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Introduction

Mark Stocker

An Exhilarating Journey

In March 2018 the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa opened its new art gallery Toi Art, greatly enlarging the display space for New Zealand’s national art collection. From 1936 that collection had been the responsibility of the National Art Gallery, which had absorbed the New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts, whose collection of New Zealand works dated back to 1903. When Te Papa first opened in 1998, it incorporated the collection of the National Art Gallery, which had until that time been run as a separate art museum, into its waterfront site in Wellington. But Te Papa never had enough space for art, and so Toi Art is a massively welcome development. New Zealand art at Te Papa is published to mark the gallery’s opening.

This book discusses 275 artworks in roughly chronological order, from the very earliest, dating from the late 1770s and early 1800s, to works commissioned for Toi Art in 2018. They have been selected by Te Papa’s current art curators, and are considered to be the treasures of the collection that exemplify key moments in New Zealand’s art history and the careers of New Zealand artists. They are grouped into five sections that correspond to significant epochs in our national history and our art history.

Customary Māori art is not discussed here. However, Māori and indigenous Pacific peoples and cultures, as depicted by Pākehā (European) artists visiting or inhabiting New Zealand, constitute a vital element of the collection, and from the 1960s onwards, modern and contemporary Māori and Pacific artists feature prominently. A powerful tribute to Māori art came from Captain Cook’s shipboard naturalist and sponsor Sir Joseph Banks, one of the first Europeans to behold it: ‘I may truly say that [it] was like nothing but itself.’1 Such uniqueness is not conducive to an art mash-up. Nor is Te Papa’s formidable heritage collection of decorative arts — from furniture and jewellery to ceramics and fashion — included here. That, too, is a topic for a separate book.

1 Quoted in Nicholas Thomas et al., Alliance: Te Wāhine, Māori carving, colonial history, Otago University Press, Dunedin, 2009, p. 166.
This book takes the reader on a journey through a selection of works from Te Papa’s collection, including some of its best-known and best-loved masterpieces and, occasionally, its eccentric and hitherto overlooked works. You will encounter plenty of passion in the pages that follow, and intelligent, jargon-free writing. A solemn, canonical and definitive textbook on New Zealand art this is not.

From Encounter to Dominion

The opening section, ‘Encounter to Dominion’, involves the biggest chronological sweep — some 140 years, spanning Cook’s voyages (1769–79), the Treaty of Waitangi (1840) and the conferral of dominion status on New Zealand in 1907. Today’s art collection, particularly of this early period, benefited from a legislative change in 1992 that unified many societies (which, like art schools, were part of a ‘civilising’ process in late-nineteenth-century New Zealand) provided a livelihood for local artists. Landscape art followed the familiar genre in the British art that provided such a major influence on the hitherto small but rapidly growing British colonial art (1873) with its spectacular scenery that demanded ‘paint me’. JC Richard, Nicholas Chevallier, John Gully (p. 58), George O’Brien, Charles Wills and Edward Ardizzone are all in the book, and many others besides — rose to the occasion. Other subject matter such as genre painting, still life or portraiture was marginalised in comparison. Nineteenth-century commentators were already complaining about the tyranny of landscape, which they considered an artistic limitation — even a liability. Yet it remained central to mid-twentieth-century regionalism and subsequent modernism, and it lingers on, however vestigially, in Colin McAlpine’s late, great Survey (1976) (p. 189).

Atmosphere to ‘probably New Zealand’s best-known artist’, as Roger Blackley presents a far more sophisticated spectacle (p. 41). Although Andersen made an eloquent appeal to artists not to allow ‘entrancing scenery to become the subject of study’ instead, other subject matter such as landscape photography, still life and portraiture was marginalised in comparison. Nineteenth-century commentators were already complaining about the tyranny of landscape, which they considered an artistic limitation — even a liability. Yet it remained central to mid-twentieth-century regionalism and subsequent modernism, and it lingers on, however vestigially, in Colin McAlpine’s late, great Survey (1976) (p. 189).

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Functional rather than purely aesthetic, a pantomime first performed in London in December 1785. Philippe Jacques de Loutherbourg capitalised on this, and Philippe Loutherbourg. Whatever their authorship, the drawings were annotated with notes (‘Tall’ or ‘Middle Size’) to assist with casting actors in the three roles. Likewise, the enlarged version of the hero (ornamental comb), seen to the right of the ‘chief warrior’, may have been intended for fabricating props.

Omai (or Mai) was an inhabitant of Nia’iroa in what is now French Polynesia. Joining HMS Adventure during James Cook’s second voyage to the Pacific from 1772 to 1775, he arrived in Britain in 1774. There he enjoyed immediate celebrity, becoming the darling of elite society for his exotic appearance and natural grace. In 1776 Mai returned to the Pacific, settling on the island of Huahine, where he died only a few years later. In 1784 the popular memory of Mai and public interest in the Pacific were reinforced by the publication of the official account of Cook’s third voyage, of 1776–80. Omai was hailed for its realism. However, some artistic licence is evident in the costume designs and props, notably the anaomalous plantain leaf held by the ‘Chief warrior’, may have been intended for fabricating props. Likewise, the enlarged version of the heru (ornamental comb), seen to the right of the ‘Chief warrior’, may have been intended for fabricating props.

A woman, New Zealand (c.1785)
watercolour and pencil, 296 x 174 mm, purchased 2014

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Unknown, after Georg Forster
A fish from New Zealand (c.1777)
gouache on vellum, 268 x 312 mm, purchased 2003

The Resolution reached Dusky Sound on 26 March 1773 following three gruelling months in the Southern Ocean. One objective of James Cook’s second voyage was to confirm the existence or otherwise of the great southern continent. For Cook the relief upon reaching a safe harbour was palpable. ‘[T]here is no Port in New Zealand so delightful as Dusky Bay.’2

The seven weeks in Dusky Sound included an encounter with a party of Ngāti Māmoe, which was immortalised in paintings by William Hodges, the voyage’s official artist. For the naturalists on board, Johann Reinhold Forster did eventually publish his work in 1778, not as a narrative but in the form of a wide-ranging philosophical account, Observations made during a voyage round the world. 1

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Joseph Dufour and Jean-Gabriel Charvet

Les sauvages de la mer Pacifique
(The native peoples of the Pacific Ocean) (1804)

woodblock printing, stencilling and hand-brushed gouache on paper, 2000 x 8545 mm, purchased 2015 with Charles Disney Art Trust funds

From the moment James Cook arrived back in England in 1771 following his first voyage to the Pacific, a flurry of illustrated publications spread information about his travels. Over the next few decades interest in the Pacific flourished and was supported by the circulation of objects, books, prints and paintings as well as plays in England and mainland Europe. The French wallpaper Les sauvages de la mer Pacifique represents a summation of the intense interest in the Pacific aroused by Cook’s voyages.

This is a rare, spectacular, large-scale panoramic wallpaper, printed from woodblocks with colour finishing by hand. It was printed by the entrepreneur and innovative wallpaper manufacturer Joseph Dufour, after a design by textile and wallpaper designer Jean-Gabriel Charvet. The wallpaper proved popular and was sold throughout Europe and in North America, where it adorned the interiors of wealthy individuals. It offered a kind of ‘armchair tourism’, transporting viewers to another time and place. This example depicts twenty-three different indigenous groups across the Pacific, from Alaska to New Zealand. All appear in the lush environment of Tahiti, described by Louis Antoine de Bougainville as ‘the Garden of Eden … everywhere we found hospitality, ease, innocent joy, and every appearance of happiness’.1 Ideas like this reinforced the Enlightenment myth of the ‘noble savage’ and the notion of the Pacific as paradise. Consequently, features are generalised and little attention paid to traditional practices of body adornment such as piercing or tattoos. In spite of this general sanitisation, the wallpaper does include a moment of specific narrative: the death of Captain Cook, reduced in scale and rendered as a background detail in one panel.

Since the 1980s there has been renewed interest in Les sauvages de la mer Pacifique in Australasia and the Pacific. While it can be seen as a reflection on to the past, reflecting attitudes of the time, it also offers a means to reflect upon the profound shifts that have occurred in the post-colonial period. Indigenous artists have revisited the stereotypical representations of their forebears, bringing the historical wallpaper into the minds of contemporary audiences.

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Sarah Featon

Aka. Roto (c.1885)
watercolour, 264 x 214 mm, purchased 1919

Manuka (c.1885)
watercolour, 292 x 240 mm, purchased 1919

Kowhai (c.1885)
watercolour, 306 x 250 mm, purchased 1919

Sarah Featon’s exquisite watercolour drawings of the flowering native plants of New Zealand were the basis for the groundbreaking publication *The art album of New Zealand flora*, 1887–89. With her husband, Edward, she sought to disprove the ‘mistaken notion that New Zealand is peculiarly destitute of native flowers’. With her drawings, they aimed to prove the beauty of New Zealand’s native flora.

The Featons were based in Gisborne, and Sarah’s drawings were made from specimens sourced far and wide. Their project was supported by prominent early settler and expert on botany, the Reverend William Colenso, who later named a newly discovered species, *Droserophyllum featonium*, after Sarah.1

The Featons collaborated with the Wellington firm Bock & Cousins to publish the first fully coloured art book in New Zealand, using the relatively new medium of chromolithography. Although it almost bankrupted the firm, the book was widely admired. One reviewer expressed ‘surprise that such an artistic, correct, and beautiful work should have been wholly produced in New Zealand’.2 Indeed, it was so praised that a copy, enclosed in a casket of New Zealand wood, was given to Queen Victoria for her diamond jubilee in 1897.3

In the book, Sarah’s delicate illustrations were accompanied by Edward’s lively and occasionally verbose text. He describes the appearance of the yellow kōwhai, *Sophora tetraptera*, in full bloom as ‘extremely pretty … its masses of pendulous golden flowers presenting a unique and striking picture in the landscape’.4

While the book was widely distributed, the drawings remained with Sarah Featon for over thirty years. In 1889, widowed and financially distressed, she finally parted with her life’s work, selling her collection of a hundred and thirty-four drawings to the Dominion Museum for £150.5

2. Unfortunately, this honour has since been revoked. The shrub was found to be the same as *Dracophyllum strictum*. See Bee Dawson, *Lady painters: The flower painters of early New Zealand*, Penguin Books, Auckland, 1999, p. 71.
Brent Wong

Mean time exposure (1971)
Acrylic on hardboard, 900 x 1360 mm, purchased 2013

The phrase ‘in the meantime’ refers to an ambiguous suspension of time, where you are waiting for something to happen or something to end. A common enough phrase, but a concept that starts to feel weirdly oblique if you think too much about it. Brent Wong’s Mean time exposure has this same eerie feeling, where the passage of time slips and slides between past and future. Here, the ruins of some futuristic structure erode into the ancient landscape while a phantom version is resurrected with the dilapidated Victorian villas and architectural elements of the inner city. In this work in particular, the geometric forms seem vaguely reminiscent of Ian Athfield’s quirkily eclectic architectural designs. Wong’s structures, however, are often in ruin. Mean time exposure was painted during the early 1970s, when Wellington began an aggressive period of demolition to rid the city of older buildings deemed vulnerable to earthquakes. This sense of latent danger and urban destruction seem to have permeated the subconscious of the young artist. His paintings, devoid of people, give a sense of mild dystopia under the cheerful blue skies.

From the time they were first exhibited in the late 1960s, Wong’s hard-edged surrealistic paintings captured the public imagination. Though largely self-taught, he quickly became an important figure in the New Zealand painting scene, recognised for his technical mastery of the medium. In works like Mean time exposure, he uses this hyper-realistic style in an extraordinary version of the local landscape, adding phantasial elements that make it both more magnificent and more unsettling than the real thing.

Robin White

Mangaweka (1973)
Oil on canvas, 1005 x 1005 mm, purchased 1994 with New Zealand Lottery Grants Board funds

Although dated 1973, Mangaweka had its origins in 1971, when Robin White, a recent Elam School of Fine Arts graduate, was living in a tiny cottage at Bottle Creek (now Portobello, near Pāuatahanui Inlet, near Porirua). That year she and her fellow Bottle Creek resident, the poet Sam Hunt, made a road trip to visit friends who lived near the small rural settlement of Mangaweka, near Taapapa. When they stopped in the main street, White immediately noticed the truck parked in front of an old wooden building. ‘The truck belonged there,’ she recalled. She admired the ‘Mangaweka’ on the door and how it ‘stressed with the lines of the building and the curves of the hills beyond’. She took a series of photographs — close up waves and shots incorporating the background: ‘I saw the painting before I ever painted it.’

Back at Bottle Creek, White was busy with other projects. Late in 1971 she left for Dunedin, bought a cottage at Portobello, and became acquainted with the Otage Peninsula landscape. It was not until 1973, now married and expecting her first child, that she had the chance to develop the painting she had earlier envisaged.

Mangaweka shows the influence of Rita Angus, an artist White greatly admired, in its stylised linear forms, flattened space and brilliant light. It is structured according to a taut, irregular grid, and bisected by the dramatic line of the veranda. White suppresses unnecessary detail, focusing on the crisp geometric form of the building sandwiched between the truck and hills. She signs her name on the door, inscribing herself in the picture and alluding to the painter’s role in transforming the way we see the world.

Like much of White’s early work, Mangaweka takes a small slice of small-town New Zealand and transforms it into an archetypal image — a painterly parallel to Sam Hunt’s poetry. The same year as that memorable visit with White, Hunt wrote ‘A Mangaweka road song’, where he tells us the following:

No place more I’d like to bring you than this one pub town approached in low gear down the gorges through the hills.

1 Robin White, email to Jill Trevelyan, 1 November 2017.
Birds first appeared in Bill Hammond’s works around 1990, following a trip by the artist to the subantarctic islands. On their own territory, and largely unused to human contact, the subantarctic flocks stood their ground and stared back at the visitors. ‘The Auckland Islands are like New Zealand before people got here. It’s bird land,’ commented Hammond, who described feeling ‘like a time-traveller, as if you have just stumbled on remeina forests, tuatara-like Walt Disney would make. It’s a beautiful place, but it’s also full of ghosts, shipwrecks, death.’ The bird motif soon resolved itself as a major subject — anthropomorphic renditions of birds that reference the work of the controversial ornithologist and collector Sir Walter Lawry Buller, who published his A History of the Birds of New Zealand, with illustrations by Johannes G. Keulemans, in 1873.

Land list lies somewhere between the paranoid interiors of Hammond’s early practice and the vertiginous forest landscapes of the later 1990s. An eight-panelled work painted on a folding screen (other grounds from this period include a doublebass case, a cupboard, and panels from a beer crate), here the bird characters are depicted in ambiguous landscape settings overwritten with texts from an urban milieu — ‘Gang Land’, ‘Logo Land’, ‘Leisure Land’, ‘Liquor Land’. As ever, it is unclear whether Hammond’s birds are the hunters or the hunted, the colonisers or the colonised. And the artist does not say: with only a couple of exceptions, he has resisted calls for personal insights into his work. While Land list references issues around the occupation of land in New Zealand, Hammond’s ultimate position remains unspoken.

Typically, Hammond’s images are caught in a continuous process of ’becoming.’ In Land list birds transform into snakes, a mountain range becomes a carpet, a colony of birds looking out to sea becomes the curve of a coastline. The images proliferate wildly, the effect being one of a gloriously baroque excess picked out in shot-velvet lowlights and ghostly pale highlights, underpinned by the drips, festoons, veils and greasy crusts of his paint. In Hammond’s bird lands, the fabulous implausibility of an aesthetic derived from sources as diverse as Japanese manga comics and ukiyo-e woodcuts, 1970s album cover art, and Hieronymus Bosch’s The Garden of earthly delights, c.1510 (Museo del Prado, Madrid) describes a rich, private world hovering somewhere between history, myth and imagination.

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Section 5

1999 — 2018
Art for a New Millennium

Te Papa Press
The "The homely" series is clearly the work of a traveller. Gavin Hipkins captured these images with a plastic tourist camera over four years throughout New Zealand and Australia, on the roadside, on day trips and at friends’ houses. In some cases, museum dioramas stand in for the real world.

When displayed in its entirety, the series of eighty photographs is hung with the frames abutted like cells in a film strip and spans nearly forty metres. To absorb it you must walk along it, and in doing so you encounter a stream of images, some sunny, some mundane and some strangely menacing. There is no obvious narrative, and no apparent weighting to the images; a snap of a cat’s scratching-post has much prominence as a sublime view of Huka Falls.

‘The homely’ has come to be regarded as the iconic expression of Hipkins’ ongoing investigation of national identity in what he described as ‘the turbulent wake of British Imperialism’. At the time he produced ‘The homely’ and the related series ‘The next cabin’, 2000–02 (shot in North America), Hipkins was exploring histories of landscape representation, especially the way landscapes are depicted and used to create and communicate national identities. As he wrote in 2002, ‘New Zealand has a long tradition of landscape representation. Illustrations of idealised landscape helped entice my migrating forebears to make the long sail from Europe in the nineteenth century to a new colony called New Zealand.’

The development of a contemporary Pākehā identity began in earnest in the 1970s and continues today. As many writers have noted, depictions of indigenous communities and culture are conspicuously absent from ‘The homely’, bar a weathered waharoa (gateway) in a Rotorua tourist park. This is deliberate, a way of drawing attention to the formation of a post-colonial identity. As curator William McAloon wrote, rather than seeking to correct those absences, ‘The Homely deliberately exaggerates them, concerning itself with the activity of repression rather than its subject.’

Brian Brake

This photograph depicts product transport ship at Tauranga. However, it does not appear in any of the Fletcher Challenge reports, nor in Direction: New Zealand innovation and achievement, a 1978 promotional book on New Zealand industry that contained Brake’s photographs. While in either case his reputation probably ensured Brake free rein over both subject matter and style, perhaps this image was simply too visually complex for these publications. Without a caption the viewer may not decipher a ship, recognise the cylinders as newsprint, or understand exactly what is being done with them.

Brake has used a telephoto lens to compress distance, blending foreground and background into abstract shapes. It is almost a picture of two halves — the man and background into abstract shapes. It is therefore not surprising that it was eventually used in Brake’s lavish 1980 version of New Zealand! Gift of the sea, published posthumously, which encapsulated his work in this light.

Glenn Jowitt

Sataua, Savai’i, Western Samoa, 1982, from the series ‘Polynesia here and there’ (1982)

As his honours project in photography at the Canterbury School of Fine Arts, Glenn Jowitt chose to document a subculture that was completely foreign to him: the world of horseracing. The experience led to invitations to visit their islands, and Jowitt spent six months during 1981–82 photographing in Niue, Tonga, Sāmoa, Tokelau and the Cook Islands. This and his Auckland work culminated in a national touring exhibition in 1983, Polynesia here and there, and Sataua, Savai’i. Western Samoa, 1982 became Jowitt’s signature image following its appearance on the exhibition poster. The photograph was taken following a ten-day lull in fishing because of rough sea conditions whilst Jowitt was staying with the Vai’a family on the island of Savai’i. The man had just returned with a good haul from the night’s fishing. A boy waded out to meat and unload the canoes, and Jowitt captured his almost triumphant carrying in of one family’s catch against the subdued colours of clothing and canoe in the grey dawn. For Jowitt the image encapsulates the Pacific tradition of ‘bringing in the protein’, as well as the values of family cooperation and sharing.

1 Annual report, Fletcher Holdings, 1977, inside cover.


3 Ibid.
Fatu Feu’u

Salamasina (1987)

oil on canvas, 1764 x 2321 mm, purchased 1989 with New Zealand Lottery Board funds

In the early 1980s Fatu Feu’u was encouraged by fellow painters Tony Fomison, Philip Clairmont and Pat Hanly to develop a new direction in his work that was deeply grounded in Sāmoan history and fāa Sāmoa (the Sāmoan way).1 Feu’u retells and reinterprets this history using repeating motifs. The iconic frigatebirds symbolise a strong female presence, and is paired with mask-like forms representing spiritual ancestors. Interspersed throughout the work are stylised frigatebirds, a male symbol which represents journeys and the ongoing connection with the spiritual realm. Frigatebirds were also used as navigational aids to help steer the right course. The multiple meanings embedded in this work reflect the dual purpose of Feu’u’s motifs to convey narrative and to hold cultural knowledge.

Fatu Feu’u has described his paintings as va’aomanu, or vessels of knowledge, that emphasise the importance of fāa Sāmoa.2 The title of this work refers to Salamasina, a significant figure in Sāmoan history who rose to great power in the sixteenth century.3 She was given special powers by Nafana (goddess of war) and eventually held all four paramount chiefly titles. Today, all of the chiefly gafa (genealogies) can be traced back to Salamasina.4 Feu’u retells and reinterprets this history using repeating motifs. The iconic frigatebird symbolises a strong female presence, and is paired with mask-like forms representing spiritual ancestors. Interspersed throughout the work are stylised frigatebirds, a male symbol which represents journeys and the ongoing connection with the spiritual realm. Frigatebirds were also used as navigational aids to help steer the right course. The multiple meanings embedded in this work reflect the dual purpose of Feu’u’s motifs to convey narrative and to hold cultural knowledge.

4 Salamasina, a short history of Western Samoa, University of the South Pacific, Suva, 1997, pp. 21–2.
5 Ibid.
Anne Noble

The gorge above Pipiriki, from the portfolio
gelatin silver print, 134 x 315 mm, purchased 1984
with Harold Beauchamp Collection funds

Since 1885, when Alfred Burton photographed its people
and scenery on a survey expedition into the King Country,
the Whanganui River has been a frequent subject of
photography. Almost a century later, in 1979, Whanganui-
born Anne Noble set out on a concentrated project to
find a personal connection with a local landscape and its
history along this river.

Like all rivers, the Whanganui passes through many
phases along its two hundred and ninety kilometres to
the sea, and Noble’s work was a sustained and committed
exploration of the river as a living entity. ‘I was looking
at its wildness, its serenity, its physical force. How it
looks when it is swollen, turbulent, misty, calm — all its
moods.’ She said that one of her aims was ‘to offer my
pictures as an experience of this landscape, to make
people love it very deeply’. Her choice of the word
‘experience’ is significant, for Noble did not mean to
simply add to a century’s worth of scenic photography
by creating ‘views’ from well-known vantage points.
Her approach was much more immersive, and intent on
conveying the things that are less visible: the feel or spirit
of places along the river rather than their look — places
steeped in Māori and Pākehā history, and that change
according to the season, weather and time of day.

In The gorge above Pipiriki the landscape is wilfully
obscured — by darkness as well as mist. Black and white
was Noble’s chosen medium for the first half of her career,
and the mysteries of light her theme. Here the enveloping
blackness obscures detail to focus attention on the
inexorable flow of the river. The light off its turbulent,
oily surface is almost black itself — a sheen covering
powerful, silent, unknown depths.

1 Cited in Rhondda Bosworth, introduction to Anne Noble, ‘The
Wanganui: Photographs of a river’, PhotoForum, no. 51/52,
2 Ibid., p. 6.
Emily Karaka

Rangitoto eruption (1988)

Oil on two unstretched canvases with modern wooden lintel, 3318 x 1975 mm, purchased 1988 with Ellen Eames Collection funds

Emily Karaka's painting Rangitoto eruption refers to two events. First is the cataclysmic birth of Rangitoto, the landmark volcanic motu, or island, in Auckland's Waitematā Harbour. Karaka uses this event, witnessed by ancestors a hundred and eighty acres at Takaparawhā central Auckland but tried to set aside two hundred and eighty acres at Takaparawhā for an inalienable gift to his ngāti Whātua hapū and their descendants.

The progressive alienation of this estate and demand for recognition of its ownership is symbolised figuratively in the painting. A crushed body thrusts volcanically against a scoria- or blood-coloured background, rising centrally, and two taniwha canoe-prow type forms (upper left/lower right) pop up on either side. These emergent forms make reference to the huge pan-Māori protest that erupted in 1976 when the Crown announced its intention to create high-cost housing and parks at Ōrākei. In response, the now-landless Uri-o-Hau hapū (community) of ngāti Whātua and its Māori and Pākehā supporters occupied the contested land for five hundred and seven days until 25 May 1978. After being served a trespass notice and encircled by six hundred police officers with army back-up, the hapū was evicted from their makeshift village and their meeting house was bulldozed.

Karaka suggests the motu Rangitoto — appearing on the painting's upper edge in a carved representation by her then partner Norman Te Whata — is not simply a witness to, but also a participant in, these struggles. Arms outstretched, fish forms ringaringa (fingers of Rangitoto) is claiming back Takaparawhā's name inscribed three times on the painting, and ngāti Whātua, to itself. In 1988, the year of the painting, the Crown was forced to relinquish the remains of Ōrākei and Care by the hapū and their descendants.

Emily Karaka

Kura Te Waru Rewiri

There is more in Te Kore (1986–87)

Acrylic on unstretched canvas, 1981 x 1769 mm, purchased 1987 with Ellen Eames Collection funds

Kura Te Waru Rewiri is a leading contemporary Māori artist and one of the first women to lead a whare hui (meeting house) refurbishment project — for Te Puna o Te Mātauranga at NorthTec in Whanganui. In 1973 she graduated from the School of Fine Arts at the University of Canterbury, where she was taught by the expressionist Rudolf Gopas and was also influenced by fellow Māori artist Buck Nin. She then taught in various North Island secondary schools before becoming a full-time artist in 1985. Te Waru Rewiri's artistic sensibility draws deeply upon Māori philosophies, knowledge systems and non-religious spirituality, although the Rūnanga faith is also a significant source of inspiration.

There is more in Te Kore is an early-career work by a trained yet intuitive artist who brings Māori holistic understandings to painting. During the 1980s, Te Waru Rewiri drew upon Te Ao Māori (the Māori world), which was undergoing significant revival. Her artist peers were reviving te reo and supporting Māori creative arts in government support schemes in Porirua, Whanganui and Ōtara. The social, economic and political energies of the time had an impact on schools, homes and marae. However for Te Waru Rewiri, whanautanga (Māori non-religious spirituality) was missing. 'We were not acknowledging the importance of wairua in our whole-being, our existence ... I began to focus on Te Kore, Te Po, Wairua Whakapua. I used to feel the earth, the mud, the stones, the water, the sea, the sun, those sorts of things and get lost in the silence of the tactile being of those elements. Much of my experience in life has made me feel and reflect on the potential of wairua, maori ora, kaitiakitanga in Te Kore, Te Po and Te Waahi Ngaro.'

In this dynamic painting, a world emerges as a cosmic, unified system bound by spirit. Te Waru Rewiri recalls that the deeper reasons were not clear at the time, but "30 plus years on, there are moments of pristine clarity."

1 Email correspondence with Huhana Smith, 14 March 2018

Kora Te Waru Rewiri
Tony de Lautour

Lookout 1 (1999)

oil on board, 290 x 446 mm, purchased 1999 with New Zealand Lottery Grants Board funds

Tony de Lautour’s deftly repainted found paintings depend on a subtle fusion of respect and desecration. On one level they are kin to the posters or waiting-room magazines that we feel compelled to deface with spectacles, beards or buck teeth. They are also part of a modernist tradition of sophisticated art vandalism initiated by Marcel Duchamp’s moustachioed Mona Lisa vandalism initiated by Marcel Duchamp’s moustachioed Mona Lisa defacement of past art seems widespread through these otherwise serene settings like invasive species. Gunboats and drunken wastrels, which often include animals, or as cosy domestic interiors. They can be viewed as a group connected by a loose narrative flow, each work also stands alone and contains its own possibilities. The diminutive size of Leek’s paintings are emblems their promontory in

Saskia Leek

Untitled, from the portfolio ‘Underwood’ (2001)

watercolour, acrylic and polystyrene on hardboard, 265 x 204 mm, purchased 2001

Saskia Leek’s series of nine paintings collectively titled ‘Underwood’ was commissioned for an issue of the literary and arts journal Underwood that was based on the theme of shelter. Leek’s works in this series depict notions of shelter as dwellings set within landscapes, which often include animals, or as cosy domestic interiors. They can be viewed as a group connected by a loose narrative flow, each work also stands alone and contains its own possibilities. The diminutive size of Leek’s paintings are emblems their promontory in