

# AUCKLAND ART GALLERY TOI O TĀMAKI

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**Changing The Story: Auckland Art Gallery symposium to discuss what is contemporary indigenous art today**

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Image: Book cover for *Five Māori Painters*

Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki will host the symposium, *Changing The Story: How Do We Understand Contemporary Indigenous Art Today?* on Saturday 12 April. The symposium coincides with the launch of the companion publication to the current exhibition, *Five Māori Painters*.

Beginning with a keynote lecture by Auckland Art Gallery Indigenous Curator Māori Art, Ngahiraka Mason, the symposium includes a day of presentations and discussions. Contributors include artists Kura Te Waru Rewiri and Fiona Foley, 2013 Australia Council Visual Arts Award winner; as well as Massey University Professor of Māori Visual Arts, Robert Jahnke, and General Manager of arts organisation Toi Māori Aotearoa, Garry Nicholas. The symposium is free and open to all, however people are encouraged to register via [eventfinda](#).

The launch of the *Five Māori Painters* publication – a beautifully illustrated title offering insight to the practice of the five artists in the exhibition – will close the symposium. The publication connects contemporary practice with Māori painting from pre-European contact times and includes in-depth essays on artists Kura Te Waru Rewiri, Star Gossage, Saffronn Te Ratana, Emily Karaka and Robyn Kahukiwa, as well as two essays on paint materials and techniques.

Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki Director, Rhana Devenport, says the symposium is an integral part of a wider commitment by the Gallery to Indigenous art practice from New Zealand and the Pacific region.

‘Alongside exhibitions like *My Country: Contemporary Art from Black Australia*, *Five Māori Painters* and *Arnold Manaaki Wilson Pou Ihi | Pou Whenua | Pou Tangata*, we have recently installed the commission, *untitled (sum of the parts)*, by Indigenous Australian artist Jonathan Jones. These projects highlight our focus

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on indigenous art and are conceived to encourage increased understanding amongst different cultures through art practice.’

Auckland Art Gallery Indigenous Curator Māori Art, Ngahiraka Mason, says the symposium will offer attendees a deeper insight into contemporary Māori art practice, as well as a chance to reflect on how Māori art has been discussed in the past.

The symposium takes as a reference point the landmark contemporary Māori art event, *Toioho ko Apiti Māori Art Conference*, held at Massey University in 1996.

‘We have permission from Professor Hirini Moko Mead to share his keynote address from 1996, which set in motion discussions about contemporary Māori art practice at the time, and which still raises relevant points 18 years later.

‘Given that we have four contemporary projects featuring Indigenous artists, the time is right to investigate the wider body of contemporary Indigenous art, and celebrate the launch of the companion publication to our *Five Māori Painters* exhibition.’

People can register to attend the symposium via [www.eventfinda.co.nz](http://www.eventfinda.co.nz) – registration is free and recommended, as there is limited capacity at the venue.

The symposium and publication are supported by Te Waka Toi, the Māori Arts Board of Creative New Zealand and JBWere.

- ENDS –

About the *Five Māori Painters* publication:

***Five Māori Painters***

96 pages, Hardback

Published 2014 by Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki

Available from the Auckland Art Gallery Shop and by phone order

Please contact Jade Lucas if you are interested in a review copy, details are below.

**For more information please contact:**

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