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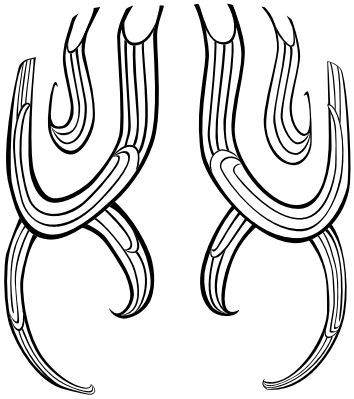
TE KAUAE KI
RUNGA



Exhibition Report presented in partial fulfilment for the degree of
Master of Māori Visual Arts

Bonita Bigham
2020

Excerpts from 'MOKO,' by Moana Maniapoto

I wear my pride upon my skin, my pride has always been within
I wear my strength upon my face, comes from another time and place
Bet you didn't know that every line has message within, did you know that?

The word tattoo describes the marking of patterns
By inserting coloured dyes under a smooth skin
The word moko represents a traditional custom
In which spirals unique to Māori are carved
Deeply below the skin's surface
To produce a grooved scar, did you know that?

Women received kauae, or chin moko
Some copied their mother's or grandmother's
Others allowed the artist to express their creativity

The moko indicated genealogy, rank, accomplishment
It represented masculinity, beauty, warriorhood, identity
So don't use that word tattoo

(Used with permission from the artist)

Mihimihi



Fig 1. Ngārere Paremauri Kipa (Photo: Whānau Archive)

TAMARAU

Tamarau nō runga i te rangi
Heke iho ki raro ki te whakamarimari
Tē tatari ai
Ki te hurahanga o te tāpora o Rongoueroa
Taku kuia e, taku kuia e
Te ara o taku tupuna i tohi ai au
Ko Te Āti Awa nō runga i te rangi
Ko te toki tē tangatanga i te rā
Taringa mangō, ko te kete ngē
Ue Hā! Ue Hā!

(Te Atiawa ngeri)

I te tuatahi i tuku mihi ahau ki tōku tino kuia, kia Ngārere Paremauri Kipa, tōku kuia i mau moko kauae.

My first acknowledgement is to my maternal great grandmother, Ngārere Paremauri Kipa, who was the last in my line of ascent to have moko kauae. Despite her passing long before I was born, she has been a lifelong source of inspiration and motivation to one day also proudly wear moko kauae.

I am forever indebted to my whanaunga Rangi Kipa, another of Ngārere's uri, whose gentle hands brought my moko kauae into the light. I am honoured to be in receipt of his inspiration and talent, to carry these markings made by him as a physical manifestation of our shared whakapapa. Kore he kupu e te whanaunga.

I am grateful to my mother Hinewaito, for staunchly supporting my kauae journey, my husband Kevin for his commitment to learn and grow and for walking with me every step of the way and my son Te Rei for always being my sounding board and collaborator. Tōku tuara, tōku manawa koutou.

There are many people who helped shape and influence *Te Kauae Ki Runga*, my final exhibited work. A huge thanks to Danielle Haenga, Allie Hemara-Wahanui, Taine Rothe and Paula Carr for capturing images and videos of my moko kauae day, thereby enabling the creation of a critical element within my exhibition. Arohanunui kia koutou.

I must also thank dear friend Gabrielle Belz, cousins Kim Kahu and Paula Frearson and my niece Lara Ruakere (all wonderful wāhine and artists in their own right), for their patient ears, sharing hearts and helping hands. Thanks too, to Te Kere Davey, Sam Whareaitu, the whānau of Te Kura o Ngā Ruahine Rangi for your assistance, advice and tautoko. Te Aroha Hohaia, thank you for sharing your stunning images with me. Kore e mutu te mihi kia koutou.

Ariana Paul, I will be eternally grateful for your openness in sharing such personal and precious kōrero about your own kauae journey and for your trust in me with this beautiful gift. Arohatinonui e hoa!

My ambitious foray into university study over the past five years and across two Masters degrees has only been survivable because all my supervisors, the inspirational Rachael Rakena, the amazing Eugene Hansen and for this tohu, the fabulous Kura Te Waru-Reweri. He mihi mutunga kore kia koutou.

All the amazing staff at Massey's College of Creative Arts led by Huhana Smith and Te Pūtahi-a-Toi by Robert Janke who have also helped and guided me, thank you all. Ōku hoa tauira Lisa Purda and Kezia Whakamoe, your tautoko throughout has been unwavering. He tino mihi aroha kia koutou kātoa.

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Thanks to all those who have supported my toi journey over the years, here in Aotearoa and overseas; those who inspired me, bought my work, encouraged my creativity and who continued to see and add value to my artistic expression.

An extra mihi to those who have financially supported my studies over these years, in particular Parininihi Ki Waitōtara Trust, Te Korowai o Ngāruahine Trust, Te Kotahitanga o Te Atiawa, Puke Ariki Trust and Te Kūnenga Ki Pūrehuroa – kei te tino mihi kia koutou kātoa.

Special acknowledgment is reserved for two tāne who are no longer with us, George Kalani Brown from Maui, Hawai'i and Gavin Taylor, husband of my Ngāruahine whanaunga Katrina (Tina) Taylor, who passed away just over a week after we were all together to see Tina receive her kauae. Moe mai rā kōrua.

I also mihi to Aunty Mana Jenkins, who reminded us that tangihanga must always take precedence over all else, and to all the other loved ones whose earthly journeys have ended while I have been working on this kaupapa. Haere, haere, haere oti atu koutou.

Mouri ora
Bonita

For my sister Sue.
He wahine hūmārie, he wahine purotu.
Mokemoke tonu āhau, tangi tonu ana taku ngākau mōu.

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Abstract

As a colonised indigenous people, Māori have suffered the same kinds of cultural oppression and suppression as many of our indigenous brothers and sisters around the world.

Here in Aotearoa, the most visible and perhaps the most personal of suppressed practices was the art of moko, in particular moko kanohi, the marking of faces as ultimate expressions of cultural identity.

This exhibition report has an inherently inward, personal focus as it explores many factors pertaining to my own journey towards my receipt of moko kauae, which in turn informed my work for the exhibition component for this Masters of Māori Visual Arts qualification.

It will not be a revisiting of the pūrākau about Niwareka and Mataora; her escape back to Rarohenga from her abusive husband who then remorsefully sought her out for forgiveness, only to discover moko and be allowed to receive it as commitment to his change in ways, and their happy return with the artform to Te Ao Mārama. In fact, this will be the only reference.

This report instead focusses heavily on my own experiences, inspiration, conversations and research and offers an insight into my process of experimenting, of making and creating.

I also consider historical narratives surrounding moko kauae, review its evolution over time and look at survival, revival and ascension to increased visibility in the modern context, as a living cultural and political statement.

It examines the impacts of colonisation in relation to my own experience and speaks to ongoing efforts of decolonisation. It honours those who have influenced and impacted my journey.

I purposefully omit including a glossary of Māori words in deference to applying my own constrained translations and interpretations. Instead I implore the reader to do their own research and develop their own understanding, within the context of the discussion.

By no way is this report meant to be a comprehensive inventory of issues and answers relating to moko kauae, in fact there are many references not included from notable authorities (like Rawinia Higgins and Linda Waimarie Nikora), such are the practical limitations of a report of this nature.

I would hope that those reading this report remember its context as merely an archive relating to the exploration of my own story and how I chose to artistically and creatively make that manifest.

Methodology

Despite having already completed Master of Fine Arts qualification, which was done within a mainstream academic construct, the ethos of Māori research methodology was very new to me. Indeed, my desire to study towards this tohu in Māori Visual Arts was in direct response to wanting to feel immersed in a kaupapa Māori, academic arts-focussed environment.

So, in seeking to understand my own place within this mahi and to provide a context by which my research could contribute to the growing body of indigenous knowledge, I spent quite some time looking, listening and reading.

I started with Linda Tuhiwai Smith, who in her book *'Decolonising Methodologies'* outlined the necessity for indigenous people to push back at the problematic application of Euro-centric models of research theory on indigenous experiences, used around the world as ways and means of justifying colonisation.

> *"A critical aspect of the struggle for self-determination has involved questions relating to our history as indigenous peoples and a critique of how we, as the Other, have been represented or excluded from various accounts.*
>
> *Every issue has been approached by indigenous peoples with a view to **re**writing and **re**righting our position in history."*
> *(Tuhiwai Smith, 2012, p. 29)*

Relative to this, a comment made by Mera Penehira in her doctoral thesis *'Mouri Tu, Mouri Moko, Mouri Ora – Moko as wellbeing strategy'* particularly stands out for me.

> *"My intent is to practice utilising Kaupapa Māori as a liberator research framework."*
> *(Penehira, 2011, p. 9)*

In first considering different ways to research, I remembered a model I had seen, presented by Dr Rangimarie Turuki Pere and based on Te Aorangi – Te Universe, in her book *'Te Wheke.'*

She stated:

> *"A person's education is based on his or her experience and understandings. The universe of ancient Hawaiiki is the universe. Education in this context knows no boundaries."*
> *(Pere, 2003, p. 5)*

The next methodology I became familiar with was the *Kaupapa Māori Theory*, initially developed by Graham Hingangaroa Smith in 1990 and further expanded by Linda Tuhiwai Smith (in 1997), Leonie Pihama (in 2001) and Taina Pohatu (in 2005).

During 2020 I also studied through Te Wānanga o Aotearoa on the Toi Paematua Raranga programme. It was under '*Ngā Uarā*,' their kete of values, that I completed that qualification *(Te Wānanga o Aotearoa, n.d.).*

It was by combining and developing various elements of all these methodologies as I progressed, that I eventually created my own framework which enabled me to undertake the research and practical elements of this qualification, in the hope that I was maintaining the integrity of rangahau Māori.

The expanded elements of my Kaupapa Māori Research methodology were;

> *Rangatiratanga – I am responsible for ensuring the integrity of my thoughts, approach, actions and outcomes. I am accountable for the things that need improvement. I give appropriate recognition to people who assist me in my mahi, for their knowledge and contributions.*
>
> *Tikanga – I ensure that appropriate tikanga and kawa are observed. I ensure that mana tangata, especially mana wāhine, is maintained at all times. I consider any impacts my actions may have and discuss any potential tikanga conflicts with my whānau whānui to find appropriate solutions.*
>
> *Whākapapa – I understand that I am only here because of those who have gone before me and that my actions will impact on those who come after me. I recognise my kuia Ngārere as the pou for my own journey and my whanaunga Rangi as the conduit to my own moko kauae.*
>
> *Whānau – I look to my whānau whānui, especially my mother Hinewaito, husband Kevin and son Te Rei, to be my tuarā, for kupu awhina and tautoko. I show appreciation for the support of my wider whānau, reciprocate at every opportunity and also share their struggles and successes.*
>
> *Turangawaewae – I am safe to stand on my marae and work hard make it place where others can also be safe. I know my connection to the whenua and share that knowledge with others. I maintain my relationship with my mounga.*
>
> *Kaupapa – I am clear about my intentions and aspirations in completing this work. I acknowledge all wāhine mau kauae for their individual journeys, without judgement. I treat everything shared with me by others with respect. I ensure that the kaupapa of moko kauae is elevated as highly as possible. I remain committed to moko kauae and my own journey as the focus of my rangahau and artistic expression for this tohu.*

In October 2020 I was fortunate to be able to attend a two-day wānanga, He Pūnaha Hohou Rongo, on Māori Research Methodologies with Graham Smith, Linda Tuhiwai Smith and Leonie Pihama, hosted by Tu Tama Wahine o Taranaki, a Whānau Ora service provider based in Ngāmotu (New Plymouth).

The hui demystified the rhetoric around rangahau Māori and removed perceptions that it was only relevant within academia. It also enabled participants to begin to engage with the constructs of research in ways that made sense to them for the various kaupapa they were working on and in, across Te Ao Māori.

Attending that wānanga helped put my mind at ease, in that it was appropriate that I had created my own theoretical response to my research and that the measures by which I had tried to assess my approach to my work were valid.

He mihi nunui kia Leonie, Linda me Graham and all those who have taught us that we have the answers we need within ourselves.



Fig 2: Graham Smith, Linda Tuhiwai Smith, myself, Leonie Pihama October 2020. (Photo: Whānau Archive)

He Whakamārama - My Kauae Context

E RERE RĀ

E rere rā te motu nei
Ki roto koia o Parihaka
Nā Tohu rā i whakahaere mai ngā tikanga
I tere paepae ai te motu nei
Tō pikitanga kei Te Pūrepo
Tō heketanga kei Toroānui
Kia whakarongo koe
Ki te reka mai o te kōrero
Hei! Hei! Hei!

Mātau tonu au ki a koe e Tohu
E te ngākau whakapuke tonu
Me aha ia rā e mauru e
Ko te hau ka wheru whakamōmotu
E whiuwhiu ana
Kei te uru e
Kei te tonga
Ka haramai ki roto ka kōharihari
Hei! Hei! Hei!

(Parihaka waiata)



Fig 3: Parihaka Poi Manu, Ngārere fourth from left, 1890s.
(Photo: William Andrew Collis, Alexander Turnbull Library)

Ngārere - Te Manihera (Neha) Kipa Mataaria – Te Ahu Rei
| |
Apihaka - Spence Te Ahu
|
Hinewaito - Geoff Bigham (Pākeha)
|
Bonita

My whakapapa on both sides of my mother Hinewaito's whānau has strong associations with Parihaka, a place and history that has intimately helped define and shape and my life.

On both sides of Taranaki Mounga, my marae at Kātere in Te Atiawa and Waiokura in Ngāruahine were the last stops for dispossessed refugees from across Aotearoa who sought sanctuary and shelter in Parihaka. At Kātere and Waiokura they received manaaki and awhi before setting off on the final leg of their journeys around the coast, taking with them kai and supplies mostly grown by the hapū of those marae, Ngāti Tāwhirikura and Ngāti Tū.

My Te Atiawa koroua Neha Kipa was taken away as a Parihaka political prisoner and many Ngāruahine men, known as the ploughmen because of their active but passive resistance by ploughing the whenua (*Parihaka Ploughing Campaign Begins*, n.d.), were also incarcerated without trial for undefined periods of time. Prisoners were put to work as slave labour to build numerous infrastructure projects in Te Waipounamu (the South Island) and kept in atrocious conditions (Ellison, 2018).

Our Ngāruahine men were mostly kept on the west coast, around the Hokitika area, hence the iwi's decision to formally receive our Treaty of Waitangi Crown apology there. That decision centred on our desire to honour our lost loved ones and also to recognise the manaakitanga shown to them by local hapū Ngāti Waewae, without whom many more would have no doubt perished (Coster, 2015).

Taranaki is a rohe where muru me te raupatu, the total confiscation of whenua and subjugation of iwi around the mounga was carried out by the colonial government, where a 'scorched earth' policy was implemented and papakainga were burned to the ground. Crops and other food sources were destroyed and the sacking of Parihaka was carried out in the face of passive resistance, where children playing and offers of food for the soldiers were met with imprisonment of men and the rape and abuse of women and children (*The Taranaki Report - Kaupapa Tuatahi*, 1996).

It is this legacy that our whānau have been born into, grown up with and continue to remember. While we have seen Treaty of Waitangi settlements for both our Ngāruahine (*Ngāruahine*, n.d.) and Te Atiawa (*Te Ātiawa (Taranaki)*, n.d.) iwi and a reconciliation ceremony and subsequent settlement negotiations for Parihaka (*He Puanga Haeata - Parihaka-Crown Reconciliation Ceremony*, n.d.), the fact remains that our whānau and our people are in

revitalisation mode, trying to rebuild our cultural identity and birth right based on the fragments that were left after the devastation wreaked on our people.

One of those interrupted cultural practices was tā moko, and our whānau, like most others of the late 20th century, had not actively engaged with this kaupapa in living memory. Conversely however, like most other whānau, we didn't have to look too far back into our whakapapa to reconnect with a living manifestation of this taonga – our kuia Ngārere.

I was already familiar with a couple of photos of her with kauae, but was told that the photographers had touched up the images, as was common in those days, so those depictions of her kauae felt less than genuine to me because of that.

Fortunately for our whānau, one of Ngārere's uri, Rangi Kipa, became an early pioneer in the revitalisation of this taonga and has been instrumental in its resurgence around Aotearoa over the past 20 years ('Rangi Kipa', 2020).

His guidance, inspiration, support (and in my case patience) has been pivotal in not only my kauae journey, but has fundamentally shaped the lives of literally dozens, if not hundreds of wāhine and tāne around the motu. Among those have been members of our extended whānau, hapū and iwi, whose transformations I have been privileged to witness over the years and whose examples strongly influenced my own journey.

I was the first in my grandmother Apihaka's line to receive kauae and since then two cousins and one of their daughters have also received theirs, not from Rangi but other tōhunga tā. Having reintroduced this taonga to our whānau, we are living manifestations of our cultural identity and are now direct links back to the face of our kuia.

Many times I have heard Rangi refer to wāhine mau kauae as living, walking political statements. Ngarino Ellis, in examining the politics of the survival of moko kauae, despite concerted efforts to suppress it, also said;

> *"Yet through all this turmoil the moko endured. Carved on the faces primarily of women from the 1860s onwards, it remained a potent symbol of tino rangatiratanga / sovereignty."*
> *(Ellis, 2018, p. 4)*

Even without being physically manifest, moko kauae has been a constant presence my whole life, a taonga at the forefront of my aspirations, but one just beyond my reality. From the photos of Ngārere, to drawing rudimentary koru on my chin as a child, to drawing representative stylised kauae on my own and others' chins when standing with kapa haka rōpu Te Huatahi at Te Matatini in 1998, kauae was always there in my consciousness.

Then there was also creating artwork with kauae references with my son Te Rei, who spent his first formative years in Rangi's house where we lived, and whose first drawing attempts were of moko on his arms legs and face, modelling what he saw his Matua Rangi doing.

My childhood home in Manaia, South Taranaki was built on a block of land known as Te Kauae, the wharemoe at my Pā, Waiokura was renamed Te Kauae and two important taonga, discussed later, also carry the name.

Finally, and quite significantly, I had the honour and privilege of witnessing about 20 other wāhine receive their moko kauae before finally receiving my own in 2019, and I have shared the experience with seven other wāhine since.

I especially mihi to Te Rawanake Coles, Ria Wihapi Waikerepuru and Te Urutahi Waikerepuru, who 20 years ago broke down barriers, dealt with the questions, challenges and the criticism (from our own people) and cleared the way for the rest of us to follow. They took on moko kauae at a time when it was revolutionary to do so, when our people struggled to understand what that meant for them. Thankfully, times have changed.

I was fortunate to attend a wānanga at Parihaka in early 2019 with many other wāhine on the moko kauae journey. My husband and I, they and their whānau spent a few hours talking through our fears, barriers, questions and aspirations with Rangi. It was a hugely empowering process. Since that time five of us have received kauae and no doubt many others are closer to their time as well.

We are now entering a time when wāhine don't need to feel so mokemoke and in seeking each other out for support to claim their birth right, they are understanding that they have all the mana they need to proceed.

Kia kaha wāhine mā.

'E kore e hekeheke he kākano rangatira – a noble heritage will never perish'



Fig 4: Te Rawanake Coles, myself, Ria Wihapi Waikerepuru at Waiokura Mārae, 2020.
(Photo: Whānau Archive)

Kauae And Christianity

> *"Kei muri i te awe kāpara, he tangata kē. Nōnā te ao – he mā. Behind the tattooed face, a stranger stands. He will inherit the world – he is white"*

Robert Joseph attributes the kōrero above to the second Māori king, Tāwhiao, and states that according to his Mormon church's historical narrative, Tāwhiao also prophesied the arrival of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Morrison et al., 2012). This is the church I was born into and raised in through childhood and into my late teens.

One of the first things children learn is that the church regards the human body as a gift from God, equating marking that body with tattoos as defiling it, affecting its spiritual health and jeopardising a person's worthiness for other things like serving a mission for the church (*The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints - Tattooing*, n.d.).

This is just one of the religious tenets I grew up with, in a small, rural congregation consisting of mainly Māori extended whānau members, where conformity was the norm and adherence to church teachings was inherently expected.

However, I now feel that I was fortunate in that despite being a staunch church member herself, my mother Hinewaito choose to prioritise being Māori over being Mormon. If it was a choice between supporting kaupapa at the Pā or going to church, we were at the Pā. This was not the case for most Māori church members, for whom the church came before all else.

While church members tended to socialise mostly with other church members, the choices made by (who I would now describe as) my very liberally minded mother meant I was exposed to a wide range of people with differing habits, beliefs, religions, sexual orientations and interests.

It was this dual existence which gave me the early ability to begin forming my own belief systems, values and principles, which by my late teenage years leaned heavily toward Te Ao Māori and further away from Mormonism.

But it still took eight more years before I received my first moko, an ankle band (as was one of the trends of the late 90s). By that stage the church's expectations didn't feature in any aspect of my decision, nor have they since. I have also seen other wāhine with kauae whom I know were, or still are, Mormon and I have wondered how, if at all, the church has influenced their kauae journey.

Ariana Paul, who received her kauae in 2020, shared her experience with me. Ariana also grew up in the church and while our ending place may be the similar, our journeys were quite different.

“I didn't connect with my culture until my late 30's. Growing up, the church was like a culture, it superseded life, and although I knew I was Māori and where I was from etc, my identity was through my religion, and my Māori culture was an add-on.

However, when I started to connect with my culture, it was as though for the first time, I felt whole. Understanding my whakapapa, learning our reo, hearing pūrakau, listening to mōteatea, being on the marae, learning karanga and researching our history, shifted my spiritual wellbeing to a level that I'd never felt in the church. I was connected to our stories of creation, more than I ever was about Adam and Eve's creation story. I was far more inspired by our own navigation stories than I was by American Pioneer stories.

Because I felt I wasn't able to bring my culture into my religion, I started to distance myself from the church. I didn't ditch all of the learnings, because there are beautiful values that I was raised with that I will always keep, however it wasn't until I pulled away from the church, that I started to contemplate the restoration of my identity, and the protest for my ancestors for years of suppression of our culture, which is where the seed of moko kauae was planted.”
(A. Paul, pers comm, 2021)

Ariana also remembered what happened when she got her first moko and how deeply ingrained the church’s expectations were.

“The church teaches how important it is to stay clean and pure and that you should treat your body like a temple. I was advised against having any moko on my body, because it would be like putting graffiti on a temple building, so I made sure that the first moko I had done, wasn't visible. It felt as though I was 'rebelling' and in some ways, a sinner.

I distinctly remember my Kuia seeing my moko one day in the car. She was sitting behind me and could see something underneath my t-shirt. She gently pulled my t-shirt across my shoulder and asked, "When did you get this?" I recall the pause before answering, "I've had it for a while," and that was all that was said. It was so vivid because I felt I had done something wrong, but as soon as my Kuia saw it and didn't question anything further, I felt a sense of relief.”
(A. Paul, pers comm, 2021)

Ariana also advises that, like me, she has not had any negative reactions from church members, in fact both our experiences have interestingly been quite the opposite. While having pulled away from Mormonism, she currently attends a Māori Anglican church with her husband, where Māori culture is the norm and where other wāhine have kauae, including the minister of the church.

While Ariana and I have had only positive responses from church members, in *'Mau Moko – The World of Māori Tattoo,'* Ngahuia Te Awekotuku relates feedback from interview subjects who had not had such good encounters.

> *"Some wearers assert that family members react unfavourably because they have been 'colonised' by the Christian (most frequently Mormon) church, or 'programmed' by the colonial process."*
> *(Te Awekotuku, 2011, p. 205)*

Perhaps the similar positive experiences of both Ariana and I can be easily explained by our own self-imposed distancing from the church, therefore limiting our interactions just to those 'active Mormon' whānau members who would support us no matter what.

This also poses a question worthy of further investigation at another time - is there a covert, but inherent acceptance of moko kauae by Māori despite them being immersed within Christian ideology? While not overtly promoted or promulgated, can whakapapa, whanaungatanga and tikanga mostly triumph over church ideology and teachings?

If so, the statement of the Anglican Reverend JW Stack (1835-1919) in a 1940 Journal of the Polynesian Society regarding the influence of Christianity, may no longer be as solid as he then purported;

> *"It has taught them to give up heathen customs to which they have clung with passionate attachment."*
> *(Stack, 1940, p. 538)*

The colonial notion of 'practicing' a religion was in total contrast to Māori life, where systems of tapu and noa were as inherent as breathing. No activity or process was considered or completed without the relevant and appropriate spiritual undertakings being appropriately addressed first.

However, the basic tenets of Christianity were adopted by our people who found relevance and resonance with many aspects. Some adapted various teachings and combined them with mātauranga Māori to create their own faiths or joined established Western religions.

Here in Taranaki the passive resistance promoted by prophets Tohu Kākahi and Te Whiti o Rongomai from Parihaka was based in Christian religiosity, a protest methodology which went worldwide to Ghandi and Martin Luther King, both religious men and whose descendants have visited Parihaka (Sinnott et al., 2015).

Anglican minister Dr Hirini Kaa espoused the benefits of adaptation to Christianity by indigenous peoples, saying;

> *"When combined with mātauranga Māori (indigenous knowledge and ways of knowing) and indigenous agency, all around the world it became a source of liberation and release,*

inspiring multiple generations and countless movements to seek and achieve freedom."
(Kaa, 2018)

I have a vastly contrasting point of view, and absolutely agree with a statement made by the late Dr Ranginui Walker, to which Kaa was responding, as saying that what Christianity actually brought was;

'total colonisation… in that it involved cultural invasion and colonisation of the minds of the invaded as well.'
(Walker, 2004, p. 146)

On the E-Tangata website, Moana Jackson also commented on a darker side of Christian colonisation;

"The rape of Māori children in church and other colonising institutions was a taking away of innocence that was rarely acknowledged until the recent courageous efforts of survivors."
(Jackson, 2018)

Colonisation affected not only what Māori came to believe, but also reinforced the missionaries' attitudes of cultural superiority.

Walker also said;

"Unlike the traders, who were motivated only by commercial gain, the missionaries were the cutting edge of colonisation. Their mission was to convert the Māori from heathenism to Christianity and from barbarism to civilisation."
(Walker, 2004, p. 85)

Te Awekotuku states that despite this, moko traditions of wahine have survived regardless of the aggressive efforts of the missionaries (of all faiths) to stamp out the practice.

'The tattooed female face has always been here, an enduring emblem of Māori femininity and strength, visible and uncompromising in an era of political conflict, ongoing alienation of land and the growing corrosion of Christian influence.'
(Te Awekotuku, 2011, p. 85)

This brings me a sense of purpose, a feeling of solidarity and reason to be infinitely grateful to all those wāhine, who over the last two centuries, have maintained the mana of this taonga in the face of religious colonisation, its pressure and persecution of our people.

Kauae As Commemoration

Te Awekotuku said in *'Momento Mori: Momento Maori'* that;

> *"Many people in the Maori world take moko to mark a significant moment in their lives; the birth of a new baby, the joining in marriage, the loss of a loved one, the achievement of a special goal, and the attainment of a degree or success in sport. Dreams can be worn upon the skin, and so can memories; past events, past successes, past ordeals, past lives."*
> *(Te Awekotuku 2009, p. 2)*

An commonly expressed reason for wāhine to receive their moko kauae is to commemorate an important occasion, commonly the passing of a loved one. Ariana Paul talked about that being the catalyst for her.

> *"For about 5 years, I had seriously considered receiving moko kauae, however I felt that it would be in my 60's or much later. In 2020, I lost my father during COVID lockdown, therefore we were unable to hold a tangi for dad. It was the most difficult personal struggle I have ever faced, to not grieve or farewell our father in the way I was accustomed to.*
>
> *During this time of complete devastation, I went through a spiritual awakening - I'm not sure how else to explain it. Although my grief was so deep, I felt my wairua becoming stronger and stronger - I knew I was being held by my tūpuna.*
>
> *I'm a dreamer, I've often received dreams that have meaning, and one morning, not long after dad passed, I received a message that it was time to have my kauae done. I woke up, told my husband about my dream, and to my surprise he just said, "I thought you would."*
>
> *So, this was my tohu that it was time. I spoke to our tamariki and I also spoke to my wider whānau. I knew I needed to carry this through, so I found someone who was from home (Hokianga) who could do it during lockdown. No one was able to come, which actually worked in my favour because I'm an introvert at the best of times!"*
> *(A. Paul, pers comm, 20 January 2021)*

Ngāruahine tohunga raranga Kim Kahu had already decided she was ready for moko kauae, but it was some time before plans progressed, and only after having experienced what she felt were 'little tohu' telling her that her late parents had also given her their blessing.

She decided on a date that sat right between the anniversaries of the passing of her biological mother and her whāngai mother (her maternal grandmother), to honour them both.

“Even though it (their deaths) was 30-something years apart, that was the decider as to what the date was going to be. Not only that, there were a whole lot of different changes I was going through as well; letting my hair go grey, just embracing the fact that I’m now 50, getting older, being a grandmother, yep all those little tohu saying now it’s time.”
(Kahu, pers comm, 2021)



Fig 5: Kim Kahu with Rangi after she received her kauae, September 2019.
(Photo: Kim Kahu)

Another more public expression of commemorative moko kauae was noted in 2012 when 16 wāhine from Tainui received their moko kauae in honour of the late Māori Queen, Te Ātairangikaahu (NZ Herald, 2012).

Then in 2016, a further 16 wāhine received moko kauae in commemoration of the 10th anniversary of the coronation of Te Ātairangikaahu’s son, King Tuheitia. This included his then 19-year old daughter, Ngawai hono i te po Paki, who was reported as saying of the occasion;

"The real reason why I wanted to have my moko kauae done was to support and acknowledge my father and the decade he's spent on the throne. In the ten years my father has experienced so many things. So, this is perhaps my gift to him, my moko kauae.”
(Brown, 2016)

Television reporter Tamati Rimene-Sproat from the Sunday programme also shared his mother Sonya’s moko kauae journey on television, as she commemorated her mother’s passing, as part of a four-day mokopapa where seven people received moko kauae from renowned moko pioneer, Derek Lardelli.

Sonya told her son;

> *“I’ve been thinking about his for the past five years son, and in particular when Oma died, so I thought it was time.”*
> *(Rimene-Sproat, TVNZ, 2020)*

Other wāhine may choose to have photos of loved ones who have passed away nearby as they receive their moko kauae, bringing the wairua of the departed among the living and into the event. This is especially true when they may be receiving their moko away from their home or marae.

When I received my moko kauae, it was here at home where my closest friends and whānau were with me, among the many photos of my loved ones who are no longer with us. While they were acknowledged and remembered at the time, my kauae also commemorated a pivotal moment in the lives of myself, my husband, my hapū and our wider iwi.

In 2018 a pod of 12 parāoa (sperm whales) stranded and died along coastline belonging to two Ngāruahine hapū, including nine in the rohe of my hapū of Ngāti Tū. Initially it was a highly emotional and distressing time, however with awhi and tautoko from Hori Parata and his response team from Ngāpuhi’s Ngātiwai hapū, we were guided and taught the process of hauhake, the flensing of the parāoa to recover as many precious resources as we could from them (Groenestein, 2018).

While my tauiwi husband Kevin had already accepted my commitment to Te Ao Māori and had been welcomed by the wider whānau, despite our many years together he had not seriously been interested in learning more than he needed to know to get by without causing offence.

However, he worked alongside Ngātiwai in the grimy, smelly depths of the hauhake. It changed him forever. Among other things, within six months my husband was learning te reo Māori.

He said of the parāoa experience:

> *“It was a unique experience... after sitting through the wānanga and then visiting the site with Ngātiwai it was like something came over me, it was almost spiritual.*
>
> *Just being part of that whole process, it just gave me an awareness of the culture and I wanted to learn more, so I’ve taken steps to obtain a greater understanding. We’ll see where it evolves from there.”*
> *(Huxtable, pers comm, 2020)*

It was that change in Kevin’s wairua that also gave me the courage to finally talk to him about my dream of having moko kauae, after 15 years of us being together. His immediate positive response I attribute directly to the parāoa.

Hence, my moko kauae was a commemoration not only of the human dead, but also those nine parāoa who gave my husband the gift of ngākau Māori and myself the kaha to kōrero to him about moko kauae.

Nō reira, e ngā taonga o Tangaroa; Ōtāmare, Maraekura, Mātangirei, Te Atawhai, Manaia, **Te Kauae Runga, Te Kauae Raro**, Waiohata, Motumate, maumahara māua ia koutou mō ake tonu.



Fig 6: Allie Hemara-Wahanui and I with ‘Mātauranga Interrupted’ which honours the parāoa, created for my final MFA project, 2018. (Photo: Whānau Archive)

Kauae Controversy

As previously noted, moko kauae has become more mainstream and an increasingly accepted part of Aotearoa's society over the past 20 years. However, for a couple of decades before that, moko kanohi of any sort was mired in controversy and usually only associated with gang culture.

Te Awekotuku's research followed the urbanisation of Māori over three decades from the 1950s-1970s, by which time 80% of the Māori population had become urbanised, creating breeding grounds for dispossessed youth who wanted to prove their allegiance to gangs by marking their bodies with tattoos. But she also recognised that gangs were, in effect, the bridge between the old and the new.

> *"Confirmed members thus became the new guardians of an adapted, yet old tradition."*
> *(Te Awekotuku, 2011, p. 163)*

She went on to state the because of those gang associations, wāhine were especially stigmatised, one research subject relaying that people automatically assumed that because she had moko, she had been to jail.

The Hon Nanaia Mahuta, herself a moko kauae wearer (and a personal role model), also noted the gang references in a 2017 news article.

> *"There was a time in NZ history where people wearing moko kauae were not well understood; they were judged. In fact, doing normal day-to-day things became quite stressful because people made judgements on who they were because they wore a facial tattoo and that was likened to gangs."*
> *(Redstall, 2017)*

I recently re-watched the 1994 movie *'Once Were Warriors'* after many years and realised I had forgotten all about the character of the young wahine with moko kauae, girlfriend to the character Nig. While a minimal, non-speaking part with an imitation kauae, she was stunningly beautiful and it was a profound reminder to me that this 90s portrayal of wāhine mau kauae was quite indicative of the assumptions and attitudes of the time – that anyone with moko was rebellious, dangerous, unruly and unlawful.

But the past three decades of renaissance of moko kauae have not been without significant controversy. Many instances of discrimination have been added to the public record, including Tuhoe's Hapai Hake who was 14 years old when she received her moko kauae in 1996, outraging her Pākeha school principal who questioned her ability to give consent, suggesting that she had been assaulted and disfigured (Te Ara, 1996).

Others issues included Kay Robin's exclusion from a Gisborne bar (Kiriona, 2003), Christina Bevan not being hired for a job (Mather, 2005), Stevie Pringle being "bullied" out of her job in Australia (Tyson, 2019), Atawhai Tuki being

told to cover up her kauae (Bateman, 2019) and artist Ngahina Hohaia being racially abused (Te Karere, 2020).

More controversies that have also swirled around moko kauae include the cultural appropriation and misappropriation of kauae by French fashion designer Gaultier (Fairfax Media, 2009), painter Nikki Romney (Te Karere, 2020) and portrait painter Samantha Payne (James, 2020).

Of particular nasty note, was Rotorua businessman Gavin Eggleton referring to a wahine mau kauae saying “Another one with a winns barcode on her chin (sic)” (Palmer, 2020). This scathing description in particular, went viral.

But perhaps the biggest, and arguably the most positively impactful controversy of recent times related to moko kauae being worn by Pākeha woman Sally Anderson (Pihama, 2018). While I agree that kauae is the birth-right of only wāhine Māori, I also recognise and actually appreciate that this take brought the debate about ‘worthiness’ of getting moko kauae into the mainstream arena. It encouraged really robust discussion, which I think had a hugely positive impact on wāhine around the motu, including here in Taranaki (Martin, 2018).

Sometimes though, it is our own who issue the hardest challenges. I was stopped on the street by a Ngāruahine kuia who said to me “Is that you BB? Why did you do that to your pretty face? Oh, you’ve ruined your face.” While somewhat stunned, I had expected some wero from someone, so was able to assert and articulate the mana of my decision. Her challenge was the only one I have ever had.

But the wero can also come from within the moko kauae circles. Tōhunga tā Joni Brooking-Clark raised the question of intellectual property rights of moko kauae, believing they belong with the kaitā, not the wearer. This was instigated by exhibition photos of wāhine with moko kauae, taken by a wāhine mau kauae, and centred on the commercial benefits of the images (Tawhai, 2020).

Another wero was issued recently by a wāhine mau kauae Rhonda Tibble, who stated that she would only speak Māori to wāhine she met who have kauae, believing that if they wore the markings of our kuia then they should have the reo also flowing from their lips or should be making an effort to learn (Waatea News, 2020).

While I may not fundamentally disagree with Tibble’s sentiments, I think she has failed to recognise the ongoing, systematic efforts to alienate Māori from our reo and she also disregards the intergenerational trauma still affecting our people. We are only one or two generations away from those who were physically and psychologically abused for speaking Māori, a pain sometimes amplified in the modern context.

In her book *‘Still Being Punished,’* Rachael Selby presented a collection of stories from kaumātua who suffered the physical institutional violence meted out to tamariki for speaking Māori, and who now suffer whakamā at the hands of younger reo Māori speakers.

She said of their stories;

> *“I have seen rangatahi arrogantly pass judgement on their elders who do not speak te reo Māori. I see the pain felt by elders who were punished as children and who now suffer at the hands of rangatahi who do not know about our history.” (Selby, 2014, p. 4)*

She also extended the sentiment to the next generation;

> *“We must not judge our elders and make assumptions about why they do not speak te reo Māori. Nor should we judge their children whom they insisted should speak only English – believing that English was the key to the future and to survival.” (Selby , 2014, p. 68)*

To a lesser degree, in private conversations with other wāhine, some who mau kauae and some who do not, we have debated many things including the ongoing relevance of using moko stencils for kapa haka considering we get upset if any other cultures try it (Matagi, 2017).

We also questioned the appropriateness of putting moko onto pre-pubescent children, again seemingly only for kapa haka, and the ‘kitchness’ of photographic portrait sessions where faux moko are applied and costumes or kākahu worn to reflect a colonial appearance have yet to be seriously considered. Having now become normalised, are these things just harmless practices or should there be more cultural cringe?

Are these things only acceptable when Māori do it? Or is cultural integrity the issue at stake? There have been no resolutions to any of these debates and no doubt the issues will resurface again in the future.

Kauae Ki Te Ao

Despite domestic ructions about moko kauae here in Aotearoa, an increasing global awareness of this taonga is also enabling and encouraging wāhine from other indigenous cultures to reclaim their rightful heritage.

In his 2007 book *'The Tattooing Arts of Tribal Women'* Lars Krutak showcased not only the results of women who had been tattooed, but also the work of women who were the tattooists. The number of cultures for whom the art of what we call moko was part of their cultural practice was astounding.

Krutak was critical of colonial attitudes to indigenous cultures, describing photography in the colonial era as a;

> *"'literally colonizing process of inscription,' whereby the tattooed bodies of indigenous peoples were read by Western audiences as evidence of a 'savage inferior state'."*
> *(Krutak, 2007, p. 21)*

Krutak lamented the continued demise of traditional practices and practitioners, but despite this treatment as exotic and erotic oddities, some cultures are fighting back (Gilpen, 2018), (Kelly, 2017), (Kaszas, 2012).

On a most memorable trip to Hawai'i in 2019, I had the opportunity to go to Mauna Kea to support the Kia'i (protectors) who were protesting the construction of a new telescope on the mauna. Among the people I saw two wāhine with kakau on their faces. I was able to greet one of them with hongi and we just held each-others' faces. Outrightly violating the mutual tapu about touching one another's heads, we wept with the inherent cultural recognition of understanding and indigenous struggle and that our faces were living political statements of survival.

Tricia Allen's *'Tattoo Traditions of Hawai'i'* noted early references and images of facial markings on wahine, sometimes of a tradition nature (chevrons or hoaka – marks of mourning), but also colonial influences, like goats (Allen, 2013).

During that trip I also had the honour of being welcomed into the home of George Kalani Brown and Jennifer Kekiwi-Brown at Haiku on the island of Maui, where kahuna ka uhi, master kakau artist Keli'iokalani Makua was working on a family member. It was a humbling experience to be in the presence of another group of indigenous cousins who were part of the important revitalisation of an interrupted cultural practice.

All ohana members had received kakau and although none of the markings were on their faces, the instant connection of moko to kakau was powerful and palpable. I was profoundly grateful to the Kekiwi-Brown ohana for opening their home to me that day and sharing such an intimate and unique cultural experience.

George's passing in 2020 impacted me in ways I find hard to explain. Perhaps it was mostly that I would never have the opportunity to reciprocate the generosity I felt that day by welcoming him to Aotearoa, to share my sacred places and special people with him, to return his aloha. Despite his passing though, his beautiful wife Jennifer and their ohana would be always welcome in my home and onto my whenua. Aloha ku'u hoa o ka ua 'Ulalena, ke hāpai 'ia maila e ka Ho'olua, 'eā alia ho'i 'oe i ka uka o Haleakalā, i laila ka nohona e la'i mau ai. Love for my friend of the 'Ulalena rain, being lifted by the Ho'olua wind, you are now there in the uplands of Haleakalā, sitting in everlasting peace.



Fig 7: George Kalani Brown (bottom second from left), his wife Jennifer Kekiwi-Brown at his shoulder and kahuna ka uhi Keli'iokalani Makua next to him, with their ohana, myself and Ngāruahine whanaunga Paula and Justine Carr at Haiku, on Maui, Hawai'i, 2019. (Photo: Paula Carr)

Also during that trip, while attending 'The Chief's Luau' on Oahu, myself and friend Bernard Makaore, who has mataora, were invited onto the stage by the Samoan Chief Sielu for whom the show is named, who has full Samoan pe'a (*Chiefs Luau*, n.d.). The Chief explained the cultural significance of all our moko and kakau to the more than 200 guests present and thanked us for maintaining the traditions of our tupuna.

Quite conversely, on the same trip I was approached by a haole (white American) from the mainland USA who complimented me on my kauae and said he wished his wife would get one, but she didn't want to. I asked if she was Māori, he said no. My response went something like this;

> *"If she's not Māori then your wife is right, she shouldn't have one. These aren't decorations to us, this is our cultural identity."*

I then asked if he had been to Aotearoa and he confirmed he hadn't but really wanted to. My next response was;

> *"Well if you do I hope you'll take some time to learn more about our culture, to respect it and support it, not just come to appropriate it."*

I am quite sure he still didn't get it.

Here in Aotearoa, especially over the past five years, seeing wāhine with moko kauae has become a much more common. Not only are more wāhine than ever receiving kauae, they are younger and holding more significant positions within mainstream society.

Nanaia Mahuta was the obvious example, as our now Foreign Affairs representative to the world. While that attracted some racist rhetoric (Feek, 2020), (Small, 2020), the world has responded with favourable interest (Cave, 2020), (Holland, 2020). Mahuta herself spoke years earlier to the power of her kauae (Price, 2016).



Fig 8: Myself and Minister Nanaia Mahuta with a kete I made named Aniwaniwa, a koha to her for her leadership, 2020. (Photo: Whānau Archive)

Other examples kept coming. Whitiaira Timutimu was the first wahine to wear moko kauae in the police force (Dewes, 2018), the Māori Land Court's deputy chief judge Caren Fox had moko kauae (Clapham, 2017), TVNZ's Oriini Kaipara took her kauae to mainstream news (Willetts, 2019) and NRL women's league star Hilda Mariu charged moko kauae into the international sports world (Harriman, 2018).

Many books on moko have been published, most notably in my own personal collection the aforementioned *'Mau Moko'* (Te Awekotuku, 2011), Michael King's *'Moko'* (King, 2019), *'Te Kuia Moko'* by Harry Sangl (Sangl, 2020), and *'Gottfried Lindauer's New Zealand – The Māori Portraits'* (Mason & Stanhope, 2020).

I was relieved that HG Robley's turn of the 20th century prediction that the art of moko was fast vanishing was actually, in the modern context, fast being disproved (Robley, 2018). In fact, a facebook page named '*Wāhine mā mau Moko Kauae - who am I to wear Moko Kauae'* has 664 members at the time of writing and is a safe, online space for wāhine to share experiences, ask questions and offer support to others on the journey.

Artistically, moko has also always maintained a strong presence. While Goldie and Lindauer most come to people's minds, other artists continued to portray moko kauae, even when it was nearly invisible in lived reality.

A 1992 calendar in my possession featuring work from Robyn Kahukiwa shared two strong works titled 'Hineteiwaiwa' and Rona Whakamau Tai (Moon Box Series) both from 1984, and Te Atiawa whanaunga and renowned artist Darcy Nicholas has always powerfully highlighted the mana of moko kauae in many of his works.

Indeed, Nicholas said of moko;

> *"The tattooed face has become the modern defining symbol of our people and it graces the face like a coat of arms. A symbol of identity, culture and spirituality."*
> *(Nicholas, 2005)*



Fig 9: Taranaki Woman, Darcy Nicholas, 1988
(Nicholas, 2005)

Contemporary wāhine artists like Sofia Minson (*Sofia Minson Art*, n.d.), Aimee Ratana (Ratana, 2008), Vanessa Wairata Edwards (*Vanessa Edwards – Kura Gallery*, 2018) and Sian Montgomery-Neutze, herself a tōhunga tā moko (*Sian Montgomery-Neutze*, n.d.) have continued to amaze and inspire me with their depictions of moko kauae.

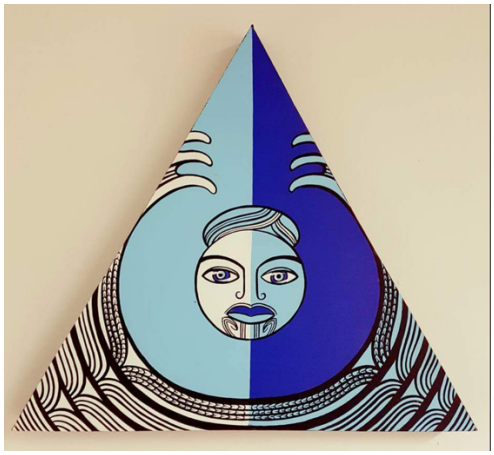


Fig 10: Hina and Hinemoana, n.d
Sian Montgomery-Neutze
(*Sian Montgomery-Neutze*, n.d.)



Fig 11: Tuhoe, 2008
Aimee Ratana
(Ratana, 2008)



Fig 12: Hinenui Te Po, 2017
Sofia Minson
(Sofia Minson Art, n.d.)

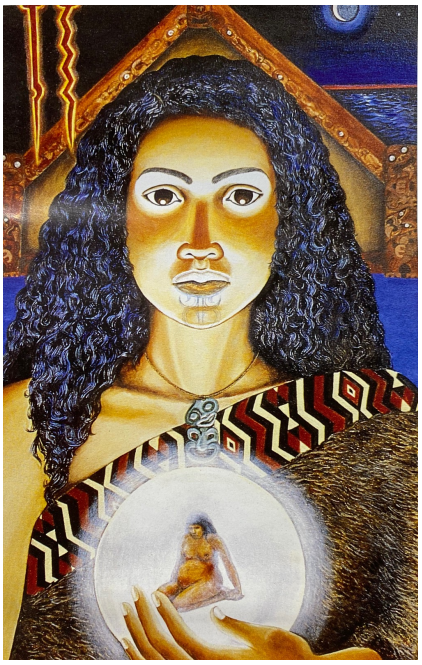


Fig 13: Hineteiwaiwa, 1984
Robyn Kahukiwa
(Kahukiwa, 1984)

Moko has been taken to Australia to be exhibited in *'Tā Moko – Māori Markings'* (MacDonald, 2019), and an exhibition specifically honouring moko kauae, *'Momo Kauae – Moko Kauae in contemporary art'* was held in Hastings in 2014. It featured stunning works by artists including some of my favourites; Robyn Kahukiwa, Matthew McIntyre-Wilson and Manos Nathan (Cracknell, 2014).

An exhibition shown here in Taranaki in 2019 and again this year which celebrated moko kauae was developed to celebrate Tu Tama Wahine's 30th anniversary and featured wāhine mau kauae in their sacred places. The exhibition, a series of photos taken by grandmaster photographer Tania Niwa, was described this way in promotional material;

> *"This is about healing ourselves, healing our Tūpuna and healing our whenua; because we are connected, women and land are intimately connected."*
> (*Puke Ariki, 2019)*

In other exposure, Te Puia opened its doors to show moko to the world in 2018 (Māori Television, 2018), government department, the Ministry for Women, utilises a moko kauae for its branding (*Ministry for Women*, n.d.) and the Human Rights Commission has a special section speaking specifically to discrimination against moko (*Human Rights Commission*, n.d.).

Also used on stationery and office materials, it seemed there was no shortage of examples of moko kauae in contemporary use to acknowledge. In my opinion all this exposure serves to continue the normalisation and naturalisation of moko kauae within our contemporary world.



Fig 14: Notebooks from Maiea Movement, (*Maiea Movement*, n.d.)
(Photo: Whānau Archive)

Te Kauae Ki Runga

Kauae Kī Whea?

I considered many different ways of artistically manifesting my kauae journey for this exhibition, first and foremost the question being where to show my work. All my life I had wanted to receive my moko kauae at Waiokura, in our whare tupuna Paraukau. However, when the opportunity arose, I felt Waiokura had become somewhat of a battle ground in recent times and I no longer fully felt the wairua there that I knew I needed for the process, so I decided to have it done at mine and Kevin's home, in Manaia, South Taranaki with just whānau and close friends in attendance.

The evening before, my son Te Rei received his first moko from Rangi, completing a circle started when my son was a baby growing up watching his Matua do moko on others. In my MFA thesis, Te Rei discussed his thoughts about eventually receiving moko from Rangi and this exhibition report now closes that loop (Bigham, 2018). It was a very personal and special weekend for us both and is a time we both treasure dearly.



Fig 15. Rangi works on my son Te Rei as I look on, 2019.
(Photo: Whānau Archive)

However, by the time it came to decide on the exhibition venue I had re-found my place and peace at Waiokura, so wanted to show my work there, not only to reaffirm my presence but also to put the work into its most impactful environment.

Te Rei and I spent some time just sitting in Paraukau, talking about the space, our memories, its potential and challenges as an exhibition venue. To also reinforce the context of moko kauae in that space, we carefully examined all the photos in the whare, and as anticipated found that none showed wāhine with kauae, nor men with mataora. That confirmation reinforced to me the need for the work to be shown in that whare.



Fig 16: Top – Waiokura Pā, Winks Road, Manaia, South Taranaki.
(Photo: Whānau Archive)





Figs 17-18: Bottom left – Paraukau, Bottom Right – Interior of Paraukau, 2020.
(Photos: Whānau Archive)

Rangahau - Research

Having decided on the exhibition venue, I then knew what my limitations and also opportunities would be. I began thinking about various media including sculpture, moving images, holograms, raranga and photography and explored all of them to greater or lesser degrees.

I knew any of those media could have been utilised to activate the space. However, the ongoing evolution of this work eventually took me full circle and back to two other pieces I had previously exhibited as inspiration.

The first, named *'Ōrite, Rerekē,'* consists of a sheet of heavy-duty white fine art 200gsm paper measuring 60cm wide by 2m high and features nine triangular shapes, each consisting of 55 smaller triangles, cut and bent in a variety of ways to produce unique, different effects.

Totally hand cut, this piece became a tauira and was one that I would like to keep revisiting in the future, for further inspiration and exploration.

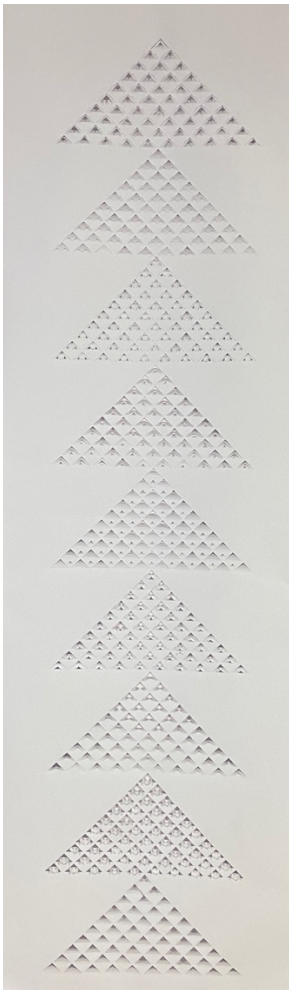


Fig 19: Left - ‘Ōrite, Rerekē,’ 2019.
(Photo: Whānau Archive)



Fig 20: Hine E Hine, 2018
(Photo: Whānau Archive)

Exhibited at a Puanga exhibition at the Lysaght Watt Gallery in Te Hāwera, South Taranaki and featuring work from members of Toi o Taranaki Ki Te Tonga, this was the first time I had shown any work utilising the practice of paper cutting.

The work referenced Mounga Taranaki and explored the notion of sameness, despite difference between each iwi. The piece was hung from a lighting panel, with a spotlight directed down the face of the cut side to produce shadows on both sides of the work and the floor beneath it. During that exhibition the idea of a future instillation came to mind, utilising more like components to create something akin to a forest of floating banners that the audience had to navigate to appreciate the full effect of the work.

The second piece, named *‘Hine E Hine’* was exhibited in the Percy Thompson Gallery in Whakaahurangi (Stratford) in 2019’s *I Am Woman* exhibition, celebrating the 125th anniversary of women’s suffrage in Aotearoa(*Percy Thomson Gallery*, 2018). Made from an A2 sheet of low gsm paper sprayed with spray paint, it also featured cut triangles arranged to show the whakapapa of my mother’s descendants, with emphasis on the females in our whānau, each generation having more lines than the generation below.

The two streams of thought in terms of these previous works and the work for this report were in no way related at the time, but as I began to search out other work that activated spaces with floating works that created a journey of discovery for an audience, these cut pieces kept coming back to mind.

Inspiration - Whakahihiko

As I researched, several works caught my attention. *'Plastik'* was designed for the haircare company Redken in Portugal in 2013 by design agency FAHR 021.3 and featured many of the elements I was interested in – floating pieces, transparency, a journey through the work, activation of space.



Fig 21: Plastik, 2013. (Aihong, 2016)

Principal architects Hugo Reis and Filipa Frois Almeda said;

> *"plastic curtains cut the route of the observer and the end result will feel confused by the motion generated by these translucent plans. finally those who venture reaches its moment of retreat already inside and revises all self surrounded by distorted images"*
> *(Reis, 2013)*

Another source of inspiration was Emmanuelle Moureaux's *'Kaleidoscope,'* an office space with transparent divisions which was transformed by different colour applications of yellow, red, green, blue and black every month. His website said;

> *"the space is designed with a different color, changing hues like a kaleidoscope: a rediscovery of colors that ordinarily pass unnoticed in everyday life."*
> *(Moureaux, 2009)*



Fig 22: Kaleidoscope, 2009 (Moureaux, 2009)

The final inspirational work was a more recent piece, Convergent Art Studio's *'Face To Face'* (*Designboom*, 2020), comprising 117,539 face masks constructed into 80 curtains and installed within a larger space, to create a tunnel through which the audience walks.



Fig 23: Face To Face, 2020. (*Designboom*, 2020)

Exhibited in Suzhou, China, it referenced the current worldwide Covid-19 pandemic and engaged the audience as an education tool and memorial to the dead, recognising the transition of the facemask from a just piece of fabric to a symbol of resistance to the virus.

> *"in a way, the mask now represents the importance of each individual's effort to combat the pandemic crisis. on a practical level, the pressing need to control the pandemic in china has resulted in a surplus of face mask production. by utilizing the remaining stockpiles, it was made possible to promote a public health message, as well as to create a monument to those affected." (Designboom, 2020)*

In reference to my personal journey, the individual elements of my work had to create barriers to free progression through the space, but also had to provide enough transparency to entice the audience through the instillation with the anticipation of further discovery of the video and audio components deeper into the building.

Inspiration also came from the 1998 waiata *'Moko'* by Moana Maniapoto, which won the International Song writing Competition in 2003 over 11,000 other entries. The waiata's power was recognised in this review;

> *"It is a remarkable piece, not just in its low and powerful delivery by Moana… but for its timely message which contrasts European and other styles of tattoo with the Maori moko which is imbued with something much more deeply meaningful and culturally significant than a butterfly on your shoulder."*
> *(Reid, 2012)*

I sought permission from Moana to use the waiata in my exhibition and was grateful that she agreed (B. Bigham, pers comm, 25 September 2020). She has also written about moko herself (Maniaopoto, 2018).

Tātai - Planning

While I had utilised plastic and Perspex in past works, I had never worked with fabric and I considered using both materials and experimented with them at different stages, but I did not like the results and returned to paper, the material I have most recently been utilising in my practice and one that I feel is most Papatūānuku-friendly. However, the paper needed some transparency to overcome the perception of being a hard physical barrier. It needed to appear something more like a curtain.

Because of the enclosed environment within Paraukau, with little natural lighting and charcoal-coloured carpet, the interior could be quite dark. My plan included installing lighting to not only light the space, but to focus the viewer's attention on specific elements of the work.

I had used lights and spotlighting in past work, so understood the potential impact. Also inspired by the interior box-light kowhaiwhai panelling I had seen within the wharenui Tūhuru at Arahura Marae in Hokitika (*Arahura Marae Unveil New Meeting House*, 2014), I wanted to use multi-coloured LEDs which cycled through the colour spectrum to enhance the viewing experience.

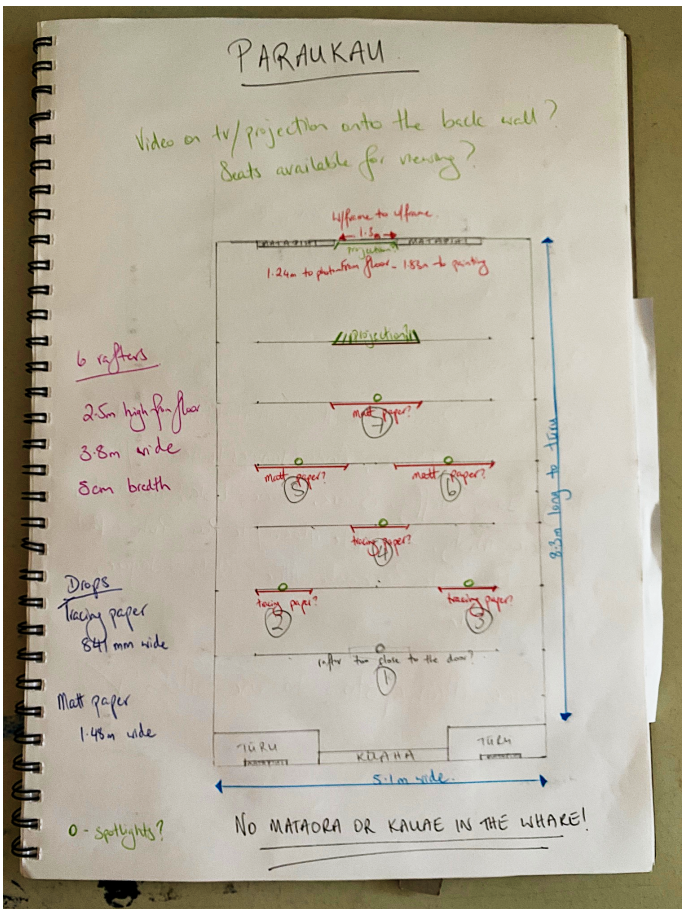


Fig 24: Initial exhibition plan, 2020. (Photo: Whānau Archive)

While the components were intended to float in space, I also wanted a reference to the work being grounded, to have its foundations in its connection to the Parāoa experience. To achieve that, I envisaged having kohatu from Kāupokonui beach as anchor points for the components, referencing the influence of that experience on my kauae journey, but also having a practical purpose of preventing them from spinning or swaying from air movement.

I also had to consider ease of movement through the whare, ensuring ample space was available, so while I originally planned to have nine drops to represent all the Parāoa I had to reduce the number to seven to provide the space I needed.

Originally, I also thought about inserting myself into the instillation as the final and culminating element. However, on further reflection, I decided instead to utilise recordings of my kauae being done as well as kōrero I recorded of my mother Hinewaito relating her memories and whakaaro about kauae.

The next consideration was to have the work projected onto the back wall of Paraukau, onto another component or have some other medium of presentation. For logistical ease and clarity of presentation, I decided on using a television instead, with the video and audio playing on loop.

Hanga Toi – Art Making

After experimentation with different paper types, embellishments such as raranga, inscribing attempts and various cut patterns, I decided to focus just on the singular, triangular cut for the components.

I used seven drops of 84cm wide by 180cm high translucent tracing paper of 110 gsm to create each component, the paper being robust enough to cope with the cutting, handling and hanging, while providing enough opacity to not fully block light.

Making the work all took place at Waiokura Marae, in the wharemoe Te Kauae. I based myself there during the week before exhibition to ensure I had the necessary space to be able to prepare all the components of the work, check measurements, spacing and placement next door in Paraukau, and to create and safely store the work until it was ready for instillation.



Fig 25: Workstation in Te Kauae, Waiokura, 2020 (Photo: Te Aroha Hohaia)

The stencil I used for the patterning was the same one created for *'Ōrite, Rerekē'* and also used for *'Hine E Hine.'* White pencil was used to draw the triangles for cutting, to negate the potential for lead pencil marks and smudges to remain visible on the paper and remove the need for rubbing out, which can exacerbate the smudging issues and also rip the paper.

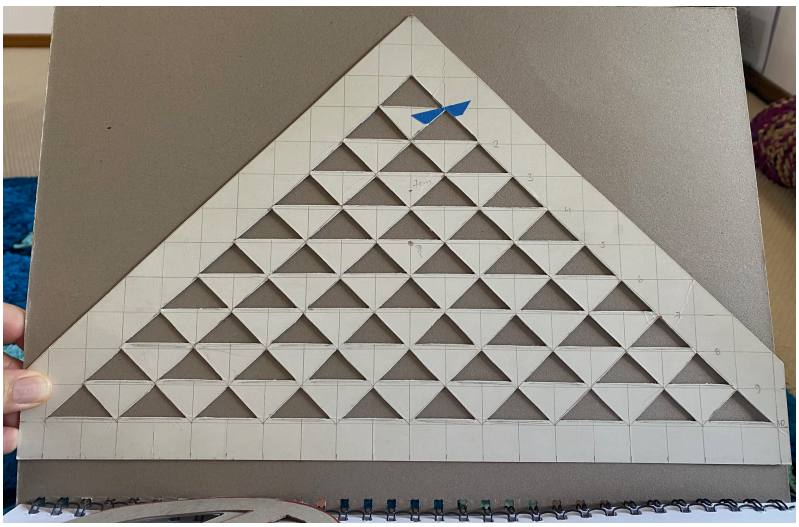


Fig 26: Stencil used for this and other projects, 2020. (Photo: Whānau Archive)

The digital version of my kauae, based on photos, was created by graphic designer Te Kere Davey, which I had enlarged and printed onto poster-quality paper. These images were then hand cut with scissors and covered with a clear adhesive book covering before cropping and positioning onto the drops between the top and bottom cut shapes.



Fig 27: Digitised image of my kauae ready to be trimmed, 2020. (Photo: Whānau Archive)

Each drop featured three fully cut triangle clusters, from the top representing my kuia Ngārere, then Apihaka and finally my mother Hinewaito. Under those was a digital representation of my kauae followed underneath with further randomised triangular cuts of different amounts and consistency, each panel creating a more cohesive and clearer pathway to me receiving kauae.



Fig 28: Two drops showing various sections, 2020 (Photo: Whānau Archive)

Each drop was then secured top and bottom with four 30mm pine half rounds that had been painted white. Double-sided tape and screws secured the wood, which measured 120cms across to create small overhangs on either side of the drop.

My son Te Rei collected a number of kohatu from Kaūpokonui, to reference the Parāoa, and my niece Lara wove kete kupenga around some of them from harakeke harvested at Waiokura, with two longer ties coming from each kete for attachment to each drop.



Fig 29: Kete kupenga around kohatu, 2020. (Photo: Whānau Archive)

The audio-visual component was created using a selection of video clips and photographs taken while I was getting my kauae and also from a conversation I had with Hinewaito about her moko kauae memories and considerations. They were turned into a single clip using iMovie and included the waiata *'Moko.'*





Figs 30-31: Screenshots of audio-visual recording used as a key element in my exhibition; title shot and Hinewaito, 2020. (Photo: Whānau Archive)

Whakaraupapa - Instillation

This timeline was dependant first on the instillation of the spotlights. I contracted this work to a Taranaki-based professional company after earlier consultation with Sam Whareaitu, one of their Māori staff members who understood the concept, was familiar with the venue and who supported my artistic vision. I went with his lighting suggestions and while he wasn't part of the instillation team, I greatly appreciate his influence in the final presentation.

Experimentation also on the hanging of the components proved my original floating idea was difficult to achieve, the drops becoming too mobile. I decided instead to securely hang the drops off nails in the rafters in Paraukau,

while still retaining free space underneath each drop where the kohatu were intended to go. However, during the process it became obvious that the kohatu made the floorspace look too cluttered.

The overhangs of half-rounds at the bottom of the drops created adequate space to ensure the audience could move through the instillation without getting too close to the individual drops.

Black stickers with white writing were stuck to the floor at the bottom of each drop, each one sharing a belief I had to overcome during my journey to kauae.

They read;



My reo isn't good enough

My tāne won't like it

I'm not worthy enough

I haven't earned it yet

Someone will challenge me

My tuakana should get hers first

Only kuia have kauae

Fig 32: Components for construction, stickers for the floor and half rounds, 2020.
(Photo: Whānau Archive)

The lights, offset from the rafters, were focussed downwards on the back of each drop and set to move through different colours. One was also installed in the television stand, placed against the back wall in the centre of the whare.

The memory stick containing the video recording was inserted into the usb port on the tv and the video was set to loop. The kohatu kupenga were placed on the floor around the bottom of the television stand. Chairs were also brought from the wharekai for viewers to sit and watch the video (Bigham, 2019).

The instillation was complete.



Fig 33: Completed instillation of Te Kauae Ki Runga, Waiokura Marae, 2020
(Photo: Te Aroha Hohaia)

Whakaaturanga - Exhibition

Invitations were emailed to whānau and friends, funders of my study and also posted on my facebook page.

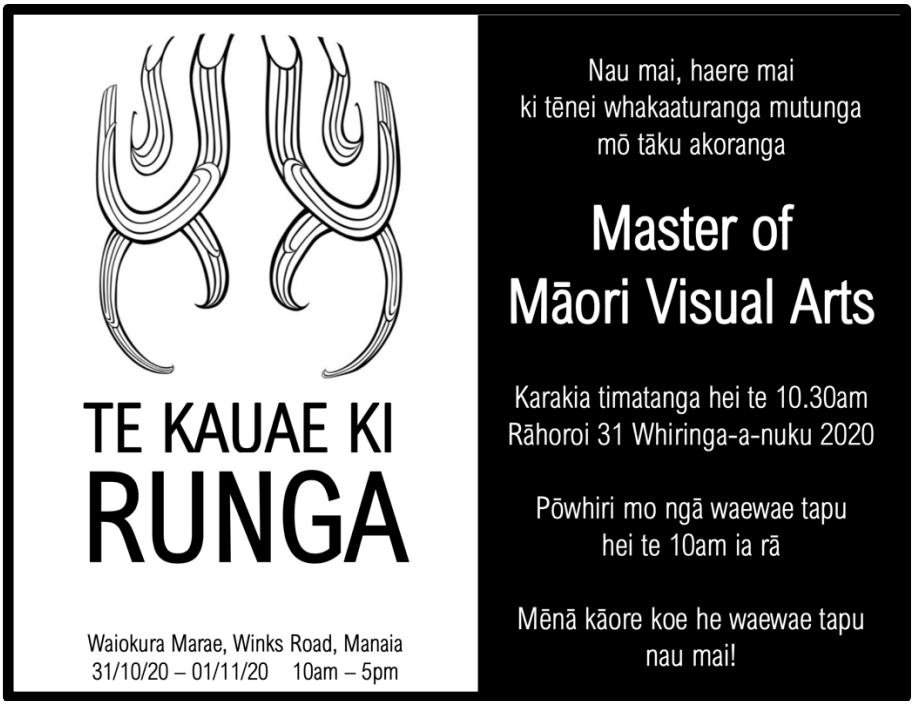


Fig 34: Exhibition invitation, 2020

The exhibition was opened by karakia shared by a group of wāhine, all whānau members who had helped with the making of the work or the instillation and who were there to support the kaupapa.

Although the invitation said the exhibition was open from 10am to 5pm each day, it actually became available for viewing from about 8am to 10pm each day, the effect of the lighting being especially prominent during darkness. Some whānau who visited during the day returned at night to see the lighting effects.

Visitors included whānau members, other artists, hapū members, Ngāruahine and other iwi members, work colleagues, friends, kaimahi and tamariki from Te Kura o Ngā Ruahine Rangi and Te Kura Kaupapa Māori o Ngāti Ruanui and other 10 wāhine mau kauae.

Wāhine mau kauae ki Waiokura, Te Kauae Ki Runga, October 2020





Fig 35: L-R Ngapera Moeahu, Te Rawanake Coles, Ria Wihapi Waikerepuru, Kim Kahu (back), Raewyn Kawana, Mako Jones, myself, Theresa Patu, 2020.

Fig 36: Myself and Te Aorangi Dillon, 2020.
(Photos: Whānau Archive)





Fig 37: Te Aorangi Dillon, Te Rawanake Coles, Te Rau Oriwa Davis.

Fig 38: Kataraina Rongonui, myself, Ngahina Hohaia.
(Photos: Whānau Archive)

The whānau from Te Kura o Ngā Ruahine Rangi also supported the pōwhiri for my supervisor Kura Te Waru-Reweri and examiner Erana Kaa the morning they visited. Nōku te honore nui.



Fig 39: Kura Te Waru Reweri, myself and Erana Kaa, 2020. (Photo: Whānau Archive)

I estimate upwards of 120-130 people visited the exhibition over the time it was open over the weekend, with some coming back multiple times to enjoy the ambiance and company during the day and at night. Some visitors even arrived at the latest moment possible, sitting and watching the video while the rest of the instillation was literally being deconstructed around them.

Utilising the opportunity to make the most of the weekend and the facilities, I also organised a mahi toi wānanga for our Toi o Taranaki Ki Te Tonga artists' collective, which attracted many creatives from the wider community, as well as whānau members. As chairperson of the collective, it made sense to combine the two kaupapa, which are intrinsically linked as part of our efforts to revitalise and normalise the expression of mahi toi Māori in our rohe.

He Aha Ānō - What Next?

My original desired outcome for the exhibition was that it at least elevated the conversation about moko kauae here in Taranaki Ki Te Tonga.

Many wāhine who saw the work said it resonated so strongly with them it was as if I had read their minds. The barriers to progressing towards getting kauae on the stickers were particularly salient. Many asked where it would be installed next so that they could revisit the work and bring others with them, and there were also requests to exhibit it at another Ngāruahine marae and at Kātere, our whare on our whānau papakainga where Ngārere lived, in the rohe of Te Atiawa.

Initially I had hoped that Rangi would also be available for a wānanga with interested wāhine and their whānau one of the evenings, to coincide with the exhibition. Unfortunately, he had other commitments, but was unexpectedly able to visit for a few hours one morning, which coincided with visits from other Kipa whanaunga, creating a worthy photo opportunity of Ngārere's uri.



Fig 40: Kipa whanaunga ki Waiokura, from left Lara Ruakere, Mataaria Rei, myself, Bev Gibson and mokopuna, Tami Cave, Rangi and Pukauae Kipa, Hinewaito Bigham in front, 2020. (Photo: Whānau Archive)

While Rangi was there we organised a mokopapa to be held six weeks later, at Waiokura. This was an unexpected but exciting development. A pānui was created and shared via social media.



Fig 41: Pānui created for mokopapa, 2020 (Credit: Te Aorangi Dillon)

Within a week we had interest from more wāhine than the tōhunga tā had time to cater for and from two tāne who also wanted mataora. In total, three wāhine and two tāne were scheduled to receive moko kānohi, four with whakapapa to our hapū and one with a strong whanaungatanga to Waiokura and whakapapa to Te Atiawa.

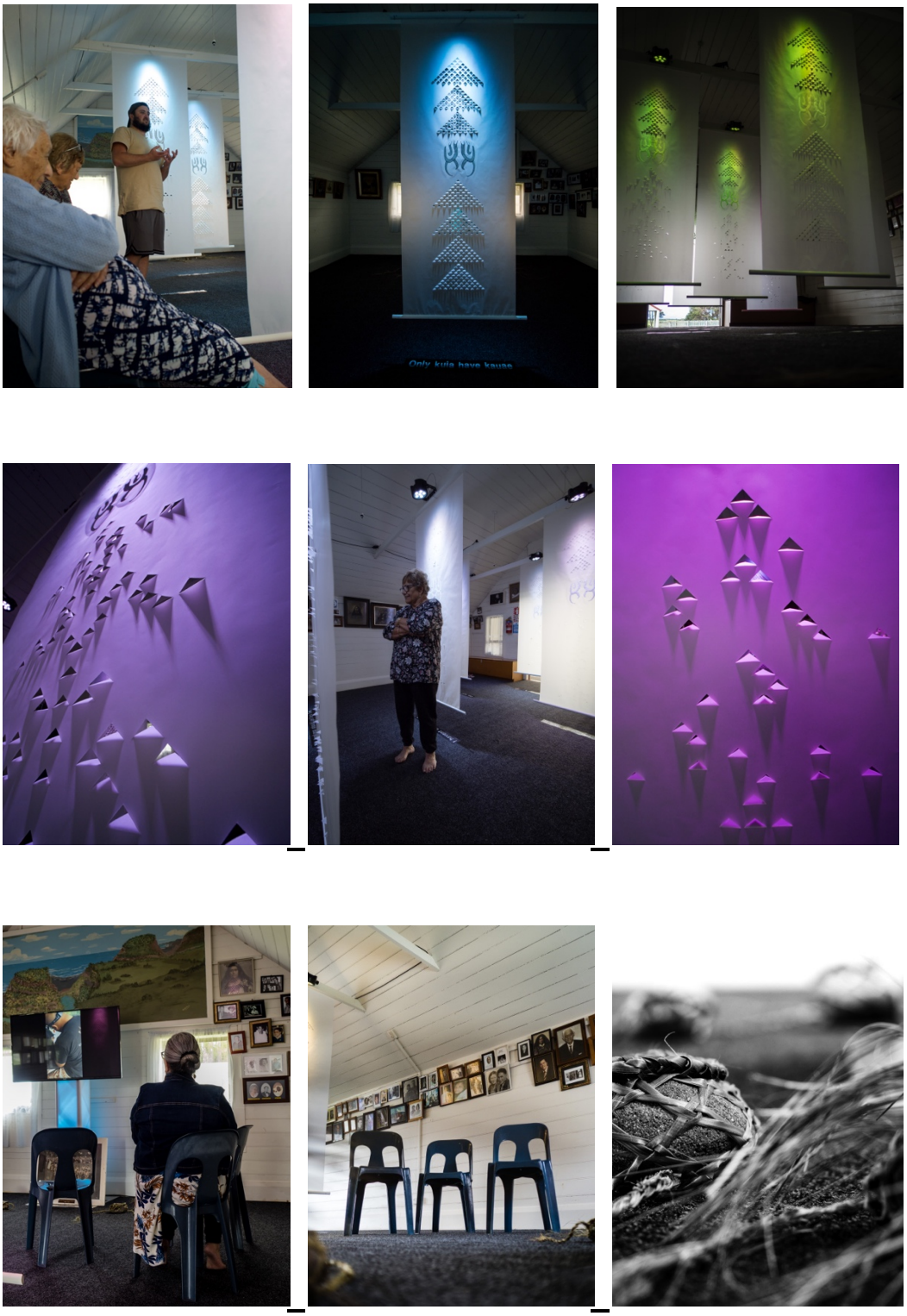
However, two days before the mokopapa one of our local kuia passed away, so our hui was postponed until further notice in deference to the tangihanga. This was an apt reminder that tangihanga are the ultimate expression of whakapapa and turangawaewae.

It is intended that the mokopapa will be arranged again early in 2021, also at Waiokura with Rangi as lead tōhunga tā. Whānau are looking forward to this with much anticipation and wāhine from other nearby marae are also talking about eventually holding their own mokopapa on their marae to receive their kauae. Indeed, months now after the exhibition, whānau and friends still want to kōrero with me about it and eagerly await the upcoming mokopapa and wānanga.

I am very humbled that my work has initiated these ongoing conversations and commitments to the kaupapa of moko kauae, an outcome far in excess of any of my original aspirations.

Moko tū, moko ohooho!

Te Kauae Ki Runga – Exhibition Images

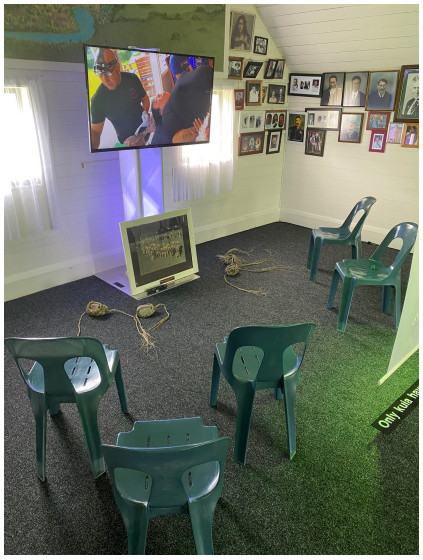


Figs 42-50: Collection of exhibition images, Te Kauae Ki Runga, 2020
(Photos: Te Aroha Hohaia)

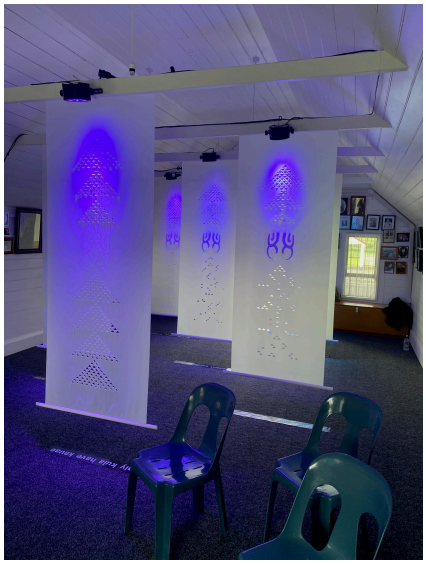
Exhibition Images continued











Figs 51-55: Collection of exhibition images, Te Kauae Ki Runga, 2020.
(Photos: Whānau Archive)

Kōrero Whakamutunga

This Masters programme both challenged and inspired my creative output and necessitated that I indigenise my rangahau methodology. It enabled me to create different memories at Waiokura and work with whānau and friends in new ways.

It reinforced that toi Māori is hugely important in my life, that it continues to nourish and strengthen me and is a critical to maintaining my mental wellbeing (Winder, 2019), (*All in for Arts Stories*, 2020).

I consider my role as a wāhine mau kauae to educate, to advocate, to challenge and to support. As an artist my role is to research, to interpret, to express ideas and points of view. For me, the two are not only interchangeable but are inseparable.

I remain forever grateful for the opportunities that have been afforded be these past two years, for the people I have met and the experiences I have been lucky enough to have.

The last words of this report I leave to Netana Whakaari, who 100 years ago said;

> *"You may lose your most valuable property through misfortune in various ways… you may be robbed of all your most-prized possessions; but of your moko you cannot be deprived except by death; it will be your ornament and your companion until your last day."*

Tūturu ō whiti whakamoua kia tīna, tīna!
Haumi e, hui e, taiki e!



Fig 56: Myself and husband Kevin, 2019 (Photo: Whānau Archive)

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