**YEARS 7–10**
**CURRICULUM**
**LEVELS 3–6**

# Protest
# Education Resource

## About this resource

Centring on New Zealand painting from the late 18th century to today, The Fletcher Trust Collection offers a rich resource for learning and inspiration. This unit introduces ākonga to artworks created in and reflecting Aotearoa New Zealand, offering deeper insight into the pieces, the artists behind them, and their broader cultural, historical, and thematic contexts.

Designed for ākonga in Years 7–10 (Curriculum Levels 3–6), the unit explores the theme of **Protest** through three artworks from the Collection. It considers how artists use their artwork as a tool to protest against real-world issues they feel passionate about. Students will engage in observation, discussion, critical thinking, and art-making to consider the role of art in protest and how visual forms can convey political messages.

While primarily aligned with the Visual Arts learning area, this resource also supports learning in English and the Social Sciences, demonstrating how art can be a powerful cross-curricular tool. It has been designed as an adaptable toolkit, allowing teachers to select and customise materials to suit their classroom needs. Key sections are structured to be easily extractable as handouts for direct student use.

To introduce the theme of **Protest**, kaiako might consider the following activities:

**Personal Reflection:** Have ākonga respond to the prompt, "What's something you care deeply about or wish you could change in the world?" Students can write a brief 1–2 paragraph response.

**Collaborative Discussion:** Use open-ended questions to spark conversation, such as: *How can art be used to protest issues in the world? Can art make a difference? Why might someone choose art over words to express their opinion?*

**Visual Analysis:** Present an example of protest art (such as an artwork from this resource). Ask simple questions like: *What do you see? What do you think the artist is trying to say? How does it make you feel?* Record the class's responses to show the range of interpretations.

## Aotearoa New Zealand Curriculum Links

Composite of Levels 3–6

This resource offers the opportunity to develop the five key competencies of the New Zealand curriculum: thinking; using language, symbols, and texts; managing self; relating to others; participating and contributing. It is also relevant for a majority of the Levels 3–6 achievement objectives in the New Zealand Curriculum for Visual Arts, as well as presenting opportunities in other learning areas, as outlined below.

**Visual Arts:** communicating and interpreting, developing ideas and practical knowledge, understanding the visual arts in context, and inspiring curiosity

**English:** understanding oral, visual and written language

**Social Sciences:** people remember and record the past in different ways (CL3); the Treaty of Waitangi is responded to differently by people in different times and places (CL4); the ideas and actions of people in the past have had a significant impact on people's lives (CL5); individuals, groups, and institutions work to promote social justice and human rights (CL6)

## Understand

Big Ideas

Ākonga can explore ideas about the theme of **Protest** in response to artworks by Emily Karaka, Robyn Kahukiwa and Ralph Hotere.

This unit also connects to each of the Big Ideas outlined in the Visual Arts NZC, especially *Curiosity, risk taking, and critical thinking are integral to creativity in Visual Arts; Whanaungatanga in Visual Arts builds sustainable communities* and *Visual Arts communicates ahurea tuakiri and evokes responses.*

## AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND CURRICULUM LINKS

**Explore**
Communicating & Interpreting

Ākonga can think critically about how art can be used as a tool for protest.

— Describe key elements in an artwork using appropriate visual language.
— Identify visual evidence to support interpretations and ideas about artworks.
— Understand how framing, abstraction, and symbolism can express messages.
— Reflect on the role of art in protest and environmental/social activism.
— Explore how art can communicate protest, identity, and care for the natural world.
— Use critical inquiry, evidence, and collaborative discussion to build shared understandings of artworks.

**Create**
Developing Ideas & Practical Knowledge

Ākonga develop practical knowledge as they:

— Identify causes they care about and reflect on their significance.
— Experiment with visual elements such as colour, pattern, symbols, composition, text and abstraction to express ideas about protest and social issues.
— Understand how artists use materials, abstraction, and metaphor to convey political and conceptual ideas.
— Collaborate to create a collective artwork with a shared message about protest or social justice.
— Create conceptual artworks using repurposed materials and visual metaphors to communicate ideas.
— Draw inspiration from local artists to create works that express personal, cultural, or political ideas.
— Reflect on how artists such as Emily Karaka, Robyn Kahukiwa, and Ralph Hotere use art for protest and apply similar strategies in their own work.
— Explore the link between protest, imagination and the future in their creative practice.

Emily Karaka
b. 1952, Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland, Aotearoa

*Kaitiakitanga: Shield I* &
*Kaitiakitanga: Shield II*
both 1993
Mixed media on board
1225 x 810mm [I] & 1190 x 810mm [II]

# Emily Karaka Kaitiakitanga: Shield I & Kaitiakitanga: Shield II

*My work is centred around the Treaty of Waitangi. It's to do with rangatiratanga, our atua, our taonga, and rights, living rights, arts and cultural rights*. —Emily Karaka

Emily Karaka (Ngāpuhi, Waikato-Tainui, Ngāti Hine, Ngāi Tai ki Tāmaki, Ngāti Mahuta, Ngāti Tahinga, Ngāti Tamaoho, Te Ahiwaru, Te Ākitai Waiohua, Te Kawerau ā Maki) is a respected senior Māori artist and leader. For more than 40 years, she has used her powerful, intensely coloured paintings to speak out about important political and environmental issues, especially around Māori land rights and Te Tiriti. Alongside her art mahi, she has spent decades working for her iwi, Ngāi Tai ki Tāmaki, to address environmental concerns and Treaty claims.

Karaka is largely self-taught, and her expressive style of painting is very much her own. She often works on a large scale, creating complex paintings filled with words, abstract shapes, patterns inspired by toi whakairo (Māori carving) and forms from nature. Karaka calls her artworks "political landscapes" because they show the deep connection between land, identity, and protest.

Describing her paintings, writer Witi Ihimaera has said:

*Her paintings not only eyeballed us; they shouted at and challenged us*.

These two *Kaitiakitanga Shields* demonstrate Karaka's belief in our role as stewards of te taiao (the natural world). Their shield shape suggests the act of protection and reminds us of protest movements where shields have been used by protestors, such as the 1981 protests against the Springbok tour.

Through her art and her advocacy, Karaka stands up for kaitiakitanga (guardianship of the land) and tino rangatiratanga (self-determination).

**What do you see?**

Look carefully at the shields. What do you notice? What words, symbols and images can you find among the swirling colours?

What kind of colours and brush strokes has Karaka used?

How would you describe the way the painting looks and feels?

What do the shields remind you of? Do they look like anything you've seen before?

**How is it made?**

How do the colours and words make you feel? What mood or energy do they create?

The Kaitiakitanga Shields are shaped like protest shields. What does this shape suggest to you? What might the artist be trying to protect or defend?

**What does it mean?**

What do you think the message behind these artworks might be? Are there clues in the words, shapes, or symbols?

Karaka calls her paintings "political landscapes." What do you think that means? How can a landscape show ideas like protest, identity, or land rights?

What do you think Witi Ihimaera meant when he described Karaka's paintings as "shouting" and "challenging" people?

Who might the paintings be challenging—and how?

With a partner, brainstorm some ways you could make an artwork "shout".

**Why does it matter?**

What does the shield shape tell us about Karaka's views on protecting land or standing up for people's rights?

Why do you think art is a powerful way to speak up about political or cultural issues? What can it do that words alone might not?

## CREATE — EMILY KARAKA

Art can be a powerful way to stand up for what you believe in. Emily Karaka's *Kaitiakitanga Shields* are symbols of guardianship, identity, and protest. They show her belief in the importance of people protecting te taiao.

Inspired by Karaka's mahi toi, your task is to design and create your own shield that expresses your ideas about what needs protecting in your world today. What do you care about? What would you stand up for?

**Step 1:**
Brainstorm

Write down 1–3 things that are important to you. Some ideas could be the environment, your whānau, culture, animals, water, freedom, or identity.

Think: Is there a place, idea, or taonga (treasure) I feel connected to?

Write 2–3 powerful words or short phrases to express your feelings about it (e.g. "Protect our awa," "We stand strong," "This is our land").

**Step 2:**
Visual Research & Symbol-Making

Look at patterns from nature (leaves, water, wind, birds).

Explore Māori motifs (koru, manaia, niho taniwha, rafter patterns).

Experiment sketching some abstract symbols or shapes to represent your ideas.

Choose a colour palette that reflects your ideas .

**Step 3:**
Design & Create Your Shield

Choose a shield shape (e.g. rounded, angular, traditional Māori or fantasy-inspired).

Sketch your layout: where will your symbols, colours, patterns, and words go?

Layer symbols and text using paint, pencils, felt tips, pastels, or collage, whatever materials you like!

Think about using bold colours, strong brushstrokes, and expressive shapes like Karaka does.

**Reflect + Share:**

Write a short paragraph (3–5 sentences) or record a voice message explaining:

What your shield is protecting.

What your symbols and colours mean.

How your shield shows kaitiakitanga.

# Robyn Kahukiwa
# Tihe Mauri Ora


Robyn Kahukiwa
b. 1938, Sydney, Australia

*Tihe Mauri Ora* 1990
Oil and alkyd oil on unstretched canvas
2100 x 3580mm

Robyn Kahukiwa (Ngāti Porou, Te Aitanga-a-Hauiti, Ngāti Konohi, Te Whānau-a-Ruataupare) is best known for her bold depictions of Māori figures, especially wāhine, advocating for the reclamation of tino rangatiratanga (sovereignty and self-determination). Her paintings often combine traditional Māori symbolism with urban settings and explore themes of protest and activism.

This painting was originally part of *Hineteiwaiwa te Whare*, a whare wahine created by the Pōneke-based Māori women's art collective Haeata for the exhibition *Mana Tiriti: The Art of Protest and Partnership* (1990), which marked 150 years since the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi. Describing this artwork, the members of Haeta said:

*This whare takes its name from the deity who gave us weaving, Hineteiwaiwa. Uncompromisingly female, the whare is a contemporary expression of a traditional concept. It contains all the elements of a whare tupuna... it is a women's response to New Zealand's 150-year history of deceit.*

Originally forming the left-hand front wall of the whare, *Tihe Mauri Ora* confronts this history, especially the impact of colonisation on wāhine. It expresses mana wāhine, the authority and strength of women. Like many of Kahukiwa's works, it interweaves traditional Māori symbols with contemporary social and political commentary, presented through her bold, mural-like narrative style.

**What do you see?**

Look closely at Kahukiwa's painting. What elements look traditional, and what looks contemporary? (Remember: *traditional* means something passed down through generations, and *contemporary* means something from today.)

How would you describe the mood of this painting? What emotions does it seem to express?

**How is it made?**

What visual elements help show the ideas in this painting? Think about colour, composition, scale, text, how the paint is used, and the subject matter.

Can you think of other ways a painting could express strength or authority?

What visual tools can artists use to show power?

**What does it mean?**

Why do you think Kahukiwa chooses to blend traditional symbols with contemporary images? What might she be trying to say?

What is mana wāhine, and how do you think this painting shows it?

Haeata called their whare wahine "a women's response to New Zealand's 150-year history of deceit." What do you think they meant by this?

How can painting be a form of protest?

What do you think this artwork is speaking out about?

**Why does it matter?**

Why do you think some artists choose painting to protest instead of giving speeches or writing articles? What is especially powerful about visual messages?

Do you think protest art can help create change? Why or why not?

## CREATE — ROBYN KAHUKIWA

Art can be more than something pretty—it can be powerful. It can speak up, protest, and help people understand different points of view. Kahukiwa and Haeata's artworks were a protest against unfair treatment and a celebration of mana wāhine. In this activity, your class will work together to create a mural that shares your voices, ideas, and messages, just like artists do when they protest through their work.

*For this activity, you will need a large surface to paint or draw on. Butchers paper, an old bedsheet or cardboard boxes taped together all work well.*

**Discussion:**

As a class, discuss the big ideas from Robyn Kahukiwa's painting, such as protest, strength, history, and standing up for what's right. What do you care about or want to speak up about? Decide on a message for your collective artwork to communicate.

**Plan:**

Collectively brainstorm drawings, words, patterns, and symbols that will illustrate your message. Decide who is responsible for drawing/painting each one.

**Creation:**

Draw/paint people, powerful symbols, important words, traditional Māori designs, or things from today's world that connect to your message.

Try to let your artwork connect to others'—you might carry on someone's pattern, link your image with theirs, or echo their message in your own way.

Use strong outlines and bold colours to make your voice stand out, just like Kahukiwa's bold painting style.

**Reflection:**

Step back and look at what we've made. What stories are we telling? What do our voices say when we join them together?

# Ralph Hotere 1984


Ralph Hotere
b. 1931, Mitimiti
Northland,
Aotearoa

*1984*
1984
Corrugated stainless steel on board
815 x 900mm

Ralph Hotere (Te Aupōuri) is one of Aotearoa New Zealand's most respected artists, best known for his abstract art and frequent use of the colour black, as well as crosses, circles, and lines. As a young man, Hotere studied in France and travelled around Europe where he saw exciting new styles of modern art. While in Italy, he visited the grave of his brother Jack, who was killed in action in World War II. This moment deeply influenced Hotere's art for years to come.

After returning to Aotearoa, Hotere began introducing words into his paintings, working with well-known poets such as Hone Tuwhare and Bill Manhire. He also began using unusual materials in his art, such as corrugated metal and old window frames, which you can see in *1984*.

Even though Hotere didn't often talk about his art (he liked to let it to speak for itself), during the 1980s he began using his work to share strong political messages, such as his opposition to the 1981 Springbok rugby tour and the sinking of the *Rainbow Warrior* in 1985.

However, the political work he is perhaps best known for his *Aramoana* series, a group of artworks made in protest against plans to build a second aluminium smelter at Aramoana, close to his home in Koputai Port Chalmers. The project would have harmed important salt marshes, where birds and native plants lived, and had wider environmental impacts.

Hotere didn't just make art about the issue—he joined the resistance too, supporting local iwi and passionate residents who were fighting to protect the area. The Save Aramoana Campaign inspired his work for over ten years. Some of this art was "unofficial"—like the time he threw black paint across a giant pro-smelter billboard and sent a photo of it to a friend, calling it "probably the best painting I've done in 30 years. It took me 2 seconds."

**What do you see?**

Ralph Hotere used found materials like corrugated iron and old windows—things that would usually go to waste. What do these materials look like? What kind of feeling or atmosphere do they create?

What do you think the artist is telling us by choosing these materials? What might they say about his values or ideas?

**How is it made?**

Hotere often included poetry in his work. What effect do you think combining visual art and poetry might have?

How can art be used to express emotions or ideas that are hard to put into words? How is Hotere doing that in this work?

**What does it mean?**

Why do you think protecting Aramoana was so important to Hotere? What does this tell us about him?

What does the story about the billboard and the black paint tell us about Hotere's approach to protest? What message might he be trying to send?

Why do you think someone would choose to express their protest through art instead of speeches or signs?

**Why does it matter?**

What role can artists play in protecting the environment or supporting their communities? Can art really make a difference?

Do you think artists have a responsibility to speak up about political or environmental issues? Why or why not?

If there was an issue you felt strongly about (in your school, neighbourhood, or the environment), how could you use art to make a statement?

Have you ever seen a piece of art that made you think differently about something? What was it, and how did it affect you?

## CREATE — RALPH HOTERE

For this artwork and many others, Hotere salvaged old window frames from the local junkyard and used them as the frames for his work. Because of this, we can see *1984* as a view through a window.

This activity requires you to think about different possibilities of what could be outside your window. Your task is to create an artwork using a window frame that looks out onto a future world shaped by protest, or by the lack of it. You'll imagine and create either:

**A utopian scene:** *What could the world look like if we stand up and protect what we believe in?*

**A dystopian scene:** *What could the world become if we stay silent and let injustice or destruction happen?*

**Step 1:** Begin by choosing your path: Will your window look out onto a hopeful world where people acted? Or will your window act as a warning and show a damaged world where no one protested? Pick one, or create a diptych showing both sides.

**Step 2:** Think about a cause that matters to you: climate change, Indigenous rights, war, equality, clean oceans, animal protection, freedom, etc., Depending on which path you have chosen, consider what the future will look like if we choose to protect this, or how it will be if we don't.

**Step 3:** Make a window frame from cardboard or recycled materials. You can divide it into panes, scratch it, paint it—make it feel like part of the story.

**Step 4:** Use collage, drawing, paint, or mixed media to create what's seen through the window. Think about how you will use colour, texture, shapes, and symbols to show mood and meaning.

**Step 5:** Give your work a powerful title, perhaps a single word, place name, or question.

**Emily Karaka**

Karaka and Ihimaera quoted in: Witi Ihimaera, "Earth Goddess," *Emily Karaka: Waharoa o Ngai Tai* (Tāmaki Makaurau: Fisher Gallery, 1997). PDF here.

Emily Karaka website

"Emily Karaka on her dedication to te ao Maori through her art," RNZ interview, 2024

Rahel Aimi, "Emily Karaka Champions Indigenous Justice through Paintings," Frieze, October 2024

Mārena Mane, "'Activist' artist Emily Karaka aims to share iwi stories at new arts workshop," Te Ao Māori News, January 2022

"In conversation with Emily Karaka," The Art Paper interview, 2021

**Robyn Kahukiwa**

Haeata quoted in: Ramari Young (ed.), *Mana Tiriti: The Art of Protest and Partnership* (Te Whanganui-a-Tara: Daphne Brasell Associates Press, 1991), 76. PDF here.

Cameron Ah Loo-Matamua, "Robyn Kahukiwa: 'He kupu kei runga—There are words attached'," Art News, July 2023

Mya Morrison-Middleton, "He Toka Tū Moana a Robyn Kahukiwa," The Pantograph Punch, March 2024

George Watson, "George Watson on Robyn Kahukiwa," The Art Paper, February 2021

Robyn Kahukiwa is represented by Season Aotearoa.

**Ralph Hotere**

Hotere quoted in: Kriselle Baker, *The Desire of the Line: Ralph Hotere Figurative Works* (Tāmaki Makaurau, Auckland University Press, 2005), x.

Ralph Hotere, short film

Te Ara Encyclopedia of New Zealand: Hone Papita Raukura (Ralph) Hotere

DigitalNZ Story: Ralph Hotere