



AUCKLAND ART GALLERY TOI O TĀMAKI

Artwork Pack Storytelling Term 4 2016

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Years 1–2

Grand Designs



In many parts of Europe there was a proliferation of grand country estates in the late 17th and 18th centuries, reflecting the increasing wealth brought about through the introduction of industry and agricultural reforms. While architects scurried to outdo each other with their grand designs, aristocratic and newly emergent middle class owners sought out artworks of all kinds to decorate their rural mansions as well as their elegant town houses.

The period became known as the Age of Enlightenment, and ideas about taste, science, medicine, economics, literature, et cetera were reflected in a wide range of art forms. Portrait painters were constantly at work, recording individuals and their acquisitions, and connoisseurs avidly collected paintings from earlier centuries, many of which they picked up while on the Grand Tour of Europe.

Grand Designs captures a snapshot of the times, displayed in its own equally grand setting and includes works by Pieter Brueghel the Younger, Marco d'Oggiono, Lavinia Fontana, Thomas Gainsborough, Luca Giordano, Pietro Paolini, Guido Reni, Salvator Rosa, and others.



Above

Andrea Michieli (known as Andrea Vicentino)
Joseph Making Himself Known to His Brothers late 16th century
oil on canvas
Mackelvie Trust Collection
Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki
gift of James Tannock Mackelvie, 1882

Sold into slavery by his jealous brothers, Joseph, son of Jacob, rose to become governor of Egypt. His brothers came from Canaan to buy corn, and after testing the sincerity of their regret for their misdeeds, he reveals to them his true identity (Genesis 37).

When James Mackelvie sent this work out to Auckland, along with the Guido Reni displayed in the exhibition, local artist Alfred Sharpe commented on the deformed hands displayed by some of the brothers, putting it down to their being gouty subjects, possibly brought on by carrying weapons. In fact, they were the product of some very poor over-painting done in the past, which conservation rectified.

Years 1–2

To All New Arrivals

Since Captain Cook's six-week New Zealand residence accompanied by artist William Hodges at Dusky Sound in 1773, artists have been fascinated with recording how Māori and Pākehā interact. The signing of the Treaty of Waitangi, the immediate establishment of Mission Stations and the rapid growth of immigrant communities became a subject used by itinerant artists such as Charles Meryon, Augustus Earle, George Baxter, George French Angus and Reverend Dr John Kinder. They all contrasted immigrant arrival with Māori settlement.

The relations between arrival and community have become a theme artists have explored for more than two centuries. In a nation where ongoing arrivals and departures are constantly being compared, conversations about arrival occur regularly between Māori, Pākehā and Pacific artists. Ideas surrounding arrival have become an ongoing feature within New Zealand's art.

Ranging from 1773 through the 19th to 21st centuries, this collection-based display utilises themes about arrivals as a way of profiling ongoing artistic concerns where arrivals and identity intersect. For instance, John Pule and Fatu Feu'u explore Pacific globalism and the continuing Oceanic diaspora. Kennett Watkins imagines the arrival of Māori in the 14th century while Peter Robinson represents contemporary ethnicities in terms of waka arriving from Hawaiiki.



Kennett Watkins (1847–1933 | New Zealand)



Above

Kennett Watkins
*The Legend of the Voyage to
 New Zealand 1912*
 oil on canvas
 Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki
 gift of Messrs Samuel Vaile & Sons,
 1914

The 'legend' referred to in the painting's title recounts the story retold over many generations of the history of the migration waka (canoes), Tainui and Arawa, that made landfall while the pohutukawa tree was blooming. During their elation of discovering this scarlet foliage of Aotearoa New Zealand, some voyagers flung overboard their kura, the prized red-feather ornaments they had brought from Hawaiki, believing that the tree trunks were filled with the red-feathered bird known as amokura.

The history of early Māori voyages to Aotearoa has gripped writers since the colonial period. Ethnologist Percy Smith condensed genealogies gathered from Māori informants, and helped develop a persistent mythology that a 'great fleet' arrived here about 1350.

Kennett Watkins' painting is a romantic fantasy representing the arrival of Polynesian double-hulled canoes as if they were antipodean versions of historical Egyptian barges. By representing history as a painted and illusory scene, the artist visually mythologises a legend that has already been distorted from the records of Māori oral history.

Christine Hellyar (born 1947 | New Zealand)



Above

Christine Hellyar

Change 2008–16

wooden glazed boxes, found objects, silk, linen, cotton and woollen cloth, various cordage and thread, paint, tapa, paper, feathers, shells, beads, buttons, vellum, ribbons, lace, and artificial flowers
courtesy of the artist, Auckland

For decades, Christine Hellyar has studied the traditions surrounding the trading of goods between people of Pacific heritage and European voyagers and settlers. *Change* utilises the display methods of museum cases to expose the history of collecting, while looking at the sorts of items that were exchanged between indigenous locals and immigrants from the northern hemisphere in the 18th century.

‘These wall mounted glazed boxed works relate principally to the materials brought out to the Pacific by Europeans in the 18th century. The title refers to the physical and nonphysical contacts that were made. There are textiles, beads, buttons, seeds, cordage, paint, paper, canvas, tools and feathers combined in different disciplines. My readings of the diaries of that time show that textiles and feathers and cordage were very desirable. Tapa (bark cloth) and feathers were traded between Island groups so they are included.

There is a very physical quality to the work even though it is behind glass. In some examples it shows how European goods were reused in a new way; they were not just acquired for their own sake. The format is like that of a European museum and the wording is European. There is often an Oceanic context, and an Oceanic aesthetic.’ – Christine Hellyar.

Shane Cotton (born 1964 | New Zealand)



Above

Shane Cotton
Free Fall 2006
 acrylic on canvas
 Chartwell Collection
 Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki
 purchased 2006

Shane Cotton's painting contrasts a plummeting bird and a aeroplane with an aerial view back towards a panoramic shoreline, which is laid out like a navigational topographic profile. The tattooed mokomokai (head), unmistakably dating from the past, raises notions about the historical trade in tattooed heads to Europe and elsewhere and the fact that many of these human remains have subsequently been returned to New Zealand.

Here, New Zealand is looked at from a position far offshore and from a bird's-eye viewpoint high above the sea. The overall themes are of arrivals and departures, the ever-present impact of cultural history and the frequent conversations that occur in New Zealand between past and present.

John Pule (born 1962 | Niue)



Above

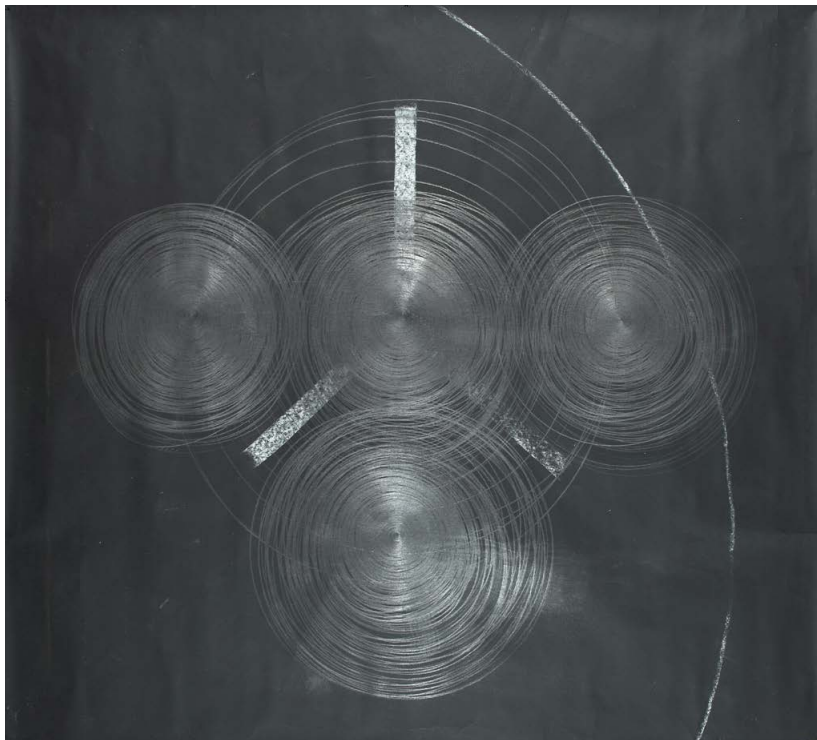
John Pule
Kehe tau hauaga foou (To All New Arrivals) 2007
 enamel, oil, pencil, pastel, oil stick
 and ink on canvas
 Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki
 gift of the Patrons of the Auckland
 Art Gallery, 2007

John Pule's recent painting is his largest work to date. The artist is ambitious in his intention; he addresses global turbulence from an explicitly Pacific viewpoint. Of mural size, the work combines scenes of conflict with many images of human relationships in order to reveal a world that is living in confusion. The painting acts like a huge chart that is mapping a Pacific perspective onto the nature of worldwide reality. Bombs and nuclear testing are contrasted with pollution and global warming. The painting gathers contemporary and historical narratives that express stories about the world by inviting us to visually 'read' what we are seeing. The work's title – *Kehe tau hauaga foou (To All New Arrivals)* – confirms that Pule's narratives are both symbolic and instructive. John Pule looks at our world as a place living with a mythic past juxtaposed with contemporary images of conflict and tumult. He utilises scenes from the New Testament as if they are small vignettes actually occurring today, in our everyday world. Other moments from the past well up into the present moment so as to speak with images from the past. Pule brings together diverse geographies and topographies as if they are physically located at the same place.

Years 3–8

History Sees Division

This grouping of works focuses on an important moment in New Zealand's art history, a time when art and politics collided. More than any historic period to date, in the 1980s themes of division and social unrest appeared through a range of artistic practices. The artworks reflect key historical events, such as the Springbok Tour and, in particular, environmental awareness. But more subtly, artworks reflected divisions of thought – the idea that there are two sides, a 'black' and 'white' aspect to art and societal events.



Left

Philip Dadson
Pacific 3, 2, 1, Zero 1984
 gouache, graphite, chalk
 on paper
 Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki
 gift of the Patrons of the
 Auckland Art Gallery, 2005

Artist and musician Philip Dadson was a founding member of the Scratch Orchestra, established in London by Cornelius Cardew in 1969. Following his return to New Zealand Dadson established From Scratch (1972–2002). This drawing can be viewed as a performance plan for the members of From Scratch to loosely structure their improvisation for *Pacific 3, 2, 1, Zero*. While maintaining Cardew's emphasis on improvisation, democratic structure and graphic scores From Scratch nonetheless located itself fully in the Asia-Pacific, travelling widely throughout the region and responding to issues of political and environmental concern, which were equally vital to Dadson's artistic practice. Dadson introduced a strong emphasis on found sound and constructed instruments.

The first recording of *Pacific 3, 2, 1, Zero*, for example, included tuned PVC pipes, chimes, bamboos, drums, handbells, Jilzira drones, cymbals, voices, trom tubes, spun drones, rattle jackets and biscuit tins. The subject matter responds directly to nuclear testing in the Pacific both musically and visually through the ground plan, which incorporates the international peace sign. The performance which had toured internationally over the previous decade was in 1993 made into a film with collaborator/director Gregor Nicholls and was awarded the Grand Prix in category at Midem, Cannes.

Stuart Page (born 1957 | New Zealand)

Michael Shannon (born 20th century | New Zealand)



Above

Stuart Page, Michael Shannon
Stop the Tour 1981

From: New Zealand—July 22–September 12, 1981
silkscreen prints, artists book with laminated cover
 Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki
 purchased 1984



Top

Stuart Page, Michael Shannon
Headlines 1981



Bottom

Stuart Page, Michael Shannon
Green Police, Christchurch 1981

This highly responsive set of prints was made and exhibited during the Springbok Tour of New Zealand in 1981. Stuart Page had transferred into the photography department at Canterbury University under the influence of dynamic teacher and mentor, American photographer and Pop philosopher Lawrence N Shustak (1926–2003). There his photographic process shifted into colour separation silk-screen printing which allowed him to interfere with the image to dynamic effect. His student work documented the growing landscape of commercial signs and advertising in central Christchurch which he compiled into an artist book to satiric and humorous effect. This shift to colour printmaking represented an end to his black and white photography, which caused something of a stir for the faculty who were not sure how to position this 'new media' of the time. Page created a self-styled vacuum table to allow the larger scale production and exact registration of his print process, which created a crisp alignment of the multiple colour screens.

The 'tour book' was a collaboration with lawyer friend Michael Shannon, and was first shown at the Student Union Building at Canterbury University. They had aimed to create a chronology of the tour protests – the divisive and violent uprisings, and media effects. Incorporating media images alongside Shannon's own photography, a week into the exercise they were told by newspapers that the police had banned the distribution of tour photographs. After the first edition of prints sold out, the Student Union building was turned into a printing studio by Page who set about creating an edition of 100 prints for distribution and later an artist book.

Greer Twiss (born 1937 | New Zealand)



Above

Greer Twiss
No Sun, No Rain, No Radiation 1986
 wood, lead
 Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki
 purchased 1986

The title's words are taken from text often seen printed on the outsides of packing crates, especially those containing fragile material which pass through national borders. Used as an introduction to this collection of domestic items, the language carries a rather more haunting sense. At the time of the work's conception and making, New Zealand's status as a nuclear-free nation was a hot topic, especially after Prime Minister David Lange's Labour government barred nuclear-powered or armed ships from entering New Zealand waters in 1984. As early as 1965 Twiss had addressed the nuclear issue in his strongly figurative sculptural language, but in this installation, made for the Auckland Art Gallery's sculpture survey, *Aspects of New Zealand Art: Sculpture 1* (1986), the work has a highly abstract yet personal tone. Around the time this work was created, Twiss's studio and many family possessions had been destroyed by a fire. Twiss incorporated into the artwork small remains he had found at the site of the fire using a direct casting process. About this he said, 'I like to allude to illusion with the props of reality', and here the remnants of the fire are metaphoric tools to explore the broader social implications of nuclear warfare and the relatively improbable idea of shelter from its global reach. The work incorporates children's toys, even artworks, a suggestive tripod (tool for viewing), adjacent to an impossibly small and flimsy tent composed of lead sheeting.

Ralph Hotere (1931–2013 | New Zealand)



Painted in protest at a proposal to build an aluminium smelter which could destroy the ecology surrounding the artist's neighbourhood, the Aramoana series includes black paintings on windows, large canvases, prints and drawings as well as reliefs on New Zealand's own vernacular building material, corrugated iron.

When someone hurled a paint bomb at the sign that marked the smelter's potential building site, Hotere incorporated the graphic effect into his work. Aramoana (pathway to the sea) is visually translated into a falling white streak of paint, and a lament is signalled with the muted stencilled letters.

Left

Ralph Hotere
Aramoana, 1980-83
 acrylic and enamel on
 corrugated iron and wood
 Chartwell Collection, Auckland
 Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki
 purchased 1984

To All New Arrivals

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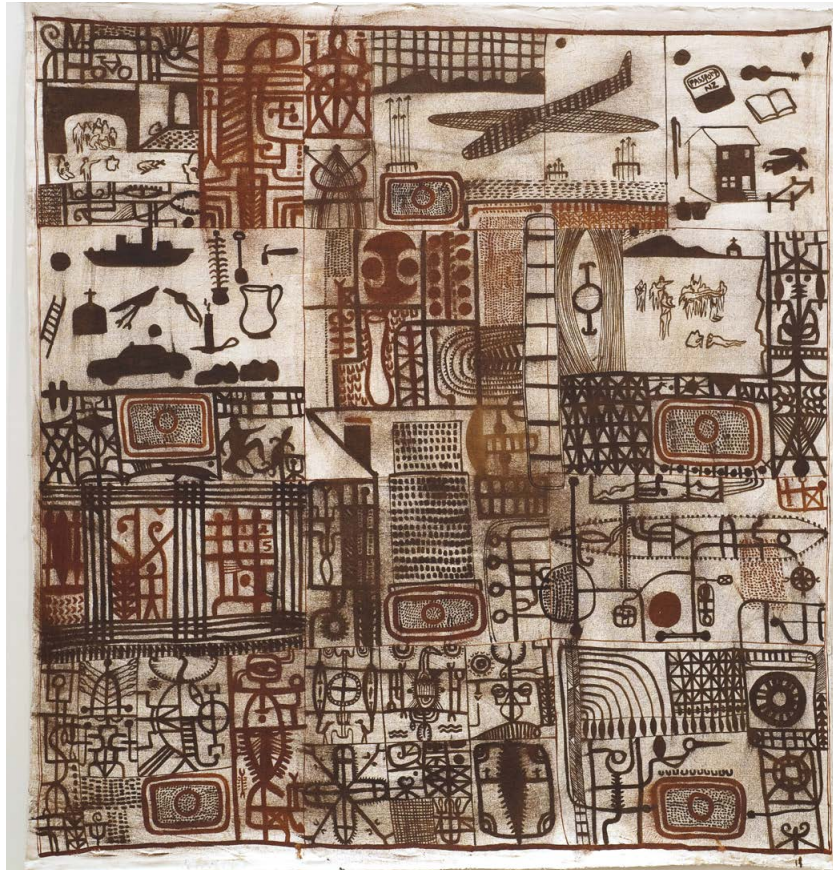
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Studio

John Pule (born 1962 | Niue)



Left

John Pule
Take These With You When You Leave 1998
 oil on canvas
 Chartwell Collection
 Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki
 purchased 1998

By combining Polynesian motifs with European silhouettes and designs, John Pule creates a highly personal image that works like a painted memory of the experience of emigrating from Niue to New Zealand. Here, identity is a product of exploration both within one's own memory and through reflecting on familial history. 'What is perhaps most remarkable about John Pule's paintings – that really has no precedent in either traditional Polynesian art or in modern western genres – is their fusion of cosmology, cartography, biography and corporeality.'

John Pule's art addresses issues of cultural identity and tribal belonging. Born in the village of Liku, Niue he immigrated to New Zealand at the age of two. His interest in the history and mythology of Niue has developed into a global response to the Pacific condition. By looking beyond colonialism and into the legacies of Christianity, he mixes up traditions in order to envisage the future of Polynesia within New Zealand.

The burnt umber silhouettes of the ship Maui Pomare and a New Zealand passport, small relics symbolising John Pule's childhood emigration from Niue, contrast areas of pattern and traditional motifs.

In the early 1990s, inspired by 19th-century hiapo (bark cloth), Pule began using a grid to construct map like paintings, charting his memories and family history. Pule recalls, 'The energy of hiapo has affected my art. It deals with identity and migration, colonisation or people, destruction of indigenous practices. It conjures up past stories that live in the images.'