

SEASON

HERO

PARADE

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HERO PARADE



Hero Parade coincides with Auckland Pride Festival 2026. The title acknowledges the parade of the same name and the wider Hero Festival, which ran from 1992 to 2001 and was the predecessor of Auckland Pride. The exhibition spans the late 1930s and the present day, bringing together works provided by Season artists and borrowed from private collections. It pays tribute to a panoply of queer role models: atua, ancestors, trailblazers, icons, lovers, friends, hookups, colleagues.

LEO BENSEMANN

born 1912, Tākaka; died 1986, Ōtautahi
Pākehā; bisexual

From the 1930s to the 1950s, Ōtautahi was home to a progressive arts and culture group that Peter Simpson has termed 'Bloomsbury South'. Among its most prominent members were artists Rita Angus and Leo Bensemann. In February 1938, Bensemann and his then lover Lawrence Baigent moved into a flat adjoining one where Angus was living at 97 Cambridge Terrace. The three met for meals and hosted parties together. Bensemann and Angus often painted their friends, one of whom was the young Harry Courtney Archer (1918–2002).

This portrait, which was owned by Archer, reflects Bensemann's interest in Renaissance portraits, in which figures are often placed against expansive landscapes, and Japanese art, particularly ukiyo-e woodblock prints, with their rhythmic lines and flat colour. It is not known whether the painting was a commission or a gift. Simpson has dated it to about 1939.¹ At this time, Archer was working at his family's flour mill at Rangiora, and the background ostensibly shows this location. (Simpson suggests that the mountain is Maukatere Mount Grey.)

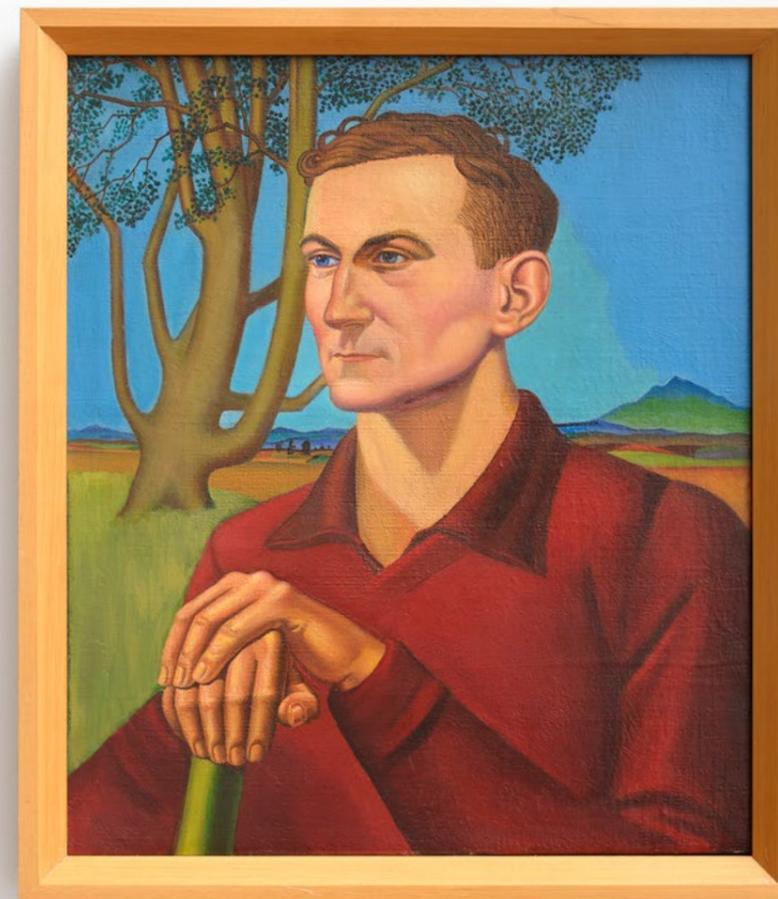
Like Angus and Bensemann, Archer was a pacifist. His father disapproved of his position, causing Archer to leave home and his job at the mill. Like other conscientious objectors, including Angus, he spent time at Pangatōtara and Riverside, in the Nelson region, during the Second World War. There, he engaged in horticultural labour that was not essential to the war effort.

After the war, Archer travelled to China, where he worked alongside Rewi Alley at the Shandan Bailie School. The objective of the school was to impart useful knowledge to a poor community using a 'half work, half study' system. A short biography of Archer notes that he quickly became 'a convert to the school's philosophies and way of life. He was impressed by the students, admired Alley's ideals and practical approach, and felt totally at ease in the strong family environment which had been created at the school.'

Political tumult made life in China difficult. Nevertheless, Archer persisted at the school for several years. In 1953, he decided to return to New Zealand, due to his father's failing health. Following his father's death in 1955, he took over the flour mill. He maintained ties to China, but Aotearoa was his base for the rest of his life. He lived at Rangiora with his male partner, Chen Tan, and died in 2002.

Harry Courtney Archer is a strong example of Bensemann's work. The artist was always more at home as a draughtsman, but the picture shows a growing confidence with paint that places it in league with other major portraits of his. Bensemann suffuses the painting with symbolic content. Standing in a calm and fertile landscape, with an intelligent countenance and elegant hands resting on an implement, Archer becomes an emblem of peaceable life and labour.

¹ Peter Simpson, *Fantastica: The World of Leo Bensemann* (Tāmaki Makaurau: Auckland University Press, 2011), 56.



LEO BENSEMANN
Harry Courtney Archer,
c. 1939
Oil on canvas
500 x 430mm (work)
550 x 475 x 60mm (frame)
Fletcher Trust Collection,
Tāmaki Makaurau



A. LOIS WHITE

born 1903, Tāmaki Makaurau; died 1984, Tāmaki Makaurau
Pākehā; possibly lesbian

The following newspaper article by renowned gay writer Peter Wells (1950–2019), ‘Lois Was a Sister’, was published in 1993 in response to the major retrospective *By the Waters of Babylon: The Art of A. Lois White*, curated by Nicola Green (1962–2011). The show included *Self-Portrait at Easel*.

Auckland City Art Gallery now boasts a remarkable exhibition of paintings and drawings by a woman we can be proud [of] as an ancestor of queer Aotearoa.

A. Lois White painted an extraordinary range of images, the most compelling of which illuminate female eroticism. Again and again we find stylised ‘art deco’ images of bare-breasted women enjoying each other’s company, frolicking in the waves and wind, carefree, proud and beautiful. These are stunning lesbian images, contemporary and coolly elegant.

Who was Lois White? Like many of the queer women and men of our past, she may have had to live a life of prevarication and guarded disclosure. Lilian Federman’s extraordinary book, ‘Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers’, details how lesbians of an earlier age took refuge in the safety of what appeared, on the surface, to be two maiden aunt-types living together, or associating closely. In the homophobic past, this provided safety.

On the surface, Lois White was a rather prim-looking Methodist art teacher. The emotional truth is revealed in her intensely erotic imaginings of women. Check out the audio-visual presentation. There you see photos of the young Lois, in pert swimsuits, her nipples pressing against the fabric, carefree and happy, unconsciously radiating sexual allure and strength. This is Lois’ sexual truth, not the prevarications of her life-style in provincial New Zealand of the interwar and postwar period.

It’s interesting that the exhibition can only hint at Lois’s lesbianism. As gay men and lesbians we have to provide the link ourselves. But it is unmistakably there. This exhibition is something to shout out about with joy. And perhaps there’s a kind of irony that Lois’ images of barebreasted women look like stylised views of the proud lesbians parading down Queen Street in the latest Hero Parade. It is a salute from the past to the present.

Don’t miss this show. Lois was a sister. It costs \$5 waged (\$3 concession) and runs till May 8 in Auckland, then moves on to Hamilton, Dunedin, Wellington, Napier and Christchurch.



A. LOIS WHITE
Self-Portrait at Easel, c.
1953
Oil on board
490 x 275mm (image)
675 x 460 x 50mm (frame)
Fletcher Trust Collection,
Tāmaki Makaurau





A. LOIS WHITE
Sleeping, c. 1960
Oil on canvas on board
600 x 750mm (image)
780 x 930 x 30mm (frame)
Fletcher Trust Collection,
Tāmaki Makaurau

A. Lois (pronounced 'Loyce') White was born into a middle-class Methodist family from Auckland. Her biographer, Nicola Green, has noted, "Throughout her life Lois struggled to reconcile two sides of her personality: the God-fearing dutiful daughter and the creative artist."¹ She trained at the Elam School of Art from 1923 to 1927 and went on to tutor there from 1928 to 1963. She was influenced by diverse artists, from the Old Masters of the European tradition to the Cubists and other modernist painters.

During the 1930s and 1940s, she was a prominent figure in the Auckland art scene, but she grew to be critically undervalued, both because her style was not thought particularly avant-garde, and because her preferred subject-matter was not comfortingly local. Following her rediscovery by Te Whanganui-a-Tara gallerist Peter McLeavey in the 1970s, and the staging of a major touring exhibition in the 1990s, her paintings came to be recognised for their idiosyncratic poetry.

White's work looks and feels like that of no other artist from Aotearoa (though there are resonances with figures such as May Smith, Margaret Thompson, James Turkington, and George Woods). None of her contemporaries embraced the rhythmic compositions associated with Art Deco as passionately or thoroughly as she did. None was as dedicated to experimenting with the type of the 'history painting'.

Sleeping is a fine example of the allegorical or symbolic works for which White is best known. The composition is beautifully calibrated to the subject-matter of sleep and (by implication) dreams. The foreground undulations, the flanking trees of a similar hue, and the voluptuous mountains in the far distance form a womb-like pictorial frame, reinforcing the mood of security and serenity that permeates the work.

Human and animal subjects are elegantly integrated with one another and their surroundings. The cool moonlight is exquisitely evoked, its delicate play across the faces of the sleeping figures especially well realised. The image is sensual, even bordering on erotic (consider, for instance, the excited forms of the tree at left and the yearning branches of the one at right). Yet this is not in any sense an explicit painting. It is subtly coded, welcoming complex and multiple responses.

Sleeping is undated, but it is likely a relatively late work, since it is painted on canvas board, lacks the stippling typical of earlier pieces, and includes figures with more robust physical features. A similar work, *Sleep*, is dated 1958. Given the greater confidence of *Sleeping*, it is possible that it was made after the artist's first and only European excursion in 1961. She travelled in the company of Ida Eise, who was her teacher and later colleague at Elam, her lifelong friend, and possibly a romantic partner.

¹ Nicola Green, 'Biography: White, Anna Lois', Te Ara The Encyclopedia of New Zealand, <https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/4w13/white-anna-lois>.

² Nicola Green, *By the Waters of Babylon: The Art of A. Lois White* (Tāmaki Makaurau: Auckland City Art Gallery/David Bateman, 1993), 109.



JOHN MILLER

born 1950, Tāmaki Makaurau; lives and works in
Tāmaki Makaurau
Ngāpuhi, Ngāi Tāwake ki te tuawhenua, Te Uri
Taniwha, Ngāti Rēhia, Te Whiu; ally

These photographs were taken by John Miller when he was working for *Craccum*, the University of Auckland's long-running student magazine. They show the Gay Day Happening, the first Gay Liberation public event, which was held at Albert Park, Tāmaki Makaurau, on 11 April 1972. Ngāhuia Te Awekōtuku, who appears in one of the photographs, has written:

The Gay Day Happening on 11 April was our first public action, a loud celebration of being 'like that' sited on the steps below Queen Victoria. Gay Liberation events were about laughter and release, because for decades the gay sensibility was suppressed, deprogrammed, criminalised, incarcerated or denied. To say it out loud, to take it back with joy was a conscious tactical manoeuvre on our part. We chose to move away from misery, even if it meant risking the loss of jobs, accommodation, family. We demanded our full humanity.

The group composed a letter to the Mayor of Auckland, inviting him to attend and comment on the Queen in Queen Street. At the event, I read this out with glee as the crowd pranced around the monument with huge placards, some exhorting, 'Say it Loud, Gay is Proud!', 'Better Blatant than Latent!' and 'Will Victorian Morality Ever Die?', referring to the laws of the Empress in stone.

Some of the braver men performed a poignantly funny yet harsh skit enacting common occurrences there after dark—entrapment by a plainclothes policeman or brutal assault by a queer basher—while some women, including Caterina [de Nave], wore sandwich boards declaring on one side, 'I Am Your Best Fantasy', and on the other, 'I Am Your Worst Fear'.¹

¹ Ngāhuia Te Awekōtuku, *Hine Toa* (Tāmaki Makaurau: HarperCollins, 2024), 276.



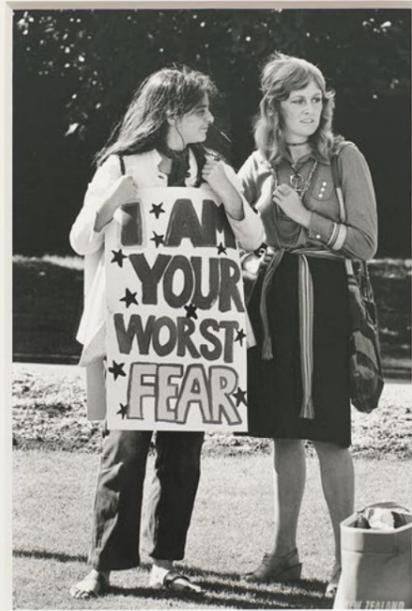
JOHN MILLER
Ngāhuia Volkerling (now
Te Awekōtuku) speaking
in front of 'Will Victorian
morality ever die?' sign,
Gay Day Happening, Albert
Park, Tāmaki Makaurau, 11
April 1972
Printed 2019
Gelatin silver print
Unique
290 x 190mm (image)
435 x 325 x 25mm (frame)
Coutts Josland Collection,
Tāmaki Makaurau



JOHN MILLER
Gay Day Happening, Albert
Park, Tāmaki Makaurau, 11
April 1972
Printed 2019
Gelatin silver print
Unique
290 x 190mm (image)
435 x 325 x 25mm (frame)
Coutts Josland Collection,
Tāmaki Makaurau



JOHN MILLER
'Gay Liberation' sign, Gay
Day Happening, Albert
Park, Tāmaki Makaurau, 11
April 1972
Printed 2019
Gelatin silver print
Unique
290 x 190mm (image)
435 x 325 x 25mm (frame)
Coutts Josland Collection,
Tāmaki Makaurau



JOHN MILLER
Caterina de Nave (wearing
'I am your worst fear/I am
your best fantasy' sandwich
board) and Sue Kedgley,
Gay Day Happening, Albert
Park, Tāmaki Makaurau, 11
April 1972
Printed 2019
Gelatin silver print
Unique
235 x 155mm (image)
380 x 290 x 25mm (frame)
Coutts Josland Collection,
Tāmaki Makaurau



JOHN MILLER
Caterina de Nave (wearing
'I am your worst fear/I
am your best fantasy'
sandwich board), Gay Day
Happening, Albert Park,
Tāmaki Makaurau, 11 April
1972
Printed 2019
Gelatin silver print
Unique
235 x 155mm (image)
380 x 290 x 25mm (frame)
Coutts Josland Collection,
Tāmaki Makaurau

PAUL JOHNS

born 1951, Ōtautahi; lives and works in Ōtautahi
Pākehā; gay

Paul Johns met Beverley Smith through the party scene in Ōtautahi in the first years of the 1970s. His initial depictions of her, on film and in photographs, formed part of his Honours degree at Ilam, which involved the production of art works and a dissertation. Johns received a failing grade, and he was later told by one of the lecturers at the School of Fine Arts that this was a consequence of the perceived impropriety of the content rather than its quality. Sadly, Johns destroyed the dissertation but works he made survive. Moreover, he continued recording his friends enthusiastically.

This undated work, reminiscent of an Andy Warhol silkscreen portrait, derives from a photographic or filmic image of Beverley created in the mid- to late 1970s. At this time, she was living in Te Whanganui-a-Tara. She performed under the moniker Solitaire at The Balcony, a 'nightclub and striptease parlour' (as the National Library of New Zealand puts it) owned by the legendary Carmen Rupe and named for a play by Jean Genet set in an upmarket brothel. John's work does not focus on the hostility to which Beverley and other trans women were subjected at the time. She is in full celebrity mode, gorgeous, glamorous, strong, self-possessed.



PAUL JOHNS
Beverley
Screenprint (enamel ink) on
canvas
200 x 200 x 25mm
Private collection, Tāmaki
Makaurau
Works by Paul Johns are
available via Commode, Te
Whanganui-a-Tara



RICHARD MCWHANNELL

born 1952, Akaroa; lives and works in Tāmaki
Makarau
Pākehā; ally



This work shows fellow artist Paul Johns, who became a friend of Richard McWhannell's in the early 1970s, when both were attending the University of Canterbury's Ilam School of Fine Arts. Johns was the subject of a number of portraits made by McWhannell in the 1970s and 1980s.

RICHARD MCWHANNELL
Head of a Man (against
light), 1979
Oil on linen
495 x 360mm (work)
615 x 480 x 25mm (frame)



JANE ZUSTERS

born 1951, Ōtautahi; lives and works in Waitaha
Canterbury
Pākehā; lesbian



Freudian Slips, Tāmaki Makaurau (1981) is a variant of a photograph of the feminist band Freudian Slips that featured on the cover of their EP *On the Line*, along with a painting of a cutout dress by Zusters. Shown left to right are Mary During, Cathy Sheehan, Nikki Lancaster, Paula Connolly, Elizabeth Leyland, and Donna Fletcher.

JANE ZUSTERS
Chiara, Tracey, Marianne
with poodles, Douglas
Street, Tāmaki Makaurau,
1983
Gelatin silver print
Unique
140 x 215mm (image)
385 x 465 x 10mm (framed)

Exhibited:
Margaret Dawson and Jane
Zusters, *Corps-a-corps*—
riposting the male gaze in
the 70s and 80s, curated
by Andrew Paul Wood, Next
Gallery, Ōtautahi, 2017



JANE ZUSTERS
Freudian Slips, Tāmaki
Makaurau Auckland, 1981
Gelatin silver print
Unique
150 x 225mm (image)
410 x 475 x 10mm (framed)

Exhibited:
Jane Zusters, Seventies
Silver, Mark Hutchins
Gallery, Te Whanganui-a-
Tara, 2012
Margaret Dawson and Jane
Zusters, Corps-a-corps—
riposting the male gaze in
the 70s and 80s, curated
by Andrew Paul Wood, Next
Gallery, Ōtautahi, 2017

RICHARD MCWHANNELL

born 1952, Akaroa; lives and works in Tāmaki
Makarau
Pākehā; ally



This man shriven and the later reprise, *This man shriven (2nd version)*, are dedicated to the memory of the artist's friend Russell Wells (1948–1989). The original work was included in the groundbreaking 1992 exhibition *Implicated and Immune: Artists' Responses to AIDS* at the Fisher Gallery (now Te Tuhi), Pakuranga. In the catalogue for the show, McWhannell described the context in which it was made:

This was painted after a visit to Russell Wells mid-1989. He was, at the time, in the late stages of HIV illness and had requested that I make him a door plate inscribed with the phrase 'Kororia Harirua' ('Glory Hallelujah') and containing the comets from the Bayeux tapestry. When I delivered the plate to him he was feeling particularly wretched and asked me in his terms, to call father so and so for he had 'great need of being shriven'. The phrase stuck in my mind and either later that day or the next I began the little painting *This man shriven* as a contemplation of it and in respect of his desperately enfeebled state.

RICHARD MCWHANNELL
This man shriven, 1989
Oil on canvas on board
420 x 750 x 25mm



Russell Wells was the brother of well-known gay writer Peter Wells (1950–2019), who was also a friend of McWhannell's and who acquired the painting. Russell is commemorated in the New Zealand AIDS Memorial Quilt. In 2013, Peter wrote:

This panel was made by my mother Bessie, myself (Peter)—Russell's younger brother—and Alexa Johnston, a close friend of Russell's. The material was a beautiful brocade which I thought expressed some of Russell's joie de vivre. The symbols mark out things like his love of antiques, his role in the legal profession, knowledge of Māoritanga. Russell was my elder brother by two years. I wrote extensively about this charismatic brother in my memoir *Long Loop Home* and the documentary film based on it, *Pansy*.

He influenced a younger generation of chefs and cooks. He was an ace cook of Elizabeth David recipes and Ray McVinnie and Alexa Johnston learnt from Russell—his flair, sharp taste, nonacceptance of second-best and demand that things be 'just so'.

Like anyone he could be irritating, demanding and difficult—but his flair for life was so extraordinary he changed the lives of people around him.

He died at 41 and my mother and I often wonder what he would have achieved if he had lived longer.

RICHARD MCWHANNELL
This man shriven (2nd
version), c. 2016–2026
Oil on linen
450 x 900 x 25mm



MURRAY SAVIDAN

lives and works in Tāmaki Makaurau
Pākehā; ally

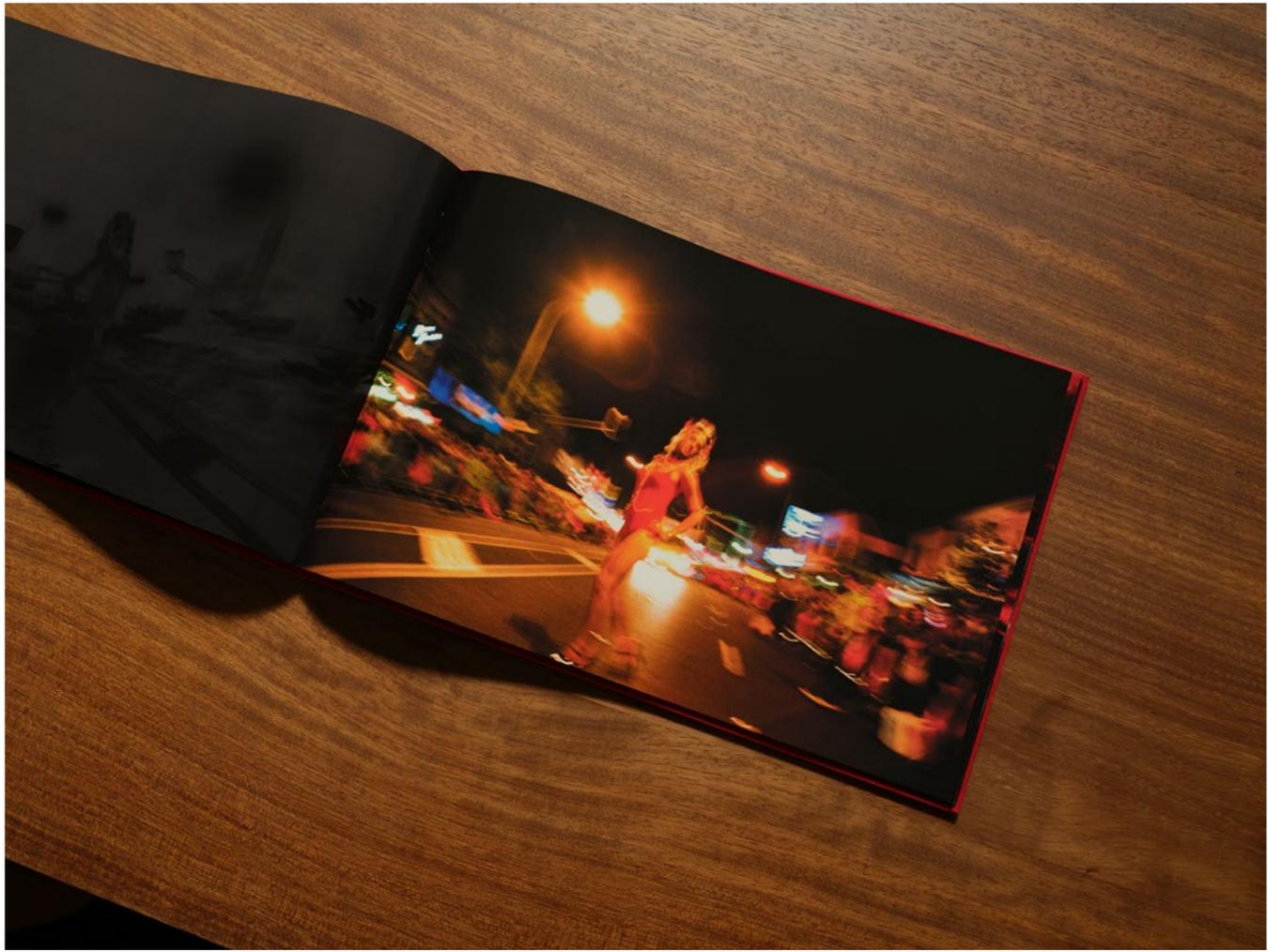
The Hero Parade and wider Hero Festival (the forerunner of Auckland Pride) were vital queer cultural phenomena in Tāmaki Makaurau, running from 1992 to 2001. Photographer Murray Savidan documented the parade in 1997, 1998, and 1999, and self-published a selection as *Out There: Portraits of the Hero Parade* in 2001. The book included a text by celebrated takatāpui author Witi Ihimaera, who commented:

As it happened internationally New Zealand's version of the once gay parade, Hero, has become bigger and more inclusive than it used to be: it's not just a gay parade any longer it's, well, more colourful. Not only has it the sass and style of Māoridom and the Pacific: it's also lesbian, transgender, bisexual and, Oh my God, there are real men and women in it. I can still remember the outrage from the most political queers, myself included, that the float with the most glitter, glam and nakedness was gruesomely heterosexual—the Flagship Sky City float. It was almost as if heterosexuals didn't have their own party to go to so were gatecrashing ours.

On the other hand, Hero positively acknowledges that being heroic isn't just a gender thing. It is to those of us who are gay, lesbian and out. But Hero also acknowledges the hero in all of us. It's a four letter word in the best sense having within it four other words: he, her, hero and the thing that binds all of us, eros. For some of us becoming a hero is a small pitiful thing that has the possibility of growth. For others, being heroic is the strength that our lives draw upon and makes it possible for us to confront the world with its prejudices and petty complaints. We all hold within us the seeds for a new alternative tribe like none ever seen before, a tribe that can force the world to focus on the real issues: freedom, justice, equity.



MURRAY SAVIDAN &
WITI IHIMAERA
*Out There: Portraits of the
Hero Parade*
Tāmaki Makaurau: Savidan
Productions, 2001
Private collection, Tāmaki
Makaurau



DOUGLAS MACDIARMID

born 1922, Taihape; died 2020, Paris, France
Pākehā; bisexual

Lay Your Sleeping Head I derives from a 1937 poem, 'Lullaby', by the openly homosexual W. H. Auden. It was introduced to Douglas MacDiarmid by his first great love, the composer Douglas Lilburn. The two formed part of what Peter Simpson has termed 'Bloomsbury South', a progressive artistic and literary circle based in Ōtautahi between the 1930s and 1950s. Other members included Rita Angus, Leo Bensemann, Allen Curnow, and Denis Glover.

MacDiarmid had a lifelong passion for poetry, initially nurtured by his mother. His biographer, Anna Cahill, notes, 'While some verse has its season, then fades from memory, 'Lay your sleeping head' [i.e. 'Lullaby'] stayed with him through thick and thin. Finally, he made his own translation so his French-speaking partner, Patrick, could enjoy it fully with him.' In 2012, MacDiarmid wrote to a friend:

I set out on this poem fully aware that a translation mustn't become a betrayal; but in all things, if enough love gears heart and mind to a commitment, the labour is multiplied and so is the pleasure. It does contain a lot. My French judges have been generous, and my reward has been a painting which then took over. Just for the hell of it, I'll enclose a copy. I've called it *Sleep*, and hope it doesn't bring you a nightmare.

Sleep was later retitled *Lay Your Sleeping Head I*.¹ As with other works by MacDiarmid, form is reduced to the essential, the colour applied in blocks, creating a patchwork or poster-like quality. However, where other works evoke the effects of intense sunlight, *Lay Your Sleeping Head I* suggests a visionary space, still in the process of coalescing, or perhaps on the verge of dissolution.

¹ A pastel of the same size and date, *Lay Your Sleeping Head II*, was also produced. The reclining figure in this work bears a strong resemblance to Patrick.



DOUGLAS MACDIARMID
Lay Your Sleeping Head I,
2012
Acrylic on paper
450 x 640mm (paper)
550 x 740 x 35mm (frame)
Fletcher Trust Collection,
Tāmaki Makaurau

Lullaby

Lay your sleeping head, my love,
Human on my faithless arm;
Time and fevers burn away
Individual beauty from
Thoughtful children, and the grave
Proves the child ephemeral:
But in my arms till break of day
Let the living creature lie,
Mortal, guilty, but to me
The entirely beautiful.

Soul and body have no bounds:
To lovers as they lie upon
Her tolerant enchanted slope
In their ordinary swoon,
Grave the vision Venus sends
Of supernatural sympathy,
Universal love and hope;
While an abstract insight wakes
Among the glaciers and the rocks
The hermit's carnal ecstasy.

Certainty, fidelity
On the stroke of midnight pass
Like vibrations of a bell,
And fashionable madmen raise
Their pedantic boring cry:
Every farthing of the cost,
All the dreadful cards foretell,
Shall be paid, but from this night
Not a whisper, not a thought,
Not a kiss nor look be lost.

Beauty, midnight, vision dies:
Let the winds of dawn that blow
Softly round your dreaming head
Such a day of welcome show
Eye and knocking heart may bless.
Find the mortal world enough;
Noons of dryness see you fed
By the involuntary powers,
Nights of insult let you pass
Watched by every human love.

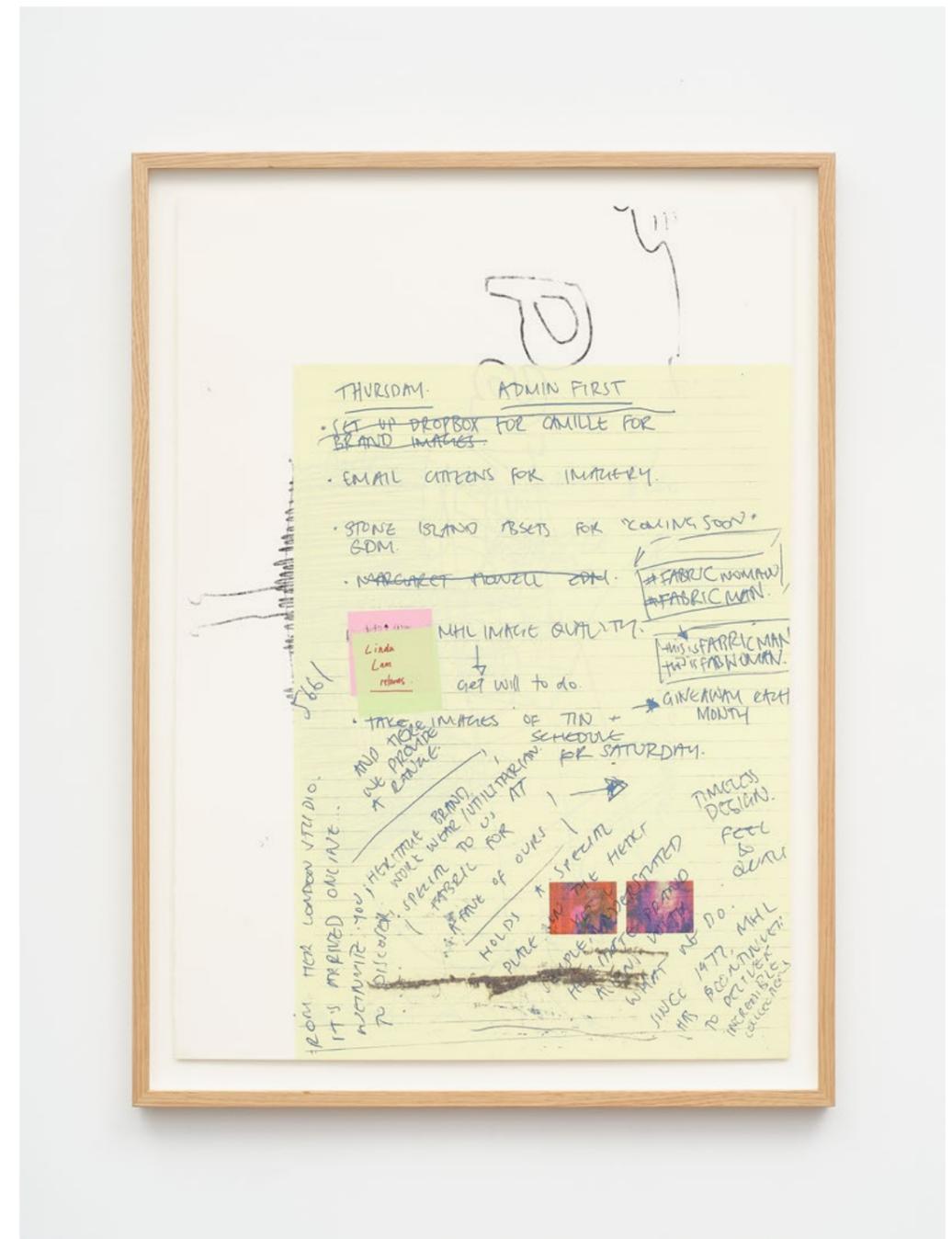
—W. H. Auden



2012.
MacDiarmid.

LUCA NICHOLAS

born 1997, Tāmaki Makaurau; lives and works in
Tāmaki Makaurau
Pākehā; queer



This work positions site as a role model/hero. Enlarged trompe-l'œil notes from one of my retail friends back at Fabric featuring Aimee Mann (my LDR during high school) and a clump of dust from Recycle Boutique that obscures a note left by some students in the Print Lab at AUT. The specifics of the note are probably a red herring but I think a nice clue to, or window into, the kinds of queer whānau that I've experienced and found through working in retail/tertiary environments. Reference: Anne-Marie Fortier's queer belonging as a constellation of sites.

—Luca Nicholas

LUCA NICHOLAS
BEARD CHEESECUTTER
HOLD, 2022
Silkscreen monotype and
dust from Recycle Boutique
on Fabriano Tiegolo
900 x 700mm (paper)
1095 x 805mm (frame)

박성환 SUNG HWAN BOBBY PARK

born 1988, 청주시 Cheongju, South Korea; lives and works in Tāmaki Makaurau and Los Angeles
Tauwi; Tangata Kōrea (Korean); gay

These works were produced by 박성환 Sung Hwan Bobby Park during his 2024 Tom of Finland Foundation residency at TOM House, Los Angeles. Park commented at the time, 'I'm going through the archives and taking in inspiration. I am working with materials and processes I haven't worked with before. For example, my ass and my cock. I'm so happy to be following the great tradition of my ancestors making penis art.'





박성환
SUNG HWAN BOBBY PARK
Gods Special Edition, 2024
Collage, nail polish, wooden
board
305 x 305 x 40mm



박성환
SUNG HWAN BOBBY PARK
Gay Seggii, 2024
Collage, nail polish, wooden
board
410 x 305 x 25mm



박성환
SUNG HWAN BOBBY PARK
Gay Seggii, 2024
Collage, nail polish, wooden
board
410 x 305 x 25mm



NEKE MOA

born 1971, Tāmaki Makaurau; lives and works in Ōtaki
Kāi Tahu, Ngāti Kahungunu ki Ahuriri, Ngāti Porou,
Ngāti Tūwharetoa, Te Whare o Papaīra; takatāpui

These pieces hold stories about our takatāpui world. Some stories are direct and some way-pointers. Not all pride parades need to be loud and sparkly, though these pieces will certainly turn heads. They are a part of my cultural narrative as ringatoi, as wahine, as Māori, as takatāpui.

—Neke Moa

*

The Papakainga of Papaīra houses atua who have chosen and been chosen to live there. It is an inclusive and diverse space for atua who didn't quite fit into traditional forms and ways of being. Papaīra accepts them, cares for them, trains them, and creates a whānau of atua who also celebrate eachother for their 'queerness'.

Kōpūtahi refers to the twins Tūmengātaha and Tūmāteaha and goes on to include the sisters who make up the Whare Tū. Rauru is a flat plait made up of three or more threads. It is also the part of the umbilical cord that is still attached to the mother. The name Rauru kōpūtahi acknowledges the time when Papaīra chose to add a whare to her papakāinga, becoming a mother to them.



NEKE MOA
Rauru kōpūtahi, 2024
Paewai, pounamu raurēkau,
pōkinikini, dye, pāua, dye,
bone, pencil
575 x 120 x 75mm



Just as people pass through different phases over a lifetime, so do atua. As the name suggests, Atuaiti represents a time of atua exploration—a phase after training. The world is your oyster. Explore, express yourself, become who and what you want to be!

NEKE MOA
Atuaiti, 2025
Pakohe (Ōraka Colac Bay),
anga, bone, jute
315 x 195 x 15mm

Tūwaewae and Rakiwai are co-creators of pakohe from Ōraka. Together they witness the splash of the taniwha's tail heralding the arrival of people from far away and the end of the dark times. Co-creation amongst atua was a powerful and intimate act. These two atua wāhine created a stone that was transformative for the first peoples of Aotearoa.



NEKE MOA
Tūwaewae and the
taniwha, 2025
Pakohe (Ōraka Colac Bay),
wax cord, peita, bone,
pungapunga, kakanui
garnet
300 x 235 x 110mm



Kai gives life and breath to all. Kai is shared and centred. Kai welcomes strangers and sends them away, bellies full, as whānau. Kai brings kōrero and connection. Kai brings strength and position. Kai is identity and culture. Kai is happiness. This piece is a reminder of a feast, anga tuatua—a lei for remembering, for enjoying, and for looking fabulous!

NEKE MOA
Kai a te rangatira—food fit
for a chief, 2025
Anga tuatua (Takapuna),
wax cord, peita
330 x 250 x 10mm

A celebration of queening and queen-ness! This beautiful chrysoprase from Australia glows and pulsates. The stone is known for its happiness, compassion and self-acceptance virtues. The pūpū rore shells are from Ōtaki and create a winged shape as they rise from the stone. She is a Queen, ready to have fun and be admired.



NEKE MOA
QUEEN!, 2025
Chrysoprase, pūpū rore
(Ōtaki), jute, peita, muka
430 x 140 x 35mm

TONY GUO

born 1999, Tāmaki Makaurau; lives and works in
Tāmaki Makaurau
Tauwi; Tangata Hainamana (Chinese); gay



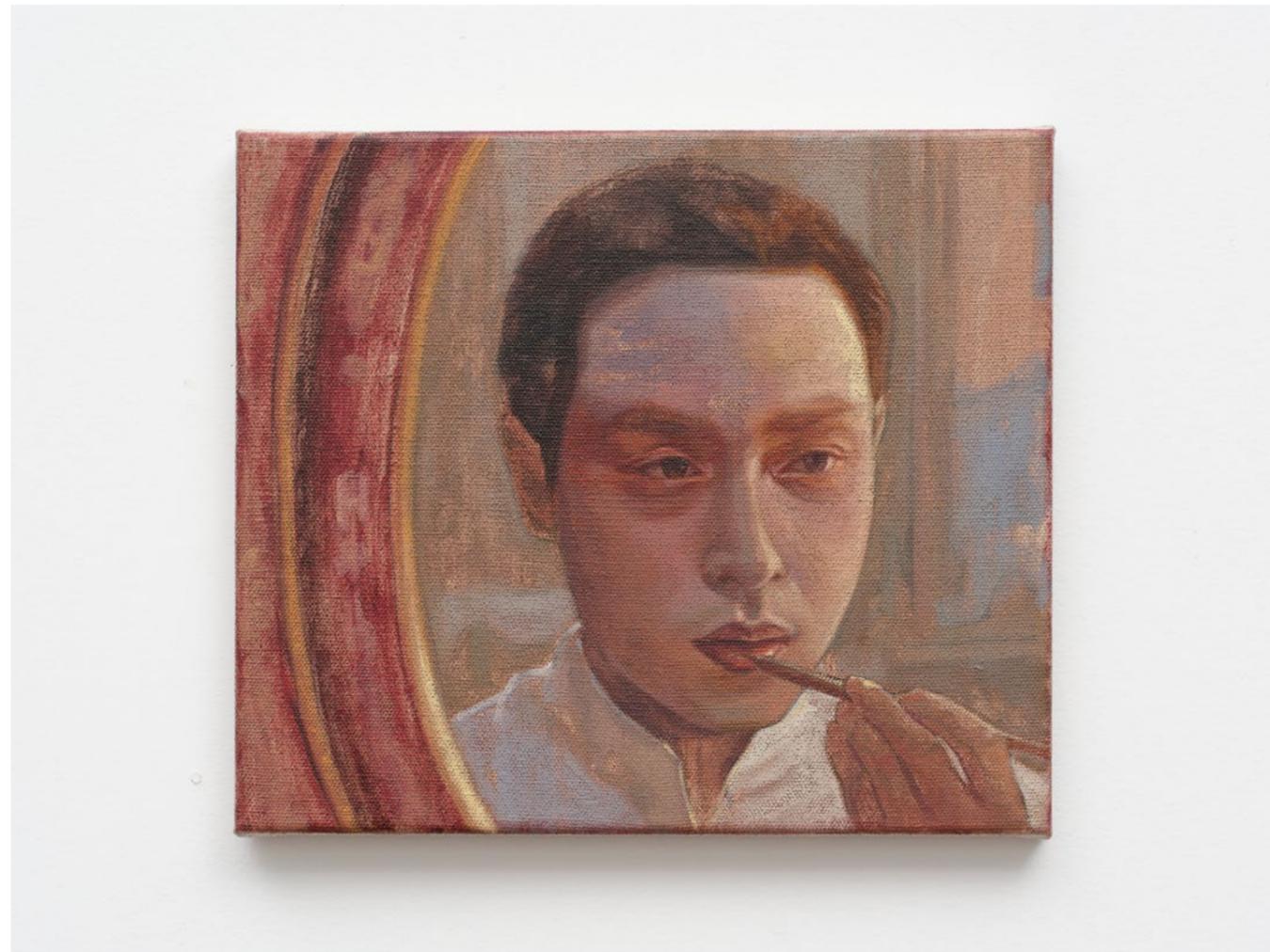
Tony Guo's portraits depict Xin Ji, a contemporary dancer and friend of the artist, who reads while stretching; Lady Gaga (Stefani Germanotta), in the music video for her 2009 song 'Telephone' featuring Beyoncé Knowles-Carter; and Hong Kong singer and actor Leslie Cheung (1956–2003), in a scene from the 1993 film *Farewell My Concubine*. In the 'Telephone' video, Gaga serves a prison sentence for killing her abusive partner (as shown in the video for her 2008 song 'Paparazzi'), hence the title *I killed my boyfriend*. 不疯魔, 不成活 is a quote from *Farewell My Concubine*. Guo notes that the phrase is difficult to translate: 'It literally means "no craziness, no survival". It is also a traditional saying in Chinese opera indicating that without total obsession, without losing yourself to the role, you cannot truly exist or survive.' Cheung took his life in 2003.

TONY GUO
Xin, 2025
Oil on linen
1000 x 505 x 35mm

N.B. Available to purchase
from May 2026.



TONY GUO
I killed my boyfriend, 2026
Oil on linen
305 x 355 x 25mm



TONY GUO
不疯魔, 不成活 Without
obsession, I cannot survive,
2026
Oil on linen
305 x 355 x 25mm

MAUNGARONGO TE KAWA

born 1969, Woodville; lives and works in Woodville
Ngāti Porou; takatāpui

Maungarongo Te Kawa's *He tripped and fell on my patu seventeen times* makes reference to Brian Tamaki, founder of Destiny Church, which is well-known for its anti-queer stance. Church members turned up at the Auckland Rainbow Parade in 2025, intimidating marchers and implying that they speak for all Māori, when in fact they do nothing of the sort. Te Kawa's large appliqué quilt shows a takatāpui warrior who defends herself and her people.

Te Kawa has also created two fabulous taniwha-atua, *Tangaroa* and *Tāne Mahuta*, which allude to the open attitudes towards sexuality and gender to be found in te ao Māori.



MAUNGARONGO TE KAWA
*He tripped and fell on my
patu seventeen times*, 2026
Mixed media quilt
2000 x 800mm





MAUNGARONGO TE KAWA
Tangaroa, 2026
Mixed media quilted soft
sculpture
700 x 650 x 250mm



MAUNGARONGO TE KAWA
Tāne Mahuta, 2026
Mixed media quilted soft
sculpture
630 x 640 x 220mm





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