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STEPHEN BAMBURY | "play it again, sam"  
Exhibition October 6 – November 28, 2014

One of New Zealand's most noted artists, Stephen Bambury is presenting a major exhibition at Auckland's Trish Clark Gallery, at 1 Bowen Avenue in the CBD, and during Artweek he will present an artist's talk in the exhibition at 3pm on Sunday 12 October.

Throughout his 4-decade career, Bambury has traveled extensively in the USA, Europe, and Asia, exploring art and architecture from a diversity of historic periods and cultures; these experiences remain integral to his studio practice. This exhibition clearly demonstrates Bambury's organic relationship to elemental forces – natural (earth, air, water), human, and cultural. He explores and reconnects the apparent dualities of light / dark, negative / positive, masculine / feminine, the sea and the land, the intellectual and emotional and the universal and the particular.

Bambury's *Seven Days*, a group of small paintings developed with newly discovered chemicals on metal plate forms evolved from notebook drawings of 35 years ago, opened Bambury to a very organic process of exploration and experimentation, the result of which is this exhibition.

His constant investigation of materiality drives Bambury's practice and delivers a visually rich and compelling exhibition. No empty formalist, more an alchemist, Bambury's comprehensive technical mastery sees exhibited works utilizing aluminium, resin, graphite, precious metal gilding, chemical patinas and rust. Sculptural elements comprised of burnt timbers and gold leafing expand the notions of a painting practice, while an exceptional range of scale in the paintings, from over 7 meters long to under 200 millimeters, gives physical punch to the exhibition.

Bambury's crosses reference both the form of the cross and its historical associations, such as the four cardinal points, Malevich's Suprematist cross, and McCahon's Tau cross. Bambury's masterful *Here* at over 7 meters long, a horizontal chakra of 7 panels, stamps the artist as fully present moving through an evocative multi-layered landscape contained in the painting's enormous internal scale. *Hau*, at 4 meters high, embodies the Maori meaning of the word – breath, air, or vital essence. A vertical chakra of 7 panels, the genealogical stacking of the generations on the previous one's shoulders is represented with immense power and strength. Bambury gives body to history.

*Ideogram (at Giverny)* evokes Monet's watery paradise – a source of inspiration for Bambury. A frequent visitor to Monet's masterpiece, the monumental Waterlily cycle commissioned for the Orangerie in Paris's Tuilleries Gardens (now so brilliantly

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restored), Bambury discovered in that watery valley at Giverny the miracle of the light there, that Monet painted so obsessively.

This fascination with light feeds into the *Fourteen Mirrors*, a newly completed series of paintings that reference the 14 Stations of the Cross for a secular reading, engaging the viewer to undertake their own journey, reflecting upon the way.

Born in Christchurch, Stephen Bambury has been exhibiting regularly in New Zealand since the mid-1970s, after graduating with a Diploma of Fine Arts (Hons) from the University of Auckland. From the mid-1980s he has exhibited in the USA, Australia, France, Germany, Austria and Slovenia. Among other awards he received the inaugural New Zealand Moët & Chandon Fellowship in 1989; including the Fellowship period, Bambury spent two and a half years living and working in France. A major retrospective exhibition at Wellington's City Gallery and the Auckland Art Gallery, and the publication of a monograph, marked the turn of the century. Since 2009 Bambury has been exhibiting regularly in Frankfurt, Germany, and in 2015 will take up a Residency at Ateliers Höherweg, Dusseldorf, Germany.

Stephen Bambury lives and works in Auckland, New Zealand.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, IMAGES AND QUERIES  
PLEASE CONTACT THE GALLERY

[trish@trishclark.co.nz](mailto:trish@trishclark.co.nz)

09 379 9556 / 021 378 940