



Kāpiti Coast District Gallery

ANNUAL REPORT, 2023-2024

MAHARA GALLERY TRUST - TRUSTEES

Gordon Shroff (Chairperson) is a former senior civil servant with an interest in the arts. He graduated in History from Auckland University in 1967 and joined the NZ Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He was Deputy Secretary of Foreign Affairs, serving in New York, London and Samoa during his career. In the mid-1980s he headed the New Zealand Immigration Service. He was President of the Friends of Te Papa from 2012 to 2015 and served on the Friends' Board for eight years. He was admitted as a Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit (CNZM) in 2004.

David Shand (Treasurer) worked for the World Bank, IMF, and OECD before returning to New Zealand in 2006. He is a graduate in economics and accountancy from Victoria University of Wellington. He is currently an independent director of Auckland City Mission Housing Ltd. He was formerly chair of the Tertiary Education Commission, a member of the Royal Commission on Auckland Governance, chair of the 2007 Rates Inquiry and a director of Meridian Energy. He was a board member of the NZ Portrait Gallery for eight years. He has held a financial advisory role in his iwi, Ngai Tahu.

Glen Wiggs has a background in law and marketing and has been a leader in regulation of advertising for over 28 years. He was Executive Director of the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) in New Zealand for more than 14 years before establishing the Foundation for Advertising Research (FAR). He was for seven years an Adjunct Professor of Advertising Regulation at the University of the Sunshine Coast, Queensland. He was admitted as a member of the New Zealand Order of Merit (MNZM) in 2009.

Andrew Sexton BArch (Hon) joined the board in late 2022, as an independent Director. A member of the NZ Institute of Architects, Andrew owns and manages his own award-winning architectural practice—Andrew Sexton Architects, established in Wellington in 2004—and now more recently based in Mahara Place, Waikanae.

Dr Warren Young joined the board in 2024. Dr Young brings his previous experience as Chair of Arts Access Aotearoa to Toi MAHARA. He has spent 30 years working in, and studying, aspects of the criminal justice system. He has been an academic, senior civil servant, law reformer and most recently General Manager of the Independent Police Conduct Authority. In 2015 he was appointed a Companion of the Queen's Service Order for services to the law.

BOARD MEMBERS

Ann-Maree Ellison is the Te Āti Awa representative on the board of trustees, Te Āti Awa ki Whakarongotai, Ngāti Toa Rangatira, Ngāti Raukawa, Ngāi Tahu. With expertise in Education and Environmental management, her personal goal is to lift the educational achievements of Iwi/Māori. She currently holds positions as Whakarongotai Marae Trustee, Raukawa Foundation, Te Āti Awa Charitable Trust, Cultural Heritage Liaison Group M2PP, Te Whakaminenga o Kāpiti, To Ohu Taiao, Town Centre Working Group, ART Forum, Māori Economic Development Board, Ara Tahi, Te Upoko Taiao, and is an accredited Environmental Commissioner.

Liz Koh is an active Rotarian, former Chair of the Chamber of Commerce, founding Chair of Kāpiti Economic Development Association (KEDA) and Trustee of Creative Kāpiti Charitable Trust. For nine years Liz Koh served as the Deputy Chair of the Nikau Foundation and established the Nikau Kāpiti Fund and Creative Kāpiti Fund.

Tonchi Begovich (Waikanae Community Board Representative) is a Registered Quantity Surveyor, a member of the Waikanae Community Board and Co-Owner of Diamond Residential Ltd a local Waikanae residential home builder. Tonchi also works as NZ Construction Manager for Bode. He has more than 30 years' experience in the commercial and residential construction and build environment. Tonchi is a member of the New Zealand Institute of Quantity Surveyors and New Zealand Institute of Building.

Toi MAHARA ANNUAL REPORT 2023-2024

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The 2023-24 year has been both challenging and exhilarating for the Mahara Trust Board and Director Janet Bayly and her staff. From July to October a myriad of demands were made on our time and energy as construction and fit-out of the new Gallery approached completion and all the systems such as lighting, climate control, security, and IT systems had to be completely installed, tested and fine-tuned to enable staff to mount exhibitions, run events and start managing delivery of the new premises. At the same time planning had to be done for the official opening weekend, the installation of the Field Collection and development and marketing of the programme of exhibitions and events for the months ahead. Together this put enormous pressure on the Director and her small team which was still being recruited, and their combined efforts deserve special mention. We were fortunate in having some additional human resource made available to Mahara from Council staff and particular thanks are due to Project Manager Rowan Cordwell and Transition Manager Sonja Williams for her contribution and as coordinator of the Opening Festival weekend.

The exhilaration came with the official opening festival over two days in late October. It was an enormous pleasure to bring together to celebrate the occasion the many people who had over the years contributed to and supported the Mahara redevelopment project. Participants included mana whenua and Whakarongotai marae representatives and our Patron, Darcy Nicholas, the Mayor and some of her predecessors and Councillors and officials, Trust members and previous Chairs, major donors including Field Collection Trustees, Philipp Family Foundation Trustees, Coastlands Trustees, many well-known artists and members of Kāpiti's cultural communities, Athfield Architects' team and the Crowe Construction team and contractors, and, happily, many children who are our artists and audiences of the future. In all over 5000 people visited the new Toi MAHARA and its opening exhibitions in that first Opening Festival weekend.

The feedback from the initial wave of visitors and the following eight months was almost universally positive. The striking quality and design of the building was much remarked upon and endorsed as an asset for Waikanae and the Kāpiti region to be proud of. Likewise, the range and quality of the opening exhibitions attracted very favourable comment which is a testament to the thoughtfulness with which the Director conceived and brought together those shows.

Subsequently Toi MAHARA received numerous requests for tours of the new facility, including from professional colleagues from other regional galleries and their Friends associations to inspect the new building and its operations. Their positive comments and clear interest in encouraging collaboration with the new Toi MAHARA were a very welcome endorsement of the views of Kāpiti residents. Further reinforcing the mana of the new gallery were later in the year decisions by professional peer associations to make awards to Athfield Architects in Public Architecture, and a Gold award in the Master Builders' Commercial Project Awards for Crowe Construction.

In the second half of the year some exciting trends in visitation became evident. The increase in exhibition spaces from two to four has made possible a greater diversity of shows catering for different audiences in Kāpiti and beyond. In particular Toi Māori

in various modes has figured more prominently, something facilitated by our being able to call on the expertise and networks of our part-time Toi Māori curator. The result has been a welcome increase in the diversity of our audiences. Furthermore, there has been strong signs of increasing visitor numbers with nearly 14,000 coming in the eight months after our initial opening. That trend has been accompanied by a significant increase in visits to Toi MAHARA's redesigned and updated website and by significant sales of local artist's works and the merchandising of Kāpiti-produced items. There has also been a steady demand for access to the Field Collection, much of which cannot be on permanent display for conservation reasons, and this has served to underline the wisdom of the Field Trustees in wanting to make Toi MAHARA the permanent accessible home for the collection. It will be an exciting challenge for the Director, staff and the Trust in coming year to see whether these trends can be consolidated and developed so as to get full value for Kāpiti from this splendid new community whare taonga.

Alongside the curatorial and cultural challenges of the new gallery have been the more mundane but nevertheless essential tasks of bedding in and tuning building systems, staff recruitment and training, developing and updating administrative, accounting and IT arrangements and looking at ways to attract increased support for Toi MAHARA's activities and outreach. For the Trustees a particularly time-consuming issue has been trying to negotiate a new Partnership Agreement with the Kāpiti Council to cover the funding and operations of the new gallery in a way which meets the original expectations of the various major donors to the redevelopment in the current climate of financial stringency. That task is ongoing currently.

A fuller account of all the work undertaken or launched in in the past year follows in the Director's Report. Suffice it for me at this point to record our admiration and gratitude to Director Janet Bayly for the creativity, energy and imagination evident in the extraordinary burden of work she undertook in this transitional first year of the new Toi MAHARA. Alongside this I wish to express my sincere thanks to my fellow Trustees for so unstintingly making available so much voluntary time to gallery affairs and, on behalf of the Trust and gallery staff, to record our deep appreciation for all the support received for the new Toi MAHARA from mana whenua, friends, donors and partners in Kāpiti and beyond.

Gordon Shroff
Chair, Mahara Gallery Trust Board

LAUNCHING TOI MAHARA

The response to the new Toi MAHARA has been overwhelmingly positive with diverse visitors delighting in its design, quality fittings, effective re-use of original timber, new visual identity, and programme content across varied exhibitions and

events. 'Beautiful, stunning' are the most common descriptors new visitors use. The building gained an award in Public Architecture award from NZIA for Athfield Architects and a Master Builders' Award for Crowe Construction.

Toi Mahara really has come of age, remembering its roots, standing its ground and re-imagining a visionary future. It is memorable architecture worthy of its name

....

The winning design respected the value of the original building and somehow combined modesty and verve to create a strong new identity and significantly adapt the gallery building for the next generations.

....

From an urban perspective, an expressive double-height canopy on the corner of Mahara Place creates a fantastic new civic-scale entrance to the gallery and the central mall courtyard.

Mark Southcombe in *Architecture NZ*, July 2024 (Issue 4)

<https://architecturenow.co.nz/articles/modesty-and-verve/>



Toi MAHARA. North façade. Photograph Andy Spain.



The Opening Festival weekend spanning October 28-29, 2023, supported by Kāpiti Coast District Council and Te Ātiawa ki Whakarongotai, drew around 5,000 people. Photograph Toi MAHARA.

Mahara Place came alive with kapahaka, live music, performance poetry, bands, drumming and dancing for the Opening Weekend Festival spanning October 28-29, 2023. It was supported by Kāpiti Coast District Council and Te Ātiawa ki Whakarongotai, drew around 5,000 people.

Visitors from across the district and around Aotearoa New Zealand moved between the gallery, Mahara Place and the marae which supported the opening with generous manaakitanga. Staff, board, volunteers and Friends of Toi MAHARA welcomed visitors into the gallery and guided tours were given by the Heritage curator Vicki Robson and lead Athfield architect Nick Mouat.

Over the following eight months the gallery attracted 13,907 visitors to 12 exhibitions embracing artists, communities, taonga and stories from across Kāpiti. Our visitor demographics to the redeveloped gallery have grown more diverse and feature more young and middle-aged professionals, families and children. Based on this first eight months transitioning into full operation, future visitation can be expected to exceed 20,000 annually. Toi MAHARA has already become a visitor destination for greater Wellington, national visitors and international visitors.

Toi Mahara is a boutique art gallery with roots deep in local community arts and crafts groups. It curates history exhibitions as well, reflecting a depth of locally grounded content.

Mark Southcombe in *Architecture NZ*, July 2024 (Issue 4)

The smart new graphic logotype, visual identity system and brand communications, was designed by Studio Catherine Griffiths. It is elegantly expressed throughout the

building and has represented our new identity in wide national media coverage in physical and digital forms. Toi MAHARA social media platforms have attracted thousands of new online followers. The website developed by Peter Johns, Butterpaper, working closely with Catherine Griffiths, is an ongoing project. It includes a strong presence for the Field Collection and is building an online shop and an extensive exhibition archive.



East sentinel featuring canopy frit pattern designed by Tracey Morgan (Te Ātiawa, Ngāti Toa Rangatira, Ngāti Tama, Ngāti Mutunga) and MAHARA, Home of the Field Collection. Photograph Janet Bayly.

Unique interior design features which integrated old and new materials have attracted favourable comment from visitors, including rimu from the original roof recycled into the stairwell, three tiled wharepaku, and four rimu plinths to hold two wairua bowls commissioned from leading ceramic artist Jenny Shearer.

Four retro-style lounge chairs re-upholstered in Ashcroft Tweed designed by legendary gallery curator Margaret MacKean-Taylor have been widely admired. Accessibility features for visitors with impaired sight and mobility needs have also been applauded. The Friends of Toi MAHARA also refreshed its branding, expanded its membership base and supported extra furniture, signage and marketing collateral to be produced, as well as sponsoring local arts awards and supporting events with manaakitanga.



MAHARA logotype, Studio Catherine Griffiths. Photograph Andy Spain.



View into Ringa Toi, Artists Gallery, upper floor. Photograph Andy Spain.



Entrance and shop. Photograph Andy Spain.



Te Manawa Toi | Coastlands Gallery. Photograph Andy Spain.

EXHIBITION PROGRAMME

The first twelve exhibitions have signaled key kaupapa/ curatorial strategies for the new gallery. These included a strong focus on toi Māori; artists working with environmental themes and materials; heritage exhibitions conveying the diverse cultural history of Kāpiti, alongside a focus on the Field Collection; and strong support for Kāpiti-based artists in solo and group shows such as *Toi MAHARA Arts Review* in Te Manawa Toi | Coastlands Gallery during the 2023 Kāpiti Art Trail.

The *Arts Review* was followed by two large exhibitions curated by Kohai Grace, Ngāti Toa Rangatira, Ngāti Porou, Te Āti Awa and Ngāti Raukawa, who joined Toi MAHARA as Toi Māori curator and expanded our mana whenua and artist's audiences and networks.

The opening show in Ringa Toi | Artists Gallery on the upper level, *Whiriwhiria*, which originated at Toi MĀORI, featured exceptional weaving from an Ōtaki-based collective and was extended for Toi MAHARA by Kohai Grace.

This was followed by two solo artist's exhibitions connected to the newly opened Kilns at Te Horo. Elisabeth Vullings' *The Kilns Project* responded to the process of reconstructing Mirek Smíšek's famous Beehive kilns and was followed by Adrienne Riseley who travelled from Sweden for her six-month residency at The Kilns and presented *Elemental* in collaboration with local artist Wirihana Kiriona. Toi MAHARA has made an annual commitment to exhibiting the major residency artist at the Kilns at Te Horo, which is an important new cultural destination for Kāpiti.

Our education focus included another children's exhibition *Wai Ora* from Paekākāriki School in our annual art and environment project delivered in partnership with Ngā Manu Nature Reserve for 12 years, generously supported by the Philipp Family Foundation, and received with great enthusiasm by visitors, schools and whanau alike. It featured exceptional artworks created with the children led by artist Michelle Walton, poetry led by Apirana Taylor and filming by Himiona Grace of Wai Ata Studio.

The design is hyper-efficient and tiny in comparison to other galleries for similar-sized local authorities. This was a key part of its design challenge — the overall building area is modestly increased with additional first-floor area added on two sides of a now-centralised mezzanine floor. All spaces have to work hard with multiple overlapping functions. This starts with the reception/retail/community space that also acts as exhibition, education and hospitality space during openings. The major gallery, Te Manawa Toi Coastlands Gallery, is also a ground-floor community arts-focused facility. It is sensitively recrafted, with its volume restored and brought to life, complete with coffered ceilings and an operable visual connection to Mahara Place.

Mark Southcombe in Architecture NZ, July 2024 (Issue 4)



Tamariki from Paekākāriki School at their exhibition opening Wai Ora with trustees of the Philipp Family Foundation, Ray and Irene Mackle, Councillor Sophie Handford, Mahara Board Trustee Glen Wiggs. Photograph Kevin Ramshaw.

Paralleling the building redevelopment, with its 'beautiful dialogue between old and new', it became evident that the public also experienced an active and nuanced dialogue between old and new in two opening heritage exhibitions and contemporary shows throughout the gallery. The intimate scale of the galleries and their accessible content encouraged a close engagement and interactive experience for visitors.

Toiora: Ki te Pō ki te Ao, The Art of Wellbeing: Through Light and Shadow was first presented at Pataka by its curator Kohai Grace, then extended for four months at Toi MAHARA with another four Te Ātiawa ki Whakarongotai artists and a strong public programme. Kohai then developed *He whiri, he kete, he tangata* with tutors at Toi Whakarakai in Te Wānanga o Raukawa which also connected past, present and future generations and knowledge. This was the first in a series of exhibitions with the kaupapa 'Kia Emiemi', which received an Arts Sustainability grant from Council spanning three years, working with A.R.T Confederation artists and Te Wānanga o Raukawa.



He kete, he whiri, he tangata. Photograph Ryan B. McCauley.



Curator Kohai Grace at work with weavers Pip Devonshire and Whaea Sonja Snowden in *He kete, he whiri, he tangata* in Te Manawa Toi | Coastlands Gallery. Photograph Toi MAHARA.

Kāpiti artist John Baxter's paintings and book illustrations in *Rua Potae*, curated by Gary Freemantle, opened in early June alongside *He whiri, he kete, he tangata*. Drawn together for the first time in 30 years, this exhibition presented a significant artist for a new generation and audiences.

(Interview with Mark Amery on RNZ Culture 101 programme)

<https://www.rnz.co.nz/national/programmes/culture-101/audio/2018943515/john-baxter-rua-p-tae-he-who-wears-two-hats>



Rua Potae, John Baxter and whanau at combined opening. Photograph Janet Bayly.



Whaea Lois McNaught and Sandra Edwards, Ātiawa Whakarongotai Marae Chair person and secretary, and Alison Grant at opening of Rua Pota. Photograph Janet Bayly.



*Curator Gary Freemantle and artist John Baxter at opening of Rua Potae.
Photograph Janet Bayly.*

DELIVERING A COMMUNITY ASSET

The redeveloped gallery also adds vitality and visibility as a lively community asset for Waikanae township. The glazed corner leading into Mahara Place and the gallery entrance presents high quality Kāpiti and national artists and craft workers visible to passers-by as well as gallery visitors. The retail shop supports a sustainable income for artists and the gallery alongside new Toi MAHARA and Field Collection merchandise.

The gallery has had many international visitors and the feedback and interest in local artists, exhibition works and retail works for sale and enjoyment of the gallery spaces has been one of many highlights of the new gallery.



Retail shop from Waipuna Toi | Community Space. Photograph Andy Spain.



Arotake Toi | Mahara Arts Review 2023 award-winning artist Rosemary Mortimer and sponsor, Athfields Architecture, Nick Mouat. Photograph Kevin Ramshaw.

Waipuna Toi | Community Space sited in the gallery entrance has proved an attractive, workable site for a range of exhibitions, including the very popular children’s art and poetry in *Wai Ora*, local arts access group The Shed Project, and a local artist’s group, The Saturday Painters. It has also functioned well for events including puppet shows, live music, a Kāpiti Chamber of Commerce social event, catering for openings and several artist’s workshops. Three north-facing windows enable the public to see these events in progress, as well as exhibitions on the walls.



Weavers Ezra Bevan, Tracey Morgan and others at work (left) and Harriet Bright workshop ‘Creating clay creatures’ (right) in Waipuna Toi | Community Space.



Artists talk for Friends of Toi MAHARA with Adrienne Riseley and Wirihana Kiriona.



Photographs Janet Bayly.

Defect-testing, remediating and fine-tuning of the building's operating systems continued throughout the year while gallery and council staff collaborated to monitor and manage the building effectively through a changing exhibitions and events programme. Each gallery and workspace is interconnected and very small by most public gallery standards, which means they all 'have to work hard with overlapping functions'. This requires careful management for public safety, access, and the safe storage, presentation and movement of artworks and furniture during and between exhibitions and events. We are very grateful for our dedicated staff managed by our multi-skilled Business Manager Vicki Jackways. Everyone has given 110% as our small team has grown and delivered our beautiful new gallery to an admiring public.

Toi Mahara is a boutique art gallery with roots deep in local community arts and crafts groups. It curates history exhibitions as well, reflecting a depth of locally grounded content.

Mark Southcombe in Architecture NZ, July 2024 (Issue 4)

The vision of Toi Mahara gallery is clear. They have set out to be an artistic hub for Kāpiti stories and Kāpiti creatives – and their first suite of exhibitions certainly achieves that. It's an exciting space that I look forward to visiting again in the future.

Sinead Overbye in The Post, January 2024

THE FIELD COLLECTION

The gift of the nationally significant Field Collection to the Mahara Gallery Trust was a key driver in redeveloping the gallery to museum standards, generously supported by the Field Collection Trust. The collection is comprised of 44 artworks, 24 of them by Frances Hodgkins (1869-1947), considered New Zealand's most significant expatriate artist. It is now installed in Te Kohinga | Collection Store, its new permanent home.

Adding a permanent art collection has extended the gallery's core function as the district gallery, to include responsibilities for maintaining and preserving the collection for future generations, supporting research, and making it available to viewers in a range of ways. At its core is 22 watercolours by Frances Hodgkins which are very fragile and can only receive limited exposure to light each year to prevent further damage. They cannot be on permanent display and only some can be shown in temporary exhibitions or loaned to other institutions each year.

Partly because it is very small by most public gallery standards, the Field Collection is very accessible for visitors, by prior arrangement, and a small number of works are also displayed in curated exhibitions. Curator's tours of the Collection Store have proved popular for local, regional and national visitors in small groups at a time. These can book between Tuesday and Thursday each week. Our half-time curator Vicki Robson, supported by Master of Museum and Heritage Practice student at Te Herenga Waka Victoria University of Wellington, Eiréann Diggins, from April 2024, has been hard at work cataloguing, labelling and housing the Field family archive alongside collection items.

Ten Field Collection works were included in the opening exhibition *Ngā Taonga Tuku Iho, Kāpiti Treasures*. This ran from November to April, alongside taonga borrowed from important local private collections and Kāpiti museums to tell stories of other families who settled here from the early 19th century, and whose treasures have lasted the ravages of time. The Taonga Tuku Iho, Heritage Gallery has received strong interest and very engaged audiences spanning mana whenua, families, children and new visitors to the district.



*Curator Vicki Robson giving a floor talk In Taonga Tuku Iho | Heritage Gallery.
Photograph Janet Bayly.*



Kapakapanui School taura visiting Women of Otaki exhibition in Taonga Tuku Iho | Heritage Gallery. Photograph Janet Bayly.



Documentary film-maker Blandine Massiet du Brest presenting her film 'Frances Hodgkins, Anything but a Still Life' at Shoreline Cinema, Waikanae. Photograph Kevin Ramshaw.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

The 2023/24 year saw a significant change in the financial operations of the Trust with the opening of the new building and the appointment of the additional staff needed to operate the new Gallery.

This report acknowledges Kāpiti Coast District Council's operating grant of \$643,639 of which \$400,000 was provided from the government's "better off" funding to councils. This increased grant recognizes the need to make effective use of the new \$6 million building, by substantially increased activities, exhibitions and collection management. Total operating expenses increased to \$784,873, from \$436,472 in 2022/23 driven largely by the increased staffing numbers. Revenue from gallery operations was reduced by the 4 month delay in launching the new Gallery but has developed well in the eight months since the opening.

The new Partnership Agreement between the Trust and Council provides for separation of future responsibilities which reflects their relative strengths and expertise, with the Trust responsible for the exhibition, educational and public outreach programmes and the Council for building and equipment maintenance, energy costs, cleaning and security and other related building costs.

The operating result for the year was a small deficit of just over \$5,000 which reduced our accumulated funds to only \$27,076. (Both figures remain subject to audit.) The Trust recognises that going forward it will need to increase revenue from external donations and other grants to establish a fully sustainable funding base and also to achieve budget surpluses to increase the low level of accumulated funds.

The Trust's audited financial statements will be available in due course on the Charities NZ website - charities.govt.nz



Master carver Chris Gerretzen (Te Ātiawa ki Whakarongotai), Ra Higgott (Ngāti Toa, Ngāti Raukawa and Te Ātiawa) and Toi MAHARA Board member Ann-Maree Ellison (Te Āti Awa ki Whakarongotai, Ngāti Toa Rangatira, Ngāti Raukawa, Ngāi Tahu) with the pou in the entrance to Toi MAHARA. Photograph Kevin Ramshaw.



Toi MAHARA entrance, east sentinel. Photograph Andy Spain.

Ahakoā he iti, he pounamu – although it is small, it is a treasure.