



Boboli (1964). Detail of Archie Brennan tapestry. The Textile Trust studio collection.

In Search of the Fabulous Idea

Costume & Textiles Aotearoa New Zealand

Annual Symposium

2nd to 4th April 2027

The Regent Theatre, Greymouth Māwhera, West Coast Te Tai Poutini

Call for Papers

We invite papers that explore costume, textiles and dress through the theme *In Search of the Fabulous Idea*.

The Search for the Fabulous Idea is the title of June Black's first exhibition in 1958. June was an artist with a particular interest in fine fabric, clothes and fashion. In recent years her reputation has grown, due in part to The Intellectual Fashion Show 2016, curated by CTANZ member Doris de Pont, and the Modern Women: Flight of Time exhibition in Auckland in 2024. With the permission of her daughter, Sheridan Keith, herself a textile artist, the theme of our symposium in 2027 has borrowed and adapted that title.

The 2027 CTANZ Symposium is going to be held in Māwhera Greymouth for the first time and its theme reflects the history and heritage of the Coast while recognising that the future for this extraordinary part of Aotearoa is inextricably bound-up with adventuring and exploring.

For centuries Te Tai Poutini/ the West Coast has been a place where people have come to find riches: pounamu, gold, coal and lumber. Along the way those explorers have lent an air of myth and a richness of stories in their wake. Te Tai Poutini (The Tides of Poutini) is named after the taniwha that swims offshore in the wild and turbulent waters, guarding precious pounamu, the land from whence it came, and the people of the Coast. Such stories have created the legend of the tough Coaster, independent and a little wild, but that is only part of the tale of this marvellous area. Artists and craftspeople have long been at home here, drawn by the lush scenery, forests and dramatic cliffs that line the ocean.

Textiles are an important part of the story of the Coast. From the pāraerae (flax footwear) that carried Raureka and countless others over the passes on the pounamu trails to a cloak that kept a 19th Century life from drowning, textiles and clothes have enabled life to thrive and enriched livelihoods. That is just as true today as it was centuries ago. For those who are of an enquiring nature, and curious, the Coast offers new ways to live and work. In a place where a legendary and infamous katabatic wind called The Barber cloaks the hills with cold fog as it tumbles down the river valleys, and where snowy peaks frame the vistas, keeping warm in body and spirit is leading to the building of new communities. New ideas are transforming the settlements up and down Te Tai Poutini and textiles are an integral part of that change.

In celebration, as always, we are looking for symposium presentations that explore costume and textiles in relation to the theme. You might consider the meanings of 'Fabulous', 'Search' or 'Idea', or have a project that you think would fit. Whatever your theme, presentations can take the form of a paper (20 minutes), a panel (3-4 people) or lightning talk (10 minutes). For this symposium we are also offering Conversations On The Couch, an interview-style of presentation with up to three people (two presenters and an interviewer).

We invite scholars, artists, makers, conservators, designers, historians, performers and thinkers to join us in Māwhera Greymouth as we go together In Search of the Fabulous Idea.

Submit your proposal abstract

Abstract

Up to 250 words in a Word document (saved as surname_firstname.docx)

Biography

Up to 50 words plus contact details

Deadline for receipt of abstracts: 31 October 2026

Notification for CTANZ symposium 2027

7 December 2026

Email: andy@textiletrust.org

Applicants are not required to be members of the CTANZ, but all presenters are required to pay the symposium registration fee.

We would love contributors to consider publishing their papers in *Context*, CTANZ's journal.

Any questions?

Please contact the organisers at andy@textiletrust.org.