

art

September 2010

Welcome to the sixth edition of **art**

In order to remain fully focused on painting, I have moved my studio out of the family home and into a space in central Tauranga. Art Hub is attached to Laundromat art project space, and as the name suggests, this is a hub for creatives (painters, a sculptor and architects and designers). I have a modest studio, a great little space to disappear into and paint... but am part of the larger collective too, which is a nice change.

I have been busy with various paintings and commissions, private and public, as well as including my works in group exhibitions. I am ready to send my 2010 commission (an annual event) to my friend and supporter in Belgium. This has been a highly successful collaboration once again, a triptych based around the life of Heeni Te Kirikaramu (famous for her heroic actions at the battle of Gate Pa in 1864).

Reading it from right to left, you can see a palisade and trenches, typical of what was to be the beginnings of trench warfare. In this case, I have represented Gate Pa by working from early sketches from colonial artists, showing the hills as they actually were in the distance. Shadows cast by the palisade and trenches make reference to the symbolism used in the left panel (see below).



The middle panel shows Heeni meeting with Mere, the wife of Te Paitui on the journey to Gate Pa. Mere was the only survivor when her part split off from Heeni's. A Fantail (Piwakawaka) was the deciding factor for Heeni's party to follow one track, and Mere's to follow the other. Heeni went with the Piwakawaka...

The left Panel shows Tarawera in the Te Awara region where Heeni was from (she was taken with her Mother from Mokoia Island on Lake Rotorua by a raiding tribe when she was a small girl). Heeni would often return to the area from her home in Katikati, and was there during the well known 1886 eruption of Mount Tarawera, when the famous Pink and White Terraces were destroyed. In this pane I have also used water in the river and a cross as a sign of cleansing and hope. This cross is referenced in the shadows cast from the palisade in the right panel.

I will be painting a second version of this which will remain in New Zealand. This is something I have agreed on with the buyer, a good way to insure that works from this series remain here. I have plans for a major show of these in 2014, the 150th anniversary of the battle of Gate Pa and Te Ranga. This show will be a mix of new work and works which I will borrow back.

In mid-July I was approached by a Dunedin architect regarding a commission to paint a memorial piece for local Iwi. This is to be on permanent display in Foodstuffs New Zealand's new Pak and Save store in Papamoa.



Mataitai is large piece at 2400 x 800 mm, this has been a mammoth task to research, discuss, compose and paint before the official opening and blessing by local Iwi on September 13th. It incorporates the Papamoa Hills as the backdrop to wetlands, the Wairakei stream and sand plains, showing local tangatawhenua gathering shellfish. This area was one of New Zealand's first Polynesian settlements, dating back to 1450 AD!

In Auckland, you can now see some of my works at Letham Gallery in Jervois Road, Ponsonby. This a small gallery, with a very high standard of artists with great work! Just ask Anna and Donna if my works aren't on the wall.

You can also view some of my latest work at Red Spot Gallery in Rotorua, Fisher Brown Gallery in Tauranga and The Artist's Room in Dunedin.

Please don't hesitate to contact me if you'd like to make a time to see my studio and the works in progress. I also have some older works (some here, some stored) which I can make available on request.

All for now, take care.
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