



Announcing the 2026 McCahon House Parehuia Artists in Residence

Embargoed until 10am Monday 8 September

McCahon House is delighted to announce **Conor Clarke, Linda Va'aelua** and **Zena Elliott** as the 2026 Parehuia artists in residence.

Next year will mark the 20th anniversary of Parehuia, one of Aotearoa New Zealand's most respected artist residencies. Since its establishment in 2006, it has supported over 50 artists with dedicated time, space, support and community to develop their practice. More than just a place to create, Parehuia fosters ideas, conversations, and connections, offering each artist a three-month residency to expand their practice, engage with peers and curators, and share their work with wider audiences. In its twentieth year, Parehuia continues to be a fertile ground for artistic growth, experimentation, and lasting impact towards enabling sustainable and rewarding careers.

Reflecting on this anniversary year, Jude Chambers, Executive Director, McCahon House, says: *"Now more than ever, I believe in the importance of offering artists the space to fully immerse themselves in their practice. We are thrilled to announce the 2026 artists and look forward to nurturing a supportive and generative residency at Parehuia — one that I am confident will be transformative for each artist. My sincere thanks to our alumni and sector colleagues who took part in the selection process. The sheer calibre of applications this year made the decisions both inspiring and incredibly challenging"*.

The Parehuia Artist Residency is generously supported by members of *The Gate* — patrons who champion the growth and development of Aotearoa’s artists and creative sector, and by Creative New Zealand.

In 2026, McCahon House is proud to partner with Creative New Zealand’s Pacific Arts Strategy on a new pilot programme. This initiative extends the support of Parehuia beyond the residency itself, creating pathways for international connection and offering artists the chance to strengthen and share their practices within a global context.

Makerita Urale, Senior Manager, Pacific Arts, says the new opportunity and partnership with McCahon House is aligned with key focus areas of the Pacific Arts Strategy 2023–2028, particularly Tagata (leadership development), Vaka (skills development), and Va (growing relationships and networks).

“Growing global Pacific arts is a strategic priority, with a goal to see more Pacific artists accessing international opportunities and building the skills to navigate overseas markets and audiences. We’re thrilled to formally collaborate with the experienced McCahon House team who have extensive global networks and our shared commitment to supporting Pacific arts”.

Lisa Bates MNZM, Chair, McCahon House Trust, adds:

“As we celebrate 20 years of Parehuia, we acknowledge the extraordinary impact this residency has had on Aotearoa’s cultural landscape. Our thanks to the Gate patrons for their ongoing support, and to Creative New Zealand — both for commitment through the Residencies, Internships and Fellowships Fund and, in particular, the Pacific Arts team. Together we are piloting an exciting new initiative that extends the residency’s support, creating opportunities for artists to expand their practices internationally. This aligns with the international partnerships McCahon House is actively fostering through The Tomorrow Group and ensures Parehuia continues to nourish the growth of contemporary art here in Aotearoa.”

For further media enquiries please contact:

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Conor Clarke



Conor Clarke (Waitaha, Ngāti Māmoe, Ngāi Tahu – Ngāti Kuri, Irish, and Welsh) is a Ōtautahi Christchurch-based contemporary artist, photographer, and lecturer whose practice explores our relationship with the living world, ecology, and landscape.

Through a range of lenses and imaging techniques, she captures life, energy, and messaging often imperceptible to the human eye - revealing barely perceptible or overlooked aspects of wild places both near and far from home.

Recently, Conor's practice has focused on endemic and endangered birdlife, particularly the Kaikōura titi (Hutton's shearwater). These mountain-dwelling seabirds, which navigate by stars, scent, and instinct, inform and enrich her own approach to knowledge gathering and art-making.

She has received numerous awards and residencies and exhibited in both public and private galleries across Aotearoa. Her work is held in a number of public collections, including the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, Te Whare o Rehua Sarjeant Gallery, Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū, and Dunedin Public Art Gallery. Conor holds a Master of Fine Arts with first class honours from Ilam School of Fine Arts, University of Canterbury, where she also works as a lecturer in photography.

Image: Conor Clarke, photo by Craig Hilton.

Linda Va'aelua



Linda Va'aelua (Magiagi, Saleaula, Lano and Samata, Palagi and Scottish) is the inaugural Creative New Zealand-McCahon House Pacific Artist in Residence.

She is a contemporary artist whose practice explores her mixed heritage, drawing connections between traditional wayfinding, navigation and her own evolving cultural identity. Her work often blends traditional motifs and materials with bold, graphic imagery and vibrant colour - a reflection of her extensive background in graphic design.

Recently, Linda has been creating work in response to the Government apology in 2021 for the Dawn Raid era, focusing on concepts of identity as a Samoan raised in the diaspora, as well as immigrant labour and factory work.

She holds a Bachelor of Design (Visual Communication) from Unitec, has been a finalist for numerous art and book design awards, and has exhibited in both solo and group exhibitions. Two works from *A Niu Dawn* were recently acquired by the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa. She has her sights on several international pathways and is currently exhibiting and undertaking research in Scotland.

Image: Linda Va'aelua, photo by Darryl Chin.

Zena Elliott



Zena Elliott (Ngāti Awa, Te Whānau-ā-Apanui, Ngāti Rangitihi, Ngāi Te Rangi, and Te Arawa) is a Waikato-based interdisciplinary artist, researcher and educator whose practice spans painting, sculpture, whakairo, installation and speculative sonic kōwhaiwhai.

Their work explores themes of Māori identity and culture, gender fluidity, popular culture, Indigenous diaspora and futurism. Drawing on these diverse influences, they combine and reimagine motifs, icons, materials and colours to create a distinctive and recognisable visual language.

Zena recently won the prestigious National Contemporary Art Award at Te Whare Taonga o Waikato Museum & Gallery. They have exhibited in over 80 solo and group exhibitions, including Toi Tū Toi Ora: Contemporary Māori Art at Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki and are featured in a range of national and international publications.

They hold a Master of Fine Arts, Bachelors of Whakairo, Adult Education and Media Arts (with post graduate honours) and Diplomas in Whakairo and Adult Education.

Image: Zena Elliott, photo courtesy of Te Whare Taonga o Waikato Museum & Gallery.