

PRESS BOOK



Rockets, endangered birds, environmental issues, and pop culture collide in vibrant textural colours and forms in this intimate portrait of the life, loves, and friendships of New Zealand artist Geoff Dixon.

A feature documentary film

Directors | Producers

Clare O'Leary & Glenis Giles

Format: DCP HD 5.1 25

Duration: 82 minutes

**gogo
media**
AOTEAROA

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“A love story between two men who live their art. When one dies the other finds solace in his work. A film about grief and love and art. Intimately told.”

Dame Gaylene Preston

Short Synopsis:

Geoff Dixon's wild and colourful paintings and sculptures portray endangered birds and their collision with humans, technology, and the natural world.

His moving story is full of adventure and [the](#) exploration of love and friendship. We witness his great friend and fellow artist Euan Macleod, painting him as they talk.

Geoff and his partner, indigenous Australian artist Arone Meeks, work alongside each other. [Through their art](#), both shine a [penetrating](#) searchlight on the serious decline of our environment.

Geoff says the paintings are “portraits of us”.

The Story:

Geoff's paintings fill the room with vibrant colour and texture - a challenge to all of us to wake up and think about the future of our wildlife, our flora and fauna, our country and our planet.

The collision of human life and technology with the natural world is portrayed in large sculptures of birds that stare straight into our souls. Eyes staring, questioning, being. Technology, planets, rockets whizz by the intensity of their gaze. Their stillness is unnerving and arresting.

What are we doing to our natural world, and when are we going to wake up?

Geoff Dixon was born in Bluff, New Zealand, but has lived most of his life in Australia. He now lives in Cairns. The film follows his preparation for an exhibition at Bowen Galleries, Wellington, in May 2022.

We started this film in 2020, but COVID, politics, and events in his personal life have interrupted the preparation of the work. The film follows alongside him as he conquers these challenges and strives to continue to do the work.

The film documents the process of creating the ‘assemblages’ and as he paints, he talks of his motivations and vision.

Through the years we unravel early influences in family life, environments, people he met on his travels, and the teachers who helped to shape his artistic style and vision.

Geoff's work is held in many private collections in New Zealand. He has had residencies in the Christchurch Art Gallery and the Southland Museum and Art Gallery, and in his hometown of Cairns, Queensland. He has also shown alongside his partner, Aboriginal artist Arone Meeks.

He confronts his audience with the unsettling fact that a third of New Zealand's remaining bird species are in serious decline. Geoff paints to celebrate the birds we do have, as well as those on the verge of extinction in Australasia to reflect on the state of our ecology. He says that the paintings are also “portraits of us”.

My work developed over the past ten years has focused particularly on endangered bird species, with an overriding theme of technology relating to clichés of science fiction and space travel as developed in the 1950s when I was a child.

Geoff Dixon

Geoff Dixon – Artist

Geoff Dixon was born in Southland and grew up in Nelson. He studied graphic design at Christchurch Polytechnic in the mid-1970s and has exhibited widely since. He was the 1997 Art Foundation's Artist in Residence in Southland, Invercargill (1996-97), the Centre of Contemporary Art in Cairns (2000) and the Art Centre of Christchurch's Artist in Residence, Christchurch Art Centre (2007).

He currently lives and works in Cairns, Queensland, and now divides his time between Australia and New Zealand.



Geoff started exhibiting when he was a student at Canterbury's Christchurch Polytechnic in the 1970s. After travelling in Africa and Papua New Guinea he moved to Sydney. He later moved to Cairns to live with his partner, Aboriginal artist Arone Meeks, whose work is also exhibited in national and international exhibitions.

Collections

Geoff's work is held in Artbank Australia, Christchurch Art Gallery, Christchurch Polytechnic, George Patterson, James Wallace Arts Trust, Manawatū Art Gallery, Southland Museum and Art Gallery, Wingnut Films, Mike Cole, and many other private collections in New Zealand, Australia and Europe.

Geoff is represented by **Bowen Galleries**, Wellington.

<https://bowengalleries.nz/dixon/>

Creative Team

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Clare O’Leary & Glenis Giles

In 2020 Glenis and Clare rebooted their production company to co-direct and produce the feature documentary *Geoff Dixon | Portraits of Us*.

In 2010 they produced a feature documentary on a Wellington artist: *Gordon Crook : A Life of Art*. This screened in the New Zealand International Film Festival 2010.

In 2007 their documentary on historian/biographer *Michael King - A Moment in Time*, screened at the International Film Festival in 2007 and on Māori Television in March 2009.

2005 QTV was a 13-part science and technology series for children (8-12), for TVNZ featuring New Zealand scientists and technology innovators across the country. Produced with Di Oliver-Zahl and Glenis Giles. Directed by Lala Rolls & Clare O’Leary. This series had a large web and interactive component which was leading-edge at the time. Currently available online on YouTube.

1997 *A Class Act*, a documentary about the life and work of playwright, Mervyn Thompson screened in the International Film Festival in 1997.

In 1999 we made a short film on Ralph Hotere *The Sound of a Painting*, shot during the Out the Black Window exhibition at Wellington City Art Gallery, featuring the poetry of Hone Tuwhare, Cilla McQueen, Ian Wedde and Bill Manhire. Originally a pilot for a feature documentary.

Glenis has also produced films in collaboration with artists such as Linda Niccol, Ainsley Gardner, Sally Rodwell, Sebastian Doyle, Joanna Simpson and Fiona Samuel.

Clare has produced a number of documentaries independently as Banshee Productions (Australia/NZ) and The Doco Bug (NZ). She works across health education and filmmaking, bringing storytelling into her role in health communications.

Clare and Glenis refreshed their brand in 2020 as **gogomedia AOTEAROA**.

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[gogomedia on youtube](https://www.youtube.com/gogomedia)

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gogomedia works with Sam O’Leary who has designed their logo and many graphics and titles for several of their films. ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

web: www.conduction.co.nz

instagram: [samolearypresents](https://www.instagram.com/samolearypresents)





Glenis Giles – Producer/Director

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Glenis returns to the film industry after six years working in marketing and social media for a New Zealand gift and stationery company, Live Wires NZ Ltd, with a large NZ and global market.

Glenis and Clare have been working together on a privately funded documentary for the past two years – **Geoff Dixon | Portraits of Us**. This has been her first foray into directing - which she has loved.

Glenis is an independent producer of film and television with over twenty years' experience in the local industry. She was a founding member of Women in Film & Television (WIFT) and represented New Zealand at WIFTI, Women and Film & Television International.

She has worked on feature films as production manager and line producer.

Her portfolio of work includes documentaries, theatrical short films, TV dramas, commercials and music videos. She has worked extensively in the production of television for youth, and her science series QTV was a finalist in the Japan Prize and the ANZ TV awards in 2006.

Over the years she has produced numerous award-winning shorts including *Song of the Siren*, *Eau de la Vie*, *Shoes* and *Mokopuna*, Ainsley Gardner's directorial debut.

She produced three short films, *Dangerous Ride*, *Beautiful Collision* and *The Handkerchief* with Linda Niccol, and was instrumental in the early days of Linda's feature film *Poppy*.

Her documentaries, co-produced with director Clare O'Leary - *Michael King, a moment in time*; *A Class Act*, *Mervyn Thompson*; and *Gordon Crook, A Life of Art*, all screened in the International Film Festival of New Zealand.

All her short films have screened at the NZ International Film Festivals and many travelled to international festivals.

She was involved in the Wellington Fringe Film Festival for nineteen years, as co-ordinator and then Chair.

Glenis was a founding member of WIFT Wellington and has been on the NZ board and the International representative for NZ on WIFTi International.

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[IMDb glenisgiles](#)



Clare O'Leary - Director/Producer

gogomedia AOTEAROA

Clare is currently director/producer with Glenis Giles on the feature documentary *Geoff Dixon | Portraits of Us*. The film was edited by Amanda Mulderry with an original soundscape by Plan9.

Clare started her filmmaking career in Western Australia, working on short films and directing documentaries: *Overlocked & Underpaid* (SBS-TV - 1988) about migrant women in the clothing trade and *Groundwork* (1989), tackling gender issues in the mining industry.

She returned to New Zealand at the end of 1990 and has worked on a variety of art and social issue films. A television documentary about the sex industry, *A Double Standard*, (TV3 1996) and *Decriminalisation of Sex Work in New Zealand* (2010) tell stories of sex workers before and after the legislation decriminalising prostitution was passed. Prostitution Reform Act (2003).

Documentaries include: *Gordon Crook: A Life of Art* (2010), *A Class Act* (1997) about playwright *Mervyn Thompson*, historian and writer, *Michael King, A Moment in Time* (1997). These were all selected for the NZ International Film Festival programme and were produced with Glenis Giles through gogo media.

Other shorter formats include profiles of artists, writers and community projects. *The Sound of a Painting* featured the work of artist Ralph Hotere and his collaboration with NZ poets Hone Tuwhare, Bill Manhire, Ian Wedde and Cilla McQueen.

In 2015 Clare was Digital Artist in Residence with The Big Idea to create The Solace Initiative, a collaborative creative workshop between hospice workers and creative practitioners exploring 'what brings you solace' in loss and grief. *The Solace of Art*.

Clare has also worked extensively in the creative, digital content and games industry sector, writing papers and digital strategies for NZTE, NZ On Air, NZIER and the National Library of NZ. She has advised on the government's Creative Industries and Digital Content Strategy. She scoped NZONSCREEN, the largest online screen portal in NZ at the time, of which she was the founding Content Director.

Clare originally trained as a nurse and has worked across the health and media sectors. Her work through hospice, *The Art of Palliative Medicine* saw the introduction of creative storytelling for medical students to understand grief, loss and dying.

Clare was appointed to the Film Literature & Classifications Board for four years (2010-2015). She is currently a board member of the Home of Compassion, St Joseph's and is also a trustee of the Lesbian Gay Archives of NZ (LAGANZ) Te Pūrangā Takatāpui o Aotearoa in 2022.

Clare lives with her partner Cathy in Breaker Bay, Wellington and often works on projects with her son, artist/illustrator Samuel O'Leary. He and his wife Stephanie live in Portland, Oregon with their two sons, Miles and Louis, and new baby Lila.

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[NZ On Screen profile](#) [Instagram: samolearypresents](#)



Penney Moir – Executive Producer

Penney Moir is co-owner and co-director of Bowen Galleries in Wellington. Since 2005, she and her colleague Jenny Neligan have supported the careers of 32 New Zealand and New Zealand/Australian artists.

They have represented artists in art fairs in New Zealand and Australia, published art books, and secured artwork acquisition in public institutions. Penney Moir is executive producer of *Portraits of Us*, a documentary featuring Bowen Galleries artist Geoff Dixon and made by gogomedia directors and producers, Glenis Giles and Clare O’Leary.

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Geoff Dixon | Portraits of Us Screening Times



EDITOR: Amanda Mulderry

Amanda is an Editor and First Assistant Editor with over 17 years experience under her belt.

She is the editor of *Geoff Dixon | Portraits of Us*, her first feature documentary.

In recent years she's cut short documentaries *Ultimately Lacks Polish*, featuring Aotearoa New Zealand poet Freya Daly Sadgrove, and *Beyond White Guilt* (previously known as *Land of the Long WHITE Cloud*), a seven-part web series exploring what it means to be Pākehā. Earlier in her career she cut half-hour episodes of *Living the Wildlife* - a TV documentary series directed by Emmy-award winning cinematographer Colin Stafford Johnson, *No Guts, No Glory* - a half-hour adventure race documentary, and numerous inserts for long-running Irish cultural affairs TV series *Nationwide*.

Her first documentary, *Redder Than Red* - a 15-minute film about the first female breakdancer in the UK - was co-directed by world-renowned photographers Martha Cooper and Nika Kramer and screened at various festivals in the UK, Germany, Holland, New York and Los Angeles.

Equally at home helping to steer the editorial ship on local or international productions, her feature film credits as First Assistant Editor include Kiwi films - *Cousins* (2020), *Poppy* (2020), *Reunion* (2020) and Blumhouse film *Black Christmas* (2019). While her TV/Streaming credits include AppleTV+ series *Mr. Corman* (2021) and TVNZ's *Wellington Paranormal - Season 2 and Season 3* (2019 - 2020). She was Second Assistant Editor on Universal's *Mortal Engines* (2018) and Paramount's *Ghost In The Shell* (2017) and an Assistant Editor for the Behind-The-Scenes content on *The Hobbit Trilogy*.

She is particularly interested in cutting content around LGBTQIA+ stories, mental health, equality and multiculturalism.

AMANDA MULDERY | EDITOR | FIRST ASSISTANT EDITOR
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Plan 9

David Donaldson, Stephen Roche, Janet Roddick

Plan 9 has created the original music for more than 30 feature films. Wellington based composers Plan 9, David Donaldson, Janet Roddick and Steve Roche, have composed music for an impressive array of film, television and theatrical and installation projects since 1995.

They won the 2021 SOUNZ Contemporary Award, Te Tohu Auaha at the APRA Silver Scrolls for their album *The Bewilderness*. Following the 2020 Covid lockdown they received a grant from Creative New Zealand to compose and record a new work for altered string quartet with 2 voices, and *The Bewilderness* was released in June last year.

Their score for *They Shall Not Grow Old* (dir Peter Jackson) was a nominee for the 2019 Critics Choice Documentary Awards. They have won Best Feature Film Score 3 times at the NZ Film & Television Awards for *Predicament*, *Saving Grace* and *Jack Brown Genius*. They were finalists at the 2015 APRA Series Awards for *Life Force* as well as being NZ Film & Television Awards finalists for *Jubilee & Perfect Strangers* (film), *Forgotten Silver* (tv) and *Earthquake* (tv).

The 2022 documentary *Geoff Dixon | Portraits of Us* directed by Clare O'Leary and Glenis Giles is their newest score. They are scoring TVNZ's *Our Big Blue Backyard* S3 currently, having done the 2 previous series. They composed the music for Linda Niccol's *Poppy* released in May 2021. In early 2020 Plan 9 created the score for *The Tender Trap* a film for Greenstone Pictures directed by Sima Urale. They also provided music for *Go Further South* – 12 hours of slow tv. In 2019 Plan 9 was music editor and consultant on *Undertow*, the film and TV series. They scored Kerry Fox's first short film *Topping Out*. In 2018 they scored 3 part series *Volcanic New Zealand* and in 2017 scored a 6 part series called *Modern Dinosaurs* for Discovery UK/NZ. Plan 9 composed scores to 2 flagship Animal Planet telefeatures – *Living With Maneaters & Mysterious Wilds of India*.

Included in their 30 feature films are Annie Goldson's documentary *Kim Dotcom: Caught In The Web* (2017) and *Kobi* (2017) by Andrea Bosshard both of which premiered at the NZ Film Festivals They also scored *The Man In The Hat* about Peter McLeavey and Gaylene Preston's documentary on Rita Angus. Other highlights were *The Great Maiden's Blush* (2016) and *What We Do In The Shadows* (2014) by Taika Waititi and Jemaine Clement. They did the music for the stunning feature documentary *Antarctica: A Year On Ice*, which has won numerous awards at international festivals. In 2014 they scored a Japanese/French/ Discovery co-pro 6 x 1 hour documentary series called *Life Force 2* (aka *Mutant Planet 2*) which won a Gold World Medal at the New York Festivals' International TV & Film Awards. They were commissioned by RNZ to create a new theme for Morning Report which played from 2014 to 2022.

With David Long they co-wrote the dwarves' song *Misty Mountains* for *The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey* (2012) and this theme was used by Howard Shore as part of the score. Also with David, they wrote cultural music and created musical sound design for *The Lord Of The Rings* Trilogy and *King Kong* and their music was used in *The Lovely Bones*.

Plan 9 have been providing music editorial services since the early days of the *Lord of the Rings* animatics for Peter Jackson. They've done music editing and temp score editing on numerous films and tv series for NZ and international projects.

Contact details: www.plan9.co.nz

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CREDITS

Director | Producers Glenis Giles & Clare O’Leary

Executive Producer: Penney Moir

Director of Photography: Russell Milledge

Original Music: Plan 9

Editor: Amanda Mulderry

Post-production: POW Studios

Park Road Post

PHOTOS

Also available in separate folder



Geoff Dixon – Studio, Cairns

Photo: Michael Marzik



Takahē

Photo: Stephen A'Court



Space/Rain Forest

Photo credit: Stephen A'Court



To the moon and stars and back. May 2022. Bowen Galleries

Photo credit: Michael Marzick

Plan 9

Composers



Photo credit: Grant Maiden

<https://www.plan9.co.nz/>