



The Welcome Swallow Gallery

Presents

Drawn from Life

Three significant artists who devoted a lifetime to depicting the human form in their artworks



Ron Stenberg



Tim Quirke



Jan Nigro

12th May - 30th June 2023

Held in association with



FINE ART SOCIETY
NEW ZEALAND

MONTANA
FOOD AND EVENTS

Exhibition Sponsors

Our first collaboration with Fine Art Society New Zealand

We are pleased to present this exhibition featuring works supplied by Fine Art Society New Zealand.

These artworks are all works on paper produced by highly trained, professional artists. Although all three are completely different in their style and subject matter, they all display the skills that can only be acquired from years of training and practice in rendering the human body.

The depiction of the human body has been central to art in every culture from the beginning of time and still is to the present day. From the oldest identified pieces of art to those created during the modern era, the depiction of the human figure has played a monumental role in conveying the ideals, desires, and creeds of the artists that created them.

Whether the human figure displayed the artist's view of 'perfection' such as a young handsome man with an athletic build or the frailty of a subject such as a venerable woman grimacing in pain, art concentrating upon a body reflects the thought of not only artists but also provides some insight from the nation, culture, sect, or time period in which the artists lived and worked.

Representing the human figure means more than simply reproducing a likeness of a person. Artists also endeavour to capture and express their own special view of the model. Such art can make us feel sympathy, amusement, attraction, identification, pity, or even adoration.

Since ancient times, painters and sculptors have portrayed the most important people in their societies: kings and queens, heroes, deities, foreigners, saints, artists, as well as the common people, and more.

By the 17th century, the depiction of the naked body, often within the genre of history painting, had become an essential skill for artists to master, and life drawing remains an important part of artists' training today.

For any new artist, the ultimate goal in drawing techniques has always been the human form. In a life drawing class, students gravitate toward capturing the human body. Not only for artists, but for architects and designers. If you can render the human body perfectly in all of its complexity, you can draw anything else.

We hope there will be an artwork in this exhibition that can find a place in your own personal collection.



Life Class at Elam
1937
The 17 year old student, Jan Aislabie is the second from the right and her future husband, Gerry Nigro is the man in the centre.

Drawn from Life



Tim Quirke drawing
from a life model

"I have been drawing since the age of nine and then art school aged 12. The head and figure have always been my main interest. I became devoted to drawing, searching for the simplicity of form and structure, which should always be the ultimate aim."

Ron Stenberg
2007

"Moving from one country to another scrambles one's expectations and sharpens a sense of what is valuable. Drawing is the record and reconstruction of a most human response. Colour is the reintegration of emotional values intelligibly represented"

Tim Quirke
2011

"Naked and nude: there is no difference between the naked and the nude, but the public thinks so. Clothes give people a period in time but when you strip them, the body is quite universal. The nude has always been a no no to the general public. I need to look beyond the skin at the social, sexual, cultural or even psychological complexities."

Jan Nigro
1996

from Ron Stenberg's sketchbook



Ron Stenberg
1919 - 2017

Self Portrait 1995

Ron Stenberg had a long and distinguished career as an artist, teacher and illustrator. Born in Auckland in July 1919, Stenberg initially studied painting as a young teenager in the early 1930's. After art school he worked as an illustrator and later in advertising. Stenberg established himself as an artist in New Zealand through exhibiting in the group exhibitions at the Auckland Society of Arts. In 1954 a Carnegie scholarship enabled him to travel overseas for two years. A few years later he was offered a teaching position at the Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art in Dundee, Scotland; he remained there for almost thirty years retiring as Professor of Painting in 1984. He was a frequent exhibitor with the Royal Scottish Academy, Royal Scottish Watercolour Society, the Glasgow Institute and Royal Society of British Artists, as well as participating in many group and solo exhibitions in Britain, Sweden and other European countries.

His work is held in many private and public collections both here and overseas. The Auckland City Art Gallery, Te Papa, Bishop Suter Gallery in Nelson and the National Gallery of Victoria in Melbourne all hold his work. His subject matter is, in many ways, very traditional.

People, places and objects with a personal connection to the artist. His work sits well within both a New Zealand and a Scottish painting tradition.



Dock workers
Graphite & Conte 47 x 29cm



The First Picnic, Spring '86
Ink & wash 28 x 37cm



Sleeping after Work
Conte 25 x 20cm



Record Keeper
Charcoal 37x 29cm



James Birrel Duff
Pencil & wash 29 x 27cm



Kneeling Nude
Grey chalk 43 x 30cm



Curly Sue, Dundee
Pastel 29 x 24cm



Guitar Player
Conte 50 x 39cm



Shearing Time
Pastel & watercolour 26 x 36cm



Ian Shearing Goats
Hand-coloured etching 17 x 25cm



Tim Quirke
b 1956

Self Portrait 2012 (detail)

Tim Quirke studied fine art at the Johannesburg College of Art and after completion of his course Tim was invited to teach part-time at the college where he ran the drawing programme for the foundation course. This teaching was followed by work in advertising agencies in Johannesburg as well as undertaking freelance commercial artwork. In 1985 he re-joined the College of Art as a permanent staff member to teach the foundation drawing course in all schools of the College. Tim also taught art history to first- and second-year students, as well as drawing and perceptual studies until eventually resigning in 1996.

Since leaving the College Tim has worked as a full-time artist, specialising in portraiture and figurative subjects, rendered in a classical representational style. Tim Quirke is an artist who has immersed himself in the philosophy and teachings of the great master painters. Through extensive study he has developed an in-depth knowledge and appreciation of classical artistic techniques. As a teacher Tim has endeavoured to pass on to his pupils the knowledge and enthusiasm for the traditional values embodied in the work of the old masters. Drawing from an early age Tim has had over 50 years to develop his techniques based on these methods.

Tim Quirke's works can often include direct references to the work of the great masters; each one has a story and meaning beyond the purely aesthetic.

The Arrival of
Rita Angus &
Colin McCahon
in the Studio
Mixed Media
36 x 53cm



Ennui
Mixed Media
35 x 53cm



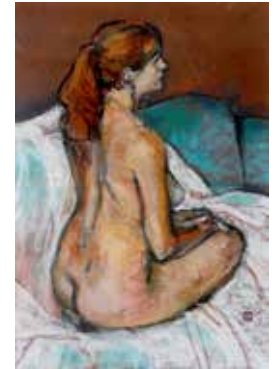
Bacchantes,
Dancing Girls
Mixed Media
53 x 72cm



Harlequin
Backstage with
the Circus Family
Mixed Media
52 x 72cm



The Contortionist
Preparing for the Night
Mixed Media 68 x 50cm



Chante, Seated
in the Studio
Mixed Media
55 x 38cm

Under the Big Top
Mixed Media
62 x 98cm



Jan Nigro
1920 - 2012

Self Portrait 1986 (detail)

Born in Gisborne in 1920, Jan Nigro enrolled at the Elam School of Fine Arts, Auckland in 1937 and studied under the tutelage of Archie Fisher, John Weeks and Lois White. It was here that she met her future husband, the artist, Gerry (Angelo) Nigro. After the war they moved to Australia where Jan Nigro became established as an Australian artist exhibiting in both Melbourne and Sydney. On their return to New Zealand the Nigros settled in Rotorua, where Jan explored abstraction before returning to work with the figure. Later they moved to Northcote, Auckland before settling on Waiheke Island for 25 years. Jan moved back to Auckland after Gerry's death in 1994. In 1996 Claire Finlayson wrote a thesis on Nigro, and entitled it 'Jan Nigro - Topographer of the Social'. In it Finlayson discusses how in the first two and a half decades of the artist's career Nigro submitted the figure to a formal analysis and how since then she has "undertaken to examine the figure from a range of sexual, social, cultural and psychological perspectives".

For Nigro the human figure has remained constant as the greatest and most lasting source of inspiration. She likes to build a strong rapport with her models and build themes around them. They are portraits only in the sense that we can often identify the sitter. Primarily, Nigro uses the figure as a means to represent the themes and subjects which she chooses to explore. Nigro is an astute observer of human behaviour, succinctly appraising the world around her in her search to understand the figure. She is aware of the trends of her time and responds to the way society adapts to issues by delivering works that are innovative and unique.



The Indolent Garden
Oilstick on paper 51 x 71cm

Jan Nigro was awarded the MBE for Services to the Arts in 1993 and in 1996 published her autobiography 'Apple for the Teacher.' Jan Nigro's work is held in all major public collections both in New Zealand as well as internationally.



Island Girl, 1994
Oilstick on paper 80 x 60cm



Bronzed Young Man, 1995
Oilstick on paper 80 x 60cm



Raven Sleeping
Oilstick on paper
52 x 47cm

Lovers with a
Rose, 2000
Oilstick & collage
on paper
80 x 60cm



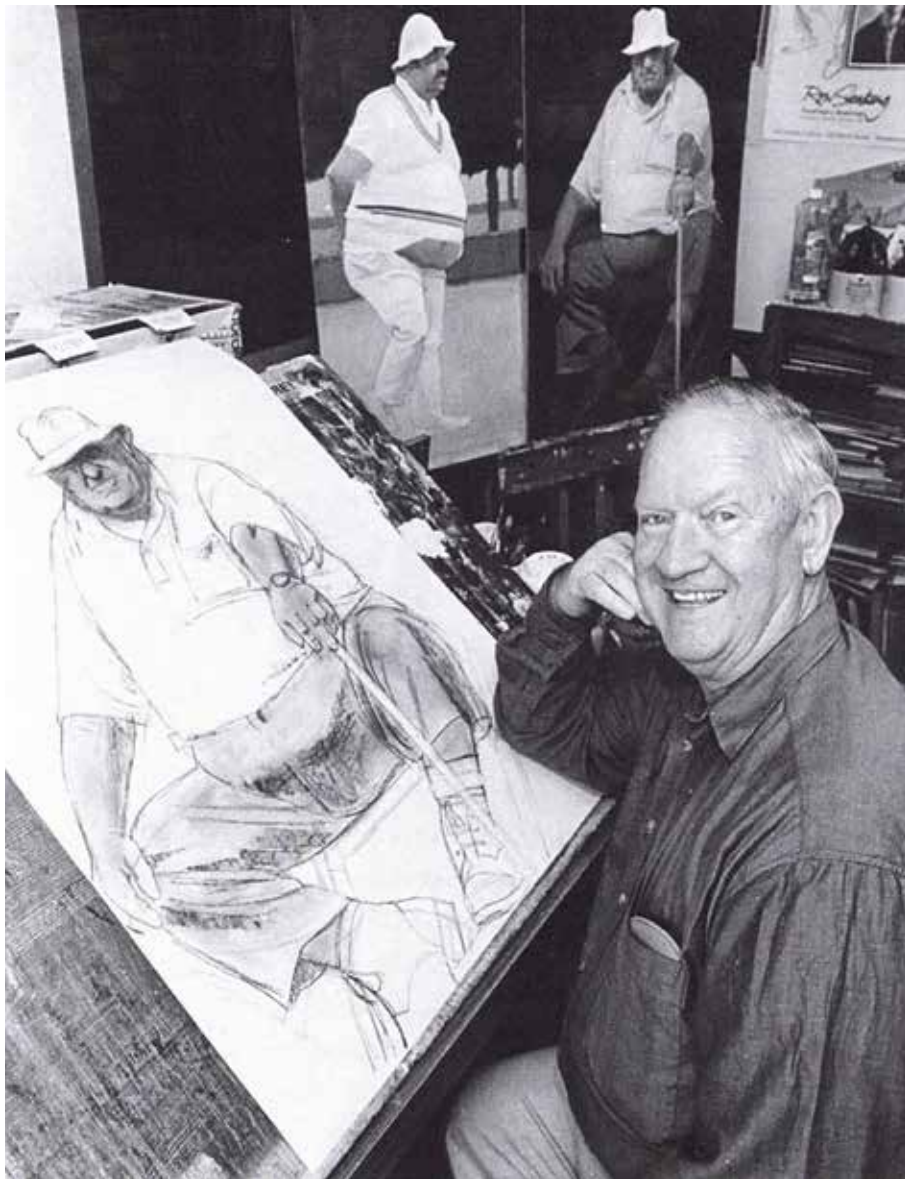
At the Beach
2001
Oilstick & collage
on paper
74 x 53cm



Bogat Figure
C1980



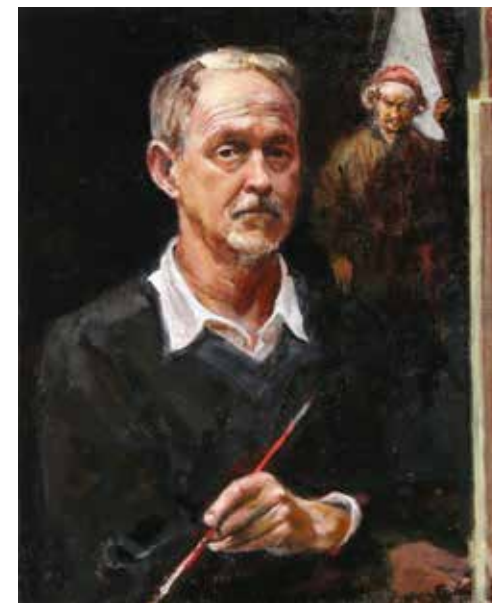
1x Pencil, 1x Etching
each 25 x 14cm



Ron Stenberg working in his Birkenhead studio in 1992



Jan Nigro working in her Waiheke Island studio 1990



Tim Quirke
'Self Portrait with the
entrance of Rembrandt'
2011



The Welcome Swallow Gallery

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Welcome Swallow in the City

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