

**Cultural Memory – A History of the Whangarei Art Collection
1921 - 2008**

4 August – 28 Sept 2008 Curated by Scott Pothan



Tony De Lautour, **New World, 2001**, Screen-print on Canvas
Whangarei Art Museum Collection

Resource Kit Contents

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Cultural Memory – A history of the Whangarei Art Collection 1921 - 2008



CF Goldie, Maori Women, Harata Rewiri Tarapata, 1904, Oil on Canvas, Gifted by Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade to Whangarei Art Museum Collection 2002

Introduction:

Whangarei Art Museum will be lavishing its walls with a ravishing array of heritage and modern works from the public art collection. From the foundational gifts of Capt Gilbert Mair, Thomas L. Drummond, Adele Younghusband and George Woolley in the first part of the 20th century to more recent acquisitions, gifts and bequests. This is an exhibition designed to provoke questions, challenges and responses.

We are also including some important historical paintings of Whangarei which include *Entrance to the Whangarei River* J. C. Hoyte, Private Collection, and *Bird's-eye View of the Whangarei Regatta* 1887 by R.Highley Jr. from the Maritime Museum, Auckland. Both of which, along with a large body of Adele Younghusband paintings were offered to the city in the early 1990's but were subsequently declined.

The exhibition will also track some of the stories of individual and institutional destruction and vandalism to the visual culture of Whangarei over a long period, carefully articulating these divided histories and contested stories from archive sources, public documents and minutes. Retelling the story of compelling momentum for a public art museum in Whangarei since 1921 in a timeline of events, from failed gallery projects in 1935 with the municipal library in Rust Avenue to 1982 and the Forum North development, right up to the present day including a history of the Hundertwasser project, from germination to reincarnation!

Throughout this, the collections history is inextricably bound up with the community debate for a public gallery, the generous gifts that were made by many over the last century to ensure a flagship for visual culture of the district was embedded.

Visitors to the art museum will be invited as they enter, to place beside their favourite artworks a ribbon, from 3 collection categories; heritage (19th-early 20thC) modernist (1920-45) and contemporary (1945-present) and if they choose to place their comments on the dedicated '**post-it**' wall! Results will be published on the art museum's community website *ARTHYPE*.

Viewers will see the artworks grouped in the manner with which they were acquired, rather than chronologically, period or genre. They will be able to view the step-by-step process in evaluating an artworks role within the collections policy of the museum, condition reporting, purchasing or deed of gift documenting and finally, accessioning into the Vernon Collections software. We will be recreating a

'collection storage space' installation of paintings and archives ephemera etc *in situ*, with explanatory texts on how to collect and store artwork.

This storytelling exhibition is designed to be an everyday guide to understanding the mysteries of museology. How a public art museum operates as an institution - but also how to use some of these skills to display and care for **your** own heirlooms and manic collections! Enabling visitors understand how to look at art - as if you were appraising a new acquaintance, and understand a little of the unique knowledge-base that is 'the artworld' without the 'artspeak'

Museum visitors will be welcome to bring in their art for advice and appraisal (but NOT valuation) and how to source information. Pamphlets and advice for budding home-museum curators on how to collect and look after everything from photographs to old vinyl LP's will be available. There will be a free appraisal day to be announced, with a panel of museum experts in art and artifacts for the public to bring their revered and perhaps slightly dubious 'treasures' for assessment over tea and biscuits !

Thought provoking and timely, *Cultural Memory* is perhaps more fundamentally an exhibition to prompt that age-old question:

Whose collection is it - and who are its guardians for the future

A brief outline to the 'isms'

With the colonisation of New Zealand came the introduction of European influence to the arts. One of those settlers, James Naim brought with him a strong following in impressionism. He arrived in NZ in 1890, after having studied at the Glasgow Art School. Impressionism tried to capture the candid moments of everyday life, natural poses of ordinary people.

"Impressionism, a major movement, *first in painting and later in music, developed* chiefly in France during late 19th and 20th century. An attempt to *accurately and objectively* record visual reality in terms of *transient* effects of light and colour. "

Nicolas Pioch©14 Oct 2002

www.ibiblio.org

The influence from England and European Art was to carry on for some time after this first introduction. Expressionism, which emphasised the artist's emotions by distorting and exaggerating colour, shape and perspective followed, and an example of this period would be the rare Mina Arndt painting, "Portrait of a Woman". Mina Arndt was one of the countries first women artists to study abroad in 1907, and trained under the 'father' of German expressionism Lovis Corinth.

In the mid 1930's - 1940's onwards New Zealand was in search for a 'National Identity'. Being a relatively young country many settlers felt a need to connect with their new homeland.

"It is often the arts *that* assume for themselves *a role* in *binding* the nation together and *providing* it with a vision of the future.

Bloem & Browne, 2002, pg 17

With this came the movement known as Modernism. The true standard bearer of the modernist movement would be Colin McCahon the seminal Northland Panels. Modernism was concerned with form rather than subject matter, and disobeyed the academic rules of perspective and composition. Some of the early exponents of a modernist approach were Adele Younghusband, Louise Henderson and Freda Simmonds, all closely associated with Northland, as were Eric Lee-Johnson and Ralph Hotere, currently on exhibition.

The works of Charles Tole, Russell Clark and Eric Lee-Johnson have dealt specifically with representing the unique characteristics of New Zealand, exemplifying Regionalism.

In the developing art world of New Zealand artists what followed was an exploration into cubism, painterly abstraction, conceptual art, installation and through to a strong identity within contemporary art.

Suitability

Years 6 - 13

Levels 3 - 8

Essential Learning Area Visual

Arts

Focus Strand

PK Developing Practical Knowledge in the Visual Arts DI
Developing Ideas in the Visual Arts CI Communicating and
Interpreting in the Visual Arts UC Understanding the Visual Arts
in Context

Developing Literacy's

Draw on a variety of sources of motivation to develop ideas
Present and respond to art works, developing skills in conveying and interpreting meaning
Investigate the discipline and art works in relation to their social and cultural contexts

Strand achievement objectives

- L 4 - DI: Students will generate and develop visual ideas in response to a variety of motivations, using imagination, observation and a study of artist's work.
- L 5 - DI: Students will generate, develop, and refine visual ideas in response to a variety of motivations and a study of selected artist's works.
- L5-CI Students will describe and evaluate how ideas and art-making processes are used to communicate meaning in selected objects and images.
- L 5 - UC Students will investigate the relationship between the production of art works and their social context.
- L 6 - CI Students will identify and analyse the processes, procedures and art-making traditions that influence selected artists' ways of working.
- L6-CI Students will analyse and describe how art-making processes and procedures clarify meaning and intentions in their own and others' work.
- L 7 - CI Students will use critical analysis to inform, interpret, and respond to art works.
- L 7 - DI Students will generate, analyse and clarify ideas in response to two-dimensional and three dimensional works.
- L8-CI Students will research and analyse approaches and theories related to contemporary visual arts practice.
- L8-CI Students will critically reflect on, respond to, and evaluate their own and others' practice and work in the visual arts.
- L 8 - DI Students will use both recent and established practice in a selected field of visual arts as the basis of study.

whangarei | **art museum**
TE WHARETAONGA O WHANGAREI

EXHIBITION TASKSHEET FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

***Cultural Memory – A History of the Whangarei
Art Collection 1921 - 2008***

"Approaching a painting as a thing gets us past one misconception, which is *that art is unavailable to you unless you're in on all its hidden meanings.*" (Paton Justin, 2005, pg 27)

Whilst learning what others have said about an artists work can enhance the significance of its meaning, coming to your own understanding of a work is equally important. It can open a whole world up to you, your own inner world, your world of symbology and meaning. Approach art as you would listening to a new CD for the first time, sometimes it takes listening to 3 or 4 times before it's really got you.

Try this out:

- Stand quietly in front of the artwork
- Move forwards and read the title Question the meaning/significance/relevance
- Listen for the questions/responses you come up with
- Scan the work for the answers you want
- Be patient...
- Move around the space. Re-encounters and coming back to a painting will add dimension to your experience and shift the focus of view. Try viewing the work from another angle.

Absorb the layers of information available to you in the gallery from Museum staff/text panels/publications/videos and reviews in measured amounts comfortable to you. DON'T DESPAIR if you still don't understand - learning is a process of absorption. Meeting art is as rewarding and as frustrating as meeting a new friend or acquaintance. It is the privilege of understanding.

Choose 1 painting or work which stands out to you or which you like.

1. Write down the artist, title of the work and the medium used.

2. Try a free word association. Write down any words that come to you whilst viewing the work.

3. Is the work smaller than you or bigger than you? Does it draw you in or push you back? Write a couple of sentences on the affect the work has on you.

4. What period is the artwork you've chosen from Right two facts that describe that period.

5. Write an essay from the point of view of a collector or museum director who wants to purchase one of the paintings. Include why you chose the painting and how it will add to their current collections

**EXHIBITION TASKSHEET FOR PRIMARY AND
INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL STUDENTS**

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- Move around the space. Re-encounters and coming back to a painting will add dimension to your experience and shift the focus of view. Try viewing the work from another angle.

Absorb the layers of information available to you in the gallery from Museum staff/test/panels/publications/videos and reviews in measured amounts comfortable to you. DON'T DESPAIR if you still don't understand - learning is a process of absorption. Meeting art is as rewarding and as frustrating as meeting a new friend or acquaintance. It is the privilege of understanding.

Choose 3 paintings or works which stand out to you or which you like. Using a page for each piece of work, answer the following;

1. Write down the artist, title of the work and the medium used.
-

2. Try a free word association. Write down any words that come to you whilst viewing the work.

3. Is the work smaller than you or bigger than you? Does it draw you in or push you back? Write a couple of sentences on the affect the work has on you.

4. What period is the artwork you've chosen from? Right two facts that describe that period.

5. What do you think the artist is trying to communicate?



Exhibition Education Resource Kit

Cultural Memory A History of the Whangarei Art Museum Collection 1921 - 2008

Further Resources and Reference List:

Bibliography

A.H.McLintock, 1966, *An Encyclopedia of NZ*
<http://www.teara.govt.nz>, 28 April 06

Bloem & Browne 2002, Colin *McCahon*, *A Question of Faith* Craig Potton Publishing, Nelson

Paton Justin, 2005, *how to look at a painting* AWA Press, Wellington, NZ

Pioch Nicolas ©14 Oct 2002, *Impressionism*
www.ibiblio.org

www.zeroland.co.nz

**The exhibition will be available to view online at www.whangareiartmuseum.co.nz.
For information and print quality jpegs contact the Whangarei Art Museum at 09 430 4230
or email whangareiartmuseum@wdc.govt.nz
Education resource kit was compiled for the Whangarei Art Museum**