

ART COLLECTOR



THE UNDISCOVERED ISSUE

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FROM BEHIND THE LENS TO LEADING THE FAIR

The Aotearoa Art Fair director **Sue Waymouth** has built a collection that champions overlooked voices in contemporary art.

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Devoted collector and Fair Director of the Aotearoa Art Fair, **Sue Waymouth's** collecting journey began with a passion for photography. A camera often by her side, she first studied photography at Auckland University of Technology under lecturer **Helen Hughes**, where she learned to develop analogue photographs in the darkroom, grounding her understanding of the medium.

Her beginnings in collecting photography came when Director of Art + Object, **Ben Plumbly** convinced Waymouth to buy **Michael Parekōwhai's** photograph *Messines from The Consolation of Philosophy: Piko nei te matenga* (2001). Featuring portraits of floral arrangements in Crown Lynn vases, the series acts as a complex memorial to the New Zealand Māori Battalion's service during World War I, with each work titled after a foreign battlefield upon which they fought.



She has gone on to collect photographic works by **Edith Amituanai, Marti Friedlander, Robin Morrison, Anne Noble, Fiona Pardington, Shannon Te Ao, Elizabeth Thomson, Yvonne Todd** and **Ans Westra**. Waymouth has held senior marketing roles in New Zealand and overseas, including New Zealand Funds Management, Chase Bank (UK) and Alvern Media (UK), and for the last decade, has run her own marketing consultancy focused on supporting the arts. She has been on the advisory committee of the Contemporary Benefactors, a philanthropic tier of the Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki for almost ten years, and is now Co-Chair. Through this, she works with figures such as Senior Curator of Global Contemporary Art, **Natasha Conland**, meeting and supporting artists including **Simon Denny, Ana Iti, Jonathan Ward Knox, Yona Lee, Suji Park** and **Michael Stevenson**.

A significant moment in her personal collecting was the purchase of a 1970s stained canvas landscape painting by **Gretchen Albrecht**, *Dipping and Sweeping (Sunset)* (1974), from Two Rooms, noting, “I fell in love with the velvety swathes of colour and its connections to the New Zealand landscape on the West Coast...It is my favourite piece, and it takes me to a happy place every time I look at it.”

She goes on, “My collection is quite heavily focused on female contemporary artists, as their aesthetic often resonates with me. Women artists have not been given the credit they deserve, and it is only now that they are beginning to be recognised for their contribution to art history. Central to my collection is a work by **Jacqueline Fahey**, *Mum, Christmas Day* (1971), purchased from Gow Langsford. Fahey’s paintings are exquisite with their layers of paint and her domestic imagery with feminist overtones which appeal to me, and it is only in her 90s that she is getting the recognition she deserves. Other works in my collection by **Star Gossage, Judy Millar** and **Seraphine Pick** also seem to resonate with Fahey’s work.”

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Sue Waymouth

PREVIOUS: Sue Waymouth at home with works by Patricia Piccinini, *The Protege*, 2023. Silicone, fibreglass, hair, 25 x 46 x 26 cm. Edition of 6.

RIGHT: Artwork on display: Elizabeth Thomson, *The Ocean of Eden II*, 2012. Acrylic, optically clear epoxy resin, glass spheres on wood panel, 120 x 154cm









“I am really passionate about supporting emerging artists and I do this through my own collecting, through the Auckland Art Gallery Contemporary Benefactors and also the Aotearoa Art Fair.”

Sue Waymouth

“During my recent post graduate art history studies, I focused on Māori and Pacific artists with the support of Auckland University Professor **Caroline Vercoe** and I am adding artists like **Edith Amituanai**, **Fatu Feu’u**, **Star Gossage**, **John Pule** and **Kalisolaite ‘Uhila** to my collection.”

Speaking to the scope of her collection, she notes, “I mainly own New Zealand art, with a scattering of Australian and international artists. I was lucky to be introduced to the work of Australian artist **Sally Gabori** by Tim Melville a long time ago. I also love **Patricia Piccinini** and have several works of hers.

“Fox Jensen has introduced me to international artists such as Australian artist **Tomislav Nikolic** and American artist **Winston Roeth** and I love the humour of British artist **David Shrigley** which I have bought through Two Rooms Gallery... Attending leading art fairs is a great way to discover international artists. After attending Sydney Contemporary and the Sydney Biennale I discovered two of my favourite artists from Australia, **Yasmin Smith** and **Mitch Cairns** from Commercial Gallery.

“I am really passionate about supporting emerging artists and I do this through my own collecting, through the Auckland Art Gallery Contemporary Benefactors and also the Aotearoa Art Fair. I am also really excited to be introducing a new section to the Fair which will support and showcase emerging artists and I hope to expand on this in years to come. The 2025 edition of the Fair will see a new space, *Horizons*, supported by the law firm Chapman Tripp.”

Alongside her Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Commerce degrees from the University of Otago, Waymouth has recently completed a Post Graduate Diploma in Art History from Auckland University. Fittingly, her advice to young or emerging collectors is “you should buy things you love, but it is worth researching the artist.”

LEFT:
Jude Rae, *SL426*, 2020, oil on linen,
122 x 137.5cm.

Patricia Piccinini, *The Protege*, 2023.
Silicone, fibreglass, hair, 25 x 46 x
26 cm. Edition of 6.