



Resource Card

Folk Nationalism

Ayesha Green, *The Harvest*, 2020, acrylic on canvas. Courtesy of the artist and MTG Hawke's Bay, Tai Ahuriri

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MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
Te Tihikanga o te Mātauranga

Folk Nationalism

About the artist

Ayesha Green (Ngāti Kahungunu, Kai Tahu) is an artist based in Tāmaki Makaurau. She has a Master of Fine Arts from Elam in 2013 and a Graduate Diploma in Arts specialising in Museums and Cultural Heritage. She is the 2021 Rydal Art Prize winner, 2020 recipient of the Springboard and 2019 winner of the National Contemporary Art Awards.

About the Exhibition

Ayesha Green's *Folk Nationalism* features a substantial new body of paintings, sculpture and drawings developed by Ayesha over the past year. Her large-scale works form a bold interrogation of the representation of Māori and Pākehā histories, and the role that images and language play in perpetuating systems of power.

Folk Nationalism presents historical events, figures, and images, reclaimed and recontextualised to question where power lies. Green's stylised, figurative paintings represent a bold interruption of prevailing national identifiers. In *Folk Nationalism*, she invites us to revisit mythologies of nationhood and explore the possibility of restorative story telling. As Matariki Williams commented on Ayesha Green's work, "perhaps the past is a foundation on which to place the future, to construct new meanings, to reinterpret inherited histories, to gaze upon with eyes anew."

Understand | big ideas

Ākonga can explore visual ideas, and ideas about Aotearoa New Zealand's histories, in response to Ayesha Green's practice.

- Ayesha Green art-making practice is about **representing** Aotearoa New Zealand's histories through **simplifying** historical narratives.
- For Ayesha Green, indigenous and introduced plants provide an example of **colonisation** and **power** at work in local contexts.
- She sees her art as a **service** to her iwi because it restores stories that have been **silenced**.

Know | art in context

Ākonga can inquire about the purposes, value, and context of Ayesha Green work.

- Native and introduced plants influence Ayesha Green's practice of representation.
- Land has become a material that she can work with in the form of *uku* (clay) and *kōkōwai* (clay-based pigment).
- The land and flora are a source of knowledge that continues to shape identities.

- Botanist, Joseph Banks is a central figure in Ayesha Green's work because his Pacific journeys increased the commodification and global trade of indigenous resources from Aotearoa.
- Ayesha Green is taking control of a historical narrative through exhibiting her own version of well-known historical images.

Do | practical knowledge

Ākonga develop practical knowledge as they:

- Learn to look by distilling elements of images to communicate meaning.
- Develop observational drawing skills.
- Use critical inquiry, evidence, and conversation to build shared understandings of artworks.
- Reduce complicated histories with simple pictorial elements.

Before your visit

There are many ways to learn and tell histories. Have students consider how they have learned about their personal history and national histories. For example, ākonga might share examples such as books, documentaries, movies, cartoons, waiata, songs, pūrākau, conversation with parents or grandparents.

During your visit

Ākonga are guided through *Folk Nationalism* using hands on activities, aquarelle pencils, and magnets to inquire about Ayesha Green's art and Aotearoa New Zealand's histories. They make a postcard to themselves about the exhibition using Sydney Parkinson's botanical works as inspiration. They receive a large-scale postcard for post-visit watercolour activities.

After your visit

Of the many amazing *kōkōwai* works that Ayesha Green has made, her postcards from Joseph Banks invite us into her world of research and restorative story telling. This activity is a way for ākonga to connect and place themselves in the history of Aotearoa New Zealand.

Write a postcard message using a paintbrush, your super-size postcard and watercolours, from one of the following prompts:

- A message to a historical figure in Aotearoa
- A message to a person living on a street named after your family (search on Google Maps)
- To your great grandparent

Paint a picture of a place that relates to the subject of your message; for example, my postcard message is to a stranger who lives on Gillies Street in Outer Kaitī. I have painted a picture of the front of my own house.