

# PENNY HOWARD

TE WHAKAHOKI | *A sort of homecoming*



**SOTHEBY'S LOT 10 - Toki / Whakahoki**

Acrylic on board

870 x 600mm

\$8,000

## Te Whakahoki

21 April – 20 May 2020

Penny Howard (Te Mahurehure, Ngāpuhi) was impelled to create the paintings and drawings in this body of work through a profound sense of anger. Her perusal of recent online sales of historic Māori artefacts – taonga tūturu – at the British auction house, Sothebys, at huge prices, motivated her to re-capture them, and by extending from their photographic images, she is ensuring they are brought back to us, if not literally, at least figuratively: te hokinga ki tēnei kāinga o Aotearoa New Zealand. Penny is reclaiming our existential heritage and her work incorporates not only these taonga, but also the red thread of te mauri interconnecting Māori, and them as always living tūpuna or ancestors ever deeply vested to the land. More, her depiction of ngā manu – birds – in her drawings, is a further visceral embodiment of this ever-present spiritual interconnectedness of taonga and the entire Māori ethos; te ao Māori katoa. The birds are kaitiaki of these taonga, ready to escort them back to where they ontologically belong. They were always ready to return to the landscapes backgrounding the paintings: just look at their eyes.

It is important to note that all the taonga represented in this work – and of course many more such treasures – have been in the hands of Pākehā collectors for at least two centuries. How were they first obtained? Some were traded for such articles as tobacco, axes and pots, to early whalers and sealers. Others were somehow attained by first-contact collectors such as Joseph Banks. Some were sold for minimal sums of money by later colonial collectors. Others were traded by local New Zealand museums, in their effort to obtain similar indigenous artefacts from overseas. Some were stolen outright.

However, many more were gifted by various iwi Māori as part of a reciprocal arrangement when services had been provided and when agreements had been formalised between 'early' Pākehā and Māori, including on occasions when Māori sought some sort of protection from these colonial forces, or expressed their own commitment to the Commonwealth.

Importantly, such is the length of time associated with the attainment of such taonga, concrete provenance has not always been established for them: Sothebys only notes who 'owned' them after they were obtained from Māori as their rationalisation of the 'right' to on-sell. For example, Lot 109, the mighty Ku Ko Kahukanui is unashamedly 'explained' by, "The recorded European history of this sculpture begins with the Viennese collector Friedrich Wolff (1890-1949), known from 1935 as Frederick Wolff-Knize." And the estimated price range in 2018, when offered, was US\$200-300,000!

The key to these early transactions is this. Māori generally gave taonga in a spirit of expectation that the receiver would in some way reciprocate, if not in kind, at least in some mutually beneficial way. Such gifting, indeed, such early trading as based on this tenet of reciprocity, has not been met by the receivers of Māori largesse. For while these taonga can sell for prices well over one million US dollars – as in the 2014 Sothebys 'offering' of Te Pou Whakairo - these monies do not filter back to this country. Accordingly, the taonga themselves remain overseas, based in museums or in the hands of private collectors, often sight unseen until the next overseas auction. Indeed, the heritage of this latter intricately carved piece is described in rather off-handed fashion as, "According to information...from the owner of the...statue during its rediscovery in the attic of a country house in Scotland, the latter 'had been acquired by one of his ancestors, a sailor who brought it back in Scotland in the early 1830s.'" The word 'respect' does not seem to feature in the vocabulary of such collectors and their collaborators.

I can only commend Penny Howard for her vision, her mahi. In re-capturing these taonga she is providing further momentum to our bringing our tūpuna home. In her visual exposition of the imbalance ensured by Sothebys and its creed of commodification, she further enforces what Rana Waitai said about them and their ilk, as "a tarted up, unscrupulous shark that was legally pawning off cultural treasures" (quoted in Howard, K, Repatriation of Māori Figure Not Expected. The Dominion, 24 November. 1998.)

Ko te tāima mō te whakahoki ināianei. Tēnā koe Penny.

Vaughan Rapatahana

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## Sotheby's

ARTS D'AFRIQUE ET D'OCÉANIE

Herminette de chef, Maori, Nouvelle-Zélande

**MAORI CHIEF'S ADZE, NEW ZEALAND**

**Estimate 150,000 — 200,000 EUR**

### PROVENANCE

Collection Dr. Ralph Linton, New Haven, Connecticut  
John J. Klejman, New York  
Collection Nelson A. Rockefeller, acquis le 22 mars 1956  
The Museum of Primitive Art, New York, avril 1967, don de Nelson A. Rockefeller  
(en prêt permanent depuis août 1956), inv. n°56-15  
Parke Bernet Galleries, New York, 4 mai 1967, n°57  
Collection privée, Belgique  
Collection privée

### EXHIBITED

New York, The Museum of Primitive Art, Selected Works from the Collection: Four, 19 février 1958 - janvier 1959, n° 33  
New York, The Museum of Primitive Art, Figure Sculpture from Polynesia in the Collection of the Museum of Primitive Art, 19 juillet - 31 décembre 1961  
El Paso, El Paso Museum of Art, One World, 12 mars - 15 mai 1966

### **Maori Chief's adze, New Zealand**

*The ceremonial topi poutanga adze ("the adze which establishes a man in his authority") is the most important symbol of authority for Maori chiefs, reserved exclusively for the use of the akari, the supreme leaders of the larger Maori tribes. The extremely small corpus (with often solely the sculpted shaft extant), is mostly distributed amongst institutional collections in Britain (the British Museum, the Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford, and the Royal Scottish Museum, Edinburgh), the United States (the American Museum of Natural History, New York, the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia) and New Zealand (Otago Museum in Dunedin and Canterbury Museum in Christchurch). Only three known pieces remain in private hands, including this one, formerly in the collection of the Museum of Primitive Art, New York.*







***SOTHEBY'S LOT 14 - Whakahoki***

Acrylic on board

900 x 1200mm

\$12,000

14

**Sotheby's**

ARTS D'AFRIQUE ET D'OCÉANIE

Statue, Maori, Nouvelle-Zélande

**MAORI FIGURE, NEW ZEALAND****Estimate 70,000 — 100,000 EUR. LOT SOLD. 91,500 EUR.****PROVENANCE**

Collecté à Te Ngae (région de Rotorua, île septentrionale), en 1876

Merton Simpson, New York, ca. 1965

Collection George et Rosemary Lois, New York

Christie's, Paris, 16 juin 2009, n°236 et couverture

**Maori figure, New Zealand**

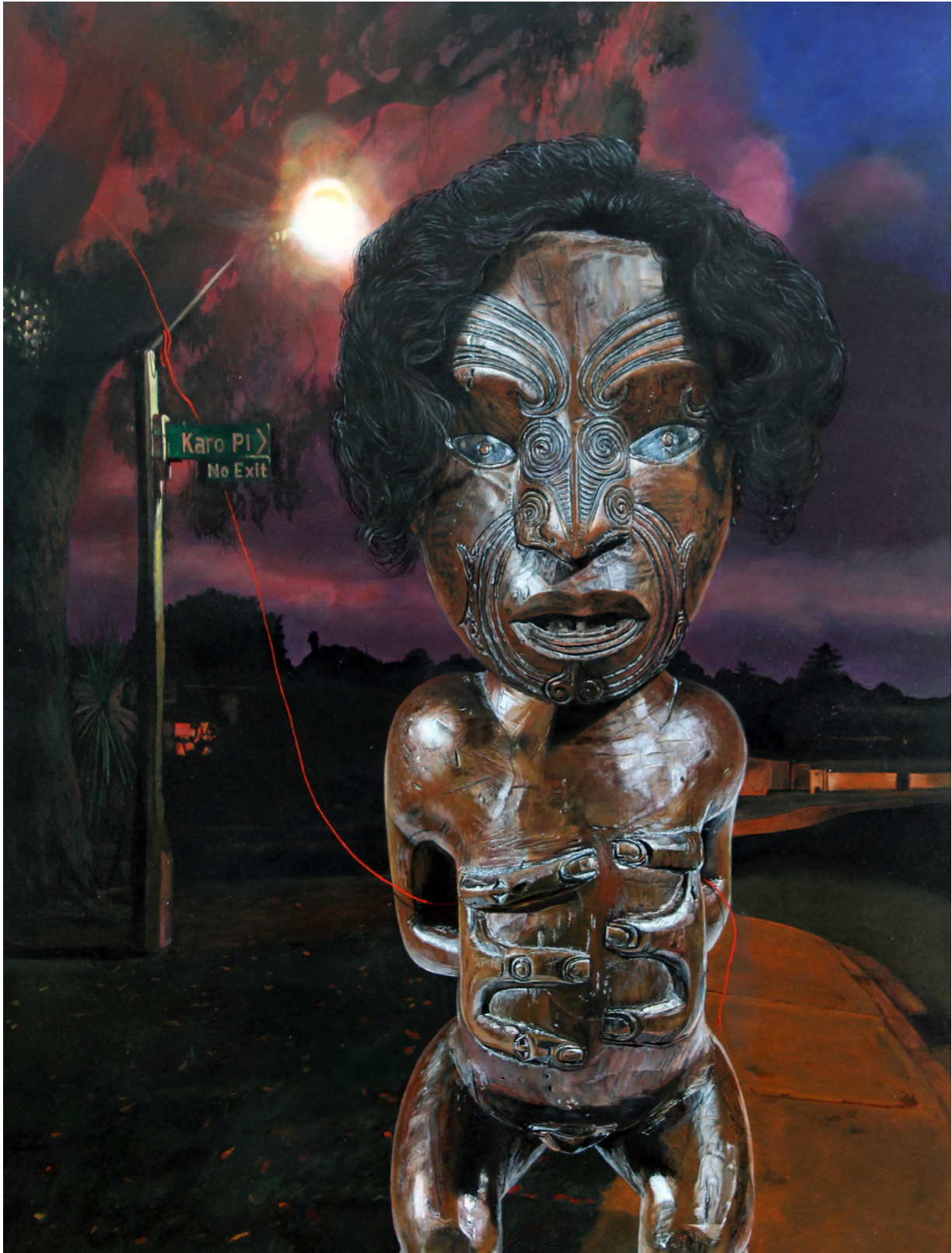
"Tangaroa was the sacred god of the sea in Maori country. [...] In order to punish Ruatēpupuke - an ancestor whose name is associated with the origins of woodcarving - he captured his son Manurihi, took him to his home at the bottom of the ocean and substituted his human form and personality for those of a bird. He then hung him atop his carved house as a tekoteko" (Mead, 1984, p. 65).

This famous Maori myth tells the story of the origin of woodcarving (wakairo), with the house and its tekoteko roof sculpture as key elements. For centuries, the "carved house" (like the leaders' dwellings and the storehouses) has been adorned with the most elaborate decoration. The gable, in particular, symbolizes the body of the founding ancestor: the roof beam embodies the legendary hero of the tribe and provides the backbone, the rafters represent the ribs, and the gable sculpture, the head.

The authority of the founding hero is expressed here in the striking comparison between the naturalistic body - the pose and volume of which are streamlined in the extreme and exalt the figure's powerful presence - and the forcefulness of the highly stylised wheku face, its eyes inlaid with a disk of hallois shell. According to Sidney M. Mead (1975, p. 178-179) although, in Maori art, human figures - referred to as Tiki - generally represent ancestors rather than gods, in a context where, like their children, they may be regarded as founding ancestors, the degree of stylization chosen by the sculptor depends on his desire to emphasise the social role of the hero, or, as is the case in this piece, his spiritual dimension.

According to the inscription made in ink on its forehead, this rare and beautiful tekoteko gable sculpture, collected in "Te Gnæ" [Te Ngae], Rotorua, in February 1876, is very similar to that collected a year later by A. E. Bothamley, also in the Rotorua region, near Lake Rototiti, and now kept in the British Museum ("Gable Figure tekoteko", inv. No. NZ146 cf. Maori, 2010, p. 35 and pl. 26, No. 106). Although the Rotorua region is inhabited by Arawa tribes, the style of these two pieces recalls that developed a little further east by the Te Whānau-a-Apunui (cf. Moko Mead, *ibid.*, p. 205). In this regard, they are remarkable illustrations of the relations between the neighbouring regions of East Cape and the Bay of Plenty, whose "artistic styles were closely related" in the 19th century. (Moko Mead, *ibid.*, p. 103).





***SOTHEBY'S LOT 10 - Pou Whakairo / Whakahoki***

Acrylic on board

900 x 1200mm

\$12,000



10

## Sotheby's

ARTS D'AFRIQUE ET D'OCÉANIE

Statue pou whakairo, Maori, Nouvelle-Zélande

FIGURE, POU WHAKAIRO, MAORI, NEW ZEALAND

Estimate 1,500,000 — 2,000,000 EUR. LOT SOLD. 1,441,500 EUR.

### PROVENANCE

Collection privée, Ecosse  
 Phillips, Londres, 13 mars 1979, n° 232  
 Collection John Kennedy, New York  
 Collection privée, Angleterre  
 Sotheby's, Londres, 27 juin 1983, n° 169  
 Lance et Roberta Entwistle, Londres  
 Collection Frum, Toronto

### The Frum Maori Figure

*Traditional Maori three-dimensional human figures can be divided into two types - those that depict ancestors, and those that depict gods. The standing figures typically form an integral part of architectural supports in buildings, of which the best known forms are post figures, pou tokomanawa (cf. Sotheby's, New York, 22 November 1998, lot 162), and gable figures, tekoteko. The rarest of all Maori large scale sculptures are the so-called 'free-standing images', or pou whakairo, of which the Maori figure from the Frum collection is one of a corpus of just six. Barrow was the first to identify the corpus of pou whakairo in his 1959 essay, 'Free-standing Maori Images'. The existence of the Frum figure was not known until its appearance at auction in 1979 and its subsequent publication by Roger Neich in the Journal of the Polynesian Society, 1980. The Frum Maori figure is therefore not amongst the five figures, all now in institutions, listed by Barrow:*

- Hunterian Museum and Art Gallery, University of Glasgow (E34), height: 39.4 cm
- Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum, Glasgow (A.1948.105), height: 44.8 cm
- The Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts, University of East Anglia, Norwich (UEA 178), height: 38.7 cm
- Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, Wellington (OL000148), height: 45.6 cm
- Russell-Cotes Art Gallery and Museum, Bournemouth (28.24), height: 48 cm





***SOTHEBY'S LOT 50 - Tētē / Whakahoki***

Acrylic on board

870 x 600mm

\$8,000



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## Sotheby's

ARTS D'AFRIQUE ET D'OcéANIE

Tête, Maori, Nouvelle-Zélande

Estimate 40,000 — 60,000 EUR. **LOT SOLD. 47,100 EUR.**

### PROVENANCE

Jacques Kerchache, Paris, 1966  
Piet Blanckaert, Bruges  
Collection privée, Belgique, ca. 1980  
Transmis par descendance

### Head, Maori, New Zealand

*In 1966 La tête was one of Jacques Kerchache's first exhibitions dedicated to 'Primitive Art'. The cover of the catalogue, the foreword of which was written by the poet and art critic Max-Pol Fouchet, features this impressive Maori head, the back of which bears an old inscription which, together with the carving style, indicates that it once adorned a piece of architecture.*

*The offered head is closely related to the sculpture which, until 1845, was the gateway to the village of Pukeroa pa on the foreshore of Lake Rotorua, and which is now in the Auckland Institute and Museum (Moko Mead, *Te Maori: Maori Art from New Zealand Collections*, 1984, p. 195 and cover). 'In this male figure the artist has used an Arawa realistic tattooed face mask [...] The face of the figure was originally painted white with black tattoo [...]' (Moko Mead, *ibid.*). The restored polychromy on the Auckland sculpture reveals the light patina of the very old wood. The same surface is visible in the offered lot, the tattoo of which is also accented with black. See also Sotheby's (Paris, 30 November 2010, lot 74) for a canoe prow ornament in a similar realistic style, the open mouth of which represents, according to David R. Simmons, 'Hema, a legendary hero of Maori mythology.'*





***SOTHEBY'S LOT 6 - Hei tiki / Whakahoki***

Acrylic on board

870 x 600mm

\$8,000



6

## Sotheby's

ARTS D'AFRIQUE ET D'OCÉANIE

Pendentif Hei Tiki, Maori, Nouvelle-Zélande

MAORI HEI TIKI PENDANT, NEW ZEALAND

Estimate 60,000 — 80,000 EUR. **LOT SOLD.** 75,000 EUR.

### PROVENANCE

Collection Harry Geoffrey Beasley (1881-1939), Londres  
Ralph Nash, Londres / Cannes  
Collection Comte Baudoïn de Grunne, Bruxelles  
Sotheby's, Paris, 3 décembre 2004, n° 31  
Collection privée européenne, acquis lors de cette vente

### EXHIBITED

Galerie Kamer, Paris, Arts d'Océanie, 1996

*Among collectors who have furthered the discovery and recognition of Oceanic arts, the name Harry Geoffrey Beasley (1881-1939) rings out as one of the most prestigious. In the early 20th century, the market was suddenly flooded with a multitude of objects collected by missionaries, travellers and colonial officers from the 18th century onwards. It was a golden age for British collectors of Oceanic art, as is attested by this superb hei tiki entering the Beasley collection during this period.*

*Although nephrite hei tiki pendants were once worn round the neck by men and women alike, they were reserved for the exclusive use of high-ranking people. Their momentous power (mana) grew stronger with each transmission from one generation to the next. Within the corpus, this large hei tiki stands out for the very beautiful breadth of its body and for the quality of the nephrite (pounamu). The tension of the curves and counter-curves is enhanced by the inclined planes where traces left by traditional tools still appear. In addition, the age and prolonged use of this hei tiki is evidenced by the second hole drilled atop the head - the original one having been worn out from carrying. Subtly combining the art of adornment and a manifestation of power, this hei tiki pendant is an eloquent testament to the refinement and complexity of Maori culture.*





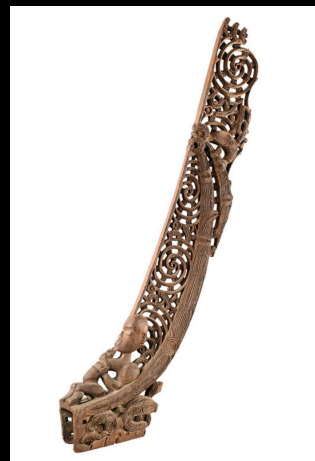
***SOTHEBY'S LOT 75 - Waka prow / Whakahoki***

Acrylic on board

900 x 1200mm

\$12,000

75



**Sotheby's**

**ARTS D'AFRIQUE ET D'OCÉANIE**

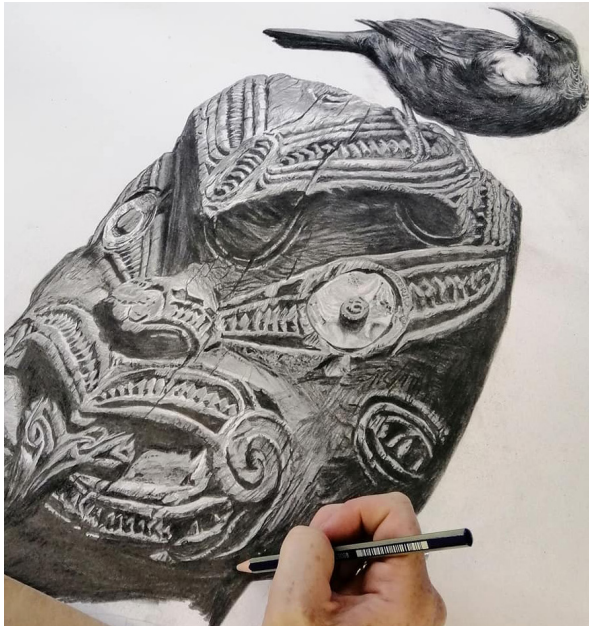
Très rare pouep de pirogue de guerre, Maori, Nouvelle-Zélande

**VERY RARE MAORI WAR CANOE STERN, NEW ZEALAND**

**Estimate 80,000 — 120,000 EUR. LOT SOLD. 90,750 EUR.**

**PROVENANCE**

Probablement ancienne collection de Sir Joseph Banks, conservée dans sa demeure familiale à Revesby, dans le Lincolnshire  
Sotheby's, Londres, 21 Juin 1993, no 26  
Collection privée



## PENNY HOWARD

Te Mahurehure – Ngāpuhi

Penny Howard's artworks are an expression of the artist's narratives of finding one's cultural identity. Penny is of Maori (Te Mahurehure, Ngāpuhi) Irish and Scottish descent.

Her works explore memories, stories, and longing of and for whanau, whakapapa and tūrangawaewae, within both her Maori and European ancestry. She questions what we have lost culturally through colonisation and pacific diaspora but also the connections that we can retrace and hold within ourselves to pass on to future generations. The red thread in Penny's work represents I Nga Wa O Mua, the Maori world view to take the past with us into the future for guidance.

Penny graduated with a Bachelor of Visual Arts in 1995. She has work in the permanent collections of the Wallace Arts Trust, Foundation North, Auckland Events Centre, the University of Auckland and in public and private collections across New Zealand, Australia, the UK, and China.





***SOTHEBY'S LOT 109 - Whakahoki***

Acrylic on board, 1230 x 930mm  
First painting in the *Whakahoki* series  
Private Collection