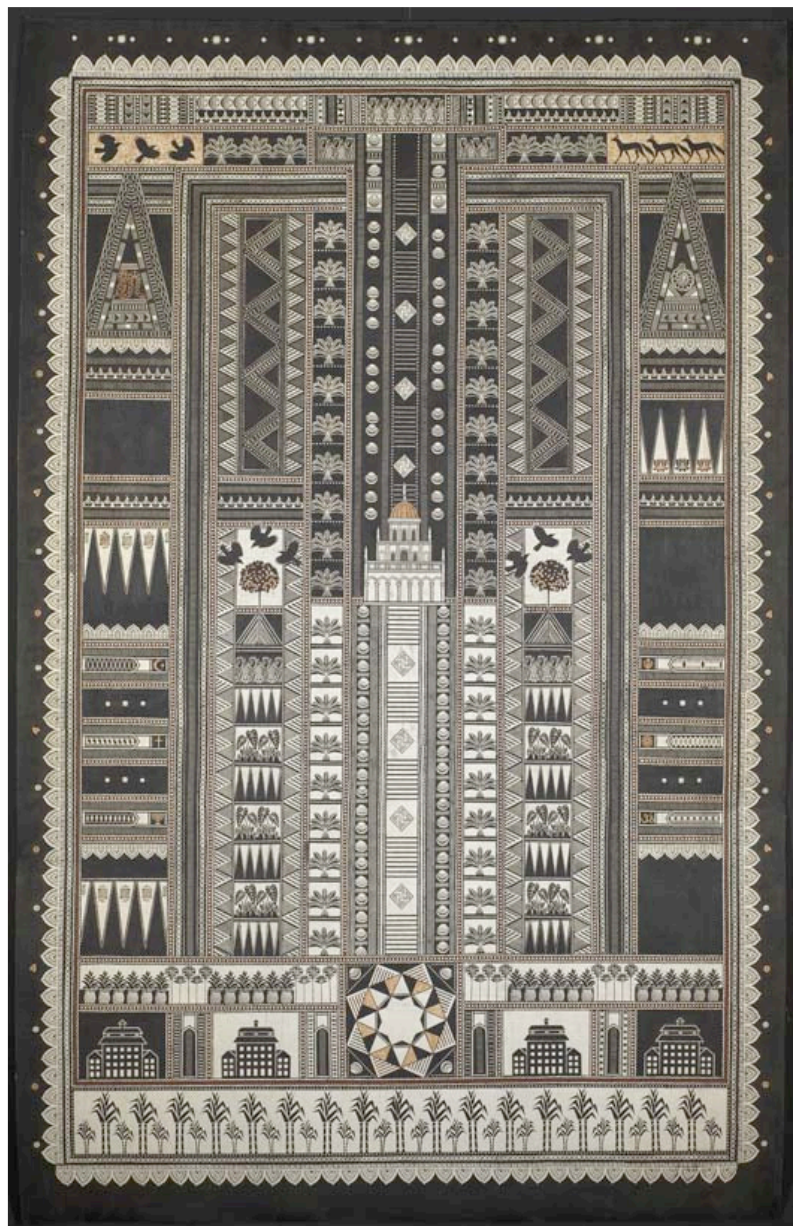




PATAKA EDUCATION
Art • Heritage • Culture

DOUBLE VISION : *when artists collaborate*



Suka Siti (Sugar City), Robin White, Leba Toki and Bale Jione, 2009-2010,
Printed tapa.

TEACHER'S NOTES

Education resource compiled by Fiona Wilcock Educator at Pataka Museum of Arts and Cultures, 2010. Pataka Education programmes are supported by LEOTC (Learning Experiences Outside The Classroom) and funded by the Ministry of Education.

COLLABORATION

CONTEXT:

COLLABORATION

Two or more artists *working together* in a joint effort to produce artworks.

Exciting things can happen when creative minds work together!

From artist couples to artist groups and collectives, an increasing number of visual artists are beginning to see the value of working with others.

'The power of two' seems to be a winning combination: in Britain four recent Turner Prize finalists have been artist collaborators, while in NZ last year Marcus Williams and Susan Jowsey won the 2009 Wallace Art award and Madeleine Child and Philip Jarvis won the Portage Ceramic Award 2009.



Bale Jione and Robin White working on Suka Siti, 2009.

<http://news.bahai.org/story/754>

Some artists work in long-term collaborations where they work almost exclusively in collaboration with each other; others are short-term collaborations that preserve the identity of each individual's style.

The artists in *Double Vision* revel in the creative possibilities that emerge from working collaboratively.

In order to be able to create together, artists need first to establish a close relationship of empathy and trust - so perhaps it is not surprising that many artist duos are either very close friends or partners.

As New Zealand artist Robin White says, 'the cross fertilisation of talent and experience can often produce surprising results. Creating art becomes a fundamentally social activity.'¹

¹Robin White in conversation with Helen Kedgley, *Double Vision*, 2010

(Based on exhibition and catalogue text by the curator of *Double Vision: When Artists Collaborate*, Helen Kedgley, Senior Curator Contemporary Art, Pataka Museum of Arts & Cultures, 2010.)

Introduction to DOUBLE VISION

Double Vision looks at the partnerships and processes used in creating collaborative artworks.

Innovative and diverse, these leading contemporary artists work with many different materials from brightly glazed ceramics and mixed media sculptural materials, to painting and traditionally dyed tapa cloth.

These artists also explore a wide range of different concepts and themes; from the natural environment and Victorian portraiture, to Maori myths and legends.

Featured Artists

ARTISTS	GENRE / MEDIUM
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Robin White, Leba Toki and Bale Jione	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Fijian Masi / tapa cloth
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Madeleine Child and Philip Jarvis	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Ceramics & mixed media
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Hannah Beehre and Aaron Beehre	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Digital mixed media
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Marcus Williams and Susan Jowsey	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Photography & digital media
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Gavin Hurley and Sam Mitchell	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Collage & water colour
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Shintaro Nakahara & Yoshiko Nakahara	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Acrylic paint and ink
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Hemi Macgregor, Ngataiharuru Taepa, and Saffron Te Ratana	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Mixed media installation

ARTIST PROFILES

ROBIN WHITE, LEBA TOKI and BALE JIONE

Robin White

New Zealand artist Robin White has been working with artists and amongst communities in the Pacific Islands since 1974.

For White the idea of collaboration began partly as a practical solution to having been left with no art materials when her house and studio in Kiribati were destroyed by fire. At this time she was living in an isolated area with no access to an art supplies store.



Robin White, *I am doing the washing in the bathroom* 1984, woodblock, 148 x 198 mm. From *Beginner's Guide to Gilbertes*, Robin White, 1983.

White made the decision to use locally available skills and materials. She found a group of women at the local Catholic Centre she could collaborate with and developed a relationship with them.

Collaboration with Leba Toki and Bale Jione



Leba Toki, Robin white, and Bale Jione.
Te Manawa Museum Gallery Science centre,
October 2009.

Robin White's most recent collaboration is with Fijian masi artists Leba Toki and Bale Jione.

Masi is a traditional Fijian tapa cloth. White describes the process of working with these two artists as liberating and an exciting journey in which she has enjoyed learning and sharing the responsibility of creating an art work.

Collaboration with Leba Toki and Bale Jione Cont.

A Multicultural Collaboration

All three of these artists are of the Baha'i faith. In Fiji, White explains, almost all of the world's great religions are represented by a significant portion of the population - Hindu, Muslim, Buddhist, Christian, and a small but growing Baha'i community. 'That makes it special. Somehow we wanted to get that idea across.'²



Traditional Fijian Masi cloth.

Together White, Toki, and Jione have used their vision of a future society, which respects differences of belief and culture and is connected by the bonds of love and respect to inspire their work.

Leba Toki comments that 'Working together is very powerful. Different races, both giving ideas.'³

^{2, 3} (Báhá'í World News Service, Báhá'í International Community, *Prestigious exhibition presents "New Garden"*, 2010. <http://news.bahai.org/story/754>)

See www.pataka.org.nz
For Pataka Educations Teacher
Notes on Fijian masi cloth.



Fijian Masi cloth being printed with masi stencils.

MADELINE CHILD and PHILIP JARVIS



Madeline Child and Philip Jarvis, *Doodads & Doodahs, Orange*, 2009.

Artist couple Madeline Child and Philip Jarvis are renowned for their brightly coloured, quirky, multi media ceramic sculptures. They have been working collaboratively together since 2003, while also maintaining their individual art practices.

Innovative Materials

Innovative and experimental, Child and Jarvis works push the boundaries of traditional ceramic practice.

In their recent works they have explored a variety of

new techniques incorporating everyday materials into their ceramic work. These materials include rubber bands, sponges, wire, mirrors, and even road glass! Both artists specialise in contemporary ceramic techniques and share a love of vibrant colours and a fascination for the richness and diversity found in nature.

In 2009, Child and Jarvis won New Zealand's prestigious Potage Ceramics Award. Their recent series of winning works *Doodads & Doodahs* and *Widespread Occurrence of Possible Symbioses* are inspired by the vivid colours and fragile nature of marine life.

Why Collaboration?

Child and Jarvis's collaborative practice is one of balance. They both share similar backgrounds and similar ideas, yet each artist brings different skills to the creation of their work.



Brain Coral, Coral Reefs,
<http://library.thinkquest.org/07aug/01713/index.htm>

MADELINE CHILD and PHILIP JARVIS Cont'd



Madeline Child & Philip Jarvis, Sturt Gallery Artist in Residence, 2009.

When working collaboratively each of them will take turns at working on their art work. Jarvis says 'what we tend to do is generate our ideas together and then each work on separate aspects together and then join them together.'⁴

A relationship of trust and honesty are a really important part of their process.

Many hands make light work

Ceramics is a technical and time consuming medium to work in. Child and Jarvis started collaborating on artworks after the birth of their first child as a practical solution to the problem of lack of time. Jarvis says 'You get double the ideas, double the speed of making the work which with ceramics is quite important since It's such a time consuming process'.⁵

⁴ Jarvis in conversation with Helen Kedgley, *Double Vision*, 2010

⁵ Jarvis in conversation with Helen Kedgley, *Double Vision*, 2010

(Based on exhibition and catalogue text by the curator of *Double Vision: When Artists Collaborate* Helen Kedgley, Senior Curator Contemporary Art Pataka Museum of Arts & Cultures, 2010.)

HANNAH BEEHRE and AARON BEEHRE

Husband and wife team, Hannah Beehre and Aaron Beehre work almost exclusively with each other. They have been working together for more than five years. Hannah is fine arts trained and Aaron has a background in graphic and design.

They work across a wide range of media - from painting and computer art to large-scale interactive video installations.

New Technology and Digital works

Recently the Beehres have collaborated to create a series of digital works that explore surreal, imaginary landscapes. Often working with new technologies and digital media Hannah says, 'The best thing about working together is coming up with something at the end that you wouldn't have done by yourself'.⁶



Postcard to Garland Briggs, 2008.

Postcards to Garland Briggs

Postcard to Garland Briggs is a large interactive landscape photograph on canvas. The image of a mysterious and magical night garden is animated by firefly like forms. The fireflies are projected onto the canvas print via a data projector and react to movements via motion sensors positioned in the gallery space.

'It's that process when you talk about the issues and find solutions to what you're doing that is really exciting - you keep that curiosity you don't end up with what you think you are going to end up with'.⁷

⁶ Hannah Beehre in conversation with Helen Kedgley, *Double Vision*, 2010

⁷ Aaron Beehre in conversation with Helen Kedgley, *Double Vision*, 2010

(Based on exhibition and catalogue text by the curator of *Double Vision : When Artists Collaborate* Helen Kedgley, Senior Curator Contemporary Art Pataka Museum of Arts & Cultures, 2010.)

MARCUS WILLIAMS and SUSAN JOWSEY

Marcus Williams and Susan Jowsey have been collaborating for over 15 years. In 2009 they won the prestigious Wallace Art Award with their collaborative photographic work *The Correction*.

A Family Business

In 2006 Williams and Jowsey formed a collective called F4, working in collaboration with their children who are aged 9 and 12.



F4 collective (Susan Jowsey, Marcus Williams, Jessie Williams and Mercy Williams) *The Minutes* 2010.

They find working collaboratively as a family incredibly bonding. Creating artworks together involves trust and having to listen to each others ideas. It is a process where each family member has the opportunity to share and work through their ideas freely. Williams and Jowsey's children are involved in the whole process of the collaboration from helping develop the concept of the works, and selecting the subject matter to be photographed, through to naming the works. The children often appear in the photographs and digital images themselves.

GAVIN HURLEY and SAM MITCHELL



Charles Heaphy, Gavin Hurley,
Oil on linen, 2009.

Gavin Hurley and Sam Mitchell worked on their first collaboration in 2001. They are close friends who studied at Elam School of Art together.

Interested in portraiture, Hurley paints his subjects in oils first then creates elaborate collages of his painting, which he refers to as 'cut outs'. Mitchell works mainly within the mediums of drawing and painting. Hurley's intricately collaged portraits provide the ground or skin for Mitchell's wonderfully imaginative doodles.

Complementary styles

Inspired by Victorian portraiture, historical and famous figures, Hurley's treatment of characters such as early 19th century painter Charles Heaphy is entirely contemporary. Simplified down into almost cartoon like forms, Hurley's portraits possess an impassive yet quirky quality.

In contrast Mitchell works in a very illustrative, detailed style. Mitchell is inspired by tattoos, tribalism, marks of identity and belonging. An avid collector of images from popular culture she states 'I really like cartoons. That's what keeps humour in my work.'⁸. Collaboratively, Hurley and Mitchell bring contemporary and historic subject matter together in a way that gives their portraits a whole new story.



Charles Heaphy, Gavin Hurley and
Sam Mitchell, 2010,
Collage and water colour.

Shared custody

Both artists enjoy the openness of their collaborative process. 'This is a very easy process ...Gavin provides me with a collage and I have the freedom, usually unedited, to add to it. We work so differently, Gavin is tidy and organised and his work reflects this sense of order. So I am honored to be able to disrupt the order and add some twisted chaos to his perfectly cut and neat collages. He never really knows what the original work will come back looking like and I have no preconceived idea of what I will add to the work. So it really is a surprise to us both when the collaborative work is revealed.'⁹

⁸ Hanna Scott, *Childish cartoons and collectables let artist Sam Mitchell act like a naughty kid while making art for grow- ups*, Pavement Magazine, 2005

⁹ *Sam Mitchell's Secrets*, artist in conversation with Mary Newton gallery, 2009.
<http://marynewtongallery.blogspot.com/2009/10/sam-mitchells-secrets.html>

YOSHIKO NAKAHARA and SHINTARO NAKAHARA

Japanese artist couple Shintaro Nakahara and Yoshiko Nakahara began working collaboratively on their arrival to New Zealand two years ago. Both Yoshiko and Shintaro maintain their own individual art practice as well as creating work together.



Byobu – Folding Screen, Acrylic on canvas, 2010

Calm and contemplative Yoshiko's highly detailed, intricate drawings take immense skill and a great deal of time to produce. Working in black ink on paper she uses delicate lines and marks to build up rich, dense, figurative forms. In contrast, Shintaro's work is spontaneous, expressive and largely about pure colour. Working with acrylic paint and using traditional Japanese brush technique Shintaro builds up flowing, abstract, calligraphic forms.

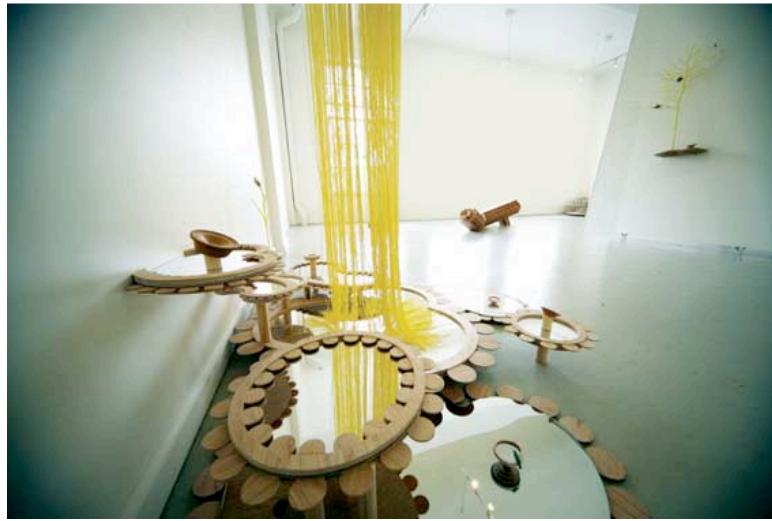
A third artist

Having very different artistic styles the Nakaharas describe their collaborative work as bringing out a 'third artist'. Yoshiko draws directly on to the canvas in her delicate linear style, she passes the canvas on to Shintaro who paints washes of rich colour over the top, and then Yoshiko adds another layer of fine drawing. Their collaborative process is instinctive and they try not to discuss their work in advance. Shintaro says 'we prefer to let it happen with out much discussion. If we talk to each other about what we are about to produce we will have to negotiate, so it's better to go with the flow and surprise each other.'¹⁰

The Nakahara's have called their collaborative series of works *Hikari* (Light), a metaphor for the revelation implicit in taking a mutual journey.

¹⁰ Shintaro Nakahara in conversation with Helen Kedgley, *Double Vision*, 2010.
(Based on exhibition and catalogue text by the curator of *Double Vision : When Artists Collaborate* Helen Kedgley, Senior Curator Contemporary Art Pataka Museum of Arts & Cultures, 2010.)

**HEMI MACGREGOR, NGATAIHARURU TAEPA
and
SAFFRONN TE RATANA**



Tu Te Manu Ora / Te Rangī, Installation, 2009.

Artist couple Ngataiharuru Taepa and Saffronn Te Ratana have collaborated on various projects throughout the years. Recently they decided to collaborate with their friend, artist Hemi Macgregor. All three are graduates of Te Putahi-a-Toi Massey University in Palmerston North. Macgregor says, 'We have been working alongside one another for the past ten years and this is the beginning of us creating work together and exhibiting it in a public forum.'¹¹

Whanaungatanga / Family Values

Collaboration is essentially at the heart of Maori Tikanga (customary values) and Whanaungatanga (family values). Whether it is preparing a meal on the marae or the building of a marae, it is a traditional Maori custom that people work together. This is one of the shared values that drew Taepa, Te Ratana, and Macgregor into collaboration. Taepa says 'Art making in Maori culture, especially in the construction of the marae, was a collective process.'¹²

Taepa also states 'we were brought up in an education system that teaches you to be competitive. That's something I would like to see changed in terms of Maori art practice. I am committed to the communal.'¹³

¹¹ Macgregor, H. 'Tane and Rehua at centre of new exhibition', www.scoop.co.nz 2 Oct 2008

¹² Ngataiharuru Taepa in conversation with Helen Kedgley, *Double Vision*, 2010.

¹³ Taepa, N. *Taiawhio II : Contemporary Maori Artists: 18 New Conversations*, Te Papa Press, Wellington, 2007, p242

Tu Te Manu Ora I Te Rangi

Taepa, Te Ratana, and Macgregor have all explored the legend of Tane, the Maori God of the forest, in various forms in their individual practice, so they decided that 'the narrative provided the ideal platform for the collaborative relationship between us' ¹⁴.

Tu Te Manu Ora I Te Rangi explores Maori cosmology through the legend of Tane and his brother Rehua, children of Ranginui and Papatuanuku, the sky-father and earth-mother of the Maori creation myth. Rehua, a summer star and revered Maori god is said to be one of the brightest stars in the night sky. Rehua lives in the tenth heaven in Maori cosmology.

Pre & Post Visit Inquiry and Points for Discussion

- EXPLORE how different cultures work collaboratively to create artworks e.g. Fijian Masi cloth makers, Maori carvers, American quilters.
- AS A CLASS work collaboratively to create a mural, collage, or installation art work.
- RESEARCH Maori myths and legends like the one of Tane and Rehua. See if your class can work collaboratively to retell the story using painting, drawing, collage or printmaking.
- RESEARCH famous artist collaborations from throughout history - The Renaissance artists, The Dadaists, Andy Warhol and Jean-Michel Basquiat, Claes Oldenburg and Coosje van Bruggen, The Guerilla Girls, 1972 feminist collaboration *Womanhouse*, Christo and Jeanne Claude, Jake and Dinos Chapman, and Gilbert and George.
- PLAY the Surrealist collaborative drawing game, *The Exquisite Corpse*.
- DISCUSS other creative professions where people have worked collaboratively e.g. Movie making and music. How do these people work together? How are they acknowledged for their individual contributions?

GLOSSARY

- **COLLABORATION** : Two or more artists *working together* in a joint effort to produce artworks, also known as an art collective.
- **MASI**: A traditional Fijian tapa cloth made of bark from the masi (paper mulberry tree).
- **MATERIAL**: The substance(s) or object(s) out of which an art work is made e.g. paint, clay, fiber, paper, wood etc.
- **CERAMIC**: Pottery or clay sculpture.
- **DIGITAL MEDIA**: An electronically processed work composed of bits and bytes. A moving image, usually coming from use of a computer or film.
- **CONCEPT**: An idea, thought, or notion conceived through mental activity.
- **WHANAUNGATANGA**: Family values.
- **MAORI TIKANGA**: Customary values.
- **NARRATIVE**: Art which represents elements of a story.

The most liberating thing is breaking away from that myth of the artist as a 'special unique individual' - the solitary Kafka-like personality working away on their own and in suffering... it is far more enjoyable to discuss ideas with someone who has also invested in the work... (Matthew Dalziel, environmental artist, UK.).