

# The passion of the artist

WELLINGTON photographer David Boyce has dredged up memories of his childhood for his latest exhibition. He has produced his own *Stations of the Cross*, even though he doesn't consider himself a particularly religious person.

"I had a traditional 1960s quasi-religious upbringing," says Boyce. "I was sent to Sunday school so my parents could spend some time in bed.

"We learnt about the Passions – stations of cross – at Sunday school and the idea comes from that."

The *Stations of the Cross* depict Jesus carrying his cross, dying on it, and being buried. They are normally found lining the walls of Christian churches, but Boyce's representation of the Passion of Christ is at Photospace in Courtenay Place.

"I remember my grandmother, who converted to Catholicism, having rather dark stations around her house. The idea of doing my own has been something bouncing around in my head for quite some time."

Boyce's interpretation of this is a series of photographs of the pavement. Rather than depicting Jesus, he has found crosses that exist in the architecture of the Wellington waterfront between Te Papa and the Star Boating Club.

For example, a picture of the space between paving stones takes on a religious tone when the cross formed there is viewed in a Christian context, as do



**Boyce stands between Jesus' death and his removal from the cross.**

crossed beams embedded in the footpath.

Boyce is following in the footsteps of some of New Zealand's most celebrated artists.

"It grew from interest in NZ spirituality and references artists such as Colin McCahon, Ralph Hotere and Barnett Newman," he says.

By sticking to such a small area to find his stations, Boyce has imposed limitations on himself similar to those the artists applied to their works.

"It's my first time working to a really narrow frame of reference. Barnett Newman limited himself to black canvas, black paint and produced beautiful work. It forces you to be lot more creative.

"I've worked in series before but not with such definite parameters as this. My last show had 42 photos in series. Even now I could

interchange some of those images without interfering with the overall effect."

Boyce sees his *Stations of the Cross* as one work, rather than 14 photos.

"I try not to look at them as individual images, but if I had to choose my favourites I would say 12 and 13 – dying on the cross and being taken down from the cross.

"And I like the simplicity of number four – where Jesus meets his mother."

He cheerfully admits to taking up photography because he can't paint. "Photography is a way I can be creative," he says. "I work better behind a camera.

"If I could paint I would but people now realise photographs can be a work of art."

*Stations of the Cross*, Photospace, Sep 15-Oct 7.