

## Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki appoints Nathan Pōhio as Senior Curator, Māori Art



Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki has appointed Nathan Pōhio (Waitaha, Kāti Māmoe, Kāi Tahu) to the role of Senior Curator, Māori Art. Pōhio brings almost 20 years of experience working in galleries, including six years in curatorial positions.

As Senior Curator, Māori Art, Pōhio will help develop and manage the Gallery's collection of artworks by Māori artists, as well as those depicting Māori people, researching, displaying and interpreting the collection for the benefit of all.

'This is a key curatorial role at the Gallery and in the Māori arts sector more broadly. I'm delighted Nathan has accepted this senior position and look forward to his future projects at the Gallery,' says Auckland Art Gallery Director Kirsten Lacy.

Pōhio was appointed to the role by a panel comprising Director Kirsten Lacy, Deputy Director Tom Irvine (Ngāti Whātua), Head of Kaupapa Māori Te Arepa Morehu (Ngāti Whātua, Ngāpuhi), Head of Curatorial & Learning Dr Sarah Farrar, and artist and longstanding Haerewa member Lisa Reihana (Ngāpuhi, Ngāti Hine, Ngāi Tūteauru, Ngāi Tūpoto).

Since 2015, Pōhio has been part of the curatorial team at Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū. While there, his focus has been to increase the presence of Toi Māori, Toi Moana Nui a Kiwa within exhibitions, collections, publications and public programmes.

This has included conceiving and carrying out the cultural responsibility for *Te Wheke: Pathways Across Oceania*, a two-year-long exhibition with Aotearoa and Te Moana Nui a Kiwa at the centre of art historical

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narratives from Aotearoa New Zealand.

'I have been formed professionally over nineteen years at Te Puna o Waiwhetū Christchurch Art Gallery and feel confident Toi o Tāmaki Auckland Art Gallery's needs are something I am qualified to contribute towards,' says Pōhio.

'I feel fortunate to have known past Directors and very much look forward to working with Director Kirsten Lacy. I have a huge respect for the staff and local art galleries and institutions within and around Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland. Good friends once worked in the capacity I will be picking up at Toi o Tāmaki Auckland Art Gallery and I hope to expand upon what they pushed for: a wide-reaching view on the depth of Māori art.'

Pōhio will also work closely with the Gallery's Head of Kaupapa Māori, Te Arepa Morehu, and with Haerewa, which works in partnership to raise the profile of Māori art at the Gallery and to foster an environment that encourages Māori engagement and visitation.

'I am ecstatic that Nathan will soon be joining our Toi o Tāmaki whānau. I can't wait to find ways in which we can help each other create great opportunities for Toi Māori and Māori artists, further sharing that with Aotearoa, puta atu ki te ao – with Aotearoa and the rest of the world,' says Te Arepa Morehu, Head of Kaupapa Māori at Auckland Art Gallery.

Recruitment to the role invited applications from those in curatorial and senior curatorial capacities, and Pōhio will commence as Senior Curator, Māori Art on 8 February 2022, reporting to Dr Sarah Farrar, Head of Curatorial & Learning.

One of Pōhio's first projects with his new colleagues, will be *Toi Te Kupu*, a major Māori art symposium. *Toi Te Kupu* will be positioned within a kaupapa Māori paradigm that validates te reo Māori me ōna tikanga – Māori language and culture, beliefs, values and practices. The symposium aims to celebrate and showcase the transformative power of mātauranga Māori as expressed through art, exhibition-making and wider creative practices.

*Toi Te Kupu* will be held over two days, 15-16 June 2022, in Tāmaki Makaurau. More announcements about this symposium will be made in early 2022.

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