

# Ideas on the Future of Māori Arts

Te Ahukaramū  
Charles Royal  
10 December 2017

*Let's get ambitious, audacious, courageous...*

*Remember - the possibilities of the future ought not be defined through the realities of the past... we may not yet even have a hint of what might be possible in the world of Māori arts.*

# What is the purpose/value of art?

It is to establish human connection so as to move one another, to inspire...

...through this we achieve a deeper understanding of ourselves, our experiences and the world around us.

....we feel a greater sense of purpose, empowerment, fulfilment, happiness, harmony.

# What is the purpose/value of art?

The purpose of art is to move, to inspire, **to reveal or take us into the extraordinary**, particularly in the ordinary...

Art does this by engaging the **totality of our humanity** - rational, non-rational, irrational, perfections, imperfections, strengths, weaknesses.

# What is the purpose/value of art?

Art, ultimately, is about the truth of who we are, of our experiences, the world around us.

Its role is to both confirm who we are and our understanding of life, and also disrupt, disturb, challenge - all for purpose of getting to the truth.

# The Māori Arts 'world' encompasses:

The **participation of Māori people in the arts** - individual Māori and Māori arts groups contributing to and working in the arts.

Arts which speak to and reflect the **experiences and lives of Māori people**.

Arts which are designed **to advance a Māori issue or cause** (e.g. Māori language revitalisation) or generate certain Māori outcomes (e.g art in iwi development)

**Mātauranga Māori approaches to arts** and art making (e.g. taonga pūoro, whakairo, kōrero etc)

(This is an imperfect description as a 'place to start' when thinking about the broad sweep of Māori arts and artmaking.)

# Some Dreams - some examples

## Māori people

- More Māori individuals as 'icons' of NZ Visual Art (*a la* Ralph Hotere)
- A Māori writer wins the Nobel Prize for Literature
- A Māori filmmaker wins the Palme D'Or at Cannes or an Oscar

## Māori experiences/history

- Critically important stories about Māori people and our experiences are told with greater quality and frequency
- The profile and presence of those stories has increased dramatically in the national consciousness and 'makeup' of what it is to be modern Aotearoa-NZ

# Some Dreams - some examples

## Advancing a Māori cause

- The hearts and minds of the majority of New Zealanders is won over to the cause of Te Reo Māori and mātauranga Māori through the beauty of our artmaking which makes use of our language and our knowledge
- Critical social justice questions and challenges facing Māori people (inequalities, historical Treaty claims etc) are assisted by our artmaking

## Mātauranga Māori approaches to Art

- Mātauranga Māori art forms (e.g. kōrero, raranga, whakairo, taonga pūoro etc) are alive vibrant and influential in overall NZ art and society - we have advanced distinctive art forms and artistic expressions

## Some deeper goals

Our artmaking becomes progressively more **authentic and truthful**, more courageous and groundbreaking about the nature of our experiences, about who we are and what the world means to us. (It moves away from simplistic and shallow interpretations of ‘being Māori’.)

We become greatly skilful and powerful in the telling of our stories, in the creation and presentation of our artwork. This includes becoming sophisticated with mātauranga Māori approaches to artmaking.

## Some other considerations

We should not underestimate the international significance and potential of our art making - Māori art has broadened significance than just Aotearoa.

We should think about how Māori art making contributes to the overall goal of elevating art in general society and culture as an indispensable feature of a well functioning society.

We should also consider deeply the place of art making in contemporary Iwi development.

# To achieve this...we need to...

Develop a more sophisticated **proposition regarding the significance and value** of Māori arts to the world - and ensure that relevant people are knowledgeable of this proposition.

Develop **greater depth, breadth and quality of Māori arts administration and management** - both individuals who are managers as well as organisational infrastructure for Māori arts

Develop a more robust and consistent **practice and culture of 'mana enhancing critique'** of Māori art.

# Structural aspirations

- An continuously funded Māori arts delivery organisation (similar to the NZSO, NZ Ballet, NZ Opera etc)
- A continuously funded Māori arts infrastructure and capacity/capability building organisation
- A continuously funded Auckland City Māori arts delivery organisation (similar to the Auckland Arts Festival, Auckland Museum, Maritime Museum, APO etc)