

COLOURS, SHAPES AND A CHANGE IN DIRECTION



Adrian Jackman in his studio.

Simon Burt

Prominent Auckland painter Adrian Jackman now calls Carterton home.

It's Wairarapa's gain, but we might have Whanganui to thank for it. Simon Burt explains.

Adrian Jackman's colourful, geometric artwork is driven by the patterns and shapes he sees as he goes about his daily life. And it was the distinctive repetitive exterior of Whanganui's modernist classic War Memorial Centre that set him off on a path that would end up in Wairarapa.

The way the light falls through the open blockwork on the War Memorial building was the basis for Adrian's 2013/14 exhibition "Minimal Wave" at Whanganui's Sarjeant Gallery. Adrian had been "in residence" at the Sarjeant's Tylee Cottage in 2012 and he considers the paintings he created for this post-residency exhibition to be a significant change in direction for his work. "I didn't have a lot of time at Tylee because I had to go back to my mural painting job for the Auckland Council, but as with all residencies it afforded me lots of time to think."

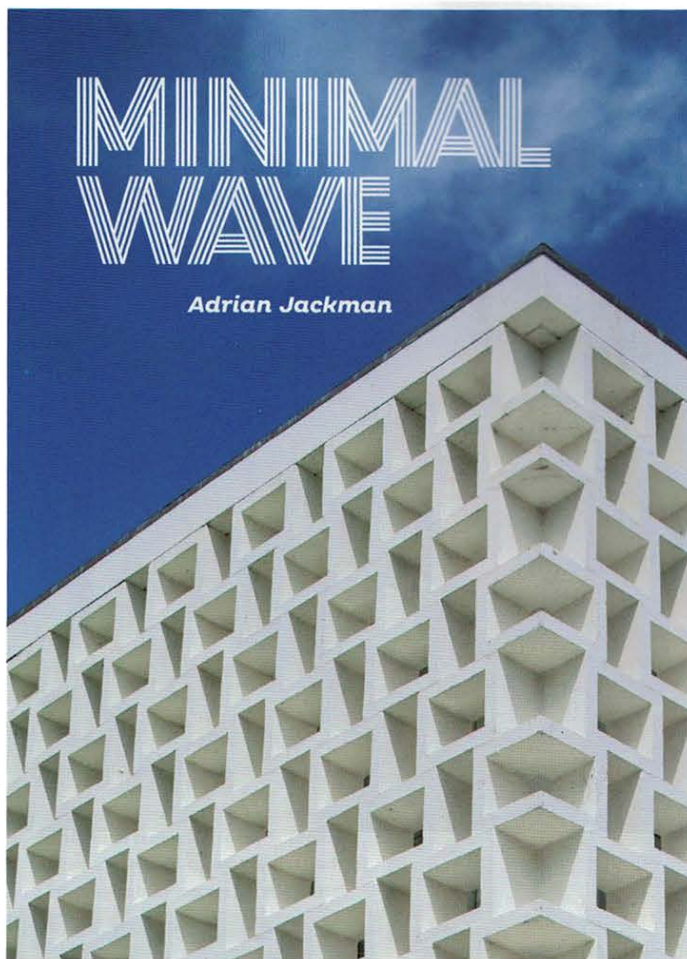
As well as thinking about his art, Adrian had time to consider a change in where he was living. It was becoming clear that buying a house in Auckland for his young family was not going to be an

option. He has family history in Whanganui and that city was certainly a possibility to relocate to, as was Nelson or Hawke's Bay, but a conversation with prominent Masterton-based artist Dame Robin White was to prove decisive.

"I had no knowledge of Wairarapa at all until I spoke to Robin at my Sarjeant exhibition opening," Adrian recalls. "She filled me in on the local art scene, told me about the Aratoi gallery and described the wider community. It struck a chord."

Small town life is not totally foreign to Adrian, having grown up largely in Kerikeri, but his graphic designer wife Lisa Rushworth is a life-long Aucklander. "The thought of living in the provinces was maybe a bit of a stretch for her," he admits, but Lisa's mother and her partner were also considering a move out of Auckland (they ended up in nearby Greytown) so when a suitable house cropped up in Carterton they made an offer on it and packed up and moved south with their daughter Zoe, now 8, in 2016.

Adrian Jackman has been a practising artist all his working life. "The people who first challenged me to make art for a living were



Adrian's 2013/14 exhibition "Minimal Wave" at Whanganui's Sarjeant Gallery

my high school teachers, Geoff Harris and Roger Chignall. They told me I had to work hard and work regularly so I made a little studio in my bedroom at home and just painted. And painted and painted and painted ... ". Having done foundation studies in graphics and design at AIT, Adrian had a suitable portfolio for application to the Elam School of Fine Arts at Auckland University in 1991, a famously competitive institution to be accepted for. "There was a real work ethic instilled in us at Elam, too," he remembers. "Basically, if you weren't at the easel by 9am the tutors weren't interested in you."

A four year degree followed by two years of post graduate study towards a Master of Fine Arts was a "marvellous" time and allowed for a lot of professional development in readiness for a career in the notoriously fickle art world. Adrian's highly regarded work has been exhibited all over New Zealand and is held in both public and private collections here and internationally.

The Jackman/Rushworth family is part of a growing group of creative young people moving into the Carterton area, attracted in part by the relatively affordable housing but increasingly by the lifestyle. "We're finding the extra space here is great and that you can create time for yourself by working from home and not having to drive everywhere." Lisa has brought her existing graphic design work here and has no problem servicing existing clients remotely. Adrian augments his painting with a part-time job as Exhibitions Co-ordinator at Aratoi. For Zoe it's a short and pleasant walk to school across the park.

And has their relocation caused another change of direction in Adrian's creative output, like it did in Whanganui? "I guess the new environment may potentially inform my work – but in what way, we'll have to wait and see!"