

Sunday Star  
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## ARTBEAT with Linda Herrick

# Surprises at the bottom of meal

**H**UMOUR, technical excellence and a touch of the bizarre go hand-in-hand in **Fiona Pardington's** work, whatever the media. She recently reiterated her skills as an artist-photographer in her three Church Rd wine labels, and now moves into the world of ceramics as one of 18 **Studio Ceramics Dinner Service Show** artists at the Fisher Gallery in Pakuranga. Pardington's graceful serving platters, dinner plates and soap dishes, all in the sunny yellow glaze reminiscent of early Victorian china, are decorated with startling deep red transfers which reflect her long-time fascination with late 19th century medical text books and equipment mail-order catalogues.

She enjoys the idea of a dinner guest discovering, beneath their food, a diagram of a rectal examination finger stall, an enema applicator, a tourniquet, a uterine support or a spinal truss. "They have a lovely generic form, it's an inventive play that makes art that sticks in people's brains, a surprise at the bottom," she says. "I originally wanted to use transfers of dermatitis or sores, I liked the proximity of the food and the diseases. I'll try that later."

But how does a soap dish fit with a dinner service? "That's to do with protecting yourself while — or after — you've been in contact with bodily functions." Pardington says she's been inspired by this effort to push further into ceramic work — "it's a friendly form of art through its domestic approach".

The exhibition, which runs until October 17, is also well worth attention because of the treatment many other prominent artists have given to their "dinner services", many working with ceramics for the first time: including **Luise Fong's** black and white experiments with glaze sediment; **Dick Frizzell's** mid-western desert set; **Terry Stringer's** hand-thrown vase and table setting; and **Carole Shepherd's** outstanding use of gold transfers. All works are for sale.

□ The Japanese avant-garde dance form **Butoh** meets **Polynesia** in **Illumina: Embracing the Darkness** a Spectra



FIONA PARDINGTON with her spinal truss dinner plate

Dance Theatre production opening at the Galaxy this week. Director **Lemisjo Ponifasio**, who studied **Butoh** in Japan, uses eight white-washed dancers, **Shinto Taiko** drumming (most unusually, by a woman, **Sumiko**, who was the first of her gender to be accepted to learn the art), video and water to create a stark 90-minute statement on the "bleakness of human experience". Coinciding with **New Zealand Japan Week**, the work has been acclaimed as "arresting... with a beauty of its own". It opens on Wednesday and runs until October 16.

□ **High notes: The New Zealand String Quartet**, performing **Schoenberg's Ode to Napoleon Buonaparte** with actor **Barry Empson** and pianist **Bryan Sayer**, at **Auckland Town Hall** on Tuesday at 7pm, as part of the **Chamber Music NZ** series. The **New Zealand Symphony Orchestra** with acclaimed British conductor **Jane Glover**, American pianist **David Allen Wehr**, and our own **Michael Houston**, touring the North Island with a changing programme through October. And the **Tower Opera Concert**, an evening of arias, choruses and ensembles, with **The Magic Flute's** bass singer **Noel Mangano**

and the **Auckland Philharmonia Orchestra**, at the **Aotea Centre** on Saturday.

□ At the galleries: Former architect-turned painter **David Russell** turns a practised eye on to **Auckland's Heritage**, detailed watercolour studies of our older buildings and a comment on the "bland superficiality" of many modern buildings. That opens today at the **Jonathan Grant Galleries** in Parnell, until October 13. **Don Bassett** curates a retrospective of **Joan Smith's** works from 1911-1989, for the **ASA Gallery** in Ponsonby, until October 13. The first annual **Buddle Findlay Art Award**, open only to final-year **Elam** students and worth \$1500, will be announced tomorrow. Law firm **Buddle Findlay**, which boasts an extensive art collection, hopes that the award will go some way towards returning a level of support to the arts community. The **Chiaroscuro Gallery** in **Durham St East** / **Queen St** hosts a preview viewing on Tuesday from 5pm, followed by a showing until October 15.

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