

NATIONAL CONTEMPORARY ART AWARD

2023



Acknowledgements | Ngaa Mihi

Waikato Museum Te Whare Taonga o Waikato is grateful for the generosity of our principal sponsor, Tompkins Wake, one of New Zealand's leading law firms and supporter of the award since 2014. We also thank our other sponsors, the Hugo Charitable Trust, Random Art Group, Friends of Waikato Museum, and the family of Campbell Smith, for their continued support of this national award.

Congratulations to the winner and to all the finalists in this, our 23rd iteration of the National Contemporary Art Award. A special thanks to our judge for 2023, Melanie Oliver, for so wonderfully undertaking the unenviable task of picking the award-winning entry.

Sale of artworks

If you are interested in purchasing any of the works on display, please contact Waikato Museum during opening hours (10am-5pm daily).

07 838 6606

museum@hcc.govt.nz

Artwork images

All images of artwork are details for reference purposes only and may not accurately represent the full works.

Note

This exhibition contains content that some people may find offensive, such as strong language and nudity.

Opinions expressed in artists' statements belong solely to the artists.

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2023 NATIONAL
CONTEMPORARY
ART AWARD



A Word from Waikato Museum

Liz Cotton
Director Museum and Arts
Waikato Museum
Te Whare Taonga o Waikato

It brings me great pride to present the National Contemporary Art Award 2023 here at Waikato Museum Te Whare Taonga o Waikato.

This year, 41 artworks have been selected as finalists from more than 420 original entries from Aotearoa New Zealand artists based here and overseas, the largest number ever received. I am thrilled at the unprecedented number of people who shared their creativity by entering the National Contemporary Art Award. This reflects the vibrancy of New Zealand's art scene and the essential role art plays in our society, as well as the importance of our philanthropic partners who enable us to offer such generous prizes.

The judge for 2023 is highly respected arts curator and commentator Melanie Oliver, from Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū. It has been wonderful to work with Melanie through the selection and judging process and as always, I have learnt a great deal from such a respected member of our arts community. Ngaa mihi for your generosity in terms of both time and knowledge.

Deep gratitude to our principal sponsor, Tompkins Wake who have been supporters since 2014, and to our other sponsors – the Hugo Charitable Trust, Friends of Waikato Museum, and the Random Art Group. The Campbell Smith Memorial People's Choice Award winner will be decided by public votes during the exhibition season. Ngaa mihi nui, your support enables us to host this major national art award and provide access to the works of the artists here for our communities.

Last but not least, thank you to the entrants to the award, and sincere congratulations to the finalists. Without you we would not have the National Contemporary Art Award in our lives



From the Judge

Melanie Oliver
Curator, Christchurch Art Gallery
Te Puna o Waiwhetū

The range and ambition of the entries to the National Contemporary Art Award this year was extraordinary. It was exciting to see the breadth of contemporary practice from across Aotearoa, and a difficult task to select the finalists. I loved the use of diverse media, from mosaics to moving image, textiles, photography, painting and installation, and I was impressed with both the ideas that artists were bringing into their practice and how they were exploring these materially.

There was a strong thread of artists concerned with climate change, the most pressing issue of our time, and this can be seen in several works that ask us to consider our interrelationships with the natural world and impact on the environment. Some artists looked to urban, digital or domestic surroundings to contemplate culture and society today, while others reflected on particular histories or memories that resonant with our contemporary moment. A cluster of artists focused on portraiture, the body or identity, drawing on whakapapa and personal experiences to create powerful works that question and address representation.

As we collectively face the demands of our fast-changing world, the ongoing inequalities in society and escalating climate emergency, it is encouraging to see artists generating meaningful works that can challenge, nourish or inspire us. Congratulations to all those who submitted entries as well as those who are included in this exhibition – you've made some wonderful art for us to see.



From the Sponsors

Jon Calder
Chief Executive
Tompkins Wake

Tompkins Wake is proud to sponsor the National Contemporary Art Award, steadfast in our commitment to nurturing New Zealand's flourishing contemporary art scene.

As a leading New Zealand law firm, we continuously strive to deliver exceptional legal and strategic advice. In many ways, similar to contemporary artists, who challenge conventional norms and redefine the boundaries of artistic expression, Tompkins Wake embraces a forward-thinking mindset, where new ideas and innovative thinking shape our practice.

This year, we are immensely proud to mark our significant milestone of 10 years of sponsorship as the principal sponsor, supporting a talent that challenges artistic norms, just as we build upon our enduring foundation of knowledge and legal expertise.

2023 FINALISTS



01. Thomas Kendall's Affair

Brett a'Court

Oil on prepared woollen blanket on canvas support

\$1,481

Thomas Kendall was one of Aotearoa's first missionaries. He pioneered the transcription of the Māori language, and also attempted to describe Māori cosmological thought.

One of Kendall's understandings into the Māori way of life was through Tungaroa, the daughter of the tohunga of Rangihoua, with whom he had an affair.



02. Tuesday

Rachel Hope Allan

Photograph

\$2,222

At 6pm on a Tuesday, it is just us and the host until @__xxson and @spxllofmxsk rock up searching for the next hot backdrop. They ooze post pandemic Tokyo vibes wrapped in Koreatown maximalism. They don't order a drink but do make sure to tag me on Instagram.



03. A kiss

Colleen Altagracia

Electric cable, embroidery thread, magnet, crocodile clips, air

\$2,778

The work comes from practice-led studio research to poetically engage and think about air; including the action of breath and a kiss. Connections and associations with the action and meaning of *A kiss* can be implied with the material used to make the work.



04. Tehlor II

Naomi Azoulay

Oil on stretched canvas

\$1,850

This portrait challenges the traditional Eurocentric depiction of ethnic women as submissive and pleasing, instead portraying a powerful and independent woman who does not seek the viewer's approval. My aim is to spark a conversation about representation and empowerment and inspire viewers to embrace their strength and agency.



05. When I rub the rocks on my jeans they polish differently.

Debbie Barber

Clay, denim

\$722

Embedded in the discipline of domesticware, the clay's spoil creates a ceramic vocabulary founded in chance. Influenced by my mum's journey with dementia and grounded in a reflective practice considering time and memory, this assemblage explores connections between her philosophical writings and clay's materiality.



06. Adam (after Michelangelo)

Jordan Barnes

Graphite on paper

\$9,000

My work draws inspiration from the Renaissance and highlights the omnipotent role of technology in our lives. The contrast of light and dark and the implied presence of a computer, comment on the intricate connection between humans and technology, urging the viewer to contemplate its effects on our existence.



07. The Daily Cosmic Order

Tori Beeche

Oil on linen

\$1,850

Exploring notions of 'restorative' and 'reflective' nostalgia, my paintings seek to reference both personal and shared histories. Extracting poetic moments from historical archives that elicit Baudelaire's concept of recognition, capturing the permanent from the transient. It is through the process of recognition that we feel at home in the world.



08. The remains of the day.

Deborah Body

Acrylic and oil on unstretched canvas

\$3,472

Change is inevitable, all of the time, it's happening now as we go about our day, in every facet of life. The passage of time, its ramifications, and our perceptions of it, have prompted this work regarding the nature of transience, fragility and connectedness of existence.



09. Final Fantasy

Emily Brown

Toner print on silk

\$370

This work gently explores the notions of mutation, doom and connection through print. By transferring the imagery with solvent the imagery takes on an ambiguous quality, which is amplified by the transparency of the silk.



10. Recycle Day

D Milton Browne

Photograph (archival giclée inkjet print)

\$5,000

The mundane is regularly examined in art and the routine experienced by most going out to the shops, purchasing goods for consumption is commonplace. The hydrangea is said to symbolise heartfelt emotion, and most would think it's impossible the plant is aware of the presence of the upturned blue bin.



11. The gilded shift

Esther Bunning

Photograph

\$2,500

'I equally have holes and marks from my life and past adventures. I don't think I hide these.'

K.

We are all broken in some way or another, but we can still be beautiful and whole. Photograph of K. In her own space, early evening.



12. Liquid Gold

Cathy Carter

Fujiflex Crystal Archive C-type silver halide photographic print

\$6,602

Liquid Gold makes reference to water as the new gold. Water is essential to our survival, yet it is in a precarious condition. Condensation was photographed on recycled hydrophobic materials left outside, the droplets, a metaphor for the lack of unity needed to find solutions to environmental issues facing water.



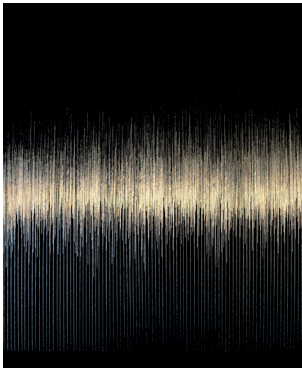
13. Plunge, Klein Blue

Cathy Carter

Giclée print on Hahnemühle Ultra Smooth paper

\$6,667

Plunge, Klein Blue is inspired by my desire to make intimate emotional connections between my own body and the ocean. The colour Klein Blue references Yves Klein's obsession with 'the void.' This work seeks to reflect on the vulnerability of our oceans and waterways at this time in history.



14. Tears of Gabrielle

Katherine Claypole

Hand stitched metallic thread on painted stretched canvas

\$2,852

Based on a series of sound wave recordings of rain taken during the time of Cyclone Gabrielle. Waiting to hear from family, not knowing their fate nor whereabouts, just hoping that the rain would stop.



15. C15.2023

Antony Densham

Acrylic on canvas

\$8,000

My painting practice employs marks that are independent gestures but also acknowledge the brain's tendency to search for representation. I am looking for this middle ground, to confound the space through the interchange of revealing and concealing.



16. The Wrack Line

Kim Fifield

Algae-based bioplastic, shell, macro-seaweed, barnacles, driftwood, plastic, leaves, feathers, sand, aluminium panel

\$3,704

This assemblage is inspired by the wrack line, an ecological link between land and sea where debris is deposited during high tide. Algae-based bioplastic forms that encase debris gathered, represent passers-by and inhabitants of the wrack line. These forms have hydrophilic properties, giving them the appearance of living organisms.



17. Heavy Industries

Alastair Floyd

Acrylic paint, pigment ink, acrylic ink on
Fabriano Artistico acid-free cotton rag
\$1,944

Employing a complex layering of analogue and digital techniques, I achieve paintings that present more than portraits at face value by inviting the viewer to look further into the psyche of the subject, and in doing so uncover these dualities in our collective nature and circumstance.



18. Stained Cheery Wine

Hannah Ireland

Watercolour, ink and acrylic on found
window
\$4,000

Clothed in a variation of marks that warp, map, and construct each figure: each mark seeks rest upon a surface resistant to forming a harmonic relationship. Painted directly onto a glass surface, the index of the painting is viewed in reverse when flipped, revealing the finished side.



19. Flipping skateboards (pale)

Bena Jackson

Mosaic (ceramic tiles, cement board, adhesive, grout, steel)

\$2,963

Flipping Skateboards (pale) prompts an earnest look at the ways public space is and could be used. It imagines what mosaics might look like if they were still a conventional feature of public spaces in an era marked by mass-production, increasing density and erosion of public spaces.



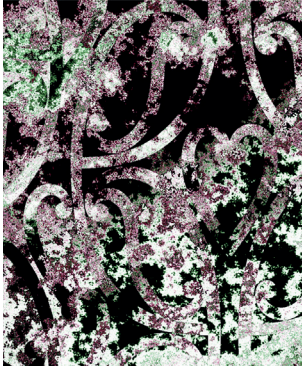
20. Se'i ou va'ai

Reece King

Oil and enamel on canvas

\$18,000

Like most, one is constantly scrolling; being bombarded with information, observing culture and society, researching heritage, history, sciences, and arts. Contemplating meaning. Seeing things. An unbound approach to painting allows the processing of this otherwise confused and anachronistic imagery through the means of a rolling, accented, and rhythmic organisational energy.



21. Manu Tioriori

Cecelia Kumeroa

Digital media

\$3,704

Through our work *Manu Tioriori*, we take audio data and transform it into a sensory experience, inviting the audience to visually engage with the 'mauri' of the forest.



22. Light of the Pacific

Theo Macdonald

Digitised 16mm film, 1 minute (looped)

\$2,222

Light of the Pacific responds to Aotearoa New Zealand's recently rekindled involvement in US military projects by entwining 16mm footage of a windmill on fire (referencing the 1931 film *Frankenstein*) with adapted lyrics from Herbs' 1982 anti-nuclear protest song *French Letter*.



23. 11

Leanne Morrison

Acrylic and enamel on canvas, stretcher,
wooden sticks

\$4,500

slow down

take a breath

see, don't look

be.



24. Tears of Ranginui (Dew on the
Emerald Dagger Moss)

Ella Grace Nicol

Glass beads, sterling silver, palladium,
pewter, nylon thread

\$1,667

Reflecting a reciprocal flourishing of networks,
symbiotic exchanges and living webs of alliance,
Tears of Ranginui explores the sublimation of
sorrow into a generative form of nourishment
and sustenance – metaphorically encapsulated
in Ranginui's tears that turn to dew which revivify
Papatūānuku's bed of Emerald Dagger Moss,
enlivening her essence.



25. Two Lovers in Fiordland

Shannon Novak

Digital print on paper

\$1,750

Two same-sex lovers kiss in the depths of Fiordland during the late 19th century. Recently discovered, this may be one of the earliest known photographs of queer intimacy in Aotearoa, or is it?

Co-developed with AI (artificial intelligence), this work considers the ethical implications of using AI to fabricate heritage.



26. Cheese and Onion

Mark O'Donnell &
Cameron Rey

Yellow plastic, black foam, clear adhesives,
pins, paint, varnish

\$263

I stare into my wallet. I stare hard. I could see a cheese and onion sandwich. I order in English. I think in Vietnamese I'll have to eat it on the sticky Otara footpath on the way to the factory.



27. Darling, Tēnei Au

Sara (Hera) Tautuku Orme

Photograph

\$11,111

I'm no longer the person I was a year ago. I know I'm going to overcome fucking cancer. I'm a stubborn bitch. Today, in my Wairere I felt a bit scared. A waiata just busted out of me. It's fitting. I didn't know it was coming.



28. Poems to Oceania: Vanuatu, April 2023

Maria O'Toole

Crayon on Fabriano paper

\$1,850

My concerns around the detrimental human impact on moana/ocean and awa/rivers led me to the development of embodied drawing processes.

These processes take place in a liminal space between human and non-human. They are sensory, imaginative and speculative.



29. BTM 조상 초상화 Ancestor Portrait

Sung Hwan Bobby Park

Digital photograph

\$5,000

BTM 방탄모 is a series that interrogates the South Korean military's homophobic policies and treatment of LGBTQ+ people. Korean military law Article 92-6 criminalises homosexuality. This Joseon dynasty-style portrait provides an opportunity to reimagine a world where there is no discrimination but rather a celebration of queer identities.



30. Lichen 2

Marilyn Rea-Menzies

Handwoven tapestry

\$36,111

We are nature and nature and is us! My work is an attempt to become more aware of our place in the world, and by focusing on the beauty and fragility of the small things that matter, we will come to understand that nature needs protecting to safeguard our future.



31. Scenes from a Victorian Restaurant

Tawhai Rickard

Reclaimed wood, enamel/acrylic paint

\$18,981

This work examines the cultural nuances of Aotearoa, New Zealand from a social and political perspective. It is a visual ode to the bicultural relationship between Māori and non-Māori.

The wall hangings feature scenes presented in an anti-chronological nature, promoting historical and contemporary characters and narratives.



32. Cold Comfort for the Contemporary Human

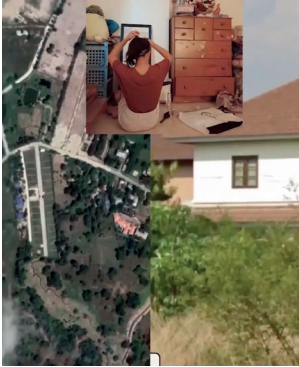
Naomi Roche

Textile

\$1,952

The conundrum of a throw blanket in a society running like a pressure cooker, on an earth overheating into armageddon... what solace is a 'security' blanket?

Couch cosy for contemporary life, we continue our extended nana nap from the world we have created.



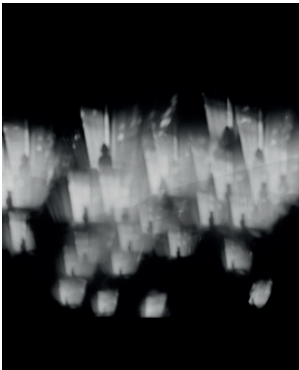
33. I think I'm homesick

Warisara Thomson

Single channel, moving image

\$2,778

I was raised in Ban Chang, Rayong, Thailand. I adored the small town. After moving to New Zealand alone, dealing with homesickness, I revisited my hometown; through the lens of Google Street View and Google Maps. I visited places that are of significance to me.



34. All my ghosts

Jenny Tomlin

Photograph

\$1,000

This pinhole image is from a camera with as many borer holes as pinholes. With no viewfinder there is an intuitive dialogue between the 'machine' and me, revealing all my ghosts. The multiple selves are ever present, informing my behaviour, what I hide or show to others. Decisions with many possibilities.



35. New Routine (If there's pleasure in action, there's peace in stillness)

Hannah Valentine

Cast bronze and cord

\$4,500

I'm interested in fundamentals of the hand, and how our relationship to physicality might be shifting. Here, moments of weight and pressure invoke a call to action, but it is one grounded in presence, in slowness. Function and interaction is up for question. Perhaps stillness is becoming ever more radical.



36. Granny's trippin'

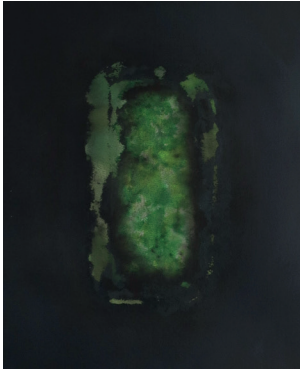
Anja Vallis

Wool and acrylic yarn mix, black calico

\$5,700

Granny's tripping - the crochet squares of the wall hanger disappear into the abyss. Nobody knows if this is due to a high fever, drug use, mental illness or something else.

Based on *Movement in Squares* by Bridget Riley, 1961.

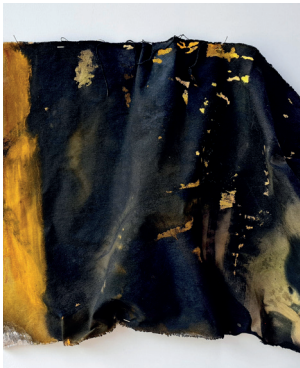


37. Moemoea

Rihari Warnock

Ink on Arches cold press, 600gsm paper
\$5,556

Lying on the floor of the ngahere and looking up, the light filtering through, giving off the flowing green of pounamu is a unique feeling. The light of the ngahere offers us calm and the green of the pounamu provides reassuring reminders of our whakapapa.



38. In the sun near the kohekohe

Amanda Watson

Ink, pigment, and glue size on canvas
\$2,500

This painting was made outside in tracts of native forest, and in the studio, using a method of wrapping surfaces of the land with canvas and then brushing, pouring, and erasing pigments across it's undulating surface, to reveal my encounters and exchanges with these places and materials.



39. Nanna's wairua

Siniva Williams

Digital photograph, digitally painted on
Hahnemühle German Etching 310gsm
Textured Matte paper

\$3,333

I created an artwork in memory of my late nanna Dorothy, who passed away in 2018. The piece incorporates elements that represent her life and wairua, including a set of rose cups, plates, ANZAC biscuits, and a photograph of a huia bird that symbolises her mana.



40. I look above to where my help comes from

Benjamin Work

Acrylic on canvas

\$15,500

During the pandemic, my sense of safety was shattered by a cyclone and the passing of my niece. As a painter, I turned to my work to process grief and find solace in nature's signs, such as the pair of Tavake birds circling above me after the cyclone.



41. Kai Paraoa

Cora-Allan

Whenua (Pukepoto and Karangahape Blush)
on Hiapo

\$11,111

My view of the Kiwaha: Kai Paraoa

We are strong, resilient and creative

We're going to rediscover with every generation
new ways of connecting with our ancestors

It's tough, but it's beautiful

With every new learned skill

The journey is sweeter

A piece of cake.

CAMPBELL SMITH MEMORIAL PEOPLE'S CHOICE AWARD 2023

Your turn to choose the winner

Each year a guest judge selects the finalists and prize winners of the National Contemporary Art Award via a blind judging process.

The Campbell Smith Memorial People's Choice Award is decided by votes from the public. This award, which includes a cash prize of \$250, is sponsored by the family of Campbell Smith (1925-2015), an artist, poet, playwright and former Waikato Museum Director.

Voting closes on Tuesday 24 October and the winner will be announced the following week.

Vote in person or online

Use the voting box in the gallery to cast your paper ballot. Or head online and have your say by viewing the album of finalists on Waikato Museum's Facebook page and liking your favourite artworks.

Scan the QR code or visit waikatomuseum.co.nz/NCAA

SCAN ME



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