



art  
books

Peter  
Simpson  
delves  
into the  
year's art

Some of the best art books these days are produced by galleries in association with exhibitions in their spaces. Edward Hanfling's excellent study of the art and design work of Auckland artist Roy Good is a case in point. It accompanies a survey of his work showing at Te Uru in Titirangi (until February 10, 2019). A mature artist who first exhibited at Barry Lett Galleries in the early 1970s and was also associated with the Petar Vuletic's galleries dedicated to modernist abstract art, Good worked as a designer for television and later as a freelancer for his "day job". A welcome feature of both book and exhibition is that they pay attention to both aspects of his work, art and design, which clearly inform each other profoundly. Frankly indebted to the geometric abstract tradition of Mondrian and Malevich and the op-art procedures of Bridget Reilly, Good's stylish and arrestingly clever paintings, many of which are "shaped" to avoid the conventional rectangle, are well reproduced in this high-quality production.

**TONY DE LAUTOUR:**  
*Us v Them*

by Peter Vangioni  
(Christchurch Art Gallery, \$40)

This book on Christchurch artist Tony de Lautour

**PARALLEL UNIVERSE:**  
*The art and design of Roy Good*

by Edward Hanfling  
(Te Uru Waitakere Contemporary  
Gallery, \$95)



is also associated with the *Us v Them* exhibition at Christchurch Art Gallery this year. Curator Peter Vangioni is joined as essayist by Zara Stanhope, Lara Strongman, Alice Tappenden and Peter Robinson (a friend and contemporary who interviews the artist). Initially de Lautour's paintings fed off the imagery of gang, skin-head and punk tattoo culture. His visual lexicon included snakes, crosses, heraldic beasts, lightning flashes, stars, spider webs, clouds, banners, talking heads, verbal slogans, skull-and-crossbones, demented kiwis — all painted with crude vigour on heavily impastoed surfaces. Sometimes he transferred this imagery to found objects such as handsaws, axes and baseball bats and (in another series) to amateur landscape paintings found in junk shops. Recent work is more abstract in manner and refined in technique. Though attractive, the book is curiously bound by Japanese-style stab sewing which looks handsome but causes large parts of pictures spread across two pages to disappear into the deep gutter between them.

**GALLERIES OF MAORILAND:**  
*Artists, collectors and the Māori world, 1880-1910*

by Roger Blackley  
(Auckland University Press, \$75)

This serious work of scholarship (it began life as a doctoral thesis) is a subtle and searching analysis of the various ways in which Pākehā discovered, documented, appropriated,

presented and romanticised the Māori world in the decades before and after 1900. It investigates how painters of Māori life such as Goldie, Lindauer, Watkins and Steele, anthropologists such as Elsdon Best, Edward Tregear and Alexander Hamilton, and institutions such as the Dominion Museum and the Polynesian Society interpreted the Māori past, especially through its material culture. A novel feature of the argument is the degree of Māori participation in this process; Māori are seen not as mere passive victims of cultural theft but as active stakeholders using Pākehā authorities and cultural institutions for their own purposes. The trade in Māori curios, the role of Māori life in international expositions, and the complex transactions involved in Māori portraiture are among the topics explored in closely argued and superbly illustrated chapters. This deeply researched book is an impressive contribution to that process.

**THEO SCHOON:**  
*A Biography*

by Damian Skinner  
(Massey University Press, \$60)

Damian Skinner's biography of Theo Schoon will be read with enthusiasm by the many people who have been wanting to understand and make more sense of this enigmatic and chameleon figure in our art history. Until now Schoon has been a puzzling compendium of many parts — photographer, painter, archaeologist, carver, advocate for modernism and Māori art — the interconnections between which were puzzling and confusing. In Skinner's well-researched and well-written book all the different parts hang together convincingly and the interrelationships between them are lucidly explained. Born in Indonesia to Dutch colonist parents, Schoon's discoveries of Māori rock art informed his practice for several decades in the many different art media he successively pursued. Skinner's book is a fascinating study of a talented outsider (gay and unassimilated) whose key place in New Zealand art is only slowly being recognised and understood.