# SARJEANT QUARTERLY

Newsletter of Te Whare o Rehua Sarjeant Gallery ISSN 2624-408X / Winter 2025



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**Cover**: Joanna Margaret Paul *Frugal Pleasures [still life with orange leaf and gold dish]* 1999, watercolour on paper. Collection of David and Karen Skegg, on deposit at Hocken Collections, Uare Taoka o Hākena, University of Otago. Courtesy of Joanna Margaret Paul Estate Above: The recently reopened Te Whare o Rehua Sarjeant Gallery, photo: Andy Spain

### Nau mai, haere mai,

We have noticeably entered a period of seasonal shift as the air cools and the leaves fall, and we can see new snow starting to appear on Ruapehu thanks to the fabulous views that our new facilities provide. From this setting, we are about to enter our first Puanga season, when we will reflect on the challenges and successes of the previous year and prepare for the new year ahead. We are looking forward to sharing with you the new exhibitions and events that will launch over this period.

As well as our special Puanga exhibition, *Kanapa ki Runga, Kanapa ki Raro,* we are delighted to host *Joanna Margaret Paul: Imagined in the context of a room*—a beautiful exhibition and publication developed in partnership with the Dunedin Public Art Gallery. We are also very excited to host the much-anticipated first edition of the annual Pattillo Whanganui Arts Review since our return to Pukenamu. As is the tradition during Puanga, we celebrate our forebears as we foster new generations.

In thinking of those who have recently left us, this issue of the Sarjeant

Quarterly pays homage to the Sarjeant Gallery's first professional director, Gordon Brown. We also look at his impressive library, which now has a new home at the gallery and will be an important resource for both serious researchers and curious browsers alike.

Meanwhile, behind the scenes, our collections team have been busy with commencing the relocation of our 8000-work art collection into our new purpose-built collection storage spaces. And the rest of the gallery has been really humming with a steady flow of customers through our café, lots of activity in our shop, regular visits from school groups of all ages and tour groups from all over the world, and many wonderful reviews from visitors.

As we enter this period of seasonal renewal, it's clear the gallery has a bright future. Predictions made in 2019 estimated that we would see 65,000 visitors a year after reopening. After just six months, we are thrilled to report that we've already seen more than 74,000 visitors through our doors. Thank you all for your support.

Andrew Clifford Director

# Joanna Margaret Paul: Imagined in the context of a room 12 July–9 November, 2025

These paintings take the form of a frieze Their subject is interior change They are imagined in the context of a room.<sup>1</sup>

Across a creative practice spanning more than three decades, Joanna Margaret Paul (1945-2003) navigated her work within the context and the concept of a room. A room of the heart. the mind, the spirit; a room of one's own. Built upon the foundation of an intense responsiveness to the world around her, Paul's art asserted the legitimacy and importance of lived experience, particularly the experiences of women as subject matter. She celebrated the 'ordinary' and the 'minor', she rejected trends and hierarchies, and she trusted how the world appeared from her point of view. Imagined in the context of a room presents a close study of Paul's career and considers the resonance and legacy of her work in our contemporary time.

Top: Joanna Margaret Paul *Inventories* 1977, gouache on paper. Collection of the Sarjeant Gallery Te Whare o Rehua. Purchased 1981

**Right**: Joanna Margaret Paul *Still life, Okains Bay* 1973, watercolour and bodycolour on paper. Private Collection, Christchurch For Paul, the home offered an environment where objects, places and people acted as markers of memory, identity, domestic life, relationships and time. The interior was not only a space where art and life lived, but it was also connected to the landscape and viewed in relation to it.

As both a publication and exhibition, this project (which opened at the Dunedin Public Art Gallery in 2021 and subsequently toured to Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu and City Gallery Wellington) gathers together the diffuse strands of Paul's creative practice and reflects the intersections and divergences between the significant body of experimental film, drawing, painting, photography and poetry that were left behind at the time of her death in 2003.

Moving across the different phases of Paul's life as an artist, the exhibition traces key journeys that shaped the artist's career: from Ōtepoti Dunedin to Banks Peninsula to Whanganui (her home from 1985 until her passing in 2003);



between the mind, body and spirit: and between presence and absence.

Although many of Paul's artworks can be seen as autobiographical, after moving to Whanganui new concerns came into focus that were less present within her practice. Issues such as architectural preservation and genetic engineering became consuming focuses, but were often expressed through means other than the visual arts. Twenty-two years after her passing, we are enormously proud to once again be showing Paul's work in a gallery she loved and where she had her first major show in 1989—A Chronology: Joanna Margaret Paul.

This exhibition was curated by Greg Donson—Senior Curator and Programmes Manager, Te Whare o Rehua Sarjeant Gallery, and Lauren Gutsell and Lucy Hammonds, Kairauhī Curators of Dunedin Public Art Gallery, who developed and led the exhibition and publication of the accompanying book with Te Whare o Rehua Sarjeant Gallery as project partner.





1. Joanna Margaret Paul, *Transformations*, Wellington Settlement Gallery, 1973

# 2025 Pattillo Whanganui Arts Review 31 May–31 August 2025

Te Whare o Rehua Sarjeant Gallery is delighted to welcome the 35th iteration of the Whanganui Arts Review back to Pukenamu Queen's Park. With continued support from our principal sponsor and partner Pattillo, and supported by a strong group of Whanganui businesses, this year's Arts Review represents a wide array of awards and a substantial prize for the winner of the Open Award. In addition to a generous cash prize, Pattillo have also sponsored the Pattillo Project—where the winner of the Open Award will receive a solo exhibition at the Sarjeant Gallery with mentoring from the gallery's curatorial team.

The judge this year was Abby Cunnane, Manutaki Director at Te Pātaka Toi Adam Art Gallery.

There is one last award in this year's Arts Review, so don't forget to cast your vote for the Whanganui River Markets Trust People's Choice Award, closing

Top: Frances Stachl receiving the Pattillo Open Award with sponsor of the Pattillo Whanganui Arts Review, Anne Pattillo

Above: The Pattillo Open Award winning work Lost and found in translation. Translations of 'You and I are earth'. (A phrase taken from an English earthenware plate, c1661) by Frances Stachl





5pm 31 July, with the winner announced shortly thereafter.

Pattillo Open Award: Frances Stachl Dalgleish Architects Excellence Award: Kate Sellar PKF Doyle and Associates Excellence Award: Merrilyn George

Whanganui Garden Services Merit Award: Penni Wyse Friends of the Sarjeant Merit Award: George Agius Renata's Art & Framing Merit Award: Wigs Arathoon Edith Collier Trust Merit Award: Kristy Palleson Barnicoat & Healy Merit Award: Margot Bennetts Article Café Merit Award: Tia and Ming Ranginui Elva Abbot Memorial Youth

Recognition Award: Danielle Taylor Moore Pattillo Caught Our Eye Award: Karney Herewini Whanganui River Markets Trust People's Choice Award:

Voting closes Thursday 31 July at 5pm

## Sophia Smolenski: Offering It Up 17 May–31 August 2025

Sophia Smolenski has worked in the arts ecology of Aotearoa for over a decade, largely behind the scenes as a mount maker and museum technician. Drawing from this experience, her exhibition *Offering It Up* transforms the often-invisible world of display fabrication into a compelling subject in its own right. Toured with the support of Te Pātaka Toi Adam Art Gallery and now showing in our heritage gallery, this installation explores the tools, materials, and roles behind the scenes of exhibition-making.

Visitors are greeted by a large, beautifully crafted vitrine, two pristine crates, an oversized foam chock, and a fireresistant plastic welder's screen—each hand-made to Smolenski's exacting standards. These objects, typically hidden or overlooked, are recreated as display objects, highlighting the aesthetics and functionality of the equipment that supports exhibitions. A video projection of Smolenski fabricating a mount in her workshop further underscores the divide between spaces of making and display.



The heart of the exhibition lies in Smolenski's collaboration with 22 artists from across Aotearoa. Each was invited to create a work to accompany a bespoke mount she crafted, originally made for personal items such as a lone work boot, workshop tools, or parking receipts. The artists weren't told what the mounts were originally for, prompting a diverse array of responses.

In *Offering It Up*, Smolenski shifts the spotlight to the often-unseen labour of exhibition support, proposing a more inclusive view of artistic creation where technicians and artists, objects and their supports, can be equally appreciated.

This exhibition is toured with the support of Te Pātaka Toi Adam Art Gallery and has been made possible by a generous grant from Creative New Zealand Toi Aotearoa.

Above: Sophia Smolenski's Offering It Up installed at Te Whare o Rehua Sarjeant Gallery

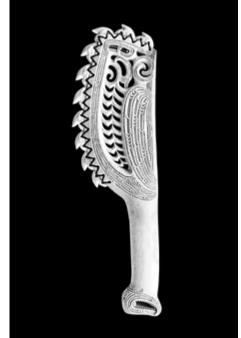




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# Kanapa ki Runga— Kanapa ki Raro 14 June–21 September 2025

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Above: Rangi Kipa (Te Atiawa, Taranaki) *Tini* whetū e iti pōkēao, 2024 wheua paraoa (sperm whale bone), niho tōiki (tiger shark teeth), aho (waxed nylon) Photo: Trinity Thompson Browne

**Opposite:** Cliff Whiting (Te Whānau ā Apanui) *Korero* 1965, wood, 1973/3/2. Collection of Te Whare o Rehua Sarjeant Gallery. Purchased with a grant from the Peter Stuyvesant Foundation, 1973 Kanapa ki runga, Kanapa ki raro, Māpuna he wai whakaata Ko Te Whare o Rehua Gleaming are the stars above Glistening are the waters below Where the pool reflects The House of Rehua Che Wilson, 2024

A selection of local and national artists have been called to create works with the above poetic narrative as inspiration. Puanga (Matariki) is a time for wananga, connection, remembrance and is a central theme for this exhibition titled Kanapa ki Runga-Kanapa ki Raro. Kanapa ki runga references the celestial realm. The night sky is a connection to both the past and the future. Kanapa ki raro grounds us in the earthly domain and places us in the present. This exhibition is a way for each of the fourteen featured artists to communicate their own aspirations or create a work about past events that may have impacted their lives.

Renowned artist Rangi Kipa has created a powerful taonga, a 'potent symbol of authority'. Kipa describes the polysemy of his weapon, a maripi (customary knife); 'weapons also have a symbolic power to demonstrate that capability, which in turn can also be seen as the ability to invoke peace.' This is a transcendent object of immense beauty—standing as a sentinel in the dynamic koriporipo (current) where tupuna and descendant thinking converge.

Migrating to her Whanganui whenua, Maiangi Waitai, a 'receptor' of stellar-ly inspiration, graces us with her presence this Puanga season. Waitai weaves together a cacophony of anahera, clouds, skulls, symbols, manaia, koruru and other-worldly beings into a multimedia installation. For her, Rehua the star is depicted as 'the god-like aspect of ourselves'. Poised in the gallery in three-dimensional space, her artwork evokes happiness. Waitai is an ebullient, unique artist who has always been singular in her visionary art-making practice.

Isiaha Te Rangatira Barlow presents an opulent triptych, packed with reticent and equally overt symbolism to tease out our contemplative powers. A seductive tri-offering lures us into a world of human theatre where timelines, cultures, politics and power collide. Golden halos hover behind sinister figures. Orwellian themes emerge from acutely painted forms and compositions fraught with tension. Religious narratives drawn from the proto-Renaissance



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era that have been part of Barlow's oeuvre, are sharply weaponised, imploring the viewer to question the power structures behind contemporary social upheaval.

Israel Tangaroa Birch continues his reign as a master of light, his work resonating with celestial beauty. Although it is alluring, there is always a challenging aspect present beneath the surface. Birch sends a visual 'wero' using kowhaiwhai and accompanying texts such as 'Rae ki te Rae – Game recognise Game'. This piece features two elements, a mangopare (hammer-head shark) and a stylised kowhai ngutu-kaka (flower) facing each other, in a state of confrontation while at the same time, conveying a sentiment of mutual respect. Birch's light refracting metallic artworks fit seamlessly into our gallery where architectural narratives celebrate the ethereal qualities of light.

Aaron Te Rangiao's *Magic Net* is an object conceived from a chance opshop encounter. This involved finding a vinyl record in all its retro glory—a cracklingly authentic 45-inch, five minute rendition of the origins of net-making, as brought to the world of men by other-worldly beings *Patupaiarehe* (or *Ponaturi* as they are known in the Far

**Right top**: Wi Taepa (Te Arawa, Ngāti Whakaue, Te Āti Awa, Ngāti Pikiao, Ngāti Te Roro o Te Rangi) *Ipu "Waka"* 1999, raku bodied clay, oxide, gas fired to 1180 C, 1999/28/1. Collection of Te Whare o Rehua Sarjeant Gallery. Purchased with funds donated by Patrons of the Sarjeant Gallery, 1999

Right bottom: Israel Tangaroa Birch (Ngāti Kahungunu, Ngā Puhi, Ngāti Rakaipaaka, Ngāi Tawake ki te Waoku) *Rae ki te Rae – Game Recognise Game*, 2023, pigments, lacquer on etched stainless steel. Courtesy of Milford Galleries North). The idea has manifested into an intriguing artwork. Te Rangiao has always demonstrated an adroitness with objects and sculpture, unafraid to test ideas and materials. This is an artist who fearlessly pushes boundaries with a Maui-esque vigour, and audiences will delight in the karanga of the *Magic Net*.

Ngahina Hohaia has been creating artworks from sustainably sourced toroa (albatross) and tohorā (whale). There has been a revival of tribal customary practices around Māori material culture —in particular, taonga species such as tohorā. Hohaia—who has diligently woven and constructed these materials into exquisite taonga, has spent years researching whale harvesting techniques. These are carefully cultivated works of veneration and an important contribution to tribal knowledge repositories.

Like tributaries flowing inward to Te Whare o Rehua, Professor Bob Jahnke has carved a path through the landscape of New Zealand art. His current works are loaded with politics, layered with meaning and emanate not only physical light in space, but the luminous qualities of *tupuna* wisdom. The use of mirrors invites questions about eternity. From the sharp and piercing scholarly mind of the maker, each piece becomes a cyclical



line of inquiry; inwardly and then outwardly. Puanga is the perfect time to show works that reflect, challenge and empower.

The artists of this exhibition have produced works that offer an insight to the wider Toi Māori scene which is dynamic, edgy and forward thinking. Each of them brings their unique vision to the house of Rehua, to inspire, celebrate, and provoke thought. *'Māpuna he wai whakaata—where the pool reflects'—*this line from our opening whakatauaki refers to the reflection of the stars in a pool of calm water, where one may contemplate the heavens.

Cecelia Kumeroa Curator—Programmes & Engagement

Exhibiting artists: Aaron Te Rangiao Gardiner, Robert Jahnke, Isiaha Barlow, Israel Tangaroa Birch, Maiangi Waitai, Maihi Potaka, Matthew McIntyre Wilson, Melanie Tangaere Baldwin, Natasha Keating, Ngahina Hohaia, Rangi Kipa, Russ Flatt, Ta Piri o Te Rangi Pirikahu, Te Ururangi Rowe

## Gordon H. Brown OBE (b.1931, d.2025)



Above: Gordon H. Brown photographed by Gil Hanly in 2001, with his 1968 portrait by Colin McCahon. Both the Gil Hanly photograph and the McCahon portrait are in the Sarjeant Gallery collection. Image reproduced courtesy of Gil Hanly and the Colin McCahon Research and Publication Trust.

Gordon Harold Brown OBE, our first professional director, died peacefully in hospital in Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland on the evening of Sunday 16 March, aged 93. Brown, who was born in Wellington in 1931, first trained in Fine Arts at Canterbury School of Art and graduated in 1956. He then trained as a librarian and found work at the Alexander Turnbull Library before a short stint as Librarian-in-charge at the Elam School of Fine Arts. He was subsequently appointed the first Research Librarian at Auckland Art Gallery, then Director of the Waikato Art Gallery for one year from 1970, before moving to Dunedin to take up the role of Curator of Pictures at the Hocken Library, leading to his tenure at the Sarjeant Gallery in Whanganui from 1974 to 1977.

While working at the Sarjeant Gallery he produced many reports that furthered the professionalisation of the organisation and paved the way for the decades that followed after his successor, Bill Milbank, became Director. Brown received a fellowship to tour museums and galleries in the USA and observe their operations, during which he took the photos that became his Hotel North America series. He initiated the relationship between the Sarjeant Gallery and the Collier family, which Milbank went on to develop further, and which resulted in the large body of works from Edith Collier's estate formally entering the permanent care of the gallery in 1984.

After leaving the Sarjeant Gallery, Brown became a full-time writer, art historian and critic. He was also a painter and photographer, and his works are held in private and public collections including the collection of Te Whare o Rehua Sarjeant Gallery. In particular, he is noted for his scholarship on Colin McCahon and his authorship of many iconic NZ art publications. In 1980 Brown was awarded the OBE for services to art history, and in 2002 Victoria University presented him with an Honorary Doctorate and initiated an annual lecture and publication series in his name. In 2017 he donated to the Sarjeant Gallery his personal art library of 5,000 books, which can now be accessed through our new reading

**Right:** The three former Gallery directors at Te Whare o Rehua Sarjeant Gallery centenary celebrations in 2019. Cutting the cake are (I–r) Greg Anderson (2007–2022), Gordon H. Brown (1974–1977), and Bill Milbank (1978–2006). room, which is named in his honour. We were pleased to be able to celebrate this new space and his life with a keynote lecture by Linda Tyler as part of our opening season last year. We were also glad to have him join us for our centenary celebrations in 2019.

Moe mai rā e Koro

Andrew Clifford



## Gordon H. Brown Reading Room

Thanks to a team of committed volunteers we are delighted to be able to offer public access to our new reading room, named in honour of the late Gordon Harold Brown OBE.

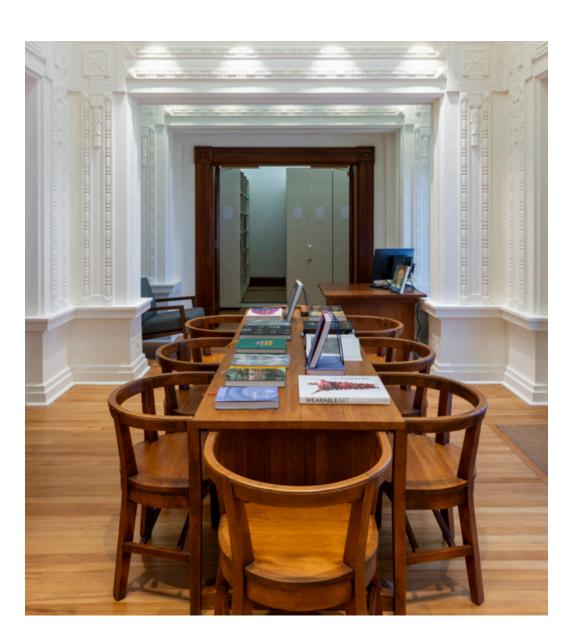
In 2018 the former Sarjeant Gallery director (1974-1977) gifted his substantial personal collection of art books to the gallery. This collection, comprising 5,000 items, is of national significance both because it was collected by Brown over his life-time and because of the depth and breadth of the material it contains. Included are New Zealand and international volumes on art and art practice, art theory, philosophy and history, as well as early New Zealand regional art society catalogues, periodicals, monographs, limited-edition artist books, and a stunning section of international photography books.

For his personal library Brown devised a bespoke classification system which

**Opposite:** Located within the stunning original entry foyer of the heritage gallery building, the reading room is accessed via the exhibition galleries.

organised the collection into highly specialised art related subjects, so, after much research and consideration, we decided to continue using his system. Brown's book collection has been added to the existing gallery library holdings resulting in an extensive reference library of over 10,000 items. With the assistance of gallery staff Katherine Claypole and Sarah Loveluck-Newland, together with support from the Whanganui District Library, we recently completed the cataloguing of both library collections onto the Whanganui District Library's public access system Koha.

We are delighted with the public response so far and hope that as word spreads more visitors, researchers and students will visit and spend time exploring this unique collection. The Gordon H. Brown Reading Room is located within the architecturally stunning former entry foyer in the gallery's heritage building and can be accessed via the exhibition galleries. It is open on Friday and Saturday afternoons from 1.30–4.30pm or by appointment. Contact info@sarjeant.org. nz or gallery reception to request a booking.



### Venue Hire and Gallery Revenue

At the time of writing, it is autumnal May in Whanganui and we are marking the completion of the gallery's sixth month open. Only days ago, we released the news that a stunning 74,000+ visitors have been through since opening day in November. This is the reason we've all been feeling so busy!

It is wonderful to see the gallery being enjoyed and used by so many. The gallery's six revenue streams are all in gear and working hard. These revenue streams reduce the gallery's operating costs which are born by Council, so it has been a priority to have them up and running as quickly and efficiently as possible. These six streams are our shop, café, venue hire, ticketed events, guided tours, and the donations or giving programmes.

The café and shop are a key part of the gallery offer, both glittering and tempting us all every day. A less obvious revenue stream is the gallery as a venue for hire. Managed efficiently, this stream has the potential to support the gallery operations in a very meaningful way.

The heritage gallery was well used as a venue for most of its first 100 years. Now, with good notice and planning, wedding ceremonies under the dome or in the gallery foyer are again a possibility, as are seated or standing, private, community and corporate events, performances, classes and workshops, launches, lectures, panels, talks, film screenings... the possibilities are end-less. The gallery is very fortunate to be working with the professional team at Whanganui Venues and Events, who are helping us develop best practice systems for venue hire enquires and bookings.

We have two purpose-built event spaces which can join and become one large event space with a stunning view of Ruapehu. In addition, a small private meeting room which seats six and a large private meeting room which seats eighteen. All of these spaces have screens, conferencing and PA capability. Please complete the venue hire booking inquiry form on Sarjeant.org.nz and someone will be in touch with you to discuss your event.

In addition to the income generated by the café, shop (both already functioning well ahead of predictions and targets) and the aforementioned venue hire—we provide guided tours of the building and exhibitions led by staff, ticketed events



and a programme of membership and donations.

Each one of these streams not only generates income for the gallery and council but provides new ways for the community to engage with our facilities, and supports and uplifts our region in a myriad of ways.

Jaki Arthur, Communications Lead

### Funding and Events



**Top:** Dick Frizzell in his abundantly visual studio.

Above: Grace Wright in her elegant Henderson studio.

**Opposite top:** Lisa Reihana giving her talk at the Fair

Opposite bottom: The gang in the donut

# Te Whare o Rehua Sarjeant Gallery at the Aotearoa Art Fair 2025

In May a group of generous donors who have given to the Sarjeant Gallery Redevelopment Project and the Endowment Fund enjoyed complimentary VIP passes to the Aotearoa Art Fair in Auckland. Over two days they experienced a range of exclusive art experiences, including visiting private collections and artists' studios to meet and hear directly from the artists.

Two very different artists gave us insights to their art practices and bravely shared work in progress. Dick Frizzell's studio was a treasure trove of paintings, research, memorabilia and collected objects. He talked freely and entertained us with anecdotes about his early career to the present day.

Grace Wright, a young rising star artist also spoke about her practice amongst her new paintings destined for exhibition later this year—some works so huge she uses a ladder to reach the whole surface. Her studio could not have been more different to Dick's, with its polished concrete floors and double height linen curtains filtering the light. Early access to the Art Fair before it opened on the second day was a special privilege. We heard from Lisa Reihana about her most recent project, surrounded by her stunning works exhibited by Sally Dan Cuthbert Gallery, Sydney.



It was wonderful to have such a strong Sarjeant Gallery contingent at the Aotearoa Art Fair this year. And it was a great way to build a sense of community amongst Sarjeant Gallery Endowment Fund donors. 6

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This art experience will not be our last! With the redevelopment project complete we are working to build a supporter group of regular Endowment Fund donors who will take part in a curated calendar of events that connects them closely to art and the gallery they love.

Their contributions (starting at \$1200/ year and paid by instalment) will ensure Te Whare o Rehua Sarjeant Gallery can deliver over and above what is normally expected from a regional gallery by partnering in ambitious exhibitions, supporting artists careers and gallery education programmes, and continuing to build and care for our nationally significant collection.

Becoming a Sarjeant Gallery Endowment Fund donor is a way to make a real difference. If you are curious to learn more, please get in touch with Nicki by email: Nicki.Manthel@sarjeant.org.nz



### TE WHARE O REHUA SARJEANT GALLERY

### 14 June – 21 September 2025

Bob Jahnke Aaron Te Rangiao Isiaha Barlow Israel Tangaroa Birch Maiangi Waitai Maihi Potaka Matthew McIntyre Wilson Melanie Tangaere Baldwin Natasha Keating Ngahina Hohaia Rangi Kipa Russell Flatt Ta Piri o te Rangi Pirikahu Te Ururangi Rowe



Rangi Kipa (Te Atiawa, Taranaki) *Tini whetū e iti põkēao*, 2024 wheua paraoa (sperm whale bone), niho tõiki (tiger shark teeth), aho (waxed nylon) Photo: Tinity Thompson Browne