

Waipu artist Brett a'Court

When you put your whole life and energy into your art, you take so many risks.

It's an exciting find on a cold sunny winter morning in Waipu – an artist in his studio shed in Shoemaker Rd.

Brett a'Court has just held a successful exhibition in Parnell, Auckland. The exhibition entitled *Lingua Sacra* (Sacred Language) was staged in an old wooden church, now part of the Parnell Community Centre. It was opened by Member of Parliament Judith Tizard and 250 people turned up to the first viewing. The New Zealand Herald and several art magazines gave it favourable review.



Brett has been taken on Brett a'Court in his Waipu shed studio

as "foundation artist" by an organization called Art-Artz, the brainchild of John Hodgson of Grey Lynn in Auckland – who happens, coincidentally, to have grown up in Waipu.

In words taken from its website – "Art-Artz is an experimental dealership in modern contemporary fine art which seeks to promote original, collectable and enduring fine art."

It's a different kind of dealership, which is not based in a gallery and consequently the commission taken by the dealer is smaller than is usual.

Art – Artz found the venue – the Parnell community centre church, which was spacious enough to hang the largest of the paintings which measures 5 metres

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by 2 metres, and handled the promotion for Brett's exhibition. you don't have anything to say."

Brett said, "I don't really paint for the market. Once I start to think about who's going to buy my work I lose it. You need to have someone on your side who is good at marketing and who believes in you enough to let you do your own thing." A lot of his current reading is in the Christian Mystics. He reads a lot of spiritual books and likes the old mystics because they are "not as flaky as the modern ones. They have an edge to them."

"Most people see my work as very dark. It doesn't appeal to a lot of people but there is a minority out there." Renaissance art, along with the renaissance interest in anatomy are motifs in his paintings.

"Most people see my work as very dark. It doesn't appeal to a lot of people but there is a minority out there somewhere who feel the same way I do." "Good art is a marriage of intellect and art," he says. "It has to have an intellectual dimension but conversely, it needs to be part of your experience"

Several years ago Brett was named in a magazine article as one of seven up and coming New Zealand artists who art investors should be watching. Colin MacCahon is a strong influence, particularly on Brett's earliest work.

"It all helps," said Brett who made enough money from simple way."

sales at his latest exhibition to carry on painting full time for a few more years. Philip Clairmont is another New Zealand artist he admires

Brett and his family moved to Waipu ten years ago. The main reason they came here was because, at that time, house prices were cheap. "He is close to the opposite, very loose and very expressive."

"I didn't plan it this way but actually it's been good working in relative isolation from other artists I would normally associate with in Auckland. It's difficult at times but it has also helped me to find my own voice." Brett feels as if he has made a breakthrough in the past four years.

Brett is accustomed to going his own way. "I don't feel like I'm underneath looking up any more."

He attended the ASA School of fine art where he gained "a lot of good tools" but left after six months because he felt like he would come out "institutionalised" and he wasn't keen to build up a big student debt. He retains one canvas in his studio, which he says he won't sell as it represents the beginning of his new direction.

Instead he rented a little flat in Mt. Eden where he got down to work. It's a very dark painting with a large human figure but behind some clematis flowers forming little points of light.

That was 12 years ago. Although they don't contain landscapes, Brett feels the darkness in his paintings is influenced by the dark tones of the New Zealand bush. He was taking regular walks up at the Piroa Falls at the time he painted this picture and remembers the shock of the white clematis in the dark green bush.

"When you put your whole life and energy into it (your art) there are so many risks. There are financial risks, personal risks. You have to have a lot of self belief." Typically Brett will start work in his studio at about 8am and paint until about 2pm. In the afternoon he does research. Brett a'Court's paintings can be viewed on line at: www.art-artz.com