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Walk With Me

A performative investigation, researching contested memories at New Zealand's national site for remembrance, Puke Ahu.

An exegesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree
of
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at Massey University, Wellington,
New Zealand.

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Abstract

Walk With Me is a performance art project that was born from an interest in memory and memorialisation. The guided tour series initiates an investigation of site that illustrates the power of the New Zealand Government to influence our national identity through the fuelling of dominant myths at the new National Memorial Park (Puke Ahu). The project has revealed the ongoing effects of colonialism and offers participants an alternative to the memory formed by the focus on New Zealand's involvement in overseas wars. The Government's spending on commemoration of the First World War and specifically the centenary of the Gallipoli landings of 25th April 1915, overshadows Maori remembrance stories of colonial conflicts, which are discreetly articulated at Puke Ahu. The project's focus narrows from encounters with people at the site to concentrate on what is there, who is represented and what is performed there. This is a memory work that is bound to the site by the ritual act of walking and investigates the plural memories of the landscape.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to those of you who walked with me.

Some walked ahead so that I could follow.

Others walked behind me, making sure I stuck to the path.

And a special thanks to those who walked beside me,

You know who you are.

Contents

Abstract	1
Acknowledgements	2
Introduction	4
Memory War Memory theory and memorialisation	6
Walking and Guiding A survey	9
Methods - Encounters at the Site	14
Performance and Performativity	19
Encounters with the Site	23
A Mythical War	28
Ritual Encounters Conclusion	33
Illustration List	36
Bibliography	37