

# A HOE!

BY STEVE GIBBS

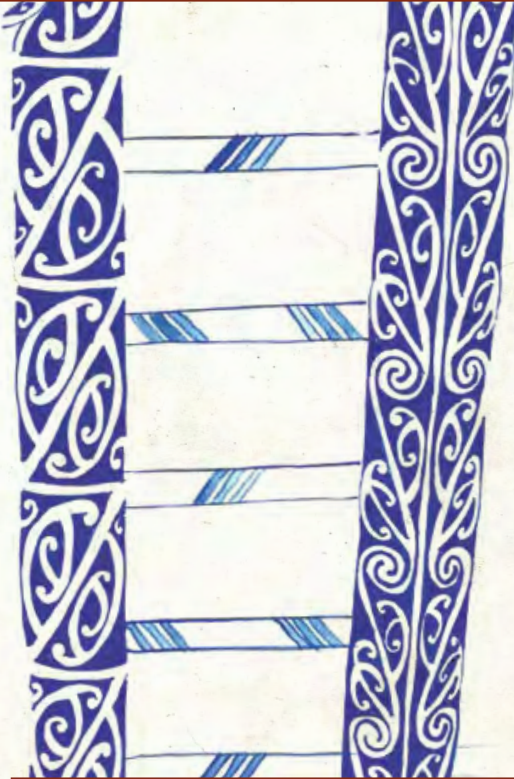
## STEVE GIBBS

(Ngāi Tāmanuhiri, Rongowhakaata, Rongomaiwahine, Ngāti Kahungunu)

Steve is an artist and teacher who was born and raised in Gisborne. His art combines elements of customary and non-customary Māori design.



I feel really lucky that I was born in Tūranganui-a-Kiwa – Gisborne. When I was a child, I often went to our marae. I spent many hours looking at the kōwhaiwhai (painted designs) in the wharenuī (meeting house). I was fascinated by them. What did they mean? Who had painted them and why?



▲ The kōwhaiwhai patterns looked like this. (This is a recent painting by Steve – the kōwhaiwhai in his wharenuī were coloured black, red, and white.)

Many years later, I saw a beautiful painting. It was by Sydney Parkinson, the artist on James Cook's ship, the *Endeavour*. The painting was of the hoe waka that were exchanged with Tupaia and Cook by Māori in 1769.



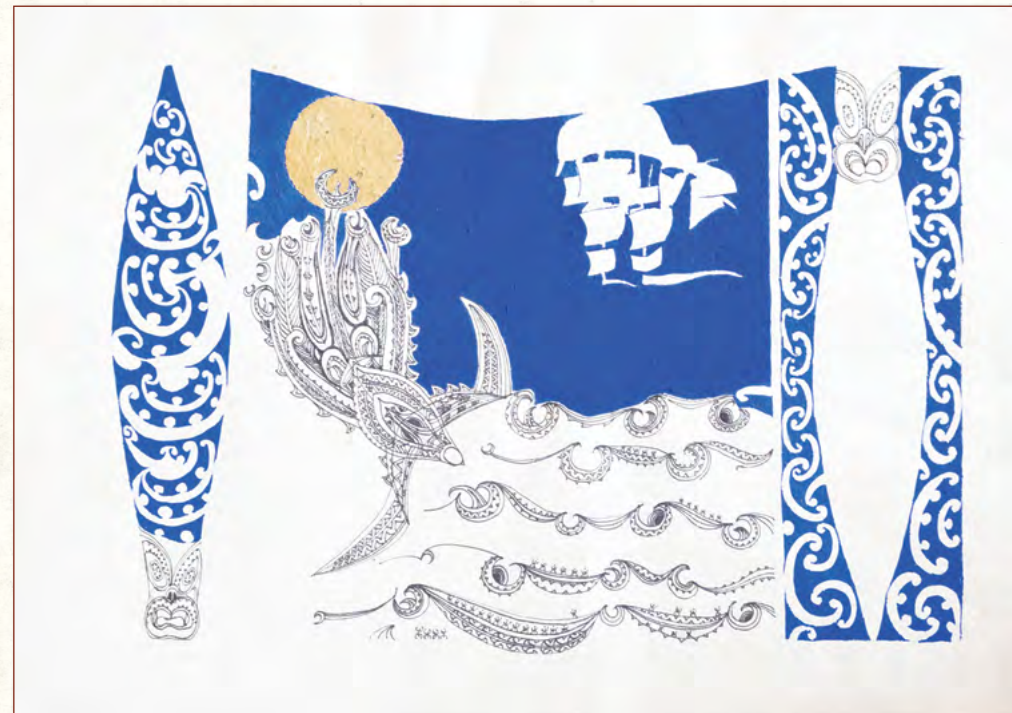
Sydney Parkinson: "Three Paddles from New Zealand" (1769)  
Pen, wash, and watercolour, British Library, London

I realised that the designs on the hoe were the same as the designs we now call kōwhaiwhai. The hoe were the last remaining examples of kōwhaiwhai from that time.



I wanted to find out more about the designs, so I travelled to the United Kingdom and Europe. I went to several museums to find the hoe waka. Then I made copies of their designs. Two of my drawings are shown below.

I also did some paintings of my own. They are about the hoe waka and the first meetings between Māori and Europeans. The drawings and my paintings were on show at Tairāwhiti Museum in Gisborne in 2017. The exhibition was called *A Hoe!*



## “NO ORDINARY BIRD”

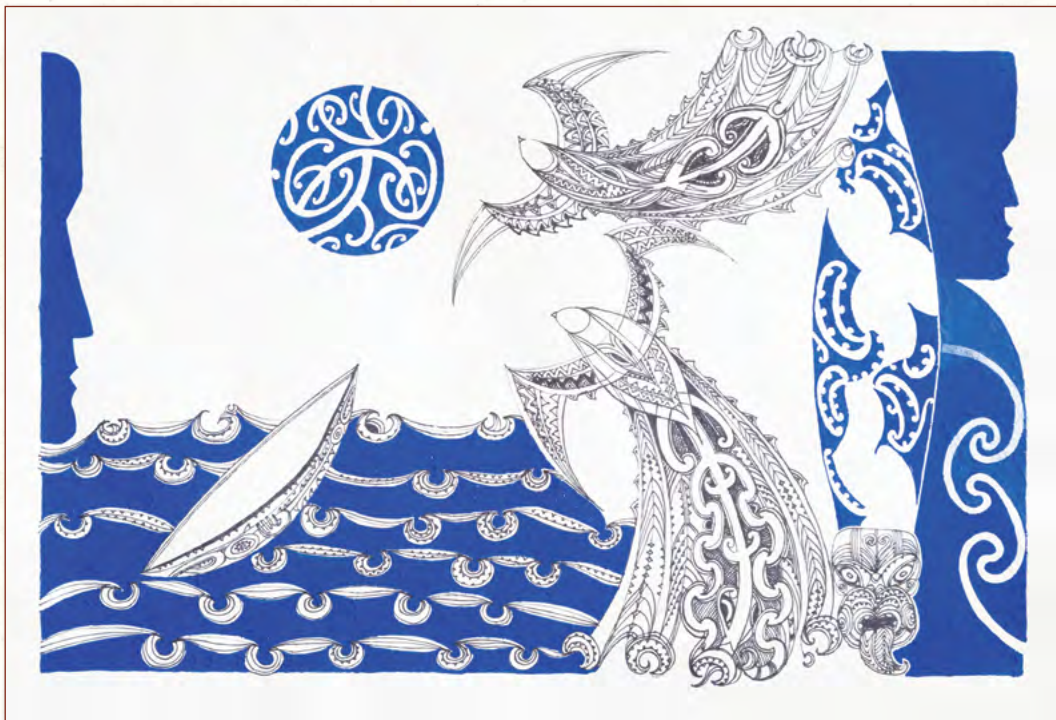
This painting shows the *Endeavour* arriving at Tūranganui-a-Kiwa. When Māori first saw the *Endeavour*, it was coming from the north-east. The kuaka (bar-tailed godwit) and other birds come from the north-east when they are returning from their migration. The white sails might have made the ship look a bit like a bird, too. But as Māori watched it come closer, they knew it was “no ordinary bird”.



## “TE HOE NUKUROA”



This painting is about the first contact between Māori and Europeans at Tūranganui-a-Kiwa. It shows them meeting, and it shows the gifts they exchanged. The waka represents the Māori navigators who crossed the wide ocean of Kiwa (Pacific Ocean) about five hundred years before the European sailors.



## “6TH SENSE”



Pawa was a Ngāti Porou explorer. He came to Aotearoa in *Horouta*, one of the first waka. In this painting, Pawa’s dog (te kurī a Pawa) is watching Cook’s ship arrive. The dog knows this will mean many changes for Māori. (The dog stands for the people who lived in the area from Tūranganui-a-Kiwa to Māhia.)





## “SCENT”



The title of this painting refers to the dog smelling the earth. The dog is finding out about the history of the people and the events that happened in the area.

Whareongaonga was a busy settlement when Cook arrived in Aotearoa. A number of waka went out to meet the *Endeavour*. Māori on the waka traded items with the crew. The crew gave Māori some nails, a tomahawk, Tahitian tapa cloth, a bag of potatoes, turnip seed, and blue glass beads. Among the things that Māori gave the crew in return were hoe waka – the same hoe waka that I saw in the museums in the United Kingdom and Europe.

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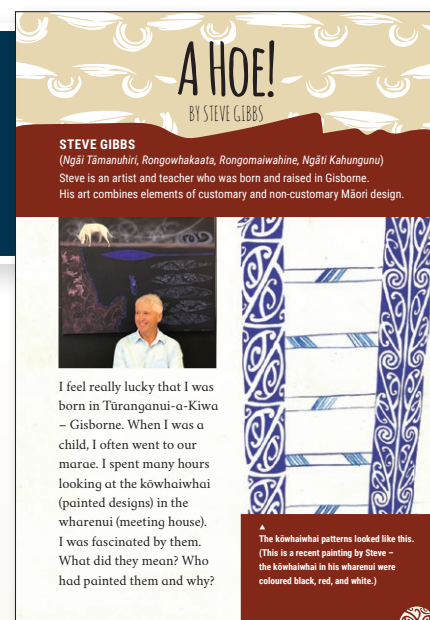
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