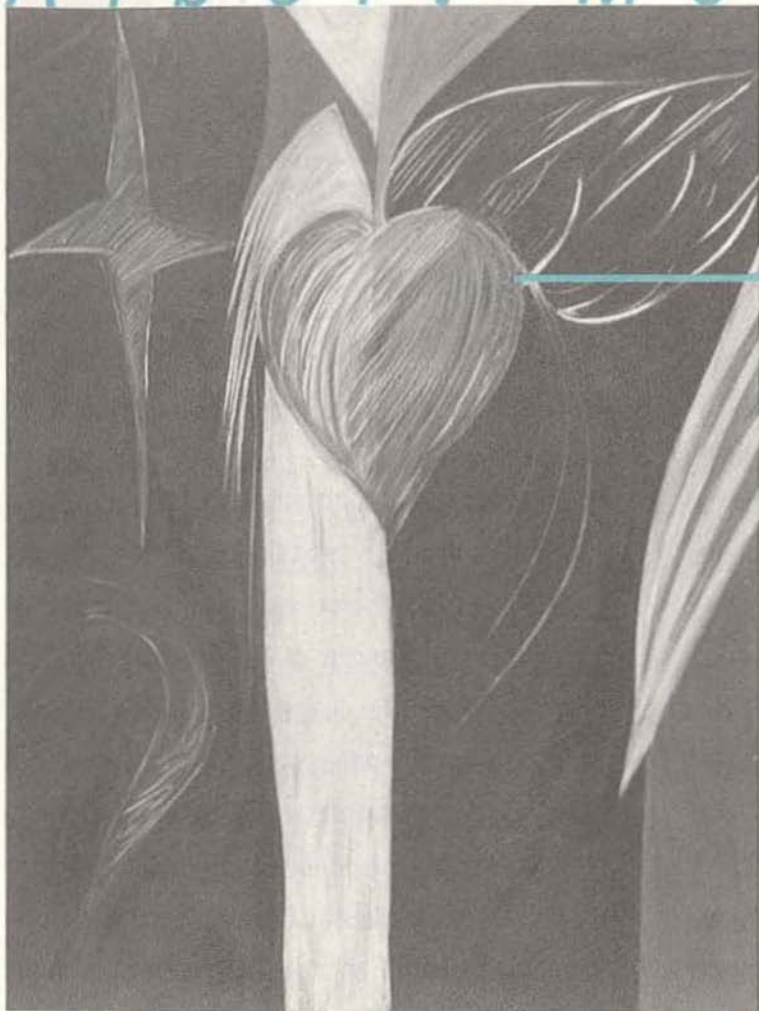


*rock me baby this aint no chocolate box affair*

*A l b e r t M c C a r t h y*




709.  
93  
MCC

*McDougall Art Annex, Christchurch  
11 february - 20 march 1994*

## *The Concept*

A process of abstraction and principles of misrepresentation and exploitation are at the root of the inspiration for Albert McCarthy's **Rock me baby, this aint no chocolate box affair.**



The area of New Zealand which McCarthy most strongly identifies with is that of the Taupo region. It is a concern for the treatment of this environment and the way it is culturally represented, outside the locale, which has fuelled the development of the work for this exhibition. He feels that neither of these is being accorded the respect they deserve.

McCarthy is of the opinion that short term thinking dominates industry in this area, so that long term care of the environment is sacrificed to the business needs of the day. Similarly, he feels a limited vision is being

brought to bear on the way the local culture is promoted. All too often "chocolate box" standards are allowed to prevail and art work of an inferior quality, and a stereotyped nature, winds up representing the region. It is an attitude developed in response to his own 'heartland' but which has universal application.

McCarthy wishes to comment on the trivialisation and waste of commodities essential to our very being and therefore precious. He wants to give tangible form to his belief in the sanctity of the environment which provides the basis for everything we need to live. His work both acknowledges and honours the natural world as the provider of our life's breath. It does this by drawing on the Maori creation myth which describes the separation of the earth and sky gods, Papatuanuku and Ranginui. Their division released the life force from which we all derive our existence.

# The Work

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The focus and main component of this exhibition is McCarthy's untitled canvas installation with its earth/sky associations. The works on paper, **Revelations from Rangi and Papa**, are intended to extend the concept being symbolically represented by the canvas installation.

The challenging logistics involved in the work's execution forms a large part of its presence. Its scale and the emphasis on the technology required to achieve the desired effect are important facets of the way McCarthy likes to work and the character of the installation. A formidable 50 metres of canvas has been utilized for this work, with the 144 strips of canvas having been hand painted, each receiving six coats of paint. The 76 blue strips and 68 orange strips have been individually attached to a grid system suspended from the ceiling according to a meticulously prescribed arrangement. The whole piece measures just over five metres in length, is three and a half metres high and nearly two metres wide.

Despite the quantity of materials, McCarthy aims to combat the weight of that input and convey a light airy feel. He does this through the five tonal breaks employed in the colouration of the canvas strips. These are then arranged

with the deeper tones recessing from the front to the back, or rather from the outside in, so that the lighter tones are placed towards the middle. This has the effect of opening up the feeling of mass.


The vibrant colour is a key to interpreting this abstract rendering of the creation myth. The brilliant blue represents Ranginui (the sky father), while the lush orange employed to represent Papatuanuku (the earth mother) suggests an earth rich with the possibilities of growth and nourishment. The strips of colour are interleaved and mingle to convey the intertwined entities so reluctant to be separated. The vertical parallel lines emphasize a symbiotic relationship where each partner both contributes and derives strength from the other. The powerful colour and simple uncluttered lines describe a determined marriage of dignity and endurance.

The red toned earth placed at the base of the installation confronts the viewer with the literal core of the installation's theme. Its physicality opens a door of accessibility to the work's meaning by establishing a real and immediate point of identifiable contact for the viewer. As the soil used has been sourced locally, it also introduces an element of community input and spiritual involvement.





## *The Residency*



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Albert McCarthy is the fifth and final recipient of the Trust Bank Canterbury Artist in Residence Award. He has spent a year living and working in the Christchurch Arts Centre. McCarthy's exhibition, **Rock me baby, this aint no chocolate box affair**, marks the close of both his year as Artist in Residence for 1993 and the Award itself.

The Trust Bank Canterbury Artist in Residence Award was established in 1988. It was created to provide an opportunity for New Zealand artists to use the residency to develop a new body of work. Through their presence in the community, the Trust Bank Canterbury Artists in Residence have brought a fresh stimulus to the activity in the visual arts in Christchurch and its environs, and provided a model for and encouragement to local artists.

The residency was a prestigious award which was

available to artists throughout New Zealand (excluding the Canterbury region), who are seriously involved in developing their work, who have a record of innovative and excellent achievements and who are considered to have the potential for significant future development. A stipend, studio, apartment, and opportunity to exhibit were provided by the Award's sponsors.

Previous recipients of the Trust Bank Canterbury Artist in Residence Award have been Tom Kreisler (1989), Di ffrench (1990), Gavin Chilcott (1991) and Lisa Reihana (1992).

The Award, throughout its duration, occupied a unique place in New Zealand as it enjoyed the support of a commercial sponsor. It has been funded by Trust Bank Canterbury, The Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council of New Zealand, The Arts Centre of Christchurch Trust, and the Robert McDougall Art Gallery.

# *The Artist*

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Albert McCarthy (Ngati Tuwharetoa) was born in the central North Island town of Taumaranui in 1954 and he is of Maori, Samoan and European ancestry. He trained as a teacher in Palmerston North, where he currently lives, and attended the Ilam School of Fine Arts at the University of Canterbury in 1979.

He is an artist who works in a multi-disciplinary fashion including painting, sculpture and installations. In the course of expressing an idea, his work explores design, form, colour, texture, space and movement. McCarthy feels his work is both influenced, and

benefits from, his multi-cultural background. He intends that the concepts at work in his art should move freely between cultures just as he does between materials and mediums.

McCarthy received his first art award and began exhibiting while still a teenager. Since then, he has continued to garner awards, had numerous solo shows, and been represented in group exhibitions at national and international levels. His work is in public collections throughout New Zealand, as well as in private collections in Australia, USA and Europe.



## *Selected Awards*

*1993*

Palmerston North City Council  
Recreation, Leisure and Cultural Committee Grant  
Te Atinga Contemporary Maori Visual Arts Grant,  
Te Waka Toi

**Trust Bank Canterbury Artist in Residence Award**

*1992*

Palmerston North City Council Arts and Culture Grant

*1991*

Te Atinga Contemporary Maori Visual Arts Grant,  
Te Waka Toi

*1990*

International Programme Grant, QEII Arts Council of NZ  
Te Atinga Contemporary Maori Visual Arts Grant,  
Te Waka Toi

*1989*

Creative Schemes Grant, QEII Arts Council of NZ  
**Artist in Residence**, Hawkes Bay Polytechnic, Taradale

*1988*

Te Atinga Contemporary Maori Visual Arts Grant,  
Te Waka Toi

**Artist in Residence,**

Palmerston North College of Education

*1986*

Visual Arts Grant, QEII Arts Council of NZ

**Artist in Residence,**

Palmerston North College of Education

## *Selected Exhibitions*

*Solo*

*1993*

*Seeing is Believing* - Te Wai Pounamu,  
Artis Gallery, Auckland

*Seeing is Believing* - Te Wai Pounamu,  
Hogarth Gallery, Sydney

*You Can't Stop Running Water*,  
Manawatu Art Gallery, Palmerston North

*1992*

*Recent Works*, Manawatu Art Gallery, Palmerston North  
University of California, Riverside, USA.

*1990*

*Recent Works*, Govett-Brewster, New Plymouth,  
Sarjeant Gallery, Wanganui, Dowse Art Museum,  
Manawatu Art Gallery, Palmerston North

*1989*

*Plans for Recent Works*,  
Palmerston North College of Education

*1987*

*Te Aroha*, Brooker Gallery, Wellington

*1986*

*The New Net Goes Fishing*, Seismic Gallery, Taupo  
*Recent Works* - Albert McCarthy,

Sarjeant Gallery, Wanganui

*1980*

Christchurch Arts Centre





## Group

1993

*Toi Te Ao*, Aotearoa World Celebration of Indigenous Art  
and History, Auckland

*Visa Gold Art Award*, Wellington Public Library

*Te Tipunga*, School of Fine Arts,

University of Canterbury, Christchurch

*Hit Parade*, Contemporary Art from the Paris Family Collection,  
Wellington City Art Gallery

1992

*Te Waka Toi*, Touring Exhibition of Contemporary Works  
to USA: San Diego, Phoenix, Chicago, Seattle, Hawaii

*Works on Paper*, Janne Land Gallery, Wellington

*Contemporary New Zealand Artists Update*,

Sarjeant Gallery collection, Wanganui

1991

*He Toi Tutanga Na Nga Toa a Te Whare Waananga a Waitaha*,  
School of Fine Arts, University of Canterbury

1990

*Kei Konei Inaianei*, 15 New Zealand Sculptors

*Here and Now*, The Bath-house, Rotorua

*Te Ao Maori*, Touring Exhibition of Contemporary Works,  
Idyllwild, Washington, Memphis, Hawaii

*Nga Paiaka*, Maori Dimension Exhibition, Wellington

1989

*Te Ao Maori*, Sarjeant Art Gallery, Wanganui,

Dowse Art Museum, Lower Hutt

1986

*Nga Puna Waihanga Exhibition*, Ngaruawahia

1985

*Contemporary Works by Maori Artists from Public Collections*,  
Sarjeant Gallery, Wanganui

1984

*Nga Puna Waihanga Exhibition*, Sarjeant Gallery,  
New Zealand Maori Traditional and Contemporary Art

*Exhibition*

1979

Te Rangimarie Centre, Christchurch

1977

*Manawatu Review*, Manawatu Art Gallery,  
Palmerston North

*New Zealand Young Contemporaries 77*,  
Auckland City Art Gallery

*Contemporary Maori Art Exhibition*, opening of new Arts  
Centre, Gisborne

1976

*Manawatu Review*, Manawatu Art Gallery,  
Palmerston North

*Contemporary Maori Art Exhibition*, Waikato Art Museum

*New Zealand Maori Artists Exhibition*,  
South Pacific Arts Festival, Rotorua



## List of works

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Series of nine works on paper

### ***Revelations of Rangi and Papa***

oil pastel, oil paint on paper

four works measuring 810 x 1220mm

three works measuring 810 x 610mm

two works measuring 610 x 810mm

### ***Untitled*** canvas installation

painted canvas, hardboard framework, earth

3500 x 1685 x 5000mm

### ***Ko Tongariro te maunga, ko Taupo te moana***

woollen rug

2800 x 1400mm

## Acknowledgements and artist's statement

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*"Although the focus of this show is the canvas installation, it is important and appropriate to comment on other works within the show, and in short, on my term of residency.*

*The rug is related to family tribal connections. It is placed in the show to welcome you to this body of work.*

*The series of works on paper signifies the completion of an intense period of work as Artist in Residence.*

*They express in their sombreness, a sincere heart-felt connection to this region. They are also an expression of gratitude for having had the privilege of being the Trust Bank Canterbury Artist in Residence, and having had the opportunity to live and work within this region."* (Albert McCarthy)

Albert McCarthy and the Robert McDougall Art Gallery gratefully acknowledge the assistance of *Trust Bank Canterbury*, principal sponsor of the Trust Bank Canterbury Artist in Residence Award, the *Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council of New Zealand*, and the *Arts Centre of Christchurch Trust*.

