

Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki voices the need for culture at the core of the COVID-19 conversation



Photo: Ivan Muller

'Cultured Conversations', a new digital series addressing the impacts of COVID-19 for arts and culture in Aotearoa New Zealand, launches today at www.aucklandartgallery.com/CulturedConversations.

'The world as we knew it is gone,' says series host and Auckland Art Gallery Director, Kirsten Paisley. 'The global pandemic is changing everything. It's a crisis for arts and culture too. Around the world, museums, galleries and cultural producers have been disrupted. We must advocate for the arts now more than ever.'

Paisley adds, 'In New Zealand, we are in the privileged position of actually being able to sit face-to-face and have conversations. I'm using this opportunity to speak out and to speak with other leaders. We're making these conversations public. We must talk about this crisis to overcome it. We must promote and advocate for a positive policy agenda on the arts now.'

Exploring issues and ideas from the cultural sector in Aotearoa New Zealand, 'Cultured Conversations' invites leaders from arts, philanthropy, economics and politics to outline their vision for recovery as we navigate the impacts of COVID-19. Rich with diverse voices and inspirational ideas, 'Cultured Conversations' creates dialogue around urgent concerns that face our cultural communities as we move from crisis to renewal.

The series will also delve into other issues that face our cultural communities, including Indigenous representation, arts and culture funding, and the importance of arts in enriching civic life.

'Cultured Conversations' launches with two episodes: the first with former Prime Minister of New Zealand Helen Clark ONZ. Clark speaks about the importance of arts advocacy, saying that the arts community 'has to be banging on doors'.

The second episode is with Chris Brooks, Chief Executive of Regional Facilities Auckland, who speaks about arts leadership in a time of crisis.

With a new episode released every week, future guests include Curator, Māori Art Nigel Borell; internationally acclaimed artistic director and curator Juliana Engberg; Senior Partner at global management consulting firm, McKinsey & Company, Andrew Grant; and Academy-award nominated filmmaker Chelsea Winstanley.

New episodes of 'Cultured Conversations' will launch every Tuesday. Episodes can be found at www.aucklandartgallery.com/culturedconversations.

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