

Te Aua Tiare



Richard Shortland Cooper

Te Aua Tiare, The Garden of Flowers

Installation by Richard Cooper in the foyer of the Fisher Gallery.

One of the most important art expressions of the Cook Islands is Tivaevae making. The early 19th century saw the arrival of missionaries to the Cook Islands. They brought with them the skills of patchwork and quilt making, which they taught. The quilts are known as Tivaevae Manu, Tivaevae Tataura and Tivaevae Taoret. Commonly made up of sewn colourful flowers such as iris, orchids, hibiscus, chrysanthemum, and water lily.

A flower that appeals to Richard Cooper is the hibiscus flower. Today you see it printed on shirts, lavalava, quilts, as well as a myriad of other items representing 'Pacifica' in a ceremonial way



and is a symbol of a way of life, woven into these missionary inspired quilts. Cooper's concept is based on the importance of the family. He is concerned with social values in society.



"When you plant a seed you are hoping that it will grow into a beautiful flower. However it won't happen on its own. It needs water, sunlight, protection, nurturing and the removal of weeds that choke it from growing.

Statistics show that South Auckland is suffering from a decay of social structures, with child and spouse abuse, abortions, youth suicide, and a high crime rate.

Our answers are within our own four walls, our homes. As

parents we are responsible for raising our children, the best way we can. With much love, patience, and support, we can help nurture these flowers to grow."

Richard Cooper

Cooper has sculptured his hibiscus flowers from metal sheet and manuka



stems, lashed together with flax. A total of 50 flowers, representing the blossoming of children, youth and adults.

The materials, although not organic as the original flowers, will have a life span roughly equal to the human life cycle, before they deteriorate.

He has arranged them in the gallery using the space as his quilt. All who walk through the environment are part of it. Cooper has created this installation for the Fisher Gallery, the contemporary art museum for Manukau City.

Tivaevae Rakau, a wooden Tivaevae Cooper has made from domestic materials. The quilt and wooden applique is made from recycled rimu weatherboards which once was a house, a home to a South Auckland family before its demolition.

Richard Cooper hopes to encourage our youth to focus on education towards a prosperous career. Many friends, family and others have immigrated here for this purpose.

Te Aua Tiare, The Garden of Flowers, was a name given by Cooper's mother, Te Kura Ingetau Manu, who was born in Aitutaki, Cook Islands, to whom he expresses his gratitude for nurturing him like a flower.



Chronology

Born: Kawakawa, Bay of Islands, Aotearoa

Married: Rula Ormsby, 10/08, 1983

- Children:
1. George Benny
 2. Destiny Ngarongea
 3. Richard Walter
 4. Isaiah Lahi Mesiah

Awards/Scholarships/Grants

- 1996 Cultural Arts Blues Award - Auckland University
1996 QE II Auckland City Council
1996 Manukau City Council - Creative New Zealand Community funding
1997 Tai Tokerau Trust
1997 Manaaki Tauiira
1998 Pacific Island Polynesian Education Foundation
1998 Creative New Zealand (Pacific Island Arts Development)

Solo Exhibitions

- 1997 *Me He Aroha "Love at home"* - Te Tiamata Gallery - Auckland
1998 Boise Idaho Museum - United States of America
1998 *Te Aua Thau "The garden of flowers"* - Fisher Gallery - Pakuranga

Travelling Exhibitions

- 1996 *Six Pack*, Pakuranga Community Centre, Inverc North Island
1997 *From Here to There*, travelled Australia, Hawaii, Samoa, Tonga
1998 *Cook Island Artists*, travelled Cook Islands, Fiji, New Zealand

Selected Group Exhibitions

- 1996 *The new net goes fishing*, Te Tiamata Gallery
1996 Maori Exposition, Aotearoa Centre
1997 *Te Hahatanga o Pipiri (The first breath of Winter)*, Bell Gully law firm, Auckland
1997 *Te Atanga*, Civic Centre, Rotorua
1997 *Te Vaka o Kuki Arama*, Urubridge, Howick
1997 *Manahiki Tauiira*, Out Beach, Ponsonby
1998 *FOUR*, ArtStation, Ponsonby
1998 *Te Toti Hou*, George Fraser Gallery, Auckland
1998 *Pacific Island Artist*, Aotearoa Centre
1998 Auckland Institute of Technology Sculpture Symposium

Performance and Installation

- 1996 Featured extra *Kura Warrior Princess*, Episode 13
1997 *Retrieve*, Maidment Theatre, Auckland

Public Collections

- Auckland Institute of Technology
Auckland University
Waikato Polytechnic Student Association, Rotorua
Sutton Park School, Mangere, Auckland
Manukau City Council
Carter Holt Harvey, Tokoroa
Boise Historical Museum, Idaho - United States of America

Publications/Catalogues

- 1996 *Mana Magazine*
1997 *Dovecote Museum*, Wellington
1997 *National Business Review*
1998 *Art News*, Summer
1998 *Manakau*
1998 Fisher Gallery, Pakuranga
1998 Elam School of Fine Arts Prospectus for 1999



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INDIGENOUS MEDIATION



Tanya Reihana Te Waiti