



Farewell to two very important staff members

Pātaka director **Reuben Friend** is leaving us to take up the role of General Manager, Community and Partnership at Porirua City Council and **Linda Fordyce**, Pātaka's long serving education Officer, is leaving for well-earned retirement. This newsletter is very much dedicated as a tribute to both, and we are delighted that each has agreed to share a little of their Pātaka experience, below.

It has been a privilege to work with Reuben and Linda. Both are passionate about their work and have the ability to imbue others with their enthusiasm. We will miss them.

VISITS

Our visit to the City Gallery for a conducted tour of the **HILMA AF KLINT exhibition** is scheduled for 9 February, commencing at 11.30am. This is free to 2022 members but we have limited spaces, so reserve your place as soon as you can at patakafriends@gmail.com

Maringikura Campbell's invitation to Friends to visit the family home of her parents **Meg and Alistair Te Ariki Campbell** has been rescheduled to 2022 due to ill health. We wish her the best for her recovery.

We will continue with interesting visits to local artists as the new year progresses, so watch this space.

MELVIN DAY TALK

Gregory O'Brien will present an overview of the work of **Melvin Day** (which is currently showing in the Maude and Miller Gallery) on 12 December at 3.30pm.

THANK YOU!

Finally, a huge thank you from the Friends of Pātaka Committee for your support throughout the year.

And remember, with Christmas just around the corner make the most of your membership 10% discount at Toi Store and spend up large!

All the very best for the Festive Season and for 2022.



REUBIN FRIEND

IT WAS THURSDAY 2 MARCH 2000. I remember this day because I was still flushed with the afterglow of my 21st birthday revelries from the night before in Plimmerton. It was also the day of my very first art exhibition, here at Pātaka in the Bottle Creek Gallery. I was still an art student at the time and was so elated to be showing in

a real gallery with real artists. I was double elated to see a red dot beside my painting on opening night. I had been so focused on trying to make "good art" that I had completely forgotten that people *actually buy art* at art galleries.

It was the first painting I had ever exhibited and sold, and I still have a copy of the Mana Magazine article that featured my painting alongside works by Darcy Nicholas. Darcy was one of those *real artists* and he was also the General Manager for Community Services based here at Pātaka. Some 20 years later, having enjoyed a solid run as Director at Pātaka for the past six years, I find myself stepping into Darcy's shoes in the GM role.

I'm proud of what I have achieved in my time here at Director, having begun with a renovation of the bathrooms, and then gallery spaces and most

recently the new insulated roof and improved collection storage. The public spaces are so much better now also, with the new community kitchen and the new Hāpori meeting room downstairs, as well as managing to get air conditioning piped through the Dance Studio and Helen Smith Room, so our visitors are always the right temperature. The new staff structure that we have implemented has also meant that we can operate as a more professional team.

We have toured exhibitions around Aotearoa New Zealand and the world, including the Wi Taepa exhibition at Auckland Art Gallery and projects this year in Taiwan, Canada, and the upcoming Venice Biennale in April 2022. We're about to send out the touring proposal for the Sandy Adsett exhibition too, so I'm looking forward to seeing that show tour to galleries around Aotearoa New Zealand after

I leave this space. On my last week here this week, I've been thinking about some of the highlights, such as the recent Sandy Adsett exhibition and the fabulous Maximo Laura textiles exhibition.

The Friends have been here by our side the whole time, always providing fantastic support to our small team here. We really do strive to provide world-class experiences for our out-of-town-visitors and local communities, and we couldn't have done it without the Friends of Pātaka.

The Friends have been a wonderful group of people to work with, always making me feel at home.

Thinking back to my first show here way back in 2000, that first painting I exhibited here now lives on the Chatham Islands, lovingly cared for Susan Thorpe and Maui Solomon who live between the Chathams and Titahi Bay. These are the earliest memories I have of Pātaka and the many communities who converge and congregate here. Though I grew up in Auckland and the Waikato, the longest

period of my adult life has been spent here in Porirua. Living on Hampshire Crescent in the Creek and later on at Tireti Street in the Bay, I've felt blessed to be part of these communities. Porirua is where I feel most at home here in Wellington.

Though I will miss being part of the creative energy here at Pātaka, being able to attend events simply for the pure enjoyment is something I am looking forward to. I shall be joining the Friends of Pātaka, so you can expect to see me at events!



LINDA FORDYCE

I STARTED WORKING as the full-time Education Officer at the Porirua Museum (opposite Takapuwahia Marae) in May 1988 after seven years teaching around Porirua and the Kapiti Coast. There were only three full-time staff at the Porirua Museum back then so I had an amazing opportunity to do everything: planning, research, writing, painting, teaching, curating exhibitions etc for nearly ten years.

One of the joys of my job was also being the Oral Historian. I interviewed some amazing people who could recall Porirua as a village and the early seaside and farming communities for our Oral History Archive. I had two mentors back then: Lou (Luti)

Solomon from Takapuwahia who visited every day and took me 'under his wing'; and Joe Boulton (a great-great-grandson of the whaler Joseph Toms) who lived at Pauatahanui and knew everything of Porirua's history.

Other highlights from that period included driving the museum's Ford Model A truck into school playgrounds, writing booklets for our History Series and establishing the Hands-on Heritage programme.

In 1997 we had a year to plan and shift into the new Museum/Art Gallery/Library complex which opened in September 1998. One of the opening exhibitions was our Family Treasures Exhibition which involved working with all the Year 7/8 students of Porirua for over a year. This, I believe, was the perfect (and best) exhibition to make our local families and school communities feel part of and welcomed at Pātaka.

The exhibition I curated in the year 2000 about Titahi Bay ('Life's a Beach') – which resulted out of writing a history book about The Bay – also developed this sense of pride in our local communities. Every community group in the Bay paraded behind banners through our Spine and once

again I felt proud of the sense of inclusion an exhibition at Pātaka could produce. The two WW100 exhibitions I was involved with – were once again centred around stories of community and family (favourite topics).

And that brings me to the thousands of school children (even second generation) that I have SO enjoyed 'entertaining' and hosting here for over 33 years.

Working with the tamariki of Porirua – of all ages and cultures – using history, bus tours, art, crafts and their own natural curiosity – has been the mainstay of my work here and the reason for staying so long. I love that they love and remember coming here each time they walk in. I love adding to their own understandings and wonderment of their own place and the wider world. I love that a new Aotearoa New Zealand's Histories Curriculum will help to finally ensure that local narratives from an iwi and te ao Māori perspective will now be mandatory and mainstream.

I have also loved meeting and working with so many wonderful colleagues over the years who have helped to make Pātaka such a wonderful valuable place to be a part of.