



WHAT'S IN THE GALLERIES?

A NEW SHOW BY LOCAL ARTIST NEAL PALMER STARTS OCTOBER 24 AT NKB IN MT EDEN.

WHAT CAN WE EXPECT TO SEE AT THIS EXHIBITION AT NKB?

I've been working with the flax plant as a subject for a number of years now and this show is a continuation and development of these works. My approach has been to create paintings alongside my signature pieces that explore isolated aspects of my work. For example *Shadowplay*, a monochromatic piece that intensifies the viewer's awareness of the forms of the leaves and the way shadows interact with these shapes. In the title piece *Silver Linings* I've used gilded silver leaf in a type of line drawing to describe the light reflecting from the flower stem. I particularly like the way this piece reflects light from oblique angles; light describing light. My intention for this exhibition is to focus on these aspects to really get to the heart of my artistic practice.

THE EXHIBITION IS CALLED 'SILVER LININGS', HOW DOES THAT NAME RESONATE WITH BOTH YOUR LIFE AND THE WORKS IN THE EXHIBITION?

Right, well the answer to that is related to the exhibition intention I just mentioned as in its actually really hard to push past a place where you've achieved a reasonable level of success. It triggers a kind of internal battle. If you imagine this as a storm cloud the silver linings are the new artistic directions possible as a result. It's also a reference to the reflective qualities of flax leaves that I use to create dramatic light contrasts in the paintings, and a literal reference to the silver leaf I use in a few of the works.

WHAT HAS BEEN THE INSPIRATION FOR YOUR VERY NATURE-ORIENTATED PAINTINGS?

I started painting native plant based works when we moved to Piha from London. We're now in central Auckland but I still get out west whenever I can. I'd been working with more abstracted organic shapes at art college in the UK but moving to New Zealand I wanted to locate the work in my new environment. It was my way of connecting on an emotional level with New Zealand's culture and environment. It still is.

HOW HAVE YOU GROWN AS AN ARTIST OVER THE LAST 15 YEARS?

Well I suppose the obvious answer is technical proficiency. You can get a lot of practice in 15 years! Though really it's more like a story that gradually unfolds. Each work leads to the next in respect that for every time you nail one idea it inevitably poses a new avenue to explore. Also because of human nature we all have fundamental paths that permeate everything we do and I think the hardest part of being an artist is really getting down to what these are and how best to express them. For me it's our relationship with the natural environment on macro and micro levels and how they relate. To create work that celebrates the cycle of life and that calmly reminds us we are all part of one very large place. 🌿