



PARALLEL REFLECTIONS

JOHN BLACKBURN + MARIAN FOUNTAIN



JOHN BLACKBURN



Returning from London for his eleventh exhibition at ARTIS Gallery, it is both apposite and convenient to suggest that John Blackburn's career has spanned parallel paths in New Zealand & Britain over the last six decades.

John Blackburn's extraordinary career began in Auckland in the summer of 1959-60 when he was included in an exhibition, curated by Colin McCahon at the Auckland City Art Gallery. McCahon had been impressed by what at the time were Blackburn's boldly avant-garde works, the flamed paint surfaces of his 'Encaustic Series'.

The following year Blackburn returned to England and exhibited his work at London's Woodstock Gallery, a gallery highly involved in the modernist art emerging from St Ives during the 50's and 60's. Blackburn's lyrical abstract paintings of simple, reduced forms in limited pure, unmixed colours, could easily be appreciated within the context of the British art scene at that time.

Blackburn took a hiatus from the artworld during the 1970s & 80s. It was the chance discovery of some of Blackburn's works acquired in the 1960s by the renowned collector, Jim Ede for his house, Kettle's Yard in Cambridge, that led to renewed interest in the artist. Blackburn was re-launched back into the art world with a full-scale retrospective exhibition at Folkstone Metropole Galleries in 2006, followed by an exhibition at the prestigious Mayfair gallery of Osborne Samuel in London. A major exhibition in New Zealand followed at ARTIS Gallery, Auckland, in 2009. Blackburn has returned to New Zealand to exhibit every year since.

Throughout, Blackburn's work reveal a remarkably consistent vision and approach. The paintings in this exhibition are unified, both individually and collectively, by the artist's repertoire of signature forms and finishes. His investigation of the seemingly limitless possibilities of painterly effects, add a sense of lightness and deftness to the works.

Illustrated Cover:

John Blackburn

Green Field

Oil & mixed media on canvas, 51 x 75 cm



John Blackburn

Ark

Oil & mixed media on canvas, 58 x 68 cm



John Blackburn

Tulips Appearing

Oil & mixed media on board, 25.5 x 30 cm



John Blackburn

Copper Heat

Oil & mixed media on board, 30 x 25 cm



John Blackburn

The Four Elements

Oil & mixed media on canvas, 24 x 31 cm



John Blackburn

Red Sun

Oil & mixed media on canvas, 29.5 x 39 cm



John Blackburn

Strength

Oil & mixed media on canvas, 31 x 36.5 cm



MARIAN FOUNTAIN

Returning from Paris to New Zealand for her exhibition at ARTIS in February, *'Parallel'* is an appropriate word to express Marian Fountain's life and expression. This is perhaps not surprising, having lived in Europe since 1984 and in Paris since 1991.

Fountain melds the rich diversity of European art, history and culture with her New Zealand roots and the cultures of the Pacific, to create works that are compelling and original. Exploring her own ideas of conflict, change and growth, her works demonstrate an environmental awareness and concern for the future of humankind.

Born in New Zealand in 1960, Fountain studied bronze casting while studying at Elam School of Fine Arts (1979 - 1983). In 1984 she received a major travel grant from the Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council and travelled initially to Morocco and France to observe foundry practice, then to London where she was an assistant at the Royal College of Art. She then moved to Italy and studied at the Scuola della Mediglia (Rome Mint).

In 2017 Fountain was commissioned to create a memorial at the Wellington Quarry Museum in Arras, France, to recognise the work of over a 1000 New Zealand tunnellers in the Arras quarries during the First World War.

Fountain has exhibited at the British Museum, The National Gallery of Scotland, the Museo Archeologico of Milan, York Museum and the French Mint. Her work has been displayed at the New Zealand Embassy in Paris and in London and are held in the British Museum and Smithsonian Museum collections. She exhibits regularly in Europe, and has kept a continuous presence in the New Zealand art world.

Many of Marian's sculptures instill duality as though there are two sculptures in one – turn them around and you might find a surprise, a complementary form to deepen the contemplation of what it is to be alive.

Illustrated Cover: **Marian Fountain**
Large Glyph Bookend
Bronze, 19 x 18.5 x 10.7 cm
Partage - Sharing
Bronze, 49 x 26 x 13 cm



Marian Fountain
Squeeze Remnant
Bronze, 80 x 25 x 20 cm



Marian Fountain
Becoming Conscious
Bronze, 29 x 28 x 22 cm



Marian Fountain
Small Shoot 2
Bronze, 42.5 x 15 x 10 cm



Marian Fountain
Mitochondria
Bronze, 33.5 x 11 x 10 cm



Marian Fountain
Parallel Realities
Bronze, 52 x 31 x 9 cm



John Blackburn

Retracting Seas

Oil & mixed media on canvas, 102 x 62.5 cm



Marian Fountain

Mother Earth

Bronze, 64 x 25 x 10 cm

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