

# The New Zealand Herald

## TJ McNamara: City lights given intriguing twist

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By T.J. McNamara

Peter Wichman at Orexart has developed his style over a number of exhibitions. This show is called Familial and presents groups intensely interacting in a variety of ways that range from aggression to submission. The figures are smaller than usual but the large number of paintings suggests hard work and a copious imagination.

His technique is all his own. He uses a black underpainting and over it paints an arid landscape and figures done in a way that leaves them with black shading and sometimes a black outline.

As in the past, acrobats figure and, when they juggle, it is with weapons as symbols of aggression.

One of the most forceful is *Beach*, where the figures are arranged in a tight S curve. They adopt the usual attitude of bathers but their faces are grotesque. Thrusting in from the side is a figure face down in agony or death. The intensity of this painting is particularly strong, whereas in other works the atmosphere is dispersed by the scattering of the figures.

This is a symbolist world where each figure expresses the idea of exclusion, being set apart or pointed at or humbled. There is an odd combination of the utmost brutality with the utmost vulnerability. The resultant works are like nothing else on the art scene.

A painting by Wichman is instantly recognisable.