



Winter 2010  
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**Tairāwhiti**  
**MUSEUM**  
*Te Whare Taonga o te Tairāwhiti*

# Tui! Tui! Tuituia!

Quarterly newsletter of the Tairāwhiti Museum & Art Gallery  
*Te Whare Taonga O Te Tairāwhiti*



*Cornfields*  
Phyllis Underdown

## TAIRĀWHITI LANDSCAPES

A regional museum and art gallery provides three basic functions for the community it serves: development and care of collections, exhibitions and education programmes. In earlier times many of our museums were able to display most of the specimens, objects and art works that they had collected. However as museum collections continue to grow, an increasing proportion of the collections are kept in storage. Objects and art works confined to storage are accessible to researchers and others who have a particular interest in or relationship with them, but museum trustees and staff are increasingly conscious of the need to make these collections more accessible to the public through exhibitions and other public programmes.

In 2009 a selection of art works from the museum's collection was displayed and discussed in the winter lectures. Some of those attending the lectures said that they were not aware that the museum had such an interesting collection of art works. Museum staff made a commitment at that time to create exhibitions that would make the museum's art collections more accessible. Many of the art works discussed during the lecture series were landscapes painted by local artists and it seemed logical to begin the series of collection based exhibitions with *Tairāwhiti Landscapes*.

*Tairāwhiti Landscapes* is a selection of forty paintings and prints from the museum collection including works by Noman Scott, Phyllis Underdown, Sandy Adsett, Peter Ireland, Juliet Bowen, Richard Rogers, Brian Campbell and John Walsh. The works of these and other artists in the exhibition emphasise the richness and diversity of artistic endeavour in this region. Without the generosity of those who have gifted many of the works to the museum collection this resource would not be available to the community.



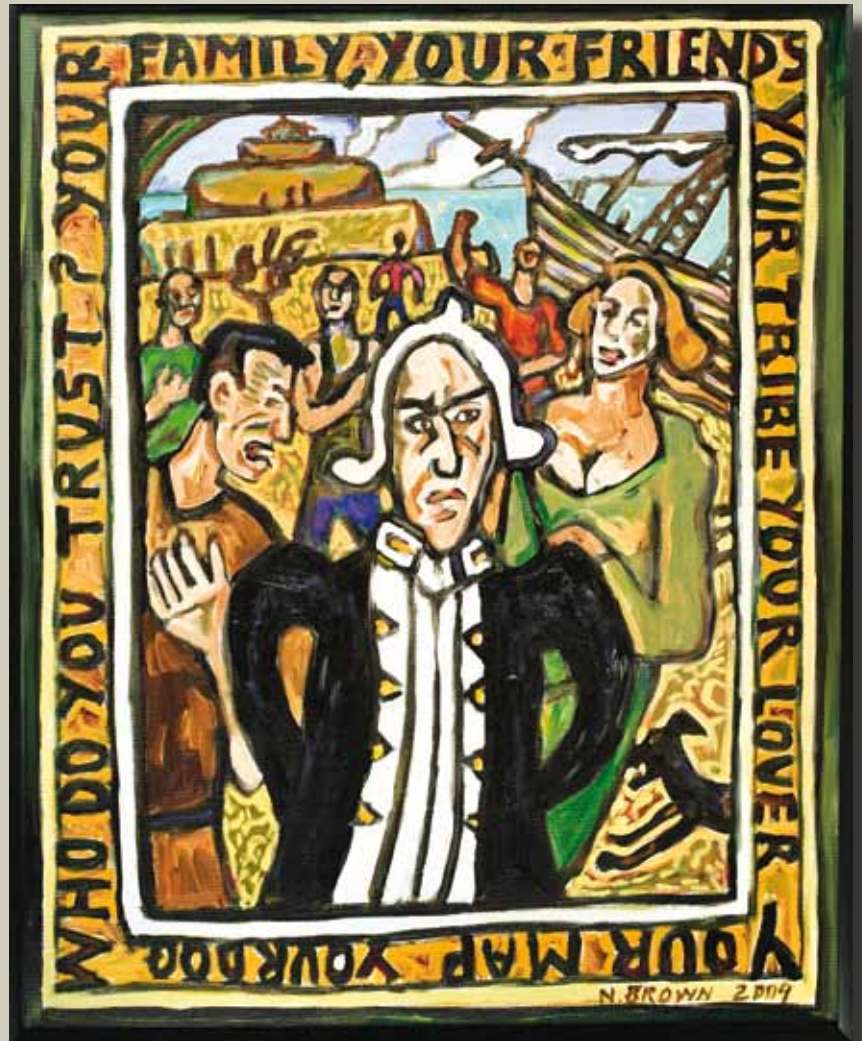
**EXhibit**  
C A F E

Open Monday to Saturday from 10am  
For fantastic food in a relaxed and tranquil setting.

# The Written Word - Nigel Brown

Many New Zealanders are familiar with Nigel Brown's portrayal of New Zealand men in black singlets and of historical identities such as James Cook and James K. Baxter. These are images that challenge us to reflect on our history and contemporary social and environmental issues. According to Stephen Higginson, Brown is "acknowledged as New Zealand's most significant narrative artist":

"Nigel Brown tells visual stories using history, character, cultural emblems and motifs. His works are political and purposeful with his painterly objectives varying from the didactic to social investigation and celebration. At the very heart of his work sits the individual and the relationships between male and female, between place and use, between gesture and meaning." (S. Higginson, 2009, *Nigel Brown: All Our Days*, p. 45)



Nigel Brown has a very clear sense of purpose:

"I want a human face to my art. Art can be a product of a person in the greatest sense. My concern is with the dilemma of modern existence...the ongoing frailty of humanity's material – moral and spiritual. An art that has no humanity or concern means nothing to me. The challenge is to be direct and look continually with a fresh vision on the world at hand. I'm less interested in painting as painting. I'm more interested in it as a vehicle to express and explore ideas..." (G. O'Brien, 1991, *Nigel Brown*, p. 9)

Nigel Brown generously donated his *Urewera* print series to the Tairāwhiti Museum fine arts collection in 1994 and these are included in the exhibition along with paintings on loan from the Wallace Collection and the artist's private collection.

## C Company

Dr. Apirana Mahuika welcomes C Company veterans Major John Waititi and Noel Reihania and members of many C Company families for the re-opening of the C Company exhibition, *The Price of Citizenship* on Saturday 27 February 2010.



### Landscape Label Writers Club

Art Gallery labels can be quite boring. Sometimes the only information provided is the artist's name, the name of the art work (all too often the very helpful *Untitled*), the medium and the date the work was executed (perhaps an unfortunate choice of word). Recently the Exhibitions Curator, Jolene Douglas, invited thirty friends of the museum to each write one or more labels for paintings in the *Tairāwhiti Landscapes* exhibition. The resulting labels provide some wonderful personal responses to the landscapes and some well informed analysis of the works. The museum hosted a small event to thank the members of the landscape Label Writers Club for their participation in this project. If you would like to join the Landscape Label Writers Club please contact Jolene Douglas. We will be inviting club members to write labels for another exhibition later in the year.



### Gisborne Artists and Potters

This year the Gisborne Artists and Pottery Group annual exhibition was selected by local teacher and artist Dick Calcott. Dick is pictured here speaking at the opening of the exhibition on March 26th. He acknowledged the high quality of the work that had been selected for the exhibition and spoke about the importance of encouraging young people in our community to participate in their activities.



### Ministers Visit Museum

The Hon. Dr Pita Sharples, Minister of Māori Affairs, and the Hon. Anne Tolley, Minister of Education and Member of Parliament for East Coast, visited the Museum in May. The Ministers were welcomed by Museum Trust Board Chairman Dr Apirana Mahuika and the Mayor Meng Foon. In response, the Minister of Education affirmed the importance of the Museum Education Programme and Dr Sharples acknowledged the significance of the work done by regional museums and art galleries. Dr Sharples and Dr Mahuika are pictured in front of Robyn Kahukiwa's painting of the renowned Tairāwhiti tipuna Hinematiaro.



### The Vietnam War

The museum marked ANZAC 2010 with an exhibition about the Vietnam War. Of special significance was the inclusion of photographs of the four soldiers from Tairāwhiti who were killed in action in Vietnam and some of the other soldiers from this region. The museum acknowledges the support of the Tairāwhiti Vietnam Veterans Group and in particular the assistance given by their spokesperson Wally Te Ua. It has been wonderful to see small family groups spending time in the exhibition, sharing their memories and acknowledging the service given by the New Zealand soldiers in Vietnam. Wally Te Ua and Colin Rickard are pictured in the Vietnam War exhibition.

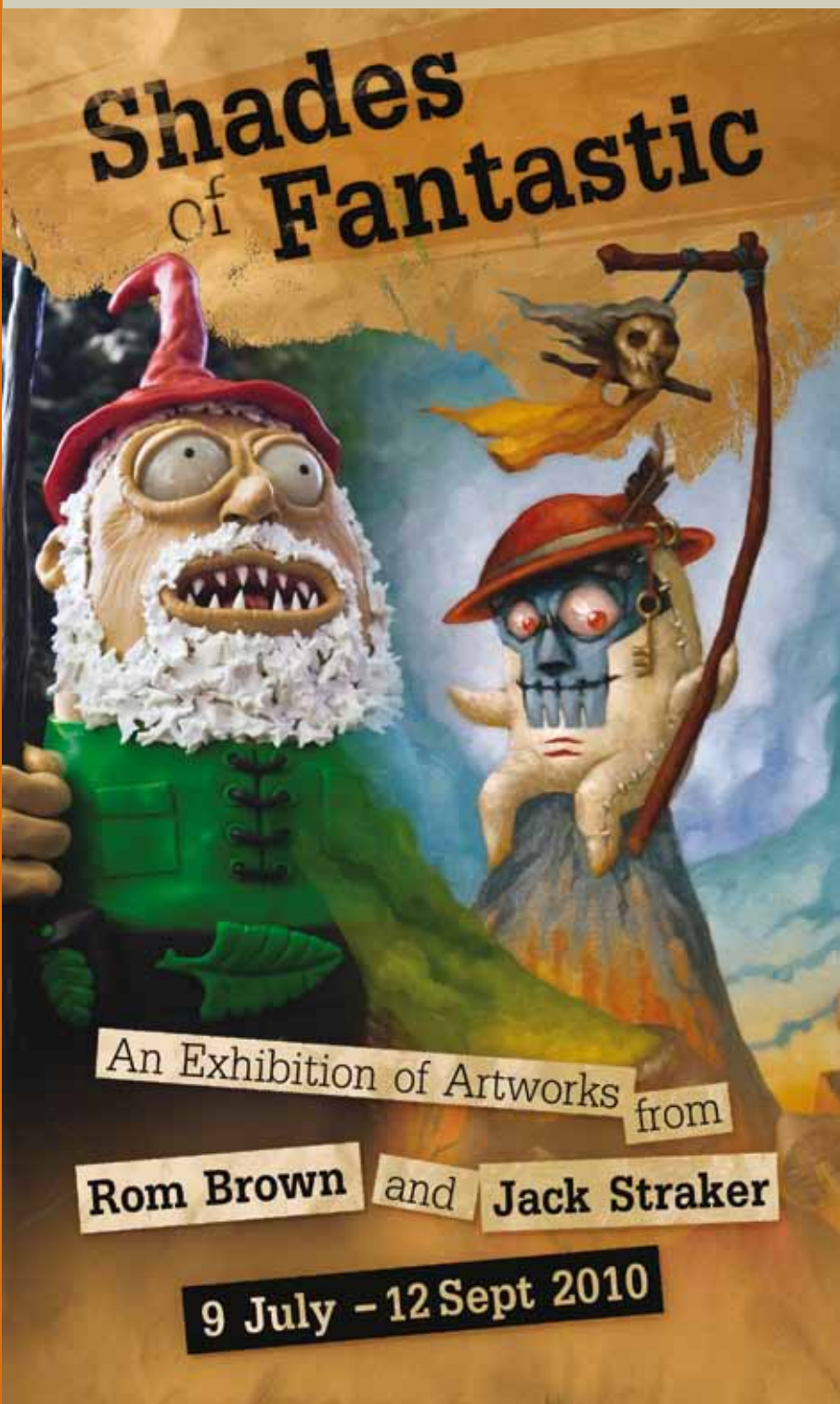
## Power Dressing Lecture

5.30pm Wednesday 9 June 2010

*Power Dressing* is an exhibition of Chinese and Korean robes from Dr Jack Richards' private collection on display at the museum until 11 July. These garments are particularly notable for their symbolic embroidery designs. Valerie Carson will present a lecture and discuss some of the robes in the gallery on Wednesday 9 June. Valerie trained at the Textile Conservation Centre, based at Hampton Court Palace, and was a textile conservator at Te Papa for 25 years where she provided conservation treatments for a wide range of textile collections. She is an expert in the identification and history of textiles and has a particular interest in Chinese and Indian textiles.



**POWER DRESSING:**  
CHINESE & KOREAN TEXTILES  
FROM THE JACK C RICHARDS  
COLLECTION



## Vibrant Arts and Culture

Creative people with a vision for a vibrant creative Tairāwhiti need to get involved in the Arts and Culture Strategy that Gisborne District Council is developing. Council has a major influence on the landscape and environment of Tairāwhiti. District planning and urban design can reflect the uniqueness of the region; the rich heritage of the people and create a thriving arts community of which locals can be proud. As a funder and steward of the Tairāwhiti Museum, WB Williams Memorial Library, theatres and art in public places, Council has a key role in supporting and promoting arts, culture and heritage.

"Through better planning there is an opportunity to integrate art, culture and heritage with Council activities. With everyone working off the same page great things can be achieved," says Council strategy advisor Pania Ruakere.

"A temporary steering group has been established to guide the process to develop an Arts and Culture Strategy. To ensure that the process is inclusive and encourages forward thinking we want to talk to people in a workshop setting. If all goes to plan these could occur in June/July, 2010."

The aim of the Arts and Culture Strategy is to bring together all Council activity involving arts, culture and heritage. Working with the community and Tangata Whenua the uniqueness of this region will be captured to inform Council decision making and planning.

A workshop specifically for Maori stakeholders will be organised to ensure an indigenous perspective is captured. If you have any queries you can contact Pania on 867 2049 ext 5686 or email [pania.ruakere@gdc.govt.nz](mailto:pania.ruakere@gdc.govt.nz) otherwise keep an eye out for further information about workshops through this newsletter.  
**Pania Ruakere GDC**

# Temporary Exhibition Programme: June - August

## Current Exhibitions

**POWER DRESSING:** Chinese & Korean textiles from the Jack C. Richards private collection.

### **POWER DRESSING: Lecture**

5.30pm Wednesday 9 June 2010

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POWER DRESSING:

**Tairāwhiti Landscapes:** A selection of artwork from the museum fine arts collection.

## Upcoming Exhibitions

4 June  
to  
4 July

**Nigel Brown: The Written Word**

*The Written Word* is an exhibition of paintings and prints by New Zealand artist Nigel Brown drawn from the collections of Nigel Brown, the James Wallace Collection and Tairāwhiti Museum. Brown is an artist of strong convictions about environmental issues, New Zealand history and the importance of the arts in our cultural traditions. Brown is known for including written messages as part of his painted images. A special feature of this exhibition will be the Urewera Series of prints donated to the museum in 1994 by Nigel Brown. This exhibition will be on display in the Concourse Gallery from Friday **4 June** until 4 July.



*Strings of Desire*, Brian Campbell  
Tairāwhiti Museum Collection

9 July  
to  
12 Sept.

**Shades of Fantastic**

Sculpture and artwork from Rom Brown and Jack Straker.

17 July  
to  
19 Sept.

**Body in Action**

**Designed and toured by Te Manawa**

This interactive exhibition examines how body parts work and function.

Amusement is the key note and the galleries will be brimming with pizzazz featuring brightly coloured stalls sporting titles such as Sensational Super Senses, Brilliant Brain and many more. This is the chance to put your body to the test and see just how



*40 Karaka St*, Nigel Brown  
James Wallace Arts Trust Collection

## H.B. Williams Memorial Library

A 'million dollar' view can seriously increase the cost of the most humble house. The home owner cannot really do anything with the view except look at it and then on-sell it at a later date. The value seems to lie in the contemplative aspects of the view, be it a twinkling cityscape from a twentieth-floor apartment, the ever-changing sea from a coastal home or simply a lush flower garden seen from a lounge window.

In New Zealand, since the moment Pākehā and Māori first met, our landscape has been recorded by artists. Sydney Parkinson was chief artist aboard James Cook's ship Endeavour, but, like the other illustrators aboard, he was there primarily as a botanical draughtsman. The scientific recording of plants, people and landscapes was their aim, rather than producing landscape paintings to grace the drawing rooms of the English aristocracy.

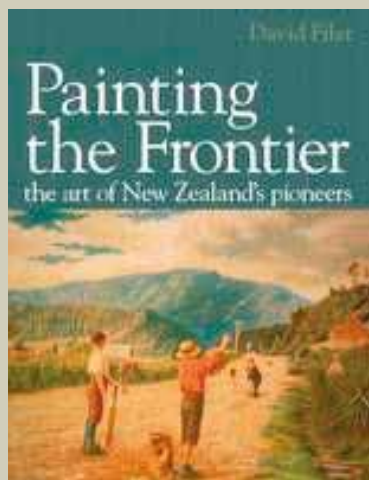
As Aotearoa was colonised, European ministers and their wives, surveyors, and a host of amateurs drew and painted their newly 'discovered' landscape. Most of these art works from the 19<sup>th</sup> century provide a record of the landscape rather than suggesting an empathy with a particular place. More than a few of these art works seem to have very English-looking trees conveniently filling the background. These paintings and drawings fascinate us today, providing as they do a record of the landscape being transformed, people going about their business and the development of towns and cities – interesting more for their subject matter than for the aesthetic contemplation of the viewer. The digicam of the 19<sup>th</sup> century if you like.

A couple of centuries on, the lure of the landscape for artists is

still as strong as ever, but both techniques and styles have evolved considerably. The selection of Gisborne landscapes currently showing in the Crisp Gallery at Tairāwhiti Museum is testament to the universal appreciation of a good view. When the 21<sup>st</sup> century viewer looks at a painting the response is invariably emotive; feelings are aroused, we make decisions about how the painting makes us feel and when it is a landscape we know – real or imagined – we can place ourselves within it. Lashings of thick paint, which might represent a tree or a hill, and finely executed watercolour grasses evoke polarised responses. Different strokes for different folks.

### Painting from the frontier: the art of New Zealand's pioneers

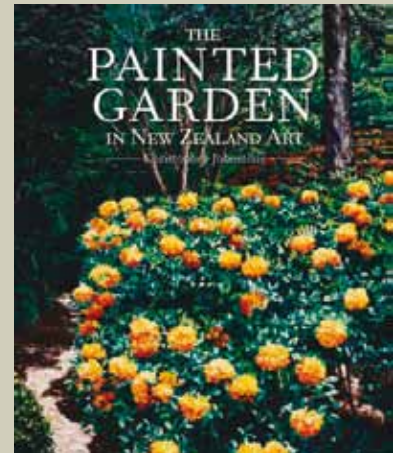
David Filer



Francis Pound, in his book *Frames on the land: early landscape painting in New Zealand* (1983), argued that the early New Zealand painters imposed their European artistic baggage onto their works. We get that. Filer, in his recently published study of colonial painting, uses a storytelling approach to elucidate the content of the paintings, thus facilitating an understanding of both the history and aesthetics of the works.

## The painted garden in New Zealand art

Christopher Johnstone



The images in this book may not be majestic in that 'theatre of landscape' way, but they are intimate, personal and, in many cases, raised from the ordinary by the evocative talent of the artist. The author has included some still lifes of flowers indoors (hinting at the world outside), domestic vegetable gardens and the grounds of grand mansions. These works, dating from 1830-2008, are all unmistakably from this part of the world.



Protestant sampler  
Peter Ireland. 1999  
Oil on paper

### ART FOR ARTS SAKE

HB Williams Memorial Library has an extensive collection of local artworks and photographs available to borrow.

Create inspiration to any home, office, waiting room, real estate open home, or just show off to your friends!

Visit our website to view the entire artwork collection.  
[www.gpl.govt.nz](http://www.gpl.govt.nz)

artworks | Library