

Ed Ruscha (born 1937)
United States of America

Love Chief 1986

acrylic on canvas
Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki
purchased 1989

Ko te tino kaupapa ki a Ed Ruscha ko te reo kai parāoa o Amerika, inarā ko tō Los Angeles. Kua whakahurihia e ia ōna āhua takiraha me ōna kupu kia toi Arotini tāera Tai Hauāuru kē. He paki whaiāipo nō LA te *Love Chief*, 1986, e tirohia ana mai i te rererangi, ā, he mahi toi nō tētahi rōpū i oti i a Ruscha e whakaatu ana i tētahi koromeke rama tiriti e whakakā nei, e hua nei i te tāonenui o ngā anahera, he mutunga kore te pūkoni, te kauruku whakahāngai. I tēnei mahi toi kei te whāwhā a Ruscha i te toi tahanga taetahi kōangiāngi, kua peita tuaruatia ki te tukutuku tingotingo wera me ngā taukapo kua paraihe kōkōhautia. Ka whakauruhia tētahi kupu angarua ā-tuhinga ōpaki: ‘Love Chief’. Pērā i ngā mihimihi whakatuwhera o te kiriata – he haukura e rewarewa ana i te rangi o California – he ngāwari, he whakapoapoa ngā kupu a Ruscha, ānō nei he kōhimuhimu patipati a te māngai reo irirangi i te atapō. Ko tā te ōrangihiko he tāpiri i te wairua matapōuri. I te tau 1986, ka mahi a Ruscha i roto i tētahi whare waka rererangi i taea ai e ia te whakamahi i te whakatakotoranga takiraha; nā reira i miramirahia ai tōna rata ki te kiriata me te noir. I te whakamahi ia i ngā tikanga paraihe kōkōhau; ka hua ko te rerehua tino kiripūtauhuka e rite ana ki te kiriata. Kei te noho a *Love Chief* ki waenganui i te atarua me te mato, ka mutu he kōnanutanga rawe rawa atu i te arotini, te tahanga, te tuhinga kupu.

American vernacular, and particularly that of Los Angeles, is Ed Ruscha’s subject of desire. He has turned its vistas and words into a West Coast variation of Pop art. *Love Chief*, 1986 is an LA love story viewed from an airplane, and belongs to a group of works Ruscha made that suggest a festoon of streetlights that illuminate and delineate the city of angels as it sprawls and cross hatches endlessly for miles. In this work Ruscha tinkers with cool monochromatic minimalism, overpainting it with a grid of airbrushed hot spots and twinkles. He then introduces a word play in informal script: ‘Love Chief’. Similar to the opening credits of a film – a neon floating in the California sky – Ruscha’s words sound cruisy and sexy, like a low come-on from a late-night radio host. The Prussian blue lends it a kind of melancholy. In 1986 Ruscha was working in a large hangar shed, which allowed him to move into a bigger, often more panoramic format that emphasised his attachment to cinema and noir. He was using airbrush techniques that produced a particularly celluloid aesthetic akin to film. *Love Chief* lives between the blur and the crisp and perfectly combines Ruscha’s pop, minimal text pursuits.

Rebecca Swan (born 1968)
New Zealand

Sean and Lisa 1999

from: *Assume Nothing* 1995–2004
silver gelatin selenium toned
Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki
gift of the artist, 2019

E whakaatu ana a *Sean and Lisa*, 1999 i tētahi tokorua e awhi ana, otirā he whakaahua o te mana o te aroha. He wāhanga te whakaahua nei o ngā kohinga a Rebecca Swan a *Assume Nothing*, 1995–2004, e tūhura ana i ngā āhuatanga, ngā tuatinitanga me ngā kotahitanga o te tuakiri ira.

E ai ki a Sean:

I taku tūtaki i a Lisa, i rongo wawe au i te hāneaneatanga, nā te mea i mōhio au he irawhiti hoki ia. He wahine ki te tāne ahau, ā, he tāne ki te wahine ia. I tīmata tā māua mahi kairau hei takirua. Nā, ka tīmata māua ki te whakangungu i ngā mahi ka mahia e māua me te kiritaki. Te mutunga atu i tohutohu māua i a māua me pēhea te whāwhā i tētahi atu. I rawe tā māua pō e rāwekeweke haere ana.

Showing a couple in a warm embrace, *Sean and Lisa*, 1999 is an image of tender power. The photograph is part of Rebecca Swan’s series *Assume Nothing*, 1995–2004, which explores the nuances, complexities and intimacies of gender identity.

Sean says:

When I met Lisa I immediately felt comfortable with her because I knew she was transsexual too. I am female to male and she is male to female. We started doing sex work together as a double. So we started practising what we would do with a client. We ended up telling each other how we’d like to be touched. We had a pretty good night playing around.

Studio of Antonio Canova

(late 18th–early 19th century)

Italy

Venus Italica 1802 {copy circa 1812}

marble

Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki

gift of Moss Davis, 1931



Kei te whakakīhia e Canova tōna *Venus Italica*, 1802/1812 ki te wairua o te oranga, ki te whakaari, ki te hāngaitanga onāianeī. Kei te hunaia e Venus tōna kiri kautanga ki te taora nā te mea kua whakatumekehia, kua whakapōreareatia i tāna horoi tūmataiti. Kei te titiro whakamuri ānō nei ka wero ia i te kaimaoho. Ehara i te ata e kitea nuitia ai mōna e puta mai ana i te moana; kei te *bagno* kē, e tohutoroa ana e te tūru rūma horoi whai waewae ngeru. I tonoa tā Canova *Venus Italica* hei rīwhi i te *Venus d’Medici* rongonui i kahakina ai e Napoleon i te tau 1802, ā, ka haria ki te Louvre (kua whakahokia ināianeī). Kei roto i te tauira Medici he Venus takapū ake, māhaki ake, he aihe kei tōna taha e tohutoro ana i ngā kōrero pūrākau mō tōna whānautanga i te moana. He mea rerekē te whakakorenga a Canova i te pūrākau mō Diana e whakatumekehia ana e te kaiaru a Actaeon, ka aro kē ki te Venus whakaraerae. Tēnā pea ka arotahi a Canova ki a Diana hei whakarite i tētahi anō tono, te āhua nei ko tāna *Venus Vitrix*. Ko tōna hiahia he tārai i tōna kaitono a Pauline Bonaparte hei atua takakau, heoi ko tāna tono kē he tārai i te atua whakawai, kiri kau a Venus – te atua mō te aroha.

Canova imbues his *Venus Italica*, 1802/1812 with a sense of life, drama and contemporary relatability. Venus, with her bath sheet scooped up to conceal her nakedness has been surprised and interrupted from her private toilette. She looks over her shoulder as if to encounter the intruder. The fact that she is in her *bagno* and not in her usual iconography emerging from the sea, is indicated by the small paw-footed bathroom stool. Canova’s *Venus Italica* was commissioned to replace the famous *Venus d’Medici* seized by Napoleon in 1802 and removed to the Louvre (now returned). In the Medici version a stouter and more stolid Venus is accompanied by a dolphin to indicate her original mythical sea birth. Curiously, Canova has collapsed the myth of Diana, surprised by the hunter Actaeon, with his version of the vulnerable Venus. Perhaps Canova focused on Diana in preparation for another commission, likely his *Venus Vitrix*. He had hoped to sculpt his patron Pauline Bonaparte as the virgin goddess, but she requested to be a seductive, nude Venus – the goddess of love.

Walter Dendy Sadler (1854–1923)

England

Married 1896

oil on canvas

Mackelvie Trust Collection

Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki

Ko tētahi kaupapa i rorotu haere ai i te wā o Te Pirinihi me te wā o Wikipitōria i Ingarangi, he tāne pīkaokao, he aesthete, e kitea ai ngā taitama e whai ana i ngā tuhinga a te kaihuritao kaupapa hinengaro, te kaituhi, te kaiarohaehae toi, a Walter Pater. Nā Walter Dendy Sandler i hanga ngā peita paki e kī ana ki ngā tohu e whakaatu ai i ngā whakamahukitanga me ngā tīwhiri ki ngā tikanga huhua e huna ana ki mua i te aroaro. Kei te kitea atu, nā runga i te ingoa, ko *Married*, 1896 he takirua whakamā, e noho ana ki te kokonga māra putiputi. Heoi, kei te utaina e Sandler te peita nei ki ngā tīwhiri, ki te taunakitanga e whakaatu nei i te whakawehenga tē taea te whakatika. Ahakoa te huhua o ngā tikanga o te reo ā-tinana, tē taea te karo i te tikanga o ngā pukapuka kirikau e uhi nei i te ure o te taitama, i te pūkura ngohe kei te papamua, te honu e whakaeneene ana, ngā putiputi paroparo kei runga i ngā turi o te hoa kōhine. Kua auhi tōna ngākau. Kei te aronui kē ia ki te toikupu, ki te whakahuata, e ai ki ōna kākahu rerehua o taua wā. Ko ia te momo i whakahorihoritia e W T Courthope i roto i āna tuhinga, ‘kei te whākorekorehia ngā matenui whakawahine e kōkirihi ai e Mr Pater, te māngai o tō tātou “ahurea” toi.’ I te pakari haeretanga o te matatika whiwhita, ka huri te whakawahine hei kupu huna mō te tāne mate tāne.

The cult of the dandy, or aesthete, which grew in popularity during the Regency and Victorian eras in England saw young men follow the example and writings of philosopher, writer and art critic, Walter Pater. Walter Dendy Sandler created narrative paintings full of symbols that suggest asides and clues to multiple meanings hidden in plain sight. Ostensibly, as the title indicates, *Married*, 1896 is about a shy young couple sitting in a garden nook. But Sandler loads this work with inklings and evidence that suggest an irreconcilable schism. If their body language can be read ambiguously there is little uncertainty about the leather-bound books that cover the young man’s masculinity, the limp cock in the foreground, the dawdling tortoise and the wilting bouquet in the lap of the young wife. She is distraught. He is devoted to his poetry and the pursuit of refinement exemplified by his modish attire. He is that type that W T Courthope denounced when he wrote, ‘we repudiate the effeminate desires which Mr Pater, the mouthpiece of our artistic “culture”, would encourage in society.’ As the Victorian era progressed its zealous morality, effeminacy became code for homosexuality.

Alfred Woolmer (1805–1892)
England

The Proposal (Reflections in Shadows) circa 1875

oil on canvas

Mackelvie Trust Collection

Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki

bequest of James Tannock Mackelvie, 1885

Hei keipeita tōnui o Ingarangi a Alfred Joseph Woolmer i whakamihia mō āna kāpeka pātītī whakaingoingo me ngā whakamāoritanga ā-whakaari o ngā kōrero a Shakespeare, me ngā kōrero hītori hoki. Kia tae ki te 60 tau te pakeke, kua whakaaturia e ia ngā peita nui ake i te 400 ki ētahi wānanga toi o Piritana. He whēnakonako, he toi pūkare hoki a, *The Proposal (Reflections in Shadows)*, nō mua i te 1875 otirā koirā tonu te āhua o ngā mahi a Woolmer: e kārohirohi ana tētahi rangi o te aho horahora me te kapua pārū ki runga i te takutai ā-papa pounamu nei, otirā e whakapūaho ana i te kāpeka, ā, e tino matauri ana i te tokorua. Ka awhi te tokorua ipo i a rāua e whakatata mai ana, e hīkoi ngātahi ana hoki.

Alfred Joseph Woolmer was a prolific British painter who was praised for his romantic pastoral scenes and dramatic interpretations of Shakespearean and historical narratives. By the age of 60, he had exhibited over 400 paintings at various British art academies. Atmospheric and evocative, *The Proposal (Reflections in Shadows)*, circa 1875 is characteristic of Woolmer's style: a sky of diffused light and sultry cloud shimmers on the glass-like shore, dramatically silhouetting the couple. The lovers embrace as they walk towards us, stepping forward in unison.

Christian Rohlfs (1849–1938)
Germany

Kleines Paar (Little Couple) circa 1915

woodcut

Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki

Ko Christian Rohlfs tētahi o ngā tino ringatoi o te Die Brücke (The Bridge), he rōpū o ngā ringatoi Toi Pūkare Tiamana. He mea whakatū i te 1905, i whanaketia e Die Brücke tētahi momo whakaatatanga tikanga hou tūwhana, e awhi ana i te āhua tūturu-kore me ngā tae muramura ki te hanga i ngā kāpeka kukume pūkare. *Kleines Paar (Little Couple)*, i mua i te 1915 e whakapupū ana i te wairua harikoa – ko ngā kōpiko o te tinana o te wahine e whakaatu ana i te nekeneke, te kanikani pea, otirā he kaupapa auau i roto i ngā mahi a Rohlfs. Ka uru te aho mai i te taha whakarunga o te taha mauī, e tūhura ana i te tinana o te wahine, i a ia e takawiri ana kia anga atu ki te kaimātakitaki. He pērā anō te anga o te tinana o te tāne, i a ia e kori ngātahi ana ki ngā nekehanga takawiri a te wahine.

I muri i te aranga ake o te Pāti Nazi hei mana nui i ngā tau o te 1930, I kīa ai te Toi Pūkare Tiamana hei toi kino ki te whenua o Tiamani, ā, i te tau 1937 i uru ngā mahi a Rohlfs ki te whakaaturanga *Degenerate Art*, he whakaaturanga o ngā mahi toi i murua, he mea whakarite e te Pāti Nazi hei whakaako i te iwi tūmatanui ki te āhua o ngā toi nei otirā ‘kua pirau ngā tikanga’. He whā rau, tekau mā rua ngā mahi a Rohlfs i murua i ngā whare taonga Tiamana, ā, kāore ia i whakaaetia ki te peita, te whakaatu rānei. I mate ia i roto i tana taiwhanga i Hagen i te 8 o Hānuere 1938.

Christian Rohlfs was one of the most significant artists of the Die Brücke (The Bridge), a group of German Expressionist artists. Established in 1905, Die Brücke developed a radical anti-traditional form of representation, embracing non-naturalistic forms and vivid colour to create emotionally charged scenes. *Kleines Paar (Little Couple)*, circa 1915 evokes a sense of revelry – the curves of the woman’s form suggest movement, perhaps dancing, a recurring theme in Rohlfs’ work. Light enters from the top left to reveal the woman’s back as she twists to face the viewer. Angled similarly, the man moves in unison with her.

After rising to power in Germany in the 1930s, the Nazi Party declared that Expressionist art was degenerate and hostile to the state. In 1937, Rohlfs’ works were included in the *Degenerate Art* exhibition, a display of confiscated artworks organised by the Nazi Party to educate the public about the artworks’ ‘moral decay’. Four hundred and twelve of Rohlfs’ artworks were confiscated from German museums and he was forbidden from painting and exhibiting. He died in his studio in Hagen, 8 January 1938.

Marti Friedlander (1928–2016)

New Zealand, England

Alf and May Coppel 1969 2000

gelatin silver print, toned with gold

Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki

gift of Marti Friedlander, with assistance from the Elise Maurant Bequest, 2001

He mea kapo ake i runga o te Tiriti o Kiwitea i Sandringham, Tāmaki Makaurau, e whakaatu ana tēnei whakaahua a Marti Friedlander i a Alf rāua ko May Coppel e tū ana i waho i tō rātou kāinga kāwanatanga o ngā tau 1940. I timata i te tau 1905, i whakawhānui tere i te hōtaka whare kāwanatanga o Aotearoa mai i 1937 ki 1940. I whakaohohotia mā te hiahia ki te whakarato i ngā kāinga ā-tāone me te tiaki i ngā hāpori mā ngā whānau, i whakaata te hōtaka i ngā whakapono o te kāwanatanga o taua wā, arā, ko te whānau te ‘pūtake o te motu’.

Ko te tokorua kei tēnei whakaahua, a Alf rāua ko May, e whakatauirā ana i te hononga mauroa, tētahi āhautanga pea ka wawata te rangatahi i te Marcus Stone *Her First Love Letter*, 1889, ki te whakaatu ake nei.

Taken on Kiwitea Street in Sandringham, Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland, this picture by documentary photographer Marti Friedlander shows Alf and May Coppel standing outside their 1940s state house. Originating in 1905, New Zealand’s state housing programme expanded rapidly from 1937 to 1940. Motivated in part by a desire to provide suburban homes and nurture communities for families, the programme reflected the then-government’s belief that the nuclear family was the ‘foundation of the nation’.

The couple depicted in this photograph, Alf, and May, exemplify a long life in partnership – perhaps something the young protagonist in Marcus Stone’s *Her First Love Letter*, 1889, on display nearby, aspires to.

Marcus Stone (1840–1921)

England

Her First Love Letter 1889

oil on canvas

Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki

gift of Moss Davis, 1930

He wawe te piki haere o te angitu o Marcus Clayton Stone RA nā runga i te tautoko a Charles Dickens, nāna ngā kupu whakamihi mō te ‘kaha me te pito mata whakamīharo’ o Stone. Nā te tino whakapono a Dickens ki te pūkenga o Stone, nāna i whakapakepake tōna kaitā pukapuka ki te whakamahi i a ia hei kaitā pikitia māna. Nā reira i tā ai a Stone ngā pikitia mā ētahi atu kaituhi tae atu ki a Anthony Trollope, he kaituhi i whakamahia nuitia e ia te ‘reta’ hei nuka hanga kōrero ki te kōkiri kaupapa, ki te aihe i te tāhū kōrero. Kei roto i te *Her First Love Letter*, 1889 kei te whakaaturia e Stone tētahi kōhine e pānui ana i te tuhipoka a tētahi whaiāipo. Kei te uraura te kanohi, ko te whakaihihi ki ngā kōrero te take. Kei tōna taha tētahi wahine, e ai ki tōna āhua, kua mōhio kē ia ki te tere o te tinei haere o tēnei mea te ngākau whiwhita. Ko te ngeru kei raro i te tēpu he tīwhiri ki te nuka pea a te wahine, ko ia pea tētahi e mārāma nei ki te mahi tinihanga a te kaituhi.

Ko Marcus Stone, ‘te ringa peita i ngā whaiāipo’, he ringa toi mana nui i roto i te kohikohinga a Toi o Tāmaki. Ko ia te kaikōwhiri mā te Mackelvie Trust, ā, nā tāna whakapau kaha i tukuna ki Aotearoa ngā mahi toi ‘kakare’, ka mutu ko aua mahi toi he wāhanga whakahirahira o te kohikohinga mō ngā wā o mua.

Marcus Clayton Stone RA gained success in his early career aided by the patronage of Charles Dickens, who praised Stone’s ‘remarkable power and promise’. Dickens was so taken with Stone’s talent that he persuaded his publisher to commission him as his illustrator. This led to Stone drawing stories by other writers and, importantly, Anthony Trollope, whose plots frequently used the ‘letter’ as a narrative ploy to turn events and propel plot. With *Her First Love Letter*, 1889 Stone depicts a young woman receiving a suitor’s note. She is flushed with the excitement of its contents. Looking on is a slightly older woman whose countenance conveys the knowledge that passion soon wanes. The cat under the table hints at the possibility of deception on the part of the older woman, who perhaps knows the fickle nature of the writer.

Marcus Stone, the ‘painter of sweethearts’, also made an important contribution to the Gallery’s collection. As selector for the Mackelvie Trust he was responsible for ‘sentimental’ works being sent to New Zealand which form an important foundation of the historical collection.

Pat Hanly (1932–2004)

New Zealand

Lovers 1959

monoprint

Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki

gift of the artist, 1990

I Rānana a Pat rāua Gil Hanly e noho ana, ā, i mārena i te tau i mua i te hanganga o tēnei tānga papatahi o te aroha tikanga-kore. I te noho rēti-kore te tokorua i tētahi whare papangararo, e mahi ana, e penapena ana hoki ki te noho i roto i tētahi atu whare pai ake me ō rātou hoa. I tūpato te whakahaere a Hanly i ngā pūtea taiwhanga, ahakoa i peita ia, i aro ia ki te whakapaunga o ngā tikanga toi pēnei i te toi Pūkare Tūrehurehu, otirā me nui ngā kānawehi me ngā taiwhanga kia pai ai te makamaka peita, ā, kāore i tika ki runga i te kānawehi i ētahi wā. I taea e Hanly te hanga tānga papatahi mō te kore utu i te Royal Academy, ā, ahakoa tikanga waiwai tērā momo whakaputanga mahi, i taea tonu e ia te tūhono me te whakaatu herekore i a ia anō.

Ko te kī a Hanly i a ia e whakamārama ana i te hononga i waenga i wana momo papatahi me ngā peita:

He nui aku mahi peita, he rerekē mai i ngā mahi whakaingoingō (ngā mea e rewa ana i te rangi) tae atu ki ngā hanganga pango. I roto i ētahi o ngā momo papatahi tūtata nei, i taea angitutia e au te whakakotahi i ngā mea e rua. Ka whanake pea tēnei ki tētahi mea hira ā tōna wā.

– He kōrero i roto i a Russell Hanley, *Pat Hanly: A New Zealand Artist* (1989), p 73.

Pat and Gil Hanly were based in London and had married the year before this monoprint of bohemian love was produced. The couple were living rent-free in a basement flat, working and saving money to live in more adequate lodgings with friends. Hanly was careful with his studio budget and although he painted, he was critical of the expense of art styles like Abstract Expressionism, which required large canvases and studios to hurl swathes of paint that didn't always hit the canvas. Hanly could produce monoprints for free at the Royal Academy and although this humble mode of production was a necessity, it also connected with him and he felt able to freely express himself. In describing the relationship between his monotypes and paintings, Hanly said:

I have quite a lot of painting together, it varies from romantic subjects (figures floating about landscapes) to black constructions. In some recent monotypes I have successfully combined the two. This may develop into something quite important eventually.

– Quoted in Russell Hanley, *Pat Hanly: A New Zealand Artist* (1989), p 73.

William Frith (1819–1909)

England

A Sketch: The Proposal date unknown

oil on cardboard

Mackelvie Trust Collection, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki

bequest of James Tannock Mackelvie, 1885

Ko āna whakaahua takiraha pāpori rongonui, he whakautiuti te whakarite, he kī tonu ki ngā tāngata o te porihanga Wikitōria, ka pērā hoki te whakariterite a William Frith i tāna pakihi toi hei waka e kawe ai i te pānga ataata, i te rorotu ki te kaimātakitaki. Kitea ai i roto i ngā taipitopito kōrero o tāna haukiri, he tangata e mārama pai ai ki te māketete, e mūrere ana ki ngā hiahia o te kiritaki, e mataara ana ki te wairua, ki te hā o te wā. Ko te kakare he kaupapa nui i te wā o Wikitōria, he āhuatanga i arahina ai e Kuini Wikitora rāua ko tōna hoa rangatira a Albert; he rawe ki a rāua ngā kaupapa mate kanehe, kaupapa whakawhaiāipo, e kawea ana e te ariari pū a te Tiamana. He pai ki a Frith te kaupapa ‘he tono’, ā, e toru ngā peita, he nui ake rānei, e whakamau nei i taua ingoa. Ko tā tēnei huahua he whakaatu i tētahi kōhine taiwhenua rāua ko te whaiāipo. Kei te whakamahia e Frith tētahi o ngā tāera hanganga e pai ai ki a ia; kei te titiro te kōhine ki te kaimātakitaki ānō nei he whakatenetene nōna, kei te aro kē te whaiāipo ki ōna whakararo, te tuarā ki te kaimātakitaki, he nanakia te mahi. Ehara i te mea he mahi kino kei te haere, heoi kei te whakamātautauria ōna kaha, ā, he āhuatanga e kitea nuitia ai i te wā o Wikitōria.

Like his celebrated and fastidiously arranged social panoramas populated with people of Victorian society, William Frith similarly organised his artistic business as outputs for visual effect and audience appeal. From his highly detailed autobiography we gain a sense of man acutely aware of the market, astute about patrons, alert to the mood and tastes of his time. Sentiment was high on the Victorian agenda, led in no small part by Queen Victoria and her consort Albert, whose sensibilities were attracted to the slightly schmaltzy and romantic with a crisp, German precisionism. Frith was fond of the theme of ‘a proposal’ and there are at least three pictures recorded by this title. This sketch shows a moment between a country lass and suitor. In a compositional format often employed by Frith, the lass looks out to the viewer as if to demur while her suitor invades her space from below, with back turned in a roguish act of clandestine encounter. She is not in peril, but her virtue is being tested, which was a common Victorian conundrum.

Thomas Cook (1744–1818)
William Hogarth (1697–1764)
England

Marriage à la Mode 1796

steel engravings
Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki
purchased 1955

Ko tā William Hogarth raupapatanga a *Marriage à la Mode*, 1796 he kōrero matatika, he kōrero pūhohe mō te kaumingomingotanga o ‘te aroha’ e nuku haere ana mai i te tomo ki te moe pūremu tōtōā, tae noa ki tōna mutunga he kōhuru, te whakamomori a te kōhine mārena. E ono ngā rīanga o te raupapatanga taketake, kei konei he whā kē. Ko tā te rangatūtanga mua-kiriata he tuku i a Hogarth kia whakaatu i te kūnakunaku haere o tō rāua ao ā-kāinga hei tohu i te tanuku o te mārena, ka mutu he tīwhiri huhua ki te mahi pūremu a te tokorua – hei tauira ko te hora haere o te koha pākewakewa kei runga i te tāne. Ko te wā Rococo he wā mō ngā whakaniko whakapaipai, he wā mō te mōtekoteko hoki. Ko tā Hogarth ‘Modern Moral Subjects’ he āhuatanga matarua mō te whakapati me te whakatūpato: nā te whakaheke i te tangata whai rawa hei kaihāpai ō, he whakawā i taua momo kei te haere. Ko Hogarth he tangata Ingarihi nō Hanover, ā, ko ōna hoa he hunga i whakapeto kaha ki te hanga i tētahi porihanga i runga i ngā uara whai tikanga, uara manawanui, uara e tiaki ai tētahi i tētahi.

William Hogarth’s series *Marriage à la Mode*, 1796 is a moral tale and a satire on the pathology of ‘love’ as it progresses from transacted betrothment to feckless debauchery and finally, fatally, murder and the suicide of the young bride. The original series has six panels, and here we have four. The pre-cinematic serialisation allowed Hogarth to show the gradual domestic chaos that acts as a symptom of the breakdown of marriage, and a vast range of clues to the couple’s infidelity – the enlarging syphilis blemish on the young husband, for instance. The Rococo period was one of finery, but also of salaciousness. Hogarth’s ‘Modern Moral Subjects’ plays a double game of titillation and caution: in bringing the well-to-do down to size a class commentary is at work. Hogarth was a Hanoverian Englishman and mixed with those who sought and strived to create a society based on more rational, tolerant and humanitarian values.