

# Te Ara a Tāwhaki

## Māori Art Categories

## What is Contemporary Māori Art?

Contemporary Māori art straddles customary and non-customary practice, with each maintaining adherence to and support from a particular sector of society. For many Māori, there is a preference for work in which they can see themselves.

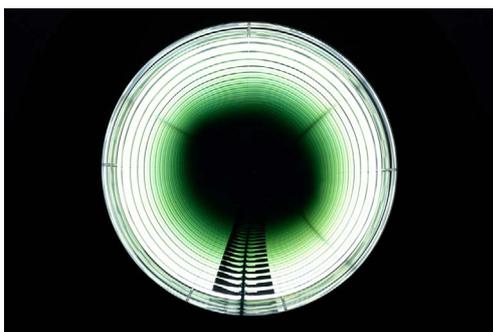
This is particularly evident in customary and trans-customary work, where cultural references to form and pattern are obvious visual connections. For those artists whose practice is non-customary, in a perceptual sense, acceptance by Māori is often tenuous. The problem faced by such practitioners is that the kaupapa Māori (Māori ideology or worldview) element often needs to be explained.

Professor Robert Jahnke classes modern Māori art into three categories. First, there's **customary**, which equates with traditional – a work you can identify immediately with Māori culture.

Then there is **trans-customary**, where a change can be seen in the forms taken from the culture. For example, a marae may not be instantly recognisable, or a koru may be lengthened and represented differently.

Lastly, you have **contemporary**, which has no obvious visual reference back to traditional culture. What creates the resonance with traditional culture is the fact that the work is centred on things Māori.

Jahnke in fact made a conscious decision in 1992 to phase out all Māori imagery from his work, believing that 'it was becoming to cliché'.




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**Robert Jahnke, *Whenua Kore*, 2019**

lacquer, mild steel, powder coated aluminium, neon, mirror pane, mirror, laminated glass, toughened glass, electrical components

Chartwell Collection

Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, purchased 2019

For the following artworks, identify the three Māori art categories that Robert Jahnke discusses above. Use the 'Picture Association' column as a clue to get you started.

Picture Association	Term	Word Association	Thinking
<p>The following images each relate to a category of contemporary Māori art, as discussed by Robert Jahnke.</p>	<p>Identify the term you are analysing:</p>	<p>Write down words that you can associate with the term:</p>	<p>In your words, write down how you would describe the term:</p>
			
			
			

## Artwork credits

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**Unknown artist**, *Hei Tiki*, date unknown

pounamu (nephrite)

Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, gift of Sir George Grey, 1887  
on loan to Auckland War Memorial Museum Tāmaki Paenga Hira

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**Areta Wilkinson**, *Hei Ata Āhua*, 2018

24ct Ōtakau and Te Tai Poutini gold, fine silver

Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, commissioned 2017

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**Michael Parekōwhai**, *Kapa Haka (Pākākā)*, 2003

automotive paint on fibreglass

Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki

gift of the Patrons of the Auckland Art Gallery, 2004