

Press Release
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The remarkable and revealing exhibition *The Māori Portraits: Gottfried Lindauer's New Zealand* opens this weekend at Auckland Art Gallery

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Gottfried Lindauer, *Heeni Hirini and child*, 1878, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tamaki, gift of Mr H E Partridge, 1915

The Māori Portraits: Gottfried Lindauer's New Zealand opens this Saturday 22 October at Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki.

The free exhibition of more than 120 portraits by artist Gottfried Lindauer features prominent Aotearoa New Zealand historical figures and rangatira (chiefs) from the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

These include the second Māori King, Tawhiao, of Ngāti Mahuta; Tamati Waka Nene; James and Isabella Dilworth; Bishop Selwyn, and many more.

Auckland Art Gallery Director Rhana Devenport invites all New Zealanders and international visitors to *The Māori Portraits*.

'This exhibition offers a very rare opportunity to experience in one place so many original portraits by Lindauer of Māori and Pākehā ancestors from all over the country.'

'These unique paintings depict in vibrant – almost living – colour, a time in New Zealand's history that was otherwise only captured in early black and white photography,' she says.

Guest curator of the exhibition Ngahiraka Mason says Lindauer's Māori portraits reveal a long history of engagement with protagonists from New Zealand's past, when he started painting tipuna Māori (Māori ancestors) in 1875.

'These artworks, although impressive in their own right, are more than just portraits, they're living connections to the past,' she says.

Lindauer travelled extensively throughout New Zealand, painting Māori chiefs and leaders. Works in *The Māori Portraits* are arranged by iwi (tribes), from the top of the North Island to the bottom of the South.

Iwi are represented by region: Te Tai Tokerau; Waikato, Tainui; Hauraki, Marutūāhu; Mātaatua; Te Arawa; Te Tairāwhiti; Te Matau a Māui; Taranaki; Whanganui; Te Wai Pounamu and Ngāti Toa, Te Āti Awa.

Living descendants of many of those depicted in the portraits will travel to the Gallery from around the country and will contribute to a lively programme of talks and discussions throughout the course of the exhibition. They will share stories of their ancestors and, where known, explain their ancestor's relationship to Lindauer.

Lindauer's personal history, from his art education in Europe and his emigration to New Zealand, to his artistic developments upon arrival, are highlighted, bringing new insights to the relevancy of his life's work in the 21st century.

New ways of understanding how this period of historic change, colonisation and bicultural contact was visually recorded are investigated in the exhibition, as is the role of photography in the creation of Lindauer's portraits is explored.

Alongside the exhibition, the Gallery is running a small companion show, *Identifying Lindauer: His Materials and Techniques*. This examines Lindauer's artistic techniques and provides insights by comparing a number of his original works with a known forgery.

(ends)

Exhibition details:

The Māori Portraits: Gottfried Lindauer's New Zealand

When: Saturday 22 October 2016 to Sunday 19 February 2017
10am to 5pm daily except Christmas Day

Where: Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki
Corner Kitchener and Wellesley Streets
Auckland, New Zealand

Admission: Free

Image credits:

Gottfried Lindauer, *Heeni Hirini and Child*, 1878, oil on canvas, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tamaki, gift of Mr H E Partridge, 1915

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Notes to Editor:

Accompanying book: *Gottfried Lindauer's New Zealand: The Māori Portraits*

A 300-page book, *Gottfried Lindauer's New Zealand: The Māori Portraits*, is being co-published by Auckland University Press and Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki for the occasion of the exhibition. Edited by Ngahiraka Mason and Dr Zara Stanhope.

This definitive book presents 67 major portraits and eight genre paintings alongside detailed accounts of the people and their lives, with essays by leading scholars that take us inside the world of Lindauer: from his artistic training in Bohemia to his travels

around New Zealand as Māori and Pākehā commissioned him to paint portraits; his artistic techniques and deep relationship with photography; Henry Partridge's gallery on Auckland's Queen Street where Māori visited to see their ancestors; and the importance of the paintings in marae and memory.

RRP \$75.00

About Gottfried Lindauer

Gottfried Lindauer (1839–1926) was the most prolific and best-known painter of Māori subjects, in particular portraits, in the late 19th to early 20th centuries.

He was born in Pilsen, now Czech Republic.

Professionally trained at the Academy Fine Arts in Vienna, he migrated to New Zealand in 1874. Lindauer's first portraits of Māori were painted in Nelson. He worked in many parts of NZ before establishing a studio in Auckland in the late-1870s where he met businessman, Henry Partridge (1848–1931), who over the next 30-plus years commissioned from Lindauer numerous portraits of eminent Māori as well as large-scale depictions of traditional Māori life and customs. Partridge's commission project aimed to create a pictorial history of Māori at a time when society was rapidly changing.