Exhibition first for the South Island

MĀORI CAMERA CLUB
Victoria Meakin

A newly formed collective of Māori photographers will hold its first official exhibition at Christchurch's Arts Centre this month.

Running at The Physics Room gallery from October 17, the Māori Camera Club exhibition features the work of eight artists, including senior lecturer in photography at Ilam School of Fine Arts, Conor Clarke. The collection spans environmental portraits, cosmic video works, and explorations of indigenous identity.

The club began in Wellington last year as a public programme alongside an exhibition by artists Bridget Reweti and Clarke. Young Māori photographers were invited to spend half a day connecting, in the camera club tradition.

"I thought what a cool idea," Physics Room director James Tapsell-Kururangi said. "I reached out to both Bridget and Conor and said, 'How about we have an exhibition with the group of photographers that you'd had come along that day?'"

The Christchurch/Ōtautahi event marks the group's first official exhibition and their first wānanga/study group in the South Island. The photographers will meet to discuss the club's future and visit the Ngāi Tahu archives alongside prominent photographers John Miller and Natalie Robinson.

Tapsell-Kururangi said the wānanga was a significant professional development opportunity for the group, which includes several recent award winners.

"The work that they're producing is some of the hottest young Māori photography coming out at the moment."

The exhibition also features photography by Hendrix Hennessy-Ropiha, whose reçent *Pahemata* outdoor exhibition saw his work presented in light boxes on Wellington's Courtenay Pl.

Keita Newbery, Ben Girven, Abigail Hau, Tiana Krafft-Soffe, Vanessa Green, Renati Waaka, and Jazmin Tainui Mihi are also exhibiting.

Hau, born and based in Ōtautahi, shoots exclusively using film and pursues a practice rooted in connection to taiao/the natural world.

Tapsell-Kururangi, who has been director at The Physics Room for two years, said it was important for gallery to support initiatives like the Māori Camera Club.

Based in the Registry Additions Building at The Arts Centre, the gallery is a not-for-profit charitable trust that aims to develop and promote contemporary art and critical discussions about the creative landscape.

An artist floor talk for the Māori Camera Club will be held at the gallery on October 31 from 1pm, with the exhibition running until December 4.



Work by Jazmin Tainui Mihi makes up part of the upcoming Māori Camera Club exhibition.



Ilam Fine Arts photography lecturer Conor Clarke has contributed to the Māori Camera Club exhibition.



Work by Renati Waaka is included in the exhibition.



Photographer Bridget Reweti's work is included in the exhibition.