

WORLD SCULPTURE NEWS

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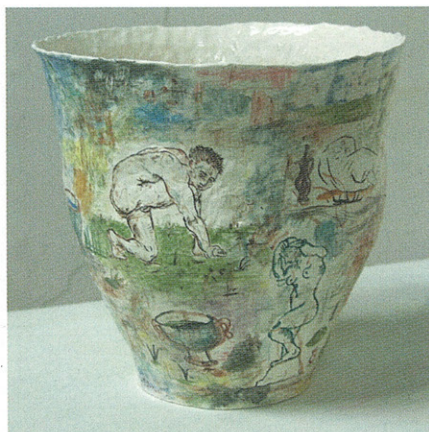
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Thinking Twice About Future Values

The use of recycled materials as an integral part of many artists' art practice has, during the past 100 years, raised innumerable questions about what constitutes art. As we become ever conscious of, and more anxious about, the destruction of the world's resources, the role of the artist as the messenger of tragedy becomes ever more powerful.

- 37 THE NETHERLANDS/ENGLAND**
The Luck Of The Dice

Double sixes will do it. With the (un)lucky roll of the dice triggering an endless hall of mirrors with multiplying entrances and exits, Jacqueline Pennell's abstract *Aleatoric* (2002) responds to Hieronymus Bosch's 16th-century depiction of "Hell". Conceived specifically for the three-part intervention *A Triptych across Time: Artists Respond to Bosch's 'Garden of Delights' [* Eden * Hell * Garden of Delights *]*, Pennell's installation "suggests the uncertainty that endless chance events can induce, and the certainty that the future will be no different."



Stephen Benwell, *Vase*, 2001

- 40 NEW ZEALAND**
A Gathering Of Memories

More often than not the simple things in life are catalysts for evoking memories. In her recent work, Carole Shephard utilizes an astonishing range of glass with which to engage her viewers. Taken in parts, her gigantic installation might seem to overwhelm the senses but, as one digs around and separates those parts which jog specific memories, the work becomes a voyage of visual and mental discovery.

- 49 AUSTRALIA**
The Dynamic Of The Vessel

Melbourne-based ceramicist Stephen Benwell, 49, has built a fine reputation for making art that spans a wide range of sculpture, painting, and pottery influences, as well as printmaking and painting. All of these influences—and styles such as abstraction and figuration—have come together in many different ways over the years in work that surprises and delights in its strength and delicacy. In a recent review of his work in *Craft* magazine, reviewer Barbara Weis referred to Benwell as a "painterly ceramicist," noting that this "quality is confirmed by the riot of visual references and narratives he embeds in each piece."

- 52 SINGAPORE**
The Sculpture Of Tan Teng Kee

During the past three decades, there have been numerous singular changes in the world of contemporary sculpture in Singapore. Artists as different as Han Sai Por, Ng Eng Teng, Sun Yu Li, and Tan Teng Kee, to name but four, have contributed significantly to the scope of Singapore sculpture, taking it in fresh and engaging directions. Tan Teng Kee, as one of the pioneers of contemporary sculpture in the country, has been one of the most influential sculptors of any generation.

- 55 REVIEWS**
Reviews for Australia, Japan, New Zealand, and the United States.

Cover: Walter McConnell, *Itinerant Edens*, 2002, moist clay in plastic enclosure plywood, polystyrene, light, 75 x 58 x 144" (large); 34 x 28 x 72" (small).

Welcome to World Sculpture News

The summer is a time of reflection. It is a time also to relax, to draw a breath while contemplating in the mind's eye notions of future projects. The past couple of years have been difficult for so many people, both inside and outside the art world, so taking time to pause and re-energize oneself is important. While there have been numerous difficulties in the art world, there are always signs of positive action. *The Melbourne Art Fair* (October 2–6) and *The Contemporary Asian Art Fair* in Singapore (11–15 October), both of which have gone from strength to strength in recent years, are just two examples of well-organized art fairs in the Asia-Pacific region that have reached across borders to highlight some of the best art around. Their examples in commitment and organization are to be applauded in these hard times as they prove once more that the market for good art is not constrained by economic difficulties.

While the art fairs look to the future, a number of the artists featured in this issue look to the past to arouse memories of the positive and the negative about our cultural and social histories. New Zealander Stephen Mulqueen knows very well that the past haunts us in many different ways and that it reveals its secrets ever so slowly. During the past two decades, Maori culture and identity have seen an important and vital resurgence which has helped many to reconfigure the past in a more complete and honest fashion. Such changes have helped artists to make work that brings balance and a degree of reconciliation to the experience of the pre- and post-colonial periods. In his work Stephen Mulqueen looks at the land, its renaming and its reshaping, to come to a better understanding of what happened in New Zealand.

Memory, too, is at the very heart of New Zealand installation artist Carole Shephard's work. Where Mulqueen uses place as a marker, Shephard utilizes glass in its myriad forms to inspire memories within us. More often than not the simple things in life are the most powerful catalysts for evoking memories, not only of time and place, but of people and our relationships with them. At first glance Shephard's work may appear to the eye and the mind as a confused jumble of objects, but it is far from this (her most recent exhibition was opened by the Rt. Honorable Helen Clark, the Prime Minister of New Zealand.) As the eye takes in the different shapes and colors, the mind slowly adjusts to their stimulus, and bit by bit the memories begin to form.

Contemporary sculpture was slow to develop in many Asian countries, but once it began, sculptors have proven themselves to be extremely adept at making some of the most interesting sculpture in the international art scene. In Singapore among the leaders, or pioneers, of contemporary sculpture is Tan Teng Kee. His combination of Asian and Western art education had enabled him both to make art and to teach sculpture that has made him one of the most influential sculptors of any generation in the country.

On a different note is the mirrored work of the British installation artist Jacqueline Pennell. Her subtle work "suggests the uncertainty that endless chance events can induce, and the certainty that the future will be no different." The American sculptor Walter McConnell's art shows us something about the demise of nature in the human world and the rise of technology through which humans may survive the destruction of the natural world. His art has an easy power about it, which inspires unease in the viewer.



Ian Findlay-Brown
Editor/Publisher

World Sculpture News (ISSN # 1024-087X) is published quarterly by **Asian Art Press (International) Ltd., 11 G/F, 28 Arbuthnot Road, Central, Hong Kong. Tel: (852) 2522-3443. Fax: (852) 2521-5268. E-mail: asianart@netvigator.com** Please note that all editorial and advertising inquiries should be, in the first instance, addressed to the Publisher, **World Sculpture News**, at the above address. FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, PLEASE ALSO VISIT OUR INTERNET SITES: www.worldsculpturenews.com & www.asianartnews.com

Subscription price for one year (4 issues): US\$17.50 for the US, US\$22 for Canada, HK\$140 for Hong Kong and Macau, and US\$30 for all other countries (postage included). **To subscribe** in the US, tel: (760) 747 1438, Fax: (760) 432 8101. US periodicals postage is paid at Rahway, NJ. POSTMASTER. **Send address changes** in the US and Canada to **World Sculpture News**, PO Box 301388, Escondido, CA, 92030-9955, USA. For address changes in other countries, send to **World Sculpture News**, 1 LG/F, 28 Arbuthnot Road, Central, Hong Kong.

Colour Separation: Chum Express Ltd., 10/F, Lok's Industrial Building, 204 Tsat Tsz Mui Road, North Point, Hong Kong. Tel: (852) 2838 3826, Fax: (852) 2591 6538. Printer: Lammar Offset Printing Ltd., Flat C, 16/F, Aik San Factory Bldg., 14 Westlands Road, Quarry Bay, Hong Kong. Tel: (852) 2563 1068, Fax: (852) 2811 3375.

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Artist As Archaeologist

The past haunts us and reveals its secrets only slowly. In New Zealand, where a resurgence of Maori culture and identity has taken place during the past few years, there is a great deal of the past that needs to be reconfigured if a true understanding of pre- and post-colonial times is to be achieved. In his work Stephen Mulqueen looks at the land and its renaming and reshaping to come to a better understanding of what happened in New Zealand.

By Cassandra Fusco

New Zealand artist Stephen Mulqueen was one of the founding members of the well-known Dunedin-based jewelry gallery-workshop, Fluxus (1981). Together with Kobi Bossard, Fluxus established standards in jewelry that remain exemplary in New Zealand and beyond. Mulqueen turned from his formal practice of goldsmithing, with its particular use of precious metals, to working with combinations of silver, copper alloys, and non-precious materials such as a selection of sedimentary stones, *pua* shells, and pumice. The woods were dyed and painted. The pumice was reheated, caged, and dyed to form a paradox between weight, volume, and mass. The result was an illusion of a solid, satin object. A series of thematic necklaces and brooches followed.

Mulqueen indicates that the move away from the use of gold and diamonds towards the more ethereal materials was part of his search for an aesthetic that questioned not only what we considered precious, but also why. "I became like a journeyman ranging around familiar materials

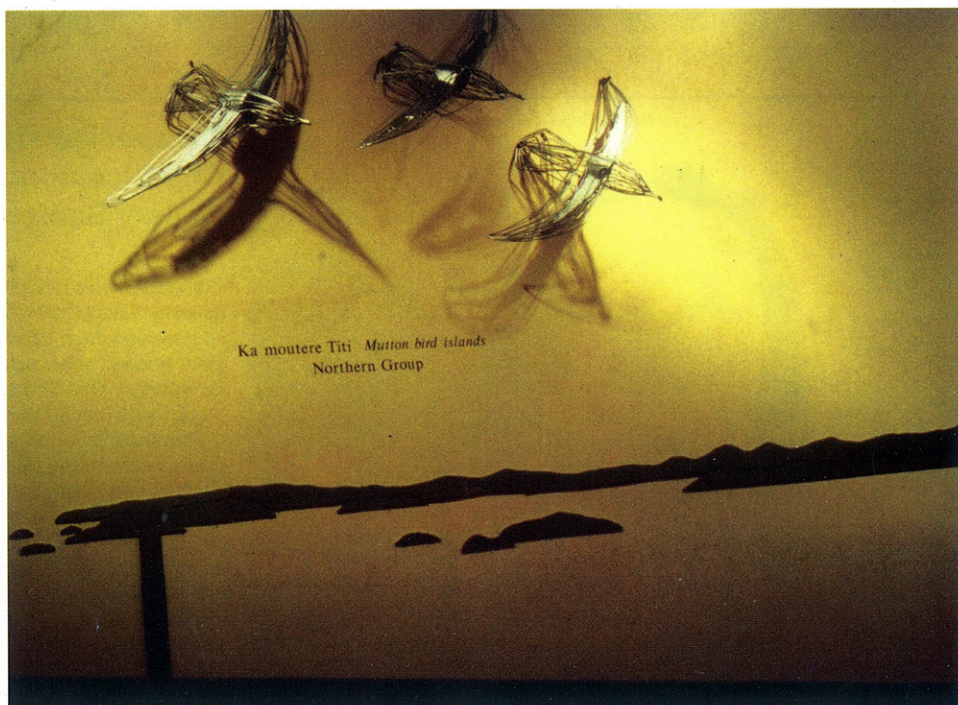
and scouting out others, attempting to press the 'new' into services not normally associated with conventional jewelry," he says. "This eventually led to a period of reevaluation, one that challenged the established hierarchy of 'precious,' the products of 'status' which I had been trained to make. It was, in one sense, finding new

Canberra gold- and silver-smithing workshop, both by example and default, helped him clarify his growing sense of direction, one intrinsically linked with Southland and its unique sense of place "imprinted in me. My time in Canberra served as a 'distancing' window from the familiar, from the local, and it brought these into a sharper perspective for me. I basically wanted to return to what I recognized was an existing rich reservoir. My return to Dunedin was both a return and new-sighted beginning."

The first body of work that resulted was *Papakihau*, meaning "slapped by the wind." These were a series of stones and their resonance and references were both real and imaginary, cultural and natural, implicit in the

materials themselves. This was the beginning of Mulqueen's re-sighting of the past within contemporary forms, linking natural phenomena such as ventifacts (stones eroded by the wind) with cultural phenomena—artifacts.

Papakihau was well-received critically, both in Canberra and in various public galleries around New Zealand. On

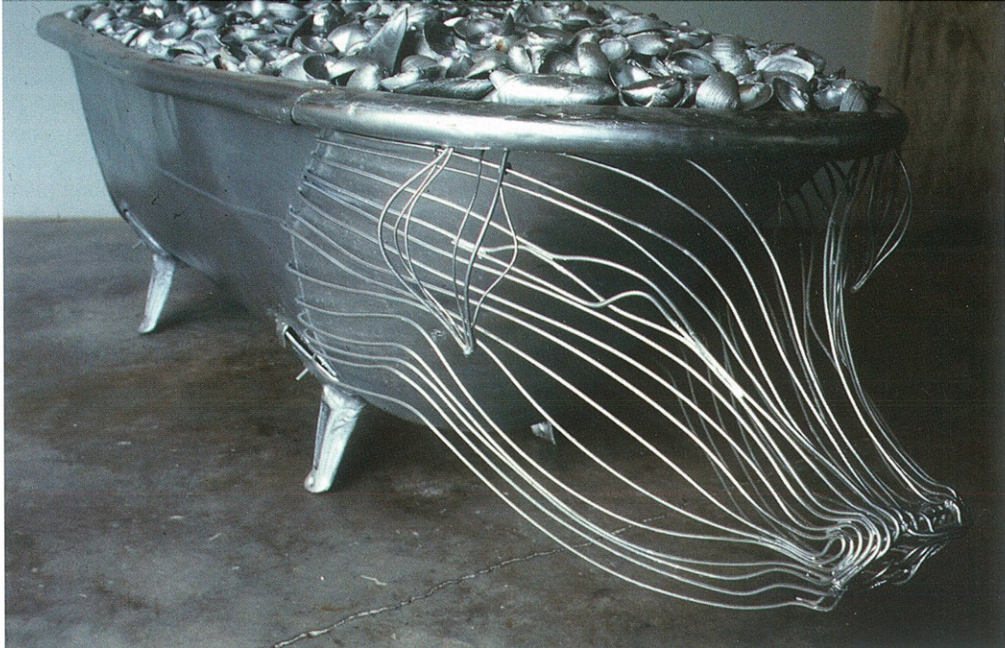


Stephen Mulqueen, *Ka moutere Titi (Mutton bird islands, Northern Group)*, 2000. Iron pickaxes, No. 8 wire and aluminum paint, 65 x 10 x 40 cm.

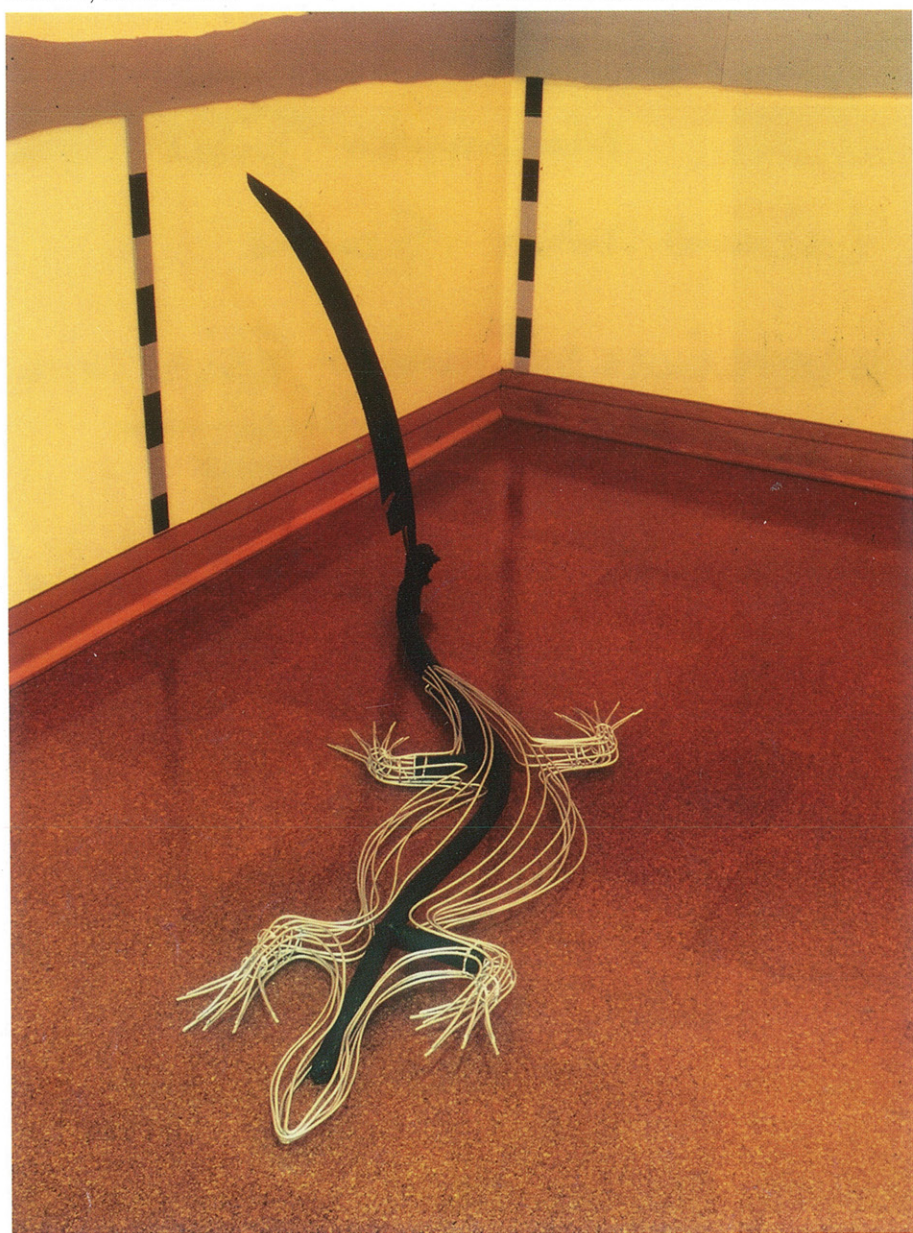
hands and eyes."¹

Leaving Fluxus in 1989, Mulqueen returned to Invercargill in Southland to teach at the local polytechnic. Subsequently, he went to Canberra, Australia, where he entered the gold- and silver-smithing workshop to undertake post-graduate studies. Mulqueen says that the modernist and formalist notions within the

these stones Mulqueen inscribed the Maori names for canoe parts thereby signifying how such "parts" had helped carry voyagers through and into the landscape. For example, *Tiawai* (a dugout canoe); *Takitimu* (an ancestral canoe); *Takerebaka* means 'to dance on the keel of a canoe' and the summit of Bluff Hill is (the stern-post of the canoe of *Aoraki*) and *Motupohue* refers to the island of Convuluous, now renamed Bluff. "These parts, and placenames," says Mulqueen, "signify genealogies, geographies, and much more. This sequence of works was an archaeology, the beginning of a recasting, literally, of the landscape in bronze and Yass stone with bauxite. The inscription was physically a naming record as well as an act of mourning—for what had been lost and overlaid—but here refound, recelebrated."



Stephen Mulqueen, **Te Aka (The Shell Island)**, 2000, renamed Pig Island, tin bath, mussels and cockle shells and aluminum paint, 180 x 75 x 55 cm.



Stephen Mulqueen, **Mokomoko (Lizard Inlet)**, 2000, No. 8 wire, scythe, aluminum paint, 160 x 50 x 10 cm.

Mulqueen eventually began exploring a specific local area, Bluff, his birthplace, and how its history, apparently familiar and known, remains an archaeology still in translation, like much of the wider country itself. In his work he began to reference the area known as Motupohue physically and metaphorically and showed how its pre-European sense of place had been overlaid in 1856 by J.T. Thomson, the government surveyor, with his grid-like plan for the township of Bluff.

Thomson named major streets in Bluff after major rivers in Ireland (e.g. The Shannon, Boyne, Slaney, Lee, and Liffey) in honor of the birthplace of James Spencer as founder of the Bluff settlement. In doing so, Thomson transcribed his "familiar" bearings onto "foreign soil," disregarding the pre-existing Maori names. As depicted in Friel's play, it was part of an established process of colonial construction—reinventing the "familiar" by embedding known signifiers into the fabric of a "new," "unmapped" (and presumed empty) landscape. Thus "space" was colonized into "place," displacing existing Maori placenames and existence.

"New Zealand," he says, "like many realignments occurring all around the world, is still unraveling and revealing layers of ruptures and overlays. Here, history can be re-read through a fascinating residue of marks and tracings. The mapping and re-naming of Motupohue, for example, as Bluff, like much of New Zealand, reveals a history of re-invention, re-possession, and re-construction by various peoples."

"My exploration of Motupohue (Bluff) coincided with three pivotal events—following study at Canberra; a period of research at the National Sculpture Factory in Cork, Ireland; a commission from Te Papa Atawhait New Zealand De-

partment of Conservation to re-design the viewing structure for Bluff Hill, a favorite hunt of mine, and the impact upon my sense of place by the play, *Translations*, written by the Irish playwright Brian Friel.

"These three events, my periods of study in Canberra, in Otago, and in Ireland, brought my thoughts into a confluence, to a critical point. But it was not until I saw the Abbey Theater's production of Friel's play that I found the crucible into which I could pour my energies and enquiries and have them re-emerge in a series of works which I believe make the mappings and remappings of Motupohue, and all that it potentially represents, into a coherent confluence readily accessible to others.

Brian Friel's play *Translations* takes elements of the historic remapping and renaming of Ireland by the King's Ordnance Survey of 1833 using these to encourage critical assessment of the contemporary position of Ireland.

"Friel's play reflects a poetic vision through which he mines the ironies, contradictions, and injustices that plague Ireland. In this, by its lacunary nature, language plays a crucial role. The play indicates that there is no return to the displaced language, Gaelic. Rather, its vision promotes making a home within the crucible of translation, speaking for oneself, and achieving aesthetic independence, aware of the past but pressing into the future. Clearly, the implication is that political sovereignty will follow. Here in New Zealand, and elsewhere, such a message is more than applicable."

Mulqueen returned from his sojourn in Ireland fired with enthusiasm, determined to mine the layers of translation around him. His research was furthered by the rich resources of maps and historical accounts held in the Hocken Library, University of Otago, in Dunedin, and

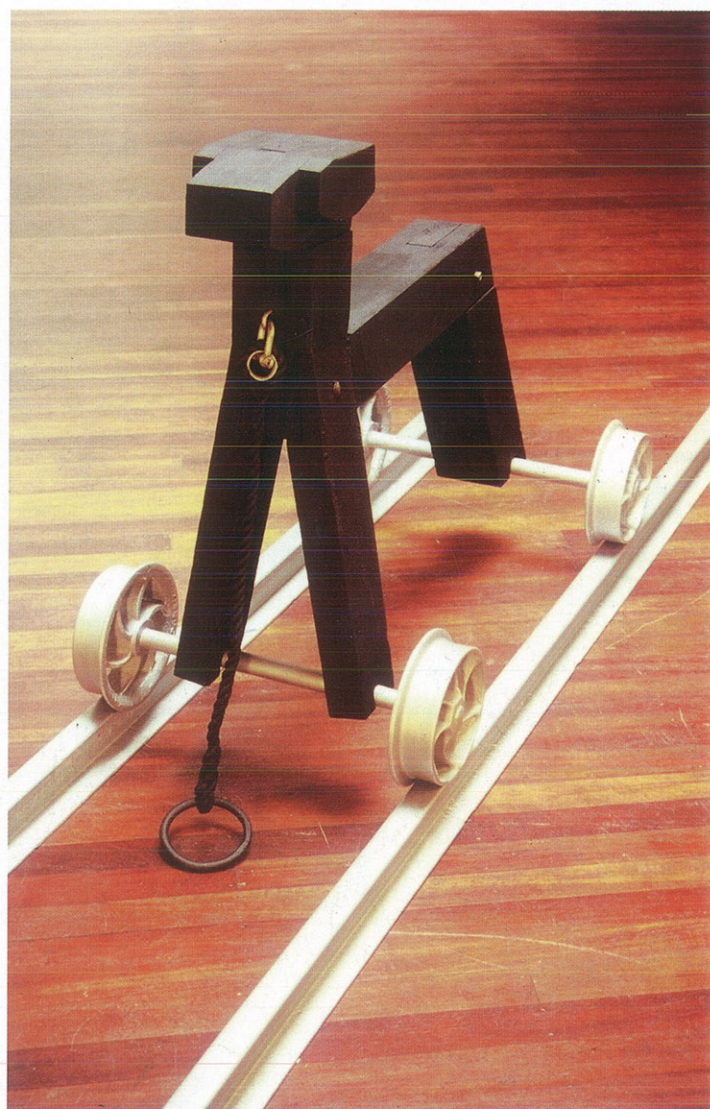
a scholar friend, Kati Mamoe upoko Harold Ashwell, who guided him through the original Maori placenames of the area.

The result was Mulqueen's installation work, *Whakamaoritanga/Translations*, which he describes as a multi-layered exploration of pre-European, colonial, and post-colonial occupancies of Motupohue/Bluff in the far south of New Zealand's South Island. "The cultural identities examined," he says, "were various. It was a rich reminder of a living archaeology. *Whakamaoritanga/Translations* was an affirmation of individual agency prevailing against the larger or homogenizing forces of globalization. And again, the materials I used promoted this — aluminum and stone."

First exhibited at the Hocken Library Gallery and curated by Linda Tyler of the University of Otago, *Whakamaoritanga/Translations* paid homage to the land and features such as Tikaha (Rabbit Island), Te Aka (The Shell)



Stephen Mulqueen, part-installation shot showing **Tihaka (Rabbit Island)**, 2000, No. 8 fencing wire, aluminum paint, 52 x 28 cm; mat 330 x 130 cm.



Stephen Mulqueen, **Motupiu (A Swinging Island)**, 2000, renamed Dog Island, cast iron bogie wheels, nail irons called dogheads, brass, wood and aluminum paint, 150 x 125 x 14 x 20 cm.

now Pig Island, Motupiu (Dog Island), Ka moutere Titi (Mutton bird islands, Northern Group) and the Mokomoko (Lizard) Inlet. All of these were "recast" in No. 8 fencing wire, aluminum paint, and material (a "local" colonial product), rail lengths and dog-nails, bellows and a scythe—all implements and materials symbolic of the colonial era and its remapping. Significantly, Tikaha (Rabbit Island) was dwarfed in a "sea" of aluminum flax weave. And all of these objects were "enclosed" within a mat aluminum coated insulation paper-landscape.

Whakamaoritanga /Translations, like Friel's play, argues for an acknowledgment of the layers of human presence and subsequent "translations." It requires a conjunction between archaeological and artistic practices, subjective experience and aesthetic responses. "Primarily I am concerned with making things and, as a consequence, with people. I am tied to the land through identity and identification with it—both oral and subsequent records. The layers in Bluff, as elsewhere, overlay and overlap; each is fascinating and none should be disregarded. In my work I try to get people to review the gaps and makes links between the past and present. Like many before me I argue for the particularity of place, the specificity of lived experience of the local. And nowhere is this more vital than in the Maori tradition. Maori ancestors made oral maps of the land which provided both a record of themselves and bound their descendants to that land. For example, the legendary navigator Maui² was said to be responsible for the very existence and shape of the land."



View from Viewing Platform at Motupohue/Bluff Hill.



Stephen Mulqueen, installation shot of *Whakamaoritanga / Translations*, Hocken Library Gallery, University of Otago, 2000.

Maori mapping, like many Polynesian and Oceanic systems, operated in a realm of oral retention. This included a metaphorical understanding of landscape, determined not simply by description but also by genealogy and myth. An oral map required knowledge of the history of the place and its cultural significance. Such a map could assist the voyager across water and walk them through the landscape as a participant, as opposed to the bird's-eye view taken by an observer of a map inscribed from "above" on paper.

Mulqueen says: "As a Pakeha living at the end of the 20th century and facing into the 21st, I have come to identify with the local and regional; I feel enriched by this environment which had its earliest human foundations formed by pre-colonial tribal connections and the mythic narratives and events attached to them. In an Irish context, Friel's play encapsulates. Ire-

land was England's first colony, pre-dating Virginia in the new world. The indigenous culture was deracinated. The same happened here in New Zealand. Granted there is a Maori renaissance afoot, but what I am arguing for is a cultural venture, a reassessment of how we can all acknowledge the past and share in a closer appreciation of what we have here. Whereas *Whakamaoritanga/Translations* was a large and sprawling work, I have tended more recently to work on an almost intimate scale. I still reference the grid but into my current aluminum 'box' series. These are boxes in which I insert the precious finds of the past, recast in aluminum—adze heads, ancient fish hooks. Just as *Whakamaoritanga* attempted to show erasure, enclosure, and overlaying, so also my boxes record this process but, by their intimate scale, they suggest that individuals can also hold and treasure the land."

Mulqueen's *Whakamaoritanga/Translations* confirms the truism that all cultures map. But what it attempts to clarify is that mapping is not simply a matter of cartographic inscription, of measuring, naming, and recording the physical world along lines of latitude and longitude on paper. Mapping, like location, is as various as lived experience and, as such, invites rich and varied "readings." Δ

Notes:

1. This and all subsequent quotes taken from a series of interviews between Stephen Mulqueen and the author between 2000–2002.
2. See: John Hall-Jones, *The South Explored*, Invercargill: Craig, 1988 (36).

Dr. Cassandra Fusco is the New Zealand contributing editor of *World Sculpture News* and *Asian Art News*. She is based in Christchurch.