

AORAKI/HIKURANGI

Cath Brown
Jacqueline Fraser
Ross Hemera
Peter Robinson
John Scott
Areta Wilkinson

Stephen Gibbs
Robert Jahnke
Robyn Kahukiwa
Baye Riddell
Ngapine Tamihana Te Ao
John Walsh



McDougall Art Annex
Rolleston Ave Christchurch

with the kind assistance of
Te Waka Toi

21 June — 7 August 1994

ISBN NO. 0-908874-36-7

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AORAKI/HIKURANGI

Aoraki and Hikurangi are geographical phenomena. At 3753 metres Aoraki is New Zealand's highest mountain: the East Coast mountain Hikurangi¹ (1755 metres) is the first place on the mainland to be caressed by the light of the new day, the first to welcome both the seasonal and calendar new years.²

For nga tangata taumata rau — New Zealand's indigenous "people of many peaks" — such mountains hold significance as sacred emblems of iwi [tribal] identity. In the customary recitation of emblems that identify tangata whenua [the people of the land] as belonging to a specific iwi, the mountain comes first.

*Ko Aoraki te mauka
Ko Waimakariri te awa
Ko Kai Tahu te iwi*

*Ko Hikurangi te mauka
Ko Waiapu te awa
Ko Ngati Porou te iwi*

Aoraki is the mountain
Waimakariri is the river
Ngai Tahu are the people

Hikurangi is the mountain
Waiapu is the river
Ngati Porou are the people

For Ngai Tahu of Te Wai Pounamu [the South Island], then, Aoraki is the mountain; for Ngati Porou of Tairāwhiti [the East Coast], it is Hikurangi. The mountain does not belong to the iwi: rather, the iwi belongs to the mountain. As Dr Pakariki Harrison (Ngati Porou), the distinguished tohunga whakairo, puts it: "Hikurangi is my mountain. I belong to it; it does not belong to me." It is the enduring presence of the mountain that shapes the iwi's sense of place, meaning, belonging and wellbeing. Witness to, and guardian of, the passing generations, the mountain is conceived of as eternal,

and enjoys a god-like status. It existed long before there were iwi, and will outlast the people who cherished it as a symbol. [This thought is encapsulated in the proverb: *Rarangī maunga tu te ao, tu te po; rarangi tangata ka ngaro, ka ngaro.* : A range of mountains stands day in and day out, but a line of people is lost, is lost.³]

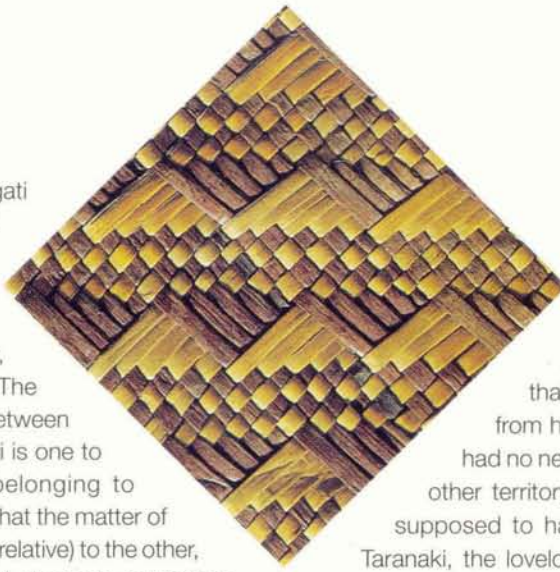
Throughout Polynesia a mountain represents the highest point at which the primal parents — Papatuanuku, the Earth Mother, and Ranginui, the Sky Father — meet. As one of the highest places on earth it is closest to heaven, and is therefore one of the most sacred places. The iwi that belongs to such a mountain locks that landmark into its own mythologies and histories, into its own account of its origins and fortunes. In Aotearoa [the North Island, strictly speaking] and Te Wai Pounamu various stories are told in explanation of the origins of Aoraki and Hikurangi in the creation mythologies specific to Ngai Tahu and Ngati Porou, respectively. Aoraki was named after a member of the crew of the ancestral waka [canoe] Araiteuru which came from Hawaiki. In another story the supernatural canoe, Te Waka-a-Aoraki, turned into the South Island, and the captain Aoraki, and his brothers, into mountains. The South Island is also known as Te Waka-a-Maui, and the North Island as Te Ika-a-Maui [Maui's fish]. Hikurangi is thought of as the first part of the fish to have broken the ocean's surface. [Hawke's Bay is Te Matau-a-Maui — Maui's fish-hook.] And Hikurangi was the resting place of Maui's waka.

Ko Tahupotiki te takata Ko Porourangi te tangata
Tahupotiki is the ancestor Porourangi is the ancestor

There are strong kinship ties between Ngai Tahu and Ngati Porou. Tahu-Potiki, from whom Ngai Tahu trace their descent, and Porourangi, the founding ancestor of Ngati Porou are shown in various whakapapa to have been blood relations, but the precise nature of the relationship is difficult to determine. According to the Ngai Tahu rangatira Teone Taare Tikao⁴, for example, Tahu-Potiki, by marrying his brother's widow, Hamo, became stepfather to his nephew Porourangi. The daughter from this union was to marry Porourangi, and there were to be other intermarriages of a kind that would now be thought of as incestuous, but which were originally intended to preserve the nobility of the



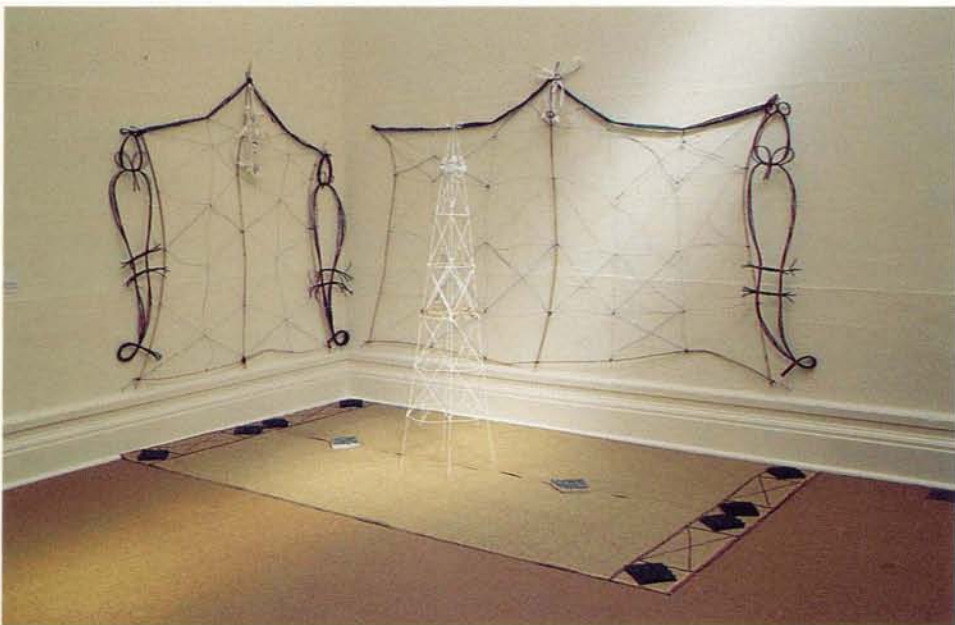
ruling family. However, the Ngati Porou tohunga Mohi Ruatapu states that it was Porourangi who married Hamo⁵, and that she also co-habited with his brother, who is identified as Tahu.⁶ The question of discrepancies between the whakapapa of the two iwi is one to be avoided by someone belonging to neither.⁷ Suffice it to observe that the matter of which iwi is tuakana (the elder relative) to the other, and which is taina (the younger), depends on whether the precise nature of the relationship between Tahu-Potiki and Porourangi can ever be established to the satisfaction of both sides. Nevertheless, whenever Ngai Tahu and Ngati Porou come together (as they do in this exhibition) their connectedness is affirmed in the traditional ceremonies of ritual encounter.



The great Ngati Porou chief Te Kani-a-Takirau is said, in the 1850s, to have declined the offer of the Maori kingship on the grounds that he was a king in his own right from his Ngati Porou ancestors, and had no need to assert his mana over any other territory or people.⁹ Hikurangi, he is supposed to have said — in an allusion to Taranaki, the lovelorn mountain forced into exile from the central plateau when he tried to steal Pihanga, the wife of Tongariro — was not one of the “travelling mountains”.¹⁰ While it is true that mountains are physically immobile, the name, the meaning, and the image of Hikurangi and Aoraki have travelled, over time and distance, from the ancient world of “Hawaiki”, the islands of origin from whence the ancestors came. Variants of those venerable names, are found throughout Polynesia — Hikurangi in Rarotonga, and Aora[‘]i in Tahiti, for example — and other iwi have bestowed them on landmarks within their rohe [areas] in New Zealand.

According to Teone Taare Tikao, the Ngai Tahu tribe “started up at *Turanga* (Gisborne) and through various causes, principally fighting and quarrelling, they drifted south ”⁸ The migration is reckoned to have begun some ten to twelve generations ago, and Ngai Tahu eventually occupied the greater part of Te Wai Pounamu, entering into an accommodation with descendents of more ancient settlers in the island, notably Ngati Mamoe, and adopting their geographic emblems of identity.

Today, nga tangata taumata rau are widely scattered far beyond their tribal rohe. Yet even where nga tangata have been physically separated from their turangawaewae [place to stand] for, say, two or three



Jacqueline Fraser, *Ko Aoraki te Maunga (Mt Cook is the Mountain)* 1991.
 Courtesy of the Dunedin Public Art Gallery



generations, from the necessity of living where a livelihood is to be made, they — whether they are te whanau o Ngati Porou living in Otautahi [Christchurch] or Ngai Tahu living in Tamaki-makau-rau [Auckland] — will usually know their emblems of identity. The mountain is a part of their being: in a sense, the mountain goes where they go.

In 1891 a young Ngati Porou man journeyed from the East Coast to enrol at Canterbury College (now the Christchurch Arts Centre). Born at Kawakawa on 3 July 1874, Apirana Turupa Ngata was educated at Waiomatatini Native School and Te Aute College. At Te Aute he was thoroughly prepared for the matriculation examination by completing a course of study, thoroughly grounded in the traditions of the English public school, which had been introduced by John Thornton, the Headmaster. Ngata's admission to Canterbury College was described in the Christchurch *Press* editorial of 10 April 1891 as marking "an epoch in the history of the University of New Zealand" for this was the first time "that a member of the race has entered on a university course."¹¹

In his first year Ngata set himself up for the eventual completion of two degrees: a Bachelor of Arts and a Bachelor of Laws. In November 1893 he passed his B.A. finals, and graduated the following year, thus becoming the first Maori graduate. He fulfilled the requirements for the award of a Master of Arts degree in 1894, and a Bachelor of Laws degree in 1896, and was duly admitted to the bar, after serving his articles with the Auckland law firm of Devore and Cooper. When he entered Parliament in 1905 as the member for Eastern Maori, he was academically the most highly qualified person in the House of Representatives. He left the House in 1943 as its longest serving member.

As a politician, statesman, leader and scholar Ngata was the force and inspiration behind what is often described as the first Maori cultural "renaissance". Although he was first and foremost Ngati Porou, his immense influence was exercised pan-tribally. Right up until his death (on 14 July 1950) he was actively involved in whare whakairo [carved, decorated tribal houses]

and whare karakia [churches] building projects, and had inspired a major revival of the traditional arts of carving and weaving, particularly (but not exclusively) throughout the North Island.

At the time of his death a second Maori "renaissance" in the visual arts was about to get under way, this time involving young Maori artists who were being initiated into western modes of artmaking. Selwyn Wilson graduated Diploma in Fine Arts in 1952, and Arnold Manaaki Wilson, Diploma in Fine Arts with Honours in 1954 — both from the Elam School at Auckland University College. They were the first Maori graduates in fine arts. Meanwhile, the visionary Department of Education official Gordon Tovey had targeted other aspiring Maori artists, such as Cath Brown, Cliff Whiting, Paratene Matchitt, Ralph Hotere, and Fred Graham for training as specialist art teachers. Up until 1975 the New Zealand art establishment was disinclined to take the work of these modernist and contemporary Maori artists seriously. But since the Hiko [land march], led by the late Dame Whina Cooper in 1975, a major resurgence of Maori nationalism and culture has gathered force, and its expression in the visual arts has become conspicuously successful.

Most of the artists in *Aoraki/Hikurangi* are nationally recognised as contemporary Maori artists, and some have also enjoyed recent exposure in Australia, Spain, Holland, and the United States of America, in response to a burgeoning international interest in the contemporary art of the world's indigenous people.

But this is not just another exhibition of contemporary Maori art. *Aoraki/Hikurangi* features the work of twelve artists — six Ngai Tahu, six Ngati Porou — each of whom has strong iwi recognition, and is thus qualified to stand under the mantle of his or her emblems of identity. The iwi identity of the artist may or may not be discernible in the iconography of the works but it is always implicit in who that artist is. It is as representatives of their respective iwi and mountains that the Ngai Tahu artists Cath Brown, Jacqueline Fraser, Ross Hemera, Peter Robinson, John Scott, and



Areta Wilkinson join together with the Ngati Porou artists Baye Riddell, Stephen Gibbs, Robert Jahnke, Robyn Kahukiwa, Ngapine Tamihana Te Ao and John Walsh in acknowledgement of a specific kaupapa [purpose]: the historic meeting of Ngati Porou and Ngai Tahu on the occasion of the centenary of Apirana Ngata's graduation on this, the Christchurch Arts Centre, site. In honouring and celebrating his achievement as the first Maori to gain a university degree, the descendents of Porourangi and Tahu-Potiki affirm their ancestral connectedness. In doing so, they stand with pride and dignity as the people of their mountains: *Aoraki* and *Hikurangi*.

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to Dr John Hearnshaw, Reader in the Department of Physics and Astronomy, University of Canterbury, for this information.

3. Quoted from Hirini Mead, *Te Maori: Maori Art from New Zealand Collections* (Auckland, 1983), 20.
4. Teone Taare Tikao, *Tikao Talks: Ka Taoka o Te Ao Kohatu: Treasures from the Ancient World of the Maori: Told by Teone Taare Tikao to Herries Beattie* (Auckland, 1990), 119.
5. Anaru Reedy, *Nga Korero a Mohi Ruatapu: Tohunga Rongonui o Ngati Porou* (Christchurch, 1993), 147.
6. *ibid.*, 156.
7. The writer is of Ngapuhi descent.
8. Tikao, *ibid.*
9. W. H. Oliver, ed., *The Dictionary of New Zealand Biography, Volume One, 1769-1869* (Wellington, 1990), 458-459.
10. Apirana Ngata, *E To Hoa Aroha*, III (Auckland, 1988), 259.



Robyn Kahukiwa, *E Tipu E Rea*, 1994.

ENDNOTES

1. This is not to be confused with the district of Hikurangi, near Whangarei.
2. The first place in New Zealand to see the sunrise is the Chatham Islands. The first country in the southern hemisphere to see the sunrise at the beginning of the seasonal new year is the Kingdom of Tonga. The first place on earth to see the sunrise at the beginning of the calendar year is the Chatham Islands. I am indebted

11. Among those who signed Canterbury College's Declaration Book in 1891 several others were to achieve distinction in public life: Ernest (Lord) Rutherford (1871-1937); John Angus (Professor) Erskine (1872-1960); James (Sir James) Hight (1870-1958); and Willie Sinclair (Sir William) Marris (1873-1945).





Cath Brown

Kai Tahu

(Born 1933, Taumatu) Cath Brown went to Teachers' College in Dunedin, and specialized in art education. From Teachers' College she was recruited by Gordon Tovey of the Department of Education to train as a Maori art advisor on a scheme to introduce Maori art into schools. She worked in the Canterbury Education Board area as an art advisor from the fifties through to the seventies, and was also involved with Maori Art and Craft courses run for teachers throughout the country. In 1973 she joined the Art Department at the Christchurch College of Education, retiring from the position of Head of Department in 1990. She has been a member of the Aotearoa Te Moanaui a kiwa Weavers Committee since its foundation in 1983, the Maori Women's Welfare League and the New Zealand Netball Association. In 1987 she became a Justice of the Peace. Cath Brown lives in Southbridge where she has cultivated a flax garden from which she harvests materials for her art.

Jacqueline Fraser

Ngai Tahu, Kati Mamoe

(Born 1956, Dunedin) Jacqueline Fraser studied sculpture at the Elam School of Fine Arts from 1974 to 1977, and was the curator of the Otago Early Settlers Museum from 1978 to 1980. In 1982 she moved to Auckland. Fraser has exhibited in New Zealand since 1977 and internationally since 1978. In 1987 and 1990 she received grants from the QE II Arts Council and in 1992 was awarded the Moët & Chandon Fellowship. In 1993 she travelled to Germany to participate in the international art exhibition *Prospect '93* at the Frankfurter Kunstverein. While living in Dunedin she was an active member of the Otakou marae. In Auckland Fraser has been a member of the Maori

Women's Welfare League, the Kohunga Reo movement, and a bilingual teacher of Maori.

Stephen Gibbs

Ngai Tamanuhiri, Rongo Whakaata, Ngati Kahungaunu, Ngati Porou

(Born 1955, Gisborne) Stephen Gibbs graduated in painting from the Ilam School of Fine Arts in 1978. In 1979 he attended Christchurch Teachers' College, and taught in Christchurch throughout the eighties. In 1992 he became a lecturer in Maori Design at the Christchurch Polytechnic, and is at present a tutor in Contemporary Maori Art at Tairāwhiti Polytechnic in Gisborne. He has exhibited in galleries and on maraes since 1976, and has also been involved in co-ordinating exhibitions. He has been a member of Nga Puna Waihangā and the Te Atinga committee of contemporary Maori visual arts.

Ross Hemera

Ngai Tahu

(Born 1950, Kurow) Ross Hemera studied at the Otago Polytechnic School of Fine and Applied Arts, graduating in 1972, and gained a certificate in visual arts from Auckland Teachers' College. Hemera has exhibited since 1975, and has also been involved in design work. After a period of secondary school teaching in Auckland Hemera moved to Rotorua in 1983 to head Waiariki Polytechnic's art department. This year he has taken up the position of senior lecturer in contemporary Maori design at Wellington Polytechnic. In 1987 he travelled to the United States to work with and study with indigenous artists on a QE II Arts Council/Air New Zealand travel award. Ross Hemera has been a member of Nga Puna Waihangā, the Te Atinga committee of contemporary Maori visual arts, the New Zealand Stamp Design Council, the New Zealand Qualifications Authority and the Aotearoa NZ Association of Art Educators.

