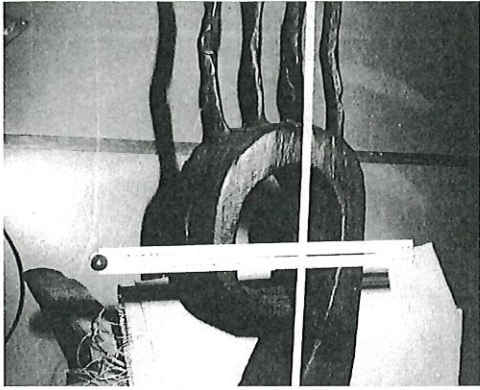


1984



Hirini Moko Mead and Te Maori

Story by Ben Manukonga

Te Kawa a Māui - School of Māori Studies, 2017

Te Maori Exhibition

When we think of life-changing exhibitions in Aotearoa New Zealand, nothing comes close to *Te Maori*. Opened in New York on 10 September 1984, *Te Maori* combined the art of the ancestors with the strong message, often overlooked, that Māori culture continues to thrive in the modern era.

Initially, the exhibition travelled across four American cities - New York, St. Louis, Chicago, and San Francisco. During this time, *Te Maori* was viewed by over 500,000 Americans.

In 1986, after the exhibition had garnered global renown, *Te Maori* returned home to New Zealand. It remained successful, touring through Wellington, Dunedin, Christchurch, and Auckland, where it was seen by almost one million New Zealanders.

The exhibition, which was created for Māori, by Māori, opened the door for more Māori exhibitions in museums and art galleries for decades to come.

Māori at the National Museum

Hirini Moko Mead

Professor Hirini Moko Mead was one of the leading players in *Te Maori's* conception. During his time at Victoria University, Mead was a lecturer and head of department, and founded Te Kawa a Māui (the School of Māori Studies).

Professor Mead, along with other important Māori figures such as Secretary for Māori Affairs, Kara Puketapu, developed plans for *Te Maori* in the early 1980s and edited the catalogue which accompanied the exhibition.

In his role as co-curator, Mead was especially involved in selecting taonga (treasures) from collections across New Zealand to represent a diverse range of iwi.

At each venue the exhibition opened and closed with Māori ceremonies, including karakia (prayer), karanga (welcome call), and waiata (song). Visitors were welcomed through pōwhiri (welcome ceremony).

Working with his wife, June, Professor Mead also wrote the teaching resources for young Māori who worked as kaiārahi (guides) in the exhibition, many of them students from Victoria.

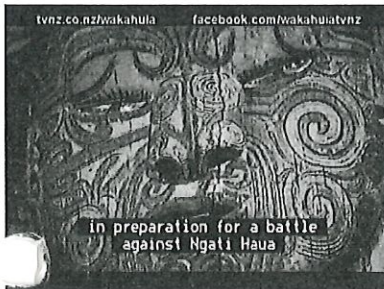
The resources, written in both Māori and English, covered topics such as marae protocol, personal adornment, Māori myths, and the meaning of taonga.

The pair encouraged visitors to learn about and identify with Māori art so that they could appreciate the importance of indigenous heritage in New Zealand.

Following the return of *Te Maori* in 1986, Professor Mead organised a wānanga (forum) where important issues were debated such as the Māori ownership, care and interpretation of taonga.

The recommendations from this wānanga had a profound effect on the future development of local museums such as Te Papa.

25 Years On



25 years on: Waka Huia

More on Te Maori

- [Te Ara Māori and museums - ngā whare taonga](#)
- [NZ History: Te Maori exhibition opens in New York](#)

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