

Whakaora: the medicine mandala

OPUS GALLERY | 14 JUNE – 10 AUGUST 2014

Whakaora



TE KŌPUTU A TE WHANGA A TOI
Whakatāne Library & Exhibition Centre



Whakaora:

the medicine mandala

SAND MANDALA MONKS

Geshe Jamyang Sherab

Karma Gyaysey

LIST OF ARTISTS

Adrienne Ranson

Ben Pearce

Dion Hitchens

James Ormsby

James Ford

Max Gimblett

Fiona Kerr

Maree White

Whakaora

ADRIENNE RANSON

I started with two images of figures from Michaelangelo's painting *The Last Judgement* (1541) in the Sistine Chapel, Vatican City, Rome. One was a woman's figure transcendentally rising to heaven as her death shroud uncoils to the ground, the other was a man, an anguished reprobate, descending into the maws of hell. In Michaelangelo's painting, both figures have been judged by the Christian God according to their conduct in life and assigned a future that reflects their behaviour. She arises to heaven and he despairs towards hell.



*Bardo of Becoming :
Heavy Karma, Light
Karma, 2014*

Acrylic on
gessoed board

In Buddhism, a parallel ethic is extolled. According to the laws of cause and effect, how one is and most circumstances that are experienced are the results of previous causes and conditions. Our bodies and minds are the results of multiple causes and conditions from the gross to the most subtle, an infinite, beginningless array of actions, events and responses coalescing into this moment as you and I. A negative cause and condition produces negativity, while a positive cause and condition will produce positivity. In Buddhism, as in Christianity, creating the conditions for wellness or wholeness begins with acting ethically. Buddha Shakyamuni calls these ethics or virtues the taproots of the perfections. Cultivating these taproots of virtuous actions enables us all to engender and enjoy an improved future as an individual and positively affects all levels of existence on this earth.

BEN PEARCE

In 'Body Has Been', Pearce has dissected the school chair, leaving only a remnant of its metal structure to act as a support for a chillingly accurate human ribcage and spine. He describes the work as a self portrait: "I think of it as me, I was once that size and somehow have absorbed that person."

This reinforces the idea that the body and mind are more than 'causally connected', that there is an embodiment, an essential link that cannot be separated simply by putting a division between the two. Rom Harre calls this process the 'personal embodiment' and suggests that in order for union to occur, we must first accept that there is also separation. Only when this occurs can we become embodied.

(With thanks to Karl Chitham for the use of this extract from his essay text for the exhibition Nervous System 2011. Artworks courtesy of PAULNACHE Gallery).



Body Has Been, 2011
Sandblasted Black
Walnut, Found School
Chair, Metal Tube

DION HITCHENS

'Ranga Whenua' is a layering of sacred landscapes and symbols in a contemporary drawing of objects and light. It brings together both Tūhoe and Shakyamuni Buddha through the inclusion of Maungapōhatu and Eagle Peak.

Maungapōhatu is the sacred ancestral maunga for Tūhoe. Eagle Peak exists in the northern part of India and is the place where Shakyamuni Buddha (known also as the original Buddha) expounded the Lotus Sutra along with many other teachings. In the Lotus Sutra, Eagle Peak is mentioned as a metaphorical place where the ceremony in the air happens. This is the pinnacle of events in the text.

The small animation included in the drawing is of a modern Buddha which has the face Chinese artists gave Shakyamuni Buddha over a thousand years ago. He is chanting Nam Myoho Renge Kyo. Renge is the lotus flower, referencing the mystic law of cause and effect in the lotus sutra.



*Ranga
Whenua,
2014*

Installation

JAMES ORMSBY

Our surface and above, form a family of epistemic notions of guiding light, rescue, restoration, gratitude ... The convections of weather, the stars and moon all move and are a related cosmos,... My late Aunt Hill wrote...“What are the cords which bind this place, close to our hearts with bonds of joy and pain? The strand of heritage - close woven in the warp and weft, the very healing pattern of our family life”. (Ref. page 34. “Te Parae – the homestead” from...“Lighting the traveller’s Road – the poetry of Hilary Ferguson”. pub. Fraser Books, Masterton, NZ. 2003. ISBN: 0-9582332-4-1).

Down here is a kind of correspondence with whakapapa or genealogy, linking history... especially European and Māori. They are both an attempt to figure-out things visually... Mo nga uri whakatipu (for the inquiring descendants). These works depict: home, whenua, blood, dangers... and the counterbalances of what is: covered/uncovered, light/dark, above/below, dislocation/recovery, grievance/partnership, healthy/ill,...

*Te Ao Marama –
the world of light
(part one), 2013*

*Te Ao Marama -
the natural work
(part two), 2013*



Artworks courtesy of PAULNACHE Gallery

JAMES R FORD

Works from the Scribble Fields series (2008-2011) are created using fine ink pens in small intense areas on paper, or with paint pens on large canvases. There is a method of chance situated within an ordered structure - the contrast between geometric shapes and the free-flowing scribble loops contained within. They look ordered from a distance, seemingly basic colour shapes of triangle, circle, square, etc., but on closer inspection, the simplicity gives way to an obsessive, labour-intensive mass of mark-making. On a small scale, scribbling with a pen or pencil can fill time when bored, but when done on an intense or large scale, the time-consuming and repetitive nature of the act itself becomes almost meditative.

*Cyan scribble
filling a white
square,
2009/2011
Ink on paper*

*Pink scribble
filling a white
triangle,
2009/2011*

Ink pen on paper

*Purple scribble
filling a white
circle, 2009/2011*

Ink on paper

*Green scribble
filling an orange
triangle, 2010*

Glitter paint pen
and household
paint on MDF



Artworks courtesy of PAULNACHE Gallery

MAX GIMBLETT

Max Gimblett is a prominent New Zealand painter primarily based in New York. His philosophies and practices encompass influences as varied as Abstract Expressionism, Modernism, Eastern and Western spiritual beliefs, Jungian psychology and ancient cultures.

The mix of cultures and aesthetics is evident in Gimblett's work, which consists largely of object-based paintings. The use of the quatrefoil refers to a multiplicity of meanings as it dates back to pre-Christian times and is found in both Western and Eastern religions, symbolising such objects as a rose, window, cross and lotus.

In 2009, Gimblett became one of the first New Zealand artists to have an artwork exhibited in the Guggenheim in New York. His international significance was further cemented with his inclusion in another major exhibition in the United States, at the Warhol Museum in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in 2011. The exhibition *The Word of God*, was a series of one-person shows representing each of the world's five major religions; Islam, Judaism, Christianity, Buddhism and Hinduism. Gimblett was the representative of Buddhism.

Artworks and text courtesy of Gow Langsford Gallery.



The House of Zen, 2008

Gesso, acrylic and vinyl polymers, epoxy, aqua size palladium leaf on canvas 15 inch quatrefoil

West Meets East, 2011

Gesso, acrylic
15 inch quatrefoil

Heart of the Star, 2004

Gesso, copper, acrylic
size on canvas
15 inch quatrefoil

FIONA KERR



Mandala, 2014

Pheasant, peacock
and turkey feathers

MAREE WHITE



*May I Embody the Four
Immeasurables, 2014*

Acrylic

Close-up showing the textural element of the mandala.

Image courtesy of Jill and Colin Harland





Karma Gyaysey

Geshe Jamyang



*Geshe Jamyang
Sherab and
Karma Gyaysey*



Karma Gyaysey



*The completed
Medicine Mandala*

*Geshe Jamyang, Karma Gyaysey and
Geshe Sangyey Thinley during the
Mandala Dissolution Ceremony*



*Whakatāne District Council
senior cultural advisor Pouroto
Ngaropo leads the procession
from Te Kōputu to Otuawhaaki.*

Image courtesy of Jill and Colin Harland





The Dissolution Ceremony concludes with the blessed sand being offered to Ōhinemataroa – Whakatāne River.

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THE WHAKATĀNE MUSEUM
SINCERELY THANKS:

The Jam Tse Dhargyey Ling
Buddhist Centre, Whangarei

Geshe Sangyey Thinley

Geshe Jamyang Sherab

Karma Gyaysey

Paul Currie and Kaari Schleich

The generosity of the Mandala
sponsor, who wishes to remain
anonymous

Maree White, Adrienne Ranson
and members of the Thö Sam
Dhargyey Ling Buddhist Group

Whakatāne District Council senior
cultural advisor Porouto Ngaropo

Principal photographer:
Andy Taylor



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