

# Contemporary Public Art Gallery – Waikato

## Discussion Paper 2015

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## INTRODUCTION

In this paper we examine the role of the contemporary public art gallery in modern society. We ask why galleries are important and how they sit within a mature and cultured community. We look to the Waikato's specific relationship with galleries, past and present, in order to inform future conversations and opportunities.

Art and culture is central to community cohesion and to our sense of identity of place. The arts play a key role in promoting social and economic goals through local regeneration, attracting tourists, development of talent and innovations and improving wellbeing. A gallery is an effective arts mechanism by which to activate these benefits.

A 'contemporary' art gallery by definition is one which focuses on art created in contemporary times. Therefore the content of contemporary galleries reflects prevailing social subject matter and thus, as they connect communities with art, they further understanding, reflection, discussion and debate. Contemporary art galleries also operate as interpreters of local artistic identity. They hold a mirror to the place and reflect people, thoughts and feelings, diversity and uniqueness. Not only do they help us to question the world around us but they also strive to communicate about and connect to what is happening globally.

The absence of a contemporary art gallery in Hamilton over the last few decades has been a hot issue. Hamilton is the fourth largest city in New Zealand, yet has not had a standalone public art gallery since 1994. By contrast the next six cities (and towns) smaller than Hamilton all claim galleries of significance.

This present day predicament is at odds with Hamilton's historic relationship with contemporary art. In the 1980's, Hamilton was at the forefront of contemporary arts discourse with the Centre of Contemporary Art housed in the iconic Hamilton Hotel building. In the 1990s, the Waikato Museum also showed leadership in this area, being caretaker of significant contemporary art collections, both the Chartwell and Barr Collections. Even as early as the 1940's, Hamilton had a prominent art gallery on Grantham Street, established by the Waikato Society of Arts.

Fast forward to 2014. In an effort to progress from discussion to action, the Hamilton Arts Forum (arts advisory body to Hamilton City Council) formed an art gallery working group. It determined that a "feasibility study on the development of an international standard contemporary public art gallery to support a nationally recognised art collection in Hamilton" should be undertaken. An ensuing consultation workshop recommended that four gallery models be examined more closely in a 'pre-feasibility study' in order to carefully and specifically identify the best approach for Hamilton.

Also in 2014, the Waikato Creative Infrastructure Plan (commissioned by Creative Waikato for the Waikato Mayoral Forum), provided the first opportunity for the Waikato region to review current and future creative sector facility needs.

One of twelve priority projects identified in this recommendation was the development of a nationally significant public art space or gallery in Hamilton. The plan acknowledged the constraints of funding for building new infrastructure and maintaining future operation, and suggested shared facilities and flexibility in design to adapt to changing uses and needs.

As we reach the end of 2015, there is a real sense of renewed will to see progression of a vision for the development of a contemporary public art gallery in Hamilton.

This paper is written for those who wish to be part of that progression. It aims to bring historic and contemporary reference together to build a shared understanding that will support progress.

The current climate is showing positive signs for collaboration between community, local and central government, strategic philanthropic investors and the arts sector itself. If seized, this moment just may manifest into a cultural asset of significance for Hamilton and the Waikato region and become a valued legacy for future generations to come.

Creative Waikato has a key role in harnessing collective community arts outcomes and relishes the opportunity to assist in facilitating the conversation to a point of delivering such an outcome.

Sarah Nathan

**Creative Waikato CEO**

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## DEFINING CONTEMPORARY AND PUBLIC ART GALLERIES

What is meant by a “contemporary public art gallery”? A ‘contemporary’ gallery focuses on art that is being made currently or recently. It provides a focal point for contemporary art and is an important repository and interpreter of artistic identity in local, national and international contexts. Contemporary galleries strive to connect people with art to promote understanding, reflection and enjoyment. They are also specialists in provoking discussion and debate as well as courting controversy.

A ‘public’ art gallery is part of a larger context of cultural institutions termed ‘museums’.<sup>1</sup> It is “a non-profit making permanent institution in the service of society and of its development, open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits...the tangible and intangible evidence of people and their environment”.<sup>2</sup> The terms ‘art gallery’ and ‘art museum’ are used interchangeably. A public art gallery has accountability to the public and is usually funded primarily by public money.

For the purposes of this paper we refer to contemporary public art gallery, which may have elements of both.

## WHY ARE CONTEMPORARY PUBLIC ART GALLERIES CONSIDERED IMPORTANT?

### **They play a dynamic role in our national cultural life**

As dedicated places where people can learn, experience and enjoy, and be stimulated to think about their place in the world. Museums and art galleries now perform a flagship role in the provision of arts, culture and heritage activities.<sup>3</sup>

### **They stimulate discussion and debate**

Art galleries have a social responsibility to use their unbiased authority to stimulate discussion and debate.<sup>4</sup> Not only does this enhance participation and creativity in public decision-making, but it also strengthens community capacity, strengthening identity and sense of place.

### **They generate economic activity**

Art galleries have several different types of impacts economically and over the long and short term. They are a driver of tourism; they create jobs, add vibrancy and create halos of activity and business. In 2013/14 the Tate Modern art museum attracted more visitors than any other type of museum or gallery in the UK and its Twitter following broke past one million.<sup>5</sup> Its flow on impact boosted the

deprived London borough of Southwark through job creation and in the rapid growth of supporting businesses.

In the short term art galleries generate attention in city centres and in the long-term have economic spin-offs over and above the gallery itself.

### **They contribute to and encourage conversation about key aspects of our community and national identity**

Hamilton is one of only three cities in New Zealand which is forecast to grow significantly over the next few decades at around 40%.<sup>6</sup> The Māori population in the Waikato is the second largest in New Zealand. Hamilton also has a younger median age than both the Waikato and New Zealand as a whole and this is projected to continue into the future.<sup>7</sup>

The nature of our bicultural society, and other multicultural influences, means that museums and galleries will have an increasingly important role to play in helping our communities to explore and understand the nature of the society in which they live and work.

They do this by curating programmes and exhibitions which explore and challenge local identity issues and stimulate response from the public. Art galleries have the distinct advantage of being able to instigate public discussion as a neutral entity, without the constraints of perceived political bias.

### **They build social cohesion, creativity and leisure opportunities for communities**

Social well-being occurs as people's lives are impacted by the art around them and the connections made with people, as they learn, consider and enjoy. Arts and culture activity, including art galleries, contribute to civic development, social cohesion, creativity and leisure to people and communities.<sup>8</sup>

Galleries provide a focal point for community gathering and interaction; become key social destinations and venues for important activity and celebration.

### **They foster enrichment**

When we examine the value of arts and culture, we must recognise the intrinsic benefit – how arts and culture enrich our lives and emotional world. Recent research undertaken by Creative New Zealand supports this view, with 89% of people in the Waikato agreeing that “the arts are good for you”.<sup>9</sup>

While there is general agreement around the positive impact of the arts, there are still plenty of opportunities to further increase engagement in the arts in the Waikato, with three in four people in our region agreeing that some arts events interest them but they still don't go much.<sup>10</sup>

Therefore, we have a community that values the arts and would be interested in attending more arts events. The key is to ensure the region is delivering the right quality experiences that reflect the appetite of the community.

## A RICH HISTORY IN OUR REGION

Since before the Second World War, a vision for an art gallery in Hamilton has been ever present. Although marked by political movements of the time, the following timeline<sup>11</sup> indicates moments in our history when Hamilton has been at the forefront of visual and contemporary arts.

<b>1945</b>	The wife of a former Hamilton Borough Councillor gifted a small building to the Waikato Society of Arts for a Museum and Art Gallery.
<b>1948</b>	The Waikato Society of Arts established The Hamilton Art Gallery and shared this small space, known as the Grantham Street Gallery, with a photographic group. It received a grant each year from the Council to buy exhibition pieces.
<b>1965</b>	Waikato Museum was founded on the top floor of the Hamilton Public Library.
<b>1969</b>	Waikato Society of Arts ends its 23 years as administrator of the city's Art Gallery.
<b>1971</b>	A joint report of Museum and Art Gallery staff set out amalgamation benefits of the two facilities.
<b>1972</b>	Hamilton City Council determines the two facilities merge to become one. The Waikato Art Museum on Grantham Street incorporating the site of the old Waikato Art Gallery and adjacent land.
<b>1973</b>	The Waikato Art Museum is moved to the top floor of the PSIS Investment House on London Street.  Te Winika, a 200 year-old carved waka taua (Māori war canoe) was gifted to Hamilton city, Waikato Art Museum, by the Māori Queen, Dame Te Atairangikaahu, as a gesture of harmony and goodwill.
<b>1974</b>	Chartwell Collection established by Chartwell Trust. Founding trustee was Robert Gardiner. Early acquisitions to the Chartwell Collection were placed on loan into the Waikato Museum's temporary premises.
<b>1978</b>	A feasibility study was commissioned to determine the most suitable location and development type for the new premises for The Waikato Art Museum.
<b>1981</b>	The iconic Hamilton Hotel was sold to charitable company Hamilton Arts Centre Ltd who developed it as an arts and community centre which became commonly known as Left Bank. Robert Gardiner was instrumental in this development. Waikato Society of Arts became a tenant.
<b>1982</b>	Hamilton City Council decided to proceed with the planning and construction of the new



	premises on the Grantham Street site.
	Chartwell Trust established Centre for Contemporary Art (CFCA), at the new arts and community centre, when it grew beyond temporary storage facilities available at the Waikato Museum.
<b>1987</b>	Waikato Art Museum opened, a purpose-built facility, amalgamating the two formerly separate institutions: The Waikato Art Gallery and The Waikato Museum. Waikato Art Museum then became Waikato Museum of Art and History during the strategic planning and re-branding phase for the new building.
	Te Winika took a final journey from the former museum on London Street to the current Waikato Museum on Grantham Street.
<b>1992</b>	Council purchased former Post and Telegraph office, built in 1901, where ArtsPost is now located, to create a high profile facility for promotion of visual arts.
	Chartwell Trust enters into a new loan agreement for the collection with the newly opened Waikato Museum of Art and History and the collection transferred there.
<b>1993</b>	Barr Collection placed on long-term loan to the Waikato Museum of Art and History.
<b>1994</b>	Exhibitions programme at the Centre for Contemporary Art (CFCA) ceased and building sold.
<b>1995</b>	The Exscite Trust raised capital funding to construct Exscite, the building adjoined onto the Museum. Exscite opened in 1995 and was managed by the Trust until 1997 at which time, there was an operational merger with the Museum.*
<b>1996</b>	Council restructuring amalgamates management of the Waikato Museum of Art and History and the City Library (decision later reversed). Barr Collection moves to Dunedin Art Gallery.
<b>1997</b>	Chartwell Collection placed on long term loan to the Auckland Art Gallery, Toi o Tāmaki.
	Waikato Society of Arts moves into ArtsPost.
<b>1998</b>	Renovated ArtsPost opened.
<b>1999</b>	ArtsPost received a Creative Places Award.
<b>2006</b>	Waikato Museum of Art and History is renamed Waikato Museum.
<b>2015</b>	Waikato Museum undertakes consultation for a new Strategic Plan for the museum.

\*In addition to a science collection, the Waikato Museum has more than 38,000 tāonga/objects in its visual arts, social history and tangata whenua collections.

## WAIKATO SOCIETY OF ARTS

Even prior to Hamilton officially becoming a city in 1945, the Waikato Society of Arts (WSA) was a small society which had a significant impact on our cultural history. It led the way in its endeavours to improve and enhance Hamilton's cultural facilities and it also influenced other independent art groups into new kinds of artistic practice.<sup>12</sup>

The benefaction of the Grantham Street Gallery represented a turning point for WSA, and after 1947, provided a means of supplying the community with an artistic centre. Although, its relationship with Council was at times tenuous<sup>13</sup>, there is no doubt that through both the Societies' collections and City Collections, the community at large were exposed to a taste of local, national and even international exhibitions.<sup>14</sup>

The influence of WSA is crucial to an understanding of the development of the visual arts in Hamilton.<sup>15</sup> Not only has it remained active, but it has also helped shape the cultural development of our community.

WSA has been a strong advocate for the establishment of a public art gallery and has previously put forward concepts to Hamilton City Council. Over the last decade a number of submissions were made to Council regarding the development of an art gallery which would be led by WSA and requested the gifting of a parcel of land between Grantham and Victoria St for the development to take place. Although, these concepts did not come to fruition, it is acknowledged that WSA have a long history in leading this discussion.

## CHARTWELL COLLECTION

The Chartwell Trust was founded in the early 1970s by Robert Gardiner, and was named after his home suburb of Chartwell in Hamilton. The Chartwell Collection itself began in 1974 with an objective of promotion of the visual arts. The initial acquisitions policy was designed to complement that of the Waikato Museum of Art and History.<sup>16</sup> There was also a strong desire to share knowledge and appreciation of developments in contemporary art practices and processes drove the Trusts purpose. Also significant to the Trust was the need to facilitate and develop wide interest and respect for the thinking involved in making and viewing art<sup>17</sup> as well as providing assistance to the public gallery sector and to artists and art institutions in our community.<sup>18</sup>

The collection development and philanthropic programmes of the Chartwell Trust have been described as constituting one of the most determined and ambitious programmes of any private charitable trust anywhere in the world.<sup>19</sup> It has grown from early New Zealand acquisitions in the 1970s, through the first acquisitions of Australian works in the 1980s, to the establishment of a collection of more than 1,450 works in 2014. The commitment to the exploration of creativity through the medium of contemporary art has also continued to develop in depth along with the determination to enable access to the collection and to contemporary art on a wider basis.<sup>20</sup>

The initial intention of the Trust was to help promote and build a permanent collection-based public art gallery in Hamilton. Until that was built, the early acquisitions to the Chartwell Collection were placed on loan into the Waikato Museum's temporary premises. Chartwell's vision and goals soon extended beyond the need for a new art gallery and became centred around two major types of activities; the further development of the Chartwell Collection, principally a collection of contemporary works from New Zealand and Australia; and the development of a programme of philanthropy including significant donations to visual arts projects which are predominantly within the public gallery sector (referred to as the Chartwell projects).<sup>21</sup>

## BARR COLLECTION

Jim and Mary Barr are Wellington based collectors, writers and curators of contemporary New Zealand art. Without inherited or accumulated wealth they have assembled one of the most significant collections of critical contemporary art in New Zealand.<sup>22</sup>

Jim and Mary Barr have always been straightforward advocates of the rights of artists. This strong identification with the individual artist rather than with the institution of art has been reflected in the nature of their collection, whereby they have tended to accumulate work by particular artists in depth, a strategy not usually employed by a public institution collecting contemporary art. Their sustained patronage of contemporary art provides a highly important source of encouragement for young artists.<sup>23</sup>

In 1993, Jim and Mary offered their collection to the Waikato Museum of Art and History on long term loan, with the single intention of increasing public accessibility. "Shared Pleasures" was an exhibition of the Barr's collected works to be shown that same year. This exhibition brought together a diverse, but interrelated selection of works by some of New Zealand's leading contemporary visual artists. An interest in the revaluing of art history and the modernist tradition of art-making, present in the works of Julian Dashper, Merylyn Tweedie, Michael Parekowhai, Richard Killeen, Chris Cane and Patrick Pound; and a sense of transformation of the everyday object features

in the diverse images and objects of Peter Peryer, Marie Shannon, Don Driver, and Richard Reddaway.

## THE CENTRE FOR CONTEMPORARY ART (CFCA) HAMILTON

In 1982, the Chartwell Collection was removed from the Waikato Art Museum as it was growing beyond the temporary storage facilities available. The Centre for Contemporary Art (CFCA) in Hamilton was then established as the first permanent home for the Chartwell Collection. It was developed in the old Hamilton Hotel, the renovation of which included galleries for the CFCA, an exhibition programme and a space for the Waikato Society of Arts and a theatre company (known as the Left Bank).

The CFCA rapidly became a centre for national art discourse in New Zealand, with its programme of non-commercial New Zealand, Australian and international exhibitions. This programme simultaneously increased public access to the diversity of contemporary art practice and enabled artists to reassess directions in the development of their own work. With a permanent home for the rapidly developing collection, its parameters increased from the acquisition of paintings and works on paper to encompass sculpture and indigenous artefacts.<sup>24</sup> It provided a nationally significant alternative art space and was committed to growing a local audience for contemporary art.<sup>25</sup> An annual Chartwell Collection exhibition served to highlight new acquisitions which increasingly included works by Australian artists rarely seen in New Zealand at the time. Over thirteen years, around 150 exhibitions were held at the gallery.

In the early 90s, Chartwell Trust entered into a new loan agreement for the Collection with the newly opened Waikato Museum of Art and History and the collection transferred there. Two years later, in 1994, the exhibitions programme ceased at the CFCA and the building was sold.

## LOSS OF THE CHARTWELL AND BARR COLLECTIONS

In 1996, Council undertook a restructuring of the Museum and City Library, amalgamating the management of both. The Museum no longer had its own director, a decision which cemented the Chartwell Trust's decision to shift its collection to Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki on long-term loan.<sup>26</sup> Other high-profile Museum staff followed, and in addition to the loss of the 500-work Chartwell Collection, the 121-work Barr Collection was also lost to Dunedin Art Gallery. The loss of these most prestigious art collections was considered by some to be hugely detrimental to the contemporary arts scene in Hamilton and its influence in this area nationally.

## WALLACE GALLERY AND COLLECTION

Opened in October 2010, The Wallace Gallery in Morrinsville, houses a changing selection of pieces from the Wallace Arts Trust Collection alongside exhibitions by national and local artists. It has been the vision of the Gallery committee to create a place of pride, inspiration and engagement for the community. It has three exhibition spaces, the largest housing the artwork from the Wallace Collection and two exhibition spaces, one displaying work of New Zealand artists from around the country and the other dedicated to promoting and encouraging community art including school competitions and local art groups.<sup>27</sup>

The Gallery hosts travelling exhibitions of New Zealand art, undertakes exhibitions of cultural significance, is a facility for a wide variety of art expression and is a focal point for discussion, meeting and education.<sup>28</sup>

The Wallace Art Collection is a significant collection housed within the Wallace Gallery. The vision of the Wallace Arts Trust is to support, promote and expose New Zealand contemporary artists while providing the wider public with a unique cultural and historical resource of contemporary New Zealand art.<sup>29</sup>

Sir James Wallace began collecting New Zealand art in the mid-60s, with a particular focus on the work of emerging artists. In 1992, he transferred his Collection to a newly formed Charitable Trust, which he proceeded to fund so that it could continue to add to the Collection and provide support for the arts in New Zealand in general. The original aim was to assist emerging artists through both patronage and promotion through exhibitions. However, as the Trust became more established, it broadened its scope to include the acquisition of works by artists as they continued to develop, so creating a 'diary collection'.

Nothing from the collection is ever sold, meaning that the body of works, now numbering over 8,000, will remain in its entirety as a cultural resource for present and future generations. The Wallace Arts Trust loans out artworks to over 50 institutions ranging from schools to universities and hospitals, to expose as wide a range of audience to contemporary New Zealand art as possible.<sup>30</sup>

## STRONG UNDERGROUND SCENE

During the mid to late-90s, various galleries with a contemporary arts focus began to establish themselves in Hamilton. The influence of WINTEC (Waikato Institute of Technology) Media Arts has had a significant impact on this scene and has been a seeding ground for galleries such as Platform 01, Syrup Room and later Draw Inc and Pilot Gallery. These galleries all supported and profiled

exceptional local emerging artists and have strived to actively encourage the development and promotion of contemporary art. Although the existence of each space has been temporary and sometimes shifting, they nonetheless made a critical contribution to the growth of contemporary arts in Hamilton during their time and speak loudly of the cultural tone of the city.

### ARTS AND CULTURE SECTOR – HAMILTON/WAIKATO

The Waikato Region is currently one of the most culturally active areas in New Zealand,<sup>31</sup> with strong activity around Hamilton. A scan of the creative sector in 2015 indicates a healthy level of development pathways and programmes, active clusters of practitioners, and a strong number of nationally significant established arts events.<sup>32</sup> Artforms with the most activity reflected in the region are: music, theatre, visual arts, ngā toi Māori and craft/object.

The region is home to Ngāti Maniapoto, Ngāti Raukawa, Tainui, Pare Hauraki and Ngāti Tuwharetoa Iwi. The Kīngitanga (Māori King movement), which was begun in the mid-1850s, is centred in Ngaruawahia, at Tūrangawaewae marae. Many marae in the region actively support creative and cultural activity.<sup>33</sup> Also, tertiary education provider Te Wānanga o Aotearoa, and regional festivals and events such as Matariki ki Waikato and Tainui Waka Kapa Haka foster traditional and contemporary Māori arts and cultural activities.<sup>34</sup>

Tertiary art education is extensive and provided through the University of Waikato, Waikato Institute of Technology (WINTeC), and Te Wānanga o Aotearoa.

Existing public art galleries in the region are the Wallace Gallery in Morrinsville, WINTeC's RAMP Gallery and The University of Waikato's Calder & Lawson Art Gallery.

National and regional festivals and events strongly support the visual arts. 'The Hamilton Gardens Arts Festival', 'Spark International Festival of Media, Arts and Design', 'the New Zealand Painting and Printmaking Award', and 'The National Contemporary Art Award' all take place in Hamilton.

MESH Sculpture Hamilton is a charitable trust formed in 2010 by a group of business and community leaders to raise philanthropic funds to commission nationally significant artworks, which are then gifted to the city.<sup>35</sup> MESH works closely with Hamilton City Council and private landowners in selecting appropriate locations for the works. To date these have been significant pieces;

- Te Pumanawa o te Whenua - Beat Connection, Claudelands Centre, 2011 (artist Seung Yul Oh)
- Te Waaharoa ki te Ao Maarama - The Entrance way to the World of Enlightenment, Lake Rotorua, 2013 (artist Lonnie Hutchinson)
- Tongue of the Dog – cultural precinct, construction late 2015 (artist Michael Parekowhai)

Hamilton is also well known for its Hamilton Gardens.<sup>36</sup> In 2014 the Gardens won the prestigious International Garden of the Year, an award presented to gardens which distinguish themselves in the development and promotion of the garden experience as a tourism attraction.<sup>37</sup> It is home to three pieces of public art. The prominent Nga Uri o Hinetuparimaunga is located at the Hamilton Gardens entrance, the Hamilton Gardens Mural in the main pavilion and Hamilton's first piece of public art Little Bull.

In addition to the Hamilton Gardens, Hamilton City Council also owns and operates the Waikato Museum, Hamilton City Theatres, Hamilton Libraries, and the Claudelands Events Centre.

In 2014-15 Hamilton City Council signalled its confidence and value in the arts sector through strategic decisions such as the handing over of the Meteor and Clarence Street Theatre to community trusts which has seen arts activity in those venues increase.

## WAIKATO MUSEUM

Why would Hamilton need a contemporary public art gallery when we have a museum that has art exhibitions and collections? The Waikato Museum is well established as the region's cultural heritage leader with a mandate that includes visual art, social history, tangata whenua and science. The museum has built and maintains strong relationships with artistic and cultural stakeholders. The art collections include: Waikato Museum Collection; Trust Waikato Collection; Barry Hopkins Art Trust Collection; Waikato Bequests Trust Collection; Daspher/Shannon Trust Collection; and the Raupatu Lands Trust Collection. The nationally significant annual National Contemporary Art Award is hosted by the museum, and annually there are contemporary art exhibitions and associated public programmes.

The vision of Waikato Museum, Te Whare Taonga o Waikato is that it is "the artistic and cultural heart of our city. We value and celebrate our rich and diverse cultural heritage, particularly with respect to our relationship with iwi, and also our region's artistic vibrancy and flair for scientific innovation".

The Waikato Museum achieves this through:

- The collection and care of the region's heritage and taonga
- Sharing stories via informative, inspiring and engaging experiences
- Stimulating awareness, understanding and enjoyment in the community
- Communicating and celebrating our special partnership with Tainui
- Providing a rewarding and popular visitor attraction in the region<sup>38</sup>



Contemporary art galleries are quite distinct from cultural heritage museums in that they have a singular focus on contemporary art, are curated and connect with global thinking specifically around contemporary art. They can indicate a level of sophistication and cultural maturity as a city. A contemporary art gallery can vary in its mission, mandate, organisational structure, and form, but there are some commonalities. Common threads among some contemporary art gallery mission statements reflect a desire to connect people with art to promote understanding, reflection and enjoyment.<sup>39</sup>

The fundamental role of museums is to educate and disseminate objects considered to hold cultural and social significance and collect and display such objects. A contemporary art gallery holds art works connected to a modern and contemporary framework, with the artist and gallery working together to conceptualise and display the art works.<sup>40</sup>

There was a time when the Waikato Museum reflected a strong contemporary art focus. In 1987, the Waikato Museum amalgamated with the Waikato Art Gallery and became the Waikato Museum of Art and History. A purpose-built facility, designed to specifically grace the river, was opened and signalled a new era for Hamilton, "no longer a rural-servicing town, but a vital, emerging city with the Museum as one of its proudest achievements".<sup>41</sup> Then Director Bruce Robinson called the Museum "the most contemporary, purpose-built institution of its kind in the country. One of New Zealand's finest buildings, a world class museum" and with well-respected curators Linda Tyler and Lara Strongman, immediate links were made with the Chartwell Collection.<sup>42</sup> Exhibitions of the Collection, including *Cross Currents* in 1991 and *Shared Pleasures* in 1993, demonstrate the Museum's foresight to engage in dialogues about contemporary visual culture.<sup>43</sup> This as well as the acquisition of the Barr Collection, in 1993, showed the strength of contemporary arts at this time.

## HAMILTON CITY COUNCIL'S CURRENT ROLE IN SUPPORTING HAMILTON'S CULTURAL LIFE

Hamilton City Council's Hamilton Plan sets out 10 priorities, which it will focus on over the next 10 years. One of these priorities is to "Celebrate our arts and culture", that Hamiltonians recognise the importance of art, music and culture in our everyday lives. The importance and relevance of arts and culture to regional communities is also being recognised, whether it is in terms of its contribution to economic regeneration and increased tourism and local resident demand or for benefits relating to social inclusion and community connectedness.<sup>44</sup>

Hamilton City Council supports the arts and culture sector specifically through public art, arts leadership and strategy, and grants and services. The Hamilton Arts Agenda was developed to support and grow Hamilton's arts and culture sector by providing direction and leadership. Formulated in 2011/12 it identified five outcome statements that will help achieve this vision, these are under review, but broadly include the following areas;

- Spaces and places (*Nga wahi toi*)
- Toi Māori (*Māori art*)
- Creative economy (*Kia haumako te waihanga toi*)
- Participation (*Whai mana*)
- Promotion (*Whakanuia*)

## HAMILTON ARTS FORUM

When the Hamilton Arts Agenda was adopted in 2012, Hamilton City Council established an Arts Forum as an advisory board to 'think tank and nurture new ideas, provide strategic direction and co-ordinate new projects.'<sup>45</sup>

The Arts Forum identified the development of a public art gallery as a priority project, and formed a working group (Art Gallery Working Group) to complete a "feasibility study on the development of an international standard contemporary public art gallery to support a nationally recognised art collection in Hamilton."<sup>46</sup>

In March 2014, a consultation workshop was held with 40 stakeholders identified by the Art Gallery Working Group. These people were predominantly from the Hamilton creative, tertiary, business sectors, City Council, and funders. The consultation was to identify models for an art gallery by defining stakeholders' views on the purpose and value of an art gallery. From the consultation results, consultant and facilitator Tim Walker put forward a recommended approach to a pre-feasibility study of four art gallery models:<sup>47</sup>

1. A traditional art museum model
2. A contemporary projects model
3. A mixed-use mixed-genre creative hub model
4. A dispersed node model.

The AGWG put this recommendation forward to the Art Forum and the Arts Forum requested that the pre-feasibility study be carried out.

In 2014, Council did not approve funding for an Arts Gallery feasibility study. However, in August 2015, the Strategy and Policy Committee resolved that staff liaise with the Arts Forum and Creative Waikato on pre-feasibility research for an Art Gallery. Hamilton City Council staff are to report back on this matter before the Draft Annual Plan 2016 is adopted.

Another key strategy for the city is the Hamilton River Plan - a guide for Council, businesses, developers and the general public for improving Hamilton's engagement with the river. One of the River Plan Objectives is to "enhance Hamilton's key arts and cultural zone and strengthen its connection to the river".<sup>48</sup> Hamilton City Council has indicated a project to promote development of the ArtsPost site to compliment the Museum, and specifically, to support the development of a world-class themed art hotel by the river.

## WAIKATO CREATIVE INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN 2014

Another key piece of work, carried out in 2014, was the Waikato Creative Infrastructure Plan, which provided the first opportunity for the Waikato region to review current and future creative sector facility needs. The primary objectives of this exercise was to identify the current facilities available throughout the Waikato, to ascertain any gaps in the facility offering and to determine how best to fill those gaps over the next 30-year period.

As part of this Plan, a detailed benchmarking assessment was provided to illustrate what other regions had developed particularly as performance and exhibition venues (rather than rehearsal or storage spaces). Of the 58 facilities assessed the majority were located with a similar population catchment to the Waikato and/or situated within 1-2 hours' drive of a major urban centre. The relevance and implications of this benchmarking for the Waikato are as follows:

- Major regional centres tend to offer quality public art galleries and performing art centres regardless of demographic trends;
- The strongest argument applied for supporting the investment into these quality facilities is enhancement to the liveability and appeal of regional cities and towns;

- There is recognition of the need for growth in the visitor economy through creative festivals and events;
- There is a recognised need to help support and stimulate employment via the creative sector; and
- There is a need to address social and community issues and to help create more inclusive communities where different cultural groups can participate.<sup>49</sup>

A priority project identified in this plan is the development of a nationally significant public art space or gallery in Hamilton. The plan acknowledges the constraints of funding for building new infrastructure and maintaining future operation, and suggested shared facilities and flexibility in design to adapt to changing uses and needs.

## NEW ZEALAND CONTEXT

Hamilton is the fourth largest city in NZ, with a population of approximately 150,000, yet has not had a standalone art gallery since 1994. By comparison, the following table shows New Zealand cities and towns that have a dedicated art gallery of significance (that is recognised as key cultural infrastructure that drive community development, tourism and economic outcomes).

City/Town	Gallery	Population <sup>50</sup>
New Plymouth	Govett-Brewster and Lyn Lye	74,184
Dunedin	Dunedin Public Art Gallery	127,500
Nelson	Suter Art Gallery Te Aratoi o Whakatu	46,437
Timaru	Aigantighe Art Gallery	46,850
Whanganui	Sargeant Gallery Te Whare o Rehua	42,639
Tauranga	Tauranga Art Gallery	117,600

## INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

Internationally, contemporary art galleries are reflecting our rapidly changing world and are moving away from traditional thinking to more niche opportunities. The Boston Museum of Modern Art for example, a sister institution to New York's MoMA, was conceived as a laboratory where innovative

approaches to art could be championed. The museum established a reputation for identifying new artists, and in pursuit of this mission, eventually parted ways with MoMA and changed its name to the Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA) in 1948. As the ICA's reputation grew around the nation, it paved the way for other institutes and museums of "contemporary art" as well as artists' spaces and alternative venues.

For more than 75 years, the ICA has presented contemporary art in all media – visual arts, performance, film, video and literature – and created educational programmes that encourage appreciation for contemporary culture. In 2006, the ICA opened its new building on the Boston waterfront. In its new facility, the ICA has expanded the scope and size of its exhibitions and programmes, increasing its audiences tenfold and serving as the catalyst for contemporary art in Boston.

Here in New Zealand, the newly opened Len Lye Centre in New Plymouth is an example of a city acknowledging the contribution of Len Lye to its community and beyond by providing a '...world centre for the care, display, research and development of the works and ideas of Len Lye.<sup>51</sup> It has been couched as a major cultural destination on the Pacific Rim,<sup>52</sup> and with increasing national and international interest in the work of Len Lye, it looks set to continue.

Contemporary art galleries challenge thinking and by their very nature can be host to controversial exhibitions and collections. The Museum of Old and New Art (MONA) in Hobart, Tasmania, is arguably one of the most controversial private collections of modern art and antiquities in the world. Described as a 'subversive adult Disneyland'<sup>53</sup> the collection ranges from ancient Egyptian mummies to some of the world's most infamous and thought-provoking contemporary art. In 2013, Lonely Planet put Hobart on its global list of top 10 cities to visit, and credits "maverick personality"<sup>54</sup> David Walsh, with nothing short of putting "Hobart on the map".<sup>55</sup>

National and International links can be forged between established contemporary art galleries, sharing increasingly ambitious exhibitions.<sup>56</sup> The Walker Art Center in Minneapolis, United States, has gained a reputation for linking ideas from different disciplines and art forms, which is seen as a model for cultural institutions for the future.<sup>57</sup> Today it ranks among the five most-visited modern/contemporary art museums in the United States and, together with the adjacent Minneapolis Sculpture Garden, attracts more than 700,000 visits per year.<sup>58</sup>

The idea that there is no single model of what is a 'contemporary art gallery' is evident in the 21c contemporary art museum in Louisville, Kentucky, United States. Native Kentuckians Laura Lee Brown and Steve Wilson sought to marry their passion for contemporary art with a desire to make a considerable contribution toward revitalisation efforts in downtown Louisville.<sup>59</sup> 21c Louisville is a 90-

room boutique hotel with 9,000 square feet of exhibition space and an award-winning restaurant featuring locally and sustainably raised foods. It has now expanded to other cities throughout the United States.

The contribution that contemporary art galleries make to the economy and tourism is substantial. In Queensland Australia, in addition to the Queensland Art Gallery, the establishment of the Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art (APT) in 1993 forged a focus on artwork of the region, and as an ongoing exhibition series the APT created a case for a second building to display growing contemporary collections. The Gallery of Modern Art opened in 2006, creating a two-campus institution.

GoMA and the Queensland Art Gallery have had more than 10 million visits since the opening of GoMA in December 2006. There have been more than 1.4 million visits to ticketed exhibitions and more than 1.8 million to three free Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art exhibitions, contributing a total of more than \$90 million to Queensland's economy since 2006.<sup>60</sup> GoMA has provided a destination where locals and visitors can experience innovative and exciting cultural experiences. It's also proving popular in the regions, with more than 450,000 people accessing GoMA's collection and programmes at regional exhibitions, workshops and children's programmes at over 100 venues around the state.<sup>61</sup>

As these examples demonstrate, the term 'contemporary art gallery' does not express a single international type, approach or model. However, the leading examples of contemporary institutions do have one thing in common; a very clear sense of what makes them specific and relevant in their context.<sup>62</sup>

Internationally, contemporary art galleries demonstrate that with a clear vision, a belief in the value and benefits of contemporary art and a collaborative approach, contemporary public art galleries can be a catalyst not only for community connectedness and understanding but also as key economic drivers.

In order for Hamilton and the Waikato to succeed in furthering a vision for its own contemporary public art gallery, four essential components need to be well aligned:

**A Driving Body** – The foundation of an independent Trust would be an effective way to establish clear strategy, advocacy and leadership for a contemporary public art gallery. A not-for-profit Board of independent professional community leaders with a passion for the sector would create a vision, attract investors and work with key stakeholders to ensure quality outcomes.

**Council and Government Support** - Hamilton City Council support will be critical to its establishment and ongoing sustainability. It is essential that Council fully recognises the social, cultural and economic benefits that a contemporary public art gallery would provide to our city and beyond. Council's role may manifest in many ways, not the least, as an enabler. Central Government will also have a key role through its lens of regional development.

**Philanthropic and Community Support** - Identifying establishment funding and support will be a challenge not only at the outset of the project, but throughout its development. It will be important to maintain momentum, particularly in times of economic uncertainty, in believing that the benefits of having such a gallery will go beyond the immediate needs and into the future.

**Community buy-in** - A key motivation for this discussion paper was to assist public understanding of the drivers for a contemporary public art gallery and the benefits it would have for the community. It will be essential that public are involved in the development process so that the outcome is specific and relevant to users and future audiences.

The current climate is showing positive signs for collaboration between community, government, philanthropic investors and the community. If seized, this moment just might manifest into the creation of a cultural asset of significance for Hamilton and the Waikato region and become a valued legacy for future generations to come.

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## ENDNOTES

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<sup>5</sup> Tate Report, 2013/14

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