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Coversheet

Title: Kua Rangitamiro Mai Nei | We Have Assembled Here

Masters of Māori Visual Art

Te Kunenga ki Pūrehuroa Massey University

Brook Frederick Charles Konia

2023

Kaupapa

“Wehea te muka, kua whati te taura, whiria kia mau, kia ū he taura mau waka.”

Ko te aukaha hei here i ngā waka, te pūtake o tēnei mahi toi. Tēnei aukaha e here ana i ngā rākau ki te taura me te puru. I konei ka miro i te muka tī kōuka hei taura whiri. Kua purua te kōhao ki te puru rākau, he puru tāwhao, he puru mānuka. Ko ngā tārai he rākau e whai pānga ana ki taku ngākau, he paketai, he kōporo, he paraki mira anō hoki, hei tohu i te mana whakapapa, i te whanaungatanga, me te manaakitanga. Ko tā te paepae tāutuutu, he hiki i te tapu, he tuitui i te tāngata kia piri, kia kotahi.

“Wehea te muka, kua whati te taura, whiria kia mau, kia ū he taura mau waka.”

"Separated fibres may break, yet when bound tightly together, they can meet any challenge."

'Kua Rangitāmiro Mai Nei' delves into the wood-joinery technique of aukaha (lashing) used in waka construction. I have explored aukaha through the tī kōuka (cabbage tree/cordyline australis), collecting and processing the rau (leaves) to create taura (ropes), revealing the function and design. Exploring aukaha and lashing together, found and collected rākau that carry personal connection of whakapapa, whakawhanaungatanga and manaakitanga - creating puru plugs and block-shaped components from these rākau. 'Kua Rangitāmiro Mai Nei' shares mātauranga of the strength in assembling and working together. In the metaphoric language of whaikōrero and mihimihi emboldened at the paepae, kupu whakarite is masterfully spoken, words used that allegorically reflect inherent qualities seen in nature that appropriately share the roles and responsibilities tāngata have to a place. In presenting two seats facing each other to conceptualise the paepae and words spoken there, this body of work considers the potential of joining and working together.

Nō reira,

Ka whakamaua kia tina

Tina!

Haumi e hui e taiki e!

Acknowledgements

E Tahutahu kau ana te wakatapu o Horouta, E tū ana te maunga whakahī o Whetumatarau

E moe ana te urupa o Mataniho kei raro i te maunga, E rere ana te awa o Awatere

ki te marae o Hinerupe, E tangi nei he uri o Tuwhakairiora

tēnei te ringa o Ngati Porou, Nō te whānau Konia ahau

Ko Brook tōku ingoa

Kei te mihi kei te aumihi kei te whakamihi.

Ka nui te mihi ki ōku whanaunga rangatira mō te whakaora i te kōrero o ō mātou whakapapa i au nei
Matehaere and George Konia, and Hinemoana Konia. He poroporoaki ki a Matehaere.

Ōku mātua, Wendy and George Konia, thank you for your love and support you give to me and my art
journey.

Erena Arapere - mā mua ka kite a muri, mā muri ka ora a mua. Thank you for being my supervisor
throughout these years and this kaupapa.

Ngā kaiako me ngā kaimahi o Toioho ki Apiti, ara, ko Pūtahi a Toi - Kura Te Waru Rewiri, Robert
Jahnke, Karangawai Marsh, Hemi Macgregor, Ngatai Taepa, Margaret Forster, Alan Ibell, Luke
Anderson, Hemi Whaanga, whaea Mare Ropata. Kua whakaritea te parekereke, ka puawai ana mai
nga taurua. Ngā kaiako reo Māori o Te Pukenga - Ko Matua Tahī Gotty rāua ko Whaea Lorraine
Keefe. E mihi ana ki tō akoako mā te aroha, mā te hinengaro, mā te whānau, mā te wairua, mā te
kotahitanga.

Louie Zalk Neale, Natalie Robertson, Lionel Matenga, Graeme Atkins, Billy Harrison, Hine
Waitai-Dye, Justice Hetaraka, Java Bentley. He kaupapa tēnei i hangai ana mo tō koutou matauranga.
Mauri ora ki a tātou katoa.

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Chapter 1 Introduction to kaupapa

This chapter provides an overview of my art practice. New works further a project on seating. Continuing from my artworks in the 2022 Matatau exhibition at Te Manawa during my postgraduate diploma, titled Tūru Noho Ora, which explored the definition of noho. Whether someone sits for a moment or remains for a lifetime, noho is a profound way of expressing connection to a place. Two benches sit side by side, conceptualising the pae – a demarcating zone that transitions someone from wandering and wondering to being welcome. In the context of my 2023 Masters theme, my art considers how to achieve a strong join between different rākau and, by extension, a strong bond between people.

“Wehea te muka, kua whati te taura, whiria kia mau, kia ū he taura mau waka.” Separated fibres may break, yet when bound tightly together, they can meet any challenge. (Te Whiringa Muka, 2022, p. 6).

The whakataukī above came from my rangahau and acknowledges the incredible role of muka (fibres within leaves). Muka is a versatile material. This kaupapa aims to utilize it as a securing material for holding rākau together by twisting and binding bundled fibres. In Manatu Taonga’s Tuia 250 interview of voyaging expert Stanley Conrad speaking on waka lashing, Conrad shares that muka can be obtained from a variety of fibrous plants, including harakeke, aka vine, kiekie pandanus, and coconut (Conrad, 2019, 1:20). I have chosen to focus on tī kōuka due to my introduction during a wānanga at the end of 2022. I have also chosen to focus on its significance as a customary resource of our tipuna for waka construction through aukaha, or lashing techniques. The guiding whakataukī for the exhibition Kua Rangitāmiro Mai Nei illuminates the connection between muka tī kōuka and aukaha forming the central theme for this exhibition report.

My interest in building seats connects the function of a seat within an art gallery space as social functioning objects that consider people within a space. With an interest in the roles of nohoanga at the paepae, I have been building seats in pairs. This is to embody the symbolism of pōwhiri, the meeting between haukainga and manuhiri.

The tūru, or nohoanga within my art practice, refers to the verb ‘noho’ – to sit, and to the noun ‘nohoanga’ as a place where someone resides.

In *Voices Beyond The Pae*, 1996, Robert Jahnke says the paepae is a zone of demarcation and negotiation (Jahnke, 1996, p. 1.). Within an art gallery context, my seats are built in pairs to create a space for kōrero. The minimalist style of seat I have looked at is the ‘form’ or ‘bench’ seat. Graham Blackburn in his online article “A Short History of Benches” refers to these names for backless and elongated wooden seating (Blackburn, 2005). While this is not an exclusive style of seat seen at every marae, nor has it eventuated in the final look of my seats. This backless seat approach causes the sitter to remain upright, which is an appropriate posture in the circumstance of the paepae tapu. However, I leave this up to chance; the everydayness of sitting down and the not very often allowance of touching (let alone sitting on) an artwork will cause a clumsy, curious approach to this un-performative action to my seat artworks.



Figure 1. Konia whānau photograph, 2010



Figure 2. Photograph by George Konia, Final trellis wall standing, January 2023

This kaupapa furthers my previous practice of using reclaimed wood from urban areas. I wanted to challenge myself by sourcing rākau to discuss whakapapa and whanaungatanga – an exploration grounded in personal connections. Over January 2023, my dad began removing a garden trellis in the backyard of our whānau home in Whangārei, which he built thirty years ago, with plans of building a new outdoor area. I grabbed the weathered pine posts before he took all the dismantled wood to the tip. It's been that garden structure all my life. I was gifted several lengths of rimu milled timber and many small, thin slats of totara while discussing my kaupapa of wooden seats with others. The call for rākau was answered again at a wānanga at the Waiapu ngutuawa. This experience was further enhanced by witnessing the devastating effects of Cyclone Gabrielle. Following a tikanga of locating rākau there, I collected tōtara logs and, washed out old farm fence posts and brought them back to Palmerston North.



Figure 3. Photograph by author, Ngutuawa o Waiapu, April 2023

In collecting rākau with personal significance, I've used specific words to articulate these connections: rākau manene describes each individual rākau I've collected. This term describes the unsettled realities of the rākau. Are they still of use? Tū Tangata magazine of the 1980s used the term manene to describe the tutorials and workshops offered for urban Māori, disconnected from their whakapapa, a chance to learn carving to restore a sense of who they are.

rākau tāwhao is a term for driftwood and brushwood I've collected. I've built with them because I believe they can meet the necessary tasks and fulfil the required role. This term comes from the biography of Tohunga Whakairo Paki Harrison by Ranginui Walker (2008); there is a recorded comment Harrison gave to seeing Māori youth around the town and comparing them to tāwhao, drifting in no direction, and him seeking to find ways of calling to them and offering ways of contributing to the building of the marae.

rākau whakawhanaungatanga is another way of describing two specific rākau amongst my accumulated wood in studio. I use it to describe the rākau I have been gifted during my kaupapa of seat building.

rākau manaakitanga is the name of all the rākau I use and the transformation from rākau manene and rākau tāwhao, for it is the role they display as being hospitable and welcoming, the considered approach to manuhiri.

Each of these terms describes differences in the rākau, like colours on a paint palette. Each speaks to my different rhythms of connection in collecting and being gifted. In my practice, kohikohi refers to gathering and collecting, an intentional part of connecting with my tipuna. This involves drawing inspiration from how they utilised their surroundings, incorporating what you have planted and cultivated in the local environment. I also want to interrogate my use of screws and bolts.



Figure 4. Photograph by author, Tūru Noho Ora: Turangahakoa installation, Te Manawa, November 2022

Following the Matatau exhibition, I attended a wānanga led by Louie Zalk Neale titled Ngā taonga i huna. The focus was on tī kōuka. There, I began learning miro, twisting muka to become whenu, aho and taura. Tī kōuka can be found in abundance outside maraes, in urban spaces and in gardens across Aotearoa! Tī kōuka muka has a Māori history in the practices of fishing lines, hīnaki weir building and waka construction. Through another wānanga, He Kaupapa Waka: Tārai Waka with Billy Harrison, Justice Hetaraka and Hine Waitai-Dye, Te Papa 2023, I learned about aukaha, the strength of the lashing and binding with kōhao (holes) and puru (plugs). Billy Harrison spoke a whakataukī while he and others worked on mamari waka kōpapa. He said, "kia ū ki te here i tō waka", "commit to your waka. This wānanga was an instance of remedial work, undoing the lashing that bound together the rauawa battens, hull and sides—then seeing it come together again through the pulling tight of the lashing rope and plugging. This resurfaced in a longer whakataukī: “Wehea te muka, he taura whati, whiria kia mau, kia ū, he taura mau waka”.

I began making puru from the tōtara and rimu I had collected. I explored puru further. As a result, I introduced mānuka. I collected fallen branches from Lower Hutt and Turitea, and received additional branches from Feilding. The mānuka has a connection of function as puru, plugging waka and hīnaki weir, relating to the tī kōuka as they grow near water.



Figure 5 and 6. Photograph by author, making puru from rimu, 2023



Figure 7 and 8. Photograph by author, making puru from mānuka, October 2023



Figure 9. Photograph by author, side view of Rangitamiro 1, November 2023



Figure 10 and 11. Photograph by author, muka from rau tī kōuka process, 2023



Figure 12 and 13. Photograph by author, muka from rau tī kōuka process, 2023



Figure 14 and 15. Photograph by author, muka from rau tī kōuka process, 2023

Looking to aukaha in my art practice of wood joinery. I considered the implications of processing each material. The muka undergoes a significant transformation from its natural state. Through waka kōpapa and waka taua construction techniques, I explored taura as materials, their functions, and their environments. Therefore, I learned about these trees, their potential, and their history.



Figure 16. Photograph by author, tī kōuka in rear garden of Putahi-a-Toi Whare kai, Toi-te-Ora, 2023.



Figure 17. Photograph by author, tī kōuka beside Kioreroa Road, Whangārei, 2023.



Figure 18. Photograph by author, tī kōuka along Te ara taha tika o Manawatū walk and cycleway, near Ayr Place street entrance, 2023.



Figure 19. Photograph by author, tī kōuka by Massey University bus stop, Tennant Drive, 2023.



Figure 20. Photograph by author, tī kōuka at Waitoetoe Park, Awapuni, Papaioea, Palmerston North, 2023.

Making taura rope and aho cordage, wood joinery, seat building, and waka construction require strength in function. I extend these functions to seats. These works are an affirmation of the roles and responsibilities to the marae, ngā tāngata, and te taiao.

Working with wood joinery and looking to aukaha, I considered the implications of processing each material. A significant transformation occurs in the rau tī kōuka from its natural state to muka. Using waka kōpapa and waka taua construction techniques, I sought to understand taura as materials, their functions, and their environments. As a result, I learned about these trees, their potential as an available resource, and their history.

Chapter 2 – Literature Review

This chapter is divided into two parts; a review of the practice of four Māori artists whose work has influenced my practice followed by a literature review of four Māori authors whose writing informs my conceptual engagement with material, form and content.

Part one of this chapter discusses key Māori contemporary artists who have a distinct approach to rākau in their art practice that has influenced my practice. The second part reviews four texts that support my art practice through a conceptual and theoretical kōrero. This review aims to provide insight into my kaupapa and locate it within contemporary Māori art practice as a tauira of the contemporary Māori art continuum that shares taonga tuku iho and tūturu customary ways of making.



Figure 21. Photograph from Pine whānau archive, Matt Pine, 'F' Series no.2 - Impressions on Gate Pā (excavations), 1979

Matt Pine, 'F' Series no.2 - Impressions on Gate Pā (excavations), 1979 and 2021

The first artwork reviewed is 'F' Series no.2 - Impressions on Gate Pā (excavations) by Matt Pine. This artwork's section focuses on encountering functionality and minimalist approaches to Māori construction techniques.

F-Series no.2 Impressions on Gate Pā (excavations) explores the fortified Māori Pā site, Gate Pā, one of eight large installations. Pine was interested in the layout and plan of the site and how it was directed by the type of space utilised with a focus on the fortified entranceway. Pine considered bodily movement. The viewer encounters these works thinking about their functionality. The activity is implied rather than performed on these artworks. My kaupapa of seats' functional use goes beyond looking. This kaupapa explores the sharing of knowledge within the gallery and museum context. The use of two seats as paepae activate an environment of cultural interchange.

F- series no.2 Impressions on Gate Pā (excavations) offers a minimalist rendering of the extensively used anti-artillery rua bunkers and concealed trenches. One work resembles an A-frame double-sided ladder. Dowelling connects the two sides. The bridge-like structure is surrounded by twisted rope handles linked through holes in raised posts. A third component of the work is an obstructive wall made of joined upright timber interlocked by structural lap joints.

In these works, Pine presents innovative Māori architecture. He interpreted the formal aesthetics and function in response to the whenua as defensive trenches and hill terraces. F- series no.2 Impressions on Gate Pā (excavations) offers the opportunity to re-present traditional signifiers of Māori occupation and land ownership. I connect this to transformation: within my kaupapa, taking tāwhao (driftwood) that would otherwise continue to swirl and bank at the river mouth or become firewood. I activate the rākau by applying aukaha as a making and joining technique; these seats both are waka and not waka.



Figure 22. Photograph by Auckland Museum, Will Ngakuru and Nicole Charles (Building Wilderness), Haumanu, 2022

Will Ngakuru and Nicole Charles (Building Wilderness), Haumanu, 2022

The following review looks at Will Ngakuru and Nicole Charles (Building Wilderness), Haumanu, 2022. Here, I discuss two key points: pūrākau teachings and assembling as an act of hauora.

Haumanu was created for Te Whiwhinga in the Auckland War Memorial Museum. In the Auckland Museum interview of Will Ngakuru (2023), he shares how he developed this work while watching his child play with other children on the Mortin Bay fig in Pukekawa Auckland Domain. He was captivated by the childlike approach to Te Taiao. The pan pacific pūrākau of Rata and the tree also guided Haumanu's creation. This narrative shares nuances of ownership and authority, conservation, preservation, and good resource management. In one of many retellings of this pūrākau, André Ngāpo (2018) tells of Rata's desire to build a canoe. Children of Tāne reassembled the tree. When Rata caught the resurrection of the tree he had felled, he was met by contention for what right he had to fell this tree?". This part encourages us to acknowledge, respect and protect this world we call home.

Applying the tī kōuka and mānuka—plants found nearby by water to aukaha, a type of joinery passed down from tipuna, activates an understanding of our relationship to te taiao. These rākau I have collected and been gifted encourage a kōrero of hauora and restoration.

Haumanu is made from many trees, composite panels, and timber remnants fitted together to form one whole. 'Haumanu' means revival and restoration of one part of a vast network of life. Similarly, I have used aukaha with the process muka ti for aho and taura, and the sawn and sanded back form of rākau to acknowledge the strength in finding form and coming together. Taking stock of ourselves increases our awareness of Te Taiao. As well as being activated by the trunk of the Imaginarium, Ngakuru has a doorway and seats of the same rākau pieces. My seats follow a similar gesture: to provide seating and space for kōrero.



Figure 23. Photograph by artist, Heidi Brickell, 'Mauri rourou rau: he ara heke, he ara piki', 2022

Heidi Brickell's Mauri Rourou Rau: He ara heke, He ara piki, 2022

Heidi Brickell's Mauri Rourou Rau: He ara heke, He ara piki, 2022, is the third artwork reviewed. Two key points are discussed: collecting and gifting rākau as artwork material, and muka tī.

'Mauri rourou rau: he ara heke, he ara piki' resemble ladders. Brickell collected branches from her plum tree during the COVID-19 lockdowns. Other neighbours also contributed rākau. Mauri Rourou Rau reflects these multiple contributions and shared mauri. In discussing my kaupapa of wooden seat

building with people, I was gifted several lengths of rimu milled timbers and many small, thin slats of tōtara. The collected rākau within Mauri rourou rau: he ara heke, he ara piki expresses a sense of residence, beginning with what Brickell collected herself, and then building on what others collected. In my own writing detailing the works from an interview with Brickell I say, “This describes what happens when people come together” (Konia, 2022, p. 53).

Mauri rourou rau: he ara heke, he ara piki act as a variation of te ara poutama in tukutuku weaving, connecting Ranginui and Papatūānuku by extending between the gallery's ceiling to the floor. This relationship of Ranginui and Papatūānuku, ceiling to floor, up and down; Brickell reflects this through her use of the word pakanga in the exhibition title 'Pakanga for the lostgirl', the struggle of one's journey to ascension and making sense of our world and lived experience, being born in this space and time and attempting to transform it (Konia, 2022). Like Brickell's high conceptualization, my materiality explores life, death, and strength.

The rākau are wrapped in thread. Brickell's process-driven practice mediates mind and body. Her interest in psychology weaves dreams, imagination, the subconscious, lineage, lived experiences, memories, and learned histories. The miro tī I use binds rākau to enact joining and structural integrity. As the only material I have obtained from the living plant directly, I reflect on the tī kōuka whakataukī "Ka whati te tī, ka wana te tī, ka ora te tī". This whakataukī which came from my rangahau during my rūmaki reo Māori course this year (Te Pou, 2020). It describes when the tī is cut at the stump or branch and grows new shoots. This incredible property extends to muka and miro aho and taura as well. This enables a becoming of potential to the rākau tāwhao and rākau manene to secure form, function and structure as my seats and artworks. To assemble and act in this role to manaaki and voice te taiao and the relationship we tangata require to care for te taiao.



Figure 24. Photograph by author, Martin Langdon, Te rau pito; places that shape the world, 2021

Martin Langdon's Te rau Pito: Places That Shape the World, 2021

The fourth artwork reviewed is Martin Langdon's Te rau Pito: Places That Shape the World, 2021. This artwork's section discusses two key points: visitor engagement, and multiplicities of identity.

The Dowse Museum presented Te rau pito in 2021. It is common for Langdon to operate in a dynamic environment where groups, pairings, and orientations intersect. In an interview with me this year, Langdon (2023) calls his wooden structures 'whenua beds'. The whenua beds come a chance encounter between Langdon witnessing his son while walking with him along the Wellington waterfront; an astroturf had been wrinkled up on the ground. With his feet, his son manipulated it. This reminded Langdon of the pūrākau of Rakaihautū the ariki of Uruao canoe, along with his son Rokohouia, who traversed the island and named the southern lakes.

Langdon engraved place names, streets, awa (waterway), moana (ocean), maunga (mountain), and GPS coordinates on the edges of the whenua bed structure. Whenua beds contain earth from places connected to his whakapapa (genealogy). Langdon hand-manipulated and screwed the astroturf into place after placing the whenua from four sites in the base of the box. There is a step into the wooden square that allows visitors to walk on the work. A video feed is projected onto the far back wall to further highlight the work and visitor engagement on the whenua beds.

In te rau pito Langdon explored how visitors could see themselves in a place. " The Dowse art object label (2021) read "The work is an invitation to people to collectively reshape a landscape. To reinterpret and reimagine what they want to see or leave behind for others". Langdon's broader art practice acknowledges the layers of history and people connected through time and generations. Exploring a multitude of combined memories of a place, Langdon points out that this multitude is referred to by a single reductive word: history. In thinking of one's connections to places, they become one's identity landscape. These four places are part of Langdon's whakapapa, and he can see them connected in a natural didactic way through the mind's eye. A saying recalled by Langdon (2023), te pito whenua, positions his kōrero to highlight every individual's point of view to the rest of the world. Langdon adds to his kōrero of te pito whenua by describing it as the umbilical connection.

In my work, sitting is more than just sitting; it's a way of being with each other, engaging in kōrero, and coexisting. Noho marae are a different way of spending time, including sleeping and eating, where people dwell and connect. I have set up seats that navigate the social rules within artworks, and visitors go through the 'Can I, Can't I' process to open up the limits of social engagement and relational aesthetics, all to simply have the opportunity to kōrero.

Te Tangata by Michael P Schirres

Michael P. Shirres' Te Tangata is the first source text reviewed. This review discusses three key points: intrinsic tapu, extensions of tapu, and tapu meeting tapu.

All were created under the mana of Io, says Shirres (1997, p. 13). Precipitating mana is the source of all being and intrinsic tapu. Shirres acknowledges this with *Ko te pū* (Shirres, 1997, p. 23) as a layering of connection, *whakapapa*, connecting *tāngata* to the universe and linking through the void to the potential that stirred into the world. *I te kore, te pō ki te ao marama*. Understanding tapu means understanding our worlds and connection *ki ngā atua, tipuna; hunga mate and matou; te hunga ora*. It is cyclical and intertwined within a world not closed off from its actions and events; it is all part of a much bigger whole. The material proceeds from the spiritual and interpenetrates the material world, *Te ao marama*. Therefore, the mana o *ngā atua* is the source of tapu—intrinsic tapu. Tapu is being with potentiality for power. A potentiality that comes from the *atua* that binds us to them. *Ko Ranginui e tū mai nei, Ko Papatūānuku e takoto nei*. The forest has its tapu in Tane. We know the significance of Tane in the world and realm we live in. Tane Mahuta of the forest, Tane Whakapiripiri of the assembled house. My practice connects to Tane, who precipitates the driftwood and brushwood I used, *e takoto*—laying back down with Papatūānuku to become the earth again.

This *mauri* is the catalyst for my artworks. "The *whakataukī*, "*nā ko Parawhenuamea koia te matua o te wai*", translates to "Parawhenuamea, the parent of water" (Best, 1976, p. 254). Parawhenuamea reveals her primary function in her name; 'para' is sediment, waste, vegetation or nutrients. Parawhenuamea personifies the floods that flush the para from the land into the ocean. However, too much is being taken out because of destructive colonial pastoralism.

In Shirres' 1994 writing *Tapu* (1994, p. 28) he shares that intrinsic tapu passes on extending tapu (the tapu engaged with through receiving- extends on). My art-making is guided by the *kaupapa* of *waka* and *aukaha*; *waka* is under the Tane and Tangaroa categories of art. "*ka hinga a Tane*", "*ka takoto kei raro he kaha tane, he kaha tangaroa.*" and "*Tena te kaha ka mau... mau ki tapu kaha nui o Tangaroa, mau ki tenei waka.*" (Shirres, 1997, p. 59). *Kaha* is the lashing, *kaha* also meaning strong. *Au* can be the sea '*aumoana*' and the cord. '*Au*' can be the self or the expression of *whakapapa*, *au Ngati Porou* (Shirres 1997, p. 53). This analysis of '*au*' opens *aukaha* up to a greater interpretation.

Aho and taura are made from collected rau; harvesting is the extended tapu of Rongomātane. Rongomātane holds the kawa of the whare tipuna. (Matenga-Kohu et al. 2006, p. 8). The wharenuī is the collective house of the people in the nohoanga or takiwā vicinity; it is where the people come together to noho, to kōrero. Shirres (1997) continues to say that the real sign of a person's mana and tapu is their power to manaaki, protect and look after others. A person's mana and tapu can be built up by recognizing them, welcoming them, and showing them appropriate hospitality. This is why I am drawn to functional seating. Seating in galleries should not be an afterthought or rejected based on aesthetics. It is as important as the roof and ceiling above, doorway entry and exit, wall to hang and floor to stand on.

Whaikōrero: The World of Māori Oratory, Poia Rewi

The second source text is Whaikōrero: The World of Māori Oratory, Poia Rewi. This review discusses three key points: seating arrangement, pae, and formal and informal kōrero.

The placement of seating between haukainga and manuhiri serves a crucial purpose in demarcating directions, as noted by Rewi (2010, p. 118). The space between hosts and visitors symbolises a boundary beyond which visitors can express themselves within the protocol. It is not my intention to designate either side of my paired seats as haukainga. However, while exhibited, the artworks host and share the whakaaro behind artworks.

Formal welcomes are conducted inside the whare, pae seats, and the marae noho. I contextualise my artworks as paepae tapu to act with a role and responsibility. Rewi notes two primary speaking arrangements: tauutuutu (alternating) and paeke (en bloc/all the speakers from the tangata whenua (hosts) speak first, followed by all the speakers from the manuhiri (guests) (Keane, 2020). As a gesture in the spirit of generating kōrero, the seats offer a more informal occasion to speak to another visitor in the space, much like ordinary gallery seating; however, by being made as artworks for the exhibition, they too carry the meaning of the exhibition in their make-up.

This concept of acknowledgment through continuous response leads to my approach of rākau tāwhao and rākau hauora, that by using driftwoods and brushwoods, I am asking the rākau to speak, the rau tī and puru mānuka and tikanga of locating, collecting and using rākau and not leaving it as para, summoning connection, to return to the spaces of ngahere, repo and awa to see what they have to say and how we as tāngata can support and restore them.

Rewi (2010, p. 19) also includes “Te Poroa Malcolm and Katerina Mataira of Ngati Porou suggest that whaikōrero always involves thematic development and point out that the person who expresses a particular issue is irrelevant, the main focus being the issue itself”. This last point expresses the link I have made around exploring the pae as seats joined via aukaha. I have looked to tipuna making as the expression, and linking to oral traditions of the kupu whakarite.

Casey, John, 1982, Manene-nui as cited in Mead, H. (1997). Māori Art on the world scene

The third source text reviewed is Manene-nui by John Casey. A review of this text discusses two key points: manene (unsettled identity), and hauora.

In Te Whakapakoko o Manenenui, an image of the urban Māori, John Casey (1997, p. 117) uses his own small carving as an example of the journey we go through in reclaiming Māoritanga and the beauty that remains in our wairua Māori. Using recycled timber rescued from Wellington houses, Casey contemplates who a taonga is for.

Casey carved Manenenui and other carvings for his daughters and mokopuna so they have their own taonga. "Drawing on the accumulated knowledge of our ancestors and basing my composition very firmly on the Māori tradition of art and navigating personal circumstances to discuss and share Māoritanga. A way of healing, a way of learning.

I extend Casey's use of taonga with the definition shared by Paula Paranihi of Te Wānanga o Raukawa during a workshop at Palmerston North City Library (2023). Taonga means treasure. However,

Paranihi derives the word's etymology from tao; Te Papa describes tao as a wooden defensive spear. A plain rākau with a sharpened point usually hardened by fire. The other end is blunt (Te Papa Tongarewa, 1992). This defensive spear was applied as the last line of defence. This was so important it would be the spear and the individual's own life between the attacker and the very thing being protected: whenua, tamariki. Paranihi's further analysis looks at the participle (the added suffix of nga to the end of the kupu tao) of taonga, as a verb, can be translated into English as 'defend', which redirects a colonial and museological lens of using the word taonga not as in treasures that would be coveted, or as a treasure looted which carries western archeological and anthropological (even pirate) connotations. To taonga, as in something you honour and defend, you place your very life between someone or something attacking or taking.

Robert Jahnke Essentially Māori

The fourth source text reviewed is Robert Jahnke's *Essentially Māori*. The review discusses three key points: Content in place, content in materiality and genealogy.

Jahnke (2019, p. 427) writes that “form, content, and the genealogy of the artist are determinants of Māori cultural relativity and relevance”. and discusses further saying “the determinants are contextualised in relation to a Māori worldview pertinent Western theoretical perspectives that intersect understanding within a transcultural context of change that occurred as a consequence of European settlement.”

Jahnke (2019, p. 436) states that “the right of indigenous people to determine their own creative practices, which may or may not accommodate other cultural positions”.

Regarding content in place, I broaden my scope within this essay and state my Ngati Porou whakapapa with Waiapu driftwood - I extend my mention of pūrākau from Haumanu artwork, of Rata, and from Te Rau Pito, the pūrākau of Rakaihautū. I share the pūrākau of Māui-Tikitiki-a-Taranga and the waka Nukutaimemeha as a link to major foundations within my kaupapa. The confluence of foundations in my kaupapa connects whakapapa, whenua and awa, waka and rākau. In the film Te

rerenga pōuri o nga parawhenuamea ki Te Moana-nui-a-Kiwa by Atkins et al. (2020, 0.05), its text says, "The Great Fish of Māui emerged - stranding his waka Nukutaimemeha on nearby Hikurangi Maunga... Pastoralism drove settler axes and fuelled bush-fire burn-offs while Māori land was portrayed as lying idle. The government of the time penalised farmers if they still had trees standing. The thinking of the time was that two trees were worth a blade of grass."

Of content in materiality, my kaupapa is understood through driftwood from the ngutuawa o Waiapu. Jahnke (2019, p. 433) discusses that "The Māori art paradigm considers form, not only in terms of its archetypal, transitional, or unconventional manifestation but also the genealogy of the artist and art". To contextualise the importance of pūrākau to understand our world, I link Rata and the waka, and Māui and Nukutaimemeha under the umbrella of Jahnke's discourse and the importance of ritual exchange. I bring attention to the voice of my rākau, Waiapu driftwood, as a catalyst to the take of where it comes from. Becoming rākau manaakitanga, hosts to share kōrero through its materiality. This will summon its position as debris of erosion to te Tai Rāwhiti, and the intention behind mānuka and tī that offers a voice to river restoration. Jahnke (2019, p. 428) describes "karanga as a customary ritualised 'performative' act sanctioned in tradition and culturally empowered in cosmogeneology". Jahnke continues this with "At the heart of the ritual exchange is the contextualisation of hosts and visitors (in relation to female pre-eminence, sacred and profane, deceased and living). These are acknowledged in a conjunction of past and present, in a holistic continuum of cultural interconnectedness where space and time, people and place are implicated in the cultural context of the occasion."

Referring to Shirres (1997, p. 34), Parawhenuamea is one of the ātua precipitating intrinsic tapu in my kaupapa. Parawhenuamea and Waiapu Kōkā Huhua manifest in my kaupapa's materiality, the taketake of forest and river restoration and elevated kōrero in tipuna ways of making in aukaha.

Chapter 3- Methodology and Process

In this chapter, I discuss the conceptual frameworks that underpin my kaupapa. These frameworks are titled in four sections, Pūrākau, kōrero, kua hinga te tōtara haemata, e tū te maota he!, and hohou. I explain why these were important in each section and how they connect to my art-making.

Pūrākau

Through pūrākau, we can discuss cosmic genealogy and our connection to the universe (Marsden, 2003, p. 35). Whenua is the primordial mother, Papatūānuku. She had many children with Ranginui. Tane Mahuta's children are her cloak. Ngahere (bush) and rākau trees cover her. Seeds fall from trees or are carried by birds. On the forest floor, seeds are nurtured by leaf litter and branches. As old trees fall, seeds grow from their tupuna, continuing the cycle. As the land replenishes, plants and animals flourish. Plants maintain watercourse health. Rain falls through the trees. Branches provide steady light, maintaining constant temperatures. Roots stabilize banks, oxygenating water. Wetlands remove paru (dirt).

In Te Wehenga, Tangaroa, the ocean atua, Hinemoana, the mother of all marine sentient beings, and Wainui, the ocean personification, soared into the primeval sea. (Ihimaera, 2020, p. 81). ‘He wai Tangaroa i haere ki uta’ (Best, 1924, p. 181) By means of water, Tangaroa was transported inland. From Tāne-te-waiora, the source of life, light, and wellbeing, and Hinetūpari maunga, comes Parawhenuamea. Parawhenuamea with Pūtoto births Hine-Ukurangi (clay), who with Rakahore births Hine-tūahōanga (sandstones) and Whatuaho (onewa/greywacke) (Moore and McFadgen, 2006).

‘E kore a Parawhenuamea e haere ki te kore a Rakahore’ (Robertson, 2019, p. 268) Parawhenuamea will not come out in the absence of Rakahore. Estuaries are shared by Parawhenuamea and Kiwa (whose domain is the sea) (Philips, 2020, p. 2). From Hine-tūahōanga, birthed Hine Waiapu (Atkins et al., 2020, 4:00).

This whakapapa of atua connected to the Waiapu river, along with the cyclical description of the environment, sets the basis for using Waiapu driftwood as ‘au Ngati Porou’ in my art practice to speak about the importance of assembly and working together by revealing the whenua and moana are interlinked.

“The land was all safe and protected underneath a canopy of trees, an interlocking web of roots.” (Atkins et al., 2020, 6:10). The film continues describing This root system filtering water before reaching streams and rivers. Water carries rotting trees, leaves, soil, stones and sediment downward. Sedimentation feeds aquatic life and flushes debris out. Deep pools replace rapids, allowing slower flows.

kua hinga te tōtara haemata

In raising awareness of the rākau materials I have used within my kaupapa. In this section, I explain why it is pertinent to draw attention to them.

In learning about the tī kōuka, a disease termed 'sudden decline' shocked me. The tī kōuka nationwide were dying off in the 1980s. Simon Collins in the NZ Herald (2002) highlights that the passion vine hoppers (*Scolypopa australis*) have been the noted cause, spreading a New Zealand native bacterium called *phytoplasma australiense* as described by. The disease has declined over time. However, the tī haven't developed a strong resistance. Botanist and Tī kōuka expert Philip Simpson says the spread of bacteria is controlled by water levels. Most tī die in backyards, gardens, streets, and paddocks. Simpson in an RNZ feature (2018) states that climate change will intensify the disease. Our focus on planting and growing tī should be in the places where they thrive.

By harvesting tī leaves from the lower hanging leaves, koka (the falling skirt of dead leaves), and off the ground, the tī is one of my rākau hauora, rākau manaaki, bringing their strength in the assembly of my seats and artworks.

Department of Conservation Ranger Graeme Atkins, in his documentary *Mate Tipu, Mate rākau* (2021), explains that the airborne pathogen myrtle rust (*Austropuccinia psidii*) is causing rapid devastation on the East Coast. The region has 15 indigenous myrtle species with increased myrtle rust observations.

By collecting brushwood mānuka, then sawing and sanding back where rot has set in, I shaped the rākau into puru, poles and plugs to share the strength they possess that our tipuna knew.

The slash wood and erosion I saw in April in Tai Rāwhiti is the result of over a century of forest stripping and land mismanagement along with the added layer of climate crises. The Ministry for Culture and Heritage (2023) describes Cyclone Bola that hit Hawke's Bay and Gisborne-East Cape in 1988. Torrential rains followed, damaging houses, bridges, and roads. Pipelines in Gisborne were damaged. Floodwaters evacuated thousands while sedimentation destroyed grazing land. Hauraki Gulf Weather (2023) describes Cyclone Hale forming in the Coral Sea in January 2023. The tropical depression became a Category 1 tropical storm. Niwa climate scientists said climate change influenced the gigantic event that was Cyclone Gabrielle in February 2023. Gabrielle devastated Te Tai Rāwhiti and caused destructive flooding to Tāmaki Makaurau and north into Te Tai Tokerau.

Fast sedimentation affects waterways. Material overload lowers river oxygen levels. Fish migrate or die when habitats change. Lots of driftwood signals Parawhenuamea's alarm. It is vital to mitigate soil stability and deforestation. It's time to return, dwell, kōrero, and find ways to support each other and te taiao.

Atkins et al. (2020, 1:00) read, "This land hasn't had the vast periods of time needed to harden against the forces of erosion. It is mudstone derived of marine sediment laid down recently in the last 2-6 million years - pushed up out of the ocean by tectonics." Land without tree roots can easily be eroded. We need to recloak the skin of Papatūānuku.

E tū te maota, hē!

The Waiapu River Accord approved a 100-year river revitalisation project in 2014. Natalie Robertson's photographic practice documents the Waiapu River within this. In 1890, agriculture and deforestation affected the river. And through our colonial history, pastoralism and deforestation caused driftwood and sand to flow out of river mouths. According to Natalie Robertson in an interview on Radio Ngati Porou (2023): she says "When we pay attention to the practices that our tipuna had, they were drawing from the materials from within their home environment, so to make a fishing net, they were using harakeke and manuka and kanuka poles, they were able to do that without leaving plastic that ends up on our beaches and killing creatures in the moana. They were able to work in an interconnected way with their environment. When we slow down and pay attention to their practices, we can learn how to reinvigorate our relationship with Waiapu". Throughout this kaupapa, I have thought about these words by Robertson in my utilisation of aukaha.

By shifting the realities of the rākau tāwhao and manene into rākau manaakitanga, I present a way forward by looking back. To kōrero and connect with each other. To remember ways and practices of our tipuna.

Hohou

The kupu 'hohou' for lashing also symbolises peace. Shirres (1994, p. 14) describes Hohou Rongo as a way to restore tapu with tika, not just aroha. In this sense, lashing combines people, objects, histories, and memories together to work toward peace.

Jeff Evans in his book *Waka Taua The Maori War Canoe* (2013, p. 25) details that Ti torere (*Cordyline banksii*) and Tī kōuka (*Cordyline australis*) leaves were utilised to make taura for waka because the fibres are durable and do not shrink in salt water. Applied in several parts of the waka taua, Semi-finished hulls were hauled by ropes, the floorboards of the tūāpapa lashed together (deck), stern-end kūpenga netting, the poumanawa (mast) held taut, and in waka kōpapa, lashing the rauawa

and hull, the haumi kokomo lashed to extend the length of the hull, and lashing the taumanu to the top edges to lay across the interior of the hull, and more.

Every part of the waka's construction, just as every role in the waka; kaea, hoea, and kumea (bailer) is vital. Strong waka require a suitable tree. In attending the workshop about aukaha with the waka mamari at Te Papa, I witnessed the remedial work of aukaha - undoing and replacing lashing. This remedial work shares what tipuna practices can offer. Strong aukaha joinery and remedial maintenance of puru and taura. Within this design is a lesson of knowing to return to check up and see if anything needs looking at, and to never forget the past.

Chapter 4 - Creative practice and process.

This chapter describes my artistic practice and the methods I used to create my thesis exhibition. I reflect on my artwork in the 2022 Matatau exhibition, Tūru Noho Ora: Turangahakoa. Additionally, Ruhanui at Square Edge Art Centre in June 2023. Presented as part of the thesis exhibition, this overview outlines the process and preparation of my art practice.

Through my materiality and art language, Tūru Noho Ora describes personal feelings about the journey of life. A key component of my kaupapa is rākau. Noho explores place through connection. Pae is a demarcating zone that transitions someone from wondering to being welcomed. In my 2023 Masters show, my art contemplates how to build strong bonds between people.

I set parameters for rākau as the primary material to remove the ease of buying materials from stores and grow a way of knowing where materials come from. This was a basis to develop my ideas—the deck chair as a gifted object from a friend began Tūru Noho Ora, which led to collecting rākau where I reside and has continued the premise of my materiality in my art practice. The bench-style seat is constructed with collected and gifted rākau.

There is a whakataukī;

‘He Pukenga te wai, ka puta te rākau, he pukenga nga tāngata, ka puta te kōrero’. In a flood of water, a tree appears, and in a confluence of people, dialogue comes out.

I learned this whakataukī when I attended the Kahui Kaitiaki wānanga in May this year spoken by Taharakau Stewart and Paora Tibble on the clean up and protection work post Cyclone Gabrielle. This whakataukī relates rākau to kōrero. Trees growing from water or driftwood culminating in the deluge of floods. Symbolising connection and meeting. I position myself to my multiplicity through my materiality of collecting rākau of personal connection.

Weathered pine that represents my umbilical connection to Whangārei. Repurposing the wood that comes from something my dad built at my parents' home. At the Waiapu Ngutuawa in April, I

supported an art kaupapa (He Uru Manuka) and saw its devastating impact on land erosion and sedimentation of riverbeds. I collected a few tōtara logs and washed out old farm fence posts there that symbolise Ko Hikurangi te maunga, Ko Waiapu te awa, Ko Ngati Porou te iwi. These rākau both reflect my urban identity and Ngati Poroutanga. Ka puta te rākau - the metaphoric link to the refuse understanding of pine and the driftwood and brushwood alludes to the role of the forest floor ecosystem, the current state of land erosion to the awa Waiapu and myrtle rust crisis.

In Tūru Noho Ora, I used half-lap and mortis-and-tenon joinery to emulate the joinery of the deck chair. I wanted to interrogate these methods and the screws and bolts within my seats in 2023. My process and materiality were emphasized in a number of workshops before beginning my making in this kaupapa. Louie Zalk Neale's wānanga 'Taonga i huna' centred on the tī kōuka Cabbage tree leaves and their usefulness because the fibres within are strong and do not shrink in water. We were taught miro by using separate gatherings of equal twin muka bundles. In this way, the miro maintains its diameter after the muka is ordered. The twisting of each countering bundle towards its counterpart results in the miro aho, kaha, and taura length. After reaching the muka's ends, I add a new bundle, folding the middle between the two already twisting bundles and blending the muka seamlessly. The use of the rau tī voices the current status of the tī kōuka in its 'Sudden Decline'.

My exploration of waka construction techniques was inspired by Billy Harrison, Justice Hetaraka, and Hine Waitai-Dye. Specifically, aukaha. I combined my learning of how to make miro tī and aukaha for my kaupapa to be the assembly of rākau and assembling of people to share a conversation.

Kohao, the drilled holes, are part of the aukaha lashing. Across separate rākau, Puru holds the binding. Aukaha is secured by puru.

Tahi Wehewehe was the name I gave my first aukaha test. In two small blocks of pine posts, I drilled holes. Lashing with three aho (cords) of tī kōuka. Kohi (collecting) rau (leaves) from around Palmerston North, patu (beating), hāro (scraping), and miro (twisting) create the length of aho. Puru were shaped from tōtara logs from Waiapu River's ngutuawa (river mouth) and malletted to form the cylindrical plugs that tied the lashing securely.

Next, I sawed the pine posts into blocks and drilled two holes for the legs of a new seat. Lashing the blocks together was next. I lay over a halved tōtara log with square lap joints sawn out and a bar holding the legs' bottom along the ground.

Tūru were the goal of creating my artwork's final form. Throughout the year, I considered showing different techniques in aukaha as wall works. It is my aim in presenting aukaha shown on waka kōpapa and waka taua tuapapa in a contemporary sense, bringing the matauranga of our tipuna forward with us. The tūru, the paepae tapu, is a rethinking of the art gallery space to Māori spatial considerations. Manaaki is at the forefront of my thinking.

Branch, logs and fence posts dictated the finished sizes. Constant revisions were necessary due to the dimensions and limitations of materials. How far do I go? What amount of sawing, cutting, and lashing is needed? The exhibition is a snapshot of my journey and thoughts.

Following that, I stepped away from the pine posts. "My stockings may get caught," commented an observer to the seats I made in August. I was unsure how much of the weathered outer skin I should remove from the logs and fence posts as the collected and gifted rākau were important in their current state at this point. Then, I thought about creating my muka and stripping it of the para when I heard this comment. As a result, I created two updated seats. A farm in Feilding provided me with more tōtara. Connecting with this wood without cutting or fabricating it is intentional. As I used the saws and sanders to remove the weathered outer parts, the wood shrank dramatically.

I had to question my square cut and bar component at the bottom as the blocks got smaller. Through discussion with workshop technician Luke Anderson. I used lengths of mānuka to reach across each leg at four corners; this felt resolved in contrast to my seats from earlier in the year. There is a connection between the manuka and the puru which I learned from Billy Harrison (2023). Plugging the waka, manuka branches would be used to plug kohao and snapped off to hold the lashing.

The transformation of the rākau and rau I used. The tī transformed into muka, miro, aho, and then taura. I shaped puru for these new seats from the tōtara, rimu and mānuka: drilled holes and lashed

through miro tī kōuka. My final work for the exhibition, 'Aukaha', shows the lashing on the side of a waka kōpapa. 200 hundred bundled muka were used to enlarge the aho. I used the rimu timber, drilling larger holes and plugging with mānuka branch cut puru—the lashing showing both the inner and outer sides that hold the battens as they would around the hull and rauawa to be watertight on the waka kōpapa. As the cord is pulled through the kohao tight, puru is driven into the hole. The cord is then passed through the other hole and tightened.

Secondary to my making, supporting my kaupapa has been my personal development of learning mihimihi and whaikōrero. "Kua rangitāmiro mai nei i tēnei wā ki raro o te tuanui o to tātou nei whare" was one way to describe a people gathered. Knowing miro to be used for lashing and learning to use this word as a way to acknowledge a people gathered became the name and link between my materiality and concepts.

Chapter 5. Exhibition – analysis/discussion

The focus of this chapter is the thesis exhibition. Following this, the exhibition layout is discussed.

An explanation of the title as a foundational concept for the exhibition is undertaken.

Then the artworks are explained.

Exhibition Layout

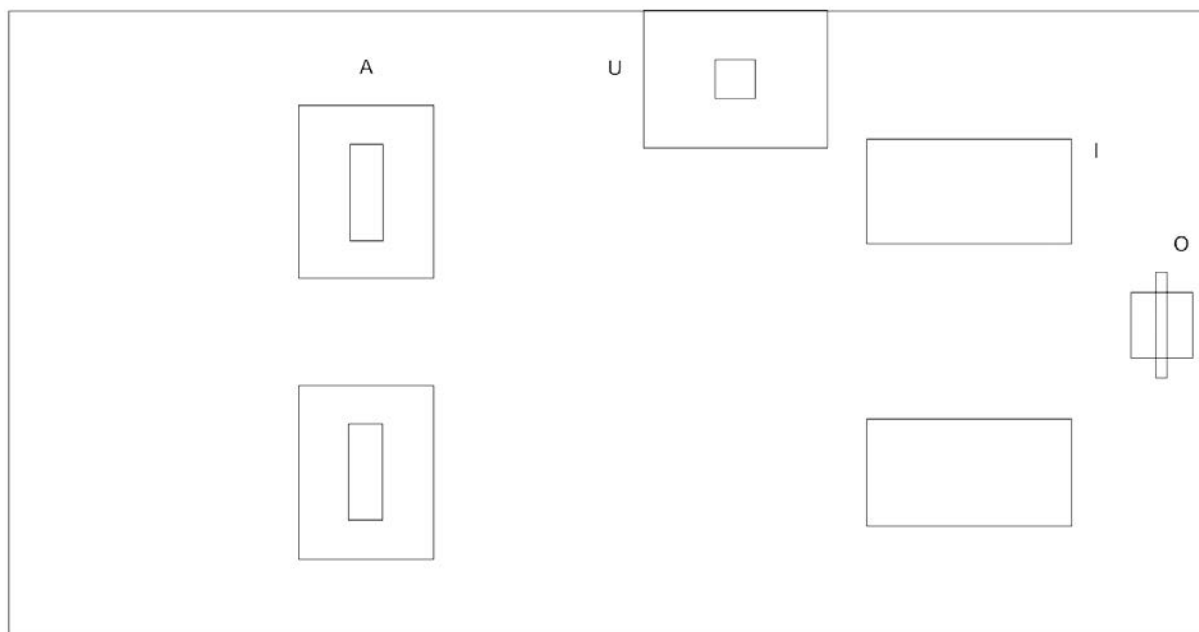


Figure 25. Diagram by author, Exhibition floor outline, 2023

- A.** E Tū, *weathered pine posts, rimu timber shaped into plugs, aho miro tī kōuka cordage.*
- U.** Tahī Wehewehe, *weathered pine posts, tōtara log shaped into plugs, aho miro tī kōuka cordage.*
- I.** Rangitāmiro, *tōtara log leg and seat components, mānuka plugs, aho miro tī kōuka Cordage, wool.*
- O.** Aukaha, *rimu timber, tōtara reclaimed timber, mānuka branch plugs, taura miro tī kōuka*

I presented my exhibition in Cubeside studio building 1.01, Putahi-a-Toi, Toioho ki Āpiti, Turitea Campus, Massey University Te Kunenga ki Pūrehuroa, Manawatū, Papaioea, Palmerston North

17th November - 1 December 2023

This exhibition recognised the art making I undertook this year and the completion of my master's year. Looking back along the pathway that leads to the door of my studio, a Tī kōuka (Cordyline Australis) is visible in the garden beside the lemon tree, this garden is situated behind the Wharekai Toi-te-Ora. Also, while I didn't use any of this variety, noting the (Cordyline banksii), otherwise named Tī Ngahere can be found at the end of this path by the carpark. With my art practice thinking about noho and residence, exhibiting my work in Palmerston North is apt. Further Tī kōuka I collected from were situated; behind the bus stop on Tennent Drive, Massey University, in the Waitoetoe Park clearing, Ahimate Reserve near the Manawatū river, amongst an infield of trees along Te ara taha tika o Manawatū walk and cycle way near Ayr Place Hokowhitu.

Spatial considerations:

Whakatika te whare. To leave it better than when you found it. I cleaned and painted the studio to refresh the white walls and grey floor. This wasn't to add to the discussion of my works or intervene on the space, but let the space be clear.

For the placement of my artworks within the exhibition suggest notions of pōwhiri. This aligned with the thematics of my exhibition to assemble people together. I detail specific placement ideas below after artwork interpretive descriptions.

As the buildings entrance is to the right side, the back area is clear to enable visitors space to stand before all the works and walk forward amongst them.

E Tū and Tahī Wehewehe are on what I have called 'raised ground'. The plinths made are painted in the same colour as the floor to keep the relationship as seat leg components on the floor.

The plinth size covered the sink in the space to ease the visitors eye. E Tū had same size plinths to be uniform.

Exhibition title.

Kua Rangitāmiro Mai Nei | We Have Assembled Here

‘E ngā manuhiri,

Kua rangitāmiro mai nei i tēnei wā ki raro o te tuanui o to tātou nei whare’

This exhibition takes its name from this line I learned amongst mihimihi during rumaki reo Māori class at Te Pūkenga this year. It stood out for me as I have been making using miro, within the Miro Whakaaturanga Masters Māori Visual Art Paper. This mihimihi was one way to acknowledge a people gathered. Knowing miro to be used for lashing, and learning to use this word in this way became the name and link between my materiality and concepts.

The exhibition room text extended this link with the whakataukī “Wehea te muka, kua whati te taura, whiria kia mau, kia ū he taura mau waka.” I came across this whakataukī through my rangahau this year. It stood out to me as it echoed a similar kōrero Billy Harrison gave during the workshop “ Kia ū ki te here i tō waka”. This whakatauki resonated with me as its words give clarity to the interflowing of my different modes and concepts that link; the assembly of rākau and assembly of people, the tī kōuka’s usage within waka and aukaha waka lashing, letting my materiality of driftwood and brushwood voice their own kōrero of river revitalisation within my seats and artworks.

E Tū description



Figure 26. Photograph by author, E Tū in Kua Rangitāmiro Mai Nei, November 2023

weathered pine posts, puru rimu, aho miro tī kōuka.

E Tū comes from the first half of the year where I explored building seats from the collected rākau I had accumulated in studio.

I approached the pine posts much like Tahi Wehewehe, to build up a form for the leg components. This involved the tasks of sawing into blocks and drilling two evenly spaced holes. Following the aukaha technique I lashed the blocks together, secured by shaped puru from rimu timber i was gifted. Laying over the two legs as the seat is a halved tōtara driftwood with lap joints to fit the square blocks, and similarly a bar that braced the bottom of the legs.

As an act of transformation, these rākau have shifted from states of manene (unsettled) and tāwhao (adrift), to assemble together and offer noho (a place to reside), and manaakitanga o te wā (hospitality in such a time as this).

E Tū were the leg components of my approach to build a seat with the collected rākau. Within Kua Rangitāmiro Mai Nei they are separated and face forward into the exhibition space. Positioned on raised floor, they stand to meet and guide visitors as they walk into the exhibition.

The placement of ETūtakes on the role of a tomokanga, being closest to the entrance they welcome all entering the space.

Tahi Wehewehe description



Figure 27. Photograph by author, Tahi Wehewehe in Kua Rangitāmiro Mai Nei, November 2023

Tahi Wehewehe

weathered pine, tōtara, tī kōuka.

Tahi Wehewehe holds a significant place within my making this year. The body of this work is made up of weathered pine which I sourced from the old vine trellis that my Dad built in the backyard of our whānau home in Whangārei almost thirty years ago. Sawn to a small scale it now sits as two separate almost cubes. As my Dad took on a new project back home, these old pine blocks became the catalyst of my venture into practicing the lashing technique - aukaha. In these two blocks, I have implemented the techniques of kohao, (drilled holes) in their centre, then lashing through three aho (cords) of tī kōuka. Making this aho through a process of kohi (collecting) rau (leaves) of tī kōuka from around Palmerston North, patu (beating), hāro (scraping) and miro (twisting) to create the length of aho needed. Finally, I secured the lashing with puru (plugs), which I shaped from a tōtara log I collected from the ngutuawa (river mouth) of the Waiapu river, shaping the small cylindrical puru necessary to then be malletted in to hold the lashing and complete the loop of aukaha.

Tahi Wehewehe embodies the kōrero of locating oneself at the Ngati Porou coastline.

“Mai i Pōhautea ki te Ahikōuka, ka whakawhiti i te awa o Waiapū”

“Seaward from Pōhautea mountain inland to the area named Ahikōuka, crossing the Waiapū River”

Tahi Wehewehe placement

The puru of Tahi Wehewehe are made of totara driftwood from the Waiapu river. Waiapu Koka Huhua - mother of many, Parawhenuamea female atua of the alluvial deluge of water from hills and forest are the voices carried by Tahi Wehewehe within my exhibition. Standing over the raised ground plinth, this work's position embodies the karanga to welcome visitors inside. The raised ground (that covers the sink) marks the opposite side and rhythm of the space to the entrance door.

Rangitāmiro description



Figures 28 and 29. photographs by author, Rangitāmiro seats in Kua Rangitāmiro Mai Nei, November 2023



Figure 30. Photograph by Java Bentley, kōrero between Duncan, Lorrette and Brook.

Rangitāmiro, tōtara log leg and seat components, mānuka plugs, aho miro tī kōuka cordage, wool.

Rangitāmiro are two seats, presented as a gesture to spend time within the exhibition space, as an opportunity to gain an understanding of place, function, and design, through a sense of touch and the physical act of being seated.

The seats within my art practice, refer to the verb 'noho' - to sit for a moment, and to a place where someone resides, 'nohoanga'.

In exploring aukaha and lashing with this aho, I have bound together rākau that carry personal connection; tōtara driftwood and washed-out old fence posts collected from the ngutuawa (rivermouth) of the Waiapu. This tōtara is the catalyst of the take (purpose) in this artwork. Connecting to it with my Ngati Porou whakapapa, to raise the alarm of the climate crisis that has caused devastation to Te Tai Rāwhiti. This take extends to the other rākau within each seat, which were gifted to me through kōrero, conversations about my seat-building kaupapa.

Transforming these rākau into block-shaped components and lengths for the seat top. I have implemented the techniques of kōhao, (drilled holes), then lashing through with three aho. The aho is secured by puru mānuka (plugs made of brushwood mānuka branches) completing the lashing around each component of rākau. Puru roa, extended poles of mānuka branches reach across in between the seat legs, fastening the seat to stand firm.

By building these seats with the natural resources of rākau and rau tī, I am following the practices of tipuna and working in an interconnected way with the environment. By employing the tī kōuka and mānuka as the functioning elements securing the seat together, my hope is to elevate the kōrero of the important roles the mānuka and tī have within the ngahere (forest), and repo (swamp and marsh land) - and the importance of kaitiakitanga (custodianship) we as tāngata have to these areas and the waterways that run through them.

Rangitāmiro shares matauranga of the strength in assembling and working together. In the metaphoric language of whaikōrero and mihimihi emboldened at the paepae, kupu whakarite is masterfully spoken, words used that allegorically reflect inherent qualities seen in nature that appropriately share the roles and responsibilities tāngata have to a place.

Rangitāmiro placement

Rangitāmiro activates kōrero by providing the space of seating constructed in a medley of woods to speak with anyone who sits across from you. As two seats facing each other, Rangitāmiro conceptualises the paepae to consider the potential of joining and working together.

Aukaha description



Figure 31. photograph by author, Aukaha in Kua Rangitāmiro Mai Nei, November 2023

Reclaimed rimu and tōtara timber, taura miro tī kōuka (cabbage tree leaf rope), puru mānuka (mānuka plugs)

Aukaha demonstrates the lashing that is applied to bind the rauawa (upper strake) and the dugout hull body of waka kōpapa (river canoe). Drilling five holes into each of the two rimu boards, I have lashed using larger miro twisted rope to takitoru (in multiples of three) bind through each hole, around supportive paewai (battens). Each lash section's hole have puru, plugging the lashing to hold secure.

Aukaha placement

Aukaha began as a developing wall mounted based idea. however I wanted to reveal both sides, which led to it sitting on a plinth. I positioned Aukaha at the end in between the seats to set the kaupapa of taura here, binding together. I faced Aukaha to position it with the batten lashing facing to correlate the inside of the studio with the inside of a waka kōpapa.

Other considerations.

I am looking to re-present this exhibition with a second aukaha work as I would like to show it as a pair and have them hold the space as if visitors were walking into a waka. I will potentially reposition Tahi Wehewehe to be in a kaea position or remove it in this next exhibit along with E Tū to only show the progress into the sanded back rākau and focus on tōtara, mānuka and tī kōuka. I am looking to build more seats to lengthen this work so more visitors can activate.

A sustainable materiality, a relationship with rākau me te whenua

During my research on materiality sourcing, the literature review rangahau provided me with answers to how rākau can voice nohoanga. Contextualising my art making within the broader Māori art continuum. Brickell activated her local suburb of her home plum tree, incorporating gifted sources by whānau and friend. Ngakuru's collation of smaller rākau lashed into a cohesive whole that reflects the image and form in response to space. Inspired by his child's innocent engagement with turf, Langdon creates the basis of his whenua bed artworks for Te Rau Pito.

Langdon's utilisation of whenua from different places that as he says' "provide umbilical connections to whakapapa and whānau takiwā as mentioned in the literature review, linked the film Te rerenga pōuri o nga parawhenuamea ki Te Moana-nui-a-Kiwa, to my use of waiapu drifwood. Langdon lets his whenua bed flooring be adaptable, moving and adjusting by those that step into the beds. It is a way of individually in the moment and collectively through the span of the exhibition, reshaping a landscape. In understanding the driftwood I have used as the catalyst for kōrero, personal connection is one dimension for me to link to the rākau, as an umbilical cord that speaks through time to the Waiapu River and Raukumara forest.

Ti kōuka within my kaupapa is the assembly, the process of the rau, as I patu and hāro to become wehe as muka, comes together again as aho and taura to have the strength through miro - The connection bringing the rākau together through aukaha. My making symbolises the connection of people seated together for kōrero. Overall, navigating within the parameters of rākau was a journey of discovery. From my perspective, I have positioned myself in a way that is both not harmful and educative.

ti kōuka and aukaha

I have found the combination of working with tī kōuka and applying the revealed muka within the techniques of aukaha to be an incredibly interesting kaupapa. Louie Zalk Neale's ti kōuka wānanga, the waka tarai workshop held at Te Papa and the work of Will Ngakuru inspired me. I will continue my investigation into the various parts of waka joinery and develop my work beyond that of the 'Aukaha'. Bringing the tī kōuka and aukaha together felt fated. Aukaha as an integral part of waka construction brings waka as a fundamental symbolism for my artworks.

Beyond miro tī

I will also aspire to look at different lashing styles other than the straight-line takitoru I have used. As an extension of this kaupapa, I will continue to explore the many avenues shelved as my rangahau lead me through a broader contextualisation of the tī kōuka. These rangahau included growing my knowledge of tī kōuka and the other varieties like Cordyline banksii. Moving into all the areas the tī operates in. In addition, I will be looking into and supporting riparian planting of ti kōuka along riverbanks.

Function and visitor engagement

The way Langdon's art practice crosses between visitor engagement and seeking different paths that can be used for educating and entertaining purposes has been a source of interest for me for quite some time now. Apart from me being in the space to speak further to my materiality, the symbolism of the specific rākau tāwhao, the tōtara driftwood and mānuka brushwood, along with the rau tī kōuka, was not described anywhere in the exhibition. I am unsure if this was a bad thing, as it was interesting to involve myself in this process related to my art practice. Which was something I wondered about with Tūru Noho Ora. I am not completely satisfied with the results of my testing on how visitors might be able to engage with an exhibition if they were given a seat as a way to engage them in exploring it. Despite this, I think I have covered much ground to get to the point of exhibiting my work. As a result of building seating for visitors, I got a better understanding of structural integrity in relation to function and that function can symbolise the role of people in caring for te taiao.

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