

# He doesn't want to offend – honest

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**OUTSIDER ARTIST:** Lester Hall and a poster promoting his show at Loft. It depicts 19th century English sailor and trader Barnet Burns who lived as a Pakeha Maori and had a full facial tattoo.

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Artist and sailor Lester Hall, a newcomer to Kerikeri, has no intention of making his viewers feel comfortable.

Describing himself as a 50-something white New Zealand outsider artist, he says he's not part of the art establishment.

"I don't like being told what to think or do."

In producing satire, self-taught Mr Hall just wants "to be open and honest".

He admits overstepping the mark at times, like the piece he did 15 years ago about philanthropist Jenny Gibbs' unlikely friendship with Tuhoe activists Te Kaha and Tame Iti.

"She packed a sad," he recalls.

Mr Hall's work is largely about Maori-Pakeha contact. He uses firsthand accounts in journals, not history books.

Fascinated by what he calls accidental history, he says he aims to open conversation.

He laments that Kiwis don't like delving into their history and they focus on historical figures from other cultures rather than their own.

"Take Hongi Hika – an extraordinary military man and remarkable entrepreneur."

Wellington born, Mr Hall has lived in the Bay of Islands for several years. His move to Kerikeri is aimed at raising the profile of his art, he says.

His new works go up at Loft in Kerikeri Rd at 5.30pm today. Go to [www.lesterhall.com](http://www.lesterhall.com).