Collusion

A collaborative show by Dark Ballad

Opening
November - Friday 20th
6pm

Running until Nov 29th

Chapter1 Gallery - 95 Orbell st

chapter[1]

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LiquorLand Carlton

THE EXHIBITION

About Collusion

COLLUSION is a celebration of the underground alliances, late-night links, and creative connections Dark Ballad has forged over the last three years. From prominent fine artists like Priscilla Rose-Howe to near-mythological graffiti writers like Pkay, Ballad has joined forces with a literal who's who of the scene to finally bring this massive body of work under one roof.

Not content with limiting these operations to Aotearoa, the show features international heavy-hitters—including a series of gruesomely satirical pieces with SKAM, one of the USA's most prolific stencil and paste-up artists. Deeply entrenched in both the street scene and the gallery world, Ballad occupies a unique space, acting as the catalyst for these two distinct worlds to collide.

Rather than just presenting a finished product, the exhibition lays bare the intense physical labor of the print medium—displaying the heavily carved original woodblocks alongside the traditionally framed fine art prints and bespoke garments. By moving the art from raw wood to frames and onto heavy cotton, Ballad has carved a completely unique niche. He allows the audience to witness the immense effort behind the craft while giving them the chance to wear these one-of-a-kind collaborations out on the streets, immortalising what is so often fleeting graffiti or work shown once, and never again.

OPENING

Friday 20 November

from 6pm

SHOWING

20 – 29 November

2026

VENUE

Chapter1 Gallery

95 Orbell St, Otautahi
Christchurch

THE ARTIST

Dark Ballad

Dark Ballad is an Otautahi-based urban artist who has carved out a distinct, unmistakable niche within the contemporary art landscape. Blending traditional medieval printmaking techniques with street level grit, his work spans from high-contrast gothic paste-ups and hi-vis stickers on the city streets to highly sought-after apparel and limited-edition fine art prints.

Armed with a Masters in Creative Practices (Specialising in Printmaking, 2022), Ballad has dragged the ancient medium of woodblock printing kicking and screaming into the modern world—proving it can be fearlessly applied to any surface. His ever-expanding network of joint operations with prominent fine artists and graffiti writers results in fresh, tactile, and highly distinct alternatives to mass-produced street fashion.

Deeply embedded in the local arts community, Ballad frequently channels his technical output into public spaces. His curation of the Carve surfboard art trail in New Brighton for the 2025 Duke Festival of Surfing united over 30 local artists, running alongside his annual workshops and public installations for the Little Street Art Festival since its inception.

FEATURING 20+ COLLABORATING ARTISTS

Alias · Anime · Borge · Bleak · Eisoe · Ekoe · Fiasko · Hambone · Hannah Martin · Klaudia Bartos · Mr Wolf · Orgnz · Pkay · Pmang · Priscilla Rose-Howe · TrollDoll · Rivet · Scotch · SKAM · Smeagol

Price List

All prices in NZD

NO.	WORK	MEDIUM	YEAR	PRICE
01	Dark Ballad x Priscilla Rose-Howe	Woodblock carving	2023	**$300**
02	Dark Ballad x Mr. Wolf	Woodblock carving	2024	**$350**
03	Dark Ballad x Klaudia Bartos	Woodblock print	2025	**$350**
04	Dark Ballad x Hambone	Woodblock print	2024	**$300**
05	Dark Ballad x Priscilla Rose-Howe	Woodblock print	2023	**$350**
06	Dark Ballad x P.Mang	Woodblock print	2026	**$300**
07	Dark Ballad x SKAM	Woodblock print	2024	**$300**
08	Dark Ballad x TrolllDoll	Woodblock print	2025	**$300**
09	Dark Ballad x Mr. Wolf	Woodblock print	2024	**$320**
10	Dark Ballad x Borge	Woodblock print	2025	**$280**
11	Dark Ballad x SKAM #2	Woodblock print	2025	**$350**
12	Dark Ballad – *Flying Catacomb*	Woodblock print	2025	**$350**
13	Dark Ballad x Hannah Martin	Woodblock print	2024	**$280**
14	Dark Ballad x TrolllDoll #2	Woodblock print	2024	**$300**
15	Dark Ballad x Priscilla Rose-Howe #2	Woodblock print	2025	**$400**
16	Dark Ballad x Klaudia Bartos x Alias	Woodblock print	2025	**$300**
17	Dark Ballad x Eisoe	Woodblock print	2026	**$280**
18	Dark Ballad x Orgnz	Woodblock print	2024	**$320**
19	Dark Ballad x Alias	Woodblock print	2025	**$280**
20	Dark Ballad x Pkay	Woodblock print	2024	**$300**
21	Dark Ballad x Orgnz #2	Woodblock print	2026	**$350**
22	Dark Ballad x Smeagol	Woodblock print	2026	**$320**
23	Dark Ballad x Bleak	Woodblock print	2024	**$280**
24	Dark Ballad x Anime	Woodblock print	2025	**$220**
25	Dark Ballad x Ekoe	Woodblock print	2026	**$300**
26	Dark Ballad x Rivet	Woodblock print	2026	**$250**
27	Dark Ballad x Fiasko	Woodblock print	2026	**$350**
28	Dark Ballad x Pkay #2	Woodblock print	2026	**$300**
29	Dark Ballad x Corners of Christchurch	Photograph in carved	2026	**$200**
30	Dark Ballad x Corners of Christchurch	Photograph in carved	2026	**$200**

Garments

All t-shirts **$80** unless individually priced on the clothing racks.
All sweaters/hoodies **$150**.

Feel free to touch the display clothing to check for sizing etc. All shirts can be printed to order if your size is not available at the exhibition.

About the Collaborations

Priscilla Rose-Howe

NOS. 01 · 05 · 15

Priscilla is so incredibly talented and world class, and when the show talks about the "fine art" world, she is the blueprint. These two prints are probably the truest collaborations in the entire show. Dark Ballad took her raw, detailed pencil sketches and completely translated them into the heavy black ink of the woodblock. The final prints smash her soft, psychological sketching style directly into hard-cut relief lines, creating a raw crossover where gallery art meets underground street prints.

Mr. Wolf

NOS. 02 · 09

One of Dark Ballad's earliest collaborations and still one of the most complex pieces he has ever carved. Mr Wolf delivered a gnarly design that forced Joe to meticulously map out a dense labyrinth of tangled roots and skeletal decay. Cutting this massive matrix early on set a serious benchmark for the level of detail the woodblocks could handle. Mr Wolf has since taken his style to massive heights, creating the official Taniwha artwork for Metallica's Auckland show recently.

Klaudia Bartos

NO. 03

A true collaboration born from a shared adoration of the macabre and the grotesque. Klaudia's signature distorted portraiture and her super bold use of contrast was a no-brainer. They worked closely together to create a piece that represented their dark legacy.

Hambone

NO. 04

Two distinct styles in one. Hambone the bold and the traditional, Ballad the grotesquely detailed.

P.Mang

NO. 06

Another massive clash of styles for the archive. Driven by a love for Japanese art and demon folklore, Dark Ballad linked up with Pmang—one of Christchurch's premier artists utilizing traditional Japanese tattoo aesthetics. This design fuses Pmang's sharp, iconic Oni demon motifs directly into Joe's signature style of melting, high-contrast horror skulls.

SKAM

NOS. 07 · 11

Portland, Oregon's king of paste-ups was a total long shot when Dark Ballad sent a random late-night Instagram DM. SKAM's gruesome, macabre style perfectly matched the energy of the woodblocks, and he was immediately keen. This international link-up has spawned two brutal designs so far—slamming fine-line satirical street stencils into raw woodcarving. Not only are these prints running on tees worldwide, but they have also been pasted up in massive jumbo scales all across the United States.

The Collaborations, continued

TrolllDoll

NOS. 08 · 14

A fun experiment with different typography focusing heavily on meticulous attention to detail. The goal was to seamlessly blend the sharp, interlocking complexity of a death metal font with the raw weight of a woodblock print.

Borge

NO. 10

Teaming up with Borge, Christchurch's undisputed god of cyber sigilism, was a no-brainer for a woodcut project. Their signature style is rooted in sharp, aggressive tattoo linework, which translates perfectly into the bold, high-contrast black and white of relief printing.

Hannah Martin

NO. 13

This satirical Tony Soprano print came to life out of a shared love for The Sopranos between Dark Ballad and Hannah, who is one of the most talented artists he knows. Hannah paints portraiture so beautiful that it becomes grotesque, making this a perfect crossover of styles.

Klaudia Bartos x Alias

NO. 16

A massive triple collaboration for the archive. Alias and Klaudia put their heads together to design this whimsical yet creepy jack-in-the-box creation, while Dark Ballad took the raw concept and hand-carved the final woodblock.

Eisoe

NO. 17

This one came about completely by chance. A mutual friend brought over an incredibly talented artist who specializes in these reaper characters, and watching them work so fast made an instant collab a total no-brainer. Ballad has always wanted a body attached to his character, and since reapers are his absolute favourite gothic figure, everything just clicked. Love the raw, heavy linework on this print.

Orgnz

NOS. 18 · 21

This collaboration marks the definitive inception point of Ballad's signature character. Orgnz' iconic character serve as a primary creative spark for Joe's own visual mascot, and this print brings that evolution full circle.

Alias

NO. 19

This piece is a personal favourite and one of the ultimate "from the street to the wood" translations in the show. The raw, rolling flow of the graffiti lines lent itself perfectly to the woodblock carving process.

Smeagol

NO. 22

Smeagol straight up hates America and provided Dark Ballad with this brutal piece of raw political satire. Standing out as one of the most challenging carves in the entire collection, the block forces viewers to look past the immediate shock value to find some incredibly sick graffiti woven deep into the chaos.

The Collaborations, continued

Bleak

NO. 23

This one went all the way to New York fashion week in 2024. Bleak was chosen to participate in the show and transformed one of the shirts Ballad printed for their collab into a baby doll dress which was worn on the runway.

Pkay

NOS. 20 · 28

A total myth in the local scene, Pkay has left a huge mark on graff culture and his letters are synonymous with Christchurch. The whole point of this one was to make it look as if Pkay has personally tagged on every shirt using a rigid piece of wood. A really cool juxtaposition. Every single running drip, bleed, and paint splatter was painstakingly carved by hand into the block.

Anime

NO. 24

A true virtuoso. Anti-style incarnate.

Ekoe

NO. 25

A piece with one of Otautahi's most active and prolific graffiti writers. For this collaboration, Ekoe bypassed standard street letterforms to compose a massive, organic teardrop medallion of interlocking script. The design mimics ancient glyphs and fluid Arabic calligraphy, bringing a sharp kinetic energy to the chest. Carved deep into raw wood and stamped onto heavy cotton, the fleeting movement of a late-night street tag is frozen permanently into a bold, wearable artifact.

Rivet

NO. 26

The most geometrically precise writer in Christchurch. His heavily structured, technical letterforms translated perfectly to the relief medium, allowing Dark Ballad to execute exceptionally clean, razor-sharp outlines. Featuring a classic old school character layout alongside the crisp lettering, the resulting print stands out as one of the most precise and pristine woodblocks in the entire collection, locking absolute architectural symmetry into the heavy grain.

Fiasko

NO. 27

An absolute honour to work with an undisputed OG of Christchurch graffiti. This piece is a personal favourite compositionally. We knocked it out of the park on this one.

Corners of Christchurch

NOS. 29 · 30

Emerging in the last couple of years as one of, if not the most, prolific street art photographers in Christchurch, Corners has put together a huge portfolio of work documenting the amazing graffiti in the city. Ballad joined forces with him after he shot his studio and these photos are the result. Ballad carved the frames to make it a true collaboration.

Scotch

GARMENTS

A newcomer to the scene, Scotch has become somewhat of an apprentice in the studio with Ballad. Picking up the art of printmaking very quickly, Scotch is an emerging artist to look out for. For Collusion, Scotch's contribution is the intricate stitchwork on the sweater that is the centerpiece of the clothing aspect of the show.

WITH THANKS

Liquorland Carlton

for sponsoring the drinks

Watch This Space

for promoting and running the artist talk

Klaudia Bartos

for help with the poster

And of course, the many artists who worked with Dark Ballad to make their work into immortalised woodblocks.

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chapter1.co.nz · @chapter.rhq · @dark_ballad