



Media Release

Common Thread

Where: Mt Marua Gallery, Expressions, Fergusson Drive, Upper Hutt

When: 1 March -13 May 2012

16 February, 2012

The humble woollen blanket has been part of our history since its early arrival in the 1800's through to its production in mills around the country during the industrialisation of New Zealand. Blankets are part of the weft and warp of our heritage, stories and daily lives.

Work featured in *Common Thread* will explore the use of blankets in contemporary art including photography, two dimensional artwork, sculptural forms, jewellery and costume.

The exhibition features a range of different perspectives as seen through the medium of the blanket. For example while blankets may signify warmth, comfort and home for European New Zealanders; for Maori they may symbolise land loss. Jo Torr's costumes reference our colonial past, alongside work by Ngaahina Hohaia which symbolizes the impact of this commonplace object on Maori.

The artworks of Katherine Morrison and Andrea Chandler predominantly feature grey army blankets combined with symbols like the Red Cross which embody war and the ANZAC spirit. Chandler's grey army blanket is bejewelled with a blood splatter.

Melior Simms has made a two dimensional relief image of Antarctica with blanket and stitch. Her methodical use of technique highlights the environmental impact human nature has on its surroundings through repetitive destructive action.

Akiko Diegel, winner of the paramount 2011 Wallace Arts Trust Award, also uses repetition to draw attention to the widespread loss of sewing skills which are no longer valued and have been discarded, much like many of the blankets used in this exhibition, which have been salvaged from opportunity shops around the country.

There will be a floor talk at Expressions at 2pm on Sunday 29 April featuring Natalie Friend, the exhibition's curator, and several of the artists talking about how the elemental and symbolic nature of blankets has informed their art.

For more information contact:

Natalie Friend, curator Common Thread

phone: 04 527 2168, **email:** curator@expressions.org.nz

Stephanie Cottrill, director Expressions

phone: 04 527 2851, **email:** director@expressions.org.nz