

**MEDIA RELEASE:** For immediate release



## **Exhibition and Book Release Celebrate New Zealand's Leading Contemporary Jeweler**

*Made in Aotearoa: Jewellery by Alan Preston* showcases one of New Zealand's greatest artisans, whose desire to create a "jewellery of this place" saw him spearhead a movement in favour of materials from Aotearoa and the Pacific. The exhibition opens on Saturday, 7 March in Auckland Museum's Pacific Masterpieces Gallery; a gallery featuring the very collections that inspired Preston's creative output.

In the late 1970s Alan Preston abandoned western jewellery making traditions in favour of locally found materials and techniques. From delicate shell necklaces to politically charged sovereignty badges, Preston began crafting beautiful objects with symbolic meaning. The exhibition features some of his most riveting work, much of it influenced and discovered between the tides and inspired by artefacts at Auckland Museum.

"Alan Preston has provided many New Zealanders with the means to express their unique identity. This exhibition celebrates the significant role he has played in capturing and leading an indigenous zeitgeist," says Dr Vanda Vitali, Director of Auckland War Memorial Museum.

"*Made in Aotearoa* traces Preston's early use of paua, through to an extraordinary range of new works created in response to the foreshore debate and the passing of the Maori Queen. It's significant his pieces will be exhibited here, at the Museum that inspired so much of his creativity."

The opening of the exhibition will coincide with the launch of the book *Between Tides*, on 10 March. The book, published by Random House, is the first ever survey of Alan's work and also one of the few historical surveys of a contemporary New Zealand jeweller.

*Between Tides: Jewellery by Alan Preston* is strikingly designed with a compelling essay by Damian Skinner, one of New Zealand's best-known art writers whose recent books include a monograph on Don Binney and a major work on the art of Maori carving. The book has a recommend retail price of \$39.99.

The book launch will take place in Auckland Museum's Pacific Masterpieces Gallery.

ENDS

For more information, images and interviews contact Caleb Starrenburg, Auckland Museum Publicist, Phone (09) 306 7059, Mobile 021 171 9161, Email [cstarrenburg@aucklandmuseum.com](mailto:cstarrenburg@aucklandmuseum.com)

### **Artist Profile: Alan Preston**

Alan Preston is a leading contemporary New Zealand jeweller, and co-founder of Auckland jewellery store, Fingers.

A penchant for wearing exotic jewellery grew into a career for Alan Preston, after a short-course in the artistic playground of Camden, London. Upon his return to Auckland in 1973, he juggled a career as a wharfie and jeweller before founding the Lorne St store Fingers with a group of friends and colleagues. A move towards greater experimentation with different materials in the jewellery scene,

such as Perspex, rubber, in the 1970s coupled with a trip to Fiji, propelled Preston to create jewellery that was uniquely 'home-grown'. The medical school dropout, psychology scholar (Preston holds a masters in Psychology) and Lower-Hutt boy has since carved a successful career for himself producing jewellery from materials sourced from New Zealand and the Pacific.

In 2006 Preston was the first recipient of the Deane Award for Decorative Arts which is open to all New Zealanders and includes a \$10,000 award to support the creation of innovative new work. Preston has won the Best Craft Design at the DINZ Best Design Awards in 1992, a Creative Development Grant from the QEII Arts Council in 1993 and a Presentation, Promotion & Audience Development Grant from Creative New Zealand in 2007.

His current inspiration is his place of residence, Muriwai beach.