

NIGEL BROWN ONZM

Nigel Brown has been represented by ARTIS Gallery since 2014.

Over the past forty years, Brown has established a reputation as one of the most important figurative artists in New Zealand. His distinctive visual language uses recurring motifs, stylistic features and symbolic characters, which are strongly grounded in a New Zealand vernacular.

Throughout his career Brown has received numerous awards, including; the QEII Arts Council Grant (1981), Inaugural Artists to Antarctica Award (1998) and in 2004 was awarded the ONZM for services to painting and printmaking.

Brown enrolled at Elam School of Art in 1968 where he was taught by Pat Hanly, Colin McCahon, Garth Tapper, Greer Twiss and Robert Ellis. McCahon encouraged Brown to pursue his own personal vision and utilize distinct motifs in his work. Brown graduated in 1971 and began his full time artist career the following year in 1972. He cemented his reputation as an artist in 1977 with his highly acclaimed *Lemon Tree series* (1977).

Brown has a systematic and workmanlike approach to painting. He works from an initial concept, which is the result of reading and extensive research. Sketches, photographs and other sources are used as a visual back up to develop specifics, leading to works on paper and trial paintings. The artist works from a gesso ground on which he applies a base coat of yellow ochre. The main ideas and words of each work are then sketched in by brush, followed by the initial lines and tones, and the first of five layers or more of paint.

Brown directly and selectively employs history, literature and politics as devices in his artworks. He also uses words in his paintings, a technique that was heavily influenced by the English poet and painter William Blake. At Elam, McCahon suggested that Brown contain his text in a border or boundary, a technique he still employs today.

ARTIS – EXHIBITIONS:

- 2025 *Last the Distance*
- 2022 *Cells of Human*
- 2019 *DOG*
- 2015 *Albatross Neck*

In addition to his painting, Brown is also a printmaker and has undertaken two significant stained glass window designs – St Mary’s Catholic Church, Auckland (1991) and the Holy Trinity Cathedral, Parnell, Auckland (1998).

ACADEMIC HISTORY:

1968-71 Elam School of Fine Arts, University of Auckland (BFA)

PRIZES, AWARDS, RESIDENCIES:

2005	Awarded a three-week residency in Russia hosted by Stuart Prior, New Zealand’s ambassador in Moscow - and partially funded by private contributors in New Zealand
2004	ONZM for services to Painting and Print Making
1995	Finalist Visa Gold Awards
1993	Artist in Residence, Wanganui Regional Polytechnic
1986	Awarded QEII Arts Council Grant
1981	QEII Arts Council Grant for travel to USA, UK and Europe
1978	Awarded QEII Arts Council Grant

MAJOR COMMISSIONS:

2009	The Haydn Lithos, printed by Papergraphica, Christchurch. Commissioned by Chamber Music New Zealand in association with NZ String Quartet (performance) and Sara Brodie (video included in the performance) Handwritten text and illustration of Glenn Colquhoun, North South, Steel Roberts: Wellington.
1998	Stained glass window commission, The Holy Trinity Cathedral, Parnell, Auckland Southern Odyssey Project Commission, Painting for Mossburn Railway Hotel, Southland.
1991	Stained glass window commission, St Mary’s Catholic Church, Auckland.

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