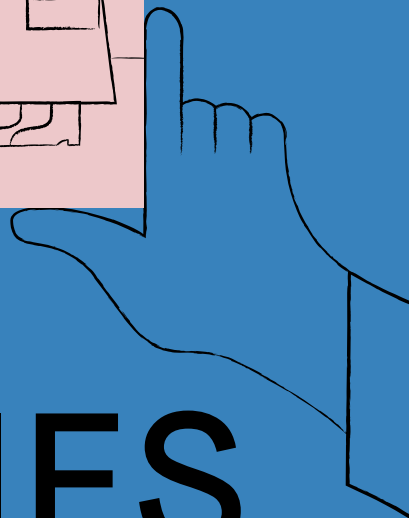
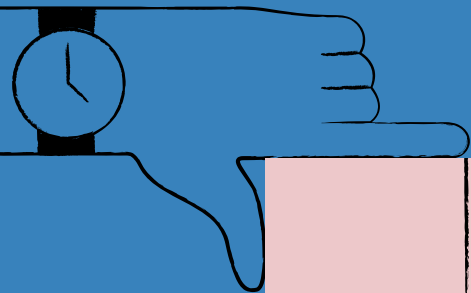
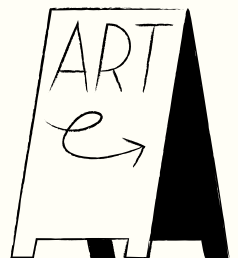


# PICTURE



# GALLERIES



# WHY YOU'RE READING THIS?

This booklet advocates for the power, public good and community value of art galleries. There are few readily-accessible publications for directors, politicians and public sector managers to use when they want to advocate for public art galleries – why they matter and how they impact on all our lives. Both the Chartwell Trust and I hope it fills a gap.

Over twenty local government senior leaders, politicians and art gallery directors were consulted to bring together messages in support of public art galleries. The purpose is to clearly summarise some of the key ways in which galleries provide essential services for the people of Aotearoa New Zealand.

We hope this helps ensure those in influential positions are better able to support art galleries – whether it's funding them; understanding the complexities of collections and loans; or grasping the power of public art galleries to contribute to community wellbeing, as well as to cultural tourism in a thriving economy.

— Jenny Harper

# DISPELLING THE MYTHS





1. An exception was the former National Art Gallery, now part of the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, which received central government funding. It's worth noting that both Dunedin Public Art Gallery and Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki were established in 1884. Christchurch's Robert McDougall Art Gallery and the former National Art Gallery in Wellington were established in the 1930s, but earlier manifestations collected for these cities on their behalf.

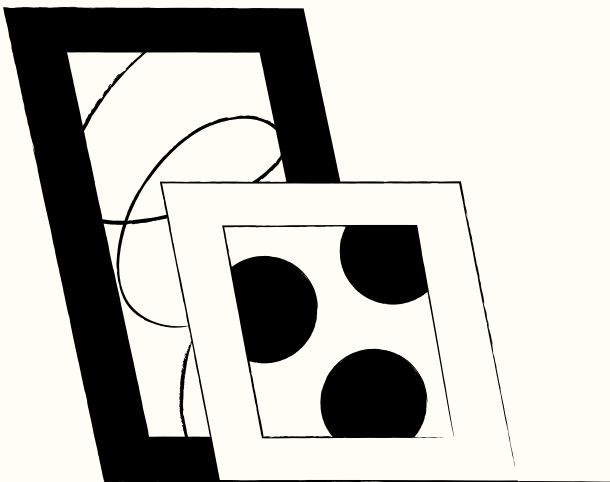
Advocating for public art galleries is a big job. But it's crucial, and a shared responsibility!

Although some public art galleries have been in existence as long as our four major metropolitan museums, none is established by statute which requires local and regional councils to support them.<sup>1</sup> Knowledge about the cultural sector often seems to get lost in the election and planning cycles – so when the going gets tough within councils (or their CCOs), art galleries often have a rough ride. Newly elected councillors and local government officials sometimes need reminding of their art gallery's core functions and their role within communities.

Indeed, many of the same questions are asked and re-asked during each planning and budget cycle:

- Why does the gallery want to add to its art collections when so much is already in storage?
- Why does it cost so much to make and tour exhibitions?
- Why do they insist on free entry?
- What is its community value – isn't art highbrow and elitist?

We want to address these questions and outline some of the major pressures our public art galleries in Aotearoa are facing now.



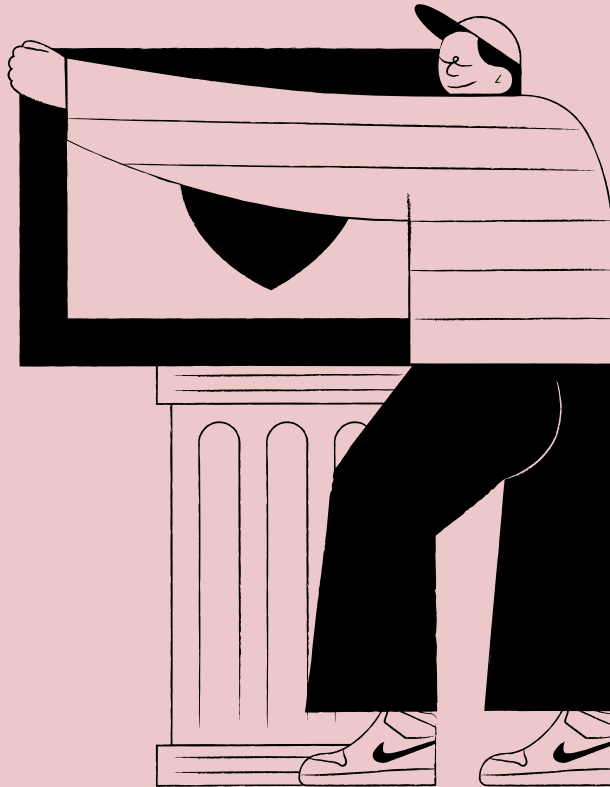


# **PUBLIC ART GALLERIES**

**&**

**WHY THEY  
MATTER  
NOW MORE  
THAN EVER**

2. There are accepted ways of measuring their contributions with the larger galleries regularly undertaking internationally benchmarked visitor surveys. Creative NZ (CNZ) and the Ministry for Culture & Heritage (MCH) also publish related research, such as Cultural Indicators in New Zealand 2009.

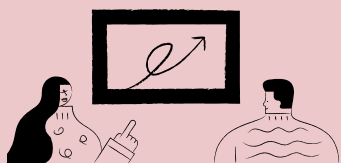


In our image-saturated and fast-paced world, the visual is vital to our lives – think TV and films, advertising and signage, as well as what artists make. Art helps us to understand ourselves; it reflects us and our varied pasts, helps us understand our own and other cultures and histories and engage with changing communal needs and aspirations.

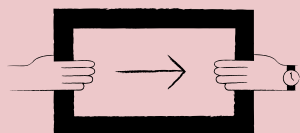
Public art galleries underpin at least three markers of key community wellbeing: cultural, social and economic. And these days we can show how.<sup>2</sup>

Art galleries build relationships within their spheres of influence. They expose their visitors to the results of creative thinking. Seeing art encourages children and young people to make art, and regular gallery visits lay the ground for an imaginative contribution to whatever field they choose. Galleries provide nuance, solace and 'slow time', as well as stimulation – and the occasional spectacle. They bring us together. They sometimes question our perspective; and often help us understand others' points of view (see p.18).

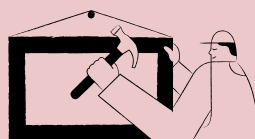
# DID YOU KNOW?



*"The arts and creative sector, which contributes nearly \$11 billion a year to GDP, employs 90,000 people and supports the wellbeing of communities."* Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern, Minister for Arts Culture & Heritage, 2020.



Jointly, the four main public art galleries in New Zealand care for some 73,000 works of art. Excluding touring exhibitions, they make available an average of 200 loans of art a year to other art galleries, national and international.



There are some fifty public art galleries in Aotearoa, with a further twelve art gallery spaces combined with museums. They directly employ a good range of workers, indirectly support other industries – and provide stimulating work for local volunteers.

The size of a city's population and a breakdown of resident's age and ethnicity provides a context for considering visitor numbers. Here are two examples:



*"Only 45% of all visitors to the Auckland Art Gallery identify as New Zealand European. And this: a staggering 70% of all visitors are under the age of 35."* Simon Wilson, The Spinoff, 12 December 2017.

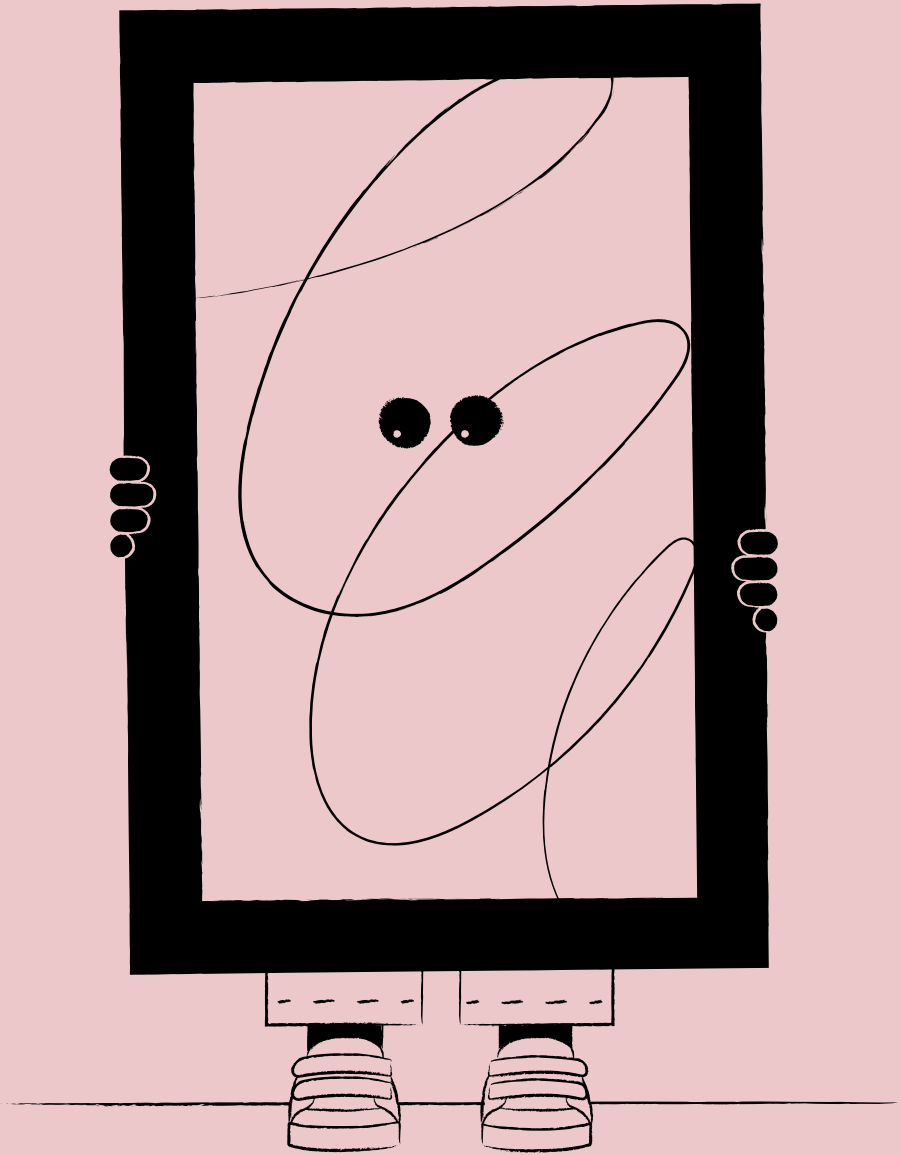


Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū's visitation levels were 130% of its city's population in 2008–09; with an average of 200% attained in the eight months prior to its closure from the 2010–11 Canterbury earthquakes.<sup>3</sup>

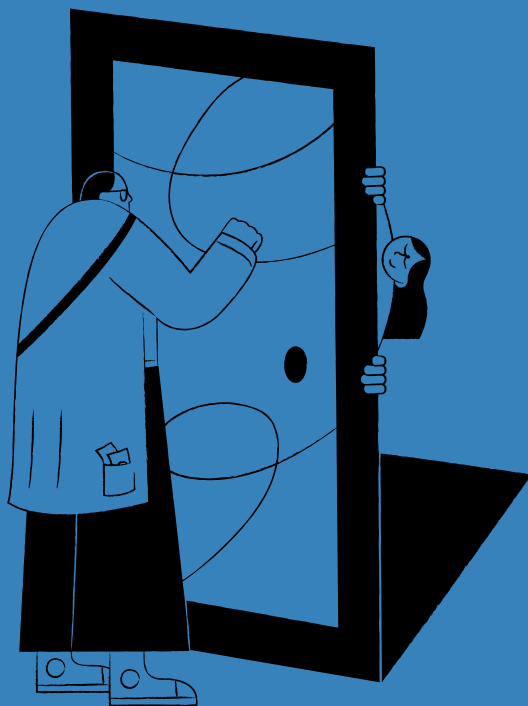
3. Both the Louvre in Paris and Tate Modern, London, attract some 85% of their respective populations; Queensland Art Gallery (QAGOMA) reported a record high in 2017 with 2.17m visitors [pop. then 2,296m]; and Art Gallery of South Australia reported a record year of attendances in 2018 with just over a million visitors [pop. then 1,328m].

*“The international evidence is crystal clear. Children in arts-rich schools do significantly better at the basics than schools which focus on literacy and numeracy outcomes. The arts build the key skills that employers value most highly: risk taking, collaboration, curiosity and an ability to think across rather than in disciplinary silos.”* UoA Professor Peter O’Connor, ‘Teachers hope to end “near death” of arts in school’, Newsroom, 21 January 2020.

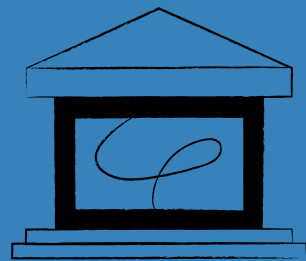




# HOW GALLERIES IMPACT ON



# OUR LIVES

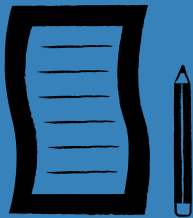


### **1. They support artists and, like artists, art galleries are a pivot in the arts ecosystem**

Artists are among us! They're neither elusive nor unusual, and most are glad to share what they do with us:

*"We [artists] retell, we speculate, we investigate, we chronicle, we create, we instigate, we fabricate, we activate, we procrastinate, and we decorate."* Telly Tuita, on Objectspace's Instagram, 24 March 2020.

Aotearoa New Zealand's public art galleries are a key pivot in the arts ecosystem. They support artists by acquiring, showing and explaining what they do, building collections that provide a context for their work. They endorse what artists do and provide the context they need to produce ambitious and innovative new work.

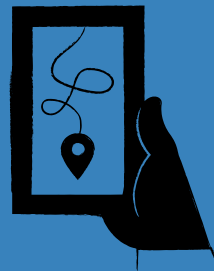


## 2. They promote critical discussion and learning

Art galleries create and feed audiences by producing exhibitions (see p.25) which are talking points, sparking discussion that builds bridges between artists and communities. Galleries nurture expertise, both internally and externally, building teams who can explain and engage. Fostering a love and understanding of art in turn attracts patrons and supporters willing to give works and offer other kinds of support.

Galleries create opportunities for art to be written about, reviewed, dissected and studied. Critical and academic discussion is important to the overall art ecosystem, promoting a healthy respect for what is being made and shown. And, at all levels of the education system, great teachers prioritise curiosity, creativity, experimentation and reflection – helping develop art audiences now and for the future. Increasingly, business and civic leaders recognise how imaginative thinking ensures success in a variety of fields.

Public art galleries are at the centre of this complex social, economic and cultural network.



## 3. They're destinations

Here and elsewhere, public art galleries are a vital part of how cities and towns present themselves. There's at least one major collecting gallery in each main centre, and many in smaller towns as well. Galleries play a key role in cultural tourism and feature on the 'to do' lists for many visitors to the city. They create exhibitions which speak to both visitors and our communities, making locals proud by revealing their place, its history and taonga.

In a post-COVID-19 world, in which major touring exhibitions are less likely, the focus will shift to locally-held collections. To continue to make a valuable economic, social and educational contribution to their communities, art galleries must develop collections worth seeing now and in the future.



#### **4. As well as being tourism performers, they drive a unique economy**

Our galleries directly employ a good proportion of workers – and provide stimulating work for local volunteers. Their purchasing power and advocacy creates opportunities not just for artists but for the wider industry: the manufacturers, suppliers, fabricators, framers, crate builders, freight companies, printers, designers, technicians, dealer galleries, and a myriad of other specialists who together make up the art world.



#### **5. They're communal spaces, making connections**

As much as public art galleries used to be 'pavilions in the park' or sit like temples on a hill-top location, now galleries prefer being in the central city. But, wherever they are, their collections operate like springboards for our cultural engagement.

Art galleries are active communal spaces, overflowing with life and events for younger and older people alike. They support learning at all levels and offer varied outreach programmes for their communities. They're often busy but, if you want to go it alone, they offer emotional and intellectual nourishment as you muse and imagine. Galleries are an enjoyable option for spending leisure time and meeting others, or for winding down during stressful times. They encourage a sense of belonging, which is more important now than ever.

Gallery cafés, restaurants and shops are often busy and great places to meet. Many galleries offer good spaces for after-hours functions, conferences and special events.

4. Galleries are considered to be the 'publishers' of exhibitions within their spaces, and advice can and should be sought from the Office of Film and Literature Classification with time allowed for this to be provided.

5. See my 'Museum as Provocateur – Art Galleries and Controversy' in *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Art*, vol 4, no 2, 2003 and vol 5, no 1, 2004, (p.57–75).



## 6. They are all about access – they're ours and they're free!

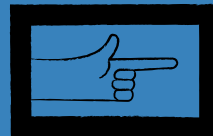
Public art galleries in Aotearoa are funded either through central government (Te Papa) or through local councils (the rest). There is no question that a gallery's collections belong to the community which funds them. City councils, directors and gallery staff are trusted with caring for these for future generations; they're kaitiaki or guardians with a shared responsibility for the city's collections.

Art galleries are open most days and – like our botanic gardens and parks – they're proudly free (except for the occasional special exhibition). By providing free access, art galleries help grow an understanding that the collections really are for everyone.

Standing up for free entrance means that galleries:

- reduce 'threshold fear' and barriers to local access;
- demonstrate their commitment to equity and access for all;
- enable locals to visit often and spend 15 minutes or 5 hours;
- value the free social media marketing which younger visitors provide;
- make out-of-towners feel warmly welcome as guests of our city; and
- kick the idea that art is elite or highbrow well into the background where it belongs!

Most galleries also provide access to works of art in their care by publishing in print and online, although technological upgrades and cataloguing assistance are needed in some places (see p.37). They also lend works to other public galleries regularly for specific exhibitions on a cost-recovery basis, enhancing their cultural value and reach.



## 7. Sometimes galleries challenge and provoke

Advancements in any field involve taking risks and exploring different solutions. Creative thinking and art-making are no different, so sometimes we need to remind ourselves that:

- good art can cause ripples within a community; and
- good art galleries will still want to show it.<sup>4</sup>

Standing alongside artists whose work may be challenging – deliberately or not – needs thinking through by a publicly funded gallery. Can gallery staff support the debate and any predictable fall-out? How do they make visitors aware of what they'll see and provide a context for the work if it's unusually provocative?<sup>5</sup>

Art can cause discomfort; it may get under our skin and reveal other sides of a debate. Astute city-wide cultural leadership and supportive governance are needed throughout.

6. See Brian O'Doherty, *Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Space*, (expanded edition of essays initially published in *Artforum* during 1976), Los Angeles: UCP, 1986.

7. See Rebecca Carlsson, 'Are museums good for your mental health?', in *MuseumNext* online journal, 16 May 2020. See also, Daniel Thomas, 'The many kinds of many minds', *Museum National*, CAMA, Melbourne, August 1993, (p. 4–7).



### 8. Galleries respond to community debates and help us face current realities!

Galleries used to think of themselves as neutral spaces, with their white walls and clean spaces reinforcing an ideology of separation from the outside world.<sup>6</sup> Very few assert this position now. Rather, in an era of increasing diversity, public art galleries recognise they need to join and, on occasion, lead the debates that coming to terms with a fair and equitable future require. So it's good to see art galleries rising to the various political, ethical and ecological challenges in the community.

*"To address structural racism and the inequalities underpinning society, we have a responsibility to act."* Maria Balshaw, director, Tate Galleries, statement, 13 June 2020, on Tate's commitment to racial equality following the killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis on 25 May 2020.

### 9. They're healing

Art is a fundamentally human activity, practised from the beginning of time and in varying forms across all cultures. Both making art and looking at art are linked to our personal health and wellbeing, to the way we learn, and to how we communicate and understand ourselves and each other. Art-making opportunities are now provided in a range of contexts – from schools to prisons, in hospitals and retirement villages.

Similarly, visiting art galleries is increasingly considered to be healing. Recent studies point to improvements to mental health, decreases in levels of anxiety, isolation and depression, and how greater self-esteem comes from exposure to art through gallery visits.<sup>7</sup>

*"The arts are healing balms because at their heart is a celebration of life, a celebration of the possibility of joy, of wonder, of beauty. In the coming days, as the fragility of life is increasingly threatened, the arts will be part of what puts us back together."* UoA Professor Peter O'Connor, 'The days ahead', post in *The Big Idea*, 1 April 2020.

*"A public art gallery is a gymnasium for the mind."* Robert Gardiner CNZM, Chartwell Trust.

# TYPES OF ART GALLERIES AROUND AOTEAROA

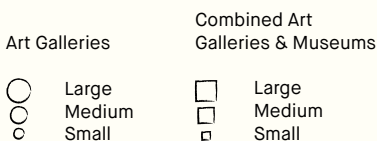


**Before we start, a couple of points to absorb:**

Most cities and many towns in New Zealand support public art galleries which collect and show art. A smaller number of more-recently established institutions do not themselves collect, but present a range of exhibitions by borrowing from public or private collections.<sup>8</sup>

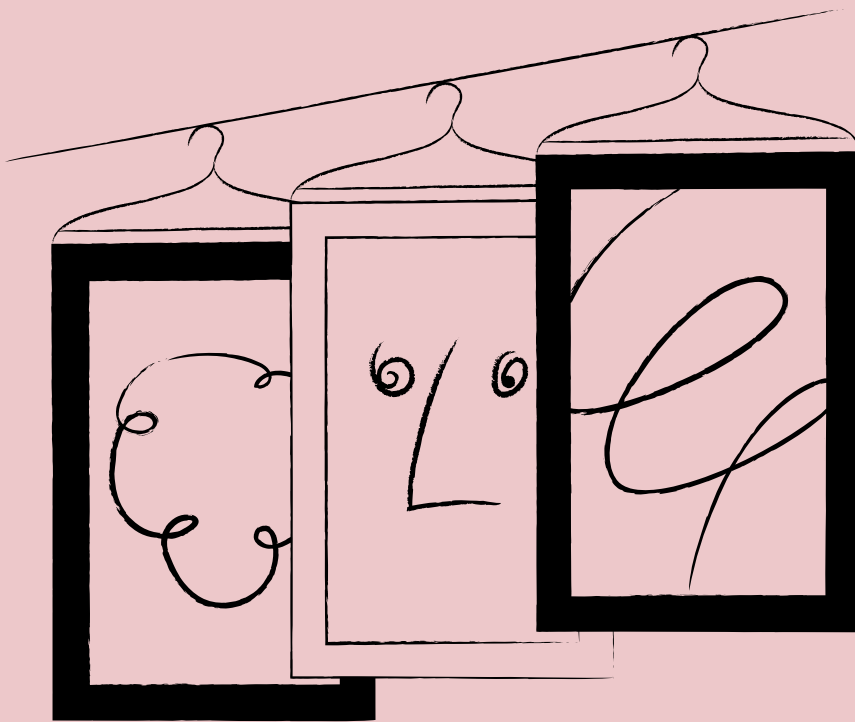
Since around 1990, most galleries also have and use a name in te reo Māori. This will either be a translation (as in Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki) or a name given by local iwi (as with Te Puna o Waiwhetū for Christchurch Art Gallery).

See p.40 for full list.



8. For example, City Gallery Wellington was inaugurated in 1980 as an exhibiting space without a collection, largely because Wellington was also home to the former National Art Gallery which grew a collection (now within the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa). Te Uru, Te Tuhi and Objectspace in Auckland, City Gallery Wellington and CoCA in Christchurch and several of the smaller contemporary galleries, operate more like European kunsthallen (art halls), staging a succession of changing exhibitions and artists projects. There is also a small range of university art galleries in New Zealand, supported by the university – these often have campus-wide art collections to care for.

# GALLERIES & THEIR MOKOPUNA



9. See my director's foreword  
'Collections Matter', B.181, Christchurch  
Art Gallery, spring, 2015, (p.4-9).

# OUR COLLECTIONS

## **Building and caring for collections**

Collecting is a human instinct, and many of us collect on a domestic scale. However, cities take on this role for their communities by providing for collections in their key art galleries, museums and libraries.

Each place is different, but each art gallery cares for a sample of cultural DNA found nowhere else on the planet.<sup>9</sup> Many gallery staff love the collections, and some think of them as their children or their mokopuna. As well as their care being a responsibility, it is a privilege to work with them.

Public art collections belong to the people of a particular city who help fund them through their annual rates. Gallery staff and their managers are kaitiaki or guardians with responsibility for these. The origin of the word 'curator' is someone who cares for; its current use as a verb meaning to 'select' is by no means the full story. Caring for public collections, the kaitiaki role, is a base-level function. It's not trivial and involves ensuring good quality storage and suitable conservation facilities, as well as ensuring staff are trained in handling works of art in their varying media.

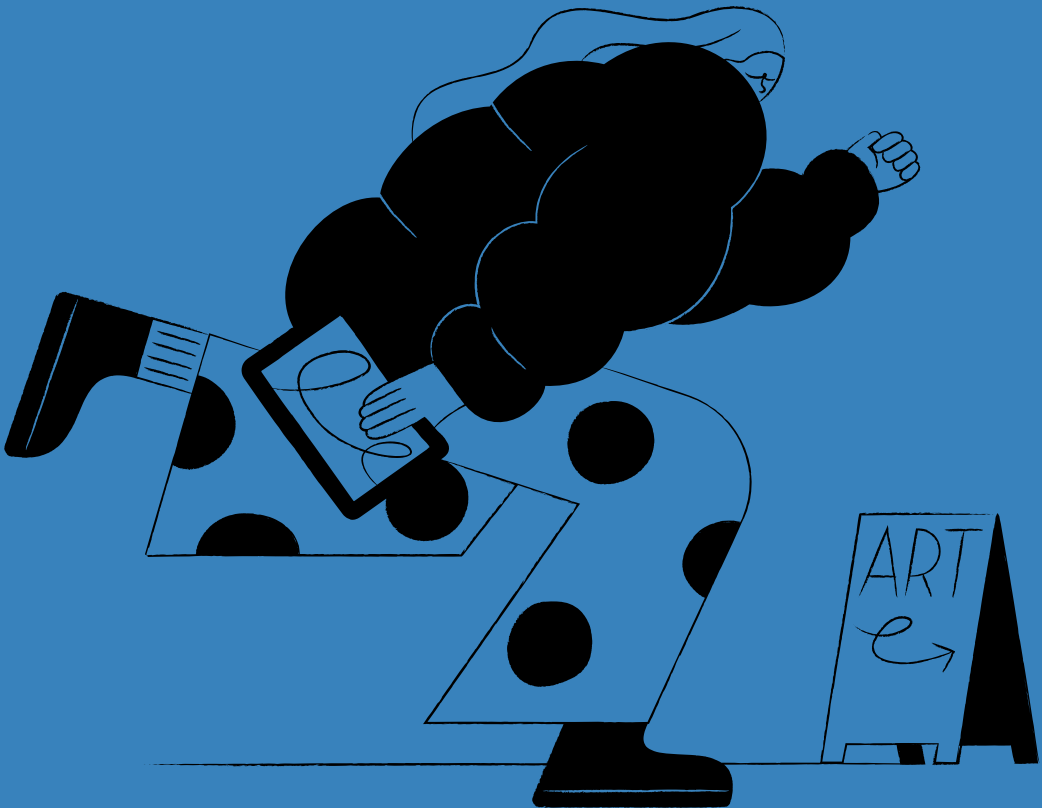
To build a collection with integrity requires knowledge and commitment. Productive relationships with artists, collectors and other galleries must be established. Assured capital funding, confident curators, supportive governance, as well as a network of individual champions all help ensure collections are enhanced in line with a well-considered policy.

## **We need to collect continuously and consistently because:**

- it's important to support our creative community of visual artists;
- it's irresponsible to leave future generations to play catch-up, filling gaps later and at higher prices;
- as time passes, collecting patterns change – we recognise now that art made by women, Māori and Pasifika artists, as well as those who identify as LGBTQI+ was not collected well or systematically in the past.

**The collections are us! Our base and our foundation, these taonga are sources of creativity for all...**

# BRINGING ART & CREATIVITY TO ALL



## Exhibitions

There's no sense in building a collection if it is not seen or known about. Public art galleries are open almost every day to ensure easy access to the art on display. They stage exhibitions for their communities, familiar and occasionally challenging; over time these help visitors develop a rapport with their collections.

Publishing the collection in different formats is key. Exhibitions are art gallery publications, and a way of providing access to collections in contexts during opening hours.

### Spend 15 minutes or 5 hours!

Longer-term collection displays with current points of interest often form the backbone of a visitor's experience. Regular visitors can let a particular sculpture or painting work its magic on their imaginations – it's helpful to remember you can go often and you don't need to understand or enjoy everything! You can look at a single work during a lunchtime visit (a big plus for free admission) or spend longer absorbing a group of works.

Shorter exhibitions are staged for several months or for a particular event. They may bring together works by the same artist or a group whose work resonates with others. They might be prompted by the desire to reveal an exciting new acquisition to a home audience.

Temporary exhibitions involve a lot of work, including the planning and scheduling

of any needed short-term loans, and insurance and careful transportation. They usually stem from the ideas of one or more curators, who collaborate with others in their own and other galleries and cultural institutions. Exhibitions can be designed for children or other specific audiences.

### On and off-line?

Some recent UK-based research shows that the more that we learn about collections from exploring them online, the more we are likely to want to go and visit them.<sup>10</sup>

With the worldwide restrictions on public art galleries in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, some exemplary communications about art collections have emerged online, from 'walk-throughs' of closed exhibitions to fun and engaging personal responses to individual works. Very much of their time, these responses are a real testament to people's desire to connect with art, even in various levels of community 'lock-down' in 2020. Works of art will accrue new meanings as we return to look again.

Experiencing art exhibitions in a physical environment is special. And warnings are surfacing as writers spring to the defence of exhibitions over their digital counterparts:

- online exhibitions are replicas, not originals;
- they lack the 'stumble upon' nature of the real gallery experience;
- it's easier to 'tune out' of online exhibitions.<sup>11</sup>

10. UK Art Fund, [www.artfund.org/blog/2018/02/15/why-collect-report](http://www.artfund.org/blog/2018/02/15/why-collect-report)

11. See, for example, Emma Thorne-Christy, 'In Defence of the Physical Exhibition: A plea not to 'move' exhibitions online', in MuseumNext, accessed 20 May 2020. [www.museumnext.com/article/in-defence-of-the-physical-exhibition-a-plea-not-to-move-exhibitions-online](http://www.museumnext.com/article/in-defence-of-the-physical-exhibition-a-plea-not-to-move-exhibitions-online)

### **Publications: print and online**

Exhibitions are probably the best-known form of making collections available, but printed publications enhance access and ensure images and information are more widely shared. Art gallery catalogues are usually generously illustrated and feature informative essays and up-to-date details about individual works. Collectable in their own right, they provide a record of an exhibition or the collection. They also make their way into libraries – gallery, public and university – where they are used as reference material. A gallery’s library in turn becomes a rich resource for researchers and writers.

A gallery magazine or newsletter will also communicate a programme in an up-to-date way, as well as help grow a strong support base.

Access to collections and other forms of publication and relevant information is increasingly provided online and is a rich resource in its own right. Making recent writing and public lectures relating to a gallery’s programme available online improves a community’s sense of connection to the public art gallery and its collections.

### **Public programmes and education**

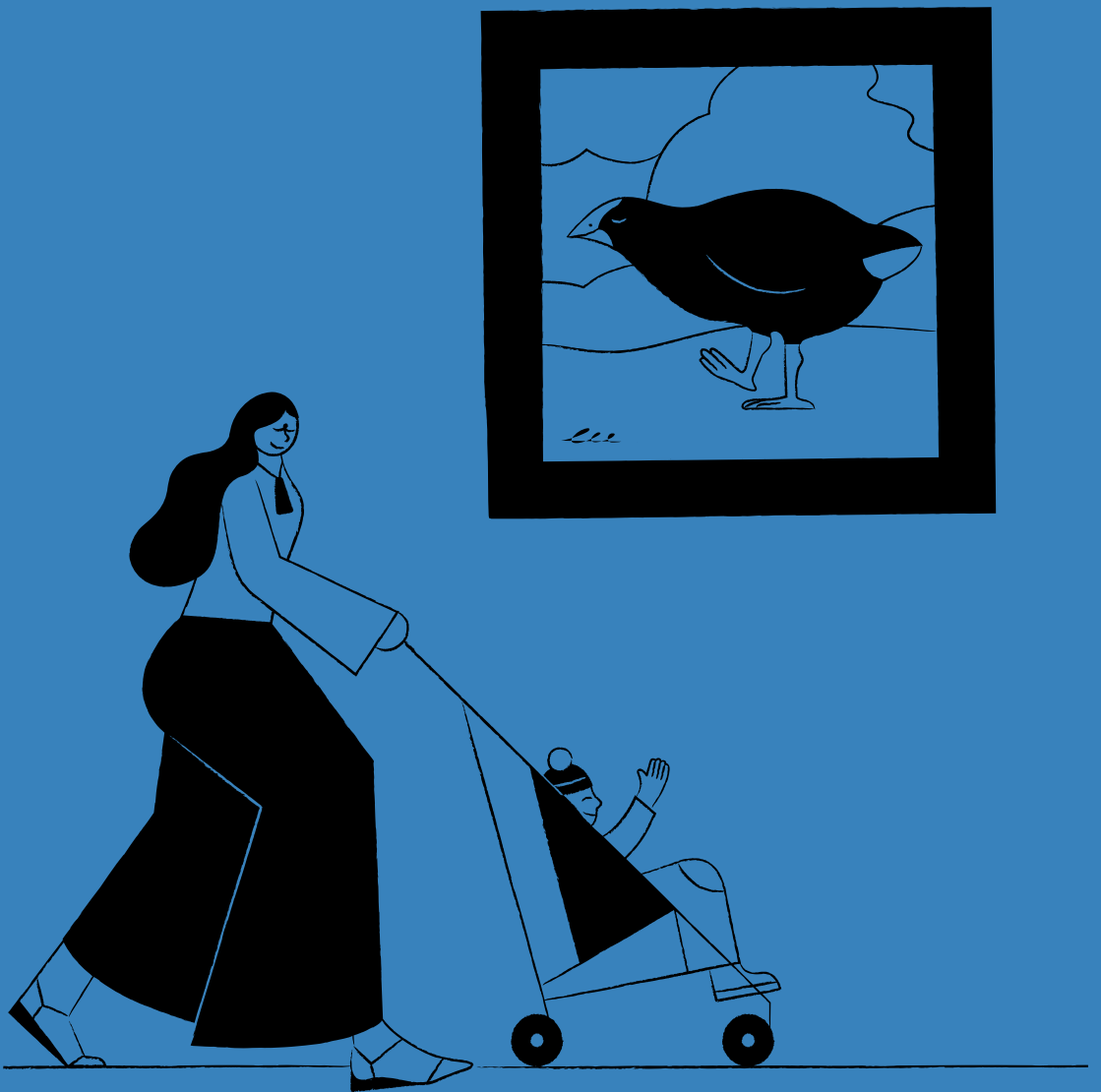
Public art galleries reach their communities by developing varied programmes aimed at diverse audiences. And with a reduction of art education in New Zealand schools, and an increasing lack of support for the humanities here and internationally, art learning within the public art gallery context becomes more vital.

Galleries support students in schools as well as encouraging art-related on-site activities. Programmes are also devised for adults, and can be delivered with the help of trained volunteers. Online learning will continue to grow with technological improvements and social media. Awareness of the cultural and social makeup of a city’s residents and visitors to the gallery helps to ensure well-targeted programmes.

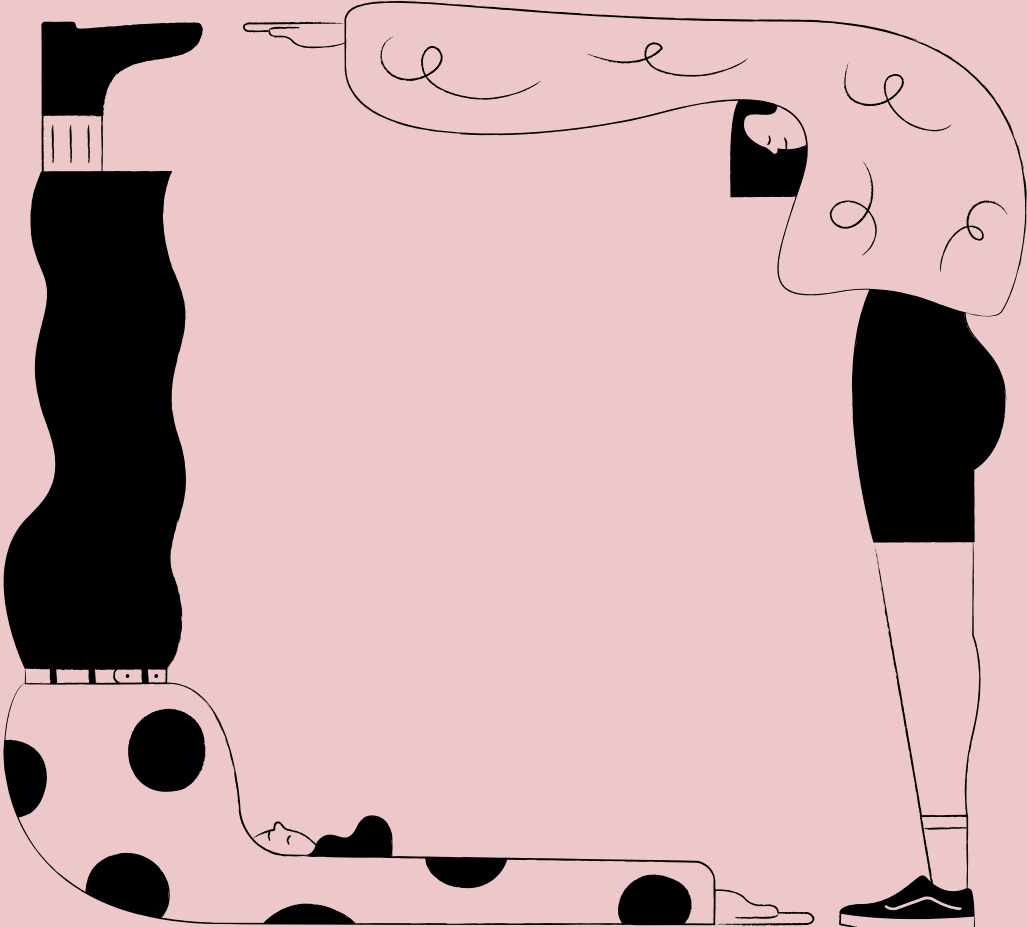
It’s great if public programmes break from the formulaic and expected, encouraging curiosity and prompting empathy for new ways of thinking and being. Good art education prompts cultural engagement, with its lovely joint meanings of ‘drawing forth’ and ‘developing potential’.

### **Centres of learning and cultural exchange**

Public art galleries are centres of learning; they’re a bridge between artists and other cultural thinkers in our community and the public. They are sites of social exchange which help shape meaning, so it’s important that they connect with broader critical and educational environments and take advantage of relevant scholarship as it develops. Artists, academics and others may be asked to lecture, contribute to catalogues and gallery magazines, as well as take on guest curator roles. Sometimes they will work in fields of study for which the gallery doesn’t have specialisation. Whatever their involvement, a good rapport between galleries and the tertiary sector will ensure huge gains for everyone.



# THE PEOPLE





# WHO SPEAKS FOR THE GALLERY?

## **Directors**

Generally their directors speak on behalf of a given public art gallery. They're aware of the gallery's full range of responsibilities and the need to be politically astute. Directors will actively develop relationships – with ministries and within councils, with locals and with iwi, as well as national and international colleagues.

Inspirational and aspirational directors will impart a sense of mission to their colleagues and to politicians, as well as those who manage gallery funding levels directly or through CCO's. They'll speak with an understanding of their gallery's contribution to shaping culture, and be at ease with cultivating thought leaders within their wider community as well as donors in the cultural sector.

## **The art gallery team**

Public art gallery employees will also speak on different occasions. Curators may be heard in relation to the collections, the exhibitions they fashion from them, and the art they have a hand in acquiring. They'll be good at articulating the role of artists as cultural thinkers and their pride in having work in public collections. Other art gallery staff, including those in public programmes, visitor hosts and guides, will understand how important it is to speak to the broader community of visitors and interested others on their own terms.

There are a range of others working in necessary support roles. Conservators,

registrars, installation staff, and security roles are all key if rarely seen by visitors. But front-of-house hosts, public programmes and shop staff are seen and have an important impact on the visitor experience. Some tasks are also allocated to volunteers, offering satisfying and interesting part-time options for some in their community.

## **Being professional**

It's crucial that public art galleries are managed and staffed by well-trained and respected professionals at all levels. A recognised career structure within the sector is important, as well as shared ways of applauding individual and team achievements locally and nationally. Collecting accurate data about an art gallery is useful and will enable regular national and international professional bench-marking.

Politicians, funders and patrons should understand the strength of the institution they are supporting; it's also good for art gallery staff to see how they rank alongside other galleries and identify ways they can lift their game. Relative to other fields, there is not much staff 'churn' within the art gallery sector, so it is important to encourage training and manage other on-site improvements.

There's a lot to be said for art galleries being aware of professional peer-review systems used in academic and aligned fields, and borrowing from these regularly and if a specific need arises.

## Being ethical

Codes of ethics are developed for public art galleries and museums, from those which are internationally debated and approved to that adopted here by Museums Aotearoa.<sup>12</sup> Aspects of these are pretty straightforward (for example, that neither board members nor curators should collect art in competition with their art gallery; and that the proceeds of any approved deaccessioning which takes place must be applied solely to the benefit of the collection). But questions can arise which are not covered within these codes. They will be discussed and resolved within the organisation or with the aid of the professional body concerned.

Sources of external funding may also lead to unwelcome associations. Major sponsorship used to be sought by art galleries from tobacco and alcohol companies, but no longer. More recently, those involved in the manufacturing of opiates and extracting fossil fuels have attracted massive international opposition. Within New Zealand, valid questions are raised from time-to-time about the dependence of large parts of the arts sector on lotteries and gaming support.

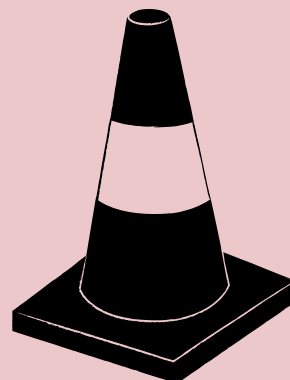
## Deaccessioning?

Because one of our key responsibilities is to collect, the custodial role of the public art gallery is paramount. However they're acquired, whether by gift or purchase, our art is with us for the long haul.

Works of art are 'accessioned' into the collection. Deaccessioning or disposal may need to be considered if items are damaged beyond repair or when a greater good is identified and approved at the highest possible level. However, it is crucial that confidence in a collecting gallery and any historical undertakings its predecessors may have made are not undermined. It is also important to apply any gains from deaccessioning directly to the collection.<sup>13</sup>

12. ICOM is the International Council of Museums (which includes art galleries). Museums Aotearoa's Code of Ethics & Professional Practice, Wellington, adopted 20 November 2013 (and presently under review), is subtitled: 'For Governing Bodies, Managers and Staff of Museums and Art Galleries in Aotearoa New Zealand' and is aligned to ICOM, but deals with a range of matters specific to New Zealand.

13. See Shane Simpson, *Museums and Galleries: a practical legal guide*, Sydney, Museums Association of Australia Inc., 1989, ch.5.





## What does it cost to run an art gallery?

Art galleries come with costs. There's always the cost of acquiring new works for the collection. But, in addition, protecting works of art, running large buildings and developing audiences is not cheap. Budgets vary, depending on the size of the city or town and its gallery, but roughly ordered with the most expensive first, basic running costs include:



- staffing and security;
- building and maintenance (in some places, there is an additional need for earthquake strengthening);
- plant and 24/7 climate control;
- storage, conservation and insurance;
- exhibitions and other publication costs;
- public programme, education and marketing costs;
- relationships – domestic and international.

14. The Regional Culture & Heritage Fund, administered by the Ministry for Culture and Heritage, may contribute up to a third for capital projects for centres outside of Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch. See <https://mch.govt.nz/RegionalCultureHeritageFund>

### **So, who pays?**

Aotearoa New Zealand has inherited a commitment to sharing our cultural legacy with many audiences and to maintaining an egalitarian approach in what we do.

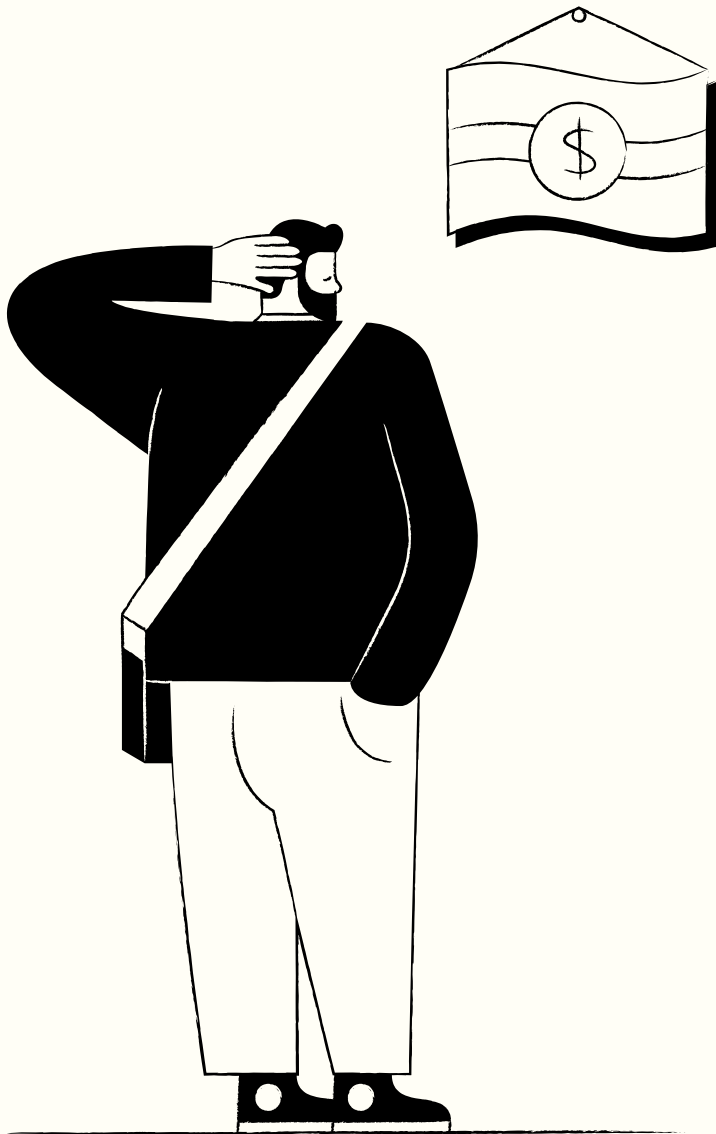
### **Government: central and local**

All public art galleries are only partially funded from the public purse – whether that be by tax-payers (including occasional specific project grants from MCH or CNZ) or rate-payers.<sup>14</sup> Public funding is best thought of as a necessary base for art galleries, but it generally falls short by at least 20% within Aotearoa, with further funding expected to be gained either in-house or from external sources.

Funding relationships can make public art galleries less independent and, on some past occasions, politicians have meddled beyond what is acceptable. It is important that elected representatives and senior council managers understand the benefits of an 'arm's length approach' to programming and decision-making within galleries.

### **In-house funding sources**

Many galleries run shops with gallery and collection-related products, including books and cards, to enhance their general purposes as well as their base income. Several also run cafés and restaurants, either directly or through commercial leases which add to the base of public funding. Welcome additional income may be gained from the hire of gallery spaces for after-hours events, meetings and other social and corporate gatherings.



## **Friends and Foundations**

During the good times at least, additional support is sought from other quarters, including through Friends and Members organisations, and through Foundations.

Foundations may be established to assist a public art gallery with independent fundraising, especially for new building projects, major collection items or special projects. Hugely beneficial for their independent status, they may also gain the charitable status needed to offer tax relief for donations. There are well-established fundraising principles for Foundations to be aware of and they must adhere to relevant regulations, as well as being open and accountable.<sup>15</sup>

Trustees and board members lend their expertise, time, contact networks and reputations to the institution. Many also lead by financial example, but not all will be in a position to give as generously as others.

While some see it as their responsibility to support local arts organisations, including public art galleries, there is a critical need to develop a new generation of philanthropists within New Zealand.

## **Business sponsorship**

Business sponsorship was at its apex back in the 1980s when banks, Telecom, Benson & Hedges and Montana were big arts supporters. However, in New Zealand sport is still – however questionably – considered more mainstream than the arts. Charitable and community causes often take priority with companies who want to support a social purpose within their business strategies.

When times are tough, as in the present global pandemic, attracting support from corporate sponsors is also hard.

The 2020s look set to be challenging, with a likely decline in discretionary income and in giving at all levels.

An art gallery with a strong independent brand is more likely to attract external financial support than one overwhelmed by a local government presence or that of a joint CCO. The brand and reputation of potential sponsors is also key. Their money needs to be 'clean' (see p.30) and their business aligned to the greater good of the community, as much as that can be defined and assessed at the time.

15. CNZ's 'Getting on Board' is a useful resource for foundations and governing boards in the cultural sector and is available at: <https://www.creativenz.govt.nz/development-and-resources/research-and-reports/getting-on-board-a-governance-resource-for-arts-organisations>

The text is centered on a light pink background. It is surrounded by several thin, black, stylized outlines of flames or fire, which are scattered around the text, creating a sense of heat and intensity. The text itself is in a bold, black, sans-serif font.

**NINE  
BURNING  
ISSUES  
FACING  
ART  
GALLERIES**



# Several gallery directors around the country were spoken to in the course of this project. Their key concerns led to this summary of common 'red flags'.

1. Seismic strengthening is a priority requirement for a range of public art galleries, some in heritage-protected buildings, and this requires significant funding.
2. Some galleries do not have ready access to expert conservation skills and advice nor sufficient secure climate-controlled storage space. The endorsement and the encouragement of central government may help prompt local bodies to think beyond their rate-payer base about investing cooperatively in shared facilities.
3. Natural disasters and extreme weather events globally have caused the costs of travel, freight, as well as the insurance of art to rise exponentially over the last decade, with some insurers withdrawing from the art market. This, in addition to the current global pandemic and its aftermath will mean expectations of the 'blockbuster' international touring exhibitions of the past are becoming unrealistic.
4. An overemphasis on visitor numbers, with not all counting systems as reliable as others, can become a pain point. Many galleries need additional help with defining and measuring the quality of their visitor experience and understanding how those who come reflect the make-up of their area.
5. Equity issues are perceived with the four larger museums in New Zealand having been established with legislation which requires their funding from relevant city councils. The same independence is not guaranteed by statute for the equivalent-level art galleries. With their institutional collecting not endorsed by statute, art galleries need to argue constantly for how integral it is to their purpose.
6. Advocates for art within local bodies are rare – it's hard to find champions. It is hoped this publication helps councillors and those in senior ministry and council roles understand the importance of public art galleries, as well as providing a unifying voice for directors in planning and budget discussions.
7. In challenging times, financial models which support key public art galleries to carry out their core tasks are needed. For these are also times when the generosity of individual philanthropists and the largesse of corporations is stretched by multiple requests from differing communities.
8. The need to nurture a new generation of philanthropists is recognised and is something which can be addressed at central government and local council levels, as well as by gallery directors, membership groups, boards and foundations.
9. The powerful notion of a well-documented distributed national collection, discussed in the 1980s in the context of the then proposed Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, has yet to be realised. Financial support for nationally significant art held in collections beyond Te Papa's would be welcomed. A good first step would be the establishment in the 2020s of a specific independent contestable fund parallel to that for capital projects to support art galleries (and the wider museum community) to catalogue and maintain their collections.

# A FINAL WORD

We humans need to be imaginative and resilient to contend with our complex and challenging future. As much as we need science to solve the reality of climate change, and new economic models to address growing social inequality, we also need a deep sense of the meaning, value, and purpose of our existence. Art is a means to this end.

We trust artists to offer us solace, inspiration and insight, to model and interrogate our core natures – we need public art galleries to ensure their works are seen and voices heard. Galleries in Aotearoa New Zealand must have reliable funding and be open and active, so their collections, exhibitions, staff and volunteers can provide access to the pleasure and hope that art gives.

## **Thanks**

Chartwell Trust, especially Rob Gardiner and Sue Gardiner; McCarthy for design; Creative New Zealand and Museums Aotearoa for assistance with distribution; David Simpson and Megan Shaw for their editorial eyes; Tina Barton for her incisive wisdom and the final word; Brown Bread for their project acumen; all who were interviewed during the genesis of this booklet (all helpful).

## **Dedication**

This booklet is dedicated to those who work in public art galleries in Aotearoa New Zealand and all who help to fund them; as well as to the artists of Aotearoa New Zealand and their support networks.

## **Jenny Harper**

Now retired from the public sector, Jenny tackles various art-related projects which interest her. She was director of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū from 2006-2018. Before this she worked at Victoria University of Wellington, developing the Art History programme and establishing the Adam Art Gallery; in 2003, she was appointed assistant vice-chancellor (academic). Jenny was the last director of the former National Art Gallery in Wellington, becoming director of Art and History at the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa after legislative change in 1992. She was commissioner for New Zealand's presentations at the Venice Biennale in 2009, 2011 and 2013. In 2011 she received an MNZM for services to the arts and in 2018 she was awarded a D.Litt (hon) from the University of Canterbury.

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## ART GALLERIES IN NEW ZEALAND

(as provided by Museums Aotearoa)

Large	Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki
Large	Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū
Large	Dunedin Public Art Gallery
Medium	Aratoi Wairarapa Museum of Art and History
Medium	City Gallery Wellington
Medium	Govett-Brewster Art Gallery
Medium	Sarjeant Gallery Te Whare o Rehua Whanganui
Medium	Tauranga Art Gallery
Medium	Te Tuhi
Medium	Te Uru Waitakere Contemporary Gallery
Medium	Dowse Art Museum
Medium	Suter Art Gallery Te Aratoi o Whakatu
Small	Adam Art Gallery Te Pataka Toi, Victoria University of Wellington
Small	Aigantighe Art Gallery
Small	Artspace Aotearoa
Small	Ashburton Art Gallery
Small	Blue Oyster Art Project Space
Small	Centre of Contemporary Art Toi Moroki
Small	Corban Estate Arts Centre
Small	Eastern Southland Gallery
Small	Enjoy Public Art Gallery
Small	Estuary Arts Centre, Orewa
Small	Forrester Gallery, Oamaru
Small	Fresh Gallery, Otara
Small	Geoff Wilson Gallery
Small	George Fraser Gallery
Small	Gus Fisher Gallery, University of Auckland
Small	Hastings City Art Gallery
Small	Invercargill Public Art Gallery
Small	Lake House Arts Centre
Small	Left Bank Art Gallery
Small	Mahara Gallery
Small	Malcolm Smith Gallery
Small	Mairangi Bay Art Centre
Small	Mangere Arts Centre Ngā Tohu o Uenuku
Small	Millennium Public Art Gallery
Small	New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts
Small	New Zealand Portrait Gallery
Small	Northart
Small	Objectspace
Small	Papakura Art Gallery
Small	Percy Thomson Gallery
Small	ST PAUL St Gallery
Small	Studio One
Small	The Depot Artspace
Small	The Pah Homestead, TSB Bank Wallace Arts Centre
Small	The Physics Room
Small	University of Waikato Art Collection
Small	Waiheke Community Art Gallery
Small	Waihi Arts Centre and Museum
Small	Wallace Gallery
Small	Whangarei Art Museum - Te Manawa Toi

## COMBINED ART GALLERIES AND MUSEUMS

Large	MTG Hawke's Bay
Large	Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa
Large	Te Manawa
Large	Waikato Museum
Medium	Pataka Art + Museum
Medium	Rotorua Museum Te Whare Taonga o Te Arawa
Medium	Southland Museum and Art Gallery
Medium	Tairāwhiti Museum Te Whare Taonga o te Tairāwhiti
Small	Central Stories Museum and Art Gallery
Small	Expressions Whirinaki Arts and Entertainment Centre
Small	Taupo Museum
Small	Te Koputu a te Whanga a Toi – Whakatane Library and Exhibition Centre





# WHY YOU'RE READING THIS?

This booklet advocates for the power, public good and community value of art galleries. There are few readily-accessible publications for directors, politicians and public sector managers to use when they want to advocate for public art galleries – why they matter and how they impact on all our lives. Both the Chartwell Trust and I hope it fills a gap.

Over twenty local government senior leaders, politicians and art gallery directors were consulted to bring together messages in support of public art galleries. The purpose is to clearly summarise some of the key ways in which galleries provide essential services for the people of Aotearoa New Zealand.

We hope this helps ensure those in influential positions are better able to support art galleries – whether it's funding them; understanding the complexities of collections and loans; or grasping the power of public art galleries to contribute to community wellbeing, as well as to cultural tourism in a thriving economy.

— Jenny Harper, August 2020

# DISPELLING THE MYTHS





1. An exception was the former National Art Gallery, now part of the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, which received central government funding alongside the National Museum. It's worth noting that Dunedin Public Art Gallery and Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki were both established in the 1880s; Christchurch's Robert McDougall Art Gallery and the National Art Gallery in Wellington were not established until the 1930s, but other agencies collected art earlier on behalf of these cities.

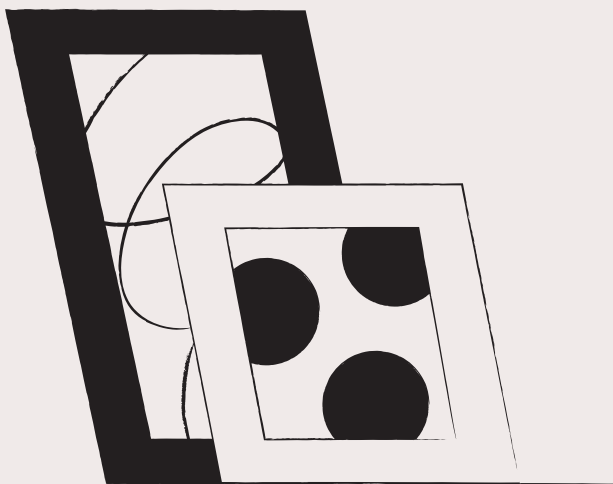
Advocating for public art galleries is a big job. But it's crucial, and a shared responsibility!

Although some public art galleries have been in existence as long as our four major metropolitan museums, none is established by statute which requires local and regional councils to support them.<sup>1</sup> Knowledge about the cultural sector often seems to get lost in the election and planning cycles – so when the going gets tough within councils (or their CCOs), art galleries often have a rough ride. Newly elected councillors and local government officials sometimes need reminding of their art gallery's core functions and their role within communities.

Indeed, many of the same questions are asked and re-asked during each planning and budget cycle:

- Why does the gallery want to add to its art collections when so much is already in storage?
- Why does it cost so much to make and tour exhibitions?
- Why do they insist on free entry?
- What is its community value – isn't art highbrow and elitist?

We want to address these questions and outline some of the major pressures our public art galleries in Aotearoa are facing now.



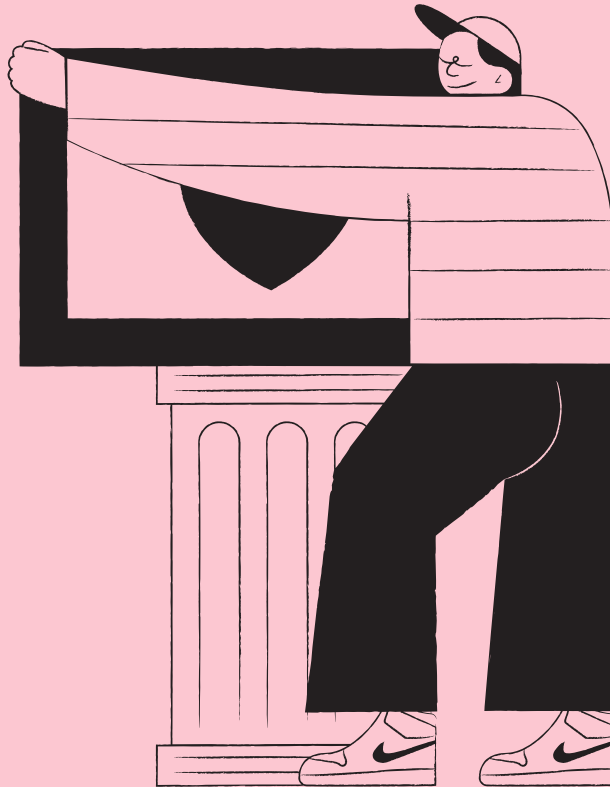


# PUBLIC ART GALLERIES

&

WHY THEY  
MATTER  
NOW MORE  
THAN EVER

2. There are accepted ways of measuring their contributions with the larger galleries regularly undertaking internationally benchmarked visitor surveys. Creative NZ (CNZ) and the Ministry for Culture & Heritage (MCH) also publish related research, such as Cultural Indicators in New Zealand 2009.

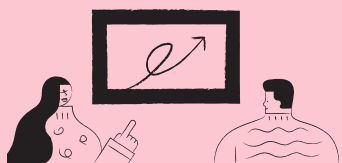


In our image-saturated and fast-paced world, the visual is vital to our lives – think TV and films, advertising and signage, as well as what artists make. Art helps us to understand ourselves; it reflects us and our varied pasts, helps us understand our own and other cultures and histories and engage with changing communal needs and aspirations.

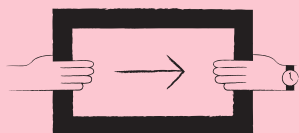
Public art galleries underpin at least three markers of key community wellbeing: cultural, social and economic. And these days we can show how.<sup>2</sup>

Art galleries build relationships within their spheres of influence. They expose their visitors to the results of creative thinking. Seeing art encourages children and young people to make art, and regular gallery visits lay the ground for an imaginative contribution to whatever field they choose. Galleries provide nuance, solace and 'slow time', as well as stimulation – and the occasional spectacle. They bring us together. They sometimes question our perspective; and often help us understand others' points of view (see p.18).

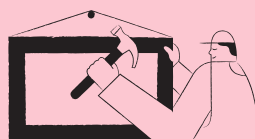
# DID YOU KNOW?



*“The arts and creative sector, which contributes nearly \$11 billion a year to GDP, employs 90,000 people and supports the wellbeing of communities.” Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern, Minister for Arts Culture & Heritage, 2020.<sup>3</sup>*



Jointly, the four main public art galleries in New Zealand care for some 73,000 works of art. Excluding touring exhibitions, they make available an average of 200 loans of art a year to other art galleries, national and international.



There are some fifty public art galleries in Aotearoa, with a further twelve art gallery spaces combined with museums. They directly employ a good range of workers, indirectly support other industries – and provide stimulating work for local volunteers.

The size of a city's population and a breakdown of resident's age and ethnicity provides a context for considering visitor numbers. Here are two examples:



*"Only 45% of all visitors to the Auckland Art Gallery identify as New Zealand European. And this: a staggering 70% of all visitors are under the age of 35."* Simon Wilson, *The Spinoff*, 12 December 2017.



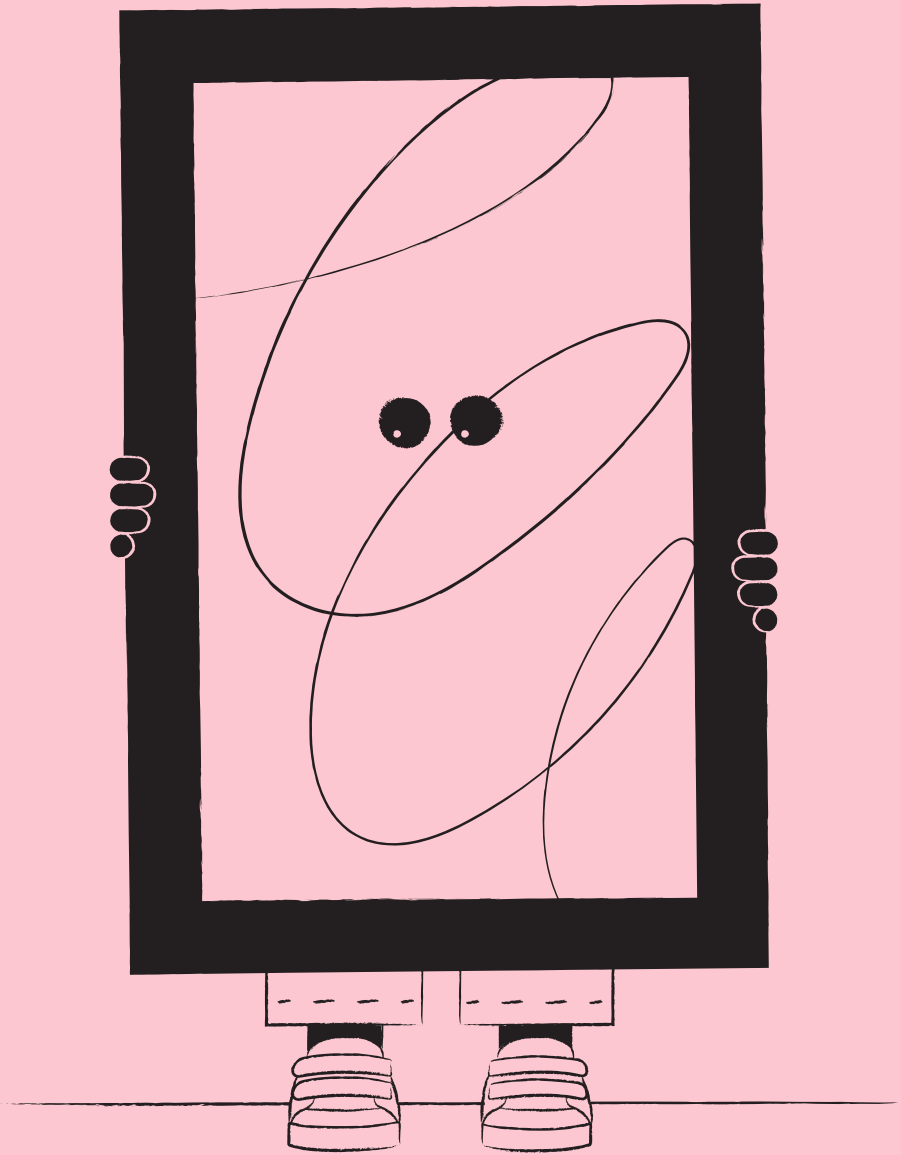
Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū's visitation levels were 130% of its city's population in 2008–09; with an average of 200% attained in the eight months prior to its closure from the 2010–11 Canterbury earthquakes.<sup>4</sup>

3. This may be a conservative estimate. 'Unleashing New Zealand's Creative Economy', a recent online paper contends that the creative sector sustains 131,000 jobs and adds \$17.5 billion to GDP (Yoobee/UP Education, March 2021, p 6.) <https://www.up.education/content/uploads/2021/03/Unleashing-New-Zealands-Creative-Economy-Whitepaper.pdf> (accessed May 2021).

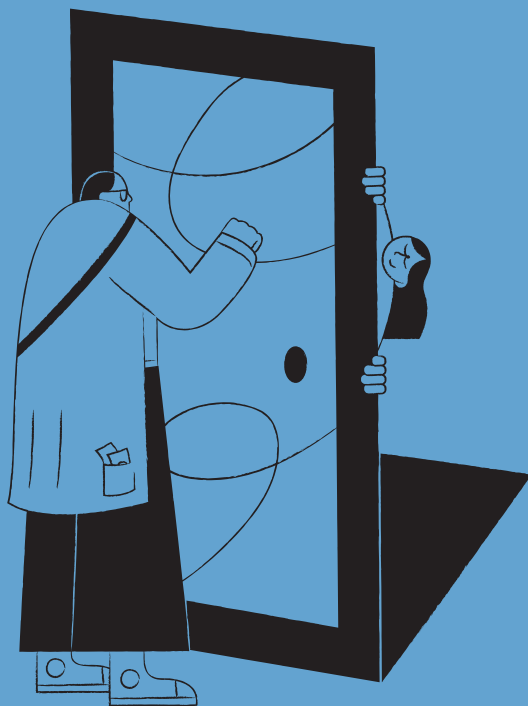
4. Both the Louvre in Paris and Tate Modern, London, attract some 85% of their respective populations; Queensland Art Gallery (QAGOMA) reported a record high in 2017 with 2.17m visitors [pop. then 2,296m]; and Art Gallery of South Australia reported a record year of attendances in 2018 with just over a million visitors [pop. then 1,328m].

*“The international evidence is crystal clear. Children in arts-rich schools do significantly better at the basics than schools which focus on literacy and numeracy outcomes. The arts build the key skills that employers value most highly: risk taking, collaboration, curiosity and an ability to think across rather than in disciplinary silos.”* UoA Professor Peter O’Connor, ‘Teachers hope to end “near death” of arts in school’, Newsroom, 21 January 2020.

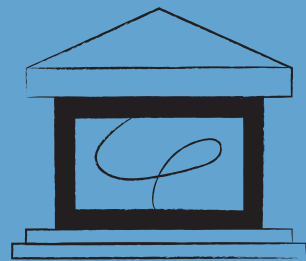




# HOW GALLERIES IMPACT ON



# OUR LIVES

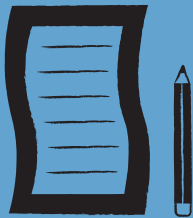


### **1. They support artists and, like artists, art galleries are a pivot in the arts ecosystem**

Artists are among us! They're neither elusive nor unusual, and most are glad to share what they do with us:

*"We [artists] retell, we speculate, we investigate, we chronicle, we create, we instigate, we fabricate, we activate, we procrastinate, and we decorate."* Telly Tuita, on Objectspace's Instagram, 24 March 2020.

Aotearoa New Zealand's public art galleries are a key pivot in the arts ecosystem. They support artists by acquiring, showing and explaining what they do, building collections that provide a context for their work. They endorse what artists do and provide the context they need to produce ambitious and innovative new work.

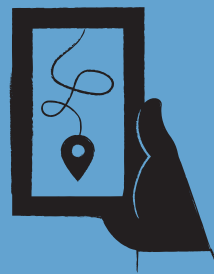


## 2. They promote critical discussion and learning

Art galleries create and feed audiences by producing exhibitions (see p.25) which are talking points, sparking discussion that builds bridges between artists and communities. Galleries nurture expertise, both internally and externally, building teams who can explain and engage. Fostering a love and understanding of art in turn attracts patrons and supporters willing to give works and offer other kinds of support.

Galleries create opportunities for art to be written about, reviewed, dissected and studied. Critical and academic discussion is important to the overall art ecosystem, promoting a healthy respect for what is being made and shown. And, at all levels of the education system, great teachers prioritise curiosity, creativity, experimentation and reflection – helping develop art audiences now and for the future. Increasingly, business and civic leaders recognise how imaginative thinking ensures success in a variety of fields.

Public art galleries are at the centre of this complex social, economic and cultural network.



## 3. They're destinations

Here and elsewhere, public art galleries are a vital part of how cities and towns present themselves. There's at least one major collecting gallery in each main centre, and many in smaller towns as well. Galleries play a key role in cultural tourism, featuring on many 'to do' lists for visitors to a city, particularly those from other parts of the globe. They create exhibitions which speak to both visitors and our communities, making locals proud by revealing their place, its history and taonga.

In a post-COVID-19 world, in which major touring exhibitions are less likely, the focus will shift to locally-held collections. To continue to make a valuable economic, social and educational contribution to their communities, art galleries must develop collections worth seeing now and in the future.



#### **4. As well as being tourism performers, they drive a unique economy**

Our galleries directly employ a good proportion of workers – and provide stimulating work for local volunteers. Their purchasing power and advocacy creates opportunities not just for artists but for the wider industry: the manufacturers, suppliers, fabricators, framers, crate builders, freight companies, printers, designers, technicians, dealer galleries, and a myriad of other specialists who together make up the art world.

Galleries are often sought-after venues for after-hours functions, and many also manage hospitality and retail operations.



#### **5. They're communal spaces, making connections**

As much as public art galleries used to be 'pavilions in the park' or sit like temples on a hill-top location, now galleries prefer being in the central city. But, wherever they are, their collections operate like springboards for our cultural engagement.

Art galleries are active communal spaces, overflowing with life and events for younger and older people alike. They support learning at all levels and offer varied outreach programmes for their communities. They're often busy but, if you want to go it alone, they offer emotional and intellectual nourishment as you muse and imagine. Galleries are an enjoyable option for spending leisure time and meeting others, or for winding down during stressful times. They encourage a sense of belonging, which is more important now than ever.

Gallery cafés, restaurants and shops are often busy and great places to meet. Many galleries offer good spaces for after-hours functions, conferences and special events.

5. Galleries are considered to be the 'publishers' of exhibitions within their spaces, and advice can and should be sought from the Office of Film and Literature Classification with time allowed for this to be provided.

6. See my 'Museum as Provocateur – Art Galleries and Controversy' in *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Art*, vol 4, no 2, 2003 and vol 5, no 1, 2004, (p.57–75).



## 6. They are all about access – they're ours and they're free!

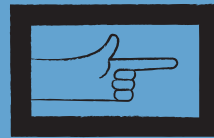
Public art galleries in Aotearoa are funded either through central government (Te Papa) or through local councils (the rest). There is no question that a gallery's collections belong to the community which funds them. City councils, directors and gallery staff are trusted with caring for these for future generations; they're kaitiaki or guardians with a shared responsibility for the city's collections.

Art galleries are open most days and – like our botanic gardens and parks – they're proudly free (except for the occasional special exhibition). By providing free access, art galleries help grow an understanding that the collections really are for everyone.

Standing up for free entrance means that galleries:

- reduce 'threshold fear' and barriers to local access;
- demonstrate their commitment to equity and access for all;
- enable locals to visit often and spend 15 minutes or 5 hours;
- value the free social media marketing which younger visitors provide;
- make out-of-towners feel warmly welcome as guests of our city; and
- kick the idea that art is elite or highbrow well into the background where it belongs!

Most galleries also provide access to works of art in their care by publishing in print and online, although technological upgrades and cataloguing assistance are needed in some places (see p.37). They also lend works to other public galleries regularly for specific exhibitions on a cost-recovery basis, enhancing their cultural value and reach.



## 7. Sometimes galleries challenge and provoke

Advancements in any field involve taking risks and exploring different solutions. Creative thinking and art-making are no different, so sometimes we need to remind ourselves that:

- good art can cause ripples within a community; and
- good art galleries will still want to show it.<sup>5</sup>

Standing alongside artists whose work may be challenging – deliberately or not – needs thinking through by a publicly funded gallery. Can gallery staff support the debate and any predictable fall-out? How do they make visitors aware of what they'll see and provide a context for the work if it's unusually provocative?<sup>6</sup>

Art can cause discomfort; it may get under our skin and reveal other sides of a debate. Astute city-wide cultural leadership and supportive governance are needed throughout.

7. See Brian O’Doherty, *Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Space*, (expanded edition of essays initially published in *Artforum* during 1976), Los Angeles: UCP, 1986.

8. See Rebecca Carlsson, ‘Are museums good for your mental health?’, in *MuseumNext* online journal, 16 May 2020. See also, Daniel Thomas, ‘The many kinds of many minds’, *Museum National*, CAMA, Melbourne, August 1993, (p. 4–7).



## 8. Galleries respond to community debates and help us face current realities!

Galleries used to think of themselves as neutral spaces, with their white walls and clean spaces reinforcing an ideology of separation from the outside world.<sup>7</sup> Very few assert this position now. Indeed public art galleries may need to explain the contexts in which art was made in the past, as well as articulate reasons for (and maybe defend) showing some works which — at first glance — may seem counter to current values, even shocking. While art galleries consider carefully what they show, a current shift to ‘counter culture’ in the West is worryingly relevant.

In addition, in an era of increasing diversity, public art galleries recognise they need to join and, on occasion, lead the debates that coming to terms with a fair and equitable future require. So it’s good to see art galleries rising to the various political, ethical and ecological challenges in the community.

*“To address structural racism and the inequalities underpinning society, we have a responsibility to act.”* Maria Balshaw, director, Tate Galleries, statement, 13 June 2020, on Tate’s commitment to racial equality following the killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis on 25 May 2020.

## 9. They’re healing

Art is a fundamentally human activity, practised from the beginning of time and in varying forms across all cultures. Both making art and looking at art are linked to our personal health and wellbeing, to the way we learn, and to how we communicate and understand ourselves and each other. Art-making opportunities are now provided in a range of contexts – from schools to prisons, in hospitals and retirement villages.

Similarly, visiting art galleries is increasingly considered to be healing. Recent studies point to improvements to mental health, decreases in levels of anxiety, isolation and depression, and how greater self-esteem comes from exposure to art through gallery visits.<sup>8</sup>

*“The arts are healing balms because at their heart is a celebration of life, a celebration of the possibility of joy, of wonder, of beauty. In the coming days, as the fragility of life is increasingly threatened, the arts will be part of what puts us back together.”* UoA Professor Peter O’Connor, ‘The days ahead’, post in *The Big Idea*, 1 April 2020.

*“A public art gallery is a gymnasium for the mind.”* Robert Gardiner CNZM, Chartwell Trust.

# TYPES OF ART GALLERIES AROUND AOTEAROA

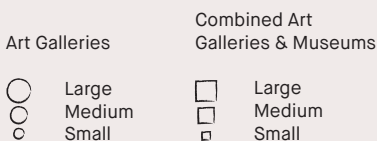


**Before we start, a couple of points to absorb:**

Most cities and many towns in New Zealand support public art galleries which collect and show art. A smaller number of more-recently established institutions do not themselves collect, but present a range of exhibitions by borrowing from public or private collections.<sup>9</sup>

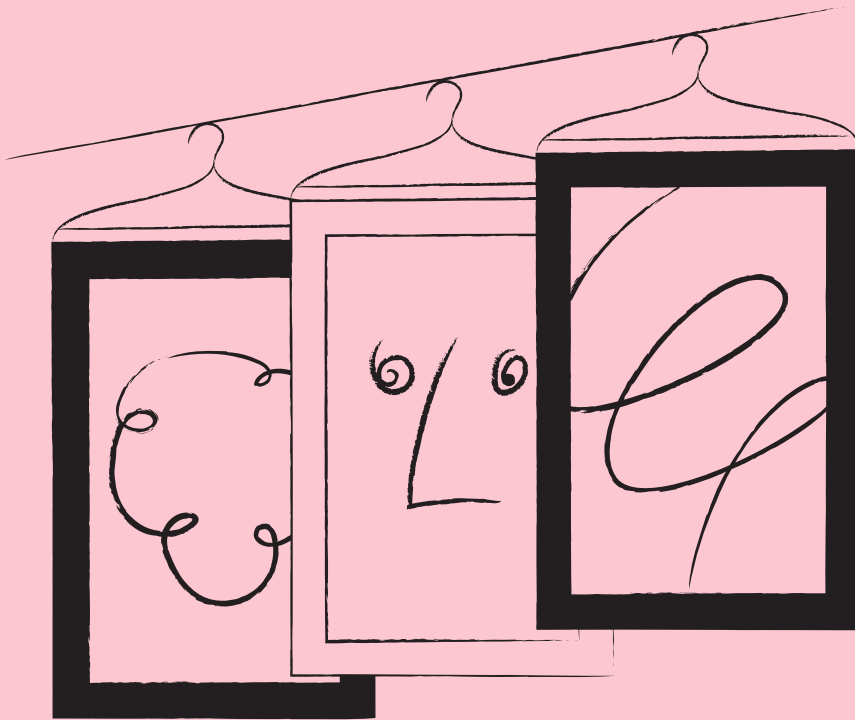
Since around 1990, most galleries also have and use a name in te reo Māori. This will either be a translation (as in Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki) or a name given by local iwi (as with Te Puna o Waiwhetū for Christchurch Art Gallery).

See p.40 for full list.



9. For example, City Gallery Wellington was inaugurated in 1980 as an exhibiting space without a collection, largely because Wellington was also home to the former National Art Gallery which grew a collection (now within the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa). While they receive consistent local authority funding, Te Uru, Te Tuhi in Auckland, City Gallery Wellington and CoCA in Christchurch and several of the smaller contemporary galleries, operate more like European kunsthallen (art halls), staging a succession of changing exhibitions and artists projects. There is also a small range of university art galleries in New Zealand, supported by the university – these often have campus-wide art collections to care for.

# GALLERIES & THEIR MOKOPUNA



10. See my director's foreword  
'Collections Matter', B.181, Christchurch  
Art Gallery, spring, 2015, (p.4-9).

# OUR COLLECTIONS

## **Building and caring for collections**

Collecting is a human instinct, and many of us collect on a domestic scale. However, cities take on this role for their communities by providing for collections in their key art galleries, museums and libraries.

Each place is different, but each art gallery cares for a sample of cultural DNA found nowhere else on the planet.<sup>10</sup> Many gallery staff love the collections, and some think of them as their children or their mokopuna. As well as their care being a responsibility, it is a privilege to work with them.

Public art collections belong to the people of a particular city who help fund them through their annual rates. Gallery staff and their managers are kaitiaki or guardians with responsibility for these. The origin of the word 'curator' is someone who cares for; its current use as a verb meaning to 'select' is by no means the full story. Caring for public collections, the kaitiaki role, is a base-level function. It's not trivial and involves ensuring good quality storage and suitable conservation facilities, as well as ensuring staff are trained in handling works of art in their varying media.

To build a collection with integrity requires knowledge and commitment. Productive relationships with artists, collectors and other galleries must be established. Assured capital funding, confident curators, supportive governance, as well as a network of individual champions all help ensure collections are enhanced in line with a well-considered policy.

## **We need to collect continuously and consistently because:**

- it's important to support our creative community of visual artists;
- it's irresponsible to leave future generations to play catch-up, filling gaps later and at higher prices;
- as time passes, collecting patterns change – we recognise now that art made by women, Māori and Pasifika artists, as well as those who identify as LGBTQI+ was not collected well or systematically in the past.

**The collections are us! Our base and our foundation, these taonga are sources of creativity for all...**

# BRINGING ART & CREATIVITY TO ALL



## Exhibitions

There's no sense in building a collection if it is not seen or known about. Public art galleries are open almost every day to ensure easy access to the art on display. They stage exhibitions for their communities, familiar and occasionally challenging; over time these help visitors develop a rapport with their collections.

Publishing the collection in different formats is key. Exhibitions are art gallery publications, and a way of providing access to collections in contexts during opening hours.

### Spend 15 minutes or 5 hours!

Longer-term collection displays with current points of interest often form the backbone of a visitor's experience. Regular visitors can let a particular sculpture or painting work its magic on their imaginations – it's helpful to remember you can go often and you don't need to understand or enjoy everything! You can look at a single work during a lunchtime visit (a big plus for free admission) or spend longer absorbing a group of works.

Shorter exhibitions are staged for several months or for a particular event. They may bring together works by the same artist or a group whose work resonates with others. They might be prompted by the desire to reveal an exciting new acquisition to a home audience.

Temporary exhibitions involve a lot of work, including the planning and scheduling

of any needed short-term loans, and insurance and careful transportation. They usually stem from the ideas of one or more curators, who collaborate with others in their own and other galleries and cultural institutions. Exhibitions can be designed for children or other specific audiences.

### On and off-line?

Some recent UK-based research shows that the more that we learn about collections from exploring them online, the more we are likely to want to go and visit them.<sup>11</sup>

With the worldwide restrictions on public art galleries in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, some exemplary communications about art collections have emerged online, from 'walk-throughs' of closed exhibitions to fun and engaging personal responses to individual works. Very much of their time, these responses are a real testament to people's desire to connect with art, even in various levels of community 'lock-down' in 2020. Works of art will accrue new meanings as we return to look again.

Experiencing art exhibitions in a physical environment is special. And warnings are surfacing as writers spring to the defence of exhibitions over their digital counterparts:

- online exhibitions are replicas, not originals;
- they lack the 'stumble upon' nature of the real gallery experience;
- it's easier to 'tune out' of online exhibitions.<sup>12</sup>

11. UK Art Fund, [www.artfund.org/blog/2018/02/15/why-collect-report](http://www.artfund.org/blog/2018/02/15/why-collect-report)

12. See, for example, Emma Thorne-Christy, 'In Defence of the Physical Exhibition: A plea not to 'move' exhibitions online', in MuseumNext, accessed 20 May 2020. [www.museumnext.com/article/in-defence-of-the-physical-exhibition-a-plea-not-to-move-exhibitions-online](http://www.museumnext.com/article/in-defence-of-the-physical-exhibition-a-plea-not-to-move-exhibitions-online)

### **Publications: print and online**

Exhibitions are probably the best-known form of making collections available, but printed publications enhance access and ensure images and information are more widely shared. Art gallery catalogues are usually generously illustrated and feature informative essays and up-to-date details about individual works. Collectable in their own right, they provide a record of an exhibition or the collection. They also make their way into libraries – gallery, public and university – where they are used as reference material. A gallery’s library in turn becomes a rich resource for researchers and writers.

A gallery magazine or newsletter will also communicate a programme in an up-to-date way, as well as help grow a strong support base.

Access to collections and other forms of publication and relevant information is increasingly provided online and is a rich resource in its own right. Making recent writing and public lectures relating to a gallery’s programme available online improves a community’s sense of connection to the public art gallery and its collections.

### **Public programmes and education**

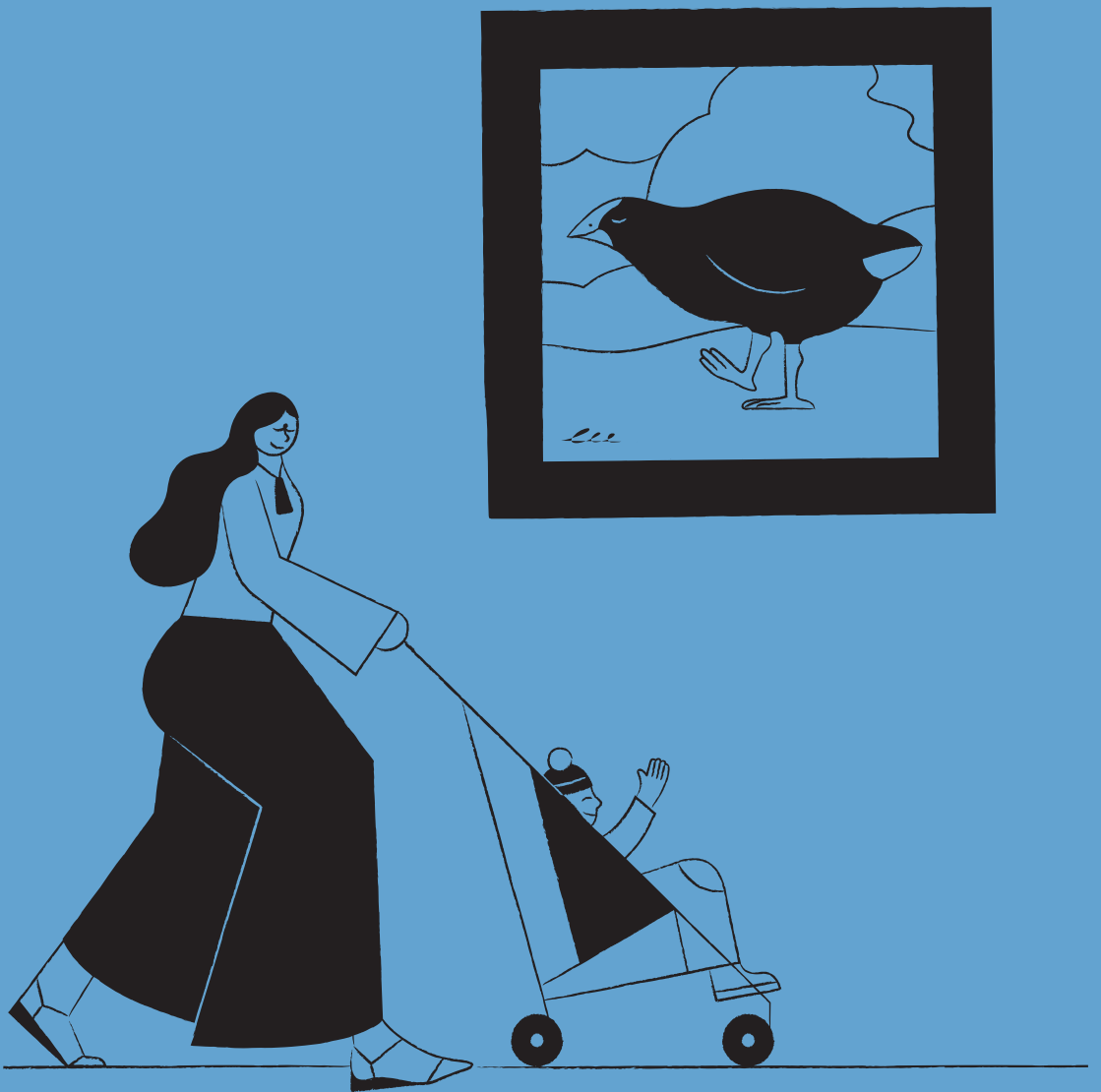
Public art galleries reach their communities by developing varied programmes aimed at diverse audiences. And with a reduction of art education in New Zealand schools, and an increasing lack of support for the humanities here and internationally, art learning within the public art gallery context becomes more vital.

Galleries support students in schools as well as encouraging art-related on-site activities. Programmes are also devised for adults, and can be delivered with the help of trained volunteers. Online learning will continue to grow with technological improvements and social media. Awareness of the cultural and social makeup of a city’s residents and visitors to the gallery helps to ensure well-targeted programmes.

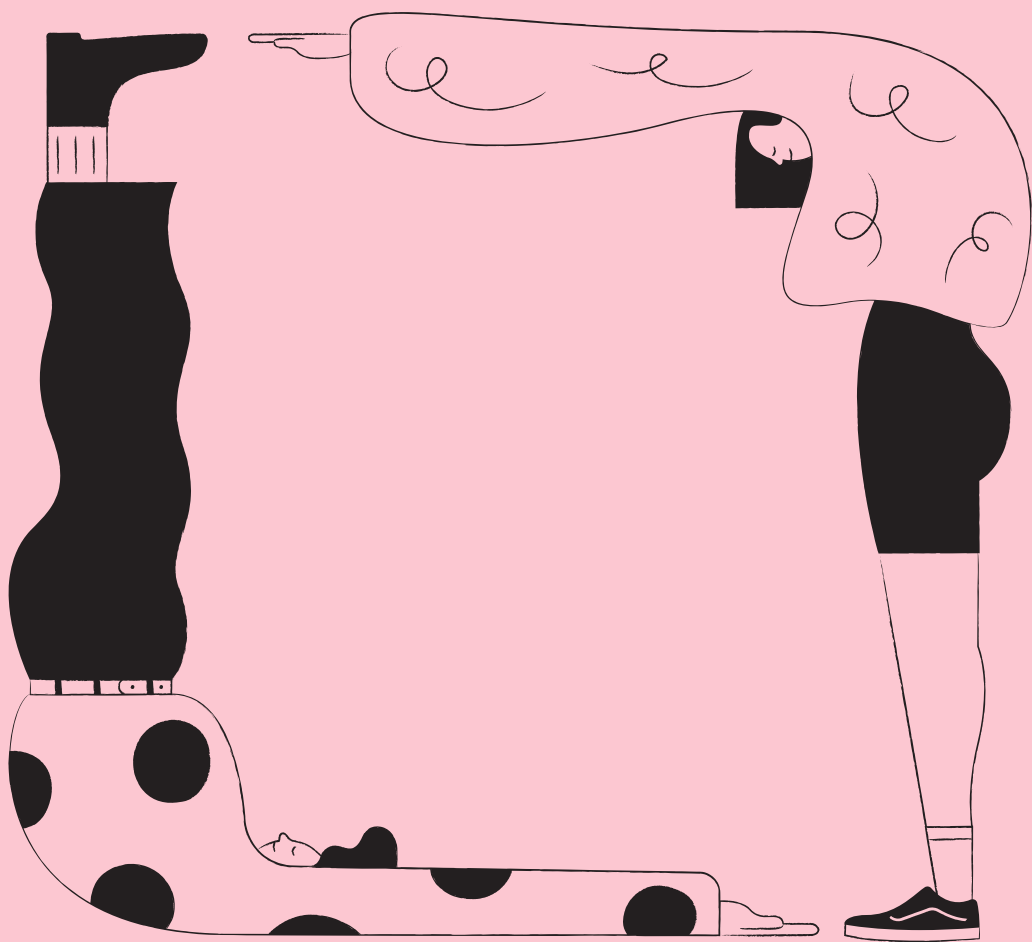
It’s great if public programmes break from the formulaic and expected, encouraging curiosity and prompting empathy for new ways of thinking and being. Good art education prompts cultural engagement, with its lovely joint meanings of ‘drawing forth’ and ‘developing potential’.

### **Centres of learning and cultural exchange**

Public art galleries are centres of learning; they’re a bridge between artists and other cultural thinkers in our community and the public. They are sites of social exchange which help shape meaning, so it’s important that they connect with broader critical and educational environments and take advantage of relevant scholarship as it develops. Artists, academics and others may be asked to lecture, contribute to catalogues and gallery magazines, as well as take on guest curator roles. Sometimes they will work in fields of study for which the gallery doesn’t have specialisation. Whatever their involvement, a good rapport between galleries and the tertiary sector will ensure huge gains for everyone.



# THE PEOPLE





# WHO SPEAKS FOR THE GALLERY?

## **Directors**

Generally their directors speak on behalf of a given public art gallery. They're aware of the gallery's full range of responsibilities and the need to be politically astute. Directors will actively develop relationships – with ministries and within councils, with locals and with iwi, as well as national and international colleagues.

Inspirational and aspirational directors will impart a sense of mission to their colleagues and to politicians, as well as those who manage gallery funding levels directly or through CCO's. They'll speak with an understanding of their gallery's contribution to shaping culture, and be at ease with cultivating thought leaders within their wider community as well as donors in the cultural sector.

## **The art gallery team**

Public art gallery employees will also speak on different occasions. Curators may be heard in relation to the collections, the exhibitions they fashion from them, and the art they have a hand in acquiring. They'll be good at articulating the role of artists as cultural thinkers and their pride in having work in public collections. Other art gallery staff, including those in public programmes, visitor hosts and guides, will understand how important it is to speak to the broader community of visitors and interested others on their own terms.

There are a range of others working in necessary support roles. Conservators,

registrars, installation staff, and security roles are all key if rarely seen by visitors. But front-of-house hosts, public programmes and shop staff are seen and have an important impact on the visitor experience. Some tasks are also allocated to volunteers, offering satisfying and interesting part-time options for some in their community.

## **Being professional**

It's crucial that public art galleries are managed and staffed by well-trained and respected professionals at all levels. A recognised career structure within the sector is important, as well as shared ways of applauding individual and team achievements locally and nationally. Collecting accurate data about an art gallery is useful and will enable regular national and international professional bench-marking.

Politicians, funders and patrons should understand the strength of the institution they are supporting; it's also good for art gallery staff to see how they rank alongside other galleries and identify ways they can lift their game. Relative to other fields, there is not much staff 'churn' within the art gallery sector, so it is important to encourage training and manage other on-site improvements.

There's a lot to be said for art galleries being aware of professional peer-review systems used in academic and aligned fields, and borrowing from these regularly and if a specific need arises.

## Being ethical

Codes of ethics are developed for public art galleries and museums, from those which are internationally debated and approved to that adopted here by Museums Aotearoa.<sup>13</sup> Aspects of these are pretty straightforward (for example, that neither board members nor curators should collect art in competition with their art gallery; and that the proceeds of any approved deaccessioning which takes place must be applied solely to the benefit of the collection). But questions can arise which are not covered within these codes. They will be discussed and resolved within the organisation or with the aid of the professional body concerned.

Sources of external funding may also lead to unwelcome associations. Major sponsorship used to be sought by art galleries from tobacco and alcohol companies, but no longer. More recently, those involved in the manufacturing of opiates and extracting fossil fuels have attracted massive international opposition. Within New Zealand, valid questions are raised from time-to-time about the dependence of large parts of the arts sector on lotteries and gaming support.

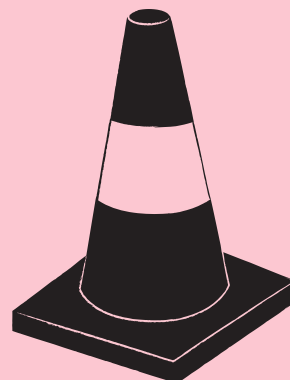
## Deaccessioning?

Because one of our key responsibilities is to collect, the custodial role of the public art gallery is paramount. However they're acquired, whether by gift or purchase, our art is with us for the long haul.

Works of art are 'accessioned' into the collection. Deaccessioning or disposal may need to be considered if items are damaged beyond repair or when a greater good is identified and approved at the highest possible level. However, it is crucial that confidence in a collecting gallery and any historical undertakings its predecessors may have made are not undermined. It is also important to apply any gains from deaccessioning directly to the collection.<sup>14</sup>

13. ICOM is the International Council of Museums (which includes art galleries). Museums Aotearoa's Code of Ethics & Professional Practice, Wellington, adopted 20 November 2013 (and presently under review), is subtitled: 'For Governing Bodies, Managers and Staff of Museums and Art Galleries in Aotearoa New Zealand' and is aligned to ICOM, but deals with a range of matters specific to New Zealand.

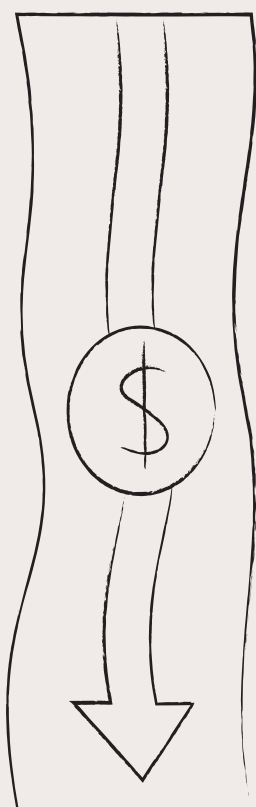
14. See Shane Simpson, *Museums and Galleries: a practical legal guide*, Sydney, Museums Association of Australia Inc., 1989, ch.5.





## What does it cost to run an art gallery?

Art galleries come with costs. There's always the cost of acquiring new works for the collection. But, in addition, protecting works of art, running large buildings and developing audiences is not cheap. Budgets vary, depending on the size of the city or town and its gallery, but roughly ordered with the most expensive first, basic running costs include:



- staffing and security;
- building and maintenance (in some places, there is an additional need for earthquake strengthening);
- plant and 24/7 climate control;
- storage, conservation and insurance;
- exhibitions and other publication costs;
- public programme, education and marketing costs;
- relationships – domestic and international.

15. The Regional Culture & Heritage Fund, administered by the Ministry for Culture and Heritage, may contribute up to a third for capital projects for centres outside of Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch. See <https://mch.govt.nz/RegionalCultureHeritageFund>

## **So, who pays?**

Aotearoa New Zealand has inherited a commitment to sharing our cultural legacy with many audiences and to maintaining an egalitarian approach in what we do.

### **Government: central and local**

All public art galleries are only partially funded from the public purse – whether that be by tax-payers (including occasional specific project grants from MCH or CNZ) or rate-payers.<sup>15</sup> Public funding is best thought of as a necessary base for art galleries, but within Aotearoa it generally falls short by some 20-50%, with further support expected to be gained either in-house or from external sources.

Funding relationships can make public art galleries less independent and, on some past occasions, politicians have meddled beyond what is acceptable. It is important that elected representatives and senior council managers understand the benefits of an 'arm's length approach' to programming and decision-making within galleries.

### **In-house funding sources**

Many galleries run shops with gallery and collection-related products, including books and cards, to enhance their general purposes as well as their base income. Several also run cafés and restaurants, either directly or through commercial leases which add to the base of public funding. Welcome additional income may be gained from the hire of gallery spaces for after-hours events, meetings and other social and corporate gatherings.



## **Friends and Foundations**

During the good times at least, additional support is sought from other quarters, including through Friends and Members organisations, and through Foundations.

Foundations may be established to assist a public art gallery with independent fundraising, especially for new building projects, major collection items or special projects. Hugely beneficial for their independent status, they may also gain the charitable status needed to offer tax relief for donations. There are well-established fundraising principles for Foundations to be aware of and they must adhere to relevant regulations, as well as being open and accountable.<sup>16</sup>

Trustees and board members lend their expertise, time, contact networks and reputations to the institution. Many also lead by financial example, but not all will be in a position to give as generously as others.

While some see it as their responsibility to support local arts organisations, including public art galleries, there is a critical need to develop a new generation of philanthropists within New Zealand.

## **Business sponsorship**

Business sponsorship was at its apex back in the 1980s when banks, Telecom, Benson & Hedges and Montana were big arts supporters. However, in New Zealand sport is still – however questionably – considered more mainstream than the arts. Charitable and community causes often take priority with companies who want to support a social purpose within their business strategies.

When times are tough, as in the present global pandemic, attracting support from corporate sponsors is also hard.

The 2020s look set to be challenging, with a likely decline in discretionary income and in giving at all levels.

An art gallery with a strong independent brand is more likely to attract external financial support than one overwhelmed by a local government presence or that of a joint CCO. The brand and reputation of potential sponsors is also key. Their money needs to be 'clean' (see p.30) and their business aligned to the greater good of the community, as much as that can be defined and assessed at the time.

16. CNZ's 'Getting on Board' is a useful resource for foundations and governing boards in the cultural sector and is available at: <https://www.creativenz.govt.nz/development-and-resources/research-and-reports/getting-on-board-a-governance-resource-for-arts-organisations>

The text is centered on a light pink background. It is surrounded by several stylized, white line-art flames of varying sizes and orientations, some appearing to rise from the bottom and others from the sides, creating a sense of fire or heat.

**NINE  
BURNING  
ISSUES  
FACING  
ART  
GALLERIES**



# Several gallery directors around the country were spoken to in the course of this project. Their key concerns led to this summary of common 'red flags'.

1. Seismic strengthening is a priority requirement for a range of public art galleries, some in heritage-protected buildings, and this requires significant funding.
2. Some galleries do not have ready access to expert conservation skills and advice nor sufficient secure climate-controlled storage space. The endorsement and the encouragement of central government may help prompt local bodies to think beyond their rate-payer base about investing cooperatively in shared facilities.
3. Natural disasters and extreme weather events globally have caused the costs of travel, freight, as well as the insurance of art to rise exponentially over the last decade, with some insurers withdrawing from the art market. This, in addition to the current global pandemic and its aftermath will mean expectations of the 'blockbuster' international touring exhibitions of the past are becoming unrealistic.
4. An overemphasis on visitor numbers, with not all counting systems as reliable as others, can become a pain point. Many galleries need additional help with defining and measuring the quality of their visitor experience and understanding how those who come reflect the make-up of their area.
5. Equity issues are perceived with the four larger museums in New Zealand having been established with legislation which requires their funding from relevant city councils. The same independence is not guaranteed by statute for the equivalent-level art galleries. With their institutional collecting not endorsed by statute, art galleries need to argue constantly for how integral it is to their purpose.
6. Advocates for art within local bodies are rare – it's hard to find champions. It is hoped this publication helps councillors and those in senior ministry and council roles understand the importance of public art galleries, as well as providing a unifying voice for directors in planning and budget discussions.
7. In challenging times, financial models which support key public art galleries to carry out their core tasks are needed. For these are also times when the generosity of individual philanthropists and the largesse of corporations is stretched by multiple requests from differing communities.
8. The need to nurture a new generation of philanthropists is recognised and is something which can be addressed at central government and local council levels, as well as by gallery directors, membership groups, boards and foundations.
9. The powerful notion of a well-documented distributed national collection, discussed in the 1980s in the context of the then proposed Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, has yet to be realised. Financial support for nationally significant art held in collections beyond Te Papa's would be welcomed. A good first step would be the establishment in the 2020s of a specific independent contestable fund parallel to that for capital projects to support art galleries (and the wider museum community) to catalogue and maintain their collections.

# A FINAL WORD

We humans need to be imaginative and resilient to contend with our complex and challenging future. As much as we need science to solve the reality of climate change, and new economic models to address growing social inequality, we also need a deep sense of the meaning, value, and purpose of our existence. Art is a means to this end.

We trust artists to offer us solace, inspiration and insight, to model and interrogate our core natures – we need public art galleries to ensure their works are seen and voices heard. Galleries in Aotearoa New Zealand must have reliable funding and be open and active, so their collections, exhibitions, staff and volunteers can provide access to the pleasure and hope that art gives.

## **Thanks**

Chartwell Trust, especially Rob Gardiner and Sue Gardiner for commissioning this booklet; for prompting a second edition, John and Jo Gow, Connells Bay Trust, and The Ake Ake Fund; McCarthy for design; Creative New Zealand and Museums Aotearoa for assistance with distribution; David Simpson and Megan Shaw for their editorial eyes; Elizabeth Caldwell for her comments on the first edition; Tina Barton for her incisive wisdom and the final word; Brown Bread for their project acumen; and of course all who were interviewed during the genesis of this booklet (all helpful).

## **Dedication**

This booklet is dedicated to those who work in public art galleries in Aotearoa New Zealand and all who help to fund them; as well as to the artists of Aotearoa New Zealand and their support networks.

## **Jenny Harper**

Now retired from the public sector, Jenny tackles various art-related projects which interest her. She was director of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū from 2006-2018. Before this she worked at Victoria University of Wellington, developing the Art History programme and establishing the Adam Art Gallery; in 2003, she was appointed assistant vice-chancellor (academic). Jenny was the last director of the former National Art Gallery in Wellington, becoming director of Art and History at the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa after legislative change in 1992. She was commissioner for New Zealand's presentations at the Venice Biennale in 2009, 2011 and 2013. In 2011 she received an MNZM for services to the arts and in 2018 she was awarded a D.Litt (hon) from the University of Canterbury.

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## ART GALLERIES IN NEW ZEALAND

(as provided by Museums Aotearoa)

Large	Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki
Large	Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū
Large	Dunedin Public Art Gallery
Medium	Aratoi Wairarapa Museum of Art and History
Medium	City Gallery Wellington
Medium	Govett-Brewster Art Gallery
Medium	Sarjeant Gallery Te Whare o Rehua Whanganui
Medium	Tauranga Art Gallery
Medium	Te Tuhi
Medium	Te Uru Waitakere Contemporary Gallery
Medium	Dowse Art Museum
Medium	Suter Art Gallery Te Aratoi o Whakatu
Small	Adam Art Gallery Te Pataka Toi, Victoria University of Wellington
Small	Aigantighe Art Gallery
Small	Artspace Aotearoa
Small	Ashburton Art Gallery
Small	Blue Oyster Art Project Space
Small	Centre of Contemporary Art Toi Moroki
Small	Corban Estate Arts Centre
Small	Eastern Southland Gallery
Small	Enjoy Public Art Gallery
Small	Estuary Arts Centre, Orewa
Small	Forrester Gallery, Oamaru
Small	Fresh Gallery, Otara
Small	Geoff Wilson Gallery
Small	George Fraser Gallery
Small	Gus Fisher Gallery, University of Auckland
Small	Hastings City Art Gallery
Small	Invercargill Public Art Gallery
Small	Lake House Arts Centre
Small	Left Bank Art Gallery
Small	Mahara Gallery
Small	Malcolm Smith Gallery
Small	Mairangi Bay Art Centre
Small	Mangere Arts Centre Ngā Tohu o Uenuku
Small	Millennium Public Art Gallery
Small	New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts
Small	New Zealand Portrait Gallery
Small	Northart
Small	Objectspace
Small	Papakura Art Gallery
Small	Percy Thomson Gallery
Small	ST PAUL St Gallery
Small	Studio One
Small	The Depot Artspace
Small	The Pah Homestead, TSB Bank Wallace Arts Centre
Small	The Physics Room
Small	University of Waikato Art Collection
Small	Waiheke Community Art Gallery
Small	Waihi Arts Centre and Museum
Small	Wallace Gallery
Small	Whangarei Art Museum - Te Manawa Toi

## COMBINED ART GALLERIES AND MUSEUMS

Large	MTG Hawke's Bay
Large	Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa
Large	Te Manawa
Large	Waikato Museum
Medium	Pataka Art + Museum
Medium	Rotorua Museum Te Whare Taonga o Te Arawa
Medium	Southland Museum and Art Gallery
Medium	Tairāwhiti Museum Te Whare Taonga o te Tairāwhiti
Small	Central Stories Museum and Art Gallery
Small	Expressions Whirinaki Arts and Entertainment Centre
Small	Taupo Museum
Small	Te Koputu a te Whanga a Toi – Whakatane Library and Exhibition Centre