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Cross-Cultural Collaboration in New Zealand

A Chicano in Kiwi Land

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[This Exegesis is my exploration into the field of cross-cultural collaboration in New Zealand. Specifically, my collaboration with two Māori artists on an installation that expressed the findings of our mutual investigation into the question: How can the artist be a catalyst to overcome the historic inequity and oppression that is part of the foundation and fabric of world society? We created a performance and an installation that incorporated my current focus in video, audio, and Butoh dance and that blended and juxtaposed the language and culture of Chicanos and Māori. The performance was presented in Wellington at non-traditional space, the Saint James Marketplace on Manner Street and the installation was in a store on Dixon Street in February 2008.]

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INTRODUCTION

In my exegesis, I will explore the different social, political, cultural and artistic themes, influences and methods that direct my art practice. I will dissect my current work, outlining these transformations and how they impact my work here at Massey, as well as how they will continue to inspire my art practice in the future.

As an artist and a human being, a major influence was the reality of growing up along the La Frontera, the United States-Mexico Border, a very volatile place where cultures clashed and smashed against each other constantly. The Border is a place where the first and the third worlds collide on a daily basis. These daily explosions made the border area a very fluid place to live, as situations changed from moment to moment.

As a child, the politics of the Border did not mean much to me. To me, the Border was just a line, a delineation of one neighbourhood from another, separated by a small ineffectual chain-link fence, which in many places, had fallen down in disrepair. There was no thought of not going shopping or visiting friends on the other side of the Border. However, as I grew up things changed.

In 1965, I was eight years old. The US was going through a turbulent time; the assassination of US president John F. Kennedy, the Civil Rights Movement, Martin Luther King Jr. had already given his "I had a dream" speech and the US decided to invade Vietnam. On television, I saw my first major race riot, in Watts, a suburb of Los Angeles and the seeds of the Chicano Movement were planted with the Land Grant movement in New Mexico. I had already experienced institutionalized racism; in kindergarten at the age of five I was punished for speaking my native language of Spanish in school.

In 1975, I finished high school, the US landed another man on the moon, and Watergate happened, followed by the impeachment of Richard Nixon. The death of the Civil Rights Movement was marked by the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. and Robert Kennedy. By this time, I was becoming more political. I had been in several anti-war protests and had burned my draft card. The Chicano Movement was losing momentum, but in my home town of San Diego, Chicano Park and the Centro Cultural de la Raza were established.

Chicano Park was dedicated on April 22, 1970, after 9 years of community activism by the people of Barrio Logan. Through the Chicano Park Steering Committee, they were able to reclaim a

three-acre parcel of land that was taken away by the City of San Diego for the construction of the Coronado Bay Bridge. This park became the focal point for the Chicano Movement in Southern California. In the subsequent years, the community, led by Salvador Torres, an artist and resident of Barrio Logan, started a major park mural project that attracted Chicano artists from all over the Americas. This park and its murals are now known world-wide as a monument to the power of the community activism and a major example of contemporary Chicano Art. (Kathleen L. Robles and Richard Griswold del Castillo 1996)

As an outgrowth of the Chicano Park Steering Committee's negotiations with the City of San Diego, an old water tank in Balboa Park was donated as a place for a community centre. In 1970, San Diego's Centro Cultural de la Raza was founded. The Centro quickly became a gathering place for Chicano artists from around the country. Within a short period of time, the Centro cemented its position as one of the premiere places for the development and exhibition of contemporary Chicano and indigenous art. One of the most prominent groups to emerge was the Border Art Workshop/Taller de Arte Fronterizo, (BAW/TAF) (Border Art Workshop/Taller de Arte Fronterizo. 1988) in June of 1984.

In February of 1986, I attended the opening of Border Realities II (Border Art Workshop/Taller de Arte Fronterizo. 1988) at the Centro. That night I reconnected with an old family friend, David Avalos, who was the co-founder of the BAW/TAF. David invited me participate in the Centro Cultural De La Raza.

I began spending more time at the Centro, going to openings and talking to the artists. I documented many of the performances and art exhibitions at the Centro.

The BAW/TAF (Border Art Workshop/Taller de Arte Fronterizo. 1988) was at its apex. I interviewed several of the artists involved in the Workshop for a documentary I was working on. They were David Avalos, Guillermo Gomez-Peña, Sara-Jo Berman, Michael Schnorr and Victor Ochoa. Before this time, I had no real understanding of the art world, how the Border area functioned, or how the BAW/TAF was addressing it. I was just living it on a daily basis. I never really looked at the core dynamics of the area. Through these interviews and subsequent conversations, I was given an opportunity to be educated in what was termed "Border Consciousness," the mechanisms that shaped and governed this area of the southwestern United States. Chicanos also called it Aztlan.

Aztlan is the mythical place of origin of the Aztec peoples. In Chicano folklore, Aztlan is often appropriated as the name for that portion of Mexico that was taken over by the United States after the Mexican-American War of 1846, on the belief that this greater area represents the point of parting of the Aztec migrations. (Araujo 2003)

During these discussions, I learned how the BAW/TAF was using art to “reconceptualize social relations through the application of extraordinary art practices,” to quote David Avalos (Centro Cultural de la Raza (San Diego Calif.), Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego. et al. 1993). They had a strong commitment to art-as-activism. They reconized the transformative power of art. Their goal was to facilitate dialogue between the United States and Mexico. They believed that through dialogue the fear that had festered for years between the two cultures could be alleviated and that methods and models of coexistence could be developed. They were in search of creating a utopia along the US-Mexican Border (Pena 1989).

This education influences my work. Most of my works deal with the concept of borders, whether they are physical, economic, or cultural borders between countries and people or whether they are mental, spiritual or sub-conscious borders within our own minds. My work has been about the borders that govern the way we engage the world around us.

If you look at the human race, as individuals, we are all islands floating in a sea of air. We all have our own biological border that separates us from the rest of the world. Forever separated from each other, we are constantly looking for ways to connect with the world around us. In doing so, we are constantly negotiating these borders between us.

I, as a border artist, am writing this paper. In doing so, I am crossing a border-the border from the everyday world of political activist community-based art into the world of academic art writing. This academic world is construed as being elitist, formal and disconnected from the everyday reality around us, using a formula based on thought processes, concepts, and intellectual discourse. While the political activist community-based art is based on facts and realities of every day life. By straddling this border, I hope to create dialogue and communication between these two cultures. By using everyday terminology to describe elements and perspectives in this paper, I am bridging the gap between the world of the academic and the world of the general reader, making my processes and concepts accessible to a greater audience.

From the point of view of the concept of borders. How does one negotiate these territories between one another? How do we find a balance between two opposing and separate entities? How do we find a common bond? How do we create a space for dialogue? These are some of the questions that I ask when I make art. One of the ways I address these questions is through the process of collaboration.

COLLABORATION

My interest in the collaborative process started with my exposures to Chicano Art back in the eighties. Groups, like the Border Art Workshop, were a great influence. The fact that a group of people from different cultural and economic backgrounds could assemble and create art, spoke volumes about their commitment to art process. The art that they created reflected the ideas and concerns of the participants involved, as well as addressing issues that were of common interest to the group.

Also of interest to me was the fact that the art objects were not identified by the name of one person, but by the group as a whole. While the individual pieces themselves could be credited to certain members of the group, the sum of the work was more important than the individual pieces themselves.

This notion of the author as the creator of an object was and is a factor in my work. Much has been written about authorship, ownership and its place in the art world, but my interest in this issue isn't concerned with ownership, economics or the state of the gallery and museum systems in the art world but exists more on a human level. It's about group and social dynamics: how to create a group consciousness that manifests itself in an art piece that blends the ideals and philosophy that each individual brings to the table into a unique and multi-layered experience that comes at the viewer from many different angles and perspectives

How does collaborative authorship fit into the scheme of today's contemporary art world? How does collaboration work? What are some of the methodologies of collaboration being used today?

For example, *Divided by Resistance*, a mid-1990s work of Bruce Gilchrist, Gilchrist explored the concepts of space, audience, spectator, and participant (Walwin 1997). Gilchrist was the author, who conceptualized the piece. He had a vision of what the piece should be and how he wanted it to be executed; he had total control of the process, but in order to bring his piece to fruition, he had to enlist the services of artists, technicians, and even the audience.

The decision to collaborate with Gilchrist on one of his projects is not one taken lightly. It is usually necessary for the collaborating artists to feel mutually sympathetic towards the artist objectives of the work. But in the context of Gilchrist's activities they must also be prepared to work with electronic equipment with which they may be unfamiliar, and to reveal aspects of their thought processes and subconscious for the public inspection. (Walwin 1997)

In this instance, the collaborators were not part of the conceptualization process, but the collaboration was more of a work-for-hire experience or contributor of resources and skills. Gilchrist guided the collaborators, like a director, in order to create the art that he had envisioned. The artists involved were given parameters to full fill a need Gilchrist required in order to complete his concept.

This method of collaboration is similar to one I was involved in, back in 2003, for a piece called *The Devil's Highway* (Photo 1, 2). *The Devil's Highway* was an interdisciplinary site-specific, multi-media, gallery performance/installation that was made up of several components. The *Devil's Highway* installation /performance was installed in the Main Gallery at the California Institute for the Arts in the United States. The concept was to create a work that explored the issue of people, who were desperate to find work, dying along the United States-Mexico border.

The first component was a filmed on-location Butoh performance by six dancers, who were trained in the Butoh style of dance for six weeks. They were taken out to the desert region where thousands of people had died crossing into the United States. Once there, they created several different Butoh performances in different locations. These performances were filmed by a small crew of three, in order to be used later in the installation.

In the studio, the film was edited into three non-linear, non-narrative films. During the gallery performance, the films were projected onto three sets of screens that were offset from each other, so that dancers could move between them.

The second component was a modern dance commissioned for the installation/performance. During the performance, the modern dancers interacted with the projected images of the Butoh performances out in the desert. Accompanying the projections and dancers was a soundscape, produced by Los Angeles-based sound artist Bob Bellvue.

In this project, I was the author and creator of the concept, enlisting the talents and skills of other artists to help bring the work to fruition. They all had their own take on the concept and brought many great ideals to the project, but I was the one guiding them and making the final decisions for them on this journey. This method is similar to the method employed by Gilchrist in his work.

Another method of collaboration can be seen in the site-specific collaboration, *Disorders: A Twenty-Four Hour Event*, curated by Nosepaint and produced by Beaconsfield for the St. Thomas' Hospital, in London in 1996 (Walwin 1997).

Here, a group of artists were invited to create a body of work around the theme of disorders, relating to the problem of sleep disorders. The exhibition took place in a London hospital for twenty-four hours. The artists were taken to the hospital for an inspection of the location. Afterwards, each artist made a decision as to what they would create and where their art work would be placed. Some artists took in consideration the site-specificity of the hospital, while others focused on the concept of disorders. Some created new works, while others reconfigured previous work to fit the theme of show. This process of collaboration was to create a show that allowed the artist to have a personality of their own under the umbrella of a centralized theme. Each performance or installation would have resonance within the hospital context and which would implicitly or explicitly respond to the notion of sleep. (Walwin 1997).

In 2003, I participated in a similar site-specific collaboration, *Without Alarm III* (Collective 2003), curated by the Arroyo Arts Collective, at the Los Angeles Police Museum, where, again, artists were given a theme, incarceration, and a place to create work, the old jail cells in the police station. In this instance, even though the art installations were in cells right next to each other, they did not need to relate to one another, just to the theme. The installation I collaborated on was titled *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (Photo 3, 4). It built upon the dual uses of a cell – a prison cell and a monk's cell – to explore the sacred and the pragmatic aspects of a public policy that raised questions about the meaning and relationship between punishment/revenge and forgiveness/redemption. In the cell next to *For Whom the Bell Tolls* was a work titled, *Suspended*, which used the cocoon as a metaphor, signifying the incredible ability for transformation in extreme situations. Both pieces were very different, but they complemented each other as both related to the concept of incarceration.

Disorders and *Without Alarm* were collaborations in the loosest form. There was no direct interaction between the artists involved in the show. The collaboration was on the presentation of the show, the re-contextualizing of common spaces and places of every day life. They were basically site-specific group shows. As a way to bring together groups of artists under a common theme and have them interact on a personal level, I think this form works well. Having been involved in many of these shows, I have seen the potential for learning a tremendous amount from participation in them.

However, as a form of collaboration, this method does not meet my artistic needs. What I look for in collaboration is the contact between artists. A direct exchange of ideals and concepts while developing a project.

Another form of collaboration is what Charles Green in his book *The Third Hand*, (Green 2001) has termed long-term or lifetime commitment collaborations. These are collaborations that are usually based on families or couples who continue to work together for many years. It has also been termed as an artist double act or artist couples (Kueingdorf 2007).

Distinctions need to be made between what constitutes an artist double act and artist couples, who may at times collaborate but still retain their singular artistic autonomy. Regardless of their personal relationships (brothers, sisters, lovers, friends), the double-act artists have chosen - and here the emphasis is on 'have chosen' - to sublimate the pursuit of a singular subjectivity in a shared endeavour. (Kueingdorf 2007)

A few examples of artist couples or families working together are Christo and Jeanne-Claude, who have been creating temporary works together since the late sixties; they have been so successful that they have been able to turn the name Christo into a corporate logo. There is Gilbert and George, who produced three-dimensional sculptural objects, while they played with the idea of themselves being both subject and art (Green 2001), or Viacheslav Mizin and Alexander Shaburov of Blue Noses, who use performance, photography and video to create works that reflected their interest in anarchic parody as a form of anti-art (Kueingdorf 2007). Then, there's Marina Abramovic and Ulay (F.Uwe Layseipen), who worked in durational performance art and photography; their work has been called an "anthropology of human relations." (1985) Finally, Jennifer Allora and Guillermo Calzadilla, whose Land Marking project in Puerto Rico, used video, sculpture, photography, and sound performance (Kueingdorf 2007). These coupling were very successful long term collaborations.

But as our work began to occupy a greater part of our time, the collaboration began to influence our entire way of living.

Today I cannot imagine being with someone with whom I couldn't discuss a project over breakfast. It's such a luxury to have a life companion who has a natural interest in what you are saying; it would be terrible to sit there with your morning coffee and your brain exploding with some new ideas and then hearing only the reply, Oh, really? Interesting! (Kueingdorf 2007)

About seventy-five percent of my work has been collaborations with Miki Seifert. Our collaborations have come about organically. We both bring different skill sets to our projects; Miki is a

researcher, writer, Butoh dancer, and performance artist with a political science background; I am a multi-media, filmmaker, and performance artist, with a construction background. We are from different cultures; Miki is of German decent born in the United States; I'm of Mexican decent born in the United States —also known as a Chicano. We each bring a varied mix of experiences to the table. Together, we create a vision of the world that is unique and very accessible to our audiences.

The style of collaboration that we have developed did not occur overnight. It was and is still an on-going process. We have had many discussions about art, the world and our place in it. We have tackled issues like gender: Miki is a devout feminist—and, well, I started out as a chauvinistic pig. I maybe up to a monkey now, I'm not sure. Anyway, we worked our way through the gender roles of men and women in American society. From there, we looked at the politics of class and social status. We are both from working class families, but Miki was educated at a very well recognised liberal arts college on the east coast of the United States. We moved into economics, capitalism, neo-liberalism and globalisation. Along the way, we looked at race relations, multi-culturalism and immigration issues.

The process of collaboration is based on the exchange of ideas and concepts which lead the artists to a common goal and an output that reflects that exchange. For me, that goal has been the collaborative process itself. That's not to say that the end product is not as important as the process, but that the art object is the physical manifestation of that process. What is unique about the collaborative process is that the art object envisioned at the beginning of the process is not always what's created at the end of the project. If the artists are completely open and immersed in the collaborative process, they will not have any idea until the end what the final outcome will be.

It serves little purpose to establish which element belongs to which artist in the art works realised, and to do so mitigates against the intentions of the double-act artists themselves. However, this description speaks to psychological motives and it is the radical nature of the contemporary practitioners that they work outside the stereotypes of individuality in their creative visions. In a certain sense, too, they challenge the conventions of art history that would seek to categorise and attribute specific parts to each artist. This does not mean that their work is not immediately recognisable or does not possess certain striking and particular characteristics. Neither, of course, does it mean that the artists involved are not without their own strong, individual personalities. (Kueingdorf 2007)

It has been my experience participating on several projects that the collaborative process for a great many artists is difficult. For these artists, the issue of authorship— the fear of credit being given to another for work done as part of the collaboration process—is of prime concern.

As far as authorship in my past collaborations is concerned, I do identify with the work. When working with a group, I make sure that all artists involved are acknowledged. I feel that recognition of all the participants in a work is very important. In my past collaborations, the groups of artists were not looking to create a separate persona that represented the groups, such as turning a name into a corporate logo, like, Christo. We were more interested in the art process itself.

Over the years Miki and I have invited other artists to collaborate with us and have been invited to participate in collaborations with other artists. This inclusion of other artists in our collaborations changes our processes dramatically. Miki and I have developed a verbal shorthand over the years. We have used this shorthand to discuss and explore ideas and concepts. When we work with other artists, we have to be aware of our communication practises. We have to be able to explain our concepts and ideas in a more detailed manner, so the other artists will be able to understand our points. We also have to more patient and work harder at understanding the language, nuances and knowledge that the other artists bring to the table.

In the past, this process has not been difficult because most our collaborating artists were long-time friends or people in our art community. We shared the common bond of living in the southwestern region of the United States. We were all aware of the issues and conditions in our area. When we talked, there was shared knowledge, which enabled the building of bridges for deeper communication, which helped facilitate the exchange of ideas and concepts in a more productive and constructive way.

Two examples of the outcomes of these collaborations are the experimental video *Ramona: Birth of a mis-ce-ge-NATION* (Photo 5), with David Avalos and Deborah Small, and the installation *No Olvidado: the Performance* (Photo 6) with Ruben Mendoza. Both of these collaborations were with long-time friends with whom we had developed an in-depth communication about art and art practices.

For me, the myth of the lone artist genius working in his studio on some mountain somewhere is not appealing. I am most comfortable working in a group. There is no ego that drives me to have control of every aspect of a project I am working on.

I welcome input on a project from other sources. I work better when different ideas and concepts come from outside my realm. It stimulates my thinking processes and sends me in another direction, usually a place where I had not thought of going. This way my work is constantly evolving, growing and changing, as I go through life.

Collaboration makes artists leave their comfort zone, diving into areas of the unknown, not knowing what awaits them. Coming here to New Zealand was the biggest dive of all.

CROSS-CULTURAL COLLABORATION

A collaboration is a process of working jointly with others, of channelling a dialogue. It is not about the erasure of difference, rather, it is about the articulation of differences and working with difference itself. (Goldstein 1991)

What is cross-cultural collaboration in the contemporary art world? Like the collaboration methodology discussed in the previous chapter, it has numerous meanings. Here are some examples of the different methodologies that are used today.

There are multi-cultural art groups around the world that use cross-cultural collaboration as the core of their organizations philosophy.

APPEX (Asia Pacific Performance Exchange Residency Program)(Appex 1994)(Appex 1994)(Appex 1994)(Appex 1994)(Appex 1994), formed at UCLA in 1993, has been bringing together artists from the Pacific regions. Their method is to “reinforce the value of each person's unique local practice while it also introduces artists to other like-minded individuals and promotes mutual understanding. Through APPEX, artists and writers participate in an intercultural and international dialogue.” (Appex 1994) Appex’s focus has been to use this method of cross-cultural collaboration as the core structure for creation of art works, primarily in the performance and theatrical arts. This blending and merging of the different cultural styles is the cornerstone of Appex’s work.

As mentioned in the introduction, the Border Arts Workshop/Taller de Arte Fronterizo (BAW/TAF) has been using cross-cultural collaboration to explore the intricacy of living and working in the US-Mexico Border region. Since the late eighties, (BAW/TAF) was a bi-national group of artists, activists, journalists, and scholars who set out to tear down the cultural, social and economic borders between the United States and Mexico in order to create a new model of co-existence that both societies could benefit from. Their work encompassed numerous styles and approaches; including performance art Border actions, films, articles, and thematic exhibitions. Over several years, the BAW/TAF created a body of work that referenced the cultures and influences of those involved in the name of creating dialogue between the two opposing countries and cultures. Their work exposed to the art world the everyday conditions along the US-Mexico border.

Another example of a cross-cultural collaboration is the Red Project. In 2004, the RED Project was created as an online collaboration between students at the Art Institute of Boston, Massachusetts and at Zhaoqing University in Guangdong Province, China. This project was devised by Carmin Karasic and Tom R. Chambers. According to Chambers,

The *assignment* was to visually explore the colour red using digital tools; the results illustrate how these two very different cultures interpret the same thing. (Tom R. Chambers Visiting Lecturer, University et al. 2004)

This project, through the use of modern technology, was a virtual cross-culture collaboration in cyber space. The internet was used as the conduit for communication, for the exchange of ideas and concepts. As a simple method for the experimentation of a virtual cross-cultural collaboration, this project worked. However, I see problems with this paradigm as a platform for of cross-cultural collaboration. Despite advances in modern electronic technology, there is still the problem of translation of ideas and concepts into a form that is transparent to all parties involved. Until this problem of transparency can be resolved, this form of cross-cultural collaboration can not be as fruitful a method of collaboration as it could be.

A good example of cross-cultural collaboration is the *Fire & Water* (Reading 2007) exhibition, held at The Spirit Wrestler Gallery in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. Lewis Gardiner, a Māori pounamu artist from Aotearoa, and Preston Singletary, a Tlingit glass blower, merged images, myths and legends from both cultures to create a unique piece of cross-cultural artwork of pounamu and glass.

Their collaboration worked because the emphasis was on interaction between the two artists and their cultures. Both artists had known about each other's work for a few years before they were asked to collaborate on this exhibition.

For this show, Lewis travelled to Seattle, Washington to work with Preston for several weeks. Lewis then returned to New Zealand to work on his portion of the project; a few weeks later, Lewis returned to Seattle to complete the project.

This interaction between the two artists was made possible by the similarities and connections between the two cultures. Both worlds are linked by the Pacific Ring of Fire, hence, the title of the show. Both cultures have a very strong tie to the land and water. Both artists were able to find

similarities between the mythologies of the two cultures. This formed a strong unifying base for the two to build upon for this collaboration.

Where do I fit into this cross-cultural landscape? I am a Chicano. I have known three worlds: the Mexican world, the US/American world and the world of the Chicano. I lived most of my life on La Frontera. La Frontera is a place between two worlds, a culture that continually responds and changes to complexities that occur, as the two dominant cultures that inhabit the region collide.

CROSS-CULTURAL COLLABORATION IN NEW ZEALAND

The importance of “the whole idea of whakatupuranga – that you grow when someone else grows. One frond falls and another one appears. The whole idea that if you’ve got knowledge, it’s of no value unless you pass it on. Because then you get richer yourself, because you leave a bit of room to absorb something that somebody else may want to hand on to you... (Greenwood 2002)

Based on my history with various models and methodologies of cross-collaboration, I came here to New Zealand to push the bounds and limits of the art form. The steps for cross-cultural collaboration are the same but the distances and complexities between the Chicano and Māori cultures are broad.

I came to Wellington with a couple of names, but no real connection to the Māori community. I came here on a fixed timeline of fifty-two weeks to complete my project. I had researched the Māori culture and had written a paper about the Māori at the California institute for the Arts (Calarts), but a paper is different from actually living and breathing the Māori culture here in Aotearoa.

Cross-cultural collaboration in New Zealand has been a complicated multi-step process that I experienced for the first time in my art making. The processes that I had used in the past had to be modified to work here in New Zealand.

To find collaborators, I needed to find a community of Māori artists with whom I wanted to create bonds with a few members of this community. To do this, I had to understand the concept of Tikanga Māori, the value system that governs the way most Māori interact with the world. When possible, I asked questions of the Māori I met and read books in order to familiarize myself with the values of Tikanga. I took kapa haka practise at Massey, where I learned a substantial amount of information about Māori values. The next step was to find artists who were interested in my exploration and wanted to participate on the project. I then had discussions with potential collaborators to find out if there was enough common interest, sense of passion and commitment for the project.

Before I started on this project, I looked at the different methodologies of cross-cultural collaborations. What method of collaboration did I want to use as a model for this project? Would it be like Gilchrist’s version, where I would be the author, develop the concept of work that would be my

vision? Then the Māori artists would be for hire; I would just using them as resource rather than as collaborators? Using this method of collaboration would not push me nor the other artists involved into any new areas of growth or development.

Another possibility was a thematic site-specific group show, as in *Disorders*. I would set a concept for the show and invite artists to participate. They would create pieces of art that related to the theme and hopefully, they would all relate to each others work. In this instance, the potential for cross-pollenisation would be very limited. It is still a singular mode of working, reaching deep into the collaborative process.

In the end, I decided that, in order for the artists involved to get the most from their time together, the best method for collaboration would be a model built on the concept of group consensus (Plc. 2007): a flexible model based on the common style of decision making process that is similar to the community-based decision making processes of both Māori and Chicano culture.

Only using this consensus model of collaboration, which was used by Lewis Gardiner and Preston Singletary for *Fire and Water* (Reading 2007), would truly allow the artists involved to fully reap in the benefits of our collaboration.

Gardiner and Singletary only had a few weeks together at different times during the year of their collaboration. Our group would meet weekly for approximately eight months to create the exhibition. This extended amount of time would give the group the luxury of building deeper connections between the artists which, in turn, would lead to a complex and multi-layered art piece.

For the consensus model to work, a safe environment needs to be constructed for the development of trust to occur, which, leads to a free flow of ideas and concepts within the group. What needs to be created is a group space where all issues can be raised and addressed in a supportive manner.

When embarking on this project, I was asked about the role of New Zealand's policy of bi-culturalism in our collaboration.

Bi-culturalism is a state-mandated policy, developed as a way to honour the statutes in the Treaty of Waitangi, as a way to govern the country in a fair and equitable way that took in the consideration the two signatories to the Treaty.

A simplified version of bi-culturalism is that it is a partnership between the two signatories to the Treaty, the indigenous people of Aotearoa, the Māori, and the Crown of England. The way it works is that each party's opinion and processes are validated and honoured by each group, in other words, "the sharing of responsibility and authority for decisions with the appropriate people" (Bazley 1994). On the surface, the issue of bi-culturalism seems straight forward, but underneath, it is a controversial subject.

For biculturalism to be more than a pathetic fallacy requires empathetic negotiation across the boundaries of cultural reality. To presuppose a priority of vision defined solely by Western perception merely perpetuates the cultural capital of the elite as the sole criterion of cultural legitimacy....After a hundred and fifty years we are finally renegotiating that (Waitangi) treaty but the mere factor that re-negotiation is necessary at all speaks volumes about the assumptions made in the name of superior civilisations and the primacy of one (only) 'mother tongue'. (Jahnke 1995)

Does bi-culturalism have impact on our group's collaboration? As background information to understand the way decisions are made on a governmental level here in New Zealand, I say yes, but as having a major influence on the internal working of the group dynamics, I would have to say no.

I had great fortune in my search for collaborators. On several occasions, I had encountered people who were interested in my project and who introduced me to different Māori artists and organizations in the community. People like Jenny Knight, the Communications Officer for Toi Māori Aotearoa. She invited me to the press reception for the Māori Market place and introduced me to Darcy Nicholas and several other Māori artists who were instrumental in opening up my acceptance to the Māori community.

From these contacts and others, I was able to forge relationships with two Māori artists, Eugene Hansen and Anahera Gildea, who, along with Miki Seifert, became my primary collaborators on this project.

On June 2, 2007, we had our meeting, and at that moment the artist group With Lime, was born. We scheduled weekly meetings on Saturday mornings that lasted four to five hours. The purpose of these meetings was to find ways to create bonds between the members of the group, to sort through differences and find similarities between us. We would use these similarities to develop a unified cohesive unit that could address the questions that we would look at in this project. At these

meeting, we talked about our life histories, sharing stories, and compared events that help shape our lives and our artistic processes.

One of the methods we used to bond us as a group was food. The sharing of food is very important to both Chicano and Māori cultures. There is never a group or family meeting without food being involved. Both Chicano and Māori cultures have strong ties to the earth through food. For Chicanos/Mexicans; it's Maiz (corn). For Māori; it's kumara. By sharing food at every meeting we reconnected to each other as Whenua (family) and to the earth and the environment around us, acknowledging the fact that we all come from the same place.

Once we felt that we had reached a point in our development that was conducive to working on art project, we revisited the original question that I had related to the group when I had approached them about participating in collaboration. The question was: using a cross-cultural comparison of contemporary Chicano and Māori art as a point of departure, how can the artist be a catalyst to overcome the historic inequity and oppression that is part of the foundation and fabric of world society, so that all may share in the basic rights and opportunities of all human beings?

This question defines the work in many ways. It is addressing a common question looked at by both cultures, Chicano and Māori, who share the common history of being colonised. The question is considered from the point of view of these two groups that have been marginalised in our respective societies. By looking at this question through our eyes, we are using a different frame of reference than that of the coloniser. In doing so, our collective response to the question will be different than that of the mainstream contemporary art world of the coloniser.

The construction of the question gave the artists involved latitude in deciding which way to answer the question. Each member of the group had various answers to this question. One response to the question from the group was to create dialogue by fostering communication between opposing groups, in this case, in New Zealand, it is the Māori and Pakeha.

After a few discussions, we as a group came to the conclusion that one of the methods that we would use to create dialogue was through the mirroring and juxtaposing another culture that is experiencing similar but unique situations onto the cultural landscape of New Zealand. That other culture would be the Chicano culture of the United States. By juxtaposing and blending these two separate, but similar experiences together, it would compel the audience to think in an anomalous

way, to contemplate situations in their lives from an alternate point of view. Hopefully this shift of paradigm would lead to new avenues for discussion and dialogue between the people of New Zealand.

Living in New Zealand, people are constantly asking about life in the United States. I have been forced to look back and compare the problems and lexicons of life in the United States with the problems and conditions here in New Zealand. This comparison and re-investigation into my past has challenged the way I perceive the issues that impact my life back in the United States.

Through this mirroring of another culture, I am hoping that the same thing which transpired in me here in New Zealand, will happen to the audiences of the performance and viewers of the installation in New Zealand.

NO NAIANEI

Having developed the concept, the question became how to present it as an art piece? We did not want to present it in a structured didactic narrative style. In my past experiences with this method and viewing the results of other artists who have presented information in a similar manner, I have found that viewers from both sides of the art spectrum, those with general knowledge about art and the educated art patron, tend to shut-down and not engage with the discussion when information is presented in this manner.

We also did not want to present it in a highly sophisticated conceptual style that was only transparent to the educated art elite in New Zealand. There is nothing wrong with targeting this community, but in doing so, we would lose most of our audience, the general public, who are the biggest group of people that we want to engage. We wanted this to be a well-balanced, accessible conceptual piece that does not repel, but engages viewers from the many different communities in the New Zealand context.

We were to create a site-specific, non-linear, multi-layered installation/performance piece, combining the elements of Butoh, VJing, multimedia projection, sculptural objects and sound. The project would incorporate the Māori/Pākehā, interwoven with the Chicano/US experience.

The project, entitled *Nō Naianei: From This Moment*, is made up of three components. The first part is a Butoh Hikoi (procession), starting at the top of Cuba Street and ending at the James Smith Marketplace, site of the performance. The Hikoi will be made up of several cultures, including Chicano, Māori and Pakeha. Estimates are that ten to fifteen people will be participating.

The point of the Hikoi is to reconnect contemporary Wellington to the Wellington of the past. By performing a procession on Cuba Street, we are acknowledging the past histories of Māori and Pakeha in the area, as we head toward the future. A loose translation of a Māori Whakataukī saying is that the past is always in front of you. In other words, you can never see the future without seeing through the past. This reconnection with the past will help set the context for the performance and the connection with the installation.

The specific area of Wellington we are referencing is called Te Aro papa kainga (village). The area extends north to Wakefield Street, west to the Terrace, south to Buckle Street, east to Taranaki

Street, and northeast to Te Aro pa. There used to be a small stream called Waimapihi that ran through this section of town. "The name of the stream is of Ngäi Tara/Ngäti Mamoe origin, meaning the stream (or bathing place) of Mapihi, a chieftainess of those iwi" (Adkin 1959). The Māori used to catch eels in the stream, as well as having several mārakai (gardens) in the area when the Europeans arrived in the Wellington area.

The second part of *No Naianei* will be a Butoh performance piece that will incorporate elements of Mexican Shamanism and the Māori and Mexican cultural experience. It will be performed by four people: Miki Seifert, Anahera Gildea, Andrea Peterson and myself. Accompanying and interacting with the performers, will be Eugene Hansen, who will be creating a live VJing and sound performance. These two elements, Butoh dance and VJing, will be interwoven to create a unique performance style that has never been performed in New Zealand. The performance will touch upon issues of colonisation, alienation, borders, assimilation, the Other (Contributors 2008) and myths of Māori and Chicano cultures. By using these two cultural viewpoints in the piece, the Pakeha and American sensibilities will be implicit in the presentation.

One of the unique aspects of the performance component is the creation of a new form of performance art, Māori Butoh by Anahera Gildea, who, along with several other Māori artists, is being trained by Miki Seifert and me in the performance technique of Butoh.

Butoh, attempts to express the ineffable through images and movement. Drawing upon memory, both personal and collective, Butoh allows the emergence of form from within rather than imposing rules and structures from the outside. Butoh is both dance and theatre, yet it finds common ground with the shaman and the seer. It is a force of liberation, yet it is born out of extreme discipline. While Butoh was born in Japan, it is infinitely mutable. The body, consciousness, and spirit of each performer transmogrify Butoh into its own personal and cultural expression.

Anahera Gildea is one of the first Māori to learn this method of Butoh. There are other performers who use a Butoh in New Zealand, such as Samoan artist Lemisio Ponifasio, nationally acclaimed ballet dancer and choreographer, founder of the MAU Dance theatre in Auckland. Lemisio uses the philosophical approach of Butoh.

The philosophical approach of Butoh has had a profound influence on me. It has allowed me to let go of established dance concepts. Butoh encompasses many, many different

performers all with different styles, techniques and staging. It means different things to different people. For me it is about the process of discovering the original state of being human and the expansion of that human concept. (Meredith 2002)

There is also Hugh Majors (Parker 2003) a contemporary Maori choreographer. Major combines Butoh with many different styles and methods of dance. He has incorporated masks, mime, and scripted drama in his productions to create a hybrid that is Butoh-influenced and is more a derivative of Butoh rather than the art form itself.

No Naiane is our first exploration into combining a structured Butoh performance with live VJing. VJing is a relatively new art form, combining the aspects of experimental filmmaking and the club DJ. VJing is the outgrowth of the latest advents in computer technology. The relatively inexpensive, ultra high-speed computers that allow the instant manipulation of extremely large video files are now opening the doors for the development of this new art form. We are taking VJing out of the realm of the party and dance bar environment and giving it content that will blend with the Butoh Performance. Considering the improvisational nature of Butoh, the art of living in the moment, the ability of VJing to allow the free flow of ideas and concepts during a live performance is a natural companion to Butoh. During the performance, there will be certain touchstones but the way that Eugene reaches these points will be arbitrary and up to how Eugene feels at that moment.

The third part of this project, the installation, will be both a counterbalance to the performance and a stand-alone work, the installation will be in a store front in the Te Aro Pa area. Since the performance is an emotionally darker experience, we decided that the installation would be brighter, having a Pop influence. The colours in the installation will reflect the historical as well as the contemporary colour schemes that are present in both Chicano and Māori cultures. These colour schemes fit right into the contemporary sensibilities of the Pop culture aesthetic.

We will re-contextualize the space to reflect the cultural background of the area, which includes the rich Māori and Pakeha histories. Survey maps of Te Aro Pa and surrounding areas will be incorporated as part of the floor plan and walls of the space, similar to what was used during the performance. We are doing this to anchor the installation to the area we are referencing.

Since there used to be a small stream that ran down what is present day Cuba Street, I am producing some sugar eels, similar to the Mexican sugar skulls that I created for my Dia De Los Muertos (Day of the Dead) show at Roar Gallery earlier this year. Along this area were also mārakai (several community gardens), so we are incorporating food elements into the installation. We are looking at corn and kumara as well as flax and wheat which will be painted in Pop colours and arranged in painted kete bags. In both the Chicano and Māori cultures, food played a very important role in the spiritual and physical well being of both cultures.

Juxtaposed with Te Aro Pa references, will be several video screens that will be playing images of the Mexican vendors at San Diego-Tijuana Border crossing, showing the inter-connectedness of the two economies and the influence of the Pop culture on Mexican commercial sector.

There will be a synthesized sound track, composed in part, from audio clips from historical and contemporary movies about Māori and Chicanos. These same movies are being used in the VJing during the performance.

To truly communicate with the cultural other is an extremely painful and scary experience. It is like getting lost in a forest of misconceptions or walking on mined territory. (Pena 1989)

PERFORMANCE TEST

During the year, our group has been doing a series of tests to develop the different parts of the performance, to see what effects these elements have upon an audience. These tests were also used to give the performers experience working in front of a New Zealand audience.

Miki, Anahera and I participated in the first test. It was our first attempt at working together as a group. It was an on-site experimental performance in the tradition of Teatro Campesino (Cohen-Cruz 1998) and the BAW/TAF from a Butoh perspective, I was a Mexican shaman (Photo 7), Miki was a colonist, and Anahera was a Māori (Photo 8, 9). For the performance, I had constructed a soundtrack of indigenous music from the United States and New Zealand, which included shamanistic chanting, hakas, traditional and contemporary songs. I, as the Mexican shaman character, was supposed to be waiting outside the museum building for the audience to arrive. My intention was to lead them on a journey up into this historic building that represented the colonisation of New Zealand to a vision of the past and the present situation in New Zealand through my Chicano eyes. The concept and creation of this performance was conceived a week before the performance.

Serendipitous moments can be quite strong and wonderful experiences. The beginning section of this test was one of them. As I was about to exit the building with Arawhetu, who was documenting the event, I noticed that most of the invited audience had already arrived and were patiently waiting for the performance to begin. I turned to Arawhetu and told her to start filming, that the performance was starting now and to tell me when it was two o'clock, the intended time to go into the building. Taking control of the situation from the audience that had assembled before the performance was supposed to start, I emerged from the building in Butoh mode, took up a position sitting on the bench in front of the western entrance to the museum and did not move for fifteen minutes.

At two o'clock, I slowly stood up and led the audience on a journey of my vision. I took them up the glass elevator to the third floor landing. At this point, they were participants in the performance, part of my journey. When they disembarked from the elevator, they saw Miki and Anahera performing amongst several tall white plinths, as the soundscape played in the background. Miki and Anahera took the group through the emotional history of the conquest and colonisation of New Zealand. At this point of the performance, the audience were still participants, observing my

vision as it took place in front of them. Their performance lasted fifteen minutes, at which point I broke the traditional convention of suspending reality by causally walking over and turning off the sound, abruptly signalling the end of the performance.

The comments after the test were, for the most part, positive. There were only a few negative ones. One comment was that the soundscape was too complicated. It had too many references in it that took their attention away from the performance. Another was that the performers did not seem comfortable in the space and with each other. Considering that, with just a week of rehearsal, it was the first time we had performed together in front of an audience, it was easy to understand this comment.

One of the concerns was the confusion felt by some of the audience members. The confusion was based on their perceived role in the performance, starting as participant, going on the journey with me, then changing into observer of me and the performers in the space. There was a disconnection between the audience and I when we exited the elevator that was unintentional; this led to confusion as to how the audience was to position themselves in relation to me and the other performers. They were still participants, but they were supposed to be participant/observers, watching my vision from my point of view.

During my critique and subsequent informal conversations about the performance with several audience members, the fifteen minute time period before the intended start of the performance was one of the most powerful moments for many in attendance. When asked what they experienced at that moment of the performance, they all replied with similar responses. This is a composite of what they saw:

They saw an indigenous contemporary shaman, sitting in front of a building that represented the European colonisation of New Zealand. He was facing west toward his homeland, reclaiming the land and environment around them for him and the other indigenous groups that had been colonised in the past.

It was not a conscious decision on my part to project this image to the audience at that moment, but it gave me a piece of information to think about including in the final performance.

The performance proved to ourselves that we could perform together as a group. There were moments during the performance when we all felt connected as a single unit.

The second test was performed by Miki Seifert and me. There is no physical documentation of this test, only my memory of it. We had a twenty minute time frame to complete the performance. Our concept was to create a space where we would engage the audience members in a performance that would take them on an emotional and psychological journey through the world of "The Other". Giving the audience an opportunity to experience what it feels like to be "The Other", a person being denigrated by a group for a reason unknown by the person being othered.

Othering is a way of defining and securing one's own positive identity through the stigmatisation of an "Other." Whatever the markers of social differentiation that shape the meaning of "us" and "them," whether they are racial, geographic, ethnic, economic or ideological, there is always the danger that they will become the basis for a self-affirmation that depends upon the denigration of the other group. (Contributors 2008)

In this test, we wanted to take the audience from observer to participant to observer and back again to participant in the performance.

Miki and I had created a pair of characters, who were cultural anthropologist from another place, completely foreign to any western perspective or ideology. We were here to examine and categorise specimens from the area. We would not make any noises or sounds. We would only communicate through looks.

We choose a plain white room. In the far end of the room, we set up a small altar. The base of the altar was a small red handkerchief. On the altar was a small paua shell that was filled with burning sage. The sage filled and transformed the space from a white cube gallery into a space from some other place, in some other time. On each side of the shell was a candle. These candles were two of the three sources of light in the space. Lying in front of the altar was a series of tags with a small string attached to each of them. In the middle of the room was a spot light that illuminated a large circle on the floor.

The hallway outside the space was set up like the waiting room in a doctor's office, just a few chairs lined against the wall, but not enough for everyone; some people would need to stand and wait.

The entrance door was locked. On the door was a sign,” Please be seated. We will attend to you in a couple of minutes.”

At the pre-determined time, Miki and I exited the space and surveyed the group. We each arbitrarily picked one person, gently blindfolded them and led them into the room. We placed them under the light. Keeping them blindfolded, we started the process of examination, which included looking, smelling, listening and touching different parts of their bodies. Each examination took five minutes. After the examination, we went over to the altar and decided which tag was appropriate for our subject and tied it onto their ring finger. We then moved the subjects to an arbitrary place against one of the four walls of the space, removed their blindfold and walked away. We continued this process for the twenty minute time frame.

At the twenty minute mark, we had eight people lined up against the walls. Each had gone through the process of examination and all, but the last two, had the opportunity to watch the same process take place with a different subject, while still being a participant.

When the alarm went off, announcing the end of the twenty minute time allotment, Miki and I walked to the altar, extinguished the sage and blew out the candles. We walked to the door, turned off the only other light source and walked out the room, closing door behind us.

Outside in the waiting area, the five or six people, who had not been picked, were patiently waiting for their turn. We ignored them, as we walked past and exited the building. We returned five minutes later, as the first group of people began leaving the space, realizing that we were not going to return.

The discussion afterwards was very interesting. The first impression of the piece was not from an art critique point of view, but from an emotional and psychological perspective. Everyone who was picked wanted to know why they were picked. They also wanted to know what was so special about their specific tag. In order to continue the performance aspect of this test going into the discussion period I explained to the participants that since this was from a non-western perspective, completely foreign to them, that they would not be able to understand the process or the reasons behind it, so there was no point in trying to explain it to them.

They all mentioned that they had a feeling of uneasiness, suspicion, or confusion, not knowing why they were being examined. They talked about having the sense of loss of control, even though they could have left anytime they wanted to or could have stopped the examination at any point when they felt uncomfortable.

What is interesting is that the people who were not picked went through a different psychological trauma. During my discussions with this group after the performance, several members of this group, at the beginning of the performance, had feeling of excitement because they wanted to be picked. That emotion changed into fear of the unknown, as they watched people being blindfolded and led, into a dark room. As the performance continued and they did not get picked, they went through a period of confusion. Near the end of the performance the emotion of confusion turned into depression, wondering what was wrong with them. They felt that there was a judgement being put upon them by us, that there was something wrong with them, that they were not good enough or were damaged goods. As a psychological defence near the end, several members turned their feeling of rejection into a feeling of hatred and defiance, while others took to making fun of the project. These strategies, helped to raise their sense of self-esteem, to rationalize the reason for not being picked, to regain control over the situation.

Historicity these are all feelings that are felt when someone is placed in the position of being “the Other”(Contributors 2008). There may not be the same blatant examinations, categorising and separation from the flock, but that’s what happens when a dominate culture comes into contact with another group. These are the same feelings the indigenous people had when the Europeans came to New Zealand and the Americas and began the process of colonisation (Small and Jaffee 1991).

This time we were successful in taking the audience from observer to participant to observer and back to participant again in the performance. The test was successful. We began to look how to integrate this “Othering”(Contributors 2008) into our performance and installation.

The third and final test was performed with the entire group. We invited a select group of friends and peers to a performance of *No Naianei* at Thistle Hall.

The performance, an hour long without intermission, did include most of the elements that we wanted to incorporate in the piece: Butoh, VJing, soundscape, audience participation, and graphic design elements (Photo 10).

The Butoh performers were Miki Seifert, Anahera Gildea, Andrea Peterson, and I. VJing was by Eugene Hansen. Live drumming was by Jaime Campbell.

The performance area was laid out in a grid with vinyl tape, using as a point of reference the surveyor's maps of Te Aro Pa at the turn of the 19th century. The map showed land that was owned by the Māori and what was sold to the English. Each plot had its own number or description. This grid took up the entire floor of Thistle Hall. Bisecting the grid was what should have been Courtnay Place. This street was labelled the United States-Mexico Border. Through this grid, we were combining the physicality of New Zealand and the United States. The line was illuminated by a narrow band of spotlights, creating a border that could be interacted with or ignored. The key areas in the grid were also illuminated by pools of light.

On either side of the room were video projections that were de-constructed in order to break away from the usual viewing patterns associated with video. The third projection was on a fabric hanging at the entrance. At the entrance was a large hanging piece of fabric that was projected on from above (Photo 11).

The performance itself was a combination of choreographed and improvised Butoh dance, drawn from historic and contemporary narratives, Māori and Chicano spirituality, told in a non-linear fashion, mirroring and contextualising the VJing of Eugene Hansen. Some of the elements were the Māori creation myth, US-Mexico Border crossings, culture clashes, colonisation and death (Photo 12).

During the performance, as we the performers traveled through the different situations and events of the non-linear story, we shape-shifted into different characters and cultures. As an example, I started as a part of a rock, then I became a Mexican Shaman, then a coloniser, an undocumented immigrant, a rescuer, a separated lover, a dead person and finally, the conscious mirror of the audience.

The feedback we received at the performance was varied and good. It gave us a lot to think about. Initial comments were very positive, except for one. One person was expecting to be overwhelmed, similar to what he felt when he saw *Maui* at the St. James Theatre earlier that month. However the intention of a mainstream narrative-based theatrical presentation, like *Maui* and our test is very different. We choose to walk that fine edge between a theatrical and experimental performance

art. It was precisely this quality that many others liked, feeling that we never went too far one way or the other. Our intention was to engage and create dialogue with the audience. We did not want a passive audience. We did not want to hand feed the audience and tell them what to think. We wanted the audience to have to work for their experience, to find the jewels hidden beneath the surface of the work. It is these little jewels that stick in the mind of the audience, long after the performance is over.

Later comments, since people had had time to reflect about the piece, were more productive for us. Some said that they liked the way we transformed the space into the conceptual cube by having the projections surround everyone. Others liked that we had enough happening that they never became bored; if they lost interest in one element, they could engage with another. A couple viewers mentioned that they thought the videos worked well, but they would have liked the performers to interact more with the video.

For the collaborators, the performance was successful, except for one element. We were unsuccessful in getting the audience to participate in the performance. We wanted the audience to mill around the grid, as we performed. Upon looking at the video documentation, we realised that once a few of the audience members sat against the walls; the rest, like sheep, followed suit. We are looking at ways to remedy this problem.

Another self-critique from the group was that we were not yet at the level of performance we wanted to be, that we need more work, especially on the Butoh. Our movement was too pedestrian. We needed to get that other—worldly movement into our bodies. The soundtrack needed work too; it was too flat to engage the audience for an hour. After we make these changes, then we will be closer to our goals for the performance.

The feedback from these tests were invaluable to the group and my own process. There were moments that were pointed out by observers that were more successful than the group had anticipated. Some of the serendipitous moments in the test turned out to be some of the strongest moments. There were moments that did not work as well as we had thought. The critiques gave the group a sense that we were on the right track in our explorations.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion to my exegesis was the premiere of the performance and installation in February 2008. The installation was on display the last two weeks of February, in a retail space inside the James Smith Marketplace on Cuba Street (Photo 13, 14), the Hikoi took place on the evening of the 21st along Cuba Street (Photo 15, 16), with the performance right afterwards, at the James Smith Marketplace (Photo 17, 18).

This year-long exploration into the processes of a cross-cultural collaboration in New Zealand has pushed me into territories that have expanded my artistic horizons. Understanding the complexities of working with another indigenous group, the Māori, halfway around the world from my Iwi, has made me more aware of my own art history and culture. This process has made me look deeper to gain a better understanding of who I am and where my art work and I fit in the contemporary art world.

It is one thing to come to a city for a few weeks, scratch the surface, and create an art work from that scratch. Most scratches never really get beneath the surface to the meat of things. It takes time to understand another culture or person, but it is very well worth the effort. I hope my fellow artists in this project experienced similar insights into their art practises. It is all about sharing—sharing of cultures, identities, ideas, concepts and life. This experience has strengthened my resolve to continue exploring the field of cross-cultural collaboration as a way to create dialogue and communication between cultures and countries, to help change the status quo of the contemporary world because there are no others in this world, but ourselves. As the Mayan saying goes:

Tu est mi otro yo

You are my other self

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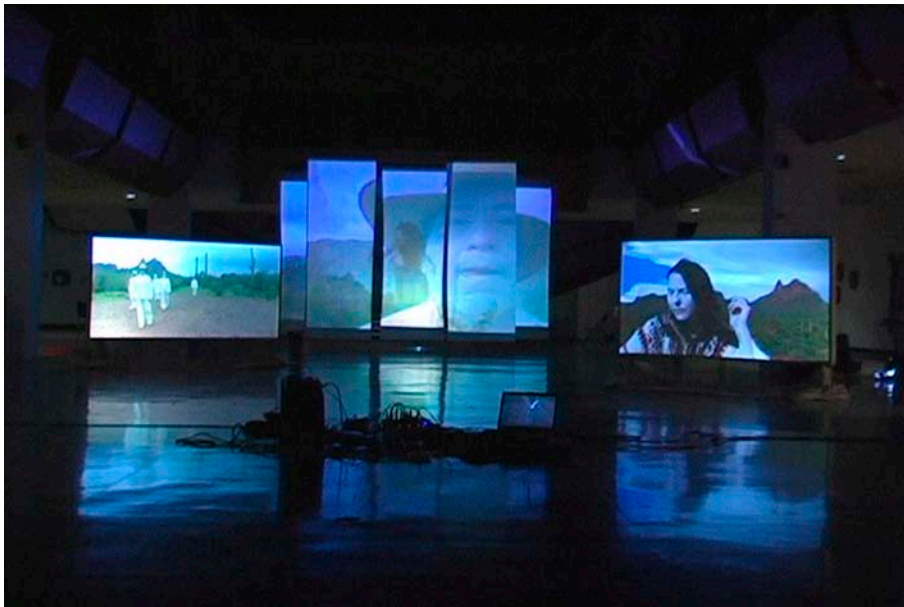


Photo 1



Photo 2



Photo 3



Photo 4



Photo 5



Photo 6



Photo 7



Photo 8



Photo 9



Photo 10



Photo 11



Photo 12



Photo 13



Photo 14



Photo 15



Photo 16



Photo 17

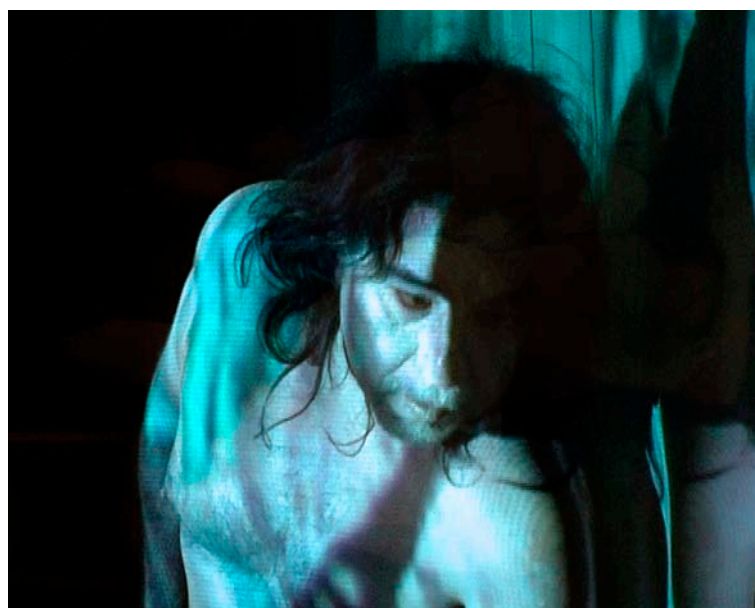


Photo 18