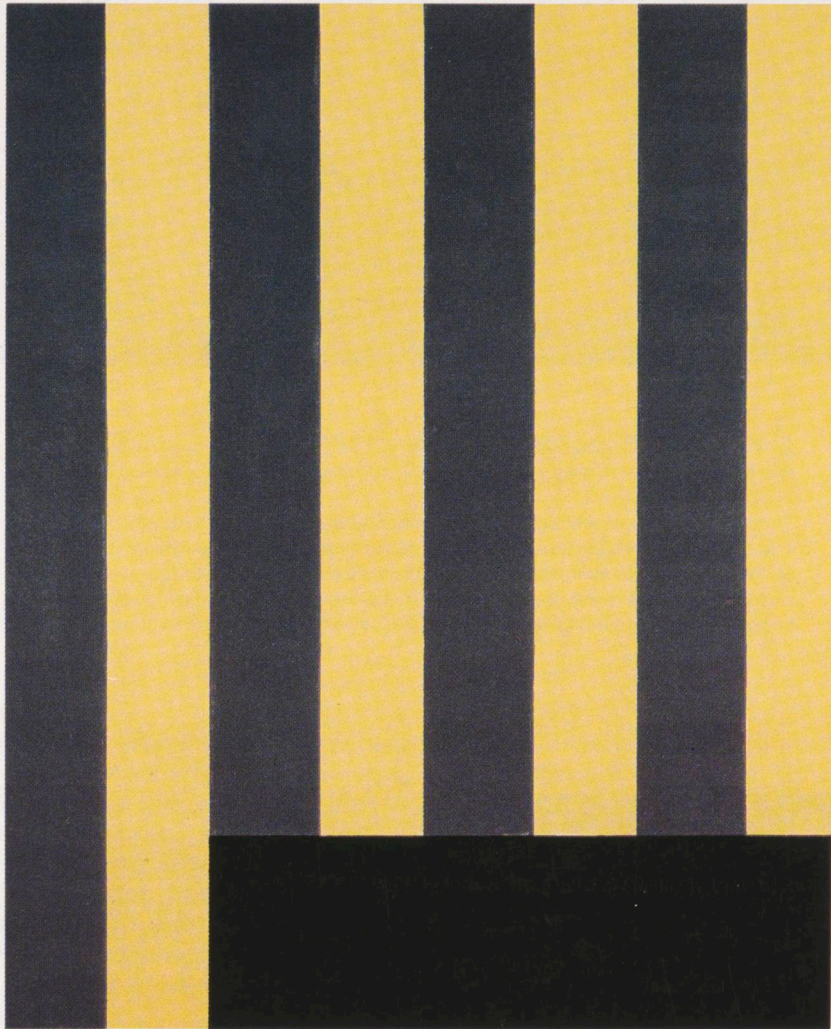


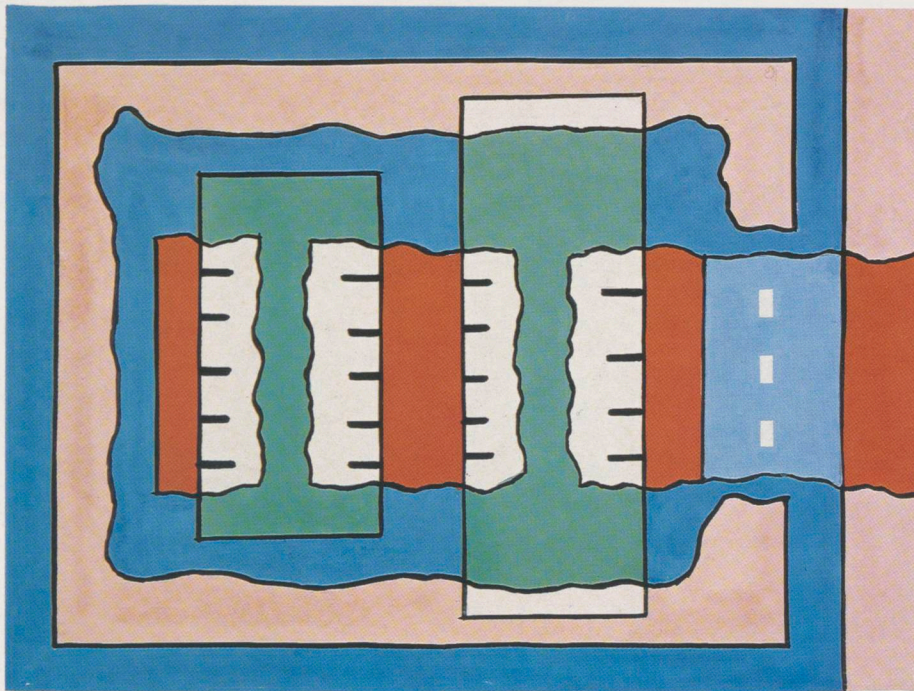
# P A R A L L E L L I N E S



*Untitled* 1988 acrylic on paper  
Courtesy of the artist and Sue Crockford Gallery

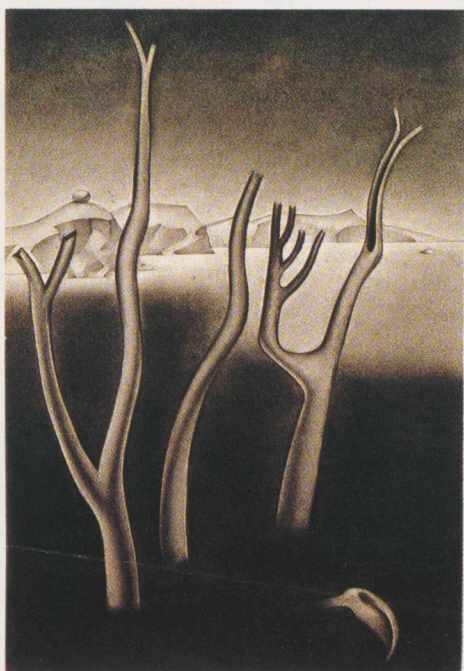
G O R D O N   W A L T E R S  
I N   C O N T E X T





*Untitled 1956 gouache*  
Auckland City Art Gallery collection

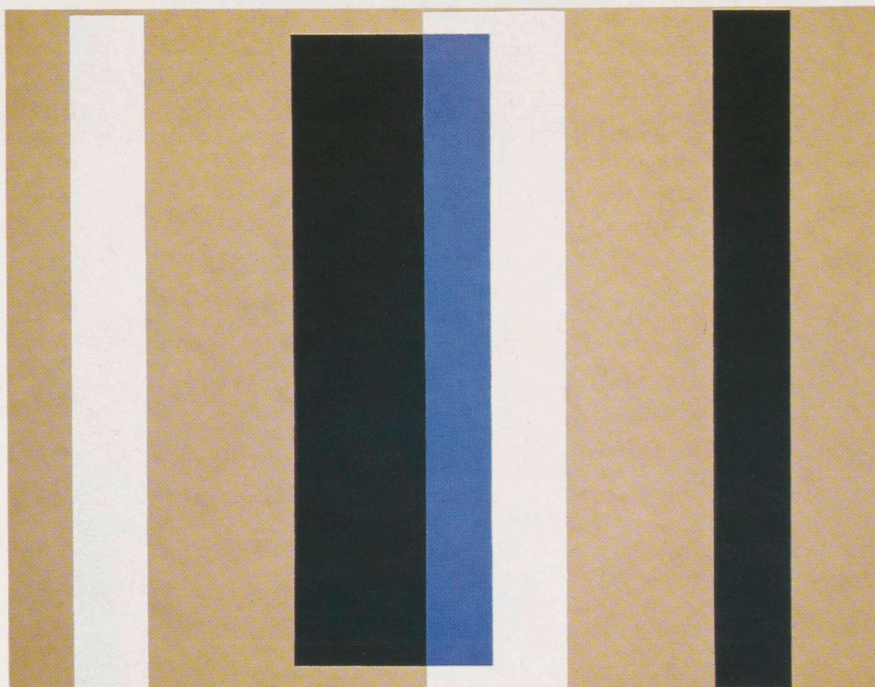
This playful and adventurous abstract is one of the many Walters created in the 1950's. He considered them too radical to exhibit at the time and over the years many were destroyed or lost. The remaining works were finally shown in 1974 and are now highly sought after by collectors.



*Waikanae Landscape 1944 black conté*  
Auckland City Art Gallery collection

This work describes the New Zealand landscape in a style reminiscent of European surrealists like Salvador Dali. Advanced for its time, it marked the end of Walters' concern with representing the real world. "My interest passed... to Klee, Arp, Miró and the abstractionists," Walters said, "and on these interests I commenced to build."





*Transparency 7* 1991 acrylic on canvas  
 Courtesy of the artist and Sue Crockford Gallery

This recent painting sees Walters returning to the compositional devices of 1950's works like *Untitled* (opposite, top left): overlapping planes which carefully balance and mirror each other. The refinement of these new works is the product of a lifetime's dedication to the craft of painting.

FIFTY YEARS AGO, Gordon Walters was pioneering the development of abstract art in New Zealand. Today he is regarded as one of this country's most important painters. His distinctive adaptation of the Maori koru, immediately recognisable, exemplifies how his work has shaped our identity and our art history. Now in his seventy-fifth year, Walters continues to break new ground in his work and inspire a new generation of artists.

This August, the Auckland City Art Gallery celebrates the life of this major New Zealand artist with the exhibition *Parallel Lines – Gordon Walters in Context*.

In the 1940's and 1950's, when Walters was formulating his style, modern art was viewed with suspicion, if not downright hostility, in New Zealand. The artist kept in touch with the latest developments from overseas, poring over international art magazines, and visiting Europe in 1950 to see at first hand the works of avant garde abstractionists.

But another element just as important to his art lay closer to home. Maori and Pacific art, relegated to the ethnology sections of the country's museums and largely ignored by

Pakeha artists, was a rich source of inspiration for Walters. It was out of this mix – Maori and Pakeha, traditional and modern – that Walters' unique koru paintings evolved.

*Parallel Lines* follows the path of Gordon Walters' work over fifty years, from his earliest experiments with surrealism, the development and achievement of the koru paintings, to his uncompromising recent work.

For the first time, Walters' painting will be seen alongside works by the international artists who inspired him: Mondrian, Klee, Taeuber-Arp, Vasarely and many others.

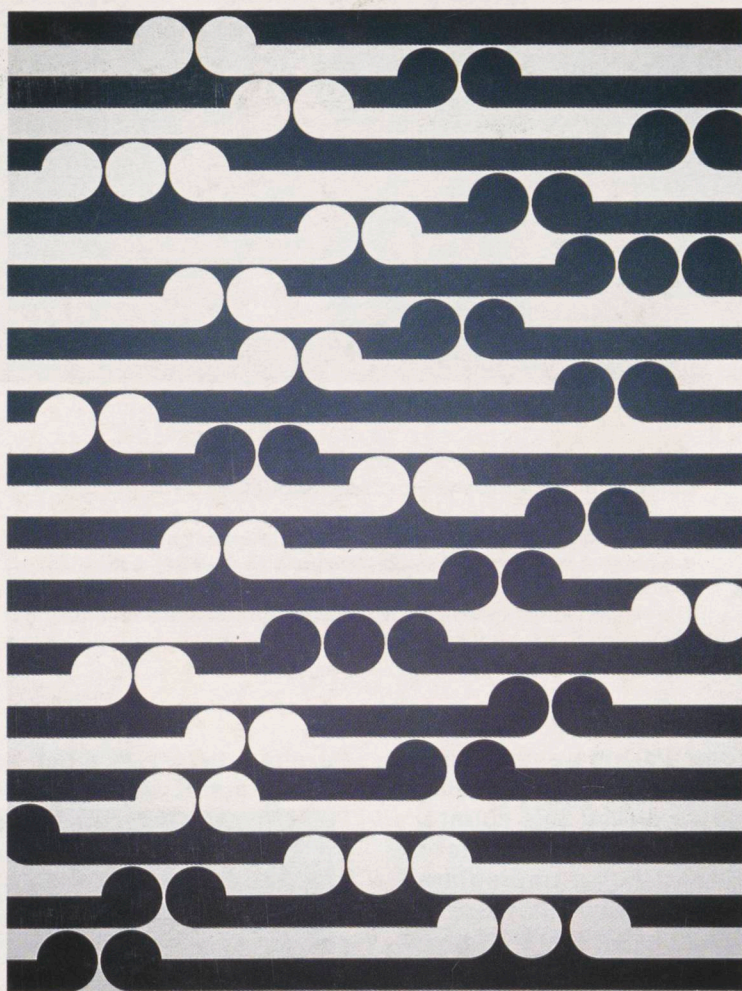
The exhibition looks at Walters' work in relation to his New Zealand contemporaries – Colin McCahon, Milan Mrkusich and, most importantly, Theo Schoon – and shows his influence on successive generations of younger artists: Richard Killeen, Stephen Bambury, Julia Morison, Julian Dashper and Shane Cotton.

*Parallel Lines* also offers a rich insight into Walters' working process. It follows a recent series of works from their development as experimental collages to their realisation in immaculately finished paintings, many appearing in a public gallery for the first time.



# P A R A L L E L L I N E S

## G O R D O N W A L T E R S I N C O N T E X T



*Maheno* 1981 acrylic on canvas  
Auckland City Art Gallery collection

Walters is perhaps best-known for these "koru" works, which explore Maori imagery with the rigour and discipline of modern abstraction. This Auckland City Art Gallery exhibition, especially prepared to celebrate Walters' 75th year, tracks the artist's development before and beyond this classic motif.

A U C K L A N D C I T Y A R T G A L L E R Y

22 AUGUST - 2 OCTOBER 1994

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