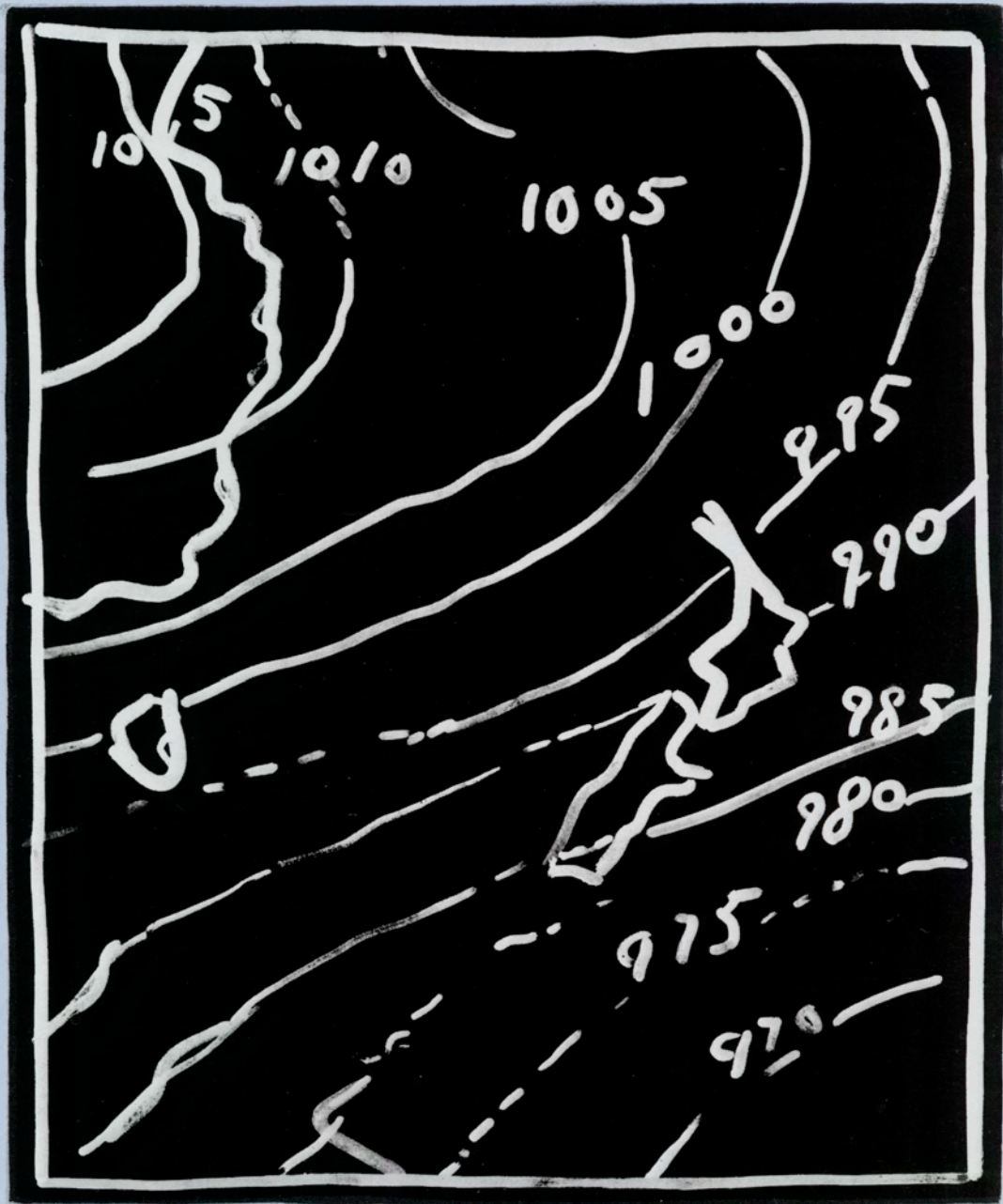


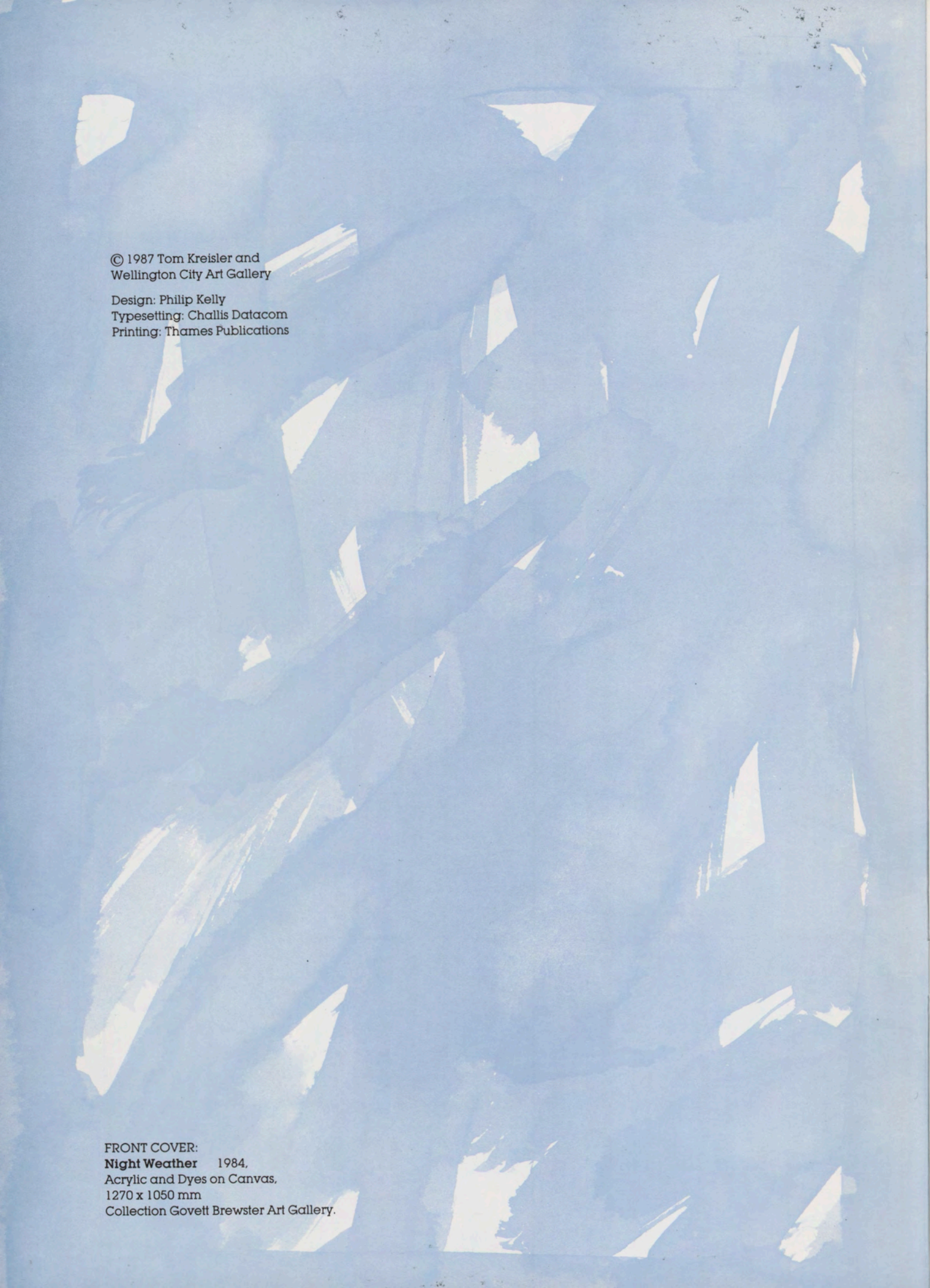
# **TOM KREISLER**

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**NOT A DOG SHOW**



© 1987 Tom Kreisler and  
Wellington City Art Gallery

Design: Philip Kelly  
Typesetting: Challis Datacom  
Printing: Thames Publications

FRONT COVER:  
**Night Weather** 1984,  
Acrylic and Dyes on Canvas,  
1270 x 1050 mm  
Collection Govett Brewster Art Gallery.

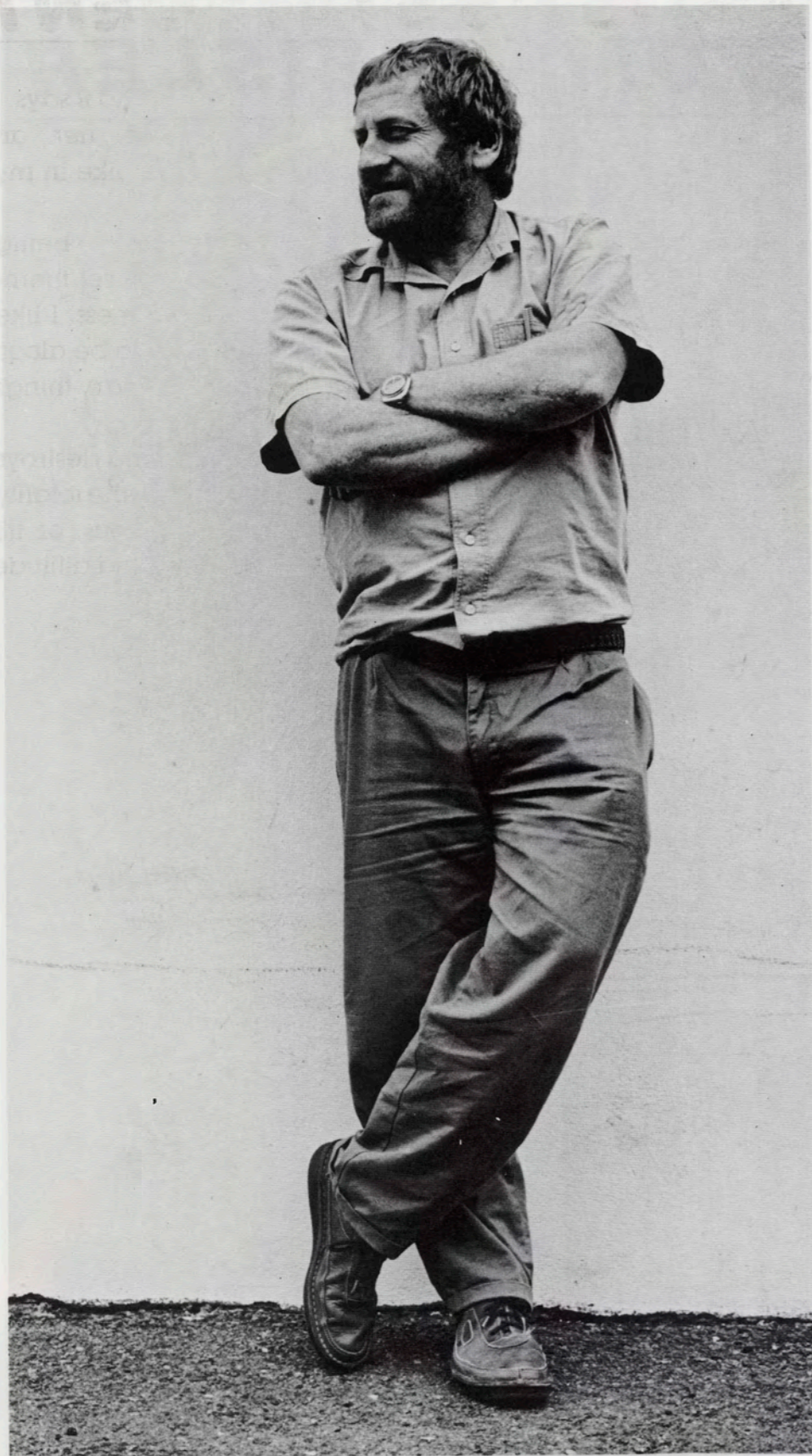
# ***TOM KREISLER***

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A Survey of Work since 1970  
WELLINGTON CITY ART GALLERY  
June 5 – July 19, 1987

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## ***NOT A DOG SHOW***



Tom Kreisler, 1986

## **ARTIST'S STATEMENT**



It's just a bit of rubbish I wrote one day, and it says:  
"Having lived with myself as a Foreigner, an outsider to most cultures. I know what I like in my work, and try to shape it accordingly.

Hate pretentiousness, cleverness, boringness, being respectable, that is deserving of respect. Artists who set themselves up as monuments of excellence, social toadiness. I like that art that constantly questions itself, that appears to be aloof, but is passionate, that looks at ordinariness and ordinary things without wishing to colonise them.

I don't like art that is so aggressive that it excludes and destroys all that it touches, but I do like an art that understands the totality of its own existence, that is at the same time conscious of its own fallibility. I am more concerned with thoughts and attitude than appearances".

And that's something I scribbled out one day.

*From an interview with Fiona Clark – Jan. 1986 for an exhibition of Recent works at the Govett Brewster Art Gallery during February 1986.*

# FOREWORD



uring 1970 in New Plymouth a Gallery opened. The gutted and redesigned Regent Theatre became the Govett Brewster Art Gallery.

I was a Fifteen year old student of New Plymouth Boys High, unashamedly excited by John Maynards opening exhibition of Leon Narbys light/sound environment works and the potential of the Gallery's contemporary programme for a provincial and national community.

For those in New Plymouth who had fought for and awaited the presence of a Gallery, expectant to see a redesigned white walled space resplendant with images of Mt. Taranaki, the shock must have been great on viewing this inaugural showing.

The Gallery has continued to provide this challenge for a regional community, earning a national and international reputation, as well, providing a catalyst for a committed group of professional Artists. Tom Kreisler is one such Artist, lured to the city following Art School in 1968, by the concept and potential of this Gallery. In 1971 his first exhibition of works appeared on the Gallery walls – the now familiar "COAT SERIES I" paintings. Works massive in scale, depicting simple line interpretations of the coat floating/hanging on the invisible hook. This series of works rendered through a variety of pastel colour changes were easily reminiscent of the works of a number of American and European Artists of the Pop-Art culture during the 1960's and early 1970's.

The imagery, titling and wit of subsequent works remain – uniquely Kreisler. Using Acrylic and Dye lightly laid on stretched canvas Kreisler has continued to work purposefully, outside of the mainstream groupings and trends of N.Z. art culture.

During 1981 a second series of 'COAT PAINTINGS' showed at the R.K.S. Art Gallery, Auckland. This series of 10 works, on a similar scale to the first series, showed the progressive line and colour abstractions of a coat.

This survey exhibition documents three Coat works from the 1971 and 1981 series with an associated group of working drawings.

Since the early 1980's Kreisler has pursued a number of thematic interests with work often evolving over a two-three year period.

Included in this exhibition are two map works – the formal painterly "TWO ESOTERIC LOW PRESSURE SYSTEMS" in 1983 and in 1984 the much freer black and white work 'NIGHT WEATHER', now in the collection of the Govett Brewster Art Gallery.

The 1984 works 'FOOTNOTES' and 'LIGHTNESS OF HAND' 'FLEETNESS OF FOOT' preceded a number of 'Dog' works which have evolved through 1985 and 1986. Included in this exhibition from the exhibition of recent work 'NOT A DOG SHOW' shown at the Govett Brewster in February 1986 are dog series works – 'DANCING DOGS', 'TIRED DOGS' and 'FOUR PAIRS OF DANCERS PULLING AGAINST THE FABRIC OF LIFE'.

In May this year in Auckland, for the first time since 1981 Kreisler showed four works including 'ARTIFICIAL LIGHT 1' and 'ARTIFICIAL LIGHT NIGHT BEETLE DAY BEETLE', the later being a more radical departure from earlier works – overtly painterly in style, heavily framed with the inclusion of Neon Stripping. These works formed a significant part of an exhibition with Artist friends Dick Frizzell and Warren Viscoe at Star Art Gallery. The work 'MUSIC GOING TOWARD THE BACK DOOR OF A PAINTING' completes this survey of works to date.

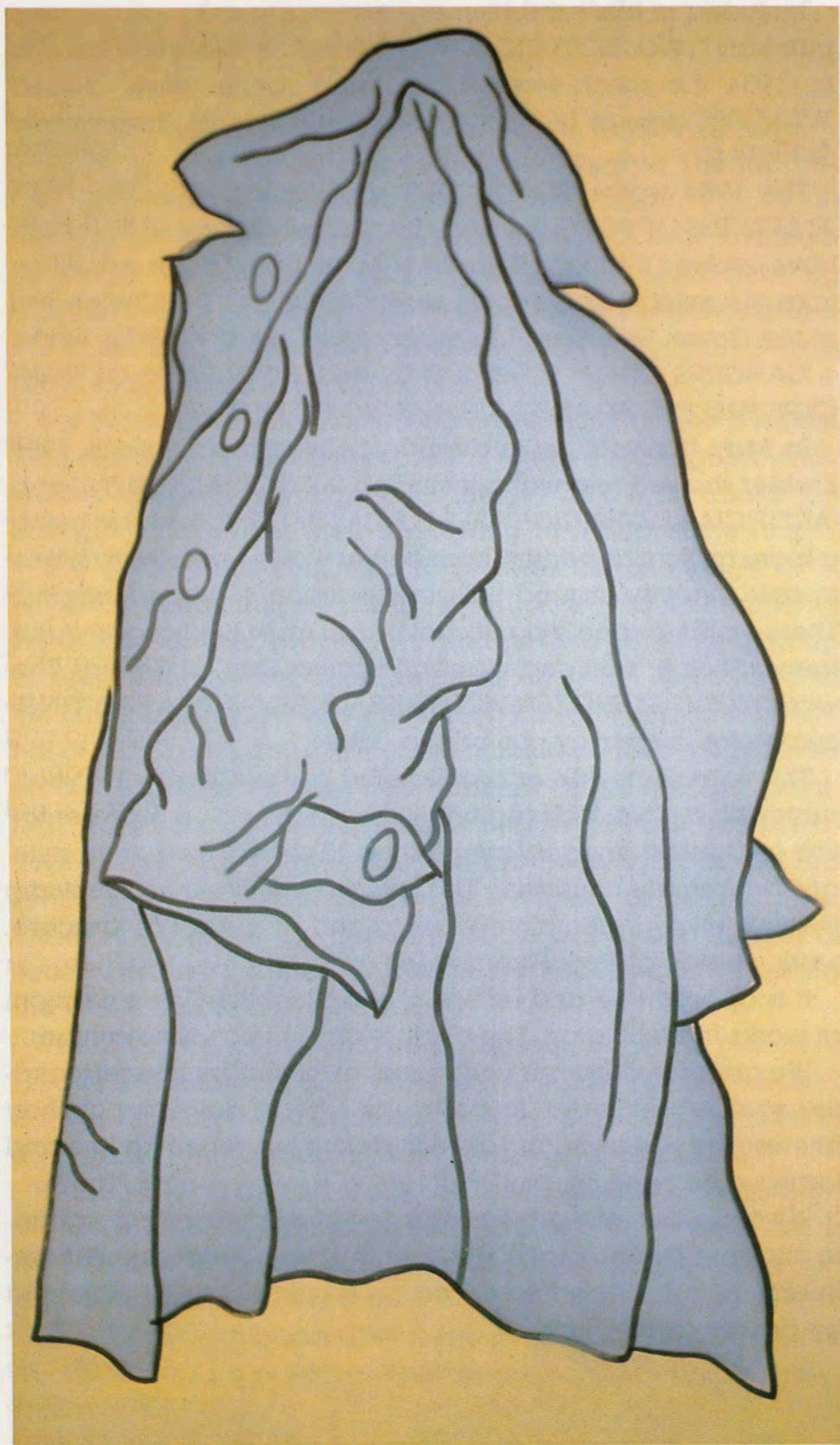
This exhibition, one of two planned by the Gallery this year, surveying the work by regionally based Artists – is representative of Kreisler's imagery over almost 20 years. The quality, style and wit remain consistent. This selection of works will provide the first full representative viewing and appraisal of Kreisler's work, outside of New Plymouth.

It is appropriate and timely to bring together this collection of works in Wellington. The evaluation of which is now yours.

We are grateful to our colleagues of the Govett Brewster and Sarjeant Art Galleries, in particular Cheryl Sotheran for her interest, support and time taken in writing the contributing essay for this catalogue.

We are especially grateful to individual lenders for their trust in allowing works to travel and be displayed. Survey exhibitions in any institution rely heavily on the generosity and trust given by private collectors.

John Leuthart. Director. May 1987.



Coat VI 1971, Acrylic and Dyes on Canvas. 2270 x 1300 mm Private Collection, New Plymouth.

## ESSAY



In an age when the typical artist, and particularly the typical painter acknowledges eclecticism rather than originality, exploits the second-hand image rather than protects the unique vision, Tom Kreisler is, wilfully, an aberration. His deliberate choice of a provincial town as a place to live implies also a set of painterly choices which stem from a determination to resist market demands, fashionable trends he sees as prevailing in our larger centres. Yet his work itself presents a paradox in that it is far from what we think of as provincial in appearance or content; it has an international flavour, a resistance to regional narrowness.

The exhibition, while it takes its title from a group of works painted in the early nineteen eighties, in fact undertakes a modestly scaled survey of important turning points in Kreisler's artistic life.

His personal life is tracked through the interview reproduced in the Gallery newsletter between the Artist and Fiona Clark, photographer and likewise an international provincial, making the choice to live far from major population centres in order to maintain a clarity of vision rather than a doggedly regional polemic.

The early coat series laid the foundation for continuing practices in Kreisler's work: the fidelity to a serial practice, exploring the painterly and thematic possibilities of a theme, a notion, a character (the dogs ARE characters, and perhaps, in their endearing combination of pugnaciousness, sexuality, enthusiasm, cynicism and charm, as close as Kreisler will get to presenting us with a self portrait), The Coats represent painterly concerns, an attention to the play between the strong line and the thin, luminous wash of colour over the paint surface. They are revealing of thematic connections, particularly with the iconoclastic vocabulary of Pop, both in its Northern Hemisphere manifestations and in the regional translations seen in New Zealand through the Pound-founded New Image school. The track between painterly and thematic concerns has been a direct one in Kreisler's work since; at times narrative or literary elements prevail, as in the works which address the cultural issues of nationality, alienation or assimilation, the view of an intellectual wanderer whose vision is made both richer and more poignant

by his sense of displacement.

In such works as *Old and New* and *Mathematical Painting* the sense of line and the sure handling of the wash of colour on the canvas are tempered by the cynical and quirky linguistic/numeric imagery, referring us back relentlessly to our reliance on more or less mechanistic systems of analysis to arrive at our judgements.

The *Dancing Dogs* bring in another scenario, and a looser and more subtle approach to composition and the picture surface. Rather than the more or less precise, if apparently arbitrary placing of objects within the framed space seen in earlier works, the dogs dance, struggle, travail, copulate all over the arena allowed them by the artist. The surface emphasis of the modernist artist is retained, as is the rejection of conventionally realist devices; the narrative is however strong, and involves us in a microcosmic world of pathos, humour and cynicism.

The rejection of obviously regional imagery in favour of a domestic vocabulary revealing among other things, the universal banality of human (or animal) existence has marked Kreisler's work for years now. His use of such objects as coats, babies' clothes, coathangers – both as witty compositional elements and as in more grim juxtapositions with images drawn from a wider and more threatening world (the battleships of the Argentine conflict, for example) reinforce the notion that the artist sees his domestic world as both refuge from and metaphor for the global conflicts his international vision compels him to recognise.

In the very latest work, insects with something of the same naivety and vulnerability as the dancing dogs, are shown as variations of the "moth to a candle flame" theme. The insects are painted with a delicacy and luminosity that is heightened by the use of a light source made part of the work. Their innocent submission to the power of attraction the light source holds for them counterpoints the inevitable tragedy of their destruction, both in the physical sense and in the sense of loss of individuality and finally even will.

The artist's commitment to maintaining an original vision has never had so clear a metaphorical expression. These works carry the confident handling of washes and strokes of paint beyond the limits of the canvas, underlining the use of light in a sculptural way. As if in sympathy with this impulse, the paint itself has become thicker, and while the word 'impasto' still doesn't

automatically spring to mind, the works have become somehow larger, more substantial while the content has, paradoxically become more evanescent: the fragility and brevity of insect life.

Kreisler's work, never static, reveals its diversity to the Wellington audience for the first time in a coherent group in this exhibition. Surveys, even little ones, have a tendency to put full stops on development; in this case there is every evidence that all that is required is a comma.

Cheryll Sotheran  
Director  
Govett-Brewster Art Gallery



*Dancing Dogs 1* 1984, Acrylic and Dyes on Canvas 1370 x 1370 mm Collection of Sargeant Gallery.

$$\begin{array}{r} 60 \times \\ \hline 1,116,0000 \\ \hline 60 \times \\ 669,600,000 \\ \hline 24 * \\ \hline 2678,400,000 \\ \hline 13,392,000,000 \\ \hline 16,070,400,000 \\ \hline 365 \times \\ 8,037,200,000 \\ 964,424,000,000 \\ 4,821,120,000,000 \\ 5,866,016,000,000 \\ \hline 4,027,600,000 \\ \hline 5,870,043,600,000 \\ \hline 2,348,017,440,000 \\ \hline 0,202,507,180,000 \end{array}$$

Mathematical Painting 1970, Acrylic and Dyes on Canvas. 2235 x 1585 mm Collection of Govett Brewster Art Gallery.



Chameleonitis 1984, Acrylic and Dyes on Canvas. 1310 x 1275 mm Private Collection, New Plymouth.



Casual and Navy 1985, Acrylic and Dyes on Canvas. 1185 x 1000 mm Collection of Artist.

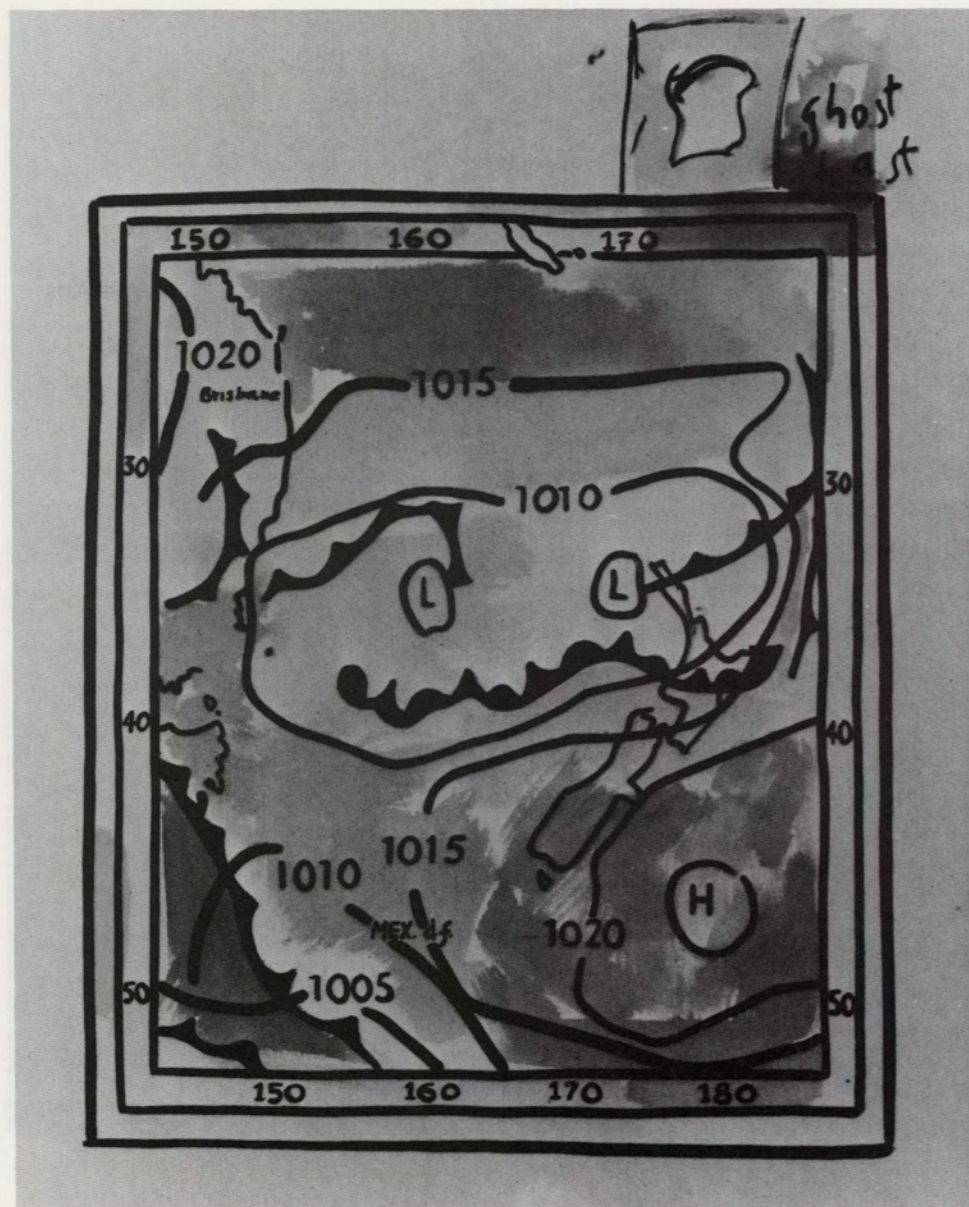


## COLLECTIONS

Auckland City Art Gallery  
Covent Garden Art Gallery  
Edinburgh Art Gallery  
Wellington Art Gallery

Footnotes 1984, Acrylic and Dyes on Canvas. 895 x 1170 mm Private Collection, Hawera.





Two Esoteric Low Pressure Systems 1983, Acrylic and Dyes on Canvas. 1275 x 1575 mm  
Private Collection, Auckland.

## **TOM KREISLER**

Born Argentina 1938.

Arrived New Zealand 1952.

Attended University of Canterbury School of Fine Arts (Painting).

Awarded Senior Scholarship University of Canterbury School of Fine Arts 1965.

New Zealand Selector for Paris Biennale 1966.

First Solo Exhibition Barry Lett Galleries 1967.

Graduated Diploma Fine Arts (Honours, Painting) 1968.

Art Teacher New Plymouth Boys High School 1968-77.

Art Teacher Mexico 1977-1979.

Tutor Taranaki Polytechnic 1979 -

## **EXHIBITIONS**

1967 Barry Lett Galleries Auckland.

1971 Govett Brewster Art Gallery New Plymouth Coat Series I.

1981 R.K.S. Gallery Auckland Coat Series II.

1986 Govett Brewster Art Gallery  
'Not A Dog Show' - Recent works 1983 - 1986.

1987 Star Art Gallery Auckland  
Group Exhibition Frizzell Kreisler Viscoe.

1987 Wellington City Art Gallery  
(A survey of Work since 1970.)

## **COLLECTIONS**

Auckland City Art Gallery

Govett Brewster Art Gallery

Rotorua Art Gallery

Sarjeant Art Gallery Wanganui

# **LIST OF WORKS**

1. **Mathematical Painting** 1970  
2235 x 1585mm
2. **The Key** (Coat Series) 1971  
2275 x 1295mm  
Collection Govett Brewster Art Gallery
3. **Coat II** 1971  
2270 x 1300mm  
Private Collection Auckland
4. **Coat VI** 1971  
2270 x 1300mm  
Private Collection New Plymouth
5. **Coat Series Drawings** 1970  
Collection Govett Brewster Art Gallery
6. **Concrete Poem** 1977  
Concrete work  
315 x 265mm  
Collection Govett Brewster Art Gallery
7. **Au Revoir** 1981  
Concrete work  
340 x 315mm  
Private Collection New Plymouth
8. **1 Kilo = 1 Pound** 1980  
445 x 415mm  
Two Screen prints  
Collection of Artist
9. **Coat 2** 1981  
2310 x 1315mm  
Courtesy R.K.S. Gallery Auckland
10. **Coat 3** 1981  
2310 x 1315mm  
Courtesy R.K.S. Gallery Auckland
11. **Coat 4** 1981  
2310 x 1315mm  
Courtesy R.K.S. Gallery Auckland
12. **Two Esoteric Low Pressure Systems** 1983  
1275 x 1575mm  
Collection Govett Brewster Art Gallery
13. **Night Weather** 1984  
1270 x 1050mm  
Collection of Artist
14. **Circa 1971** 1983  
1000 x 1180mm  
Collection of Artist
15. **Casual and Navy** 1985  
1185 x 1000mm  
Collection of Artist
16. **Flying from Hong Kong to Ireland** 1983  
995 x 1180mm  
Collection of Artist
17. **Footnotes** 1984  
895 x 1170mm  
Private Collection Hawera
18. **Lightness of Hand, Fleetness of Foot** 1984  
1145 x 1345mm  
Collection of Artist
19. **Chameleonitis** 1984  
1310 x 1275mm  
Private Collection New Plymouth
20. **Dancing Dogs I** 1984  
1370 x 1370mm  
Collection of the Sarjeant Gallery
21. **Tired Dogs** 1985  
1370 x 1420mm  
Collection of Artist
22. **4 Pairs of Dancers Pulling Against the Fabric of Life** 1986  
1350 x 1657mm  
Collection of Artist
23. **Vroom Vroom** 1986  
990 x 765mm  
Private Collection New Plymouth
24. **Artificial Light I** 1986  
1270 x 2300mm  
Collection of Artist
25. **Artificial Light Night Beetle, Day Beetle** 1986  
1470 x 2300mm  
Collection of Artist
26. **Music Going Toward the Back Door of a Painting** 1986  
1300 x 1720mm  
Collection of Artist

All works unless otherwise stated are Acrylic and Dyes on Canvas.

# **LENDERS**

Tom Kreisler  
New Plymouth

Govett Brewster Art Gallery  
New Plymouth

Sarjeant Gallery  
Wanganui

John Matthews and Mira Sorensen  
New Plymouth

Paul Hartigan  
Auckland

Warren Viscoe  
Auckland

Mrs. P. Greig  
New Plymouth

Dr. Talbot  
New Plymouth

Alan Clark  
Hawera

WELLINGTON CITY ART GALLERY