

AUCKLAND ART GALLERY TOI O TĀMAKI

Exhibition partner:

2013 Pilsen
European Capital of Culture

Media Release

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Historic Māori Portraits Travel to the Czech Republic

Supporting partner:

 **Toi Māori Aotearoa**
Māori Arts New Zealand

Auckland Art Gallery Toi o
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Image credit: Gottfried Lindauer, *Wahanui Reihana Te Huatare*, oil on canvas, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, gift of Mr H E Partridge, 1915

From 6 May to 20 September 2015, historic Māori portraits by 19th century painter Gottfried Lindauer, will be part of a major retrospective exhibition at the Gallery of West Bohemia in Pilsen, Czech Republic.

Following a record-breaking exhibition of 48 of Lindauer's portraits at the Old National Gallery in Berlin, attended by more than 143,000 visitors, Lindauer's portraits from the Partridge Collection at Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki will soon be seen by Czech audiences.

Pilsen is both the birthplace of Lindauer, one of the 19th century's most prolific painters of Māori portraits, and the 2015 European Capital of Culture.

Director of The Gallery of West Bohemia in Pilsen Roman Musil says the Lindauer exhibition is the most ambitious project the Gallery has ever prepared.

'Lindauer's portraits of important Māori have the reputation of being something extraordinary,' he says.

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Lindauer's spirit will be symbolically welcomed back to his birth city of Pilsen during a kawē mate ceremony (conveying the deceased) that will be held in The Gallery of West Bohemia by representatives of Haerewa, Auckland Art Gallery's Māori advisory group.

'It will undoubtedly be a spiritual and moving moment,' says Musil.

The exhibition includes 44 portraits from Auckland Art Gallery, four from Te Papa, and three from Czech Republic. It also has 19 of Lindauer's early works from before he left for New Zealand in 1874, and Māori items sent back to the Náprstek Museum in Prague by Lindauer around 1900.

Auckland Art Gallery Director Rhana Devenport says the Pilsen exhibition marks the continuation of a momentous journey for the taonga (treasures).

'These paintings have priceless cultural value for New Zealand and even more significance for the descendants of the sitters, the artist and his benefactor, as well as the city of Pilsen,' she says.

'This journey presents a valuable opportunity to connect the portraits with the living relatives for whom they have particular resonance. It's not just about the history of these artworks, but also a chance to acknowledge their ongoing importance and living presence in a modern context.'

The tour to Germany and Czech Republic marks the first time the Māori portraits have left New Zealand since they were painted more than 100 years ago.

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For more information about each museum please see websites below:

www.aucklandartgallery.com - Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki

www.zpc-galerie.cz – Gallery of West Bohemia, Pilsen

[Altes Museum](http://www.altesmuseum.de) – Old National Gallery, Berlin

About Gottfried Lindauer (1839 – 1926)

Gottfried Lindauer was born in Pilsen, Bohemia. He trained at the Academy Fine Arts in Vienna and immigrated to New Zealand in 1874. Lindauer travelled and worked extensively around New Zealand, notably Auckland, Nelson, Christchurch and Napier. He returned to Britain for an exhibition in London in 1886.

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For more information about Gottfried Lindauer and his paintings visit www.lindaueronline.co.nz.

About the Partridge Collection

Auckland businessman Henry Partridge commissioned an extensive series of Māori portraits and large-scale genre scenes from Lindauer over a 30-year period. In 1915, Partridge offered his collection of 70 Lindauer paintings to Auckland on the condition that Aucklanders contribute £10,000 to the Belgian refugee relief fund. The amount was raised within several weeks, and the collection presented to the Auckland City Council to hold in trust for the people of the Auckland province. The collection comprises 62 portraits and eight large genre canvases.

For further information please contact:

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