

John Kinder

British/New Zealander, 1819 -1903

Worcester Boulevard, PO Box 2626, Christchurch, New Zealand
www.christchurchartgallery.org.nz Phone (03) 941 7300

Keri Keri Falls

1858, watercolour wash, 16x23 cm
Purchased with the assistance of the Olive Stirrat Bequest 1984



About the work

John Kinder was an amateur artist concerned with topographical accuracy and exactness. The 20 metre high Rainbow Falls are a few kilometres from Keri Keri, which is at the head of the Keri Keri Inlet, one of the northwestern arms of the Bay of Islands in Northland. Kinder visited the region, including Whangaroa Harbour, Hokianga and Keri Keri, in December 1858 and January 1859.

Kinder was a keen watercolourist and on his many journeys on foot and horse throughout New Zealand he carried a sketchbook. He would make numerous pencil drawings of topographical features in the landscape and on returning to his study, he would apply watercolour tints and pencil shading to the sketches, building up the forms. In 1984 *Keri Keri Falls* was taken out of one of Kinder's albums of drawings and watercolour studies when it was broken up for sale. Later in his career Kinder became a keen photographer and he would use his photographs to remind him of details in the scenes he wanted to paint.

Very little of the wildness of the New Zealand landscape comes out in Kinder's work as, like most 19th century landscape artists, he tended to emphasise the lyrical and rhythmic qualities of the forms, seeing only these as suitable subjects for a work of art.

It is sometimes considered that, in refining and tidying the New Zealand landscape, colonial artists were expressing nostalgia for the domesticated English landscape and were subconsciously imposing a familiar sense of order on the New Zealand scene before their eyes. However, with his scholarly background and preference for logic and discipline, Kinder's precise watercolours could be seen as an extension of his personality.

The Rainbow Falls were also painted by an earlier visiting artist, Augustus Earle (1793 -1838), the first independent, professionally trained artist to visit each of the five continents and record his experiences. Earle was in New Zealand in 1827.

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About the artist

John Kinder was born in London in 1819. He developed an interest in painting as a young man at Cheam School, Surrey, and received some instruction in watercolour painting in Southampton. In 1835 he developed an interest in sketching gothic architecture and studied under the water colourist Aaron Penley (1807-1870).

Kinder visited Europe in 1837 and in the following year began studying law at Trinity College, Cambridge. In 1845 he was awarded a Master of Arts degree from Cambridge University and began studies for the Anglican Ministry. That year he was ordained a Deacon at St Paul's, London, and in 1848 he was ordained a Priest at Lichfield Cathedral.

Unhappy with the reactionary state of the church in England, Kinder accepted Bishop Selwyn's invitation to become the headmaster of the proposed Auckland Grammar School. He arrived in New Zealand in October 1855. In 1859 he married Marianne Celia Brown. Kinder was a fine scholar with an easy command of French and German. He became the examining Chaplain of St John's Theological College and had a Doctorate of Divinity conferred on him by the Archbishop of Canterbury in 1873.

Kinder made frequent journeys throughout New Zealand. From 1863 he developed his interest in photography. In 1869 Kinder's name was put forward as a founding member of the Society of Artists in Auckland and he exhibited in the Society's first exhibition in 1871. He died in Auckland in 1903.

Other works by the artist in the Collection

Tarawera from the Landing Place Near Rotomahana

1866, watercolour
Purchased 1970

Further reading

John Kinder, H. Keith, Auckland City Art Gallery, 1958.

John Kinder, Paintings and Photographs, M. Dunn, Seto Publishing, 1985.

'The Kinder House', J. Dunn, *Art New Zealand*, No. 23, 1982, pp.32-35.

'The Reverend John Kinder: Painter and Photographer', R. Fraser, *Art New Zealand*, No. 2, 1976, pp. 24-27.

