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Ki Kaitiaki Pūtea o Te Mātāhiaki o Aotearoa  
supported by ASB



# Asian aucklanders and the arts:

Attitudes, attendance  
and participation in 2006





**Asian Aucklanders and the arts**

is a partnership research initiative by Creative New Zealand, Auckland City Council and ASB Community Trust.

Please contact us for more information, and copies of this report and our other research documents.

We also welcome your feedback on this research. Please email us at [asianarts@creativenz.govt.nz](mailto:asianarts@creativenz.govt.nz)

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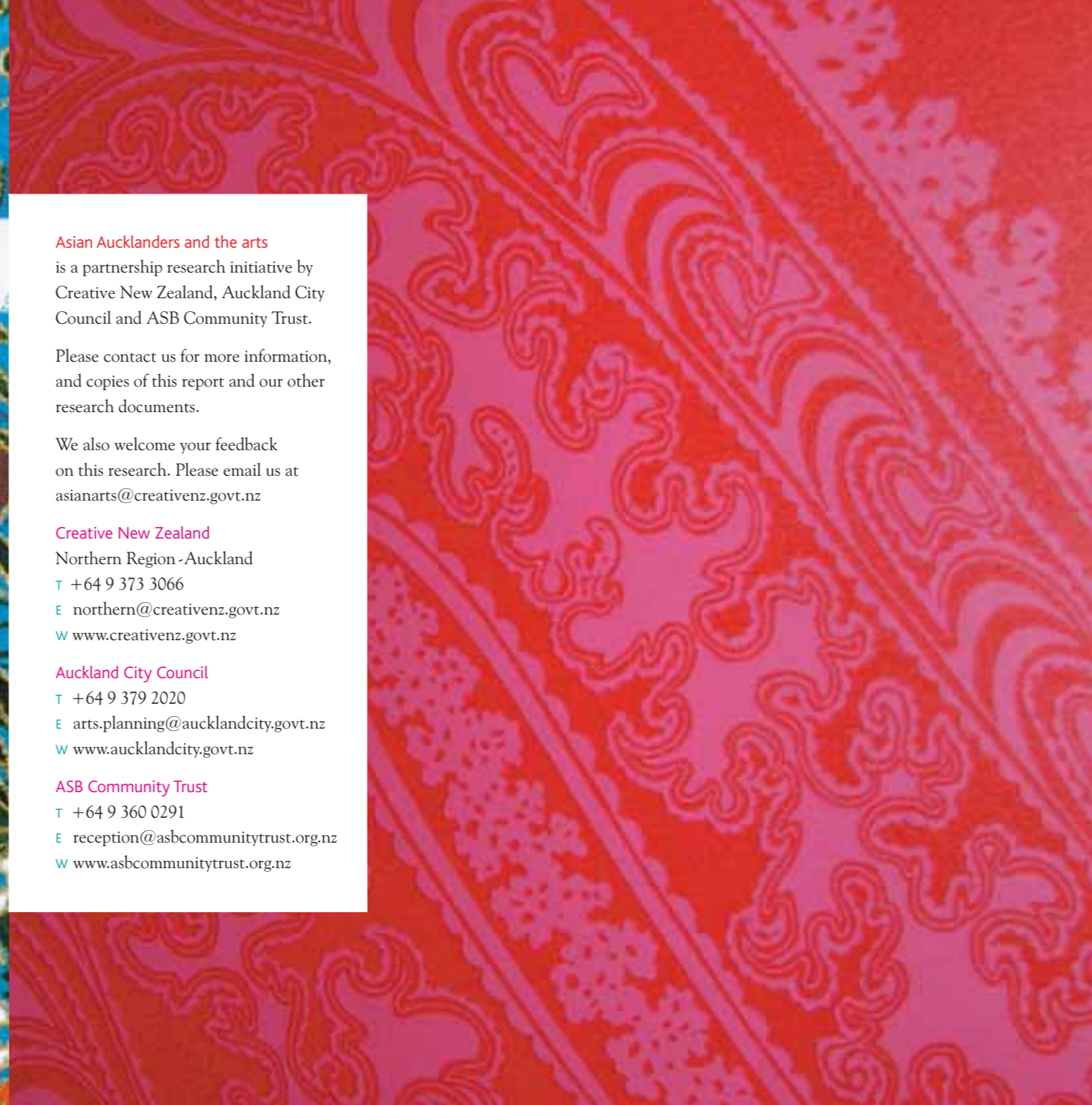
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Tēnā koutou me ngā ahuatanga o te wā. A tātou tini mate e hinga atu i o tātou kainga maha o te motu, rātou kua ngaro i te tirohanga kanohi haere atu ra. Te hunga takimano, kua riro ki te pō, te hokai a taiao, tauārai o te pō. Ko te tirama taipo kia rātou, titoko ko te ao mārama ko tātou ko te tirama taiao ki a tātou. Tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā tātou katoa. Kei raro ngā pitopito kōrero e pā ana kia Creative New Zealand mō te mahitahi, rangahau ki te taha o te iwi whānui kei Aotearoa e noho ana.



## Foreword

Creative New Zealand, Auckland City Council and ASB Community Trust commissioned research company Colmar Brunton in 2006 to undertake qualitative research with Chinese, Indian, Korean and Japanese communities in the Auckland region. The aim of the research was to gain an understanding of how Asian peoples engage with the arts.

The findings, presented in this report, are an important first step in our journey to connect with and support the various communities in the Auckland region whose origins lie in the Asian region.



## Creative New Zealand

This research into Asian Aucklanders and the arts will play an important role in helping Creative New Zealand define, and work towards, a future vision of the arts for *all* New Zealanders. We were delighted to work with

Auckland City Council and ASB Community Trust on this project.

New Zealand is a vibrant, multi-cultural society built on a bicultural foundation. This multiculturalism is reflected particularly in Auckland, our most populated region, where the Asian population is growing rapidly.

A key priority for Creative New Zealand over the next three years is to work with communities throughout the country to enhance their engagement with the arts, both as participants and audiences.

This report is full of stories, insights and examples that provide us with an understanding of how we can best support the artists, artforms and cultural traditions of this country's diverse ethnic communities.

One of Creative New Zealand's roles is to work with arts organisations to build audiences for the arts and to provide New Zealanders with greater access to the arts. The findings of this research will be an important tool to help reach Asian communities and increase their attendance of and participation in the arts.

For Creative New Zealand, undertaking this research has been an exciting step in our ongoing work to engage with and develop opportunities in the arts for Asian communities. This report adds to a growing body of evidence that Creative New Zealand is using to inform its work in this area. Next year, we will be undertaking both qualitative and quantitative research on Asians and the arts as part of our follow-up national study on New Zealanders and the arts.

Kia hora te mārino, kia whakapapa pounamu te moana, kia tere te kārohirohi.



**Stephen Wainwright**

Chief Executive  
Creative New Zealand

## Auckland City Council

Auckland City Council was pleased to partner again with Creative New Zealand, and to be joined by ASB Community Trust, in this pioneering research project.

This research builds on what we have already learned from the 2005 *Aucklanders and the Arts* project – that Aucklanders believe the greatest strength of our arts lies in our cultural diversity. The 2006 Census showed that Asian peoples now account for 24% of the Auckland city population – a 44% increase on 2001.

The findings will inform our future work to ensure Auckland City Council has appropriate strategies in place to engage successfully with this rapidly growing sector of our community. However, we hope the research will be useful to other local authorities in the Auckland region and beyond.

We also want to assist Auckland's arts organisations to build on the ways they engage with and attract this sector of the community through their programmes and activities.

Our aim is to nurture and showcase Auckland's creative talent and ensure there are opportunities for all our communities to experience and participate in the arts. Our Asian communities are already involved in a broad range of arts and cultural activities, and we are working directly with some of these communities by supporting significant events such as the Auckland International Cultural Festival, Diwali Festival and the Auckland Lantern Festival.

It is heartening that the research shows a high level of awareness of such events. However, we also face ongoing challenges to break down barriers to participation and increase accessibility to our programmes and services.

We want to develop a culturally inclusive city and this research supports our goal to use the arts as a tool to foster greater cross-cultural interaction. The arts can help bring different communities together to share cultures and promote greater understanding. I am sure this research will prove invaluable in guiding

Auckland City Council's policies to achieve this.



**Cr Penny Sefuiva**

Chairperson  
Arts, Culture and Recreation Committee  
Auckland City Council



## ASB Community Trust

ASB Community Trust welcomes the opportunity to work alongside Creative New Zealand and Auckland City Council on this exciting research into Asian Aucklanders and their attitudes to, attendance at and participation in the arts.

This research will inform our programme development and help ensure that we can respond to the growing needs of the diverse communities that make up Auckland. It is also hoped that the research will provide other community funders with valuable insights into Asian communities and overcome barriers that stand in the way of their engagement with the arts.

This research was commissioned in recognition of the growth of Asian communities within Auckland, and we value the opportunity to engage with these groups and learn more about their histories, motivations and challenges. As a major community funder in this region, our aim is to enrich the lives of people living in Auckland and Northland by working in partnership with community organisations to achieve the widest possible levels of participation.

To achieve our mission, we fund community organisations across six sectors: the arts, health and social services, education, sport and recreation, the environment and heritage, and community economic

development. In the arts, we support projects and organisations that foster access, engagement and cultural opportunities for all.

The Trust is researching each of the sectors it funds and this insight into Asian Aucklanders and the arts will complement that work. It has given us the opportunity to learn more about Auckland's diverse communities and will help guide our policy development.




Jennifer Gill

Chief Executive Officer  
ASB Community Trust



## Acknowledgements

Helen Bartle (Creative New Zealand), Susan Brooker (Auckland City Council) and Chloe Harwood (ASB Community Trust) led this project on behalf of these organisations.

Our very special thanks go to the seven members of the reference group: Kitty Chiu, Ruth DeSouza, Alistair Kwun, Melissa Lee, Dr James Liu, Dr Sapna Samant and Kentaro Yamada. Their knowledge, insights and generosity have been invaluable in guiding this project.

Thanks also to Cath Cardiff of Creative New Zealand, who initiated this project, and to the Colmar Brunton research team of Harry Pappafloratos, Jon Carapiet, Debby Giness and Carl Sarney.

We would also like to acknowledge the input and support we've had from tāngata whenua. Most of all, we wish to thank the families, communities and artists who took part in this research and provided us with such a rich source of information. These are your stories and we greatly appreciate the time you took to tell them to us.





introduction  
to the  
research

## Introduction to the research



### Why we did the research

Learning more about the diverse Asian communities in the Auckland region and how individuals, artists and families engage with the arts in New Zealand was the key focus of this research.

The Asian population is the fastest growing segment of New Zealand's total population, with most of this growth happening in Auckland. Recognising the significance of this trend, Creative New Zealand, Auckland City Council and ASB Community Trust formed a partnership in 2006 to commission research on Asian peoples and the arts.

In late 2005, Creative New Zealand in partnership with Auckland City Council commissioned Colmar Brunton to conduct research on New Zealanders' attitudes to, attendance at and participation in the arts. The findings, based on

qualitative and quantitative research, were published in *New Zealanders and the arts: Attitudes, attendance and participation in 2005* and in *Aucklanders and the arts: Attendance, participation and attitudes towards the arts in 2005*.

As well as surveying adult New Zealanders, this research included additional face-to-face interviews with Māori and Pacific peoples to provide sufficient sample size for analysis. Young people aged between 10 and 14 years were also interviewed. The research did not look specifically at Asian peoples.

This latest research, therefore, provides a vital snapshot into the experiences of people living in Auckland who have diverse and often deep cultural connections to Asia. Only qualitative research was undertaken. At this stage, we were more interested in hearing the stories of our survey participants than in knowing precise numbers of people engaged in any particular activity. That will be the subject of a national follow-up survey to *New Zealanders and the arts* research, to be undertaken by Creative New Zealand in 2008.

### What we wanted to know

What do we mean by the terms "Asian communities" or "Asian Aucklanders"? This is a very broad term, a label we have used in this report to capture the individuals, families and communities in Auckland whose origins lie in the Asian region.

Auckland is a vibrant, multicultural society and the home of Asian peoples from many countries. However, this research focused on Chinese, Indian, Korean and Japanese communities – the ethnic groups with some of the largest representation in the Auckland population.

In undertaking this research, we wanted to explore three areas:

- Asian peoples' attitudes to the arts
- the arts events they attend
- the arts activities they take part in.

We were particularly interested in gaining insights into people's cultural heritage and experiences, and how these influence their engagement with the arts. What are some of the barriers that prevent them from going to a play, a concert or an exhibition?

What is it that might stop them joining a book group or taking music lessons? Why might they see the arts as a hobby rather than a viable career option?

Among the aims of this research, we wanted answers to the following questions:

1. What do Asian communities and individuals define as the arts?
2. How do recent immigrant communities engage with the arts in terms of attitude, attendance and participation?
3. How does this differ from more established migrants and people of Asian descent who are born or have lived most of their life in New Zealand?
4. What arts activities, events and organisations in Auckland do people currently attend and participate in, and why?
5. What are the parental aspirations for their children in terms of arts participation and attendance, and why is this so?
6. What are the main differences in arts attendance, participation and attitudes between the communities we talked to?

7. What are the attitudes of younger people, under the age of 25, towards the arts?
8. What are the overall attitudes, both positive and negative, towards New Zealand arts and artists?
9. What are the attitudes, both positive and negative, to the more traditional heritage arts in New Zealand?
10. How do perceptions vary towards the work of New Zealand-born artists and that of international artists who come to New Zealand?



### How the research was conducted: methodology

Creative New Zealand, Auckland City Council and ASB Community Trust commissioned Colmar Brunton to undertake a qualitative study with Asian peoples about their engagement with the arts in the Auckland region.

In-depth interviews were conducted with Chinese, Indian, Korean and Japanese families, community leaders

and artists either in their homes or workplaces. Family interviews included multiple family members and were conducted in English, with language assistance provided where necessary.

This was a qualitative study to explore a range of perceptions and experiences. Rather than setting pre-determined definitions of "attendance" and "participation", those taking part in the research were free to define and describe their engagement in arts-related activities.

Participants in the research were recruited with the advice and support of the research reference group, through personal networks and by telephone, using the ConsumerLink panel. Participants were assured of confidentiality.

Sixteen families and nine artists were interviewed. You can read some of their stories on pages 28 to 45. Ten community leaders were also interviewed to provide background and context to the interviews with families and artists. Although these community leaders were not the main focus of the research,

their comments added depth to the research and highlighted issues and trends in their communities.

The families interviewed were:

- six Chinese (Taiwanese, Mainland China, Singaporean, Hong Kong) families
- four Indian families
- three Japanese families
- three Korean families.

Family members included children between the ages of eight years and 25 years, and those who had spent a varying length of time in New Zealand. Some had spent more than 25 years in New Zealand or were born here; some had been living in New Zealand for at least 15 years while others had only been here for between eight months and seven years.

The artists interviewed included:

- three Chinese (Taiwanese, Mainland China, Singaporean, Hong Kong) artists
- two Indian artists
- two Japanese artists
- two Korean artists.

These artists represented a range of ages and artforms, as well as a varying

length of time spent in New Zealand.

The community leaders were drawn from a range of community groups, church organisations and other associations and societies.

They included:

- four Chinese (Taiwanese, Mainland China, Singaporean, Hong Kong) leaders
- two Indian leaders
- two Japanese leaders
- two Korean leaders.

All interviews were conducted between November 2006 and January 2007. Each family interview was approximately two to two-and-a-half hours in length. Interviews with individual community leaders and artists were approximately one-and-a-half hours in length.

A reference group, made up of seven members representing a range of Asian cultures and experience, was also consulted during the project. The group played a significant role in shaping and advising on the project.



## What we already knew: demographics

The Auckland region recorded the strongest population growth (12.4%) in New Zealand between 2001 and 2006, according to findings compiled by Statistics New Zealand ([www.stats.govt.nz](http://www.stats.govt.nz)) following the 2006 Census.

The Asian population is growing faster than any other ethnic group in New Zealand with a 48.9% increase between 2001 and 2006. On Census Day 7 March 2006, the number of Asian peoples living in New Zealand was 354,552. Approximately two-thirds (234,222) live in the Auckland region.

The Māori, Asian and Pacific populations will all increase their share of the New Zealand population in the 20 years between 2001 and 2021. It is predicted that:

- the Māori population will make up 16.5% of the New Zealand population by 2021 (cf. 15.1% in 2001)
- the Asian population will make up 14.5% of the New Zealand population by 2021 (cf. 7% in 2001)

- the Pacific population will make up 9.1% of the New Zealand population by 2021 (cf. 6.7% in 2001).

Other demographic trends, based on the 2006 Census, show that:

- the Asian population in Auckland City increased by 44% between 2001 and 2006, and is 93,522 (24%) of Auckland City's total population of 382,539
- the Māori population in New Zealand (565,329) increased by 39,048 (7.4%) between 2001 and 2006. One in seven people identifies with the Māori ethnic group.
- the Pacific Island population in New Zealand (265,974) increased by 14.7% between 2001 and 2006
- Europeans now make up 67.6% of the New Zealand population, followed by Māori (14.6%). Those who identify themselves as "New Zealanders" (a new option on census forms) make up 11.1% of the population, followed by Asians (9.2%) and Pacific Island peoples (6.9%).
- The number of New Zealanders born in the United Kingdom and Ireland remains steady at 6.6% while those born in Asia stand at 6.5%.





what  
the  
findings  
tell us

## What the findings tell us



### An overview

A key feature of this research was the huge diversity within and across the groups we talked to. This diversity and range of views were reflected in a number of ways, including:

- a desire to hold on to traditional values and also to embrace contemporary values
- the degree of exposure to New Zealand lifestyles and traditions, influenced by the length of time interviewees had lived in New Zealand and been able to engage with the wider community
- levels of income
- stage of life, ranging from school children through to young professionals and the elderly
- a wide variation of knowledge of the arts and particular artforms.

For Asian peoples in Auckland – particularly those who were not born here – one of the main differences between their country of origin and

New Zealand is the size and diversity of the Asian region. There are also differences in the role of the arts in the country of origin, the level of funding for the arts and the scale of audiences. Clearly, language is also an important factor in Asian peoples' ability to engage with the arts in New Zealand.

There are, however, some common threads that emerged both across the migrant communities and with the wider New Zealand community. As revealed in the research report *New Zealanders and the arts: attitudes, attendance and participation in 2005*, people engage in the arts for enjoyment, self-expression and community interaction. They like to attend arts events with their families or their peer group.

Throughout this report, we have highlighted a number of opportunities that individuals, groups and organisations may find useful when they communicate with Asian communities.



## Some key findings

It is important to remember that the findings and perceptions outlined in this report are the result of a qualitative study and cannot be seen to represent the whole community. However, there were some clear themes that emerged among the artists, families and community leaders we spoke to.

These are some of the key findings.

- The arts are seen as a part of everyday life.
- Food, socialising and the arts are often entwined.
- The arts create a sense of belonging and identity, passing on established values and histories across generations.
- The arts bring communities together and build bridges across cultures.
- Traditional Māori arts are seen as New Zealand's most distinctive artistic expression.
- The boundaries between attending and participating in the arts can be blurred.
- Proficiency in the English language can be a barrier to attendance and participation.

- Lack of time and having no one to go with can be barriers to attendance and participation.
- Not knowing about an event or an artform – and how to find out more – is a common barrier to attendance and participation.
- Younger Asian people are typically more engaged with new technologies, and have more exposure to new and evolving art and artforms.
- Artists can feel branded as “Asians” even though they may have been born in New Zealand and see themselves as Kiwis.



## Attitudes to the arts

### Defining the arts

The term “the arts” can mean different things to different people, regardless of ethnicity. The interviewees' responses to a question asking them to define the arts reflected their diverse experiences, interests and cultural traditions.

In attempting to define the arts, there were comments about the difference between arts activities that:

- were seen as elitist and inaccessible versus arts that are more popular and accessible
- have a European or academic tradition versus contemporary art
- were seen as sophisticated and “good” for you versus the arts that are pure entertainment.

One young member of a new migrant Indian family even asked: “Is sport an art?”

Underpinning any definition of the arts is a generational change in perceptions of what the arts are. For older generations, traditional or “high art” in the European academic tradition defines what the arts are all about. As the arts evolve, pushing boundaries and incorporating new media, younger generations have a broader definition of the arts.

### Perceptions of New Zealand arts

New Zealand is a small country with a population of just over four million. This is in stark contrast to the dense

populations of many countries in Asia and had some influence on interviewees' perceptions of New Zealand arts.

Typically, there was a sense that New Zealand's size means that the quality of the performances and level of artistic skills may not be as high as the international acts that come to Auckland. Associated with this were several other perceptions, including:

- opportunities – and audiences – for the arts in New Zealand are relatively small
- funding for the arts is more limited here than in some countries in Asia
- career paths in the arts are limited and fewer artists can “make it” professionally.

The perceived lack of funding and limited career paths mean that some interviewees felt that in New Zealand, people engaged more in the arts in a voluntary or hobby capacity. A positive aspect of this is that participation in the arts as a hobby was seen by some as less intimidating than in their country of origin.

There was, however, an awareness of some world-class New Zealand artists

and arts (e.g. the films *Whale Rider* and the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy, and musicians Bic Runga, P Money, Kiri Te Kanawa and Brooke Fraser) although the range of awareness was limited. A quantitative survey would be needed to identify the New Zealand artists that were known to Asian peoples in Auckland.

Asked to describe what they saw as traditional New Zealand art, the interviewees mentioned traditional Māori arts. Typically, there was limited exposure to Māori arts - particularly contemporary Māori arts. Some spoke of the difference between what was termed “high art” in the European academic tradition and traditional Māori arts with their roots in daily life and rituals.

### Shared values

For some interviewees, Māori arts and their values associated with ceremony, spirituality and family resonated with their own cultural values and traditions. These shared values may provide opportunities for arts organisations to make connections in their programming and marketing of arts events. They may also offer

### opportunities for cross-cultural participation in the arts.

There also appears to be limited exposure to Pacific arts. However, the Pasifika Festival in Auckland City was mentioned as a great opportunity to experience Pacific arts. There was also recognition of the strong family traditions in Pacific communities that reflected some of the values in some Asian traditions.

Underpinning some of the responses to perceptions of Māori and Pacific arts is the fact that New Zealand is a relatively new country without the long histories and traditions of countries throughout Asia. Because of New Zealand’s “newness”, it may appear to lack depth in terms of historical and cultural richness.

The strong sports culture in this country also creates an impression that New Zealand’s identity is expressed more through sport than through the arts.

It is important to note that many of the migrants we interviewed had moved to New Zealand for its lifestyle

and landscape, and a different kind of life. Pursuing their arts interests wasn’t a motivating factor.

### The role of the arts

One particularly clear theme to emerge from the research was that for many Asian peoples, the arts, culture and identity are inextricably linked. The arts are not regarded as a distinct and separate practice but are a part of everyday life.

For many, the arts within migrant communities play a vital role in bringing people together. Eating together, sharing food and socialising are all important cultural aspects of this and are closely connected to the way in which the arts are seen as a part of everyday life.

It is interesting to note that Māori and Pacific peoples also see their arts, culture and life intertwined. “I don’t think of it as the arts. It’s just part of our culture,” said one Māori interviewee in the *New Zealanders and the arts* research. A Pacific interviewee said: “In our culture, the things people call arts are just part of life.”

For many of the people we interviewed, the arts also provide a cultural connection across generations, within their own culture and with other cultures. They can create a sense of belonging and address some fundamental questions. Where do I come from? Which culture do I most identify with? Where am I going?

Many also see the arts as a way to help non-Asian New Zealanders understand more about their culture. “Kiwi people generally have no idea about our culture other than the food that they have tried at the numerous Asian restaurants in Auckland,” said one interviewee.

### What young people think

Shopping, computer games, hanging out with friends, sport, texting, music ... all are activities that young people in New Zealand enjoy. Younger Asian people we interviewed shared many of the same interests as other young New Zealanders. Music, especially rock and hip hop, was seen as “cool”. It plays an important part in their lives and is seen as a way of encouraging cross-cultural interaction.

Dance is another artform seen as a way to help maintain cultural connection and also encourage cross-cultural interaction: for example, the combination of Bollywood, Pasifika and Māori dance moves with break dancing.

Young people tend to have greater exposure to Auckland’s multicultural society than people from the older generation. Children, for example, have cross-cultural experiences at school on a daily basis and are more exposed to the shifting values of contemporary society. In some cases, this can cause conflict within families about the continuation of traditional values versus the adoption of new values in New Zealand.

Typically, young people are more engaged with new technologies, giving them greater exposure to new and evolving art and artforms.

Among the under 25-year-olds interviewed, there’s a sense that some are now part of a new global community and not bound only to a Kiwi or a country-of-origin identity. As other studies have suggested, this fluid identification is a part of the

migrant and second-generation experience. In a globalised culture such trends can be expected to continue.

In some Asian cultural traditions, parental influence on young people’s lives may continue longer into the life of an adult child than in some other traditions. For example, many parents we interviewed expressed concern about the viability of a career as an artist in New Zealand. Although there is limited evidence of parents actively rejecting artistic careers for their children, there was little support for their children to pursue a career in the arts.

Few of the young people interviewed as part of the family expressed an interest in pursuing a career in the arts. The arts were seen as an interest rather than a sensible career path.

### Different stages of the migrant experience

The length of time that Asian peoples have been living in Auckland has a significant impact on their attitudes and the way they relate to the arts in New Zealand.

For some new migrants, attending or participating in the arts is an opportunity to meet people at a similar stage of migration and to share those experiences. However, for many new migrants to Auckland their main focus is to settle, cope with a new language, find work and schools for the children, establish a home and create a circle of friends. This can leave little room or time to engage with the arts.

For longer-term migrants, the arts may have become a more central part of their social life and circle of friends. They may have more time than when they first arrived and have a steady income, enabling them to expand their engagement with the arts. Of course, having more time and money will not necessarily motivate people to engage if they are not interested in the arts.

For those who have been born in New Zealand (the so-called 1.5 generation) or have spent most of their lives here, the experiences and relevance of the arts may be different yet again. These people may identify as Kiwis first and Asians second,

having a more complete connection with New Zealand culture and traditions than newer migrants with whom they might be confused. For some, this may lead to a sense of a loss of their own heritage and a desire to reconnect with their communities. At the same time, they may also sense that they are being stereotyped as “Asians” despite their long-term connection with New Zealand.



## Attendance

What makes Asian peoples attend arts events? Are their reasons for attending a play, a festival or an art gallery any different from other cultures in New Zealand? What are the barriers that discourage or prevent them from attending arts events?

As already mentioned, the boundaries between attendance and participation are not always as clearly defined for many of the Asian communities taking part in this research as they are for more traditional Western artforms.

## Four motivating factors

There are four primary reasons why Asian peoples may be motivated to attend arts events. These are:

- maintenance of tradition and culture
- outward expression and communication
- stimulation and fun
- family involvement.

## Tradition and culture

This includes traditional storytelling and plays, fine art paintings (often with religious themes), visiting museums and engaging in craft shows, as well as heritage performance arts. The motivation here is to maintain a tradition and ensure cultural identity. For some, this is about telling their stories and making sure they are heard across the community and passed on through the next generation.

The Auckland Museum is seen as a place where people can connect with a range of different cultures and their histories. It was often mentioned as one of the main places where different ethnic communities are exposed to Māori traditional artforms and performances.

## Expression and communication

A fundamental reason for people’s involvement in the arts is personal expression and communication with others. This was also the case for the diverse communities taking part in this research.

## Stimulation and fun

The arts as a form of entertainment and stimulation is an important motivation to attendance. This means that some arts events are competing with other forms of entertainment, including sport, eating out, shopping and, for younger people, simply hanging out with friends. The kinds of events mentioned in the interviews were the free arts/cultural festivals in Auckland, Cirque du Soleil, music concerts (particularly contemporary music), multi-media events and video installations.

## Family

The family is important in motivating Asian peoples to attend an arts or a cultural event. As with other cultures, doing things together as a family is important. Activities that meet this need include going to the circus, musicals and the museum.

## Events with particular appeal

Movies, comedy and festivals appear to have particular relevance and interest across the different communities interviewed. However, the study revealed a wide variation in the level of interest in individual artforms and a quantitative study would be needed to define this interest more accurately.

Auckland has a tradition of promoting and supporting large cultural festivals. These have particular appeal because they are often:

- cross-cultural or showcasing a particular culture
- free or low-cost
- suitable for all family members.

For some of the people we interviewed, comedy can be a safe medium in which to both challenge stereotypes and portray familiar aspects of a culture. Seeing their culture portrayed in a humorous and affectionate way was seen as highly relevant.

Typically, there was little understanding of what was meant by video installations. However, some younger people expressed an interest

because of the suggestion of videos and video games.

Performances that portray the migrant experience – displacement, retaining and developing an identity in a new land – have particular appeal for many communities. However, some expressed concern at the stereotyping that can happen when the artists and writers have not experienced it themselves. Related to this was the desire to see Asian communities portraying their own stories.

## Triggers to attendance

There are many reasons why Asian peoples attend arts events, including a personal interest in a particular artform or performer. Other common triggers that emerged in the research are:

- invitations
- international acts
- happening upon it by chance
- supporting your own
- a social excursion.

## Invitations

A personalised invitation can provide people with security and a sense

of acceptance that they have been invited to represent their community or simply join the community in a celebration or an arts-related event.

#### International acts

The arrival in New Zealand of a well-known international act, either as a local hero from their country of origin or as a world-class performer, can have great appeal for a community. Sometimes the visiting act is only well-known within a particular community but this can still create a great deal of interest and drive attendance through community networks and word-of-mouth.

#### Happening upon it

Sometimes the key trigger to attending an event is happening upon it by chance – particularly for festivals and some shows. This indicates a communication gap and the difficulty for some migrant communities, especially for individuals with limited English, in finding out about events.

#### Supporting your own

As with any community, many of the interviewees felt a need to support

their own artists, whether they are friends, family or visiting artists from their country of origin. Knowing the artist can be highly appealing because of the social interaction and sense of community it may provide.

#### A social excursion

Attending an arts or cultural activity is an opportunity to share time with family and friends, and to engage with the wider community.

#### Barriers to attendance

Many of the barriers for Asian peoples attending arts events are similar to the barriers expressed by people who took part in the *New Zealanders and the arts* research: for example, having no one to go with and lack of time.

Other barriers include:

- lack of knowledge of a particular artform and not understanding its lingo (i.e. the artform “language” and idioms)
- language
- the cost, which might include the ticket, getting there, and the associated social activity such as a meal in a restaurant

- traffic congestion, parking and public transport issues.

#### Language

The level of proficiency in the English language is an obvious barrier for many Asian peoples and is not simply about the difficulty of understanding a performance. It can also create barriers to finding out about the event, making a booking and then reading the programme when you have arrived at the event.

Individuals and families with limited English tend to engage with their own language media, created locally by the community, or listen to broadcasts over the internet or other channels from their country of origin. This means that some people are not getting exposed to some of the mainstream communications promoting arts events in Auckland.

#### Language options

**Making a booking for a show can be a daunting prospect for people with limited English. More language options for people making online or telephone bookings would help overcome this barrier.**

Once at the event, programmes can be an important information source to enhance the audience’s enjoyment and encourage future attendance. However, this is not the case if the language itself is a barrier.

#### Finding out about events

Clearly, people can’t go to an arts event if they don’t know about it. Asian communities have important networks that share information about activities, often via emails and newsletters. Sometimes, these networks are linked through a church organisation, an association or a social group, or the school community.

For families, schools are an important channel for information about arts and cultural events. Children can help with language and also act as a vehicle for communications about these events.

Informal word-of-mouth networks can also be an extremely effective way for people to find out about events, as well as motivating them to attend. “If friends are into it, and you know what’s going on, and they want someone to go with, they’ll tell it to you and you go too.”

#### Importance of peers

**The New Zealanders and the arts research showed that “having someone to go with” was an important motivator in attending an arts event. Peer-to-peer marketing strategies and word-of-mouth are powerful tools that arts organisations can use in engaging with Asian communities.**

#### Perceptions about arts events

Events in Asian communities, both in their country of origin and in New Zealand, often have a strong social component. People eat, talk and move around, with the arts occurring simultaneously as part of these social interactions.

For some interviewees, therefore, the idea of watching a performance passively and in silence can lack appeal. Indeed, there may be a fear of censure if a comment or action is seen by other audience members as disruptive.

A sense of social exclusion was also expressed. By going to certain arts events, where the audience is

predominantly Pākehā New Zealanders, some interviewees thought they might stand out and not feel accepted. This may simply be a perception or it may be based on actual experiences of not being made welcome.

#### A positive step

**Actions to welcome Asian audiences and participants may help reduce feelings of exclusion. These might be as simple as a greeting, a conversation or a personalised invitation to attend an event or take part in an arts activity. One way to deal with the language barrier is to liaise with community leaders or networks.**



#### Participation

Church choirs, piano, violin, drumming, drawing, ikebana, eggshell carving, calligraphy, animation, musicals and origami are among a wide range of traditional and contemporary arts activities that interviewees said they participated in.

Some of the people we interviewed felt that community and voluntary arts events are more significant as a point of engagement than professional arts.

Because of the social role of the arts, the boundaries between attending an arts event and participating in the arts can be blurred.

### Communication channels

A number of community associations and societies in the Auckland region represent Asian communities.

These can be important channels for communicating with these communities, encouraging arts attendance and participation, and supporting what is already taking place. The appendix on page 56, *Useful organisations, media and networks, may be a good starting point.*

### Triggers to participation

Across the communities, there are several common triggers that encourage arts participation. These include:

- exposure to the arts at school, combined with parental pressure to participate

- affiliation with a community group
- involvement in church groups and religious festivals.

### Chinese community

For some members of the Chinese community, practising the arts is seen as a means of “using the other side of the brain” and developing self-discipline. For example, learning to play the piano or taking ballet lessons are seen as a means of self-improvement and personal achievement.

For some people originating from the densely populated centres of Mainland China and Hong Kong, participating in some arts activities is more achievable in New Zealand. For example, having a piano in your own home to practise on is easier in New Zealand than in China and Hong Kong because there are less space constraints. That said, the cost of a piano and paying for lessons may remain a barrier to participation.

### Japanese community

For some people of Japanese origin living in Auckland, participating in the arts is a way of maintaining social

connections with their community – at the same time maintaining cultural values and sharing them with the next generation. For example, a woman may belong to an ikebana group to maintain her friendships with other Japanese women, as well as to enjoy an artform she has a personal interest in.

Some interviewees mentioned the relaxed atmosphere and environment in New Zealand, which made it easier to perform as a non-professional.

“You don’t need to be perfect to be able to perform in front of your peers here.”

Formal invitations, either from the Japanese Consulate or organisations representing the Japanese community, can be important access points for participation in the arts.

### Indian community

Creating and maintaining social and community networks is often the key to participating in the arts for the Indian community. Across people of different age groups, there was a common expression of enjoying the

vitality of their culture and religious diversity. In some religious events, participation and attendance become merged experiences, intertwined as both family members and friends either perform or support those they know who are performing.

Some interviewees saw the fusion of traditional and modern expressions of the arts as a feature of the arts in the Indian community. While traditional artforms enable people to maintain and share their heritage, this modern expression ensures that the artforms are never dull and allows everyone to become involved.

School events and dance competitions are seen as a way of building an awareness of some artforms, both within and beyond the Indian community. One family mentioned with pride that a group of Pacific Island children had won the Bollywood Dance Competition. For them, this signalled both an accessibility of the artform and a willingness to embrace wider participation.

### Korean community

For people in the Korean community, the arts can be an important

opportunity to enjoy a hobby in their spare time and also maintain unique cultural traditions. Sometimes, the hobby is purely for its own sake but interviewees also mentioned that a hobby could create opportunities for work or travel.

“Koreans like learning. They are compelled to learn things, including learning artistic skills.”

Interviewees also commented about the influence of peer pressure and collective activities. They said that Koreans were “more group-oriented than Western individualism”. To be part of the group, they felt compelled to do the same activity as others.

### Barriers to participation

What is it that discourages or prevents Asian peoples in Auckland from participating in arts activities? Cost, lack of time and different priorities are some of the common barriers emerging from the research – barriers shared by many New Zealanders, as revealed in the *New Zealanders and the arts* research.

For new migrants, in particular, different priorities dominate their lives in those early years after arrival.

One commonly expressed barrier is the issue of knowledge: not knowing about an event or artform simply because it is unfamiliar; and not knowing where to find out more or where to go to participate in a particular artform.

### Underfunded and undervalued

Another common barrier to participation among the people we interviewed was a sense that the arts in New Zealand were underfunded – a sentiment related to the view that the arts may be undervalued.

In particular, interviewees told stories about people who participated in certain arts events as performers. Their efforts had received limited acknowledgement and token appreciation. Petrol vouchers and certificates of participation were often inadequate recognition of the time, effort and skills involved in participating in the event. They felt that this could result in fewer people participating in a particular artform or performing in certain arts events.

The costs associated with participation are also an important barrier. If there is no or little external funding for a group or individual to take part in an artform, significant challenges may emerge in terms of finding a space for practice, spaces for performances, buying materials for props, and even transporting or storing equipment. The cost of lessons was also mentioned as a barrier to participation.

#### Basic needs

Help with basic needs such as storage for instruments and costumes, transportation and affordable rehearsal/performance space would support individuals and community groups to maintain and even expand their engagement with the arts.

#### Language

Not being able to read or speak English fluently can be a barrier to participating in the arts. In the first place, it can be hard to find out just what arts activities there are to participate in. And then language can be a barrier to engaging in the artform itself and working with others.

Language can also prove a barrier in terms of accessing sponsorship and funding to participate in an artform or put on a performance. A number of times, interviewees mentioned that they didn't know where to go for funding and support. And if they did know where to go, they found the process difficult.

A final barrier that language can present is trying to promote events beyond their own communities. Typically, communities have their own communication channels such as email, posters and media. These can reach people within the community in their own language but they do little to reach the wider community or other ethnic groups who don't share that language.

#### Promoting an event

A lack of English language skills may mean that some community organisers and participants find it difficult to promote their event to a wider community. Offers of help in the design and implementation of communications may be valued by migrant communities.





Sharing  
Stories

## Sharing stories



For Asian communities, as with any community, the arts are a way to tell people's stories – stories of their culture, their history and their life experiences. These stories help them make connections within their own community and with other communities, communicating across generations and cultures.

As in any ethnic group, communities are made up of individuals. While there are common features that many of these individuals share, there is also a great diversity of attitudes and influences that affect the ways in which Asian peoples engage with the arts.

This report also recognises that migrant communities are continually evolving as they respond to life in the Auckland region, and to its diverse cultures and communities.

### Not their real names

This section offers additional perspectives gained through the

interviewing process. However, it is important to remember that the following stories reflect individual experiences and perceptions of the families and artists interviewed, and may not represent the full range of views of Asian peoples in New Zealand. The names used here are pseudonyms and in some cases, personal details have also been changed. All the stories are extracts from more extensive profiles.



## A snapshot of communities

### Chinese community

There was a perception among the people we interviewed that the migrant Chinese community in New Zealand has lost some of the skills of, and interest in, Chinese traditional arts through the generations.

Among Chinese peoples, there may be different levels of understanding and familiarity with Chinese traditional arts. For example, those from Singapore and Malaysia, especially

during the wave of migration in the 1970s, were perceived to be English-speaking, educated and far less conservative than Chinese people from other areas. As one artist said, "They are just a lot more chilled out about Chinese tradition." They mainly came to New Zealand for specific jobs and to fill a skill shortage. With habits and attitudes similar to those of middle-class Pākehā, adapting to their new home was comparatively easy for some.

People from Hong Kong, on the other hand, were perceived as being more traditional and conservative, and keen to preserve the traditions of their culture.

Interviewees also described the Chinese community as tending to be risk-averse. Young people were encouraged to attend university and choose a degree that offered the best opportunities with the lowest risk.

### Japanese community

These days, Japan is seen as a mix of East and West with its people quick to adapt to new environments. Many of those interviewed describe the decision to leave Japan as one

motivated by the willingness to experience other cultures and an enjoyment of travel. However, this has also resulted in a level of transience and fragmentation in the community, with its mix of settled and more recent residents. Some see traditional culture suffering as a result.

For some Japanese people, it can be a challenge to attend an arts event with other people. They're not sure whether to be honest in their comments or say they enjoyed something because it's the "right" thing to say in Japanese culture. For some, therefore, it's easier simply not to attend than take a risk.

For others, an "official" invitation to attend an event or participate in something acts as a seal of approval. The smaller size of the Japanese community compared to other Asian communities in Auckland can also act as a barrier because there are fewer specifically Japanese events to go to.

There appears to be a limited number of established community networks. The Japanese Consulate and the New Zealand Japan Society of

Auckland are important but there are few newspapers or television or radio programmes in the Japanese language.

### Korean community

Before the 1990s, the population of Koreans living in New Zealand was low. But since then, there have been waves of migration to this country. The Korean community in Auckland has a strong church connection: there are many church groups and six Saturday Korean schools. These church groups tend to be a starting point for cultural performance groups and Koreans interested in participating in the arts can meet, network and find audiences to perform to.

The Korean Embassy and its Consulate Office in Auckland are active in helping to build a Korean cultural presence in New Zealand. However, the church-focused community, combined with language issues, may limit engagement with non-Korean communities.

### Indian community

The Indian community has experienced a rapid increase in migration in the past ten years to

become a sizeable community with an established presence in Auckland. There is large diversity within the community, which is made up of Indians from the sub-continent as well as Fijian Indians. There is also a mix of religions, including Christians, Hindus, Buddhists and Muslims.

Speaking English is more common among some Indian migrants compared to other Asian peoples. However, this is not always the case – especially among the older community members. There are some concerns that these older people are not able to engage with the arts for the same reasons as their non-Indian peers: for example, people with a physical disability, transport, money and language.

For many, spiritual and cultural traditions still play a strong role in everyday life, and there are many religious and cultural festivals celebrated throughout the year.

Some Indians may have lost relative economic strength and social status since moving to New Zealand and this may also have an impact on their ability to engage with the arts.

## Family stories

### Appealing to the mainstream

#### The Guangs, new migrant/born here, from Mainland China

Doris came to New Zealand from Mainland China for a holiday ten years ago and while she was here, she met a New Zealand-born Chinese man, Steve, whom she married. They have a daughter who is in Year 2 at primary school. Doris is a fulltime mother and Steve is an accountant.

Most of their entertainment involves shopping or watching a movie, either at the cinema or at home. Once a month, they try to get to a show. They find out about these shows from *The New Zealand Herald*, *The Sunday Star Times* or the Chinese newspapers available in Auckland. They also get the occasional email from TicketDirect, and Doris sometimes listens to Chinese radio and watches CCTV on SKY TV.

When they see an advertisement for a show, they consider the dates (Can we make it then or will we be too busy?), the venue (How far away is it? How do you get there? Is there easy parking?), and the cost.

Chinese-influenced shows always catch their attention and they usually try to go. “The Chinese shows we’ve gone along to have been well-attended by the Chinese community and often sell out. In fact, many Chinese people are already involved in the arts and I’m not sure there’s a need to encourage more.”

Doris enjoyed singing as a hobby when she was younger and her daughter has just started singing lessons. She will also be taking piano lessons and ballet lessons. Doris says her own parents could never afford proper music lessons when she was a child. However, she would discourage her daughter from choosing music or ballet as a career path. That’s because it is so difficult, especially in New Zealand, to earn a decent living and have a secure future as a musician or dancer.

Overall, Doris and Steve think that Chinese people tend to be fairly conservative and become more so as they get older. They suggest that shows need to be more mainstream and not so fringe: “Things we’ll expect to enjoy rather than expect to be confused by.”

This would encourage more people to participate in and attend the arts.

### Earning a living

#### The Parks, new migrants from Korea

Jin and his family moved to New Zealand in 1996 from Korea. He is a teacher and his wife, Hee-Ju, is a full-time home-maker. They have two children studying at tertiary institutions.

Although Jin teaches languages, he did a master of fine arts in Korea as well as his teaching qualification. “You would never do just a fine arts degree ... You need a way to actually make some money.”

Their daughter, Maria, is studying visual arts and psychology. At the moment, she is looking for funding for an exhibition space with one of her fellow students. She is considering applying for funding but is also looking at getting sponsorship from a private company. She is more hopeful than her father that it may be possible to pursue a career in the arts. However, she is aware of her father’s experience and has followed his advice by studying a subject with more certain career opportunities.

Compared to Korea, attending arts events is less affordable in New Zealand. That’s because the bigger population in Korea means larger audiences and therefore cheaper tickets. Transport costs are also lower in Korea.

Two or three Korean musicians come to New Zealand every year but the tickets are usually too expensive.

### Value for money

#### The Duans, long-term Chinese migrants from Singapore

Weng and his wife Mayling moved to New Zealand from Singapore in 1988 when Weng was offered an IT job here and Mayling was able to find a job in finance.

They learn about arts events from the *What Now* book of events in Auckland, *City Scene* and *AK@Play*. The library has other booklets too, and they often come across events advertised in *The New Zealand Herald* or *Central Leader*.

They tend to work out what’s on and what they’ll attend on a month-by-month basis. One major barrier to attending these events is not being able to get food easily after 9pm on a

weekday. In Singapore, they could go out to see a show and have dinner afterwards but here, they have to eat very early if they want to go out because nothing will be open once the show is finished. Parking is also a problem.

Attending the arts costs about the same in New Zealand as it does in Singapore. They often work out the price per hour of entertainment when deciding on the value of an event.

They feel that in New Zealand there is more opportunity to enjoy participating in the arts as a lifestyle.

“Singapore is more academic and commercial. Everyone’s chasing the dollars. It’s more important to have an income first and a lifestyle after that.”

They think that people in New Zealand are more accepting of art as an occupation and that “it’s not so on the fringe”.

### A non-essential item

#### The Pangs, long-term migrants from Hong Kong

Rick and Penny moved from Hong Kong to South Africa in 1991, and then

to New Zealand in 1997. They work in the public health sector, and have a daughter, Anita, studying at university and a son, Dan, at high school.

“We’re a halfway transitional family,” Anita says.

“We value our Chinese heritage but we have been westernised. A typical Chinese family would have Mum at home not working, no oil paintings on the wall, and Dad doing most of the talking.”

Rick says that if they hear of Chinese performers coming to New Zealand they’re interested in going along as a family. They enjoy catching up with people in the Chinese community when they go to festivals such as the Lantern Festival and the Moon Festival.

They feel there is a lot on offer in New Zealand but it’s all much more expensive than in Hong Kong. “Hong Kong has easy access to a vast variety of arts events. We have an underground railway to everywhere and there are also big stadiums that seat up to 40,000 people. So it tends to be cheaper and easier to attend arts events.”

Asked to consider New Zealand art, they mention a range of artforms such as tapa cloth, moko face tattoo and flax weaving. They appreciate Māori art and believe it to be of first-class quality but they don't go out of their way to see it.

“As much as we enjoy art, it's a non-essential so if there's something on that appeals to us we'll go if we can afford it at the time, but we won't save up especially to go.”

In terms of art as a career path, they say that:

“Parents in Hong Kong want their children to have a stable career. There's no social benefit or subsidy so you need to earn a living yourself to put food on the table. To be a professional artist, you either have a second job or you can afford to live off your family's inheritance.

“Asians like to do statistics and calculations. We're not risk-takers like New Zealanders tend to be and a career as an artist is just not viable. Studying art would make you a burden to the family as it's a high-risk investment.”

#### A part of life The Charterjees, new migrants from Sri Lanka

Kevin, wife Ritu and their son Tony moved to New Zealand in 2004. Kevin works as a company administrator and Ritu works in the public service sector. Tony is in Year 12 at secondary school.

They used to go to more movies and theatre, and dine out more, before they came to New Zealand. For them, low income is the main barrier to attending the arts. “We were in quite a high income bracket back home and now we're in a relatively low one.” Their costs of living are higher here.

Another thing they've noticed is that the dates of events aren't as well-publicised as they're used to.

“Back home, everyone knows a month in advance when there's an event happening ... Publicity is not so prominent here.”

Also, they have few friends or no family to go along with, and no family to help with the costs.

Going out to the movies was a favourite form of entertainment for them back home but the experience was quite different to here. They're used to huge 600-seat cinemas where there's lots of buzz and excitement. People get dressed up to go along and often go in large family groups. “Here it is very casual, just like watching at home ... People get more excited about going to the beach. That's a big deal for Kiwis.”

The Charterjees say that in Sri Lanka, the arts are much more a part of life and happen during religious festivals or pageants. “More or less, there's a cultural activity or pageant every month with dance, music, food, costumes and so on.”

#### Going out as a family The Khatri, born here, Indian heritage

Jimmy Khatri was born in New Zealand and says his grandfather was one of the first Indians to come and live here. Jimmy is now retired and lives in the house next door to his daughter Shelly, husband Sam and their two young children.

Shelly was also born in New Zealand

but met her husband (English-born Indian) in the United Kingdom where they had their first child. They've since had a second child in New Zealand.

Although the family hasn't lived in India for several generations, the Khatri still like to retain their Indian culture where they can.

“We like to do Indian things like Diwali, social get-togethers, and we like to support Those Indian Guys and our cricketers.”

When it comes to putting on events, sponsorship by local business is common among the Indian community. “Indian people aren't looking for handouts. We tend to want to stand on our own two feet, which is why the Indian community puts things on for themselves.”

When they attend these events, they tend to go as a family or not at all. “Indian people won't get an outsider babysitter. Only a family member can do that so you have to have a family member living near by if you want to go out for the evening.”

They see New Zealand art as Māori art and say that Indian art is about dance and music, is often part of a festival and is almost always accompanied by food.

#### Time to participate The Takahashis, long-term migrants from Japan

Kane moved to New Zealand with his family in 1991 to lecture in a tertiary institution in Auckland. His wife, Tami, is an ikebana florist and runs training sessions in floristry. Their son Chris has recently finished a degree in interior design.

It's easier to participate in and attend the arts in New Zealand, compared to Japan where “You're always working, there's no extra time.”

They find out about Japanese arts events through magazines like *Gekkan NZ*, *E-cube* and *MJ*; through *The New Zealand Herald* and local newspapers; on the internet; and from brochures at their local community centre. They've also received invitations to the Emperor's birthday celebrations at the Japanese Consulate.

Asked about uniquely New Zealand art, they mention Māori art - weaving, carving, singing and haka - and also New Zealand landscaping, using native plants.

“New Zealand is a young country so other than Māori art everything follows Western forms – like Kiri Te Kanawa, who is a New Zealand singer but sings in a Western classical style.”

#### Getting in touch The Kobayashis, new migrants from Japan

Alex moved to New Zealand in 2002, two years before his wife, Miya, and their two children moved here. He wanted to come to New Zealand because “it's not Japan, I can speak English and it's warm”.

Their children learn musical instruments. They say it's easier to enjoy playing music as a hobby in New Zealand because they are under much less pressure from other academic study than they would be in Japan.

“Other kids also practise their instruments much harder in Japan so it’s harder to perform because everyone’s much more skilled than you are. But here I feel more free and everyone’s more relaxed,” their daughter says.

Miya and Alex wouldn’t discourage their children from becoming professional musicians but it’s harder to earn money that way because “it’s not really a job”. They would be expected to have another job as a back-up.

In Japan, they say, it’s much more expensive to go to an arts event. It’s hard to get tickets and it’s also very difficult to get to the concert because of the traffic. “It’s so hard to move around in Japan and after a concert you feel exhausted. But here in New Zealand we can drive there and park, then drive home.”

The magazine *Gekkan NZ* is how they would most likely find out about a Japanese art event in New Zealand, as well as posters in the shopping centre and on the internet. They feel it is just as easy as in Japan to find out about arts events.

They think there needs to be a more active Japanese association to encourage more Japanese people to attend arts events, and also help people meet and do things together. It’s hard to get in touch with Japanese society in New Zealand and they suggest this might have something to do with the generally “closed” nature of Japanese people. “Perhaps we need to look at how Kiwis are so friendly, kind and welcoming.”

#### Peer pressure The Kims, long-term migrants from Korea

Jae Kim and his wife, Min-Ji, arrived in New Zealand 15 years ago. He is much more of a golf fanatic than an arts enthusiast although every so often, when he has some spare time during the day, he will walk from his work in the city to the Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki. He also keeps an eye on the banners outside the gallery to see if there’s a particular exhibition coming up that he might be interested in.

They enjoy the occasional trip to the theatre to see shows such

as *Les Miserables* and *Mama Mia*. They learn about upcoming arts events through television, pamphlets outside the Civic Theatre and by talking with friends. They subscribe to two Korean newspapers, *NZ Times* and *Korea Times*, where they find out about Korean events and performances. They have also been invited by the Korean Consulate to attend some events.

Jae says Korea can offer a greater variety of activities because of its population. He says that there seems to be more investment in the arts in Korea because there’s a greater potential income from larger audiences. They also commented that the GDP per capita in Korea is higher than in New Zealand so there’s generally more money around to attend arts events.

Participating in the arts (e.g. drawing, speech, poetry, taekwondo, dance, ballet, gymnastics) as a hobby is encouraged because it’s enjoyable to do and may provide travel/teaching opportunities as well as fitting in with the group.

“Koreans are more group-orientated by comparison to Western individualism. In order to be part of the group, you are compelled to do the same – same hobby or interest. We’re quite sensitive to peer pressure.”

#### Settling in The Wangs, new Chinese migrants from Taiwan

Margaret is a solo mother of two adult sons. They first applied to live in New Zealand in 1993 and were finally approved to move here in 2003. They see New Zealand as a good place to learn English, which they hope will improve their opportunities in the future.

Margaret feels that there are fewer places in Auckland for her to go dancing compared with Taiwan, especially for middle-aged people like herself. Because her English isn’t very good, she’s less confident about going out too.

As well as the expense of many arts events, the Wangs feel that for new migrants there are other more important things to learn when you’re

settling in. Art is fairly low on the priority list.

They are members of the Taiwanese Association, which costs them \$60 a year, and they receive newsletters and invitations to shows. They also get information about arts events from the local newspaper, posters at university and Taiwanese websites.

#### More than butter chicken The Narayans, new migrants from India

Manu, Sita and their two children (Yas, aged 21 and Anu, 14) migrated to New Zealand in 1999 from India. Both parents work full-time. Yas studies at university and Anu is at school.

All of them enjoy modern Indian arts from Bollywood to Bhangra dance, and like to share this in conjunction with a family meal, and with other families and friends. This may also involve a beer, a barbeque, card games or Playstation “sing star” to get them performing.

Exposure to Māori and Pacific art has been limited: mainly through university and at the Pasifika Festival.

Manu and Sita note the cultural connections in small things “like the blessing of buildings ... We do the same ... Beliefs and rituals are very similar.”

Although they have been in New Zealand for seven years, finding time is still a barrier to them engaging in the arts. As well as time, other factors that limit the number of arts events they go to are transport difficulties, the cost of parking and the cost of tickets for the whole family.

“In India, people are into the arts and drama, and these have much more exposure. It’s cheap - maybe \$2 or \$3 even at the top end - so you can afford it.

“For new migrants, we’re all struggling to settle down and so much as I want to go, money is a constraint. So are other commitments.”

Manu says Indian community events are as much about socialising as entertainment. People can be involved through groups such as Auckland Marathi Association, which puts on

plays throughout the year. This is open to everyone and even a couple of Chinese people have become involved.

He says the Fijian-Indian community has a connection to other Pacific cultures but is also very active in connecting to their Indian heritage although their experiences are different to migrants from India.

Participation in arts and cultural events through community organisations can be a struggle because of low budgets and a non-professional approach. Funding could help improve the quality of the experience. Building awareness of where to get funding is important, Sita says. “The thing is the formalities ... how you get things done, who to go to for the information.”

Most of all, Anu wants to see more festivals and cross-cultural events. “I want them to create more events and more awareness of what we are.

“Kiwis know us for our food but we’re more than butter chicken.

“Get the information out there, especially expose it to students at

the grass roots as they are the next generation. Provide enough funding to make it easy to access and affordable. And give it more exposure: national television reaches most households and is free to view. Diwali was on TV this year for the first time and people who’d seen it came to me and said: ‘I’d like to go there’.”

#### Hip thing to do

#### The Reddys, new migrants from India

The Reddy family moved from Bombay in 2003, motivated by their view of New Zealand as a good place to raise their children. Both parents, Sanji and Sarah, work and their three children (Rav, 14, Roya, 12 and Tina, 10) are all at school.

It’s the outdoors New Zealand that the family enjoys and likes to share with visitors from overseas: Western Springs, One Tree Hill, Devonport and Cornwallis Beach. These activities are also easier to plan for in terms of cost.

For the Reddys, it’s really important for the family to be able to do things together. Therefore, arts activities with a strong entertainment quality appeal to them. They mention plays

such as *Krishnan’s Dairy*, the film *Bend it Like Beckham* and visiting performers such as Canadian comedian Russell Peters as particularly appealing because of the humour and resonance in their portrayals of familiar community quirks. That said, the cost of all the family going to events is prohibitive. Combined with the pressure of time, it means they sometimes end up not going.

The Auckland Museum appeals as a way to learn more about their new homeland and its history. Traditional folk dancing and singing hold appeal as a way of learning more about their own and other communities’ heritage. For similar reasons, Māori and Pacific arts are of interest to most of the family although they have had limited exposure to them.

Sanji says Māori and Pacific peoples’ strong family connections and their respect for ceremony are values shared by Indian communities.

For Sarah, the benefits of the arts are in “touching the deeper self ... it gets you in touch with the emotions and spirits ... the soul of a country”. Arts events can also be a chance for the

family to learn new things together and hold on to their own heritage.

“The arts are a powerful tool to pass down traditions of the past to new generations and not lose touch with our roots.”

They say that in India, rich and poor alike participate in events and the associated arts activities. One of the benefits is escaping from the suffering and reality of the lives of those less well-off.

“Indian culture has everyone involved. It’s very family-oriented.”

On top of time and cost, another barrier to engagement with the arts is knowing about events that may be of interest. “There’s no will to go unless it is promoted and made accessible. And it has to be easy. It’s not as easy as going for a meal. It has to be planned and takes effort to think about it,” Sanji says.

Sanji has some ideas on how to encourage people to engage with the arts. For example, linking arts into

more popular community events; offering discounted tickets for families; using word of mouth, and using celebrity endorsement to make arts attendance cool.

“It should become a trendy thing. If it becomes hip, people may be more interested. For the youth and kids, show that it’s not the sophisticated thing; not nerdy or for geeks but rather, that it’s the hip thing to do.”

#### Broad traditions

#### The Nakamuras, long-term migrants from Japan

Kami and her husband, Harry, migrated to New Zealand in the mid 1990s and had previously travelled and worked outside of Japan. They have two children: Juro, aged 10 and Aneko, aged 13.

The family is involved in the Japan Society of Auckland and when they were interviewed, they were planning to celebrate Japanese Day at the ASB Stadium. It was another chance for the children to be with the wider Japanese community.

In terms of communicating to the Japanese community, they say that

many Japanese people are more integrated into mainstream Kiwi life because the community is much smaller than some other Asian groups. Therefore, trying to reach them through community networks may not be effective.

Compared to New Zealand, they say that art in Japan is “a part of daily life. We talk about it: here they talk about sport.” Opportunities to attend arts events are far fewer here than in Japan, Kami says.

“It’s 120 million compared to four million. It’s a small economy here and you can’t expect as much.”

Kami and Harry appreciate the arts as an expression of the creative imagination in many forms and from different cultural traditions. They are also a form of entertainment, a link to ancient times and an escape from everyday life. They say that Japanese traditions are broad and include a huge number of different artforms, ranging from Kabuki performance through to martial arts, garden design and the tea ceremony.

They feel that Japanese contemporary culture has aspects of both Asia and Europe, and has a level of sophistication that may not be typical of other Asian countries.

For Kami and Harry, the arts are a way to bring people together. They would like to see organisations such as Auckland City Council and the Japanese Consulate working with community groups to provide more official events - particularly cross-cultural ones. “Can we not bring these communities together? There’s no communication between them. The current focus is in maintaining their own culture but it doesn’t need to be at the expense of creating bridges between these different cultures.”

They would also like to see more focus on different age groups in the events on offer. For younger people, the entertainment factor is important and there needs to be “more hands-on stuff”.

#### Generational differences The Maengs, long-term migrants from Korea

Hwun and Nam-Hee have been in New Zealand since the early 1990s

and have their own business. They have two sons, Karl and Alistair, who are teachers and are both in their twenties.

Although family life is busier than in the past, they say they still enjoy activities together - family meals, watching television, and participating in events organised by the Korean church or Christian organisations.

Hwun says that the Korean church is an important way to maintain a connection to their culture for the next generation.

The family’s range of sources for information about art-related events includes pamphlets and posters, networks through church-related groups, word of mouth via friends, email subscribed newsletters, local newspapers and television. “But 50 per cent of the potential audience is reached through a poster and the Korean news media.”

Although ethnic groups have their own cultural traditions (e.g. Korean traditional drumming), Hwun says that “the arts in Korea are very westernised and modernised”.

Personal connections to artists are a particular motivation to go to events: e.g. to an exhibition of work by a Korean artist and friend. Hwun would like to see a wider audience at these events beyond the Korean community but recognises that individual taste means that some people simply may not be interested.

Hwun and Nam-Hee are aware of generational differences within the Korean community. For older people, the Korean War meant they had little time to enjoy the arts and this may have continued for the next generation in some families. However, Nam-Hee says that it’s traditional in Korea for children to learn music as a hobby but that this is less the case for Korean families in New Zealand.

They say that the younger generation growing up in New Zealand has greater exposure to events and more familiarity with a range of cultures, including Māori and Pacific cultures.

Although the family recognises that it’s impossible to generalise, some artforms may be of particular

relevance in the Korean community. Pottery, for example, plays a big role in Korea as art and in daily life. Opera and orchestral music are also common forms of entertainment in Korea.

One artform that Hwun and Nam-Hee miss is comedy.

“Without comedy life is very dry. Because of the language barrier, there’s not much chance here for Korean people to understand comedy in English.”

The family would like to see the cost of performing at venues such as Aotea Centre reduced so that community groups could afford to use it more often. They would also like more support for community and school groups to perform in smaller theatres and venues. Hwun sees this as an important way for migrants to retain cultural traditions and for New Zealand to be seen as a country of opportunities.



#### A creative perspective

Different experiences, motivations, challenges and perspectives emerged in interviews with arts practitioners. For most of them, however, pursuing their interest or career in the arts enables them to express their individual creativity as well as tell their stories, and the stories of their family and communities.

Some had come to New Zealand as youngsters or were born here. Their career paths, therefore, were developed in this country. Others of an older generation came to New Zealand with their artistic interests already developed. Among these artists, many came for reasons other than their arts career. They came for a better lifestyle, for peace, a better place to raise their children, for the land and the beaches. Although interested in pursuing their art as a hobby or a profession, the importance of this was secondary to these other factors in motivating them to migrate.

#### Reinforcing stereotypes

Among some of the artists we interviewed, there was a sense that

many of the portrayals of Asian characters in films, books and other media are being authored by people with limited connection to the individuals and cultures they are representing. They felt that these portrayals reinforce stereotypes rather than recognise the diversity and reality of modern New Zealand.

There was also a perception that there are limited opportunities and career paths open to those in the creative sector in New Zealand. This attitude was reinforced by family perceptions that other careers offer a more sustainable and stable future.

For others, however, there was family acceptance and support in their pursuit of a career in the arts.

One of the themes that emerged was a feeling of being “branded” by their ethnicity. In some instances, this may have helped them obtain funding or gain performance roles. For others, it has been a barrier to employment opportunities.

#### A wider community

Many of the artists we talked to faced the challenge of appealing to a wider

community. Both the families and artists from all communities were keen to share their culture, expressive visions and creativity more widely.

Funding is also a key issue for many artists. What's on offer? Where do you go? How do you fill out the forms? How can you understand and therefore show that you meet the criteria for funding?

Another outcome of the creative/migrant experience in New Zealand is being “a big fish in a small pond”. That's not to say all the artists saw themselves as big fish or New Zealand as a small pond. However, there was a perception that artists might need to go overseas to develop their craft even though there are opportunities in New Zealand to “get a foot in the door”, be recognised and do what you want to.

### Artists' stories

**Struggling for your passion**  
**Tina Cheung, filmmaker:**  
 born here, Chinese heritage

Tina has lived in Auckland all her life and is the youngest of three children.

The older two gained their PhDs and followed in the footsteps of their parents, who are both highly respected in their professions.

When Tina started at university planning to study medicine, she decided to defer her studies for a year and take some “more enjoyable papers”, including English, philosophy and film studies.

“I have always loved movies and I guess in that first year my tutors were wonderful people and led me to believe that I could actually make a career out of my love of movies. So to keep my parents happy, I did a BSc in computer science as a safety net, just in case I couldn't make it as a movie maker.

“The only reason my parents weren't that comfortable with me being a filmmaker is because it's not a usual profession where you can make a solid income. And they are right there. I mean, I wonder from day to day where my next pay cheque is coming from. I mean, ‘struggling artist’ is a term that makes sense because you are struggling for your passion and you are struggling for something you believe in

and always struggling for money and where it's going to come from. But it feels so worthwhile and inflames you so much that you are quite happy, to a degree, to suffer for it.”

Tina feels that because she was raised here she has a good grasp of how things work and is able to write complex essays in English. This puts her at an advantage over new immigrants looking to pursue creative projects, who may find it much harder to write proposals and apply for funding.

She says she doesn't feel comfortable being seen as a representative of the Asian voice.

“The term ‘Asian’ in itself is problematic. And then even within ‘Chinese’ it's problematic. Are you a Chinese New Zealander who was born here, did you come here when you were young, or did you just come here within the past five years? Those differences are big differences.

“I guess I've been seen to be representing Chinese New Zealanders when in fact, my work as a Chinese New Zealander is tremendously subjective and not meant to represent

anybody but myself. It would be great if there were myriad voices in the arts from the community.

“I think it's important for Chinese people to be encouraged to talk, to voice their own opinions and put across their point of view to mainstream New Zealand. Otherwise, they run the risk of someone else doing it for them and, potentially, doing it badly.

**“I would love to see an arts community that represented the multicultural richness of New Zealand's population.”**

“I think it's going to happen anyway but this research is a wonderful way to maybe help it along. No one has to apologise for who they are. In fact, who they are makes that place so wonderful and rich. Rich is the best word for it. Lush and rich, rich in culture.”

**Sense of pride**  
**Paul Hwang, musician:**  
 long-term migrant from Korea  
 Paul came to New Zealand 12 years ago with his parents when he was

nine-years-old. His parents chose New Zealand because they wanted a break from the highly stressful Korean lifestyle and could see there was a good education on offer here for Paul and his siblings.

In 1997, he started attending a Korean church and saw the church's traditional drumming group perform. “I thought it looked like a lot of fun so I joined the group.”

Two years later, he started taking drumming more seriously and trained with the master drummer who set up the group that Paul now leads.

There are 50 members of the core group, who are mostly young Korean students looking for a bit of fun and camaraderie. These days, the group is well-known and receives invitations to play at various arts and cultural events. They have also been on tour through several cities in New Zealand and have performed in Sydney and Brisbane.

Funding has always been a problem. The instruments are expensive to buy and repair and as the group grows larger, the administration and travel

costs increase. Most of these costs are covered by members of the group.

The musicians charge a modest fee for appearances at bigger events and are paid to give tuition at secondary schools. However, they are looking for an ongoing funding source – something that would take some of the pressure off Paul, who works full-time and is also studying part-time.

Despite the funding issues, Paul says they still have lots of fun practising and performing together. They feel a great sense of pride about their music when they can see their audience enjoying it.

Paul feels especially proud when he sees Korean people emotionally moved by the music. He sees a parallel between Māori haka and Korean drumming “The Māori people have been through a lot of hardship, being taken over by European civilisation. Similarly, the Korean people went through much hardship when we were taken over by Japan. I think that this hardship has given the music a real sense of spirit, which comes through in a Māori haka and also in our drumming.

“Some Korean people cry when they hear us. I suppose it reminds them of old Korea.”

In New Zealand, it's easier to get involved in a performing group than in Korea, where there's a lot more people to compete with. “You really have to be professional to perform in public.”

#### Sharing her art

**Sarah Gwon, performance artist:**  
 long-term migrant from Korea

Sarah moved to New Zealand with her husband and family in the early 1990s. She recalls the difficult times during and after the Korea War, and how women in the 1960s tended to be in the house and had less equality than today.

Sarah wants the next generation to keep in touch with their culture and also learn about other people's cultures. She values the chance to perform with artists from other backgrounds and has participated in events with Indian, Chinese and Japanese people, who are also the audience for her performances.

“Korean, Māori, Chinese ... Many people. We want multi-nationalities in the audience.”

Although Sarah has performed widely, she finds it hard to maintain and share her art while having to earn a living and care for the family. Korean artists may get support from the Korean Embassy and the New Zealand Korean Society, she says, but it's hard to find practice space and transport instruments and performers to venues.

“Performers have no place to practise. Performance places are so expensive. Some are three or four hundred dollars for the big rooms.”

When performers are invited to perform at events, she says, they should be paid instead of being given things like petrol vouchers and a certificate of participation. This leaves performers like Sarah often having to cover the cost of food, transport and so on.

She says this lack of reward makes it harder to motivate younger people to maintain their study of the traditional arts.

Most of all, Sarah needs support in the following areas: a place for her and others to rehearse; safe and dry storage for instruments and costumes; financial reward for performances; help to find funding; and assistance in overcoming language and information barriers.

#### Authentic stories

**Justin Chang, actor/writer/director:**  
 born here, Mainland Chinese heritage

Justin is in his forties. Born and educated in New Zealand (his parents are both Chinese-born), he remembers growing up as the only “Asian” child in school.

He has never been to China and apart from his features, there's nothing about him or his lifestyle that he considers to be particularly “Asian”.

Justin trained overseas and when he returned to New Zealand, he looked primarily for acting work but found the opportunities were too limiting and he was always being typecast. Every time he went for a role, he was asked to put on a Chinese accent and audition for the part of the kung fu-killing laundry man or the pidgin-English-speaking

detective. He found it insulting that there was no recognition of him as a New Zealander.

Adding insult to injury was his understanding that such stereotyped roles turn off the Chinese audience. So he turned his hand more to film writing, directing and editing.

With many “Asian” roles written by Pākehā New Zealanders, there's a lot of stereotyped clichéd characterisation, Justin says. Works that don't bow to this stereotyping would not only reach out to the Chinese community but would also startle mainstream audiences by providing real insights into another culture.

International acts have kudos because they are from overseas while “unknown” New Zealand acts are seen as a bit of a lottery with the potential for disappointment. There's concern over relevance: not getting it, feeling stupid for not understanding the content or missing the significance.

Justin has found it incredibly difficult to find out information on how to apply for funding. He thinks there

is a need for a directory on where to go, who to approach, how to apply for funding and which funding bodies cater for the different artforms.

What Justin would like to see is funding for Chinese practitioners to enable them to produce works that tell the stories of their communities; stories written and performed by their own people about issues relating to their experiences.

If parents could see there were funding opportunities for artists to produce works about their communities that received public recognition and praise, then perhaps their attitudes towards the arts as a viable career would gradually change.

#### Having a profession

**Li Liu, artist:**  
 born here, Chinese heritage

Li is a first-generation New Zealander, born and bred in Auckland. Her parents, who are originally from Malaysia, immigrated to New Zealand in the 1970s.

Li believes integration was relatively easy at that time for her parents.

They entered New Zealand as professionals with offers of suitable employment, were fluent in English, were treated as novelties rather than “invaders”, and their accents seemed more acceptable to New Zealanders than Hong Kong Chinese accents.

Li explains that Chinese people put a lot of emphasis on having a “profession”. A career in the arts is seen as “kind of useless” because you can't earn enough money. She puts this down to the fact that many overseas Chinese families from the Southern China diaspora are originally of peasant stock. Self-improvement, education, working and earning money to protect the future of your family has historically been a priority.

However, she says that the increasing business value of creative industries is helping more Chinese artists keep a foot in both camps.

Discussing attendance, Li feels there is a diversity of interest across the many different Chinese communities that's similar to that of mainstream New Zealand - from the conservative attitude, which sees the arts as a

waste of money, to the liberal attitude, where attending an arts event is good entertainment and a way to broaden your horizons.

However, for the Chinese groups that have the least mainstream arts attendance, there are issues of personal relevance, location, advertising and language. Many events target what most see as a homogenous group. They offer only mainstream advertising without considering, for example, including multicultural content or marketing in the Chinese media.

Li feels there are challenges she faces as an Asian artist in New Zealand. She says she will never be race-neutral. She will always appear in the public sphere as an ethnic minority and whatever she says will be seen as something that came from an Asian person.

#### A distinctive style

**Akiyama, visual artist:**  
long-term migrant from Japan

Akiyama has been in New Zealand since 1997, arriving on his own at the age of 20 and originally intending

to stay just a couple of years to learn English. However, he found himself drawn into the contemporary art scene and hasn't looked back.

In Japan, he feels there is not so much opportunity: the competition is fiercer and the emphasis is placed on technical ability. The New Zealand scene, with its flexible approach and acceptance of different artistic styles, suits him.

He feels he has had opportunities here than he never would have had in Japan: professional training, for one thing, and also the ability to bring something to the arts world that is distinctive - a style that fuses New Zealand and Japanese cultures. His style, he says, is a rebellion against the label of "Japanese artist" that he felt was placed on his work. Instead of getting frustrated by the label's limitations, Akiyama uses it to his advantage by exaggerating the Western definition of Japanese.

Akiyama says he will always feel like he is between Kiwi and Japanese cultures; living and creating in New Zealand but using

his subscription to a Japanese contemporary arts magazine, the internet and the work of Takashi Murakami to provide a birds' eye view of Japanese art and act as his sources of inspiration.

In New Zealand, he sees contemporary art as more mainstream than it is in Japan. Buying art is more aspirational and as an artist, you do not have to "make it" for people to be proud of your achievements.

#### Driving audiences

**Tamasha, stand-up comedian:**  
born here, Indian heritage

As a stand-up comedian, Tamasha has spent the past ten years either making people laugh or being booed off the stage, thanks to his satirical depictions of Indian stereotypes and the personalities that every Indian community has.

Price can be a barrier to attending a show, he says. However, as he's experienced, a show can come from India costing twice as much as his show and people will pay to see it. Reputation, therefore, is a key factor in driving audience numbers.

"If your work has a reputation, then people feel as though it's an insurance that what they're going to see is worth it."

Relevant and appealing material also drives audiences, he says. This includes genres that exist in India and are accessible to the mainstream: musicals, comedy, theatre and puppetry.

Getting people to the arts means giving them a reason to go: a link, a connection, someone they know in the performance. Going to one event may encourage them to go and see something else.

A barrier to attendance is simply not knowing about an event. He says that this could be overcome with advertising and marketing that reaches the Indian community: for example, Triangle TV, Indian newspapers, posters in shops and restaurants frequented by the Indian community. Key channels for Tamasha are tapping into newsletters distributed by the Auckland Indian Association, and the North Harbour and Auckland Central Sports Associations.

"No matter how good the show is, people won't come if they don't know it's on."





# Looking to the Future

## Looking to the future



### Reference group reflections

#### Multiple identities

By Ruth DeSouza

Psychologist and writer Carol Gilligan once asserted that in order to have a relationship, a voice is necessary and in order to have a voice, a relationship is necessary.

This project was a tremendous opportunity for members of Asian communities to be involved in the development, refinement and validation of a research project.

Minority researchers have asserted that the process of undertaking research is as significant as the findings of the research; that the process of research validates what is found. Importantly, for a first piece of research, the reference group was involved from the beginning of this project to the very end. There was also an acknowledgement of the multiple identities of all concerned and the dynamic nature of culture and creativity.

The research went beyond treating Asians as a whole and looked at gaining an in-depth understanding of four of the largest Asian communities in Auckland. The findings provide an opportunity for both voice and relationship to be developed further, and enhanced within and between Asians and the wider communities to which they belong.

As an East African Goan New Zealander, I welcome this project and encourage other organisations to look at ways in which Asian communities contribute to New Zealand society and are, in turn, shaped by their contribution.



Ruth DeSouza is Centre Co-ordinator/Senior Research Fellow, Centre for Asian and Migrant Health Research, National Institute for Public Health and Mental Health Research, AUT.

#### New pathways

By Alistair Kwun

As a New Zealand-born Chinese, I grew up alone in my skin and

unsure about my place and future as a cultural-creative practitioner in this country. I have since come to terms with who I am but being part of this reference group brought back memories of those tough times.

On a personal level what stands out in the *Asian Aucklanders and the arts* research is the richness of the stories captured by the Colmar Brunton research team. As any communicator will agree, stories have the power to transform lives and generate intense emotional connections between people from diverse walks of life. The stories drawn out in this research inspire, touch and delight.

Another highlight for me is increased understanding around the importance that Asian Aucklanders attach to the arts and culture in their lives. It adds flesh to the statistics in the Census 2006, reinforcing that Asian Aucklanders are contributing deeply to the social, economic, cultural and creative life of the region.

It is fantastic to know what's on the mind of young Asian Aucklanders. They are tomorrow's creative leaders

and participants, and it would be fascinating to follow the aspirations of this group in future research.

Here is my vision: local and global Asian communities connecting in New Zealand without barriers and borders. This research opens up new pathways and unlocks fresh conversations to achieve that. It validates the voice of Asian Aucklanders and helps assert our place here as the "new mainstream". Above all, it communicates diversity as relevant, essential and belonging to everyone.

I hope this research will enable all New Zealanders to continue celebrating "togetherness" through the arts with pride, confidence and an open heart. My thanks to Creative New Zealand, ASB Community Trust, Auckland City and Colmar Brunton for the privilege of being part of this groundbreaking research.



Alistair Kwun is Director, Alistair Kwun Communications.

#### Connecting ideas and people

By Associate Professor James H. Liu

Interconnectedness is the key to making research in social sciences work. This research has been a groundbreaking effort at connecting different institutions in society to understand and serve Asian communities and the arts.

The representatives from the three funding organisations and Colmar Brunton researchers consistently took on board suggestions made by the reference group. Consequently, the final product has potential to be used as a springboard for engaging Asian communities in the arts instead of another report to be duly noted and filed.

By interviewing leading individuals, families and creative artists from four Asian communities, the project has captured some important group dynamics. Young creative people in Asian communities are wrestling with not only stereotypes from the mainstream but preconceived notions of the arts in their own communities.

The cutting edge of the arts is always about breaking boundaries and shifting

preconceptions, about connecting ideas and people that have not yet been connected. There is currently little interchange and exchange of creative ideas between the different ethnic communities labelled as Asian. This report, therefore, is useful not only to the mainstream in understanding Asians and the arts but to Asian communities as well in terms of how they want to represent themselves in New Zealand arts.

I hope that this project will serve as an inspiration and provide elements of a blueprint for creating new and improved platforms that allow Asian communities in Auckland and New Zealand as a whole to express themselves through the arts. We are entering an era when the local has become global and the global has become local. Asian participation at every level is important to the future development of New Zealand's most global city.

By building on the findings of this report, local and national government, businesses and various communities can work together to establish the institutional and psychological changes necessary for a creative

New Zealand to represent all its various communities, and take this vision to the world.



Associate Professor James H. Liu is Deputy Director, Centre for Applied Cross Cultural Research, School of Psychology, Victoria University of Wellington.

### Relevant policies By Melissa Lee

Diversity has been a fashionable word in recent years. Aucklanders have always known their city to be so. Now, they have evidence of just how diverse it is.

Government departments, funding bodies and local authorities must understand not only the make-up of their multi-ethnic population but also what, how, when and why they do what they do. Only with this information and understanding can they make relevant policies.

I believe that this research gives us only a glimpse of our Asian population

and how they view art. As a Korean New Zealander, I am pleased that the researchers included Korean artists, who are struggling to break through to present their side of the story.

The Asian population in Auckland, the diversity within this population, the commonalities and differences, how they perceive the arts, their views on New Zealand ... It's all in this report.

Although this is a fabulous initiative and a groundbreaking start, it's important to continue building on this research so that inclusive and fair policy and funding decisions are made.

The reference group has been very vocal and articulate and I am very proud to have been a part of the group. Perhaps now we will see changes in the way art is communicated to our Asian communities and we may see more Asian Kiwis participating in the arts.



Melissa Lee is Producer, Asia Downunder, TV One and Principal, Asia Vision production company

### Seeing ourselves in the arts By Dr Sapna Samant

The Indian community is one of the oldest migrant communities in New Zealand. It is said that an Indian, Black Peter, actually discovered the gold in Otago.

Imagine: A tall, brown, bearded man contemplates the winter landscape near Dunedin. He shivers under the clear blue sky, so far away from his warm, native Goa. He misses the food, his mother and the priest at the church in the village but he is resolute. He asked for adventure and the cosmos brought him to Aotearoa.

Or imagine, even before that, a young Bengali sailor jumps ship to be with his Māori girl. Neither the captain of the ship nor her father, the Supreme Chief who has promised to marry his daughter into a powerful iwi in the Waikato, can keep them apart.

Or, much later, young Sikhs clear gorse and bush under the supervision of racist white masters because they need the money, not knowing that one day they are going to own this very land; a Gujarati man, inspired by Mahatma Gandhi, assists striking dock workers in Auckland.

If the dominant Pākehā view of the history of Aotearoa actually had space for these migrant tales, the research partners would not have felt the need to address the lack of Asian participation in and attendance at the arts. These and other stories would make epic films, television series, theatre, short stories, dance dramas, paintings, sculptures, poems, video art etc but only if people take ownership of their culture.

Migrant artforms do not have to imitate those from the motherland. New artforms, and hence new stories, can take inspiration from various sources and yet stay true to cultural complexities. For that to happen, there has to be a two-way process between communities producing their own artistes and funding bodies proactively creating an atmosphere conducive for practice. This research paves the way. I hope it will lead to us seeing more Asians in Aotearoa arts.



Dr Sapna Samant is writer, radio producer and Company Director of Holy Cow Media Ltd.

### Contributing to society By Kitty Shui Fung Chiu

As a researcher, art appreciator and active Chinese community leader, I'm not surprised by the research findings. Indeed, I'm delighted that the Auckland City Council, Creative New Zealand and ASB Community Trust have made this research a reality.

As the research shows, the Chinese community is made up of people who have very deep traditions and a culture that is expressed through the arts and daily living. By immigrating, they have limited contact with these secure traditional artforms.

This research has identified some major challenges, issues and opportunities to increase the quantity and quality of Asian peoples' participation in arts. For me, three important challenges are accessibility, affordability and communication.

If more affordable local community venues were used instead of all the expensive big stadiums with difficult parking, more Asians would go to arts events. And in terms of cost, I think

that eliminating the "middleman" booking system (e.g. Ticketek) would reduce the price of tickets and encourage more people to go.

I believe the mainstream artforms must be more customer-focused and result-orientated if they want to increase Asian peoples' engagement with arts. My suggestions are:

- to define your target population and then design the marketing/communication plan accordingly
- to create a two-way capacity-building process by working in partnership with the local ethnic community to deliver culturally appropriate marketing programmes
- to develop a cost-effective communication strategy, involving community networks and eliminating language barriers
- to provide a culturally friendly funding application process with relevant policies and systems to support the process.

Over time, and with some proactive strategies by the three organisations leading this research, I believe that the Chinese community will engage more with New Zealand arts and

therefore contribute and integrate better into New Zealand society. When people feel comfortable and at ease, they perform better and become part of a creative and productive New Zealand society.



*Kitty Shui Fung Chiu is Associate Director, Centre for Asian Health Research and Evaluation, Social and Community Health, School of Population Health, The University of Auckland.*

### Embracing multiculturalism

By Kentaro Yamada

First of all, I would like to thank Creative New Zealand and its research partners for inviting me to be a part of this research.

Although I am based in Auckland, I don't consider myself as an artist from New Zealand or Japan. I was born in Japan, moved to New Zealand on my own 15 years ago. I have spent half of my life here in New Zealand and the other half in Japan. I have also travelled extensively and lived

in different cultural centres such as Tokyo and New York.

As a typical 1.5 generation Asian New Zealander, my experience of growing up in New Zealand has definitely shaped my creative mind. New Zealand gives me the time and space that is needed for creativity.

As an artist, I look beyond what is discussed in this research. For me, most of these discoveries are about what is going on in people's lives. I prefer to concentrate on what is beyond this research – how to make sense of it all as an artist.

I believe New Zealand has huge potential to be creatively successful with different cultures influencing each other. However, my focus is on common experiences beyond different cultures. One of my favourite cities is New York City. People in New York don't ask me where I am from. They're over trying to figure out if I am Japanese or a New Zealander.

Our world is getting smaller and smaller and people are moving from country to country, communicating to each other on a personal level

around the world. I think this is an exciting time – and opportunity – for New Zealand to embrace our multiculturalism and creativity.



*Kentaro Yamada is an artist.*



### An international perspective

By Jerry Yoshitomi

In 1993, I wrote an article looking to the future of people of Asian ancestry in the United States. Our task was to look forward to the year 2020 and imagine the conditions of Asian American arts at that time and to suggest methods to support and nurture that work.

Although the intentions of several public arts agencies at various levels of government in the United States have been meritorious, there is still a lack of research, knowledge and

direct support from those agencies – particularly in light of the growing percentage of people of Asian ancestry.

It's remarkable, but also very encouraging, that a small country the size of New Zealand has stepped forward to survey the cultural needs and desires of Kiwis of Asian ancestry; the different needs for first and second generation Asians; and the role that the arts play in Japanese, Korean, Chinese and Indian homes, relationships and communities. The findings on each of the Asian communities provide depth and detail.

All of this helps the research partners understand the policy and strategy implications of supporting these diverse cultural groups.

Understanding, and then linking motivation to behaviour (participation in the arts) as research methodology, is something that we are just beginning to learn in the United States, and there's been very little work done to research the art needs and aspirations of Asian Americans.

My understanding is that Asian immigration to New Zealand has

escalated over the past 30 years. To acknowledge the importance of these relatively new Asian communities and to take the initiative and do this research is a tribute to the wisdom of those who funded the survey. I look forward to seeing the results of this research, the implementation of strategic initiatives and their impact on Asian Kiwis.

Asian immigration to the United States has a history of about 130 years and we've not yet attempted research of this depth and impact.

Thanks to this project, there now exists research, a report of the findings and some strategic activity that will be of value to Asian communities throughout New Zealand, as well as to New Zealand's arts, cultural and community organisations.

There are very strong parallels in this report with the needs and aspirations of communities of Asian ancestry in other parts of the world. I sincerely hope that the findings will be distributed widely to cultural policy leaders in other countries with Asian immigrant populations.



*Jerry Yoshitomi is the grandson of Issei (first generation) immigrants who came from Japan to the United States in the early twentieth century. He attended Stanford University and has worked in arts management since 1974. He was the first Executive Director of the Japanese American Cultural and Community Center in Los Angeles. Over the past year, Jerry has worked with Creative New Zealand and arts organisations in New Zealand to help them build audiences and encourage arts participation.*



### Using the research

This research will enhance Creative New Zealand, Auckland City Council and ASB Community Trust's understanding of Asian peoples living in the Auckland region. It will inform their ongoing policy and implementation of strategic initiatives aimed at supporting these communities, delivering quality arts experiences and encouraging their participation in the arts.

Other local government bodies, community funders and the arts sector may find valuable information and insights in this report. For arts organisations in Auckland, for example, it provides key market intelligence that will help them reach new audiences and encourage participation. Although focused on Auckland, the research may also prove useful to the wider arts sector.

### Practical suggestions

Based on the findings, the following suggestions could be developed into practical initiatives to build relationships with Asian peoples and overcome barriers to participation in and attendance of the arts.

- Use word of mouth, local networks, schools, education centres and community media (print, radio, television and email lists) to promote arts performances and activities.
- Use community leaders to reach out to communities.
- Work with other organisations (e.g. arts centres, consulates, Office of Ethnic Affairs, Ministry of Education) to develop arts initiatives and/or build networks.

- Encourage communities to participate by sending out personalised invitations.
- Make connections between different communities, and develop or support cross-cultural events that bring communities together.
- Consider using non-traditional venues (e.g. markets, parks) to raise awareness of an arts activity and help remove a barrier of not knowing the rules.
- Implement initiatives to reduce costs for families to attend arts events and increase opportunities to “test drive” an arts event.
- Provide a more accessible booking service (e.g. multi-language booking line, overcoming the barrier of a booking fee).
- Be aware of language barriers and find ways to help overcome this: e.g. producing other-language brochures or using community networks and ethnic media.

### Asian audiences and Auckland Theatre Company

How best to reach Asian communities and encourage them to attend

Auckland Theatre Company productions is a question the company is exploring. Michael Adams, Marketing and Sponsorship Manager, and Rachel Chin, Audience Development Co-ordinator, read this report and say its findings couldn't be more timely for the company.

“The draft report appeared in my inbox the day after we'd been having a big discussion with the board about how we could attract more Asian audiences,” Michael says. “The first thing is that it helps us understand how the arts fit into the lifestyle of these communities. What comes through strongly is that for many, the arts are part of their daily lives.

“We need to figure out how to communicate the appeal of theatre in line with these values. It could be as simple as the words we use in our marketing material, and choosing venues and times of performances that fit in with cultural practices. Or it might be as complex as programming work with an Asian focus, collaborating with Asian companies and artists, or casting Asian performers. But these sorts of

decisions are driven by the creative team and based on artistic merit.

“Having champions in the communities to act as ambassadors for us is another idea that could work well. It's something we need to explore further and this research will be really valuable.”

Auckland Theatre Company has profiled its audiences to find out who comes to its productions and who doesn't.

“Asian audiences are one of the gaps but we see them as potential audiences,” Michael says. “From a demographic point of view, if we take away language and ethnicity, then the Asian population tends to be close to our core Pākehā audiences in terms of education, house size, family size and household income – factors that are key indicators for attendance.

“Attendance as an adult is also very much determined by past behaviour. If the first migrant generation weren't theatre attenders in their home country, it's highly unlikely they'll suddenly want to start coming to theatre in

New Zealand. Their children, however, will experience the New Zealand education system where we already have development programmes in place. I think these programmes will be an important strategy to develop Asian audiences of the future.

“That's a very long-term approach and we won't necessarily see the results of that work for ten to fifteen years, when the 1.5 generation comes through.”

Rachel Chin, who is a Malaysian Chinese, came to Auckland in 2005 and completed a bachelor of business (marketing) degree before joining Auckland Theatre Company in 2006. For her, the transition was relatively easy. “I'm from an English-speaking family and I have an aunt who has lived here for almost 20 years.”

Back in Malaysia, she learned ballet and piano, and enjoyed going to plays, dance performances and musicals. Being involved in the arts in Auckland, therefore, stems from her exposure to the arts since she was young.

Language, she says, can be an obvious barrier for many Asians but points to the 1.5 generation – those people who

were born or have spent most of their lives in New Zealand and share many of the Kiwi values – as a target market.

“This research has identified the gaps between the Asian Auckland market and the practice of arts organisations. I think the first thing organisations need to ask themselves is what they want to achieve with this segment of the population and then work from there.

“It's more than just about advertising in the right media. Organisations actually need to look inwards at their core and ask if they're ready to reach out to this market and extend their current practices.”

“The research is a good start in understanding how we behave as Asians and compares this with how arts organisations and groups are currently operating. The big question we need to address is how we bring together these two strands and whether, ultimately, it meets the organisation's goals for this segment – be they monetary or social.”



## Appendix



### Useful organisations, media and networks

The following list may be a useful starting point for artists and arts organisations wishing to communicate with Asian communities.

#### General

##### AEN Aotearoa Ethnic Network

AEN promotes and connects ethnic communities in Aotearoa New Zealand. The AEN email list is free to join and connects you with more than 330 people.

**W** [www.aen.org.nz](http://www.aen.org.nz)

##### Asia New Zealand Foundation

Level 7, 36 Customhouse Quay  
PO Box 10 144, Wellington

**T** +64 4 471 2320

**W** [www.asianz.org.nz](http://www.asianz.org.nz)

##### Alistair Kwun Communications Limited

Cross-cultural relations, arts and youth marketing and public relations.

19 Avicé Street, Remuera, Auckland 1050

**T** +64 9 529 2760

**F** +64 9 524 9320

**M** +64 27 233 8680

**E** [ak698@xtra.co.nz](mailto:ak698@xtra.co.nz)

##### Asia Network Incorporated (TANI)

7-A, Business Centre, Wagener Place  
Sandringham  
PO Box 27 550, Mount Roskill, Auckland

**T** +64 9 815 7851

**F** +64 9 815 7852

**E** [asian\\_network@xtra.co.nz](mailto:asian_network@xtra.co.nz)

**W** [www.asiannetwork.org.nz](http://www.asiannetwork.org.nz)

##### Bananaworks Communications Limited

Level 3, 6 Arawa Street, Grafton  
PO Box 8951, Symonds Street, Auckland

**T** +64 9 366 1470

Level 4, 35-37 Victoria Street

PO Box 24 534, Manners Street, Wellington

**T** +64 4 471 1168

**W** [www.bananaworks.co.nz](http://www.bananaworks.co.nz)

##### Office of Ethnic Affairs, Auckland

AA Centre, 99 Albert Street, Department  
of Internal Affairs, PO Box 2220, Auckland

**T** +64 9 362 7968

**E** [ethnic.affairs@dia.govt.nz](mailto:ethnic.affairs@dia.govt.nz)

**W** [www.ethnicaffairs.govt.nz](http://www.ethnicaffairs.govt.nz)

##### Minister for Community and Voluntary Sector

Hon Luamanuvao Winnie Laban  
Free Post Parliament, PO Box 18 888, Wellington

**T** +64 4 470 6584

**E** [wlaban@ministers.govt.nz](mailto:wlaban@ministers.govt.nz)

**W** [www.beehive.govt.nz](http://www.beehive.govt.nz)

##### Office for Community and Voluntary Sector Tari mō te Rāngai ā-Hapori, ā-Tūao

The Office for the Community and Voluntary Sector exists to inspire co-operative relationships between the government and the community and voluntary sector.

Level 2, West Block, Charles Fergusson Building  
Bowen Street, PO Box 1556, Wellington

**T** +64 4 918 9555

**F** +64 4 913 3080

**E** [ocvs@msd.govt.nz](mailto:ocvs@msd.govt.nz)

**W** [www.ocvs.govt.nz](http://www.ocvs.govt.nz)

##### Asia Downunder

Asia Downunder is a TV One programme about Asia and Asians in New Zealand.

4 Newton Road

PO Box 68 835, Newton, Auckland

**T** +64 9 360 0803

**F** +64 9 360 0477

##### Triangle TV

Auckland's regional television service, it includes ethnic programming to reflect the region's diversity.

28 Surrey Crescent

Grey Lynn

PO Box 78 034, Grey Lynn, Auckland

**T** +64 9 376 5030

**E** [info@tritv.co.nz](mailto:info@tritv.co.nz)

**W** [www.tritv.co.nz](http://www.tritv.co.nz)

##### The Music Association of Auckland (MAA)

MAA was established to use music as a bridge to facilitate communication among members and promote friendship with people of different ethnic origins.

PO Box 113 092, Newmarket, Auckland

**E** [info@maa.net.nz](mailto:info@maa.net.nz)

**W** [www.maa.net.nz](http://www.maa.net.nz)

#### Chinese

##### Chinese Consulate

588 Great South Road  
Greenlane

PO Box 17 123, Greenlane, Auckland

**T** +64 9 525 1588

**T** +64 9 525 1589

**F** +64 9 525 0733

**E** [chinese.consulate@xtra.co.nz](mailto:chinese.consulate@xtra.co.nz)

**W** [www.chinaconsulate.org.nz](http://www.chinaconsulate.org.nz)

##### Chinese Radio

Unit B, Highland Home Centre  
491 Pakuranga Road, Auckland

**T** +64 9 537 4990

**E** [support@radiochinese.co.nz](mailto:support@radiochinese.co.nz)

**W** [www.radiochinese.co.nz](http://www.radiochinese.co.nz)

##### Chinese Embassy

2-6 Glenmore Street  
Kelburn

PO Box 17 257, Karori, Wellington

**T** +64 4 472 1382

**F** +64 4 499 0419

**W** [www.chinaembassy.org.nz](http://www.chinaembassy.org.nz)

##### New Zealand Chinese Association

Organisers of the Banana Conference.

Head Office, 23-35 Marion Street

PO Box 6008, Wellington

Auckland Branch, PO Box 484, Auckland

Kai Luey, National President

**T** +64 9 522 1840

**F** +64 9 522 1842

**E** [kailuey@xtra.co.nz](mailto:kailuey@xtra.co.nz)

**W** [www.nzchinese.org.nz](http://www.nzchinese.org.nz)

##### Skykiwi.com

New Zealand's only dedicated Chinese website with more than 120,000 registered users.

Kylie Liu, Creative Director

Level 3, 228 Queen Street

PO Box 5699, Wellesley Street, Auckland

**T** +64 9 309 2288

**E** [kylie@skykiwi.com](mailto:kylie@skykiwi.com)

**W** [www.skykiwi.com](http://www.skykiwi.com)

##### Taiwanese Association

193 Great South Road, Otahuhu, Auckland

**T** +64 9 276 4180

**W** [www.hwahsia.org.nz](http://www.hwahsia.org.nz)

##### WTV

World TV Ltd in association with SKY Network Television Ltd broadcasts 24 hours daily throughout New Zealand.

Unit F, 124 Penrose Road, Mt Wellington

PO Box 12 743, Penrose, Auckland

**T** +64 9 571 2288

**E** [info@wtv.co.nz](mailto:info@wtv.co.nz)

**W** [www.wtv.co.nz](http://www.wtv.co.nz)

#### Indian

##### Auckland Marathi Association

PO Box 64 369, Botany Town Centre  
East Tamaki, Auckland 1730

**T** +64 9 475 5913

**E** [marathinz@hotmail.com](mailto:marathinz@hotmail.com)

##### Indian Newslink

English-language fortnightly tabloid.

Indiana Publications (NZ) Ltd

6 Santa Ana Drive, Howick

PO Box 82 394, Highland Park, Auckland

**T** +64 9 533 6377

**T** +64 9 533 8010

**W** [www.indiannewslink.co.nz](http://www.indiannewslink.co.nz)

##### Radio Tarana

Aimed primarily at New Zealand's Indian community, it provides a Hindi language service on 1386AM.

Level 2, 35-39 George Street

Kingsland

PO Box 5956, Wellesley Street, Auckland

**T** +64 9 303 2286

**E** [info@tarana.co.nz](mailto:info@tarana.co.nz)

##### New Zealand Indian Association (Inc)

Formed in 1926, it has three branches: Auckland, Country Section (Taumarunui) and Wellington.

Auckland Indian Association (Inc)

PO Box 8110, Symonds Street, Auckland

**T** +64 9 357 0665

**E** [president@nzindians.org.nz](mailto:president@nzindians.org.nz)

**W** [www.nzindians.org.nz](http://www.nzindians.org.nz)

##### The Global Indian website

Angan Publications Pvt Ltd

56 Woodbank Drive

Glen Eden, Auckland

**T** +64 21 251 4924

**E** [editor@theglobalindian.co.nz](mailto:editor@theglobalindian.co.nz)

**W** [www.theglobalindian.co.nz](http://www.theglobalindian.co.nz)

#### Japanese

##### The New Zealand Japan Society of Auckland

PO Box 26 685, Epsom, Auckland

**T** +64 21 45 1423

**E** [auckland@nzjapan.net](mailto:auckland@nzjapan.net)

**W** [www.nzjapan.net/auckland/](http://www.nzjapan.net/auckland/)

##### Consulate-General of Japan, Auckland

Level 12, ASB Bank Centre

135 Albert Street

PO Box 3959, Auckland

**T** +64 9 303 4106

**E** [info@cgi.govt.nz](mailto:info@cgi.govt.nz)

**W** [www.nz.emb-japan.go.jp/auckland/](http://www.nz.emb-japan.go.jp/auckland/)

##### Gekkan NZ

Monthly Japanese-language magazine.

Ground Floor, Tasman Building

16-22 Anzac Avenue

Auckland Central

**T** +64 366 7773

**F** +64 366 7775

**E** [info@gekkannz.net](mailto:info@gekkannz.net)

**W** [www.gekkannz.net](http://www.gekkannz.net)

#### Korean

##### Embassy of the Republic of Korea, Wellington

Level 11, ASB Bank Tower

2 Hunter Street

PO Box 11 143, Manners Street

Wellington

**T** +64 4 473 9073

**E** [consular@koreanembassy.org.nz](mailto:consular@koreanembassy.org.nz)

**W** [www.koreanembassy.org.nz](http://www.koreanembassy.org.nz)

##### Consulate Office in Auckland

10th Floor, 396 Queen Street

PO Box 5744, Wellesley Street

Auckland

**T** +64 9 379 0818

**E** [koreanconsulate@xtra.co.nz](mailto:koreanconsulate@xtra.co.nz)

##### Korea Times

Level 1, 9/30 Upper Queen Street

Newton, Auckland

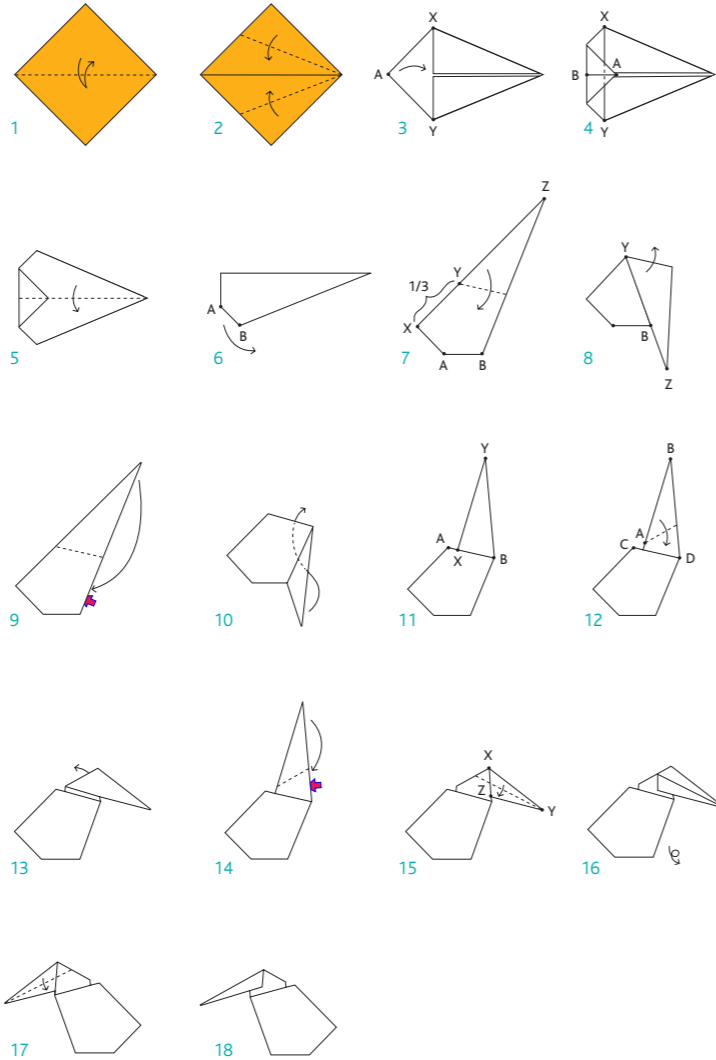
**T** +64 9 379 3436

**W** [www.koreatimes.co.nz](http://www.koreatimes.co.nz)

## Origami kiwi

### Instructions

- 1 Cut out the facing sheet of paper. With the yellow side facing up, fold in half, then unfold.
- 2 Fold outer edges into the centre line.
- 3 Fold point A to the right so that a triangular flap is created. Line XY should intersect the triangular flap at a point one-third the length of the flap.
- 4 Line BA represents the length of the triangular flap created in step 3.
- 5 Fold the top half downward.
- 6 Rotate the model so that edge AB is horizontal.
- 7 Point Y is located at one-third the length of edge XZ. Starting at point Y, fold downward so that line YZ intersects point B.
- 8 Unfold.
- 9 Inside reverse fold downward as shown.
- 10 Inside reverse fold upwards as shown.
- 11 Edge XY is perpendicular to edge AB.
- 12 Fold so that edge AB is close to and parallel to edge CD.
- 13 Unfold.
- 14 Inside reverse fold as shown.
- 15 Fold so that edge XY meets edge ZY.
- 16 Turn the model over.
- 17 Repeat step 15.
- 18 The finished kiwi!



Origami design by Gregory Suarez  
[www.brooklynorigami.com](http://www.brooklynorigami.com)





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