

# ALAN PEARSON

## LOOKING EASTWARD TO THE SEA

4 – 23 SEPTEMBER 2007

Sanderson Contemporary Art is pleased to present 'Looking Eastward to the Sea', a solo exhibition of recent work from veteran New Zealand expressionist painter Alan Pearson.

Alan Pearson's profile in New Zealand has risen substantially over the past few years - seeing his works reach record prices in private sales and auctions. Following his hugely successful exhibition of recent paintings in 2006, 'Looking Eastward to the Sea' presents a new collection of exceptional and highly individual works, created from his studio in Australia:

*"Pearson built a house and studio in Queensland, Australia in 2002 and divides his time between there and Auckland. This shift proved to be very significant, provoking a renewed vigour in colour and imagery throughout his work. Lush beach and bush scenes sprawl across large canvases. The figure (ever-present) stands, sits and dances. The musicality of nature as perceived by the artist is translated into a kind of dance in paint – the musical potential of a visual medium. Intensely energetic and optimistic, reflective of a man contemplating another chance at life, paintings are celebratory and vivid, as though only just painted and barely dry - as though alive." (From "The Artists: A Snapshot of New Zealand Contemporary Art Practice 2007-2008")*

An artist of huge experience and a long, illustrious career, Pearson has received many awards and fellowships for his art and is represented in major private and museum collections around New Zealand and abroad. An afflicting heart condition has seen Pearson's practice slow of late after a 50 year art career: 'Looking Eastward to the Sea' may therefore represent one of the final opportunities for the New Zealand public to view such a substantial body of new work from this artist.

Despite his health issues, Pearson continues to demonstrate his considerable technical skill and his remarkable ability to create movement and emotion in each piece, creating a series that imparts his sense of the grandeur in life and the world at large. Set against the sun-bleached colours, shadowed light and mute and volatile movement present in his Australian environs, this recent work leaves behind the moody, angst-ridden imagery of Pearson's work from his time in New Zealand.

*Sanderson Contemporary Art is proud to be a primary dealer for Alan Pearson in New Zealand and to maintain a comprehensive collection of his works in our gallery.*

*Our collection represents different periods throughout Pearson's life, including works created in both New Zealand and Australia, spanning the 1970s to the present. Please feel free to enquire with us if you are interested in a particular period or series of this artist's work.*

## BIOGRAPHICAL

**Born:** 1929, Liverpool, England (moves to New Zealand in 1955)

**Lives:** Noosa, Australia / Auckland

**Qualifications:** Diploma in Fine arts (First-class Honours), School of Fine Arts, University of Canterbury, Christchurch; Diploma in Teaching, Auckland College of Education, Auckland; Royal Academy Schools, London

**Selected Awards and Distinctions:** Doug Moran Portrait Awards, Australia - Finalist (2006); Artist in Residence, Tai Poutini Polytechnic, Greymouth (1993); Artist in Residence, Otago Polytechnic and Dunedin Public Art Gallery (1986-87); National Bank Portrait Prize for *Herne Bay Couple & Portrait of Mrs Oliver* (1978/79); Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council Travel Grant to Europe (1976); Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council Scholarship (1964-65); Bickerton-Widdowson Scholarship (1959); Rosa Sawtell Prize for Life Drawing (1958)

**Selected Public Exhibitions:** *Portraits & Personalities*, Christchurch Art Gallery, Christchurch (2004); *Heaven and Blood Retrospective Exhibition*, Christchurch Art Gallery, Christchurch (1999); *Visitations* (solo touring exhibition), Manawatu Public Art Gallery (1991-2); *Anxious Images*, Auckland City Art Gallery (1984);

**Other Select Exhibitions:** *Looking Eastward to the Sea*, Sanderson Contemporary Art, Auckland (2007); *Saving the Classical Spirit*, Artigiano Gallery, Auckland (2006); *Recent Australian Paintings*, Arthouse, Christchurch (2005), *Westcoast Narratives*, Artigiano Gallery (2005)

**Collections:** Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, Wellington; Auckland Art Gallery Toi O Tamaki, Auckland; Hocken Pictorial Collections, Dunedin; Dunedin Public Art Gallery, Dunedin; Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna O Waiwhetu, Christchurch; Te Manawa, Palmerston North; Wallace Arts Trust, Auckland

**Selected Books and Publications:** **Books:** Finlayson, Claire, *This Thing in the Mirror: Self-Portraits by New Zealand Artists*, Nelson: Craig Potton, 2004; Chesterman, Sandra, *Figure Work: The Nude and Life Modeling in New Zealand Art*, Dunedin: University of Otago Press, 2002; Trussell, Denys, *Alan Pearson: His Life and Art*, Christchurch: Hazard Press, 1991  
**Catalogues:** Robert McDougall Art Gallery, Christchurch, *Heaven and Blood: Painting and Drawing by Alan Pearson 1959-1999*, Christchurch, 1999; Auckland City Art Gallery, Auckland, *Anxious Images: Aspects of Recent New Zealand Art*, Johnston, Alexa, Auckland, 1984, pp47-52; **Articles:** Fusco, Cassandra, 'From Edge to Inroads: Alan Pearson in Australia', *Art New Zealand* (84), Spring 1997: 52-54; Crichton, Anna, 'The Portraits of Alan Pearson', *Art New Zealand* (69), Summer 1993-1994: 68-69,85; Fusco, Cassandra, 'Life is a Wound: The Paintings of Alan Pearson', *Art New Zealand* (54), Autumn 1990: 64-67,95; Ward, Raymond, 'Alan Pearson', *Landfall: A New Zealand Quarterly* (164) May 1988: 443-447