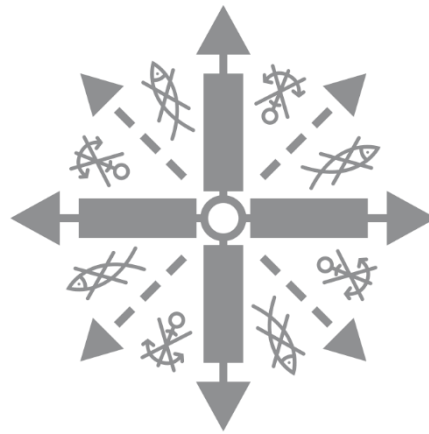


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The Southern Cross Cable: A Tour

Art, the internet and national identity
in Aotearoa-New Zealand

An exegesis submitted in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy in Fine Arts

Massey University, Wellington
New Zealand

Bronwyn Holloway-Smith	2018
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“The internet does not exist. maybe it did exist only a short time ago, but now it only remains as a blur, a cloud, a friend, a deadline, a redirect, or a 404. If it ever existed, we couldn’t see it. Because it has no shape. It has no face, just this name that describes everything and nothing at the same time.”¹

¹ Julieta Aranda, Brian Kuan Wood and Anton Vidokle, “Introduction,” in *E-Flux Journal: The Internet Does Not Exist*, eds, Aranda, Kuan Wood and Vidokle (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2015), 9.



Abstract

This exegesis is the written analytical component of a studio-based Doctor of Philosophy that, as a whole, investigates the influence of international hegemony and power structures on popular notions of Aotearoa-New Zealand's national identity. Selected histories and locations of New Zealand's primary international internet connection, the Southern Cross Cable, have been taken and applied within a body of conceptually driven artworks that function as an effective metonymic vehicle to reveal unseen processes, conveyed over a specific infrastructural system, that are influential upon New Zealand's national identity.

The creative works in this thesis comprise the suite of artworks *The Southern Cross Cable: A Tour*, a multi-platform art project comprising two moving image works, a sculptural work, a published tour guide and its associated web-based work. These sit alongside, and in response to, a historic mid-twentieth century New Zealand mural: *Te Ika-a-Maui* [sic] by the artist E. Mervyn Taylor. Together, these works encourage public awareness of the jurisdictional limits of the internet, and illustrate ways in which an individual member of the public can respond to the supposedly 'intangible' internet in a physical manner.

By strategically subverting popular nationalist symbolism, the works raise questions about the relevance of nationalism in an era of expanding globalisation and suggest the internet is increasingly becoming a tool of digital colonialism. By distributing this knowledge in the public sphere, this study challenges and tests the assumption—often asserted and implied by those who control this infrastructure and obscure it from public awareness—that public knowledge is a threat to the cable. Instead, viewers are encouraged to explore what individual agency they do, or do not, have as New Zealand citizens in shaping this dominant influence on contemporary New Zealand culture.

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Finally, to my exceptional children Stella, Abel and Lane. I hope this in some small way helps keep the internet you inherit from being super freaky and creepy.

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1.0 Introduction

This exegesis is the written analytical component of a studio-based Doctor of Philosophy. The creative works comprise the suite of artworks, *The Southern Cross Cable: A Tour*, a multi-platform art project comprising two moving image works, a sculptural work, a published tour guide and its associated web-based work. These are exhibited in conversation with a mid-twentieth century New Zealand mural, *Te Ika-a-Maui* by the artist E. Mervyn Taylor, which I discovered and restored during the early stages of this research process.

As a whole, this research investigates the influence of international hegemony and power structures on popular notions of Aotearoa-New Zealand's national identity. It takes selected histories and locations of New Zealand's primary international internet connection, the Southern Cross Cable (which for purposes of brevity I will refer to as the "SX"), and applies them within a body of conceptually driven artworks that function as an effective metonymic vehicle² to reveal unseen processes, conveyed over a specific infrastructural system, that are influential upon New Zealand's national identity.

The internet is widely credited with radically disrupting and altering global economic, social, political, and cultural systems. Notwithstanding its highly scrutinised impact, analysis of the effect of the internet on New Zealand national identity has largely been overlooked. Instead, the internet is widely promoted as a solution to New Zealand's ongoing struggle with its geographical isolation in relation to the global north, and the oft-lampooned national inferiority complex that has developed within the culture as a result (particularly that of the dominant Pākehā culture). Distance looks our way, and New Zealand national identity has long been shaped by it.³

² A metonym is a figure of speech in which a thing or concept is referred to by the name of something closely associated with that thing or concept. By way of example, "The Crown" is a metonymic vehicle that can be used as a substitute for the government. In this study "The Southern Cross Cable" is used as a substitute for discussions of the broader concept that the internet is challenging popular notions of New Zealand national identity.

³ C. K. Stead, *Distance Looks Our Way* (Auckland: The University of Auckland, 1961), 96: "remoteness is not something our writers should deny or regret, but something to be acknowledged and exploited." Although this too generally emanated from a highly Eurocentric framing that drew upon early Modernist modes of representation. As Mark Williams finds: "The New Zealand identity fashioned by the mid-century nationalists rested on the romantic

In the Post-Snowden Era, the public perception of the internet is manifold.⁴ While continuing to serve as a cost-effective information distribution tool, it has also come to represent an unseen threat. As Christine Smallwood observes, “the history of the Internet is a history of metaphors about the Internet, all stumbling around this dilemma: How do we talk to each other about an invisible god?”⁵ If this intangible force—or god—is inactive, the threat is simply conjecture. But if this god is found to be violating agreed laws, what agency do people have to respond? As Peter Dahlgren highlights, visibility is a “central aspect to participation.”⁶ Like the Wizard of Oz, the first task in demystifying the internet as a god-like force involves an investigation into, and delineation of, the limits of its power. As I am a New Zealand citizen, I have restricted this delineation to the jurisdictional boundaries of Aotearoa-New Zealand (within my practical limits of democratic influence). During the timeframe of this study, access to the international internet within these boundaries has been supported by a single system: The Southern Cross Cable. This exegesis questions the behaviour of this seemingly omnipotent, omnipresent, intangible ‘god’, deconstructing the myth of its invisibility and using conceptual art strategies to reframe it as a tangible system, thus proposing that some democratic public agency remains in shaping the manner in which it is regulated.

Art is one mechanism through which notions of national identity are established and explored. Attempts to define and understand New Zealand national identity are a constant in the country’s art history.⁷ In recent decades, artists have developed more nuanced responses that address the complexities of New Zealand national identity. Many of these practitioners have been included in the exhibition *This Is New Zealand* (City Gallery Wellington, 2018) alongside my own project, *The Southern Cross Cable: A Tour*.

view, influential in Britain between the wars, that national consciousness was a result of the organic response over time by a given people to a specific landscape.” “Crippled by Geography? New Zealand Nationalisms,” in *Not On Any Map*, ed. Stuart Murray (Devon: University of Exeter Press, 1997), 19–42.

⁴ The descriptor “Post-Snowden” refers to the period following the leak of thousands of classified documents by a former contractor to the National Security Agency of the United States, Edward Snowden. The first leak occurred in May 2013, and since then term has been used extensively by academics, journalists, and other writers to describe a drastically altered cyber landscape.

⁵ Christine Smallwood, “What does the internet look like?,” *The Baffler*, December 2009, <https://thebaffler.com/salvos/what-does-the-internet-look-like>.

⁶ Peter Dahlgren, *The Political Web: Media, Participation and Alternative Democracy* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 55.

⁷ This has primarily been at the hand of Pākehā artists concerned and/or fascinated by their sense of isolation from the centres of the Western art canon—Europe and North America. Understandably, this theme is not as apparent in the work of Māori artists, or that of artists from the various Pacific and Asian diaspora.

As a whole, the exhibition *This Is New Zealand*: “considers how our country has represented itself, and what those representations have included and excluded. It takes a critical look at the stories we have told ourselves—and others—about who we are.”⁸

Alongside my own work, the show includes pieces by Simon Denny, Gavin Hipkins, Emil McAvoy, Fiona Pardington, Michael Parekowhai, and Michael Stevenson.

Over the last two decades, a number of artists from the United States, the United Kingdom, France, and Singapore have created works that seek to establish a visual language for internet infrastructure. Taryn Simon, Steve Rowell, Lance Wakeling, Trevor Paglen, and Charles Lim have all made work about submarine internet cables. Three other artists (an American and two New Zealanders living variously in Paris, Auckland, and Berlin) have created works that engage with aspects of the SX, either explicitly (Evan Roth, John Johnston) or implicitly (Simon Denny). None of these artists have created public artworks using the SX as a metonymic vehicle to critique and reveal hidden relationships between the internet and New Zealand national identity. Through my own project, *Te Ika-a-Akoranga* (2014) whereby I uncovered and restored *Te Ika-a-Maui* as part of a commission from public art commissioning group Letting Space, I learned that there is a gap—that New Zealand contemporary art is noticeably absent when it comes to visualising New Zealand’s internet infrastructure.

My creative practice methodology is that of an investigative artist: a hybridized approach that draws upon, and is informed by, the fields of investigative journalism, conceptual art, socially-engaged practice, and art in the public sphere. My topics of research are often located at the interface of art, politics, and science/technology, with past subjects responding to a broad field of enquiry into established systems of power and control over knowledge and information. This has led my research into areas such as the changing nature of the public sphere in a neo-liberal age, the commons, the politics of copying, and the colonial as a theme in speculative fiction. Resulting projects are often realised in various media, operate across multiple platforms, and include participatory elements as a means of relinquishing some of the power traditionally held by the artist and arts institutions, and enabling audiences to engage with projects on their own terms.

⁸ “This is New Zealand,” City Gallery Wellington, accessed June 25, 2018, <https://citygallery.org.nz/exhibitions/this-is-new-zealand/>.

This study extends my focus more specifically into aspects of nationalism, neocolonialism, digital citizenship, and the post-Snowden era. Through my investigative art methodology, I have created a body of publicly-accessible artworks that reframe selected histories and locations of the SX as an effective metonymic vehicle that reveals unseen processes that are influential upon New Zealand's national identity, providing my audience with a participatory mechanism (a tour guide) through which they might engage with the sites on their own terms.

1.1 Hello World

I was born in the Hutt Valley, Wellington, in 1982. One year later, New Zealand's first fibre-optic communications cable was installed a few blocks away from where I was growing up, signifying the early stages that would lead to the internet's arrival in New Zealand. Canadian author and journalist Michael Harris has accurately pinpointed the position my demographic occupies, saying "If you were born before 1985, then you know what life is like both with the internet and without. You are making the pilgrimage from Before to After."⁹ Harris opines that the members of my generation are "the last people in history to know life before the internet, we are also the only ones who will ever speak, as it were, both languages."¹⁰ We naturally oscillate between the analogue and digital worlds, translating back and forth as we do so.

Although I was unaware of it at the time, a few years after I was born my paternal grandfather retired from his position as the Deputy Head of Communications and Security at the Government Communications Security Bureau (GCSB). This institution would later become implicated in one of the most contentious internet-related global public debates to date: Edward Snowden's revelations of a mass internet surveillance programme, PRISM. Led by the United States' National Security Agency (NSA) the programme was operated by the Five Eyes alliance, which comprised the governmental spy agencies of the United States (US), the United Kingdom (UK), Canada, New Zealand (NZ), and Australia. The GCSB were complicit in the programme.

⁹ Leo Mirani, "What it feels like to be the last generation to remember life before the internet," *Quartz*, August 14, 2014, <https://qz.com/252456/what-it-feels-like-to-be-the-last-generation-to-remember-life-before-the-internet/>. Although an argument might be made that the date of 1985 might be later in New Zealand—perhaps 1995.

¹⁰ Mirani, "What it feels like."

I grew up in Petone, Lower Hutt.¹¹ After the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840, a fleet of ships packed with British immigrants arrived on the Petone foreshore and established the first British settlement there, a village of huts which they named Britannia. Britannia was a remarkably short-lived settlement, lasting just a few months before it was destroyed by the flooding of Te Awakairangi, the Hutt River.¹² Branches of my Pākehā ancestry trace back to this early colonial period, with my paternal and maternal grandmothers being fifth and seventh generation New Zealanders respectively. These settlers sowed the seeds for what later became our country's dominant national culture—the Pākehā culture—a culture distinct from, but forever connected to, its European origins.

Another branch of my family tree includes a more recent arrival to Aotearoa and a migration story marked by the need to fit in rather than to establish dominance. Upon his post-World War II migration to New Zealand from Holland, my maternal grandfather Jan Kok anglicised his name to “John Cook” in order to assimilate into the dominant Pākehā culture and avoid discrimination. He did not teach his children his native language, and they learned very little about being Dutch, so this cultural heritage was not something they were able to pass down to the next generation. This lack of connection to the language and culture of the Netherlands did not prevent my siblings from attaining Dutch passports in 2002, leading them to become dual citizens—an opportunity I missed, and am now unable to revisit.¹³ My ineligibility (contrasted with my siblings' dual citizenship) is proof indeed that, in the contemporary era, nationality can be a somewhat fickle and arbitrarily determined thing.

The end of the decade in which I was born was marked by the deregulation of New Zealand's telecommunications. Not long after my birth, the country's left-wing government took an abrupt turn towards neoliberalism. From the very first phone call made in New Zealand in 1878 all phone services had been controlled by the state, and for

¹¹ Petone is an English bastardisation of the Māori name, Pito-one.

¹² Chris Maclean, “Wellington region - The struggle to survive: 1840–1865,” Te Ara - the Encyclopaedia of New Zealand, July 9, 2007, <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/wellington-region/page-7>.

¹³ “Dutch citizenship through grandparents,” Expatriates, accessed July 4, 2018, <https://expatriates.stackexchange.com/questions/7727/dutch-citizenship-through-grandparents>. The opportunity closed in 2013. Passports from Holland are currently ranked amongst the most powerful in the world, with only Singaporean and German passports having greater weight. “Global Passport Power Rank 2018,” Arton Capital, accessed July 4, 2018, <https://www.passportindex.org/byRank.php>.

the best part of the twentieth century these services were provided through the state-owned Post Office. In 1987 the Post Office was divided up and the phone service was renamed “Telecom”. In 1990 Telecom was privatised when the government sold it to a consortium made up of national and international interests.¹⁴

Telephones, television, print media, and the radio were the dominant modes of communication during my childhood in the 1980s and 1990s. At this time the country was becoming more aware of its bicultural heritage and obligations. At my primary school, a private Christian school, we stood for the New Zealand national anthem which played through a cassette player each morning as the national flag was raised. Our te ao Māori education followed the New Zealand primary school curriculum at the time and, while it was more than primary school students in previous decades would have received, it was ultimately superficial—we were taught some basic te reo Māori and sometimes baked rewana bread with a Māori kuia who came to visit.

Due to my religiously-biased upbringing and primary school education, I struggled to adjust to the secular high school I attended from age thirteen onwards. My Christian indoctrination set me apart from my fellow Pākehā students, and I developed my first friendships with a group of culturally Christian Samoan girls. They called me “Balani”—a portmanteau of *Bronny* (a shortened form of *Bronwyn*) and *Pālagi* (a colloquial Samoan word which means *European*).¹⁵ While I was a member of the dominant culture in New Zealand by birth, I was keenly aware that my upbringing and semi-evangelical faith made me an outsider.

Throughout secondary school, I elected to study music and art: the haven of teenage misfits everywhere. I went on to undertake a Bachelor of Fine Arts at Massey University in Wellington, starting my studies in the year 2000, the same year that the SX came online. At the start of my degree, much of our research as millennial students was still conducted within the bounds of card catalogues at the library. After a stint living overseas (Melbourne and Vienna) and traveling on my New Zealand passport (which afforded me the privilege of relatively unhindered mobility across national borders, but at

¹⁴ A. C. Wilson, “Telecommunications - Post and Telegraph, 1914–1945,” Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand, published March 11, 2010, <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/telecommunications/page-6>.

¹⁵ R. W. Allardice, *A Simplified Dictionary of Modern Samoan*, (Auckland: Polynesian Press, 1985), 133.

the time was not as powerful as a passport from countries within the European Union), I returned to university and finished my Bachelor of Fine Arts with Honours. The brief break in my studies marked a turning point, as upon my return to university I found myself utilising the internet in new and interesting ways. I was also much more conscious of how the dominant culture operated in my home country, having broadened my horizons through the quintessentially Pākehā O.E., albeit a non-conventional version.¹⁶

My interest in the internet as a concept informed my Honours project, *Virtually Maybe* (2005), a series of pencil-on-paper reproductions of a range of images sourced from the internet that included falsified facts, or fiction presented as truth. When these works were subsequently shown in an exhibition in New Plymouth curated by Bruce Philips, he described them thus:

Virtually Maybe, explores the naïve acceptance and cynical scepticism of truth in today's digital culture. The drawings, arranged on the wall not unlike spam windows that pop up unexpectedly on a computer screen, are carefully sketched copies of images derived from suspect Internet sites. Smith's study of the Internet images, carefully depicted to the pixel, suggests a paradox. The irony being that a fresh perspective and questioning of sophisticated computer communication can be obtained via the traditional technique and physical act of cross hatching in pencil. Indeed the simplicity and candidness of the drawings suggests a sincere search or testing of truth among a seductive bombardment of glowing pixels that claim extraordinary realities.¹⁷

It was when I was making *Virtually Maybe* that I first became interested in artists' legal and ethical responsibilities when it came to respecting and acknowledging copyright. I sought clarification from my lecturers over my obligations to the original creators of the images I was reproducing, but was told "Don't worry about copyright." This avoidance of answering my question had the counteractive effect of further inspiring my curiosity, leading me on a long and unexpected foray into the world of Copyright.

¹⁶ OE is an acronym for "Overseas Experience," a New Zealand term for an extended overseas working period or holiday.

¹⁷ Bruce Philips, accompanying text for *Draw'n'* exhibition, 110 Devon St New Plymouth, 24–25 June, 2006. Bronwyn Holloway-Smith, "Virtually Maybe," accessed July 4, 2018, <http://bronwyn.co.nz/projects/virtually-maybe/>.

My research into the intersection between art, ownership, and the internet intensified as I progressed through my career in the IT and arts sectors. My web developer partner and I celebrated our civil union in 2008, and this union, of an artist and an IT professional, could be seen as a metaphor for my practice. In late 2008 we co-founded the Creative Freedom Foundation (CFF), a not-for-profit trust established in response to changes in New Zealand law that “threatened to undermine artists’ and public rights in the name of protecting creativity.”¹⁸ Through the CFF we sought to represent New Zealand artists’ perspectives in New Zealand political conversations about the use and abuse of information technology. We launched with our *Internet Blackout* campaign against a new provision in the Copyright Act (Section 92A) which called for internet providers to “reasonably implement” a policy (determined in negotiation with major rights holder groups) to disconnect the accounts of customers who were decided to be “repeat copyright infringers”.¹⁹ No burden of proof was called for by the law, and the necessity for the informed opinions of independent copyright experts was not specified as a measure to ensure that an alleged copyright infringement had actually taken place.

CFF argued that this proposed system held too much faith that private businesses would employ a just and ethical model for determining repeat copyright infringement. We felt it was much more plausible that they would implement a process that best suited their business interests. It was more likely, for example, that a small internet service provider approached by a large (inevitably United States-based) litigious rights-holding body would take a risk-management approach, choosing to disconnect a customer rather than face potentially hefty costs defending themselves against a major film studio or recording company. In this equation, private individuals (including artists) would lose their access to the internet for acts they had potentially not committed, as well as their ability to access information and knowledge and participate in social, political, and economic spheres.

¹⁸ “About Us” Creative Freedom Foundation, accessed July 5, 2018, <http://creativefreedom.org.nz/about/>.

¹⁹ Becky Hogge, “Winning the Web: Stories of Grassroots Campaigning for Access to Knowledge in the Networked Digital Age,” *IssueLab*, May 1, 2009, <https://www.issuelab.org/resource/winning-the-web-stories-of-grassroots-campaigning-for-access-to-knowledge-in-the-networked-digital-age.html>.



Fig 1 Creative Freedom Foundation website, screenshot.

For me, the most serious issue underlying this debate was the threat that Section 92A posed to freedom of expression in New Zealand. There was the potential for the law to be used as a form of censorship.²⁰ Would a small internet service provider, untrained in copyright law, have sufficient understanding of Fair Dealing exceptions to be able to determine whether something was actually an infringement or not?²¹ Would art that used material created by people other than the artist without their explicit permission be up for scrutiny? Could this process be abused by private interests attempting to hamper their competitors by identifying similarities in their work and claiming they were copyright infringements? Could a government (with access to mass-surveillance data) silence dissidents by accusing them of infringing copyright resulting in the discontinuation of their online access for an unspecified period? With public life in New Zealand increasingly moving online, these threats were significant.

As the Director of the CFF and spokesperson for the *Internet Blackout* campaign (which took place in 2009), I responded to these threats through the established methodologies of a lobbyist. I met with politicians, learned about the law-making process, and how New Zealand public opinion might be shaped through carefully designed messages delivered via mainstream media channels, particularly the emerging platforms of Twitter and

²⁰ Declan McCullagh, "Google yanks anti-church sites," *Wired*, March 31, 2002, <https://www.wired.com/2002/03/google-yanks-anti-church-sites/>.

²¹ New Zealand Copyright Act 1994, Part 3, "Acts permitted in relation to copyright works." New Zealand copyright law prescribes "Fair Dealing" exceptions that are included in order to enable (to a limited extent) the use of copyrighted materials without permission for the purposes of criticism or review, reporting current events, research or private study, or educational purposes.

Facebook. The campaign was a success and Section 92A was first delayed from coming into effect, then re-written and finally replaced completely.



Fig 2 The CFF Internet Blackout campaign demonstration outside Parliament.

I celebrated the success of the campaign, but my relief that we had won was mitigated by my sense that this experience was taking me a step in the wrong direction as an artist—that it was a diversion from my vocation. By shifting into a lobbying role to implement change, rather than making art as a critical response to my conditions, I felt like I was giving up my art practice in order to defend my ability to practice my art. I wondered if there was a way in which my art practice could *contribute* to this kind of debate rather than being sidelined by it.

A subsequent project, *Whisper Down The Lane* (2012), built on my newly acquired Copyright knowledge and tested the possibilities and limits of copying using emerging technologies in an art context—an open source 3D printer, the RepRap, and new consumer-grade digital modelling software.²² In doing so, it questioned the boundaries of authorship and originality, and took control away from the artist, the collector and the gallery, and placed it in the hands of the user.

In 2013 I secured a public art commission with public art group Letting Space and international advertising firm JWT (John Walter Thompson) for the firm's office space of in Auckland.²³ My accepted proposal had specified an interest in the Southern Cross Cable's landing points in the Auckland region, and this opportunity enabled me to begin my investigations. The resulting project, *Te-Ika-a-Akoranga* (further discussed in Chapter

²² Bronwyn Holloway-Smith, *Whisper Down The Lane* (2012), accessed July 4, 2018, <http://bronwyn.co.nz/projects/whisper-down-the-lane/>.

²³ Letting Space is an initiative undertaken by Wellington curatorial duo Mark Amery and Sophie Jerram.

3.2), was a project to restore, digitise, and revive the rediscovered mural *Te Ika-a-Maui* (discussed in Chapter 2.1). Through this process, the mural became a poignant symbol of the dramatic shifts that had taken place since its commissioning, in both New Zealand's international communications infrastructure and in terms of concepts of New Zealand national identity. It also demonstrated that further research was needed in this area.

1.2 The Southern Cross Cable Network

The trouble with an invisible system is that it might be assumed to be out of reach and beyond public influence. As Nicole Starosielski notes, “the reasoning goes, if the public doesn't know about the importance of undersea cables, they will not think to contest or disrupt them.”²⁴ In fact, despite the popular perception that the internet is invisible it operates via landing stations and physical fibre-optic cables buried under the ground and draped across the ocean floor. Rather than being ephemeral it is quite tangible: cables travel through physical geographic sites and distinct jurisdictions and are built and controlled by human hands. For seventeen years New Zealand has relied on one such system to provide 98% of its international internet connectivity, often on a daily basis: The Southern Cross Cable Network.²⁵

The SX is a submarine fibre-optic cable system that came online in November 2000. It is approximately the diameter of a garden hose and rests on the ocean floor in a figure-eight path that connects New Zealand with the US, Fiji and Australia.²⁶ This reliance on the SX is amplified in New Zealand, an economically developed country that is marked by its geographic isolation and its dependency on foreign economies. The envisioned consequences brought about by the potential loss of this cable illustrates its significance to New Zealand's social, political and economic systems. As one major New Zealand internet agency, InternetNZ, articulated: “If Southern Cross were to be disrupted [...] it would jeopardize the nation's functioning, especially as most internet content originates

²⁴ Nicole Starosielski, *The Undersea Network* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015), 4.

²⁵ Statistics from 2016 found that 94% of New Zealanders check the internet daily and a third are constantly connected, placing New Zealand's internet engagement per capita alongside other highly connected populations, including Australia, the U.S., Canada and the UK. In a nation of 4.7 million people, this equates to roughly 4.4 million people engaging with the internet on a daily basis. “Online personal safety a top priority for Kiwis,” InternetNZ, October 26, 2016, <https://internetnz.nz/news/online-personal-safety-top-priority-kiwis>.

²⁶ From Takapuna Beach on Auckland's North Shore it travels along the floor of the Pacific Ocean to Spencer Beach (Hawai'i), Morro Bay (California), Nedonna Beach (Oregon), Kahe Point in (Hawai'i), Lauthala Bay (Viti Levu), Collaroy Beach (New South Wales), Clovelly Beach (New South Wales), and Muriwai Beach to the west of Auckland. It is more than 30,000km long.

offshore and users' access to basic services is dependent on international links.”²⁷ The risk of such a loss would be twofold: there would be an economic cost due to lost traffic and the need for the cable’s repair, and the country would suffer a blow to its reputation and could lose its ability to attract business that relied on this form of communication. Many New Zealand sectors depend on this undersea cable network in order to operate, including banking, exports, tourism, and any industry reliant upon cloud functionality (including most large email services which are used across the government, education and business sectors). The creative sector is also a key field in this regard, perhaps most notably in relation to film.²⁸



Fig 3 The official Southern Cross Cable Network map.

But the severing of cables is a relatively rare occurrence and one that cable companies are actively prepared for with cable repair ships that remain on standby should a disruption occur. While earlier cables were susceptible to a range of potential disruptions, modern-day cables have been designed to withstand many of these threats. Globally,

²⁷ Starosielski, *The Undersea Network*, 57.

²⁸ The Lord of the Rings trilogy, Avatar and The Hobbit trilogy all depended heavily on this high-capacity digital exchange in order to enable effective collaboration with production companies in the United States. As Nicole Starosielski notes: “the collaborations on Avatar between Weta Digital in New Zealand and Industrial Light & Magic in California would not have been possible without the Southern Cross Cable Network. As a result, Weta Digital has a major stake in the smooth operation of Southern Cross and generates a sizeable stream of traffic that helps to sustain their network.” “Underwater Flow,” *Flow* 15, no. 1, (October 16, 2011), http://flowtv.org/2011/10/underwaterflow/#identifier_o_11512.

natural events and accidental damage remain the primary threats to submarine cables.²⁹ An early work I made as part of this research, *Breaks and Faults* (2015), was a response to this.



Fig 4 Left: an exhibit from the Telegraph Museum Porthcurno showing examples of cable breaks and faults; Right: *Breaks and Faults* (2015), a preliminary work I made during this study.

Terrorism can also be seen as a threat to internet cables, however statistically this is much less likely. Fibre optic cables systems also include electricity cables to power repeaters, making sabotage a dangerous activity to attempt. As Chang notes:

“The idea that saboteurs in wetsuits would dive [...] and cut a fibre optic cable, though not impossible, is highly unlikely, if only because doing so would be a good way to wind up dead. “These cables are carrying thousands of volts of power,” Mark Simpson, CEO of SEACOM, told Wired [...] Attempting to cut such a line could easily kill you, he said, making sabotage “pretty unusual and pretty dangerous.”³⁰

The vulnerability of New Zealand’s internet connection has been mitigated in recent years, with the Tasman Global Access cable coming online in March 2017, and two further cables being developed: the ‘Hawaiki’ cable and Southern Cross’s follow-up cable ‘Next’. However, an increase in connectivity does not preclude total disconnection. As seen in Taiwan in 2006, major natural disasters have been known to disrupt several cables at

²⁹ Tom Pullar-Strecker, “Kaikoura could get phone, internet back in days after quake cuts cable,” *Stuff*, November 15, 2016, <https://www.stuff.co.nz/business/industries/86463492/options-being-assessed-for-restoring-phone-services-to-kaikoura>. A domestic New Zealand sub-sea cable was damaged following the 2016 Kaikoura Earthquake.

³⁰ Alexandra Chang, “Undersea cables are actually more vulnerable than you might think,” *Wired*, April 3, 2013, <http://www.wired.co.uk/article/vulnerable-undersea-cables>.

once.³¹ This threat may increase in future years: scientists have warned that there could be a global increase in severe earthquakes from 2018 onwards, and global warming is also predicted to cause an increase in severe storms.³² Another preliminary artwork, *The Earthquake* (Fig 5), responded to this issue.



Fig 5 Developmental artwork: *The Earthquake*.

While the reliance on the SX has been seen by some industry insiders as a source of potential national vulnerability, the obscuring of internet infrastructure in the public eye has rendered the majority of New Zealanders largely unaware of the risks of their continued investment in offshore internet services. If a system is not understood, those who use it are unable to make informed decisions about how they engage with it and, in a democratic nation, how it is regulated.

Several factors have led to the erroneous perception that the internet is invisible. Firstly, the popular use of misleading terminology (i.e. ‘the cloud’, and ‘cyberspace’)³³ imply that the internet primarily operates as an intangible, atmospheric medium, often assumed to be satellite technology.³⁴ Secondly, as Starosielski finds, popular media narratives

³¹ Winston Qiu, “Submarine Cables Cut after Taiwan Earthquake in Dec 2006,” Submarine Cable Networks, March 9, 2011, <https://www.submarinenetworks.com/news/cables-cut-after-taiwan-earthquake-2006>. Eight cables were damaged by an earthquake in Taiwan in 2006.

³² Robin McKie, “Upsurge in big earthquakes predicted for 2018 as Earth rotation slows,” *The Guardian*, November 18, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/nov/18/2018-set-to-be-year-of-big-earthquakes>.

³³ In addition, the Te Reo Māori term for the internet is “ipurangi,” which translates as “a container for the sky.”

³⁴ Satellites do carry some internet connectivity, but this is minor in comparison to cables.

primarily focus on connection narratives and disruption narratives, both of which tend to be highly technical and therefore fail to capture the public imagination.³⁵ Thirdly, the sites of New Zealand's international internet infrastructure are purposely designed to be inconspicuous, which limits public visual understanding of the physical manner in which New Zealand's internet operates.³⁶ This obfuscation of internet infrastructure enables the continued public perception that New Zealand's internet is outside of jurisdictional control, despite this is not being entirely the case.

Who holds power in a system that promotes itself as decentralised and invisible? In 2015 artist James Bridle created a browser plug-in called *Citizen-Ex* which, when installed, tracked and made visible the geographic territories its users travelled to when they browsed to different websites. Over time the programme built up data about its user's browsing habits, displaying it in a pie chart that depicted its subject's "algorithmic citizenship" based on how much time one spent, virtually, in different jurisdictions. Of his own digital citizenship, the UK-based Bridle stated that, "based on a few days of internet surfing, I turned out to be 89.5 percent American, 3.2 percent Irish and 1.9 percent French plus 18 other nationalities, even though I have a Japanese passport, and grew up in the UK." He elaborated that, "Most of the anglophone internet is in America [...] Quite a few sites that you wouldn't necessarily expect are hosted on infrastructures based out in the US because the web is not as distributive as we'd like to think."³⁷

Considering the example posed by *Citizen-Ex*, what might New Zealand's Digital Citizenship profile look like? If the nation's browsing habits are anything to go by, it seems that New Zealanders may be increasingly engaging with expressions of cultural values that do not originate from the cultures that we live in physical proximity to—cultures governed by values from societies other than ours. Statistics revealed by Nielsen in 2017 showed that four of the five most popular sites visited by New Zealanders were based in the US.³⁸ Further, SimilarWeb's figures from April 2018 show that US websites accounted

³⁵ Starosielski, *The Undersea Network*, 66-68. Connection narratives relate to the design and technological development of an undersea cable while disruption narratives describe an unexpected disconnection of the cable and detail the threats not only to transmission but also to a broader cultural order.

³⁶ Spark NZ, email to author, April 4, 2017.

³⁷ Emiko Jozuka, "Find Out Your 'Algorithmic Citizenship' Based on the Websites You Visit," *Vice: Motherboard*, May 30, 2015, https://motherboard.vice.com/en_us/article/pga4pb/find-out-your-algorithmic-citizenship-based-on-the-websites-you-visit-1.

³⁸ "Nielsen online rankings reveal New Zealand's biggest websites—UPDATED," *StopPressNZ*, May 19, 2017, <http://stoppress.co.nz/news/most-popular-sites-in-april>. The most popular websites were Google, Facebook,

for seven of the ten top websites in New Zealand.³⁹ Having installed the plugin on my own browser and run it for some months, my algorithmic citizenship was 75.6 percent US, 13.82 percent New Zealand, and 8.43 percent Irish. Are most New Zealanders actually primarily US Digital Citizens? What does this mean for New Zealand national identity?

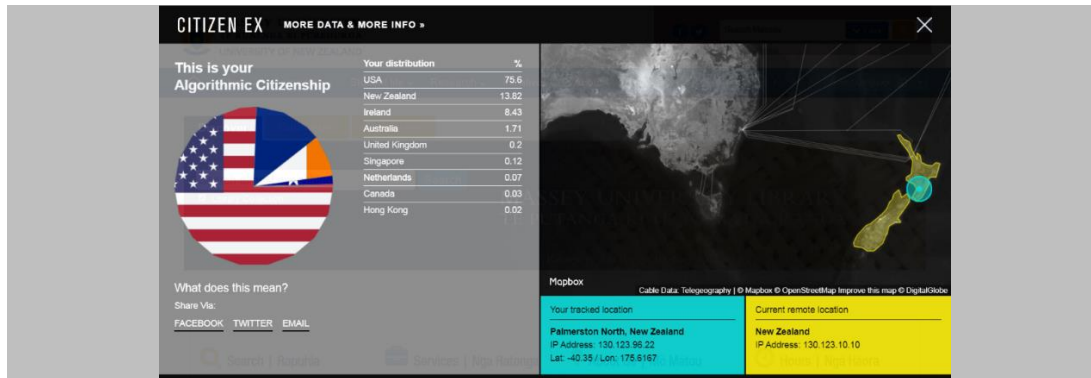


Fig 6 Screenshot of the author's Citizen Ex Algorithmic Citizenship.

1.3 Inventing the nation

While definitions of 'nation' remain somewhat elusive, the contemporary understanding of a nation is broadly understood as a group of people connected in an ongoing manner by distinct and unifying characteristics.⁴⁰ This might be due to genealogic factors, theologic factors, or geographic factors.⁴¹ Of all three, the latter application is most commonly used in the present day. This form of the nation relates to communities living

MSN/Outlook/Bing/Skype, and YouTube. The fifth was Stuff.co.nz which, despite being Australian-owned, publishes New Zealand-focussed news stories.

³⁹ "Top sites ranking for all categories in New Zealand," SimilarWeb, last updated May 01, 2018, <https://www.similarweb.com/top-websites/new-zealand>. Google ranked first and second (.com & .co.nz) followed by YouTube, Facebook, TradeMe, Stuff, Instagram, Wikipedia, NZHerald, and Reddit.

⁴⁰ The word 'nation' derives from the Latin 'natio' literally meaning 'birth,' however, despite its etymological origin, the tie between nationality and birth is no longer so clear cut, with the contemporary understanding of nation increasingly seen as a natural companion of the 'state'. Many theorists have commented that a consistent definition of the nation remains elusive, including Bagehot who observed that: "We know what it is when you do not ask us, but we cannot very quickly explain or define it." E. J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780 : Programme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 1. Hugh Seton-Watson similarly lamented, "I am driven to the conclusion that no 'scientific definition' of the nation can be devised; yet the phenomenon has existed and exists." Hugh Seton-Watson, *Nations and States: An Enquiry into the Origins of Nations and the Politics of Nationalism* (London: Methuen, 1977), 5. Hobsbawm finds that the criteria for defining a nation are "fuzzy, shifting and ambiguous" which makes them "unusually convenient for propagandist and programmatic, as distinct from descriptive, purposes." Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism*, 6.

⁴¹ An example of genealogic nationalism is the Canadian "first nations." In a New Zealand/Aotearoa context, consideration has been given to the use of this term with specific reference to the iwi collectively referred to as 'Māori'. See Rika-Heke, "Tribes or Nations?" 170–181. Examples of theologic nationalism may include members of the Jewish faith, the Catholic Church, or—by way of a more extreme example—the Islamic State. The implication here is that specific rules may be decreed by (religious) leadership that members are expected to prioritise over their specific jurisdictional laws (i.e. the Caliphate).

within a geographically-defined territory, and governed by a sovereign body: the state. Organisations such as the United Nations speak directly to this interpretation. For the purposes of this study, the term 'nation' and its derivatives will principally refer to this geographical definition.

In addition to its defined borders, the geographic nation is constructed through the application and aestheticisation of national ideals through an established sovereign government and the development and maintenance of a 'national identity' based on expressions of shared cultural values.⁴²

New Zealand is a geographically-isolated island group, and its geographic boundaries are therefore well defined. But what of the application and aestheticisation of its national ideals? It has an established government (although its sovereignty has lately been questioned), but does it have a 'national identity' and has this been developed and maintained?⁴³ In order to begin answering this question, we might ask "what are expressions of shared cultural values?", and secondly, "have these shared cultural values been developed and maintained?"

While David Novitz has labelled 'culture' a tricky thing to pin down, W. H. Walsh outlined a 'colligatory' concept of culture as a means of grouping individuals in a collective manner by way of shared characteristics, whether they be actions, interactions, values, beliefs, knowledge, etc.⁴⁴ Here, the identification of shared characteristics relies on the discovery of *distinctive* traits, which might be positioned as different to those of an 'other'. In the context of a search for national culture, the 'other' is inevitably a political-geographic group with their own identifiable traits against which the self-identifying group in

⁴² This definition has been extrapolated from Ernest Gellner's typology of nationalisms in which he concluded that three factors alone really matter in the construction of a nation: power, education, and shared culture. Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, (New York: Cornell University Press, 1983), 97.

⁴³ Although this study is not seeking to undertake critical analysis into New Zealand's status as a sovereign nation it is noted that there has been some recent criticism in this area, calling into question whether New Zealand's sovereignty is at risk. This discussion has garnered particular prominence in response to New Zealand's participation in the Trans Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPPA) and its successor, the Comprehensive and Progressive Trans Pacific Partnership Agreement (CPTPP), both of which contained Investor State Dispute Settlements. Aspects of this trade agreement related to the governance of the internet in New Zealand, particularly the intellectual property chapter. For further insight into this topic, see Kelsey and Walker, *Hidden agendas*.

⁴⁴ "the central problem [. . .] is knowing what exactly politicians, writers and the rest are striving after when they search for a peculiarly New Zealand culture. The trouble, of course, is that the concept 'culture' is murky, and talk of cultural identity doubly so." David Novitz, "On Culture and Cultural Identity," in *Culture and Identity in New Zealand*, eds. Novitz and Willmott (Wellington: GP Books, 1989), 278. See also W. H. Walsh, "Colligatory Concepts in History," in *The Philosophy of History*, ed. Patrick Gardiner, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974), 127–144.

question can react. As Novitz elaborates, these traits might be appealed to “in order to enlist loyalties, to summon a national pride, to articulate grievances, to alter our sense of self, to re-think our role within the group, and to demand the sort of action which will alter or strengthen the fabric of the society [. . .] the search for cultural distinctiveness and identity is, in the broadest sense, a political, but not a scientific quest.”⁴⁵ The search for national culture, then, is clearly a political quest positioned in proximity to the geographic ‘other’ that is significantly influenced by expressions of shared cultural values.

But what are ‘expressions’? Simply put, an expression is an action that communicates an idea or feeling.⁴⁶ Communication is the act of sending and receiving—encoding and decoding—an idea or feeling between one party (whether an individual or group) and another. In essence, communication involves methods of transmitting and receiving information—acts of connection. Today, the internet is the primary form of communication in New Zealand, but its origins can be traced back to the telegraph, radio, telephone, and satellite. Gradually technologies emerged that targeted increasingly larger audiences via mass media. Each of these developments has led to shifts in cultural, political and economic systems, and by extension, systems of power.

An expression occurs when one party has an idea or feeling, and communicates this idea or feeling through an action transmitted to another party. This use of action evokes the territory of art explaining why, as Lister and Leonard have rightly pointed out, art has played a role in asserting and questioning notions of national identity.⁴⁷

But how can we identify cultural values that are shared on the scale of the New Zealand geographic nation? To what extent do they need to be ‘shared’? Cultural values shared by half a dozen people cannot qualify as representational of the entire population. In a democratic sense, and in consideration of the connection between the ‘nation’ and the ‘state’, might the expressions of these cultural values only qualify as ‘shared’ if they represent the ideas or feelings of a majority of the population—a quantitative measure? No. Popularity does not, and should not, equate with shared cultural values. A system that

⁴⁵ Novitz, “On Culture,” 286.

⁴⁶ This action might manifest in creative or destructive processes, both of which have been employed in art practice. See, for example, Gustav Metzger’s “Auto-destructive art.”

⁴⁷ Robert Leonard and Aaron Lister, “First, a word from the curators,” in Leonard, Lister, and Lawson eds., *This Is New Zealand* (Wellington: City Gallery Wellington, 2018), 5–6.

seeks to gain admissible evidence of the personal opinions of multiple individuals cannot function without a disturbing level of surveillance that breaches the human right to privacy (Article 12).⁴⁸ Further, a system that holds perceived popularity aloft over other measures of cultural value risks undermining the critical human right to freedom of expression. It is vital to any healthy democracy to enable the creation of new cultural expressions that explore contentious issues, where it might be socially or politically dangerous for members of the population to make their solidarity known. Quantitative measures (audience numbers, hits, likes, followers, views) are measures of potentially passive consumption of cultural expressions (even by ‘bots’) that by no means equates with the validation of an expression as truly representative of the majority opinion of a geographic nation. When measured in this manner, it is easy to see that any expression claiming to be a quantitative ‘shared cultural value’ is impossible to prove. But this does not automatically disprove the ‘nation’ as a myth.

Benedict Anderson outlined his theory of the ‘imagined community’ in 1983, stating that the nation is “an imagined political community—and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign”.⁴⁹ He further elaborates that “all communities larger than primordial villages of face-to-face contact (and perhaps even these) are imagined. Communities are to be distinguished, not by their falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined.”⁵⁰ Ernest Gellner has also signalled this definition: “Nationalism is not the awakening of nations to self-consciousness: it *invents* nations where they do not exist.”⁵¹

The notion of something being invented, where it did not previously exist, is both a romantic one and a colonial one. To complicate this understanding of the term we may turn to Francis Pound who, in his consideration of New Zealand’s mid-century nation building era, observed it being applied with two distinct meanings: “the old meaning, which was to discover, to find something which was already there before you; and today’s

⁴⁸ “The universal declaration of human rights 10 December 1948,” Wikipedia, uploaded 7 November, 2017, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Universal_Declaration_of_Human_Rights#/media/File:The_universal_declaration_of_human_rights_10_December_1948.jpg. The specific wording of this article is: “No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honour and reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference of attacks.”

⁴⁹ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. and extended ed. (London; New York: Verso, 1991), 6–7. He carries on to clarify that his community is ‘limited’ by finite, elastic boundaries.

⁵⁰ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 6.

⁵¹ Gellner, *Nations*, 169. Emphasis added.

meaning, which is to create something new, or even to concoct it, to make up a fictitious story.”⁵² If New Zealand, as a nation, is an imagined political community by whom has it been discovered or invented?

E. J. Hobsbawm found that “the ‘national idea’ as formulated by its official champions, did not necessarily coincide with the actual self-identification of the people concerned.”⁵³ National identity, then, is formulated by its *official champions* (state, or otherwise) and may be conferred upon (or taken away from) its subjects regardless (or because) of the factors with which they personally identify. Anderson describes the character of official nationalism as being “an anticipatory strategy adopted by dominant groups which are threatened with marginalization or exclusion from an emerging nationally-imagined community.”⁵⁴ Here, the development/promotion of official nationalism is used as a desperate measure to regain control over subjects that are veering away from the status-quo. How? Because national identity appeals to the emotions, and allegiance is essentially an emotional attachment. This is illustrated in the antonyms of allegiance: apathy, disobedience, treachery—all of which can be seen as threats to established power.

Shared cultural values, then, are not *necessarily* representative of the ideas or feelings of a majority of the population, but may be mass-communicated ideas or feelings that those in power wish to see reflected in their subjects—as a means of grouping them for political purposes. Known by another name, the mass communication of certain political ideas and feelings by established power structures is simply ‘propaganda’ (or perhaps ‘fake news’ to use a recent phrase).

Mass media is one of the primary platforms over which concepts of national identity have historically been established, whether through the print media, radio, film, or television.⁵⁵ Those in control of these platforms hold the power to select which information/belief systems/values/traditions are promoted (or not) and the manner in which these are

⁵² Francis Pound, *The Invention of New Zealand: Art and National Identity, 1930–1970* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2009), xix.

⁵³ Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism*, 134.

⁵⁴ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 101.

⁵⁵ Much might also be said about the impact of migration on shifts in national identity, but this is outside the scope of this study.

framed and interpreted. Hence, mass media plays a key role in shaping public perceptions on a variety of important issues.

Political discourse has long been mediated by electronic machines and, as John Corner argues, there has long been a power relationship involving elites and the media.⁵⁶ As Umberto Eco noted in his 1967 essay *Towards a Semiological Guerilla Warfare*:

Not long ago, if you wanted to seize political power in a country, you had merely to control the army and the police. Today it is only in the most backward countries that fascist generals, in carrying out a coup d'etat, still use tanks. If a country has reached a high level of industrialization the whole scene changes. [...] Today a country belongs to the person who controls communications.⁵⁷

If this is indeed the case, those who control New Zealand's current communications channels also control New Zealand national identity. This is, of course, a simplistic assumption after all it is never possible to control independent thought, and those who seek to hold power to account continue to be given voice in the New Zealand popular media. However, due to the lack of accountability and transparency on the internet and the prevalence of closed-source platforms (as opposed to transparent open-source ones), those with power may take measures to promote or censor certain ideas and feelings that are favourable or unfavourable to their agendas, and to discourage methods through which the public might establish their own critical perspectives.⁵⁸ The technical community continue to maintain primarily private governance of the internet, resisting public accountability, raising the possibility that New Zealanders could be censored without realising it.⁵⁹ Due to the individualism of the internet experience (amplified by

⁵⁶ John Corner, *Theorising Media: Power, Form and Subjectivity* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011), 21–22.

⁵⁷ Umberto Eco, *Travels in hyperreality: essays*, trans. William Weaver (San Diego; New York: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1986), 135.

⁵⁸ Knowledge Commons Brasil, "What's wrong with current internet governance?: Digital colonialism & the Internet as a tool of cultural hegemony," accessed June 25, 2018, <http://www.knowledgecommons.in/brasil/en/whats-wrong-with-current-internet-governance/digital-colonialism-the-internet-as-a-tool-of-cultural-hegemony/>.

⁵⁹ Mario Trujillo, "Civil liberties group: Facebook 'complicit in political censorship'," *The Hill*, November 11, 2014, <http://thehill.com/policy/technology/223626-group-asks-facebook-for-more-info-on-censorship-requests>. This lack of public accountability has even extended to several recently-developed multilateral trade agreements that New Zealand has been party to, including the Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement (ACTA) and the Comprehensive and Progressive Trans Pacific Partnership Agreement (CPTPPA). Although these included clauses relating to the internet input on the text of these treaties was sought from private stakeholders, but not from the general public.

recommendation algorithms, shadow bans, and social bubbles), and the waning of other communications platforms, the exercising of any such control would be very difficult to detect.

1.4 Control of the internet

Not so long ago the internet served as the main symbol and medium of globalization. Today, one is regularly reminded that the corporations and organizations that operate the internet have real, physical, off-line addresses in territories that are controlled by certain states. As such, they are increasingly used as instruments of surveillance, propaganda, and fake news. Instead of constituting a virtual space beyond state borders, the internet is increasingly understood as a scene of struggle for interstate information wars.⁶⁰

As a system, the internet is distinctly hierarchical operating over three dimensions: (1) the structural dimension (how the system is configured); (2) the representational dimension (the mediated audio-visual experience); and (3) the interactive dimension (the act of participating in the system).⁶¹ Each of these dimensions is populated by actors possessing differing levels of power in the construction and maintenance of the internet.

Those with power in the *structural* dimension are able to change how, and under what rules, data is sent, received, and routed. Two organisations oversee this dimension: the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN), who manage the internet name spaces, and the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF), who manage the technical protocols underpinning the network. As both organisations are based in the US, they operate under the oversight of the US Government.⁶²

The New Zealand government signed each of these treaties before the final text was released publicly (let alone responded to).

⁶⁰ Boris Groys, "Towards a new Universalism," *e-flux Journal*, no. 86 (November 2017), <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/86/162402/towards-a-new-universalism/>.

⁶¹ Peter Dahlgren, "The Internet, Public Spheres, and Political Communication: Dispersion and Deliberation," *Political Communication* 22, no. 2 (April 2005): 147–62. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10584600590933160>.

⁶² Purkayastha, Prabir and Rishab Bailey, "U.S. Control of the Internet: Problems Facing the Movement to International Governance," *Monthly Review*, July 1, 2014, <https://monthlyreview.org/2014/07/01/u-s-control-of-the-internet/>. Purkayastha and Bailey also note a lack of diversity in these organisations.

A second layer in this dimension is populated by network operators and Internet Service Providers, who control the cables and other infrastructure over which internet traffic travels. This is the layer at which the SX is located. The SX is operated by a Bermuda-based company, Southern Cross Cables Ltd., which is led by a Chief Executive primarily based in Bermuda. This is a strategy common to the neoliberal era whereby commercial endeavours obscure their head office (i.e. tax base) by dispersing their locations and moving to more attractive offshore sites that reduce the overhead costs of labour and tax, contributing to greater profits. Southern Cross Cables Ltd. is, in turn, owned by three telecommunications companies: Spark New Zealand (formerly Telecom New Zealand), Singtel and Verizon Business.⁶³ With a 50.01% share, Spark New Zealand (Spark NZ) are the majority shareholders of Southern Cross Cables Ltd. and manage the cable within New Zealand jurisdiction. Spark NZ itself is a publicly-traded company, or ‘public enterprise’, listed on the New Zealand, Australian and New York stock exchanges.

Those with power in the *representational* dimension might be grouped into those who control the internet browsers, and those who control the websites that are accessed over these browsers.⁶⁴ The major browsers, including Google Chrome, Safari, and Firefox, are all owned by organisations based in California, US, however Firefox is distinct amongst this set as the only Open Source (and therefore publicly transparent) browser. The majority of the most popular sites accessed by New Zealanders are organisations registered under US jurisdiction.⁶⁵ The registration of these companies in the US does not imply that they hold any particular ethical position, but simply that they are operating under a democratic system within which New Zealand constituents have no agency or representation, and that the business operating decisions they make are unlikely to take New Zealand’s particular context into account.

Those with power in the *interactive* dimension are privileged by good social skills, good (English) language and typing/coding skills, able-bodied-ness, and better access whether

⁶³ These shares are split approximately: Spark NZ (50%), Singtel (40%) and Verizon Business (10%).

⁶⁴ These actors may also be Internet Service Providers themselves.

⁶⁵ “Nielsen online rankings reveal New Zealand’s biggest websites—UPDATED”. Of the top ten sites included in these rankings, Google (1) and YouTube (4) are US sites owned by multinational conglomerate Alphabet Inc; Facebook (2) is a US site owned by publicly traded company Facebook; MSN/Outlook/Bing/Skype (3) and Microsoft (6) are owned by US multinational the Microsoft Corporation; Stuff.co.nz (5) is owned by the Australian company Fairfax Media Ltd.; nzherald.co.nz (7) is a NZ site owned by a private business New Zealand Media and Entertainment (NZME); TradeMe (9) is a NZ site that is publicly listed; and Wikipedia (10) is a US site owned by the non-profit Wikimedia Foundation. The New Zealand Government (8) is the only public sector site in the top ten.

through time, speed, or devices (a form of privilege referred to as the “Digital Divide”). This often results in larger social media followings, which equates with greater reach. Market-driven structures disadvantage those who are not enabled with these privileges, enhancing social inequality.

The internet was founded on the principles of the neoliberal theory of the “Free Flow doctrine”, which has been described as “not a neutral idea, but a way in which an enterprise with many resources at its disposal has greater opportunities than weaker brethren to make its own hegemony accepted.”⁶⁶ As Danny Butt observes:

The effective freedom for information to flow relies on financial and technical resources that are systematically denied to groups and regions that do not possess them. [...] Much as in other forms of colonial infrastructure, the need for stable operation and development of “neutral” infrastructure would be used to justify the continuing exclusion of those outside the small group participating in its arrangements.⁶⁷

Without public accountability and oversight,⁶⁸ those who have access to this power might abuse it and use it for their own political advantage⁶⁹ or social control.⁷⁰

The extent of US state interference in the internet has drawn criticism from other parts of the globe, with suggestions that it is increasingly becoming a tool of digital colonialism or, more specifically, an extension of the global colonisation of US-led neoliberal ideologies.⁷¹

⁶⁶ Finland’s president, Urho Kekkonen quoted in Hervert I. Schiller, “Communication and cultural domination,” *International Journal Of Politics* 5, no. 4 (Winter 1975/1976).

⁶⁷ Danny Butt, “FCJ-198 New International Information Order (NIIO) Revisited: Global Algorithmic Governance and Neocolonialism,” *The Fibreculture Journal*, issue 27 (October 2015).
<http://twentyseven.fibreculturejournal.org/2016/03/08/fcj-198-new-international-information-order-niio-revisited-global-algorithmic-governance-and-neocolonialism/>.

⁶⁸ The New International Information Order of the 1970s was a response to threats of monopolisation and neocolonial globalisation in the international communications industries, which gained traction at UNESCO. In his revising this proposal, Butt highlights the lack of the principles of democratization, decolonization, demonopolization, and development in the way the internet is globally structured and controlled today. Butt, “FCJ-198 New International Information Order (NIIO) Revisited.”

⁶⁹ Edward Snowden’s NSA leaks illustrates some situations where this has indeed been the case, including in New Zealand. See *The Speargun Conspiracy* in Chapter 4.0.

⁷⁰ “China invents the digital totalitarian state,” *The Economist*, December 17, 2016,
<https://www.economist.com/news/briefing/21711902-worrying-implications-its-social-credit-project-china-invents-digital-totalitarian>. China’s proposed “Internet Plus” social-credit system is a case in point.

⁷¹ Kuehn, *The Post-Snowden Era*.

The current issue of net neutrality is a prime example of the continued progression of this colonisation of the internet that may lead to an “Internet Elite”—a set of dominant internet platforms that block equal access and create a class system of internet users.⁷² The public controversy over Facebook’s recent involvement in the Cambridge Analytica scandal, and the establishment of the European General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) on 25 May 2018 signal that there is potential for this paradigm to shift in favour of public rights, however the internet is still a long way from being a non-hierarchical platform.⁷³

The level to which this power might be abused was made abundantly clear in June 2013, when Edward Snowden made his first revelations to the world, exposing a government-led system of mass surveillance that eclipsed anything that had previously been attempted in history. Spearheaded by the US government spy agency, the National Security Agency (NSA), the programme involved a collective of western nations known as the “Five Eyes” including (along with the US) Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom and New Zealand. The New Zealand agency responsible for this programme was the GCSB.

The surveillance programme—titled ‘PRISM’—operated with a ‘catch all’ approach, which compromised every layer of the internet.⁷⁴ The data of all internet users was being captured and stored in the possibility that it might become useful intelligence in the face of future security threats.

The erosion of privacy was a major concern expressed by critics, and one that had been eerily foreshadowed by Marshall McLuhan in 1964:

information devices for universal, tyrannical womb-to-tomb surveillance are causing a very serious dilemma between our claim to privacy and the community’s need to know. The older, traditional ideas of private, isolated

⁷² Carmen Scurato, “Who will be hit hardest by net neutrality? Marginalised America,” *The Guardian*, December 18, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/dec/18/net-neutrality-marginalised-america-open-internet-fcc>.

⁷³ Although the GDPR relates to the jurisdiction of the European Union, any businesses doing business within this area must comply. As most web services are accessible within Europe, the reach is broad and companies throughout the world are complying. Due to their economic power, the EU have managed to pass a local law that is global in its reach, however, as New Zealand doesn’t have a comparable law, its resident citizens are not afforded the same level of privacy.

⁷⁴ Purkayastha and Bailey, “U.S. Control of the Internet.”

thoughts and actions—the patterns of mechanistic technologies—are very seriously threatened by new methods of instantaneous electric information retrieval, by the electrically computerised dossier bank—that one big gossip column that is unforgiving, unforgetful and from which there is no redemption, no erasure of early “mistakes.”⁷⁵

Later, Snowden presented NSA slides about “Project Speargun” described as being “underway” in March 2012. He alleged that New Zealanders were subject to mass internet surveillance under the GCSB with the full knowledge of the then-Prime Minister John Key (leader of the National Party).⁷⁶ The project’s first phase entailed the covert installation of cable access equipment that would enable access to the SX. In early 2013 another NSA document noted that “phase one” was complete. Phase two was said to entail the installation of metadata probes on the SX, with a first metadata probe scheduled for mid-2013. Further notes specified that the probe could only take place after the passage of legislation which would expand the powers of the GCSB, the GCSB Amendment Bill, which indeed passed into law in 2013.⁷⁷

Two NSA facilities were said to be in New Zealand—one in Auckland and another “in the north of the country”. In response to Snowden’s claims, Prime Minister John Key revealed details about “Project Cortex”, said to be a cyber-defence system. The GCSB denied the project involved tapping into the SX, as did Anthony Briscoe, CEO of the SX Network. Questions about whether the system might involve accessing the networks of individual internet providers were, however, not dismissed.⁷⁸

⁷⁵ McLuhan, Fiore, and Agel, *The Medium is the Message*, 12. The “Right to be forgotten” is a concept that has been put into practice in the European Union and Argentina. Its application is, however, limited to these jurisdictions, and is not applicable to companies operating outside the jurisdictions. There is no global framework to allow individuals control over their online image. “Right to be forgotten,” Wikipedia, accessed July 3, 2018, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Right_to_be_forgotten.

⁷⁶ On 15 September 2014 as part of an event at the Auckland Town Hall titled “Moment of Truth.”

⁷⁷ It was repealed in September 2017 and replaced with the Intelligence and Security Act 2017, which mitigated some of the issues that had been raised by the previous legislation but not all, with no clear limits on the ability for the New Zealand Government to undertake mass collection or mass surveillance. Ben Creet, “The Intelligence and Security Act 2017,” *InternetNZ*, accessed 27 June, 2018, <https://internetnz.nz/blog/intelligence-and-security-act-2017>. And Thomas Beagle, “Submission: NZ Intelligence & Security Bill 2016,” New Zealand Council for Civil Liberties, September 7, 2016, <https://nzcl.org.nz/content/submission-nz-intelligence-security-bill-2016>.

⁷⁸ Tom Pullar-Strecker, “NZ’s main communications cable ‘not tapped’,” *Waikato Times*, September 17, 2014, 7.



Fig 7 GCSB slide leaked by Snowden showing “Project SPEARGUN underway”.

The Five Eyes revelations highlighted the power and control held over the internet by a set of distinct nation states. Despite being perceived as a decentralised, post-national network, “shapeless, faceless, and everything and nothing at the same time”,⁷⁹ here the internet was defined by the complex boundaries of nation states, however in reality one nation state (the US) possessed far more power than the others. In this scenario, New Zealand became subservient to a larger nation—the US, in effect creating a form of neocolonialism.



As a parent of three young children, I can attest first hand to the benefits of the internet in enabling individuals to feel less isolated. Perhaps this is why it has been so popular in New Zealand, an island nation marked by its geographical distance. However, in contrast to these benefits, Snowden’s revelations of mass-surveillance made me feel both vulnerable and concerned for the future world my children would inherit. As Kathleen Kuehn has argued, the goal of such a system of surveillance “is to target ‘foreigners’ communicating usable intelligence, but many critics argue that the sheer volume of captured data is a ‘pool of potential targets so broad that it encompasses journalists,

⁷⁹ Aranda, Kuan Wood and Vidokle, “Introduction,” 5.

academic researchers, corporations, aid workers, business persons, and others who are not suspected of any wrongdoing.”⁸⁰

I felt challenged to accept the state-surveillance as a necessary evil: to be one of the people “willing to accept the potential infringement on privacy and civil liberties as a necessary tradeoff for the promise of security”.⁸¹ However, as an individual who was known to the New Zealand government (and even the US government),⁸² my perception of the internet shifted and I found myself oscillating between a sense of great paranoia at having being surveilled as a ‘known dissident’, and adopting a defiant ‘onwards and upwards’ stance. I found myself increasingly self-censoring my online behaviour—an engagement strategy that has persisted. Kuehn confirms that I wasn’t alone: “A 2014 study by PEN American Centre found that journalists and writers from more than fifty countries reported an increase in self-censorship in fear of government surveillance since the Snowden revelations.”⁸³ This level of self-censorship has a sobering resonance with Michel Foucault’s discussion of Bentham’s Panopticon.⁸⁴ As it becomes increasingly prevalent in New Zealand, will it result in a trend away from critical thinking and holding power to account, and a movement in the direction of anti-intellectualism and conservative values? What impact would this attitude have on the cultural life of New Zealand and the ability for artists to operate?

The root of this issue is one of transparency, openness, and public oversight. The invisibility of the internet enables it to function as a neo-colonial force via the hands of those who control it. If the internet is visible to the public, this might enable forms of resistance to emerge in response to these dominant forces, shifting control back towards

⁸⁰ Kathleen Kuehn, *The Post-Snowden Era: Mass Surveillance and Privacy in New Zealand*, (Wellington: Bridget Williams Books Ltd., 2016), 51.

⁸¹ Kuehn, *The Post-Snowden Era*, 10.

⁸² The Creative Freedom Foundation were mentioned in a US government cable that reported on the events surrounding the redrafting of S92A. “New Zealand to redraft Section 92A of new copyright law,” Wikileaks, accessed June 25, 2018, https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/09WELLINGTON88_a.html.

⁸³ Kuehn, *The Post-Snowden Era*, 108.

⁸⁴ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, (2nd Vintage Books ed. New York: Vintage Books, 1995). The Panopticon was a concept developed by the English philosopher and social theorist Jeremy Bentham in 1745 where he described a new system of control that placed a hidden, powerful, observer at the centre of an institutional building (for example, a prison) leading to its inhabitants self-regulating their behaviour. The theory was influential, particularly on French philosopher Foucault who, in *Discipline and Punish* (originally published in 1975) used it as a metaphor for modern “disciplinary” societies and their pervasive inclination to observe and normalise. In 1993 Oscar Gandy Jr published “The Panoptic Sort: A political economy of personal information,” which discussed the coming impact on lack of privacy due to technological developments.

those who use it. What would be the effect of knowing, for certain, that our online behaviour wasn't being monitored?

The “invisible hand” is a term originally coined by the economist and philosopher Adam Smith in 1759 as a metaphor for the concept that acting in one's self-interest could result in socially-beneficial results. It has been used in descriptions of free market capitalist and neoliberal economic theories, and as such has become a metaphor for these systems. Of particular relevance here, the term ‘invisible hand’ can be read as a metonym for the invisibility sought by internet infrastructure, and the invisibility of the typing hands coding the algorithms that shape the online experience. In contrast, the *visible* hand emphasises the materially tangible aspect of the internet and the presence of an embodied self. Hands become a recurring theme throughout *The Southern Cross Cable: A Tour* as a symbol of physical engagement, agency, action, individualism, and expression. Included in an exhibition about the construction of New Zealand's national identity, these hands are being put to use, questioning the validity of assumptions around New Zealand national identity in an increasingly globalised world.

1.5 New Zealand national identity and communications systems

As can be said of any global territory, contemporary New Zealand national identity is indebted to the past. Much has been written on the emergence of nationalist rhetoric in New Zealand, and the manner and aesthetics of its constructed nationalism. This study does not seek to compete with the work of renowned New Zealand historians such as Michael King, James Belich, Ranginui Walker, Dame Anne Salmond, Gordon H. Brown, Francis Pound, and Wystan Curnow, but rather to contextualise the artwork and illustrate the issues to which *The Southern Cross Cable: A Tour* is responding.

Following the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840, the British departed their empirical home in vast numbers, voyaging over the oceans by boat. When the settlers stepped onto New Zealand shores they were (by way of migration) effectively importing their culture—their language, art, literature, music, fashion, food, history, political systems, religion, ideologies—their ideas. Similarly, cultural objects and ideas from New Zealand's indigenous people, the Māori, were exchanged and taken back to Britain in the same boats in what would turn out to be a lop-sided cultural exchange. At this point in time, New Zealand (as a landmass) was a net importer of British culture, and the infrastructure supporting that cultural exchange comprised of the shipping channels. The postal system took several months to deliver items to-and-fro. This reinforced the feeling of distance experienced by settlers.

Mass media is one⁸⁵ of the primary platforms over which concepts of national identity have historically been established, whether through the print media, radio, film, or television. In reviewing historic moments where various New Zealand nationalisms were at play it becomes apparent that, concurrently, major developments in communications technology were shifting the manner in which New Zealanders were engaging with each other, and the wider world. Commenting on a similar effect overseas, Anderson observed:

There is also no doubt that improving trans-Atlantic communications, and the fact that the various Americas shared languages and cultures with their respective metropolises, meant a relatively rapid and easy transmission of the new economic and political doctrines being produced in Western Europe. [...] Nothing confirms this 'cultural revolution' more than the pervasive republicanism of the newly independent communities.⁸⁶

The same might be said of New Zealand's connection to the British Empire and the US: the importing of cultural values into New Zealand from abroad provided both an 'other' in response to which a concept of New Zealand national identity could be constructed, and intellectual discourse that shaped antipodean intellectual life.

It was not until New Zealand's first international telegraph cable was established in 1876 that communications began to speed up,⁸⁷ however due to expense these networks were primarily used by government, business, and the newspaper industry. Echoing developments overseas, New Zealand's communications platforms steadily migrated towards those that were faster, more reliable, more affordable, broader reaching, and capable of supporting multimedia. Aside from a few brief moments of competition, the government (via the New Zealand Post Office) held a monopoly over New Zealand communications infrastructure for over 100 years. It was within this context that the various New Zealand nationalisms emerged.

⁸⁵ Much might also be said about the impact of migration and encounter on shifts in national identity, but this is outside the scope of this study.

⁸⁶ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 51.

⁸⁷ Australia No. 1, travelling from Wakapuaka (near Nelson) to Sydney and rerouted to Titahi Bay in 1917.

In the 1980s, communications began the process of deregulation and foreign-ownership, a trend that led to today's primary site of mass media communication, the Southern Cross Cable, being owned by a Bermuda-based company.

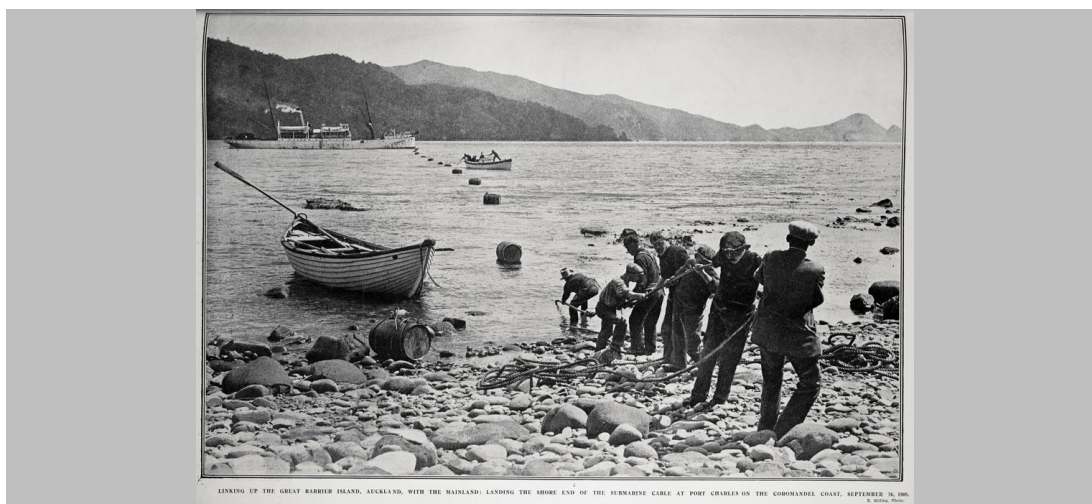


Fig 8 Landing the shore end of the Great Barrier Island submarine cable, 1908.

There is no singular New Zealand national identity, however during certain periods aspects of nationalist rhetoric have held particular focus within New Zealand's intellectual life. Each of these periods has coincided with the dramatic improvement of New Zealand's communications links, contributing to the relatively rapid and affordable transmission of developing international economic and political doctrines. Mark Williams has outlined three distinct *micro-nationalisms* that have shaped present-day manifestations of New Zealand national identity and which provide a useful framework through which to explore popular notions of this identity: post-settler Pākehā nationalism, Māori nationalism, and bicultural nationalism.

Post-settler Pākehā nationalism came from the need for “a displaced British people to feel ‘at home’ in New Zealand and this required the evolution (or construction) of a single coherent Pakeha culture.”⁸⁸ This era, particularly associated with the 1930s–1970s, was marked by philosophical and political conservatism and materialism, and the rise of the telephone and radio. It was within this period of nationalism that *Te Ika-a-Maui* was produced (discussed in Chapter 2.1).

⁸⁸ Mark Williams, “Crippled by geography? New Zealand Nationalisms,” in *Not On Any Map*, ed. Stuart Murray (Devon: University of Exeter Press, 1997), 21.

Māori nationalism refers specifically to the Māori renaissance of the 1970s–1980s, whereby Māori acted to reassert their rights under the Treaty of Waitangi, to reconnect with and regain autonomy over their land and culture (previously exploited/repressed) and to resolve historic grievances with the Crown. This nationalism was the primary catalyst for bicultural nationalism, and an awareness of it has informed methodological aspects of this study, particularly when taking into account the Takapuna and Muriwai sites.

Bicultural nationalism also correlates with the 1970s–1980s—a vital and urgent response by the predominantly Pākehā government to Māori nationalism and major public ethical debates over racial issues (particularly during The Springbok Tour). This era was also marked by significant developments in the politics of equality and diversity (feminism, gay rights), bold moves in international diplomatic relations (nuclear-free legislation), and the emergence of assertive neoliberal government economic policy. The establishment of Māori and Bicultural Nationalism and the rise of these neoliberal doctrines coincided with the emergence and popularisation of the television.

But it is questionable whether New Zealand could still be considered to be in an era of Bicultural Nationalism. Janine Hayward has observed that “Governments in the early 2000s have been reluctant to make strong statements about biculturalism”, further noting that “Political scientist Dominic O’Sullivan believes that by 2004 debates on biculturalism had been largely replaced by ideas about individualism, democracy and justice in the way governments and the public sector talk about New Zealand.”⁸⁹

Expressions of official nationalism continue to be performed through established methods,⁹⁰ however (as will be further elaborated on in Chapter 3.3) these have been criticised for tending towards the propagandistic. One concept contributing to this study is the idea that present-day New Zealand nationalism is potentially being used by established power structures to push New Zealand further towards US-style

⁸⁹ Janine Hayward, “Biculturalism - Continuing debates,” Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand, published June 20, 2012, <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/biculturalism/page-3>.

⁹⁰ Fiona Barker, “New Zealand identity - Understanding New Zealand national identity,” Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand, <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/new-zealand-identity/page-1> (accessed 28 May, 2018). For example: the deliberate promotion of images by the state through symbols like flags or coins, immigration propaganda or tourist advertising; the performance of New Zealanders internationally in war or in sport; major political acts that attract international attention; and artistic portrayals, in films, books, art or music.

neoliberalism, and querying what part powerful US-media forces (as represented by the internet) might be playing in this potential form of neocolonialism.

This creative practice research set out to investigate the influence of international hegemony and power structures on popular notions of Aotearoa-New Zealand's national identity through a specific focus on a singular internet cable system, the Southern Cross Cable. Due to its significance, this system lent itself to functioning as an effective metonymic vehicle, revealing hidden US-centric control of this primary medium of neo-liberal globalisation.

In order to test the limits of public engagement with this situation, this study resolved to create a body of conceptually driven artworks that used the SX, its histories, and locations, as an effective metonymic vehicle to reveal unseen processes and infrastructures influencing New Zealand's national identity.

1.7 Exegesis summary

This exegesis is structured in five parts: this introduction to the focus of the research; a review of the field, elaboration on my creative process, an analysis of the creative work results, and a conclusion.

A review of the field is located in Chapter 2.0. Following an elaboration on the mural *Te Ika-a-Maui* (mentioned earlier), the review shifts focus to creative works that respond to submarine internet cables in the digital era, resolving that no public artwork was commissioned to mark the establishment of the SX, and identifying useful strategies that distinguish this study from related international projects. In particular, few works have been created from a New Zealand perspective, few of them are readily identifiable as works of public art, and even fewer depict the human body in close proximity to cable infrastructure creating a dehumanising effect. None of the works are direct responses to the idea of creating public artworks using the SX as a metonymic vehicle to critique and reveal hidden relationships between the internet and New Zealand national identity.

The process applied in this research is discussed in Chapter 3.0. This includes an elaboration on my *investigative art* approach to creative practice research. A crucial preliminary artwork is discussed, produced under this investigative art model: my project *Te Ika-a-Akoranga* (2014) whereby I restored *Te Ika-a-Maui*. In combination with my review of the field, this project helped to identify a series of aims for the final body of work, to: (1) Create works that focus on the physical sites of the cable, particularly those with visible records of the cable's presence; (2) Appropriate and subvert symbols of New

Zealand nationalism; (3) Employ strategies that place the body (as a symbol of acts of power, control and agency) at the centre of the work; (4) Use media with a knowing mimetic relationship to existing familiar formats; and (5) Use the exhibition experience to distribute this information in the public sphere.

This process led to a proposal to the managers of the SX in New Zealand (Spark NZ and Southern Cross Cables Ltd.) to create a set of site-specific public artworks and an associated tour guide publication. Their subsequent rejection of this proposal confirmed the shift in public (dis)engagement strategies used by each cable project, which has contributed to current poor public knowledge of communications infrastructure in New Zealand. Following this response, I adjusted my methods of dissemination to emphasise a different strategy—the development of a body of works that built upon the platform of the previous proposal that together formed *The Southern Cross Cable: A Tour*, first shown at City Gallery Wellington as part of the exhibition *This Is New Zealand* (2 March–29 July 2018). Finally, a brief discussion of my creation process outlines my aspiration towards a Zero Waste art production model, after which the works are disseminated.

The results of this research are discussed in Chapter 4.0: an overarching installation, *The Southern Cross Cable: A Tour*, comprised of five works. Four of these works each relate to a landing site of the cable: *A Power Troubles The Still* (Takapuni); *Te Ika-a-Maui* (Northcote); *The Speargun Conspiracy* (Whenuapai); and *The Long Walk to Northern Waters* (Muriwai). The fifth work, *The Southern Cross Cable: A Tour (publication)*, sits above and across the other four artworks serving the dual purpose of acting as a guide around the artworks in the installation and also as a guide to the physical sites of the cable. Here, each resulting work is discussed with elaboration on my background research and the development of the work with particular attention given to overarching strategies and themes, the installation experience, and its public dissemination.

The conclusion, which comprises Chapter 5.0, finds that, while there are some limits on the manner in which creative practice can respond to the physical sites of the SX in New Zealand, many opportunities remain. This study has shown that it is possible to take selected histories and locations of the Southern Cross Cable and apply them as a metonymic vehicle within a body of conceptually driven artworks, to reveal unseen processes that are influential upon New Zealand's national identity. Together, these works encourage public awareness of the limits of the internet, illustrating the ways in which an individual member of the public can respond to the supposedly 'intangible' internet in a physical manner, shifting the perceived power and control of New Zealand's internet back towards the public.

2.0 Review of the field

This chapter is structured over two particular areas of review.

The first is an in depth discussion of a historic artwork that has shaped this study, and which is included in the final installation: *Te Ika-a-Maui* (1962) by E. Mervyn Taylor. The rediscovery of this mural led to a project that I completed during the early stages of this study: *Te Ika-a-Akoranga* (2014), discussed in Chapter 3.2. Both works informed the wider project *The Southern Cross Cable: A Tour*. Although *Te Ika-a-Maui* is included in the final installation, I am not claiming this work as my own therefore it is discussed in depth here, and not with the results of the study.

The second is a review of creative works relating to my chosen topic, the Southern Cross Cable. This discussion begins with a consideration of art projects and other texts that have specifically referenced the SX. The review is then extended to more broadly consider contemporary theorists associated with this topic and other creative works that respond to submarine internet cables in the digital era.

Further elaboration on my investigative art methodology and other artists utilising artistic methodologies that I consider to be that of an investigative artist are discussed in Chapter 3.

2.1 *Te Ika-a-Maui* (1962)

During the era of Post-settler Pākehā nationalism the New Zealand Post Office, a government department at the time, invited artist E. Mervyn Taylor to develop a mural for the new purpose-built Commonwealth Pacific Cable (COMPAC) landing terminal in Northcote, Auckland.⁹¹ COMPAC established a new infrastructural route for communications cables in New Zealand and subsequent cables have followed in its

⁹¹ Item R21679531, COMPAC [Commonwealth Trans Pacific Submarine Telephone Cable] - General & Opening Ceremony, central filing system, Archives New Zealand, Wellington, New Zealand. In a letter dated 24 January, 1961, the director of the Overseas Telecommunications Division of the Post Office was told that “The Ministry of Works has been informed that we prefer the work be entrusted to Mr M. Taylor, Wellington.”

footsteps. The Takapuna end of the SX leads to the landing station complex in Northcote that also houses the COMPAC terminal.

Despite the wide uptake of the domestic telephone network, during the 1950s⁹² New Zealand was marked by expensive international telephone communications infrastructure which heightened a sense of geographic isolation amongst its residents.⁹³ The Commonwealth Pacific Cable (COMPAC) was a new coaxial cable slated to address this problem and was celebrated as a triumph for the small nation that craved more reliable links to the rest of the globe, particularly for Pākehā settlers who, despite their 'nation building' were still looking abroad for cultural validation.⁹⁴

COMPAC stretched across the Tasman Sea and Pacific Ocean, reinforcing geopolitical ties that were strengthened during World War II and linking New Zealand with its Commonwealth counterparts Australia, Fiji, and Canada, (via Hawai'i) then, via the CANTAT cable, with the United Kingdom. COMPAC was as an exercise that connected Commonwealth political, social, and economic systems, and was implemented as a collaborative inter-governmental project.



Fig 9 Pages from the official COMPAC booklet issued by the New Zealand Post Office.

⁹² A. C. Wilson, "Telecommunications - Post and Telegraph, 1914–1945," Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand, published March 11, 2010, <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/telecommunications/page-4>; and Keith Newman, *Connecting the Clouds* (Auckland: Activity Press, 2008), 25–27; . The number of telephones in the country grew from around 33,000 in 1910 to more than 350,000 in 1950—more phones per head of population than any country except the United States.

⁹³ In 1930 New Zealand's first international public radio-telephone service was in place, linking to Australia over high-frequency radio, although calls were expensive and regarded as something of a luxury.

⁹⁴ An argument might be made here that, for better or worse, Pākehā New Zealanders *still* largely look to other, bigger, developed nations for cultural validation.

A publicity unit was formed to manage the public communications around the project. A series of promotional objects and events were produced to mark the occasion,⁹⁵ including town hall celebrations, publications, photographs, stamps,⁹⁶ films,⁹⁷ poetry⁹⁸ and Wedgewood plates.⁹⁹



Fig 10 Left: Council Chambers of Wellington Town Hall during official opening of COMPAC; Right : Commemorative COMPAC stamps.

E. Mervyn Taylor was a New Zealand nationalist artist who found his artistic voice during his time as the first arts editor and illustrator of the *New Zealand School Journal* (serving from 1944–1946). Primarily known as a printmaker, Taylor was very much embedded in

⁹⁵ Bronwyn Holloway-Smith, “Voices Through The Deep,” in *Wanted: The Search for the Modernist Murals of E. Mervyn Taylor*, ed. Bronwyn Holloway-Smith (Auckland: Massey University Press, 2018), 125. The Auckland–Suva link was officially opened at the General Post Office in Wellington in November 1962 and the full cable network at the Wellington Town Hall on 3 December 1963. This latter event was attended by some 450 people, including diplomats and other distinguished guests, and was networked with Australia, Britain and Canada via the COMPAC cable. Her Majesty The Queen telephoned in for the occasion, “introduced by a fanfare and the playing of the National Anthem by the Band of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police” and followed by a special telephone “conference” between the Prime Ministers of the commonwealth nations.

⁹⁶ For an insight on the place of stamps as vehicles for the mass communication of New Zealand nationalist ideals, see Michael Maloney, “‘One of the Best Advertising Mediums the Country Can Have’: Postage Stamps and National Identity in Canada, New Zealand and Australia.” *Material Culture Review / Revue de La Culture Matérielle* 77 (January 1, 2013). <https://journals.lib.unb.ca/index.php/MCR/article/view/22081>. More analysis might yet be undertaken into how stamp imagery has shifted during the digital age.

⁹⁷ The two films were *Eighty Channels Under the Sea* (produced by Supreme Sound Studios for the Pacific Cable Management Committee) in 1960; and *Call the World* (produced by Eyeline for Cable and Wireless) in 1962. Both were 16-millimetre colour prints with sound.

⁹⁸ Holloway-Smith, “Voices,” 125. G. Hobson was the poetic cable enthusiast, writing a 21-stanza poem called “Compac Capers” chronicling the laying of the cable, followed by a shorter poem on the same topic, “So Loverly.”

⁹⁹ Holloway-Smith, “Voices,” 125. Four individuals received “Commemorative Albums and Wedgewood Plates (C.O.M.P.A.C)” courtesy of Standard Telephones and Cables Ltd of London.

the project to invent New Zealand. In 1946 he helped found the Architectural Centre—a community loosely modelled after the Bauhaus. Amongst this group he became known for promoting the idea that every new building contract should include a sum of money set aside to commission a work by an established artist that was in some way associated with the site. Taylor felt that the price of an artwork—be it a sculpture, mural, carving or other medium—was relatively small in comparison to a building, and was well known for passionately arguing this idea with his friends at the Architectural Centre. Maurice Patience recalls: “One could guarantee that if he were in architectural company, discussion would soon turn to the artist’s role in buildings. In his living room I have vivid memories of Gordon Wilson and others being heard in endless debate with Mervyn on this subject.”¹⁰⁰

Although the idea never entered into legislation, it was adopted by a number of architects who put the concept into practice, including those who held the position of Government Architect. The idea received traction amongst a government focussed on ‘nation building’, and Taylor was commissioned to create several murals for public sites, including the mural for the COMPAC terminal.

As a multi-national project, the mural needed to reinforce New Zealand’s ‘distinct’ culture in the eyes of its Commonwealth allies in a suitable visual language that would assist the mural’s international diplomatic audience to view New Zealand art in proximity to their own high culture. Taylor had included depictions of Māori in many of his murals to date. In the COMPAC mural he extended this approach, proposing to depict the traditional Māori creation story of the demi-god Māui fishing up the North Island, titling the work *Te Ika-a-Māui*¹⁰¹ after the legend. By focusing on this story, Taylor put a distinctive nationalist New Zealand spin on the significance of the new telecommunications cable.¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ Maurice Patience, “Emigravit: Ernest Mervyn Taylor (1906–1964),” *Journal of the New Zealand Institute of Architects* 31, no.7 (August 1964), 217.

¹⁰¹ This translates in English as “The fish of Māui.”. Although it is common practice to include a macron “ā” in the word Māui today, Taylor’s mural title did not include the macron so it is has not been included here.

¹⁰² “New Zealand Murals,” *Daily News*, July 9, 1962. This national newspaper reported at the time: “When asked if he had any special reason for selecting this particular myth for the cable, Mr Taylor explained that the myth of fishing up a piece of land was a poetical Polynesian way of describing the discovery of a new island. There was an analogy, he thought, between the ‘fishing up’ of New Zealand by Maui and its modern counterpart where the new cable again draws New Zealand out of the Pacific into the telephone systems of the world.”

In the design Māui holds a rope and braces himself in a waka (a traditional canoe) brimming with fish, while his brothers flail in near-comic motion. Peculiar beady-eyed seagulls frolic above swirling waves that reveal the emerging peaks of Mount Ruapehu. The basic form of the North Island can be made out, with the tip of Māui's hook appropriately located in the Wellington region.¹⁰³ The base of the image is framed by breaking waves, and the upper half by soft pink skies and wispy clouds. Intersecting colour planes fly through the image, creating bold collisions of khaki, mustard, navy, and teal.



Fig 11 *Te Ika-a-Māui*, COMPAC Terminal, 1975.

¹⁰³ Wellington is also known as Te Upoko-o-te-Ika-a-Māui, or “The Mouth of the Fish of Māui.”

National newspapers reported on the new mural, including the Christchurch Press and New Plymouth's Daily News, which both printed text taken directly from the press release:

When asked if he had any special reason for selecting this particular myth for the cable, Mr Taylor explained that the myth of fishing up a piece of land was a poetical Polynesian way of describing the discovery of a new island. There was an analogy, he thought, between the 'fishing up' of New Zealand by Maui and its modern counterpart where the new cable again draws New Zealand out of the Pacific into the telephone systems of the world.¹⁰⁴

Taylor was indebted to certain strands of European Modernism. As a printmaker he had been heavily influenced by the British Arts and Crafts movement. Additionally, a Cubist echo is apparent in *Te Ika-a-Maui*. However, the North Island, emerging like a brave new world from below, echoes the simplified naturalism of the Regional Real rather than the ultra-modern. A nation is born but it is a strangely familiar, iconic one. As Taylor created his murals Socialist Realism had also emerged as an influence, but the political implications of this reference were most likely unintended, and ignored.¹⁰⁵ Instead we see an energetic celebration of the "discovery of a new island".

The mural design was recreated in ceramic tiles by Carter Tiles in England and installed in the foyer of the COMPAC landing station in time for the opening of the Tasman section of the cable. On 9 July 1962 the mural was revealed to the public at a ceremony attended by Prime Minister and National Party leader Keith Holyoake.

During this era, public artworks (especially those supported by 'percent for art'-style schemes) tended to comfortably fit within one of two categories: murals or sculpture. As Twylene Moyer has explained, the primary intention of 'percent for art' public artworks was "to instil and preserve civic norms, in addition to adding an aesthetic veneer to

¹⁰⁴ "New Zealand Murals," *Daily News*, July 9, 1962.

¹⁰⁵ New Zealand had hosted an exhibition of Soviet art in 1957, inspiring the United Soviet Socialist Republic (USSR) to extend a reciprocal invitation to a chosen New Zealand artist. Taylor was chosen. He visited Moscow as a guest of the Soviet Ministry of Culture in 1958, and also passed through the US and UK. He no doubt witnessed some fine examples of Socialist Realist public art during this time, and this influence is apparent in *Te Ika-a-Maui*. One might ask what New Zealand was doing engaging with an art exchange with the USSR at a time when the embers of the Cold War were still smoldering, and New Zealand was continuing to strengthen its allegiance with the Soviet Union's arch rival the US., however Taylor, however, was not bothered by this concern, choosing (perhaps rightly so) to focus on the artistic potential provided by Socialist Realism.

buildings, plazas, and government facilities, these projects represent only the official face of a field with the potential to contribute to public dialogue and public life in myriad other ways.”¹⁰⁶

Taylor sought to bridge the gap between the stereotypical New Zealander and the intellectual class. As such, he developed a visual language that was engaging and accessible to this envisioned ‘general public’, in the hope that its imagery would subtly complicate the perception of New Zealand national identity in the minds of the dominant Pākehā public. The conviction driving this artistic mission was—in keeping with many of his fellow Nationalist artists—essentially an argument for better bicultural awareness amongst Pākehā¹⁰⁷ but, unlike them, the friendly form of his public works gained the attention of mass media and subsequently reached a wider audience. Taylor was not working from outside the official nation-building programme, but from within, having been commissioned by a government department that was intrinsically tied to the New Zealand nationalist project.

Although Taylor’s use of Māori culture in this artworks might be seen in approximate relation to primitivism, his *intentions* were clearly not in line with the cultural attitudes associated with this aesthetic. Taylor researched his subject matter thoroughly with tangata whenua (local indigenous people). He was a member of the Ngati Poneke Young Maori Club, where he spent time learning the Māori language under the tutelage of Bill Ngata, and further extending his knowledge of Māori culture. When awarded a scholarship by the Association of New Zealand Arts Societies, he used it to spend time in Te Kaha, living amongst the Te Whānau-ā-Apanui people and studying Māori culture and daily life. As historian J. C. Beaglehole wrote, “[Taylor] was very much a New Zealander, consciously, not self-consciously. He felt in touch with things, large and small, that grew in

¹⁰⁶ Glenn Harper and Twylene Moyer, eds. *Artists Reclaim the Commons: New Works-New Territories-New Publics*, (New Jersey: ISC Press, 2013), 7.

¹⁰⁷ Mark Derby, “Māori–Pākehā Relations — Māori Urban Migration,” Te Ara — The Encyclopedia of New Zealand, published May 5, 2011 <https://teara.govt.nz/en/maori-pakeha-relations/page-5>; and Gregory O’Brien, *A Nest of Singing Birds: One Hundred Years of the New Zealand School Journal*, (Wellington: Learning Media, 2007), 21–23. During the years Taylor was working, a mass urbanisation of Māori was underway. As Mark Derby notes, “In the 50 years between 1936 and 1986, the Māori population changed from 83 per cent rural to 83 per cent urban, one of the fastest rates of urbanisation in the world.” () This resulted in many Pākehā coming into close contact with Māori for the first time, which challenged certain British ‘sensibilities’. Taylor was an early advocate of finding ways in which Māori culture might be given space within dominant European-cultural narratives, and had made significant inroads in this endeavour from his early days with the New Zealand School Journal. Although Taylor left the journal in 1946, efforts to further this bicultural focus continued. *Life in the Pa* (1948) was a landmark book-length publication by the School Journal that presented an unromanticised account of what traditional Māori life might have looked like prior to European contact. ()

New Zealand, its birds, its snails, its trees, its flowers, its mushrooms. In the 1950s he fell in love with its landscape and its old buildings, the country things. And at the same time his feeling for the Maori came uppermost.”¹⁰⁸

Taylor’s application to the Association had proposed a project to fully illustrate Sir George Grey’s *Polynesian Mythology*. Although he was not able to complete the illustration project before his death, this mural clearly continued this ongoing project. In revisiting Sir George Grey’s version of *Te Ika-a-Maui*, it becomes apparent that even the “new land” discovered by Māui was done so in a violent manner and found to be already occupied, with foreboding consequences. After “striking his nose violently” Māui uses his own blood to bait his great “fish”. Upon bringing up his haul, he sets off to pay sufficient offerings to the gods and follow due protocol to “purify” the group onboard the waka ahead of distributing their catch, warning his brothers not to eat or cut up the fish until he had done so. However, Māui’s brothers ignore his advice and immediately began consuming the catch:

Alas! alas! those foolish, thoughtless brothers of his cut up the fish, and behold the gods turned with wrath upon them, on account of the fish which they had thus cut up without having made a fitting sacrifice. Then, indeed, the fish began to toss about his head from side to side, and to lash his tail, and the fins upon his back, and his lower jaw. If the brothers of Maui had not acted so deceitfully, the huge fish would have lain flat and smooth, and would have remained as a model for the rest of the earth, for the present generation of men. This, which has just been recounted, is the second evil which took place after the separation of Heaven from Earth.¹⁰⁹

Below the surface of this “poetical Polynesian way of describing the discovery of a new island” lies a warning: proceed with caution when you draw up new land as it may be occupied and due protocol may need to be followed to smooth the experience. Beyond the metaphor of Māui’s-fishing-line-as-telephone-cable, the mural might equally be seen as a public reminder that New Zealand was first discovered by the Māori (here

¹⁰⁸ J. C. Beaglehole, article on E. Mervyn Taylor, MS-Papers-11535-090, Papers of John Cawte Beaglehole and his family, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand.

¹⁰⁹ Sir George Grey, *Polynesian Mythology*, (Christchurch: Whitcombe and Tombs Ltd., 1961), 27.

represented by Māui and his brothers), and now that New Zealand was being drawn “out of the Pacific into the telephone systems of the world” it would be wise to proceed with caution, you don’t know what you might fish up.

The result can be seen as a strong example of New Zealand nationalism from the era. Somewhat ironically, Taylor’s mural was created to commemorate a communications cable that marked the beginning of the end of one of New Zealand nationalism’s main drivers, the tyranny of distance, as today the internet (in combination with air travel) has significantly mitigated the full impact of New Zealand’s geographic isolation.

The COMPAC station in Auckland was publicly accessible for many years.¹¹⁰ Visitors could experience Māui and his brothers in close quarters as the mural occupied a full wall within a relatively small foyer area. However, it was not to remain there (as discussed in Chapter 3.2). Almost forty years after the commissioning of *Te Ika-a-Maui*, New Zealand became connected to the world via another undersea communications system that would come to have an arguably greater impact on the economic, social, political, and cultural state of the nation: the SX.¹¹¹

2.2 Works relating to the Southern Cross Cable

Apart from myself, only three artists have created works that engage with aspects of the Southern Cross Cable: Evan Roth, John Johnston, and Simon Denny.

Evan Roth, an American artist based in Paris, has been developing a series of works that employ alleged “ghost-hunting” technologies to record elements of cable landing sites. I served as a tour guide for Roth during a visit to Auckland, as we visited a number of cable landing sites, some of which were those of the SX. During this trip, Roth created a video work and series of images with a camera he had modified to shoot primarily in the infrared spectrum, referencing both restricted lightwaves in fiber optic cables, and a filming technique used in paranormal hunting. These works were exhibited at the ICA

¹¹⁰ As evidenced by a visitor’s book kept by the station staff.

¹¹¹ Three further underwater telephony cables had served the country in COMPAC’s stead: Tasman 1 (1976), ANZCAN (1984–2002), and Tasman 2 (1992–2017). New Zealand’s first fibre optic cable, PacRimEast, operated from 1993–2009 but had limited capacity at 560Mb/s compared to the Southern Cross’s initial capacity of 640 Gb/s.

Studio, London and on the website POSTmatter in July 2015.¹¹² While my work is undoubtedly related to Roth's in terms of its subject, Roth's approach consistently utilises a very specific aesthetic and technological approach that emphasises a theoretical connection between internet infrastructure and superstitious beliefs, rather than New Zealand national identity.

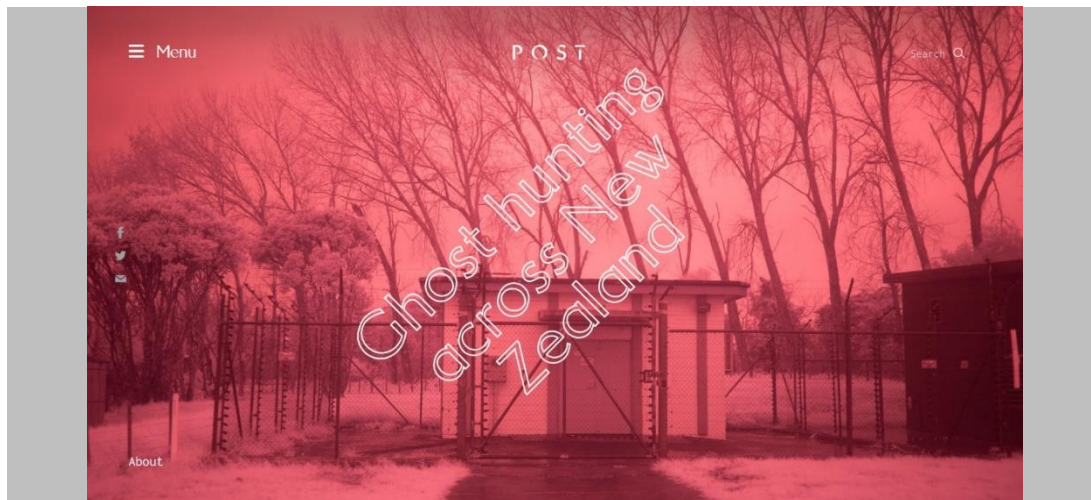


Fig 12 Screenshot, Evan Roth: *Ghost hunting across New Zealand* (2015), POSTmatter.merimedia.com. Depicted is one of the buildings at the site of the SX Whenuapai landing station.

In addition, two other notable artworks that include reference to the SX have been made by New Zealand artists in response to the Five Eyes/Snowden surveillance narrative: *Five Eyes Network. Surveillance Outpost*, by John Johnston (2013), and *Secret Power* by Simon Denny (2015).

In December 2013 a black banner appeared on a cable marker post on Takapuna Beach, directly atop the SX landing site. The banner was painted with a motif depicting two birds interlinked by a network of five individual eyes, and two statements: one to the right of the motif, "Five Eyes Network", and another to the left, "Surveillance outpost." The artwork was accompanied by an anonymous press release on the news site Scoop, which described the work as "a guerrilla art strike" accrediting the work to "an artist dubbed 'Unknown'."¹¹³ The press release made specific reference to the SX, and stated the aim of

¹¹² Evan Roth, "Ghost Hunting Across New Zealand," POSTmatter, July 20, 2015, <http://postmatter.merimedia.com/articles/fig-2/artist-piece-evan-roth/>.

¹¹³ You Can Make Contact, "Artist Graffiti Landing Point of NZ's Undersea Internet Cab," Press Release, Scoop.co.nz, December 12, 2013, <http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/PO1312/S00187/artist-graffitis-landing-point-of-nzs-undersea-internet-cab.htm>.

the work as being “in protest of the growing mass surveillance conducted by international spy agencies, revealed by Edward Snowden, and the passing of New Zealand's new GCSB Amendment Bill.”



Fig 13 John Johnston, *Five Eyes Network. Surveillance Outpost* (2013).

The installation was removed shortly after, and by February 2014 the artist had come forward: John Johnston, an artist based in Auckland who primarily works in painted media. In her article reviewing the work, Ally McCrow-Young examines the manner in which this work, titled *Five Eyes Network. Surveillance Outpost*, exposes the relationship between power and visibility, and how creative citizen engagement can serve to reveal structures of power surrounding global politics and surveillance:

Visibility is a central concept, extending beyond issues of local visibility at the micro level, into the networked, global environment through online media. The significance of the cable landing point and its intersection with the public space is analysed in relation to the invisibility of elite powers, and the potential for creative participation to act as resistance to dominant narratives over surveillance and privacy. This artistic intervention points to an evolving citizen counter-narrative of the surveillance state, making visible

the connected, global system where the influential power of the Five Eyes alliance is wielded.¹¹⁴

Johnston's work shares many similar concerns to mine, including that of making internet infrastructure visible, operating as an artist utilising their creative practice to implement a moment of active citizen participation, and bringing the political in to everyday spaces. However, it focusses on a singular narrative relating to the SX, and on only one site where the cable travels, whereas my project focusses on an expanded set of narratives and sites. Further, this public artwork was executed through guerrilla-art strategies, while my project is operating through established, formal, permission-based channels that maintain open conversations with stakeholder parties including Spark NZ and SX.

Secret Power was Simon Denny's commissioned project for the New Zealand Pavilion at the 2015 Venice Biennale. In it he presented a case study of NSA visual culture, with specific focus on former NSA designer David Darchicourt, and Edward Snowden's leaked NSA slides exposing the Five Eyes surveillance network. The Five Eyes slides included mention of the SX and, as such, it had a minor inclusion within Denny's overall project: within David Darchicourt's world-map design, commissioned by Denny.

A large format print of this image was included in the installation component "Modded Server-Rack Display with David Darchicourt Commissioned Map of Aotearoa New Zealand", opposite the flags of the Five Eyes Intelligence Alliance (Canada, New Zealand, UK, US, and Australia), and scale architectural models of the NSA Headquarters in the US; the GCHQ Headquarters in the UK and the GCSB's Waihopai Station in New Zealand. The map was also reproduced in full in the exhibition catalogue, with the extended caption "David Darchicourt, world-map commission with New Zealand as the centre and south at the top. Submarine communication-cable paths are traced in red." The design features one red line spanning from Auckland to the US (presumably the SX Takapuna-Hawai'i leg), and three red lines crossing the Tasman Sea from Auckland to Australia (presumably, the SX Muriwai-Sydney leg; and the Tasman 2 cable, but as there was not a third live cable travelling this route at the time, it is unclear what the third line represents). The cable is not mentioned anywhere else in this project. Denny's work touches on the cable

¹¹⁴ Ally McCrow-Young, "Visibility, Power and Citizen Intervention: The Five Eyes and New Zealand's Southern Cross Cable," *Westminster Papers in Communication and Culture* 12, no. 3 (October 31, 2017). <https://doi.org/10.16997/wpec.259>.

in a very light fashion, as a side-narrative to his broader focus on the design of the NSA slides, and an American designer connected with this narrative—David Darchicourt—without going into any further detail about the landing sites of the cable. This work is related to my own in that it also highlights a connection between internet infrastructure and digital colonialism. However, whereas Denny’s project identifies and amplifies an established aesthetic associated with government-led mass surveillance through a consideration of the design approach of a specific US individual in an influential position, my work is emphatically focussed on exploring this subject matter through physical cable landing sites in New Zealand.



Fig 14 Simon Denny: *David Darchicourt world map commission with New Zealand as the centre*, 2015.

Beyond this, a handful of literary works have been produced that relate to the SX. While these have provided useful background information for the study, they do not venture into great detail regarding the cable landing sites. Nor do they share my approach of applying this information within a body of conceptually driven artworks that function as an effective metonymic vehicle that reveals unseen processes, conveyed over a specific infrastructural system, that are impacting on New Zealand’s national identity.

A number of national media platforms reported on the SX when it came online in 2000, primarily focussing on technical details about the cable including capacity, metrics relating to the cable infrastructure, financial details, and projected economic benefit. One point of difference within this narrative category was a story mentioned in passing in a press release issued by Telecom mentioning a dawn ceremony that was held on

Takapuna Beach on Friday 10 November 2000 to bless the newly completed SX.¹¹⁵ This event is discussed further in Chapter 4.2.

Outages to the SX have been reported in popular media since it came online. In 2001 the cable was damaged by a storm near Sydney, in 2007 hurricane-strength storms and flooding severed the Oregon cable route, and in 2008 an undersea earthquake damaged the cable.¹¹⁶ In 2011 an outage occurred the SX's cable station in Alexandria, Sydney from 3.17am–4.28am, Sydney Time, and in 2015 the cable was cut twice: first by a boring machine in Sacramento and then by a digger in Oregon.¹¹⁷ On each occasion, the cable was repaired quickly, and traffic diverted to the SX's alternate path as afforded by its figure-eight design, so internet users were generally unaware of the disruption. There has never been any reported damage to the cable due to sabotage.

Additional popular media narratives relating to the SX tend to be matter-of-fact, sitting in one of three categories: staffing changes (particularly, when a change of CEO has taken place); changes in hardware/capacity; and speculation about monopoly pricing due to a single cable system.

In December 2010 a US Government report was leaked that listed over 300 foreign sites that were considered “critical infrastructure and key resources located abroad”¹¹⁸—sites that, if damaged or disrupted, would have a critical impact on the safety and security of the United States.¹¹⁹ Other sources interpreted this as a list of potential terrorist targets.¹²⁰ Only two New Zealand sites featured on the list: the two landing sites of the SX, listed as “Whenuapai” and “Takapuna”. Here, it is worth noting that the Waihopai Spy

¹¹⁵ *Press Release: Dawn Of A New Technological Age For New Zealand*, Telecom New Zealand, November 10, 2000.

¹¹⁶ “Southern Cross Cable: Damage Incidents,” Wikipedia, accessed June 25, 2018, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Southern_Cross_Cable#Damage_incidents.

¹¹⁷ Tom Pullar-Strecker, “Cable cut for second time in three months,” *Stuff*, May 21, 2015, <http://www.stuff.co.nz/business/68739063/Cable-cut-for-second-time-in-three-months>.

¹¹⁸ “Request for Information: Critical Foreign Dependencies (Critical Infrastructure and Key Resources Located Abroad),” WikiLeaks, Accessed June 27, 2015, https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/09state15113_a.html.

¹¹⁹ Nicole Starosielski, “Warning: Do Not Dig’: Negotiating the Visibility of Critical Infrastructures,” *Journal of Visual Culture* 11, no. 1 (April 1, 2012): 38–57. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1470412911430465.38>.

¹²⁰ Gus Lubin, “Wikileaks Unveils Over 300 Foreign Sites That Are Critical to U.S. National Interests,” *Business Insider Australia*, December 7, 2010. Accessed June 27, 2015, <http://www.businessinsider.com.au/wikileaks-critical-foreign-dependencies-2010-12>.

Base is conspicuous in its absence. While it has tended to be a key part of popular media discussions of New Zealand's involvement in the Five Eyes surveillance network, it did not feature on this list.¹²¹ Further, Takapuna might refer to the beach landing site or the Northcote Station as they are in close proximity to each other. Muriwai is not listed, however, which implies that the US interest is in the landing stations rather than the beach landing sites.

Both *Connecting the Clouds* by Keith Newman (2008) and *Down to the wire: The Story of New Zealand's Internet* (2010)¹²² are publications focussing on the history of the internet in New Zealand. Newman's book currently stands as the most comprehensive publication on the building of New Zealand's internet infrastructure. It contains a wealth of useful data, however there is minimal information on the story of the SX and no in-depth consideration of connections between New Zealand's communications infrastructure and the shaping of its culture as a nation. *Down to the wire*, meanwhile, is a commercially-produced tribute website by Wellington-based digital agency Heyday, created to mark their 10th anniversary. The site collates a range of content that relates to aspects of New Zealand's digital history over the years 1989–2010. The site includes minimal mention of the SX.

Starosielski's *The Undersea Network* (2015) is the most comprehensive publication to date on the histories and present-day existence of submarine communication networks that link Pacific-rim nations. Starosielski includes many references to the SX and its predecessor in this book, and a number of anecdotes about various aspects of the cable's development and laying, however the publication has been written within the field of media and communications history, rather than that of the arts and New Zealand's cultural and national identity. One aspect of this work has been of particular relevance and inspiration to this body of research: Starosielski's typology of popular media narratives about internet infrastructure finds that they have primarily focussed on *connection narratives*, which "focus on the design and technological development of an undersea cable" and *disruption narratives*, which "describe an unexpected disconnection of the cable and detail the threats not only to transmission but also to a broader cultural

¹²¹ Nicky Hager, *Secret Power*, (Nelson: Craig Potton Publishing, 1996); and Abi King-Jones, Errol Wright, and Valerie Morse, dirs. *The Fifth Eye* (Wellington: CutCutCut Films, 2017).

¹²² "Down to the Wire: The Story of New Zealand's Internet." Accessed June 11, 2018. <http://downtothewire.co.nz/>.

order". Neither narrative depicts the cable in its most common state—that of being in operation. Additionally, these stories tend to be highly technical, which limits public engagement with cable narratives. As a result the internet is effectively obscured in the public imagination. This has the effect of failing to communicate “the significance of cables to governments, companies, or publics that have a stake in their development, operation, and regulation.” This key argument asserts that the lack of public awareness of present-day trans-national internet infrastructure has led to a lack of informed input into democratic decisions about how it is (or isn’t) controlled. Starosielski proposes that “new cultural narratives” are required in order to address this issue.¹²³ Kathleen M. Kuehn’s *The Post-Snowden Era* (2016) maps New Zealand’s role in international intelligence-gathering from the Second World War to the present day. A significant part of this book is an elaborate discussion of the manner in which Snowden’s revelations unfolded in New Zealand media and political discourse. This includes mention of the SX, and many statements relevant to this study (which have been cited throughout the text). It is, however, limited to the narrative of mass surveillance, and does not consider the impact the internet is having on New Zealand national identity.

Pay Up (2018) by Anthony David is a novel about a plot to sabotage the SX. It is worthy of mention, due to its depiction of the power dynamics that may be at play in New Zealand politics and internet cable developments, and its setting in a New Zealand cultural context. A literary work, it is not comparable to the present study.

2.3 More broadly comparable works

A number of creative non-fiction books have been written that touch on internet infrastructure, however these tend to be from a non-New Zealand perspective and don’t include mention of the SX. Neal Stephenson’s *Mother Earth Mother Board* (1996) and Andrew Blum’s *Tubes* (2012) both utilise the language of travel writing in order to illuminate the infrastructure that enables the internet to operate. Stephenson frames himself as a “hacker tourist” physically travelling to follow the development of a new trans-national cable system under the maxim that “it behooves wired people to know a few things about wires—how they work, where they lie, who owns them, and what sorts of business deals and political machinations bring them into being.” Inspired by an outage to

¹²³ Starosielski, *The Undersea Network*, 68.

his home connection, Blum follows his domestic cable to uncover the data warehouses, cable ducts, and hubs that enable the internet to operate, and meets the staff who operate them. The sites are largely US and Euro-centric, and the text is light-hearted, rather than political.

In addition to the work of Nicole Starosielski, an increasing number of theorists have been considering the social, economic and cultural impacts of internet infrastructure—particularly in the fields of media and communications studies, geography, technology and computer science—suggesting that this study is timely in the contemporary moment. Individuals who are noteworthy in this area include Benjamin Bratton, Matthew Fuller, Geert Lovink, and Ned Rossiter. Of particular note, Lisa Parks essay “*Stuff you can kick*”: *Toward a theory of media infrastructures* considers what she terms *infrastructural imaginaries*—“Ways of thinking about what infrastructures are, where they are located, who controls them, and what they do.”¹²⁴ Parks explores a range of media infrastructure systems that are “involved in the local, national, and/or global distribution of audiovisual signals and data”¹²⁵ with the aim of contributing a digital humanities/media studies perspective to this discussion. The mail sorting system is one example under discussion, where Parks particularly acknowledges that films that documented the mail sorting process operated as “an historical metonym for content distribution”.¹²⁶ While Park’s essay does not touch upon internet infrastructure specifically, it is useful to consider the manner in which metonym has been used historically in proximity to other communication infrastructures.

In the visual arts field, a number of artists, primarily from the US and UK, have produced projects that touch on internet infrastructure. Again, these are not from a New Zealand perspective, however some of them employ strategies of depicting internet infrastructure in proximity to the landscape (both above and below water) and the concept of physical travel/internet tourism. Data centres are a specific focus for a number of these projects. As significant internet infrastructural sites in their own right, data centres are related to this study as focal points for discussions of the internet,

¹²⁴ Lisa Parks, “‘Stuff you can kick’: Toward a theory of media infrastructures,” in *Between Humanities and the Digital*, eds. Patrik Svensson and David Theo Goldberg (Cambridge, Massachusetts; London: The MIT Press, 2015), 355.

¹²⁵ Parks, “‘Stuff you can kick’,” 356.

¹²⁶ Parks, “‘Stuff you can kick’,” 359.

jurisdiction, power, and sovereignty, however these discussions tend to focus on energy consumption, the sublime nature of big data, and the ethics of data hosting and control—concerns that are outside the scope of this study. Artists who have created work under this banner include Simon Norfolk (2005),¹²⁷ Suzanne Triester (2011),¹²⁸ Tyler Coburn (2011–),¹²⁹ Connie Zhou (2012),¹³⁰ Boaz Levin and Ryan S. Jeffery (2015),¹³¹ and John Gerrard (2015).¹³²

Beyond this, a number of projects have responded directly to internet cables. As part of her series *An American Index of the Hidden and Unfamiliar* (2007), photographer Taryn Simon gained access to the US landing site of a number of Transatlantic Sub-Marine Cables. One resulting photograph in this series, titled *Transatlantic Sub-Marine Cable Reaching Land*, resonates with Andrew Blum's observation that "Photographs of the Internet were always close-ups. There was no context, no neighbourhood, no history. The places seemed interchangeable." Simon's approach is similar to mine in that she undertakes thorough research into her subjects before realising her final works. In this case, she invested time in building a relationship with the operators of the cable station in order to gain access to her subject, however her resulting work was realised as a singular photograph within a body of photographs spanning a range of difficult-to-access sites, none of which related directly to the New Zealand context.

In 2010 Steve Rowell began a 3-year project to research and document historical telecommunications sites in the UK, Canada, and the USA. This work eventually resulted in the production of a video, photographic works, and multi-media installation: *Points of presence* (2013). Exhibited at the Chicago Museum of Contemporary Art from November 2013-March 2014, the work focussed on landing sites of historic North Atlantic 19th and 20th Century telegraph and analog telephone cables. While this body of work could be

¹²⁷ Simon Norfolk, *The Super Computers: I'm sorry Dave, I'm afraid I can't do that*, 2005,

¹²⁸ Suzanne Triester, *Data centers on fire*, 2011.

¹²⁹ Tyler Coburn, *I'm That Angel*, (2011–).

¹³⁰ Connie Zhou, *Untitled* (Google Data Center photographs), 2012.

¹³¹ Boaz Levin & Ryan S Jeffery, *All That is Solid Melts into Data* (2015).

¹³² John Gerrard, *Farm* (Pryor Creek, Oklahoma), 2015.

considered a predecessor to my own, it does not appear to have explicitly touched upon the nationalistic aspect of communications infrastructure.

Lance Wakeling's travelogue-style video work *A Tour of the AC-1 Transatlantic Submarine Cable* (2013) documents his personal visits to the four landing sites of the submarine internet cable "Atlantic Crossing 1". The artist narrates the video in a quiet, monotonous style discussing travel details and chance encounters alongside facts more directly related to the cables sites. While the concept of physically travelling to, and experiencing, cable landing sites first-hand is similar to my own approach, Wakeling's approach differs from my own in that he places himself at the sites as a protagonist, whereas my work (as a tour guide) encourages participants to place themselves in this role.

Ben Schumacher's 2014 project *Gluten and Bondage*¹³³ incorporated disused telegraph cables retrieved from the Black Sea, into a sprawling sculptural installation. While sharing a similar interest in exposing the physical underpinnings of the trans-national internet, Shumacher's resulting work was not driven by an interest in directing audience members to specific infrastructural sites, but rather by more formal sculptural concerns.

Ingrid Burrington's publication *Networks of New York: An Internet Infrastructure Field Guide* (2015) illustrates more than fifty sidewalk markings, manhole covers, surveillance cameras, cellphone towers and other visible records of internet infrastructure that can be found within New York City. More importantly, however, Burrington has made her information available via a print format that places knowledge of these modern-day hieroglyphics back in the hands of the public, and allows the information to be taken out into public space for first-hand learning experiences that are not reliant on the internet. By design, the field guide prompts the reader to leave the comfort of their own homes and venture out into public space. As a publication, this work is directly connected to my own published tour guide, however takes a significantly different approach to design and content.

In 2015 Trevor Paglen exhibited a series of art works at the gallery Metro Pictures in New York, *Untitled (Choke Points)*, which included photographic prints of undersea cables and

¹³³"Ben Schumacher," The Moving Museum, accessed 4 June 2018, <http://www.themovingmuseum.com/commissions/gluten-and-bondage/>

associated shorelines, and a sculpture of relevance to this study.¹³⁴ These works were the result of a project examining a number of *choke points*—locations off the coast of the US where international underwater fibre-optic cables are believed to be tapped by the NSA. Paglen's initial images were of landing sites above water but he gained a scuba-diving license and successfully located and photographed cables underwater. The images primarily spoke to the landscape tradition, depicting barren sea-floor landscapes with lone cables stretching into the distance. For the 2015 Art Fair Basel Miami Beach, Paglen led a group on a dive to one cable site. While there is a clear connection between Paglen's initiative to physically dive to cables, and my own, his driving focus as an artist is on the geography and aesthetics of the American surveillance state whereas my own project is squarely located in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Charles Lim's work *silent clap of the status quo* (2016), exhibited at the 20th Biennale of Sydney, comprises a single-channel projection of a collection of "inspection videos" of undersea cables. It appears these were sourced from within the industry, and are likely to have been filmed with a Remote Operated Vehicle (ROV). A former Olympic sailor who competed for Singapore, Lim's works often explore political issues associated with the ocean, and aim to demystify the cultural assumption that the sea is unoccupiable and free from the control of any individual nation or state. Lim's work connects with my own in that he also seems to suggest that the presence of these cables in open waters can be seen as a form of colonisation: through the act of inhabiting the finite space of the ocean floor these cables are in a sense claiming it. However, this work reinforces my discovery that the human figure has been absent from depictions of submarine internet cables: once again no people are visible in this work.

2.4 Summary of Review

Te Ika-a-Maui is an example of a moment where the SX and New Zealand national identity intersect. Originally commissioned by the New Zealand government during New Zealand's post-war, mid-century 'nation building' era to commemorate the establishment of the COMPAC cable, this public mural is a poignant symbol of the dramatic shifts that have taken place since its commissioning, in both New Zealand's international

¹³⁴ a miniature model of the U.S.S. Jimmy Carter, a submarine that has used tapping devices on underwater cables <http://www.metropictures.com/attachment/en/58986e4c5a4091a0008b4568/News/58986ebd5a4091a0008b5ef6>

communications infrastructure and in terms of concepts of New Zealand national identity. By comparison, this review has confirmed that no public artwork was commissioned to mark the establishment of the SX.

While the selected projects I have mentioned here present a wide range of methods for responding to, and communicating the subject matter of submarine internet cables, few touch on New Zealand's particular internet history and those that do communicate very limited information about issues relating to the cable's history, sites, and how it affects wider New Zealand cultural conversations. Further, few of them are readily identifiable as works of "public art". There have been no conceptually driven artworks that take the histories and sites of the Southern Cross Cable as an effective metonymic vehicle revealing unseen processes that are influencing conceptions of New Zealand's national identity.

Lastly, this review underscores the observation that few works have depicted the human body in proximity with cable landing sites. While the infrastructure is visualised, it is dehumanised, and not depicted as something that can be physically related to. As a result, this study will address this gap in visual language by employing strategies to place the body (as a symbol of acts of power, control, and agency) at the centre of the work. This theme will encourage viewers to explore what power, control and agency they retain in their own digital lives encourage them to question what individual agency they do, or do not, have as New Zealand citizens in shaping this dominant influence on contemporary New Zealand culture.



3.0 Process

This chapter outlines my approach to creative practice: that of an investigative artist. This approach is demonstrated through *Te Ika-a-Akoranga* (2014), a project completed during the early stages of this study and which, in combination with my review of the field, helped identify a series of aims for the final body of work. A declined public art proposal, made to Spark NZ and SX, confirms the deliberate maintenance of cable sites in New Zealand as inconspicuous, which in part explains the current poor public knowledge of communications infrastructure in New Zealand. This leads to the subsequent development of a body of works, using a Zero Waste Art production model, for *The Southern Cross Cable: A Tour*.

3.1 On Investigative Art

My creative practice research is located at the interface of art, politics, and science/technology. Previously, I have intended my works to function as tools for the encouragement of critical thinking and social conscience. Through this process of inquiry I have addressed subjects such as the changing nature of the public sphere in a neo-liberal age, the commons, the politics of copying, and post-colonialism. This study extends my focus more specifically into aspects of nationalism, romanticism, neocolonialism, digital citizenship, and the post-Snowden era.

My art practice methodology consists of thorough fact-finding and archival research into the ostensible subject/narrative, followed by the development, creation, and dissemination of a body of related artworks. These are often realised through multiple media forms in both physical and digital realms. Thus, I can relate to the statement Heather and Ivan Morison make about their own practice:

Context is fundamental, We draw a huge amount from a place. Every work has a different space to occupy, and must be the perfect work for that space. We consider, rifle through, keep and cast aside a place's landscape, history, materials, people, architecture, culture, stories and myths, searching for a union between our world and the context. We are also looking for what is needed or what is missing. Often this is to be found by seeking out an unknown and previously unidentified crack, void or blind spot in the place or its people, and carefully locating there a work in the form of an 'agitant' and

irritant that might act as an agent for change. We want the work to say we acknowledge it all, we know, we can see it too. It is ok.¹³⁵

As touched upon in Chapter 2, during the course of this research I have developed and worked within an ongoing framework that I have termed “investigative art.” Investigative art is a hybridized approach drawing upon and informed by the fields of investigative journalism, conceptual art, socially-engaged practice, and art in the public sphere.¹³⁶ The primary goal of investigative art is to hold power to account (or, more specifically, to hold democracies and individuals accountable to the public). This method emphasises in-depth conceptual research and project planning ahead of the production of artworks. The use of the dissemination phase as a critical component of the artwork as a whole, seeking to address a broad public audience. Thus, public engagement is also a major part of my practice, and I often conduct media interviews and give public lectures in connection with my projects. Artworks also often include interactive components, encouraging participatory engagement.¹³⁷

As such, it shares many concerns with what Alfredo Cramerotti has termed *Aesthetic Journalism*, which he defines as “artistic practices in the form of investigation of social, cultural or political circumstances” with research outcomes that “take shape in the art context, rather than through media channels.”¹³⁸ He further clarifies that “The artist who uses the tools of investigative journalism in their work adopts techniques like archive and field research, interviewing, surveys, they also employ specific narrative and display formats such as documentary style, graphic visualisation, text-based and photo reportage.”¹³⁹ It is on this point that Investigative Art and Aesthetic Journalism differ—the former, while using similar research strategies to the latter—has a wider array of mediums through which to communicate. While artworks that might be classed as

¹³⁵ Heather Morison, Ivan Morison and Claire Doherty. “Heather and Ivan Morison in conversation with Claire Doherty,” in ed. Claire Doherty, *Out of time, out of place : public art (now)*, (London : Art/Books in association with Situations, Public Art Agency, Sweden, 2015), 118.

¹³⁶ Andrei Siclodi, “Introduction: Art and Journalism: A Perspective Shift of Meaning,” in Alfredo Cramerotti, *Aesthetic Journalism* (Bristol: Intellect, 2009), 13. As Siclodi points out, “objective investigative reporting has lost more and more ground to a processing of news that tends toward ‘infotainment’.”

¹³⁷ For example, in *Pioneer City Showroom* (2011), participants were able to fill out a form and submit themselves as a prospective migrant to Pioneer City on Mars. In *Whisper Down The Lane*, the files for a series of 3D printed objects were made available for free download, so participants could print their own replica of the works.

¹³⁸ Alfredo Cramerotti, *Aesthetic Journalism* (Bristol: Intellect, 2009), 21.

¹³⁹ Cramerotti, *Aesthetic Journalism*, 22.

Aesthetic Journalism are limited to media traditionally associated with journalism, the results of an Investigative Art practice may be rendered in a wider array of media, including painting, sculpture, performance, and other forms not traditionally associated with journalism.

Both *modi operandi*, however, stem from similar contemporary concerns: those of the gradual erosion of resources dedicated to investigative journalism in mainstream journalism channels which has led to a homogenization of news; a questioning of the truth (or *truthiness*)¹⁴⁰ presented by these channels; and a response to the power and authority wielded by globalised media networks and corporations.

Over the past few decades media companies have gradually downsized their resources dedicated to investigative journalism—particularly during the emergence of the mainstream internet. As a result, less research time is available to journalists leading to the production of articles that have not been duly fact-checked, and therefore potentially contain erroneous information. This conflicts with the established notion—one that has been historically publicly accepted—of journalistic and documentary-based forms as truth-telling media. In addition, the establishment of certain efficiencies in news reporting has led to the duplication of content from other sources. As Cramerotti notes: “The production of information is now fragmented into thousands of pieces that paradoxically generate a homogenization in the response: too many sources mean no reliable source at all.”¹⁴¹ This has had the follow-on effect of many seemingly-worthy topics being absent from mass media information. Further, as programmes of capitalist globalization have continued, the control of media companies has gradually been concentrated in fewer hands. In the US, it has been reported that fifteen individuals own the entire news network.¹⁴² In New Zealand, attempts to continue this pattern were recently blocked by the Commerce Commission, who stated that such a merger would “concentrate New

¹⁴⁰ A term coined by US comedian Stephen Colbert, which is defined as the quality of preferring concepts or facts one wishes to be true, rather than concepts or facts known to be true.

¹⁴¹ Cramerotti, *Aesthetic Journalism*, 26.

¹⁴² Kate Vinton, “These 15 Billionaires Own America’s News Media Companies,” *Forbes*, June 1, 2016, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/katevinton/2016/06/01/these-15-billionaires-own-americas-news-media-companies/#652285b6660a>.

Zealand news media ownership and influence to an unprecedented extent for a well-established modern liberal democracy.”¹⁴³

Cramerotti, like myself, sees art as a useful tool through which to respond to this shift: “In the current situation, no space other than art (venues, programmes, funding bodies, producers and receivers) can sustain the effort to counter this control; and, as long as they do not convert to a sort of ‘political news service’ for the art circuit, this is a potential still relatively unexplored.”¹⁴⁴ This distinction is critical: like Aesthetic Journalism, Investigative Art does not seek to replace investigative journalism, but rather to provide a new set of tools through which presented realities might be questioned. Indeed, as Cramerotti has articulated, “an artist is not better at producing a more transparent picture of the real than a journalist. What the artist can do better, instead, is to construct a self-reflective medium, which ‘coaches’ its viewers to ask relevant questions by themselves, instead of accepting (or refusing *tout court*) representations as they are proposed.”¹⁴⁵

Cramerotti makes mention of many artists who have created work through this method, including Antonio Muntadas; Julia Meltzer and David Thorne; Josh On and Futurefarmers; Dan Graham; Martha Rosler; Hans Haacke; Multiplicity; Lukas Einsele; Laura Horelli; Renzo Martens; Alfredo Jaar; Renée Green; The Atlas Group/Walid Raad; and Bruno Serralongue.

While this thesis is not seeking to establish an expansive typology of Investigative Art practice, a fragment of artists (and project examples) whom I consider to have utilised an Investigative Art approach include: Michael Stevenson (*This Is The Trekka*, 2003), Fiona Jack (*Palisade*, with collaborators, 2008), Jeremy Deller (*It Is What It Is: Conversations About Iraq*, 2009), Ai Weiwei (*Remembering*, 2009), Superflux (*Power Toilets, UN*, 2010), Khaled Hourani (*Picasso in Palestine*, 2011), Hito Steryl (*Is the Museum a Battlefield?*, 2013), Nicholas Mangan (*Limits to Growth*, 2016), and Simon Denny (*The Founder’s Paradox*, 2017), many of whom I would consider part of my community of practice.

¹⁴³ Commerce Commission New Zealand Te Komihana Tauhokohoko, “Commission welcomes Court of Appeal ruling on NZME/Fairfax merger,” media release, September 25, 2018, <https://comcom.govt.nz/news-and-media/media-releases/2018/commission-welcomes-court-of-appeal-ruling-on-nzmefairfax-merger>.

¹⁴⁴ Cramerotti, *Aesthetic Journalism*, 64-65.

¹⁴⁵ Cramerotti, *Aesthetic Journalism*, 29-30.

3.2 Te Ika-a-Akoranga (2014)

During the early stages of this study I completed a project that led me to undertake this Doctoral research: *Te Ika-a-Akoranga*, a project to restore, digitise, and revive *Te Ika-a-Maui*. This project can be seen as an example of the investigative art approach to creative practice.

In mid-2013 I secured an art commission with the public art commissioning group Letting Space, in partnership with the international advertising firm JWT (John Walter Thompson) for the firm's office space in Auckland. The resulting artwork was required to engage members of the public in some way, while also delivering a physical output that could sit comfortably within a vitrine space in the office. My proposal specified a project that investigated the Southern Cross Cable cable's two landing points, which at that time I understood to be Takapuna and Whenuapai.

In early 2014 I discovered information relating to a mural located within the SX Northcote landing station but, upon enquiry with the station manager, was told it had been lost. A historic photograph located at Archives New Zealand revealed that the mural was *Te Ika-a-Maui*. Following up with the station manager, and prompting him to investigate the COMPAC station, the tiles of the mural were discovered, stacked in three cardboard boxes.

This revelation resulted in the Letting Space/JWT project focussing on the cleaning and digitisation of the mural. This included in the construction of two large photographic replicas of the mural (one at JWT and another in my studio in Wellington), and a webpage reinstating public access to the work.¹⁴⁶ I titled the project *Te Ika-a-Akoranga* (The Fish of Learning) and completed it on 16 October 2014, during the early stages of this doctoral study.¹⁴⁷ The project posed restoration as a critical interpretative act with respect to New Zealand art and design history.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁶ Bronwyn Holloway-Smith, "Te Ika-a-Akoranga (2014)," artist's website, accessed 1 April 2018, <http://bronwyn.co.nz/projects/te-ika-a-akoranga/>.

¹⁴⁷ "Lost art work rediscovered", Radio New Zealand National, June 1, 2014, <http://www.radionz.co.nz/national/programmes/standing-room-only/audio/2598085/lost-art-work-rediscovered>; Max Rashbrooke, "Secrets and ties," *FishHead*, Issue 43 (November 2014), 90; and "Restoration complete on long-lost art treasure," *Good*, Issue 41 (March/April 2015), 16.

¹⁴⁸ For further elaboration on this project, see "Bronwyn Holloway-Smith - New cultural narratives - NDF 2014" YouTube, published by National Digital Forum, December 8, 2014, <https://youtu.be/L1KET7oIDAY>.

This discovery also led me to a role directing another project, *The E. Mervyn Taylor Mural Search & Recovery Project*, and producing a book *Wanted: The Search for the Modernist Murals of E. Mervyn Taylor* (further discussed in Chapter 4.3).



Fig 15 Left: The mural tiles, stacked in boxes;
Right: *Te Ika-a-Akoranga* nearing completion, JWT offices, Auckland, 2014.

This process raised two questions: how had this artwork been forgotten, and why had no public artwork been commissioned for the establishment of the SX?

COMPAC (and its station) was decommissioned on 30 November 1984, just prior to the State Owned Enterprises Act 1986, a landmark piece of neoliberal legislation which split the New Zealand Post Office into three new enterprises: New Zealand Post, Telecom New Zealand, and the Post Office Bank, with the station falling under the remit of Telecom. In 1990 Telecom was sold to two United States-based telecommunications companies, Bell Atlantic and Ameritech, who went on to list the company on the New Zealand, Australian and New York stock exchanges in 1991, whereby it became a publicly traded company or ‘public enterprise’. Around this time a high-security perimeter fence was built around the COMPAC complex, cutting off public access to Taylor’s mural. As the ownership of the station changed hands, memory of the mural slipped through gaps, and it was forgotten.¹⁴⁹

The question of why no artwork was commissioned to mark the establishment of the SX can be attributed to a series of factors. Taylor was working during an era when architects were setting aside portions of their building budgets for the commissioning of new artworks relating to the sites of the buildings—an idea that Taylor had consistently advocated for through his connections with members of Wellington’s Architectural

¹⁴⁹ The Telecom Art Trust was established following the government sale of Telecom but this artwork had not been recorded as part of the collection.

3.3 The concept

This led to my development of an ongoing series of works that responded to this historic nationalist public artwork, using the SX, its histories and locations, as an effective metonymic vehicle within conceptually driven artworks, to reveal unseen processes and infrastructures that are key influences on New Zealand's sovereignty and national identity.

A series of aims were identified that would guide the final body of work:

1. Create works that focus on the physical sites of the cable, particularly those with visible records of the cable's presence
2. Appropriate and subvert symbols of New Zealand nationalism
3. Employ strategies that place the body (as a symbol of acts of power, control and agency) at the centre of the work
4. Use media with a knowing mimetic relationship to existing familiar formats
5. Use the exhibition experience to distribute this information in the public sphere

1. Create works that focus on the physical sites of the cable, particularly those with visible records of the cable's presence

As previously discussed, the obfuscation of internet infrastructure avoids transparency, openness, and public oversight of the system. The first task for these works was to reframe the SX as a tangible, visible object within public reach (and, by implication, public agency and influence). This naturally led to a decision to create works that focussed on the physical sites of the cable, particularly those with visible records of the cable's presence.

The initial task of locating the SX sites was undertaken through web research which included viewing sites on Google maps, satellite view, and streetview. Alongside this process I sought out published information on the histories of the sites.

Although sources primarily mentioned Takapuna and Whenuapai as the landing sites of the cable, it was found that this could be expanded into four sites. While *Takapuna* is used to refer to both the beach landing site and the landing station further inshore, the landing station is technically located in the suburb of Northcote. Similarly, the Whenuapai site houses a landing station which in turn connects to the cable landing point at Muriwai beach. Although the cable is continuous, and numerous sites might be implicated along its path from Takapuna Beach to Muriwai Beach, the project needed focus. Therefore I

decided to limit the scope of the study to the two distinct beach landing points, and two landing stations connected with each: Takapuna, Northcote, Whenuapai, and Muriwai.

Following the identification of each site, site visits took place (up to five at each site). Here, as a measure of safety, I travelled with companions.¹⁵⁰ During these visit I looked for and photographed visible indicators of the cable and, where possible, engaged local residents in oral and written conversations about the sites and their histories.

It was not always straightforward to locate the sites. While Takapuna and Northcote were relatively straightforward, I had not been able to pinpoint the exact location of the Whenuapai station. In order to locate it 'on the ground' I drove around the general area looking for a site resembling a landing station. My prior knowledge of the aesthetics of the Northcote station aided my discovery. At Muriwai I initially walked up the beach from the main township, but was unable to identify markers that might indicate where the cable came ashore. In this instance, I contacted a fellow researcher who had visited the site, Nicole Starosielski, who pointed me in the right direction.

During my final visit I travelled between all four sites, testing the tour and making note of useful practical information for the publication (including timings).

Through this process, prominent narratives were identified in relation to each site, which lead to the development of the final artworks. Further analysis of these individual sites is included in the chapters on each associated work.

2. Appropriate and subvert symbols of New Zealand nationalism

As a socio-political exercise, New Zealand national identity lends itself comfortably to a discussion of the social sphere. By employing a strategy of appropriating and subverting symbols of New Zealand nationalism I envisioned that these works would open up a dialogue that enabled the questioning of the relevance of New Zealand national identity in an age of expanding globalisation, spurred by the influence of the internet.

Having identified, researched, and visited the sites (including analysis of *Te Ika-a-Maui*), it became apparent that some of the more prominent present-day examples of nationalist

¹⁵⁰ Of note, I was never confronted by security personnel.

endeavours lent themselves more naturally to the project than others. I identified two in particular that related directly to the focus of this research: the New Zealand Flag Referendum, and national iconography in New Zealand Tourism Campaigns. The New Zealand Passport was also later incorporated as a symbolic reference (discussed in Chapter 4.0). Each of the two examples discussed here provide their own visual languages that have been adopted and adapted in the final body of work, in order to imitate and subvert the notion of national identity.

In 2015–16 New Zealand Prime Minister John Key spearheaded a project during his last term in office, the New Zealand Flag Referendum, through which he hoped to change one of the most prominent symbols of New Zealand nationalism. Among his reasons for undertaking the exercise, he stated an interest in distinguishing the flag from the (very similar) Australian flag, and wanting to inspire “‘overt patriotism’ in New Zealand in the same way countries like the United States turned up to sporting events with jerseys, scarfs and hats emblazoned with stars and stripes.”¹⁵¹ Thus, this exercise itself might be seen as an attempt to shift New Zealand culture towards that of the US. This adoption of US culture is not new to New Zealand: Pākehā culture (the dominant culture in New Zealand) has historically been influenced by external cultures. As a former British colony, this culture had a strong influence on the establishment of the nation. Later, as New Zealand was distanced from the colonial influence of Britain, strategic Pacific economic-political alliances and the strength of the US media empires enabled gradual shifts in lifestyle of the average New Zealander (aided considerably by a shared language: English) further towards one that resembled what was essentially a US-model.¹⁵²

¹⁵¹ Jo Moir, “John Key lists his reasons for a new flag,” *Stuff*, August 20, 2005, <https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/politics/71285531/John-Key-lists-his-reasons-for-a-new-flag>.

¹⁵² Michael King, *The Penguin History of New Zealand*, (Auckland: Penguin Books, 2012), 414. As Michael King has noted, philosophical and political conservatism coupled with the rise of consumerism “brought National to power in 1949 and kept the party in office for 29 of the next 35 years. At the same time there was an American-led build-up of the Cold War mentality and a minor outbreak in the 1950s of something resembling McCarthyism. There was also the growth of a more overt form of materialism than had been apparent previously, centring on a desire for better homes and more consumer goods: washing machines, refrigerators, family cars, fashionable clothing—the phenomena that came to be known collectively as ‘keeping up with the Joneses’.”



Fig 17 Image of Voting Paper from the Elections.org.nz website.

The flag referendums of 2015–16 called for enrolled individuals to express their preference of five new flag designs, which had been chosen by a committee. The first referendum had a 48.78% voter turnout (fewer than half the voting public): slightly more than half of these voters preferred a version that effectively replaced the Union Jack (a symbol of Britain) with a silver fern (a botanical symbol often used on sporting uniforms). Here, the symbol of the nation's former colonial ruler was replaced with a symbol of its athletic prowess and natural environment. The second referendum pitted this new contender against the existing flag. The voter turnout was slightly higher, 67.78%, however ultimately resulted in the retention of the existing flag (although by a narrow margin).

The process was widely criticised, particularly due to its cost, timing, structure, and relevance.¹⁵³ Largely run as a marketing campaign,¹⁵⁴ the campaign lacked genuine emotive reasoning which failed to trigger responses of national pride and convince voters why they should personally care about the new options, although the prospect of developing a new national flag was one that had been raised in previous decades. There was a strong individualism tied to the campaign. It was a 'pet project' of John Key, and the designers of the shortlisted flags became point of focus in media coverage (i.e. Kyle Lockwood). This worked against the construct of national identity as being an expression

¹⁵³ "Winner Announced for National Contemporary Art Award," Waikato Museum, July 17, 2015, <http://waikatomuseum.co.nz/about-us/news/article/77/>. My own artwork, *Pioneer City Flag*, (which was judged the winner of the National Contemporary Art Award in 2015) was one such critical response to the referendum process.

¹⁵⁴ "Flag referendum: Where does the \$26 million go?," *Stuff*, November 17, 2015, <https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/the-flag-debate/74003348/flag-referendum-where-does-the-26-million-go>.

of nationally shared (group) values and marked the process as a misguided, hollow one. The neoliberal framework through which this project operated was its undoing as individualism and nationalism work in opposition to each other. This example might suggest that, in a globalised world, the search for national identity has become a similarly hollow endeavour—a marketing exercise.

The New Zealand flag is referenced in multiple ways in this study, beginning with the fact that the cable itself is named after the Southern Cross, the constellation that features on the New Zealand flag. The decision to use the cultural capital of this symbol was made consciously by the SX cable development team, as Starosielski explains:

Brett O’Riley, who helped to develop the cable network, remembers that “Southern Cross was different, because for the first time we really treated it as a market exercise. This was not industry getting together and saying, ‘How do we make this work?’ This was sponsors . . . we had a marketing committee. We designed a logo for it. We designed merchandise for it.” Even SCCN’s name speaks to the shift in cable politics: the Southern Cross is the dominant constellation in the southern hemisphere. The SCCN team wanted a name that was more interesting than the typical engineer-produced name (such as TPC-3) and that would signify that it was a different kind of cable system. Fiona Beck, SCCN’s CEO, had a background not in engineering but in finance and strategy, which helped make the cable company aware of the kinds of market-related questions that would be asked of them.¹⁵⁵

Here, the national icon was appropriated for marketing purposes however, despite being named after a nationalist icon, the cable system sits at odds with the concept of national identity due to its role in facilitating further globalisation.

The second nationalist endeavour that lent itself to this study was that of the application of national iconography in New Zealand tourism marketing campaigns.

New Zealanders’ identity has historically been defined in proximity to its ‘wild and unspoilt’ landscape, particularly through the aspirations of the mid-century nationalist

¹⁵⁵ Starosielski, *The Undersea Network*, 51–52.

artists who sought to invent “a high culture peculiar to New Zealand, in which the real and pre-existent New Zealand might come properly to be seen”.¹⁵⁶ This resulted in the somewhat romantic rhetorical mythologising of New Zealand as a landscape with a ‘harsh clarity’ of light, imbued with spiritualism.

Even those nationalists who reacted against the photogenic landscapes by focussing on the essential monotony of the land, Peter Tomory’s “hyphenations between the eye blinding attractions of the scenic tourist pamphlet”,¹⁵⁷ were operating within a European Romantic art framework that celebrated the solitary wanderer.¹⁵⁸ Merely through the act of depicting these previously overlooked sites, the nationalists were deeming them worthy of attention, effectively supporting the establishment of these ‘less obvious’ beauties as tourist destinations in their own right (the Cass station, for example).¹⁵⁹ As has been discovered since, the act of creating artworks in response to site goes hand-in-hand with the redefinition of site as tourist destination.

This mid-century rhetoric continues to reverberate today in the manner that New Zealand represents itself to the outside world. The economic significance of this image has led to tourism becoming one of New Zealand’s biggest export earners: Tourism New Zealand, a Crown Entity that has maintained a long-running *100% Pure* campaign since 1999 to promote the country around the world as a tourist destination. An offshoot campaign, *100% Middle Earth*, leveraged off the exposure New Zealand gained through the enterprise of Sir Peter Jackson’s blockbuster *Lord Of The Rings* and *Hobbit* films.

¹⁵⁶ Pound, *The Invention of New Zealand*, xix.

¹⁵⁷ Peter Tomory, “Imaginary Islands and Floating Reefs: the Romantic Image in New Zealand Painting,” *Ascent* 1, no. 2, (July 1968), 16.

¹⁵⁸ Pound, *The Invention of New Zealand*, 134–135. “The Nationalist distaste for an industrialised mass tourism is also, perhaps, a product of the nineteenth-century European Romantic stress on solitary wandering and solitary sensation, which may itself be seen as a turning away from the Grand Tourists’ coach party trips of the preceding age. [. . .] Here, as in all of Nationalist art, the solitary sensibility is posed against a tourist chatter, against the touristic picturesque. It seeks a beauty less obvious, more difficult, more profound.”

¹⁵⁹ A well-known painting by mid-century New Zealand nationalist artist Rita Angus, created in 1936.



Fig 18 The 100% Pure campaign. Image: Tourism New Zealand.

But the country is not as pure as this propaganda suggests. Polluted waterways are a widespread issue, largely caused by one of the nation's primary industries: farming.¹⁶⁰ Other natural symbols of national identity have similarly been under threat. Tane Mahuta, the largest Kauri tree in New Zealand which was named after the Māori god of the forests and birds, is threatened by Kauri dieback.¹⁶¹ Even the kiwifruit, a founding emblem of kiwiana, has been threatened by the disease PSA.¹⁶² Ironically, tourism can play a part in the spread of diseases that affect local attractions. Tourism and the pristine landscape work in opposition to each other. Here, also, the promotion of New Zealand national identity is an exercise undertaken for marketing purposes.

As one of the goals of this study was to reframe the SX in proximity to the physical landscapes it passes through, references to the manner in which the New Zealand landscape has been co-opted as a marketing brand for economic purposes was incorporated into the final works.

New Zealand nationalism has become an economic brand, promoted in a neoliberal global economy, rather than something that represents genuine shared cultural values.¹⁶³ This is

¹⁶⁰ Press Editorial, "New marketing campaign 100% Pure New Zealand puffery," *Stuff*, July 17, 2017 <https://www.stuff.co.nz/the-press/opinion/94781950/editorial-100-pure-new-zealand-puffery>.

¹⁶¹ "Kauri dieback protection for Tane Mahuta," *Northern Advocate*, April 13, 2017, https://www.nzherald.co.nz/forests/news/article.cfm?c_id=211&objectid=11836172.

¹⁶² Cleo Fraser, "Devastation of PSA still felt by kiwifruit growers," *NewsHub*, December 4, 2017, <https://www.newshub.co.nz/home/new-zealand/2017/12/devastation-of-psa-still-felt-by-kiwifruit-growers.html>.

¹⁶³ Jo Smith and Ocean Mercier, "Un-New Zealand-ish," in Leonard, Lister, and Lawson eds., *This Is New Zealand* (Wellington: City Gallery Wellington, 2018), 118–119. In 2017 Taika Waititi, a prominent New Zealand film director and 2017 Kiwibank New Zealander of The Year, made public statements drawing attention to major issues facing New Zealand, including racism, pollution, depression, suicide, child poverty and housing shortages. Conservative

the age of the internet, migration, multilateral trade agreements, climate change, overpopulation, food and water shortages. The globe is shrinking, and increasingly defined by its connectedness rather than its borders. The reinforcement of those borders is the last grasp of power structures who depend on nationalisms that are beginning to end. The recent examples of the resurgence of Nationalist rhetoric in the UK (in response to Brexit) and the US (with the election of Trump) can be seen to fit within this paradigm. Jürgen Habermas sounds alarm, seeing a return to global conservatism which points towards the rise of an authoritarian mass democracy under the conditions of a globalised world economy. Instead, he promotes a global shift beyond nationalism, towards a “better, more rational organisation based on worldwide consensus”, however he concludes that such a shift cannot occur without a true public sphere to support it.¹⁶⁴

The most apparent possible future paths are postnationalism or neocolonialism—which will further concentrate the world’s power in fewer hands. The world is in a transition period,¹⁶⁵ and this tension can be felt in the installation. This project is a contradiction: a bolstering of, and a death knoll for, New Zealand national identity. *The Southern Cross Cable: A Tour* contributes to the construction of contemporary New Zealand national identity, if only to deconstruct it again.

3. Employ strategies that place the body (as a symbol of acts of power, control and agency) at the centre of the work

Much has been written on the place of the body in art.¹⁶⁶ While this study is not primarily focussed on contributing to the various schools of representation that have charted the multiplicity of cultural perspectives on the body over time, my discovery that few works have depicted the human body in proximity to cable landing sites led me to resolve to employ strategies that placed the body (as a symbol of acts of power, control and agency)

media responded by claiming he had “thrown New Zealand under the bus,” calling him “treasonous” and implying that an individual with the title of “New Zealander of the Year” should bite their critical lip, instead using their status to focus on promoting only the positive traits of the nation. As Smith and Mercier note, these reactions demonstrate “a retrograde form of nationalism tied to a fear of harming ‘brand New Zealand’.”

¹⁶⁴ Stuart Jeffries, “A rare interview with Jürgen Habermas,” *Financial Times*, April 30, 2010. <https://www.ft.com/content/eda3bcd8-5327-11df-813e-00144feab49a>.

¹⁶⁵ Dahlgren, “The Internet, Public Spheres, and Political Communication,” 153. “While we might see the embryonic outlines of a global civil society, its full realization is not on the horizon,”

¹⁶⁶ Corinne Saunders, Ulrika Maude and Jane Macnaughton, “Introduction,” in Saunders, Maude and Macnaughton eds., *The Body and The Arts*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 1-7.

at the centre of the work. While, in these examples, internet infrastructure had indeed been visualised, the absence of the human body in proximity to it had created a dehumanising effect.

In her essay *Modernist Bodies: Coming To Our Senses*, Ulrika Maude recollects that:

One of the recurrent ways of making sense of new technologies has been to conceptualise them precisely in relation to the human body, as forms of prosthetic devices that function either as instances of organ or sensory extension, in a positive sense, or as a form of organ replacement, to make up for an individual deficiency or lack. An example of the former would be the telephone, which enhances the perceptual powers of the human ear, and indeed was modelled on the anatomy of the ear, with its vibrating tympanum. As an example of a technological device that was originally to supplement a lack, one could offer the typewriter, first devised in order to enable the blind to write. Freud, one of the most famous early commentators on technology, indeed argued that, “With every tool man is perfecting his own organs, whether motor or sensory, or is removing the limits of their functioning”.¹⁶⁷

Indeed, mediated connection and physical connection are intertwined in complex and myriad ways, however the approach of conceptualising internet infrastructure in relation to the human body appears to have been lost somewhere along the way.

As Kuehn found, media coverage of the Snowden revelations lacked stories of a personal nature which might have placed the individual in context of implications of mass surveillance. This contributed to the formation of a general sense of powerlessness that prevented a mass social movement taking hold.¹⁶⁸

By depicting the SX as something that could be physically related to I hoped to revisit this approach, emphasising the latent potential for human connection with internet infrastructure.

¹⁶⁷ Ulrika Maude, “Modernist Bodies: Coming To Our Senses,” in Saunders, Maude and Macnaughton eds., *The Body and The Arts*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 116-117.

¹⁶⁸ Kuehn, *The Post-Snowden Era*, 9.

4. Use media with a knowing mimetic relationship to existing familiar formats

This study was not simply about reframing the cable as a tangible object. There was an additional requirement for this project to engage, and be accessible to, a broad public audience in order to have any practical impact. Thus, the target audience for the works comprised those impacted by this infrastructure. This required the project to be presented in a form that was palatable to a general audience, using media that mimicked familiar formats. The use of imitation also carried an added reference to the nature of the internet as the world's largest copying machine.

This strategy took familiar formats from the realms of nationalism, including the colour and symbolism of national symbols (the retained national flag, the passport); the physical experience of the landscape as a romantic individualised, heroic, endeavour; the use of colour and light (and its opposite, dark); the use of nostalgia; tactile experiences; and emotive language. These are further discussed in Chapter 4.0.

5. Use the exhibition experience to distribute this information in the public sphere

In order to challenge the assumption, made by those who control this infrastructure, that public knowledge of internet infrastructure poses a threat to its security, this project used the exhibition experience to distribute such information throughout the public sphere.

Public art, and indeed the notion of the 'public', has shifted considerably since the era of *Te Ika-a-Maui* seeing the emergence of an expanded approach to public art that could move beyond static visual form to employ durational, distributed, and participatory forms. Public art specifies that there is public access to the artworks—that they are located within publicly-accessible space, or the 'public sphere'. The 'public', by definition, is a term that is used to refer to ordinary people in general—the community as a whole, often of a nation or state. It is related to the concepts of openness, shared resources, visibility and accessibility (i.e public space, public libraries, public services).¹⁶⁹ For the purposes of this study, the 'public sphere' refers to an expanded context where a body (or bodies) of individuals are able to exercise their freedoms of assembly, expression, and association,

¹⁶⁹ "Public", Oxford English Dictionary, accessed June 27, 2018, <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/public>.

in order to engage in democratic debate that might lead to a general consensus on certain political issues.¹⁷⁰ The absence of a public sphere, then, might be indicated by the inability for public opinion to be formed; restricted access; restrictions on assembly and association; censorship of matters of general interest; and a lack of democratic debate. The democratic nation and the public sphere are therefore closely interrelated terms.

Definitions of the contemporary public sphere do not all neatly align with one another. While theorists including Zizi Papacharissi,¹⁷¹ Jürgen Habermas,¹⁷² and George Monbiot¹⁷³ have concluded that the internet is *not* a public sphere, others have seen the potential for such a system to develop.¹⁷⁴ Papacharissi has suggested that “the internet presents a public space, but does not yet constitute a public sphere”, however she was writing ahead of Snowden’s revelations of mass surveillance. As Kuehn had commented, “the once-held distinctions between ‘public’ and ‘private’ spheres of activity have largely collapsed. The Snowden files offer some empirical insight into how ‘public and private agencies, internal and external security, national and international interest’ are increasingly blurred and deeply connected. National security is, in fact, no longer ‘national’.”¹⁷⁵ As an effective panopticon, the Five Eyes PRISM programme has led to an increase in self-censorship, and as such I am sceptical about the possibility to consider it as a true public space.

¹⁷⁰ Dahlgren, “The Internet, Public Spheres and Political Communication.”

¹⁷¹ Zizi Papacharissi, “The virtual sphere: The Internet as a Public Sphere.” *New Media and Society* 4, no. 1 (March 2002), 9–27. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14614440222226244>. “New technologies provide information and tools that may extend the role of the public in the social and political arena.” (p.10), however, “political expression online may leave people with a false sense of empowerment, which misrepresents the true [negligible, and increasingly fragmented] impact of their opinions.” (p. 16–17) Further, the power of advertising to influence online content, and the ensuing public cynicism of popular media content, has undermined the democratic potential of mass media. (p. 19).

¹⁷² Jeffries, “A rare interview.” Habermas himself does not see the internet as constituting a public sphere as “Its structure is not suited to focusing the attention of a dispersed public of citizens who form opinions simultaneously on the same topics and contributions which have been scrutinised and filtered by experts.” “The web itself does not produce any public spheres.”

¹⁷³ George Monbiot, “The need to protect the internet from ‘astroturfing’ grows ever more urgent,” *The Guardian*, February 23, 2011, <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/georgemonbiot/2011/feb/23/need-to-protect-internet-from-astroturfing>. Astroturfing software “has the potential to destroy the internet as a forum for constructive debate. It jeopardizes the notion of online democracy.”

¹⁷⁴ Jürgen Gerhards and Mike S. Schäfer, “Is the Internet a Better Public Sphere? Comparing Old and New Media in the USA and Germany.” *New Media & Society* 12, no. 1 (February 2010): 143–60. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444809341444>. Gerhards and Schäfer note that, “In countries such as Germany and the USA, freedom of the press and freedom of opinion are widely guaranteed. Therefore, print media communication is relatively open and balanced [...] This may differ in more authoritarian countries, such as China, where both mass media and search engines are government controlled [...] and censored because their content is seen as potentially dangerous to the system.”

¹⁷⁵ Kuehn, *The Post-Snowden Era*, 77.

Unless it is controlled by public systems, with openness and transparency, it is at best a pseudo-public space,¹⁷⁶ or a privately-owned (and controlled) publically-accessible space. Where can these works be located in a society where public space is diminishing, and the public sphere isn't online?

In response to the fact that *Te Ika-a-Maui* had been commissioned as a public artwork to commemorate a cable landing, I resolved to create a series of site-specific public artworks that would be installed at the four primary (publicly-accessible) landing sites of the SX, with participants directed to the site and given contextual information through a tour guide publication.

A core idea behind this project was to encourage internet users to take themselves offline, or at least away from their desks, in order to physically experience the internet that they use on a daily basis through manual methods to that would familiarise them with the infrastructure of the digital world. Due to the goodwill and relationships I had developed with Spark NZ staff through my work on *Te Ika-a-Maui* I hoped the owners of the cable stations would appreciate the relevance of this proposal sufficiently enough to support it.

In early 2017 I sent this proposal to Spark NZ (see Appendix I), seeking their support to help realise this suite of works, emphasising that this series of public artworks would mark the end of an era by celebrating the national significance of the SX, and encouraging better public appreciation for New Zealand's connection to the trans-national internet. Initial feedback was positive,¹⁷⁷ however the proposal was formally turned down on 10 April 2017, with the reasoning that they preferred not to draw attention to any of the physical infrastructure and hence would not support any installations that co-located with the cable.¹⁷⁸ The manager of the SX's visual presence in

¹⁷⁶ Jack Shenker, "Revealed: the insidious creep of pseudo-public space in London," *The Guardian*, July 24, 2017, <http://www.theguardian.com/cities/2017/jul/24/revealed-pseudo-public-space-pops-london-investigation-map>.

¹⁷⁷ Personal communication, March 3, 2017. "We had a meeting with the Southern Cross Board trustees [...] this morning to discuss your project proposal. They asked me to pass on their appreciation of the work you have done to date to acknowledge the cable's importance to New Zealand. They support your proposal in principal, and will take this to the SX board with their endorsement, however before they can do this they would like to get a breakdown of costs. [...] A positive outcome!"

¹⁷⁸ "[The] Head of International Operations for Spark NZ has considered this carefully but has advised he would prefer NOT to draw attention to any of the physical infrastructure and hence would not support any installations that co-locate with the cable. He has explained that they cannot put at risk the security of the cable stations by bringing their presence to the attention of the public. They place considerable value on maintaining the two sites as inconspicuous as possible (they currently have no Spark NZ or SCCN signage on them). / There may be a possibility

New Zealand placed considerable value on keeping the physical sites of the cable as inconspicuous as possible, due to a perception that a more overt presence would bring the presence of the cables to the attention of the public, putting the security of the cable stations at risk. No artwork had been commissioned for the SX stations due to a perception that public awareness is a threat to the cable.

This response confirmed that there is some purposeful effort on the part of those who control New Zealand's internet infrastructure to obscure it in the visual landscape. This is a strategy used by many cable operators internationally, and contributes to current poor public knowledge of communications infrastructure in New Zealand.¹⁷⁹ There is some irony in this approach, as a secondary part of the cable manager's job is raising awareness of cables amongst maritime communities in order to avoid accidental damage to the cable.¹⁸⁰

Following this outcome, I began conversations with City Gallery Wellington curators, Robert Leonard and Aaron Lister, about the potential of including works in their forthcoming exhibition on New Zealand national identity, *This Is New Zealand*, City Gallery Wellington, 2018. A public gallery is arguably an operational sector within the broader public sphere that holds the potential to support modes of distribution that provide alternatives to the distributed media of the internet.

In previous decades, traditional media channels carried the ability to distribute their content in a simple manner: publishing through their own platform then sharing and promoting the content on social networks. However, this landscape has become more fragmented. As social media networks have expanded their reach, they have begun to host original content that can be targeted at various demographics and interest groups leading to a new multi-pronged, or distributed, mode of content distribution. Instead of regurgitating the same content across multiple platforms, content must now be created exclusively for each platform. This has led to an expanded network of actors who hold

of SX to be involved in a scaled back way with the virtual tour, on line in conjunction with the 'opening' of the completed work when it is displayed at the City Gallery Exhibition in Wellington early in 2018."

¹⁷⁹ Starosielski, *The Undersea Network*, 3–5.

¹⁸⁰ One example is the "Catch Fish Not Cables" campaign run by the New Zealand Ministry of Transport. Ministry of Transport, "Protecting New Zealand's undersea cables."

mass media power, although several major players have emerged (i.e. Google, YouTube, Facebook).

In his 2002 artwork-as-art-historical-essay *Dispersion*, Seth Price considers how conceptual art was particularly successful in claiming new territory for art by co-opting areas outside the systems and institutions that had traditionally framed, and validated, art practices. He asserts that it is essential for art to operate within the space of distributed media “lest it be outdistanced entirely by these corporate interests”. He continues to posit that “art grounded in distributed media can be seen as a political art and an art of communicative action, not least because it is a reaction to the fact that the merging of art and life has been effected most successfully by the “consciousness industry”. The field of culture is a public sphere and a site of struggle, and all of its manifestations are ideological.”¹⁸¹

Although, apart from the tour guide, this body of work is not “grounded in distributed media” per se (in that it does not specifically seek to co-opt major distributed media platforms) it echoes the conceptual art concerns outlined by Price. *The Southern Cross Cable: A Tour* seeks to claim new territory for art practice by responding the overlap between art and life. It operates as an art project that directly responds to the impact the internet is having on life in Aotearoa New Zealand.

3.4 Creation and dissemination

The creation and dissemination of the works is further discussed in Chapter 4.0, however in summary, a range of potential final material forms for the resulting works were considered, as dictated by the research findings, with the potential of the final form remaining somewhat fluid up until the final public dissemination of the work.

In addition to this approach, I aspired to enact (where practical) a Zero-Waste model during the production phase; thus, a simple ethical approach to artistic production that aims to reduce unnecessary waste (Appendix II). Finally, the work was disseminated, in this case through an exhibition in a public gallery. This also involved public engagement (whether through media interviews, or public presentations).

¹⁸¹ Seth Price, “Dispersion (2016 PDF version),” accessed July 10, 2018, <https://anthology.rhizome.org/dispersion>.



4.0 Results

This research has resulted in an overarching installation: *The Southern Cross Cable: A Tour*, comprised of five works. Four of these works relate to a landing site of the SX cable: *A Power Troubles The Still*; *Te Ika-a-Maui*, *The Speargun Conspiracy*, and *The Long Walk to Northern Waters*. The fifth work, *The Southern Cross Cable: A Tour (publication)*, sits above and across the other four artworks, serving the dual purpose, of acting as a guide around the artworks in the installation, and also as a guide to the physical sites of the cable. Here, each resulting work is discussed, with elaboration on my background research and development of the work, with particular attention given to overarching strategies and themes, the exhibition experience, and its public dissemination.

4.1 *The Southern Cross Cable: A Tour* (Installation)

In September 2017 I submitted a proposal document to City Gallery Wellington, which adjusted my earlier public art proposal to a gallery setting (see Appendix III). This document outlined five works: *The Tour Guide*; *Takapuna Beach: The Paper Nautilus*; *Northcote: Te Ika-a-Akoranga (Alteration)*; *Whenuapai: The Nation Consents*; and *Muriwai: The Long Walk to Northern Waters*. Three possible additional works were also briefly mentioned—*Breaks & Faults*, *The Earthquake*, and *The Dive*, although they were not included in the final installation.

This proposal was intended as a basis on which to discuss and negotiate planning and fundraising issues. The artworks in the installation *The Southern Cross Cable: A Tour* are the results of this continued strategy.

The overarching premise for the installation was the idea of creating a tour within the gallery space, with each artwork functioning as a destination point along a wider conceptualised and mapped trajectory. This overarching framework would function as a co-option of the landscape tourism that defines New Zealand national identity both at home and abroad.

In addition, I considered using the Southern Cross Cable constellation (as per the New Zealand flag) as an organisational template for the installation of the four works relating to each site. The stars and location names could be visible on the floor, or indicated in

some other way (also referencing audio guide symbols), prompting visitors to consult further information in their tour guide.

Using digital editing tools I drafted the preliminary installation concept on a floor plan of the space (see Fig. 19). This plan intentionally emulated similar strategies used within state-sponsored exhibitions in Wellington that might be seen as contemporary attempts to construct a New Zealand national identity: *The Scale of War* (at Te Papa Tongarewa Museum of New Zealand), *The Great War* (a government-funded exhibition at the former Dominion Museum Building), and *He Tohu* (at Te Puna Mātauranga o Aotearoa The National Library of New Zealand). Each of these evoked a narrative style, designed to funnel visitors through in a certain direction. Gallery and museum exhibitions are themselves tourist destinations, and in these examples the format of the tour had been applied within the exhibitions themselves. This new plan placed the tour guide publications at the beginning of the installation, the Takapuna work first, then Northcote, Whenuapai and Muriwai. A further iteration removed some works and shifted the tour guides to the exit point of the installation.

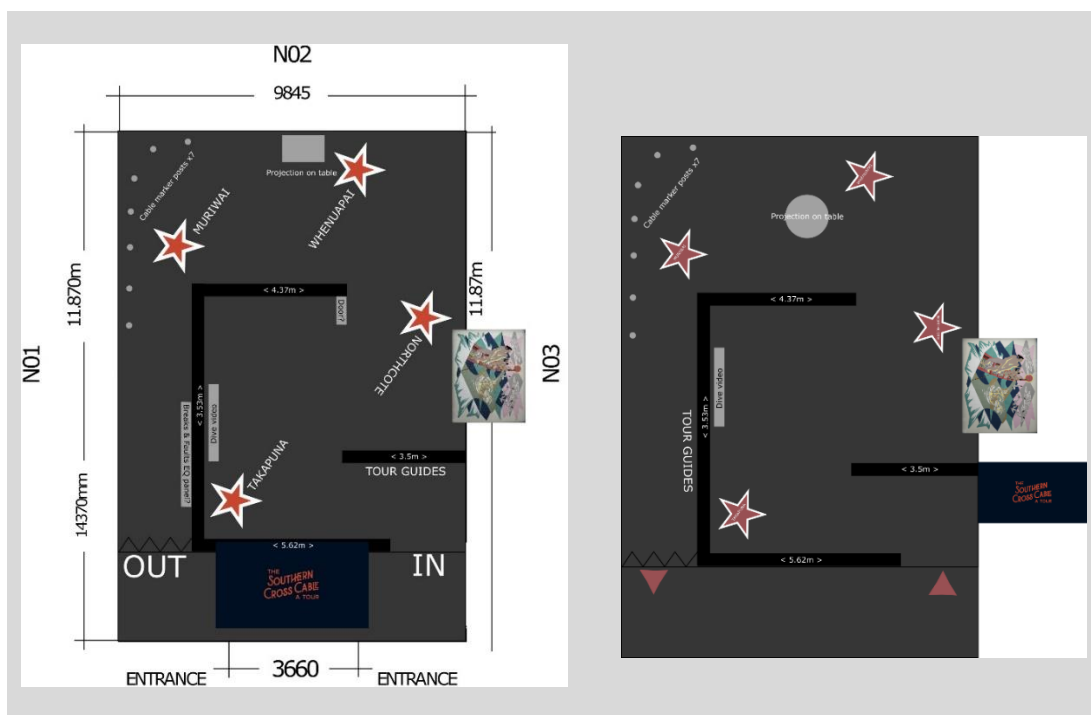


Fig 19 Installation concepts for CGW. Left: 17 November 2017; Right 28 November 2017.

After spending time in the gallery space, it became apparent that the space was not large enough to comfortably realise this vision. Further, the literal tour would add another layer to a series of works that were already engaged in fairly complex set of relationships. I decided to simplify the concept in order to create a more effective relationship between

the conceptual and physical components presented in the space, and the broader exhibition.

The third layout tested an installation access point that would lead visitors into the centre of the space, however this created a complex lighting situation that would be difficult to resolve. Due to this adjustment of concept, and unsuccessful funding applications, we resolved to work with the existing layout of the space—a largely open space, with a large southern wall that had a small opening to the south-east. I was concerned that the visual impact of the mural *Te Ika-a-Maui* would dominate the space and risk muting the messages of my own works, so I specified that a partition wall should be installed ahead of the opening to block its initial view. This would also help restrict interference from external lighting and enable us to better control the lighting within the space. Further, this partition would funnel the audience towards my own work, encouraging them to be experienced first.

As the Takapuna work took some time to resolve, several backup works were considered, which included adding further works to the installation (Fig. 20). The order the works appeared in the space was also a point of adjustment. It had been resolved that *Te Ika-a-Maui* would hang on the northern wall, which was both large enough and strong enough to support the tiles.

A further work, *A Power Troubles The Still*, was installed on the wall facing *Te Ika-a-Maui*. Although the works weren't installed in a clockwise, linear narrative, the openness of the space meant that audience members were enabled to experience the works in this order if they chose. The placement of the tour guides in the most obscured point of the installation (one that would be arrived at as a viewer was exiting the space) removed the necessity for the works to function in association with the order of sites in the publication, as it was unlikely to frame the experience of the works from the beginning. Further, making the tour guides the final statement of the installation reinforced the manner in which they were intended to be used: to be picked up, taken outside of the gallery, and the tour experienced beyond the installation as an ongoing work in its own right. Finally, with all works resolved, I made the decision that the idea of placing the Southern Cross star constellation on the floor was unnecessary.

The body of works that comprise *The Southern Cross Cable: A Tour* are housed within the larger curated exhibition entitled *This Is New Zealand*, which (as previously quoted) promotes itself as exploring “the role art has played in asserting and questioning notions of national identity. It considers how our country has represented itself, and what those

representations have included and excluded. It takes a critical look at the stories we have told ourselves—and the stories we have told others—about who we are.”¹⁸²

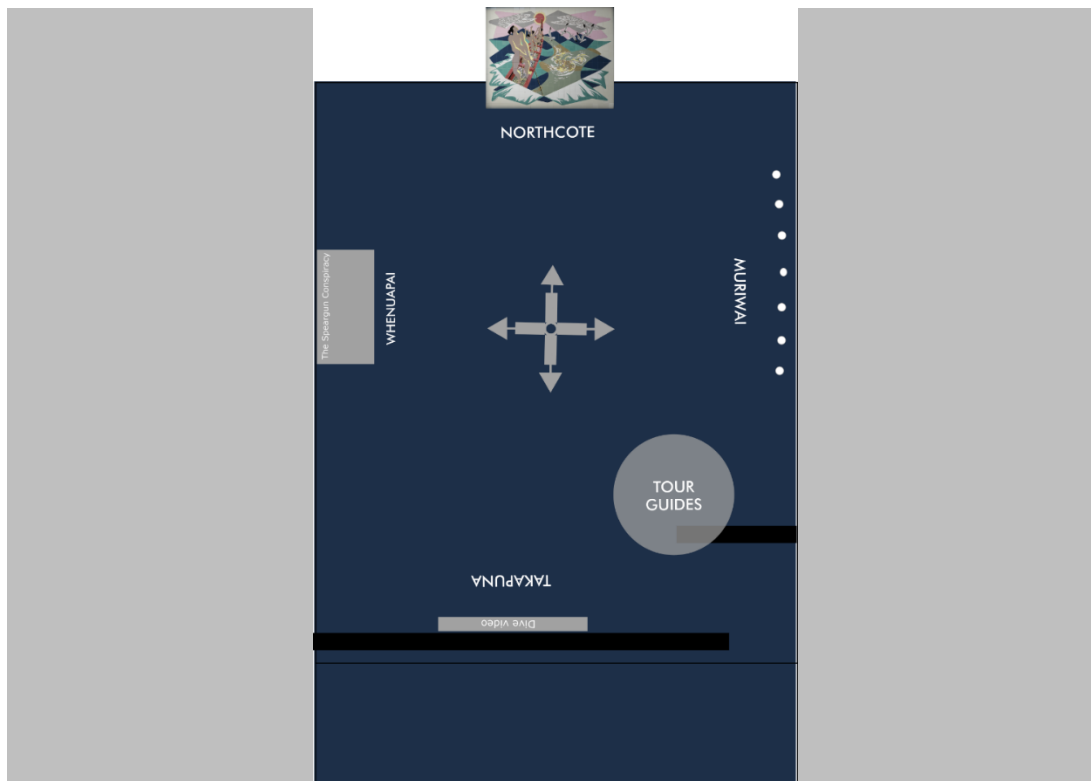


Fig 20 Installation concept 29 January 2018.

I acknowledge my project's placement within this wider context, and there are various points where connections may be found with other works in the exhibition. The otherworldly landscape of *A Power Troubles The Still* resonates with Gavin Hipkins' unhomely works. The overarching subject of *The Speargun Conspiracy* is closely related to Denny's cabinet from *Secret Power*, which features a map that marks New Zealand undersea communications cables. *The Speargun Conspiracy* also references a work by Michael Stevenson (who is included in the show) and the idea of a conspiracy, or hoax, resonates with the film *Forgotten Silver*. The images sourced from the Crown Historic Aerial Photographic Archive were accessed in a manner related to Emil McAvoy's sourcing of images for *The National Basement*. The nationalistic optimism of *Te Ika-a-Maui* echoes that of the film *This Is New Zealand* and the carved posts of *The Long Walk to Northern Waters*, may be associatively linked to Michael Parekowhai's carved piano

¹⁸² "This is New Zealand," City Gallery Wellington, accessed June 25, 2018, <https://citygallery.org.nz/exhibitions/this-is-new-zealand/>.

On First Looking into Chapman's Homer. The tour guide and its poster echo the historic New Zealand tourism posters installed in the Deane gallery, as well as Denny's project about the redesign of the New Zealand passport *Freeview Passport: CD NZ Presentation*. Finally, the navy painted space is a reference to the New Zealand flag, another theme that recurs throughout the entire exhibition.¹⁸³

Locating these works within the context of the wider exhibition recognizes the works as a series of comments on the tangled and uneasy relationship between internet infrastructure, along with its surrounding contexts, and New Zealand national identity. Overarching themes recur throughout based on my strategic subversions of popular nationalist symbolism, enabling the works to function both individually, and as a group, and raising questions about the relevance of nationalism in an age of expanding globalisation.



Fig 21 Entrance to *This Is New Zealand*, City Gallery Wellington, 2018.

My works are located on the upper floor of the gallery. Introductory text on this wall provides context for the works, and reads:

For seventeen years, the Southern Cross Cable has carried 98 percent of New Zealand's international internet traffic, providing our primary point of

¹⁸³ The fact I am the only female artist amongst this list is not lost on me, and could be explored further, but not here.

connection with the outside world. For the past four years, Bronwyn Holloway-Smith has researched and made work about this cable, which lies across the floor of the Pacific Ocean. This installation is part of a broader investigation into the entanglement of systems that shape and influence culture, technology and politics.

Early on in her research, Holloway-Smith discovered a lost 1961 ceramic mural by Wellington artist E. Mervyn Taylor that was commissioned to mark the 1962 landing of an earlier cable in 1962—COMPAC—which linked several Commonwealth countries. Hearing, but refusing to accept, that the mural had been lost, she found, restored, and returned it to the public sphere. She was struck by the mural's contribution to what, in the 1960s, was a widespread moment of national pride, in contrast to the comparative secrecy that surrounds the Southern Cross Cable today. Her resulting proposal—to follow Taylor's lead and make a series of site-specific public artworks to mark the landing sites of the Southern Cross Cable—was rejected by its owner, Spark NZ on security grounds.

Here, she presents iterations of the work she proposed for the four main landing sites. Each marks a specific site, and explores the events and histories that sit behind it. The project has taken Holloway-Smith into the depths of art history, governmental archives, and the Hauraki Gulf, even scuba diving to touch the physical cable. Taylor's restored mural presides over her entire project. It now reads as a warning of what was to come, and, perhaps, a message sent to Holloway-Smith to follow through with her investigations.

A modest opening at the bottom right side of the wall reveals a blue carpet-tiled entrance. Directly ahead of the opening is a navy-blue partition wall that features a stylised grey compass symbol and the words "The Southern Cross Cable: A Tour" placed in the centre of the wall. The compass rather than using textual indicators uses alternating graphic elements: a fish and an anchor, both 'X-ed' out, are nestled in the gaps between the various compass points, suggesting a maritime element to the project (or perhaps an anti-maritime element). The fish can also be a symbol of Christianity. The anchor has been used as a Christian symbol, although in the context of New Zealand

national identity it can be linked by association to the iconic *Anchor* dairy brand. Dairy, after all, has traditionally been one of the backbones of the New Zealand economy.¹⁸⁴

The title *The Southern Cross Cable: A Tour* extends to the left of the symbol, leading viewers into the installation. The points of the compass reference the four-star Southern Cross constellation which is—in addition to the Union Jack—the other symbol visible on the national flag. The suggestion of a ‘Tour’ references another major player in New Zealand nationalism: tourism.

The installation beyond this point remains largely hidden. The space is mostly dark, but the partition wall is lit with soft spotlights. The carpet tiles in the installation space provide an interruption to the hard concrete surfaces elsewhere, referencing a threshold or foyer. The wall reinforces this, both titling the installation and alerting the audience that they are stepping into a different context. Stepping off the carpet tiles, and onto the central concrete floor of the installation space, three elements are immediately apparent: lighting, sound, and colour.



Fig 22 *The Southern Cross Cable: A Tour*, installation entrance.

The rectilinear gallery space is darkened, and painted navy blue. This particular shade of blue is a match for the navy blue in the *Te Ika-a-Maui* mural. It is a Resene colour called *Crescendo* and it is promoted as “a blue that aspires to be a navy of consequence”;

¹⁸⁴ Albeit, as discussed earlier, one that has impacted on the nation’s brand.

another reference is to the blue of the New Zealand flag. The use of Resene paints is another subtle comment on New Zealand national identity as Resene is “New Zealand’s own paint company” started in 1946 by a builder based in Eastbourne, Lower Hutt, Ted Nightingale who “in typical kiwi style” created his own alkali resistant paints due to an absence of similar products in New Zealand at the time.¹⁸⁵ E. Mervyn Taylor was also an early user of Resene paints, applying them in his mural for the Taita Soil Bureau.¹⁸⁶

A series of illuminated objects seem to float against the dark of the space, either spot lit, or emitting their own light. This contrast between light and dark references the flashes of light, the zeroes and ones, that are the life force of the internet, and also nods to the supposed ‘harsh quality of light’ that the New Zealand landscape was said to possess.

Two moving image works appear in the space: a large projection on the south wall of the gallery (to the left of the viewer as they enter) and a smaller monitor visible on the west wall (ahead of the viewer). The projection shows a diver in a murky, teal, underwater setting and emits an audio track: the heavy breathing of a scuba diver and associated underwater bubbles. Paired with the dark blue gallery, this creates the atmosphere of the installation space being underwater. This work, *A Power Troubles The Still*, represents Takapuna.



Fig 23 *The Southern Cross Cable: A Tour*, installation showing (L–R) *The Southern Cross Cable: A Tour (Publication)*; *A Power Troubles The Still*; and *The Speargun Conspiracy*.

¹⁸⁵ “Home Grown,” Resene, accessed July 4, 2018, <http://www.resene.co.nz/pdf/nostalgia.pdf>.

¹⁸⁶ “E. Mervyn Taylor: Soil Bureau, First Kumera Planting,” New Zealand Mural Heritage, published May 13, 2016, <https://murals.nz/2016/05/13/emt-soil-bureau-first-kumera-planting/>.

The audio of the monitor-based work is more prominent: the voice of a male New Zealander, using the reassuring tone of a disembodied television announcer stating what's coming up next—a voice that evokes officially sanctioned authority. This work, *The Speargun Conspiracy*, represents Whenuapai.

Hung on the north wall of the gallery, opposite *A Power Troubles The Still*, is a large ceramic tile mural. A male stands in a waka (traditional Māori canoe), holding onto what appears to be a rope, or cable. Other figures are depicted in the waka, either flailing, or perhaps dancing. Fish lie at their feet, and seagulls hover nearby. The North Island of New Zealand is distinguishable and, lit with spotlights, it appears to glow. This work, *Te Ika-a-Maui*, represents Northcote.

Continuing around the gallery, seven white posts stand in a row in front of the east wall. They are unevenly spaced. There are words and numbers on each of them. This work, *The Long Walk to Northern Waters*, represents Muriwai.

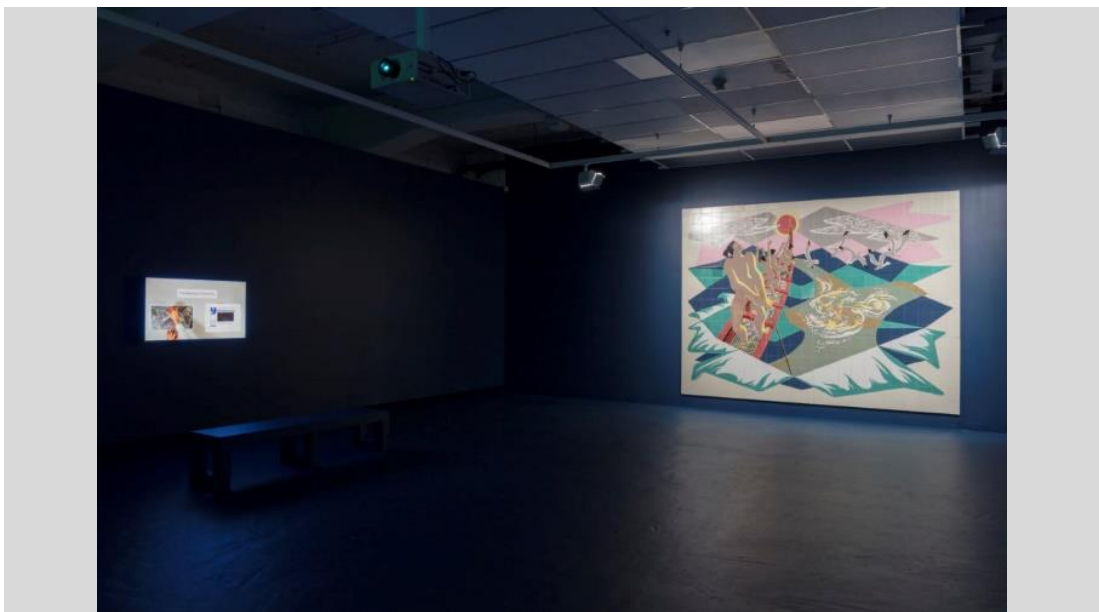


Fig 24 *The Southern Cross Cable: A Tour*, installation showing (L–R) *The Speargun Conspiracy*, and *Te Ika-a-Maui*.

To the right of the posts, on the rear of the partition wall, is a framed photograph of a hand holding a booklet, a beach scene is visible in the background. Below the photograph is a shelf stocked with several booklets. These are copies of the tour-guide publication *The Southern Cross Cable: A Tour*. They are freely available to visitors, indicated by the text “Please take one.”



Fig 25 *The Southern Cross Cable: A Tour*, installation showing (L-R) *The Long Walk to Northern Waters*; *The Southern Cross Cable: A Tour (Publication)*; and *A Power Troubles The Still*.

In total, there are five works comprising the installation.

Acts of power, control and agency recur throughout the installation whether at the hands of the artist, the audience, or those with power over the internet, supported (in a literal manner) by the depiction the human body. This theme encourages viewers to explore what power, control and agency they retain in their own digital lives. As a result, the audience is encouraged to question what individual agency they do, or do not, have as New Zealand citizens in shaping this dominant influence on contemporary New Zealand culture.

4.2 Takapuna: A Power Troubles The Still



Fig 26 Takapuna Beach, Auckland, New Zealand.

The SX cable beach landing site at Takapuna is located near 21 The Strand, at the point where The Strand meets the beach. The landing site is marked on the beach by a triangular signpost that reads *CABLE*, intended to alert boats to the cable protection area. The post is also marked by a sign that warns *Danger, High Voltage* and *Telecom cable dial 124 before you dig* with symbols indicating that electricity is nearby, and digging is not allowed. Located further up the post are Auckland Council signs marking an alcohol ban area, and providing information about restrictions on dog access to the beach.

Before coming ashore, the Takapuna leg of the SX passes through the Hauraki Gulf Cable Protection Area, a legally protected and monitored zone that runs from open water through the Hauraki Gulf to the beach landing point. No anchoring or fishing is allowed in this zone, which has led to a study into whether the zone functions as a de facto marine reserve.¹⁸⁷ The zone also passes through a disused explosives dumping ground that is managed and monitored by the New Zealand Navy. Due to the risk of encountering explosives, the SX was not buried in this area.¹⁸⁸ This area is also within recreational open

¹⁸⁷ N.T. Shears and N.R. Usmar, *The role of the Hauraki Gulf Cable Protection Zone in protecting exploited fish species: de facto marine reserve?* (Wellington: Science & Technical Publishing, Department of Conservation, 2006).

¹⁸⁸ "Hauraki Gulf Cable Zone – warning," The Fishing Website, accessed June 25, 2018, http://www.fishing.net.nz/forum/hauraki-gulf-cable-zone-warning_topic16905.html. Confirmed via personal communication with SX Station Manager.

water diving limits. From the beach, the cable travels inland up The Strand and past the Takapuna Library (a popular public library and home to a local history archive) and continues through the main shopping area towards the landing station in Northcote.

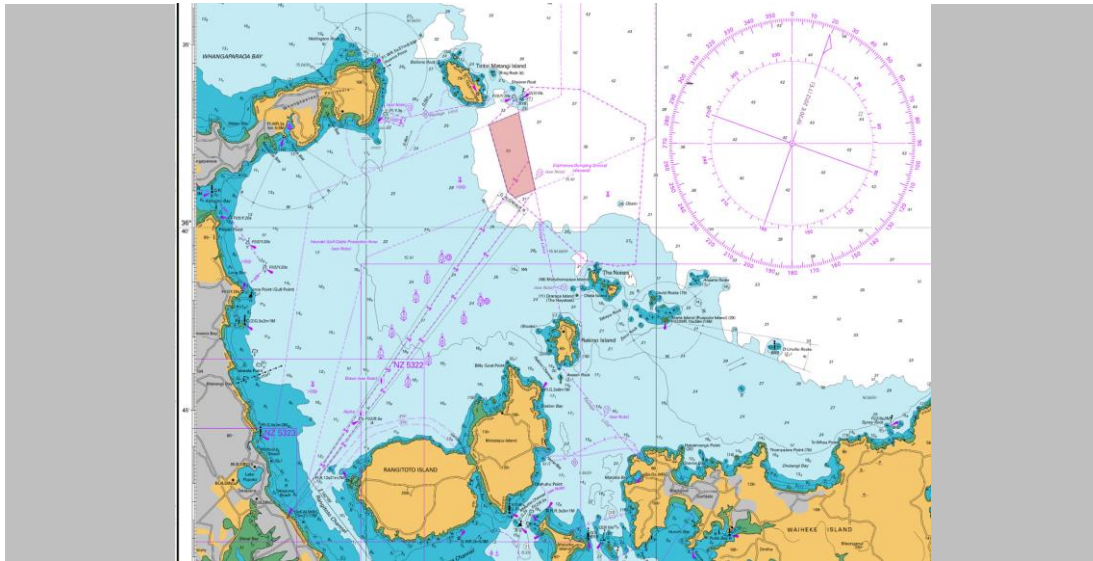


Fig 27 LINZ map of the Hauraki Gulf showing the intended dive site in the Cable Exclusion Zone.

Beaches hold iconic status in New Zealand culture, as Graeme Lay has noted in his introduction to *The New Zealand Book of the Beach 2*, “In an era of rapid social and physical change, the beach remains an abiding and constant presence in the lives of nearly all New Zealanders.”¹⁸⁹ Takapuna is one of New Zealand’s more notable beaches, which has earned it a place on the 2017 Trip Advisor list of Top Ten Beaches in New Zealand.¹⁹⁰ Located on the east coast of Auckland’s North Shore the beach is fifteen minutes’ drive from the Auckland CBD. It looks out towards Rangitoto Island, one of Auckland’s defining landmark features, and opens out onto the Hauraki Gulf, the primary shipping route to Auckland Harbour.

Takapuna’s history is intertwined with the Post-Settler Pākehā period of nation building, particularly through its literary connection.¹⁹¹ Also of thematic relevance to the study is

¹⁸⁹ Lay, ed., *The New Zealand Book of the Beach 2*, (Auckland: David Ling Publishing, 2008) 7.

¹⁹⁰ “TripAdvisor names best beaches in New Zealand and the world,” *Stuff*, February 23, 2017, <http://www.stuff.co.nz/travel/themes/beaches/89712376/tripadvisor-names-best-beaches-in-new-zealand-and-the-world>.

¹⁹¹ Graeme Lay, *North Shore Literary Walks* (Auckland: North Shore City Council, 2012), accessed June 27, 2015, <http://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/EN/newsevents/culture/heritage/Documents/northshoreliterarywalks.pdf>. North Shore City Council produced this “North Shore Literary Walks” self-tour guide in 2012. As the pamphlet notes “Nowhere in Takapuna is far from its beach, and most of the writers who have lived in the town chose homes within easy walking distance of the glorious sweep of sand which extends from The Strand to Hauraki Corner.” Indeed,

the fact that Australian aviator Charles Kingsford-Smith landed his aeroplane *Southern Cross* on the beach in 1933. The Southern Cross had been the first aeroplane to successfully complete a trans-Tasman flight in 1928.

When the SX landed on Takapuna Beach on 5 September 1999, Southern Cross Cables Ltd. hired media company Sweeny Vesty Ltd. to document the cable landing. I obtained a DVD of this footage during the early stages of my research (55 mins of footage, format-shifted from VHS).

Later, on Friday 10 November 2000, a dawn ceremony was conducted on Takapuna Beach to bless the Southern Cross Cable ahead of the full system being switched on. Arranged by Telecom New Zealand (now Spark NZ), aspects of the event were led by local Māori kaumātua Danny Tumahai and Dr. Takutaimoana Wikiriwhi of the Ngāti Whātua iwi, the tribe of the greater Auckland region.

As part of the ceremony, Tangaroa (the Māori god of the sea) was acknowledged, the symbolism of *te ahi kā* (a lit fire) was evoked, and the chant *He Aha Te Hau* was recited.¹⁹² *He Aha Te Hau* is also known as *Titahi's Chant*. *Titahi* was an eighteenth century Ngāti Whātua leader and this *whakataukī* (or proverb) is said to be his foretelling of the arrival of the British colonial discoverer Captain James Cook in the central Auckland harbour, the Waitemata.

He Aha Te Hau	What is that wind
He aha te hau e wawara mai?	What is that wind that softly blows?
He tiu, he raki	It is the breeze of the north
Nāna i ā mai te pūpū-tarakihi ki uta	That drives on shore the paper nautilus
E tīkina atu e au te ko tiu	If I bring from the north wind
Koia te pou, te pouwhakairo	The handsome carved post
Ka tū ki Wai-te-mata	And place it here in Wai-te-mata
I ōku wairangi e	My fears will be fulfilled
Kōkiri!	Advance!

authors including Frank Sargeson, Janet Frame, Maurice Gee and Bruce Mason spent time in the area, and this experience migrated into their writing. Maurice Gee's *In My Father's Den* (1972), contains scenes set at a Takapuna beach front property and the beach also featured in Ian Mune's 1991 film adaptation of Bruce Mason's novel *The End of the Golden Weather* (1959).

¹⁹² Danny Tumahai, personal communication, 2014.



Fig 28 An article in a local newspaper covering the Southern Cross Cable blessing ceremony.

Building on this narrative, my initial concept for a Takapuna-related work was titled *Kokiri! (He Aha Te Hau)*. I was interested in how it was said to prophecy the coming of the Europeans to the Waitemata, and what it meant for this chant to be used at a blessing for an internet cable. I was exploring the idea that the internet was having a colonising effect of its own. The presence of this chant at the birth of the SX spoke to this narrative in a manner that related to the construction of New Zealand national identity.

I hoped to create an audio recording of a member of Ngāti Whātua o Ōrakei reciting the chant, providing public access to it via a telephone service, and spoke with Danny Tumahai about this idea. He was generally supportive and recommended an appropriate person to ask.

The Ngāti Whātua iwi is an important one in the historic construct of New Zealand national identity as it played a significant part in the shift towards Bicultural Nationalism. This is the iwi who were central to the Bastion Point occupation in 1977–78, a 507-day occupation in protest of the proposed Crown sale of their tribal lands. Video of the occupation screened on television, presenting powerful images of national unrest to viewers around the country and contributing to the significant shifts that were made in the New Zealand political system towards settling these historic post-colonial grievances.

From November 2016 to January 2018 I was involved in discussions with members of Ngāti Whātua o Ōrakei, seeking their permission to include *He Aha Te Hau* in the project. Eventually this proposal was also declined and I refocussed the project.

The lack of a Māori voice in the overall project, which is about the relationship of the internet to contemporary New Zealand national identity, may seem short-sighted by some, particularly in a nation that emphasises the official appearance of bi-cultural unity. However, many Māori have fought long to gain the agency to represent themselves on their own terms. The manner in which this present-day proposal unfolded suggests that it would be ethically unsound for a Pākehā artist to make the mural *Te Ika-a-Maui* in today's cultural climate, and perhaps rightly so.

With the *He Aha Te Hau* project looking unlikely, I returned to the idea of a filmed dive, which had been mentioned as an additional project in my original SX proposal.

In December 2014, in my early stages of research, I had resolved to test the idea of placing my own body in proximity to the cable, gaining my PADI Open Water dive license, followed by the PADI Advanced Open Water Diver course (gained in March 2015). This experience confirmed that I was both physically and mentally capable of diving.

I was intrigued by the notion of communicating the immersive experience of a scuba dive through the emerging immersive technology of VR. I also saw a physical connection between the forms of the diving mask and the VR headset, and anticipated this would enhance the impact of the experience. In 2016, I initiated contact with a dive instructor in Auckland, with no positive follow-up response until October 2017. I made some enquiries into locally available 360 degree video tools, however I concluded that the technology was overly specialised and expensive, thus I resolved to creating a single-channel recording using a GoPro.

As any dive is subject to weather conditions, we were unable to make firm dates for the dive, however carried on planning towards the dates of 9–12 February 2018 when I hoped to complete two deep dives for the Deep Diver Specialty Course on the first day, and the two deeper dives at the Southern Cross site on the second day. The SX manager provided me with some more accurate data indicating the possible location of the cable in the disused explosives dumping ground (cables can shift with currents), which assisted our planning.

The mission was marred by a number of setbacks. In January the boat we were planning to use was involved in an accident, and therefore unable to be used. The Dive Instructor located another boat and skipper, however its availability was limited. When I arrived in

Auckland a cyclone was hitting the region, and I came down with a head cold.¹⁹³ The dive was postponed however I remained in Auckland and, once recovered, completed the training dives. A second cyclone was predicted to hit the Auckland region the following weekend (when the charter boat was next available), so we opted to try a shore dive in the hopes of coming across the cable. We were successful. We initially hoped to also complete the dive in the Explosives Dumping Ground, however this ultimately did not occur due to weather and time restrictions.



Fig 29 *A Power Troubles The Still*, video still.

A Power Troubles The Still is a single channel moving image work with a stereo audio track, filmed in high definition resolution (1080p) with a running time of 1m10s. It is projected on the southern wall of the gallery space, directly opposite *Te Ika-a-Maui*, with the width of the projection roughly the same as that of the mural.

The work is documentary footage of my dive to the cable and shows a range of improvised actions I performed with, and near, the SX cable in the Hauraki Gulf. The video fades in, and out, and is set on a constant loop. The sound throughout the work is that of bubbling, water movement, and heavy breathing through the scuba apparatus. The camera perspective stays in a relatively fixed perspective throughout the piece.

¹⁹³ Diving with a cold is very dangerous, as air bubbles can get trapped in nasal and ear passages, risking total hearing loss due to underwater pressure.

The work fades in to an image of myself floating, mid-frame, in full scuba gear. My hair is plaited and I wear a torch—a safety measure due to the poor visibility—which casts light, and occasionally illuminates the bottom surface of the dive site. The water is teal in colour and visibility is poor due to the post-cyclone conditions. Silt swirls around the frame giving the impression it is a murky, dirty environment.

I descend slowly using my hands to propel myself downwards and adjust my body position—in order to avoid kicking up the bottom sediment and further clouding the image. I reach to the bottom left of the frame. Glimpses of a long, narrow object appear through the silt. I wrap my hands around it and lift it slightly, looking directly at the camera when I do so. After a few seconds I adjust my position, kneeling up and pointing two ‘thumbs up’ at the camera, then a second gesture that lies somewhere between a sign of the horns¹⁹⁴ and a Shaka Sign.¹⁹⁵ I stroke the cable up and down with one hand, and then adjust my position into one that resembles a car squat or hunting pose, with my left hand on my knee and my right hand making the ‘thumbs up’ symbol. After this I swim upwards, and out of frame as the video fades out.

The basic premise of this work was to illustrate the point that New Zealand’s internet didn’t operate in cyberspace, wirelessly, or in the cloud, but was draped along the ocean floor: it can be touched. There are, however, further messages embedded in this work including themes of vulnerability, power, and identity. The title itself, *A Power Troubles The Still*, comes from a poem by Rudyard Kipling, titled “The Deep Sea Cables” (1893), which has been included in the tour guide publication (see Chapter 4.6). Here, it signals that there is power visible in this work: the literal power of electricity running through the cable, the power of myself as an individual holding this considerable symbol in my hands, and the unseen power of those who control it.

The work is the first one presented in the space. Thus, it functions as a set of introductory statements to the project that are realised in both the format and content of the work.

The chosen media, a large-scale video projection with audio, is intentional and speaks of the place of spectacle in the construction of national identity. The piece is sited directly

¹⁹⁴ “Sign of the horns,” Wikipedia, accessed July 3, 2018, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sign_of_the_horns.

¹⁹⁵ “Shaka Sign,” Wikipedia, accessed July 3, 2018, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shaka_sign.

opposite the mural *Te Ika-a-Maui*, and mimics its scale, in a challenge *and* a tribute. The teal water echoes a shade of teal found in the mural. Both images focus on a single protagonist: the mural on Māui (a Māori male), and the video on myself (a Pākehā female). This is an acknowledgement of the pair of figures/mascots on the New Zealand Coat of Arms, Zealandia and a Māori Chief, further reinforcing the theme of the construction of New Zealand national identity.

A secondary reference, further building on the theme of nostalgia, is that to a television ad produced for TelstraClear¹⁹⁶ in the early 2000s, titled “Hello World.”¹⁹⁷ This ad was also replete with New Zealand Bicultural Nationalism. In it, a boy walks along a rugged New Zealand surf beach, holding a flax head. He spies a rope emerging from the tide and pulls it ashore. As his endeavour continues, he looks up finds this rope is pulling a host of large international cities ashore. A narrator announces, “At last the isolation age is over, and the world is at our doorstep.” Here, the fable of *Te Ika-a-Māui* has once again been applied in a communications infrastructural context.

The sound permeates the entire installation space, working in a manner that doesn’t compete with *The Speargun Conspiracy*, and seeming to provide a soundtrack (albeit without seagulls) for *Te Ika-a-Maui*. It activates the darkness and blue colour of the space by co-opting them into its underwater world. By standing in the space, viewers are immersed in this world, but they have no ability to control it.

Through its choices in media, scale, style, environment, and short duration the work is designed to be easily consumed. As a video work, it is bound to be one of many short videos that will bombard its viewer’s daily lives. The large scale of the projection gives the effect of the performer being larger than life, floating taller than the audience and physically dominant in stature. Although the environment is an alien one, New Zealand audiences have a long history of objectifying the landscape for consumptive purposes. This consumer quality extends to the performer: as a caucasian female, I belong to a gender and ethnicity that has a long history of being objectified in New Zealand media for consumptive purposes. Further, I appears to acknowledge and consent to this

¹⁹⁶ “TelstraClear,” Wikipedia, accessed July 3, 2018, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/TelstraClear>. New Zealand’s third-largest telecommunications company before being acquired by Vodafone New Zealand in October 2012.

¹⁹⁷ “Best Ad Hello World Jak’s first Ad,” YouTube, published July 28, 2007, by charlesfab4, <https://youtu.be/5ijo8pHgWsk>.

objectification—I know I am being watched, performing for the camera and at one point appearing to dance, mermaid-like. I am not trying to make the audience feel awkward, but welcome (despite the sludge). My gestures are familiar to the ‘selfie generation’ and further normalise this highly abnormal environment.

Although I may appear to be performing for the benefit of the audience, my gestures begin to suggest otherwise.

The first pose (holding the cable) echoes Māui’s pose in the mural. Here, the protagonists both adopt the character of the romantic heroic individual. If Māui is heroically raising a new land which, in Taylor’s work, is an early symbol of globalisation what is Zealandia dredging up? This foreshadows the revelations of *The Speargun Conspiracy* and establishes a counterpoint to which the other works can respond.

The second pose (the thumbs up) references a classic selfie pose. ‘Selfie poses’ are one of the dominant expressions of individualism online, but also a cliché that may indicate a constructed identity, concealing true emotion and experience.

The third pose (the sign of the horns/Shaka) is an improvised gesture that is a personal acknowledgement of my Hutt Valley heritage (which is known for its bogan culture). Here I am inserting into the piece a strange, localised hand gesture that will have little meaning for most viewers. This is an act of resistance to the homogenising effect of a neocolonial internet.

The fourth pose, the car squat or hunting pose, is an expression of dominance, power, affluence (it is often performed in front of luxury cars by subjects who wish to imply they own the car, or by hunters in front of animals they have killed). Here I am implying I ‘own’ the cable and, for a minute, perhaps I do. Not in the sense of property, but in the sense of power and control. I am holding New Zealand’s internet in my hands, and the population is powerless to do anything about it. Exhibited in a public gallery, where thousands of New Zealand internet users will see it, I am flaunting this dominance. To those who realise it, this may evoke a sense of vulnerability.

These four gestures each speak to the protagonist’s position and power as performer, and function as a montage of comments on various relationships between the internet and the construction of identity.

Ultimately, this work clearly demonstrates exactly how close an individual can get to the Southern Cross Cable, and proves both its existence and tangibility.

4.3 Northcote: *Te Ika-a-Maui*



Fig 30 The SX landing station at Northcote.

The SX Northcote Landing Station is located at 1 Akoranga Drive, Northcote, and is where the Takapuna leg of the SX emerges from below ground and is connected to local networks. The station sits at the corner of two relatively busy urban roads. The site is largely devoid of signage, with the exception of security and health and safety warnings and a location sign: *1 Akoranga*. The site is surrounded by two security fences: a tall chain link fence, and a second alarm-monitored fence. A large automatic gate secures the main entrance to the site, and multiple security cameras are visible. Two large blue buildings and one smaller blue building occupy the site along with a cellphone tower. Although they are not labelled, the two larger building are the SX landing station and the former Commonwealth Pacific Cable (COMPAC) station. It is possible that the smaller third building houses an emergency backup generator.

From the public-facing side of the complex, the COMPAC station is most closely visible. The main door to the building, canopied and surrounded by barred windows, stands several metres back from the fence on Northcote Rd. Very little is visible through the windows.

In response to these findings, the public artwork I proposed to SX for Northcote was titled *Te Ika-a-Akoranga (Alteration)* and proposed to fit a glass door in place of the existing door to the COMPAC station. Additional spatial alterations would enable the mural's former wall to be visible from outside the complex.

This work was conceptually-driven, envisioned as a subtle intervention in the cable station that wouldn't call great attention to the site, but would return the formerly-public station foyer to public-visibility. Billy Apple's series *The Given as an Art Political Statement: Alterations* (1979–1980) provided inspiration as a conceptual process that spoke of artistic agency in the construction of New Zealand national identity, and presented a clear and concise model for artistic interventions in public space. As this work's existence was dependent on a very specific site, some adjustment of concept was required to adapt it to the City Gallery setting. I proposed to install a glass door, possibly painted red to echo the old New Zealand telephone booths, etched with a photograph of the mural's wall in the COMPAC station. The concept was that this door might function as a readymade object that (if attitudes shifted at SX) would be readily able to be freighted to Auckland, adjusted as necessary, and fitted in place of the existing COMPAC door. The application of red paint to the door would position it as a symbolic evoking of New Zealand's communications history, and the site's history as a former telephone cable station.¹⁹⁸

To develop this concept further, I sought to obtain a door that was fabricated in the style of old telephone booths, and glazed with wire mesh security glass—pre-empting the possibility that the security-conscious station managers might specify a door with such a feature. My Zero Waste practicing principles dictated that obtaining a second-hand door was preferable to constructing a new one. Although I sought actual telephone booth doors, none were readily available, however I successfully found and acquired a second-hand door that served as a near-approximation of a telephone booth and was glazed in the required manner. Eventually I decided upon a Resene colour, *Guardsman Red*, however the painting was not pursued further than this.

¹⁹⁸ Sam Neill dir., *Phone*. (Wellington: National Film Unit, 1974), Video, 3:41. Accessed June 25, 2018. <https://www.nzonscreen.com/title/phone-1973>.



Fig 31 Left: The entranceway to the COMPAC foyer, 2014; Right: the second-hand door.

The second component of the work was the creation of a laser-etched pane of glass. This was intended as a component that could be easily added and removed. Within the gallery installation it would function as a ghostly depiction of the wall, but could be removed if the door were installed in the COMPAC station. Having never etched previously in my practice, I investigated etching techniques online and sought advice from Massey University's 3D workshop staff. My existing image required editing prior to its being laser etched onto glass. After editing the image I undertook a test etching, however this was only moderately successful, as the resulting etched image did not hold the clarity I had hoped for.

As the concept developed, it became apparent that the etched image was not going to sit comfortably within the door. The grid lines in the image clashed with the grid of the wire mesh, and further obscured what was already a difficult image to decode. What was the point of this image being embedded in the glass? What was it telling the audience that couldn't be communicated in another way? The marks on the wall spoke about the processes the mural had been through. The grid lines with their added layer of black cement residue created an aesthetic that spoke of abstract expressionism and support/surface. I was compelled by this image on a personal level, and the conceptualist in me wanted to claim this wall as my own work—as a readymade. But this interest seemed to lead away from the function this image needed to play in the installation. Its purpose was not to assert itself as an image in its own right, but to supplement the mural *Te Ika-a-Maui*. It was an 'after' image to the mural's 'before' and needed to serve as documentation that evidenced the shifts the mural had undergone.

Returning to Apple's *Alterations*, I designed a poster that could sit alongside the red door, publicly proposing it as a replacement for the COMPAC station (Appendix IV). Although this could have worked as a resolution to the question of adapting the SX proposal to a gallery setting, it risked complicating the in-space experience of a relatively compact gallery space that was already housing a number of works. Ultimately, this work was not included in the final installation as it was agreed that the restored mural *Te Ika-a-Maui* itself was enough to represent the Northcote site. However, I made reference to this concept in the tour guide publication.

Through the process of *Te Ika-a-Akoranga*, sixteen tiles had been discovered to be missing from the original mural. These were left as gaps in the JWT version, in line with common restoration practices. In the digital version, missing tiles were indicated by an X-shaped image of a dragnet knot-intersection, echoing the 'X' placeholder graphic that is commonly found online when images are missing.

With the support of the Spark Art Trust, I recreated the sixteen missing tiles, painting them in 1:1 scale using carefully colour-matched gouache just as Taylor had done. These designs were used as the primary reference for the replica tiles created by a ceramicist for the 2018 installation of the restored mural. Further restoration work, and a mounting system for the City Gallery installation, was arranged by a trained conservator.



Fig 32 At work creating painted replicas of the missing tiles.

The inclusion of this now fully-restored mural *Te Ika-a-Maui* in the installation is both the next stage in the *Te Ika-a-Akoranga* project, and a point of comparison to which my own works respond. This is the first public installation of the fully restored mural, complete with replica tiles made to replace the missing sixteen. At the time of writing, conversations are underway with Auckland Council about permanently installing the

mural in the Takapuna Library, a public building located on The Strand, where the SX and COMPAC come ashore.



Fig 33 Standing in front of *Te Ika-a-Maui* at the launch of *Wanted: The Search for the Modernist Murals of E. Mervyn Taylor*. (L-R) Nicola Legat, Claire Robinson, myself, Dame Patsy Reddy, Sir David Gasgoine and Elizabeth Caldwell.

Alongside undertaking this research, the project *Te Ika-a-Akoranga* had led me to undertake a project to research, document, and preserve the additional murals E. Mervyn Taylor had made during his career. This resulted in a research project, *The E. Mervyn Taylor Mural Search and Recovery Project*, of which I was the Director, supported by the Massey University College of Creative Arts. This project culminated in a book, of which I was the editor, *Wanted: The Search for the Modernist Murals of E. Mervyn Taylor* published by Massey Press. The book was launched at City Gallery Wellington by the Governor General Dame Patsy Reddy on the opening day of *This is New Zealand*. Amongst other contributions to the book, I wrote a chapter “Voices Through The Deep” about the mural *Te Ika-a-Maui*, which contextualises this historic work in proximity to my own research (see Appendix V).

4.4 Whenuapai: *The Speargun Conspiracy*



Fig 34 The Southern Cross Cable landing station at Whenuapai.

The Whenuapai SX landing station is located at 153 Brigham Creek Road, directly opposite the Royal New Zealand Air Force base, north-west of Auckland City.

Due to the fact I had identified and visited the Takapuna and Northcote sites during the *Te Ika-a-Akoranga* project, I arrived at the Whenuapai and Muriwai sites later in the project. The site was smaller than that of Northcote, but employed similar strategies to keep itself inconspicuous, including security cameras and fences. The only signage in place that of the address number “153” and information relating to security measures around the site.

The site showed indications of both historical and contemporary security measures. Signage included marker posts labelled with Telecom’s brand and “DANGER: BURIED CABLES CONTACT TELECOM 124 BEFORE YOU DIG IN VICINITY”, while building signs read “KEEP OUT: AUTHORISED PERSONS ONLY”. Swipe card readers were visible on buildings around the complex. Infrastructural work was taking place outside the site at the time, and several holes had been dug at intervals directly alongside the site, on the same side of the road but several metres from the station’s fence line. Plastic pipes were visible in the hole, perhaps one of them housed the cable. This sat at odds with the overly-secure nature of the landing stations.

Across the road lay the Royal New Zealand Auckland Air Force Base. A lidded access shaft was embedded in the ground, with another Telecom ‘do not dig’ marker post nearby. Further “CAUTION” marker posts were on this side of the road that warned of a “Fibre optic cable in vicinity”, however were labelled with the brand of domestic backbone internet carrier “FX networks” rather than Telecom.

The Whenuapai air base is central to the location's history, so it was clear from the beginning that the relationship between this airfield and the landing station would be a dominant narrative. As the New Zealand Defence Force page on the site states:

RNZAF Base Auckland is the Air Force's largest operational air base and is located to the north west of Auckland City on the upper western reaches of the Waitemata Harbour. It's home to a number of squadrons including those carrying out airborne surveillance of New Zealand waters, the South Pacific and the Southern Ocean, as well as tactical and strategic transport, including to Antarctica.¹⁹⁹

The airfield was originally constructed in 1937 as the Auckland base of the Royal New Zealand Air Force and its *Wellington* bomber aircraft. Following this, the airfield served as Auckland's civil international airport from 1945. In 1965 the civil international airport was relocated to its current location in Manukau, and the Air Force resumed sole occupancy of the site. The Southern Cross Cable landing station was built directly opposite the base prior to the cable coming online in 2000, but I was unable to identify the exact date.

Due to my established process of using Google satellite images to identify the SX sites, I initially turned to this strategy in order to seek further information on the site. It occurred to me that the birds-eye-view of these satellite images had a connection with aviation—as aeroplanes remain a significant method for obtaining photographs of sites from this perspective.²⁰⁰ Further, the connection with satellites provided a reference to the commonly-held idea that the internet is a satellite-based technology. I discovered that Google Earth Pro included a tool to review and download high-resolution historic satellite imagery of a given site. Twenty-nine images of the Whenuapai site were available, dating

¹⁹⁹ "Camps and Bases: Whenuapai," New Zealand Defence Force, accessed June 25, 2018, <http://campsandbases.nzdf.mil.nz/our-camps-and-bases/whenuapai/>.

²⁰⁰ This line of enquiry also led to some early works that considered drones as part of this narrative. Drones are a present-day development in consumer technology that enables members of the public to capture their own birds-eye-view images. Further, drones also hold potential as host sites for Low Orbit Server Stations, ad-hoc network, or even the internet. (See Mark Brown, "The Pirate Bay plans low-orbit server drones to escape legal jurisdiction," *Wired*, March 19, 2012, <http://www.wired.co.uk/article/pirate-bay-drones>. And "Facebook drone that could bring global internet access completes test flight," *The Guardian*, July 2, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2017/jul/02/facebook-drone-aquila-internet-test-flight-arizona>.) However, as the progressed it seemed that looking back in time, rather than forwards, was a recurring strategy so I abandoned this idea, although it did lead to my creation of a set of fibre optic dream catcher works that were successful, in their own whimsical way.

back to 2004, so I duly downloaded them all, and later edited this set down to 26 images for the SX proposal due to some images being similar in both date and content.

A review of this imagery revealed the most dramatic shift in the visual appearance of the site over the time period: a large-scale excavation project between the Air Force base and the SX landing station, documented taking place around 3 March 2012. In order to check that this occurrence was indeed unusual I turned to the Crown Historic Aerial Photographic Archive at Archives New Zealand.²⁰¹ This turned up several images dating back to the 1950s that suggested the excavation lines were unlikely to be for irrigation or drainage purposes as there did not appear to have been a past water issue in that particular location. This, in combination with the aerial, military, and satellite imaging themes that were connected to the site led to questions about the Whenuapai station's relationship with the previously identified SX mass surveillance narrative.

I began to wonder if these excavation marks were connected with Snowden's allegations that the SX was tapped for GCSB-led mass surveillance purposes under *Project Speargun*. The Whenuapai station had, after all, been included in the US Government's list of "critical infrastructure and key resources located abroad" and the US, through the NSA, were leading the Five Eyes mass-surveillance programme that the Speargun project was said to be part of. Snowden presented GCSB documents showing that Project Speargun was underway in March 2012—the same time as these excavation marks appeared. Was there a connection? I resolved to use the Whenuapai site to respond to this narrative.

The work proposed for Whenuapai in my public art proposal was titled *For The Good Of The Land / Ipurangi* (working title) and proposed to respond to the surveillance narrative associated with the site through the installation of a billboard outside the Whenuapai landing station that depicted a collection of historic aerial imagery of the site.

²⁰¹ A government-commissioned historic resource that is managed by Land Information New Zealand (LINZ).



Fig 35 Digital rendering of the envisioned billboard outside the Whenuapai station.

The first part of the working title of this project “For the good of the land” is a translation of the Māori words *whenua* and *pai*. *Whenua* can mean country; land; nation; state,²⁰² while the meanings of *pai* include to approve; consent; be good.²⁰³ My intention here was to pose this title as a question or implied statement (depending on the voice it represented). We might ask “is this mass surveillance actually good for the country/nation/state?”, while those who are implementing it might assert that it is being done because it is, indeed, best for the people (regardless of whether they formally consent to it or not).²⁰⁴

As the topic of surveillance and security was a sensitive one, the proposal to focus on this theme was a potentially bold move and (in my opinion) the least likely to be accepted by a corporation that was potentially risk-averse. However, avoiding any discussion of this high-profile topic would amount to self-censorship and threaten the credibility of this study. Therefore, I felt obliged to include this narrative somewhere in the body of works and my research pointed towards Whenuapai as the most comfortable fit. The proposal was carefully worded in an attempt to mitigate the seriousness of this narrative (‘gently’, ‘historic’), and focussed on already publicly-accessible aerial imagery—which I thought would be a relatively innocuous response to a polarising theme. Initial responses

²⁰² “Whenua,” Māori Dictionary, accessed July 2, 2018, <https://maoridictionary.co.nz/search?idiom=&phrase=&proverb=&loan=&histLoanWords=&keywords=whenua>.

²⁰³ “Pai,” Māori Dictionary, accessed July 2, 2018, <https://maoridictionary.co.nz/search?idiom=&phrase=&proverb=&loan=&histLoanWords=&keywords=pai>.

²⁰⁴ Kuehn, *The Post-Snowden Era*, 10. This returns once again to Kuehn’s suggestion of a public “willing to accept the potential infringement on privacy and civil liberties as a necessary tradeoff for the promise of security.”

suggested this tactic was effective, however the ultimate response declining my proposal reinforced my suspicions about a risk-averse organisation.

In costing the SX proposal, I discovered that placing a billboard work in the Auckland region was a complicated, time consuming, and potentially costly undertaking. This led to a second concept: that of a post-box housing a solar-powered digital screen that played a slideshow of the satellite images. This would require audience members to bend and peer through a slot to engage with the work in an implied act of voyeurism. Rather than 'yell' like a billboard does (as a popular advertising format), the post box would be a subtler intervention that also spoke to New Zealand's communications history, as the Takapuna door would have. It could easily be installed on site without building consents and would be less expensive to produce.

The production of this work began with attempts to source an old community post box. I scoured second-hand sites, and contacted NZ Post directly. Such an object was not readily forthcoming, so I made plans to construct one from some left-over pieces of MDF I had obtained earlier. I located some existing old-style wooden post boxes and took photos and measurements. I created a plan for constructing the object, but put this on hold in order to resolve the issue of the images and screen.

Following the shift from the public art proposal, I proposed to install this post box work in the gallery. Due to my Zero-Waste strategy I aimed to re-use a digital photo frame that I already owned, and that had been previously tested in a gallery exhibition. I had sourced a collection of historic satellite images during my research phase, however these were not all aligned with the same perspective and crop lines. I digitally adjusted the images using a consistent reference image, skewing, adjusting brightness and contrast, and cropping to match the digital photo frame's resolution. I created a slideshow that had relatively smooth transitions, and tested it on my screen. I then assembled a cardboard model of the postbox from old cardboard boxes and installed the screen. Looking through the mouth of the post box, however, the resolution of the screen was too low to be effective. In considering the practical aspects of this work being installed in a gallery space, further issues arose: how would people of different heights experience the work? The viewing space was small, and it was difficult to see the entire image. This seemed unnecessarily complicated and the work became more about navigating the viewing device than engaging with the content. The postbox wasn't going to work.

Another strategy emerged, inspired by an exhibit in the exhibition *Gallipoli: The scale of our war*, at Te Papa Tongarewa Museum of New Zealand, and therefore in keeping with

the research project's exploration of themes touching on national identity. I had been drawn to this installation as an approximation of a tour, with a clearly implied trajectory that led visitors around the exhibit. The work in question was an educational work that consisted of a moving image projected onto a 3D topographic surface. As the image shifted, it showed movements taking place in the landscape over a period of time. I obtained elevation data about Whenuapai, and created a rough cardboard topographic surface however, as the landscape was relatively flat, the effect was negligible.

This process made me wonder if these display mechanisms would actually detract from the key message in the work: to highlight the peculiarity of the excavation marks leading between the air base and the landing station. What was I trying to imply through these images? My suspicion was that these excavation marks were related to Snowden's accusations of the SX being tapped by the GCSB through project Speargun, but were these images enough to communicate this backstory to the public? I needed some additional clarity, with an expanded argument supporting my theory.

I dug deeper into the story of the tapping of the cable through Project Speargun. I returned to the *Moment of Truth*, and media information that had emerged since.²⁰⁵ I printed out all the articles and information I could find, and began matching the allegations to the satellite images, and the timeframes appeared to reinforce my suspicions. A further narrative emerged involving the abuse of digital surveillance tools by a government minister, Tim Groser (discussed later). I returned to Archives New Zealand and located further historic satellite images of the site. Following this I became aware of a website, retrolens.nz, that made these images available for download and reuse under a Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 license and through this method, and my own research at Archives New Zealand, I built a set of eight images that I then edited for consistency.

Upon closer inspection of the images, I discovered that a new building had been constructed around the same time as the excavation marks appeared. Seen from this aerial perspective, this building had a striking resemblance to a data warehouse, images

²⁰⁵ "Moment Of Truth" was an event held at the Auckland Town Hall on 15 September, 2014, where Edward Snowden and journalist Glenn Greenwald revealed information about Project Speargun and the tapping of the Southern Cross Cable, alleging that New Zealanders were subject to mass internet surveillance under the GCSB with the full knowledge of the Prime Minister John Key.

rationalizations, ‘doesn’t want to make a fuss’ or ‘make a fool of himself’”.²⁰⁶ Therefore it would require delicate handling. As John Gilliom has noted, “Privacy discourse had become something like background noise in a complex cultural environment.”²⁰⁷ Kuehn elaborates, “The stories are so common they are like the ‘socio-political equivalent of elevator music hovering in some strange space between silence and meaningless presence.”²⁰⁸ I would have to frame this work very carefully in order to focus the attention of my audience towards the scandal of what this excavation implied.

In the lead up to the 2014 election, at a similar time to Snowden’s revelations about Project Speargun, investigative journalist Nicky Hager released his book entitled *Dirty Politics* which claimed that senior National Party politicians used right-wing blog sites to attack public figures who opposed or criticised party policy. Prime Minister John Key dismissed Hager as little more than “a screaming left-wing conspiracy theorist”.²⁰⁹

Conspiracy theory theorist Matthew Dentith, has shown that “Conspiracy theories are often portrayed as unwarranted beliefs, typically supported by suspicious kinds of evidence. Yet [. . .] conspiracies occur—and [. . .] if we take an evidential approach, judging individual conspiracy theories on their particular merits, belief in such theories turns out to be warranted in a range of cases.”²¹⁰ Thus the title of the work, *The Speargun Conspiracy*, reclaims the word “conspiracy” (which automatically implies the word “theory”) and asserts its status as one that is *warranted*. By owning this term up front, it hopes to deter critics who might use the term “conspiracy” to dismiss the work.

I created a single-channel video work that functions as a factual piece: with the artist as reporter, public servant, or educator making a compelling case in support of her theory.

²⁰⁶ Bill Pearson, “Fretful Sleepers: A Sketch of New Zealand Behaviour and Its Implications for the Artist”, in *Great New Zealand Argument*, ed. Russell Brown, (Auckland: Activity Press, 2005), 53. “The New Zealander delegates authority, then forgets it. He has shrugged off responsibility and wants to be left alone. [. . .] He pleads rationalizations, ‘doesn’t want to make a fuss’ or ‘make a fool of himself’, but generally he does what he is told, partly because everyone else is doing it, partly because he wants to be sociable and cooperate in a wishfully untroubled world.”

²⁰⁷ John Gilliom, “A response to Bennet’s ‘In Defence of Privacy’.” *Surveillance & Society* 8, no.4 (2011), 500–504.

²⁰⁸ Kuehn, *The Post-Snowden Era*, 115.

²⁰⁹ “Nicky Hager book shows National’s ‘dirty politics’,” *TV3 News*, 13 August, 2014
<https://www.newshub.co.nz/politics/nicky-hager-book-shows-nationals-dirty-politics-2014081317>.

²¹⁰ Matthew R. X. Dentith, “Conspiracy Theories on the Basis of the Evidence,” *Synthese*, (2017): 1–19.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11229-017-1532-7>.

As public engagement has been integral to my practice, I was prepared for this role, and originally tested the piece as a slideshow. I mocked up a rough presentation, placing satellite images on the right-hand-side and images of key documents on the left. This format felt right, but was too static and dry, echoing media analysis videos on YouTube rather than the physical, tactile process of my archival research. Recalling my discovery that the human body is rarely depicted in proximity with internet infrastructure, I decided to film myself in front of the slideshow projection, pointing to relevant parts of the images, however this could cause lighting issues detracting from the message. This artwork wasn't directly about me, it was addressing Whenuapai.

Returning to the earlier idea of projecting downwards, I chose the format of a single-channel video filming a pair of hands cycling through the material, with a narrator reading a script that related to the images. As the first portion of the story was focussed primarily on satellite images, I adjusted the layout so that the satellite images were on the right, and key documents on the left, echoing reading from left to right. The script also included a narrative relating to the suspicious circumstances under which the GCSB Amendment Act was passed,²¹¹ however this complicated the message further than I wished.

This video work could be either projected on a tabletop, or displayed on a large monitor. Considering my archival experience, I was drawn to the potential of a bird's-eye-view video work of a manually illustrated table-top narrative. This perspective also held potential in its popular use as an aesthetic of (satellite) surveillance. I envisioned this would be suitably light-hearted to make the narrative palatable in a way that didn't come across too heavily or 'preachy'. I had seen such a strategy used before, in the first season of the UK comedy series *Look Around You* (2002) which satirised and paid homage to early 1980s British educational films and school programmes.²¹² This aesthetic was also alive in New Zealand television, as the National Film Unit (a government initiative) also created public education films during this period, on subjects including proper phone

²¹¹ Involving Peter Dunne voting in favour of the legislation, despite being initially publicly opposed to it. This followed scandal involving leaked GCSB information which had seen him lose his position in the National-led cabinet. His position in Cabinet was reinstated some months following his vote.

²¹² Robert Popper and Peter Serafinowicz, "Water Experiment #1," in *Look Around You – Series One*, ep. 3, (2002), accessed June 25, 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bi-Up8Xuh9c>.

etiquette.²¹³ This strategy was also used by Michael Stevenson in his work *Introduccion a la teoria de la probabilidad* (2008).²¹⁴

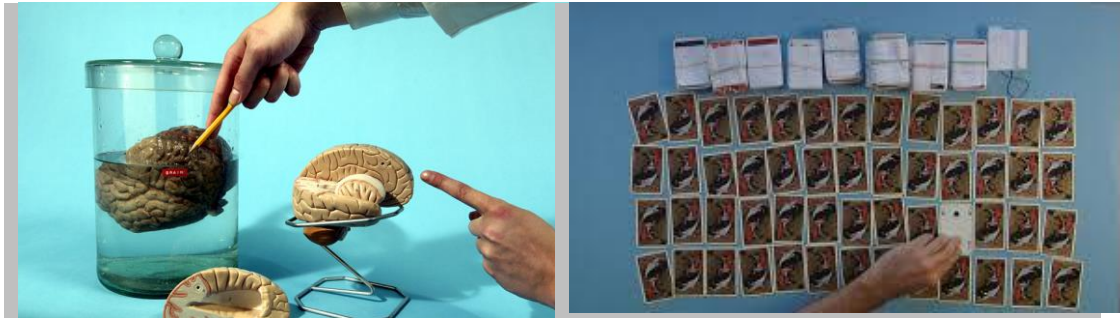


Fig 37 Left: Still from Popper and Serafinowicz, *Look Around You, Series 1, Module 9: Brain*; Right: Still from Michael Stevenson, *Introduccion a la teoria de la probabilidad* (2008).

To test this concept, I divided the project into several phases: (1) The development of a script in synergy with the sourcing and editing of supporting visual material; (2) A test audio recording of the script with a voice actor; (3) The construction of a set, props, and costuming; (4) The video recording, in a professional studio environment, of a series of test videos in synchronisation with the audio track; (5) The editing together of audio and video elements; (6) A review of the resulting work (including testing the work on others) and edits to the script and filming approach as necessary. Following this, the process was repeated until the desired outcome was reached.

To provide the piece with the appropriately accessible-yet-official tone I needed a suitable voice to act as narrator. Accepting that my voice was not the right one, and considering the era evoked by my inspiration *Look Around You*, I recruited an actor whose voice had the timbre of an announcer from the heyday of New Zealand television: the 1980s to early 1990s during the era of the Goodnight Kiwi.²¹⁵ I prepared a script, being careful to pen it in a neutral, factual tone and testing it against my images and documents in order to refine it. I created a series of rough audio recordings, which I edited to match the timings of my envisioned video piece.

²¹³ Neill, *Phone*.

²¹⁴ I like to think Stevenson's piece was similarly inspired by *Look Around You*. Stevenson's piece was included in a postal art project by the Wellington-based group "Alterations," whereby participants could receive a DVD of the work by mail and view it work in the privacy of their own home before forwarding it to the next participant.

²¹⁵ "The Goodnight Kiwi," YouTube, accessed June 25, 2018, <https://youtu.be/2H2BOGGUbm4>.

Following this stage, I prepared to film my video work. I arranged a collection of physical paper records that were suitable for the recording and practiced the manner in which they would unfold in front of the camera, making adjustments as necessary (i.e. adding dates to images to assist the narrative, and adding image credits as per licensing requirements).²¹⁶

I created a rough cut where I added the audio track to the best take to create a test video, reviewed this work made slight adjustments to the script (for clarity of language) and video (for clarity of image), then undertook a second audio recording session, filmed a second video in the studio, edited, and completed the work. This was productively tested on the gallery's monitor, resolving the method by which the video would be displayed.

Alongside this process, I made contact with investigative journalist David Fisher—a senior writer at the NZ Herald newspaper who was the main New Zealand journalist who had been following and writing about the Speargun story. I discussed my findings with him, and he concurred that “I’ve repeated what seems to me to be all that you did in forming the theory around the building on the Whenuapai base and I reckon you’re spot on—or at least, there’s enough there to raise seriously legitimate questions.”²¹⁷

Fisher enquired with a NZDF spokesperson about the new building and was told “The building [...] is the Aeronautical Engineering Workshops (AEW Building), a part of the Maintenance Support Squadron on Base Auckland. This building was built September 2012 and is home to a number of Engineering workshops, including the Metal Shop, Machine Shop, Composites Bay, Armament Servicing Bay, and the Woodwork Section. The main purpose of these workshops is the repair, manufacture and prototyping of Aircraft (and non-aircraft) components for all RNZAF Aircraft types.” The satellite image I sourced showed that the building was largely constructed by March 2012. Further, if it was for the prototyping of Aircraft, shouldn’t it have clear paths for aeroplanes to access the runway? This building didn’t appear to have such access (as neighbouring hangars

²¹⁶ This included adding CC-BY 3.0 attributions to the Retrolens images. Google Earth stated that their images were likely to be able to be used under Fair Use-type provisions (Fair Dealing in New Zealand), but also stated that clear, visible attribution must be included in all uses of the content, when it is shown. I didn’t obtain rights to show further records as, due to my knowledge of Copyright Law, I felt I could make a case for the reuse of these works being transformative and permissible under New Zealand’s Fair Dealing exceptions to Copyright Law.

²¹⁷ Personal communication, February 6, 2018.

clearly did). Fisher confirmed he would continue trying to locate records that might verify this suspicion, however, by the time of writing, no results had emerged.



Fig 38 *The Speargun Conspiracy*, video still.

The Speargun Conspiracy is a single channel moving image work filmed in ultra-high-definition (4k) that describes a conspiracy between the New Zealand government, its spy agency the GCSB, and the international Five Eyes network (led by the US agency the NSA) to spy on the New Zealand public via a tap on the Southern Cross Cable. The running time is 5m09s and it includes an audio track, recorded in stereo in a professional studio. It is displayed in the installation space on a wall-mounted monitor located in the centre of the western wall. The screen is a 49 inches and 4k resolution, creating a 1:1 ratio so the reproduced image is the same size as the actual content in the work and the text on the printed pages in the video can be read by the viewer. The video fades in, and out, and is set on a constant loop. A bench seat enables the viewer to sit comfortably for the duration of the work, and also to turn away from the video and experience the relationship between *A Power Troubles The Still* and *Te Ika-a-Maui*.

The work unfolds in a linear narrative, beginning with a satellite images of the Air Force base and landing station site in 1940,²¹⁸ and progressing through the years up until 2018. It consists of two main components: the voice of a narrator reading a script, and footage of documents being placed on a flat, grey tabletop²¹⁹ by a pair of androgynous, Caucasian,

²¹⁸ Sourced from Google Earth and the Crown Historic Aerial Photographic Archive.

²¹⁹ Painted a Resene colour called *Archive Grey*, although this isn't disclosed in the work itself.

hands. The work is filmed from a point-of-view perspective in a single take. The voice of the narrator and the images placed on screen relate to each other in a symbiotic manner (the full script and list of images is included in Appendix VI). The face of the narrator is never seen, nor is any additional part of the body to which the hands and lower arms belong—they remain anonymous.

The narrator's voice is that of a New Zealand male. It has the timbre of a generic New Zealand television announcer, the disembodied voice that introduces and advertises television shows in a tone that is just positive enough to not be neutral, but careful not to display any particular opinion or emotion. The script describes particular events relating to the site's history.

The pair of hands extend from the cuffs of a white business shirt which suggest the performer is a white-collar worker, perhaps a public servant, or a whistleblower. The hands first place a printed heading "The Speargun Conspiracy" in view, typed in the font Futura.²²⁰ They continue to place printouts of aerial/satellite images of the site on the left-hand side of the viewing field, and leaked documents and news articles relating to the narrative on the right. The sheets are sometimes placed askew, disrupting the formal tone of the work, indicating that it is perhaps unofficial, or even amateur. The intention of this strategy is to put the viewer at ease, lightening the mood of the piece. This strategy is further emphasised through the use of carefully timed forced, literal, hand gestures that relate to the words spoken by the narrator (i.e. pointing to relevant parts of visible documents, turning pages, highlighting areas of interest in the photographs with a red whiteboard marker). These operate as cheesy, comic relief moments in the increasing seriousness of the piece, and also reinforce an air of nostalgia. The analogue aesthetic is a counterpoint to digital communications, and a reference to the public educational films mentioned earlier.

²²⁰ Futura is a geometric sans-serif typeface designed by Paul Renner and released in 1927. According to Wikipedia, "Futura has an appearance of efficiency and forwardness," and was marketed as "capturing the spirit of modernity," using the English slogan "the typeface of today and tomorrow." Further, this font breaks away from the font used for the phrase "Project SPEARGUN underway" in the GCSB slide that appears later in the piece. This font is Verdana—which is a font closely connected with computing (and internet) culture. Verdana is a humanist sans-serif typeface designed by Matthew Carter for the Microsoft Corporation. Released in 1996, Verdana was bundled with subsequent versions of the Windows operating system, as well as their Office and Internet Explorer software on Windows, classic Mac OS, and Mac OS X. Windows OS is the official computing operating system used by New Zealand government agencies.

The work begins with an account of Whenuapai's historic association with aviation. The photographs are in black and white, marked with the year they were taken. This does not always align with the dates mentioned in the script due to images available in the archive not necessarily aligning with the dates in the narrative, so subsequent images nearest the mentioned date are used. This may confuse viewers, but the decision to keep these dates distinct and factual unto themselves has an added value: it immediately signifies that the images may contain different information to the script, implying that viewing the work with a critical eye may be rewarded— foreshadowing the observational frame of mind required when looking for sites that are designed to be inconspicuous (a requirement of those who chose to undertake the site-tour aspect of the project). The aerial photograph dated 2003 marks a transition to colour images, signifying the shift in photographic technology that had taken place between 1972 and 2003. This also hints at the shift in communications infrastructure brought about by the cable.

The phrase “north-west of Auckland City” is included as a reference to Edward Snowden's claim that “There are actually NSA facilities in New Zealand. One of them is in Auckland, another is in the north of the country.” This statement clearly suggests that Whenuapai could house one of these facilities.

From 2004 onwards, images shift away from the Crown Archive images to Google Earth satellite images. This distinction is important: while the Crown images were commissioned with public money by the New Zealand Government and have since been made available to the public under an open access license, the Google Earth images have been commissioned by a private US-based organisation and are not licensed openly, although they acknowledge Fair Use and state that “Generally speaking, as long as you're following our Terms of Service and you're attributing properly, we're cool with your using our maps and imagery.”²²¹ It is worth noting that, while the original records of the Crown Archive are held at Archives New Zealand in Wellington, Google's database is housed offshore in numerous data centres. As of March 2017, Google has eight data centres in the US, one in South America, four in Europe and two in Asia, with further centres planned in North America (3), Europe (4), South America (1), Asia (2), and Australia (1). None of these are in New Zealand, meaning that, if New Zealand were to lose internet access, it

²²¹ “Using Google Maps, Google Earth and Street View: Uses in Television and Film,” Google, Last Modified: December 17, 2015, <https://www.google.com/permissions/geoguidelines.html#maps-video>.

would no longer have access to these images (and many more resources). This segment points out that, when the US Government list was published in 2009, the SX was considered the only resource or infrastructure site in New Zealand that might impact the US if damaged or destroyed. While New Zealand clearly has numerous resource and infrastructure sites, most of them are not of interest to the US. This leads to the question: why is the SX of such interest to the US over other NZ resources and infrastructure?

At 1m39s the moment of central importance to this work unfolds: the communication of my own new theory relating to the Project Speargun, expressed publicly for the first time as part of this installation:

Named after a gun used in underwater fishing, the project's first phase entails the installation of equipment enabling access to the Southern Cross Cable, which by this time, carries 98% of New Zealand's international internet traffic.

Fresh excavation marks appear between the Whenuapai Air Force base and the Southern Cross Cable landing station—a metaphorical “speargun” has been fired in the form of an intercepting cable.

A data centre is built on the site of a former telephone exchange to handle the amount of information captured by the system.

My argument that Project Speargun was undertaken at the Whenuapai site is based on the timing of key events presented in the video, and the proximity of the excavation marks to the landing station.

The mention of ‘underwater fishing’ is a connection with two other works in *The Southern Cross Cable: A Tour*, particularly the dive video *A Power Troubles The Still* and the mural *Te Ika-a-Maui*. The statistics provided emphasise the significance of the cable, and the act.

The telephone exchange site is marked on a 1962 photograph of the Air Base available on the New Zealand Defence Force website,²²² so this is a known piece of information, however my suggestion that this new building is a data centre is entirely new.

The subsequent narrative relating to the “WTO Project” is intended as a case-in-point that illustrates a New Zealand example of how this surveillance capability might be abused by those in power for their own personal gain. Here, National Government minister Tim Groser used the XKeyscore surveillance system to spy on fellow candidates vying for the job of Director-General of the World Trade Organisation.²²³ Kuehn had observed that “Much of the academic and popular research published to date on Snowden and surveillance also takes a North American and British perspective, often with little mention of New Zealand other than to identify it as a Five Eyes partner”.²²⁴ She had subsequently found that media coverage of the Snowden revelations lacked stories of a personal nature, which placed the individual in context of implications of mass surveillance. This had contributed to the formation of a general sense of powerlessness that prevented a mass social movement taking hold in reaction to the allegations of Project Speargun and the passing of the GCSB Amendment Act (which effectively expanded government surveillance capabilities despite general public opposition to the law).²²⁵

One of the main intentions of this piece was to communicate a memorable, yet complex statement about New Zealand sovereignty and national identity. The life-size quality of the moving image display, and the point-of-view perspective of the camera, places the audience in the position of the protagonist, suggesting that the audience member has agency in this narrative.

But the character of the protagonist is a complicated one. They may equally be a member of the GCSB outlining the secret facts (an anonymous member of that powerful voyeuristic Five Eyes surveillance collective), or perhaps the protagonist is one of ‘us’,

²²² New Zealand Defence Force, “Camps and Bases: Whenuapai,” fourth image in the image scroll.

²²³ Nicky Hager and Ryan Gallagher, “How spy agency homed in on Groser’s rivals,” NZ Herald, March 23, 2015, http://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=11421370.

²²⁴ Kuehn, *The Post-Snowden Era*, 9.

²²⁵ Kuehn, *The Post-Snowden Era*, 75.

engaged in an act of citizen-counter-surveillance (or, as I prefer to call it, “Community Watch”). There are multiple levels of voyeurism apparent in this piece. The viewer is both a member of the public who are being surveilled, and a voyeur returning the gaze of the Five Eyes—photography and video are, after all, the main languages of surveillance.

But the ultimate delivery of this intent lies in the last words uttered by the narrator “Why is there still a knot in my stomach?” This statement operates as a stark contrast to the previously neutral tone, and suddenly imbues the narrator with character, emotion, personal opinion, and agency. If this disembodied voice is questioning what he is seeing, perhaps we should be too. I hoped this suggestion of agency and would shape the manner in which audiences engaged with the tour guide.

The pairing of this statement of unease with an image of clouds suggests that the view of the invisible gods can sometimes be obscured—a reminder of the limits of voyeurism. As Foucault pointed out, those who can be watched can be controlled. If we are both being watched, and watching, are we both under control, and in control?²²⁶

The ultimate location of this story in the present day (2018) implies that it is still unfolding, and able to be influenced.

²²⁶ Foucault, *Discipline and punish*.

4.5 Muriwai: *The Long Walk to Northern Waters*



Fig 39 The Beach Access Road at Muriwai Beach, under which the Southern Cross Cable is buried.

The SX cable beach landing site at Muriwai is located near the Muriwai Beach Riding Centre, Coast Rd.

I visited Muriwai a total of three times during my research. My first visit took place in December 2013. I initially walked up the beach from the main township, but didn't find the cable landing site. After this experience I contacted Nicole Starosielski, who provided me with more specific directions. I made my first successful visit to the landing site in July 2015 with Evan Roth, and visited again the following year in November 2016 as part of a trial of the tour with a friend.

Muriwai beach, on Auckland's west coast, is a vastly different site to Takapuna. Located approximately 40 minutes drive from the Auckland CBD, the beach is renowned for its wind, wild surf and black sand. The beach opens onto the Tasman sea and is part of the Muriwai Regional Park. The SX comes in towards the northern end of the beach off Coast Road, near the Muriwai Beach Riding Centre, adjacent to Woodhill Forest. The cable is buried on Auckland Council land to the south of Ōkiritoto Stream and west of Coast Road, under the beach access road that leads west from the end of Coast Road. From here the cable connects with Alexandria in Sydney, Australia, and inland with the Whenuapai landing station.

Although there is no cable marker triangle like at Takapuna, the Muriwai path of the SX can be identified by three high-voltage marker posts, which warn the public not to dig due to risk of electrocution. These are spaced along the beach access way on Coast Road, with an additional post near the entrance to Woodhill Forest marked NZPO (dating back to the era when the New Zealand Post Office managed these cables). Painted white to

various degrees and weathered by the elements, the posts feature signs that begin with a faded *DANGER* heading, and warn *HIGH VOLTAGE: TELECOM CABLE: DIAL 124 BEFORE YOU DIG: Telecom: CABLE LOCATION SERVICE*. An “MP” code reads 484 on one post, 46 on another, and is left blank on a third. The International Standards Organization warning label for Electrical Shock/Electrocution, and a prohibition symbol showing a shovel with what appears to be a cable complete the graphic elements of the sign. Ironically, the posts have been embedded into the ground, presumably by way of digging. These posts are the only visible record of the SX on Muriwai beach. The posts are wooden, which has an interesting resonance with Woodhill Forest—a major presence in the area surrounding the cable landing site. The story of this forest is noteworthy as it is central to the history of the area.

A short north-facing walk of approximately 200 metres up the beach will lead you to the Okiritoto Stream mouth where an old communications cable is visible having been exposed due to erosion. The manager of the SX cable in New Zealand has suggested this is the COMPAC cable, however other sources suggest it is the Australia #2 telegraph cable.²²⁷



Fig 40 A historic cable, emerging from the sand above the Okiritoto Stream, Muriwai.

²²⁷ Karen Astwood, IPENZ Engineering Heritage Register Report: Trans-Tasman Telegraph Cable Numbers 1 and 2: Cable Bay, Titahi Bay and Muriwai Beach (Wellington: Institution of Professional Engineers New Zealand (IPENZ) and Engineering Heritage New Zealand, 2014).

Landings, burials, and deaths are a strong theme at Muriwai. Accidental landings include those of whales²²⁸ and boats.²²⁹ Purposeful landings include communications cables, and gannets. The act of burial is one that can be applied to whale carcasses,²³⁰ cables, and plant roots, and the (deceased) human body. The theme of death might apply to the deaths of stranded whales, unfortunate sailors, the existence of urupā (traditional Māori burial grounds in the area), or the decommissioning of a cable—which is a kind of death. Muriwai also carries relevance in New Zealand art history due to the fact renowned artist Colin McCahon had a studio there for many years and created many works about the site. Many of these works also include themes of life and death, particularly his *Walk (Series C)*, painted in 1973 in response to the idea of a long walk with his recently-deceased friend, poet James K Baxter, along Muriwai beach.

Seven communications cables have landed at Muriwai. With operation dates given in brackets, they are: the Trans-Tasman Connection (1912–1964); the Australia #2 telegraph cable (1932–1956); the COMPAC cable (1962–1984); the Tasman 1 cable (1976–2001); ANZCAN (1984–2002); Tasman 2 (1992–2017); and the Southern Cross Cable (2000–current). The cables have primarily landed at, or near, the same site where the SX comes in. Also of interest to New Zealand’s communications history, is the fact that the First Trans-Tasman airmail flight departed from Muriwai in 1934.

Māori arrived in the area around 1200AD and Ngāti Te Kahupara are recorded as having lived in the Okiritoto stream area from the 1700s until the late 1800s. Rev John Butler & Samuel Marsden visited the area in 1821 but it was not until the 1870s that European settlers arrived in the area and attempted to farm. Sand drifts became a major issue for inhabitants between 1920–23 following deforestation, which led to several State-led projects that attempted to mitigate this effect. To further extend their ability to control the sand drifts, the Crown set about to purchase or compulsorily acquire local land

²²⁸ The numerous recorded instances of whale strandings/beachings include: six in 1840; one rare Shephard’s Beaked Whale in 1928; five sperm whales in 1944; thirteen sperm whales in 1958; seventy-two sperm whales in 1974; and four large male sperm whales in 1983.

²²⁹ A number of boating accidents have also been recorded at the site, including: the cutter ‘Petrel’ driven ashore in 1865; the barge ‘Concordia’ run ashore in 1902 (with a load of timber. Its steward fell into the surf); the barquentine ‘May’ lost off the coast of Muriwai in 1902 (It was on course from Ponto with a cargo of timber. The vessel capsized in surf and all crew drowned except Watti Dunn, 19-year old Māori and champion swimmer.); the barque ‘Kinlune’ came ashore in 1904 (The crew landed safely, but the ship was a total wreck and stayed ‘high and dry’ for years.); and the steamer ‘Albany’ wrecked by Muriwai creek and lost while being towed out through surf in 1916.

²³⁰ Many beached whale carcasses have been buried at Muriwai.

through public works legislation. In 1934 a major grab took place, with full- and part-sections of land taken from both European Settlers and Māori. These takings included four significant and well-identified urupā and removed the ability for local Māori to legally access the west coast to gather seafood, a staple part of their diet. This led to a lengthy land-dispute exchange between Māori and the Crown. By the late 1990s, 75% of the land Ngāti Whātua o Kaipara²³¹ had held in 1900 had been alienated by sale or taken for public works.²³² Part of this contest was a major land block, Woodhill Forest, a “Permanent State Forest” created in 1959 as a means of curbing the problem of sand drifts. In 2013 a Treaty of Waitangi settlement transferred ownership of Woodhill Forest to Ngā Maunga Whakahii o Kaipara.²³³



Fig 41 “Do Not Dig” marker posts at Muriwai Beach.

The public artwork I proposed to SX for Muriwai, titled *The Long Walk* (working title), described installing a series of wooden posts along the landing route of the cable, leading visitors towards the decommissioned cable visible at the mouth of Okiritoto Stream. The posts would be labelled with various events in Muriwai’s history, including the unseen cables under the sand at Muriwai, and would imitate the look and feel of the High Voltage posts, so as to function as a subtle addition to the landscape. Additional reference to

²³¹ Ngāti Whātua o Kaipara is the name chosen by the hapū and whānau of the five marae of south Kaipara (Reweti, Haranui, Kākānui, Araparera and Puatahi). The term Ngāti Whātua o Kaipara is not traditional but has been adopted to avoid confusion between Ngāti Whātua in Orakei and Ngāti Whātua in south Kaipara. Reweti is the hapū nearest to Muriwai & Whenuapai.

²³² “Ngāti Whātua o Kaipara Claims Settlement Act 2013,” New Zealand Legislation, Parliamentary Council Office, accessed June 25, 2018, <http://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2013/0037/15.0/DLM4653012.html>.

²³³ Margaret Kawharu, “Woodhill – Twice a Remedy,” Woodhill Forest, accessed June 25, 2018, <https://www.woodhillforest.co.nz/woodhill-twice-a-remedy/>.

McCahon (through the technique by which paint was applied to the posts) was considered.

Muriwai is a site that encompasses what might traditionally be considered dramatic natural beauty. Through communications with several long-term residents of the area, I discovered there was a significant amount of local pride in this fact, and some concern to protect this trait of the area as an asset. As a result, I felt any proposed artwork would need to be relatively subtle in order to attempt to gain public acceptance. Further, I felt that the artwork's function as an acknowledgement of the region's history would be seen as contributing to the interests of the community. As this initial concept mimicked existing features of the landscape, it was less likely to be seen as controversial. The prime purpose of the work was to punctuate what was a relatively long and challenging walk up the beach to the mouth of the Okiritoto stream. I was worried that this would discourage travellers from arriving at the exposed cable: the ultimate culmination point of the tour. This is a unique location as it enables participants to hold a historic cable (possibly COMPAC) and emulate the actions performed both by myself underwater, and Māui in his waka, in a symbolic display of my goal to use public art to emphasise the physical nature of the internet and inspire public agency in its regulation in New Zealand.

As this work was the most traditionally 'sculptural', it translated fairly easily to the City Gallery setting, however the concept had adjusted slightly. Having undertaken further refinements to the timeline and plotted the individual marker posts on a large-format print of a satellite image of the site, I discovered that 22 posts would be required to mark each relevant decade between the year 1200 (when Māori first arrived in the area) and the present day. Some of these would need significant amounts of information listed on them, which would become unwieldy when working on a relatively small surface. Further, any timeline aiming to be comprehensive was bound to miss certain events, and I didn't want to embark on a journey of constant updates suggested by local historians. The work needed a narrower focus. Subsequently, I decided to limit my focus to the seven cables that had landed at the site, proposing to install seven posts laser etched or otherwise labelled with the name and operating years of each cable that has landed on Muriwai Beach in a font that subtly evokes headstones.

The reduction in posts from 22 to seven, and the focus on cables, meant that the reference to McCahon's *Walk (Series C)* was not going to be so effective, so I decided to stick with plain white for the posts. Adding a discussion of McCahon to the project also felt like an unnecessary digression that would further complicate an already complicated undertaking.

I did not have concrete dates for the various cables' establishment and decommissioning, and could not locate any decisive public sources for this information, so I contacted the SX cable manager and asked him. He was happy to provide the information.

Having obtained measurements for the posts on Muriwai beach, I located some similar ones at a local farming supply store and had them shipped to my home studio. I had hoped to obtain wooden posts from Woodhill Forest, but there was no clear way to do this within the timeframe. The use of any New Zealand pine would speak of the New Zealand forestry industry, which could be tied back to Woodhill. It wasn't ideal, but it was good enough.

I considered several strategies for attaching the cable information to the posts. The cable marker posts themselves have printed acrylic signs which have been nailed to the posts. However, these have faded significantly in the outdoor environment. In order to avoid this future scenario, and heighten the reference to headstones, I decided to engrave the posts. This was also a nod to the carved post, *te pou whakairo*, an expression used in *He Aha Te Hau* to symbolise the arrival of European colonisers.

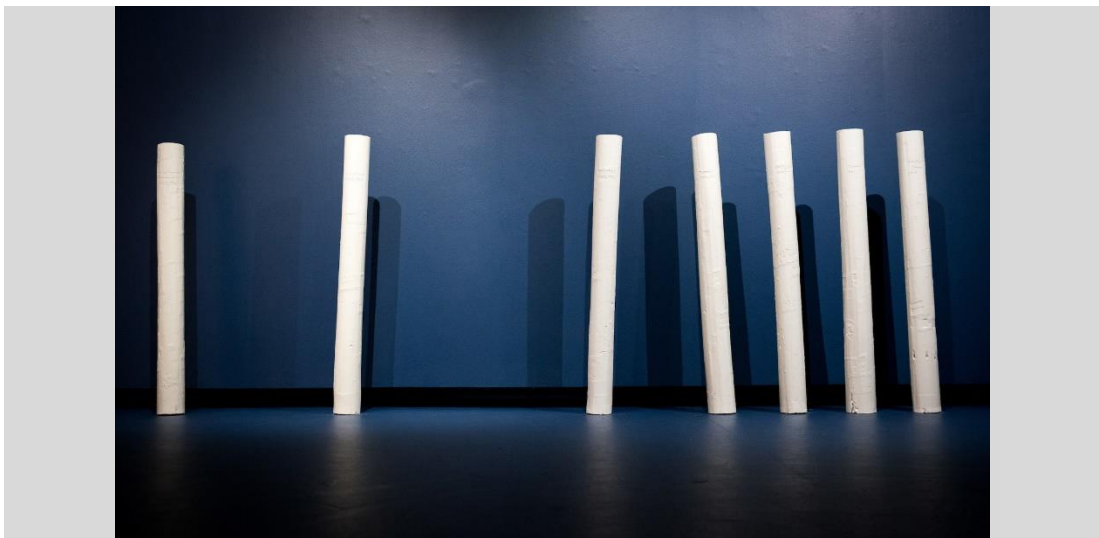


Fig 42 *The Long Walk to Northern Waters.*

The final work in the series is titled *The Long Walk to Northern Waters*. Once again, the meaning embedded in this title relates to an examination of the Māori words associated with to the work's relevant site. While 'muriwai' speaks of a lagoon at the mouth of a river, the word can also be split into two main components. As a verb, 'muri' translates to: sigh, grieve, mourn—speaking to the theme of death found at this site. As a noun, 'muri' translates to: north, the place of departed spirits. This project speaks of multiple norths: that of the COMPAC cable to the north of the beach access road, that of the northern shores that the cable travels to in Australia, Fiji, and the US; that of the *global north* that

New Zealand belongs to, despite its Southern Hemisphere location.²³⁴ In Māori culture, the spirits of the deceased return to their place of origin—Hawaiki²³⁵—via the northernmost tip of New Zealand’s North Island. Finally, ‘muri’, as a location refers to the future. Indeed, what is this future we’re heading into? The second component of the word, ‘wai’, translates as a noun to: stream, creek, river, water, or singularly, tears. This might equally refer to Okiritoto stream, the Tasman Sea, or the act of grieving—echoing earlier references to death and memorialisation. Although all of these translations resonate with the project, *The Long Walk to Northern Waters* has been chosen particularly due to the manner in which it operates in the tour guide (see Chapter 4.6).

The gallery installation comprises of the seven round posts which stand free in the gallery spaced roughly 20cm from the eastern wall: enough distance to be seen as standalone works, but close enough to the wall to discourage people from going behind them. They have been attached to the floor with bolts that are screwed into the base of the posts and hidden from view.

Due to the natural quality of the posts as former pine trees, there is an inconsistent tilt to each post, and they appear ‘wonky’. This effect is heightened by their seemingly uneven placement, however this has been determined by the landing dates on each post—a measurement of the full desired width of the installation was taken, then divided by the number of years that the posts span. Each post was then placed in its approximate location on this physical timeline. This echoes (in a condensed manner) the strategy that would have been used to place the posts onsite at Muriwai. The posts lead from left to right in ascending date order—from the mural *Te Ika-a-Maui* to the tour guides, which include an image of the cable emerging from Okiritoto stream.

The form of the posts also echoes the form of the cables: round and long. However, these forms have been cut, severed—a further nod to death. They have been lit with spotlights that cast multiple shadows from the posts, further reinforcing their stark contrast with the blue wall. Here we might think of the light and dark—the zeroes and ones—that are

²³⁴ “List of countries by regional classification,” Wikimedia Meta-Wiki, accessed June 25, 2018, https://meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_regional_classification.

²³⁵ Incidentally, a future New Zealand internet cable also bears this name.

central to the manner in which the internet operates. A fibre optic internet cable without light is effectively dead.

The posts are awkward, and potentially seem out of place. Despite their wonkiness they seem empty, lifeless. They lack the glamour of *Te Ika-a-Maui*, the spectacle of *A Power Troubles The Still*, the uneasy humour of *The Speargun Conspiracy*. The fact is, they are out of place. Of all the works in the installation, these are the ones that are truest to the initial SX public art proposal. While the new door for the COMPAC station was envisioned as a Prêt-à-Porter artwork, but not realised, these posts were successfully realised and are now residing in an uncertain future.

They are also dead—created from actual dead trees that are monuments to dead cables and relics of an unsuccessful art proposal. They are at once monuments and memorials, both grieving (as ‘muri’ implies) and commemorating these cables. Many historic public artworks are memorials, as Doherty elaborates:

Public art has historically been associated with the memorial or monument to past events, serving as sites at which collective remembering takes place.

The act of commemoration is closely aligned to strategies of storytelling, by which a particular history of the past is sanctioned by those in the present for those in the future [...] an active form of rewriting the present through the past for the future.²³⁶

Decommissioned cables are often left in situ after being switched off, and the ones named here continue to lie, dead and buried, at Muriwai Beach. The posts are grave markers, dislocated from their envisioned site, displaced, but finding temporary refuge in a gallery. Perhaps this is why they seem awkward. They contrast starkly with the dark blue walls and stumble into the straight architectural edges of the space. They don’t belong here. They belong in the natural environment where they will be surrounded by similarly wonky posts, branches, tree trunks, where they will collect moss and lichen, and have their paint stripped by blowing sand. They don’t want to be stuck in a gallery, they want to escape and get their feet dirty. They remind us of the eventual death of the SX, and acknowledge the impact these cables have had on New Zealand.

²³⁶ Doherty, *Out of time, out of place*, 202.

4.6 The Southern Cross Cable: A Tour (Publication)

Of all the projects in the installation, the tour guide is the singular concept that was both fundamental to the original concept, and one that was not hugely effected by the declined SX proposal. The content of the tour guide was largely based on the research findings from the primary four sites, so any addition research was based on an investigation into different print formats appropriate to a tour guide. I began by visiting a local tourist information centre *i-site* and collecting tour-related brochures. These were all in DLE format which, while functional, was a format that had become associated with low-value (usually free) publications.

I undertook one of the tours, the *Te Ara o Nga Tupuna Heritage Trail*, published by the Wellington City Council. This tour included some sites that did not have an obvious visual moment of ‘arrival’ as some sites had long ago been abandoned and obscured by future urban development. My fellow travellers and I all felt a sense of disappointment after having invested time and mileage to arrive at a non-distinct location. We had hoped for a moment of revelation, or spectacle. This realisation inspired the concept for the site-specific SX public artworks, envisioning that these would provide a sense of arrival for those on the tour. The site-specific artworks also provided an opportunity to revisit Taylor’s mural and test the potential and constraints that might exist around creating public artworks for a major New Zealand cable landing site in the present day.

I conducted a trial tour around the SX sites, starting at Takapuna and finishing at Muriwai, testing timings and specific directional information, and used this to inform the structure and user information provided in the tour guide. The tour guide proposal to SX was described as such:

The tour will be communicated via a brochure-style publication that also functions as an exhibition guide, giving directions and insights into the art installations. The tour will take approximately 2.5 hours.

With the declining of the proposal, the sites would remain as anti-monuments rather than obvious destinations, however this in itself was able to fit within the construct of New Zealand national identity. As “hyphenations between the eye blinding attractions of the

scenic tourist pamphlet”,²³⁷ the sites reference the work of those nationalist artists who operated in this area. By deeming them worthy of attention, the tour supports the establishment of these ‘less obvious’ beauties as tourist destinations in their own right.

I sought advice from an experienced lawyer on whether this precluded me from carrying on with the publication. Due to the fact that the information I would publish in the guide came from publicly-accessible sources, this was not deemed to be a legal risk. I made plans to work with an experienced designer on the project, Duncan Munro, and by the time of the City Gallery proposal the concept had developed. It would take the form of a small print publication with navigational information guiding readers to each of the four main sites of the SX, and narratives introducing them to some of the associated histories. A further participatory component would be included in the form of questions that could only be answered by visiting the sites, with correct answers forming a username/password combination that would lead to a website with bonus information relating to the project.

I worked with Munro to develop the publication (Appendix VII), taking design inspiration from the New Zealand passport format, smartphone dimensions, vintage New Zealand tourism material, and archival material relating to the cable and its past operations under the New Zealand Post Office.

While earlier designs had experimented with a DLE format, we shifted to one resembling a passport. While a DLE-format brochure was easier to perceive as cheap and disposable, a passport format was associated with a print item that was expensive and valuable. It also acknowledged the context of the wider exhibition, encouraging the audience to consider how internet infrastructure connects with notions of citizenship.

As a format widely understood by non-art audiences, this publication would likely seem familiar. Although the tactile experience of picking it up could be seen as a subversive act by those who wish to protect the cable’s secrecy, it could seem like a relatively trivial act for those outside of this world of knowledge. The gallery installation would function as a distribution platform for the tour guides in a manner that could not be directly traced digitally. The knowledge of the locations would be dispersed and circulating in an organic

²³⁷ Tomory, “Imaginary Islands and Floating Reefs,” 16.

manner that created no digital footprint, whereas data generated from downloads of an app or visits to a website might. This would test the cable operator's assumption that public knowledge of the cable's locations was a threat to the cable's security.

I originally considered selling the publications in the installation via a vintage vending machine with some formal resemblance to an arcade machine. However, as the installation concept progressed it became apparent that the publication should be made available for free. The quantity, distributed randomly via the exhibition platform amongst non-traceable self-identifying participants, would create an unknown distributed base of New Zealand residents who knew the exact locations of the cable.

This project posited that this invisible public could equally be seen as a potential threat and a potential protective measure for the cable. If individuals perceived the cable as a threat, it would be at higher risk of sabotage. If it was viewed as an asset, it would be more likely to be defended. The perception of the cable as a risk or threat is dependent on the manner in which it is regulated, and the perceptions of whether these regulations impinge on certain public rights, or advance them. Most participants are unlikely to realise it, but through the distribution of these publications the perceived power and control over New Zealand's internet has been shifted back towards the public.

The untraceability of the tour guides' distribution became essential. The sale of publications via an electronic transaction (i.e. EFTPOS) would generate data that could be connected to an individual, and therefore potentially traceable. Secondly, the distribution of the publication via the vending machine would require participants to hold or obtain coins in order to engage with the project. This would inhibit the number of publications distributed, which worked against the overarching premise of the project. Thirdly, a price would immediately exclude the potential participation of a large percentage of the population with limited income. Even a koha (donation) is a measure that places social pressure on participants to contribute financially. To those of means, the guides could be undervalued and discarded (my mum rescued one from someone's recycling bin). By comparison, those who are struggling financially may more greatly value the gesture (a colleague observed people who were taken aback by the generosity and surprised they could take the publication for free). These are more likely to be kept. Free means that participation is open to all. This was further reinforced through the licensing of the publication under a Creative Commons Attribution-Non Commercial-No Derivatives 4.0 license, in keeping with my Zero Waste practice.

While the installation copies are free, the publication is also available to order via my own personal website. This enables individuals around the world to access and engage with the project, rather than limiting this access to those who pass through City Gallery Wellington. This has seen booklets sent to local destinations (including Christchurch, Dunedin, Auckland) and internationally (Australia, France, the US). The data generated by this process emphasised the anonymity provided by the gallery installation. When purchased online, I receive information about the purchaser's name and address. If I can see this, it is possible that the Five Eyes can too. Although this doesn't diminish the greater aim of the booklet distribution, it presents a point of conflict that I have not been able to resolve. There are benefits to internet access, but also risks. As it stands, orders via the website were relatively few (less than twenty), while 2000 copies were distributed via the gallery in the first five weeks of the exhibition.

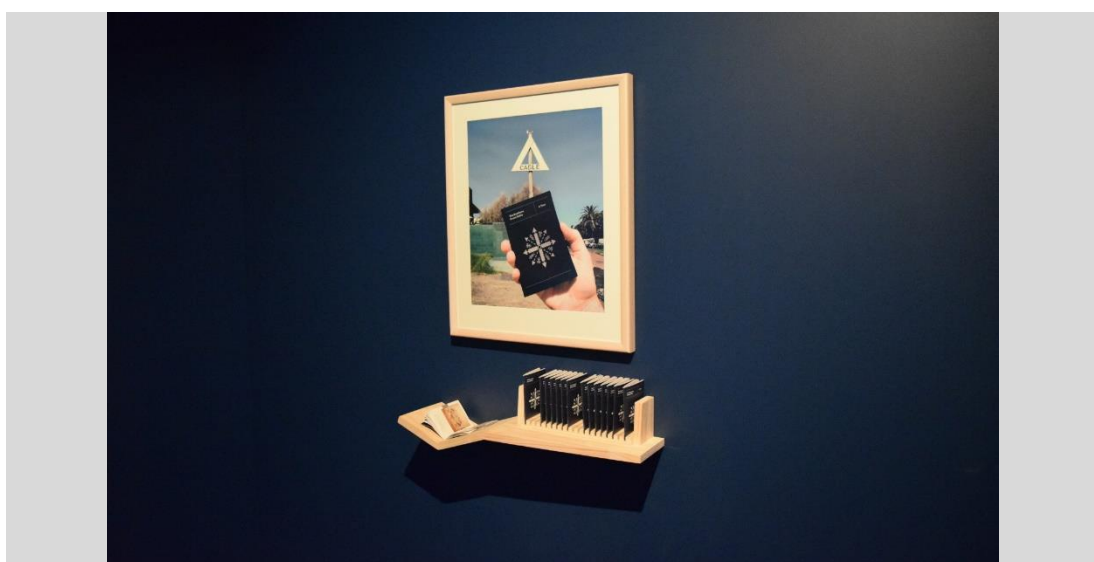


Fig 43 *The Southern Cross Cable: A Tour (Publication)* showing framed photograph and shelf installation.

To the right of the posts, on the rear of the partition wall, is a framed photograph. The foreground features a hand holding a booklet titled *The Southern Cross Cable: A Tour*. The cover of the booklet echoes the vinyl title and compass symbol on the opposite side of the wall. A landscape is visible in the background of the photograph. Most prominent in this scene is a triangular signpost in the top third of the image labelled "CABLE", framed by a cloudless blue sky. A seagull sits on the top of the post, disrupting its monumental quality, echoing the seagulls in *Te Ika-a-Maui*, and locating the site near the sea. The middle third of the image shows an urban site. A green concrete block wall is visible to the left. A patchy green paint job suggests it has been a previous target for graffiti. A building is visible behind the wall. A chimney suggests it is a domestic dwelling. A leafless tree reaches above the wall and gently hugs the cable marker post. A road and paved path is

visible to the right. Vehicles are parked at the edge of the frame, suggesting the presence of others in the area. The lower third of the image shows a sandy surface.

Below the photograph is a shelf stocked with several booklets with covers matching that in the photograph. On the left hand side of the shelf is a viewing copy, mounted in a flat 'V' shaped alcove. On the shelf in front of the booklets, text reads "Please take one". The frame and shelf are both made of a limed wood.

As the final act in the installation, the tour guide is potentially the most crucial one. This publication and its associated web-based work sits above and across the previously described four artworks. It serves a dual purpose, acting as a guide around the artworks in the installation but also as a guide to the actual physical sites of the cable. It must operate both in harmony with, and independently from the four works. This is emphasised through the placement of the tour guides as the final statement of the installation, implying that they are intended to be picked up, taken outside the gallery, and used as an experience beyond the installation. The publication remains accessible beyond the walls and time limits of the gallery installation. It is not tied to the exhibition dates, and is therefore an ongoing, non-durational work.

This act of internet tourism also speaks to the idea of New Zealand national identity and belonging however it subverts the dominant naturalised, romanticised conventions of landscape that the New Zealand tourism industry largely bases itself upon.²³⁸ Tourism is largely a leisure experience, one that has been constrained within the set boundaries of things that have been sanctioned as of interest to the tourist. This guide works against the wishes of the cable operators, giving permission for tourists to look at sites that seek to remain invisible and, particularly in the case of the cable stations, that do not immediately align themselves with romantic notions of the landscape. This is a tour, but it is also a counter-tour.

The format of the booklet is that of a passport, although the cover is the navy blue of the old New Zealand passport, rather than black like the new one. The blue matches the colour of the installation space. The absence of full rectangular frames is intended to create a feeling of openness and continuity throughout the booklet. Again, the use of a

²³⁸ Particularly, that of the Lord Of The Rings.

familiar format is designed to evoke nostalgia. In line with my Zero-Waste practicing strategy, the publication is FSC-certified.²³⁹

The back cover contains text under the heading “Let’s party like it’s 1999!”²⁴⁰ It introduces the SX, and the purpose of the tour. Inside the book, a title page echoes the front cover, positioning the publication as a book rather than print advertising. The compass has been replaced by a simpler symbol: its base is a circle with lines to the left and right—similar to the biometric symbol printed on the cover of biometric passports. The form is a map symbol representing a cable marker post.

The first few pages of the booklet are introductory, and include a double-page colour map, demarcating “The tour”. The colours, textures, symbols, and fonts on the map recall a mid-century design style which has also been influenced by maps obtained from Land Information New Zealand. The remainder of the booklet relates to the specific sites of the tour.

The content for each site is designed to work in two contexts: providing expanded information that sits alongside the artworks in the gallery space, and as narrative that operates in isolation within the field for those who may not have experienced the installation. Of particular note, the cultural narrative for Takapuna describes the dawn blessing of the cable, and the prophesy *He Aha Te Hau*, but does not print the text in full out of respect for the discussions with Ngāti Whātua. The visual/textual pages for the Muriwai site disembark from the narrative relating to the buried historic cables, to introduce a romantic pairing: a portrait of myself imitating Caspar David Friedrich’s *Wanderer Above The Sea of Fog* (1818)²⁴¹ that sits opposite a romantic ode, Rudyard Kipling’s “The Deep-Sea Cables” (1893) (see Appendix VIII).²⁴² Once again, this image

²³⁹ The FSC is a print certification system operated by the Forest Stewardship Council. It is one of the most rigorous international environmental and social standards for responsible forest management.

²⁴⁰ A whimsical reference to the year the cable was laid, also a lyric in the popular song, *1999* by the artist *Prince*, released in 1982.

²⁴¹ Caspar David Friedrich, “Observations on Viewing a Collection of Paintings Largely by Living or Recently Deceased Artists,” in ed. Charles Harrison and Paul Wood, *Art in Theory 1815–1900*, (Malden: Blackwell Publishers, 2003), 50. Friedrich himself stated “the copy is the product of human hands and so lies closer to our human frailty. This explains the oft-heard pronouncement that the copy is more pleasing than nature herself.”

²⁴² For further discussion of the manner in which Romanticism can be traced in the development and operation of computing and the internet see Thomas Streeter, *The Net Effect: Romanticism, Capitalism, and the Internet*. (New York: New York University Press, 2011).

places the human figure in proximity to the internet sites. In the image, I am standing and looking over the Okiritoto stream. Although it is not visible in the photograph, this position looks directly towards the point where a cable emerges from the sand.



Fig 44 Left: Caspar David Friedrich, *Wanderer Above the Sea of Fog* (1818);
Right: Bronwyn Holloway-Smith, *Untitled* (2015).

In Friedrich's painting, the wanderer stands above a cloudy landscape—a similar mist to that in the final frame of *The Speargun Conspiracy*. The image is a metaphor for life as an ominous journey into the unknown. However, in my imitation of the Wanderer, the view is clear. The landscape, and its mysteries, have been revealed, it is able to be influenced.

Kipling's poem is written from the point of view of a cable laying deep in the ocean, but shares many themes with this body of work. It is set in a strange dark, landscape, just as the gallery space itself is dark. Shipwrecks occur above, evoking the treacherous waters of Muriwai. Extremophiles live in proximity to the cable, as it carries the babble of human communication across the 'ultimate slime', evoking the imagery of *A Power Troubles The Still*. This is a dangerous, hostile landscape, however it is one where the vast spectrum of lived human experiences are being acted out ("warning, sorrow and gain, salutation and mirth"). The final note of the poem is one of hope: "Joining hands in the gloom, a league from the last of the sun [...] a new Word runs between: whispering, 'Let us be one!'". This can be seen as a utopian aspiration for world unity—universalism or post-nationalism. Together, this double-page spread is a celebration of the wonder, mystery, and romance of cables that ends the body of work on a hopeful note.

Excluding the colophon, the final two pages of the publication include an image showing the disused cable emerging from above the Okiritoto Stream next to a page titled “Access additional content”. Here, space is provided for answers to the earlier questions to be written, which form a Username and Password combination. A URL directs participants to a website where they can enter the information to “gain access to special content relating to the tour”.

An added incentive for completing the tour, this webpage features a moving image work: edited footage of the SX cable landing on Takapuna Beach on 5 September 1999 taken from Southern Cross Cables Ltd DVD that I was given permission to use. The content of the video shares some of the optimism (as well as some symbolism) of E. Mervyn Taylor’s mural. The music is that of Wellington musician Eyeliner (Luke Rowell, aka Disasteradio), which follows conceptually in the tradition of ‘muzak’ albums (credited as the originators of ‘Elevator Music’)²⁴³ whilst paying homage to the output of the electronic music label ‘Innovative Communications’, which was active in the 1980s.²⁴⁴ Like *The Speargun Conspiracy*, this provides the work with a nostalgic feel: that of a *Beyond 2000*²⁴⁵ segment, turning a dry, industrial scene into that of the aspirational futurism of the late-twentieth century.

A second feature of the webpage is a Guest Book, based on the design of the Visitor’s Book that was kept at the COMPAC Station next to the mural of *Te Ika-a-Maui*. Here, “fellow internet tourists”, are congratulated on visiting, and given the opportunity to add their details, if they wish, to make their presence known to other travellers (wording designed to emphasise the public visibility of the information).

²⁴³ Peter Blecha, “Muzak, Inc. Originators of ‘Elevator Music’,” *HistoryLink.org*, June 4, 2012, <http://www.historylink.org/File/10072>.

²⁴⁴ “Innovative Communication,” Discogs, accessed 29 June, 2018, <https://www.discogs.com/label/4293-Innovative-Communication>.

²⁴⁵ An Australian television show, produced in the 1980s–1990s and popular in New Zealand, that showcased developments and inventions in science and technology. See *Beyond 2000* – Official Channel, <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCU4colvoeIwfuw79LM-ICpg>.

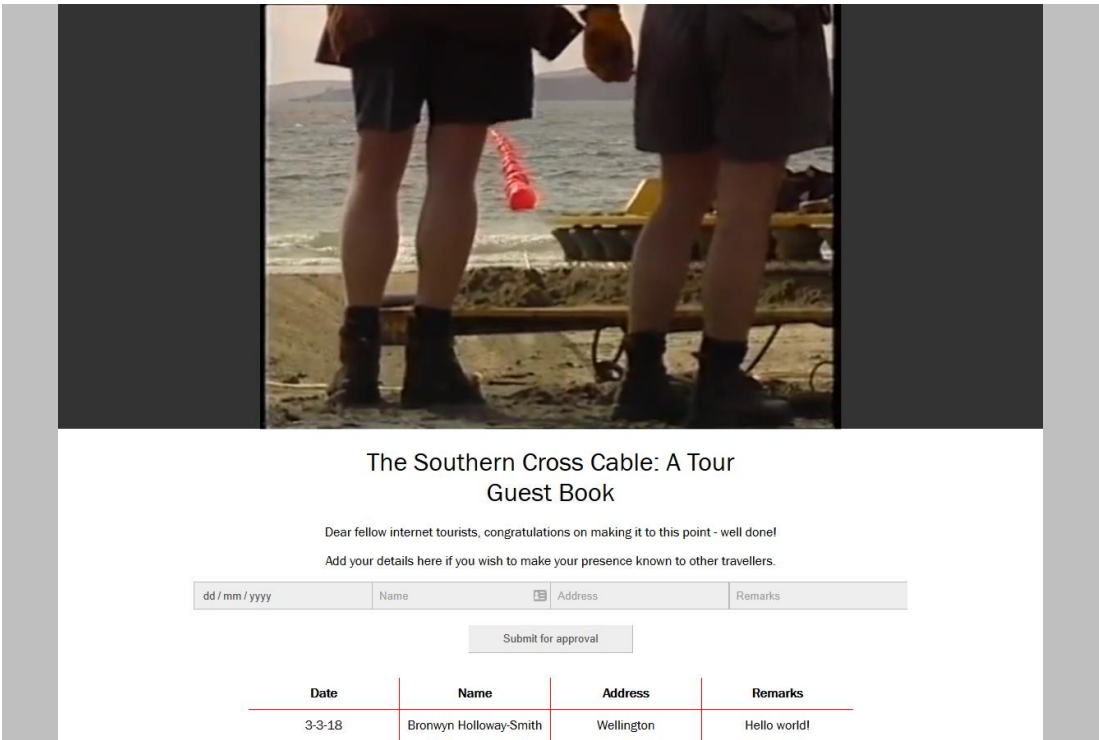


Fig 45 Screenshot: Additional content webpage, The Southern Cross Cable: A Tour.

The act of undertaking the tour itself can be seen as a physical recreation of the journey data takes when it traverses the cable. In this tour, the tourist and their vehicle becomes a bit or byte, and the roads are the infrastructure that supports their journey. This physical recreation of the journey of internet data is a personal experience that reinforces the physicality of the internet and targets personal memory. As David Abram has said, “Direct sensuous reality, in all its more-than-human mystery, remains the sole solid touchstone for an experiential world now inundated with electronically-generated vistas and engineered pleasures; only in regular contact with the tangible ground and sky can we learn how to orient and to navigate in the multiple dimensions that now claim us.”²⁴⁶

²⁴⁶ David Abram, *The spell of the sensuous: perception and language in a more-than-human world* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1996), x.

4.7 Summary of Results

This research has resulted in five contributions, housed under the umbrella of the installation *The Southern Cross Cable: A Tour*. Together, these works encourage public awareness of the limits of the internet, illustrating the ways in which an individual member of the public can respond to the ‘intangible’ internet in a physical manner.

Being located within the context of the wider exhibition *This Is New Zealand* recognises the works as a series of comments on the tangled and uneasy relationship between internet infrastructure, along with its surrounding contexts, and New Zealand national identity. There are various points where connections may be found between my works and others in the exhibition.

Strategic subversions of popular nationalist symbolism recur throughout the works, raising questions about the relevance of nationalism in an age of expanding globalisation. Acts of power, control and agency are another theme throughout the works, exemplified in the recurring motif of hands and the body, encouraging viewers to explore what power, control and agency they retain in their own digital lives. As a result, the audience is encouraged to question what individual agency they do, or do not have as New Zealand citizens in shaping this dominant influence on contemporary New Zealand culture.

The first work discussed, *A Power Troubles The Still*, relates to the Takapuna site of the cable and comprises video footage of myself scuba diving to the Southern Cross Cable itself, and performing a series of gestures in relation to it. These four gestures each speak to the protagonist’s position and power as performer, and function as a montage of comments on various relationships between the internet and the construction of identity.

The second work discussed, *Te Ika-a-Maui*, relates to the Northcote site of the cable and is the first public exhibition of the fully-restored mural, complete with sixteen replica tiles created based on designs that I developed through my earlier investigative art project, *Te Ika-a-Akoranga* (2014). By being included in *The Southern Cross Cable: A Tour*, the mural provides a point of comparison to which the remaining works respond. Originally commissioned by the New Zealand government during New Zealand’s post-war, mid-century ‘nation building’ era to commemorate the establishment of the COMPAC cable, this public mural is a poignant symbol of the dramatic shifts that have taken place since its commissioning, in both New Zealand’s international communications infrastructure and in terms of concepts of New Zealand national identity.

The third work discussed, *The Speargun Conspiracy*, relates to the Whenuapai site of the cable, and describes an alleged conspiracy between the New Zealand government, its

spy agency the GCSB, and the international Five Eyes network (led by the US agency the NSA) to spy on the New Zealand public via a tap on the Southern Cross Cable. The moment of central importance to this work is the communication of my own new theory relating to Project Speargun, expressed publicly for the first time as part of this installation. This is an argument that Project Speargun was undertaken at the Whenuapai site via an intercepting cable laid between the Royal New Zealand Air Force base and the cable landing station, supported by a data centre built within the Air Force base. The narrator's concluding statement, "Why is there still a knot in my stomach", paired with an image of clouds, encourages a sense of unease in the viewer while also functioning as a reminder of the limits of voyeurism. As Foucault pointed out, those who can be watched can be controlled. If this is true, and we are both being watched, and watching, then we are both under control, and in control. The ultimate location of this story in the present day (2018) implies that it is still unfolding, and able to be influenced.

The fourth work discussed, *The Long Walk to Northern Waters*, relates to the Muriwai site of the cable and comprises seven round posts, painted white and etched with the names and operating years of seven cables historic communications that have landed at Muriwai beach. The posts are awkward, and potentially seem out of place. They are also dead—created from actual dead trees that are monuments to dead cables and relics of an unsuccessful art proposal. They are at once monuments and memorials, both grieving and commemorating these cables. They are displaced, and don't belong in the gallery, but in the natural environment. They remind us of the eventual death of the Southern Cross Cable, and acknowledge the impact these cables have had on New Zealand.

The fifth work discussed, *The Southern Cross Cable: A Tour (publication)*, is the final act in the installation and sits above and across the previously described four artworks. It serves a dual purpose, acting as a guide around the artworks in the installation but also as a guide to the actual physical sites of the cable. The publication has been made available for free. The quantity, distributed randomly via the exhibition platform amongst non-traceable self-identifying participants, creates an unknown distributed base of New Zealand residents who know the exact locations of the cable. Due to the format of the guides as a print publication, this knowledge has been dispersed and circulated in an organic manner that creates no digital footprint. This tests the cable operator's assumption that public knowledge is a threat to the cable's ongoing operation. The perception of the cable as a risk or threat is dependent on the manner in which it is regulated, and the perceptions of whether these regulations impinge on certain public rights, or advance them. Most participants are unlikely to realise it, but through the distribution of these publications the perceived power and control over New Zealand's

internet has been shifted back towards the public. An added incentive for completing the tour is a webpage that features a moving image work and a Guest Book that can only be accessed with login information obtained by visiting the four sites of the tour. Reinforcing the impact of these works, they have been included in a major exhibition about the construction of New Zealand national identity with an estimated audience reach of more than 70,000 visitors.



5.0 Conclusion

This creative practice research has investigated the influence of international hegemony and power structures on popular notions of Aotearoa-New Zealand's national identity. The primary focus of the investigation involved a singular internet cable system—the Southern Cross Cable—that New Zealand has relied upon for international communications for seventeen years. Due to its highly significant role, this system became an effective metonymic vehicle within the research, revealing hidden US-centric control of this primary medium of neo-liberal globalisation.

Broader public knowledge of the workings of the internet is often flawed, with the notion of its invisibility persisting. This is due to several factors, including the popular use of misleading terminology, popular media narratives that have the effect of further obscuring the cable, along with the deliberate design of New Zealand's international internet infrastructure sites to be inconspicuous. Ultimately, this has the effect of obscuring the controlling entities of this dominant communications system, most of them located outside of New Zealand's jurisdictional reach.

The internet is a mass media platform from which concepts of national identity are established, with further analysis suggesting that those who control such communications significantly reshape public perceptions closely in line with their own ideological frameworks. Due to the lack of accountability and transparency online, and the prevalence of closed-source platforms (as opposed to more transparent open-source ones), specific viewpoints that are favourable or unfavourable to the agendas of these private entities may be promoted or censored without the knowledge or input of internet users, thus radically affecting the manner by which notions of New Zealand national identity are constructed in the twenty-first century.

In order to test the limits of public engagement with this current situation, this study has taken selected histories and locations of the Southern Cross Cable and applied them, as a metonymic vehicle within a body of conceptually driven artworks, to reveal these unseen processes that are influential upon New Zealand's national identity.

My investigation into the mural *Te Ika-a-Maui* confirmed that no public artwork was commissioned to mark the establishment of the Southern Cross Cable. A further review of relevant creative arts projects that have addressed New Zealand's particular internet

history has demonstrated that those that do communicate limited information about key issues relating to the cable's history, sites, and its operation within the context of wider cultural conversations in New Zealand. Few of them are readily identifiable as works of public art, and even fewer depict the human body in proximity with cable landing sites. This is the first conceptually driven artwork that uses the histories and sites of the Southern Cross Cable as a metonymic vehicle, revealing unseen processes influencing New Zealand's perception of its national identity. It is also the first artwork to directly depict this infrastructure, referencing specific New Zealand contexts, in proximity to the human body, rehumanising it via representing its actual physical and haptic qualities.

Through an investigative art approach and the application (where possible) of a Zero-Waste production methodology, I have created a series of works addressing the aims of this research. They place the body at the centre of the work, encouraging viewers to explore what power, control, and agency they retain in their own digital lives. Moreover, the artworks strategically subvert popular New Zealand nationalist symbols, actively questioning the relevance of nationalism in an age of expanding globalisation spurred by the influence of the internet. The artworks render New Zealand's critical internet infrastructure visible to a public audience in the face of official efforts to obscure it from public awareness, challenging and testing the assumption made by those who control this infrastructure that public knowledge is a threat to the cable by distributing this knowledge in the public sphere. While there are some limits to the means by which creative practice can respond to the physical sites of the Southern Cross Cable in New Zealand, many opportunities remain.

The five artworks in this creative practice submission: *A Power Troubles The Still*; *Te Ika-a-Maui*; *The Speargun Conspiracy*; *The Long Walk to Northern Waters*; and *The Southern Cross Cable: A Tour* (publication), comprise the installation *The Southern Cross Cable: A Tour*. Together, these works encourage public awareness of the limits of the internet, demonstrating multiple ways in which an individual member of the public may respond to the ostensibly 'intangible' internet in a manifestly physical manner. In addition, the tour guide, which was distributed freely via the exhibition platform to gallery visitors, creates an 'unknown' selection of New Zealand residents who are now aware of the exact locations of the cable. Through this action, the perceived power and control over New Zealand's internet has been shifted in the direction of the public. This tests the cable operator's assumption that public knowledge is a threat to the cable's ongoing operation.

These works conclude that, while international hegemony and power structures influence popular notions of Aotearoa-New Zealand's national identity, members of the New

Zealand 'public' still retain their ability and agency to contribute to revised definitions of New Zealand's national identity.



As an artist, and an individual, my works are intrinsically interwoven with my own identity and particular world view. Due to this factor, this thesis is simply *one* of the multitudes of possible creative responses to this subject. As an emerging field, particularly in the context of New Zealand, numerous opportunities remain for others to consider, and respond to, the confluence of the internet and New Zealand national identity. The publication, *The Southern Cross Cable: A Tour*, can be seen as a starting point: a manual that enables those who might be interested in extending this conversation to further explore and communicate their own position on the topic. It has been licensed under a Creative Commons license, with the intention that this knowledge can be carried forth: reinterpreted, shared, and extended.

Although the Southern Cross Cable embodied New Zealand's international internet connectivity for seventeen years, this era is coming to a close. The second trans-Tasman cable to be laid in seventeen years, the Tasman Global Access Cable, came online in 2017 and at the time of writing two further cables are in developmental stages, the *Hawaiki Cable* and *Next*. As *The Long Walk to Northern Waters* illustrates, the Southern Cross Cable itself will one day be decommissioned. Each of these future communications cables will have similar intersections with New Zealand national identity, and their own potential cultural narratives to be uncovered. It is highly likely that these communications systems will continue to be catalysts in the continual growth and change of global hierarchies of dominance and control—currently Net Neutrality is a particularly relevant debate in this area. As such, it would be wise to pursue the aim of holding such power to account. The development and maintenance of critical and creative responses becomes a crucial step in this task. Kōkiri!

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APPENDIX I:
Project Proposal to Spark NZ /
Southern Cross Cables Ltd.



The Southern Cross Cable: A Tour

A Project Proposal to the Spark Arts Trust

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February 2017

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Introduction

For seventeen years, the Southern Cross Cable Network (SCCN) has single-handedly carried the weight of New Zealand's international internet connectivity. This era is drawing to a close, with the Tasman Global Access cable due to come online in March 2017, the Hawaiki cable expected in 2018, and SCCN's replacement cable "NEXT" due to be laid by 2019.

Being connected to the global internet has had enormous economic, social, and cultural impacts for this geographically isolated, but internationally-engaged nation. As a result, New Zealanders' adoption of this technology has been widespread. A recent study of internet behaviour found that 94% of New Zealanders check the Internet daily with a third constantly connected.¹ But there is a disconnection between New Zealander's perceptions of internet infrastructure, and its actuality.

Popular technological terms such as *wireless*, *the cloud*, and *cyberspace* might imply that the internet is an intangible medium, like radio waves, however this is not the case. Globally, the internet is still primarily delivered via physical wired networks: buried under the ground, and laid along the ocean floor. The SCCN is one such network. Approximately the size of a garden hose, the cable forms a figure 8, or infinity symbol, around the Pacific Ocean.

Since 2000 the SCCN has been New Zealand's major point of communications connectivity, carrying an estimated 98% of the nation's international internet traffic. In New Zealand, every time Google or Wikipedia is searched, Facebook is accessed, or YouTube videos are viewed the data physically passes as light under the the Tasman Sea or the Pacific Ocean.

Published in March 2015, Nicole Starosielski's book *The Undersea Network* (Duke University Press) is the most comprehensive publication to date on the histories and present-day existence of submarine communication networks that link Pacific-rim nations. Through this investigation, Starosielski has identified that "Creating new cultural narratives for undersea cables is critical to an informed public participation with the transnational Internet".²

For the past three years I have been addressing this issue, undertaking a PhD (Fine Arts) through Massey University researching the cultural significance of the landing sites of the SCCN in New Zealand, with the aim of producing a series of artworks that highlight these places and stories in a publically-engaging manner.

As a result I have devised *The Southern Cross Cable: A Tour*, which connects four site-specific art installations that will be launched at a special event. The tour will be communicated via a brochure-style publication that also functions as an exhibition guide, giving directions and insights into the art installations. The tour will take

¹ <https://internetnz.nz/news/online-personal-safety-top-priority-kiwis>

² Starosielski, *The Undersea Network*, 68.

approximately 2.5 hours. Additionally, I wish to develop a 360 degree video experience of the tour that will be accessible to anyone with an internet connection.

I am seeking Spark NZ's support to help realise this suite of works.

Spark NZ is both the majority shareholder of the SCCN, and the manager of the cable within New Zealand's jurisdiction. Additionally, I have an established relationship with Spark employees and members of the Spark Arts Trust through my work reviving the mural Te Ika-a-Maui by E. Mervyn Taylor.

This series of public artworks will mark the end of an era by celebrating the national significance of the Southern Cross Cable, and encouraging better public appreciation for New Zealand's connection to the trans-national internet.

Bronwyn Holloway-Smith
February 2017

Site 1: Takapuna Beach

On Friday 10 November 2000, a dawn ceremony was conducted on Takapuna Beach to bless the Southern Cross Cable. Arranged by Telecom New Zealand (now Spark NZ), the event was led by local Māori kaumātua Danny Tumahai and Dr. Takutaimoana Wikiriwhi of the Ngāti Whātua iwi, the tribe of the greater Auckland region.

As part of the ceremony, Tangaroa (the Māori god of the sea) was acknowledged, the symbolism of te ahi kā (a lit fire) was evoked, and the chant *He Aha Te Hau* was recited. *He Aha Te Hau* is also known as Tītahi's Chant. Tītahi was an 18th century Ngāti Whātua leader and this whakataukī (or proverb) is said to be his foretelling of the arrival of the British colonial discoverer Captain James Cook in the central Auckland harbour, the Waitemata.

He Aha Te Hau

He Aha Te Hau
He aha te hau e wawara mai?
He tiu, he raki
Nāna i ā mai te pūpū-tarakihi ki uta
E tīkina atu e au te ko tiu
Koia te pou, te pouwhakairo
Ka tū ki Wai-te-mata
I ōku wairangi e
Kōkiri!

*What is that wind
What is that wind that softly blows?
It is the breeze of the north
That drives on shore the paper nautilus
If I bring from the north wind
The handsome carved post
And place it here in Wai-te-mata
My fears will be fulfilled
Advance*



Kokiri! (working title)

The tour will direct visitors to a point on Takapuna Beach where the Southern Cross Cable comes ashore. This point is visibly marked by a triangular marker post, labelled "CABLE".

Echoing the lines in the chant *He Aha Te Hau*, this marker post too will be carved: with a phone number.

When called, the line will play listeners a recording of a Ngati Whatua elder reciting "He aha te hau" before disconnecting the call.

Site 2: Northcote

In 1962, New Zealand artist E. Mervyn Taylor was commissioned by the New Zealand Government to create a mural for the foyer of the Commonwealth Pacific Cable (COMPAC) landing station in Northcote.

Following shifts in the structure and ownership of New Zealand's communications industry, the mural *Te Ika-a-Maui* was largely forgotten until, as a result of the research for this tour, it was found: stacked in cardboard boxes in the disused COMPAC landing station, having been hidden from the public for an estimated 20 years.

As a result, the project *Te Ika-a-Akoranga* was undertaken. Each of the 398 tiles in the mural (sixteen were found to be missing) were cleaned, photographed, the digital file edited, and reproduction photographic tiles printed in duplicate – a process that took months – each of the tiles taking roughly an hour to process.

The images of each tile are publicly available as a free download, under a Creative Commons Attribution license on bronwyn.co.nz

The mural itself (in the collection of the Spark Arts Trust) is undergoing restoration work, with the intent to reinstall it in a publicly-accessible space in proximity to the mural's original location on the North Shore of Auckland.



Te Ika-a-Akoranga (Alteration)

This site-specific installation will be the final step in the *Te Ika-a-Akoranga* project: once again allowing the public to view the wall where the *Te Ika-a-Maui* mural was installed in the COMPAC landing station in Northcote (albeit from outside the complex).

A glass door will be fitted in place of the existing door to the COMPAC station, the canopy and bars will be removed, and the windows and space will be cleaned. Additional internal lighting may also be required to aid visibility of the wall from outside.

Site 3: Whenuapai

In December 2010 a US Government report was revealed that listed over 300 foreign sites that were considered “critical infrastructure and key resources located abroad”. Only two New Zealand sites made the list: the two undersea cable landing sites of the Southern Cross Cable (listed as “Whenuapai” and “Takapuna”).

Later, on 15 September 2014, Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Glenn Greenwald, Wikileaks founder Julian Assange and whistle-blowing anti-surveillance advocate Edward Snowden took part in an event at the Auckland Town Hall titled “Moment of Truth”, arranged by media mogul Kim Dotcom in connection with the New Zealand national election.

Greenwald and Snowden presented information about “Project Speargun”, suggesting that New Zealanders are subject to mass internet surveillance under the GCSB with the full knowledge of then-Prime Minister John Key (leader of the National Party). The surveillance was said to take place via a tap on the Southern Cross Cable.

Anthony Briscoe, CEO of the Southern Cross Cable Network, dismissed the claims as “nonsense”, saying it would have impossible for probes to be inserted without his company noticing an impact on performance.

To date, no further evidence has come forward to support these allegations.



For The Good Of The Land / Ipurangi (working title)

This installation will gently respond to this important story associated with the SCCN, and will also pick up on themes intertwined through all the works in this series.

A billboard will be installed outside the Whenuapai landing station,

depicting a collection of historic aerial imagery of the site.

As well as referencing concepts of surveillance, this will mark the proximity of the landing station to the Royal New Zealand Air Force base (this aerodrome was also Auckland’s international airport from 1945-1965 when the COMPAC mural was completed). The use of a tile motif will echo this mural. Additionally, the Maori word for “Internet” is “Ipurangi”, which translates as “container for the sky”.

This work will remind viewers of the changing landscapes we live in, and the histories that surround us.

Site 4: Muriwai

Like Takapuna, Muriwai is a site with a rich cultural history. However, unlike the gentle shores of Takapuna it is a wild, dramatic landscape shaped by the surf of the Tasman Sea.

Although primarily known for its gannet colony, it is also a site marked by the dramatic spectacles of whale strandings and shipwrecks. Celebrated New Zealand artist Colin McCahon captured some of the spirit of this in his Muriwai series', produced while he worked from a studio in the area.

Lesser known is the fact that Muriwai has long been a landing site for communications cables, with no fewer than eight cables having been landed at the beach (the first dates back to 1902). Muriwai was also the site of the first Trans-Tasman airmail flight in 1934.

Although largely unmarked (there is not a "cable" marker like at Takapuna), the landings can be identified by three high voltage marker posts - warning the public not to dig due to risk of electrocution. These are spaced along the beach access way on Coast Road, with an additional post further inland marked "NZPO" (dating back to the era when the New Zealand Post Office managed these cables). From this road, the public may walk 200 metres up Muriwai Beach to the Okiritoto stream mouth, where an old communications cable is visible, having been exposed due to erosion.



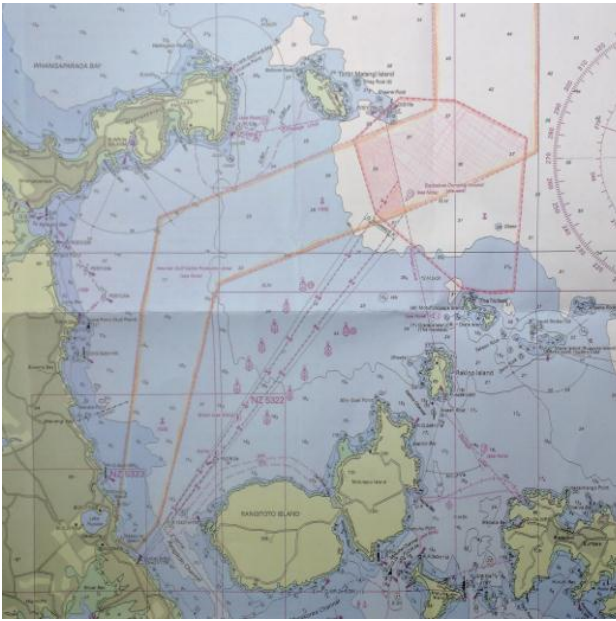
The Long Walk (working title)

The tour will conclude with a walk punctuated by posts that chart various events in Muriwai's history, including the unseen cables under the sand at Muriwai (see the current draft of the timeline in Appendix I).

The walk will begin at the beach access carpark, and culminate at the point where the cable is visible coming out of the sand.

The posts will imitate the look and feel of the High Voltage posts, so as to function as a subtle addition to the landscape, and will be painted in a manner that references McCahon's "Walk C".

VR Experience



Once installed, each of the four artworks will be recorded using 360 degree video technology - suitable for experiencing in a headset (ie Samsung Gear 360).

A dive to a site in the Hauraki Gulf where the SCCN passes through a disused explosives dumping ground will also be attempted, and filmed in 360 degree video.

Files will be made available for free download, and also uploaded to YouTube. The possibility of projecting this work inside an inflatable observatory dome (ie for an exhibition-style installation) would also be investigated.

If completed in time for the launch this experience would replace the need for buses to the sites - reducing hireage costs, petrol costs, time, and emphasising the benefit of this technology.

The Launch



The **10 November 2017** marks exactly 17 years to the day since the Southern Cross Cable was blessed on Takapuna Beach.

It is also the closing day of NetHui - a major gathering of key players in New Zealand's Internet industry, organised by Internet NZ (to be held at the Aotea Centre).

To take advantage of these factors, I propose that the tour is launched at a special evening event at the **Spark HQ, Auckland**.

Te Ika-a-Maui will be fully restored by this date, and therefore could be installed for this event.

The **tour brochure** will be available for guests to acquire.

If realised, the **VR Experience** will be made available to guests as part of the event. Alternatively, busses may be hired to provide access to the locations.

Timeline

2017

Feb Proposal to Spark Arts Trust

? Meet in AKL to sort out details, funding etc. Source additional funds if required.
Additional potential funders include Southern Cross Cables Ltd and Internet NZ.

Apr Production Phase 1 (1 month)

Takapuna: record He Aha Te Hau, set up phone line

Northcote: door/windows sorted (Measure up for new door, source replacement door, remove existing door and fit replacement, remove bars from windows, clean windows and space)

Whenuapai: images sourced, rights cleared, billboard designed

Muriwai: community consultation, refinement of exploded timeline

Brochure: Finalise content & design

Dive: dive planning: scope technical requirements, contact Navy for permission

May-Jun Production Phase 2 (2 months)

Takapuna: produce carving for post

Northcote: adjust installation as necessary

Whenuapai: print billboard

Muriwai: production of fence posts

Brochure: test on focus group (on site)

Dive: perform & record dive

Jun - Aug Production Phase 3 (2 months)

Muriwai: installation of fence posts & billboard

Brochure: amendments, final design & send to printers

Dive: post production for 360 experience

Sep Production complete: Launch preparation

Prepare for Launch Event. Send invitations...

Oct Launch preparations continue

Install Te Ika-a-Maui for launch event

Test VR experience

Nov 10 Launch Event at Spark HQ

Te Ika-a-Maui on display; VR experience set up; brochures available

Media engagement as appropriate

2018

Jan Te Ika-a-Maui deinstalled, packaged & shipped to Wellington for City Gallery exhibition

Feb City Gallery exhibition opens;
WANTED: The Murals of E. Mervyn Taylor book launch

Jun Exhibition ends, mural shipped back to Auckland for permanent display

Technical requirements

Takapuna

Phone number equipped with an automated answering service. Audio recording of He Aha Te Hau to be provided by the artist.

Northcote

A glass door that fits the given space.
Removal of bars.
Cleaning of space.
Possible installation of lighting.

Whenuapai

Images sourced from Archives NZ: Crown Historic Aerial Photo Archive.
Printed billboard (as per Muriwai boards).
Posts cemented into ground, board installed.
Possible council charges for installation of billboard (TBC).

Muriwai

Compared to the other projects, this work will need more significant engagement with the local community to ensure it is well received and accepted as an addition to the largely natural landscape.

Although it is a fairly subtle intervention, the events represented here are an outsider's view of what is important. Locals may have other ideas about what should be on this list. For this reason the list will need to be presented, considered, and discussed by local residents and items may be added/removed/alterd following this step.

The sites for the posts will also need to be confirmed. I am not sure who owns this land, or what restrictions may be applicable, so this will need to be addressed.

Creation & installation of marker posts.

VR experience

An Auckland-based startup company is currently developing technology for filming in 360 degrees underwater. In the first instance, I will contact this company to propose a partnership towards realising the dive and documentation of the work above land.

See:

- <http://www.boxfish-research.com/>
- <https://stories.ehf.org/360-video-under-the-sea-with-boxfish-research-cefb8a0fb9d3#.1i8k00a19>

Envisioned costs

Actual costs are yet to be confirmed, and may be affected by permissions and practical issues as the work is produced, however below is a list of likely expenses.

Tour Brochure

Author fee (incl provision of all content, focus group testing of tour and adjustments as necessary).
 Designer fee.
 Brochure printing costs.
 Distributor fee.

Takapuna Beach

Artist fee for artwork development & production (incl. research, recording, provision of audio file, post carving, management of telephone line setup).
 Cost for landline number.
 Cost for answering service: InfoAnswer.

Northcote

Artist fee for artwork development & production (incl. research, sourcing of door, project management of alterations).
 Second hand door: approx. \$200 plus locks & cleaning up & fitting.
 OR new door: approx. \$1000.
 Labour for removal/fitting of door.
 Labour for removal of bars.
 Labour for cleaning of space.
 Possible costs for new lighting.
 Ongoing electricity costs.

Whenuapai

Artist fee for artwork development & production (research, design, sourcing of materials, project management of installation). Billboard printing.
 Installation costs (posts, concrete, labour, consents...).

Muriwai

Artist fee for artwork development & production (research, community consultation process, design, sourcing of materials, preparation of posts ready for installation, project management of installation including obtaining required permissions).
 Marker posts & information plates, consent fees (etc), installation (hole digging, concrete, etc...).

VR Experience

Dive & technology costs (Box Fish).
Post production costs.

The Launch

Catering costs.
Communications/PR costs.
Bus hire/VR costs & dome hire.
Cost for setting up Te Ika-a-Maui.

Appendix I: Muriwai Timeline (Draft: Feb 2017)

C.1200	Maori arrive in area
1821	Rev John Butler & Samuel Marsden visit the area
1840	Six whales beached
1865	March 28: PETREL cutter driven ashore. No casualties
1870s	Settlers arrive in the area and attempt to farm
1902	<p>"Pacific Cable" landed?</p> <p>September 23: CONCORDIA Barge run ashore with load of timber. Steward falls into surf</p> <p>October 17: MAY Barquentine 237 tons, built of oak. Cargo of timber from Ponto. Lost off coast of Muriwai. Vessel capsized in surf. All drowned except Watti Dunn, 19-year old Maori and champion swimmer.</p>
1904	<p>November 15: KINCLUNE Barque. Came ashore. Total wreck. Crew landed safely. Ship stayed high and dry for years.</p>
1912	Sydney - Auckland cable
1916	<p>September 28: ALBANY Steamer wrecked by Muriwai creek. Lost while being towed out through surf.</p>
1918	<p>First vehicle drives on Muriwai Beach - a "Velie". Gets stuck in sand, pulled out by horses.</p>
1920s	Sand drifts a major issue
1927	Successful land reclamation work with imported marram grass.
1928	A rare Shephard's Beaked Whale found
?	Boxing Day car racing championship - 100mph record broken in a "Sunbeam"
1931	Unemployed labour used by Ministry of works during great depression to stabilise land
1932	<p>Spliced composite of Trans-Tasman telegraph cable numbers 1 & 2 relocated to Muriwai, landed near Okiritoto Stream mouth. Abandoned in 1963. "Already a cable house established at the beach, associated with the Pacific Cable"</p> <p>- IPENZ Engineering Heritage Report #2649</p>
1934	First Trans-Tasman airmail flight departs from Muriwai

1942	Muriwai Surf Club established
1944	Five sperm whales beached
1958	13 sperm whales beached
1962	COMPAC landed at Muriwai Beach. Voice contact between Australia and New Zealand established on June 2. Decommissioned November 30, 1984.
1974	72 sperm whales strand. All die.
1976	TASMAN 1 landed (?). Decommissioned July, 2001
1983	Four large male sperm whales beached and buried
1984	ANZCAN landed. Decommissioned November 1997 (?) Segment E closure 28 Feb, 2002 (COMPAC Station visitors' book)
1992	TASMAN 2 landed. Still operating in 2016
2000	SOUTHERN CROSS CABLE landed. Still operating in 2016

APPENDIX II: Zero Waste Model

I aspire to be a Zero-Waste Artist by: 1. Refusing what I do not need 2. Reducing what I do need 3. Reusing (and repairing) what I have 4. Recycling what I cannot refuse, reduce, or reuse 5. Rotting (composting) the rest.	When I need things, I consider:	
	PRACTICALITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is it within budget?• Can I source/produce it in time?• Is it suitable for the project duration?• Can I borrow it, or find a suitable second-hand item?
	ETHICS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is it made from materials with low environmental impact?• Has it been produced under ethical working conditions?• Is it culturally appropriate for its destination?
When completed, materials from temporary works should again be considered under the 5 R's. <i>NOTE: There is a preference for outcomes to be made Open Access if appropriate to the material & concept (for example documentation licensed under CC) in order to share this knowledge with the world, and reduce the waste of time and energy spent by others investigating the same territory.</i>		

APPENDIX III:
Outline of Works for City Gallery Wellington

TO **Robert Leonard & Aaron Lister**
City Gallery Wellington

THE SOUTHERN CROSS CABLE: A TOUR

OVERVIEW OF INSTALLATION COMPONENTS
FOR CITY GALLERY WELLINGTON

September 2017

Introduction

This project is a result of my PhD in Fine Arts researching and making artworks relating to the landing sites of the Southern Cross Cable Network (SCCN) in New Zealand. The SCCN is a physical fibre optic internet cable system that has been operating between New Zealand, the USA, Fiji and Australia since 2000.

Approximately the size of a garden hose, the cable follows the contours of the ocean floor forming a figure 8 – or infinity symbol – around the Pacific Ocean. The cable travels from Takapuna Beach in Auckland to Spencer Beach in Hawai'i, Morro Bay in California, Nedonna Beach in Oregon, Kahe Point in Hawai'i, Suva in Fiji, Brookvale in Sydney, Alexandria in Sydney, and Muriwai Beach in Auckland.

In New Zealand, every time Google or Wikipedia is searched, Facebook is accessed, or YouTube videos are viewed the data physically passes as light under the Tasman Sea or the Pacific Ocean. From 2000-2017 the SCCN has been critical in ensuring New Zealanders' ongoing engagement with the rest of the world, providing approximately 98% of New Zealand's international internet connectivity.

In early 2017 I sent a proposal to Spark NZ (Spark NZ are the majority shareholder of the SCCN and the manager of the cable within New Zealand's jurisdiction). I had established relationships with Spark employees and members of the Spark Arts Trust through my work restoring the mural *Te Ika-a-Maui* by E. Mervyn Taylor. This proposal outlined a set of four public art installations at the four main landing sites of the Southern Cross Cable in NZ, connected by a tour guide that would also double as an exhibition guide.

Although responses were positive at first, the proposal was eventually declined due to concerns from the Head of International Operations for Spark NZ's, who explained that "they cannot put at risk the security of the cable stations by bringing their presence to the attention of the public. They place considerable value on maintaining the two sites as inconspicuous as possible (they currently have no Spark or SCCN signage on them)."

Despite this setback I have carried on developing the artworks as I would have done if the proposal had gone ahead. Although the artworks are doomed to never be installed in their intended sites, it is my hope that – if they are made available to the public via an independent public site (i.e. the gallery) – they will still be able to operate as site-specific artworks in the minds of people who visit the sites after having seen them.

It is this set of works that I would like to include in the exhibition next year.

Bronwyn Holloway-Smith
September 2017

The Tour Guide



This will be a small format print publication with navigational information guiding readers to each of the four main sites of the Southern Cross Cable in New Zealand (maps, addresses) and short paragraphs providing some contextual information about the relevance of the artworks to the sites. Questions that can only be answered by visiting the sites are also included. When the full set of answers is collected, visitors will be able to form a username/password combination that leads to a website with bonus information relating to the project.

I am working with designer Duncan Munro to develop this. At the moment we are taking design inspiration from the New Zealand passport format, smartphone dimensions, vintage New Zealand tourism material, and archival material relating to the cable and its past operations under the New Zealand Post Office. Pictured above left is a draft mockup, which is subject to change.



I am planning to make this publication available for purchase within the exhibition via a vintage vending machine that has some formal resemblance to an arcade machine (left). This machine may be painted another colour depending on the overall feel of the objects when they are brought together. The top of the machine is a light box which may have signage added to it.

From 2000-2017 the weight of Aotearoa New Zealand's international internet traffic has been carried by a single system: The Southern Cross Cable Network. This tour guides you to the four main New Zealand sites of this cable that connects a small geographically-isolated nation into the internet systems of the world. By car, the tour takes approximately 2.5 hours. The use of additional navigational aids when traversing the four sites is recommended. Some fun questions have been included that you can only answer by visiting the sites. Good luck!

Share your experience, #FibreTours

Takapuna Beach: The Paper Nautilus



ORIGINAL PROPOSAL

The tour will direct visitors to a point on Takapuna Beach where the Southern Cross Cable comes ashore. This point is visibly marked by a triangular marker post, labelled “CABLE”.

Echoing the lines in the chant He Aha Te Hau, this marker post too will be carved: with a phone number. When called, the line will play listeners a recording of a member of Ngāti Whātua reciting “He aha te hau” before disconnecting the call.

EXHIBITION PROPOSAL

A Plessey All Weather Phone will be installed in the gallery. When listened to, the line will play listeners a recording of member of Ngāti Whātua reciting “He aha te hau”.

NOTE: I am awaiting a response from Ngāti Whātua Ōrakei giving permission to record this mōatea.

On Friday 10 November 2000 a dawn ceremony to bless the Southern Cross Cable was held. Arranged by Telecom New Zealand (now Spark NZ), aspects of the event were led by the Ngāti Whātua kaumātua, Danny Tumahai and Dr. Takutaimoana Wikiriwhi. As part of the ceremony the chant He Aha Te Hau was recited.

He Aha Te Hau, also known as Tītahi’s Chant, speaks directly to the history of the Auckland region. Tītahi was a 19th Century Ngāti Whātua tohunga/priest, and this prophesy is said to evoke hope in the winds of change, foretelling the arrival of the British colonisers in the Waitemata harbour.

*He aha te hau e wawa ra, e wawa ra
He tiu, he raki, he tiu, he raki,
Nana i a mai te puputara ki uta
E tikina atu e au te kotiu,
Koia te pou whakairo e tu ki Waitemata
Ka tu ki Waitemata i oku wairangitanga,
E tu nei, e tu nei!*

*What was the wind that was roaring yonder?
It was the north wind, the wind from the north
It was indeed the north wind I was perceiving driving the
paper nautilus ashore.
And then to my amazement there was the carved post
standing by (the shores of)
Waitemata, standing, standing thus.*

What does it mean for a chant that prophesies the coming of colonisers to be recited at a ceremony for a new internet cable? What connections can be found between colonialism and the internet?

Northcote: Te Ika-a-Akoranga (Alteration)



ORIGINAL PROPOSAL

This site-specific installation will be the final step in the Te Ika-a-Akoranga project: once again allowing the public to view the wall where the Te Ika-a-Māui mural was installed in the COMPAC landing station in Northcote (albeit from outside the complex).

A glass door will be fitted in place of the existing door to the COMPAC station, the canopy and bars will be removed, and the windows and space will be cleaned.

EXHIBITION PROPOSAL

A glass door, possibly painted red to echo the old New Zealand telephone booths, will be installed in the gallery. A photograph of the mural's wall in the COMPAC station will be laser-etched on glass and framed within one of the door's glass panes.

The Commonwealth Pacific Cable (COMPAC) terminal was purpose-built for a new telecommunications cable that was celebrated as a triumph in a small nation that craved more reliable links to the rest of the globe. The New Zealand Post Office invited Wellington-based artist E. Mervyn Taylor to develop a mural for the publicly-funded construction project.

Taylor's resulting work – a ceramic tile mural – depicted the popular traditional Māori story of the demi-god Māui fishing up the North Island (Te Ika-a-Māui, or the fish of Māui), putting a distinctive New Zealand spin on the significance of the new cable. Unveiled on 9 July 1962, the mural was very well received and – in the view of the COMPAC publicity unit – did 'a valuable pre-publicity job for the project'.

However, all submarine communication cables have a limited lifespan, and COMPAC was no exception. The cable was decommissioned on 30 November 1984 prior to the State-Owned Enterprises Act 1986 which split the New Zealand Post Office into three new enterprises: New Zealand Post, Telecom and the Post Office Bank.

In 1990, Telecom was sold to two United States-based telecommunications companies, Bell Atlantic and Ameritech. Around this time the once publicly-accessible cable station was transformed into the inconspicuous, private, high-security site that it is today and the mural was forgotten until 2014 when it was rediscovered in boxes, gathering dust.

The mural has now been relocated and fully restored. The COMPAC station remains unused.

Whenuapai: The Nation Consents



ORIGINAL PROPOSAL

A billboard will be installed outside the Whenuapai landing station, depicting a collection of historic aerial imagery of the site.

As well as referencing concepts of surveillance, this will mark the proximity of the landing station to the Royal New Zealand Air Force base (this aerodrome was also Auckland's international airport from 1945-1965 when the COMPAC mural was completed). The use of a tile motif will echo this mural. Additionally, the Maori word for "Internet" is "Ipurangi", which translates as "container for the sky".

EXHIBITION PROPOSAL

An old-style community post box will be installed in the gallery space (sourced - if I'm able to do so, or a replica if not. I'm not settled on the colour scheme yet either). When viewers peer through the postal slot they will see a digital photo frame playing a looped slideshow of satellite images of the Whenuapai landing station from the 1940s through to recent years, showing how the site has changed over time including excavations marks that appear in 2012, directly between the SCCN station and the airbase.

Whenuapai has had a long association with aviation. Originally constructed as a base for the Wellington bomber aircraft in 1937, the airfield operated as Auckland's civil international airport from 1945, until it was transformed into the Auckland Royal New Zealand Air Force Base in 1965..

The history of the internet is closely intertwined with the military, dating back to the development of the ARPANET project in the 1960s – funded by the US Department of Defense. High-quality, secure communications are, after all, fundamental to the defence sector.

In December 2010 Whenuapai became a point of international interest when a US Government report was leaked – a list of over 300 critical infrastructure and key resource sites worldwide. Only two New Zealand sites made the list: the two landing sites of the Southern Cross Cable, listed as Takapuna and Whenuapai.

Later, in September 2014 at an Auckland event called the "Moment of Truth", journalist Glenn Greenwald and whistle-blower Edward Snowden announced that New Zealanders' internet lives are under constant surveillance via a tap on the Southern Cross Cable. According to Snowden, the surveillance programme "Project Speargun" was reported as being underway in October 2012, with the "New Zealand partner cable access programme" achieving "Phase 1" in early 2013 and undertaking its first "metadata probe" in mid-2013. These claims were immediately rejected by the government and the cable operators.

Snowden claimed there was a GCSB facility in Auckland, and that the Southern Cross Cable could have been tapped without the knowledge of the telecommunications provider. If this is the case, where might the New Zealand Five Eyes sensor network database be located?

Muriwai:

The Long Walk to Northern Waters



ORIGINAL PROPOSAL

A line of posts, imitating the look and feel of the High Voltage posts marking the path of the cable, will be added to the landscape. These will chart various events in Muriwai's history, including the unseen cables under the sand at Muriwai. The walk will begin at the beach access carpark, and culminate at the point where the cable is visible coming out of the sand.

EXHIBITION PROPOSAL

A set of seven posts will be painted white and laser etched or otherwise labelled with the name and operating years of each cable that has landed on Muriwai Beach in a font that subtly evokes headstones.

Muriwai is a site marked by strandings, landings, arrivals, departures, and sand.

In 1840 six whales beached. In 1928 a rare Shephard's Beaked Whale was found. In 1944 five sperm whales beached. In 1958 thirteen sperm whales beached. In 1974 seventy-two sperm whales were stranded, all died. In 1983 four large male sperm whales beached and were buried.

A number of boating accidents have also been recorded here. A cutter was driven ashore in 1865, a barge in 1902, and later that year a barquentine capsized in surf and all-but-one of the crew drowned. In 1904 a barque came ashore, and in 1916 a steamer was lost while being towed out through surf.

Maori arrived in the area around 1200AD with Ngāti Te Kahupara recorded as having lived in the Okiritoto stream area from the 1700s until the late 1800s. European settlers arrived in the 1870s and attempted to farm. Deforestation led to sand drifts becoming a major issue for inhabitants between 1920s-30s. To tackle this problem marram grasses and lupins were planted and the Crown acquired Ngāti Whātua o Kaipara's remaining land, establishing Woodhill Forest. Over the course of ninety years (1900-90) 75% of Ngāti Whātua o Kaipara's land had been alienated by sale or taken for public works, ultimately leading to a 2013 Treaty of Waitangi settlement that saw ownership of Woodhill Forest transferred to Ngā Maunga Whakahii o Kaipara.

In 1912 the first telecommunications cable arrived at Muriwai: the Trans-tasman connection (decommissioned 1964). Then the Australia #2 telegraph cable (1932-1956); the COMPAC cable (1962-1984); the Tasman 1 cable (1976-2001); ANZCAN (1984-2002); Tasman 2 (1992-2017); and the Southern Cross Cable (2000-current). Seven in total. One can be seen coming out of the sand near the mouth of the Okiritoto stream.

Are we coming or going? Are we stranded, or have we landed? What else has been buried in the sand?

Budget

Item		Cost (NZ\$ incl. GST)
Tour guide	Designer fee	2,760
	Brochure printing (estimate based on earlier quote)	2,990
	Vending machine	250
	Paint, signage	TBC
	Website setup costs	TBC
Takapuna	Recording costs	TBC
	Plessey All Weather Phone	91.50
	Mount for phone set	TBC
	Hardware to play the audio in the exhibition	TBC
Northcote	Door	155
	Handles/lock	TBC
	Door frame	TBC
	Glass for photo etching	50.00
	Photo etching	Massey workshop
Whenuapai	Post box	TBC
	Paint	TBC
	Mount for post box	TBC
Muriwai	Marker posts x 7	151
	Laser cutting	Massey workshop
	Mounting system for posts	TBC

Possible additional works



Breaks & faults, the earthquake, & the dive

Three wall-based works that share a theme of interactions between undersea cables, humans, and other aspects of the natural world.

APPENDIX IV:
Apple-style Alterations Poster

A NEW DOOR FOR THE COMPAC TERMINAL

An alteration proposal for Spark NZ

In the 1950s New Zealand was marked by poor communications infrastructure, which heightened a sense of geographic isolation.

The new Commonwealth Pacific Cable (COMPAC) linked New Zealand with its commonwealth counterparts Australia, Fiji, Canada and Britain.¹ It was celebrated as a triumph for the small nation that craved more reliable links to the rest of the globe.

In 1962 E. Mervyn Taylor was commissioned by the New Zealand Government to create a mural, *Te Ika-a-Maui*, for the foyer of the new COMPAC terminal in Northcote, Auckland to mark this glorious enterprise. In addition, commemorative stamps were issued, booklets produced, public celebrations held and, films produced about the cable. When the full cable system was switched on, an official opening was held at the Wellington Town Hall, networked – via the cable – with Australia, Britain and Canada. Her Majesty The Queen telephoned in for the occasion, announced by fanfare and the national anthem, played by the Band of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

Two decades later, on 30 November 1984, COMPAC was decommissioned prior to the State-Owned Enterprises Act in 1986 which split the New Zealand Post Office into three new enterprises: New Zealand Post, Telecom and the Post Office Bank. In 1990 Telecom was sold to two US-based telecommunications companies.

Around this time the once publicly-owned and publicly-accessible cable station was transformed into the inconspicuous, private, high-security site that it is today.

The mural – once publicly-accessible – became locked away in a private complex and was largely forgotten until it was found: stacked in cardboard boxes² in the disused COMPAC landing station, as a result of research into the landing sites of the Southern Cross Cable.

This led to the project *Te Ika-a-Akoranga*.³ Each of the remaining 398 tiles⁴ in the mural was cleaned, catalogued, and photographed. Two quarter-size photographic versions of the mural were also created. The digital images of the tiles were released⁵ under a Creative Commons Attribution license to re-enable public access to this formerly-public artwork. The mural has now been fully restored, including the remaking of sixteen missing tiles, and plans are underway to reinstall it in a publicly-accessible space in proximity to the mural's original location on the North Shore of Auckland.



The door to the COMPAC Terminal foyer, 2015



As the final step in the *Te Ika-a-Akoranga* project, it is proposed that the public are once again permitted to view the wall where the *Te Ika-a-Maui* mural was originally installed.

A glass door will be fitted in place of the existing solid door; the bars will be removed from the windows, the canopy will be removed from above the door, and the windows and space will be cleaned enabling visibility of the wall through the perimeter fence of the cable complex.

1 Via the CANTAT cable.
2 At some point the mural had been removed from its wall – in all likelihood due to deterioration of the tiling cement leading to tiles falling off the wall and being damaged.
3 A work commissioned by Letting Space in association with J. Walter Thompson
4 Sixteen tiles were missing from the set.
5 The digital files are available for download at <url>

APPENDIX V:
Voices Through The Deep





CHAPTER 6

1962 AUCKLAND

COMMONWEALTH PACIFIC CABLE TERMINAL







BRONWYN HOLLOWAY-SMITH

VOICES THROUGH THE DEEP

Today the idea of a great public celebration to mark the opening of a new communications link may seem odd, but in the 1950s New Zealand was marked by poor communications infrastructure, which heightened a sense of geographic isolation.

The Commonwealth Pacific Cable (COMPAC) was a new coaxial cable slated to address this problem and was celebrated as a triumph for the small nation that craved more reliable links to the rest of the globe.

A series of objects and events were produced to mark the occasion, including a special publication issued by the New Zealand Post Office. It opened with a stirring quote from Milton's *Paradise Lost* — 'United thoughts and counsels, equal hope, and hazard in this glorious enterprise' — and continued:

How aptly Milton's words express the unity of the Commonwealth demonstrated by this venture — the Commonwealth Pacific Telephone Cable. Today, 3rd December, 1963, a scientific miracle will take place. At 11 o'clock New Zealand time Britain, Canada, Australia and New Zealand will be linked by a cable conceived and produced by its members. The cable is of revolutionary design and will enable people separated by half the world to talk to each other as easily as if together. To the spirit of unity and fellowship that produced this miraculous cable, we dedicate this booklet.

Calling the world

A child speaks to her mother in Australia by telephone over the newly opened Tasman Link, 1962.

[PREVIOUS PAGE]

Cherished

Taylor's design for the COMPAC terminal (detail). Gouache on hardboard panel, circa 1961.

**Title**

Te Ika-a-Māui

Medium

Ceramic tiles

Dimensions

H2625mm x W3430mm

Date

1962

Original location

Commonwealth Pacific Cable Terminal

1 Akoranga Drive

Northcote

Auckland

Architect

F. G. F. Sheppard

Government Architect

Current location

Removed from original location,
undergoing restoration

Property of Spark NZ

Since 1931, New Zealand had been relying on a radio telephone service, which was becoming increasingly unreliable, susceptible to interference and overloaded due to demand. The new COMPAC cable would enable ‘thousands of people throughout the world [. . .] to talk to each other with complete clarity’, also ensuring that ‘at the same time thousands of telegraph and telex messages as well as pictures and programmes will be exchanged’.

COMPAC was a feat of finance and engineering that stretched across the Tasman Sea and Pacific Ocean, linking New Zealand with Australia and Canada, via Fiji and Hawai‘i, and reinforcing geopolitical ties that were strengthened during World War II. Costing £26.3 million (10 per cent of which was contributed by New Zealand), the cable spanned 14,000 miles.

Prior to 1987, New Zealand’s communications infrastructure was managed by the Post Office, a government department. So it was the Post Office that invited E. Mervyn Taylor to develop a mural for the COMPAC Terminal in Northcote, the only one he made in the Auckland region. By this stage in his career Taylor had built himself a strong reputation as a muralist for public buildings. In a letter dated 24 January 1961, the director of the Overseas Telecommunications Division of the Post Office was told that ‘The Ministry of Works has been informed that we prefer the work be entrusted to Mr M. Taylor, Wellington.’

Taylor had included depictions of Māori in many of his murals to date. In the COMPAC mural he extended this approach, proposing to depict the traditional Māori creation story of the demi-god Māui fishing up the North Island, also known as Te Ika-a-Māui (the fish of Māui).

By focusing on this story, Taylor put a distinctive New Zealand spin on the significance of the new telecommunications cable. This illustration was also unique amidst his oeuvre of murals in that it directly continued his ongoing mission to illustrate the stories from Sir George Grey’s *Polynesian Mythology*, which he had begun (but not completed) during his Academy of Fine Arts scholarship time in Te Kaha.

In his mural work for Wairoa, Taylor had developed a technique of painting detailed preparatory gouache designs and he continued this process with the COMPAC commission. The resulting image was far more playful than any of his other mural designs, harking back to earlier prints such as *The Magical Wooden Head* and *Maui and the Fire Goddess*, and his theatrical Christmas cards.

In the design Māui holds a rope and braces himself in a waka brimming with fish, while his brothers flail in near-comic motion. Peculiar beady-eyed seagulls frolic above swirling waves that reveal the emerging peaks of Mount Ruapehu. The basic form of the North Island can be made out, with the tip of Māui’s hook appropriately located in the Wellington region.¹ The base of the

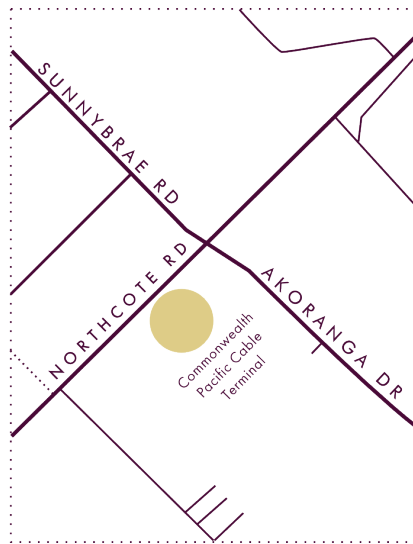


image is framed by breaking waves, and the upper half by soft pink skies and wispy clouds. Intersecting colour planes fly through the image, creating bold collisions of khaki, mustard, navy and teal.

This design was to be one of the largest stand-alone paintings Taylor ever completed,² and after Taylor passed away it hung for many years in his widow Teddy's home. The work seems to have been especially cherished by Teddy: while she arranged for other mural designs to be acquired by the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa during her lifetime, an arrangement was made for this particular work to enter the collection after her passing.

The mural design was recreated in ceramic tiles by Carter Tiles in England and installed in the foyer of the COMPAC landing station in time for the opening of the Tasman section of the cable.³ On 9 July 1962, Prime Minister Keith Holyoake drew back a small New Zealand flag in the station to unveil a plaque commemorating the Tasman Link.⁴ Later, an official opening ceremony took place at the Auckland Town Hall. The cable was further commemorated by official public ceremonies in Wellington, special commemorative stamps and plates, two films and even a poem.⁵

The mural was very well received and attracted, in the view of the COMPAC publicity unit, 'a wide field of interest' doing 'a valuable pre-publicity job for the project'. A press release on the mural stated it as being a work 'of striking beauty' which 'graced the entrance hall of the terminal building'.⁶ The same release continued to quote an architect (unspecified), who stated: 'There is always a tendency to adopt austerities and eliminate anything not functionally required. But we can't live without art of some kind — it is essential to civilised living, and I am glad to see such a fine piece of work in the new cable building.'⁷ It was covered in national newspapers, including the Christchurch *Press* and New Plymouth's *Daily News*, which both printed text taken directly from the press release:

When asked if he had any special reason for selecting this particular myth for the cable, Mr Taylor explained that the myth of fishing up a piece of land was a poetical Polynesian way of describing the discovery of a new island. There was an analogy, he thought, between the 'fishing up' of New Zealand by Maui and its modern counterpart where the new cable again draws New Zealand out of the Pacific into the telephone systems of the world.⁸

The COMPAC station in Auckland was publicly accessible for many years.⁹ Visitors could experience Māui and his brothers in close quarters — the mural occupied a full wall within a relatively small foyer area.

However, all submarine communication cables have a limited lifespan, and COMPAC was no exception. The cable was decommissioned on 30 November 1984, just prior to the State-Owned Enterprises Act 1986, which



split the New Zealand Post Office into three new enterprises: New Zealand Post, Telecom and the Post Office Bank. In 1990, Telecom was sold to two United States-based telecommunications companies, Bell Atlantic and Ameritech. Around this time a high-security perimeter fence was built around the COMPAC complex, cutting off public access to Taylor's mural.

At some point during this period the *Te Ika-a-Maui* tiles began falling off the wall, probably due to the deterioration of the tiling cement used by the installer.¹⁰ A decision was made to remove the mural completely. Each tile was taken down, numbered and stacked in cardboard boxes in an adjacent office. There they remained until 2014, when a prospective PhD candidate researching cultural narratives relating to the landing sites of a present-day submarine internet cable — the Southern Cross Cable — rediscovered them.¹¹ That candidate was me.

Having been told about a mural located within the Takapuna landing station of the Southern Cross Cable Network (SCCN), I contacted the landing station manager asking for permission to access and photograph the work. Mike McGrath from Telecom (now Spark) responded: 'There is no longer a mural at the cable station, many years ago there was a ceramic mural which was on the entrance wall at the COMPAC cable station which is on the same site. This mural started to deteriorate and fall apart so it was removed.'

Around the time of the rediscovery, I was invited by curators Mark Amery and Sophie Jerram, of public art commissioning group Letting Space, to propose a project for the office space of JWT — now the J. Walter Thompson marketing firm — in Auckland. The brief specified that the work needed to straddle both the corporate and public spheres: it was to be located within a vitrine between the firm's boardroom and open-plan office space, and had to be able to engage outside audiences. A time limit of several months was set for the commission.

Together the rediscovery and the commission led to *Te Ika-a-Akoranga*, a project to restore, digitise, publish and rebuild *Te Ika-a-Maui*, and was also the catalyst for this book. With the permission of Spark, the mural itself was relocated from Auckland to Wellington. Each tile was then cleaned, photographed, the digital file edited and reproduction tiles printed in duplicate — a process that took months. In undertaking the project, I wanted to bring the story of the mural into the present day, but also to address issues connected with the SCCN and New Zealand's contemporary communications landscape. The name *Te Ika-a-Akoranga*, or 'The Fish of Learning', was chosen in reference to the mural's original title and the physical location of the SCCN and COMPAC landing stations at 1 Akoranga Drive, Northcote, Auckland. (Akoranga translates as 'learning, subject, discipline, profession, school, educational course, academic programme, academic course, teaching, class,



lesson¹² — analogous to a key aspect of the present-day internet.)

Robert Clendon, a conservator from Te Papa, inspected the tiles and advised on the ways and means appropriate for cleaning them. I created a video documenting the cleaning process for one tile.¹³ Working bees were held in order to remove the cement, packing tape and grime from the tiles — attended by Taylor's granddaughter Sarah Taylor, Kerry Males (a dedicated intern from the Massey University School of Art) and a wealth of friends and family.

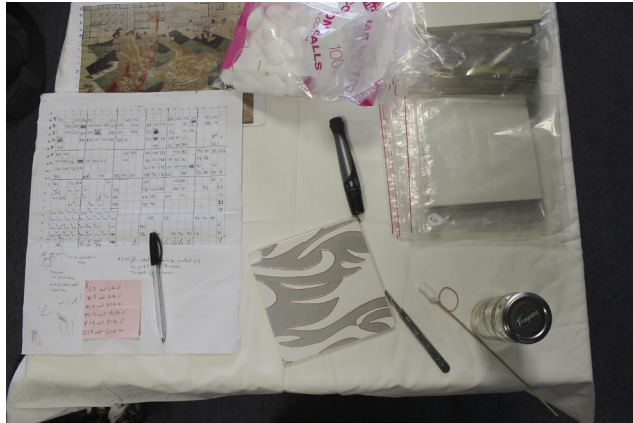
In addition to the digital work, two physical photographic versions of the mural were constructed: one at the JWT offices in Auckland and a parallel work in Wellington with a dragnet used to mount the photographic tiles — a subtle reference to surveillance narratives that were circulating at the time.¹⁴ As the work had originally been commissioned with public money, the mural was once again made publicly accessible via the internet.¹⁵ This process also acted as a form of back-up, with multiple copies of the image ensuring that the work is less likely to be forgotten and lost in the future.

Through the process, sixteen tiles were discovered to be missing from the original mural. These were left as gaps in the JWT version, in line with common restoration practices. In the digital version, missing tiles were indicated by an X-shaped image of a dragnet knot-intersection, echoing the 'X' placeholder graphic that is commonly found online when images are missing.

The completion of the JWT reproduction of the mural was celebrated at a special event in the offices on 16 October 2014, attended by E. Mervyn Taylor's family members, including his daughter, Jane. Later, by closely studying the design and archival image of the mural, I recreated the sixteen missing tiles, painting them in 1:1 scale using carefully colour-matched gouache, just as Taylor had done. These paintings were scanned, colour-corrected and printed as exact colour matches by Shaun Waugh of the Massey University School of Art photography lab.

For the first time in decades, the complete mural was assembled at the Massey University College of Creative Arts on 12 November 2015 for the launch of the E. Mervyn Taylor Mural Search and Recovery Project, with the photographic prints filling the gaps left by the missing tiles. Following this one-day installation, the mural was again packed up and shipped back to Auckland for complete restoration work.

At the time of writing, the Spark Arts Trust is commissioning replica ceramic tiles to replace the missing originals, and discussions are under way with Auckland Council towards finding a permanent, publicly accessible home for the mural on the North Shore, in proximity to where it once stood.





[LEFT]

**Mural restoration
and photographic
reconstruction process, 2014.**

Cleaning the tiles alone took
approximately 140 hours.

[ABOVE]

The mural's original location
COMPAC station foyer,
Auckland, 2014.







Careful hands

Photographing a tile for
Te Ika-a-Akoranga, a project to
restore *Te Ika-a-Maui*, 2014.







Te Ika-a-Maui

The full mural installed for the first time since its cleaning, with photographic prints filling the gaps. Massey University, Wellington, 2015.



APPENDIX VI:
Speargun Conspiracy Script & List of Images

NARRATOR	IMAGE
Whenuapai's association with aviation dates back to 1937 when the Auckland base of the Royal New Zealand Air Force was established.	A black and white aerial photograph of the site, dated 1940 Source: Retrolens.nz
From 1945 the base also served as Auckland's civil international airport.	A black and white aerial photograph of the site, dated 1950.
In 1965 the civil international airport was relocated and the Air Force resumed sole occupancy of the site.	A black and white aerial photograph of the site, dated 1972.
The Southern Cross Cable landing station was built prior to 2000, when the cable came online.	A colour aerial photograph of the site, dated 2003.
The year: Two-thousand-and-nine, the date: February 18th.	A colour satellite photograph of the site, dated 2009. The red outlines drawn earlier are now embedded in the printed image.
The United States Government compile a secret list of over 300 foreign infrastructure sites that, in their view, "if attacked or destroyed would critically impact the US"	A stapled A4 document: a printed copy of a leaked US Government cable that brought the mentioned list to public attention. Several lines are highlighted on the front cover ²⁴⁷ .
Only two New Zealand sites feature on the list. Not the Beehive, not the US Embassy in Wellington, not the Waihopai Spy Base,	The pages are turned as the script continues. ²⁴⁸

²⁴⁷ The highlighted words on the front cover read:

SECRET STATE 015113
NOFORN, NOT FOR INTERNET DISTRIBUTION

SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR INFORMATION:CRITICAL FOREIGN DEPENDENCIES (CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND KEY RESOURCES LOCATED ABROAD)

2. (U//FOUO) Under the direction of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), the National Infrastructure Protection Plan (NIPP) was written to provide the unifying structure for the integration of critical infrastructure and key resources (CI/KR) protection into a single national program.

²⁴⁸ Highlighted on the second page is:

3. (U//FOUO) In addition to a list of critical domestic CI/KR, the NIPP requires compilation and annual update of a comprehensive inventory of CI/KR that are located outside U.S. borders and whose loss could critically impact the public health, economic security, and/or national and homeland security of the United States. DHS in collaboration with State developed the Critical Foreign Dependencies Initiative (CFDI) to identify these critical U.S. foreign dependencies -- foreign CI/KR that may affect systems within the U.S. directly or indirectly. State is coordinating with DHS to develop the 2009 inventory, and the action request in Para. 13 represents the initial step in this process.

5. (U//FOUO) The NIPP identifies 18 CI/KR sectors: agriculture and food; defense industrial base; energy; healthcare and public health; national monuments and icons; banking and finance; drinking water and water treatment systems; chemical; commercial facilities; dams; emergency services; commercial nuclear reactors, materials, and waste; information technology; communications; postal and shipping; transportation and systems; government facilities; and critical manufacturing. Obviously some of these sectors are more likely to have international components than other sectors.

but the two landing stations of the Southern Cross Cable, listed as “Whenuapai” and “Takapuna”.	The page turning ends, and the open spine of the pages are creased to help them sit flat. The hand gestures to a highlighted section ²⁴⁹ of the document, then points out the words “Whenuapai” and “Takapuna” when they are spoken.
The year: Twenty-twelve, the month: March. New Zealand Spy Agency, the GCSB report that Project “Speargun” is under way.	A copy of one of Edward Snowden’s leaked slides. The hand points to “GCSB” and “Project SPEARGUN Underway” as the words are spoken.
Named after a gun used in underwater fishing, the project’s first phase entails the installation of equipment enabling access to the Southern Cross Cable, which by this time, carries 98% of New Zealand’s international internet traffic.	[no image]
Fresh excavation marks appear between the Whenuapai Air Force base and the Southern Cross Cable landing station—	A colour satellite photograph of the site, dated 2012, with the red outlines still embedded in the image. Excavation marks are visible in the image.
a metaphorical “speargun” has been fired in the form of an intercepting cable.	The alleged path of the intercepting cable is drawn on the image by hand with a red whiteboard marker.
A data centre is built on the site of a former telephone exchange to handle the amount of information captured by the system.	A rectangle is drawn around a large, new building in the Air Force base, and a line drawn to connect it to the path of the intercepting cable.
The year: Twenty-thirteen, the month: February. “Phase one” is complete and ready for its first data capture,	A printed slide with heading “Key Activities In Progress: Access”. Large parts are redacted with black lines, but the last line is visible and states “New Zealand: Partner cable access programme achieves Phase 1. The hand gestures to underline the words “Phase 1”
awaiting the passing of a new GCSB law.	A thinner piece of paper is placed over the slide at an askew angle. It includes the text “New Zealand: GCSB’s cable access programme SPEARGUN Phase 1; awaiting new GCSB Act expected July 2013; first metadata probe mid 2013. The hand points to the phrase “new GCSB Act”

²⁴⁹ Highlighted on the landing page are the lines:

New Zealand:
Southern Cross undersea cable landing, Whenuapai, New Zealand
Southern Cross undersea cable landing, Takapuna, New Zealand

An engineer from US spy agency and Five Eyes partner, the NSA, visits New Zealand to teach GCSB staff how to intercept the Southern Cross Cable.	<p>A NZ Herald article titled “Powerful US spy tools were set for NZ installation” written by David Fisher. Two paragraphs are highlighted. They read “An engineer visited a GCSB base near Blenheim in February 2013 to talk about setting up a ‘Special Source Operations’ site.</p> <p>The SSO is the division of the United States’ National Security Agency which carries out cable tapping and has vast resources to trawl and capture massive amounts of internet content and electronic communication, including the PRISM system.”</p>
The year: Twenty-thirteen, the month: April. The GCSB deploy their spying capabilities on a set of new targets.	A colour satellite photograph of the site, dated 2013, with the red outlines still embedded in the image.
Not terrorists, not criminals,	n/a
but job candidates.	A NZ Herald article titled “How spy agency honed in on Groser’s rivals” written by Nicky Hager and Ryan Gallagher.
Tim Groser, the Government Trade Minister, is vying for a job at the World Trade Organisation, the WTO.	The article includes a photograph of Groser, with John Key standing, out of focus, behind him. The hand points out Groser.
Under the codename the “WTO Project” the GCSB intercept email and internet traffic from other applicants and pass the information on to Tim Groser’s campaign team in an attempt to give him a competitive advantage.	An official cable-style document. A highlighted segment reads “sigdev/2013_wto_project”. The hand points to this segment when the narrator says “WTO Project”.
May 14th. Groser fails to make the final shortlist, ultimately losing to a Brazilian candidate, but Prime Minister John Key stresses that, “he gave it his best go with the support of the Government”.	The hand points to the out-of-focus image of John Key standing behind Groser.
Groser is later appointed New Zealand’s Ambassador to the United States.	A screenshot of a page on the New Zealand Foreign Affairs & Trade website showing Groser as New Zealand’s Ambassador to the United States of America. The words “Tim Groser; New Zealand’s Ambassador to the United States of America” are highlighted. The hand points to these words.
The year: Twenty-thirteen, the date: August 21st.	A new colour satellite photograph of the site, dated 2013, with the red outlines still embedded in the image.
Project Speargun is enabled by a new law.	The legislation of the Government Communications Security Bureau Amendment Act 2013.
<p>The National and ACT Parties, and a single vote from United Future’s Peter Dunne pass the law with a slim majority of 61 to 59 votes.</p> <p>The bill allows the GCSB to capture communications from all New Zealanders for the</p>	The hands gently reach for the document and slowly start turning the pages of the Act. Sections on pages 5–6 are highlighted.

use of government departments including the New Zealand Police, Defence Force and the Security Intelligence Service.	
The year: Twenty-thirteen, the date: September 2nd.	A GCSB letter to David Fisher responding to an official information request for information relating to initiative 7418
Following Edward Snowden's document leaks, which draw public attention to the GCSB's cable-tapping plan, the Government claim funding for Project Speargun has been halted.	The hand turns the letter over. There is more information on the reverse side. Sections are highlighted. The hand gestures to these sections.
Aerial photographs of the Whenuapai site show the intercepting cable has not been removed.	A colour satellite photograph of the site, dated 2018. The red outlines have been removed, but the excavation line has been brightened. The hand gestures to this line.
The infrastructure and legislation remain intact, and with it, the legacy of Speargun.	The hand closes the GCSB Act document and places it tidily on the pile of documents.
Why is there still a knot in my stomach?	A colour satellite photograph of the site, without a date. The site is largely obscured by clouds. The view pauses before slowly fading to black.

APPENDIX VII:
The Southern Cross Cable: A Tour
(Publication)

APPENDIX VIII: The Deep Sea Cables

The wrecks dissolve above us; their dust drops down from afar—
Down to the dark, to the utter dark, where the blind white sea-snakes are.
There is no sound, no echo of sound, in the deserts of the deep,
Or the great grey level plains of ooze where the shell-burred cables creep.

Here in the womb of the world—here on the tie-ribs of earth
Words, and the words of men, flicker and flutter and beat—
Warning, sorrow and gain, salutation and mirth -
For a Power troubles the Still that has neither voice nor feet.

They have wakened the timeless Things; they have killed
their father Time
Joining hands in the gloom, a league from the last of the sun.
Hush! Men talk to-day o'er the waste of the ultimate slime,
And a new Word runs between: whispering, 'Let us be one!'

Rudyard Kipling, 1983