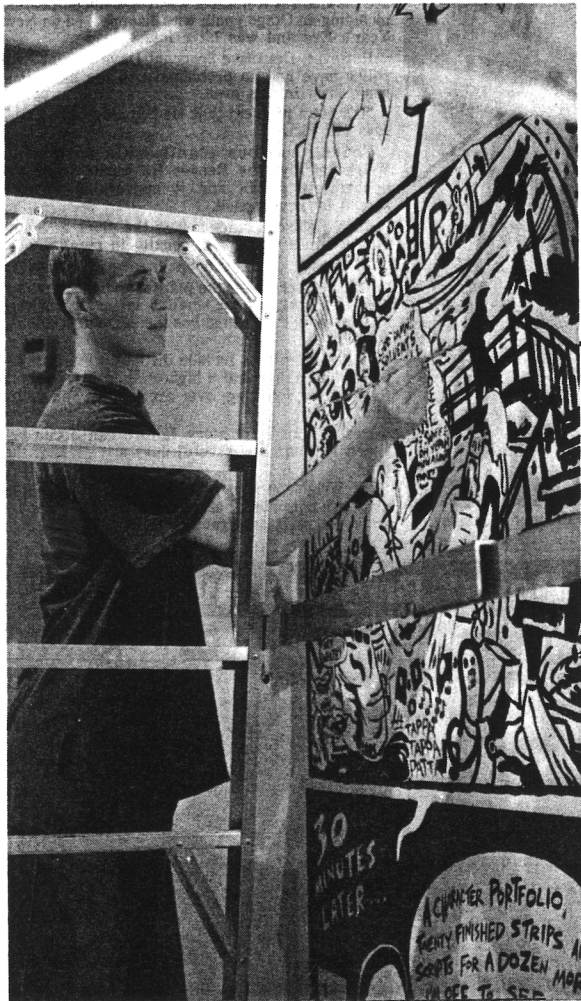


Cartoonists exhibit at Fisher Gallery



WALL JAM: Cartoonist Lars Cawley puts the finishing touches to the wall jam comic strip at Fisher Gallery.

Comic books are about blood, sweat and tears and their creators have a cinematic view of life — hence the panels of action and words.

That's the word from cartoonist Graeme Romanes, who is exhibiting at Pakuranga's Fisher Gallery.

For Graeme, and most of the other cartoonists whose work is on display, it's a hobby. Some like Dylan Horrocks, who writes for *The Listener*, and Chris Knox are published more regularly.

Occasionally New Zealand-made comic books have been printed for cartoonists to vent their talents, such as *Razor* in the 1980s and more recently *UFO*.

Stories:

MARY MacKINVEN

Graeme is a self taught cartoonist working as an English teacher, and is just back after eight years teaching in Japan.

From there he sent letters in the form of comic strips to friends and family. Some of the letters have since been pasted on walls.

Graeme's artwork is confined to pen and ink and pencil drawings, with the occasional dabble in watercolour.

Inspirations were *MAD* and *Heavy Metal* magazines from the United States, which he collected from the age of 10.

The first cartoon rolled off his pen about the same time.

Fisher Gallery's Survey of Contemporary New Zealand Comix comprises a wall jam painted by 12 cartoonists as well as original and published artworks and magazines.

Forty exhibitors have drawn a page each in a limited edition catalogue of 400 copies, called *Jack and the Beanstalk*, on sale at the gallery.

Exhibitor Chris Knox, who is also a music reviewer, musician, artist and writer, will talk about the comics exhibition at the gallery on Sunday, February 4, at 2pm.

The exhibition runs until February 11.

Curator is hooked on arts career

Curating the comics exhibition at Fisher Gallery in Pakuranga was a climax for Taskforce Green worker Orlando Stewart.

It was also the last task for the former Howick College pupil as he heads back to university to finish an MA in art history.

Orlando (26) was surprised at the amount of work involved in putting together an exhibition.

"I had to telephone 45 artists all around the country.

"But it was fun contacting so many people who were mostly fun, but also very professional."

Then four days before the exhibition opened Orlando and other staff and volunteers at the gallery began to install the art works.

This involved painting the gallery walls to

provide a suitable backdrop, deciding where to put exhibits, and often hardest of all, actually fixing the displays into position.

In six months Orlando says he learned a lot about art administration and appreciates the job is "not cushy".

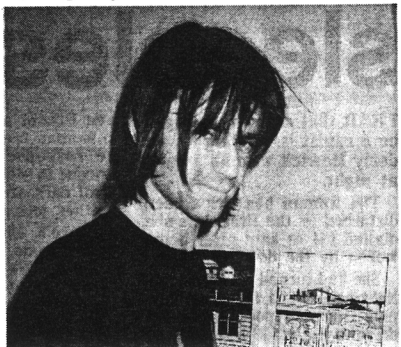
"It's not just appreciating art and sticking pictures on walls."

Orlando is now hooked on a career in arts.

Although not an artist he wants to see a change in the hierarchical notion that some art is high (such as oil painting) and some is low (such as cartoons).

"All art is culturally relevant," he says.

"People should come to the gallery because there is always something interesting to see here, something to learn about their country and culture."



FIRST-TIME CURATOR: Orlando Stewart curated Contemporary Comix at Fisher Gallery.

PHOTO: CATHERINE BALLANTYNE