KORURANGI

NEW MAORI ART

10/10/95 I was most upset to see the N.Z. flag on the floor. Like the invitation "please walk on me"

15/10 Complaints are destructive. Once again personal interpretation is the key. If you don't like it, leave it

17/10 DIANNE PRINCE - THIS PIECE IS NOT ACCEPTABLE TO MOST N.Z. PEOPLE. I AS A 5TH GENERATION N.Z.ER FIND IT DISGRACEFUL. TO DISPLAY THE FLAG TO BE WALKED ON IS NOT ACCEPTABLE BY ANY STANDARDS. THIS IS A PUBLIC GALLERY AND THE STANDARD OF THIS EXHIBITION IS POOR.

17/10/95 One or two good pieces but quite disgusted at 'Please walk on me-Flag."

9/11/95 Again we as Maori are forced to have our Taonga compromised by the institutionalised nature of Pakeha systems, not designed to portray Maori SHAME!

17/10/95 DIANNE PRINCE - THIS IS OF VERY LOW ARTISTIC MERIT. IT IS BLATANT PROPOGRANDA FOR ACTIVIST (ANARCHIST) MOVEMENTS.

18.10.95 Excellent - I hope you will always feature new radical and honest art
Congratulations on keeping it up. Thankyou!

30-10-95 Great stuff Particularly enjoyed watching the small minded woman with the big voice 'close her eyes about the flag - good on the cool calm collected & over polite staff!!

1.11.95 Maori Council quite fantastic Intelligent thought full

3/11/95 Dianne Prince's Art — the New Zealand flag has been removed — last night.
Art Policy — Artistic Expression is NOT subject to 'political dictate'.

4.11 Appalled to note that Dianne Prince's piece has been removed under pressure from the forces of old age... the Gallery should not be so spineless as to capitulate...!

The DIANNE PRINCE work should not have been removed. This is allowing censorship to dictate to art.

KORURANGI

NEW MAORI ART

Korurangi: New Maori Art
1 October – 26 November 1995

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Editor Chris Szekely
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Contents

Inside front cover
Public comments on *Korurangi: New Maori Art* excerpted from the New Gallery Visitor's Book.

Inside back cover
Korurangi: New Maori Art media headlines

Front cover illustration
Ralph Hotere *If* 1995 (detail)

He Mihi

E nga mana, e nga karangatanga o nga motu nei.
Tena koutou e nga ahuatanga e mau ana i runga i a koutou.

Tenei he mihi tuturu tonu kia koutou katoa
me nga mihi hohonu mo ratou kua wheturangitia.
Haere mai, whakatau mai ki tenei o to tatou whare tiaki toi.

Te korero a kui ma me koro ma,
"Hutia te rito o te harakeke, kei hea te komako e ko?
Ki mai ki au, 'He aha te mea nui i te ao?'
Maku e ki atu, 'He tangata, he tangata, he tangata.'"

Tihei mauri ora!

Arnold Manaaki Wilson

Foreword

This publication, and the exhibition which it locates in retrospect, marks a significant turning point for the Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tamaki – one that could not be allowed to go undocumented. The presence and importance of *Korurangi: New Maori Art* remains as considerably more than the culturally stirring inaugural exhibition of Auckland's New Gallery. Indeed, there are elements of its community and critical reception that continue to resonate today. If *Korurangi* was to act positively and forcefully upon the Gallery's commitment to biculturalism, it was almost inevitably bound to create problematic and contested histories. But while much was condensed into its aspirations, just as much was learnt through the process of revealing them. It is that growing understanding which this publication acknowledges and celebrates.

Chris Saines
Director
Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tamaki

Hei Kupu Whakataki

In 1991 I was appointed to the governing body of the Art Gallery, the Enterprise Board. In reponse to a need for a wider Maori view and as whanau support for the only Maori representative on the Board, Haerewa was formed. The group was established as a Maori initiative to support, promote and encourage Maori in the Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tamaki. This was actively encouraged by tangata whenua and the Maori arts community.

Haerewa is a group of five Maori people with a particular expertise in Maori art, as well as a knowledge of western art traditions. The foundation members include: Ngahuia Te Awekotuku (Arawa, Tuhoe, Waikato), Kura Te Waru Rewiri (Nga Puhi), Arnold Manaaki Wilson (Tuhoe), Fred Graham (Ngati Koroki, Ngati Raukawa) and myself, Elizabeth Mountain Ellis (Nga Puhi, Ngati Porou). The name 'Haerewa' may be translated as the first cut (in moko), to chisel, to set in motion.

Haerewa was able to advise and lead the Gallery's Board, staff and *Korurangi* artists on Maori issues that arose before, during and in the aftermath of the exhibition. We aimed to make Maori welcome in the alien context of the Gallery by providing a bridge for manuhiri (visitors) and support and shelter for the artists. We provided a path for Maori and non-Maori to walk together with understanding and to thus appreciate and uphold the mana of Maori art.

Elizabeth Ellis
Convenor and Chairperson
Haerewa

The Pathway to *Korurangi: New Maori Art*

by Alexa Johnston

It is with much pleasure that Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tamaki presents this catalogue to record and celebrate the exhibition *Korurangi: New Maori Art*. On the anniversary of the opening of *Korurangi*, its significance as a landmark exhibition for the Gallery can now be clearly seen.

Korurangi presented a challenge to the Gallery's established ways of operating and its bicultural perceptions. After a year's delay we are able to reflect on these, on the Gallery's aims for *Korurangi*, the issues and debates it raised, the strongly polarised responses it created and the lessons it taught. Some of the responses, reviews and debates are included in this catalogue alongside illustrations of the art which ultimately made *Korurangi* a memorable and successful event.

The pathway to *Korurangi* began in 1992. An independent Maori curator, George Hubbard, suggested to the Gallery that we should mount an exhibition of recent art by a group of Maori artists, many of them young, who were interested in Maori identity and in investigating what constituted Maori art by Maori artists thoroughly versed in the Pakeha world. The Gallery responded to this suggestion with an invitation to develop a proposal for the show.

In December 1993 George Hubbard submitted a list of artists and an exhibition overview. The title George had given to the exhibition was *Brownie Points* – a provocative choice which he described as 'a loaded catch-phrase. . . *Brownie Points* are what Pakeha try to score by indulging Maori, and what Maori try and score by indulging Pakeha. . . The focal and clearly visible intention of the show is to promote contemporary Maori art as a strong, confident and unique arts practice and perspective that is exclusive to the indigenous people of Aotearoa.'[1]

The proposal was accepted, while the exhibition title remained provisional, and the show was scheduled for March 1994. George Hubbard began working with William McAloon, then Assistant Curator, Contemporary New Zealand Art, who was the Gallery's organising curator for the exhibition. Artists were approached and grant applications made to the Arts Council for funding assistance with the catalogue and the public programme. Almost immediately the date was delayed to August 1994 with a larger space allocated for the show to ensure that works could be displayed to their best advantage. The exhibition had begun to grow.

The following year saw a number of related developments at the Gallery. A Strategic Plan was created after consultation with a wide range of people in the community. The Plan clearly stated that more Maori art should be shown and purchased by the Gallery, more Maori staff employed and a Maori advisory group established. Shortly after the Plan was published the New Gallery project was confirmed, with a projected opening date of May 1995. It was quickly decided to delay *Niho Taniwha*[2] (a new provisional title for *Brownie Points* suggested by one of the artists in the show) so that it could be the opening show for the new building and thus demonstrate the Gallery's increased commitment to the exhibition and discussion of Maori art.

The Gallery's newly appointed Maori advisory group, Haerewa, met for the first time in May 1995. The group comprised five Maori people: Elizabeth Ellis (Convenor), Ngahuia Te Awekotuku, Kura Te Waru Rewiri, Fred Graham and Arnold Wilson. They raised concerns about

the exhibition's name, *Niho Taniwha* and suggested a third title, *Korurangi* – the name of a ta moko pattern in which two spirals curl around each other without ever touching. A sub-title was added: *New Maori Art.* By this time the opening date for the New Gallery had receded to August 1995.

The artists who had been invited to participate in the exhibition were commendably patient with the rescheduling of the show and its changes in title, and remained committed to its importance as the New Gallery's opening exhibition. They are Shane Cotton, Jacqueline Fraser, Brett Graham, Chris Heaphy, Ralph Hotere, Emily Karaka, Maureen Lander, Barnard McIntyre, Michael Parekowhai, Diane Prince, Lisa Reihana and Peter Robinson. All the artists were invited to provide statements for the catalogue. Some of them did and their statements, which take a variety of forms, are published here alongside the illustrations of their works.

Korurangi: New Maori Art finally opened to the public on 1 October 1995, eighteen months after it was first scheduled, and ran until 26 November. The story from there is one of some outstanding successes, some painful cultural collisions and now, a year later, opportunities to learn from the experiences that made up *Korurangi.*

In the success corner we can celebrate, above all, the quality of the work in the exhibition. All the artists gave their best to the show and the results, as shown in the illustrations in this book, were superb. Their works are concerned with questions of identity and history, language and land, of what it is to speak from a position between two cultures – issues of the nineties as New Zealanders face the complexities of biculturalism.

There was a hugely positive response from the large group who attended the afternoon opening. The opening took the form of a powhiri with Maori and Pakeha

The manuhiri gather outside the New Gallery awaiting the opening powhiri for *Korurangi: New Maori Art.*

speakers, with resounding waiata from Awataha Marae as manuhiri and Te Reo Tahi, from Auckland Institute of Technology, for the tangata whenua. The exhibition was formally opened by Dame Catherine Tizard, then Governor General of New Zealand.

The New Gallery spaces also showed their ability to maximise the impact of an exhibition. Attendances exceeded the Gallery's expectations – 16,500 paying visitors over eight weeks. Many of these were attracted by the lively public programme which took place in the show, including musical performances from contemporary groups Moana and the Moa Hunters and Dam

Native on opening day. George Hubbard and several of the artists gave talks in the exhibition.

There were guided tours of *Korurangi* in Te Reo Maori and English attended by 1,900 children. These were led by the Gallery's kaiarahi, guides fluent in Maori, many of whom had also worked in the *Te Waka Toi* exhibition in 1994. Twenty-five workshops for school children were held in the New Gallery studio and attracted 432 children. The team of Gallery Assistants selected especially for the New Gallery began their work with a show which stretched their skills – a challenge which they met admirably.

However, the cultural collisions began early. Acknowledged tensions between the guest curator and Gallery staff grew as the exhibition was in preparation. Conflicting working styles and approaches to managing the project emerged. These were exacerbated by the pressures of the New Gallery project and regular delays in the date for opening the building.

The compilation of the catalogue was a vexed topic requiring further guidance from Haerewa. On their advice, George Hubbard's original essay for the catalogue was not accepted and an alternative was suggested – an interview between him and Kura Te Waru Rewiri. The interview is published in this book. Haerewa also suggested that we commission an outside Maori writer to comment on the show and, at very short notice, Robert Jahnke, artist and lecturer from Massey University, agreed to do this. His work is also published here.

A few days before the opening there were more developments. The original plan developed with Haerewa had been to have only an afternoon opening, but as the opening day drew nearer, an additional dawn blessing was subsequently strongly advised by Ngati Whatua elders. A traditional blessing by kaumatua who came from Te Puea Marae took place at 4.45am on 30 September and all went well until the assembled guests moved across to the main Gallery for breakfast. There was none. The caterers had let us down.

The incident was a deeply distressing cultural faux pas and the cause of great tension for those who attended. The tradition of eating together to complete the blessing is an important part of the ceremony. The fact that this could not take place undercut the ritual and reflected poorly on the Gallery as hosts.

There was more, however. Shortly after the dawn blessing was added to the opening events, it was pointed out to Gallery staff that two of the elements used in the space adjacent to *Korurangi* – a project by Julia Morison called *1Monochromes* – could cause offence to the kaumatua carrying out the blessing. Julia Morison's work has as one of its sources the medieval science of alchemy which attempted to turn base materials into gold. She uses ten elements in her work including those deemed most precious – gold and silver – and those least valued and most feared – blood and excrement. Her work involves the questioning of cultural hierarchies of value placed on these elements.

None of the Pakeha staff at the Gallery had considered the relationship between these two exhibitions, until the problem was raised by two of the artists in *Korurangi*. Unfortunately, Haerewa members were not available to give advice. After discussion with Julia and some of the artists in *Korurangi* it was decided that the only way to avoid grave offence was to remove those parts of *1Monochromes* which used blood or excrement from the building and replace them after the blessing.

Julia Morison agreed to this but was distressed and angered by the perceived downgrading of her work. She

asked that *1Monochromes* not be available for viewing until it had its own separate opening a week later. This was done, and at that opening she unwrapped a final component of *1Monochromes*, sent to her by Peter Robinson, one of the artists in *Korurangi*, in a gesture of support for her position.

In retrospect, another appropriate move would have been to discuss the issues with the kaumatua and ask them directly to make the decision.

In mid October another collision – but this time between the rights of an artist to make a political statement in her work, and a public perception that such statements, critical of current social mores, should not be allowed in a public art gallery.

Diane Prince's installation *Flagging the Future* included a New Zealand flag, lying on the floor, stencilled with the words 'Please walk on me.' Many visitors to the show accepted the invitation, others were outraged and offended. The Gallery Visitors Book and talkback radio both provided forums for their anger. We have reproduced some extracts from the Visitors Book on the inside cover of this catalogue, as well as comments from published reviews.

The flag was part of an installation which relates to Maori land and its loss and/or confiscation by the Government last century. It was also a comment on the Government's then current fiscal envelope proposals to settle Maori land grievances and claims. The Gallery firmly supported the artist's right to show her work, noting that the role of a contemporary art gallery is not merely to support the status quo, but to participate in the important issues of today and while some see the flag as a symbol of pride, for others it represents outdated ties with the United Kingdom and an oppressive colonial past.

The opening powhiri for *Korurangi: New Maori Art*. Above, Arnold Manaaki Wilson leads the manuhiri from Awataha Marae. Below, Governor General Dame Catherine Tizard stands alongside the tangata whenua group, Te Reo Tahi.

However, when a visitor laid a complaint with the Police, the Gallery was advised that the work was in breach of the Flags, Emblems and Names Protection Act (1983). The Police indicated that the offending component of the work would have to be removed from public display or the Gallery and the artist would face prosecution. As a result, after considerable consultation, the artist instructed the Gallery to remove the entire work on 2 November.

The heat continued as some visitors denounced the removal as cowardly censorship by the Gallery. As the furore gathered momentum around *Flagging the Future* it seemed as though the whole exhibition had been

reduced to one notorious work, an unfortunate narrowing of the impact of the show.

There is no doubt that for some there was a numbed sense of relief when the show ended.

Partly because of the difficulties that went before and the time for reflection that has occurred since, the Gallery now takes pride in presenting this anniversary publication. The catalogue offers an opportunity to celebrate the works in *Korurangi* and thoughtfully consider the actual impact of the exhibition.

Sincere thanks are due to all those who contributed to *Korurangi* – the artists for their work, to George Hubbard, William McAloon, the Gallery assistants and kaiarahi who worked in the exhibition, members of Haerewa, Kura Te Waru Rewiri for her interview and Robert Jahnke for his essay. Creative New Zealand Toi Aotearoa supported the public programmes in *Korurangi* and Te Waka Toi contributed to the production of this catalogue. We are grateful to them all.

So where to from here? What has the Gallery learned from *Korurangi*? Has it earned any brownie points?

It is clear that there is no substitute for Maori staff at all levels of an organisation which seeks to be bicultural in New Zealand today. With *Korurangi* such staff could have provided advice and support to both Maori and Pakeha involved in the show, and possibly averted some of the distressing conflicts and misunderstandings which occurred.

The existence and influence of a Maori advisory group is also essential. Haerewa brings with it a huge fund of knowledge and wisdom and this has enabled the Gallery to grow in its bicultural understanding and proceed with greater confidence and conviction.

It is vital that Maori material is part of our programme at all levels. Exhibitions like *Korurangi* should not be isolated events, carrying the weight of all the Gallery's aspirations, but part of a continuing dialogue between and among the cultures of Aotearoa New Zealand. Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tamaki must present more evidence of this dialogue to visitors, both local and international, who come here wanting to see what is special about us.

The Gallery remains committed to the approaches suggested above. While *Korurangi* revealed weaknesses, it also confirmed strengths and prompted an institutional shift in attitude and ways of doing things. As well as the excellent works that comprised the exhibition, *Korurangi: New Maori Art* remains significant to the Gallery as an early step in our bicultural journey. From here we move forward.

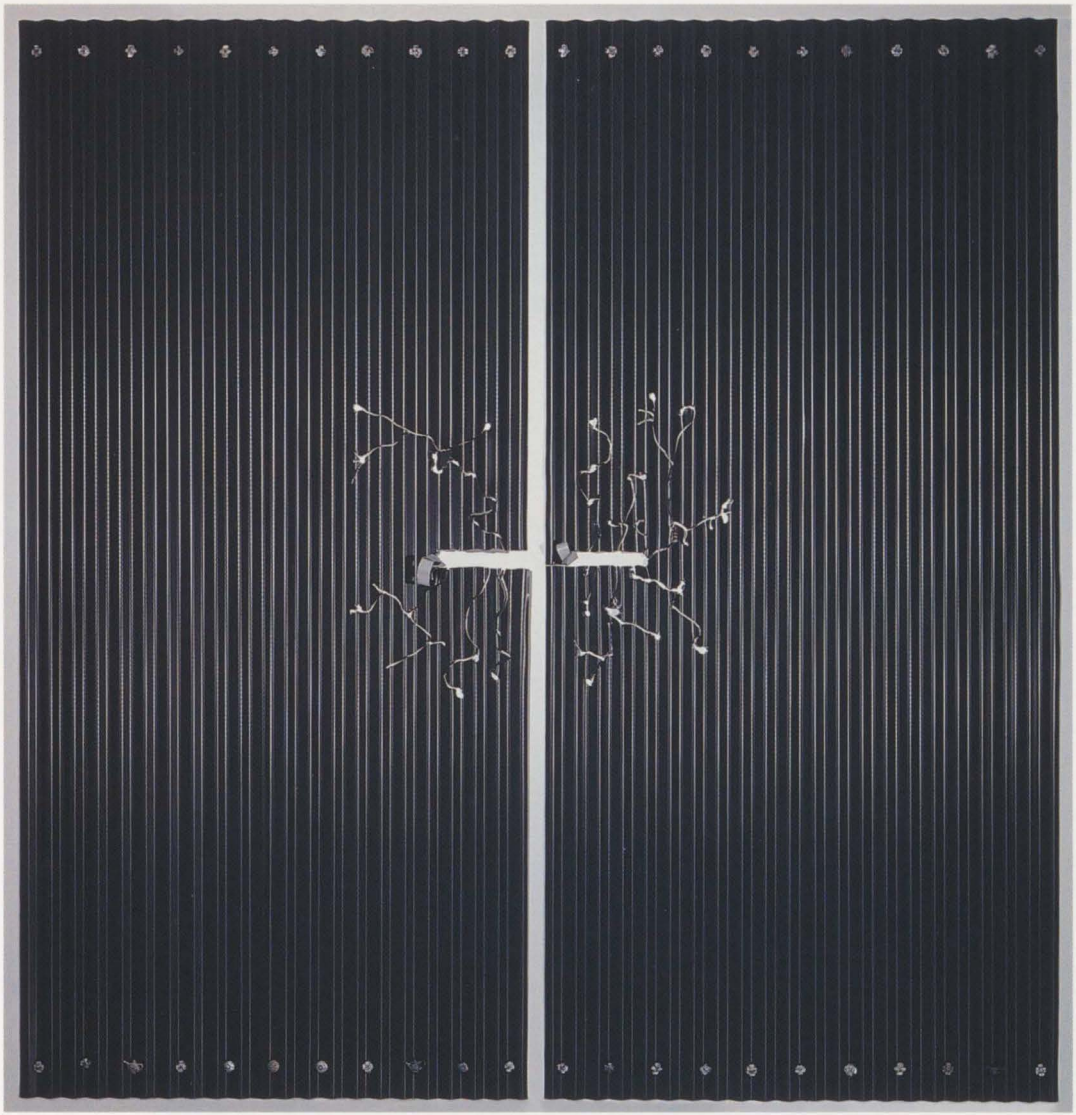
Alexa Johnston
Principal Curator
Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tamaki
September 1996

1. Hubbard, George. *Brownie Points* exhibition overview, 19 December 1993
2. *Niho Taniwha* can be literally translated as 'monster's teeth'. The concept for the exhibition was to convey the notion of the 'cutting edge'. The term is also applied to a particular tukutuku weaving pattern.

RALPH HOTERE

born 1931

Te Aupouri



If 1995
powder-coated steel, lead-head nails 3435 x 3300 x 200mm
Courtesy of the artist , Port Chalmers

JACQUELINE FRASER

born 1956

Kai Tahu, Kati Mamoe

The Silver Fern is our national emblem. As a child I felt sure that we were the only country in the world with ferns. I knew that Peter Snell, the All Blacks, the silver trophies in the museum all had silver ferns because of this treasure which was only ours.

Years later I travelled south of Sydney on a coastal car journey. I was shocked to discover fern-clad bush. Kangaroos jumped amongst them, oblivious.

Well, now I know that our silver fern is only a symbol. The hope that we in New Zealand will have something unique, rare, special. Only ours and no one else's.

Ko matou te iwi Maori, he taonga no nga tipuna. We the Maori people are that rarity.

So the silver fern is my gift in a contemporary Maori art exhibition. I am an artist who speaks English as a first language, French as a means of getting by in Europe and Maori when I describe who I am.

Ka tangi te titi
Ka tangi te kaka
Ka tangi ahau.
Tena koutou, tena tatou katoa

Na Jacqueline Fraser

Kai Tahu
Kati Mamoe
Taku hapu –
Ko te Raki a Moa.

He manaaki ki a koutou i nga wa katoa.

Te Rau Ponga / The Silver Fern (detail) 1995
wood, paint, wrought iron pot plant holders, plastic coated wire, wire, raffia, organza, brocade 3200 x 10670 x 100mm
Courtesy of the artist and Sue Crockford Gallery, Auckland

BRETT GRAHAM

born 1967

Ngati Koroki Kahukura

Ko au ko Kahukura, he uwhi,
hei whakamarumaru i nga mea katoa
noho ai i raro.

Ko au ko Kahukura, he aniwaniwa.
E hora ana oku kara i mua i to aroaro,
he tohu o nga ra kua pahure
mo apopo hoki.

Ko au ko Kahukura, he pou whakamaharatanga
mo te tupuna whaea, Rangimarie.
Ka tu au hei atamira, hei ataata mou.
Ko koe he tohunga, he taniwha,
he kanohi humarire o te ao kowhatu.

Also exhibited
Te Kohao o te Ngira 1995
wood, paint, gold leaf 1015 x 1945 x 492mm
Private collection, Auckland

Kahukura 1995
wood, paint 2070 x 1500 x 1500mm
Collection of the Vanuatu Cultural Centre, Port Vila, Vanuatu

MAUREEN LANDER

born 1942

Nga Puhi, Te Hikutu

He whakatauki
Manaakitia nga tukemata o Tane
Caring for the eyebrows of Tane

This proverb refers to the conflict between Tane Mahuta (God of the Forest) and Tangaroa (God of the Sea) following the separation of their parents Papatuanuku and Ranginui – the Earth and the Sky. Seeking to end the strife Tane plucked out his eyebrows and gave them to Tangaroa as a peace offering, but Tangaroa was still angry and cast them back ashore.

There they grow today as the indigenous golden pingao (Desmoschoenus spiralis) sending out their tongue-like stems which bind the drifting sand on the front dunes, the contested site where the sea continues to skirmish with the land. In recent decades their survival has been threatened and they have become an endangered plant in many areas where they once grew in abundance. There are a number of causes for this decline, one of which is the annual trampling underfoot by beach-goers to popular beaches such as Whangamata and Piha.

The leaves for this installation were collected after the summer onslaught of 1995 as many plants lay flattened into the sand, turning first a brilliant yellow-gold and eventually dying off to a dull brown.

In the context of the *Korurangi* exhibition, the indigenous gold leaf (traditionally used in many tribal areas to make fine kete and tukutuku panels) is here used as a contemporary art medium juxtaposed with the gold leaf associated with Western art traditions. They combine to cloak an existing pillar in the gallery with a spiralling whiri (braid) of leaves to form a symbolic pouwhenua (or perhaps a goldpost?). The photographs in gilt frames tell their own story.

Gilt Complex 1995
pingao, gold leaf, paint, satin, braid, framed photographs, mirrors 3600 x 9000 x 4000mm
Courtesy of the artist, Auckland

MICHAEL PAREKOWHAI

born 1968

Nga Ariki, Te Aitanga-a-Mahaki

The Summer of '69

It seemed a good idea at the time.

Toko found this set of wheels down at the dump. "Mint condition," he said, "complete with axle, tyres and everything." Trouble was the wheels came off a derelict pram originally built for twins. You know, the ones where the passengers sit side by side over an extra wide wheel base which sags in the middle.

Toko got cracking. Knocked up a trolley in no time. He's always been big on building has our big brother. All Toko needed was a set of wheels and a weatherboard plank. A smear of grease, rusty bolt, some bits of rope and that was that. No frills or concessions to comfort except of course the flash piece of nylon carpet nailed to the drivers seat.

But the best thing about Toko's trolleys were his experimental designs – those small but ingenious innovations for improved performance like the empty nail box packed with bricks he hammered on the front. "Streamlining," Toko explained, to increase the drag, which was what it was, hauling his handiwork halfway up a hill.

When he got there it was test drive time. First honours fell to the youngest. Not because of innocence or age or anything like that but because the steering straps had been cut a little bit short.

"Not to worry," Toko said, as we tied the toddler in with dressing gown cords and a piece of string, "he's got safety belts. Lots of them."

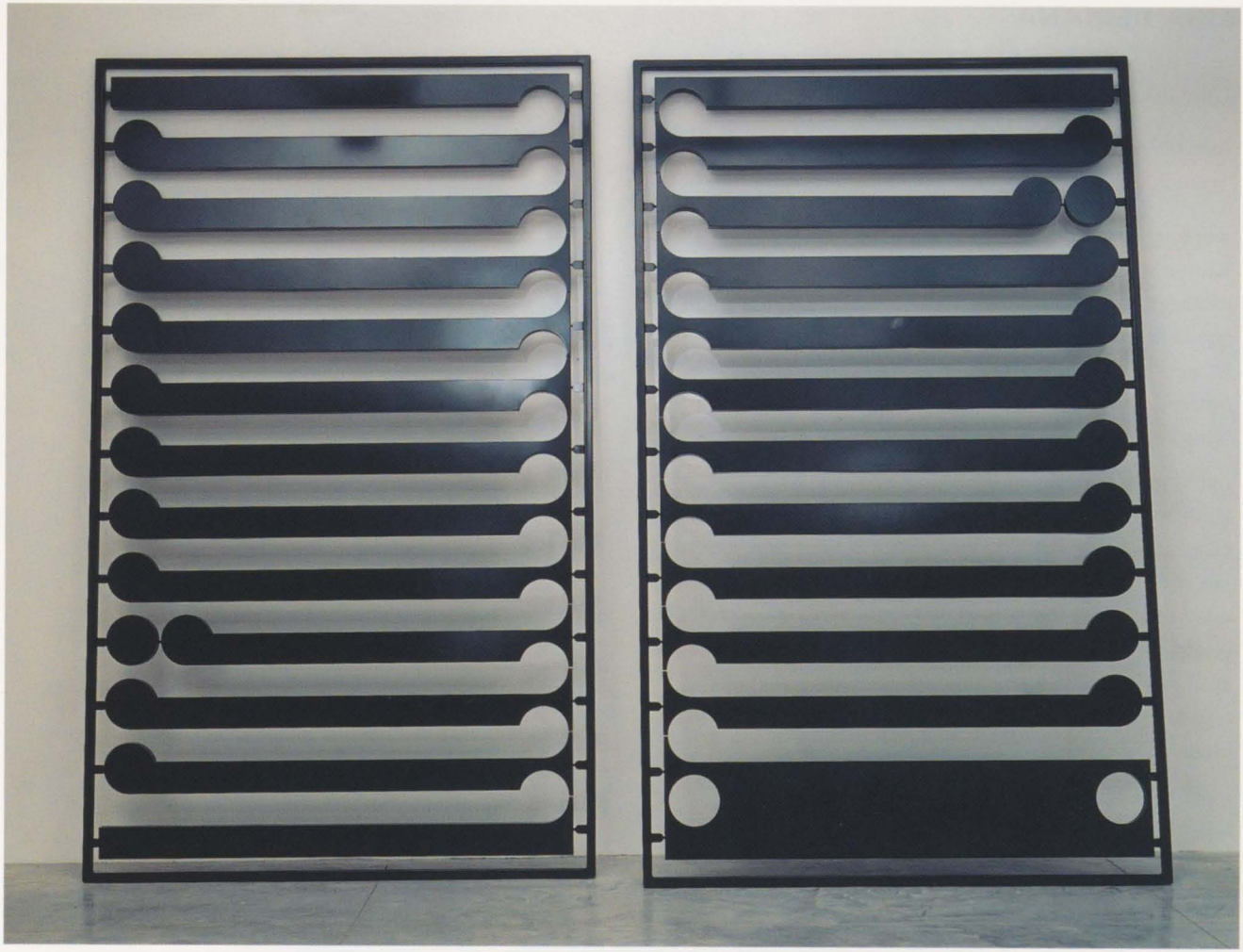
Blissfully unaware, the unsuspecting child with a plastic motorbike helmet stuck to his head received an encouraging slap.

"K bro?" Toko said confidently as he tested the wheels and warmed up for a flying start. "Fuck the bastards."

The plank squeaked into life, gathered speed and was about to take off when Toko lent over and gave the boy-racer a generous shove – just for luck.

"Kiss that baby goodbye," he said as our youngest brother leapt forward, laughed a lot and never looked back.

CKP



Kiss the Baby Goodbye 1994
powder-coated steel in two parts, each 2220 x 3610 x 110mm
Chartwell Collection, Waikato Museum of Art and History
Te Whare Taonga o Waikato, Hamilton

LISA REIHANA

born 1964

Nga Puhi, Ngati Hine, Ngai Tu

working with my hands i become connected to all women, my mother, my mothers mother, her mothers mothers mother and my fathers mother and so on. it spans time and geographical dis/placements. patchwork is, as my grandmother points out, an art of recycling. nothing is wasted but transformed, providing a new covering, it is warmth and regeneration.

and into the warp and weft of the very fibres: songs are sung, stories told and prayers recited. and the stories are no greater than the most ancient; the parting, the coming of light, and knowledge entering our earthly realm. a tale of the most romantic and melancholic longing in the world. the cloak is a bridge for that unending want, a stairway fashioned from within its depths, it leads to a doorway, and from the doorway is a place to fly and a place to rest.

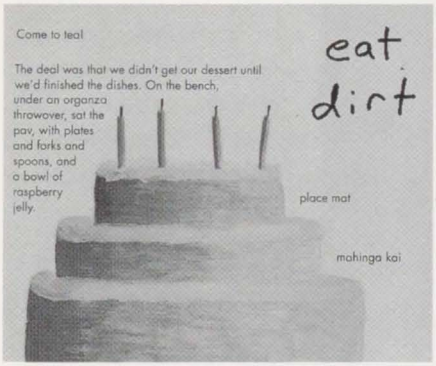
i am told of the son who placed four wooden posts to keep the lovers apart. the strength that numbers must have! the four winds the four directions the props of the heavens... and in that between space, his children play and they wear their finery. and in the light of the day, and with the knowledge it freed, can be seen a palette, a visual feast for the senses...

Te Wao a Tane 1995
cotton velvet, feathers, satin, braid 2785 x 1700mm
Collection of Sylvia Dann

CHRIS HEAPHY

born 1965

Kai Tahu



Facing page: clockwise from top:

Kai 1995
oil and oil stick on organza table cloth
Collection of Lillian Budd, Auckland

Induction 1994
oil and oil stick on table cloth
Courtesy of the artist and Jonathan Smart Gallery, Christchurch

New dirt 1995
oil and oil stick on six coasters
Collection of Jane Keenan and Jonathan Smart, Christchurch

Maori art 1994
oil and oil stick on four place mats
Collection of Lillian Budd, Auckland

Evergreen 1994
oil and oil stick on table cloth
Courtesy of the artist and Jonathan Smart Gallery, Christchurch


KAI
M A
O R
I A
R T

EMILY KARAKA

born 1952

Ngati Tai, Waiohua, Ngati Hine, Ngati Wai

Te Uri o Te Ao

'The issues that I'm always discussing are economic, social and environmental, and land rights tie back to the basis of justice in our country, the covenant of the country, the korowai of the country.'

– *Tama Toa* Mahuru / Whiringa-a-nuku
September / October 1995

Manawhenua Hapu o Tamakimakaurau 1995
oil media on canvas 3000 x 3800mm
Courtesy of the artist

DIANE PRINCE

born 1952

Ngati Whatua, Ngati Kahu, Nga Puhi

Since 1840 we have had major resistance to the encroachment of Crown policies on Maori political, economic and social life. Colonisation and all that it entailed interrupted the natural evolutionary pattern of Maori society, which has had to continually adapt to the whims of various successive governments.

Accordingly, Maoridom has existed in a relatively hostile environment in which the pivotal causes of land, economy and language have been made to exist within their own isolated political framework.

The latest catch cry, 'Biculturalism' represents a decision, little different from the old assimilationist policies in which the indices of progress have had little impact on the well being of Maoridom.

Because of pressure from Maoridom itself, the Crown has begun the protracted process of recognising our rights as Maori guaranteed under the Treaty of Waitangi.

However, the Crown, through the fiscal envelope, showed its true agenda by attempting to hijack their obligations under the Treaty. In doing so, it once more drew attention to the fact that 'democratic' structures are no guarantee for the political safety of colonised indigenous people anywhere.

And its not irrespective of, but faithful to the old Marxist belief which maintains that having been acted upon by history, Maoridom has decided to act unto itself, with greater control and more authentic representation of its people.

The 'kaitiaki' figures represent Marx, who believed in people acting unto their own history, and Maui, 'the hero' who 'snared' the sun (that they said would never set on the British Empire?). Sitting on a mesh grid – which represents the squared grid of the surveyor's mark which imposes a new hierarchical order of ownership on the contours of the land – they speculate on the political future of our people and the call for Tino Rangitiratanga within the political agenda of Maoridom.

The flag merely represents the emotional attachment many people believe they have for the old order, irrespective of the its relevance to the future.

Flagging the future: Te Kaitangata – The Last Palisade 1995
mixed media 3000 x 3000 x 4000mm
Courtesy of the artist, Wellington

SHANE COTTON

born 1964

Nga Puhi, Ngati Rangi, Ngati Hine

The waka I have depicted in *Wake* characterises concepts of transition and change. In many ways I associate this theme with that of Buck Nin's consistent reworking of waka and land. In his works, Nin forges the tauihu of the waka within the land. Thus allowing light to break away and demystify the romanticised view of landscape. In a similar way I have juxtaposed the waka against a backdrop of land as well as containing views within each cell. As forms struggle to make themselves known they interact with the shape of the waka. It is at once attracting and repelling, all the time trying to re-form appropriately.

Also exhibited
You say A. B. C.... 1994
oil on canvas 1830 x 1520mm
Collection of Gary Langsford, Auckland

Wake 1995
oil on canvas 1895 x 2750mm
Private collection, Auckland

PETER ROBINSON

born 1966

Kai Tahu

'My work deals with exploring Maori culture on a personal level, but it also questions that thing of careerism and the use of a "flavour of the month" topic in a sceptical way, like biculturalism as a personal vehicle of careerism.'

– *Planet 14* Spring 1994

Also exhibited
Untitled 1994
mixed media 2510 x 2370 x 250mm
courtesy of the artist, Christchurch

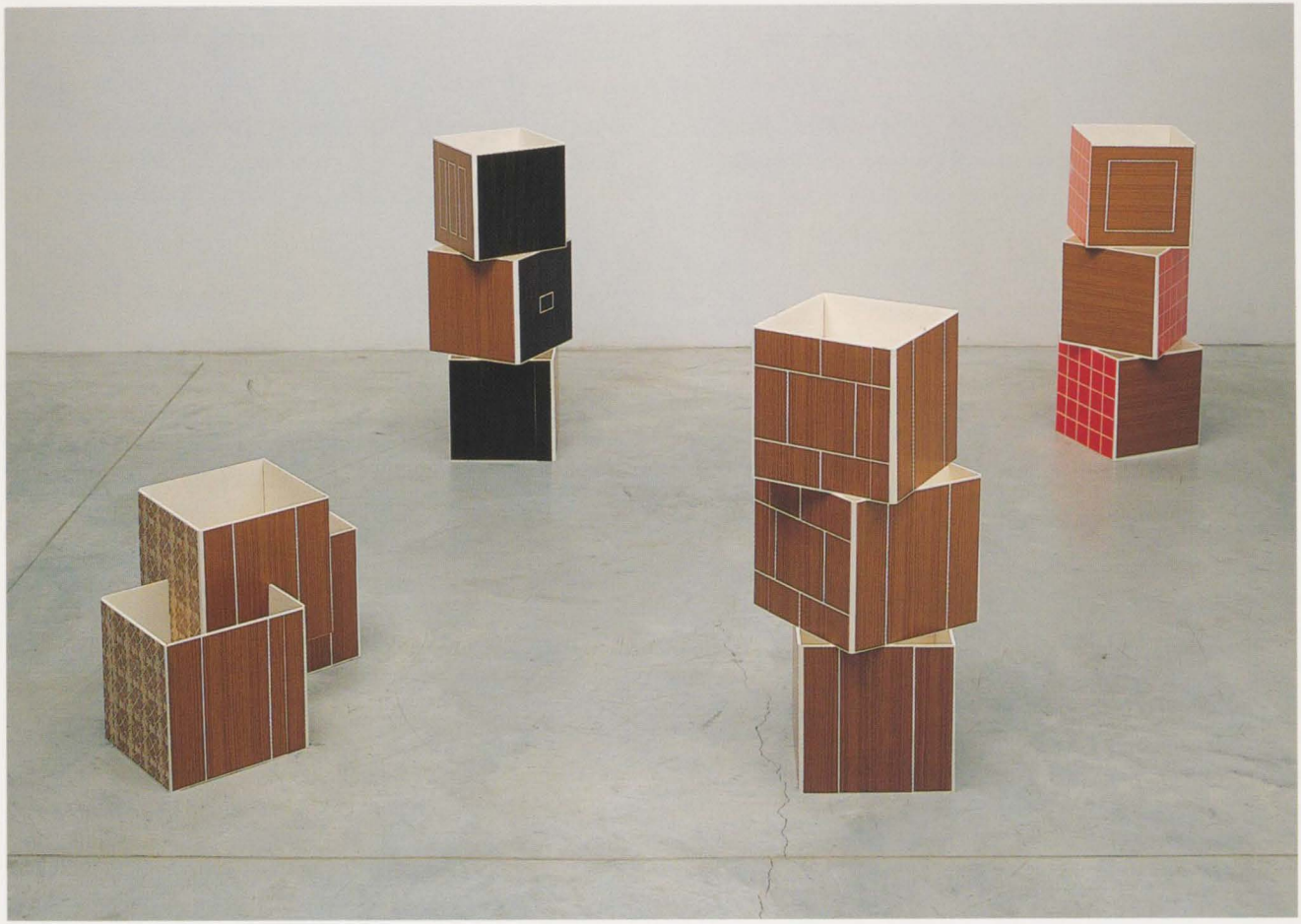
Top
Painting 1993
mixed media on canvas 800 x 5600mm
Fletcher Challenge collection, Auckland

Bottom
Painting 1993
mixed media on canvas 1080 x 5485mm
Auckland Art Gallery collection

BARNARD McINTYRE

born 1961

Nga Puhi



Untitled 1994
vinyl, foam-core board in three parts, each 765 x 255
x 255mm; one part 380 x 255 x 735mm.
Courtesy of the artist and Hamish McKay Gallery, Wellington

Kura Te Waru Rewiri interviews Korurangi guest curator, George Hubbard (Ngati Kuri) on 29 September 1995, shortly before the opening of the exhibition.

Kura Te Waru Rewiri: Kia ora George. I want to ask you some questions about the exhibition *Korurangi*. How did it start?

George Hubbard: Basically, by lobbying the Gallery to do a show which addressed the needs of Maori and Polynesian communities. In 1990 I did *Choice!* at Artspace, which was a bit of a runaway success. Alexa Johnston, Principal Curator at the Auckland Art Gallery, saw it and in 1992 invited me to put in a proposal to do a show.

Of course everybody's wondering, 'George who?' George Hubbard! I was born Michael David Murupaenga and I was adopted when I was three or four days old. I've spent the whole of my life trying to get back to those three or four days when I was my real self. So its been an identity search, to find out who I am. This is what the exhibitions I've done have been mainly about – identity, identification, identification process. I think this is why a lot of the artists that I work with are outsiders or very single-minded individuals who go about their own business in their own way, and paint their own picture.

K: Of their Maoriness? Or something else?

G: Their Maoriness and everything else.

K: There is a sense of isolation in yourself and the artists you work with.

G: I do tend to work with what most people would consider misfits, the outcasts, the detribalised, the dysfunctional, the bums, the no-hopers. I mean, that's my life. Ralph Hotere, so early in the piece, was single-mindedly going about his business in his own way, in such a way that a lot of people thought that it was really jumping the gun.

K: Is that why he is in the show?

G: Ralph is an anchor-stone, an inspiration. He really did open the way for a lot of younger artists to explore mediums not traditionally associated with contemporary Maori art. Whatever that is.

K: Does the contemporary Maori movement obligate your artists to be visibly Maori in their work?

G: Maybe a Pakeha audience tends to look for work that has an obvious outer exterior of Maoriness about the work. Pakeha institutions, curators, historians, writers want to identify the species, put it in a box and put the lid on it. I've gone around and pulled the nails out, taken the lid off and tried to let whatever's in the box do whatever it wants to do. The last thing we need is to say 'that's it!' I would encourage artists to be as experimental as possible.

K: Is that taking into consideration the context that they work in? What are the influences?

G: All the influences – eastern, western, northern southern – they wash up on the shore and you pick. You go to the beach and take whatever you want. It's good to be international. It's great to be from here. I would never pass judgement on any artist as far as where they get their inspiration from.

K: But in the Maori context, and this show is Maori.

G: Auckland is the largest Polynesian city in the world

and this is an opportunity to present a challenging contemporary Maori art exhibition to a large audience. There hasn't been a significant contemporary Maori show in the city which has included older and younger artists for goodness knows how many years.

K: Do you see that the Maori audience will increase?

G: The audience that is being targeted is Maori and Polynesian people, people who never go to the art galleries, people who can barely afford to go the supermarket. And youth as well. I think we're going to lure them in with the public programmes. We're having Moana and Moahunters, Dam Native, DJ competitions, MaiFM, that sort of stuff. The Pakeha audience, the ones who buy it all – I don't worry about them. There's no point in preaching to the converted.

K: Do you think that the work you are doing is taking the contemporary Maori art movement further? Is there an understanding of what that might be?

G: I would like to think so. This work, for me, is very personal, very subjective. I do work with artists that relate to my position, which is trying to find out who I am. One of the great things about Maoridom is its diversity. The group I'm working with is just one part of the whole picture. I can't speak on behalf of the whole culture. I can only speak on behalf of what relates to me.

K: Do we need more Maori curators?

G: The more people doing it, the better. The more arguments, criticism, I think it's fantastic. I have been pigeonholed as a Maori curator, while the artists have been pigeon-holed as Maori artists. I'd like to see myself as a curator of all art and I'd like to think of the artists in the same way. I think Pakeha want to paint us as if we are all one thing. But it's not quite like that. There are so many different factions, dissension within the ranks. I'm not attempting to define what constitutes contemporary Maori art. If the artists in this show were yellow or green, I would still be curating them because of the art they make. It's not just because they're Maori, or flavour of the month.

K: Has it been difficult doing this exhibition?

G: It's been incredibly difficult – three years to a show! Shane Cotton and Peter Robinson, they weren't the big thing in 1992. In 1995, they're just huge. There's no one in the show under twenty-five, which is a real shame. There are so many younger ones which have come along who I wish I could have put in.

K: In three years, lots of things have happened.

G: This is like a retrospective really, on what was happening in 1992.

K: Are you able to talk about the name of the exhibition? How it started?

G: Well, the original title was *Brownie Points.* The reason I chose that was because I felt that was what the Auckland Art Gallery was trying to score by employing me as guest curator – the first Maori curator that they'd ever had since the institution's inception. I was trying to spell it out with the title. This PC thing was bound to happen, but it doesn't matter. All the artists know what the show's really called.

K: Do you want to talk about the artists?

G: These are the kids that are happening. I was saying to Ralph last night that he is the youngest kid in the show. For me that was important – repositioning Ralph in the 90's and showing him with the younger artists. It's obvious he's been an inspiration to so many artists, Maori or Pakeha.

The thing that really ties all of the artists together is the

aspirations for Tino Rangatiratanga. I can safely say that for all the artists here, it's not just an art thing. It's an opportunity for issues of biculturalism, the Treaty, fiscal envelope and all that sort of stuff. It's not just about decor. That's what I really like about Diane and Emily's work. It's very militant. And Ralph's new work - there's no text, there's no clues. It's just big, black, blank. Even though we all have our differences, there's a common goal of reaffirmation – we're all alive, we exist as a culture. I was saying to Ralph last night we should start our own tribe – Ngati Arty.

K: The challenge that was there at the beginning, is it still there?

G: I don't think that I have achieved what I set out to do. Personally, I think as far as the show happening and the artists, it's really great and hopefully it'll get Maori and Polynesian people in, which is even better. But still, I don't feel all the artists had enough input as far as what work they wanted in the show.

K: With the timespan of three years, have they been able to produce new work for this show?

G: There was a selection process which I was very uneasy with. Normally when I go to an artist's studio, which isn't very often, it's like visiting a friend. The first thing you want to do is sit down and have a yack or a cup of tea or a beer. Institutional curators tend to rush past the artist, get the camera out, turn on the microphone and scrawl on the notepad. I always wait until the artist says 'Shall we have a look at my work?' Curating is going to change. It's going to be more artist-orientated, finding what artists' needs are.

K: The repercussions of this exhibition – what do you see that they might be for this place, the New Gallery?

G: It's good that it's a Maori show that's opening the new building. We've got an opportunity to show our wares. Some people might think I've purposely gone out and tried to do a show, a Maori show, that doesn't look like a Maori show. But it is. Some of the artists are sick of being labelled and they want the public and especially the art institutions and bureaucracy to keep re-thinking the plot.

K: Do you think these changes need to be made by us?

G: Well, we are the ones making it. You can't change the way an institution thinks.

K: I think a change is happening. Maori people are starting to talk now.

G: I get sick of talking. I talked all through the eighties.

K: Well, you might be, but other people might follow in your footsteps and say 'Hey George said something I agree (or disagree) with!' You've allowed that dialogue to happen. I think that *Korurangi* will open up dialogue that even you will have to be prepared to listen to.

G: I know that's true.

Kura Te Waru Rewiri is an artist and in 1995 was a founding member of Haerewa.

The curator wishes to thank: the artists, Joanne Lee Russell, Lillian Budd, Robin Craw, Anna Bibby, Janita Craw, Dion Workman, Gavin Chilcott, Dick Frizzell, Judy Frizzell, Reuben Paterson, Megan Tamati Quenelle, Paora Murupaenga, Rose Greaves, Ata Brampton, Priscilla Pitts, Rachael Churchward, Grant Fell, 23a Gallery, Anton Parsons, Richard Reddaway, Eugene Hanson, Lonnie Wallace, Jim Barr, Mary Barr, Tessa Laird, David Carman, Darcy Nicholas, Garry Nicholas, Daniel Barnes, Timothy Moon, Tom Samson, Anne Sampson, Jan Bieringa, Luit Bieringa, Tristan O'Shannessy, UNITEC, Linda Tyler, Bill McKay, Karl Maughan, James Kirkwood, Dr Paul Crozier, William Dart, Alexa Johnston, Ron Brownson, William McAloon, Chad Taylor, Chris Saines and the entire Auckland Art Gallery staff - Kia ora!

ets to artistic achievement attained from the bastions of Western aesthetic dissemination. Their facility and eloquence is a product of urban realities. While there are also those who owe no such allegiance, for some, the dialogue within the alternative sites of customary negotiation is often tenuous and sometimes silent.

Silence is an ambivalent term within Maoridom. It can be both a sign of humility and a sign of self-consciousness, of insecurity, of unfamiliarity and even a sign of contempt. Like those before them, these artists inherit a reality that imposes a cultural price on their commitment to creative expression. However, the tenor of their korero remains theirs to define. If, in negotiating the sites of contestability they are able to mediate between the spaces with equal facility and decorum then theirs will be a bicultural voice. If the tenor of their korero is strident to Maori ears then they may remain beyond the pae. If the tenor of their korero is comprehensible then they have crossed the pae.

The enigmatic silence of Ralph Hotere is a sign of humility. It is a silence that sustains the myth of the innate korero embedded within the work; it is a silence that offers ponderous potential in translation. Charged with the inherent potential of the medium and a stark visual vocabulary, Hotere's creation emits a radiance through negative and positive contrast, through manipulation of mass and void. Simply titled *If*, the work presents several possibilities that require the conditional clause: If this is a cross then perhaps there is sorrow; if this is an expression of light what is the rippling field? Disruption? Fissure? Enlightenment? Inspiration? Contamination? Even the idiosyncratic lead-headed nails contribute to the construction of the text. Cross after cross enumerates the potential for lamentation but the two teapots and a cup present a dilemma in equilibrium. Perhaps, it is a signal to the young that this 'new' vocabulary offers a solution to a balanced equation.

Reclamation offers an insight into the visual and conceptual inter-narrative that permeates the work of some of the artists. The koru of Gordon Walters requires no further debate. Its monumentality as issue and customary mark translated finds its unquestionable termination in Michael Parekowhai's *Kiss the Baby Goodbye*. Its sheer size and weight is overpowering. This is no Weetbix box kit-set. If this is a game, as some suggest, its physical realisation as mass and void, as negative and positive, as black and white presents an insurmountable obstacle to any trivial pursuit. Its anchorage is a coalescence of two realities, black and white.

The koru, meanwhile, strains for sustenance in Shane Cotton's pot. It is a transplanted culture nourished by multifaceted threads of dialogue. As Te Whiti[8] had predicated 'You say ABC, we say ABC,' but the inflection and meaning are certainly not identical.

While Robert Leonard has labelled Peter Robinson's work as 'heretical' within the context of Maori art, it is a reading that is conditioned by a Eurocentric view of the ratio and percentage game.[9]

From a Maori perspective the percentage paintings may

pae boundary line, horizon, location of host speakers on the marae

koru customary pattern in Maori art that is often associated with the *pitau*, the unfurling shoot of a young fern

be perceived as marks of identity, as significant as the moko. Although the spiral that defines the numerical percentages exists as an isolated referential mark from Maori art, it assumes additional denotational signification through its perceived configuration as finger print.[10] Such a reading displaces the patronising agenda with one of polemic recrimination. The accusation of "authenticity" is inverted to construct an opposing stance as a counterpoint to the colonial penchant for empirical order and statistical constructs. In such a world view, calculations of Maoriness by measuring the percentage of one's blood are both irrelevant and meaningless. One is Maori because one has a whakapapa that is acknowledged and communicated with other Maori. The percentage game is a construct generated out of ignorance.

The 'numbers game' of Robinson has become the 'waka game' in the hands of other artists. As vessel of humanity, the poetry of Hotere's upturned waka is eloquent. *If*, indeed, the waka is no accident of perceptual transgression. With Cotton, genealogical connections emerge through the haze of shifting frames of reference, dislocated vistas and customary imprints of taniwha and whakarare to celebrate a kinship with the tribal canoes, Mataatua and Nga Tokimatawhaorua.

In some cases, the act of reclamation appears to be skin deep. Chris Heaphy's imprints on imprints hang as superficial stains of exchange. The vision negotiated attempts to juxtapose orders of confluence both visual and customary but the ensuing korero is rendered silent by an incapacity to verbalise the metaphysical nature of representation. There is an obvious acknowledgment of the definitive boundaries that exist between food consumption and art production, but this is a tea party gone wrong. Within Heaphy's *Maori Art* there is a potential articulation of the imposition of labels together with a glimpse of cultural erasure. However, the realisation of this potential is tentative and self-consciously realised. The tablecloth fails to conceal the formica surface. The dialogue is pleasant but in danger of remaining grounded on the periphery.

Even more peripheral are the vacant containers of Barnard McIntyre with their synthetic veneer. These transportable, transposable, disposable boxes are rescued from collapse by their potential for reconstitution as constructions that negotiate the modernist dilemma. The accompanying label proposes that "we might tentatively locate a Maori content in McIntyre's work – represented by its absence." This can only be answered with silence.

Silence has never been part of Emily Karaka's vocabulary. The ominous cry of the ruru[11] maintains her plaintive cries against the rules and regulations that impinge upon a legitimate realisation of the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi. Paint drips with remorse and the palette is charged with emotion as the *Uri o Te Ao* are laden with the sins of their forefathers and the legislative plunder of Maori rights to self-determination. The State Owned Enterprises Act of 1986 and the Resource Management Act of 1991 are emblazoned across the

waka canoe

taniwha often translated as *monster*. The taniwha's role can be malevolent or benevolent. Sometimes it is a *kaitiaki* – a protector or guardian. In speeches it acknowledges the mana of the person addressed.

whakarare a carving pattern that is often translated as 'to wander, to meander or to distort.' In some contexts, its configuration suggests a pathway to achievement and enlightenment.

ruru owl

painting for special consideration. The snake-like whip of the 'S' is overlaid with a ladder, while the 'E' is transcribed as the smiling face of enterprise. But whose enterprise is invoked in the reclamation of the 'O'?

Because the tears continue to fall like rain as the ruru sheds a sympathetic tear, it is not difficult to gain an insight into the artist's intention. Words compete for ascendancy as one attempts to decode the ambiguous articulation of this polemic voice. The effort spent in translation provides some clues to comprehending the catch cry of the artist that "This land is Maori land."

Diane Prince's tent embassy (or wakataua) is equally vociferous in its condemnation of so-called "democratic" structures with hidden agendas. Its transitory nature articulates grievance through the impermanence and the incongruous juxtaposition of elements. Flag as mat and flag at half-mast, fibre torso on metallic grid, feathers suspended and feathers erect, boundaries demarcated and spaces crossed, pumice contained and pumice unconfined, diminution of scale and convergent trajectory entice negotiation of the space defined by Prince.

However, one is encouraged to radically alter one's perception in order to negotiate beyond the boundary. If one is capable of this initial step, one is confronted by less literal barriers to full participation. And then, there is the antithetical positionality of muri and mua. In offering the wisdom of Marx and the insight of Maui as kaitiaki in her artist's statement, Prince demands an encounter with history as a vehicle to enlightenment.

Jacqueline Fraser continues to redefine gallery spaces with her linear notations of area and space. Fraser offers the customary mark as a reverential image within the context of the frame. The central figure, made tangible by linear manipulation of new world fibre in tandem with framing drapery, is laden with narrative promise. It is a pale apparition, a patupaiarehe, with the imprint of moko and cosmetic lips. She is flanked by tipua, who bear witness to the translation of ponga frond from the margin to the centre as fern leaf, as emblem of identity and as crown of triumph. The trappings of acknowledgment are rendered complete by the bouquet of flowers. Or, is it a wreath to the fallen?[12] In any event, as her Artist's Statement suggests, it is not the silver fern that is "unique, rare, special," it is "we the Maori people."

As the potiki a nga korero a wahine[13], Lisa Reihana offers the lure of velour as patchwork of colour and texture. Reihana perpetuates a tradition common among Maori women. The patchwork quilt brings with it a craft tradition of intuitive structuring with its ultimate function of generating warmth and recycling discarded fabric. The suspended braids of velour and feathers bound to the kaupapa of this cloak unite this modern fabrication with the korowai of customary practice. The anxiety generated by definitive qualification of 'art' versus 'craft' is rendered silent by this bold transgression across the boundaries of aesthetic articulation. In the end, creative expression is a condition of heritage, a social production, an indictment of one's negotiation of history. It is a perception coloured by the nuances of fabric, exotic or

wakataua war canoe
muri rear or behind in terms of place. The past in terms of time.
mua the front in terms of place. The future in terms of time.

patupaiarehe apparition, fairy folk
ponga species of fern
korowai a class of Maori cloak with suspended thrums bound to the body of the garment

indigenous, and the multifarious strands of inheritance that bind cladding to core.

The crowning statement of this exhibition might be found in the work of Maureen Lander. Tuakana to the female artists in *Korurangi*, her voice is enriched with age while her utterance is eloquent. It provides an appropriate kinaki to the waiata to tautoko the preceding korero. Lander's *Gilt complex* is an installation that negotiates several spaces both physical and metaphysical. Its siting within the 'new' gallery space allows the work to articulate a dichotomous dialogue between cultural realities and the preservation of order. It is a documented concern for the fate of pingao (*Desmoschoenus spiralis*), an important weaving fibre that binds and stabilises coastal dunes while sustaining the metaphysical narratives that regulate Maori cultural perception.[14] A whiri of pingao cloaks a gallery column to create a 'pouwhenua (or perhaps a goldpost).' This act of covering an ionic column, a remnant of classicising orthodoxy, emerges as a contestation of site. Whose values are at stake? Whose inheritance should be protected? Where does the power reign to sustain the battle for cultural survival? This cloak is anchored by whakaahua of the indigenous 'gold leaf' as natural resource and taonga. Like the photographs displayed at the tangihanga the presence of these treasured possessions is invoked to enrich the korero of this 'goldpost.'

There is a powerful undercurrent of lamentation within Lander's installation. Its most poignant manifestation may be discovered on an elevated platform. The crown of pingao, with its golden accents, is an eloquent reminder of the conquest of site and the ephemeral nature of dominion. The "gilded" leaves are enriched in their translation from potae taua. Elevated on a pedestal, this golden crown is cushioned upon a pillow of exaltation, enhanced by the semantic potency of inter-related Maori expressions that reference mourning.[15] The framing purple curtain and the purple cushion, edged with golden tassels, intensify the sanctity of the space and the sacrosanct nature of the potae.[16]

At the risk of translating the metaphor too far, it should be stated that *Korurangi* will not be the final curtain call for Maori art.

Brett Graham's poroporoaki is a tribute to Rangimarie Hetet. His work *Kahukura* can be likened to a protective covering, a rainbow whose colours are emitted as a sign of the union of past and present in acknowledgment and celebration of Rangimarie, whose contribution to Maoridom as artist and 'mother' is unquestionable. *Kahukura* stands as a tipuna with its genealogical and commemorative function articulated through an abstract visual vocabulary of tension and energy, enclosure and expansion. It exists in a genealogical kinship with nga kakahu i whatua e Rangimarie, the cloaks woven by Rangimarie, both metaphorically and aesthetically as a salute to nga taonga tuku iho, the treasures handed down. This happens not only in terms of artistic expression, but also in its acknowledgment of Rangimarie Hetet, a taonga united with the spirits of her tipuna. Its kinship is a cloak whose strands are bound

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tuakana	older brother of males or older sister of females. Used here as the eldest female.
kinaki	relish. In this case, a relish to excite the senses.
waiata	generic term for song
tautoko	support or endorsement
whiri	braid
pouwhenua	literally, a post upon the land
whakaahua	photographs. More correctly: the capacity to generate a likeness of a person or object.
taonga	treasure
tangihanga	funeral. Ritual farewell to the dead.
potae taua	a form of head-dress associated with mourning

through its kaupapa to the semantic potential of aho and whenu. In its kinship with nga kakahu o nehe ra, the cloaks of the past, it is steeped in korero.

Kahukura stands alongside Graham's companion work *Te Kohao o te Ngira* as a statement of the conceptual realisation of the metaphysical fibre that is an inheritance of the voices of the past. It is sustained in its reductionist vocabulary as an imprint of the abstract potential that was realised in nga taonga tuku iho o Tainui.[17]

Na reira, e kui, haere atu ra ki runga i te aranui a Tane.
Ahakoa, kua pakaru te taura hei here i a koe
ki tou whanau, hapu hoki,
Ka mahana tonu nga kakahu i whatu i a koe
i te wa ora ai
Hei tauira miharo, hei taonga hoki
ki nga uri whakamuri ,
Inaianei, e ngunguru ana te maunga a Ruapehu
i tou wehenga atu ra.
Haere atu ra, e Kui, ki runga i tou waka whakahirahira
ki te kainga tuturu ki te kainga i whakapukenga ai
te kune o nga taonga tuku iho,
Ara, ki Hawaiki-nui, ki Hawaiki-roa, ki Hawaiki-pamamao.[18]

In 1984, at the Hui Taumata in Wellington, Sir James Henare left this prophetic message: "The good that is old is preserved, and the good that is new will be added to it."

I leave you with the 'choice' in determining the good that is 'New Maori Art.'

Robert H.G. Jahnke
Maori Studies Department
Massey University
October 1995

The writer wishes to acknowledge Sue Smith, Student in the Bachelor of Maori Visual Arts and Museum Studies programmes, Massey University, for assistance with the female perspective.

tipuna ancestor
aho weft, horizontal strands in weaving, genealogical term establishing line of descent
whenu warp, vertical strands in weaving. Alternatively rendered as whenua, its semantic context is enriched by connections to land and the afterbirth that was ritually returned to the land as signification of union with Papatuanuku.
Hui Taumata summit meeting

Footnotes

1. Edward W. Said (1984) *The World, the Text, and the Critic* Faber and Faber Limited, Great Britain, p.25.
2. Notes from Exhibition Introduction.
3. Brett Graham's recent comment in *Tama Toa,* Mahuru / Whirirangi-a-nuku September / October 1995, p.17, articulates this dilemma: "we have to ask ourselves what's happening to the generation of Maori master artists before us? Do galleries bring the young ones in because our work is comfortable, safe and non-challenging, or is it that they're (institutions) truly concerned about biculturalism."
4. Syncretic is a term used to describe attempts to reconcile diverse or opposing tenets or practices. The resulting vision is often perceived as polemic in intent.
5. Roger Neich (1993), *Painted Histories: Early Maori Figurative Painting*, Auckland University Press, Auckland, pp.7-8.
6. *Te Waka Toi* was an exhibition of Maori art which toured the United States from 1992 to 1993. Upon its return to New Zealand, the show was exhibited at the Auckland Art Gallery from 30 January to 10 April 1994. Two of the artists in the show, Selwyn Muru and Buck Nin withdrew their works from the Auckland venue in protest at the Gallery's perceived bicultural insensitivity.
7. The phrase 'young guns' is taken from the title of a concert programme aired on National Radio, 'The rise and rise of young Maori artists, the young guns', 30 September 1995. It should be remembered that there are also some 'old guns' in *Korurangi.*
8. Te Whiti o Rongomai was an influential Maori prophet, who founded the settlement at Parihaka. He died there in 1907.
9. Robert Leonard (1995), '3.125% Pure: Peter Robinson plays the Numbers Game', *Art and Text 50*, p.18.
10. Refer to Athol Anderson (ed) (1994), James Herries Beattie, *Traditional Lifeways of the Southern Maori,* University of Otago Press, Dunedin, p.250. According to Beattie, some Ngai Tahu informants have suggested the thumb print as a source for the evolution of the spiral pattern in tattoo.
11. The ruru (owl) is often perceived as the purveyor of ill tidings, a sign of foreboding. Alternatively, it is also looked upon as a kaitiaki, protector and guardian. Its hovering presence in the Karaka work capitalises on this duel significance.
12. This composition of spiral shapes bears a striking resemblance to the kotiate, a Maori club used in battle. It is possible that a double entendre is intended.
13. Literally translated as the youngest of the female voices, this is an acknowledgment of Reihana as the youngest female artist in *Korurangi.*
14. Refer to Maureen Lander's Artist's Statement for her account of the whakatauki or proverb 'Manaakitia nga tukemata o Tane Caring for the eyebrows of Tane'.
15. A related series of terms that encompass a period of mourning include: *whare potae* house of mourning; *whare taua* house built for mourners; *kakahu taua* mourning garment; *atamira* an elevated platform for the laying of the body in state.
16. The religious garments of the Ratana church use the colour purple as a signification of sacredness. It is the colour of the *anahera pono* (angels of truth) and the *apotoro rehita* (righteous apostles).
17. Translated as 'the treasures of the Tainui people in the Waikato region.' Brett Graham has ancestral links with Tainui.
18. This passage is the writer's salutation to the art of Rangimarie Hetet.

Review Quotes

'Korurangi, New Maori Art manifests great assurance and poise.'

T.J. McNamara
New Zealand Herald 11 November 1995

'The sterility of political correctness hangs about Korurangi: New Maori Art.'

Keith Stewart
Sunday Star Times 15 October 1995

'The concept of contemporary Maori art in New Zealand is proven specious by this very exhibition.'

Keith Stewart
Sunday Star Times 15 October 1995

'The show plays things very safe, but predicatably enough, it has already been hit with mindless rants and equally mindless raves.'

Justin Paton
New Zealand Listener 4 November 1995

'The exhibition (as distinct from individual artists) lacked a heart, a pulse, a wairua.'

Jonathan Mane-Wheoki
Art New Zealand 78 Autumn 1996

'The fusion of mythology and modernity gives the exhibition its edge. What unites the work is a sense of spirit.'

Simon Robinson
TIME International 16 October 1995

Bright start for splendid New Gallery

- 6. NOV 1995

Friday, November 3, 1995

Exhibit symbol of ignorance

NOVEMBER 6, 1995

Protest at a gallery seems to be taboo

3. NOV 1995

Mayor Denies Censorship Over Artwork Controversy

Art to fund activists

Maori Consultant Group Says It Is Disappointed Work Removed

- 5 NOV 1995

Public foot put down

14. NOV 1995

Mediocre art hiding behind a screen of controversy

- 3 NOV 1995

Mayor denies censorship over removal of flag art

Cultural apartheid creates a ghetto

OCTOBER 15, 1995


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