

Trust the process
and those to whom they have been invested.

**An exhibition report presented as a partial fulfilment of the requirements for the
degree of**

Masters of Māori Visual Arts

Massey University,
Palmerston North,
New Zealand.

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He Mihi Nui- *Acknowledgements.*

I want first to acknowledge my whānau, for allowing me to dream and become who I am. Dad and Mum, I would not be who I am without your loving support. The learning in my whānau flows naturally and firmly because you both live by the values you treasure and practice. Thank you for everything you have shown me about caring for the whānau and community.

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This is also a wero for all my nieces, nephews and mokopuna to follow through with the things they love. You can change and grow a better future for your communities if you engage.

He mara whakautuutu ki te Rangatira, he mara tiria, he mara ate ki te ware, e kore.

A leader in where their industry and skill set an example for others to follow.¹

My two mentors/ whanaunga, are bonded by the art of giving back and toto. To Hemo Ata Henare, you exude what it truly means to collaborate with the community. I have been honoured to witness and participate in many opportunities and wananga. Hopefully, one day, I may find my weaving hands. My supervisor, Kura Te Waru Rewiri He Wahine toa, the sharing of whakaaro throughout my journey as a practitioner of the arts. To trust me and allow me to be part of your world. I thank you, and I am forever grateful for your unwavering support through all that I do.

My AU whanau. Alb, Teenie, Nicole, Trina, William and Dwan, you have supported me through my highs and lows; you inspire me to support kaupapa within our communities to create spaces supporting education, sports, health and social justice. Friendships that last a lifetime keep us together. The things you all do are simple acts of giving back in your ways within your communities. Thank you all for keeping me on track and grounded. Thank you for being the ears when needed and having faith in me.

¹ Grove, N. author, editor, & Mead, H. M. author. (2023). Ngā pēpeha a ngā tīpuna = The sayings of the ancestors. Victoria University Press. Pg 55

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Abstract

Wahine Māori have played instrumental roles as leads with both projects, which is evident in my learning as the practitioner. Wahine Māori artists in this report are highlighted as agents of change and enablers who support and create space for growth and take the lead when needed. This exhibition report navigates the firsthand experiences of two projects that formally catalysed my art practice. The report has no literature review but shares ideologies that support wahine toa to take leadership roles that are perceived as the responsibilities given to the male counterpart. Wahine Māori led both community projects to serve their communities. The projects drew from the customary arts of kowhaiwhai and taniko designs to embellish the new build 'Te Hononga' and refurbish an existing whare, the NorthTec whare Te Puna o Te Mātauranga.

My current work demonstrates my applied methodologies from the context of working in collaboration with others. Values of manaakitanga, ahurutanga, and whanaungatanga supported the projects. My thesis exhibition celebrates where I am and uses kowhaiwhai design units to create multiple visual narratives. This exhibition report navigates the firsthand experiences of two community projects that provided the catalyst for my art practice into the future. I have extracted shapes from an existing composition. I utilise colour and paint applications to give new relevance to my practice and nurture my continued ideals of working for my communities.

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Summary of chapters.

This exhibition report focuses on the processes and the collaborative negotiating within an indigenous Toi Māori cultural paradigm.

Designs from the customary art forms of tukutuku and kowhaiwhai are shifted around within and away from the customary context of the whare. Both projects convey the shift of customary designs from the cultural context of the whare, with some customary mediums exchanged for non-customary substitutes.

The physical format of the customary context of the whare remains intact, but the visual patterns and designs shift. For example, painted kowhaiwhai patterns on rafters become large painted panels between the sidewall pou. Rectilinear patterns move onto the tahuhu. Kowhaiwhai and rectilinear patterns adorn the pou, inside and outside on the mahau, with most of the surfaces left untouched by the chisel. The impact of the works produced for both projects are visibly connected. For my final exhibition submission, I have chosen to deconstruct a large wall panel made in Te Puna o Te Mātauranga, culminating in several irregular, cut-out shapes. Technically, the process whites out coloured parts of each segment but seeks to achieve contrasts through layering colour over colour and white over colour.

My involvement with both projects has been a life-changing experience with the bonus of giving back to the community of my workspace and to Kawakawa, where I attended secondary school. The processes and negotiation for the projects to be completed I have found can be at extremes of easy to overwhelmingly challenging.

Chapter One acknowledges where I was born and raised. I went to AUT, achieved my BFA, and returned home to Moerewa, where I am now. Chapter One shares the influences and mentoring I received from whānau and friends. My community is Moerewa.

Chapter Two shares the experiences of working on the project in 2015, creating works to adorn Te Puna O Te Matauranga, NorthTec Whangarei. Enabling one to work with initiative and practitioners who trust each other has positively impacted my practice as an artist.

Chapter Three discusses the community-led project of the building of the Te Hononga Memorial Park Complex in Kawakawa 2019-2021. Work was created once again for a building, and I worked within a collective for the benefit of the community.

Chapter Four identifies the similarities and differences between both collective projects. It identifies areas of similarities the practitioner uses while working collaboratively on the projects. Both projects were led by wahine Māori, emphasising mana wahine experiential strength and presence in the north.

Chapter Five: My thesis exhibition for this study was held in November 2023 at the Geoff Wilson Gallery, NorthTec in Whangarei. This chapter discusses the artwork created for my thesis exhibition and what the influences from both projects have had on my practice thus far. The development of making and understanding the impact of manipulating customary art conventions, methodology and methods applied.

Chapter 1 Te Hōkai nei i aku tapuwae.-*Tread in my and their footsteps. My foundations.*²

Ko Emiemi te Maunga

Ko Whangaroa te moana

Ko Mamaru te waka

Ko Ngāti Kahu ki Whangaroa te iwi

Ko Ngāti Pākahi te hapū.

Ko Mangaiti te marae

Ko Tau te rangimarie te whare

Kei Moerewa e noho ana ahau

Ko Lorraine King tōku ingōa

‘E kore ngako te rakau ki te tikina ki te pūtake e whakangako ai, engāri me tiki ki matamata.’

A tree does not itch if touched at its base but rather when the extremities are moved.³

This Whakatauki describes the impact of small and big influences you become aware of upon reflection. As I sit here and reflect on several small but significant occurrences, I can now identify minor influences that have impacted my practice. One is reminded of what makes one who and what you are. As an art practitioner, the reminder is a constant.

I have always been drawn to the creative arts. Throughout my schooling, I participated in painting murals and was constantly asked by whānau and friends to create something, make something, paint something. I am blessed as I have creative genes on both sides of my whānau.

My grandmother was an excellent crocheter and knitter, and I fondly remember her sitting for hours and hours creating things for family members. My mum has the best sewing skills, so I never needed to worry about changing things. She was always sewing something for

² Personal communication with Taitai Henare. January 2024

³ Grove, N., & Mead, H. M. (2001). Nga pepeha a ngā tīpuna - The sayings of the ancestors (Reprinted as pbk. 2003). Victoria University Press. Pg32.

someone in the community who was in need. Who needed something? I fondly remember curtains for Otiria Clubrooms being made from material that had fallen off a truck.

So, giving back was a natural act of what my family did for others. On my dad's side, I found out when I was older that there were people in the whānau who were artistic. Dad was always involved in sports teams or clubs within the community of Moerewa, so naturally he coached teams and volunteered his time. He also assisted many of his mates at AFFCO (Allied Farmers Freezing Company) in Moerewa and was the union delegate for years. There was always something both parents were doing. During high school, I was awarded numerous art awards and I decided to pursue this; as you can imagine, a little girl from Moerewa living in Auckland was a slight culture shock, and I eventually moved home after a year. I then worked part-time as a teacher's aide at our local school, Otiria Primary. This was the school that I went to in my primary years. I decided to become a teacher; I used to be allowed to take the lessons every Thursday afternoon in class while the teacher would do some planning.

Later, I moved back to Auckland as I felt this would be where I would get the best education to become a teacher. A friend called me to say they were setting up an art course in Mangere at TWoA (Te Wānanga o Aotearoa). I decided to see my friend's sister, who would be the kaiako, and then I signed up. The rest, I suppose, is history. I never looked back and this ignited my love of painting and engagement with others again.

I had support from key members of the community of Moerewa, who offered me space to exhibit my artwork and sell it. One such place was at the Tuna Café, which Suz Te Tai and Jennifer Martin managed at the time. Through this kind gesture, it helped me financially while I was studying in Auckland. The local Mahaki Gallery, managed by Te Hemo Ata Henare, also supported and allowed me to have my first solo exhibition, which was held in my community. The people I studied with during that time I am still in touch with, and many are still creating and working with their communities.

In the end, I completed a degree in Visual Arts from AUT. And I decided then to come home. I was home for a month and was then asked to go and spend some time in Kaeo as my two brothers and Dad thought that because I had an art degree that majored in painting, I knew how to paint the kitchen walls in my grandparents' home. While up there, I was contacted by Te Hemo Ata, who wanted to see me. I met her at NorthTec in Whangarei and was offered a job teaching a Level Three programme in Moerewa. I was thankful that Moerewa

School supported the initiative, and that my class consisted of many young Māori who needed something to do. Many of these ākonga have gone on to several amazing things within the arts and their interest areas.

This was a learning time for me and the ākonga involved. That first class collectively painted the Moerewa school banners as a koha back to the school. These are still hanging in the school hall. At one stage, I had a class entirely of the staff at the school and they created and adapted what they learnt into the teaching. During this time, we were also involved in many opportunities to be involved in community events. As an art class / course, we supported the community on gala days by doing face paintings. A mural at Simpson Park involved the local tamariki painting it. It was rewarding to see them take ownership of that project.

My days were busy, and much learning came out of the activities. In hindsight, this is where the model of trusting your ability and service to your community began. Working with the community and learning from the engagement, my skills were needed, rewarding, and valued, regardless of the task. Sharing my experience and skills has informed my journey and teaching.

Several years have passed and I still work at NorthTec where I have been again allowed to teach and share what I know about the arts with the Maunga Kura Toi Degree. My responsibility is to give back to the communities that raised me. I am proud of my humble upbringing in the centre of my universe of Moerewa. My MMVA Exhibition Report thesis responds to two significant projects and working collaboratively towards artworks in public spaces.

Whanaungatanga is about relationships, both familial and not. Māori relationships between people must be built upon for things to happen and function. (Mead, 2003) This is a reflective response about myself as a creative practitioner who has been given the opportunities and relationships formed while working on two community projects. My involvement has allowed me to develop and share visual narratives in spaces and places within the community where I work and live.

The experiences of this reflective approach I am reminded that it is about- about learning and understanding the responsibilities of being wahine Māori, a Māori artist, a Māori painter, giving back to my community is a space where and when your voice and creative practice as a Wahine Māori is validated. And through creating, one can connect to a place of one's standing.

Kei te tu- To stand.

The sense of self-worth and being able to be myself around two artists freely. One is contemporary, and the other is customary, and the common commitments that have resonated in both their practices is Tino rangatiratanga—self-determination as Wahine Māori. The relationship between these two whanaunga brought us together at the same place bonding through

whakapapa. The essence of our koha is the drive to be present and working within our communities. Effective leadership is shared leadership, enabling others to initiate along the way. Being part of a

collective and working with a model of Tuakana-Teina naturally

occurred within this working relationship. We gave emphasis to the responsibility we each uphold to whanau hapū and Iwi, with tika and pono for the benefit of others.



Figure 1: Kura Te Waru Rewiri, Lorraine King & Te Hemo Ata Henare. Staff Function NorthTec 2026

Chapter 2. Pono ki te tangata, Puna ko te kaupapa.-*Believing in people, the kaupapa will naturally flourish.*⁴

Te Puna O Te Mātauranga - NorthTec

In 2012, an internal report of the Te Puna O Te Mātauranga department was reviewed and it identified priority actions and projects to raise the success of Māori within NorthTec. Four major components were identified, including the upgrade and completion of Te Puna O Te Mātauranga Marae, which was completed and opened on December 5th, 2015. It took eleven months (Jan 4th to Dec 4th, 2015) to refurbish this Whare wananga at NorthTec, a backbreaking mahi led by wahine.

At this time, the Te Puna o Te Mātauranga Programme Manager was Kura Te Waru Rewiri; she was identified as the lead of this project. Her ability as a practitioner of the arts and her support from the North Tec Council, particularly from Erima Henare, created a space for artists like me to be part of the project. She identified the team as her current staff: Te Hemo Ata Henare, the weaver; Lorraine King, the painter; and Shane Whatarau, the carver. An advisory group was set up. A Kahui Kaumatua group decided that the whare could not represent tupuna. The Team Leader would closely liaise with the Director of North Tec, Phil Giles and the North Tee team of builders and electricians. Project details, including resources and the project's duration to completion, facilitate hui to contribute to wānanga. Kura worked with the Facility Manager and the artists to keep the project on time and within budget.

Work began on Jan 4th, 2015. Due to the fallout over the totara, another carver was brought on board, Te Kuiti Stewart; he would

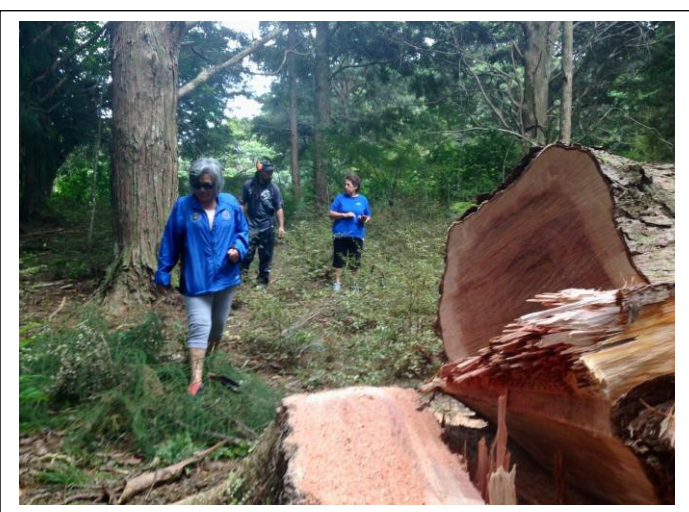


Figure 2: Shane Whatarau, Kura Te Waru Rewiri & Te Hemo Ata Henare, logs for the whare. Towai 2014

⁴ Personal communication with Tatai Henare. January 2024.

also teach Whakairo Rakau on the new Maunga Kura Toi degree programme at NorthTec offered in three strands Whakairo/Raranga/Rauangi. Council funding of less than \$300 K had to cover the team's salaries.

Wahine toa. *Woman of influence.*

What makes this whare wānanga unique is that the team consisted of more women than men and that the project lead was a woman; this had the support from Tohunga Te Warihi Hetaraka. He was also the Māori Advisor to North Tec. Many hands contributed to the whare wānanga, and this has catalysed my practice thus far.

Kura Te Waru Rewiri is a leading Māori artist who has contributed to developing contemporary Māori arts throughout Aotearoa. Her concepts are inspired by the Tiriti o Waitangi, which focuses on the principles of the treaty, heritage rights, land rights, and human rights. Kura began her painting career staking claim to her whakapapa, 'ko wai ahau' in 1985. Her thesis work reflected the carved styles of Ngāpuhi. Concepts of tapu and noa, te kore, te po and te ao contributed to developing a holistic Māori worldview. The influence of Te Hahi Ratana stems from her marae and her great-great grandfather Hapeta Renata on her mother's side. Symbols of the hahi feature in her early 2000 paintings after her father's passing, Apotoro Rehita Hamiora Te Waru-Rewiri. Her early paintings and the expressive use of colour, paint and gestural mark-making have been likened to the marks of whakairo chiselling. In contrast, whakairo rakau was and still is perceived as what men do.

Her influence on my practice occurred at the beginning of the new millennium. I was informed that Kura was whānau; we held the same whakapapa through my King side. Her whānau was mine, and mine hers. I had yet to meet this amazing artist who had work that had influenced my early practice by using an overlay of painting techniques and imagery suspended between the layers to create depth through layers of paint. This had already been something I was drawn to within my practice. Instead, the art of using paint was understanding how to manipulate paint to create interchangeable three-dimensional pieces. Artwork at the time was one of the simple lines or use of geometric forms and shapes. Shapes and their simplicity have always moved me, quite the opposite of hers, but the application of paint during these times created layers, a process I have enjoyed and explored more.

Mahuri hou: *new sapling, working with Kura.*

In September 2014, I was brought on to support the Marae project. I was seconded out of my role as a teacher to be an artist. In turn, I also worked with Kura and the team in numerous areas of the Marae project. The central part was to complete a series of artworks for the walls alongside Kura. These would mirror the design applications of Kura's artwork. On January 4th, 2015, the painting work was ready to start. Kura and I sourced the plyboard, and it took over two weeks to complete the preparation. It was identified that the size of the ply boards would affect the overall visual effect of the paintings, and another solution was sourced when a koha from the current General manager of the Tri-Board in Kaitaia came to our aid. New custom-made to-size MDF boards were ready to start—six panels on each side of the whare.



Figure 3: Kura Te Waru Rewiri & Lorraine King. Starting on boards. NorthTec. Jan 2025

We both had a working relationship within the teaching space. She knew my work ethic. We have a saying within our Māori Arts that is still relevant today; "It's not about us," so practicing this approach to learning and being influenced within the creative space is what needs to happen. Our workspace became a Wahi haumarū, a safe space. Our workspace was the Whakairo classroom, with large, exposed windows and an ample floor space that could cater to the painting, which was 2.6 meters by 1.6 meters. This exposed us to the outside influences of peering eyes. We both agreed that we needed space so that we, as artists, could be left alone without any distractions. Classrooms and teaching surrounded us both. I was fortunate that I wasn't responsible for teaching; Kura, on the other hand, was overseeing the new degree and teaching courses in the New Māori Arts Degree at NorthTec.

As Māori artists, we share similar cultural and family values of reciprocity, service, relationships and understanding, which are essential to collective mahi: whānaungatanga (relationship, kinship, sense of family connection), rangatiratanga (chieftainship, right to

exercise authority), and mohiotanga (knowledge, understanding) often alternated between each of the team. (Mead, 2003) The challenges faced by both artists, being private within their artmaking practice, were the first things to overcome. Working in a space where other people are present and completing work has been an obstacle for me as an artist. I need the time to think, explore, and make the necessary mistakes to move on. Many of my works are unfinished because of this challenge and my way of working. I can understand that this is part of what I do within my practice, that within the making I critique, so part of the unfinished is part of the completed as I move from both to figure things out. The challenge was to work by someone of that calibre within the arts and create work that I had to take ownership of and maintain or create my individuality in the painting and complete it within the timeframe along with the other work I was to do for the Marae project.



Figure 4: Kura Te Waru painting NorthTec February 2015

During our informal sharing of ideas/wananga, we both discussed colour choice. Choosing the colour pallet for such work was a matter of collaboration, significantly impacting my colour pallet created in Te Puna o Te Matauranga. I was a painter who used a limited colour palette and applied paint in numerous

ways in an abstract manner. The Whare project changed my perception, and the next step was using the set colours of yellow, blue, green, maroon, grey and white to create hues that we could create a sense of overlaying of design units—understanding how colours react to each other. A pallet of six colours with white to lighten colour was chosen, and as a point of difference, we agreed not to use the generic colours of red, black, and white for this Wharehui. We started by mixing the same pallet of colours using white and painting with the core of the set colours.

At this stage, we worked together on the panels and then moved to work separately. We were still working together, collaborating on a series of designs that worked in pairs. Kura did



Figure 5: Completed paintings, both Kura's and mine. August 2015

six designs, and I did six designs. Working collaboratively was easy once we decided what we needed to do. The over-layering of design units created movement with each work. Generic kowhaiwhai design elements were utilised and deconstructed. Kura trusted that I could give integrity and mana to the work.

Kura's approach to painting was a softer edge, while my lines were hard-edged. It is a nice contrast. This is only noticeable if you know the artists, and this was one of the subtle differences within the work, along with colour.



Figure 6: Kura's Painting close up NorthTec. Feb 2024

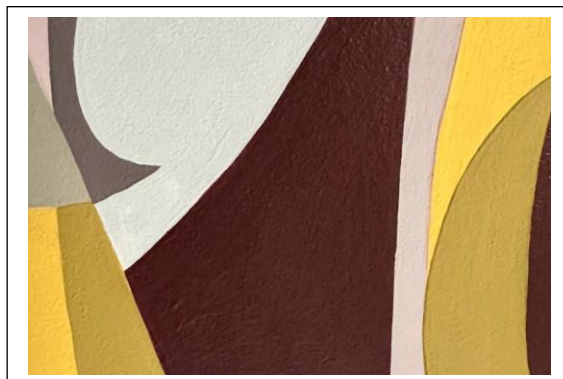


Figure 7: Lorraine's painting close up. NorthTec Feb 2024

The concept of mahi tahi is a natural way of working for the collective interests of the people from an indigenous community. (KA'AI 2008 pg.65) This approach to working on projects identified that more than one has a role and that the contribution to the whole project needs to be maintained to keep the end goal as the focus.

The approach to painting and creating was something that Kura trusted me with. This takes time for artists as the application may not fit the outcome of the finished work. In practice, I already had but had to re-learn and recalibrate to be open to critique. Sometimes, I might have had to lead and make decisions and have open discussion when things were not working and why. I was relearning about my practice and how and when I needed to adjust if needed.



Figure 8: Kura Te Waru Rewiri working, while my painting are last on the right, showing differences in artworks. NorthTec. August 2014

The idea is to work on six paintings, each developed at a particular stage within the project. It came about from the mixing of my colour pallet which was different from that of Kura's, my colours having more intensity, whereas hers followed a softer approach, much like the difference between her soft edges and my hard line in the paintings. Also, she edited units to form shapes, which I just layered and then edited afterwards.

The last painting I took back to Moerewa to work on, and from needing the visual reference points of the other paintings, this was painted with slight differences from the rest. There is more overlay and no editing of shapes. This, I felt on reflection, was something successful as it allowed me time to figure out what was working and to edit shapes. I created a time for me as a practitioner to understand my practice. When completed, it was selected in the left-hand corner of the whare wananga and cut to cater for the doors.

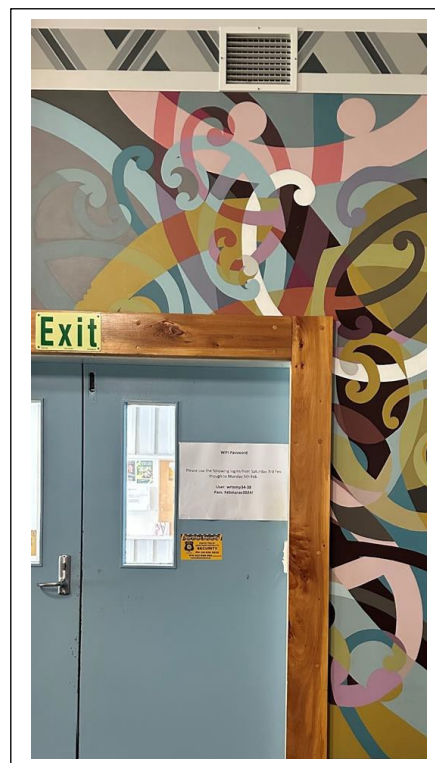


Figure 9: Painting. There is a slight difference in the overlay. NorthTec. Feb2024

Raranga. *Weaving of people. Working with Te Hemo Ata.*

The concept of working as a collective in the art of mahi raranga, the relationships between the art and the people, is a standard practice. The art of the collective is the point of interaction, and the work created together builds relationships and a shared understanding of what must be done for the whole. My other role in the Marae project was working alongside Te Hemo Ata to develop concepts and provide designs for the back and front walls. She is an extraordinary person and is a connector of people and communities through her practice, which spans over 50 years of work within the realm of mahi raranga. Her practice is expansive in the area, and her connection with people also plays an important role.

Her practice has accumulated over decades to learn a broad skill base in raranga, whariki, tukutuku and whatu. Her work and the collective approach to many of her projects, either through commissioned work or those of marae throughout the motu, making whariki for whanau, hapu, and iwi, is a testament to her having made well over 100 mats. This creative approach to her work is driven by the need for her people and the application of giving back to taonga tuku iho.

This approach has led many others to follow and do this, not driven by anything else. The tautoko of one's whānau and friends' things can succeed and flourish. Her approach has influenced others to follow and maintain marae raranga wananga of learning throughout the motu. Te Hemo Ata, Kura and I had many kōrero/wānanga regarding the front and back wall.

I was given the encouragement needed to develop



Figure 11: Lorraine King, Joy Wikitera & Te Hemo Ata Henare. March 2015.-
source: T.H.Henare

a concept that could encapsulate my whakaaro of learning and using the inspiration of

the unrealised potential of people while highlighting the natural resources they use in Raranga. Using plastic tubing in tukutuku was a hurdle for a customary mahi raranga practitioner. This was about trusting myself with an idea, especially for Te Hemo Ata to trust me with these concepts and have the vision of creating them. She had many teams working in pockets throughout the motu to get the mahi done.

Our first wānanga was held at Orakei with her whānau. This group of Wahine were taught by one of Te Hemo Ata's mentors. This wananga I will never forget. Discussions were held about using materials that were not used in a traditional way with tukutuku. Who is this lady with these crazy ideas?

The central theme from many of the weavers after that weekend was that they trusted Te Hemo Ata and her ability within mahi raranga and the art of tukutuku. In this instance, they came around and trusted the process and came to use the materials; they even created a way to support the structure as the quality of the plastic tubing needed to be more structurally firm than the traditional materials they would usually use.

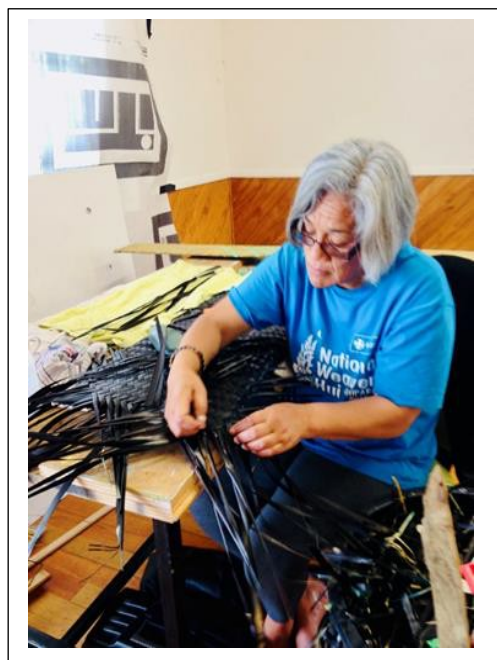


Figure 10: Te Hemo Ata Henare. Working on panel for installation of Te Puna O Te Matauranga. NorthTec. November 2015

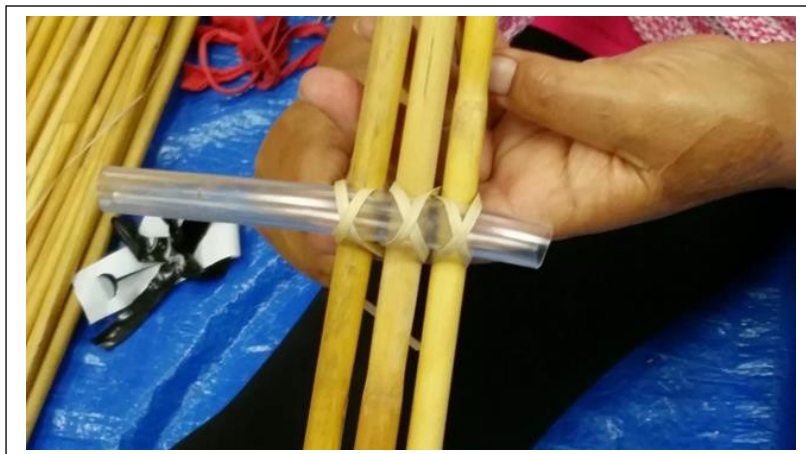


Figure 12: Te Hemo Ata Henare, trial of plastic tubing and kakaho. January 2015

I would often travel with her throughout the year, where I would rest, as the work we did as practitioners was usually long and continuous. I can't weave, but I would be there to share the overall concept and get some well-deserved rest from

continuous days of painting. I learned many factors from having people who believed in and understood me through this time.

The art of raranga is a communal practice compared to that of a solitary painter. Space sharing comes naturally with the ropu of mahi raranga collaboration and trust is woven together and likened to tukutuku. The act of Tuku atu, tuku mai. The act to release, let go, relinquish, grant and gift⁵. My work for the back wall was painting the panels with a



Figure 13: Mereana Leituva, Cristine Anderson & Sue Clark are working on panels. April 2015. Photo Source: T.H.Henare

Poutama pattern. This was a solitary part of the project, but engaging with the weavers was quite the opposite. Some of my hurdles within the project were believing in myself, needing Te Reo, and not being Māori enough with fair skin and blue eyes.

These insecurities have always been with me throughout the making, some days stronger than others. During the last two

⁵ Personal communication with Te Hemo Ata Henare. January 2024

weeks of the work being completed and down at the marae, ready to be installed, a realisation of the project hit me like a pile of bricks. Did I do enough? Did I know what I was doing? Was it appropriate? Was I enough? I was lucky that Te Warahi was there with Te Hemo Ata and spoke during this time. “It was only completed if it were meant to be. Trust your inner strength and realise your potential.” I had people reassuring me as a person. And what I had created would be there for a long time, and people would praise and critique the mahi done.



Figure 14: Lorraine with trials for back wall. September 2015 photo source T.H. Henare

“You have to own it(the artwork) As a tuakana and teina approach. It is important to feel, in reciprocating between each other, we had to trust each other from the start and negotiate how our works would occupy space together as whanaunga, let alone as wahine creatives”.⁶

The work itself is something that was achieved in record time. We sacrificed a lot to do the job and still, to this day, mourn the people lost in that year along the way. We built and cemented bonds between practitioners that will last a lifetime and more. Strengths and weaknesses are identified, and the project still surrounds you—the selfless act for the bigger picture.

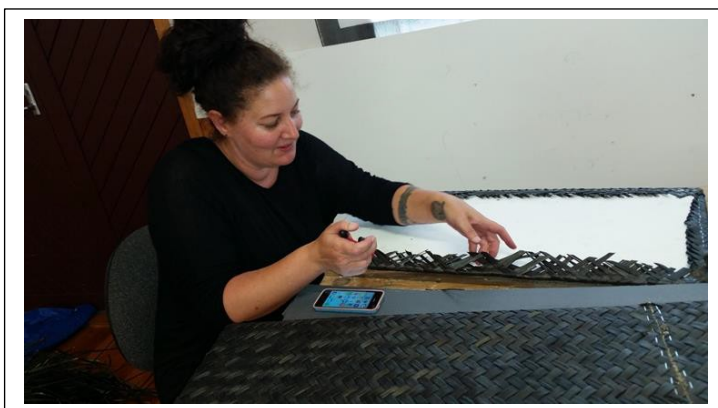


Figure 15: Lorraine King is working on a panel to install Te Puna O Te Matauranga. NorthTec. Nov 2015. Source: T.H. Henare

⁶ Kura Te Waru Rewiri, video recording Te Puna o Te Matauranga October 2022 talking to ākonga.

“The concepts encompass the narratives of 'nga kete o te Matauranga' and the journey through the twelve heavens to attain knowledge and enlightenment. The creative team sought to capture, without the figurative form, the desire to learn, share and grow ourselves towards opportunities to support the dreams and livelihood of our whanau.”⁷

The refurbished Whare and Whare Kai got a new coat of paint and, yes, with blue and maroon. The Whare was opened and refurbished on Dec 5th, 2015. It took 11 months to complete the Whare 'Te Puna o Te Mātauranga.



Figure 16: Te Puna o Te Matauranga. NorthTec. December 2015, Photo source. NorthTec website

⁷ <https://www.northtec.ac.nz/info/te-puna-o-te-matauranga>

Chapter 3 Te Pono ngā te Hononga- *Belief in people, the kaupapa will naturally flourish.*⁸

Te Hononga

Te Hononga is a community building that was created by the vision of community by the Kawakawa Hundertwasser Memorial Park Charitable Trust (KHPCT) in December 2009.

Its aim was to preserve the memories and legacy of Friedensreich Hundertwasser's contribution to Kawakawa. He designed and built the public toilets that seem to be one of the most famous toilets in New Zealand. This has brought many people to visit the north. Te Hononga environmental build and design with natural materials, Māori art, culture, and shared community spaces was the vision for the collaboration with the trust, in co-governance with Ngati Hine, they wanted to create a visual experience for locals and visitors, with a ground-floor interpretive Centre and memorial to Hundertwasser, a first-floor gallery and community workshop, and a viewing platform looking out across the park.

Hono. *The joining of people*

In 2019, I was approached by Pita Tipene regarding a new building that would be built in Kawakawa to share some ideas and support an art gallery inside the building. I soon realised that this project would take over two years from start to completion. This building was in its infancy as the plans from the architect and the community engagement needed to come together. An idea from what little information was shared was to identify artists from the Ngati Hine area with support from the Ngati Hine Runanga. Because I live in the area, but don't whakapapa to Ngati Hine, I spoke to Te Hema Ata who is of Ngati Hine descent.

⁸ Personal communication- Tatai Henare January 2024

We attended the first community hui to listen to the architects' concepts and artists' impressions of this new building. It was noted after the hui that Ngati Hine artists needed to be involved and at the forefront of the build and not just added at the last minute like many other buildings that have happened in the past; this was an opportunity for all parties to be involved in the design of the building from the ground up. A group of artists were identified, and the wānanga and mahi began. This process identified that artists could impact all areas within the building, and Ngati Hine Runanga fully supported the kaupapa. The building involved the Hundertwasser Kawakawa Trust, Far North Holdings and Ngati Hine. The Hundertwasser Kawakawa Trust and their



Figure 17: Theresa Reihana, Te Hemo Ata Henare, Laurell Pratt, Maude Cook-Davies, Pat George. Te Hononga, Kawakawa 2020. Photo source: Norma Shepherd.

Ngati Hine representatives met, and we, as a collective of practitioners, shared the concepts of what could be done. The Trust then employed a project manager to manage artists and areas of the overall building. Dealing with groups and managing these at times was a struggle, as was meeting looming deadlines and dealing with many places and people.

Te Tautuhi: *Identifying the artists.*

The project identified a group of artists, which included me, and allowed us to create artwork for this space. The team consisted of Maude Cook, a ceramicist and designer and our project lead for us artists. Te Hemo Ata Henare - Mahi Raranga, Theresa Reihana- Painter, Te Warihi Hetaraka- Tohunga Whakairo. Peter Sharp left before the start of the artwork, so Pat George – a mosaic artist, came on to complete and create work in the toilet areas.

Over 30 areas were identified to share pūrakau from the Ngāti Hine area. Our first meeting with artists identified the areas of interest and artists assigned to do the work. The artists researched and developed concepts for their assigned areas. We had some wānanga to discuss concepts for each area and ensured our ideas and overall theme were consistent. We even went on a drive around the regions of Ngāti Hine, looking at the soils and the colours of these areas to be inspired by what we had in our backyard. The visual inspiration of this was something that we, as a ropu of artists, identified as a critical factor within the build. Our overarching theme pivoted upon the mnemonics of what we visually see around Ngāti Hine. We were tasked to encapsulate some prominent narratives within the area to highlight them to the people of Ngāti Hine.

Mahi tahi: *The Making*

Part of the building was structurally insulated rammed earth (known as a sirewall) made by a company from Canada who are experts in rammed walls and with whom we travelled around with on their first visit to identify soils that could be used for the building. They ended up teaching the processes and had several youths on a training project with Regent Training, working on the construction of the walls. Collaboration with local youth and Māori created a catalyst for everyone to be involved, because ownership takes place as they develop a sense of accomplishment.

I identified areas that I could design. These were the window areas of the dedicated workshop space and the curtain wall of windows in the library area. The skill base of understanding scale had to be applied, and measurement was the key to achieving what I did. Pip Boulton, the architect, worked on ensuring my first drawings aligned with the size of these windows, especially within the scaling process, and ensuring my measurements were accurate.

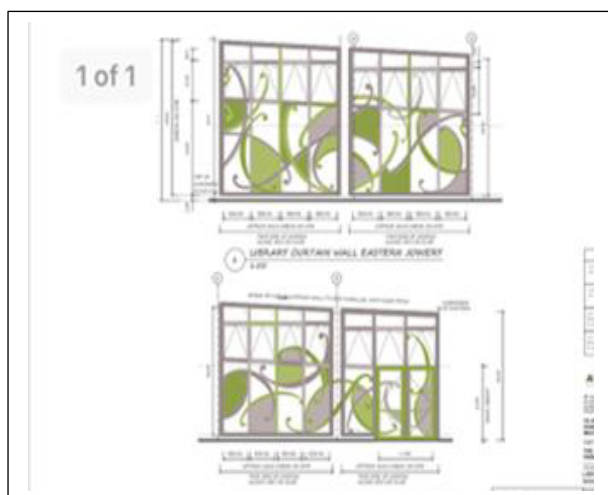


Figure 18: Library window Plans- Te Hononga, Kawakawa.



Figure 19: Library windows. Te Hononga. Kawakawa. Jan 2014

I wanted to investigate shapes more, and use block colours that were translucent enough to both show colour and cast shadow, as the curtain window walls were an ample space within the library that needed to give privacy for those who would be in there but also create a movement, depending on where you were positioned and what time of the day you were in the building. As a result, a series of original design styles and colour variances were created. The colour of the window frames changed depending on the colour beside them to give a subtle change, rather than the frame being of one colour that would pause the movement of the shapes visually.

During this time, Theresa decided that she needed help completing some of the work she had identified and allocated to her due to whanau commitments. She asked me to take this over and complete those paved areas surrounding the building and the concrete area in front of the building. This meant slight changes due to money constraints and the scale of her original designs to create the cutouts for the inlay of shapes around the building. The area in front of the building was another hurdle as I had to make minor design adjustments to account for the rock columns and changes occurring often due to time and money. This would be the biggest work, that would take the shortest time to paint. And even more daunting was not that I couldn't do this alone, but I had to paint in public. I needed to take some time off work; Te Hemo Ata and Tash Nikora, my North Tec work colleagues, offered to help.



Figure 20: View of painting. Kawakawa October 2021

Tash Nikora helped measuring and drawing up the work on the concrete and painting it. Pohatu shares ideologies of mauri: that when engaged, reflection happens. We are awakened. Relationships come, and then so does participation. This constantly evolves and is not static. So too, are roles and responsibilities with one another within the collaboration (Pohatu. pp 83).

As practitioners throughout this build, I realised that if and when we needed support, we were there to awahi. It was a natural process throughout the project. This particular artwork was located between a shop and the famous Hundertwasser toilets. I was lucky to have fencing and shade cloth placed by the footpath, giving me some privacy. We completed this work the night before the opening.

The collective collaboration with the community and networking created this building: it wasn't the artists; we were the conduits. Many hands helped to serve the community.

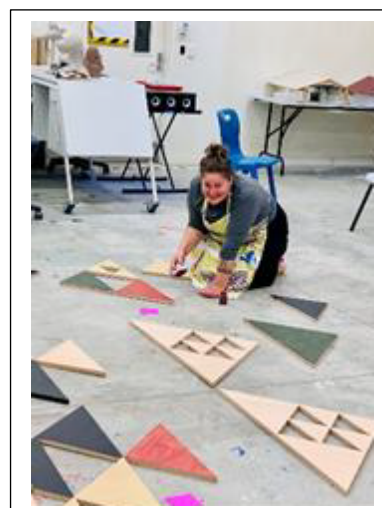


Figure 21: Lorraine is painting and working on the corner wall. NorthTec. August 2021

One of Te Hemo Ata's assigned areas was the only corner wall within the building, and we looked at a work based on Taniko patterns that could be attached to the outside of the building; this meant that as artists, we could come together to create the artwork, even it was arranging the triangular shapes to scale and painting them.

I was then asked to create designs for the doors. This was a simple task, and they were laser cut and painted in colours depending on where the doors were; all doors were different within



Figure 22: Front door Te
Hononga Buidng.Kawakawa
2020

the building. Five in total were designed. The front door needed more time to create due to making sure this visually responded to the outside having Hundertwasser columns outside.

This project's central theme was similar to Te Puna O Te Mātauranga, where we needed 'to trust the process'; things happen for a reason, and we can adapt as creatives to navigate the hurdles and learn from them. The only difference between the two projects is that one is a whare wānanga and a community service centre. One was already shaped as a building and built from the ground up but both of them serve many purposes for the community.

Te Puna o Te Mātauranga is a place of gathering for Māori and its' communities; The other is to be used as a building that houses a library, gallery, and the Far North District Council service centre.

"Lorraine said that 'we all needed to trust each other, trust each other's abilities, and trust the process', and I couldn't agree with her more," says Pip. "We had a diverse group of people with different abilities working very closely together, but we remained steadfast. That's what made this project so incredibly special and unique. It's not often you get to design a building with purpose and meaning and work alongside its' community. There is a diverse range of people who care about this collaborative initiative. For me, it was a dream come true."⁹



Figure 23: Te Hononga. Kawakawa. February 2023. Photo Source: Website

Te Hononga Hundertwasser Memorial Park in Kawakawa was officially opened by the Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern in October 2021, the vision of the Kawakawa Hundertwasser Memorial Park Charitable Trust, Ngati Hine Runanga, artists, and locals. Te Hononga, Hundertwasser Memorial Park won the Innovation Award, Gold Award at the NZ Commercial Project Awards, and three at the 2021 Auckland/Northland Regional ADNZ Resene Design Awards.

⁹ <https://www.gib.co.nz/assets/Uploads/Te-Hononga-The-Joining-Of-Cultures.pdf>

Chapter 4- Tuia te mana Mareikura tui, tuia- *Weaving the female essence*.¹⁰

Wahine Toa: worth of a woman.

Wahine Toa, a transformation of working with wahine, was a common thread between both projects. This created a monumental change in leadership and decision-making.

The Whare holds a significant cultural and spiritual importance for Māori communities. These spaces are repositories of ancestral knowledge, storytelling, and community gatherings. Wahine have led projects to do with Whare Whakairo reclaiming and revitalising traditional practices, protocols, and governance structures. In this instance, it is within the art created for these two projects and the leadership to do so.

In Whare, Wahine Māori play critical roles as kaitiaki (guardians) and leaders in preserving cultural practices and promoting community well-being. Through their leadership, Wahine Māori uphold the principles of Manaakitanga (hospitality), Whanaungatanga (relationships), and Kaitiakitanga (stewardship) within their communities. By centring indigenous perspectives and values in decision-making processes, Wahine Māori contribute to the creation of innovative governance structures and promoting inclusive and equitable leadership practices. This shifts the perceptions and stereotypical thinking of wahine Māori in art roles. It creates a space for many wahine art practitioners to occupy.

Each carving is shaped by the carver's individual talents and desires and the various choices made about composition and surface decoration. Yet the individual carvers' choices are governed by the aesthetic framework that makes demands on what the carver might and can do.¹¹

As Skinner notes, each work is shaped by their individuality and within the confines of a whare; this sets a tone of where and what can be created. Within my work and those from Te Puna O Te Mātauranga, the aesthetic framework was for change to occur, and carvings represent educational aspirations where tipuna representation could be applied. The Whare

¹⁰ Personal communication with Taitai Henare January 2024

¹¹ Skinner, D. (2008). *The carver and the artist: Māori art in the twentieth century*. Auckland University Press Pg.3

wananga still has the formal elements of a whare. The creatives have shifted elements within the whare, and the layout of art forms in customary visual aspects changes.

Orite: *Similarities*

Both projects have their place in the community in particular ways, and both serve the community. Wahine art practitioners have had significant project roles with both projects. and are transformative, highlighting the potential for Wahine Māori. As described by Jenkins:

When it arrived on Aotearoa's shore, Western civilisation did not allow its womenfolk any power – they were merely chattels and, in some cases, less worthy than the men's horses. The coloniser found a land of noble savages narrating [...] stories of the wonder of women. Their myths and beliefs had to be reshaped and retold. ¹²

Underpinning the roles and responsibilities of Wahine Māori is pivotal to advancing the capability and capacity of Wahine Māori to take the lead in making decisions for future projects.

As Mikaire shares:

contradictions brought about by colonised perceptions of our roles as Wahine Māori and the effects that have been held to this day on leadership roles. This creates a dialogue supporting mana wahine through Cosmo genealogical narratives, whakapapa, and our societal roles. Male dominance of colonisation has affected the status and roles currently. ¹³

Ngāti Hine emphasised honouring the Tupuna Hine a Maru by creating work in Te Hononga that honours the Tupuna and its iwi. In Te Puna O Te Matauranga, leaders gave artistic control to a woman, where we have paintings that embrace you when you enter the Whare. Typically, this would be tukutuku, beside pou. Geometric patterns adorn the tahuhi and pou have no visual representation of tupuna. It is a powerful movement that challenges the perception of traditional norms and representations. Wahine artists who embody Tino Rangatiratanga and

¹² Mana Wahine Reader | A Collection of Writings 1999-2019, Volume II P.9

<https://www.puketeraki.nz/site/puketeraki/Mana%20Wahine%20Volume%202.pdf>

take the lead, leave a legacy for many future creatives. Wahine Māori artists within projects like this are redefining women's societal roles and empowering themselves through the art they create within public spaces.

Te Hemoata shares one aspect of her practice as a kai raranga:

“What I have been given in my practice and those who have taught me. I am only a carrier of this, and it is my place to share the knowledge. Being able to bring people together is what drives me—giving back to my people. The roles that we have as wahine can determine how we do things. Working on projects has led me to believe that what we do within the art of mahi raranga can change people's lives and reclaim a woman's self-worth and self-determination. I have seen it in many of my tauira and people within my communities throughout the years.”¹⁴

This highlights the selfless act of giving back to people; the artist is the carrier that leads to reclaiming self-worth through art, providing a visual voice for wahine. The male leaders in both projects supported and ensured the wahine was safe in all aspects of the project. This allowed them to assert their presence in a traditionally male-dominated artistic leadership domain, challenging gender norms and redefining cultural narratives.

Mahi tahi means working together for the common goal, as mahitahi is a Māori customary way of working together for the collective interests of the people or the Indigenous community. (Ka'ai 2008) In both projects, we see the power of Wahine pulling together for the overall work. We need to work collectively to maintain the integrity of the artwork and support one another. The Māori worldview of Kotahitanga is an expression of one self-self-identity within the collective, working with mutual and reciprocal support.

Differences.

Te Hononga was the vision for the Kawakawa Business Association and Frederick Hundertwasser, as he lived in the area and designed the famous public toilets in Kawakawa in the early nineties. His love for the whenua and the area was a driving force to create a building that was at one with nature, a contrast with the little town of Kawakawa with a railway track

¹⁴ Personal communication. 20th January 2024.

running through the middle of the town. This was contributed to and supported by local iwi Ngāti Hine. The group of wahine included Maude Cook Davies as the artist lead and Laurell Pratt as the project manager who dealt with companies doing work for us, made funding applications and set the budgets. Because this was a new build, artists were initially paid for their concept work. Once each area of the site was completed, artists were assigned to those spaces. Funding had been set aside for artist contributions. The project ran over a two-year period.

Te Puna o Te Mātauranga was an idea of five kaumatua realising the importance of education for Te Tai Tokerau through a community college, and for a whare wananga to be the first point of entering the community college. This was left without it being dressed for several years; artists at the time were teaching staff, so work was created as a secondment, and staff were removed from their roles to develop the work physically. Time was also a restriction, as the design and making of the artwork for the whare wananga had to be completed within a year.

Wahine artists have been pivotal in promoting cultural revitalisation and intergenerational knowledge transfer. Their art educates and inspires others to engage with culture, language, and traditions. By reclaiming and celebrating their Indigenous identities, the philosophies of working as a collective guarantee Tino rangatiratanga within each collective member. Wahine Māori artists empower their communities and pave the way for a more inclusive and equitable society.

Chapter 5 Mahi- *To make, practice and process.*

A, ka kitea i reira, e tuhi ana, e rapa ana

*Yes, it was discovered there by its making and sheen.*¹⁵

This reference to finding Greenstone comes from a song. Still, in this instance, I have felt that it can be applied to the discovery of the start of something within my practice, whereby reflective thinking of what these two projects have done within my practice as a painter has developed a style of using both shapes and applications of paint with the deconstruction of kowhaiwhai.

The trusting collaboration processes with the two projects identified many areas within the methodology. Smith explains that peoples of Indigenous cultures have their ethics, and the indigenous practitioner's responsibility is to find out what these ethics are within their practice. These come with their principles and values. It supports and validates the narratives of the indigenous voice. It also conveys that Indigenous Peoples have their codes of ethics, and it is up to the researcher and, in this case, the practitioner to find what those are and where they sit within the research of the researcher. The indigenous voice sets the tone and standards for completing the tasks. (Smith 2021)

Tikanga was as simple as understanding how to keep quiet. To listen. Reflect and learn. Many of these methods take on a personal note: the need to reflect on experiences to learn from them. The cultural considerations identified throughout the process as an artist. These exemplars of Māori values and ethics are used when working and collaborating.

Whakakotahi rua: *Merging the two*

These were foundations within my kaupapa when working on both projects. Whakawhirinaki-Trust. To honestly believe in what other practitioners and yourself are doing and understand that trust is reciprocal. Tika And Pono: truth correctness, directness, justice, fairness. To be accurate, valid, honest, genuine, sincere. To be truthful, even when egos get in the way, have the courage and voice to share your thoughts and feel validated. Whānaungātanga: mutual

¹⁵ Grove, N., & Mead, H. M. (2001). *Nga pepeha a ngā tipuna - The sayings of the ancestors* (Reprinted as pbk. 2003). Victoria University Press. P.15

respect between artists, identifying the common ground in the work being done. The nature of the work and the friendship and support when needed. Mahi Tahi: The collective works on a project for the collective. Selfless act for the bigger picture. Titiro: To watch and to be silent. To learn from others. Tino Rangatiratanga: to empower yourself and those around you. For leadership to happen within the team is not a sole act.

In both projects, the design elements are notable forms of kowhaiwhai, and the use of kowhaiwhai has been evident in my work, sometimes subtle and sometimes blatant.

“A perspective for understanding the creative process today regarding kowhaiwhai is specific to the individual. Creating kowhaiwhai patterns starts with exploring architecture, form, and institutions drawn from the collective atmosphere. A path of searching, introspection and empathy for kowhaiwhai is necessary to connect with metaphoric, figurative, abstracted and symbolic expressions of the seen and unseen environments.”¹⁶

It allows the artist, myself, as a painter, to draw visually to indigenise what is to become and where it belongs; kowhaiwhai carries a metaphor that carries whakapapa, growth and influence. It consists of patterns with positive and negative spaces to create a continuum between the seen and unseen; as Mason alludes, the artist, within their skill and exploring symbolic expressions for the particular environment. It allows for innovation of form, patterns and placement. My main objective for this artwork was to merge my way of working from both. I learn from reflecting, expression, and my making experiences. It is a way of understanding the application of materials and where I belong. Thinking about the work sometimes takes you on a journey before you start. I must be ready for this, and then it comes.

The idea of trusting yourself within the context of doing and making is something that, within being in a state of mind, Marsden powerfully states, 'Mauri was a force of energy meditated by hauora- the breath of the spirit of life. "Mauri ora is the life force transformed into life principles by the infusion of life itself" (Marsden 2003, pg.44). How I operate my well-being within myself, and my surroundings is critical to one's art-making practice. This meant I needed the time to think and make sense of it all. It is a state of mind that requires clarity to

¹⁶ Te Waru Rewiri, K., & Borell, N. 1973-editor. (2011). Kura: story of a Māori woman artist. Mangere Arts Centre. P. 43

understand your ability and allow your creativity to flow. It was as simple as identifying shape and colour. Both have always been part of my practice, and it only resonated through much internal wānanga.



Figure 24: Artwork. Geoff Wilson Gallery. NorthTec November 2023

Whakawhirinaki/Trust in myself.

I am creating a sense of accomplishment and a visual representation of inner strength and determination to overcome. Often exploring the idea of identity, empowerment and, in this case, self-expression and self-resilience. I reclaim my narrative and the visual aspect through strength and resilience. Growth begins with the unknown, and it develops over time. Dominant narratives that may have marginalised Māori women are now expressed through art and have laid the foundations for artists like myself. My making for oneself in this exhibition allowed my paint application to be re-ignited. Using finishes of whitewashes to conceal and create depth within layers, it explores the duality of both my painting



Figure 25: Close up on artwork. November 2023

before the projects and that of now. Influences of graphic application of colour within the Te Puna O Te Mātauranga and the understanding of negative shapes in Te Hononga. Deconstructed shapes form and create new shapes with open negative spaces being part of the work and arrangements being as organic as the formed relationships.



Figure 26: Beside my artwork. Geoff Wilson Galley. NorthTec. November 2023. photo source. F. McManus

Conclusion

He tina ki runga, he tamore ki raro.

Contentment above, firmly rooted below. ¹⁷

Tino Rangatiratanga engages in artmaking as a form of cultural resistance, empowerment, and self-expression. They are artistically asserting their sovereignty, celebrating heritage, and shaping art and cultural narratives. Wahine Māori embody sovereignty and self-determination, crucial in Māori art-making practices. Art has been a powerful medium through which we express identity, reclaim heritage, assert autonomy and lead. This has been shown in the two projects: leadership within those roles develop and enables the collective to work together. It is a testament to the two, Te Waru-Rewiri and Henare in particular, that their leadership qualities supported me in both projects. The art of creating and reclaiming my practice has been a journey. The two projects I have been involved in have shown me that I can give rewards far beyond the making of art. Relationships and giving back to the community lead me to have a purpose, and artmaking is the vessel used.

Tiheiwa, Tihei mauri ora!

¹⁷ Grove, N. author, editor, & Mead, H. M. author. (2023). Ngā pēpeha a ngā tīpuna = The sayings of the ancestors. Victoria University Press. Pg.125.

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