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The alternative Māori art exhibition Choice held at Artspace in Auckland in 1990 is now seen as a turning point in Māori Art; Māori artists were starting to see beyond their identity as Māori and become concerned with more global issues.

FRED AND BRETT GRAHAM

For Arts Sake: Fred and Brett Graham (extract)

Pinnacle Productions 1996. Duration 9:12

Brett Graham is a contemporary Māori sculptor whose work engages in a dialogue between Māori and European art traditions. While his focus is on modernist form and material he references his heritage in the titles and concepts of his work. His father Fred Graham was one of a group of Māori artists including Ralph Hotere, Arnold Wilson and Para Matchitt trained by Gordon Tovey as national art specialists for the Department of Education during the 1950s.

“The bird, is an old way of navigating throughout the Pacific ... the satellite as a symbol of new technologies, new ways of navigating...The work is still Māori in terms of the concepts even though the shapes may be different”. Brett Graham.

LISA REIHANA

Wog Features (extract)

Lisa Reihana 1990. Duration 6:54

Lisa Reihana is a multi-media artist working in animation, film, video, photography and sound. She uses these contemporary mediums to create a discourse on a variety of subjects including politics, sexuality and gender. The carnival atmosphere and bright colours of work like Wog Features enables Reihana to tackle controversial subjects like sexism and racism, without overwhelming or ostracising her viewer. Reihana challenges the idea of a Māori artist being someone working with traditional Māori materials and themes and says that “a Māori artist is someone who stands in a particular relationship to Māori culture.” She doesn't believe Māori culture should remain static. Her work is more global than her predecessors and Reihana often speaks on behalf of all indigenous cultures.

MICHAEL PAREKOWHAI

For Arts Sake: Michael Parekowhai (extracts)

Pinnacle Producing 1996. Duration 13:22

Michael Parekowhai's work questions traditional notions of 'Māori art'. His work is not specifically Māori and reflects wider international trends in art; drawing on art language to comment on aspects of being Māori. Gone are the traditional koru and tukutuku panels of his ancestors.

In this extract we see Parekowhai drawing on Western art history: references include abstractionists Colin McCahon and Gordon Walters, surrealist Marcel Duchamp, the formalist David Smith and the contemporary art movement Neo Geo.

PETER ROBINSON

Backchat: Series 01, Episode 22 (extract)

Gibson Group 1998. Duration 8:05

Peter Robinson's work explores his dual identity as both a Māori and Pakeha. He is interested in New Zealand's colonial history: the process of assimilating two cultures and the difficulties that arise from this. He uses a lot of scrawled words and slogans which reference both ancient rock paintings and the handmade signs of urban street vendors, emphasising the relationship between old and new, Māori and Pakeha.

His work also comments on the politics of the art world itself: the careerism involved in becoming a successful artist on an international art stage and how one maintains a sense of themselves and their cultural identity. Experiencing a sense of loneliness and cultural isolation while living in Europe, Robinson's work became focused on existential philosophy, cosmology and the internet.

While exploring his Māori identity, Robinson sets this identity against a more global cultural context than many of his predecessors.

PETER ROBINSON: DISCUSSION

Backchat: Series 01, Episode 22 (extract)

Gibson Group 1998. Duration 11:24

Bill Ralston leads a panel including art writer Tessa Laird, lecturer Hannah O'Regan and Jewish Rabbi Jeremy Lawrence to discuss the controversy surrounding the Peter Robinson painting Pakeha Have Rights Too that hangs in the Art History Department of Victoria University.

SHANE COTTON

Frontseat: Series 01, Episode 10 (extract)

Gibson Group 2004. Duration 5:12

Shane Cotton's early morphologic images show an interest in creation: both biological and artistic. In 1994 his work reached a turning point when he became focused on post-colonial Māori art: figurative painting influenced by European styles and techniques. He also started to draw on 19th century topographical drawings, contemporary art and pop culture. From 1996 onwards Māori words and images and biblical texts also become more frequent in Cotton's paintings.

His work raised questions about the appropriation of ideas and images from other cultures. As his style developed it also became more and more political. The juxtaposition of these 'borrowed' images reference Māori grievances and examine the structures of Māori culture in relation to other cultures in New Zealand.

JOHN WALSH

The Big Art Trip: Series 02, Episode 07 (extract)

Communicado 2002. Duration 10:20

John Walsh uses traditional Māori legends to convey ideas about contemporary society. His distinctive style draws on stone and wood carvings: the mask like faces of the characters evoking an ancient mythological world. He is interested in the male and female relationships that are expressed in these stories, and the impact they have had on our society and belief systems.

He paints mainly with oil on board and canvas, his use of colour limited to browns and blues, reinforcing this sense of a spiritual, mystical place.