

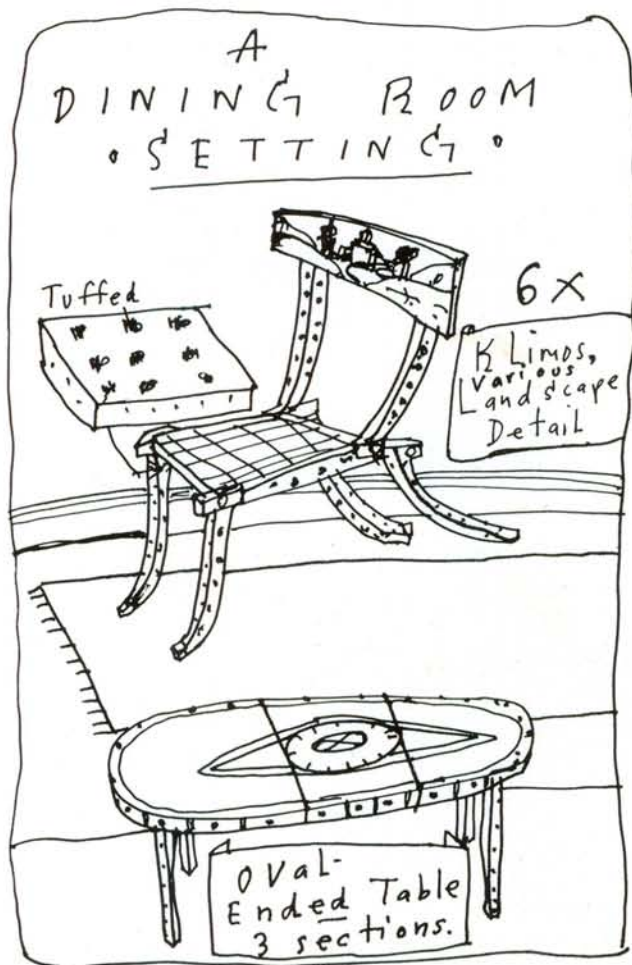
Gavin Chilcott
Setting a Table

15 December 1989 – 14 February 1990
An Auckland City Art Gallery Artist's Project
Cabinetmaker – David White

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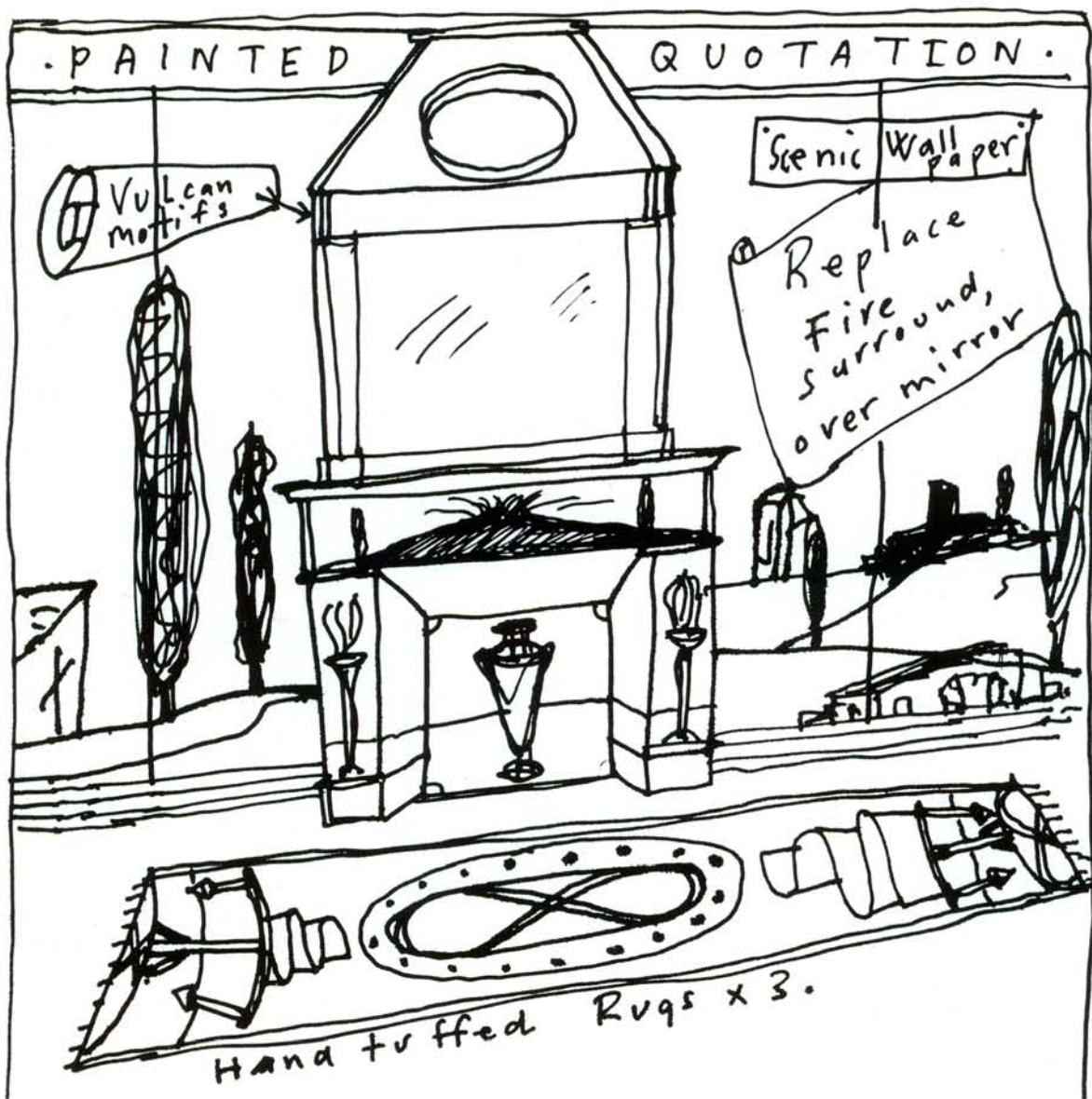


Working drawing for *Setting a Table* 1989
ink on card
295 x 210 mm

A Personal Note

My first encounter with Gavin Chilcott was during the occasion of his exhibition at Ray Hughes Gallery, Brisbane, in 1983. This was to be the start of what can best be described as an ongoing romance with the man and his work. Like all romances, it evolved through certain stages; there was an initial attraction to the physical haughtiness of the works, which gave way to intrigue at their newness and freshness, and eventually mature love and respect.

As with most good artists it is impossible to separate Chilcott the person from his art, which comes directly from his environment: anywhere there are people, preferably engaged in a



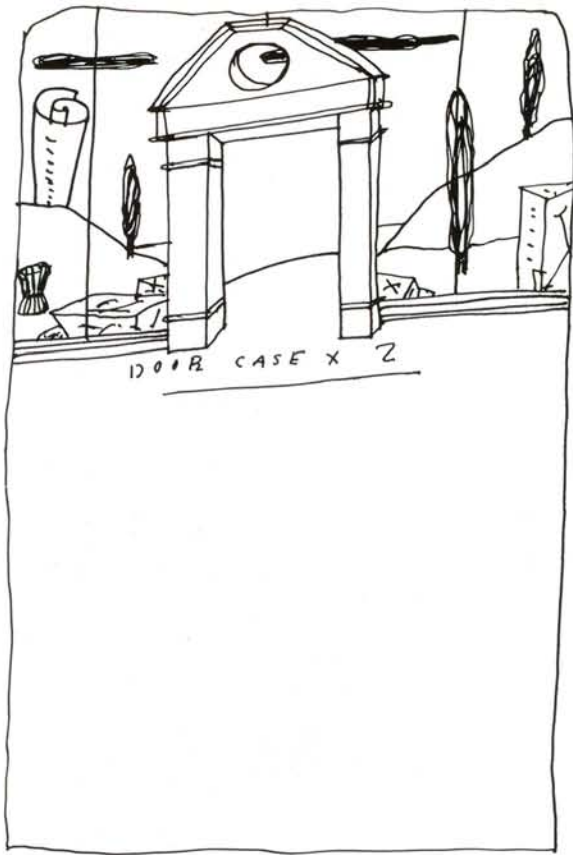
boisterous 'good time'. While the man is at times capable of sober introspection and of applying a veneer of respectability (Italian suit and crocodile-skin shoes), this is purely a respite from the next headlong confrontation with humanity and the human condition.

Chilcott in a crowd can at times be likened to the cliché of the mad scientist careering around the laboratory in a frantic search for the ultimate truth about life itself, which surely must be in the next smoking test tube. Whereas if we substitute a few people and a drink (sometimes verging on

the scientific), Chilcott's search for human souls goes on.

If Chilcott is a gestural painter then it must follow that his paintings are also gestural and the brushwork as well but if it comes down to analysing brushstrokes we're all in real trouble and as even the bartender would say, spirit?

His work comes from the great tradition of New Zealand art inherent in which is the strength of personal concepts overriding all other concerns, most notably landscape and allow me the comparison to the tradition of Australian art



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which seems overwhelmed by myths and tragedy about the 'great outbreak'.

Just as McCubbin, Roberts, Williams and others all did their obligatory odd weekend in the bush, most of today's artists, to have any 'professional' credibility, make their pilgrimage to Kakadu, the Kimberleys and Cape York, and get to know at least a couple of aboriginals.

For this reason the best of New Zealand art seems devoid of excessive lyricism and is primarily concerned with what I'd call Romantic Humanism. This is the tradition in which Gavin Chilcott is anchored.

Tom Risley

Tom Risley is an Australian artist presently working in Auckland.

Brief biography

Gavin Chilcott was born in Auckland in 1950 and studied at the Auckland Technical Institute and the Elam School of Fine Arts. He has exhibited regularly in solo and group exhibitions in New Zealand since 1978 and in Australia since 1983. He lives in Auckland.

Public collections

Auckland City Art Gallery
Museum of Contemporary Art, Brisbane
Chartwell Collection, Hamilton
Bank of New Zealand, Wellington
Dowse Art Gallery, Lower Hutt
Dunedin Public Art Gallery
Hocken Library, Dunedin
Fletcher Challenge Corporation, Auckland
Hawkes Bay Art Gallery and Museum, Napier
National Art Gallery, Wellington
New Zealand Embassy, Washington, DC
New Zealand Consulate, New York City
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Wellington
New Zealand Consulate, Rome
New Zealand Embassy, Canberra
Sarjeant Gallery, Wanganui
Robert McDougall Gallery, Christchurch
Waikato Art Museum, Hamilton
Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council, Wellington
Powerhouse Museum, Sydney
National Library, Wellington

Cabinetmaker – David White

David White was born in Auckland in 1965. He worked as an apprentice joiner at HMNZ Dockyard in Auckland and in 1984 he won the Apprentice of the Year award. Since 1985 he has worked as a freelance cabinetmaker in Auckland.

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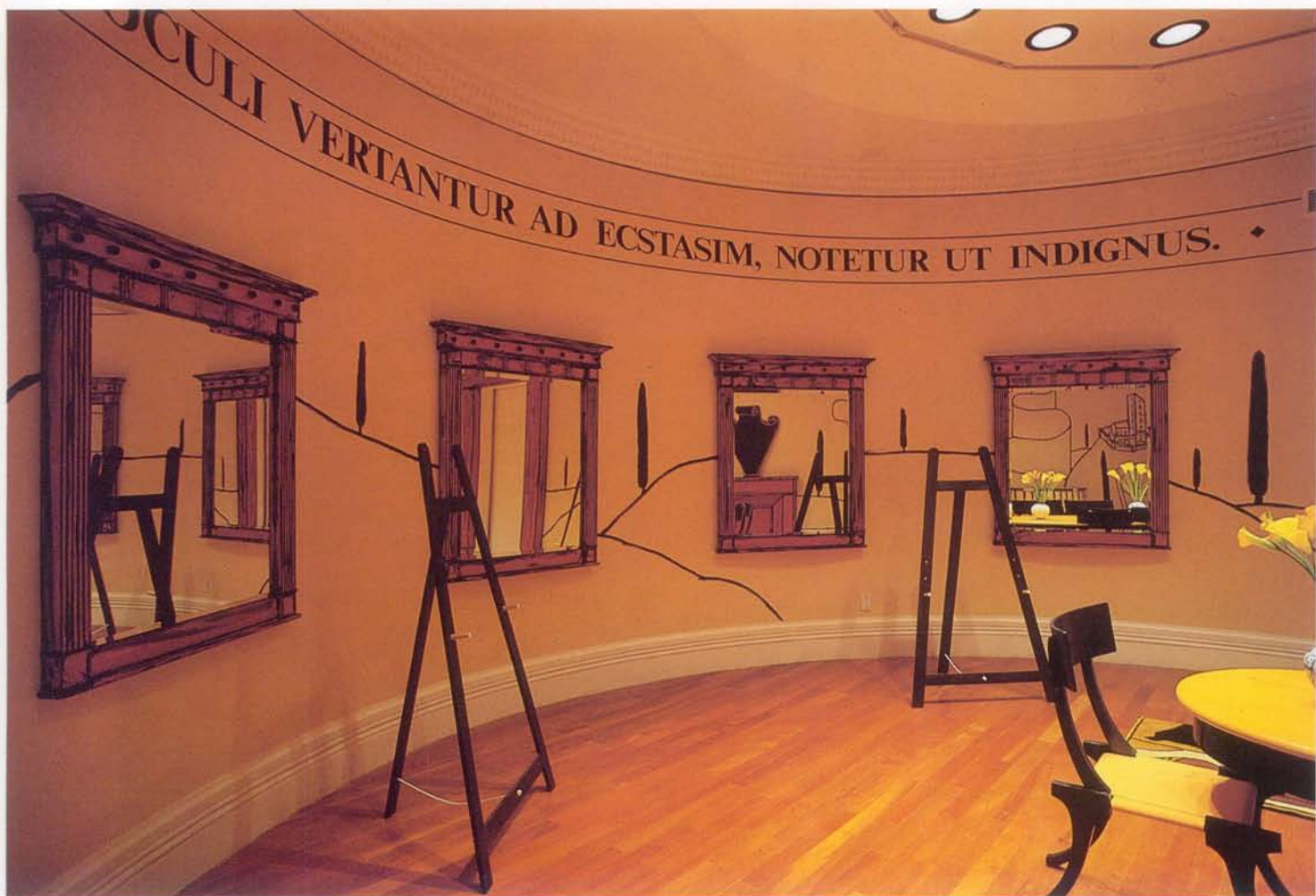
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