

Fall in love with *Romancing the Collection* at Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki this winter



Marcus Stone *Her First Love Letter*
1889, oil on canvas. Auckland Art
Gallery, gift of Moss Davis, 1930

Opening on Saturday 7 August, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki’s latest exhibition, *Romancing the Collection*, offers a love letter to the city’s public art collection.

‘*Romancing the Collection* provides a deep dive to present much-loved favourites alongside artworks that – perhaps – have been previously overlooked and under-loved. Blending the historical with the contemporary, the exhibition traverses time to show just how tastes have changed in the decades through which our city’s art collection has grown,’ says Director Kirsten Lacy.

‘In the 19th century, when the Gallery’s collection was first established, fashion favoured history, portrait, landscape, genre and still-life painting. *Romancing the Collection* allows for these works to be presented in a new way and for us to fall in love with them all over again.’

From portraits to pop art and even a Picasso, *Romancing the Collection* delves into portraiture, romance, vistas, animalia, still life and abstract works. It opens with the remarkable Māori portraits painted in oils by 19th-century artists, Gottfried Lindauer and Charles F Goldie, and includes the work of other leading portraitists, Allan Ramsay, Joshua Reynolds and Henry Raeburn.

‘Quite literally, as society, styles and methodologies changed, we observe the evolution from highly mannered and managed sitters to portraits that introduce life and light to release bodies to cavort in space,’ says Senior Curator Juliana Engberg.

‘Eventually, we see the painted portrait being overtaken by photography, which reintroduces formality with a knowing twist.’

Romancing the Collection explores all the complexities of love from first flirtation to unrequited and fickle love, and even hidden desires. As styles and sensibilities shift, the exhibition demonstrates how frivolities give way to formalisms.

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'Romance was once framed as a mythological or religious subject of sacred and profane sensibilities, with all its voyeuristic, clandestine potential,' says Engberg.

'It eventually became a domesticated narrative, played out for audiences primed by novellas and magazine serialisations, and, as a result, schooled in symbols, hidden messages and the double entendre.'

Spirited and playful, *Romancing the Collection* cleverly pairs historical pieces with contemporary art. Opening on Saturday 7 August, entry is free.

Exhibition details

Romancing the Collection

When:

Saturday 7 August 2021

10am–5pm daily

10am–9pm Fridays

Where:

Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki
Cnr Kitchener and Wellesley Streets
Auckland, New Zealand

Admission:

FREE

**For more information, high-res images
and interview requests contact:**

Priscilla Southcombe

Communications Officer

Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki

+64 21 548 480

priscilla.southcombe@aucklandartgallery.com

aucklandartgallery.com