



Education Programme: Art and Language

Colin McCahon The Lark's Song 1969, Collection Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, gift of the artist, 1982

**City
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MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
Te Tākaha o te Mātauranga

Colin McCahon: *On Going Out with the Tide*

About the exhibition

Colin McCahon: On Going Out with the Tide explores Colin McCahon's evolving engagement with Māori subjects and themes in works of the 1960s and 1970s. Rooms in the show feature works inspired by different places: Northland, Muriwai (where McCahon had a studio), Parihaka, and Te Urewera. The works range from early treatments of koru imagery to text-laden works referencing Māori whakapapa (genealogies), spiritual beliefs, waiata (song), whakataukī (sayings), and prophets. The exhibition, curated by Wylan Curnow and Robert Leonard, seeks to understand these works in terms of shifts in New Zealand culture during the 1960s and 1970s, our emerging biculturalism.

Colin McCahon is New Zealand's most celebrated artist. Born in 1919, he was an artist, curator and teacher. He was active from the 1940s into the early 1980s. Over this time, his practice underwent major formal and conceptual transformations. His diverse oeuvre includes landscapes, figurative paintings, abstractions, text-and-number paintings and combinations of these.

Pre-visit

Discussion: How much do you know about Māori culture, history and language? Can you count in te reo? Which te reo kupu (words) do you know? Which waiata (Māori songs) can you sing? Do you know about any Māori legends or atua (gods)? Do you know where any of the Māori place names in your local area originate from or what they mean in English? Share what you know.

During the visit

Students will:

- View and discuss McCahon's exhibition and think about the aspects of te ao Māori (the Māori world) which inspired him. (CI)
- Reflect on the ways McCahon's paintings communicate ideas about different cultural perspectives. (CI, UC)
- Make an artwork featuring kupu using painting and drawing techniques. (DI, PK)

Kupu Māori you may use or hear in the education programme: whakapapa (genealogies), waiata (song), whakataukī (sayings), Io (supreme being), Papatūānuku (earth mother), Ranginui (sky father), Tāne Mahuta (God of the forest and birds), manu (bird), pango (black) mā (white), Te upoko-o-te-Ika-a-Māui (head of the fish of Māui, the Wellington Region) Te Whanganui-a-Tara (Wellington), iwi (tribe), whānau (family), tahi (one), rua (two), toru (three), koru (spiral motif), kōwhaiwhai (Māori patterns and motifs), mangōpare (hammerhead-shark motif), te ao Māori (the Māori world).

Art terms: appropriation - reworking found images and ideas to create one's own statement.

Elements and principles: shape, value, tone, contrast.

Techniques and processes: dry brush painting, stencilling, shading, blending.

Ideas and themes: whakapapa, places, te reo Māori, te ao Māori.

Follow up activities

Reflect on your visit to the gallery. Which new aspects of te ao Māori did you discover by studying McCahon's paintings?

Investigate your own whakapapa. Ask your family to see what more can you find out about your family tree and ancestors.

Learn about iwi from different regions in Aotearoa www.teara.govt.nz/en and practice your mihi (personal greeting) or improve your te reo Māori language skills www.maorilanguage.net/maori-words-phrases/greetings-mihi/

Find out more about Māori legends www.maori.info/index.htm

Research other New Zealand artists who have used text in their work: John Reynolds, Shane Cotton, Ralph Hotere.

Make an artwork using Māori and English words.

Think about what a bicultural artwork might look like. Describe the features it could include.