

# Dual cultures separate artist's exhibit from the rest

By AROHA AWARAU

Artist Mandrika Rupa believes in pushing boundaries.

Her latest work, *Inheritance: A Lament*, fuses Maori poetry with Indian music and images — sparking mixed reviews.

“Some people didn’t like the fusion and mixing the two cultures together,” the Herne Bay resident says.

“Sometimes we are told to stay in our own cultures but I’ve been influenced by a lot of cultures, so I believe in pushing those boundaries.”

Ms Rupa was born in the Indian state of Gujarat and came to New Zealand in 1960, aged four.

Several of her ancestors left India in the early 1900s and married Maori, giving her strong links with both cultures.

She gave up a career in social work to become a film-maker and visual artist in 1993.

*Inheritance* is showing at Cambridge University in England as part of *Pasifika Styles*, a two-year exhibition of contemporary Maori and Pacific artists.

It took two years to complete and has three 20-minute instalments.

“I wanted to make a social commentary on how I felt. I wanted to question the separation of cultures in the world today,” she says.

Ms Rupa received a \$3280 grant from Creative New Zealand to contribute to the exhibition.



**Two worlds:** Mandrika Rupa fuses two cultures in her new artwork.

Photo: JASON OXENHAM