

Art's Histories in Aotearoa New Zealand

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This is the text of an illustrated paper presented at 'Art History's History in Australia and New Zealand', a joint symposium organised by the Australian Institute of Art History in the University of Melbourne and the Australian and New Zealand Association of Art Historians (AAANZ), held on 28 – 29 August 2010. Responding to a set of questions framed around the 'state of art history in New Zealand', this paper reviews the 'invention' of a nationalist art history and argues that there can be no coherent, integrated history of art in New Zealand that does not encompass the timeframe of the cultural production of New Zealand's indigenous Māori, or that of the Pacific nations for which the country is a regional hub, or the burgeoning cultural diversity of an emerging Asia-Pacific nation.

On 10 July 2010 I participated in a panel discussion 'on the state of New Zealand art history.' This timely event had been initiated by Tina Barton, director of the Adam Art Gallery in the University of Victoria, Wellington, who chaired the discussion among the twelve invited panellists. The host university's department of art history and art gallery and the University of Canterbury's art history programme were represented, as were the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, the City Gallery, Wellington, the Govett-Brewster Art Gallery, New Plymouth, the Dunedin Public Art Gallery and the University of Auckland's National Institute of Creative Arts and Industries. The University of Auckland's department of art history¹ and the University of Otago's art history programme were unrepresented, unfortunately, but it is likely that key scholars had been targeted and were unable to attend. So whether this was the panel to reflect 'on the state of New Zealand art history,' given the University of Auckland's leadership in the field over much of the discipline's history, must be open to question.

The event attracted a sizeable attendance and included local visual arts professionals and art history students.

¹ Although the University of Auckland's Emeritus Professor of Art History, Tony Green, founding Professor of Art History in the University of Auckland in 1969 and one of the key figures in the teaching – in the construction, the *invention* - of New Zealand art history was also a member of the panel.

The broad questions for discussion which had been distributed to the panellists in advance² were:

- What is the current state of play for New Zealand art history?
- What (if any) are the discursive frameworks within which it is taking shape?
- Is it possible or worthwhile to write a history of art in New Zealand and is this the same as writing New Zealand art history?
- What are the opportunities and drawbacks of being involved with the production of a localised art history?
- Does contemporary art need a history?

The discussion itself was divided into three sections under the headings:

- What was New Zealand art history?
- What is New Zealand art history currently?
- What should art history be?

These are Tina Barton's excellent questions and I am going to use them, in their timeliness, as a basis for responding, in part, to the AIAH symposium's theme: 'Art History's History in Australia and New Zealand'. I am recasting this for my own purposes as 'Art's Histories in Aotearoa New Zealand.'

What was New Zealand's art history?

Although paintings of the New Zealand landscape and its indigenous inhabitants were exhibited in the Royal Academy, London, in the late 18th century following the return of James Cook's voyages to the south seas, and as part of the tiny New Zealand display at the Great Exhibition in London in 1851, a consciousness of New Zealand's distinctiveness as an art culture did not begin to emerge until the 1930s. New Zealand art shown at the Empire Exhibition in London in 1924 made no impact at all, unlike contemporary Canadian art which was lauded to the skies by art critics. 'Canada above all other countries has reason to be proud of her contribution....Her canvases... are real triumphs. Canada has arrived. She has a national style....'³

An exhibition of Contemporary Canadian Painting, curated by Dr. Eric Brown, Director of the National Gallery of Canada, toured the other dominions of the British Empire – South Africa, Australia and New Zealand - and was held up as a model for the development of their national art cultures. Touring the four main

² Personal communication from Tina Barton, 30 June 2010. I am grateful for her permission to adapt and quote from her discussion document.

³*The Field*, quoted in Wayne Larsen, *A. Y. Jackson: Life of a Painter*. Dundurn Press, Toronto, 2009, p.119.

centres of New Zealand in 1938, the exhibition resonated with the nationalist agenda of the first Labour government which had been swept into power in 1935.

As part of the centenary celebrations of the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi, an agreement solemnised between representatives of the British Crown and indigenous tribal leaders in 1840, the first ever survey exhibition of New Zealand art was curated and toured the country during 1939 and 1940. The National Centennial Exhibition of New Zealand Art comprised a selection of 355 works by 222 artists. In his 'Introduction' to the catalogue, the curator, A. H. McLintock, described the exhibition as 'a survey of one hundred years of New Zealand art'⁴ although it also included, as W. E. Parry, the Minister of Internal Affairs noted in his foreword, works by 'the earliest artists to come in contact with our country.'⁵ The earliest of these, Mordenaarsbaai (Murderers' Bay), was a facsimile of one of the 'crude and rather fanciful drawings of the country and its inhabitants'⁶ produced by Isaac Gilsemans, a draftsman who sailed with Abel Tasman in 1642.

The primary, didactic aim of the survey, however, was to recognise art's role as providing 'a faithful reflection of the national spirit,' revealing and documenting, despite the 'strain of pioneering...the social and political changes which transformed a struggling colony into a progressive dominion'⁷, within the temporal framework of a hundred years. The exhibition presented New Zealand to New Zealanders as a 'small and young nation' and 'a new land', and 'New Zealand's geographic remoteness', the isolation of the dominion',⁸ was lamented.

The official, Department of Internal Affairs perspective on New Zealand art presented in the Centennial Exhibition was further elaborated in the *Encyclopaedia of New Zealand* published in 1966. The 'Art in New Zealand' entry was written by A. H. McLintock and Stewart MacLennan, Director of the National Art Gallery in Wellington⁹ and built on the narrative constructed for the Centennial exhibition catalogue. By this time, however, the construction of New Zealand art history had become a contested field. Charles Brasch, founder and editor of the literary journal, *Landfall*, in 1947, dismissed the Wellington version of New Zealand art history as 'perverse'. An alternative narrative began to be 'invented' around artists such as Colin McCahon and Toss Woollaston by poets such as Brasch in Dunedin and John

⁴ A. H. McLintock, 'Introduction,' *National Centennial Exhibition of New Zealand Art*. Wellington: Department of Internal Affairs, 1940, p.7.

⁵ Ibid. p.6.

⁶ Ibid. pp.7-8.

⁷ Ibid. p.7.

⁸ Ibid. pp.7-16.

⁹ Stewart MacLennan, 'Art in New Zealand,' *Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, vol.1. Wellington: Government Printer, 1966, pp.82-91.

Summers in Christchurch where the journal was in fact published – by the Caxton Press.

McCahon's shift to Auckland in 1953 to take up a position at the Auckland Art Gallery, Peter Tomory's appointment in 1956 to the Directorship of the Gallery, where McCahon was researching for, curating and pioneering the first art gallery exhibitions on New Zealand artists, and Tomory's essay, 'Looking at Art in New Zealand,' published in *Landfall* in June 1958¹⁰, mark the advent of Auckland's ascendancy in the construction of historical narratives of New Zealand art. In 1966, the introduction of art history as an academic discipline in the University of Auckland and the appointment, three years later, of Tony Green as founding Chair of the Department of Art History, the dominance of the Auckland Art Gallery on the national scene through its authoritative surveys of contemporary New Zealand painting, the emergence of New Zealand art history as a subject in its own right, and the rise of Auckland as the most active art market in the country were to consolidate the city's position as the nodal point for the development of a nationalist art history. Art history as a discipline was subsequently introduced at the Universities of Canterbury, Victoria and Otago, where topics in New Zealand art were also introduced, taught, researched and published but most of the textbooks were written by Auckland-based art historians and curators.

The 'quest for national identity' reverberates throughout *New Zealand Art: Painting 1827 – 1967*, authored by Hamish Keith, Peter Tomory and Mark Young, published in 1968, and described on the dust-jacket as 'an addition to the meagre literature on painting in New Zealand.' Hamish Keith and Gordon Brown's more substantial *An Introduction to New Zealand Painting, 1839 – 1967*, appeared in 1969. Gil Docking, Tomory's successor as Director of the Auckland Art Gallery, produced a lavishly illustrated book entitled, *Two Hundred Years of New Zealand Painting*, which, since it first appeared in 1971 (and is still in print in Michael Dunn's revised edition), pushed the timeframe back to James Cook's first voyage. The most recent survey is Hamish Keith's book of the television series, *The Big Picture*, published in 2007, which begins where the Centennial exhibition began, with the Tasman voyage of 'discovery' in 1642. But Francis Pound's more recent, scholarly study *The Invention of New Zealand: Art and National Identity, 1930-1970*¹¹ returns to a mythic site – Colin McCahon's celebrated assumption of the roles of nationalist visionary and artist-

¹⁰ Peter Tomory, 'Looking at art in New Zealand', *Landfall* 46, vol. 2, no. 2, 1958, pp. 153-169.

¹¹ Francis Pound, *The Invention of New Zealand: Art and National Identity, 1930-1970*. Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2010.

prophet who would 'invent the way' to 'see' New Zealand.¹² Before there could be a New Zealand art history, New Zealand had first to be 'invented'.

The Auckland Art Gallery had, meanwhile, been assiduously building its collections of New Zealand art and many of the works from the collection are illustrated in the histories of New Zealand art written by Auckland-based art historians, such as Michael Dunn's *A Concise History of New Zealand Painting*, published in 1991. Such images have embedded themselves in the national consciousness, through the sometime popularity of New Zealand art history in secondary schools and universities, as 'icons' of New Zealand art, although characteristic, and occasionally more impressive, examples of works by artists represented in the Auckland Art Gallery collections are also to be found in public collections in Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin.

In her guidelines for panellists, Tina Barton posed the extremely interesting question, 'Does the *Big Picture* serve as a textbook? Is a nationalist agenda still operative or is Francis Pound's book its effective epitaph?'

The Big Picture is Hamish Keith's opinionated, racy and populist narrative of art in New Zealand whose beginning he dates back to the drawings Isaac Gilsemans produced in December 1642 and January 1642 on Tasman's voyage. Francis Pound's weightier, scholarly book, *The Invention of New Zealand: Art and National Identity 1930-1970*, appears at a time when the visionary strategic direction set during the nine years of the fifth Labour-led government from 1999 – to promote the development of a New Zealand identity – has given way to a focus on securing New Zealand's economic future in the face of deep global uncertainty. The retirements of Michael Dunn and Francis Pound from teaching, Len Bell's situation as pretty much the solitary flag carrier for New Zealand art history in the downsized and restructured University of Auckland Department of Art History, the closure of the Auckland Art Gallery main building for reconstruction and extension for several years (from early 2008 to its reopening in September 2011), and the influx of significant numbers of immigrants and students from Asia and the Middle East, the decline of student interest in a nationalist art history (nationally), and instead, the students' internet savvy-ness and global connectedness, and their interest in contemporary art beyond national boundaries, reinforce the urgency of Tina Barton's questions. There is a sense that the leadership in shaping the direction of New Zealand art history that has been provided by the Auckland Art Gallery and The University of Auckland's Department of Art History, in what is New Zealand's most populous city, the country's economic powerhouse and its most active art market, has arrived at a point of stasis.

¹² Colin McCahon, 'Beginnings,' *Landfall*, vol.20, June 1966, pp.360-4.

Let's recap on the timeframes for the construction of the nationalist narrative to date.

In 1968 *New Zealand Art: Painting 1827 – 1967* picked up the story from just before the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi, as did Hamish Keith and Gordon Brown's *An Introduction to New Zealand Painting, 1839 – 1967*. Gil Docking's *Two Hundred Years of New Zealand Painting* pushed the timeframe back to 1769, the year of James Cook's first voyage to New Zealand. Hamish Keith's starting point in *The Big Picture* is where the Centennial Exhibition had, in 1939, begun: with Tasman and Gilsemans arrival in 1642. The naming of New Zealand dates from that voyage and from that date, it is assumed, the *idea* of art arrived with the Europeans and the seed of a New Zealand art history was sown. Thus the past came to be colonised and mythologised in order to legitimate the British colonial and imperial project.

The big question that is begged at this point is: where is Māori art?

McLintock provided a kind of rationale for the exclusion of Māori art from his foundational history: '*...when the first Europeans arrived in New Zealand, the country possessed in its Māori art a unique native culture which the impact of civilisation was ultimately to destroy.*'¹³

Stewart MacLennan's *Encyclopaedia of New Zealand* essay on 'Art in New Zealand', published in 1966, echoes McLintock's sentiments:

*'The process of integration has isolated the Māori of today from the living meaning of the arts of his forefathers, and his culture must, from now on, be one with his European forebears.'*¹⁴

But the same *Encyclopaedia of New Zealand* contains an entry on 'Māori art' by Jock McEwan which serves as a riposte to MacLennan.

*'It is the habit of ethnologists to study Māori art as if it had come to an abrupt end on the arrival of the European settlers in New Zealand and to regard post-European work as being of little importance. It is necessary to point out, however, that the major forms of Māori art have never died out and that there is a continuous tradition from pre-European times to the present.'*¹⁵

In a review of McEwan's *Encyclopaedia* essay, Ron O'Reilly, the Christchurch City Librarian, asserted that 'We must learn to consider Māori art as art.'¹⁶

¹³ McLintock, p.7.

¹⁴ MacLennan, p.87.

¹⁵ Jock McEwan, *Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, vol. II. Wellington: Government Printer, 1966, pp.408-429.

¹⁶ Ron O'Reilly, 'Art and the Encyclopedia: 2, Māori Art,' *Ascent* I: 2, 1968, p.61.

Some years ago, I was invited to present a lecture on the topic, 'Is Māori art "art"'? (Or is Māori art a European invention, as Richard Bell has declared Aboriginal art to be, 'a white thing'¹⁷?) An international conference in Wellington in 1996 posed the over-arching question 'is art a European idea?'

Roger Neich has observed that -

*'Māori self-consciousness was one of the first effects of European contact. Māori became aware of themselves as Māori. Eventually Māori artists became aware of their art as "Māori art," different from European art. They were made aware of their own aesthetic concepts, and of the conventions governing them.'*¹⁸

Once Māori had become conscious of being watched and analysed and criticised, there was no going back to a pre-contact, essentialist state of 'innocence' and 'purity'. Such was the impact of the colonial and imperial project on the indigenous psyche and art was implicated in this.

Customary Māori art, considered as art, has, in fact, an earlier, longer history in European thought than New Zealand art. Augustus Hamilton's *Māori Art*, first published in five instalments between 1896 and 1900, appeared in book form in 1901. It would be possible to compile an extensive and impressive bibliography on Māori art historiography. Although Māori art has largely been excluded from New Zealand art historical narratives from the earliest period of European contact to the present day, it is covered in most general surveys of international art history written by European scholars, from Ernst Gombrich's *The Story of Art* through to Hugh Honour and John Fleming's door-stop of a work, *A World History of Art*, first published twenty-five years ago and now in its seventh edition.

In 1984 the landmark exhibition of customary Māori art, *Te Māori: Māori art from New Zealand collections*, opened to critical acclaim in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. This seemed to complete the process of the recontextualisation of Māori art from ethnographic museum artefact to aesthetic art object. The leading Māori scholar, Hirini Mead, asserted that –

The Metropolitan is synonymous with international art. It is the centre of the world of art. By taking our art to New York, we altered its status and changed overnight the perception of it by people at home and abroad. We brought Māori art out of the closet, out from obscurity, out from anonymity, and out of the cupboard

¹⁷ Bell's Theorem, <http://www.kooriweb.org/bell/theorum.html>

¹⁸ Roger Neich, 'A Survey of Visitor Attitudes to a Māori Art Exhibition', *AGMANZ News*, 11:2, May 1980, p.6.

*of primitive contextualisation. In fact, we rescued it and freed it from the limiting intellectual climate of New Zealand, releasing it so it could be seen by the world.*¹⁹

Following its triumphant North American tour, in New Zealand the exhibition was shown in the Auckland and Christchurch Art Galleries, the National Museum in Wellington and the Otago Museum in Dunedin. It was seen by almost one million New Zealanders, just under a third of the population at the time, and became a rallying point for Māori identity and pride and Māori nationalism and politics, and it was a revelation for many Pākehā New Zealanders. But did it change the art establishment culture?

Although the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, which opened in 1998, presents customary, modern and contemporary Māori art in a continuum, to this day, the display of customary Māori art as art in New Zealand's art galleries is a rare occurrence, presumably for much the same reason that European art museums seldom show examples of contemporary Māori, Pacific and indigenous Australian art – because it is still categorised as, essentially, ethnographic. None of New Zealand's mainstream art galleries actively collects examples of customary art. I find myself gazing with envy at the acquisition and display of customary indigenous art in Australian metropolitan galleries and the National Gallery of Australia and wondering why New Zealand galleries cannot do likewise.

Contemporary Māori art is, however, a different matter. As head of an art school which, while founded 120 years ago, became part of the University of Auckland in 1950, I am mindful of the fact that two young Māori men were among the first cohort of undergraduates, and that in 1952 and 1954, respectively, they became the first Māori graduates in fine arts. From and around these two stems the dynamic entity that is the contemporary Māori art movement, with Māori artists such as Shane Cotton, Jacqueline Fraser, Brett Graham, Ralph Hotere, Bob Jahnke, Michael Parekowhai, Lisa Reihana and Peter Robinson among the most acclaimed New Zealand artists today. Contemporary Māori artists are as likely to be selected to represent New Zealand at international art events such as the Venice Biennale as Pākehā artists. Some of them have become household names.

Ironically, the two foundational figures were greatly interested in the work of the 'primitivist' aspect of the work of modern carver-artists such as Brancusi, Jean Arp, Henry Moore and Barbara Hepworth but they were strongly discouraged from studying their own direct carving traditions from masterpieces in the Auckland

¹⁹ Quoted in <http://www.nzhistory.net.nz/timeline/10/09>

Museum. The two would probably have been unaware at the time that customary Māori art was a component of the European modernist construct of 'primitivism.'²⁰

During a ten-day stopover in Auckland in August 1895, en route to French Polynesia, Paul Gauguin, the 'father of 'primitivism', made drawings from Māori carvings in the Auckland Museum and collected photographs of Māori art from which he later quoted in some of his paintings²¹. It was actually possible to see in the same exhibition season in 1984 in New York examples of those paintings in the Museum of Modern Art exhibition *'Primitivism' in Twentieth Century Art* and, in *Te Māori* at the Metropolitan Museum, the original carvings Gauguin had studied in Auckland.

These days it is not the disruption of the Māori art tradition from the cataclysmic experience of colonisation that is uppermost in the minds of Māori artists but ensuring the continuity of today's art with that of the past. Māori art has demonstrated a remarkable tenacity and resilience, an ability and determination to renew itself, to adapt, to survive. A history of Māori art from ancient times to the present day, constructed around Māori paradigms, and written by an increasing number of Māori art historians for New Zealand and international readers - as well as across the great divide between pre- and post-European contact - is looking more and more feasible.

While a nationalist history that privileges Pākehā perspectives and strives to legitimise the arrival, presence and actions of Europeans, is no longer tenable, there is potential for a *bicultural* history of art in Aotearoa New Zealand, that takes both strands back to mythological, cosmological beginning points and forward to the complex interweaving of ethnic and cultural strands that is the reality of present-day New Zealand. One could imagine Cliff Whiting's mural, *Te Wehenga o Ranginui ko raua Papatuanuku*, 1969-76, (National Library of New Zealand), being set alongside McCahon's *Takaka: Night and Day*, 1948, (Auckland Art Gallery), as a bicultural gesture, the two works operating as foundational icons for such an art history.

The make-up of the New Zealand art history discussion panel, with its ten Pākehā, one 'token' Māori (me), one Pacific art historian, and Pākehā chair together with the largely Pākehā audience was not a credible reflection of the cultural condition of New Zealand today – especially in Auckland and Wellington - nor of the histories

²⁰ William S. Rubin, ed., *'Primitivism in 20th Century Art: Affinity of the Tribal and the Modern*, 2 vols. New York, 1984.

²¹ See: Bronwen Nicholson, *Gauguin and Māori Art*. Auckland: Godwit Press in association with Auckland City Art Gallery, 1995.

represented and the art traditions cherished by, and distinctive to the culturally diverse communities that make up that condition.

Art is the common denominator but there are, potentially, more diverse histories and multiple voices to be accommodated in new narratives. One of these is the European tradition which relates as much to the central narratives of European art as it does to the development of a distinctive New Zealand tradition and identity – that of the Pākehā. A history of Pākehā art is feasible; a Māori history of Pākehā art, European art is imaginable. But earlier attempts at such an approach have stalled. *The Arts of the Māori*, a sourcebook for primary school teachers published in 1961, was to have been followed up by a book on the arts of the Pākehā but this never progressed beyond a series of workshops.²² Similarly, there was talk in at least one museum of developing a *Te Pākehā* section as a response to *Te Māori* but this idea remained undeveloped. Pākehā are very prickly about these things.

And what if New Zealand had taken up the option in the Australian Constitution in 1900 to become a state of Australia? (New Zealand and Australia have a shared and largely unexplored art history in common.) New Zealand art would have become part of a very different nationalist narrative and Māori art would be regarded as an indigenous art of Australia, along with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art. Indigenous art, it should be noted, may be *in* the modern nation state but it is not necessarily *of* the nation state.

This brings me to another grouping which grows out of Aotearoa New Zealand, but whose boundaries are not those of New Zealand: the art of Pasifika.

In 1992, at the Pacific History Association conference in Christchurch, I concluded a paper on contemporary Māori art with this prediction:

*The art of emerging artists such as Fatu Feu'u, Michel Tuffery, and John Pule, who are balancing out in their work the conflicts and continuities in being, not just the indigenous "other" but the dislocated Pacific "other" in New Zealand, will further complicate, as well as enrich the diverse cultural textures of contemporary New Zealand art.*²³

In August 2010, in a keynote address I presented at the Pacific Arts Association conference in Rarotonga, I set these three artists within a larger framework of contemporary Pacific art not only in terms of its wider geographic dispersion (since

²² See: Jonathan Mane-Wheoki, 'Gordon Tovey and the History of the Contemporary Māori Art Movement', in *Tovey & the Tovey Generation*. Porirua: Pataka Museum 1996.

²³ J. N. Mane-Wheoki, The Resurgence of Māori Art: Conflicts and Continuities in the 'Eighties, *The Contemporary Pacific*, Vol. 7, No. 1, Spring 1995, pp.1-19.

1992) from New Zealand but in terms of its founding figures in Auckland. Just as I am constructing a whakapapa (or genealogy) of the contemporary Māori art movement with the Elam's first two Māori graduates as foundational figures, so I am also working on a genealogy of contemporary Pacific artists in and beyond Aotearoa New Zealand.

In 1964 Barry Lett, a student at Elam School of Fine Arts, founded a dealer gallery (the Uptown Gallery, later the Barry Lett Galleries) in Auckland which was to become famous as a venue for the exhibition of such major artists as Colin McCahon. Lett gave two young Māori artists, Selwyn Muru and Para Matchitt, their first solo exhibitions in 1964 as well as two Pacific Islands artists – Teuane Tibbo, a seventy year old Samoan-born grandmother, who had suddenly taken up painting with enormous energy and enthusiasm, and Paul (Pomoni) Tangata, a brilliant young Cook Islands artist who was still a student at Elam. When he graduated in 1965, he was the first Pacific Islands artist to gain a university qualification in fine arts.

Works acquired from these exhibitions by the Auckland Art Gallery, were the first paintings by Pacific Islands artists to enter a mainstream art collection. There is a fantastic story to be told of the development of contemporary Pacific art from these first steps in Auckland and, through Elam's Pacific graduates, spanning the wide Pacific from Honolulu (Carl Pao) to Port Moresby (Daniel WasWas), and intersecting with local communities. I remember the New Zealand painter, Robin White, (who is of Māori descent and was, at the time of the first Asia-Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art in Brisbane in 1993, living in Kiribati), recounting a story about Colin McCahon, her tutor at Elam in the mid-'sixties. McCahon told the incredulous students, 'Well, of course, the Pacific will become the centre of the art world.'²⁴

As I reflect on the current state of play of New Zealand art history and art's histories in New Zealand, and the intriguing potential for new and different narratives, I wonder, I wonder....

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²⁴ See: Jonathan Mane-Wheoki, 'A Recentred World: Post-European/Pro-Indigenous Art from Aotearoa/New Zealand and Te Moana-Nui-a-Kiwa/The South Pacific', in Caroline Turner and Rhana Devenport, eds., *The Second Asia-Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art*. Brisbane: Queensland Art Gallery, 1996, p.28.

Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa. He is an art historian, architectural historian, cultural historian and curator. While he has produced professional work encompassing many disciplines, he is especially noted as a pioneer in the development of contemporary Māori and Pacific art and art history. A strong advocate for the Humanities and the creative arts as well as Māori knowledge and education, Jonathan has served on a wide range of national and international bodies, and is currently a member of the Council of the Royal Society of New Zealand, a member of Te Haerewa (the Māori Advisory Committee of the Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tamaki), and a governor of the Arts Foundation of New Zealand.

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