



PORTRAIT PLAY: Rhoda Fowler, curator of te tuhi — the mark, brings an exhibition which pushes the boundaries of portraiture to local viewers. Portraiture — the art of social commentary runs at the Pakuranga gallery until July 20.

Photo: JONATHAN BARRY

Facing up to portrait show

By CATHERINE MYHRE

Rhoda Fowler has been keeping her ears open for reactions to a new exhibition at te tuhi — the mark which challenges people's views of portraiture.

Miss Fowler is the curator of the exhibition, Portraiture — the art of social commentary, which began at the Pakuranga gallery earlier this month.

It consists of 23 contemporary New Zealand artists, some of whom grew up in Howick and Pakuranga and work at the Manukau Institute of Technology.

Their works come in the form of film, photography, print, sculpture, collage and ceramics.

Miss Fowler says the works challenge the genre of traditional portraiture and give a different, broad perspective on what portraiture can be.

She approached various artists to contribute to the exhibition after visiting the National Portrait Gallery in Wellington.

She spent three years researching what portraiture means to contemporary artists.

So far a lot of people have visited the show and offered different responses to it, she says.

"Every person will find something they like and dislike — I like that.

"We're left in a world of blandness with television advertisements and so many different images presented to us. It's exciting to hear different opinions."

Portraits include one of Queen Elizabeth II, but not as most people know her in her normal portraits, she says.

"It's exciting to see the diversity of work which can be construed as a portrait."

This is Miss Fowler's 10th year as curator of te tuhi — the mark.

Portraiture — the art of social commentary is on at te tuhi — the mark, 13 Reeves Rd, Pakuranga, until July 20.