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**MEDIA RELEASE**  
**August 30, 2018**

# Depot Artspace

## EXPLORER FINDS FAIRIES IN AOTEAROA

Working at night on the set of Lord of the Rings, surrounded by Orcs, New Zealand writer/actor Geoff Allen had an epiphany about myths, legends and fairytales:

“I saw how stories moved around the world when their people moved. How they spoke about that culture - even when their people did not. It has set me on a journey of learning Te Reo and about Te Ao Maori; and learning about being Pakeha.”

Opening Devonport’s inaugural BiblioHub is the book launch of *Fairies of Down Under and other Pakeha Fairy Tales* by Geoff Allen, published by Makaro Press.

*When European settlers sailed to the bottom  
of the world, to Down Under,  
they took with them: tools, seed, livestock  
and their hope.  
They did not take monsters.  
Those crept aboard ... all by themselves.*

*Fairies of Down Under and Other Pākehā Fairy Tales* is a collection of sixteen short stories, each set in New Zealand. Thirteen of the stories are in the north, four in the South Island; and one that takes you around our entire coastline in a single night. Together they create a journey you can make around the country, either in story or in reality.

It is a book that has taken author Geoff Allen on his own personal journey – learning Te Reo, Te Ao Maori and learning about being Pakeha:

“The idea of asking the European fairies to tell us how they got to Aotearoa came one cold night while working on Lord of the Rings. On the set of Helm’s Deep, I looked around and saw elves, dwarves and orcs chatting and fighting and suddenly had an epiphany - like a part of me had been rejoined; between the land that made me and the stories that had moved me.

In 2016 I looked after my elderly mother for a year. After mum had gone to bed I’d work on the stories at the dinner table. Then often finish by doing a sketch to go with each one.

I have travelled thousands of miles around New Zealand researching these stories. Becoming a student of Te Reo was essential for this journey. The reo is the key to understanding more the world our ancestors and their fairies came to; Aotearoa.

Ka mutu tōku kōrero mō ngā pūrākau ēnei.  
tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou katoa.”

Please join Depot Artspace, publisher Makaro Press and Geoff Allen for a celebration of his new publication *Fairies of Down Under and other Pakeha Fairy Tales*.

Geoff Allen’s original illustrations for the book will also be on display.

**Friday, 28 September, 5.30 – 7pm at Depot Artspace, Devonport, Auckland.**

**-ENDS-**

### **GEOFF ALLEN**

Geoff Allen is an Auckland-based writer, playwright, actor, producer and teacher.

His short stories and poems have been published in Takahe Magazine, The 4<sup>th</sup> Floor Literary Journal and NZ Short Short Stories 2000. *Silk by Thorn* (2016) was a runner-up in the James Wallace LGBTQ Short Story Competition.

A visit to the graves of Vincent and Theo in Auvers inspired *Mrs Van Gogh*, which became one of the NZ Herald’s Plays of 2012.

Allen’s play *Sister Anzac*, a labour of love based on his grandfather’s experiences at Gallipoli, was produced at the NZ Navy and Maritime museums and the Going West Festival in 2015. Further seasons were at Te Pou, Meteor and Q Theatres.

*The Taiaha and the Sabre* was highly commended at the 2016 Adam Playwriting Awards.

Allen is currently developing a novel set in Italy in 1944 *Three Days in Italy*, about his father’s experiences in the battle of San Michele. He has also recently completed a research trip to Taranaki for, *TYRONE, The South Seas Adventures of James Tyrone*.

In 2018 Geoff Allen was recipient of a regional grant from The New Zealand Society of Authors (NZSA) and Auckland War Memorial Museum\*.

<https://authors.org.nz/event/book-launch-geoff-allen-auckland/>

<https://www.makaropress.co.nz>

<https://authors.org.nz/nzsa-auckland-museum-research-grants/>

## **BIBLIOHUB**

### **BiblioHub: September 28 – October 3**

As part of celebrating Devonport's rich and diverse literary community, BiblioHub brings together local booksellers, book-makers, book writers of all genre, and book lovers.

BiblioHub events at Depot Artspace include:

**BOOK LAUNCH: Geoff Allen:** *Fairies of Down Under and other Pakeha Fairy Tales*, Friday, 28 September, 5.30 – 7pm, The Depot Artspace, Devonport, Auckland

**BOOK LAUNCH: Mickey Smith:** *As You Will: Carnegie Libraries of the South Pacific*, Saturday, 29 September, 2:00 - 4:00pm, The Depot Artspace, Devonport, Auckland

**VERNACULAR LOUNGE: MICHAEL KING: A COMMEMORATION** by the MICHAEL KING WRITERS CENTRE (AUCKLAND HERITAGE WEEK) **September 28 – October 15**

### **FRANK SARGESON: 70<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE SARGESON HOUSE**

#### **DEPOT GALLERY MAIN GALLERY DISPLAYS**

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- PARADOX BOOKS
- DEVONPORT LIBRARY ASSOCIATES
- FLAGSTAFF
- BOOKMARK
- DEPOT PRESS

### **All listed events take place at**

#### **Depot Artspace**

28 Clarence Street  
Devonport  
Auckland

Phone: (09) 963 2331

#### **DEPOT ARTSPACE**

Depot Artspace is an open and inclusive creative community in Devonport, Auckland that encourages engagement in all art forms. Depot Artspace offers a variety of facilities, services and events that support the creative community including galleries, a professional development programme, publications and a recording studio.

[www.depotartspace.co.nz](http://www.depotartspace.co.nz) and <https://www.facebook.com/DepotArtspace>

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