

# TE WHATU O POUTINI

A VISUAL ART EXPLORATION OF NEW MEDIA STORYTELLING

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ARAHURA  
MICHELLE LEE  
DIGITAL IMAGE  
2007



KO TUHUA TE MAUNGA

KO ARAHURA TE AWA

KO POUNAMU TE TAONGA

KO NGATI WAEWAE TE IWI

KO TUHURU TE TANGATA

KO POUTINI TE TANIWHA

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# TE KUPU WHAKAMANA A TE RINGATUHI

## ATTESTATION OF AUTHORSHIP

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

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Michelle Lee

# NGA TOHI

## DEDICATION

This Masters of Art and Design Research Project is dedicated to my Tupuna and the descendants of Ngati Waewae, in particular, my children, Moana Sandra Ngapoko Lee-Makapelu and Toa Emmett William Lee-Makapelu, and my mother The Honourable Sandra R Te Hakamatua Lee.

This Masters of Art and Design degree is also dedicated to the memory of the late Don C. Selwyn for his vision and belief.

‘Life is but a moment between two eternities.’ (Don C. Selwyn)

# NGA MIHI POUNAMU

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge all my tupuna who have inspired and guided every step of this journey.

During this past year, two significant elders passed away, Dr Don .C. Selwyn and my Uncle Wereta Tainui, moe mai ra.

I would also like to express my deepest gratitude for the assistance and support given by all of my Whanau. Many thanks for the endless encouragement, and the hours, days, and years of support given by my mother, The Honourable Sandra Lee. To my children, Moana and Toa Lee-Makapelu, thanks for your enthusiasm, sacrifice and patience. You all have been, and will always be, the inspiration of my creative path. I would like to especially acknowledge my cousin Marama Karetai for her assistance with every aspect of the research process. Many thanks to my sister Annabelle Lee-Harris and her children Omiha-Pearl and Mokemaio Harris, for their support, input, and analyses. I appreciated the contribution of my Taua, Roka Barber and my late Grandfather William Barber for his love of history and story. I acknowledge my tungane Manu and Wiremu Weepu for their intimate knowledge of our awa. My thanks also to Cousin Iri Barber for all the support and ‘rides over the hill’. Thanks also to Anaru Vercoe For his insights and to Mahinarangi. To my father Michael Lee and his wife Jenny, many thanks for your support. To the Lee family and my late Grandparents Emmett and Eileen Lee, thank you for sharing your love of oratory.

I would like to acknowledge all of the time and contributions of the descendants of Ngati Waewae; furthermore, I would like to express my gratitude for the assistance given by the Barber Whanau, Weepu Whanau, Tainui Whanau, Tauwhare Whanau and the Tirikatene Whanau. My thanks to my Kaumatua, in

particular, Uncle Eli Weepu, Uncle Ken Tainui, Uncle Te Mauri o Te Tiriti Tirikatene and Uncle Jack Tauwhare. Also to, Aunty Papakura Tainui, Aunty Te Whe Weepu, Aunty Tilly Tainui and all the beautiful Taua of Arahura Paa, my many thanks.

The assistance of Te Runanga o Ngati Waewae executives and members has been invaluable. In particular, the insight, input and encouragement of Cousin Jerry Pu has been vital to the project. My thanks also, for the contributions of and shared adventures along the way with, Cousin Richard Barber, Cousin Tangihaere Weepu, Cousin Irai Weepu, Cousin Emma Weepu, Cousin Tuhuru Gibbs, Rawiti Weepu, Ihaka Weepu, and Arama Weepu. I extend my aroha to the entire Rangatahi of Arahura Paa, and all the members of the Arahura Paa Web page.

I pay tribute also, to my friends for their critique, patience and understanding.

I am also grateful for the Tuakana Teina scholarship and the staff of the Auckland University of Technology, Faculty of art and design.

My acknowledgements turn to my two supervisors Natalie Robertson and John Eyles. I appreciate greatly the fresh insight and vision, John, that you have brought to this project and beyond. Natalie, this journey would not have been completed if it were not for you. Thank you so much for being a true kaiako and mentor. For singing the map and sharing the fire on my journey though new territory, fellow daughter of Paikea, my deepest gratitude.

November 2007.

# NGA MOTIKA HINGARO TANGATA

## INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS

An intellectual property right reserved by the Treaty of Waitangi, in particular Article 2, applies to the relevant components of the following material.

# TUHINGA WHAKARAPOTO

## ABSTRACT

This visual art project has explored the ancient Maori pukorero (oral tradition) of Te Whatu o Poutini (The Eye of Poutini) that articulates the journey of Poutini Taniwha, Waitaiki and Tamaahua from Tuhua (Mayor Island) in the Bay of Plenty, to the Arahura River. An oral geological map, the pukorero also expresses through cultural values, the intimate spiritual relationship Ngati Waewae have with our tupuna, the Arahura River, pounamu stone and each other. Exploring the genres of digital storytelling and video art installation, this project combines them as new media storytelling. The current experience of colonisation and urbanisation emotionally parallel the abduction, transformation and multiple places of belonging experienced by the tupuna Waitaiki at the hand of Poutini Taniwha. The project explores and acknowledges this connection. The survival, restoration and celebration of Ngati Waewae culture and the need to assert control of our own destinies has infused every component of the project.

The thesis is constituted as practice-based work 80%, accompanied by an exegesis 20%

# TE PUTAKETANGA

## THE SOURCE

### INTRODUCTION

Te Whatu o Poutini is a traditional thriller pukorero (story), of abduction and chase across the country. The customary oral story embodies geological knowledge that demonstrates a scientific understanding of the formation of stone. The central characters Poutini Taniwha, Tamaahua and Waitaiki, map the geology of the fault line of Te Ika a Maui, the North Island and Te Wai Pounamu, the South Island, revealing the locations of sources of stone of economic and spiritual value to Maori. The people of Ngati Waewae whakapapa (genealogy) to these characters, allowing us to claim authority over our tribal region Te Tai Poutini, the West Coast of the South Island of Aotearoa, New Zealand, and kaitiakitanga (guardianship) over pounamu, forms of jade.

I am a direct descendant of Tuhuru (paramount chief of Te Tai Poutini West Coast of the South Island and direct descendant of Tamaahua) and his wife Papakura. This is my matriarchal line of descent. The driving aim of the project has been one of the political notions of ‘ Tino Rangatiratanga ’ (Self-Determination and direction). The research participants have included Ngati Waewae; therefore I have researched from the position of participant within the research. As the celebration of Ngati Waewae culture and the need to assert control of our own destinies has been the core of every component of the

project, Te Whatu o Poutini has been researched as a spiritual oral tradition and story rather than as ‘myth’ or ‘legend’, which has been a colonial definition.

My thesis, Te Whatu o Poutini takes the story, examining how this could be utilised as a metaphor of my current Ngati Waewae experience and how it translates as a new media storytelling piece. As a result of the research process and in consideration of its aims, this project defines new media storytelling as combination of storytelling and video installation. Video has been an accessible means of exploring abstract moving images that narrate the story from the current context.

This project rests on two central nodes of practice. The first is storytelling. Stemming from Ngati Wairangi oral traditions storytelling is a major mode of communication of Ngati Waewae descendants. These iwi journeyed to one of the furthest most isolated reaches of Polynesia, Te Tai Poutini (The West Coast of the South Island). They gathered intimate knowledge of their specific environmental location, developing into pounamu artisans and travelling traders, a tradition that continues to the present. The story of Te Whatu o Poutini that has been a mechanism utilised to bind Ngati Waewae, to the Arahura River, to pounamu (greenstone) and to each other. Maori collective experience continues to inform and define our cultural perception through the retelling of journeys.

This visual art project extends the story into a modern context, connecting the past with the present and on to the future. The representation of the participants as a political notion has meant activating creative practice through the principles of Whanaungatanga (Inclusiveness), within Kaupapa Maori research methodologies (Smith, 1999). This has been through a process of consultation, contribution and collaboration of the research participants. This has been researched using creative practice research



methodologies drawing on Rosenberg's (2000), rhizomatic approach that has gathered from and set out a number of streams like a braided river.

The second central node of practice has been new media. The evolution of technology has seen a rapid expansion of the potential ways in which a story can be told within a new media setting. Cinema and television have been well utilised for this purpose and have developed specific formulae that meet the industrial commercial needs. Similarly the advent of the video camera, development of data projectors and other such equipment has allowed further areas of artistic exploration into the use of moving image. Computers have seen the development of the Internet, editing effects, animations, three-dimensional virtual environments, and various other innovations that enable new media storytelling. Digital storytelling methods have spread throughout communities across the world because they utilise a level of technology that enables social democracy. In contrast to the documentary or other television genre, individuals are now able to have complete control over the telling of their own stories through moving image.

This new media story installation of Te Whatu o Poutini contains personal threads to strengthen the intimate of bonds for and with future generations of Ngati Waewae to the present generations and reflects our current context. This follows the traditions of our tupuna who left traces of themselves for our future reference in various forms of taonga. This derives from an understanding that intimate relationships and knowledge of previous generations affirms self-identity. The project has been inspired by the journals of my tupuna Tame Whakamaui Pihawai West whose writings have served in this way. A strong sense of identity and connectedness is the primary cultural value of Maori and is an essential survival tool in a colonized environment.



TAME WHAKAMAIA PIHAWAI WEST

JOURNALS  
MICHELLE LEE  
DIGITAL IMAGE  
2006

Underpinning concepts of the project have been to contemporise and accelerate the flames of Ngati Waewae storytelling traditions. These oral tradition maps important cultural and economic knowledge as expressed through Mataranga Maori (Maori epistemologies). The current dispersed urbanised situation of many Ngati Waewae descendants corresponds with Te Whatu o Poutini. For this reason the two stories, the traditional journey to Arahura and the current journey and our relationship with our turangawaewae (traditional tribal region) have been compiled into one new media artefact. Telling the traditional story and the modern context simultaneously reflects an equal value of the past and the present.

The pukorero Te Whatu o Poutini reflects the triangulation of narrative. It follows therefore that this exegesis is written in and moves between three voices, an academic voice, a storytelling voice and a personal voice.

My great grandmother Roka Te Hakamatua Pihawai West Johnson left Arahura Paa to settle in Wellington as apart of the early urbanisation of Te Iwi Maori. As a result the following generations of my family have been urbanised. As a small child my family moved on to Auckland but we have always maintained strong bonds with our iwi and turangawaewae retaining all our inherited lands and our iwi shareholdings. Because we were one of the first families to leave the Paa, generations of my family have felt a sense of responsibility to our whanaunga (relations) when they have subsequently entered an urban environment. Our relationships with our whanaunga, journeys to the Paa and the exchange of stories ever constant in my family home reinforced my emotional and spiritual connections with my ancestral homeland. The Arahura River is the only privately owned river in New Zealand and has always remained in the ownership of Ngati Waewae descendants. It is the one place where we are free to exercise our Tino Rangatiratanga.

I am the mother of two children, Moana Sandra Ngapoko Lee-Makapelu and Toa Emmett William Lee-Makapelu. Both of my children have been raised with a strong Ngati Waewae identity. They have close relationships with their whanaunga and been educated in Kura Kaupapa Maori but because of time and financial restraints, I had not taken them back to Arahura Paa. After being reminded of the pukorero, Te Whatu o Poutini and dreaming one night of a waka racing at speed southward, in January of 2006, I decided that it was time to take them home. I put my children into the car, loaded it up with supplies and drove them from Auckland to Arahura.

We spent two weeks in the Paa and purchased a Bedford bus that was parked on my family land and explored our tribal region and awa. We collected Pounamu, korero and most importantly memories. All the while, my seven-year-old son constantly searched for the face of Poutini Taniwha.

PAPAKAINGA  
MICHELLE LEE  
DIGITAL IMAGES  
2006



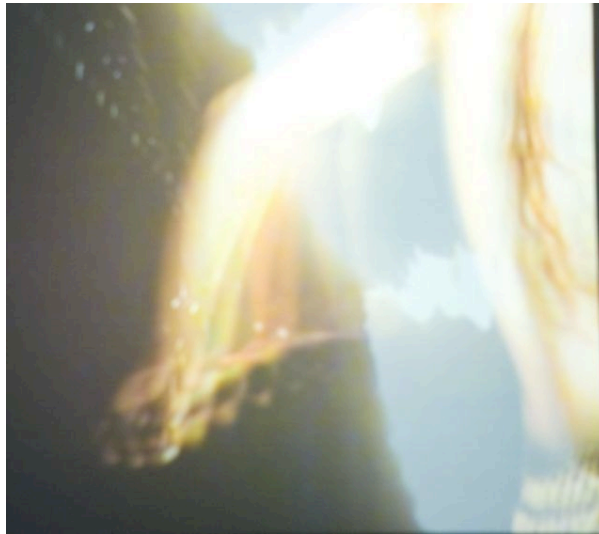
Guided by two of our kinsmen, we travelled to beyond Punakaiki, near our tribal boundary to the landing place of one of Tamaahua's tekateka (darts) used in his pursuit of Poutini, and sourced stones, formed from this event, that our Tupuna used as drill bits for carving pounamu. Stone forms that were created by the enemies of Poutini, such as sandstone and flint, were used for carving pounamu. We had karakia to ensure our safe return and bid our kinsmen farewell.

On our dash to catch the Inter-Islander Ferry for the journey to our other home, my son announced that he had in fact, seen the face of Poutini. When I enquired as to where he found it he replied that he had seen it in all of the faces of our iwi.

At the end of 2005, I was encouraged by my mother to embark on a Masters of Art and Design Degree and was supported by my late kaiako, political ally and friend, renowned Maori filmmaker, Dr Don C Selwyn. That the story of Waitaiki resonated with me so deeply I decided that Te Whatu o Poutini would be the kaupapa or platform of my Masters project. This also gave me a sound reason to return home to Arahura Paa more often. Since that time I have returned home fives times and have contact with my relations still on the West Coast on a daily basis.

# TE WHATU O POUTINI

## THE EYE OF POUTINI

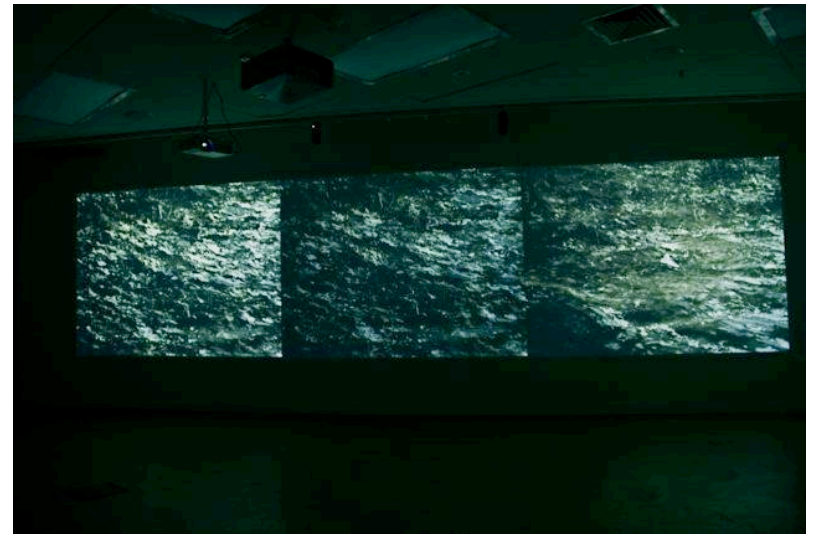


TE WHATU O POUTINI  
MICHELLE LEE  
NEW MEDIA STORYTELLING INSTALLATION  
PHOTOGRAPH: NATALIE ROBERTSON  
2007



## DESCRIPTION OF COMPLETED INSTALLATION, NOVEMBER 2007.

Te Whatu o Poutini is a new media storytelling installation. It contains two major narratives. The abstract visual narrative combines video images in order to invite the audience to share an experience of journey. It utilises the key themes of the pukorero Te Whatu o Poutini as a metaphor. A multi-screen synchronized video installation portrays my spiritual and emotional connection with my turangawaewae, Arahura, the tupuna within the pukorero and utilises combinations of multiple projections to paint images that allows the layers of both stories to be expressed. To collect these images holistic and interactive approaches were employed and the methods responsive to the research. Images of travel, home fires, wahine, and river water have all been expended in a largely abstract way.



TE WHATU O POUTINI  
MICHELLE LEE  
NEW MEDIA STORYTELLING INSTALLATION  
PHOTOGRAPH: NATALIE ROBERTSON  
2007

The setting of the final installation of Te Whatu o Poutini is a dark triangular shaped room with a concrete floor. The seating comprises of two low wide grey totara planks placed in a semi circle and the floor is polished so as to make use of it's reflective properties. This establishes a river fireside storytelling environment.

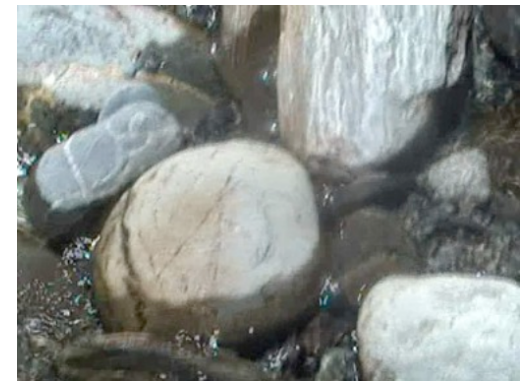
The narrative, in accordance with tikanga Maori, is a mihimihi (greeting) set on the Arahura River by Kaumatua Te Mauri o Te Tiriti Tirikatene. This plays out as a single projection on the shortest wall. On its conclusion, three synchronised projections on the longest wall in the room portraying an original waiata commences. This second piece serves as both the waiata tautoko (supporting song) and a literal retelling of the pukorero Te Whatu o Poutini. Clarity presented through literal representation gives the work a foundation, but permits subjective interpretation and preservation of the pukorero.

Te Reo Maori is the language used and pacing between each verse signals storytelling. This allows for the multiple levels of comprehension for various audiences. Other relevant environmental sounds that relate to the context and enhance the experience are also expended.

Perceiving the current generations as the living embodiment of our tupuna the work explores the parallels and spiritual reflections between the two groups. It also in a non-literal way examines the notion of taniwha. Taniwha are spiritual water entities that have powers, attributes, and guardianship responsibilities over places and taonga, such as pounamu in the case of Poutini. Taniwha can deceive, protect, destroy and create. Tama, a hei tiki pounamu, is used as binding thread between the characters. Storytelling offers moral and maxim of social dilemmas. Colonisation, urbanisation and a longing to return to my ancestral home emotionally parallel the abduction, transformation and multiple places of belonging experienced by the tupuna Waitaiki at the hand of Poutini taniwha featured in the pukorero.



NGA PAREPARENGA  
RIVER BANKS  
SHAPING THE RESEARCH AREA



PAREPARENGA  
MICHELLE LEE  
DIGITAL IMAGE  
2006

## SYNOPSIS

This chapter explains the research journey and developments. As the banks of the Arahura shape the path of the river so too have various nodes of practice shaped the research area. Discoveries of taonga (treasured gifts) have been made on these banks. Some have formed the riverbed and some have flanked the research path. Previous to embarking on my Masters degree my art practice had involved establishing a painting career, fifteen years in Maori and art education, designing and weaving costumes, training under Don C. Selwyn as an actor in theatre, television and film. I also had composed numerous waiata, written the play *Kawe Mate*, created advertisements for television and spent many years collaborating and directing community art projects. The primary nodes of practice of the research are storytelling and new media. However, other media tested in the research process included painting, installation and digital storytelling have been informative. This chapter examines how and to what degree these nodes of practice were explored and how they informed the final work.

## PAINTING

As I had exhibited as a painter since 1988, the project began using painting practice. In 2006, I joined the MA (Art and Design) off-campus programme through the Tauranga pod due its close proximity to Tuhua (Mayor's Island), the homeland of Waitaiki and Tamaahua. It was my intention to follow the original route of Poutini and record in paintings the landscapes of key sites in their current colonial state. I found this to be limiting in the ways in which it could narrate the pukorero and the modern context simultaneously. Sound could not be used but I wanted to give voice to the story. However painting informed the later video practice. By using dual and multiple screens, patterns formed using various images that add another layer of narration to be comprehended such as 'Niho Taniwha' (taniwha teeth).

In March 2006, I travelled in with my cousin Tangihaere Weepu and a group of other Maori artists, including James Webster and Darren Pivac to Tahanga, Coromandel, the first stopping point of Poutini, on his journey with Waitaiki, and where he created basalt stone. We had karakia to acknowledge our tupuna and commencement of my work on the old paa headland of Opito Bay.



KARAKIA  
MICHELLE LEE  
DIGITAL PRINTS  
2006

I took many digital photographs of this journey. The islets swirling into the bay appeared as if they were a great taniwha, diving in and out of the water, and I began to understand how the landscape informed Maori storytelling.

The dichotomy of Maori oral maps and western linear signage discovered on that trip, was also of interest to me.



HIKOI  
MICHELLE LEE  
DIGITAL PRINTS  
2006

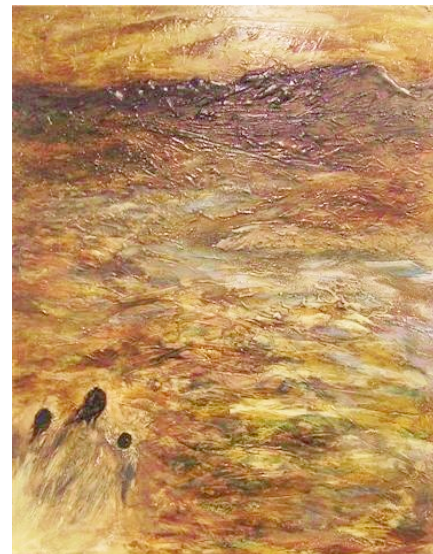
I returned to Auckland to paint from the images that I had gathered. I attempted utilising Waitaha rock art images as a means of narrating the story, only to discover some months later that they were not found on the West Coast of the South Island.



WAITAIKI  
MICHELLE LEE  
PENCIL ON PAPER  
2006

I was of the view, at that time, that if I developed a systematic approach to my painting for the Tahanga location, I could repeat this approach for each location. I was conscious of taking my painting practice into an academic research process and wanted to structure my practice around what I perceived to be academic rigour. In my previous academic experiences I had learnt that success depended on following the prescribed set of rules and guidelines, despite that they were often foreign to my natural learning style. I tried seeking out and then to form painting rules and experimented with a number of ways of 'testing' my work so that it might be academically and artistically successful. The results I felt were disastrous, the tests failed, and to the distress of my whanau for the first time in my life I stopped painting. I later resolved that Maori research methodologies, which are my natural practice, were both sound academic and artist practice and was vital to the project.

To study how to proceed further at that point however I had to analyse my previous practice. I had to 'peel back the paint'. The issue was that the audience had not been able to interpret the emotional and spiritual content from the visual language used. I focused on the emotion experienced on my trip back to Arahura and what had drawn me to the pukorero. I made new work not to fulfil academic needs but in a move from an objective analytical to subjective critical position.



TATAI TUPUNA  
MICHELLE LEE  
(DETAIL ABOVE)  
MIXED MEDIA PAINTINGS  
2006





POUTINI TANIWHA  
MICHELLE LEE  
DIGITAL IMAGE  
2006

By May, my focus was on the digital images collected from Tahanga, as my digital skills had been forced to improve because of the online nature of the program. I was still researching ways in which I could use these images within a painting practice but was becoming far more interested in researching digital art practice.

At the mid year critique it was suggested that I was a storyteller and that mine was storytelling project, a realisation that I had not made at this point. I was then told that I could and should test other mediums for this reason. I decided to investigate sculptural installation utilising the stones that I had gathered and digital storytelling.

## INSTALLATION

The installation node of practice was explored and furthered the development of a storytelling environment in the early video installation test. It has continued to be an area of consideration for the final work.

A key theme within the story is the stone. Installation was examined, after the mid year critique, using stones and other natural resources such as rimurimu (seaweed) from the various sites and was woven into hoe (paddle) forms. Although I explored the inherent strength in stone as a physical representation of the story it still did not communicate the emotional content I wanted to tell.

KOHATU  
MICHELLE LEE  
STONE AND SEAWEED  
SCULPTURE  
2006



## DIGITAL STORYTELLING



A plan developed to explore ways to research digital storytelling in my practice. Largely exploration of work that used methods developed by the Digital Storytelling Centre, Berkeley, California was conducted. The Digital Storytelling methodology, used commonly all over the world, was a powerful tool and was extremely important to the development of the project. The methods however prescribed story development formula and recommended the use of still images. To make a clear distinction, my later practice is defined as new media storytelling.



The first footage tests were shot using a 'low tech/ high access' digital camera and cellular phones. This was because the objective of the project was the empowerment of the Ngati Waewae participants. Within Maturanga Maori, value is placed on accessing higher knowledge and resources, only when finished exploring the existing resources. This approach allowed 'others' to share their stories within the project. The footage was not directed as such; rather an invitation was extended to share a story.



Joe Lambert of the Digital Storytelling Centre, Berkeley, University of California had developed research tools and methods that ensured that the story define the process. Lambert's method (2007) asserts that the connection of the teller to the story is essential and that stories should express first hand experiences. Digital storytelling methods dictated that the visual elements inform the design of the narration. The use of the Digital Storytelling Cookbook (Lambert 2006) method was used in collating important whanau stories.

During this period of research, the later half of 2006, Natalie Robertson, photographer, new media art practitioner and Co-ordinator for Maori Art and Design at AUT became involved with my project in a supervisory capacity. I continued to create digital stories well into my second year of research.

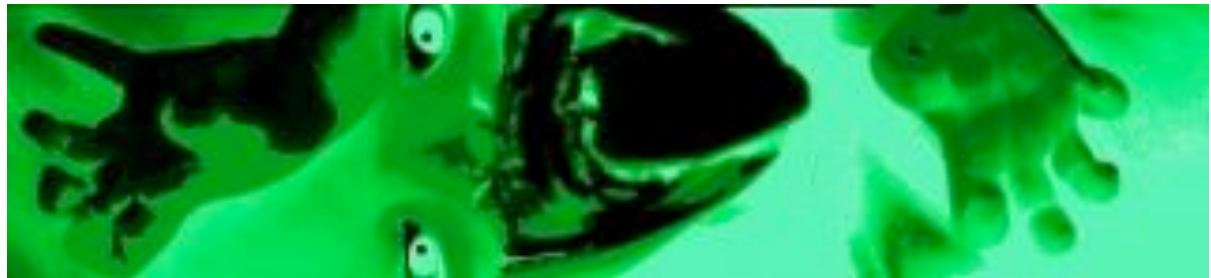
WHANAU DIGITAL STORIES  
MICHELLE LEE  
COLLECTION OF DIGITAL  
PRINTS  
2007

## DIGITAL IMAGES

Digital images were explored and proved useful in developing research questioning and analysing my research practice. I began to develop digital image research questions and further manipulate images from looking more closely at the work of other Maori New Media practitioners. Characteristic features of pou whenua (stakes marking territory) and taniwha in other Maori art practice were considered and reproduced in a digital form.



WHAT DOES A TANIWHA LOOK LIKE?  
MICHELLE LEE  
DIGITAL PHOTO COLLECTION  
2006



DIGITAL TANIWHA  
MICHELLE LEE  
DIGITAL IMAGE  
2006

Research revealed that it was unnecessary to create a literal, visual representation of taniwha when the aim was to narrate a conceptual one. Taniwha is an abstract spiritual entity. Whenever my work slipped into a literal visual illustration of the pukorero, the research path seemed to become blocked.



## VIDEO INSTALLATION

Video installation is a major node of my research practice. Initially I did not define the combination of video installation and storytelling as new media storytelling.

By November, after viewing Natalie Robertson's work *Kimiora, Moteatea – Tīkapa Beach* (2004), I was reminded that the pukorero was of importance not just as a geological map but because the people that tell it have an emotional connection to it (fig 2.1). From that point onward I realised that it was the emotional and spiritual component of the pukorero that was most important to my work. Although I would have liked to follow Poutini's route, the current context that I was aiming to reflect saw me take a new route to Arahura. Arahura is the source of my Tino Rangatiratanga as it was for my Tupuna. Our whakapapa to the characters within Te Whatu o Poutini and the actions of our Tupuna Tuhuru and Papakura allows us to assert that.



FIGURE 2.1  
NATALIE ROBERTSON  
VIDEO INSTALLATION  
KIMIORA, MOTEATEA  
TIKAPA BEACH. 2004.

I invited my son to share his Poutini story. After a number of tests, I came to realise that the natural way in which he kinaesthetically engaged with the stone (tangiwai) revealed his aroha with it as much as his words. Like other iwi we consider pounamu to be tapu (sacred) but we also have our own unique connection to the stone. Like children who have a daily intimate relationship with a Grandparent, we hold the pounamu with affectionate reverence and without any sense of fear that it could ever bring harm to us. This has come about from over a thousand years of looking. I tested the ways that others might be able to hear his story in the same intimate way that I had experienced.



TOA TANGIWAI  
MICHELLE LEE  
VIDEO INSTALLATION  
DURATION: 3.30MIN  
2006

On installing the work for the final critique of 2006, I placed the same whaariki (mat) in the work against the wall, with the same pounamu upon it and projected the video so there was an unbroken line between the projection and the whaariki. I kept the projection very low to encourage the viewer to come down to my son's level, sit on his whaariki, share in his story and form a physical bond with the pounamu.



TOA TANGIWAI  
MICHELLE LEE  
VIDEO INSTALLATION  
DURATION: 3.30MIN  
2006

#### CRITIQUE ONE VIDEO INSTALLATION NOVEMBER 2006

TOA TANGIWAI, 2006

DURATION: 3.30 MIN

#### TESTED

Use of editing filter as abstraction

Focus on hands

Low projection

Use of whaariki and stone

Low tech camera

Use of modern music

Use of different voice

#### RESEARCH ANSWERS

Disconnected Audience

Showed intimate relationship with the stone but only held audience attention for a limited time

Drew audience into the work

Allowed audience to have shared experience

Low quality distracted audience

Revealed current context

Allowed the work not to be viewed as a music video and narrated the story



TOA TANGIWAI  
MICHELLE LEE  
VIDEO INSTALLATION TESTING  
2006

After the final critique of the first year I arrived home to Auckland to find Matua Don Selwyn on my deck. I cooked the fish he had brought us, as others of the Koanga Maori Theatre Group, that he had established and that I had been a member of, gathered. To my surprise, a meeting of the group had been called at my home, that evening. Having fed everyone, I set up the installation on the deck where it had been shot and waited nervously for his response. In the years that I had been directed by and worked with this great storyteller, he was never a man to withhold his genuine opinions, good or bad, of those he had invested his time in and had vision for. He sat and listened to the story while softly rubbing the pounamu with hands far older than my son's. He then said that technology would allow our rangatahi (youth) to share their stories like never before this and would impact on the world's relationships. He also said, without the aid of words, that I should return to a face focus. Sadly this was the last conversation we were to ever have. As was his habit, Matua Don slipped away home later that night without saying goodbye.

In December of 2006, I travelled via London, England to Cannes, France and then on to Paris visiting numerous exhibitions. In Paris I was fortunate enough to visit the George Pompidou Museum, passing on my way the stall at the Saint Surplice Mache de Noel selling Arahura Pounamu. It seemed so strange yet pleasing, given how far Arahura is from Paris, to find it here in a market place. The dichotomy that pounamu is be valuable enough to travel so far, yet affordable enough to allow a wide range of people to purchase it, was reinforced to me. A global human connection to this taonga, as vessels of story, enables exchange of experience and reveals it's true worth. Perhaps taonga such as pounamu served as a 'front runner' to the Internet in this way.

On show at the Pompidou was *Le Mouvement des images – Art and Cinema*, which proposed a rereading of 20th century art through cinema. This was a collection of work that collated development of cinematic art films from Marcel Duchamp's *Anémic Cinéma*, (1925) onward. Early work seemed to me based in the internal intellectual discourse of the artists rather than the engagement of the viewer to share in an

experience. As Walter Benjamin (1955) suggests of the evolution of the novel, cinematic art film making evolved, in my opinion, from the upper classes and bourgeoisie, perhaps due to the limited access to cinematic film resources at the time.

New media practice, and the use of less expensive video technology, has allowed a more socialist evolution. From Nam June Paik on, new media practice has allowed a far wider range of practitioners in regard to cultural and political background to contribute to its evolution. It follows, therefore, that it often deals with social issues and the exchange of human experience. My new media practice allows me to express a heritage of Maori art practice and socialist principals.



SELF PORTRAIT IN FRONT OF  
PAUL GAUGUIN'S,  
DEUX FEMMES SUR LA PLAGE,  
1891  
MICHELLE LEE  
MUSE DE ORSAY  
DIGITAL PHOTO  
(TAKEN WITHOUT FLASH)  
2006

After a month of travel away on seeing work of Paul Gauguin, *Deux femmes sur la plage* (1891), hanging in the Muse de Orsay, I cried. Prints of this image have always hung in my family homes and I had all my life studied them closely. In this place, so far from the Pacific, the sight of these vahine (women), dressed in their pareu in the middle of a Parisian winter was very moving. For the first time I saw them as tupuna, ancestors. Their images were, in that context, as comforting to me as the photographs of my own Tupuna that also hung on the walls of my family home. I came to understand that when viewing an artefact in a new context we bring to it our previous experience and associations and the relationship evolves. I was interested in the way in which, in this context, the images of these tupuna seemed to me vulnerable and evoked a sense of empathy from me. This had implications for my work, as I wanted to research how my work could evoke aroha not only within the work but also in front of it. On my return to Aotearoa, I spent two nights and a day in Tahiti and wished that I could have returned the image of the Tahitian tupuna back to their warm homeland.

## VIRTUAL PAA

In considering where to house digital stories I developed the concept of the Virtual Paa (Village). Having started my first year of this project as an online student, I had benefited from the online interactions and relationships developed with staff and students alike. I could see the benefits of a similar website for Ngati Waewae.



FIGURE 2.2  
LISA REIHANA  
DIGITAL MARAE — HINE PUKOHURANGI,  
2001  
QUEENSLAND ART GALLERY:  
COLOUR CIBACHROME PHOTOGRAPHS  
MOUNTED ON ALUMINIUM.

Lisa Reihana's *Digital Marae* series (2001) and her 25-year long-term planned project *2020*, which will result in a major installation, is a significant and influential body of work that embodies the notion of transportability of tribal cultural spaces (fig 2.2). Rachael Rakena has also deployed this strategy in her digital video projection on canvas work *Mihi aroha* (2002). Other Maori artists as such George Nuku and Chris Bryant take components of the wharehau to shift create portable marae. For Pasifika Festival and Artspace, Suite Seven (Natalie Robertson, Ani O'Neill and Shigeyuki Kihara) created the *Urban Marae Mattress* project (2007), twenty mattresses that can be used to make a comfortable resting place for manuhiri, visitors.

Marae and Paa have always been and always will be the centre of our peoples systems of communication, education and political systems. In the past as we know our Marae and Paa were built around those with which we shared close Whakapapa (genealogy). The Marae were built to house whanau and hapu. However during the 1940's and 50's many Maori shifted to the cities far from our marae because of the government urbanization policy. This policy deliberately damaged our relationships and tikanga (protocols).

When faced with the urbanisation challenge, our people did what we always have done; we adapted to our new environment and built new marae. Building urban marae was a political response to our assimilation.



The innovation of those tupuna who built them, ensured that our tikanga and reo would be protected. Since the time of Te Whatu o Poutini, Maori not only embraced innovation but also have been the masters of it. The next political innovation may be the virtual Paa.

As a part of the research process, at the beginning of 2007, I established Arahura Paa page on Bebo, a social networking website (<http://arahura.bebo.com>). To date, well over a hundred members of our Ngati Waewae joined the page. This has been a response that far exceeded my expectations. Members have joined from as far away as Perth, Australia and New York City, U.S.A. The page houses digital stories and artefacts. It has also allowed ongoing discourse between tribal members. Ahi kaa members (home people) are of course the heart of the page keeping others informed as to the happenings at home. At least two members of the page have joined to use the page as a way to reconnect ties, necessary due to urbanisation or adoption, with their Ngati Waewae whanaunga.

FIGURE 2.3  
COLLECTION OF WHANAU  
PHOTOGRAPHS  
PHOTOGRAPHER UNKNOWN



I made a critical decision in March 2007 to continue my work on the virtual Paa but withdraw it from the academic research. This was due to two reasons. The first being that I saw it as essential that Ngati Waewae have sole control over this development process, including any potential commercial developments. Secondly, I wanted to focus on telling my own version of the story as an art practitioner using new media.

## NEW MEDIA STORYTELLING

Video installation practice and storytelling practice combined form new media storytelling as discuss in Defining New Media storytelling and informed the next phase of research.

In February 2007, as a part of my new media practice I began researching ways to use my daughter as a representation of Waitaiki. I had conducted a number of tests of this in an urban environment with my daughter wearing our whanau pounamu hei tiki, named Tama. Tama has served as spiritual protector of women who wear him. I also began to explore the use of the Auckland Motorway as a visual parallel to the river.

I returned to Arahura with her in order to shoot material for the project. We were fortunate at this time to be to be given access to old family photographs (fig 2.3), and documents by Uncle Ken Tainui and able to video Uncle Te Mauri o Te Tiriti o Waitangi Tirikatene. Uncle Te Mauri o Te Tiriti o Waitangi, named by Maori Prophet Tahu Potiki Wiremu Ratana, was the son of Sir Eruera Tirikatene, who was the Southern Maori Member for Parliament for many years. He had travel to Tuhua (Mayor Island) and had vast knowledge of Te Whatu o Poutini. He is skilled in playing koauau (flutes) and I shot large amount of video footage of him and my daughter on the river together.

At this time sought and was given the approval from Te Runanga of Ngati Waewae and my kaumatua for the project. Research of our whakapapa was taking place at this time for the purpose of building the new Marae. It has been fortunate that my project has considered with this development. We also spent time and had discussions with my Cousin Iri Sinclair, also knowledgeable in whakapapa.



In March, Isaac Julian's work *True North* (2004) a three-screen synchronized cinematic film was installed at the Saint Paul Street Gallery, AUT as a part of the Auckland Triennial (fig 2.4). I attend the Artist talks that he delivered and saw strong links between his concepts and my own. *True North* is a work that utilises the current context as a metaphor it narrates a historic story of journey.

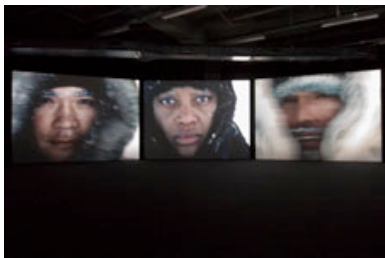


FIGURE 2.4  
ISAAC JULIEN  
TRUE NORTH, 2004  
TRIPLE SCREEN PROJECTION  
16MM FILM, BLACK & WHITE/COLOUR FILM,  
INSTALLATION AT ST PAUL ST GALLERY  
FOR THE 3RD AUCKLAND TRIENNIAL, 2007  
PHOTOS: JENNIFER FRENCH

I began to explore the use of multiple projections within my work. Multiple projections allowed multiple views and empowered the audience to select their focus as with storytelling. This also reflected multiple layers of meaning. Not having a multi-cab editing program, I developed a system of production that was more informed by painting practice rather than cinematic. I edited the individual shots that I was wanting as a palate; I then drew parallel story boarders with timelines. Next I created one clip at a time. This was slow way of developing work, as there was no way of viewing how individual shots worked when set next to each other until after the DVD had been burnt and the work was played on monitors. Later in the year, I discovered it was better to working simultaneously on all my intended clips, developing them shot by shot by viewing these next to each other in a Microsoft PowerPoint Program.

Also as a part of the Auckland Triennial of 2007, Carlos Capelan, and Uruguayan artist based in Sweden, became the Artist in Resident at AUT and joined the Post Graduate critiques. His critique of my work was most valuable as it came from a non-New Zealand perspective and I wanted to test my work in this way. At this first critique of 2007, I tested my first multiple projection work initially with three television monitors. I was interested that the use of Te Reo Maori did not stop those who could not speak Maori, from comprehending the core concepts of the work. This was a concern that I had wanted to test. I was encouraged to extend the duration of my work and explore the use of projectors in order to give the audience a greater ability to experience a sensation of being on a storytelling journey.

## MIHI EDITING PROCESS 2007

### TESTED

Use of sky to ground pans

Use of footage shot out of the moving vehicle

Setting up shots

Use of self designed multi-cab editing system to produce synchronized multi screen installation

### RESEARCH RESPONSES

Gave a sense of displacement because of contrast of colour in the river environment

Took the viewer into the work but this was disjointed when combined with still camera position shots

Shooting must be responsive to the situation

Tikanga must be the first priority

A natural response rather than acting is more likely to be achieved in one shot when filming Kaumatua if a strong relationship is established

Editing can help correct any issues such as moving out of shot or having to adjust the camera

Was successful but could only view work next to each other on completion



MIHI  
MICHELLE LEE  
NEW MEDIA STORYTELLING INSTALLATION  
3 TELEVISION MONITORS  
DURATION: 1.30MIN  
2007

I examined the work of other new media artists that used technology as a way of allowing the audience to interact with their work. However I discontinued following this path as I saw it may potentially distract from the content or intentions of the work. It also appeared to be an expensive development for what was already an expensive research project.

## CRITIQUE TWO NEW MEDIA STORYTELLING INSTALLATION MAY 2007

MIHI 2007

DURATION: 1.30MIN

TESTED

Three Television Monitors

Different camera angles

Use of only Te Reo Maori

Entry of characters

Having the same character on two screens  
Simultaneously

Use of black fades

Use of only mid and close shots

RESEARCH RESPONSES

Only passively engaged audience  
Did not allow a continuous field of vision

Narrated multiple layers of story

Extreme difference in camera angles  
Was visually distracting from content

Was effective in that it could still convey storytelling to non-Maori speaking audience  
This showed that the work was primarily for Maori but widely inclusive of all viewers  
Was a way of encoding the levels of the story

Easing characters into view through various methods  
gives the audience time to reconcile their presence

Works only if the shots are very different (Wide /  
Close up)

Directs audience focus  
Effects pacing in allowing visual rest periods

Did not give complete river environment

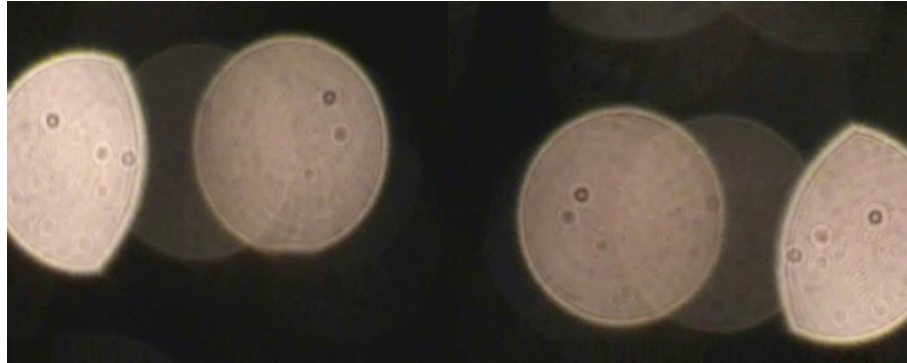
I returned to Arahura to collect more wide-angle footage of the river, in the beginning of the Matariki (New Year) season, April 2007. Collected by my cousin Irai Weepu at Christchurch Airport and we drove through the snowing night of Arthur's Pass, arriving at Arahura Paa at two o'clock that morning. I was aware that Matua Don Selwyn was again in hospital but had thought that he was likely to recover.

I travelled again, up river, to a point on the river known as Miltown. Over one hour away from power and cellular phone coverage, I spent two hours filming that afternoon and collected all the footage I needed at that point. On reaching cellular phone coverage again I received a message to say that Matua Don had past away three hours earlier. I was frantic to return in Auckland but there were no flights leaving the West Coast until the following morning and the flights leaving Christchurch had been booked out.

On the advise of my mother in Auckland, that night I went down to the river mouth with my Uncle Jack Tauwhare and a group of my young cousins and lit a memorial bonfire and had karakia for Matua Don. Matariki, it is believed, is a time of the year when great rangatira pass. Firers have always been used at this time of year to remember those who have gone. Two years earlier I had worked with Matua Don on his Matariki television production, this was to be his last completed production, and as a part of this he had invited me to compose and record a waiata (chant) both of lament and celebration as customarily sung at night during this period. Again I sung his song and filmed his fire.

The next morning my Aunty Te Whe Weepu drove me over two hours to Westport. I caught a plane to Wellington, then on to Auckland. I collected my children and drove five hours down to Taumarunui to the tangi (funeral). My son carried onto the marae the pounamu he shared with Matua Don, and presented it to his whanau.

MARAMA MATARIKI  
 MICHELLE LEE  
 NEW MEDIA STORYTELLING INSTALLATION  
 DURATION: 3.30MIN  
 2007



Within the following weeks of Matariki, I conducted a number of tests of my cousin Marama Karetai playing with fire poi. I was seeking out ways of showing timeless spirituality and ceremony. I wanted to display the intimate relationship with our Tupuna, such as Waitaiki.

#### MARAMA MATARIKI EDITING PROCESS 2007

##### TESTED

Use of black night canvas

Use of various costumes to show timeless intimacy

Combining to locations through editing

The use of only close-up

##### RESEARCH RESPONSES

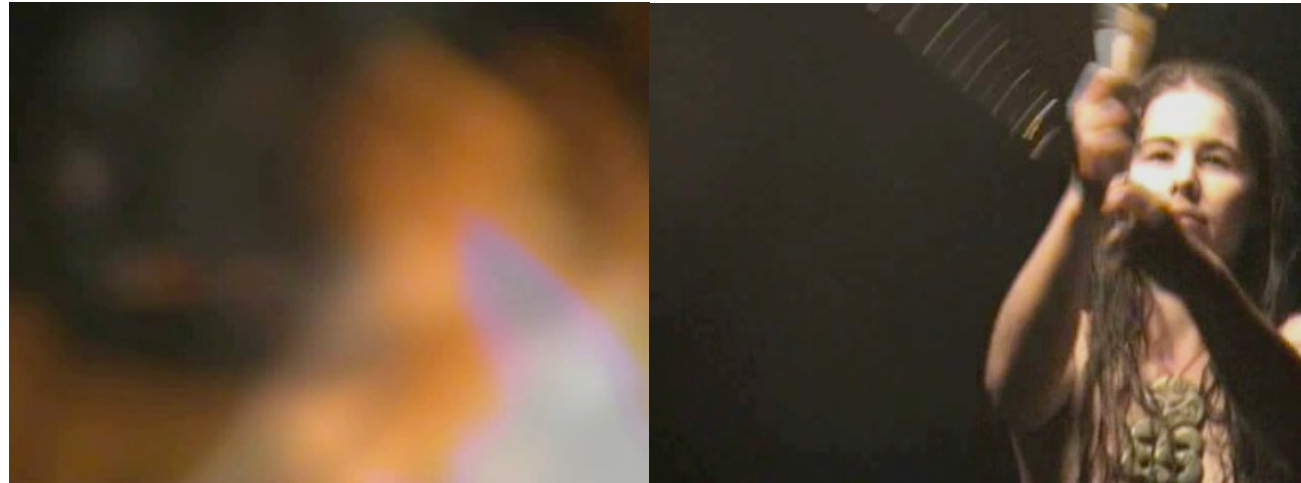
Gave a spiritual timeless feeling to the work

The use of a mask gave a cabaret mood  
 Use of black clothing did not narrate the parallel between tupuna and the current context  
 Use of just the piupiu, hei tiki, with hair up gave a lack of modesty to the work  
 Use of moko was an over illustration of tupuna

Operated in seamless way

Gave modesty intimacy and abstraction

I tested a number of ways of shooting this material and various contexts, including her wardrobe. Because of my experience at the Muse De Orsay, I chose to use our whanau pounamu he tiki, Tama, as a link again in another context, within my work so that the audience might form a deeper connection with it. I also wanted to give a sense of taniwha without a literal display. I combined with editing technologies, this footage shot on Owairaka (Mt Albert), named after another Maori female Tupuna, with the memorial fire footage I shot at Arahura. I wanted to take the audience on a form of spiritual journey. This work was viewed as two projections at the mid year critiques. The work largely achieved my research the objectives.



MARAMA MATARIKI  
MICHELLE LEE  
NEW MEDIA STORYTELLING INSTALLATION  
DURATION: 3.30MIN  
2007

### CRITIQUE THREE NEW MEDIA STORYTELLING INSTALLATION MAY 2007

MARAMA MATARIKI 2007

DURATION: 3.30MIN

#### TESTED

Lack of voice narrative

Double projection onto wall

Use of fire poi soundtrack

Double projection of the same character  
From different camera angles

Planning the emotional journey

Zooming out from opening ground shots

#### RESEARCH RESPONSES

Story could still be portrayed but retention of the pukorero was not achieved

Gave an inclusive feeling in regards to audience  
Was more effective when projections were tight with each other as a visual continuum

Established a lyrical hypnotic environment and portrayed spiritual journey

Gave the audience a circular vision of the character

Gave a continuous flow to the work

Gave a sense of spiritual lift off

I began looking at the research area ‘in front’ of the work in particularly kinaesthetic engagement of the audience, which is further discussed later. I explored the various ways that other art practises born from Maori storytelling, such as whakairo, enable this. I was interest greatly in new media practitioner Rachael Rakena in this regard, particularly her work with Keri Whaitiri, *Ahakoā he iti* (2004) (fig 2.5). However after some advice, I decided that the incorporation of sculptural elements was a vast area of research too large for my remaining time frame of the Masters Degree.



FIGURE 2.5  
RACHEAL RAKENA AND KERI WHAITIRI  
AHAKOA HE ITI.  
INSTALLATION,  
LIGHTSCAPE GROUP EXHIBITION,  
CURATED BY BROWN, D.,  
URBAN ARTS BIENNIAL: CHRISTCHURCH 2004



The notion of exchange of experience within storytelling was an area I was still concerned with, as discussed in subsequent chapters. In establishing the Arahura Paa Bebo page, I had addressed this, but not yet not achieved it in my New Media Storytelling practice. I did not want the work to be produced or viewed in isolation or for it to be uni-directional in the way Film and Television is because of its capital value. Early August 2007, I travelled to Hamilton to meet and hear Joe Lambert of the Digital Storytelling Centre, Berkeley, speak. Fortunately a friendship developed over this time and had the privilege of hosting him when he later visited Auckland.

Lambert spoke about principles of ownership of stories and his experiences working with Native American communities, relaying a story of negotiations between Native American elders telling their stories and their youth who were assisting them to produce digital stories. I came to the realisation that exchange of experience accrued in the production of digital story and New Media storytelling rather than just in the listening to it.



In my New Media practice I had had a constant exchange of experiences with my iwi in developing my work. My work was an exchange of experience. An exchange of my tupuna's experience, my iwi, my own and perhaps it will give rise to future generations doing the same.

I returned twice more to Arahura, in the second half of 2007 to collect footage. Having taught my young cousin Arama Weepu to use the video camera, I directed him, while his brother Ihaka Weepu drove us to various locations on the river. I became increasingly concerned at this point with sound, in particular, the various sounds created by the river and the distinctive sound of the tracks of the Arahura Bridge.



MOEMOEA  
MICHELLE LEE  
NEW MEDIA STORYTELLING INSTALLATION  
DURATION: 4.00MIN  
2007

The Arahura Bridge is a single lane road and railway bridge. It is over a hundred years old and soon to be replaced. It has been a pastime and almost a rite of passage of the children of Arahura to jump from the bridge into the river and is of cultural value to Ngati Waewae as it signals our arrival home. I took footage from various angles crossing the bridge.

On testing the work, the perspective of the bridge-crossing footage took the viewer into the work. This was unlike the previous footage, which was for the most part moving shots over solid backgrounds or shots of movement and depth from a still viewpoint. As a result the bridge-crossing footage gave rise to feeling of displacement rather than journey.

MOEMOE  
 MICHELLE LEE  
 NEW MEDIA STORYTELLING INSTALLATION  
 DURATION: 4.00MIN  
 (DETAIL SCREEN 1)  
 2007



Concerned too with the colour continuity and style of the work, I shot largely at night in the second half of the year to produce a black canvas rather than the predominately green canvas of the earlier. The previous night work tested had used fire as lighting as opposed to the more common blue used in Film and Television productions. This natural lighting source had produced comforting warm night images.

#### AWA NIGHT EDITING PROCESS 2007

##### TESTED

Use of five videos

Use of PowerPoint to house videos

Vary shapes of video

##### RESEARCH RESPONSES

The more videos used the slower the pace and simple the content of each must be to allow it to be read

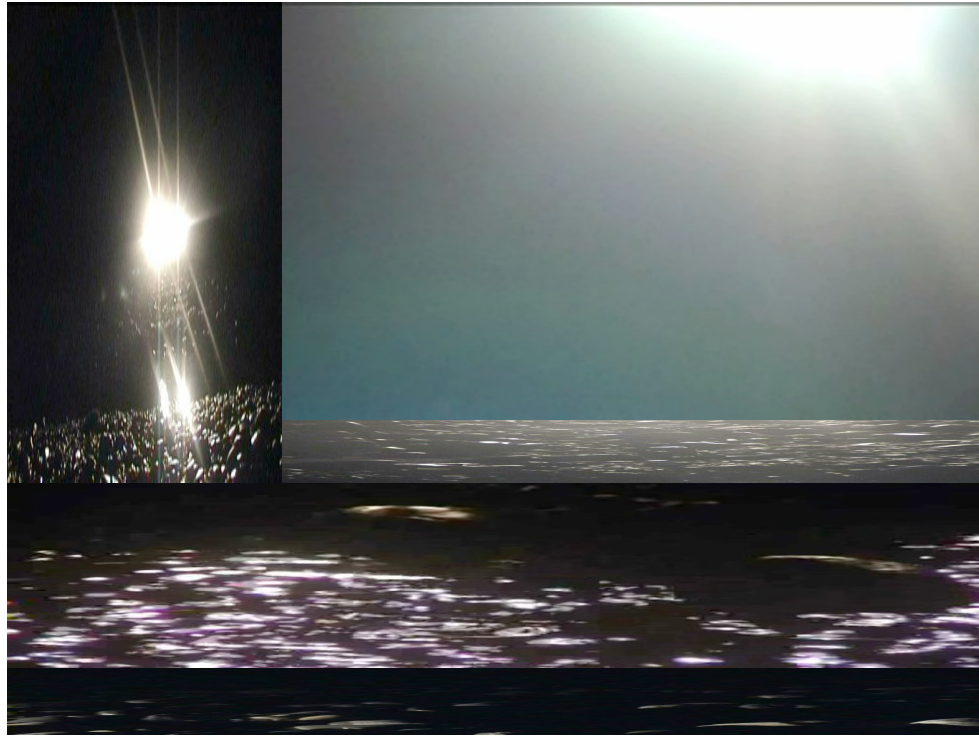
Useful for single projection work

More than one projection of this type could over complicate the work

This informed the next stage of my multi-cab editing process

Painting practice balance of form and colour could be further investigated

AWA NIGHT  
MICHELLE LEE  
NEW MEDIA STORYTELLING INSTALLATION  
DURATION: 1.00MIN  
5 X VIDEOS  
POWERPOINT PROJECTION  
2007



I continued to be interested in the symbolism of car lights as a way of narrating taniwha eyes. Like Poutini taniwha, cars are the vehicles that carry us, sometimes unwillingly, from our homes in a modern context. Car lights can produce a feeling of being watched in an almost voyeuristic way.

I tested ways of shooting this and the colour effects produced from beaming car lights onto the river. I then tested this work using a Microsoft PowerPoint program that allowed me to show the videos set opposed to each other in various shapes in a move away from a cinematic node of practice. Due to the constraints of the space that the final work would be installed in, I did not pursue this research path further.

In late August, at the final critique, I tested a work *Moemoea*, which comprised of four projections onto the surrounding walls, wanting to completely immerse the viewers and test all outstanding research questions. Testing the whaariki (mats) again to create a storytelling environment, I found this was unsuccessful due to the technical restraints of using four floor projectors in a small triangular shaped room. The constant multiple projections became overpowering within a small space and the speed of the transitions between shots moved the viewers too quickly to enable them to form an emotional connection with the work. I also tested the reflective qualities of the concrete floor. This critique was highly informative for the final work and of the space that the work would be finally installed. I decided to simplify my work.

In collaboration with my sister Annabelle Lee-Harris, we composed and recorded a waiata (chant), *Hoki mai koe e Tama kia taururetia koe i Te Whatu o Poutini* (see Appendix One), to be used as the main soundtrack of the work. This waiata contains key points of interest from the various versions of the pukorero researched, as discussed in Chapter Three, on researching oral traditions in a colonial environment.

Waiata has always been used as a form of telling and recording story within Mātauranga Māori. The waiata storytelling format fitted with the lyrical nature of the images being tested and also gave a Māori structure when used as a waiata tautoko (supporting song) after the recordings of Uncle Te Mauri o Te Tiriti o Waitangi Tirikatene's mihimihi. Instead of continuous use of the waiata, pacing between each verse signalled storytelling rather than a music video, when put to video footage. It became apparent that the audio track would dictate the length of the work.

## CRITIQUE FOUR NEW MEDIA STORYTELLING INSTALLATION AUGUST 2007

MOEMOEA 2007

DURATION: 4.00MIN

### TESTED

Breaking the work into chapters

Surrounding the four walls

Use of waiata as storytelling narrative

Synchronizing of visual patterns

Taking the viewer 'into' the work

Use of city view

### RESEARCH RESPONSES

Fragmented and did not allow a sense of journey

Overwhelmed the viewer

Offered too many possible views

Offered too many technical restraints and conflicts

Was effective

Recording quality essential so as not to distract from visual narrative

Useful visual hook that should reflect emotion being conveyed as with oratory

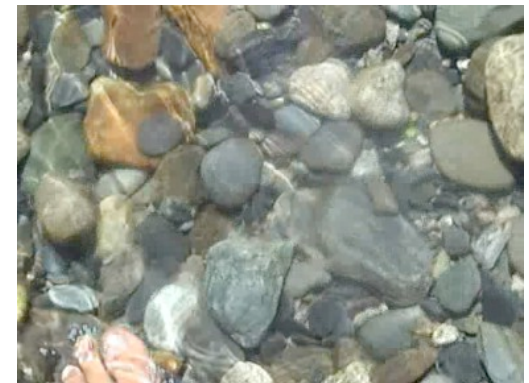
A greater sense of spirituality and ancestral connection was achieved in shoots that zoomed out rather than zoomed in

Showing an obvious urban environment was unnecessary to narrate the emotional context of the work

Research 'in front of the work' has happened in conjunction with the research 'within the work', as one impacts on the other. Wanting to tell a visual story from the current context, the objective is also to convey the pukorero Te Whatu o Poutini and display the parallels between the two. Transitions between night and day shots are being resolved. In the installation space provided, making use of both the wall and the reflective properties of the concrete floor is a major consideration. Balancing the desire to create an encompassing experience without over-whelming the viewer is also being considered as well as technical resources and restraints.

# HE PARAERAE

FLAX FOOTWEAR  
RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES



PARAERAE  
MICHELLE LEE  
DIGITAL IMAGE  
2006

## **SYNOPSIS**

This chapter discusses and justifies the interpretive framework and research methodologies intrinsic to the project. When embarking on a journey it was the custom of my Ngati Waewae tupuna to weave paraerae (sandals) for the journey from harakeke (flax) or tikouka (cabbage tree). The Methodological Rationale has been the paraerae of this creative journey. The methodology has been woven together by Kaupapa Maori and evenly formed from my spiritual and political beliefs. This chapter engages discourses on Indigenous views in relation to research and storytelling as a research methodology. Creative practice as research is addressed along with rhizomatic methodologies. This includes the Kaupapa Maori approach in consideration of ethics.

## **METHODOLOGICAL RATIONALE**

Te Whatu o Poutini is Mātauranga Māori. The oral tradition Te Whatu o Poutini is a recount of research and is a creative product born from research. It recounts my rhizomatic approach to the research field and was a collaboration of stories. Te Whatu o Poutini is the research Methodology.

## **INTERPRETIVE FRAMEWORK**

Prior, even to the work of ethnographer Elsdon Best, in the nineteenth century, Māori have had an aversion to imperial research paradigms. Imperialistic invasive research methodologies and practices have assisted in the disempowerment of Māori. The form of research assumes authority that perpetuates the dogma of cultural and intellectual superiority that underpins colonization. Robertson (1999) refers to the damage, pain and destruction inappropriate paradigms have on Māori research participants. Bishop (1996) asserts that Māori research should address the desire for self-determination. Self-determination manifests in how the research deals with Māori concerns about ignition, benefits, representation, legitimating and

accountability. According to Maori academic Ranginui Walker (1996), Te Rangi Hiroa stated to Sir Apirana Ngata, in February 1931:

“Kua mutu te wa kia Te Peehi ma, kua riro ma taua, ma te Maori, taua korero.” (The time for Best is over; we as Maori must again take responsibility for researching our world for ourselves. It is left to us to straighten up what has been written by Pakeha pioneers.)

This quote refers to Elsdon Best who was researching from the position of outside observer. The cultural renaissance of Mātauranga Māori, which had its genesis in the work of Sir Apirana Ngata a hundred years ago, has blossomed in the present era resulting in a far-reaching movement of indigenous knowledge recovery, discusses Walker (1996). I have researched from the position of a member within and observer of, the group.

I have examined the broad field of qualitative research methods, indigenous research methodologies and creative practice as research. The methodologies useful to the development of the project were an entwining of Kaupapa Māori Research Methodologies and of ‘creative practice as research’ as it fits within in a Māori paradigm. Kaupapa Māori links to other creative practice methodologies such as Narrative enquiry, action research, genealogy and ethnography. Components of these approaches fit into a Māori paradigm because they have always been a part of Mātauranga Māori such as Poetic research, so it is unnecessary to see them as additional to Kaupapa Māori and may imply Non-Indigenous ownership of these concepts.



## **KAUPAPA MAORI**

According to Pihama (2002), the core principles of Kaupapa Maori are self determination, cultural aspiration, culturally preferred pedagogy, socio-economic mediation, extended family structure and collective philosophy. As the project is founded on these principles, this research approach has been relevant to the project and is coherent within the aims and primary concerns in regards to a Maori paradigm.

## **MATAURANGA MAORI**

Te Whatu o Poutini is situated with in Maturanga Maori. Maturanga Maori is the traditional Maori epistemology. This has been damaged by Imperialism and inappropriate research methodologies were an instrument of this. The cultural renaissance of Maturanga Maori, which had its genesis in the work of Sir Apirana Ngata in the nineteenth century, has blossomed in the present era resulting in a far reaching movement of indigenous knowledge recovery, discusses Walker (1996).

## **AHUATANGA MAORI**

The Education Amendment Act (Act No. 41 of 1990) embedded “Ahuatanga Maori” and allowed provision for Maturanga Maori as guaranteed under the Treaty of Waitangi. This has also confirmed that Kaupapa Maori has a place in Tertiary Institutions. Te Wananga-o-Raukawa (2005) has developed a Matrix of ten values of Ahuatanga Maori and requested that NZQA audit the quality of its programmes in accordance with these values.

## **KAUPAPA MAORI MATRIX**

Manaakitanga	(kindness, generosity, hospitality, care support)
Rangatiratanga	(chiefly dignity and behaviour marked by noblesse oblige)
Whanaunagatanga	(kinship, relationships)
Kotahitanga	(unity, sense of group belonging)
Wairuatanga	(spirituality locating man within and not above the natural order)
Ukaipotanga	(nurturing mother, earth mother)
Pukengatanga	(repository of higher learning)
Kaitiakitanga	(guardian, care for the natural order)
Te Reo	(Maori language)
Whakapapa	(genealogy of knowledge, Maori epistemology)

All of these values guide not only the philosophy of the project but also set the methodological framework. All research tools and techniques have been within this framework.

## **STORYTELLING AS A KAUPAPA MAORI RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Storytelling is a research methodology established in Mātauranga Māori and more recently within academia. It goes further than Narrative Inquiry in that the researcher is seen as participant in the research. It is appropriate to the project as it allows inclusive representation, collaborative creativity and empowers the participants.

Collaborative stories are selected, recollected, and reflected on by research participants (including the researcher), then merged to create a collaborative text - a mutually constructed story created out of the lived experiences of all participants. (Bishop 1996, p1)

## **CREATIVE PRACTICE AND RHIZOMATIC RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES**

Te Whatu o Poutini was rhizomatic in its nature. All the characters developed strategies and tactics in response to their changing situations. Rosenberg (2000) states that poetic research is rhizomatic and organizes tactically. However it sets out numerous paths in various directions. Some arrive at 'dead ends'; some form paths of discovery, the space between developed into further areas of discovery. This relates to the project in three ways:

- The journey to Arahura examined, has not followed the same route of the original journey within the pukorero but rather is a journey back to our turangawaewae from an urban environment.
- The collection of data as a journey, in terms of the various mediums researched, has followed had numerous random paths. Some lead on to dead ends and others did not. Some that seemed like a dead ends gave rise to new beginnings or directions.
- The creative practice in terms of the evolution of creativity and ideas produced similar paths and reformed, reproduced and transformed.

## **INDIGENOUS RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES**

Over the past ten years, a recognition and naming of indigenous research methods has occurred within the academia (Bishop 1996; Pihama 2002; L. Smith 1999; Walker 1996; Wilson 2001). As Wilson (2001) states an Indigenous research paradigm is produced from the central ideology that knowledge is not owned or discovered. Knowledge is relational; it is shared with all Indigenous creation paradigms and requires an adherence to cultural values and protocols when accessing and sharing knowledge as those in engaged have an equal responsibility for the maintenance of natural order. Wilson (2001) continues that the reflection of these beliefs and the obligations they imply, are the foundations of Indigenous Research Methods. Indigenous research methodologies do not come in a response to non-Indigenous paradigms. Research paradigms are informed by cultural values that developed from the respective environments to which indigenous peoples belong.

## ACADEMIC ETHICS

In accordance with Kaupapa Maori, those that have contributed to the project have received some form of koha (reciprocity). Various intricate oral negotiations were had, subsequently, oral agreements were reached and exchange transpired. The ancient practice of the exchange of pounamu is an example of this. Therein, for academic ethical purposes, the research participants have been paid performers. Recording written documentation of individual koha agreements would have been inappropriate to the oral practice of koha and negatively affected my personal mana (integrity), those of the participants, and in turn that of the project. Having entered this research project, sourced from my iwi, into the realm of academia, it has not been my intention to challenge the protocols of either. Rather I have attempted to transform my approach, like a taniwha perhaps, to meet the requirements of both.

TE AWA  
THE RIVER  
NEW MEDIA STORYTELLING PRACTICE



TE AWA  
MICHELLE LEE  
DIGITAL IMAGE  
2007

## **SYNOPSIS**

The main body of water, or awa, has been the research of visual art exploration of new media storytelling. To maintain the mana and integrity of the project, all aspects, methodologies, methods, and outcomes, have endeavoured to convey the traditional knowledge and values contained within the Maori oral storytelling practice. Mountain streams feed the main body of water of the Arahura. So too, does storytelling theory feed my work. This chapter examines the various core concepts and theories of storytelling that have informed the project in particularly the exchange of experience, moral and maxim within story and the embedding of multiple layers of perception. The diversity within different versions of story is examined in relationship to the pukorero Te Whatu o Poutini and the challenges of researching oral traditions within a colonial environment.

## **INTER EXCHANGE OF EXPERIENCES**

A core concept within storytelling practice, is that storytelling as opposed to other art disciplines, such as the novel, is a non-hierarchical exchange of experience. Storytelling is a cycle of exchange. Walter Benjamin (1955), a German Jewish intellectual of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, asserted that, experiences are relayed mouth-to-mouth, generation-to-generation and become the experience of groups of listeners, where as the novel is formed in isolation and is in turn received in isolation. Benjamin's cultural assessment of the interrelation of art, technology and mass society is formed from what is primarily a Marxist perception. Benjamin's assertion is relevant to the project as it was written from a Jew and Marxist observation on a capitalistic culture that has colonised my own. The roles of listener and teller revolve around a group; however, even cinematic film is largely a one-directional exchange of experience. The

project is a narrative in keeping with the art of storytelling; therein those that participate in the project are fundamental to it, in that they share the stories of their experience. I suggest in a new media environment exchange, happens in the negotiation of the production of collaborative story.

### **MORAL AND MAXIM**

In the storytelling genre the exchange of experience is critical as experience gives rise to the maxim. Walter Benjamin (1955) asserts that stories offer counsel by way of moral, practical advice or maxim. Stories house cultural responses and establish protocols and attitudes. The project has commonalities with Canadian online journal Horizon Zero, Number 17, *Tell*, a digital project created by Cheryl L'Hirondelle (2004) that explores indigenous Canadian stories in an online new media format.

Let us tell you a story. For Aboriginal people, storytelling is a way of using metaphor to understand our roles and responsibilities on the planet. (L'Hirondelle's 2004)

Unlike most western stories and fables, Maori storytelling does not strictly assign characters the roles of victim, villain, hero, but encourages empathy for all characters. This is the overall counsel offered by pukorero in general and the understanding that individuals may take on all these roles and perceptions depending on the social situations they face and give rise to self-acceptance. This is generally strengthened, in Te Whatu o Poutini by genealogical links of Ngati Waewae to all the characters.

### **MULTIPLE LAYERS AND PERCEPTIONS**

Storytelling offers multiple layers and perceptions that then evolve in various directions forming new stories or visions.



Stories are a way of representing truth and meaning. Different stories give different versions of and approaches to truth and meaning. Stories allow the diversities of truth and meaning to be heard. (Bishop 1996, p7)

There are numerous versions of Te Whatu o Poutini and a collation of various components has been selected. I have used the multiple projections to deal with the variations in a stemless way. In some versions of the story Tamaahua has three wives. Having three projections of the Waitaiki character is an example of how this been incorporated.

Stories are multi layered and scaffold the listener as they develop understandings of social complicities. This allows stories to be received by a group of listeners who have a range of understandings. This has been an important to my research project. Although my work is primarily for my own iwi, others will view the story. The multiple layers of the project have been tested before audiences of various levels of understanding of the Pukorero Te Whatu o Poutini or the Ngati Waewae situation.

Abstraction within storytelling is an approach used to both scaffold the listener and to encode knowledge. Stories are often used as an educational tools and therefore highly valuable to oral based societies. Abstraction serves as a code of protection. A major component of the pukorero Te Whatu o Poutini is that it embeds an oral map of the primary geological survey of Aotearoa. However unlike linear Western maps, access to these sites and the comprehension of details within the story, is allowed to those who have a comprehension of tikanga Maori and made the effort to engage with the sites, moral, and spiritual values. It therefore follows that the project continues to use abstraction as an approach.

## RESEARCHING ORAL TRADITIONS IN A COLONIAL CONTEXT

Much Mātauranga Māori has suffered deliberate damage at the hand of colonisation and this has implications when researching Māori oral traditions. The pool of native speakers of Te Reo Māori has been drastically reduced particularly within Ngāti Waewae who became a minority ethnic group within our tribal region, early in the colonisation process. Early written recordings of Te Whatu o Poutini are from my research findings are in English. Therefore subtle detail changes from this translation may have occurred.

Te Whatu o Poutini is a pukorero whose origins were formed in our ancestral homeland of Hawaiki and different versions are found through out Te Iwi Māori. Research of the pukorero for the purposes of the project therefore has spanned over the oral reciting of Ngāti Waewae descendants, Ngāti Wairangi oral traditions, and other iwi groups who retain versions of the story such as Tainui, Mātaatua, Taranaki and some East Coast tribal groups. References to Te Whatu o Poutini within moteatea (chants) of numerous iwi were also examined.

Other versions and variations including that of Ngāti Waewae, make reference to Tumuaki a servant or in some cases slave of Tamaahua. After breaking a tapu, Tumuaki is transformed into a mountain. Some recount that Tamaahua had three wives who drowned in the Arahura River when their waka, Tairea, was capsized and became the different forms of jade. All versions and variations are valid. The waiata composed for the new media storytelling installation that retells the pukorero has selected, collated and or incorporated different versions of the pukorero, to meet the project aims but has not added or created new material to it.

## **INDIGENOUS RESPONSES TO TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCES**

Te Whatu o Poutini as a research project, is in keeping with Ngati Waewae oral traditions despite that it is a new media storytelling installation. Candice Hopkins (2006) writes of the aesthetics of Indigenous Storytelling, that tradition is often misinterpreted as being static or conventional. This assumption is not uncommon and many indigenous art practitioners have had to debate this issue. As we are the living embodiment of our ancestors, it is my belief that they too, would engage with technological advances. The pukorero, Te Whatu o Poutini narrates an adaptation to changing resources. Hopkins (2006) suggests that the use of technology is merely a continuation of what indigenous people have been doing from time immemorial - making things our own and that this move does not threaten storytelling tradition.

## **THE ADVANTAGES OF NEW MEDIA**

Storytelling can be advanced by new media practice. Not only in the numbers and range of people that can access the story, but that it can tell multiple stories simultaneously. It allows, like other art practices born from storytelling, to record stories for archival purposes. It can also give a new voice to existing artefacts so that they may be viewed in a new context. Technology can allow the work to be responsive to the interactions of the viewer. For storytellers it allows the teller to be multiple locations at any given time.

## **BIRTH OF MANY AUTHORS**

'Death of the Author' (1967) is an essay by the French literary critic Roland Barthes. Barthes criticizes the reader's tendency to consider aspects of the author's identity. The Maori concept of story telling and completion of artefacts on being observed by audience is not seen not 'death of the author' but the 'birth of many'. This stems from an ideology that knowledge is not owned by individuals but by the collective. Creative practice and outcomes are not formed in the isolation of the individual, but are the descendant, relation and potential ancestor of the many. It has been the cultural practice of Ngati Waewae, whilst perceiving us as kaitiaki (guardians) of the pounamu, to also exchange it. Examining other Maori art

practice such as whakairo (carving) I was interested in how whakairo acted as vessels of multiple story. They house the story of the tupuna they convey, the carver and the story of their own creation and in some cases travel. Furthermore they continue to evolve from the way they are engaged with by the viewer. Whakairo are often dressed in piupiu or other taonga, painted, greeted and touched. New media allows for collective creation and further evolves from collective ownership.

TE WAHAPU  
RIVER MOUTH  
AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH



TE WAHAPU  
MICHELLE LEE  
DIGITAL IMAGE  
2006

## **SYNOPSIS**

Having reached the river mouth there are still areas for further exploration. This chapter addresses these areas including an installation of my work in Arahura Paa, kinaesthetic engagement as discussed earlier and the establishment of the Arahura Virtual Pa Interactive Website.

## **ARAHURA PA INSTALLATION**

It is my hope within the next year to install the work within Arahura Pa. This will allow the main body of research participants to view the work. By erecting a marquee on my whanau land (Block 8, Arahura Paa). I hope to project the work on to the marquee walls using portable data show projectors and DVD players.

## **ARAHURA VIRTUAL PAA INTERACTIVE WEBSITE**

By establishing an Arahura Virtual Paa Website it is possible for us to reinstate our tribal systems of education and communication and reduce the damage created by urbanisation. It is essential that this be an inclusive, empowering process, which also adheres to our traditional cultural practices. Technology is at a level now where our tikanga and privacy can be protected with a private site and registration process.

Although other iwi and hapu do have websites they are not interactive and therein act only as notice boards. Other iwi do have Virtual Marae however they only house digital carvings and do not allow, again, interactions. By establishing our own interactive website we will be the first iwi in Aotearoa to develop a Virtual Paa. The benefits of a Virtual Paa would be that it would bypass the financial, geographical and time restraints that affect our ability to gather. The research page has shown that our rangatahi, particularly those living in Australia, are using the Arahura Paa Page daily to keep in contact with home and each other.

A website that carves our foundation stories digitally would be the primary component of the site. Access, the secondary component of the site would be open to tribal members only. Recorded on simple technology such as cell phones tribal members will be able to up load their own materials on to the site.

As a part of the secondary component, live online meetings of individuals, the different family lines, or the tribe as a whole could take place. Individual blog pages would allow tribal members to establish relationships and strengthen existing ones. Story telling and interactive education programs to revive our language etc would be accessible. Streaming of events such as the achievements of our young on the sporting field, in education, and entertainment could be viewed. Virtual tours of specific cultural practices, such as searching for jade on our tribal river, could take place, giving access at anytime to those who can't physically do so for such reasons as age, health and distance.



## KINAESTHETIC ENGAGEMENT

Using the imagery collected over the research period, I would like to further explore ways in which sculptural practice could be included in my work and develop further opportunities for kinaesthetic engagement and further evolve from this engagement. I am interested in testing projecting onto sandstone sculpture and combining this with an audio track. Shooting actors that assume the roles of the characters within the pukorero and projecting each character in turn onto the same form. Projections of the various stones, fire and river water would be disbursed between the character shots. The work could be activated through hongis with the viewer. The technologies employed by Australian artist Lynette Wallworth's work is an area I am interested in exploring further, due to its ability to create interaction and intimacy between the viewer and view.

FIGURE 6.1  
EVOLUTION OF FEARLESSNESS (STILL)  
2006  
PRODUCED BY FORMA  
COMMISSIONED BY NEW CROWNED HOPE FESTIVAL  
VIENNA  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND FORMA  
PHOTO: ROCCO FASANO



## MUTUNGA

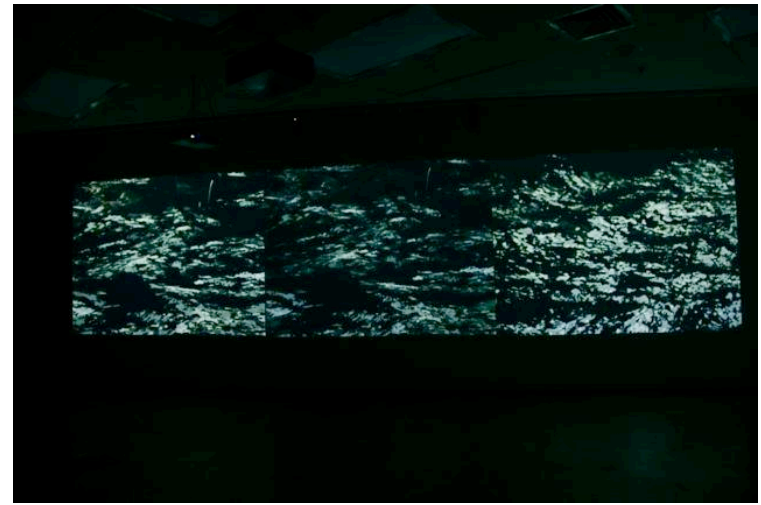
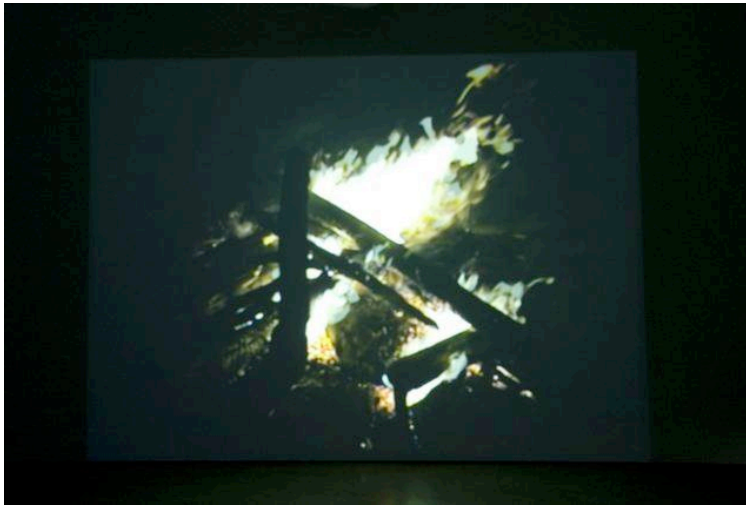
### CONCLUSION

I embarked on this journey in order to evolve my art practice and to have a specific reason to return home to my turangawaewae.

This research process has brought about a dramatic shift in my art practice. When I commenced the Master of Art and Design programme in 2006, it was with a painting practice, examining Te Ara o Poutini. As this evolved, the pukorero in a sense, took over, transforming my approach to art making and become Te Whatu o Poutini. The project and those involved in it widened my view of the various nodes of practice that I worked in and led me to combine these into a digital moving image piece. This has meant that storytelling, painting, waiata composition have been employed. In order to produce this work it required that I learned to write, produce, shoot video, edit in a number of different applications, and install. The intellectual discourse and experiences I shared with Don. C. Selwyn became far more pertinent to my practice and informed the final outcome to an extent that I only came to realise after his passing. I felt this lost deeply and this sense of mamae gave me the drive to complete the project to the best of my ability. The research process in itself is how now I approach my practice. I perceive myself now as an art researcher as apposed an artist who arrives without testing at a solution or resolution and produces a product. I attribute this approach as the key shift in my work.

The pukorero has enabled me to return home on a regular basis and this in turn has changed my relationship with my Turangawaewae. This has lead on to other projects.

There are many areas yet to be explored and no doubt each generation will interpret and contribute to our oral traditions differently. This creative and spiritual journey has been my attempt at honouring the experiences and words of my tupuna and I encourage future generations to do the same.



TE WHATU O POUTINI  
MICHELLE LEE  
NEW MEDIA STORYTELLING INSTALLATION  
PHOTOGRAPH: NATALIE ROBERTSON  
2007

# TAPIRITANGA

## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX ONE (WAIATA)

#### KA ARA AKE TE WHATU O POUTINI EE !!!

Maui Pae, Maui Taha,  
He ika no Tuhua Ahuahu e  
He mokai na Ngahue, na Ngake  
Ka tohetohe ki a Waiapu e.  
He ika paneke neke mai i nga ringa o  
Hinetuahoanga,

Kia horo te haere, ki te motu o Tuhua Meketika  
Na Tamaahua i whakamarumarū  
Nana te taonga whakamoe, nana te taonga tauhuna  
Te taonga ka whakapaaha e,

Kei nga wai o Paretāo, he mareikura  
Ko Waitaiki tera,  
I nga wai tutae o Poutini,  
Ka kahakina  
Ka rere ki a Tahana, te ahi e muramura e,

Maui Pae, Maui Taha,  
A fish from Tuhua Ahuahu  
The pet of Ngahue, of Ngake  
Who quarreled with Waiapu  
The fish that slipped through the hands of  
Hinetuahoanga  
  
Travel quickly to the island of Tuhua Meketika  
Sheltered by Tamaahua  
His taonga was concealment, his taonga was the disguise  
The taonga he would come to regret

In the waters of Paretāo, the maiden bathed  
It is Waitaiki  
Abducted in the defecated waters of Poutini  
Hasten to Tahana  
There let the fire burn bright

Karawhiua te tekateka a Tamaahua,  
Kia rapu ai tona mareikura  
Engari kua tinea kee te werawera  
Ko Pakawera tona otinga e,

Ka karakiatia he patuwatawata  
Ka turakina e te ika taniwha.  
Ka maramaratia ki wiwi, ki wawa,  
Ko ta Tamaahua, he whakaepa tekateka  
Ki Taupo i mu  
Ki Taranaki, ru ana  
Ki Te Ana o Weka ka rangona  
Te kowiriwiritanga ee

Ka rere tonu a Poutini  
Ki nga wai makariri o te tonga  
Ki Piopiotahi te puhi e tangi moteatea,  
Hine hotuhotu, Hine pokaikaha  
ko te roi o mata, ko te Tangiwai e

Ka herea a Waitaiki ki a Kaikanohi,  
Te putaketanga o Arahura  
Ka toko ake te huatau o taniwha,  
Ki te kore au, ka kore koe, ki te kore au,  
Ka whakataka a Waitaiki i nga wai tapu ee

Ka kite a Tamaahua I a Waitaiki,  
Wahine Purotu, Wahine Hotuhotu,  
Te matapuna o te Pounamu ee

Whakamoe i te whatu o Poutini ee !!

Cast the dart of Tamaahua  
To search for the maiden  
But the fires are already extinguished  
Basalt is what remains

Incant the wall,  
The obsidian wall that was shattered by the taniwha fish  
Pieces flung hither and thither  
Tamaahua throws his dart again  
In Taupo its falls silent  
Go to Taranaki, the land quakes  
To Te Ana o Weka  
The vibration heard

Poutini dashes  
To the cold waters of the south  
At Piopiotahi Waitaiki laments  
Sobbing woman, strained woman  
The tears of your eyes become serpentine

Waitaiki is held at Kaikanohi  
The source of the Arahura  
The taniwha reasons,  
If not me, then not you, if not me,  
Waitaiki is thrown into the sacred waters

Tamaahua finds Waitaiki  
The beautiful wahine, the sobbing wahine  
The source of the greenstone

Close, conceal, rest Te Whatu o Poutini !!



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