

Waitangi Rosary
Botanical Plaster Casting
Education Resource



Robert Jahnke, *Waitangi Rosary*, 2007

lacquer, lead, MDF

Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, purchased 2008

Extract from '[Waitangi Rosary, Robert Jahnke](#)', Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki

Kei te hoki atu te *Waitangi Rosary*, 2007 ki Te Tiriti o Waitangi. I hangaia te *Waitangi Rosary* hei urupare ki te kaupapa whakatutū puehu, arā ki te Ture Principles of the Principles of the Treaty of Waitangi Deletion Bill i whakatakotoria ki mua i te aroaro o te komiti whiriwhiri i te tau o 2006, ā, kei te tāpaetia tētahi ara hei huritao i te nui whakaharahara o te Tiriti o Waitangi i tēnei rā; kei te whakarōpūhia e ai ki ngā kaupapa o ngā 'Mahi a te Karauna' e putaputa mai ai i roto i te hītori o Aotearoa mai i te hainatanga i te tau 1840.

Kitea ai ngā kuputuhi me ngā kupu angarua, i ngā toi a Robert Jahnke. Kei te whakamahia ngā āhuahanga reo, āhuahanga ataata hoki, hei tūhura i ngā āhuatanga tīkokikoki a te reo. Pērā i ngā rōhi rino nei, he taumaha, he māngohe ngā āhuatanga tohu. He tohu tēnei mō Maria Takakau, mō te hekenga toto o Ihu Karaiti, o te aroha, o te kīngitanga, o te Kuini Irihapeti o nāianei. Kua āta whakaritea te *Waitangi Rosary* hei huritaonga mā te tangata.

Waitangi Rosary, 2007 revisits New Zealand's founding document Te Tiriti o Waitangi – the Treaty of Waitangi. Created in response to the contentious Principles of the Principles of the Treaty of Waitangi Deletion Bill that went before a select committee in 2006, *Waitangi Rosary* offers a pathway to contemplate the importance of Te Tiriti o Waitangi today by recasting 'Crown Acts' into underlying themes that have played out in New Zealand history since its signing in 1840.

Text and wordplay are regular features of Robert Jahnke's works. He uses linguistic and visual forms to reveal the unstable nature of language. Like the lead these roses are cast in, their symbolism is heavy and malleable. Symbolic of the Virgin Mary, the spilling of Christ's blood, human love, kingly power and in the present day, Queen Elizabeth. *Waitangi Rosary* is purposefully paced to invite reflection.

The Power of Words

Robert Jahnke and a significant number of other New Zealand artists have created artworks that explore the power of words and text.

Extract from [‘Text Art: 8 Artists Who Harness the Power of Words in Art’](#),
My Modern Met:

Language is a powerful tool. And no one understands that better than artists who thoughtfully utilise text to make a statement and draw out emotion. By using text as the central communication vehicle in their artistic expression, these artists push forth letters, numbers, and words as their primary means to get out their message.

Of course, text and art have been intertwined for centuries – think of medieval illuminated manuscripts, with their elaborate illustrations. But things really took off in the twentieth century. When Surrealist artist Magritte famously wrote ‘Ceci n’est pas une pipe’ (‘This pipe isn’t a pipe’) across his painting, he moved text to a central role in understanding the work. Cubists, such as Georges Braque, were also known for incorporating text into their artwork, often highlighting its graphic quality.

From the 1960s onward, a group of artists increasingly focused on text in their art. From projections to canvases, sculptures to public murals, the versatility – and power – of the written word forces the viewer to reflect. Clever word play, political activism, subversion of advertising, and appropriation of form are just some common characteristics of powerful text art.

In Jahnke’s work, there is another layer to the text that can be explored from a Te Tiriti perspective.

Extract from [‘Difference between the texts – Read the Treaty’](#), NZHistory

The Treaty of Waitangi has two texts. The Māori version is not an exact translation of the English. There has been much debate over the differences – how they came to be and what they mean. Some people argue that there are two treaties: te Tiriti, the Māori version, and the Treaty, the English version.

Legally there is just one Treaty, despite the differences between the two texts. The Waitangi Tribunal has exclusive authority to determine the meaning of the Treaty in the two texts and to decide issues raised by the differences between them. References to the Treaty in law try to bridge the differences by referring to the ‘principles’ of the Treaty, or the core concepts or spirit that underpin both texts. As is often noted now, it is the spirit of the Treaty that matters most.

In *Waitangi Rosary* Jahnke explores the consequences of the interpretations of the Treaty principles in his choice of words. The artworks’ titles each describe the actions these interpretations have led to as *An Act of: Faith, Constitution, Alienation, Compromises, Reprisals, Hope, Suppression, Empowerment, Adjustment, Consolidation, Citizenship, Assimilation, Development, Redress, Entitlement, Restitution, Charity*. Each of these words becomes loaded with meaning, and it is our job to unpick these meanings.

To enrich the above, further examination of postcolonial theory would be appropriate, as would further reading of Linda Tuhiwai Smith’s writing on decolonisation and Epeli Hau’ofa’s reconceptualisation of the Pacific.

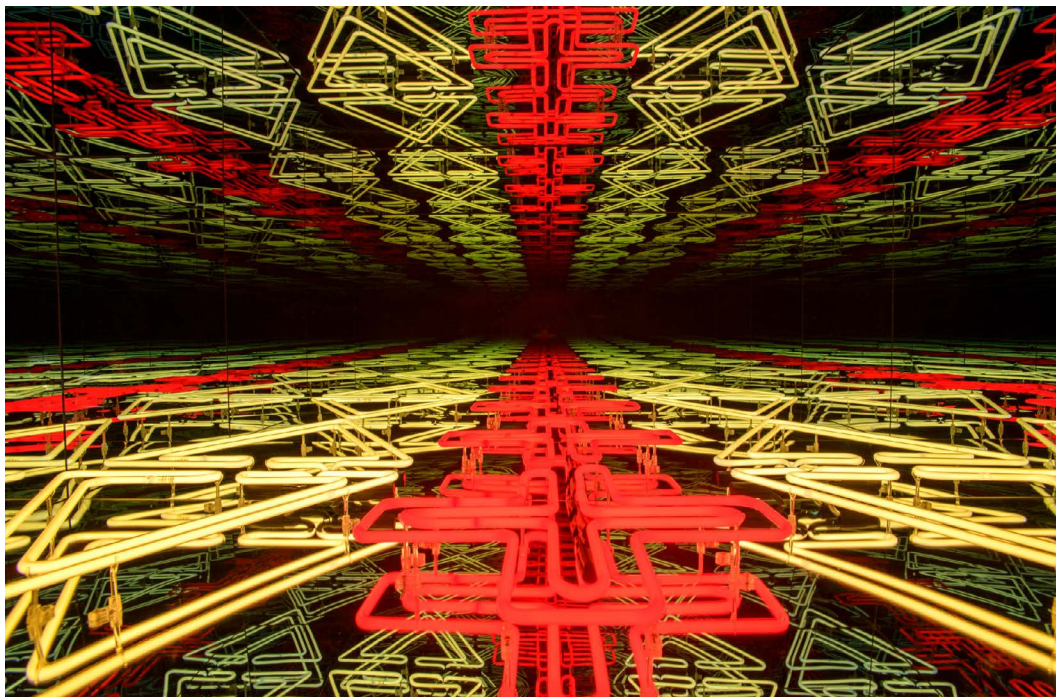
Robert Jahnke, born 1951, Tūranganui-a-Kiwa/Gisborne
Ngāi Tahu, Ngāti Porou, Te Whānau a Rākairoa, Ngāti Porou

Robert Jahnke was raised at Waipiro Bay on the East Coast.

He went on to obtain a Bachelor of Arts and a Master of Fine Arts from Elam School of Fine Arts, and a Master of Experimental Animation from California Institute of the Arts. In 2006, Jahnke was awarded a Doctor of Māori Studies from Massey University.

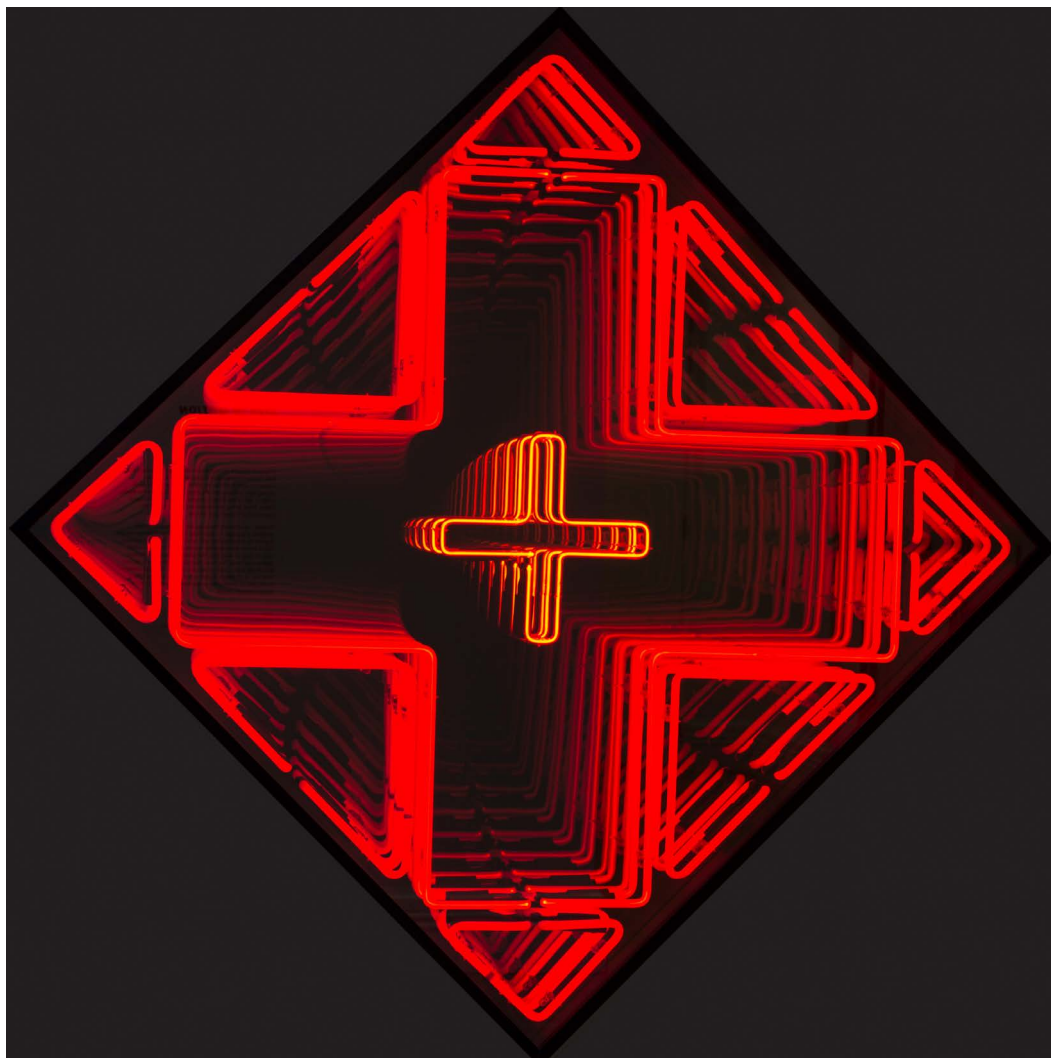
Jahnke employs a range of media to create work that tackles issues of identity, colonisation and intercultural exchange, and to explore Māori creation narratives in a multidimensional way.

Jahnke is currently Professor of Māori Visual Arts at Massey University, where he helped drive the establishment of the Toioho ki Āpiti arts programme in 1991.



Robert Jahnke, *Ata Tuarua*, 2016

MDF, paint, neon, one way glass, mirror, electricity
Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, purchased 2016



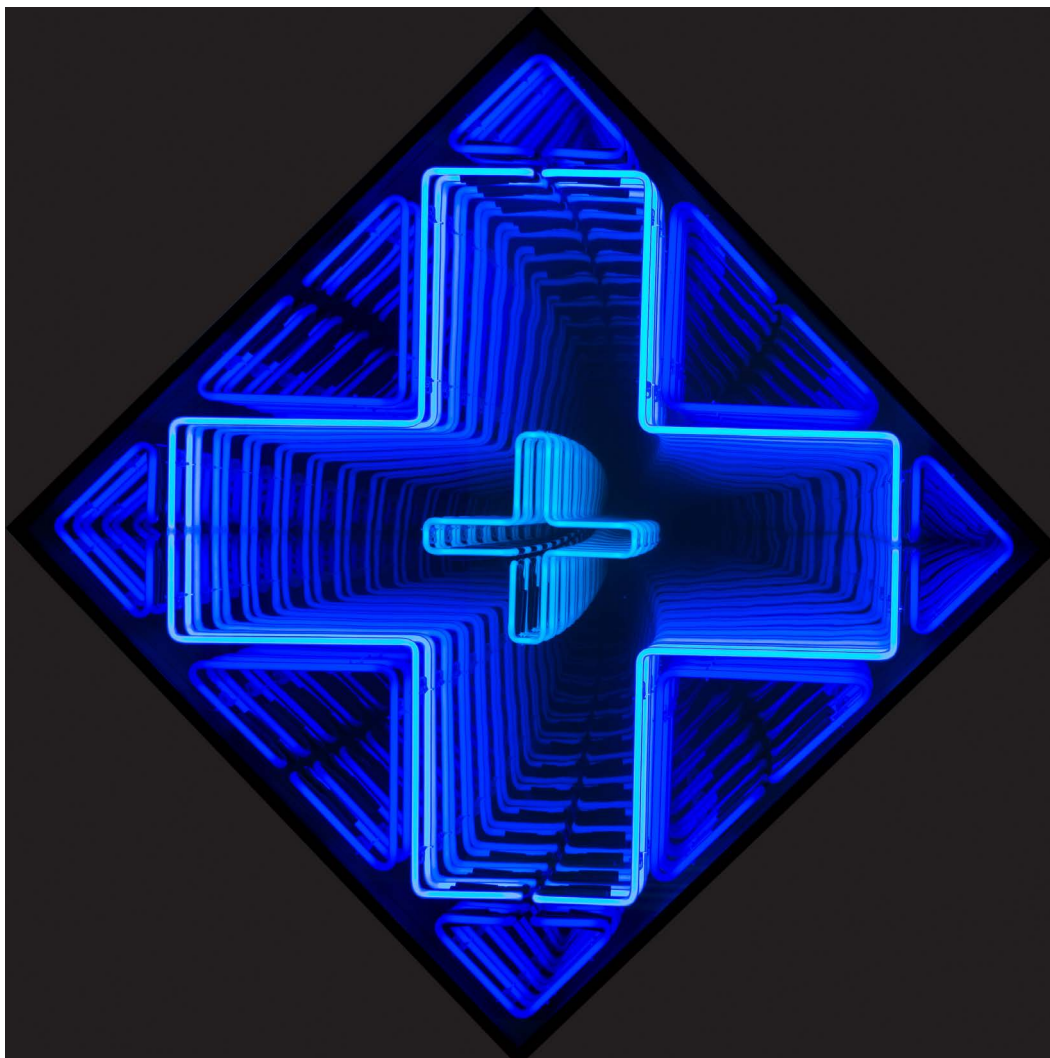
Robert Jahnke, *Ata Tuarua*, 2016

MDF, paint, neon, one way glass, mirror, electricity
Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, purchased 2016



Robert Jahnke, *Ripeka Kōwhai*, 2016

MDF, paint, neon, one way glass, mirror, electricity
Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, purchased 2016



Robert Jahnke, *Ripeka Kahurangi*, 2016
MDF, paint, neon, one way glass, mirror, electricity
Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, purchased 2016

Robert Jahnke's Use of Text



Robert Jahnke, *IAM SUBALTERN*, 2012
stainless steel, lacquer, panel
courtesy of the artist



Robert Jahnke, *This Land Was Made for You and Me*, 2012
stainless steel, lacquer, panel
courtesy of the artist



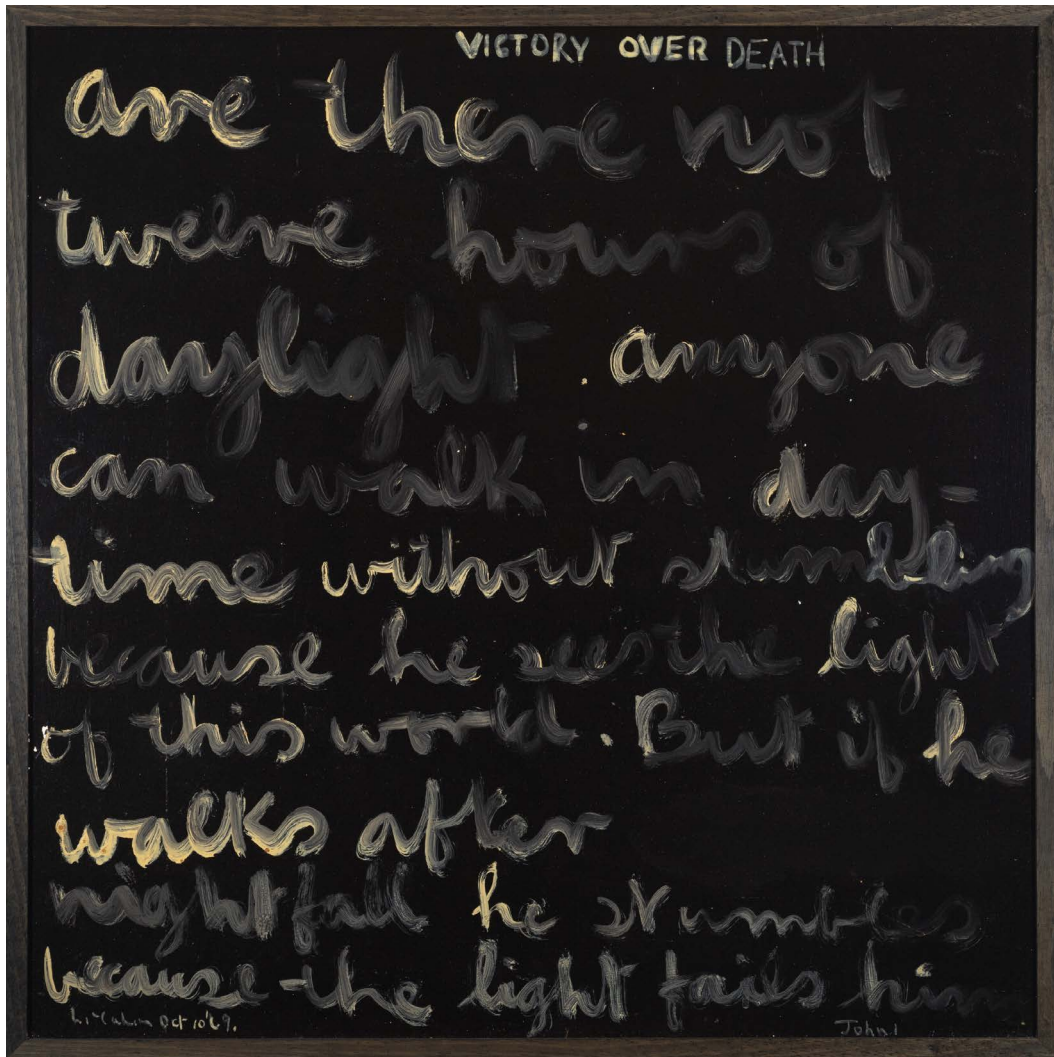
Robert Jahnke, *IAM DIASPORA*, 2012
stainless steel, lacquer, panel
courtesy of the artist

Extract from [‘Māori perspectives – creative life’](#), Te Ara: The Encyclopedia of New Zealand

This artwork, *Ta Te Whenua*, is Robert Jahnke’s response to conflicting Māori and Pākehā attitudes to land, money and power. At the time the work was created, in 1995, the New Zealand government was attempting to settle Māori land grievances through a one-off cash settlement known as the ‘fiscal envelope’. In Jahnke’s work, huge rubber stamps bearing the message ‘not negotiable’ stand on an aerial photograph of Martinborough, a small town in the Wairarapa. The streets of Martinborough were laid out in a grid representing the Union Jack, the flag of the United Kingdom.



Robert Jahnke, *Ta Te Whenua*, 1995
 exotic timber, custom board, photographic paper, rubber
 Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, purchased 1995

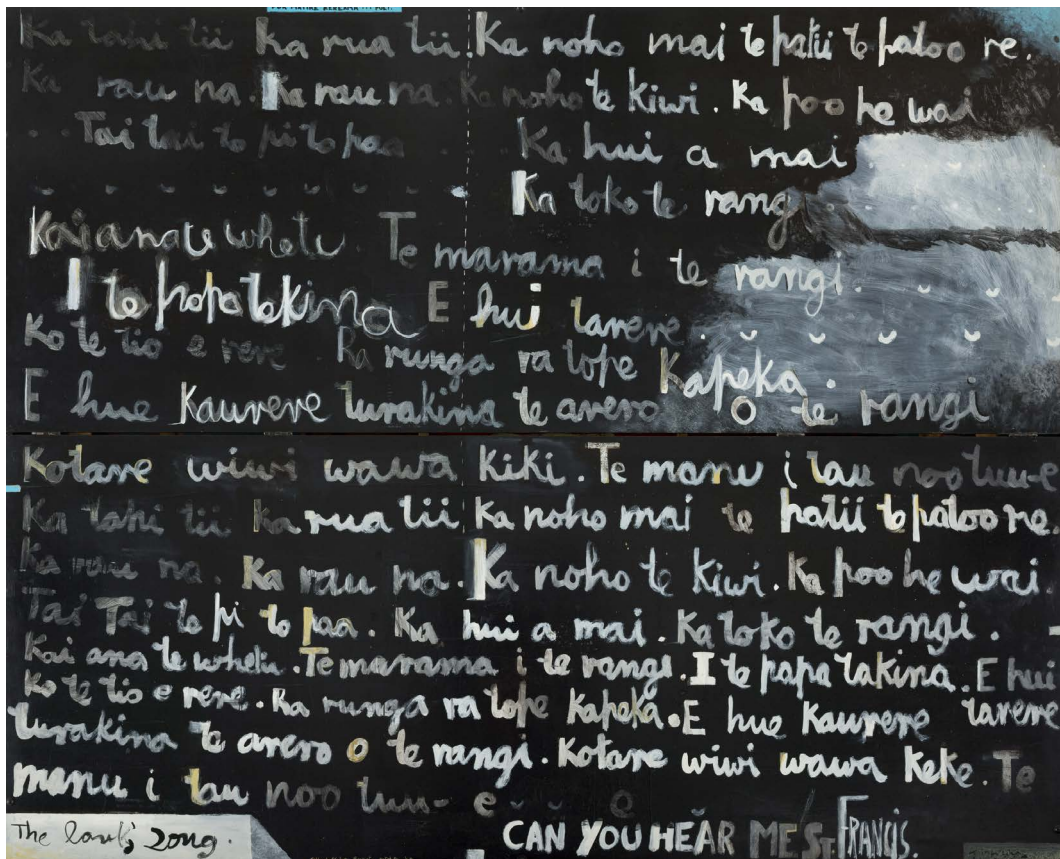


Colin McCahon, *Victory over death*, 1969

synthetic polymer paint on hardboard

Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, gift of Miss L D Gilmour, 1983

courtesy of the Colin McCahon Research and Publication Trust

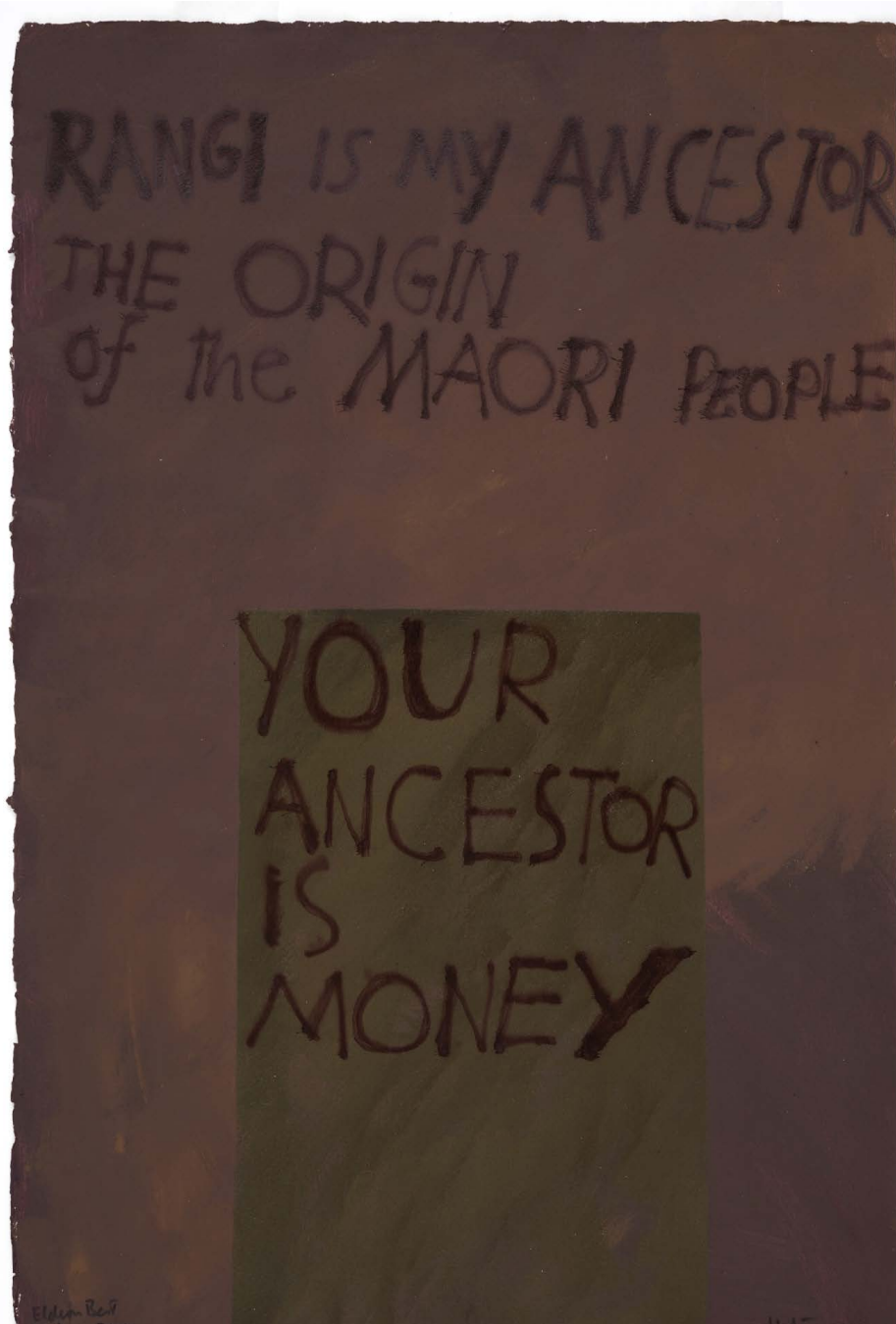


Colin McCahon, *The lark's song*, 1969

synthetic polymer paint (PV Ac) on two hardboard doors

Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, gift of the artist, 1982

courtesy of the Colin McCahon Research and Publication Trust



Ralph Hotere, *Rangi Is My Ancestor*, 1972

acrylic and lacquer on paper

Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, purchased with the assistance of
Dame Georgina Kirby, 2013

by permission of the Hotere Foundation Trust



Michael Parekōwhai, *The Indefinite Article*, 1990

wood and acrylic

Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki and Chartwell Collection, purchased with generous assistance from Jim Barr and Mary Barr, 2009



Michael Parekōwhai, *'Everyone will live quietly'. Micah 4.4*, 1990

wood and laminates

collection Govett-Brewster Art Gallery, New Plymouth

purchased from the Monica Brewster Bequest with assistance from the Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council of New Zealand in 1991

image courtesy of the artist. © Michael Parekōwhai



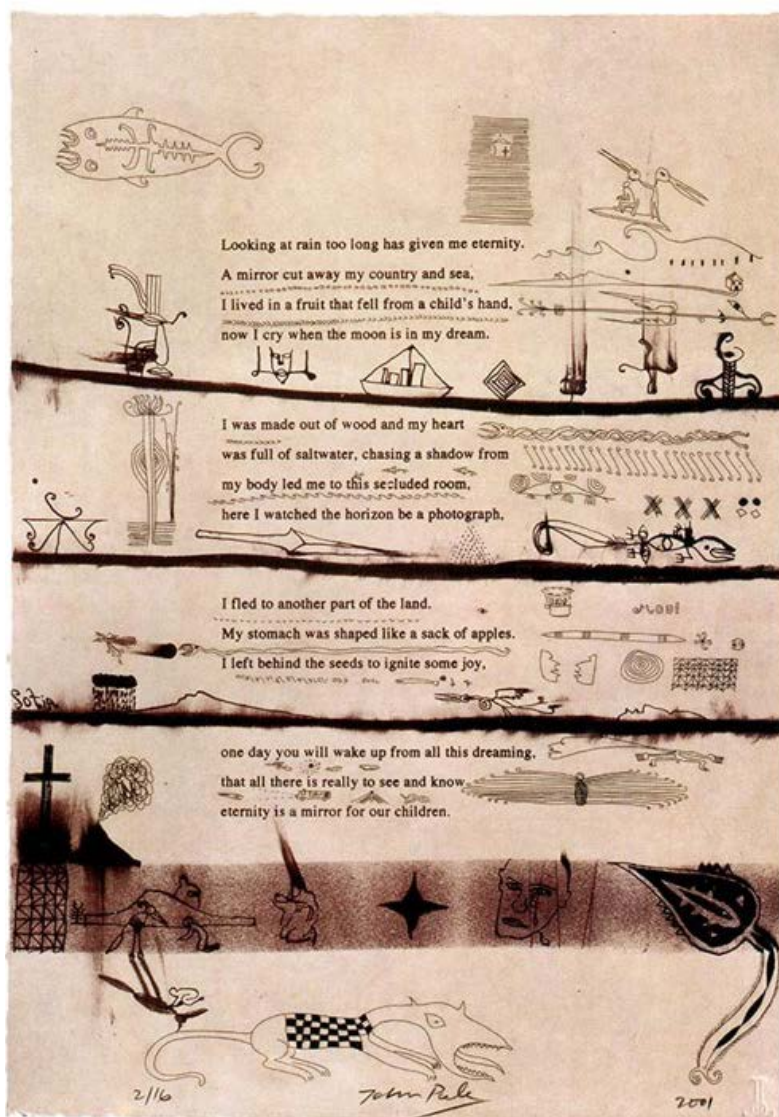
John Reynolds, *Looking west, late afternoon, low water* (detail), 2007

acrylic on canvas

Victoria University of Wellington Art Collection, purchased 2007

From 'John Pule, "100 love poems" (2nd of 3)':

John Puhiaata Pule, Niuean New Zealand novelist, poet and artist, has often used his poetry within artworks. This lithograph, *Looking at Rain Too Long Has Given Me Eternity*, is from his series *100 love poems*. While Pule's art expresses contemporary experience and understanding of history, it is also deeply based in Niuean traditions. In his work, he has translated the layout, forms and colours of hiapo (Niuean tapa), and commented on the history of colonisation and Christianity in the Pacific, and on 20th and 21st experiences of migration.



John Pule, *Looking at Rain Too Long Has Given Me Eternity*, 2001
lithograph on paper
image courtesy of the artist © John Pule

Extract from [‘Plot 150’](#), Brett Graham:

Plot 150 reproduce(s) the outlines of six of the scores of redoubts raised along or near the Great South Road before, during, and just after the Waikato War. Together, they trace the path of the British Army and its local allies from the southern outskirts of Auckland, across the aukati, or border, that King Tāwhiao had proclaimed near present-day Mercer, through the coveted plains of the Waikato to Pirongia, at the mountainous southern edge of the region.

Graham’s show has coincided with the 150th anniversary of the conquest of the Waikato, and it says as much about the meaning of that event as a table-load of wordy documents and weighty artefacts.

When Brett Graham sculpts our redoubts, he is depicting much more than a few temporary military fortifications. Empires expand by dividing smaller societies into pieces, and consuming each piece in turn. As they marched south from their Auckland citadel a century and a half ago, Britain’s imperialists established islands of control and familiarity amidst an alien, autochthonous landscape of forests and swamps and thatched kāinga.



Brett Graham, *Plot 150*, 2014
 St Hubert limestone
 Waikato Museum Te Whare Taonga o Waikato

Extract from [‘Te Au Marino’](#), Brett Graham:

This work was commissioned by Ernst & Young as a memorial to Simon Moore (1972–2011). Coral is a central theme to acknowledge our locality within the Pacific and to reflect some of the essential qualities Simon shared with those around him. In the natural world coral serves as an organic hub, attracting, sustaining and protecting all manner of life, qualities Simon demonstrated throughout his life. The coral motif emphasises the fragile nature of life and its latticed character speaks of Simon’s ability to build and maintain lasting relationships. – Kiwa Whatarau



Brett Graham, *Te Au Marino*, 2012
wood
commissioned by Ernst & Young, 2012

Extract from [‘Word Strings’](#), Virginia King:

2009

Floating Land – Rising Seas

Created during the Artist and Writer’s Symposium, Lake Cootharaba, Boreen Point, Noosa.

The 12 hand-cut word strings were floated in the lake, across the land and in the air. They allude to and refloat past histories of Lake Cootharaba; Aboriginal and Colonial.

My concept was to create strings of words, referring to our written culture. To assemble phrases that suggest past and present loss, combined with references about environmental neglect, global warming, the plunder of the oceans, rising seas, endangered coral reefs and storm wreckage. Before leaving New Zealand, I had made a complete alphabet of plywood templates that we used for cutting the 200 or more characters needed to write the words.



Virginia King, *Word Strings*, 2009
natural fibre, plywood, ash and acrylic pigment
image courtesy of the artist



Virginia King, *Word Strings*, 2009
natural fibre, plywood, ash and acrylic pigment
image courtesy of the artist



Virginia King, *Word Strings*, 2009
natural fibre, plywood, ash and acrylic pigment
image courtesy of the artist

Some International Artists Who Utilise Text

- Jasper Johns
- Barbara Kruger
- Jenny Holzer
- Ed Ruscha
- Christopher Wool
- Bruce Nauman
- Mel Bochner
- Steve Powers
- Ben Eine
- Sean Landers
- Adam Pendleton
- Kay Rosen
- Erica Baum
- Guerrilla Girls
- Xu Bing
- Petter Preffington
- John Baldessari
- Tracey Emin
- Glenn Ligon

Some Examples of Plaster Casting

- [‘Plaster Cast Flowers and WOYWW’](#), Velvet Moth Studio
- [‘Botanical Plaster Casting’](#), Pinterest