

Daniel Kirsch



Wabi-Sabi  
OF THE **Sleeping  
Beauties**

> art works on  
car wrecks  
from coromandel

20 Nov - 19 Dec 2009

Wall Gallery, 55a Mackelvie Street,  
Ponsonby Auckland  
Tues-Fri 10am-5:30pm  
Sat. 10am-4pm  
phone (09) 378 2150

30 Jan - 26 Feb 2010

Flametree Artgarden & Gallery  
16a O'Brien Rd, Coatesville  
Thur-Sun 11am-4pm  
phone (09) 414 7433

[www.thesleepingbeauties.co.nz](http://www.thesleepingbeauties.co.nz)

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**In Brief** Observing New Zealand landscape and culture, in particular the beautiful Coromandel Peninsula and its abandoned automobiles, up and coming artist Daniel Kirsch combines screen prints on car body parts, screen prints on paper, photographs and sound to create a surprising and completely captivating experience.

Old rusty Car wrecks from the beautiful Coromandel come back to life as unusual art works – the artist cuts them up and prints photos of the wrecks onto parts of themselves, revealing their initially unappreciated beauty and fascinating stories. Among the wrecks are classics like Valiant Hemi, Bedford Truck, Hillman Superminx. With his grungy but fresh work Kirsch manages to amalgamate opposites like petrol heads with environment, and spirituality with car art. Don't miss this must-see exhibition now on at Flametree Gallery, Coatesville. Show closes 26 February 2010.

**what others  
have to say:**

*“Something especially New Zealand is showing at the Wall Gallery where Daniel Kirsch is showing prints on paper and prints on metal panels recovered from cars abandoned in the Coromandel bush. One of the works must surely become iconic. It is a yellow car inexplicably swamped deep in the green of thick bush.”*

TJ McNAMARA, IN THE WEEKEND NZ HERALD



## Art facts

This exhibition features mainly screen printed work on metal pieces cut out of old car wrecks in the Coromandel bush. It deals with the inherent contradictions of our western design aesthetic (a.k.a. "Modernism") by looking at western design objects from an unusual perspective. Although not intentional, this viewpoint relates a great deal to Wabi-Sabi, a long established Japanese philosophy and aesthetic which celebrates transience and impermanence.

The work further explores our cultural definition of beauty. By looking at things in a different way, the work discovers the initially unappreciated yet incredible beauty held in abandoned vehicles and in their out-of-context, amazing positioning. And with this, the stark contrast to our habitual perception of old vehicles in the bush; as wrecks, as an eyesore, abandoned, discarded junk.

*The work discovers initially unappreciated yet incredible beauty.*

In addition to the prints on metal the exhibition features prints on paper, and a 20 minute sound installation which can be heard while looking at the visual work. To conclude Kirsch published a limited edition 160 page hardcover book about the project. It catalogues all the

work on display at the exhibition, shows photographs of the wrecks, and features a number of texts relating to the work. The very interesting process of making the work is also explained and illustrated.

## Retail facts

The work is high calibre screen printed artwork on actual car metal panels cut from the vehicles depicted, and is finished to a very high standard. Each piece has custom designed and individually machined stainless steel fittings welded to the reverse which make a sleek wall mounting system. This work has depth AND it is fun and looks great, making each piece a sophisticated object to have in your space or to give to someone special for Christmas. The metal prints retail between \$1500 and 5500.

Further to the metal work, screen prints on paper are available as a limited edition of 6 for \$450 each. At the lower end of the price spectrum but no less unique, a beautifully designed, hand-bound hard cover book retails at \$220. This is a signed and numbered limited edition of 30 (160 pages, each cover different, each containing original artist prints as endpapers), and last there are 2 designs of classy, high quality T-shirts featuring classic cars also found in the artwork. They retail at \$45 each. While visiting the gallery listen to a sound installation playing bush sounds like

*This is high calibre artwork which has depth AND is fun, plus it looks great.*

tui, bellbird etc juxtaposed with car sounds (1974 Chrysler S.E., log trucks) and traditional maori instruments/taonga puoro, played by the artist. (detailed price list available on request)



## Back-ground

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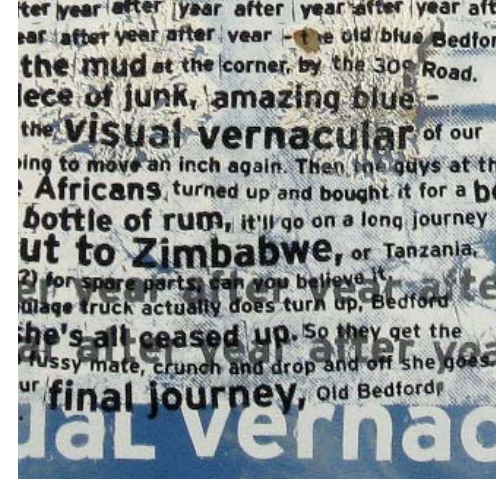
He made him laugh. Perhaps it is kind of crazy in another kind of sane way but Kirsch has always been intrigued by the initially unappreciated yet incredible beauty held in these abandoned vehicles and in their out-of-context, amazing positioning. And with this, the stark contrast to our habitual perception of old vehicles in the bush; as wrecks, as an eyesore, abandoned, discarded junk.

Coromandel is full of old car wrecks that from one point of view spoil our beautiful environment, while often they are in the most amazing places. You wonder how they ever got there. Be it deep down a gully in the middle of a pristine stream (running through the vehicle), or on top of a hill, right smack in the middle of a big paddock or simply sitting in somebody's back yard or old shed, piled over with junk, slowly rotting away. They get front row while delivering an 'eyesore experience' to everyone else.

An artist friend observed that his recent work is quite "Wabi-Sabi", to which the only sensible answer Kirsch could come up with was "Wabi-What?" He went on to explain that Wabi-Sabi is a Japanese art aesthetic that appreciates a beauty of things imperfect, impermanent, and incomplete. A beauty of things unconventional. Although Kirsch still knows little about Wabi-Sabi this idea appealed greatly and gave him a title for his sleeping beauties.

Also, since the beginning of the millennium, Kirsch spent countless days everywhere in the Coromandel backcountry you could think of. Trailing along with his friend Keith Stephenson he helped set up each year's secret course of the Coromandel Adventure Race. This took them to the most stunning places and the most remote corners you could imagine. The amazing thing was that even though you think you're somewhere in the middle of paradise at the end of the world, you always come across an old wreck somewhere, guaranteed. You can count on it. These old wrecks struck him being as much part of the visual vernacular of our unique environment as everything else from bush to hills to sheep to old sheds and the coast.

In this completely new body of work the artist offers a surprising, gentle, and completely unusual new way to look at abandoned automobiles from around the beautiful Coromandel Peninsula.



## The Cars

Some of the beauty in this project is that most of these wrecks in the bush are pretty old automobiles, that belong to a by-gone era. They are much closer in style to the vehicles that rolled around the streets when Kirsch grew up in Berlin, Germany and was first exposed to cars. Compared to today's cars, the design is different, the feel is different, the technology is different, their colours are different, their buttons and switches and gauges are different, they smell differently, and their size is very different!

These are automobiles from another time, from before the digital age – very simple, analogue-type machines. Our mind is still capable of comprehending their functionality. We

*These are automobiles from before the digital age – very simple, analogue-type machines. Their bulkiness, and often excessive size, provides something fascinating and satisfying.*

can relate to what we see. An air of slowness and friendliness surrounds them, despite (or supported by) their more or less advanced state of dissolution. Their bulkiness, and often excessive size, provides something fascinating and satisfying.

“It is really gratifying to know”, says Kirsch, “that my friend, and project welder Paul Baylis drives around in one of the coolest cars by far - a modified, matte black, 1974 Chrysler S.E. It isn't often that people turn up in such appropriate vehicles for a job like this”. It's his Valiant Hemi, featured in the work, that is rotting away in Papa Aroha. He keeps it as a spare part supply for the S.E. Surprisingly Kirsch's other friend Rich Visick, recently got himself an authentic old white

Bedford truck. No frills, no rust, and all original. It goes 70 km/h max on 6 cylinders and gets dreadful mileage. Interestingly, both vehicles (in slightly different form) feature in this body of work.

And while these big old cars on some level are completely mad, they also offer something very satisfying, and in a way balancing, to our increasingly efficient and ever so sensible world of high-tech delusion.



## Exhibition summary

Wabi-Sabi of the Sleeping Beauties/Beauty Mate combines screen prints on car body parts, screen prints on paper, photographic work and a sound installation.

You will be able to view a > comprehensive selection of work printed on actual metal panels cut from the vehicles which are depicted. In addition there is > a limited and signed edition of 6 on paper, created with the same printing screens. > A complimentary book featuring additional material will be launched.

This exhibition also features > a sound installation by audio engineer Nalan Kirsch, which blends a variety of mostly natural location sounds. Displacing these into a highly controlled, man-made environment like this gallery offers an interesting reverse parallel to the out-of-context vehicles in their natural settings.

## Artist Info

Wabi-Sabi of the Sleeping Beauties/Beauty Mate! is the most recent project by up and coming New Zealand artist Daniel Kirsch. Amazing things can happen when based in the Wop-Wops of beautiful Coromandel and operating on a German-coined mind. Kirsch's grungy but fresh work amalgamates opposites like petrol heads with environment, and spirituality with car art. When Berliner Kirsch first arrived to NZ by cargo vessel 10 years ago, he went straight for rural Coromandel – and stayed. An intimate relationship developed with his new home, not the least from "going bush" a lot. With a wide array of styles

*Kirsch's work amalgamates opposites like petrol heads with environment, and spirituality with car art.*

ranging from quick pen and ink drawings, acrylic paintings to cut-up and printed-on beehive boxes or car wrecks the artist expresses his love and respect for his fascinating and very different new home. He is one of those rare, new artists whose fresh approach and dedication ensures a promising future.