

Mokopōpaki

A.A.M. Bos & PĀNiA!

Present

WHIO: BLUE DUCK

8-29 November 2017

Mokopōpaki is pleased to announce the first of our short 'n' sharp Taihoa Ināianei or Peek Shows. Literally a 'stop – pause for a moment' Taihoa Ināianei give our unknown and emergent artists at Mokopōpaki an opportunity to step up, take the floor and test out their ideas.

In the Brown Room at Mokopōpaki, our Taihoa Ināianei for November 2017 features new artist A.A.M. Bos with PĀNiA! in a playful, three-week project, Whio: Blue Duck – exploring the nature and behaviour of this handsome but most secretive of native birds.

Whio: Blue Duck: *Hymenolaimus malacorhynchos*

The plumage of both adult male and female Whio is slate blue-grey in colour with chestnut brown spotting on the breast. Whio have attractive pale grey bills with some greenish iridescence on their head, neck and back and piercing yellow eyes.

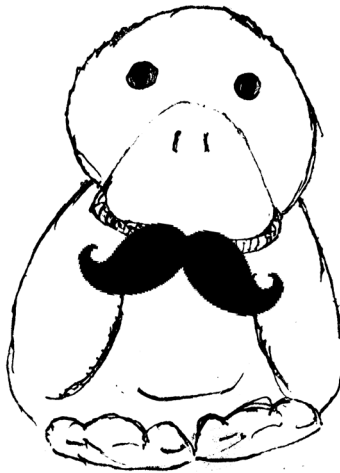
Whio are believed to be an ancient species of Anatidae or duck whose evolutionary isolation and confined alpine habitat has made them one of the most highly specialised waterfowl in the world. At home navigating the clear fast-flowing rivers of the New Zealand high country Whio have developed some unique anatomical adaptations such as the protective black flap at the tip of their bills and webbed feet able to collapse and fold like an umbrella, reducing drag as they negotiate swift

WHIO: BLUE DUCK

mountain streams and torrents.

Whio feed on aquatic insects and larvae by systematically skimming the surface of white water to nibble over the downstream faces of boulders in the shallows of rapids.

Whio: Blue Duck are an endangered species. They are intensely territorial and reclusive in behaviour. Whio are watchful and ever vigilant and will always see you before you are able to see them. Should they be disturbed, male Whio will sound the alarm by making a shrill, high-pitched, wheezy, disyllabic whistle *Whi-o!* from where the Māori name of the species is derived.



Drawing by A.A.M. Bos
(2017)

TAIHOA INĀIANEI

WHIO: BLUE DUCK
Works in the Exhibition

A.A.M. Bos

Whio: Blue Duck (2017)

Epson Premium Lustre print

43 x 43 cm

Edition of 3, 1 AP

Artist's Statement

If you asked me is my picture of Whio: Blue Duck an example of wild life photography I'd say No. Certainly not in the category of wildlife photography produced by National Geographic magazine or a BBC Natural History documentary crew.

This is because what I present as wildlife is an image of Whio taken in captivity in an open-air aviary at Auckland Zoo. Although there are no obvious bars, the bird is still in a cage and on display. In this artificial environment Whio has become used to being around people. They know what it is like to be observed. The Blue Duck appears to act naturally behaving for the camera but is this in fact how they are in the wild? For those without the resources or means to access the New Zealand wilderness, the made habitat with live-action exhibit we encounter in places like the zoo, is often the only experience of 'wildlife' available to us.

If you asked me again, is my picture of Whio: Blue

Duck an example of wildlife photography I'd still say No. I think the word 'wildlife' creates distance between observer and the observed. This is not what I want to do at all. I want to intensify the relationship and close up the space between. I want the viewer to feel a connection with my duck subject and their at-risk world not as an outsider at a safe distance, but as co-inhabitant of this environment in a space we share. I want us to be able to look Whio in the eye and to admire them. Not simply as a beautiful, immaculately dressed bird but as a dear and most respected friend.

My portrait of Whio asks questions about human populations and the kind of invasive development that responds uncritically to a need to drain and contain. Although I congratulate Auckland Zoo on the quality of their outdoor enclosures, the Blue Ducks we see in these spaces still live in a gated community with water feature from which there is no escape. If we remembered the uniqueness of the birds and the contribution they make to the diversity of the planet I think our management of the built environment would be much more sensitive to and respectful of the natural world. Perhaps then I could imagine myself going down to the clear, fast-flowing waters of the Wairau Stream at the end of Link Drive Industrial Park, in Glenfield, to photograph a Whānau of happy Whio – wild and free.

PĀNiA!

Blue Duck (2017)

Upscale plastic toy ducks, lacquer

2 parts, each 23.5 x 21.5 x 25 cm

*Rubber Ducky, you're the one
You make bath time lots of fun
Rubber Ducky I'm awfully fond of you*

*Rubber Ducky, joy of joys
When I squeeze you, you make noise
Rubber Ducky, you're my very best friend it's true...*

*Rubber Ducky, you're so fine
And I'm lucky that you're mine
Rubber ducky, I'd like a whole pond of
Rubber ducky, I'm awfully fond of you!*

Made famous by Ernie from the mismatched Muppet duo Ernie and Bert, *Rubber Duckie*, an up-beat, song for children, celebrating a much loved bath-toy, created a minor global splash by climbing in September 1970, to No. 16 on popular music playlist the Billboard Hot 100.

Ernie and Bert were two of the original Muppets who in July 1969, appeared in the pilot episode of the ground-breaking educational, children's sketch comedy and animation, TV series *Sesame Street*. First performed by Muppet creator Jim Henson and collaborator Frank

Oz, Ernie and Bert were designed as characters with attitudes and traits completely opposite to the other. However, like the real-life creative dynamic that existed between the Muppeteers Henson and Oz, Ernie and Bert co-operate and learn to function in situations able to show how two people with totally different views of the world can be good friends. On *Sesame Street* Ernie and Bert live together in a basement apartment. Although the two Muppets sleep in separate beds and Bert occasionally pursues love interests of his own, the relationship between the two friends has often been read as a representation of a same-sex couple.

PĀNiA!

Commander Duck & The Red-Neck Millionaires
(2017)

Folding canvas chair, tekau tāra, New Zealand
ten-dollar note, plastic peg
85 x 52.5 x 47 cm

A retaliatory shot fired back by Whio: Blue Duck, leader of the imaginary *Aotearoa Anatidae Liberation Army*. Aimed directly at organisations responsible for the multi-million dollar manufacture and sale of hunting paraphernalia like the well-known, American-made, *Duck Commander* – a hand-crafted, double-reed, wooden, duck-calling device carved out of Louisiana cedar.

PĀNiA!

Duck! Playing games with Malcolm Ross:

PĀNiA! takes the court (2017)

Duct tape, rope, bungee hooks, fixings, goose
feather shuttlecocks

4 parts, installation dimensions variable

“As a rule of thumb, my method is to think of a shape,
then embarrass the hell out of it.

As visual puns [the works] are real groaners.”

–Malcolm Ross

Although largely unknown, Malcolm Ross (1948–2003) is regarded by many as one of the key figures in New Zealand conceptual art. Born in Takapuna on Auckland’s North Shore, Malcolm was a sculptor, painter, photographer, cartoonist and historian who for almost all his career worked outside of the institutional white-cube. When Malcolm was seven years old, his family went to live in the Hokianga where his father was a teacher at Motukiore Māori School. During this very formative period in his life, Malcolm was immersed not only in Māori community and Māori world view but also developed an enduring love of ornithology and the study of birds. Here, Malcolm began to document his solitary and introspective investigations of the natural world, producing a series of detailed, hand-drawn maps identifying the locations of bird nesting sites. These

spidery, geographical, almost secretive diagrams are among the earliest examples of Malcolm's work that survive.

PĀNiA!

Toilet Duck (2017)

Plastic bottles, 'TOILET' sign, fixings, adhesive
4 parts, installation dimensions variable

Pipe, Blocked

Force a mixture of soda and salt as far as possible down the offending pipe. Half an hour later, swill the pipe with boiling water, and then flush well with warm water. For frozen pipes use salt and boiling water in the same manner.

Pipes, Leaks in

Until the plumber comes, the hole may be effectively stopped with a paste made of yellow soap and powdered whitening mixed together with a little water.

Pipes, Slimy, to Clean

Dissolve some cofferas and leave to work its way gradually through the pipes.

Pipes, to Prevent from Bursting

Pipes in exposed positions should be wrapped about with old sacking, canvas or felt.

Shop Window

A.A.M. Bos

Sitting Duck (2017)

Vintage New Zealand-made plastic decoy duck,
velour cushion, sand

24.5 x 40 x 40 cm

Wildlife Act 1953 No.31 (as at 13 March 2017)
Schedule 1 Wildlife Declared to Be Game

Black Swan (*Cygnus atratus*): except on Chatham Islands

Chukar (*Alectoris chukar*): except on Chatham Islands

Duck: Australasian shoveler (*Anas rhynchos*)

Grey Duck (*Anas superciliosa*) and any cross of that
species with any other species, variety, or kind
of duck (except on Chatham Islands)

Mallard Duck (*Anas platyrhynchos*) and any cross of
that species with any other species, variety,
or kind of duck (except on Chatham Islands)

Paradise Shelduck (*Tadorna variegata*)

Partridge: Grey Partridge (*Perdix perdix*): except on
Chatham Islands

Red-legged Partridge (*Alectoris rufa*): except on
Chatham Islands

Pheasant: any bird, not being a domestic bird, of the
genus Phasianus and any cross of any such bird
with any other species, variety, or kind of
pheasant: except on Chatham Islands

Pūkeko (*Porphyrio melanotus*): except on Chatham Islands

Quail: Bobwhite Quail (*Colinus virginianus*): except on Chatham Islands

Brown Quail (*Coturnix ypsilophora*): except on Chatham Islands

California Quail (*Callipepla californica*): except on Chatham Islands

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