

## PRESS RELEASE

Rangi Kipa  
May 8 – June 14, 2008

Goff + Rosenthal gallery is pleased to present the first solo exhibition in the United States of work by Maori New Zealand artist Rangi Kipa. Our New York exhibition follows on the heels of Kipa's inclusion in "Star Power: Museum as Body Electric", the inaugural exhibition of the Museum of Contemporary Art in Denver.

The exhibition consists of three parts: a series of colorful Staron and Corian *Parata* (masks), each uniquely carved and inlaid; six single brightly colored, hand-carved ironwood panels—or *pou*—and a large drawing.

Rangi Kipa's personal history and artistic practice have been closely intertwined with New Zealand's indigenous Maori population's rights movement which, in many ways, drew on the experience and strategies of the American civil rights movements of the 1960s and 70s. Kipa's work should be viewed within the context of the Maori cultural recovery initiatives which sought both to promote traditional Maori carving and object-making and Ta Moko (tattooing) and to re-appropriate these traditions from cheap Western commercial exploitation (Tiki Bars, "tribal" tattoos", etc).

Although Kipa's work draws on traditional Maori forms, narratives and cosmology, his radical use of new and synthetic materials such as Staron and Corian and his subtle references to contemporary culture and his own personal history and life brings his work into the realm of contemporary art. The *Parata* embody Kipa's position on the border of Maori traditions and contemporary art. The form of the masks references a form found on a classic Maori fishing canoe, yet they are hot pink, orange, blue, black, green and yellow. Says Kipa: "I think a lot about the need for Maori people to navigate new pathways, to move forward much in the same way that the Maori people originally navigated their way across the Pacific. I'm not looking to re-validate our culture within in the post-colonial social structure of New Zealand, but rather my position is that we're already validated and must move forward." The starting point of this exhibition, thematically and formally, is the large orange *Parata* called "The Navigator."

In a wider sense Kipa's work is about the challenge of making a massive break with a particular tradition and ethnic/national identity while also maintaining a connection to this same source. Kipa shows that this delicate balance is possible, especially in a charged political and post-colonial context. His work exits the realm of ethnography to become a mode of expression and commentary that exists on an international platform—including that of the contemporary "art world".

Kipa's work is included in significant collections in New Zealand (Te Papa, Dowse Art Museum, Puke Ariki) and overseas. Recent awards include the 2006 Creative New Zealand Craft/Object Art Fellowship and the Molly Morpeth Canada Creative Excellence Award 2004. He was a graduate of the Maraeroa Carving School in 1986, and from Waikato University in 1994. He also holds a Masters of Maori Visual Arts, Massey University 2006. He resides in Ohope, New Zealand.