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Walk With Me

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

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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.
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Introduction

I lay face down. My camera lens pushed into my ribs, head to one side and hands flattened against the cold bitumen, pieces of aggregate embossing my skin. I pushed up naively unaware of the steel pole lodged between my shoulder blades. Panic swelled then dispersed from my stomach up to my face, like a fine lace of emotion. The thought that there might be more steel, another blow yet to come; I shouted for help.

On the other side of Buckle Street the fleeting sounds of birds and singing cicadas clash with the metal on metal of the construction site. Adding to the suite of temporal notes is the convivial voice of a 41-year-old artist, conversing with her tour participants about a seemingly heavy subject. Above and below, the pohutukawa trees, anchored deeply in the ground by tendrils wrapped firmly around the old munitions buried a century before.

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. 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 participation in overseas wars.

The notion of a “compact, consolidated structure, with its countless blocks, inside and outside, held firmly in position by their own weight and pressure, will be ever an instructive type of the National strength and grandeur which can only be secured by the union of ‘many in one’” (as cited in Curran, 2009. p.271), is a quote that describes a relationship formed between the construction of monuments and the idea of a collective national identity. The National War Memorial site on Puke Ahu, Wellington, endures the disruption of excavation as the Memorial Park is being constructed and the National War Memorial stands nearby following a lengthy restoration. The New Zealand Government has passed new laws to ensure the park’s completion in time for 25th April 2015, which has placed an emphasis on New Zealand’s experience of war at Gallipoli and the commemoration of Anzac\(^1\) Day.

\(^1\) ANZAC is an acronym for Australian and New Zealand Army Corps.
The 25\textsuperscript{th} April, Anzac Day is an important date for New Zealanders and Australians as it marks the landing of troops on the shores of Gallipoli in 1915. Although Palenski (2012) argues that a New Zealand identity was already taking shape before the start of World War 1, Harper (2011) and Shadbolt (1988) both point to the Gallipoli campaign as an important step towards nationhood. Palenski (2012) concedes that New Zealanders’ role at Gallipoli affirmed expressions of a national identity, highlighting Anzac Day as an important commemorative event. To understand the relevance of the new Memorial Park in Wellington as a national site for remembrance, I will firstly discuss *les lieux de mémoire\textsuperscript{2}* in relation to the construction of national identity. This leads to an analysis of my own practice within this project, which initially centred on encounters with people at the site and the relationships formed between the diverse communities brought together during the walks, to raise dialogue about the Memorial Park. Although my practice still focuses on social engagement, it has deviated as a result of deeper encounters at the site to include the contested memories that exist there due to; what is there, who is represented, and what is performed there.

A monument is positioned on the northwestern corner of the land that the Old Museum Building, Tokomaru, is built on. This memorial acknowledges the peaceful protestors of Parihaka who were held in a prison at the same site in the 1880s. The rock cairn memorial is humble in comparison to the 50 metre high, concrete and stone construction of the National War Memorial, which was dedicated on Anzac Day in 1932 (Shoebridge, 2009). The Parihaka Memorial tells part of the story of a displaced people and is the only recognition of the foundation wars\textsuperscript{3} of New Zealand at the site. The Parihaka Memorial sits slightly apart from the National War Memorial on land owned by Te Atiawa Iwi (O’Hare, 2010). This is a reminder of the Tangata Whenua\textsuperscript{4} of Wellington and brings forth a Maori understanding of land and the significant role of myth as contributing to a sense of national identity.

\textsuperscript{2} *Les lieux de mémoire* is translated as the realms or sites of memory. *Les Lieux de Mémoire: Realms of Memory, rethinking the French Past* is the title of Pierre Nora’s 1996 publication.

\textsuperscript{3} The foundational wars of New Zealand, also known as the ‘Land Wars’, began soon after the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi and ended with the battle at Maungapōhatu in the Urewera in 1916 (Cooper, 2011).

\textsuperscript{4} Mana whenua is translated as the mana (authority) derived from one’s connection to a particular place. Similarly Tangata Whenua are the people of authority of that place (Mead, 2003).
Memory War
Memory theory and memorialisation

The building of monuments and memorials\(^1\) is a way for a nation to construct a desired narrative for an observing public (Byatt & Wood, 2008). The constructed narrative according to Byatt, is reinforced by the use of flags, the naming of civic buildings and parks and also the ritual ceremonies organised by government institutions (2008). These different aspects of remembrance are termed by French theorist, Pierre Nora, as realms of memory or *les lieux de mémoire*\(^2\) (1996). Every aspect of embodied memory whether material, symbolic, or functional exists to form *les lieux de mémoire*. In the case of the National War Memorial, these realms of memory contribute to an historical awareness of what it is to be a New Zealander and provide a context for a national identity to emerge.

\(^1\) Monuments can be considered a type of memorial, however a memorial can take different forms. Both monuments and memorials act to preserve memory (Nora, 1996).

\(^2\) *Les lieux de mémoire* is translated as the realms or sites of memory. *Les Lieux de Mémoire: Realms of Memory, rethinking the French Past* is the title of Pierre Nora’s 1996 publication.
Les lieux de mémoire that Nora refers to are created by the interplay of memory and history and are reliant on a willingness to remember. Without memory Nora states a nation would only be able to access what historians once described as direct sources of history. The direct sources of history were recorded as objective accounts of history and were not subject to reinterpretation. Indirect sources, unlike the recorded histories were testimonies left behind and were used at the discretion of historians and others with the intent to remember. Without this intent the result would be more likely les lieux d’histoire. History is equally as important to producing les lieux de mémoire because “if history – time and change – did not intervene, we would be dealing not with les lieux de mémoire but with simple memorials” (1996, p.15). Although the principal goal of les lieux de mémoire is to memorialise a place in time, the aspect of time and change allow new meanings and interpretation to form, while old meanings can be rekindled. It is within this space, which speaks of “life and death, of the temporal and the eternal” that I hope to situate my own memorial practice (1996, p.15).

Edward Casey, in his attempt to define public memory, describes traditional memorials made from heavy, seemingly permanent materials, securing a place in the future by trying to exist outside temporal limits (Casey, 2004). This idea is discussed by both Young (1999), and Tilley and Rowlands (2006) later within this paper. However, Casey also describes the type of memorials, which do not try to exist outside of temporal limits. His examples include eulogies and roadside memorials and contain the essential elements necessary to an historical event becoming part of public memory. According to Casey (2004), for something to become a part of public memory it must firstly be observed by the public and more importantly be instantly understood by the public. Casey continues to say how individual memory, although personal, does not have to be distinguished totally from the remembering we do with others. Individual memory is important to the idea of collective memory, which we experience separately, but is centred around a shared event. Another facet of memory is social memory, which is memory shared by a group of people who already have a relationship to each other. Social memory need not be public or collective memory, but it could easily exist within these realms.
With an understanding of the different realms of memory and the differences between individual, social, public and collective memory it is possible to evaluate the varied forms of memorialisation. For many people, driving or walking past public monuments such as the New Zealand National War Memorial is a daily occurrence. Young describes monuments such as the National War Memorial to be permanent and static in their inability to express memory beyond the context in which they are built (1999). There is a concern that building monuments aids the forgetting of public memory as “we have to some degree divested ourselves of the obligation to remember” (Young, 1999, p.2). Rowlands and Tilley share this view and also concur that a monument’s sense of permanence is evoked through the use of stone and heavy materials, which offer a false sense of memory being stable or fixed (2006).

Paul Connerton (1989) agrees with Rowlands and Tilley when he argues that a collective memory requires more than solid, prescriptive monuments. Collective memory relies on all of the things a group of people does in order to remember, for example, wearing a poppy on Anzac Day, participating in a street parade, attending a public ceremony or building a memorial. These ideas are echoed in Nora’s les lieux de mémoire and are illustrated in the work of the contemporary memorial artists I will discuss in the following survey.
Walking and Guiding
A Survey

Artists dealing with the challenge of producing permanent memorials that consider the notion of time and space by employing a sense of absence are Rachel Whiteread and Horst Hoheisel. Materiality is crucial to Whiteread’s work as seen in ‘Judenplatz Holocaust Memorial’ 2000. The work, a positive cast of the space surrounding the books at a Jewish library uses “materiality…[as] an index of absence” (Young, 1999, p.6). Although Whiteread’s work is dealing with the commemoration of murdered Austrian Jews in World War 2, she also explores the idea of sites of memory in the way that she uses materiality to express the void that they left behind. Rachael Whiteread is not the only artist to use an empty space to indicate the absence of people in the designing of a memorial. Young (1999) in his article ‘Memory and Counter-Memory’, describes how Horst Hoheisel’s submission for a national memorial to commemorate the murdered Jews of Europe, involved the destruction of the Brandenburger Tor in Berlin. By marking “one destruction with another destruction” (Young, 1999, p.1) Hoheisel would provide a void in the landscape to mark the disappearance of the displaced Jews. According to Young (1999) the memorials that are required in our postmodern world need to reflect the changing attitudes towards history. Namely, the need to reflect a memorial that is temporal and allows for meaning to evolve depending on the needs of the nation it represents.

Figure 2. Whiteread, R. 2000. Judenplatz Holocaust Memorial, Vienna. Photograph by Martin Gnedt.
UK artist, Simon Pope explores how walking together can be a model for dialogue. Of the three works of Pope’s mentioned in *The Art of Walking. A Field Guide*, by David Evans, ‘Memorial Walks’ (2007) features most prominently (2012). Many of the participants involved in ‘Memorial Walks’ were writers interested in landscape and memory. In ‘Memorial Walks’, Pope was exploring the idea of the spoken tree images as a metaphor for human frailty in opposition to nature, economics and politics. Walking and talking are the common elements within Pope’s practice and have become an integral part of my own current creative practice. An earlier difference between my ‘Memorial Walk’ and Pope’s work is his use of land as the dialogist and other non-human things that could be brought into a dialogic art practice. Since my understanding of Pope’s methods has grown I have been able to employ the memorial as a non-human object in a dialogue by performing a tour of non-visible memorials. The material importance of the structure is not excluded; instead it is expressed through the revelation of minute details disclosed at chosen intervals within the tour.

The material environment is carefully considered in the audio and video works of Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller (2012). Cardiff allows one to think differently about a place by the choice of information she chooses to reveal and in the conversational tone of her delivery. I was most interested in Miller and Cardiff’s walks as a way of delivering an oral history, but their use of framing within the Alter Bahnhof Walk (2012) also draws your attention to certain aspects of the Bahnhof. The form of the walk is a composition of views at certain locations, which spatially aligns the participant with a visual perspective as they listen to the recorded narrative on headphones. The confusion created from blending past and present within the same view raises questions over what is real within the work and relates to a non-linear view of history and memory.

Figure 3. Cardiff, J. and Miller, G. 2012. Alter Bahnhof Walk. Video/Audio Walk.
The guided walk as an art form generates possibilities for creating spatial environments, for a willing audience to consider specific information disseminated by the artist. In the journal article "In the footsteps of angels: Tim Brennan’s ‘Museum of angels’ guided walk" (2005), Steve Pile discusses Tim Brennan’s 2003 work performed at the British Museum. The performative act of physically pointing to the angels amplifies the role of Dr Dee’s theories of angels as providing the founding knowledge on which the British Museum is built. Dr Dee was an important scientific advisor in the late 1500s; however, his position was affected when his research branched into the study of angels and the occult. Regardless, Dee’s work fell into the hands of the curator of the British Museum in the 1700s and thus became part of the Museum’s founding collection (Pile, 2005). Brennan’s narrative counters the Museum’s official history and is further complicated by the non-linear mapping he employs when steering his audience from place to place. Like Cardiff and Miller, Brennan frames a view for the audience to contemplate whilst delivering a delicately constructed story.

Acclaimed artists such as these have all influenced my work at some stage; however, it was theorist, Paul Connerton (1989,) who led me to the idea of memory as an embodied experience. Upon learning from Connerton how “images of the past and knowledge of the past are conveyed and sustained by ritual performances and that performative memory is bodily” (1989, p.1), I felt compelled to find the means to create a collective memory that was also manifested in a bodily way. My first attempt at this involved the baking of bread loaves and sharing them with people in order to commemorate the making and sharing of bread. I was interested to see how eating the bread and embodying the memory of the sharing would affect the group. Naively, I had not given enough thought to the setting in which we would share the bread or how relational practices of the 1990s might affect the experience of such work. Like Connerton, Gibbons (2007) claims that the retelling of history through the vehicle of contemporary art was due to a liminal shift in the understanding of memory, which valued subjective over objective memory and thus questioned the ways in which colonial history was constructed. In order to elevate the importance of the personal stories I had obtained from workers at the site over official written histories of the National War Memorial, I embarked on a new mode of creative practice. Influenced by Cardiff’s Alter Bahnhof Walk (2012) I adopted the persona of a tour guide to deliver the information I had gleaned from people at the site.
Constant evaluation of my practice has meant that I would need to question the role of bread as a material within my project. The temporal quality of bread has somewhat been replaced by performance, however, I cannot dismiss how the sharing of bread at the National War Memorial provided a convivial environment for the facilitation of personal stories. Neither can I ignore the importance of materials within memorialisation. Monuments, as described by Rowlands and Tilley, “evoke feelings through their materiality and form as well as symbolise social narratives of events and sacrifices retold in public rituals” (2006, p.500). Thus, I would continue to question the need for monumental memorials but with sensitivity to the feelings that materials evoke. At that point there was space in the investigation for both material exploration and the presentation of myself as a tour guide. Discovering through Connerton (1989) that collective memories are sustained through ritual, bodily behaviour was a turning point in my research and led me to consider performance as a methodology. My practice is currently characterised by the way that research leads me to choose the medium for expressing the discoveries that I make. Although, I have found this mode of practice very challenging, I believe that my project requires a sensitivity and consideration that is worthy of some temporary discomfort.
Figure 4. Kilford. A. 2013. Inaugural sharing of bread within the MFA community.

Figure 5. Kilford. A. 2013. Inaugural tour of the National War Memorial based on stories told by construction workers at the site. Photograph courtesy of Nara-Ratch Boontoun.
Methods – Encounters at the Site

With the aim of expanding my art practice in order to effectively investigate the National War Memorial site, in 2013 I adopted a more dialogical approach to my research. In his book *Conversation Pieces, Community and Communication in Modern Art*, Grant Kester explains how artists are defining “their practice around the facilitation of dialogue among diverse communities” (2004, p.1). Similar to the aims of relational art as depicted by Bourriaud (2002), dialogical art can be assessed on the human relations formed between audience and artist. However, the emphasis on careful construction of encounters to enable conversation makes the dialogical artist a provider of context not content (Kester, 2004). Thus, elements of a relational art practice may exist in a dialogical practice, but the attention in a dialogical artwork is given to conversational exchanges between different communities.

Figure 6. Kilford. A. 2013. *Memorial Walks* participants October, 2013. Most of these participants belonged to a community group called *Mount Cook Mobilised*. 
I had stated at the outset of 2014 that the strongest way to advance my project was to employ a dialogical methodology with the ambition of bringing non-human objects as dialogists into my walking tour practice. I had imagined walking the perimeter of the imminent Memorial Park, while talking about a well-known memorial, which exists in another place. The material importance of the structure would be conveyed through the revelation of minute details, such as the number and type of stones used, or the weight and dimensions of the monument. The only possible experience of the memorial would be an imaginary existence in the minds of those listening for that time. As a further iteration of the tour, which broadened the audience beyond the original participants, I played an audio recording of the walk.

In an artificially lit room, adding to existing tensions was a server, dressed in black and white offering bread and wine on a silver platter to the audience. The obvious symbol of the holy sacrament was unnoticed by some and yet others were clearly a little perplexed by the offering. The weight of the questionable act of hospitality hung in the air and was roundly ignored from the conversation for some time. My intention was to put forward the notion of sacrifice in order to extend the dialogue beyond the tour and into an exhibition space. These intentions were overshadowed by the difficulties people had with the religious reference. The crushing symbolism forced the audience to reflect upon their own experience of ‘Communion’ and led the conversation away from war commemoration and instead turned people to reflect inwards.

Figure 7. Kilford, A. 2014. Experimental bread sharing and audio installation within the College of Creative Arts, community.
Looking back on my earlier work, *War Bread* (2013) may have been a more appropriate choice of bread to serve. This bread was the result of research into the materiality and meaning of bread through reading wartime newspaper articles on the National Library database. The articles were dated between 1914-1918 and described how people in Germany, England, Australia and New Zealand sought substitutes for wheat with which to make bread. This showed how desperate people had become in their struggle to nourish themselves as some of the recipes substituted sawdust, ground tree bark and even acorns for wheat. In a critique session I presented this bread and recipes, but didn’t offer the bread to anyone for consumption and yet, there was a feeling of community as we stood together commemorating the people who were given no choice but to eat it. As a provocation, the *War Bread* spoke specifically of the timeless affects of war and the sacrifices made by both soldiers and civilians in times of food shortages. Without further experimentation it is difficult to gauge the success or failure of the introduction of Christian symbolism into the gallery space. There are other references to sacrifice that could have been accessed, however, I had to question the relevance of the symbolism in relation to the site. Eventually I determined that the story of sacrifice is not a memory that is contested at the National War Memorial and thus continued my effort to define the aspects of the site which were without voice.

At this time I took a step away from the live tours and concentrated on creating a relationship between the bread and the audio recordings. How could I create a dialogue between the ephemeral tour and a bread form? It was not my original intention to build a bread monument. However, in my kitchen, with the tunnel light cutting a broad beam of sunshine across the otherwise badly lit workspace, I contemplated the hundred or so bread bricks placed uniformly on trays. Each piece barely two centimetres square, with flat, floured edges and raised crust. Bread, as monumental. I then crushed more tree bark, thumped more dough and cast another hundred or so bread bricks. By then every available surface was covered in tiny symbols of resistance. Resistance to forms of commemoration which have been powerfully influenced by the militarisation of history through the building of war memorials and the annual commemoration of Anzac Day.
Block upon bread block, held together by flour and water. It stood rather humbly, falling short of its expected colossal height in a small white space, forming a triangle with the two modest speakers shouting dialogue at its missing apex. The recipe for pohutukawa bread lay on the concrete floor in place of a plaque, an obvious clue to the structure, but perhaps in this instance an unnecessary element. The audio cropped from a previous tour of the Memorial Park under construction described the materiality of an obelisk inspired structure in Washington DC. The introduction of foreign memorials to the walking tour was intended as a provocation and was perhaps on reflection a much stronger indication of how I wanted to push the project politically.

3 Pohutukawa are native trees of New Zealand that have been planted as living memorials within the National War Memorial precinct. As a tree the pohutukawa is iconic to New Zealanders and renowned for its red flowers (Kilford, 2014).
The time consuming nature of solving the design problems associated with baking and shaping bread left me with no time to work on tours. Consequently, I was faced with making a choice between creating bread objects and creating a tour series. It seemed logical at that crucial stage to evaluate the performativity of each of the creative outputs in order to decide on which direction I would advance with. Although the bread monument installation was well received in its nascent stages, I felt strongly that the installation lacked the verve of the tours and perhaps left little to the imagination. The time constraints had forced me to reach into the core of my project and identify my primary concerns surrounding the National Memorial Park and building the bread forms was not contributing productively to the dialogue.

My 2013 tour series *Memorial Walk*, raised some difficult questions, however, I felt that the tours had more agency in the real world than the bread installation. As Bishop states, “for some artists the desire to make art that is living stems from the desire for something breathing, performative, and action-based” (2012, p.21). To refer to art that exists in the ‘real world’ implies that art galleries and museums are not the ‘real world’. To further evaluate the different modes of my practice it is of foremost importance to understand the notion of performativity within practice-led research and the historical conventions surrounding the art gallery and museum.
Performance and Performativity

Socially engaged practice has a long history of being about politically charged issues. Having chosen to research a political site that involves the investment of several groups of people, I have studied artists employing methods of social engagement in order to reach the wider community of the National War Memorial. Kaprow laid the foundation for artists exploring socially engaged art practices in the following decades, such as Rirkrit Tiravanija in the 1990s (Bishop, 2004). Nicholas Bourriaud in his book *Relational Aesthetics*, describes Tiravanija’s practice as one in which the artwork is judged on the “…basis of the inter-human relations which they represent, produce, or prompt” and that relational art is a practice which considers the “whole of human relations and their social context, rather than an independent and private space” (Bourriaud, 2002, p.112-113). However, I am also aware that the influence of the curator and the art gallery as an elite institution is particularly prevalent in this form of art making. According to Bishop “relational art is entirely beholden to the contingencies of its environment and audience” and for this reason I would be hesitant to describe my practice as entirely relational (2004, p.54). The methodologies employed in my practice have evolved from sharing bread, using bread as a prompt in developing relationships, to performing as a tour guide at the National War Memorial. Human relations have become crucial to my work and I acknowledge that during my research I have employed methods that created the conviviality between myself and audience that is central to a relational art practice. In order to socially engage with diverse groups within the community I intend to continue to work in a relational way, with an awareness of the traditional institutional conventions of the 1990s. Applying myself as a performance artist in this project, has motivated me to understand the distinction between performance and performativity within creative research.

Practice-led research describes the way in which a creative practitioner produces knowledge within a performatve research paradigm, and like quantitative and qualitative research methods it is based around repetition (Bolt, 2008). However, a performatve paradigm celebrates repetition with difference rather than sameness and defines itself through the idea that creative practice, as defined by Bolt, is “performatve in that it enacts or produces ‘art’ (or design) as an effect” of research (2008, p.5). According to Barad, there has been a tendency to conflate performance and performativity which leads her to query whether all performances are indeed performatve and whether the creation of art and design objects (for example, painting or sculpture) are also performatve (as cited in Bolt, 2008).
I would argue that if the explanation of performativity were simplified to a definition of "a practice that brings into being what it names", all performances and productions of creative practice would therefore be performative (Bolt, 2008, p.4). But for the idea of performativity to be useful within the performative research paradigm, the effects of the research in the real world need to be evaluated. By looking at the work in a context that is broader than, but also includes a conventional exhibition setting, is key to gauging how successful a work is. Dorothea von Hantelmann, in her book, How to do things with art (2010), discusses how the performative in relation to art "involves outlining a specific level of meaning production that basically exists in every artwork, although it is not always consciously shaped or dealt with – namely its reality-producing dimension. In this sense, a specific methodological orientation goes along with the performative, creating a different perspective on what produces meaning in an artwork" (p.18).

Von Hantelmann, goes a long way to offering solutions on how to understand art’s impact on the political and social aspects of society (2010). Whilst investigating via a selection of vanguard artworks, von Hantelmann examines the reasons why art is so important to the world today and how her book contributes to a theoretical understanding of contemporary artistic practice. From the introduction it is ascertained that the political conventions of the traditional exhibition space cannot be escaped. Western democratic market societies mirror that of the art world due to the bi-fold subjectivity created by both the artist in the making of art objects and the environment in which the object is presented, which in turn requires the subjectivity of the viewer. The resulting environment is one of desire and consumption, where the object becomes product and is valued as a commodity in the market space of the gallery or exhibition. It seems pointless to work against this convention, as avant-garde artists of the 1960s found that by defining themselves in opposition to the conventions of art, they were also bound to them by their counteraction. Von Hantelmann (2010) agrees that contemporary artists have benefited from the successes and failures of the avant-gardes and through operating outside the confines of the exhibition or gallery have stepped outside the canon of visual arts and thus avoided ‘museification’ (p.12).

My current practice does not rely on the conventions of the exhibition, either as a place to put my art or as a convention to react against. I wish only to make art that is temporal due to its delivery, raising the value of oral histories and rather reacting to the idea of an objective and recordable history. My art will live on in the minds and stories of others. However, I do seek to avoid ‘museification’ in my production of knowledge and as von Hantelmann (2010) explains, the 19th century idea of housing artifacts in a museum was a way of marking time and as such created a linear view of history. History production, through the building of museums, provides a “ritual encounter with the past” (p.10), which is reflected in exhibition formats. Although it
was not my intention, if I am to consider the relationship between the production of history and the systems and traditions of museums and exhibitions, my work inherently opposes these conventions.

In von Hantelmann’s section on “Models of an Alternative Production”, she cites Tino Seghal as an artist who manages to “create meaning and create economic value without producing a physical object” (2010, p.151). Seghal’s art works rely on the human body as a conduit to generate meaning through performance, rather than producing an art object. The museum or art gallery space as an historic platform for the display of high art objects, places Seghal’s performance work in a position of difference. Modes of artistic practice that rely on the production of a physical object are the dominant modes of meaning production and concede to the conventions of economic value placed on art objects within the museum and art gallery space. Seghal’s work confronts the dominant models of meaning production and surpasses a definition of performativity that privileges the commodification of art objects. The artist’s insistence that no record of his art be produced has ensured that Seghal’s manoeuvres live on in an anecdotal form and are passed on by further spoken iterations.

Art that exists outside the gallery or museum space does not automatically resist commodification. It is the conventions of the museum that are to be avoided in order to remain outside a market economy. My practice naturally falls into this category, however, the reasons for practising outside the museum or gallery are due to a desire to engage with a site, which has become the central focus of my project. Kwon explains site-specific artwork as art that gives “itself up to its environmental context, being formally determined or directed by it” (1997, p.85). Richard Serra when discussing his 1980s sculpture, Tilted Arc, argued for a site-specific art which prioritised the site and defined the site and the art as inseparable from each other. As I have discovered through the guiding of several different groups of participants on the same walk, the site has determined the content of the tour and the knowledge gained through ritual walking has become embodied within me. The work and the site are not easily separated, as I found out when attempting to deliver the tour content without being able to walk my familiar route around the park. To recall the stories of the site, I subconsciously took a virtual tour utilising my memory of the places where I would normally pause, in order to remember what I wanted to say. Additionally, I was compelled to walk while this thought process was taking place.
The inadvertent use of the, ‘stations’, of the tour as mnemonic devices reflects ideas shared by Byatt in the edited volume, Memory An Anthology (2008). According to Byatt, bodily memory connects the activity of the brain to the rest of the body, meaning that our memories are mapped and stored both psychologically and physically. Within the experience of the tour my body and my mind rely on each other to trigger the memory of facts and phrases as I pass by features in the landscape. This phenomenon is described in the Anthology as a spatial memory technique and is linked to Aristotle’s “Memory Palace” as a way of organising memory in different ‘rooms’ within the mind (Wood & Byatt, 2008). The development of this memory technique within my work now brings a duality of memory to the project; it is a memory work that investigates the memory of the landscape.
Encounters with the site – Puke Ahu

The ideas of pepeha¹, whakapapa² and whenua³ are important as they emphasise a valuing of land that is not connected to money or ownership. Mead describes tikanga Māori as practices and laws that exist in order to negotiate situations and events (2003). Tikanga are formed through responses to matauranga Māori, a body of knowledge that is passed down through generations. This knowledge is organised as whakapapa and can be traced back to the time before there was light in the world, before there was darkness, to a time where all that existed was potentiality.

Ko Takitimu te Waka
Ko Rongopai te Marae
Ko Maungatapere, me Okahuiatiu, me Maunga Haumi, nga maunga tapu
Ko Waipaoa, me Repongaere, me Waikakariki nga awa
Ko Whanau A Kai te hapu
Ko Te Aitanga a Mahaki te Iwi
Ko Wi Pere te tangata
Ko Angela Kilford ahau

When these words are spoken aloud, they inform people of a speaker’s identity. This Maori practice is known as reciting mihimihi or pepeha and describes the connections between a person, their Tipuna⁴ and the land. This pepeha is described in a research document written by my aunt, Josephine Ihimaera in which she has recorded the whakapapa of one of our prominent Tipuna, Wi Pere. A translation of the pepeha might look like this:

Takitimu is the canoe,
Rongopai is the meeting place,
Maungatapere, Okahuiatiu and Maunga Haumi are the mountains,
Waipaoa, Repongaere and Waikakariki are the waters,
Whanau A Kai is the family group,
Te Aitanga a Mahaki is the tribe,
Wi Pere are the people,
Angela Kilford, that is I.

This pepeha refers to physical features of the landscape that are of particular significance to my family. Of broader significance is the connection that Māori hold with the land and also with spiritual ancestors who embody the physical landscape. The word for land, ‘whenua’, has more than one meaning. Most commonly whenua

¹ Pepeha or mihimihi is to recite one’s genealogy.
² A literal translation of whakapapa is genealogy.
³ Whenua has two direct translations; land and placenta or afterbirth.
⁴ Tipuna or tupuna relates to a prominent ancestor.
refers to land or earth, but it also stands for placenta or afterbirth. It is Māori tradition to bury the whenua in the ground to replenish the earth in return for the nourishment and shelter it provides. Walker explains that burying the whenua also acts to strengthen the bond between a person and their place of belonging (1990). The dual meaning of whenua contributes to the idea of pepeha and is illustrated in the written introduction of my aunt Josephine’s research, “Pepeha identifies who you are. It identifies your ahi kā. It brings your wairua back to your Tipuna and lands. Pepeha also links back into your history and directly links you to whakatauaki of your Tipuna” (Ihimaera, personal communication, Dec 2012). The following whakatauaki draws these ideas together,

"Ma te huruhuru karere te manu... By its wings a bird can fly, that is what we are trying to do as a whanau. If you know who your wings are and gather them in together, we can be assured of moving forward together" (Ihimaera, 2012).

A Māori view of history requires an understanding of the importance of whakapapa and whenua in affirming identity. The saying "I nga wa o mua", eludes to the past being something that lies in front of you rather than something you leave behind. This proverb illustrates a cyclical view of history and as each person is added to the whakapapa the story moves forward bringing the past with it (Irwin, 1984). The site on which my work is centred, Puke Ahu is a contested site due to the differing values held by the mana whenua and the Pakeha who settled in Wellington in the 1840s. To identify oneself as Māori one must have a meaningful relationship to the land and know one’s genealogy. Puke Ahu is being proffered as a place for a national identity to manifest; however, much of what Māori believe to be imperative has not been acknowledged here.

Not only is Puke Ahu a contested place, it is also a marker of the deep historical displacement of Māori people following colonisation. The New Zealand Association formed a company in 1839 to formalise the colonisation process by purchasing land cheaply and selling it to wealthy landowners in Britain. According to Walker, the aim of the company was to transfer the British class system to the new colony and to buy as much land as possible from Māori before the British Government was able to

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5 Ahi kā referred to here as the long burning fires of occupation.
6 Wairua could be translated as an intangible life force.
7 Whakatauaki are important proverbs or metaphors, which enable understanding from a Māori standpoint.
8 A simple translation of whanau is family and can be extended to incorporate more than one generation.
9 Mana Whenua is translated as the Mana (authority) derived from one’s connection to a particular place. Similarly Tangata Whenua are the people of authority of that place (Mead, 2003).
10 Pakeha is a common term used in New Zealand for a person who is not Māori.
set up a regulating body to oversee the purchase of land (1990). The Company made a promise to set aside one tenth of all land purchases for Māori as native reserves. The New Zealand Government adopted this principle following the Treaty of Waitangi, however, the principle of setting aside one tenth of land purchases for Māori was never realised. By the 1900s only two million hectares of the 26 million that made up the country was in Māori hands and by 1990 only 9,080 hectares remained (Walker, 1990). Puke Ahu was originally intended as a one tenth reserve and is described in figure 11 as Reserve 10, Cooks Mount.

![Image](image.png)

Figure 11. Smith, M.1840. Map showing central Wellington: SO 10408, 1840

Two blocks adjacent to Puke Ahu, numbers 89 and 90 were also set aside as native reserves, but were occupied by the military under Government administration. In 2003 the New Zealand Government published a report following the investigation of thirteen claims made to the Waitangi Tribunal and found that the Te Atiawa Iwi\(^{11}\) had ahi kā, title to land through occupation of many of the urban tenths reserves (NZ Government, 2003). The Waitangi Tribunal settlement does not include the blocks of land on Puke Ahu, however Te Atiawa Iwi was given the first right of refusal to any

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\(^{11}\) Te Atiawa, Ngāti Tama, Ngāti Ruanui are the names of Māori tribal groups from Taranaki.
“surplus government properties” and in 1997 the museum building and associated land were transferred to the Wellington Tenths Trust. The Trust was established to administer Māori Reserve lands, largely in urban Wellington. The beneficial owners of the reserves are descendants of hapu of Te Ati Awa, Ngāti Tama, Taranaki, and Ngāti Ruanui tupuna. The Trust in association with Massey University redeveloped the building and established it as a part of the Massey University Wellington Campus (Raukura Consultants, 2014).

In an article published in the Journal of the Polynesian Society, Best addresses the history of Māori settlement in Wellington prior to the arrival of European settlers (1919). Initially the area was occupied by the descendants of Ngāti Tara, hence the name Whāngaui-A-Tara (Harbour of Tara). Following a succession of displacements of the Ngāti Tara, then later the Ngāti Ira, the Taranaki people arrived as a consequence of musket wars driving them southward. By the 1820s Te Atiawa and the other Taranaki Whanui12 inherited the status of Manawhenua13 of Wellington. The whanau14 remaining in Taranaki continued to face adversity and in the 1860s made history by their passive resistance to European land confiscation. Te Whiti rose as a leader of the Kotahitanga Movement15 inspired by peace and with an aim to keep the Māori and European races apart thus preserving Māori tikanga. The message Te Whiti spoke from Parihaka was simple:

“Lay down your weapons. Be wise…Though the whites exterminate the trunk they cannot pull out the roots. Avoid all sale and lease of land. Permit no European to cross the border of this our last free Maoriland. We want no roads or schools from them. Let them do with their land what they will”. (As cited in Walker, 1990, p.157).

The men that Te Whiti sent out to plough the fields belonging to Pakeha farmers in 1879 to protest against land confiscation by the New Zealand Government were arrested and jailed illegally for up to a year. Some were held indefinitely without trial. The Māori Prisoners Trial Act of 1879 was passed swiftly through Parliament to give the impression that proceedings were legal. In 1880 more of Te Whiti’s men were arrested, this time for ploughing and fencing where roads had been planned directly across the peaceful settlement of Parihaka. As gaols in Taranaki were overflowing with at least 400 arrested ploughmen and fencers, prisoners were sent to Wellington, where they were held on their way to become slave labour further

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12 Whanui refers to tribal groups. Iwi is another term used to describe a tribal group from a specific area.
13 Mana Whenua is translated as the Mana (authority) derived from one’s connection to a particular place. Similarly Tangata Whenua are the people of authority of that place (Mead, 2003).
14 A simple translation of whanau is family and can be extended to incorporate more than one generation.
15 Kotahitanga is translated as unification. The Kotahitanga Movement sought to unify Māori.
south in Otago and Canterbury settlements. In 1881 the Government moved to collapse Parihaka by sending in armed forces of 1,500 men to arrest the leaders and destroy the village. The actions of the Government were justified with yet another piece of legislation, the West Coast Peace Preservation Bill. Although some of the men returned to Parihaka, they were unable to thrive without their land. Other prisoners died following arrest leading to a suffering, which was not limited to a mere loss of an individual, but also a loss of whakapapa\textsuperscript{16} and matauranga\textsuperscript{17} Māori.

As discussed earlier, whenua and whakapapa are important to Māori as they contribute to a sense of identity and ensure that the matauranga Māori is passed on to future generations (Walker, 1990).

\textsuperscript{16} Here, whakapapa means genealogy.

\textsuperscript{17} Matauranga Māori describes a body of knowledge passed down through whakapapa.
A Mythical War

The idea of a collective national identity has been described by Barker as a “form of social identity – meaning people’s understanding of who they are in relation to others. National identity is a shared understanding of the characteristics and behaviours that distinguish one nation from other nations” (2012, p.1). Barker agrees that the notion of a national identity cannot be fixed and is reliant on many factors, however a general acceptance of a dominant Western ideology seems to be evident. The symbols and expressions of identity communicated outside of and inside of New Zealand predominantly reflect the performance of our nation in war and sport, supported by our international political actions, propaganda and advertising, flags, coins and artistic portrayals of identity (2012).

In a move to focus on war commemoration as a way of unifying New Zealanders in 2001, the then Prime Minister Helen Clark announced a project to gather the stories of New Zealanders imprisoned in Japan during World War 2 (Buchanan, 2009). The oral history project was part of a broader initiative, which saw government spending on culture climb from $388 million in 1990-1991, to $675 million in 2003-2004 (Hucker, 2010). During Clark’s time as Minister of Arts, Heritage and Culture, several military heritage projects materialised in New Zealand and abroad1, including but not limited to, the New Zealand Memorial on Anzac Parade in Canberra (2001); the Tomb of the Unknown Warrior in Wellington (2004); the New Zealand Memorial in Busan, South Korea (2005); the New Zealand Memorial in London (2006); and the announcement of the New Zealand Memorial Park Project in Wellington (2008). All of the aforementioned commemorative projects were focused on wars that New Zealand was involved in overseas. As Buchanan notes, there have been comparatively sparse funds dedicated to the commemoration of the foundational2 wars of New Zealand under either the Labour Party Government or the National Party Government (2009).

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2 The foundational wars of New Zealand, also known as the ‘Land Wars’, began soon after the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi and ended with the battle at Maungapōhatu in the Urewera in 1916 (Cooper, 2011).
The National Party’s election campaign to end ‘special treatment’ for Māori in 2005 sought to end all Treaty of Waitangi claims by 2010 and shifted the concerns of Māori New Zealanders to the periphery (Buchanan, 2009). Although the campaign was unsuccessful, the National Party’s pledge in 2008 to “achieve just and durable settlements of all historic Treaty Claims by 2014” illustrated a desire to bury the concerns of Māori and assisted the National Party in its bid for leadership (2009, p.223). Throughout the campaign to put an end to Māori grievances, the attention to war commemoration was sustained. The New Zealand Government’s policy on war commemoration during the four years of centenary events remembering World War 1 resulted in the appointment of a Special Adviser on Military Heritage. Former Special Adviser, Michael Houlihan expressed in a press release recently that “War has been the anvil upon which the Nation’s identity has been shaped. The richness of the experience and stories of New Zealand from both the battlefield and home tell us so much about who we are today” (MCH Website, 2014). The campaign to make New Zealand’s experience of overseas wars a political focus by devoting over $80 million to the new National Memorial Park at Puke Ahu, affects the nation’s ability to include the foundational wars as a part of a collective identity.

A government’s ability to manipulate national memory through choosing what to remember is discussed by Hazareesingh (as cited in Byatt & Wood, 2008). Even the renowned French theorist, Nora has given preference to aspects of French national memory, illustrating how “in overall terms, French memory remains highly selective” (Hazareesingh, 2008, p.93). In New Zealand, a memory that has been selected during the last decade of war commemoration is the notion of sacrifice. Remembrance as described by Baird (2010), has become somewhat of a civic religion and encompasses the concepts of sacrifice. Ideas of sacrifice expressed by Helen Clark at the interment of the Unknown Warrior sought to justify future sacrifices of New Zealanders as Clark, “co-opted the warrior to justify the government’s foreign affairs policy, claiming that, ‘The Unknown Warrior died carrying out New Zealand’s role in international affairs’” (Baird, 2010, p. 11). By exploiting the notion of sacrifice, the government simultaneously negates negative feedback on the further involvement of New Zealand in overseas wars. Thus, public spending on war commemoration is not challenged and the public accepts the sacrifices made as a necessity.

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3 Te Tiriti O Waitangi or Treaty of Waitangi is the founding document of New Zealand signed on February 6th, 1840. The Waitangi Tribunal was set up to deal with Breaches of the Treaty of Waitangi (Walker, 1990)

4 "The Tomb of the Unknown Warrior, in front of the National War Memorial, commemorates the nearly 30,000 New Zealand military personnel who have died in wartime – 9,000 of whom have no known grave" (Shoebridge, 2009, p.25).
Plans for a memorial park have been mooted since the end of World War 1. A tree-lined boulevard leading from the National War Memorial down to the water’s edge was abandoned in preference to a main road linking the western and eastern suburbs (Shoebridge, 2009). In a press release dated 7th August 2012 the Ministry for Culture and Heritage (MCH) announced their intention to build a National Memorial Park in time for Anzac Day 2015, marking the centenary of the Gallipoli landings during World War 1 (2012). In order to have the Memorial Park opened by 25th April 2015 new legislation was passed to avoid the hindrance of regular consent processes. The legislation is named the National War Memorial Park (Pukeahu) Empowering Act 2012 and indicates the influence of the Government over the site. The emphasis on ANZAC is expressed through the ultimate purpose of the legislation to have the park opened by 25th April 2015. The prioritising of ANZAC commemoration at Puke Ahu is also evident in the invitation to the Australian Government to be the first to erect a memorial in the new park and perpetuates Gallipoli as the founding myth of both an Australian and New Zealand national identity.

The way in which myth influences identity and history is explained by Beckett as a means of understanding the past through the reinterpretation of personal stories (1990). Personal stories and memories have become prioritised within historical documentation (Huyssen as cited in Gibbons, 2007). Huyssen argues that our obsession with subjective memory has stemmed from a breakdown of Utopian narratives, which exemplified the idea of an objective historical truth. This has brought about a focus on personal experience and an elevation of subjective memory over its objective counterpart within the recording of culture, allowing oral histories and stories to emerge. Beckett’s volume, The Myths We Live By, exemplifies the importance of subjective memories and demonstrates the role of myth and stories within public memory, as nations seek stories and myths to make sense of the past (1990).
Recorded narratives depicting the experience of New Zealand soldiers returning from Gallipoli during World War 1 have recently been contested. Despite the revelation that the soldiers’ stories were altered to reflect feelings of nationhood, the Gallipoli myth continues to contribute to the sense of a collective national identity (Ferrall, 2014). In a public lecture to commemorate the victory of New Zealand soldiers at Chunuk Bair at Gallipoli in 1915, Dr Charles Ferrall of Victoria University of Wellington dispelled the idea that New Zealand soldiers returned home with a new sense of national identity (8 August, 2014). Ferrall has reviewed transcripts of interviews of New Zealand war veterans that were published in 1988 by Maurice Shadbolt (2014). The common theme that emerges from Shadbolt’s book, Voices of Gallipoli, is that New Zealand soldiers had not felt a sense of national pride or distinct identity prior to the Gallipoli campaign (1988). It appears that the soldiers’ interviews were not transcribed exactly and that most of the soldiers never actually alluded to the subject of identity. Shadbolt was commissioned to produce a play in 1982 and to write a television documentary based on the interviews. Thus the Gallipoli myth has been heartily fuelled, regardless of whether the victims and survivors recorded any new feeling of nationalism following World War 1.

Myth is important to both Pakeha and Māori in the forming of a collective or national identity. The foundational myth of Māori though not promoted to the extent of the Gallipoli myth, is central to a Māori understanding of the world (Walker, 1990). In the spirit of oral histories I will now relay the Māori story of creation in my own words:

_in the beginning there was nothing_

*Te Kore*

*Then there was the energy, the power of potential*

*Te Po*

*From the energy and darkness emerged Ranginui the sky and Papatuanuku the earth*

*Many sons came from within their close embrace*

*The sons grew restless trapped between the forms of their father and mother*

*Eventually Tanemahuta, with his head and hands butting against his mother pushed his legs upwards to lever Ranginui and Papatuanuku apart*

*Te Ao Marama*

*In the world of light the sons fought*

*Tawhirimatea eventually retreated to reside with Ranginui*

*Haumiatiketike and Rongomatane stayed with Papatuanuku, where they were protected*

*Tangaroa, is Atua of the sea and all of its creatures*

*Tumatauenga turned on his brothers, Atua of war*

*Tanemahuta, Atua of birds and forests, formed the first human from the Earth, Hineahuone*
The Māori story of creation demonstrates a connection to the land through whakapapa, which can be traced back through the realms of the Atua to Papatuanuku, the earth mother, and Ranginui, the sky father. Walker describes the love that Papatuanuku received from her children, as a love that all nurtured children would have for a mother (1990). This story characterises Māori as people deeply affiliated to the land and affects the practices of Māori when interacting with the natural world, as the intangible realm of the Atua are intrinsically related to the realm of the living. It is through the whakapapa illustrated in the story that Māori are connected to the Atua and also the land. The fact that Māori are related to Papatuanuku through whakapapa seriously affects their treatment of the land and has further implications when considering any interaction with it. From the planting of new crops to the excavation of large areas, the relationship to Papatuanuku is always considered and acknowledged.
A Ritual Encounter
Conclusion

It was a feeling of unease and even fascination that drew me to investigate Puke Ahu as a national site for remembrance. From the first day that I visited the site with my camera with the intentions of documenting the initial stages of excavation, I was in awe of how a landscape I thought I knew could swiftly change. On this day I was involved in an accident on the site as a barrier fence fell and trapped me beneath it. From that moment I felt connected to the site by the trauma of that memory, which has enabled me to persistently scour the site for traces of memory, until I could feel that I genuinely knew the story of that place.

As I have traversed the area of Puke Ahu, I have also balanced relationships with the many parties with an interest in the site. I have refined my practice so that the attention I was giving to these relationships, was no longer distracting me from the real issue of a small nation trying to establish a place for a public memory to be performed. New Zealand’s National War Memorial subscribes to the type of monument portrayed by Young, as serving a government’s perception of nationhood (1999). Les lieux de mémoire demonstrated at the site of remembrance function to reinforce New Zealand’s experience in overseas wars as vital to our national memory and preferences a colonial history over the story of wars that took place between Māori and Pakeha. The visual representation of the established National War Memorial and the act of allocating $120 million to build the Memorial Park overshadow other historical aspects of Puke Ahu.

My aim to develop a deeper understanding of collective memory at this site, has led me to the conclusion that a singular collective memory does not exist here. There are other memories at the site\(^1\), one of which I resolved to explore through a return to walking and guiding. Sharing stories and myths with participants, has allowed me to situate my practice in a way, which acknowledges both the ephemeral nature of memory and the tangible aspects of public memory. Participants are vital to this process as a collective memory is one formed around a shared event. The live art performance, as a method of producing knowledge, has challenged dominant models of recording history by elevating the value of oral histories. Research into

\(^1\) There are other important memories at the site, namely the story of conscientious objectors in World War 1 who were marched from the Terrace Gaol to work at the prison brickworks (Baxter, 1939) and the Wharf Strike of 1913. Although these stories are both relevant as they demonstrate resistance to the power of the New Zealand Government, I have chosen primarily to concentrate on the story of Parihaka. The Parihaka memorial is a visual reminder of the deeper concerns of Māori over land confiscation and is an example of how the effects of colonialism are continuing after 170 years. This story could easily be told in other parts of New Zealand where land confiscation has taken place (Walker, 1990).
site-specific artwork has provided clarification of how the project was now bound to the site and revealed how spatial memory techniques could further strengthen the bond between place and memory. The use of these techniques brought a duality of memory to the project; it is a memory work that investigates the memory of the landscape.

The effects of colonialism in New Zealand are continuing after 170 years through the institution of government and are physically represented on Puke Ahu. *Walk With Me* has granted me the opportunity to express an otherwise subdued memory of the site and highlights to others the power of the New Zealand Government to influence how public memories are formed at Puke Ahu. A national identity is expressed by means of our ritual practices and through the ritual acts I have performed through *Walk With Me*, I have begun to develop a myth that challenges the dominant stories supported by the New Zealand Government.
Illustration List

Figure 1. Smith, S. C. 1932. *Dedication of the Carillon Tower, Anzac Day 25\textsuperscript{th} April, 1932.* Photograph. Source: Alexander Turnbull Library. Ref:1/1-020293-G


Figure 4. Kilford, A. 2013. *Inaugural sharing of bread within MFA community.*

Figure 5. Kilford, A. 2013. *Inaugural tour of the National War Memorial based on stories told by construction workers at the site.* Photograph courtesy of Nara-Ratch Boontoum.

Figure 6. Kilford, A. 2013. Memorial Walks participants October, 2013. Most of these participants belonged to a community group called Mount Cook Mobilised.

Figure 7. Kilford, A. 2014. Experimental bread sharing and audio installation within the College of Creative Arts, community.

Figure 8. Kilford, A. 2014. *Pohutukawa bread blocks.*

Figure 9 & 10. Kilford, A. 2014. *Bread structure and audio installation.*

Bibliography


