From the collection

Lisa Reihana is a New Zealand pioneer of media art, utilising technology to create new ways to explore Māori culture.

Reihana graduated from Elam in 1987. Her practice has encompassed video, animation, storytelling, sculpture, textiles, performance, sound and photography, increasingly with a digital emphasis. In 1997 she created Native Portraits n.19897, a large gateway comprising 31 video monitors, commissioned for the opening of Te Papa Tongarewa and forming the waharoa of her ongoing Digital Marae project. From these 31 videos, Reihana created five projected dramas and six granite portraits, which form part of her Memoranda project, first shown at the Singapore Art Museum in 2003.

Etched by laser onto granite from video stills to resemble photographic plates, these portraits are based on 19th century studio photographs of Māori taken by the Burton Brothers, often using models in inappropriate costume. By using relatives and friends to recreate these images, Reihana challenges modes of Western portrayal and the romantic notion of long-lost civilisations, replacing it with a dynamic view of a living culture. From this series, the University last year purchased Top Hat, 2003, which is now on show at the George Fraser Gallery as part of Full Circle, an exhibition of Elam graduate works recently acquired for The University of Auckland Art Collection until 29 March.

A suite of six new large-format digital photographs were added to Reihana’s Digital Marae for an exhibition last year at the Govett-Brewster Art Gallery, two of which (Maui and Ranginui) have also been purchased for the University’s Art Collection. These photographs are like the carved pouapou that line the walls of a meeting house, representing significant figures from the artist’s whokakapa, whanau and friends. The exquisite black-on-black detailing, Reihana says, acknowledges the influence of senior Māori artist Ralph Hotere.

With execution like that of fashion photography, Reihana works with a team of experts including models, costume designers, photographers, makeup artists and hairdressers, crediting them all in the exhibition much as a movie director acknowledges the team at the end of a film. Working in this way, incorporating friends and helpers both in the work and the production, Reihana celebrates the idea of a marae as a vibrant community place where people come together, as well as side-stepping the traditional Māori convention that prevents women from being carvers. Working with new media, she is creating a virtual, portable marae that can occupy new territory in new ways, creating a place to gather in galleries and even in cyberspace. She continues to add to the project, progressively working towards her Virtual Marae 20/20 AD – a project that will be the culmination of 25 years work.

Andrew Clifford

Books

A Matrix Handbook for Statisticians

It is intended as a text for students in diverse disciplines including business and management, as well as the social, environmental, health and applied sciences. It also has particular relevance for professionals from all backgrounds interested in understanding the dynamic behaviour of complex systems, change management, complex decision-making, group problem-solving and organisational learning.

A Matrix Handbook for Statisticians published by Wiley, New York, and written by George Seber, Emeritus Professor of Statistics, systematically collects a wide range of results about vectors and matrices that might be useful in theoretical research.

To economise on space, proofs are not given but are simply referenced, usually with more than one reference. Bearing in mind its statistical orientation, references to statistical applications are frequently given.

To make the book user-friendly, the 2850-odd results are carefully cross-referenced.

The University of Auckland News

Systems Thinking, System Dynamics

Systems Thinking, System Dynamics: Managing Change and Complexity, written by Associate Professor Kambiz Maani (Management and Employment Relations) and Dr Robert Cavana from Victoria University of Wellington, offers readers a comprehensive introduction to a growing field and its applications.

Published by Pearson Education New Zealand, it provides a self-contained and unique blend of qualitative and quantitative tools, step-by-step methodology, numerous examples and mini-cases, as well as extensive real-life case studies. The content, mix and presentation style make this otherwise technical tool of systems thinking and system dynamics accessible to a wide range of people.

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Peter M. Senge from the Society of Organisational Learning at MIT, Boston, says: “If you believe as I do that enhanced systems intelligence is the mandate for living together in our shrinking world, you will be delighted by Kambiz Maani’s and Bob Cavana’s new book, which takes a big step towards clarifying the underlying philosophy and demystifying the system dynamics method that has long been the core of our work.”

A Matrix Handbook for Statisticians

When someone mentions the word “matrix”, various images come to mind, including a form of cement and the science fiction movies.

However, in mathematics, a matrix is a two-way table of data or symbols, as on the cover of this book, and a row or column of the table is called a vector.

In statistics multiple measurements are frequently taken on an object or person, which give a vector of data, and a sample of such vectors gives a matrix. Vectors and matrices and their properties are therefore fundamental to statistical research.