

Āniwaniwa

Zena Elliott (Ngāti Awa)

Tina Tangiweto (Rongomaiwahine, Te Whānau a Ruataupare, Ngāti Kahungunu)

9 July – 20 August 2022

Wormhole Gallery and Studio

Website Text

Āniwaniwa showcases work by two takatāpui multidisciplinary artists of different generations. Both artists hail from the Eastern Bay of Plenty. They have whakapapa ties to this place and further down the East Coast of Te Ika a Maui. Zena is now based in Kirikiriroa, and Tina is currently in Te Awa Kairangi. *Āniwaniwa* is their first exhibition together. It brings their art back home.

The show title refers to a type of rainbow that forms a halo around the moon. It plays on takatāpuitanga, guiding lights and wandering paths, maramataka, and also nods to the colours that are present in the exhibition. Zena and Tina work through big ideas and serious kaupapa with a light touch. *Āniwaniwa* is joyful, twisting, energetic, and warm. Vibrant colours, patterning, mātauranga Māori, and tapping into the flow of mauri while making are important in Zena and Tina's work. This is an exhibition with many faces.

About Tina's mahi toi for Āniwaniwa:

Tina Tangiweto's mahi toi for *Āniwaniwa* relates to the maramataka (Māori lunar calendar). Each piece has been completed on a single phase of the moon. Tina's feelings spill onto scavenged cardboard boxes from urban sites near the artist's home, nikau spathes from the homes of relatives, and other foraged surfaces. On some works, commercial printing peeks through Tina's organic patterns. In other works, Tina's paintings and words layer on top of each other; tracking feelings on the same phase of the moon when it comes around again.

Tina's works are named after the lunar period, moon phase, and Gregorian year they were painted on. Some of the titles are accompanied by short notes by the artist. We can read Tina's works like pages from a diary, and consider how we feel in the present moment. We can reflect on the tensions between two flows of time; the regimented and organic; solar and lunar; Pākehā and Māori. Perhaps we can be inspired to notice the textures and rhythms of our environment, make use of what's around us, and connect with our bodies and emotions.

Quote from the surface of Tina's painting, *Tangaroa: Poutūterangi x Whiringa-a-Nuku 21*:

The fruits of this marama could be more/ if I didn't have the chore/ of paying the rent/
feels like my head is turning into cement/ I try to get into my body again/ running when I

rise/ climbing hills/ breathe fresh almost autumn air/ before Tangaroa wanes/ The fruits of this marama could be more/ why did we change that for?

Quotes from an interview with Tina Tangiweto:

I describe myself as a Ringatoi Rongoa. My patterns come from the marama, the whenua, the mātauranga Māori.

I try not to think much when I'm painting with the marama. I treat it as practice that gets me out of my hinengaro, and honour the rest of me. This is a necessary restorative practice in a time where the brain - the teina - is unnecessarily recognised as tuakana! I pick colours that look cool and cheerful. They remind me of the colours I see in the taiao.

The surfaces I paint are found in my local, everyday environment - nikau from the backyard, found boxes from work, the supermarket, and the nacho factory down the road.

My painting practice is about reclaiming the maramataka, and understanding the space and time of the whenua. I hope to inspire and reactivate mātauranga Māori and kaitiakitanga. We, the people, need to take care of the whenua and it'll take care of us.

About Zena Elliott's mahi toi for Āniwaniwa:

Zena Elliott's mahi toi for Āniwaniwa is a two-part work. Two large faces, titled *Ramaroa (pass the threshold)* and *Ramaroa (duality)* represent the male and female embodiments of the rainbow. The two faces are complex and unique, patterned and glowing. Together they make a whole, that is both male and female. They can help us think about gender fluidity, identity, and continuation.

Zena adapts shapes and patterns associated with wheku (carved faces). These familiar forms are rehashed in day-glo colours, mashed up with camo and clouds, made asymmetrical. Instead of carving away wood, Zena peels off masking tape to reveal areas of flat colour and clear strips of marine ply. It's a technique used in pinstriping and signwriting. There is potential in the negative spaces Zena peels back. There's space to breathe, and to think about the old in the new. Where have we come from? Where are we now? Who can we become?

The title *Ramaroa* translates to beacon. Zena's work for Āniwaniwa attracts attention, and shines brightly even in the soft light of the gallery. Visitors have been intrigued by how these works are made, and the way the colours buzz together. Often, the colours match what visitors are wearing, and we have an opportunity to think about the visual language we encounter everyday.

Quotes from an interview with Zena Elliott:

I am a multi-disciplinary artist positioned within contemporary painting and whakairo. My artwork explores notions of communication and the transmission of knowledge.

My visual art practice is my first language. I express my thoughts, feelings, concepts, and ideas in this language, using visual sentences and creative methods. The world and

education structures have mainly focused on one form of language - written language. Imagine a world that embraced all forms of language, including the unique dialects and individual styles of visual communication! How exciting would that be aye?

My visual forms of expression come from my ancestors and intergenerational knowledge held within our whānau blood and memory. I find inspiration in the knowledge and practices of our ancestors. My new works speak to each other, and to wider audiences, signalling messages of visibility, resilience and wellbeing using colour, shapes, and light. Ramaroa is a conceptual device and methodology that guides my practice. Ramaroa acts as a beacon or a light in the dark, a signal for a location that helps people from going astray, while also being a source of ideas, information, and inspiration for future generations to connect with.

I have been incorporating bold, glow in the dark, and bright colours into my artwork for decades. I use colour to signal and draw attention to the ideas and concepts I am trying to convey through an artwork.