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**Jewellery As Pepeha:** Contemporary jewellery practice informed by Māori  
inquiry

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

Doctor of Philosophy  
in  
Fine Arts

at Massey University Te Kunenga ki Pūrehuroa, Palmerston North,  
Aotearoa New Zealand.

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## **Abstract**

**Jewellery as Pepeha:** Contemporary jewellery practice informed by Māori inquiry

This thesis investigates and articulates an ethical Māori framework for New Zealand contemporary jewellery practice that represents a distinctive method of making, and thinking, unique to Te Waipounamu/Aotearoa New Zealand. Contemporary jewellery is an international applied art genre that self-consciously investigates the wearable object and the body as a site of reference, including related social contexts, such as ideas of preciousness, memento and heirloom. Currently a comprehensive analysis of contemporary jewellery practice embedded in whakapapa from Te Waipounamu/Aotearoa does not exist, and this thesis explores the implications of thinking about contemporary jewellery practice from a Kāi Tahu, and Māori perspective through a taoka methodology. The metaphor of pepeha allows contemporary jewellery to be located within a Māori social context and a uniquely Māori system of knowing, by contextualising taoka/contemporary jewellery alongside oral narrative as statements of collective identity anchored in Te Ao Kāi Tahu (a Kāi Tahu worldview). The thesis asks: How can a contemporary jewellery practice be informed by narratives of whakapapa, whenua, kaikā, and thus become taoka tuku iho?

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Ka ara  
Hī, hā, aue*

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Te piki huia  
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## Foreword

“You have already been blessed, you have been given the gifts from your ancestors,  
you are on your journey so enjoy it”

Maruhaeremuri Mona Stirling, 8.7.1933-10.7.2012

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