

THE
KERMADECS

ARTISTS
IN THE
SOUTH
PACIFIC





In May 2011, a group of leading artists from the South Pacific region will travel on HMNZS Otago to a place rarely explored – the seas around the Kermadec Islands.

The “seariders” heading to the Kermadec region are Niuean-born John Pule, Te Puke-born painter and printmaker Robin White, leading Australian sculptor/installation artist Fiona Hall, inter-media-artist Phil Dadson, painter John Reynolds, Wellington-based sculptor Elizabeth Thomson, photographer Jason O’Hara, documentary filmmaker and photographer Bruce Foster, and writer-artist Gregory O’Brien.

In November 2011, an exhibition of the artists’ work – ‘Kermadec’ – will open at the Tauranga Art Gallery. The Kermadec Ridge (the undersea formation which includes Raoul Island, where the artists will spend two days) is geologically linked with the Tauranga area. The Ridge stretches northwards from the Bay of Plenty, as far as the Tongan Trench. Through shipping, fishing, voyaging, migration, history, mythology, meteorology and geology, the Kermadecs are very much a part of Bay of Plenty reality. This exhibition will enhance these connections in new and illuminating ways.

The Kermadec Islands are the most remote part of New Zealand. Despite their historical as well as mythological significance, public awareness of the islands and surrounding waters is slight. The voyage and exhibition aim to change that by documenting a unique, imaginatively charged encounter with one of the greatest, least-known, natural wilderness areas on the planet.

This project is an initiative of the Pew Environment Group’s Global Ocean Legacy programme, the goal of which is to promote the designation of large, highly protected marine reserves.

The Pew Environment Group is the conservation arm of The Pew Charitable Trusts, a nongovernmental organization that works globally to establish pragmatic, science-based policies that protect our oceans, preserve our wildlands and promote clean energy.

www.PewEnvironment.org



ARTISTS



John Pule
Robin White
Fiona Hall
Phil Dadson
John Reynolds
Elizabeth Thomson
Jason O'Hara
Bruce Foster
Gregory O'Brien

John Pule

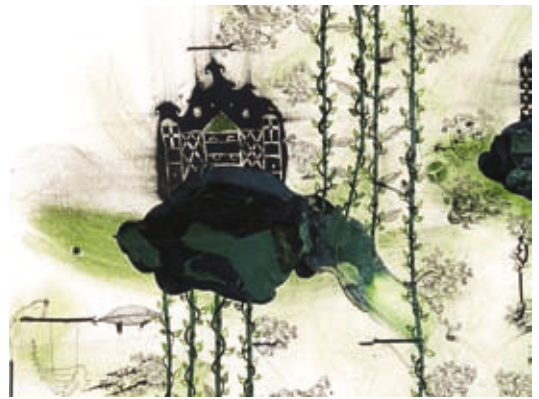
PAINTER/
PRINTMAKER/
POET/
NOVELIST

John Pule (born in Niue, 1962) is the foremost contemporary visual artist of Pacific Island descent. He is also the first Pacific artist to be the subject of a major monograph and retrospective exhibition. Pule is a writer as well as a visual artist. He has published numerous collections of poems as well as two groundbreaking novels, *The Shark That Ate the Sun* (Penguin, 1992) and *Burn My Head in Heaven* (Penguin, 1998).

A major survey of his work, '*Hauaga (Arrivals)*', (curated by Gregory O'Brien and Aaron Lister) opened at City Gallery Wellington in 2010 and will be shown this year at Auckland Art Gallery and Dunedin Public Art Gallery. Pule's works are held in all major public institutions in New Zealand as well as in the Queensland Art Gallery, Australia, and the National Galleries of Scotland. He has represented New Zealand and the Pacific region in numerous exhibitions and art events around the world. *Hauaga - the art of John Pule*, ed. Nicholas Thomas, was published by Otago University Press in 2010. Pule co-authored, with Thomas, *Hiapo: Past and present in Niuean barkcloth* (2005).

A comprehensive CV and numerous paintings can be viewed at:
www.gowlangsfordgallery.co.nz/artists/johnpule/biography.asp

John Pule is represented by Gow Langsford Gallery, Auckland;
Jonathan Smart Gallery, Christchurch; and Martin Browne Fine Art, Sydney,
www.martinbrownefineart.com/ArtistJPule.html.



TOP
Savage Island Man with Pure (2003), John Pule.
Photographed by
Sofia Tekala-Smith

ABOVE
John Pule
*Take these with you
when you leave,*
oil on canvas (1988)

ABOVE RIGHT
John Pule
Detail of *Another
Green World* (2006)

Robin White

PAINTER/
PRINTMAKER

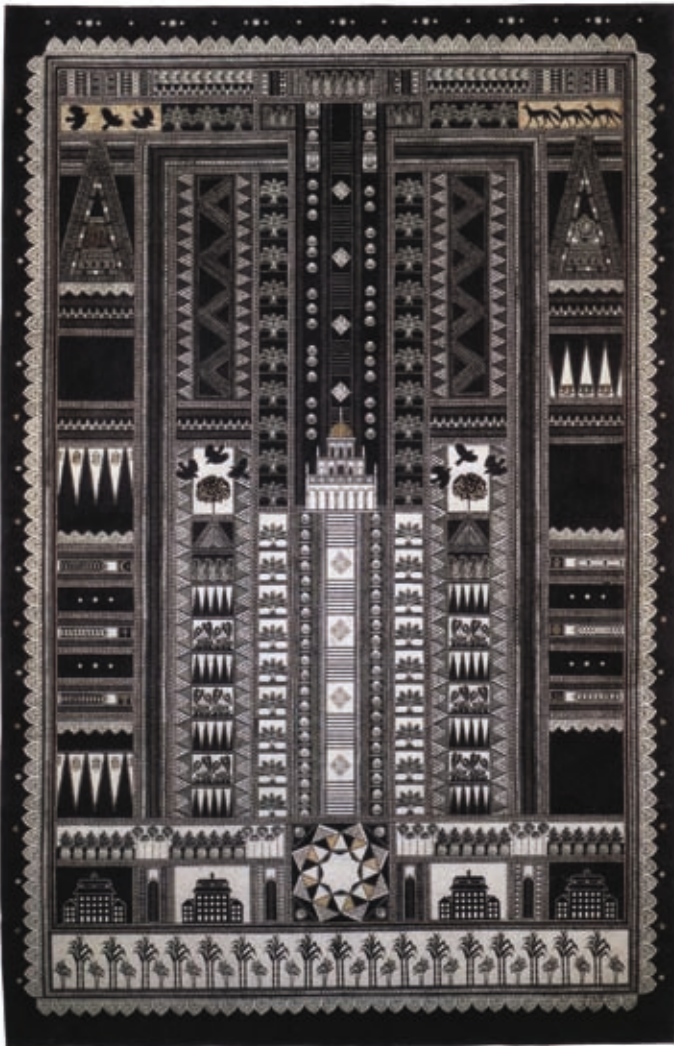
Robin White (born 1946) is one of New Zealand's greatest visual artists. Of Maori and Pakeha descent, she was born in Te Puke and has strong family ties to the Tauranga region – a geographical location significant within the greater 'Kermadec' picture. White was one of the most prominent painters of the 1970s, producing numerous iconic New Zealand images. She subsequently lived on the island of Tarawa in the Republic of Kiribati for some years before returning to New Zealand. She is now based in Masterton but continues to work with weavers and artists from the Pacific.

White's recent work is an astonishing amalgam of Palangi (Pakeha), Maori and Pacific influences. As well as collaborating with weavers, she continues to make prints, draw, paint and take photographs. She is represented by Peter McLeavey Gallery, Wellington, and her works are included in public collections around New Zealand and, significantly, in the Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane, and the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra.

A study of her paintings, *Robin White: New Zealand Painter*, was published by Alister Taylor in 1981. She has represented New Zealand at numerous international exhibitions and, in 2003, was made a Distinguished Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit. For younger generations of New Zealand artists, White is a role model par excellence, a kuia, an exemplary artist in every respect.

An interview with Robin White can be found at:
www.art-newzealand.com/Issues31to40/white.htm

The Auckland Art Gallery has a fine collection of White's work:
www.aucklandartgallery.com/the-collection/browse-artists/699/robin-white/images



TOP
Robin White
Postcards from Pleasant Island 2: Dagaburoro (1989)

ABOVE
Robin White
Teitei vou (A new garden) (2009)

ABOVE RIGHT
Robin White
Fish and chips, Maketu (1975)

Fiona Hall

SCULPTOR/
MIXED-MEDIA
ARTIST

Fiona Hall (born 1953) is one of the most accomplished and internationally acclaimed contemporary Australian artists. Her work has been featured in many biennales and international art events over the past two decades.

After establishing herself as a photographer in the 1970s and early 1980s, Hall began working increasingly as a sculptor and installation artist. In recent years she has added video and printmaking to the media she uses. Major works by Hall are in collections throughout Australia. In 2005–6, a retrospective exhibition was shown at the Queensland Art Gallery and the Art Gallery of South Australia (with an accompanying monograph by curator Julie Ewington).

In 2008, a major survey exhibition (curated by Vivienne Webb, Paula Savage and Gregory O'Brien) was shown at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, and then at City Gallery Wellington and Christchurch Art Gallery. In the past four years, Hall has returned to New Zealand regularly and made significant works relating to the birdlife, botany and environmental issues of this country.

An extensive CV and numerous examples of Hall's work can be found at:
www.roslynolex9.com.au/artists/17/Fiona_Hall/profile/

Paradisus Terrestris... A series of these works, made from sardine tins, are on long-term display at the Australian National Gallery. In the gallery's visitor surveys these works are consistently voted the most memorable in the entire gallery. Hall's work engages with the environment, with genetics and evolutionary science – it also references vast sweeps of human history. As well as being an account of her inner life – of states of mind and emotion – her works are a meditation on the life and death of body and mind. Fiona Hall often uses detritus from the modern world, which she reconfigures into birds' heads, plant-forms or parts of the human body.



ABOVE
Fiona Hall
Paradisus Terrestris...
(1999)



ABOVE RIGHT
Fiona Hall
Dead in the water
(1999)



BOTTOM RIGHT
Fiona Hall
Detail of Understorey
(2005)

Phil Dadson

INTER-MEDIA ARTIST/
SCULPTOR/
MUSICIAN

As well as being a visual artist – working in two and three dimensions – Phil Dadson (born in Napier, 1946) is a composer, sound-artist and practising musician. He was a founding member of the enormously influential percussion ensemble From Scratch, whose composition ‘Pacific 3, 2, 1, Zero’ was one of the great statements of Pacific antinuclear protest during the 1970s. Dadson works with video, installation, sound and a plethora of other media – often bringing disparate approaches and materials together in surprising and remarkable combinations. Information on his many projects and exhibitions can be found at: www.sonicsfromscratch.co.nz and www.thearts.co.nz/artist_page.php&aid=68&type=bio

Dadson’s recent exhibition ‘Deep Water’, which was shown at Starkwhite, Auckland, this year, might be thought of as a curtain-raiser to the work he envisages doing as part of the Kermadec project.

www.starkwhite.co.nz/exhibitions/previous/phil-dadson-deep-water.aspx

Among Dadson’s recent projects is a kinetic wind sculpture, *Akau Tangi* (2010), which is permanently installed beside Cobham Drive, on the way to Wellington Airport. He also exhibits drawings and paintings, and frequently uses video and sound in his gallery-based installation projects.



TOP
Phil Dadson
*An Archeology
of Stones* (1995)

ABOVE
Phil Dadson
Akau Tangi (2010)
kinetic wind sculpture

RIGHT
Phil Dadson
Stone Map
video still (2004)

John Reynolds

PAINTER/
INSTALLATION ARTIST

John Reynolds (born 1956) is one of the most celebrated and widely exhibited artists of his generation. His art is often infused with a sense of grandeur, mystery and abstract thought – yet such qualities are always offset by a characteristic playfulness and wit. His dazzlingly large-scale works convey states of mind – immersing the viewer in complex visual environments. Reynolds' *Cloud*, comprising over 7000 canvases, was a stand-out work at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, where it was featured in the Sydney Biennale in 2007. www.art-newzealand.com/Issue122/reynolds.htm

A documentary about John Reynolds' art, *Questions for Mr Reynolds*, was directed by Shirley Horrocks and screened in festivals around New Zealand in 2007. A major monograph on his work, *Certain Words Drawn; John Reynolds Continued*, was published by Godwit in 2008. He exhibits at Sue Crockford Gallery, see below: www.suecrockford.com/artists/images.asp?aid=6
www.thearts.co.nz/artist_page.php&aid=37&type=bio

The Kermadec region has long fascinated John Reynolds. He notes that there are Kermadec Nikau palms outside his Auckland studio, and he planted them there.

Reynolds' recent art incorporates large-scale abstract compositions, word-based pieces, video, installation and performance.



TOP
John Reynolds
Cloud (2006)

ABOVE
John Reynolds
Cloud, detail (2006)

RIGHT
John Reynolds
Detail from *Persian Letters* (1990)

Elizabeth Thomson

SCULPTOR

Elizabeth Thomson (born 1956) is a Wellington-based sculptor/installation artist, whose work has often engaged imaginatively with the Pacific region. As a young artist, she lived on the Christmas Islands for six months and her experiences there shaped her artistic life.

Thomson's work has strong connections with biology, physics and other areas of science. She has produced considerable work in collaboration with a scientific glassblower. She has also produced major commissions which engage with the depths of the ocean – one such work is installed in the aptly titled Kermadec Restaurant, Auckland (which also houses a major tapa-installation by John Pule). Her school of cast-metal fishes, *The Fearless Five Hundred*, is installed in the Fonterra building in Auckland.

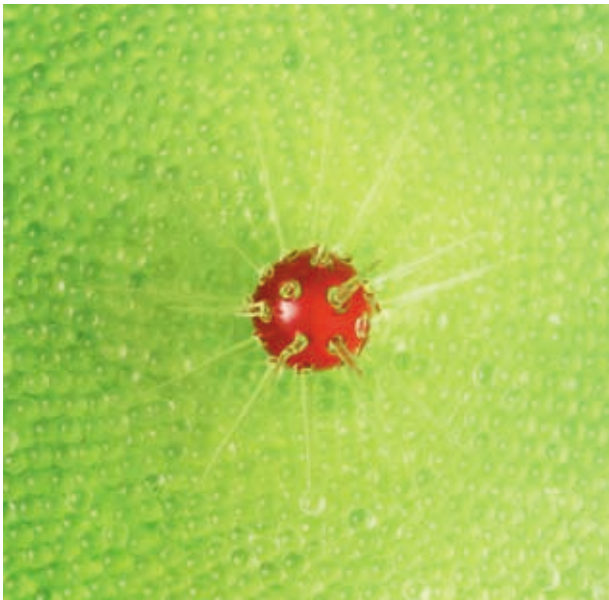
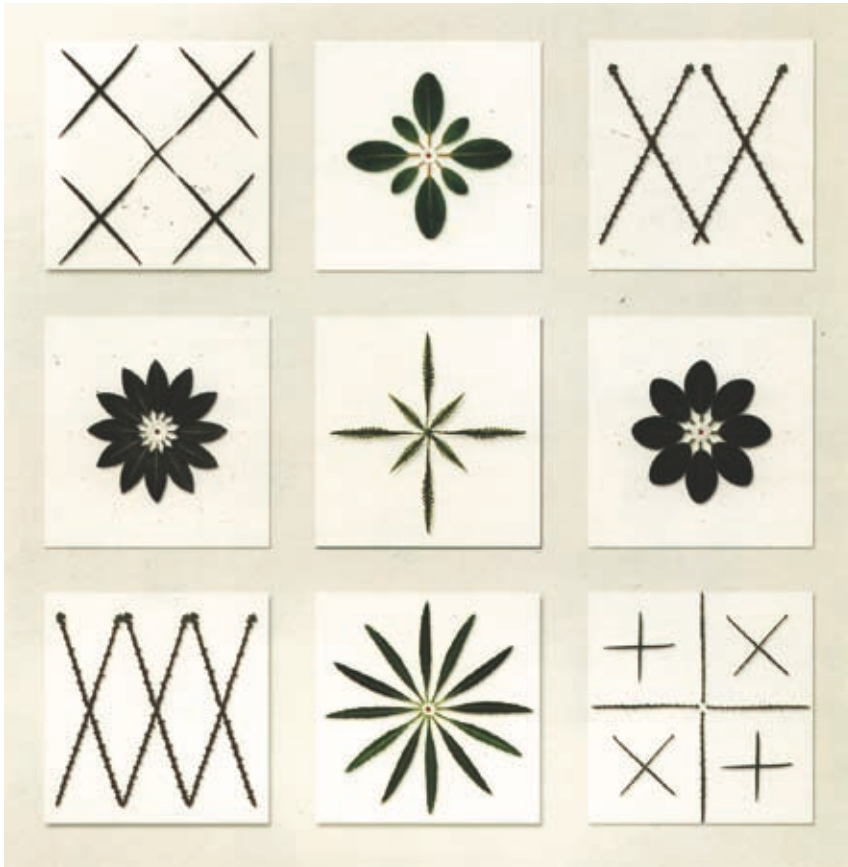
City Gallery Wellington staged a major survey of Thomson's work 'My Sci Fi My Hi Fi' in 2006. The exhibition toured to Auckland, Rotorua, Hamilton and Dunedin. She currently has a major installation on display at the Tauranga Art Gallery – see below:

www.artgallery.org.nz/exhibitions/another-green-world

Further works by Elizabeth Thomson can be seen at:

<http://tworooms.co.nz/artists/elizabeth-thomson/#>

www.mhgalleries.co.nz/navigation/artists/elizabeth_thomson/works.html



TOP
Elizabeth Thomson
Botanical Icons
(2005-6)

ABOVE
Elizabeth Thomson
Detail from *Forbidden*
Fruit (2005)

RIGHT
Elizabeth Thomson
Detail from *Koromiko*
(2003)

Jason O'Hara

ARTIST/
PHOTOGRAPHER/
DESIGNER

Jason O'Hara (born 1968) is a New Zealand-based visual artist working across a variety of disciplines including photography, painting, sculpture and new media. He lives in the seaside community of Breaker Bay, Wellington. He has been a full-time professional creative since graduating from Wellington Polytechnic School of Design in 1989. For 20 years he has designed brands, packaging, exhibition spaces, websites and communications for some of New Zealand's top design companies (Origin, DNA and DesignWorks) while gradually building a reputation as an artist and photographer.

Currently O'Hara balances his work as an artist with working part time as design director for Origin Design (where he was a partner for nine years). His work has won numerous national and international awards and has been published internationally in Graphis annuals and elsewhere. He has exhibited in group and solo exhibitions in Auckland and Wellington. He has been a judge in the New Zealand Best Design Awards.

Further works by Jason O'Hara can be seen at www.studioj.co.nz.



TOP
Jason O'Hara
Backbone (2009)

ABOVE
Jason O'Hara
51 and Faith (2008)

ABOVE RIGHT
Jason O'Hara
Cat
Levin (2007)

RIGHT
Jason O'Hara
Railway lights
Levin (2007)

Bruce Foster

PHOTOGRAPHER/
DOCUMENTARY
FILMMAKER

Bruce Foster (born 1948) is one of the foremost photographers to emerge in the 1970s. His colour photographs of the 1980s are among the iconic images of that period, and his works are held in major publication collections around the country.

Foster has also worked with print media. In 1994 he collaborated with writer Lloyd Jones on a book, *The Last Saturday* (published by VUP), and an exhibition of the same title which was held at the National Library in Wellington. In recent years he has worked as a freelance photographer and increasingly engaged with moving image technologies. He is co-director of the Wellington-based design and video production company, Airplane.

In 1999 he made a short film around the New Zealand String Quartet's performance of Beethoven's 'Quartet in E Minor'.

His works in the collection of the Auckland Art Gallery can be viewed at:
www.aucklandartgallery.com/the-collection/browse-artists/2521/bruce-foster



TOP
Bruce Foster
New Plymouth
(2011)

ABOVE
Bruce Foster
Owaha, Taranaki
(2011)

TOP RIGHT
Bruce Foster
Oamaru
(2010)

BOTTOM RIGHT
Bruce Foster
Otaki
(2009)

Gregory O'Brien

POET/
ARTIST
ESSAYIST/
CURATOR

Gregory O'Brien (born in Matamata, New Zealand, 1961) is a Wellington-based writer and painter. He has illustrated his own poetry books and written two publications introducing art to young people, *Welcome to the South Seas* (AUP, 2004) and *Back and Beyond* (Auckland University Press, 2008). His other books include *After Bathing at Baxter's – Essays and Notebooks* (Victoria University Press, 2002) and *News of the Swimmer Reaches Shore* (Carcanet UK/Victoria University Press, 2007).

Between 1997 and 2009 he was a curator at City Gallery Wellington, where he worked on exhibitions (with accompanying books) by Ralph Hotere, Rosalie Gascoigne, Colin McCahon, Laurence Aberhart, John Pule, Fiona Hall, Elizabeth Thomson and others.

Recent projects include two major monographs, *Euan Macleod – the painter in the painting* (Piper Press, Sydney, 2010) and *A Micronaut in the Wide World; the imaginative life and times of Graham Percy* (Auckland University Press, 2011). He writes regularly for *Artist Profile* magazine (Sydney) and *PN Review* in the UK, amongst other places.

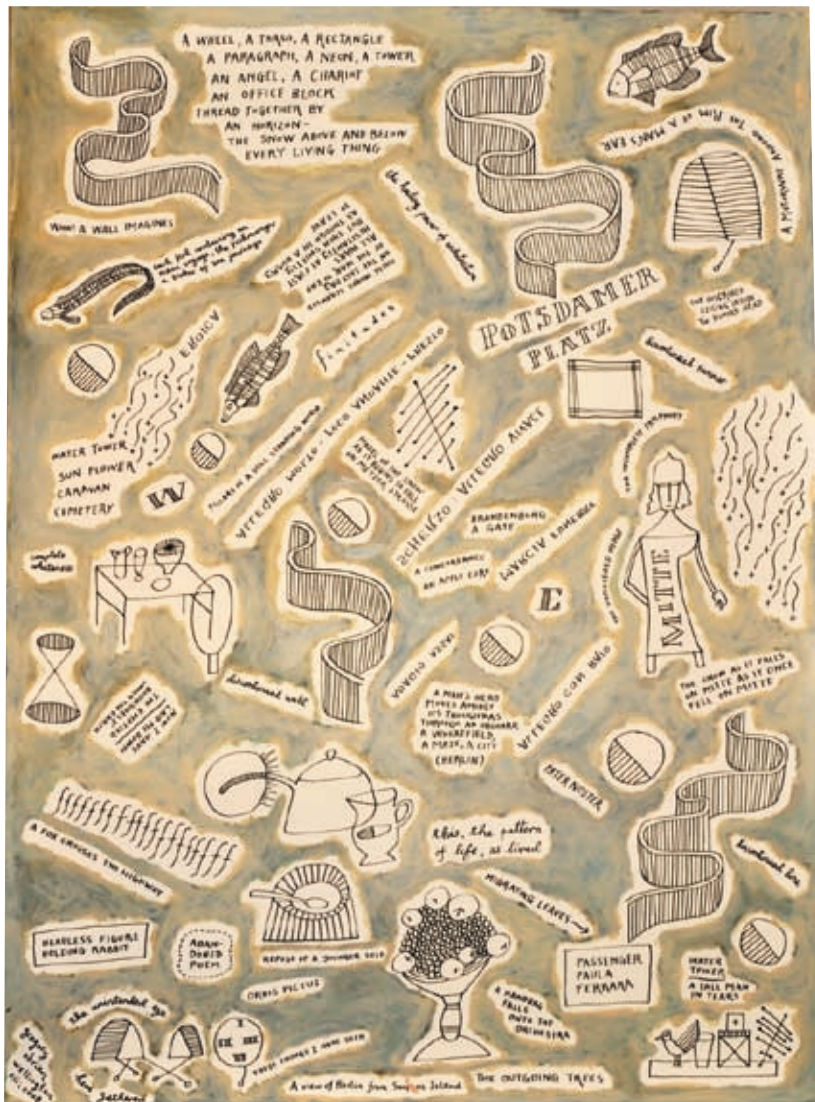
O'Brien's visual works often incorporate texts – his own poetry and that of others. In recent months, he has made a series of 12 etchings with John Pule (printed by Cicada Press, Sydney). He exhibits his work at Bowen Galleries, Wellington, and Jane Sanders Art Agent, Auckland. O'Brien's poems and drawings were the basis for a winter fashion collection from Auckland designer Doris de Pont in 2006. His art is included in the following collections: the Hocken Library, Otago University, Dunedin; the Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington; the Ministry of Foreign Affairs collection; University of Auckland Art Collection and the Chartwell Collection, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tamaki.

Further details of publications can be found at:

www.bookcouncil.org.nz/writers/obriengreg.html

and his art can be viewed at:

www.artagent.co.nz/gregoryobrien.htm and www.artagent.co.nz/editions.htm



TOP
Gregory O'Brien
A view of Berlin from Somes Island (2009)

LEFT & RIGHT
Gregory O'Brien
 Cover drawings for French edition of *Man Alone* by John Mulgan (2011)

