

Kaiako Māori *Taniwha*

The Role

Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū seeks a kaiako Māori who can develop and deliver high-quality, meaningful education programmes at the Gallery. Primarily for kura kaupapa Māori and schools with bi-lingual provision, they will also work with other interested schools where possible.

This is a short-term role to support the delivery of programmes alongside the exhibition *Taniwha*. Dates for delivery are 6 October – 5 December 2025 (9 weeks). A week of planning time would also be covered, prior to 6 October, at a time that suits the individual kaiako.

We are aware that our current education programme isn't regularly accessed by kura kaupapa Māori or schools with bi-lingual provision. While this is something that requires ongoing consideration, in the meantime we think it's important that we recognise the opportunity for kura kaupapa Māori that this exhibition presents.



Taniwha

This exhibition will celebrate mātauraka Māori about taniwha, looking at ways that Māori artists and writers have explored ideas around taniwha.

In te ao Māori we have a rich history of pūrākau that explain how taniwha are capable of being kaitiaki, tohu, atua, tipua and tūpuna, as well as creatures who have left their marks upon the landscape of Aotearoa. In Waitaha, we have the story of Tūterakiwhānoa, who now resides in Waihora. As a result of colonisation, however, many of these pūrākau have been negatively impacted by Christianity, incorrect recording and retelling, land loss, and the loss of te reo Māori. Through Māori art and literature, this exhibition will highlight the enduring relevance of taniwha in Aotearoa, contribute to the preservation of indigenous knowledges, and correct outdated representations or taniwha as fairy tales.

Pūrākau will underpin this exhibition. Māori stories have long been dismissed as myths or legends, without consideration of how knowledge is transmitted across generations, through pūrākau. Pūrākau are important for the way they explain historical events, celebrate significant ancestors and atua, teach about te taiao and natural phenomena, and provide advice and warnings about tikaka and behaviour. They continue to provide rich content for artists, writers and teachers.

Alongside existing works loaned from other collections, artists will be invited to create new work, encouraged to explore their own understandings of and experiences with taniwha. This is another opportunity for iwi, hapū, or whānau stories about taniwha to be shared.

In exhibition curator Dr Kirsty Dunn's words, "This project asks 'who' rather than 'what' are taniwha? To whom are they related and how? Are there connections between taniwha narratives? What kinds of knowledge are embedded in these narratives? And how might taniwha narratives help us to understand and navigate current conflicts and challenges that are present both here in Aotearoa and beyond? Our project will contemporise the stories of taniwha, highlighting the valuable mātauraka stored within them and elucidating their continuing relevance in both local and global contexts."

IMAGE: Lisa Reihana (Ngāpuhi, Ngāti Hine) *A Māori Dragon Story* (still) 1995
16mm animation transferred to digital; duration 16 min, 13 sec
Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū, purchased 2021



Key themes within the exhibition:

- The relationship between Māori and the natural world
- The playful, shapeshifting nature of taniwha
- Kaitiakitaka
- Taniwha and the creation, changing, or movement of land
- Taniwha as tohu, wero or warning
- Taniwha in relation to response or adaptation to climate change
- Taniwha/human relationships

The Programme

Our education programmes are generally delivered within the following parameters, but there is flexibility should the person in this role want to do things differently.

All of our programmes are informed by our exhibition programmes and underpinned by the values and objectives of the NZ Curriculum and Te Marautanga o Aotearoa.

- Lessons are generally 90 minutes, but this is flexible should more time be needed.
- Two lessons are taught a day, one in the morning and one in the afternoon.
- Lessons start in the classroom with a welcome and explanation of the lesson, followed by a visit to the exhibition to view and discuss the artwork, then return to the classroom and explain/demonstrate a hands-on activity.
- A hands-on art-making activity in the classroom results in something for tamariki to take home.
- Classroom kaiako and parent helpers are present during the lesson.
- Normally, all age groups are invited to engage with our education programmes. However, given the short time frame of this role, and the work required to develop a programme that is accessible for all age groups, we would suggest choosing a specific age group to target with this programme.

The Gallery has funding from Creative New Zealand to help cover planning and teaching time for this kaiako. We will also be applying to Rātā Foundation to help cover the cost of buses for taura into the Gallery.

For more information contact schools@christchurchartgallery.org.nz.

TOP: Lessons in the classroom.
BELOW: Lesson held in the gallery, with Michael Tuffery's
Povi Christkeke 1999. Mixed media. Collection of Christchurch
Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū, purchased 1999

