Ockhams Sampler

Extracts from
the finalist books in the
Booksellers Aotearoa New Zealand Award for Illustrated Non-Fiction
at the 2021 Ockham New Zealand Book Awards

OCKHAM
NEW ZEALAND
BOOK
AWARDS

Booksellers Aotearoa New Zealand Award for Illustrated Non-Fiction

The Booksellers Aotearoa New Zealand Award for Illustrated Non-Fiction at the Ockham New Zealand Book Awards recognises excellence in works – by one or more authors – with combined strength of illustration and text. Prize money in this category is $10,000.

The Illustrated Non-Fiction category in 2021 is judged by Dale Cousens (Ngāruahine) of the National Library of New Zealand (convenor); bookseller and former publisher Brian Phillips; and writer, graphic designer and magazine art director Jenny Nicholls.

The judging panel says, "The four finalists are standout examples of a dazzlingly broad range of passions, from the arts and sciences to food, adventure and the outdoors, distilled into beautiful and engaging works which will hold their own for years to come."

This Ockhams Sampler gives you a taste of the craft at play in each of this year's shortlisted books. You can read the judges' comments about each finalist in blue at the start of that title's extract.

Look out for samplers of the finalists in the other three categories in the Ockham New Zealand Book Awards. As they are rolled out in the coming weeks, you will find them here:

www.anzliterature.com

www.nzbookawards.nz/new-zealand-book-awards

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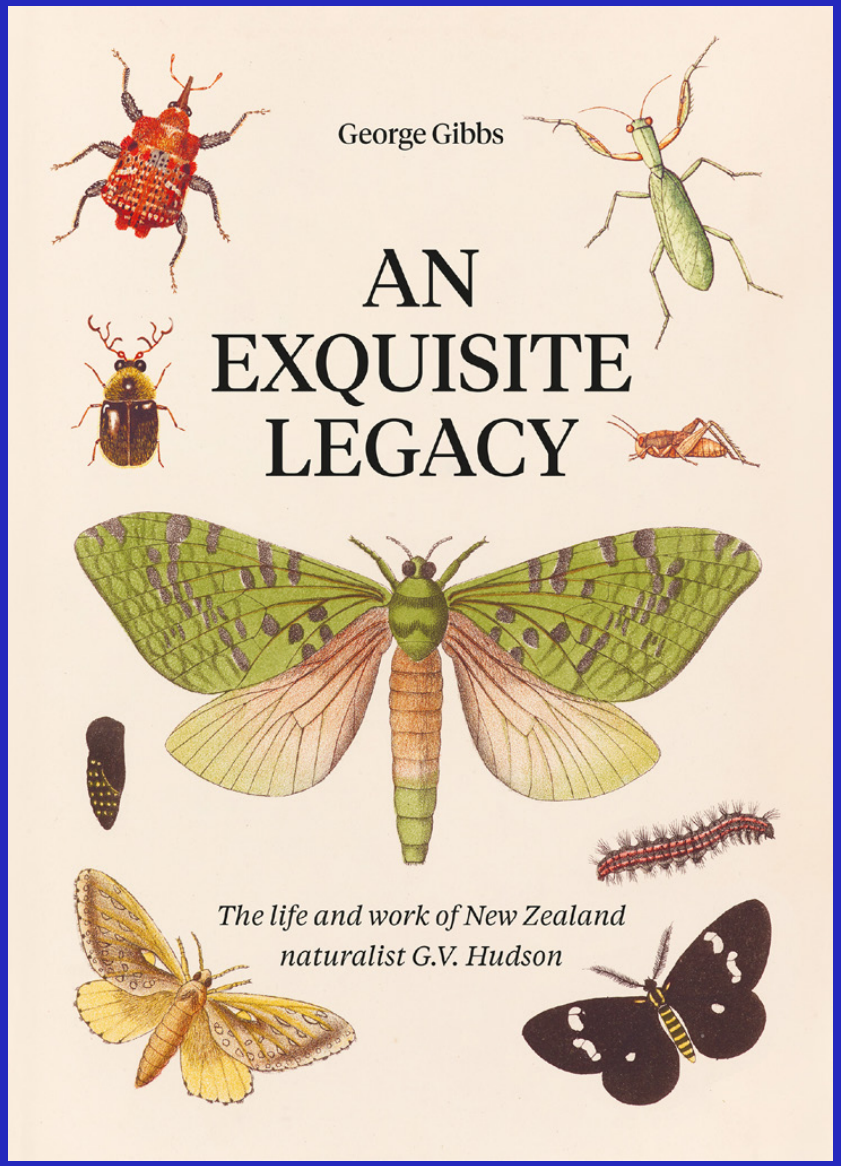


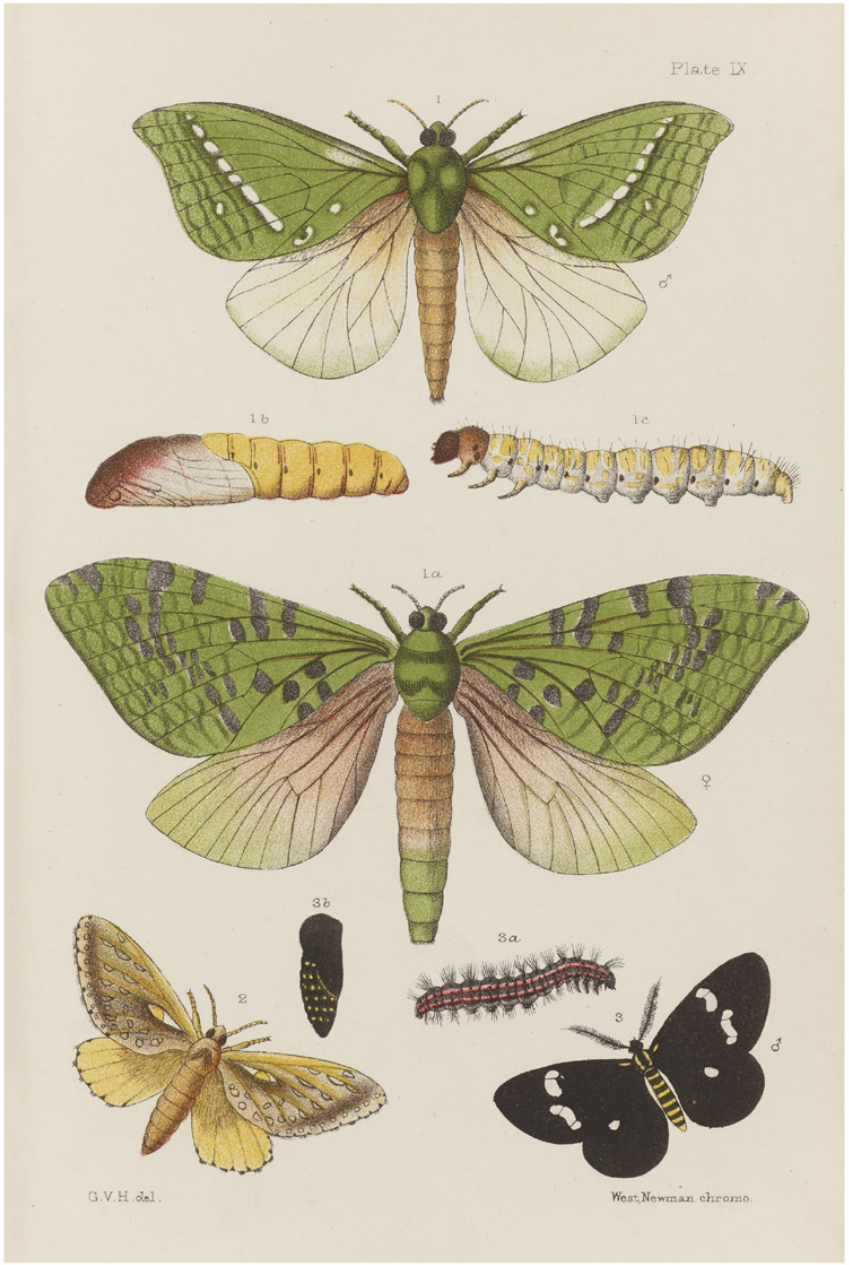
Published by **Potton & Burton**

An Exquisite Legacy: The Life and Work of New Zealand Naturalist G.V. Hudson

JUDGES' COMMENTS

George Hudson's grandson has produced a glorious tribute to his grandfather, not only one of New Zealand's greatest naturalists but also an artist of dazzling skill. In reproducing so many of these paintings for the first time, the author is scientifically and artistically scrupulous, with detailed captions and superb production values. Crucially, this is also an enlightening and lovingly written biography – we are drawn inside the world of an insect-mad fellow who became a significant figure in our natural history landscape.

Selected spreads overleaf



The pūriri moth, *Aenetus virescens*, New Zealand's largest moth, fascinated Hudson from the time when his early collecting around Karori in 1884 revealed their wood-tunnelling larvae. Plate IX from the *'Manual'* is an example of chromolithography at its best. Hudson perfected a method for hatching the moths out from pupae found during early spring in order to obtain specimens for his collection.

THE PŪRIRI MOTH

In 1883, while busy gathering material for the *Manual*, George encountered the largest moth in the fauna near his home – the spectacular green pūriri moth, *Aenetus virescens*. As it happened, he couldn't wait for publication of the book but wrote the first account of its life history in 1885 for his favourite journal, *The Entomologist*.[6]

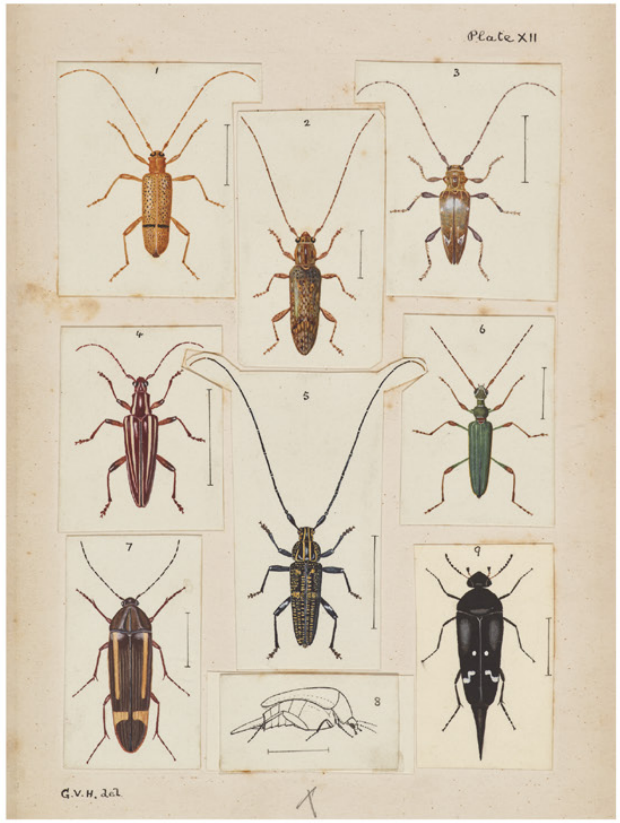
Pūriri moths are found in the North Island only. They proved to be common around Karori (as is still the case today) where patches of original forest remained on the surrounding hills, yet for several years he failed to find a living example of the adult moth. Today we could tell him that it was largely because the moths are nocturnal and he didn't have a bright enough light to attract them at night. What he did find was that nearly all the stems of the 'NZ currant' as he called it, the wineberry or makomako (*Aristotelia serrata*), a quick-growing tree that was regenerating rapidly in the forested gullies of Karori, were tunnelled by pūriri moth larvae.

His first encounter with this insect was on a Sunday late in August 1883 when he was chopping away at a mānuka trunk, 'wishing to discover the occupant' of some large holes. The result was 'the great pupa represented natural size at Fig 25'; (see page 25). Unfortunately, the blows of his axe had killed it. But it did awaken him to the link between these pupae and the large tree holes, recognised by their camouflaging silken cover that he had been finding, especially on ribbonwood and 'currant trees'. Before he 'drew pupa & went to church evening', it had dawned on him: 'I believe they are both larva and pupa of *Charagia virescens*'.

The following winter and for several years thereafter he resolved to search for living caterpillars and pupae by splitting them out of their host tree timber so that he could keep them at home, awaiting the emergence of perfect specimens of the moth. His interest burgeoned as he recognised their value for entomological 'trading' with colleagues overseas – an excellent bargaining point. Armed with a tomahawk, he would comb the hillsides during winter and early spring, searching for the largest inhabited tunnels. Mortality rates were quite high, the crude extraction process accounting for many damaged insects, but on Sunday 18 May 1884 success came with 'a good larva just changing'. He made a drawing of it in the afternoon (fig. 2), noting that the 'spiracles should be on the anterior portion of the segments not on the posterior as there indicated'. The drawing of another

OPPOSITE: Plate XI: This plate was fully completed, at Hudson's death, along with the other plates for *Fragments of New Zealand Entomology* (1950), including all instructions for its publication. According to his custom, each insect had been painted separately on a small, high-quality card, at the size it was to appear in the book. It could thus be replaced if necessary by another painting before the book went to press. His daughter Stella faithfully completed the task. In her view, her father's 'artistic skill reached its consummation in the figures for this book, thus fulfilling the life's task he had set for himself'. These paintings for Plate XI were given the subtitle 'Some Rare and Interesting Beetles'. Incidentally, the 'del.' term after Hudson's initials on each plate are an abbreviation for 'delineated'.

BELOW: Plate XII. Mainly longhorn beetles, from *New Zealand Beetles and Their Larvae* (1934). After his retirement, Hudson swapped his butterfly net for a white umbrella and transferred his attention from moths to beetles – a group of insects that he regarded as 'a suitable hobby for an old man'. As well as containing beetle species, the book's main contribution was a comprehensive catalogue of the New Zealand beetle fauna.



8. The books

From a grandson's point of view, deciding which of Hudson's life works he would have chosen as his main achievements is not as straightforward as it may seem. He left a meticulous record of his daily activities and an overview of the important events; there is no doubt he had a vision, but, like most of us, he could hardly be expected to commit it to paper. What was not high on his list of goals was financial gain from a successful career. If he had an overall goal it would have been to win people over to the way he saw the world: placing an appreciation of natural history ahead of financial reward.

This chapter examines the seven books that he wrote over the 65 years of his life in New Zealand – the achievements that would rank in most people's minds as his most important contribution. In her resumé of Hudson's life and works, his daughter Stella reviewed the time and effort that went into each of his books, essentially subdividing his life into sections depending on which book was being prepared. This also makes sense to me, because it is clear from all his writing, and in particular those in the 'Summary of Diaries', that the book he was engaged on at any given time set the pattern for his life. There are no breaks when he wasn't writing. of planning books. They were the 'life work that [he] had set out to do'. He followed his guiding principles, but it would be fanciful to think that he was following any fixed plan.

In one sense, each book's subject matter evolved from the time in his life when he was compiling it. Thus, the first was a simple guidebook to our insects – *An Elementary Manual of New Zealand Entomology, being an introduction to the Study of our Native Insects,* to give it the full title. It came as he was settling into an unfamiliar environment and getting to know its fauna. In the vigorous years of his early life, as he undertook marriage and the breaking in of a Karori hillside, he

George Hudson produced seven volumes on New Zealand insects between 1892 and, posthumously, 1950. Pictured here are examples of plates from two of the larger volumes and three of the beautiful gold-leaf covers. It is the meticulously painted insects, totalling over 3000, that demands attention; all executed with the brush and pigment skills that he learnt from his father. These, together with his equally meticulous insect collection, were the goals he set for himself and maintained, with ever-increasing perfection, throughout his life.

Published by **Godwit, Penguin Random House**

Hiakai: Modern Māori Cuisine

JUDGES' COMMENTS

Hiakai is no ordinary cookbook but rather one which, unusually, lets us see our natural environment with fresh eyes. Coming from award-winning chef Monique Fiso, it is the result of years of labour and research into Māori cuisine and all it represents. Passionately written, well edited, beautifully illustrated and presented, *Hiakai* weaves tikanga, history, cultivation, foraging and hunting into an influential classic of the kitchen, and also of cultural history; in these recipes Fiso shows the range of indigenous ingredients with sophisticated flair.

Selected spreads overleaf

KAI MĀORI COOKING METHODS

Hāngi

Putting down a hāngi is a serious business, requiring a high degree of organisation, preparation, fortitude and patience. In the 21st century, a hāngi is a major event – a style of cooking used for celebrations, family gatherings or other important occasions. For early Māori, cooking in an underground earth oven was a way of life they'd always practised. Hāngi were prepared largely by women while the men were hunting, with the food ready for the evening meal. Any leftovers, particularly vegetables, were eaten the next morning.

At its most basic, a hāngi is an underground steam oven. The food – wrapped in leaves or in woven baskets – is flavoured by smoke from the initial fire, the surrounding earth and the native plants used. Then, as now, the size of the hāngi pit (umu) varied depending on the number of people being cooked for and what was being cooked in it. Archaeologists have discovered huge umu in the South Island that may have been used to cook seals or moa. Usually, pits were much smaller – around a metre in diameter and up to half a metre deep. Each family had their own pit and would reuse it.

To begin, a fire was carefully laid in the pit, with wood layered on until level with the opening. Special stones – ideally volcanic rocks, which withstand high temperatures, rather than sedimentary river stones that can shatter – were set on top. A hāngi fire needed to burn for at least an hour or two (depending on the size of the pit) to sufficiently heat the stones through so they held enough heat to cook the food when the hāngi was sealed. This part of the process cannot be rushed. Sometimes stones were heated in the ordinary cooking fire (adjacent to the pit) rather than in a separate fire laid in the pit.

After the fire had been burning solidly for an hour or two, the bottom of the pit would be a sea of wood ash and white-hot stones. At this point, any unburnt wood would be removed and water sprinkled over the stones to wash away leftover ashes (ashes left in a hāngi taint the taste of the food). The stones were levelled out and a woven band of harakeke, called a pae umu, was inserted into the pit to

WHENUA: LAND

HUHU GRUBS

Prionoplus reticularis

LOCATED: ACROSS AOTEAROA

Dig down into the damp cavities of rotten logs and you'll often find one of Aotearoa's finest delicacies – the huhu grub (see page 102). These fat, wrinkly bugs (larvae of the endemic huhu beetle) provided a rich source of fat to the early Māori diet. Considered one of nature's greatest little recyclers, huhu grubs munch through decomposed trees that would otherwise bury the forest floor.

Today, most people approach eating huhu grubs with a 'fear factor' mentality. But while they'll never win an award for being the most attractive morsel on the planet, huhu grubs taste great and no serious foodie should be afraid to give them a go.

To enjoy a huhu grub: first grab your axe. Split a decaying log right down the middle, then pluck out a grub and eat it raw. As you bite down, a small burst of peanut butteriness will pop in your mouth. If you prefer a less 'lively' version, sauté the grubs with a little garlic and salt. The grub's outer shell expands and becomes crisp when cooked in a pan of hot oil, adding a delicious crunch.

KĀKĀ

Bush parrot

Nestor meridionalis

LOCATED: ISLAND AND COASTAL AREAS; NEAR PREDATOR-CONTROLLED AREAS

The kākā is a large, forest-dwelling parrot known for being playful and talkative. Māori often make reference to the kākā's chatty characteristics when describing people: someone known for being a gasbag is often described as *he kākā waha nui* (a big-mouthed kākā). Kākā are greedy as well as gregarious – they eat a varied diet of native berries, seeds, insects, nectar and sap, often until they're too full to fly.

Kākā were one of the few birds that Māori kept as pets, often teaching them to mimic other species and using them as decoys when hunting. This didn't stop them from becoming food themselves – kākā were a staple of the Māori diet,

FRIED HUHU GRUBS, KŪMARA GNOCCHI, HUHU SAUCE

SERVES 4

Huhu grubs have a mild nuttiness that made me think of satay sauce when I first tried them. I created a sauce with roasted huhus, and to my surprise it tasted a lot like a chestnut sauce we served with agnolotti at A Voce, in New York. I decided to serve the sauce with a kūmara gnocchi as a tribute to my time working the pasta section at A Voce.

FOR THE KŪMARA GNOCCHI:

200 g kūmara, roasted and mashed
30 g Parmesan, finely grated
125 g buckwheat flour, plus extra for rolling
¾ T salt
Finely grated zest of 1 lemon
2 T olive oil
Salt, to taste
2 T vegetable oil
Black pepper, freshly ground

Using your hands, mix together the mashed kūmara, Parmesan, buckwheat flour, salt and lemon zest. Knead mixture with your hands until a sticky dough forms. Divide in half.

Dust a work surface with buckwheat flour. Roll each portion of dough into a long rope, then cut into 2 cm pieces.

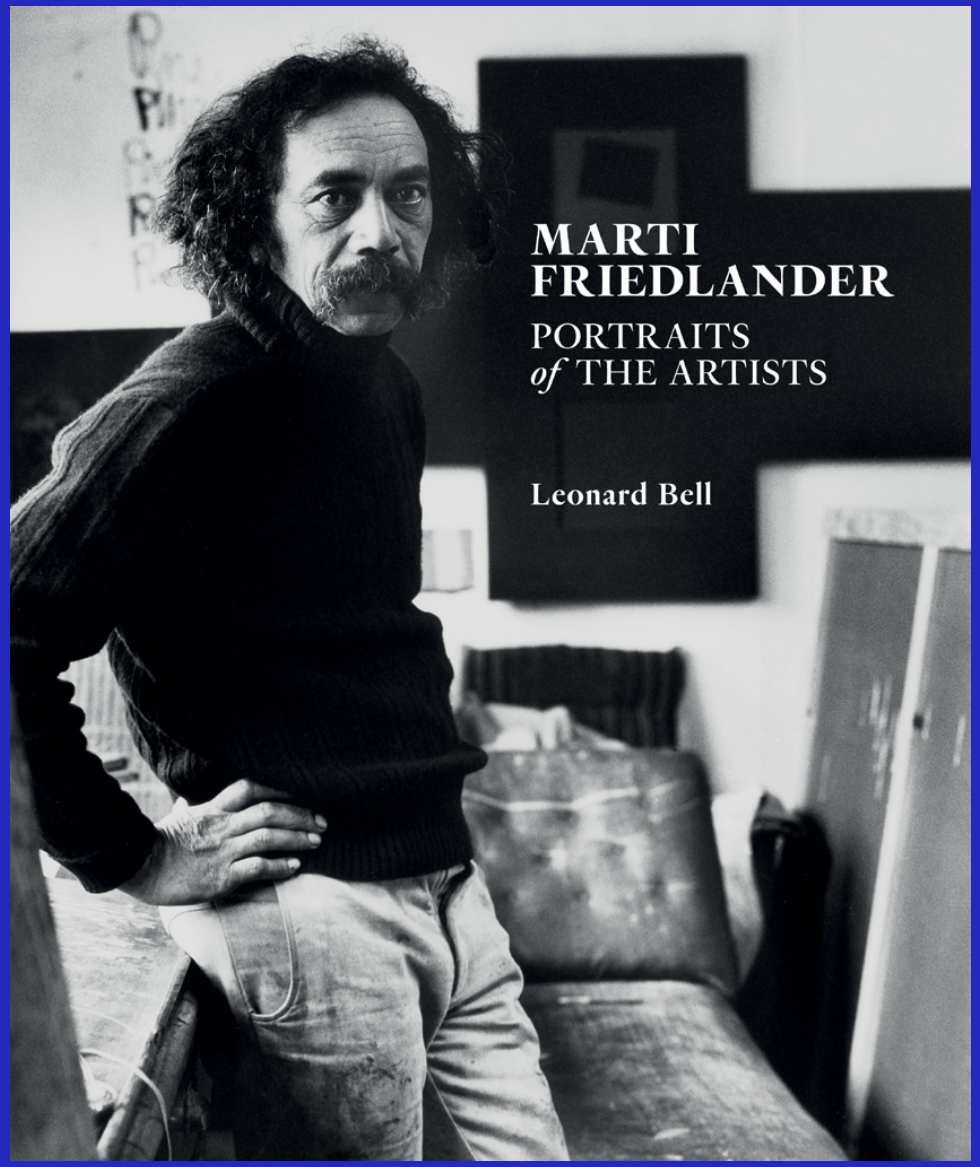
Bring a large pot of water to the boil. Add the olive oil and a generous spoonful of salt. Cook the gnocchi in batches for about 3 minutes. Remove with a slotted spoon, then drop them into a bowl of iced water. Drain gnocchi and arrange on a lined tray. Leave uncovered in the fridge overnight.

When you're ready to serve, set a sauté pan over medium-hot heat and add the vegetable oil. When it's hot, add 1–2 handfuls of gnocchi and sauté until golden brown and hot in the middle. Season with salt and black pepper and serve immediately.

FOR THE HUHU SAUCE:

1 T vegetable oil
15 huhu grubs
1 small white onion, peeled and finely diced
2 cloves garlic, peeled and finely diced
50 g peanuts, roasted and shelled
½ tsp dried horopito flakes (see page 262)
100 ml chicken stock
250 ml cream
Flaky sea salt
Ground white pepper
Freshly squeezed lime juice

Set a saucepan over medium heat. Add the oil, followed by the huhu grubs. Toast the grubs for 1 minute, then stir in the onion, garlic and peanuts. Sauté until the onions are soft and caramelised. Stir in the horopito flakes, chicken stock and cream. Simmer gently for 15 minutes. Remove from the heat and pour into a high-speed blender and purée until smooth. Season with flaky sea salt, ground white pepper and a few drops of lime juice. Pour the sauce through a fine mesh sieve and serve hot.



Published by **Auckland University Press**

Marti Friedlander: Portraits of the Artists

JUDGES' COMMENTS

This elegantly produced collection of photographs, the bulk of which have never been published before, is exquisitely designed and edited – and the image reproduction is exceptional. The accompanying text breathes life into these individuals and, thanks to the layout, Marti Friedlander's uncanny ability to capture the spirit of her subjects shines through. With images of over 110 artists, photographed over several decades, this important volume is a wonderful cultural account of mid-to-late twentieth century creative life in New Zealand.

Keith Sinclair (1922–1993)

Friedlander photographed historian, poet, aspiring politician and friend Professor Keith Sinclair on several occasions from the late 1960s to the early 1990s: 'Keith thought of me as his photographer.'[164] Several were used as dust-jacket author or cover photographs for his books, including *The Reefs of Fire* (1977) and *A Destiny Apart: New Zealand's Search for National Identity* (1986). Others accompanied articles about Sinclair, in particular when he was the Labour candidate for Eden in the 1969 parliamentary elections. Labour Party brochures and promotional material also made good use of Friedlander's portraits. Her portraits ranged from the relatively formal to the casual, as in the photograph of Sinclair with a kingfish he had caught while sailing on Gerrard Friedlander's yacht. This image, with its understated wit and irony, was reproduced in multiple places – with Tony Reid's *Auckland Weekly News* article 'A Professor in the House? New Zealand Intellectual in Search of a Political Role',[165] in a *New Zealand Herald* front-page feature article, 'Man of the People', and in Sinclair's memoir, *Halfway Round the Harbour* (1993).[166]

Friedlander first met Sinclair, whom she described as 'dapper' and not modest, at a party on the North Shore: 'Keith wasn't a listener. He was a talker. . . . a typical New Zealand male. He was not a good communicator.' She noted, '[He] is not an easy subject for the camera, he is always very tense,'[167] which Sinclair himself readily recognised: 'My friend the photographer Marti Friedlander went to endless trouble to take some good photographs of me – I was tense in front of the camera and could rarely smile.'[168]

A close-up of Sinclair's face, looking back at the viewer, his expression sombre, was reproduced with Marilyn Duckworth's review of his fourth volume of poetry in the *New Zealand Listener* (1973): 'In *The Firewheel Tree* the lover is as predominant as the historian, the philosopher is also the fatalist. His cynicism is that of a disillusioned romantic who will never be completely disillusioned.'[169] Friedlander's ambiguous and multi-connotational image was an apt choice.

Years later when Sinclair asked Friedlander to take photographs for his memoir: 'I took him to the beach [Point Chevalier] to photograph him because that's where he'd been in his childhood, hoping that he'd relax.'[170]

The portrait opposite offers another face.

Keith Sinclair, Auckland, 1969.

Merata Mita (1942–2010)

[I]f you're a Maori woman and that's all you are, that alone will put you on a collision course with the rest of society and its expectations. And if you flatly refuse to give up your Maori value system for an easier way of life and you live in a society that is supposed to be bicultural and multicultural but isn't . . . then you'll be in conflict with how that society is run and how it sees itself. — MERATA MITA[315]

Friedlander photographed Merata Mita (Ngāti Pikiao and Ngāi Te Rangi) for *Head and Shoulders: Successful New Zealand Women Talk to Virginia Myers* (1986). A full-page black-and-white portrait features on the page facing the brief introduction to Mita's reflections. She fills most of the frame. She sits in semi-profile, hands in her lap, composed, looking to the right, as if far-seeing – which she was.

Maketū-born Mita was one of New Zealand's best and most influential filmmakers, both here and internationally. The director of such justly famous films as *Bastion Point: Day 507* (1980), *Patu!* (1983), *Mauri* (1988) and *Saving Grace: Te Whakarauora Tangata* (2011), she was the first Māori woman director. Her youngest son, Heperi Mita (the son of Mita's second husband, fellow director Geoff Murphy), directed the recent film *Merata: How Mum Decolonised the Screen* (2018), following her life from childhood and her first unhappy and abusive marriage in the Bay of Plenty, her escape to Auckland with her children, intermittent work and a hand-to-mouth life, before entering into television as the frontperson for Māori affairs programme *Koha* in the late 1970s and early 1980s, and then film in New Zealand and the USA. When Mita, who trained as a teacher, began in film, the medium and industry here was almost entirely, with few exceptions, dominated by Pākehā men. Pioneer Māori filmmaker Barry Barclay (1944–2008) and Gaylene Preston (born 1947) inspired Mita, just as she has in turn been an inspiration for many people in film, especially women, Māori and indigenous peoples worldwide.[316]

Mita, an activist for Māori and women, made movies that are impassioned, urgent, vivid in their imagery, and sustained by empathy and recognition that people are flawed and make mistakes, yet can also 'do the right thing' (a nod to African-American director Spike Lee and his 1989 film of that name). Mita's impact was and is huge. Back in 1986 she said her films would be worthwhile if they make 'Maori people feel stronger about themselves'.[317] She was honoured with a Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit in 2010.

Merata Mita, Auckland, 1985.

Francis Pound (1948–2017)

Francis Pound, whose early years were spent in Ohakune and Hamilton, was a child of the mid- to late-1960s countercultural turbulence. He started as an artist, with a BFA and MFA from the University of Auckland, then shifted to art criticism and art history, initially freelance and then while a lecturer in art history at the same university. He was a tutor there when Friedlander took two art history courses in 1976.[324]

Friedlander photographed Pound on two occasions: in the early 1980s for the author photo in *Frames on the Land: Early Landscape Painting in New Zealand* (1983) and in the late 1990s for *Stories We Tell Ourselves: The Paintings of Richard Killeen* (1999).[325]

Pound's other books include *Forty Modern New Zealand Paintings* (1985), *The Space Between: Pakeha Use of Maori Motifs in Modern New Zealand Art* (1994), *Walters: En Abyme* (2004) – which accompanied a fine exhibition at the Gus Fisher Gallery that he curated – and his magisterial *The Invention of New Zealand: Art and National Identity, 1930–1970* (2009). He also wrote numerous articles for periodicals, especially *Art New Zealand*, and essays in exhibition catalogues, some of which he curated, such as the *New Image* show (1983) at Auckland Art Gallery. And he guest-edited a special issue of *Landfall*, 'The Fifties Issue' (1993), in tandem with the big art, design and architecture of the 1950s show also at Auckland Art Gallery.

Pound's books were intensively researched, sometimes over many (twenty-plus) years, elegantly written, invariably a pleasure to read, whether or not you agreed with what he had to say. Whether intentionally or not his writing could be provocative, as with *Frames on the Land*, *The Space Between* and *The Invention of New Zealand*. On one occasion another leading art writer initiated libel proceedings against Pound, necessitating the professional assistance of one of New Zealand's foremost barristers, Paul Treadwell (1930–2017). The libel action was dropped and Treadwell became an admirer of his client's writing.

Pound was admired for his stylish clothes (evident in Friedlander's portrait). They scored highly in student course evaluations. Little did they know that back in 1967, in a very different cultural climate, Pound was once apprehended by the police because his then-ragged clothing was deemed 'an offence to women and children'. Pound grew up into a scholar, almost monk-like in his dedication to his objects of study (art and books) and his touching unworldliness – again suggested by Friedlander's portrait. (Another disclosure: Francis and I were old and close friends.)

Francis Pound, Auckland, 1999.

Published by **Te Papa Press**

Nature — Stilled

JUDGES' COMMENTS

This sumptuously beautiful book presents a wondrous selection of specimens from Te Papa's natural history collection. Brilliantly photographed and produced, it highlights not just the breadth of these collections but also the knowledge and passion of those who care for them. Jane Ussher is one of Aotearoa's most accomplished photographers and she has clearly approached this project with great respect and enthusiasm for the exhibits which represent our vanishing natural world, and have never been more worthy of our attention.

Selected spreads overleaf

Brissus gigas
Giant heart urchin

Of these three specimens of giant heart urchin, the one on the left has retained its hair-like coating of spines while the other two have lost theirs. The smallest and largest specimens were collected at the Poor Knights Islands, and the central specimen was collected at Whakaari White Island.


NATIONAL MUSEUM, WELLINGTON, N.Z. No. 20742
Phigys solitarius ♀ ad.
Ono 7s., Fiji
15.5.1975 F.C. Kinsky
NATIONAL MUSEUM, WELLINGTON, N.Z. No. 20747
Phigys solitarius ♀ ad.
F.C. Kinsky
NATIONAL MUSEUM, WELLINGTON, N.Z. No. 20741
Phigys solitarius ♀ ad.
Ono 7s., Fiji
14.5.1975 F.C. Kinsky
NATIONAL MUSEUM, WELLINGTON, N.Z. No. 20740
Phigys solitarius ♂ ad.
Ono 7s., Fiji
14.5.1975 F.C. Kinsky
NATIONAL MUSEUM, WELLINGTON, N.Z. No. 20388
Phigys solitarius ♀ ad.
Vanua Levu, Fiji
5.6.1974 F.C. Kinsky
NATIONAL MUSEUM, WELLINGTON, N.Z. No. 20387
Phigys solitarius ♂ ad.
Vanua Levu, Fiji
10.6.1974 F.C. Kinsky
NATIONAL MUSEUM, WELLINGTON, N.Z. No. 20386
Phigys solitarius ♂ ad.
Vanua Levu, Fiji
9.6.1974 F.C. Kinsky
NATIONAL MUSEUM, WELLINGTON, N.Z. No. 20385
Phigys solitarius ♂ ad.
Vanua Levu, Fiji
8.6.1974 F.C. Kinsky
NATIONAL MUSEUM, WELLINGTON, N.Z. No. 20384
Phigys solitarius ♂ ad.
Vanua Levu, Fiji
7.6.1974 F.C. Kinsky
NATIONAL MUSEUM, WELLINGTON, N.Z. No. 20746
Phigys solitarius ♀ ad.
Ono 7s., Fiji
4.6.1975 F.C. Kinsky

Birds

Plate 001 p.012
Plate 107 p.214

Apteryx mantelli
North Island brown kiwi
Kiwi

Kiwi lay enormous eggs, up to 23 percent of the female's body weight. They are often described as having the largest egg in relation to body size of any bird, but the situation is more nuanced than that. Some storm petrels lay eggs that are up to 29 percent of the female's body weight; however, storm petrels are very small birds, and the pattern across all bird species is for small bird species to lay relatively larger eggs than large bird species. At the other extreme, the largest egg of all is laid by the ostrich (the largest living bird), but this is the smallest egg of any bird when expressed as a percentage of female body weight (less than 4 percent). When egg size is graphed against body size for all bird species, there is one clear outlier: kiwi have eggs that are far larger than predicted for their body size when compared with any other bird — about six times larger than expected for a bird of 1–2 kg. Perhaps we should say that in relation to female body weight, kiwi eggs are unexpectedly larger than those of any other bird.

Plate 026 p.062

Coenocorypha pusilla
Chatham Island snipe

The Te Papa research collection contains a large series of Chatham Island snipe and New Zealand shore plover skins collected on Rangatira South East Island in Rekohu Chatham Islands, *c.* 1900. The specimens have two different but distinctive data labels attached to their legs, indicating that they had been in the possession of either Henry Travers or Sigvard Dannefærd.

Travers and Dannefærd were the main suppliers of rare New Zealand bird specimens to museums and private collectors for several decades around the end of the nineteenth century. Both men went into the field themselves, but they were also dealers, sourcing specimens from others who visited remote sites, and onselling them to willing buyers.

Forensic analysis of the labels on these snipe and shore plover specimens by the New Zealand Police Document Examination Section revealed that a third (unnamed) person had written on the labels, and that they had worked for both Travers and Dannefærd (and had apparently been supplied specimen labels by both men). This collaborative study with the New Zealand Police also revealed that the same mystery person had collected other notable specimens from around Rakiura Stewart Island (and held in the Te Papa collection) that had long been attributed to Henry Travers.

Plate 027 p.065
Plate 149 p.294

Apteryx owenii
Little spotted kiwi
Kiwi pukupuku

Little spotted kiwi are the smallest kiwi species, with adults typically weighing less than 1.4 kg. As a result, they are more vulnerable to stoat predation than the four other kiwi species, and are considered extinct on the mainland. Fortunately, five birds from South Westland were released on Kāpiti Island in 1912. All the little spotted kiwi known today are descended from these five birds, including about 1200 birds now on Kāpiti Island (the largest population).

Kiwi chicks are fully feathered when they hatch out of their enormous eggs. Weighing less than 150 g, they look like miniature adult birds, and are able to forage for themselves within a few days of hatching. In the absence of introduced predators, little spotted kiwi have a mean life expectancy of 45 years. It is likely that some birds live to a much older age; however, marking studies have not been running long enough to confirm this.

The genus name *Apteryx* means 'without wings', but this is not quite true: their tiny wings have just a few feathers, which are similar in length and structure to the shaggy body feathers that conceal the wing. The oldest fossil kiwi found is estimated to be 19–16 million years old, but it is not known when they lost the ability to fly.

Birds

Plate 043 p.085
Plate 061 p.129
Plate 092 p.185

Paradisaea raggiana
Raggiana bird-of-paradise

The 42 species of birds-of-paradise are among the most spectacular birds in the world; many have astonishing plumage and courtship displays. The largest and showiest of them all are the six species in the genus *Paradisaea*. The first specimens of the genus to reach Europe (via Arabian spice traders) had been preserved for their plumes, with their legs removed. As a result, Carl Linnaeus, in 1758, described the greater bird-of-paradise as *Paradisaea apoda* (meaning 'legless'). This contributed to the belief that these beautiful visitors from paradise remained aloft, borne by their gorgeous plumes, until death brought them to earth.

The Raggiana bird-of-paradise was named after the Marquis Francis Raggi of Genoa. It is mainly found in southern Papua New Guinea, including along the Fly River and around the capital, Port Moresby. Other members of the genus *Paradisaea* are found in the north of the country, in Western New Guinea (now part of Indonesia), or on offshore islands. The distribution of the Raggiana bird-of-paradise, as well as its large size and spectacular plumes, resulted in it being selected as the national bird of Papua New Guinea, and it features on the nation's flag.

Plate 040 p.087

Ixobrychus novaezelandiae
New Zealand little bittern
Kaoriki

One of New Zealand's least known extinct birds, the little bittern was extinct within 30 years of being formally described. It was named in 1871, based on a specimen collected at Lake Wakatipu. All subsequent records were from the West Coast, with most of the information about the birds in life being recorded by the surveyor Charlie Douglas and the prospector and bird collector William Docherty.

Douglas referred to little bitterns living in 'such impossable swamps' that it was no wonder that they were seldom seen. Docherty (quoted by Walter Buller) found them on the forested side of coastal lagoons, 'standing on the bank of the lagoon, with their heads bent forward, studiously watching the water; at other times I have seen them standing straight up, almost perpendicular'. He considered them to be 'very solitary, and always found alone, and they stand for hours in one place'.

Only 13 mounted specimens or study skins of New Zealand little bittern are known to survive, including four in Te Papa, three in Canterbury Museum, and one each in Whanganui Regional Museum and Otago Museum; one is in Melbourne, and the remaining three in the United States.

Plate 042 p.090
Plate 043 p.093

Nestor meridionalis meridionalis
South Island kākā

The kākā was abundant in the nineteenth century, and was hunted in large numbers for food by Māori and European settlers alike. People expressed concern at its decline in numbers in the late 1880s, and it has been fully protected since 1907. As with many New Zealand forest birds, it was long thought that clearance of forests for farming was the main cause of the kākā's decline.

Kākā have become common throughout the Wellington Town Belt after they were reintroduced to the predator-proof-fenced Zealandia sanctuary in 2002–2007. The town belt comprises mainly over-mature pine trees and low-stature native shrubs, with an almost complete absence of the tall native canopy tree species found in surrounding forest parks. In contrast, however, nearby Rematuka and Tararua forest parks have largely intact native forests — but kākā are rare or absent. How can this be?

We now know that introduced stoats killing female kākā and their chicks in their nest-holes was the main reason why kākā disappeared from much of the mainland. In the absence of nest predation, kākā are able to thrive in highly modified habitat that, until recently, was considered unsuitable for them. It was unsuitable only because it was overrun with rats, stoats and possums.

George Gibbs
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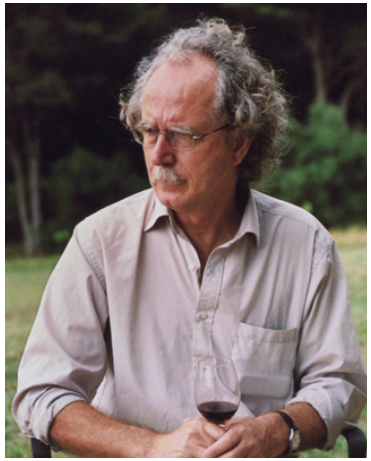

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