

GERALD BARNETT
Watercolours and drawings, 1990-2010
MAHARA GALLERY
29 August – 3 October 2010

Gerald Barnett, the first professional director of Mahara Gallery from 2001-2006, has returned to his first love, painting. This is his first exhibition in ten years, and spans twenty years' work. Barnett has been active as a writer and curator, working for the National Art Gallery, the Colin McCahon Trust and the Real Art Roadshow. In 2007, he moved to Australia to concentrate on his art.

Barnett has been working in watercolour since the early 1970s. His first solo exhibition was in 1979 with the Jan Dowse Gallery in Gisborne. Apart from the decade 1985 to 1995, when he showed with Aberhart North Gallery in Auckland, he has not been a regular exhibitor.

The earliest works in this show were painted in the 1990s, when watercolour was seriously unfashionable in the contemporary art world. Today, it's back in vogue. But Gerald has always made art primarily for his own pleasure and satisfaction. For him, the quest to create something of beauty remains relevant, meaningful, and contemporary.

Watercolour is a medium which allows for no second thoughts or reworking. It demands a high level of technical ability and instinct. In Gerald's hands, it's a medium of improvisation and adventure, and I've sometimes thought that his central theme is one of transformation; an exploration of the way forms emerge, hover and dissolve as our eye travels across the white page.

Jill Trevelyan, curator and writer.

We gratefully acknowledge Gerald Barnett's input to this exhibition, and also Jill Trevelyan, Dave Chalmers, Barbara Chalmers, Stephanie Bronk, Sage Bronk and Hany Sadek.

Thank you also to the Kapiti Coast District Council for their essential ongoing support, and also to Kapiti's Beach FM 106.3 and the Real Art Trust.