Copyright is owned by the Author of the thesis. Permission is given for a copy to be downloaded by an individual for the purpose of research and private study only. The thesis may not be reproduced elsewhere without the permission of the Author.
Toi Runga
Part 1

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy in Fine Arts

at Massey University, Palmerston North, Aotearoa New Zealand

Johnson Gordon Paul Witehira
Ngāti Hinekura, Tamahaki, Ngāti Hauā, Ngai Tūteauru, Ngā Puhi
2013
Thesis structure

The thesis is divided into three parts: *Toi Runga (Part 1), Toi Raro (Part 2)* and *Te Hononga Toi Māori (Part 3)*. *Toi Runga* and *Toi Raro* allude to *Te Kauae Runga* (the upper jaw) and *Te Kauae Raro* (the lower jaw), a Māori wānanga system associated with the Wairarapa wānanga (held in the nineteenth century at Greytown) that divided knowledge into celestial and terrestrial knowledge, that is, the knowledge of the gods on the one hand and knowledge of humankind on the other.

In the case of the thesis, the division refers to the two types of knowledge explored within the thesis. *Toi Runga (Part 1)* examines knowledge that is derived from a review of 'old' knowledge associated in particular with *pare* (door lintels). This review of customary Māori carving practice, and subsequent *pare* analyses, resulted in the development of a Māori design language pertinent to contemporary Maori design practice. In *Toi Raro (Part 2)*, the ‘new’ knowledge (Māori elements and principles of design) derived from the analysis of ‘old’ knowledge, were then applied to three design projects within a contemporary context.

*Te Hononga Toi Māori (Part 3)* was developed by the author as a reference for Māori terms, the Māori design elements and principles, and customary Māori surface pattern. When used in tandem with *Toi Runga (Part 1)* and *Toi Raro (Part 2)*, *Te Hononga Toi Māori (Part 3)* acts as quick reference to understanding Māori terms and relevant design terminology. Māori terms are introduced using a convention of Māori term followed by the English translation in brackets and thereafter only the Māori term is used.
Abstract

This research explores eighteenth and nineteenth century Māori carving and more specifically, *pare* (door lintel). The goal of this research is to develop design guidelines for Māori designers, based on customary models. Consequently, the research seeks to answer the research question: how might the visual language and *tikanga* (conventions, protocols, customary practice) of customary Māori carving inform contemporary Māori design practice?

This research topic responds to the dearth of Māori informed guidelines for designers, both Māori and non-Māori, when working with Māori content, form and imagery. In view of the increased use of Māori iconography in design industries both locally and globally, there is a need to develop guidelines that help maintain the integrity and intent of the Māori form and content, while enabling designers to express culturally significant messages. As a project by Māori, developed in response to Māori needs, the notion of *tinorangātiratanga* (sovereignty) is reaffirmed. While the customary, and to some extent contemporary Māori arts are helpful, the connection of design with commerce also highlights the need to develop guidelines that recognise this distinct crossover between culture and commerce. Thus, the Māori elements and principles of design have been articulated through an extensive literature review of eighteenth and nineteenth century Māori carving, and a linear diagrammatical analysis of *pare* informed by elements of Māori visual culture and epistemology with European design concepts and ideas about art.

The interdisciplinary nature of this project also demanded an innovative framework and methodology. This resulted in the development of the linear diagrammatical method for analysing carving, which combined *mātauranga Māori* (Māori knowledge) and knowledge about important cosmo-genealogical narratives, with western design conventions. This intersection between two-world views, that of design and that of customary Māori arts, is at the core of this thesis. It is critical to remember that the Māori terms developed to name the Māori principles of design evolve out of a conceptual engagement with the terminology and access to the language expertise of Dr Darryn Joseph. The terms therefore are not customary, but modern terms developed specifically for this study.

The elements and principles of Māori design were trialled through three design projects, a design exhibition *Ko Aotearoa Tēnei: This is New Zealand*, a Māori alphabet block set, and *Whakarare*, a Māori typeface design. Each of these offered insights into how the Māori elements and principles could be applied within contemporary design practice. At the same time, these projects demonstrated some of the limitations of this customary-informed approach to contemporary design. Importantly, these
projects established how the Māori elements and principles could potentially allow designers to create multi-layered works that express Māori ideas, and Māori design sensibilities, in the absence of literal Māori iconography in a variety of design contexts. The Māori elements and principles bring Māori design closer to Te Ao Māori through the connection of design with customary Māori arts practice.
Acknowledgements

This research is a manifestation of my love for two things, Māori culture and graphic design. I have always maintained a keen interest in the Māori arts. However, as a graphic design student I remained reticent to undertake Māori projects because I had little knowledge about both Māori arts and culture. My 2007 Masters project, an exploration of Māori art through gestalt theory, presented an opportunity to rectify this problem. After I completed the Masters at the Whanganui School of Design, my supervisor Professor Hazel Gamec encouraged me to meet with Bob, and enrol in a PhD. Hazel’s advice had always resulted in positive outcomes, so in November 2007 I headed over to Palmerston to Te Pūtahi-a-Toi, Massey University’s School of Māori Studies.

Bob was Professor Robert Jahnke, the Head of the School and Coordinator of the Māori Visual Arts Programme, to whom I am indebted. Throughout my time at Māori studies Professor Jahnke’s guidance and knowledge has been inspiring. As the key supervisor of my research, his input has also been invaluable.

Special thanks must be given to Dr Darryn Joseph, the co-supervisor of my research. His insightful commentary and feedback on the writing has been enriching. Joseph’s knowledge of Te reo Māori was critical where Māori terminology was used, and new terms created. His light hearted and witty annotations also made the difficult latter stages of the thesis bearable.

I would thank a number of friends and teachers from Te Pūtahi-ā-Toi whose support and kōrero (discussions) at the Māori arts school, wānanga (knowledge dissemination gatherings), or over dinners, contributed to the ideas in my thesis, and also in the design exhibition. Two teachers in particular, Rachael Rākena and Israel Birch, provided me with much advice over the course of my studies. Reweti Arapere, your quiet reflections and insightful responses to my ideas helped me to better understand my research from a Māori worldview, enabling me to make better decisions within the research and in the design projects.

I would like to thank Shane James, Kaitiaki Taonga Māori (Guardian of Māori treasured possessions) at Te Papa Tongarewa Museum. James organised and assisted me during numerous visits to the Taonga Māori archives. James enthusiasm for Māori art and culture was inspiring. Chanel Clarke, curator of Māori collections at the Auckland Museum, and her support staff also deserve mention. On numerous occasions Chanel and her team located carvings, and provided me with images. I could not have completed this research without their help.
I would like thank John Moore and Miriame Barbarich who took me under their wing and supported me following my move to Wellington. Their aroha (love), friendship and assistance have meant more to me than I could ever express.

I would like to thank my family for all their support not only during the doctoral journey, but through all my academic and artistic pursuits. I would also like to thank the Duff family, who have provided support for both my wife and I. Your manaakitanga (support) knows no bounds.

To my wife and best friend Michelle Duff, I owe the biggest thanks. Working towards this PhD has been one of the hardest things I have ever done. You have supported me, and suffered with me through to its completion. You were pivotal in the design projects that I undertook, acting as the critical spring-board for many of my ideas.

Much of the research in this thesis is based on carvings found within New Zealand and overseas collections. I would like to pay tribute to the many carvers, and the incredible artistic legacy they have left, not only for Māori but for all New Zealanders and the world. The development of Māori design within this thesis could not have been achieved without the artistic platform that you have laid.

I dedicate this thesis to my parents, Beverley and Geoffrey Witehira.
Contents

Part 1: Toi Runga

Chapter 1 The Syntax and Grammar of Māori Design ......................................................... 1

Chapter 2 Tirohanga ki Mua: A History of studies into Māori art ..................................... 7
  From the late Eighteenth century to the mid-1980s ............................................................... 7
  Conclusion ........................................................................................................................... 17

Chapter 3 Three Key Studies of Carved Pare ................................................................. 19
  Gilbert Archey’s Pare Analysis ......................................................................................... 19
  Archey’s Pare Groupings ............................................................................................... 20
  The Stylistic Evolution of Pare ....................................................................................... 29
  Conclusion ......................................................................................................................... 31
  Michael Jackson’s Aspects of Symbolism and Composition in Māori Art ......................... 32
    Jackson’s Structural-Anthropology ............................................................................. 33
    A working definition of Pare Types and Styles ......................................................... 35
    The significance of the grouping of three elements in Māori art ................................. 39
    Jackson’s principles of pare composition .................................................................. 40
    The role and function of relief in pare ...................................................................... 43
    Kinesic, Chromatic and Sexual Symbolism ............................................................... 45
    Conclusion ..................................................................................................................... 50
  David Simmons (2001) The Carved Pare: A Mirror of the Māori Universe .................... 51
    Questionable Sources: Christianity, Te Riria and The Ahupiri Council of Elders ........ 52
    Major and minor themes in pare design .................................................................... 53
    Simmons’ categorisation of pare types: ................................................................. 58
    Pare anomalies: Important pieces of the puzzle ..................................................... 63
    Figure composition, relief and symbolism in pare design ........................................ 68
    Conclusion ..................................................................................................................... 71

Chapter 4 The Linear Pare Analyses ............................................................................ 72
  Design Theory and Terminology .................................................................................. 73
  The Elements and Principles of Design ........................................................................ 74
  The Six Elements of Gestalt Theory ............................................................................ 76
  The Law of Proximity ................................................................................................. 76
  The Law of Similarity ................................................................................................. 77
Part 3: Te Hononga Toi Māori

Appendix The Elements and Principles of Māori design

The Elements of Māori design

The Elements of Māori design: Te Tinana (the human body)

The Elements of Māori design: Te Manaia (the profile figure)

The Elements of Māori design: Te Takarangi (the spiral)

The Elements of Māori design: Te Tauira (pattern)

The Elements of Māori design: Te Ata (light) and Te Atakau (shadow)

The Principles of Māori design

The principle of tātai rahinga (arrangement by scale).

The principle of tātai mokowā (spatial interconnectedness)

The principle of tātai hikuwā (disrupted symmetry)

The principle of tātai hangarite (arrange symmetrically)

The principle of tātai whakapapa (proximal tiki arrangement)

The principle of mana wahine (the female element)

The principle of tātai manawa (heart pulse)

Patterns and Spirals in Māori carving

Paama-Pengelly’s Māori Design Conventions

Glossary

Bibliography
List of tables

Table 1. Simmons' minor themes in pare ............................................................... 55
Table 2. Simmons additional themes in pare ....................................................... 57
Table 3. Simmons' single figure scheme .............................................................. 60
Table 4. Simmons' two-figure scheme ................................................................. 61
Table 5. Simmons' three-figure pare scheme ...................................................... 62
Table 6. Single figure anomalies from Simmons' study ..................................... 63
Table 7. Single figure anomalies continued ....................................................... 64
Table 8. Three-figure pare anomalies ................................................................. 65
Table 9: Three-figure pare anomalies continued ............................................. 67
Table 10. Design and gestalt terminology .......................................................... 81
Table 12. Notching and ridged lines in Māori carving .................................. 205
Table 13. Surface and perforated patterns ....................................................... 206
Table 14. Common spiral forms in carving ....................................................... 208
Table 15. Key design conventions, Paama-Pengelly (2010) ............................ 212
List of figures

Figure 1. Archey's Simple Figure Sequence; Auckland Museum (Ethnology number: 202), width 82cm. .......................21
Figure 2. Stylized Tiki and Manaia Designs from Archey's pare grouping: Text Fig. 2. Auckland Museum (ethnology number: 9758) width 75 cm; Text Fig. 3. Auckland Museum (ethnology number: 18681); Thornton's Bay pare, width 76.2 cm; Text Fig 4. Dominion Museum Photo. ........................................................................22
Figure 3. Design Grouping of Tiki: Text Fig. 6. Presented to the British Museum in 1854 by Sir George Grey. 54. 12-29, 89. 98 x 76 cm. Text Fig. 7. Liverpool Museum, Ascension number R1 26-16/30, width 81.2 cm .......23
Figure 4. Pare. Text Fig 8, unearthed at Patetonga, Hauraki Plains, 1919, Auckland Museum (ethnology number: 6189) 233.8 x 76.2 cm; Pare with spiral rhythm, Text Fig.9, pare, Auckland Museum (Ethnology number184), 127 cm width. .................................................................24
Figure 5. Tauahi example from Archey (1960) ........................................................................................................25
Figure 6. Taranaki Design: Text fig. 10, Parepe, Canterbury Museum (E141.783); Text fig. 10.a, parepe, Taranaki Museum (A77.338) 1730 x 500mm. .................................................................26
Figure 7. Taranaki Pare, Waitara (Archey, plate 43A); Auckland Museum (33737), 550 x 120 mm. .......................26
Figure 8. Taranaki Pare, Oruanangi (Archey, plate 43B); Auckland Museum (33309), width 690mm. .................26
Figure 9. Taranaki pare [parepe]. Discovered at Waitara (Archey, plate 43C), Te Papa Tongarewa Museum (M.E 4657), 1500 x 280mm. .................................................................27
Figure 10. Sui Generis – Archey Text Fig 11: Pare, The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Canada. 104 x 25cm. .......27
Figure 11. Sui Generis Archey Text Fig 12. Kaitaia pare, Auckland Museum (6314). .............................................28
Figure 12. Archey's double spiral scheme (Archey, 1955, fig.14) ....................................................................29
Figure 13. Pare Whakapapa (Genealogy) .................................................29
Figure 14. Jackson's Pare classification: A. (i) Full figure; takarangi spirals on either side; manaia at either end of the pare (Linear isolation based on Jackson's photographic example) ........................................................................30
Figure 15. Jackson's Pare classification: Two pare examples of pare type A. (ii) Full figure; interlocking manaia forms on either side; manaia at either end. (Linear isolation based on Jackson's photographic example) .........................................................30
Figure 16. Jackson's Pare classification: A. (iii) The Kaitaia lintel. (Linear isolation based on Jackson's photographic example) ........................................................................................................31
Figure 17. Jackson's Pare classification: B (i) Two full figures separated by a single large takarangi spiral; two half-size takarangi spirals on top of each other at either end of the pare. (Linear isolation based on Jackson's photographic example) ........................................................................32
Figure 18. Jackson's Pare classification: B (ii) Two full figures separated by a two adjoining takarangi spiral; two half-size takarangi spirals on top of each other at either end of the pare (Linear isolation based on Jackson's photographic example). ........................................................................33
Figure 19. Jackson's Pare classification: C (a) Three full figures, arms upraised with fingers usually close to the ears, separated by takarangi spirals; with two half-size takarangi spirals on top of each other at either end of the pare (Linear isolation based on Jackson's photographic example) ........................................................................34
Figure 20. Jackson's Pare classification: C (ii) Same as C (a) except that the takarangi spirals between the central and adjacent figures become two small takarangi spirals in each case, one on top of the other (Auckland Museum) .....................................................................................35
Figure 21. Jackson's Pare classification: C (iii) Three full figures, arms upraised with fingers usually close to the ears, separated by takarangi spirals; no spirals at the ends of the pare (Peabody Museum, D1343) .....................................................................................36
Figure 22. Jackson's Pare classification: C. (b) Three full figures as in C (a) separated by interlocking manaia forms or mata-hupenga designs; manaia at each end of the pare (Linear isolation based on Jackson's example) ........................................................................37
Figure 23. Jackson's Pare classification: C. (c) Two manaia forms at left-hand end of the pare, followed by three sinewy semi-manaia forms (Taranaki type) (Linear isolation based on Jackson's photographic example). Today this is considered to be a paepae pātaka. ....................................................................................38
Figure 24. Jackson's principle of symmetry (Bi-lateral) .....................................................................................39
Figure 25. Jackson's principle of transposed profiles .................................................................40
Figure 26. Jackson's principle of alternating rhythm – Spiral ........................................................................41
Figure 27. Jackson's principle of fission and fusion .............................................................................42
Figure 28. Isolation of smaller interstitial figures in East Coast pare ..................................................................43
Figure 29. Jackson's levels of relief demonstrated .............................................................................44
Figure 30. Merging of elements across pare (Liverpool Museum, Accession no: RI 26.16) ..................................45
Figure 31. Central Figures with hands placed on the rib cage ........................................................................46
Figure 32. Central Figures with hands in varied positions .............................................................................47
Figure 33. arrangement of hands of central pare figures ................................................................................48
Figure 34. Pare with interstitial manaia facing inwards, mouths to shoulders of central tiki ..................................................................................................................49
Figure 35. Pare with interstitial manaia outwards, mouths to shoulders of central tiki ..........49
Figure 36. Pare anomaly 2.4 with abstraction ........................................................................................49
Figure 37. Pare anomaly 2.4 - terminal figures in continuum ..........................................................................50
Figure 38. Pare from Taowhinitimu (carved late 1880s) and Huriwhenua (carved late 1870s) ..............68
Figure 39. Simonon's levels of relief in two- and three-figure pare ........................................................70