

Patrick Caulfield (1936–2005)

England

Curtain and Bottle 1973

screenprint

Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki

gift of the Institute of Contemporary Prints, London, 1976

I roto i te *Curtain and Bottle*, 1973, ka hangaia e te ārai wini kapakapa, e te taeka aho, e ngā ātārangi hōhonu, tētahi wairua porehu ānō nei he kiriata-noir. Ka hopukia kahatia te aronga o te kaimātakitaki e te mōhio a Patrick Caulfield ki te tuku i te poho tārewa mā te huarahi horehore noa. Karekau he kauruku, karekau he whakatauirā. Kua whakapāpakuhia ngā mea kia tata tonu he kauwhata whakaahua, ā, kua tāhuahuatia ki ngā rārangi matotoru, pango hoki. Nā te āta ako i ngā peita kaupapa rō-whare i whanake ai i a Caulfield taua tāera tahanga. E ai ki te Kaihautū o mua o te Whare Whakairi Toi o Tate a Nicholas Serota, he ‘ringa toi matatau’ ia e mōhio pai nei ka pēhea e tiaho iho ai te aho ki runga i ngā mea.

In *Curtain and Bottle*, 1973 the blowing curtain, shaft of light and deep shadows create a film-noir air of mystery. The scene is doubly intriguing for the way Patrick Caulfield infuses a sense of suspense using the barest of means. He makes no attempt at shading or modelling. Objects are reduced almost to the point of pictographs and rendered in thick black lines. Caulfield developed his pared-down style through close study of paintings of interiors. Former Tate Gallery Director Nicholas Serota described him as a ‘knowing artist’, one who understands deeply how light falls against objects.

Bessie Christie (1904-1983)

New Zealand

Flowers, Fruit and Glass circa 1950

oil on board

Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki

purchased 2016

Kei runga ake i te whīwhiwhitanga o ngā huarākau me te papanga e tōpaki ana, ko tā ngā piko auau he kukume i tō tirohanga huri noa i te toi. Ehara i te mea he mana nui ake tō tētahi i tō tētahi. Ko te mea kē, kei roto te manawataki o te *Flowers, Fruit and Glass*, circa 1950 i te āta whakaritenga o ngā āhua me ngā tae. Kua tutuki te toi peita i ngā tāhina mātaratara o te kōwhai me te kahurangi, ka mutu ko ngā waiporoporo me ngā hāura he punga mā tēnei toi. I mōhiotia a Bessie hei Bombardier Christie i te Pakanga o Te Ao Tuarua, ā, he kaitaraiwa ia i te Rōpū Wāhine Whaitaua o Te Ope Kātua, he ringa peita rongonui hoki i Tāmaki-makau-rau i ngā tau 1940, 1950. I tētahi taha ko āna mahi toi he kaupapa mō te tangata, he tirohanga o te ao hurihuri, i tētahi taha he ata ōkawa, he ata kiato, pēnei i tēnei nā.

Hovering above the tangle of fruit and fabric, repeated curves draw your eye in and around the composition. No object is prioritised over another. Instead, in *Flowers, Fruit and Glass*, circa 1950 finds its rhythm in the careful arrangement of shapes and colour. Shared icy tones of yellow and blue tie the painting together, while the earthy purples and browns function like anchors in the composition. Known as Bombardier Christie during World War II, Bessie was a driver in the Women's Auxiliary Army Corps and a prominent painter in Auckland during the 1940s and 50s. In her practice she balanced an interest in people and depicting scenes of contemporary life, with more formal and tightly composed images like the one seen here.

Patrick Hayman (1915–1988)

England

Abstract with a Bottle 1943

oil on board

Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki

gift of Colin McCahon

He ātaahua te hūmārie o *Abstract with a Bottle*, 1943, me āna hanga ngāwari, hanga paraha, e piri tahi ana ānō nei he wāhanga pānga hono. Ahakoa te māori o te kaupapa, arā, he pātara kei runga i te tēpu, e tōpunitia ana te peita a Patrick Hayman ki te tōrangapū. He Hūrae a Hayman, ā, he kārangirangi tōna ao hei manene whakauruuru i Aotearoa i ngā tau 1940. Ko ōna wheako hei rāwaho te toki i tārai ai i ōna whakaaro mō te toi hei mahi whakahoro i ngā raru o te ao. E ai ki a Hayman, ‘Ka aupēhia te ringa toi, ka raru te mana o te tangata; ka herekore te ringa toi, ka tīwhera te ao’. Ko te *Abstract with a Bottle* he wero ki te status quo: i hāngaia e te ‘rāwaho’ ki te tāera taiao-kore i te wā ko te peita taiao e rangiwhāwhā nei te kitea i te ao toi o konei. Nō reira ko te peita nei he tohu mō tētahi hītori toi kē atu nō Aotearoa, arā ko tā Hayman: ‘Kei te raru [tonu] a Aotearoa i tāna kaiponu Tino Rangatiratanga, me ōna pōhēhētanga e pā ana ki te tino tikanga o te mahi toi i Aotearoa’.

In the refreshingly modest *Abstract with a Bottle*, 1943, simple flat shapes lock together like pieces of a puzzle. Although the subject of a bottle on a table may seem harmless, Patrick Hayman’s painting is steeped in politics. Hayman was Jewish and lived an unsettled existence as a cosmopolitan émigré in New Zealand during the 1940s. His experience of feeling like an outsider shaped his views on art as a liberatory activity. ‘Whenever artists are oppressed freedom falters, where they are free civilisation expands,’ stated Hayman. *Abstract with a Bottle* was a challenge to the status quo: it was made by a ‘foreigner’ in a non-naturalistic style at a time when landscape painting dominated the local art scene. The painting, then, is emblematic of an alternative New Zealand art history, as Hayman once declared: ‘New Zealand is [still] suffering from Nationalism and a false interpretation of New Zealand art’.

Frances Hunt (1890–1981)

New Zealand

Still Life date unknown

oil on board

Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki

gift of Mrs A J C Fisher, 1951

Ko tā Frances Hunt i mua i te ako toi turua, he mahi ahuwhehua. Ka kitea ōna pūkenga toi i tōna tamarikitanga, heoi ka waiho ki rahaki hei taunaki i tōna whānau. I te Pakanga o te Ao 1 ko ia anake te tamāhine e ora tonu ana, ā, i te wehenga o ōna tungāne ka waiho māna te pāmu e whakahaere. He ākonga pakeke ia i te Elam School of Art i te tau 1932, te āhua nei i reira hangaia ai te *Still Life*. Ki ētahi he maroke pea te toi nei, heoi he wero tonu i mua i te aroaro o te ringa peita: ka pēhea te whakaatu i ngā kōripi aho i runga i te pātara kōata, ka pēhea te tītohu i te hōhonutanga kei roto i te kapu, ka pēhea te whakaari i te kōtakataka mōhanihani o ngā hēki.

Before studying fine art, Frances Hunt worked on the land. She put her early artistic promise to one side in favour of family responsibilities. As the only surviving daughter, and in the absence of her brothers, Hunt had to run the farm during World War I. She enrolled as a mature student at the Elam School of Art in 1932, which is where *Still Life* was likely created. The work may seem prosaic, but it would have provided a range of challenges for the painter: how to capture fine slivers of light on the glass bottle, how to show the depth inside the teacup, and how to capture the perfectly smooth roundness of the eggs.

Frances Hunt (1890–1981)

New Zealand

Composition circa 1949

oil on board

Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki

purchased 1990

I whakahouhia te tāera toi a Frances Hunt e tōna akoranga ki te Elam School of Art i ngā tau tīmatanga o 1930. I te mutunga o tōna akoranga e toru tau te roa, ka hangaia e ia tētahi taupuni mahi toi nui i tōna kāinga i Tāmaki-makau-rau. He wāhi whai rauemi toi, ā, e ai ki tētahi mātanga hītori toi a Eric McCormick, ‘kī tonu ngā pakitara ki ngā paenga e pupuri nei i ngā pukapuka toi, i ngā mea hei kaupapa mā te ata toka, i ngā hangarewa ukutea – he pane Benin, he pākurukuru Julius Caesar, he rīpene whakarākei nō Kirīhi, he Apollo mau rau piki’. Ko te tāruatanga pane Benin te kaupapa matua o te *Composition*, circa 1949; he rawe te whakataurite a Hunt i te koropikopiko huatau me te tipuranga e tupu kūnakunaku ana ki tōna taha. Ko taua taupuni hou he wāhi mutunga mai o te pai hei taiao peita; e ai ki a McCormick ‘he taupuni pai tērā mā Michelangelo’.

Frances Hunt’s artistic practice was rejuvenated by her training at the Elam School of Art in the early 1930s. Following the completion of the three-year course she had a large studio built at her home in Auckland. It was a well-appointed space and art historian Eric McCormick recalled ‘walls lined with shelves holding art books, ornaments for use in still lifes, and plaster casts – a Benin head, a bust of Julius Caesar, a Greek frieze, a fig-leafed Apollo’. The replica Benin head is the central focus of *Composition*, circa 1949, and Hunt expertly balances its graceful curving shape with a more unruly neighbouring pot plant. The new studio provided the ideal conditions to paint, and McCormick quipped ‘that the place would have done nicely for Michelangelo’.

Saskia Leek (born 1970)

New Zealand

Untitled 2009

oil on board

Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki

gift of the ART50 Contemporary Art Trust, 2009

Ko tā *Untitled*, 2009 he whakahoki mahara ki ngā peita takiwaitara manomano i oti i ngā ringa toi e āta whakamātau ana i ngā mātāpono o te Toi Matahuhua. Ko te hangarua a Saskia Leek i ngā kaupapa mōhiotia rangiwhāwhātia he whakamiramira i tō tātou aronga kopī ki ngā ariā hou. Ko tā āna huarākau mata huhua he maumahara i te hunga i whakapakari ai i tōna toi mā ngā tāruatanga i ngā maheni, i ngā tapanga pukapuka tawhito, i ngā mātātuhi kōrae. Kei te maopo koe ki te toi peita-ā-tau ānō nei he ihu hūpē te ringa toi? Me āta titiro kia kitea te ata toka i hangaia ai ki te tae kātoretore, e te mātanga raweke i te kōwhiringa tae. Kei te rewarewa te ipu huarākau a Leek i runga i te moana kārikiōrangi; he ngāwari tōna ringa i whakamahi ai i ngā tāhina mahana, tāhina kōangi, hei whakaatu i te pito mata o te mahi-ā-ringa ki te whakatairanga i te ata ruha.

Untitled, 2009 subtly recalls the thousands of semi-abstract paintings made by artists exploring the rudiments of Cubism. Saskia Leek's recycling of modernist tropes highlights our fraught relationship with notions of originality. Her faceted fruit remind us that many come to know art through reproductions in magazines, old book plates and faded prints. Do you squirm at the naïve paint-by-numbers aesthetic? Look deeper and you'll see a still life constructed with a luminous and refined sense of colour. Floating in a field of turquoise green, Leek's arrangement of fruit is delicately rendered in small passages of warm and cool tones, demonstrating the potential of the handmade to elevate well-worn imagery.

Pablo Picasso (1881–1973)

Spain, France

Verre et Pichet (Glass and Pitcher) 24 Jul 1944

oil on canvas

Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki

on loan from the Thanksgiving Foundation, 1999

I te nuinga o te Pakanga o te Ao II, ka piri a Picasso ki tōna whare i Paris. Ka peitahia te *Verre et Pichet (Glass and Pitcher)*, i te 24 o Hūrae 1944, i ngā wiki i mua i te mawetenga o Paris, i te marama kotahi tonu i mua i te whakahauraro o ngā Tiamana i te 25 o Ākuhata 1944. Ko te iti, me te māori o te kaupapa he whakaataranga o te herenga ki te kāinga me te whakatiki o ngā tau pakanga o Picasso. Nā te ongeonge o ngā rawa mahi toi, ka peita ia ki ngā poro rākau. Nāna hoki i whakamahi rauemi kimikimi noa, pērā i te tūru me ngā kakau paihikara, hei hanga tārai. Ahakoa ngā taiapa, ko tā te *Verre et Pichet (he Karaehe me he Tiaka)* he whakaatu i te ata toka hei wāhi e huritao ai i te tohutohu o ngā mea māori – i konei, he tiaki waiora, he rēmana kawa, he tēpu rākau horehore.

Picasso spent most of World War II holed up in his apartment in Paris. *Verre et Pichet (Glass and Pitcher)*, 24 Jul 1944 was painted in the weeks before Paris's liberation, almost one month exactly before the German surrender on 25 August 1944. The modest scale and subject reflect the confinement and deprivation of Picasso's war years. With limited access to art materials, he was forced to paint on pieces of wood. He also created sculptures from found materials, such as a bicycle seat and handlebars. Despite the constraints, *Verre et Pichet (Glass and Pitcher)* reveals the way still life offered a meditative space in which to dwell on the symbolism of everyday objects – here, a life-sustaining jug of water, a bitter lemon and bare wooden table.

Jude Rae (born 1956)

New Zealand

Still Life 48 1999

oil on linen

Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki

purchased 1999

Ko tā te ingoa o tēnei peita nō te tau 1999, he whakaari i tōna wāhi i te raupapatanga – ko te *Still Life 48* he wāhanga nō tētahi mahi nui ake. He wairua pōturi, he wairua āta mahia tō tēnei peita. Karekau he āhukatanga poka noa; kei te kitea te whakapau kaha ōrite tonu ki tēnā mea, ki tēnā mea – i kaha pū tonu te whakaoti i tēnā tiaka, i tēnā ipu putiputi. Kei te tīhaea te ngūtanga e ngā kōtingotingo aho ruarua noa, e te ātārangi paku kei te taha mātau o te tiaka mā, e te ipu pango whano kē e tata huna ana ki muri. He ātārangi ranei? Nāwai rā, nāwai rā, kei te oho haere ngā mea muna a Jude Rae, ā, ka panoni haere kia puta hei whanaunga kē. I te tīmatanga he kohinga āhua maroke o ngā mea tae piakano, i te mutunga he mea maha rawa e kōmitimiti ana, he mea whakamanawarau.

The title of this painting from 1999 suggests it is part of a series – that *Still Life 48* belongs to a longer enquiry. The painting has a slow and studied quality. Nothing is spontaneous as each object is given the same even treatment – the jugs and vases rendered with absolute precision. The sense of stillness is only slightly interrupted by a few flecks of light, a small shadow to the right of the white jug, and an ambiguous black vessel tucked in at the back. Or is it just a shadow? After a while, Jude Rae’s anonymous objects take on greater presence and begin to feel like characters in a family. What started as a seemingly banal collection of pastel-coloured objects becomes an increasingly crowded mingling, redolent with unease.

Michael Shepherd (born 1950)

New Zealand

Cut-throat Razor and Cotton Reel 1978

oil on linen on board

Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki

purchased 1982

Ko tā Michael Shepherd *Cut-throat Razor and Cotton Reel*, 1978 he whakaari i ngā mea o te rautau 19 i roto i tētahi wāhi hiwa, tētahi wāhi katia o te peita ata toka o mua. Ko te heu motu-korokoro he kautete nō te wā i whai pāhau ai te tāne; ko te takatakai kātene nō te wā i tuia ai, i tapia ai ngā kākahu e te wahine. Ko tēnei toi he hokinga mahara ki te rautau 17, he wā i kauanuanutia ai taua momo toi, ā, he mana whakaharahara tō te mea. I taua wā ko te kārara he tohu mō te oranga rangitahi; ko te pukapuka he tohu mō te whakapono; ko te pua tiere he tohu mō ngā rangi tūhāhā. I oti i a Shepherd āna mahi toi i te whiore o ngā tau 1970; he ōrite āna mea ki ngā rawa tawhito e kitea ai i roto i te toroa kāore e tino whakamahia, i te wā e paraketuhia ana mea kē. E ai ki te mātanga hītori toi a Francis Pound: ‘. . . kei te piri tonu ngā maumaharatanga tawhito ki āna mea, me he puehu angiangi, rangiwhāwhā.’

Michael Shepherd's *Cut-throat Razor and Cotton Reel*, 1978 sees objects from the 19th century set in a dark and hermetic space of historical still-life painting. Cut-throat razors come from a time when men wore beards, and cotton reels from when women sewed and mended their own clothes. The work harks back to the 17th century when the genre was at its zenith and objects held great symbolic power. A time when candles represented the transience of life, a book signalled piety; and cherries connoted paradise. But Shepherd's work was made in the late 1970s, and his objects are more like those old things found in a forgotten drawer when you're rummaging for something else. Art historian Francis Pound elaborated: ‘. . . his objects have old memories clinging to them still, like a fine and pervasive dust.’

William Reed (1908–1996)

New Zealand

Still Life 1949

oil on canvas on cardboard

Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki

purchased 1976

I haere a William Reed ki te Canterbury College School of Art ako ai, ā, ko te nuinga o ōna tau mahi, he kaiako ia i Te Waipounamu. He āhua mārie te *Still Life*, 1949 mēnā ka titiro ki ngā mahi toi rongonui a Reed, arā ko ngā peita pakanga mō te Moana-nui-a-Kiwa. I mua i tāna mahi hei hōia o te Ope Waka Tūroro, he kaihoahoa pukapuka me te pānui whakaahua. Kei te kitea te kaha o tana aronga ki te hanganga i roto i tēnei ata toka whaihanga. Kitea ai i konei tāna mihi ki ngā mātua o te toi matahuhua, ki a Georges Braque rāua ko Pablo Picasso mā te whakamahi i ngā tauira kakano rākau, i ngā hanga whakatīaho, i ngā rangiruatanga ā-mokowā, heoi anō kua whakaratahia te Matahuhuatanga. Kei te whakaatu a Reed i tōna mōhiotanga ki te ao houtanga o Ūropi, ā, kāore e tukuna kia kaumingomingo rawa te whakaari.

William Reed trained at the Canterbury College School of Art, and spent most of his career teaching in the South Island. *Still Life*, 1949 is relatively sedate compared with his war paintings of the Pacific, for which Reed is best known. Before enlisting as a territorial in the Field Ambulance Corp, Reed worked as a book and poster designer. His attention to composition is apparent in this stylised still life. In it he acknowledges the work of his cubist ancestors Georges Braque and Pablo Picasso through the use of woodgrain patterns, translucent forms and spatial ambiguities. But the Cubism is tamed. Reed demonstrates his knowledge of European modernism without letting his scene become too unruly.

Lionel Lindsay (1874–1961)

Australia

Dahlias 1925

wood engraving and woodcut
Mackelvie Trust Collection
Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki

E ai ki te kairauhī a Anne Ryan, ko ngā tārākau a Lionel Lindsay – nāna anō ōna pūkenga tā rākau i whakapakari – ‘ētahi o ngā mātātuhi kōhure, pai rawa, i oti ai i Ahitereiria i mua tonu i te Pakanga o Te Ao Tuarua.’ I ngā tau 1920, i te ngākaunui te tokomaha o ngā ringa toi nō Ahitereiria ki te toi o te ao hou, inarā ko rātou i noho ai i Poihākena – engari Ko Lindsey. He kaha tāna whakahē i ngā take hou, take whakawhana, ā, mōhiotia nuitia ai tāna whakahē i te ao houtanga i tāna pukapuka *Addled Art* (1942). Ko tā te *Dahlias*, 1925, pērā i ngā mātātuhi ātaahua mō ngā putiputi me ngā manu, he whakaatu i te whakaaweawe a te kaitā-rakau nō Ingarangi a Thomas Bewick me tāna *A History of British Birds* (1797). Kei te takahuri a Lindsay i te papamuri māori kia angiangi kē te kakano. Kua whakahorohia ngā kōtingotingo mā e kātoretore ana, ki te mata tuauriuri o te tēpu a runga. Kei te tautoko ēnei āhuatanga katoa i te kaupapa matua – he whakaritenga putiputi paroparo haere e kotiti ana.

For curator Anne Ryan, self-taught etcher and engraver Lionel Lindsay’s woodcuts represent ‘some of the most distinctive and memorable prints made in Australia in the period prior to the Second World War.’ The 1920s saw many Australian artists embrace modern art with vigour and energy, particularly those living in Sydney – but not Lindsey. A vocal opponent of the new and radical, Lindsey famously voiced his opposition to modernism in his book *Addled Art* (1942). *Dahlias*, 1925, like many of Lindsay’s stylish prints of flowers and birds, shows the influence of early English wood-engraver Thomas Bewick and his *A History of British Birds* (1797). Lindsay transforms a plain background into a fine network of texture. The table top with its ink black surface is punctuated with a constellation of white dots which appear to glimmer. All of this supports the main event – an angular and wilting arrangement of flowers.

Wilfred Stanley Wallis (1891–1957)

New Zealand

Still-life with Red Chair circa 1950

oil on board

Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki

purchased 1958

He maha ngā korowai o Wilfred Stanley Wallis: he mātanga whakatika wheua, he ika a Whiro, he kaitākaro kirikiti, he ringa peita. Kei Rotorua e noho ana, mahia ai ia ki te paenga o te ao toi hou e puta mai ana, ā, nāna anō hoki ona pūkenga i whakapakari. Ki tā te ringa toi a John Weeks, he kaiārahi ia i a Wallis, ko te mohoaotanga me te mātauranga ōkawa kore o tōna hoa he painga mōna nā te mea i te wātea ia ki te whakapakari i ōna ake tikanga toi, arā he tae muramura, he hanga ihiihi. Ko tā te *Still-life with Red Chair*, circa 1950 he kawē i te wairua hihiko. Kāore he herenga o te ariā ōkawa, o te ture tātai, i wātea a Wallis ki te whakamātau i te tirohanga hou, i ngā tae hihiko, i te tikanga mata.

The multifaceted Wilfred Stanley Wallis was many things: an orthopaedic surgeon, war veteran, keen cricketer and progressive painter. Based in Rotorua, he worked at the periphery of an emerging modern art scene and was largely self-taught. Artist John Weeks, a mentor to Wallis, believed that his friend's isolation and lack of formal training worked in his favour as it allowed him to develop his own technique – one that was bold in colour and composition. *Still-life with Red Chair*, circa 1950 communicates a sense of liveliness. Unencumbered by any particular theory or formula, Wallis was free to experiment with unconventional perspective, electric colours and a raw technique.

John Weeks (1886–1965)

New Zealand, England

Still Life with Fruit and Decorated Jar

circa 1940

tempera on board

Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki

purchased with the aid of a grant from the Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council of New Zealand, 1970

Kei roto i te kōpiringa o te *Still Life with Fruit and Decorated Jar*, circa 1940 kua raungaitihia ngā mea hei āhuatanga whakanikoniko i te hoahoa whānui. He kaiako whakaaweawe, he mātanga toi ao hou i Tāmaki-makau-rau a John Weeks; nāna i whakatairanga te Matahuhuatanga ōkawa, tirohanga ngāwari ake. E ai ki a Weeks, ‘ko te taumata e wawatahia ana, he hoahoa rangatira, arā he āhua mātinitini, reretau hoki e kitea ai te pai o te huinga tae me te tohungatanga o te ringa toi’. Kitea ai aua whakaaro anō i roto i ngā kōrero a te ringa toi hou nō Ahitereiria, a Frank Hinder – nāna i mahi i te wā ōrite ki a Weeks:

Ahako te kaupapa kei mua i te aroaro, ko te mea nui ko te whanaungatanga, he āhuatanga e puakina ana e te hoahoa – te puakitanga nahanaha o tētahi whakaaro.

Within the tightly constructed *Still Life with Fruit and Decorated Jar*, circa 1940 objects are reduced to decorative elements in service to the overall design. An influential teacher and key transmitter of modernism in Auckland, John Weeks promoted a classical and less visually disruptive mode of Cubism. According to Weeks, ‘the ideal to work for is noble design, which implies mass arrangement, with rhythm, incorporated with fine colour orchestration and great draughtsmanship’. Modern Australian artist Frank Hinder, who worked at the same time as Weeks, reiterated these sentiments when he stated:

No matter what lay in front of one, it was the relationship expressed which was important, and the relationship was expressed through design – the orderly expression of an idea.

Colin McCahon (1919-1987)

New Zealand

[Still Life with Lamps] 1947

ink, watercolour on paper

Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, purchased 1974

I roto i tā Colin McCahon [*Still Life with Lamps*], 1947, kei te hahana ngā koroirangi me ngā tara aho ki te mokowā heoi karekau he ātārangi. Ko te aronga kē o McCahon he whakahua i ngā āhua kōpiko o ngā rama hinu e rua me te puri-kānara. Ahakoa te ōpaki, te huahua hoki o te āhua o tēnei mahi toi, he tohu rangatira te rama me te kānara e putaputa mai ai i roto i ngā peita a te ringa toi i ngā tau 1940. Kitea ai he rama i te taha o ngā mea kaupapa whakapono, tae atu ki a Maria Takakau, ki a Ihu Karaiti hoki, hei tohu ārahi, tohu Kupu o te Atua, tohu māramatanga.

In Colin McCahon's [*Still Life with Lamps*], 1947 halos and peaks of light radiate in space, but cast no shadows. McCahon instead concentrates on marking out the basic curvaceous forms of the two oil lamps and candle holder. Though the work may appear informal and sketch-like, lamps and candles were potent symbols which reappear throughout the artist's paintings of the 1940s. He regularly placed a lamp beside religious subjects, including the Virgin Mary and Christ, as a symbol of guidance, God's Word, and wisdom.