Still, the Kōwhai grows

Pariwhero (Red Rocks), Aotearoa, September 2022. Personal archive.

Abstract

This exegesis discusses moving image, installation and poetic prose. *Soft afternoon* (2021), *What we do* (2021), *Return* (2022), and *A wave that moves out* (2022) are examined in relation to Pākehātanga and colonial history. Within these frameworks, the passage of time, environmental agency, and collaboration widen considerations about the complexities of living and making art in Aotearoa. My practice and this exegesis seek answers to a question inspired by Moana Jackson: how will Pākehā find the comfort of a place to stand? Slow-motion moving images and long-take filming are explored in relation to the emotional tenors I am searching for in life. The works explored in this exegesis seek to open space for conversation, humour, melancholy and hope.

Introduction

My creative inquiries are compelled by a desire to understand and express the complexities of how I live in Aotearoa. I search for ways to weave my lived experiences with wider discussions about cultural identity, specifically Pākehātanga. Poetic language, moving image, and sound are artforms that have often carried the emotional tenor I am searching for in life. The ambiguity of these artforms and my reaction to them is deeply intriguing, and I am searching to move others the way I have been moved by art.

I make moving images. Poetic writing and photography help define and widen the grasp and understanding I have of my ideas, as well as any next directions. During my MFA, I made multiple works, four of which I detail in this exegesis: *Soft afternoon* (2021) in collaboration with Lily Joyce, *What we do* (2021)[1], *Return* (2022)[2], and *A wave that moves out* (2022)[3]. All of these works were made in collaboration with friends and colleagues. Collaboration is a process that motivates my creative inquiries as I value other voices as well as my own.

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[1] Dani McIntosh, *What we do*, 2021, digital video, 5:58min, vimeo.com/640648818.
[2] Dani McIntosh, *Return*, digital video, 3:29min, vimeo.com/729448144.
[3] Dani McIntosh, *A wave that moves out*, 2022, digital video, 6:49min, vimeo.com/796545440.

The complexity of my relationship to being Pākehā and being of English ancestry have a firm hold within my creative work. I was born in Tāmaki Makaurau and after living there for my first 7 years, moved to England with my mother, father, sister and grandparents. While they remained there, I returned to Aotearoa after 16 years to live in Te Whanganui-a-Tara. When I left, my father's words rang in my head:

I always knew you would go back, I always knew that you belonged there.

During my MFA I wanted to answer a question inspired by the late lawyer and revolutionary Moana Jackson: how do Pākehā find "the comfort of a place to stand"?[4] My creative work invites closer inquiry into my own Pākehātanga and familial colonial history. My work often reflects an unease and instability I feel about my place in Aotearoa, despite being born here. Along the way, I take note of Alison Jones' position on relationships and relationality and that "the most important things are ineffable, unexplainable, difficult, and sometimes even contradictory."[5] I seek ways to invite aesthetic ambiguity into my practice to reflect this positioning.

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[4] Moana Jackson, "Where to next? Decolonisation and stories of the land," in *Imagining Decolonisation*, edited by Anna Hodge, 133–155 (Wellington: Bridget Williams Books, 2020), 145.
[5] Alison Jones, *This Pākehā Life: An Unsettled Memoir* (Wellington: Bridget Williams Books, 2020), 226.

In my practice, I am aware that Pākehātanga is a developing space in terms of definitions. Curator and Toi Māori Aotearoa advisor Anna Marie-White's satirical summary of Pākehātanga in the publication *Pākehā Now!* was a catalyst to consider Pākehātanga as a distinct culture. Moreover, barrister and solicitor Ani Mikaere has observed that "there is nowhere else in the world that one can be Pākehā."[6] It's important to my sense of belonging and my art that the word *Pākehā* comes from te reo Māori. In thinking through my Pākehātanga, I acknowledge te ao Māori and that I stand on shared ground.

[6] Ani Mikaere, *Colonising Myths – Maori Realities: He Rukuruku Whakaaro* (Wellington: Huia Publishers, 2011), 79.

Soft afternoon

Soft afternoon was a text-based installation collaboratively made with my friend, artist Lily Joyce. The installation consisted of a co-authored poem published in black vinyl on three white walls of a window-lit room.

A pivotal influence on our installation was Berlin-based multidisciplinary artist Marianna Simnett's 2021 exhibition, *CREATURE*, at City Gallery Wellington Te Whare Toi in Te Whanganui-a-Tara. The audience's first encounter with the exhibition was a text installation on the three walls opposite the entrance foyer. The installation consisted of three lines of white text written in capitals, wrapping all the way around black walls.[7] The writing itself alluded to a dark narrative of metamorphosis; a body undergoing painful transformation and a search for acceptance and freedom. The poetic narrative teetered on a story while remaining ambiguous in its detail. Simnett's work left the audience to wonder and imagine.

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[7] Mark Williams, "*CREATURE*, Marianna Simnett," Circuit Artist Moving Image Aotearoa New Zealand, 25 May 2021, circuit.org.nz/writing-and-podcast/creature-marianna-simnett.

The configuration of the text as well as the size of the walls and the space invited the audience to walk while reading. The invitation of movement and autonomy meant that our bodies could become part of the process of reading, something usually reserved for sitting alone. Language was given space to shift in accordance with bodies, other people, space, and time. Suddenly a normally private act becomes more performative, more interactive, and for me, more memorable.

The relationship between audience and time spent with a work is an important consideration in my practice. Slowing down time and captivating an audience is something we sought for *Soft afternoon*.

Soft afternoon, 2021, in collaboration with Lily Joyce, black vinyl text on white walls (installation view).

Soft afternoon, 2021, in collaboration with Lily Joyce, black vinyl text on white walls (installation view).

i know the feeling of the deepest green

like whispers from other worlds

it spikes each leaf with a stick collector of

sounds softly stirring those who live elsewhere now

awakened by the winds

stirs your hair into your eyes so you look unto me

remember me when i am not here search for me

see me in the bluest waters clearest mirrors see me in you

pour into me onto me in me outside of me

salt water running down our faces crawling on the bathroom floor

taste oceans that travel down

once lost in a magnetic tide

it was summer when it was warm

Soft afternoon, 2021, in collaboration with Lily Joyce (co-written poem).

When Lily and I made *Soft afternoon*, we grappled with ideas about hyper-individualism and agreed upon a process of poetic writing that allowed us to respond to what the other had written before. This way of making poetry created a piece that flowed, holding two people's perceptions and ideas at once. Through collaboration we explored understandings of individualism, specifically in relation to Pākehātanga. The core of what we wanted to explore was questions like: how can collaboration remove individualistic ideas and create something else?

Individualistic morals in Pākehā culture have been a fundamental part of how Pākehā relate to others since European settlers arrived in Aotearoa.[8] Possession of property – the idea that an individual can *own* land – has been foundational in Pākehātanga. Betterment of an individual's or a family's status and wealth was a key driver for settler-colonial migration to Aotearoa, with the promise of leaving behind the limitations of class hierarchies in home countries. Individualism and capitalism go hand in hand in our histories of land, which have leaked into ideas about possession. Individualistic demarcation and tendencies for individualised authorship and ways of working are inherent in colonial structures like galleries, dominant museums and universities. Artist and writer, Hana Pera Aoake asserted that "in a non-western context, art making or rather creating rejects authorship, as it rejects ideas around ownership and possession."[9] We wanted to challenge our own tendencies as artists, even in collaboration, to demarcate and have authorship. We explored this through

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[8] Vocational Training Council, *Understanding Pakehas* (Wellington: E. C. Keating, 1978), 8–9.
[9] Hana Pera Aoake, "The Sea Brought You Here and Now You Must Go Back: A Review of Namesake," Pantograph Punch, 1 Sep 2017 pantograph-punch.com/posts/review-namesake.

shared writing exercises with a focus on blending sentences and words so that our individual input would become lost.

Fueled by a desire to be critical of our own social and historical positions, we made some direct comparisons between Pākehātanga and (what little we knew of) Māoritanga. Unintentionally, my thinking was reductive. In trying to define my unease, I kept landing on oversimplified logic: that Pākehātanga was bad and Māoritanga was good.

My making process also considered the passage of time, and how our bodies move through the world in space and time. Measurements of time in Aotearoa, specifically the Gregorian calendar and the maramataka, are of interest to my work and life. I consider what it means to follow the Gregorian calendar while living in Aotearoa. Astronomer Rangi Mātāmua writes about this from a Māori perspective:

> Our entire context of time shifted its foundations to a Western ideology and, accordingly, all its political, religious and cultural paradigms; this remains the reality of time in Aotearoa New Zealand to this present day.[10]

At the time, our criticality and learning about the maramataka funnelled into our writing and the installation for *Soft afternoon.* I brought aspects of maramataka and mātauranga Māori into my writing in the hopes that I could give space to a more holistic way of thought. I wrote this line of the poem:

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[10] Rangi Matamua, "Matariki and the decolonisation of time," in *Routledge handbook of critical indigenous studies,* edited by Brendan Hokowhitu, Aileen Moreton-Robinson, Linda Tuhiwai-Smith, Chris Andersen and Steve Larkin, 65–77 (New York: Routledge, 2021), 66.

it was summer when it was warm

These words captured a way of relating to seasonal shifts that I could understand and that I've felt in my body. It seemed to answer the philosophical question of "how do we know." In hindsight, I see that I was appropriating a knowledge system in my art that was not mine to use. My understanding has evolved about the difference between understanding and appreciating something, and whether I can employ a direct idea in my work.

British writer Olivia Laing says that art "opens us to the interior lives of others. It is a training ground for possibility."[11] It is on this training ground where I want my creative work to test boundaries, in as safe a way as possible. Academic and writer Alison Jones reflected in her memoir *This Pākehā Life* about relationality and instability in relationships, specifically her experience as Pākehā working with Māori, which I find helpful to reflect on here:

> But taking relationality seriously throws into disarray our sincere dreams for answers and end points – and our assumption that, one day, we will wake up and *all will be well*. Relationships are never like that. They are contingent, fluid and always on the move, always in the process of being and becoming something. In the end, the most important things are ineffable, unexplainable, difficult, and sometimes even contradictory.[12]

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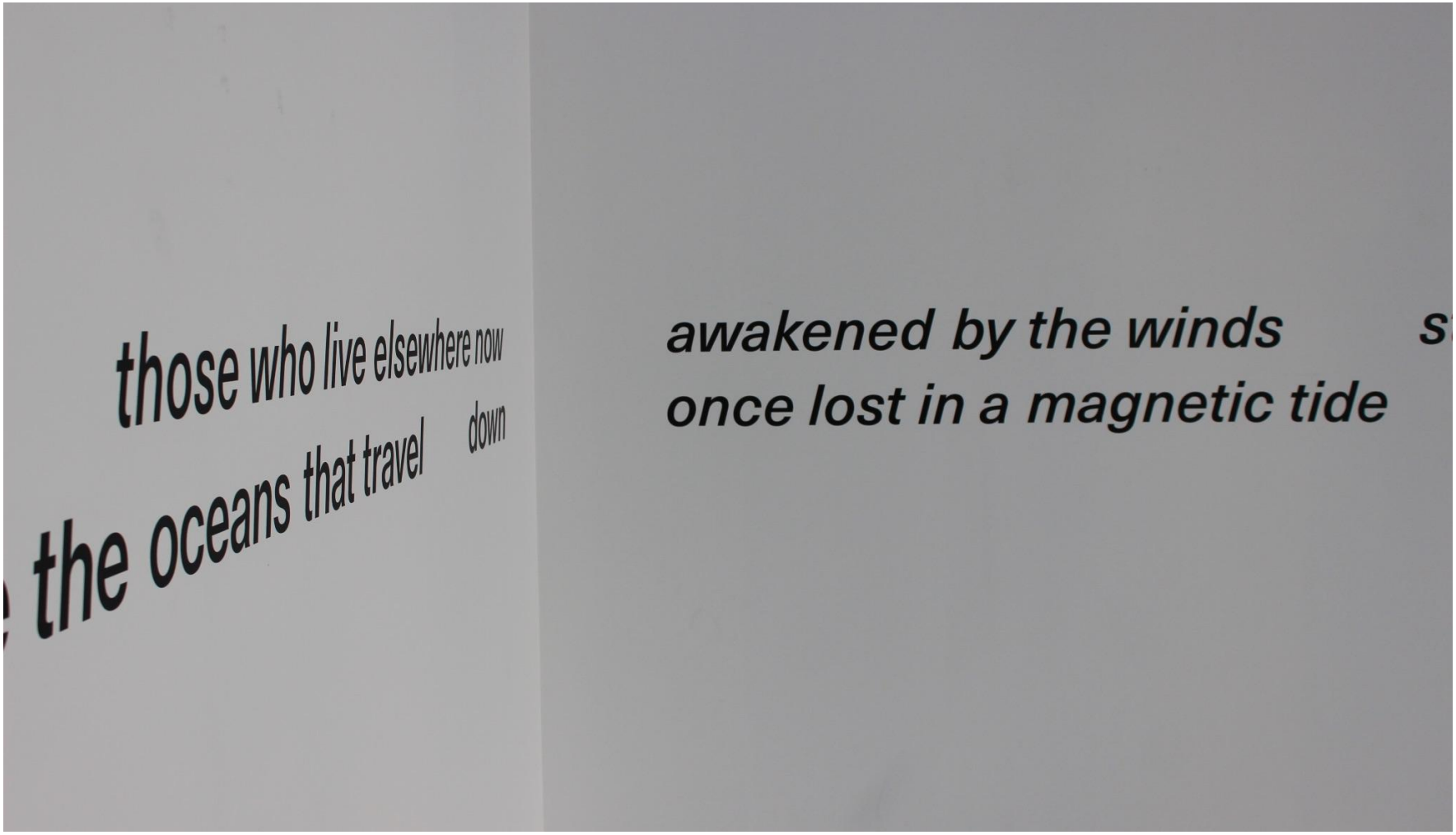
[11] Olivia Laing, *Funny Weather: Art in an Emergency* (New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 2020) 2–8.
[12] Jones, *This Pākehā Life*, 226.



Soft afternoon, in collaboration with Lily Joyce, 2021, black vinyl text on white walls (detail).

What we do

Before the MFA, my process for making moving image works involved mining my iPhone video archives for inspiration. The serendipity of searching directed my ideas about each work as I was making it. Because my archives held a collection of videos from my life in both England and Aotearoa, these narratives became enmeshed. Through the making process, unlike my life, I could bridge the gap between my life in Aotearoa and in England.

During the MFA, my process shifted to working with new ways of filming moving image works. In the first year, still amid the pandemic, I wanted to continue working through an autobiographical lens. This was 2021, another blur of lockdowns and navigating restrictions. The first group trip I had taken since 2019 was to Rangataua, near Ruapehu. My friends and I stayed in a large house with two floors of wrap-around verandas. This is where I made moving image work, *What we do*.[13] *What we do* is a single-channel work, filmed on a camcorder. It was projected in a large dark space, in colour and with sound. It looped from beginning to end, cycling through scenes from the veranda, staring at Ruapehu, to being in the bush near the mountain.

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[13] McIntosh, *What we do*, vimeo.com/640648818.

Imagined in the context of a room is a touring exhibition of work by prominent New Zealand artist Joanna Margaret Paul, curated by Dunedin Public Art Gallery and Sarjeant Art Gallery Te Whare o Rehua Whanganui. The exhibition began touring Aotearoa in 2021, following the worst of Covid 19 lockdowns. During the 2020 and 2021 lockdowns, wondering about my lived experience at home became all-encompassing and compelling.

Paul's practice builds the idea that her lived experience and perspective hold importance and legitimacy.[14] Much of her art, from painting to video, is not only made in a domestic environment but also depicts it. Discussing her work in the 90s, Paul described windows and doors as being an intermediary between herself and the world outside the domestic:

> The window has moved around within my work. In my earlier paintings they were closed, shut in; now doors and windows are "transitions", a fragile intermediary between myself and the world out there.[15]

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[14] Dunedin Public Art Gallery, "Introduction," in *Imagined in the context of a room*, edited by Lauren Gutsell and Lucy Hammonds (Dunedin: Dunedin Public Art Gallery, 2021), 8.
[15] Gregory O'Brien, "Joanna Margaret Paul: Beyond Sensation," in *Land and Deeds: Profiles of New Zealand contemporary painters*, 67–77 (Auckland: Godwit Publishing, 1996), 75.

There is an unsteadiness of an open window. There is vulnerability in allowing the outside to permeate in, while what is inside can go beyond. My practice evolved in making this work. I began going beyond themes of isolation and internalisation, key aspects in my earlier works, and leaning into the curiosity and desire to look more closely, or further and to find moments of connection with people, place, histories, and intangible realms.

In the opening scene of *What we do*, a view of Ruapehu's peak is framed by the roof of someone's home and bells from the veranda. This composition is representative of the leap I sought to take creatively, into spaces and realms outside the domestic. Elements of the domestic remain present throughout this work through sound. While the imagery changes to scenes of the bush around Ruapehu, Mangawhero River and Waitonga Falls, the sound of my friends talking inside the house keeps going until the end. This perhaps speaks to my uneasy relationship with this landscape, one not known by me; therefore, I never allow myself or the artwork to fully immerse in the landscape.

What we do, 2021, single-channel moving image with sound, 5:58min (installation view).

What we do, 2021, single-channel moving image with sound, 5:58min (still).

What we do was an unplanned work: once I was there, the imagery and sound were serendipitously recorded. For the duration of *What we do*, we remain partially within the context of the opening scene: an image of the white peaks of Ruaphehu in September, framed by the tin roof of someone's home in Rangataua, and three bells hanging from the porch of where we stayed for the weekend. This scene was filmed in a doorway, in the room behind the camera, my partner and tāku hoa (Ngāi Tūhoe) talked about Musket Wars and Mihingarangi Forbes. I edited the work so that this conversation is layered over the opening image, and later over images of my friends, a group of Pākehā, Māori, and Tauiwi, walking in the bush near the Managawhero River and Waitonga Falls.

Although this trip was not dissimilar to many others I have taken, filming what we did gave me an opportunity to think critically about our activity in a place we didn't know. What did it mean that we walked on tracks on iwi land, made by the Department of Conservation? Why do we want to know the name of plants, but not much else? Questions like these feel uncomfortable considering how ingrained these things are to me. Alison Jones reflected on this too, describing how much a part of Pākehātanga it is:

> Having forced roads through other people's lands, we just assume we can travel uninvited anywhere on an innocent whim, enjoying the scenery, and waving – in our famously friendly way – at the people who live near the road. It's ignorance of our history that allows us to behave like that.[16]

[16] Jones, *This Pākehā Life*, 205.

I do not want to remain ignorant to my history, my ancestry and the wider histories of Aotearoa. I researched my ancestors and found out that my great grandmother lived under Ruhapahu, near the Whanganui River. Some sources said she lived in Rangatua, the small town I stayed in while filming *What we do.* When I read that I felt so connected to her. Yet, although I felt some sense of belonging to Rangatua because of her, my family no longer lives there or talks about it as home. I realise that unlike whakapapa, I feel a looser grip on land my ancestors lived on, and instead my connection comes more from lived experience.

My great grandmother and family, 1913 or 1914, Whanganui River. Personal archive.

What we do, 2021, single-channel moving image with sound, 5:58min (still).

Amie Siegel is an American artist who was commissioned for the 5th Auckland Triennial, *If you were to live here?*, curated by Hou Hanru in 2013. Siegel's commission was called *Winter* and was shot in various sites including structures by Athfield Architects, including Ian Athfield's home in Te Whanganui-a-Tara. The work has a post-apocalyptic aesthetic where the architecture points toward the past and future simultaneously. Imagery of dark colonial cedar mixed with white washed bubble skylights creates a "sense of a history painting that's a history in the future."[17] Siegel used groups of people who activated these domestic spaces, demonstrating activities that would take place in an imagined future.[18] While I am interested in the architecture of dwellings and how protagonists can activate space, my work seeks to be less ambiguous about site, and is located in the now rather than the future.

From what I can tell, Siegel included only white-presenting or Pākehā people in the cast of *Winter*. The landscape, as with so many films shot in New Zealand (including my own), is what most distinguishes it from somewhere else. Despite the insistence on ambiguity, when we treat the cultural context of the film as carefully as Siegel treats the architecture and aesthetic, it becomes inaccurate to imagine the future that's suggested: where are Māori? The social and cultural dynamic is way more nuanced and layered than what *Winter* depicts and what Siegel has chosen to focus on. Without true acknowledgement of Māori and the interactions and interweaving between cultures, Siegel is committing to a shallowness which joins the predominant

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[17] Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, "5th Auckland Triennial: Amie Siegel @ Auckland Art Gallery," 12 Jun 2013, YouTube video, 1:28, youtube.com/watch?v=sRLYD_Q9Ylk.
[18] Auckland Art Gallery, "Amie Siegel" youtube.com/watch?v=sRLYD_Q9Ylk.

imagery associated with Aotearoa. *Winter* does not come close to listening or showing the richness of Aotearoa as a place or the people.

What we do was a catalyst in my creative practice. At the end of year one I began thinking about the wider impact of how my Pākehā perspective and creative work could be viewed by both Aotearoa and international audiences, specifically, what does it mean to be Pākehā in the landscape? One way I activated this work (in addition to filming) was by posing questions and inviting others to reflect on some of the things that I was finding challenging to consider, like presenting imagery of my friends on holiday as representative of my Pākehātanga or how to show the richness of our culture. I spoke about Pākehātanga with friend and poet Ben Fagan in 2021:

> DM The deeper 'Pākehā conversation' that I've been privy to is about banal nationalism but there's a richness in so many other ways. The deep-ness of our identity is not something I've heard people talk about, or even want to talk about.
>
> BF They're really boring, Kiwiana books, but there's an importance there too because it's an attempt at identity: it's taking a swing at identity. You use the word deep-ness, and there's complexity because as soon as you scratch the surface there's insecurity. So much fragility in all of it: like if you read three Kiwiana books in a row, you become painfully aware of everything that's not being talked about. There's this backdrop of colonisation, or just relationships with Māori and this big unspoken thing of: *Okay so why are you here?* Like

> what is the context in which you're pointing to these really boring things to define yourself?[19]

My work seeks specificity about places and people. I acknowledge that my work comes from a Pākehā perspective and is part of Pākehātanga. As Anna Marie-White asserted in the art exhibition publication *Pākehā Now!*:

> Pākehā culture influences every aspect of life in New Zealand. In some respect, conscious or not, all white New Zealand citizens contribute to the maintenance and preservation of Pākehā culture. This is why Pākehā carry a responsibility to understand and be aware of their culture and how it affects, and differs, from others.[20]

Marie-White's chapter in *Pākehā Now!* is a satirical overview of Pākehātanga, including our affinity with cultural iconography *Kiwiana*, farming and DIY. It was important for me to read this because it emphasised the absurdity of trying to define an entire culture through its art and objects, much like Pākehā have been doing to Māori for years. Equally, Marie-White demonstrated that Pākehātanga can begin to be defined through our art. What's more, paying attention to Pākehā art can potentially reveal who we are. Ani Mikaere's position is that:

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[19] Ben Fagan, personal interview, interviewed by author, Wellington, 23 Oct 2021, personal recording, 01:14:37.

[20] Anna-Marie White, "Te Pākehā: The People of New Zealand," in *Pākehā Now!* 13–44 (Nelson: The Suter Te Aratoi O Whakatū, 2007), 44.

> Pākehā people carry an enormous burden of guilt about the way in which they have come to occupy their present position of power and privilege. They also have a deep-rooted insecurity about the illegitimacy of the state that they have attempted to create on Māori land.[21]

I do often see this in other Pākehā as well as embodying it myself. Acknowledging these uncomfortable feelings is a way of moving forward. I am compelled by something Moana Jackson said:

> ...colonial stories may have helped explain the taking of power, but they could not give the colonisers the comfort of a place to stand.[22]

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[21] Mikaere, *Colonising Myths – Maori Realities*, 52.
[22] Jackson, "Where to next?" 145.

What we do, 2021, single-channel moving image with sound, 5:58min (still).

Capturing ‘reality’ became less appealing to me after making *What we do*. Part of this was the use of my real life, and my friends' lives, as part of sometimes delicate conversations around my work. I saw the benefit in using what I had learned, but wanted to explore what would happen if I distanced my personal life from it, and instead tried to evoke similar conversations but with imagined worlds.

Artist and curator James Tapsell-Kururangi (Te Arawa, Ngāti Whakaue, Ngāti Pikiao, Ngāti Mākino, Tainui, Ngāti Raukawa, Ngāti Porou, Te Whānau-a-Rākairoa) collapses time as linear and is careful in depicting intimate familial relationships. Tapsell-Kururangi does not take for granted our understanding of time, of life, of death, or of our human condition. Moving image works *A portrait of my Father* (2022)[23] and *He waiata aroha* (2021)[24] are imbued with imagery of places that hold historical and familial meaning to Tapsell-Kururangi, yet move beyond the autobiographical. The Enjoy publication for his exhibition outlined his way of working:

> Rather than acting to document these places, the film moves towards a semi-fictional space, where locations dense with meaning and memory for the artist act as touchstones, gateways into an imagined celestial space.[25]

At the end of year one I sought a different approach technically. In order to move away from the autobiographical, I stopped using iPhones and camcorders, opting

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[23] City Gallery Wellington, “Matarau,” 2022, citygallery.org.nz/exhibitions/matarau/.
[24] Brook Konia, “Kōrerotanga. Listen, Watch, Carry the Days...” Enjoy Contemporary Art Space, Apr 2021, enjoy.org.nz/publishing/exhibition-essays/he-waitata-aroha/korerotanga.
[25] Enjoy Contemporary Art Space, *James Tapsell-Kururangi: He waiata aroha 09.04—22.05.21* (Wellington, 2021), exhibition publication.

for high-definition, professional-grade cameras. I also made space to invite others into the project by employing a videographer and sound technician, Fraser Walker. This meant I could focus on directing, planning, editing and installation. I hoped this higher-stakes way of making would push my ideas further, as well as make works that had their own magnetic and arresting agency in a space. I wanted to explore how different modes of collaboration could also diffuse aspects of individual authorship and bring other subjectivities and skills into conversation with mine through collaboration. This will be discussed further in relation to *Return* and *A wave that moves out*.

Bedroom, 2021, Waimapihi, Aro Valley, Aotearoa. Personal archive.

Return

Return is a two-channel moving image work about a mare and foal whose bodies are seen in isolation, one on each screen, and then together on both screens.[26] The work was shot from twilight until midmorning the day before the mare and foal were 'weaned' from each other, marking the end of their six-month-long relationship.

Return was driven by the circumstances of the horses in it. We filmed the day before the foal was weaned from her mother. These actions are built upon the idea that a mother horse and her baby must be separated in order for them to thrive once a certain point of tension has been reached between them.

While not explicit within the work, this mare/foal relationship held significance for me personally. The passage of time is reminiscent of the way my mother (England) and I (Aotearoa) experience our lives at the same point in time. I was intrigued to explore how the maternal bond could be imaged, on the verge of separation and independence. A parallel interest was also how this relationship could also talk to patterns of animal domestication and cultivated land use within European-style farming traditions.

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[26] McIntosh, *Return*, vimeo.com/729448144.

In *Return*, each screen shows an opposing passage of time. While the left moves from dawn twilight until day, the right does the inverse simultaneously. Both screens show images of each horse, the foal on the left and her mother on the right – midway through the film, the imagery blends. Both screens show the horses together and at the same time of day. This is the midpoint in the work; the only time where mother and daughter are together. After this, they fade back to scenes where they are alone: daughter reaching daylight and mother returning to dawn.

Return, 2022, two-channel moving image with sound, 3:29min (installation view).

Return, 2022, two-channel moving image with sound, 3:29min (still).

The screens reference a distance and intimacy between this mare and foal, which sees their relationship ebb and flow, from solitude to closeness, and back again. The work is looped in this cycle. In both the shooting and editing process, I became more aware of how these two animals existed within the landscape, of farmland in the Horowhenua region, of the ground disturbed by their hooves, the fencing (moveable and fixed) that contained their movements, the vehicles and roading that demarcated the land. While strong focus was the interaction between the two horses and the changing qualities of light, the context of the landscape also became a significant aspect of the work.

Art critic and writer John Berger suggested that we see ourselves reflected in the environment when we are attuned to it:

> What we habitually see confirms us. Yet it can happen, suddenly, unexpectedly, and most frequently in the half-light-of-glimpses, that we catch sight of another visible order which intersects with ours and has nothing to do with it.[27]

He argued, then, that there are times of day when the light is dim, perhaps at dawn or at dusk, where we become more open to other ways of being, of other visible orders of things. I filmed *Return* at dawn with the horses to become attuned to their ways of being and how they lived in the darkness.

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[27] John Berger, "Opening a Gate," *Why Look at Animals* (London: Penguin, 2009), 9–10.

In *Return*, a drone soundtrack plays alongside the movements of the horses. It is a voiceless song tied together with a sustained lower note. High-pitched ringing layered over the top while a waxing and waning, almost piercing note played at the top frequency. The song narrows toward the end, with the low and high notes enmeshing, out of sync with the imagery that waxes and wanes. The sounds resemble the wind while remaining clearly artificial, digitally-made. Sometimes seeing horses within the confines of domestication feels like only artificial control, and the physical power of horses could erupt at any moment. The sound serves as a reminder that this wildness remains despite us.

In *Return,* I searched for ways of carrying the agency of non-human others, as Te Kawehau Hoskins and Alison Jones outlined:

> [A]ll beings and things have particular qualities and capabilities by virtue of their taking form in a *relational* context. The identity of 'things' in the world is not understood as discrete or independent, but emerges through and relates to everything else.[28]

Return was shot at 60 frames per second (FPS), half the speed of how we see real life. This meant that the audience was able to see the in-between frames usually missed. Slowing the work gave more space to notice the looming body of the horse or how the light hits a patch of grass. *Te Whakawhitinga*, 2022, is a moving image

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[28] Te Kawehau Hoskins and Alison Jones, "Non-human Others and Kaupapa Māori Research," in *Critical Conversations in Kaupapa Māori* (Wellington: Huia Publishers, 2017), 53.

work by Tāmaki Makarau based artist Jeremy Leatinu'u. Alongside the exhibition at The Physics Room in Christchurch, curator Abby Cunnane reflected:

> This slowed-down, watching-listening-thinking state makes space for the autonomous identity of the places pictured – these places hold their own whakapapa, and layers of their own stories, beyond this narrative.[29]

[29] Abby Cunnane, "Te Whakawhitinga," Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū, 22 Jun 2022, christchurchartgallery.org.nz/bulletin/208/te-whakawhitinga.

Return, 2022, two-channel moving image with sound, 3:29min (two stills).

Return, 2022, two-channel moving image with sound, 3:29min (still).

James Tapsell-Kururangi's moving image work *A portrait with my Father*, 2022, speaks to the complexities in his paternal relationship. The work is slow-moving, steadily hovering on one scene for 30 seconds at a time. No sound but a low note for a few seconds interrupts the painterly, staged-like images of a lemon tree and a wooden outdoor table in a domestic setting. Words in te reo Pākehā invite me to wonder about the lives of James and his father.

When I look at the horses in *Return*, they remind me of my own separation from my mother. We experience the same days come and go but at different times. According to a Gregorian calendar, we are constantly out of sync, never existing at the same time. While my sun is high, she sleeps in darkness. My creative work captures the melancholy I feel while distanced from my family and the unease I have confronted from a Pākehā position in Aotearoa.

Mum in our garden at sunset, 2012, Surrey, England. Personal archive.

Aotearoa bluegreen bushes frame the dusky road ahead. Hours ago under cover of twilight, the world bathed in a cool shade.

A dark wind drove around the flax and grasses, uttering to bodies.

Breath heaving with the wind, eyes closing until they never open, navigating a new sensory order, I step out in good faith and never return.

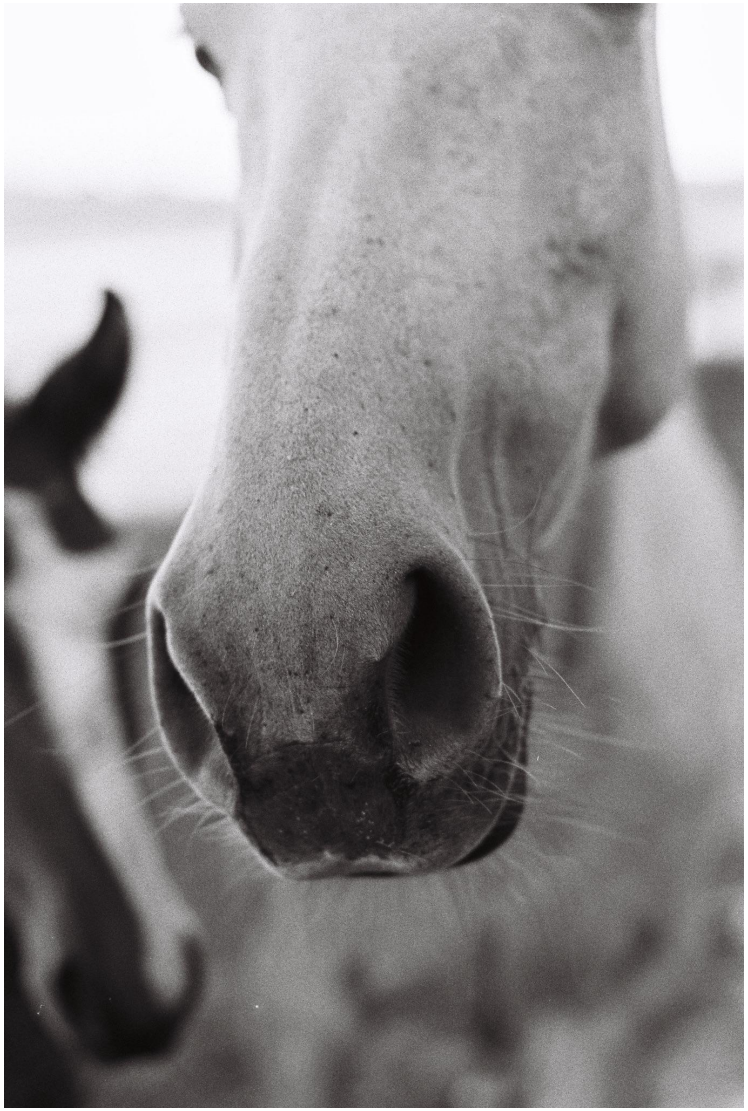
There is a hum down there, below the fence lines, near the mossy surface.

Crouching, I hold her body. Breath visible from her glistening face, hot wax screaming hitting my sweating skin. Hurting bridging over into pleasure.

You, born to me, lie sweetly on the lawn.

And my sister became a horse who I see in dark corridors. Wavering on the precipice, she needed to be liminal and live in the yellow half light.

Yellowbluegreen, 2022, by the author (poem).



Mare and foal, 2022. Ōhau, Horowhenua, Aotearoa. Personal archive.

A wave that moves out

A wave that moves out uses the site of my old home as a space to imagine how Pākehā appear in Aotearoa's landscape.[30] The environment is identifiable by the Kōwhai, Kawakawa, onion weed, *Tradescantia zebrina*, and a mown lawn. These organisms illustrate Aotearoa as colonised and cultivated land, where once-foreign bodies now lie quietly amongst their elders, blending in and covering spaces no other plants can reach.

I felt a desire to draw from mine and my sister's relationship. When we were young we were best friends. We experienced immense joy and fear, going on grand garden explorations and learning about the outside world together.

[30] McIntosh, *A wave that moves out*, vimeo.com/796545440.

A wave that moves out, 2022, single-channel video with sound, 6:49min (installation view).

A wave that moves out, 2022, single-channel video with sound, 6:49min (still).

A wave that moves out features my two friends, Georgia and Sarah, filmed in the garden at my house. Dissimilar from previous autobiographical work, this video depicts my friends' bodies as an extension of my own body. They are both Pākehā femmes, who, like me, occupy a similar desire to connect to a Pākehātanga. For the artwork, I planned for them to be entranced by their surroundings and by each other, exploring their (or my own) connection as well as disconnection from place. I directed them looking up at tall trees and birds, performing their interest in their surroundings through pointing and whispering to each other. Scripting, planning, collaborating, costuming, and directing like I did for *A wave that moves out* were, for me, new ways of making moving images.

A wave that moves out partially responds to my own memories of living on the land. I asked the protagonists to walk a path I had walked countless times. Part of disconnecting the land from a space of memory to an imagined space happened during our test shoots. I walked the path that the protagonists would later. Repeatedly doing this enabled me to reimagine what the space could be, with the knowledge of what it was in the past to guide me. Walking the line informed what I wanted the protagonists to engage with, elicit and enact while being there.

The protagonists move in slow motion, filmed at 60 FPS. Their overbearing joy, their conversation, and their laughter were carefully staged. There is a feeling of reverie throughout; that the film is not grounded in reality as it is usually experienced. This feeling is heightened in the final scene where they hold each other, spin, smile, and shout before running to and fro across the screen.

A wave that moves out, 2022, single-channel video with sound, 6:49min (still).

The dynamic of collaboration shifted to a higher energy for *A wave that moved out*. Whereas Fraser and I worked quietly and serendipitously with the horses at dawn for *Return*, *A wave that moved out* demanded attention. Although I felt in charge, we were at the whim of the weather, the light, and the typography of the land while filming. Logistics like scheduling and costuming were difficult to navigate. Filming long takes required repeatedly walking the same path with everyone in a predetermined spot. Although rigid at times, these boundaries seemed to give everyone a sharper focus. Conversations about what could work next flowed between each take and a collective appreciation for the work was cultivated by making it together. This process resulted in an artwork that speaks beyond my own comprehension and imagination.

In the editing suite, the images were overlaid with the sound of maniacal laughter and from a conversation we had recorded together. The conversation is a dreamy, utopic visualisation of the future where we spoke about how our unborn children would be raised, and the possibility of exiting capitalism to have more time to enjoy our lives with others to share daily chores. As an exercise, it brought into focus our desires for connection, love, caring and friendship towards our communities, environments and cultural contexts. The risk of this dreaming in relation to the Pākehātanga I was exploring, sits in potential conflict. The conversation is one that exudes the privileges and perspectives of the protagonists. The talking is edited to be out-of-sync with the images we see, inviting a disconnection from reality and dream state. Overlaid over imagery of the awestruck and frolicking Pākehā protagonists, the work takes on a naive feeling.

A wave that moves out was inspired by a scene in series *PEN15*, when best friends Maya and Anna pretend that they are sisters during a sleepover. In one idyllic scene, Maya and Anna run into each other's arms, jump up and down, screaming with joy. The scene evoked memories of my youthhood playing with my sister and best friends. A sample of song *Dreams* by The Cranberries is layered over the scene, the lyrics repeat:

> *It's never quite as it seems, never quite as it seems.*

The idealism portrayed in this scene is like the song suggests. What lies beneath their great bursts of energetic happiness is a loss of control over themselves and of reality. We see this happen in the subsequent scenes when Maya and Anna argue and fall out. Neither character understands why the other is upset and neither can communicate how they feel clearly. The result of this series of events manifests in each character as ambivalence toward the other.

This reminds me of my fear as a Pākehā artist. Researcher and educator, Alex Hotere-Barnes defined that many Pākehā feel paralysed by fear of being wrong or causing offence, and as a result, take no action that could result in cultural change.[31] I want cultural change toward tino rangatiratanga in Aotearoa.[32] Reckoning with my own ambivalence and occasional self-contempt toward being Pākehā continually

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[31] Radio New Zealand, "Pākehā Paralysis," Land of the Long White Cloud, 26 Nov 2019, YouTube video, 6:54, youtube.com/watch?v=G-cAK3YwDUY&t=146s.

[32] Matike Mai Aotearoa – The Independent Working Group on Constitutional Transformation, *He Whakaaro Here Whakaumu Mō Aotearoa*, 2016, converge.org.nz/pma/MatikeMaiAotearoaReport.pdf.

comes up in my process of making art. I am learning to deal with this with love and curiosity. These contradictory feelings exist in parallel, and are emotions I seek to give space to and hold within myself and my art.

A wave that moves out reveals a pattern of how I engage with my own Pākehā way of being in Aotearoa. My experience being here is uniquely influenced from growing up in England, a place where self-deprecation is a constant part of people's way of seeing themselves. I am connected and disconnected from that way of being. I feel lucky to be Pākehā and to have the opportunity to build a life here because I was born here. Yet the satirical, sometimes sarcastic tone of *A wave that moves out* reveals some contempt, or at least, uncertainty, about how I exist here.

A wave that moves out, 2022, single-channel video with sound, 6:49min (still).

Up until making *A wave that moves out*, sound had come later in my planning and editing process. For this work, I prioritised recording voices, laughter, and environmental noise alongside the imagery. The laughter moves from being 'fake' and forced into bouts of 'real' and uncontrollable laughter. I directed the protagonists through a process of inducing genuine laughter by first pretending to laugh. This relationship between the forced/fake and the uncontrollable/real is conducive to my interest in how experience swings from moments that feel fluid and natural, *good*, to moments that feel forced and static, *bad*. I am compelled by the idea that these moments may never exist without each other, and so there is value to be found in both.

There is an uneasiness of hearing someone laughing without knowing what they're laughing at. I fear that the unease of this will scare some of my audience away, and that the subtleties I crave in my artwork could be overshadowed. Marianna Simnett takes a chance with her audience because her work is challenging to experience. The exhibition *CREATURE* balances traumatic imagery, difficult concepts, dark fairytales, with magical narrative, familiarity, and concepts of renewal. She asks us to trust that she knows what trauma feels like and suggested we should sit and listen. As CIRCUIT Artist Moving Image Director, Mark Williams, posited:

> The gamble of the work lies in the delicate balance between compelling the viewer to look, whilst simultaneously repelling our gaze. How then, to draw the viewer into a world that also pushes us away?[33]

[33] Williams, "Marianna Simnett," circuit.org.nz/writing-and-podcast/creature-marianna-simnett.

Simnett's five-channel installation *Blood in my Milk*, 2018, operates "on a sliding scale between matter-of-fact documentary and fantasy," with fairy tale songs layered over cold and bureaucratic language.[34] This mixture creates a sense of foreboding while at once, elements of whimsy and nostalgia make the imagery seem more absurd, almost a parody of themselves. This is the satirical tenor I am trying to tap into. I am interested in much of what Simnett does, yet my work concerns my specific cultural experience and is intended to be shown primarily to audiences in Aotearoa.

A wave that moves out is about the impossibility of ignoring Pākehā colonial history. In the work's version of the world, nothing is overwhelming, every interruption is exciting, where everyone looks around, smiles, laughs and hugs in the light of day. The world is literally lit up by the low morning and afternoon suns on the same day within minutes of each other. Here there is no night, only a cycle of sunshine. There are elements relating to a sense of unease in the film, components that jolt us out of the idealised world the protagonists live in.

Te Whanganui-a-Tara-based artist Sarah Jane Parton (Omoka, Tongareva, Avaiki-raro) made the moving image work *she's so usual* in 2003.[35] In the work, Parton wears a bright red dress in front of a white backdrop. She sings in a flat, New Zealand accent, karaoke-style over the top of Cindy Lauper's *Time After Time*,

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[34] Williams, "Marianna Simnett," circuit.org.nz/writing-and-podcast/creature-marianna-simnett.
[35] Circuit Artist Moving Image Aotearoa New Zealand, "Sarah Jane Parton, She's so Usual (2003)," digital video, 4:11min, circuit.org.nz/work/shes-so-usual.

tripping over parts of the song and looks sheepishly at the camera. Parton dances and sways, her movements are uncoordinated and sporadic. It is both endearing and uncomfortable to watch. I am drawn to Parton's vulnerability and emotional tenor in the context of a moving image work.

Christchurch Art Gallery noted about a later work, *Bright Light*, 2008, that Parton's practice often exposes who we are (reality) and who we want to be (dreams) simultaneously. Her work illuminates the relationship between dreams and reality by noticing the spaces or contradictions between them.[36] *A wave that moves out* notices the space between Pākehā wish for belonging and the reality of how far we have to come. Ani Mikaere noted that reform may come Pākehā renouncing control:

> Giving up control requires a leap of faith on the part of Pākehā. In my view, however, nothing less will suffice if they truly want to gain the feeling of belonging that they so crave, the sense of identity that until now has proven so elusive.[37]

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[36] Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna O Waiwhetū, "Sarah Jane Parton: Bright Light (2008)," last accessed 18 Nov 2022, christchurchartgallery.org.nz/exhibitions/sarah-jane-parton-twinset.
[37] Mikaere, *Colonising Myths*, 79.

A wave that moves out, 2022, single-channel video with sound, 6:49min (still).

A wave that moves out is shown as a single, long take. From start to finish, the world moves at half the speed of real life. Together, the work is uninterrupted and moves in a fluidity not experienced in the everyday. German Professor and writer of cinematic and art history, Lutz Koepnick proposed that:

> The long take distends time, derails the drives of narrative and desire, and hovers around the border between film and photography.[38]

The camerawork means an audience can be "aware of the scene as a scene, as a construct," as Amie Siegel puts it.[39] The camera moves independently of the protagonists, panning and zooming past their bodies, focusing instead on the environment or in-between spaces. The camera hovers on spaces in the environment; there is emphasis on something elusive, ungraspable. The focus is not always on the protagonists, they become part of the world, not the sole agent.

Much like the native plants and trees that mix and twist together surrounding a grassy lawn, the protagonists sit in an old Magnolia tree, admiring its waxy leaves.

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[38] Lutz Koepnick, *The Long Take: Art Cinema and the Wondrous* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017) 5. I am interested in slow-moving images in the context of the speed at which many of us live in 2022. Koepnick wrote: "the culture of 24/7 in fact progressively undercuts what empowers wonder in the first place: a certain absence of expectation and a deliberate postponement of reaction, activity, and interpretation… Contemporary moving image practice at once probes and recalibrates what it means to be attentive today. It deflates the disruptive haste of contemporary screen life to play out the promise of the wondrous against a culture of vigilant connectivity and mostly reactive self-maintenance."

[39] Columbia GSAPP, "Amie Siegel," 12 Jun 2019, YouTube video, 01:40:46, youtube.com/watch?v=gz1UxuFyFzY&t=66s.

Their bodies entwined with branches, hiding and revealing each other at once. Steadily, they move and discover Kōwhai that have fallen from old and thickened branches. A Kawakawa leaf is plucked for its earthy scent before the protagonists embrace, trampling the lawn, darting to and fro in front of the vast space framed by onion weed and *Tradescantia zebrina*. The last frame shows a valley blanketed with green: old pines and young ponga grow together, quietly reaching for sunlight. These frames illustrate this place as violent and hopeful. Still, as we hastily navigate the world, the Kōwhai grows.

Questions raised writing this exegesis include the potential for international audiences to receive work about Pākehātanga. I am compelled to have conversations about colonial history, Pākehātanga and decolonisation in Aotearoa in the contexts of England, Scotland, and Ireland, my ancestral lands. The overarching stories of Aotearoa mainly derive from tourism as well as blanket imagery of mountainous vistas, cultivated fields, glassy water and modern architecture. I wonder, where and who are the people?

Don’t be scared

of all that lives

of the beginning of time

of those found at dawn

Settle in knowing

hurried matters pass

quietly leaping into pools

drowning as they arose

Step and be ready

for gulls still fly in stormy weather

heavied with water

and carried by wind

Wait for change

that soaks the ground beneath

parched by lingering days

it wakes at sunset and goes on

Messages, 2022, by the author (poem).

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