

# B. 216



Christchurch Art Gallery  
Te Puna o Waiwhetū

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Winter 2024



# B.

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Cover: Cora-Allan *Encountering Aotearoa  
right now* 2024. Whenua paint, kāpia ink  
on hiapo. Courtesy of the artist

Left: Marilynn Webb *Thunderstorm and  
the Waipori River* (detail) 1981. Hand-coloured  
linocut on paper. Marilynn Webb Estate  
collection



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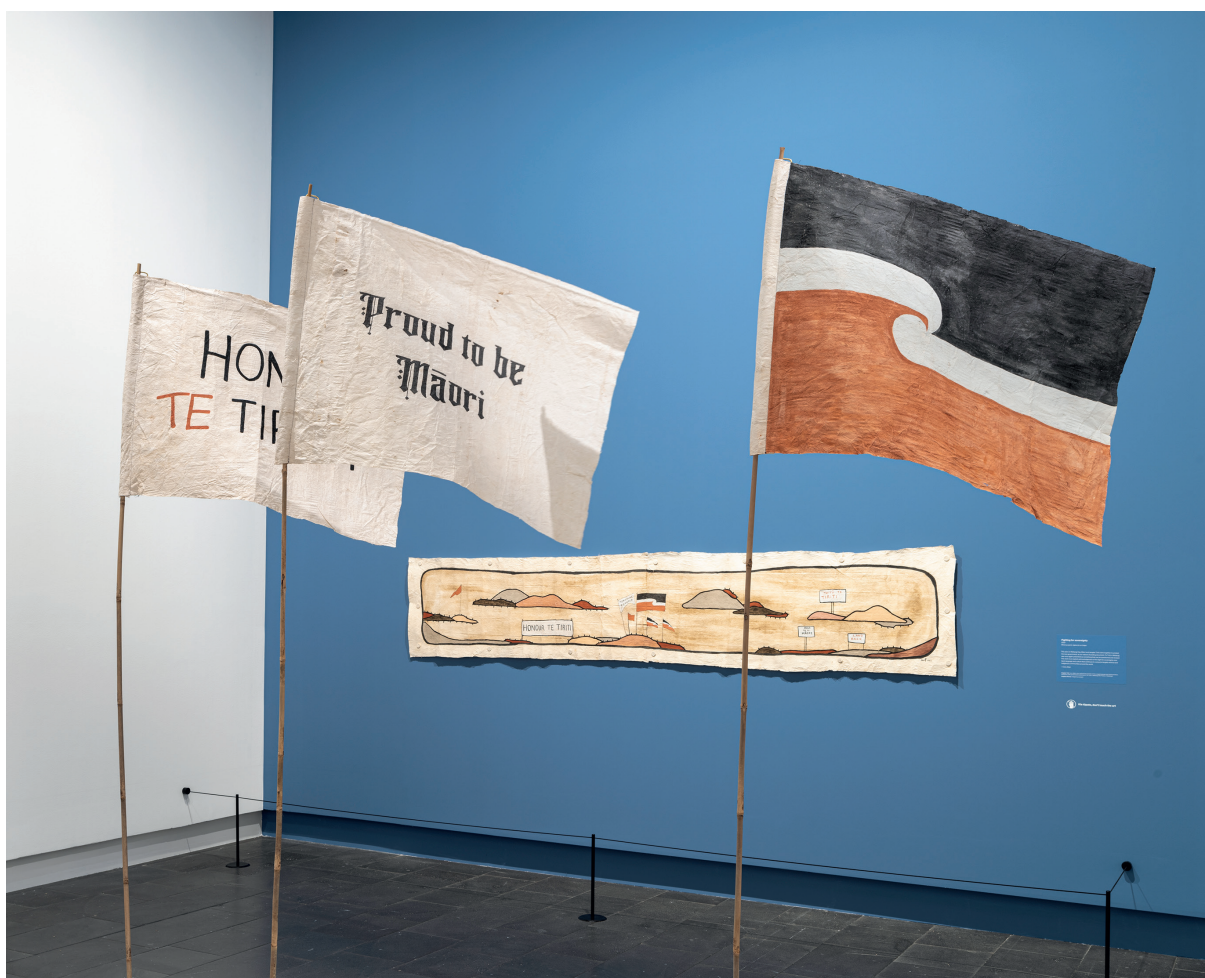
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Above: Installation view of Cora-Allan: *Encountering Aotearoa* at Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū, 2024

Left: Marilyn Webb *Landscape with a Bleeding Rainbow* (from the *Pacific Countdown Suite*) 1985. Linocut, intaglio and relief, hand-coloured on deckle-edged paper. Hocken Collections Uare Taoka o Hākena, University of Otago



# Director's Foreword

**BLAIR JACKSON**

May 2024

Welcome to the winter 2024 edition of *Bulletin*. At its very heart, Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū is built upon a collection that weaves together diverse threads from history, culture and imagination. From contemporary installations that reflect and challenge the world around us to finely crafted historical paintings, each piece tells us something about the human experience, connecting past, present and future in a continuous dialogue. The works in our collection make other statements too: about where we have come from, who we are now, and how we hope others might see us in the future. Far more than a selection of static objects, it's a living resource that will continue to grow and change as time passes and ideas shift, and as Ōtautahi Christchurch continues to adapt and transform into a diverse and exciting cultural powerhouse.

For ten years, the Together partners of the Gallery's incredible Foundation have collectively worked to help us develop the collection, adding to the legacy we care for and share with so many people, in person and online. As we mark a decade of the Together initiative, we have launched a refreshed iteration of the Together programme with an expanded vision. We're focusing on honouring and safeguarding the best of what's gone before us while also re-examining our journey to this point. Importantly, we're also celebrating and supporting the artists of today by providing them with opportunities to make ambitious and adventurous new works. With our eyes firmly on the future, we are focused on how the Gallery will meet its challenges and expectations, and on what our legacy will represent for generations to come. You can read more about our new programme on the Foundation's website at [christchurchartgalleryfoundation.org.nz](http://christchurchartgalleryfoundation.org.nz). My warm thanks to the Foundation and our Together partners for being part of something so generous, forward-thinking and genuinely significant.



One way we celebrate today's artists is through helping them to generate new work. *Toloa Tales*, opening in June, is a new exhibition the Gallery has commissioned from Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland-based artists Edith Amituanai (Aotearoa, Sāmoa) and Sione Tuivailala Monū (Aotearoa, Australia, Tonga). In late 2023, the artists spent five weeks in Sāmoa, making work that explored a friend's participation in the Miss Sāmoa Fa'afafine Pageant, and the return of Edith's aunt to the place of her birth. The video works they produced trace migratory threads between Sāmoa, Tonga, Aotearoa, Australia and the United States through personal stories and the tender moments of everyday life. The pair talked to *Bulletin* about their time in Sāmoa, their process of making, and how their understandings of cultural identity and migration have changed over time.

Also opening at the Gallery this June is *Marilynn Webb: Folded in the Hills*, which comes to us from Dunedin Public Art Gallery. The exhibition's curators Lauren Gutsell, Lucy Hammonds and Bridget Reweti (Ngāti Ranginui, Ngāi Te Rangi) have developed a show that traces five decades of art making by this renowned Ngāpuhi, Te Roroa and Ngāti Kahu artist. Best known as a printmaker, Marilyn Webb (NZOM) was an artist, an educator, a feminist and an environmental activist whose deeply personal and courageous art confronted the salient issues of her time. In this issue of *Bulletin* we're delighted to hear from emeritus professor Ngāhuia te Awekōtuku (Arawa, Tūhoe, Waikato, Ngāpuhi), who writes about what Marilyn meant to her as a friend, and why she is important.

In 'Down and Gritty', curator Ken Hall investigates a subgenre of Aotearoa New Zealand art that he argues is frequently under recognised—that of urban and industrial landscape. Ken pulls together a selection of works from

the exhibition *From Here on the Ground* by very well known and less familiar artists that illustrate how they have explored the subject matter around themselves in their urban lives. Barbara Garrie, senior lecturer in art history at the University of Canterbury, looks at some of the intergenerational pairings in our major collection exhibition *Perilous: Unheard Stories from the Collection*, which closes soon. Drawing on these pairings, she asks how our choices around what to collect and display can help to shape social consciousness and public discourse. And artist Cora-Allan (Ngāpuhi, Ngāti Tumutumu, Niue—Liku, Alofi), whose work makes such an eloquent statement on this issue's cover, talks to her Pāpā Kelly Lafaiki about his experiences working with her in researching and developing the *Experiencing Aotearoa* exhibition.

Our Pagework comes from Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland-based artist Xin Cheng, whose print of scum floating on the surface of a local waterway is considerably more beautiful than it might sound, and this issue's My Favourite is supplied by Lyttelton-based playwright, author and *Press* columnist Joe Bennett.









# Toloa Tales

Conversations with Edith Amituanai  
and Sione Tuívailala Monū

In November and December 2023, artists and friends Sione Tuívailala Monū (Aotearoa, Australia, Tonga) and Edith Amituanai (Aotearoa, Sāmoa) went to Sāmoa together to make new video works for their forthcoming exhibition at Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū: *Toloa Tales*. With extended family and now her mother and aunt living there, Edith has visited several times before. However, this was the first time for Sione. The relationship between Tonga and Sāmoa is one of ancient rivalry and connection, with Tonga more recently exerting colonial force in the region before European and American colonisation. Edith and Sione talked to *Bulletin* about their time in Sāmoa, their process of making, and how their understandings of cultural identity and migration have changed over time.





Edith and Sione after a day's shoot, Siumu, 2023

**Can you talk about the idea of motherland or an ancestral land, and how that might be thought about by Pacific peoples in Aotearoa and in the Pacific?**

**Edith Amituanai:** It's kind of hip to be romantic about your ancestral homeland isn't it? There were times in Sāmoa, drinking Taula beers, when I also thought about it in that romantic way. But when we were there and working, it wasn't such a big deal. So I think that's funny. Our relationship to place is more fluid—you come and go and it's your relationship that changes.

**Sione Tuivailala Monū:** I think growing up my parents and their parents were quite staunch about our culture, our homeland and the practices that they maintained as Tongans. I get that, because they're trying to keep those practices alive while outside of their homeland. But we had some family come from Tonga for my auntie's funeral recently, and they were saying we don't do funerals like this anymore in the islands. We don't extend it for this long like we all grew up doing; we have the ceremony and burial the next day. It was funny because the New Zealand Tongans and Australian Tongans agreed, but they still do it that old way. I found it really cool that in the islands, they're less staunch. They're open to change out there—things that make it easier for them—and I totally understand why. In the diaspora, they're clutching at something they don't want to lose.

**Edith:** They're holding on to their version of the culture that they arrived with. I understand that.

**Sione:** I guess our relationship to that culture does change as we get older, and we have to decide what it is to us now and how we want to continue forward.

**Edith:** Because when you're little you don't have control over it. It's something that you're raised in and shown. And as you get older, you have to figure it out for yourself—figure out what it means to you.

**Sione:** I also find it interesting to think about what our relationship to the Pacific was like growing up. Because it sounds like we both had a strong upbringing within our culture. And I find with artists specifically, that as they get older they question more how they want to take it forward. I relate more to the way homeland Tongans are more flexible with the culture. I think artists are always just naturally challenging things.

**Edith:** Our relationship to the Pacific is complicated, isn't it? When you're younger, you're in it, right? If you get the opportunity you can try to push back, but you are in it. I remember it feeling suffocating when I was a teenager—why can't I drink with my fifteen-year-old friends? Which is not really cultural. But you don't understand that and you think that some of the things





Edith Amituanai Vaimoe (still) 2024. High definition video. Courtesy of the artist

you're inheriting are cultural but they're not. So I think it's more relaxed than I thought. Although I am guilty of romanticising it, too.

**Sione:** Well, our parents were completely romantic about island life I think, or at least mine were. They framed it in that way, I guess, because they grew up there, and then they came here. The islands changed but they'd left.

**Edith:** Yeah, so we get the 1980s version via Tonga via Australia.

**Why did you decide to travel to Sāmoa and make new works?**

**Sione:** We had been in conversation about dream projects and films we would make in the islands one day, and then the opportunity presented itself when the Gallery commissioned this project. So we put together this trip to make something. We had a friend competing in the 2023 Miss Sāmoa Fa'afafine Pageant and we wanted to support them and make work around that. But Edith when did you start this idea of filming your auntie? When did you think of that? Because she moved back there quite recently, right?

**Edith:** A film gives you a lot of motivation—you get a team with you and that allows you to do a bigger project.

And it's always good to work with what you have, so I thought, oh, who best to make a project about... I really like people that want the limelight. It makes it easier. And my auntie said, "I'm not going to miss out, it's the opportunity of a lifetime!" So that's an easy decision. What about you?

**Sione:** I've always wanted to visit Sāmoa because my family has connections there way back. I had built this romantic image of going back and connecting to my ancestors, my homeland. And I was very curious to see Sāmoa compared to Tonga, because I've visited Tonga a few times to make art. I had a feeling it wouldn't live up to the ideas in my head, but luckily it was way more than that! Also, I wanted to make a bigger moving-image work—I've always just worked on my phone and this was my chance to work with a team. Yeah, big equipment to prove to myself that I can do it.

**Edith:** It's fun to make work like that. Oh, can I do it? Let's see, can I upscale this thing? Can we do it in international waters? I think it's fun. It's also a pretty amazing thing to be able to do as an artist. That's our job—to go to Sāmoa and work for five weeks! I have been a couple of times for jobs but not for this long. And not where I had the lead. So it was amazing to work with my family and wider community on a project like that. That was pretty wild and a huge privilege.



**Sione:** We also caught the Fa'afafine pageant with Samora Kake. That was great to see some locals or some of our people from Aotearoa in the islands. Some of our friends had a really beautiful, emotional time there. Reconnecting. That was sort of what I had romanticised in my head that I would experience, so it was a privilege to get to see them have that connection of being back in their homeland.

**Edith:** I don't think I'm wired that way. But I think the feeling of working there with your friends and your family might be the same kind of thing?

**Sione:** Yeah, I definitely appreciated that. Making that connection to the land in that way. And I'm also a Capricorn, so I like working. I realised even if I was in super beautiful islands, I wouldn't have enjoyed it if I wasn't making something. What about your auntie? Why did she move back to Sāmoa and what do you think returning after so long was like for her?

**Edith:** I think that you get to a certain age and the call to return home gets louder and stronger. I also think that that conversation was started by my mum when she visited a few years ago and encouraged her to think about moving back to Sāmoa. You can reinvent yourself back in your homeland in a way that is harder to do in America or New Zealand. So it's another phase of her life, a reinvention, a homecoming, but also she's more redemptive in this later stage of life. If I had filmed her when she was younger, in America, it would be a completely different film. I guess I'm getting her on her wiser contemplative return, but I think it is also an excuse to do something that looks at the idea of people returning home, because many Sāmoans want to do that—whether they've lived there before or not. The idea of buying another house in Sāmoa is a very current topic now. So yeah, I maybe used her as an excuse to explore this idea of home too. How did it feel for you visiting Sāmoa for the first time?

**Sione:** It was beautiful. I was comparing it to Tonga a lot when I was there. But it's just so different. And I found it interesting. A lot of people there know about Tonga's history of colonisation and when they found out I was Tongan they would say "Oh, Tonga, yeah yous used to rule here. We used to be slaves to you", and they said it so nonchalantly. And that was surprising—it is obviously traumatic history, but the way they presented that history to me wasn't with any trauma. It was a joke.



Edith Amituanai Vaimoe (still) 2024.  
High definition video. Courtesy of the artist









Sione at work, Sāmoa, 2023

**Edith:** But here I've seen, myself included, we'll fight people for making fun of us. If Tongan's are like "Haha we used to rule you" we get really upset about it. But Tonga's rule is very much a part of Sāmoa's story, it's a part of our history. There's an acceptance. It's not like a disconnection between the cultures.

**Sione:** Is that time do you think? Because, I imagine, the more recent colonisation history is fresher in the minds of Sāmoans and the trauma of it is more evident. But it's almost like Tonga's colonisation isn't on that level anymore, it's history...

**Edith:** It's just that "Oh yeah the Tongans did rule here and their islands aren't that far away. They used to come around here quite often." So yeah, I think it's like the neighbours or something. Cousins.

**Sione:** I found the homes, the structures in Sāmoa, so Pacific Island coded, in that you kept a lot of your structures from pre-colonial times. And in Tonga it's nothing like that—we don't have any Indigenous structures. We got rid of them. Even tatau.

**Did your perspective change from the visit and spending time there? When was the last time you had visited before this trip?**

**Edith:** I think I went three times last year—I was also there in March and then again in May. May was for a cousin's wedding and I photographed that. And March was a saofa'i, and I photographed that too. I think the camera offers incredible access that you don't get when you don't have a camera. People thought I was media or working for the New Zealand Government when I showed up.

**Sione:** Oh, and they thought we were the university.

**Edith:** I guess that's who they understood that we were funded by. It was very beautiful the way we were treated—they really took our project seriously. It made me want to work there again. What about you?

**Sione:** It was so smooth. And being privy to your connections, your family, getting the special treatment. That was really nice.

**Edith:** Nice being fanned when you eat...

**Sione:** Oh my gosh. We don't go that far in Tonga. But, we should...





**How do the scenes differ from Aotearoa for both contemporary art and queer culture?**

**Sione:** I didn't really get to explore the scene there as much as I would have liked. But the pageant was amazing. I saw the Fa'afafine Foundation, and the previous prime minister made a speech.

**Edith:** Yeah, he sounded like a good ally. What he was saying, his speech was good. But that could have been a whole other film, just focusing on the pageant and all of that. How did you manage to negotiate what to include from it in your film?

**Sione:** Well, I was lucky to have Samora and Cameron [Ah Loo-Matamua] and the Aotearoa team they had with them there to work with, and I got to shoot Cameron's village which was beautiful, and them in the fale. If we had longer I would have preferred to connect with the local scene, but I had to decide that it was very much just shooting me and my experience of the island. But it would have been cool to work with more of the locals.

**Edith:** You'll have to go back again.

**Sione:** What did your friends and family think about the work you were making?

**Edith:** I get the same reaction, whether I'm filming or photographing here or anywhere. It's kind of like, sort of interested? They don't really understand it. It can be exciting—someone coming to town to photograph you, but also uncomfortable. Someone filming you while you're eating crab? I guess they're a bit puzzled: why do you want to come film us collecting seafood? But I don't mind that, because it's hard to explain when you don't know what you're doing either. We're just going to have to go back and show them what we did. That'd be so fun! What did your friends or family think about you going to Sāmoa as a Tongan?

**Sione:** They were surprised! Yeah, they didn't really understand. The older family thought it was funny, but I guess my immediate family know me and the kind of art I make and they were curious. Sāmoa is not a subject my family really deep dive into. So I guess I was curious and wanted to see why.

**How does your film practice differ from your photographic practice? Are there things you can do through film that you can't do with photography?**

**Edith:** When I photograph, I think in single images. I'm trying to sum everything up in a single frame, which I think is closer to a painting, or what I think about painting. It's more constructive, I suppose, in my mind.







# “We get the 1980s version via Tonga via Australia.”

I’m looking for the perfect frame. But in filmmaking, perhaps I’m thinking more sequentially, and I’ve had to let go of some of those ideas of perfect frames. To allow the camera to be a bit loose. Not that I love a shaky camera, but I allow the camera to move in a way that I don’t with photography. If every scene that you have is painted as a kind of Sistine Chapel in your mind it can be overwhelming as a sequence because you do need some quieter moments. Whereas I don’t like that in photography, I’m a bit more ruthless, because you’re only going for one printed image.

**Sione:** And I guess the film is more the relationship of images to each other.

**Edith:** Yeah. And you’re thinking about where it goes in an order, what you’re working up to. Someone said to me, “Oh yeah, I can tell their filmmaking practice is like this. They film something from one angle and then they’ll do it again from another angle, and then they’ll do the same thing from a different angle or perspective.” And that made me recoil. I was like, urgh, I don’t like that. I don’t know why, but I still think in a kind of one frame. The camera is like this. Often it doesn’t move.

**Sione:** Well, I guess film is milking the theme as much as you can for the edit.

**Edith:** What about your editing process—how do you develop a narrative in your work?

**Sione:** I think my process is quite loose. I have ideas around character and world, and then I have scenes in my head. But the edit is king for me. I love finding the narrative in the edit, and it’s all about getting as much of the character narrative as I have, maybe not complete when we’re filming, but getting as much of the idea shot as possible. And then in the edit I find that narrative. That’s more my practice, even with my phone, and I wasn’t sure if it would translate to film, which is more like a big production. But I did stick to that process while we were filming and I’m figuring it out now in the edit. I haven’t finished the edit yet.

**Edith:** But you’re still finding something?

**Sione:** Still finding. I’ve got scenes and sequences down and I like the narrative of it at this stage. I haven’t figured out the full film narrative yet. And we still need to shoot some stuff here. But my favourite part is connecting all the imagery in the editing process.

*This is an edited version of a conversation recorded by Sione and Edith in March 2024. Sione Tuivailala Monū and Edith Amituanai: Toloa Tales is on display from 8 June until 13 October 2024.*

**Fa’afafine**—people who identify themselves as having a third gender or non-binary role in Sāmoa

**Fale**—house

**Saofa’i**—the formal acceptance of a new matai or chief by their family and village





Marilynn Webb *Lake Mahinerangi 22 1975*. Etching.  
Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū,  
gift of Holcim (New Zealand) Limited, 2003





*Marilynn Webb*

*Ngāhuia te Awekōtuku*

*He mana ā whenua, he mana wahine*  
Female power comes from the earth



*“She flowed with them, and around them; she chose when to speak, and when to remain silent, and the eloquence of her work sharply defined her response.”*

As I write these pages, I remember the stories Marilyn Webb told me.

In Te Tai Tokerau—Northland, early 1960s—Marilynn met with her colleagues Ralph Hotere and Muru Walters to plan their arts teaching programme. As promising graduates of the innovative Art and Craft Scheme to foster Māori education, they were based in their home territory. Although raised in Ōpōtiki, Marilyn’s Māori genealogy connected her to Ngāpuhi, Te Roroa and Ngāti Kahu. Like the men, she was home. When they asked her, “Can you cook?”, she promptly snapped back, “Of course I can!”

That encounter she’d often recall with some relish; the question summarised all the challenges and expectations that she experienced over the ensuing decades. She flowed with them, and around them; she chose when to speak, and when to remain silent, and the eloquence of her work sharply defined her response. To those men, to the world, and to us.

I was invited to write about why Marilyn matters, and what she was for us, what she meant. To describe in readable, easy language, for the general public, how I feel about her legacy and her work, as an artist, as a Māori, as a woman, as an educator.

Taku mareikura, tangi tonu te ngākau mōu. Tears are still fresh on our faces; what do I say about you?

We first met at a Grafton home whose owner, an elegant woman from Ngāti Tūwharetoa, was hosting a meal (Māori food and lots to drink) for Ralph, Murupaenga, Para Matchitt, you and poet Hone Tuwhare. It was in the mid 1960s; a salon for Māori arts educators and admirers. I was a stunned first-year student and you were quietly sophisticated, just back from overseas. Some time later, at the historic gathering of Māori artists and writers at Te Kaha in 1973, we met again and you described how I hid behind my hair at the Grafton house, and how you drew me out by talking about the North. We laughed so much that weekend at the marae above the sea. That hui was a turning point for Māori creatives, and you were a pathfinder, a female artist of commitment and courage. You lived the proverb, “Whaia tō iti kahurangi; me tuōhu koe, he maunga teitei”; follow your innermost desire, and if you bow, let it be to the highest mountain. And then stand tall, move on.

This is what you always did, conscious of obstacles, steep walls, hidden bogs and scrubby patches, disappointments and traps abounding. You evaded them with skill and delicacy, and you left your own trail of colour, of texture, of calm, of triumph. And sometimes, of tears. He karanga maha koe; you had many callings, and many parts. Art-maker, wahine toa, cat lover, mother, educator, feminist, eco-warrior, visionary. Loving friend. Your voice, euphonious,





Photographer unknown [Marilynn Webb] c. 1975. Uncatalogued archival material. Marilynn Webb Estate collection, Hocken Collections Uare Taoka a Hākena, University of Otago

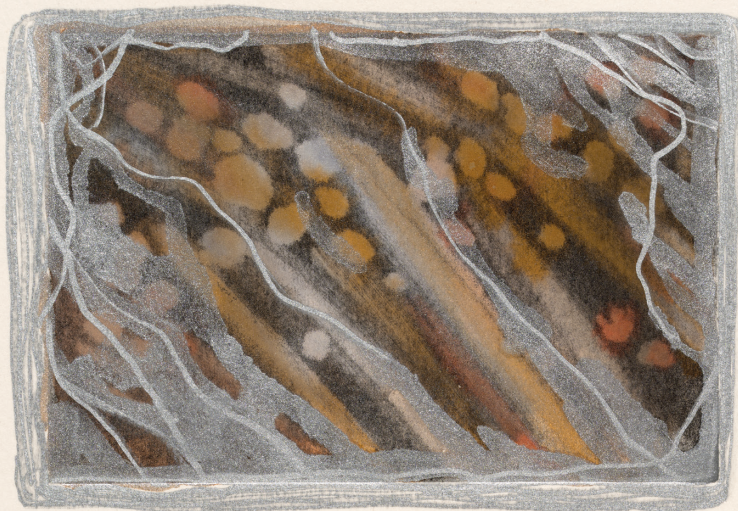
gentle, compelling, could freeze a classroom or warm a meeting house. It could enchant and sustain, capturing and holding one's consciousness like your visual works, which take us not only into your world, but make us look more closely at our own. Looking at what you presented, we were pressured to look at ourselves—through your artistry in blending Māori and Celt, the plaiting together of traditions across antipodean distance, offering impact and immediacy in the world of spirit, of wairua, of invocation to the elements of te taiao, particularly earth, sky and water. Hoki wairua mai rā, e tai e... we feel you are still here, in your work.

After teaching for a few years, then taking off to enjoy crafts and creative adventures around the world, Marilynn returned to Aotearoa, and the Frances Hodgkins Fellowship in Ōtepoti Dunedin. And thus the far south, its landscape, people, vegetation, energies and differences, became the place of her soul. She had an entire year, financially supported and housed with a studio, to do nothing but make art. Nothing else! This enthralled her. After fifteen years of managing her teaching commitments and squeezing her creative endeavours around that full-time job, she experienced the freedom and the pure joy of focusing on her passion. Doing her real work. She produced, she crafted, she experimented, she played. Her friendship with Ralph Hotere

deepened and, with Hone Tuwhare staying around after the Burns Fellowship, the fires of Te Tai Tokerau smouldered and cast their special glow across the far south. As artists, they were all politically aware and active, supporting Māori rights, and damning the Apartheid regime, the Vietnam war and nuclear testing, especially in the Pacific. These salient issues inspired many important works from all of them. Sometimes they'd collaborate, and the spell-making of Tuwhare enhanced the images of Hotere and Webb—all voices from the far north, from another island.

The 1974 campaign against the proposed aluminium smelter at Aramoana ignited her genius for subtle protest and she created exquisite works. She mastered and manipulated different techniques and technologies, some requiring immense physical strength; and she resumed teaching and mentoring in the tertiary sector. She considered printmaking to be a woman's art form; neglected as mere craft, yet responsive to time, action, space. And so transportable; she observed that works could be rolled up carefully in a tube and just posted off, rather like an ordinary parcel, anywhere around the planet. It was accessible, affordable and gratifying too. She reached so many people and places; her elegant little Christmas and New Year cards—small prints on her favourite themes—remain a treasured wonder in many homes around the country and the world.





#### ARAMOANA SOUP

Find a dead albatross, a dead swan, a dead shag, a dead heron, a dead seal, a dead penguin, a dead shark, some dead sandpipers and assorted flat fish. Prepare a stock with them and let it stand for some days. Strain, and discard bones, beaks, feathers, feet and skin. Add the following ingredients to the stock:—

- 1 sack of blue mussels
- 1 sack of cockles
- 1 sack of flouride
- 1 sack of carbon waste
- 1 sack of cyanide
- 1 sack of southern tua tua

Cook for a week at alternating high and low temperatures. Garnish with dry chopped salt marsh vegetation and sea weed. Choose a restaurant with a high noise level and serve the soup at blood heat in aluminium bowls. Finally, add the cost of the electricity incurred in making the soup, to the diner's bill.





Marilynn Webb Lake Mahinerangi 43 1981. Etching. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery  
Te Puna o Waiwhetū, Lawrence Baigent / Robert Erwin bequest, 2003





"Thunderstorm & the Waipori River" Marilyn Woff, Dunedin 1981



*“Marilynn spoke truth to power.  
She produced imagery that either  
predicted or documented change.”*

Marilynn maintained a high level of studio practice, even during the enriching diversion of motherhood with young Ben, and she consistently produced works of calibre, provocation and beauty. She explored and experimented; she was excited by the new. Some projects, like the commissioned exhibit *Taste Before Eating* for the Dowse Art Museum in Lower Hutt, revealed a quirky sense of humour, reducing significant sites to edible and extreme foodstuffs, consumables. Literally cooked up and served, they were the boiling down and reduction of potential crisis and calamity.

Throughout the decades, Marilyn considered the threat of environmental catastrophe, envisioning the possibility of a nuclear Pacific, emphasising her strong faith in the relationship between tangata—the people—and whenua—the land. Or moana, the ocean. However profound and possible the looming threat, there is still a sense, a line, a thread of hope, of light, that comes through, lifting the heart of the viewer, honouring the mana of Papatūānuku, the Earth Mother Gaia; promising to sustain and protect her.

Marilynn’s work was deeply personal, and this exposure required courage. Hers was a profound sense of purpose, showing and sharing her inner self and her own experiences through the placement of her hands upon the surface of her works, asserting her continuous presence within each image. Hands demonstrate and deliver mana—they are instruments of creativity, action and commitment. With her hands, Marilyn spoke truth to power. She produced imagery that either predicted or documented change. Nuclear testing, the toxic aluminium smelter, the irreplaceable loss of natural habitat and endemic vegetation—she persisted in making images of protection, of active defence, to counter spiritual and physical incursion, and she achieved this by maintaining

a consistent and fierce work ethic until her last days with us. From the teaching workshops to her glorious Dowling Street studio, then on to her lush, layered garden and spacious, light-filled villa in Morningson, there was always something in progress. She taught not by telling, but by showing—her hands-on, fingers stained, aching-arms-and-shoulders-and-lower-back approach mentored an outstanding flow of students, most of whom remain in the sector as practitioners, teachers, writers and curators; they are a vital part of her legacy. Some contributed to the magnificent survey exhibit, *Folded in the Hills*, a visual triumph that resonates from 1968 to her final years and is a revelation of her many ways of seeing. Of reminding us.

For me, Marilyn matters because hers was a life of giving, of understanding the human spirit, of growing. She decided to live and flourish far away from the earth of her own bones and blood; she constructed a lifeway as her ancestors did, after crossing oceans and continents. She gazed into the still, smothering waters of Mahinerangi, and inhaled the stained and streaked horizons of Mānīatoto, and she remained with them, and they embraced her. She made her choice.

Takoto mai rā koe, e tai, i te poho o Papatūānuku; kia tupu anō tō pākārito.

Rest well in the breast of the Earth Mother, for your legacy will flourish.

*Ngāhuia te Awekōtuku is an emeritus professor who has enjoyed many roles in the cultural heritage and university sectors. She is a fellow of the Auckland War Memorial Museum, and a companion of the Royal Society of New Zealand. Marilyn Webb: Folded in the Hills is on display from 8 June until 13 October.*





# Down and Gritty

Ken Hall

The art history of Aotearoa New Zealand includes a subgenre of landscape painting that is often under recognised, but enlivens the story of this country in gritty, illuminating ways. Investigating the twentieth-century painters who focused on the urban and industrial exposes a rich seam of material, with subject-matter ranging from gasworks, hydroelectric plants and foundries to factories, warehouses and cityscapes, workshops, wharves and railway yards. The artists are a combination of well known and less familiar names, but it is notable that this direction developed most strongly among the Ōtautahi Christchurch-trained: two-thirds of the artists in *From Here on the Ground* attended the Canterbury College School of Art, where many also taught. It was a training ground regarded as among the most progressive in the Southern Hemisphere for several decades in the first half of the century.







Housed in a Gothic Revival-style building by the Botanic Gardens on the corner of Hereford Street and Harper Avenue, the school's location encouraged the pragmatic use of its natural and built surroundings. Students were directed to paint and draw on the Ōtākaro Avon riverbank or to survey architectural spaces such as the nearby Provincial Council Chambers, sketching in its corridors or from selected roof positions. A striking example of a student response to the city's built fabric appears in a work in oils by Rhona Haszard from 1921, framing an outlook a little further up Hereford Street. The view is through Strand Lane to Cathedral Square, where lined up motorcars sound a stylish, modern note.<sup>1</sup>

Much of the city's art teaching and exhibiting activity occurred in proximity to the college, and many of the tutors lived or had studios nearby. The main local exhibition venue, the Canterbury Society of Arts, was a zigzag across the grid to the corner of Durham and Armagh streets, where the latest productions were presented annually in end-of-summer shows. In 1927, a small clique of mainly local graduates, announcing themselves as The Group, held their first exhibition in a shared upstairs studio space in Cashel Street, making a demarcation towards a more modern approach.

A newly arrived student at the School of Art that year was Rita Angus, who would later exhibit with both groups and extend the urban and industrial genre. At the beginning of 1933, the height of the Great Depression, Angus was living at 120 Ferry Road, an unlikely cultural hub on the edge of industrial Waltham, under the same roof as her husband Alfred Cook as well as his mother and brother James, a teacher at the Canterbury College School of Art. Rita's youngest sister Jean had also just joined the household, arriving from Napier to study at the school. Angus's marriage was becoming more than strained, and the couple would separate in the following year. From this constricted domestic setting, Angus took a short walk to make sketches at the nearby Christchurch Gas Company, marshalling resources to paint her memorable *Gasworks*, a small painting with psychological resonance. Featuring a lone figure, burdened and sympathetically portrayed, walking beneath an unyielding industrial framework, it also reflects something of the societal pressure of this time. Angus extracted material for two paintings from this atmospheric location, showing these alongside four other new works at the Canterbury Society of Arts in 1933. *Gasworks*, offered at five guineas, was the work that made ripples.<sup>2</sup> *A Coal Yard*, at four guineas, was not mentioned in reviews and remains unlocated.



Rhona Haszard *Untitled (Looking Through Strand Lane from Hereford Street, Christchurch)* 1921. Oil on canvas board. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū, purchased 2002



Angus found friendship and solidarity with other artists including Louise Henderson, a Paris-born embroidery and interior designer who settled in Christchurch in 1925, began teaching at the School of Art and became similarly drawn to industrial subject-matter. In the spring of 1933, Henderson exhibited seven works at the inaugural New Zealand Society of Artists exhibition in Christchurch, including four titled *Halswell Quarries*, *Industry*, *Brick Works*, and *Brick Kiln*, *Opawa*—all now unknown and with an obviously non-scenic, gritty focus. Prior to the exhibition, Henderson had shown only textiles locally; her ability with colour and compositional structure now came to the fore in a different way. Her transition to paint also impressed a reviewer who noted

“Mrs L. Henderson, known as a craft worker, surprises by the ability of her oil paintings.”<sup>3</sup>

Another of Henderson’s works in the 1933 catalogue was *View from Studio Window*, which it is tempting to correlate with her attentive architectural interpretation of a section of Manchester Street, east of Cathedral Square. Scanning Post Office directories from the period doesn’t line her up neatly with a studio in the place we know it was painted—the seven-storey New Zealand Express Company Building (more recently known as Manchester Courts, a survivor until the earthquakes). But it feels like an outlook she knew well before she chose to paint it.



Louise Henderson *Manchester Street*, Christchurch c. 1933. Oil on board. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū, Dame Louise Henderson Collection, presented by the McKegg Family, 1999



Many of the locations pictured in works in this show carry close personal associations for the artists who made them. Among these is Archibald Nicoll's *Industrial Area*. Nicoll found good, paintable material not far from his rented studio on Cambridge Terrace, in the lines of warehouses, factories and cars on Tuam Street. Director at the School of Art through the 1920s and later solely a teacher, Nicoll became regarded a leader in what became known as the Canterbury School. The art school's curriculum habitually included sending students off on bicycles to sketch and paint at visually complex locations such as the several brick-works along Port Hills Road in Hillsborough and St Martins. With its bicycle propped against a lamppost, evidence of a nearer-to-town cycle mission comes in Juliet Peter's *Poorer Christchurch*, painted in about 1938 while still a student. The title shows she has ventured beyond her usual home territory: the towering chimney behind the old wooden houses suggests this could be Rita Angus's old neighbourhood.

Juliet Peter was among the many to be impacted by the onset of war in 1939. By then a Diploma of Fine Arts graduate, she took on new skills as a nursing voluntary aid and in an office at Christchurch Hospital, before joining the Women's Land Service in 1942, established to replace younger male farm workers fighting overseas. Artists whose lives and careers were interrupted or shifted off course included more than a few who headed overseas with the armed forces. Among those set to war work on home soil was Bill Sutton, another recent art school graduate and part-time teacher, redirected into roadmaking, painting army murals and designing for the Camouflage Unit.

Artist's families also joined this bigger picture. Louise Henderson faced imaginable disruption due to her husband Hubert's nine-month war service as second-in-command of a trainee battalion in Burnham, before being deployed to the Western Desert. With his release from service and appointment as a secondary schools' inspector in Te Whanganui-a-Tara Wellington in 1941, Henderson ended her fifteen years' teaching at the Canterbury College School of Art to enter full-time teaching at the Education Department's Correspondence Schools Branch, while developing its needlework and embroidery syllabus.<sup>4</sup> Maintaining her sharp agility in this role while continuing to paint, she is one of over half the artists in *From Here on the Ground* who were teachers, many of these at Canterbury College. Henderson was also the first of the local leading lights in the period to head to Wellington, with the later departures of Juliet Peter, Evelyn Page and Rita Angus further depleting the local painting and exhibiting scene.

*“Many of the locations pictured in works in this show carry close personal associations for the artists who made them.”*



Archibald Nicoll *Industrial Area* 1941.  
Oil on canvas board. Collection of  
Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o  
Waiwhetū, purchased 2004



Juliet Peter Poorer *Christchurch*  
c. 1938. Watercolour. Collection of  
Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o  
Waiwhetū, gift of Alastair and  
Gaelyn (Ensor) Elliott, 2018







Buster Black *Black Painting: Night Landscape* 1962. Oil, enamel on hardboard.  
Collection of Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, gift of Matthew McCahon, 2008







*“Artists appear to be most commonly drawn to urban or industrial subject-matter through personal connection, related to their own place and circumstances.”*



Sam Cairncross Moon Over McKillop Street, Porirua 1974. Oil on board. Collection of Rognvald and Deborah Marcus



Wellington-based Sam Cairncross took a less collegial route than that available to Christchurch artists, taking his first part-time art classes at Wellington Technical College in his late twenties in 1939. Exempted from war service, Cairncross developed as a painter while working as a labourer and then as a hospital porter until 1947, when (following a solo exhibition) a French Government scholarship awarded him a year's study in France. When he painted his semi-autobiographical *Wellington Hospital* in 1951, he was earning his living through painting alone.<sup>5</sup> By 1955, Cairncross and his family were living in a modest state house in McKillop Street, Porirua. While the bustling streets and buildings of central Wellington were his favoured painting territory, he remained alert to his everyday surroundings and created something of a rarity in *Moon Over McKillop Street, Porirua* (1974) for its moonlit, urban working-class setting.

Another Te Ika-a-Māui North Island artist in this story is Thomas Desmond Pihama (Ngāti Maniapoto, Ngāti Rangī), better known as Buster Black, who almost exclusively employed nighttime settings.<sup>6</sup> Born in Taumarunui in the King Country in 1932, he is understood to have destroyed most of his own work by the late 1980s, a fact made more painful through the strength of what remains. Black took up painting after moving to Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland in his mid-twenties, working as a factory hand and storeman and from 1956 attending classes at Auckland City Art Gallery, where he befriended its then keeper and newly appointed deputy director, painter Colin McCahon. Marja Bloem and Martin Browne have noted that “the two men became close friends and spiritual confidants, pupil and teacher influencing each other”, and that their “conversations ... ranged across Christianity, music and painting”.<sup>7</sup> Black's extraordinary night scenes include distant urban vistas, punctuated as if by pinpoints of light, blinking street layouts mapping across whenua that breathes and undulates. His relationship to location here is as tangata whenua through whakapapa, and implicitly through experience of both belonging and exclusion, a double role of insider looking out and outsider looking in.

Artists appear to be most commonly drawn to urban or industrial subject-matter through personal connection, related to their own place and circumstances. There is at times a sense of calm, distanced regard, as well as regular evidence of the art school training process, with attention given to qualities of light, colour and formal or spatial relationships. This is distinct from practical recording. In a general sense, such works share a kind of exploratory conviction, a need to bring forth something truthful from where they had landed. They are about more than wanting to stand out on art society exhibition walls, and the dialogue between artists opened new possibilities for subject-matter. There are also sparks that fly between works. The paintings brought together here bring some of this into sharp detail.

### **Ken Hall** *Curator*

*From Here on the Ground is on display until 17 November 2024.*

1 Among works she exhibited in 1921–2 were *Grey Day* and *Rink Taxis*—a local taxicab company—either of which title could fit this painting.

2 These include a response by Doris Lusk, *Gasworks and Foreshore, Dunedin*, c. 1935. See also Peter Vangioni, ‘As Stark and Grey as Stalin's Uniform’, *Bulletin* 192, winter 2018.

3 ‘N.Z. Society of Artists. First Exhibition Opened,’ *Press*, 27 October 1933, p.12.

4 In 1944, Henderson also became an assistant teacher in arts and crafts at Wellington Teachers' Training College.

5 *Wellington Hospital* was purchased by *Landfall* editor Charles Brasch, published in the journal in 1952, and given to the Hocken Library in 1963.

6 He was also known as Buster Pihama and John Pihama. See Megan Tamati-Quennell, <https://mccahonhouse.org.nz/100/megan-tamati-quennell/>.

7 Black is credited as a catalyst for McCahon's 1964–74 waterfalls series. See Marja Bloem and Martin Browne, *Colin McCahon: A Question of Faith*, 2002, pp.201–2.



# What Can Exhibitions Tell Us?

What Can  
Exhibitions  
Tell Us?



# Listening to Perilous: Unheard Stories from the Collection

Barbara Garrie

In a corner of *Perilous: Unheard Stories from the Collection*, two self portraits are placed as if in conversation with one another. Made by Allie Eagle and Olivia Spencer Bower in 1974 and 1950 respectively, the pairing creates a striking vignette, and hints at some of the important themes that drive this exhibition. In her expressive graphite on paper drawing, Eagle presents herself with a steely-eyed focus that perfectly captures the clarity of vision and determination of an artist committed to advocating for the rights of women in Aotearoa. Eagle was a pivotal figure in the feminist movement of the 1970s, and did much to amplify the voices and experiences of women through her own art practice and curatorial projects. Spencer-Bower, whose retrospective exhibition Eagle curated in 1977, was a similarly progressive artist. Beginning her career as a young student of the Slade School of Art in 1929 before returning to Aotearoa in 1931, she pursued her practice during a period when it was certainly a challenging prospect for a woman to set herself up as a professional artist. Like Eagle, she pictures herself with a committed and steadfast gaze that embodies her spirit of radical defiance. Although produced twenty-four years apart and by artists at different stages in their careers, these two works represent a compelling intergenerational dialogue, their placement deftly illustrating that struggles for recognition and empowerment remain ongoing pursuits, and indeed, that art continues to play a key role in pressing for change.



Allie Eagle *Self Portrait* 1974. Graphite on paper. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery  
Te Puna o Waiwhetū, purchased 2012





Olivia Spencer Bower *Self Portrait* 1950. Oil on board. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery  
Te Puna o Waiwhetū, purchased 1954





Joanna Margaret Paul *Barrys Bay: Interior with Bed and Doll* 1974. Oil and watercolour on paper and hardboard. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū, purchased 1974



Throughout *Perilous* there are numerous examples of these kinds of transgenerational relationships. Take, for example, Nova Paul's beautiful and intimate moving-image work *Still Light* (2015), which responds to a poem by Joanna Margaret Paul and is positioned alongside one of Paul's own paintings, *Barrys Bay: Interior with Bed and Doll* (1974). In both, the domestic contexts of home—its spaces, objects and activities—are rendered through poetic reflection on the everyday. *Still Light* calls back to Paul's interior, celebrating the textures of the domestic environ (one which is still tied in many ways to the lives of women, and mothers) with a cinematic touch that is both gentle and intense, and finds meaningful connection through a shared understanding of the difficulties and joys of whānau and family life.

The importance of whakapapa also underpins the work of artists such as Areta Wilkinson and Ana Iti whose respective works *Hei Tupa* (2013) and *Treasures Left by Our Ancestors* (2016) are brought together in another persuasive curatorial pairing. For both Wilkinson and Iti, their art making is rooted in the connectivities of whakapapa, whenua, and mātauranga Māori. *Hei Tupa*, a contemporary reinterpretation of a tupa shell necklace, is a piece that connects to a rich Māori history of adornment and, as Wilkinson writes, “a generational art making process.”<sup>1</sup> Often working within the spaces of museum collections, she reconnects with taoka that now live in heritage archives. To these taoka *tuku iho*, she notes, “I have added my ‘words and stories’ that anchor the concepts in my time, and if these new works pass into the hands of others, they too may attract further *kōrero*”.<sup>2</sup> Iti's video work *Treasures Left by Our Ancestors*, is an attempt to connect with *tūpuna* through a sharp critical reflection on museological displays and the narratives they construct. Crouched in front of an old diorama at Canterbury Museum—now removed as part of the museum's current renovation project—Iti looks back at the display, mimicking the poses of the figures in what she describes as an “act of empathy and endurance”.<sup>3</sup> Although supposedly representing the lives of early Māori in Waitaha Canterbury, these





Nova Paul *Still Light* 2015. 16mm film transferred to digital video, colour, sound, duration 6 mins 35 secs. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū, purchased 2020



**“Shows like *Perilous* do important work in highlighting the ways in which galleries and exhibitions tell stories, and the power they can have in doing so.”**

Ana Iti Treasures Left by Our Ancestors 2016. Single-channel digital video, colour, sound, duration 4 mins 40 secs. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū, purchased 2019







Areta Wilkinson *Hei Tupa* 2013. Oxidised sterling silver, polyester.  
Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū, purchased 2016

dioramas presented an extremely misleading and harmful depiction of mana whenua. Iti's performance of looking is a powerful intervention that sheds light on the colonial legacies embedded within these kinds of curated spaces, and as an artist seeking to connect with her own histories and cultural narratives she poignantly asks "What responsibility does the Museum have to me?"<sup>4</sup>

These kinds of transgenerational exchanges add richness to the curatorial agenda of *Perilous*, and signal the salience of relationships and communities of practice as driving forces that shape art making and art histories. However, it would be wrong to think that this exhibition relies on emphasising a straightforward sense of continuity or influence. A relational way of thinking about the histories of art will necessarily be messier and more difficult to choreograph. Indeed, continuity and linear narratives represent an approach to art historical enquiry and curatorial practice that contemporary scholars have sought to problematise since at least the 1970s. Instead of setting out to construct neatly packaged stories that hide their own omissions and

decision-making processes, contemporary exhibitions, at their best, let us see behind the curtain—allowing loose ends, diverse perspectives and sometimes unwieldy transgenerational connection to propose new ways of thinking or to ask provocative questions.

Shows like *Perilous* do important work in highlighting the ways in which galleries and exhibitions tell stories, and the power they can have in doing so. Far from being objective, they are ideological spaces within which certain themes and points of view are dramatised. Historically this has been from a patriarchal, heteronormative and Western perspective. In *Perilous* we see a curatorial paradigm that leans into its own institutional critique in a way that is generative, and foregrounds the importance of embracing new frameworks. The subtitle of this exhibition, *Unheard Stories from the Collection*, speaks to the kind of erasures and silencing that galleries and museums have been (and in some cases continue to be) responsible for. In doing so, we see the Gallery and its curators reflect on their own roles and their accountability as storytellers.



Miranda Parkes *The Third-class Compartment (exploded book: French Painting)* 2020.  
Gold and silver foil, collage elements, acrylic, varnish on photogravure book plate.  
Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū, purchased 2021







Louisa Afoa *Blue Clam* 2018. Digital photograph. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū, purchased 2021

Certainly this is something that many of the artists in *Perilous* call for. Let us add to the works I have already cited Louisa Afoa's *Blue Clam* (2018), a digital photograph that transforms an 'icon' of Western art history—Botticelli's *Birth of Venus* (1485–6)—into a representation that more meaningfully reflects her own experiences of the world. It is a convincing rebuke of the universalising assumptions that have supported art history's Western canon, delivered through an irreverent lens. Picturing herself in her own backyard as Venus, Afoa incisively identifies, as the exhibition text notes, the systemic absence of "brown bodies in white spaces".<sup>5</sup> And in works from her *exploded book* series (2020), Miranda Parkes exuberantly defaces the pages of a volume on French painting with a mixture of collage and colourful, painterly gestures, challenging viewers to think deeply about the way that art histories are produced and circulated. Her effacing of the text makes it unreadable as art historical scholarship, while the prioritising of her own marks demonstrates that meaning itself is changeable.

By acknowledging the inherent subjectivity of art history and of exhibition making, *Perilous* invites viewers to critically engage with the stories being presented, encouraging them to question dominant narratives and to consider alternate perspectives. In doing so, exhibitions like this underscore the role of galleries and museums as agents of social and political discourse that can be significant forces in shaping public consciousness and contributing to ongoing dialogues about representation, power and inclusion. In this

sense, collection exhibitions like *Perilous* are not merely displays of art but, done well, can be dynamic platforms that encourage visibility and foster debate.

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**Kōrero**—speech, discourse

**Mātauranga Māori**—the body of knowledge originating from Māori ancestors

**Taoka**—treasures, things of cultural value

**Taoka tuku iho**—heirloom

**Tūpuna**—ancestors

**Whakapapa**—genealogy

**Whānau**—extended family

**Whenua**—land

1 Areta Wilkinson in conversation with Nigel Borrell and Benjamin Lignel, *Art Jewelry Forum*, 23 September 2015, <https://artjewelryforum.org/interviews/in-conversation-with-areta-wilkinson/>, accessed 15 April 2024.

2 Ibid.

3 Ana Iti, 'Treasures Left by our Ancestors', <https://anaiti.art/Treasures-left-by-our-ancestors-2016>, accessed 10 April 2024.

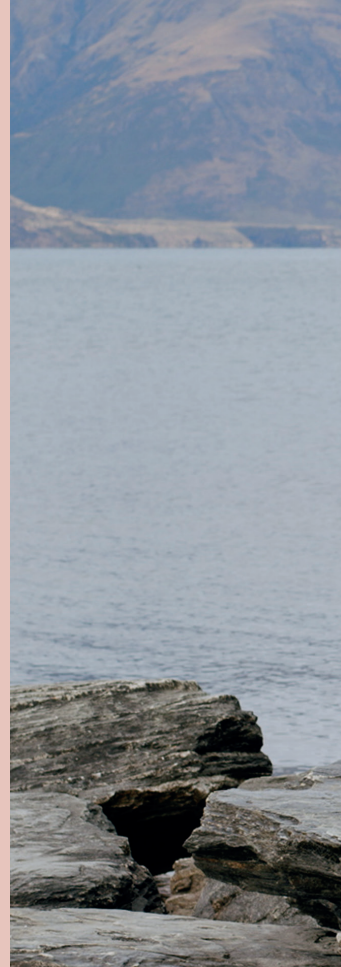
4 Ana Iti cited in Simon Palenski, 'Ana Iti: Before the Displays', *CIRCUIT Artist Moving Image*, 14 January 2018, <https://www.circuit.org.nz/writing-and-podcast/ana-iti-before-the-displays>, accessed 10 April 2024.

5 Exhibition label, Louisa Afoa, *Blue Clam* (2018) in *Perilous: Unheard Stories from the Collection*, Christchurch Art Gallery, 2022–4, <https://christchurchartgallery.org.nz/collection/2021147/louisa-foa/blue-clam>, accessed 11 April 2024.



# *A Shift in Place*

Cora-Allan talks with her Pāpā, Kelly Lafaiki







*After Encountering Aotearoa opened at Dunedin Public Art Gallery I spent time reflecting on whether I was happy with the body of work and how it conveyed the journey I had taken with my Pāpā and my relationship with the whenua.*

*Using whenua pigments to paint the works was a great honour and, when I saw the work installed, it felt overwhelming. The work itself was too big to view while I was painting it, so the first time I saw it truly together was when it was hung in the gallery. I felt satisfied with the show, I was happy.*

*Then, after the 2023 elections I felt a shift in my place as tangata whenua in Aotearoa. I was encountering an Aotearoa that I could see would undo and put at risk many things that I find important. As Waitangi Day drew near, new works were beginning to flow out of the studio and I decided they would join Encountering Aotearoa in Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū.*

*Before seeing the new works installed and the new layout of the exhibition, I wanted to know what Pāpā thought of the original show. Here are some of his thoughts and experiences from our journey.*

Emily Parr *Encountering Aotearoa*  
(still) 2023. Digital video, sound,  
47 mins 38 secs. Courtesy of the artist



*“I woke up at 5am every morning  
and called my sweetheart  
and drank three cups of  
coffee before the sun was up.”*

**Cora-Allan: What do you think about the work in  
*Encountering Aotearoa*?**

Kelly Lafaiki: The work is so good, so easy for people to understand. Especially Islanders when looking at the hiapo patterns. The clouds could be improved, but the framing of the work changes the pieces and makes them look so good. Someone rich should buy the works! Although actually, I think an institution should buy them, so they can be shared with everyone instead of putting them in a private collection. People would love to see the works from this show.

**Cora-Allan: What are some of the works that you remember  
from the show?**

Kelly: My diaries. It was the first time I had done that sort of thing and I enjoyed using colours that represented the colours you see in Aotearoa. I like the videos—the way we were talking was funny—and the last panel in the large painting, which was first sketched in the Albatross Centre. The hanging hiapo banners are great too. I really enjoyed working with Emily [Parr], she was able to find our rhythm and shot some really good video. We were lucky to have her with us.

**Cora-Allan: Was there a particular day you enjoyed on  
the trip?**

Kelly: The day we went to Rakiura Stewart Island. It was the most beautiful spot! We walked into the township but didn't expect to have to walk back at the end of our visit and had to run to the ship. It was beautiful to see boats hanging out and the water surrounding the area. I think it would be a nice lifestyle down there away from the busyness of town.

**Cora-Allan : What day was your hardest?**

Kelly: Well, it wasn't a hard day... but I ate too much after a hard hike in the morning and had to sleep. I loved the variety of food on board and every meal was delicious and exciting. I enjoyed all the events—I am so happy we did it together.

**Cora-Allan: Did you enjoy your support role?**

Kelly: I didn't really know what to expect, so I went with the flow—I got into the rhythm of writing stuff down and making sure I paid attention to the schedule each day. You work pretty long hours, and you were in residency mode which means you can work till midnight and wake up at 5am. That suited me because I woke up at 5am every morning and called my sweetheart and drank three cups of coffee before the sun was up.

**Cora-Allan: Do you think I needed someone with me?**

Kelly: Yes, you did. Someone to talk to if something went wrong. Like the first day when we were mucking around with the life jackets—we were both doing the wrong thing and it was nice to be able to have a laugh and make mistakes together. I think you need someone to assist with your art materials and someone that is there for small talk when you have ideas. I have gotten used to listening to your art talk and enjoy offering advice where I can.

**Cora-Allan: How did your preparation for the trip go?**

Kelly: I had plenty of stationery for my diaries, I had my gear ready for different weather and I enjoyed riding on the Zodiacs when we left the main boat. After a while we got into a pattern getting ready for each day, making sure we packed our bags before breakfast to ensure we were fast.





Pāpā on Ahauhu 2023. Photo: Fiona Wardle





Emily Parr *Daily Reflections*  
with Pāpā and CA (still) 2023.  
Digital video, sound, 49 mins  
18 secs. Courtesy of the artist

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Emily Parr *Daily Reflections*  
with Pāpā and CA (still) 2023.  
Digital video, sound, 49 mins  
18 secs. Courtesy of the artist

**Cora-Allan: How did you feel about the daily activities?**

Kelly: Each day was something new. The schedule was always full, so we just had to get used to the things we needed to take, and take the opportunity to make art, create videos with Emily and make sure we were paying attention to our surroundings. The boat moved along the coast so fast our view was always changing and that felt special.

**Cora-Allan: What about your experience at Waitangi?**

Kelly: Leading the group in as the 'chief' was so cool! Watching the Waitangi Day events this year felt more surreal now knowing I had done that. I had never done anything like that before so I was scared. I was shaking and the young lady told me to relax and that I'd be okay. I had been on heaps of marae but not this important one, and not doing something this special. People fought for the land and Māori are still fighting for their rights, so it was an important place to be. Russell was really interesting to learn about too—I didn't know how rough it used to be. You bought an *Endeavour* replica from the museum there and people were so surprised when you picked it up and walked out, they thought you were stealing it!

**Cora-Allan: Do you think I would have painted the same works after experiencing this new government?**

Kelly: I don't think so. Māori have always had to fight for their rights against the government and when I see works like the flag you painted, I recognise that you are standing up for what you are proud of. You love being Māori and from Niue and you are very proud of both your whakapapa. You already paint from your heart; you are good at painting Niue patterns and using the whenua.

**Cora-Allan: Which culture do you think my work reflects the most?**

Kelly: You paint Niue patterns and use Māori materials and stories in your work. It is both of your cultures. The amount of colour that you make from the earth, especially on the large work is amazing. You have to make sure that you test the paints to make sure they don't come off the wood panels too. You understand the materials very well and celebrate their brightness.

**Cora-Allan: If we do another trip, what would you enjoy?**

Kelly: Any trip would be great as long as I am with family—if you're with family you are okay. If you go with friends I'm not too sure... But with family any trip would be great. I would do another diary and would take a small printer so I can print my photos to add in immediately.

**Cora-Allan: Would you like to make any comments about the show or your wonderful artist daughter?**

Kelly: Hahaha, I think she is on the right track, she just needs to keep on going and to keep her focus with her work. I think she can go even bigger in scale. I can't wait till she is showing this type of work overseas—it needs to be shared with the world.

*Cora-Allan interviewed her pāpā Kelly Lafaiki in March 2024.*

*Cora-Allan: Encountering Aotearoa is on display until 25 August 2024.*



# My Favourite

**Joe Bennett** is an author and columnist. He lives in Lyttelton.

Towards the end of last century I was teaching at Christ's College. At lunchtime, like quite a few of the boys, I used to go through a gate in a brick wall to the Botanic Gardens to smoke. Then, especially if it was cold, I'd often wander, to no great purpose, through the Robert MacDougal Art Gallery.

I remember only two paintings. One was of a bridge over Bruce Creek in Arthur's Pass. The other was of a Dutch funeral. They could hardly have been more different, yet each gave me a feeling of inconsequentiality. And I like a feeling of inconsequentiality.

*Dry September* was the high country in paint. I could feel the heat of the nor'wester, hear the crunch and creak of dry stones underfoot in the riverbed, see the grasses sucked dry and bleached. Despite the white-painted timbers of the one-lane bridge in the foreground—and how redolent is a one-lane bridge in these parts?—here was a landscape on which man had made little imprint.

It put me in mind of fishing in the Mackenzie in heat that bounced off the stones of the Tekapo riverbed under a sky as wide as the world. Just little me in a place where nothing mattered.

*The Dutch Funeral* was the Northern Hemisphere at its coldest. Funerals lend perspective, and a funeral with the coffin on a sledge in a frozen landscape under a sky as low as misery was especially stark. My first thought, always, was how they dug the grave. The land must have been like iron.

The mourners in black looked Gloriavale-ish. I presumed they were Dutch puritans. There was something touching but absurd in this embattled group of people setting out to bury their dead in weather so unremittingly hostile. And it was good to be reminded of mortality and absurdity, of nothing really mattering, before going outside for one more smoke, then back to the classroom to teach the young.





Bill Sutton *Dry September 1949*. Oil on canvas. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery  
Te Puna o Waiwhetū, purchased 1973



Petrus van der Velden *Burial in the winter on the island of Marken [The Dutch Funeral]* 1872. Oil on canvas.  
Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū, gift of Henry Charles Drury van Asch, 1932





# Midwinter Dinner with Friends

**Saturday 24 August**  
**\$99 Friends / \$109 non-members**

Join the Friends and toast midwinter with convivial company, fine food and excellent wine. This fun-filled and art-focused night is a wonderful opportunity to support local artists and the Gallery.

Your ticket includes a welcome drink, a three-course meal (and a few complimentary bottles of wine for the table). Every ticket sold contributes to the Friends' ongoing fundraising efforts and we will be raising money with a silent auction on the night. Like our biennial Auction Event, all money raised will go towards assisting the Gallery's projects.

Book tickets for yourself, or gather your friends and book a table.

**[christchurchartgallery.org.nz/support/friends](http://christchurchartgallery.org.nz/support/friends)**

Photo: Helena Lopes. Courtesy of Pexels

## Friends

**CHRISTCHURCH ART GALLERY**  
**TE PUNA O WAIWHETŪ**



# Pagework

## no.62

Xin Cheng *Imprint from Te Auaunga/Oakley Creek* 2023.  
Courtesy of the artist

*Each quarter the Gallery commissions an artist to create a new work of art especially for Bulletin. It's about actively supporting the generation of new work.*

Xin Cheng started to follow dirty water in 2018, while on residency at the Floating University Berlin. She developed a method of recording the surface scum in the rainwater basin that feeds the city's canals by carefully laying a sheet of paper on it. When she gently retrieved the paper, it revealed intricate swirling patterns; microscopic landscapes of sewage, grass-clippings and insects. She reflects, "It's like the dust, wind, water, tiny creatures are drawing."

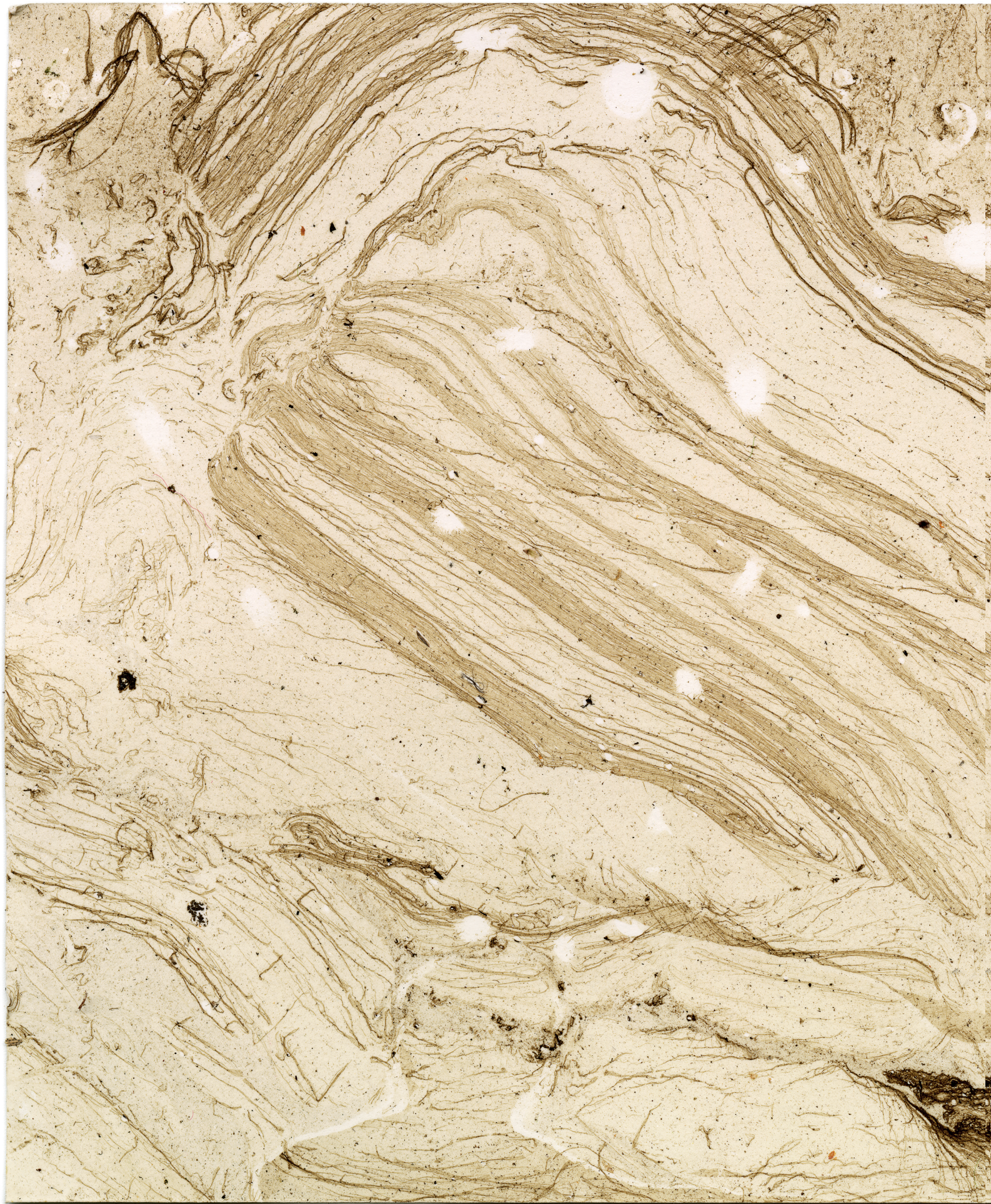
Back in Aotearoa, Cheng lives near Te Auaunga Oakley Creek, one of Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland's longest urban streams and home to the threatened New Zealand longfin eel. The creek meanders through several suburbs, is piped under major roads, and flows alongside residential and industrial areas before heading out to the harbour at Point Chevalier. With a ground that is rich in volcanic rocks and clay, as well as stormwater pipes releasing into the creek, there is plenty of grit, plant matter and small creatures in this water.

Cheng has made it a regular practice to visit the creek and take surface scum prints as a way of observing, encountering and capturing not only the nature of the water, but also the surrounding environment and ecosystem. It is a means to slow down and look sideways, and she thinks of these prints as a collaboration with the creek, the wind and the insects that call it home. Reprinted here, the small particles, flow marks and surface oils are a portrait of a distinct time and place, of interrelationships and connectivity with the creek.

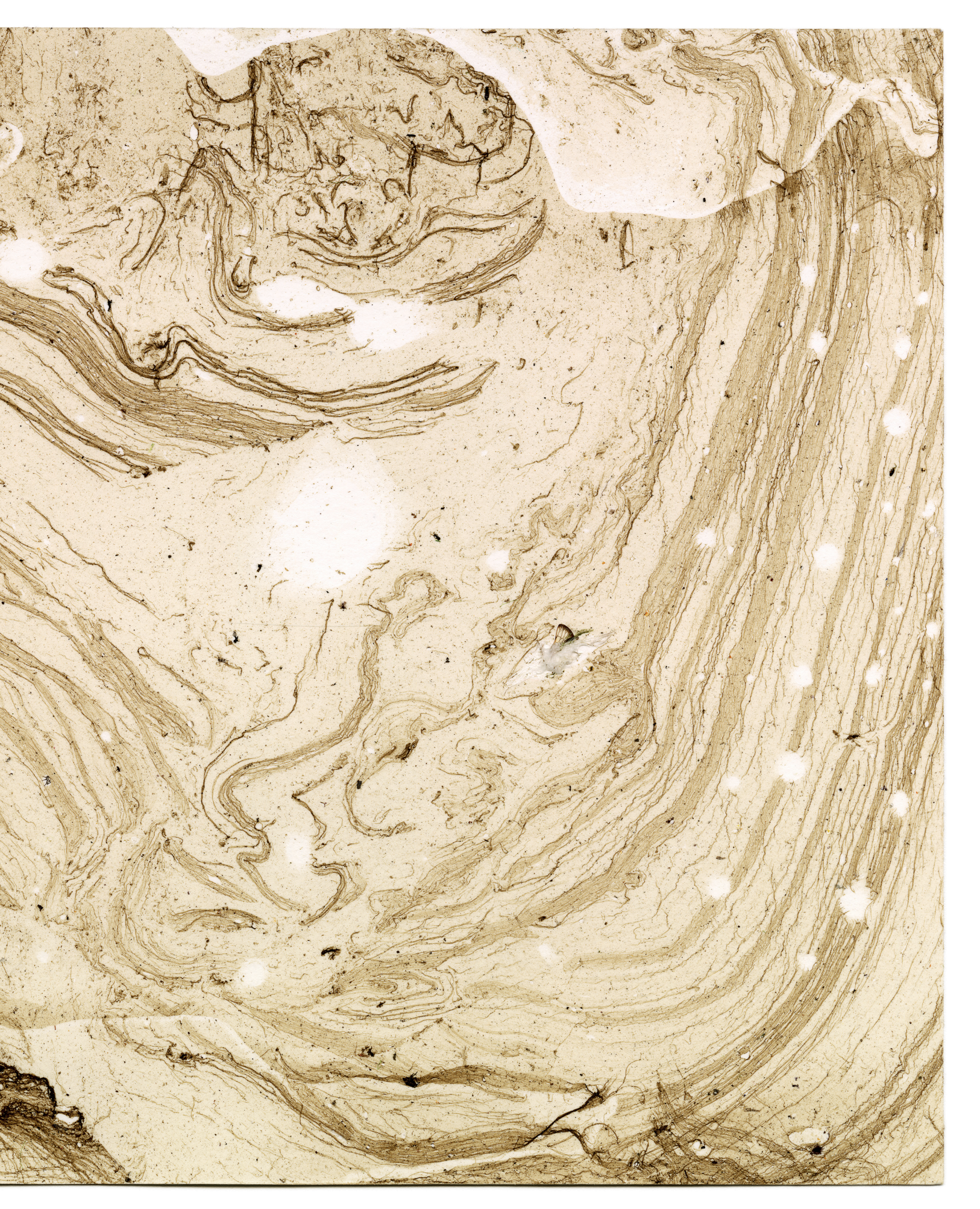
While specific to Te Auaunga Oakley Creek, this work reminds us to consider the state of our own local waterways. The Ōtākaro awa that flows through Ōtautahi Christchurch has been the focus of a regeneration plan for several years, but the water is still undrinkable, and not even safe for swimming. Sadly, the ongoing debates around who will fund water infrastructure in Aotearoa overlook the simple fact that we are all reliant on and responsible for water.

**Melanie Oliver**  
Curator











## Opening this quarter

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**Edith Amituanai and Sione Tuivailala Monū: Toloa Tales**

8 June – 13 October 2024

New video works trace migratory threads across Te Moana-nui-a-Kiwa as the artists return to their ancestral homeland.

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**Marilynn Webb: Folded in the Hills**

8 June – 13 October 2024

A major survey exhibition of Ngāpuhi, Te Roroa and Ngāti Kahu artist Marilyn Webb (NZOM).

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**Whenua**

Opens 24 August 2024

Takata and whenua, people and land, considered through Aotearoa New Zealand's art history.

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## Coming Soon

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**Edwards + Johann: Mutabilities—propositions to an unknown universe**

14 September 2024 – 9 February 2025

Transformation, unpredictability and magic happen when unrelated worlds meet.

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**Leo Bensemann: Paradise Garden**

14 September 2024 – 9 February 2025

A collection of Leo Bensemann's extraordinary Mohua Golden Bay landscape paintings.

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## Closing this Quarter

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**Maureen Lander: Aho Marama Strings of Light**

Until 14 July 2024

A magical UV light installation bringing together different art forms and histories.

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**Perilous: Unheard Stories from the Collection**

Until 21 July 2024

Making room for fresh voices, untold narratives and disruptive ideas.

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**Cora-Allan: Encountering Aotearoa**

Until 25 August 2024

A two-week journey by sea around Aotearoa led to this major body of new work documenting the whenua from the vantage point of the moana.

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# Exhib



## Ongoing

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### **From Here on the Ground**

*Until 17 November 2024*

Twentieth-century Aotearoa New Zealand artists exploring urban, suburban and industrial landscapes.

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### **Mataaho Collective: Tikawe**

An ambitious installation that descends from the skylights to zing across the foyer.

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### **Lonnie Hutchinson: Hoa Kōhine (Girlfriend)**

An intricately cut-out billboard celebrating supportive friendships between women.

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### **Martin Creed: Everything is Going to be Alright**

A completely unequivocal, but also pretty darn ambiguous, work for Christchurch.

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### **Reuben Paterson: The End**

A sparkling elevator installation providing an unexpected space for contemplation and connection.

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### **Séraphine Pick: Untitled (Bathers)**

Pick's lush watercolour offers a utopian vision in the carpark elevator.

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### **Tomorrow Still Comes: Natalia Saegusa**

A fragmented, poetic temporary wall painting by Natalia Saegusa.

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### **Kelcy Taratoa: Te Tāhū o ngā Maunga Tūmatakahuki**

A vast painting about how we are bound together.

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### **Wendelien Bakker: Catching a Grid of Rain**

The Gallery's bunker as a sculptural surface.

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See the Gallery website and What's On guide for our events listings.

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# itions





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Pat Hanly  
Cliff Whiting

*Te Ao o Nga Atua or Te Waka o Aoraki, 1988.  
Pictured left.*



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### Christchurch Art Gallery Foundation

In 2023, the Foundation was honoured to receive a significant bequest from the late Sir Miles Warren, a great supporter of the Gallery and himself the subject of a retrospective exhibition in 2009. The bequest helped us to reach the incredible milestone of \$5m in our Endowment Fund for the Gallery's collection programme. The Foundation is incredibly grateful to Sir Miles for his generosity and foresight in making this gift.

Nothing gets accomplished without support. That's why we need the Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū Foundation. It's a solid base that helps ground the role of the Gallery and provides important funding to achieve our objectives. We collect, share and inspire, recognising where we've been, where we are now and where we're heading. We need people like you to join us.

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Please see [christchurchartgalleryfoundation.org.nz/together-partners/](https://christchurchartgalleryfoundation.org.nz/together-partners/) for a full list.

We wish to thank all of our TOGETHER partners, current and previous donors for your generosity and support over the years.

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Lilly's Gallery

If you would like to discuss partnership opportunities, contact Jacq Mehrrens on (+64) 21 404042 or [jacq@christchurchartgallery.org.nz](mailto:jacq@christchurchartgallery.org.nz)

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## CHRISTCHURCH ART GALLERY TE PUNA O WAIWHETŪ FOUNDATION

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