

# The Welcome Swallow Gallery

## The Waikato Watercolourists



catalogue:

14.2.20 – 31.3.20



# The Waikato Watercolourists

## Sandra Barlow

The Waikato is such a beautiful place - it was very difficult to choose what to paint. The Waikato region has so much to offer and such diverse opportunities to find inspiring scenes to work with. It is an honour to take part in this unique exhibition to showcase our region and the beauty that is watercolour. I would like to sincerely thank The Welcome Swallow Gallery and everyone involved for their encouragement and support.

## Paulette Bruns

When asked to exhibit with fellow watercolourists the answer was immediately yes. Any opportunity to showcase the beauty and skill involved with painting watercolour is a great thing, let alone to do this alongside five other passionate watercolourists and in the fabulous gallery space at Welcome Swallow Gallery. With the theme of our paintings being 'Waikato' and been born and raised in Hamilton, I had many subjects already in my head. The hardest part was deciding which to paint!

## Rebecca Dowman-Ngapo

In my daily life in the Waikato, different things catch my eye. From the interactions between people playing a card game, a collection of rusting boats moored on a serene water to the native birds eating oranges in my front yard. As I travel around, I am lucky to capture such moments that our region has to offer, teenagers jumping off an iconic bridge, the end of a black water rafting trip, the relocation of endangered birds or an intense conversation at a uni party. As an artist I feel lucky to be able to capture such a variety of subjects and share with you these moments in time and my collection of work reflects this.

## Diane Mayson-Hewitt

As a painting artist I see beauty all around me every day. Such as sunlight on the river, our beautiful lake, wonderful gardens, wetlands and rural settings. I have tried to capture these subjects in my watercolour paintings for the viewer to reawaken their thoughts and feelings of the beautiful Waikato they have grown to know and love.

## Bernadette Parsons

Working in a partnership with watercolour instead of challenging it enables me to attempt to create excitement through strong bold brushstrokes and the joy of hard and soft edges, all the time allowing the paint to have the freedom to keep painting on the paper. Watercolour has been my passion for over twenty years encouraged by the humble beauty of the Waikato Whangamarino Wetlands where I live, and my passion for landscapes, especially trees. I have had success in winning awards and selling my work encourages me to just keep going.

## Denise White

Previously, for me the Waikato has been a less frequent place to find subjects to paint. However given the challenge of focusing on our local area as a source for exhibition material, it wasn't difficult to have many and varied ideas for painting. The sea, the river, and dairy country as well as the plentiful flora, give a vast array of subjects. For me it is important that there is a focus within the broader vista. Watercolour and the Waikato are a happy union.





Sandra Barlow



Diane Mayson-Hewitt



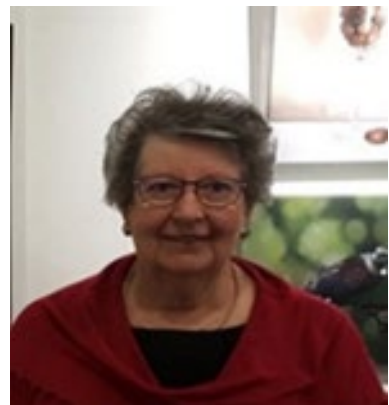
Paulette Bruns



Bernadette Parsons



Rebecca Dowman-Ngapo



Denise White

# The Waikato Watercolourists



For the first time, The Welcome Swallow Gallery is curating an exhibition that specifically delves into the very nature of our region, the Waikato. We asked six superb locally-based artists (see previous page) to reflect on how they would represent their home<sup>1</sup>. Although they employ varied styles, the one thing that they have in common, is that they are all watercolourists. The importance of the watercolour genre is manifest in the work of artists such as John Singer Sargent, Sir William Russel Flint and Frank Webb. It is sometimes forgotten that many of the well-known painters such as Turner, Hopper, O'Keefe and van Gogh were also supreme in this medium.

The warrant for this exhibition is also derived from history. Led by John Ferguson and Samuel Peploe, *The Scottish Colourists*, were most active in the early part of the twentieth century. However, they were critically afforded their geographical nomenclature largely after the fact and did not meet for the purposes of establishing a co-ordinated effort. This exhibition is specifically curated according to the current Waikato-inspired insights that are presented in the artists' compositions. Although holistic enjoyment is to be had, the curation of this exhibition falls into six categories:

<i>Rites of Passage</i>	1-6
<i>Iconic Hamilton</i>	7-10
<i>Bucolic Bliss</i>	11-22
<i>Exotic Flora</i>	23-27
<i>Idyllic Reflections</i>	28-36
<i>Sound Tracks</i>	37-41

Most likely, an art exhibition such as this has not been attempted before. It is a unique contribution that magically captures the warp and weft of the Waikato. As always the Gallery is indebted to the artists whose insights and skills we treasure.

While browsing through this catalogue, we also encourage you to enjoy these art compositions in the comfort of your own surroundings. Both the artists and the cause are well worthy of your investment.

ACCCT Board, February 2020

<sup>1</sup> These artists have formed the *Waikato Watercolourists Society* that is based at The Welcome Swallow Gallery.



# Rites of Passage

1.



**Rebecca Dowman-Ngapo**  
End of a Journey - Blackwater  
Rafting, Waitomo  
415x525mm  
Price: \$740

2.



**Rebecca Dowman-Ngapo**  
A Past Life - Peachgrove  
Road, Hamilton 2009  
315x410mm  
Price: \$590

3.



**Paulette Bruns**  
St. Peter's Cathedral  
290x450mm  
Price: \$750

4.



**Sandra Barlow**  
St. Peter's Door  
480x350mm  
Price: \$500

5.



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**Rebecca Dowman-Ngapo**  
Rite of Passage - Papahua  
Footbridge, Raglan  
505x410mm  
Price: \$690

6.



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**Rebecca Dowman-Ngapo**  
Every Second Sunday -  
Ohinemuri Club, Paeroa  
315x420mm  
Price: \$580

## Iconic Hamilton

7.



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**Paulette Bruns**  
The Main Drag  
490x350mm  
Price: \$1150

8.



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**Sandra Barlow**  
Fairfield Bridge over the  
Waikato River  
260x340mm Price: \$300



9.



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**Paulette Bruns**

The Tongue of the Dog

500x340mm

Price: \$950

10.



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**Paulette Bruns**

Fairfield Bridge

510x710mm

Price: \$1450

## Bucolic Bliss

11.



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**Sandra Barlow**

The Lonely Tree

340x260mm

Price: \$300

12.



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**Bernadette Parsons**

Macrocarpa and Stuff

600x800mm

Price: \$1500

13.



**Sandra Barlow**

Taupiri Horizon

260x340mm

Price: \$300

14.



**Bernadette Parsons**

About the Light

800x1000mm

Price: \$2300

15.



**Sandra Barlow**

The Glade

350x480mm

Price: \$400

16.



**Sandra Barlow**

Treescape at Pukemokemoke

470x630mm

Price: \$700



17.



**Diane Mayson-Hewitt**

Rural View North of

Te Awamutu

410x380mm

Price: \$1200

18.



**Denise White**

Pirongia

500x700mm

Price: \$495

19.



**Sandra Barlow**

The Girls

230x340mm

Price: \$300

20.



**Denise White**

Arapuni Cliffs

650x500mm

Price: \$495

21.



**Denise White**

Is There a Hobbit?

440x540mm

Price: \$295

22.



**Denise White**

Spring in Ohaupo

500x650mm

Price: \$350

## Exotic Flora

23.



**Diane Mayson-Hewitt**

Celebration

390x530mm

Price: \$1395

24.



**Sandra Barlow**

Climbing Rose

190x230mm

Price: \$450

25.



**Diane Mayson-Hewitt**

Kowhai After Rain

200x290mm

Price: \$895

26.



**Denise White**

Magnolia Spring Blooms

550x450mm

Price: \$350

27.



**Diane Mayson-Hewitt**

Bloom from Botanic Garden

335x420mm

Price: \$1350



# Idyllic Reflections

28.



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**Bernadette Parson**

Port Waikato

1000x800mm

Price: \$2300

29.



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**Denise White**

The Pier

450x500mm

Price: \$350

30.



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**Diane Mayson-Hewitt**

Sunlight on Waikato River

330x260mm

Price: \$1095

31.



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**Bernadette Parsons**

Whangamarino Wetlands

800x1000mm

Price: \$2300

32.



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**Bernadette Parsons**

Waikato Winter

1000x800mm

Price: \$2300

33.



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**Bernadette Parsons**

Waikato Edge

600x800mm

Price: \$1500

34.



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**Rebecca Dowman-Ngapo**

Biding Time – Raglan Wharf

335x490mm

Price: \$660

35.



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**Denise White**

The Landing

450x550mm

Price: \$295

36.



**Paulette Bruns**

That Log

300x420mm

Price: \$850

## Sound Tracks

37.



**Rebecca Dowman-Ngapo**

Holes in my Oranges - Tui  
Otorohanga

300mm diameter

Price: \$410

38.



**Rebecca Dowman-Ngapo**

Pirongia Release - Kokako  
230mm diameter

Price: \$290



39.



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**Diane Mayson-Hewitt**

Pukekos on Wetlands

335x270mm

Price: \$1095

40.



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**Rebecca Dowman-Ngapo**

Morning Meeting - Sparrows,  
Otorohanga

230x330mm

Price: \$360

41.



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**Rebecca Dowman Ngapo**

A Long Awaited Visit -  
Morepork, Otorohanga Kiwi  
House and Native Bird Park

430x330mm

Price: \$420

# This is what we do



Supporting the Waitomo/Waipā Women's Refuge services



Wendy Valler from the Waitomo/Waipā Women's Refuge services, receiving funds from Board Trustees and volunteers

We are extremely pleased that we are able to support the Waitomo/Waipā Women's Refuge services. The refuge runs two safe houses for women and children victims of domestic violence in the Waikato region. The funds donated will help children, including special needs children, who require services in the form of counselling and play therapy programmes. The funds, according to Manager Wendy Valler, have also been donated for the children to enjoy Christmas and several outings that are being coordinated.

# EXHIBITION LIST

1. Gillian Hamilton, **A Welcome Swallow Exhibition**, 3 August – 31 Dec 2013
2. John Wakeling, **Art in Nature: a photographic Exhibition**, 8 Feb – 1 June 2014
3. Marion Manson, and Fenella Fern, **The Art of Craft**, 30 Oct – 1 Dec 2014
4. Marilyn Rea-Menzies and Belinda Saunders, **Fantasies in Fibre and Clay**, 4 Dec – 2 Feb 2014/15
5. Kate Wilson, **Project Darkside**, 22 May – 31 August 2015
6. David Clark, Haydn Rive, Robyn Nannes, Kate Wilson, Fenella Fern and Gilian Hamilton **Group exhibition**, March – May 2016
7. Marilyn Rea-Menzies and Elwyn Stone, **Juxtapose**, 28 Oct – 31 Jan 2016/17
8. Kate Wilson **Mind Stretch**, 1 March -31 May 2017
9. Deborah Eastwood, **The Messengers**, 9 June - 31 July 2017
10. Denise White, **Odyssey**, 11 August – 30 Sept 2017
11. Jenni Taris, Yasmin Davis, **Expressions of Spring: Clay and Felt**, 6 October – 6 Jan 2017/18
12. Robyn Nannes, **A Point of Difference**, 19 Jan – 3 March 2018
13. Toni Kingstone, **Peaceful by Nature**, 9 March - 30 April 2018
14. Maggie Sullivan, **Small works: Musings and Meditations**, 4 May - 18 June 2018
15. Catherine Smith, **Flowers and more – A celebration of the Natural World**, 10 August – 10 Sept 2018
16. Birgit Shannon, **Journey of Styles**, 14 Sept – 29 Oct 2018
17. Yasmin Davis and Jenni Taris and Robyn Nannes, **Spring Collection** 1 Nov – 31Jan 2018/19
18. Rebecca Ngapo, **Noun: A collection of People, Places and Things**, 8 Feb –23<sup>rd</sup> March 2019
19. Various Artists, **Celebration** 1 May – 1 August 2019
20. Various Artists, **Threads of Life**, 9<sup>th</sup> August – 20<sup>nd</sup> September 2019
21. Various Artists, **Raglan Art with Risk**, 27<sup>th</sup> September – 27<sup>th</sup> October 2019
22. Various Artists, **Christmas in the Gallery**, 1<sup>st</sup> November – 10th January 2020
23. Various Artists, **The Waikato Watercolourists**, 14 February – 31 March 2020
24. *Forthcoming* Various Artists, **A New Zealand Story**, 3 April – 31 May 2020



# The Waikato Watercolourists

By Clive Gilson Ph.D, Emeritus Professor and member of the  
Board of Trustees for The Welcome Swallow Gallery

The recently expanded Welcome Swallow Gallery<sup>1</sup> in Hamilton East, provided an opportunity for the Gallery Trustees to curate exhibitions that involved, alongside traditional wall-hung art, novel compositions such as textiles and ceramics. However, between February 14<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> March, the Gallery is concentrating solely on the medium of watercolours with a focus on the Waikato region. It is not often that a specific geography is called for in curation. Led by John Ferguson and Samuel Peploe, The Scottish Colourists spring to mind, yet the geographic nomenclature was critically added as a post hoc method that was designed to create an understanding of the contribution made by prominent Scottish artists in the first few decades of the twentieth century. In parallel, there have been many less than revealing debates regarding the emergence of a discernible form of New Zealand art or otherwise. The curation of *The Waikato Watercolourists* Exhibition has much more modest aims. Over several exhibitions this past year in the Welcome Swallow Gallery it became increasingly obvious that many Waikato-inspired compositions were being submitted by local artists, whose chosen medium tended to be watercolours.

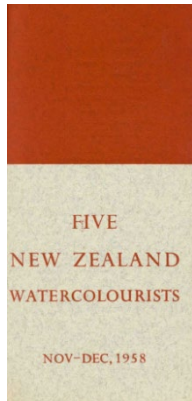
The next logical step was for the Gallery to assist in the formation of the Waikato Watercolourists Society<sup>2</sup> that is now based at the Welcome Swallow Gallery. From this initiative the Trustees of the Gallery both invited and challenged these artists to develop their own insights into how they felt their home might be effectively represented. Additionally, the Gallery had already developed a growing interest in watercolours by prior exhibiting paintings by Frances Hodgkins, Rita Angus and Britain's foremost water colourist, Sir William Russell Flint. Moreover, even a cursory knowledge of art history records that many of the great artists, such as Turner, Hopper, O'Keefe, Webb, Sargent and van Gogh were all supreme in this medium. And in New Zealand we need look no further than the 1958 Watercolour exhibition where Rita Angus along with

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<sup>1</sup> The Gallery is run by the *Achieving Change for Children Charitable Trust* that raises money for Children's charities in the Waikato. All staff and Board members are unpaid volunteers.

<sup>2</sup> The artists that have formed the WWS are: Sandra Barlow, Paulette Bruns, Rebecca Dowman-Ngapo, Diane Mayson-Hewitt, Bernadette Parsons and Denise White.

four other watercolourists, first presented both *Irises* and *Fungi* (see catalogue cover, inset).



The brief for this exhibition, shared with the artists, was deliberately vague with a view to allowing the artists enough license to choose a variegated slate of compositions. We certainly anticipated traditional New Zealand fare, viz. landscape and light, with perhaps more forensic approaches to flora and fauna. This was obtained but with additional socio-cultural commentary that was not envisaged. As a result, the exhibition boasts forty-one compositions that currently stand alone as the only illustration of the Waikato by artists who have used their skill and chosen styles to provide a unique coherent commentary on the world around them.

Although holistic enjoyment is to be had, the curation of this exhibition falls into six categories; Rites of Passage, Iconic Hamilton, Bucolic Bliss, Exotic Flora, Idyllic Reflections and Sound Tracks. Each artist has clearly developed their style through time, mixed and constituted with distinct echoes from deep history within the watercolour genre. Nevertheless, these are compositions that can only have become manifest from a Waikato tableau.

It is fascinating to see how each artist wears her conceptual badges of honour forged from within established parameters of the watercolourists who set the standards by which all subsequent artists are inevitably judged. In this sense *The Waikato Watercolourists* establishes a footprint that locates the exhibition artists firmly within a larger historical narrative. Shared here are six examples that demonstrate how their compositions have created an additional contour to the history of New Zealand watercolourists<sup>3</sup>.

### Rites of Passage

There will be few residents of the Waikato who are unfamiliar with the Waitomo glow worm caves. Rebecca Dowman-Ngapo's evocative composition, *End of a Journey - Blackwater Rafting, Waitomo* captures this moment.



The painting is bursting with energy as each member of the party hauls themselves into daylight. Like Homer's 1934 rendering of *The Cherry Pickers*, each person maintains a private relationship with their immediate task environment, dedicated to purposefully carry out their intended warrant. In both instances neither artist sees the need to

<sup>3</sup> In each case the current exhibition piece is featured first.

provide anything other than profiles of the subjects. The focus of their activity is sufficient to communicate the substance of each composition.

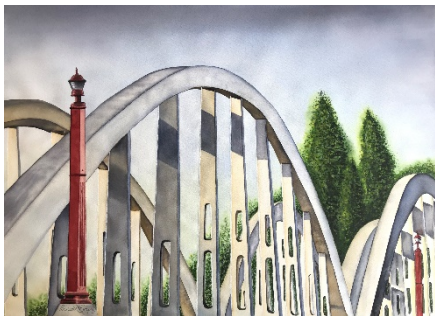


Homer, *The Cherry Pickers*, 1934

Dowman-Ngapo firmly places her subjects in a Waikato context. This is the story of their passage.

### Iconic Hamilton

Much of modern life in the Waikato is driven by the footprint of its largest city, Hamilton. The *Fairfield Bridge*, instantly recognisable, is dramatically captured



by Paulette Bruns who emphasises the proud curvature of the bridge spans that connect both sides of the city across the Waikato river, whereas Hopper's 1934-38 *Country Bridge*, eschews such bold modernity in favour of locating the bridge spans as nestled and integrated into a timeless rural setting. While

Hopper's quest to capture the essence of America can be seen here, it is equally evident that Bruns's *Fairfield Bridge* achieves a similar distinction regarding the Waikato.



Hopper, *The Country Bridge*, 1934-38

Although the ambience of the Waikato is associated with a rural and pastoral ambience, this is not the case for all its inhabitants. Cities also carry structural images that powerfully represent modern life. While, Hopper places his central focus towards the back of the painting, Bruns boldly puts the bridge span at the forefront of her composition.

### Bucolic Bliss

Sandra Barlow's submission *The Glade*, like John Singer Sargent's 1903 painting, *Olive Trees*, invites the viewer to experience a gentle walk with a backdrop of trees that assist in choosing the direction of travel.





distinctive familiar feel to such rural settings.



Sargent, *Olive Trees*, 1903

#### Exotic Flora

Diane Mayson-Hewitt's painting, *Celebration*, fits well in a tradition of floral representations by New Zealand artists where precision is valued for the way in which form and colour are best captured.



worlds. For Mayson-Hewitt it is sufficient that flowers represent a simple



Brady, *Violet Pink Garden Poppy*, 2004

Barlow's rendition is, however, less realist and more imaginary with ghost trees behind the main avenue with a generous mist that plays mystically in the background. This is surely a reference to the Waikato basin's bouts of temperature inversion that frequently brings these mists to ground level thus creating a

While Sargent's olive trees could be located in multiple paddocks and parks, Barlow's painting specifically captures the feel of the Waikato with a certain "swagger"; a label typically associated which Sargent's paintings.

Further afield, Carolyn Brady's 2004 watercolour, *Violet Pink Garden Poppy* offers an illustration of her noted genre of photorealism that also echoes in Mayson-Hewitt's composition. Brady's fascination with flowers entered the philosophical realm where she believed that flowers were the mediation between the human and spiritual

beauty that helps to define our collective experience of the Waikato. And it is the realist genre that is best suited to provide these illustrations.

In direct contrast to this is the impressionistic work of Denise White, whose *Spring Blooms in Ohaupo* takes greater reference from the works of Cezanne



whose technique of overlapping watercolour washes is evident in his 1902, *Mont Sainte-Victoire* painting. For White, this is the best method that can be used to catch the munificent cacophony of colour that the Waikato displays. Gone is the attempt for accurate reflection. In true post impressionistic, Fauvist style, Cezanne's use of a

vivid colour palate is mirrored in White's luxurious canvas that presents a breath-taking floral vista.



Cezanne, *Mont Sainte-Victoire*, 1902

### Idyllic Reflections

Bernadette Parsons, a well-recognized New Zealand watercolourist and winner of the People's Choice Award at 'Splash-2017' has provided the exhibition with



a series of her signature impressionistic works that are an extension of her landscape art seen in New Zealand and overseas. Featured here is an expansive composition entitled *Whangamarino Wetlands*. With strong gestural lines and a swirling firmament above, it is not outlandish to place this work alongside some of Turner's finest.

His work, *The Dark Rigi, the Lake of Lucerne*, painted in 1842 evokes intense passion between the fluid interplay of light, land and water, creating a similar



atmosphere to that of Parson's work. It is evident in both compositions that an illustration that genuflects towards realism would inadequately capture the majesty of such a large canvas. Never has the Waikato been so dramatically represented.

Turner, *The Dark Rigi, the Lake of Lucerne*, 1842

*The Waikato Watercolourists* exhibition at the Welcome Swallow Gallery has provided six outstanding watercolour artists with an opportunity to demonstrate how their chosen medium can create commentary and insight about their surroundings, the Waikato. When artistic skills blend with socially useful talents and observational acumen, the results, as in this case, are simply spectacular.

Priceless the legacy; immeasurable the good.

C.H.J. Gilson Ph.D (February 2020)

The Welcome Swallow Gallery, (ACCCT Trustee)

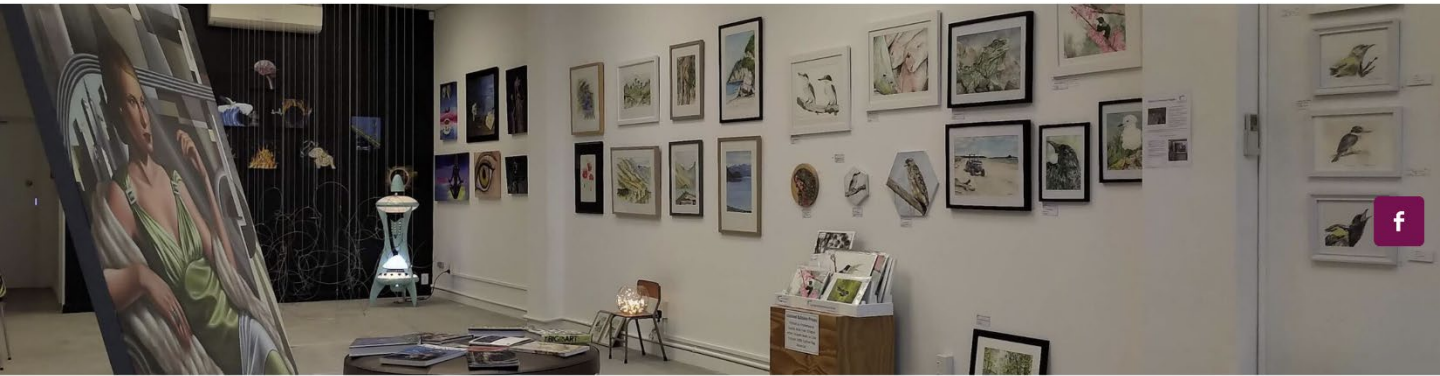




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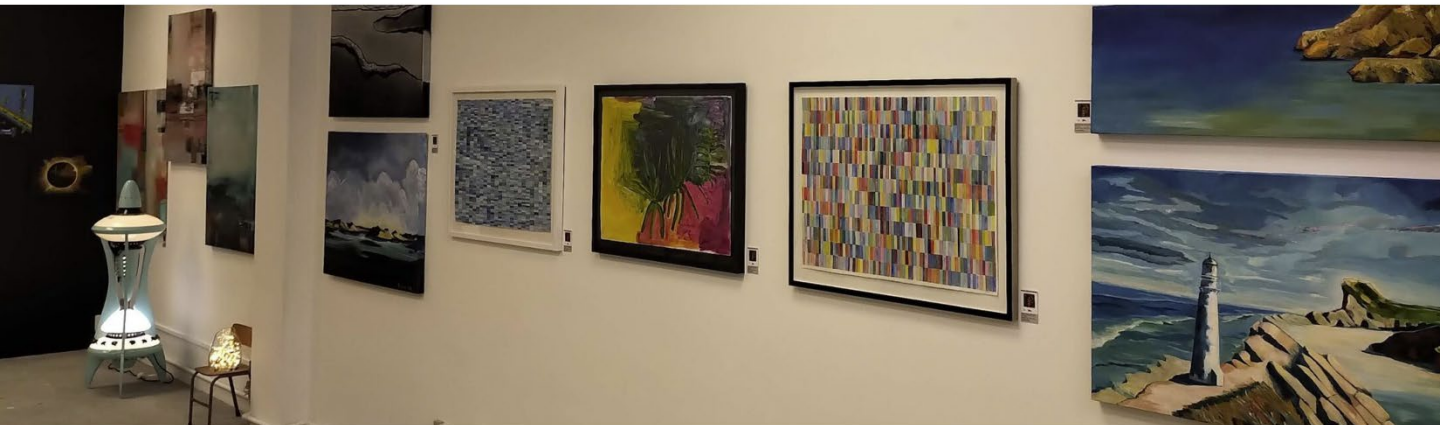
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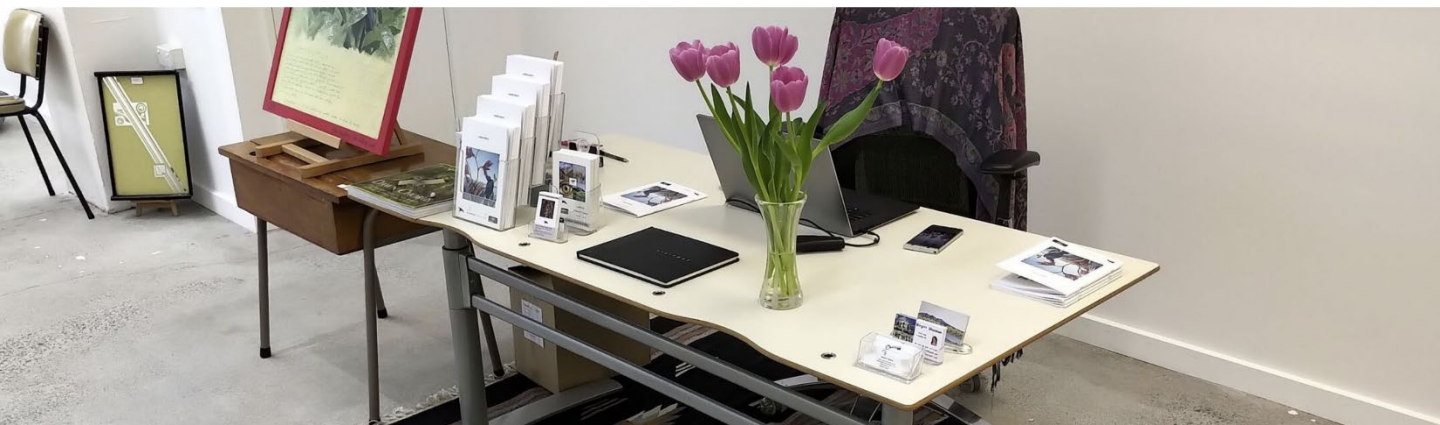
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