

Alan Preston

Made in Aotearoa

13 October – 2 December

In the 1970s Alan Preston broke away from the conventions of traditional jewellery in favour of creating work that spoke of this place – Aotearoa, New Zealand. Turning his back on the precious metals and stones valued by mainstream jewellers, Preston began working with materials that reflected the environment, values and identity of New Zealand as a Pacific nation.

Preston (b. 1941) is considered as one of New Zealand's leading contemporary jewellers. He is a founding member of the Fingers jewellery gallery, which is firmly established as New Zealand's foremost platform for the exhibition of contemporary jewellery.

This exhibition, *Made in Aotearoa*, begins in 1979 with early work produced by during a New Zealand and Fijian arts council workshop run by Preston, and fellow jewellery Warwick Freeman. This work was heavily influenced by Preston's experiences on this visit to Fiji, and his examination of the way in which the Fijian jewellery drew from materials and traditions indigenous to their culture and environment. It was this idea proved to be a watershed, prompting the question on his return "if I were to make jewellery of this place using what was available, what would I make?"

Made in Aotearoa takes a journey through Preston's from this point on, moving through the key thematic threads that emerge over two decades of innovation in jewellery. It reflects the artist's engagement with indigenous, Pacific and international ideas about the relationship between people and materials, the symbolism of body adornment and Preston's view of how we as New Zealanders reflect our sense of place.



The exhibition charts the artist's response to some of the major political issues of 20th Century New Zealand, and reflects his commitment to the idea of Aotearoa – New Zealand and its place in the Pacific. This exhibition also reflects a period of major change within contemporary New Zealand jewellery practice, with Preston and his contemporaries providing the vehicle for change, and leaving a legacy of innovation, challenge and integrity to an emerging generation of artists.



For further information contact:

Margaret Cranwell
Public Programmes Team Leader
Hawke's Bay Museum & Art Gallery
P.O.Box 248
9 Herschell Street
NAPIER

Ph: 06 835 7781
Fax: 06 835 9249

www.hbmag.co.nz