

# Vincent Ward

filmmaker + artist + writer

New Zealand filmmaker Vincent Ward is best known for his ability to create visually striking and magical worlds. *What Dreams May Come* (1998) won an Academy Award for its visual effects and was nominated for best production design.

Three of his early feature films, *Vigil* (1984), *The Navigator* (1988), and *Map of the Human Heart* (1993) were selected for Cannes. Between them they garnered over 30 national and international awards. All three films have compelling and powerful performances by child actors.

The Boston Globe called him “one of film’s great image-makers”, while Roger Ebert, one of America’s foremost film critics, hailed him as “a true visionary.”

During his time in LA, Vincent was storywriter for *Alien 3*, and executive producer on *The Last Samurai*, a project he developed the underlying material for before finding its director and bringing the production to New Zealand.

His recent docudrama *Rain of the Children* (2008) was voted by the audience from 250 feature films to win the Grand Prix at theaEra New Horizons Film Festival.

Between 2011-13 Vincent produced two large format art books and nine public exhibitions of his cinematic installations and print and painting work, including a featured solo pavilion show for the Shanghai Biennale 2012. As a guest of renowned Chinese video artist and curator, Qiu Zhijie, Vincent’s work resided in an historic former cathedral on the Bund – in the heart of Shanghai.

The recent U.S. publication *Making the Transformational Moment in Film* (2011, Michael Wiese) foregrounds his career and looks at the way he is capable of moving audiences through his use of image and story.

In 2007 Ward received a New Zealand Order of Merit (NZOM) for his services to film.

He is currently working on a range of new film projects.

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## ARTIST

### Exhibitions:

THE SHANGHAI BIENNALE 2012

*Destinies Lost & Found*

Solo station, Former Union Church, Shanghai Biennale (October 2012)

BREATH: the fleeting intensity of life

Solo exhibition, Govett-Brewster Art Gallery (December 2011 – February 2012)

INHALE

Solo exhibition, Gus Fisher Gallery (July 2012)

EXHALE

Solo exhibition, Wallace Arts Centre (July 2012)

INHALE | EXHALE

Video installation (window), Gow Langsford Gallery (June 2012)

FRANKFURT BOOK FAIR, New Zealand year

Cinematic installation, Central Pavilion (October 2012)

WEHI

Solo exhibition, Mark Hutchins Gallery (March 2012)

HÄ: Winter's Breath

Solo exhibition, Te Manawa Museum (December 2013 – February 2014)

ARATOI

Solo exhibition, Aratoi (December 2013 - February 2014)

## FILMMAKER

### Director:

Rain of the Children (2008)

River Queen (2005)

What Dreams May Come (1998)

Map of the Human Heart (1993)

The Navigator: A Medieval Odyssey (1988)

Vigil (1984)

In Spring One Plants Alone (1981)

A State of Siege (1978)

### Producer:

Rain of the Children (2008)

The Last Samurai (2003) (executive producer)

Map of the Human Heart (1993) (producer)

In Spring One Plants Alone (1981) (producer)

### Screenwriter:

Rain of the Children (2008) (screenplay)

River Queen (2005) (screenplay) (story)

Map of the Human Heart (1993) (story)

Alien 3 (1992) (story)

The Navigator: A Medieval Odyssey (1988) (screenplay)

Vigil (1984) (screenplay)

A State of Siege (1978) (screenplay)

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WRITER

Published works:

INHALE | EXHALE

(Ron Sang Publications, 2012)

THE PAST AWAITS

*People, images, film* (Craig Potton Publishing, 2010)

THE EDGE OF THE EARTH

*Stories and Images from the Antipodes* (Heinemann Reed, 1990)

THE NAVIGATOR

*A Medieval Odyssey* Screenplay (Faber and Faber, 1989)

#### BOOKS FEATURING VINCENT'S WORK

BREATH *the fleeting intensity of life*

a record of exhibition (Govett-Brewster Art Gallery Publications, 2012)

MAKING THE TRANSFORMATIONAL MOMENT IN FILM:

*Unleashing the Power of the Image (with the films of Vincent Ward)*

by Dr. Daniel Fleming (MWP, 2011) ; Chinese translation (release date: 2014)

CINEMATIC ILLUMINATIONS: *The Middle Ages On Film*

by Laurie A. Finke and Martin B. Shichtman

(John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 2010)

THE GREATEST SCI-FI MOVIES NEVER MADE

by David Hughes (Titan Books, 2008)

LA PEINTURE ANIMEE, Essai sur Emile Reynaud (1844 -1918),

Entre peinture et cinema, by Stephanie Varela, (L' Harmattan, 2010)

## awards

Winner of more than 30 national and international awards.

### ACADEMY AWARDS

*What Dreams May Come*, 1998

Winner Best Visual Effects

Nominated Best Production Design.

### CANNES FILM FESTIVAL

*Map of the Human Heart*, Official Selection, 1992

*The Navigator: a medieval odyssey*, In  
Competition, 1988

*Vigil*, In Competition, 1984

### GOLDEN GOBLET - SHANGHAI INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

*River Queen*, 2006

### GOLDEN KINNAREE AWARD - BANGKOK INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

*River Queen*, 2006

### MOST SIGNIFICANT ARTISTIC ACHIEVEMENT - TOKYO FILM FESTIVAL

*Map of the Human Heart*, 1992

### BEST FILM & BEST DIRECTOR - AUSTRALIAN FILM INSTITUTE

*The Navigator: a medieval odyssey*, In  
Competition, 1988

### GRAND PRIX - ERA NEW HORIZONS FESTIVAL, POLAND

*Rain of the Children*, 2008  
(audience vote selected from 250 features)

### GRAND PRIX - CINEMA DU REEL

*In Spring One Plants Alone*, 1982

### SILVER HUGO - CHICAGO FILM FESTIVAL

*In Spring One Plants Alone*, 1982



## RAIN OF THE CHILDREN

*A haunting historical epic ... Masterful*

HOLLYWOOD REPORTER

Vincent Ward's deeply personal and incredibly moving film unravels and re-imagines the story of Puhi, the Tuhoe woman he documented in 1978 for his early film *In Spring One Plants Alone*. Then she was 80 and caring for her adult son, and Ward was 21, a young art student capturing her traditional way of life...

Puhi believed herself to be cursed and this unknowable curse is what preoccupies Ward now. Puhi, he discovers, was an extraordinary woman. Chosen by Tuhoe prophet Rua Kenana to marry his son, she survived the 1916 police raid on Rua's Maungapohatu community and went on to have 14 children. Cutting between early footage, his own to-camera narration, contemporary interviews with Tuhoe descendants, and magnificently recreated historical sequences (featuring Rena Owen as the older Puhi among a superb cast of Maori actors); Ward reveals both the heart-rending background of Puhi's belief in the curse, and her lasting power over him.



## RIVER QUEEN

*A viscerally engaging adventure that works the emotions.*

EMPIRE

In 1860s New Zealand, a young Irish woman finds herself caught on both sides of the line during the wars between Maori tribes and the British colonial army.

Sarah O'Brien (Samantha Morton) has grown up among soldiers in a frontier garrison on Te Awa Nui, the Great River. Pregnant by a Maori boy, she gives birth to a son. Seven years later her son, Boy, is kidnapped by his Maori grandfather.

Abandoned by her soldier father, Sarah's life becomes a search for her son. Her only friend, Doyle (Kiefer Sutherland) is a broken-down soldier without the means to help her.

As the conflict between the Maori and the colonial forces escalates Sarah finds herself at the centre of the storm. She is torn by the love she feels for her son, anguished over the attachments she still has to the white man's world, and sickened by the brutality she witnesses on either side. Sarah must choose; will she return to the white man's way of life, or will she have the courage to follow where her instincts tell her she truly belongs?

With darkness all around, and desperate to find her son, she discovers that only the heart can see...

Featuring Samantha Morton, Kiefer Sutherland, Cliff Curtis, Temuera Morrison, Stephen Rea and Anton Lesser.





## MAP OF THE HUMAN HEART

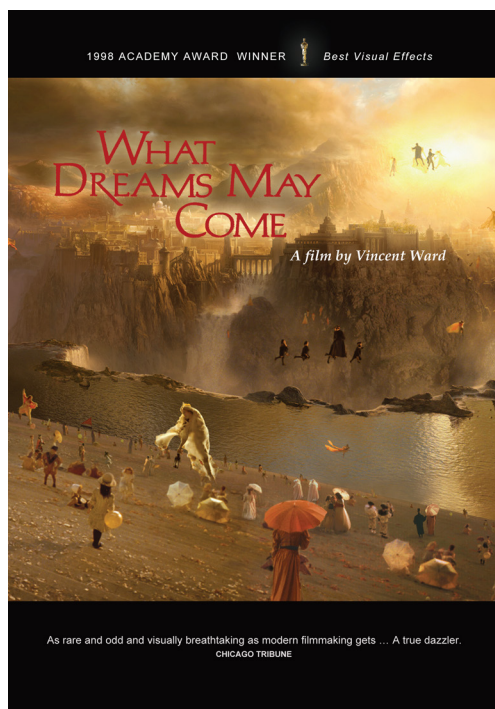
*A startling epic of seduction! Brave, passionate and wildly beautiful! Brilliant!*

LOS ANGELES TIMES

Two children, Avik and Albertine, both cultural outsiders are drawn together by their shared sense of irreverent fun. A friendship which unfolds into a fierce love amidst both the heady freedoms and the terrors of a foreign war.

A chance encounter with map maker Walter Russell will change Avik, the Inuit boy's life forever. Realising that Avik is suffering from tuberculosis, Walter takes him far from his native home in the Arctic to the South of Canada for treatment. It is here that Avik meets Albertine, a half French Canadian half Indian girl, for whom he will cross oceans and the ravages of war torn Europe to be, only to discover that their cultures are the most difficult spaces to traverse...

Directed by Vincent Ward, from his own story, with screenwriter Louis Nowra. Starring Jason Scott Lee, Anne Parrilaud, Patrick Bergin and John Cusack.



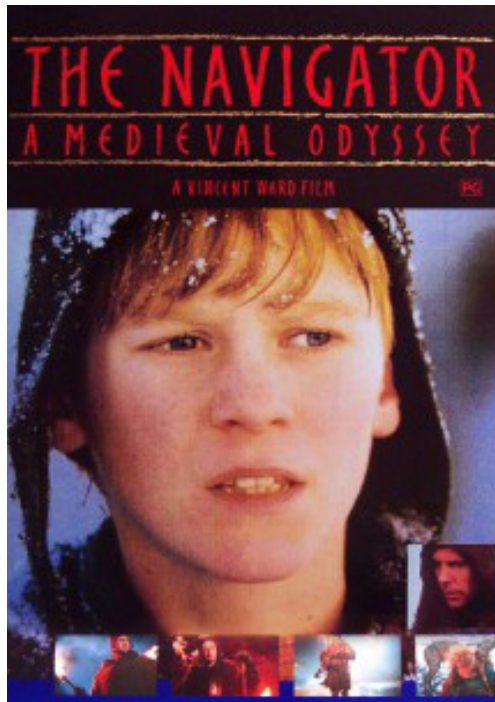
## WHAT DREAMS MAY COME

*As rare and odd and visually breathtaking as modern filmmaking gets ... A true dazzler.*

CHICAGO TRIBUNE

A man dies and awakens in the world of his afterlife, an astoundingly lush and visually rich world. Yet he finds no joy in paradise without his wife and soulmate. She has been lost to despair and now resides in hell. Determined to get her back, he undertakes an Orpheus like search to find her.

Featuring Robin Williams, Cuba Gooding Jr, Annabella Sciorra and Max von Sydow.



## THE NAVIGATOR: A MEDIEVAL ODYSSEY

*Wondrous...a bold, provocative piece of cinema. Rich with primitive images of earth, fire and water, drawing us into a medieval world so that we enter our own century with fresh eyes.*

SUNDAY TIMES, LONDON

Griffin is nine years old. He's haunted by fragments of a dream.

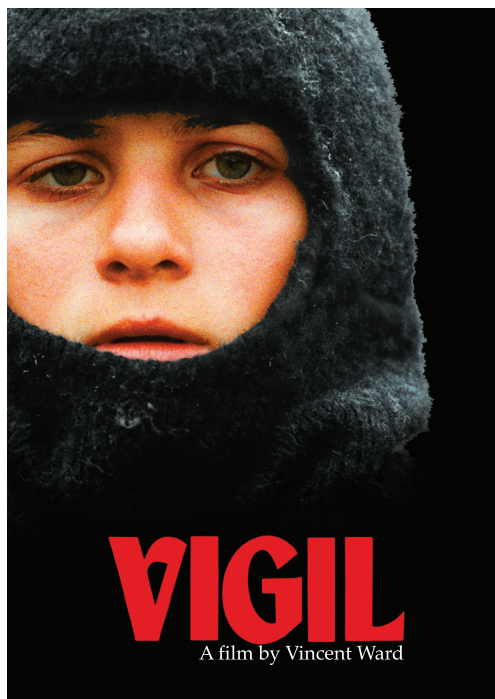
He envisages a journey. A celestial city, a great cathedral, and a figure roped to a steeple, about to fall....

It is Cumbria 1348, the year of the Black Death. A medieval mining village lives in fear of the advancing plague. Griffin's older brother Connor returns from the outside world in a state of despair, until Griffin tells of his dream and reveals their only source of survival:

*Make tribute to God. Place a spire on a distant cathedral.  
Do so before dawn or the village will be lost.*

Griffin embarks on an extraordinary journey with Connor, Searle the pragmatist, Searle's naive brother Ulf, Martin the philosopher and Arno the one-handed ferryman. In his vision together they tunnel through the paper thin earth to a new world, a fabled land of hellish extremes, unfamiliar as the distant future of the antipodes, 1988.

But Griffin has a chilling new premonition... for one of them, the journey will end.



## VIGIL

*It reminds us of cinema's great power to excite, surprise and conjure up unique imagined worlds .. A work of astonishing, original force.*

THE GUARDIAN

Her father is dead.

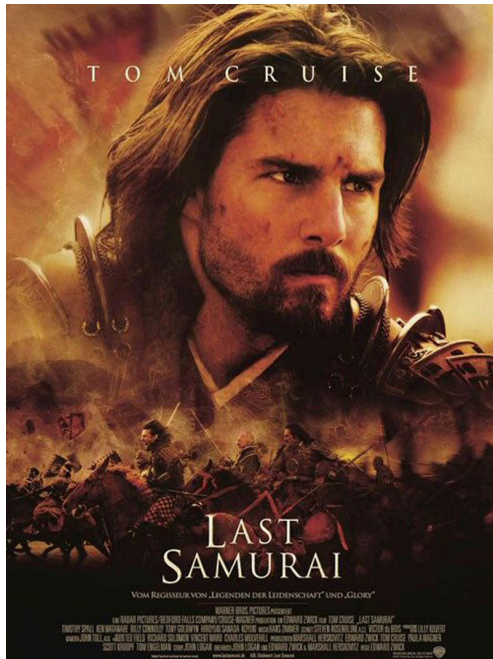
Isolated and alone in the broken hills,  
a young girl watches  
an intruder enter her world.

He moves in with her mother.

On the brink of puberty  
she feels a growing tension,  
knowing

She must defend her valley.

She must remove him.

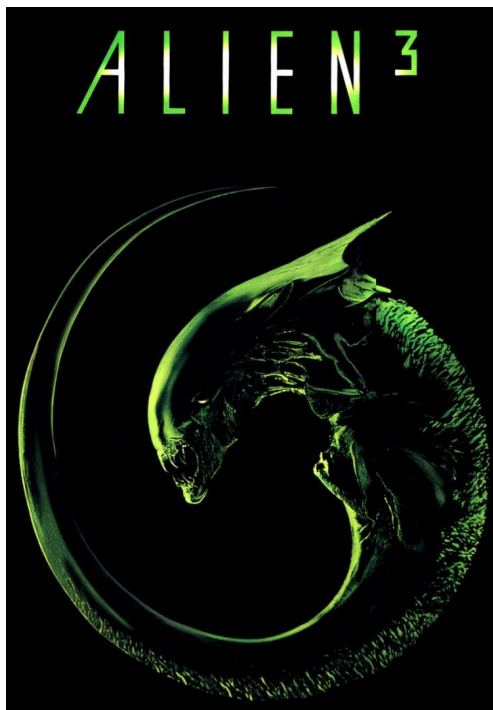


## THE LAST SAMURAI

*Beautifully designed, intelligently written, acted with conviction.*

ROGER EBERT

Vincent Ward was an executive producer of *The Last Samurai*. He developed the basis of this material for 3 years before selecting its director.



## ALIEN 3

*It wasn't a retread kind of sequel it was a completely new idea rich with religious imagery, iconography and metaphor.*

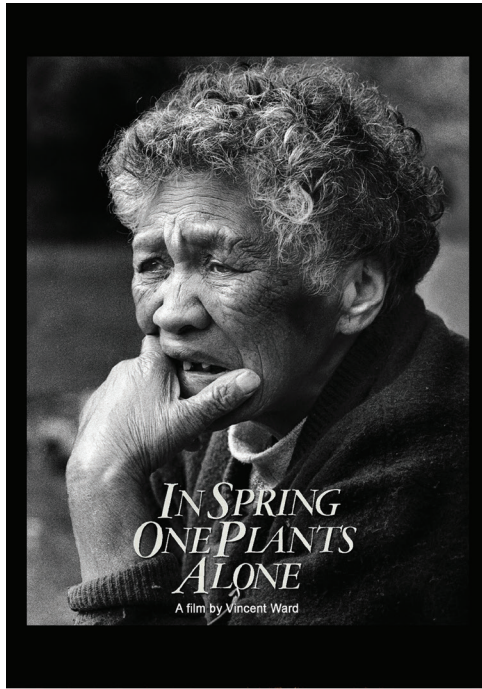
THE GREATEST SCI-FI MOVIES NEVER MADE DAVID HUGHES, 2005

*Vincent Ward was a storywriter for Alien 3.*

*His story was used, but the full imagination of his vision for the film never made it to the screen.*

*It has since gained it's own cult following and made it to top spot in the London Times Online list of 'greatest sci-fi movies never made.'*





## IN SPRING ONE PLANTS ALONE

*A thoroughly devastating documentary on 82 year old Maori woman's struggle for survival...the most original talent of New Zealand's First Wave belongs to Vincent Ward.*

LOS ANGELES TIMES

This is the story of Puhi, an aged Maori woman and Niki, her fully grown but wholly dependent son. The world they occupy is not a world of large events but the rituals of everyday life, traditions and interdependence. *In Spring One Plants Alone* documents the minutiae of their very enclosed existence. Filmed over a period of one and a half years, it emerges as a rare, haunting and powerful portrayal of their life together. This is the story of their rituals and of their survival. The small and disconnected instances that we encounter form a lone vision of the rifts and the bond between an old woman and her disturbed son.



## A STATE OF SIEGE

*Stunning... Rigourously constructed with one exquisitely composed image following another... film becomes poetry.*

LOS ANGELES TIMES

Malfred Signal leaves her life of stifling gentility, (as an art teacher in a South Island private girls school), and decides to live out her dream – painting alone in the remote North. One terrifying night, beset by a prowler, but confronting only her own image at every step, she relives her past.

*A State of Siege* articulates a tense and strange poetry of life, in a social and spiritual backwater. Where the apparent uniformity and calm holds unfamiliar experience and unknown dangers.