

## ARTS

# Challenge to gallery art

When artist Michael Hight is not creating neo-expressionist artwork, he paints houses.

Dabbling paint on suburban weatherboards might be a world away from his city studio, but Hight says career artists in New Zealand need a regular paying sideline.

In addition to a guaranteed income, house-painting gives Hight an opportunity to unwind and formulate new ideas before throwing himself into a burst of work — usually lasting two or three weeks.

The last few weeks have been spent devising *The Quick Brown Fox* exhibition, which features nine sculptures at Pakuranga's Fisher Gallery until November 25.

"When you put something in an art gallery, it becomes art with a capital A. I'm interested in challenging the institution of art in galleries," he says.

Some of Hight's sculptures are obviously visible. Others are more subtle, prompting viewers to question what is different about the environment.

For instance, 10 upright fence posts have been attached to the courtyard's fence. They are the same colour and the same size, but the spectator who gives the fence a second look will see those 10 posts have 60cm-long prongs rising out of them.

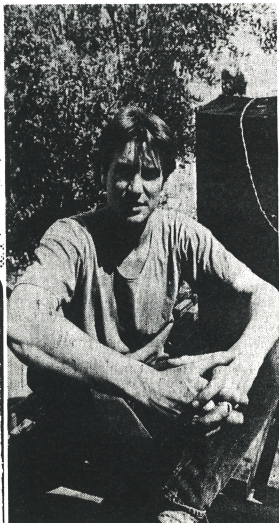
When the viewer opens his or her eyes and notices slight changes like that is when the question "Is it art?" can be considered.

As a painter and a sculptor, Hight has been considering that question and challenging the boundaries of art since he began working as an artist in the early 1980s.

Two years in London, which he describes as "his art school," helped by exposing him to new mediums, different cultures and a wider array of artists.

*The Quick Brown Fox* coincides with one featuring the photographs of acclaimed German photographer Herbert List.

The exhibition surveys the West German's career, covering work from 1930 through to the 1970s and representing his diverse output.



NEO-EXPRESSIONIST: Michael Hight with one of his sculptures.