

Copyright is owned by the Author of the thesis. Permission is given for a copy to be downloaded by an individual for the purpose of research and private study only. The thesis may not be reproduced elsewhere without the permission of the Author.



# From Shadelands to— **Shade Lands** *Painting as a Place Inquiry*

**Turi Park**

**From Shadelands to Shade Lands: Painting as a Place Inquiry**

Turi Park 2026

Submitted in partial fulfilment of a Master of Fine Arts

Massey University

How can painting, as a situated research practice, trace the shadows, absences, and unease within Pākehā ways of seeing?



## G U L F

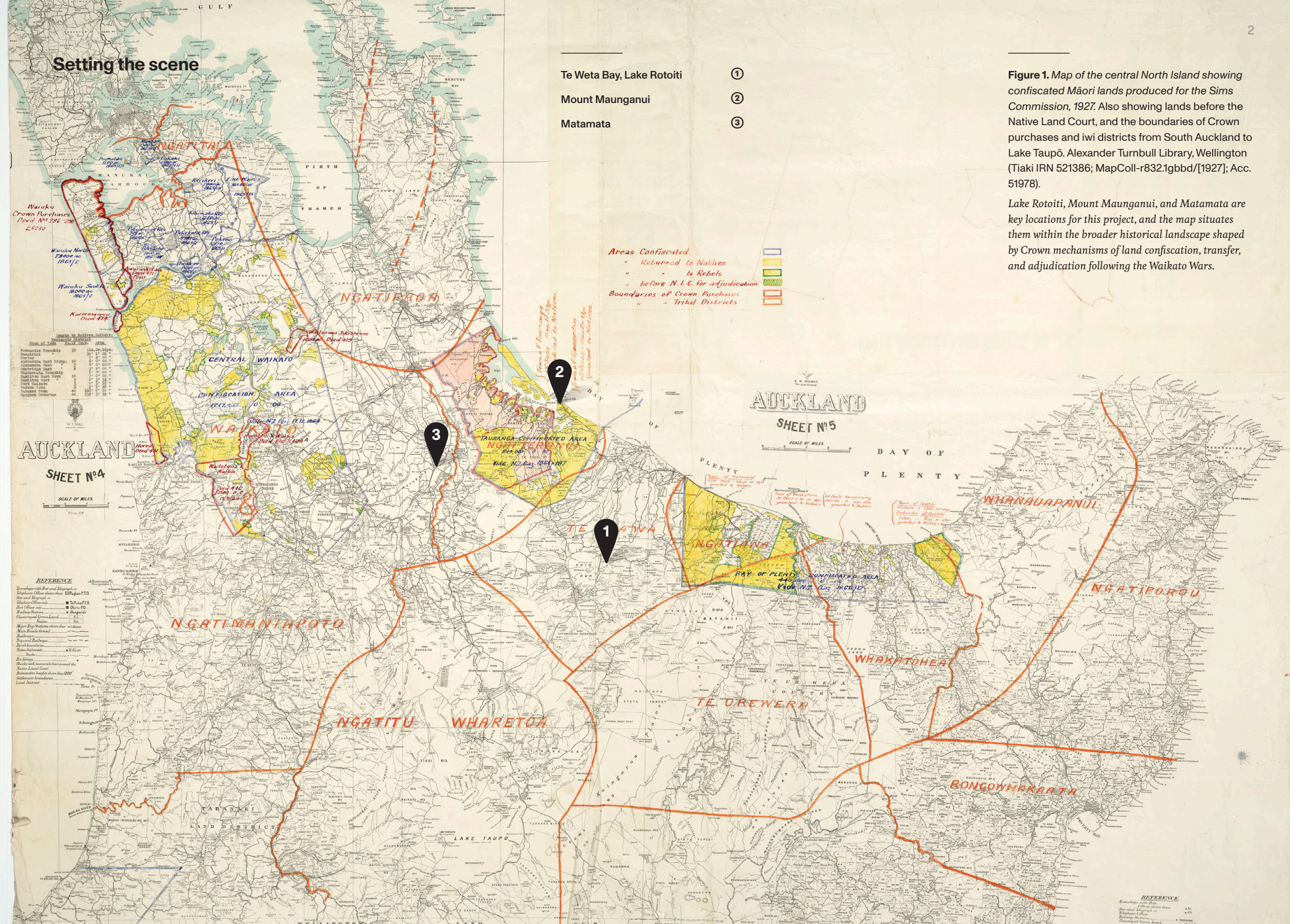
①

②

©

*Lake Rotoiti, Mount Maunganui, and Matamata are key locations for this project, and the map situates them within the broader historical landscape shaped by Crown mechanisms of land confiscation, transfer, and adjudication following the Waikato Wars.*

*Lake Rotoiti, Mount Maunganui, and Matamata are key locations for this project, and the map situates them within the broader historical landscape shaped by Crown mechanisms of land confiscation, transfer, and adjudication following the Waikato Wars.*





From Shadelands  
to— **Shade Lands**  
*Painting  
as a Place Inquiry*

**Turi Park**

**From Shadelands to Shade Lands: Painting as a Place Inquiry**

Turi Park 2026

Submitted in partial fulfilment of a Master of Fine Arts

Massey University

How can painting, as a situated research  
practice, trace the shadows, absences, and  
unease within Pākehā ways of seeing?



## Abstract

My project *From Shadelands to Shade Lands: Painting as a Place Inquiry* investigates how painting, as a research-led practice, can question and reframe inherited Pākehā ways of seeing land in Aotearoa.

The project begins from the recognition that these visual habits have often treated whenua as property, resource, or scenery—modes of looking that supported colonial occupation and continue to shape how many Pākehā understand place. In response, the research engages with relational understandings of mana whenua, grounded in their whakapapa, reciprocity, and ongoing connection. Painting emerges as the primary site through which these different ways of seeing are brought into relation, overlap, and which sometimes unsettle one another.

The work is anchored in a specific place: my family's holiday home at Lake Rotoiti near Okere Falls. Four generations of my maternal family have lived with this place in shifting ways, forming an archive of memory, affection, silence, and uncertainty. Treating this site as a case study allows me to examine how belonging and dislocation are inherited, and how Pākehā ways of seeing influence what is noticed, retold, or forgotten.

Through a sustained ecology of research, looking, memory, and material process, my painting functions as both method and inquiry. The works engage with the shadows, gaps, and hesitations that shape my family's relationship to Rotoiti. The paintings do not aim to resolve these tensions; instead, they make them visible—showing where attachment, habit, unease, and colonial inheritance intersect.

Overall, the project argues that painting can contribute to remaking Pākehā relationships with place by slowing familiar modes of looking and opening space for reflection, responsibility, and developing more grounded forms of connection to whenua no longer held in Māori land title.



## Acknowledgements

Kia ora koutou e te whānau o Whiti o Rehua,

Looking back, I now understand why you taught me to figure things out for myself—and why the work of “learning to un-learn” was always going to be mine, not yours. It has taken me most of the MFA to recognise this. The late-afternoon shadows in the eddies of my genealogical relationships gradually revealed themselves and began to register. Only through my own mahi, and the uneasy discomfort that ensued—and still lingers—could this happen. I have had to feel it fully, own it, and search for the surface I might move toward before I could express it with any honesty.

There was support for me to engage genuinely, even when it was uncomfortable. The learnings have been exponentially deeper because of this approach—not despite the difficulty, but because of it.

To Huhana, Julieanna, Shannon, Jonathan, Hemi, and all: for your patience, care, and guidance as I painted my way toward better understanding, I offer my heartfelt thanks. I will be forever grateful.

I wish to honour my teacher, mentor and friend, Kate Coolahan ONZM, who passed away in January 2025. She believed fiercely in my potential and encouraged me to push hard—into the “scary magic” beyond the horizon of what we think we can do. Her “positive frame of reference” approach to teaching, alongside high standards, discipline, and an unwavering faith in sustained creative focus, has been significant to my development as an artist and continues to resonate in how I work.<sup>①</sup>

I te kore, ki te pō, ki te ao Mārama.

*From the void, to the darkness, to the world of light.*

To my Jane, whose strength, patience, art-historical background and Irish eyes(!) have made the privilege of this study possible. To Georgia, our gifted designer—*let’s go, girl!* I can’t wait to see how you will soar. To Jack—*go hard, my guy!* Massey School of Music and a massive audience awaits. And to beautiful Connie, up there now watching us from above—and being very good at not barking.

To Mum, for the canny heads-up forty years ago that being an artist is bloody hard work—and for making the big space for art in our world. As with most things, you are right. For all the magical days up at Te Weta Bay; and for trusting me with your stories of connection too, even as I’m learning to see new things for myself—and through my old eyes.

To my siblings—Matiu and Kate, Marika and Pule, Tim and Mārama—held in whanaungatanga, here. To all of my Banks auntsies, cousins, and Richard and Frankie, and the Cathies.

And to Julian, Rayleen, and your fine library team; and to Kathy, Lawrence, Tony, Piripi, Rebecca, Rebecca, Bob, Tim, Kingsley, Simon, Shaun, Mike, Will, Caroline, Martin, and Virginia—thank you. You have all been open and extraordinary, even when I have consistently complicated familiar narratives.

To Nonna and Grandad, of course, for all of those early lessons, the first chapters that continue to guide us. I know more now that the times you lived were complex, but my love and regard remain undiminished.

To Lake Rotoiti—ngā mihi for being both anchor and mirror throughout this project. *The Grove of Life* endures here. I acknowledge the mana of this whenua and Ngāti Pikiao as mana whenua, original and continuing kaitiaki of this land.

And with deep aroha and a sly wink to Dad. I see you watching from up there—with those phat kererū in the sun. I can now see, with more clarity and curiosity, that your way of seeing the sly theatrics embedded in how we see this country is big, wild, spirited, and generous.

I reckon I’m ready now, Bro. *Let’s do this.*

1. The phrase *positive frame of reference* is used here as it is articulated by jazz maestro Wynton Marsalis in relation to creative pedagogy. See Wynton Marsalis: *The Sound of Democracy*, BBC World Service, 12 Oct. 2021. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p0lr0zt6>.

See also: <https://art-newzealand.com/104-kate/>





---

**Figure 2.** *Shifting shadows and reflections where water and land meet. Lake Rotoiti, 2024. Digital photograph by Turi Park.*



## List of figures

|                                                                                                                          |    |                                                                                                                    |    |                                                                                                                     |    |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| <b>Figure 1.</b> Map of the central North Island showing confiscated Māori lands produced for the Sims Commission, 1927. | 2  | <b>Figure 19.</b> Western end of Lake Rotoiti from above Taheke (Ōpātia) Marae, looking south east.                | 26 | <b>Figure 43.</b> Surface Tension.                                                                                  | 49 |
| <b>Figure 2.</b> Shifting shadows and reflections where water and land meet.                                             | 6  | <b>Figure 20.</b> Rotoiti S.D. (Survey District) map.                                                              | 26 | <b>Figure 44.</b> Geological map of Rotoiti Survey District.                                                        | 50 |
| <b>Figure 3.</b> Sunrise from above Mount Ngongotahā, with Lake Rotorua and Lake Rotoiti beyond.                         | 8  | <b>Figure 21.</b> Rules of CEMA (Cedric and Marjorie) Lodge.                                                       | 27 | <b>Figure 45.</b> The door to Nonna and Grandad's bedroom.                                                          | 50 |
| <b>Figure 4.</b> Shadelands Motorcamp, Mount Maunganui, from May and Rata Streets looking towards Tauranga Harbour.      | 10 | <b>Figure 22.</b> Loki Puleitu peeling apples with his Nana.                                                       | 28 | <b>Figure 46.</b> Sun-split sticker on the glass sliding door.                                                      | 52 |
| <b>Figure 5.</b> (Most of) the Banks family today.                                                                       | 12 | <b>Figure 23.</b> Reflections of the late afternoon sun on native bush.                                            | 29 | <b>Figure 47.</b> The Blinds Drawn (Shadelands).                                                                    | 53 |
| <b>Figure 6.</b> Where Sunshine Spends the Winter (Shadelands).                                                          | 13 | <b>Figure 24.</b> I Carry My Landscapes Around with Me.                                                            | 30 | <b>Figure 48.</b> Exterior view of the royal train carriage used during the Duke of Cornwall and York's 1901 visit. | 54 |
| <b>Figure 7.</b> Hinemoa, the Māori Girl.                                                                                | 14 | <b>Figure 25.</b> Afternoon reflections: raupō at the lake edge.                                                   | 32 | <b>Figure 49.</b> The Blinds Drawn (Shadelands).                                                                    | 54 |
| <b>Figure 8.</b> Swimming all day in the whenua.                                                                         | 14 | <b>Figure 26.</b> Late afternoon sun on blinds.                                                                    | 34 | <b>Figure 50.</b> Morning sun on native bush in winter, Te Weta Bay, Rotoiti.                                       | 55 |
| <b>Figure 9.</b> A View Taken in the Bay of Oaite Peha (Vaitepiha), Otaheite (Tahiti).                                   | 17 | <b>Figure 27.</b> The old kitchen at the lake.                                                                     | 36 | <b>Figure 51.</b> The presence of an absence.                                                                       | 56 |
| <b>Figure 10.</b> Lake and hill forms in a cracked shop-window film                                                      | 18 | <b>Figure 28.</b> Reflecting on being in place.                                                                    | 38 | <b>Figure 52.</b> Reference photograph for the view painted across thirteen roller blinds.                          | 57 |
| <b>Figure 11.</b> Motorcade (Rites of Passage).                                                                          | 20 | <b>Figure 29.</b> Reuben Sutherland with my mother, Lindsay Park, in the old kauri clinker dinghy on Lake Rotoiti. | 39 | <b>Figure 53.</b> Pukurahi pā and its north-facing rua kūmara                                                       | 58 |
| <b>Figure 12.</b> Te Weta Bay in late summer, from Te Akau Road.                                                         | 21 | <b>Figure 30.</b> Shape and texture.                                                                               | 39 | <b>Figure 54.</b> Pukurahi pā site as it looks today.                                                               | 58 |
| <b>Figure 13.</b> Plenty to go around: the Banks family at Christmas, 1984, with Nonna and Grandad at centre.            | 22 | <b>Figure 31.</b> Makeshift paints and making the shift.                                                           | 40 | <b>Figure 55.</b> The Blinds Drawn (Shadelands). Detail.                                                            | 59 |
| <b>Figure 14.</b> Lantern light held nested in the bush.                                                                 | 24 | <b>Figures 32 and 33.</b> Material details from Leisure Settlement (The Queen's Chain).                            | 42 | <b>Figure 56.</b> Ohinemuri No. 1 Shooting Team, Ohinemuri Rifle Volunteers, Hauraki Regiment, 1898.                | 61 |
| <b>Figure 15.</b> Subdivision (part) Taheke Papakainga No. 6A and No. 6B, No. 2, Lake Rotoiti.                           | 25 | <b>Figure 34.</b> Leisure Settlement (The Queen's Chain) installed at Massey University.                           | 43 | <b>Figure 57.</b> Plan of Matamata Settlement, Piako County                                                         | 63 |
| <b>Figure 16.</b> Prime lake edge.                                                                                       | 25 | <b>Figure 35.</b> Leisure Settlement (The Queen's Chain).                                                          | 44 | <b>Figure 58.</b> Te Weta Bay, Rotoiti, as the sun goes down.                                                       | 64 |
| <b>Figure 17.</b> Christmas at the lake with Banks cousins.                                                              | 25 | <b>Figures 36 and 37.</b> Leisure Settlement (The Queen's Chain). Details.                                         | 45 | <b>Figure 59.</b> Marika, Matiu, and Turi standing by the family pig.                                               | 66 |
| <b>Figure 18.</b> Tikitere, NZ mosaic map series.                                                                        | 26 | <b>Figures 38–41.</b> Material details from Leisure Settlement (The Queen's Chain).                                | 46 | <b>Figure 60.</b> Flinch.                                                                                           | 68 |
|                                                                                                                          |    | <b>Figure 42.</b> Beyond the Queen's Chain.                                                                        | 48 | <b>Figure 61.</b> Engraving of a Victorian photography studio.                                                      | 75 |



## Preliminary notes

### Human Research Ethics

This project involved human participants (informal, voluntary conversations) and therefore required ethics approval under the Massey University Code of Ethical Conduct.

Approval was granted on 11 June 2025, by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee (Ohu Matatika): *Application OM2 25/38 — “Holding, Losing and Remaking: Painting as a Personal Inquiry Into Family Stories of Connection to Te Waiiti Bay, Lake Rotoiti.”* Data collection proceeded in accordance with the approved protocol (consent, confidentiality, and secure storage). See page 94 for the approval letter.

### Citation system

This exegesis follows the *Chicago Manual of Style* (18th ed.) Notes and Bibliography system. Sources are indicated by consecutive superscript numerals, with full citation details provided in numbered notes. Notes are numbered consecutively throughout the document and may include bibliographic references as well as contextual or explanatory commentary.

The Bibliography lists published sources cited in the notes. A separate Additional Works Consulted section follows the Bibliography and records texts that informed the research but are not cited directly in the notes.

### Use of Artificial Intelligence

Artificial intelligence (AI) tools were used to assist with editing and refinement during the preparation of this exegesis. All research, analysis, and creative content are my own, and responsibility for the final work rests entirely with the author.

### Image permissions

Unless otherwise stated, all artworks, photographs, and images reproduced in this exegesis are the author's own or are reproduced with permission. Some images include family photographs and archival material used for research purposes. Images are included for study and examination only; further reproduction requires permission from the relevant copyright holders.



**Figure 3.** Sunrise from above Mount Ngongotahā, with Lake Rotorua and Lake Rotoiti beyond. Digital photograph by Joan Nichol, Rotorua, 2024.

Our place at Te Weta Bay lies near the lower left of Lake Rotoiti, near Okere Falls.

# Contents

## Front matter

|                                |   |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Abstract                       | 4 |
| Acknowledgements               | 5 |
| List of figures                | 7 |
| Preliminary notes              | 8 |
| Human Research Ethics          |   |
| Citation system                |   |
| Use of Artificial Intelligence |   |
| Image permissions              |   |

|              |    |
|--------------|----|
| Introduction | 10 |
|--------------|----|

## The Context

|                                |    |
|--------------------------------|----|
| 1. A Settler View of Landscape | 16 |
| 2. The Place of Rotoiti        | 22 |
| 3. The Presence of Absence     | 30 |

## The Practice

|                   |    |
|-------------------|----|
| 1. Before the MFA | 35 |
| 2. Methodology    | 37 |
| 3. Materials      | 40 |

## The Works

|                                           |    |
|-------------------------------------------|----|
| 1. Leisure Settlement (The Queen’s Chain) | 44 |
| 2. Surface Tension                        | 49 |
| 3. The Blinds Drawn (Shadelands)          | 54 |

|                  |    |
|------------------|----|
| Conclusion       | 65 |
| Unsettled seeing |    |

## Appendices

|                                           |    |
|-------------------------------------------|----|
| 1. Bibliography                           | 69 |
| 2. Additional works consulted             | 71 |
| 3. Human Research Ethics: Approval letter | 74 |



## Introduction

This exegesis reflects on my MFA project, *From Shadelands to Shade Lands: Painting as a Place Inquiry* occupies an uneasy, shifting space where my inherited Pākehā ways of seeing land—as property, possession, or scenery—meet the grounded, relational understandings of mana whenua. Centred on my family’s family holiday home in a small bay on the north-western edge of Lake Rotoiti near Okere Falls, the research traces four generations of my maternal family’s relationship with this place. Painting becomes both method and inquiry: a way to sense the shadows, absences, and unease my Pākehā histories have learned to overlook.

I write as a Pākehā artist; male (yes), pale (yes), and stale (yes—*middle-aged, but please read on*), with family histories threaded through the colonial project, positioned as tangata tiriti at Te Whiti o Rehua, acknowledging Ngāti Pikiao and Te Arawa as mana whenua of Rotoiti. My practice emerges from recognising that I am implicated in the very structures I examine, and trying to feel the ethical weight of that implication rather than simply accounting for it.

Being Pākehā is ongoing work: noticing what we inherit, what we obscure, and what we might yet remake. Following Alison Jones’s framing of

identity complexity, I understand myself as multiply positioned within settler privilege, committed to accountability and working toward more ethical forms of engagement.<sup>②</sup> This stance acknowledges my cultural limits while refusing moral closure. It keeps creative tension alive—working, I find, in a way that resonates with Jones’s framing of identity as ongoing and situated—from the roots to the shoots.

**Figure 4.** *Shadelands Motorcamp, Mount Maunganui, from May and Rata Streets looking towards Tauranga Harbour.* Photographer unknown. Tauranga City Libraries collection (21-1294), late 1930s. Archival photograph.



The title *Shadelands* comes from the campground and store that my maternal grandfather E.C. Banks ran in the 1930s at Mount Maunganui, but the project's deeper work is to examine a longer lineage of property acquisition sustained by structural advantage—what it has meant, and still means, to be tangled up in the shadows of histories written by the winners—the stories that colonisation insisted were truth, and that still shape my seeing.<sup>③</sup> The project looks at what happens in the shadows of my Pākehātanga: the gaps and silences in family stories that echo wider patterns of settler possession.<sup>④</sup> These absences generate the lingering unease—the haunting sense of not quite belonging in the very place we long to call home.<sup>⑤</sup>

The mana whenua placental connection that Ngāti Pikiao have to whenua is grounded and relational; my inherited ways of seeing are culturally constructed, carried in colonial frameworks and devices I did not design but have participated in perpetuating.<sup>⑥</sup> Understanding this requires thinking through binaries—relational rather than representational, ethical engagement rather than resolution—while recognising that such framing is necessarily partial and situated.

#### **Research question:**

How can painting trace the shadows, absences, and unease within Pākehā ways of seeing land as property, while acknowledging mana whenua's placental connection to whenua and exploring the tensions that arise in the “place between places” where these perspectives meet?<sup>⑦</sup>

This question operates across three registers:

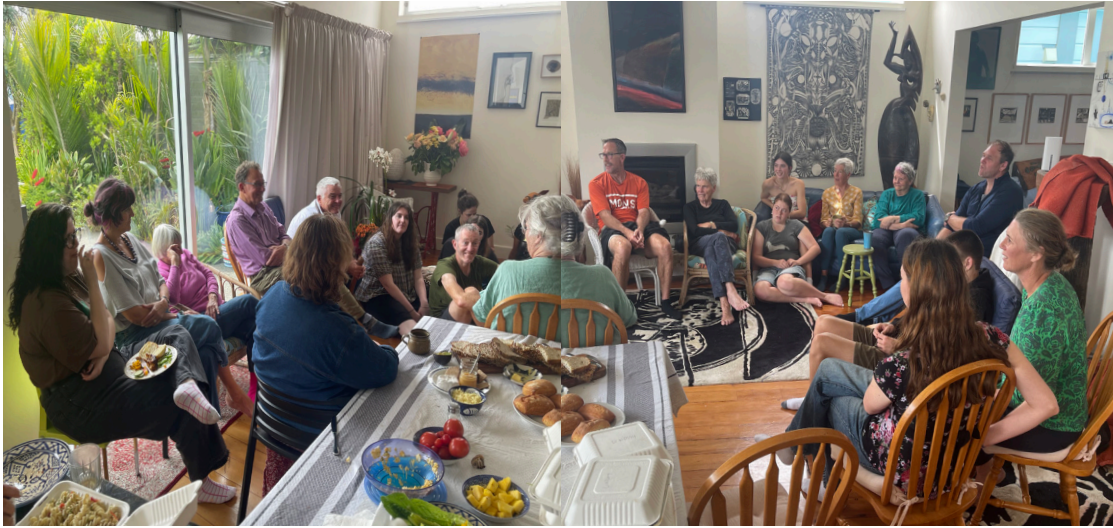
1. It locates the problem within my own inherited frameworks of seeing, recognising that the “shade” does not reside in the land itself but in the visual habits through which I have learned to apprehend it.
2. It acknowledges that mana whenua have relational connection to whenua as a form of knowledge I can attend to and learn from, while accepting that it is not one I can claim or inhabit.
3. It positions painting not as a site of resolution between these perspectives, but as a slow, research-driven practice of attention—one that draws on photography, memory, and material experimentation to hold complexity, uncertainty, and ethical unease without collapsing them into binaries.

Even here, the reflexes of my Pākehātanga surface quickly—the urge to treat inherited gaps as voids to be filled, complicities as debts to be repaid. Yet this reckoning is more than calculation. As McLuhan reminds us, “the medium is the message”: it shapes how responsibility and presence are felt.<sup>⑧</sup> This work is not about payment plans or retreating behind the bravado of the “artist,” but about finding grounded ways to engage with embedded cultural debts, following Shane Cotton's insight that “the only way you can paint the land is to look at the stories and events connected to it.”<sup>⑨</sup>

Until 2013, my painting practice was technically proficient yet unsustainable—not for lack of craft, but because I did not yet know with confidence which stories were mine to tell. Committing to the MFA Programme at Whiti o Rehua School of Art provided the ground I needed: it allowed painting to become the centre of my creative focus, and let design become the side project.

What I needed next was more clarity about the visual inheritance I had unconsciously absorbed—the frameworks that shaped how I saw land long before I began to paint it.





**Figure 5.** (Most of) the Banks family today. Family kai at Roseneath after the Park/Steele wedding. Digital photograph/s by Turi Park, Wellington, 2024.

2. Alison Jones, *This Pākehā Life: An Unsettled Memoir* (Wellington: BWB Texts, 2020), 125. Jones's analysis of identity complexity emerging from her feminist activism illuminates contemporary challenges of positioning: "On the ground amongst the women, a fierce identity politics was developing ... we each found ourselves multiply positioned on the good/bad identity divide: I was (am) a heterosexual (bad), white (bad), middle-class (bad) woman (good)." Her literary device—parenthetical admissions of problematic positioning followed by humorous self-awareness—models how structural advantage can be acknowledged without paralysis, maintaining agency while accepting accountability.
3. Robert Craig Scott, Mount Maunganui: A History of the Land and Early Settlers from 1864 (Tauranga: Tauranga City Council, 2022), 185.
4. Christine Winter, "White Lies: On the Epistemic Violence of the Settler State," *Artforum* 64, no. 7 (March 2025): 70–73.
5. Harry Culy, "The Darkroom: Gavin Hipkins," *PhotoForum NZ*, May 2024. Hipkins's images and writing articulate a distinctly colonial gothic sensibility in which the settler notion of 'home' is "dreamlike, fragmented, and murky," exposing the unease that underpins belonging.
6. Geoff Park, "Whenua—The Ecology of Placental Connection," in *Theatre Country: Essays on Landscape and Whenua* (Wellington: Victoria University Press, 2006), 239–250.
7. Peter Doig, A Brush With... Peter Doig, *The Art Newspaper* podcast, season 30, episode 4, October 22, 2025, Apple Podcasts.
8. Marshall McLuhan and Quentin Fiore, *The Medium Is the Massage: An Inventory of Effects* (New York: Bantam Books, 1967). McLuhan and Fiore argue that media shape perception rather than merely convey messages. "The medium is the massage" names how form, technology, and sensory experience organise responsibility, presence, and relationality—an insight central to this project's concern with inherited visual frameworks shaping Pākehā encounters with land, history, and accountability.
9. Shane Cotton, quoted in Lara Strongman, "Ruarangi: The Meeting Place Between Sea and Sky," in *Shane Cotton: Survey 1993–2003* (Wellington: City Gallery Wellington, 2003), 15.





**Figure 6.** *Where Sunshine Spends the Winter (Shadelands)*. 2025. Acrylic emulsions and oil on vintage tent canvas, hessian, and fittings including eyelets and rope, fixed to panel, 210 x 100 cm.

The title draws on a phrase attributed to writer George Bernard Shaw during a visit to Mount Maunganui in the 1930s, where my grandad acted as host. He later reused this phrase in his local real-estate promotion.





**Figure 7.** *Hinemoa, the Māori Girl*. Nicholas Chevalier, 1880. Oil on canvas, 25.5 × 35.9 cm. Painted in London. Rex Nan Kivell Collection, National Gallery of Australia (Acc. 82.1669; IRN 89094). Public domain.



**Figure 8.** *Swimming all day in the whenua*. Photograph by Geoff Park, Te Weta Bay, Rotoiti, 1982. Author's collection.

*My sister Marika swimming by our jetty at the lake, as she did throughout the summers of our childhood.*

### Seeing through a settler lens

One morning, I noticed a copy of Leonard Bell's *The Māori in European Art* in a second-hand bookshop window.<sup>(10)</sup> Later, reading Bell's chapter on Nicholas Chevalier's *Māori Girl in a Canoe with Native Bush on Hillside* (1880), I returned to John Berger's argument that in European painting the viewer—implicitly male, implicitly white—is the unpainted protagonist: “Everything is addressed to him.”<sup>(11)</sup> Even without a European figure present, Bell shows how Chevalier's composition centres a possessive, colonial gaze, offering Māori femininity as a scenic pleasure.

What caught me was the sense of recognition. I had just spent a month painting *The Blinds Drawn* (*Shadelands*) in deliberate conversation with European landscape traditions, and suddenly I was seeing those conventions refracted through Chevalier's work. And then another image surfaced: a photograph my father, Geoff Park, took of my sister at Lake Rotoiti in the early 1980s. She is lying back in the water—Te Ati Awa, adopted into our Pākehā family—fully absorbed in the lake, in the moment, within the whenua. Looking at it now, I realise Dad could well have taken this photo because it triggered a sense of déjà vu—as if the elements of an inherited and familiar scene were assembling themselves again. The reclining body, the bush-lined shoreline—features that unconsciously rhyme with Chevalier's idealised composition, although in this case the gaze is familial, grounded, and relational rather than possessive or colonial.

Yet the logic is reversed. My sister is not posed for a viewer; she is living the place. This is what Dad noticed. Not gazing at the lake as a vista, but his daughter immersed in being in it—through relationship, time, and whakapapa.<sup>(12)</sup> When one of Shannon Te Ao's Masters of Māori Visual Arts (MMVA) students looked at Dad's photograph and said simply, “Time. And whenua,” something aligned for me too.<sup>(13)</sup>

Separated by a century, these two images—Chevalier's painting and my father's photograph—map the tension between the settler view of landscape and the lived, relational experience of place.

From this threshold, the next section turns to context.



## The Context

### 1. The Settler View of Landscape

To understand how my painting practice engages with questions of inheritance and belonging, it is necessary to examine the visual frameworks through which Pākehā have historically seen and occupied land. European vision in Aotearoa translated whenua into property, resource, and scenic backdrop—something to be measured, improved, fenced, and claimed.<sup>(14)</sup> This was never a neutral act of looking: it was a visual grammar designed to encode hierarchy, distance, and control.<sup>(15)</sup>

Landscape painting held power through seduction—the ability of beauty to draw us in, to make us complicit before we question what we are looking at.<sup>(16)</sup> As the English art critic and writer John Berger observes, “everything is addressed to him. Everything must appear to be the result of his being there.”<sup>(17)</sup> The Romantic *Rückenfigur* sharpened this pleasure of possession: a solitary figure seen from behind invites the viewer to inhabit the scene, to feel ownership through identification. Painting became a form of affective persuasion—what marketing theorist Gerald Zaltman later captured in his now all too familiar line that “we buy with emotion and justify with logic.”<sup>(18)</sup>

The American transcendentalist Ralph Waldo Emerson famously called landscape “a state of the soul,” seeking to spiritualise property by transforming the view between settler fences into a shared aesthetic of refinement and belonging.<sup>(19)</sup> This notion of shared amenity value

appeared communal but intensified colonial individualism.<sup>(20)</sup> It stands in sharp opposition to the relational reciprocity through which mana whenua hold connection to place—a connection not mediated by the distant view but by whakapapa, care, and intergenerational accountability.<sup>(21)</sup>

This imported vision arrived in Aotearoa through artists like William Hodges, who travelled with Captain Cook in the 1770s and brought with him the picturesque conventions of Claude, Poussin, and Rosa.<sup>(22)</sup> Ordered foregrounds, tree trunks used as repoussage to feign natural framing while steering the viewer’s gaze inward, soft atmospheric distance—each device transformed encountered places into constructed scenes that fit an existing European moral narrative.<sup>(23)</sup> As the New Zealand film and visual culture scholar Laurence Simmons writes, Hodges used “newly encountered landscapes as the stage upon which European classical allegories could play out,” cropping and composing the Pacific to suit imported ideals.<sup>(24)</sup> What appears as admiration becomes, upon closer inspection, a visual technology of control. In her work *In Pursuit of Venus [Infected]*, 2015–2017, Lisa Reihana reclaims and reanimates the places of these European ‘landscapes’, exposing how the visual devices that once staged the Pacific as allegorical spectacle worked to control perception and continue to shape colonial imaginaries in Aotearoa.<sup>(25)</sup> In Aotearoa, this ideology shaped both artistic practice and state policy. *The Scenery*

*Preservation Act 1903* literally framed landscapes as pristine vistas for settler enjoyment, even as access for mana whenua to mahinga kai was further restricted.<sup>(26)</sup> Around Rotorua and its lakes—already a centre of thermal tourism and staged cultural display—the Act functioned as an aesthetic charter: institutionalising a picturesque gaze while continuing to displace the very people whose relationship to whenua was being overwritten.

This pattern of aesthetic appropriation was a lifelong focus of my father, Geoff Park. In *Theatre Country*, he traced how idyllic landscape imagery shaped colonial land-use and ecological transformation.<sup>(27)</sup> Swamps became “wastes,” native forest became “unproductive,” and the language of scenic beauty masked the violence of drainage and clearing. Yet despite growing up in the thick of these conversations—dinner-table debates about landscape, representation, and whenua—for decades I remained at least partially blind—and certainly blinkered—to how these dynamics played out in my own family story at Lake Rotoiti.

Our bach sits on prime lakeside property, looking across to what is now a scenic reserve and was once the mighty Pukurahi pā. The very mechanisms my father analysed are still quietly operating under my feet. This realisation felt like the ground shifting—a mix of shame, grief, shock and awe. In my mum’s words: “It’s a bloody bugger of a thing.”<sup>(28)</sup>

But this, too, is the mahi I want my paintings to do: to help hold these contradictions, to create conditions for conversation rather than paralysis. I learned early how charged aesthetic shifts could be. One of my earliest memories of adults arguing white-hot is of my father and grandfather in furious debate over the New Zealand painter Colin McCahon.<sup>(29)</sup> My grandfather—devout, orderly, a believer that painting should reveal “the rapture in the magical beauty of the place”—was outraged by the harsh realities of McCahon’s stark vision. My father defended McCahon’s “clear seeing... his courage and willingness to paint the raw and honest view of this land.” That moment taught me that paintings can divide a room; they can expose what a culture is ready—or unwilling—to see. McCahon challenged the foundations of the European landscape tradition not by rejecting its language but by wrestling with it. Using its very devices, he exposed rather than concealed the struggle between light, land, and belief. As Simmons notes, McCahon’s painted light renders the viewer “contingent to the landscape’s order instead of essential to it”—a radical reversal of the colonial gaze.<sup>(30)</sup>



**Figure 9.** *A View Taken in the Bay of Oaite Peha (Vaitepiha), Otaheite (Tahiti).* William Hodges, 1775–76. Oil on canvas, 92.7 × 138.4 cm. National Maritime Museum, Greenwich. Public domain.



This is not a simple story of awakening from ignorance to awareness. It is a story of layered, and slippery complexity—where personal implication and critical understanding coexist; where beauty and violence intertwine; where inherited privilege persists even through ethical concern.<sup>(31)</sup>

As the New Zealand historian Michael Belgrave notes, post-war New Zealand was marked by a desire to forget, to believe that “history belonged somewhere else and was only lightly inscribed on this landscape and its people.”<sup>(32)</sup> Forgetting became the national pastime. And for Pākehā, this urge to look forward without looking back made it easy to live on land—or plonk a bach there for the summers—while remaining blind to the histories it holds.



**Figure 10.** *Lake and hill forms in a cracked shop-window film.* Digital photograph by Turi Park, taken while waiting for fish and chips, Te Ngae Shopping Centre, Rotorua, 2025.

10. Leonard Bell, *The Māori in European Art: A Survey of the Representation of the Māori by European Artists from the Time of Captain Cook to the Present Day* (Reed, 1980).
11. John Berger, *Ways of Seeing* (London: Penguin Books, 1972), 54.
12. Susan Owens, *Spirit of Place: Artists, Writers & the British Landscape* (Thames & Hudson, 2021).
13. Shannon Te Ao. Personal communication, 2024.
14. Giselle Byrnes, *Boundary Markers: Land Surveying and the Colonisation of New Zealand* (Wellington: Bridget Williams Books, 2001). Byrnes details how surveying, cadastral mapping, and boundary marking translated whenua into measurable and ownable property. Bernard Smith, *European Vision and the South Pacific*, 2nd ed. (Yale University Press, 1985), ix. Smith provides a related account of how European aesthetic categories rendered Indigenous landscapes legible within imperial frameworks of order and possession. Geoff Park, *Theatre Country: Essays on Landscape and Whenua* (VUP, 2006). Park further traces how Aotearoa's ecologies were reframed as picturesque "theatre country" for settler occupation.
15. W. J. T. Mitchell, *Landscape and Power*, 2nd ed. (University of Chicago Press, 2002), esp. chap. 1, "Imperial Landscape," 1–34; Manon Gaudet, "Rereading Hodges's *A View of Matavai Bay in the Island of Otaheite* (1776)," Yale Center for British Art, accessed 2025, <https://britishart.yale.edu/whose-view-limitations-labels>. Mitchell argues that landscape functions as an ideological medium that encodes hierarchy, distance, and control. Smith similarly observes that European visual conventions imposed order and possessive distance on unfamiliar environments, shaping colonial understandings of place. Gaudet further demonstrates how ostensibly documentary Pacific views were composed through European picturesque conventions—repoussoir, staged foregrounding, and elevated vantage points—that naturalised a colonial way of seeing.
16. Joseph Leo Koerner, *Caspar David Friedrich and the Subject of Landscape* (Reaktion Books, 1990). Koerner argues that the *Rückenfigur* functions as a surrogate for the viewer, inviting entry into the landscape through the figure's vantage point. W. J. T. Mitchell similarly discusses the possessive dynamics of landscape spectatorship in *Landscape and Power*, 2nd ed.
17. Berger, *Ways of Seeing*. 54.
18. Gerald Zaltman, *How Customers Think: Essential Insights into the Mind of the Market* (Harvard Business School Press, 2003).
19. Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Nature* (James Munroe and Company, 1836). Emerson defines landscape as "a state of the soul," merging aesthetics with moral and spiritual uplift. His transcendentalist framing was deeply influential in shaping Euro-American landscape ideology, often overlaying spiritual significance onto privately owned land. See also Tyler Green, *Emerson's Nature and the Artists: Idea as Landscape, Landscape as Idea* (Prestel, 2021).
20. Giselle Byrnes. *Boundary Markers*. Byrnes discusses how surveying, subdivision, and "amenity improvement" produced an illusion of communal benefit that in fact strengthened private property individualism.
21. Patrick Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native," *Journal of Genocide Research* 8, no. 4 (2006): 387–409. While Byrnes outlines how imported aesthetic categories of "improvement" and "amenity" framed land development as a shared public good while reinforcing individual property rights. Wolfe similarly shows how settler-colonial structures naturalise private accumulation under the guise of communal benefit.
22. Geoff Park, *Theatre Country*; Bernard Smith, *European Vision and the South Pacific*, 2nd ed.; and Peter Brunt et al, (eds.), *Art in Oceania: A New History*.
23. Jay Appleton, *The Experience of Landscape* (London: John Wiley & Sons, 1975).
24. Laurence Simmons, *Tuhituhi: William Hodges, Cook's Painter in the South Pacific* (Otago University Press, 2011).
25. Leanne Daly, "Catching Shadows: The Exhibition of Intangible Heritage of Moana Oceania in Lisa Reihana's in Pursuit of Venus [infected]," *Journal of Conservation and Museum Studies* 20, no. 1 (2022): 1–17, <https://doi.org/10.5334/jcms.214> Daly situates Reihana's work within discussions of exhibition technologies and decolonising museum practice, showing how the artwork both engages with and challenges historic visual constructs such as European scenic panoramas and colonial representations of the Pacific.
26. Scenery Preservation Act 1903 (3 Edward VII, no. 47). *New Zealand Parliamentary Statutes*. The Act allowed the Crown to acquire land considered "scenic," creating reserves designed around picturesque viewing rather than Indigenous use. Geoff Park, *Theatre Country: Essays on Landscape and Whenua* (VUP, 2006, pp. 205–221), shows how these reserves—especially around Rotorua—protected settler tourism routes while restricting mana whenua access to mahinga kai and other sites central to whakapapa and subsistence. See also Michael Roche, "The State as Conservationist, 1900–1935," *New Zealand Journal of History*, vol. 24, no. 2, 1990, 214–227.
27. Geoff Park. *Theatre Country: Essays on Landscape and Whenua*. (VUP, 2006), 217 (quoting Henry Wright in "New Zealand Native Birds"): "in the not very distant future ... it would cause the island to be the show place of the North Island, to which steamers from Auckland will ply with excursionists to see not only the last of the native birds, but the remaining specimens of the noble kauri, the nikau palms, the tree and numerous other ferns still flourishing in all their pristine loveliness, when the primaeval forest elsewhere will have long since passed away."
28. Personal communication. Exclamation reflects my mother Lindsay Park's wry side-eye, occasional mutterings—and real interest—as I've researched absences in our family's whakapapa, and our implication.
29. Family memory as personal experience. This argument between my father and his father occurred when I was about nine years old, (an experience also recounted in Geoff Park, *Theatre Country*, 56.) Havelock North, 1982.
30. Laurence Simmons, *The Image Always Has the Last Word* (Dunmore Press, 2007), 129.
31. Michael Belgrave. *Becoming Aotearoa: A History of New Zealand* (Massey University Press, 2024), 385.
32. Belgrave, *Becoming Aotearoa*, 385. Belgrave argues that post-war New Zealanders preferred to believe that "history belonged somewhere else and was only lightly inscribed on this landscape and its people," a line Richard Hofstadter coined in *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life*, to describe broader patterns of cultural forgetting.





**Figure 11.** *Motorcade (Rites of Passage)*. 2025. Acrylic emulsions and oil on vintage tent canvas, hessian, and fittings including eyelets and rope, fixed to panel, 210 × 100 cm.

Based on a photograph of the 1967 Royal Visit entourage passing along Banks Avenue, Mount Maunganui, a road named after my grandfather, E. C. Banks.





**Figure 12** *Te Weta Bay in late summer, from Te Akau Road.*  
Digital photograph by Turi Park, Rotorua, 2025.



## 2. The Place of Rotoiti

My research takes place within the rohe of Ngāti Pikiao, of Te Arawa. I acknowledge Ngāti Pikiao as mana whenua and kaitiaki of the lakebed, and the protective stewardship embodied in their kākahu—the cloak of care, authority, and responsibility that surrounds this place.<sup>(33)</sup> Although my family has maintained a Pākehā presence here for more than seventy-five years through property ownership, I write with awareness of the responsibilities, histories, and uneven relationships that shape this place.

In the early twentieth century, Crown engagement with Ngāti Pikiao land was shaped by a framework that translated whenua into questions of occupation, productivity, and value. When the Stout-Ngata Commission held hearings in Rotorua in 1907 and 1908, Māori freehold land was assessed according to whether it was “unoccupied or not profitably occupied,” and how it might be “utilised and settled in the interests of the Native owners and the public good.”<sup>(34)</sup> In its 1908 assessment of the Rotorua district, Ngāti Pikiao land was further framed through measures of economic value and pastoral suitability, rather than whakapapa or relationship, described as “perhaps the most valuable of the Rotorua lands, and the most suitable in our opinion for pastoral purposes.”<sup>(35)</sup>

**Figure 13.** Plenty to go around: the Banks family at Christmas, 1984, with Nonna and Grandad at centre. Photograph of a family album. Photographer unknown; digital photograph by Turi Park, 2025.





The site of my project is our family bach in Te Weta Bay, Okere Falls—a place my maternal family has enjoyed every summer since 1950. Place here is inherited, lived, and conflicted: a site of memory and a lens through which to examine Pākehā history and colonial legacies.<sup>(36)</sup> This is the place I think of when I think of home, even while knowing that “home” is a fraught, unsettled word for Pākehā whose consciousness of land is shaped by dispossession of Māori from their wholistic concept of whenua.

The lake is a deep, damp green for most of the year. By late October it begins to warm, carrying the scents of cut grass, wood smoke, sheets drying in the hot sun and of airing rooms out. By early December, the honeyed mix of rewarewa, pōhutukawa, and māhoe flowers signal the start of summer. Mornings hold the creak of the jetty and the slap of water against the tinny and the distant hum of boats across long afternoons, folding into evenings around the table on the deck. We grew up free-range—treating the lake and bush as our playground, as though the land around us were empty. This was the terra nullius fantasy my father studied, but one I had been way too busy living—to ever truly question.<sup>(37)</sup>

My maternal grandparents bought the section in 1950. While reading Richard Shaw’s *The Unsettled: Small Stories of Colonisation*, a quick title search confirmed what I sort of half-knew: before sectioning off it had been Ngāti Pikiao-owned *Tāheke Pāpakainga* 6A.<sup>(38)</sup><sup>(39)</sup> Seeing it written in black and white triggered a bodily recognition of the “presence of an absence” in my own relational genealogy—a mix of shame and curiosity about the gaps my family overlooked. The project seemed to find itself right in that moment.

Our acquisition occurred as these blocks were being subdivided after the war, enabled by inherited wealth, professional networks, and the settler optimism of the period. My grandfather secured the prime section early through his real-estate connections—a clear example of structural advantage functioning exactly as designed.<sup>(40)</sup> Thom shows how “arability” and valuation metrics translated whenua into settler logics of productivity, rationalising alienation at iwi scale.<sup>(41)</sup> The context was visible even in contemporary papers: by 1947, “Wanted to rent—ROTOITI” ads appeared,<sup>(42)</sup> and by 1950 leasehold sections were for sale<sup>(43)</sup> as the state hastily widened the Rotorua-Whakatāne highway to service growing leisure demand.<sup>(44)</sup>

The land had been systematically alienated from Ngāti Pikiao through the Native Lands Act (1909) and divided into blocks for government farming schemes, with Tāheke Pāpakainga Block 6A sold to E. W. Payton in 1914 for £150—severing generations of mana whenua connection.<sup>(45)</sup> My great-grandparents’ achieved early property wealth through the 1904 Matamata Estate ballot, and then the successful subsequent Mount Maunganui investments positioned my grandfather to act the moment lakefront land opened. His wartime trauma adds personal complexity, but it does not excuse the structural violence of the colonial project within which these acquisitions are embedded.<sup>(46)</sup>

As children we spent summers at Rotoiti without imagining its deeper histories. We were just too busy hooning around—bare feet on wet grass, playing pirates in canoes, meals from the garden, poozling fruit and getting caught for throwing

it at each other.<sup>(47)</sup> Reconciling the brilliance of these memories with a sharper awareness of the privilege that enabled them now sits at the centre of this inquiry. Although I carry a Māori name and have family ties to Te Āti Awa through my adopted sister, these connections do not exempt me from the complicities and privileges inherited through colonial dispossession.<sup>(48)</sup>

It was always my mother’s family’s place. My father—ecologist and writer Geoff Park—watched on from the sidelines: guest, observer, and occasional cook. At Rotoiti he witnessed the very dynamics he theorised in *Theatre Country*: seeing his own family performing the settler drama of leisure and belonging. In and out of time. Horrocks argues that Park’s writing inhabits the tension between ecological empiricism and narrative witnessing—observation as a form of storytelling.<sup>(49)</sup> Watching him watching on, I learned that positionality is not simply where one stands but *how*: it is in the *angle* of looking, the *tone* of involvement.

Informal oral research has been central. In August 2025 I headed back up to the lake to meet Ngāti Pikiao kaumātua Piripi Curtis at our place. We walked the shoreline, pointing out the pā headlands, studying maps, and looking toward Pukurahi Pā where its rua kūmara lie tucked in behind the bush.<sup>(50)</sup> I shared my family’s stories; he shared his. He stressed that learning te reo Māori is essential to understanding “the real ebb and flow of things around here—like we do.” And as a Pākehā who “sounds like he gets it,” he told me I had work to do helping my own people understand these histories.



The true gift of that day was understanding that dialogue is not metaphor but the work itself: a practice of listening, of standing on shared ground, and learning—slowly—how to belong. This interplay of conversation, observation, and inherited knowledge now shapes how I encounter material, how I place myself within landscape, and how I recalibrate positionality.

Yet even with a clearer sense of the land's histories, I realised that the most difficult work lay within: recognising what my own ways of seeing continued to obscure.

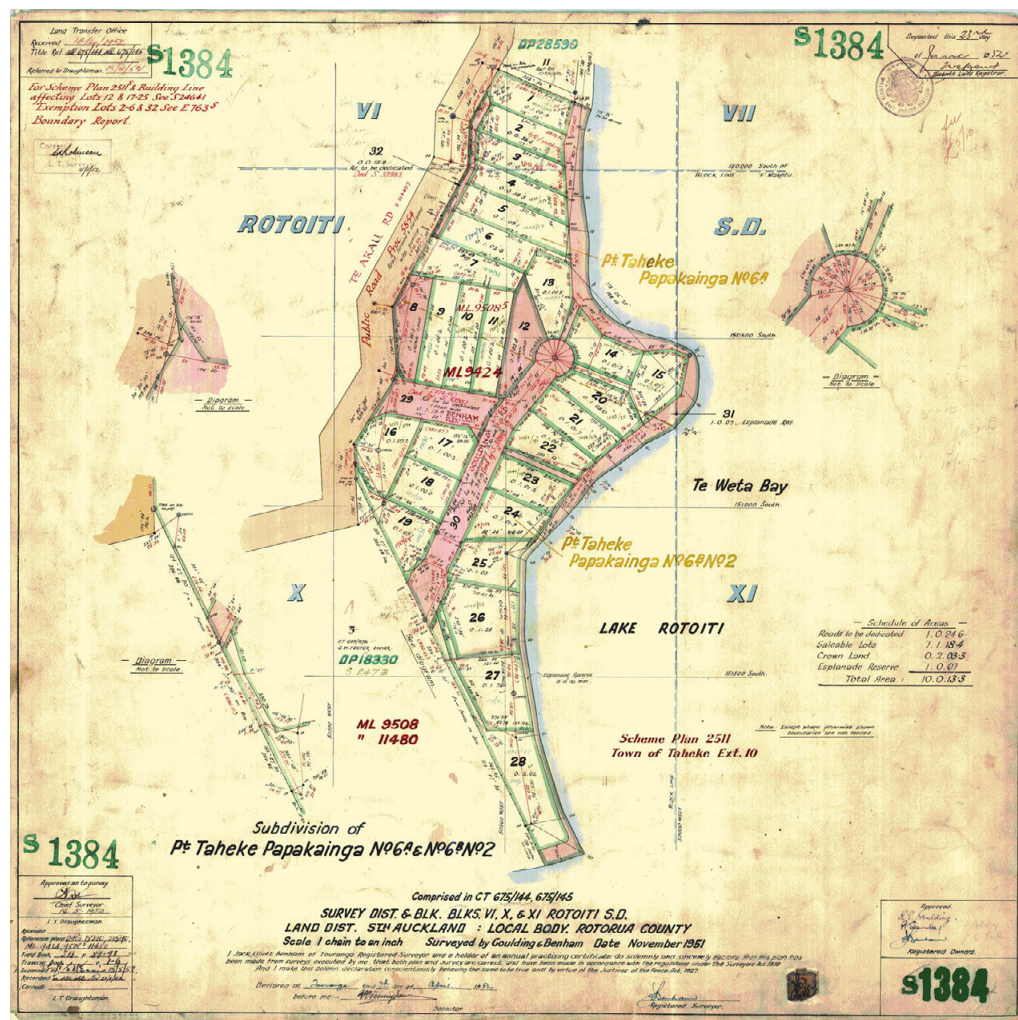
---

**Figure 14.** *Lantern light held nested in the bush.* Digital photograph by Turi Park, 2025.

*This photograph references Joanna Margaret Paul's mid-1970s photographic practice, characterised by fragmentary viewpoints, domestic subject matter, and an ethic of attentiveness that resists spectacle. Paul also had a personal connection to Lake Rotoiti and was a family friend, exhibiting at my mother's 33 1/3 Gallery.*







**Figure 15.** Subdivision (part) Taheke Papakainga No. 6A and No. 6B, No. 2, Lake Rotoiti. Survey map by Goulding and Benham, Deposited 1952.

The original survey plan for the subdivision from which my grandparents purchased Lot 20; family accounts recall that my grandfather knew both surveyors—our road namesakes—which helped secure an early agreement in 1949, settled in 1950. Lot 31 marks the public access strip around the lake edge, commonly known as the “Queen’s Chain.” (Source: DPS 1384\_1951 Subdivision, accessed via GRIP, December 2024.)



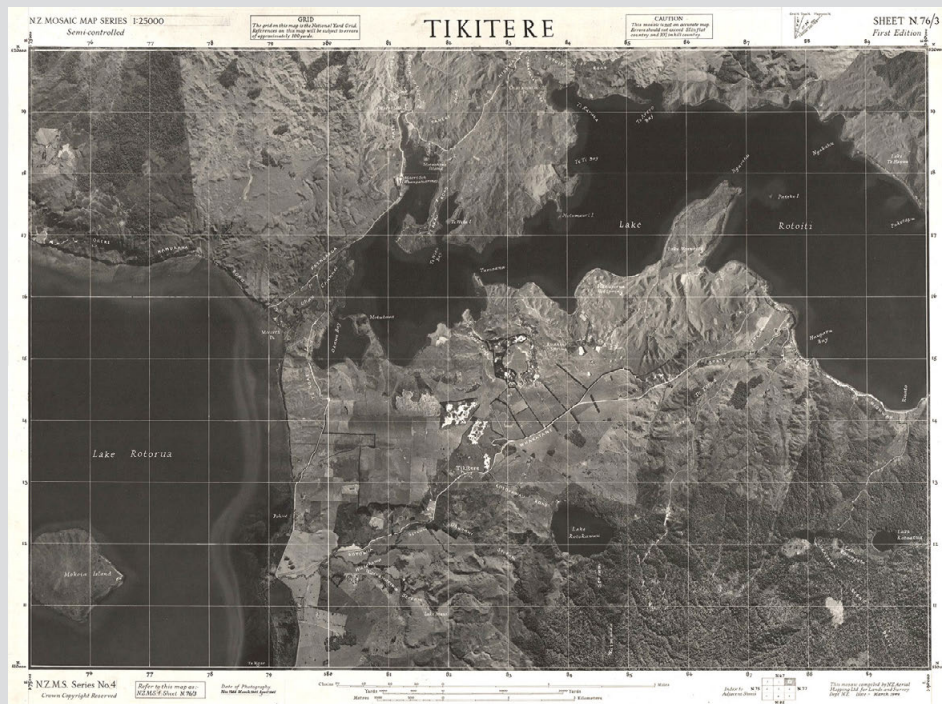
**Figure 16.** Prime lake edge. Digital photograph by Matiu Park, Lake Rotoiti, 2006.

View from the living room of the old back looking onto the deck; outside of summer, the lake edge is often misty and damp, as shown here.



**Figure 17.** Christmas at the lake with Banks cousins. Photograph by Marjorie (Nonna) Banks, 1984. Digital photograph by Turi Park, 2024.



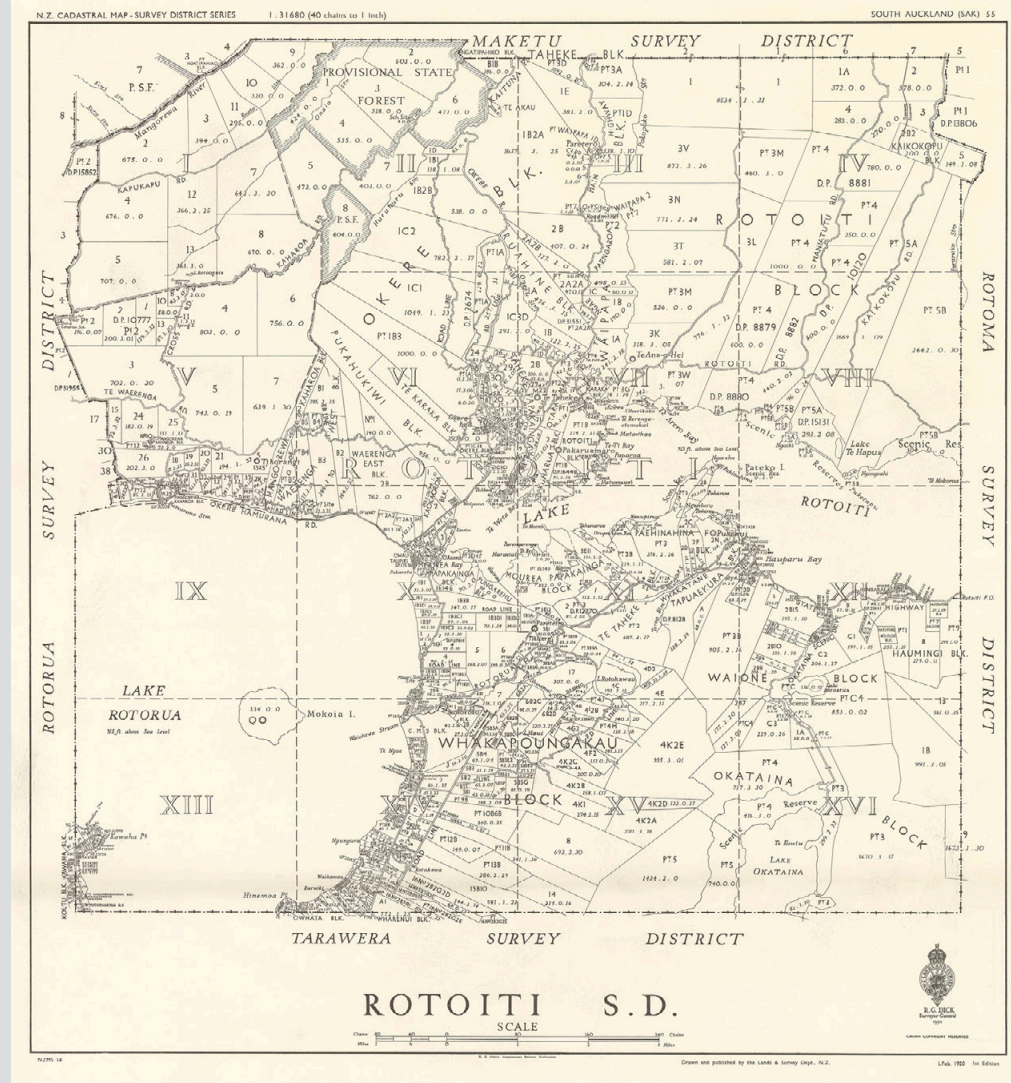


**Figure 18.** Tikitere, NZ mosaic map series. New Zealand Department of Lands and Survey, 1949. Aerial photograph. National Library of New Zealand (ALMA 9917870353502836; NZMS 3, N.76/3. 1967)

The area appears largely cleared for farming as part of wider Government Farming Schemes, presenting an Arcadian pastoral landscape at the time of my grandparents' arrival; Te Weta Bay is visible at the upper centre of the map.

**Figure 19.** Western end of Lake Rotoiti from above Taheke (Ōpātia) Marae, looking south east. Aerial photograph by Whites Aviation, Okere, 1954.

Likely produced as a commemorative souvenir of the 1953–54 Royal Visit, the image shows the lake as it would have appeared in my mother's childhood; Te Weta Bay is visible at upper left, and Te Takinga Pātaka—now held by Te Papa—formerly stood near the lakeshore in the foreground.



**Figure 20.** Rotoiti S.D. (Survey District) map. New Zealand Department of Lands and Survey, 1950. Map. National Library of New Zealand.

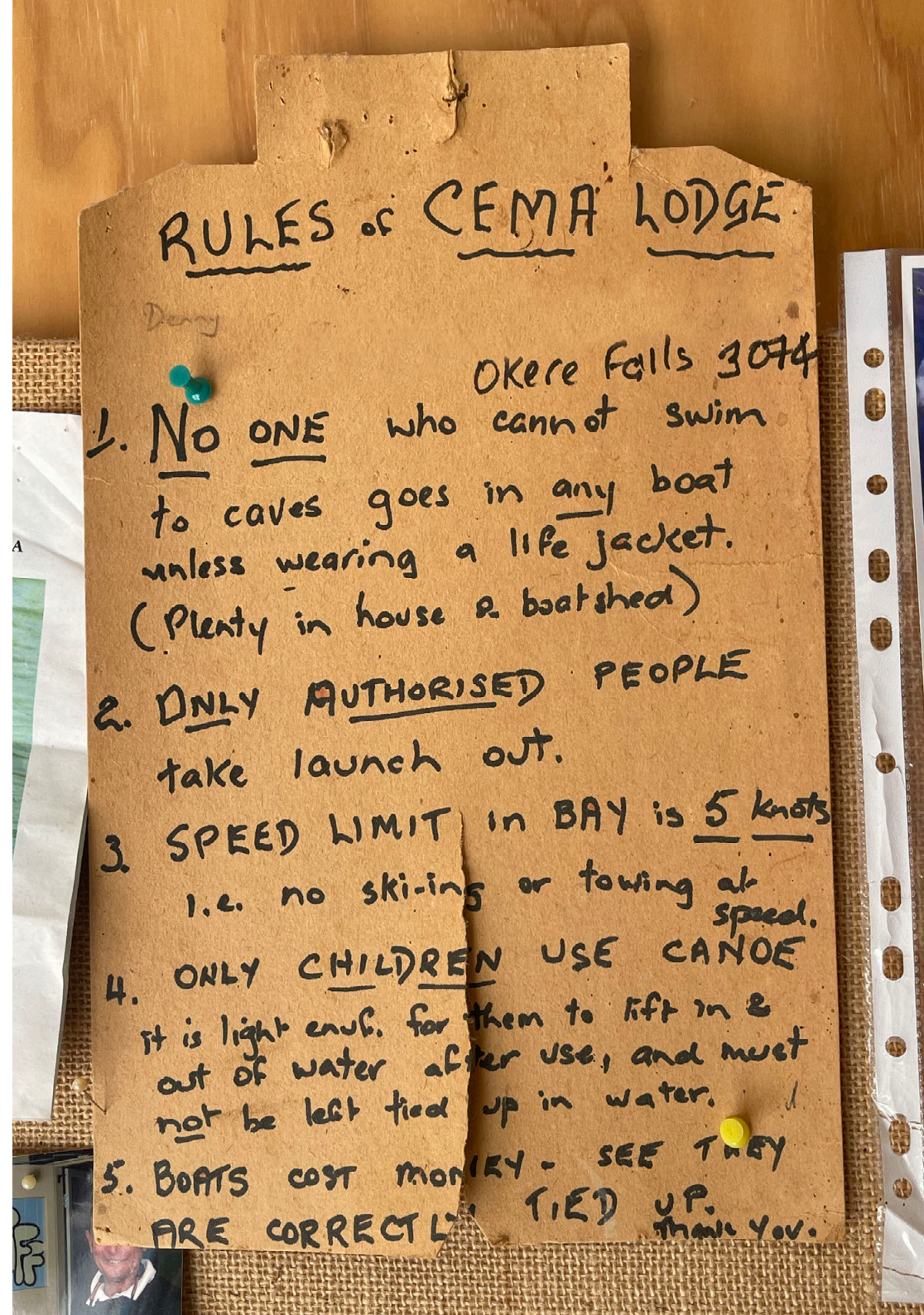
The density of survey lines indicates the intensity of land interest and property acquisition at the time; Te Weta Bay—where our place is situated—appears beneath the second “O” in “Rotoiti,” near the centre of the map.



33. Acknowledgement of mana whenua.
34. Donald M. Loveridge, "The Most Valuable of the Rotorua Lands": *Alienation and Development in the Ngāti Pikiao Blocks, 1881–1960* (Wellington: Crown Forestry Rental Trust, 1998), 9, quoting "Interim Report of the Commission Appointed to Inquire into the Question of Native Lands and Native-Land Tenure," *Appendix to the Journals of the House of Representatives* (AJHR), 1907, G-1, i–ii.
35. Loveridge, "The Most Valuable of the Rotorua Lands," 10, quoting "Native Lands and Native-Land Tenure: Final Report of Native Land Commission," AJHR 1908, G-1E, 4.
36. Nēpia Mahuika, "New Zealand History is Māori History." *New Zealand Journal of History*, vol. 49, no. 1, 2015, 5–30.
37. Geoff Park. *Ngā Uruora: The Groves of Life* (Wellington: Victoria University Press, 1995).
38. Richard Shaw, *The Unsettled: Small Stories of Colonisation* (Auckland: Massey University Press, 2024).
39. Title Search for SA1042/211, *Land Information New Zealand (LINZ)*, linz.govt.nz. Accessed 28 Feb. 2025.
40. Family oral research, Wellington, Tauranga and Rotoiti, 2024–25.
41. Rowan R. M. Thom, "Land Loss, Confiscation, Arability and Colonisation." *AlterNative*, vol. 18, no. 4, 2022, 556–565.
42. "Wanted to rent – ROTOITI." *Bay of Plenty Beacon*, 21 Nov. 1947, 3.
43. "Leasehold Section, Lake Rotoiti." *Rotorua Morning Post*, 27 Mar. 1950, 3.
44. Public Works Statement (No. 19 State Highway, Rotorua–Whakatāne). Appendix to the Journals of the House of Representatives, 1948, D-1.
45. Donald M. Loveridge. Wai 1200, 1.1.141(a). "The Most Valuable of the Rotorua Lands: Alienation and Development in the Ngāti Pikiao Blocks, 1881–1960," 1998 140.
46. Catherine Comyn. *The Financial Colonisation of Aotearoa*. (ESRA, 2025).
47. Desmond E. Hurley. "Poozle and Poozling – A Continuing Story." *NZ Words*, April 2005.
48. Nicolina Newcombe, and Diana Amundsen. "Why Pākehā Should Implement Te Tiriti o Waitangi in Charitable Organisations," *Kotuitui*, vol. 17, no. 4, 2022, 479–98.
49. Ingrid Horrocks. "The Ecologist and the Journalist." *Journal of Commonwealth Literature*, vol. 56, no. 2, 2021, 322–41.
50. Piripi Curtis, In person meeting for local oral history and place research, Rotoiti, August 2025.

**Figure 21.** Rules of CEMA (Cedric and Marjorie) Lodge. Marjorie (Nonna) Banks, marker pen on cardboard shirt-board, 1985. Digital photograph by Turi Park, 2025. Author's collection.

Rule 1 required children to prove they could swim across the bay—from the jetty to the "food caves" (rua kūmara beneath Pukurahi pā)—in order to earn the freedom to spend the summer without a life jacket.







**Figure 22.** *Loki Puleitu peeling apples with his Nana. Digital photograph by Turi Park, 2020.*

*A summer afternoon ritual echoing my own childhood experience with my Nonna.*



**Figure 23.** Reflections of the late afternoon sun on native bush. Digital photograph by Turi Park, Te Weta Bay, Lake Rotoiti, 2025.

*Image shown upside down.*





### 3. The Presence of Absence

Painting possesses a truly divine power in that not only does it make the absent present (as they say of friendship), but it also represents the dead to the living... Through painting, the faces of the dead go on living for a very long time.

— Leon Battista Alberti (51)

#### I. Recognition

This chapter turns inward. We have traced the inherited habits of European looking and grounded that gaze in a particular location—but here I turn to what that looking leaves out, and to how absence is sensed, named, and worked through in painting.

The Māori historian and writer Rachel Buchanan calls “the presence of an absence” the blank spaces produced by familial and cultural forgetting.<sup>(52)</sup> The things we don’t talk about. And don’t talk about. Until there is nothing left to talk about at all. She describes rereading her own pages months later and feeling “shocked at what I felt”—recognition arriving belatedly, through the body before the mind. She looks to Elizabeth Jelin, who also helps explain: forgetting is never passive.<sup>(53)</sup> It is a social project—families and communities decide what they will not remember, and those decisions leave a textured silence we come to feel as absence. In her essay *The Dementia Wing of History*, Buchanan names this our “Colonial Dementia”: the brittle, imperfect cultural vessel we are still paddling around in.<sup>(54)</sup>

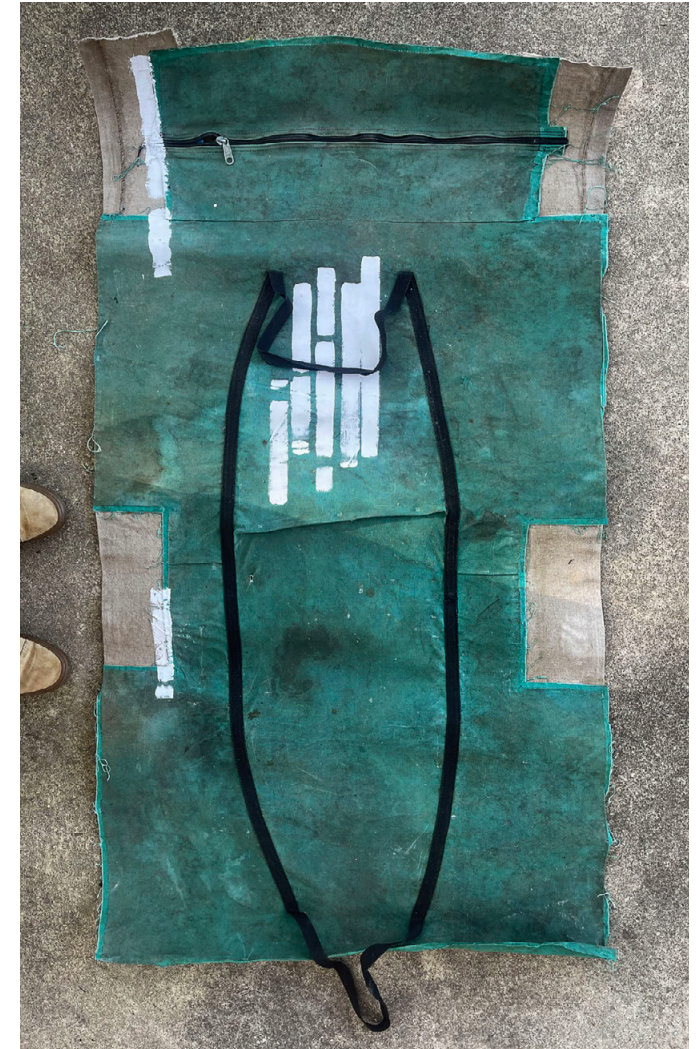
I felt that same delayed recognition sharply at Lake Rotoiti when I finally understood that our long enjoyment of this place rested on histories not our own. What I had been taught to read as belonging was, in truth, benefit. I reckon our family stories resemble the painter Shane Cotton’s vessels in his *Potted Histories* series—still capable of holding water but leaking through every fracture.<sup>(55)</sup> In *Whakapiri Atu te Whenua* (1993), the dying plants inside the pot allegorise the violence of containment, yet those same cracks open to light.<sup>(56)</sup> Recognition begins: with a crack.

There is a crack, a crack in everything — that’s how the light gets in.

— Leonard Cohen (57)

#### II. Reorientation

Richard Shaw, political scientist and historian, reframes Allen Curnow’s famous line—“some child... will learn the trick of standing upright here”—as belonging to an “unquiet land.” Curnow, a mid-century poet, originally placed the phrase beside a moa skeleton, with uprightness already extinct. Sociologist Avril Bell shows how Joan Metge, an anthropologist, and Glenn Colquhoun, poet-doctor, reconceive the “trick” as an ethical stance—the slow “art of walking upright”: reciprocity, attentiveness, stepping up and stepping back.<sup>(58)</sup>



**Figure 24.** *I Carry My Landscapes Around with Me.* Mixed-media assemblage using found tent-canvas carry bag, linen, PVA glue, and acrylic house paint. 94 × 172 cm. Digital photograph by Turi Park, Wellington, 2025.



Shaw extends this lineage: Pākehā stability is not natural but learned, an act of balance over what has been wilfully forgotten.<sup>(59)</sup> His insight that such recognition “registers in the body before it shifts to the brain or heart” struck home.<sup>(60)</sup> The ground underfoot had always been moving; I had simply never admitted it.

I entered the MFA wanting to re-ignite my painting practice; in truth, my well was dry. By mid-year, confidence unravelled. Reading, conversation, critique—and the erosion of long-held assumptions—reached my bones. I saw that I was still painting inside a visual grammar that naturalised possession: the settler eye that beautifies to displace. A moment in Shaw’s writing made this unmistakable. He describes looking at the painter Michael Smither’s *Baptism of Christ* mural for fifty years—“glanced at a thousand times but never seen.”<sup>(61)</sup> Smither had quietly relocated the biblical scene to a Taranaki stream. Shaw absorbed the image for decades before recognising its intervention. His late seeing mirrored my own: if he could miss the obvious in someone else’s work, what blind spots was I carrying in my own looking?

This softened me toward the idea that absence is not only a gap but a form of potential—darkness before form, the pause before recognition. I tread carefully here. This is not a claim to Māori cosmology, but an echo of something articulated by Kura Te Waru Rewiri, a leading Māori painter and

educator: that a world can emerge from a unified system bound by spirit, and that “the deeper reasons were not clear at the time, but 30-plus years on, there are moments of pristine clarity.”<sup>(62)</sup> That phrase—moments of pristine clarity—felt like a realisation for me too: here is permission to recognise what had been forming at the edge of my own seeing.

The MFA asked not for refinement but for *reorientation*:

from control → *to relation*

from resolution → *to responsiveness*

from designing → *to being in the work*.

What I once called mastery has become something smaller, slower: remaining in relation, allowing something to arrive and allowing it to slip away. Holding, losing, remaking. An artist friend once said she saw me as “an empty shell”; eighteen months later, “full to overflowing.” Both states now feel true.

A small family story makes that shift visible. As a child I made lemonade with my Nonna in a chipped enamel jug. One Christmas, carrying it to the table, it burst—sticky juice everywhere. “Well, that won’t hold us up anymore,” she grinned. The vessel had done its job—beautiful but unsound, like our inherited stories of place. The rupture was inevitable.

### III. Opening

The Scottish-born, Trinidad-based painter Peter Doig’s notion of psychic distance clarified what I was circling. He describes his paintings as “hinged in reality,” suspended between fact and fiction. For me, that hinge is not invention but responsibility—the distance between recognition and restraint.<sup>(63)</sup> Doig treats unsettledness not as disorientation but as the “pristine clarity” of potential. His images drift between places—familiar and strange at once—opening a space where viewers recognise what had been waiting in themselves. In this I recognised a lesson for my own practice: that what feels unstable can be the very ground of relation.

To paint from discomfort is to resist tidying or resolving. The mark hesitates; pigment thins; form becomes porous. These gestures are ethical, not stylistic. This tension animates my internal dialogue between the Collector and the Painter. The Collector speaks in the voice of order, lineage, property; the Painter works in uncertainty, attending to the moment. The Cree artist Kent Monkman offers the clearest guide: “My work is not a correction (to the colonial project); it’s a complication.”<sup>(64)</sup> Landscape theorist Shannon Davis describes this as an “open landscape narrative”—plural histories held together without forcing coherence.<sup>(65)</sup>



At Rotoiti, these pluralities—Ngāti Pikiao, Ngāti Tarawhai, Tūhourangi, leisure settlement, ecological change—converge within a single frame. My task is not to reconcile them but to register their coexistence.

As this orientation settled, the body returned. Brush marks loosened; breath slowed; colour found rhythm. Knowledge begins in the body, moves through the mind, into the hands, and ends—if I'm lucky—in humility.

“There are no foreign lands. It is the traveller only who is foreign.”

— Robert Louis Stevenson (66)

I too have come to recognise that some understandings arrive only after a long delay—years after the work that seeded them. Clarity is rarely immediate; it gathers slowly, like light adjusting on water at dusk. One windless late summer evening I pushed the old kauri dinghy into the lake. The water held me level with the stars; the oars whispered. I drifted until direction dissolved.

Presence → *the water*.

Absence → *the air I could feel but not touch*.



**Figure 25.** Afternoon reflections: *raupō* at the lake edge. Digital photograph by Turi Park, Te Weta Bay, Rotoiti, 2025.



The moment clarified the work's demand—not to map but to dwell; not to name but to breathe.

Painting inhabits the place between places—between the seen and unseen, the inherited and imagined. This is where I want my practice to take shape now: between knowing and not-knowing, at the surface where paint and light keep remaking one another. Here, the presence of absence becomes an opening of potential—not a shady void to patch or fill, but a fertile space to tend and return to.

“One of the things I’m searching for in painting,” says Shane Cotton, “is to deliver a space that no one’s ever seen before.”<sup>(67)</sup> This must be the place—between memory and material, inheritance and imagination—where the work itself takes shape.<sup>(68)</sup>

In my language, I call this mystery. When I push the boat out into the night, I seek its stillness. The lake becomes a teacher not through explanation but through my being present. I watch, I listen. I wait in the shadows. I let the darkness hold me.<sup>(69)</sup>

51. Leon Battista Alberti, *On Painting*, trans. Cecil Grayson (London: Penguin, 1991), quoted in Laurence Simmons, *The Image Always Has the Last Word* (Auckland: Dunmore Press, 2007), 37. The Italian phrase—“il viso di chi già sia morto, per la pittura vive lunga vita”—captures painting’s power to make the absent present, providing theoretical foundation for understanding how artistic practice can engage with presence and absence.
52. Rachel Buchanan. *The Parihaka Album: Lest We Forget* (Wellington: Huia; Melbourne: La Trobe University Press, 2009), 70–71.
53. Elizabeth Jelin, and Susan Kaufman, “Layers of Memories: Twenty Years After in Argentina.” In T. G. Ashplant et al., *The Politics of War and Commemoration*, Routledge, 2000, 106. Quoted in Buchanan, illustrating her claim that erasure is an active, willed process rather than a passive lapse.
54. Rachel Buchanan, “The Dementia Wing of History.” *Cultural Studies Review*, vol. 13, no. 1, 2007. DOI:10.5130/csr.v13i1.2162.
55. John Huria, “Metamorphic Vocabulary: Text and Image in Shane Cotton’s Paintings.” In *Shane Cotton: Survey 1993–2003* (City Gallery Wellington, 2003) 135.
56. Shane Cotton. *Whakapiri Atu te Whenua*. 1993. Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa Collections Online, <https://collections.tepapa.govt.nz/object/36553>
57. Leonard Cohen, “Anthem.” *The Future*, (Columbia Records, 1992).
58. Avril Bell, *Tangata Tiriti: Working with Māori, Honouring the Treaty* (Auckland University Press, 2024)
59. Richard Shaw, *The Unsettled: Small Stories of Colonialism*. (Massey University Press, 2022) 123–34.
60. Shaw. *The Unsettled*. 124.
61. Shaw. *The Unsettled*. 126–27.
62. Kura Te Waru Rewiri, in conversation with Dr Huhana Smith. *There Is More in Te Kore* (1986–1987). Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa Collections Online, <https://collections.tepapa.govt.nz/object/36517> Kura and my Mum Lindsay are old friends, as Mum was one of Kura’s first art dealers at her 33 1/3 Gallery, Wellington (operating 1986–1993). Mum would have likely represented this work.
63. Peter Doig, quoted in Adrian Searle, review of *Peter Doig, Tate Britain*, *The Guardian*, February 2008.
64. Kent Monkman, in Conversation with Ben Luke. A Brush With... podcast, *The Art Newspaper*, Apple Podcasts, 2023.
65. Shannon Davis, “Landscape Narratives and Shared Histories.” *Lincoln Planning Review*, vol. 1, no. 1, 2008, 13. <https://journals.lincoln.ac.nz/index.php/lpr/article/view/56>
66. Robert Louis Stevenson, *The Silverado Squatters* (Chatto and Windus, 1883).
67. Shane Cotton, Quoted in John Huria, “Metamorphic Vocabulary: Text and Image in Shane Cotton’s Paintings.” In *Shane Cotton: Survey 1993–2003* (City Gallery Wellington, 2003) 129.
68. Talking Heads, “This Must Be the Place (Naive Melody).” *Speaking in Tongues* (Sire Records, 1983).
69. Stéphane Aquin, “No Foreign Land to Painting.” In *Peter Doig: No Foreign Lands*, (Scottish National Gallery / Hatje Cantz, 2013) 14. On Doig’s use of strangeness and familiarity to evoke a “feeling of recognition” drawn from the labyrinth of memory.



**Figure 26.** Late afternoon sun on blinds. Digital photograph by Turi Park, 2025.

*The fish form derives from an artwork etched into the glass of the window behind, by Basia Smolnicki.*



## The Practice

### 1. Before the MFA

The hunter wanders the rocky heights in vain,  
while the shepherd stays close, tending what  
grows.

—after Virgil, *Eclogue 10* (70)

Before beginning my MFA, I approached painting earnestly but unreflectively—grounded in technique, emotion, and instinct rather than shaped by critical inquiry. I stretched every canvas by hand and built surfaces slowly, using the full lexicon of traditional oils: linen (yum), rabbit-skin glue, gesso, imprimatura, grisaille, velatura, glazes, impasto, scumbles. I loved the smell and feel of the materials, the soft amber sheen of shellac giving everything the glow of a half-remembered moment. I was fluent in the language of surface.

My subjects were fragments of imagined romances—lovers swimming or picnicking, working-class couples at the margins. Darkness at the edges of towns. Scenes steeped in European pictorial traditions and a kind of Pākehā nostalgia. Looking back, I see what James Elkins, the American art historian known for his writing on how artists learn to see and paint, calls a “state of constant false starts”: painters working intensely without yet perceiving the habits shaping their choices.<sup>(71)</sup> Graeme Sullivan, a leading scholar of practice-based research, names this a “non-reflective studio”—energetic, compulsive, but unexamined.<sup>(72)</sup>

That was me. I sensed when something was off but lacked the instinct to reflect, and the vocabulary to articulate why. I worked inside a European visual grammar not because I chose it critically, but because it was the only language I knew how to speak fluently. My way of painting was Pākehā—without yet recognising the potential in the holes in my Pākehā ways of seeing—as the stories to paint.

My landscapes implied belonging, yet a faint unease bled through. I built technically strong, beautiful surfaces around curious wonderings that I could not name—questions about identity, land, inheritance—lying a little too politely beneath the shellac. And the shellac itself taught me something: fast-drying, sealing the slower oils, forming inevitable cracks. Those fissures mirrored the gap between gesture and understanding, the lag between surface fluency and conceptual depth.

In *Slow Painting*, Helen Westgeest, an art historian whose research focuses on contemporary painting and temporality, notes that material slowness cultivates reflection; in my case, the tension between fast and slow revealed how little reflection I was actually doing.<sup>(73)</sup> By 2013, the practice had dried out. Well, died really.

I now see I had been approaching painting like a hunter—waiting for results, operating on Western time: hours in, materials used, value extracted. I was harvesting the fruit without tending to the ground. Strong supervision, and a great deal of painting, listening and reading—especially Rangi Mātāmua’s writing early on—helped me recognise how deeply this echoed the strictures of colonial time, with its emphasis on linear output over cyclical relationship.<sup>(74)</sup> I imposed vision, directing from above instead of attending to the slow, relational processes real practice requires.

What I needed was space for patience, listening, cultivation. The hunting approach had exhausted both me and the work. My kete was full of the wrong things, and I was tired from carrying dead weight. Only in hindsight can I see how much I needed to step back and recognise the structures I brought into the studio. This “before” forms the baseline for the transformation that followed: from hunter to gardener, from extraction to cultivation, from control to conversation.

If honest analysis of my earlier practice revealed what I brought into the studio, the MFA asked me to relearn how to work: to treat painting not as execution but as inquiry.



70. Virgil. *Eclogues*. Translated by Guy Lee (Penguin Classics, 1984). Virgil and the pastoral mode appear again in Geoff Park's "Wild New Zealand—Voices from the Landscape: 2003 Address," in *Voices of Aotearoa: 25 Years of Going West Oratory* (Going West Trust and Oratia Books, 2021), 118–43, where Park draws on the *Eclogues* to frame questions of landscape, belonging, and habitation. Dad often talked about Virgil over campfires in wild places.
71. James Elkins. *What Painting Is*, (Routledge, 1999).
72. Graeme Sullivan, *Art Practice as Research: Inquiry in the Visual Arts*. 2nd ed., (SAGE Publications, 2010).
73. Helen Westgeest. *Slow Painting: Contemplation and Critique in the Digital Age*. (Bloomsbury Visual Arts, 2020).
74. Rangi Mātāmua. "Matariki and the Decolonisation of Time." *Routledge Handbook of Critical Indigenous Studies*, edited by Brendan Hokowhitu, Aroha Harris, and Vic Pasupe (Routledge, 2020), 290–300.



**Figure 27.** *The old kitchen at the lake.* Photograph by Matiu Park, 2006.

*The espresso machine lodged in the ceiling at upper left records an explosion caused by inattention to the process of making.*



## 2. Methodology

This project works through deliberate oscillation between painting and inquiry — treating art-making as research rather than illustration. Following Graeme Sullivan, a leading theorist of practice-based research who describes art-making as a form of “braided research,” technical discovery, conceptual development, and ethical positioning operate simultaneously.<sup>(75)</sup> Making leads to questioning; questioning reshapes making. The process folds back on itself like the tupu of the kūmara — growth emerging in relation to what has already unfolded while sensing what has yet to surface.<sup>(76)</sup>

My days move between the studio, archival digging, conversations over tea with whānau and neighbours, and time at Lake Rotoiti: watching, listening, noticing what the place gives and withholds. Each painting becomes a conversation across time — between what the land has witnessed, what I am beginning to understand, and what emerges through stories, silences, and material resistance.<sup>(77)</sup>

Central to this methodology is what I have come to understand as takahurihuri — the disorienting roll of being spun in the dark when confronting absences in my own genealogy. Researching the sun-faded gaps around my grandfather’s trauma became a fever dream: books, cups of tea, podcasts, late-night *PapersPast* searches, map overlays, obituaries, photo albums, more talking. Slowly, information seeped up through the cracks — the return of things deliberately not passed on.

Rather than resisting this disorientation, I treat it as necessary passage. To paint these stories, I must feel their weight; the finding out must hurt me too. Authentic stories emerge through cycles that embrace uncertainty as generative methodology.

Anne Noble’s *Peter Turner Memorial Lecture* at Te Papa in 2025 described how the most generative shifts in her work often arose through “seemingly magical moments” that appeared only after long hours in the field, in the darkroom, or in deep conceptual inquiry. What looked like good luck was, in her words, the product of showing up: being attentive, prepared, and open to what the work might reveal. Noble frames these moments as states of attention—conditions in which something previously unseen can surface. That articulation felt closer to what my own painting practice seeks: not inspiration as accident, but clarity as the consequence of care, time, and being present to the work.<sup>(78)</sup> My approach privileges material responsiveness over conceptual control. I work experimentally: altering grounds, staining tent canvas, testing blinds as if from the 1920s Royal Train carriage, letting accidents lead. Helen Westgeest, an art historian whose work on *Slow Painting* foregrounds temporality and attentiveness, consolidates this shift: pacing the work so materials have time to speak and I have time to hear them.<sup>(79)</sup> The studio becomes both “Room for Doubt” and “Room for Improvement.”<sup>(80)</sup>

Ethical boundaries function as creative catalysts. When I was advised not to depict the likeness of Māori guides in a developing work, it initially felt like a constraint; in practice, it opened pathways I would never have found by pushing ahead.<sup>(81)</sup> As Ralph Hotere’s practice demonstrates, restraint is not a diminishment but a discipline — a way of sharpening perception through what is deliberately withheld.<sup>(82)</sup> Similarly, tikanga-based constraints sharpen my attention to relation, responsibility, and perspective. Accountability becomes a generative condition: a form of internal creative pressure that shapes the work from within.

I was reminded recently that “writing is just talking about, and reflecting on the work—which is part of the work itself,” and that reflection and consideration become active components of practice.<sup>(83)</sup> I am not painting about the story; painting becomes the story—thinking-in-movement, with analysis occurring mid-gesture rather than after the fact.

It is as if there is an ongoing imagined dialogue between two voices in my head that structure my practice: The Painter and The Collector. The Painter listens, tests, allows materials to lead; The Collector contextualises, catalogues, and tracks provenance of ideas and images. One voice leans into intuition; the other gathers and holds. Between them, a productive tension emerges — gesture and restraint, care and complicity,



discovery and accountability. Studio notes, process photographs, voice memos, and text pages are not documentation of the work but extensions of it. They record not conclusions but proximities: how close I am to understanding something, and where the next question sits.

Thinking happens through the hands as much as the mind. Painting has become a form of embodied inquiry — a way of processing difficult inheritances through sustained attention to what materials and histories communicate.<sup>(84)</sup> The practice unsettles visual habits I have inherited and shows how those habits live on inside the brushstrokes: the vantage point chosen, the edge softened, the urge to polish or resolve. But now I hold this in tension — letting the habit surface without letting it decide.

Knowledge emerges through resistance: the drag of diluted house paint, the warp of old tent canvas, the slack of blind fabric, the stubbornness of gesso on a humid day. It emerges through the pull of history, the ache of absence, the refusal of old stories to settle. Breakthroughs come in the ongoing conversation between presence and absence — where paint becomes a means of reimagining more accountable relations to place.

This methodology demonstrates that uncertainty is not an obstacle but a mode of knowing. By treating ethical frameworks as generative and by listening to material intelligence,

the practice models a research approach that thinks through surfaces — where painting becomes a way of working with, and working through, inheritances that cannot be resolved but can only be held in tension.

As the methodology settled into my hands, the materials themselves began carrying the inquiry — insisting on their own histories, limits, and ways of speaking.



**Figure 28.** *Reflecting on being in place.* Digital photograph by Turi Park, Te Weta Bay, Rotoiti, 2025.





**Figure 29.** Reuben Sutherland with my mother, Lindsay Park, in the old kauri clinker dinghy on Lake Rotoiti. Digital photograph by Turi Park, 2025.

Both are photographing the sheet underwater, echoing the task of rinsing behind the boat that I once helped my Nonna with.

**Figure 30.** Shape and texture. Digital photograph by Reuben Sutherland and Turi Park, 2025.

Initial results from photographic experiments using an underwater camera (GoPro Hero 9, cable-tied to an old hiking pole).

75. Graeme Sullivan, *Art Practice as Research: Inquiry in the Visual Arts*, 2nd ed. (Los Angeles: SAGE Publications, 2010).
76. Nick Roskrug, *Ko Mahinga o Tūku Māra Kai: Establishing Māra Kai* (Wellington: Te Puni Kōkiri, 2014).
77. Conversations with family members about histories of place and traditional practices.
78. Anne Noble, "Peter Turner Memorial Lecture," Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, Wellington, August 7, 2025. Public lecture.
79. Helen Westgeest, *Slow Painting: Contemplation and Critique in the Digital Age* (London: Bloomsbury Visual Arts, 2020).
80. Bob Kerr and Sarah Maxey, personal conversations (coffee catch-ups), Wellington, 2024–25.
81. Dr Huhana Smith, supervision session, Massey University, Wellington, July 2025.
82. Vincent O'Sullivan, *The Dark Is Light Enough: Ralph Hotere—A Biographical Portrait* (Auckland: Penguin Random House, 2020).
83. Shannon Te Ao, MFA writing workshop, Massey University, Wellington, November, 2025.
84. Huhana Smith and Julieanna Preston, supervision session, Massey University, Wellington, May, 2025.



### 3. Materials

My commitment to the materiality of painting — the laboured craft of oil, the making with hands and eyes that first drew me back to practice — has undergone a sharp recalibration. Critique forced me to confront my own Pākehā inheritance, and that reckoning worked its way into the materials themselves. Old canvas tents, tarpaulins, roller blinds, camp stretchers now arrive in the studio not as neutral supports but as objects thick with use: creases, rusted eyelets, mildew, sun-fade. They hold traces of time and touch — the ghosts of summers, sheds, storms, neglect. They are not surfaces; they are witnesses.

Over time I've come to understand these materials as more than family camping gear. They function as an operating system — evocative objects embedded with the cultural codes my Pākehā ancestors carried to Lake Rotoiti and to places like it across Aotearoa: naming, classifying, domesticating. *Great Expectations* projected onto whenua. What if these fabrics don't merely receive the painting, but already are the painting? Old tents and blinds as the first layer of image: inherited European imagery upended, unsettled, repurposed.

**Figure 31.** Makeshift paints and making the shift.  
Digital photograph by Turi Park, 2025.

Materials sourced at the Wellington Tip Shop, forming the beginnings of my "Make-Do" paint palette.





This has led to a practice I think of as makeshift materiality. Paints sourced from tip shops and TradeMe: mismatched house paints, mistints, old sample pots, dried buckets revived with mediums. Nothing precious. Archival is a consideration but not a master. Making becomes making-do — an intentional refusal of painterly purity in favour of experimentation, as the wider project demands. The work proceeds through trial and error: glazing over disaster, scraping back failure, letting the material speak and collaborate.

Technically, this approach builds on the pragmatic wisdom of Ralph Mayer, whose *Artist's Handbook* has long been a standard reference for studio materials; Reed Kay, a painter and educator known for his method-driven *Painter's Guide to Studio Methods and Materials*; and — delightfully — Eric Hebborn, the notorious art forger whose *Art Forger's Handbook* is equal parts craft manual and mischievous critique.<sup>(85)</sup> These sit beside online forums, decades-old notes, and improvised chemistry as I test homemade transparent gesso, sanding sealers that won't yellow, matting solutions that cooperate with second-hand paints. Lo-fi, yes — but the making do is not an aesthetic; it's an approach. Holding, losing, remaking. The domestic. The discarded. The provisional.

But the makeshift extends beyond thrift or ingenuity. The tent canvas itself behaves as an analogue of colonial encounter: an imported

fabric stretched across an unconsidered landscape. A fumbling intent to impose order without understanding the natural order of things. The canvas holds these rough applications the way skin holds scar — architectural, sculptural, bodily. A stand-in for Pākehā shape-shifting: foreign forms arriving into whenua already alive with its own systems.

The materials act with the faint logic of *après-coup* — meaning that arrives only later, tapping us on the shoulder.<sup>(86)</sup> These found objects trigger recognitions I did not have at first contact. They carry what Bruno Latour calls history materialised: traces of the makeshift systems they come from — mistint house paints, sun-faded drapes, tarps and timbers reused across decades.<sup>(87)</sup> History doesn't just sit in documents; it sits in the mustiness of a tarp, the weight of a stretcher frame, the sting of canvas dust. Working around tears, seams, and eyelets forces me to let the material speak, resist, redirect the image — embodying Buchanan and Shaw's "presence of an absence."<sup>(88)</sup> Gaps become part of the meaning, not obstacles to be smoothed away.

This transition — from hand-stretched linen and archival oils to found tents and tip shop paint — is not only aesthetic but ethical. It marks the shift from celebration to reckoning, from permanence to provisionality, from clean surfaces to marked ones that speak before I do. Like the cracked water jugs, oversized boots and *Potted Histories* in Shane Cotton's paintings, these materials operate as

imperfect vessels: carriers of story and rupture, holding together just enough.<sup>(89)</sup> Their fragility is a form of honesty — an acknowledgement that settler inheritance is makeshift, precarious, held through habit more than right.

Because of this, each material acts as both question and collaborator. The tent canvas strains under its own weight, buckles in humidity, resists adhesion, refuses smoothness. House paint drags differently across seams, congeals unpredictably. Blinds roll memory into their ribs. These interferences become compositional events, redirecting the work. Material resistance becomes a mode of thinking — an embodied conversation between presence and absence.

The works that follow — *Leisure Settlement* (*The Queen's Chain*), *Surface Tension*, *The Blinds Drawn* (*Shadelands*) — show how this material intelligence shapes the inquiry. These objects are not supports but agents: carrying histories, provoking questions about comfort and inheritance, pulling me back toward the murkiness where the trouble lives. They refuse closure, refuse prettiness, refuse the urge to tidy the story.

The materials know more than I do. My role is to watch and listen — to feel their insistence — and let that lead the work.





“It's like it's trying to  
show me something I  
can't see yet.”

—Justin Paton, recounting  
Courtney Johnston <sup>(90)</sup>



**Figures 32 and 33.** Material details from *Leisure Settlement (The Queen's Chain)*. Installation at Massey University test space 2D09. Digital photograph by Turi Park, 2025.

85. Ralph Mayer, *The Artist's Handbook of Materials and Techniques*, 5th ed. (New York: Viking Penguin, 1991); Reed Kay, *The Painter's Guide to Studio Methods and Materials* (New York: Watson-Guptill, 1983); and Eric Hebborn, *The Art Forger's Handbook* (London: Cassell, 1997).
86. Jean Laplanche, “Après-coup,” in *Essays on Otherness*, ed. and trans. John Fletcher (London: Routledge, 1999), 111–133.
87. Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).
88. Rachel Buchanan, *The Parihaka Album: Lest We Forget* (Huia and La Trobe, 2009), 70–71, as quoted in Richard Shaw, *The Unsettled: Small Stories of Colonisation* (Massey University Press, 2024), 124.
89. John Huria, “Metamorphic Vocabulary: Text and Image in Shane Cotton's Paintings,” in *Shane Cotton: Survey 1993–2003* (City Gallery Wellington, 2003), 135.
90. Justin Paton, “Finding Space: Six Encounters with Shane Cotton,” in *Shane Cotton: The Hanging Sky* (Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū, 2013), 42.





**Figure 34.** *Leisure Settlement (The Queen's Chain)*  
installed at Massey University. Digital photograph  
by Turi Park, 2025.



## The Works

### 1. Leisure Settlement (The Queen's Chain)

*Leisure Settlement (The Queen's Chain)* is a large-scale installation measuring 540 × 240cm, made from five repurposed tent panels sewn together and hung like sheets on an old wire washing-line. Cut from a 1980s *Sunshine Leisure: Hideaway* family tent, the panels are painted with acrylics, inks, enamel spray, chalk, and a transparent gesso I formulated from PVA, varnish, and kaolin. Suspended 120cm off the wall with sisal rope, bamboo poles, and metal pegs, the work hovers—somewhere between painting, textile, and sculpture.

The tent matters. It is a settler instrument: a first mode of occupation, offering mobility and refuge while asserting presence on land. This particular model was ubiquitous in the 'striving individualism' of the 1980s—a *Toyota Corolla* of campgrounds—symbolising Pākehā prosperity, leisure, and the deepening of our attachment to place. These temporary structures extended settlement further into Māori lands and shaped how Pākehā families came to understand access, belonging, and entitlement.

The work presents a 270° panoramic view along our boundary at Lake Rotoiti — a liminal 22-yard strip of land framed in Pākehā imagination as "*The Queen's Chain*," a supposedly public access corridor whose very premise the work interrogates. The scene flickers between daylight and night, creating an "in and out of time" effect that unsettles both moment and place.



At the centre sits *The Whare*, a small structure my Sāmoan brother-in-law built by hand for my Te Ātiawa sister. At the time, we understood it simply as a family project — something made with care, tuned to the spirit of the place. Only later did I recognise the cultural complexity we had stepped into. The outward sweep of its *maihi*, or barge boards — which should carefully honour whakapapa — are here fashioned from salvaged Victorian gingerbread trim my Pākehā father rescued (for a crate of beer) from the demolition of St Mary's Girls' College in Thorndon, Wellington.<sup>(91)</sup> The effect is curious: a hybrid front face that unintentionally brushes against the visual language of the whare, without any of us knowing the tikanga or whakapapa carried by that form.

**Figure 35.** *Leisure Settlement (The Queen's Chain)*. 2025. Acrylic, ink, enamel spray paint, chalk, pencil, shellac, and transparent gesso (polyurethane varnish, whiting, and kaolin) on canvas panels cut and resewn from a 1980s *Sunshine Leisure* family tent; sisal rope, bamboo poles, and metal pegs. Installation, 540 × 240 × 120 cm. Installed at Massey University test space 2D09. Digital photograph by Turi Park.



Architectural historian Bill McKay notes that the meeting house is often addressed as one would greet a person: the face first, not the body.<sup>(92)</sup> Western readings have misinterpreted this emphasis on the façade as a simplification of form, rather than an encounter with an ancestor. Roger Neich, a leading anthropologist of Māori visual culture, reinforces this understanding in *Painted Histories*, showing how whare forms operate as genealogical bodies, embodying descent and historical narrative.<sup>(93)</sup> Art historian Deidre Brown extends this: in the symbolic architecture of the whare, the koruru is the face, the maihi the outstretched arms, the tāhuhu the spine, and the heke the ribs.<sup>(94)</sup>

Seen with that knowledge, our little structure takes on a different resonance. Its improvised “maihi” sit directly on the line where our private land meets the so-called *Queen’s Chain*. The painting holds this tension instead of tidying it away. It becomes a space to sit with the complexity rather than resolve it: What does it mean for a Pākehā family to unknowingly echo the form of a whare on whenua marked by uneven histories of access, authority, and belonging? What does that say about inheritance, intention, and the slipperiness of good faith?

To orient this, I look sideways to artists who understand contested terrain. Ronny Quevedo, a Bronx-born Ecuadorian-American artist whose

work draws on sports diagrams and Indigenous cartographies to chart movement and displacement, maps migration and dislocation through diagrammatic marks — scuffs, arcs, ghost-lines tracing bodies navigating fractured ground.<sup>(95)</sup> Hurvin Anderson, a British painter of Jamaican heritage known for his examinations of diasporic space, works with architectures of quiet exclusion: fences, screens, thresholds that shape who gets to belong before anyone arrives.<sup>(96)</sup>

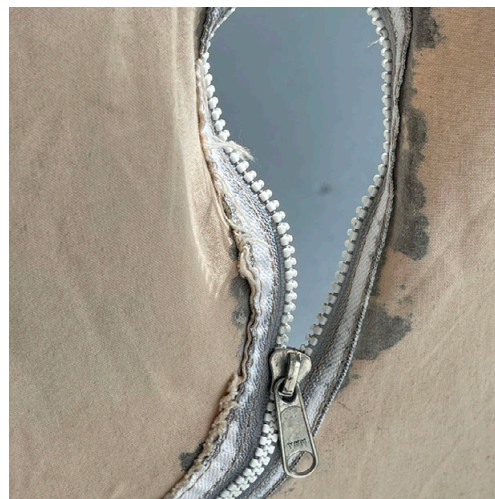
Their practices illuminate a blunt local truth noted in an oral-history conversation: “Rotoiti was always for the flash folk—having a bach there showed the world you’d made it.”<sup>(97)</sup> That line snapped the shoreline into focus. What looks scenic is layered with overlapping regimes — royal decrees unevenly applied, survey chains, papakāinga and mahinga kai histories, access strips, and the more-than-human pulse of lake and bush. Doing the ‘art-making as research’ mahi helped me see more of how these structures operate both visibly and invisibly at Rotoiti, shaping what can be sensed, ignored, or assumed.

Whilst I’m keenly aware of how artists such as Peter McIntyre, Don Driver, and Don Binney have been folded into what has been described as the “failed heroics of the Pākehā New Zealand nationalist project”—and how their practices, in different ways, continued and naturalised European landscape traditions—this project positions itself against that



**Figures 36 and 37.** *Leisure Settlement (The Queen’s Chain)*. Details. Digital photograph by Turi Park, 2025.





**Figures 38–41.** Details from *Leisure Settlement (The Queen's Chain)*. Installation at Massey University. Digital photograph by Turi Park, 2025.

legacy.<sup>(98)</sup> As a child, visiting art galleries with my parents was a constant, and I was fascinated by all of these artists. Yet something about Don Driver's work, especially, didn't sit right—even then. That early unease has become clearer through this project: the seductive pull of Driver's material theatricality is inseparable from a broader Pākehā nationalist imaginary—a lineage in which Pākehā culture often sees itself as resourceful, not recognisably colonial. It is that aesthetic of unexamined ingenuity that I am now working to recognise and unsettle. Rather than celebrating scenery, *Leisure Settlement (The Queen's Chain)* unsettles it, drawing energy from McCahon's resistance to pictorial comfort. Material familiarity becomes confrontational: awkward seams, makeshift stitching, and resistant tent fabric push back against romantic impulses. I keep the title deliberately — not to endorse the myth but to bracket it. As Dr Huhana Smith argues, the belief in automatic public access to water margins is a “dumb myth” that erases Māori customary relationships with waterways.<sup>(99)</sup> For Ngāti Pikiao, mana whenua of Lake Rotoiti, this strip is part of a living taonga—once flourishing mahinga kai that fed their papakāinga.<sup>(100)</sup>

The tent fabric shifted everything. I bought it on TradeMe twelve years ago and stored it in our Rotoiti garage, where it absorbed the scent of rich, black earth. During installation, the smell — musty, pungent, overwhelming — pulled me instantly back to childhood: searching under the house for tools, 2-stroke petrol, and paints for odd jobs with my grandfather. Viewers definitely smelled it, and it was a constant in critiques (my sister cried when she ‘saw’ it first). That moment nudged the work



toward installation, where scent carries narrative weight. Cutting and resewing the tent brought emotional resistance. Some seams held; others skewed. It echoed sewing with my Nonna as a child — garments always slightly embarrassing to wear to school, never quite right. Yet that makeshift quality felt true: the handmade, the patched-together, carried awkwardly but lovingly.

Hanging the panels at 120cm came from memories of playing between sheets in the sun. That distance also allowed the tent's zip-up "door" and "windows" to frame the space behind, transforming the work into sculpture as well as painting. Once off the wall, it demanded bodily response and refused to behave like a traditional picture plane.

Critical feedback, however, revealed the central issue: just too much happening at once. Too many conceptual layers — washing line, screen, medal ribbons, war scene, theatre backdrop — crowded the encounter. The lesson was simple and necessary: tell one story, and know my position in telling it. This realisation pushed me toward *Surface Tension* and the need for 'one story, one point of view — and then dial it up.'

The clarity I needed arrived only through recognising the limits of my own storytelling. If *Leisure Settlement (The Queen's Chain)* exposed how easily multiple threads can tangle into noise, the next work required a single pressure point — a doorway into the deeper structures shaping my family's presence at Rotoiti.

That doorway, it turned out, was an actual door.

91. Personal recollection. I helped my father collect these materials and load them into our family van. Wellington, early 1980s.
92. Bill McKay, "Māori Architecture: Transforming Western Notions of Architecture," *Fabrications* 1–2 (December 2004): 1–10. McKay notes that the meeting house is often addressed by Māori as one would address a person rather than treated as a neutral container for activity, an approach frequently misread by Western architectural traditions as formal crudity rather than relational address.
93. Roger Neich, *Painted Histories: Early Māori Figurative Painting* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1993). Neich shows how whare forms operate as genealogical bodies, embodying descent and historical narrative.
94. Deidre Brown, "Māori Architecture—Whare Māori," *Te Ara – The Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, 2012, <https://teara.govt.nz/en/maori-architecture-whare-maori/Brown> explains the symbolic anatomy of the whare: koruru (face), maihi (arms), tāhuhu (spine), heke (ribs).
95. Joan Mitchell Foundation, "In the Studio: Ronny Quevedo." <https://www.joanmitchellfoundation.org/journal/in-the-studio-ronny-quevedo>. See also: "Ronny Quevedo." *Alexander Gray Associates*, <https://www.alexandergray.com/artists/ronny-quevedo/>, *The Menil Collection*. "Wall Drawing Series: Ronny Quevedo," <https://www.menil.org/exhibition/wall-drawing-series-ronny-quevedo>, Quevedo, Ronny. *Artist website*, <https://www.ronnyquevedo.info/>
96. Hurvin Anderson. *Hurvin Anderson* (Rizzoli Electa, 2022). See also: Thomas Dane Gallery. "Hurvin Anderson," <https://www.thomasdaneartgallery.com/artists/28-hurvin-anderson/works/>, Morris, Kadish. "Artist Hurvin Anderson: 'I'm always nervous about the word identity...'" *The Guardian*, 21 May 2023, [https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2023/may/21/artist-hurvin-anderson-royal-academy-salon-paintings-hepworth-wakefield-interview-Christie's-Lot-Essay-\"Country-Club-\"\(Chicken-Wire\)\"](https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2023/may/21/artist-hurvin-anderson-royal-academy-salon-paintings-hepworth-wakefield-interview-Christie's-Lot-Essay-\) 7 Mar. 2017, <https://www.christies.com/lot/lot-hurvin-anderson-country-club-chicken-wire-6062983/>
97. Informal conversations with Rotorua and Rotoiti locals, family, and neighbours, 2024–25.
98. Shannon Te Ao. Informal 1:1 conversations reflecting on the work at Massey University, Wellington, March 2025.
99. Dr Huhana Smith, "No Queen's Chain for Mana: Te Marae Atea." In B. E. Hayes, *The Law on Public Access Along Water Margins, Land Information New Zealand*, 2003, 49. as shown in Hayes, <https://www.herengaanuku.govt.nz/assets/Publication/Files/cd93e0e028/public-access-along-water-margins.pdf>. See also: Warren Gamble. "Truth behind the Queen's Chain." *NZ Herald*, 12 Aug. 2003, <https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/truth-behind-the-queens-chain/>. New Zealand coastal property ownership is a patchwork of old and new laws, meaning a beach walk can cross Crown, council, and privately owned land without notice. The Queen's Chain, often imagined as a guaranteed right of access, is in fact an incomplete series of publicly owned strips beside beaches, lakes, and rivers.
100. Roger Neich. *Carved Histories: Rotorua Ngāti Tararawai Woodcarving* (Canterbury University Press, 1993), 15. Neich contextualises the cultural significance of mahinga kai and papakāinga around Lake Rotoiti.





**Figure 42.** *Beyond the Queen's Chain.* Digital photograph by Turi Park, Te Weta Bay, Rotoiti, 2025.

*Looking out from the lake edge toward the Pūkuraahi pā site.*



## 2. Surface Tension

*Surface Tension* emerged directly from the lesson of *Leisure Settlement (The Queen's Chain)*: the need for “storytelling singularity”—one clear site of pressure, stripped to its essentials. Rather than trying to hold everything at once, I chose a single doorway—literally—into inherited family patterns and the colonial frameworks shaping them.

The work began with a domestic object carrying deep psychic weight: the door to my grandparents’ bedroom. It was a threshold my siblings and I were trained to respect, and my Nonna had transformed its surface into a collage of magazine cut-outs—Buller’s birds, native plants, Rotorua landscapes, and portraits of Māori guides. I worked on a rimu veneer panel (120 × 150 cm) found in a rubbish skip, using a mixture of artists’ pigments and leftover house paints from the Wellington Tip Shop. This “making-do” materiality enacted the themes rather than illustrating them, aligning refinements in my studio process with the conceptual shifts underway in my practice.

The breakthrough came through ethical constraint. As I painted, the presence of the Māori guides in Nonna’s collage became impossible to ignore. However, I could not paint these wāhine Māori—even their likeness—without consultation and correct permissions from their whānau.<sup>(101)</sup> Following this limit became generative rather than restrictive. It redirected my attention from the figures themselves to the structures that framed

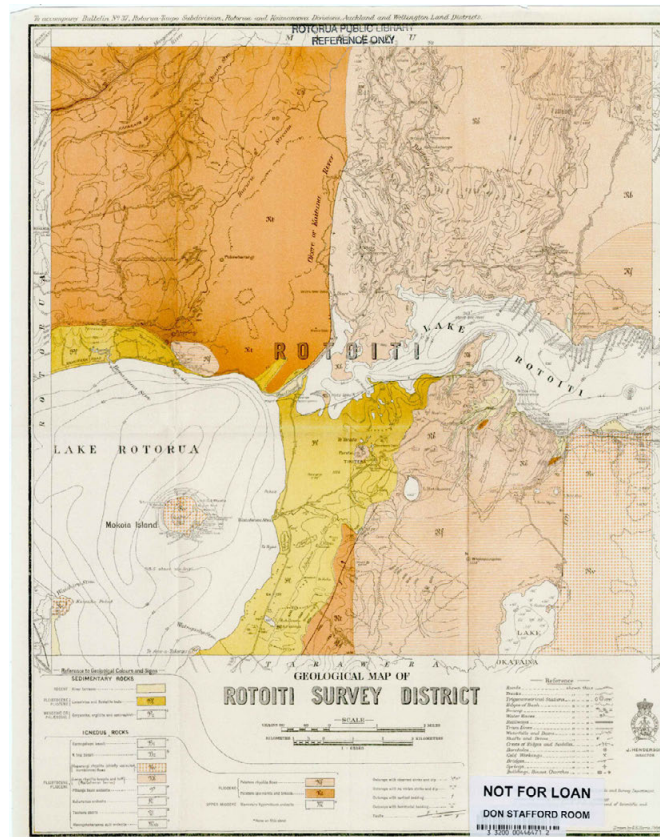
**Figure 43.** *Surface Tension*. 2025. Acrylic (house paint and artists’ acrylic) and pencil on rimu veneer panel, 120 × 150 cm. Installed at Massey University test space 2D09. Digital photograph by Turi Park.





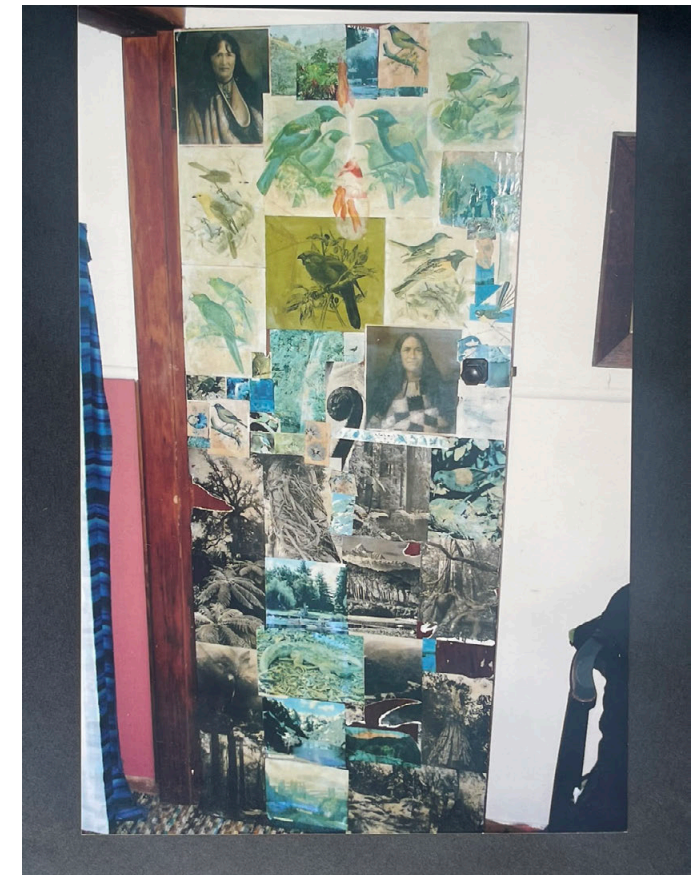
them. Peter Brunt's analysis of 'the civilised and the savage' in William Hodges' colonial paintings sharpened this recognition, showing how European landscape conventions carry a moralising desire to civilise—disguising aesthetic appropriation as admiration and positioning Māori women as beautiful objects rather than subjects with agency, mana, and whakapapa.<sup>(102)</sup> My Nonna's loving collage, I realised, repeated this visual logic—tender but structured by the same colonial frames.

Stepping back from the figures opened another path. With the women withheld, the red positional lines I had laid down early in the process asserted themselves. They resembled survey lines—property boundaries seen from the air—dividing land into possessable parcels. Catherine Comyn, a researcher of financial colonisation and a PhD candidate in International Political Economy at King's College London, sharpens this shift; grounded in historical materialism, her work traces how finance extends colonial logics. She argues that “capital and its representatives operate according to a relentless expansionist imperative that is violently appropriative at its core.”<sup>(103)</sup> The painting was no longer about the collage's imagery but the structural advantage of ownership that makes both the door, and our presence at Rotoiti, possible.



**Figure 44.** Geological map of Rotoiti Survey District. Drawn by G. E. Harris; compiled by L. I. Grange, Geological Survey Branch, Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, and the New Zealand Department of Lands and Survey, 1936. Map. National Library of New Zealand (39535846).

**Figure 45.** The door to Nonna and Grandad's bedroom. Digital photograph by Matiu Park, 2006. The house has since been extensively renovated and the door removed.





This introduced a crucial methodological change: I began letting the work determine its own pace. When the painting neared the point where oils would lock it down, I stepped back. Trusting its internal logic reflected Cézanne's insight that "the canvas isn't just a window on a subject but becomes its own image, its own story."<sup>(104)</sup> Listening to the work's resistances and openings allowed abstraction to emerge not as style but as necessity. It was like flicking the high beams on—structural clarity appearing where figuration once sat.

This opening demanded deeper research. Reading Comyn on intergenerational financial trauma alongside a *Counterfutures* book forum, I began to see my grandparents not only as beloved figures but as active participants in the financial architecture of colonial advantage.<sup>(105)</sup> My Nonna, the first woman chartered accountant in Aotearoa, and my grandfather, a real-estate agent and farmer, worked within systems that managed, valued, and redistributed land. The door she decorated—tenderly, proudly—sat inside these mechanisms.

Shannon Davis, whose research examines plural narratives within shared landscapes, helped me recognise how the door held multiple histories simultaneously. Her concept of "vertical plurality" clarified the collage surface as a site where inherited Pākehā narratives had been layered over—or placed beside—what had been omitted.<sup>(106)</sup> The moment the boundary lines clicked, the abstraction clarified: it wasn't decorative; it was the argument about how histories are curated, layered and withheld.

Working with house paints alongside artists' pigments produced discoveries that mirrored

the work's conceptual concerns. House paints contain mixed pigments; some colours sit strong, others sink. They mix unevenly and unpredictably. This required attentiveness, aligning material behaviour with themes of makeshift domesticity and provisional belonging. The rimu veneer panel—marked, scratched, repurposed—already carried its own history. Working on this surface foregrounded patterns of extraction, labour, and consumption embedded in wider colonial narratives.

*Surface Tension* set the direction for what followed. It demonstrated that domestic surfaces can operate as maps—holding together questions of possession, inheritance, and complicity. It showed that ethical constraint is not limitation but engine; that listening to material resistance produces insights impossible through predetermined paths; and that personal narrative requires rigorous contextual grounding. Most importantly, it proved that abstraction—when arising from ethical necessity—can reveal the structures of colonial power more clearly than figuration. These unresolved questions led directly to *The Blinds Drawn (Shadelands)*, where surface, shadow, and concealment become the central inquiry.

If *Surface Tension* taught me to let ethical limits generate form, the next step was to understand how that limit functions at structural scale: not just what I could or could not paint, but what I had been unable—or unwilling—to see.

This opened the path to a new method entirely: a positioning device capable of materialising inherited blindness.





**Figure 46.** Sun-split sticker on the glass sliding door to the deck. Digital photograph by Turi Park, Rotoiti, 2025.

101. Dr Huhana Smith. Supervisory consultation. Massey University, May 2025.
102. Peter Brunt, "Savagery and The Sublime: Two Paintings by William Hodges Based on an Encounter with Māori in Dusky Bay, New Zealand." *The Eighteenth Century*, vol. 38, no. 3, Fall 1997, 266–286.
103. Catherine Comyn, *The Financial Colonisation of Aotearoa*. (ESRA, 2022).
104. Paul Cézanne, Letters to Émile Bernard, 1904–1906. Quoted in *Cézanne: Letters*, edited by John Rewald (Oxford University Press, 1976), 234.
105. Arama Rata, Jane Kelsey, Simon Barber, and Catherine Comyn, "Book Forum: The Financial Colonisation of Aotearoa." in *Counterfutures: Left Thought and Practice Aotearoa*, vol. 14, 2023, 21–54, doi:10.11157/cf.v14.244.
106. Shannon Davis, "Stories from the Land: Revealing Plural Narratives within One Landscape." *Landscape Review*, vol. 19, no. 1, 2022, <https://doi.org/10.34900/lrv19i1.1194>





**Figure 47.** *The Blinds Drawn (Shadelands)*. Installed in The Engine Room Gallery, Massey University, Wellington. Digital photograph by Turi Park, 2025.



### 3. The Blinds Drawn (Shadelands)

The conceptual foundations for this artwork began with hearing more about *The Naiad*, my mum's family's first boat at Lake Rotoiti — a kauri launch named for a Greek water spirit.<sup>(107)</sup> This European allegory, ferried effortlessly into a volcanic lake, carried the same logic as William Hodges' imported conventions and the scenographic narratives Lisa Reihana critiques with *In Pursuit of Venus [infected]*, 2015–17: mythologies from elsewhere naturalised as signs of belonging.<sup>(108) (109) (110)</sup> The lake was not empty; it held its own whakapapa. Yet we arrived carrying symbols from the classical allegories of Greece, laying them across what was already there.<sup>(111)</sup>

The discovery that fractured my understanding of our family inheritance and connections to this place was finding our maternal

surname on the Matamata Estate 1904 ballot list—land reallocated at the government valuation of £3/10 an acre, a price so low it effectively guaranteed the land flowed to Pākehā families who could demonstrate their capital privilege to enter the ballot.<sup>(112) (113)</sup> Not personal wrongdoing, but playing the game hard within the tilt of structural advantage—the quiet machinery of colonisation functioning exactly as designed.<sup>(114)</sup> All the stories I thought I knew about our family suddenly felt provisional, suspect. What else had been smoothed over, whitewashed, or simply marked 'never-to-be-spoken-about'?

The shock created its own void—a settler version of not-knowing, a blinding absence where certainty used to be. Overexposed fragments of



**Figure 48.** Exterior view of the royal train carriage used during the Duke of Cornwall and York's 1901 visit. Photograph by Albert Percy Godber, Petone Railway Workshops, 1901. Alexander Turnbull Library (ATLIB 274361).

This is the same carriage later used by Prince Edward during the 1920 Royal Visit.



**Figure 49** *The Blinds Drawn (Shadelands)*. Installed in The Engine Room Gallery, Massey University, Wellington. Digital photograph by Turi Park, 2025.





---

Figure 50. Morning sun on native bush in winter, Te Weta Bay, Rotoiti. Digital photograph by Turi Park, 2025.



childhood memories—the sun-glare of car trips from Wellington to Mount Maunganui, the long hot waits of visiting the rellies while adults talked for hours, the white-hot silences around my grandfather’s war trauma—began slowly to align. The washed-out and whited-out gaps in the record, the places where things had been smoothed over or simply not spoken about, echoed the very absences I was trying to understand. Forms started to emerge from this blankness — not the original shapes, but their inverted doubles, the shadows cast by what had been erased.<sup>(115)</sup> Like the register of atomic shadows burned into Hiroshima’s walls, these were not images but absences made visible, the texture of historical trauma rendered in negative space.

From here my research spiralled and deepened into a fever dream. What began as a simple curiosity on PapersPast quickly spiralled: hours lost scrolling through digitised newspapers, census rolls, probate files; maps laid alongside each other; obituaries clipped and cross-referenced; family photos pulled from shoeboxes and scanned; long conversations with Mum, Aunties and cousins over endless cups of tea; sketchbook pages filling with notes, diagrams, questions, and half-formed ideas for images. This is where takahurihuri became not metaphor but method: the felt experience of being rolled and re-rolled in the dark while searching for what has been hidden, withheld, or lost. Rather than resisting this disorientation, I learned to treat it as necessary



**Figure 51.** *The presence of an absence.* School photograph, Mount Maunganui Primary School, Form 2, 1959. Tauranga City Libraries, Pae Korokī: Image Collections (Photo 13-407).

*The deliberate cutting out of a child in the back row produces an effective erasure, visualising gaps in family history and prompting speculation about the stories such absences invite.*

passage. The lesson came hard in May, when three weeks of intense painting had to be packed down and cleaned away—my supervisor rightly pointing out that there was ‘precious little’ of the emotional register these painful stories demanded.<sup>(116)</sup> Tikanga teaches that some knowledge arrives only through discomfort — and I realised that I could not paint these stories unless I understood—and really felt—some of this hurt too.

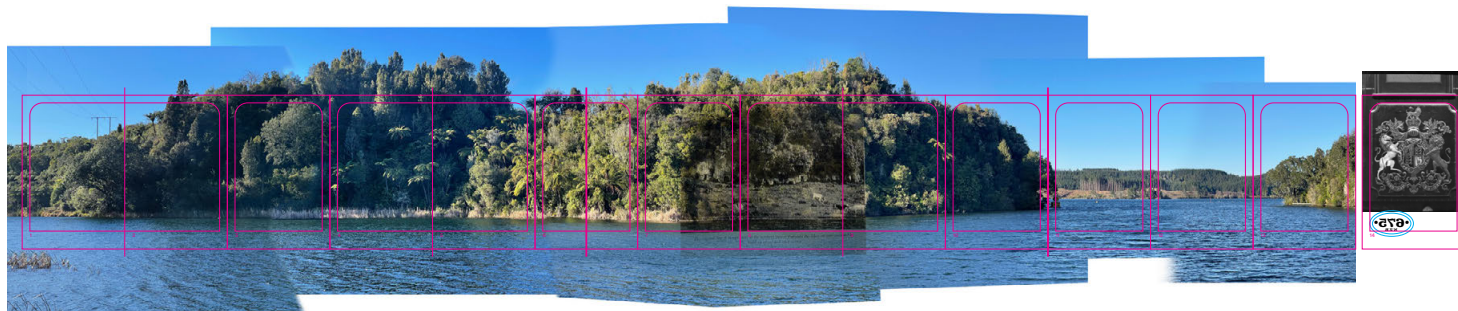
Ideas arrived like long dormant seeds: small, potent, and insistent—opening, unfurling, sending out shoots. Slowly they became kai—food for thought, reasons for the work. Each painting now grows from these encounters between people, materials, and histories—a conversation across time, between what the land has witnessed and what I am beginning to figure out for myself.

The positioning device crystallised when I encountered Hamish Keith’s review essay “*The Blinds Drawn*,” written as a review of Roger Neich’s landmark study *Painted Histories*.<sup>(117)</sup> Keith, Auckland writer and cultural odd-job man, recounts how, in March 1920, Te Rata and nearly a thousand Waikato mana whenua gathered at Ngaruawāhia station awaiting a royal visit—only for Prince Edward’s train to Rotorua to “hurtle past with the blinds drawn.”<sup>(118)(119)</sup> He observes that “the bicultural experience of most non-Māori New Zealanders is not unlike that of the travellers on that train: the drawn blinds concealing reality, the cultural destination one officially sanctioned according to a political agenda.”<sup>(120)</sup> That line was the key. The blinds were not simply fabric screen; they were a worldview—a method of seeing my Pākehā ways of not-seeing the whole picture.



**Figure 52.** Reference photograph for the view painted across thirteen roller blinds. Digital photograph by Turi Park, 2025.

The image includes an overlay of a historic photograph of the rua kūmara beneath Pukurahi pā by Don Stafford (*Landmarks of Te Arawa*, vol. 2), and was selected to capture the low winter sun catching the punga fronds at left—a rare condition. The coat of arms at far right, taken from the door of the royal carriage shown earlier, is painted onto the ‘door panel’ (blind no. 6 of 13).



From there, the work took form: thirteen vintage roller blinds, which I’d collected earlier via TradeMe: as a house lot of 14 from a renovation in Remuera—aligned with the exact windows of the royal carriage, 8.4 metres of continuous surface. A panorama of what passengers might have seen, skimming by the train, had they looked. To stand before the work is not to observe the problem but to inhabit it. To be complicit. It fills the room and places you in the royal carriage—whether you like it or not.

Working directly on vintage oilskin blinds without priming was a calculated risk, informed by earlier material inquiry. The oilskin accepted pigment readily; the brown japara cloth hummed against greys and lake-blues drawn from old photographs. These colour relationships, descended from European landscape traditions yet improvisational and intentionally makeshift, moved away from permanence toward contingency. The painting process embraced Sullivan’s “braided research” — technical discovery, conceptual development, and ethical positioning unfolding together.<sup>(121)</sup> Visible brushwork, drips, softened edges remained; accidents stayed. The blinds carried their own histories — stains, warps, marks of use. Representation shifted from depicting to listening.

A parallel insight came through thinking about the American artist Wade Guyton’s printer-drawn paintings, especially *Untitled* (2012).<sup>(122)</sup> Guyton exposes the mechanics of image production by letting the machine misfeed, smear, drag, and corrupt the file.<sup>(123)</sup> His conversation with Rachel Kushner sharpened this insight. Guyton’s refusal of seamlessness echoed what I was learning with the blinds: that the work gains force when the apparatus shows. The drawn blinds, like his dragged ink, seek to reveal the structural advantages of the “Operating System” rather than conceal it. With this work, I am deliberately calling out the “visual communication system” of the European landscape tradition — a system that has normalised and justified significant environmental and cultural transformations in Aotearoa.<sup>(124)</sup>

The 270-degree panorama mirrors the view from our family jetty toward the Scenic Reserve on the former Pukurahi Pā site. This land, acquired under the *Scenery Preservation Act* 1903, served as aesthetic backdrop for Pākehā properties, enacting Premier Seddon’s declaration that “the time has arrived... when our scenery should be preserved.”<sup>(125)</sup> The Act allowed the Crown to seize Māori-owned land for its scenic value. Colonial aesthetics were

systematically legislated into property law, as Geoff Park notes: the *Scenery Preservation Act* enabled the Crown to acquire extensive Māori land “for the enjoyment of settlers” under the guise of preserving picturesque views.<sup>(126) (127)</sup>

What distinguishes *The Blinds Drawn* (*Shadelands*) from my earlier works is that ethical method was built in from the outset. Where *Leisure Settlement* struggled with “the dumb myth” of *The Queen’s Chain*, and *Surface Tension* discovered abstraction as ethical necessity, *The Blinds Drawn* (*Shadelands*) integrates cultural responsibility at structural level. The positioning device critiques Pākehā visual culture without presuming to depict Māori experience. The work acknowledges its limits: it cannot claim to visualise a Māori perspective, nor should it. What it can reveal is the “double-blind dynamic”—how settler culture constructs and maintains its own selective seeing.<sup>(128)</sup> A deeper insight emerged too: absence is not closure. It is a generative pause — an ethical and aesthetic threshold where history, memory, and perception intersect. Absence becomes the space of potential where recognition might begin.





**Figure 53.** Pukurahi pā and its north-facing rua kūmara (kūmara storage caves), c. 1930s. Photograph by Don Stafford. Reproduced in *Landmarks of Te Arawa*, vol. 2 (1996), 95. Digital photograph by Turi Park, 2025.

The image shows the food caves much as I remember them from swimming across to explore in the late 1970s; since grazing along the Queen's Chain ceased in the 1990s, regenerating bush has gradually obscured the caves entirely.

**Figure 54.** Pukurahi pā site as it looks today. Digital photograph by Turi Park, Te Weta Bay, Lake Rotoiti, 2024.

Ongoing regeneration of native bush has obscured any visible trace of the rua kūmara, formerly known to us as the "food caves."

The original line of storage caves at the northern base of Pukurahi Pa. Most are now concealed by build-up of soil and other matter.



The theoretical scaffolding was not supplementary but formative. Simon Schama's foundational quote for landscape studies, and central argument in *Landscape and Memory*—that "landscapes are culture before they are nature"<sup>(129)</sup>—shifted the project from conceptual speculation to embodied urgency. As Dad knew, this stuff matters. Berger's reminder that oil painting "treats everything as though it belonged to the owner of the picture"<sup>(130)</sup> reframed my family's narrative within broader colonial economies. The word drawn plays on this double meaning—blinds drawn, views captured, boundaries sketched out, land drawn into possession. Jean Laplanche's psychoanalytic concept of *après-coup* (afterwardness) sharpened the temporal dimension: the 1920 blinds returning not as illustration but as material installation—an echo arriving late, charged with new understanding of what was refused and what remains complex and unresolved.<sup>(131)</sup>

Exhibiting the work-in-progress confirmed its methodological strength. Classmates and tutors recalled the familiar "ping and clack" of vintage blinds while recognising the structural critique. The positioning device held: viewers stepped into the frame, not outside it. *The Blinds Drawn (Shadelands)* marks a decisive step: painting as systematic inquiry into inherited colonial structures. It shows that abstraction, when generated through ethical necessity rather than aesthetic choice, can reveal those structures with clarity. It keeps faith with my responsibility as a Pākehā researcher—following Shaw, Bell, Jones, my dad and others—to examine my own positionality rather than appropriating



another's. Most significantly, the work materialises absence as active presence—a space open for recognition—while acknowledging its own limits. It aims not for resolution, but calls for response; it opens space for dialogue.

That discovery clarified what the work required: not another image of the past, but a structure that places viewers inside the cultural mechanism itself—the drawn blinds that shaped, and blinkered, how my family, and so many Pākehā, were trained to see this landscape in purely scenic terms, as simple and settled, when place is never static but a dynamic, relational, and deeply complex conversation.



**Figure 55.** *The Blinds Drawn (Shadelands)*. Detail.  
Installed in The Engine Room Gallery, Massey  
University, Wellington. Digital photograph by Turi  
Park, 2025.



107. Family oral histories: conversations with Mum, Aunties and cousins, 2024–25.
108. Laurence Simmons, *Tuhituhi: William Hodges, Cook's Painter in the South Pacific* (Dunedin: Otago University Press, 2011).
109. Manon Gaudet, "Whose View? The Limitations of Labels," *Yale Center for British Art*, <https://britishart.yale.edu/whose-view-limitations-labels>
110. Timothy Gantz, *Early Greek Myth: A Guide to Literary and Artistic Sources* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993).
111. Umberto Pappalardo, *The Splendor of Roman Wall Painting* (Los Angeles: Getty Publications, 2009).
112. "Matamata Estate Ballot," *New Zealand Herald*, 21 May 1904, p. 5. *PapersPast*, <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/>. Contemporary reporting confirms the Matamata Estate sections were allocated at the government valuation of £3/10s per acre, making the land accessible predominantly to Pākehā settlers.
113. H. C. Kensington, "The Purchase of Estates for Settlement." *Appendix to the Journals of the House of Representatives, 1904*, C-1, pp. 17–19. <https://atojs.natlib.govt.nz/>. Government record: The Lands and Survey Department's report documents the government's acquisition and resale of estates—including Matamata—at valuations averaging £3 10s per acre.
114. Jan Morris, *The Spectacle of Empire: Style, Effect and the Pax Britannica* (Faber and Faber, 1982), 156. Chapter 6, "Show of Force," includes Alfred Austin's reflection on imperial self-image and the poem: "For when the One Great Scorer comes / To write against your name, / He marks—not that you won or lost— / But how you played the game."
115. Walter Benjamin: "It is not that what is past casts its light on what is present, or what is present its light on what is past; rather, image is that wherein what has been comes together in a flash with the now to form a constellation." as qtd in *"That Day Now: Shadows Cast by Hiroshima"* (Everson Museum of Art, 2015). <https://everson.org/explore/past-exhibitions/that-day-now-shadows-cast-by-hiroshima/>. Exhibition exploring the lasting shadows and traces left by atomic destruction, resonating with the concept of forms emerging from historical erasure and family silences around wartime trauma. See also: Richard Shaw. *The Unsettled: Small Stories of Colonisation* (Massey University Press, 2024), 186–87. Shaw discusses Bruno Latour's exhibition essay *"The Language of Things"* (originally written for Manuel Franquelo's work displayed in Nagasaki) and adopts Latour's concept of historical texture versus shape in examining colonial memory. <https://www.factum-arte.com/pag/110/the-language-of-things>
116. Dr Huhana Smith and Dr Julieanna Preston, supervision meeting, May 2024. Following critique of work that lacked emotional depth relative to the painful histories being examined, discussion of tikanga approaches to difficult knowledge and the necessity of genuine engagement with discomfort in the research process. The Māori concept of *takahurihuri* was a key framework studied in my first year of the Massey MFA programme.
117. Hamish Keith, "The Blinds Drawn." *New Zealand Books*, vol. 5, no. 1, Mar. 1995, <https://nzbooks.org.nz/1995/non-fiction/the-blinds-drawn-hamish-keith/>.
118. Keith, "The Blinds Drawn." Note referencing his self-description as "a cultural odd-job man" and the phrasing used within the review.
119. Roger Neich. *Painted Histories: Early Māori Figurative Painting* (Auckland University Press, 1993). Landmark study demonstrating how whare forms and early Māori figurative painting operate as genealogical bodies carrying history, descent lines, and political narrative.
120. Keith, "The Blinds Drawn."
121. Graeme Sullivan, *Art Practice as Research: Inquiry in the Visual Arts. 2nd ed.* (SAGE Publications, 2010). Sullivan describes "braided research," in which technical discovery, conceptual development, and ethical positioning unfold together.
122. Wade Guyton, "Wade Guyton in Conversation with Rachel Kushner." *The Painting Factory: Abstraction After Warhol*, edited by Jeffrey Deitch and Nikki Columbus (Skira Rizzoli / Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, 2012), 133–149.
123. Wade Guyton. *Untitled (2012)*. Referenced in Rachel Kushner, "Wade Guyton's New Paintings," *The New York Times Style Magazine*, 25 Sept. 2014, <https://www.nytimes.com/2014/09/25/t-magazine/wade-guyton-paintings.html>. See also: Yau, John. *Hidden in Plain Sight – Wade Guyton's Dirty Pictures* <https://hyperallergic.com/hidden-in-plain-sight-wade-guytons-dirty-pictures/>
124. Francis Pound. *The Invention of New Zealand: Art and National Identity, 1930–1970* (Auckland University Press, 2009). Examines how Pākehā painters constructed nationalist landscape conventions that normalised settler belonging while obscuring colonial violence.
125. New Zealand Ministry for Culture & Heritage, "The Scenery Preservation Act." *NZHistory – Manatū Taonga*, 20 Dec. 2012, <https://nzhistory.govt.nz/culture/scenery-preservation/the-scenery-preservation-act>.
126. Geoff Park, "New Zealand as Ecosanctuary: The Legacy of Scenic Preservation." *New Zealand Journal of Geography*, no. 121, 2006, 1–14.
127. Deidre Brown, "Scenic Reserves." *Te Ara – The Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, 2008, <https://teara.govt.nz/en/scenic-reserves>. Note: "In 1919, Ngāti Pikiao (actually) gifted the areas of lake-edge bush around Lake Rotoiti to the Crown. It was gazetted as a public reserve for its scenic beauty in perpetuity." <https://www.forestandbird.org.nz/resources/restoring-rotoiti-reserves>
128. Alison Jones, and Kuni Kaa Jenkins. "Rethinking Collaboration: Working the Indigene–Colonizer Hyphen." *Handbook of Critical and Indigenous Methodologies*, edited by Norman K. Denzin, Yvonna S. Lincoln, and Linda Tuhiwai Smith (SAGE Publications, 2008), 71–486. Jones and Jenkins analyse how settler interpretive frameworks reproduce colonial authority even when they appear collaborative or well-intentioned. Their argument reveals how Pākehā ways of seeing are structured by inherited blind spots—a dynamic directly relevant to the selective vision examined in the work.
129. Simon Schama, *Landscape and Memory* (Alfred A. Knopf, 1995), 61.
130. John Berger, *Ways of Seeing*. (British Broadcasting Corporation and Penguin Books, 1972), 83.
131. Jean Laplanche. *"Après-coup." Essays on Otherness*, edited and translated by John Fletcher (Routledge, 1999), 111–133.



### Nature and nurture: and soaking in stories of displacement

This photograph from 1898 shows the Ohinemuri No. 1 Shooting Team, part of the Ohinemuri Rifle Volunteers, Hauraki Regiment. The tall figure at the top left is labelled in the original caption as Lance-Corporal Banks. While not yet definitively confirmed, I am increasingly confident this is my great-grandfather Edward Corrigan ("Ted") Banks, then 28 years, whose age, movements, physical height (we are all tall, Mum's brother Simon was 6'8"), and sporting background align closely with the men in the image. Encountering this photograph produced a moment of felt recognition—the sense of meeting a familiar presence across time.<sup>(132)</sup>

My grandfather, Ted's son, Cedric (also E.C. Banks) was a decorated scout and sniper in the brutal Pacific Theatre of WW2, known for his calm and instinctive accuracy. Moving in absolute silence at dawn on dewy mornings: he taught my brothers and I to shoot rabbits on the neighbouring farmers paddocks. Many have since remarked on our steady hands and timing. But that marksmanship carries more than just 'the knack' of inherited technique—it embeds ways of seeing, of targeting, of leveraging force to claim dominance over landscape through the rifle sight. In teaching us to shoot, just as he had been taught, my grandfather was also passing on a mode of Pākehā visuality: the land as territory to be surveyed, secured, and controlled. My great-grandfather's likely involvement in the Ohinemuri



**Figure 56.** Ohinemuri No. 1 Shooting Team, Ohinemuri Rifle Volunteers, Hauraki Regiment, 1898. Lance-Corporal Banks appears at top left. Tauranga City Libraries, Pae Koroki: Image Collections (2011-002 HAU; Photo 11-014). Photographer unknown.

Rifle Volunteers therefore positions him—whether as an active participant or a willing supporter—within the continuing apparatus of Crown force in the years after the Waikato War. In *This Pākehā Life: An Unsettled Memoir*, Alison Jones describes the corridor between Auckland and Hamilton as “soaked in stories of enforced expulsion of peaceful communities of Māori from their own lands—called ‘rebels’ simply for being related to tribes who resisted invasion by the troops.”<sup>(133) (134)</sup>

Jones introduces a striking eyewitness account published by John Featon in 1879, sixteen years after British soldiers entered the lower Waikato. His

description transforms Tuakau—now a modest highway town—into a vivid, thriving papakāinga:

*“The village was situated on the edge of the river, and justly considered one of the prettiest and most flourishing in the lower Waikato. The land was good; potatoes, kumeras, and corn grew luxuriantly, and each year filled the storehouses of the natives to overflowing. A water mill close by ground their wheat into flour, and their fruit trees were loaded with apples and peaches, whilst the branches of the vine bending under their juicy weight trailed in the swift running stream.”*



"No wonder the natives were loth to leave their beloved home. The 65th emerged suddenly from the bush in the rear of the settlement, and surprised the natives, who, hastily collecting their household possessions, moved mournfully down to their canoes, and with many tears and deep sighs paddled away." (135)

Reading Featon, I thought of the family summers of my childhood at Rotoiti—and what we "like so much now" about the lake. James Cowan, writing in 1910, described Rotoiti as "richly blue, with softly-wooded shores that wind in and out... [and] the most beautiful of the lakes in the Rotorua country," (136) a description that sits close to my mother and her sister, my Aunt Barbara's early-1950s recollections of the water itself: crystal clear, and "delicious to drink." (137) Both recollections carry the trace of an ecology still functioning in a state of beautiful harmony—both the *pristine loveliness* and the *Arcadian pastoral* notions of paradise that were such powerful drivers for colonial settlers. (138)

Importantly, Featon and Cowan's accounts reveal not a romantic idyll but an intact indigenous ecology, a placental life-support system sustained by generations of intimate, reciprocal tending. My father Geoff Park sharpens this insight: whenua names "an indigenous, placental ecology—an integrated life-support system in which land, people, and whakapapa are bound together." (139) Colonisation worked by interrupting that ecology: severing relationships, displacing communities, and reclassifying richly peopled landscapes as "unused," "unimproved," or "empty."

In his book *Carved Histories: Rotorua Ngāti Tararawai Carving*, Roger Neich reveals the specific richness of what

was here: the kūmara cultivated on the papakāinga where our property now sits were grown directly across Te Wai-iti Bay in the Tāheke papakāinga and stored in the north-facing rua kūmara caves beneath Pukurahi pā. (140) These crops were renowned as the sweetest in the region, and the rua kūmara and papakāinga were so highly prized they were staunchly defended, often changing hands between Ngāti Tararawai, Ngāti Pikiao, and Ngāti Tūhourangi. In 1866, when Ngāti Te Takinga invited carvers to create new gateposts for the refortified Te Koutu pā at Mourea, the master Ngāti Tararawai carvers specifically requested permission to work at Te Wai-iti Bay on the eastern side of the Te Akau Peninsula (now called Te Weta Bay, and exactly where our property sits)—they wanted to live here because of the land's exceptional fertility and abundance.

This same system of dispossession later delivered the Matamata acreage my great-grandparents acquired in the 1904 ballot. The family skill I grew up admiring—the perfect shot of a rifle held steady—is thus inseparable from the wider colonial apparatus that made such land available.

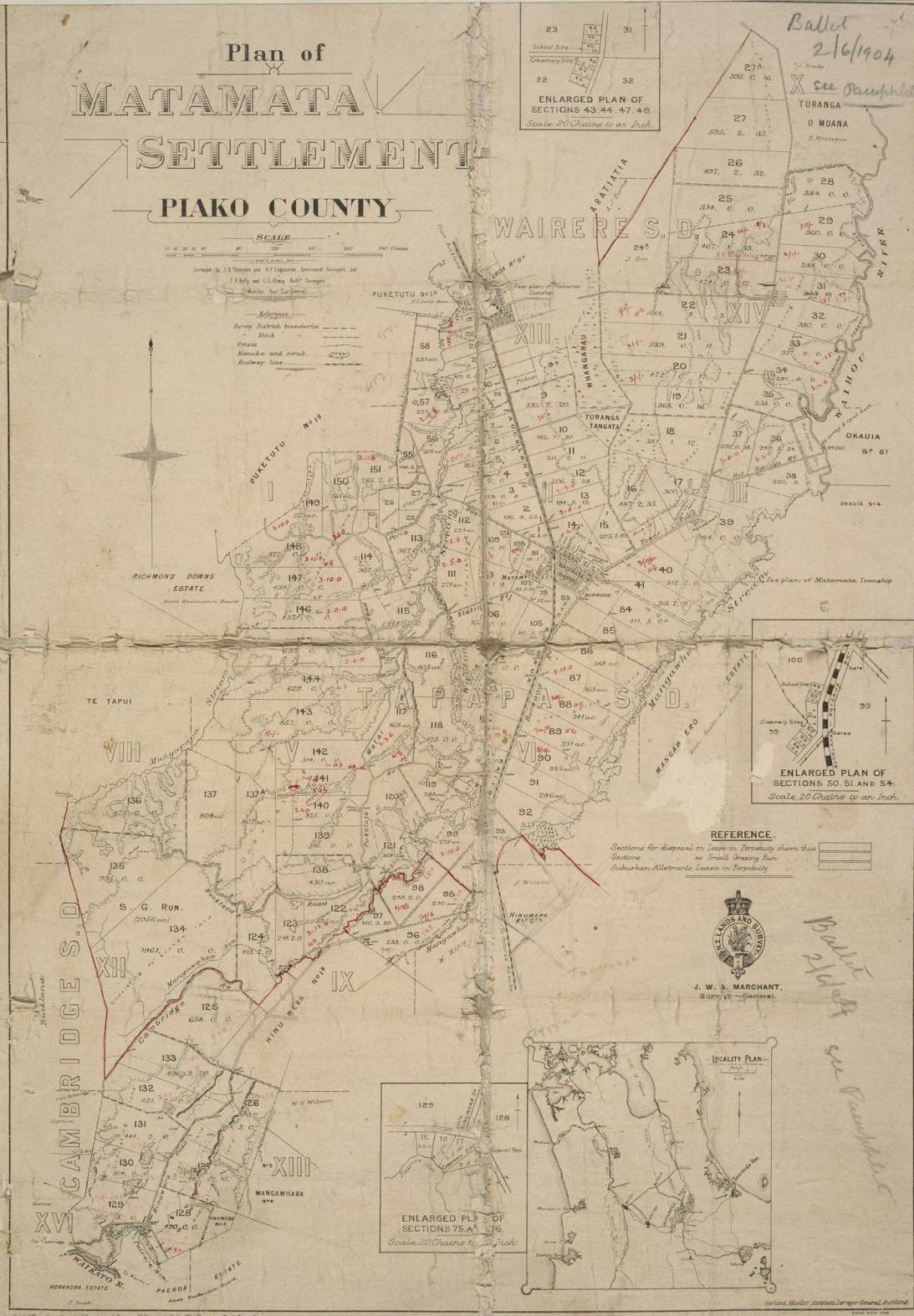
The accuracy we were taught and praised for, the quiet steadiness passed down through generations, is braided with histories of removal.

That bodily competence we inherited as learned survival skills—our ability to hold still, to judge distance, to strike a target, to put food on the table—moved through the same systems that so efficiently transformed precious whenua into "vacant" and "available" land.

To acknowledge this is to feel, at once, the pull of familial connection and the weight of what that precision once served: dispossession.

132. Ohinemuri No. 1 Shooting Team, Ohinemuri Rifle Volunteers, Hauraki Regiment. 1898. Photo 13-407. Pae Koroki: Image Collections, Tauranga City Libraries.
133. Alison Jones. *This Pākehā Life: An Unsettled Memoir* (Bridget Williams Books 2020), 202–203.
134. Vincent O'Malley, *The Great War for New Zealand: Waikato 1800–2000* (Bridget Williams Books, 2016), 208.
135. John Featon, *The Waikato War, 1863–4*. 1879, 22. [www.enzb.auckland.ac.nz/docs/Featon/pdf/feat1000.pdf](http://www.enzb.auckland.ac.nz/docs/Featon/pdf/feat1000.pdf) Quoted in Alison Jones, *This Pākehā Life*, 203.
136. James Cowan., "Old Rotorua: Legends of the Lakes. No. XI. The Bays of Rotoiti." *Evening Post* [Wellington], vol. 80, no. 32, 6 Aug. 1910, 10. *PapersPast*, [paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/EP19100806.2.110](http://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/EP19100806.2.110).
137. My mother, Lindsay Park, and my aunt, Barbara Bianchin, recollections of Lake Rotoiti in the early 1950s. Unpublished family oral history, recorded by the author, 2025.
138. Geoff Park. *Theatre Country: Essays on Landscape & Whenua*: also quoting Henry Wright in "A Regard for Pristine Loveliness" (VUP, 2006), 217.
139. Geoff Park. "Whenua — The Ecology of Placental Connection." *Theatre Country: Essays on Landscape & Whenua* (VUP, 2006), 239–244.
140. Roger Neich. *Carved Histories: Rotorua Ngāti Tararawai Carving* (Auckland University Press, 2001), 26–27.
141. New Zealand Parliament. *Appendix to the Journals of the House of Representatives*, 1904 Session I, C-04, "Matamata Estate (Reports and Correspondence Dealt With by the Auckland Land Board in Disposing of the)," 19. Accessed via *PapersPast*.





**Figure 57.** Plan of Matamata Settlement, Piako County. New Zealand Department of Lands and Survey, 1904. Map. Auckland Libraries Heritage Collections (Map 4428).

Produced to advertise Crown land made available through the Matamata Estate ballot following subdivision; the map shows the sections secured by my great-grandparents in the 1904 ballot—E. C. Banks, Lot 87 (365 acres), and M. Banks, Lot 86 (368 acres). (141)





**Figure 58.** *Te Weta Bay, Rotoiti, as the sun goes down.* Digital photograph by Turi Park, 2025.



## Conclusion

### Unsettled seeing

This MFA research project asked: How can painting trace the shadows, absences, and unease in my Pākehā ways of seeing land as property, while acknowledging mana whenua relationships to whenua, and exploring the tensions that arise in the "place between places" where these perspectives intersect?<sup>(142)</sup>

What sharpened through the work was how clearly contemporary artists expose the visual devices of the pastoral and its entanglement with the colonial imagination. Discourse around the para-pastoral helped me name the shift in my own practice.<sup>(143)</sup> Artists like Emma Webster remind us that the pastoral was never neutral: when studying the work of 17th-century French pastoral painter Claude Lorrain, she had a breakthrough. "It was a watershed moment," she recalled. "I realized that, historically, landscape painting wasn't from plein air but fabricated collage. It was used solely as a backdrop to imbue sentiment—usually peace, harmony, beauty—and support allegorical plot."<sup>(144)</sup>

My investigation revealed how the "presence of an absence" Rachel Buchanan identifies in Pākehā whakapapa operates across familial and legislative scales.<sup>(145)</sup> What began as inherited landscape memory required rigorous examination of colonial visual regimes, financial structures, and the laws that frame land as scenery rather than living whenua.

My research demonstrated that materials carry histories of their own—tent fabric soaked with earth scent, rescued rimu veneer, oilskin blinds evoking childhood silences. Their makeshift qualities resisted pristine gallery aesthetics and insisted on acknowledging the structural conditions that produced them. Most significantly, ethical constraints proved generative. They pushed me toward approaches that exposed the colonial framing devices embedded in European landscape traditions.

Central to this methodology was takahurihuri: the disorientation of spinning—and spinning in the dark of nothingness, a literal experience of the "presence of absence." Both concepts reveal how potentiality lives in uncertainty: the shadows that hold what we haven't seen, the darkness that teaches by withholding rather than revealing. Instead of resisting this disorientation, I learned that such states generate authentic inquiry, where material discovery and emotional reckoning work together. The positioning-device methodology developed through this research shows how painting can subvert inherited visual frameworks and invite viewers to recognise their own implication in ongoing colonial conditions.

The most profound discovery was recognising that genuine engagement with colonial inheritance requires self-directed confrontation that cannot be made comfortable. This learning is necessary, and

it hurts. What remains troubling is the question of beauty itself: my way of seeing is not neutral but European, shaped by inherited assumptions, frames, and expectations. I continue to paint, holding beauty and critique together, and making visible the violence that representations of pristine landscapes have historically concealed.

As Lucy Lippard suggests, maybe the arts can slow us down—interrupt inherited patterns of seeing, and create space for accountability, listening, and beginning again from relation rather than possession.<sup>(146)</sup> My practice now works to locate itself within these frictions—in the unsettled space "between landscape and identity"—ethically charged and unresolved.<sup>(147)</sup> Painting becomes accountability rather than possession. The constant internal dialogue within my practice between the Painter and the Collector reveals how art-making can hold both privilege and connection, care and complicity, within the same surface. It is by staying with this unsettled condition—refusing the drawn blinds of comfortable vision—that the work lives. This is not about resolution, but about remaining deliberately unsettled, and inviting other Pākehā to notice when the blinds are drawn and to look harder at what we've been taught not to see.



This body of work marks the refocusing of my practice toward what contemporary artists and theorists are calling the para-pastoral—a movement emerging in the context of the Anthropocene that subverts and interrogates the nostalgic innocence of traditional landscape representation and exposes the ideological labour that scenic beauty has always performed—and still performs in the present.

My Pākehā upbringing sits at the centre of this work. My mother's family gave me an extraordinary inheritance of connection to Rotoiti as a place—beautiful, fraught, and growing more complex—while my mother herself gave me the gift of confidence and fluency in artmaking as a visual language, much as some fortunate children grow up bilingual. My father, a leading expert on the “ecological aesthetics” that shaped colonial ways of seeing, quite literally wrote the book on the “tricks of the trade” embedded within these visual strategies of control.<sup>(148)</sup>

The recognition that our Pākehā leisure dreams cast such long shadows across Māori communities and their whenua carries a weight that reaches beyond the individual. This inheritance settles differently in each family, and the body often holds what the mind cannot yet say aloud.

I feel older, wiser, and a lot more humble.



**Figure 59.** Marika, Matiu, and Turi standing by the family pig. Photograph by Marjorie (“Nonna”) Banks, Atawhai Drive, Nelson, 1978.

*Taken during a visit from Tauranga at the arrival of my brother Tim.*



### Pentimenti (Coda)

We farewelled my dad Geoff on St Patrick's Day in March 2009. He was always comfortable saying that *kererū* were “his spirit birds”—*kererū, kūkupa, ūkaipō*: signifiers of a place that is alive, healthy, abundant, intact, and nourishing, like mother's milk.

The last time we took him to *Ngā Manu*, the bird sanctuary in Waikanae, the *kererū* welcomed him like an old friend. Just like one of their own. They sat on his shoulders, on his arms and even his head, and flew and coo'd for him—as my tiny kids, and everyone else there that day, watched on and whooped in absolute delight.

I think I had my last talk with him in the sunshine, about two days before he died. He held my arms and pushed his own copy of his book *Theatre Country* into my hands, with that bright sparkle still in his eyes that meant ‘listen closely, my son. This is important stuff’. In his scratchy left-handed script, he'd left a note on a newspaper clipping, which I found later. And which makes a lot more sense to me today—because of what I've learnt in the doing of this project:

*‘Here's another way of saying what I said on Thursday: Let the subconscious work on it. If it is good, it will “progress the thinking...”*

And he'd circled a quote by Nigel Brown, at the end of an exhibition review:

*“You have to progress the thinking. As you go further into it, you find things are not as simple as you thought when you were young.*

*The whole thing builds up so you become better at what you are saying and covering a wider scope.”<sup>(149)</sup>*

Kia ora.

142. Peter Doig, A Brush With... Peter Doig, *The Art Newspaper* podcast, season 30, episode 4, 22 October 2025, Apple Podcasts.
143. Katie White, “A Para-Pastoral Movement Is Taking Root in Art. It's Anything but Idyllic,” *Artnet News*, 11 July 2025.
144. Emma Webster, quoted in Katie White, “A Para-Pastoral Movement Is Taking Root in Art. It's Anything but Idyllic,” *Artnet News*, 11 July 2025.
145. Rachel Buchanan, *The Parihaka Album: Lest We Forget* (Huia/La Trobe, 2009), 70–71.
146. Lucy R. Lippard, “Beyond the Beauty Strip,” introductory essay in Max Andrews (Ed.), *Land Art: A Cultural Ecology Handbook* (London: Royal Society for the Encouragement of the Arts; Arts Council England, 2006).
147. Dr Huhana Smith, informal learning session over coffee, Massey University, October 2024.
148. Geoff Park, *Theatre Country: Essays on Landscape and Whenua* (VUP, 2006).
149. Nigel Brown, quoted in Adam Gifford, “Shades of McCahon, and More,” *New Zealand Herald*, 11 October 2008.





**Figure 60.** *Flinch*. Acrylic and oil paint on canvas.  
100 × 100 cm. Digital photograph by Turi Park,  
Wellington, 2024.



## Appendices

### 1. Bibliography

Alberti, Leon Battista. *On Painting*. Translated by Cecil Grayson. London: Penguin Books, 1991.

Andrews, Max, ed. *Land Art: A Cultural Ecology Handbook*. London: Royal Society for the Encouragement of the Arts; Arts Council England, 2006.

Appleton, Jay. *The Experience of Landscape*. London: John Wiley & Sons, 1975.

Aquin, Stéphane. “No Foreign Land to Painting.” In *Peter Doig: No Foreign Lands*, 14. Edinburgh and Ostfildern: Scottish National Gallery and Hatje Cantz, 2013.

Bell, Avril. *Tangata Tiriti: Working with Māori, Honouring the Treaty*. Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2024.

Bell, Bill McKay. “Māori Architecture: Transforming Western Notions of Architecture.” *Fabrications* 1–2 (December 2004): 1–10.

Bell, Leonard. *The Māori in European Art: A Survey of the Representation of the Māori by European Artists from the Time of Captain Cook to the Present Day*. Auckland: Reed, 1980.

Belgrave, Michael. *Becoming Aotearoa: A History of New Zealand*. Auckland: Massey University Press, 2024.

Benjamin, Walter. Quoted in *That Day Now: Shadows Cast by Hiroshima*. Syracuse, NY: Everson Museum of Art, 2015. <https://everson.org/explore/past-exhibitions/that-day-now-shadows-cast-by-hiroshima/>

Berger, John. *Ways of Seeing*. London: Penguin Books, 1972.

Brown, Deidre. “Māori Architecture—Whare Māori.” *Te Ara – The Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, 2012. <https://teara.govt.nz/en/maori-architecture-whare-maori>

Brown, Deidre. “Scenic Reserves.” *Te Ara – The Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, 2008. <https://teara.govt.nz/en/scenic-reserves>

Brunt, Peter. “Savagery and the Sublime: Two Paintings by William Hodges Based on an Encounter with Māori in Dusky Bay, New Zealand.” *The Eighteenth Century* 38, no. 3 (Fall 1997): 266–286.

Brunt, Peter W., Nicholas Thomas, Sean Mallon, Lissant Bolton, Deidre Brown, Susanne Kuchler, and Damian Skinner, eds. *Art in Oceania: A New History*. London: Thames & Hudson, 2012.

Buchanan, Rachel. *The Parihaka Album: Lest We Forget*. Wellington: Huia; Melbourne: La Trobe University Press, 2009.

Buchanan, Rachel. “The Dementia Wing of History.” *Cultural Studies Review* 13, no. 1 (2007). <https://doi.org/10.5130/csr.v13i1.2162>

Byrnes, Giselle. *Boundary Markers: Land Surveying and the Colonisation of New Zealand*. Wellington: Bridget Williams Books, 2001.

Cézanne, Paul. *Letters to Émile Bernard, 1904–1906*. Edited by John Rewald. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976.

Cohen, Leonard. “Anthem.” *On The Future*. New York: Columbia Records, 1992.

Comyn, Catherine. *The Financial Colonisation of Aotearoa*. Auckland: Economic and Social Research Aotearoa (ESRA), 2023.

Cotton, Shane. Quoted in Lara Strongman. “Ruarangi: The Meeting Place Between Sea and Sky.” In *Shane Cotton: Survey 1993–2003*, 15. Wellington: City Gallery Wellington, 2003.

Culy, Harry. “The Darkroom: Gavin Hipkins.” *PhotoForum NZ*, May 2024.

Daly, Leanne. “Catching Shadows: The Exhibition of Intangible Heritage of Moana Oceania in Lisa Reiherana’s in Pursuit of Venus [infected].” *Journal of Conservation and Museum Studies* 20, no. 1 (2022): 1–17. <https://doi.org/10.5334/jcms.214>

Davis, Shannon. “Landscape Narratives and Shared Histories.” *Lincoln Planning Review* 1, no. 1 (2008): 13. <https://journals.lincoln.ac.nz/index.php/lpr/article/view/56>

Davis, Shannon. “Stories from the Land: Revealing Plural Narratives within One Landscape.” *Landscape Review* 19, no. 1 (2022). <https://doi.org/10.34900/lrv.19i1.1194>

Doig, Peter. A Brush With... Peter Doig. Podcast audio. *The Art Newspaper*, season 30, episode 4. October 22, 2025. Apple Podcasts.

Elkins, James. *What Painting Is*. New York: Routledge, 1999.

Emerson, Ralph Waldo. *Nature*. Boston: James Munroe and Company, 1836.

Featon, John. *The Waikato War, 1863–4*. London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle & Rivington, 1879. <https://www.enzb.auckland.ac.nz/docs/Featon/pdf/feat1000.pdf>

Gaudet, Manon. “Rereading Hodges’s A View of Matavai Bay in the Island of Otaheite (1776).” *Yale Center for British Art*. Accessed 2025. <https://britishart.yale.edu/whose-view-limitations-labels>

Gantz, Timothy. *Early Greek Myth: A Guide to Literary and Artistic Sources*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993.

Gifford, Adam. “Shades of McCahon, and More.” *New Zealand Herald*, October 11, 2008.

Green, Tyler. *Emerson’s Nature and the Artists: Idea as Landscape, Landscape as Idea*. Munich: Prestel, 2021.

Guyton, Wade. “Wade Guyton in Conversation with Rachel Kushner.” In *The Painting Factory: Abstraction After Warhol*, edited by Jeffrey Deitch and Nikki Columbus, 133–149. Milan and Los Angeles: Skira Rizzoli and Museum of Contemporary Art, 2012.

Hebborn, Eric. *The Art Forger’s Handbook*. London: Cassell, 1997.

Horrocks, Ingrid. “The Ecologist and the Journalist.” *Journal of Commonwealth Literature* 56, no. 2 (2021): 322–41.

Huria, John. “Metamorphic Vocabulary: Text and Image in Shane Cotton’s Paintings.” In *Shane Cotton: Survey 1993–2003*, 129–35. Wellington: City Gallery Wellington, 2003.

Jelin, Elizabeth, and Susan Kaufman. “Layers of Memories: Twenty Years After in Argentina.” In *The Politics of War and Commemoration*, edited by T. G. Ashplant, Graham Dawson, and Michael Roper, 106. London: Routledge, 2000.

Jones, Alison. *This Pākehā Life: An Unsettled Memoir*. Wellington: Bridget Williams Books, 2020.

Jones, Alison, and Kuni Kaa Jenkins. “Rethinking Collaboration: Working the Indigene–Colonizer Hyphen.” In *Handbook of Critical and Indigenous Methodologies*, edited by Norman K. Denzin, Yvonna S. Lincoln, and Linda Tuhiwai Smith, 71–486. Los Angeles: SAGE Publications, 2008.

Kay, Reed. *The Painter’s Guide to Studio Methods and Materials*. New York: Watson-Guptill, 1983.

Keith, Hamish. “The Blinds Drawn.” *New Zealand Books* 5, no. 1 (March 1995). <https://nzbooks.org.nz/1995/non-fiction/the-blinds-drawn-hamish-keith/>

Koerner, Joseph Leo. *Caspar David Friedrich and the Subject of Landscape*. London: Reaktion Books, 1990.



- Laplanche, Jean. "Après-coup." In *Essays on Otherness*, edited and translated by John Fletcher, 111–133. London: Routledge, 1999.
- Latour, Bruno. *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network Theory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.
- Lee, Guy, trans. *Eclogues*. By Virgil. London: Penguin Classics, 1984.
- Loveridge, Donald M. "The Most Valuable of the Rotorua Lands": *Alienation and Development in the Ngāti Pikiao Blocks, 1881–1960*. Wellington: Crown Forestry Rental Trust, 1998.
- Mahuika, Nēpia. "New Zealand History is Māori History." *New Zealand Journal of History* 49, no. 1 (2015): 5–30.
- Marsalis, Wynton. Wynton Marsalis: The Sound of Democracy. *BBC World Service*, October 12, 2021. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p0lr0zt6>
- Mātāmua, Rangī. "Matariki and the Decolonisation of Time." In *Routledge Handbook of Critical Indigenous Studies*, edited by Brendan Hokowhitu, Aroha Harris, and Vic Pasupe, 290–300. London: Routledge, 2020.
- Mayer, Ralph. *The Artist's Handbook of Materials and Techniques*. 5th ed. New York: Viking Penguin, 1991.
- McLuhan, Marshall, and Quentin Fiore. *The Medium Is the Message: An Inventory of Effects*. New York: Bantam Books, 1967.
- Ministry for Culture & Heritage (Manatū Taonga). "The Scenery Preservation Act." *NZHistory*, December 20, 2012. <https://nzhistory.govt.nz/culture/scenery-preservation/the-scenery-preservation-act>
- Mitchell, W. J. T., ed. *Landscape and Power*. 2nd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002.
- Morris, Jan. *The Spectacle of Empire: Style, Effect and the Pax Britannica*. London: Faber and Faber, 1982.
- Neich, Roger. *Painted Histories: Early Māori Figurative Painting*. Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1993.
- Neich, Roger. *Carved Histories: Rotorua Ngāti Tararua Carving*. Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2001.
- O'Malley, Vincent. *The Great War for New Zealand: Waikato 1800–2000*. Wellington: Bridget Williams Books, 2016.
- O'Sullivan, Vincent. *The Dark Is Light Enough: Ralph Hotere—A Biographical Portrait*. Auckland: Penguin Random House, 2020.
- Owens, Susan. *Spirit of Place: Artists, Writers & the British Landscape*. London: Thames & Hudson, 2021.
- Park, Geoff. *Ngā Uruora: The Groves of Life—Ecology and History in a New Zealand Landscape*. Wellington: Victoria University Press, 1995.
- Park, Geoff. *Theatre Country: Essays on Landscape and Whenua*. Wellington: Victoria University Press, 2006.
- Park, Geoff. "New Zealand as Ecosanctuary: The Legacy of Scenic Preservation." *New Zealand Journal of Geography*, no. 121 (2006): 1–14.
- Park, Geoff. "Wild New Zealand—Voices from the Landscape: 2003 Address." In *Voices of Aotearoa: 25 Years of Going West Oratory*, 118–143. Auckland: Oratia Books and Going West Trust, 2021.
- Paton, Justin. "Finding Space: Six Encounters with Shane Cotton." In *Shane Cotton: The Hanging Sky*, 42. Christchurch: Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū, 2013.
- Pound, Francis. *The Invention of New Zealand: Art and National Identity, 1930–1970*. Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2009.
- Roche, Michael. "The State as Conservationist, 1900–1935." *New Zealand Journal of History* 24, no. 2 (1990): 214–227.
- Roskrige, Nick. *Ko Mahinga o Tūku Māra Kai: Establishing Māra Kai*. Wellington: Te Puni Kōkiri, 2014.
- Schama, Simon. *Landscape and Memory*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1995.
- Scott, Robert Craig. *Mount Maunganui: A History of the Land and Early Settlers from 1864*. Tauranga: Tauranga City Council, 2022.
- Searle, Adrian. Review of Peter Doig, Tate Britain. *The Guardian*, February 2008.
- Shaw, Richard. *The Unsettled: Small Stories of Colonisation*. Auckland: Massey University Press, 2024.
- Simmons, Laurence. *The Image Always Has the Last Word*. Auckland: Dunmore Press, 2007.
- Simmons, Laurence. *Tuhituhi: William Hodges, Cook's Painter in the South Pacific*. Dunedin: Otago University Press, 2011.
- Smith, Bernard. *European Vision and the South Pacific*. 2nd ed. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985.
- Stevenson, Robert Louis. *The Silverado Squatters*. London: Chatto and Windus, 1883.
- Sullivan, Graeme. *Art Practice as Research: Inquiry in the Visual Arts*. 2nd ed. Los Angeles: SAGE Publications, 2010.
- Talking Heads. "This Must Be the Place (Naive Melody)." *Speaking in Tongues*. New York: Sire Records, 1983.
- Thom, Rowan R. M. "Land Loss, Confiscation, Arability and Colonisation." *AlterNative: An International Journal of Indigenous Peoples* 18, no. 4 (2022): 556–65.
- Westgeest, Helen. *Slow Painting: Contemplation and Critique in the Digital Age*. London: Bloomsbury Visual Arts, 2020.
- White, Katie. "A Para-Pastoral Movement Is Taking Root in Art. It's Anything but Idyllic." *Artnet News*, July 11, 2025.
- Winter, Christine. "White Lies: On the Epistemic Violence of the Settler State." *Artforum* 64, no. 7 (March 2025): 70–73.
- Wolfe, Patrick. "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native." *Journal of Genocide Research* 8, no. 4 (2006): 387–409.



## 2. Additional works consulted

- Abbey, Edward. *Desert Solitaire: A Season in the Wilderness*. McGraw-Hill, 1968.
- Abbey, Edward. *The Monkey Wrench Gang*. Lippincott, 1975.
- Abram, David. *The Spell of the Sensuous: Perception and Language in a More-Than-Human World*. Vintage Books, 1997.
- Albers, Josef. *Interaction of Color*. Yale University Press, 1963.
- Alloway, Lawrence. "Site Inspection." *Artforum* 15, no. 2 (1976): 52. <https://www.artforum.com/print/197608/site-inspection-37966>
- Armitage, Michael. *Michael Armitage: Paradise Edict*. Royal Academy of Arts; White Cube; MCA Australia, 2021.
- Armitage, Michael. *You Who Are Still Alive*. White Cube, 2021.
- Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki. *Lisa Reihana: In Pursuit of Venus [infected]*. Edited by Zara Stanhope. Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, 2015.
- Baker, Kirsty. "Joanna Margaret Paul." In *Sight Lines: Women and Art in Aotearoa*, 209–220. Auckland University Press, 2024.
- Baker, Matiu, Katie Cooper, Michael Fitzgerald, and Rebecca Rice, eds. *Te Ata o Tū: The Shadow of Tūmataunga: The New Zealand Wars Collections of Te Papa*. Te Papa Press, 2024.
- Bancroft, Sarah C., ed. *Richard Diebenkorn: The Ocean Park Series*. Yale University Press, 2011.
- Barnett, Stephen. *Those Were the Days: A Nostalgic Look at the 1930s from the Pages of the Weekly News*. Moa Publications, 1987.
- Barnett, Stephen. *Those Were the Days: A Nostalgic Look at the 1940s from the Pages of the Weekly News*. Moa Beckett Publishers, 1988.
- Barrell, John. *The Dark Side of the Landscape: The Rural Poor in English Painting, 1730–1840*. Cambridge University Press, 1980.
- Bate, David. *Photography After Postmodernism: Barthes, Stieglitz and the Art of Memory*. Routledge, 2022.
- Bell, Leonard. *Colonial Constructs: European Images of Māori 1840–1914*. Auckland University Press, 1992.
- Bermingham, Ann. *Landscape and Ideology: The English Rustic Tradition, 1740–1860*. University of California Press, 1986.
- Bhabha, Homi K. *The Location of Culture*. Routledge, 1994.
- Bidois, Himiona, and Te Rangikaheke Biddle. *Ngāti Pikiao: The People and the Land*. Te Arawa Lakes Trust, 2010.
- Bindman, David. *Ape to Apollo: Aesthetics and the Idea of Race in the Eighteenth Century*. Reaktion Books, 2002.
- Bindman, David. "'Philanthropy Seems Natural to Mankind': Hodges and Captain Cook's Second Voyage to the South Seas." In *William Hodges 1744–1797: The Art of Exploration*, edited by Geoff Quilley et al., 22–35. Yale University Press for the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, 2004.
- Binney, Judith, Gillian Chaplin, and Craig Wallace. *Mihaia: The Prophet Rua Kenana and His Community at Maungapōhatu*. Oxford University Press, 1979.
- Borremans, Michaël. *Michaël Borremans: As Sweet as It Gets*. David Zwirner Books; Hatje Cantz, 2014.
- Bradway, Todd, ed. *Landscape Painting Now: From Pop Abstraction to New Romanticism*. Thames & Hudson, 2019.
- Brice, Lisa. *Lisa Brice*. Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, 2021.
- Brown, Cecily. *Cecily Brown*. Rizzoli Electa; Gagolian, 2020.
- Brown, Warwick. *Ian Scott: A Survey 1969–1989*. Auckland City Art Gallery, 1989.
- Butler, Cornelia H., et al. *Marlene Dumas: Measuring Your Own Grave*. Museum of Contemporary Art; D.A.P., 2008.
- Butler, Sue. "The Feel of a Word: Artist." *Sue Butler – Lexicographer at Large*, 21 August 2022. <https://www.suebutler.com.au/the-feel-of-a-word/2022/8/21/artist>
- Callen, Anthea. *Techniques of the Impressionists*. Penguin Random House, 1996.
- Campbell, Joyce. *On the Last Afternoon: Life, Difference and Technocapital in the Age of Global Ecocide*. PhD thesis, University of Auckland, 2021.
- Christie's. "Country Club: Chicken Wire." Lot essay, *Post-War and Contemporary Art Evening Auction*, 7 March 2017. <https://www.christies.com/lot/lot-hurvin-anderson-country-club-chicken-wire-6062983/>
- Clifford, James. "Museums as Contact Zones." In *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*, 188–219. Harvard University Press, 1997.
- Coates, Ta-Nehisi. *Between the World and Me*. Spiegel & Grau, 2015.
- Cole, Thomas. *The Course of Empire. 1833–36*. New-York Historical Society, New York.
- Connew, Bruce. *A Vocabulary*. Vapour Momenta Books, 2021.
- Cosgrove, Denis. *Social Formation and Symbolic Landscape*. University of Wisconsin Press, 1984.
- Crase, Douglas. "The Leftover Landscape." In *Lines from London Terrace: Essays and Addresses*, 97. Pressed Wafer, 2018.
- Crow, Thomas. *Modern Art in the Common Culture*. Yale University Press, 1996.
- Crump, Barry. *Bastards I Have Met: An ABC of Bastardry*. Crump Productions, 1971.
- Curtis, Piripi. *Ka Whawhai Tonu: Struggle Without End*. Directed by Michael Jonathan, produced by Piripi Curtis and Thomas Toby Parkinson. Akeake, 2024.
- Demos, T. J. *Against the Anthropocene: Visual Culture and Environment Today*. Sternberg Press, 2017.
- Devenport, Rhana, et al. *New Zealand at Venice 2017: Lisa Reihana — Emissaries*. Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, 2017. <https://nzatvenice.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Lisa-Reihana-Emissaries-catalogue-FINAL.pdf>
- Doig, Peter, et al. *No Foreign Lands*. Hatje Cantz, 2013.
- Doig, Peter. *Peter Doig*. Thames & Hudson, 2007.
- Docking, Gil, with Michael Dunn and Edward Hanfling. *Two Hundred and Fifty Years of New Zealand Painting*. David Bateman, 2012.
- Dunn, Megan. *Things I Learned at Art School*. Penguin Random House New Zealand, 2021.
- Edwards, Betty. *Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain*. TarcherPerigee, 1979.
- Eisenman, Stephen F. "Art History, Time, and the Anthropocene." *Panorama: Journal of the Association of Historians of American Art* 5, no. 1 (Spring 2019). <https://www.journalpanorama.org/article/art-history-time-and-the-anthropocene/>



Eisenman, Stephen F. *Gauguin's Skirt*. Thames & Hudson, 1997.

Emery, Debra Joy Tepora. *E Hoki ki Tō Maunga: The Quintessential Elements of Home*. PhD thesis, University of Waikato, 2008.

Gauguin, Paul. *Noa Noa: The Tahitian Journal*. Translated by O. F. Theis. Dover Publications, 1985.

Gayford, Martin, and Tracey Emin. "Conversations: Tracey Emin and Martin Gayford." Public talk, *White Cube Bermondsey*, 2024. White Cube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t2Hi2VfGRjE>

Gayford, Martin. *How Painting Happens: And Why It Matters*. Thames & Hudson, 2024.

Gayford, Martin. *The Pursuit of Art: Travels, Encounters, Revelations*. Thames & Hudson, 2019.

Gioni, Massimiliano, et al. *The Painting Factory: Abstraction After Warhol*. Skira; Rizzoli, 2012.

Grace, John Te Herekikie. *Tuwharetoa: A History of the Māori People of the Taupo District*. A. H. & A. W. Reed, 1959.

Green, Tyler, host. "No. 680: Ronny Quevedo, Imagination in the Age of Reason." *The Modern Art Notes Podcast*, episode 680. Modern Art Notes Media, 2025. <https://www.manpodcast.com/portfolio/no-680-ronny-quevedo-imagination-in-the-age-of-reason/>

Haltman, Kenneth, and Richard Read, eds. *Colonization, Wilderness, and Spaces Between: Nineteenth-Century Landscape Painting in Australia and the United States*. Terra Foundation for American Art for the University of Chicago Press, 2020.

Hearn, Terry. *Land for the People? The Government's Land Policies in the Central North Island, 1860–1930*. Crown Forestry Rental Trust, 2006.

Hirsch, Marianne. *The Generation of Postmemory*. Columbia University Press, 2012.

Hofstadter, Dan. "Almost Free of the Mirror: Richard Diebenkorn." In *Temperaments: Artists Facing Their Work*, 190. Alfred A. Knopf, 1992.

Hofstadter, Richard. *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life*. Vintage Books, 1963.

Holcroft, M. H. *The Shaping of New Zealand*. Paul Hamlyn, 1974.

Ingold, Tim. *Lines: A Brief History*. Routledge, 2007.

Jones, Anna. "Landscape, Memory, and the Colonial Imaginary." *Memory Studies* 9, no. 3 (2016): 289–305.

Jones, Felicity, and Mark Smith. *Case Studies: A Story of Plant Travel*. Massey University Press, 2025.

Keith, Hamish. *The Big Picture: A History of New Zealand Art from 1642*. Random House New Zealand, 2007.

Kennedy, Thomas, and Eliza Spindel, eds. *Edward Burra*. Tate Publishing, 2025.

Laplanche, Jean. *Après-coup: Followed by "Time and the Other" and "Temporality and Translation"*. Translated by Nicola Luckhurst. The Unconscious in Translation, 2017.

Latour, Bruno. "Procedure 3: Sharing Responsibility: Farewell to the Sublime." In *Reset Modernity!*, edited by Bruno Latour and Christophe Leclercq, 167. ZKM Center for Art and Media; MIT Press, 2016.

Leonard, Robert, and Aaron Lister. *This Is New Zealand*. City Gallery Wellington, 2018.

Lehrer, Erica, and Shelley Ruth Butler, eds. *Curatorial Dreams: Critics Imagine Exhibitions*. McGill-Queen's University Press, 2016.

Lindsay, Robert, and Memory Jockisch Holloway, eds. *George Baldessin: Sculpture and Etchings: A Memorial Exhibition*. National Gallery of Victoria, 1983.

Lochnan, Katharine A., Roald Nasgaard, and Bogomila Welsh-Ovcharov, eds. *Mystical Landscapes: From Vincent van Gogh to Emily Carr*. DelMonico Books; Prestel, 2016.

Lopez, Barry. *Arctic Dreams: Imagination and Desire in a Northern Landscape*. Charles Scribner's Sons, 1986.

Lopez, Barry. *Horizon*. Alfred A. Knopf, 2019.

Lorrain, Claude, et al. *Claude Lorrain: The Painter as Draftsman*. National Gallery of Art, 2007.

Lowe, David J., et al., eds. *A Volcanic Environment: Central North Island Geology and People*. Te Arawa Historical Society, 2001.

Marsh, Dave. *Bruce Springsteen: Two Hearts: The Definitive Biography, 1972–2003*. Routledge, 2004.

Massinger, Philip. *A New Way to Pay Old Debts (1633)*. Edited by T. W. Craik. Methuen Drama, 1993.

Mead, Hirini Moko. *Tikanga Māori: Living by Māori Values*. Huia, 2003.

Mika, Jason Paul. *Māori Perspectives on the Environment and Wellbeing*. Ace Consulting Limited for the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment, 23 December 2021. <https://www.pce.parliament.nz/media/llxjl5ay/mika-maori-perspectives-on-the-environment-and-wellbeing.pdf>

Morris, Kadish. "Artist Hurvin Anderson: 'I'm Always Nervous About the Word Identity. I Try Not to Use It.'" *The Guardian*, 21 May 2023. <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2023/may/21/artist-hurvin-anderson-royal-academy-salon-paintings-hepworth-wakefield-interview>

Morrison, Robin. *A Sense of Place: Photographs by Robin Morrison*. Hodder and Stoughton, 1981.

Nouvel-Kammerer, Odile, ed. *French Scenic Wallpaper, 1795–1865*. Flammarion, 2000.

O'Brien, Gregory. *Lands & Deeds: Profiles of Contemporary New Zealand Painters*. Godwit, 1996.

O'Malley, Vincent, and David Armstrong. *The Beating Heart: A Political and Socio-Economic History of Te Arawa*. Huia, 2008.

Panek, Jennifer. "Picturesque Violence: Seeing and Settler Colonialism." *Visual Culture Quarterly* 5, no. 2 (2019): 72–88.

Paraone Koikoi and the Origins of the Waikato War. *NZ Wars Collection*, season 4, episode 1. RNZ. Hosted by William Ray and Mihingarangi Forbes, 2021. <https://www.rnz.co.nz/podcast/nz-wars-collection/season-4>

Paton, Justin. *Shane Cotton: The Hanging Sky*. Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū, 2013.

Poussin, Nicolas, et al. *Poussin and Nature: Arcadian Visions*. Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, 2008.

Pound, Francis. *Frames on the Land: Early Landscape Painting in New Zealand*. Collins, 1983.

Pound, Francis. *The Space Between: Pākehā Use of Māori Motifs in Modernist New Zealand Art*. Workshop Press, 1994.

Quilley, Geoff. "William Hodges: Artist and Empire." In *William Hodges 1744–1797: The Art of Exploration*, edited by Geoff Quilley et al. Yale University Press for the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, 2004.

Reweti, Bridget. *What Are You Looking At? Master's thesis*, Massey University, 2013.

Rice, Rebecca. "The Significance of the Dufour Wallpaper." *Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa*, 2017. <https://www.tepapa.govt.nz/learn/for-educators/teaching-resources/venice-biennale/lisa-reihana-emissaries/significance-of-dufour-wallpaper>

Riding, Christine, and Nigel Llewellyn. *British Art and the Sublime*. Tate Research Publication no. R1109418, 2012. <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/research-publications/the-sublime/christine-riding-and-nigel-llewellyn-british-art-and-the-sublime-r1109418>

Riethmaier, Gregory. *Rebecca and the Maoris*. A. H. & A. W. Reed, 1964.



Robert McDougall Art Gallery. *The Quest for Arcadia*. Christchurch City Council, 1974. PDF. Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū. [https://christchurchartgallery.org.nz/media/uploads/2010\\_07/Survey10.pdf](https://christchurchartgallery.org.nz/media/uploads/2010_07/Survey10.pdf)

Roivainen, Hilja. "From Acidified Groves to Virtual Mountains: The Continuum of Utopian Landscape Types in Twenty-First-Century Nordic Art." In *Landscapes of Affect and Emotion: Nordic Environmental Humanities and the Emotional Turn*, edited by Maunu Häyrynen, Jouni Häkli, and Jarkko Saarinen, vol. 7, 119–155. Brill, 2021.

Rosenblum, Robert. "The Abstract Sublime." *ArtNews*, February 1961. <https://www.artnews.com/2015/03/27/beyond-the-infinite-robert-rosenblum-on-sublime-contemporary-art-in-1961/>

*Rotorua 1880–1980: The First Hundred Years*. Edited by D. M. Stafford et al. Rotorua and District Historical Society, 1980.

Rubin, Brittany, and Janet Bishop, eds. *Matisse/Diebenkorn*. San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and The Baltimore Museum of Art, in association with Yale University Press, 2016.

Ruscha, Ed. *Course of Empire: Paintings by Ed Ruscha*. Edited by Linda Norden and Donna De Salvo, Hatje Cantz, 2005.

Ryan, Louise, et al., eds. *Current: Contemporary Art from Australia and New Zealand*. Art & Australia Publishing, 2008.

Said, Edward. *Culture and Imperialism*. Vintage, 1993.

Salmond, Anne. *Aphrodite's Island: The European Discovery of Tahiti*. Penguin, 2010.

Salmond, Anne. *Tears of Rangī: Experiments Across Worlds*. Auckland University Press, 2017.

Schoeser, Mary. *Sanderson: The Essence of English Decoration*. Thames & Hudson, 1987.

Schwabsky, Barry. "Painting with the Flow of the World." In *Landscape Painting Now: From Pop Abstraction to New Romanticism*, edited by Todd Bradway, 16–25. Thames & Hudson, 2019.

Shaw, Karena. "Indigeneity and the Politics of Seeing." *Cultural Geographies* 15, no. 4 (2008): 437–458.

Silverman, Debora. *Van Gogh and Gauguin: The Search for Sacred Art*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2000.

Smale, Holly. "After the Pastoral: Contemporary Art and the Para-Pastoral Turn." *Artnet Magazine*, 2023.

Smith, Bernard, and Alisa Bunbury. *Les Sauvages de la Mer Pacifique: "The Native Peoples of the Pacific Ocean"*. Art Gallery of New South Wales, 2000.

Smith, Linda Tuhiwai. *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*. 3rd ed. Zed Books, 2021.

Snyder, Gary. *The Practice of the Wild: Essays*. North Point Press, 1990.

Snyder, Gary. *Turtle Island*. New Directions, 1974.

Solnit, Rebecca. *A Field Guide to Getting Lost*. Canongate, 2006.

Sprague, Quentin. *The Stranger Artist: Life at the Edge of Identity*. Hardie Grant Books, 2020.

Sprague, Quentin. *What Artists See: Essays*. Monash University Publishing, 2025.

Stafford, D. M. *Landmarks of Te Arawa: Rotorua. Vol. 1*. Reed Books, 1994.

Stafford, D. M. *Landmarks of Te Arawa: Rotoiti, Rotoehu, Rotoma. Vol. 2*. Reed Books, 1996.

Stafford, D. M. *Te Arawa: A History of the Arawa People*. Reed, 1967.

Stafford, D. M. *The Founding Years in Rotorua: A History of Events to 1900*. Ray Richards and Rotorua District Council, 1986.

Stafford, D. M. *The New Century in Rotorua: A History of Events from 1900*. Ray Richards and Rotorua District Council, 1988.

Stafford, D. M. *The Romantic Past of Rotorua*. A. H. & A. W. Reed, 1977.

Stoppard, Tom. *Arcadia*. Faber and Faber, 1993.

Tabouret, Claire. *Claire Tabouret*. Perrotin, 2020.

Te Arawa Lakes Trust, with Rawiri Wepiha. *Te Arawa: Our Lakes, Our People*. Te Arawa Lakes Trust, 2015.

Vennell, C. W., and Susan Williams. *Rotorua: The Birth of an Industry*. Ray Richards, 1989.

Waterston, Darren. *Representing the Invisible*. Charta, 2007.

Waitangi Tribunal. *He Maunga Rongo: Report on Central North Island Claims, Stage 1*. Wai 1200. Legislation Direct, 2008.

Waitangi Tribunal. *The Te Arawa Mandate Report*. Wai 1150. Legislation Direct, 2004.

Waitangi Tribunal. *The Te Arawa Mandate Report: Te Wāhanga Tuarua*. Wai 1150. Legislation Direct, 2005.

Waitangi Tribunal. *The Te Arawa Settlement Process Report*. Wai 1353. Legislation Direct, 2007.

Walker, Ranginui. *Ka Whawhai Tonu Mātou: Struggle Without End*. Penguin, 2004.

Webster, Emma. "Emma Webster: Where Worlds Begin and Unravel." *ART Summit*, 1 October 2024. <https://www.art-summit.com/emma-webster/>

Whiteley, Brett. *Another Way of Looking at Vincent van Gogh: Paintings, Drawings, Photographs, Silkscreen Prints, Etchings and Sculptures Created over a Period of Fifteen Years*. Richard Griffin, 1983.

Williams, Raymond. *The Country and the City*. Oxford University Press, 1973.



### 3. Human Research Ethics: Approval letter



Date: 11 June 2025

ReviewerGroup: Prof Huhana Smith and Prof Julieanna Preston

Researcher: Turi Park

Project Title: Holding, Losing and Remaking. Painting as a Personal Inquiry Into Family Stories of Connection to Te Waiti Bay, Lake Rotoiti.

Dear Turi,

Thank you for the above application that was considered by the Massey University Ohu Matatika 2 at their meeting held on 11/06/2025.

On behalf of the Committee I am pleased to advise you that ethical approval has been granted for your research.

Approval is valid for three years. If this project has not been completed within three years from the date of this letter, an amendment to extend the approval must be requested by contacting the Research Ethics Office at [humanethics@massey.ac.nz](mailto:humanethics@massey.ac.nz).

If the nature, content, location, procedures or personnel of your approved application change, please contact the Research Ethics Office at [humanethics@massey.ac.nz](mailto:humanethics@massey.ac.nz) to request an amendment form.

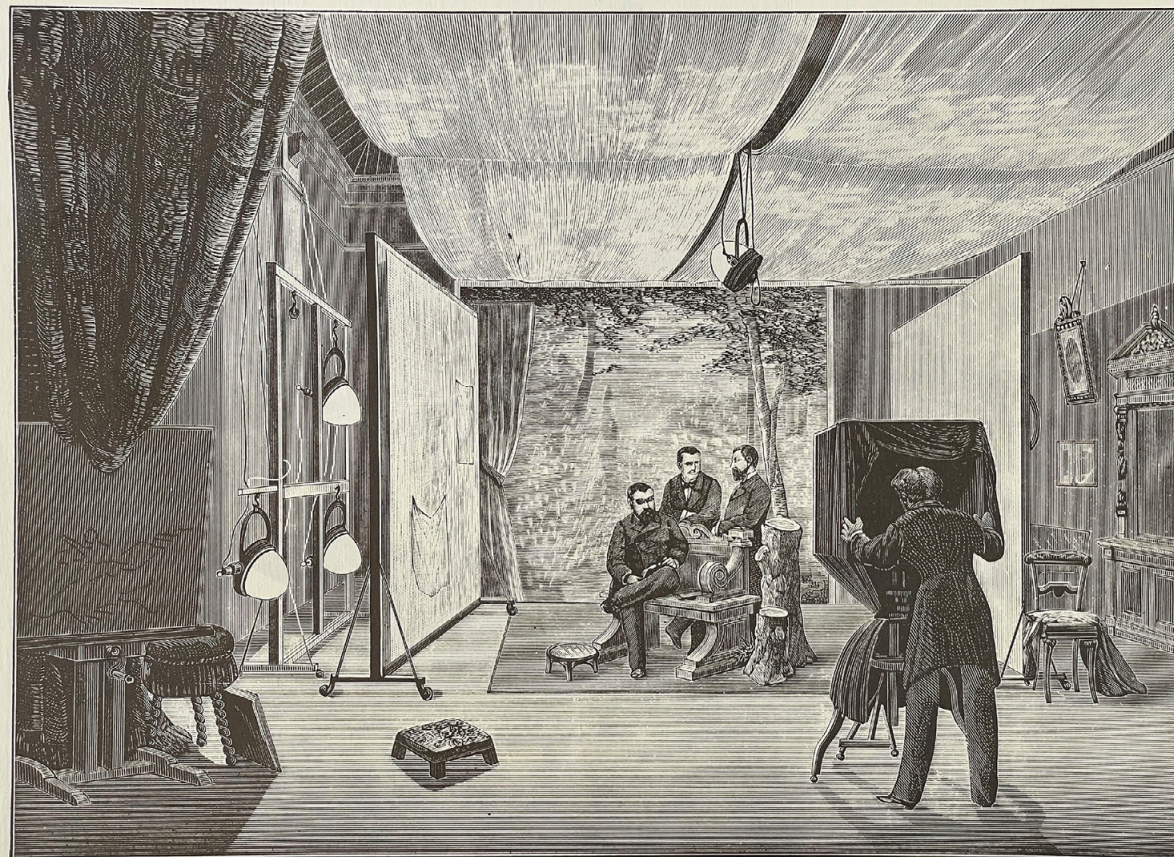
Yours sincerely

Professor Tracy Riley  
Acting Chair, Research Ethics Chairs' Committee

Massey University Human Ethics Committees (Ohu Matatika 1, Ohu Matatika 2, and Ohu Matatika 3)

Research Ethics, Graduate Research School and Ethics  
Massey University, Private Bag 11 222, Palmerston North, 4442, New Zealand  
E [humanethics@massey.ac.nz](mailto:humanethics@massey.ac.nz); [animalethics@massey.ac.nz](mailto:animalethics@massey.ac.nz)  
[www.massey.ac.nz/research/ethics](http://www.massey.ac.nz/research/ethics)





### Portrait collage machine

This era of studio photography routinely employed painted backdrops and props that alluded to European landscape painting conventions. Such photographs offered a quick and affordable means for sitters to signal class, cultivation, and social standing through recognisable visual cues: receding pastoral landscapes, repoussoir trees, and props such as logs or classical furniture implying dominion over nature, learning, and taste.

The final image is an engraving depicting a nineteenth-century photography studio functioning as a “portrait collage machine,” evoking the European landscape tradition by situating the sitter within a carefully assembled scene. Painted scenery, perspectival devices, symbolic props—and especially the romance of sentiment—were borrowed from academic painting to naturalise the sitter within a European pictorial tradition. These compositional theatrics reveal how photography, from its early history, absorbed and redeployed pictorial traditions rather than operating as a neutral documentary medium.

This understanding crystallised while I was daydreaming at traffic lights on Taranaki Street in Wellington, looking at studio portrait photographs of young New Zealand soldiers taken just before they boarded ships for the First World War.

Seeing this for myself unlocked the project conceptually.

**Figure 61.** Engraving of a Victorian photography studio backdrop. Illustrating the use of painted landscape conventions derived from European landscape painting. Artist unknown. From Jim Harter, *Harter's Picture Archive for Collage and Illustration: Over 300 19th-Century Cuts* (New York: Dover, 1978), 6.