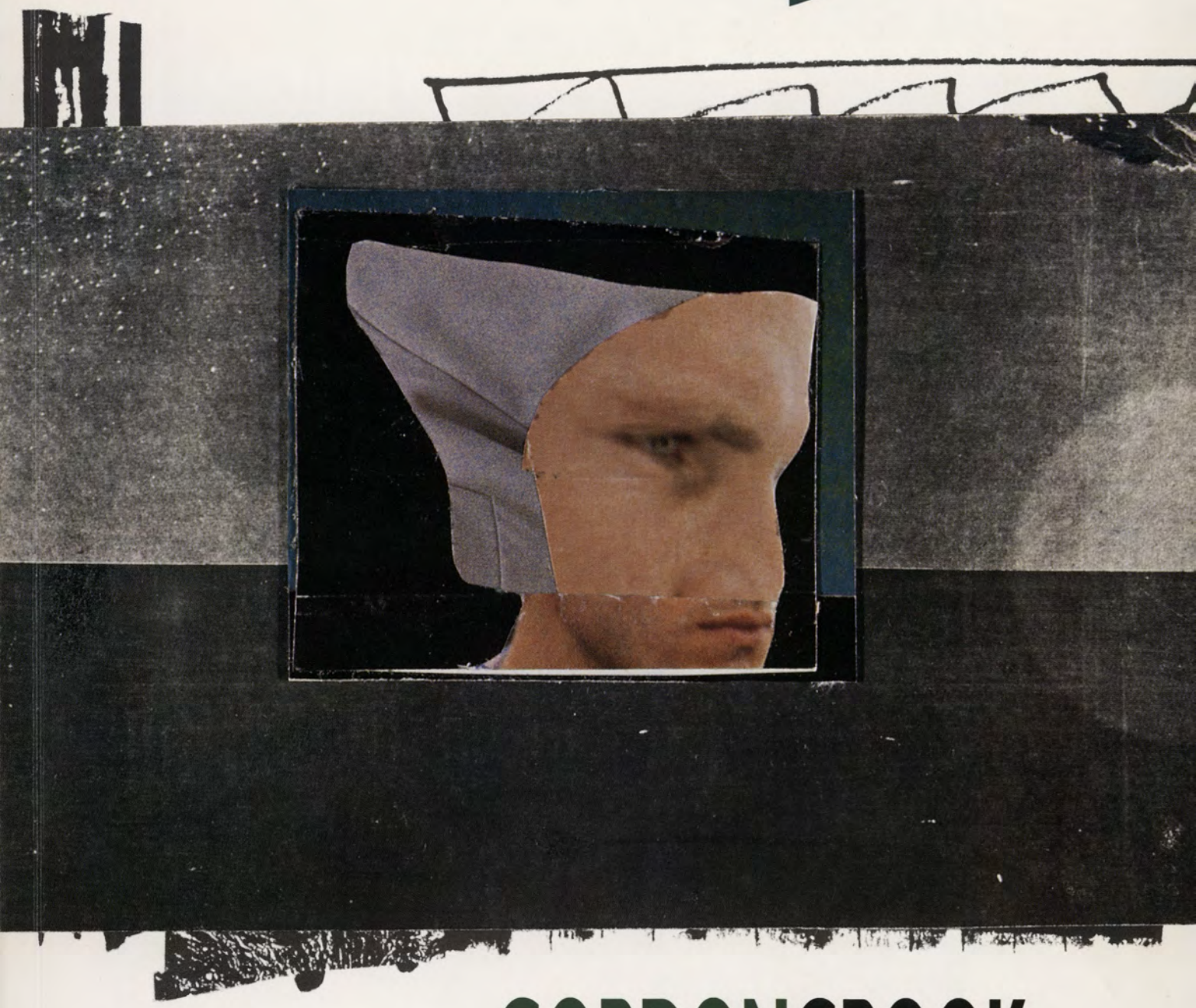
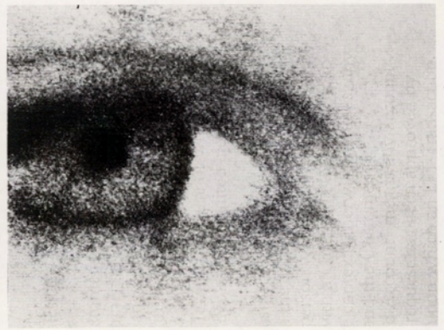
I have yards of notes if you need them, but trust this brevity will do.



GORDONCROOK



GORDONCROOK

GORDONCROOK

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Front cover:
The child at one and half years old
from **Wolf Man** *series 1991*
Collage on xerox 760 x 580
Private collection

Inside front cover:
'recollections of childhood'
from **Wolf-Man** *series 4 1991*
Xerox print actual size
Private collection

Inside back cover:
'breathing out' from **Wolf-Man** *series 3 1991*
Xerox print actual size
Private collection

Back cover:
Untitled *from* **Wolf-Man** *series 1991*
Xerox print actual size
Private collection

CONTENTS

FOREWORD
The Brooker Gallery 5

GORDON CROOK COLOUR MASTER, VISIONARY
James Mack 6

GORDON CROOK
Kate Derum 10

NOTES/POEMS/DREAMS
Gordon Crook 50

BIOGRAPHY
Gordon Crook 60

"or something not like that"

GORDONCROOK

FOREWORD

KAY ROBERTS

This profile publication on Gordon Crook is an acknowledgement and celebration of his artistic production in Aotearoa/New Zealand. The publication has been produced to coincide with a survey exhibition of his works which has been curated by Kate Derum, an Australian writer and artist, for tour to public galleries and museums in New Zealand during 1994, 1995 and 1996.

Born in Richmond, England in 1921, Gordon arrived in New Zealand in 1972 and has remained ever since. During this period he has produced a large body of work in a range of media, but is most noted for his work in the areas of printmaking, tapestry and collage.

Based in Wellington, Gordon Crook and his work remain largely unknown to audiences outside of the region. Wellingtonians and visitors to Wellington have become familiar with Crook's ideas and designs through the commissioned banners for the Michael Fowler Centre in Wellington. Others will be familiar with his works commissioned for the New Zealand Chancery building in Washington.

This publication has been produced with the support of the Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council through its Audience and Art Market Development Scheme, and it is hoped that it will work to inform and extend viewer perception, understanding and enjoyment of the work of Gordon Crook.

The Gallery would like to acknowledge the generosity of a number of people in the production of this profile publication; in particular, Kate Derum, Edith Ryan, James Mack, Philip Kelly, Rosemary Laurenson, Mary Barr, Janne Land, Lesley Nicholls, and Gordon Crook without whose commitment and patience the publication would not have been possible.

Kay Roberts
Director
Brooker Gallery
August 1993

GORDONCROOK COLOUR MASTER - VISIONARY

JAMES MACK

Where do babies come from
Wolf-Man Series 1991
Xerox actual size
Private collection

For about him till the very end were still
Those he had studied, the fauna of the night,
And shades that still wanted to enter
the bright circle of his recognition. [1]

THROUGHOUT THE HISTORY of humankind each generation has exposed a few truly imaginative individuals of superior intellect who have marshalled their creative powers to expose themselves so that the rest of us might see ourselves better.

What magik it is that sets a mortal on this path is unknown - whatever the nuances are, divine, astral, genetic, metaphysical, mortification or sheer bloody mindedness we will never know exactly. What we must know however is that the sublime creative act is an act of concentrated power that resonates through us all. We are immolated in its vibration.

In the floor of Chichester Cathedral there is a partitioned glass window that allows you to see the remains of a recently discovered Roman mosaic from the floor of a temple that occupied the site hundreds of years before the Cathedral. Pagan minds, Christian minds knowing the power of this place; a Gateway? Where mere mortals might commune more directly with their Gods.

> *Man in medieval days lived in a world which externalised and symbolised the inner nature of life and presumably was better able to come to grips with it. The mystery being less bewildering once given its meaningful and tangible shapes. To live with the gods and foibles and virtues of personality as daily companions, the constant presence, the constant reminders, the simple faith, must surely have given a conscious purpose to living and creation. Have kept people in touch with the wonders of self.*[2]

Gordon Crook's body and spirit walked and wondered in and sang in Chichester Cathedral. It was here he began meandering the pathways whereby the patterns of his being would be revealed. An unending process by which he would seek to ratify himself for himself. A cathartic journey into the mysteries of his supervivid psyche. A discovery of the symphony of existence, experienced through known and genetically encoded time.

> *On certain levels we do explode the concepts of Time. We then become divine beings. We move into our powers. The effect of this is such a threat to the dream of the self we imagine ourselves to be that we shut down and settle for mortality again.*[3]

Gordon Crook is an enigma. Self opinionated, self indulgent, self ingratiating on one hand and delicate and fragile on the other. Well read, well schooled, articulate, charismatic and intense. A consummate artist whose contribution to the visual language of this country is monumental. His genius is an essential belief in himself and an awareness that his primary responsibility is to expose himself through his art. He believes that the more accurate his self portrait is the more likely his work will find sympathetic resonance with his viewers. His audience must be able to move into the experience of his art and equally easily move out. The common chord with a common vibration must raise an empathetic response that is as demanding as any religious activity.

He believes *that to be ordinary you have to be brave enough to be ordinary.* Caught in the dichotomy of conceit and humility. Having to take for granted the torment of knowing nothing, and luxuriating in the knowledge that he is able to penetrate most mysteries. The miracle being able to manifest what he sets out to describe. Marvelling that he is able to reveal himself.

> *These times in our lives when we come on a mirror into which we can dissolve and find ourselves....like some music, some slow movement of a Beethoven concerto... the soft caressing and guiding leading us into almost unbearable delights of recognition and community.*[4]

Crook's colour language is exact but he realises its transitory comings and goings.[5] Colour has always been the pervading force in his work. His colouration is always dramatic and often outrageous. He also takes his colour beyond the usual range of his medium of choice. His serigraphs are often composed of up to twenty different screens. He mixes or supervises the mixing of the inks himself to get the intensity of hue or tint that he requires.

For his early tapestries he dyed his own wool, now he carefully selects pre-dyed yarn and twills two or three different yarns together to get the colour power his concept requires.

Crook is one of those rare artists blessed with creative power in his art, his speech and his writing. He is a voluminous letter writer. Writing about colour is hopeless unless it elicits those colours in your mind's eye. ...*the deep ultramarine of borage flowers these tiny stars against the curtains, pale magenta primulas, dusty wallflowers, tough green leaves - its a strangely inert kind of colouring, held back, unhappy, as the curtains are patterned Prussian blue, on a very dead and abandoned red.*[6]

To this word picture add a scream, a few harsh words, a small explosion, a dirty joke, a wry smile, colour render them, and still you are not really knowing Gordon Crook's colour language.

Take your imagination on a trip inside one of his tapestries particularly and you will experience amazing colour fields, unbelievable colour combinations, harsh colour dissonance, the subtlest colour harmony, colour contrast, superbly architected, sublimely orchestrated. Crook is a colour master who knows all the rules but who continues to break them for our emotional eye pleasure.

In 1990 Gordon started reading about Freud's *Wolf Man.*

> *I did not deliberately embark upon a Wolf Man project. The story became the content of my own dreams and drawings, stirring memories of the flames of desires forgotten.*

Gordon aged twelve with mother

I began to put Wolf Man adventures beside my own and from such remembrances and reverie another multidimensional portrait started to emerge....[7]

What did emerge was a monumental series that consumed eighteen months of his life. A magnum opus of prints that is seminal in his oeuvre. The prints were in black and white, charged with emotional colour. They do things in silk screen that are redolent with the black power of aquatints.

The works are psychosexual and Crook has got inside the pervading myth and is looking out with his own artist's eyes. His brain has been unable to secure the focus. He has forced foreshortening, played with abstraction, classicism, realism. The images charged with emotion are dismembered, castrated, cut, sliced. Emotionally they are supercharged with sinister hallucinatory power. They are great works of art created in a controlled state of heightened consciousness. They elucidate Freud and illuminate the Wolf Man.

They are still alive, but in a world he changed
Simply by looking back with no false regrets
All he did was remember
Like the old and be honest like children. [8]

Throughout the history of humankind each generation has exposed a truly imaginative individual of superior intellect who has marshalled their creative powers to expose themselves so that the rest of us might see ourselves better.

One can but pay homage to an artist of Gordon Crook's stature and know that as a recorder of our time, we have been magnificently served.

James Mack
March 1993

1 W.H. Auden
In Memory of Sigmund Freud November 1939
W. H. Auden *Collected Poems*
Edited by Edward Henderson, Faber & Faber c. 1976
2 Gordon Crook to James Mack 9 January 1986 about Chichester Cathedral
3 Gordon Crook to QEII Arts Council 1976
4 Gordon Crook to James Mack 24 September 1992
5 Gordon Crook to James Mack 21 September 1993
6 Gordon Crook to James Mack 21 September 1992
7 Gordon Crook notes for The Wolf Man Easter Sunday 1991
8 W. H. Auden

Untitled ***1981***
Tapestry 2020 x 1170
Collection: B. and S. Torchinsky

GORDONCROOK

KATE DERUM

Why should we honour those who die on the field of battle?
A man may show as reckless in courage in entering into the
abyss of himself.

W.B. Yeats

GORDON CROOK lives in a small, black painted wooden house with a blue roof and a red door on the top of a hill overlooking Wellington. His house is surrounded by a charming garden, harbouring pockets of casual disorder. The view from his window is a vast expanse of sky where the daily sweeps of weather play out their dramas with a kind of white intensity. Dark ancient mountains pull the eye down and then, much further below, is the city, laid out like a distant model or a plan. It is visually distant but within walking distance, albeit down a perilously steep and winding road.

He leads a simple life, accepting the ebb and flow of domestic routine. He takes a positive pleasure in cooking and gardening being very knowledgeable about herbs and plants and a most imaginative cook. Rising early in the morning he usually begins each day with writing. Sitting at his table facing the sky and mountains, he records his dreams, writes poetry and letters to friends in New Zealand and around the world. He writes elegantly, with great style and wit, and with a true passion for and understanding of language. He is also a prolific and serious reader with wide interests - psychology, religion, myth, history and fiction. In this way his work (his art) is grounded in words and ideas. On most days Gordon will work for about five hours on whatever project is current. All his art involves research, painstaking editing, and a good deal of reflection and consideration.

Gordon walks everywhere - he has no car - so each day takes him out into the world. Experiencing the world first-hand from a walker's viewpoint and pace provides him with a perspective now largely lost in the Western world. His alert and active eyes observe everything about him. The simple act of looking with full attention, a combination of seriousness and enjoyment, is crucial and significant for his art. He looks at birds, flowers and animals, colour and shape, as well as human incidents and street life. His is a highly refined observation which gives him a kind of anonymous involvement in human life and daily existence as well as feeding his visual sense. Thus his art is also very much grounded in visual experience. Behind his simple regimen lies a serious and disciplined purpose: the nourishment of his own inner life and a dedication to art as a vocation.

Commonly thought of as an outsider in New Zealand, he is, in fact, English and has lived in this country for just over twenty years. By inclination he doesn't care to socialize for the sake of it and

has no ambition to participate in the art world. In general he has not been either taken up or accepted by the art establishment. This is partly because his art is difficult to categorize. There is no convenient box with a ready-made label into which he can confidently be put and the lid neatly closed. He is a Jack-in-the-box always ready to spring out to startle and surprise.

However, his art is not "outsider" art, (meaning the art brut of the untrained, of the asylum, or of the isolated), and he draws upon the traditions of fine art, craft and design moving with ease among them. He has used an enormous range of media and techniques; his oeuvre includes paper casts, tapestry, drawing, collage, fabric banners, printmaking, photomontage, and painting. He has made books and designed for the theatre. He has shown a rare virtuosity in each of the media he has tackled and an extraordinary ability to marry image and idea. Sometimes called difficult, he could be much better described as a perfectionist, as single-minded, or as simply unable to ignore the demands of his inner voice. In a completely different context, writing about the writer Flannery O'Connor and the American south, Lisa Alther had this to say:

> *For all its failings, the South at its best has always encouraged a certain stubborn and prickly individualism, humility and awe in the face of nature, a reverence for ritual and good manners, a concern for spiritual and aesthetic and interpersonal values over and above the production and acquisition of goods. Often O'Connor's stories involve the clash as her characters in their untested simplicity confront representatives from the amoral exploitative urban world.*[1] .

In the same way it is not lightly done to chart the course and name the place of this most interesting and wayward artist.

As Gordon himself says:

> *Biographies bore me. I'm far more interested in my emotional life and its ups and downs, and likewise of other people too, than as to where the result of my emotions have led me. The biography seldom revealing that inner self behind the manifest and material successes and failures.*[2]

"the two halves of life: youth and age"

Museum of New Zealand

Museum of New Zealand

Museum of New Zealand

Sepia Series nos. 3, 5, 6 ***1960***
Boot polish drawings 170 x 200
Collection: Museum of New Zealand
Te Papa Tongarewa, Wellington

Julia Brooke-White

Requiem ***1988***
Tapestry 1150 x 1250
Woven by Lesley Nicholls
Collection: Brooker Gallery

Portrait de femme avec décor de losanges ***(detail) 9th century***
Coptic tapestry
Courtesy of the Musée du Louvre

Tapestry - woven ornament from linen curtain 5th century 380 x 610 Courtesy of the Board of Trustees of the Victoria & Albert Museum

AS THE TWIG IS BENT

What we call the beginning is often the end
And to make an end is to make a beginning
The end is where we start from.

T.S. Eliot

GORDON CROOK was born in Richmond, England, in 1921. At the age of four he moved with his mother from London to Sussex when his parents separated. It had been an incompatible marriage from the beginning, beset with constant conflict. After this separation Gordon lived in a series of foster homes until he went to boarding school, the Oliver Whitby School in Chichester. It was an unhappy childhood, with painful experiences of loss and betrayal. As well he endured the deprivations and cruelties, both physical and emotional, that we now condemn but which were once an accepted part of the English boarding school system. When Gordon was fourteen his mother remarried and a disliked stepfather entered his life. These difficult experiences are the touchstone against which a whole life's attitudes are forged.

Gordon soon learned how to escape, and he escaped to nature.

> *in Sussex, the country, it was just so beautiful, just lovely, ... that part of my childhood wandering across the Downs, birds nesting, I knew all the flowers, the names of all the flowers, I knew the names of all the birds, I knew the names of all the tress, and I just loved all of that.*[3]

This garden of boyhood delight offered Gordon freedom as well as safety and enjoyment, and foreshadows a constant theme in his art. Far more than an appreciation of nature, or even a love of beauty, nature became solace and nurture, inextricably bound up with feeling and self. It helped to answer the question "Who am I?"

As well as his attachment to the countryside, Gordon was also deeply aware of the beauty of buildings, clothes, furnishings, utensils and other objects. While telling stories about horrible incidents from his childhood, he always conveys a sense of his material surroundings with acute and eloquent descriptions. He notices and admires the beautiful parquet floor of the refectory which he had to scrub, and for which he was wrongly punished because it was not done well enough. At a foster house that he stayed in with a hated older bully, he recalls the lovely kitchen and red brick floor, all settings for unhappy human relationships.

> *And so I retreated into myself and I had to find my own way to live... I had to find a world which was right, you know, IN WHICH I COULD BREATH AND BE MYSELF, and that turned out to be a very private world, it didn't interest other people. Not at all.*[4]

The crucial years between eighteen and twenty four were spent on active service in World War II. He served in the Merchant Navy and the R.A.F. and was stationed in Egypt and Europe. He doesn't talk much about his wartime experiences, although they are referred to in a much later (1985) exhibition called ***Egyptian Cigarettes,*** when perhaps some of the effects, emotions and meanings have been transmuted and tempered by time.

After the War re-training grants were available to ex-servicemen. Gordon, who had always wanted to be a dress designer, applied to study art. He had an interview with the Minister and was able to show one small drawing of a crab, his best effort, a copy from a book of nature study. The Minister told him, "Well it's not much to go on," but nevertheless gave him a grant for one year to study textiles at St Martin's School of Art.

After the year at St Martin's his grant was extended and he went on to the Central School of Art to study printed textiles. However he was drawn towards painting and drawing, and this was what he constantly did in his spare time. After finishing his course he started teaching at the Central School.

AWAKENINGS

DURING THE WAR he had been in Italy while in the Air Force. He remembers being sent Poetry London magazines. Reproduced on the cover of one was Picasso's *Girl before a mirror* (1932). Gordon was immensely interested but he couldn't understand and wondered what the key was. He began to look for everything he could about Picasso.

Gordon often had great difficulty in finishing his paintings, at knowing *when* to stop so as not to overwork them. With this problem in mind he began weaving two tiny tapestries, one of an apple,one of a pear. He did not really know how to do them, but he

Robert Mc Dougall Art Gallery

Boy with Vase ***1960***
Tapestry 1620 x 1360
Woven by Gordon Crook
Collection: The Robert McDougall Art Gallery

"The name of this vase is unrequited love, it holds my heart's desires."

had a clear memory of the Coptic tapestries he had seen in the collection at the Victoria and Albert Museum and reproduced in a book at St Martin's School.

He was interested in the later Coptic tapestries with their rich Byzantine colouring and where the figures have lost their Greek realism and have become stylized. Then he made the connection: "Yes, Picasso paints like this - broken line, slightly naive, descriptive and informative drawing." This was a powerful link to make, and it opened a way to use the tapestry medium in a highly expressive and personal way.

A further key formative experience was the discovery of Dali. Although Gordon never really liked his work, he was very interested in it as it showed him he could paint his dreams. He vividly remembers the first one that he attempted to draw.

> *I was riding a bicycle on a narrow path with a chasm on one side and steep mountain on the other, cracks that went down into the sea appeared in the path and got wider and wider - I plunged into the water, this is it, you are going to die I thought, I accepted my death, I let go, when I did that down at the bottom of the ocean I tried to swim with the rhythm of the fronds and my body changed, I developed a tail and became a fish.*[5]

At first he found it very difficult to make a line that described his feeling, with no preconceptions about what it should be or how it should look. What he then discovered, for himself, was how to contact his original self, so that it was from here the work was coming. This was a profound revelation and became a code for him in his own work and in his teaching.

Gordon taught for twenty three years at the Central School, running an excellent basic design course, teaching drawing and printed textiles and supervising the post-graduate programme. John Drawbridge, now a prominent New Zealand artist, was a student of Gordon's. He describes Gordon as "committed, concerned with ideas, not very interested in helping with technique. Gordon wanted to educate about attitude to life, commitment as a person."[6]

In his teaching Gordon never focussed on textiles, but always on the self. He wanted to reach the inner core of the person. Many students could not cope with this and resisted before they could understand the process. Malcolm Cocks, a former student of Gordon's and now a lecturer at the combined St Martin's Central School, recalls him "as a very very exacting teacher, totally dedicated and quite difficult."[7] He regards Gordon as a tremendously significant influence on his own career and those of many other students.

Gordon was concerned at this time to eliminate the barriers between so-called fine art and industrial design and to teach himself and his students the disciplines and code of professional practice. Colleen Farr, his former Head of Department, describes Gordon as a collaborator.[8] It is a perceptive comment about his teaching for he collaborated with the students in their development rather than imposing something upon them. In his own work he has collaborated extensively with other people. In another, deeper, sense his work is always a collaboration between himself and his material.

The two decades during which Gordon was teaching and exhibiting saw many social and artistic upheavals as the traditional structure of English education and employment changed. The study grants made available to ex-servicemen caused cracks in a system based on the fortunes of class and wealth.

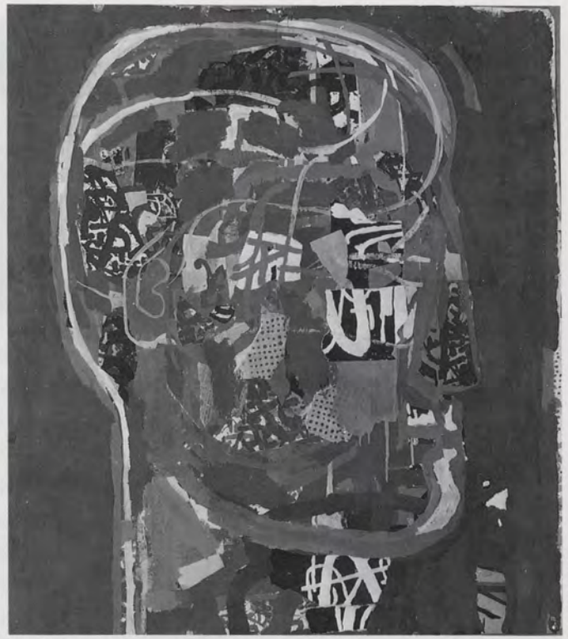
Gordon had always felt outside that privilege of wealth and life-style and angry at that exclusion. This is made more poignant by the failure of his parents' marriage perhaps being due to their different backgrounds; his mother a simple country woman, his father more sophisticated and urbane.

However, being an artist gave him a certain classlessness (which he enjoyed) and access to a whole stratum of English society which included patrons and collectors, as well as designers and artists. It was an era of change in the world of design. A collapse of the consensus about design dogmas saw freelance designers emerge from the Royal College of Art and Central School, "*so surprisingly versatile that they could successfully work for producers whose ideas of good design differ greatly one from another.*"[9] These college trained designers were aware of developments in other fields such as architecture and fine arts, and collaboration with artists like Henry Moore, John Piper and Graham Sutherland emphasized the idiosyncratic nature of British textile design. A later development in the sixties was the alliance between pop art and design, hearalding further breakdowns of the previously rigid hierarchies of fashion, fine art and furnishings. London in the Sixties was the centre of an explosion of new approaches to painting and sculpture as art was re-assessed and re-arranged.

Apart from his professional design practice, Gordon exhibited paintings, drawings, ceramic sculptures and tapestries and held a number of solo shows. The works were mostly purchased privately. Many found their way into Anthony Denny's collection and to the United States.

A review of a 1951 exhibition at the Redfern Gallery in London said:

In his small tapestries framed like pictures, Mr Gordon Crook has discovered a charming minor art; his work is sometimes based on the fragments of Byzantine tapestries that have survived in Egypt and sometimes on the designs of Klee. He is evidently an excellent craftsman, but he has also contrived to keep in this medium something of the vitality of touch that belongs to painting.[10]



Gordon Crook

Head, Anatomical Series *1955*
Cartoon for tapestry 1524 x 1220
Private Collection

Head, Anatomical Series (1955) is a large 1524 x 1220mm woven tapestry. A monumental profile exposes the inner life and mechanisms of the human head. Confident and painterly, its colours are the deep and brilliant reds and pinks we associate with the internal organs of the human body. The crude almost graffiti-like marks attest to the power of the sub-conscious and of the necessity that we pay attention to it. This was to become a life-long preoccupation of Gordon's acting like a sub-plot at times, but gaining full ascendancy at other times.

Friends, Anatomical Series (1955), is a 1524 x 1220mm gouache cartoon for a tapestry that was never woven. Here figures and ground are merged with no defined interior and exterior space. The whole seems to be composed of elements from nature - leaves, twigs, stems - in a densely packed assortment of suggestive textures and patterns. The composition slowly reveals the outlined silhouettes of two male figures in a tender and chaste embrace.

This and other large gouaches and drawings were all made in a tiny London bed-sit where Gordon had to stand on the bed to paint. He often thinks of this situation now as a perverse fighting against confinement. A beautiful, collaged ***Head*** from 1955, about one metre wide, features a profile with an Eygptian feel and style which is another recurring motif in Gordon's work. Loops of umbilical cords, ambiguously set behind the head, lead round and nowhere, but hold and place the young figure like the chances of birth and family.

Sepia Series, (1960). These small boot polish drawings of distorted figures with enlarged heads and foetal, anthropomorphic bodies are reminiscent of Dubuffet.

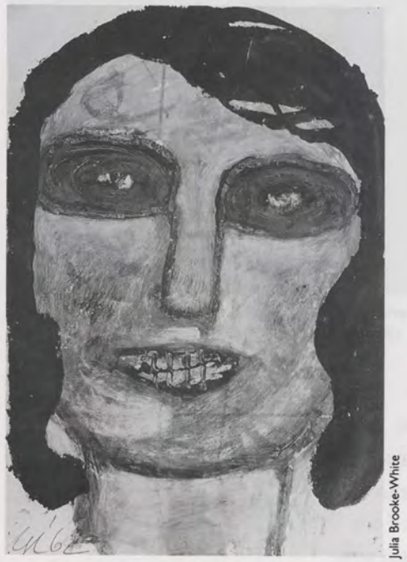
Gordon Crook

Gordon Crook

LEFT: "note ghost in ground ... there's been a car crashed into a tree"
Cartoon for* Boy with Vase *series 1960
Gouache 1524 x 1220
Private collection

RIGHT: "... the car again, now observed by the ghost, with sun and moon in the sky"
Cartoon for* Boy with Vase *series 1960
Gouache 1220 x 1524
Private collection

BELOW: Antonia *1962*
Gouache 450 x 650
Collection: Jim Barr and Mary Barr



Julia Brooke-White

"He [Dubuffet] is interested in child art, in the art of madmen, in graffiti on walls and pavements, and in the accidental markings and malculation to be found in these surfaces."[11]

Gordon's drawings are a kind of scribbled, raw and awkward testimony to "non-art" and to immediacy. These drawings belong to a particular period.

... priority given to the inner world of the artist, and the rejection of the traditional claims of art to be more coherent, more organized, and more homogeneous than 'non-art' or 'reality' were pointers to the future."[12]

Boy With Vase (1960), woven tapestry. We see the silhouette of a boy facing us, turning away from his act of placing a vase of flowers on a table. The boy and the flowers and the vase are one visual form signifying a close and satisfying attachment. This tapestry is spontaneous, expressive and painterly. It conveys a romantic view of boyhood, a longing for lost innocence. To transform a fresh gouache so convincingly into tapestry is an intense labour for one person. At the time tapestries of this quality were not being produced anywhere. As tapestry has often been viewed as a minor or decorative art, the sophistication of these images can be easily overlooked.

An artist who comes to mind is Hockney, especially in the paint-naif style and subject matter of his well known painting, *We Two Boys Together Clinging!* Hockney was part of the *Young Contemporaries* exhibition in 1961 which was a key moment in the beginning of British pop art. Gordon was producing art at the same time, and from this same milieu.

"...given across the narrow space from dark to light..."

MASKS

IN A COLLAGE monoprint ***Untitled*** (1962) a stark head, cut in half and rearranged, suggests that we are observing two parts of the self. There is a savagery in the gouged marks and lines; they are not at all pretty or decorative. The face has the expressionlessness of a mask which opens up another layer of suggestions. Surely the point about a mask is that there is a face behind it. It is a cover for ritualistic, or as in this case, psychological necessity. Cutting up, composing, re-arranging and editing are the basics of collage. Gordon would go on to develop and refine this way of art-making throughout his career.

Gordon Crook

Boy in Garden *1970*
Cartoon for painted wood construction
1070 x 1295
Private Collection

An extension of this collage approach is evident in the drawing, ***Boy in Garden*** (1970/71). This work was for a painted wood construction with each motif fret-sawed into sections, then painted, glued and nailed onto a plywood base. Gordon brought ten or twelve of these works to New Zealand. ***Boy in Garden*** is more stylized than previous works, showing a paring down and simplifying from the linear and the graphic towards flat, solid shapes. The plants and trees surround but do not engulf the boy. His face is an interesting mixture of a known face with an expression of guarded optimism or anticipation, and an impersonal mask signifying youth. This piecing together of disparate but matching parts (like a jig-saw puzzle) presages later collages and photomontages. It also points to Gordon's tremendous facility with materials and his eagerness to experiment and work in new ways. "If you want to do something, you do it," is his comment on tackling new techniques and forms.

Gordon Crook

Aviator *1969*
Gouache with painted mask 320 x 260
Private collection

... everything that Gordon does opens up another area for him so instead of becoming captured within or imprisoned by what he has done so that the stage of his work remains limited, instead of that happening, Gordon has this amazing capacity to use what he has already done and ... everything he does expands beyond what he had already done and he doesn't become stylised or stuck or cliched within himself... He doesn't limit himself at all ... he is using the visual arts as a method of expressing his spirit and life."[13]

Gordon Crook

Begin Again *1969*
Cartoon for the woven tapestry
2366 x 1524
Private collection

Begin Again ***(detail)***

BEGIN AGAIN

A LARGE tapestry titled ***Begin Again*** was made in 1969, before Gordon left for New Zealand. Intriguingly, its images foretell subsequent events. At the time of making it he had no idea that he would ever live in New Zealand, and had no conscious interest in New Zealand imagery. Yet the central figure is a Maori woman and there is a baptismal figure at the base of the drawing perhaps signalling a new life. Another figure with a mask or new face walks away from the hearth (home?), exotic creatures people the mantlepiece and a large hand points away. (Gordon sold this tapestry in New Zealand but it was stolen.)

At this time Gordon was agitating to start a new life, literally to begin again. He had moved from London to Suffolk in an attempt to simplify his life. But the move only highlighted the complications of travelling, teaching, a private design practice, art activities, the demands of town life, the demands of country life. In the rural district of Suffolk there were no suitable jobs whereby he could have eked out a living. He thought about Scotland or the wilds of Wales, but the job and money problems would have been the same. He had even been tempted to move to Lebanon which he loved, or to Italy which he saw as a marvellously creative and romantic land.

The decision was made in 1972 when at the age of fifty one he left England and sailed to New Zealand. He already had friends there and the security of the English system was a plus. Before leaving he had a huge bonfire of works, a literal disposing of England.

It was a flight to, and a flight from, as all migrations probably are. It was a wrench to leave his house in the beautiful Suffolk countryside, but he had always felt an outsider in England. To his friends and colleagues in England his departure was abrupt and puzzling. New Zealand seemed very far away from the centres of the civilized world. But that civilized world contained its oppressions and to Gordon the escape from the influences of European art and tradition was welcome. Also he had a specific purpose: to concentrate full time on being an artist and making his living that way.

FREE AS A BIRD

GORDON SETTLED in Wellington and has never returned to England. He has no desire to do so nor, indeed, has he travelled anywhere else since his arrival. He has never even been to Auckland, for instance. He likes New Zealand and now enjoys a freedom that a 'new' country can confer.

In his early days in Wellington he designed book jackets and the interior of a coffee house. He exhibited work that he had brought with him from England at the Settlement Gallery, New Vision Gallery and the New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts among other places. His tapestries were viewed with horror by the local weaving fraternity and other works were met with either a 'blank stare' or attacked. "Artist's work fails to impress", stated a Christchurch *Star* review in 1974.

However, others did take some notice. Jim and Mary Barr clearly remember a drawing of a snake shown in a group exhibition at the New Zealand Academy. "It stood out, no one was doing anything like that at that time."[14] They took notice and became friends and recipients of Gordon's correspondence for many years. In fact, Jim Barr while director enthusiastically bought Gordon's works and supported his career through the Dowse Art Museum.

Julia Brooke-White

Eve with Skipping Rope ***1976***
Moulded paper pulp, silver paint 1060 x 820
Collection: Dowse Art Museum

Gordon's ingenuity and determination were called upon when he realized that he was unable to buy good quality paper. If he had been able to import it (which he couldn't because he hadn't been in New Zealand for a year) he couldn't afford it anyway. So in characteristic fashion he set about learning to make it. Nowadays there are courses and books on this subject, but then he had to start from scratch. He did this very thoroughly, writing a detailed research report for a grant that he had received. It is significant that paper making never became an end in itself or a technical obsession - he always explored its artistic possibilities. He used the paper as backing for the small tapestries woven at this time. The paper's solidity negotiates a border for the tapestries and becomes a transition for the eye from edge to frame.

He completed many moulded paper-pulp bas-reliefs. ***The Two Trees of Eden*** (1976) and ***Eve with Skipping Rope*** (1976), both painted silver, are simplified images on a theme that he took up again in an exhibition of tapestries and drawings.

THE GARDEN OF EDEN

THE EXHIBITION ***Adam and Eve*** at Galerie Legend in 1978 was a landmark for Gordon. It consisted of two drawings and fourteen small tapestries mounted on hand made paper. The works are an exploration of the story of Adam and Eve. In these rational and technological times this Christian myth is still our inheritance as it tells us the story of our beginning and therefore something of what we are now. The Garden of Eden is a metaphor for innocence and the loss of it while the snake and the apple remind us of the paradox of good and evil.

"I grew up with a tree and a serpent" - Gordon Crook

Gordon Crook once remarked that simply to draw a square on a piece of paper was very difficult. Most of these tapestries (and many other of his works) are based compositionally on a square or near square. The most subtle shifts and counter-shifts in the way the square occupies space are crucial to this work. There are layers, cracks and planes of activity that lead the eye around and into an imagined world within.

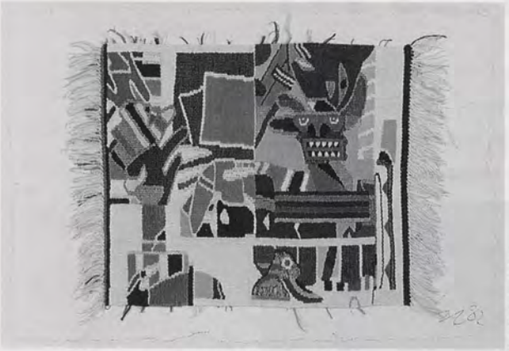
The origins of this stylistic foundation to his work can be found in Gordon's observations of Paolozzi, the sculptor, who experimented with screen printing in the textile department of the Central School while Gordon was teaching there. One of the most basic technical tools of textile design is the 'repeat' so learning to make a design for repeats is an essential part of design training. However, Palozzi was a sculptor and he didn't design for repeats so in *his* designs images dropped down, overlapped unwittingly and unbidden over others, left open spaces and collided up to edges. This fascinated Gordon and its influence is very apparent in all his work. It can best be described as a kind of shifting picture plane which creates a very special kind of space.

> *I know what you mean about warmth. I think I might call it the artist baring his soul. It is a quality in work I admire. But what a problem it can be ... one I have not properly achieved yet. The primitives achieved it naturally, but people like me who have too much of the sophistication of art schools have a dreadful task. I was looking at a book of medieval manuscript drawings ... it was taken for granted that Man had a soul and that was what the world of existence was about."*[15]

Indeed these tapestries do achieve that warmth. Looking at them now, almost twenty years later, we can judge them timeless. The subtle use of borders, stripes and triangles gesture in the direction of tapestry's decorative traditions. But it is only a gesture. The Byzantine richness of colour and unique integrating power of the woven surface gives these works a fabulous, exotic feel.

Gordon wove these tapestries himself so it is interesting to discover that they were woven from the back. It is a kind of canon that tapestries woven from the front (generally speaking an English

Adam (2) *1978*
Woven tapestry 750 x 620
Collection: Brooker Gallery



Julia Brooke-White

Tabu, ***from the Maui Series 1982***
Tapestry on hand-made paper 550 x 800
Woven by Gordon Crook
Collection: Dowse Art Museum

tradition) are more lively than tapestries woven from the back (more a French tradition). This makes the vitality and inventiveness of the surface of these works all the more intriguing. For Gordon, because tapestry making is slow, to work from the back means that he never tired of the image. He was kept in suspense till the end. This way of 'keeping on your toes', also required great skill, judgement and risk taking.

OCEANIA

A FURTHER SERIES of small tapestries and prints, exhibited in 1982, interweave a personal story about disappointment in love with the Maori myth of Maui. Maui was a great trickster and hero who snared the sun, fished up islands from the depth of the sea, and brought fire to mankind. He died while attempting to give man immortality. This Polynesian myth shows that Oceania, the place, was now working on Gordon; his surroundings have infiltrated his art.

In his effort to obtain immortality Maui set off with some birds to find Hine-nui-te-po (great goddess of the night), the goddess who ruled the dead. He found her asleep and told the birds that he would enter the body of the old chieftainess and come out of her mouth. He would live and Hine-nui-te-po would die but they must not laugh and disturb her. He entered the goddess through her vagina and when the birds saw his feet sticking out one wagtail let out a laugh. This woke Hine-nui-te-po who crushed Maui inside herself. So Maui failed to achieve immortality for humankind.

The monster's mouth, teeth bared, features in ***Tabu*** (1982) and ***The Divided Self, Dreaming*** (1982). This mouth brings to mind the *vagina dentata* waiting to claim its victim, expressing male fear of the hostile biting and devouring sexuality of the female. Other artists, such as Alan Davie, Dubuffet and particularly Picasso during misogynist phases of their development, have used this motif. In ***The Divided Self, Dreaming***, the fearsome monster glares at us, a fish flies (snaring an island?) but central to the whole is a divided face. A neutral mouth, slightly open and thoughtful is dominated by four rows of abstracted eyes. These eyes appear again in ***Lady of Shadows*** (1982) and yet again in the ***Wolf-Man*** Series of 1991. These mysterious faces suggest the conscious and the unconscious parts of the self. We look, we stare outwards, but also we gaze inward and dream.

Myths are a universal invention to explain the critical problems that always face humans. In modern industrial society myth and legend are almost dead. Philosophy and science explain for us now.

"The tremulous motion of these wings as repellent as the waves of a nightmare sea."

However the richness of incident and description in mythology suggests a very deep source in the human psyche. Jung argued that everyone possesses both a personal and collective unconscious. It is this idea that links the personal and the universal in these works.

The screenprint triptych ***Allegory*** (1982), addresses more directly rejection in love. Here the brightness of the colour is hectic and harsh, disturbing rather than pleasing. The tilting and layering of shapes create dissonance and noisy jumpiness. In the centre panel a woman's face, depicted cartoon-like, is coy and knowing. Her pallor is bluish-grey, and a triumphant red smirk dominates her face. It is not a flattering portrayal. A menacing bird's beak and compressed abstract shapes add to the pressure and tension.

In all, Gordon wove about forty small tapestries. They sold well, many to private buyers and some to public collections, in particular the Dowse Art Museum. The privately owned tapestries remind us that quiet and "sustained over time" living with a work of art is at the heart of the communication between artist and audience. It is a particular kind of enrichment.

THE PUBLIC DOMAIN

OFTEN REFERRED to as his first big break, in 1979 Gordon was commissioned to design twenty banners for the New Zealand Embassy in Washington designed by architects Warren and Mahoney.

The banners have the quality of flags in a cathedral or medieval dining hall. They are five metres high and one metre wide and hang in the Great Hall of the Embassy between the rafters, ten on either side, suggesting a formal procession. The themes are abstract derivations of South Pacific imagery, the heraldry of flags. "Nothing specific and factual but like a quick out-of-the-corner of the eye glimpse of New Zealand's neighbours - Japan, the Polynesian islands and windy Wellington, the capital city."[16] The colours are brilliant, very bright, strong and clear, and put together with verve and originality. This richness is enhanced by the white background which gives the eye rest. There is a confidence in the arrangement of the abstract shapes which owes as much to modern art (one thinks of Klee and Mondrian both) as to the traditional imagery of flags.

The banners were made by Nancye Seaton, manager of the New Zealand Ballet and Opera Trust production unit. Because traditional flag-making techniques of piecing the cloth together were to be used, Gordon originally searched for a flag

John Casey

Fountain ***1986***
Tapestry 2430 x 1820
Woven by Artweave Workshop
Collection: Brooker's Limited

Robert Mc Dougall Art Gallery

Helen Mitchell

TOP: **Some moments darker than others** ***1985***
Pastel on paper 920 x 1900
Collection: The Robert McDougall Art Gallery

BOTTOM: **Some moments darker than others** ***1985***
Photomontage 77 x 102
Private collection

Julia Brooke-White

Islands *1984*
Tapestry 1500 x 1030
Woven by Lesley Nicholls
Collection: Dowse Art Museum

maker or sailmaker, but none had the necessary expertise or equipment. Nancye Seaton, an experienced costume manufacturer, used a pattern-making technique which allowed the banners to be viewed from either side. She used a heavy fabric which would hang well and also hold the vividness of the colour. She said this about the experience of working with Gordon:

He's intense and he insists on perfection. He's so careful with what he does and his preparation of his work that he's a delight to work with because you know that you are, just for that time, being his hands.[17]

Gordon too was invigorated by the commission:

I enjoy the catalyst which can eventuate when professionals in varied occupations are forced to work together and can share their knowledge and expertise.[18]

Another commission followed for the Michael Fowler Centre for a series of ten huge wall hangings and twelve banners. It was designed with Wellington in mind with abstract motifs and glowing, vivid colours. These commissions and others confirmed Gordon as a New Zealander and brought him public acclaim. As fellow artist Kate Coolahan has remarked:

> *Gordon is about beauty ... there is content there but it's the beauty which draws us to what he is doing. He has represented us overseas in Washington ... he represents us here in Wellington at the Michael Fowler Centre with the beauty of his work. He has contributed greatly to our way of seeing what the Pacific is like.*[19]

MAKING LARGER TAPESTRIES

UNDER PRESSURE from demands for more tapestries and his own desire to do other works, Gordon needed to find a way to have his tapestries woven by someone else. He met weaver Lesley Nicholls at exactly the right time. She was an experienced weaver, and attracted to the idea of working with his designs. They began in a simple and experimental way, gradually building up trust in each other to work on more complex designs. It was a mutually beneficial and productive collaboration which lasted for ten years and resulted in twenty tapestries.

The first works were a set of five quite large 1830 x 1220mm tapestries called the ***Star*** series. The bright colours caused a sensation for they were a great contrast to the muddy browns and swamp greens then being used in New Zealand. They may look simple now but at the time they were radical and tremendously influential.

Three large tapestries exemplify the fruitfulness of his collaboration with Lesley Nicholls (Artweave Workshop): ***Birds with Orchid*** (1982), ***Red Kowhai*** (1985) and ***Fountain*** (1986). At first glance these large works seem to lack that fascinating dimension of personal mark-making that is so compelling in the earlier small tapestries woven by Gordon himself. However, on closer attention the monumentality and scale of these works becomes paramount. They exploit to the full the decorative and technical potentials of the tapestry medium. Woven colour has an intensity and saturation never possible in paint as it absorbs rather than reflects light and the texture of the surface and the way it hangs suggest warmth and pliabilty.

Their celebratory quality comes from the integration of wonderful birds, animals, trees, plants and flowers into a fantastic world of shapes and colours. Gordon always maintains that his art *is* another world, it is not about something, it *is* something. Perhaps these tapestries readily offer us the opportunity to enter that world. A letter to friends offers further insight.

> *Wouldn't it be simply marvellous and exciting if all the cages at the zoo opened and suddenly the land was populated with all such colourful creatures, great and small. Snakes cleaning their tails on the lime bottle brushes of the wattle trees, panthers sitting on the doorstep waiting to come indoors from the rain, monkeys hanging on to the guttering with curled tails - chattering about the antics of us for a change, instead of the other way round.*
>
> *Weird how we keep this taste of Paradise locked up...*[20]

These tapestries are a romantic cry for freedom and innocence as well as an imagined play in the Garden of Eden!

OUT INTO THE WORLD

WRITING IS a fundamental part of Gordon's life and work. A large part of this writing has always been in the form of letters to friends. Some of these friends are overseas and others close by in Wellington.

Gordon uses his letters to think, often like a spring-cleaning of his mind in the early morning. Often, too, they flow as a stream of consciousness and are therefore more of a soliloquy than a conversation. The poet Rilke kept up a voluminous correspondence which was a medium for poetic meditation rather than personal contact. He cherished love as an inspiration, but shunned it as an entanglement. Perhaps Gordon cherishes friendship in this way so his letters become his way of sending himself out into the world.

Julia Brooke-White

Correspondence with Jim Barr and Mary Barr
1977 - 85

Many of his letters are decorated, drawn on with pencils, felt pens, paints, crayons, pens or pastels, collaged with photos, old postcards, tickets, pieces of wallpaper, wrapping paper, or magazine pictures. An inventive and joyous kaleidoscope of envelopes, cards and letters team with graphic energy and unselfconscious charm. Being personal and private they are an intriguing link to his more developed work. Fresh and direct and not originally intended for a public audience, they have the character of a sketch book and offer an insight into Gordon's visual thinking. This thinking can be playful and childlike as well as savagely witty in the way images are juxtaposed and arranged. Mostly these letters show us how total an artist Gordon is. Every part of his life and being is interwoven with his art.

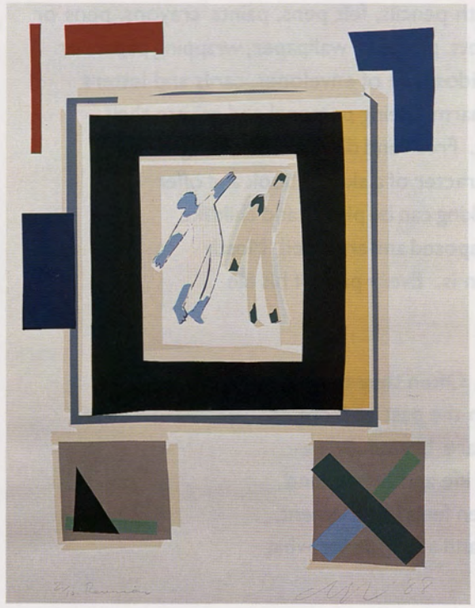
The letters are, of course, about words as well. Often they begin with the retelling of a dream, or an incident from the past or from his daily life. These tellings and observations are beautifully re-counted and followed by general musings about life and humankind which are lyrical as well as astute. His writing often feels like a lament, expressing a sadness about the human condition and a longing for what it might or could have been.

> *All things bright and beautiful, eh? Yes. That is us. When I first sung this hymn as a child, alongside is this memory of an infant school play which had a horse, a rooster, and a donkey. I was the donkey and wore his cardboard head over mine... and when my turn to speak came, I said "he-haw, he-haw", in comparison to the rooster's shrill call, mine sounded even at that early age, like a soul in bondage. Thinking of this now, with the donkey I associate the Greek Priapus ... yes, of army boys in the desert, one of whom caused a donkey to ejaculate, "he-haw, he- haw" cried the donkey. There were two other army boys who used to patrol the streets of Heliopolis and hit innocent donkeys on the head with a sock filled with sand! All things bright and beautiful eh? These polarities of beauty and ugliness.*[21]

This writing is like a collage where certain familiar phrases, visual images, memories, sounds and associations are brought together in startling juxtapositions and by their judicious association become a poetic whole.

SPACE AND SHAPE

GORDON HAS constantly made and shown prints since arriving in New Zealand although the years between 1984 and 1988 were particularly productive. Technically he is a virtuoso screen printer, although he never trained as a print maker. Produced from his small kitchen, his prints are both meticulous and luscious, the beautiful colour lying even and compelling across the paper. The sharp expressive edges of his shapes are all the more telling in this form.

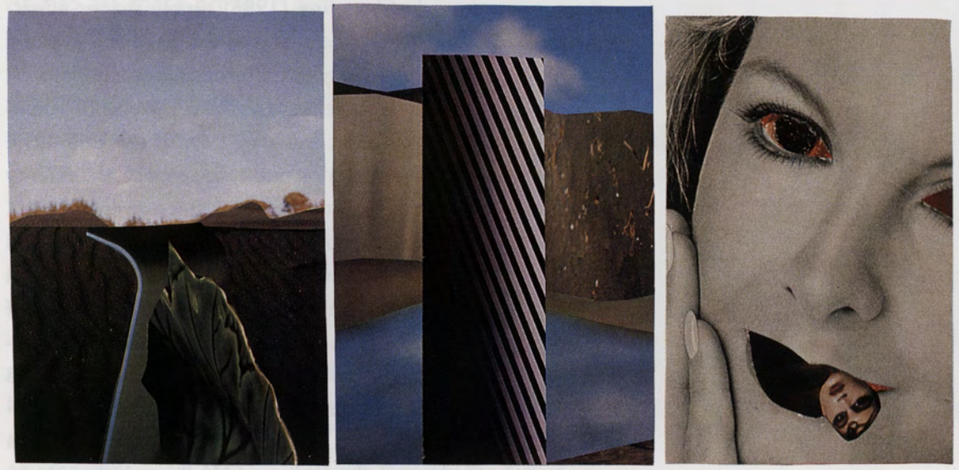


Helen Mitchell

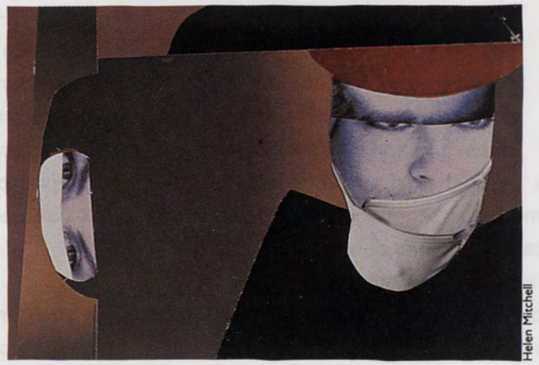
Reunion ***1988***
silkscreen print 750 x 620
Collection: Brooker Gallery

Helen Mitchell

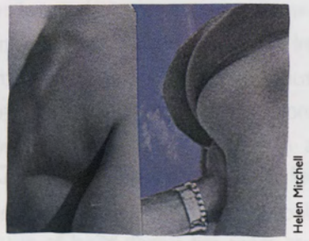
Shoreline ***1986***
Silkscreen print 750 x 620
Collection: Robyn Alexander



Helen Mitchell



Helen Mitchell



Helen Mitchell

ABOVE: Riddle & Rebus no. 14
(Kronos) ***1989***
Collage 160 x 315
Private collection

CENTRE & BELOW:
Riddle & Rebus no. 42
(Inspector/Inspect her) ***1989***
Collage 100 x 155
Private collection

In ***Shoreline*** (1986) simple shapes effortlessly spread across the page and evoke a time of day, late afternoon, a season, winter, and that sense of desolate melancholy experienced at the grey turn of the tide. The birds are enormously expressive, their perky outlines conveying constant movement and a jaunty self-possession. The trees are dark and ancient against the palest of blue skies. An enigmatic black abstract form in the centre of the picture is sinister and compelling - mountains and rocks perhaps. We are thus drawn into the picture to experience the landscape imaginatively. This print, to Australian eyes anyway, evokes something of the feeling of Wellington that is not present in the bright banners or tapestries.

The flat colour and seemingly-cut edges of the shapes in his prints remind many people of Matisse. Gordon, while liking and admiring Matisse's work, has never been consciously influenced by it. The stylistic similarity in the use of abstracted motifs, 'cut' edges and flat colour disguise a fundamental dissimilarity in theme and subject matter. Matisse was interested in the female figure set in lush and sunny domestic interiors, heavily decorated and patterned. His art is that of a comfortable insider. By comparison, Gordon's work is altogether more sparse, open and spacious, and he himself an uncomfortable outsider, puzzling about the basic questions of human existence.

Gordon has a deep empathy with birds which is evident from their multiple and gorgeous appearances in his art. Perhaps in ***Totem with Kiwi Soul Bird*** (1983) his own soul and spirit has accepted New Zealand as his place in the world. The bird has alighted on the totem for the time being, but it should be remembered that a bird's natural element is the air. The space in the print feels like this infinity.

> *The other day in town I watched a pigeon which was almost trodden-on! Usually pigeons know their distance and safety and danger, of their infinitesimal margins of daring and taking chances. This pigeon was so engaged, its instinctive calculator gauging each step as if a magic path were mapped on the pavement, then unexpectedly, abruptly a pedestrian approached from an opposite direction ... all of a sudden there was no place for the bird to go! My heart leapt upward, away from the thought of a crushed claw and squashed tail. "God spared upon this time, that accident was not part of his design!*[22]

And so via these prints we travel from the edge of the land, into the air, and then down into the bottom of the sea in ***Full Fathom Five*** (1984). Here the large areas of space take us into the eternity of the sea. We assume the crowned head is "thy father", perhaps the fish is Gordon, as in his dream letting go and adapting to a new environment.

Museum of New Zealand

Full Fathom Five *1984*
Screenprint on paper 600 x 800
Collection: Museum of New Zealand
Te Papa Tongarewa, Wellington

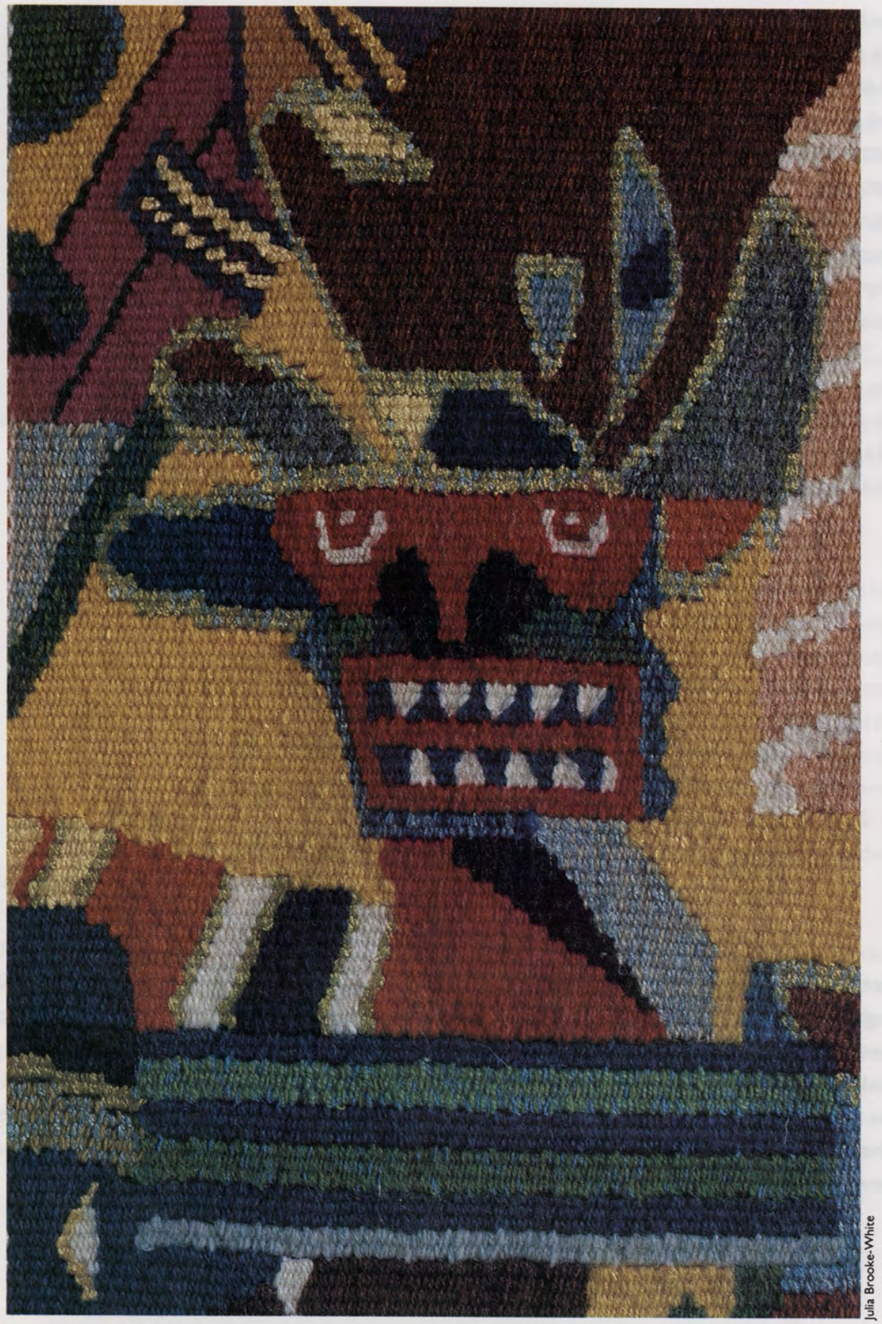
Full fathom five the father lies;
Of his bones are coral made;
Those are pearls that were his eyes;
Nothing of him that doth fade
But doth suffer a sea-change
Into something rich and strange.
Sea-nymphs hourly ring his knell;
Ding-dong,
Hark! now I hear them - ding-dong bell.

William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*

Codename SNMB 1, 2, and 3 (1986) takes us abruptly into the built world of humans. These large banner-shaped screenprints on canvas are bright and bold and there is a systematic and mechanical lay-out of houses, house plans, gates and building blocks. Hiding in this neat display are snakes and phalluses suggesting both the power of nature and the force of evil. The anonymity of the title and the tension between the layered images sets up a disquiet that initial appearances belie. These works are loaded with their apparent "clean" design a lure, a trap for the unsuspecting viewer.

DEPRESSION AND LONELINESS

IN 1985 GORDON exhibited a suite of large pastel drawings at the Janne Land Gallery. The drawings were a new direction both in style and in subject matter.



Julia Brooke-White

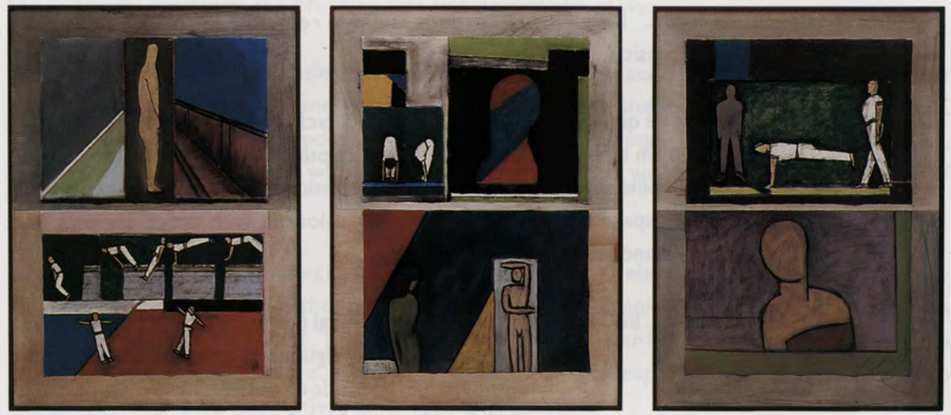
Tabu ***(detail)*** ***from the*** **Maui Series** ***1982***
Tapestry on hand-made paper 550 x 800
Woven by Gordon Crook
Collection: Dowse Art Museum

Julia Brooke-White

Difficulty at the Beginning ***(detail)***

Julia Brooke-White

Difficulty at the Beginning ***Triptych 1985***
Pastel on paper 3060 x 1420 each
Collection: Hewlett Packard N.Z. Limited



Museum of New Zealand

Gymnasium ***Triptych 1985***
Pastel on paper 3060 x 1420 each
Collection: Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, Wellington

In an artist's statement about the exhibition Gordon had this to say:

> *... it could be said of these pastels that they show the darker side of my life, what Jung called "the Shadow". With ageing I understand my task the more clearly, to master those feelings of loss and betrayal and threat which have always dogged my heels, and which by running away from, erroneously, I expected to escape. No such luck. I find with age that I must walk backwards as it were, into these shades, and to know them as projections of myself. To try to throw some light on what's obscure. Until this is done I am sure "the Shadow" will remain as a blind spot in the eye of my vision. ... I really want to say of this present selection of pastels that I set out to explore a deep feeling of depression and to give face to it. This meant that I had to stick with a particular and isolated feeling rather as one holds fast to a memory, and resists the flow of change. It was not a way I had worked before - no, that may not be true, I may have done so but not fixed in "a depression", in the negatives. I have generally preferred to burnish the brighter side of my nature. I have the belief that misery leads on a downward spiral to further misery. I also believe that artists should be very thorough in everything they do, especially in their explorations..."*[23]

The preliminary drawings for these pastels were small photo collages which were made from found images cut, juxtaposed and edited. The large drawings were made with pastels which Gordon manufactured himself so as to get the exact colour and quality he wanted. The drawings are mounted onto backing papers subtly marked and coloured with pastel. These pastels explore a quieter, more sombre and muted colour range than previous works. Another key change in these works is the stripping down of subject matter and the eschewing of obvious visual effect.

In Memorium (1985). A man is looking. He is facing two rather abstract figures which are sculptures in an art gallery. The question that arises is, "Do we become what we are looking at?" In the foreground a flower imprisoned under a dome suggests the tension between man made and natural forms. Lovely visual rhythms and rich reds and yellows give this work subdued glowing intensity.

A quiet meditative quality pervades the larger triptych ***Difficulty at the Beginning*** (1985). Big, plain blocks of black are very descriptive of how depression feels. A distorted profile suggests the difficulties of relationships. An empty cube sits in an empty space and the whole is subtly coloured with pinks, apricots, soft beiges and greys, conveying longing.

In ***Corridor*** (1985) a lone, central figure jogs towards the viewer. This anonymous and ambiguous character, alone on life's journey, could be inside or outside, male or female. The window on the left suggests a church or cathedral while the square field of green on the right suggests, minimally, nature. The journey is possibly the one between this world and the next.

In ***Person*** (1985) the male tie - that which separates heart from head - is a dominant motif. Watchful and menacing the blue of this picture becomes cold and unpleasant. A black screen obscures the vision of the male figure who is either observing or dreaming of the sensuous figure on the right. She is a rounded female drawn with a lovely long slow tilt to the head. We are reminded of Jung's *anima* and *animus* and the human struggle with the two opposing sides of personality. How do we reconcile softness and strength?

Gordon's journey into his own depression and loneliness has resulted in these works of great power and beauty. They are meditative and thoughtful rather than angst ridden, maintaining a delicacy of touch and control of mood which are never weighed down by excessive detail.

EGYPTIAN CIGARETTES

THIS WAS THE elegant title of a 1988 exhibition at the Janne Land Gallery. Comprising eight large prints and three tapestries, it is a narrative based on a war time experience. The death of a friend, a pilot who was shot down over the English Channel, occured at the same time as his entire family were bombed out. Gordon was posted in Egypt at the time of this devastating personal blow. The deaths were a hard and difficult experience. This exhibition is a kind of elegy or requiem for a personal tragedy, but it never becomes sentimentally nostalgic or mawkish. It also dispassionately and indirectly condemns the brutality, loss and devastation of war.

Requiem (1988) woven by Lesley Nicholls, features a realistic portrait of an airman enclosed in a square surrounded by an energetic profusion of stylized shapes, flowers, animals, insects, creatures and some clearly Egyptian figures at the bottom. As a requiem it is exuberant and joyous, implying an optimistic reunion with nature that death brings, as well as being a resolution of grief and loss for the artist.

A Long, Long Story (1988) takes up the theme of friendship in an elegant, uncluttered and unusually elongated screenprint. Here the face of the airman is accompanied by another, similar face: his friend, his double or his ghost? Two stylized figures in the lower half of the print pull apart from each other in a matched gesture. Memory is here tempered by experience and then wrought into art, an art which is contemplative rather than expressive.

"...a profusion, a richness, abundance and prosperity."

The archaic Greek belief that memory is the mother of the Muses expresses a fundamental insight into the nature of the arts and of the mind .... What is committed to memory and susceptible of recall constitutes the ballast of the self.[24]

The Sister (1988) is a similarly enigmatic and mysterious evocation of a story from the past. The strength in these works perhaps lies in their long gestation of some forty years after the event. The trailing threads that hang connected but loose, thin but strong, take us to a time, place and circumstance, somehow in empathy with these events unknown to us.

Gordon Crook achieves that most difficult of feats: the make up of art that is light, lovely to look at, but in no way flippant or offhand. It is sincere without ever wanting to brow beat us with self-expression.[25]

The colour in all these works is very sophisticated. Subtle and unusual combinations of green, cream, jade, delicate pinks, browns and greys are expertly modulated. Gordon's use of colour is remarkable for its range and the resonances he can set up. He vividly remembers seeing some Chinese prints at the home of collector Anthony Denny in London which enlarged his horizons for what was possible. The fine nuances of colour in the ***Egyptian Cigarettes*** works are superb examples of that enlarged horizon.

AND NOW LOOK...

FOR SOME TIME Gordon had been working with collaged photographic images, either as preliminary working drawings or as finished works.

Riddle and Rebus was the title for an exhibition in 1989 of fifty two photomontages, one for each week of the year. This series juxtaposes and combines found photographic images into startling and seemingly stark and dark, erotic compositions. They are not 'nice'. The works are not named, just numbered. Each image is doubled with the cut and pasted photocollage repeated in a cibachrome version paired beside it in some way. A riddle is a conundrum. It is a mysterious question that makes no sense and the answer to which we must guess. Once we do hear the answer though, it seems very clear and obvious. A rebus is a picture puzzle, an enigmatic representation of a name or word in pictures that suggest its syllables. The term is not being used in its literal sense here but suggests that the viewer must experience the picture on his or her own terms.

Many of these photomontages incorporate mirrors between the pairs of images thereby pushing even further the involvement of the viewer. What do we see in the mirror? Why, nothing but ourselves, disturbingly there in the picture with these other disturbing images. At the same time the mirror prevents the viewer from becoming merely a voyeur.

Photomontage originated with the Dadaists and flowered in the hands of the surrealists.

The "reality" of the photographic images ... can all the more successfully disrupt our perception of the normal world, and create marvellous images. By the juxtaposition of elements by nature strange to one another, hallucinatory landscapes are formed; commonplace objects become enigmatic when moved to a new environment. Our thought struggles to encompass them and is baffled, or a new thought is made for them.[26]

The subversive ambiguity is all the more telling when the transformation of the 'authority of realism' reveals strange and compelling erotic images. It is literally cutting up reality.

In ***Riddle and Rebus no. 33*** a male and a female face, one dark, one light, are compelling and cool. The separation between them seems absolute. We can also see a palely pink penis lolling in a lunar landscape, then erect, rocket-like against a dark sky. As we look again we realize we have ourselves transformed the image into a penis. It is simply pink paper, perhaps once an arm or leg cut from a magazine and composed this way. We are forced to acknowledge: "Oh, *I* saw that!" An emotional tension is released; it is palpable, we can feel it and are unnerved by it.

In many of these works someone looks back at us as we look at them. Images have been cut, chopped, disfigured and mutilated and in this there is an affronting violence. It is the method, as much as the images, that convey this. Often the edge of a form is cut so as to reveal what was next to it before, when it was innocently in its original state. This tantalizes as well as disfigures. Even more disorienting is that these works are meticulously presented and framed. In time the collage will fade but its cibachrome double will preserve the colours. A precarious balance between delicacy and impropriety is set up in which we ourselves collaborate.

A DIVERSION - IN TRANSITION

DURING 1991 the Victorian Tapestry Workshop in Melbourne, wove a tapestry based on a design by Gordon. Called ***Festival***, it incorporates elements of photomontage and the graphic marks and abstract shapes from earlier prints and tapestries. It features a profile of a woman with a deliberately flattened nose and horned, cone-shaped head totally Egyptian in feel. This tapestry represents a transition between the past and the future work, which was the Wolf-Man.

"Environment and surroundings condition and reflect"

WOLF-MAN

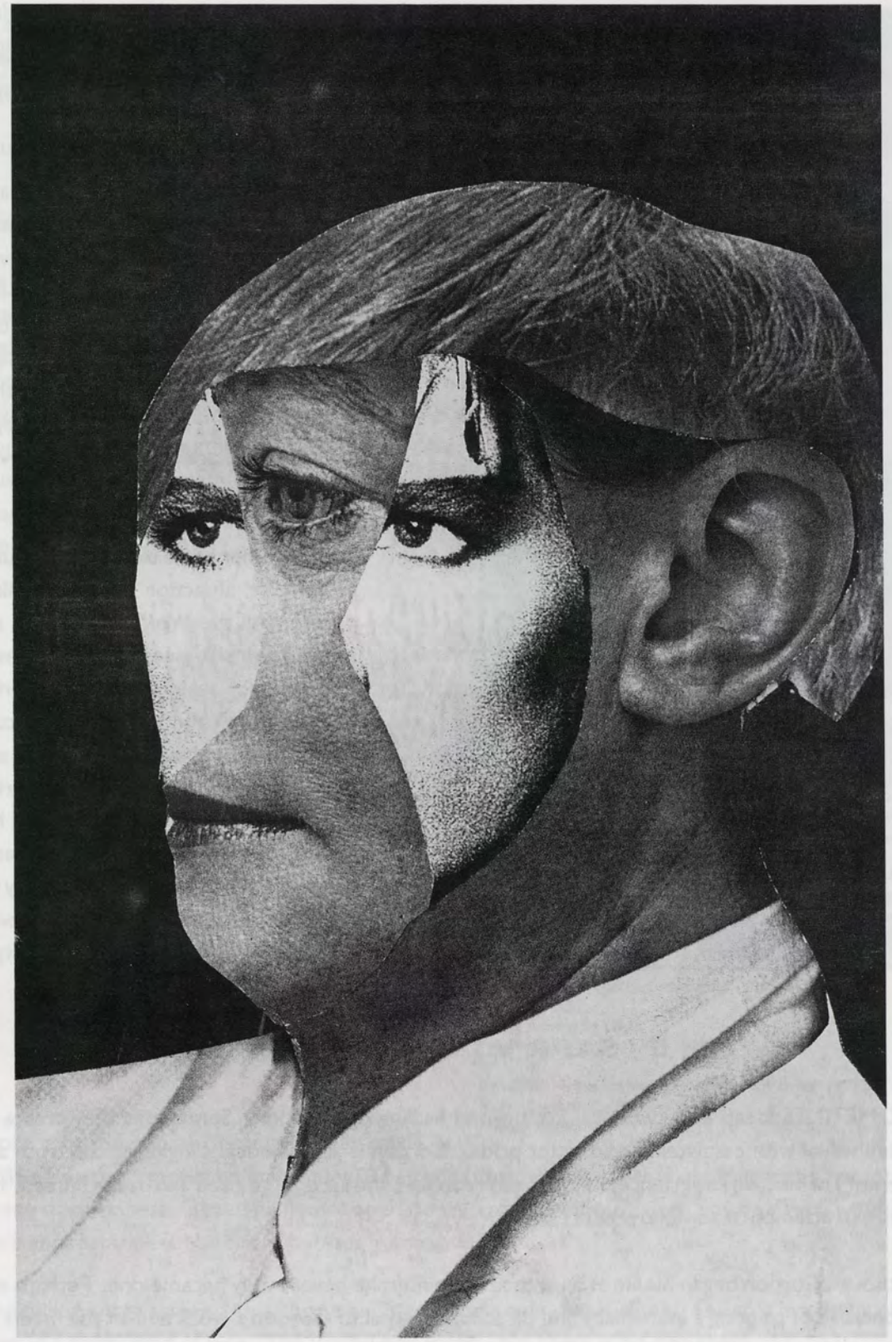
Wolf-Man **(1991) was an ambitious project which resulted in two exhibitions of extraordinary prints and tapestries. It began, appropriately, with reading. Gordon read *The Wolf-Man and Sigmund Freud* edited by Muriel Gardiner which included memoirs written by the Wolf-Man, an account of his analysis by Freud as well as Freud's own writings on the subject.**

> *... from the first page I was hooked into it. I suppose without realizing, often reading into it an account of my own life and feelings and predicaments. Every morning, here I was writing my dreams down on paper, and caught too into the dreams and history of a wealthy Russian aristocrat travelling across Europe with his private doctor and valet. He was going to Switzerland to consult an eminent specialist in nervous diseases. En route he visited Freud ... their immediate interest in each other began an association which lasted several traumatic years and which resulted in Freud's most famous case history, that of the legendary Wolf-Man!*
>
> *To some extent we share each other's history, if not in actuality then sometimes by way of metaphor and analogy. This hapless man who subsequently lost a fortune and then had to fend for himself. The bewildered child so soon inhibited in finding expression for love in a world of adult privilege and behind-the-scenes love-making. The child who sees what he is not meant to see and is not thought to have seen, the sexual frolics of his young parents one hot summer's afternoon. Things and scenes remembered. Frightening puzzles which needed to be solved, mysteries to unravel, injuries to heal. The long hours spent with Freud in analysis, uncovering and providing startling illustration of his not-so-well-understood "castration" theory - that wounding for unseemly behaviour - these complex, sexual relationships between the father, son, and loved mother ... a light projected into these dark areas.*[27]

Initially Gordon had wanted to make a book to illustrate this story. The book would incorporate three layers: the actual story of the Wolf-Man, the dreams that he (Gordon) was having at the same time as reading the story, and his own writing. This proved impossible for lack of a publisher and the usual practical difficulties in realizing unusual projects.

So, ***Wolf-Man*** became three different sets of prints: twenty two screen prints, ten screen prints and twelve xerox prints. These sets are all boxed. In conjunction with the prints was a series of small black and white tapestries woven by Trish Armour.

All the images of the ***Wolf-Man*** project have been derived through the xerox process. Beginning as coloured photomontages, they have been photocopied many times and gone through many changes. The photocopy then being re-collaged and copied again until it was 'right'. The photocopy changes tone and density, gives a new emphasis, flattens out sometimes, and gives an even dense



Wolf Man ***1991***
Xerox print 273 x 177
Private collection

black across the image. His use of photomontage as "drawing" which translates to prints and tapestry sees a refinement of a way of working and exploring of images that is, for Gordon, a long process.

The final images in the ***Wolf-Man*** series are savage, stark and minimal. Absence of colour accentuates this. A portrait of Wolf-Man (his name deriving from a fear of wolves, not lecherous Wolf-like behaviour) shows a man with three eyes, one in the middle of the forehead. It is grotesque and unsettling. The third eye. Another face has three pairs, or layers of eyes staring at us, again they are unnerving and disorienting.

ABOVE: Therese Wolf-Man *series 1991*
Xerox print 99 x 89
Private collection

BELOW: Wolf Man at age 7 Wolf-Man *series 1991*
Xerox print112 x 192
Private collection

In yet another a face blows out a column of dark air, an action towards disliked people. All the ***Wolf-man*** images are small. Their size gives them an intensity and intimacy which is very powerful. The story of Wolf-Man is deconstructed and then reconstructed with a keen and savage intelligence using the materials and technology of today. Gordon has moved beyond his modernist inheritance (which was always tempered by his design training) and into the new world. A rare feat for an artist aged seventy.

THE SURVIVING SPIRIT

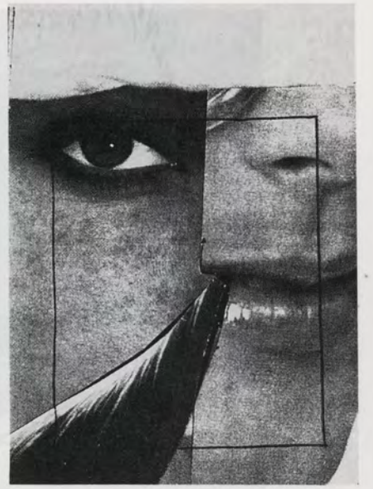
SOMETIMES 'deep early wounds' are beyond healing or salvation. Sometimes they create an individual with persistence and bitter pride. Gordon is an individual clinging to the truth and memory of his own experience, struggling to reconcile and accept the good and bad of himself. His art is an attempt to somehow express this.

Although Gordon began his life as an artist as a painter, he never really became one. Perhaps this is because of painting's immediacy and directness, for all of Gordon's work and all the media he has used have involved planning, reflection and delay. This is in seeming contradiction to the end result of his endeavour, which looks and feels spontaneous, intuitive and fresh. His interest in

making books (he has made several and would like to make more) may give us a clue. A book slowly reveals itself to us, and in that revelation contains "the time of its own making".

Thus the care and attention that have gone into the making in Gordon's art, signifies its contemplative values.

His work encompasses the great themes of New Zealand art-migration, religion, spirituality and the land. But primarily it is psychological as it evokes moods and emotions - not always straightforward feelings - and raises the visual over the literal. His work is not *about* something, it *is* something. We must enter his images, as if another world, in our imaginations, enter them and move about. In short, *experience* them.



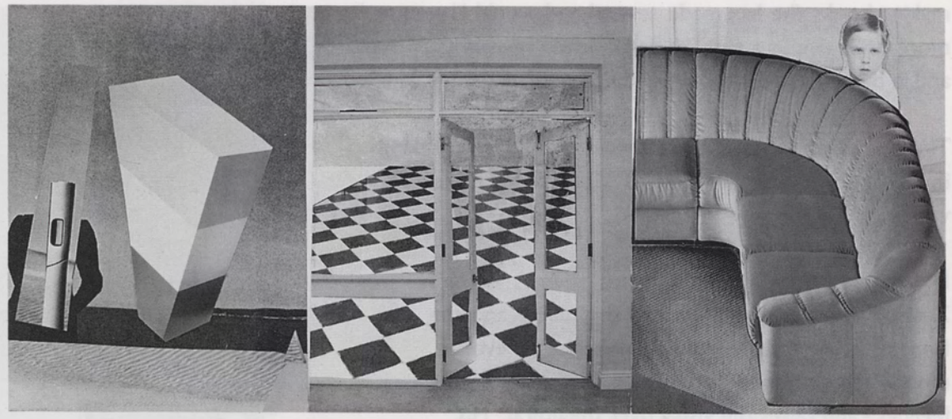
> *But if much of poetry, music and the arts aims to "enchant" - and we must never strip that word of its aura of magical summons - much also, and of the most compelling, aims to make strangeness in certain respects stranger ... We are, at key instances, strangers to ourselves, errant at the gate of our psyche. We knock blindly at the doors of turbulence, of creativity, of inhibition within the terra incognita of our own selves. What is more unsettling: we can be, in ways almost unendurable to reason, strangers to those whom we would know best, by whom we would be best known and unmasked.*[28]

ABOVE: "to breathe out noisily..." Wolf-Man *series 1991*
Xerox print 154 x 113
Private collection

BELOW: "remembering" Wolf-Man *series 1991*
Xerox print 166 x 190
Private collection

From a boxed set of photomontages made in 1986 a haunting image stays in the mind. The series deals with the theme of observation, the mood is one of emptiness. Receding floors, open doors, rooms without roofs, empty chairs, windows bare and featureless. Interiors but not homes.

The telling image shows a small boy standing behind a sofa. He is alone. The sofa is a fleshy pink, sexy in a flashy kind of way. The wistful boy looks - but there is no-one there.



Boy behind sofa *from the* Empty Chair *Series 1986*
Photomontage 460 x 540
Private collection

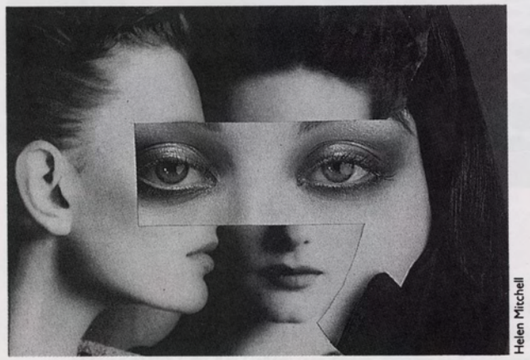
1 Flannery O'Connor - *A Good Man is Hard to Find*, introduced by Lisa Alther, The Women's Press Ltd., 1980, p.3.
2 Interview in programme notes for *Imprints* a dance work commissioned by the Wellington City Council for the opening of the City Art Gallery (set design, lighting and costumes by Gordon Crook), September1980.
3 Interview for the television programme *Kaleidoscope*, 1987
4 ibid.
5 Interview with the author, 1991.
6 *Kaleidoscope*, op. cit.
7 Conversation with the author, London, 1992.
8 ibid.
9 Mary Schoeser: *Fabrics and Wallpapers*, Bell and Hyman, 1986, p. 90.
10 *The Times*, 1951
11 Edward Lucie-Smith, *Movements in Art since 1945*, Thames & Hudson 1969, p. 87.
12 ibid, p 91
13 John Drawbridge, *Kaleidoscope* , op. cit.
14 Conversation with the author, Wellington 1992.
15 Catalogue notes, Galerie Legard *Adam and Eve* exhibition 1978.
16 Interview with Elva Bett, *The Listener*, January 15, 1983
17 *Kaleidoscope*, op. cit.
18 Interview with Elva Bett, op. cit.
19 *Kaleidoscope*, op. cit.
20 Letter to Jim and Mary Barr, May 1979
21 Letter to the author, 4 February 1991
22 Letter to the author, 31 March 1992
23 *Gordon Crook* Artist's Statement, 1985
24 George Steiner, *Real Presences*, Faber & Faber, 1989. p. 10
25 Ian Wedde, *Evening Post*, November 1988
26 Dawn Ades, *Photomontage* Thames & Hudson, 1976, p. 107
27 *Gordon Crook*, Exhibition Notes for *Wolf-Man*, 1991.
28 George Steiner, op. cit, p. 139

Helen Mitchell

'looking like...' *1989*
Collage 100 x 155
Ron Barber collection

Notes/poems/dreams

GORDON CROOK



Helen Mitchell

piss piping along cherry valley
with persons perturbed, and persons perfumed,

selecting pairs, pears and peaches
putting the slices with cream,

or
something not like that, a contrast,
remembering a place, time,
a rose picked on a certain day,
the sun on the grass, a gardener passing by,
to come and go with another is not the same,
nothing like,
though by an unlikeness it can be told
what flowers will appear on the green bush,
and fall.

1.

... when the self and the other become one
the what and the why turn out to be beautiful.

2.

meeting
Friday, thirteen, eleven, ninety-two -
can it be two years ago!
Perhaps I wrote your name in an old diary.
How do we measure time,

from then to what is to come, to what comes afterwards,
or is it the distance between moments of our attention
- that infinitude!
measurable only when broken into, even then
the going fast and slow contracts and expands
lengths of the intervals.
I move from morning to morning, from sky to sky,
from rose to blue, to the sun about to rise above the hills,
to then and back,
turning to find a moon that is not yet gone.

This time to give exact description,
the effort to penetrate, to empower belief the world is me,
me is you, you are me. Time caught into memory
yellow leaves come to the chestnut tree
- those petals on a child's party dress. Time suddenly -
as sea spray, as brine, as taste of grapefruit on luxury liners.
Funnel smoke. Gardens with lavender,
jasmine
rocket spilling scent into the evening air
- of finding happiness and who I am,
of burning the porridge!
This time to write on blank sheets
"hello time! 'tis me."

3.

The paradox that no medium is ever like what it describes.

4.

a batch of bread
a fleet or flotilla of boats
a sedge of bitterns

Stoke Clump; the Devil's Hump bare of trees,
a Saxon burial mound, maybe, we are told.
Dry summer afternoons with eye-blue butterflies, cowslips, bee orchids
... here we come, the Whitby troop, eagles, panthers, curlews, wolves
pulling the scout cart to Kingley Vale, then higher to the Shell House
where, on a mirror the spire of Chichester cathedral four miles away
throws its image -

Goodwood, bluebells,
a courting couple quiet in the deep green bracken.

5.

Facts about plants: the history and background is often surprising,
pleasant as the recovery of something one did not know was lost.

6.

I would have liked a son, then to have named him Balthazar.
I am always wanting things, walking around the house speaking to myself,
"I vant, I vant ..." not remembering that already I have everything.

7.

Do dreams give an indication of the worlds we might live in when we die
- as we think, then so be it? I hope not. I listened to a tape of Sufi
poems read by Robert Bly, of transformations, incarnations, metamorphoses,
a line about sexuality and desire, it asked, "when we get what we want,
what do we do with the longing?" I puzzled over that. My instant
response was the pleasure of being rid of it! This by Blake:

> *At will to murmur in the flowers small as the honey bee,*
> *At will to stretch across the heavens and step from star to star.*

I wouldn't mind that world, stars as flowers.

8.

a gross and a lesser quantity,
a large mass and a small piece,
a stone and a chip,
an apple and a slice -
these comparisons describe money,
some to save
some to spend
the ratio of 1:6.

The larger part rolls down the hill in an avalanche.
I juggle with the smaller as with slippery balls.
What business is this!
It is unmanageable.

(MONEY in Chetwynd's Dictionary for Dreamers, represents anything
of equivalent value - often time, or energy, sometimes love.)

Yes!
The love business.

9.

A video about LOWRY,
a talk on his work by one-time pupil, Harold Riley,
a man with a bald head, just a thick dark fringe
of hair above his ears.
I think of,

lasso
emu
a cassowary egg coming through a tuft
of shining black feathers.

10.

Environment and surroundings condition and reflect - mirror the marked
characteristics of people. The world and the individual become One.
This is another way of saying that our lives exist in the nature of
duality, that every One is made of Two. Everything follows from this,
even the strange and the mystical.

11.

I wake thinking of the severance of the umbilical cord.

Ten years ago I had my first dream of spacecraft - a meccano cradle,
it cruised along the street just a few feet off the ground,
the people on it as close as a handshake.
The Captain glaring at me.
My feelings of guilt, and of gliding.

Now another dream:
'a long cable that pulls away from me.
The cable was attatched to an airship that has come adrift
and it trails in space.
I am cut off from my source of power - I do not mean
'personal power', for that is not affected;
its just that when the cable lay nearby me
it provided my means of communication,
functioning as a radio station which picked-up
the frequencies and disturbances made by persons from far off, talking.'

12.

there is a girl with golden hair
who folds a rope of pearls inside white paper

there is a white unicorn with a flaxen mane
embroidered on a cushion on the floor

on this cushion is placed a buttercup
a wedding ring and a ripe, ripe apricot -
the night will bring the lucent moon
shimmery-silvery.

13.

Flags. Two of them. One is whole and complete. The other is made
of particles of dust that fall apart as the flag unfurls.

The two halves of life: youth and age.

14.

SIGMUND FREUD'S MISSION by Erich Fromm is an analysis of Freud's
character, it reveals him as a man who wants to change the world -
in the manner of Christ, a leader, yet dependent as the murderer needs
victims and a shop requires customers ... sure of himself, above the
others, master with disciples and followers.

That night after reading 'I went to a baker to ask a favour.
I found him kneading (needing) bread, a ton of bran with a ton of figs,
this mass - (Eucharist). I am dumbfounded by the sheer scale of the
work. Maybe not favourably.'

15.

K. was here and gave me a flower, a giant mullein.
It was given across the narrow space from dark to light.
Another time he left a daisy poked in the keyhole of the back door.

16.

won over or run over
asks the voice in my head,

he stands in pyjamas
on the foot of the bed

dives to the floor
where the sheets have spread,

am I landed in heaven
(sensation)
or in hell
(resignation),
he says.

A month after that the man was dead.

17.

Two dogs, particularly the puppy which I am to take to its mother.
I am afraid the dogs will bite me.
Instead, the puppy bites its mother, their jaws lock, they cannot part.

18.

me ... "have you got the art of note-taking?"

I tell her how I read ... when I find something that interests me
I read to the end to get a better picture,
to get the full drift of the idea ...
one word to the next
then I lose the place I started from.

"am I talking about life or just the reading," I said.

19.

this scenario:
a restaurant with people eating at tables.

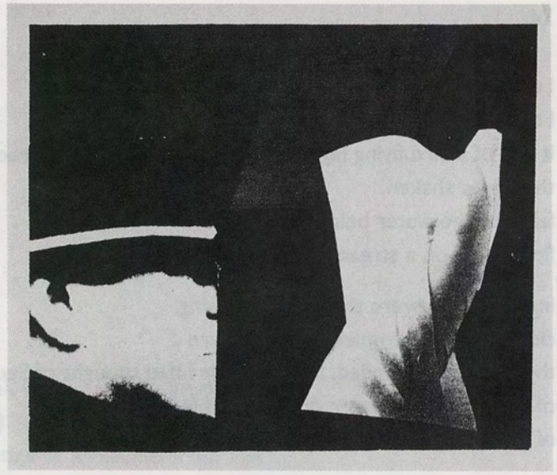
A man walks through to the back which leads into a garden.
It is a day of soft-raining, everywhere drenched and wet underfoot.
There is a lobby between the dining room and the garden,
it swarms with insects ... large centipedes
each with a thousand legs stuck together like wings.
The tremulous motion of these wings as repellent as the waves of a nightmare sea.
If all this is discovered the restaurant will be closed.
A door is left open.
The insects flow into the dining room.
The people panic.
They rush out and leave the place empty.
Of those diners -
any woman would be horror-struck to find herself pregnant :
the guilty virgins!
Same can be said of the men.

The symbolism hinted at, is of having one's pleasures ruined
by the intrusion of exacting thoughts.

20.

Your story of the policeman holding a flower,
ha, the laughing policeman! ha ha ha,
silver buttons on his tunic
black ones on his flies.

This pic comes to me while
I research the Wolf-Man
project:



I give it the title:

'the missing figure is a man on horseback, a (k)night'

A dream-time pun.

21.

two words
veracity and mendacity,
the question:
is truth variable from day to day?

22.

Inscriptions on red granite
black words on stone that shines in the sun;
figures by Rodin and Canova,
hallucinatory thoughts of commemoration,
cemetery
symmetry.

23.

A taxi is travelling the city streets at night, in the back are
two passengers, an elderly man with another who is also not young.
They hold hands, fingers together in the shape of a church,
the palms touch.
The old man gives a gentle pressure, its his way of
acknowledging a feeling that cannot be expressed.

24.

I tried to write a poem about Africa
I don't know why;
it was of a bird flying high to its nest on the top of a tree,
the leaves shaken,
fallen to the water below,
floating off on a stream -

in the stream were three boys bathing,
close by was a woman pounding corn ...
there the poem ended, for suddenly I had thought of Seurat,
of his boy by the water dreaming of feathers,
of *Pelicanus conspicilatus* that nests on the ground.

25.

I made a collage yesterday about you-know-who ... well partly,
and partly to illustrate a dream.
'The dream is of a beautiful woman. Her face splits in two.
The mask removed. The real face is formless and dissolves into
glowing colours ... into feelings of truth and mystery.

Looking at herself, she sees a bed that is empty ... a bed with
satin sheets that have not been slept in - a bed on the floor
of the deep black sea.

Grey curtains at the window and the far-off shoreline,
lavender colour against a lilac sky.

Oh, abruptly an erect penis thrusts through the fall of orange
violet water! The sky clears. The sea turns blue. The shore
comes closer, gradually changing into sheets of water, a thin
lapping of waves over the floor.
A crevice, a volcanic fissure, and into it a viscid fluid pours.
It pours through to the ocean bed of blood and flesh and petals
of red flowers, into pain.

If a partner were present, that person would be far away, far as
the first sighting of the shore ... all this suffering depresses me
- this loss of someone who was never here anyway - this lament
for what was not given.
This empty bed, never anyone in it but myself and even myself,
come to think, absent.

26.

Easter Sunday.
I am fourteen,
come downstairs for breakfast
to the chocholate egg.
Our punctilious lodger tells me,
"your rabbit is dead, dead," he says.

27.

One of those pointed-at-one-end Greek vases - usually provided
with a stand or trivet (right as a trivet!)
I am hugging the vase to my chest, the size of it reaches from
my nose to my knees. It is filled with gifts and presents, a
profusion, a richness, abundance and prosperity.

The name of this vase is unrequited love, it holds my heart's
desires.

28.

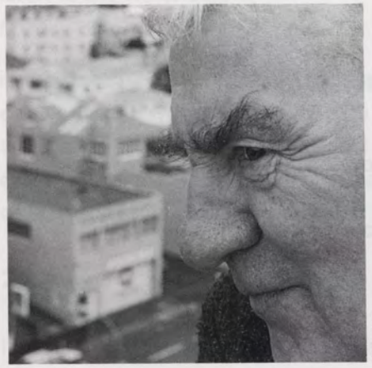
... when it is announced there will be fifteen extra people
to dinner, the cook asks for assistance but her request is
refused.
However, it quickly becomes apparent the control of this situation
is really in her hands, and so she gets what she wants.
This makes her very happy, and away she goes dancing and singing
into the kitchen,

"derboom derboom derboom"

and her song catches on.

BIOGRAPHY

GORDON CROOK



Phillip Kelly

GORDON CROOK was born in 1921 in Richmond, Surrey, England. He was educated at the Oliver Whitby School, Chichester and shortly after leaving school joined the R.A.F. to serve during World War II. After demobilization in 1945 he began to study at the St Martin's School of Art, London. He went on to the N.D.D. course in textiles at the Central School of Art. From 1948 until 1971 he practised as a freelance designer and lectured in design at the Central School.

His paintings and tapestries were included in exhibitions at Redfern Gallery, London; O'Hana Gallery, London; Bear Lane Gallery, Oxford; Contemporary Arts Association, Houston, Texas; Smithsonian Institute and the Scottish Arts Council. He was awarded the Sanderson Centenary Award for design.

In 1972 Gordon emigrated to New Zealand and has lived in Wellington ever since. He has had many exhibitions throughout the country.

Solo Exhibitions

1972 New Vision Gallery, Auckland; Robert McDougall Art Gallery, Christchurch
1973 The Settlement, Wellington; CSA, Christchurch; Victoria University of Wellington
1974 Victoria University of Wellington
1976 Bett-Duncan Gallery, Wellington
1977 and 1978 Galerie Legard, Wellington
1980 Galerie Legard, Wellington; Peter Webb Gallery, Auckland
1982 Janne Land Gallery, Wellington; Dowse Art Museum, Lower Hutt

1983 Janne Land Gallery, Wellington
1984 and 1985 Janne Land Gallery, Wellington; Dowse Art Museum, Lower Hutt
1986, 1988 and 1990 Janne Land Gallery, Wellington
1991 Gregory Flint Gallery, Wellington; Brooker Gallery, Wellington
1993 Brooker Gallery, Wellington

Group Exhibitions

1972 New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts, Wellington
1974 New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts, Wellington
1976 Auckland City Art Gallery
1979 Govett-Brewster Art Gallery, New Plymouth; Arts Jamboree, Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council
1984 Contemporary New Zealand Prints, Japan; International Biennale of prints, United Kingdom
1990 Intergrafik, Berlin
1991 Canterbury Society of Arts, Christchurch

Gordon has also made a number of commissioned works. Among the most important are banners for the New Zealand Chancery, Washington; wall-hangings for New Zealand posts in Tonga, Samoa and Mexico; a work for Stafford House, Wellington; banners for the Michael Fowler Centre, Wellington; tapestries for Brooker & Friend offices, Wellington; banners at the Wellington Regional Council; prints for Peter Small Gallery and a tapestry for the Victorian Tapestry Workshop, Melbourne.

Bibliography

Gordon's work in both solo and group exhibitions has been reviewed often in newspapers. More detailed comments can be found in:

Bett, Elva, Flying the Flag, *New Zealand Listener*, January 15, 1983
Bett, Elva, *Drawing and painting: A Complete Study Course for New Zealanders*, Wellington, AH & A W Reed 1984
Bett, Elva, *New Zealand Art: A Modern Perspective*, Auckland, Reed Methuen, 1986
Blumhardt, Doreen and Brian Brake, *Craft New Zealand*, Wellington, A H & A W Reed, 1981
Cape, Peter, *Please Touch: A Survey of Three Dimensional Arts in New Zealand*, Auckland, Collins, 1980
Foster, Susan, 'Wellington' *Art New Zealand*, 35, Winter 1985
Kirker, Anne, 'Wellington' *Art New Zealand*, 19, Autumn 1981
McIntosh, Jill, ed. *Contemporary New Zealand Prints*, Wellington, Allen & Unwin, 1989
Rowe, Neil, 'Gordon Crook' *Art New Zealand*, 16, 1980

A television documentary called *Gordon Crook, Man of Symbols and Dreams* was made about Gordon in 1987 for the series Kaleidoscope.

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