BACK STORY 6

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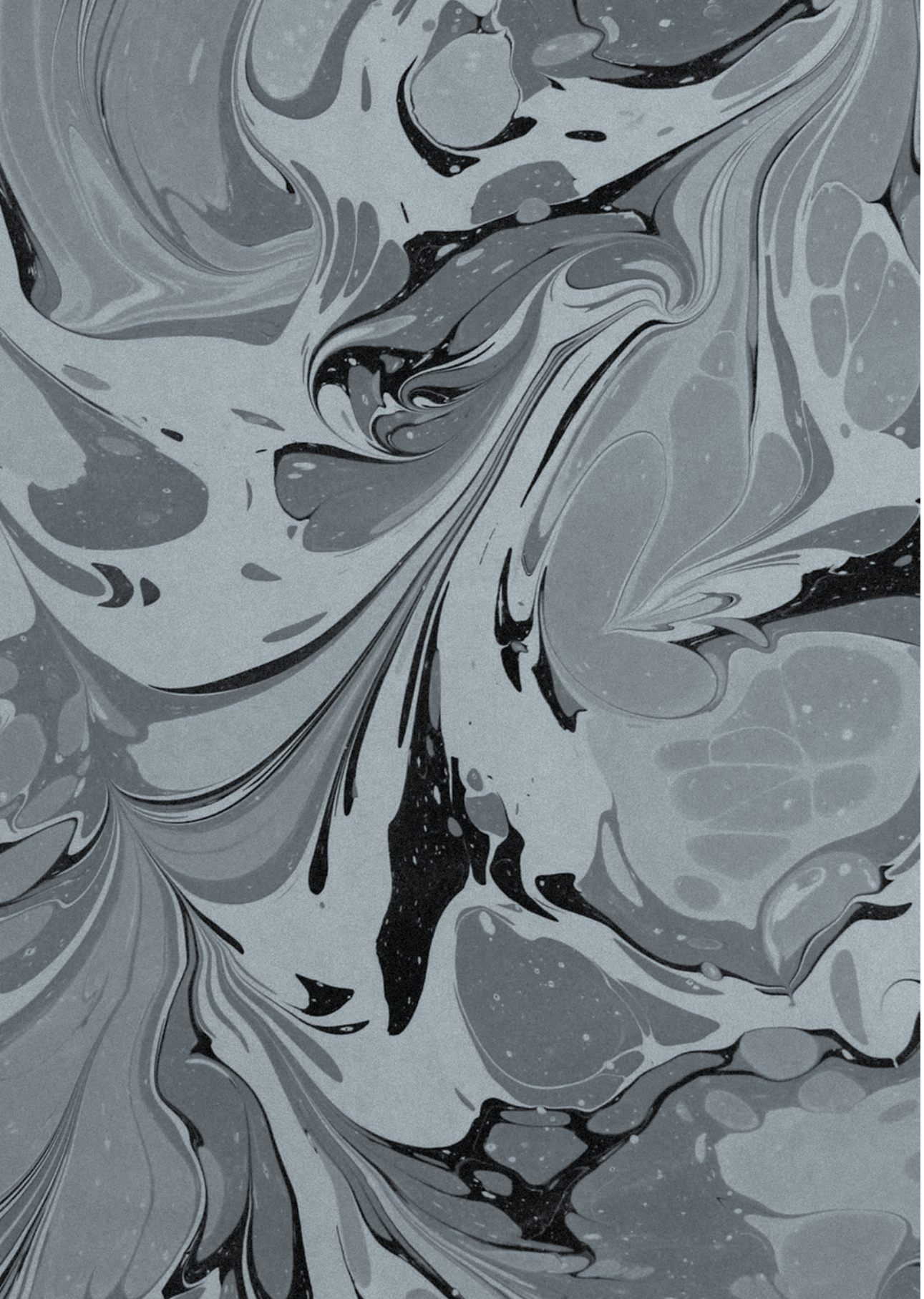

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Editorial

Our sixth issue manifests our previously stated aims to seek contributions from those working in the country's museum, art gallery and library sectors as well as publishing research by new researchers. We also trust it evidences two other key goals of the editorial team: to place considerable importance on the use of photographs and illustrations in the journal and to provide space for commentary and personal recollection by those interested in our art, design and media history.

Our profile commentary in this issue pays tribute to and features the photography of Peter Peryer who died in September last year. Sian Van Dyk, a curator at the Dowse Art Museum, reflects on Peryer's ability as a photographer to "tap into an underlying New Zealand psyche with elegance". She states that Peryer's image making mingled "the uncanny and the beautiful to invoke our curiosity in objects and scenes we may otherwise pass by without a second glance".

Susannah Whaley looks at a body of work by artist Rita Angus from the late 1930s to the 1950s where she sought to look beyond "New Zealand gender normalities" to craft an image Angus called the 'New Madonna'. Whaley argues the portraits and self-images that the artist worked on during this period "highlight female independence, while concomitantly acknowledging female sexuality". She further contends that Angus's art becomes "a medium to validate who she is as a woman and an artist".

As a hobbyist photographer and historian Russell Duncan extensively photographed sites associated with early European explorers in New Zealand. His aim, says Auckland curator Emma Jameson, was to record where these explorers, in particular Captain James Cook, left their mark and how the passage of time might have altered the landscape. The article illustrates how Duncan's photographic practice draws attention to a photograph's inherent tension, depicting what Barthes identifies as the here-now and the there-then. The photographed object or scene remains 'alive' in the traces of the moment depicted in the photograph whilst simultaneously the image also suggests it is of a time past or 'dead'.

Whilst Duncan's photography was interested in connections to the period of colonial exploration and was purblind to indigenous presence; Laura Campbell looks at early movements in New Zealand which while acknowledging our European cultural traditions sought also to explore the relationships between Maori and Pakeha art. She notes that at the end of nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century there was "a new found desire to integrate Maori and Pacific art into both public and private aesthetic spaces". By acknowledging the beauty of Maori and Pacific art and adding this appreciation to the European art traditions, "this ultimately translated into something original and specific to New Zealand".

Herbs, a group of Maori and Pacific Island musicians, introduced a distinctive form of 'Pacific reggae' to New Zealand. Elizabeth Turner focuses on the cover of their 1981 EP record What's Be Happen? to discuss their significant cultural and political influence in an important period of activism in this country. The cover is a photographic image of the final day of the Bastion Point occupation in Orakei, Auckland on 25 May, 1978. Turner identifies the choice of cover image and other visual elements as "a cultural and political statement of identity".

If we were looking for a theme for this issue we might highlight the power of visual imagery. However, there has been no attempt here to dress Issue 6 in any thematic cloak. Our intention in every journal is merely to feature the diversity and richness in New Zealand's art, design and media history. We trust you find this selection of articles fulfils our intent.

Alan Cocker

The cover of Herbs' first Pacific reggae album: Perusing the paratext

Elizabeth Turner

Keywords: #Herbs #What's Be Happen? #Pacific reggae #album cover #paratext #context

The cover of Herbs' award-winning EP What's Be Happen? is dominated by an image of the final day of the Bastion Point occupation in Ōrākei, Auckland on 25 May, 1978. Released in 1981, the album has been recognised in a number of music industry awards for its important contribution to cultural life in Aotearoa New Zealand, and for the musician's brave political stance in a period of activism that achieved significant social change. This article presents an analysis of the ways in which the record cover acts as a visual and textual introduction to the songs it encloses. Drawing on theorisations of features of paratext such as the title and images on a record sleeve as thresholding devices and as textual extensions of the records they enclose, the paper explores Herbs' album title, the typographic forms of the title and the band's name, and the use of colour, as well as the textual organisation of the songs on the two sides of the record. With reference to the social and political context at the time of the album's release, the article offers an interpretation of the identifications and values signified by these elements of the cover, as carriers of meaning.

Figure 1: Front cover of Herbs' album What's Be Happen?

The front cover of Herbs' EP record *What's Be Happen?* is a photographic image of the final day of the Bastion Point occupation in Ōrākei, Auckland on 25 May, 1978. The black and white aerial photograph[1] shows a moment during the contentious eviction of Māori land rights protesters after 507 days of occupation in an attempt to prevent the sale of traditional Māori land for luxury housing. In what has been described as a depiction of the clash between the mana of M*ā*ori and Pakeha authority[2], the image shows part of a large circle of white-helmeted police officers surrounding the meeting house and a scattered handful of protestors' caravans. The police officers in the upper area of the circle stand in position with hands behind their backs, facing inwards. Other officers are seen filing into position in

the lower segment of the photograph while protestors stand on either side of a pathway that leads away from the meeting house, which is positioned off centre in the composition. The name of the band is superimposed at centre top in white curved letters outlined in red, and the mini-album title in red is centred at the bottom. The symmetrically positioned lettering of the foregrounded name and title curves towards to centre of the photograph, echoing the circle of police officers. In enclosing the image and encircling the police circle, the curvature of the typography suggests an embrace, a signal of willingness to support and speak for those damaged by the events depicted in the image. Along with the question posed by the album title, the photograph signals and contextualises the political content of Herbs' songs as well as suggesting the orientation of the musicians in relation to that content. In 1981, at a time when Aotearoa New Zealand had no tradition of political bands, the choice of image was unequivocal as a statement of political stance. *What's Be Happen?* is the country's first Pacific reggae album, and its release by Warrior Records in 1981 is regarded as a turning point in the history of New Zealand popular music.

Although it was not commercially successful in terms of sales, the album and the band have been formally recognized in a series of awards for their significant cultural and political influence in an important period of activism in Aotearoa New Zealand. The multi-ethnic mix of five Herbs musicians introduced an innovative and distinctive style of Pacific reggae[3] which localised Jamaican roots reggae[4] and embodied the influence of Bob Marley on Māori and Pacific Islands musicians, activists and audiences in particular. The band was inducted into the Aotearoa New Zealand Music Hall of Fame at the Silver Scroll Awards in September 2012, and in April 2015 Herbs musicians, Warrior Records founder Hugh Lynn, and the label and artist manager Will 'Ilolahia were presented with the Independent Music New Zealand (IMNZ) Classic Record award for *What's Be Happen?* at the Taite Music Prize event. In June the same year the band was again recognised when they won the Manukau Institute of Technology Lifetime Achievement Award at the Vodafone Pacific Music Awards in Auckland. That award was for *What's Be Happen?*, described at the ceremony as a ground breaking album of social commentary, and for Herbs' second album *Light of the Pacific* released in 1983. This paper focuses on an exploration and interpretation of the ways in which the peritext[5] of the cover of Herbs' first record album, in its design and content, acts as a visual and textual introduction and an extension to Herbs' songs. In addition to the images on the album cover it discusses the album title,

the typographic forms of the album title and the band's name, and the use of colour[6]; as well as the textual organisation of the songs on the two sides of the record.

In adopting the name of one of the four songs written by founding Herbs musician Toni Fonoti for the album title, Herbs chose a slang expression used by stylish Pacific Islands youth in Aotearoa New Zealand at the time the songs on the album were written. That song, *What's Be Happen?* is structured as a "hidden dialogue"[7], a probing soliloquy in which the singer narrator appears to hold a conversation with absent speakers. In a narrative structure shaped by the imagined utterances and experiences of invisible addressees, the song questions contradictions between the aspirations of Pacific Islands and Māori people for a better material life[8] and the economically oppressive and miserable realities of life for many migrants in urban Aotearoa New Zealand:

> Say you're alright brada, cause you got hire purchase
> No need to pay just slave and slave and slave...
> What's be happen, when the children turn away
> And why for you stay when nothing remains...[9]

Although Toni Fonoti was not conscious of it at the time[10] there appears to be an intertextual connection between the title of Herbs' album (and of their song by the same name) and the title of Marvin Gaye's influential album and single *What's Going On*, released in 1971[11]. Gaye's politically charged album includes songs of protest that are a commentary on social suffering and injustice, urban decay, police brutality and conflict in the United States, from the generalised point of view of a soldier returning from the war in Vietnam. Herbs' apparent localisation of Gaye's title in the vernacular of young Pacific Islands people and the rhetorical device of juxtaposing the album title and the photograph of Bastion Point suggest the significant intertextual influence of Gaye's seminal album. As Herbs' bass player and songwriter Phil Toms, recalls, the decision to adopt the name of Toni Fonoti's song as the title of Herbs' album had been taken before the cover image was decided on. That choice was made after the band had completed recording, when the musicians went to Hugh Lynn's house to celebrate; the Bastion Point photograph was on the wall and it was Phil Toms who suggested including that image on the cover[12].

The fact that there is no question mark in Gaye's title suggests an intentional framing of his album as a firm statement of social injustices. In contrast, Herbs' title, as a question, suggests an engagement with listeners in an interrogation of events, conflicts and experiences that formed the album's social and political context and are represented in the main image of the album cover and in the recorded songs that the cover encloses. The 1970s and early 1980s were a period of important change in the recent history of Aotearoa New Zealand. There were conflicts and campaigns over human rights, ethical values, and national identity, and over the kind of society people wanted in Aotearoa New Zealand[13]. These included protests against nuclear testing in the Pacific, campaigns against serious degradation of the environment and against the racist apartheid regime in South Africa, as well as campaigns for women's rights, gay rights and homosexual law reform[14]. People from the Pacific Islands were subjected between 1974 and 1976 to frightening race-based dawn raids by police with dogs, searching for people they suspected had stayed beyond the terms of their entry permits, the so-called over stayers. Pacific Island and Māori youths experienced police harassment and random police checks on Polynesian looking people on the streets of Auckland and were arrested for being "idle and disorderly"[15]. And many Pacific Islands and Māori people who had moved from the Islands and from rural areas to urban Aotearoa New Zealand suffered from the loss of homeland and island roots, from a sense of cultural dislocation and from economic and social hardships in suburbs with poor housing conditions. There were also significant struggles over the loss of traditional Māori land. These are not only represented in the image on the front cover but also linked in the album track "One Brotherhood" to the racism of apartheid, and to protests against the racially selected South African Springboks team's rugby tour of Aotearoa New Zealand which was to take place between July and September 1981[16].

The signalling of the social commentary constructed in Herbs' album in the image and album title is augmented by the typography of the title (see Figure 1) in which the impression of an almost graffiti-like social comment is reinforced by the uneven positioning of letters along a notional baseline (see the "H" in particular). At the same time, an upward curve of letters at the beginning and end of the title has the effect of partially enclosing the image, signifying the relationship between the photograph with its high visual modality and the title question.

There is a similarity between the typography of the title and the design of the "Warrior Records" logo positioned on the right hand corner of the rear of the album cover (see Figure 2). Although the fonts differ slightly in terms of the size of the serifs (the projections that finish off the strokes of letters) the letters are similarly cursive but are not completely joined. In both texts there is slight elongation in the vertical axis and narrow spacing between letters. The form of the name "Warrior" can be understood as evoking a line of Māori warriors standing more or less to attention (the second stem of the "A" slopes towards the first letter). Furthermore, the relatively "spiky" form of the letter "W" in the company logo is suggestive of the taiaha, a wooden or bone fighting staff with a long-handle used by Māori warriors, while the final, ascending component of the "W" is heavy, and extends horizontally to enclose both words, connoting a protective palisade surrounding the "warrior" letters.

In a further connotation of Māori culture, the thick, curvilinear letters of the band's name bring to mind the hand crafted kowhaiwhai designs associated with Māori wood carving (evoked in the connection between the "R" and the "B" in particular), which is frequently characterised by interlocking curved shapes, and the stylised spiral koru[17]. The Herbs' logo has been an enduring contribution to the band by bass player and graphic artist John Berkley. Berkley replaced the first bass player Dave Pou in Back Yard, the precursor to Herbs, but left the band in 1981 just before Herbs began to prepare to start recording, and his place was filled by Phil Toms. In Berkley's design, letter strokes end in ball-shaped terminals, with the exception of vertical ascenders, and these are particularly pronounced in the final "S". These shapes are associated in Aotearoa New Zealand with the koru motif, the stylised spiral shape of an unfurling fern frond, a symbol of renewal that is ubiquitous in wood carving and other forms of Māori art.[18] The same koru form is echoed in the question mark at the end of the album title, and on a smaller scale in stroke and serif terminals in the title.

The use of colour is also significant. The red and white in Herbs' name, red in the album title, black in the record company logo and the black and white images, can be interpreted as signifying Māori mana (symbolised by the colour red), Māori culture and the interests of *Māori* . These traditional colours feature strongly and have cultural significance in Māori woodcarving and other art forms, and they carry political meaning as the three colours of the Māori Tino Rangatiratanga (sovereignty) flag.

Figure 2: Rear cover of Herbs' album What's Be Happen?

There is a contrast between the allusions to Māori culture in the image and text on the front of the album cover and those created through the image on the rear of the sleeve, a much smaller black and white photograph (see Figures 2 and 3). The photograph of Herbs musicians is edged by a frame that in this context evokes Pasifika weaving patterns. In 1981 Herbs consisted of vocalist and song-writer Toni Fonoti of Samoan heritage, Tongan drummer Fred Faleauto and guitarist Spenser Fusimalohi, Māori rhythm guitar player Dilworth Karaka and European bassist and song-writer Phil Toms, and these musicians are posed around a piano, encircling it in a way that mirrors the curved positioning of the letters in the band's name.

Figure 3: Image detail from rear cover of Herbs' album What's Be Happen?

The posture of the musicians is relaxed; their level gaze, juxtaposed with Dilworth Karaka's Māori facial expression, engages the viewer, and the close shot serves to reduce social distance through the relative proximity of the figures to the camera. These combined effects create an impression of a brotherhood of different ethnic and cultural backgrounds united literally and metaphorically around music. The image suggests a representation of the kaupapa of unity that is reinforced by the title of the first track on Side Two, "One Brotherhood", and its lyrics: "We're one brotherhood... brotherhood and sisterhood yeah, Aotearoa"[19]. In contrast, the dominant image of Bastion Point on the front of the sleeve documents lived realities that contributed to the rupturing of the ideology of Māori and Pākehā living in harmony as one people[20].

The central section of the back of the album cover beneath the photograph of Herbs musicians is followed by a list of credits: to the musicians ("The Musos"), and their contributions; background vocalists on the track "Azania (Soon Come)"; The Rarotonganui Cultural Club for percussion segments in "What's Be Happen?"; recording and mixing engineers, Mascot (recording) Studios and Herb's management (for

the cover design) and some 25 names, acknowledged with the words "thanks to...for helping us get where we are". These thanks are echoed in the text that follows in a parallel construction that reads: "Special thanks to YOU for helping us get to where we will be". The use of bold for these words, their centre alignment and the use of capital letters signal and emphasise a shift of focus from the musicians and all those who helped to produce the album, to the audience, to the significance of those who hear the music and see the album cover. At the same time the words signal a shift in focus from the past and present to the future. Like the image of the musicians above it, the message to "YOU" is an engagement with the reader. This direct address to the audience and the effect of reducing the social distance between the audience, the musicians and the team that produced the album suggests that the readers and listeners who hold the album and who hear the music, those "who listen and... understand"[21] are, and should be, part of a sisterhood and brotherhood committed to helping achieve a future free from racism, injustice and oppression.

Although changes in technological mediation involving digital files and the ability to buy single tracks off an album from an online store have changed the ways in which we listen to music[22], as a vinyl EP and a physical artefact Herbs' album has two sides. It has to be turned over in order to listen to the songs on each side. The typical approach and custom in listening to a vinyl record album is to listen to Side One first, starting with the first track, to turn the record over on the turntable and listen to the songs on Side Two. The order of the tracks on each side of an album therefore has significance. In the case of Herbs' album, the organisation of the six songs and relationships between them are constructed sonically if the songs on the record are listened to in sequence. Some of these relationships are represented materially on the back of the record sleeve (see Figure 2) in the sequence of song titles listed for each side, and in the "carved-up shape of the lines [of the lyrics] on the page"[23].

A symmetry is achieved between the two sides of the record in that each of the track lists begins with an overtly political track, includes a song that narrates experiences of Pacific Islands people, was well as another that involves the theme of spirituality. "Azania (Soon Come)", the first track on Side One, is musically and lyrically the most forceful of the six songs, with its strong, driving reggae beat, voices of additional vocalists that intensify the sound of the chorus and final chanting, as well as incorporated liberation slogans, and the strong assertion that racism will be overpowered in apartheid South

Africa: that Azania - a South Africa freed from racist white-minority control - "(soon come)"[24]. Side Two begins with the explicitly political "One Brotherhood" in which the lyrics connect the violence of police treatment of protestors, social injustice, apartheid South Africa, and what Ranginui Walker describes as the struggle against oppressive and racist treatment made manifest in the ongoing loss of Māori land[25]. The spiritual theme of "Dragons and Demons"[26] on Side One is echoed in references to Rastafari spirituality in the tribute to Bob Marley and to reggae in the final acoustic track, "Reggae's Doing Fine"[27], on Side Two. The commentary on hardships faced by migrants from the Pacific Islands in "What's Be Happen?" on the first side is counterbalanced by the narration of experiences of police harassment in "Whistling in the Dark"[28] on Side Two. The track lists thus introduce and document the organisation of the six tracks in which overtly political songs at the beginning of each side frame those that follow. In doing so these initial songs establish an explicitly political context in which the subsequent songs are heard and interpreted.

The recorded Pacific reggae songs that the cover encloses can be understood as an identification with the values and rhetorical functions associated with Jamaican roots reggae as message music, a genre that expresses the social realities of its practitioners and functions as a "musical weapon" against oppression and injustice[29]. Similarly, as this exploration suggests, the allusion to Marvin Gaye's album title can be interpreted as a signal of the band's positioning in relation to African American soul music and the role of that music in addressing social injustice and conflicts.

The choice of image on the front cover, the use of colour and other visual components contribute to a form of positioning[30], a cultural and political statement of identity, and an identification and ethical alignment with the rights of those who struggled against racism and injustice. At the same time, the image of Herbs musicians on the back of the album cover implies the need for cultural unity in the face of these struggles, a unity grounded in reggae music. The dialogic relationship between the colour red in particular and the image on the front of the cover can be understood to signify the discourse of Māori mana and by implication the protest of Māori and others who campaigned against the ongoing erosion of Māori land ownership. Furthermore, references to the koru in the typography discussed here can be seen as signifying not only growth and renewal but also the resurgence of Māori political activism and self-assertion that emerged at the end of the 1970s[31] in what James Belich describes as a new form of Māori "decolonisation"[32]. In this context the choice of the main image is an explicit statement of political orientation in relation to the protests and occupation at Bastion Point and as this article has shown, like the title, acts as a thresholding device for the songs on the record itself.

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END NOTES

1 Although this photograph is not attributed, a similar aerial photograph from the New Zealand Herald archive was published on 30 May 2015 (see Suzanne McFadden, 2015 "Auckland's 175th anniversary: Season of discontent" at http://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=11456874).

2 John Dix, Stranded in Paradise: New Zealand Rock and Roll - 1955 to the Modern Era (Wellington, New Zealand: Penguin, 2005).

3 With the exception of the final track on the album, which was recorded as a tribute immediately after the death of Bob Marley, and after the end of the main recording sessions, all of the songs on the album are reggae songs

4 See Thomas J. Weber, "Likkle but Talawah (Small but Mighty): Reggae Music, Globalization, and the Birth of a Social Movement (Phd Thesis)." Bowling Green State University, 2000. Weber defines roots reggae as the form popularised internationally by Bob Marley and others, featuring full instrumentation and harmonized vocals; it is now less frequently heard in Jamaica, where "dancehall" reggae form, with spoken vocals and computer-generated backing, predominates. "Introduction", in Ian Biddle and Vanessa Knights (eds.), Music, National Identity and the Politics of Location. (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2007), p.2.

5 Gerard Genette, Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1997). Peritext is one of two general categories identified by Genette in his theorisation of the practices and discourses constituting supplementary paratext, which is next to but beyond the main text of a book, and yet constituent of it. Peritext includes cover images, titles and contents pages, for example, which "surround" and are materially adjacent to the primary text; they extend it, but have no meaning except in relation to that text. Epitext includes promotional material and newspaper reviews, for example, that are not necessarily materially attached to the primary text but circulate in relation to it. Genette suggested that the idea of paratextuality could be extended from books to musical recordings, where the text itself is the vinyl record or CD and the sleeve or other "containment devices" are the paratext (Colin Symes, Setting the Record Straight: A Material History of Classical Recording (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2004), 95.). Colin Symes' response to Genette's suggestion employs the notion of paratext in the study of materials that surround classical long playing records (LPs), conceptualising record covers as important textual extensions of the records themselves, and extending Genette's analysis of the narrative architecture of books to this different cultural form. Paratext is seen as a threshold to the texts they refer to (Genette, Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation.) and elements of peritext and epitext act as "thresholding devices" (Symes, Setting the Record Straight: A Material History of Classical Recording, 95.) which convey information and can signal authorial intentions; they "present" the text and help to frame readers' approaches to it.

6 The examination of the paratext of Herbs' album cover is informed by David Machin's analysis of the text and iconography (the images and symbols) of popular music album covers. (See David Machin, Analysing Popular Music: Image, Sound, Text (London, England: Sage, 2010).) In multimodal examinations of the ways in which record sleeves communicate identities and values and signify particular discourses, Machin builds on the semiotic theory and approaches of Roland Barthes (Roland Barthes, Image/Music/Text, trans. S. Heath (New York, NY: Noonday, 1977).) and of Gunther Cress and Theo van Leeuwen (Gunther R. Kress and Theo van Leeuwen, Reading Images:The Grammar of Visual Design (London, England: Routledge, 1996). Relevant visual language features discussed by Machin include images and what these may document and denote, as well as the values and concepts they may connote; that is their "meaning potential" (Machin, Analysing Popular Music: Image, Sound, Text, 37.) As others have pointed out, such connotations are historical and social, being dependent on the conventions, expectations and cultural values of the society in which an image appears and is interpreted (See for example, Mikhail Bakhtin, "Toward a Methodology for the Human Sciences," in Speech Genres and Other Late Essays ed. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1986).; and Barthes, Image/Music/Text.). Machin also identifies the relevance of techniques that signify salience, visual modality, and the semiotic resources of colour and typography. Salience is the degree of importance of visual elements as carriers of meaning; this may be signified by the inclusion of culturally significant symbols, by foregrounding elements, and as Cal Swann also points out, through relative size (Cal Swann, Language & Typography (London, England: Lund Humphries, 1991). The modality of images refers broadly to the degree to which an image expresses certainty and is "real, more real or less than real" (Machin, Analysing Popular Music: Image, Sound, Text, 10.), that is the extent to which it is perceived as expressing truthfulness and certainty, as an image of "realness" (Barthes, Image/Music/Text.).

7 Mikhail Bakhtin, Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics, trans. Caryl Emerson (Manchester, England: Manchester University Press, 1984), p.197.

8 See Michael King, The Penguin History of New Zealand (Auckland, New Zealand: Penguin, 2003).

9 Toni Fonoti, What's Be Happen? [Recorded by Herbs]. On What's Be Happen? [Vinyl Record], (Auckland: Warrior Records/WEA, 1981d).

10 Toni Fonoti, personal communication, October 5, 2012

11 Al Cleveland, Renaldo Benson, and Marvin Gaye. What's Going on [Recorded by Marvin Gaye]. On What's Going on [Vinyl Record]. Detroit, MI: Tamla Records, 1971.

12 Phil Toms interview with the author, Auckland, November 21, 2013.

13 See historian Jock Phillips, cited in Anthony Hubbard, "For a Good Cause," Sunday Star Times, August 29 2010.

14 King, The Penguin History of New Zealand; Marilyn Waring, "A Feminist Perspective," in Glory Days: From Gumboots to Platforms, ed. Ian Chapman (Auckland, New Zealand: HarperCollins, 2009); King, The Penguin History of New Zealand.

15 See Elizabeth Turner, "What's Be Happen? A Bakhtinian Analysis of Aotearoa New Zealand's First Pacific Reggae Album" (Auckland University of Technology, 2016).

16 "One Brotherhood in Aotearoa New Zealand: Protest, Resistance and Pacific Reggae," Music and Politics XII, no. 2, Summer 2018.

17 See Michael Dunn, New Zealand Sculpture: A History (Auckland, New Zealand: Auckland University Press, 2002).

18 Ibid.

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Rita Angus: A New Madonna 1942–1951

Susannah Whaley

This article explores the ‘New Madonna’ in Rita Angus’s artwork in the 1940s and early 1950s. The New Madonna combines female independence and celibacy with sexuality and motherhood. She develops from Angus’s position as a woman painter who lived and worked alone, and is expressed in three nudes and a number of goddess portraits which are discussed. The origins of the term ‘New Madonna’ and the interpretative possibilities it affords to Angus’s art are examined. These works allow Angus to inscribe herself with a value derived from being female. In order to offer insight into these portraits, Angus’s letters to the composer Douglas Gordon Lilburn are considered.

Rita Angus. *Self-Portrait* (1936-1937). Oil on canvas laid on board, 490 x 400. Dunedin Public Art Gallery, 31-1980

Self-Portrait (1936-1937) is one of the most well known images of Rita Angus, completed during her separation from the artist Alfred Cook. She smokes a cigarette with her arms crossed across the front of her body and wears an oversized coat much like a man's, asserting her own sufficiency. As a woman, an artist, and a divorcee, Angus's art and art practice challenges mid-twentieth-century New Zealand gender normalities. During the years after her separation in 1934 until her divorce, and even afterwards, Angus was neither "maid, wife, nor widow", nor mother, an uncommon position in a society that valued women by their affective connection to men. In 1924, when Angus was 16, *Ladies' Mirror* columnist V. Quirk implied that there were four types of women only: "the spinster, the mother-woman, the wife-woman, and most rare, the wife-and-mother woman". Each woman was defined by her love (or lack thereof) towards a husband or child. By contrast, in *Self-Portrait* Angus embodies the early twentieth-century "new woman". In a collection of essays on art and gender in Australia, academic Pamela Niehoff defines this "new woman" by describing women going out to work, women obtaining university degrees, and

housewives with leisure time, women such as Grace Crowley's *Portrait of Lucie Beynis* (1929) and Sybil Craig's *Peggy* (1932). *Lucie Beynis* shows an intellectual woman with a book, short hair, and a business-like costume, and Niehoff comments that "[t]he direction of the model and her gaze suggest preoccupation with her own thoughts". *Peggy* smokes and the "closeness of the image to the picture plane... enhances Peggy's confidence in her own appearance, not sitting but 'on the move'". Likewise, in Angus's *Self-Portrait*, her upper body fills the frame and her gaze is self-assured. The portrait places Angus within the international trend of women painters imaging a new woman. However, this is a woman who largely remained out of place in Angus's daily world.

Grace Crowley. *Portrait of Lucie Beynis* (1929). Oil on canvas on hardboard, 797 x 645. Art Gallery of New South Wales, purchased 1965, OA14.1965

Sybil Craig. *Peggy* (1932). Oil on canvas, 404 x 304. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, purchased 1978, A3-1978. © Estate of Sybil Craig

A new image of female independence appears in Angus's work in the following decade. Angus's paintings and the image she crafted of herself as a painter in the 1940s gave rise to what she herself called the 'New Madonna'. Crucial to the understanding of Angus's art are her letters to the composer Douglas Gordon Lilburn, in which she discusses the effects on her art of her miscarriage in 1942, and her subsequent

renegotiation of her sexuality and her relationship with Lilburn. Lilburn was the father of Angus's child and also homosexual, though whether Angus knew this in the 1940s or later is unclear. Angus writes to him in 1944 that she hears *herself* being exalted in his composition *Magnificat and Nunc Dimmitis*. This piece shows a "glimpse of the new Madonna" who "was born [...] of a woman pacifist who worked among conscientious objectors in a Pacifist co-op, in Wellington". The New Madonna develops through Angus's lifestyle as a woman painter who lived and worked in isolation, as well as through a new woman she creates in her portraits, and particularly her goddess portraits. She arises from traditional imagery of the Christian Mary as Virgin Mother of God, but differs from her in important ways. While apparently chaste, this new female figure embraces her womanhood and her creative capabilities. The portraits and self- images that Angus worked on in this decade highlight female independence, while concomitantly acknowledging female sexuality.

Both Jill Trevelyan in her biography *Rita Angus: An Artist's Life* (2008) and, more extensively, Bronwyn Lloyd in her PhD thesis "Daemons and Dream Children" (2009), have acknowledged Angus's goddess portraits in particular as imaging a "New Madonna". Trevelyan contends that the goddess paintings "update" a Western tradition of Madonnas in the Pacific. Lloyd states of Angus's goddess portrait *Rutu*: "Angus's interest [was] in the concept of a twentieth century pacifist Madonna and child, heralding a second coming and bringing a message of peace and hope to a war-torn modern world". However, it remains to focus and develop this image, particularly in the context of Angus herself. In the 1940s, Angus was living as a single woman. According to social norms, she had failed as a wife and a mother. Moreover, as her child was conceived illegitimately and Lilburn refused her wish for another child or further intimacy, this meant that her grief was mostly private, as only a few close friends knew of her pregnancy. She frequently discusses her child in her letters to Lilburn, but the portraits themselves are heavily imbued with symbolism. Representation of Angus's personal life in her art recalls Mexican artist Frida Kahlo's (1907-1954) *Henry Ford Hospital* (1932), where Kahlo's miscarriage is represented by symbols. Kahlo presents herself naked on a hospital bed with symbols of her loss, such as a fractured pelvis and a foetus, floating around her. Angus's miscarriage a decade later takes shape in paint far more subtly, likely due to the child's illegitimacy, but also to the isolated and still puritanical New Zealand society in which she lived. Without her letters, which contained information about her portraits

not made public, there would be no way to offer the interpretative possibilities that this essay does. The Madonna, as an ideal symbol of motherhood, is an apt, and in hindsight even a provocative persona for Angus to choose as she negotiated a new motherhood to her art, taking possession of her female sexuality, whether or not she was physically a mother.

I focus on three nudes and a number of goddess portraits, including little-discussed watercolour sketches. In these pictures, independence is conveyed, but it is a differently negotiated image than that of the woman in the trench coat – this new woman is the "New Madonna". Of the other female figures appearing in New Zealand art at this time, similarities can be drawn between Angus's goddesses and Lois White's corporeal goddess figure in her portrait *Ode to Autumn* (1945). However, being able to chart Angus's back story of the New Madonna through her letters show the unique image of womanhood she created was unlike that with which women in New Zealand are known to have experimented with at the time. As well as important personal images, the goddesses are forerunners to Robyn Kahukiwa's *Hinetitama* (1980) as wāhine toa. The "New Madonna" becomes an increasingly important trope in Angus's art and in her self-mythologising as a painter through the 1940s, one which reinscribes her with a value derived from being female.

SUBLIMATING AND SANCTIFYING

In July 1942 Angus describes drawing herself in the nude and states that "the child would have been born in about two weeks". These nudes develop a sexual but unusual image of her naked body. Breasts and hips indicate childbearing, yet the woman stands alone. The drawings accentuate her figure curving in where it should curve out. The standing pencil sketch shows the hollowed cavity below her ribs, her narrow waist, arms spread wide rather than brought to the body to hold a baby. However, following this apparent acknowledgement of loss, the drawings can be seen to express recovery. Lloyd calls them a "narrative sequence". Angus shows her own face inclining towards the viewer, or towards herself as the artist, indicating she is able to meet her own gaze with confidence. In the seated nude, the gaze is partially hidden by the tilt of her face and her seated pose positions her further away.

Rita Angus. *Self-portrait (nude, seated)* (c. 1942). Pencil and wash, 423 x 286. Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, TMP-001461, on loan from the Rita Angus Estate

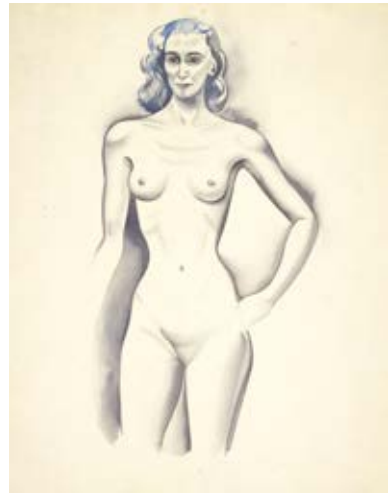
Rita Angus. *Study for carving torso (nude self portrait)* (c. 1942). Pencil, 309 x 248. Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, TMP-001410, on loan from the Rita Angus Estate

In the sketch of her standing, Angus shows herself standing more firmly and easily, with her legs slightly apart and her gaze direct. There are no hands and feet, emphasising the torso. The portraits examine the physical attributes of being female. They show, despite the miscarriage, the beginning of the artist's realisation of her own "perfection and vitality". Angus writes to Lilburn at this time: "I want to tell you this that I do not despise my body. That my body belongs to me. This is to me important because no man has the right to despise my body." The strong shading around the figures suggests vibrancy and a redirection of love for her lost child into self and into herself as artist/creator.

Angus's nude sketches acknowledge an undeniable sexual and maternal function: her breasts and hips. These are stark references to the childbearing function that makes her a woman and are an irremovable part of her image even if she has no child. Outlined by shadow, the nudes appear like statues, goddess-like, removed. But the nude remains a sexual body. Importantly, Adams' study of the Madonna's use as feminist symbol does not preclude sexuality: "the Madonna can be a powerful figure for certain writers of [the Victorian]

period because of their radical understanding of virginity – *psychic, social, and even sexual*" (my italics). Not only is the Madonna made multi-faceted; she can be tailored to suit individual concerns. Lloyd identifies the standing nudes as studies of a statue of the Egyptian priestess Imeret-Nebe, with whom Angus "fused her body and identity". The priestess is chaste, virginal, dedicated to her god. Angus is likewise dedicated to her sacred duty to paint.

Angus's view of the sanctity of her role as an artist develops out of her new body image. The purpose of "quietly reclaiming [her] virginity" was "to serve the arts". She writes to Lilburn in April 1943, "as a high priestess, I learn my duty, to cause no pain to others, to accept myself as I am, to be responsible to myself and to my works, which is greater than I am. Living simply, trusting, and speaking the truth, to live up to my history of women". In late 1942, she describes herself as living a "moderate life", "alone in my monastery". Adams argues that the Madonna can be read as more than a tool of patriarchy to subordinate women to chaste, passive roles. She repositions the Madonna's virginity, and its significance for women who try to emulate it, in the words of nineteenth-century women's rights activist Margaret Fuller: "virginity is primarily a matter of self-intactness; the virgin state is 'self-subsistence in its two forms of self-reliance and self impulse'". This "self-intactness" leads to "self-expansion: woman as virgin can make her life beautiful, powerful, and complete, achieving the perfection God requires of every species and every soul", a sense of completeness that Angus's nudes also convey.



Rita Angus. *Grisaille nude self portrait (standing)* (c. 1942). Wash, 293 x 224. Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, TMP-001460, on loan from the Rita Angus Estate

Nude self-portraits of women in the 1940s are scarce, making Angus's excursion into the field of nude self-portraiture bold and experimental. One other example is Australian artist Freda Robertshaw's *Standing nude (self portrait)* (1944). While the reflection in the mirror behind her suggests sensuality, Robertshaw's stance in the foreground is confident and unselfconscious.

Freda Robertshaw. *Standing Nude* (1944). Oil on board, 1100 x 690. Cruthers Collection of Women's Art, University of Western Australia, CCWA 409

Like Angus, Robertshaw creates an image of herself nude in which *she* is gazer, both as artist and at the self in the mirror. Robertshaw's portrait has a feeling of life with the curtain being drawn to reveal a spectacle, and the artist still wearing her sandals as though she has briefly slipped her dress over her head. The painting has caught the moment, whereas Angus's is completely outside the moment. The mirror into which the artist looks to draw herself is implied, not seen, highlighting the separateness of Angus's body. Angus proclaims celibacy following her miscarriage. Her nude sketches express this as an acceptance of her body, and her own sense of completeness.

Lilburn rejected Angus's wish for another child and continuing intimacy. However, Angus gained a new motherhood – to her painting. In a letter to Lilburn in 1943, a poem, "Embryo", alludes to Angus's transition from carnal love to love that is pure and spiritual, and also distant.

I look toward the sun,
And receive warmth and kindliness,
Naked and unashamed.
The Lord said unto Moses,
The adulteress shall surely be put to death!
Christ said unto her,
Thy sins are forgiven,
Thy faith hath saved thee, go in peace.
Cruelty and benevolence.
A vessel of Purity
The Madonna of Lovers,
And not Aphrodite, Goddess of Love.
Perfection.
Through my body and my mind,
Enmity to Love.

"Embryo" refers to the miscarriage and makes use of the language of motherhood that Angus was beginning to apply to her painting, expressing physical pregnancy as analogous to creative fertility: "I felt the life continuity in me when I was pregnant, and an exaltation because the child was yours. I wanted the life continuity to go on. Can you understand why I wanted another child. I am amazed the life continuity does go on in a different way. Everything I paint has the sense of being alive."

In 1948, Angus stated that she had come to think of her miscarried child as a boy, and that if the boy "had been a girl she could have lived, hence the painting of Sun Goddesses". Moving on from the nudes, Angus rewrites the death of the Christ child, and her own child, by creating "living" portraits. The goddess portraits stand as works of peace and love, mothers to a new world. She wrote in 1943, "I imagine that had I not been born an artist, but a Madonna, married at 22, I could have at least six children now, it overwhelms me".

In April 1942, Angus attended a rehearsal of Lilburn's composition *Magnificat and Nunc Dimmitis* in Christchurch Cathedral. Lloyd notes that as Angus listened to choristers singing the story of the Virgin Mary, "her revelation was this: Douglas Lilburn was exalting a 'New Madonna' and that woman was Rita Angus herself." In November that same year, Angus was to refer to the moment as her "'revelation'" in the Cathedral. In August 1944, in a letter in which she mourned the dead while those in the streets were celebrating the Liberation of Paris, she reminds Lilburn that "[w]hen you composed the *Magnificat* you exalted a new Madonna". In September, she describes this woman as herself, "a woman pacifist". The Madonna looks down towards her child. Like the nudes, Angus's goddesses, New Madonnas, look out, across.

GODDESSES: A NEW MADONNA

From 1945-1951 Angus painted three major goddess works, her paintings *Rutu* (1945-1951), *A Goddess of Mercy* (1945-1947), and *Sun Goddess* (1946-1949). Lloyd provides these dates of composition, stating that *Rutu* is the first Sun Goddess. The goddesses represent engagement with love in the post-war world, creating realms of peace and healing. In the early 1940s Angus asks for "in a few years, a calm, joyful, Franciscan world of flowers and trees?" This is the world of the goddesses. In a review of a 1951 London exhibition of New Zealand painters, English art critic Maurice Collis called *Rutu* a "saintly vision of a Siennese Madonna". Angus clarifies: "Rutu may resemble a Siennese Madonna, she is also her own age, as well as ahead of her era."

The goddesses are new women, removed from the domestic landscape of the home, holding flowers rather than babies. *Rutu* sits on a throne before the sea, *A Goddess of Mercy* stands before farmed hills with a root system forming a halo around her head, and *Sun Goddess* is ensconced in wildflowers.

Rita Angus. *Rutu* (1951). Oil on canvas, 707 x 548. Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, purchased 1992 with New Zealand Lottery Grants Board funds, 1992-0025-1

While these are intensely reproductive landscapes, with spring and summer flowers and ploughed fields, the goddesses are quiet, sacrosacnt. Angus's wide landscapes highlight that despite their accentuated figures, the landscape as woman's body, the red berries amongst the leaves and red lips of *Rutu*, the goddesses are alone, self-sufficient. What is more, her interpretation of the goddesses as her children emphasises, through the portraits, reproduction as the work of a woman's (artist's) hands. Adams writes that Fuller considered the Madonna "a powerful symbol of the female artist, miraculously producing books, or 'virgin births,' with no man's aid." Like *A Goddess of Mercy*, in which the hills on each side of the goddess might form a woman's breasts, *Rutu* has sexual possibilities – the slow blush creeping

into the stem and petals of the waterlily, her accentuated figure, the red berries hidden amongst the leaves, and her red lips. Despite this, the goddesses are alone and self-sufficient. Considering the Culture of Love in nineteenth-century literature and art, Stephen Kern notes that because a woman's hand passes from father to husband, control over hands shows power, while open hands indicate helplessness. The hands of these twentieth-century goddesses are all occupied. The flowers that they hold are full and blooming.

Rita Angus. *A Goddess of Mercy* (1945-1947). Oil on canvas, 866 x 611. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū, purchased 1956, 69/75

While *Rutu* is still labelled as a self-portrait where it hangs in Te Papa in Wellington, Lloyd refutes this, and I agree that to view *Rutu* solely as a self-portrait would be limiting, particularly in regard to the narrative of the painting as child and herself as "mother" that Angus unfolds in her letters to Lilburn. However, Angus was known to play with her own image. A clear example is the watercolour sketch *Fair-haired woman with bird* (1951?). Angus literally inserts herself into the goddess's pose, half profile, her gaze turned slightly to the viewer's left. Her lilac eyes have an exotic, oriental tilt, echoing the soft tones of the sky, the bird sitting on her hand, and the pink cloth over her arm. What is more, she is half nude, her breasts exposed. Lloyd states that the work is likely the one that Angus was referring to when she wrote from

her parents' house where she was recovering from a breakdown in 1949: I've made a note of another 'Goddess.' It will be a while yet before I am ready to continue. She is classical. The setting is of the landscape around this district, (extending a few miles) hills and trees.
Angus often described herself as "classical". At this juncture, the goddess might be associated with a reassessment of self, with healing. In "Embryo" (1943), Angus states:

> I look toward the sun,
> And receive warmth and kindliness,
> Naked and unashamed.

The fair-haired woman is not simply an act of fantasy, but presents to the world the image that the artist herself sees, one that is beautiful, admirable, whose body is not a source of shame from an illegitimate pregnancy, but exaltation. In the same year as the poem, a sketch in a letter depicts another naked Angus with blonde hair, reaching out above her head for the sun.

Rita Angus. *Sun Goddess* (1946-1949). Watercolour, 532 x 420. Private Collection

Rita Angus. ***Fair-haired woman with bird***. Self-portrait (1951?). Watercolour on card, 150 x 112. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, E-439-f-010

Rita Angus. *Untitled*. Ink and watercolour sketch on lined paper, 260 x 150. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, A-354-024

The naked woman under the sun recalls a verse in Revelation, that "a woman clothed with the sun" will initiate the second coming (12:1-12:2). The woman of Revelation, pregnant and giving birth to a child can be interpreted as Mary, Mother of God, and fits with Angus's possession of her image as Madonna of a second coming of worldwide peace following the war. In the same letter as the sketch, Angus recounts a dream she had of Lilburn in which he kissed her, and which made her happy because it portended a peaceful relationship: "There was no desire in your action, you turned me round, kissed me, and said, 'You are a part of my life, and I am a part of yours,' I didn't work that day, but lay in the sun." In this letter Angus reiterated what would be a tenet of her mythology: "I know myself through a knowledge of my own body".

A later goddess image, *Figure at Sumner* (c. 1949), evokes Mary's image directly in showing a woman in a blue habit and veil standing on a beach. From 1943, Angus was living and working in a cottage at Clifton, up on the hilltop above Sumner Beach. While not labelled as a self-portrait, the woman has blonde hair like Angus, and

blue eyes show underneath her veil. Her halo, above the water, gives the impression of a rising sun, evoking Mary as *Stella Maris*, Our Lady, Star of the Sea. An oil portrait, *Young girl holding beads* (c. 1950), in which a girl holds a rosary before a landscape of trees makes further use of the Marian image. The girl is dressed in blue with a translucent dark veil over her brown hair, the clouds in the sky following the silhouette of her head. Like Angus's major goddesses, these two appear alone. While obviously feminine, and thus set apart from Angus's earlier *Self-Portrait* (1936-1937) in trench coat, something similar is played out. Angus sets a stage on which she is self-sufficient, as an artist, as a celibate New Madonna. According to Fuller, virginity "allows woman to be a powerful solitary figure who is 'betrothed to the Sun,' clothed with the sun, shining with divine glory." These two pictures exemplify a mix of Marian and New Madonna divinity.

Rita Angus. *Young girl holding beads* (c. 1950). Oil on canvas, 491 x 392. of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, TMP-001454, on loan from the Rita Angus Estate

Rita Angus. *Figure at Sumner* (c. 1949). Watercolour, 256 x 176 – irregular. Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, TMP-002786, on loan from the Rita Angus Estate

Rita Angus. *Self-portrait in Oriental costume* (c. 1946). Oil on canvas, 464 x 259 – irregular. Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, TMP-001419, on loan from the Rita Angus Estate

An unfinished portrait, *Self-portrait in Oriental dress* (c. 1946) extends the qualities of the Madonna to non-Christian imagery. This partially painted woman is dark skinned, wearing a green oriental robe with red trousers and green shoes. Her hands are held in front of her in a gesture that evokes Angus's *Rutu* and *A Goddess of Mercy,* and a bird rests on her upper hand. Trevelyan draws attention to an exhibition of Chinese art that toured New Zealand in 1937, curated by Captain George Humphreys-Davies for the National Art Gallery and Dominion Museum. The exhibition contained a bronze figure of the Buddhist goddess of mercy and compassion, Kuan Yin.

Trevelyan draws a comparison between Kuan Yin and Angus's *Goddess of Mercy*. She writes that:

> [u]sually depicted as a barefoot, gracious woman, her palm exposed in a gesture of benediction, and often associated with a willow branch, Kuan Yin is a virgin goddess who protects women, offers a religious life as an alternative to marriage, and grants children to those who desire them. She would have been an immensely attractive figure to Rita.

In Angus's self-portrait, this "gesture of benediction" can be seen, with the hand on the left lowered and the hand on the right drawn overtop, a reversal of but very similar to a eighteenth-century statue of Guanyin (an alternative spelling) held by the Auckland Museum. Combining virginity and motherhood, this oriental goddess would have appealed to Angus's ideals of world peace and inclusivity.

Porcelain statuette of Guanyin, 18th Century (with detail), Auckland War Memorial Museum Tāmaki Paenga Hira, CA335 © Auckland Museum CC BY

For Angus as artist, creation becomes an expressly female process. Her description of her painting uses the vocabulary of motherhood: "My major works are now in embryo" and "Last Friday evening I brought forth a portrait [...] I am spending my confinement quietly in the garden". In Luke 2:7, Mary "brought forth her firstborn son". "[B]rought forth" also describes the creation recorded in the Bible in Genesis, when "the earth brought forth grass" and "the waters brought forth" new creatures (1:12, 21). Further, in Leviticus 25:55 the Lord "brought forth" His chosen people from Egypt. All these actions represent new beginnings. Angus evokes Mary directly to describe the creative process:

> The joy of creative conception,
> I know not pain or sorrow,
> Within leaps, our child of beauty,
> Of charity, intelligence,
> The Holy Ghost fills within me,
> Gently soothes my mind and body.

The repositioning of the female divine within Angus's own body, both as Mary and in herself-portrait as goddess, is a statement of self-sufficiency.

Finally, *Figure with Rose: Mozart Quartet No. 21* (c. 1948-1951) provides further evidence of the importance of Angus's celibate self-image to her independence. The face of this naked goddess is not Angus's, yet the body bears similarities to her first standing nude: the crease of flesh on her inner left thigh, and her accentuated waist and full breasts, as if the nude woman is transformed into goddess. Rising behind her are feathery wings, with a moon or halo behind her head. The image is mainly blue, apart from the pink rose in the woman's hand which might be associated with new life. A yellowish sheen creeps up to her waist and covers her lower arms, falling like sunlight on her hair, parts of her face, and the roundest parts of her breasts. The woman is encased in the universe. The light could be the rising sun, while the pinpricks of white in the blue next to her body appear as stars. She is cosmic, creating a sacred universe – a cyclic wholeness. That the painting is named for a piece of music accords with the practice Angus describes of sketching to music, in turn associated with her connection to Lilburn. Trevelyan states: "Increasingly, [Angus] would come to see her and Lilburn's art as the testament to their relationship".

Representing the composer and the painter drawn together, the picture expresses their relationship in a symbolic rather than a physical sense: this angel/goddess is the product of both disciplines.

Rita Angus. *Figure with rose, Mozart Quartet no 21 in D Major (1948-1951)*. Watercolour, 270 x 184. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, E-426-f-016

Angus's art becomes a medium to validate who she is as a woman and an artist, exploring who she is as she transitions from the trench coat model towards a new model of female independence. In 1947, Angus tells Lilburn that the goddesses, these sacred divinities, "don't mind being illegitimate". The crafting of a "world of my own", she states, is a result of these "last five years of celibacy". Her renegotiation of the roles of a loving female, wife and mother, into an independent, powerful image, representing herself as New Madonna, high priestess, and goddess, offers an alternative to physical love – both in the context of a child and a partner.

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ENDNOTES

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Peter Peryer (1941–2018)

A profile commentary by Sian van Dyk

On his fridge, Peter Peryer kept a quote by Ansell Adams that read: “You don’t make a photograph just with a camera. You bring to the act of photography all the pictures you have seen, the books that you have read, the music you have heard, the people you have loved”. This photographic essay considers how Peryer’s personal experiences and passions became intertwined with his practice, and how his understanding of the photographic image saw him create enduring images that will continue to test our own observations of everyday life.

Erica – Winter (1979). Gelatin silver print. Courtesy of the Estate of Peter Peryer.

In the 1970s and early 80s, Peryer forged his reputation with emotionally charged self-portraits and equally dramatic photographs of women, most often his former wife, Erica. *Erica – Winter* (1979), shows the object of his affection glaring back at him with apparent contempt. Her gaze insinuates a fickle lovers' quarrel and stirs up a yearning for the renewed warmth of making up, raising as many questions about the recipient of that stare as the person who gives it. Writer Emily Perkins encapsulates just how evocative these portraits were for her teenage-self:

> "This was life outside the humdrum, images that proved what, at sixteen, I suspected and hoped—that there were other ways of being, in this country, than hale and athletic and sporting a grin. The pictures gave off an intense romance, a doomed cinematic aspect, an acceptance of complexity in love that I yearned to experience".[1]

There is a sense of relief in Perkin's heartfelt disclosure that speaks of the ability of Peryer's images to connect with people, and how his photographs provide alternative ways of seeing, just askew from the mainstream. In a later interview, Erica revealed that her expression in this portrait was because she was cold[2]. In constructing these images, Peryer was fastidious about how subjects were dressed and posed, facing them towards the sun or in other uncomfortable conditions to avoid the smile audiences have come to expect of a typical photographic portrait.

While he moved on from portraits fairly early in his career, *Erica-Winter* reveals a quintessential approach to image making that has remained with Peryer throughout his practice. Constructing and titling his images like clues in a mystery for us to solve, Peryer gives his audience scope to discover his subjects at their own pace, and see something of themselves reflected back at them.

Neenish Tarts, 1983. Gelatin silver print. Courtesy of the Estate of Peter Peryer.

My first Peryer experience was with *Neenish Tarts, Jam Rolls and Donuts* (1983) as an art student visiting The Dunedin Public Art Gallery. The unusual arrangement and grainy texture of these black and white photographs sent messages I did not expect of food photography. What was supposed to look sweet and delicious became a series of formal patterns from afar, but somewhat unsettling close up. These photographs transported me back to my high school job in a dubious café at the local suburban mall, where sub-standard cabinet food was a poor disguise for the last indoor smokers refuge. However, this kind of poetry of form in the mundanity of a food cabinet was the kind of aesthetic Peryer was chasing. The artist's cake images began when his eye was caught by some doughnuts in a bakery in Devonport and he promptly bought three dozen of to take home, arrange and photograph. They evoke the unremarkable eateries in city centres and regional towns across Aotearoa New Zealand— nowhere of particular importance— but somewhere we are all familiar with.

Slaughter, 1985. Gelatin silver print. Courtesy of the Estate of Peter Peryer.

Both *Erica-Winter*, and *Neenish Tarts* show how, early in his career, Peryer was developing a growing awareness of how to create images that sparked the imagination. The artist also had an understanding of the utilitarian aspects of his chosen art form, such as the role photography plays in advertising or tourism, where ideas about who we are and what we want are sold to us.

Slaughter (1985), a lesser known image, taps into notions of nationhood in an unexpected way. Recalling his early upbringing in rural Aotearoa New Zealand, Peryer wrote:

> "Our farm had a herd of about 60 cows, a typical size then... once I watched some being led one by one, wedged and tied tightly into a race while my father, using a handsaw, took their horns off. Immediately, the blood spurted and they were released, bellowing with pain, faces streaked with red. Even though my mother tried to keep me from witnessing such barbarianism she couldn't."[3]

While the meat industry is celebrated for forming the economic backbone of our country, Peryer shows us another reality, also seen in other images of animals including *Farm Study* (1986), *Dead Steer (Waikato)* (1987), *Deer* (1993), *Goat Head* (2008) and the repulsive, flesh coloured *Carcass* (2010), which was actually a fibreglass prop from a film set.

The Meccano Bus, 1994. Gelatin silver print. Courtesy of the Estate of Peter Peryer.

What is real and alive, and what appears to be so but is manufactured, was a constant theme in Peryer's work and reflected the artist's interest in the deceptive nature of his medium. This was an approach he often used in photographs of aeroplanes, trains and road vehicles. *The Meccano Bus* (1994) is one such example, which took around eighteen months to create. It involved Peryer sourcing a model from his childhood similar to the bus he travelled to school on convincing its collector to lend and assemble it for him, and then locating a decent allotment of clay to photograph the bus on.

Blood Lilies, 1981. Gelatin silver print. Courtesy of the Estate of Peter Peryer.

Calla Lilies, 2012. Digital print. Courtesy of the Estate of Peter Peryer.

How *Meccano Bus* was realised is told in the television documentary, Peter Peryer: Portrait of a photographer (1994), where the artist talked about his "families of photographs"[4], reflecting on a series of overlapping internal guides that had formed over his career. While such guides inevitably became intuitive, they were born out of Peryer's adoption of formal compositional techniques observed from the modernist photography of artists such as László Moholy-Nagy and Edward Weston. In this way, Peryer's 'families' reflect his play with organic forms, triangular compositions and closely cropped subjects.

Blood Lilies (1981) is another photograph that has had less attention in the artist's oeuvre, but one I've come to think of as a stepping stone between his moody photographs of the late 1970s, and what developed into a signature composition: that unmistakable triangle submerged in curves. Again, drawing on the New Zealand experience, this photograph conjures up the feeling of being lost in the bush; trampling through dense undergrowth without a path in the damp—knowing you're surrounded in utter beauty—but also, that you are at risk[5]. *Calla Lillies* (2012) was taken decades later, yet is composed in the same way. However, in the intervening thirty years between these two images a mellowing had occurred, signalled most clearly in *Calla Lilies* through the artist's use of vibrant colour, shot spontaneously on his iPhone. The documentary *Peter Peryer: Portrait of a photographer* also showed a transition in the artist—a softening of character and sense of humour that I had taken for granted as I got to know him in his later years. At one point in the film he mentions how stepping away from the dark, dramatic portraits and scenes that launched his career signalled a maturing in him from "a crucified Christ to a laughing Buddha" and that he had learnt it was in fact quite easy to take a depressing image. This led him on a path in search of visual harmony.

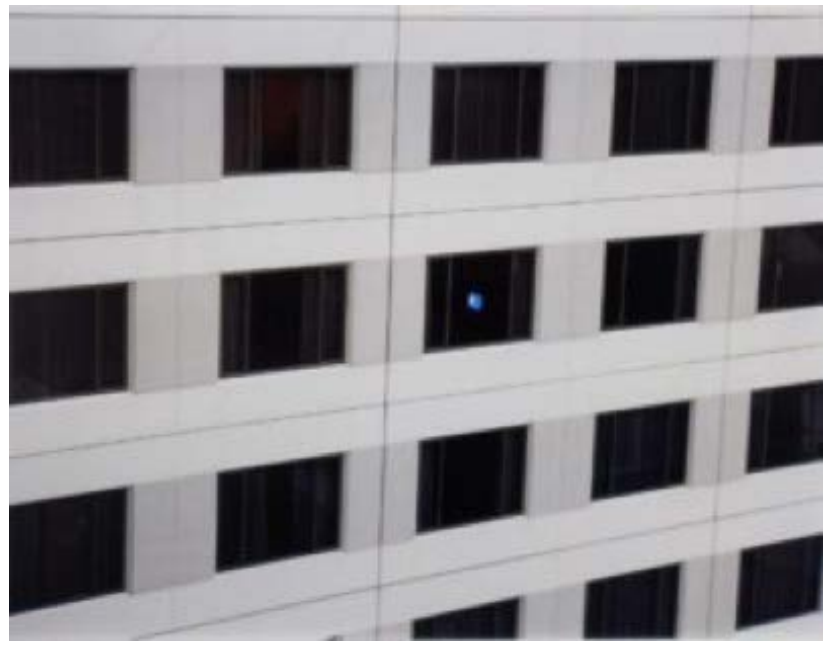
Kereru, 2006. Gelatin silver print. Courtesy of the Estate of Peter Peryer.

I often come back to the word "compose" as apt metaphor to visualise how Peryer saw the world. When he explained his work to someone, he would much rather compare it to the rhythm of music or the conjured moment of a poem than extrapolate on symbolism. *Kereru* (2006) is reminiscent of a much earlier work by the artist titled *Zoo Music* (1983) where birds on branches in a caged enclosure mimic a musical stave. A sparser image, *Kereru* is quiet and considered like the stanza of a poem. Peryer was a firm believer in the photographer's connection with the poet, for the ability of each to portray isolated moments through their own subjective lens. As New Zealand photographer Paul Thompson puts it, photography and poetry are:

> "...carefully selected and isolated distillations of reality through the filters of subjectivity, a sort of creative shorthand for the relationship between the individual and the world. Importantly both also leave plenty of space for the viewer/ reader to insert themselves in a dynamic and involving response."[6]

Fork and Spoon, 2003. Digital print. Courtesy of the Estate of Peter Peryer.

Nowhere was Peryer's subjectivity clearer than in his home. Over the eleven years I knew Peryer, I would visit him occasionally, participating in rituals like examining old contact prints, new potential 'keepers' and looking at plants and books. I was always intrigued by how his personality and the aesthetics of his photographs percolated across his home through his collection of trinkets, geological samples and ornaments, as seen in the photograph *Fork and Spoon* (2003). Formally, this work illustrates the artist's interest in taking photographs that highlight the visual balance of organic forms and geometric shapes. As with his portraits, these photographs of found objects are carefully staged and often disclose only portions of his subject, leaving the viewer to fill in the gaps and consider what these symbols mean to them. In his essay Mapping Peryerland, art writer and curator, Peter Simpson acknowledges the humour in *Fork and Spoon*, associating it with the iconic painting *American Gothic* (1930) by Grant Wood.[7] It also has an uncanny resemblance to an early image Peryer artist took called *My Parents* (1979) of two photographs on a dark mantlepiece, shadowed by a triangle.



Television, 2005. Digital print. Courtesy of the Estate of Peter Peryer.

The ripples in Peryer's image making mingle the uncanny and the beautiful to invoke our curiosity in objects and scenes we may otherwise pass by without a second glance. For instance, the abstracted, black and white halves of *Neenish Tarts* taken from a bakery in Devonport, are echoed thirty years later in the grid-like hotel windows of *Television* (2005), which was photographed by the artist while walking around Rotorua.

Contextualising Peryer's work, Athol McCredie, Curator of Photography at Te Papa, writes about photography that documents "the 'real world' in a manner that is entirely personal and idiosyncratic" and expresses "interior realities"[8]. With its single, flickering blue light, *Television* is a lonely image, that speaks to the isolation that contemporary technology has brought to the human race. Like Erica's gaze, it divulges something to us about the person behind the camera.

Whether portraits of Erica, scenes from Aotearoa New Zealand or items kept in the intimacy of his own home, Peryer's deep love of literature, the sciences and the mechanics of things enabled him to develop an intuitive understanding of photography. In doing so, the artist was able to tap into an underlying New Zealand psyche with elegance. In emphasising his unique personal viewpoint and providing snippets of a bigger picture, his images will go on in his absence by encouraging us to look beyond the surface of our own everyday experiences. This is what makes a Peryer photograph so convincing, and what will see him continue to capture our imaginations and influence generations of photographers to come.

ENDNOTES

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Russell Duncan: Re-tracing history

Emma Jameson

Keywords: #New Zealand #early European explorers #photographic albums #photographic practice #Captain Cook #photography and temporality

This article considers the construction and meaning of time in Russell Duncan's photographs. A hobbyist photographer and passionate historian, Duncan extensively photographed sites associated with early European explorers and colonial history in New Zealand, focussing primarily on those associated with Captain Cook. This article analyses, for the first time, Duncan's use of the sequential format of photographic albums to manipulate timelines in order to visually reconstruct historical narratives. By analysing Duncan's photographs of sites associated with Captain Cook in detail, this article investigates how Duncan's photographs, read both individually and in a sequence, fuse past and present in their re-tracing of history.

A co-founder of the merchant firm Ellison & Duncan Ltd in Port Ahuriri, Napier (established in 1885), Russell Duncan's photographic practice was first and foremost a hobby, a personal pastime intertwining his passion for history and travel and the documentation of these pursuits. His enthusiasm for taking photographs is evidenced by the sheer number of albums featuring photographs taken and compiled by himself that exist in public institutions around New Zealand: one album at the Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki; ten in the MTG Hawkes Bay Tai Ahuriri (Museum Theatre Gallery); three in the Auckland War Memorial Museum Tāmaki Paenga Hira; and seven in the Alexander Turnbull Library. Duncan also collected photographs taken by practitioners operating in New Zealand: one album in the MTG Hawkes Bay collection contains an assortment of photographic portraits taken by Samuel Carnell and other unnamed practitioners.[1] Duncan was motivated purely by personal interest and not by commercial intention: there are neither advertisements listing the sale of his photographs in newspapers nor adhesive labels or stamps present in the albums suggesting they were listed for sale through a vendor. Labels inside the albums indicate that he patronized Walter Suckling Limited, based in Auckland and Christchurch, to develop or print his photographs.

Group in the garden of William and Lydia Williams, Carlyle Street, Napier, circa 1890. Ref: 1/1-025684-G. Alexander Turnbull Library. The man with the camera is Russell Duncan.

Very little has been written about Duncan's photographic practice. Kynan Gentry briefly describes his photographs in her discussion of the increased colonial interest in Captain Cook at the turn of the twentieth century.[2] Photographer Mark Adams has briefly alluded to the influence of Duncan's photographs on his own practice.[3] No further descriptions of Duncan's photographs exist. This article is therefore the first thorough investigation of Duncan's photographic output.

A prolific, intrepid and eager traveller, Duncan primarily used photography to record the multiple excursions he undertook within and beyond New Zealand's shores: one album records the places he visited in Tonga from July to August 1899;[4] another documents a trip to Tahiti that same year; a third provides a general photographic overview of voyages made to Portsmouth, Iceland, and Wairoa.[5] In 1898 he ascended Mount Ruapehu equipped with "photographic apparatus" in order to "record[ing] anything noteworthy".[6] Photographs were reportedly taken at an altitude of 8,515 feet.[7]

Duncan's employment of photography to record expeditions was by no means unique or extraordinary. Rather, it was encompassed within a vogue for travel writing and photography that germinated and developed as part of a tourism boom in the New Zealand colony in the 1870s and 1880s.[8] Travel books and photographic albums enabled travellers to record their journeys and empowered 'armchair travellers' to vicariously experience 'the great unknown', generating a market for photographs of tourist sites in New Zealand.[9] Photographers like the Burton Brothers, George Valentine and Charles Spencer compiled their photographs of locales into distinct series that emphasised the processes of journeying, enabling viewers to visually traverse the depicted landscapes with each turn of the album page.[10]

What distinguishes Duncan's 'travel photography' from that of most of his contemporaries, however, is his way of calling attention to the temporal sequence of the journeying. Whereas photographers like the Burton Brothers and George Valentine typically inscribe their photographs simply with the name of the depicted locale or persons, Duncan accompanies most photographs with a stamp or inscription that states the date on which the image was captured. These inscriptions make apparent that Duncan's ordering of photographs varied according to the subject matter and function of the photographic albums. The date inscriptions accompanying his photographs of Tonga, for example, demonstrate that the album is arranged chronologically (i.e. the photographs are organized in the order in which they were taken) for the purposes of serving as a visual

travelogue documenting his travels.[11] Duncan modifies this structure slightly to significant effect in the 'Taupo Road' album, which contains photographs taken in September 1896, October 1914 and April 1915.[12] In this album, the date stamps clearly signal that the photographs are not organised in the order in which they were taken, but rather are arranged to convey the various locales sighted along the Napier-Taupo road, record Duncan's multiple journeys across the sites over a period of time, and demonstrate the changes that he observed in the landscape with each re-tracing. This construction of temporality is particularly notable in his photographs of Stony Creek: one, taken in September 1896 (Fig. 2), is directly opposite another view of the area taken on 10 October 1914 (Fig. 3). Duncan draws our attention to this shift in time by inscribing underneath the latter photograph, "View taken *18 years after* the one on the opposite page [own emphasis added]." In so doing, Duncan shifts his focus from narrating his journey to instead emphasise the effect of time on the depicted geography.

Figure 2. Russell Duncan, Napier-Taupo Road, Sept 1896, MTG Hawkes Bay, 1352, Album No 10, 73810.

Figure 3. Russell Duncan, Napier-Taupo Road, 10 Oct 1914, MTG Hawkes Bay, 1353, Album No 10, 73856.

Duncan's inscriptions overtly signal the significance of time in his organisation and in our reading of his photographic albums. The complex relationship between photography and temporality has been theorised extensively. For Walter Benjamin, "a touch of the finger... sufficed to fix an event for an unlimited period of time", condensing past and present and thus rendering the photograph and its depicted object immortal, transcendental and endless. Photography, Roland Barthes argues, occupies, "an illogical conjunction between the *here-now* and the *there-then*," a tension that results from a photograph simultaneously inferring that the depicted object remains "alive" in the present (i.e. by virtue of the fact that its simulacra still 'exists' in the photographic frame) but "by shifting this reality to the past ("this has been"), the photograph suggests that it is already dead".[13] Time is not continuous or linear but is rather spatial, figurative and amorphous.[14] This is more so the case when photographs are organized sequentially: the temporality of the single image is coalesced with that of others in the sequence, creating complex temporal interplays between the singular, the whole (i.e. the overall sequence), the intervals between the individual photographs and the viewing process of the beholder.[15]

The sequential nature of the photographic album format constitutes the crux of Duncan's photographic practice, both in its purpose and in its reception. It has already been demonstrated through the Taupo Road album that Duncan manipulated the sequence of photographs within albums to construct temporal narratives for different effect. It is in his albums focussing on the voyages of Captain Cook that Duncan's purposeful ordering of photographs to suggest alternative temporal narratives is most evident. With the upcoming 250th anniversary of Cook's landing at Tūranganui-a-Kiwa (Gisborne), it is pertinent to analyse how Duncan's photographs of Cook's sites germinated from his specific socio-historical context, how they in turn perpetuate certain perspectives from this context and how we, as viewers in the twenty-first century, can approach these photographs with this awareness.

Duncan was an eager and passionate historian with a particular interest in the voyages undertaken by early European travellers in New Zealand. Duncan's fascination impelled him to travel to Tolaga Bay (1901), Queen Charlotte Sound (1902), the Bay of Islands (1903 and 1914), and Dusky Sound (1900, 1907 and February 1910). In these excursions, he followed paths traversed by Captain Cook, Marc Joseph Marion Du Fresne, and George Vancouver, armed with historical accounts of the voyages written by George Forster, Sydney Parkinson, James Burney and J.S. Polack. Captain Cook's voyages around New Zealand

Russell Duncan, *Cascade Cove*, circa 1905-1910, photograph (albumen print), Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, purchased 1988. The photograph depicts either Mr Walter McCarthy, a geologist, or Mr F G Smith, a naturalist, both of whom accompanied Duncan on his trip to Dusky Sound.

were a particular passion for Duncan, constituting the focus of the bulk of his excursions, lectures, radio interviews, personal journals and photographs. Documented with extensive observational notes and photographs, Duncan's expeditions presented him, as the Otago Daily Times observed, with an opportunity to "indulge a fascinating hobby and make a collection of historical relics and information".[16] His diary of his 1910 trip to the Dusky Sound describes his excitement at recovering relics from the Endeavour, both from the wreck itself and from the nearby Murray River, stating that he and his team had, "found a piece of lead about 4 x 4 as good as the day it was left there."[17] On several occasions Duncan's excursions did indeed generate historical findings: of particular note is his verification of the location of Grass Cove in Queen Charlotte Sound, where several crew members from the "Adventure" were killed on 17th December 1773.[18] This historical research was subsequently reported in public lectures delivered at the Hawke's Bay Philosophical Institute and in at least two radio interviews conducted in 1935.[19]

Duncan's evident zeal at traversing historical locations was motivated by more than a desire to cross-reference, observe and gather facts; rather, the blurring of past and present through re-tracing historical footsteps seems to have been a primary motivation. Duncan describes his thrill at discovering his proximity to the exact spot of the Grass Cove massacre, stating "the feeling was rather awesome, notwithstanding [sic] the 128 years that had elapsed, the occurrence and details being vividly before our minds".[20] Determined to ensure his expeditions were faithful 're-enactments' and as experientially proximate as possible, Duncan often timed his visits to coincide with the same month of the year as his historical predecessors, and proudly reported on one occasion that he had planned his attire so that he "was able to see the place much in the same garb as he [Cook] did".[21] Duncan revelled in observing and postulating how the passage of time might have altered the landscape. In describing his motivations for his trip to the Queen Charlotte Sound he stated that "my object in so doing was to see for myself how these scenes compare now with the descriptions given of them by Cook and his scientific companions."[22] His self-published book *Early Walks in New Zealand* (Whitcombe and Tombs, 1918), aimed to demonstrate the difference between "travel today and those early periods" through the "novel idea of following the footsteps of some of the early travellers".[23]

Duncan's interest in sites relating to colonial history was not atypical for Pākehā of his time. Such interest arose within the wider colonial context of the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, which harnessed stories about Captain Cook and European explorers and settlers to construct a distinctly British nationalised identity in order to 'anchor' the burgeoning New Zealand colony in a continuing historical lineage.[24] Duncan's interest in colonial history and his photographic practice is encompassed within national campaigns dedicated to memorialise key figures in colonial history, as part of which Captain Cook was of key focus and attention.[25] In 1864 the Marlborough provincial government had set aside part of Ship Cove as a scenic reserve; by 1896 the area was landmarked as a permanent historic reserve.[26]

Duncan was one of several eager historians who travelled to Captain Cook's landing sites to chart his movements across the landscape. Alexander Turnbull, Robert McNab, Dr T M Hocken and H.D.M. Haszard retraced Cook's routes on land and water in order to forge an experiential nexus that could bring new understandings beyond those gleaned from journals and documents. McNab and Duncan were both advocates for the Captain Cook Memorial Committee which, from its establishment in 1902, sought to preserve Cook's memory through the erection of monuments at sites where he landed.[27]

Like his contemporaries, Duncan's interest in Cook was governed by a desire to faithfully retrace the explorer's steps for both historical observation and an experiential delight in blurring past and present. His photographs of Cook's sites not only visually manifest these aims but also progress them in their conscious construction of narrative. Although he was not the first avid historian to photograph Cook's sites, he is certainly the first to have done so with such persistence and in as much detail. Intended to simultaneously document the geo-historical significance of various locales; the narratives of historical voyages; the appearance of the sites; and Duncan's own expeditions, the photographs convey and embody multifarious narratives and timelines. This creates slippages between a specific history and Duncan's present, complicating the *here-now* and the *there-then* to reinforce and perpetuate colonial perspectives of the landscape.

The historical memory of Cook, as interpreted and selected by Duncan, is perpetuated and embedded onto the landscape through the photographs' descriptive and date inscriptions. The written inscriptions accompanying the photographs clearly mark the historical traces

of Captain Cook that Duncan saw and sought in the landscapes he visited and depicted. In *Luncheon Cove, ground level* (Fig. 5), we see the site where "Capt Cook and his boats [sic] crew had their lunch by this stream on the occasion of their discovery of the cove. 13 April 1773". *A view on Motuara Island* is where "Capt Furneaux in April 1773 made a garden on this island and also put up tents and landed men sick with scurvy". Duncan comments on the accuracy of historic descriptions of the landscape, thereby adding to the historical record. Alongside a photograph of *The Hole in the Wall* on the Eastern Cape, for example, he states that he "measured the arch roughly, and found that the length and breadth as given on p. 192 of Banks' journal are practically correct. I could not measure the height, but I think that Banks' estimate is too high". He relishes too in noticing how the ghostly remnants of Captain Cook's presence are still imprinted in the landscape, thereby blurring past and present. He points out that the tree stumps seen at Observation Point are the result of "a good sized clearing... made for astronomical work. Small shrub has now grown but some stump of trees that were cut down remain" as well as excitedly noting "a place... where all large stones had been moved to make a clear room for launching a boat" that, combined with the finding of "a long platform of punga trees.... piles of lead and bits of charcoal" most likely indicated "the place where the long-boat of the 'Endeavour' was... made ready for sea in 1795" (Figs. 6 and 7).

Figure 5. Russell Duncan, *Luncheon Cove*, circa 1905-1910, photograph (albumen print), Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, purchased 1988.

Figure 6. Russell Duncan, *Tree stumps, Observation Point, Pickersgill Harbour*, circa 1905-1910, photograph (albumen print), Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, purchased 1988

Figure 7. Russell Duncan, *Facile Harbour*, circa 1905-1910, photograph (albumen print), Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, purchased 1988.

It is clear from these inscriptions that Duncan's view of the depicted landscape is shaped by a specifically colonial historic viewpoint that is centred on Captain Cook; all else is auxiliary detail. This in turn directs the viewer's reading of the photographed geography: we read and understand the photographs through the information provided in the inscriptions, which narrate a selected history. Yet as noted, the inscriptions do not simply describe Captain Cook's voyages but also Duncan's process of re-tracing. The inscriptions thus create and suggest multiple layers of time – Captain Cook's voyages, Duncan's excursions, the time between those journeys and our reading– further complicating the *here-now* and the *there-then* suggested by the photographs.

Duncan's date inscriptions explicitly create, harness, and call attention to this temporal tension. They make evident that Duncan has arranged his photographs of the sites by the order in which Captain Cook visited them, and not in the order in which he took the photographs at the specific locations. *View towards water at Anchor Point*, taken 16th January 1910, documents the first anchorage of the Resolution on 26th March 1773 (Fig.8). Next to this photograph, is *View of Pickersgill Harbour* (Fig. 9) taken three days prior on 13th January

1910, where "Captain Cook brought Resolution through the passage in centre of view 27 March 1773". Following this is *Pickersgill Harbour* (Fig. 10), also taken 13 January 1910, which depicts where "Resolution moved where the two boats are 'so near to the shore as to reach in with a Brow or stage.'" The sequential order of the photographs first and foremost charts Captain Cook's movements through the landscape, enabling the viewer to retrace his historic footsteps.

Figure 8. Russell Duncan, [View towards water at Anchor Point], Russell Duncan Collection, Alexander Turnbull Library, PA1-o-137-21.

Figure 9. Russell Duncan, [View of Pickersgill Habour, water, man], Russell Duncan Collection, Alexander Turnbull Library, PA1-o-137-22

Figure 10. Russell Duncan, [View from wooded cove in Pickersgill], Russell Duncan Collection, Alexander Turnbull Library, PA1-o-137-23.

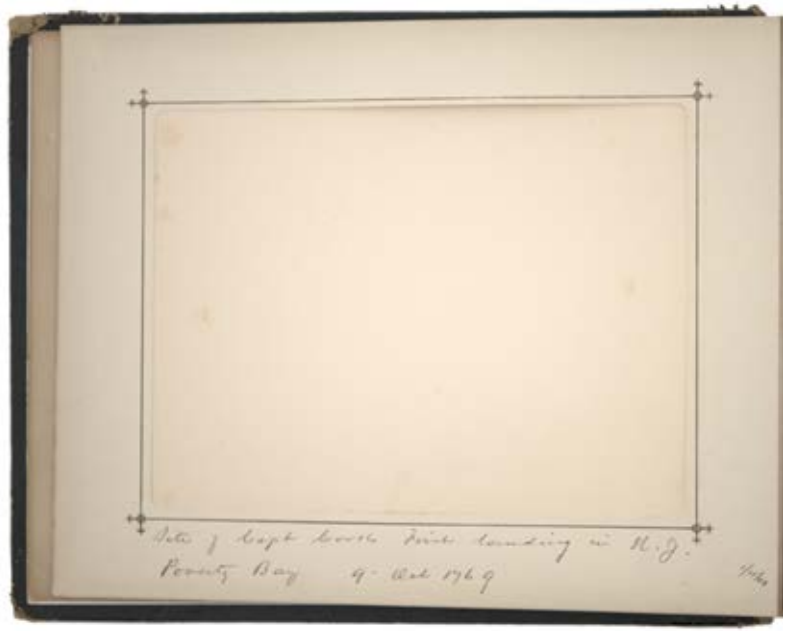

Figure 11. Photograph Album, Russell Duncan (b.1855, d.1946), Jan 1899-Dec 1900, gifted by Jasper Herrick, Collection of Hawke's Bay Museums Trust, Ruawharo Tā-ū-rangi, 68208.

Duncan's ordering of the albums was considered, laboured and varied. While there are some overarching alignments in the photographic sequences of the voyages across the public institutions, there are also instances of additions, subtractions, and re-shufflings. In several of his albums it is clear that he re-ordered individual photographs across and within albums to alter pre-existing sequences: in Volume 2 in the Auckland War Memorial Museum Tāmaki Paenga Hira's collection, for example, there are two or more pencilled numbers written in Duncan's hand on the verso of the photographs that suggest that an alternative sequence had been considered. In several instances there are some photographs missing from the album sequences: their absence indicated by a blank inset; their intended presence indicated by detailed place and date inscriptions (Fig. 11). These inscriptions and these absences evocatively complicate Duncan's construction of time by simultaneously suggesting and evading an alternative reading and timeline that was intended but never eventuated. This in turn highlights the constructedness of the narrative we see in front of us: the positioning of the photographs was not by chance, but rather a deliberate exercise executed over a period of time.

The photographs' visual features are integral to the realization of the experiential journey Duncan envisaged and deliberately planned. Presented in a sequence, the photographs provide different viewpoints of the described sites, often fluctuating from a distanced, elevated perspective to a lower, closer viewpoint. In addition to creating a sense of movement through the landscape, these shifting perspectives also create complex positionings (both spatial and temporal) for how the viewer experiences this visual journey. In *View towards water at Anchor Point* (Fig.8) we view from a distance a boat located on the site of the anchorage of the Resolution, prompting us to imagine the ship's ghostly presence in front of us. In *View of Pickersgill Harbour* (Fig. 9) we shift to view the site as it would have been seen by Cook and his associates from *inside* the boat, looking out towards the passage through which they would later traverse. Then again we shift to the position of bystander in *Pickersgill Harbour* (Fig. 10); positioned on the shore, we are prompted to imagine ourselves reaching for the 'brow or stage' described by Cook. The inclusion of Duncan's travelling companions in these photographs further blurs the relationship between the past and present by creating echoes of encounter that are layered across the landscape.

Duncan seems to employ this technique to maximise narrative suspense in his organisation of the photographs of Grass Cove. In the first image of the sequence we see a man in a boat, accompanied by the inscription "When Burney was searching for the lost boat + crew belonging to the 'Adventure' it was here that he found a canoe" [which contained some of the crew's possessions] (Fig. 12). The next photograph provides a more elevated, lateral view of the cove, "west from" the previous image (Fig. 13). Then, we are placed on the cove itself, the "scene of massacre of Mr. Rowe, Mr Woodhouse and 8 members of the crew of Adventure – 17th Dec 1773" (Fig. 14). Duncan builds a sense of anticipation, re-creating Burney's growing sense of dread as to what he would find at the cove.

Duncan's photographs were, on at least two occasions, incorporated within other historians' chronicles, adding further layers to the meanings and temporal significances embedded in the photographs. In both occasions, the photographs were intended to 'illustrate' historical events associated with specific sites. The writer Edith Howes (1872-1954) includes one of Duncan's photographs of Grass Cove in her travel guide Marlborough Sounds: The Waters of Restfulness (1918) to illustrate her description of the site's historic significance – i.e. the murder of Cook's crew in 1773.

Figure 12. Russell Duncan (b.1855, d.1946), *Wharehunga Bay, Queen Charlotte Sound*, 31 Mar 1902, gifted by Jasper Herrick, Collection of Hawke's Bay Museums Trust, Ruawharo Tā-ū-rangi, 15757.

Figure 13. Russell Duncan (b.1855, d.1946), *Wharehunga Bay, Queen Charlotte Sound*, 31 Mar 1902, gifted by Jasper Herrick, Collection of Hawke's Bay Museums Trust, Ruawharo Tā-ū-rangi, 15758.

Figure 14. Russell Duncan (b.1855, d.1946), *Wharehunga Bay, Queen Charlotte Sound*, 31 Mar 1902 gifted by Jasper Herrick, Collection of Hawke's Bay Museums Trust, Ruawharo Tā-ū-rangi, 15759.

Figure 15. Unknown. *Ship Cove*, from "Places visited by Captain Cook. 2,"Russell Duncan, 1902-1928, Auckland War Memorial Museum, PH-ALB-402-2.

An album compiled by the clerk and historian Johannes Carl Anderson (1873-1962) in the Auckland War Memorial Museum Tāmaki Paenga Hira's collection intersperses Russell Duncan's photographs with portraits of Captain Cook and Joseph Banks.[28] These are accompanied by images of Captain Cook monuments erected in Ship Cove (1918) (Fig. 15), a newspaper article about Russell Duncan's lecture in 1902, and an advert for a lecture delivered by Hon. R. McNab to fundraise for the Captain Cook Memorial Fund. In this environment, Duncan's photographs and Duncan himself become incorporated within an argument that harnesses and celebrates historicity to advocate for a certain cause: namely, the elevation of Cook as a national symbol for the burgeoning colony. These examples indicate that Duncan's photographs were viewed by his own peers as being first and foremost

illustrations of historical sites and events, rather than documentation of his own journeys. The photographs had, from the outset of their production and reception, assumed a complex temporal reading and significance that extended beyond the confines of the photographic image to suggest that which cannot be seen: history. Duncan's photographic responses to and interpretation of historical events had, within his own context, become entrenched as historical record itself. Duncan's construction of time in his photographic sequences of Cook's sites was a response to, and an extension of, the nationalising agenda of his colonial environment.[29] The date stamps, written inscriptions, and visual narratives serve to entrench Cook's presence in the landscape by fostering experiential re-tracings of the voyager's steps. In light of the upcoming anniversary, Tuia Encounters 250, it is pertinent to analyse how Duncan's photographic practice heroised Captain Cook, both in its production and in its subsequent reception, as well as considering the implications of this legacy. As part of the 'national commemoration' of Captain Cook's landing at Aotearoa New Zealand, a flotilla including a replica of the Endeavour will travel to four of the main Cook landing sites, an expedition not dissimilar from those undertaken by Duncan and his peers. Such plans demonstrate the enduring elevated status that Cook occupies as a symbol of national historical identity in contemporary Aotearoa New Zealand. This is not, of course, without its complications and tensions. Cook's landing precipitated a swathe of violations inflicted against Māori, both as part of his voyages and later as part of the British colonisation project. These violations, both in their substance and in the historical trauma they inflicted, continue to reverberate today.[30] Cook, for many, is a symbol of oppression, injustice, and pain.

What can we then, as a viewer in twenty-first century Aotearoa New Zealand, bring to the reading of Duncan's photographs of Cook's sites? With each sighting of Duncan's photographs the 'pasts' of the historic voyages and Duncan's expeditions are constantly re-iterated, re-layered and re-enacted, repopulating the depicted landscapes with a selected Euro-centric narrative. The here-now (Duncan's gaze) and the there-then (Cook's journey) continuously blend and fissure, creating ambiguous timelines that the viewer, experiencing it all simultaneously in the 'present', further complicates. What, then, can we carry with us on this conceptual journey? How can we traverse Duncan's here-now and there-then meaningfully? Certainly we need to be armed with the awareness that Duncan's photographs arose out of a specific socio-historical context in which the historical memory of Cook was harnessed in the formation of a colonial identity that ultimately prioritised Pākeha relationships to land. Indeed, Duncan makes very little mention of Māori in his inscriptions; when he does, they feature as characters in Cook's narrative rather than occupying an autonomous existence. We must therefore approach Duncan's photographs empowered with the awareness that they do not simply record but rather select and construct a narrative with a specific agenda. We need to proactively work with the layers of time constructed in his photographs to meaningfully impart new readings and narrative into what Duncan's there-then constitutes for our here-now, with knowledge of the unseen people and absent events in Duncan's photographic vision of history.

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Two Rooms. "Views from Astronomer's Point" https://tworooms.co.nz/exhibition/views-astronomers-point/.

END NOTES

1 MTG Hawkes Bay M96/6/1, 1, 68209.
2 See *Kynan Gentry, History, heritage and colonialism: Historical consciousness, Britishness, and cultural identity in New Zealand, 1870-1940* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015), p. 141.
3 See website description for Adams' exhibition "Views from Astronomer's Point" at Two Rooms, Auckland (2 June – 8 July 2017): https://tworooms.co.nz/exhibition/views-astronomers-point/. Adams states: "in the late nineteenth century Russell Duncan, a photographer and Robert McNab, historian and parliamentarian, visited the Dusky Sound sites associated with the 1773 voyage of James Cook. When I was twelve I was given a children's book about Cook's voyages to the Pacific, illustrated by Duncan's photographs. My photographs are 'after' the paintings and photographs of Cook's artist William Hodges and Duncan. Their origin is a childhood dream prompted by the misrecognition of a Duncan photograph of blurry forms shrouding Totara stumps and Kidney Ferns that grew into monsters. I knew I had to go there." It should be noted here that I have found no reference or record of the book that Adams describes.
4 MTG Hawkes Bay M96/6-3 [20114].
5 MTG Hawkes Bay M96/6-9[20110].
6 New Zealand Herald, "Ascent of Tongariro and Ngaurohoe," 15 Jan 1898: 5.
7 Auckland Star, "Ascent of Ruapehu," 25 Jan 1898: 5.
8 Lydia Wevers, *Country of Writing: Travel Writing and New Zealand 1809-1900* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2002) p. 184.
9 Christine Mary Whybrew, "The Burton Brothers Studio: Commerce in Photography and the Marketing of New Zealand, 1866-1898" (PhD diss., University of Otago, 2010) p. 104.
10 Ibid., p. 110.
11 MTG Hawkes Bay M96/6-3 [20114].
12 MTG Hawkes Bay, Album No 10
13 Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 1981), p. 79.
14 See N. R. Conceição, "Sparks of reality: on the temporalities of the photographic image," Aisthesis 11, no. 2 (2018): 186.
15 Ibid.
16 Otago Daily Times, "Dusky Sound Exploration," 7 Feb 1910.
17 See diary entries for Wednesday 26 January 1910 and Saturday 29 January 1910 written in Russell Duncan, "Journal on Dusky Sound," 1910, MTG Hawkes Bay, 091 Dun, no: 1867.
18 Russell Duncan, "Following the Tracks of Captain Cook," Art. IV, read before the Hawke's Bay Philosophical Institute, 1st December 1902, p. 44. The site was initially re-discovered by A. H Turnbull in 1901, however was not plotted nor documented other than by a personal photograph. Turnbull's photograph of the location assisted Duncan's confirmation of the location.
19 See Duncan, "Following the Tracks of Captain Cook"; the transcripts for the radio interviews, entitled "Some Early History" can be accessed in the MTG Hawkes Bay collection.
20 Duncan, "Following the Tracks of Captain Cook," p. 44.
21 Ibid., p.35.
22 Ibid., p. 32.
23 Otago Daily Times, "New Zealand Literature," 24 May 1930.
24 For a more detailed discussion, see Gentry, *History, heritage and colonialism: Historical consciousness, Britishness, and cultural identity in New Zealand, 1870-1940* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015).
25 Ibid., p. 141.
26 Ibid., p. 142.
27 Ibid., p. 142. McNab and Duncan's shared interest in Cook resulted in a competitive relationship. The two were embroiled in a public argument in which McNab's claims of being the first to identify the site of the massacre at Grass Cove were strongly disputed by Duncan. See Wanganui Chronicle, "Rival Discoveries," 28 Jul 1910, p. 5.
28 Auckland War Memorial Museum Tāmaki Paenga Hira, [PH-ALB-402-1].
29 Although it is out of the scope of this article to analyse in much detail, it is important to note that this agenda is also evident in Duncan's photographic albums focusing on sites associated with the New Zealand Land Wars. The albums generally focus on the various locales' significance for Pākehā history and neglect the atrocities suffered by Māori.
30 "Movement to boycott this year's 250th anniversary of Captain James Cook's landing gains strength," https://www.tvnz.co.nz/one-news/new-zealand/movement-boycott-years-250th-anniversary-captain-james-cooks-landing-gains-strength

Worshipping Beauty in the South Seas

Laura Campbell

Keywords: #Avant-garde #Art Magazine #Goldie #Artist Studio #Bohemian #Old World #Auckland #Curios

This article analyses the wave of *avant garde* art movements that arrived on our shores in the late nineteenth century and its impact on applied art and the general lifestyles of artists and patrons in New Zealand. With particular reference to Kennett Watkins' speech given at a meeting of the New Zealand Art Students' Association' in 1883, this account looks at the display of Māori objects in both public settings and in the privacy of the artist's studio. It also acknowledges the role of illustrated magazines in promoting the public profile of professional artists working in Auckland at the turn of the twentieth century. Many patrons in the elite social circles of Auckland admired artists such as Charles F. Goldie for being arbiters of taste and his beautifully decorated studio both linked him to the ways European academic artists presented themselves, while using local artifacts to connect his practice to New Zealand. The dispersal of illustrated art magazines in New Zealand became a marketing tool for artists to promote their art practice but, most of all, elevate their status as members of the social elite in urban centres.

> ... we hope to ... observe and record what yet remains of their ancient manners and customs, and if there be any trait, whether of the poetical, of the pathetic, or of the emotional, in their lines (which are not without sentiment), herein lies our duty and the true direction for our study ... We have made a place at least for our flower, let exotics be ever so beautiful.[1]

In his inaugural speech as President of the New Zealand Art Students' Association (founded in December 1883), Kennett Watkins shared with his colleagues what he regarded to be 'the true direction for our study'. That direction involved the incorporation of aspects of New Zealand's indigenous art forms within the colonial artist's own work.

The relationships between Māori and Pākehā cultural traditions, and indeed the relationships between local and international art more generally, continue to be a pressing issue for artists working in New Zealand. With that issue in mind, this article will acknowledge the intersection of local and international impulses that manifested in New Zealand. Provincial histories are often complicated, as art movements invariably arrived in the provinces late and, in some cases, all in one moment. In reality here in New Zealand, the Academic, Aesthetic, Impressionist, Symbolist, Arts and Crafts, and Art Nouveau movements are all interconnected and enmeshed. This points to a complex integration of the establishment of *avant-garde* practices in the antipodes. The simultaneity of both local and international influences in our art acknowledges the achronological confluence of local and European art trends that is unique to provincial cultures such as New Zealand.

In the mid-to-late nineteenth century, there was a reconsideration of non-Western art traditions in Britain and the rest of Europe, which ultimately stemmed from mass colonisation in Africa, Asia and the Pacific. The desire to collect 'exotic' artefacts from remote parts of the world had an enormous impact on Western art movements in the latter part of the nineteenth century. In an age of consumer capitalism, advances in manufacturing and technology, and trade expansion into new territories such as Japan and the Pacific, meant that there was heightened interest among wealthy patrons and artists to obtain 'exotic' artefacts. At the turn of the century in New Zealand, there was a new-found desire to not only display art from the Far East but also integrate Māori and Pacific art into both public and private Aesthetic spaces. Māori taonga and Pacific objects were integrated into Aesthetic designs within the home. An extravagant example of this can be found in Alexander Horsburgh Turnbull's private residence, 'Elibank', in Wellington. Turnbull, photographed in the 1890s with his brother Robert and friend E. F. Hadfield, is seated in his living room surrounded by his collection of artefacts from ancient cultures. On the wall there are fine examples of medieval European, Chinese, Japanese, Middle Eastern, and Pacific forms of weaponry, set against a decorative wallpaper design. Turnbull's home is one of luxury in excess. Anna Petersen's research on the interiors of nineteenth-century New Zealand homes during this period confirms that Māori art featured in domestic spaces, but could also be found in public art galleries and artists' studios in New Zealand.[2] As early as the late 1880s, while Goldie exhibited his student works at the New Zealand Art Students' Association, Kennett Watkins decorated the gallery space with flags, nikau palms and Māori curios.[3]

WATKINS' NATIONAL ART SCHOOL

When analysing the patriotic fervour in Watkins's speech made in 1883, it is clear that this artist was seeking the formation of a national art school. At this time Watkins was tutor at the Campbell Free School of Art, which operated from 1878 to 1889 and was based in the Auckland Institute and Museum building (then located in Princes Street). His teaching and own practice was heavily influenced by his familiarity with the institution's extensive Māori collection. This collection comprised of artefacts collected by Gilbert Mair and the Governor of New Zealand, Sir George Grey. Grey's collection of Māori artefacts was once housed in his mansion on Kawau Island. According to Watkins, art in this country should reflect scenes and motifs specific to the region and thereby found 'nowhere else but here in New Zealand'. In his mind, elements necessary to New Zealand art were picturesque views of landscape, accurate figure drawings and the representation of indigenous Māori artefacts. Watkins suggested to his students that the depiction of historical scenes could be realised through the 'faithful portrayal of our scenery and incidents, by directing the attention of artists to the more careful and exact representation of New Zealand landscape and foliage, flowers, Maori carving.'[4] What is most ambitious about this speech is Watkins's call for the incorporation of indigenous designs into New Zealand's art. This idea is both nationalist and informed by wider global movements, where 'exotic' or 'indigenous' objects were seen to be

sources of beauty. Instead of looking elsewhere for objects that would instil this sense of beauty in art and life, Watkins admired the simplicity of line in ancient artefacts closer to home, specifically Māori art.

Watkins expressed concern about the relentless flow of indigenous Māori artefacts exiting New Zealand for the collections of European museums in London, Berlin, Vienna, and Paris. This was a significant observation for a Pākehā artist to be communicating in the early 1880s in New Zealand. In response to this flow, Watkins suggested that the 'true direction' of art studies in New Zealand could not lead to the 'resuscitation' of Māori carving, but would aim at least to document these objects as ancient 'relics' once belonging to this locality. Watkins went on to profess: 'We appeal to you, is not our own [Māori art] worthy of a place? Have we a nationality in an art sense, or have we none? As artists or as people of taste, as New Zealanders, have we ever felt for its beauty?'[5] By referring to the harmony of line in Māori objects, he effectively labels Māori carvings as 'art' and places their indigenous makers in the same league as artisans found elsewhere. Art historian Rebecca Rice refers to other reports made during this period suggesting it was common practice to "consider Māori products as 'art' as opposed to mere 'curiosities', conferring status upon the objects and suggesting they are a valid source for inspiration and appropriation by European artists and designers."[6]

As it happened, Watkins was not the only advocate for the establishment of a national art school and for appropriating Māori 'curios' into an artist's own work. Alfred Sharpe, a pre-eminent watercolourist and member of the Association, made a remarkable statement in response to negative criticisms of the placement of Māori carvings alongside fine art paintings at the New Zealand Art Students' Association exhibition of 1885. Writing in the *New Zealand Herald*, Sharpe argued as follows:

> You remark that the exhibition has to lower itself into a sort of Maori curiosity shop and botanical garden. I would ask what decorations could be more appropriate to take off the bareness of a building never designed for an art gallery than our beautiful palms and ferns. And with regard to the Maori curios; we call them Maori works of art; and they are so in every sense of the word, and as worthy of exhibition as our own, if not more so.[7]

Obviously, both Sharpe and Watkins supported the appropriation of Māori 'art' and believed it should feature prominently in exhibition displays and in the artist's studio. Their propositions represent a confluence of European and provincial ideas, creating a quite particular context for the progress of New Zealand art at this time. Watkins, in pressing for a national art, claims that we have to call on our distinctive indigenous heritage.

Watkins art classes were conducted in amongst the collections of Māori taonga housed at Auckland Museum. Artefacts from those collections appear in historical scenes of his students, such as Samuel Stuart's *The Interior of a Maori Pa in the Olden Time*, 1885 (Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki).[8] His influence is also prevalent in watercolour studies by his contemporary Charles Frederick Goldie. As a young fifteen-year-old art student at the time, Goldie created a series of watercolour studies incorporating Māori artefacts, one of which is *Still Life with Maori Artefacts and Dead Tui*, 1886 (private collection) [Figure 1]. These watercolours reveal early signs of promise from this young Auckland art student and Goldie was awarded a Bronze medal for his efforts at the Art Students' 1886 exhibition. At this exhibition, held at the Milne and Choyce store on Queen Street, Goldie's watercolours featured alongside works by his teacher Kennett Watkins and also Alfred Sharpe.[9] Both Watkins and Sharpe entered history paintings that included Māori elements in their landscapes. Watkins continued to follow his own advice and produced many other history paintings incorporating Māori art. Three such examples, all of which are held in the collection of Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, are: *The Phantom Canoe: a legend of Tarawera* (1888), *Departure of the six canoes from Rarotonga for New Zealand* (1906), and *The Legend of the Voyage to New Zealand* (1912).

Figure 1: Charles Frederick Goldie, *Still Life with Maori Artefacts and Dead Tui*, 1886 (private collection, photo courtesy of International Art Centre, Auckland).

ÉMIGRÉ ARTISTS FINDING BEAUTY IN THE SOUTH SEAS

In the last quarter of the nineteenth century a wave of international artists such as Girolamo Pieri Nerli, James McLauchlan Nairn and Petrus van der Velden, all departed Europe for the South Pacific. These professional artists would play a significant role in the progress of Australian and New Zealand art.[10] In particular, a Melbourne newspaper reported its delight in discovering that two Florentine artists, Ugo Catani and Girolamo Nerli, had established a contemporary Italianate-styled studio environment at No. 5 Collins Street, Melbourne.[11] Setting sail from Marseilles, the two artists brought a vast collection of oil sketches by their Italianate artist-friends and continued to accumulate artefacts on their travels through Madagascar, Mauritius and the Bourbon (Réunion) Islands. The exotic artefacts collected by these artists are present within Nerli's *The Sitting*, 1889 (Brisbane: Queensland Art Gallery). The female subject is surrounded by 'decorative' objects specific to the Asia-Pacific region and Europe. A juxtaposition of paintings, wall hangings, a lion-skin rug, intricately patterned fabrics draped over the screen, and decorative fans from the Pacific Islands and Japan rest side-by-side on the walls of the studio. These objects, sourced from local and international cultures, are arranged in bric-à-brac fashion to create a 'harmonious' space of 'ordered disorder' that only an artist familiar with the latest Aesthetic fashions could envision. Nerli is by no means the only artist at this time interested in the islands of the South Pacific and collecting objects created by indigenous peoples that could be found there.

It is only a decade later that another émigré artist from Europe visited the South Pacific. French painter Paul Gauguin's arrival in Auckland was brief but nevertheless, much longer than he had anticipated. The artist was on his second voyage, and what was ultimately to be his final trip to Tahiti. When analysing his now controversial paintings of Polynesian life, it is clear that his depiction of an ideal 'primitive' beauty is very much influenced by his ten days spent in Auckland. Gauguin arrived onboard the *Tarawera* and was expecting to depart for his final destination on the *Richmond* only a few days later. This was not to be the case. Unfortunately his plans were delayed due to an engineering fault on the vessel's return journey from Tahiti to Auckland. Gauguin expressed his frustrations in a letter to his dear friends the Molards, in France.

> ... I embrace you all and am writing to you from here, that is to say Auckland, New Zealand, where I have already been for eight days and for eight days the steamer for Tahiti has been supposed to arrive but has not. And it is cold, and I am bored, and I am spending money stupidly, to no purpose.[12]

Apart from the 'cold' and miserable Auckland weather, these personal letters do not divulge any of his thoughts of what he had experienced in Auckland. However, it is known through a visitor register of Auckland Art Gallery and Free Public Library that 'Paul Gauguin, Paris' visited on 26 August 1895.[13] This encounter with Māori art would influence his paintings for many years to come. Gauguin's *Still Life* with *Sunflowers and Mangoes*, 1901 (private collection) is a subject commonly associated with one of his fellow French post-impressionist painters, Vincent van Gogh, who like Gauguin was inspired by the light and colours produced by the rural landscapes of Brittany in France. What is most striking about this painting is the so-called vase holding the sunflowers. It is in fact a Kumete[14], a round bowl with two supporting figures, which resided in the collections of Auckland Museum on the day of Gauguin's visit. He analysed Māori carvings and appropriated their designs in many other paintings depicting Tahitian life, such as The Great Buddha (*Le grand Bouddha*) c. 1899 (Pushkin Museum of Art, Moscow). The idol figure cradling the two young ones is reminiscent of *Pukaki*, *Kuwaha* (Auckland War Memorial Museum, Auckland), which Gauguin would have observed and sketched that same day in Auckland Museum.

These visits to the Auckland Art Gallery and Auckland Museum were not Gauguin's first encounter with Māori art. At the Universal Exposition, 1878 in Paris, Gauguin was entranced by a section on 'primitive art.' It consisted of a number of objects, including Pre-Colombian art as well as objects from the South Pacific. There were Tahitian tiki, clubs from the Cook Islands and a Māori waka that featured quite prominently in this international exhibition of world cultures. This ten-day stopover in Auckland is significant when looking at the work of Paul Gauguin but his appropriation of Māori art was by no means revolutionary. As discussed previously, in the 1880s Kennett Watkins had advised his students at the New Zealand Art Students' Association to carefully study the beautiful lines found in Māori art. A further irony is raised by Roger Blackley in several of his publications on Goldie—namely, that 'as Gauguin peered into museum display cases in search of an authentic tradition of Maori art, young Goldie was hard at work at the Académie Julian in Paris, preparing for his triumphant

career as New Zealand's premier painter of Māori subjects'.[15] After all, it is only a few years later that Goldie would return to Auckland, bringing with him a wealth of knowledge and treasures, and ultimately beginning his career as a painter of Māori.

THE 'MAORILAND PAINTER' AND HIS TREASURE HOUSE OF ART

At the turn of the twentieth century there were remarkable advancements made in the mass production of illustrated magazines. New techniques were devised enabling photographers to take never-before-seen images of people, places and objects and make them more accessible to a wider audience. According to Roger Blackley, in his 2018 publication *Galleries of Maoriland*,

> ... colour printing and photomechanical reproductive techniques transformed the nature of pictorial material in circulation. The reproducibility of photographs in the mass media undoubtedly heightened Māori concerns over images and their uses, while it brought Maoriland into national and international focus.[16]

Charles F. Goldie was well aware of this new technology surfacing in the 1890s. As a young bohemian art student in Paris he was familiar with the power of propaganda. His *pompier* masters William-Adolphe Bougereau and Jean-Léon Gérôme were often posing for promotional imagery in their beautifully decorated Parisian *ateliers*. These artists would publish their images in Paris and London illustrated magazines. Years before Goldie's return to Auckland in 1901 the young artist had already started to build his profile back home with the help of his father. During his time training in Paris, Goldie's father, David Goldie was Mayor of Auckland (1898-1901) and was a part of the elite social circles of Auckland. With his influential role in society, he helped his son's reputation and promoted Charles as a true academic painter. In fact, any letters sent from Paris to the Goldie family were subsequently published in the local press. One of these letters, sent from Paris to Auckland in December 1893, was published in the *New Zealand Herald*.

The young artist confessed his thoughts about his studies and settling into Parisian life.

> I like the school very much, also the students who represent almost every nationality. We have only about forty students in our section of the academy at present, viz., that under Professors Bouguereau and Ferrier, but I understand in winter there will be from 100 to 150. Before commencing work direct from the model, I thought it better to make one or two drawings from the antique first. The studies made were from the 'Venus of Milo' and 'The Slave', after Michael Angelo [sic], the originals of which are in the Louvre. The professor for this month (Ferrier) complimented me on both studies.

In 1901, after returning from his studies in Paris, he began to promote his artistic practice by posing for commissioned photographs in his Auckland studio. On 24 May 1902 the *New Zealand Graphic* published a photograph of Goldie sitting in his studio, looking every inch the successful antipodean painter [Figure 2].

Figure 2: Newspaper clipping of Goldie posing in his studio with *Sorrowful Moments* resting near the artist's feet in the *New Zealand Graphic*, 24 May 1902, 1018. Cited: Goldie's scrapbook, 11, 95 (Auckland War Memorial Museum Library: MS-438).

The photograph of Goldie's studio in *New Zealand Graphic* is centred on the page with four examples of his early portraits of Māori. His slicked back hair and semi-formal attire—a bow tie, white shirt and trousers—is hardly the most appropriate set of clothes for an artist to paint in. Goldie's urbane appearance, while posing with his palette and brush, echoed the 'celebrity' images commonly found in European art magazines. Goldie's abilities as a portrait painter were recognised by high-ranking public officials and he undertook commissions from local wealthy businessmen. Goldie also found time to paint members of his family, for example the large portrait of his mother Maria Goldie (née Partington) and also one of his brothers Frank Percy Goldie. Resting at his feet in the photograph is a portrait of the artist's sister, Violet Elsie Goldie (known as Elsie), entitled *Sorrowful Moments*, c. 1900 (private collection).

The Otago Witness replicated images of Goldie's studio used in *The Graphic* (London) and beautifully describes the significance of the artist's achievements in their full-page feature article published in December 1902:

> Mr C. F. Goldie in his Studio—Here we have the artist at home, surrounded by his Lares and Penates—the triumphs of his own pencil, and the free-will offerings of his friends. The artist seems to be sacrificing to the goddess Nicotine, even while he works or pretends to work, and from the glimpse thus afforded of his comfortable, even luxurious quarters, adorned with palms and ferns, and furnished with easy-chairs and rugs, we can well credit the statement which says that this is the most artistic studio south of the line.[18]

A series of carefully orchestrated scenes of Goldie's studio were published in periodicals. In November 1901, the *New Zealand Illustrated Magazine* published H. P. Sealy's article 'In the Studio' along with photographs of the artist sitting in profile amongst his treasures of art. One of these photographs was referred to as 'a cosy corner in the studio' [Figure 3]. Positioned at the top of the photograph, partly cropped in the upper centre, is Divan Japonais, a famous colour lithographic poster designed by Henri Toulouse-Lautrec [Figure 4]. During the 1890s, Lautrec was commissioned to portray café-concert scenes in Haussmann's urbanised Paris. He chose to base his designs on the simplicity of line and block colour found in Japanese ukiyo-e prints.

Figure 3: Unidentified photographer, *Charles F. Goldie in his Studio, Hobson's Buildings*, 1900 (courtesy Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, gift of the Goldie Family).

While studying at the Académie Julian, Goldie witnessed these kinds of café-concert scenes devised in Lautrec's Divan *Japonais* and participated in the fashionable activity of collecting the racy lithographic posters, especially those by Lautrec, as they were a new form of inexpensive art. Goldie's lithographic impression hung on the wall of his studio to remind him of the atmosphere or certain events experienced in Paris.

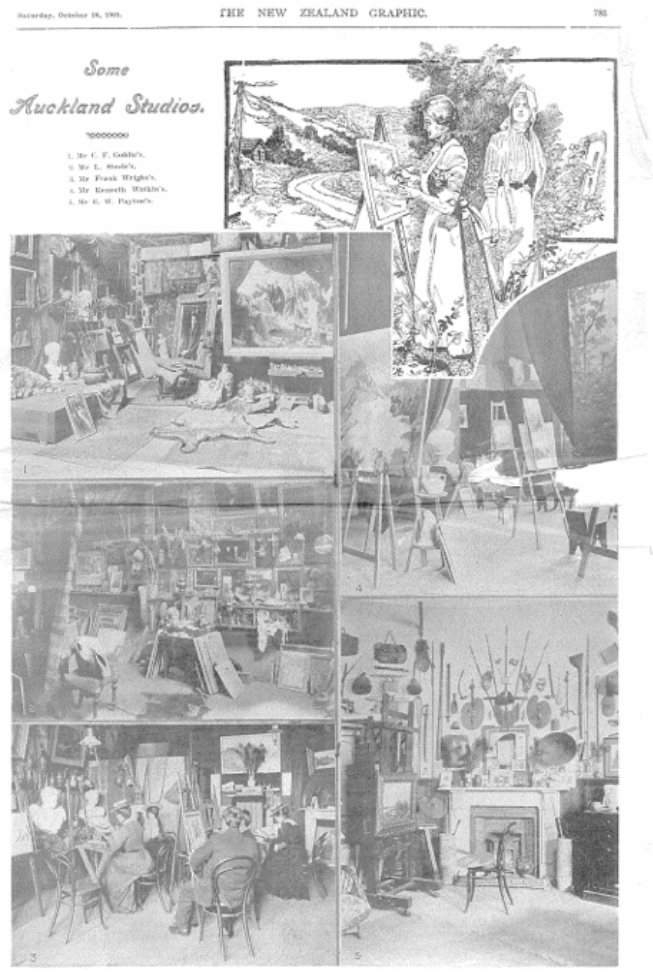
Figure 4: Henry Toulouse-Lautrec, *Divan Japonais*, 1892-93 (Brisbane: Queensland Art Gallery).

The decorative arrangement of an artist's studio was an extension of the individual and contributed to the public's perception of his moral, spiritual and creative worth. Goldie orchestrated the compositional layout of the photographs taken in his studio. It is noticeable that the artist has positioned himself in the centre with his brush and palette in front of his latest painting. His possessions include *esquisses* (sketches) on the wall (by himself and other artists of multiple nationalities), miscellaneous knick knacks, Māori curios, plaster casts, and an assortment of used and unused frames provided by local art dealer and framer, John Leech Ltd.[19] The artist's involvement in crafting his public image is noticeable when analysing a chronology of his photographs in New Zealand periodicals. His strategic placement of plaster casts, fabrics, curios, and paintings is obvious through his constant alterations to details in the studio. Goldie's marketing strategy was to declare himself a true bohemian painter living in the antipodes. In the nineteenth century, the term 'bohemian' conjured a specific look to an individual—the eccentric longhaired fashionable dandy. However, over time the characteristics associated with a bohemian artist were revised. Art magazines published photographs of the esteemed painters of Europe showing them to be well-dressed, sophisticated gentlemen posing in their luxurious studios [Figure 5]. Goldie's studio atmosphere was more attuned to those of his Parisian teachers, such as Bouguereau, but with the inclusion of Māori artefacts this artist, perhaps unknowingly at times, took ideas from artistic philosophies current in Paris and London and adapted it successfully to local conditions.

There was growing curiosity from the public about what objects could be found in the private studios of those painting in Auckland at the turn of the century. This fascination with 'Old World' artists and their bohemian lifestyle is confirmed in the October 1901 issue of the *New Zealand Graphic*, where a feature article entitled 'Some Auckland Studios' published images of artists' studios [Figure 6]. Each section has a view of an artist's studio: Charles F. Goldie, Louis J. Steele, Frank Wright, Kennett Watkins and Edward W. Payton. All of these artists were collectors of an array of artefacts from the Pacific, transforming their drab brick interiors into exotic treasure houses to be revered by visitors. In illustrated periodicals such as *The Graphic* and *New Zealand Illustrated Magazine*, images of opulent studios were circulated around the world, enticing the general public and aspiring young artists to decorate the interiors of their homes, public buildings and workrooms in an Aesthetic or Orientalist fashion.

Figure 5: 'Mr Goldie at Work on The Child Christ Before the Elders, c. 1901', *New Zealand Illustrated Magazine*, 1 November 1901, 148.

Figure 6: 'Some Auckland Studios', *New Zealand Graphic*, 26 October 1901, 785.



Although these locally produced magazines were not printed in large quantities, the presence of Goldie in his studio would have caught the attention of their loyal subscribers, many of whom were the social elite. These photographs published in illustrated magazines were also replicated and distributed in the local press. By using the media to promote their reputation, artists in Auckland and elsewhere in New Zealand (predominantly urban centres such as Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin) were demonstrating their knowledge of this international phenomenon and the need to replicate the fashions of Europe in the South Seas.

By filling their studios with items specific to this region, these artists were following Kennett Watkins's desire for individuals of this country to realise the beauty of Māori and Pacific objects. These and other objects cover the studio walls from floor to ceiling. They do not normally belong together but with the 'true artist's touch' a sense of harmony is created in these opulent interiors.[20] Art magazines gave artists, such as Goldie, the exposure he needed to sell artworks to wealthy patrons and elevate his status as a leading professional artist in this country. By promoting the 'wilful borrowings' of artistic traditions, such as the call to worship everything beautiful from our European counterparts and decorating their studios with items of indigenous peoples to the Pacific region, this ultimately translated into something original and specific to New Zealand.

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