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ARTSPACE IN AUGUST

MICHAEL PAREKOWHAI'S TEN GUITARS

Ten guitars, customised with paua inlaid kowhaiwhai patterns, sit silently, waiting for a band to breathe life into them. Michael Parekowhai's project is an obvious nod to the Engelbert Humperdinck song *Ten Guitars*, embraced in the 1960s as a Maori anthem promoting a utopian social ideal of playing together in harmony.

Known for putting a distinctive spin on bicultural issues, Parekowhai's *Ten Guitars* looks back to the days of the Maori show band, when the model of the Maori "done good" was the performer, be it Howard Morrison, Kiri Te Kanawa or Waka Nathan. Showmanship is evident in Parekowhai's own performance as an artist here, with these gratuitously flash instruments.

And there will be a performance. On opening night (18 August) a band of ten guitarists — Gitbox — will reprise the Quin-Tikis' number *Guitar Boogie*. The Maori Teddy-Boy band performed it in the 1966 kiwi rock-road movie *Don't Let it Get You*.

Ten Guitars is on at Artspace for a fortnight only (19 August - 4 September), before crossing the Tasman to represent New Zealand in the prestigious *Asia Pacific Triennial* at the Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane.

Ten Guitars has been supported by Gow Langsford Gallery and Creative New Zealand.

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