

Wayne Youle

20/20: words of wisdom

I tērā rua tekau tau, ka kitea tuatahitia ngā mahinga toi a Wayne Youle ki te whare toi hou o Pātaka pupiri taonga ki Porirua. Mai anō i taua wā, ka hau te rongō o Youle, hei mātanga toi matua o tēnei whenua.

Kei te whakaatahia ngā akoranga nui a Wayne Youle i roto i tērā rua ngahuru tau ki ngā mahinga toi o *20/20: words of wisdom*. Kei tēnei whakaaturanga ētahi o āna mahinga toi tuatahi e āta wetewete ana, e arohaehae ana i ngā taha e rua o tōna whakapapa, arā, ko tōna taha Māori, me tōna taha Pākehā. E whakaawe ana ētahi o ngā mahinga toi tuatahi e ngā toi nō te ao hou me te ao toi takitini o tana tamarikitanga, pērā i ngā peita koru rongonui a Gordon Walters, i te kākahu Harowīni e hangaia ana e te ārai hīrere mai i te kiriata rongonui o mua, o *Karate Kid* (1984) rānei. Ahakoa ngā rerekētanga i waenga i ēnei āhuetanga, ka rangona tonu ngā nekeneke o te ahurea me te tuakiri o Wayne Youle, i te wā o tōna tamarikitanga i ngā tau 1970 me ngā tau 1980.

Kei te whakaata atu ētahi anō o āna mahinga toi i ngā mahi i puta i a ia i muri atu i ngā rūnga whenua o Ōtautahi i te tau 2011, otirā, kei te kitea tōna aronga nui mai i ngā take e pā ana ki tōna anō tuakiri, ki tōna hononga ki tōna whānau me ngā hapori e karapoti ana i a rātou. Kei ngā taitara o āna mahi, nō nātata nei, ngā akoranga i mau i a ia mai i āna tamariki, i ōna mātua me ōna tino taurira. Kei te kitea hoki tōna ahunga atu ki te hōhonutanga o ngā tikanga toi me te nui o āna mahi ki te whakaputa mahinga toi.

Huri noa i te whakaaturanga, kua tāia e Wayne Youle ētahi kōrero poto mō ētahi o āna mahinga toi, e whakamārama ana i ngā akoranga matua māna i roto i āna mahi toi i roto i ngā tau rua tekau kua pahure. He kōrero muna ēnei, he mātauranga tuku iho ki te ringatoi mai i ōna tūpuna, waihoki, mai i a Youle ki āna tamariki. Kei te paku kitea pea te hiranga o ērā atu mahi i roto i ngā taitara me ngā tū whakaahua, heoi, māhau, mā te kaimātakitaki kē, ēnei mātauranga e kimi, mā tō ake mōhiotanga me ngā wheako nō roto i tōu anō ao.

Twenty years ago Wayne Youle participated in his first art exhibition at a newly opened Pātaka Art Gallery and Museum here in Porirua. In the years since, he has established a reputation as one of our country's leading contemporary artists.

The artworks in *20/20: words of wisdom* reflect on important life lessons that Wayne Youle has learnt over these past two decades. In the exhibition you will see a number of early works where Youle has taken no quarter in deconstructing and interrogating his own bicultural heritage as an artist of Māori and Pākehā ancestry. Many of these early artworks draw inspiration from a range of contemporary art and pop culture references from Youle's childhood, such as Gordon Walters' famous koru paintings, or the shower-curtain Halloween costume from the cult classic movie *Karate Kid* (1984). These seemingly disparate influences speak to the cultural politics and personal identity of Wayne Youle as a child of the 1970s and 80s.

Other pieces in the exhibition reflect on works made since the 2011 Christchurch earthquakes, noting a shift in focus away from Youle's own personal identity politics towards an engagement with family and the communities that surround them. Insights gleaned from his children, parents and mentors begin to appear in the titles of these recent works, marked also by a noticeable progression towards more complex and labour-intensive art practices.

Throughout the exhibition Wayne Youle has placed short written statements about certain artworks which speak to some of the key lessons that he has explored in his art over the past twenty years. These are intimate tales, words of wisdom passed down to the artist from his elders, and from him on to his children. Other works provide a hint as to their significance through the title and imagery, but you the viewer are left to deduce the meaning through your knowledge and life experiences.

BIOGRAPHY

I whānau mai a Wayne Youle (Ngāti Whakaeke, Ngāpuhi, Pākehā) ki Porirua i te tau 1974. I a ia e haere ana ki Mana College, he toki hākinakina ia, ka tākaro ia i te whutupōro mō te karapu whautupōro o Norths, ka kuhu atu hoki ki ngā whakataetae ā-rohe, ā-motu anō mō te mahi kauhauora i te taha o te Titahi Bay Surf Lifesaving Club. Ka riro i a ia te Tohu Paetahi mō te Mahi Hoahoa Patotuhi ki te Wellington Polytechnic School of Design i te tau 1999. I taua tau anō, ka kitea tuatahitia āna mahinga toi ki Pātaka, ka tū tana whakaaturanga takitahi tuatahi ki Te Whare Toi City Gallery Wellington. I te tau 2001, ka whai wāhi ia ki tētahi tino whakakitenga toi matihiko Māori, arā, ko *Techno Maori: Maori Art in the Digital Age*, i tū ki Pātaka me Te Whare Toi i te wā kotahi. Ko ētahi atu o āna whakaaturanga whakahirahira ko *Telecom Prospect 2004: New Art New Zealand* ki Te Whare Toi City Gallery Wellington, me *Young Maori Contemporary Artists* ki Sarjeant Gallery Te Whare o Rehua i Whanganui i ngā tau 2004 me 2005. I te tau 2009, ka whakatūria e Pātaka tētahi whakaaturanga mō ngā mahi a Youle nō tōna ngahuru tau tuatahi, arā ko *10 Down*.

Ko āna whakaaturanga takitahi i te wā tata nei, ko *AJAR* ki CoCA Toi Moroki i Ōtautahi (2018), ko *Strangely Familiar: Portraits by Wayne Youle* ki Te Pūkenga Whakaata i Te Whanganui-a-Tara (2018) me *Look Mum no Hands* ki Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū (2017). Ko āna nohonga toi nui, ko te Colin McCahon House Residency (2019), ko te Friends of Pātaka Residency (2014), ko te SCAPE / Artspace Residency ki Poihākēna (2012), ko te Rita Angus Residency me te Wellesley College Residency. Kei ngā kohinga matua o te ao tūmataiti me te ao tūmatanui āna mahinga toi e mau ana, pērā i te Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, i te Chartwell Collection ki Auckland Art Gallery, i te Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū, i te James Wallace Arts Trust, i te Pātaka Art + Museum me te Wellington City Council.

I te tau 2003, ka hūnuku a Youle ki Waitaha, kei te noho ia ki te raki o Amberley i tēnei wā. Tokotoru ngā tamariki ā Youle rāua ko tōna hoa wahine, ko Kelly McKay, arā, ko ngā ingoa o ngā tamariki ko Kupa (11), ko Arai (9), ko Tohu (4). Kei Porirua tonu ōna mātua e noho ana, he wāhi nui tō tōna whānau i roto i āna mahinga toi.

Ko ngā kaiwhakarite toi a Wayne Youle ki Te Whanganui-a-Tara ko {Suite} Gallery, ko Michael Reid Gallery tana kaiwhakarite toi ki Poihākēna me Pearini.

Wayne Youle (Ngāti Whakaeke, Ngāpuhi, Pākehā) was born in Porirua in 1974. Attending Mana College, he was an avid athlete playing rugby for the Norths Football Club and competing nationally and internationally with the Titahi Bay Surf Lifesaving Club. Graduating from Wellington Polytechnic School of Design with a Bachelor of Design in Typography in 1999, he participated in his first art exhibition here at Pātaka and held his first solo exhibition at City Gallery Wellington Te Whare Toi in the same year. In 2001 he was included in the landmark Māori digital art survey exhibition *Techno Maori: Maori Art in the Digital Age* that was shown simultaneously across Pātaka and City Gallery Wellington. Other notable shows from this period include *Telecom Prospect 2004: New Art New Zealand* at City Gallery Wellington, and *Young Maori Contemporary Artists* at the Sarjeant Gallery in Whanganui in 2004 and 2005. In 2009 Pātaka presented Youle's ten year survey exhibition *10 Down*.

Recent solo exhibitions include *AJAR* at CoCA Toi Moroki in Christchurch (2018), *Strangely Familiar: Portraits by Wayne Youle* at the New Zealand Portrait Gallery in Wellington (2018) and *Look Mum no Hands* at Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū (2017). Major artist residencies include the Colin McCahon House Residency (2019), the Friends of Pātaka Residency (2014), the SCAPE / Artspace Residency in Sydney (2012), the Rita Angus Residency and the Wellesley College Residency (2011). His work are included in major private and public collections such as the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, the Chartwell Collection at Auckland Art Gallery, Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū, the James Wallace Arts Trust, Pātaka Art + Museum and the Wellington City Council.

In 2003 Youle moved to Canterbury and currently lives just north of Amberley. Youle and his partner Kelly McKay have three children named Kupa (11), Arai (9) and Tohu (4). His family continues to be a major influence on his art.

Wayne Youle is represented by {Suite} Gallery in Wellington and Michael Reid Gallery in Sydney and Berlin.

Blood, sweat and tears (the watch work)

He mea nui tēnei mahinga toi, koia te taonga tuatahi e kitea ana i roto i te whakaaturanga. Ka whakawhiwhia taku pāpā ki tana wāti i te paunga o te 20 tau e mahi ana i te toa nunui o James Smith, ki Te Whanganui-a-Tara. I mahi ia i te wāhanga hākinakina, otirā, he tangata pukumahi ia. Kua ruha te mata o te wāti, he tohu o te pānga o te mahi nui.

Ko te whakatoi a taku pāpā, he mahi 'Miki Kiore' noa te mahi toi, ā, nāku anō tētahi wāti i hoko māku i te paunga o te 20 tau o taku mahi hei ringatoi whaiutu. Kua tāia ngā kupu 'REAL JOB' ki muri i taku wāti. E whakahīhī ana au i taku kaha ki te mahi, he taonga tuku iho tērā nō taku pāpā, ahakoa, kātahi anō ia (rātou ko aku tamariki) ka mārāma he 'tūranga tūturu' taku mahi toi ināianei.

Heoi anō, i te whakatoi noa mai ia i runga i te aroha ... e whakapono mārika ana au ki tērā.

This work acts as a kind of touchstone, the first work you see in the show. My father's watch was given to him after 20 years of employment at the James Smith department store in Wellington. He was in the sports department and had a strong work ethic. The worn surface of the watch shows the rigors of hard work.

My father used to joke that art was a 'Mickey Mouse' job, so I bought myself a suitable watch to celebrate 20 years of professional practice as an artist. My watch is engraved on the back with the words 'REAL JOB'. I am proud to have inherited a strong work ethic from my dad, even if he (and my children) only recognise what I do as a 'real job' now.

His humour comes from a place of love... I am sure of it.

The Saviour

I te tau 2011, i muri mai i te rūnga tuatahi o Ōtautahi, waihoki i te rūnga kīkino tuarua, ka rere ngā kōrero mō ngā 'whakatikatika wawe' e whakaū ana i te 'whakarauoratanga tere' o te rohe. Ka tere kite au, he pakiwaitara kē ēnā kōrero. Kātahi te pōhēhē nui, ko tērā.

He mea homai noa tēnei hoiho mihīni utu ā-kapa, hei eke mā te tamariki, nā tētahi o ōku tino hoa. Ka tahuri au ki te pani ki te peita mā, hei tohu mō tēnei pakiwaitara mō tētahi toa, arā, ko te kaiwhakaora, e tae mai ana ki te tāone mā runga hoiho mā. Nāku tonu te papa i waihanga, ka tāpirihia atu ngā kupu SAVIOUR - kua tāia ki ngā pū a te 'kaupoi'. Ka mahi tonu te pūrere, he rite te kaha ki te rā i waihangatia - ka oreore tonu te hoiho, anō nei he mihīni. Ka haruru, ka nekeneke, engari e kore e tae ki hea noa rānei.

In 2011, after the first earthquake in Christchurch, then the devastating second one, there was a lot of talk about 'quick fixes' and reassurance of a 'speedy recovery'. I realized really quickly that this was a fairy-tale. The epitome of wishful thinking.

I was given this children's coin-operated horse from a good friend and I decided to paint it white to speak to this fairy-tale idea of a hero riding into town on a white horse to save the city. I made the base and added the SAVIOUR sign in a stereotypical 'cowboy' font. The work is mechanically sound and functions with the same robotic aesthetic that it did the day it was made, making lots of sound and movement but never actually going anywhere.

My fact is no match for your fiction

Nāku tētahi kohinga kāri-pōhi i waihanga mā te whakahoutanga o Te Puna o Waiwhetū. E rua ngā kāri i hangaia e au - tētahi mō tēnā, me tēnā o aku tama i taua wā. He mea waihanga tēnei kāri mō Kupa, arā, ko taku mātaamua - 11 ōna tau i tēnei wā. Kua pāngia ia e te mate takiwātanga, ka mutu, e pūrena ana taku manawa i te nui o tōna aroha me tōna hākoako. I tētahi rā, i te pānui au i te kōrero mō Māui me tana whakapōturi i a Tamanuiterā. Ka tino mau i a Kupa ngā taipitopito o te kōrero rā. Ka taka te wā, ka tae ki te wā moe, ka pātai a Kupa mō te take me hoki moata ia ki te moe. Ka mea atu au ki a ia, ko te pō te wā moe. Hei tāna, "Mehemea, e tū tonu ana te rā, ka kore au e tukuna ki te moe." Hei tāpiritanga anō. "Māku a Tamanuiterā e whakapōturi."

I made a series of postcards for the reopening of the Christchurch Art Gallery. I did two cards, one for each of my sons that I had at that time. This one was designed for Kupa, my oldest son who is 11 now. He is blessed with a touch of autism and gives me so much love and joy. One day I was reading him the story of Māui slowing the sun, and Kupa took the details of the story to heart. Sometime later, at bedtime, he asks why he can't stay up late. I told him it was night time. In reply he says, "If the sun was still up, I wouldn't have to sleep". To which he adds, "I will slow the sun down, like Māui". Easy as that, he retells the story of Māui word for word.

I see you sunny disposition, optimism and hope

He putanga iti tēnei mahinga toi o tētahi atu o aku whakaaturanga āhua nui ake, i tū ki CoCA Toi Moroki, i Ōtautahi, nō nātata nei. Ko *AJAR* te ingoa o te whakaaturanga. He kupu whakarite tērā mō te kuaha tuwhera, arā, he kuhunga, he putanga hoki te kuaha. Tērā tētahi whakaaro, ko te pūnaha o te whareherehere te kaupapa. He mārō, he mātao te mata. He tohu te matapihi karaehe o waenganui mō te ao o waho. He tino kākāriki te pātītī, he tino kahurangi a Ranginui. He tohu ngā rama mō te tūmanko – ka pā atu ngā kaimātakitaki ki ngā pūoko, ka tīneia, ka whakakāngia hoki ngā pūrama.

Kei reira hoki tētahi kōruru, he mea whakairo, e tiro atu ana i te karaehe. E tau ana te āhua o ngā pene rākau, kāore anō kia rawekehia – he tohu mō te pitomata me te mōrearea. Kua tāraia ā-ringatia ngā hanganga moroiti. He taputapu ēnei kua hangaia e ngā mauhere, i roto i te wā, waihoki, mā ngā rauemi a te whareherehere.

Hei tā te kōrero, ka whakamahia ngā ringaringa māngere e te whare o te rēwera. Nā whai anō, he mea hāpai te mahi toi ā-ringa i ngā momo mahi whakarauora tangata. Mā te mahi toi, ka puta mai he whāinga – mā te whāinga ka puta mai te tūmanako. Nāku tēnei i hanga mō te ringaringa māngere. Me kaha tonu ki te rapu i te ao mārama, ahakoa kei tawhiti pea tēnā ao i tēnei wā.

This artwork is the smaller iteration of a larger show I had at CoCA Toi Moroki in Christchurch recently. The show was titled *AJAR* and it referenced the idea of a door being slightly open, providing potential for entrance or escape. On one level the artwork is about the prison system. The surface is hard and cold. The central glass window is a symbol for the outside. Greener grass, bluer skies. The light bulbs represent optimism, turning off and on when the public triggers the sensors.

There is a hand-carved kōruru that looks through the glass. The pencils are perfect and untouched, symbols of potential and danger. The tiny figures are carved by hand. These are items that are made with time and material resources available to inmates.

They say idle hands are the devil's workshop. So it's easy to see why art and craft have often been used as therapeutic tools in rehabilitation. Making creates purpose, and purpose creates hope. I made this work for those with idle hands. The ability to see the brighter side, even if it seems far away.

When I grow up...

I a māua ko taku tuahine e tipu ake ana ki Tītahi Bay, kua mōhio kē māua he whakapapa Māori, he whakapapa Pākehā hoki ō māua. Ehara i te mea i te kaha whāia ngā mahinga ā-iwi e tō māua whānau, heoi, pērā i te nuinga o ngā tamariki, ka pai ki a māua te toro atu ki ngā mahi Māori. Ko tētahi maharatanga tuatahi ōku, ko taku urunga atu ki te karaehe Māori ki Mana College. Hīkaka katoa ahau ki te ako i ngā mahi kapa haka me te reo Māori, heoi, kāore e roa, ka tāmia tērā hiahia ōku. He kino te pānga o ngā kōrero a ngā tāngata me ngā pātai e pā ana ki tōku āhua. Rite tonu te putanga mai o taua raruraru i roto i ngā tau whai muri iho - me taunaki au i taku whakapapa i ngā wā katoa.

Ka taka te wā, ka whai wāhi aku mahi ki ngā whakaaturanga toi e aro ana ki te Māori, e whakatairanga ana i tētahi kaupapa Māori rānei, ā, nā te tae o taku kiri, ka rere anō ngā pātai. Otirā, i roto i ētahi atu whakaaturanga – kāore i te aro ki te whakapapa o te ringatoi – ka rangirua au mō te momo mahinga toi hei waihanga māku, i runga i te pōhēhē, me aro nui au ki tētahi taha ōku. Ka pātai au ki a au anō, he aha kē ia te ara māmā e mōhio ai tēnei hunga he whakapapa Māori "tētahi taha" ōku? Ka ngākaurua au i te whakaaro me āta tautohu au i taua "tērā atu" taha, nē? Kāore anō tērā take kia tau i roto i a au.

Nāku tēnei mahinga toi i whakaputa hei urupare ki aua wheako, arā, ki ngā whakawātanga ā ētahi, i runga i te hanga o tōku āhua. He mea waihanga tēnei i tērā 13 tau, i te wā i tino pīrangī au kia rite tōku āhua ki tōku whakapapa. I taua wā, kāore i rawaka te mā, te pango rānei o taku kiri.

When we were growing up in Titahi Bay, my sister and I were always aware of our Māori and Pākehā whakapapa. That's not to say that cultural pursuits were heavily promoted in our family but, as kids do, we tried to be involved with things Māori. Like one early memory was joining the Māori class at Mana College. I was genuinely excited about the possibilities of learning kapa haka and te reo Māori, but my enthusiasm was squashed pretty quickly. Things people said and questions they asked about my appearance had a negative impact. The prospect of having to constantly qualify my ethnicity became a recurrent problem for years to come.

Later still, when I was included in art shows that were Māori focused or themed, questions were raised because of my skin colour... Then in other shows where ethnicity wasn't a prerequisite, I felt unsure about the type of work that I was expected to make, like I had to pick a side. I asked myself, what was the easiest way I could tell those people that I was "part" Māori? I felt compromised having to identify the "part" part, you know? I never reconciled that.

I made this artwork in response to those experiences, of being judged by people based on how I present externally. It was done 13 years ago, at a time when I wanted my external appearance to match my cultural heritage. A time when I never felt quite white, or quite black, enough.