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First Son

Memory and Myth - an adjustment of faith

A written component presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Masters of Design in Fashion and Textile Design at Massey University, Wellington, New Zealand.

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2005

Abstract

First Son is an exploration of cultural change in New Zealand from the 1940s till the 1980s using textiles as medium for communication. Referencing personal memories, contemporary New Zealand mythology, art and design; my work places an ordinary mans life within the sweeping social revolution that occurred over this time. As personal vehicles for expression of both my dead father and the declining rural Pakeha culture he grew up in, the textile objects have become memorials, moving statues for a culture that has been forever changed by war, government, technology and time. My research contributes written and visual material to the fields of post-modern, historical, phenomenological research, within the context of memory, identity, textiles and memorial. Using the memories a group have of an ordinary man who most people have never heard of, I hope to touch a part of all of those who see my work. The specific memories are not common, but the sadness, joy and very act of remembering someone is universal, so I propose that this will speak to all those who view it. I have aimed to create a body of work that is a visual memoir or a memorial in the form of a series of textile based Memory Objects to remember my father and the time he was alive, before those who knew him well are gone. It has used the space we surround ourselves with, particularly dress, to explore the links between the past and the present. It aims to show the importance of remembering, of archiving and presenting the past in an accessible and meaningful way.

First Son has also been designed using a method of garment production that has the potential to reduce waste in an otherwise wasteful industry. This further increases the impact of the work beyond historical, social and emotional frameworks and into the environmental context as well.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Elly van de Wijdeven for her consistent and critical supervision. I thank Thomas McQuillan for photographing my work and being a very supportive and useful person to have around. I would like to thank the staff at Massey University for their assistance. I would like to thank The Fifty2 Gallery for the space to exhibit my work. Lastly I would like to thank the family and friends of Ronald Burwell, without whom this work would not have been possible.

Table of Contents

1 – 3	Introduction – Are We Our Memories?
4 – 6	Scope of the Project: Central Proposition, Aims and Methodology
7 – 16	Literature Review
7 – 8	Memory
8 – 10	Identity
10 – 11	Mementos
11 – 12	Photography
12 – 15	Dress and textiles
15 – 16	Conclusion
17 – 47	Memory and Myth
17	Introduction
18 – 22	Last Stand – the Domestication of Godzone: 1940s
23 – 28	What Are You – a Man or a Myth?: 1950s
29 – 34	Warrior Nation: 1960s
35 – 41	Back in My Day: 1970s
42 – 47	A Few Cards Short of a Deck: 1980s
48 – 103	Exegesis
48 – 52	Introduction
53 – 61	<i>Last Stand</i>
62 – 69	<i>What Are You – a Man or a Myth?</i>
70 – 77	<i>Warrior Nation</i>
78 – 86	<i>Back in My Day</i>
87 – 94	<i>A Few Cards Short of a Deck</i>
95 – 99	Exhibition
100 – 106	Conclusion
100	Applications
101 – 102	Conclusion

a – r	Appendices
a	Ethical Standards
b	Conversations
c – d	<i>Conversation 1 – Daughter</i>
e – f	<i>Conversation 2 – Sister</i>
g – h	<i>Conversation 3 – Friend</i>
i	<i>Conversation 4 – Brother</i>
j – k	<i>Conversation 5 – Childhood Friend</i>
l – m	<i>Conversation 6 – Wife</i>
n	<i>Conversation 7 – Son</i>
o – r	Bibliography

List of Illustrations

- Fig. 1, Lorie Novak, *Fragments*. 1987. Colour photograph 16 ½ x 22": Courtesy of the artist. From *Searching for Memory, the brain, the mind and the past*. Schacter, D. (1996). New York: Basic Books.
- Fig. 2, Anne Noble. *Untitled*. 2001. Type C colour print, dimensions unknown. From *Anne Noble: States of Grace*, Paton, J. (2001). Wellington: Victoria University Press.
- Fig. 3, Hussein Chalayan. *After Words*. 2000. Fashion collection. From *The Fashion of Architecture*. Quinn, B. (2003). Oxford: Berg.
- Fig. 4, Hussein Chalayan. *After Words*. 2000. Fashion collection. From *The Fashion of Architecture*. Quinn, B. (2003). Oxford: Berg.
- Fig. 5, Eran Shakine, *Hadassah*. 1992. Collage, oil and varnish on plywood, 12 x 16": Courtesy of the artist. From *Searching for Memory, the brain, the mind and the past*. Schacter, D. (1996). New York: Basic Books.
- Fig. 6, *Last Stand*. 2-D to 3-D progression. 2005. Photographs courtesy of Thomas McQuillan
- Fig. 7. Burning land /Last stand print. 2005. Detail - not actual size.
- Fig. 8. Tourist/ Wallpaper print. 2005. Detail – not actual size.
- Fig. 9. *Last Stand* – flat. Burning Land /Last Stand side up. Photograph courtesy of Thomas McQuillan
- Fig. 10. 2D to 3D progression . Photograph courtesy of Thomas McQuillan
- Fig. 11. Detail. Photograph courtesy of Thomas McQuillan
- Fig. 12. Detail of front. Photograph courtesy of Thomas McQuillan
- Fig. 13. Detail of Tuis. Photograph courtesy of Thomas McQuillan
- Fig. 14. Detail of jacket. Photograph courtesy of Thomas McQuillan
- Fig. 15. Detail of embellishment. Photograph courtesy of Thomas McQuillan
- Fig. 16. *First Son*. 2005. 2-D to 3-D progression. Photograph courtesy of Thomas McQuillan
- Fig. 17. – First Son print. 2005. Detail – not actual size.
- Fig. 18. Precarious /Chair print. 2005. Detail – not actual size
- Fig. 19. *What Are You – A Man or a Myth?* – flat. Precarious /Chair side up. Photograph courtesy of Thomas McQuillan
- Fig. 20. 2D to 3D progression. Photograph courtesy of Thomas McQuillan
- Fig. 21. Detail. Photograph courtesy of Thomas McQuillan
- Fig. 22. Detail of back. Photograph courtesy of Thomas McQuillan
- Fig. 23. Detail of back. Photograph courtesy of Thomas McQuillan
- Fig. 24. Button detail. Photograph courtesy of Thomas McQuillan

- Fig. 25. *Warrior Nation*. 2005. 2-D to 3-D progression. Photograph courtesy of Thomas McQuillan
- Fig. 26. Letterbox / Camo print. 2005. Detail – not actual size
- Fig. 27. Land / Camo print. 2005. Detail – not actual size
- Fig. 28. *Warrior Nation* – flat. Letterbox / Camo side up. Photograph courtesy of Thomas McQuillan
- Fig. 29. 2D to 3D progression. Photograph courtesy of Thomas McQuillan
- Fig. 30. Detail. Photograph courtesy of Thomas McQuillan
- Fig. 31. Detail of front. Photograph courtesy of Thomas McQuillan
- Fig. 32. Detail of back. Photograph courtesy of Thomas McQuillan
- Fig. 33. *Back in My Day*. 2005. 2-D to 3-D progression. Photograph courtesy of Thomas McQuillan
- Fig. 34. Chain-link print. 2005. Detail – not actual size
- Fig. 35. Two Step print. 2005. Detail – not actual size
- Fig. 36. Land / Psychedelic print. 2005. Detail – not actual size.
- Fig. 37. *Back In My Day* – flat . Chain-link / Two-step side up. Photograph courtesy of Thomas McQuillan
- Fig. 38. 2D to 3D progression. Photograph courtesy of Thomas McQuillan
- Fig. 39. Detail. Photograph courtesy of Thomas McQuillan
- Fig. 40. Detail of front. Photograph courtesy of Thomas McQuillan
- Fig. 41. Detail coat of arms embellishment. Photograph courtesy of Thomas McQuillan
- Fig. 42. Detail of coat of arms. Photograph courtesy of Thomas McQuillan
- Fig. 43. *A Few Cards Short of a Deck*. 2005. 2-D to 3-D progression. Photograph courtesy of Thomas McQuillan
- Fig. 44. Flies and Maggots print. 2005. Detail – not actual size
- Fig. 45. Tree / Cell print. 2005. Detail – not actual size.
- Fig. 46. *A Few Cards Short of a Deck* – flat. Flies and Maggots side up. Photograph courtesy of Thomas McQuillan
- Fig. 47. 2D to 3D progression. Photograph courtesy of Thomas McQuillan
- Fig. 48. Detail. Photograph courtesy of Thomas McQuillan
- Fig. 49. Detail of front. Photograph courtesy of Thomas McQuillan
- Fig. 50. Detail of back. Photograph courtesy of Thomas McQuillan

Fig. 51. Detail of side fastening. Photograph courtesy of Thomas McQuillan

Fig. 52. Kaimata Primary rugby team, Ron at far right. Inglewood, 1954-55. Burwell
Family archives

Fig. 53. Exhibition detail of fake grass. Photograph courtesy of Thomas McQuillan

Fig. 54. First Son Exhibition at The Fifty2 Gallery, Wellington. Photograph courtesy
of Thomas McQuillan

Fig. 55. First Son Exhibition at The Fifty2 Gallery, Wellington. Photograph courtesy
of Thomas McQuillan

Fig. 56. First Son Exhibition at The Fifty2 Gallery, Wellington. Photograph courtesy
of Thomas McQuillan

Fig. 57. First Son Exhibition at The Fifty2 Gallery, Wellington. Photograph courtesy
of Thomas McQuillan

Introduction

ARE re We Our Memories?

Without memory, we are not whole - or as Dr Peter Marshall claims, "We are our memories" (Marshall, 2002, p.5). Despite this memory is an ephemeral concept - it can easily slip from our grasp, distort the truth and is often incomplete. It also forms the basis of identity (Schacter, 1996, p. 2). It is one of our most vivid links to the past and it is on our memory of the past that we base our decisions for the future. Memory is in not only the mind, but is infused in objects, dates, events and space.

Childhood toys are kept and handed down to our children - perhaps in an attempt to give our children some essence of a happy childhood. Does the toy somehow hold the memory of such happy times? Wedding dresses are kept, but never worn again. Statues erected by now infamous leaders are often torn down as though by removing the signifier of a time the memory of it will fade along with the loss of the object. Faithfully taken photographs of graduations and birthdays, holidays and reunions are archived in photo albums or displayed with pride on the mantelpiece.

Memories also exist in space and buildings. Hospitals hold memories of death, and of new life. The combined effect of the smell of disinfectant, echoing sound of hallways and claustrophobic, often maze-like, layout can have an overwhelming effect on those who have spent time in hospital. The empty space that remains where the Twin Towers stood in New York holds for survivors and family the memories of the thousands of people that died on September 11, 2001. This is despite there being nothing there, or is it *because* there is nothing there - the presence of absence?

Memory also exists in the land; the scars of deforestation; the journey along a road; the layers of sediment exposed through excavation of land; a special piece of land that has remained in a family for generations has meaning beyond that of a physical place. Memory is also introduced into objects that did not exist at the time of the event. Memorials for dates or events such as the end of a war or a locket holding a photograph of a loved one become solid representations of a memory - Lest We Forget.

We use these mementos, or Memory Objects as a prompt - something concrete to remind us of something which is not. However, these objects are much more than just a trigger. The loss of these memory objects does not cause the loss of the memory itself, then why would their loss be so terrible? In our everyday lives, we are surrounded with memories - photographs, furniture, wedding presents, clothing, and toys - all of which hold memories for individuals. Memories influence our identity, our relationships and the environment in which we envelop ourselves. The fragmented memories of an important event often leave those who

experienced it feeling lost or incomplete and so we use memory objects as a tool to hold on to the memories we have left.

Post modernism theorises that it is impossible to be objective, that human experience cannot be generalised or safely put into easy to understand groups. It theorises that truth is a socially constructed concept, one in which memory - which is extremely subjective - plays a key part in assembling. In the last ten years, there has been somewhat of a renaissance of interest in memory. Society-changing events such as the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks have highlighted the need for conserving memories, for memorial and remembrance - in much the same way the World Wars did on their contemporary societies. Current popular interest in memory and related areas are shown by the curiosity in TV's *John Doe* and films such as *Memento*. These touch on the relationship of memory to identity and reality. The lead characters' inability to recall anything from their past or anything that happened more than moments ago, illustrates the importance of memory in constructing our histories and identities.

In today's contemporary throw-away society, where most objects are not made to last and consumers anxiously await the Latest and the Newest, many consumer products such as clothing and computers are only expected to last for a season, stylistically and technologically. In *Death, Memory and Material Culture* (2001) Hallam and Hockey point out that "one of the effects of mass merchandising in the later twentieth century has been to underline the inherent ephemerality of the present" and that this has "set up a radically new relationship among wanting, remembering, being and buying" (p. 18). It has created a void and the past has rushed in to fill it. Museums, once relegated to dusty old corners and dark buildings, are now in new purpose-built, modern, light filled structures. The collecting and making accessible of the past to the public, to inform and satisfy interest, is of high importance to many societies. In *Dream Spaces, Memory and the Museum* (2001), Gaynor Kavanagh explores the current themes of museum exhibits in relation to memory and writes that museums need to have a feeling for peoples lives or they will become irrelevant, even remote. This point is relevant to all post-modern contemporary spaces. Personal interpretation and involvement are important in the connection between objects and user, artwork and audience, writer and reader.

In *Wild Things: the Material Culture of Everyday Things* (1998) Judy Attfield discusses the unique place textiles have in our lives and our identities - she claims that fabrics are one of the most intimate materials that forge the connection between the body and the world we live in. Some

mementos, such as heirloom jewellery, serve not only as representations of other peoples past lives and your relationship to those people, but also of the times you have worn the jewellery since it was given to you. They are a part of your identity because of the significance of them to you, and the link they provide to your heritage, genealogy and immediate past. These objects exist in the present and are representational of the past – but how accurate is this representation? How much is truth and how much is fogged by nostalgia and myth? And does truth actually matter?

Last year I found a box filled with slides which I could not remember having ever seen before. They were photographs taken by either my father or someone close to him, before I was born. They are memories of a time I was not alive to see. In many of the photographs my dad is younger than I am now: in the army before he met my mother, on a road trip around New Zealand with a friend I cannot recognise, or at a party with a group of lads - 2 of whom I know as friends of my parents. There are photographs of my older brothers and sisters as babies and children, going on trips, walking on our farm. My dad died of cancer when I was twelve so I cannot ask him about these people, about the times he had, or what it was like for him in the army. How do I construct this history, these memories of a life that has ended so that they can be remembered? How can the distance between the past and present be bridged in a poetic and meaningful way?

Scope of the Project

Central proposition

Research Aims

Methodology

I currently reside in Wellington City, and have done for 6 years, but I was brought up on a farm in rural Taranaki - a society in which it seemed nothing much had changed in the last 30 years. Although little of my day-to-day life consciously reflects my past, my past made me who I am. I hope that through expressing my past in my present, I have begun to negotiate the distance between my modern urban existence and my rural past. By filling in the gaps and reconstructing the fragmented memories of the past, the present becomes whole. The expression of change and growth can become real and effective. Through *First Son* I have explored the importance of memories and the role memories can play in our contemporary throwaway society - creating something permanent, meaningful and comforting in a world that often seems fleeting, insincere and cold. Using the intimate and personal space around the body as a vehicle for expression, I endeavoured to express the forgotten part of my history in a format that is fully accessible to the public in an exhibition.

It seems that history is like a jigsaw made from many different puzzles with a multitude of missing pieces and wrong placements - constructed by a blind person who does not know they cannot see. One of the most important things to remember is that the past and history are not the same. History is a researcher's interpretation of the past and this interpretation is coloured by all manner of things, including gender, social class and education. Rarely does history consider individual experience, preferring instead to providing a broader picture punctuated with the grand stories of influential people. Using phenomenological methodology I have explored the recent history of New Zealand through the memories of my dead father. This enabled me to expand on the more general historical context with personal and personally relevant narrative that many New Zealanders can relate to.

Phenomenological research is the study of phenomena as experienced through the senses of the participant. It deals with personal experience and is completely subjective; it seeks to describe the personal perceptions of individuals and does not seek to explain. My work deals with personal experience and is completely subjective; it seeks to articulate the personal perceptions of individuals and does not seek to explain.

I have conducted phenomenological historical research on the life and society of my father, Ronald Burwell, who was 'an ordinary man' alive in rural Taranaki from 1946 until 1993. Through in-depth interviews and conversations with seven surviving family and friends, I gathered details of experiences and memories to construct a 'story' about his life

and the time he was alive. The recording of oral histories and recollections provided insights into the life of Ronald Burwell, revealing contexts in which people knew and remember him, as well offering clues about rural Taranaki life in general.

I selected my participants from a group of approximately 25 - 30 individuals, all of which knew Ronald Burwell from the perspective of either, wife, sister, brother, daughter, son or friend. From this group I selected one or two from each group dependant on their willingness to participate in the research. I used conversation, as well as the analysis of personal photographs and letters to begin to build a story or picture of Ronald Burwell and those who knew him.

From the conversations I identified five key moments in my father's life, roughly one moment for each of the five decades he was alive. I then used these personal stories and moments as a starting point for historical research into the society these moments occurred in. Through the exploration of art, design and literature, from landscape painting to film, memorials to documentary photography and fiction literature, I explored the prevailing social, cultural, political and economical environments during my father's life. This process contextualised my father's life, placing him within the broader New Zealand social environment and provided a context in which to place the memories and stories collected, as well as providing a pool of conceptual inspiration for the design process.

Using research through design I developed five textile based pieces inspired and informed by my previous research. These take the form of a well-considered and rationalised conglomerate of the concepts, stories, and visuals I researched. Resembling a form of textile-based, social collage, each piece expresses both the private world of my father's existence, and the public world he inhabited. Using the information and objects collected I developed a visual and written archive that then aided in the creation of new objects that form a link between the past and the present. The old, the new and the recollections that are associated with them - including excerpts from letters and photographs - will be grafted together to form a hybrid of history and the present to be offered to the public in an exhibition.

My research aims to contribute written and visual material to the fields of post-modern, historical and phenomenological research, within the context of memory, identity, textiles and memorial. Using memories others have of an ordinary and largely unknown man, I hope to touch a part of all who see my work. Although the specific memories are not

common, the sadness, joy and very act of remembering someone is universal, so I hope that this will speak to all those who view it. I have aimed to create a visual memoir or memorial in the form of a series of textile based Memory Objects to remember my father and the time he was alive, before those who knew him well are gone. It has used the space we surround ourselves with, particularly dress, to explore the links between the past and the present. It aims to show the importance of remembering, of archiving and presenting the past in an accessible and meaningful way.

Memory has come to acquire an ever greater significance as one of the principal relays between interior life and exterior life, between private and public, the individual and society. (Lury, 1998, p. 6)

Saul Bellow (in Schacter, 1996, p. 1) said "Memory is life", but at first glance, in contemporary western society it would seem that memories have little importance - overrun by the tumultuous and hectic pace of urban life, always rushing forward to the future. However, what we remember makes us who we are. It is the basis on which our identities are formed and our lives lived. Moments are experienced and then stored in our brain to become memories; with these memories we make our decisions (Marshall, 2002). Research has tried to determine in what way and to what extent memory is important to modern life. Aside from it enabling us to remember how to tie our shoes, or remember a phone number, a type of memory called long-term autobiographical episodic memory is the type of memory that makes up our life story; it gives us a solid grounding for the Self (Marshall, 2002). However, as memory is often fragmented, incomplete and painful, this life story is easily distorted. Identity and life story are intrinsically linked. Memory constructs our identity, and as Abercrombie et al. wrote "to make a claim to separate status as an individual, we need a plausible history of ourselves, which recounts our past in such a way as to confirm our identity" (in Lury, 1998, p. 23).

Research has also explored memory outside of the brain. Memory also seems to 'exist' in objects, time and space (Hallam & Hockey, 2001). These act as a trigger for the senses and brain to remember, either willingly or not. Certain smells, sights, textures tastes and sounds can trigger a memory that otherwise might not be remembered. Objects and spaces are often created specifically for the purpose of remembrance within the context of art, architecture or memorials. Functioning across these contexts, Daniel Libeskind's Jewish Museum in Berlin uses space and void to induce memories of the Holocaust. The result "is profound...the visitor feels the terrifying undercurrent of an abysmal whirlpool, submerging them in a bottomless ocean of desolation." (Quinn, 2003, p. 89) The use of tools such as void and photographs within the context of art and design to express memory is common as is the connection of memory and identity within that framework.

Memory has long been seen as passive or literal recordings of life, but in *Searching for Memory* (1996), Schacter argues that memory is not like a family album, with a series of snapshots recording the events of time. We do not store unbiased photos of events in our lives; they are stored along with the emotions, meaning and sense associated with the event as well

(Schacter, 1996). Events are also remembered differently depending on the past of the person experiencing it. Schacter writes "Memories are records of how we have experienced events, not replicas of the events themselves" (p. 6). Research has established that there are certain things that we remember best. Marshall identified the following as easiest to remember; positive, concrete, interacting, bizarre, pictures, general themes and elaborate rather than plain. The apparent randomness of this list points to the complexity of memory, highlighting the uncertainties surrounding memory research. Types of memory range from being able to remember what an apple is and that it is safe to eat, to being able to recall a complex and long series of events and the emotions associated with them. Marshall identifies 15 types of memory, including, long and short term memory, autobiographical memory (passive storage of experience), iconic memory (extremely short-term retention), reconstructive memory (mixture of true and false memories) and semantic memory (storage of concepts, facts, rules and words). My research focuses on autobiographical memory.

Autobiographical memory can be likened to life story. Schacter calls these "biographies of self... a set of memories that form the core of personal identity" (p. 93). Dan McAdams argues that autobiographical memory is a construction that is extremely important in cognition and behaviour, and that "The unfolding drama of life is revealed more by the telling than by the actual events told... In the subjective and embellished telling of the past, the past is constructed -- history is made" (in Schacter, p. 93). Marshall identifies that autobiographical memory can be a source for insecurity and low self-esteem. He also writes that the way autobiographical memories are told is dependant on the situation, motivated either by a desire to be liked, or a desire to be right (Marshall). Schacter asks, "If our memories are always constructed and occasionally distorted... influenced by large doses of our present needs and desires, then might we be blind to the fundamental truth of our lives?" (p. 93). He likens our autobiographical memories to a jigsaw made up of many different contributors (Schacter). The pieces of this jigsaw come together into the jumbled up and perplexing thing called the Self. Despite this jigsaw, cognitive psychologist Craig Barkly argues that "there is a fundamental integrity to ones autobiographical recollections" (Schacter, p. 95). Regardless of the 'truth' of a memory, if it is remembered as part of a life story, then it has inherent integrity as part of the basis for that person's identity.

What is identity? Identity or Self can be hard to define for most people. It seems to be an ephemeral concept, one that is so important to

contemporary western society, yet one so difficult to distinguish. Furthermore, In *Prosthetic Culture* (1998), Cecelia Lury distinguishes that the idea of a unique, free, self-determining and responsible individual is historically specific - something that has only come into existence since the Renaissance. Furthermore, this ideal of identity is not available to all people, even in contemporary Euro-American societies (Lury). Identity seems to be an idea that exists predominately within a concept, like love, freedom and faith, and like these other concepts; identity is integral to what it means to be human. It is made up of physical attributes like hair and eye colour, height, build and temperament, but as Lury points out that having a body you can recognise does not define you as an individual, memory is also necessary for a separate identity as an individual. Clearly it seems you need more than just a body to be an individual.

Identity can also be attributed to social groups. Families, subcultures, minorities and religions all subscribe to a collective identity. It aids in the cohesiveness of the group, assisted by hierarchy and social structure. As Lury points out, memory has an important role to play in linking the individual with the group. She writes that "memory has come to acquire an ever greater significance as one of the principal relays between interior life and exterior life, between private and public, the individual and society" (p. 23). Schacter writes that "our families serve as social repositories for autobiographical recollections" (p. 279). He explores the link between personal life story and the collective identity of the family when he argues that "the beginnings of our life stories are written in our families, and when we try to make sense of these stories... it is often to the family that we return" (p. 279). In Lorie Novak's photograph *Fragments* (Fig. 1), she explores the discrepancy between our "idealized versions of childhood" (Schacter, p. 278) and family, and the reality that is lurking beneath. In *Dream Spaces, Memory and the Museum* (2001), Gaynor Kavanagh writes that "memories and individual perspectives can be subversive, challenging and disruptive" (p. 17) and they are often inaccurate. This can lead to discrepancies between members of a social group, which can lead to a break down in interpersonal relationships. Schacter discusses the effects false memories had on a woman who believed herself to have been the sufferer of ritualised satanic abuse at the hands of her family. She understandably dissociated herself from her family and tried to lead her life away from them. When it was finally discovered that no such abuse had taken place, she began to mend the relationships with her family to greater or lesser degrees of success (Schacter). Research has shown that family members often remember an

event vastly differently, or that one member does not remember at all. Traumatic events such as death or abuse can cause great pain within a family structure. The memories associated with these events on a personal level are often fragmented and incomplete. A close family could discuss and reminisce and the discrepancies may diminish however in many cases these fragments of memories will remain just fragments.

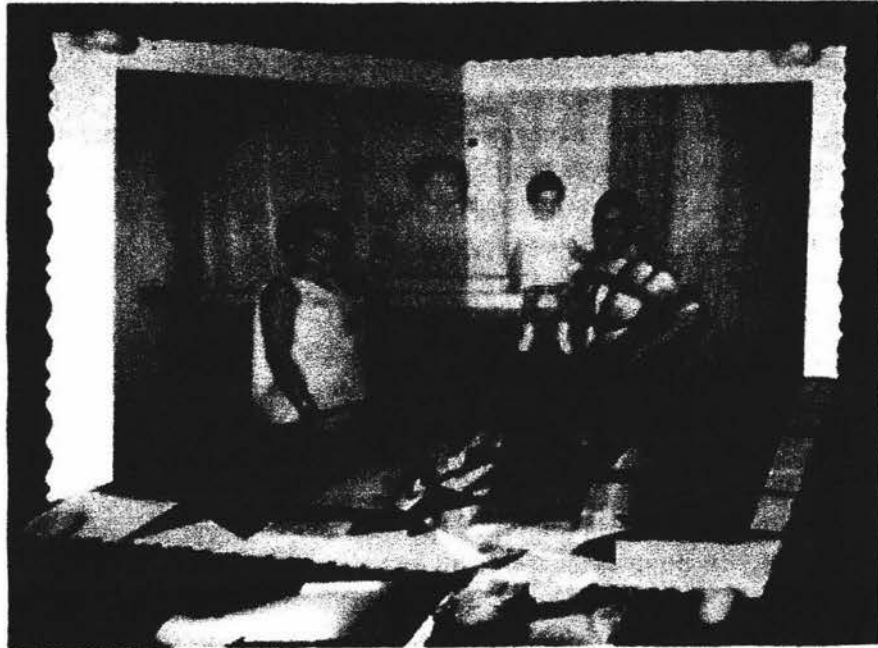


Fig. 1

Lorie Novak, "Fragments," 1987. 16½ x 22". Color photograph.

The use of memory objects, or mementos, to remember people or events is a custom that holds great importance to many people from many different cultures. My mother has a lock of my hair she kept from my first haircut, I own a charm bracelet that for me holds the memories of all the people that gave me charms to put on it and in the Andaman Islands in the Bay of Bengal, widows wore their dead husbands skull suspended from their necks (Taylor, 1983). These varied objects are all kept as reminders of a person or event. In *Sustaining Loss - Art and the Mournful Life* (2001) Gregg Horowitz comments that such objects "are the most powerful testimonials to the profound forgetfulness of human beings" (p. 13). seems that our memory is not sufficient or long lasting enough to be trusted to remember lost loved ones or important times, that we need to create objects to outlast our memories and lives. These objects are not purely a prompt for the memory, but can hold a greater meaning within the context of remembrance. Isabel Allende's grandfather said "Death does not exist: people only die when we forget them" (in Schacter, p. 95), and it seems to be because of this that mementos are so important. The

fashioning of objects to remember the dead, aids in holding onto the deceased for longer, and in creating something permanent at a time when life seems so fleeting - life seems to have more meaning.

The importance and relevance of memento mori are explored in *Death, Memory and Material Culture* (Hallam and Hockey, 2001). Hallam and Hockey argue that even the most mundane of objects can be "laden with perceptual recall" and can carry "socially shared meanings and histories through time and space" (Hallam & Hockey, 2001, pp. 49 - 50) through their ability to outlast those that originally owned them. Objects such as combs, hair, toys and clothes all have the potential to carry memory and meaning. Lury argues that memory and its related objects, such as photographs, are significant relays between private and public life - the act of displaying a photograph of a personal memory in a space such as a living room or hallway, moves the memory from the personal to the public. Objects and places not only continue the memory of individuals, but also aid in the continuity of cultural and social memory. Agnes Heller (2001) points out that the Chinese government ordered the destruction of every place of memory after the occupation of Tibet in 1951. She argues that the very life or decay of a people does not depend on the biological survival of an ethnic group, but on the survival of shared cultural memory. The destruction of objects, places of memory and language aid in a cultures ruin.

The role of photography within the context of memory has a relatively short history as it was only invented near the beginning of the 19th century. Its relative lack of history has done nothing to reduce its importance however - photography has come to represent one of the most significant processes for remembrance and preservation. Most people in western society have a photo album of their lives. Usually started by your parents when you were a child, and continued when you got your first snapshot camera well into adulthood, graduation, first job and marriage - the camera recorded any important (or unimportant) event. Photographic records can define past society and individuals. This can lead to problems however. Siegfried Racier comments that photography presents memory images without any gaps, whereas from the personal perspective of memory, photographs appear jumbled and inconsistent (in Lury). This suggests that although we often define our memories by the photographic representation we have of those memories, the image and the memory are not always compatible - if at all.

The link between photography, memory and death has often been argued. Susan Sontag summed up this link when she wrote, “all photographs are memento mori. To take a photograph is to participate in another person’s mortality, vulnerability, mutability. Precisely by slicing out this moment and freezing it, all photographs testify to times relentless melt” (in Daval, 1982, p. 162). New Zealand photographer Anne Noble has been interested in memory and the role photographs play in recollections since the late 1970s (Paton, 2001). In her series *In My Fathers Garden*, Anne Noble photographed her dead father and the various objects, people and events surrounding his funeral and cremation. She photographs his bedroom, his clothes and the mirror he dressed in front of everyday (figure 2). She took a macro-photograph of her father’s ashes as though she might get some essence of him from these burnt remains if she looks hard enough, as if the memory of him is contained within all the things she captures – lest she forgets.

Fig. 2.
Anne Noble.
Untitled. 2001.
Type C colour print



Tactile sensations are also linked to memory. Textiles, in particular clothes and quilts, have a unique place in the preservation and continuity of individual and social memory. The keeping of clothes that belonged to the deceased, the careful preservation of a delicate wedding dress or the displaying of a famous performers costume are all acts of remembrance. It is not just clothings’ visual representation that acts as a memory stimulator - touch and indeed smell also contribute to the memory held by them. Hallam and Hockey argue that the feel of clothing on the body “recovers times past and stimulates memory” (p. 84) through fabrics ability to hold smells, folds and texture that stirs memories of those that wore it. Furthermore, they argue, the clothes can “allow an experience of the past to be translated into the present” (Hallam & Hockey, p. 84) - such as wearing a 19th Century corset enables the wearer to gain greater understanding of the lives of women at the time. Similarly of my sister, upon spotting a Swandri jacket identical to the one my father wore, bought it immediately - she says it reminds her of Dad every time she wears it, sees it, touches it or even smells it.

To convey memory, artists have often used clothing. Christian Boltanski who has worked extensively with clothing believes that second-hand clothing conveys the sense of someone who was there but is no longer - the fabric retains odour and the folds have remained, but not the person.

Boltanski points out that these objects have no intrinsic meaning in themselves but have meaning linked to the emotional makeup and intentions of those who had once worn them and cared for them. Therefore, he believed it was possible to invent an autobiography with objects - that by collecting objects with a suggested meaning a story can be created. He did this with his work from 1969 to 1971; this work involved collecting and assembling objects and then creating an identity based on the 'memories' of the objects. His pieces suggest that because these objects and associated 'memories' could have belonged to anyone, your identity (being based on what we have and what we remember) could be anyone's as well.

In *The Fashion of Architecture* (2003), Quinn argues that "dressing the body and dressing the interior are part of the same process" and that "architecture, fashion and interior design exist symbiotically in the same system - none would be possible without the other" (p. 36). He discusses Hussein Chalayan's work in relation to space and identity in Chalayan's collection *After Words* (autumn/winter 2000). In *After Words*, Chalayan is expressing his central vision - that clothing defines the intimate zone around the body and creates its identity and the interior defines a wider zone but also expresses identity. Figures 3, 4 and 5 show the transformation of chairs into dresses and suitcases. It intends to express displacement and expatriation, specifically recalling the 1974 Turkish military intervention that displaced both Turkish and Greek Cypriots from their homes, of which the later Chalayan belonged to. The idea is that through the transformation of an interior object (chairs) into an intimate transportable object (clothing and suitcases) it was possible to safely remove items which define your identity in the event of an evacuation due to war - to take something with you that represents home and therefore comforts you.

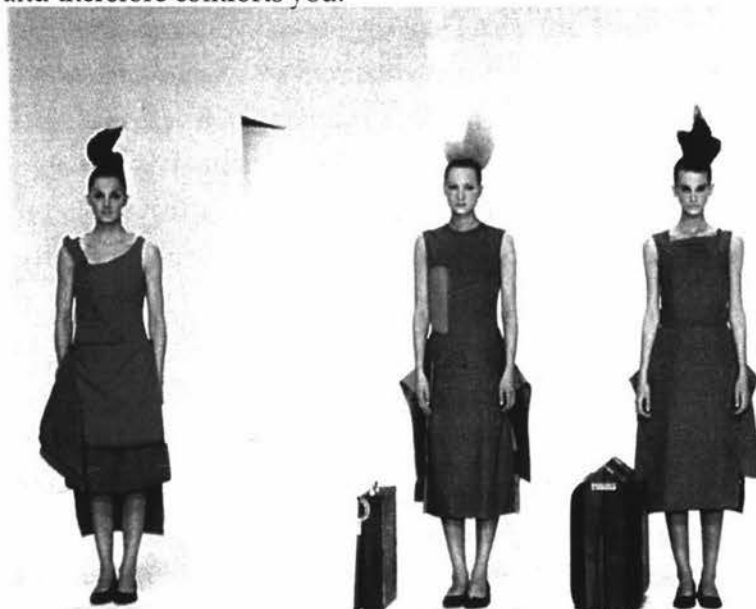


Fig. 3.
Hussein Chalayan.
After Words. 2000.
Fashion collection.

Fig. 4.
Hussein Chalayan.
After Words. 2000.
Fashion collection.



Textiles unique place in the context of memory and identity is discussed in Judy Attfield's *Wild Things; the Material Culture of Everyday Things* (2000). Attfield examines the role of textiles in the expression and development of identity, writing that because of the intimate nature of clothing – that it is worn next to the skin – the textiles that make up these garments is one of the most personal 'thing-types' that on the ephemeral nature of textiles and their ability to change, or be changed, and therefore express a sense of memory and time. She argues that the passing of time can be sensed and expressed literally and figuratively through fabric because textiles do not remain unchanged through time like stone or other more solid materials - they show wear, they soften with age, they tear. However, she also points out that textiles will not break if dropped, and that they can withstand years of heavy use, laundering and alterations - suggesting durability despite their ephemeral nature. Attfield argues that the ability of textiles to change and age, yet remain essentially the same is similar to the flexibility of contemporary identity. Attfield also discusses textiles near endless potential for modification due to the ability of cloth to be manipulated and embellished using different fibres or added decorations. This ability enables textiles and objects made from them to be personalised by their owner - further expressing the owner's identity - in fact, as Attfield examines, this ability to change or be changed leads to the transformation of a textile object from a bought thing to a personal possession laden with layers of meaning and time. Attfield discusses D.W. Winnicott's transitional objects, where textile objects, such as the child's comfort blanket, are a child's first experience

of 'not-me-ness' - a sense of self as separate from other people and things - and these objects are an emotional investment that forms a link between a person and the society they live in and yet defines them as an individual. Attfield argues that this notion of a transitional object offers space for the concept of the individual within a social context that the social sciences have difficulty offering. She argues that since the 'not-me' objects both unite and separate the self from others, individuality can be experienced in its relation to others (Attfield, 2000).

Memory has been described by Greek philosophers as a wax tablet upon which experiences are imprinted and remain forever, and by some as a garbage can with "random assorted objects" (Schacter, p. 40). Memories, according to Sigmund Freud, are like objects in a room (in Schacter). Artists have used these metaphors and others to develop art works that explore their personal memories and the recollections of others. Israeli artist Eran Shakine explored the fragmented nature of his personal past and the idea that what we believe about ourselves is dependant on what we remember about our histories. His painting *Hadassah* (figure 6) uses collage and milky paint to express a personal history that only exists as a collection of "hazy bits and pieces of memory" (Schacter, p. 56). Artist Christel Dillbihner in her piece titled *Excursions VI* uses old and discarded objects as visual representations of memory and seems to borrow from the Greek analogy of memory as a wax tablet with her use of wax to cover a piece of torn paper concealing a photograph of her brother, who died at an early age. All these expressions of memory are personal and intimate, and yet they seem universal. Memorial and reminiscence is common throughout all cultures. In many cultures there exists a very close link between the past and present in everyday life; however, in contemporary western urban society this link is tenuous at best.

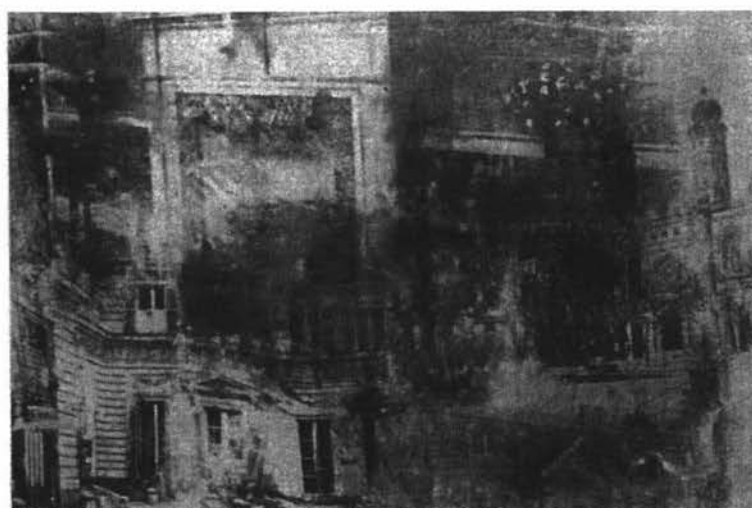


Fig. 5

Eran Shakine, "Hadassah," 1992. 12 x 16". Collage, oil, and varnish on plywood.

Research has explored the importance of memory in everyday life - for such mundane (yet important) things as knowing your address. It has also explored the link between identity and memories and found that you are what you remember - and what you forget. It has found that identity and memory can also exist in societies and groups, including families and also how we place memory in inanimate objects to hold a memory for longer. Research has also explored the link between space and memory, how memories can be triggered by a place or even just an empty hole such as the World Trade Centre 'Ground Zero'. However it is the ability to create objects and space with the intention of triggering a memory or feeling that interests me the most. My research aims to explore the memories that a group of people have of an individual and then attempt to create memory objects that express these memories or prompt them. My intention is to add to the area of phenomenological humanist historical research, and perhaps add to the knowledge of New Zealand rural history.

Memory and Myth

The memories that I have of my father are the sort that are difficult to hold on to, the fleeting glimpse of a smile, the elusive smell of hay making, the rough feel of his hands. They are primarily sensory memories - ones that are recalled in an instant, for an instant, often at the oddest of times. The few 'real' memories (you know the ones I mean - "I remember when. . .") are fragmented and are probably inaccurate, if not imagined. They are memories I made up to fill in space, because I couldn't bare the alternative - silence. So, my memories are made up of other people's stories, other people's myths about my father. They all hold him high, on a pedestal made of respect, love and sometimes regret. Their memory mythologises my father, forgetting his pain and degradation at the hands of disease. The myth makes the painful memory manageable.

The same could be said for New Zealand. As New Zealanders, we have always been taught that our country was special. We believed that in New Zealand there was no racism, no poverty, no violence, no urban slums, and no pollution - we believed that New Zealand was the cleanest place on earth and that our people were the nicest. The painful and sometimes violent aspects of our history are glossed over by the myth of New Zealand. Even now, we still express disbelief at a murder - How could it happen here, in our lovely little country? - For New Zealand is greenest, lushest, friendliest, purest and loveliest of the entire world. We believed God protected our land like no other; indeed, it says so in our national anthem. 'Our' men are the manliest, bravest and toughest and the Anzac's were the best fighters in the world. 'Our' people are inventive and practical - we could make anything with a piece of number eight wire, ours was a nation of MacGyver's and saints. Where did this mentality come from? Is it a myth? How has the Myth of New Zealand been expressed and continued within New Zealand art, design and literature? In addition, what part has the everyday man had to play in the continuity of such a wide reaching and influential set of beliefs?

Who do we think we are?

Last Stand:
The Domestication
of Godzone
1940s

When my dad was a little boy, his older sister was made to leave her schooling and work on Bushlies, the family farm. She did not want to as she was a sensitive and academic student – she wanted to go to university and make something of herself. However, as the oldest of six girls and one boy, she had to do as she was told. She described to me her horror at having to cut down, by hand, the last substantial stand of native bush on the farm. She said that she cried when the last great Tawa fell, and asked her father where the Tui will live now, to which he replied, “They’ll be right.” The paddock at the back of the Burwell farm that was once this last stand of bush is still called Tawa Bush. The attitude of ‘she’ll be right’ was common amongst farmers at the time, and had been so since New Zealand was colonised some 100 years before this event. If my father had been old enough, he would have no doubt been called on to complete this task, however by the time he was old enough to notice it, the paddock that used to be a grand stand of majestic trees, was a productive, green pasture - and would have always seemed to have been - contributing its bit to the myth of rural New Zealand.

My dad, a third generation farmer, eldest son and Real Man seemed to epitomise all of the virtues of a real Kiwi Joker. He was destined to be a Real Kiwi Bloke from the day of his birth - even the land he grew up on was a part of New Zealand’s mythology. Bushlies was bought from the Crown in the 1880’s by my great grandfather Albert (Bert) Burwell who subsequently clear-felled and burnt the native forest (a process called slash and burning) to make way for productive dairy pasture. Slash and burning the bush turned what were useless trees into a place colonists could control and use. It made the wild, untamed yet beautiful landscape into a more manageable and civilised place. Bert wrote in his letters to his mother and siblings in Liverpool describing the aftermath of the slash and burn process he was practicing on Bushlies.

It is a fearful sight I think. Great trees blackened and split with the fire rearing their heads up so gaunt and bare and those that have fallen laying about the ground in such a jumble you cannot conceive. To look from the clearing to the bush is a contrast, in the bush the tree palms, and all the other things green and beautiful and then the clearing, you can see the hand of man and the march of civilisation. (Burwell, 1887, personal correspondence)

Most early settlers recorded the battle of man versus tree, nature versus culture, either as letters home, sketches, paintings or diary entries. In particular, early New Zealand landscape artists felt the need to capture man’s triumph over such an awesome territory - to enforce some sort of order on the land - to render it less frightening. Initial works were often topographical views taken from sea of the coast. These coastal views such

as Coastal profiles from Mt Egmont to Queen Charlotte Sound by Charles Heaphy were intended primarily to record and identify the landscape however they were not without bias (Pound, 1983, p. 56). They were often simplified views of the landscape and very rarely showed truly wild areas of New Zealand or Maori settlements. Heaphy himself was a draughtsman for the New Zealand Company - a company that helped settle the country by making land available for European settlers to buy - and produced many works that advertised New Zealand to possible immigrants (Dunn, 1991, p. 2). So these paintings also aimed to present a particular image of the new country - one that was safe and familiar, yet strange, exotic and exciting.

Sir William Fox was another noted artist working during the early colonisation period from 1840 -1870. In *Frames on the Land*, Francis Pound (1983) writes that Fox's colonial art is a form of the "imposition of European order on the land" (p. 42) that was practiced by colonists in nearly every possible way. Fox worked for The New Zealand Company at the same time as Heaphy and they both were sent on expeditions to find land for European use - in the process, they renamed the lakes, rivers and mountains, painted ideal domesticated views of the 'new' landscape and began to Europeanise New Zealand (p. 42). Fox's desire for order is expressed in his work *New Plymouth in 1849*, this panorama presents New Plymouth as a prosperous, Christian settlement, with fenced farmland, roads, and European buildings - all things, Dunn points out, for leading an ordered life (Dunn, 1991, p.3). There are no signs of Maori, and the bush is far into the distance.

According to Francis Pound (1983), most early New Zealand landscapes fitted into one of four genres; Topography - presenting the land as the artist saw it, the Sublime - presenting the landscape as an overwhelming place - suggesting a superior power, the Ideal - portraying New Zealand as an idealised and beautiful place, or the picturesque - the portrayal of New Zealand as a rustic idyll. Within the Ideal and Sublime genres the theme of the dead tree often occurred. Whether as a tree stump in an Ideal landscape as a symbol of progress and the taming of a wild land or as a gnarled, burnt tree in the foreground of a Sublime landscape, expressing the awesome power of the land but revealing mans ability to control it.

In *Mt. Aspiring* (1912), Charles Bloomfield presents us with a soaring view of Mt. Aspiring - sublime and perfect, white with snow, impossibly high and unreachable - as a symbol of God and Bloomfield's "longing for something better and nobler" in art (Pound, 1983, p. 32). In the foreground of *Mt. Aspiring* are a few dead and gnarled trees, a symbol of

man's ability to control nature and therefore get closer to God. It both glorifies nature as God's awesome creation and attempts to control it.

Alfred Sharpe's *A View of Wenderholme, Auckland* (1880), records the "civilising destruction" of New Zealand with a softening Claudian light (Pound, 1983, p. 94). Frances Pound (1983) sees the painting as a historical record of what was - lush green virgin forest - without much of it existing in the actual painting. It memorialises the battle of Man against Nature, recording the disappearance of native forest with a hopeful and gentle distance - where the far-off wild bush fades into the required blue haze of the remote Claudian landscape.

The Dead Tree in New Zealand art symbolises the domestication of the New Zealand landscape, whether supporting or opposing the destruction of the native bush. It represented the old being replaced with the new (and better) during the 1800's as huge tracts of lowland native forest was cut down and burned to create pasture for sheep and dairy farms - it was the triumph of culture over nature. Later in the 1930s and '40s, high-country forest was slash and burned for the same purpose, but the Dead Tree's symbolism changed.

In Michael Dunn's essay, 'Frozen Flame and The Slain Tree' (1977, <http://www.artnewzealand.com>), Dunn discusses the Dead Tree theme in New Zealand art of the 1930s and '40s. In particular, Dunn discusses Christopher Perkins's *Frozen Flame* (c1931) and Eric Lee-Johnson's *The Slain Tree* (1945). During the 1930s and 1940s, large tracts of native New Zealand bush were being burnt off to make way for pasture. It was common to see burning forests and as a consequence Dunn quotes artist Gordon Walters as commenting that "trees, huge dead ones, were a prominent feature of North Island bush landscapes and one did not have to go far to be confronted with them". This widespread deforestation influenced many artists and poets at the time, just as it had influenced 19th century artists in their time. Pound (1999) argues that the dead tree became, for some artists, a symbol of nationalist pride, a point of difference for the New Zealand landscape, an icon that existed nowhere else at the time.

In Lee-Johnson's hands, the dead tree as a symbol of man defeating nature in 19th century art becomes, in *The Slain Tree*, an expression of environmental concern. Dunn (1977) discusses Lee-Johnson's knowledge of the effect deforestation has on New Zealand soil erosion due to a 1944, K.B. Cumberland book, *Soil Erosion in New Zealand*. Because of this book, Lee-Johnson would have been aware of the detrimental side effects of slash and burning, however Dunn argues that it would "be misleading to

exaggerate one level of meaning in the dead tree pictures" - that *The Slain Tree* is multi layered. Dunn points to the title 'The Slain Tree' as a reference to sacrifice. This suggests that the death of the tree is a sacrifice for greater good, much as the death of Christ is for the greater good of Christians. However, the trees retain a sort of strength, Dunn points out that "the trees are numerous and assertive" in *The Slain Tree*, and that "the 'ghosts' of trees still stalk the hillsides" maintaining an ominous presence. Dunn contrasts this portrayal of bush clearing for pasture with 19th Century landscapes that record "man's progressive clearance of gently-rolling slopes for pasture." In *The Slain Tree*, the bush is fighting back and Dunn wonders if "nature, perhaps, has the upper hand."

In Christopher Perkins' work *Frozen Flame*, Dunn (1977) argues that Perkins' approach is much less environmentally concerned. Dunn points out that Perkins also painted scenes of local industry, such as dairying, which relied on deforestation to be established in New Zealand. In his painting *Taranaki*, 1931, Perkins expresses the "relationship between the fertility of the land and the strength of the industry" (Dunn, 1991, p.75) in a powerfully iconic style. Dunn (1977) points out that Perkins's artistic aims, as noted by Professor Robertson in the early nineteen-thirties, are to "imply the past, show the present, and indicate the future." In *Taranaki*, Perkins portrays the Dairy industry as the present and future, and the natural environment (suggested by the mountain) as the past. It seems clear that Perkins would see deforestation as a means to an end. Dunn (1977) argues that the dead tree in Perkins' *Frozen Flame* represents just one tree of many - of the wider issue of clearing land for pastoral purposes - and is a "necessary, if sad event" in a cycle from tree, to fire to green grass.

The Dead Tree theme in New Zealand art, by the late 1950's, had become a cliché (Pound, 1999, p.21). However, artist Richard Killen used the flaming tree stump icon in some of his work in the 1980's. Francis Pound, in his book on Killeen's work *The Stories We Tell Ourselves* (1999), discusses Killeen's use of such iconography in works such as *This is not a landscape* (1985). Pound argues that this piece works best in a New Zealand context, where viewers familiar with 19th and 20th Century New Zealand painting will be knowledgeable with both the 19th Century colonialist meaning, and the 20th Century nationalist meaning of dead trees and stumps. Pound argues that in Killeen's work the tree stump becomes, not a symbol of National pride or colonial triumph over nature, but a reference to the "innumerable burnt-out trees of 20th century painting, and to the innumerable stumps of 19th century New Zealand

art" (p. 21). Killeen's stumps become a representation of a representation
– or a Myth.

What are you:
A Man or a Myth?
1950s

My Dad, as a rural Taranaki man that grew up from the 1940's and died in the early 1990's is unavoidably part of the Kiwi Bloke mythology, which like all myths, has one foot planted in truth and fact, and the other in fantasy and desire. Who was my strong, silent, easy-going father? How did his life reflect The Myth, and how does it continue to shape mine? As a child, I believed my father - like all little girls must - to be invincible. I built up my own version of the kiwi bloke myth around my father, and as he died before I was old enough to see whether he really was the godlike father figure I thought him to be, he remains that way in death. Maybe the Kiwi Bloke has died as well. However, like my father, perhaps it lives on in our memories, continuing to influence our lives today.

When my father was born in 1946, my grandad and his friends embarked on days of drinking and celebration. He was the first son after six girls and was a very welcome addition to the family. That primal need of men to prove their masculinity, and continue their family name had been accomplished, and as a result my father was treated very differently to his six elder sisters, receiving clothes, toys, privileges and responsibilities they had never received. He was rarely disciplined, as his sisters often were, all because he was the first son. At the age of 12, my father stoically broke his leg playing that manliest of sports, rugby. Because he had to wear a cast for 6 weeks, he could not fit into his usual place at the table on the lowly ranked stool. In my father's family your place at the dinner table was based on age, and as my father was second youngest at the time, he was near the bottom. However because of his broken leg he was 'promoted' to a chair ahead of his older sister. Fair enough, she thought, that is until when his cast was removed he was not then demoted back down to the stool, remaining in his privileged position above his older sister. In another incident, my father was given a rocking horse as a present when all his older sisters, apparently, did not have adequate winter coats while my father was given an expensive toy! My father had been born into the myth of the Kiwi Bloke, those men prized beyond reason for their strength, honesty and manliness - the greatest men in the world - though of course they would be too modest to admit that. New Zealand's patriarchal society had its roots in its British colonial history. When New Zealand was colonised, single men from England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales, almost exclusively settled it. Many men left Britain because of the lack of opportunities there and a desire for prospects past those the rigid social order of Britain offered. However in *A Man's Country?* (1987), Jock Phillips discusses one man's fear that he was becoming effeminate - that urban life was "sapping men of vigour and

strength" (p. 5). To this man, emigration to New Zealand was seen as a solution to the feminising influence of a growing urban lifestyle, as "in the colonies a man could feel a man once more" (p. 5). How common this opinion was, is not stated. However, colonial men did bring with them the social and sexual hierarchical rules they lived by in Britain to New Zealand. New Zealand became a man's country.

The rugged and wild nature of the environment meant that life in New Zealand was considered more suitable for strong, manly men than for soft and feminine women (or men for that matter). Consequently, more men than women came to New Zealand in the early colonial days, which led to an imbalance of the sexes - in the 1861 census men outnumbered women 1000 to 622 (Phillips, p. 7). Most men in New Zealand during the 1800's spent a large part of their time in exclusively male company, which, as Phillips points out, led to the development of a very strong male culture. New Zealand was "fertile soil for the growth of all-male institutions" (p. 7). In Colonial New Zealand, almost all work was physically strenuous, and in this environment, Phillips points out, respect for "strenuous muscular performance became a central element in male culture" (p. 17). New Zealand was not a land for the weak or lazy, it was a land where the strong and determined succeed, a land where only the toughest survived - and so began the legend of the New Zealand male. After all "only men, real men of physical strength, could chop down trees" (p. 17)

Many researchers have discussed the attributes that were considered desirable for Real Kiwi Men. New Zealand men in literature, particularly from the 1930's onward, have been defined in a very particular way. In *Whole Men* (1996), Kai Jenkins selects the attributes of "Practical and manual work, sport (especially rugby), drinking and war" (p. 19) to be the more 'straightforward' aspects of masculinity. He goes on to point out that the attribute of manly practical skills derive from New Zealand's colonial history - the need to be a 'Jack of all Trades' in the isolated back blocks of the new land. Jenkins discusses the importance that masculine literature put on sport, saying that to be a man an interest in watching sport had to at least be apparent, however, "to approach the ideal of masculinity, men had to actually play rugby well" (p. 21).

Drinking, either to excess or with mates, is an important aspect of masculinity often addressed in New Zealand literature, Jenkins cites Guthrie Wilson's war novel *Brave Company* as an example of this. Jenkins states that in the novel it is clearly admirable for a man to be able to drink excessive amounts of alcohol without passing out or vomiting - when Brent downs a "huge tumblerful of cognac...we all admire this

performance" (p. 23). That drinking, sport, physical work and war are all areas that masculinity is focussed around is not surprising, as each of these areas closely identify with all-male institutions. The RSA, rugby clubs, workplaces, unions and bars were all areas women were, if not banned, certainly not encouraged to participate (p. 23). However, Jenkins cautions that although these institutions were important, their influence to individual men in New Zealand often varied. Jenkins suggests that these masculine ideals may have little basis in truth, but have developed a "life of their own... conflicting with the demographic reality and the experience of individual men" (p. 26); the ideals became the myth and the reality of the Kiwi Bloke.

Within these 'straightforward' masculine attributes of the Kiwi Bloke, specific physical attributes such as height and size were also considered desirable. The Kiwi Bloke was portrayed in literature as tall, lanky, muscular and good looking in a rugged way. Jenkins also highlights "sexual vigour" (p. 29) and the ability to father children, in particular sons, as a mark of masculinity. Here Jenkins discusses writer A.R.D. Fairburn's rueful bemusement at his ability to sire four daughters, and no sons, despite his status as a famous drinker and manly literary figure (p. 29). Jenkins also points to Sam Hunt's delight in fatherhood on his poem *Birth of a Son*: "My father died nine months before/My first Son, Tom, was born" (p. 29). It seems significant that his father died 9 months before his first son was born, as if at the loss of one generation of Hunt men, another is born to replace him - continuing the important male line.

Beneath these relatively superficial ideals of masculinities in New Zealand fictional media, there lies a deeper set of beliefs relating to emotions and expression. Kiwi Blokes are generally not portrayed as showing emotion, particularly pain or grief. Beneath the strong chin, stoic spine and broad shoulders of the physical Real Man, is a heart and mind of stone, unmoved by sorrow and oblivious to pain under nearly all circumstances. Jenkins states that according to our mid-century writers wide ranges of emotions are to be repressed. The theme of the stoic, laconic, hard man is common in New Zealand literature. In *Masculinities in Aotearoa/New Zealand* (1999) Robin Law, Hugh Campbell and John Dolan point out that this theme for the characters was also expressed in the tone of writing, which was as laidback, curt and economical as the characters. A classic example of this theme is in John Mulgan's (1939) novel *Man Alone*. Law, Campbell and Dolan (1999) highlight this novel as one of the most influential in the development of New Zealand masculine fiction. With subject matter such as "the alienated, isolated single man; the centrality of manual work in a rural setting; a tension

between man and nature; the representation of domesticity as a trap for men" (p. 19) being reaffirmed for decades by subsequent New Zealand writers, these themes have become part of the Kiwi Bloke mythology. Many writers have focussed on the break down of the stoic unfeeling demeanour when put under extreme stress or pressure, such as in war or at times of extreme loss. It seems that within these arduous (and rare) circumstances it is acceptable for the Kiwi Bloke to express emotion.

As Law et al (1999) point out, the "... centrality of manual work in a rural setting" (p. 19) theme from *Man Alone* (1939) is significant within New Zealand literature of the mid 20th century. The "heroic tradition of rural New Zealand," (p. 19) epitomised by the pastoral hard-men with red band gumboots, stubbies and black singlets, point to the strong association of masculinity with rural New Zealand. In Robin Longhurst and Carla Wilson's essay 'Heartland Wainuiomata: Rurality to Suburbs, Black Singlets to Naughty Lingerie,' (in Law, Campbell, Dolan, 1999, chap. 12) the relationship is discussed between the "constructions of rural landscapes" and the "construction of masculinity" (p. 217), within the *Heartland* TV program. When the *Heartland* programme went to the Chatham Islands, Longhurst and Wilson claim that the Chatham Islands were "(re)constructed as part of 'our' imagined national community" and that the islanders "perform like actors... reinforcing their mythological role as rural, isolated and wild... as the 'real' New Zealand" (p. 217). Of course, this 'real' New Zealand is unavoidably masculine. According to Longhurst and Wilson, within the *Heartland* program the idea of the real Kiwi Bloke is repeated and reinforced, where "men are presented as being at home on the land, while (high) culture and the urban are feminised and not valued" (p. 218). Men are presented to the viewer, such as the man on the *Heartland* book cover, as "muscular, bare-chested, his arm splattered with blood. He wears a cowboy hat" (p. 219). This iconography underpins the importance of the hard man in New Zealand's masculine culture.

The influence of literature in helping define New Zealand's cultural identity cannot be dismissed and the use of iconography to support the masculine Kiwi Bloke is conspicuous. The iconographic New Zealand rural man is the black-singletted, muddy gum-booted character of Fred Dagg. The character Fred Dagg was created by comedian John Clark in the late 1970's, and as Law et al point out, the "comedic tradition has lovingly preserved the Kiwi Bloke" (p. 19). Despite Fred Dagg being a parody of the Kiwi rural bloke, he was very popular - especially within rural New Zealand. Fred Dagg spoke in a monotonous, flat tone and he understated most things - never getting too excited, unless of course it

was rugby, racing or beer, true to 'real' Kiwi Bloke form. He also wore the 'uniform' of the rural man - black singlet, torn jean shorts, muddy gum-boots and a floppy hat. When my father once attended a fancy dress party dressed as Dagg, my mother laughingly suggested, when looking back at a photo from the night, that all he had to do to get in character was to wear a floppy hat! This highlights in many ways how accurate the Fred Dagg persona was at representing rural New Zealand farmers. The black singlet was adopted from rural folk hero, and world champion sheep-shearer, Godfrey Bowen (Law et al. p. 19) and was an item of clothing worn by many farmers. Subsequent comedy characters parodying the Kiwi Bloke, such as Billy T. James' 'Maori Shearer', and Murray Ball's 'Wal Footrot', (both wore black singlets), have established in the public's mind the relationship between the Kiwi Bloke, rurality and the icon of the black singlet - helping to continue the myth of the Kiwi Bloke. That there have been so many characters parodying the rural man, I believe, stands testament to the notion that Kiwi Bloses - and Kiwis in general - are meant to be laidback and can laugh at themselves, they should not take themselves too seriously.

Cultures often look to identify specific people that exemplify the characters found most desirable - to make them folk heroes. In New Zealand, there have been many examples of this, mostly sportsmen. In particular, according to Law et al. (p. 14) and Jock Phillips (p. 265), Edmund Hillary, a young Beekeeper that was the first to climb Mt. Everest, epitomises for many New Zealanders the real Kiwi Bloke. In *A Man's Country?* Jock Phillips' writes

Hillary was the perfect expression of New Zealand's superior Angle-Saxon Manhood. He was tall, immensely strong; fiercely determined, with a long bony face - the picture of colonial honesty. He had been chosen by the British expedition team for the ultimate task. When it was all over, he remained modest and plain speaking - just an ordinary bloke - who eventually gave much of his life to helping the people of the Himalayas. The Kiwi hero, for all his strength, had a warm and caring heart! (pp. 264 - 265)

This extraordinary man was held up to the world as an example of New Zealand men, and Kiwis in general. At the time, in the early 1950's, New Zealand's definition of masculinity was based around its sporting and military heroes. Men such as Hillary, Peter Snell and Charles Upham were revered by common New Zealanders, and played a key part in defining New Zealand's identity as something unique and independent from 'home' or Britain. This change was significant because in the 1950's New Zealand still considered itself to be one of Britains son's - one of its finest son's - but a son nonetheless.

The myth of the Kiwi Bloke had its roots in New Zealand's hard colonial beginnings. The legend of the Bloke has been explored and enlarged by authors wishing to create a character that is uniquely New Zealand - one they saw as being a 'real' New Zealand man. This myth of the existence of a 'Real New Zealand' (read 'Rural') has been adopted by New Zealand society in general, with our heroes expected to behave a certain way, while our men are meant to be hard men - tough and masculine yet gracious, honest and modest. The myth of the Kiwi Bloke came from stories told of our pioneer history, from stories about our great and brave soldiers, and from the triumphs of our indefeatable sporting greats. They stepped out of the history books and off the pages of our novels and poems, to become a reality in the nostalgic eyes of Kiwis and non-Kiwis everywhere.

At about the age of 17, my father enlisted to serve with the Territorials. This was not compulsory - they randomly drew birth dates from a hat and Dad's birthday was called. My Grandad assumed that Ron would not want to go; that he would want to stay with him and continue working on the farm, but he did not. In letters to Ron from his father, it is clear that he was sorely missed, as both a son and an extra pair of hands - in one letter Grandad ends with "Not much longer to go now Ron, I bet you are counting the days". Although not explicitly stated, it is clear that George Burwell did not want his son to become an army man - he wanted his oldest son home, and working with his father on the family farm. From interviews with my father's siblings and friends it would appear that my grandad did not care for the wars of other countries, and did not see the need for New Zealanders, in particular his oldest son, to take part in a war that had nothing to do with him. Grandad managed to entice Ron back into farming life with descriptions of the idyllic and relaxed rural way of life - such as playing cards with family until 11pm and of his brother going to "the pictures in [New Plymouth]" with his girlfriend. For Dad the Territorials was not only about participating in the New Zealand tradition of serving our nation, but also a way of temporarily escaping the expectations placed upon him by his father. Despite a historical lack of military service within my family, stories of war - the glory of war, of mateship and bravery were all around my dad as he was growing up, and so he was very happy to be going and becoming a part of the Anzac tradition. Many of Ron's friends wanted to serve in the Territorials and continue New Zealand's proud history of serving Queen (or King) and Country. However none had their name pulled out of the hat. In interviews with some of Ron's friends they still seemed disappointed that they could not go - my father remains the envy of his friends.

The association of war and masculinity with national identity has long been evident in New Zealand culture. Indeed, it has often been stated that New Zealand came into nationhood during Our Boy's brave assault on Gallipoli. In Annabel Cooper's essay 'Nation of Heroes, Nation of Men: Masculinities in Maurice Shadbolt's *Once on Chunuk Bair*' (in Law et al 1999), Cooper discusses the way in which the Gallipoli campaign of the First World War has been "institutionalised as the crucible of national identity" (p. 85). She points out that in 1935 W. P. Morrel claimed that although New Zealand had the beginnings of a national identity before the Great War, New Zealand "wrote its name on the page of history on Anzac Day, 1915, in letters of blood" (p. 85). Such stirring proclamations were common, and remain common, at Anzac commemorations to this

day, serving to continue the notion that New Zealand's identity was formed during WWI.

Key to the formation of a New Zealand identity is the concept of the ANZAC spirit, and this concept is well entrenched in New Zealand culture. Growing up in New Zealand I was always aware of an understood bravery and friendliness of Kiwi soldiers, both in present and past conflicts - they were good men, doing a necessary job. My mother's father served in North Africa and Italy during WWII, and would occasionally start talking in Italian to amuse and confuse his grandchildren. His manner about the war was a very quiet one, as was common of returned servicemen. He rarely talked about the War and so to me it was shrouded in mystery, intrigue - and romantic Italian speech. In my mind, my grey haired, retired farmer grandfather, untouchable in the horror I imagined he had witnessed, became a hero, as all Anzacs were.

Long portrayed with a sort of saintly gallantry, the behaviour of Anzac soldiers was described to the world as courteous off duty and apparently extraordinarily brave and resourceful in battle. New Zealand soldiers, it seems, were virtually immune to fear and pain, and could stand any amount of discomfort in the field without complaint (Phillips). In addition, although temporarily absent from the domestic fold, New Zealand soldiers were "respectable family men who fought in the end, not for themselves, but for the sake of their wives and children" (Phillips, 1987, p. 168). In *A Man's Country?*, Jock Phillips discusses two particular types of Anzacs who have been mythologised and come to represent all New Zealand soldiers. The first is embodied by a Sergeant R. C. Travis who distained the regimented order imposed by officers and never had "claims to be a gentleman" (p. 167); instead, Sergeant Travis came from mysterious origins - as a horse wrangler somewhere near Gisborne or Southland. He gained his hero status for his "forays into no-man's land" (p. 167), his "cool head and steady hand under fire" (p. 167) and his archetypal Anzac strong-silent-man demeanour. The second type of Anzac hero Phillips identifies is personified by a Colonel W. G. Malone. Born in England, he was an officer - and a gentleman - who despite being disliked initially by those under his command (just the sort Sergeant Travis would have despised), won a reputation for leading from the front, being a tireless worker and always having his troop's best interests at heart. After his death during the Allied attack on Chunuk Bair, the people of Taranaki memorialised him. He was made "an acceptable New Zealand hero" (p. 167) by Lieutenant-Colonel Weston, who recalled that

he had had a "period farming in the Bush" (p. 167) - a necessary attribute for any would be New Zealand war hero.

Phillips (1987) writes that the myth of the Pioneer man was a strong starting point for the concept of an Anzac Spirit. This linking of the pioneer myth to the New Zealand soldier started during the Boer War. Phillips (1987) writes that a common explanation for the strength and toughness of New Zealand soldiers was that colonial life seemed to have hardened them, and made them "peculiarly qualified" (p. 144) for war in South Africa. This continued into WWI as the sons of pioneers lived up to their fathers' great name, as though toughness and military ability was bred into them - and in a way, it had been. Phillips writes that before the Boer War military prowess had been a minor part of the New Zealand male identity, but that "within a year of the troops' departure... the soldier was a natural and inevitable personification of the nation's patriotism" (p. 151). Indeed the deeds and behaviour of the New Zealand Soldiers made all others in that war seem pale and weak by comparison - especially the British.

The concept of New Zealand developing a national identity is closely linked to our English colonial roots. Most New Zealanders referred to themselves as Britons before WWI, and many continued to think of England as Home prior to WWII. However, events during WWI led to New Zealanders beginning to realise that the British were not indomitable. Part of the development of New Zealand's nationalistic identity lays in the perception that New Zealand soldiers were abandoned and betrayed by the British during the Gallipoli campaign, in particular during the assault on Chunuk Bair in August 1915.

Cooper discusses the way the Anzacs provided a "doubled nationalistic gesture" (p. 86), in that not only were Our Boys "capable of extraordinary military prowess" (p. 86) but also they were essentially better men than the British. This, when placed into the New Zealand context at the time, gave a clear framework for the development of a national identity, separate and distinct from our British Homeland. Generally New Zealanders up to the mid 20th Century considered England 'Home' and despite many being second or third generation New Zealanders, most of them had little concept of a New Zealand Identity. Therefore, it is hardly surprising that when WWI and WWII occurred New Zealand was one of the first countries to support Britain - after all they were fighting to protect their 'Home'! There is even a story claiming that due to the time difference, New Zealand actually declared war on Nazi Germany before Britain did!

New Zealand's relationship to War, England, and Identity is not, however, clear-cut or simple. For example, within my own family, my father wanted to serve in the army and saw it as his duty to our country, while my Grandfather did not think my father should have gone to the Territorials, that he had more use at home milking cows. Yet, delving deeper, my father's motives for wanting to go to the territorials seem to have more basis in mateship and masculinity than in protecting our country from Communism. In addition, my grandfather's motives seem very clear and altogether selfish - he did not want to lose a pair of hands and a competent farmer to a war that was not ours. New Zealand's identity was beginning to form.

Another important event that led to the development of a unique New Zealand identity followed on from the Gallipoli campaign. Anzac Day occurs every year on the 25th of April - originally to commemorate the battle at Gallipoli. Even though more New Zealand lives were lost during later battles, Gallipoli remained foremost in the hearts and minds of New Zealanders. Over time, Anzac Day has come to memorialise all of our soldiers who have fought and/or died, or are still serving in wars overseas. Ultimately Anzac Day has come to represent national unity and pride.

Every Anzac Day the surviving soldiers, and most of Inglewood's town people, would gather in the cool early morning for the Dawn Parade. In my father's photography collection are a number of photographs taken on Anzac Day - of the remaining soldiers and the memorial itself - suggesting to me the importance my father placed on New Zealand's military history. As children, Dad would take us to the Anzac Day Dawn Parade. He would wake us up early in the morning and make sure we were wrapped up warmly. I would stand silent, freezing in the morning sun, looking at the old men with their medals glinting in the cool sun and not really understand what all the fuss was about. However, for my dad, who was born just after the war ended, the glory was much more real. The feeling of Anzac day was less about serving the monarchy or protecting 'Home' (i.e. England) but more about the pride and sorrow for 'Our Boys' - of paying homage to the spectacular mythology that surrounded the Anzac soldier and by proxy all of New Zealand. And, at the central point of Anzac Day, as a concrete - or marble, or bronze - representation of such an ephemeral concept, is the war memorial.

In almost every small town, there is a war memorial. For Pakeha culture that lacked a sense of tradition here, whose historical roots were in another land, the building of war memorials was an important process in stating a sense of belonging. Pakeha possession of the land and establishment of tradition was

imperative to the new colony. In communities Pakeha had built, the monuments would be a permanent statement of community, and a public record of collective communal loss. The monuments announced not just the tragedy of personal loss; but tied imperial loyalty firmly to local pride. (Bell, 1996, p. 104)

In Inglewood, the closest town to the Burwell farm, there is a monument to the war dead, much like there is in many towns in New Zealand. A noble young soldier with head bowed, hands resting on his reversed rifle, stands by a mate's grave, with above him the list of the local men who lost their lives in WWI and WWII. The myth that was built up around the New Zealand soldier has been permanently embodied in the numerous memorials that stand in most New Zealand towns. According to Phillips in his essay 'Lest We Forget: War Memorials of the First World War', war memorials have become "part of the common fabric of our lives" (p. 1) and he likens them to lamp posts and stop signs. He also points out that although they are very common across the New Zealand landscape, they avoid being formulaic or monotonous. His reasoning for such variation and originality was that the people who commissioned these memorials did so for a wide variety of reasons and from diverse perspectives. Whether as parents of dead soldiers, friends, siblings, or returned servicemen themselves, all of these memorials were erected to remember those who lost their lives, those who never returned home and to help "recall with pride the way 'our boys' had given identity to a nation" (p. 1).

Often the memorials would take the form of one of the mythologised soldier figures; either the perfectly dressed, well-groomed soldier at attention; or the untidy soldier, buttons undone, muddy booted, looking much like unkempt, but courageous, Sergeant Travis might have. Many communities wanted to portray a sense of the Anzac spirit with their memorials, and tried to keep the detail as iconically Anzac as they could. At the unveiling of the Kaiapoi memorial in 1922, the local major described it as follows.

The figure was a soldier in full kit, and his digger friends assured him it was complete in every detail, even to the broken bootlace! The soldier was resting after a desperate charge; the torn sleeve and wounded arm showed what he had been through. . . The face was lined and careworn, and bore the marks of what the soldier had experienced. . . Yet there were indications of that tenderness shown to a wounded comrade, or even to a wounded enemy. . . The figure was typical of the spirit that sent over 100,000 of our men from New Zealand - a typical Anzac. (Phillips, 1987, pg 230)

The memorials that were erected throughout New Zealand after WWI continued to embellish the myth of the New Zealand soldier, becoming a concrete representation of that myth. Long after those that served in WWI and WWII are dead, these monuments will remain to communicate to future generations the story of the New Zealand soldier, ensuring the myth remains entrenched in our society.

The mythologising of war in New Zealand in the form of Anzac Memorials and stories was at the heart of the Territorials problem between my father and grandfather. My grandfather, although he had never served in war, had experienced the practical consequences, the deprivation and constraint that war put on life within families, communities and industry - including farming. However, because my father had never experienced war in any way, or its effects on New Zealand, his view of warfare was largely based on the mythology that surrounded the Anzacs. The role that memorials have played, and continue to play, in the establishment and continuation of the myth of the Anzac soldier cannot be understated, and combined with the reaffirmation of this myth every year on Anzac Day has led to a strong association of masculinity, war and national identity in New Zealand culture. Indeed the axioms and forms of war memorials are so iconic in New Zealand culture, and so immediate in their symbolism, that a Richard Killeen painting of a rugby player standing in front of a war memorial, needs to be only partially legible for most of those who see it to make out, THE GLORIOUS DEAD, inscribed behind him.

When Dad was about 23, a friend set him up on a blind date with my mother. Every weekend there was a dance at either Stratford, or New Plymouth's Star Gym. Dad was between girlfriends (being somewhat of a "Casanova" and a great dancer he was in high demand every weekend) and Lynne Hitchcock, a shy academic girl four years younger was convinced to go along to one with him. They hit it off immediately and shared their first kiss that night. It was, in my mother's words, "like something out of a Mills and Boon!" My parents were engaged six months later and married within a year. Despite my father having been brought up by a very domineering and chauvinistic father, dad had none of these qualities, which was just as well given my mother's feminist views. My parents were very close and, unusually for the time and place, dad was a very affectionate man. My mother also expected him to be involved in his children's lives, which dad was more than happy to be. Though I never saw my parents argue their biggest disagreement occurred over dad's favourite sport - Rugby. Mum hated the prevailing culture surrounding rugby, where women were not allowed at after match functions, men would drink copious amounts of beer and general sexism and abuse would inevitably occur. Another contentious issue was the Springbok Tour of New Zealand in the early eighties. Mum was anti apartheid and Dad was pro rugby, Mum protested in her student days against the All Blacks going to South Africa while Dad had always played, coached and enjoyed watching rugby. He and his friends believed that sport would end apartheid. In an interview with one of Dad's friends, he stated dryly that mum and he used to have 'good discussions' about politics and sport. Apparently, rugby and politics do not mix. During the Springbok Tour of New Zealand in 1981 my father was relegated to the couch for his view that the tour was not supporting apartheid - and in the end my father gave up rugby for running.

In general, before the Springbok protests (which divided families and split New Zealand down the middle regardless of where you lived), most social unrest, protest and problems appeared to come from the urban areas of New Zealand. There seemed to be a large disparity between rural New Zealand culture and urban New Zealand, which to a much lesser extent still exists today. It seemed to me, looking back, that Taranaki cannot have changed very much at all from the 1940's to the 1980's - it seemed very old fashioned, resistant to change and rather a bit of a backwater compared to the larger cities and urban areas. New Zealand was considered one of the cleanest and safest places in the world to grow up in. However this ideal New Zealand, this Real New Zealand only exists in Rural New Zealand - our urban landscapes rarely feature -

as the clean, green, 100% pure mantra does not extend within our city boundaries. There seemed to be an inconsistency and unease that existed in New Zealand, and it was an unease that we were scarcely aware of.

However, as New Zealanders began its soul searching in the late 1960s, we began to gain a sense of who we were. With this emerged ways of viewing and examining New Zealand culture. A unique New Zealand Literature style surfaced, giving voice to the myth of the Man Alone, the unquestionably masculine, stoic and emotionally repressed Kiwi Man. New Zealand film makers during WWII, with the support of the New Zealand Government, began to produce films on New Zealanders at war and at home and about our landscape; these short films which were shown prior to screenings of Hollywood feature films helped to shape our perception of what it meant to be a Kiwi. Slowly, we began to feel a sense of our own identity that was not attached to any imperial notions of the British 'Home'. As our Kiwi awareness gradually grew, New Zealand documentary photography grew with it - and it enabled us to see ourselves from another point of view. Janet Bayly wrote of this phenomenon - "documentary photography in this country paralleled the growth of a self conscious determination... of what it was to 'be New Zealand'" (p. 9).

New Zealand had the beginnings of an identity, but this Real New Zealand was firmly rooted in the (white) countryside - in the awe-inspiring mountains and green fields, the cows and countless sheep, our Real Men farmers and rugby players. In *Inventing New Zealand* (1996), Claudia Bell writes that "in New Zealand we can see the exclusion of women from the national character, the marginalisation of Maori, and the representations of the country that focus on just one class" (p. 188). She argues that this causes a massive disparity between the imagined national identity and the reality of cultural experience (p. 189). The Real New Zealand that New Zealanders were offered was largely incongruous with every day existence and it was not until the '70s that a different picture of New Zealand - often urban and less pastorally idyllic - was presented to both the outside world and to home audiences. Social documentary photographers such as John Pascoe, Les Cleveland, and in particular Marti Friedlander, produced photographs that helped form part of our new cultural iconography. These photographs are both familiar and yet strange - why would anyone want to take photographs of ordinary New Zealanders when there are beautiful mountains and rivers to photograph? However, as Marti Friedlander said, "I like the ordinary. I find the ordinary extraordinary. I go into a street, I see so much. Not just in terms of moments that need to be captured, but

because of aspects that say something about the humanity of what's there." (Cohen, NZ Listener, 2004).

One of the first documentary photographers to emerge in New Zealand was John Pascoe. He started out photographing the New Zealand landscape - in particular mountains, as he was a keen mountaineer and tramper. In many ways he was considered the archetypal Kiwi man - as Athol McCredie wrote in *Witness to Change* (1985), Pascoe was "self taught, self-motivated, highly flexible" (Bayly, McCredie, 1985, p. 30) and "down-to-earth" (p. 34). It was not until Pascoe worked for Internal Affairs for the New Zealand government in 1942 that he began to record aspects of everyday New Zealand life - in particular relating to the war effort. Pascoe worked for Internal Affairs for only three years; however during that time he recorded images that according to McCredie are "the most evocative images we have of that period" (p. 29). Many artists and writers were beginning to explore all aspects of New Zealand culture, not just the sanitised parts that were good for tourism. Pascoe was highly influenced by British filmmaker, John Grierson, who once said, "In England, we seem to see and hear a lot about New Zealand. . . I knew about your mountains and glaciers. . . I knew you had a lot of Maoris who staged shows for rich tourists, and that you had mud that bubbled... But never anything about the human beings that live in it" (p. 33). For this reason, Pascoe proceeded to capture images of ordinary New Zealand human beings.

Due to his official status as a Government photographer, Pascoe had authorized access to places, events and people that were well out of reach of most other photographers during that period. Therefore, he was able to record a part of New Zealand history that would have otherwise gone unrecorded - such as Japanese P.O.W.s, warfare training, women in industry and munition manufacture. This extensive documentation of what was essentially ordinary New Zealand, would have been at the time unheard of - although, McCredie writes that the Depression had "awakened a social conscience... a belief that it was the ordinary person who mattered most" (p. 32). The Labour Government in power during the war supported this belief, and it was Pascoe's job to document the newly initiated social programs aimed at helping the ordinary New Zealander. His photographs of health camps, state housing, milk in schools and physical education programs could easily be viewed as propaganda for the Government, or tools to raise morale - as depicting every day New Zealanders helping out 'Our Boys' in any way we could, would invariably lift national morale. However, according to McCredie, not all of Pascoe's photographs were well received by the Government. It

was reported that the Prime Minister at the time, Peter Fraser, was "rather displeased" (p. 35) with a Pascoe photograph of Maori workers outside of a very decrepit looking country factory. The photograph appeared in the 1945 book *Introduction to New Zealand* - apparently it was not the introduction to New Zealand the Prime Minister was looking for.

Pascoe's respect for the ordinary person was probably what led him to photograph coal miners, who at the time were seen by many as "not pulling their weight for the war effort" (p. 34). In his article supporting his photographs, he explained the difficulties of coal mining, examined why shortages existed and was sympathetic to the hardships of mining life (p. 34). Although Pascoe endeavoured to capture images of ordinary every day New Zealanders, many of his photographs are still enmeshed in the New Zealand Myth. In particular his photograph, *A student at Cass bound for farm work during his summer vacation, January 1944*, seems to prescribe to the notion of the Kiwi Man Alone myth. Not only is the young man the very picture of gaunt New Zealand colonial ruggedness (Edmund Hillary-ness), but also, he is photographed alone, against a rural South Island backdrop, complete with rugged hillsides, power poles and what looks to be a gravel road. In contrast, one of Pascoe's most interesting WWII photographs', *Official VE (Victory in Europe) Celebrations at Government Buildings, Wellington, May 1945*, is far from mythological. This photograph captures none of the joy or celebration of victory that you would imagine in such a photograph; instead all of the faces in the crowd are sombre. Wayne Stagg in his essay 'Forming Cultures in Photographs', writes that this photograph, "evokes a sense of authoritarianism" (Bayley, McCredie, 1985, p. 21) which he sees as typical of New Zealand culture and discusses how many of Pascoe's photographs of the period conform to the sense of isolation and insulation that he believes New Zealand was experiencing at the time. It is strange that although the crowd in the photograph are meant to be celebrating the great victory in Europe, none are even smiling. Stagg writes, that the "melancholic assemblage of humanity is at odds with our expectations of the event being witnessed" (p. 21). Behind the iron fence of Government grounds their faces are emotionless, as though this victory seems far away, intangible and, with war still raging with Japan, even hollow. It reflects, Stagg claims, the insular nature of many New Zealanders at the time, that although in Europe there is victory, it means little in real terms to New Zealanders - so what's the point in celebration?

Another notable documentary photographer working in New Zealand was Les Cleveland. His photographs, like many of Pascoe's, also subscribed to the New Zealand Myth. During the 1940s and '50s, there

was an emergence of what Stagg called the West Coast Myth. This version of the New Zealand Myth placed the West Coast of the South Island at the centre of true New Zealand-ness, bleaching the West Coast of all Maori culture, and according to Stagg, it became, in pakeha cultural terms, "a place almost totally devoid of Maori" (p. 22). Cleveland prescribed to this belief and expressed it in his photographs. His photographs are often of those bastions of New Zealand (white) maleness - the racecourse, pub, church and public hall. As a comment on the increasingly private nature of New Zealand society, and the growing materialistic world of its people, Cleveland photographed public buildings. These buildings were once the focus of New Zealand's communal lives, however in Cleveland's photographs they are in much disrepair, highlighting that often forgotten aspect of material life - that it decays (p. 22). Indeed many of the West Coast buildings that Cleveland photographed, no longer exist. Cleveland captured these buildings on film because he saw them as indicative of where we came from and where New Zealand society was slowly heading. He said,

I see us as more or less permanently locked into [19th century New Zealand architectural 'leftovers'], not in anyway modernised or driven outside them. The concrete that's around seems to me to be nothing radical - it's merely a utilitarian and functional arrangement of forms. All our institutions and most of our social customs and morality have been transposed directly from the British model to some extent, and we seem powerless to break out of this. There has been some adaptation, but very little radical change - were still doing our nineteenth century thing here. (Bayley, McCredie, 1985, p. 22)

By photographing these buildings he seems to sense on some level that New Zealand was about to change, and by capturing these images on film, he is in some way conserving an aspect of New Zealand's past that is about to disappear for ever.

Photographer Marti Friedlander, once said of New Zealand in the 50's and 60's, "it was a culture resistant to change and to people who were different, and that's why I thought I'd photograph them and photograph what I saw around me. Why? Because I knew it was going to change. It had to change" (Cohen, NZ Listener, 2004). And she was right; New Zealand was about to go through a massive series of changes, social, economical and cultural. Friedlander's approach to photographing this change was a "subtle, nuanced and quietly complicating" (p. 4) approach. In his essay, 'Narratives of Loss and Hope - The Photographs of Marti Friedlander', Leonard Bell writes that for all the "apparent literal realism" (p. 5) of Friedlander's photographs, they imply problems of identity. Bell writes that her photographs do not show us who or what

we are, rather they ask us questions about our selves and our identity; questions that are "not necessarily easy ones to answer" (p. 5).

In *Larks in a Paradise* (1974), Friedlander captures many of the aspects of New Zealand culture that we associate with Real New Zealand - the black singleted farmer, the mass of sheep, the quiet and simple way of life we associate with New Zealand. Yet, in the same book, there are images of protest and violence. There is imagery of racial and social disharmony that had rarely been shown before, either to New Zealanders or of New Zealanders. Friedlander also photographed urban New Zealand, the growing suburban sprawl growing out from Auckland and other major cities. *Larks in a Paradise* is full of disparity between the photographs, but more importantly, between New Zealand's imagined view of itself, and the 'reality' Marti Friedlander's photographs present to us. Herein lies the question Friedlander asks us - Who do we think we are?

One of Friedlander's most identifiable photographs *Eglinton Valley* (1970), depicting a flock of sheep on a dusty road, seems at first glance to be prescribing to the great rural myth of New Zealand - the land of sheep! Did you know that here in New Zealand, sheep outnumber people 20 to 1 - another 'impressive' measure of our splendid country! However, when I look at this photograph, I begin to feel a little uneasy. The sheep are staring right at me, staunch, accusing me perhaps - they are certainly asking me, "What are you doing here?" This photograph seems to test the New Zealand/sheep cliché, a cliché that is nestled amongst our most sacred of cultural anchors - Rural New Zealand. Friedlander seems to challenge this concept again, and takes it one step further in her photograph, *Ruaapekapeka*, (1970). Leonard Bell discusses the symbolism of the various elements within the photograph as follows; "a foreground cow, marking the pastoralisation of New Zealand, face to face with 'us', and a cannon, a relic of the 1846 battle between British forces and Ngapuhi for control of the region, against an idyllic, rural landscape, under a meteorologically charged, lowering sky" (p. 5). Loaded with insinuation and inference, Friedlander has never pretended objectivity. Indeed, according to Bell, she is often, if not literally in her photographs, then she is "as much part of the occasion or experience" (p. 5) as the subject of the image.

Friedlander took many photographs of protests and marches that took place in New Zealand from the '60s onward. Marches for women's liberation and gay rights, contrasted with the Sanctity of Family marches by church groups. Protests against apartheid, nuclear testing, Vietnam war, and for Maori equal rights erupted, and these issues markedly

changed New Zealand's cultural fingerprint. Friedlander's photographs of young urban Maori gave a public face to a group that had long been invisible within our cultural landscape - Maori were not just performers from a dying culture, in grass skirts, with moko on their faces, but a rich culture with issues and problems, and also a desire for a future. In her photograph, *Pentecostal March*, (1972), a middle-aged woman stands before a large banner which reads "SEX WITHIN MARRIAGE", she stares at us, about to remove her sunglasses and give us a glimpse into her eyes, daring us to confront her - yet somehow she seems slightly panicked at what she might reveal of herself if she does so. New Zealand society was changing - in this case, the introduction of the contraceptive pill, led to increased sexual freedom for women - and many New Zealanders did not want it to change. The notion of New Zealand being God's Own Country, untouched and uncaring about the wicked ways of the world, was rapidly being shouted down by the chants of our own Cultural Revolution.

In the preface to *Larks in a Paradise*, James McNeish wrote that Friedlander's photographs "imply a human condition," and that this "is something we have cared to disguise from ourselves and the outside world for so long that we must be a little surprised to find that it is really there" (p. 1). This surprising comment highlights to me the massive change that has occurred in New Zealand since 1974 - it never even occurs to me that New Zealand has a 'human condition', it just does. McNeish praises Friedlander's photographs as being the first to "correct the fallacy that we are a nation of stereotypes" (p. 2). Her photographs never feigned to 'show us' the 'Real' New Zealand - there is no Real New Zealand. Friedlander sought to explore the "sadness-beneath-the-paradise" (p. 1). She ended up revealing a vision of New Zealand outside generalisation, devoid of caricature - and she leaves us with images of people and the land we live in, of human beings watching, working, loving, changing, celebrating, protesting, and above all else, living.

A few cards
short of a deck
1980's

My experience of family life as a young child was idyllic. I remember it with an indeterminate fuzziness that comes from the rose tinted spectacles that sheltered children have - or at least that I had. Much of my childhood was spent with my brothers and sisters. Both of my parents were nearly always around or within easy reach. My gruff but beloved grandparents lived less than 100 metres up our road and most of my cousins, aunts and uncles lived an easy drive away. Every Sunday my family - not including Mum - would walk up the road to my Granny and Granddad's house and have Sunday Lunch with them. We were not a religious family, but Sunday was family worship, Grandad was God and Granny was Cook. Usually a large contingent of my extensive extended family would be there - cousins, aunties and uncles. It was a feast of tradition. Roast, potatoes, roast potatoes, hot and steaming, regardless of the temperature outside - in Granny's old house it was always cold and the open fire was always going. Favourite dishes included: apple shortcake, strawberries from the patch with icing sugar and sweetened cream, and Granny's immaculate roast. Even though she eventually became completely blind and deaf, she was well able to make all of these things - she had lived in that house for over 50 years and she must have known it like the back of her hand. We would all sit around the table; using manners that we never had at home - no elbows on the table, no slouching, using both the knife and the fork properly, please and thankyou and no bickering. Any less may have resulted in a sharp telling off or even perhaps a slap on the back of the hand with granddads fork! However, we were always the very picture of politeness and decorum, and I cannot ever recall being reprimanded. Then if it were winter we would play a long and rowdy round of Six Handed 500 by Granddads rules, or if it was warm outside then a walk around the orchard that my great grandfather started, or granddads huge veggie garden was in order. If we were a little tired, we would sit on the veranda in one of the wild licorice assortment of chairs, next to the grapefruit tree - that was Granddads pride and joy, "how many grapefruit grandad?" - and smell the citrus oil bursting in the air.

I had our farm as my playground, and it was the ideal place for fantasies - dreams of hidden treasure and great explorations. We had an ancient orchard, dead branches covered with lichen and heavily laden plum trees resting their loads on top of Granddads chicken coop. There were machines with rust and grease to climb and incorporate into my dreaming, where they would transform from tractors to grand chariots for great kings. All around were streams with eels, ridiculously green grass and absurd rolling hills and in the middle of all this a single stand

of native bush - the last one left on our farm. This archaic and forbidding corpse of trees was always enticing; it was shelter from the ever-present rain, and protection from the infrequent but blazing sun. Surrounded by barbed wire, the knowing would find their way in (through the swamp and follow the stream), and when you entered under the canopy of trees, it became an enchanting and terrifying place. I once found the skeleton of a possum there - still trapped in the jaws of a gin trap - and ran away. When I went back the next day (full of shame for my flight) to find it again, it had gone. There were no birds in the trees, the bush was eerily silent - like the Maori myth of The Mountain, Taranaki, absent of birds, silent with fear it might move again - but the creek running through had freshwater crays and little fish to catch. In winter, a walk to the cowshed involved gumboots, hat, overalls and gloves - and grass frozen with frost like brittle little knives would shatter with every careful step. In spring, there were the soft warm mouths of calves sucking your fingers, and their frustrated baby teeth, protesting your fingers lack of nourishment. In summer, huts of hay, with tunnels long and narrow, and claustrophobic with the pervasive fear of collapse and suffocation - yet we always made them. Autumn was wet and monotonous, not cold enough for the consolation of a fire yet. Always there were cows to be milked, waiting patiently to be emptied they lined up into the distance, slipping on the shit covered race and chewing their cud, and dad milking them.

However, when my father became sick, this all changed. The farm began to represent what my father could not do anymore. The idyll of the land seemed far off - like a fairy tale told to a child - and I did not want to try to reach it. Before I was told my dad had cancer, the farm was always an extension of him. Time on the farm was time with dad, all around me my father's hand would wave, from the race I know he built, the cows he loved, the tractor we fed the calves from and the motorbike he taught me to ride. Helping dad on the farm was no longer fun, but necessary. As a skinny little 11-year-old girl, I was more able to hose down the yard after milking than dad was - even though the high water pressure often knocked me off my feet. Dad was often unreachable, through pain or hospital distance, or surreally normal and healthy - leaving me confused and sad. Visits from family became false, pretensions of normality watched over by the spectre of my grimacing father, hunched over in his beige Lazy Boy. My once close association with the farm was becoming increasingly unbearable to maintain. The absence of my dad and my association of the farm with my father meant that any time spent on it was painful. Coupled with that was the arrival of people to at first help

dad out on the farm and eventually at my fathers' death, the arrival of a share milker, meant I no longer felt like the farm was ours. My life was changing slowly but dramatically - my identity as daddy's girl, a farmer's girl, was fading along with my father.

New Zealand identity had long been rooted in the land, both farmland and the wilderness, but these associations were becoming tenuous at best. Most New Zealanders by the eighties were urban dwellers, and had little concept of farming or bush walks. New Zealand culture had long been presented as idyllic and utopian - New Zealand was considered by many to be the best place in the world to raise your kids - however during the 70's and 80's this view was beginning to be questioned. Filmmakers were part of the movement toward more realism in New Zealand culture. The National Film Unit - which had long had a legislated monopoly on film production and processing - was criticised for promoting a false image of New Zealand, which was essentially government-controlled propaganda. The NFU presented New Zealand as a "Problem free paradise" and avoided social issues or controversy as "strong government editorial control resulted in the suppression of potentially embarrassing information" (Churchman, 1997, p. 58). Instead, films made were predominantly of the mainstays of New Zealand iconography - our landscape and the rural Real Kiwi Blokes that lived on it. In the late seventies, the New Zealand Film Commission was established and this financially enabled filmmakers to present to New Zealand and the rest of the world, a place that was not the traditional idyllic rural landscape virtually uninhabited by people normally shown. Films such as *Angel Mine* (1979) and *Smash Palace* (1982) were some of the first New Zealand made films funded by the NZFC that presented New Zealand in any way different from the cookie cutter, perfect world, New Zealanders supposedly lived in. New Zealand society was changing dramatically and this change was beginning to be expressed on film.

By the mid eighties New Zealand was being assaulted on every front, and economical, political and social forces were transforming New Zealand's cultural landscape. Claudia Bell in her book *Inventing New Zealand* (1996), wrote that New Zealand's traditional welfare state, the 'from cradle to grave' care promised by the New Zealand government that had become part of our identity, was being supplanted by economic needs and desires. This resulted in a "wave of ideological change [that] displaced government responsibility for social objectives in a restructured, re-rationalised economy" (Bell, 1996, p. 191). These changes, such as the privatisation of state owned monopolies, were unsettling and foreign to New Zealanders. Prior to the mid eighties, New Zealanders

had been protected from the economic reality of the rest of the world by the government, through levies and taxes, and when these were removed, many New Zealander's struggled. New Zealand's standard of living dropped dramatically and this challenged the notion of New Zealand as the best place in the world to live. It began to seem a bit dubious that we were indeed lucky to have been born here, rather than anywhere else in the world.

New Zealand's strong sense of identity as an egalitarian society was also being challenged. Through the deconstruction of our welfare state in the eighties into a 'user pays' system that meant if you could not pay then you go without, the demarcation between the haves and the have nots came into the harsh new light. The New Zealand government also changed laws and legislation relating to Maori, women and homosexuals, essentially admitting that in our mythological egalitarian society, these groups had not been as equal as we thought. At the same time, new ideologies were marketed to us. Many of these new facets of national identity were merely mutations of old established ones. We became Nuclear Free New Zealand, an idea that sat comfortably with our new independent identity and the clean green image we had cultivated since colonisation. At the removal of tariffs and subsidies that cushioned our manufacturing sector, New Zealander business became innovative and forward thinking - a handy extension of the number eight wire, can do, colonial attitude. The long established nuts and bolts of New Zealand's cultural environment were coming unwound, and the mythological smoke was clearing from our burning social landscape and along with these, the Rural Idea of New Zealand was being razed.

One New Zealand film that explored this rural razing was the 1984 film *Vigil* by Vincent Ward. *Vigil* is set in what could almost be an idyllic rural farm, but it is far from ideal. The landscape is an ominous overwhelming presence, it is caving in around the characters; it seems to be almost rotting and the stripped earth seems to fester like a wound. Nicholas Reid discusses *Vigil* in his book, *A Decade of New Zealand Film; from Sleeping Dogs to Come a Hot Friday*. He writes that although *Vigil* is "set in a distinctive world of its own" (p. 109) it also plunges deep into New Zealand mythology, both acknowledged and hidden. One of the major themes in *Vigil* is human inability to control nature. Throughout New Zealand's European history the struggle of man versus nature has been a common thread. In *Vigil*, Vincent Ward explores this theme, with references to the Dead Tree genre from New Zealand landscape art, and positions the characters overwhelmed within the ramparts of a crumbling, swamp filled, claustrophobic valley - they are powerless to

"stop the walls caving in on us" (*Vigil*, 1984). Indeed the landscape is so powerful that it is off one of these valley walls that Toss's father falls to his death. Throughout the film, weather is a dominant force, in particular, when a storm blows away the tree that Toss planted for her dead father. Alternatively, the ever-present rain clouds and the resulting bog that Toss' grandfather Birdie, has ineffectively tried to drain and that eventually swallows the tractor. All of these magnify man's incompetence against the elements. There is no happy union of land and man in *Vigil*, the land engulfs and consumes those that dwell there.

Reid (1986) suggests that *Vigil* may be one of the first New Zealand feature films that steps away from the more attractive imagery of green rolling countryside and into the rain soaked reality of rural hill-country farming. Where often the hills and mountains of New Zealand are portrayed with grandeur and majesty, these broken hills are menacing, about to topple onto the characters. Moreover, it exposes the myth that Real Rural New Zealander's - self sufficient, secular, free and in control - are actually dominated by the landscape. Reid writes that in *Vigil*, "here are men who would be handymen (but the land is too tough), a woman who would dance ballet (but the heavy work has to be done), and a solitary farm child who has to make her own universe in private games" (p. 117). The myths of New Zealand are laid naked, and are revealed threadbare.

In *Vigil*, the concept of New Zealand's isolation is explored. Generally, in New Zealand mythology, isolation is viewed as a positive or at least fortifying experience, however in *Vigil*, it feels claustrophobic and abandoned. The characters are shown as isolated from the outside world, and from each other - almost in reference to the Man Alone Myth - however, this does not lead to strength of character and body, but toward death, lunacy and resignation. The characters are never shown in sunlight, unless through a reflection from the window they are looking out of, and they seem forever trapped within the gloomy confines of the valley. The horizon is restricted to the hilltops, and beyond that is cloud, fog and rain. The result is remoteness not with expansive grandeur, but nightmarish isolation.

Another New Zealand myth explored within *Vigil* is that of a helpful, supportive, neighbourly community, where it is never too much trouble to help those that need it. In *Vigil*, the only time the community is shown is at the funeral of Toss's father, and there they remain faceless and remote. The only help the family receive is from the threatening stranger Ethan, that turns Toss' already chaotic world on its head. There is no

supportive family, not friendly neighbour; the family is very much alone in their isolated valley.

The world in which the child/ woman Toss exists is far from the idyllic childhood New Zealand children are supposed to have. She lives in the country yes, but she feels threatened by this land - her safety line to the land, killed by the land itself - it is no longer a protective place to be. So she begins to stand vigil, watching over her land, the only home she has ever known, yet one menaced by death and intrusion. From this frightening and changing world, Toss retreats to her imagination, where her father is still alive, and duels Ethan on the back of his white horse. She performs rituals, bastardised versions of Christianity, to attempt to bring her father back to life, burying a plate of food in the mud next to the tree she planted for her dad. She uses games and chants to convince herself that she is not alone - playing Hide and Seek with her dead father "one potato, two potato, three potato, four" (*Vigil*, 1984). She creates a shrine for father and prays at it - hoping that magic will bring him back. Mostly she just watches, hoping to catch a glimpse of her father, and she stands vigil, waiting for him to return - it is a vigil she ultimately fails. It seems to me that her belief in magic and its ultimate exposure as a sham are a metaphor for her passage from childhood to adult. The failure of her magic, anger at God and her acknowledgement of death moves her into the reality of the adult world, one that is much more cerebral than the fantasy she created for herself.

Vigil is a film that through the personal fantasies of a child explores the cultural fantasies of New Zealanders. The world Toss believes in is not the one she lives in, much as the country New Zealanders believe in, bares little resemblance to the one we live in.

My work is an expression of nostalgia and social history, constructed in a conglomerative fashion, creating a collage out of the many concepts, events and memories contained within my writing. The writing itself formed part of the design process, enabling me to form ideas and links between story and social history, and to critically reflect on the ideas that were then used to inspire and inform the textile and garment design of the final five pieces. Often ideas were explored through writing and then discarded - or evolved to the point where the origin is lost or became irrelevant. First Son's foundation is in the written exploration of the story and related social context into which each story is placed. However as the pieces are a physical expression of the ideas and concepts explored in the writing - and also add additional intangible and public components to the writing - the final pieces are the most important aspect of my work. The exhibition at this stage is predominantly to provide an opportunity for documentation and public viewing of my work. It is my intention to exhibit this work further in Taranaki, and perhaps also in a specific object exhibition space, to further conceptualise the pieces within the frame of object art.

First Son attempts to create a series of mementos that form a memorial to both my father and also the society he lived in. It uses mythology and stories, collected and remembered from his friends and family, and filtered from existing writing, to extend the personal and social mythology that surrounds my father and New Zealand from his birth in the 1940s till his death in the early 1990s. Each piece aims to provide clues to the viewer, to become a sort of portal, or perhaps a mirror that shows them some part of their past. As a whole all five pieces are the exploration of a man and culture that is no longer here - they become a memento, or memorial to my dead father and my journey to discover my past and his life. They are also an expression of the culture my father grew up in and the way this culture has evolved and developed over the course of its history. They are an exploration of memories, investigating the intricacies of remembering the experiences, people and events that form our identities, as much as what we forget and what is invented. It explores the mythology of rural New Zealand - the stories we tell ourselves.

First Son takes the form of memory objects, mementos or memorials. Memory objects are essentially representations of the past that exist in the present. Rarely are they open to change as new information or new perspectives come into play. It is often seen as sacrilege to add to an existing memento in order to make it more relevant to the present or accurate of the past. Museums go to extreme lengths to maintain the

status quo of objects – to preserve them as close to the original as is possible. This is to conserve the past as accurately as possible. One of the most difficult of object types to conserve is the textile object.

Textiles unique place as intimate signifiers of time and place, combined with their apparent susceptibility to the ravages of time, mean that they both represent the time they were created and the time that has passed since their creation. This ability to show the passing of time and yet remain functional is not unique – furniture shows time with the development patina and wear – however the intimate relationship textile objects have with their owner is unique. A chair cannot have the intimate relationship with the body and self that a coat can. The way textile objects can conform to the wearer's body and show areas of wear particular to the wearer is also unique to textile objects. Clothing in particular has the ability more than most objects to communicate aspects of a person's identity and past – looking at clothing this way makes clothing a particularly adept vehicle for communicating memories of the past and the way these memories form your identity.

As I am concerned with contributing to the wholeness of the consumer / viewer, I began designing the pieces from a standpoint of zero waste, using the whole of something with as little waste as possible to create the objects. For example, the Japanese use an entire width and length of a piece of fabric with minimal waste to create the Kimono. It is made of a series of rectangular pieces that are sewn together to fit the body - any excess is sewn into the seams, to allow for enlarging. This concept also relates to the theory that we never truly forget anything, but plays on this idea as not all of the fabric is visible at all times, the original plain fabric is printed on and small parts of the printed fabric are cut away (although these are always replaced with new fabric - to maintain the integrity of the garment / memory / identity). The kimono concept formed the basis for all the pieces I designed.

The starting point for each of the drapes is a double layer of identical fabric, which is then cut out in the shape of the family farm. This was done to maintain the link to my past and to reinforce the significance the land has to New Zealand's past and my father's life. The dimensions are related to The Modular, a system of measurement and proportion based on the body, designed by French architect, Le Corbusier. I used this system to provide a close relationship between my body, as the carrier of my identity, and the land from which I was raised. The width of each piece is based on the height of my arm raised - in exaltation to the memory of my father, this refers to the way I had placed my father on a pedestal and never knew of any faults as I was just a small child when he

died. Le Corbusier's Golden Section of 1:1.618 then divided this measurement, to get the height of each piece. This resulted in a doubled layer of fabric that measures approximately 205cm wide by 125cm tall.

The outline of an iconic Kiwi blokes 'Black Singlet' is then traced onto the fabric and cut out, keeping it attached to the fabric. The use of the singlet silhouette is to connect Kiwi Bloke mythology with each of the garments as my father's life and New Zealand's history is inextricably entangled with this notion of Kiwi Bloke-ness.

This was then draped upon a women size twelve mannequin - my size - as the pieces are designed for me to wear (wearing my past on my sleeve) as a representation of my past and identity. The drape process is such that the original piece of fabric is not cut up into separate pieces, but remains connected at points to ensure its integrity. This reflects the way in which our memories and everything we experience, in some way effects our lives, nothing is truly forgotten or discarded. It reflects the fragmented nature of memories, the difficulty in accurately and wholly remembering a person or event, yet memories inherent integrity as the building blocks of life story. The drape for each piece is related to dress styles from that decade - to contextualise each piece within a time-frame. They are also related to either the wider social context, or the story, or my dad's personal situation at the time.

The double layer of fabric is intended to communicate dual aspects of culture and memory, such as past and present, truth and myth, public and private, but in a format that does not place these duos in opposition. The nature of the relationship between them is like the relationship of a lining to the outer garment, each affects the other, they do not exist separate from each other however they are individual components with different purposes. On parts of the garments, the double layer is maintained and in others only a single layer is used. On some parts the 'lining' is attached to the outer, and in others it is not and on most of the drapes the lining at times becomes the shell, and the shell the lining. This reflects concepts such as the past directly affecting the lived present, or the crossing over of myth into reality or of private lives affecting the public facade. The three dimensional aspect of the drapes, mean that an element of concealing and revealing is possible, where parts of embellishments can be strategically hidden within the folds of the garment. That clothing is worn on the body in such an intimate fashion is also exploited, in that specific embellishments can be placed in relation to the body to communicate certain aspects of the pieces concept.

The act of story telling, mythologising and recalling times, people or events is explored extensively in the drapes, where the truth (each piece in their flat state) is contorted and rearranged to suit the audience (the draped garments) resulting in the final version of each story. However it is important that each piece be able to be disassembled back to the flat state as every myth, story and memory has some basis in truth, and it is often possible to dismantle many of these myths to find their origin. This process of creating and decoding myths or memories was something I encountered early on in my research. When I was talking to the family and friends of my father the same story was often told by different people in vastly different ways. It seemed that the same event was encountered by different people and then remembered as a different experience. I was not interested in finding out what really happened and revealing the 'truth', but more in why the recollections were different – age, relationship to those involved, culpability etc.? This concept was translated into the drapes ability to be both a two dimensional object and an three dimensional one, moreover, the way I have chosen to drape each of the pieces is not the only way they could be constructed, so if a different person was 'telling the story' it could look vastly different. The drapes as they were for the exhibition are my interpretation of the events and memories, my telling of the stories told to me and my memories of my father, reflected in the drape and folding of cloth.

The all-over repeat prints on each side of the drape are different, often contrasting, but not polar opposites of each other. They continue the communication of the duos of past/present, myth/truth and private/public, where each affects the other. The prints give a broad background upon which the embellishments are developed. The placement embellishments use materials and processes that are relevant to time, memory and concept. They explore an aspect not already covered by print or drape - or expand on these points. Print, appliqué, and machine stitching are used to create texture and pattern - and are used in ways that are relevant to the concept. It is also used to further communicate the themes from the written component. Stitching going through both layers at time, but not always, reflects the way the two sides are linked. This will create the result of a lining (that is traditionally invisible) having an affect on the way the garment hangs and moves – the hidden inner affecting the public outer.

Colour plays a very important role in expressing the concepts and moments I have explored. It helps to express the duality of the lives of the people and the culture of rural Taranaki from 1940s to 1990s. It also explores the relationship between people and the land they live on, own,

and impact upon – cutting down native trees, the use of chemicals and fertilizer, using the land for farming, 'taming the land' and its significance to those that inherit the land such as myself. It is also used to explore cultural mythology through iconography - such as the Black Singlet, or Red Band gumboots associated with rural New Zealand men. Colour is also used to fool and disguise, it acts as a sort of visual euphemism on many of the prints. The use of like colour on like background will represent the private world we all have, the things about our lives and our families that no one else knows. This privacy will be maintained throughout the printing and embellishment process with vague generalities being used in very near invisible ways (dark on dark, or light on light). Colours associated with maps and medical illustrations will be used. They are colours such as; yellow, green, blue, brown and pink, all in artificial pale shades. They are meant to be representations of blood, bone, veins, muscle, water, grass, trees, and the man made things such as roads and towns that we place on the land. They are directional, chemical, medical illustration colours, simplistic and contrived in the extreme. I will use these colours at their palest, washed out and faded, like a long ago memory or residue. Like a cheerful veneer it will express the front or facade we show the world.

Each piece is a complex exploration of my personal identity and history, and its relationship to New Zealand cultural mythology. It acts as a context for the prints and embellishments, placing these prints within a framework of identity, history and memory - combining in a physical form to create a memorial. They incorporate textile design, garment design, dress and society and concepts of the public and private spaces we inhabit to create a cohesive series of textile objects suitable for exhibition.



Fig. 6. *Last Stand*. 2005. 2-D to 3-D progression
First Son exhibition document (McQuillan, 2005).

The key concept within the piece is the duel between nature and culture, and the way New Zealand as we believe it to be - clean, green and 100% pure - is essentially an invention. The expression of these concepts begins with the drape of the garment. Done in a loosely 'forties style, with broad shoulders (heralding a masculine, WWII, military look), narrow hips, and a cropped jacket - this shape is intended to be reminiscent of a general 'forties shape, however not a direct replica of any particular style. The aim is to suggest, not dictate. The dress under the jacket was draped to be as feminine as possible within the constraints of the length of fabric available. The cropped jacket was draped in a more aggressive style, with doubled layers of fabric over the shoulders to accentuate that area. The intention was to have a feminine dress, partially concealed by a masculine, almost warlike jacket, and yet to still resemble a 'forties women's ensemble. This memorialises the battle between Nature (feminine) and Culture (masculine), and reflects the dominance of mankind over nature that occurred in New Zealand.

The drape of this piece allows for the placement of embellishment in such a manner that reflects the nature/ culture conflict. For example, embellishments relating to nature and New Zealand's purity can be placed beneath the jacket, so as they are only visible upon the removal of the jacket. However, the problem is, although appearing to be separate, the jacket is still attached to the dress, so cannot be removed, reflecting the way these two concepts - Nature and Culture - are linked within New Zealand history and society. The placing of the 'black singlet' within the feminine/ nature, part of the drape, is to communicate the way rural New Zealand (as represented by the Black Singlet), is considered an intrinsic part of the clean green 100% pure New Zealand nature mantra. However the treatment of the singlet - layered with 'scales' of oak trees - reflects my view that this is an elaborate myth, one sustained by the extensive deforestation of New Zealand's native bush for farming and the culturally desired myth of New Zealand.

The two predominate all over repeat prints that form the basis of the double sided drape are; an illustration of a slash and burned landscape, where the trees drip into each other like wax and the landscape continues into the distance, and a traditional English floral motif, taken from a 19th century tourism book on New Zealand, and repeated into a traditional wallpaper print. These two prints contrast the methods and the intentions of colonists as they transformed New Zealand's landscape. The aim was to turn New Zealand into an antipodean Britain, and the process was the violent destruction of the majority the existing bush. The analogy is that colonists aimed to strip New Zealand of its old wallpaper and then apply their own in the colour and style they chose. The sad fact is that this new wallpaper has been totally accepted by modern New Zealanders as what was always there.

The Burning Land / Last Stand print was designed to be slightly topographical in style, similar to *Coastal profiles from Mt. Egmont to Queen Charlotte Sound* by Charles Heaphy. However instead of the sanitised views Heaphy and similar artists produced, this is a slightly creepy, even skeletal representation of a New Zealand 'rolling green hills' landscape. The repeat was designed so as from a distance the landscape motif is not dominant, but a relatively benign (colonial) plaid - instigating another deception, that the end justifies the means. In early New Zealand landscape paintings, dead trees represented mans' triumph over a chaotic natural world - the imposition of European order on the land, in this print they form both part of the colonial myth, and they also reveal the destruction of New Zealand's natural world.

The Tourist / Wallpaper print was designed to look like a traditional wallpaper repeat. The motif was sourced from a copy of a 19th century book that acted as a tourist advertisement for New Zealand. The motif featured at the end of a chapter introducing New Zealand as an exotic, yet safe, place to visit and live. It glossed (wallpapered) over the realities of colonial life, content instead, to focus of the Amazing Pink and White Terraces, mountaineering and the 'civilised' cities and towns. I appropriated the motif for my own use, repeated it, and turned it upside down. By printing it as the partner of the dead trees in the Burning Land / Last Stand print I completed the representation of the aim of colonial settlers - to turn New Zealand into a Britain on the other side of the world, creating another jewel in the crown of the Great Expanding Empire.



Fig. 7.
Burning land/
Last stand print. 2005.
Detail - not actual size

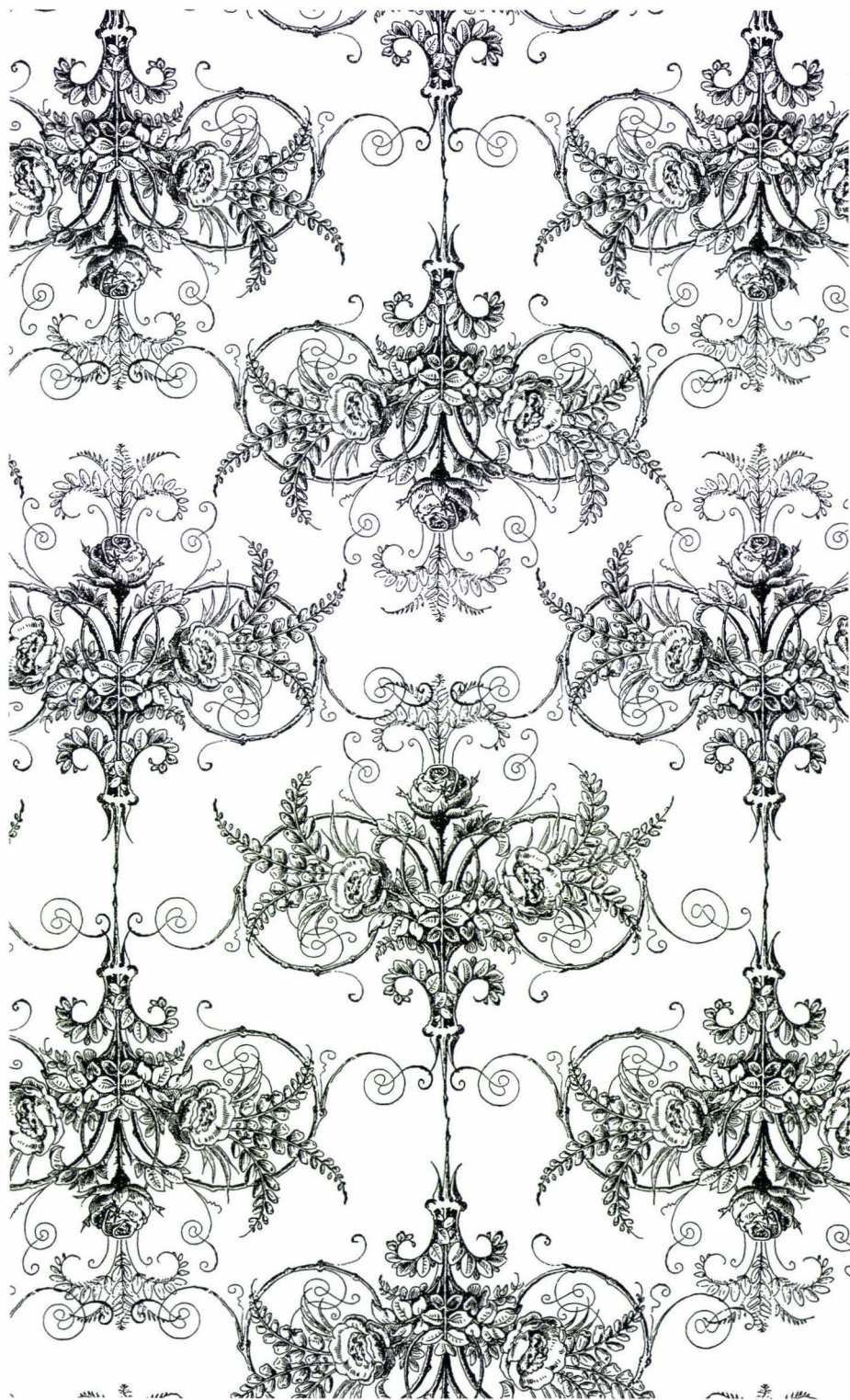


Fig. 8.
Tourist/Wallpaper
print. 2005.
Detail – not actual size.

Fabric	<p>The fabric used for the drape is tan coloured (unbleached / natural) linen, slightly course in texture. It is reminiscent of sacking cloth. The selection of this fabric was based on the technical needs of the design (to hold the shape and form of the drape) and on the primitive associations the sack cloth-like fabric has. The simplistic fabric has associations of colonial times or the 'make do and mend' philosophy that prevailed during war time in New Zealand – the time in which this piece is set.</p>
Colour	<p>The effective use of colour is important in this piece to communicate meaning. On the Burning Land / Last Stand side, the colours are a dirty, nearly sooty brown, to communicate earth and nature, as well as the destruction of it through fire. In contrast the other side is printed in pale 'medical' pastel pink. This was to express the 'sanitisation' and 'domestication' of New Zealand by European settlers. The colour is reminiscence of medical text book illustration colours; they are a sort of colour euphemism - representing something that is often gory, in calming and non-threatening pastels.</p>
Embellishment	<p>Black, pink, brown and cream were used to embellish the 'singlet' part of the drape, reflecting the many motives for the conflict of culture versus nature battle and the resulting consequences. Oak trees are printed using a technique where an image is copied onto a type of paper that can then be transferred onto fabric, creating a facsimile of the original image. This was used to reflect the desires of many colonists to create a new England out of New Zealand. The tree used has been stylised to the point that it looks like any generic tree – the kind a child might draw if asked to. This was done to represent trees in general as a symbol of nature. The tree is copied in black many times onto pink, brown, tan and cream fabric and layered upon the singlet in a scale-like fashion creating a 'forest' made of all the different motives and attempts at making New Zealand's natural identity. Ultimately they are all just fakes or a copy as the 'real' New Zealand landscape no longer exists. All of this is hidden under the jacket though, concealing any attempt to reveal the 'truth'.</p> <p>The other embellishment used on this piece is the appliqué of Tuis in flight. This motif was taken directly from the story told to me by my Aunt about when she cut down the last stand of Tawa with my Grandfather. She recalled the Tuis flying away as the trees fell to the ground (Jill, Augusth 20th 2005, Conversation 2, appendix p. f). These are cut from three types of fabrics; a green abstracted tree print (lush forest), a brown and tan wallpaper type print (dull domesticity), and a cream silk stripe (purity and order). The Tuis are partially hidden beneath layers of the skirt but they still seem to burst out from around the hem in a semblance of cheer</p>

and optimism, as though there is still hope for New Zealand yet – it is not all bad news.



Fig. 9.
Last Stand - flat
Photography by
Thomas McQuillan
Burning Land/
Last Stand side up



Fig. 10.
2D to 3D progression
Photography by
Thomas McQuillan

Fig. 11. Detail
Photography by
Thomas McQuillan



Fig. 12.
Detail of front
Photography by
Thomas McQuillan



Fig. 13.
Detail of Tuis
Photography by
Thomas McQuillan



Fig. 14.
Detail of jacket
Photography by
Thomas McQuillan



Fig. 15.
tail of embellishment
Photography by
Thomas McQuillan





Fig. 16. *First Son*. 2005. 2-D to 3-D progression.

First Son exhibition document (McQuillan, 2005).

The predominant theme of *What are you – a Man or a Myth?* is the myth of the New Zealand man - as personified by my father, and in particular his childhood growing up in rural Taranaki. The story of my father's 'promotion' to a chair from the usual stool forms the base on which the drape and embellishments are formed. The drape is intended to represent a fifties ball gown, draped, like all the others, from the 'Black Singlet' shape. This expresses the way that within the dominating masculine culture in New Zealand, women were marginalised and undervalued - the dress is extremely feminine - just the sort of thing a stereotypical 'fifties housewife might wear, and yet it is still based on the Real Kiwi Bloke Black Singlet - after all, a woman is only as good as her man. The ball gown silhouette is reference to the exalted and special status my father had within his family, expressed through a feminine equivalent, in order to reclaim for myself the status my father had. The drape has the singlet shape enveloping the torso, representing the all-encompassing nature of the Kiwi male stereotype on both men and women - men were Men and women did as they were told. The focus of this drape is primarily in the skirt, with extensive layering and tiering of the fabric to create fullness that is representational of the fifties silhouette. It also expresses the layered nature of the Kiwi Male stereotype - from physical attributes, to the more deeply rooted emotional characteristics that Kiwi men are supposed to have. The final layer of the skirt drape is also reminiscent of an apron; this is to communicate the role of women in New Zealand society in the 'fifties - as a homemaker - a role which Ron's mother (and apparently biggest fan) exemplified.

Print

The two predominant prints for this piece are expressing the story of my father's 'promotion' and the culture surrounding him as he was growing up in New Zealand in the 'fifties. The Precarious/Chair print is a representation of the story about my father's promotion from stool to chair ahead of his older sister. I have arranged impossible stacks of various chairs in a stripe pattern. At the pinnacle of each pile is a rocking horse. This was done as reference to another story told to me by my father's sister of him receiving a rocking horse as a present, when the rest

of the family got nothing (Jill, August 20th 2005, Conversation 2, Appendix p. e) The piles are precarious and almost circus-like to reflect the absurdity of the position and treatment my father received compared to his siblings. However the pile does not topple, as throughout all the interviews none of his siblings thought it had negatively affected him - he remained a lovely child and grew up to be a wonderful man. The precarious nature of the print also references the fact that the dominant male culture in New Zealand was about to change, and has to a certain degree toppled, although it certainly had not at that time in the 'fifties. I put a dentist chair in the pile because one of my most dominant memories of my father being a 'Man', was when he had to manhandle me, kicking and screaming to the dentist - he was no longer the big softy of a father, he was like other dads, gruff and tough. The print is playful and a bit strange, a little like the circus act my father's preferential treatment was.

The other print is a repeat of the words "First Son" in an old English typeface. It is repeated so much and so closely that it is difficult to make out and becomes a texture rather than a statement to be noted. The words allude to the preference boys (and men) and in particular first born sons had in New Zealand's patriarchal society and the textural nature of the print, and the colour used (pearl on white) suggest that this concept was all part of the furniture - which it was. The print represents the attitudes of most New Zealanders in the 'fifties - 'men are superior, and first born sons even more so, women belong in the kitchen and none of these beliefs are changeable, in fact we do not even notice they are there'. I am not suggesting that there were no progressive thinkers in New Zealand during the fifties, just that within my family and New Zealand culture in general this was the prevailing set of beliefs.

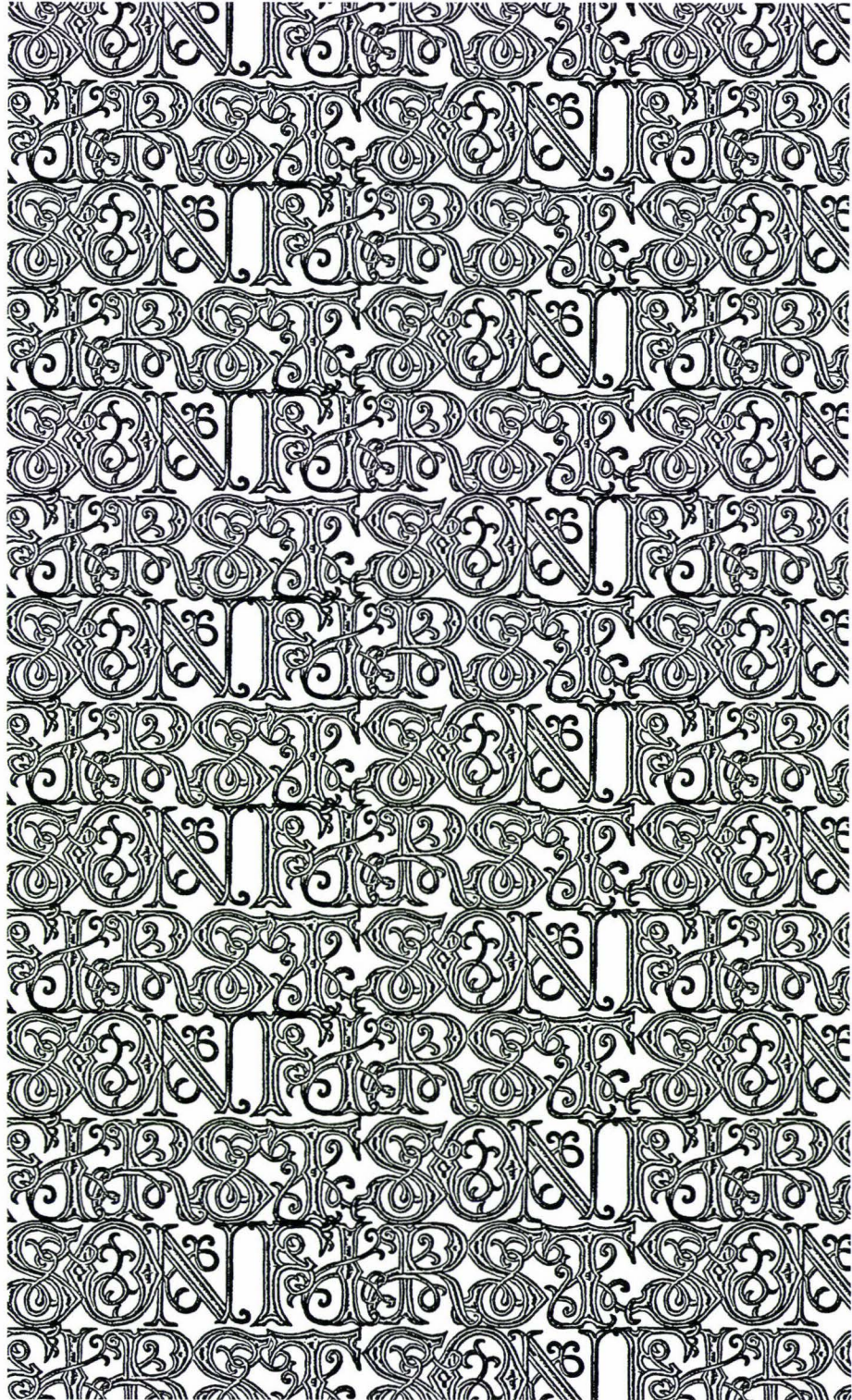


Fig.17.
First Son print. 2005.
Detail – not actual size.

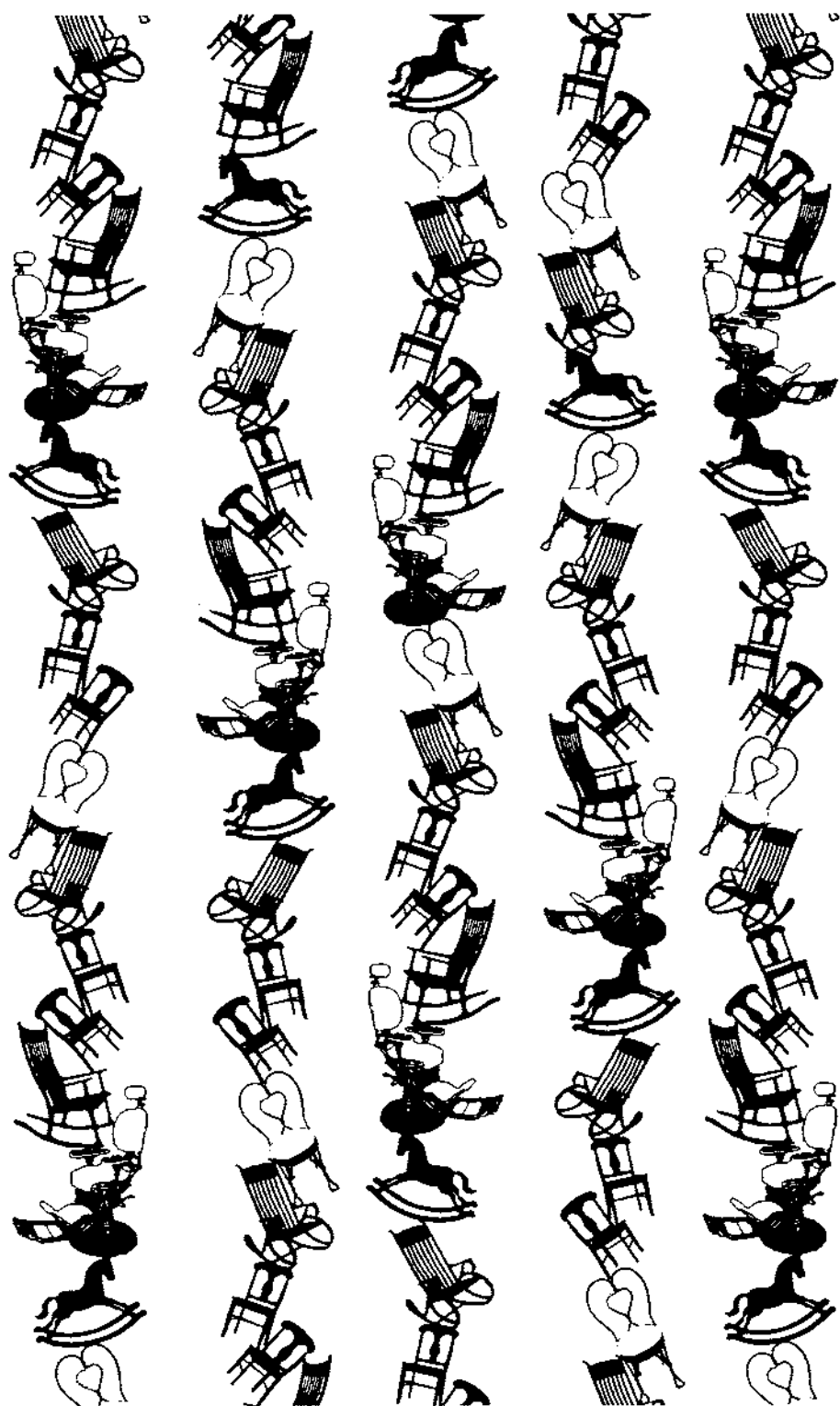


Fig. 18.
Precarious / Chair
print. 2005.
Detail – not actual size

Fabric	<p>The base fabric used for this piece is a 100% pale cream wool weave. It was chosen for its clean colour and even weave, which enables excellent clarity when printing. I had considered using a silk, to compliment the ball gown aesthetic - however I was aiming for a slightly more homely feel, so chose wool instead.</p>
Colours	<p>The colours used in this piece are predominantly the cream/ white background, with greyed blues and gold. This references the 'blue is for boys' stereotype which relates to the Kiwi Bloke stereotype that I have explored though this piece and royalty or 1st place winner, both of which are in reference to the exalted place that my father had within his family and that men in general had in New Zealand culture in the fifties.</p>
Embellishment	<p>The Precarious/ Chair print is printed in a pale greyed blue - identifying male culture as the focus of this print and the First Son print in uncoloured pearl paste to disguise the print as much as possible. The peacock/ shield embellishment is predominantly executed in shades of gold fabric, with accents of blue and white.</p> <p>The predominant form of embellishment is located at the back of the tiered skirt. Applied to the layers are additional layers of shields, or coat of arms shapes - representing tradition and the male line of inheritance that was so important to my grandfather. Printed on random coats of arms are crowns - representing the British primogeniture tradition that New Zealand's traditions were based on. The overall effect is intended to resemble the tail of a peacock – only male peacocks have such spectacular tails for prancing about in, but it also means they can not fly or run as well as their female counterparts.</p> <p>The other embellishment for this piece is the use of 'rosette' covered buttons to fasten the shoulders. I made these covered buttons with two layers of fabric, one that covers the button and the other that frills around the button – to resemble the 1st prize rosettes that were given to me as a child for winning things – reflecting the childish nature of the preferential treatment my father was given.</p>

Fig. 19.
*What Are You –
 Man or a Myth?* – flat
 Photography by
 Thomas McQuillan
 Various/Chair side up

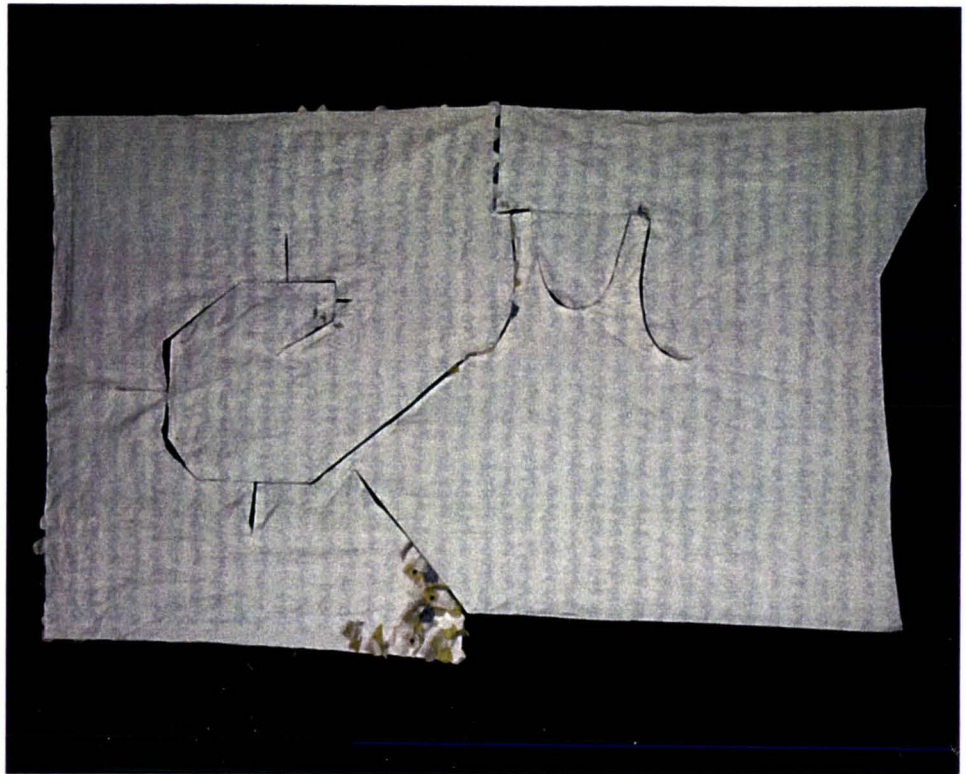


Fig. 20.
 2D to 3D progression
 Photography by
 Thomas McQuillan



Fig. 21.
 Detail
 Photography by
 Thomas McQuillan



Fig. 22
Detail of back
Photography by
Thomas McQuillan



Fig. 23
Detail of back
Photography by
Thomas McQuillan



Fig. 24
Button detail
Photography by
Thomas McQuillan





Fig. 25. *Warrior Nation*. 2005. 2-D to 3-D progression.

First Son exhibition document (McQuillan, 2005).

The overriding theme for the sixties piece is the emergence of a New Zealand Identity through war. The story garnered from interviews is of my father going to the Territorials in the late sixties, much to the dismay of his father. The piece aims to express the many sides to the concept of New Zealand identity development through war, and the differing viewpoints that my father and grandfather had.

The sixties drape was based on a combining of iconic sixties dress, with Romanesque 'Britannia/Zealandia' forms and military dress. The drape has the silhouette of a sixties dress - high neckline, short skirt and a high waist. This contextualises the drape and the embellishments on it, giving the viewer clues to its meaning. The folds and pleats that hang from the shoulders are intended to give a Roman, toga-like, aesthetic. Zealandia is the woman who appears on the New Zealand coat of arms opposite the Maori Warrior. She is the daughter of Britannia and a symbol of New Zealand's relationship to Britain. I used this as reference to the fact that most New Zealanders before World War One called Britain 'Home'. I used epaulettes on the shoulders to give the dress military styling - in reference to the close association New Zealand has with war, masculinity and national identity. Together all these elements make the piece a memorial, a monument to New Zealand's fledgling identity.

To continue with the war theme both of the all over prints are designed to resemble camouflage. However they approach the theme from two different angles.

Print

The Land/Camo print is based on aerial photographs of the area surrounding Bushlies, the farm that my grandfather, my father and I grew up on. One of the issues that arose out of the interviews I conducted with friends and family of my father was the conflict between my father and his father, over my father's desire to serve in the Territorials. The Land/Camo print represents my grandfather's point of view, that my father should stay home and work on the farm with him - that he did not belong fighting another mans war. The camouflage effect is also in reference to the way that my grandfather used the landscape and the idyllic rural community as a bribe to get my father to come home - it

seems that his real reason for wanting my father home was because he did not want to loose a capable pair of hands to the army.

The Letterbox/Camo print represents my father's point of view. It is designed as a tessellation of interlocked letterboxes - representing the distance that my father temporarily wanted to place between him and his father's expectations. It is also in reference to the letters that were written between my father and his father and younger brother. In these letters my grandfather seems to be attempting to entice my father home - with tales of movies, haymaking and family, all things that my father loved but couldn't have while he was at the Territorials. The letterbox is in the style of a typical rural letterbox - with a (red) flag that you put up when you want the postman to collect your mail - and this, combined with the camo effect of the print, references the link between rural New Zealand, New Zealand identity and War.

The two prints reference the conflict between the old school of masculine thought that placed New Zealand's identity as a first son of Britain and our service to her through war and other endeavours, and the new wave of thought that placed New Zealand's identity as unique to our own country and firmly placed in it the land and our hard-man colonial history. The reality is that it came from both.

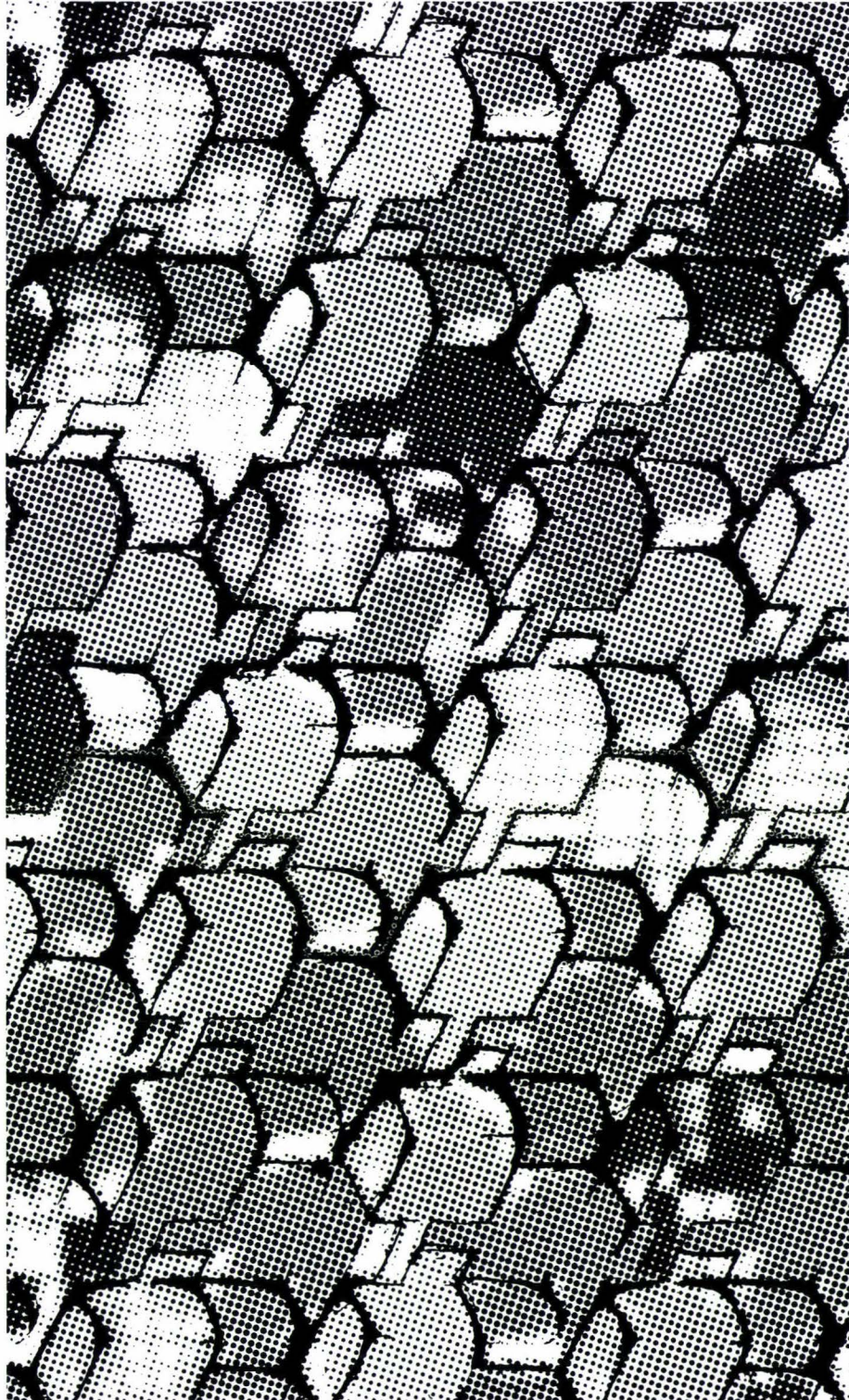


Fig. 26.
Letterbox/Camo print.
2005.
Detail – not actual size



Fig. 27.
Land/Camo print, 2005.
Detail – not actual size

Fabric	<p>The base fabric is a pale green/tan, wool drill weave, reminiscent of military cloth or work pants fabric. It was chosen for its heavy drape, to compliment the Zealandia theme and for its drill weave – commonly used for work wear and army uniforms, and its colour.</p>
Colour	<p>The predominant colours for the sixties piece are a khaki green and orange/red. The use of the khaki green colour is to tie the print in with the concept of New Zealand Identity born from war and the landscape - both have associations with green. The blood red/orange colour is in reference to three different but related ideas. The first is from the red flag of the letterbox, the second is in reference to the Redband gumboots - an icon of rural New Zealand, and the third is taken from a quote by W. P. Morrell which claimed that although New Zealand had the beginnings of a national identity before the Great War, New Zealand 'wrote its name on the page of history on Anzac Day, 1915, in letters of blood'. All three are a part of New Zealand's unique cultural identity and the letterbox and the gumboots are specific to the rural world that my father grew up in.</p>
Embellishment	<p>There are three types of embellishment used on this piece. The first is the appliqué of a copy of a letter in reverse sent to my father from his father whilst at Waiouru Army Camp training to become a territorial. It is printed in reverse so that the details contained within the letter are only visible while the wearer is viewing it in a mirror. This was done to closely link how the choice my father made (to not remain an army man and come home) directly effected me (the wearer) as if he had not come back to Taranaki, then my parents would not have met and I would not be alive. The letter is divided jaggedly and partially hidden behind the folds of the drape. This alludes to the surreptitious methods my grandfather used to lure my father home to the farm. The letter could only easily be read accurately if the drape was laid flat (truth) and the pieces of the letter placed together and then read using a mirror – a complex series of steps to follow, further concealing the 'truth' behind the words in the letter. Or the wearer could view the letter from the inside out – alluding to the suspicion I have that my father knew exactly what his father was trying to do.</p> <p>The other embellishments used were the application of shadow-like copies of family photographs of my father and his brothers, sisters and mother. These are signifying the bait used to lure my father home, and are icons of New Zealand life – the 21st birthday party, fishing, and the nuclear family unit posing for a photograph in the family orchard.</p>

The last embellishments used were the 'stamp' appliqués used as toggles for the buttons. They are in the shape of stamps to allude to the communication between my father and his father and the distance that was growing between New Zealand and England. The series of 'stamps' include the following symbolic elements. The Southern Cross constellation is employed as an expression of New Zealand geographical and cultural separation from England. The Fleur de Lys is included primarily as a symbol of heraldic tradition, but also due to a family myth that the name Burwell is a bastardisation of a French surname. The compass dial is used to represent the beginning of New Zealand's search for identity. These emblematic elements are printed on the stamps and as form part of the system that holds the garment in its shape. They represent the cornerstones of New Zealand culture at the time, a culture that was on the cusp of coming into its own – no longer tied to England's apron strings.

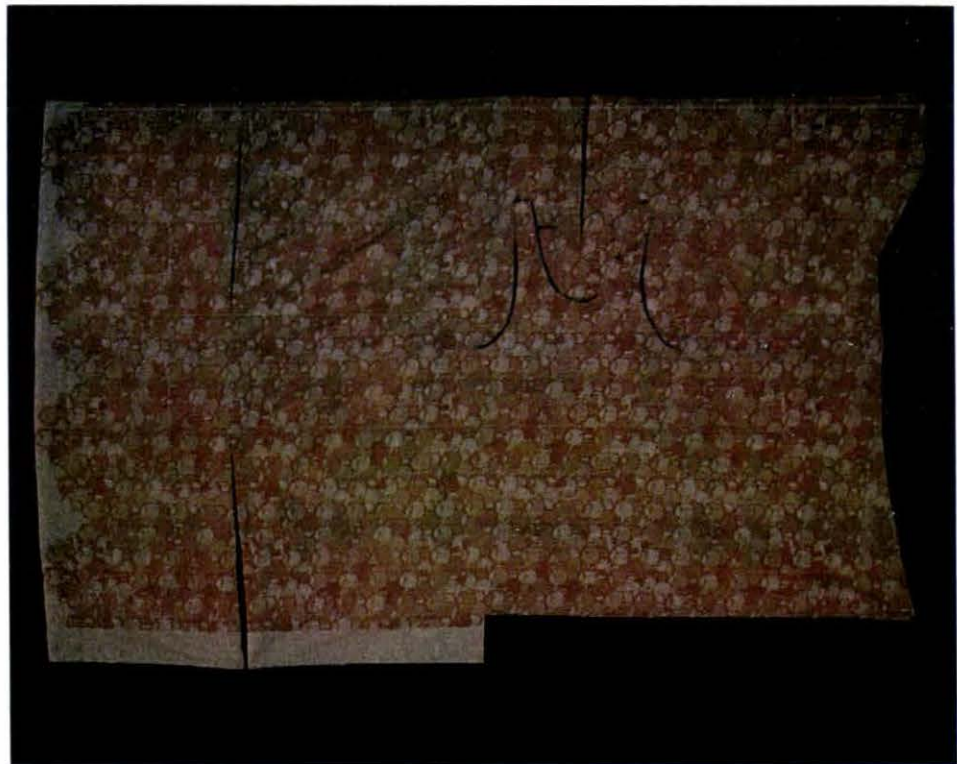


Fig. 28.
Warrior Nation – flat
 Photography by
 Thomas McQuillan
 Letterbox/Camo side up



Fig. 29.
 2D to 3D progression
 Photography by
 Thomas McQuillan

Fig. 30.
Detail
Photography by
Thomas McQuillan

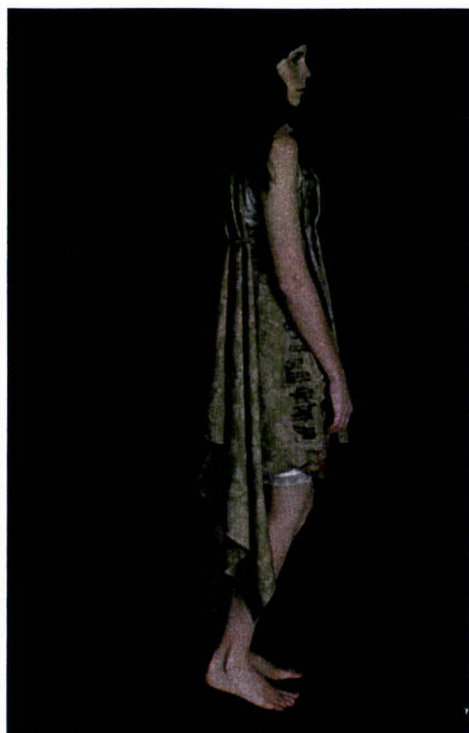
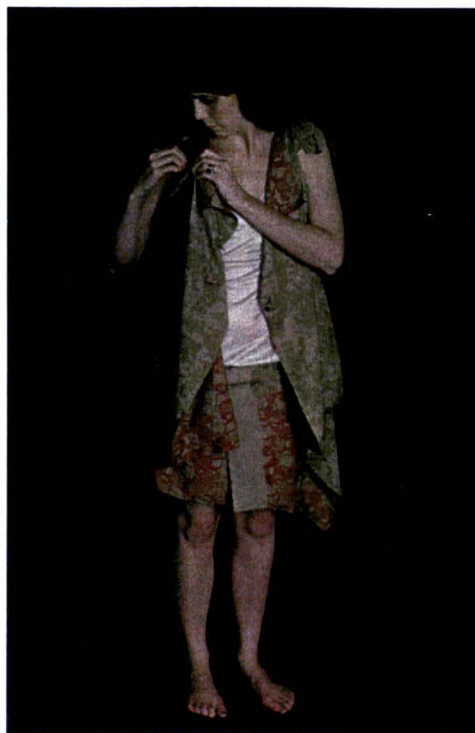


Fig. 31
Detail of front
Photography by
Thomas McQuillan





Fig. 32
Detail of back
Photography by
Thomas McQuillan

Exegesis
Back in My Day
1970s



Fig. 33. *Back in My Day*. 2005. 2-D to 3-D progression.

First Son exhibition document (McQuillan, 2005).

The seventies piece is a culmination of all the preceding decades. This is because the seventies in New Zealand was a time of massive cultural upheaval that drastically changed New Zealand's social landscape. The seventies was a time of renegotiation of what it meant to be a New Zealander, and the unique New Zealand Identity that began to emerge in the previous decades became fully fledged during this time.

Fashion during the seventies was often extreme and varied. For this reason the drape for this piece is kept relatively simple and mainstream for seventies fashion. The style is based on the peasant aesthetic that was popular in the mid seventies, with a simple poncho over a 'peasant' dress. The seventies saw a renaissance of many indigenous cultures - including Maori culture - and this had a flow through effect to fashion. The layering of the drape also allows for layering of meanings on the piece. A key concept in the design of both the prints and the drape is dance, this relates to both the story of my parents meeting and the 'renegotiation dance' that took place within New Zealand culture as new ideologies and new cultural forces came onto the New Zealand dance floor and vied for the best spot.

The dress is based on the Black Singlet shape - as all of the drapes are - however in the seventies drape, the singlet form is concealed by the poncho. This represents the way traditional New Zealand values of masculinity and rural life were in decline. By the seventies most New Zealanders lived in urban environments and few had any concept of rural life. However the stereotype of the Kiwi bloke remained - television characters such as Fred Dagg, who parodied the Kiwi Bloke, were very popular - and these continued the myth long after any relevance to most New Zealanders had faded.

Print

The two predominant prints on the seventies piece are the Land/Psychedelic print and The Chain-link/Two-step print. These prints represent the renegotiation of New Zealand's social landscape during the seventies and the waning cultural influence of rural New Zealand.

The Land/Psychedelic print is a topographic map design, altered to look like a psychedelic print from the late sixties and early seventies. This

print represents the way the rural landscape and community was losing influence, and becoming a myth. Its visibility was decreasing as other cultural forces came into play - such as the growing urbanisation of New Zealand and the move away from traditional social and family values. This print is representative of the public changes that were occurring in New Zealand culture, relating to the debunking of the myth that New Zealand was a perfect pastoral paradise, filled with sheep and farmers - the reality was that New Zealand was urban, and had problems as well. The other motive behind this print is the concept of the manufactured view of the ideal landscape New Zealanders have of our country. The topography is not based on any real landscape - it is invented - just like the landscape we believe New Zealand to have.

The Chain-link/Two-step print uses dance step diagrams randomly repeated and arranged to suggest a packed dance floor printed over a textural background of a chain-link fence pattern - to suggest separation and conflict. All of the dances are different and they seem to be only just missing collision with each other. This represents the social landscape of New Zealand in the seventies, and the massive cultural change that took place in that decade. So many social issues - from race relations, to feminism, to Maori equal rights - jostled with each other in the seventies, that New Zealand's simple way of life was altered forever. All of the dance steps are being executed by men's shoes, except one, as although New Zealand was changing, it still remained a culture dominated by men. The women's dance step is square in formation, representing the confined lives that women continued to live, in New Zealand culture. The dance steps also reference the importance of dances in New Zealand's culture, which after the seventies became virtually obsolete. My parents met at a dance in Stratford in Taranaki, and there was a dance every weekend which was a major event on the social calendar. These dances were drug and alcohol free and were the main place relationships between men and women were formed. As New Zealand's culture changed - particularly as pubs began to open for longer and women were allowed into them - dances became less frequent. The Chain-link repeat refers to the separation between conflicting ideals in New Zealand culture, specifically the unrest during the Springbok Tour protests, where chain-link fences were used to keep the protesters away from the games and supporters. Within my family there was conflict on this issue, as my mother was anti-apartheid, anti-springbok tour (she had her picture in a local paper in the '60s, protesting the All Blacks going to South Africa), and my father was pro-rugby, pro-tour.

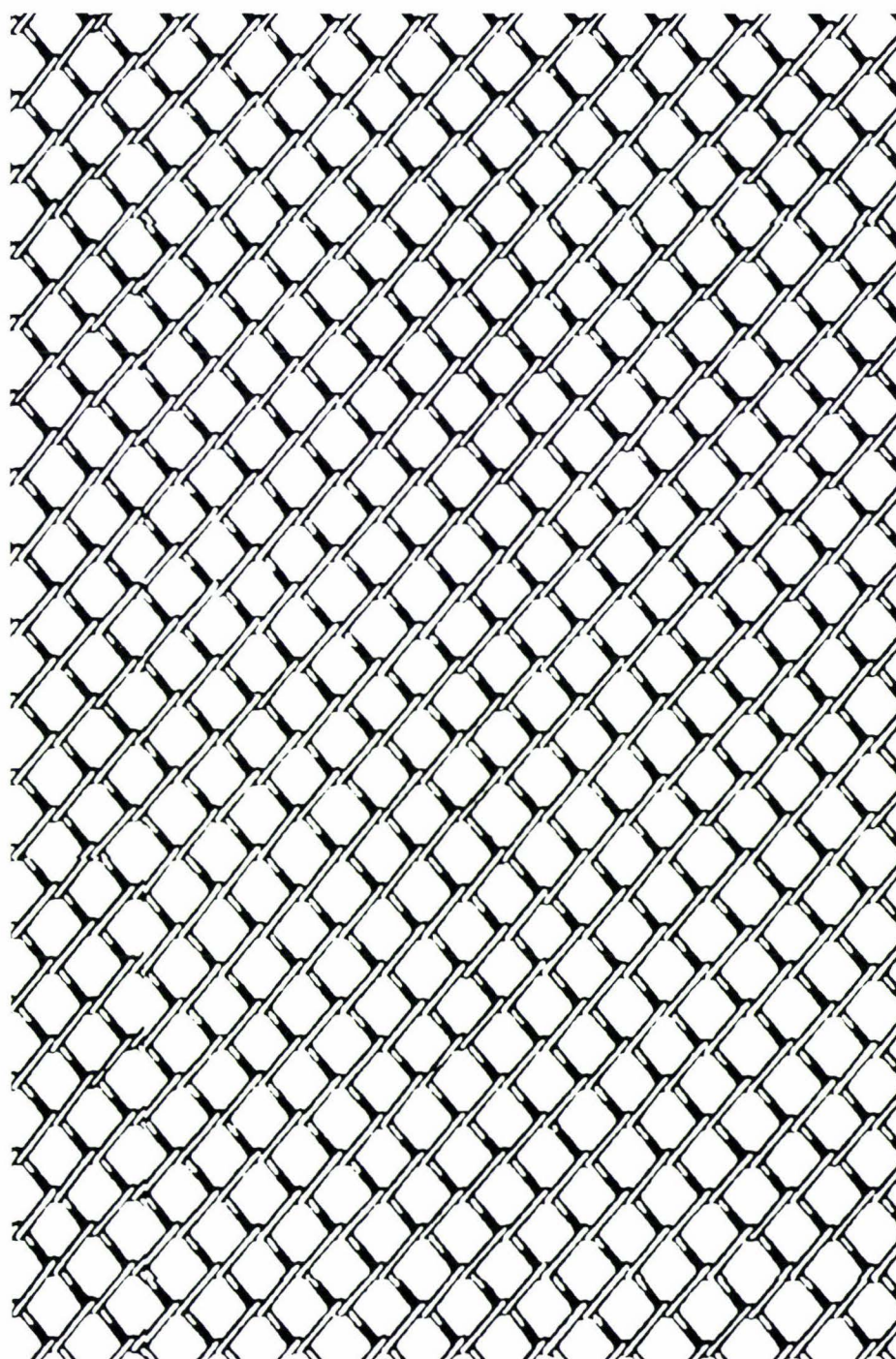


Fig. 34.
Chain-link print. 2005.
Detail – not actual size

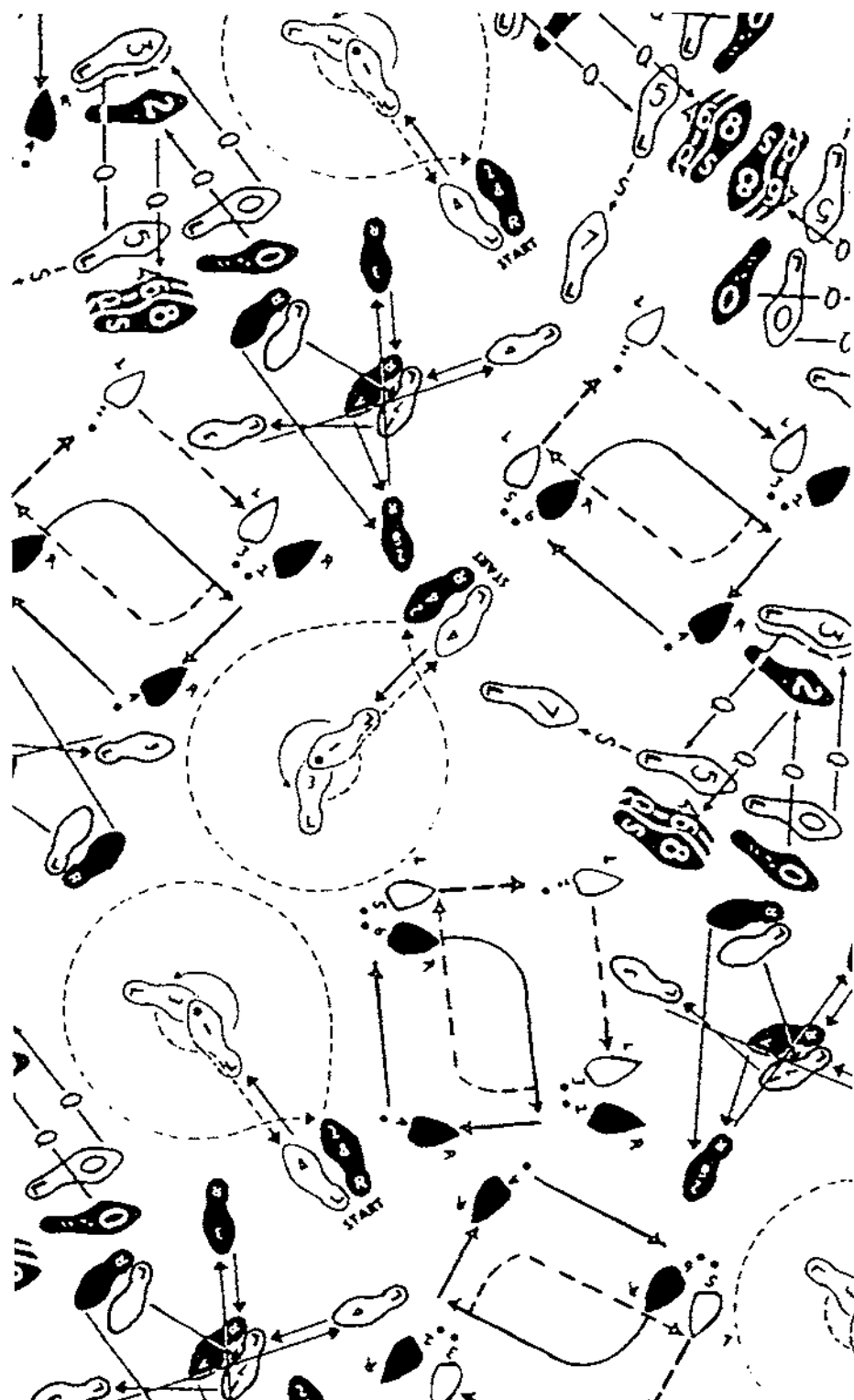


Fig. 35.
Two Step print. 2005.
Detail - not actual size

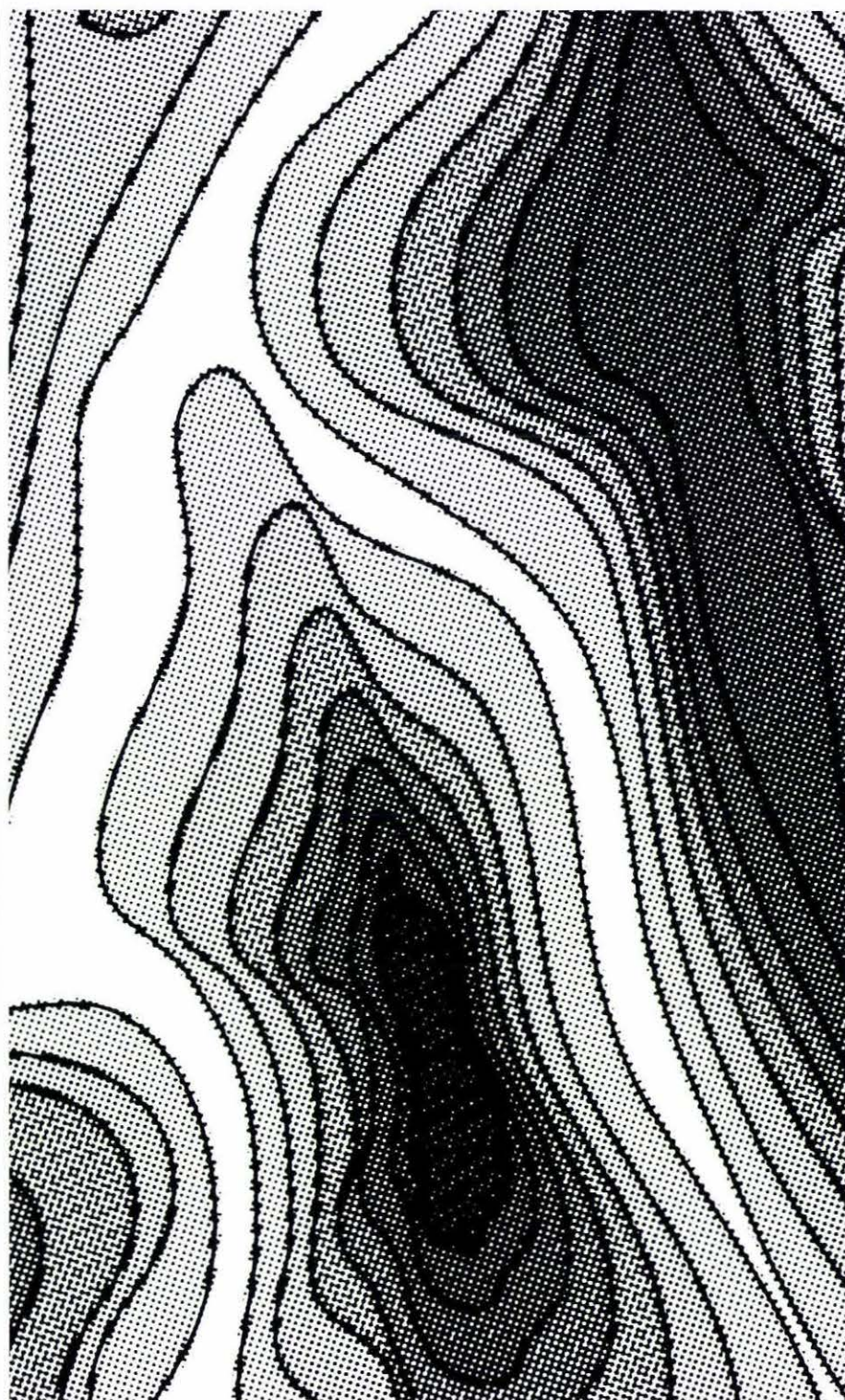


Fig. 36.
Land/Psychedelic
print. 2005.
Detail – not actual size.

Fabric	<p>The fabric chosen for this piece is a pale green silk/linen blend. It was chosen to represent the past - linen, and the future - silk. It was also chosen for its beautiful drape and texture to compliment the simple drape of the piece and the reference to dance and ball dress. The texture has both a soft silk like feel and occasional rough strands of linen, this works well with the concept of a more diverse New Zealand culture emerging in the seventies.</p>
Colour	<p>The colours chosen are a pale greyed green for the Chain-link print - so it becomes a background texture for the Two-step print in an intense cabaret pink. The use of pink on green, create a vibrant effect that reflect the vibrancy of New Zealand culture at the time. The Land/Psychedelic print is executed in a darker grey/green than the Chain-link print, making it more obvious, however as it is monochromatic on the grey green fabric, the effect is still subtle. The two prints contrast the old New Zealand with the emergence of a new New Zealand - green and subtle, with bright and confrontational. The pink also represents the emerging visibility of minority or under valued groups, such as homosexuals, women and Maori, that occurred during the 'seventies.</p>
Embellishment	<p>The primary embellishment on this piece is the appliqué of coats of arms onto and behind the fabric. I designed a range of coats-of-arms to reflect the various views, traditions and conflicts that arose and changed during the 'seventies. I used motifs that related to the three previous decades and the eighties prints, to place the seventies at the apex of change in New Zealand culture. There are tree stumps and trees representing the 'forties, rocking horses and scaled down First Son prints to embody the 'fifties, letterboxes and fleur de lys expressing the 'sixties, miniature Two Step prints and rain clouds indicating the 'seventies, and blow flies and sunny skies signifying the 'eighties. These are all transferred onto a wide variety of fabrics, from traditional floral prints, to hot pink silk and silver PVC, and cotton craft prints of suburbia. Each coat-of-arms was then either stitched behind the base fabric with the base fabric cut away to reveal the coat-of-arms beneath, or it was appliquéd on top and the base fabric cut away from behind. In both cases the coat-of-arms filled a gap in the 'fabric' of New Zealand culture, either visibly as in the first instance, or invisibly as in the second example. The application method for each depended on which print (the Land/Psychedelic or the Chain-link/Two-step) the coat-of-arms is being applied to. For example, the Tree Stump coat of arms relating to the forties piece is stitched behind the base fabric on the Chain-link/Two-step print because New Zealanders were beginning to become more environmentally aware during the seventies (visible alteration), but on top of the Land/Psychedelic print as within</p>

more traditional areas of New Zealand culture, cutting down large stands of forest was seen as an acceptable means to an end (invisible alteration). These embellishments are all placed in the bottom most layers of the drape, as within New Zealand culture many of these battles were occurring in private as well as publicly in government and in protests. Within my own family issues of racism and traditional womanly behaviour were being debated between my parents and between them and my grandparents. The issues that had for so long been taboo were becoming publicly discussed, and this opened them up for discussion in private as well.

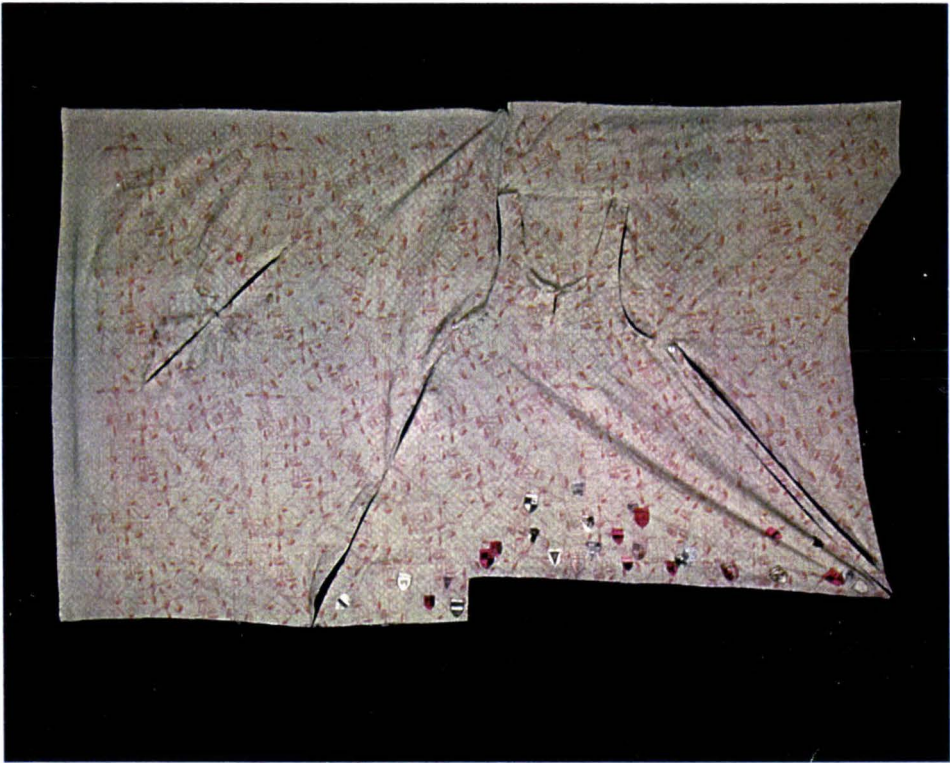


Fig. 37.
Back In My Day – flat
Photography by
Thomas McQuillan
Chain-link/
Two-step side up

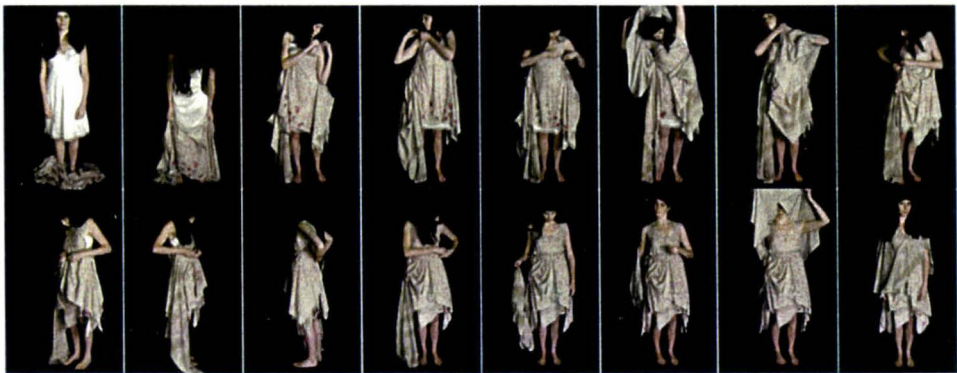


Fig. 38.
2D to 3D progression
Photography by
Thomas McQuillan

Fig. 39.
Detail
Photography by
Thomas McQuillan



Fig. 40
Detail of front
Photography by
Thomas McQuillan



Fig. 41.
Detail coat of arms
embellishment
Photography by
Thomas McQuillan



Fig. 42
Detail of coat of arms
Photography by
Thomas McQuillan



Exegesis
*A Few Cards
 Short of a Deck,*
 1980s



Fig. 43. *A Few Cards Short of a Deck*. 2005. 2-D to 3-D progression
First Son exhibition document (McQuillan, 2005).

The principal theme of the eighties piece is the decay of the traditional family unit, and the traditional values New Zealand society had before the '70s and '80s. The piece explores the way traditional family units, of a mother, father, children, grandparents and extended family, have been slowly eroded, and the influence of grandparents, as the matriarchs and patriarchs of the family, has waned. The piece also explores how New Zealanders link to the land has been largely broken by the growing urbanisation of our country. It also reflects my personal memories of my father, and the perspective I had of him, and his illness - as it was only during the eighties and early nineties that I knew my father. The piece explores memories of my childhood, as well as memories my siblings had of theirs. The feeling for the piece is of the End of the Party - when everyone has gone home, no one has cleaned up and all that is left are the dishes and food scraps.

The drape is based on a loosely eighties silhouette, with a dropped waist and fullness around the shoulders. The dominant form of this drape is the hood-like structure that starts at the back and goes over the shoulders to the front. The eighties drape is designed to express aspects of my fathers existence during the eighties and the hood is a key component of this. As my father's treatment for cancer progressed, the chemotherapy used to treat him began to cause his hair to fall out, and my father began to wear a blue corduroy hat to cover his head. The realisation that my dad was losing his hair, was one of the first moments I realised that my dad was sick. The hood is a representation of my dad's illness, and in particular my memory of him wearing a hat as his hair fell out. It is also representational of the Vincent Ward film, *Vigil* - as the main character Toss, began to wear a balaclava after the death of her dad, as a form of security and protection. The foundation for the drape is the singlet form but this is mostly concealed by the hood - as my father's love of the land and farming became increasingly difficult to enjoy as his illness progressed - however it continued to be an integral part of his life. The other predominant form on the eighties drape is the dropped waistline belt. This adds visual weight to the drape and was designed to represent

the responsibilities of family and the farm my father had and continued to attend to despite his illness.

The Tree / Cell print has double meaning behind it. Visually it resembles a bird's eye view of trees, and this is reinforced by the use of green pigment. It looks as though it may be a lovely park, with large and small trees are scattered amongst green fields, however it is actually taken from a slide of cancerous cells, specifically Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma cells - the cancer my dad died of. This print refers to the way I was oblivious for four of five years that my dad was ill - he never seemed sick, and my parents did not tell me until I was about eight. So my memories of my childhood, mostly do not involve illness or cancer, they are of playing on the farm, climbing trees, building huts out of hay-bales and climbing into the tree-house in the orchard. Therefore the realisation that my father was sick, and had been for quite a while was shocking, and in great contrast to my previous experiences. The duality of the Tree / Cell print directly references the way my experience of my childhood (trees) and my father was inconsistent with the reality of my father's illness (cancer cells).

The second all over print - Flies and Maggots - was influenced by the memories my sister has of Sunday lunch at my grandparents of the traditional roast, with all the trimmings, apple shortcake and lamingtons, strawberries and cream. But the print is of this setting, days after Sunday, as if no one had bothered to clean up. Flies and Maggots is also a comment on the erosion of the traditional family structures that our Sunday lunch was a part of. The Flies and Maggots print evokes a creepy storybook aesthetic, due to the illustration style, and is symbolic of the perceived decay of New Zealand traditions - large supportive extended families and friends, of New Zealand being the greatest place on earth to grow up in, of the idyllic rural landscape. It is also in reference to *Vigil*, where all of these myths of traditional New Zealand culture are revealed as apparitions - the family falls apart, the landscape crumbles and there is no support.



Fig. 44.
Flies and Maggots
print. 2005.
Detail – not actual size

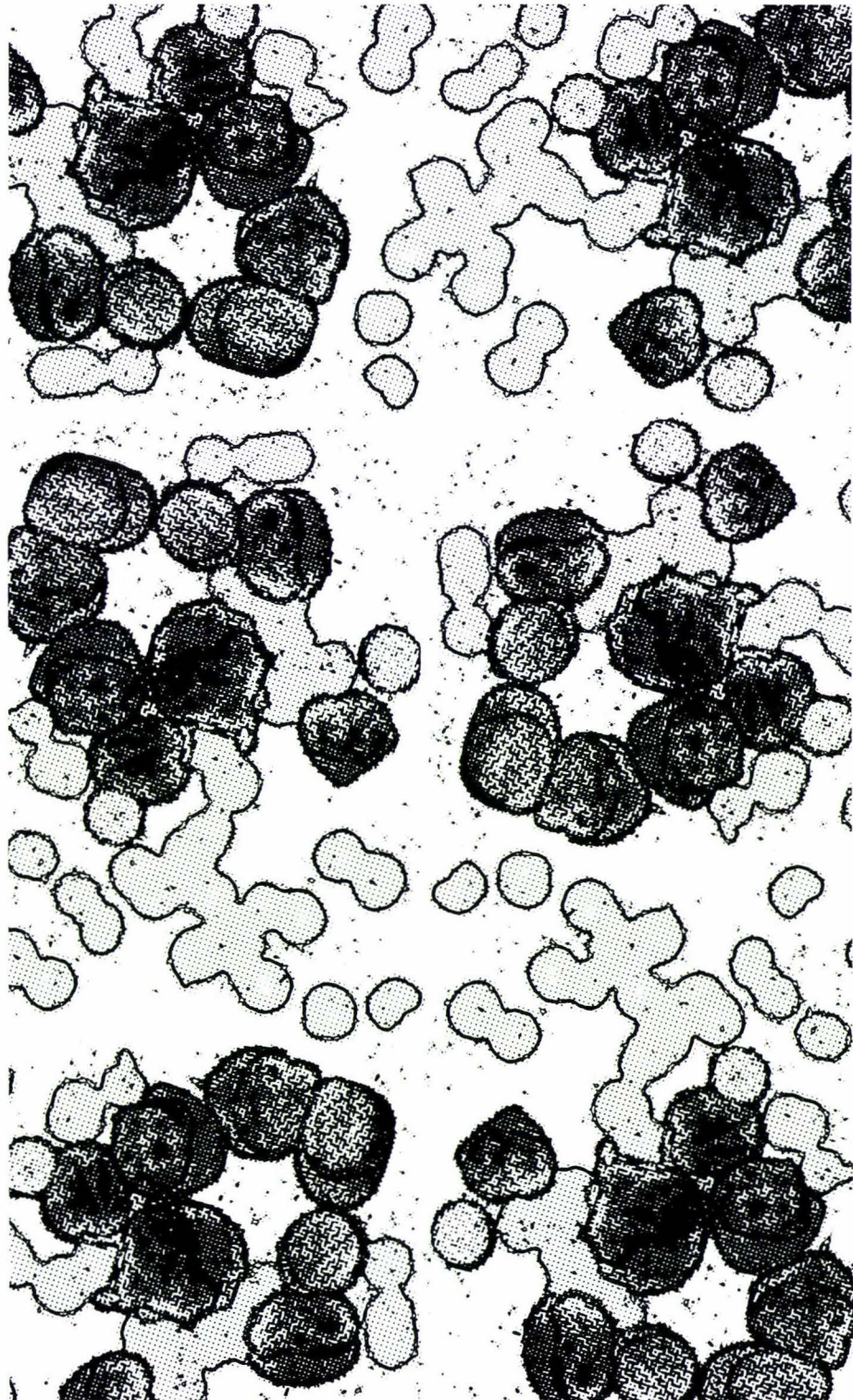


Fig. 45.
Tree/Cell print. 2005.
Detail – not actual size.

Fabric	<p>The Fabric chosen for the eighties piece is a pale buttery yellow soft cotton. It was chosen for its colour and the association cotton has of idyllic summers and childhood.</p>
Colour	<p>The colours chosen for this piece are eighties pastel shades of yellow, green and a mid grey, with accents pale blue. This colour palette reflects the summery, washed out aesthetic I was aiming for, and also transforms the prints into visual euphemisms. The colour used for the Flies and Maggots piece is a mid grey, a colour that is traditionally unobtrusive and bland, but in combination with the yellow creates a definite eighties aesthetic. This enables the print to blend stylistically with the eighties silhouette, therefore initially masking its disgusting and rotten intentions. The 'Tree/Cell' print is executed in pastel lime green, to give the impression that it is of trees, and the combination of lime green and yellow is particularly jarring, however this again ties in with the eighties context for the piece and so it does not seem out of place. The use of lime green continues to contrast the experience of my childhood, both ideal (citrus lime green and buttery yellow) and deathly (the sickly combination of the yellow and green).</p>
Embellishment	<p>The predominant embellishment on this piece is situated on the hood section of the drape. Pearls and beads form a 'map' based on archaic 'maps' of the human lymphatic system. The lymphatic system cleans the blood, and acts as a carrier of white blood cells which fight infections - problems with white blood cells can indicate a problem with the lymphatic system. It is also the location for Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma - the type of cancer my father died from. The embellishment explores society as a 'carrier' for family and the health of the family as indicative of the health of society in general. The pearl embellishment meanders up the back of the drape and onto the hood, travelling around the neck. It crosses from the Flies and Maggots side of the piece to the Tree/Cell side where they join at the spine. This alludes to the central and significant affect my father's cancer had on my family, and also explores the consequences of the break down of the traditional family unit in New Zealand society. The other dominant embellishment on this piece is 'scribbled' stitching in pale yellow/lime green on the singlet section of the piece. This references the attempts of a child to 'colour in' the 'image' of the Kiwi Bloke. In other words, it is me as a child wishing my father could be just like all the other dads in my world - not sick. The 'scribbles' attempt but fail miserably to cover up the flies and the decay in my family, and it seems that the 'felt pen' I was using ran out during my endeavours. It is an exercise in denial that reflects a wider sense of rejection of New Zealand's social situation.</p>

Fig. 46.
*A Few Cards Short
 of a Deck* – flat
 Photography by
 Thomas McQuillan
 and Maggots side up

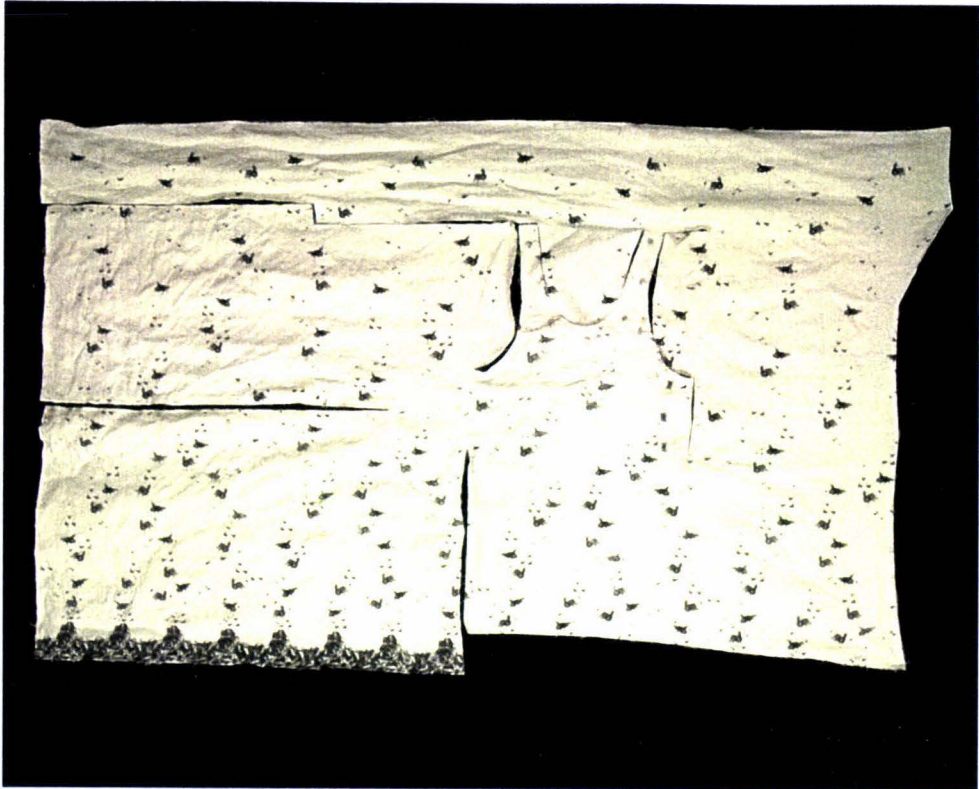


Fig. 47.
 2D to 3D progression
 Photography by
 Thomas McQuillan



Fig. 48.
 Detail
 Photography by
 Thomas McQuillan



Fig. 49
Detail of front
Photography by
Thomas McQuillan



Fig. 50
Detail of back
Photography by Thomas
McQuillan

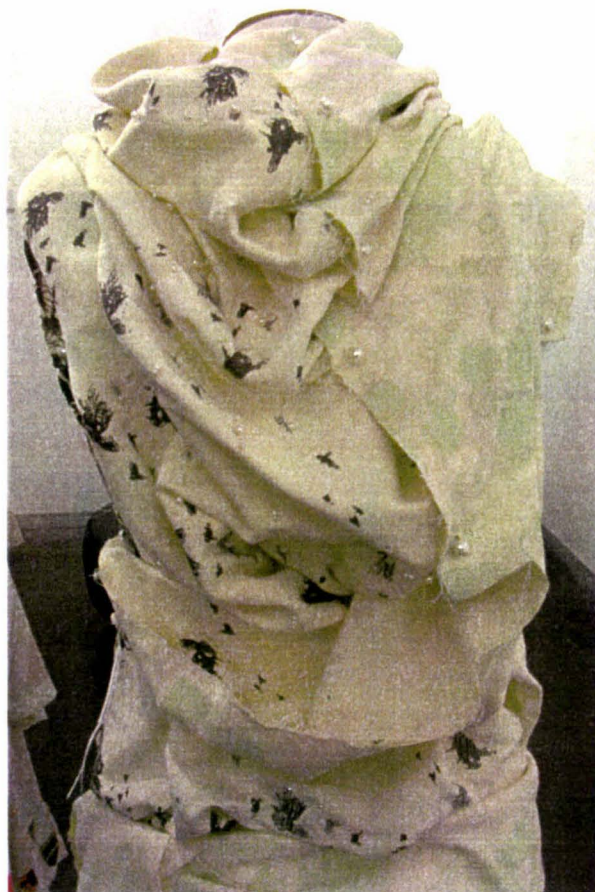


Fig. 51
Detail of side fastening
Photography by
Thomas McQuillan



The key consideration when designing the exhibition was to provide a platform on which to display *First Son* in a manner that would give hints to the meaning of the work but not give away all of the secrets. I debated with myself initially over whether to display the work flat or draped, but as the concept of the drapes evolved, it became obvious that they should be displayed as garments. This was because the pieces communicate their meanings most effectively when there are folds - hidden and revealed - and the work is placed into the context of clothing, which is something we can all relate to. If they were displayed flat all parts of the work would have been visible, effectively revealing all the privacy that the drape of each piece attempts to conceal. In their three dimensional form there is an obvious relationship between dress and façade, a suggestion of double meaning and the overlapping of seemingly opposite elements - myth and reality, public and private, past and present. If the work was displayed flat they would have remained opposites.

Another consideration was to how much information on the design process and the technical aspects of each drape to give. I had considered giving 'instructions' for people to follow in an attempt at providing clarity for the viewer as to how each piece is put together, but this was discarded early on as the pieces are designed for me to know how to create - thus retaining a part of the process in the privacy of my memory. I had thought that I would need to write instructions for myself to follow as each drape is highly complex to arrange, but a curious thing occurred. I remembered the way each piece was put together like it was a story. I knew where to start and where each part was placed after that because they were all placed as part of the story of each piece. For example On the *Warrior Nation* piece I knew to begin with the singlet shape on the back as this piece relates to my fathers temporary rejection of the rural kiwi bloke life his father had prepared for him. In addition, the *What Are You, a Man or a Myth?* piece has an apron-like front and a peacock tail-like back in reference to the places women and men occupied in New Zealand during the fifties, so I know where the corresponding sections need to be placed in order to communicate this.

I decided to provide a minimal amount of information to the public in the exhibition so each viewer might come to their own conclusion and so the personal nature of the work could be placed in the background for the universal character of the themes I intended to communicate come to the fore. I did not provide information about my father's death by cancer to the public but disease is suggested throughout the work. The Photographs in the exhibition are not specifically identified as my family; instead they could be of many New Zealanders from the '40s to the '80s.

This contrast of personal with general allows for the public to delve as deep into the work as they wish, and for my families privacy to be maintained.

Fig. 52.
Kaimata Primary
rugby team,
Ron at far right.
Inglewood, 1954-55
Example of photograph
and caption used
in exhibition



To communicate the technical two dimensional to three dimensional component of my work I provided a series of photographs of the pieces being transformed from one state to the other. The model is me as I am the particular 'consumer' of the individual pieces and the photographs show the gradual 'construction' of the work into wearable garments. These photographs give enough information to enlighten the viewer to this technical aspect of the work, and suggest the possibility of a deeper meaning for this transformation beyond purely 'cleverness'. It was important to me that the transformation be available to the public as it directly relates to the wider concepts of storytelling, memory and myth.

The draped garments are displayed on mannequins that have Astroturf fake grass covering their bases. This further links the work to the rural world but also relates to the concept of the idealised (and mostly manufactured) view that New Zealanders have of our country. It is grass, and it is green, but it is not real.



Fig. 53.
Exhibition detail
of fake grass.

I am intending to display my work in Taranaki in the near future as it directly relates to the people of Taranaki, and most of the people I interviewed, and most people that knew my father live and are from the province and could not make it to the exhibition in Wellington. I would consider changing the supporting information in the exhibition if it is displayed in Taranaki to relate more closely with the audience.

First Son Exhibition at
The Fifty2 Gallery
Wellington

Fig. 54



Fig. 55



First Son Exhibition at
The Fifty2 Gallery
Wellington



Fig. 56



Fig. 58

Applications

The applications of the technical process of creating a garment from a set width and length of fabric with no waste, I believe are wide-ranging. In the current climate of environmental awareness and the need to reduce waste, this process has the potential to create little or no waste and yet still produce a wide variety of garments in a broad range of sizes. The garment types are probably limited to tops, dresses and skirts, and stylistically to women's wear, but this could be explored further and these problems resolved.

The scope for personalization of the garments is also extensive – the garments could be draped in a variety of ways creating different looks, and the dominant side could be reversed to change the overall colour of the garment. Self embellishment for the adventurous could also be a possibility – the garments could be sold in packs with iron-on transfers or suggestions for embellishment and the application would be relatively simple as each garment is capable of lying flat, aiding in print application or embroidery - in a paint by numbers fashion.

As a medium for communication both cloth and dress are exceptional. Especially when communicating personal or ephemeral concepts, such as identity, mythology and stories. Their literal and figurative flexibility aid in expressing complex concepts relating to the body and their potential for memorials has not been explored fully yet.

Conclusion

Memories are devious things. They tease me, seem so fleeting, so beyond my grasp that I needed to create something SOLID out of the ones I had. If I could do that, then I would know more of myself and my father and of the world we live in as well. Maybe I would know more about where I live - where I *lived* and when. If I could just see the memories instead of following them around like I'm the ghost, not my father. If I wear them, then I *take* my memories with me, I am not *taken*. But do I have enough memories? When are too few memories Not Enough? So I collected some, like insects in a net, catalogued under glass so they might become safer - or at least less frightening. I turned pain into myth, disease into design and silence into silent print. I expected to be more saddened when hearing the memories of my father, but it seems that the fear of talking about something - the silence - is far worse than talking.

First Son is a memory. It is a physical representation of the memory of the world my father lived in - for me to wear my past on my sleeve like a coat. But it is a coat that when I take it off, the memory of it remains like a warm imprint. It is constructed from the fragments of other memories, like a collage, and loosely fused together to fill in the gaps of my memories. Through their construction the memories become something else - they transcend the dustbin of the past and for some reason are elevated into my future - into yours as well. In a culture where story telling is dead, this work is like one of those picture book and tape sets I read as a child, "Ding! Dong! Please turn the page". I could read the book by itself and listen to the tape by itself, but it was the most fun if I did both at the same time. It seems now that First Son is more about the people that remember my father, those that survived the years of his life, than about my dad himself. They say that history is written by the victors, but mythologies are written by the survivors. In making this memorial I have not made a history, but a mythology - constructed it out of the hoarded and sacred memories of family and friends and now they are solid. Well almost solid.

As a medium for the communication of something as ephemeral as memory, cloth is exceptional. The fabrics that make these memorials will change over time, the prints will fade and stitching may come loose. I anticipate this, because this is what textiles do best. I hope they are handled, displayed, ironed, creased, washed and worn. They will not shatter like glass. In time they may need to be mended or new ones made. I hope that the mending is obvious and the new versions different from the way I constructed these. Above all else I hope they are not hoarded like the memories they were made from. I designed First Son to be like life. Something whole and complete, yet capable of change, able to

be damaged and hopefully fixed again. It is a memorial that will change – it is not designed to be static like a bronze or marble statue – like life, it is a work in progress.

Appendices

Ethical Standards

As people were directly involved in my research through conversations and photographs, there were a number of ethical factors to consider.

I let my family and Ronald Burwell's friends know that I was doing the research, as well as what it involved and that they were welcome to come to the exhibition. I also asked if any of them would like to take part in my research. I did this, as it was possible that some of those who knew my father would be upset if I did not give them all an opportunity to be a part of my research. It was also sensitive because it involves a dead person who cannot give me their consent - so gaining consent from his family and friends was as close as I could get.

Of those who expressed interest in taking part in my research, after I selected one or two from each of the groups previously identified, I asked for written consent prior to before conducting the conversations asking that I could record and reproduce (orally and written), if I so wished, what they said. In the event very little of what was recorded was directly used.

The parts I did use were transcribed and sent to them to check over. I will also send them a copy of the final work for them to read. I also asked if they would like the original tapes back, destroyed or if they consented to my storing of them as a part of the archive. All of them consented to this.

Any photographs or other objects they were willing to give me for the duration of the research will be recorded, as well as their written consent for their use. These will be returned to them upon completion.

Appendices

Conversations

These conversations mostly took place from the 19th to the 25th of August 2005 and then the last one on the 3rd of September. They were informal discussions lead by the participant with little direction from me. I wanted the participants to talk about what they felt comfortable talking about in relation to Ron Burwell as I acknowledge the potential emotional content of these conversations. Most of the conversations took place in the participants' home, the exceptions to this were conversation 1 and 7 which took place in the participants mothers home and the interviewers home respectively. This was done for the convenience of the participants and with the participants consent.

The conversations often led to the participants showing personal photos they had of Ron – this was often the only photo they had of him and in many cases they lent them to me for my research. I also had with me at the interviews photographs and letters I had collected prior to the interviews and the participants were able to look through these throughout the conversation and this often led to a memory forgotten being recalled.

The following is a summary of the material discussed in each conversation.

Conversation 1
Ron's Daughter
19th August 2005
Onaero
Taranaki

Kama is the middle child of 5 children, Ron's 2nd oldest daughter.

Kama discussed her personal memories of her father, in particular her memory of him coming home from working on the farm and the ritual they had when welcoming each other. She also remembered his almost limitless tolerance – for example when she and her brothers and sisters broke the water pump system for the cowshed with a water toy, Kama remembered he didn't shout at them, and spent the rest of the day (or longer) fixing the pump. But she also recalled one of the few times she remembered Ron getting angry. This was to her recollection when the family were going on holiday (which was apparently rare) and in the rush to pack the van and leave a tray of eggs were smashed – Kama remembers how Ron shouted at her brother and then went silent.

Kama often discussed rituals and habits such as the regular meal times shared with family - Sunday Lunch at Granny and Granddads, afternoon tea and dinner were particular favourites. She remembered that our mother did not get along with Ron's Mother and so was not particularly welcome at their house for Sunday lunch – this was not something I had remembered. She recalled the food that Granny made – apple shortbread, strawberries and icing sugar, roast mutton.

She also recounted memories of her childhood in general, such as working on the farm and playing in the orchard. Near the end of the conversation she discussed a memory of Ron's illness and his diminishing ability to work on the farm. She recalled an instance where she was expected to help him to clean up the yard after milking the cows but did not. After waiting for him long after his usual arrival time, he came home exhausted and went to bed.

Kama's memories recalled many of my own recollections, as we had both been Ron's daughters at approximately the same time. However our recollection of the same events was at times very different. Her memories also go further back than mine do as she is older than me, and so the family dynamic would have been different. Many of her stories she told were ones I had never heard before and were not part of the Burwell family mythology, but her recollections of Sunday lunch are a strong part of this much loved experience.

Kama recalled the close relationship of our parents – they would always have a bath together at night, they would often dance with each other in the kitchen and they would always kiss and cuddle on

the couch. She used to love that about them, they were always affectionate and loving to her and each other. She remembered one of the first times when she realised that not all parents were like ours, when she had a party as a teenager and friend of hers realised that her mum and dad were having a bath together and they were shocked.

Conversation 2
Ron's Sister
20th August 2005
Putaruru
Waikato

14 years older than Ron, Jill is the oldest daughter of 6 sisters and 3 brothers. She described her relationship to Ron as more of the mother-type figure than of a sister.

Jill started by saying that she didn't think she had much to say about Ron. She recalled his birth and the ensuing party that was a result of him being the first-born son after 6 girls in the Burwell family. The Kaimata community celebrated his birth in general – as at the time she recalled boys were more important than girls, especially for a farming family. She said he was a lovely boy adored by the family, in particular his parents, and was given nearly everything he wanted as a child. She was a teenager when he was born and so was therefore responsible for much of his care – she would wake in the night to look after him and be his caregiver during the day as both his mother and father worked on the family farm.

Jill recounted how Ron's exalted status in the family impacted on his sisters' lives. She remembered an occasion when she and her younger sisters were sent to Wellington for a week without coats in winter because the family could not afford them, however Ron was given presents such as Rocking horses and new clothes. She didn't say specifically that she found this unfair, however she did talk about another of Ron's sisters being outwardly jealous of the attention and affection that he received. Jill said that the other sister would intentionally do things to Ron in retaliation for the preferential status bestowed on him by their parents. One instance Jill recounted was when the other sister gave a young Ron a drink and then said afterward that it was poisonous. Jill recounted an event that she saw signified Ron's place in the family. When Ron was about 11-12 he broke his leg playing rugby (a game which the whole family had gone to watch) and was in hospital for a week or so. When he returned with his leg in a cast he could not sit as his usual place at the dining table. The place at the table was a clear hierarchy of age, from oldest sitting on the most comfortable single chair to the youngest sharing a hard wooden bench seat made by George Burwell in WWII. At the time Ron was sitting on the bench seat and was not due to be promoted for a few years as his older sisters left home. His broken leg meant that he was allowed to sit on a single chair but when his cast was removed he was not required to move back to the bench – Jill believed that Ron's older sister remained upset by this for many years after.

Jill remembered how along with privilege came responsibilities for Ron, and how as a teenager Ron began to rebel against the

expectations placed upon him by his parents. She recalled his fight to join the army territorials and her father's attempts to stop him from going and ensure Ron's return – using the bribe of a 21st birthday party. She recalled all the handsome young men at Ron's 21st – something even as a 30+ married woman she could still appreciate.

Another incident where Jill recalled Ron rebelling against his parents was much later in life when Ron had a wife and kids. At a regular family Sunday Lunch, George discovered that one of Ron's young sons had picked many of his prized grapefruit off his tree. George picked up his grandson and spanked him on the bottom with a wooden spoon a number of times, at which point Ron walked out and saw what was happening. She recalled the look of horror on Ron's face as he watched his 2 year-old son being hit by his father – something that had his father had never done to him. Jill remembers that Ron took his son from George and walked home – apparently he didn't come up to see his parents for a number of months. Jill said that "all the wrong things meant everything to Dad", including grapefruit.

As well as memories of Ron she also recalled her experiences as a young girl and the restrictions placed upon her by her parents. In particular she remembers being forced to leave high school as a young teenager to work on the farm – a role a son would have been expected to fulfil if there had been one. She remembered her first job on the farm was to help finish clear felling the last stand of native bush on the farm, a process that had been started by her grandfather in the 1870's. She recalled how hard it was sawing by hand huge ancient kauri and her dismay as the trees fell, and all the birds flew away. She asked her father where all the Tui will live now? They'll be right was the reply. A large part of Jill's conversation was about the general social environment that pervaded in rural New Zealand during her youth – of which this incident was indicative to her.

Jill recalled how unfair it seemed to her that Ron would be the first to die out of all of her family - that he was so well loved and such a nice man. She said it seemed ironic.

Conversation 3
Ron's friend
21st August 2005
Kaimata
Taranaki

Kevin was a friend of Ron's. He knew him from when they played rugby against each other as schoolboys. Kevin and his family were close family friends of ours and we often spent New Years and other occasions with each other. They lived very close to the Burwell farm and had children the same age as my siblings and I. Kevin and his wife introduced my parents to each other in the late sixties.

I found the conversation with Kevin very interesting, as his manner of speaking reminded me of my childhood, of my father and of rural Kiwi blokes in general. Kevin was often quiet, seemed lost in thought, and would not say anything for long periods of time. He would often ask his wife for verification of his recollection of events. Kevin started by saying that he didn't think he would have much to say and that other people knew Ron better.

He recalled how he had heard of Ron before he met him as an 11 or 12 year old, saying that Ron was known as a very good sportsman in the area. They did not attend the same primary school but played against each other often. At high school they were in some teams together but it wasn't until they were older that they became good friends.

Kevin recalled introducing my parents, a process started by his then girlfriend boarding at Lynne's house. He said he wasn't sure if they would get along but they seemed to like each other a lot, right from their first meeting. Kevin recalled how Ron always seemed to have women wanting to dance with him as he was a very good dancer – but denied the label "Casanova" given to Ron by other friends I spoke to. Kevin also recalled how the group of friends (boys) would get together before a dance and drink beer in Ron's car as they were not permitted alcohol at the dances. Kevin said the dances were a regular weekly event that everyone went to, and they were one of the only ways to meet girls and socialise during the '60s in New Zealand.

Kevin mostly talked about fatherhood and his admiration for the job my father did at raising my family. He said he respected Ron's involvement in caring for his children, something that was not very common in men at the time. He said he regretted not spending more time with his own children when they were growing up. He believed Ron to be a very good father and husband.

Kevin also recalled Ron's contribution to the Kaimata community in general, his participation in organising fundraising for the community hall and other projects. He recalled how Ron had been ill in hospital receiving chemotherapy when the old hall was being dismantled and

its subsequent collapse onto 6 local men. He suggested that this was a good thing as he was sure that Ron would have been there at the time of its collapse and may have been killed. He also suggested that Ron might have felt partially responsible for its collapse as if he had been well and able to manage the dismantlement of the hall, then it would not have collapsed at all.

Conversation 4
Ron's Brother
22nd August 2005
Kaimata
Taranaki

Phred is Ron's youngest brother. Phred – as did Ron and his other brother - became a farmer and lived on the same road as my family did when I was growing up and had daughters the same age as my sisters and I. Phred was involved with the community aspects of farming with my father such as haymaking and building.

The conversation with Phred was an interesting one for the fact that he was the only one I spoke to that brought up and talked extensively about my father when he was ill. His other memories consisted of his memories of Ron when Phred was a child and his adulation for his big brother.

Phred's first memory of Ron was helping him on the farm. He said that Ron was a very even-tempered older brother, but he thought that might have been helped by the age difference. He remembers his brother as a sensitive man – something that no one else specifically identified – in particular his reaction to hearing the bad news that one of his high school teacher's had been killed. Phred remembers that Ron was very upset for the dead man's family. Phred said that he held Ron as an example of what a man was, then and now.

He discussed Ron's love of farming and his natural talent for it. He said that Ron loved the animals and the land, and seemed to know the names of all his 150+ cows. This discussion led to Phred recalling his first experience of realising how sick his big brother was during Ron's battle with cancer. Phred remembered how Ron could fix anything on the farm such as engines, pumps and fences. He remembered walking to the back of his own farm, which backed onto Ron's, and looking over the fence to see Ron obviously struggling with a job he needed to do to fix the water supply to the farm. Phred remembers wondering if he should help but instead decided that if Ron wanted help he would ask, and so Phred left and Ron never knew he had seen him.

Phred said it was difficult for him to see his brother so ill, as it was such a contrast to my father's usual strength, and he recalled that near the end of Ron's illness Nona (Ron's mother) was prevented from seeing her son because the family were concerned what it might do to her to see her favourite son so debilitated. He also recalled how upset everyone was at the time of Ron's death, in particular his father, and how Phred was shocked to see him cry.

Conversation 5
Ron's Childhood friend
23rd August 2005
Inglewood
Taranaki

Nigel knew Ron from their first day at school together, but his family were close with the Burwell's. In particular Nigel's father was at the celebration of Ron's birth that Jill had talked earlier. Nigel also went to high school with Ron and was on many of the same sports teams with him. They remained very close friends throughout their adult lives and would become running partners. Nigel and his wife were good friends with my parents, particularly through their involvement with community activities and the Inglewood Runners Club. My conversation with Nigel was a little difficult for me as he reminded me so much of my father both physically and due to his mannerisms and way of talking. I had not seen Nigel since I left Inglewood to come to Wellington when I was 17, and I found that I associated Nigel strongly with my father.

Nigel could vaguely remember meeting Ron at their first day at school in Kaimata – but he said that they just hung out together and eventually became friends. He remembered they were competitive with each other and were both good at the same sports, which led to a friendly rivalry. Nigel remembered when Ron broke his leg playing rugby game – Nigel played that same game – and the letters the class was required to write to Ron while he was in hospital. I showed Nigel the letters as Ron had kept them and he began to discuss how all they seemed to do at primary school was write letters. In the letter he wrote about his pigs and the school trip to the toy museum, Nigel thought in hindsight it was probably a bit mean to tell Ron about the toy museum trip.

They played rugby in the same teams when they left high school to, for the Inglewood Rugby Club. He discussed the importance of rugby, racing and beer to New Zealand men in the '60s '70s and '80s, and how the Springbok tour in the early '80s effected them all. Nigel mentioned that my mother and he used to have "interesting conversations" about rugby culture and the springbok tour, and that they never agreed with each other.

Nigel also recalled the dances and balls that were always happening when they were in their late teens and early twenties. He also remembered how they would get drunk in Ron's car before the dance and drive to it intoxicated. He also talked about their annual trip to the Wanganui Racecourse. This would involve driving down in Ron's car and stopping at various bars along the way until they arrived in Wanganui very drunk and they would have a great time, and then

drove home again on the same day. Nigel said that drunk driving was a part of rural life back then.

Nigel discussed how they both gave up rugby at about the same time and took up marathon running. He remembered how they would often enter in marathons and half marathons together and would finish with very similar times, often running the whole race with each other. Nigel had a photo he showed me of the last marathon Ron ever ran and it showed them running side-by-side.

Conversation 6
Ron's Wife
25th August 2005
Onaero
Taranaki

Lynne was Ron's wife for over 20 years. They met when they were in their early 20's on a blind date set up by a friend of Lynne's.

Lynne recalled the first time she met Ron, and thinking that he seemed so very old and sophisticated. She was 20 and he was 24. She thought he was a very handsome man and a very good dancer. She recalls he was a perfect gentleman. Lynne remembered what she was wearing on their first date (yellow skirt and a brown top) and that the first time they kissed was that night. She said it was like a "Mills and Boon" and that every time Ron kissed her it was the same.

She said that marriage to Ron wasn't easy and they had a very different approach to things. Lynne said that she was more sensitive and argumentative than Ron and that everything was water off a ducks back to him, nothing seemed to worry him. She remembers him as a big softy - letting the kids get away with anything, and that there was no fear in our household of "wait till your father comes home" as Ron was not a disciplinarian. She also recalled how he was always there, helping her raise the family, that he was not a typical father for the time - he was not one to leave the nappy changing to her because she was a woman. She remembers that Ron was quite involved as a father and loved being a dad, that she expected him to be involved but she never had to ask him to be so. She recalled that his main tool to discipline the children was his "disappointed look" he employed to great effect.

Lynne remembers Ron as an affectionate, silly and naïve man that she loved greatly. She remembers that he wore stubbies to meet the Queen and how he ordered prawns at a restaurant and didn't know to remove the shells, so proceeded to eat them whole. She said they would bath together every night before bed and were always hugging and kissing. She remembered how good his Milo's were, and how she still considers Milo making to be the judge of a good man.

Lynne recalled that Ron played rugby for the first 4 years they were married but that she asked him to quit because she despised the culture that surrounded it. She didn't like the drinking or attitudes towards women that pervaded the local rugby club, so he quit and took up athletics and tennis. Lynne was a feminist and didn't allow Ron to go to the Workingman's Club either because they would not admit women.

Lynne recalled how difficult it was for her when she was a young mother as Ron's mother lived 100metres up the road and did not think Lynne was a good mother to her son's children or a good wife to her oldest son. She remembered the day that she sent Ron off to do the milking with a self-induced hangover only to have Nona come down the road and tell her off for making her poor sick son work. Lynne recalls she was breastfeeding Kama at the time and that Naomi and Damon were toddlers she was also trying to feed breakfast to. An argument ensued and after it ended Lynne asked Ron to tell Nona to stop telling her how to raise her kids and look after her husband, which he did. Lynne recalled that these incidents and others led to her feeling unwelcome at Ron's parents home, so she would often not attend the weekly Sunday Lunch.

Conversation 7
Ron's Son
3rd September 2005
Wellington

Damon is the oldest of 5 children; he is also Ron's first son.

One of Damon's first memories of Ron was on the farm, riding on the motorbike with him. He remembers a crash that occurred when Ron was testing out a brand new trailer for the 4-wheeler bike and Damon and his sisters, Naomi and the infant Kama were riding in the trailer. Damon recalls that the trailer stayed in the shed forever after that and that his mother never found out about it. Damon also recalled the incident when Ron became angry with him for breaking a tray of eggs before a holiday. He recalled that he had put the tray by the door so someone would put them in the van but that Ron didn't see them and opened the door and smashed them all on the stairs. He recalled how upset he was that his father was angry with him, as he didn't think it was fair he got the blame.

Damon recalled the preferential treatment he received from Ron's parents because he was the oldest son of the oldest son. How if he didn't get what he wanted as a small child he would go up to his grandparents house and try his luck there. He remembered how nice the food was and grannies house and how they always had lollies and baked goods.

Damon recalled that Ron was an easygoing father to have as a teenager, that he let him do pretty much what ever he wanted, and that he once came home from a party drunk and fell asleep in the hallway. When Ron found him early the next morning he put a blanket over him and left him there.

Damon recalled the drive up to Taranaki from Wellington on the day that Ron died. As soon as it was apparent that Ron might die very soon, Damon drove up as fast as he could to the hospital, speeding the whole way.

Damon remembered how difficult it was when Ron died, that although he didn't feel pressure to look after the rest of the family he felt responsible for them being the oldest. He says that the example Ron set him of what a man, father and husband should be is still with him today.

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