

Show off

Curators and designers discuss the Resene colours that allow art and artefacts to shine.





opposite and left: Resene Zylone Sheen tinted to Resene Flax, Resene Cross Country, Resene Mustang and Resene Black Magic were the key colours used in this MTG Hawke's Bay exhibition, along with stripe details in Resene Serenity, Resene Opal, Resene Petite Orchid, Resene Kalgoorie Sands, Resene Caper, Resene Nirvana, Resene Chelsea Cucumber, Resene Origin, Resene Contessa, Resene Rose Of Sharon, Resene Flourish, Resene Bay Leaf, Resene Aqua and Resene Area 51. The exhibition showcases the breadth of woven Taonga in the museum's collection and the materials and techniques used to create these precious works of art. The project was recognised with a Resene Total Colour Nightingale Award and a Resene Total Colour Installation - Experiential - Product Award. Exhibit design and specification by James Price, MTG Hawke's Bay Exhibitions & Facilities Team, www.mtghawkesbay.com. Curation by Nigel How. Images by David Frost.

	Resene Aqua		Resene Petite Orchid		Resene Nirvana
	Resene Opal		Resene Contessa		Resene Flourish
	Resene Serenity		Resene Kalgoorie Sands		Resene Flax
	Resene Bay Leaf		Resene Rose Of Sharon		Resene Caper
	Resene Origin		Resene Mustang		Resene Chelsea Cucumber
	Resene Area 51		Resene Black Magic		Resene Cross Country

Of all the places one can seek out inspiration, art galleries and museums are among the most common locales that designers and specifiers go to top up their creative fuel tanks. Though many have begun leveraging the convenience of the internet to make imagery of their collections available far and wide, nothing compares to seeing a masterpiece or precious antique in person. Whether it's a painting's glossy finish or visible brushstrokes, the subtle impression of a maker's fingerprint on the surface of a pottery vessel or the sensation of being dwarfed by a large-scale work, there is a unique and undeniable magic that these objects hold.

The internet can be an overwhelming place, too. When everything is screaming for your attention, it makes it awfully hard to focus on any one thing. While its democratic nature and widespread availability is one of the web's most admirable aspects, which allows us to expose ourselves to work that we would otherwise never know existed, it also makes it difficult to separate the wheat from the chaff. The phenomenon of the

endless scroll of imagery on Google, Instagram and Pinterest has shone light on the valuable work that curators do in identifying what is relevant and important. Their ability to assemble the crème de la crème into experiences that ebb and flow, which can be experienced collectively with friends, family and strangers alike, is a great service to those in creative fields. And part of what makes those experiences so much more enjoyable is the way they are rolled out across physical areas, and the almighty negative space – or 'white space' – that frames each piece and provides the eye with a place to rest.

But somewhere along the line, the term 'white space' was taken a little too literally. White on white interiors became synonymous with a 'gallery look', even though this is rarely the ideal circumstance to experience artworks and artefacts.

"White galleries only became a gallery norm in the 20th Century," explains Charlotte Davy, Head of Art at the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa. "For many centuries, art has been displayed on coloured walls. We know that using certain

colours on the walls improves the viewing experience of paintings, which has more to do with the science of colour rather than taste. In designing exhibitions, we also look to evoke feelings and responses that enhance the experience – and colour plays a big part in that."

"The use of non-white wall colours can be such an incredible tool and can enrich the visitor's experience of the space," explains Nick Eagles of The Letter Q, a design studio which specialises in exhibit design. "It can say something about the artist or creator – it can be biographical or a visual cue to a particular time period or place. We would never position ourselves against the use of white in gallery or exhibition spaces, but it's not a convention we feel restrained by."

More designers and specifiers could do with this release from restraint and convention; not only do coloured walls offer up better opportunities to work with and around clients' artworks and antiques – even if that setting is residential or commercial in nature rather than a true gallery – they create more enjoyable and engaging spaces to be in. While there will always be exceptions where white is

BECOMING NEW ZEALANDERS

Starting anew in a fledgling nation was another challenge for the immigrants. But by nature they were brave and innovative, willing to make sacrifices and toil hard for their future generations.

Meet some of the people who made New Zealand their home.



top tips

+ Spotlights are important for illuminating artworks and artefacts in gallery and museum settings. To reduce glare from these concentrated light sources, look to low sheen and matte formulas such as Resene SpaceCote Low Sheen, Resene Zylone Sheen and Resene SpaceCote Flat for walls, ceilings and plinths.

+ For spaces housing especially sensitive artefacts, use Resene Zylone Sheen Zero – which has no added VOCs.

above and right: The Immigrants, a permanent social history exhibition created for the New Zealand Maritime Museum, features rich, warm colours to create an inviting and enveloping space with strong visual impact. The palette was inspired by old suitcases, leather, wood, book cloth and printer's ink on display and includes Resene Tia Maria, Resene Moroccan Spice, Resene Bootleg, Resene City Limits, Resene Tall Poppy, Resene Dutch White, Resene Reservoir and Resene Green Room. Exhibition design by Pearson & Associates Architects, www.pearsonarchitects.co.nz. Colour selection, art direction, image research and graphic design by The Letter Q. Painting by Savory Construction, www.savory.co.nz. Images by Nick Eagles.

	Resene Dutch White
	Resene Reservoir
	Resene Green Room
	Resene City Limits
	Resene Moroccan Spice
	Resene Tia Maria
	Resene Tall Poppy
	Resene Bootleg



did you know?

Resene
Au Chico

The Oddy test is a method for determining whether or not specific materials – including paints – are appropriate for use in an enclosed space with artwork or other cultural heritage artefacts. The Oddy test is used routinely in many museums, including Te Papa, where a sample of material is enclosed with a coupon of cleaned metal. Corrosion is accelerated by adding water to create high humidity and by elevating temperatures (60°C). After 28 days, the extent of corrosion on the metal coupon is used to evaluate the suitability of the material under test for use in the display or storage of artefacts containing that metal. A number of Resene formulas and colours were applied to glass slides, cured for a fortnight and then tested – all of which passed. For a listing of Oddy tested Resene products and tinters deemed suitable for archival, museum and gallery settings, visit www.resene.com/oddytest.

the right choice to use, if the pandemic has taught us anything, it's that spending day in and day out in stark white spaces isn't energising enough for most of us. Just as more extensive use of colour in our homes and workplaces has begun making our everyday lives more comfortable, the return to colourful gallery and museum spaces has increased the quality of the experiences they're able to offer.






When the chance to showcase a world-class collection arises – which was the case when 180 surrealist artworks from the likes of Salvador Dalí, Max Ernst, Leonora Carrington, René Magritte and Marcel Duchamp visited Wellington – the curation team at Te Papa goes all out. The museum was the only venue in Australasia to host the exhibit, which was titled *Surrealist Art: Masterpieces from Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen*.

“The exhibition was co-designed with Warren and Mahoney and we worked for six months designing each space to correspond to a particular theme,” says Charlotte. “We initially looked at the overall flow through the exhibition, then the feeling or experience we wanted to convey in each space, and the spatial layout of the artworks in the space. Each space was distinct from the one before, and that meant that we could use a wide range of colours throughout the exhibition. One space in the exhibition focused on the theme of love and desire in Surrealism; we wanted this space to feel elicited, a bit naughty, even slightly sweaty, so we choose Resene Au Chico, a beautiful fleshy peach colour. It was a bold choice that made it very clear that we were not talking about romance!”

top tip

In high-touch areas, such as interactive exhibits, Resene SpaceCote Clear can be applied to walls on top of colour coats to provide an extra layer of durability without increasing the sheen level. On items like joinery and furniture, use Resene Lustacryl semi-gloss or Resene Enamacryl gloss waterborne enamel for a surface that's easy to wipe clean.

left: The Letter Q used Resene Tangaroa, Resene Seachange and Resene Bali Hai to set an appropriate tone in the One Man's Treasure exhibition designed for the New Zealand Maritime Museum. The project was recognised with a Resene Total Colour Installation - Experiential - Product Award. Curation by Rose Evans. Painting by Rassmuss Whenuaroa. Image by Southern Studios, www.southernstudios.tv.

	Resene Bali Hai		Resene Kermadec		Resene Sumptuous
	Resene Seachange		Resene Red Berry		Resene Hot Toddy



Charlotte says that it's up to the creative team working on each exhibition to choose the colour palettes. "Colour is an integral part of the overall design and we have wonderfully talented staff who we trust to deliver the impactful, high-quality exhibitions that Te Papa is known for."

"We also partner with all sorts of creatives and creative agencies for our exhibitions. For Surrealist Art, we greatly enjoyed working with Warren and Mahoney. On Terracotta Warriors a few years ago, we worked with Freeman Ryan Design from Sydney. When we work with external designers, this is done in collaboration with our fantastic team of in-house designers. I think working in this way brings new ideas and thinking, it keeps things fresh."

When The Letter Q works on an exhibition with a museum or gallery, Nick and his partner, Hannah Kerr, embed themselves with the in-house project team. "Before any colours are selected, we will work collaboratively as part of the exhibition team and become familiar with subject, time period and the objects that are being selected for display. Depending on the size of the exhibition, this may be a year or more before it opens to the public," says Hannah.

With One Man's Treasure, an exhibition the pair put together for the New Zealand Maritime Museum, Nick says he and Hannah were inspired by the materials the objects were made of. "We really wanted to contrast and complement them. As the colour palette was being developed, Resene drawdown paint swatches were used to visualise how the colours would work in the gallery

space with the objects and were always checked under exhibition lighting before sign-off."

"We have built up a lot of trust with our clients over the years and are known for being confident with using bold colour," says Nick. "Some clients love colour too and enjoy collaborating with us as we hone the palette for a project. Others may feel less confident and are happy for us to lead the selection. We aim to present a colour palette that is informed by the exhibition concept. We think about what stories we are trying to tell and what we want a visitor to feel as they move through an exhibition space. We are inspired by and respond to the subject, objects and the time period the exhibition covers when we make our selection. This conceptual foundation can give the client the confidence to approve creative and bold colour choices."

"For example, with the Raiātea Motuti Resource and Archive Centre in Hokianga, which is set to open this autumn, we went with a dark exhibition interior in Resene Kermadec to create an envelope for showcasing the rich jewel tones inspired by Catholic church vestments: cardinal red, bishop's pink and gold, which we brought in through Resene Red Berry, Resene Sumptuous and Resene Hot Toddy."

Charlotte says she spends a lot of time considering colour in art and in exhibition design. "I am often intrigued by colours that I find hard to define or express in a single word. We use a lot of colour at Te Papa and it is often commented upon by our

The Letter Q's favourite hues

Resene Ashanti

"A serene, shifting pale blue-green-grey depending on the colours that surround it, with just enough pigment to not wash out under lights. We have used it in many exhibitions when needing a lighter element in our palette."

Resene
Ashanti

Resene Tangaroa

"A perfectly deep sea blue-green, which made the brass objects in One Man's Treasure pop."

Resene
Tangaroa

Resene Nightclub

"A luscious deep plum with rich pigmentation. We recently discovered this hue and used it in our Raiātea Motuti Resource and Archive Centre colour palette. It's a beautiful complement to the black and white images and other brighter jewel tones."

Resene
Nightclub

audiences. One of the most loved galleries at Te Papa is the portrait wall on level 5, which is in Resene Pohutukawa. It references salon hangs from the 19th Century and creates real drama in the space. In Terracotta Warriors, we predominately used a very ethereal and dark blue, Resene Blue Night, which gave a sense of mystery and majesty to the extraordinary Qin Dynasty artefacts on display.

“In our Tony Fomison exhibition Out of the Dark, we painted the whole gallery in Resene Double Caffeine. Under exhibition lighting, it seemed to shift from black brown through to blue and purple – which was entirely enveloping and perfect for the moodiness of Fomison’s work. The palette for our upcoming Robin White exhibition is the wonderful Resene Double Drought, Resene Brown Bramble and Resene Bali Hai – an airy blue with earthy browns that support major works by this very special New Zealand artist. Of course, we couldn’t live without our staple black and white, Resene All Black and Resene Black White, when we are keeping it simple.

“The main reason we like Resene is that they are terrific in working with us to find solutions to achieve the finish we want, which can sometimes be very specific. The colour range has everything we need, whether we are trying to reference historic colours or want something sharp and contemporary, and the quality of the products is top notch. We also like to support New Zealand companies who are engaged in innovation.”










Nick shares in Charlotte’s reasoning for specifying Resene. “Resene paints have a great range of strong colour pigments which perform under professional grade lighting. We really appreciate the great service Resene provides to the design industry – especially their A4 drawdown paint swatches and their library of colour specs so we can match our paint colour selections with the exhibition graphics.” **BW**

To see more of The Letter Q’s work, check out www.theletterq.co.nz. And to see what exhibitions Te Papa is currently hosting and what’s yet to come, visit www.tepapa.govt.nz.



right: Surrealist Art | He Toi Pohewa gallery view, showing exhibition design. Photos by Dionne Ward, 2021 | Te Papa. Walls in Resene SpaceCote Low Sheen tinted to Resene Nite Life, Resene Au Chico and Resene Gothic.



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|  Resene Black White |  Resene Double Drought |  Resene Au Chico |
|  Resene Bali Hai |  Resene Brown Bramble |  Resene Pohutukawa |
|  Resene Nite Life |  Resene Double Caffeine |  Resene All Black |

