

# OUR PEOPLE - OUR LAND



Justin Boroughs (New Zealand 20<sup>th</sup> Century)  
*Cows and Karaka Trees in Cornwall Park*  
Oil on board, 74 x 132 cm, signed, dated 2017

Illustrated Cover  
Grahame Sydney (New Zealand 20<sup>th</sup> Century)  
*Whangaroa Bay, Northland*  
Watercolour & gouache on arches paper, 54 x 73 cm, signed & dated 2017

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ISBN 978-0-473-41373-3

November 2017

Long before it was settled by humans, Aotearoa / New Zealand was a land of birds. Some sense of the early dominance of our so-called 'feathered tribes' was given by botanist Joseph Banks' description of the dawn chorus when the *Endeavour* was anchored in Queen Charlotte Sound on 17 January 1770. As Banks recorded in his journal: 'their voices were certainly the most melodious wild musick I have ever heard, almost imitating small bells but with the most tuneable silver sound imaginable ...'

Several of New Zealand's native birds are acknowledged in this selection of works. Layla Walter's cast glass *Kokako Bowl* immortalises an endangered forest bird which is occasionally seen on our \$50 note. The relationship between birds and humans is examined in Liam Barr's imaginative pairing, *Two Tui*, and also in Ray Ching's *Reischek and the Satyr*, which alludes to the Austrian taxidermist Andreas Reischek who collected natural history specimens in this country in the late nineteenth century. On a table in a hut in the Fiordland rainforest lies a recently bagged example of this country's nocturnal and almost flightless parrot, the kakapo, tagged and destined for the Director of the Dominion Museum in Wellington. The increasingly precarious state of our avian fauna is the subject of Nigel Brown's triptych, *Short Lives of Birds*, in which the flickering lamp of enlightenment and the incorporation of text show the influence of Colin McCahon, one of Brown's teachers at the Elam School of Fine Arts. Against a backdrop of barren bush-cleared hills, Brown's message is that these birds are in need of human protection.

The tui in Liam Barr's painting are connected by a flowering branch of one of this country's most distinctive plants, which is also the subject of Ann Robinson's cast glass *Twisted Flax Pods*. The same artist's *Puka Vase* acknowledges another widespread member of the local flora, its name given to no less than two different trees, a shrub and a climbing plant. But it is not just this country's birds that are under threat; the giant of the forest, represented here by Jim Wheeler's bronze *Kauri branch – Matariki*, is now at the mercy of dieback disease.

Four months before the *Endeavour* first sighted New Zealand, on 7 October 1769, Cook and his men carried out astronomical observations in Tahiti. Lisa Reihana has recreated that event in her *Cook's Transit of Venus*, setting it against elements drawn from *Les Sauvages de la Mer Pacifique*, an 1804-05 French block-printed scenic



Peter McIntyre (New Zealand 1910 – 1995)  
*Trooper Desmond Williams, R Troop, LRDG, painted at Kufra Oasis*  
Watercolour on paper, 39.5 x 30 cm, signed

wallpaper which she describes as a 'pictorial fantasy' and a 'fabulation located in someone else's elsewhere'. This contemporary postcolonial reworking of a utopian vision of the Pacific is a moment in time from Reihana's multi-screened video presentation, *in pursuit of Venus [infected] 2015-17*, which is part of *Emissaries*, New Zealand's pavilion at the 2017 Venice Biennale.

This land is fringed by some 15,000 km of coastline. In *Cloud Coast* Brent Wong, a master of visionary and surreal images, presents an eerily sublime seascape with clouds arranged in perfect formation. Turning to a specific location, Grahame Sydney has captured the hardy vegetation and rugged offshore islands to the immediate north of Whangaroa Harbour, the site of a dramatic event in this country's early history, the destruction of the sailing ship *Boyd* in 1809. Aspects of the coast – particularly that of Taranaki – have featured prominently in the work of New Plymouth-born Michael Smither. In his view of his hometown's breakwater, man-made concrete blocks resolutely resist the ravages of the sea. Another artist with strong regional connections is Trevor Moffitt, a painter of narratives and social history. Originally from Southland, he is represented here by *Vineyard, Number 3* from his Canterbury paddocks series. Northland and its gum diggers are subjects associated with Garth Tapper, another recorder of contemporary New Zealand life, and this was presumably the location of the patch of dappled bush captured in *McLaughlin's*.

The east coast north of Auckland provided both the raw material and inspiration for Margaret Lovell's bronze *Omaha Wave*. She sculpted it on the beach from scrim-reinforced plaster, using the sand as her mould; after drying and further work it was taken to a foundry to be cast. Some 10 km to the north is Pakiri, the location of Aroha Gossage's *Beyond the Veil – Ki Tua o te Arai*, a characteristically atmospheric landscape which reflects her close personal relationship and ancestral attachment to the whenua/land of the hapu Ngati Manuhiri.

Auckland's other coast is represented by *The Windswept Beach, Piha*, by well-travelled Australian artist Ken Knight. His use of energetic brushwork and heavy impasto follows the impressionist style of the largely Melbourne-based Heidelberg School of the late nineteenth century, and he was attracted to what he describes as the 'primeval grandeur' of this country's West Coast.

The central North Island was a region well-known to Peter McIntyre. In *The Rangitikei River* he captures the meandering power of nature, inexorably carving its way through the rugged landscape. It was with another bird's-eye view of that river, its canyon and enclosing cliffs, that McIntyre won third prize in the 1957 Kelliher Art Award. He is also represented by the watercolour, *Kakahi*, a farming community south-east of Taumaranui on the Main Trunk Line. McIntyre had a holiday home and produced a number of paintings here, and it was the subject of his 1972 book *Kakahi New Zealand*.

The woolshed, traditionally distinguished by its red corrugated iron roof, is a prominent feature of this country's rural landscape. The atmospheric interior of one such vernacular structure is



Terry Stringer (New Zealand 20<sup>th</sup> Century)  
*Hello Summer - Goodbye Summer*  
Bronze, 185 cm high on 90 cm bronze base, signed & dated 2017



Brent Wong (New Zealand 20<sup>th</sup> Century)  
*Cloud - Coast*  
Acrylic on board, 38 x 57 cm, signed & dated 1998

captured in Grahame Sydney's 1983 watercolour, *Evan's Shed*, included here along with the artist's original sketch and an etching based on the completed painting. New Zealand's sheep population is not what it used to be, but dairy cattle numbers are on the rise, and Justin Boroughs has depicted an urban herd, in Auckland's Cornwall Park. Another acknowledgement of rural New Zealand is Ken Kendall's characterful and half life-size bronze, *The Horse Trainer*. A strong rural connection is also made in Don Driver's large mixed media banner *Ammo*, named in honour of a well-known fertilizer. Similarly composed of simple bold forms and incorporating mixed media is John Blackburn's *Rotorua & Muriwai – Open Book*, which acknowledges the two regions in this country where the UK-based artist has maintained studios. In contrast, a decidedly urban landscape is Karl Maughan's rendition of the garden of writer Peter Wells, biographer of the restless nineteenth-century missionary, botanist and explorer William Colenso.

As for the inhabitants of this land, Marian Fountain pays tribute to New Zealand servicemen who dug a complex of tunnels under the Western Front in northern France during the First World War. Her bronze, *The Earth Remembers*, featuring the profile of a member of the Tunnelling Company in his distinctive lemonsqueezer hat, is a smaller version of her 3.5 m high memorial of bronze, paint, patina, soil and grass which was unveiled at Arras on 9 April 2017. Peter McIntyre was official war artist during New Zealand's next major conflict overseas, from 1941-5, chronicling the activities of its forces in Crete, North Africa and Italy. His engaging watercolour portrait shows Trooper Desmond Williams, a member of the Long Range Desert Group dealing with the extreme conditions of the Libyan Desert near their captured base at Kufra Oasis.

Zarah Southon has studied painting in France and the United States, and his mastery of intense realism and commitment to a traditional approach to portraiture are apparent in the penetrating *Enuake*. The photographic portrait is represented by a work from Australian-born Di ffrench's 1988/9 series *The Thousand Rocks*, in which she explored the ability of gestures and expression to convey something characteristic of her subject. Taking an allegorical approach are the two bronze sculptures, Llew Summer's *Lead on*, and Terry Stringer's *Hello Summer, Goodbye Summer*, the latter showing youth both greeting and farewelling and thereby witnessing the passing of the golden years. The same sculptor's large bronze *McCahon Triptych* consists of three vertical elements which coalesce to form an intense portrait of an individual who was both an influential teacher and one of this country's foremost modernists.

Richard Wolfe, Auckland 2017



Michael Smither (New Zealand 20<sup>th</sup> Century)  
*Two Boats*  
 Oil & acrylic on board, 17 x 24 cm, signed & dated 2002



Margaret Lovell FRBS RWA (British b. 1939)  
*Omaha Wave*  
 Bronze on granite, 28 x 12 cm, signed



Michael Smither (New Zealand 20<sup>th</sup> Century)  
*New Plymouth Breakwater*  
Oil & alkyd on board, 72 x 85 cm, signed & dated 1962



Marian Fountain (New Zealand 20<sup>th</sup> Century)  
*The Earth Remembers, Monument Miniature*  
Bronze, 31 x 12 x 10 cm, signed & dated 2017



Liam Barr (New Zealand 20<sup>th</sup> Century)  
*Two Tui*  
Oil on linen, 60 x 45 cm, signed



Layla Walter (New Zealand 20<sup>th</sup> Century)  
*Kokako*  
Cast glass, 25 x 31.5 cm, signed & dated 2017



Lisa Reihana (New Zealand 20<sup>th</sup> Century)  
*Cook's Transit of Venus (12520/13065)*  
Pigment print on paper mounted on aluminium dibond, 76.2 x 162.3 cm



Karl Maughan (New Zealand 20<sup>th</sup> Century)  
*Peter Wells' Garden*  
Oil on board, 87.5 x 128 cm, signed & dated 1987



Ann Robinson (New Zealand 20<sup>th</sup> Century)  
*Twisted Flax Pods*  
Cast glass, 110 x 20 cm each, signed



Llew Summers (New Zealand 20<sup>th</sup> Century)  
*Lead On*  
Bronze, 28.5 x 67.5 x 20 cm, signed



Bronwynne Cornish (New Zealand 20<sup>th</sup> Century)  
*Speckled Owl*  
Ceramic, 23 x 14 x 21 cm, signed

## DEPICTING OUR PEOPLE



Vera Cummings (New Zealand 1891 - 1949)  
*Harata Tuhaere, Chieftainess, Widow of Paora Tuhaere of Orakei*  
Oil on canvas, 30.5 x 25.5 cm, signed

### VERA (VERONICA) CUMMINGS (1891-1949)

Vera Cummings was born in Thames. Her mother, Annie, came from Australia, and her father, Irishman Matthew Cummings, arrived in this country in 1862 and served in the First Waikato regiment during the Waikato and Tauranga campaigns of the New Zealand Wars. At some point the family moved to Auckland where Matthew was employed in the construction of houses in the suburbs of Ponsonby and Herne Bay. It is likely that this led to his meeting with David Goldie, a prominent timber merchant, Mayor of Auckland (1898-1901) and, importantly, father of artist Charles F. Goldie.

At the age of eleven Vera Cummings was awarded a scholarship to attend the Elam School of Art. She subsequently became a pupil of Goldie, painting alongside him in his studio. The pair often shared the same models, who were frequently elderly Maori living in the Maori Hostel, then located at the bottom of Parnell Rise, near the intersection with Stanley Street.

Vera Cummings' paintings of Maori were popular with overseas visitors to Auckland, and one of her portraits of an unnamed Maori woman is in the collection of the Auckland Art Gallery. *Harata Tuhaere, Chieftainess, Widow of Paora Tuhaere of Orakei*, the subject of the painting in this selection, was the descendant of two famous Maori chiefs, Tamati Waake Nene and Eru Patuone. She was also the subject of three portraits by Goldie; *Memories* (1903), *The Widow* (1903) and *Meditation* (1904). *The Widow* was one of two Goldie paintings – the other being *Darby and Joan* (1903) - presented to the Countess of Ranfurly, wife of the Governor, in 1903, and which were the cause of considerable controversy when purchased by the National Art Gallery in 1990.

Harata Tuhaere was the second wife of Ngati Whatua leader Paora Tuhaere, who died in 1892. As noted by Roger Blackley, pupils of Goldie made copies of their master's work,<sup>1</sup> and it seems likely that Vera Cummings may have used one Goldie's portraits as a basis for her own depiction of the chieftainess.

1. Roger Blackley, *Goldie*, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tamaki in association with David Bateman Ltd, Auckland, 1997, p. 42.

### JOSEPH GAUT (1860-1934)

Little is known about Joseph Gaut, who was nothing if not itinerant. In 1883 he advertised his services in Auckland as an art teacher, offering lessons in freehand and model drawing, practical geometry, linear perspective and watercolour. The following year he was included in the first of several exhibitions in Auckland, showing landscape scenes from around New Zealand. That he favoured South Island scenery and twilight effects is suggested by such titles as *Sunset on Lake Rotoiti*, *Sunset Effect on Snow*, *Lake Hawea*, *Evening at Bruce Bay*, *Milford Sound*, *Sunrise*, and *Sunset in Otira Gorge*.

By late 1887 Gaut was in Masterton, now advertising what he described as 'branch classes' of the Wellington School of Design. The local newspaper reported that he was gradually travelling through the country, and studying its art. He held an exhibition in his Masterton studio, showing 15 pictures, consisting of 10 Maori portraits, 4 landscapes and one nude. His Maori subjects, both male and female, were presented in traditional costume, and the largest, the life-size *Tawhiao, the Maori King*, was subsequently shown at the 1889 Melbourne Exhibition and awarded a Fourth order of Merit. This massive portrait is now in the collection of the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, as are two other Maori portraits by Gaut and his view of the famous Pink and White Terraces, *Nature's Adornment*, *Umbrella Buttress*.



Joseph Gaut (New Zealand 1860 - 1934)  
*Portrait of a Maori Chieftainess*  
Oil on canvas, 85 x 66 cm, signed & dated 1884

The versatile Gaut also turned his hand to designing stamps. In 1895 he received several awards when included in an exhibition at the Academy of Fine Arts, Wellington, of the 2400 designs submitted for this country's first set of pictorial postage stamps. One of Gaut's designs, showing Lake Taupo with a distant Mt Ruapehu, was used both on the 1d stamp issued in 1898 and in a slightly reduced version on the 4d stamp issued two years later.



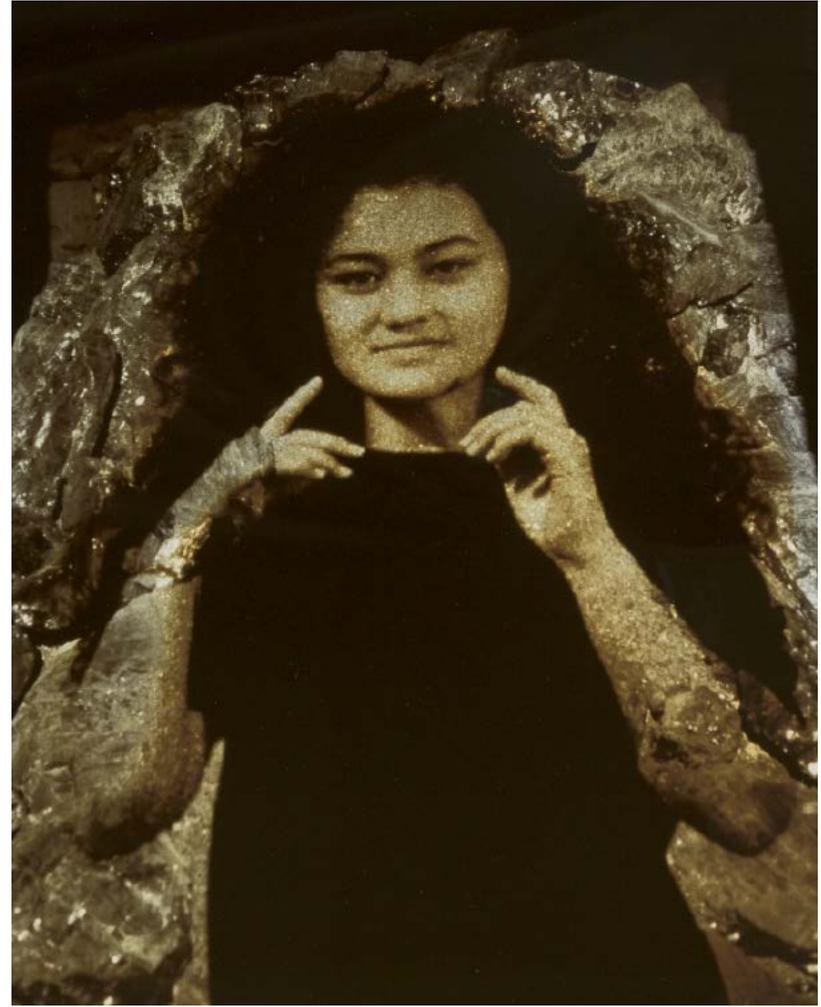
Joseph Gaut (New Zealand 1860 - 1934)  
*Portrait of a Maori Chief*  
Oil on canvas, 85 x 66 cm, signed & dated 1884

Gaut is represented in this exhibition by two unidentified portraits, of a Maori chief and chieftainess, recently repatriated from an English collection and which may have been included in his Masterton studio exhibition in 1888. On that occasion a visitor noted that the artist had avoided the 'toning down' commonly carried out by other artists, a practice which no doubt helped produce a 'pretty picture' but one which detracted from what might otherwise be 'an exceedingly expressive face'.<sup>1</sup>

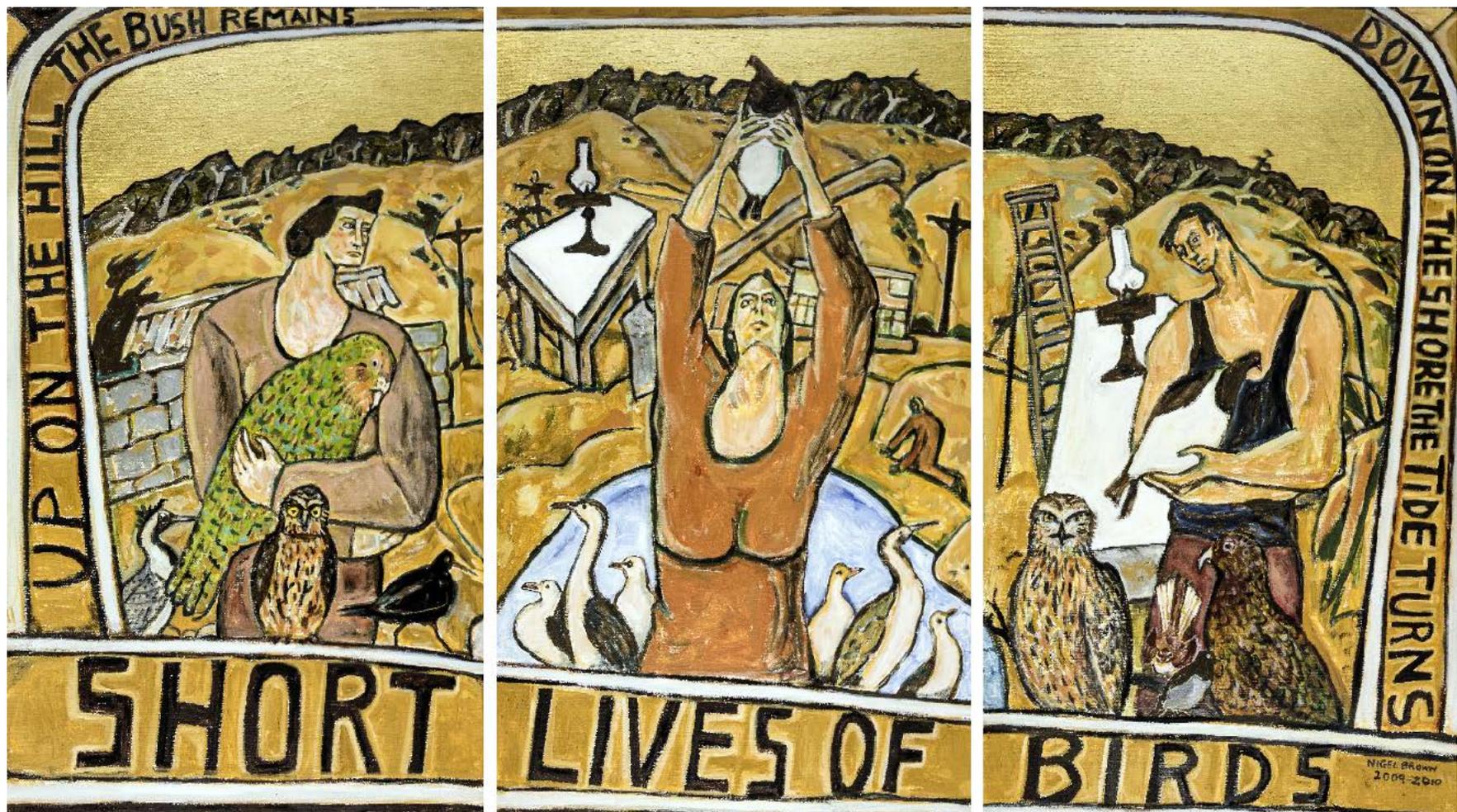
1. *Wairarapa Daily Times*, 29 February 1888.



Zarahn Southon (New Zealand 20<sup>th</sup> Century)  
*Enuake*  
Oil on linen, 35 x 30 cm, signed & dated 2017



Di ffrench (New Zealand 1946 - 1999)  
*Thousand Rocks Series*  
Cibachrome, 57.5 x 47 cm, dated 1988/89



Nigel Brown (New Zealand 20<sup>th</sup> Century)

*Short Lives of Birds*

Oil & acrylic on linen, 135 x 240 cm, signed & dated 2009 – 2010



Peter McIntyre (New Zealand 1910 – 1995)  
*The Rangitikei River*  
Oil on board, 60 x 76 cm, signed



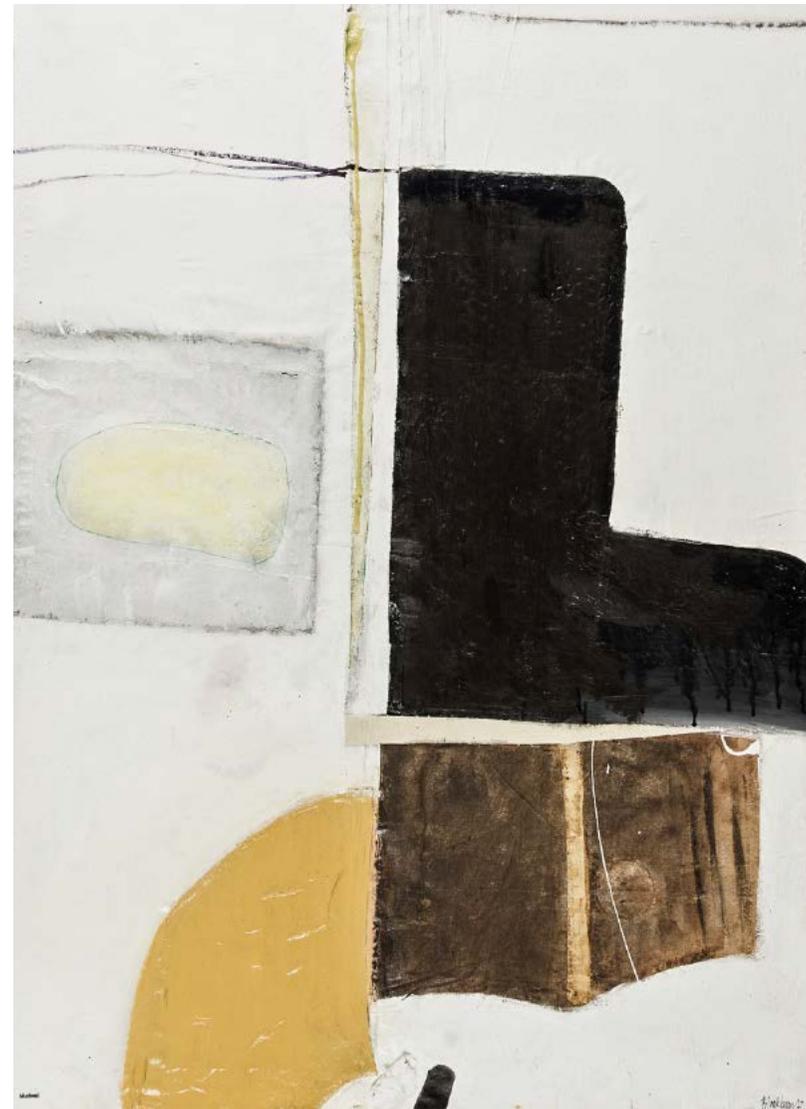
Ken Kendall (New Zealand 1928 - 2012)  
*The Horse Trainer*  
Bronze, 93 x 46 x 40 cm, signed



Peter McIntyre (New Zealand 1910 - 1995)  
*Kakahi*  
Watercolour, 52.5 x 72 cm, signed



Don Driver (New Zealand 1930 - 2011)  
*Ammo*  
Mixed media, 180 x 140 cm  
Signed & dated 1991/2007



John Blackburn (British b. 1932)  
*Rotorua & Muriwai - Open Book*  
Acrylic & mixed media on board, 102 x 74 cm  
Signed & dated 2017



Trevor Moffitt (New Zealand 1936 - 2006)  
*Vineyard, Canterbury Paddocks Series*  
Oil on board, 88 x 118 cm  
Signed & dated '93



Garth Tapper (New Zealand 1927 - 1999)  
*McLaughlin's*  
Oil on hardboard, 58 x 74 cm, signed



Terry Stringer (New Zealand 20<sup>th</sup> Century)  
*McCahon Triptych*  
Bronze, 170 x 60 x 60 cm, signed



Grahame Sydney (New Zealand 20<sup>th</sup> Century)  
*Evan's Shed*  
Watercolour, 39.5 x 51 cm, signed & dated 1983



Jim Wheeler (New Zealand 20<sup>th</sup> Century)  
*Kauri Branch – Matariki*  
Bronze, 97 x 32 x 39 cm, signed



Aroha Gossage (New Zealand 20<sup>th</sup> Century)  
*Beyond the Veil - Ki Tua o Te Arai, Pakiri*  
Oil on board, 83 x 152 cm, signed & dated 2017



Ken Knight (Australian 20<sup>th</sup> Century)  
*The Windswept Beach, Piha*  
Oil on board, 70 x 120 cm, signed, dated 2013



Ray Ching (New Zealand b. 1939)  
*Reischek and the Satyr*  
Oil on board, 91.5 x 107 cm, signed

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