

KARANGA

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A group exhibition
of contemporary work by Maori women.

WELLINGTON CITY GALLERY

May 1986

An Introduction.

This exhibition came from an idea by Ngapine Tamihana Te Ao on having seen an exhibition called Water and Clay at the City Art Gallery. The exhibition combined the talents of a number of potters and watercolourists.

She was excited by the possibility of an exhibition in different media by Maori women. The karanga had begun.

Keri Kaa, Robyn Kahukiwa, and Irihapeti Ramsden took the idea to the then director of the City Art Gallery – Anne Philbin who supported it, as has its present director John Leuthart.

This karanga is many things, a calling out and a gathering in. And from there a journey which is a start for some and a continuation for others.

It is a call to people made public and also a karanga for all those who join us with their art, including those who have gone before and those yet to come.

The specific journey for this Exhibition has been one of a community of women working in groups to make their art. An art in which Maori women represent themselves, their own culture and concerns. An art in which we make the images, and seek to redefine ourselves through them.

1. TARANGA

Janet Potiki
Ngati Rangitahi
Patricia Grace
Ngati Toa, Ngati Raukawa,
Te Ati Awa
Robyn Kahukiwa
Ngati Porou
Kohai Grace
Ngati Toa, Ngati Raukawa,
Te Ati Awa, Ngati Porou

The piece we have made came from an idea by Patricia Grace. It represents three of the things we feel are part of the wholeness that **Taranga** embodies.

The three things we have chosen are her korowai, her maro and her hair

The korowai backing is of hessian, the rest of the work is made from natural materials gathered from the bush and shore.

We have conceived of our piece as a poutokomanawa.

The enfolding korowai linked with the maro and hair all interconnect in their suggestions of femaleness, their connotations of birth, and the struggle to retain life, and the positive strength of our sex as defined by ourselves.

Taranga was the mother of Maui Potiki. She belonged both to the earthly world, which she inhabited by night, and an underworld where she lived during the day. Thus she was both human and godly.

When her youngest child Maui was born prematurely she cut off her topknot of hair, wrapped him in it and set him afloat on the sea.

She did this secretly and without the ritual required when a child is stillborn. Without this proper ritual the stillborn child could return to earth as a mischievous being.

But Taranga's action was deliberate, and also she knew the power of her hair. She believed that this last-born child of hers would one day seek her out, both in the earthly land, and in the "land of the Manapau trees." She believed that because of her actions he would have special talents and powers that would enable him to bring great gifts to the people of the earthly world.

2. THE KETE SERIES

Mihiata Retimana
Ngai Tahu, Ngati Porou
Irihapeti Ramsden
Ngai Tahu, Rangitane
Lee Retimana
Ngapuhi, Waikato
Ngai Tahu, Ngati Porou

The Kete Series symbolises the strength of our group. Our common bond of aroha and whanau allows us to respect each other as individuals. It also unites us as a group for it links us with our past in the Pacific and our future in New Zealand.

Kete III encapsulates the outpouring of intense activity and energy, the warmth, colour and rhythm of Maori women when they are working with flax.

3. THE WASHING LINE

Mihiata Retimana
Ngai Tahu, Ngati Porou
Irihapeti Ramsden
Ngai Tahu, Rangitane
Lee Retimana
Ngai Tahu, Ngati Porou,
Ngapuhi, Waikato

The Washing Line is a lighthearted view of domestic chores prevalent in our roles as women in suburbia. Colour and humour are highlighted as important elements which enable us to cope with suburban life in New Zealand's cities.

4. NGA PUNA O TE ORA

Kataraina Hetet-Winiata
Te Ati Awa, Ngati Tuwharetoa,
Ngati Maniapoto
Veranoa Puketapu-Hetet
Te Ati Awa, Ngati Tuwharetoa,
Ngati Maniapoto
Stephanie Turner
Ngati Raukawa, Te Arawa
Rea Ropiha
Ngati Kahungunu,
Te Whanau-a-Apanui

Papatanuku — life force of the earth and
Ranginui — life force of the sky once lived together as man and wife and begat many children. Those children grew to be the life forces of the sea, forest, rivers, etc.

From the underworld — the world of darkness came other life forces, life forces with specialised knowledge which they brought into the world of light. One of these life forces was Niwareka. It is from Niwareka we have the knowledge of weaving in kiekie, harakeke, pingao and other fibres/plants that grow on Papatuanuku.

Papatuanuku and other female life forces that came after her, answer many of the questions children ask concerning the world around. Women/mothers are thus natural storehouses of knowledge. All this we have combined into our painting and weaving of *Nga Puna O Te Ora*.

5. HINEMATORO

Robyn Kahukiwa
Ngati Porou
Ani Crawford
Ngati Porou

Held in very high regard by the women of great Mana. It was said she carried a kete which contained the bones of some of her ancestors, hence the saying *Tē kete a Hinematoro*. She lived within the Hauiti area and died at Cooks Cove, Tolaga Bay. The story was related to us by one of our nannies that Hinematoro was being chased by a war party. Rather than being captured and eaten — therefore losing her mana — she committed suicide (whakamo mori) by drowning herself. When a Rangatira dies in the area she appears as seaweed (there are other forms she takes).

Kotitirangi te maunga

Ko uawa te awa

Ko te Aitanga a Hauiti te iwi

This is one of the mountainins in Tolaga Bay which appears on the right hand side of the taaniko.

The pattern on the left is taken from a tukutuku pattern (Mangaroa — milky way) noting the number of people in the tribe.

E hara taku toa ei te toa takitahi he toa takitini.

Directly below that is Aramoana (pathway of the sea) based on taaniko. Below that is seaweed which appears in the ocean (mohair).

6. PEACE

Raiha Te Hiko Waaka
Ngati Toa, Ngati Raukawa
Melanie Cullinan
Ngati Koata, Te Ati Awa
Jolie Marianne Gunson
Ngati Raukawa, Ngati Toa,
Te Ati Awa
Grace Warren
Te Ati Awa
Taranaki

It's about peace! As seen through the eyes of the young and not so young. How they see what our world leaders are giving us in the name of peace. Also, how we are handling the situation: disturbed children; drug and alcohol abuse; cultural destruction etc.

7. PAPATUANUKU

Hinemoa Hilliard
Nga Puhi
Wendy Howe
Ngati Kahungunu

*"Whatungarongaro he tangata
Toitu ki te whenua"*

Na Amster Reedy

*Man may come, man may go
but the land remains forever"*

We wanted to work on something that best represented our feelings about Nuclear War and its effects. Ideas were shared and eventually consolidated into one. We decided to use symbols each making a statement of their own, and for each other. Papatuanuku symbolises the spirituality of life. The Patu is a symbol of defence not only of the land but also life. The Fire Box that encloses the whole piece is a symbol of hope.

8. TANGATA WHENUA

Robyn Kahukiwa
Ngati Porou
Patricia Grace
Ngati Toa, Ngati Raukawa,
Te Ati Awa

These two panels are a statement of our identity in Aotearoa today.

9. WAHINE

Patricia Grace
Ngati Toa, Ngati Raukawa,
Te Ati Awa
Robyn Kahukiwa
Ngati Porou

This piece developed from the 'word weaving' which begins with the word wahine. Robyn had the idea of using paint to accentuate some of the words and patterns once the piece had been photographically enlarged.

However once the enlarging was done it was seen that there was a large area of painting space. We decided that the area was just right for one of Robyn's 'woman' figures.

10. MOKO

Group members have contributed to this piece as a koha to the exhibition.

11. KARANGA

Keri Kaa
Whanau a Hunaara, Whanau a Takimoana,
Whanau a Hinepora, Ngati Porou, Rongowhakaata,
Ngati Konohe, Ngati Kahungunu,
Wendy Howe
Ngati Kahungunu

12. UKAIPO

Eranora Puketapu-Hetet
Te Ati Awa
Veranoa Puketapu-Hetet
Te Ati Awa, Ngati Maniapoto,
Tuwharetoa

Women's strength and power is born of her womanliness.

13. KARANGA KARANGA
Group Piece in window.

14. TAIRAWHITI KORERO

Keri Kaa
Whanau a Hunaara, Whanau a Takimoana,
Whanau a Hinepora, Ngati Porou, Rongowhakaata,
Ngati Konohe, Ngati Kahungunu
Robyn Kahukiwa
Ngati Porou
Ngapine Tamihana Te Ao
Ngati Porou, Ngati Kahungunu,
Ngaiterangi, Ngati Raukawa.

A full programme of
demonstrations / workshops
11a.m. - 2.30 p.m. on Week days

15. NGA WHATU

Irihapeti Ramsden

Ngai Tahu, Rangitane

Mihiata Retimana

Ngai Tahu, Ngati Porou

Lee Retimana

Ngai Tahu, Ngati Porou:

Ngapuhi, Waikato.

If you look through the western eye you will see what we are. You will see three Maori women, a mother and daughter and their second cousin. One woman teaches art at a local high school, her daughter works in the Computer Industry. The third is a nurse with an interest in art and anthropology.

If you see us through the eye of Polynesia you will find out who we are. Nga uri o Tamanuiarangi Tikao, we belong to Ngati Irakehu of Horomaka. Our grandmothers were sisters, through them we came from Hawaiiiki and we have been together in Aotearoa for a thousand years. Like the whiri of Mihiata's kete and the mesh of tree fibre in my paper our three lives are interwoven and blended by our ancestry and our whanau.

Lee has made a statement about the requirements of modern life and the domestic role of women. She demonstrates the pressures on our whanau and the humour which helps us overcome them. Above all we continue to gather together the elements of our family, as disparate as ourselves, to weave and re-weave our greatest taonga.

Robyn Kahukiwa • Keri Kaa • Patricia Grace • Janet Potiki • Irihapeti Ramsden • Mihiata Retimana • Lee Retimana • Tungia Baker • Wendy Howe • Hinemoa Hilliard • Ngapine Tamihana Te Ao • Eranora Puketapu-Hetet • Kataraina Hetet Winiata • Veranoa Puketapu-Hetet • Rea Ropiha • Stephanie Turner • Kohai Grace • Ani Crawford • Raiha Te Hiko Waaka • Melanie Cullinan • Jolie Marianne Gunson • Grace Warren • Waireti Rolleston • Diane Prince • Hana Pomare • Maxine Montgomery

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Working for this Exhibition in an administrative role has been a privilege. The collective approach has encouraged the artists to try new ideas. Most of the women have not exhibited before – this is a beginning.

The *taonga* on exhibition have been produced midst family commitments, jobs, hui and workshops. Space to think and work has been at a premium, and found in odd moments and some small places – kitchens, bedrooms, sheds, verandahs.

There are three Exhibitions running at the same time. The Gisborne Exhibition at the Museum opened on 16 April and closes on 4 May to make way for the Montana Art Awards. The Auckland Exhibition at the Fisher Gallery, opens on 4 May. There are about 70 women involved in all three exhibitions – an extraordinary achievement.

Rosemary Fullerton-Smith
EXHIBITION CO-ORDINATOR

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Those wishing to purchase works please contact:
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