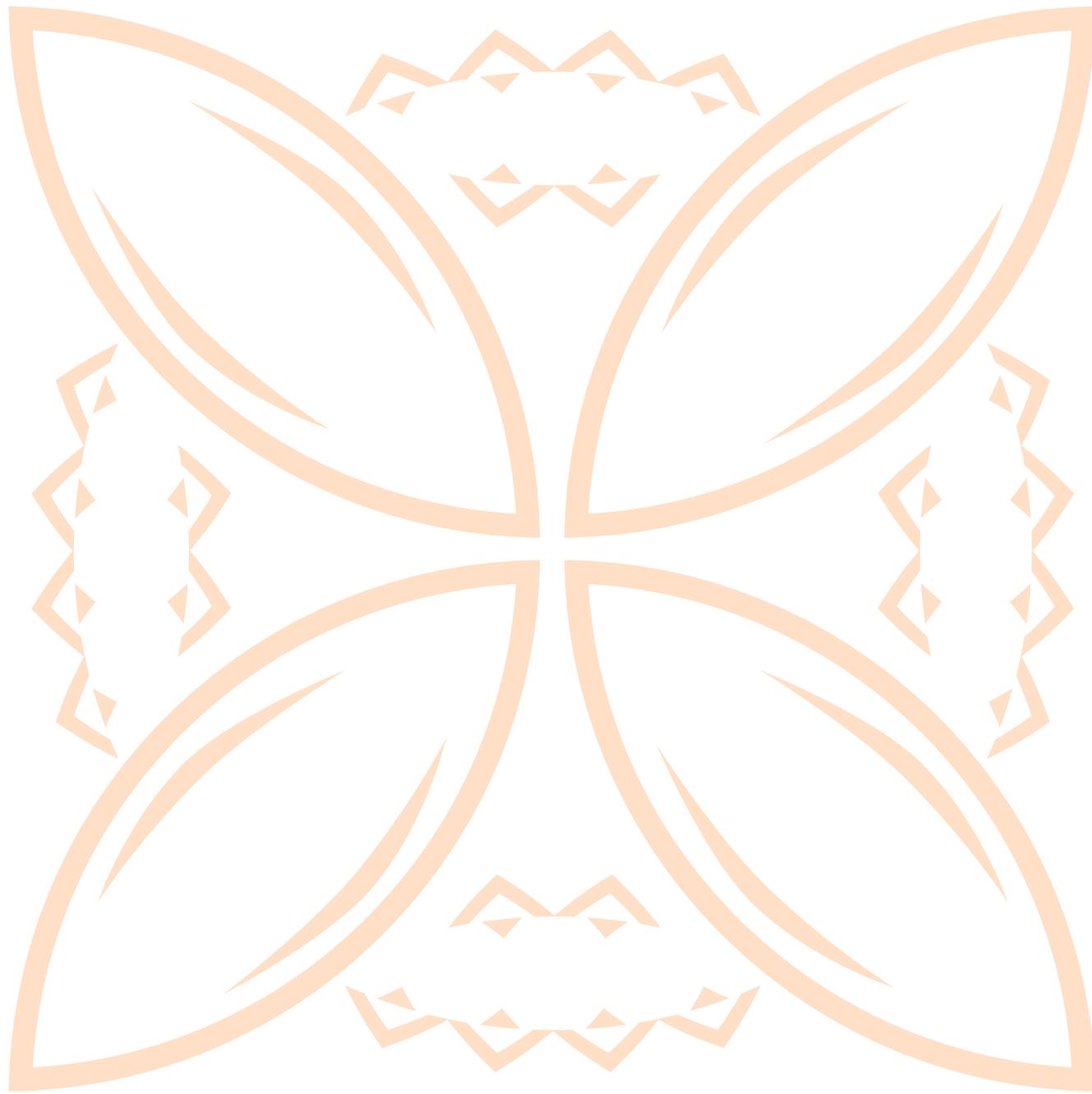
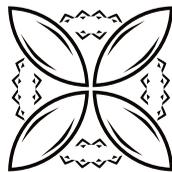


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***Utopian
Ingredients***



An exegesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Design

Massey University College of Creative Arts
Wellington, New Zealand

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2013/2014



O MEA LELEI E TUPU

AI LE MEA UMA



03	<u>Abstract</u>
04	<u>Acknowledgements</u>
06	<u>Introduction</u>
09	<u>Experience Design & Transformational Design Theory</u>
11	<u>Civic Competence</u>
15	<u>Introduction to the design process</u>
17	<u>Design process: the search for conviviality</u>
24	<u>Design process: the search for mana</u>
28	<u>Design process: the search for facilitation</u>
32	<u>The final product</u>
55	<u>Glossary of Māori and Pasifika terms</u>
57	<u>Reference list</u>
58	<u>Image list</u>
59	<u>Bibliography</u>

A Utopia is a symbolic better world, an imagined future society (Portolano, 2012, p119).

Visual Communication Design is able to bring food and people to the table of discussion about themselves, New Zealand's history, its future and what values or principles should guide New Zealand society in the 21st Century. Food is a great conduit for any community engagement and plays a central role in New Zealand society as a catalyst for communion – anywhere from the family to fale, from the marae to Parliament and beyond.

Utopian Ingredients is a designed potluck dinner party toolkit. By adapting tikanga Māori engagement principles, Western dinner customs and incorporating Pasifika design elements, the unique functional quality of the toolkit is to augment national identity and investigate what values should shape the future of New Zealand and explore what place it holds in the world.

Currently, a governmental review of New Zealand's constitutional arrangements examines the possibility of drafting a single codified constitution, with a preamble that outlines the core tenets and characteristics that guide our society. Using food as a conduit for community engagement, the designed dinner set questions, provokes, engages and guides participants to establish their own preamble concepts by sharing memories, feelings, thoughts, beliefs and desires they hold. As New Zealand's increasingly diverse population grows, *Utopian Ingredients* facilitates robust discussion about how and what New Zealand's constitutional preamble could express both visually and experientially.

The transaction of values can be a messy business – however, civic competencies are enhanced when participants are encouraged to 'play with their food' and engage with difficult and often emotionally undeclared values, while collaborating to establish multiple enduring constitutional preambles that imaginatively depict participant's aspirations for New Zealand's future and identity.

Key Words

Ceremony, Civic, Civic Competence, Civic Education, Citizenship, Collaborate, Community, Constitution, Conversation, Design, Dialogue, Dinner, Eating Behaviour, Engage, Experience, Design, Food, Future, Kai, Korero, Mihimihi, Pasifika, Politics, Preamble, Psychology, Social Capital, Talanoa, Tikanga Māori, Toolkit, Transformational Design Theory, Utopia, Values, Visual Communication Design

O mea lelei e tupu,
ai le mea uma—

Something
good comes
out of everything.

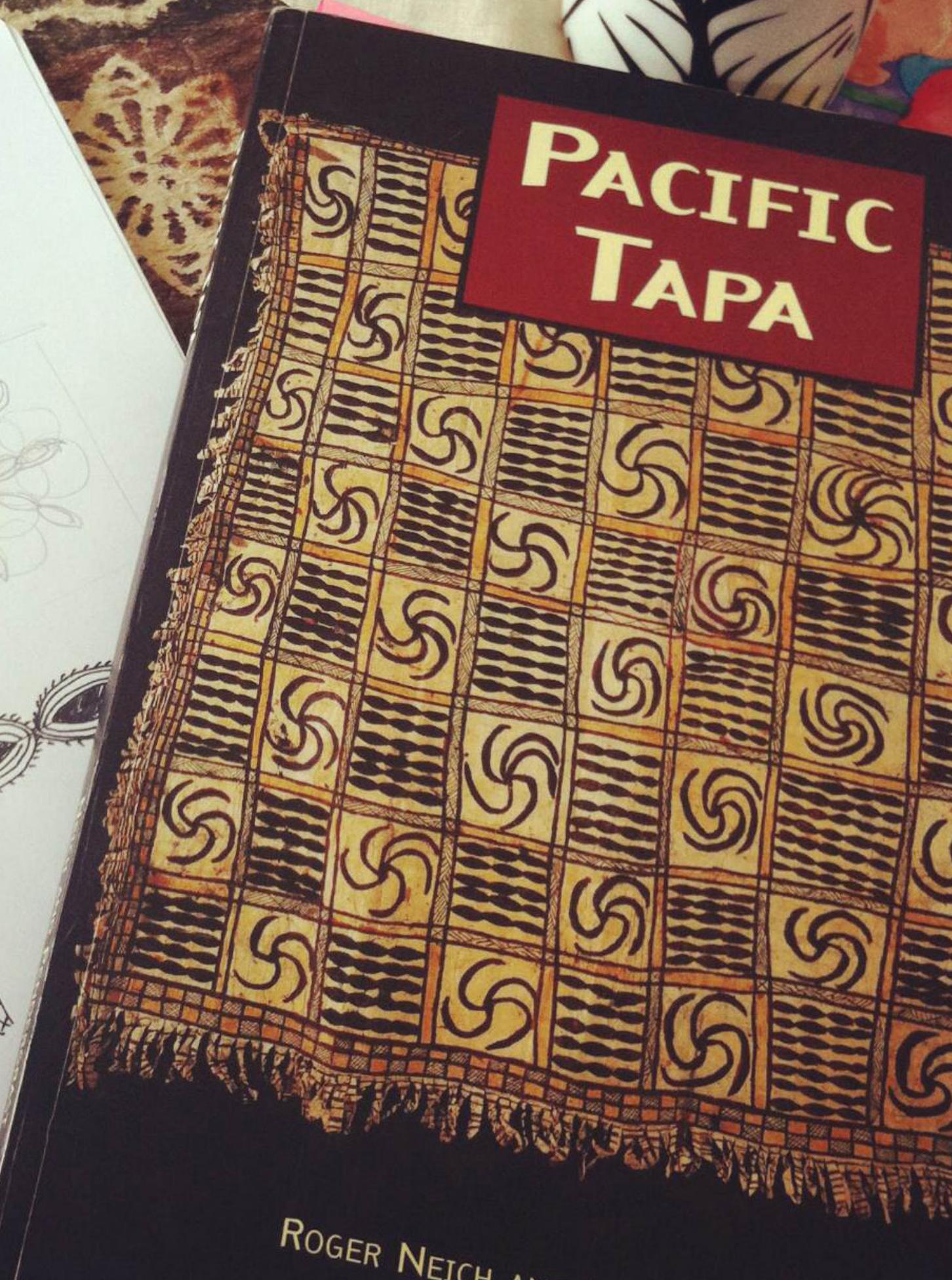
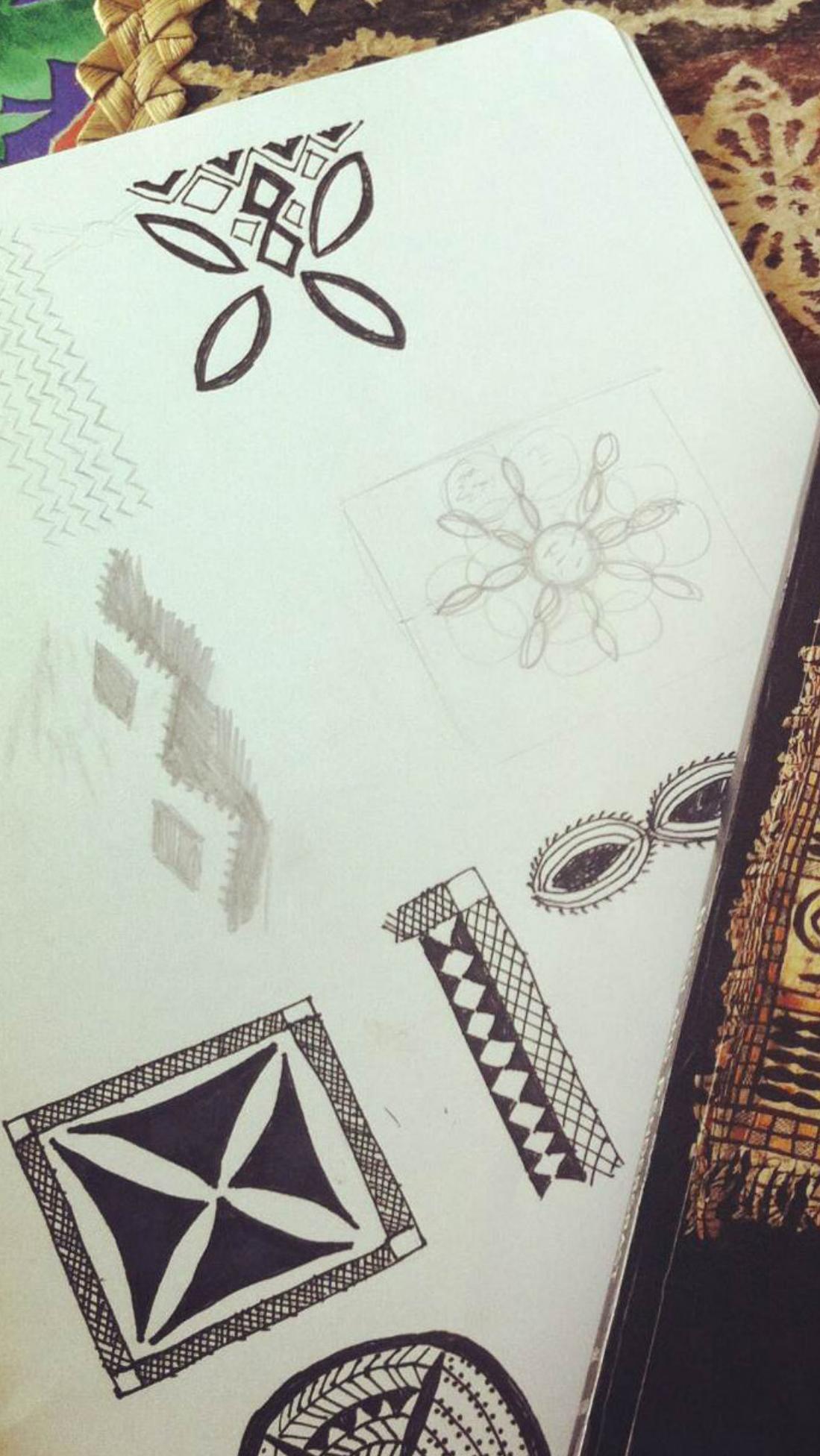
I fought the thesis, and the thesis won.

It is said that ‘no man is an island’, and this has never proved as true as this Master of Design test. I could not have made it by myself, and in the process I’ve learnt to lean on other people – especially my family. My Mother Kristine, my Sister Renee Mia and my Brother Jesse, not forgetting little fatty Bella. This is dedicated to them.

I could not have accomplished what I have without the guidance, support, financial aid and good humour of my Dad Wayne Stowers, mo lo’u Aunty peleina Nina Pamela Stowers-Kahui, also Mark and Cath Rozendaal. Karl Kane, Max Schleser and Tim Parkin you’ve also been a source of expertise, encouragement and respect – not to mention inside jokes; one day at last we may find out where the beers are.

To my supervisors Dr Claire Robinson and Anna Brown, I can’t thank you enough for your mana and the confidence you have in me. Angus Donaldson for your patience and help when it came to prototyping and construction. A sincere thank you to my dear friends and Masters colleagues for helping me see the finish line. Fa’afetai tele lava also to the Pacific Island Polynesian Education Foundation for your generosity and the team at Open Lab for cheering me on.

[#MDes](#) [#UtopianIngredients](#) [#Gains](#) [#Bounty](#)



PACIFIC TAPA

ROGER NEICH

Introduction — an invitation

The intent of this Masters of Design is to explore ways of utilizing Visual Communication Design in aiding meaningful conversations about New Zealand's constitutional changes.

I believe that I am the right person to take on this challenge.

Firstly, my background in Visual Communication Design has opened up opportunities to explore the cross section of civic engagement where design meets politics. In 2011, I was involved in a project that began as a 300-level Design & Business course at the Massey University College of Creative Arts, as a response to a question offered by an earnest individual who approached the University and asked the question 'why don't young people vote?' followed by a challenge to see if designers had any answers to this problem. Over six weeks, myself and a team of designers (Chris Nicholls, Joy Roxas, Ben Wright and Vincent Lee) developed a concept and online web strategy called *On the Fence* to engage and inform inexperienced voters about which political parties most closely align with their values. The website was launched four days before the 2011 General Election and in that short space of time managed to capture over 30,000 individual visitors from over 50 countries with no marketing and a zero dollar budget!

On the Fence was our attempt to answer the challenge set by about 40 years of continual decline in interest and participation in New Zealand politics. If participation is just ticking the box one day every three years, who has power the rest of the time? Taking this project further, my Honours year research thesis added a strategic multi-player game that augments the long-term need for young people to be involved in civic-minded activities from an early age. I was also fortunate enough to present the *On the Fence* project to a Parliamentary Select Committee in 2012 as well as an International Conference on Voter Motivation hosted by the Electoral Commission in 2013.

Secondly, my cultural and personal background has proved rich soil in which to plant new ideas. I took a different route to the Academy than my friends. I played in bands and worked at a computer shop for 5 years then travelled South America for a year. Being of mixed Dutch and Samoan ethnicity also provides me with a unique view of the world.

My cultural heritage informs my design practice by allowing me to draw from diverse languages, customs and worldviews that help to paint a picture of what is needed in the design process. These insights intuitively enable me to empathise with a wide variety of people and experiences and help me to understand the appropriate design response. Though this feels counter-intuitive to the design training I have received, more often than not it provides the undercurrent that guides the process towards a final resolution.

Currently, New Zealand's constitution is made up of a number of statutory and Parliamentary laws, the Bill of Rights Act and the Treaty of Waitangi. There is no one single document that is the constitution of New Zealand. In 2010, the National-led government agreed with the Māori Party to set up a Constitutional Advisory Panel as part of a confidence-and-supply deal. The Constitutional Advisory Panel (CAP) is currently devising a strategy that aims to draft a proper constitution as well as inquiring into whether it should be a written document. They are also directed to inform and engage New Zealanders on constitutional issues. The CAP also describe their main task as:

Establish a forum for developing and sharing information and ideas on constitutional topics and to seek the views of all New Zealanders including Māori in a manner that is reflective of the Treaty of Waitangi relationship and responsive to Māori consultation preferences.

Visual Communication Design logic is able to aid the understanding of important issues and to involve audiences. A written constitution provides a safe basis for legal interpretation but is often seen as cumbersome and difficult to access for the general public.

A quick survey of current trends shows a greater demand by consumers and citizens for two-way dialogue, transparency and authenticity in personal, consumer brand and government relationships. It is ‘little black box’ mentality that detracts governmental ability and agency to achieve effective transparent two-way dialogue with beating hearts and personalities. The generational differences (and indifferences) in 40 years time means the voter bump will be very different demographically, psychologically and in attitudes and mindsets – current governments, organisations and institutions need to prepare for these changes.

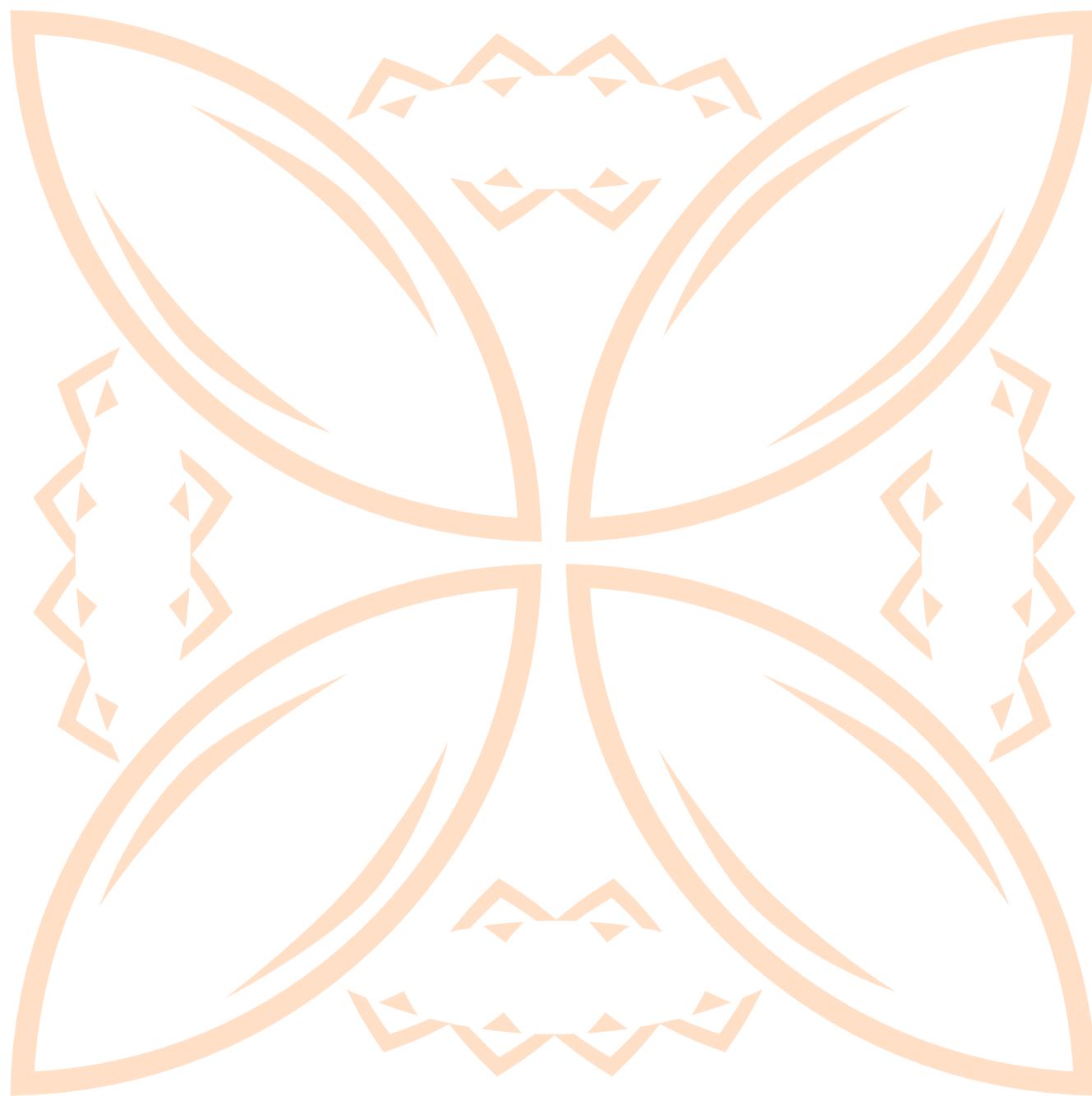
Utopian Ingredients
searches for robust
discussion about
what New Zealand’s
constitutional preamble
might potentially declare.

Utopian Ingredients searches for robust discussion about what New Zealand’s constitutional preamble might potentially declare. A preamble is the part of the constitution that consolidates national identity and affirms the nation’s core principles and values while outlining a society’s fundamental goals (Orgad, 2010, p716-717).

Though lacking in binding legal force and often difficult to interpret, a worthy constitutional preamble is one that best reflects an understanding of national identity, because law without a persuasive explanation of the ideals the law strives to protect could be defined as pure prescription (Orgad, 2010, p716). Constitutional matters reside in the realm of law and politics, but the *intent* of the law needs to be understood – a preamble is traditionally a short mission statement outlining the purposes of law, written in a more user-friendly language.

A constitutional preamble is more than a symbolic statement. New Zealand has the potential to develop a written, codified constitution and *Utopian Ingredients* investigates the possibility of a designed constitutional preamble that may accompany a codified constitution. After all, why should a picture of a preferred future be relegated to a Cabinet Manual, formatted in Garamond, a typeface invented over four centuries ago in another time and place?

Preambles have significant non-legal purposes. They “encourage cohesion... and are called upon to serve as a device of national consolidation or to reconcile past wrongs” (Orgad, 2010, p738). As a collaborative civic education workshop, disguised as dinner party, *Utopian Ingredients* is ‘bottom up’ political engagement. It produces multiple resilient, durable and living constitutional preambles written, scribbled and drawn by the people, to unite the people. It is deliberate ‘blue sky’ thinking.



***Literature Review of
Key Theories***

Experience Design & Transformational Design Theory

The concept of Experience Design draws its legacy from Pine and Gilmore's seminal 1999 work *Welcome to the Experience Economy*, whereby people trade valuable resources such as time, money and physiological, emotional and social capital in exchange for emotional and motivational experiences that are presented as consumer offerings. Following agrarian, industrial and service-based economies, and the subsequent commoditization of goods and services, the latest stage of value-creation in the free market comes from offering personalized experiences to guests and customers.

Experience Design is an approach to creating emotional connections with guests or customers through deliberate planning and placement of tangible and intangible design elements that appeal to the senses. Designers are becoming increasingly aware that experiential consumption is something that can be knowable, and therefore reproducible. Experiences have their own unique qualities and equally, their own specific design demands. For example, what is the experience of a cafe or restaurant? It depends on the entrance to the space, the material qualities of the surroundings, the lighting, the weather conditions, music and ambience, the smell and taste of the food, the mood of the fellow diners, not to mention the state of mind and approach of the staff. Experience Design is informed by knowable phenomenon. These lived experiences are describable, and therefore designable. In this context, the designer can be considered "a strategist of appearances... that we perceive through our senses, above all visual senses, but also tactile and auditory senses" (Bonsiepe, 2005).

Ellis and Rossman describe the process of staged value exchange "in which guests exchange something of value from a variety of opportunity costs to receive an emotional or motivational experience" (2008, p3). The exchange is more to do with the customer or guest coming away with new knowledge, or an emotional or physical experience for which they have acquired not just through monetary currency. There is also reciprocation in the price people are willing to invest for experiences compared to commonplace products – the greater the experience and self-realization post-purchase, the greater the customer buy-in.

The customer
is the product—

they are the
reason the
design exists.

At the very heart of Experience Design is the end user, or 'customer'. The customer is the product and they are the reason the design exists. The result of a customer's change in outlook, perception or attitude is the accumulation of lived experiences that the design strategy helps to mould, influence and guide their purchase decisions. For example, as 'experiences are inherently emotional and personal' (Pullman & Gross, 2004, 552) the service of a tradesperson may practically be to repair a wall, but the experiential result of their performance may be at a deeper level to provide reliability, reassurance, understanding and approachability. The ability of the tradesperson to allay fears and even provide specific knowledge that may guide the customer experience will produce trust and authenticity, properties of high ethical value in times of economic and political uncertainty

Citizenship does not exist in a cultural vacuum isolated from commerce; government must also compete for the attention and participation of its citizens. From a brand communication perspective, politics has until now been supplied to the public in an image economy: where politicians, parties, policies and governmental initiatives are 'sold' to the public like

one would sell sunscreen lotion. Observing Colenso Wellington's 'Real New Zealander' commercials for Bank of New Zealand (Figure 1) from the 1980's and 1990's, one would see sparkling coastlines, golden sunsets at a seaside family bach, rugby fields and the New Zealand flag flying proudly. Len Pott's hearty, masculine voice narrates the scene with typical Kiwi understatement. But did these commercials help us discover who New Zealanders really are? Blatant appeals to national pride ask New Zealanders to buy into what the ad man qualifies as 'Kiwi', however, these powerful nostalgic images are now viewed retrospectively with a sense of irony that Australians now own the Bank. The commercials were seen and heard, but not necessarily known or experienced in a way that produced a meaningful or sustained change in the individual. A more contemporary example typifies changes in consumer behaviour and attitudes towards experiences. Technology companies such as Apple Computers have made a successful business by shifting from selling and servicing products to facilitating, and thus selling transformational experience. Governments too, must shift to facilitating changes in the individual in the same way that a gym's transformational offering is able to provide experiences that lead to a fitter, stronger and healthier individual.

Meaningful experiences come from interaction and through human collaboration. The role of the designer is to understand the complexity of shared needs and wants of an audience and interpret these needs into a strategy or process that can be personalized to each individual to the greatest extent. This is where Transformational Design Theory further extends the boundaries of Experience Design to create designed experiences that are individualised, effectual and sustained. I formulate that Transformational Design Theory (TDT) is an integrated model of design approaches that place the user needs first – taking them on a journey from a current state (emotionally, physically, spiritually) to a state of conscious provocation, fulfillment or attainment. Experiences are truly transformational when users are able to find meaning and purpose beyond pecuniary transactions, which further takes Pine and Gilmore's concept of value exchange beyond the world of economics into the realm of storytelling.



Figure 1. Stills from 'Real New Zealander'
Bank of New Zealand Television
Commercials, 1989.

The TDT method begins by identifying rituals, patterns and opportunities in emerging macro trends, or zeitgeist. Zeitgeist is a German word meaning 'spirit of the age' that takes roughly 16 English words to explain. Put simply, it is the overarching changes in societal values that encompass legal, economic, social, ecological, civil and political paradigms. When designing experiential outcomes in order to create more meaningful and ultimately, transformational storytelling, acknowledgement of zeitgeist is an important consideration as designers produce their best work when one ear is to the ground, anticipating the ebb and flow of cultural behaviour. It is true that complexity, ambiguity and change in society are natural, but Transformational Design Theory aids the Visual Communication Design process to a more flexible, responsive and appropriate outcome.

Thus, within the realm of Experience Design and Transformational Design Theory, a consumable product is a means to an end.

Civic Competence is a widely-contested term that is open to a number of definitions. For the purpose of this Master of Design thesis, the explanation provided by Youniss et al. (2002, p124) proves to be the most useful. Civic Competence is described in *Youth Civic Engagement in the Twenty-First Century* as “the acquisition of behaviours that allow citizens to participate... and permit individuals to meet, discuss and collaborate to promote their interests within a framework”.

A healthy democracy is one where civic participation is alive. The pulse of democracy in New Zealand can be felt through local iwi meeting on a marae, senior citizens clubs meeting during the week or school board meetings that convene monthly. All of these are more than just ‘ticking the box’ on election day, they are examples of communities-in-action.

In order for a vigorous participatory democracy to function, the people that live within it need to possess certain ideal characteristics.

Civic Competence begins by asking what an ideal citizen looks like. Though many writers do not agree on a single definition, one satisfactory positive characterisation of citizenship that can be expanded upon is the ‘good’ citizen described by Robert Dahl in *The problem of Civic Competence*. Though a rather obtuse definition at first, the foundational concepts and characteristics outlined below provide just enough light to illuminate the path ahead in this exegesis.

Certain expectations and connotations are attached to being a ‘good’ citizen. There are obvious problems in its application. Whose well being are citizens expected to seek? Their own? Dahl describes in broad strokes that ‘good’ citizens are good because they seek the well-being of the collective, they care about the general state of their compatriots and are interested in the affairs and concerns of others through being well-informed about issues and stories and most importantly, being “engaged often with fellow citizens in deliberations on public matters” (1992, p46). The individual and their related behaviours, values and experiences is recognised as a key component within the structure of the collective. Dahl explains: “The ‘public’ good consists of the total of all the individual interests, which must

Civic Competence
begins by asking
what an ideal
citizen looks like.

be aggregated or integrated according to a justifiable principle like majority rule” (1992, p46). Due process in democratic participation does require an aggregation of the best and more popular ideas (though the two are at times mutually exclusive) but effective civic engagement is just as much about hearing out the ‘other’ as it is about making pragmatic decisions.

One attribute of the ‘good’ citizen is that they need to possess a well-rounded point of view. However, the prevailing dilemma of Civic Competence is the disconnection citizens experience when they feel that there is too much information, and that they cannot digest it. For example, with each election cycle, the complexity of issues around policies and personalities found in both broadcast news and social media makes truly understanding a matter a burden, especially if the issue falls outside of what is a typically a personal concern. Youniss et al. (2002) describe the world as “shrinking into a common pool filled by a steady stream of information” (2002, p137). Dahl argues that if citizens were armed with information, there would be strong incentives for participating in democratic activities. However, at least in Western society, this ‘steady stream’ is more like a fire hose drenching people with trivial and biased information. The nature of information flow in the 21st Century has disabled the citizen; tweets are consumed with breakfast and pictures of lunch are accumulated on Instagram. This two-way dialogue has the potential to make government organisations and institutions more transparent – but overcome with the relentless outpouring of information from pundits, news media, internet channels and social media, there is no chance to stop, reflect and consider different sides of a story.

A predisposition for empathic understanding of others and their experiences fosters commitment and inclusiveness. When conflicts or disagreements appear, or when public issues become more complex, discussion and deliberation enable citizens to recognize the bigger picture rather than their own narrow self-interest. However, Dahl posits that the competence of citizens is restricted through deliberation alone. Moreover, this would serve only to “ratify prevailing opinion” (1992, p53) and requires the participation of experts. Compared to experts, those with elementary knowledge of letter of the law provisions and political processes are limited in their ability to contribute to any meaningful or durable civic process due to low self-efficacy. People choose to not take part because they feel they do not know enough to contribute. Solutions that require a wide range of contributors are passively resigned to these ‘experts’ (or whoever has the loudest voice) while active citizenship that is easily achieved is thrown in the ‘too hard’ basket.

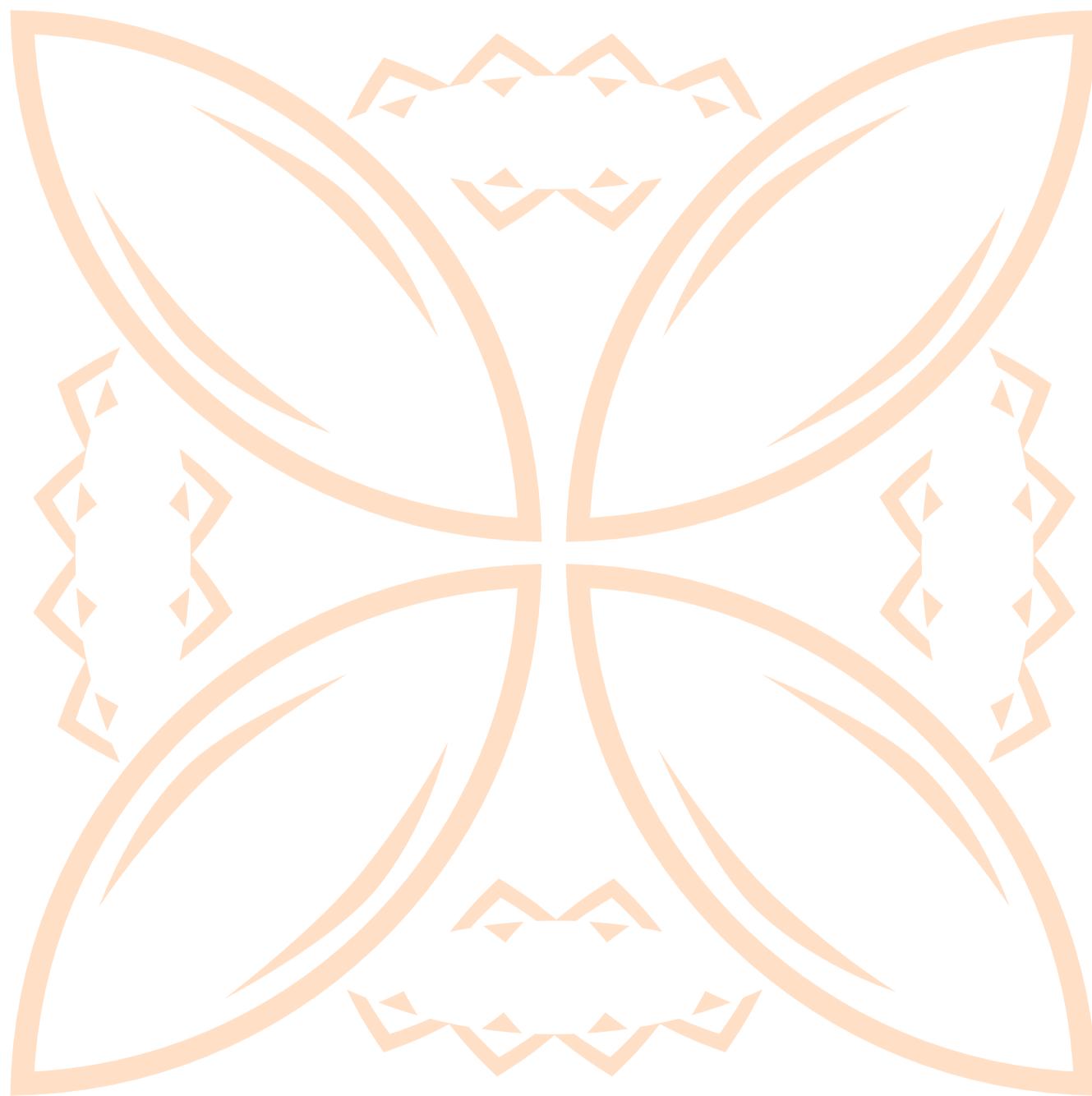
A ‘good’ citizen is future minded. Youniss et al. (2002), with particular focus on youth civic engagement state “citizenship can no longer be taken for granted as a plain matter of the older generation passing tradition on to the younger generation” (p133). Citizenship involves more than just talking heads declaring ‘in my day’. Connecting generations together and exposing each other to different ideologies, values, experiences and desires are all a part of identity and community creation. To do this, ‘good’ citizens require the chance to participate and contribute. Having a chance to put learned experiences into practice is essential to building strong participatory culture, and thus, a strong civic culture. “Participation, then, is a means of socialization into the civitas... not focused on particular political skills or processes, but is more diffuse, because it involves membership in a collective identity” (Youniss et al., 2002, p133).

Connecting
generations together

Community
engagement

Understanding
others

Thinking of
the future



The Design Process

I am an optimist.

But typical of any project where the outcome is totally unseen from the beginning, I was filled with equal amounts of excitement and dread. Throughout this Master of Design thesis I have discovered many things about myself. My undergraduate training taught me that doing things right takes time and persistence – but throughout this Master of Design process I also learned that my design process works best when I am able to generate rapid feedback loops, asking myself and others to constantly respond to research, testing and critique; not necessarily in that order. I need people to bounce ideas off, and talk through concepts in a theoretical and practical manner. Also, I work best when I have a whiteboard available. It invites people to contribute to my thinking. My design aesthetic is thoughtful, much like my personality. I naturally like to allow breathing room for design elements, but I have had to discipline myself to consciously recognise and rationalise what does and what does not need to be there.

At the Post Graduate Critical Forum event named *The virtues of design thinking: why design can't solve the world's problems*, Senior lecturers and academic staff from Massey University College of Creative Arts discussed the ability (or inability) of design to change the world. Guest contributor Simon Mark commented (personal communication, September 18, 2013) “we would be dreaming to think that design thinking can actually radically improve services to citizens”. Design would have a limited impact on government agencies, and the status quo would remain. However, I disagree with his view. What is true in the world of commerce is also true in the world of politics: people will return to their service provider as long as they are seeing positive change in their mental, emotional, physical and financial well-being. To Mark, the challenge is in convincing our finance, politics, economic and scientific counterparts that design adds value to this equation. Investing into design thinking and practice will lead to a re-imagined public sector, one that is fundamentally aware of constituent needs, motivations and values, and is able to cater to these. For now, the term design thinking is contentious, but for the purpose of this exegesis I define design thinking as the strategic contribution that creative practice makes to a larger challenge. It involves wide and flexible research, careful and sensitive audience consideration and experimental prototyping leading to an adaptable design strategy that incrementally solves very particular challenges. It is focused on the bigger picture, not minute problems.

Utopian Ingredients is not a strategy—

It is a recipe.

In the case of *Utopian Ingredients*, the larger challenge is one relating to the transformational capacity for Visual Communication Design to bring together diverse audiences to produce a unique vision for New Zealand, by producing foundational concepts that form the basis of a durable constitutional preamble.

As a relatively new phenomenon, the idealistic scope of design thinking means that a wide variety of creative practitioners have permission to test the boundaries of what Visual Communication Design can do. Design thinking makes for a better verb than noun. Metaphorically speaking, the designer plays the role of a chef, making use of creative theories, disciplines and processes that until now have been chiefly linked with conspicuous consumption. Design thinking lets us imagine ourselves remaking the best possible cake, and eating it too.

However, *Utopian Ingredients* is not a strategy. It is a recipe.

Strategy implies the use of tactics and fixed policies (which are typical of government initiatives) whereas a recipe is simply a list of the fundamental ingredients needed to create something to enjoy, nourish or enrich. Recipes can be improvised and adapted to suit the outcome; they are also scalable and can be improved over time. Some are family secrets, but some are made to share.

Significant discoveries in the *Utopian Ingredients* design process will be sketched as they relate to the key ingredients necessary for successful and transformational citizenship engagement.



Stirring together
'Pineapple Republic'

Ingredient one – the search for Conviviality

It's a little bit weird, but a little bit right.

Conviviality is important to creating inviting and engaging involvement that strengthens Civic Competence. The underlying aim of *Utopian Ingredients* is the search for identity and shared destiny by uncovering undeclared bias and prejudices, and focusing on the experiences and values that we have in common.

Dutch food designer Marije Vogelzang informed and inspired the initial experimentation process, in particular, her 2011 work entitled *Eat Love Budapest* (Figure 2). Using food as a story telling device, Marije designed several enclosed tent-like spaces filled with photographic and childhood memories. Two complete strangers sit opposite one another, their faces concealed by a curtain. A Roma Gypsy woman would feed a seated guest with a spoon like one would feed a baby while recounting stories of her upbringing and the food they ate, acting as a mother figure sharing fruit as well as her memories. After the meal the two hold hands, sing songs and even pray together. Because appearances are taken out of the equation, barriers are broken down as the connection felt is intimate and deeply spiritual. Drawing from German philosopher Immanuel Kant's wisdom – if you break bread together, you're less likely to break each other's necks, guests walk away with new awareness of how this marginalised and displaced group of people live.



Figure 2. 'Eat Love Budapest' by Marije Vogelzang tackled stereotypes and cultural barriers between social groups in Hungary.



Prototype one: 'Food Hongi'.

With this in mind, the first prototype was called 'Food Hongi'. It was an attempt to design a mechanism to facilitate the transference of other people's perspectives. It deals with an early hunch that I had: if politics is the art of compromise, then how can I find a way to ask people to see eye-to-eye. The ritual involved placing pineapple lumps on two forks that extended out of the box at opposite sides. Participants, with their hands behind their backs would bow together and eat a pineapple lump each at the same time.

Incidentally, the participants expressed that the experiment awakened a sense of vulnerability in them. The awkward points that had the potential to spark conversation were the pause that occurred just as each mouth wrapped around the fork and for a split second the participants looked into each other's eyes. The next moment came when chewing, there was nothing else to do but look at each other. Without saying anything, both people react with the same awkward feeling. The humble pineapple lump had been used to bring people together in an unusual way.

Ingredient one – the search for Conviviality

This initial experiment provided insight into how people interact with food, and the influence eating has on conversation and creating convivial moments. However, what was missing was provocation about constitutional issues. Moving forward required the importing of values to work with. A discussion on constitutional values is essentially a discussion on what it means to be a New Zealander in the Twenty First Century, and what sense of community and participation people are wanting to encounter. Removing the controversial parts, such as the debate about parliamentary term, the role of the Treaty of Waitangi, Māori and Crown settlements and so on may help make the discussion easier, but retaining them could also provide some fruitful catalysts to political education and discussion.

Much of the next stage of design experimentation process was about attempting to get the right mix of provocation and ‘yum’. The experiments revolved around the creation of my own beer battered fish’n’chip recipe, utilising newspaper clippings that were scanned and printed onto newspaper stock and wrapped into small parcels. This gave the effect of the picnic – something egalitarian and relatively easy to prepare. Based on the concept of degustación, the small fish’n’chip parcels were designed to slow down the eating process and provide a chance for the experience to last. Newspaper clippings that I had found to be pertinent to constitutional discussion such as The Warehouse recently adopting a ‘living wage’ for its employees, were designed to be discussion points. Whereas everyone involved was attracted by the smell, and excited to open the parcels and exchange their (sometimes unexpected) contents, the provocation to conscious political discussion was lost because the clippings were only printed on one side and the text was too much to take in. Political cartoons provided a much more light-hearted and more immediate understanding of ideas – how these are curated was also unresolved.

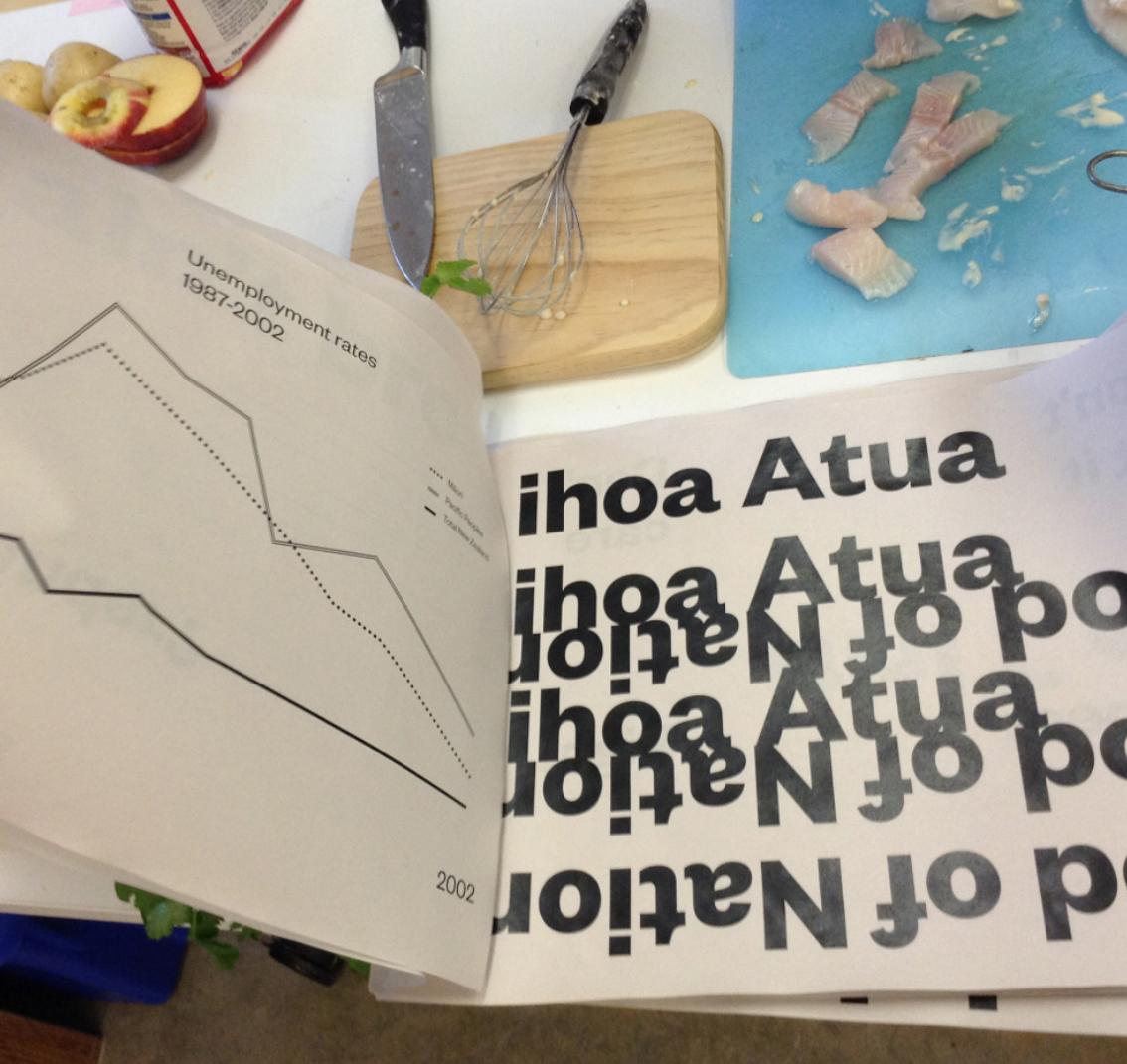
There needed to be a twist. If fish’n’chips are familiar to New Zealand culture, what could I do to make it unfamiliar? Unfamiliarity is needed in order to give the ‘jolt’ of uncomfortableness to jump start conversation. Was it the contents? Is the food too delicious? Was it the way you unwrap it? Was it the graphic language printed onto the paper stock? I was still unsure of what I was looking for, but armed with these considerations, the next round of experimentation sought to build conversations by naming and presenting food in a more performative way.



Fine tuning the art of feeding people.

The single-minded proposition became: ‘develop a method of engaging audiences in earnest conversation and dialogue’. The idea being that you could transfer this method to confront any issue by building conversation points. In this case, the overarching aim was to make the dialogue about politics and citizenship in New Zealand.

But there was still a clear lack of civic education, strategy, purpose and most obviously, a designed artefact. In order to create convivial moments, people need to feel safe. Guests feel safe when they know the rules of the house, and that the host has things under control. In the same way, the design needed to take a front seat and the food needed to be relegated further down the agenda. This revelation was a huge relief for me, as I am a designer, not a chef. My desire for uncontrolled and organic conversations had put people at unease because the design had not made it clear what its intent was.





In earlier experiments, participants were asked to respond to written provocations on the placemats provided.

Ingredient one – the search for Conviviality

This was really the turning point of the project. My goals for the next experiments were to find ways to disrupt familiar protocols involving food, and to find a way to document conversations better. I tried this by having guests scribble and write on placemats provided at a banquet event. I was still surprised by a comment raised that ‘there wasn’t any politics’ evident. Realising that I know as much about New Zealand constitutional politics as I do about Modernism in Papua New Guinea in the 1960’s – I wondered how important it was to even have the politics there in the first place.

I discovered that in order to build positive civic competencies in people, the experience needed to be controlled, in order to effectively draw out these positive characteristics and allow people to participate in building others up, too. Realising that a dinner party can be a controlled environment, with clear rules, props and guided questions, a host can enable guests to feel comfortable enough to share. If guests were to bring food to a potluck gathering, they have already begun contributing to the discussion.

Moving on from printed placemats, I experimented by creating a tablecloth canvas for dinner guests to share on. It cements what is spoken and acts as a record of things agreed on during conversation. For the sake of earnest conversation, the jargon and superfluous language that is typical of political debate is in some ways, translated into everyday speak by guests having permission to speak and draw in metaphors, word pictures and stories. This also makes the exchange of values a fun activity.

Reading deeper into New Zealand’s recent migratory influx, we see that the word ‘community’ carries with it whole new paradigms of shared experience and educational opportunities. As described in *Tangata Tangata: The changing ethnic contours of New Zealand*, the difficulties in the exchange of ideas and values are described as “without diversity and conflicts of interest, we would have no need for politics... the whole point of politics is to look for areas of compromise, to build common interests and to create systems of governance that are able to accommodate differences peacefully” (Spoonley et al., 2004, p307).



Any communal discussion about New Zealand’s constitution, or its unwritten tenets involves engaging with all sorts of memories, feelings, thoughts and ideas that we collectively hold. What I discovered is that *Utopian Ingredients* has the potential to uncover these (sometimes forgotten) memories, feelings and ideas and strengthen multiple new connections between citizens. This opens up new learning opportunities, where civic confidence is bolstered by inspiring guests connect with each other. An ancient precedent is found in early Christian ‘Agape feasts’ in which “shared meals created social ties and obligations... if a community tells its story in the way the Jewish community recounts its Passover liberation, that group allows its history to profoundly shape its identity. With “multiple media... symbolic foods, distinctive songs, probing questions, quotation of the tradition, prayers and blessings – the community enters imaginatively into its own past” (de Botton, 2012, p36).

The role of kai in this convivial strategy must not be underestimated. Kai is about more than just what we eat. It represents our identities, our links to the past and to the future. The invitations to the dinner party ask guests to bring a dish inspired by the key words selected by the host from a list. This inherently asks guests to come not just with a dish, but also with the reasons why they chose it. They may have chosen a dish their mother used to make, something new they’ve never tried before, or even something cheap ‘to go’ at the supermarket. All of these examples have stories behind them, and behind these stories is something to relate to: a lesson learned or not learned. The aim of the food requests is to ask guests to prepare themselves beforehand and come with an open mind. The valuable and sometimes spiritual insights they share have the potential to build on the Civic Competence of others and add mana to the New Zealand constitutional preamble.

TRAMPING

BUNGY

JANDALS

FOOD

BEACH

RIVERS

STUBBLES

SUMMER

XMAS BBQ'S

NOT JOHN KEY

PEOPLE WHEN
THEY GET
FAMOUS OVERSEAS.

NATURAL ENVIRON-
MENT

**KIWIS
LOVE**

DEMOCRACY (WE THINK) PORAGINK

SAUSAGE SIZZLES (BUT WE'RE NOT SURE)

HARMITE (IS IT EVEN A DEMOCRACY
ANYMORE)

TOO MUCH
DRINKING

CHINESE
TAKENAWAYS

THE SEVENS

ME

YOU

US!

Y

OUTH,

U

M

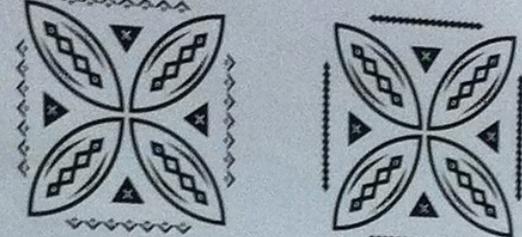
UST VO

Some responses to the placemat provocations.

of aspirations and values we collectively share as a society, getting into the details of how we make these our reality. Think of living past KFC with the windows down—all the promises of what is before we even enter, minus the nauseating regret.

is unique, because it represents the views of the people and who developed it. Since we're all pretty different, it's important that to find the things we have in common. Imagine it like an old 50c bag of lollies. Sure your teeth may hate you now, but with so many to choose from and only a tiny white bag to put them all in, we're have to carefully pick n mix our way to something worth all sharing.

or snakes aside, let's get to deciding what New Zealand should taste and have some fun along the way!



Invitations *



Invites are sent out - what foods to bring to potluck

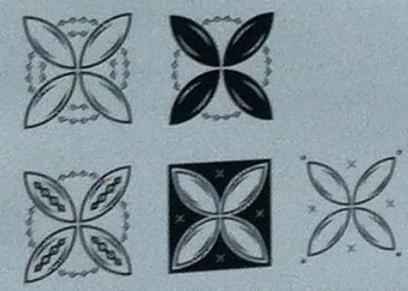
Whakatauki

Host is 'Briefed' beforehand, reads through 'U-I Manual' (objectives)

Booklet one cards *

- Setting arrangements

Event is set up - atmosphere - Food is brought



Welcome (Whakatauki) Introduction - as to why everyone is here - provide information about pre-able/constitution

Karakia (say Grace etc)

Sharing of food

Mihimihi

- Whakatauki giving introducing - memories of experience of & where you've (achieve what what values how could they

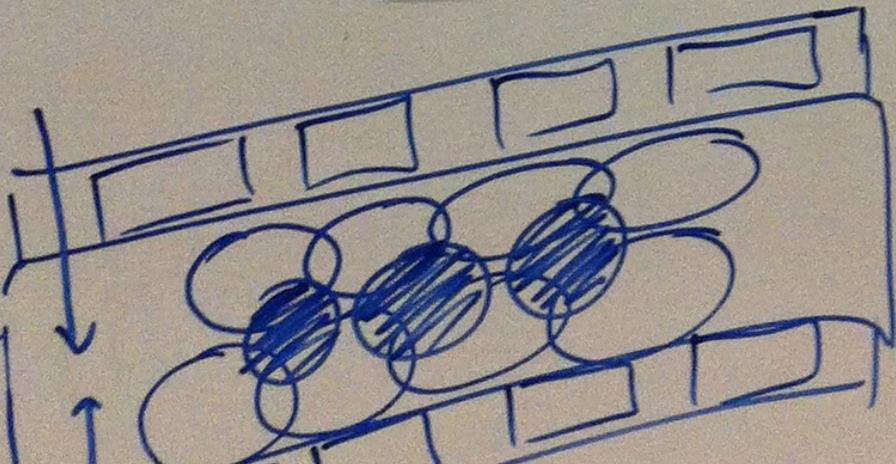
humour

Inspired by the intersecting circles seen in earlier experiments, Tikanga Māori provided the elements to guide the ceremonial process of engagement between guests.

Tablets *

You've INVITE

your backpack
25% knowledge



Poioporoaki

- Ending/concluding the Summing it up / soft

Ingredient two – the search for Mana

Following a number of critique sessions and dinner experiments conducted, I found that the obvious element missing was some sort of engagement strategy. There was no protocol, no procedure and no etiquette to follow. Participants felt, just as I did, lost, confused and bewildered. Also, without any clear process, there is no involvement and thus no ownership.

The newspaper wrappings and ‘fill in the blanks’ food packaging I had created provided a small catalyst to get people thinking, but were ultimately unsuccessful as part of a whole system. The controversial parts, such as the debate about parliamentary term, the role of the Treaty of Waitangi, Māori and Crown settlements and so on may help aid the discussion, but they could also provide some fruitful catalysts to political education and discussion. However, I discovered that as a designer, I am better trusted at talking about things design-related, within my realm of experience and training. I recognized that this Masters project could easily become a ‘soap box’ for me or worse, a bad sociology project by a Graphic Designer.

Sitting in the post graduate studio at 2am on a Sunday morning, staring vacantly at the wall (Figure 3) I realised that the intersection of values and the exchange of ideas could be enabled by looking to New Zealand’s location in the South Pacific. More specifically, the protocols and processes of engagement unique to New Zealand and its indigenous people could overcome the engagement process of dealing with challenging issues such as the constitutional preamble. The search for mana required delving into different areas than what I had previously been comfortable in reading into. To borrow another cooking metaphor, the research into why and how mana is a necessary ingredient in building Civic Competence meant taking different texts, theories and concepts and adapting them ‘to taste’.

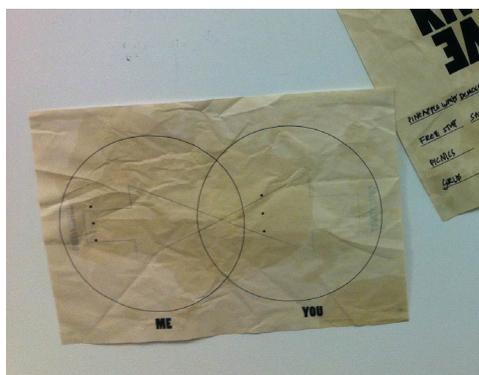


Figure 3.

Intersecting circles from placemat experiments informed the shared experiences written on the tablecloth canvas.

Tikanga Māori are the protocols and “set of beliefs associated with practices and procedures to be followed in conducting the affairs of a group or individual” (Mead, 2003, p12). It is a unique Māori perspective as it relates to the design of an interpersonal engagement process. Two particular texts were useful in guiding my understanding of Tikanga Māori: the first is a presentation made by Hannah Rainforth of Ngati Rangī Trust, Ohakune to Land and Water New Zealand. As a freshwater Scientist, Hannah also encountered problems in educating the ‘other’ and involving local Iwi in freshwater conservation endeavours. She points out that there are protocols on and off the Marae that can be utilised to enhance the engagement with Iwi and other like communities. These include turning up early, talking face-to-face, involving the right people and of course, kai. Eating, she explains, “is about lifting tapu and connecting one another” (August, 2013). Bringing food to the table is a physical manifestation showing that knowledge and understanding is reciprocal – something I had previously not considered.

The second text is a paper based on the incorporation of tikanga-based processes that enable a safe context for participants to share their thoughts and feelings about new health biotechnologies. This was facilitated by the Kōrero Whakaetanga Research Project. It introduced the methods of participation that ensures that people who come together for ‘hui’ or gathering are well accommodated and cared for. The further I delved, the more I began to recognise that there are profound layers to tikanga Māori: it can be used to create encounters, open proceedings and is adaptable to almost any situation. (Salmond, 1976, p126). Tikanga, as a concept identified in New Zealand and Pacific Island culture, provided a way of deepening the discussion and raising the significance of the potluck dinner. It provides a way of reducing space between guests and with food involved, it becomes a blended experience.

The first step to the process begins with the host, briefed beforehand by the user guide provided. They send out invitations, which state exactly the topic of discussion, describes the intent and purpose of the event and even asks the guest to prepare in advance for it: by bringing food with special meaning, guided by key words selected by the host. Bringing food to a potluck is an act of koha (offering or contribution), and there is a reciprocal responsibility between host and guest to honouring the effort that both people have put in.

When the night is ready to begin, the host also delivers a whakatau, or welcome which helps to provide information about what the dinner is about. After an initial test dinner with some University colleagues, I handed over the reins to someone else to see if the user guide was effective. What I discovered was that it is better if the host had key points in the back of their mind, rather than following a reading. It also helps to move the proceedings away from strict formality. I found that the host worked best if they could follow cue cards, rather than a booklet.

Manaakitanga is a Māori word used to describe hospitality. It has significance because the provision of food, which is noa, for people is one way of removing tapu (sacredness) that can keep people isolated. The transition from tapu activities to noa means moving from formality to informality. Metge and Kinloch (1976, p18) explain, “Tapu and noa are complementary opposites... things tapu are imbued with spiritual power and public value: they must be treated with respect”. In contrast, “things that are noa lack power but possess their own positive value, providing relief from the tension associated with tapu”. Discussion is tapu and food, as noa, provides a counterbalance to lift tapu. Traditionally, food is not offered to guests, as is customary in Pākehā culture; it is provided as part of protocol in the Marae or Fale . The discussion is deep, spiritual and layered with personal meaning, and food is the natural counterpart. To not have food involved in *Utopian Ingredients* constitutional communication is to leave the discussion in the realm of tapu, without the relief of noa. It is like trying to continually inhale without ever exhaling.

My next question was to ask whether mihimihi and the sharing of kai could become a blended experience. Mihimihi is an introduction of oneself, and seeks to establish connection with others. Whakapapa, or genealogy, helps “ground us to the earth” (Te Rito, 2007, p4) and establishes common origins. Experiences of places and common knowledge of people and relationships are all part of putting relationship first. The intersecting circles (Figure 3) provided a way of documenting the whanaungatanga, or personal connections that take place.

It is true of Pākehā, Pacific Island and Māori cultures that hosts are evaluated by their generosity and how well they treat their guests. In the case of the *Utopian Ingredients* potluck dinner party, guests prove they have been cared for when they are able to walk away with newly planted friendships, are more understanding of others, and in a spiritual sense, understanding of what they don't see. To Māori, the intangible comes before tangible. Western thinking since the enlightenment has taught that reality, science and knowledge is what we see, hear, touch and smell. Empirically, if it can be measured, it is true. Visual Communication Design has delved further into psychographic, psychoanalytical as well as attitudinal profiling; they remain however, a Western Pakeha construct. Mātauranga Māori is the body of knowledge that has been built upon by ancestors to presentday Māori (Royal, 2012, p33). It encompasses a general knowledge, but is also associated with biblical knowledge. It inherently places emphasis on the spiritual first and the material second and teaches us that there is more to a person than a body or mind. There is an intuitive, spiritual part that deserves acknowledgment.

There was the risk at the potluck dinner that participants would misunderstand what each other were saying – there needed to be a way of safeguarding the answers that people provided. Democratising the space allows a safe situation in which to express and share, even if the sharing is debate or deliberate argumentation. In order to establish this setting, there needed to be some ‘house rules’. These are some guidelines that the host is able to briefly share with the guests, which provide safe boundaries for conduct and respecting people. I found that it was helpful for the host to remind the guests to keep writing as they speak, that there were no ‘wrong’ or ‘right’ answers, and that sometimes people need to be given space to collect their thoughts and provide a considered answer.

A key finding was that when people understood what the purpose of the dinner was, and the host was confident enough to steer the guests, the level of participation improved dramatically. Guests reacted best when asked to ‘be their best’ and commit themselves to the conversation, as “those with mana to invest share the means to produce mana over their lifetime, broadening the cultural economy of their entire community” (Stone, 2013, p59). Conversely, the potential to lose mana stems from the “failure of the individual to invest his or her mana into moments of social exchange” (Stone, 2013, p59)

invitation

*You're invited to discuss what New Zealand's
Constitution should look like in the 21st Century.*

KIA ORA

Sonya

PLEASE BRING SOMETHING

Preserved & Savoury

*This is a potluck dinner for eight people.
Together, we're going to be talking about what
makes New Zealand a special place to live.
Bring a classic kiwi-style dish you think embodies
the key words above. Use your imagination!*

– UTOPIAN
& INGREDIENTS
#utopianingredients

Level E – Te Ara Hihiko
7pm
3 October, 2013

Invitations sent out by the Utopian Ingredients host ask guests to contribute food and their mana to the potluck dinner discussion.



Prototyping an early version of the tablecloth canvas.

Ingredient three – the search for Facilitation

The quest for finding the right method of facilitating the *Utopian Ingredients* potluck dinner began with a simple practical objective: create a sense of community and guide conversations. This was perhaps the hardest ingredient to control.

The facilitation of community discussion is inspired by the early Christian church: in 364AD the Church banned Agape feasts for becoming excessive and rowdy. These 'love feasts' were created to answer the longing that each person has for community and communion. They were eventually replaced by a much more sombre ritual known today as the Eucharist. Alain de Botton (de Botton, 2012, p39) remarks on the modern dilemma of physical, intellectual, emotional and spiritual isolation when he writes, "it's odd we have so few public venues which help us turn strangers into friends – we need to adapt the Mass into an all-comers Agape Restaurant, where people can meet one another through dining together". The first experiments asked people to play with their food, and I would simply observe. Soon enough, I was beginning to get the hang of dealing with food as a medium for designing and building experiences. This included the ingredients, preparation, utensils, serving and the breaking and distribution of food – minus the politics.

The designed food and the play associated with them was intended to give everyone present at the *Utopian Ingredients* 'banquet' a sense of light-hearted theatre which I believed would help alleviate from the traditional formality of the topic at hand. However, questions to do with the performative, ritualistic and spatial aspects of the banquet were raised. Because the food was laid out on the table, guests needed permission to eat from me as the host. As people stood to eat, clusters of demographically like people began to form and conversations were impossible to control. As the audience grew from a small group of people in the first experiments, into a large group that fragmented, whatever control the design wielded immediately ceased. This was important to recognise because as the conversation grows, from small groups to potentially a nation, the design still needs to achieve its objectives: to curate and intervene experiences at each moment so that the outcome is a productive constitutional discussion. There was a need to mediate these dialogues with a script or strategy of some sort, and then find a way of documenting conversations or revelations.



A convivial moment is created by participants tearing apart 'Pineapple Republic'

The relationship between audience and the food was mediated by the unwitting host – me. In the critique, I was unconsciously playing the role of the cook and the proprietor. I was still deep-frying and preparing the meals when people arrived, greeted everyone when the food was ready and gave them permission to eat. This was of course, all unscripted and unplanned. But I realised that the performance and the theatre of it all gave the impression that the food was not just the reason people were there. Investigations into the recipes, descriptions of why and how the eating works and even invitations to the 'event' could help explain the protocol people should observe. Controlling the space is another very important consideration – how does one initiate this 'performance', in much the same way a conversation is activated? How can I get the audience to become comfortable with the host as well as each other?

Also, when was the performance concluded? Were people there under false pretences? It was difficult to know. A catalyst was needed to help people prepare themselves for political discussion. I felt that taking traditional foods, rituals also usual (and unusual) New Zealand customs around their common food and disrupting or challenging them could provide some ways of identifying what useful political discussion should be like in this country. It was suggested to look into Nicolas Bourriaud's theory of Relational Aesthetics. I peeked into the Fine Arts world, and gleaned what I found useful – but I am not a Fine Artist.

Ingredient three – the search for Facilitation

Relational Aesthetics as a method of artistic practice interrupts people in everyday activities in order to enhance conversations. Its genesis is found in the belief that authentic social relations are disappearing in the age of digital information and online interaction (Davies & Parrinder, 2006, p18). Today, the world is wired for designed communication experiences, but our most effective areas of conversation are becoming more restricted and suppressed as societal transactions become more about fleeting electronic consumption, than about beating hearts and personalities, which take time to nurture. Sure, the experiences produced may be spontaneous and the results unexpected, but Relational Aesthetics only ask participants what is achievable in the 'here and now'.

Afterwards, I had to reconsider the usefulness of Relational Aesthetics. If a utopia is an imagined better future, then the core aim is to create harmonious social relations – drawing people of diverse opinions, backgrounds and languages to a single proposition, idea or communication, it helps to spark open-ended meaningful dialogue, which in turn, will develop into effectual and individually sustained contemplation. At best, Relational Aesthetics was only able to generate spontaneous and non-scripted action and dialogue between participants, whereas *Utopian Ingredients* aims to conscientiously facilitate discussions and conversations. Relational Aesthetics ultimately proved unusable. It relied too much on disruption and was difficult to resolve.



Creating 'Kia Kaha' black custard and kiwifruit.



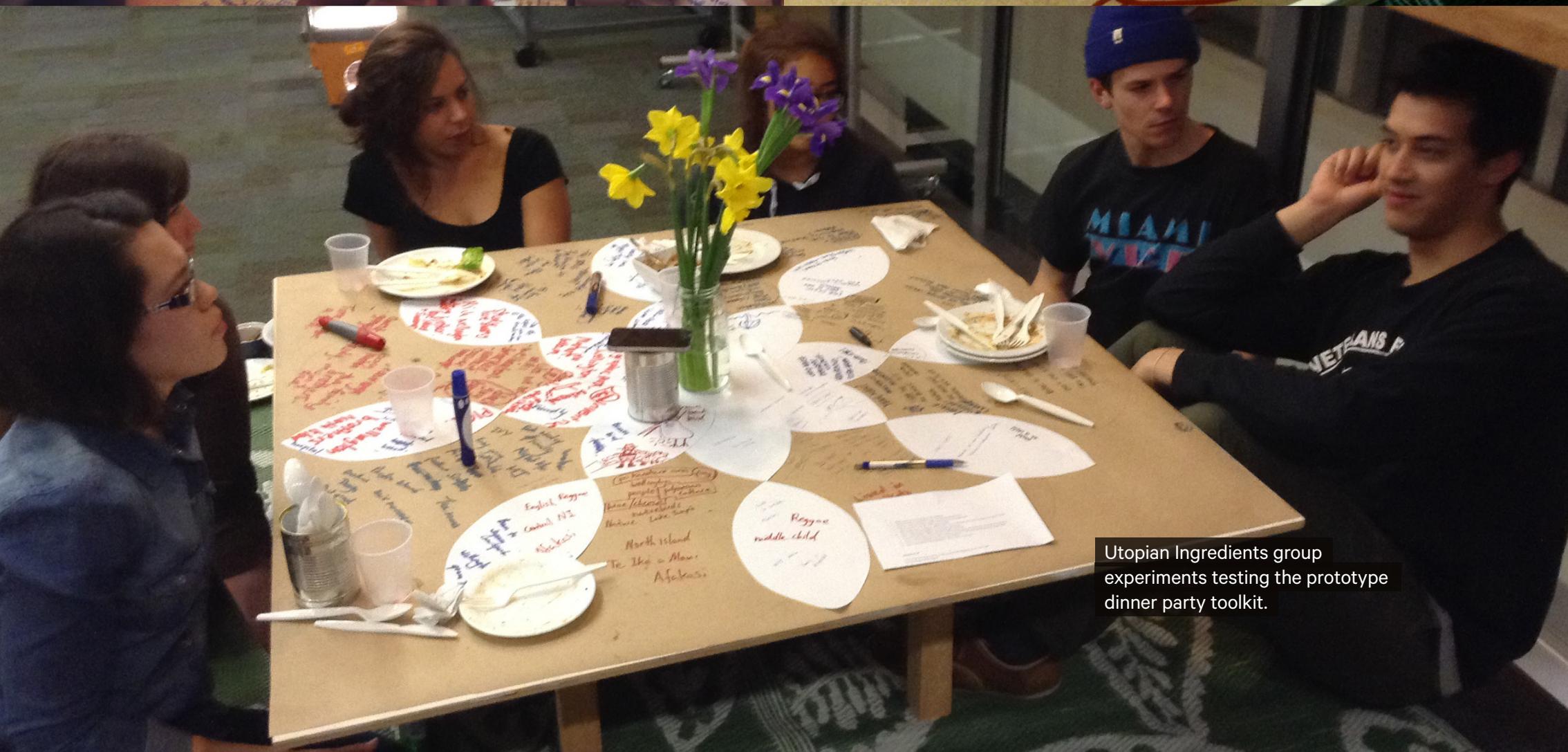
Getting my hands dirty as participants arrive for a banquet experiment.

Naming the food at the banquet helped to educate and intrigue participants to a degree. 'Pineapple Republic' is essentially dark chocolate, pineapple lumps and dried pineapple lumped together with Popsicle sticks to form a large textural, breakable chocolate bark. The sticks were inserted at obtuse angles as the chocolate was setting so that when it solidified, they could be broken off at different sizes. It was made to share. The name suggests obviously, our national obsession with Pineapple Lumps – but as a constitutional issue, it also reminds us of the possibility of declaring New Zealand a republic.

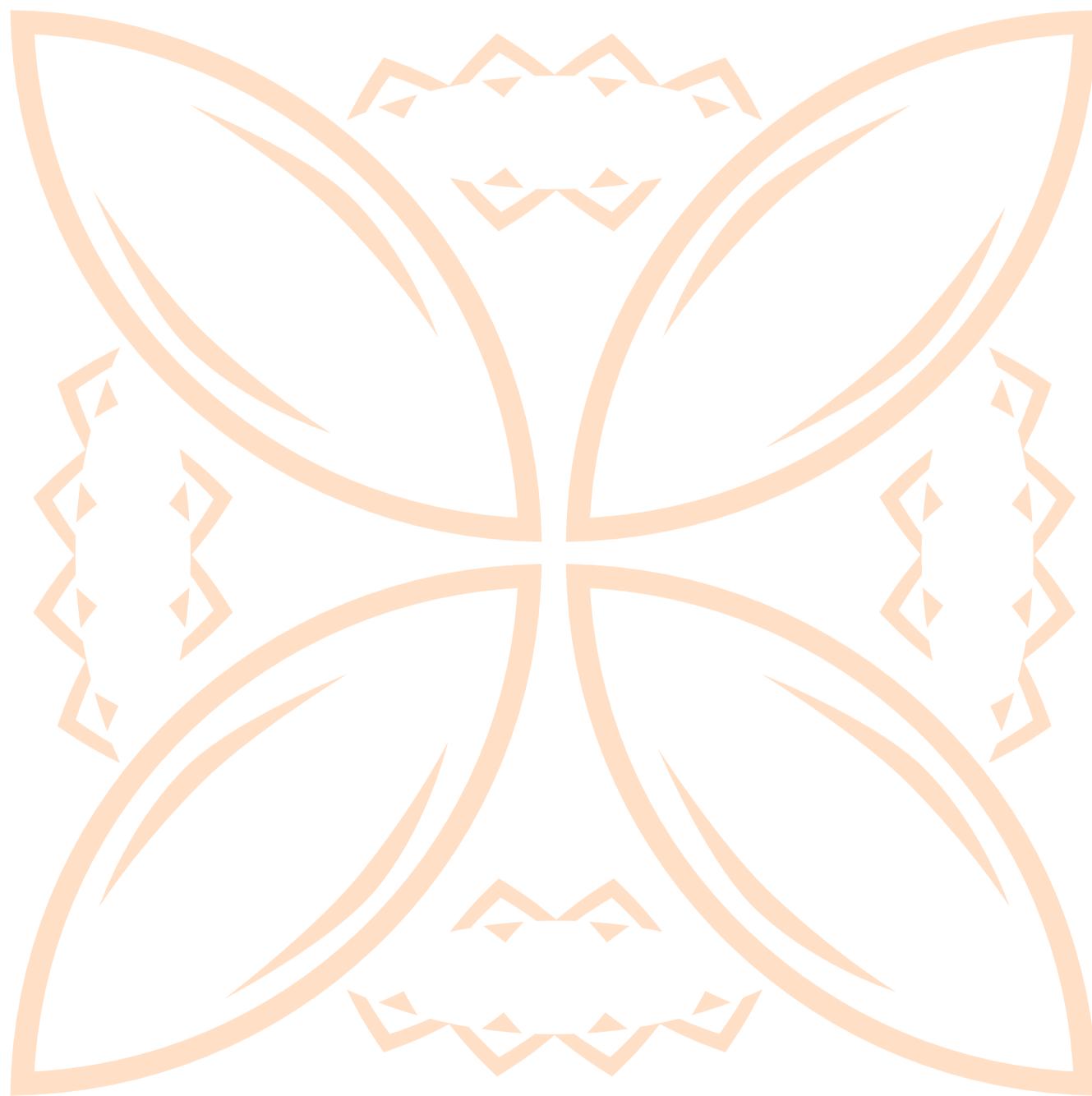
What is around them easily distracts people. Originally I wanted the process to be organic and uncontrived, but ultimately failed as I realise people need to be lead and told what to do – through a knowable and designable method of engagement. People needed to feel like they were at an event for a specific reason, with specific tasks and requirements asked of them. Ceremonies add structure and familiar parameters to events so that people don't wander off – they know what's about to happen, and they play along. To make it easier to manage, I just needed to have a smaller group. A designed 'playbook' of instructions could take people through the process of engaging with their own feelings and memories (past), sharing their thoughts on the present and discussing ideas for the future. I discovered that conversations are driven by discomfort and by interest (Chen & Berger, 2013, p581). Conversations that yield high emotional and intellectual investment are more practically useful, surprising, interesting, positive and emotionally arousing. Food is just there to augment this.



An early prototype of the talanoa box made of plywood and sandblasted perspex using new found skills with vinyl cutting and laser etching technology.



Utopian Ingredients group experiments testing the prototype dinner party toolkit.



The Final Product





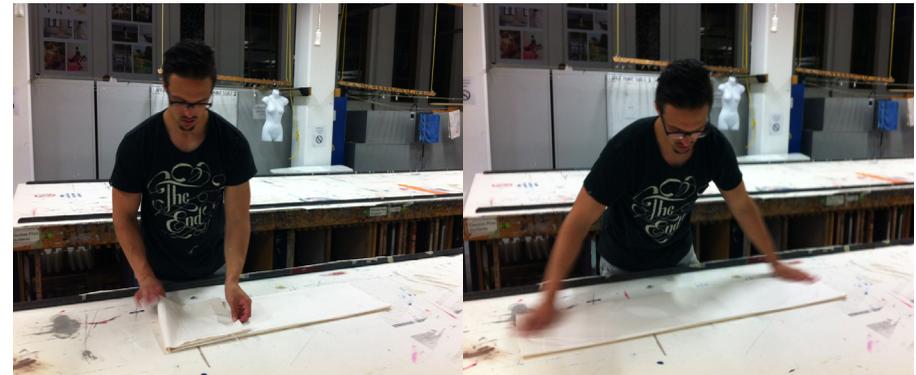


Culture can be usefully defined as a system of shared understandings (Kinloch & Metge, 1976, p8). They are understandings of what certain words and actions mean, of what things are really important and how they should be expressed. The unconscious assumptions we make that these same words or actions mean the same thing to others often mean that we judge others as strange or disrespectful in light of our own standards. However, the tablecloth, together with the host's gentle questioning is designed to give people space to collect their thoughts and provide answers that are their own, that add to the mana of the conversation.

The purpose of the tablecloth is to provide a space for telling stories. Our stories and experiences are cyclical, each comes from the other, and the way that we explain them fits within New Zealand's story. When a purchase is made, each customer has a story or reason for making that purchase decision – an orange pair of scissors may say a lot about a person; a love of paper craft, a distrust of knives or even a delight in the colour orange. Likewise, there is purpose and reason behind our transactions beyond consumption in the experience economy and the *Utopian Ingredients* tablecloth facilitates the search for deeper meaning in these stories and exchanges.

It is accepted that as designers, we deal with fuzzy phenomena and blurred emotional boundaries with perspectives that are multiple and overlapping (Dallow, 2003, p49). We also deal with knowledge that is intuitive and hard to describe at times – we sometimes speak in word pictures and ideas that are capricious and imperfect. Recognising this chaotic organization of thoughts, the materiality of the tablecloth is informed by ideas quickly scrawled and scribbled on napkin in a cafe. If words cannot be found to express an idea or describe an experience, the use of pictures, similes and metaphors are encouraged. There is value in each guest's contribution to the tablecloth and the transformational moment occurs when the tablecloth is able to deliver and carry his or her story to others.

The simple homespun cotton material speaks to the humble, improvised working class culture of ordinary kiwis. It allows guests to seek forgiveness, instead of permission as far as making a mess is concerned. At the culmination, the spilled wine, grease stains and dried crinkled lines tell us that our experiences together were spontaneous and real.



Adding the final touches to the screenprinted tablecloths.

The ubiquitous digital realm is transient and forever updating, everything is new and at the same time, nothing is new. The humility and tactility of the *Utopian Ingredients* tablecloth speaks of the reality and significance of the engagement that takes place. Out of the chaos and potential cardiac arrest of guests contributing deep undeclared passions and potentially distressing life experiences, the aspiration of the tablecloth is to reach equilibrium; to achieve a harmony, empathy and camaraderie that is drawn from different directions. It is like many artists painting the same picture, only from many different angles.

There are no 'identikit' New Zealanders, New Zealand society is diverse and colourful (Spoonley et al., 2004, p105). As an artefact, the tablecloth is instantaneously transformed from a fragile blank canvas to become a vivid snapshot of New Zealand's people. Layers of whakapapa are visibly established and built upon, as a sense of community evolves. Trust and loyalty to one another is intended to be cultivated, with guests walking away with a deeper ownership of the themes that the group has produced.

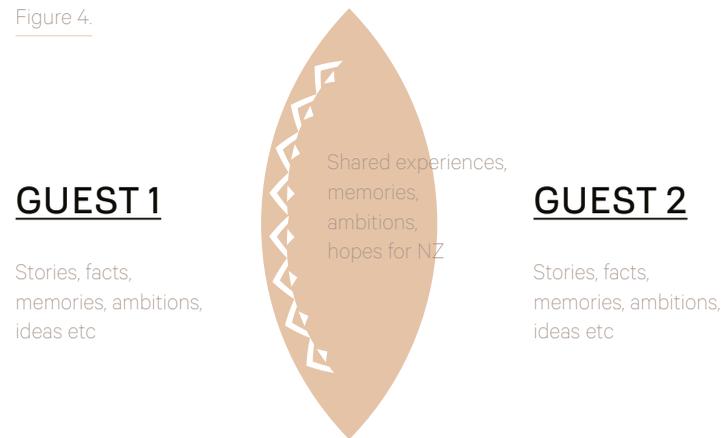
As a knowable designed artefact, it therefore can be reproduced and rolled out across the country in any future campaign, and in years to come, the tablecloths that have been scribbled on, painted and scrawled upon can be exhibited in all their soiled, yet profound glory – one could imagine an exhibition in Te Papa in the distant future displaying visions of a New Zealand 'utopia' from today.

The 'Lens of Truth'

37

(C. Askin, personal communication, August 23, 2013)

Figure 4.



The vesica piscis shape (Figure 4) is used to contain the words or pictures that guests have in common also identifies overlapping issues or tensions that arise because of lack of agreement. Like two circles that overlap each other, the shape represents the intersection of ideas and the stories of two people that come together. This is done three times, with eight participants. In the end, when four commonalities are selected, it also quietly reinforces compromise.



The shedding of “old ancestries and distancing or moving closer to ‘other’ influences, remains a potentially unsettling experience” (Spoonley et al., 2004, p296). However, it cannot be denied that New Zealand is no longer a satellite of Europe, as satellites take a given signal or image and reflect it back to the world. The shedding of ‘Britishness’ to ‘New Zealandness’ means new perceptions of cultural distinctiveness need to be activated, and they are activated by the guests. Symbolically, the shape locates us in the South Pacific as it naturally and appropriately has a Māori and Pasifika aesthetic to it.



The Utopian Ingredients motif was inspired by frosted glass windows from my Mother's house in Palmerston North.



Salvaging matai flooring and pine timber from an old state house being demolished in Brooklyn, Wellington.





The Talanoa Box

The talanoa box is a ceremonial box for holding/storing the implements for *Utopian Ingredients*. It is inspired by the tanoa bowl used as a centerpiece for important occasions such as the 'ava ceremony found in many South Pacific islands (see Figure 4). The tanoa bowl is used for special events such as welcoming people to a village or the passing of chiefly titles. It is usually an honour to be selected for the ceremony.

The talanoa box derives its name from the Samoan word 'talanoa' which describes conversation as more than just the give and take transaction of words and pleasantries; it is the gritty face-to-face exchange of stories, ideas and thinking both formal and informal. Talanoa causes malamalama (clarity) and is "a personal encounter where people story their issues, their realities and aspirations... it allows more mo'oni (pure, real and authentic) information to be available" (Vaioleti, 2006, p21).

The *Utopian Ingredients* dinner party toolkit, including the tablecloth, invitation material as well as user guide and question cards are all stored in the talanoa box: a timber case crafted out of the remnants of an old state house. The box materials have particular relevance to my experiences growing up: born into a military family, the state provided housing for families of the armed forces and I spent much of my childhood in homes provided by Ministry of Education and the New Zealand Army.

In New Zealand's sparsely populated settler society history, the "utopian self-conceptions" (Walker, 2006, p2) perceived by those arriving to strive for a greater quality of life than that experienced in class-dominated Europe moulded the geographic landscape to fit a new cultural and social identity. As towns grew into cities, housing construction went hand-in-hand with building the country. Now, New Zealand provides a prime example of immigration that has sought to nation-build by welcoming immigrants to settle (Spoonley et al., 2004, p175).

The legacy of state housing serves as a reminder of the huge demographic shifts felt post World War II. In a short period of time, New Zealand culture and society went from being relatively homogenous and euro-centric (with a sprinkling of Asian and Pacific Island) to a landing pad for new peoples, cultures and languages that brought their own challenges and expectations. New Zealand's primary industries were prosperous and immigrants from the Pacific Islands, Asia and Europe boosted the



Figure 5. Tanoa Bowl in use at an 'Ava ceremony in Samoa photographed in the 1930's. (unknown photographer)



Tanoa Bowl belonging to a friend, with fa'ailoga ornamentation on the sides.

workforce, my grandparents among these newcomers. It was the beginning of a paradigm shift (Spoonley et al., 2004, p11). With changes to society, the government needed to streamline its services and 'products'. Fordist social measures of efficiency were the answer to the influx of immigrants that needed housing, welfare and other government services. However, the government's 'take it or leave it' approach failed to recognize that people, as citizens, have endless differentiation of needs. The state failed to change

with the times, and the same method of providing services has not changed since. In the wake of the leaky housing crisis and the legal rigmarole that followed from changes to legislation and the demolition (with eventual modernisation) of state housing in low-income areas of urban New Zealand, *Utopian Ingredients* provides an opportunity to symbolically put discarded materials to practical use again in the form of the talanoa box.

In the end, designers must understand that it is the audience who creates meaning. The materiality of the talanoa box tells the story of New Zealand's recent history. It bears the modesty and unpretentiousness of people during the ever-changing external political and economic realities that many communities in New Zealand face. For those New Zealanders outside of a Pasifika frame of reference, the connection between the tanoa bowl and the talanoa box may not be made clear until they have experienced an 'ava ceremony, some similar ritual or perhaps even lived in a state house later in time.

Designed objects facilitate the telling of stories that establish a new tradition: linking the past, present and the future. Michael Rowlands encourages us to think of heritage as “discursive practice, as a way that a group slowly constructs a collective memory for itself by telling stories about itself” (2002, p108). Elements of the talanoa box design include the treatment of the materials. The original teal colour paint was sanded back through the undercoats to reveal the woodgrain textures and imperfections in the paintwork. The blue, white and mint green colours exposed are intentionally left as they are because soft, cool colours soothe the mind and aid concentration, symbolizing clear communication which leads to greater talanoaga (understanding) or malamalama. Laser cutting technology provides contrast: the fa'ailoga (motif) cut through the paint and wood represents the new, also the eight guests that make up the event. The side panels are made of Pine and the base of the box is pieced together from matai native timber flooring, both rescued from the same house. The frosted glass lid is cool to touch when it slides out, mimicking the act of pouring cool water into a tanoa bowl.

When the talanoa box is pulled out, the constitutional discussion associated with it is something to be taken seriously and engage deeply with. You are required to bring your *mana*.



Constructing the final talanoa boxes. Layers of undercoat paint are sanded back; symbolically representing layers of whakapapa.



You are invited to a dinner-time discussion about what New Zealand's Constitution should look like in the 21st Century.

KIA ORA PLEASE BRING

DATE
TIME
LOCATION
RSVP BY

Utopian Ingredients

This is a potluck dinner for eight people. Together, we're going to be talking about what makes New Zealand a special place to live. Bring a dish you think embodies the key words provided. Use your imagination!

utopianingredients.co.nz

Répondez s'il vous plaît

LET'S DO THIS!
 SORRY—NOT THIS TIME.

What would be the sound track to the 'New Zealand Movie'?

Utopian Ingredients

DELIVER TO

Our New Zealand is:

HOST YOUR OWN DINNER-TIME DISCUSSION ABOUT NEW ZEALAND'S CONSTITUTION —

SIGN UP AT
UTOPIANINGREDIENTS.CO.NZ

Utopian Ingredients


**Utopian
Ingredients**

OST QUESTION CARDS



Third Round.

THESE QUESTIONS AIM
TO USE OUR IDENTITIES,
LIFE EXPERIENCES AND
LESSONS, TO LEARN FROM
THEM AND IMAGINE WHAT
NEW ZEALAND SHOULD
LOOK LIKE IN THE FUTURE.

'WRAP UP' QUESTIONS

What key words should we use to sum up what New Zealand should 'taste' like?

Is there a non-english word, idea or phrase that could be used to describe any of the concepts that have been discussed?

Can we all agree about these?

THE PURPOSE OF THESE QUESTIONS
IS TO FIND THE 4 KEY THEMES, IDEAS
OR KEY WORDS THAT COULD BE USED
TO CREATE OUR VERY OWN PREAMBLE.
THESE 4 KEY PRINCIPLES FORM THE
CONSTITUTION'S FOUNDATION.

WHEN AGREEMENT IS REACHED,
ASK GUESTS TO WRITE THEM ON THE
'TAKEAWAY' CARDS PROVIDED.

LOG IN AND UPLOAD YOUR KEY WORDS,
PICTURES AND VIDEO TO THE WEBSITE
AND SHARE WITH THE WORLD!

UTOPIANINGREDIENTS.CO.NZ



First Round.

THESE QUESTIONS ARE
USED TO INTRODUCE EACH
OF THE GUESTS AND SEARCH
FOR COMMON GROUND IN
OUR LIFE EXPERIENCES.


**Utopian
Ingredients**

HOST QUESTION CARDS

What's your favourite thing about New Zealand?

If you grew up here – what's your most vivid memory of growing up in New Zealand?

What would be the soundtrack to the 'New Zealand Movie'? Why?

What are some positive kiwi characteristics? How are they expressed?

How do you tell if someone is from New Zealand?

What words/actions or activities define a 'kiwi'?

If you close your eyes—and I say the word Kiwi, write 3 words that come to mind

What is New Zealand's biggest success up until now? Why?

What is New Zealand's biggest challenge up until now? Why?

If you could go back in time to any year in New Zealand, what year would you travel back to and why?

REMIND GUESTS TO WRITE DOWN
WHAT THEY SHARE WITH THE GROUP
CAN'T DESCRIBE IT? DRAW IT!

If money was no object, what is one thing you could do to make New Zealand a better place? Why?

What's the most important resource to New Zealand and its people?

What should we do about New Zealand's history?

What would happen to New Zealand if all the people left, tomorrow?

If you could bottle 'New Zealandness' – what would it taste like? What would you call it?

'WRAP UP' QUESTIONS

What key words should we use to sum up what New Zealand should 'taste' like?

Is there a non-english word, idea or phrase that could be used to describe any of the concepts that have been discussed?

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LOG IN AND UPLOAD YOUR KEY WORDS,
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AND SHARE WITH THE WORLD!

UTOPIANINGREDIENTS.CO.NZ

The *Utopian Ingredients* potluck dinner party is guided by the host. In order to make the event run as smoothly as possible, there needed to be a guide that the host could follow. The guide includes instructions on how to send out the invites, how to set up the event, how to mediate differences in opinions and even provides some ‘house rules’ for guests to be aware of, so that convivial moments are facilitated that encourage guests to bring their mana. The host is also briefed on how to explain what the purpose and intent of *Utopian Ingredients* is – helping them to effectively deliver their whakatau.

The invitations that are sent out by the host ask guests to bring food that they believe is represented through two of the key words provided (Figure 6). This is to assist guests in delving into their history, their creativity and it requires them to prepare beforehand what they will bring. This is all part of ‘being your best’ and bringing mana to the conversation.

The question cards provide the host with thoughtful and soul-provoking questions (Figure 7). Starting on the outside of the tablecloth (Figure 8), guests are asked to write, draw or scribble down as they take turns responding to the questions asked. The initial questions ask guests to introduce themselves: where they are from, what languages they might speak and so on. Essentially, guests are establishing whanaungatanga, or interpersonal connections. The next round of questioning probes what life experiences and values they might have learnt growing up in New Zealand, or conversely, what experiences and knowledge they have brought to New Zealand. These help to establish the final act of the night, aggregating the most prevalent or common themes or stories or values that might best shape New Zealand society.

Prudence Stone illustrates in *Black inc.* that “New Zealand has a creation story... laced in black” (2013, p18). The printed elements of the toolkit are printed black on pearl coloured card stock. The beige tones have a calmness and warmth to them, the toolkit intentionally appears as amicable as possible. The display typeface selected is *Domaine display narrow extrabold italic*. Designed by Kris Sowersby with wine bottles and vineyards in mind – the bold, curvaceous swashes and sharp, bracketed serifs have a certain elegance and refinement to them which I found suited a dinner invitation aesthetic. The invitation and RSVP postcards are designed to provide a fun way to interact with guests, in the age of countless web notifications, it is a rare pleasure to receive something tangible.

Figure 6.

Small	Cooked Slowly	E.g:
Sweet	Cooked Quickly	Savoury & Preserved
Savoury	Energetic	
Strong tasting	Preserved	
Light	Medicinal	
Healthy	Dry	
Organic	Liquid	
Indulgent/Rich	International	
Vegetarian		

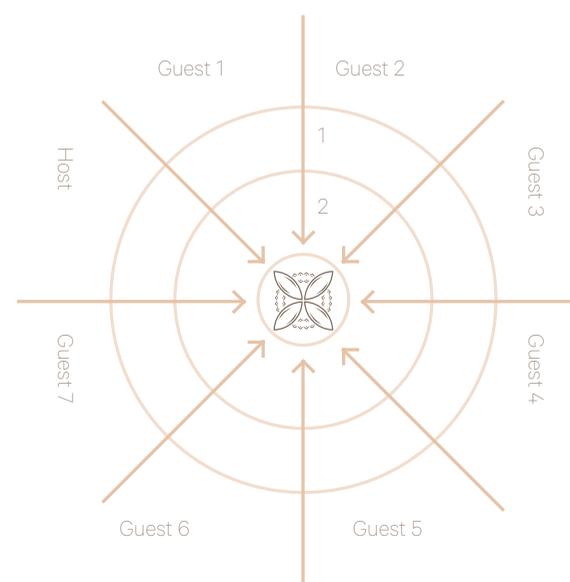
Figure 7.

E.g:

“If you could travel to the past in a time machine, what advice would you give to the 6 year old you?”

“What would happen to New Zealand if all the people left, tomorrow?”

Figure 8.



Starting on the outside ring, the role of the host is to guide the discussion by leading the questioning towards the centre; searching for common ground between guests along the way.

The purpose is to find the 4 key themes, ideas or key words that could be used to create our very own preamble. These 4 key principles form the constitution's foundation.

Round 1.

What is your name

Where you're from

Dish you brought & why you chose it

What is your cultural background?

What hobbies or interests do you have?

Do you have a special talent?

What do you miss about being a kid?

What song would be the soundtrack to your life?

Did your parents make you do embarrassing things when you were growing up?

What was your favourite food when you were growing up? Did someone bring it?

Where is the farthest you've travelled away from your home?

Can you share a story from your week?

Was there an important lesson that you learned?

Round 2.

If you could learn to do anything, what would it be?

Who or what did you want to be when you grew up? Why?

Do you still aspire to do or be the same thing?

What was the last experience that made you a stronger person? Why?

What's one thing that should be taught in schools that isn't? Why?

If you could travel to the past in a time machine, what advice would you give to the 6 year old you?

Round 3.

What's your favourite thing about New Zealand?

If you grew up here – what's your most vivid memory of growing up in New Zealand?

What would be the soundtrack to the 'New Zealand Movie'? Why?

What are some positive 'Kiwi' characteristics? How are they expressed?

How do you tell if someone is from New Zealand?

What words/actions or activities define a 'Kiwi'?

If you close your eyes – and I say the word 'Kiwi', write 3 words that come to mind

What is New Zealand's biggest success up until now? Why?

What is New Zealand's biggest challenge up until now? Why?

If you could go back in time to any year in New Zealand's history, what year would you travel back to and why?

If money was no object, what is one thing you could do to make New Zealand a better place? Why?

What's the most important resource to New Zealand and its people?

What should we do about New Zealand's history?

What would happen to New Zealand if all the people left, tomorrow?

If you could bottle 'New Zealandness' – what would it taste like? What would you call it?

Round 4.

What key words should we use to sum up the most important things we have discussed?

Is there a non-english word, idea or phrase that could be used to describe any of the concepts that have been discussed?

If we look again at what we have in common, what can we agree on? If not, how can we compromise?

Can we make up a word? Could we draw it?

The Online / Digital Component

In order to complete the post-dinner feedback loop, a digital component is needed. Information exchanges in the 21st Century involve multiple forms of media: sound, video, text and imagery. The website component to the *Utopian Ingredients* experience allows hosts to register and request a potluck dinner party toolkit. Once registered, hosts are able to later share the values, beliefs and 'stories' that the dinner guests have decided on.

By uploading video or images, they create a much more comprehensive picture of what New Zealand's constitution should look like. As a strategy, it functions as a way of enlisting participation and allowing participants to share, build on knowledge and also discover where their own beliefs sit in the greater scheme. Twitter and Facebook allow users to create hashtags to catalog media, or track them if they are searching for specific content. An Application Programming Interface (API) created for Facebook and Twitter provides improved functionality for participants to share their experiences. Following the hashtag #utopianingredients is a way of following the constitutional conversation around the world, accessing wide and disparate networks of New Zealanders – allowing those far from home to participate as well. The multi-layered nature of social media and web content shows that democracy is alive and functioning, and to the disengaged, it is fun.

The image displays two screenshots of the Utopian Ingredients website. The top screenshot shows the main navigation and a map of New Zealand. The navigation includes 'Top Themes' (Fairness, Accountability, Liberty, Hauora, Mana, Kaitiakitanga, One big Whanau, Wabi Sabi, Kaitiakitanga, Fairness, Accountability, More) and 'What people are saying'. The map highlights 'Around Aotearoa New Zealand' and 'International' with 'Explore all' buttons. A tweet is visible: '@sewithers New Zealand's constitution needs somewhat of a freshen up. This is quite a task! #utopianingredients #food #peacetalks'. The bottom screenshot shows a user profile for 'Kieran' with a grid of content. The grid includes a video titled 'Love' (Auckland, 12 September, 2013), a video titled 'Egalitarianism' (Auckland, 12 September, 2013), and a video titled 'Evolve' (Auckland, 12 September, 2013). Other content includes an 'invitation' card, a photo of a dinner table, a photo of a person writing, and a photo of a group of people on a balcony. A quote is visible: 'UTOPIAN INGREDIENTS IS ALL ABOUT DREAMING OF THE FUTURE NEW ZEALAND'S FUTURE'.







BEA TRUCK
wisdom
LANGUAGES
GIFTED
LANGUAGES
the first
supper
DANCE
PROGRAM

Glossary of Māori and Pasifika terms

As relating to their use by the author in this text.

Whakatau (Te Reo Māori)

A relatively informal welcoming ceremony used to begin a meeting or encounter.

Whakatauki (Te Reo Māori)

Proverb, saying, cryptic saying, aphorism.

Mana (Te Reo Māori)

A pan-Pacific concept that carries layers of meaning. Principally about influence and authority. Charisma, prestige, personal status and leadership are all qualitative attributes used to characterise mana.

Tikanga Māori (Te Reo Māori)

Ritualised rules, plans, methods, customs and habits particular to Māori cultural practices and interpersonal engagement.

Koha (Te Reo Māori)

Gift, present, offering, donation, contribution.

Mihimihi (Te Reo Māori)

Greeting and introduction of oneself to a group.

Manaakitanga (Te Reo Māori)

Hospitality, kindness. Includes, but not limited to the provision of food.

Tapu (Te Reo Māori)

Framework for defining behaviours and responses. Things that are tapu are considered sacred, set apart and are imbued with a supernatural condition. People are considered tapu and it is each person's responsibility to preserve their own tapu and respect the tapu of other people and places. The counterbalance to tapu is noa.

Noa (Te Reo Māori)

To be free from the influence of tapu. Ordinary, safe and unrestricted.

Whakapapa (Te Reo Māori)

Linked to descriptions of one's ancestry. Genealogy indicating layers of descent.

Kai (Te Reo Māori)

Food or meal.

Whanaungatanga (Te Reo Māori)

A sense of belonging and connection made through shared experiences and working together. Develops as a result of understanding another's whakapapa and knowledge.

Matauranga Māori (Te Reo Māori)

Māori world view and body of knowledge originating from Māori ancestors and handed down over time.

Pasifika (Pan Pacific)

An informal, blanket-term used that encompasses the peoples, cultures and languages from the Pacific Islands. Embracing unity in diversity, it also refers to New Zealand-based (and born) Pacific Island population, who identify as Pasifika, via ancestry or descent.

Tanoa Bowl (Samoa)

A carved wooden bowl of ceremonial importance used in 'ava ceremonies.

'Ava Ceremony (Samoa)

An intricate yet important ceremonial custom in Samoan culture used to mark special occasions. Includes consumption of 'ava (a beverage made of squeezed dried *Piper Methysticum* root, equal to kava in Fiji and other Pacific Island cultures) and the giving of ceremonial speeches.

Talanoa (Samoa)

Verb used to describe chatting or to conversing together.

Malamalama (Samoa)

To be light, also denotes understanding and comprehension.

Talanoaga (Samoa)

Chatting, conversation or talk.

Fa'ailoga (Samoa)

Pattern, design or motif.

Mo'oni (Tonga)

To be true, or to speak truth.

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Unless otherwise identified, all images and objects are the work of Kieran Stowers.

Figure 1.

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Figure 2.

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Figure 5.

Unknown photographer. (ca.1900-1930). *Kava ceremony, Samoa*. Retrieved from <http://digitallibrary.usc.edu/cdm/singleitem/collection/p15799coll123/id/49158/rec/1>

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...to a
discussion
New Zealand's
should look
21st Century.

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■ LET'S DO THIS!

■ SORRY—
NOT THIS TIME.

Our New Zealand is:



What would
be the sound
track to the
"New Zealand
Movie"?

Utopian
Ingredients

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DINNER-TIME
DISCUSSION ABOUT
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