

Level 3 NCEA

Art History

# Modern New Zealand Art

Student Workbook Pages

## Modern New Zealand Art

### What this is:

These pages are part of a framework for students studying NCEA Level 3 Art History. It is by no means a definitive document, but a work in progress that is intended to sit alongside internet resources and all the other things we normally do in class.

Unfortunately, illustrations have had to be taken out in order to ensure that copyright is not infringed. Students could download and print their own images by doing a Google image search.

### How to use it:

All tasks and information are geared to the three external Achievement Standards. I have found that repeated use of the charts reinforces the skills required for the external standards and gives students confidence in using the language.

It is up to you how you use what is here. You can print pages off as they are, or use the format idea and the templates to create your own pages.

You will find pages on:

- Abstraction
- McCahon
- Hotere
- Albrecht
- revision charts
- vocabulary for analysing style
- glossary
- references
- templates

Hoping this helps in some way.

### Acknowledgements

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While every attempt has been made to reference sources, many of the resources used in this workbook were assembled as teaching notes and their original source has been difficult to find. Should you become aware of any unacknowledged source, please contact me and I will happily rectify the situation.

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### More information:

If you find this useful, you might be interested in the full workbook. Have a look at the commercial section through the link:

<http://arts.unitec.ac.nz/resources/commercial/Art+History/>



**Art History: Putting you in the picture**

## Abstraction

Abstract art does not attempt to represent objects. The canvas is no longer a window allowing the viewer to see illusionary space. Instead the viewer sees the surface of the canvas itself. However, there are different forms of abstraction.

- The simplification of form to its essentials, is usually termed informal or lyrical abstraction. The process had begun with Cézanne and Cubism, and culminated in the work of the Russian artist, Kandinsky. His progressive abstraction of form to ciphers resulted in what he called the first abstract painting in 1912. American Abstract Expressionism fits in here.
- Formal or geometric abstraction is based on geometric shapes or a grid with precise or hard edges. It does not refer to anything beyond itself - there is no symbolic intention. Mondrian and Malevich were the early proponents of this style in the same decade. Mondrian's aim was to use geometric forms that would be neutral and universal and show the way to a better society (Utopia).

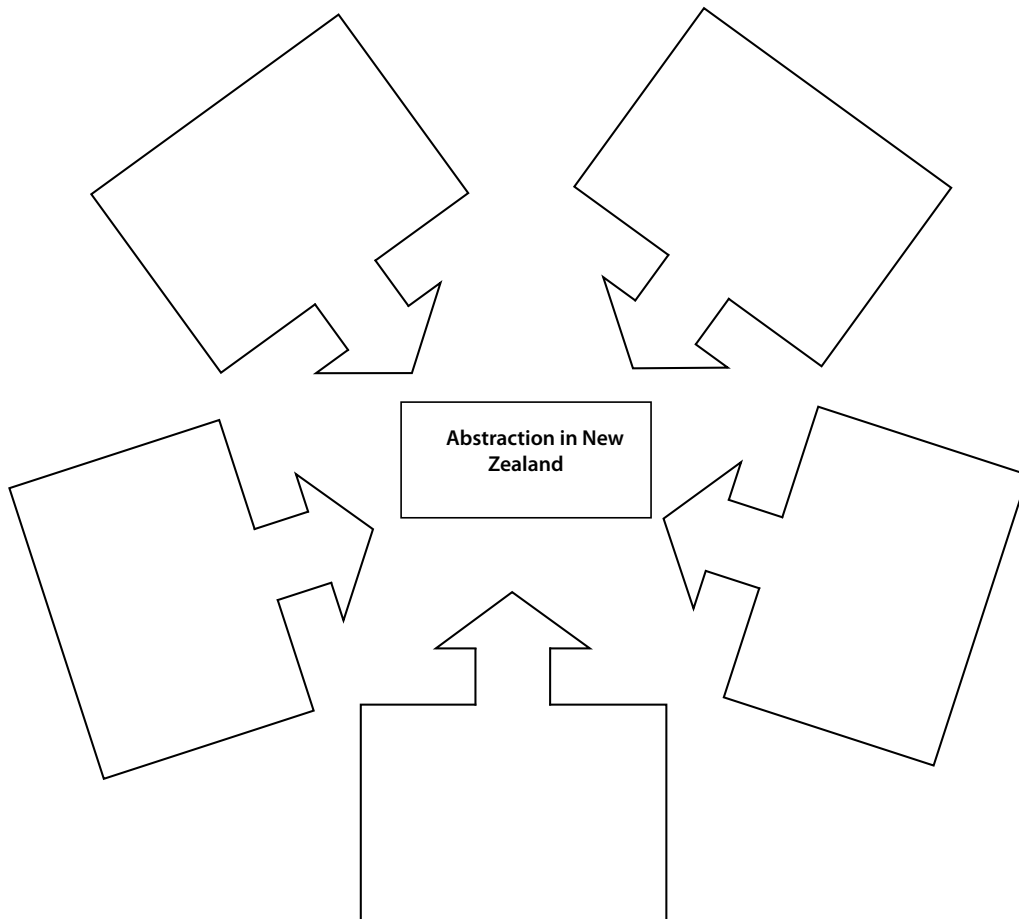
These different styles form a continuum along which artists place themselves, their positions changing from time to time.

Before 1950, New Zealand was geographically isolated. Overseas travel had to be by boat and Europe was devastated by World War II. European abstraction was slow in reaching artists here. Apart from early examples such as those provided by Francis Hodgkins, Louise Henderson, Gordon Walters and Milan Mrkusich, Abstraction did not properly emerge in New Zealand until the 1950s. New Zealand artists were largely dependent on small, black and white reproductions in books and magazines like the English *Studio*. Very few artists were able to travel.

Gordon Walters, for example, had returned from Australia in 1946 with as many MOMA New York books on art as were available. He also subscribed to various European art magazines and read the magazine of the American Abstract Expressionists in the National Library in Wellington. The Auckland City Art Gallery bought MOMA catalogues of the work of Mondrian, Motherwell, Gorky and Mark Tobey.

The 1950s and 1960s were a time of economic growth in New Zealand and several factors led to an increasing openness to the rest of the world and the emergence of abstraction here.

- post-war immigration brought new influences into New Zealand
- more Modernist teachers came or returned from abroad to work in the art schools, eg the English abstract artist, Michael Nicholson, arrived in 1953 to teach at Elam
- The American *Art News*, a large format colour magazine, enabled artists to see the latest art work coming out of New York
- touring British exhibitions such as *British Abstract Painting* in 1958 and *Henry Moore* in 1956, began to expose the New Zealand public to abstraction
- television was introduced in 1960
- it became easier for our artists to travel overseas, particularly when commercial airlines began direct flights into Auckland in 1962



## Abstraction Colin McCahon

Colin McCahon: *On Building Bridges* 1952  
oil, 1067 x 915cm, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tamaki

Space /setting:

Composition:

Colour:

Form:

Technique:

Context:

In the 1940s McCahon created his own version of the Regionalist landscape. The influence of Cézanne and Cubism, although from the end of the previous century, encouraged him to disregard the illusionistic device of single point perspective, important since the Renaissance. This device had focused the viewer on a single point within the frame. Instead, McCahon used overlapping planes to suggest depth and treated the canvas as a two dimensional surface, allowing the viewer's eye to roam anywhere within the painted surface as well as outside it.

In 1951, he spent 6 weeks in Melbourne and was encouraged to focus more clearly on the principles of Cubism through conversations with Mary Cockburn-Mercer, who had studied in Paris with the Cubists before World War I.

His response to what he learnt in Melbourne was *On Building Bridges*. Before he went to Melbourne, it was named *Paddocks for Sheep*, but McCahon changed it to create a formal, gridded structure with alternating tonal facets creating the form of the landscape.

*New Zealand Painting* (p 114)

In 1953 McCahon moved to Auckland and worked for the Auckland Art Gallery. What was important about this gallery in the 1950s and 1960s?

The 1954 *Object and Image* exhibition, which he curated, focused on abstract painting. List those who exhibited and what kind of abstract artists they were.

McCahon exhibited his kauri paintings in the *Object and Image* exhibition. The year 1954 was also important for a number of other reasons:

- He began to use words as the dominant feature of some of his paintings
- he worked with John Weeks on a retrospective exhibition
- he formed friendships with Louise Henderson whose first solo exhibition had been held at the gallery in 1953; and the English abstract painter Michael Nicholson who taught at Elam from 1953 to 1960. McCahon exhibited with them in 1955.

The other important exhibition of the 1950s was the touring *Henry Moore* exhibition of 1956. Record crowds could now see the abstraction of the human form by a respected British artist. Predictably, many hated it, but it created debate and must have forewarned McCahon as to the conservatism of the New Zealand public.

## Abstraction Colin McCahon

Colin McCahon: *The Northland Panels* 1958  
monocoat on canvas, 17.8 x 56.4cm (8 panels), Te Papa Tongarewa, Wellington

*New Zealand Painting* (p 115)

Identify some of the artists McCahon saw in the USA.

- 
- 
- 
- 

How do the Northland Panels show evidence of these influences?

It was Colin and Anne's three month tour of galleries was an official trip to look at the running of museums in America, which was beginning to be seen as the new centre of the art world. McCahon was already very aware of what was happening in America through his reading of *Art News* in the Auckland Art Gallery library.

Other artists whose work was seen by the McCahons include:

- Mondrian
- Hans Hofmann
- Robert Motherwell
- Willem de Kooning
- Diego Rivera
- Thomas Hart Benton
- Richard Diebenkorn
- Hans Richter
- Picasso's *Guernica*

While McCahon denied any direct influence from any of the artists he saw, he did acknowledge the effect that the scale of the American landscape had on him. There must have been some confirmation of the direction McCahon was already taking in the Abstract Expressionists' treatment of the overall surface of the canvas and extension into the viewer's space which he had already been working with under the influence of the Cubist Braque. Diebenkorn's adaptation of Abstract Expressionism to his local setting and the suggestion of imagery in the work of de Kooning must have encouraged him to experiment further on his return.

## Abstraction Colin McCahon

Colin McCahon: *Will he save him* 1959

alkyd & natural resin on hardboard, 122 x 91cm, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tamaki

The Cubists had used words in small areas of their work as references to the real world, but McCahon made words the subject of the entire painting. To him words presented a way of talking directly to the audience and potentially enabling him to make his meaning more clear. In 1954, the words were block letters as in *I and Thou*, but by the late 1950s his text looks more like freehand letters. Nuances of light and shade, or sometimes colour, invite viewers to read the text with the same light and shade emphasis in their voices. Words fade off to a whisper or shout their message boldly.

In the *Elias* series the texts are based on the words of the crowd at the crucifixion, wondering if Elias, an Old Testament prophet who had been taken up to heaven without dying, will come to save Jesus. The biblical text also alludes to the fact that Jesus called out "Eli", which is the name for God. Those around the cross thought he had called for Elias. McCahon echoed their doubts and confusion in the text which fades and drifts across the canvas. *Will Elias come to save him, ever, never? Matthew 27: 38 - 50* is the source for this series of around 15 paintings.

McCahon began the series because he felt that his landscapes were too personal. He wanted to speak to his audience. The choice of the Bible as his text was more acceptable in the 1950s in a country that still considered itself largely Christian. A larger proportion of his audience would have understood the references..

The last work in the series was the *Elias Triptych*. Here the words on the left panel are spoken by Christ's accusers to Pilate with Pilate's response paraphrased in the enclosed form on the bottom. The words on the right panel are part of the story of what occurred after the resurrection with Christ's words in the semi-circle at the bottom. The central panel shows a bloody sky over a tomb with Christ's blood flowing downwards.

Space /setting:

Composition:

Colour:

Form:

Technique:

### Iconography

## Abstraction Colin McCahon

In the 1960s McCahon was concerned with the protection of the environment and the threat of nuclear war. This was the period during which the Cold War between the USA and the USSR resulted in a build up of nuclear weapons on both sides. While this nuclear deterrent prevented more localised wars, such as the Cuban Missile Crisis (1962) and the Vietnam War (1964-1975), from developing into a full scale world war, the feeling in New Zealand was that nuclear obliteration was imminent.

McCahon was trying to suggest the need for a way through in order to prevent a nuclear holocaust. He was actively involved in anti-nuclear protest and took part in the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, but he also wanted to communicate through his paintings. After the exhibition of the *Gate* series, the national secretary wrote to thank McCahon for his expression.

The *Gate* series of paintings was McCahon's most abstract series so far. He often used dark shapes to symbolise obstructions or even tombs, things we need to find a way around. This openness and extension beyond the edges of the painting was something he had seen in the work of the Cubist Braque and again in Mondrian in America in 1958.

"Mondrian, it seemed to me, came up in this century as a great barrier - the painting to END all painting. As a painter, how do you get around either a Michelangelo or a Mondrian. It seems that the only way is not more "masking tape" but more involvement in the human situation."

*A Question of Faith* (p 194)

The series also related to his study of Christian theology and the book by Martin Buber (*I and Thou*) which talked of gates as a way through to spiritual fullness. So Christ is the supreme Gate.

The works of the first *Gate* series are single panel paintings. Some have curved tops because McCahon initially planned them for the Auckland Town Hall. After they were completed, he doubted the effectiveness of abstraction in conveying such an important message and considered words essential for his subsequent series.

He enlisted the help of poet and friend John Caselberg for the *Second Gate Series* which is a 16 panel work combining mainly Old Testament texts. This is a painting to walk by - a deliberate attempt to involve viewers in coming close up to the work to read the text as they walk the painting's 12 metre length. He originally intended it to be a free-standing screen to be placed at entrances to public buildings.

"I am becoming involved with an idea for a large-scale statement on Nuclear warfare...I will need words. The new series goes under the general title of "Gate" by which I mean a way through."

*A Question of Faith* (p 197)

Text is painted in authoritative block lettering on a coloured background that is less suggestive of landscape than of fire and obliteration. The words are a lamentation for the end of the Earth, with some panels made up entirely of text.

However, again the meaning of the work was not always clear to the viewer.

"Within a year of the *Gate* series first being exhibited, McCahon had accepted the difficulties many people had in coming to terms with the second series *Gate*. It had "misfired", he said, because it had been "too abstract".

*Colin McCahon: Artist* (p 130)

Colin McCahon: *Gate, Waioneke* 1961  
enamel on hardboard, 179.8 x 122 cm, Te Papa Tongarewa, Wellington

What is the context for this work?

In what ways is this work abstract?

How does it differ from the abstraction of Mondrian?

## Abstraction Colin McCahon

Colin McCahon: *The Days and Nights in the Wilderness* 1971  
acrylic on unstretched canvas, 237 x 183.6cm,  
Govett Brewster Art Gallery, New Plymouth

McCahon first exhibited his *Necessary Protection* paintings in a show called *Earth/Earth* which was a group show to highlight conservation issues. This series began with three ostensibly abstract paintings called *The Days and Nights in the Wilderness* which are all based around the idea of the protection the cliffs near his studio at Muriwai gave to nesting birds.

"I am painting about the view from the top of the cliff. This is at Muriwai. My cliff is as yet largely uncorrupted but like almost everything else, it is for sale... On the lower cliffs there are the nests of Fairy Terns [actually gannets]. In the early summer the young are taught how to fly and swim and to gather their own food. This goes on in spite of our intrusions, the cliff top parties, the broken bottles, the paper and plastic everywhere... I am not painting protest pictures. I am painting about what is still there and what I can still see before the sky turns black with soot and the sea becomes a slowly heaving rubbish tip. I am painting what we have now and will never get again."

*Colin McCahon: Artist* (p 164)

These works are not a literal representation of a particular landscape, but again link colour with text.

"They have to do with the days and nights in the wilderness and our constant need for help and protection. The symbols are very simple. The I of the sky, falling light and enlightened land, is also ONE. The T of the sky and light falling into a dark landscape is also the T of the Tau or Old Testament or Egyptian cross."

*Colin McCahon: Artist* (p 166)

This cross was the one that the ancient Israelites marked their doorposts with in order to prevent the angel of God killing their eldest children instead of those of their captors - the Egyptians. It was also the shape of the stick which Moses used to hold up a bronze snake to heal the Israelites from poisonous snake bites (*Exodus 12* and *Numbers 21*).

In this way, the Tau cross becomes a symbol of protection in the same way as the cliffs. McCahon wrote that the *Necessary Protection* paintings were

"about the Almighty looking after us."

*Colin McCahon: Artist* (p 167)

Colin McCahon: *Care of Small Birds: Muriwai* 1975  
acrylic on unstretched jute, 173.7 x 92.6cm,  
Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tamaki

This is further reinforced by his reference to Van der Velden at the bottom edge of this particular painting. It refers to something that the Dutch trained painter, most famous for his Otira Gorge paintings of the 1890s, was known for saying:

"Colour is Light - Light is Love - Love is God, and when you understand this you are an artist."

*Colin McCahon: Artist* (p 166)

During 1973, McCahon developed the *Necessary Protection* theme into his *Jump* paintings, where he recognised that the gap between the cliffs was a potential obstacle to birds about to take their first flight from the nest.

In 1975 he again developed the idea to his *Birds, Muriwai* paintings and added a rosary to signify heavenly protection.

### Iconography



# Abstraction

## Colin McCahon

Colin McCahon: *Gate III* 1971  
acrylic on canvas, 305 x1067cm, Victoria University

*Gate III* was commissioned by the Auckland City Art Gallery for an exhibition in 1971 which was to mark the opening of a new wing. McCahon wanted to make another public statement, similar to his *Victory Over Death 2* from the previous year, in protest against the proliferation of nuclear arms in Europe and America. For *Gate III* McCahon chose parts of the *Old Testament* prophetic books of *Isaiah* and *Jeremiah*, which foretold the end of the world, as well as more positive sections from *Psalms*.

The left side of the painting begins with a dark, abstracted landscape beneath an ominous sky. It states

“In this dark night of Western civilisation.”

At the bottom of this section is the opening lament from panel 1 of the *Second Gate Series*.

The blessing between the legs of the A is from *Psalms 67* and *Numbers 6*. The I brings the light of hope into the dark landscape and the complete I AM provides a gateway to the light and hope beyond. The phrase on the right side of the work is from a Buddhist text.

“As there is a constant flow of light we are born into a pure land.”

### Iconography

Space /setting:

Composition:

Colour:

Form:

Technique:

## Abstraction

### Colin McCahon

The *Parihaka Triptych* was commissioned by Waikato Museum for a proposed exhibition on Te Whiti and was gifted by McCahon to the Govett Brewster Gallery in trust for the Parihaka community.

The work comprises 3 panels: a central vertical canvas with horizontally placed side wings which form a Tau cross.

- central cross: Te Whiti's monument at Parihaka. It reads, "a monument for Te Whiti. To people throughout the world and to the people of Parihaka."

Above it is the pillar of cloud which Te Whiti hoped would lead his people to their promised land.

- fallen cross on left: war and violence - an ornament for the Pakeha"
- left panel also has "Tohu" who was another leader. It also means cross or mark/sign. Under his name is "I stand for Peace".
- right panel has Te Whiti's 1880 prophecy: "war shall cease and no longer divide the world - Adam's race has fallen over the cliffs, but the cliffs have disappeared by numerous landslips and none shall fall over these cliffs again. The one cliff left which has not been levelled is death. December 1880. Te Whiti to the people - Einga atu ana he tetekura. E ara mai ana he tetekura (one chief falls, another rises and takes his place)"

*Colin McCahon: Artist (p 161)*

#### McCahon: *Parihaka Triptych* 1972

oil, 3 canvases in T form: left 186.7 x 175.1cm; centre 175.4 x 86.4cm; right 86.4 x 175.2cm, Govett-Brewster Art Gallery, New Plymouth on behalf of Parihaka Trustees

Composition:

Colour:

Form:

Technique:

What is the context for this work?

How is it shown here?

## Abstraction Colin McCahon

*New Zealand Painting* (p 116 - 118)

Why do the numbers go to 14 in *Teaching Aids 2*?

Why did McCahon's work gain an increased following in the 1980s?

What made his art topical?

Colin McCahon: *Te Tangi o Te Pipiwhararua*  
(*the Song of the Shining Cuckoo*) 1974  
acrylic on 5 unstretched canvas panels, 175 x 450cm,  
Hocken Library, University of Otago, Dunedin

Space /setting:

Composition:

Colour:

Form:

Technique:

*Te Tangi o Te Pipiwhararua* (*The Song of the Shining Cuckoo*) is set at Muriwai Beach and takes the form of a walk along beach as the light and atmosphere changes. However, as the title suggests, it is also the journey of the shining cuckoo which represents the soul on its journey to Hawaiki.

In this way, McCahon develops the theme of his *Walk* (*Beach Walk, series C*) painting of 1973 where he imagined his recently dead friend, the poet James K Baxter, walking. His mother and his loyal supporter Charles Brasch also died that year.

In his 1973 series, McCahon had already introduced the Roman numerals which signified the stations of the Cross - the fourteen stations, or stopping points, on the way between Christ's sentencing and being laid in the tomb. In *Te Tangi o Te Pipiwhararua*, McCahon enlarges the numbers and etches them on the landscape like suspended grave markers.

He also includes the meandering dots of the cuckoo's flight, already familiar from his *Necessary Protection* paintings of 1973 through to 1975.

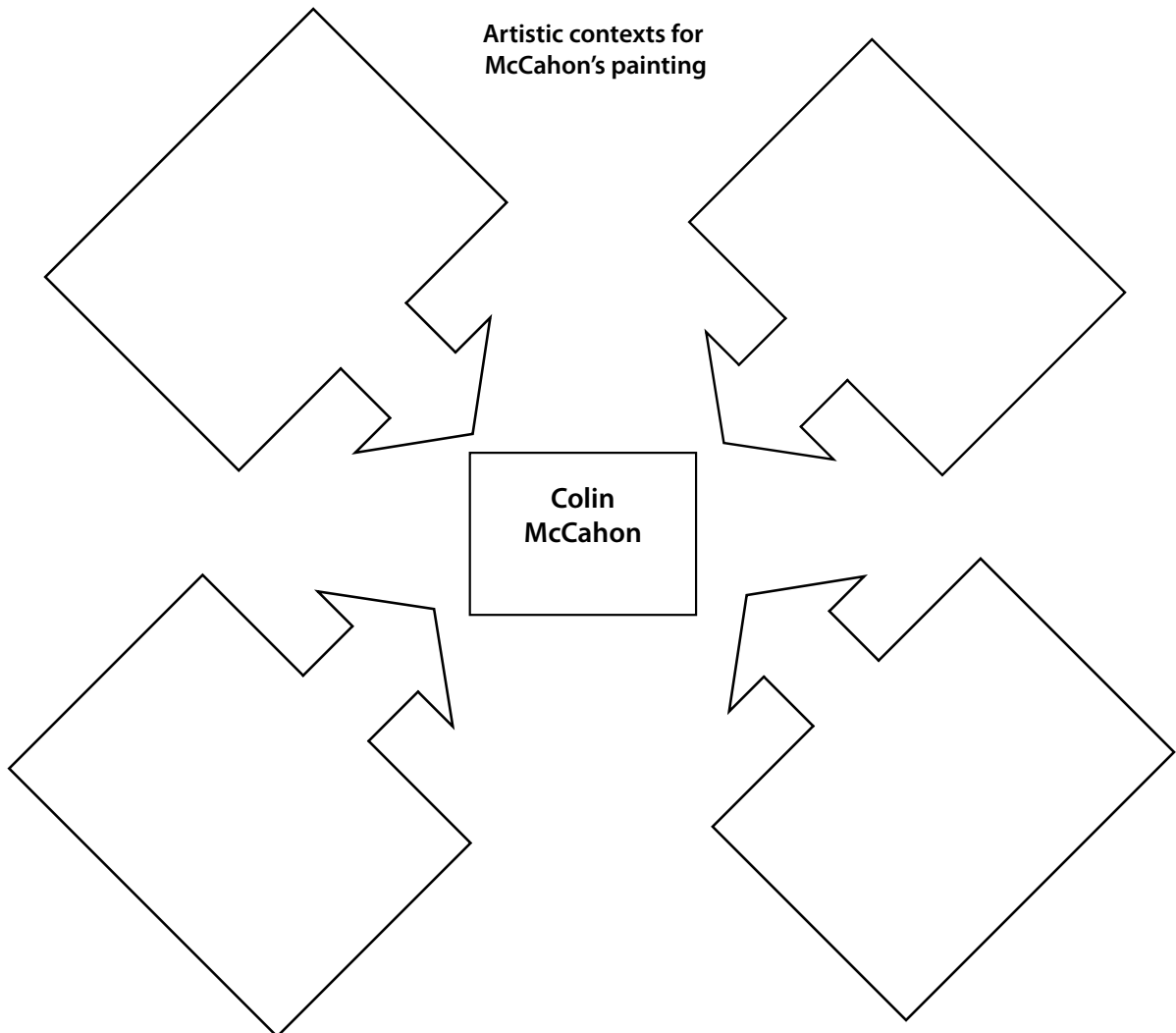
## Abstraction Colin McCahon

List the iconographical motifs/devices McCahon uses in his painting along with their meanings.

List examples of McCahon's paintings which deal with these particular themes:

- conservation
- nuclear issues
- Maori concerns
- Christian spirituality

### Artistic contexts for McCahon's painting



## Abstraction Ralph Hotere

Ralph Hotere was brought up as a devout Roman Catholic. He began working as a school art advisor in Northland and Auckland. In 1961 he travelled to London on a New Zealand Arts Societies Fellowship. In 1962 he received a residential award to work in Venice, France. His work was in the tradition of geometric abstraction (pure abstraction) of Malevich and Ad Reinhardt, whose work he had seen in London. Words and numbers began to appear along with a more political emphasis.

He returned to Auckland in 1965 where he exhibited his *Sangro Paintings* and *Human Rights Series*.

After 1972 Hotere began to use more expressive elements – gestural brushwork, graffiti-like writing, dribbled paint, burning and cutting and a greater variety of materials such as corrugated iron.

In 1978 he received a travel grant from QEII Arts Council and toured France, London, Spain and Italy. His *Window in Spain* series and works such as *Return to Sangro* gain their inspiration from this period.

### Iconography:

- numbers 1-14: journeys like Stations of the Cross or ages of the soldiers at the time of their death in the *Sangro* paintings.
- crosses: tombstones, compass, spiritual presence
- X shaped cross: act of protest/banning or signature to Treaty of Waitangi
- T cross: Tao (ancient Egyptian) or the St Anthony cross
- black: fertile beginnings, infinity, loss or oppression
- red: sacrifice & anger
- circles: infinity, mystical wholeness, cyclical nature

### Ralph Hotere: *Malady* 1970

acrylic & oil on canvas 111.6 x 91.2cm, Collection of J Gibbs

*New Zealand Painting* (p 130)

In which style is Hotere's work of the 1960s?

Influences - identify the effects of these American abstract artists on Hotere's work:

• Ad Reinhardt -

• Mark Rothko -

In the 1970s he produced his *Malady* paintings. How do colour and form combine to create meaning in the works?

How is his use of letters different from that of McCahon?

## Abstraction Ralph Hotere

### Ralph Hotere: *A Return to Sangro* 1978

acrylic on loose canvas, 146 x 90cm, Waikato Museum of Art and History

The *Sangro Series* was begun in 1962 as a memorial to Hotere's brother Jack who was killed in Italy during World War 2. Hotere visited the cemetery in 1963. His first series of *Sangro* paintings showed in London in 1964. There was a clear anti-war message in both series.

The stencilled numbers eliminate the manual element, encouraging the viewer to meditate on the ages of the dead.

#### Iconography:

- white cross: typical of war cemeteries, sacrifice and redemption
- numerals: ages of those who died
- a traditional Maori poem is used here. Others in the series use extracts from a Cilla McQueen poem
- fish refer to water and are also a symbol of Christ
- the text as an invitation to the godwit to alight and rest

Space /setting:

Composition:

Colour:

Form:

Technique:

Context:

## Abstraction Ralph Hotere

### Hotere and Protest

Over his career, Hotere has used his art to protest issues and events both international and local in a way that often seems to contradict his use of abstract/modernist techniques. This is a technique we have already seen in the work of McCahon - the adherence to the flat surface of the painting and highly simplified symbols or ciphers of abstraction coupled with the challenge to the viewer to be involved. However, other abstract artists at the time, such as Mrkusich, Peebles and Walters, did not involve themselves in protest.

Hotere's *Polaris Series* of the 1960s referred to the Cuban missile crisis and in the 1970s to the 'neither confirm nor deny' policy of America over nuclear-powered ship visits; the *Human Rights Series* referred to events in Algeria; *Requiem* referred to the assassination of Martin Luther King, the *Sangro* series to the death of his brother in World War II and the *Song of Solomon* to the Gulf War in the 1990s. Locally he has protested the proposed aluminium smelter at Aramoana, the Springbok Tour and the bombing of the Rainbow Warrior.

*New Zealand Painting* (p 131)

The 1980s saw the introduction of more local references in Hotere's work  
How did he achieve this?

*Aramoana series* 1982-5 Subject:

Why does Hotere use corrugated iron?

What does the addition of Maori words suggest?

Why does he use sash windows?

Hotere: *This is a Black Union Jack* 1983

enamel & abrasion on stainless steel, 84 x 84cm, Ellerton Trust Collection, Auckland

The *Black Union Jack series* is a protest against the South African rugby tour of NZ in 1981. Hotere has used the logo of the Christchurch Commonwealth Games of 1974 which was designed to express the New Zealand setting, the Roman numeral for ten because it was the tenth Commonwealth Games, and suggestions of the British flag - the Union Jack. The phrase "I'll be all white jack" was used on protest placards during the years of protest from 1960 on.

Again the use of recycled window sashes suggests that the view is cancelled by what he considers to be a bad union, or Commonwealth. The viewer is also involved by being reflected in the polished metal.

### Apartheid

In 1948 the South African government instituted apartheid and banned different races from playing sport together. So New Zealand had to send an all white team to play South Africa in 1960. This was hotly debated.

New Zealand was told that no Maori could be included in the 1967 All Black tour of South Africa so it was put off. In the United Nations there were calls for a sports boycott of South Africa.

In 1973 Norman Kirk announced that he would not issue visas to a racially selected team, but under the Muldoon government the All Blacks toured South Africa in 1976. Muldoon invited the Springboks in 1981 and civil disruption followed. More than 54% of those polled at the end of the tour thought that it should not have gone ahead.

The 1984 Labour government stopped official tours and apartheid eventually collapsed in 1990.

# Abstraction Ralph Hotere

Ralph Hotere: *Dawn-water Poem* 1986

acrylic on canvas, 240 x 180.5cm, Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu

Hotere strongly objected to the introduction of nuclear weapons to the South Pacific, particularly the French testing at Mururoa Atoll from 1966 - 1996. He uses strong colour to convey strong emotion.

The poem was written by Bill Manhire using the vertical format seen in the painting, but Hotere added Mururoa. The inclusion of handwritten numbers, out of sequence to 14, suggests either a countdown to the detonation or the later part of Christ's journey to death and the laying of his body in the tomb.

### Nuclear Testing

The British were testing their nuclear weapons in Australia, and America used Bikini Atoll in 1952. New Zealanders signed a petition in 1956 in protest against the conducting of nuclear tests.

A halt to testing was declared in 1958-61. The New Zealand Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament was set up in 1959 as well as the Antarctic Treaty which banned military installations or dumping of nuclear waste.

In 1961 testing was resumed by Russia, France, Britain and USA. In 1962 USA set off 30 nuclear devices in the South Pacific with fallout extending beyond the Cook Islands. New Zealand began to monitor radiation levels in the Pacific.

In 1963 80,000 people petitioned parliament for a nuclear-free southern hemisphere. USA, USSR and Britain banned atmospheric testing.

In 1966 France prepared to test in the Pacific because they had been forced to stop using North Africa. South America declared itself nuclear-free in 1967.

In 1973 Prime Minister Kirk took France to the World Court where France was ordered to stop testing. President Pompidou ignored the ruling and prepared to test at Mururoa. New Zealand sent two frigates to support protesters and focus world attention. From August 1974 France changed to underground testing.

In 1984 the new Labour government declared New Zealand a nuclear-free zone but in July 1985 French agents blew up the Greenpeace ship the Rainbow Warrior in Auckland Harbour, killing the Greenpeace cameraman.

Space /setting:

Composition:

Colour:

Form:

Technique:

Context:



# Abstraction Ralph Hotere

Space /setting:

Composition:

Colour:

Form:

Technique:

Context:

Ralph Hotere: *Song of Solomon* 1991

mixed media, 132.4 x 367.5cm (14 pieces), Private Collection

Hotere combines fragments of military jargon, gathered by poet Cilla McQueen, with lines from the Song of Solomon, a love poem from the Old Testament of the Bible, to make a chilling comment on the 1991 Gulf War in Iraq - "the mother of all battles."

The scale of the painting, which is on 14 sheets of paper, insists that the viewer takes a journey, along the stations of the cross inscribed onto an implied landscape, in order to gain the full impact of the words. The words taken from the news media are laser printed onto the paper, while the words from the Bible are handwritten. Arabic lettering and Maori text also ghost in and out of the sky.

The white and red dots evoke missile tracery fire and bomb blasts. The use of black represents the oil slicks that occurred as oil wells were bombed.

In its composition, limited palette and use of dots with Roman numerals, it references McCahon's *Te Tangi o Te Pipiwhararua (the song of the shining cuckoo)* of 1974.

## Iconography

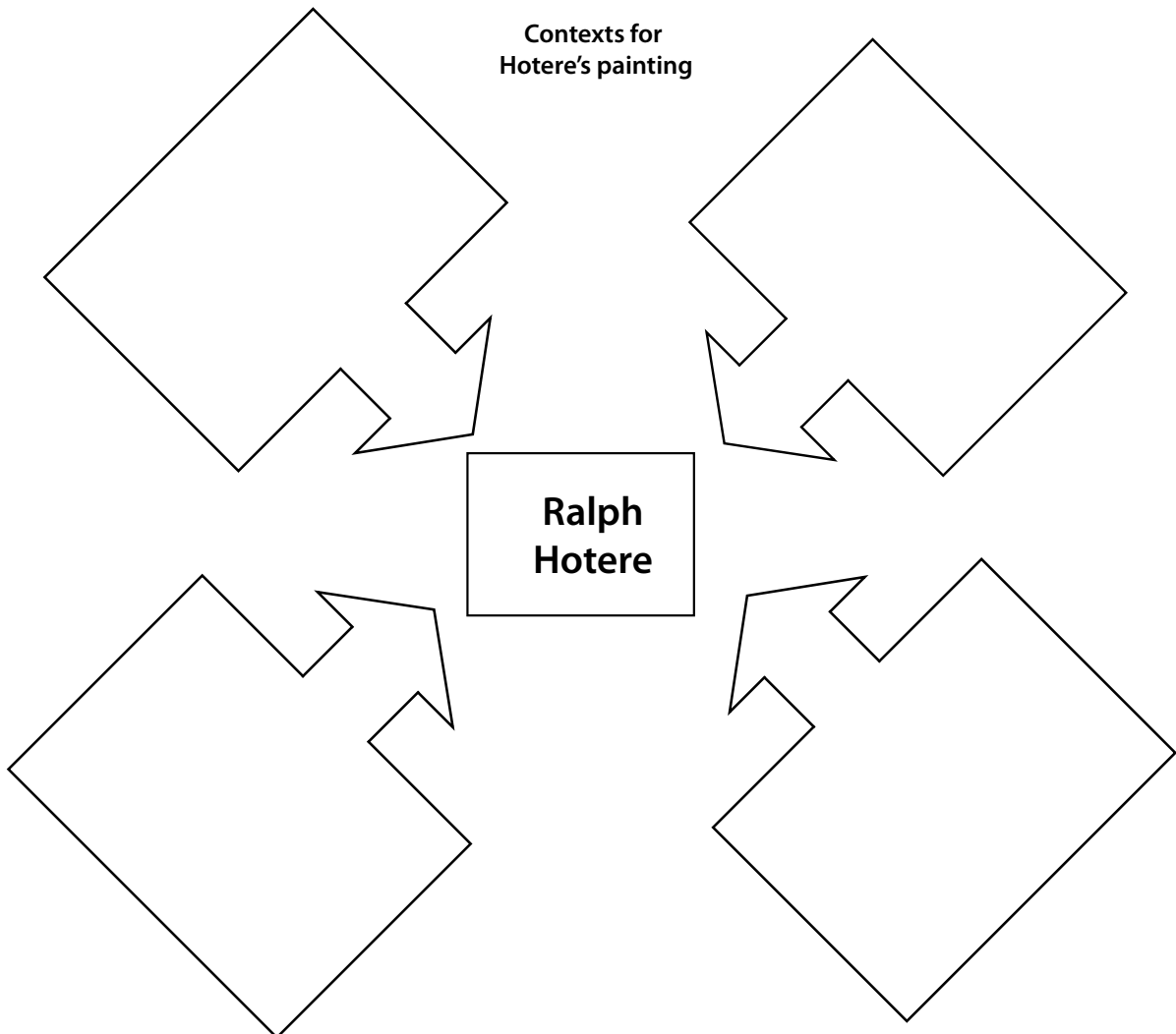
## Abstraction Ralph Hotere

List the iconographical motifs/devices Hotere uses in his painting along with their meanings.

List examples of Hotere's paintings which deal with these particular themes:

- conservation
- nuclear issues
- Maori concerns
- Christian spirituality

### Contexts for Hotere's painting



# Abstraction Gretchen Albrecht

*New Zealand Painting* (p 149 – 151)

Which American artists influenced New Zealand abstraction of the 1970s and 1980s?

What is colour painting?

When did the Morris Louis exhibition show in Auckland?

Why was abstraction generally unpopular?

Why did it appeal particularly to corporate clients in the 1990s?

What technique did she use in her paintings from the 1970s?

Gretchen Albrecht: *Garden No 15* 1971  
acrylic on canvas, 167.8 x 122cm, Private Collection

Composition:

Colour:

Form:

Technique:

Gretchen Albrecht began using the stained canvas technique in 1970, using the garden as her subject. She preferred to use a bright colour palette at this stage, more like that of Morris Louis than Helen Frankenthaler's. This technique was a logical extension of her watercolour sketches, often made on a beach or in the garden. Her attention turned more to the larger beach landscape and coloured cloud forms after 1972 when she moved from to the western edge of Auckland within easy reach of the coast.

Her titles give clues to the subjects of her work which are principally landscapes or relate in some way to nature. Instead of adding a title after the work was finished, as Frankenthaler did, Albrecht begins with a concept which takes shape along with the painting.

# Abstraction Gretchen Albrecht

Albrecht was awarded a QEII Arts Council study grant in 1978, enabling her to travel through the USA and Europe. She was strongly influenced by the Early Renaissance painters, particularly Piero della Francesca. Her use of semicircular canvases on her return were influenced by paintings such as his *Brera Altarpiece* with its semicircular arch and oval ostrich egg.

American artists such as Frank Stella had used shaped canvases in the 1960s but, in keeping with the rules of formal abstraction, they were self referential and showed no evidence of brushwork. In contrast, Albrecht’s paintings refer to things beyond themselves.

Her first hemispheres were very formal and restrained, bisected into two quadrants of contrasting colour. They reflected her concerns about dualities, oppositions. They also had connotations for her of the caesarean birth of her son - the centre division of the hemisphere being the scar.

“I wanted to keep the curve, to me it has a sensuousness and a female-relatedness that I can’t describe in any other way... a generosity about it that the angular stretcher didn’t have.”

*Art New Zealand* 64 (p 69)

Albrecht painted ten Annunciation paintings over ten years, nine of which are hemispheres. She sees the central division as the point of meeting between God and the Virgin Mary. It becomes the point of conception.

“The shape ‘hemisphere’ implies space. A shape to contain the feeling...satisfying, fundamental, harmonious. The curve is dictating to the wall surrounding. The floor holds the bottom edge.”

*Contemporary New Zealand Art 2* (p 74)

In 1984, Albrecht began to connect the 2 quadrants. Broad, sweeping strokes of colours tend to defy the central division and resolve the previous oppositions. Around 1984 she also began to emphasise the central division by using vertical strokes, often in oil paint on the acrylic stained ground.

*Nocturne* 1989 is based on the work of the English artist, Whistler, whose *Nocturne in Black and Gold - the Falling Rocket* of 1875 used gold on black.

Gretchen Albrecht: *Nocturne* 1989  
acrylic & oil on canvas, 153 x 306cm, Collection of the Artist

*New Zealand Painting* (p 151)

Describe the composition of Albrecht’s early hemisphere paintings.

How did Albrecht’s shaped canvases differ from those used in America?

Why did she begin to combine oil paint with acrylic?

## Iconography

## Abstraction Gretchen Albrecht

*New Zealand Painting* (p 151)

In 1989 Albrecht began to use oval shaped canvases as well as continuing with her hemispheres.

What meanings do the dark ovals have?

Gretchen Albrecht: *Seven Sorrows (Loss)* 1995  
acrylic & oil on canvas, 120 x 190cm, Private Collection

The floating rectangular forms, which Albrecht calls geometries, are painted in oil and create a sense of depth. The colour changes as the viewer moves. She uses the colours and forms to create meaning.

The death of her father in 1995 resulted in four groups of oval paintings which deal with her loss. *Seven Sorrows (Loss)* 1995 refers also to the Roman Catholic tradition of focused meditations named the Seven Sorrows of Mary. They are a traditional approach to coping with loss. Albrecht produced 7 black paintings which contemplate Mary's loss of her son.

Iconography:

- blue panel : Mary
- white : gate to the temple where Mary lost her son Jesus for some time.

Composition:

Colour:

Form:

Technique:

Context:

## Analyse Style

Gretchen Albrecht: *Seven Sorrows (Loss)* 1995  
 acrylic & oil on canvas, 120 x 190cm, Private Collection

Ralph Hotere: *Return to Sangro* 1978  
 oil on unstretched canvas, 188 x 91cm, Eastern Southland Gallery, Gore

composition		
colour		
form		
technique		
context		

## Abstraction Context & Iconography

### Iconography of Abstract Painting

Iconographical feature	meaning	2 works where it is used

### Context of Abstract Painting

Describe Context	Work 1 & how it shows this context	Work 1 & how it shows this context
American influences in NZ art		
Nuclear issues		
Conservation Issues		
Art about war		

## Iconography

1. Choose 2 New Zealand abstract paintings with Christian themes. For each painting describe the meaning of 3 motifs used. (Achieved)

	Painting 1:	Painting 2:
motif 1 meaning		
motif 2 meaning		
motif 3 meaning		

2. Explain how iconography conveys meaning in the works. (What other motifs can you find and what is the meaning of the whole work?) (Merit)

Painting 1:	Painting 2:

3. Evaluate the importance of Christian iconography in conveying meaning in New Zealand abstract painting. (Excellence)



## Analyse Style in Art

1. Choose 2 abstract paintings of the New Zealand landscape. Identify 2 ways in which the subject is treated differently. (Achieved)

2 key characteristics	Painting 1:	Painting 2:

2. Explain the reasons for the stylistic differences. (What were the aims of the artist/s?) (Merit)

2 key characteristics	Painting 1:	Painting 2:

3. How do these stylistic differences illustrate the development of abstraction in New Zealand painting? (Excellence)



## Revision Aims & Ideas

	aims	subjects	iconography	context
Contemporary Maori Art				
Feminist art				
Expressionism				
Abstraction				

## Revision Style

	space/setting	composition	colour	light	form	technique
Contemporary Maori Art						
Feminist art						
Expressionism						
Abstraction						

## Analyse Style Words

**Form** – the object/s in the painting can be defined by line or tone or colour

- outlined
- flat colour
- juxtaposed colours
- tonal modelling/ chiaroscuro/sfumato/light
- abstracted
- curved/sinuous
- straight
- dissolved
- brushstrokes/textures can be important
- distorted/exaggerated
- angular
- fractured

**Light**

- directional
- heavenly/divine/symbolic
- spotlight / theatrical
- backlit
- soft
- outdoor/atmospheric
- dramatic
- diffused
- chiaroscuro/sfumato
- unifying
- fleeting

**Composition** – how the window of the picture surface/plane is organised

- rule of thirds / golden section
- foreground / midground/ background
- vertical/horizontal/diagonal
- symmetrical / asymmetrical
- grid format
- scale or proportion
- leading the viewer around/across
- cut off by frame/cropping
- focal point
- horizon line
- triangular
- circular
- pyramidal
- hierarchical

**Brushstrokes / Techniques**

- licked brush/smoothly applied/polished
- loose
- energetic
- flowing
- impasto
- short dabs
- spontaneous
- sketchy
- dots
- follow the form
- palette knife
- directional
- gestural
- thinned paint
- dappled

**Spatial Devices**

- aerial perspective
- linear perspective
- diagonals
- overlapping
- shallow
- deep
- flattened
- recession
- changes in scale
- vanishing point
- tonal modelling
- foreshortening
- advancing or receding colours
- viewpoint
- illusionistic

**Colour**

- complementary
- local
- harmonious
- flat areas
- limited palette
- accents
- earth colours
- bitumen
- warm/cool
- low keyed
- high keyed
- symbolic
- advancing or receding
- arbitrary
- balanced

## Glossary

- abstract art:** art where there is no reference to object or form. Pure abstraction is most concerned with formal elements such as line or colour.
- abstract expressionism:** American post WWII movement where colour & line are used to convey mood. Influenced by Freud & Jung, eg Pollock and Rothko
- abstraction:** the process of simplifying form
- allusion:** an indirect or passing reference
- amortisation:** gradually reduce a debt
- androgynous:** neither male nor female
- anthropomorphic:** attribution of human characteristics to an inanimate object
- appropriation:** the use of images, motifs or ideas from another culture
- assemblage:** art work constructed by putting together existing objects or parts
- autonomous:** having self-government or ability to act independently
- chiaroscuro:** light and shade
- collaboration:** an arrangement in which two or more artists work together on a single project
- connotative:** having implied meaning
- critique:** critical essay or analysis
- cubism:** began in France in 1907. Known for breaking forms into geometric forms, multiple viewpoints and use of collage eg Picasso & Braque
- detritus:** waste or rubbish
- diptych:** a painting with two panels set side by side
- discourse:** a conversation, talk or lecture
- expressionism:** expresses the artist's inner feelings. Usually displays gestural line, bright colour eg Kirchner
- expressive abstraction:** may include figurative elements and exploits the emotive qualities of formal elements eg Kandinsky
- fa'a Samoa:** the Samoan way - unwritten cultural conventions
- figurative:** representational art
- figure:** positive space
- fiscal envelope:**
- formalism:** where formal elements - line, colour, shape - are sufficient for appreciation without content or context
- ground:** negative space or background
- hard-edged geometric abstraction:** pure abstraction based on geometric forms and flat colour eg Mondrian
- hierarchy:** ranking one art form or medium higher or as more important than another
- high art:** art in the modernist sense of elite or superior
- installation:** three-dimensional art work made up of related components, usually made for a specific site such as a gallery
- kaitiaki:** guardians
- karakia:** prayers
- kaupapa:** the cultural base of Maori
- kitsch:** art or objects that are seen as vulgar or tasteless
- Kiwiana:** the folk art and artefacts of Aotearoa New Zealand
- kowhaiwhai:** painted patterns found on the rafters (heke) of a whare
- manaia:** a bird-like creature in Maori carving (whakairo)
- masquerade:** a false show or pretence
- materiality:** substance or solidity
- minimalist:** art that contains minimal or limited elements of shape or colour
- modernism:** early 20th century movement which rejects content and concentrates on formal elements. Led on to abstraction.
- moko:** tattoos which trace the wearer's lineage
- painterly:** where the texture of the paint is clearly visible on the surface
- paradigm:** an example, pattern or model
- pastiche:** an imitation
- patriarchy:** a male-ruled organisation
- patu:** club
- pitau:** spiral
- poutokomanawa:** carved interior pillar - usually an ancestor figure
- piupiu:** flax skirt with hanging rolled flax cylinders
- poi:** light ball on a string, used in dance
- ready-made:** existing object used for or translated into an art work
- self-referential:** referring to itself rather than any outside meaning or context
- taonga:** Maori cultural treasures
- tapu:** sacred
- tatau:** tattoo
- tau cross:** a T shaped cross based on ancient Egyptian sources
- tiki:** human figure form in carving
- tohu:** cross
- tuia:** bind or knit together
- vaka:** waka or canoe
- whakakai:** long earrings
- whakapapa:** genealogical table or family tree
- whakairo:** carving
- whare nui:** meeting house
- whare whakairo:** carved meeting house
- whenua:** land or placenta

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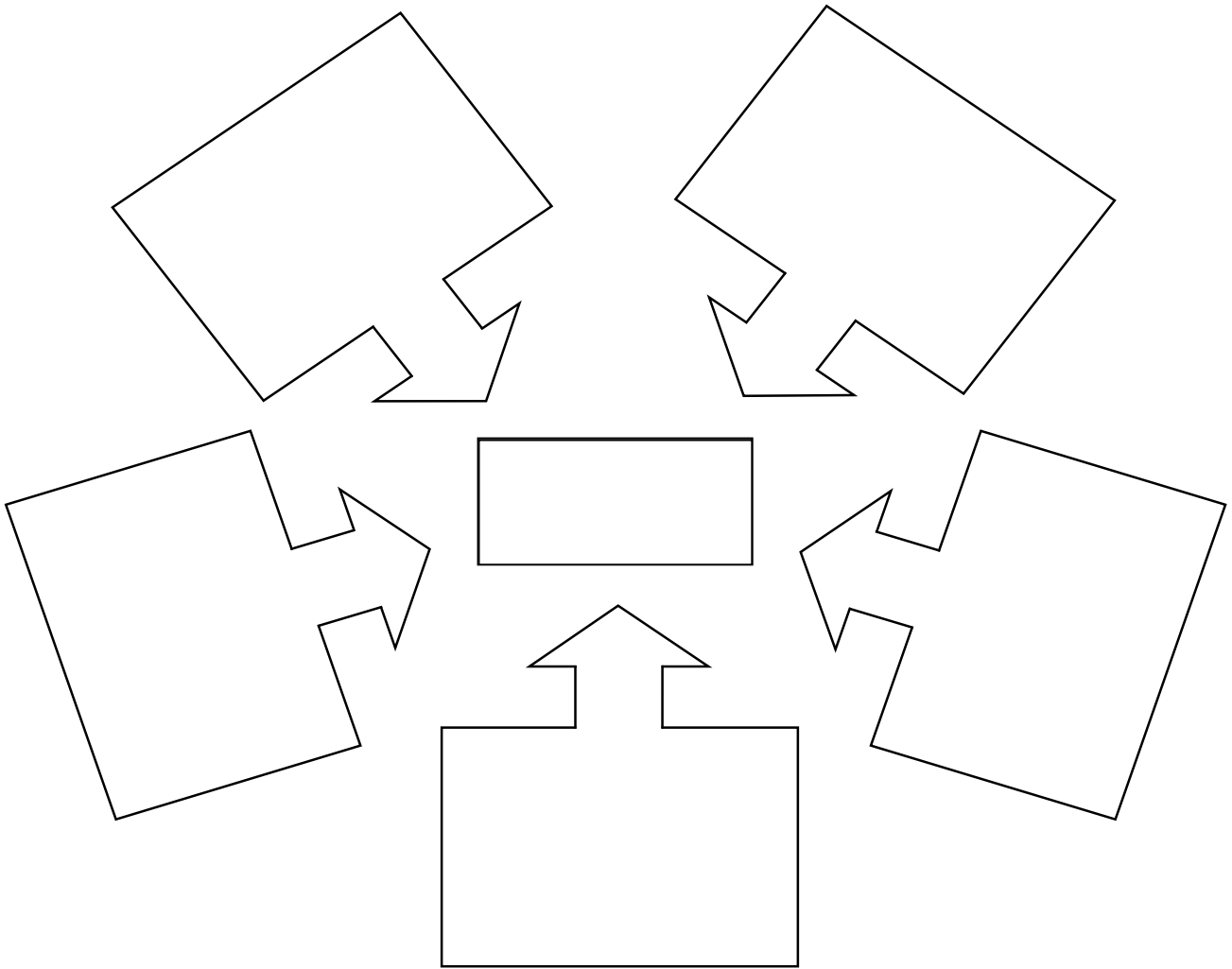
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## Context



1. Describe 3 contexts that influenced the development of

(Achieved)

- 
- 
- 

2. Describe how those contexts are evident in 2 paintings.

(Achieved)

• Painting 1

• Painting 2

3. Explain the relationships between the context and the art works. (What were the artists trying to do?) (Merit)

• Painting 1

• Painting 2

4. Evaluate the importance of the context for the development of work by this/these artist/s. (Why did it influence them?) (Excellence)

## Iconography

1. Choose 2 New Zealand paintings that deal with  
For each painting describe the meaning of 3 motifs used. (Achieved)

	Painting 1:	Painting 2:
motif 1 meaning		
motif 2 meaning		
motif 3 meaning		

2. Explain how iconography conveys meaning in the works. (What other motifs can you find and what is the meaning of the whole work?) (Merit)

Painting 1:	Painting 2:

3. Evaluate the importance of iconography in conveying meaning in New Zealand painting. (Excellence)

## Analyse Style in Art

1. Choose 2 paintings of

Identify 2 ways in which the subject is treated differently. (Achieved)

2 key characteristics	Painting 1:	Painting 2:

2. Explain the reasons for the stylistic differences. (What were the aims of the artist/s?) (Merit)

2 key characteristics	Painting 1:	Painting 2:

3. How do these stylistic differences illustrate the development of New Zealand painting? (Excellence)

context	technique	form	light	colour	composition	setting/space

Space/setting:

Composition:

Light:

Colour:

Form:

Technique:

Context: