Ko ahau te ngira, Ko te ngira ko ahau:
Reconstructing Cultural Identity

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Abstract

This exhibition report will document the development of my mahi with the aim of reconstructing my identity through research into my multi-cultural identity of Māori, Sāmoan and Pākeha heritage. It will examine identity in relation to the ongoing deconstruction and re-construction of my own identity. It seeks to acknowledge key artistic influences and experiences that have shaped my identity, to provide context to the accompanying exhibition. My past works and research over the last ten years have always maintained whakapapa as a Kaupapa Matua. Learning my whakapapa has been my emancipated response to a lifetime of experienced and historical trauma and colonisation. This research has also established the foundation that has enabled my cultural disconnection to be rebuilt. Through this process, my understanding and interpretation of who I am has been extended and developed.

Ko wai ahau

Ngātokimatawhaorua te waka
Hineāmaru te tupuna
Hikurangi te maunga
Taumārere te awa
Te Rapunga me Te Rangimarie ngā marae
Ngāti Hine te hapū, Ngāti Hine te iwi, Ko Ngāpuhi nui tonu ahau.

Mihimihi

Kia rātou kua wehe ki te po…
This exhibition is dedicated to my mum the late Joyce Downs (nee Cooper) and my nana the late Era Hirini Kawiti Paraone - the first artists in my life. Also to my dad the late Galu John Lolo and my nana the late Ripeka Brunt – the first cooks in my life. And to my papa the late Ngāpua Ape Cooper – for the gifts you have left within me.

In loving memory of the late Henry and Blanche Kemp (nee Matthews) - my introduction to sewing and walking in both worlds, also my other parents; Aunty Pillie – the seamstress of all seamstresses, the best keke pua'a maker and our other mum; and Maraea Takimoana – mentor and 'aunty', the awakening to my Ngāpuhitanga, introduction to raranga and re-introduction to rongoa.

To the late Te Kuiti Stewart – for introducing me to the world of Māori academia and unlocking the nerd in me.

Kia rātou e tu mai nei…
Very special thanks to my Maunga Kura Toi whānau, and tutors Lorraine King, Te Hemo Ata Henare and Kura Te Waru-Rewiri for being integral in my Toi journey from its beginning in 2011 to now. Thank you for everything you have taught me, for putting up with me and always setting me on the path I needed to be on, even when I did not know it. Thank you for opening the door for me to learn about my whakapapa, and empowering me to find who I am and where I stand.

To my Toi Oho ki Āpiti supervisors, Rongomaiaia Te Whaiti and Huia Jahnke, thank you for supporting me through a very difficult time and helping me see the light at the end of the tunnel. I thank you for your time and sharing through this process. He mihi aroha kia kōrua.

To all my whānau, this mahi is for you, for us and our future generations.
Ka nui te aroha kia koutou katoa, ngā mareikura, ngā whatukura, mo ake tonu ra.

Contents

Introduction

"Kua tawhiti kē to haerenga mai, kia kore e haere tonu.
He nui rawa o mahi, kia kore e mahi tonu"

"You have come too far not to go further.
You have done too much not to do more"
– Ta Himi Henare (Sir James Henare), Ngāti Hine elder and leader. (Henare S. J., 1988)

This whakatauāki is a constant reminder of the many people who have spoken these words, the struggles they endured and the many reasons to keep going. I first heard this whakatauāki from my tutor at the time Lorraine King. I have seen it written and heard it spoken aloud many times since then. It speaks to the continued determination needed to affect changes in spaces where we as Māori have been historically marginalised. Personally, it speaks to the long journey I have taken to reach this point, to find who I am – to find my cultural identity.

I have long believed my cultural identity was formed and defined by my whakapapa. Although true, it was through research and a process of continual personal critique I came to the realisation my whakapapa only formed part of it - the foundation. If so, what other elements make up my identity and how is it shaped?

From my Māori and Sāmoan worldview, whakapapa *is* identity. Whakapapa is not constructed, but identity can be. At this point of my life, my focus reflects my collective cultural identity. As part of this work of identity reconstruction the research informs my own practice and identifies artists whose creative practice and work aligns with my own practice through materials, kaupapa and whakapapa.

As the artist research developed, it became clear the works they created were an expression of their cultural identity. For some of the artists their works were a response to a lack/loss of cultural identity as Māori and Pacifica and the expression of this loss within their urban contexts. These are cultural identities that in many cases have been disrespected, oppressed, and marginalised under a colonised system. Further research and findings led to a critical analysis of my own whakapapa and forced me to unlock doors to my past I had long closed and turned my back on.

This report will outline the research and findings along with their relationship to the accompanying exhibition titled *"Ko ahau te ngira, Ko te ngira ko ahau".* The research will examine and relate my cultural identity through the eyes of academics, artists, and personal experience with a focus on: Historical influences, urban influences and artistic influences. In acknowledging my cultural identity

I have taken a Kaupapa Māori (Pihama, 2010) approach to the compilation of this report, the research it contains, the treatment and dissemination of said research, and the creation of work for the accompanying exhibition. Under Te Tiriti ō Waitangi this approach will be inclusive of my Pacifica and Pākeha cultural identities and therefore has been chosen as the best approach to safely encompass them all.

In keeping with a Kaupapa Māori approach I am initiating the following processes:

Oral traditions are recognised and utilised by indigenous peoples as a customary source of knowledge transferal. In line with this, I have utilised recorded documentaries and interviews with people recalling their direct experiences in movements and events discussed in the research for this report. Where this approach has been used as the primary source of information, I have placed the reference at the beginning of that section alongside the title. In text citations and quotes are directly credited to the speaker.

The beginning of each chapter begins with an italicised section about my memories growing up. In placing them there I am acknowledging my own experiences as valid and as a priority. These memories are also inserted at various other places throughout the report. This places my memories directly within the research it relates to.

All Māori terminology within the text will not be italicised and quotes including Māori text will be transferred and maintained in their original formats. This includes text and quotes from my mother where Māori words will be written and used in the way she would.

No glossary or footnotes have been included in this report. To aid in reader comprehension, where Sāmoan words have been used a simple translation will follow in brackets. A reference list is provided as required for this report whereby the studious reader and researcher can extend further on this research.

So as not to give credence to a system of hierarchy that has marginalised Māori and Pacifica for too long, titles bestowed by government eg: Sir, Dame have not been used in this report.

The definition and use of the term ‘whitestream’ in this report has been applied to a wider context than that identified by Ann Milne (Milne, 2013). Originally pertaining to mainstream New Zealand schools, the author has applied this term to refer to mainstream – whitestream - ways of thinking and doing within society. Using the term whitestream in this context acknowledges and highlights the

enormity and extent of the issues Māori and Pacifica peoples in New Zealand have and continue to face.

Kaupapa and artist research enabled and supported the shift in focus of this report from 'identity construction' to 'reconstructing my identity'. For the purposes of this report identity construction is defined as identities that have been influenced and shaped by external factors to the individual, namely whitestream society. Reconstruction of identity in this report is defined as the process taken to decolonise ones identity and the ensuing process to rebuild it in its rightful cultural context. No longer focusing on the negative aspect of socially enforced identity, this report shifts the focus to the reconstruction of identities across generations of Māori and Pacifica, including my own. This is achieved through a cross analysis of Māori and Pacifica response to a lack of cultural identity in urban contexts and the challenges presented therein. Māori and Pacifica have been active in reconstructing identity, this report will outline and examine key events and people who have been integral in this collective journey.

Chapter one sets the scene for the current exhibition. With the decade of my birth year as the starting point, it will provide the whakapapa and brief historical backdrop for the context of this exhibition and the influential people and experiences throughout my journey.

Chapter two is the Literature Review, made up of two parts. The purpose of this review is to locate my kaupapa and practice within the research of literature and artists. Part one summarises past and current discussion about identity with a focus on cultural identity in Māori. Part two analyses the works and practice of urban Māori and Pacifica visual artists Fatu Feu'u and Pacific Sisters and renowned customary Māori weaver Te Hemo Ata Henare.

Chapter three brings forward past bodies of work titled: *"Ka mua, Ka muri"* and *"Kimihia te mea ngaro"* and connects them to the current exhibition. This process will identify points at where my research and practice align.

Chapter four examines the current exhibition *"Ko ahau te ngira, Ko te ngira ko ahau"*. This chapter details the creative processes and works of my installation titled: *"White Spaces Op Shop"*. A catalogue of works is included providing images of each work and its use in the installation articulated.

Chapter One: Whakapapa

Introduction

As a country born, urban raised, multicultural woman I have inherited historical trauma and experienced trauma and colonisation since before I was in my mother's womb. I was born in the late summer of 1975 to my Samoan immigrant father and a beautiful Ngāti Hine maiden. Nana Peka, my father's mum, had a home in Old Bond St, Kingsland. A common address in those times for Sāmoan immigrants. My mother's parents had a home at the beginning of Sandringham Rd, at the Kingsland end. My parents met at the local dance hall . I was the youngest of five children, my mother had left my father by the time I was 18 months old. According to my mum, in those days custody automatically went to the father.

At that time, many of our grandparents, followed by our parents, encouraged their families to adopt the Pākeha ways and make a good life for their families. They believed this would be a good thing for our people to do.

Historical

The decade of my birth was a most tumultous times in modern New Zealand history. Urban Maori and Pacifica youth started to agitate for change against a dominant white system.

1975 was a poignant year for us as Māori. It was the year Whina Cooper led the Land March from Terenga Wairua all the way down the spine of Te Ika a Māui to Pōneke. It was also the year the Waitangi Tribunal was established. In November of 1975 the National Party led by the late Robert Muldoon defeated the Labour Party heralding in a nine year term of hardship for Māori. Interestingly, it was also the United Nations International Women's Year (1970s – key events, 2018; Bastion Point protestors evicted, 2021; The 1981 Springbok rugby tour, 2020).

In 1982 our first Kōhanga Reo opened and within 9 years soon spread to 630 across the country (Hamon & Rei, 1993). For Māori the 1984 Te Māori Exhibition opening in New York was an enormous mile stone. For the first time in history, on a worldwide stage, Māori art would be exhibited, and it would be exhibited by Māori. The exhibition tour finally reached home ground and opened in New Zealand in 1987 (Te Māori exhibition opens in New York, 2020). Ten years after its inception the 1985 Treaty of Waitangi Amendment Act enabled the Waitangi Tribunal to address all cases of stolen land dating back to the treaty signing in 1840 (Treaty of Waitangi Amendment Act 1985 (1985 No 148), 1985). Finally, in 1987 the Māori Language Act was brought in which at long last recognised Te Reo Māori as a national language (History of the Māori Language, 2020; Māori Language Act 1987, 1987).

The socio-historical context in New Zealand at the time (Bastion Point protestors evicted, 2021; McConnell, 2021; The 1981 Springbok rugby tour, 2020) gave rise to young urban Māori and Pacifica movements such as Ngā Tamatoa (Rogers, 2012) , The Polynesian Panthers (Ellmers, 2010) and in America, The Black Panther Party (Editors, 2021). Like Ngā Tamatoa and the Polynesian Panthers, the Black Panther Party had a strong urban following of members from minority communities.

And as all these movements found, they not only had to endure external whitestream judgements of racism and police harassment and brutality, they had to also navigate the internal judgements of their own people. This clearly highlighted the divide among young and older generations in urban minority groups at the time.

The threads that bind all three movements is that they were seen as a threat to national security by their governments, labeled as militants, terrorists, revolutionaries trying to take over the country. All three were the response from marginalised urban communities and societies whose cultural identities were suppressed under dominant whitestream governance. All three movements were born out of oppression and were the beginnings of reconstructing cultural identities within their urban contexts.

Personal Recollection

My memory of early years growing up in small-town Moerewa with my mother's parents were mostly ones of happiness. Being brought up with my grandparents and whānau was the only world I knew.

By age eight, I was taken away from my grandparents and disconnected from my whanau, whenua and whakapapa, the only world I knew. In 1983 my Samoan father moved our family to Auckland with the hope of a better life and opportunities for us.

Dad didn't really know his whakapapa, and if he did he didn't talk about his life or family back in Sāmoa. He was adamant he didn't want us to grow up under fa'a Sāmoa – the Sāmoan way. He turned his back on all his responsibilities when Nana brought him to New Zealand in his late teens. Nana was Dad's aunty although not even he was sure how. Nevertheless, we had Nana and she was the connection to our Sāmoan whakapapa. In late 1974 when mum was pregnant with me, her and Dad travelled to Sāmoa, it was his first trip back to the islands since he had arrived. Dad would not return there for another 30 years.

On my arrival in Auckland I was taken to my aunty and uncles in Avondale. Aunty was Ngāti Porou from Tolaga Bay in the East and Uncle was Ngāti Rehia from Te Tii in the North. They were our parents' best friends and we had known them and their whānau all our lives. This was my home for

the next little while. Aunty was flash and I always thought she was quite posh. Uncle was like the bad boy who won the princess's heart. We often had manuhiri staying with us, from all over the world and she knew how to manāki them. Aunty taught me the skill of hand sewing. I remember the first thing she taught us to make was a peg bag made out of some old fabric she had lying around. A very basic across the body, open satchel type bag, much like the reusable bags we have at supermarkets now just with a longer strap. She also taught us how to do different stitches – hemming a skirt or trousers, stitches for strength, temporary stitches etc. Aunty also taught me about manners and how to engage in white spaces.

When I first arrived at Aunty and Uncles, I was rough around the edges in terms of etiquette. Aunty had perfected the art of walking in both worlds and instilled in her children those same skills. I remember clearly my first instruction around table manners. I had eaten something and my tongue had changed colour. As an 8 year old child I proudly poked it out for her to see. She promptly reprimanded me in her loving way explaining that poking tongues out was not good manners and I was not to do that again. She also taught me how to use my knife and fork, eat with my mouth closed and not slurp my soup or cup of tea. My table manners were non-existent when I arrived at their door but Aunty ensured I learnt them so I wouldn't be looked down upon in the white spaces we had to engage in – school and church.

My father and brothers lived not far away in Mt Albert so I got to stay with them some weekends. They had to work so weren't home to look after me and that is why I had to live at Aunty and Uncles. I missed my family. The ones I left behind up North and the ones I had here that I didn't live with.

Eventually I did go back and live with my dad and brothers. I was so happy.

Growing up in Auckland, like most other Sāmoan families at the time, our lives revolved around āiga (family) and lotu (church). I was raised in a very strict Christian home so everything we did was only with members of our congregation who in most instances were our extended āiga. Despite everyones efforts to include me and make me feel part of their families, I never truly felt I belonged anywhere. As a child, it was a difficult head space to be in. Motherless, 'homeless', lost and alone in a new place. Don't get me wrong, I was most certainly loved. My Dad and brothers treated me like a queen, but it still couldn't fill the gap of the family I left behind.

There were many 'aunties' in my life who helped the men in my life raise me. Aunty Pillie was a sewer, she worked for a furniture company up the road from their house in Westmere, Auckland. She also sewed clothes for many of us in the church. We would often go to Barker and Pollock on K'Rd to purchase fabric and sometimes patterns for our new dresses. It was always exciting choosing our

fabrics and pattern then seeing it come to life in aunties 'sewing room'. Aunties 'sewing room' consisted of three industrial sewing machines across three different rooms in their small home.

When my father finally remarried, a female came into our home for the first time in my life. Once again my world was turned upside down as the Sāmoan culture our Dad had tried so hard to keep us from, became the central point of our lives.

My step-mother was also a sewer. She would sew all her clothes for church. I had recently learnt to sew with a machine and make basic patterns at Intermediate School so I was keen to use her sewing machine. An all in one, built in machine and table. A beautiful wooden table with delicate legs considering the weight it had to hold. She still has this sewing table. The machine no longer works but the table is still used for the new sewing machine.

By the time I was a teenager I was sewing all my own clothes for church. We did not have a lot of money so when we could afford to I was able to buy new fabric. If we couldn't afford it I just pulled out something I didn't wear much anymore, unpicked the whole outfit and remade it into a new one.

As I got older the restrictions around what was and what wasn't appropriate dress length for females was enforced more by my step-mother. All skirts or dresses had to be mid length between the knee and ankles. Mini skirts, short- shorts were out of the question. Instead modest and demure attire was the dress code everyday. For someone like myself, an extrovert when it came to fashion, an up and coming fashion designer in my dreams, these restrictions were intolerable. So in true teenager fashion, I eventually rebelled. I moved out.

Overtime I embraced my Sāmoan culture and with the help of my school friends, congregation and step-mothers family, it became the norm for me. So much so that I was able to pick up the language. This actually worked to my benefit because at that time, it wasn't cool to be Māori. People could visibly see I was Māori and say 'kia ora' to me, not once did I ever reciprocate the reply in Māori. I was embarassed to be Māori. I didn't 'feel' Māori at all. I didn't feel i had the right to say 'kia ora' because I wasn't Māori enough.

In the space of 7 years, I had gone from the child who knew how she connected to everyone around her, to a teenager who had replaced that identity with a new one. An identity that acknowledged my Māori whakapapa in certain spaces and hid it in most others. An identity that switched depending on where I was or who I was with. An identity that was confused and based on assimilation, survival and belonging. The identity of a country born, urban raised, multicultural wahine.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Introduction

Even though I was exposed to my Samoan culture, it came at the absence of my Māori side. For many years I looked upon those who were brought up at home in Te Tai Tokerau, immersed in Te Ao Māori and connected to whānau and whenua, as privileged. Privileged to have been afforded the luxury of knowing who they are. Privileged to have been raised and taught by their elders. Privileged, in terms of "Māoriness", to "Be Māori".

I had always felt an overwhelming sense of not belonging anywhere. Through my eyes, I was always on the outside looking in. I yearned to be on the inside looking out. The internal yearning to find my "Māori side" was so immense that I failed to see everything I already knew as valid and brushed it aside, only dipping into that pool of knowledge when required.

My perspective changed in 2015 when I started the Maunga Kura Toi – Bachelor of Māori Arts Degree at NorthTec, Whangarei. As my skills of critical analysis developed I realised I had in fact been raised in a 'privileged' life after all. I was raised by my grandparents for a time, I was also a whangae child for a time and I was most certainly raised by a village. I had tikanga already, it sat with my Sāmoan whakapapa.

Part One – Contextualising Cultural Identity

Māori identity has been the topic of many Māori scholars. Each bringing their own research and conclusions on 'what' Māori identity is and ways in which it is currently measured could be measured better (Durie M. H., 1995). Māori identity is complex, diverse and ever-changing. It is multi-dimensional which reflects being a multi-cultural country. Who then sets the measure for Māori identity, and who does the measuring? In this section I will outline different measures of Māori identity in writings by Mason Durie and the later analysis of both national and international measures of identity in writings by Carla Houkamau. To reflect where I am in my journey of identity thus far, this section will focus on the analysis of Māori identity in relation to my cultural identity.

One of the major contributors to the body of written work available about Māori identity is Mason Durie (Durie, 1985, 1995). In his article titled "*Te Hoe Nuku Roa – A Māori Identity Measure"* (1995) Durie introduced the longitudinal study of Māori identity *Te Hoe Nuku Roa*.

He then briefly describes prior and existing frameworks that address the topic of Māori identity and ways in which it has been and potentially could be measured. Durie clearly states the purpose of *Te Hoe Nuku Roa* is not to define 'the parameters of Māori culture, but rather to link a variety of

measures in order to obtain a more comprehensive profile of Māori' (Durie M. H., 1995, p. 464). The commonality I saw evident in these various frameworks is the use of various levels of enculturation as a measure for Māori identity (Durie M. H., 1995).

Enculturation

Enculturation by default is a normal part of society and a normal part of the way we as humans learn . Definitions for enculturation differ slightly depending on the context. The *Merriam-Webster* (Merrian-Webster.com, n.d.) online dictionary defines it as "the process by which an individual learns the traditional content of a culture and assimilates its practices and values". The *American Psychological Association* (American Psychological Association, n.d.) defines it as "the processes, beginning in early childhood, by which particular cultural values, ideas, beliefs and behavioural patterns are instilled in the members of a society".

The website *Definitions.net*, under the section 'Freebase' provides an extensive definition and description of enculturation. This definition includes a quote from Conrad Kottak who states "Enculturation is the process where the culture that is currently established teaches an individual the accepted norms and values of the culture or society where the individual lives"(Kottak as cited in Definitions, n.d). He goes on to say the most important thing about enculturation is the person learns their boundaries as to what is and what is not acceptable behaviour within that society (Definitions, n.d.)

Socio-historical context

In her 2010 PHD thesis titled "*Identity and socio-historical context: Transformations and change among Māori women*" Carla Houkamau (2006) asks the question "How has Māori identity changed over the last 50 years?" Her research participants were Māori women in three age groups. Group one women born prior to the 1950s, group two women born between 1950 and 1970 and group three women born after 1970. The range in age was specific as she wanted to encapsulate the experiences of women who were born pre-urbanisation, post-urbanisation and during the Māori cultural renaissance (Houkamau, 2006, p. ii)

In her abstract she acknowledges the common view that our colonial history has had a lasting negative affect on our cultural identity as Māori and "Māori identity may be restored via enculturation (Houkamau, 2006, p. ii). And while acknowledging the past work of Māori scholarly writers on the topic of Māori identity and the historical experiences of our people, Houkamau shifts the focus on a negative part of our history towards a positive focus on the diversity of identity within Māori women and its development as a pose to their lack of identity and trying to measure it.

In establishing the parameters for her research Houkamau analyses the theoretical work of both national and international researchers on identity. Houkamau outlines the three categories of Māori identity categorised by Mason Durie in his book *Whaiora: Māori Health Development* (Durie M. , 1994). These categories use enculturation as a measure for Māori identity.

In her review of international researchers, the first point of relevance to my research is the life-story model. In referring to the life-story model, theorist Dan McAdams (in Houkamau, 2006) sees identity as a "personal life-story in which life phases may be considered 'chapters' in the individual's evolving autobiography" (as cited in Houkamau, 2006, p. 35). Houkamau's deduction of McAdams theory is "the person's life-story 'holds' their identity (self-definitions, self-evaluations and self- descriptions) as well as specific details as to where those concepts came from in their own personal history" (Houkamau, 2006, p. 36).

The second point of relevance to my research is the influence socio-historical context has on a person's identity. Houkamau paraphrases Strauss in her statement "if you wish to 'really understand' people…you must be prepared to understand how their lives are determined by their socio-historical contexts" (as cited in Houkamau, 2006, p. 38).

Both these models clearly resonate with my own journey of identity. The life story model is evidenced in this report as I attempt to recount my life experiences in a manner that makes sense to not only myself but the reader also. This naturally flowed on to include the socio-historical context around the time of my birth. Not only do these models validate my personal approach to this report and the personal content within it, they also align with a Kaupapa Māori approach where the oral transferal of information and knowledge, the sharing of lived experience, is acknowledged as the primary and valid source of reference (Pihama, 2010).

Māori scholars have written about Māori identity from within the research as it has developed. While acknowledging the diversity of Māori identity, these scholars have unknowingly perpetuated a way of thinking that measured our 'Māoriness' in terms of our level of engagement with Māori culture or in theoretical terms - enculturation. Within their original contexts this process of measuring was presumeably ideal and accepted as they were intended as better ways to measure, describe or define Māori identity for the betterment of Māori. However, Māori individuals like myself, who are on a journey in search of their Māori identity, already measure our own 'Māoriness' against the opinions of other Māori and how 'accepted' we are into these spaces based on our personal engagement with Māori 'things'.

Durie (Durie, 1985, 1995; Houkamau, 2006) and Houkamau's research illustrates the very different perspectives of individuals in these identity categories. An individual categorised as enculturated would not understand the struggles of an individual categorised as marginalised, and vice versa as each have experienced struggle from angles the other may not have been exposed to. As a 'marginalised' Māori, this is something I used to experience on a regular basis. Still, every once in a while I am reminded by another Māori of my 'lack of Māoriness'. It would seem for all the gains Māori have achieved, Māori with a lack/loss of identity are still pushing against the external whitestream system along with our own within Māoridom. As my Māori cultural identity developed the internal 'judgement' about my 'Māoriness' began to fade.

Reconstructing cultural identity is a painful and uncomfortable experience to continually go through. To constantly question ones individual 'Māoriness' and then allow other Māori to do the measuring based on their own individual opionions and experiences. These painful and uncomfortable experiences are elevated further when the Māori doing the measuring are our own whānau. Yes, there is certainly a level of accountability to our people that is attached to being Māori and the actions and decisions we make as individuals. However, in this context of defining and categorising Māori identity as a collective, I believe the line has been blurred whereby we have allowed a whitestream way of thinking to impact our Māori belief systems negatively by unknowingly using this measure of enculturation on each other. And although unintentional, the frameworks created to "measure Māori identity" have been pivotal in perpetuating this among Māori.

If we look back at the experiences of Ngā Tamatoa, they were already knowingly or unknowingly using this process in the early 70's as the means for reclaiming their lost Māori identities. The benefits that came out of this process are evidenced in the mammoth progress that has been made on a national scale to reclaim Māori identity. This was through developments such as the introduction of Kohanga Reo, Te Reo Māori being recognised as an official language, and Wānanga being legally recognised as learning institutes, to name only a very few. The process of using enculturation as a measure was deliberate and intentional on a national scale. An entire race of people reclaiming their cultural identity via enculturation. The results of Māori advancement in reclaiming cultural identity ever since, is clear evidence of successful enculturation.

Where then does enculturation sit within the context of defining Māori identity?

If we bring forward the *Definitions.net* text of enculturation discussed previously, and overlay it on the historical experiences of Māori the question I ask now is: Who is "the culture that is currently established" and who is "the culture or society where the individual lives?". The answer to these questions would be dependent on the lens of the viewer and their individual perspective. From my

perspective as a Māori, Sāmoan and Pākeha woman, born in 1975, I see the 'culture that is currently established' as the whitestream culture that has dominated New Zealand since 1840. This answers the second question for me as well. I can appreciate the positive aspects of enculturation, mankind has been doing it for millennia. However, when the coin is flipped and a different lens is used, the differentiating line between enculturation and cultural assimilation from my perspective, is almost non-existent.

I do not have the answers to the questions raised nor am I proposing to define them. What I do bring to this conversation is an insight into past writings about Māori identity by Māori scholars through my own lens whereby 'I' the 'researched have become the researcher'.

Part Two – Artist Review

The urban historical context discussed earlier is one I share in various ways with all the artists in this review. In this section I will discuss the practice of urban Sāmoan artist Fatu Feu'u and urban Polynesian collective Pacific Sisters in relation to my own practice. I will also touch on the customary practice of Māori weaver Te Hemo Ata Henare as a direct influence on my practice.

The Accidental Artist

"Every time I do sculpture I think of my dad" (Feu'u & Jennings, Fatu Feu'u on Life & Art, 2012, p. 18)

"Whenever I cook I think of my dad"

Background

Fatu Feu'u was born in Samoa on March 9th 1946. He then moved to New Zealand in 1966 to study art (Tapa'au; Fatu Feu'u, 1992). Influenced by family, friends, colleagues and the Masters of European art, Feu'u developed his own techniques over time and came to be known as the father of Pacific contemporary art. Feu'u is inspired by Sāmoan tatau (tattoo), specifically the work of customary tatau artist Paulo Suluape. Tatau is a dominant feature in his works by way of motif and pattern which has also been joined by the influence of Lapita pottery (Tapa'au; Fatu Feu'u, 1992). He draws from his customary Sāmoan base to create works in paint, lithograph and sculpture. Through his art Feu'u has brought customary art forms into a contemporary space, retelling Sāmoan narratives and presenting the Sāmoan culture to the world (Tapa'au; Fatu Feu'u, 1992).

Feu'u's paint and sculptural works range in scale depending on their design parameters. His works are displayed in galleries, museums and public spaces such as schools and universities across Australasia and he has been exhibiting regularly since 1983 (Tapa'au; Fatu Feu'u, 1992).

Practice

The practice of Fatu Feu'u is summed up in his statement about receiving his pe'a (customary Sāmoan tattoo from the hips to the knee): "Marking yourself to let the outside world know that you are willing to serve your people, and you do this for your family (Feu'u & Jennings, 2012, p. 41). In fa'a Sāmoa (the Sāmoan way), wearing the mark of your ancestors in the form of pe'a tells the world that you are ready to be of service to your family and to Sāmoa.

Also at the heart of Feu'u's practice is his eagerness to share his knowledge with anyone willing to learn and help. In 1995–1996 Feu'u along with some of his peers setup the Tautai Contemporary Pacific Arts Trust to support and promote new and emerging Pacific artists. The name of the trust

‘Tautai’ is taken from the Sāmoan word for navigator “illustrating the organisation’s commitment to guiding moana arts in Āotearoa New Zealand” (Tautai: Championing Pacific Creativity, 2020).

Response

Many of Fatu Feu’u’s stories and experiences brought back thoughts of my own upbringing. For someone who was born in Sāmoa, brought here as a young man and had stereotypical Sāmoan church going parents, Feu’u was very open-minded with his views on being a Sāmoan artist. What stood out to me is how he was able to navigate his way through whitestream spaces in a time when immigrants like himself were not particularly valued. I can only attribute this to the fact that he arrived with a very strong Sāmoan identity to begin with. In terms of ‘fitting in’ while still maintaining his cultural identity, he was already well equipt to do this. I relate to this to some degree as I also thrived in these whitestream spaces despite my feelings of not belonging and having ‘no cultural identity’ at the time. These feelings are a key driver behind my eagerness to share what I am learning with anyone keen to listen.

One commonality I do share with Feu’u is we are both urban Pacifica and multi-media artists who draw on our customary knowledge bases. Our customary knowledge bases may be at different levels, however the intention is the same. To create contemporary work that is informed by these customary knowledge bases in order to keep our cultural narratives alive. Like Feu’u my upbringing in fa’a Sāmoa taught me how to ‘serve’ my family, visitors and my people. This learning has translated across all my cultural identities and is a core construct of who I am and my practice.

Figure 1 in References (Feu'u, Tapa'au, 1992)

Figure 2 in References (Sisters, Tāulaoleva: Keeper of the Water, 2019)

Shared histories

We were “tired of seeing white faces everywhere” Suzanne Tamaki in (Gallery, Just Remember Don't Forget: Closing A'dress with the Pacific Sisters and Nina Tonga, 2019).

“I don’t see me”

Background

Pacific Sisters is one of the longest running collectives in Āotearoa. A group of likeminded souls brought together by pure accident. Exhibiting in Auckland was a homecoming for the collective, a reunion exhibition of sorts back where it all started in the surrounding suburbs and inner city streets. Nina Tonga emailed the collective in 2016 proposing the exhibition with the hope they would all agree.

In July 2019, I visited their exhibition titled *Pacific Sisters: Fashion Activists / Pacific Sisters: He Toa Tāera* at the Auckland Art Gallery. The exhibition greets and welcomes you before you even enter. Like a digital powhiri – with a taumata and an ātea. The sound of waiata, kōrero, dance and performance, an introduction to what lies past the doors.

The video tape sentinel *Tāulaoleva: Keeper of the water* greets you on entry. Paired with a 3 minute film about its creation. Back when Pacific Sisters started their creative journey, they couldn't get natural fibres in and out of the country easily. This meant utilising what they had and had access to and in this case, a whole lot of unwanted video tapes. In the eyes of these artists, the video tapes have a whakapapa, a history. Just because they are contemporary materials does not make them lifeless objects. What they enjoyed most about creating this work was making it collectively.

The artist talk started with their short film "*Motu Tagata*" in Sāmoa (Wall, Motu Tagata in Samoa, 1996). The short film documented the Pacific Sisters journey to Sāmoa as participants in the 7th Pacific Festival of the Arts in 1996 where they would showcase their new work of the same title. Memories of my teenage years flooded in as the film played. Watching it took me back to a time and a place I had long left in my past.

Within the context of my Sāmoan identity, I am not sure my own creative practice and tikanga would allow me to push my cultural boundaries to the extent the Pacific Sisters have. While I appreciate the barriers the Pacific Sisters have overcome in paving the way for individuals like myself, I still am not 'there' in my journey yet. I do see this same sense of certainty and pushing the boundaries in my younger siblings. Is this possibly because like Fatu Feu'u and the members of Pacific Sisters, my younger siblings have a solid cultural identity already? This is certainly another topic for further research.

Collective practice

The collective practice of Pacific Sisters definitely aligns with my own practice. Most of the creative work I have done and choose to engage in is predominantly with other collective practitioners. It is important to note here that "collective doesn't describe their relationship. Sisterhood does" Nina Tonga in (Just Remember Don't Forget: Closing A'dress with the Pacific Sisters and Nina Tonga, 2019).

In their artist talk they spoke about the whakapapa of the works. How they as a collective are connected to each other through the shared histories behind their works. They also stressed the importance of family and sustainable practices. Key to their practice was the sharing of knowledge. They would teach each other their current skills and new ones as they were learnt which then translated into supporting up and coming designers. These are concepts and practices reflected in my own practice and that of Fatu Feu'u.

The whakāro around my bone needles is the same as their 'connectedness' through shared stories. The whakapapa of the bone, before I received it is a layer of whakapapa – who it came from, where it

came from. By transforming the bone into a needle I add another layer of whakapapa – who I am and where I come from. This then connects me to its new bearer, the next layer of whakapapa – who they are and where they come from. Every bearer of the bone needle in turn adds another layer of whakapapa. The bone needles physically and metaphorically connect whakapapa in the same way a needle connects the thread to each papa, each layer of material.

Response

When I walked into Pacific Sisters exhibition I saw me. I saw work that reflected me, where I finally felt I belonged. Every kind of kākahu made from all kinds of materials – new, used, recycled, upcycled, made new from used items. Bright, bold and risque designs created by a collective of techniques. I was entering a space where my love for fashion met customary knowledge!

Pacific Sisters use a range of mediums and media bringing together a collective of Polynesian cultures. From contemporary to customary, blending the two seamlessly. The composition of their works showed me what was possible with the imagination and skillset I have. It also validated the ways in which I create, the materials I use and why I use them. Seeing their 'creations' supported my decision to continue working with the commercially woven mats and use them to create foundation forms for my needles and ahurei. I stopped thinking of the individual pieces I was making as 'single' and started thinking of them as elements of my creative works. I looked at each piece the same way a window dresser would look at items to dress the mannequins. This enabled me to start constructing my collection.

1/10

Customary Māori weaver, Te Hemo Ata Henare, has been instrumental in my development as an artist and as a Māori woman in search of her lost cultural identity. Alongside my peers, I have learnt from her the customary practices and various associated techniques of rāranga, whatu and whiri. We know her as Hemo, and her practice as a customary practitioner is founded on tikanga. This includes but is not limited to, the sourcing of and maintaining natural fibres and materials following in the footsteps of her tupuna. In doing so she is maintaining and preserving the customary knowledge that has been handed down to her. This is a practice she continues with her students as a tutor of rāranga. Hemo works with customary and contemporary materials and fibres.

At the core of Hemo's practice is the concept of 1/10. A practice taught to her by her tupuna whereby "you weave 10 kete and the 10th one you feed your whānau with" or "give away 9 and keep the last one to feed your whānau" (Henare T. H., 2016, p. 23). This practice was sustainable and allowed you to be a weaver and survive without having to compromise being Māori or your tikanga.

One aspect of being an artist I have always struggled with is selling my work. It has never sat comfortably with me to earn a living using my Māori culture. The concept of 1/10 has provided me a framework by which I can feel comfortable to sell some of my work without having to compromise my tikanga.

A collective I have been a part of since late 2016 has been integral in works I have created since that time. Under Hemo's careful eye and guidance, we started making kapa haka uniforms using a blend of customary and contemporary materials and techniques. What started out as an opportunity for whānau to help with making kapa haka uniforms for our new kura quickly developed into orders for uniforms by other kapa. This mahi has pushed my sewing skills to the limit and beyond. At the same time I was learning new skills and techniques. Working within this collective has enabled me to develop and extend on the skills I already had to create the works for my last two exhibitions and the current one.

Response

My engagement with Toi Māori was initially by accident. I soon recognised it as a pivotal avenue by which I could really gain traction in reclaiming and reconnecting with my lost Māori identity. This process of reclaimation not only encompassed my Māori identity but in time came to include my Sāmoan and Pākeha identity. What it developed into unbeknown to me at the time, was the foundation I would later use as the basis for reconstructing my cultural identity.

A key construct within my practice is the deliberate and intentional action to learn, apply and maintain customary processes and practices within my Māori and Sāmoan cultures. As the reconstruction of my cultural identity progressed, so too did my knowledge and skill base within Toi. This has now come to include my Pākeha culture.

Chapter Three: Methodology

Introduction

I have always been a maker. For as long as I can remember, I have been a collector and maker of things with my hands. Growing up I was not exposed to customary Māori or Sāmoan making. I did not see my Nana harvesting or weaving even though she was a weaver. I was not brought up on our marae, surrounded by whānau with these skills whom I could watch and learn from. Yet there was a burning desire inside me to learn these things, an ahi kōmau, a smouldering passion waiting to be stoked and fed.

Our Nana used to sew lots of our clothes. I do not remember seeing her sewing but I know from the stories my mum, aunties and older cousins would tell us. Our aunty still has nanas sewing machine table. A black, iron, foot pedal Singer table with original wooden top. Nana was also a weaver. Mum said she always had to go harvesting with Nana and she hated it as it was hard work as a kid. They had to harvest because Nana was always making whāriki for their dirt floor. I didn't know Nana was a weaver until my mum saw me weaving for the first time. I was sitting on my lounge floor surrounded by flax and weaving a basic basket. She looked at me with tears in her eyes and told me "you remind me of your Nana sitting there. She was always weaving my mum was".

When I moved home to Northland in my late teens, I saw my mum sewing and working with bone for the first time. My mum would sit with her small files and make bone ear rings and taonga for our family. I didn't even notice she was doing it most of the time. Just as she was ignorant of her own mother's weaving, I was much the same with her bone carving.

He aha te kai a te Rangatira, Maunga Kura Toi, BMVA Graduate Exhibition (2017)

The body of work created for this exhibition was titled *"Ka mua, Ka muri"*. It consisted of 33 ahurei, hairpins and needles made from locally sourced buried beef bone and native woods. They ranged in size from 12 to 25 cm in length and 1 to 3 cm in diameter. Their form did not differ greatly to the forms of the examples found in my research. Apart from the dyed bone pieces, all other works were in their natural state with only the addition of canola oil to finish the wood pieces. I was introduced to using canola oil on wood by our whakairo tutor at the time. In the past I have always used linseed oil to finish wood pieces. On learning from another tutor that it was flammable, the shift to canola oil was an easy decision.

The ahurei and needles in *"Ka mua, Ka muri"* were a metaphor for whakapapa. The translation of this whakatauki is "To look to the past in order to move forward". It acknowledges the validity of researching customary Māori and Sāmoan practices in order to grow and inform my practice and future works. Through their function they personified the whakapapa for my journey of [discovery] thus far. Post-exhibition they were given as a koha/gift to some of the many people I needed to thank for their contributions along my journey thus far.

Every piece from the exhibition, and the many made in the ensuing months were presented to their recipient by hand, kanohi ki te kanohi. An important part of this process was sharing with recipients the whakapapa for their piece - what it was, its' function, medium, from whom or where the materials came, why those particular materials were chosen and the research that informed their creation. Many of the recipients called them taonga; they wanted to wear them around their neck as one would a pounamu or hei tiki.

Central to my practice is the process of doing as much as possible by hand. I saw the process of completing a carving fully by manual labour as more 'valuable' than if I used predominantly machines to achieve the same result. I believe my upbringing with my grandfather has strongly influenced the reasoning behind this thinking. This tikanga has transferred into my practice as I now use it as a measure for the 'value' of my work and as a process by which I can feel fulfilled when I am making by adding a layer of whakapapa to my work.

Ahurei

Also known as aurei, autiu, and autui. More commonly known in the English language as a cloak pin. In Ngāti Hine, we call them ahurei (T. H. A. Henare, personal communication, June 6, 2017). Making ahurei became the focus for this body of work.

The Māori-Polynesian Comparative Dictionary (Tregear, 1891) definition for aurei is "an ivory or bone ornament, a breast pin for fastening a mat. The definition for aurei in the online Māori Dictionary is a "cloak pins of ivory or greenstone". The term autiu could not be found in this dictionary, however autui are defined as a "cloak pin of whalebone or boars tusk, [a] safety pin" (Moorfield, 2003). In his article *Omens and Superstitious Beliefs of the Māori* (Best, 1898), Elsdon Best uses the term autui in reference to cloakpins made of boars tusks. The recollection by Mohi Turei (Turei, 1913) of an engagement between the chiefs Taharakau and Tapuae also uses the term autui in refering to cloakpins.

G J Black (Black, 1922) writes about autiu and aurei in his article *A Māori Dog-skin Cloak* (Kaha Kuri). Lower quality cloaks and capes were fastened with string while "finer ones were…fastened by

means of cloak pins, termed *autiu*" (Black, 1922, p. 63). He describes them as carved pins made of whalebone and boars tusks. Black goes on to identify autiu as being worn by men in bunches "suspended to his cloak in front, as an ornament" (Black, 1922, p. 63). Aurei he describes as "small, oblong, flat pieces of whalebone, similar to the *kakara*, fastened to a dog's neck when hunting the *kiwi*. Four or six of these *aurei* were fastened to a chief's cloak in front, so as to make a rattling sound as he moved" (Black, 1922, p. 63).

Based on the above descriptions and definitions we can deduce that the difference in kupu used was determined by these common factors: 1. Materials used, 2. Form, 3. Use, 4. Dialect. This selection of text highlights not only the uses of ahurei but who used them and how. It is clear they were items of high value as they are only referred to being used by chiefs or someone of high rank. The fact they were worn by chiefly men in bunches denotes the value and importance given to ahurei.

Papa, PgDipMVA Graduate Exhibition (2018)

"Kimihia te mea ngaro" is the title of the body of work created for this exhibition. It consisted of 3 x 3-dimensional sculptures made using customary and contemporary materials. All three works were large in scale with forms reflective of traditional Victorian clothing. Only one of the sculptures was coloured the two others remained in their 'natural' state.

Although they looked like garments the sculptures were unwearable and oversized for the average human. I made the decision to suspend them from the ceiling to clearly state they were sculptures. Yet contrary to this decision I still wanted them to be hung in a manner whereby they would appear as if there was someone wearing them. I wanted them to appear 'embodied', for the space inside them to be 'filled' without anything physically inside them but emptiness. On reflection these sculptures were my feelings personified, my internalised grief on display to a public audience.

"Kimihia te mea ngaro" drew on knowledge from my own whakapapa, prior learning, and past and present research at the time. It sought to find a point of intersection whereby all three sources of my whakapapa could engage cohesively in the same space. The literal translation of the title is "Seek that which is lost". It speaks to my Sāmoan cultural identity that I had 'lost' for some time, and due to circumstances at that time, I was now forced to address.

For exhibition I created an installation using a selection of customary Māori, Tongan, Samoan and British materials, tools and techniques. The materials I used were gifted for the exhibition as koha. Before I received them they were taonga to someone else. When I received them they became taonga to me. In my eyes, the whakapapa of these items and their being given as a koha constituted them as taonga. The process of re-contextualising those materials as core elements in the installation allowed me to explore aspects of my whakapapa, and the whakapapa of the materials and patterns I was engaging with.

Through a visual exploration of my whakapapa and the whakapapa of the materials and patterns, this exhibition was my response to the loss of my father … taku taonga.

After de-installation of the exhibition, the ie toga was deconstructed and returned to its previous restored state and returned to its owner. The tapa was returned in its current form in figure 12 at the request of the owner.

Tools and Materials

Following the same tikanga as described in the previous exhibition, I hand sewed these sculptures with the bone and native wood needles I had made. These would eventually be used as ahurei on the sculptures as part of the exhibition. Extending on from my previous exhibition I not only made needles, I now used them. Making and using bone and native wood needles was now my focus

Prescribing techniques of hand sewing to a work of this scale and of these chosen materials was no easy feat. A great amount of learning was achieved through this process, not only in making my tools but also in using them. I soon learnt which size, shape and material made the best needles for the different tasks I needed to complete and with the desired results I was hoping for. Using natural jute as my 'thread' was perfect for sewing these materials. It had the strength and rawness needed to hold the materials securely in their form whilst supporting the weight of the sculpture at the same time.

Needles

Past research into the customary use of bone needles by Māori (Paul, The function of a Māori bone needle, 2018) identified four primary areas they were used to sew with. These areas are: Surgical (Angas, 2011; Steele, 1930; Taylor, 1855), Kākahu (Hiroa, 1949; Roth, 1923), Fishing (Firth, 1931; Hiroa, 1949) and Tā Moko (Lambert, 2007; Robitaille, 2007; Williams, 2010). It was assumed Māori used bone needles to sew the same way Pākeha did (Steele, 1930). Evidence in this area is divided with some Māori scholars agreeing (Anderson, 2014; Angas, 1847).with this statement while documented evidence by others proves otherwise (Hiroa, 1926; Roth, 1923). It was initially thought that Māori made sails in the same way their Samoan counterparts did, smaller pieces of cloth/material/fibre sewn together to create one large sail. However, current evidence at the time proved that theory invalid (Hiroa, 1949). Firth also documents "several bone needles of the type used as cloak-fasteners" (Firth, 1931, p. 101)

19th Century Victorian Dress

I have always admired the form of 19th century Victorian women's garments. There's something about their silhouette that captures my eye. However, underneath these garments tell a different story. One of pain and discomfort. Victorian dresses were very restrictive and limited the activities a woman could take part in comfortably and safely. By all accounts they were serving their purpose, to keep a woman looking and acting modest and restrained (Franklin, 2020).

The significance of the colour Red

The customary Māori word for red is kura. Kura is derived from the word kurawaka which comes from the customary narrative of the first woman being created by Tāne. Prior to the arrival of Pākeha

in New Zealand, Māori wore red at tangihanga not black. The wearing of black at funerals was a post-European practice adopted by Māori of the time (T. Henare, personal communication, September 13, 2011). It is a practice that has been maintained to this day.

In Sāmoa red is a sacred colour that was reserved for "aristocrats and gods" (Schoeffel, 1999, p. 126) with symbolism that associates it with the sun and fire as important sources of life and power (Mow, 2018). It is also a colour associated with high ranking people, such as tulafale. 'Ulafala are necklaces made from the fruit segments of the pandanus plant. When at their ripest the fruit are a brilliant red. 'Ulafala themselves identify the wearers social status ('ulafala (pandanus key necklace), 1997). The red feathers used to create the borders on 'ie tōga were "brought as gifts...from Fiji" by Tongan ali'i (Schoeffel, 1999, p. 127).

Tapa and 'Ie Tōga

Tapa, siapo, hiapo, masi, aute, just some of the names it is known by across the Polynesian Islands. There are two methods primarily used to make tapa across the islands and they are commonly used in conjunction with each other. The process used also depends on who is making the tapa and what they are making it for. Variations of these methods are seen across all the islands (Samoa, 2016; Withers, 2018).

When our tupuna arrived here in Āotearoa, they brought with them the paper mulberry plant known by Māori as aute and the skill of making tapa. They had come from a warm climate where tapa was the perfect material to make clothing from (Hiroa, 1926).

Sāmoan making and use of siapo exists to this day. Although not a skill widely known anymore there are still siapo makers maintaining this customary practice of making tapa from the inner bark of the u'a (paper mulberry tree) (Samoa, 2016). Over time the purpose and use of siapo for only high ranking people has changed and been extended to all levels within the village (Neich & Pendergrast, 2004). One constant has remained and that is its use for special occasions. Specifically the wearing of siapo by the manaia (young male warrior) and taupou (young female virgin) for festive occasions, worn by the bride and/or groom, and the laying down of siapo under the coffin at funerals. I have seen siapo used at all these occasions. In 2018 when my father passed away, my cousin brought her family siapo to lay under my father's coffin. It covered the entire lounge floor. This was the same siapo she received on her wedding day.

Whāriki is the Māori word broadly used for mat. In my experience working alongside weavers, whāriki have different names, depending on their purpose – what they are used for, how they are used and the materials they are made of. When our mother passed away in 2020 my siblings and I were not

able to weave our mum a whāriki to wrap her in. She already knew that and had prepared things earlier by purchasing woven mats for us to use. On the morning of her funeral, accompanied by our matāmua and pōtiki, and under the guidance of my mentor, I hand sewed our mum into her 'whāriki' using a large hairpin I had made from Tōtara.

Ie tōga, the finest of mats have a deep and complex history. Although described as mats 'ie tōga are unlike fala (mat) in that they are never placed on the floor (Hiroa, 1971). The second word in their name 'tōga' refers to the dowry of an ali'i bride which among other things included ie toga. This acknowledged the whakapapa of these fine mats not as objects but as living entities. Customarily given and used only by ali'i (chiefly) lines, 'ie tōga were named to preserve the whakapapa of these lines and arranged intermarriages between them. These marriages were not confined to Sāmoan chiefly lines but also included Tongan chiefly lines. In Tonga these fine mats are known as kie hingoa (Kaeppler, 1999; Schoeffel, 1999).

My first fala was made by my step-mothers mum in Sāmoa. It was made from laufala, a variety of pandanus plant and it was called a fala moega (sleeping mat). It measured 3x4m and was thick and soft. The edges had multi coloured wool strung through like tassels. When I had my first child it was sent over with an uncle to be presented to me in celebration of the birth of my firstborn. I received our family 'ie tōga to look after following the passing of our father. His passing was the catalyst to reclaiming my Sāmoan identity which I did through the process of creating works for *"Kimihia te mea ngaro"*.

Research into 'ie tōga revealed the gradual decline in skilled makers to teach and maintain this customary practice. This was largely in part to their cost which enabled the availability of cheaper, lower quality and even commercially woven mats to slowly become a viable option (Unknown, 2011).


Hūtia te rito o te harakeke
Kei hea te kōmako e kō
Rere ki uta
Rere ki tai
Māu e ui mai
'he aha te mea nui o tēnei ao?'
Māku e kī atu
He tangata, he tangata, he tangata

Chapter Four: Ko ahau te ngira, Ko te ngira ko ahau.

Introduction

'University wasn't for kids like us. We were brought up to get a good job and work hard.. We were brought up to work. University is only for rich white kids not kids like 'us'. (S. K. Lolo, personal communication, July, 2020).

Making

The aim of this exhibition was to produce a body of 3-dimensional pieces informed by my past research into Māori and Polynesian customary practices of carving, weaving and sewing and my current research into identity. The exhibition is in partial fulfilment of a Masters in Māori Visual Art and continues on from the bodies of work titled *"Ka mua, Ka muri"* and *"Kimihia te mea ngaro"*. This exhibition is my visual response to the loss of our mother.

Like most others in my whānau, I am a collector and holder of things. Early in 2019 I made the decision to only use materials I already had in my possession, on my property at that moment. It was the perfect opportunity to utilise the resources I had collected over the last ten years. I was already working as sustainably as possible, a decision driven by my practice, founded on my papa's teaching, perpetuated by my father and whānau. I had never thought about recycling as part of my practice before, in reality, I had never thought about it at all. It was another one of those things I did on autopilot and now had to articulate.

Method

The design process for this exhibition actually started in 2017 in the final year of my Bachelor's degree. My design process takes a little while to develop and mature which reflects how my brain processes information. The framework I now use is one based on a design process shared with us by whakairo tutor the late Te Kuiti Stewart in our first year of the Maunga Kura Toi degree.

The cyclic process was his unpublished exegesis. It was called *"The Cyclic Process of Making"* (Stewart, 2015). It was initially developed for carvers and drew directly from his own personal creative processes. This framework has helped me organise my process of making ever since. By continual use throughout my degree, I was able to adapt this process to suit my practice. Still maintaining the content and integrity of Te Kuiti's descriptions, the shift was only in its application to a different strand of Toi and the associated materials and techniques.

There were definite elements of *"Ka mua, Ka muri"* I wanted to continue and develop working with. These were locally sourced local wood/bone for my needles and the commercially woven mats –

specifically materials I had already used in and the excess I had purchased for *"Kimihia te mea ngaro"*. Jute was a given if I was to continue working with the mats.

Design

When designing it always starts with my research. The research feeds my mind and from that emerges all my initial thoughts and ideas. The next part of the process is where I develop those initial ideas in conjunction with the materials I have available to me. This sometimes requires purchasing new materials. All of my natural resources and most of the rest are acquired through trade with other creatives, as payment of services from whānau, or given as koha. In my eyes all koha received are taonga, gifts from someone else for me to add another layer of whakapapa before they move on to their next home.

This is where concept meets context. Each element is constructed before connecting them together. This is where ideas need to be 'reined in' and marks the beginning of testing materials and design ideas.

Starting with *"Ka mua, Ka muri"* then extended on with *"Kimihia te mea ngaro"* the question then was: Where to from here? How can I develop and extend on my practice?

Testing

The testing process for this exhibition started in 2017 when I was creating works for *"Ka mua, Ka muri"*. Making the needles and ahurei, working with bone for the first time was the first stage of testing. Between this time and the following exhibition I had received orders for my bone needles which provided plenty of opportunity to hone my skills in making them.

The second stage of testing came in 2018 while making the works for *"Kimihia te mea ngaro"*. Making the needles was a little faster now. I needed to test them for strength, form, size and visual. In these works the stitching was deliberately visible so I replicated the stitching used on the edges of old wool blankets. After vigorous testing I then scaled it up to tidy the edges of the 'ie tōga I was gifted to use. It was in need of some maintenance so I used this opportunity to hone my technique by tidying and finishing the edges to prevent further fraying and damage. Time had faded this taonga so with permission from Hemo I used commercial flax dye and coloured it red. This also required a tester so I used one of the commercially woven mats to do this.

The third stage of testing began later in 2019. After sorting all the resources around my home I started playing with different items - namely the venetian blinds.

These blinds came out of the house we currently rent. We have lived here for almost twelve years. It is our first real home and we have raised our daughters here. Over time the cord holding them together had broken, so I put them aside. By March 2020, I had decided I was going to use them to make pake. Not one, a whole set for a kapa haka rōpu. The process to clean each individual blade took at least six months. There were seven hundred blades and it was during the cleaning process that Covid-19 hit the world.

Fast forward to 2021, the testing and making process for this exhibition had taken quite a blow since lock-down. I had eight weeks to complete my making, reorganise and hold an exhibition, do my presentation and finish this report. It was a massive amount of work to get done and in my eyes it would take a miracle. I needed help and my older sister really wanted to help me finish my studies. There was a part of the preparation she could do without my supervision. This enabled me to share my work with her and for her to be a part of it. With her being unwell and no longer working, she had lots of time on her hands and this kept her mind busy.

Part of the testing process was making up small marquettes to test how I was going to assemble the pake. I knew how to make pake only I had never made them using venetian blinds. This is where my work with the collective I discussed earlier really came to the forefront.

Explanation of title

In 2013 Ann Milne submitted her now reknowned thesis titled *"Colouring in the White Spaces – Reclaiming Cultural Identity in Whitestream Schools"* (Milne, 2013). It would be two more years before Iwould be introduced to it. In it she describes and discusses having a strong cultural identity in our Māori and Pacifica youth, as the key to their success. She highlighted spaces in education and processes widely used that were not conducive to this. And in return she offered solutions to these issues and created waves like so many scholarly writers had done before her.

This was another moment where I found myself directly in the research as an unknowing participant to then becoming a knowing, deliberate and intentional participant through my own research and works created in response to said research.

I was one of those children who endured the White Spaces most of my school life. I loved learning but from primary through to intermediate school, I never felt I belonged nor was I encouraged to strive for better things in life. Not once do I recall being asked what I wanted to be when I grew up until I started at Auckland Girls Grammar School in 1988. For the first time in my schooling life I felt valued and that I belonged. Every kind of diversity was not only supported but encouraged by our Principal.

The title of this exhibition *"Ko ahau te ngira, Ko te ngira ko ahau"* asserts all my cultural identities, visually and conceptually bringing them together cohesively in one space. With myself as the needle, I am metaphorically and categorically reclaiming and reconstructing my cultural identities. 'Sewing' them together one layer at a time. This exhibition displayed here in Te Whare Manāki reflects the juxtoposition between the installation of my work in a space that is opposite to the White Spaces defined by Ann Milne, yet still sits within a larger, predominantly, White Space.

I have called this installation of work *"White Spaces Op Shop"*. It is in direct reference to Ann Milne's thesis. The term 'Op Shop' refers to second-hand shops, the hokohoko as we call it. Placing my work in this context creates a juxtaposition within itself, a miniature reflection of its larger physical placement within Te Whare Manāki. A white spaces op shop with 'identities' for sale. Some of the identities are incomplete while others are quite prominent. Some are in frames like antiquities in a museum in reference to the way our taonga were viewed and treated by collectors in our early history. This installation of work is deliberate and a platform for dialogue. Hence the mat at the forefront in the middle of the floor in reference to 'talanoa', the platform for critical dialogue (Mauga, 2020).

Location of the exhibition

My first choice for my exhibition was the Hihiaua Cultural Centre, Whangarei. The space I eventually booked for my exhibition was the Geoff Wilson Gallery, situated in H-block, NorthTec Raumanga Campus. Due to date changes the exhibition was brought forward whereby requiring a new venue. With an extremely tight work schedule I made the decision to display my work in Te Whare Manāki.

Listed below are the key reasons Te Whare Manāki was the space chosen for my exhibition and presentation:

1. Minimal barriers to accessibility, a space I am already very familiar with, a space that I spend a lot of time in at mahi.
2. It is also the space where images of work from the initial intake of Year 2 Bachelor of Māori Arts students, have been displayed since 2016. My work as a student is among them.
3. The layout and ahua of this space is warm, welcoming and comfortable. It is condusive to manākitanga and whanaungatanga, central to who I am.
4. Te Whare Manāki is a public space and yet private and intimate at the same time.
5. I would not have to exhibit "only the lonely" (my mum's words) in a gallery, a space that is not conducive to who i am and my practice.

Te Whare Manāki is a busy working space so I have partially cordoned off the space specifically for the display of work. This leaves the space to the rear, attached to the Navigator space, free for students and staff to still access the Navigators for the duration of my work being displayed.

Health and Safety requirements for obstructing main entry and exits does not affect the positioning of my work for display. It is only applicable for the main entry and walkthrough area.

Figure 3: Installation of White Spaces Op Shop in Te Whare Manāki. Front facing view of exhibition space.

Catalogue of works

All works are untitled and presented together as one collective work. This section will visually document the elements of this installation.

Initial stitching on these works were done using a bone needle. Due to time constraints these works were completed using a stainless steel sack needle. Compilation of these kākahu were inspired by the way ensembles were put together in the Moko Fashion Show and Pacific Sisters exhibition. This made me think differently about what I was making and how they would be displayed. It made me realise I could do the same with my work. So I started making elements to create my final works as a pose to making completed works. I would then be able to create ensembles of my own.

Figure 4: View from the rear

Figure 5: Kākahu 3. Front and left side view. Commercially woven mat, jute, locally sourced tōtara and kauri, wax cord, locally sourced buried beef bone, polished coconut shell.

Kākahu 3 was shaped and stitched directly on to the mannequin. I wanted to see if I could 'drape' the mats or at least make them appear to be, the same way I would with a beautiful fabric. This piece started in *"Kimihia te mea ngaro"* as *"Maliu atu"*. I then repurposed and reshaped it into Kākahu 3. The main structure around the neckline was kept. Using water to soften the mat only where and as I needed I was able to 'drape' the mat around the mannequin. This was held in place with quilting pins and left to semi-dry before I set it in place with stitching.

Stitching the mats while still damp would compromise the integrity of the stitching and entire piece, hence the need to let it semi-dry. Once a section of stitching was completed, it was left to fully dry in the open air before commencing the next section.

She has been styled as a cross between a Victorian riding jacket, colonial army jacket, and indigenous war dress. She is adorned with 'weapons' and ready for battle, however is not calling for war, but acknowledges the ongoing struggle of our people.

Figure 6: Kākahu 3. Left side and rear view.

Kākahu 3 speaks to all my whakapapa in an attempt to assert my own identity as a wahine toa.

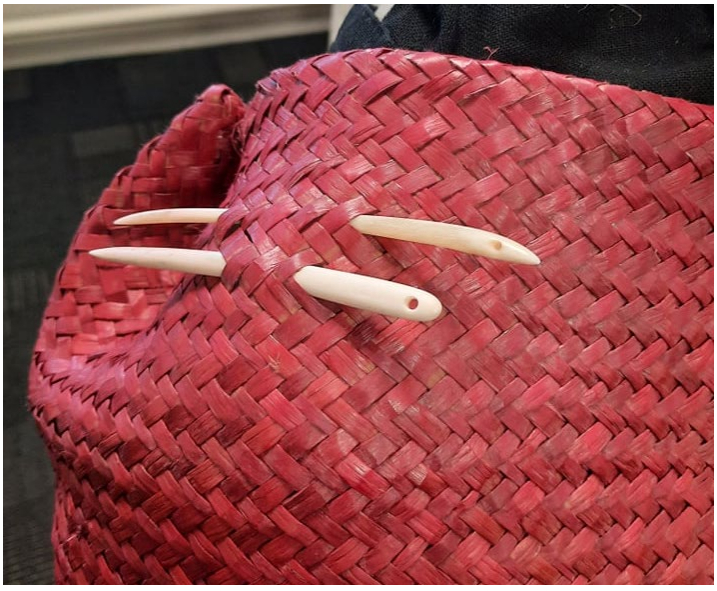
Why commercially woven mats? These mats symbolise my nana who was a weaver, my dad - 'ie tōga and my mum – whāriki. Repurposing of the materials is my papa. The four people who have had the longest influence on who I am and how I do things. They are my foundation.

Figure 9: Kākahu 3. Enlarged view of bone pins. (See figures 16, 18)

Figure 7: Kākahu 3. Right side view.

Figure 8: Kākahu 3. Enlarged view of kauri rei. (See figure 15)

Figure 10: Kākahu 3. Close up view of front. Enlarged view of tōtara hairpin used as an ahurei.



Kākahu 2 started in *"Kimihia te mea ngaro*" as *"Maliu mai"*. It was initially dyed red as the tester for dyeing the ‘ie tōga and ended up being part of the exhibition. Now placed in this space, Kākahu 2 continues the kōrero of *"Kimihia te mea ngaro"* acknowledging our loved ones who have passed on.
Her styling is very reflective of my mother, not a plain manequin for her. She would demand something with more attitude.

Figure 11: Kākahu 2. Commercially woven mat, commercial red dye, jute, locally sourced buried beef bone, was cord, muka, NZ collectors edition 50c poppy coins 2018.

Figure 12: Close up view of NZ 50c collectors edition coins.

Figure 13: Close up view of bone rei.

In line with Kākahu 3, she is also adorned with 'weapons' and ready for war. Although these are more decorative than Kākahu 3.

Mum always supported her uncles from the 28th Māori Battalion at their annual commemorations. When they went to Crete, she was right there with them. 2021 was the first year she would not be in attendance since she started going. Papa Lloyd proudly went in her place and took a large framed photo of her with him, so she 'could be there'. The 'medal' in figure 22 is in direct recognition of: everyone we lost, my daughter's great-great-grandfather who is buried in Crete and the ultimate sacrifice they all paid for the life and opportunities we now have.

Figure 14: Kākahu 1. Commercially woven mat, jute, locally sourced tōtara and beef bone, wax cord, polished coconut shell

Kākahu 1 was a commercially woven mat purchased to use in *"Kimihia te mea ngaro"* which ended not being used. So it was taken apart and repurposed here.

Visually reserved and very demure, Kākahu 1 is the simplest and least complicated of all the ensembles. She speaks to the old ways displayed in all my whakapapa. That of a modest, humble, and respectful approach to everything. Although positioned in the forefront, she is not overbearing or standing out in the crowd. For me she has the loudest voice. A voice that historically has been suppressed and marginalised. A voice that is still struggling to be heard.

Figure 15: Kākahu 1. Close up view of front. Enlarged view of tōtara rei and coconut and bone needle hairpiece used as an ahurei.

Figure 16: Venetian pake. Second hand wool blanket, jute, commercial flax dye, repurposed old venetian blinds.

Venetian pake: These marquettes were the preliminary testing for a larger body of work which was not realised for this exhibition. They are a metaphor for cultural identities. They hang on a clothing rack implying they can be 'tried on' and 'purchased' like clothing in an op shop. This is what it felt like for me in my journery of identity. The constant 'putting on' and 'taking off' of identities I believed I could 'fit'. It took a long time for me to realise I would never fit any of them.

The use of these specific materials speaks to our relationship and obligations under Te Tiriti ō Waitangi. The venetian blinds and the wool blankets in their normal contexts provide warmth and protection from the weather. Both are introduced materials to us as Māori. Pake in their normal context are used to provide both warmth and protection from the weather. In an attempt to 'merge them together', hand sewing has been used as the connector where whatu would normally be used.

In relation to Te Tiriti, these venetian pake and the context they are now placed in speak to the historical realities of this relationship. A relationship that has seen Māori and 'Māori things' oppressed and marginalised. A relationship that despite all the progress made, still remains wanting. The pake are made from second hand and repurposed materials that in this context illustrates the historical view of Māori and Pacifica peoples as 'second class citizens' and how they were treated as such. As unfinished works these marquettes will now serve as the beginning for a new body of work at a future date.

Note: Technical issues necessitated the use of sewing instead of whatu. Early testers deemed whatu insufficient for the pake to actually be worn. The process used in our collective to make contemporary pake was then applied here. The curled edges were added after discussion with the collective as to the viability of these venetian pake being worn in a performance by a kapa member.

Figure 17: Frames from left to right: 1-Threader, spearhead and needle. Deer bone. 2-Needles. Locally sourced buried beef bone, commercial flax dye. 3. Needles. Locally sourced buried beef bone. Backing for all: Undyed 'ie tōga offcuts.

Framed bone tools: These frames are a direct reference to the early historical treatment of taonga in museums. Seen as antiquities of a 'dying race' they were placed in glass cabinets to be viewed. In this representation they are grouped as sets, like mini tool boxes. During my research into bone needles I did not come across information pertaining to these specifically. However the findings and context of the research, in my mind, implied the likelyhood of their existence.

I have also been told of a small pouch Māori would weave to hold small items on their person and was encouraged to look into it further. This led me to wonder if those small pouch's were big enough to hold a miniature toolkit such as the ones in these frames. And if so who would have carried such a toolkit. I have my own assumptions about this but further extensive research is needed.

Unfortunately, I was unable to follow through on the research into the small pouch's. In line with these pouch's and toolkits I would like to do further research on the surgical use of bone needles by Māori. I believe this to be an avenue of research that will bring clarity for the questions raised.

All three Kākahu in this installation I refer to as she, acknowledging them as living entities in their own right. Collectively, the kōrero they carry is the essence that 'brings them to life". The fact they are displayed on mannequins now places them within a human context as kākahu. On reflection their execution was lacking and should have all been at or above the level of Kākahu 3.

The Venetian Pake marquettes are definitely works in progress with much potential. As an unfinished body of work they now provide an opportunity for further testing and exploration. I agree with the feedback from my assessors that although relative to the subject of this exhibition, these are a body of work on their own and would have been better served as a separate exhibition.

The Framed Bone Needles, like the Venetian Pake, are also relative to the subject of this exhibition. However, I am unsure how much they 'brought' to the conversation and if they really needed to be included in it. This is where the benefit of having a curator or experience curating an exhibition is highlighted. Someone who holds the skill to cull what should and what should not be in an exhibition.

Conclusion

My official introduction to Ngā Tamatoa and the Polynesian Panthers was in 2016 when our tutor, Kura Te Waru-Rewiri delivered a 'from the horses' mouth' account of her days with the young warriors. Her truth was life changing for me. Prior to this point I had only 'heard' of these movements but did not know enough to realise their importance in my life. I wonder now if our mum, or nana and papa were at Te Rapunga when the young warriors came to stay in 1972. How did they feel about them? What was it like for our whānau at that time? These are questions that only Aunty Biam might be able to answer for me now.

To think I was surrounded by these movements and lived within the very same neighborhoods and I did not know they existed. I wonder now what our dad and Nana Peka's experiences were like in this time. I wonder if that's why dad didn't want us to grow up in the fa'a Sāmoa way. Had he been affected by the Dawn Raids and racism at the time? Did he keep us from our culture in order to keep us safe? I wish I knew about the Dawn Raids growing up. I would have been able to talk to dad and Nana Peka about it then. These are questions that only Uncle Peter might be able to answer for me now.

The process of completing my masters studies has had untold benefits on multiple levels. Firstly, it goes without saying, this process has been pivotal in understanding myself better. The research findings have confirmed my beliefs about my life experiences and their effect on not only my cultural identity but my identity as a whole. I have learnt my identity is as deep and complex as the universe itself and that it is multi-faceted with tentacles in every direction. I have learnt that my perspective is valid.

Secondly, the immense research required has enabled me to develop and extend on the research skills I already had and at the same time filled my kete immeasurably. The primary growth for me came not in my making skills, that had been a work in progress over the last 5 years. The primary area of growth for me was in my research findings. It was full of 'I didn't knows', 'I didn't realise', and 'unbeknown to mes'! And through it all, I rediscovered my love of writing. Now I have completed writing this report, I realise it was actually for me. I *needed* to write it in order to process my life experiences and understand more about who I am because that is how *my* brain processes, stores and retains information.

Thirdly, making with my sister and articulating my journey in this report has aided me in processing my grief for the loss of both our parents.

This report, like the accompanying exhibition, addresses a subject that is vast and deep. It is a subject that by nature is not static and constantly undergoing change, analysis and development. To cover all aspects of my journey far exceeds the parameters of this study and the limitations of myself as a researcher. It would require a team and multiple studies in so many different directions, it would be a 'life's work'.

I feel both my written and creative works are resolved. There are certainly areas where more work could have been done and I accept that. I also accept that my delivery and articulation of this journey is not at the level I expected it to be for my Masters. I also know I would not have made it this far without the support of many. It is because of them I have finally reached my destination in spite of everything life has thrown at me. There are other pivotal life experiences I have not included in this report. Not because they have not influenced my identity, but because I am not ready to share them yet.

My written and creative works are a true reflection of the multitude of dynamics at play in my reality. Something that can only be fully comprehended by individuals who have walked in shoes the same as mine. My measure of my cultural identity at this point are my thoughts and feelings about it, right here, right now. I can honestly say that I feel comfortable and contented with who I am and where I am at this stage in my life. I can truly say "I know who I am and I know where I belong". My hope is that through my work, others like me will be enabled to eventually say the same. To know that they too are enough and their perspective is valid.

Whakapapa activates this space and connects us to each other. The needle and thread…binding the past with the present whilst contributing to our future…one stitch at a time.
These works speak to the past in an effort to remember, to reactivate and to reconnect with lost identity.
As a multicultural, indigenous woman whose upbringing nurtured a love of learning, I am thankful for the endless opportunities my studies have given me to just "be". Re-learning, re-discovering, and reconstructing who I am is and has always been at the core of everything I have done. Through a continual process of decolonisation, I now have words and frameworks that help articulate and validate my ways of doing.
I can now say "I choose to work "within the margins" (Smith, 2012)**, within the struggle. And from there create and define my own space". Hoana Paul, 2018**

Look to the past to guide the future
Seek that which is lost
For all those who came before, and all those who will come after

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