

Mairangi Arts Centre's (MAC's) Board of Trustees Annual Report to Members January - December 2016

Trustees

Judy Blakey (Chairperson)

Chris Bethelsen (Deputy Chairperson)

Andrew Blewden (Treasurer)

Kathie Boyd (Secretary)

Maurice Ellett

Ulrike Huetter

Cath O' Brien (from October 2016)

Lance O'Gorman (until June 2016)

Whāia te iti kahurangi ki te tūohu koe me he maunga teitei

***Seek the treasure you value most dearly:
If you bow your head, let it be to a lofty mountain***

The whakatauki (Māori proverb) chosen to frame our annual report refers to aiming high for what is truly valuable. Selecting a proverb about the importance of setting aspirational goals seems particularly apt, as we report on events during MAC's twenty-fifth anniversary year. Reaching such a significant chronological milestone has encouraged many of us to reflect on the lofty legacy that we have been entrusted with by those who have served our centre since its inception in May 1991. We are extremely grateful for their aspirational visions and dedicated service that initiated and then expanded the range of creative cultural opportunities and experiences that have been offered to MAC's communities of members and volunteers, staff and tutors, students of all ages and other stakeholders, including our sponsors and funders (particularly Auckland Council).

MAC's 25th birthday was officially celebrated at a Saturday afternoon function on 28 May. To mark the special occasion acclaimed social practice artist Tiffany Singh transformed our main gallery with an installation exploring the concept of *Growth*, which included collaborative intergenerational contributions from our MAC community. Members' hopes for the future were inscribed on silhouettes of trees that were placed on the main gallery's back wall and linked to a floor mandala constructed from organic material, much of which was sourced locally. Lively rhythms of the Rangitoto Jazz Band amplified the festive ambience, whilst colourful overhead prayer flags appeared to flutter in response to their rising riffs. **Lena Kovac** produced this memorable setting for our ceremony to honour seven extremely dedicated older MAC members. Our gratitude is extended to **Roy Boston, Greta and Alf Fisher, Annette Gillan, Rachel Irwin, Fay Mason and Jim White-Parsons** for their valuable and diverse voluntary contributions to our centre through the decades. We intend to affirm their life membership awards at our 2017 AGM.

The new Art Walkway linking MAC to the Mairangi Bay Village was another project designed to acknowledge MAC's 25th birthday. Supported by our local board chairperson Julia Parfitt, and funded by Hibiscus and Bays Local Board and Auckland Council, two carved pou (posts) supplied by the Department of Corrections' Art in Prisons programme, mark the start of the walkway at the village end of Hastings Road. Sue Clark and Cath O'Brien inspired and led mosaic artists from Murrays Bay Intermediate School to create paving stones that have been embedded along the path. Unfortunately, the official opening of this walkway is yet to occur, on account of delays in applying the appropriate surface to the asphalt.

Our centre continues to be served by a team of loyal and committed female staff, who are unfailingly responsive and work collaboratively to deliver excellent customer-friendly service. We were mindful that Lena's prowess as our dynamic General Manager might mean she would be attracted to other Arts Management positions, and wondered when Lena and her family visited Germany for an extended holiday during the year, if they might return to Europe? So it was a surprise to discover on Lena's homecoming that Creative Bay of Plenty had enticed her to relocate from metropolitan Auckland 'to create an environment where arts and culture thrive' as their new general manager. Whilst delighted for Lena, we were very sad to farewell her at the end of October, and wish Lena, Ollie and Theo all the best in their new environs.

We are fortunate that Christine Currey stepped up to lead MAC's staff, both whilst Lena was on her extended overseas holiday and during the interim period after Lena left and we recruited her replacement, Angela Suh, who joined us in January 2017. Michelle Male has continued as our knowledgeable key front desk staff member, working with part-timers Ulrike Huetter, Bronwyn O'Connell and Jane Christie, to assist process class bookings and the associated administrative tasks following the launch of MAC's new website. Laura McNeish's graphic design skills have assisted with the production of MAC's communication with our members and various media channels; whilst Leah Noonan and Lisa McKimmon's weekend gallery minding has ensured that visitors can view MAC's exhibitions on Saturdays and Sundays between 10:00am and 2:00pm.

Volunteers assist our staff perform a variety of functions, including: office administration, tasks related to the gallery and at exhibition openings, art studio working bees, garden maintenance and supervising students during school holiday programme lunch breaks. We thank them for their willingness to provide the essential extra capacity MAC requires to meet the demands of running such a busy, multi-purpose creative community hub.

MAC's new website was launched at the end of June, just prior to the start of the term 3 booking rush. It has a pleasing appearance, with Korean, Chinese and Japanese language translation features that have enhanced MAC's accessibility for the ethnically diverse communities we serve. In addition, the social change initiative 'Be. Accessible' has assessed disability-friendly accessibility options on MAC's website and in our centre's facilities, and awarded MAC a silver rating. There are however some administrative issues with the website that the board is working through. We acknowledge the generous contributions of Hibiscus and Bays Local Board and The Lion Foundation for their funding invested in this key strategic project.

Browsing MAC's website provides snapshots of our centre's engagement with our arts' communities and members. The standout feature I noted when preparing this report was discovering in an instant how many classes MAC offered, and how most of them were fully subscribed. The growth in our class enrollments, and particularly in our children's classes, is a tribute to the talents of our more than 25 tutors, who are listed on

our website, and offer an amazing range of classes for children (aged 5-17 years) and adults (aged 18+ years). Those offerings also include Kids School Programmes and the opportunity to book 'Arty Parties' to celebrate kids' birthdays. MAC's financial viability is intricately linked to the growing popularity of our art classes.

The quality and variety of MAC's exhibition schedule throughout the year has continued to attract visitors to the centre. Providing MAC members and tutors opportunities to showcase their talents and accomplishments has always been a priority, and been complemented by guest exhibitors, regularly featured exhibitions, and a few innovative surprises. Award-winning Coromandel-based Barbara Von Seida held her solo exhibition in March, following winning second prize in the 2015 Hibiscus and Bays Art Awards. In April Northland Region Corrections Facility's art tutor Beth Hill assisted organise the InsideOut 7 exhibition, which explored ways of finding a more positive pathway in the future and raised funds for Women's Refuge from sales of the over 70 artworks displayed. During July the North Shore National Salon of Photography's prestigious exhibition displayed selected images from 2,014 entries that included members of 33 photographic clubs and societies from Whangarei to Southland and overseas. Finally, in November the Auckland based inclusive dance company *Touch Compass* presented two live performances at MAC (funded by the Hibiscus and Bays Local Board), along with their *DanceBox* exhibition. *DanceBox* included the short film *Drumming is Like Thunder*, which won the *Most Original Film Award 2016* at the *Sit Down and Watch Film and New Media Festival* in Australia. These four items attest to the caliber and variety of MAC's exhibition programme.

Complying with the legislative requirements of the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 has meant Health and Safety has become a routine item on our monthly board meeting agendas, and MAC staff members have developed appropriate policies to safeguard the wellbeing of those entering our facilities, and those who work in them. In addition, Auckland Council's refurbishment of Studio 1 has replaced the studio's heaters and created a sought-after teaching space. To accommodate more young student classes we have created another teaching studio in the Arthouse, beside the pottery studio.

We are mindful that all MAC's facilities and activities are reliant on the generosity of six funders who resource our centre, who are named on our website and include: Hibiscus and Bays Local Board, Foundation North, The Lion Foundation, Pub Charity, Creative NZ and the Southern Trust. Their funding is in turn supplemented by ten local businesses, whose sponsorship is likewise vital in sustaining the continuing functioning of our vibrant community arts centre. Also named on our website, our sponsors are listed alphabetically as follows: Babich Wines, Bayleys in Mairangi Bay, CCG Industries, Factory Frames, French Art Shop, Gordon Harris, Mairangi Bay Business Association, Oki Printing Solutions, Resene and Takapuna Art Supplies.

Finally, we pay tribute to the two trustees who have completed their second three-year term of appointment and will now be standing down. Firstly, Maurice Ellett, who has served most of his time as Board Chairperson, mentored the current chairperson, and more importantly recently used his professional recruitment expertise to seek out our newly appointed General Manager, Angela Suh. Secondly, Andrew Blewden, whose IT and business backgrounds have provided insightful strategic advice to MAC's board and staff. Tutor representative Lance O'Gorman decided to stand down mid-year, and has been replaced by children's tutor Cath O'Brien. We thank Maurice, Andrew and Lance for their input and guidance and welcome Cath to our board.

Judy Blakey Chairperson