



the
cameo project

trevor bayly

24 february – 30 march 2003

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'the colours here are
the full panoply of the
colours of life...'

... nine nines are eighty-one – of all the droned responses of the classroom, this is probably the most pleasurable in its sense of inevitability. Nine as a multiple of three; 81 as three to the power of four. The sum of the integers of the product (8 plus 1) corresponding to each of the multipliers (9). The chant thus becomes less an indignity of received learning than a mantra, which Trevor Bayly's *Untitled #1* takes even further. Hung together in a prescribed grid formation, the 81 individual pieces comprise 'figures' on acrylic sheet set by means of stainless steel bolts, sheathed in acrylic tube, exactly 9 mm off their respective 'grounds' of painted MDF board. When placed on the wall, the edges are 9 mm apart. Each procedure in the construction of this work makes its own contribution to the meditation that is the whole (all mind/no mind) – the stencilling of the location of twin holes for drilling and then the screwed attachment of each of 81 supportive hooks; the use of every colour of the spectrum (plus black and white, equals 9) against every colour of the spectrum so that all possible juxtapositions are explored.

Leaving the work untitled is deliberate on the artist's part: 'I did not want to lead the viewer in any way... I [wanted] the work to be like a window frame looking through into an inner meaning and reflecting like a mirror an emotional response.'¹ With the majority of the pieces the rock image is painted on the rear of the acrylic in full positive but some are painted in 'full negative' (where the negative space behind the rock image is painted so the viewer detects the image by looking through to

the ground behind), or 'half negative', where some of the ground colour projects around the rock image formed by looking through to the ground. Separation of figure and ground in certain lighting conditions makes for shadows; in natural light there is a polarity of the seen and the unseen as such shadows come and go.

So much for procedure, but a common response to *Untitled #1* inevitably focuses on the meaning of the rock itself. For anyone who has visited Hahei on the Coromandel Peninsula, it announces itself incontrovertibly as being at Cathedral Cove – a place the artist confirms as being rich in personal associations from many years of family holidays, and the rock symbolic of the loss of his wife in 1999.² The process of making this work, in its various obsessive/compulsive aspects, was thus conducive to a strongly contemplative state in which he sought to come to terms with the absence of a loved one as a component of a specific landscape's spiritual significance. And while loss and a corresponding working through of grief may have played a part in the genesis of *Untitled #1*, the colours here are the full panoply of the colours of life, allowing artist and viewer alike to experience an emotional recommitment that is confirmed and enhanced by the artist's initially serendipitous arrangement of the pieces – the word LIFE is spelt out in a way that all but the (colour-)blind can come to see.

This exploration of landscape as contemporaneous with an emotional journey is clearly reinforced in the artist's subsequent 'Hahei Series 1' of 2002,

where natural forms are extracted and refined from the same physical environment and then cut from sheet aluminium before being powder-coated or painted in either acrylic or enamel and mounted in combinations of three or four shapes in different colours on a common axis. The resulting wall-hung constructions (three of the seven were exhibited at te tuhi in 2002) explore the significance of colour combinations in the same way as *Untitled #1*, but speak more of transcendence in that the resulting shapes most closely resemble images of birds in flight.

Coming to his study of art as a mature student, Trevor Bayly inevitably brings not only an experience of life's passages, but also an unusual range of specific skills and learning. I think particularly of a background in professional engineering and varied careers in management, neither of which is generally thought as being a necessary prerequisite for artistic practice. Reflected though, as they are here in precise and methodical procedures, underpinned by an intellectual rigour, they provide an armature for an exploration of deep-rooted emotional experience and perhaps paradoxically allow the latter a greater fullness of expression. Whether it is this polarity which will sustain the artist's practice remains to be observed.

Michael Gifkins is an international literary agent and consultant. He is involved with the writing and production of many artists' monographs.

1. Artist's Cameo proposal
2. Personal comment, February 2003

trevor bayly

qualifications

BE (Civil) University of Auckland

MSc/MBA City of London University

MIPENZ

2002 Bachelor of Visual Arts, University of Auckland

exhibitions

2002 Group Exhibition, Artstation, Ponsonby

2002 Graduates' Exhibition, Manukau School of Visual Arts,
University of Auckland, The Centre Gallery, **te tuhi – the mark**

2001 Group Exhibition, 'Arting \$ = % Shopping', Manukau City

2001 Group Exhibition, Awataha Summer Festival of the Arts, Awataha Marae, Northcote

2000 Group Exhibition, 'eight degrees', Morgan Street Gallery, Auckland

competitions

2002 finalist, Wallace Art Awards



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