

ARTIS

G A L L E R Y

NIGEL BROWN ONZM

(b.1949 -)

Born in Invercargill, Brown grew up in Tauranga and was fortunate to have Fred Graham, who greatly influenced the young Brown, as an art teacher at Tauranga Boys' College.

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 exhibiting the following year. 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.

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

In 2005 Brown took up an artist residency at the New Zealand Embassy in Moscow, hosted by New Zealand's Russian ambassador Stuart Prior. In 2009, *The Brown Years*, an exhibition at the Tauranga Art Gallery, celebrated the formative years of the artist's career. In 2011 Brown was chosen to participate in The Depot's Cultural Icons project. The project celebrated individuals who had contributed significantly to New Zealand's creative landscape.

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

Nigel Brown has been represented by ARTIS Gallery since February 2014.

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ACADEMIC HISTORY:

1963-67 Tauranga Boys' College
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. 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

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS 2010 – 2025:

2025 *Last the Distance*, ARTIS Gallery, Auckland
2022 *Cells of Human*, ARTIS Gallery, Auckland
2019 *DOG* - ARTIS Gallery, Auckland

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- 2015 *Albatross Road*, ARTIS Gallery, Auckland
Belong Belong, Milford Galleries Queenstown
- 2014 *Away and Towards*, Milford Galleries Queenstown
- 2013 *Doors Flung Back*, The Diversion Gallery, Picton
Invented Lives, Milford Galleries Queenstown
- 2012 *Joe Taihape*, Whitespace, Auckland
Short Lives of Birds (selection), Whakatane Art Museum, Whakatane
Dusky Doubtful, Milford Galleries Queenstown
Black Paper Works, Milford Galleries Dunedin
Peace Map, The Depot, Auckland
- 2011 *Travel to Travel*, Southland Museum, Invercargill, Lopdell House, Auckland
Milford Galleries, Dunedin
Short Lives of Birds, Whitespace, Wellington
- 2010 *Short Lives of Birds*, Whitespace, Auckland
Nigel Brown: Selected Works, Milford Galleries, Queenstown
Written Word, Tairāwhiti Museum and Art Gallery, Gisborne