

OUR RUTHERFORD MEDALLIST

PAGE 5

ART AND SURVIVAL

Our own Distinguished Professor Brian Boyd (English, Drama and Writing Studies) joined Harvard psychologist and celebrity author Steven Pinker, evolutionary psychologist Geoffrey Miller and US neurobiologist Mark Changizi as one of four guest curators at a world-class exhibition at the Museum of Old and New Art in Hobart, Tasmania this month. Their task was to address weighty questions like, “Why do humans create and appreciate art?”

PAGE 4

PATH TO AUP

Dr Sam Elworthy grew up on a farm in South Canterbury but was “definitely not a farmer”. As a child, he loved books and ideas and was into music. And as a student he became editor of the student newspaper at the University of Otago. Now Sam is the director of Auckland University Press, a position he took up in 2007 after ten years at Princeton University Press, the last five as editor-in-chief. Sam is the subject of our “My story” in this issue of *Uninews*.

PAGE 6

HEARTFELT FAREWELLS

This month we lost two highly respected members of our community: acclaimed photographer Marti Friedlander, to whom the University recently awarded an honorary doctorate in literature, and internationally renowned architect Adjunct Professor Rewi Thompson. Both have made unique and invaluable contributions to our lives and communities and will be sadly missed.

PAGE 8

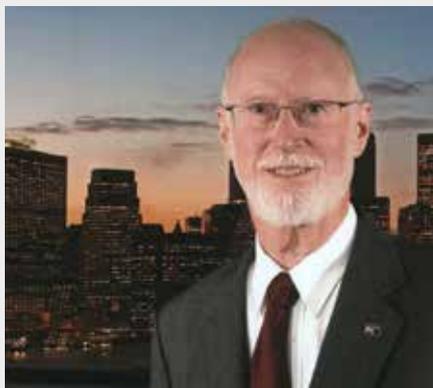
SEASON'S GREETINGS TO ALL

Best wishes for a wonderful holiday from the team that produces *Uninews* - Judy Wilford and Julianne Evans from Publications and Justin Marshall, Dan Holt and Mike Crozier from the design team in Communications and Marketing. Also from the regular *Uninews* photographers Godfrey Boehnke and Billy Wong. The first issue of *Uninews* will be out at the beginning of March next year. Keep an eye on the Staff Intranet to keep up with what's happening in the meantime.



THE NEW ZEALAND-UNITED STATES RELATIONSHIP

Associate Professor Steve Hoadley (Politics and International Relations) has had a busy month commenting across the media on the US presidential elections and the visit of the US Navy warship, as well as launching the second edition of his book *New Zealand United States Relations*. It looks at the thawing of the US/NZ diplomatic relationship since the 'no nuclear ship visits' period of the mid-1980s. Steve's book is available for \$40 from the New Zealand Institute of International Affairs, c/o Victoria University, PO BOX 600, Wellington.



NEW DELUXE MARQUEE

From March next year, in plenty of time for Autumn Graduation, we'll have a brand new deluxe pavilion to replace what's now known as the Alumni Marquee. Custom-built overseas especially for the University, it will provide an ideal space for events such Graduation, for gatherings organised by the University and its departments and for Alumni Relations and Development. With solid wall and glass panels and good to accommodate up to 1500 people, it will be the only one of its kind in New Zealand.



UNI NEWS ONLINE AND SEND US YOUR STORIES

If you want to read *Uni News* online it can be found under "News and Events" and then "University publications" on the front page of the University's website.

The publications team is also keen to hear about interesting staff summer research projects or quirky, fun or intriguing story ideas for the staff intranet. Email Judy Wilford (j.wilford@auckland.ac.nz) or Julianne Evans (julianne.evans@auckland.ac.nz)



- WHAT'S NEW 3
- IN BRIEF 4
- COVER STORY 5
- MY STORY 6
- DID YOU KNOW? 7
- WHAT'S ON CAMPUS 7
- OBITUARIES 8
- WHAT AM I DISCOVERING? 9
- IN THE SPOTLIGHT 9
- FROM THE COLLECTION 10
- WHAT'S COMING OUT 10
- CLASSIFIEDS 11
- MARAMATANGA 12

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AWARD-WINNER SOLVES DILEMMA

Four covers for one book: it's an unusual idea, but proved perfect for a recent publication from Auckland University Press.

Gottfried Lindauer's New Zealand: The Māori Portraits, published in association with Auckland Art Gallery and launched at the opening of the current Lindauer exhibition, needed to have four images on its cover – to acknowledge the iwi represented in the book.

However, for a magnificent volume of this kind there is great strength in having just a single cover image.

It was Katrina Duncan, (pictured right) the Press's senior designer, who suggested printing four different covers, each with a strong and dramatic single image. Auckland Art Gallery agreed.

The jacket design was by Neil Pardington, while Katrina created the design for the book, which comprises two sections: an illustrated essay by different authors plus a selection of 75 colour plates, each with a description on the facing page.

Katrina was full of admiration for Neil's design, which specified a different colour for each cover, taken from a detail in the image used.

For the book design, Katrina chose to use a "lovely heavy matt art paper with spot gloss varnish over the paintings. The choice of paper stock and varnish is an important part of the process".

"The design is very minimal," she added. "I wanted to have the paintings breathe on the

page."

Katrina went to China when the book was being printed – to check each sheet for quality as it came off the press. (The only previous book she has press-checked in China was *Self Portrait: Marti Friedlander*.)

Katrina is an award-winning designer who has spent 22 years on the staff of AUP. Her career began by chance, she says, when she took a job

as an editorial assistant while studying for her masters degree in sociology. She was asked to do some typesetting and never looked back: "It turned out to be my dream job," she says.

Katrina won the Edify Award for best educational book in the PANZ Book Design Awards for 2016 for her design of *See What I Can See*, by Gregory O'Brien.



STUDENTS HELP WITH REAL-WORLD PLANNING

Students from the School of Architecture and Planning have been working with Te Rānanga ā Iwi o Ngāpuhi (TRAION) on concepts for redeveloping a vacant site in Kaikohe, once occupied by the old Kaikohe Hotel.

At the same time they are gaining practical experience that is of advantage in their training.

Tania Pene, TRAION Iwi Development Leader, Natural Resource Management (and an alumna of Architecture and Planning), first approached Planning lecturer Lena Henry, who recognised the value for her third-year students of incorporating the project in their studio course. "The purpose of the studio is for students to learn the value of qualitative research, and this project allowed them to interact with a real

community facing a real development," she says.

Aided by a research grant from the Sir James Henare Māori Research Centre, the students travelled to Kaikohe for a weekend in August to engage with the community and gauge their thoughts on best use for the site.

The students stayed on the local marae, learning tikanga Māori principles to assist in their research. They gained insight into the history, culture and desires of the town through focus groups, interviews and consultations.

Proposals were then developed for assessment, and teams of students presented the concepts to the TRAION representatives. This allowed for discussion of ideas and also gave the students experience of the kind of collaborative processes they will face in industry.

Some of the themes that were strongly preferred were about making Kaikohe an attractive destination, developing a youth recreation space, offering educational facilities and creating a community garden.

In-depth quantitative research was also used to inform the recommendations, with groups working on a site content analysis, and suggesting ways of dealing with potential issues such as ongoing governance, financial feasibility and lack of skilled professionals in the area.

Both Lena and Tania were impressed with the quality of the students' proposals, and Tania hopes the architecture branch of the School of Architecture and Planning can be involved in a similar way in 2017.

For more on TRAION, visit www.ngapuhi.iwi.nz.





BRIAN BOYD CO-CURATES WORLD-CLASS EXHIBITION AT MONA

**Why do humans create and appreciate art?
Has art played a role in the biological survival
of our species?**

These weighty questions underpin a major international exhibition, *On the Origins of Art*, which opened at the impressive Museum of Old and New Art (MONA) in Hobart, Tasmania earlier this month.

Our own Distinguished Professor of English Brian Boyd joined Harvard psychologist and celebrity author Steven Pinker, American evolutionary psychologist Geoffrey Miller and US neurobiologist Mark Changizi as one of four guest curators of the exhibition.

Brian and his fellow academics were invited by museum owner David Walsh to propose their own theories on these questions and given carte blanche to choose art works from public and private collections all over the world to support their own hypotheses — and challenge the other co-curators.

Brian argues that since brains are pattern detectors, humans get their advantages from their better brains and nimbler hands, and as play helps all animals develop their key skills, art has evolved in humans as play with pattern; as a way to stimulate and develop brains and hands long before there were schools.

In keeping with his hypothesis, he chose 130 pieces ranging from basketry and painting to

photography and ceramics for his segment of the exhibition.

He included art from Māori and Aboriginal artists as well as works from African, Pacific, Asian, Islamic, North and South American and European traditions.

Among his choices are a work by New Zealand photographer Fiona Pardington and Pasifika artist Filipe Tohi, whose lalava (lashing) work can be seen inside the University's Fale Pasifika.

His selections occupy 11 rooms of the impressive museum, which is chiselled into an escarpment on the banks of the Derwent River in the north suburbs of Hobart.

On the Origins of Art opened on 5 November 2016 and will run until April 2017.

It will be the biggest and most elaborate show the museum has ever staged.

Since its huge opening weekend, which involved a “private party” for 400 and two days of parties for the public, reviews of the exhibition have been glowing, with Sharon Verghis writing in *the Weekend Australian*: “Pinker and Boyd were particularly hands-on, with Walsh describing the latter as ‘super engaged – he suggested a huge range of human dynamism and creativity, all sorts of impossible and incredible things – he’s put together one hell of an exhibition.’”

MARSDEN FUNDING

The University celebrated the success of its outstanding research projects earlier this month.

Thirty eight of our researchers or research groups won a total of \$20.6 million in Marsden funding, which amounted to nearly a third of the total amount distributed for this year, the best-ever result for the University.

Successful projects were on a rich diversity of topics, ranging from a study in the Business School on new methods of forecasting applied to New Zealand’s property market to a Faculty of Science investigation into improving understanding of internal communication within proteins.

This year the Marsden Fund delivered \$65 million to 117 research projects around the country.

ILLUSTRIOUS LINE-UP OF SCIENCE MEDALLISTS

The University of Auckland came close to scooping the pool at this year’s Science Honours dinner on 23 November, with our researchers receiving nine of 18 medals presented by the Royal Society of New Zealand. To read about the work of the Rutherford Medal recipient see our cover story opposite. The University’s other medal-winners are:

Pickering Medal: Associate Professor Iain Anderson, for wearable technology

McDiarmid Medal: Professor Merryn Tawhai, for her specialised work on lungs in ABI.

Hector Medal: Associate Professor Stéphane Coen, for his work on the physics of using light infrastrucrtr such as fibre optics

Hutton Medal: Professor Wendy Nelson, who has established New Zealand as a place of extreme value for diversity and uniqueness of seaweeds

Mason Durie Medal: Distinguished Professor Viviane Robinson, for her contribution to education in developing education leaders in schools

Dame Joan Metge Medal: Professor Stuart McNaughton, for wide-ranging contributions to education

Jones Medal: Emeritus Professor Alastair Scott, for work in statistics

Beaven Medal (Health Research Council of New Zealand Medal: Distinguished Professor Jane Harding, Liggins Institute

HOW DID WE START TALKING?

Emeritus Professor Michael Corballis (Psychology) is one of an illustrious line-up of staff who have just been announced as recipients of the prestigious medals presented each year by the Royal Society of New Zealand. Michael has received the top honour, the Rutherford Medal. He talks to Judy Wilford about his work and what the medal means to him.

When the very ancient hunters from before the dawn of language returned from over the nearby hill with a brace or two of game, they would have been unable to tell their friends or family about the huge animal that had got away – except perhaps through excited gesturing and arms held wide to show the size of the beast.

As time went on, more formal conventions of miming might have developed, with increasingly complex systems of gestures for conveying the drama and danger of experiences from outside the boundaries of present time and place.

Michael Corballis believes human language evolved from gesture rather than from the cries and calls of early primates, as has traditionally been believed. Years of scientific investigation, including his most recent Marsden-funded research, has given him some solidly-based support for this. “The idea is still controversial but at least it’s out there now,” he says.

His research involves study through MRI imaging of the way neurons of the human brain are activated not only through language but also through gestures, both productive and receptive.

By checking out the responses of the neurons in the brain both to tasks involving productive language (give all the words you can beginning with “p”) and to those involving receptive language (identify which of these matched words are synonyms), Michael has been working to build new knowledge of the neuronal networks involved in language.

The other object of his investigations has been to map these “language” networks onto similar networks relating to gestures.

“There is a system that’s quite well-known in the monkey brain,” he says, “that has to do with actions such as reaching for objects or putting things in their mouths. It has been established that there is a network of neurons in the frontal cortex of monkeys that light up in response to these movements.”

A group of researchers in Italy found that the same sets of neurons were activated also when the monkeys saw someone else performing the actions.

“This,” explains Michael, “is a ‘mirror’ system,

well-known in neuroscience circles. You can see that mirror neurons, which respond both to seeing something and doing something, would be very useful for language, since it involves mapping what you hear onto your ability to speak.”

One section of Michael’s research has involved studying the brain responses of his human subjects to the performance of a series of mimes and gestures, some of which were taken from sign language. His studies have shown that, in addition to the neurons activated in language, humans have two independent networks of neurons that are both related to gesture but in different ways. One correlates with whether the subject is left or right-handed; the other does not. His belief is that the one correlating to handedness is probably related to the manufacture and use of tools.

“I think the network relating to gesture in the monkey brain ultimately led to the evolution of three different networks seen today in humans: one a residue of the original network, another for tool manufacture and another for language,” he says.

“This gives us an opportunity to look at the way particular networks in primates became specialised for different things. I’ve been looking for some years at how that neuron system could have given rise to language, with sound incorporated at some point during this process. The new knowledge allows us to give an account of language that makes evolutionary sense.

“If you have no sense of other times and

places, the only things you can share are in the immediate present. If you want to talk about tomorrow or to plan, you need language. I think that’s the impetus behind its evolution.”

His first book on the subject, *From Hand to Mouth: The Origins of Language*, was published by Princeton University Press in 2003.

His latest book, *The Truth About Language*, which includes findings from his recent research, is now completed and is to be published early next year by Chicago University Press and Auckland University Press.

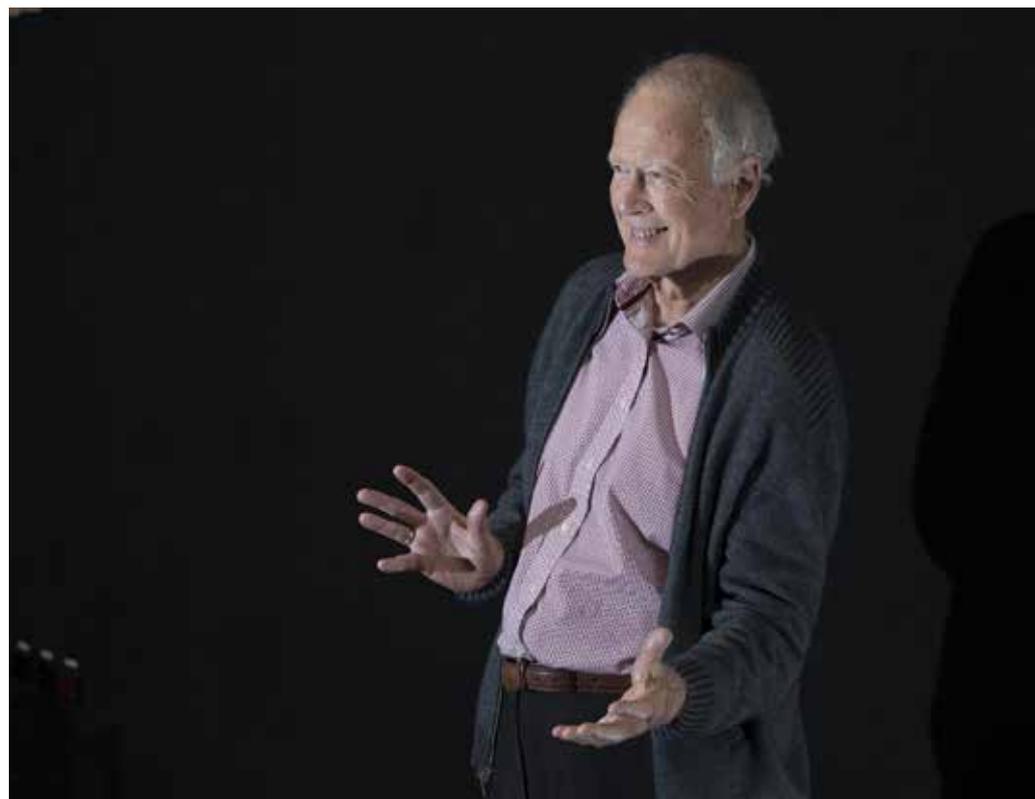
Michael’s pleasure at receiving the Rutherford Medal is not so much for himself as for the affirmation that “psychology has come of age as a science”.

When he first joined the staff of the University in 1961 (before departing to do his PhD in Canada, where he subsequently became a professor at McGill), the Department of Psychology at Auckland had been established only four years earlier and was mainly based in the Faculty of Arts, with only a few papers offered as part of a Science degree.

“Now, by comparison, in this year’s QS rankings, we were the top science department at the University, ranking 29= in the world,” he says.

“I’m very happy that psychology is now so highly respected at the University and that its contribution to science is recognised around the world.”

For information about the other University medallists, see the opposite page and the Staff Intranet.



Michael Corballis: Did language evolve from gestures?

MY STORY



Dr Sam Elworthy is the director of Auckland University Press. He took up the position in 2007, after spending ten years at Princeton University Press, the last five as editor-in-chief.

WHERE WERE YOU BORN AND WHERE DID YOU GROW UP?

I grew up on a farm in South Canterbury where my father farmed sheep and cattle – on the same piece of land that his father and grandfather and great-grandfather had farmed before him. Then when I was nine my father decided to get into politics and we moved to the big city of Oamaru, where he became National MP for Waitaki for the next nine years. Most of that time I was away at boarding school at Waihi and later at Christ's College.

WHAT DID YOU ENJOY DOING AS A CHILD?

I was definitely not a farmer. Other boys would be blowing whistles and training sheep dogs but that wasn't me. I loved books and ideas and was into music – both classical and rock – playing the piano, clarinet and guitar. I became very interested in political ideas so at university I got into student politics and edited the student newspaper.

That was at Otago, which was a great place to be a student – I stretched out my degrees and stayed a long time. I started out exploring subjects like anthropology, classics and philosophy, then ended up majoring in history. I stayed at Otago for a masters – and then went on to do a PhD at Rutgers University in New Jersey.

WHAT WAS YOUR FIRST JOB EVER?

My main claim to fame is that I never had a real job until I was 32, though I did have a few jobs when I was a student: cleaned toilets in a factory; walked the forests and picked up possum, pig and deer poop to work out the number of pests in the area based in Ruatahuna in the Ureweras for a couple of summers.

Then later I did a little bit of teaching at Otago and Vic, but my first real job was as an editorial assistant at Princeton University in 1997.

DID YOU HAVE A FAVOURITE TEACHER?

It's difficult to keep it down to one, but a man who does stand out is Professor Erik Olssen from Otago University (now emeritus professor, I think), who supervised my masters thesis and is now writing a book for Auckland University Press. He has a real intellectual seriousness, which I learned to respect and which I try to bring into my work in scholarly publishing. Erik believes deeply in the value of real research and real thinking, and didn't hesitate to show his disapproval to students (like me) when we didn't quite measure up.

In fact when he spoke at the launch of a book based on my masters thesis, he pointed out just a couple of things that could have been improved. I liked that.

WHAT'S THE PURPOSE OF YOUR PRESENT POSITION?

To find the biggest brains in New Zealand and turn their best ideas into great books.

WHAT DO YOU LIKE MOST ABOUT THE JOB?

I love discovering new talent and then working with those people to help them take their thesis or their idea and turn it into a successful book. Then at the other end of the publishing process, I love seeing how those books do in the market place – discovering which books generate excitement in the world and which ones don't. As a publisher, you learn a lot from both.

DO YOU THINK WHAT YOU DO CHANGES PEOPLE'S LIVES?

I do. I think that books change people's lives – for both the writers and for the readers. In publishing we always have to remember that the author might have spent one, or three or even 20 years thinking about and writing the manuscript we are working with.

If we do a great job (or a mediocre job) of taking those ideas out into the world then it can change that person's life. And then once books are out in the world of readers, there are some that influence public debate on a big issue, or change the course of future scholarship. Watching books you've worked on do that is a big thrill.

WHAT HAVE YOU ACHIEVED THAT YOU'RE PROUD OF?

I've just got back from Frankfurt Book Fair where over 100,000 publishers from around the world get together to buy and sell rights. We had lots of interest from some of the big publishers in buying rights and publishing co-editions of our forthcoming titles. In the big circus that is Frankfurt, I'm proud that our Auckland University Press books and authors can make an impact. I love getting international publishers excited about New Zealand books, and wanting to publish them in different territories and languages.

WHAT DO YOU ENJOY DOING WHEN YOU'RE NOT WORKING?

I enjoy cycling. I've got three sons who enjoy it too and I'm quite involved in coaching the Takapuna Grammar School cyclists. Also, my sons gave me some piano lessons as a fiftieth birthday present, so I'm looking forward to taking them up and playing music again.



DID YOU KNOW

... that seven men from what was then called Auckland University College were held in German prisoner of war camps during the First World War?

Jo Birks, Assistant Librarian, Special Collections, looks through some of their poignant letters home.

One of those men was Horace Hunt, a musician who graduated from the University with a MusB in 1907. Hunt was detained at Ruhleben civilian internment camp from October 1914 until the end of the war.

He was joined there in February 1915 by fellow New Zealander Albert Jones, who didn't attend Auckland University College but, like Hunt, was studying in Germany when war was declared.

In letters which form part of his papers held in Special Collections, Jones writes eloquently of the conditions faced by prisoners, including food shortages, boredom and depression.

He also gives fascinating accounts of the activities the internees organised to keep that boredom at bay, which including lectures, theatre performances, sports tournaments and publishing a magazine.

After nearly three years in Ruhleben, Jones was still making the best of things. In a letter home in January 1918, he wrote: 'I call my bed my drawing-room because I with-draw into [it] at nighttime, draw myself up in it when the days are cold & drawing-pin everything interesting on top & around it.'

From 5 December, a selection of photos, letters and ephemera from Jones' papers will feature in a set of new stories about New Zealand POWs on the Special Collections First World

War centenary website, which centres on the University's roll of honour.

The new website content will include stories about Hunt and Jones and two about Auckland graduates who were military POWs. Royal Flying Corps pilot Howard Ellis (BA 1910, LLB 1912) was taken prisoner after he was struck by anti-aircraft fire while flying over the Somme in July 1916 and was forced to land behind enemy lines.

William Gray (BSc 1910, MSc 1911) was captured in August 1917 while serving with the New Zealand Rifle Brigade near Messines, Belgium.

As well as that online content, some of Albert Jones' papers will be displayed outside the Special Collections Reading Room on the General Library ground floor from 5 December to 23 January.

Eventually, digitised copies of the entire set of his papers will be available online.

For the online PDF version of *UniNews*, visit the Special Collections First World War centenary website.

Lining up outside the cook house at Ruhleben civilian internment camp, Germany 1918, Jones family papers, 1911-1985. MSS & Archives 2014/14, 1/16-5



WHAT'S ON CAMPUS

AN AFTERNOON WITH ANGELA ROBERTS

Thursday 8 December, 4.30-6.30pm

Venue: A201, Epsom Campus

End your year in conversation with Angela Roberts as she discusses her four-year tenure as president of the Post Primary Teachers' Association (PPTA). With Christmas pies and a glass of wine, let Angela cap off a busy teaching year with a discussion that canvases her experiences as president, the challenges she sees facing the compulsory education sector, her experiences influencing education policy, and her imminent transition back to her secondary school job. This event is aimed at educators from primary, secondary and tertiary contexts.

CHRISTMAS CAROLS

Wednesday 14 December 12pm

Venue: ClockTower Building, Princes Street
More and more staff are gathering each year in the ClockTower for this festive event, which grew out of a smaller group nine years ago and is organised by Academic Services Staff. Listen and if you like, sing along to all your Christmas favourites from Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer to Come all ye Faithful. Members of the choir are from across the University and it's all about enjoyment and participation. Michelle Wong, who will be conducting the choir for the fourth year in a row, says it's a great chance for staff to sing together and the aim is to have fun.

PRIVACY CONFERENCE

Asian Privacy Scholars International Conference
13-14 December, 9am-5.30pm (plus dinner on first night)

Venue: The University of Auckland Business School

Local and international privacy experts will gather to study developments in data privacy in the greater Asian region. This year's theme focuses on the challenges businesses face in addressing consumers' fears and expectations in an era of pervasive surveillance. Open to privacy academics and professionals, discount for students. For details, go to <http://bit.ly/2ev2si3> or contact Lusi McCabe Email: l.mccabe@auckland.ac.nz Phone: +64 9 923 3322



FAREWELL TO REWI AND MARTI

This month, we lost two highly respected members of our community: acclaimed photographer Marti Friedlander, to whom the University recently awarded an honorary doctorate in literature, and internationally renowned architect Adjunct Professor Rewi Thompson.

Marti's honour, conferred in October this year, reflects her singular contribution to our vision of ourselves as New Zealanders over six decades of social change.

Born Martha Gordon in London in 1928, Marti was brought up alongside her sister Anne in a Jewish orphanage in the East End.

At 14, she won a scholarship to Bloomsbury Technical School for Women where she studied photography.

In 1956, when she met Kiwi dentist Gerrard Friedlander, who was in the UK on his OE, she was working for two of London's top fashion photographers Douglas Glass and Gordon Crocker.

She emigrated to New Zealand in 1958 after "falling in love at first sight" and later marrying Gerrard, who has been her lifelong love and companion ever since.

While she memorably captured a wild and empty landscape during her travels around the country, it is her striking images of people that have become her trademark.

Elderly Māori kuia with moko, artists and writers, farmers and vintners, politicians and protestors, and in particular, children, always portrayed candidly and unsentimentally.

In 2007, Marti and Gerrard established the Marti Friedlander Photographic Award to financially support talented photographers and have also established an endowment to Auckland University Press supporting a series of books on creative lives.

Marti's own life and photography have been celebrated by University of Auckland Professor Leonard Bell in his 2009 book *Marti Friedlander*, by filmmaker Shirley Horrocks in the 2004 documentary *Marti: the Passionate Eye* and in her 2013 autobiography with Hugo Manson, *Self Portrait Marti Friedlander*.

Professor Rewi Thompson (Ngāti Porou/Ngāti Raukawa) was one of New Zealand's leading architects and an internationally-renowned indigenous architect.

Raised in Wellington, Rewi began his career in engineering before leaving to study architecture at the University of Auckland, where he completed a Bachelor of Architecture. Following registration he established his own practice in 1983 and quickly rose to prominence.

Describing his work as focusing on two things, land and people, Rewi received dozens of architecture awards for his work, including a UNESCO International Award for a house design for urban Māori, and numerous New Zealand Institute of Architects awards.

His contribution to architecture included notable projects, across a range of sectors, such as the Māori Studies facilities at UNITEC and Tairāwhiti Polytechnic, innovative residential buildings in Manukau for Housing New Zealand,

the redevelopment of the Otara shopping centre, Ruapoutaka Marae in Glen Innes, and Ngāti Otara Marae and Te Rawheoro Marae in Tolaga Bay.

He will perhaps be best remembered for his own striking, Kohimarama home, completed in 1985.

He brought a culturally-based perspective to every project which reflected his belief that wellbeing could be enhanced through Māori design and connection to the landscape.

In 2002, he was appointed Adjunct Professor at the University of Auckland's School of Architecture after a number of years acting as a guest critic in studio.

As well as teaching he was also responsible for developing an appropriate cultural focus that he termed 'Te Pare' or 'The Threshold,' with special concern for the faculty's Māori and female students, and those from other cultures.

Rewi adjudicated architecture awards for many years, including the New Zealand Institute of Architects Students Awards and the Auckland Architectural Association Awards.

Haere, haere, haere atu rā.

Marti Friedlander, author photo taken for 'Self Portrait, Marti Friedlander', Auckland University Press 2013

Professor Rewi Thompson, Adjunct Professor, Faculty of Creative Arts and Industries, University of Auckland

ON A MISSION FOR WOMEN'S HEALTH

Dr Jenny Kruger leads the pelvic floor research group, based at the Auckland Bioengineering Institute (ABI). The group is a diverse mix of bioengineers, urogynaecologists and physiotherapists. Her professional background is in nursing and midwifery, but she has held a post-doctorate research position with the Institute for the past seven years.

My research is focused on pelvic floor muscle function and dysfunction in women in particular, how this relates to childbirth, urinary incontinence and pelvic organ prolapse.

We know that pelvic floor muscle damage occurs in approximately 20 percent of first time mums and is one of the leading causes of pelvic organ prolapse and urinary incontinence.

We also know many of the risk factors that are associated with this type of injury; what is more challenging is how those risk factors lead to the damage.

Being based at the Institute means our group has expertise in mathematical and computational modelling which allows a more quantitative analysis of how the pelvic floor muscles behave during childbirth.

This increases our knowledge of the mechanisms of delivery and how muscle damage is likely to occur.

Once we know this, developing prevention strategies can become more personalised and more likely to succeed. We are quite some way from this becoming a reality in the clinic, but the past five years has seen great advances in the functionality of the model, and we hope that with further validation, these models will be a useful tool for the clinician in the future.

We are also on mission to increase awareness of pelvic floor health in general. For many years, women have known about the benefits of pelvic floor muscle exercises (kegels) and there is now unequivocal evidence that pelvic floor muscle training is effective first line treatment for urinary incontinence and mild prolapse.

The problem is women don't do their exercises, or if they do they are unsure if they're doing them correctly and we don't make it part of our everyday life. We hope to change that. Part of the expertise at the ABI is development of bio-instrumentation. Our group has developed a novel, 'wearable' intra-vaginal pressure sensing device which we hope will revolutionise the way women engage with their pelvic floor health.

The device, which we have called the FemFit, consists of an array of pressure sensors encapsulated in a thin, compliant silicone – which is able to measure the vaginal pressure profile in real time, at rest, during exercise or

during pelvic floor muscle training. The pressures are transmitted via Bluetooth and displayed on a custom built app on your smart device.

Information is uploaded to a secure server, which could be shared with a health provider, or an online community. The FemFit is more than just a 'fitness tracker' or a pelvic floor muscle trainer. It could be seen as something you use periodically, to determine the vaginal pressure profile during different life stages (pregnancy, menopause or when symptoms occur).

It can be used to inform what training programme is appropriate for the symptoms that you are experiencing and tell you how you are progressing and if the training is being performed correctly.

We are about to begin a clinical trial, in collaboration with the University of Montreal to validate the device and assess its utility in women with and without incontinence who are taking part in a three-month pelvic floor muscle training programme.

We hope that once we have the data from the clinical trials, we can begin work to get the FemFit available for all women.



UNINews highlights how our academics have been featuring in and commenting on the news this month.

TRUMPED

Academics from the Faculty of Arts were all across the media commenting on the lead up to the US presidential election - and its widely unexpected result.

Associate Professors Stephen Hoadley, Jennifer Lees-Marshment and Jennifer Curtin and Dr Maria Armoudian (Politics and International Relations), Associate Professor Jennifer Frost (History) and Dr Gavin Ellis (Media and Communication) in particular, were busy on radio, television and online.

CHILDHOOD OBESITY

Dr Darren Powell (School of Curriculum and Pedagogy) was questioned on *Radio Live* on whether schools are the right place to fight the growing problem of childhood obesity, ahead of a panel discussion featuring education and obesity experts organised by the Faculty of Education and Social Work.

PHYSICIAN-ASSISTED SUICIDE

Care of older people is the focus of research by Professor Ngaire Kerse (also HOD School of Population Health) who presented her view on physician-assisted suicide in an article directed at GPs in the *NZ Doctor* this week. Her key points included that physician-assisted suicide appears to rest with maximising comfort, avoiding misery, facilitating autonomy and relieving distress. She believes the practice of physician assisted suicide and euthanasia may be the start of a slippery slope where not all treatment is used in the context of imminent death.

SUGAR BABIES

A story about a series of studies by a research team from the Department of Paediatrics and the Liggins Institute was covered on the news sites of *NZ Herald*, *stuff.co.nz*, *NewsHub* and *TVNZ*, and in five regional newspapers, from Whangarei to Invercargill. The stories highlighted that local hospitals in each region are still running the main ongoing trial, dubbed h-POD, which is investigating whether massaging a sugar gel inside the cheek of at-risk newborns can reduce admissions to NICU for a common, potentially dangerous condition called neonatal hypoglycaemia, or low blood sugar.

FROM THE ART COLLECTION



Posthumous portraits are notoriously difficult for painters to get right. Without ever meeting the subject, artists are required to represent the individual as if they had been alive when painted.

Working from a photograph, perhaps projected onto his canvas, artist Louis John Steele, manages to get a “speaking likeness” of botanist and politician (and lifelong bachelor) Dr Andrew Sinclair (1796-1861).

Steele was working over 30 years after Sinclair’s death and would never have met him, yet he captures the naturalist’s characteristic forward sweep of hair and brown eyes, showing

his fair Scottish complexion and giving a sense of his reserved nature.

Born in Reigate in 1843, where he trained at the Reigate Academy, Steele polished his technique at the École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts in Paris, and Florence Accademia, where he met and married his Italian wife in the 1860s.

Throughout the 1870s he was a frequent exhibitor at the Royal Academy of Arts in London and well-known for his etchings, made after the famous subject picture specialists of the day like William Orchardson and Marcus Stone.

He also exhibited at the Paris Salon, and

remained a committed Francophile throughout his life.

Ill health forced Steele’s emigration to the warmer climes of New Zealand in 1886, and he set up a painting studio in Victoria Arcade at the bottom of Shortland Street, where he was commissioned to complete portraits of eminent Aucklanders such as John Logan Campbell and George Grey, as well as racehorses.

The Weekly Standard described his studio as “a combination of art gallery, museum and general curiosity shop, with himself as a genial showman” because of his tendency to dress flamboyantly in the manner of a Parisian bohemian.

His subject Andrew Sinclair (1794–1861) was a Scottish doctor who used his opportunities as a naval surgeon to hone his skills as a naturalist. Sinclair’s travels enabled him to collect botanical and zoological specimens for the British Museum.

Sinclair first visited New Zealand in 1841 with the British explorer and botanist Joseph Dalton Hooker, who was working as the naturalist for James Clark Ross’s Antarctic expedition.

In 1844, Sinclair succeeded Willoughby Shortland as New Zealand’s second colonial secretary.

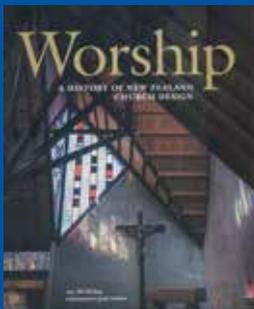
Pensioned back to Britain in 1856, he discussed his ideas with leading scientific thinkers like Charles Darwin, Thomas Huxley and Richard Owen. His friend J.D. Hooker had been appointed assistant director of the Royal Botanic Gardens in Kew in 1855, and in 1858, Sinclair sailed back

WHAT’S COMING OUT

WORSHIP

“New Zealand has always been and remains today one of the most irreligious countries in the world. So why do we have so many churches?”

This is the intriguing opening to the introduction to a magnificent volume, *Worship: A History of New Zealand Church Design*, published by Penguin Random House NZ the School of Architecture and Planning, and photos by Jane Ussher, one of New Zealand’s most respected photographers. This stunning tribute to New Zealand church architecture brings together early country churches, grand



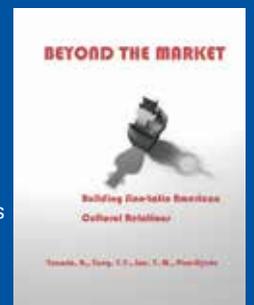
cathedrals and striking modernist designs in a unique survey of some of our most compelling landmark buildings.

Bill McKay thoughtfully explores the history and diversity of church building in New Zealand while Jane Ussher captures in extraordinary detail an array of churches from right through the country.

BEYOND THE MARKET

Edited by Associate Professor Walescka Pino-Ojeda of Latin American Studies, alongside colleagues from the University of Nottingham Ningbo China, this book focuses on

culture, arts, society and spaces. It sets out to rediscover, reconnect and create links between China and Latin America beyond the market logic that presently dominates their mutual interaction. The introductory sections appear in English, Chinese, Spanish and Portuguese and it features contributions from Walescka, Dr Kathryn Lehman and Dr Genaro Oliveira.



to New Zealand to collect botanical specimens for Hooker's *Handbook of New Zealand Flora* (published between 1864 and 1867).

Sinclair also accompanied geologist Julius Haast on his journey to Mount Cook, but drowned on 26 March 1861 while crossing the Rangitata River on his way back to Samuel Butler's Mesopotamia Station.

Hearing of the tragedy, Hooker wrote to Sinclair's niece Agnes Sinclair in Auckland, offering to curate his late friend's personal herbarium and botanical papers.

When Agnes died in 1884, her husband, judge and naturalist Thomas Gillies, founded the 'Sinclair scholarship in botany and zoology' at Auckland University College, where he was on the council. After Gillies' own death in 1889, it's thought the money from his estate was used to commission Steele to produce the Sinclair portrait, which was presented to the University in 1893.

Sinclair's zoological specimens, mostly New Zealand sponges and zoophytes, are now in the collection of the British Museum, while his plants went to Kew. Hooker named 16 New Zealand plants after Sinclair, including an orchid, sedges, herbs, shrubs and trees, including the puka (*Meryta sinclairii*). Mount Sinclair and the Sinclair River are also named after him.

■ Linda Tyler

Louis John Steele (1843-1918) Portrait of Andrew Sinclair 1893, oil on canvas, 600 x 495mm.

GENERATING DATA

Co-edited by Associate Professor Bruce Curtis from Sociology, the latest hefty tome in the SAGE Benchmarks in Social Research Methods series highlights local expertise in social science methodology. This major work cross-cuts a number of substantive methodologies and is structured around seven groupings of research in four volumes that provide the context for data generation in the social sciences. It features contributions from our own Dr Colin Cremin, Dr Vivienne Elizabeth, Associate Professor Tracey McIntosh and Dr Claudia Bell.



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MISCELLANEOUS

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THE NUCLEAR LEGACY – ATTENTION NEEDED NOW

Last month, the First Committee of the United Nations General Assembly adopted a draft resolution, which, when adopted by the General Assembly in a few weeks, will lead to negotiations on a treaty to prohibit nuclear weapons.

It would be difficult to overstate the importance of this achievement it has been 70 years since the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings and finally, the international community has agreed that the time has come to negotiate a ban on these most destructive of all weapons. We've had a ban on biological weapons for over 45 years, a ban on chemical weapons for almost 25 years and now, finally, a ban on nuclear weapons could be within reach.

And yet, the mainstream media have hardly mentioned it. Why?

In large part, the problem is one of perception. While nuclear weapons were quite rightly understood as a serious threat during the Cold War, the popular view is that that threat has receded with the softening (until recently) of bipolar tensions. It is true that compared to the Cold War, the numbers have dramatically decreased. But today, there are still around 15,000 nuclear weapons in the hands of nine states. The vast majority are held by the United States and the Russian Federation (around 7000 warheads each, with about 1,800 each on high alert) with China (260), United Kingdom (215), France (300), India (120), Pakistan (130), Israel (80) and North Korea (less than 15) bringing up the rear.

Nuclear weapons may be significantly reduced in terms of numbers compared to the situation during the Cold War. But numbers alone are deceiving. The nuclear arsenals today are many times more powerful than the early atomic

bombs. Thus, from being safer from nuclear weapons than we have been, with today's technology we hold the capability to destroy the world several times over.

And the weapons are not "safe". In one of the more amusing moments of the recent election campaigns in the United States, President Obama quipped that if Donald Trump could not be trusted with a Twitter account he was hardly to be trusted with the nuclear codes. A great line it hides an important truth. Nuclear weapons are not safe in Donald Trump's hands. They are not safe in anyone's hands. Recent research has shown us convincingly that even a "small" nuclear detonation (whether accidental or deliberate) would severely disrupt agriculture, the global economy and lead to long-term environmental degradation, starvation and outbreak of epidemic disease. The weapons are not safe, regardless of who has them.

And yet, despite all this evidence, 38 states voted against the resolution and another 16 states abstained. Many of them were either nuclear weapons states themselves or so-called "nuclear umbrella" states such as Germany and Australia – which are in security alliances with the United States. They take the position that it is an entirely pointless exercise to conclude a treaty that clearly will not (at least in the short term) have the support of those states that either have nuclear weapons, or that benefit from the protection of nuclear weapons.

But this logic is ill-conceived. In what other area of law (international or otherwise) do we wait for compliance with a new rule before agreeing to the rule? For example, in the domestic context, do we wait for everyone to agree on same sex marriage before we provide for it in our legislation? Internationally, do we

wait for all states to agree that man-made climate change is an existential threat, or do those states willing to take responsibility move forward regardless?

In recent years New Zealand diplomats have worked hard in different international forums persisting in the anti-nuclear cause. New Zealand was one of the co-sponsors of the resolution last month, and a key participant in the diplomatic work leading up to that decision. It is set to play an important part in the negotiations next year, negotiations that offer us the best chance right now of eventually eliminating nuclear weapons entirely.

This work may not have the popular appeal of the vibrant and energetic anti-nuclear campaigns of the 1980s, which led to our nuclear free status. It may not have the excitement of the flotillas in the harbours, the marches on the streets and the protests in our communities. But this diplomatic negotiating work is important just the same. It continues the legacy of the 1980s and right now, along with the work of other like-minded states, it is the best chance we have of achieving a nuclear-free world.

We should pay attention.

■ Associate Professor Treasa Dunworth,
Faculty of Law

Photo: Associate Professor Treasa Dunworth, Faculty of Law (pictured on screens), recently attended the First Committee of the United Nations General Assembly and addressed a side-event convened by the NZ Ministry of Foreign Affairs discussing legal issues arising from the upcoming negotiations.

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