

ARTIS

G A L L E R Y

JS PARKER ONZM
(1944 – 2017)

Born in Auckland in 1944, Parker graduated from Ilam School of Fine Arts, with *Honours in Painting*, in 1967.

Parker worked as a full-time artist from 1981 up until several months prior to his death in 2017. In the 2002 Queen's Birthday Honours, Parker was awarded an ONZM for forty years of service to painting and during 1970 was awarded the prestigious *France Hodgkins Fellowship* at Otago University.

Parker is best known for his large impasto paintings within a grid format, full of texture, rhythm and balance within his imposed framework. He worked in thick layers of paint applied with a palette knife, sweeps of paint, which he pared down to reveal hints of what lies beneath.

For Parker, it was the sense of an inner radiance in his paintings which allows the viewer to relate to the "spirit" of the painting. He always had a spiritual basis to his work and his 'Plain Song' series reference the plains of Canterbury and of Marlborough where he lived.

"Plain Song – everything has been titled with that name for the past four decades. Not only does this reference my memories of the plains of Canterbury and Marlborough throughout my life, but also my love of music – especially blues, jazz and classical." JS Parker

Works painted not long before his death, included several of uplifting, joyous colour – a sense of embracing his life to the full, as well as simply riding the rhythms of superbly juxtaposed colours.

Parker exhibited regularly in ARTIS Gallery from 2013 – 2017. In 2016 the painting titled '*Plain Song: The Light Plain – Sunlight*', was purchased by Otago University for the Hocken Collection.

In 2017 Parker completed four new paintings by the end of May, which were exhibited at ARTIS (six weeks after his death) in an exhibition, *Three Part Harmony*, with Bronwynne Cornish and Bridget Bidwill.

ARTIS has presented three solo exhibitions since 2017- all three including works specifically released by his family. '*OH NO NEVER LET THE SPIRIT DIE*' in 2020, '*PLAIN SONG: WORKS ON PAPER*' during 2024 (10 works dating from 1981 – 1997) and '*PLAIN SONG: STATION OF THE SOUL*', during December 2025, which included works dating from 1982 – 2015.

EDUCATION:

1967 Graduated Honors in Painting - Ilam School of Fine Arts Christchurch

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SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS:

- 2025 *Plain Song: Station of the Soul*, ARTIS Gallery, Auckland, NZ
- 2024 *Plain Song: Works on Paper*, ARTIS Gallery, Auckland, NZ
- 2023 *Structure and Form*, Diversion Gallery, Picton, NZ
- 2020 *Oh No, Never Let the Spirit Die*, ARTIS Gallery, Auckland, NZ
- 2019 *The Lightness of Being*, Diversion Gallery, Picton, NZ
- 2016 *The Light Plain*, ARTIS Gallery, Auckland, NZ
- 2014 *Recent Paintings*, (with Roy Good) ARTIS Gallery, Auckland, NZ
- 2013 *Abstract Reunion* (with Roy Good) ARTIS Gallery, Auckland, NZ

AWARDS:

- 2014 Marlborough Living Cultural Treasure
- 2002 Officer of the New Zealand Order of Merit (ONZM) for services to New Zealand Art
- 1975 Frances Hodgkin's Fellowship Award

COLLECTIONS:

Marlborough's Millennium Art Gallery
Auckland Art Gallery
Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu
Dunedin Public Art Gallery
University of Victoria, Wellington
University of Otago's Hocken Collections

PUBLICATION:

- 2009 *JS Parker: Plain Song* by Dr Damian Skinner – published by Millennium Art Gallery, Blenheim.