



**BLACK DOOR GALLERY**  
CONTEMPORARY NEW ZEALAND ART AND DESIGN

## Artist Bio

# Robyn Kahukiwa, AUS/NZ

## Painting

Robyn Kahukiwa is one of the foremost Māori artists in New Zealand. Kahukiwa's work is often celebrated for its contribution to the evolution of traditional and contemporary Māori art, and her interweaving of art and politics.

Australian born, Kahukiwa lost connection with her culture and family until her return to Aotearoa at age nineteen. The rediscovery of her Māori heritage was the catalyst to her becoming a renowned thinker and maker. In the 1960s and '70s, as a young mother living in the state housing units of Wellington, Robyn Kahukiwa began quietly producing artworks depicting marginalisation, disempowerment and spiritual displacement. The events of the mid-1970s such as the Hikoī (Land March on Parliament) and the passing of the Treaty of Waitangi Act further determined her interest in issues relevant to Māori. She embarked on a body of work that crossed between ambitious protest style paintings, illustrative work and text rich pieces.

Today, Kahukiwa's art remains true to the core ideas of her early work. While Kahukiwa's themes remain activist in nature, often exploring complex and fraught ideas of the dissolution of Māori identity, resettlement and cultural identity; her compositions are increasingly uncluttered and restrained, featuring only her powerful and select motifs. Now in her 80s, with a significant body of work behind her, there is a sense that her making has served as a form of therapy, a spiritual and cultural healing. As Kahukiwa describes: "The reality of Māori life today has got to be put by me on canvas, because otherwise I have to think about it myself...that's how I can deal with it."

Kahukiwa has work in notable collections across New Zealand including Te Papa, Auckland Art Gallery, MFAT and the University of Auckland. Te Papa museum currently holds 23 Kahukiwa works in their collection and the Auckland Art Gallery have several major works. In 2011, Kahukiwa was awarded with the Te Tohu Toi Kē Award from Te Waka Toi, the Māori arm of Creative New Zealand.

# Robyn Kahukiwa, NZ

## Artist CV

Painting

### **SIGNIFICANT EXHIBITION**

2014: Major exhibition *Five Maori Painters* at the Auckland Art Gallery, Toi o Tāmaki (Robyn Kahukiwa, Emily Karaka, Kura Te Waru Rewiri, Saffronn Te Ratana and Star Gossage)

2016- 2017: Inclusion in national touring exhibition *Wahine Waitangi*

### **SIGNIFICANT COLLECTIONS**

Te Papa

Auckland Art Gallery

MFAT

Palmerston North Te Manawa Museum

Victoria University Art Collection

### **AWARDS**

2011: Te Tohu Toi Kē Award from Te Waka Toi (Creative NZ)

1994: Publication Award, Young People's Non-fiction Award for Paikea

### **RECENT SOLO EXHIBITIONS**

2019 Papatūānuku | Earth Mother

2019 Auckland Art Fair

2017 Upoko Tapu/Sacred Head

2015 Tangata Whenua

2014 Wahine me Tamariki

2012 Ngā Atua

2009 Power to Define

2007 Super Heroes for my Mokopuna

2005 Difference Celebrated

2004 NZ Natives

2003 Whanau

### **PUBLICATIONS**

Taniwha (1986), The Koroua and the Mauri stone (1994), Paikea (1994), Kēhua (1996), Supa heroes: te wero (2000), Koha (2003), Matatuhi (2007), The forgotten Taniwha (2009), Tutu Taniwha (2010), Te Marama (2011), The Boy and the Dolphin (2016), Ngā Atua: Māori Gods (2016), The Kuia and the Spider (1981), Watercress Tuna & the Children of Champion Street (1981), Wahine Toa: Women in Maori Myth (1984), Grandma's stick (1982), Hatupatu and the birdwoman (1982), The Blue Book (2014)