

Top left: Whales tails by Stephen Myhre (Beefbone)

Bottom left: Manaia by Neil Hanna (Whale ivory, nephrite jade and silver)

Left: Kahurangi Kiwi by Hepi Maxwell (Nephrite jade)

Top right: Murihiku by Russell Beck (Nephrite jade)

Bottom right: Nguru by Ron Williams (Matai and paua shell)

The pieces have been specially commissioned to mark New Zealand's participation in the Los Angeles Olympic Cultural Festival which coincides with the games.

Jade carver, Hepi Maxwell, weaver, Erenora Puketapu-Hetet, carver and sculptor, Ron Williams, weavers Emily Schuester and Donna Waiariki are the five maori craftspeople with works in Kahurangi. Maxwell of Rotorua has a piece in the exhibition called Kahurangi Kiwi. It is a beautifully made piece symbolising the kiwi in its natural habitat amongst ponga ferns. He also has other greenstone pieces in the display and is one of the artists demonstrating their skills at the exhibit.

As part of an education programme included in the exhibition, four New Zealand craftspeople have been asked to show their skills at the museum. The first one to participate was Erenora Puketapu-Hetet from Wellington. Her korowai of pheasant feathers and muka is on display in Kahurangi. When the exhibition opened she and her husband Rangi were at the ceremony.

They were in Pasadena for a week demonstrating wood carving and weaving. Erenora took a korowai made from muka and kiwi feathers to demonstrate on.

The other craftsman to be asked to the museum was Stephen Mhyre of Pukerua Bay, Wellington. He specialises in bone carving and works with wood and driftwood. His carved hook depicting a spider web is a hei matau in the exhibition.

Rotorua weavers Emily Schuester and Donna Waiariki are weavers who made piupiu along with the guides at Whakarewarewa.

Some of the beautiful contemporary craftwork to be exhibited are works made by wood carver Ron Williams of Lyttleton. His carvings of nguru, wakahuia and a tokotoko adorn the exhibition and the nguru he has made has an aria figure which symbolises a spirit within. The God of the Wind is represented by the swirls.

The exhibition finishes in December but is expected to tour for at least a year.

Also on display in another gallery of the museum is a collection of traditional maori artefacts assembled from private collections in the USA as well as from New Zealand sources.

