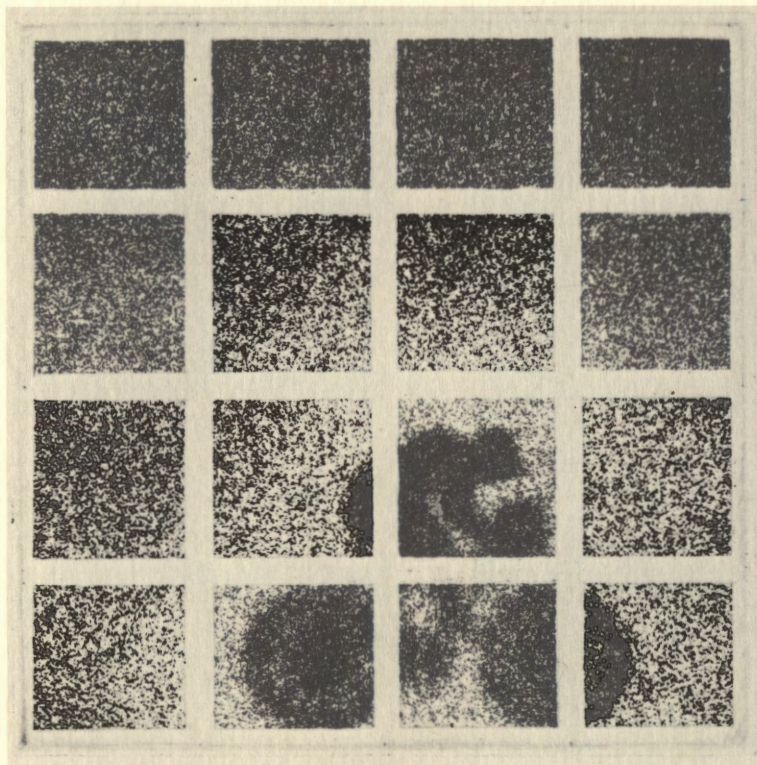
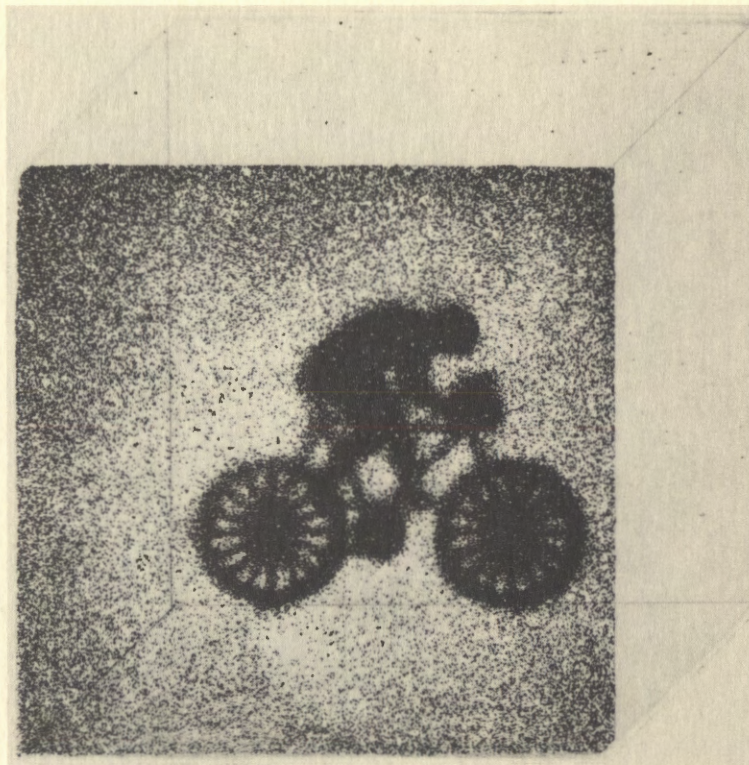


the  
bitter  
suites





'M. DUCHAMP CYCLES PAST A FRENCH WINDOW



'M. DUCHAMP GIVES CUBISM A PASSING  
THOUGHT (THE NECKER CUBE)



## THE BITTER SUITES

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In New Zealand, printmaking retains a fairly low profile as it does in Australia, and it is fortunate that we have these etchings as a sampling of Barry Cleavin's prodigious output in over twenty years of printmaking.

The main body of work entitled 'The Bitter Suites' is an attempt to deal with 'world worry' rather than 'insular introversion'. The difficulty of making images of mortal threat with a wider concern for human life, of the bewildering array of 'war toys' and strategic uses of animals in human annihilation is part of a long tradition from Piranesi, Goya and Kollwitz to Heartfield and Staek, treading the fine line between propaganda and a more personal association of images showing human potential for barbarity. 'The Bitter Suites' lend Barry Cleavin's voice to that tradition.

A strong element in all Cleavin's work is his wry humour seen in the 'Popular Illusions' series and his continuing preoccupation with word and image collisions – 'visually returning sayings to their non-metaphorical origins.'

In this art school where we have a strong printmaking department and the encouragement to develop ideas through print media, this exhibition exemplifies an artist whose intellect is not at odds with his artistry, combining meticulousness of execution with clarity of image.

Rodney Broad  
September 1987

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BIRDS OF A FEATHER (FOR OPERATION TRIAD '84)

## BARRY CLEAVIN ON METHOD

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A printmaker can easily take refuge in technique and technical cleverness, hiding in the processes. When embarrassed about the content of a work, or lack of it, I hide behind technical procedures. The methods of printmaking, once they're familiar are startlingly direct, and the real embarrassment comes from images which do not speak directly enough and their existence has to be proven by reference to techniques.

I seldom manipulate ideas and images simultaneously. I am not clever with either words or images, they arrive and tend to grow into each other. A collision involving image and word inevitably occurs once I have chosen my subject. I am influenced by everything.

When I work on a plate it is absolutely quiet. Everything outside this, involving the world, is full of noise. From this time of quietness I give the world back its noise and sadness, and hope that it will take notice of its own behaviour by what I show it. My feelings range between grief and joy, not the playhouse of love and hate, and I make images from this viewpoint. Mostly, I reduce the world to absurdity; in that form it is manageable.

I am not bound by notions involving the effects of mass media with its direct communication. Mine is a slow process. The images can become cautionary tales, not bound to a specific time, whose message and layers of meaning may fit events as they are now or as they may come to be.

The subject that I somehow or other apprehend, generally suggests what will be my method of working on a plate. Once I have caught my concern, I loosely plan its technical development. The size and shape of the plate is important – what sort of space does the

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image need to be held in? – it is possible that the profile of the plate can add to the image's intention: a cameo becomes an adjective. Sometimes I may slightly round the corners of a plate to give a softer appearance to the chosen subject.

The printing process inverts the plate image. I seldom worry about such pictorial inversions, except where some progression from left to right or lettering is involved.

With my technique I generally proceed from laying a hard ground onto a zinc plate and work through this with three differently pointed needles. I etch the plate after the major part of the drawing is established.

This first etch is done in a 1:8 solution of nitric acid and considering the weights of line involved, indicates varying textures or volumes. Lines indicating hair, for example, will be needled differently and etched for a much shorter time than lines showing heavy fabric. A 'stopping out' process – involving shellac – over mistakes or areas that demand only light etching, is also employed.

After this first etch the plate is cleaned down and the grounding process repeated. The next elements of drawing are developed over the established etch. A third ground and etch may follow this.

With the hard ground work I have generally defined my subject matter, and now it is necessary to consider what sort of space belongs to my image. The image may be contained clinically within the chosen plate shape as any precise medical matter may be or thrown into conflict with the black space of ink. This space is provided by aquatinting. The subject on the plate is 'stopped out' with shellac. The plate is then sprayed with polyurethane enamel so that approximately seventy per

cent of the plate is covered with small dots of paint.

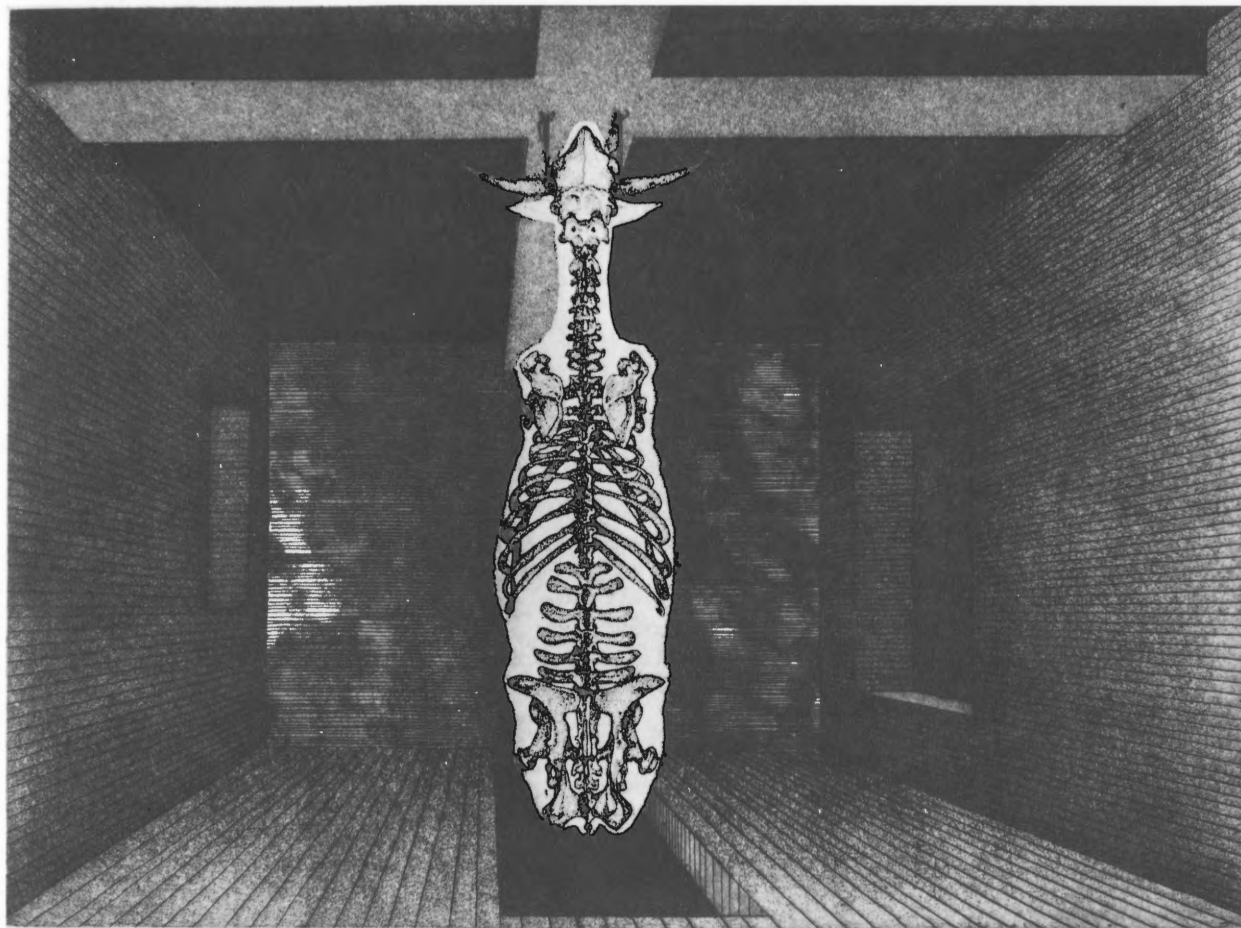
This plate is now etched in a 1:12 solution of nitric acid, the acid pitting in between each dot of acid-resistant paint. The shellac areas are protected and untouched by the acid. This procedure is repeated until the required density of aquatint is gained. Most of the aquatinted works have been etched two or three times.

On the works showing textured space or evidence of mechanical patterning, the initial drawing was established in hard ground and etched. A soft ground was then floated onto the plate, heated to evaporate off the petrol base, then the plate placed on the press bed. An embossed wallpaper was placed on top of the ground, this covered with newsprint and press blankets, and passed through the press under low pressure. The ground now transfers itself to the embossed wallpaper on the high relief areas and remains untouched on the lower patterns. The subject is now 'stopped out' and the plate etched lightly in a 1:12 solution of nitric acid.

I employ many other methods, but most of my plate making evolves around these three basic procedures.

FORMULAS: Hard Ground: Asphaltum 2 parts, Beeswax 2 parts, Rosin 1 part melted together in a suitable pot until liquid. This liquid is poured into cold water and moulded into ball shapes for storage. One ball of about 4cm. diameter is left to dissolve in about 300ml of petrol. This takes about twenty-four hours. The solution is then filtered.

Soft Ground: The hard ground is dissolved in petrol as described, with about 5g of Vaseline used per 300ml of hard ground solution.



ALTERPIECE

## BARRY CLEAVIN

Born, Dunedin, New Zealand, 1939

1963 – 1966	University of Canterbury School of Fine Arts
1972	Honolulu Academy of Arts
1975	Artist in Residence, G.I.A.E., Victoria, Australia
Since 1978	Senior lecturer in Printmaking, School of Fine Arts, University of Canterbury
1967, 1972	Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council Scholarships
1983	Fullbright Award

Has exhibited within the main centres of New Zealand in solo shows since 1966, with a survey exhibition 'Ewe & Eye' curated by the Auckland City Art Gallery in 1982 and touring New Zealand during 1982-83.

Recent specific exhibitions of prints and drawings have been shown as "Hindsight", Gingko Gallery, Christchurch 1982, 'A Litany of Lines', Gingko Gallery, Christchurch 1983, 'The Bitter Suites', Denis Cohn Gallery, Auckland, 1985, also at the Robert McDougall Art Gallery, Christchurch, 1985.

Group exhibitions participated in since 1965 within New Zealand include the 'Anxious Images' show curated by The Auckland City Art Gallery.

Outside New Zealand solo print exhibitions include shows within Melbourne and Sydney, and by invitation in group exhibitions of prints in Biennales held in Biella, Barcelona, Bradford, Buenos Aires, Berlin, Cracow, Frechen, Fredrikstad, Grenchen, Ljubljana, Listowel, Melbourne, New Dehli, Paris, Tokyo – since 1967.

Other participations in group printmaking exhibitions include the World Print Council, San Francisco. 'New Prints from New Zealand Soker Kaseman, San Francisco 1984. Has participated in the 'Premi International Dibuix Joan Miro, Barcelona, Spain since 1968 and the 'Exposition Internationale de Dessin Originaux, Rijeka as exhibitions specifically for drawing.

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- 1980 Otago Daily Times, March,  
Peter Leech
- 1982 Christchurch Star, June 16th, Brett Riley
- 1979 The Evening Post, October 13th,  
Neil Rowe
- 1975 The New Zealand Herald,  
May 3rd, T.J. McNamara
- 1985 The Auckland Star, August,  
T.J. McNamara
- 1984 Otago Daily Times, Peter Leech
- 1984 'Anxious Images', Catalogue intro-  
duction by Alexa Johnston, Auckland City Art  
Gallery
- 1986 Louise Beale Gallery Catalogue, Wellington



## LIST OF WORKS

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- |   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| 1 EWE AND EYE<br>etching<br>165 x 110 mm<br>1982<br>IMP 6/40                                | 8 CHILDS PLAY 3 (2 PG)<br>etching and aquatint<br>427 x 200 mm<br>1984<br>IMP 6/40                                     | 15 MIG 23 'FISHBED WITH<br>XIPHACTINUS & PIPLMISTUS<br>dry point, etching and aquatint<br>288 x 330 mm<br>1984<br>IMP 6/40   |
| 2 ALTERPIECE<br>etching and aquatint<br>330 x 220 mm<br>1982<br>IMP 2/40                    | 9 CHILDS PLAY 4<br>etching and aquatint<br>425 x 560 mm<br>1984<br>IMP 6/20  | 16 AH - 64A apache 7 navajo skull<br>(FROM FORT WINGATE NEW MEXICO)<br>dry point, etching and aquatint<br>270 x 430 mm<br>1984<br>IMP 6/40                                 |
| 3 NEXT TO NOTHING (NADA)<br>etching and aquatint<br>465 x 310 mm<br>1982<br>IMP 4/40        | 10 CHILDS PLAY 5<br>etching and aquatint<br>196 x 627 mm<br>1984<br>IMP 6/40   | 17 'TIME FLIES' - U.S. SURFACE TO<br>AIR MISSILES AND FOUR SKULLS<br>dry point, etching and aquatint<br>315 x 315 mm<br>1984<br>IMP 6/40                                   |
| 4 ALTERPIECE II<br>etching and aquatint<br>465 x 250 mm<br>1982<br>IMP 9/40                 | 11 BIRDS OF A FEATHER<br>etching and aquatint<br>405 x 505 mm<br>1984<br>IMP 2/20                                      | 18 U.S.S. RAMSEY WITH RED MOKI<br>AND HA PUKU (CHEILODACTYLUS SPECTABILIS<br>AND PERCA OXYGENEIOUS)<br>dry point, etching and aquatint<br>260 x 465 mm<br>1984<br>IMP 6/40 |
| 5 CALCULATED TO SEND YOU<br>ROUND THE TWIST<br>etching<br>220 x 160 mm<br>1983<br>IMP 21/40 | 12 BIRDS OF A FEATHER:<br>A 4M SKYHAWK & AQUILA CHRYSAETOS<br>etching and aquatint<br>200 x 330 mm<br>1984<br>IMP 6/40 | 19 'RULING REPTILES' - PHANTOM<br>F4J AND TERANODON<br>etching and aquatint<br>315 x 395 mm<br>1984<br>IMP 6/40  |
| 6 CHILDS PLAY<br>etching and aquatint<br>320 x 420 mm<br>1984<br>IMP 6/40                   | 13 BIRDS OF A FEATHER<br>(FOR OPERATION TRIAD '84)<br>etching and aquatint<br>240 x 190 mm<br>1984<br>IMP 6/40         | 20 TOMAHAWK AND CHIMPANZEE<br>etching and aquatint<br>315 x 395 mm<br>1984<br>IMP 6/40   |
| 7 CHILDS PLAY 2<br>etching and aquatint<br>498 x 300 mm<br>1984<br>IMP 6/40                 | 14 ANATOMY OF A (NZUS) PREDATOR<br>photo engraving and etching<br>425 x 300 mm<br>1984<br>IMP 6/40                     |  |
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|---|---|---|
| <p>21 <b>T-34 TANKS AND BEAR</b><br/>(T34/76A + T34/76)<br/>etching and aquatint<br/>340 x 355 mm<br/>1984<br/>IMP 6/40</p> | <p>28 <b>NO SHOULD HAVE BEEN THE ANSWER</b><br/>etching<br/>220 x 163 mm<br/>1985<br/>IMP 6/80</p>  | <p>32 <b>'M. DUCHAMP ASCENDING HIS STAIRCASE ON A BICYCLE</b><br/>aquatint and dry point<br/>100 x 100 mm<br/>1986<br/>IMP 7/30</p>             |
| <p>22 <b>'DISARMAMENT' WITH U.S. FIREARMS</b><br/>etching and aquatint<br/>280 x 315 mm<br/>1984<br/>IMP 6/40</p>           | <p>29 <b>ANOTHER TRANSPLANT FOR BABY FAYE...?</b><br/>etching<br/>167 x 200 mm<br/>1985<br/>IMP 3/40</p>  | <p>33 <b>'M. DUCHAMP CONSIDERS (THE PONZO ILLUSION)</b><br/>aquatint and dry point<br/>100 x 100 mm<br/>1986<br/>IMP 7/30</p>                   |
| <p>23 <b>U.S. 57mm MI/GB AND TIGER</b><br/>etching<br/>355 x 405 mm<br/>1985<br/>IMP 6/40</p>                               | <p><b>'POPULAR ILLUSIONS' – the bicycle cycle</b><br/>A series extending from a party pack of plastic cyclists purchased from the Kaiapoi Havmore Supermarket, and Marcel Duchamp's La Boite de 1914 (dated Milan June 1, 1966 on the inside lid of the Kodak box). This was offered in Sotherby's London sale, 4 December, 1985 at 2.30 p.m. with an expected price given at 70,000 – 90,000 pounds.<br/>The original box containing 17 items was given by Duchamp to WALTER ARENSBERG. It is now held at the Philadelphia Museum. Included in the box is a drawing of a cyclist superimposed on a music score.<br/>These 'popular illusions' relate to the optical and fiscal qualities of art.</p> | <p>34 <b>'M. DUCHAMP GIVES CUBISM A PASSING THOUGHT (THE NECKER CUBE)</b><br/>aquatint and dry point<br/>100 x 100 mm<br/>1986<br/>IMP 7/30</p> |
| <p>24 <b>U.S.S. NIMITZ AND PERCA FLUVIATILIS</b><br/>etching<br/>485 x 517 mm<br/>1985<br/>IMP 6/20</p>                     | <p>30 <b>POPULAR ILLUSIONS – A PRINT CYCLE FOR DUCHAMP W</b><br/>aquatint and dry point<br/>100 x 100 mm<br/>1986<br/>IMP 7/30</p>  | <p>35 <b>'M. DUCHAMP PASSING SCHROEDERS STAIRCASE ON HIS BICYCLE</b><br/>aquatint and dry point<br/>100 x 100 mm<br/>1986<br/>IMP 7/30</p>      |
| <p>25 <b>FOR THE THEATRE OF WAR</b><br/>etching and aquatint<br/>100 x 100 mm<br/>1985<br/>IMP 3/20</p>                     | <p>31 <b>'M. DUCHAMP DESCENDING A STAIRCASE ON HIS BICYCLE</b><br/>aquatint and dry point<br/>100 x 100 mm<br/>1986<br/>IMP 7/30</p>  | <p>36 <b>'M. DUCHAMP CYCLES PAST A FRENCH WIDOW</b><br/>aquatint and dry point<br/>100 x 100 mm<br/>1986<br/>IMP 7/30</p>                       |
| <p>26 <b>NUCLEAR FOSSIL</b><br/>etching and aquatint<br/>100 x 100 mm<br/>1985<br/>IMP 3/20</p>                             | <p>37 <b>MARCEL NOTICES THAT THE EVENINGS ARE VERY MUCH MORE DRAWN IN NOW (MULLER-LYER ILLUSION)</b><br/>aquatint and dry point<br/>1986<br/>IMP 7/30</p>   | <p>38 <b>'M. DUCHAMP HAS TIME FOR REFLECTION</b><br/>aquatint and dry point<br/>1986<br/>IMP 7/30</p>   |
| <p>27 <b>NUCLEAR FOSSIL (US GROUND TO AIR MISSILES)</b><br/>etching and aquatint<br/>100 x 100 mm<br/>1985<br/>IMP 3/20</p> |   |   |
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'M. DUCHAMP HAS TIME FOR REFLECTION



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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