

Gregory O'Brien (New Zealand)

Born in Matamata, Gregory trained as a journalist and studied art history and English at Auckland University. With one foot in the literary world, the other in the visual art realm, Gregory has been a prolific and busy presence on New Zealand's cultural scene for nearly three decades. *Lands and Deeds; Profiles of Contemporary New Zealand Painters* (1996) kicked off a busy few years of art-writing and curating exhibitions.

While holding a part-time position at City Gallery Wellington, he curated major exhibitions by Ralph Hotere, Rosalie Gascoigne, Colin McCahon, Fiona Hall, Laurence Aberhart, John Pule, Elizabeth Thomson and others. Presently, he is a co-ordinator-participant in the ongoing 'Kermadec' art project. As an artist, Gregory has illustrated the work of other New Zealand writers - among them C. K. Stead, Elizabeth Smither, Bill Manhire, Michael King and Jenny Bornholdt. His artworks can be found on book covers in New Zealand, Australia, England, Germany, Holland and Russia. In 2012 he illustrated Kate De Goldi's novella, *The ACB with Honora Lee*, as well as his own book, *Beauties of the Octagonal Pool*. With his handprinter-brother Brendan, he has produced numerous small press editions bringing together poetry and art, by his own hand and by others. Since 2008, he has made over 30 etchings with master printmaker Michael Kempson at Cicada Press, University of NSW, Sydney. O'Brien received an Arts Foundation Laureate Award in 2012. In the same year, Gregory was the recipient of the NZ Prime Minister's Award for Literary Achievement for Non-fiction.