

# **AOTEA CENTRE WORKS OF ART**

*Taken from "Aotea Centre Works of Art", edited by Tara Werner, written by Karen Scherer and Katherine Findlay.*

## ***Who is Robert Ellis?***

Robert Ellis is the artist who designed the Aotea Tapestry that hangs in pride of place in the Aotea Centre.

Ellis was born in Northampton, England, and educated at the Northampton and Hammersmith Schools of Art. He was subsequently awarded an exhibition scholarship to the Royal College of Art, London. Before taking up the scholarship, he completed two years national service with the RAF Bomber Command as a photographer.

In 1957 Ellis moved to New Zealand and took up a position at the Elam School of Fine Arts, where he became an Associate Professor.

## ***Who is Neil Dawson?***

Neil Dawson is the artist who created two installation artworks on display in the Aotea Centre, Featherlight and Spectra.

Dawson was born in Christchurch in 1948. He gained a Diploma of Fine Arts (Hons) from Canterbury University and also has a graduate Diploma in Sculpture from the National Gallery of Victoria Art School in Melbourne.

Among his best known New Zealand installations are 'Echo', permanently installed in the Christchurch Art Centre in 1991 and 'The Rock' outside Wellington's BNZ Centre. Dawson divides his time between small works, temporary installations and permanent commissions, often collaborating with architects, engineers and landscape designers.

Dawson has a passion for natural objects, both the installations at the Aotea Centre are works with 'natural kiwi flavours', the feather and the paua shell.

## ***Who painted the portrait of Dame Catherine Tizard in the Aotea Centre?***

The portrait of Dame Catherine Tizard was painted by well known Auckland artist Dick Frizzell. Frizzell was commissioned by the Edmiston Trust to paint the portrait as a lasting tribute to Auckland's first woman mayor, and the driving force behind the Aotea Centre project.

Frizzell has a considerable reputation for his landscapes and pop art as well as the occasional portrait, but deciding how to portray the woman who was at that time Governor General of New Zealand as no easy task.

As a professional, Frizzell regarded the job of painting a person, from the production point-of-view, as no different from a hill or a tree. As soon as he began work on the portrait, however, he realised that people were going to bring quite a different crucial point of view to bear on his rendering of the subject than they would to that of an obscure bend in some central North Island stock route!

"Meeting Dame Cath, taking reference photos became something of a saga in itself," comments Frizzell. "How to present the subject, the context, the clothing, the lighting, the props, the prose? All these things come loaded with 'significance' as the current art jargon will have it - the body language, the 'hair' language the 'chair' language ..." Frizzell's aim was as much as possible to make the subject look how she looks. It was not to be a portrait to 'shock the bourgeoisie.' The result captures the essence of Dame Catherine's qualities of leadership, and her considerable power and dignity. It is a portrait for posterity.

Dick Frizzell: "Having achieved what I thought was the right balance of dignity and aggression, toughness and softness, formality and informality I feel we all perceive in the subject, I drew the composition up on to the canvas."

Portrait of Dame Catherine Tizard can be found on the Auckland Harbour Board Gallery, level 5 of the Aotea Centre, adjacent to Door G into the ASB Theatre.

### ***Who made the 'Featherlight' sculpture in the Aotea Centre?***

'Featherlight' was created by Neil Dawson as one of a group of artworks commissioned in 1988 as part of the building of the Aotea Centre. 'Featherlight' hangs above the BNZ Foyer in the Aotea Centre near the main entrance way. 'Featherlight' can be viewed either from below on the BNZ Foyer, level 4, or above from the Air New Zealand Foyer on level 5.

This work, and its companion piece 'Spectra', replace the chandelier that traditionally hangs in the foyer of a theatre. Instead of being a source of light, it picks up light from a variety of sources and reflects it back through its prisms. The design of the sculpture allows two different perspectives, above and below, while still achieving the artist's aim of reducing the architecture to a more personal level. Although based on an easily recognisable natural form, this is only part of the sculptural experience which also explores the use of materials, space and light in an architectural setting.

Neil Dawson, speaking about Featherlight: "My aim was to surprise people with the familiar: Contemporary art does not have to be difficult, and a feather is something people of all ages can identify with."

Hidden in the ceiling are several spotlights to direct light towards the sculpture. Like a traditional chandelier which amplifies light, Dawson's feather breaks down the beams and projects prismatic pools all over the foyer. At night the effect is spectacular, giving an air of splendour to the surroundings. During the day, the work tends to reflect the colours inside the building.

From tip to tail, Featherlight is 10 metres long. The central quill is made of aluminium and polyester resin, and the barbs were crafted from prismatic strips of acrylic. Each two-metre strip was softened in boiling water then bent over separate wooden moulds to form the shape desired. Altogether there are approximately 750 barbs - placed end to end they would stretch one and a half kilometres.

Featherlight took a team of five people eight weeks to construct in Dawson's Christchurch studio. At the Aotea Centre it took another week to assemble.

### ***Where is the statue of "Robbie"?***

A memorial sculpture of former Auckland City mayor, Sir Dove-Myer (Robbie) Robinson is in Aotea Square next to the steps leading down from Queen St. The bronze statue is life size, and was commissioned in 2002, the 100th anniversary of his birth. The sculpture celebrates the extraordinary contribution Robbie made to the city.

The sculptor who was chosen to portray Robbie is Aucklander Toby Twiss, who is a teacher and lecturer of the arts. He is also well known for his bronze casts.

### ***Who created the Waharoa in Aotea Square?***

The Waharoa is a 7 metre high gateway stands at the entrance to Aotea Square, transforming it into a marae or meeting place, and the Aotea Centre into a meeting house. Created by Selwyn Muru, Waharoa is one of a series of pieces commissioned for the Aotea Centre.

At the top of the gateway, five main symbols arise. Looking from Queen Street, from the right is Tama nui te Ra (God of the Sun). Next to him is Tangaroa, God of the Sea, seen in whale form, mounted by a myth-man. In the middle is Tane Mahuta (God of the Forest), who is depicted as a bird, and beside him is Tawhiri Matea (God of the Elements). On the far left, representing heavenly spheres, is Whetu me te Marama (the crescent moon and stars).

For the artist, tradition is not the only major element. The sculpture includes images from all over the Pacific and, while the shapes within it are rooted in mythology, its themes are contemporary. The arch itself consists of a multitude of busy images. There are birds, fish, the nuclear disarmament symbol, a cross, and a heart and arrow. Abstract images derive from Polynesian tapa cloth, and the triangular patterns form 19th century Maori art. The dog is inspired by one which belongs to Muru's friend and fellow-artist Paratene Matchitt.

Selwyn Muru: "The aim of this waharoa (gateway) is to welcome and embrace manuhiri to Aotea Square. I chose wood as a medium because it already has Mauri (life force) of its own that would exude warmth in an environment dominated by steel, glass and stone."

Muru carved with chainsaw and chisel, using huge pieces of macrocarpa. The verdigris effect on the work is caused by weathered copper which Muru 'treated' with vinegar. Some of the heavier copper pieces came from Waitangi, where they once topped the old wharf piles. For Muru, this additional element is important; not only is the God of the Sea represented at the Aotea Centre, but so is the artist's birthplace, Northland.

### ***Who painted the Karanga mural in the NZI Convention Hall foyer?***

Karanga was painted by Winifred Belcher (Hinerangitoariari), commissioned for the Aotea Centre as part of a group of works in 1988.. Karanga is a large mural located in the foyer of the NZI Convention Hall, level 1, of the Aotea Centre. The NZI Convention Hall is at the southern end of the building.

Karanga is the Maori ritual call for admission when manuhiri (visitors) approach the marae. The Karanga is a call, performed by women, signifying the visitors friendly intent and request to enter the marae. The Karanga mural symbolises the advent of manuhiri to New Zealand - their past, present, and future impact on this land. The images are all significant in Maori lore. Each bird, tree, and insect tells its own story. They are depicted in such detail that in some places the artist needed a sable brush with only three hairs.

Winifred Belcher: "The painting's major inspirations are music, communication and hospitality - and the latter's cost to the natural world."

The painting is read from right to left, beginning with the break of dawn. Traditional artforms represent Tane-te-Waiora (the sun), procreator and sustainer of life on earth. The shape of the clouds is reminiscent of Maori canoe prows, travel, and the processes of hospitality. Linked together, the clouds would form a traditional carving pattern - the fish-hook or Maui. Also in the sky is a stylised kotuku, or white heron, symbolising the visitor. Moving across to the land, the viewer can identify many different native birds representing the tangata whenua. According to legend, there were birds in Aotearoa even before there were trees. Twelve represented species, three of them extinct and several others endangered, have been chosen for their vocal qualities, their significance in lore, and their individual mana as spokespeople for Papatuanuku, the Earth Mother.

The birds are arranged according to 12 notes of the chromatic scale of music, which closely approximates the sounds of ancient Maori music. The native trees have been modified and diminished in scale. Many species are recognisable - the fallen ponga serves as a memorial to our slaughtered forests.

Among the many insects is the hina-rakautauri (case moth). Flute-shaped and holed at each end, the Wind Goddess once took refuge in its body and ever since it is thought to whistle in the wind. A moko koeau (large forest gecko) also features. In Maori art, the lizard fixes the tapu, or sacred nature of a work. Several sprites, fairies, and goblins also inhabit the painting. They are personifications of the wairua (spirit) of the land.

The kowhatu (talisman) of the painting is a rock formation styled in a portrait of Tupana te Hira, a late respected Waikato elder. He sits with his back to the painting and his face to the taonga (treasures) of the gods - these living works of art, the people coming to visit the Aotea Centre.

### ***Who created Red Dancer on the outside of the Aotea Centre?***

Red Dancer is a sculpture by Barry Lett, commissioned as one of a group of works for the Aotea Centre. Red Dancer is suspended high on the outside wall of the Aotea Centre, adjacent to the level 4 entrance into the Aotea Centre, Carter Holt Harvey Lobby. Originally designed as a free-standing sculpture, its present position was suggested by Hamish Keith who coordinated the Aotea Centre artwork's.

The four metre high sculpture is made of hundreds of pieces of tanalised pine which have been screwed then glued together. Lett began the work by laying down a large paper image, scaled up from the original drawing, on the studio floor. The work then progressed piece by piece and layer by layer in a totally organic manner.

The finished work was so big, Lett didn't know how to get it out of the building. A very understanding landlady allowed him to remove the roof, and the work was lifted out by crane.

According to Lett, the figure has both 'hero' and 'antihero' qualities. These relate to the theatrical themes of comedy and tragedy, and are emphasised by the pose of the dancer. The outstretched arms and the lithe bode are seemingly contradicted by the relaxed standing pose of the feet.

Barry Lett: "I wanted to suggest that the figure was about to dance, by the fact that it was poised off balance."

### ***Who made the 'Spectra' sculpture in the Aotea Centre?***

'Spectra' is a permanent installation artwork created by artist Neil Dawson as part of a group of works commissioned for the Aotea Centre in 1988. 'Spectra' hangs in the void above the Foodtown staircase at the northern end of the Aotea Centre.

A companion piece to 'Featherlight', the huge paua shell sculpture is a bold diversion from the traditional theatre chandelier. The paua and the feather work together to reinforce the basic themes of sea and air.

There is whimsy in Neil Dawson's work which intentionally catches the viewer off balance. 'Spectra' is a light sculpture. Spectra light the natural shells we find at the beach. Paua gets its brilliant hues from the diffraction of light - in itself the shell has no colour. Although based on an easily recognisable natural form, this is only part of the sculptural experience which also explores the use of materials, space and light in an architectural setting.

Neil Dawson: "I wanted something festive - it's not a subtle piece - Spectra blazes with light."

Made of PVC foam covered with fibreglass, the 6.5 by 5.2 metre shell is suspended from the ceiling over the main staircase to the auditorium. Spotlights are directed at the sculpture. Its surface is covered in hexagonal tiles of diffraction film. This film is laser-etched with very fine grooves and has similar visual quality to a compact disc.

The work is on a dramatic scale, and the spiralling form and ever-changing light effects draw the viewer up the stairs. At night the light effects are intensified, with strong reflections appearing throughout the foyer.

### ***Who created the tapestry Point of View in the Aotea Centre?***

Point of View is a subtle work by created by Kate Wells, one of a group of works commissioned for the Aotea Centre. Woven in a single piece, a special vertical loom with roller beams top and bottom was used to make the 8 x 1 metre tapestry in one length. Lining one wall of the level 2 lift lobby, leading to the Owens Foyer, in the Aotea Centre the viewer walks past the work moving from perspective to perspective.

The warp is cotton and the weft is 80 percent wool, 10 percent cotton, and 10 percent linen. This mixture gives lustre to the surface. For her palette, Wells used approximately 250 commercially dyed colours, with six strands blended in each tuft to produce the exact shade she wanted.

The main design themes are elevation and location. "My intention was to create a work that could sustain the interest of the viewer and yet not shout out for attention." says Wells, "I wanted the tapestry to give a softening effect to the room, yet stand strongly as a thought generating work."

Originally hung in the Goodman Fielder Room on level 4 of the Aotea Centre, the floor plan of this room is included in the far right panel - "D2" represents the wall the tapestry hung on. Two other panels depict a less intimate view - that from the room's windows across to the Town Hall. On a more general level, the Auckland region as a whole is represented by a detailed map, and the volcanic form of Rangitoto Island can be seen as from the air.

Shapes fly across the tapestry. There are calligraphic signs and abstract birds. by combining abstract and realistic images, Wells links imagination with reality. Like the window frame device, they enable the viewer to shift from one location to another.

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### ***Who created the metal and wood sculpture on the outside of the Aotea Centre?***

The massive metal and wood sculpture rising for two levels on the outside of the Aotea Centre is an untitled work by Paratene Matchitt. This work is one of a group commissioned for the Aotea Centre. The piece is 'divided' by a balcony running around level 5 of the Aotea Centre, with the top part viewable from afar as well as close up, and the bottom section viewable from the Fay Richwhite Terrace surrounding level 4 of the Aotea Centre. Partly obscured from view and partly not, it is a bold piece of work that Matchitt believes will be viewed in different ways by different people.

A massive metal and wood sculpture, although untitled, could be summed up by the Maori word *manaaki* which means hospitality. Matchitt's interpretation of the work is that the powerful pieces of timber at the bottom of the mural represent the people of today, while the stainless steel forms at the top are their ancestors, both Maori and Pakeha.

The large central diamond shape symbolises hospitality. It links the past and present and contains the hearts, moons, stars and crosses which have become Matchitt's signature.

Paratene Matchitt: "The idea of hospitality came very early. The whole building needs to be hospitable to the people who are coming into it, and my mural supports that idea. It is also meant to scramble people's minds about all that sort of thing."

Matchitt also sees the sculpture as representing the development of Aotearoa. He has included historical references such as the early planting of kumara, as well as both individual and collective stories about particular ancestors.

All the timbers are from Aotearoa, and some have been used in previous constructions. The metal strips came from a scrap metal dealer and include a conveyor belt from an old tannery in Hastings. The combination of these quite different materials in one work show that the two cultures are indeed compatible. Matchitt worked mostly with power chisels, industrial sanders and a chainsaw. The result is a robust and gutsy relief which will have the finishing touches put on it by Tawhiri Matea - God of the Elements.

### ***Who created 'The Circus of Life' mural in the Aotea Centre?***

'The Circus of Life' was created by Jenny Dolezel as part of a group of works commissioned in 1988 for the Aotea Centre. 'The Circus of Life' hangs on the wall adjacent to Door F of the ASB Theatre on level three of the Aotea Centre.

This lively, colourful oil painting is Jenny Dolezel's first major public commission. It is approximately 5 x 9 metres and took six months to complete.

Jenny Dolezel: "I have chosen to directly represent a complex performance scene being observed by an audience, but in fact the work as a whole served to symbolise the theatre of real life."

The multi-panelled painting is made up of two sections. On the left a show is taking place, while the side panel on the right acts as a 'behind the scenes' section. This smaller section includes various crucial

elements that go into the making of a successful performance - both in life and on the stage - such as choosing the right role, auditioning, practising, having the correct costumes, make-up, discovering deception, trouble, pretence, false masks, background scenery, lighting, and so on. These are portrayed through a series of small semi-independent scenes, arranged more or less in chronological order. On close observation it is apparent that the audience contains several performers, identified by their gestures, looks, costumes and use of masks. The performer and the audience are merged.

The work also comments on the drama of life. The pressures of performance - the countdown, reading of scripts, and deadlines - also apply to our lives. Dolezel believes we live in a bizarre world where things are never what they seem. A nose turns into a flute, a snake slithers out of an exit sign, and candles on the birthday cake may just set the curtains on fire.

In the far right of the painting, the artist looks on and into her creation in a symbolic self portrait.

### ***Who created Tautai Matagofie in the Aotea Centre?***

Tautai Matagofie (Wonderful Navigator) was created by Western Samoan artist Fatu Feu'u as one of a series of works commissioned for the Aotea Centre. Tautai Matagofie, a 32 square metre mural, is located in the Carter Holt Harvey Foyer, next to the Administration Office entrance, on level 4 of the Aotea Centre.

Feu'u's vision of the mural is to show people from all over the Pacific coming to New Zealand, with Auckland as the unification point for all of them. It is also about the people of Auckland making their contribution to the city, by creating an awareness of sharing and respecting each others cultures and resources.

Fatu Feu'u: "Fa'auta! Ole mea lelei ma le matagofie, o uso pe a nonofo fa'atasi ma le olioli. (Behold! It is great and wonderful for brothers and sisters to live together in harmony.)"

The imagery derives from myths and legends of ancient Samoa and the Pacific. Symbolic motifs are combined with colours significant to ancient Pacific seafarers and navigators. Pale blue/grey signifies north, white is east, ochre is south, and red is west. The journey is across the Pacific from east to west. In the east is the moai, an Easter Island sculpture with the pola (house blinds) drawn behind him. Behind him is a Polynesian sacrificial altar with one female and one male motif, and fish skeletons left over from a farewell sacrifice.

The sun and star motifs signify navigational aids used by Pacific peoples, while the general migration to Aotearoa is guided by the gogo or frigate bird, symbol of spiritual ancestors. The fish motif, atu, signifies one of the staple Pacific foods.

The centre panel represents central Polynesia - Tonga, Niue and Samoa as depicted in siapo (tapa cloth) and lapita (pre-Polynesia pottery) motifs. Frangipani flowers provide an essential symbolic female balance to the male elements of spirituality that are shown.

All these migrations come together at the end of the rainbow where the koru (spiral) is pictured. It symbolises the basin of the Waitemata Harbour, and Rangitoto's familiar form is easily recognisable. To the left of the koru is a female Maori sculpture, seen here as the keeper of Aotearoa, accepting into Auckland brothers and sisters from Pacific countries.

### ***Who carved the sculpture of Dame Kiri Te Kanawa in the Aotea Centre?***

The 1.6 metre painted bronze statue was created by sculptor Terry Stringer. One of a group of artwork's commissioned for the Aotea Centre, the bronze was unveiled by Dame Kiri Te Kanawa herself at the official opening of the Aotea Centre on 9 September 1990. Located in the Air New Zealand Foyer on level 5 of the Aotea Centre, adjacent to Door H into the ASB Theatre, the statue presides over visitors entering the theatre itself.

Never intended to be a literal likeness of the its subject, Stringer wanted the figure to be seen as a column. The surface modelling is shallow and the arms, gestures and sweep of the drapery are in relief around the work. By making the facial features slightly too large for the head, and the head slightly too large for the body, he meant to emphasise her personality. As an echo of Dame Kiri's encouragement to the Aotea Centre, the sculpture also suggests a traditional figurehead.

The height of the work means it can easily be seen from a distance, even when the foyer is filled with people. The diva appears to be standing on a platform, and she stoops forward as though taking a bow. There is also suggestion of a shrug and a slight smile.

Terry Stringer: "My idea of a piece of sculpture has a formal idea, which makes a tension, and gives a sense of my mind at work. A portrait has extra presence with this tension - I don't want it to be too easy."

Stringer first met Dame Kiri in her London home and spent two days making pencil drawings of her, taking photographs of her hair, hands and clothes. The dress she chose for the portrait has the advantage of appearing to be both an opera costume and an evening dress. The pendant she wears was a gift from her late father.

In his Auckland studio Stringer made a study model of Dame Kiri's head and refined it during a further sitting during her Homecoming tour in early 1990. A full-scale model took three months to construct, and another six weeks to cast. First clay was sculpted on to a supporting metal armature, then a plaster model formed over the clay. From this a wax shell was made which the foundry imbedded in a mould. By burning out the wax and pouring in bronze, a hollow sculpture was achieved. Stringer then cleaned the bronze and perfected the surface, gave it a patina, and delicately coloured it with oil paint.

### ***Who are the artists represented in The Edge® Muka Studio portfolio?***

The Lithograph project New Zealand 1990 was commissioned by the Muka Studio to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi. The Edge® collection is one of a portfolio of 50 hardbound copies. No aesthetic, philosophical or political limitations were placed on the artists whose work reflects the beliefs, concerns and joys of the wider community in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Artists represented in the collection are:

Phillippa Blair Aeroplane Angel  
Gavin Chilcott Opiated Jars and Heart Pot  
Jenny Dolezel Love Pictures  
Robert Ellis Kuparu  
Fatu Feu'u Pale Anoo  
Dick Frizzell Just Outside Taumaranui  
Patrick Hanly Butterfly Vacation  
Christine Hellyar Germinal  
Ralph Hotere A Union Jack?  
Robyn Kahukiwa Waitangi  
Paratene Matchitt Taumatakahawai  
Richard McWhannell Untitled  
Mary McIntyre Moa Summer  
Selwyn Muru Nga Tuupuna O Te Whenua  
Kura Rewiri Thorsen Whakapapa  
John Reynolds Blind Prophet  
Barbara Tuck Repetitions  
Denys Watkins Parkinson's Study  
Ruth Watson An Introduction to Gaming  
Jane Zusters Stepping Off The Planet

Other works held in the Aotea Artworks collection by some of the above artists are:

- Jenny Dolezel, The Circus of Life
- Robert Ellis, The Aotea Tapestry
- Fatu Feu'u, Tatau Matagofie
- Dick Frizzell, Portrait of Dame Catherine Tizard
- Patrick Hanly, Metropolitan Unity
- Paratene Matchitt, Untitled
- Selwyn Muru, Waharoa

### ***Who created the Aotea Tapestry in the Aotea Centre?***

The Aotea Tapestry was designed by Robert Ellis and made at the Victorian Tapestry Workshop, taking 6 weavers nearly two years to complete. Hailed as one of the most significant contemporary tapestries, the Aotea Tapestry is the Aotea Centre's principle artwork, one of a set of artwork's commissioned for the Aotea Centre. The Aotea Tapestry was one of the country's largest public commissions at the time it was created.

There are 1,600 warp threads in the work and the completed tapestry weighs more than 260 kilograms and is attached to the wall by velcro. Measuring 11.6 metres by 6.4 metres, the Victorian Tapestry Workshop in Melbourne was, at that time, one of only five such studio-based workshops in the world which could handle a single-piece work this size. Even then a loom had to be specially designed.

Robert Ellis: "It was not my intention to be too specific, as many people will prefer to interpret it in their own way. There are many different levels of meaning, depending on the viewer's outlook."

The work contains a narrative theme in keeping with the medium, and closely relates to the Tamaki-makaurau (Auckland) district. A variety of star chart symbols, based on the southern skies, establishes geographic location and navigation reference points. The constellation Pleiades or Te Huihui o Matariki relates to the annual replenishment of earthly resources. Beneath this is a landscape formed by elemental natural forces; its surface condition by continuous volcanic activity. Cartographic symbols, surveyors' marks and weather chart signs also define the physical nature of the landscape.

Auckland is situated on an isthmus, and the fish symbolises the abundance and diversity of marine life. John Dory in particular has long-established spiritual connotations; it is poised over an open hand of friendship and good fortune. Astronomical, astrological and botanical characters, signifying riches and prosperity, embellishing the hand.

In the lower left a fountain of pure water acts as a sustaining life force, and as a cleansing agent removing the Tapu (sacred nature) of the work. In the corners, the ancient signs of Alpha and Omega relate to the beginning and ending of all things and the perpetual life cycle.

The Aotea Tapestry hangs in pride of place between the doors to the ASB Theatre in the Aotea Centre, hanging from level four to level 2. The tapestry can be viewed from the McConnell Dowell Balcony between doors D and E on level 4, from the BNZ foyer also on level 4, and between doors A and B on the Owens Foyer on level 2.

### ***Who painted Metropolitan Unity in the Aotea Centre?***

Metropolitan Unity was created by Patrick Hanly and is one of a collection of works commissioned for the Aotea Centre. Metropolitan Unity hangs in the NZI Convention Centre, climbing the internal stairs from the Kupe Room on level one of the Aotea Centre to the Maunganui Room, a room that looks down into the Kupe Room, on level 3.

Inspired by the many different aspects of life in Auckland, it is an immensely decorative piece with a serious underlying meaning - the harmony of diversity. Hanly has a lot to say about Auckland, his chosen home on his return from Europe in the 1960s, in this highly inventive and colourful work. Many races, along with their symbols, fabrics, and materials, from brick to gold, occur in the mural. Other images include crisp-edged Pacific mornings, developing blue days, lush plant forms, reflecting waters and winking neon lights, all executed with the bold brushstrokes and bright colours which have become Hanly's trademark.

Patrick Hanly: "It is a composition of derived, sensed and invented images which have arrived in the creative process from many sources, and which suggest the cosmopolitan nature of the Auckland aura."

Not all the images portrayed in this flamboyant kaleidoscope are positive. City life, says Hanly, also has its "sweaty bits". These are represented in the works by symbols of hard inner city confusion and pulsing physical action. Many of the symbols are invented - the viewer's imagination provides the interpretation. But the main theme, the harmony in the diverse, or metropolitan unity, shines through.

This artwork is currently held in storage by Auckland City Council due to the refurbishment of Level 1 of the Aotea Centre. It has not yet been decided where it will eventually be placed.

Who carved the Aotea Cartouche in the Aotea Centre?

Sculpted by Denis O'Connor from Eritrea marble and Mt Somers limestone from Canterbury, the Aotea Cartouche is a commemorative stone that records the names of those involved with the building of the Aotea Centre. However, like cartouches of the Baroque and Renaissance periods, it is also rich in imagery and symbolism.

The bell in the centre panel refers to the function of the building as a forum, the calling together of people to congregate, celebrate and speak. There is a landscape of scoria balanced on the peninsula of an outstretched arm, as well as a matuku (white-faced heron) in full flight consumed by a saw-handled mask face. This is a complex image containing suggestions of inspiration, determination and belonging. The artist sees these as a new set of icons for a newly emerging South Pacific culture.

The jug and bowl in the left side panel were chosen for their significance as ritual domestic objects. They symbolise containing, pouring, cleansing, replenishing, purifying, nurturing, sharing, and assuaging. The jug is pouring an upright image of Rangitoto Island, Auckland's youngest and most identifiable volcano.

In the right side panel, manawa (mangrove) leaves fall, each with its own cargo of scoria. This refers to the Auckland region's coastal environment of mangrove-rich estuaries, volcanic hill-forms and headlands.

Denis O'Connor: "All the images relate to the geological nature of the Auckland isthmus and our relationship to this. As well as this strong identification with locale and environmental processes, the images used evoke the function and purpose that a performance and theatrical centre ritually involves."

### ***Who painted the Pacific Platforms mural in the Levene foyer?***

Pacific Platforms was painted by Phillipa Blair and commissioned for the Aotea Centre as part of a group of works in 1988. The mural consists of 16 small panels each approximately four metres square. Pacific Platforms is located in the Levene Foyer, level 1, of the Aotea Centre. The Levene Foyer is located at the southern end of the building and is the foyer through which patrons can access the Civic Carpark.

This energetic mural incorporates sounds, light, and movement as well as both organic and architectural forms, seen in the basic context of Pacific Auckland. The artist's aim was to give the impression of growth, excitement, and change.

Phillip Blair "Being at a transit rather than a meeting point, the purpose of the mural is to announce positively the functions and atmosphere of the building and be a vigorous, colourful beginning - high in energy but with an edge of humour and drama. It is a place for music, dance performance, and people, as well as a celebration of combined talents and energies."

Phillipa Blair first visited the Aotea Centre when it was still being built. Her initial impressions were the bones of a very complex labyrinth of spaces, stairs, raw interior workings, multiple levels and viewing areas, and her starting point became a series of interlocking grid systems with platforms. To maintain the freedom of the initial brush strokes, Blair tied her brushes to long sticks and 'danced' over the panels, sometimes leaving hand and footprints that can still be seen.

The first pane includes elements of an island, which suggests both a pediment and Rangitoto. Theatre flaps symbolise stagecraft and shifting frameworks, while an unfolding, sail-like piano defies gravity. Blair plays with change - there is ambiguity and puzzle as one thing turns into another.

The second panel is slightly larger than the first. Its images are more nocturnal. Two basic platforms signify the leaping off ground for performance, the stairway zigzagging across provides counter movement, and there are pipes, sounds energy and action.