

New Grill questions (please make sure all of your answers are clear enough for the general reader to understand).

Name: Gregory O'Brien

Age: 47

Where you live: Hataitai, Wellington

Occupation: writer, curator, cultural odd-jobs person

Upcoming work: co-curated FIONA HALL—FORCE FIELD exhibition currently at City Gallery Wellington, before it tours to Christchurch in December

What do you do on a Sunday morning?

If I can extricate myself from the domestic chaos, I head off to 11am Mass at St Mary of the Angels, where the choir, brilliantly directed by Robert Oliver, serve up a feast of Latin polyphony

John Key or Helen Clark?

Helen Clark has a far more complete notion of what makes us human.

What are you like at parties?

About once a year I let myself go—to Sonic Youth, Radio Birdman, Patti Smith... Most of the time, however, I locate myself somewhere on the outskirts--and my ideal is having a conversation with one other person, without having to shout.

What do you smell of?

I am told that I smell of absolutely nothing.

Tell us your favourite song lyrics?

The rambling Scottish folksong, 'Willie o' the Winsbury' (sung by Dick Gaughan). When the singer-narrator comes to the line 'Will ye marry my daughter Janet?', for some reason I always think he is trying to marry off Janet Frame.

What's the biggest fashion mistake of our era?

Cellphones. No matter how well a person is made up or dressed, if they are talking on a mobile phone they look a combination of the following: frumpish, airheaded, desperate, droogish, inept, self-important, fascistic, mildly psychotic, dodgy.

Who is the most stylish living person on the planet (please make it someone we've heard of, not just your granny)?

A three way tie here between the playwright/director/stage actor Jo Randerson, the singer-trombonist-all-purpose musical genius Janet Roddick, and the Grande Dame of New Zealand writing, Barbara Anderson. All three have as much style on stage or page as they do in real life. If I had to pick one, it would be Barbara Anderson because, as the senior of the three, she has been stylish for the longest.

PTO
Tilly

What is life's greatest mystery?

The falling apart and the putting back together of things.

Tell us your best shoe memory (you know, a memory involving shoes...):

In 2005 I was in Moscow for the launching of an anthology of New Zealand poetry. With the writers Tusiata Avia and Ian Wedde, I was staying at the New Zealand Embassy. Somehow we managed to get ourselves locked out of the building overnight. After walking the streets of the city until 5am, Ian and I returned to the Embassy, took off our shoes and tried, unsuccessfully, to rouse the ambassador by chucking them at the high, double-glazed windows of his sleeping quarters.

Give us three words to describe your style:

Hapless, sporadically exuberant

What part of your body do you neglect?

My brain. I have yet to read *Paradise Lost*.

Who is your favourite New Zealand designer?

The recently retired Doris De Pont—who has done some brilliant lines of clothes working with artists such as John Pule and Richard Killeen (I have a vested interest here: In 2006, Doris made a range of clothes, 'Beausoleil' using my poems and drawings. For months I had the pleasure of seeing my work printed on woman's stockings walking up and down Lambton Quay)

What are the five shallow, materialistic things you can't live without?

Tea (made in a pot, with leaves); the television comedy *Greenwing*; the singing of Brazilian pop goddess Marisa Monte; properly, elegantly designed books; espresso coffee.

Which is your favourite supermarket aisle (and why)?

The exit aisle—because I know I'll soon be out of the fluro-lit, commodity-cluttered hell.

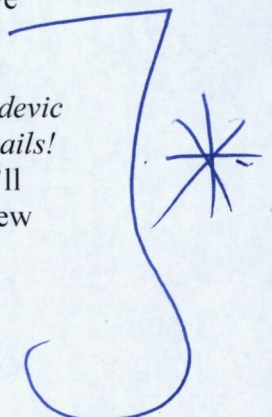
What is your first thought when you see yourself in the mirror in the morning?

I don't look in the mirror in the morning. It's up to my family to tell me if things have gone terribly wrong overnight or just now.

Can you recommend a New Age miracle worker? (eg: a masseuse/tarot reader/Ayurvedic doctor/naturopath/dietician/acupuncturist etc) If so, please provide their contact details!

When uneasy of mind or spirit, I consult the staff at Unity Books Wellington -- they'll prescribe, variously, a book of poems, an art book, a novel – an inexpensive (on a New Age scale of things) miracle cure.

Have you found yourself yet?



It seems to me that anyone's 'self' is fleeting, migratory and hopefully evolving. Maybe you could arrive at its present co-ordinates --but actually 'finding' your self, that's not going to happen.