

# 'Oh 'Uia

Housing the Kronfeld Collection  
through Moving-Image Practice

Emily Parr



# ‘Oii ‘Uia

## Housing the Kronfeld Collection through Moving-Image Practice

**Emily Parr**

**Auckland University of Technology**  
**School of Art + Design**  
**2024**

A thesis submitted to AUT in partial fulfilment  
of the requirements for the degree of Doctor  
of Philosophy (PhD).



# Abstract

Between the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the Kronfeld Collection was assembled by my great-great-grandparents, Gustav and Louisa Kronfeld, a Jewish merchant and a Samoan matriarch. As European empires expanded throughout Moana Oceania and settler and Indigenous worlds collided, the taonga, measina, and treasures travelled to 'Oli 'Ula, the Kronfeld family home in Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland. The 'oli tree, once cultivated in Sāmoa, has fragrant red flowers; 'ula can mean necklace, joyful, or red. The name 'Oli 'Ula, likely given to the house by Louisa, is suggestive of these red flowers, or a garland of them. Encircled by this symbolic garland, the taonga, measina, and treasures of the Collection adorned the walls of the house. Later, they entered Aotearoa New Zealand's public museums.

This practice-based research digitally 'houses' selected taonga and measina from the Collection through moving-image artworks. Utilising Māori Marsden's 'woven universe' (2003) and Epele Hau'ofa's 'sea of islands' (1994) as relational frameworks, the project extends Moananui notions of the house into the digital realm. The thesis proposes that whakapapa (genealogy) and vā (relational space) are forms of provenance, and that enlivening the systems of relation of museum collections is critical in transforming their futures.

Retracing the Collection's movements to understand the forces that propelled them, the research addresses imperial collecting practices in Moana Oceania and looks to ancient reciprocal networks through which treasures circulated. Engaging Lana Lopesi's concept of 'Moana Cosmopolitanism' (2021) and related notions of roots and routes, the project considers the future of the Kronfeld Collection and imagines decolonial museum ecologies. The practice enacts the reciprocity of the gift, generations later, and brings the Collection 'into the light.'

Through archival research and moving-image practice, this project develops a tuitui (sewing, threading, binding) methodology, linking the reparative nature of sewing the fabric of the universe (Marsden, 2003) with Paul Tapsell's metaphor connecting taonga, stitching, and the flight of the tūi (1997). The artworks, articulated as 'cosmospheres,' render taonga and measina as three-dimensional point clouds, and immerse them in kaleidoscopic moving-image 'lifeworlds.' The research proposes that through tuitui, the rendering of ancestral treasures using contemporary technologies might offer a form of repair within a woven universe.

# Acknowledgements

This work would not be possible without a myriad of relations.

Firstly, my utmost thanks to my supervisors, Leali'ifano Albert Refiti and Natalie Robertson, for your brilliant minds and invaluable guidance. It is an honour to be your student. Acknowledgements to the many talanoa and extended 'āiga of the Vā Moana cluster that have enriched my research. In particular, thanks to Tina Engels-Schwarzpaul for your crucial feedback and encouragement, and Lana Lopesi for your friendship and support. Thanks also to Layne Waerea, who supervised this research during its first year; and Billie Lythberg and Moana Nepia, for insightful reviews of my research proposal. I am grateful to Abby Cunnane and The Physics Room team for fostering the exploratory phase of research that gave life to this project.

The research was supported by an AUT Vice-Chancellor's Doctoral Scholarship and an Auckland Museum Institute Postgraduate Scholarship. To the Human History team at Tāmaki Paenga Hira Auckland War Memorial Museum — thank you for welcoming me into the fold, and enabling my work to continue through a Research Associateship. Thanks especially to Fuli Pereira, Nigel Borell, and Chantal Knowles for your blessings; Jimmy Ma'ia'i, Starr Ratapu, Jasmine Tuiā, and Talei Tu'inukuafe for your precious time and helping hands; and Richard Ng and Zoe Richardson for facilitating my imaging. My deepest gratitude to Andrea Low for a mentorship written in the stars (perhaps by Florrie and Louisa). Warm acknowledgements to the Pacific Cultures team at the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, particularly Safua Akeli Amaama and Grace Hutton, for enabling me the privilege of tending to my family's collection.

To all of the technicians at AUT — we are so lucky to have you. Special thanks to Suzie Gorodi; Cornelius Geraets for my prints; Harriet Stockman, ET Sung, and Matt Davis for my 'ula; and Eddie Clemens, Glenn Maxwell, and Angus Roberts for my projection screen. I'm grateful to Te Wai Ngutu Kākā for transforming the gallery for my exhibition. I have leant on the studio chats and solidarity with my PhD cohort, particularly Emelia French, Ena Kosovac, and Shelley Simpson. Many thanks to Elwyn Sheehan for your proofreading services. There were no safer hands for a tender document.

Fa'afetai tele lava to the Laumua o Tumua house of weaving for contributing to the artworks, and Galemalemana Steven Percival for connecting us. Rāhana Tito-Taylor and Salvador Brown, your sonic contributions to the works are beyond what I could have hoped for — thank you. Approval for this research was granted by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on October 4, 2022 (application number 22/238).

Arielle Walker and Makyla Curtis, you have my eternal gratitude for the listening, reading, and uplifting you have done; the countless hours and words that meant I could reach this point. I look forward to joining you both by the fireside. Allie, Sophie, and Tremé, thank you for love, joy, and friendship — a net that stretches across the world yet remains the strongest. Thank you, Jules, for being an unwavering, grounding presence, and for doing the dishes even when it was my turn.

Finally, thank you to the generations of record keepers and archive fossickers who held and expanded the collection of photographs, ephemera, and memories of the Kronfelds, of our family. Dad, Nana, Sam; Tony, Olive, Roger, Sandy; and many, many more. Thank you to Gustav and Louisa for the richest of inheritances: an 'ula of stories and relations as vivid as the 'oli flower. I dedicate this thesis to Kronfelds past, present, and future, and the taonga, measina, and treasures.



# 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 used artificial intelligence tools or generative artificial intelligence tools (unless it is clearly stated, and referenced, along with the purpose of use), 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.

Emily Parr, April 2024

# Table of Contents

	Abstract	1
	Acknowledgements	2
	Attestation of Authorship	5
	<b>Opening</b>	9
	Arrivals	10
	Introduction	12
	Notes for the Reader	15
<b>Part 1</b>	<b>A Sea of Islands, A Woven Universe</b>	17
<b>1.1</b>	<b>Systems of Relation</b>	18
	Moananui Ecologies	18
	A Woven Universe, A Sea of Islands	18
	Relationality	19
	Ecologies	20
	Whakapapa, Vā, and Wā	21
	Whakapapa	21
	Vā	22
	Wā	23
<b>1.2</b>	<b>Treasures and Housing</b>	26
	Taonga, Measina, and Treasures	26
	Taonga	26
	Measina	28
	Treasures	29
	Keeping them Warm	30
	Housing	31
	The Museum	31
	Whare and Fale	32
<b>1.3</b>	<b>The Practice</b>	35
	A Tuitui Methodology	35
	Rationale	35
	Linguistics	35
	Stitching	36
	Dwelling, Looping, Stitching	39
	Sites of Research and Practice	43
	The Archive	43
	Moving-Image Practice	46
	Exploratory Works	49
	<i>Through the Time Spiral</i>	49
	<i>and so we find them all over the universe now</i>	53
<b>Part 2</b>	<b>The Houses</b>	55
<b>2.1</b>	<b>‘Oli ‘Ula: “A House like a Museum”</b>	57
	Collecting in a Context of Empire Expansion	57
	Origins of Private Collections	58
	The German Firm	60
	Colliding Worlds: A Gift, a Trade, a Rupture	63
	Art in the Imperial Imaginary	68

	Travelling Taonga, Measina, and Treasures	72
	From Private Collections to Public Museums	72
	Roots and Routes	74
	The Hoe Parāoa and 'Ie Tōga	76
<b>2.2</b>	<b>The Museums: "South Seas Curios"</b>	85
	Imaginaries	85
	Museum Imaginaries	85
	The Colonial Imaginary	86
	Counteracting the Colonial Imaginary	89
	The Decolonial Imaginary	92
	Artists Within the Museum	94
	Decolonial Museum Ecologies	102
	Returns and Reconnections	102
	The Digital Realm	106
	Museum Futures	114
	The Kronfeld Collection in a Moana Cosmopolitan Framework	118
<b>Part 3</b>	<b>Assembling a Shelter</b>	123
<b>3.1</b>	<b>The 'House'</b>	125
	The Cosmosphere	125
	Worlding	125
	The Camera is a Portal	128
	Rhythmical Patterns and the Kaleidoscope	129
	Resonance and Atmosphere	132
	Rendering Taonga and Measina	135
	Rendering	135
	Point Clouds, Nebulae, and the Hologram	135
	Cosmological Energies	138
	To World, Adorn; to Render, Restore	140
<b>3.2</b>	<b>The Taonga and Measina</b>	142
	Selection and Process	142
	Rationale	142
	Agency, Listening, and Protocols	143
	Lifeworlds	147
	'Ie Tōga	147
	Tanoa Fai'ava	149
	Toki	151
	Māhē	153
	Hoe Parāoa	155
	<b>Closing</b>	157
	Glossary	162
	List of Figures	165
	Bibliography	169
	<b>Appendices</b>	185
	Exhibition Documentation: 'Oli 'Ula	186
	Exhibition Roomsheets	192
	Cosmospheres	196
	<i>Through the Time Spiral</i>	200
	Into the Archive: The Kronfelds	206
	Into the Archive: Reflections from the Museum	272



Figure 1. *Flukeprint*, Kaikōura, 2021.

# Opening

## Arrivals

Whales, like my ancestors, follow ancient oceanic pathways, forming webs of relation and passing knowledge between generations. In the early stages of this doctoral research, I travelled to Kaikōura, hoping to encounter whales and to make photographs for an upcoming exhibition, *Surfacing* (July–September 2021), at The Physics Room in Ōtautahi Christchurch. Not long after setting out on *Te Ao Mārama*, a vessel owned by hapū (kinship group) Ngāti Kuri, we sailed towards the first parāoa, or sperm whale.

They remain in the depths for around forty-five minutes at a time before surfacing to breathe. Most of their bodies stay beneath the swells as they inhale, exhale, inhale again for ten or so minutes. Then, more slowly than I expected, their tails lift. Water pours off the trailing edge, it flicks upwards, and they are gone.

Most people turn away from the railing now. But if you wait, you will see a smooth circle of water appear on the surface — a trace the parāoa left behind. I wish I could leap into the water, where I feel most at home, and follow them down the portal; I wish we could be eye to eye.

We didn't see any humpbacks that day, but that doesn't mean they weren't there — and it's not just the paikea I am interested in anyway. I hadn't seen a parāoa before, a great living and breathing body diving a thousand metres undersea, but I do know their bones.<sup>1</sup>

A hoe parāoa — a paddle carved from the jawbone of a sperm whale — resides among 270 taonga, measina, and treasures<sup>2</sup> of the Kronfeld Collection at the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa (hereafter referred to as Te Papa), formerly the Dominion Museum. Assembled from the islands of Te Moananui-a-Kiwa during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries by my Jewish and Samoan great-great-grandparents, Gustav and Louisa Kronfeld, the Collection was gifted to the Museum in 1939. My father observed that the hoe parāoa propels my research, as it might a waka. I have attempted to tell (part) of its story several times since I first learnt of it:

I went to visit the collection in Te Papa's storage warehouse [in 2012]. The amount of taonga systematised and filed away was overwhelming. I felt sad that they were not only far from their origins, but also inaccessible to those who might want to visit them. I had hoped to see the hoe parāoa, but nobody could locate it. Later, I found out it was in New York, in the Museum of Natural History as part of the *Whales | Tohorā* exhibition. In the years since,

---

<sup>1</sup> Emily Parr, "Surfacing," Physics Room, July 30, 2021, <https://physicsroom.org.nz/exhibitions/surfacing>.

<sup>2</sup> In this project, 'taonga' and 'measina' refer to Māori and Samoan treasured items, respectively. 'Treasures' refers to the remaining items in the Collection that originate from diverse places and language groups. It is occasionally used as an all-encompassing short-hand. See the section "Taonga, Measina, and Treasures" for a lengthier discussion.

the hoe parāoa and I have tracked a similar journey around Turtle Island: we were in the United States and Canada at the same time. I was 28 hours on a train away from the sea when I lived there. I wonder if the hoe parāoa missed the ocean as much as I did? It will have come home, just as I have. I am not sure whether it is possible for it to be returned to its true home, but perhaps reattaching part of its kōrero [story] can be begin some kind of restoration.<sup>3</sup>

Preparing to install *Surfacing*, I decided to draw the outline of the hoe parāoa on a central column facing the entranceway to the gallery, acknowledging its role as a kind of pou (post, support) in my research. I often use digital drawing as a method of imagining and layering in my moving-image practice but, in this case, I had reservations about a physical drawing: site-specificity is always entangled with the historical relationships between people and place, and the removal of paint at the exhibition's close seemed more destructive than the simple disappearing of pixels. So, I asked myself, what does it mean to house this taonga in the gallery space? And then, what does it mean for the museum to house it? A series of questions cascaded, leaving me wondering whether I could build a new, multi-sensory 'house' for the Kronfeld Collection through moving-image practice. The taonga, measina, and treasures, like my family lines, have been away from their homelands for generations now. I began imagining them surrounded by the sounds and light from their islands; the songs and whispers from their people; the feeling of dropping into the ocean or moving through the air. Could I retrace their movements, speak to them and listen in return; could I restore their relations?

I had arrived at my PhD project.

My whakapapa, too, traces a series of arrivals. I descend from the ancestral waka Mataatua. My tipuna lived on the shores of Tauranga Moana as Ngāi Tukairangi, a hapū of the iwi Ngāi Te Rangi. Our maunga, Mauao, stands in Te Moananui-a-Kiwa, the vast ocean that connects Aotearoa with my other ancestral islands of Sāmoa and Tonga; islands with eminent histories of voyaging. My Portuguese, Jewish, and German ancestors travelled to those islands on whaling and trading ships, settling and intertwining their family lines with Samoan and Tongan ones. My English, Scottish, and Irish ancestors arrived in Aotearoa on convict, military, and settler ships. They traded in Tauranga Moana, fought and farmed in Waikato, and sought gold in Te Waipounamu. Over time, their descendants relocated to Tāmaki Makaurau, the whenua that raised me. These are my ancestral legacies: journeys across the moana, the stitching together of Indigenous and settler worlds, an ever-expanding network of relations. The Kronfeld Collection is a shimmering thread among these legacies, and a responsibility I have inherited. The restoring of relations can unfold across many generations.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> Emily Parr, *Oli 'Ula*, 2020, single-channel video/audio.

<sup>4</sup> Te reo Māori terms I introduce myself with are whakapapa (genealogy), waka (canoe), tipuna (ancestors), hapū (kinship group), iwi (extended kinship group), maunga (mountain), whenua (land), moana (ocean).

## Introduction

This thesis undertakes the first significant study of the Kronfeld Collection. Its taonga, measina, and treasures can be placed in three groups: treasures from Moana Oceania that Gustav purchased, traded, or was gifted; taonga Māori that he purchased in Aotearoa New Zealand; and gifts to the family that were accessioned by Tāmaki Paenga Hira Auckland War Memorial Museum (hereafter referred to as Auckland Museum) and Te Papa intermittently, between 1916 and 1993. The Collection's diverse origins (places, collecting methods, relationships, and contexts) provide an opportunity to think through the internal and external tensions of collections that were acquired during a period of European empire expansion throughout Moana Oceania and now — as decolonial transformation is called for — reside in the museum. As a descendant of this Collection, I am motivated to enliven and nurture the relations of the taonga, measina, and treasures, and to seek restorative futures for them within and beyond the museum. The decolonial project can be understood as a process of dismantling and rebuilding, as might be done with a house, a museum. However, a house should not be dismantled around its treasures without properly sheltering them first. Therefore, through this project I seek to assemble a shelter for the Kronfeld Collection: a 'house' in which its relations might be restored. Furthermore, the task is not only to transform the museum structure around the treasures, but to let the treasures transform the museum themselves. In looking to their systems of relation and 'listening' to them, this transformation becomes possible.

This practice-based PhD project aims to restore the relations of the Kronfeld Collection through moving-image practice and a 'tuitui methodology.' Drawing on texts by Māori Marsden and Paul Tapsell, the research proposes that a tuitui methodology can offer a reparative 'stitching' in a universe conceived as a woven, rhythmical fabric. The stitching process links together two sites of research: the archive and moving-image practice; and the range of artistic methods I engage, including moving-image, digital drawing, and three-dimensional scanning and rendering. The project's artworks are partially generated through archival research at Auckland Museum and Te Papa. In the museum, I trace the Kronfeld Collection through inventories, acquisition records, and correspondence, as well as meeting the treasures in their storage or display housing. This process is documented with 35mm film photography. Two written outputs of the research, "Into the Archive," recount the history of the Kronfeld family and Collection, and my reflections from the museum.<sup>5</sup>

*Through the Time Spiral* (2021–2022) is a series of exploratory artworks produced early in the project that layer moving-image, digital drawings, and narrative voiceover assembled from my family's archival material. The series experimented with a tuitui methodology, and deepened my knowledge of the Kronfeld family and their life in Tāmaki Makaurau. Building on these early practice-based explorations and archival research at the museum, my artworks shifted significantly as I sought to digitally house taonga and measina from the

---

<sup>5</sup> See the Appendices, "Into the Archive: The Kronfelds," and "Into the Archive: Reflections from the Museum."

Collection. I assembled six ‘cosmospheres,’ using moving-image, photogrammetry, point cloud, and animation processes. After 3D scanning the taonga and measina, I digitally rendered them as point clouds. Their digital forms are placed at the centre of moving-image ‘lifeworlds,’ immersed in their whakapapa or vā relations. These cosmospheres are the project’s culmination.

The thesis explores how enlivening the systems of relation (such as whakapapa and vā) of taonga, measina, and other treasures might transform the future of museum collections; how ‘housing’ the Kronfeld Collection through practice-based research can enable the imagining of decolonial museum ecologies; and how tuitui, a reparative methodology emerging from my moving-image practice, might propose alternative methods for restoring relations between museum collections and their origins. The exegesis is organised into an opening, parts one, two, and three, and a closing. It is punctuated by sections which review key artists and influential works for this practice-based project.

**Part One: A Sea of Islands, A Woven Universe**, introduces the relational worlds in which the research occurs, key terms and concepts, and how the research is being carried out. **1.1 Systems of Relation** outlines Moananui ecologies that are expressed through Māori Marsden’s ‘woven universe’ and Epeli Hau’ofa’s ‘sea of islands.’<sup>6</sup> The chapter delves into specific systems of relation and conceptualisations of space/time that emerge from Moananui: whakapapa, vā, and wā. **1.2 Treasures and Housing** articulates extended definitions and qualities of taonga and measina, explains the use of ‘treasures’, and underlines the project’s motivation to keep the Kronfeld Collection ‘warm.’ The chapter also lays the foundations for the artworks to function as a digital ‘house’ for treasures. It looks to key scholars’ framing of the museum-as-house, and the origins, functions, and conceptualisations of housing in a Moananui context. **1.3 The Practice** outlines the methodology, sites of research, and exploratory works in the project. The methodology section illuminates the interrelation between tuitui, a woven universe, and the notion of repair through artistic practice. It brings together Marsden’s description of a rended universe with Paul Tapsell’s metaphor of taonga following the flight of the tūi (named, in turn, for its stitching motion).<sup>7</sup> The section **Dwelling, Looping, Stitching** reviews the practice-based thinking of artists dealing with notions of housing and digital media as a new form of textile. The final section discusses relevant exploratory works from the project’s early stages.

**Part Two: The Houses** is a discussion of relevant theoretical, historical, and critical contexts of the research. **2.1 ‘Oli ‘Ula: “A House Like a Museum”**<sup>8</sup> explores the phase in which the Kronfeld Collection was gathered, travelling to the Kronfeld family home, ‘Oli ‘Ula. The

---

<sup>6</sup> Māori Marsden, *The Woven Universe: Selected Writings of Rev. Māori Marsden*, ed. Te Ahukaramū Charles Royal (Ōtaki: Estate of Rev. Māori Marsden, 2003); Epeli Hau’ofa, “Our Sea of Islands,” *The Contemporary Pacific* 6, no. 1 (1994): 147–61.

<sup>7</sup> Paul Tapsell, “The Flight of Pareraututu: An Investigation of Taonga from a Tribal Perspective,” *Journal of the Polynesian Society* 106, no. 4 (1997): 323–74, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/20706753>.

<sup>8</sup> The subtitle “A House like a Museum” comes from an image caption accompanying the article “Museum House. Relics from Past,” *Auckland Star*, November 29, 1937, <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/AS19371129.2.34>.

chapter examines collecting practices in a context of European empire expansion throughout Moana Oceania, discussing notions of gifting, trade, and rupture. The section **Art in the Imperial Imaginary** reviews related research contexts in Cora-Allan Lafaiki Twiss and Lisa Reihana's practices. The chapter investigates the forces that propelled treasures, firstly, into private collections, and later, into museums. It traces the diverse roots and routes of the Kronfeld Collection, including the cosmopolitan relations of Moana Oceania that existed long before Europe entered its waters. The chapter closes with a close study of selected treasures in the Kronfeld Collection: the hoe parāoa and four 'ie tōga. The Appendix **"Into the Archive: The Kronfelds"** accompanies the chapter, reporting the research's findings through a historical account of the Kronfeld Collection and family.

**2.2 The Museums: "South Seas Curios"**<sup>9</sup> explores the phase after which the Kronfeld Collection entered Te Papa and Auckland Museum. The chapter discusses concepts of imaginaries and looks towards decolonial museum ecologies. The section **Artists Within the Museum** reviews artworks by Ana Iti, Looty, Rosanna Raymond, Lisa Reihana, Alex Monteith, Will Ngakuru, and Nicole Charles, who work both inside and beyond the museum to counteract the colonial imaginary. The chapter explores forms of return and reconnection in the museum, and considers the potential and challenges of the digital realm. Having assessed the origins of the museum, the imaginaries taking root within it, and its extension into the digital realm, the chapter goes on to speculate about the future of the museum-as-edifice. Finally, the chapter draws on Lana Lopesi's theory of Moana Cosmopolitanism, thinking through how the Kronfeld Collection and its web of relations might be understood within a Moana Cosmopolitan framework.<sup>10</sup> The Appendix **"Into the Archive: Reflections from the Museum,"** which reports the research's findings through a reflective account of researching within the museum, accompanies the chapter.

**Part Three: Assembling a Shelter** describes the methods, processes, and underpinning concepts of the major practice-based outcome of the thesis. It explores the phase of the taonga and measina travelling along routes again, while reconnecting to their roots. **3.1 The 'House'** outlines technological processes and concepts that generate the moving-image, sound, and 3D rendering components of the artworks. It explains the thinking behind the artworks' assemblage, their particular qualities, and their restorative potential. The chapter develops a notion of the artworks as 'cosmospheres' and discusses the process and rationale of rendering taonga and measina as shimmering, ephemeral point clouds. The section **To World, Adorn; to Render, Restore** reviews works by artists who digitally render worlds, including FAFSWAG arts collective and Ahilapalapa Rands. **3.2 The Taonga and Measina** addresses the specific taonga and measina included in the artworks, outlining processes of selection and engagement. Information from the accession records and material contexts of

---

<sup>9</sup> This subtitle references the article "South Seas Curios for Museum," *Dominion* (Wellington), July 13, 1939, <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/DOMI9390713.2.53>.

<sup>10</sup> Lana Lopesi, "Moana Cosmopolitan Imaginaries: Toward an Emerging Theory of Moana Art" (PhD thesis, Auckland University of Technology, 2021), <http://hdl.handle.net/10292/14298>.

the six taonga and measina are linked with the whakapapa or vā relations explored in their lifeworlds.

### Notes for the Reader

This exegesis is partially written from a first-person perspective, as a politic that, by positioning ‘the researcher’ at its centre, reflects the personal nature of familial and practice-based research. I refer to my family members by their first names, rather than surnames, for ease of distinction and to signify closer relations.

Continuing an ethic of positionality, the whakapapa/genealogical affiliations of cited persons are listed at their first mention, where publicly available.

Te reo Māori (the Māori language) is privileged because of the research’s location in Aotearoa New Zealand. For instance, ‘the Pacific Ocean’ is referred to as ‘Te Moananui-a-Kiwa.’ Rather than replicate the colonial naming and division of this ocean into Polynesia/Micronesia/Melanesia, the exegesis uses the terms ‘Moana,’ ‘Moananui,’ and ‘Moana Oceania.’ Moana means ocean in three of my ancestral languages: Māori, Samoan, and Tongan. I employ the term ‘Moana’ to denote people, treasures, knowledges, and practices that are of Te Moananui-a-Kiwa, in the broadest sense. In this exegesis, ‘Moananui’ refers to the area typically considered ‘Polynesia,’ including Aotearoa. ‘Moana Oceania’ refers to the entire region of the ocean and her islands, inclusive of ‘Polynesia’/‘Micronesia’/‘Melanesia.’ In this research, ‘Moana Oceania’ acknowledges the diversity and expansiveness of the homelands and peoples from which the Kronfeld Collection was assembled.<sup>11</sup>

Macrons and glottal stops are used according to current practice. They have not been added to quotations or titles where the author did not use them.

‘The museum’ refers to edifice, ecology, and concept, while specific museums are referred to by name and with capitalisation.

The typefaces used in the exegesis are Churchward Newstype and Churchward Maori, designed by the late Joseph Churchward. Born in Sāmoa in 1933, his typefaces were influenced by his Samoan, English, Chinese, Tongan, and Scottish heritage, and a childhood spent drawing letters in the sand. Churchward migrated to Aotearoa New Zealand, and created Churchward Maori in support of the Māori land rights movement in the 1980s.<sup>12</sup>

The exegesis is best viewed as facing pages.

---

<sup>11</sup> For a discussion on these terms, see Ioana Gordon-Smith and Lana Lopesi, “On Marinades and Moana Art Histories,” *Marinade: Aotearoa Journal of Moana Art*, no. 1 (2022): 9; Karl Chitham, Kolokesa U Māhina-Tuai, and Damian Skinner, eds., *Crafting Aotearoa: A Cultural History of Making in New Zealand and the Wider Moana Oceania* (Wellington: Te Papa Press, 2019), 16.

<sup>12</sup> Safua Akeli Amaama, “Joseph Churchward’s Handcrafted Typefaces,” in *Crafting Aotearoa: A Cultural History of Making in New Zealand and the Wider Moana Oceania*, ed. Karl Chitham, Kolokesa U Māhina-Tuai, and Damian Skinner (Wellington: Te Papa Press, 2019), 245–7.



Figure 2. Pandanus on the southern coast of 'Upolu, Sāmoa, 2023.

# Part One

# A Sea of Islands, A Woven Universe

The first chapter of Part One introduces Moananui systems of relation and concepts of space/time. The second chapter offers extended definitions of taonga and measina, and explains the logic of the terms 'treasures' and the application of 'housing' to the project. The third chapter articulates a tuitui methodology, and discusses the archive and moving-image practice as sites of the research. It details the development of early works in the project, and reviews the work of artists who engage with notions of housing.

# Systems of Relation

## Moananui Ecologies

### A Woven Universe, A Sea of Islands

Moananui systems of relation are expressed through tohunga (chosen expert) Māori Marsden's (Muriwhenua, Ngāpuhi) 'woven universe' and scholar Epeli Hau'ofa's (Tonga) 'sea of islands.' Their respective 2003 and 1994 texts have significantly influenced how Māori and Moana researchers conceptualise our relationships — to one another, to our islands, to our universe or 'cosmic family.' Scholar and musician Te Ahukaramū Charles Royal (Marutūahu, Ngāti Raukawa, Ngāpuhi) was tasked with collecting and publishing the late Marsden's notes as *The Woven Universe: Selected Writings of Rev. Māori Marsden*. Royal explains that Marsden's phrase "te kahu o te ao" (the fabric of the universe) generated the title of the collection, as it encapsulates the whare wānanga (place of higher learning) view of reality. He elaborates that "the whare wānanga sees and interprets the world as a kahu, a fabric comprising of a fabulous mélange of energies ... that are woven and move with cosmological purpose and design."<sup>13</sup> Marsden himself identifies mauri as "the bonding element that holds the fabric of the universe together,"<sup>14</sup> while historian Te Maire Tau (Ngāi Tahu) states that whakapapa was "the fabric that held the traditional world view together," before colonisation.<sup>15</sup> How, then, are taonga the research is concerned with embedded in this fabric? After all, according to scholar, Paul Tapsell (Ngāti Whakaue, Ngāti Raukawa), "*taonga* are threads from the past" that "link up the myriad of interconnecting relationships within the genealogically patterned universe."<sup>16</sup> Tapsell continues:

Tracking the pathway of *taonga* through the Maori universe of time and space is like tracing a single *aho*, thread in a cloak. The thread, like the flight of the tui, appears and then disappears, time after time, in a repeating pattern that interlocks with other threads, or *taonga*, descending from one layer of *whakapapa* to the next.<sup>17</sup>

As threads in a system of relations, taonga express the interweaving of those relations — a concept this research explores, holding Moananui ecologies at its heart. During a 2021

---

<sup>13</sup> Royal, editor's introduction to Marsden, *The Woven Universe*, xiii.

<sup>14</sup> Marsden, *The Woven Universe*, 44.

<sup>15</sup> Te Maire Tau, "The Death of Knowledge: Ghosts on the Plains," *New Zealand Journal of History* 35, no. 2 (2001): 131.

<sup>16</sup> Tapsell, "The Flight of Pareraututu," 334–5.

<sup>17</sup> Tapsell, "The Flight of Pareraututu," 335.

symposium, Tapsell called for a reorienting of whakapapa Māori so that we, peoples of Te Moananui-a-Kiwa, are at the centre of the universe, reminding us that we were part of Moana Oceania long before we had a treaty with the British.<sup>18</sup>

In *Our Sea of Islands*, Hau'ofa presents a vision of Moana Oceania to counter the popular view at the time that the region's islands were too isolated, too small, and too poorly resourced overcome dependence on neocolonial wealthy nations.<sup>19</sup> Hau'ofa undermines the legitimacy of this view in several ways, such as looking to our ancestral legacies:

If we look at the myths, legends, and oral traditions, and the cosmologies of the peoples of Oceania, it becomes evident that they did not conceive of their world in such microscopic proportions. Their universe comprised not only land surfaces, but the surrounding ocean as far as they could traverse and exploit it, the underworld with its fire-controlling and earth-shaking denizens, and the heavens above with their hierarchies of powerful gods and named stars and constellations that people could count on to guide their ways across the seas. Their world was anything but tiny.<sup>20</sup>

The Kronfeld Collection was born from these cosmologies. Hau'ofa's essay is not only useful for considering the processes (both ancient and imperial) through which the treasures became both rooted and routed, but also in imagining how their systems of relations might be enlivened once more. In understanding Moana Oceania as “a sea of islands,” rather than “islands in a far sea,” Hau'ofa offers “a more holistic perspective in which things are seen in the totality of their relationships.”<sup>21</sup> An island is only small if you neglect to look below the ocean's surface; the Moana is only alienating if you are oblivious to its ancient pathways. By extension, treasures will only remain lost to museum imaginaries if we perpetuate the forgetting or erasure of their systems of relation. Our ancestors, our cosmologies, and our ever-expanding ecologies are fundamental to restoring the relations.

## **Relationality**

Recalling a dream/vision he once experienced at a sacred site, Shawn Wilson (Opaskwayak Cree) asks us to close our eyes and imagine we are a lone, bright, infinitesimal point of light in a void. One by one, more lights appear in the distance, and, with each of them, a thin thread connecting us. Over time, these lights gather their own threads, their webs of relations taking shape:

---

<sup>18</sup> Aaron Glass et al., “Knowledge and Power” (panel discussion, *The Museum as Archive: Using the Past in the Present and Future Symposium*, Centre for Research on Colonial Culture, University of Otago, Dunedin, held online, December 14–16, 2021).

<sup>19</sup> Hau'ofa, “Our Sea of Islands,” 150.

<sup>20</sup> Hau'ofa, “Our Sea of Islands,” 152.

<sup>21</sup> Hau'ofa, “Our Sea of Islands,” 152–3.

Every individual thing that you see around you is really just a huge knot—a point where thousands and millions of relationships come together. These relationships come to you from the past, from the present and from your future. This is what surrounds us, and what forms us, our world, our cosmos and our reality. We could not *be* without *being in relationship* with everything that surrounds us and is within us. Our reality, our ontology is the relationships.<sup>22</sup>

Visualisation is one strategy used by Wilson in his 2008 book, *Research Is Ceremony: Indigenous Research Methods*, to write his ideas about Indigenous ontology and epistemology. The text includes stories, metaphors, and multiple voices, and sets a precedent for Indigenous scholars to conduct and share their research in greater harmony with their worldview. The interrelation of everything in the universe is something I have intuited to be true for as long as I can remember — certainly before I knew about the concepts I will shortly introduce. Whether they take form as Wilson’s points of light; branches reaching towards the sky as root systems mirror them below; shadows interlacing across the earth; or the galaxies in our observable universe, clues to the web of relations surround us. Addressing the reader, Wilson writes: “I hope that you will come to see that research is a ceremony. The purpose of any ceremony is to build stronger relationships or bridge the distance between aspects of our cosmos and ourselves.”<sup>23</sup> Wilson’s approach to research provides insights that are relevant to my own: there is data in my research and there are dreams; acquisition records and bodily sensations; preservation protocols and ritual ones; there is a contextual review, a historical record, and a reflective journal. Most importantly, there are artworks that are my form of ceremony — my way of restoring relations.

## **Ecologies**

‘Systems of relation’ or ‘ecologies’ are terms used interchangeably here to refer to ways of understanding and organising the world with a breadth that acknowledges nuances across Te Moananui-a-Kiwa, while emphasising the shared importance of relationality. Although the research engages systems of relation emerging primarily from Aotearoa and Sāmoa, only some of the treasures of the Kronfeld Collection are from these islands. I use ‘systems of relation’ and ‘ecologies’ to hold open a space for all their relational systems. As an example, whakapapa and vā are not cross-cultural equivalents of one another. However, within their respective cultural contexts, both express relational worldviews in ways that are pertinent to the research. Concerned with ‘ecological listening,’ Rachel Shearer (Te Atianga ā Māhaki, Rongowhakaata, Ngāti Kahungunu, Pākehā) finds “resonating patterns” through both whakapapa and ecology. Shearer’s 2018 doctoral thesis, “Te Oro o te Ao: The Resounding of the World,” traces the ecological branch of biology back to a realisation in Western science

---

<sup>22</sup> Shawn Wilson, *Research Is Ceremony: Indigenous Research Methods* (Halifax: Fernwood Publishing, 2008), 76.

<sup>23</sup> Wilson, *Research Is Ceremony*, 11.

that “instead of studying things by isolating elements ... networks reveal a greater understanding.”<sup>24</sup> She utilises ecology to “[acknowledge] that perceptions of nature and relations with the earth are inextricable from social, political and economic forces.”<sup>25</sup> Tracing ‘ecology’ further still, Potawatomi botanist Robin Wall Kimmerer notes that the root of the word means “‘home’ or ‘household’: i.e., the systems of relationship, the goods and services that keep us alive.”<sup>26</sup> Beginning with my body and all the ancestral memory it holds, I imagine the network of relations extending outwards: my home, these islands, this globe, our galaxy, and the universe beyond. There are relations that sustain and shape me just as there are forces that impact the health of those relations. All are bound up in the ecology I am part of, and the same could be said of the taonga, measina, and treasures of the Kronfeld Collection.

## Whakapapa, Vā, and Wā

### Whakapapa

Whakapapa, linguistically and epistemologically, is multitudinous. Tapsell defines whakapapa as “genealogy; to layer one upon the other; kin ties; systematic framework ordering descendants under common ancestors; genealogical descent lines connecting gods with all things living.”<sup>27</sup> In the research, I use ‘whakapapa’ to refer to specific genealogies, and, more broadly, to denote the system of relations in te ao Māori (the Māori world). Royal explains that “in traditional Māori knowledge, as in many cultures, everything in the world is believed to be related. People, birds, fish, trees, weather patterns — they are all members of a cosmic family.” The recitation of whakapapa by experts was “to explain the relationships between all things and thus to place themselves within the world. This helped people to understand the world, and how to act within these relationships.”<sup>28</sup> As Tapsell elaborates, ritual recitation provides “context in which taonga can be understood,” allowing “the structural sequencing of the universe by tying all things into a genealogical order.”<sup>29</sup> Legal scholar Ani Mikaere (Ngāti Raukawa, Ngāti Porou) also writes on the interrelation of whakapapa and taonga, emphasising that “looking at the world through the prism of whakapapa” entails “the imperative to treasure those physical manifestations and expressions of ancestors that connect us to our

---

<sup>24</sup> Rachel Mary Shearer, “Te Oro o te Ao: The Resounding of the World” (PhD thesis, Auckland University of Technology, 2018), 21, <http://hdl.handle.net/10292/11712>.

<sup>25</sup> Shearer, “Te Oro o te Ao,” 22.

<sup>26</sup> Robin Wall Kimmerer, “The Serviceberry: An Economy of Abundance,” *Emergence Magazine*, October 26, 2022, <https://emergencemagazine.org/essay/the-serviceberry/>.

<sup>27</sup> Tapsell, “The Flight of Pareraututu,” 326.

<sup>28</sup> Te Ahukaramū Charles Royal, “Te Ao Mārama: The Natural World,” in *Te Ara—The Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, September 24, 2007, accessed October 27, 2022, <https://teara.govt.nz/en/te-ao-marama-the-natural-world/print>.

<sup>29</sup> Tapsell, “The Flight of Pareraututu,” 326.

origins and enable us to project ourselves with confidence into the future.”<sup>30</sup> For my housing of the Kronfeld Collection through moving-image practice, a whakapapa lens is crucial. The whakapapa of taonga is abundant and kaleidoscopic: it includes the makers and the pūrākau (stories) of their craft; materials and their kin and atua (deity, divine) relations; and the purpose of taonga, whether utilitarian or ceremonial. As a system of relations linking past/present/future, whakapapa guides me both in navigating my relationships with the Collection and in assembling a digital shelter for it.

## Vā

A prefix in the Samoan language, ‘vā’ “describes a period, space or gap between two or more things.”<sup>31</sup> Albert L. Refiti (Sāmoa) elaborates that vā becomes “the spatial dimension of horizontal relationships connected through a genealogical system, which stems from kinship relations and alliance connections.”<sup>32</sup> Refiti also speaks to the temporal aspect of vā within this system of relations, noting that people are “constituted by relations spanning many generations into the past, and they are connected to vast elemental forces, observed in cosmogonies that move at very different speeds to contemporary life.”<sup>33</sup> In recent years, the concept of vā and its cognates has come to the fore in (particularly diasporic) Moana scholarship and art.<sup>34</sup> It was thrust into circulation by writer Maualaivao Albert Wendt (Sāmoa) in his 1996 paper, “Tatauing the Post-Colonial Body.” Describing the Samoan view of reality, Wendt articulates vā as “the space between, the betweenness, not empty space, not space that separates but space that relates, that holds separate entities and things together in the Unity-that-is-All, the space that is context, giving meaning to things. The meanings change as the relationships/the contexts change.”<sup>35</sup> Vā, a system that holds the measina of the Kronfeld Collection within this relational space, is crucial to the project.

Like whakapapa, vā is not exclusive to human relations. As scholar David Taufui Mikato Fa’avae (Tonga, Sāmoa) contended, “thinking beyond the human has always been a feature of Indigenous peoples’ understandings of ... themselves in relation to the world.”<sup>36</sup> The research project aims, firstly, to trace the vā relations of the measina and, secondly, to tend to them. Echoing Wendt’s assertion that good relationships require care, scholar I’uogafa Tuagalu

---

<sup>30</sup> Ani Mikaere, *Colonising Myths: Māori Realities; He Rukuruku Whakaaro* (London: Huia Publishers, 2013), 168, ProQuest Ebook Central.

<sup>31</sup> Albert L. Refiti, “Vā Atoa and the Ever-Moving-Present in the Samoan Cosmogony Solo o le Vā,” in “Vā Moana: Space and Relationality in Pacific Thought and Identity,” ed. Tina Engels-Schwarzpaul, Lana Lopesi, Billie Lythberg, Emily Parr, Albert L. Refiti, and Arielle Walker, unpublished manuscript, August 30 2024.

<sup>32</sup> Refiti, “Vā Atoa.”

<sup>33</sup> Refiti, “Vā Atoa.”

<sup>34</sup> Vā Moana—Pacific Spaces Research Cluster, “Talanoa,” accessed March 8, 2024, <https://www.vamoana.org/talanoa>.

<sup>35</sup> Albert Wendt, “Tatauing the Post-Colonial Body,” *Span* 42-43 (1996): 15-29, <http://www.nzepc.auckland.ac.nz/authors/wendt/tatauing.asp>.

<sup>36</sup> David Taufui Mikato Fa’avae, “Vā Beyond: A Post-Human Speculation” (paper presented at the Vā Moana: Space and Relationality in Pacific Thought and Identity Conference, held online, November 24-25, 2021), <https://www.vamoana.org/conference-presentations>.

(Sāmoa) emphasised that vā can be bad, and still be vā. Tuagalu proposed that vā is a “conduit for energy exchange” and, with each exchange, “the Samoan universe expands and contracts.” This ‘vā-field’ is subject to forces — including mana (supernatural power), tapu (restricted), and alofa (love) — that prompt action or movement. Objects can be repositories of such forces, Tuagalu suggested, and “gafa [genealogy] is a way of tracking the flow of energy. Gafa and history link people, place, and tala. Objects are re-energised when energetical patterns of convergence, consolidation, divergence, and circulation are traced out in its gafa and tala.”<sup>37</sup> Tuagalu’s proposition is demonstrated by the Kronfeld measina: they recall the mana and alofa that stimulated their travelling, which illuminate the people, places, and histories linked by the measina.

Lana Lopesi’s 2021 thesis, “Moana Cosmopolitan Imaginaries: Toward an Emerging Theory of Moana Art,” provides critical context for this project. Illustrating relationality in action, our work threads through one another’s: Lopesi writes on my practice, and my research engages her concepts. Lopesi charts the scholarly trajectory of vā and distinguishes between the ways vā features in the diaspora and in Sāmoa.<sup>38</sup> She notes that in its home context, vā is not described and discussed, because it is understood and sustained as an intrinsic aspect of Sāmoa’s social world. However, for Moana scholars and artists operating in Western-dominated contexts, articulating vā recalls their homelands’ relational ways of being and helps to resist alienating norms. Lopesi’s research found that for the generation of Moana Cosmopolitan artists, vā “is not an optical material for making art, but rather an ancestral, genealogical, and largely intangible relational ethic.” Relationality determines their social world and therefore their art.<sup>39</sup> As a Moana Cosmopolitan artist myself, the world described by Lopesi provides the context in which the Kronfeld measina interface with my practice. There is potential to give form to the vā relations in this pulsing, patterned, energetical world through moving-image artwork, activating the links between myself and the measina.

## Wā

Moananui understandings of space/time are conceptually significant to this project. I draw on research from the 2019–2023 *Vā Moana: Space and Relationality in Pacific Thought and Identity* project, which engaged scholars in talanoa<sup>40</sup> about vā and what might be considered

---

<sup>37</sup> I’uogafa Tuagalu, “Gafa, Vā, History and the c.19th Sāmoan Energetical Worldview: Implications for the Archival Museum” (presentation at The Museum as Archive: Using the Past in the Present and Future Symposium, Centre for Research on Colonial Culture, University of Otago, Dunedin, held online, December 14–16, 2021). For extended meanings of mana, tapu, and alofa, see I’uogafa Tuagalu, “Tāla’iga o le Gafa o le Vā: Storying the Ontology, Genealogy, and the Energetics of Vā; The Development of Samoan Worldview c.1000AD–1914” (PhD thesis, Auckland University of Technology, 2023), 28, <http://hdl.handle.net/10292/16859>.

<sup>38</sup> See also Brett Graham et al., “Tausiga ‘o Vā: Pacific Art and the Vā Relational Turn in the 1990s” (discussion panel at the Vā Moana: Space and Relationality in Pacific Thought and Identity Conference, held online, November 24–25, 2021).

<sup>39</sup> Lopesi, “Moana Cosmopolitan Imaginaries,” 120.

<sup>40</sup> Lopesi describes talanoa as “an inclusive and participatory dialogue” and “a culturally relevant method” of research. Lopesi, “Moana Cosmopolitan Imaginaries,” 45.

its Māori counterpart, wā. Royal notes in one talanoa that ‘wā’ is used for both space and time, a linguistic trait found across the Moana, and recalls that Marsden mentioned “the conjunction of wā (time) and ātea (space) — wātea, from which comes Rangī[nui] and Papa[tūānuku].”<sup>41</sup> Royal speculates whether thinking about ‘wā’ was a deliberate attempt of our tīpuna “to delve into some kind of portal, some kind of doorway beyond space and time, by collapsing them into one. To blur the edges, they perhaps open the possibility beyond space and time.”<sup>42</sup> He points to the presence of ancestors as an example of “something *beyond* space and time expressing itself *in* space and time.”<sup>43</sup> In another talanoa, Valance Smith (Ngāpuhi, Waikato, Ngāti Haina, Ngāti Pākehā) connects wā with whakapapa, proposing that wā is “not just a space — it’s all of those histories that have gone on before, that we carry with us.”<sup>44</sup> He also expands on the transitional and cyclical nature of wā. Likewise, scholar Ngāhuia Te Awekotuku (Te Arawa, Tūhoe, Waikato) observed that “time was governed by the ebbing and flowing of the tides, the phases of the moon, sunrise and sunset.”<sup>45</sup> On the transformation of the museum sphere, Te Awekotuku noted that time “is probably the most important element. And at this point, we pause, and ask, ‘whose time?’”<sup>46</sup> This question is one of many about space/time the research considers — how can the experience of it be adequately articulated and communicated sensorily, through moving-image practice? And how can I do so to empower the space/time of the taonga, measina, and treasures to unfold as it needs to?

A 2023 lecture by Carl Mika (Tūhourangi, Ngāti Whanaunga), “Wā and its Countercolonial Possibilities: Implications for the Human Self,” prompted both an unravelling and an unveiling for me. Coming from a speculative philosophical perspective, and acknowledging the deepening discussion on wā and its counterparts in Moana academic circles, Mika proposes wā as a “living phenomenon.” Taking issue with the incompleteness of translation from te reo Māori to the English language, Mika contends that wā “is implicated in the tendency towards linear division created through colonisation” when translated as time and space, as these terms “immediately establish ruptures in what is meant to be one holistic ground of existence.”<sup>47</sup> If not as space/time, then, how might Mika articulate wā? Imagining a pre-colonial understanding, he suggests:

---

<sup>41</sup> Te Ahukaramū Charles Royal, “Interview with Te Ahukaramū Charles Royal (Videographer: Paul Janman),” interview by Brett Graham, March 25, 2021, Vā Moana—Pacific Spaces Research Cluster, <https://www.vamoana.org/talanoa>.

<sup>42</sup> Royal, “Interview.”

<sup>43</sup> Royal, “Interview.”

<sup>44</sup> Valance Smith, “Interview with Valance Smith (Videographer: Paul Janman),” interview by Brett Graham, 2021, Vā Moana—Pacific Spaces Research Cluster, <https://www.vamoana.org/talanoa>.

<sup>45</sup> Ngāhuia Te Awekotuku, “He Atamira a Huatau: Staging Images, Contemplating Forms: Māori Art & Transformation” (keynote address at the Toi Te Kupu Whakaahuatanga Wānanga Toi Māori Symposium, Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland, June 15–16, 2022).

<sup>46</sup> Te Awekotuku, “He Atamira a Huatau.”

<sup>47</sup> Carl Mika, in Abby Cunnane, Amy Weng, Hamish Petersen, hosts, and Carl Mika, guest, “Wā and its Countercolonial Possibilities: Implications for the Human Self,” *Art Not Science* (podcast), episode 44, January 28, 2023, 38:08, <https://plainsfm.org.nz/prog/artnotscience>.

Wā signalled the absolute now-ness of the All. Thus, there is some time-related language there in the use of the word ‘now’, admittedly, but the ‘now’ is completely timeless and spaceless. The Now was everything ... wā signalled, or indeed was, the sheer reality and fact of all things in the world, at once.<sup>48</sup>

Mika’s notion of wā resonates with Wendt’s conception of vā atoa as ‘Unity-that-is-All.’<sup>49</sup> Furthermore, it tugs at a feeling: lying on sand, heart to Papatūānuku and the ocean thrumming in my body, feeling everything that ever was and ever will be unfolding simultaneously. It is through these sensations that I can begin to understand wā. Mika hypothesises that, as a result of colonisation, we “launch ourselves elsewhere — either into the past or future” in order to get away from this now-ness, and wonders whether Māori previously “moved within the world whilst experiencing the almost overwhelming persistence of the now ... A global, universal reverberation, if you like.”<sup>50</sup> Wā is not human-centric, and, in this research project, emotional or spiritual sensations are vital as I nurture my relationship with the Kronfeld Collection. We cannot *speak* with each other, but there is some kind of permeability. Mika concludes that the resonance of wā “implicates all things, brings them into being and sustains them, allows them to persist in what they are, which is not as individual objects but as all other things.”<sup>51</sup> The welcome challenge of the project is to conjure this resonance through moving-image practice, assembling a ‘house’ in which transformative futures might be imagined for the taonga, measina, and treasures.

---

<sup>48</sup> Mika, “Wā and its Countercolonial Possibilities.”

<sup>49</sup> Refiti, “Vā Atoa.”

<sup>50</sup> Mika, “Wā and its Countercolonial Possibilities.”

<sup>51</sup> Mika, “Wā and its Countercolonial Possibilities.”

# Treasures and Housing

## Taonga, Measina, and Treasures

### Taonga

According to Paul Tapsell, “the word taonga is a powerful and all-embracing Maori concept”<sup>52</sup> that refers to both the tangible and intangible.<sup>53</sup> Compelled by the limited published literature on taonga and the lack of understanding by “outside observers,” Tapsell significantly augments definitions of taonga in his 1997 article, “The Flight of Pareraututu: An Investigation of Taonga from a Tribal Perspective,” largely through conversations with his Te Arawa kaumātua (elders).<sup>54</sup> Tapsell begins with a footnote in which Sir Hugh Kāwharu (Ngāti Whātu) signalled the importance of taonga in Te Tiriti o Waitangi.<sup>55</sup> Kāwharu expands on the translation of taonga as ‘treasures’: “as submissions to the Waitangi Tribunal concerning the Maori language have made clear, ‘taonga’ refers to all dimensions of a tribal group’s estate, material and non-material — heirlooms and wahi tapu [sacred places], ancestral lore and whakapapa, etc.”<sup>56</sup> Tapsell goes on to identify mana (ancestral power), tapu (spiritual power), kōrero (knowledge), mauri (life force), and wairua (ancestral spirit) as elements which distinguish taonga from ‘artefacts.’ Similarly, Arapata Hakiwai (Ngāti Kahungunu, Rongowhakaata, Ngāti Porou, Ngāi Tahu), Kaihautū/Māori Co-leader of Te Papa, identifies the importance of kōrero and whakapapa connections with people and places, their spiritual dimension, and mauri.<sup>57</sup> Māori Art historian Ngarino Ellis (Ngāpuhi, Ngāti Porou) and co-writers Eliza Macdonald and Eleanor Almeida observe that taonga “generate different ideas for different people, but they are ultimately based on critical values of mana, tapu, kōrero and whakapapa.”<sup>58</sup> Tapsell elaborates on the role of taonga in expressing systems of relation, noting that Māori have maintained “a complex knowledge of their kinship and descent connections” by mapping common ancestors onto their tribal whenua: “These ancestors link them not only to themselves and their neighbours, but also to all things that exist in the

---

<sup>52</sup> Tapsell, “The Flight of Pareraututu,” 326.

<sup>53</sup> Tapsell, “The Flight of Pareraututu,” 331.

<sup>54</sup> Tapsell, “The Flight of Pareraututu,” 324–5.

<sup>55</sup> Te Tiriti o Waitangi, 1840.

<sup>56</sup> Tapsell, “The Flight of Pareraututu,” 326.

<sup>57</sup> Arapata Tamati Hakiwai, “He Mana Taonga, He Mana Tangata: Māori Taonga and the Politics of Māori Tribal Identity and Development” (PhD thesis, Victoria University of Wellington, 2014), 55–60, <https://doi.org/10.26686/wgtn.17008429.v1>.

<sup>58</sup> Ngarino Ellis, Eliza Macdonald, and Eleanor Almeida, “Taonga in a Digital World: Maori Adornment and the Possibilities of Reconnection,” *Journal of the Royal Society of New Zealand* 53, no. 3 (2022): 366, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03036758.2022.2090967>.

universe. ... The traditionally accepted role of taonga is to represent the myriad ancestor-land connections.” Furthermore, taonga possess mana.<sup>59</sup>

Concepts of mana, tapu, and kōrero are essential to my research and the artworks generated by it, in particular. According to Tapsell, the mana of taonga is maintained through the presence of tapu, which prevents mana from being transgressed by noa, the non-sacred.<sup>60</sup> This has implications for the care of and interaction with taonga, so that their tapu, and therefore mana, can be upheld. The third element, kōrero, is the most problematic aspect of this project: due to the circumstances under which they were collected, most of the taonga, measina, and treasures are without provenance — without their full kōrero, as it would be ritually and socially understood in their home contexts. Tapsell determines that without kōrero, a taonga “ceases to communicate, loses context, and fails to link a kin group's identity to specific ancestral landscapes.” Despite this, Tapsell affirms that such taonga “found in their thousands in archives, upon the countryside, or in museums ... may continue to evoke feelings of *ihi*, *wehi* and *wana* [spiritual power, awe, and authority] and be called *taonga*.” However, as “they have lost all associated knowledge, they are consigned to museum-like roles of representing an obscure and irretrievable past.”<sup>61</sup> Tribal leader Apirana Mahuika (Ngāti Porou) maintains that even within the museum, taonga “are sacred and living artifacts. The proper environment accords life to these *taonga*.” In 1991, Mahuika signalled Te Papa's bicultural approach as the first step towards the museum housing taonga in a way that aligns with Māori cultural values.<sup>62</sup>

Mauri and wairua are intrinsic elements of taonga. Māori Marsden believed that mauri “was originally regarded as elemental energy derived from the realm of *Te Korekore* [potential being], out of which the stuff of the universe was created.”<sup>63</sup> Here on Earth, Tapsell explains that “from first existence all things, even rocks, have *mauri*. This maintains the form of their creation, which is always an act of the *atua*, until the thing decays back into the earth, indicating that the *mauri* has departed.”<sup>64</sup> He elaborates: after taonga are created, karakia, ancient incantations, are recited that awaken mauri and envelop taonga in a state of tapu. Karakia can also be recited by specialists to imbue taonga with the wairua of ancestors, providing “a genealogical pathway bridging the generations, which allows the descendants to ritually meet their ancestors, face to face.”<sup>65</sup> Taonga, then, although formed by human hands, have a spiritual dimension that is activated by ritual practices. They can hold mana and kōrero, and themselves be held in a tapu state. The processes of colonisation and collecting can transgress, disrupt, or sever these connections. Without negating the resounding loss

---

<sup>59</sup> Tapsell, “The Flight of Pareraututu,” 327.

<sup>60</sup> Tapsell, “The Flight of Pareraututu,” 328.

<sup>61</sup> Tapsell, “The Flight of Pareraututu,” 331-2.

<sup>62</sup> Apirana T. Mahuika, “Maori Culture and the New Museum,” *Museum Anthropology* 15, no. 4 (1991): 10, <https://doi.org/doi.org/10.1525/mua.1991.15.4.9>.

<sup>63</sup> Marsden, *The Woven Universe*, 6.

<sup>64</sup> Tapsell, “The Flight of Pareraututu,” 329.

<sup>65</sup> Tapsell, “The Flight of Pareraututu,” 335.

associated with the separation of taonga from their people, this practice-based research therefore explores alternative frameworks for ‘housing’ the Kronfeld Collection. It aims to develop methods by which the relationships between treasures and their communities can be restored, when provenance has been lost.

## Measina

Karl Chitham, Kolokesa U Māhina-Tuai, and Damian Skinner define ‘measina’ as the term for cultural treasures and heritage of Sāmoa.<sup>66</sup> In Reverend George Pratt’s dictionary of the Samoan language, the definition of ‘measina’ is limited to “white mats”: the noun ‘mea’ is listed as a thing or genitals, and ‘sina’ is white.<sup>67</sup> In a discussion during a Vā Moana event, Albert L. Refiti noted that ‘mea’ means thing but also copulation, shedding light on the ability of measina to multiply and proliferate relationships. I’uogafa Tuagalu further contributed that gafa, tala, people, and places are what we notice around measina — for example, they tie a person to a place; an object to a person.<sup>68</sup> Refiti writes that, in Sāmoa, “prestigious things (*measina*) are located within and around spaces considered central to rituals and ceremonies. The *faletele* [meeting house] houses many of these activities, as it is the space used for their public presentation, and where they are ritually exchanged in *fa’alavelave* [entanglements; obligations].”<sup>69</sup> During these ritual presentations, objects are transformed to measina, acquiring mana, through being witnessed by the eyes of the chiefs and the eyes of the ancestors patterning the house.<sup>70</sup> According to Refiti, mana “conveys the cosmic principle or force,”<sup>71</sup> and “manifests itself in the brilliance, or ‘shining’, of things. This shining characteristically appears as smooth and white (*sina*), which enchants the viewer.”<sup>72</sup> If we consider Refiti’s explanation in conjunction with the definitions provided by Pratt, we gain a more expansive understanding of the word ‘measina’: things (mea), that have been transformed through the acquiring of mana, and therefore shine white (sina).

Measina are connected to the ancestral realm and tap into a timescale far beyond a human lifetime. As Tuagalu contends, “genealogical energy is manifested in certain prestige items.”<sup>73</sup> Artist Rosanna Raymond (Sāmoa, Tuvalu, Kiribati, France, Ireland, Norway) shared the significance of measina in the Samoan relational context:

---

<sup>66</sup> Chitham, Māhina-Tuai, and Skinner, *Crafting Aotearoa*, 326.

<sup>67</sup> *A Grammar and Dictionary of the Samoan Language*, 3rd ed., s.v. “Measina,” s.v. “Mea,” and s.v. “Sina.”

<sup>68</sup> Albert L. Refiti and I’uogafa Tuagalu, during discussion at Vā Kōrero session (Auckland University of Technology, October 10, 2022).

<sup>69</sup> Albert L. Refiti, “Mavae and Tofiga: Spatial Exposition of the Samoan Cosmogony and Architecture” (PhD thesis, Auckland University of Technology, 2015), 191, <https://hdl.handle.net/10292/9248>.

<sup>70</sup> Refiti, “Mavae and Tofiga,” 213.

<sup>71</sup> Refiti, “Vā Atoa.”

<sup>72</sup> Refiti, “Mavae and Tofiga,” 82.

<sup>73</sup> Tuagalu, “Tāla’iga o le Gafa o le Vā,” 103.

Our cultural belongings are not just mere objects or artefacts. The gafa or genealogy not only exists through the hands that created them, but it also inhabits the very substances they are made from, and thus, they connect us to our cosmological genealogical origins. The vā is not just a space for humans to relate with/in, but it is also the potential for how we can relate to the world of other animate and inanimate things where maui or the lifeforce runs through all.<sup>74</sup>

Human and non-human genealogies are threads that connect us both to our cosmologies and in the vā. In the research project, these threads guide me while building a ‘house’ for the Kronfeld Collection, so the taonga, measina, and treasures may be immersed in their genealogies, enabling a restoration of relationships.

## Treasures

When referring to museum collections, Indigenous peoples often prefer alternative descriptors to ‘objects’ and ‘artefacts.’<sup>75</sup> Palawa woman and museum scholar Gaye Sculthorpe noted that “they are more than objects — that is just a convenient shorthand word. They are ancestral belongings ... full of meaning and spirit.”<sup>76</sup> The Kronfeld Collection was assembled from a number of islands and kin groups with a multitude of languages.<sup>77</sup> This research refers to items falling outside of Māori concepts of ‘taonga’ and Samoan notions of ‘measina’ as ‘treasures.’ In their home worlds, these items would have had numerous purpose- and place-specific descriptors; and some may not have been considered treasures (or taonga/measina) at all. I contend that through their ongoing survival, and the bodies of knowledge and relations they carry, these items have *become* treasures: they are special and valued because they connect us to ancestors. Museum curator Maia Nuku (Ngāi Tai, British) elaborates on these ideas in the context of Moana Oceania. Through art, Nuku shares, our tipuna imagined and made tangible “networks of ancestral relations. They wrote these lineages into their skin, beat them into tapa (barkcloth), plaited and painted them into masks, and planted them into wood as notches in carvings. Our unique and distinctive ‘way of being’ ... would be revealed long into the future.”<sup>78</sup> Ancestral worldviews are embedded in items housed by the museum. By describing them as ‘treasures,’ the research does not

---

<sup>74</sup> Rosanna Raymond, “Conser.Vā.Tion|Acti.Vā.Tion: Museums, the Body and Moana Artefacts” (paper presented at the Vā Moana: Space and Relationality in Pacific Thought and Identity Conference, held online, November 24–25, 2021), <https://www.vamoana.org/conference-presentations>.

<sup>75</sup> Jilda Andrews and Aaron Glass, “Interventions: Museums, Anthropology and Their Publics” (presentation at the SIMA: Putting Theory & Things Together Webinar, held online, October 7, 2021).

<sup>76</sup> Gaye Sculthorpe, “Finding Your Ancestors’ Objects in Britain” (lecture at the RETURN: Reconnecting Objects and Collections with People and Places Symposium, CSU Riverina Playhouse and online, June 27–29, 2023).

<sup>77</sup> Papua New Guinea alone has more than 800 languages, notes Paul Simon. Kiri Chan, ed., *Kambek: Reconnecting Collections* (South Brisbane: Queensland Museum, 2018), 113.

<sup>78</sup> Maia Nuku, “Oceania: The Shape of Time,” in “Vā Moana: Space and Relationality in Pacific Thought and Identity,” ed. Tina Engels-Schwarzpaul, Lana Lopesi, Billie Lythberg, Emily Parr, Albert L. Refiti, and Arielle Walker, unpublished manuscript, August 30 2024.

intend to flatten their varied origins, nor conflate the sacred and profane, but to uphold their mana and relational power.

### **Keeping them Warm**

A significant motivation for undertaking the project is to keep the treasures ‘warm.’ I adopted this term following Ngahuia Te Awekotuku’s account of an occasion when a group of overseas curators visited Aotearoa New Zealand, and “the old people told them how to keep our taonga warm.”<sup>79</sup> Warmth implies an aliveness (the presence of mauri rather than animation) and a connectedness that was missing when I first encountered the Kronfeld Collection in the storeroom of Te Papa. Mina McKenzie (Ngāti Raukawa, Te Āti Haunui a Pāpārangī, Rangitāne), former Director of Manawatū Museum, explains that when taonga are “connected to their people, the tangible object or special knowledge remains alive and therefore ‘warm.’ The so called ‘warmth’ signifies that there is an unbroken thread between the people and their past, present and future.”<sup>80</sup> When that thread is broken and Māori are alienated from out taonga, they become ‘cold.’

Through entering the Kronfeld Collection, and later the Museum, the taonga *did* become cold.<sup>81</sup> How, then, might they be warmed once more? Warmth, like many concepts integral to this project, can be both metaphorical and literal. Tapsell refers to a form of warmth that comes through *kōrero*, comparing it to “a cloak which shrouds the ancestral item in ‘warmth of knowledge’, which can include rituals, genealogical recitations, and historical stories.”<sup>82</sup> In aspiring to warm the Collection’s taonga through the restoration of their *kōrero*, I believe that the opportunity to do so is greater now that they reside in public institutions, than if they remained a private collection, stored in the homes of Kronfeld descendants, out of sight from those who might recognise them and without the knowledge of museum curators. While some barriers to access and provenance persist, I hope that this project might warm the taonga in some way; if not through connection with their home people, then at least through illuminating their existence and context within the Kronfeld Collection.

While Curator at Te Papa, Matariki Williams (Ngāi Tūhoe, Ngāti Whakāue, Ngāti Hauiti, Taranaki) travelled to London’s Royal Academy of Arts for the 2018 exhibition *Oceania*, which marked 250 years since Captain Cook’s arrival in the region. Reflecting on the exhibition, Williams writes about the “immense privilege” of “daily access to *taonga* that lived at a time unrecognisable to a 21st-century Māori experience. ... It is in service that I

---

<sup>79</sup> Ngahuia Te Awekotuku, “Decolonising and Indigenising Museums” (keynote address to the Ngā Kākano Wānanga Series, Tāmaki Paenga Hira Auckland War Memorial Museum, December 7, 2020), <https://www.aucklandmuseum.com/nga-kakano-decolonising-and-indigenising-museums>.

<sup>80</sup> Mina McKenzie, “A Challenge to Museums: Keeping the Taonga Warm,” *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie* 118, no. 1 (1993): 79, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25842297>.

<sup>81</sup> See the Appendix, “Into the Archive: The Kronfelds” for a discussion on this process.

<sup>82</sup> Tapsell, “The Flight of Pareraututu,” 329.

work, going where I can, to visit our taonga, warm them in my hands.”<sup>83</sup> Here, Williams speaks of a literal warmth, generated by the heart, passing from hands of tangata whenua (people born of the whenua) to taonga. Williams’ notion of service to taonga also resonates deeply. Museums are stitched into my ancestral legacies: I feel as though I have inherited a responsibility to the Kronfeld Collection; to keep them warm, whether literally by my hands or by resurfacing their kōrero.<sup>84</sup> At the centre of this task is a simple request McKenzie put forward in 1994: that, in museums, “taonga will be respected, cared for, understood and therefore ‘warm’.”<sup>85</sup>

## Housing

As this exegesis’ title suggests, I conceptualise the project’s artworks as a digital ‘house’ for the taonga, measina, and treasures. While it was evolving, I was preoccupied with three whare: whare pora, whare tangata, and whare taonga. Whare pora refers to the sacred space that is entered, through karakia and ceremony, to weave.<sup>86</sup> Whare tangata names the womb as the house of humanity<sup>87</sup> — not a structure with walls and roof, but a place in which to reside and, optimally, to be nourished and grown. ‘Museum’ can be translated as whare taonga.<sup>88</sup> In a museum context, housing may refer to the galleries, but also the protective conservation ‘nests’ in which individual objects are stored. Engaging with these multiple forms of whare resulted in the extension of notions of housing, and in conceiving of the research practice as an effort to ‘house’ the Kronfeld Collection.

### The Museum

A significant influence on the project’s conceptualising of ‘housing’ was Ngahua Te Awekotuku’s 2020 keynote address at Auckland Museum. Te Awekotuku proposed that “museums are sites of power and contestation. They house the dead for the living.”<sup>89</sup> In the view of scholar Hirini Moko Mead (Ngāti Awa, Ngāti Tūwharetoa, Tūhourangi), the museum

---

<sup>83</sup> Matariki Williams, “Complicating the Narrative of ‘Oceania,’” *Frieze*, November 22, 2018, <https://www.frieze.com/article/complicating-narrative-oceania>.

<sup>84</sup> A related concept in a Samoan context is perhaps Tuagalu’s suggestion that objects can be “re-energised.” Tuagalu, “Gafa, Vā, History and the c.19th Sāmoan Energetical Worldview.”

<sup>85</sup> McKenzie, “A Challenge to Museums,” 79.

<sup>86</sup> Hinekura Lisa Smith, “Whatuora: Whatu Kākahu and Living as Māori Women” (PhD thesis, The University of Auckland, 2017), 75.

<sup>87</sup> *Te Aka Māori-English, English-Māori Dictionary and Index*, s.v. “whare tangata,” accessed March 17, 2024, <https://maoridictionary.co.nz/word/9347>.

<sup>88</sup> *Te Aka Māori-English, English-Māori Dictionary and Index*, s.v. “whare taonga,” accessed March 17, 2024, <https://maoridictionary.co.nz/word/10160>.

<sup>89</sup> Te Awekotuku, “Decolonising and Indigenising Museums.”

can also be a prison for taonga, locked within its walls as ethnological curiosities.<sup>90</sup> Given that, according to Hakiwai, the origins of museums in Aotearoa New Zealand are “based on European ideas, organizations and understanding of the world,”<sup>91</sup> it is unsurprising that the buildings constructed to house Indigenous treasures are unsuitable for the task. Te Awekotuku went on to ask, “how many Māori ventured into these cold, marble spaces anyway, and talked with them, with the taonga, with the works of their ancestors? Most preferred to stay home on the marae [courtyard] with the whare tupuna [meeting house] safely away from the trophy houses of dead people.”<sup>92</sup> Although insisting that museums must refuse to be implicated in ongoing colonisation if they are to have a successful future, Paul Tapsell suggested that “we can think of the museum as being a meeting place, like muriwai — where the fresh water meets the sea — like marae.”<sup>93</sup> What are the possibilities of a house or meeting place whose foremost aspiration is repair, in a space of confluence; where different cosmological and relational understandings come together?

## Whare and Fale

Whare whakairo (carved meeting houses) have been described by Te Awekotuku as the ultimate art gallery and museum,<sup>94</sup> by Maureen Lander (Ngāpuhi, Pākehā) as a library,<sup>95</sup> and by tohunga whakairo (master carver) Bernard Makoare (Ngāti Whātua, Te Roroa) as the universe.<sup>96</sup> According to the Ngāti Porou pūrākau of Ruatēpupuke, the origin of whare whakairo is in the depths of the ocean — the realm of the atua Tangaroa. Ruatēpupuke journeyed undersea in search of his missing son, finding him on the gable of the house of Tangaroa. Inside the whare, the posts were talking.<sup>97</sup> Architectural scholar Deidre Brown (Ngāpuhi, Ngāti Kahu) writes that whare whakairo, first built in the mid-19th century, “are often named after ancestors and considered to embody that person. The house is seen as an outstretched body, and can be addressed like a living being.”<sup>98</sup> Refiti notes that the Samoan

---

<sup>90</sup> Sidney Moko Mead, *Ngā Karoretanga o Mataatua Whare: The Wanderings of the Carved House Mataatua* (Whakatane: Te Runanga o Ngāti Awa, 1990), quoted in Arapata Tamati Hakiwai, “He Mana Taonga, He Mana Tangata,” 226.

<sup>91</sup> Hakiwai, “He Mana Taonga, He Mana Tangata,” 52.

<sup>92</sup> Te Awekotuku, “Decolonising and Indigenising Museums.”

<sup>93</sup> Paul Tapsell, “Decolonising and Indigenising Museums and Archives” (discussion at The Museum as Archive: Using the Past in the Present and Future Symposium, Centre for Research on Colonial Culture, University of Otago, Dunedin, held online, December 14–16, 2021).

<sup>94</sup> Te Awekotuku, “He Atamira a Huatau.”

<sup>95</sup> Makareta Janke and Maureen Lander, “Te Wero o Te Rangihiroa: Recreating a Rā” (presentation at the Toitū te Mātauranga, Toitū te Ao Toi Symposium, Waipapa Marae, University of Auckland, Auckland, November 24, 2022).

<sup>96</sup> Bernard Makoare, “Te Puna Mātauranga o te Toi Whakairo” (presentation at the Toitū te Mātauranga, Toitū te Ao Toi Symposium, Waipapa Marae, The University of Auckland, Auckland, November 24, 2022).

<sup>97</sup> Te Ahukaramū Charles Royal, “Tangaroa: The Sea; Ruatēpupuke and the Origin of Carving,” *Te Ara—The Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, last modified June 12, 2006, accessed November 10, 2022, <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/tangaroa-the-sea/page-4>.

<sup>98</sup> Deidre Brown, “Māori Architecture: Whare Māori,” *Te Ara—The Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, last modified October 22, 2014, accessed January 11, 2023, <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/maori-architecture-whare-maori>.

house is itself a measina,<sup>99</sup> the architecture of which “re-enacts the Samoan cosmos, the ancestral connection and separation of Papa and Lagi [procreator and progenitor].”<sup>100</sup> Refiti articulates the fale (Samoan house) as “a connector between people — first at the centre of the networks of the Samoan *nu’u* (village), where it performs the task of corralling, knotting and shaping the *vā* between the world of [humans] and their ancestor gods.”<sup>101</sup> Whare and fale both contain particular elements that embody cosmologies and whakapapa, and both connect the humans dwelling in them with the ancestral realm.

Pratt’s dictionary defines fale in these ways: a house, an umbrella; to dwell in, as if in a house.<sup>102</sup> I am particularly interested in Refiti’s interpretation of the fale as a sheltering cloak, for it bears a similarity to how I consider my digital ‘house’ for the Kronfeld Collection. Refiti explains that fale express the idea of kin gathered beneath a cover stretched over them. The notion of *fālō* (to stretch out) describes this act of “pulling a woven fabric over an area,” resembling a cloak that shelters and binds a kinship group. Further, it alludes to the effort required “for a community to maintain and observe the appropriate rituals that forges and articulates a cohesive group identity.”<sup>103</sup> The Kronfeld Collection is not a cohesive assemblage — its taonga, measina, and treasures came to be grouped together through the interests and relationships of the Kronfeld family. To house them is therefore not a straightforward task; it requires effort and, sometimes, struggle. Despite this, the aspiration to shelter and bind them prevails, and the research makes space for this struggle. In their respective homelands, whare and fale are both inextricably tied to land, and to particular genealogies and kinship structures. The use of ‘housing’ in the project does not imply a replication of these houses, even in a form so abstracted they are no longer whare or fale. Rather, in considering the ‘house’ in Māori and Samoan contexts, the importance of symbolism, the sacred, whakapapa or gafa, and our cosmologies come to the fore.

---

<sup>99</sup> Refiti, “Mavae and Tofiga,” 162.

<sup>100</sup> Refiti, “Mavae and Tofiga,” 11.

<sup>101</sup> Refiti, “Mavae and Tofiga,” ix.

<sup>102</sup> *A Grammar and Dictionary of the Samoan Language*, 3rd ed., s.v. “Fale.”

<sup>103</sup> Refiti, “Mavae and Tofiga,” 200.

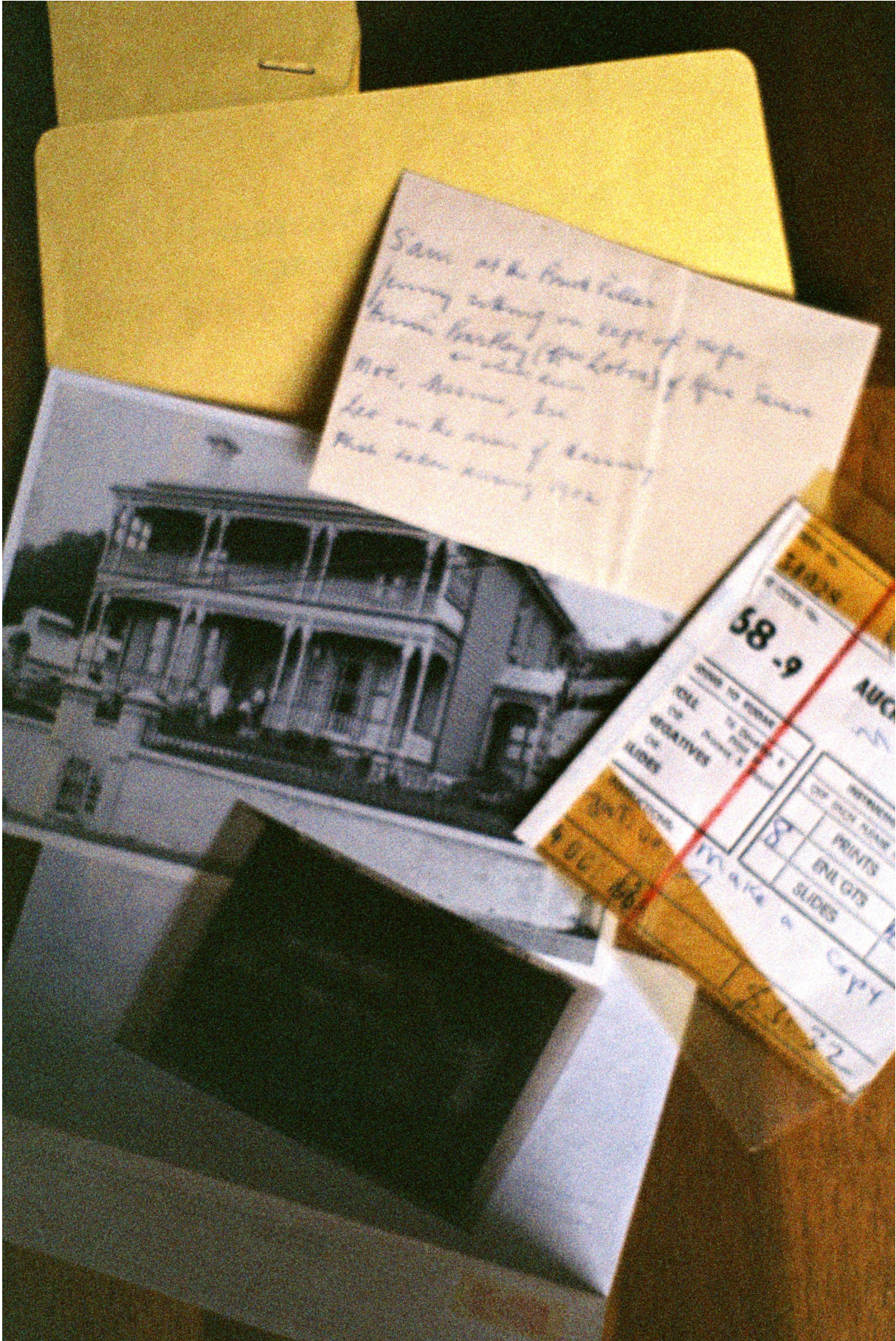


Figure 3. The contents of an envelope in my family's archive labelled "Oli Ula," 2024.

# The Practice

## A Tuitui Methodology

### Rationale

Systems of relation emerging from Moananui are the contexts in which this research occurs. These ecologies are paradigmatic and, in turn, inform the methodology. Shawn Wilson elucidates: “a paradigm is a set of underlying beliefs ... that guide our actions as researchers” and “how we go about gaining more knowledge about reality (methodology).”<sup>104</sup> From the outset of the research, I sought a practice-based methodology that would enable me to operate across multiple Moana cultures, which are reflected both in my whakapapa and in the Kronfeld Collection. It was vital for me to approach the research — often located in the museum — from an artistic perspective, rather than an anthropological one, and constructing my own methodology, I suspected, might keep me on my toes. As Wilson notes, “research is all about unanswered questions, but it also reveals our unquestioned answers,” and therefore we must continue “developing alternative ways of answering questions.”<sup>105</sup> During a supervision session, Refiti asked the thought-provoking question, whether I needed to make the art, or if this could be a purely written thesis. It brought to the fore that making art is how I process the world and reflect my understanding of it; how I bring together threads that I sense should be connected; how I connect with other entities on an emotional and spiritual level — in ways that I cannot achieve with words alone. Linking things together that are often viewed in isolation is the foundation of my practice. Furthermore, artistic practice has something to offer the museum field as it grapples with its colonial and imperial foundations. In the methodology section, I will illuminate the interrelation between tuitui, a woven universe, and the notion of repair through artistic practice, revealing how I seek answers to my questions (and question my answers).

### Linguistics

The word ‘tuitui’ has linguistic connections and a shared lineage across Moananui. In te reo Māori, ‘tuitui’ as a verb means “to lace, sew, thread on a string (repeatedly), bind,” and, as a noun, “lashing, sewing.”<sup>106</sup> In the context of making woven, patterned tukutuku panels, ‘tuitui’ refers to the passing of fibres through holes in the panel, often to a weaver on the other side.

---

<sup>104</sup> Wilson, *Research Is Ceremony*, 13.

<sup>105</sup> Wilson, *Research Is Ceremony*, 6.

<sup>106</sup> *Te Aka Māori-English, English-Māori Dictionary and Index*, s.v. “tuitui,” accessed March 17, 2024, <https://maoridictionary.co.nz/word/8666>.

In Edward Tregear's 1891 *Maori-Polynesian Comparative Dictionary*, some of the multiple definitions of 'tui' and 'tuitui' relate to sewing or threading: "tui, to prick, to sew, as clothes, to thread a needle" (also, "a beam running the length of a long house").<sup>107</sup> During a symposium discussion, I'uogafa Tuagalu and Hūfanga-He-Ako-Moe-Lotu 'Ōkusitino Māhina (Tonga) raised the occurrence of linguistic drift across the Moana: giving rise to variants such as 'tuitui' (te reo Māori), 'su'isu'i' (Samoan), and 'huihui' (Tongan). For this project, the reo Māori 'tuitui' is prioritised as the operative notion of sewing, threading, or binding together.<sup>108</sup> In the same symposium, Emma Powell (Atiu, Mangaia) and Miranda Johnson referred to the stitching together of an archive that complicates rather than segregates.<sup>109</sup> It is with this ethos — stitching together to enable complexity and multiplicity, confluence and divergence, rather than attempting to force a rigid alignment — that I approach both the research and the linguistics of a tuitui methodology.

## Stitching

I began thinking about the potential of tuitui as a practice-based methodology after reading Māori Marsden's account of his return to the whare wānanga after World War Two, in *The Woven Universe*. Explaining the potential of the atom bomb, Marsden relies on an understanding in the whare wānanga of the world as woven, rhythmical patterns of energy.<sup>110</sup> He is questioned by fellow tohunga, Toki Pāngari:

"Do you mean to tell me that the Pākehā scientists (tohunga Pākehā) have managed to rend the fabric (kahu) of the universe?" I said "Yes" "I suppose they shared their knowledge with the tūtūā (politicians)?" "Yes" "But do they know how to sew (tuitui) it back together again?"<sup>111</sup>

Mauri is the bonding element holding the fabric of the universe together.<sup>112</sup> Royal directs us to "pay attention to how this fabric is woven and the nature of our place within it."<sup>113</sup> Within this cosmological understanding, nurturing our systems of relation becomes essential, and the notion of tuitui becomes reparative. How, then, might we mend, reweave, or tuitui the relationships forming a fabric once ruptures have occurred? The project engages with the

---

<sup>107</sup> Edward Tregear, *The Maori-Polynesian Comparative Dictionary* (Wellington: Lyon & Blair, 1891), s.v. "Tui," s.v. "Tuitui."

<sup>108</sup> Kolokesa Uafā Māhina-Tuai, Albert L. Refiti, and I'uogafa Tuagalu, "Rethinking Time and Space" (discussion at The Museum as Archive: Using the Past in the Present and Future Symposium, Centre for Research on Colonial Culture, University of Otago, Dunedin, held online, December 14-16, 2021).

<sup>109</sup> Miranda Johnson and Miranda Powell, "Empire, Indigeneity and the Archive in the New Zealand Realm" (presentation at The Museum as Archive: Using the Past in the Present and Future Symposium, Centre for Research on Colonial Culture, University of Otago, Dunedin, held online, December 14-16, 2021).

<sup>110</sup> Marsden, quoted in Te Ahukaramū Charles Royal, editor's introduction to *Māori Marsden, The Woven Universe: Selected Writings of Rev. Māori Marsden*, ed. Te Ahukaramū Charles Royal (Ōtaki: Estate of Rev. Māori Marsden, 2003), xiii.

<sup>111</sup> Marsden, quoted in Royal, editor's introduction to Marsden, *The Woven Universe*, xiii.

<sup>112</sup> Marsden, *The Woven Universe*, 44.

<sup>113</sup> Royal, editor's introduction to Marsden, *The Woven Universe*, xiii.

understanding that everything is relational and has mauri — whether residing in the ocean, the forest, or a museum.

Artists and writers Natalie Robertson (Ngāti Porou, Clann Dhònnchaidh) and Cassandra Barnett (Raukawa, Pākehā) also connect Marsden’s woven universe with stitching and contemporary artistic practice. Robertson argues that “interweaving a practice of the eye with one of the hands connects camera arts with weaving through Māori understandings of a woven cosmological universe.”<sup>114</sup> Responding to Rachel Shearer’s sound artwork *Te Oro o te Ao*, Barnett compares the whakapapa of the work with “a very long thread, a thread she spins in her act of making.” Barnett posits that this thread is “perhaps what’s needed to stitch up the fabric of the universe as it now sits ... Shearer’s stitching process ... reminds me that commitment to a long process is what we need right now.”<sup>115</sup> Likewise, my attempts to restore the relations of the Kronfeld taonga, measina, and treasures will be a long-term concern. A tuitui methodology can guide me in spinning these reparative threads through making: writing, archival research, drawing, moving-image, and 3D rendering methods coming together to form new bodies of work.

Paul Tapsell shares the kōrero of an elder:

“*Tui* is an ancient weaving term that means to 'stitch'. The flight of the tui symbolises that stitching action.” (While speaking, the *koroua* [old man] ran his hand through the air following the flight of yet another tui while at the same time pretending to hold a needle). “The most successful orators on the *marae* are like the tui, they take all the different threads present, and stitch them together into a beautiful *korowai* [cloak]. The *tau* [ritual incantation]: Tui... tui... tui... tuia represents this.”<sup>116</sup>

Thus, Tapsell links the flight of tūi, stitching, and taonga from a Te Arawa perspective: “Each *taonga* represents a single genealogical thread, stitching sky to earth, *atua* to mortals, ancestor to descendant, generation to generation, in the descending pattern of the tui’s flight.”<sup>117</sup> This account links the feelings I had about stitching, whakapapa, and the fabric of the universe together, threaded through by the swooping and rising of a tūi. Tapsell then compares the flight of tūi to the way in which taonga briefly appear during ceremonies and hui on marae, before disappearing from sight once more, “sometimes for generations.”<sup>118</sup> While Tapsell applies the tūi metaphor to taonga that have remained within their kin group’s sphere of control, he likens taonga travelling outside of this sphere (such as those in the

---

<sup>114</sup> Natalie Robertson, “Nga Whatu-Ora: We the Living Are the Seeing Eyes of Our Sleeping Ancestors,” *Public* 27 no. 54 (Winter 2016): 144, [https://doi.org/10.1386/public.27.54.132\\_1](https://doi.org/10.1386/public.27.54.132_1).

<sup>115</sup> Cassandra Barnett, “Listen Your Way Home: Rachel Shearer’s *Te Oro o te Ao*,” *Ate Journal of Māori Art* 1 (2019): 37.

<sup>116</sup> Tapsell, “The Flight of Pareraututu,” 334.

<sup>117</sup> Tapsell, “The Flight of Pareraututu,” 335.

<sup>118</sup> Tapsell, “The Flight of Pareraututu,” 334.

Kronfeld Collection) to comets:<sup>119</sup> “one day they suddenly reappear, charged with the spiritual energy of past ancestors, returning home to their descendants in a blaze of rediscovery.”<sup>120</sup> Upon their return home, the taonga resume the flight of the tūi.<sup>121</sup>

Applying the language of stitching to fale, Albert L. Refiti proposes that the faletele “determines every family member’s point of orientation as if it is a link or loop into which one must direct one’s production, to be able to be threaded to the larger social structure of Samoa[n] society.”<sup>122</sup> The house is a dwelling place for manifestations of interconnectedness. Speaking at a 2022 Symposium at Waipapa Marae, Bernard Makoare pointed to tukutuku panels in the whare. He observed that the knots tied at the back, imbued with the knowledge of intimate hands, are the substance of tukutuku and, though out of sight, come together as a series of metaphors: “We are all knots that have been knotted by our previous generations and they are the knots that show patterns for future generations.”<sup>123</sup> From this, he shared two lessons: beautiful things are created by people working in relationship; we are the knots for now, and the hope is we do our work right.<sup>124</sup> Within a woven universe, taonga tuku iho (something handed down) like tukutuku can teach us about our place in it. They act as whetū, stars, as we attempt to navigate unknown waters. In the context of the Kronfeld Collection, the first knots were made by Gustav and Louisa, and each successive generation made their own. Their son, Sam, his daughter (my late grandmother), Tui, and my father, David, all held on to the family’s archive, making their own additions, so that I may glean from it what I will. I am now the knot, and I hope to tuitui a pattern for future generations in which the Kronfeld Collection is remembered, cared for, reconnected, and kept warm.

---

<sup>119</sup> Tapsell, “The Flight of Pareraututu,” 336.

<sup>120</sup> Tapsell, “The Flight of Pareraututu,” 339.

<sup>121</sup> Tapsell, “The Flight of Pareraututu,” 366.

<sup>122</sup> Refiti, “Mavae and Tofiga,” 196.

<sup>123</sup> Makoare, “Te Puna Mātauranga.”

<sup>124</sup> Makoare, “Te Puna Mātauranga.”

## Dwelling, Looping, Stitching

Barnett came to “the metaphor of housing or dwelling”<sup>125</sup> in relation to artworks through her doctoral research: faced with a methodological crisis, Barnett found that “a useful/productive approach [was] to ask what kind of subject the artwork houses ... *Who* does it give life to?”<sup>126</sup> What she found in the artworks was “a vibrant triumph of a self-sovereign life. Not the specimen exoticised and life-threatened by archiving, taxonomising, anthropologising, objectifying, hierarchicizing, rationalising practices, but the subject that has been vitally there all along.”<sup>127</sup> In a similar vein, this project seeks to defy museological practices, building a house that enlivens the systems of relation to which the taonga, measina, and treasures remain connected. In building a ‘home’ via her thesis, Barnett tried “to enact a practice of respect, reparation, affection.”<sup>128</sup> By speaking directly to the subjects housed within the artworks she wrote about, Barnett found herself “in conversation; connected, in an encounter, in a relationship.”<sup>129</sup> Speaking directly to the taonga, measina, and treasures has come instinctively to me, throughout the research, as I nurture relationships with them. Building a digital house in which they can be immersed not only offers the potential of enlivening their whakapapa or vā, but also a space of encounter with viewers.

The language of housing threads through descriptions of artistic practices that contextualise this practice-based project. For example, Barnett explains that in Rachel Shearer’s sound artwork, *Te Oro o te Ao*, the abstraction of customary practices (such as the karanga, the ceremonial call) “does not feel dangerous, nor diluting ... It feels like a mode of respectful emulation that, precisely *by* modifying that which it is reviving, at the same time erects loving walls that honour and protect what’s left safe inside them.”<sup>130</sup> This respectful approach to taonga *tuku iho* aligns with my own, and speaks to two aspects of the research: using contemporary moving-image technologies to work with customary objects; and balancing the sharing of *some* knowledge with leaving other knowledge concealed. Moving-image practice enables me to approach these concerns creatively, to reveal knowledge in layers, or through culturally specific filmic language and metaphor. These considerations are addressed by moving-image artists Natalie Robertson and Maree Mills (Ngāti Tūwharetoa, Ngāi Tahu). Robertson determines that “Māori digital media and moving image artists may shift across multiple language spaces ... locating their practices in a continuum of customary art forms, slipstreaming new media behind analogue.”<sup>131</sup> Mills’ video work *Pourewa: The Quest for Balance* (2006) is an example of this slipstreaming. Weaving “sacred chants and iconic

---

<sup>125</sup> Cassandra Barnett, “Kei Roto i Te Whare/On Housing” (paper presented at the St Paul St 2015 Curatorial Symposium: Practice, Place, Research, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, Auckland, August 21, 2015), 14, [https://stpaulst.ac.nz/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0003/14988/2015-Curatorial-Symposium-papers\\_ST-PAUL-St-Gallery.pdf](https://stpaulst.ac.nz/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/14988/2015-Curatorial-Symposium-papers_ST-PAUL-St-Gallery.pdf).

<sup>126</sup> Barnett, “Kei Roto i Te Whare,” 17.

<sup>127</sup> Barnett, “Listen Your Way Home,” 14.

<sup>128</sup> Barnett, “Kei Roto i Te Whare,” 26.

<sup>129</sup> Barnett, “Kei Roto i Te Whare,” 20.

<sup>130</sup> Barnett, “Listen Your Way Home,” 34.

<sup>131</sup> Robertson, “Nga Whatu-Ora,” 144.

landscapes, using the tools of digital non-linear video editing as a new form of textile,” Mills creates “a meeting place for the present constructed from the convergence of the ancient and modern understanding of how we have come to be where we are.”<sup>132</sup> Drawing on Mills, Robertson refers to Māori moving-image artists as “always on the move, engaging consciously and deliberately in creating new powerful stories of resilience. In being the living seeing eyes of our ancestors, we create new posts for the house, pou rewa, liquid posts, shimmering with these stories.”<sup>133</sup> Such meeting places, with their loving walls and glimmering supports, are the precedents for this research project: protective spaces to safely engage with taonga, measina, and treasures on spiritual and emotional levels.

Several prominent works and exhibitions engage with housing more literally. According to Bridget Reweti (Ngāti Ranginui, Ngāi Te Rangi) and Melanie Oliver (Pākehā), the curators of *Māori Moving Image: An Open Archive*, Lisa Reihana (Ngāpuhi, Ngāti Hine, Ngāi Tū) is a forerunner of Māori moving-image, who adapts diverse technologies to create sensuous works that represent Indigenous cosmologies and ways of seeing the world.<sup>134</sup> Mills, too, attributes the “nationwide interest in Maori ‘new media art’” (or, the “magical digital world”)<sup>135</sup> to Reihana’s body of work.<sup>136</sup> *Digital Marae* (1995), particularly, “creates a virtual whareniui [meeting house] that suggests a shifting meeting place for Māori.”<sup>137</sup> It operates fluidly in the time spiral: atua and takatāpui<sup>138</sup> figures form the ‘pou’ in this meeting house, embodied imaginings of our pūrākau. According to Mills, “Reihana suggests that displacement from the homeland ... could be somehow softened by recalling it, recreating and sharing it in a virtual manifestation.”<sup>139</sup> Similarly, Barnett writes about Shearer’s work: “If you’re looking for home, just listen. Feel the sounds building upon themselves like strata, like whakapapa.”<sup>140</sup> My intentions for the Collection mirror such imaginings. While many, if not all, of the taonga, measina, and treasures will remain in the museum indefinitely, my work strives to soothe their displacement through immersing their digital forms in their systems of relation; the light, rhythms, and sounds of home.

---

<sup>132</sup> Maree Mills, “Pou Rewa: The Liquid Post, Māori Go Digital?” *Third Text* 23, no. 3 (May 2009): 249, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09528820902954879>.

<sup>133</sup> Robertson, “Nga Whatu-Ora,” 144.

<sup>134</sup> Melanie Oliver and Bridget Reweti, “A Celebration of Māori Moving Image,” in *Māori Moving Image*, ed. Melanie Oliver and Bridget Reweti (Christchurch: Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū, 2022), 8; Melanie Oliver, Lisa Reihana, and Bridget Reweti, “Lisa Reihana,” in *Māori Moving Image*, ed. Melanie Oliver and Bridget Reweti (Christchurch: Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū, 2022), 49.

<sup>135</sup> Mills, “Pou Rewa,” 242.

<sup>136</sup> Mills, “Pou Rewa,” 241.

<sup>137</sup> Mills, “Pou Rewa,” 243.

<sup>138</sup> Takatāpui are “Māori who identify with diverse sexes, genders, and sexualities.” Elizabeth Kerekere, *Growing Up Takatāpui: Whānau Journeys* (Auckland: Tiwhanawhana Trust and RainbowYOUTH, 2017), 2.

<sup>139</sup> Maree Mills, “Contemporary Māori Women’s New Media Art Practice,” in *The Aotearoa Digital Arts Reader*, ed. Su Ballard and Stella Brennan (Auckland: Aotearoa Digital Arts and Clouds, 2008), 78.

<sup>140</sup> Barnett, “Listen Your Way Home,” 36.



**Figure 4.** Lissy and Rudy Robinson-Cole, *Wharenui Harikoa*, 2023. Sam Hartnett. Courtesy of the artists.

Three preoccupations of the project, housing, stitching, and repair, come together in *Wharenui Harikoa* (2023) — a sculpted and crocheted wharenui created by Lissy Robinson-Cole (Ngāti Hine, Ngāti Kahu), Rudy Robinson-Cole (Ngāti Paoa, Waikato, Ngāruahine, Te Arawa), and their collaborators. It shares purpose and feeling with its woven, carved, and painted forebears: within the neon walls is the collective embrace of atua, tīpuna, and pūrākau. During a visit to the wharenui in July 2023, Rudy shared that the process of constructing the work held intergenerational healing and deeply felt joy. Every being became connected by the crochet loop. *Wharenui Harikoa* is a striking example of a contemporary expression of ancient knowledge and Indigenous worldviews; of a culture not static or frozen, but ever-changing and open to an abundance of creative forms. Unravelling the separation of ‘traditional’ and ‘contemporary,’ Rudy consults and carves with kaumātua; Lissy enters a space similar to te whare pora when she crochets. Typical elements of a wharenui are there, recognisable in form and purpose. As Lissy explained, their wharenui connects to the past (through memories of crocheting nannies); we inhabit it in the present; it looks to the future (through the colours, lights, and dreams stitched throughout). With the UV lights switched on, *Wharenui Harikoa* changes in a transporting, otherworldly way, reminiscent of rituals and presences associated with te ao Māori. The UV lights echo Lissy’s ancestors’ use of phosphorescence in ocean voyaging. Lissy and Rudy are themselves navigators: they have undertaken a journey of intergenerational healing guided by their tīpuna, using brightly coloured wool, trippy lights, and a single crochet stitch throughout the whole wharenui. Quite literally, *Wharenui Harikoa* is a house stitched for the restoration of relations, as I intend the cosmospheres to be.



**Figure 5.** *Digging at the roots* (from *Moana Calling Me Home*), 2020, single-channel video/audio.

Louisa and her sister are posed in front of the building that formerly housed the convent school they grew up in.

# Sites of Research and Practice

Early in the research, a relation of stitching to whakapapa and vā emerged in my poetic writing practice. This prompted me to develop a tuitui methodology for its reparative ethos and capacity to hold layering and looping techniques integral to both my writing and moving-image practices, which I conceive of as threading loops through space/time. Space and time in Moananui worldviews are not distinct, nor is time conceived as linear. Tuitui enables a spiralling space/time; like a sewn line, which may *appear* linear. In actuality, the thread makes loops, travelling backwards in order to move forward, binding layers together. This experience of space/time can also be found in the archive, a significant site of research that propels my moving-image practice.

## The Archive

Discoveries (or gaps) in the archive generate artworks that, in turn, contribute knowledge back into it. This occurs through returning to important familial places to video and audio record; constructing narrative voiceover with the words of my ancestors that were taped by another generation with foresight; or storying my own experiences of searching in the archive, digitally tracing photographs and documents to layer over moving-images. Such artworks arise from both labyrinthine and thrilling processes of searching for clues, following hunches, and gleaning whatever gems I can find. Lana Lopesi describes the body of moving-image work created as part of my Master's degree research, *Moana Calling Me Home* (2020),<sup>141</sup> as “the latest piece of the Kronfeld Collection, a piece that adds a whole new perspective to what is already stored as part of the official history.”<sup>142</sup> Already then, I suspected that I was at the beginning of my journey with the treasures. For the present project, I undertook a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the Kronfeld Collection in the Auckland Museum, supported by documents, correspondence, and photographs residing at home with my family. I picked up where generations before me left off. Tracing the etymology of ‘archaic’ (arcane, ache), Natalie Robertson remarked that “the ache in the archive is like lost love for someone you’re yet to meet ... You imagine that someone deep in the past has written something that will explain everything, connect the unconnected. The archive activates academic ancestral agency.”<sup>143</sup> It is the *possibility* of discovery, of answers to questions I have long held about my family, that draws me to the archive like the ocean to the moon.

---

<sup>141</sup> Emily Parr, *Moana Calling Me Home*, 2020, single-channel video/audio.

<sup>142</sup> Lopesi, “Moana Cosmopolitan Imaginaries,” 79.

<sup>143</sup> Natalie Robertson, “Netting in the Archives, Netting in the River: Enmeshments between the Archival ‘Catch’ and Waiapu Kōkā Hūhua” (presentation at the The Museum as Archive: Using the Past in the Present and Future Symposium, Centre for Research on Colonial Culture, University of Otago, Dunedin, held online, December 14–16, 2021).

The archive takes many forms, not only those stored in hushed rooms of stone buildings with cool air and optimum humidity. Literary scholar Alice Te Punga Somerville (Te Āti Awa, Taranaki) explains that an archive “is just as likely to be in a wardrobe, cupboard or meetinghouse ... places where things, people and ideas come together.”<sup>144</sup> As historian and researcher Leone Samu Tui (Sāmoa, Ngāti Kahungunu ki Wairarapa) points out, archives “hold different knowledge strengths and absences according to the origins of their assemblage.”<sup>145</sup> Regarding the fale fono, the space in which chiefs formally meet, Lopesi observes that, “as the sand, wind and sun stream in through the open architecture, it is the only space in which that deep genealogical and political knowledge is accessible,” even if only to “an elite few,” in brief windows of time. Once the oratory exchanges are over and everyone departs, “the space is physically empty, with the knowledge limited to the embodiment of the chiefs. This living, breathing archive sits in stark contrast to written knowledge collecting dust in airtight bunkers.”<sup>146</sup> Whare or fale can be an archive, as can the body — a place where knowledge and memory are stored.

Access is a nuanced territory: some knowledge is not for everyone (for example, whakapapa or gafa). This is accepted within Indigenous cultures, but barriers to accessing material relating to your own cultural heritage or family is a different matter. Samu Tui addresses the “significance of being able to freely pursue the interactions, messages and connections found in archival taonga” in her former role at Auckland Museum, and wonders, “if I’d personally not seen these before, how known were they to wider Pacific communities?”<sup>147</sup> Gaining access and mentorship at Auckland Museum in May 2022, through an Auckland Museum Institute Postgraduate Scholarship, significantly altered the trajectory of my project. I spent many hours in strange corners of the Museum, grateful for the records I could search while simultaneously asking myself similar questions to Samu Tui. If I required a password, key, and the support of curators to help me locate material related to my family’s collection, how could others manage? Further, I came across several errors and missing pieces of information that I could remedy through familial knowledge, evidencing the reciprocal benefits of providing archival access to descendants.

Samu Tui also comments on the limitations of content management systems used by museums, noting that Indigenous knowledge can often only be ‘seeded’ into these systems through free text fields: “small rectangular boxes offering least resistance.”<sup>148</sup> Recounting a process of surfacing Pacific material, she remarks that there was “all this raw richness, but you wouldn’t know it from the record.”<sup>149</sup> If museum records do not hold adequate

---

<sup>144</sup> Alice Te Punga Somerville, “‘I Do Still Have a Letter’: Our Sea of Archives,” in *Sources and Methods in Indigenous Studies*, ed. Chris Andersen and Jean M. O’Brien (Abingdon: Routledge, 2017), 121.

<sup>145</sup> Leone Samu Tui, “Open Access,” *Marinade: Aotearoa Journal of Moana Art*, no. 1 (2022): 20.

<sup>146</sup> Lana Lopesi, “Your Non-Archivable, Our Archival Assemblage, a Samoan Perspective,” in *Uneven Bodies (Reader)*, ed. Ruth Buchanan et al. (Ngāmotu New Plymouth: Govett-Brewster Art Gallery, 2021), 96.

<sup>147</sup> Samu Tui, “Open Access,” 17.

<sup>148</sup> Lopesi, “Your Non-Archivable, Our Archival Assemblage,” 28.

<sup>149</sup> Samu Tui, “Open Access,” 25.

information about their collections, it becomes necessary to encounter the treasures themselves. Ngarino Ellis shared that when she visits museums, she looks to the taonga before the record, which is almost always incorrect.<sup>150</sup> When treasures remain steadfastly at the centre of archival research, however, the desire to do right by them overcomes the frustration of insufficient records, stoking the embers of curiosity and responsibility. As Tamu Sui reminds us, “there are many barriers to archival access, visible and invisible, but courageous searching leads to measina that are waiting and are glad to be found again.”<sup>151</sup> Determined searches do, sometimes, lead to discoveries.<sup>152</sup>

While my practice traverses different forms of the archive (including the familial and bodily), the primary research site is Auckland Museum. Beginning in 1852, the collections reflect an era of settler-colonisation in Aotearoa and imperialism across Moana Oceania. The Appendix “Into the Archive: Reflections from the Museum” journals tensions and wonders of operating within the museum, demonstrating the scholarly context of the archive through practice. Narungga writer Natalie Harkin speaks to these tensions: “The archive is at odds with itself, functioning through a paradoxical logic. It is both sacred space *and* colonial object; it drives us to both recover *and* preserve the past; it protects *and* patrols.”<sup>153</sup> While researching her family in South Australia’s Aboriginal records, Harkin developed archival-poetics as a way of reckoning with the violence of the colonial archive. She writes, “I unintentionally re-created and became stuck in the very thing I was interrogating: the archive box. The only way to unbind myself was to write poetry and weave my way out.”<sup>154</sup> I also found that I had to write my way through the archive, as much to process my discomfort as to commit my experiences to a form of memory, cognisant that I would be adding to this palimpsestic archive.

Through Epeli Hau’ofa and Māori poet Evelyn Patuawa-Nathan’s texts, Te Punga Somerville argues for “assuming Indigenous presence and proximity rather than focusing on distance and loss”<sup>155</sup> in the archive. Extending Hau’ofa’s thinking about islands to archives, she suggests that, if we conceive of them as “scattered ... we risk not noticing the many forms of connection between them.”<sup>156</sup> Similarly, Samu Tui advocates for the possibility of surfacing Indigenous contributions where we might not expect them, for instance, in anthropological texts at Auckland Museum: “While European writers’ names might be on the spines of these

---

<sup>150</sup> Ngarino Ellis, “Ngā Taonga o Wharawhara: The World of Māori Body Adornment and Art History” (presentation at the Toitū te Mātauranga, Toitū te ao Toi symposium, Waipapa Marae, The University of Auckland, Auckland, November 24, 2022).

<sup>151</sup> Samu Tui, “Open Access,” 27.

<sup>152</sup> See the section, “The Hoe Parāoa and Te Tōga.”

<sup>153</sup> Natalie Harkin, “The Poetics of (Re)Mapping Archives: Memory in the Blood,” *Journal of the Association for the Study of Australian Literature* 14, no. 3 (October 2014): 10, <https://openjournals.library.sydney.edu.au/JASAL/article/view/9909>.

<sup>154</sup> Natalie Harkin, “Weaving the Colonial Archive: A Basket to Lighten the Load,” *Journal of Australian Studies* 44, no. 2 (May 2020): 154, <https://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14443058.2020.1754276>.

<sup>155</sup> Somerville, “I Do Still Have a Letter,” 121.

<sup>156</sup> Somerville, “I Do Still Have a Letter,” 122.

texts, Indigenous knowledge sourced from the true knowledge-holders are still in these works, a couple of layers deep.”<sup>157</sup> If those of us with a duty of care to collections were to dismiss institutional archives for their inadequacy, we might miss opportunities to find our ancestors and our treasures in them. We would potentially also reinforce an erasure of the contributions our Indigenous ancestors made to these archives.

Te Punga Somerville suggests that “if you believe in coincidences, archives are full of them. If you don’t believe in coincidence, as I happen not to, archives are full of interactions, messages, connections.”<sup>158</sup> In *Reflections from the Museum*, I repeatedly reference an attunement to such happenings, which I fostered while fossicking in record rooms and wandering the Museum’s halls. Like Samu Tui, I believe that “the encounter between archival treasure and a viewer is powerful, sometimes even physiologically affecting ... it can also be considered a sacred, spiritual experience.”<sup>159</sup> There is much more to be found in archives than catalogues are able to reveal. While researching, I often think of Robertson’s notion of ‘tīpuna guidance.’ Robertson shared a story of photographing the notebooks of anthropologist Te Rangihīroa (Ngāti Mutunga) in the archival rooms of the Bishop Museum (Hawai‘i). She felt his nearness — “no spooky haunting” — rather, a collaboration between tīpuna rangahau (research ancestors) and Robertson, carrying on his work. She describes this as “the time-space portal that we slip through in museums — entry points into the thoughts of other generations that create circuits with future ancestors.”<sup>160</sup> I view Auckland Museum’s archives similarly: I slip into a continuum of ancestral relationships and responsibilities, while time spirals coil and unfurl from the depths of the building to the outside world. Colonial and sacred, past and future, erasure and rediscovery, all at once.

### **Moving-Image Practice**

I express my understanding of the world through moving-image artwork. Stitching elements (media, stories, knowledge) together to make connections between things I feel are related, I bring my imaginings into being. Maree Mills notes that the intersection between digital media art practices and te ao Māori “suggests that the two worlds are complementary.”<sup>161</sup> Robertson reinforces this harmonious relationship by noting that, within a woven cosmological universe, “genealogies connect phenomena and people. New technologies become absorbed into this realm of interconnectedness.”<sup>162</sup> Both artists assert that Māori

---

<sup>157</sup> Samu Tui, “Open Access,” 20.

<sup>158</sup> Somerville, “I Do Still Have a Letter,” 123.

<sup>159</sup> Samu Tui, “Open Access,” 26.

<sup>160</sup> Robertson, “Netting in the Archives.”

<sup>161</sup> Mills, “Contemporary Māori Women’s New Media Art Practice,” 76.

<sup>162</sup> Robertson, “Nga Whatu-Ora,” 144.

practitioners have long explored and embraced new tools through which to communicate ancient practices, values, and ways of seeing.<sup>163</sup> Mills elaborates:

Video installation ... can be used to explore non-linear time, physical space, emotion, spirituality and symbolism concurrently or in specific relationships. An example of this conceptual suitability can be seen in the Maori paradigm of *mauri* ... a view that regards the social, natural, sexual and spiritual as parts of an interrelated whole. This is why I contend that the process of creating *taonga* ... specific to Maori cosmology, cosmogeny and philosophy, in this medium, is a pathway in the continued quest for the celebration and understanding of Maori Culture.<sup>164</sup>

Indigenous moving-image artists create from within systems of relation, expressing cosmological understandings of relationships that make up the world. Non-linear time is a shared element of these understandings. Writer and curator Nina Tonga (Tonga) proposes that the moving-image loop is “a continuum with no distinct beginning or end, where the past, present and future have no boundaries. As moving image works loop back and play again, their repetition creates infinite opportunities for decolonisation and change.”<sup>165</sup> Like Tonga, I believe in, and am enthralled by, the infinite potential of moving-image in a woven universe. My practice is situated in a field of (primarily) Indigenous moving-image artists who have grown the space in which the research project resides. The development of my practice and methodology is intended to contribute to this expansive, generative medium.

---

<sup>163</sup> Robertson, “Nga Whatu-Ora,” 135–6; Mills, “Pou Rewa,” 244.

<sup>164</sup> Mills, “Pou Rewa.”

<sup>165</sup> Nina Tonga, “Looping through Time and Space: Observations of Māori Moving Image Out in the World,” in *Māori Moving Image*, ed. Melanie Oliver and Bridget Reweti (Christchurch: Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū, 2022), 87.



Figure 6. Through the Time Spiral: 'Oli 'Ula, 2021, single-channel video/audio.



Figure 7. Through the Time Spiral: 'Oli 'Ula, 2021, single-channel video/audio.

# Exploratory Works

## *Through the Time Spiral*

It is crucial to assess the role of time in understanding *vā* ... This mode of time has—as Charles Royal, Brett Graham ... and Anne Salmond have indicated in our discussions about *wā*—the form of a double helix spiral. Thus, the *takarangi* (Māori double spiral) is a visual representation of a dimensional system from which we can access all other pasts and presents as we travel through time, and an image corresponding with the ever-moving-present that Wendt pinned to his exposition of the *vā* in 1996.<sup>166</sup>

In May 2021, in written reflections on how I *felt* the world, and the influence of scholarly material I was engaging with, I began describing my experience of time as spiralling. During this period, Arielle Walker (Taranaki, Ngāruahine, Ngāpuhi, Pākehā) and I were exchanging videos and written notes, alternating each day. Together, they became a moving-image work following one lunar cycle. Filming the Waitematā from a pier, I opened with the reflection: “When I see time, I see endless circles looping in on each other and spiralling outwards; a great big reverberating ocean of them.”<sup>167</sup> Twelve moons later, I continued:

I followed the path of the Horotiu again this evening, to where Te Wai Ariki emerges. Before this was a carpark it was where [the Kronfeld] family lived. Earlier still it was near to a headland, Te Rerenga-Ora-Iti, quarried to make some of that ‘reclaimed’ land along the waterfront. There will be many more layers to this whenua, unknowable to us. The waters and the *taniwha* — beneath the concrete, the skyscrapers, the commuters — *they* are the time spirals.<sup>168</sup>

These reflections, as well as upcoming exhibitions and a desire to anchor archival research with artworks and test a methodological ‘stitching,’ prompted the moving-image series, *Through the Time Spiral* (2021–2022). The resulting works seek to meet my ancestors in the spiral, and also imagine that place-specific spirals can be entered through a portal.

Between August and November 2021, I made *Through the Time Spiral: ‘Oli ‘Ula*, an artwork for a recess in the Gus Fisher Gallery that once housed a telephone booth. I was excited by the challenge of ‘reconstructing’ a house that no longer exists through a moving-image work. Firstly, I searched the Kronfeld book for every description of ‘Oli ‘Ula (the family’s home, which formerly stood on Eden Crescent, just along from the Gallery).<sup>169</sup> I assembled Moe

---

<sup>166</sup> Refiti, “Vā Atoa.”

<sup>167</sup> Emily Parr and Arielle Walker, *tōu tauira me tōu kaiako hoki*, 2021, iPhone video.

<sup>168</sup> Parr and Walker, *tōu tauira*.

<sup>169</sup> Tony Kronfeld, *Gustav and Louisa Kronfeld: Some Notes Prepared by Their Grandson* (Waikanae: self-pub., 1992).



Figure 8. *Through the Time Spiral: Te Muri I*, 2022, single-channel video/audio.



Figure 9. *Through the Time Spiral: Te Muri II*, 2022, single channel of three-channel video/audio.

and Tony Kronfeld's richly detailed memories into a 'walk-through' of the house, with my recorded narration as the guide.<sup>170</sup> I shifted their words into the present tense so that the listener(s) and I could 'arrive' at a moment from any time, evoking the sense that these stories were unfolding all at once. I then filmed around the former site of 'Oli 'Ula and layered digital drawings of archival photographs and documents onto the moving-images. The work was installed alongside two peripheral works that extend on sequences in 'Oli 'Ula (*Telegrams* and *Letter*).

I made the second work in the series in January–February 2022, for an online exhibition, *This side or that side, or almost. Standing by.*, curated by Layne Waerea (Te Arawa, Ngāti Kahungunu, Pākehā) and Mark Harvey (Ngāti Toa, Ngāti Raukawa, Clan Keith) for CIRCUIT Artist Moving Image. *Through the Time Spiral: Te Muri I* is located at Te Muri, and recalls summer camping trips the Kronfelds made to the bay. Constructed similarly to 'Oli 'Ula, the voiceover is assembled from memories written in the Kronfeld book, bookended by my own words. Digital drawings of archival photographs (from the collections of my family and Andrea Low) are layered onto moving-images. Compared to my earlier works, there is a departure in the relationship between drawing and moving-image: I place the drawn figures in situ, like figures in a photograph, rather than simply layering them with no spatial considerations. This relationship is particularly necessary in *Through the Time Spiral: Te Muri II*, as the drawn ancestors are placed beside me, my father, and my brother, recorded in the moving-image. It is the first work I have made that includes living relatives. My father and I look into the camera, as our drawn counterparts do while posing for their photographs. The work, without a voiceover, functions as moving-image portraits.

While *Through the Time Spiral* differs significantly from later works that 'house' the Kronfeld Collection, the series is relevant for its experimentation with methods and concepts that provided useful practice-based foregrounding. They required delving into the archive and considering how the material might be used differently than in *Moana Calling Me Home* (2020). Most importantly, I began to develop a tuitui methodology through these works. In 'Oli 'Ula, Te Wai Ariki is the 'portal' for the spiral, the image from which the work enters and exits the house. I looped the work, so that it meets at 'beginning' and 'end' — so there is no beginning or end — referencing circular or spiralling time. In my practice, editing is a process of connecting/linking/binding/stitching multiple elements together: moving-images, drawings of archival material, sound, and narrative voiceover. The voiceovers of 'Oli 'Ula and *Te Muri I* are assembled from memories and stories from multiple people, and the works traverses multiple times and locations. Stitched together, these elements summon the echo of a house, or the apparition of a 20<sup>th</sup> century camping trip. When filming, I consider the camera to be an extension of myself; this is, primarily, how I am present in my works. *Te Muri II* is more explicit about the simultaneous presence of myself, my family, and our ancestors in the time spiral.

---

<sup>170</sup> This offered a departure from *Moana Calling Me Home* (2020), in which the voiceover was fully my 'voice', my words.



**Figure 10.** *and so we find them all over the universe now, 2023, clay, cotton, and stainless steel.*

***and so we find them all over the universe now***

In early 2023, I was commissioned by Britomart Group to create an artwork for an external recess on the Kronfeld Building, Gustav's warehouse constructed on Customs Street East in 1904. The lettering G KRONFELD (which could be seen by vessels approaching the port) is still faintly visible today. The building, and its original name, were recently restored. I wanted to celebrate the presence of a family with Samoan roots, who had been a lively and flourishing part of downtown Auckland. I decided to make a sculptural 'ula, or necklace, for several reasons. Firstly, to acknowledge the significance of the 'oli flower garland to the Kronfeld family, given it was the name Gustav and Louisa chose for their home, 'Oli 'Ula. Secondly, given I had been experimenting with a su'ifefiloi methodology<sup>171</sup> for some time, I felt it was important to experience making a garland, rather than only understanding it metaphorically.<sup>172</sup> While the artwork I made is by no means a typical Samoan flower garland, it reflects my relationship with my gafa — one of learning and reconnecting where I can, through the people, places, and practices in my orbit. As Refiti notes, su'ifefiloi "is a method that accommodates the melding together of diverse parts in a way that is sympathetic to the cobbling-together of identities in realising a diasporic Pasifika community."<sup>173</sup> The hand-moulded ceramic beads evoke organic forms from Sāmoa: seed pods, shells, sand, stones, and coral. The laser cut red cotton brings ethnobotanical descriptions of the 'oli flower into being.

The third reason I chose to make an 'ula was that it gave me an opportunity to include the whole family. Every Kronfeld descendant is strung onto the garland, as a bead or flower.<sup>174</sup> The flowers represent Gustav, Louisa, and their children, and the different bead forms represent different generations: there are seven generations, 12 flowers, and 225 beads (including one for all those yet to come). In order to ensure everyone was included, I reached out to other branches of the family to update the 1989 family tree. The artwork takes its name from a reflection by my great-grandfather, Sam, on the familial network extending from Sāmoa to the world. Making the 'ula was another medium through which to develop a tuitui methodology: in this case, the stitching was happening between family members, igniting an existing network of connections and forging new ones. Growing and nurturing relationships with other descendants — restoring the relations — was intrinsic to making the work. The Kronfeld family is woven into the fabric of Tāmaki Makaurau, and with the 'ula hanging below our resurfaced name, our story is illuminated once more.

---

<sup>171</sup> See Emily Parr, "The Ocean Is Calling Me Home: Settler-Indigenous Relationships of Te Moananui a Kiwa" (master's thesis, Auckland University of Technology, 2020), 36-38, <http://hdl.handle.net/10292/13699>.

<sup>172</sup> Su'ifefiloi refers to the threading of a mixture of flowers into a necklace. Lana Lopesi describes a similar discomfort in using a su'ifefiloi methodology without personally engaging in the practice of 'ula making. This led her to instead base her research on the metaphor of 'ula lole' (lolly lei). Lopesi, "Moana Cosmopolitan Imaginaries," 43-43.

<sup>173</sup> Refiti, "Mavae and Tofiga," 8.

<sup>174</sup> One of the beads represents my aunt Deirdre, who passed away while I was making them. Moulding the clay with my hands allowed me to process her final days, while thinking about the myriad of ways she held onto Kronfeld connections (particularly as my nana Tui's caregiver) and brought people together. She embodied 'tuitui,' and the 'ula is dedicated to her.



**Figure 11.** 'Ie tōga, 2020. Auckland War Memorial Museum Tāmaki Paenga Hira, 1987.700, 52588.

# Part Two

## The Houses

Part Two engages two ‘houses’ that ground the project, ‘Oli ‘Ula and the museum. The first house, ‘Oli ‘Ula, was built by the Kronfeld family in 1902, and named for a garland of sweet-scented red flowers from the ‘oli tree.<sup>175</sup> The villa became the centre of the Kronfelds’ orbit, drawing treasures and people into relation within its walls. The taonga, measina, and treasures that once circulated throughout Moana Oceania came to stillness, although surrounded by the lively cosmopolitan world of the family. The home accommodated ten children and guests from Moananui, including the princess of Tonga, Sālote Tupou III, who lived with the family during her early teenage years (and continued to send them gifts for the remainder of her life). The relations that converged in ‘Oli ‘Ula are detailed in the Appendix “Into the Archive: The Kronfelds.”

The second house, the museum, is also a place of convergence. While most of the Collection resides in Te Papa, this research has mainly occurred in Auckland Museum. Another thread in my ancestral legacies runs through the latter: my maternal great-great-uncle, Hugh Cresswell Grierson, was one of the architects who designed the present-day Museum, opened and consecrated in 1929.<sup>176</sup> The Museum’s neoclassical façade stands prominently atop Pukekawa, the volcanic cone of the Auckland Domain, offered to the Lieutenant-Governor by Ngāti Whātua in 1840.<sup>177</sup> Peeling back the Pākehā (European) histories overlaying Pukekawa, curator and historian Lucy Mackintosh reflects that monuments like Auckland Museum often “appear as autonomous structures separate from the evolving world around them; fixed in time and place. If, however, the Museum is approached as part of a web of historical connections ... it becomes part of a more expansive and complicated story about Auckland.”<sup>178</sup> The research is also interested in the complex relations threading through the museum that may coalesce within it, but extend omnidirectionally through space/time beyond its physical structure. The experiences and discoveries that prompted shifts in my thinking about the role of the museum — and the power of treasures housed within — are storied in the Appendix “Into the Archive: Reflections from the Museum.”

---

<sup>175</sup> In addition to necklace or garland, the word ‘ula can mean ‘red,’ the sacred colour of Tagaloa. According to Refiti, the fale‘ula, the house of traditions and stories, “was the first house built in Lagi ... to house the sacred objects belonging to Tagaloa-a-lagi.” Refiti, “Mavae and Tofiga,” 53.

<sup>176</sup> Auckland War Memorial Museum, “The History of Auckland Museum,” accessed May 18, 2022, <https://www.aucklandmuseum.com/your-museum/about/history-of-auckland-museum>.

<sup>177</sup> Lucy Mackintosh, *Shifting Grounds: Deep Histories of Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland* (Wellington: Bridget Williams Books, 2021), 47.

<sup>178</sup> Mackintosh, *Shifting Grounds*.



**Figure 12.** 'Oli 'Ula, number 9 Eden Crescent, 1902. Digital scan from original 120mm film negative. Kronfeld/Parr collection. L-R: Sam and Jenny Kronfeld, Annie Bartley (from Sāmoa), Moe, Minna, Isi, Leo, and Manny Kronfeld.

# ‘Oli ‘Ula: “A House like a Museum”

## Collecting in a Context of Empire Expansion

The Kronfeld Collection was gathered between the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as European empires expanded throughout Moana Oceania. During this period, many of the taonga, measina, and treasures that now make up the Collection were removed from their systems of relation: whether purchased, traded, or gifted, they travelled to ‘Oli ‘Ula. Through the research, I retrace its movements to understand the contexts in which it was assembled. When Gustav arrived in Sāmoa in 1876, Europeans had long set their eyes upon Moana Oceania. Sociologist George Steinmetz notes that “the modern European penetration of the Pacific took the form of official voyages of naval and scientific exploration with a barely concealed colonizing mission.”<sup>179</sup> Linda Tuhiwai Smith (Ngāti Awa, Ngāti Porou) argues that the European imperialism that proliferated from the fifteenth century was “a system of control to secure new markets and capital investments, an expansion facilitated by colonialism” that necessarily required the “exploitation and subjugation of indigenous peoples.”<sup>180</sup> Beyond a material drive for the acquisition of resources, this expansion was linked to “the Enlightenment spirit” taking hold in Europe. ‘Explorers,’ missionaries, traders and others left their shores, propelled by an imperial imagination that “enabled European nations to imagine the possibility that new worlds, new wealth and new possessions existed that could be discovered and controlled. This imagination was realized through the promotion of science, economic expansion and political practice.”<sup>181</sup> The islands of Moana Oceania, subjected to the power grabs of European nations for centuries, were renamed, traded, annexed, extracted, converted; divided or grouped incongruously. The ramifications of this period are deeply etched into museums around the world today. Every absence or discontinuity<sup>182</sup> associated with a treasure shows up in relief, as evidence.

---

<sup>179</sup> George Steinmetz, *The Devil’s Handwriting: Precoloniality and the German Colonial State in Qingdao, Samoa, and Southwest Africa*, Chicago Studies in Practices of Meaning (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2007), 245.

<sup>180</sup> Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, 2nd ed. (Dunedin: Otago University Press, 2012), 22.

<sup>181</sup> Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies*, 23.

<sup>182</sup> On discontinuities, see Andrea Low, “In a Room, in a House, on an Island, in an Ocean,” *Waka Kuaka: The Journal of the Polynesian Society* 133, no. 1 (2024): 9–14, <https://doi.org/10.15286/jps.133.1.9-14>.

## Origins of Private Collections

If imperialism is intimately connected with the Enlightenment, then private collecting is their mutual friend. Smith argues that the Enlightenment “provided the spirit, the impetus, the confidence, and the political and economic structures that facilitated the search for new knowledges ... knowledge and culture were as much part of imperialism as raw materials and military strength. Knowledge was also there to be discovered, extracted, appropriated and distributed.”<sup>183</sup> Further, she proposes that “while imperialism is often thought of as a system which drew everything back into the centre, it was also a system which distributed ... ideas outwards.”<sup>184</sup> Collecting is one such idea that travelled to Moana Oceania with those European adventurers. The collection of knowledge, people, and culture became commercialised through what Smith terms “trading the Other.”<sup>185</sup>

Museum researcher Alison Clark attributes the collections that were withdrawn into the heart of empire during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries to “British maritime endeavour and colonial expansion.” With the increase of travellers and settlers in Moana Oceania during the late 1800s, the amount of treasures “collected, traded and sold increased in extraordinary numbers. The traffic in objects created by missionaries, traders, explorers and colonial officials meant that collecting was a common practice ... particularly due to the monetary potential offered by selling these objects to dealers or museums back in Europe.”<sup>186</sup> Gustav's collecting occurred during this period of accelerating acquisitions and accumulation. By the 1890s, the decade in which the Kronfelds settled into life in Auckland, manuals advising travellers on what and how to collect had been in circulation for over thirty years.<sup>187</sup> Anthropologist Nicholas Thomas identifies this decade as a feverish point in the history of imperialism, characterised by the ‘scramble’ for colonial territory in both Africa and Moana Oceania, and the amassing of ethnographic collections from the latter.<sup>188</sup> The vast amounts of treasures that were taken to Europe by explorers and anthropologists, such as Captain Cook and Augustin Krämer, substantiate the thesis that the collecting of ‘ethnographic’ material was embedded in the expansion of empire.

As lawyer Moana Jackson (Ngāti Kahungunu, Ngāti Porou) posits, “from the beginning of organised Pākehā settlement, New Zealand was dominated by social classes committed to links with Britain and the creation of an economic infrastructure producing export staples.”<sup>189</sup> Gustav's story resists oversimplification, but it is clear that he aspired to this

---

<sup>183</sup> Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies*, 61.

<sup>184</sup> Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies*, 61.

<sup>185</sup> Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies*, 92–93.

<sup>186</sup> Alison Clark, *Resonant Histories: Pacific Artefacts and the Voyages of HMS Royalist 1890–1893*, ed. Nicholas Thomas, vol. 6 (Leiden: Sidestone Press, 2019), 47.

<sup>187</sup> Clark, *Resonant Histories*, 47.

<sup>188</sup> Clark, *Resonant Histories*, 17.

<sup>189</sup> Moana Jackson, “Land Loss and the Treaty of Waitangi,” in *Te Ao Mārama: Regaining Aotearoa: Māori Writers Speak Out*, ed. Witi Ihimaera, vol. 2 (Auckland: Reed Books, 1993), 76.

social class: born to in Prussia to a Jewish family, he became a proud naturalised British subject, eager to distance himself from an imposed Germanness; he established his own import/export business, trading goods between Moana Oceania and Europe; he participated in the cultural life of Auckland, attending the theatre and inviting visiting musicians and writers to his home. Perhaps he understood collecting as a feature of the life he had ambitions to build for himself. Ruminating on the 20<sup>th</sup> century world of international dealers and collectors, historian Rachel Buchanan (Taranaki, Te Ātiawa) considers that money was one impetus to collect, but there were others, too: “possession and protection, hoarding and storing, a sort of mooning sentimentality about the lost, the dead, the former, the primitive, the pure, the true.”<sup>190</sup> Without journals, letters, or a memoir, it is impossible to draw definitive conclusions about Gustav’s own motivations to collect. The archive does, however, partially illuminate how and why he collected, at least in the early days: mutually beneficial trading relationships conducted “beyond the copra sheds,”<sup>191</sup> combined with a keen interest in treasures. That Gustav never attempted to sell the Collection, and that it remained in ‘Oli ‘Ula beyond his death, indicates that his interest was not simply economic. Perhaps his collecting can be more accurately attributed to sentimentality or the imperial imagination. Regardless, it occurred in a context of empire expansion, and to understand the legacies of museum collections such as this, it is necessary to extrapolate from their origins.

It must be stated that, within a context of empire expansion, ‘collected’ is often a euphemism for coercion or theft. Smith flags the danger posed by ‘scientific’ researchers, for instance, who turned to Moana Oceania after Cook’s first voyage:<sup>192</sup>

They had theories to prove, evidence and data to gather and specific languages by which they could classify and describe the indigenous world. ... Skulls were measured and weighed to prove that ‘primitive’ minds were smaller than the European mind ... Other stories are told of burial caves being ‘discovered’ and examined for the precious ‘artefacts’ which were left with the dead, of carved houses being dismantled and shipped to England, of dried and shrunken heads sold and exported back to museums.<sup>193</sup>

According to Smith, the nineteenth century rise of scientific ethnography contributed to increased collecting. She notes that by the 1860s, several learned societies were operating in New Zealand, and that “implied in the urgency for describing indigenous cultures was the sense that these cultures were becoming ‘contaminated’ by contact with the West and were likely to die out.”<sup>194</sup> Legislation establishing the New Zealand Institute and a public museum

---

<sup>190</sup> Rachel Buchanan, *Te Motunui Epa* (Wellington: Bridget Williams Books, 2022), 30.

<sup>191</sup> Margaret Hixon, *Sālotē: Queen of Paradise* (Dunedin: University of Otago Press, 2000), 45. These sheds were key sites in the copra (dried coconut flesh) trade.

<sup>192</sup> Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies*, 83.

<sup>193</sup> Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies*, 85–86.

<sup>194</sup> Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies*, 89–90.

was passed in 1867.<sup>195</sup> After a lengthy (and still ongoing) period of subjugation or theft of Indigenous practices and resources, Indigenous peoples and cultures apparently required 'preserving' in the settler-colony of New Zealand. The museum was ready to step in. It was simultaneously an aspiration, a potential buyer, and competition for private collectors.

### The German Firm

In 1879 [Gustav Kronfeld] arrived in Samoa<sup>196</sup> under engagement to Messrs. John Ceasar Godeffroy & Son (the forerunners of the D.H.P.G.) after spending some years in that firm's employ in Samoa doing office work, he was appointed cashier, a position he held till he was transferred as manager to their branch at Vavau in the Tongan Islands [c. 1883]. He severed his connection with the D.H.P.G. in 1890 and started business on his own account in Auckland as a Commission and Indent Agent. In recognition of his long services, the D.H.P.G. appointed him their buying agent, a position he held up to the outbreak of the war.<sup>197</sup>

A protagonist in the context of empire expansion throughout Moana Oceania is 'the German firm': J.C. Godeffroy & Sohn, whose labour, economic, political, and collecting practices were among the most repugnant of its era. The firm is linked to the Kronfeld Collection: it was Gustav's employer from 1876-1890 and the reason he travelled to Apia. Sāmoa, as Steinmetz notes, was "the site of a plantation economy created by the Godeffroy firm, which began its operations there in 1857."<sup>198</sup> Economist Alan Bollard outlines another factor in their early market monopoly in Moana Oceania, in addition to the political and economic machinations of the firm: their use of debased South American currencies to dominate the region's small economies. According to Bollard, "they were anticipating many of the functions of today's merchant and central banks" and "setting the pattern for commercial development in the 19th and early 20th centuries."<sup>199</sup> Capitalism had arrived in Moana Oceania, with devastating effects on Indigenous communities, and these coins connected one colonial struggle to another.

Godeffroy agent August Unshelm established a head agency in Apia and commenced the purchase of local coconut oil. Within a few years, Unshelm and his successor Theodor Weber "set to work to expand their empire."<sup>200</sup> As Bollard explains, part of this expansion involved establishing agents on as many neighbouring islands as possible, rather than relying

---

<sup>195</sup> Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies*, 90.

<sup>196</sup> 1876, according to Moe, Gustav's son. Kronfeld, *Gustav and Louisa Kronfeld*, 25.

<sup>197</sup> G. E. L. Westbrook, "The Late Gustav Kronfeld," *Samoanische Zeitung* (Apia), April 25, 1924, <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/SAMZI19240425.2.9>.

<sup>198</sup> Steinmetz, *The Devil's Handwriting*, 296.

<sup>199</sup> A. E. Bollard, "The Financial Adventures of J. C. Godeffroy and Son in the Pacific," *The Journal of Pacific History* 16, no. 1 (1981): 3, <https://dx.doi.org/10.1080/OO223348108572410>.

<sup>200</sup> Bollard, "The Financial Adventures of J. C. Godeffroy," 4.

on trading schooners to purchase from islands without a Godeffroy presence.<sup>201</sup> Bollard elaborates on the firm's competitive, unscrupulous practices:

They operated as secretly as possible. Ships were sent to sea with sealed orders. They made it clear they were in the business for money not morals. They would offer more credit to islanders than other traders could afford, charging very high rates of interest and willingly taking land as security. Godeffroy stores would sell arms and ammunition, alcohol, and anything else they could make a profit from.<sup>202</sup>

Similarly, a contribution to *The bulletin* (Sydney, 1894) records:

[Weber] always put four questions to those who sought employment from him as traders, agents, or clerks:—Can you learn native languages? Can you live among the natives without forcing quarrels? Can you keep your mouth shut about the firm's business when you meet white men? Are you a moral man? If the applicant answered the last query in the affirmative he was never sent away to an outside post, but kept employed as a clerk. "A man who says he's moral," said Weber, "is hardly ever any good for a post of danger ... There is only one place for a moral man in the Pacific—that is behind a counter."<sup>203</sup>

Behind a counter, Gustav became a cashier.

Godeffroy stations spread throughout Moana Oceania and were visited by agents once or twice a year to collect accumulated goods.<sup>204</sup> However, despite the firm's sprawl and stranglehold on the economies of Moana Oceania at the end of the 1870s, J.C. Godeffroy & Sohn would topple before the decade's end.<sup>205</sup> After a series of financial losses and failed negotiations, the firm's regional branch was reorganised in 1880 under the name Deutsche Handelsund Plantagen-Gesellschaft der Südsee-Inseln zu Hamberg (D.H.P.G.).<sup>206</sup> Following pressure from the D.H.P.G. and another firm, Germany annexed New Guinea, the Bismarck Archipelago, and the Marshall and Northern Solomon Islands in the mid-1880s, which, according to Firth, ensured "a constant flow of cheap labour from the Bismarck Archipelago to the Samoan plantations of the D.H.P.G."<sup>207</sup> The firm had long owed their profits to plantation workers: unable to force Samoans to cultivate the plantations, the firm utilised indentured migrant labours from other islands of Moana Oceania (such as Niue, Vanuatu,

---

<sup>201</sup> Bollard, "The Financial Adventures of J. C. Godeffroy," 5.

<sup>202</sup> Bollard, "The Financial Adventures of J. C. Godeffroy."

<sup>203</sup> Schwartzkoff [pseud.], Letters, *Bulletin* (Sydney), June 2, 1894, accessed November 10, 2023, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-489324624>.

<sup>204</sup> Stewart Firth, "German Firms in the Western Pacific Islands, 1857-1914," *The Journal of Pacific History* 8 (1973): 12, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/25168133>.

<sup>205</sup> Firth, "German Firms," 15.

<sup>206</sup> Bollard, "The Financial Adventures of J. C. Godeffroy," 16; Steinmetz, *The Devil's Handwriting*, 296.

<sup>207</sup> Firth, "German Firms," 24, 15.

and Kiribati), known as 'blackbirds'.<sup>208</sup> Researcher Stewart Firth observes that Europeans in Sāmoa encountered “a unified culture capable of frustrating attempts at complete foreign control.”<sup>209</sup> The D.H.P.G. maintained pressure on Germany to annex Sāmoa during the 1880s, dreaming of a German Samoa in which they could force Samoans to work their plantations.<sup>210</sup> It was clear to the D.H.P.G. that, if conscripted into labour, Samoans would cease to trade with Europeans or revolt.<sup>211</sup> The strength of Sāmoa's collectivity protected them from this particular tendrill of exploitation (and enabled defiance in other political arenas). German annexation of Sāmoa did come at the end of the century. While all German property was expropriated after World War One,<sup>212</sup> the legacies of this period remain. The German firm broke a path for empire to follow: Sāmoa, and Moana Oceania, more broadly, was transformed irrevocably. Treasures that travelled from their islands of origin and now reside in museums are witnesses, survivors, products, and storytellers of this transformation. If they are to travel again, what forces might propel them this time?

The exploitative practices of the German firm are part of the context in which Gustav's collecting occurred. I am motivated to understand what Gustav's personal collecting practices were like, not to disentangle them from this context, but to determine the roots and routes of the treasures in the Collection. I scour the archive like a crime scene, searching for evidence. The search does not stop when I sleep; my dreams are haunted. How does Gustav's potential involvement in the German firm's exploitation of Moana Oceanic peoples influence my understanding of the Collection? If the research centres the treasures, how important is this context to their story? Is this the story they would tell for themselves? Leaving my intergenerational haunting to the side for a moment and considering the treasures from western Moana Oceania within an overall context of empire expansion — which encompassed the expropriation of people, land, and culture — it seems clear that, after so much has been taken, the treasures should go home. Researching Godeffroy's private collection, which include human remains, Stefanie Affeldt and Wulf D. Hund assert that accumulation was at the centre of an economy of remains. They note that “its results were no mere ‘collections’ but veritable banks of bones ... and other human components. They were not ‘collected’ but appropriated. The violent nature of this connection was unmistakable and marked all its components.”<sup>213</sup> If we look to the ugliest edges of private collecting, we find that accumulation, the ultimate driver of imperialism, is mirrored there. What else accumulates in museums, among the bones and wrongfully acquired treasures?

---

<sup>208</sup> Steinmetz, *The Devil's Handwriting*, 306; Firth, “German Firms,” 11; Bollard, “The Financial Adventures of J. C. Godeffroy,” 7.

<sup>209</sup> Firth, “German Firms.”

<sup>210</sup> Firth, “German Firms,” 16.

<sup>211</sup> Firth, “German Firms,” 18.

<sup>212</sup> Firth, “German Firms,” 10.

<sup>213</sup> Stefanie Affeldt and Wulf D. Hund, “From ‘Plant Hunter’ to ‘Tomb Raider’: The Changing Image of Amalie Dietrich,” *Australian Studies Journal Zeitschrift für Australienstudien* 33/34 (2019/2020): 117, <https://dx.doi.org/10.35515/zfa/asj.3334/201920.06>.

What might dissipate when they are relinquished? I think our breath could feel more free, our dreams less haunted.

### **Colliding Worlds: A Gift, a Trade, a Rupture**

Looking at different parts of the Kronfeld Collection with a magnifying glass, it becomes clear that the treasures have diverse roots and routes. Broadly speaking, they came together through trade and gifting, but the various contexts in which these trades or gifts occurred affect the overall picture and the treasures' possible futures. Even if Gustav was collecting for personal interest, making legitimate trades and receiving gifts, his collecting is not independent from what was happening around him. It is useful to look beyond the Kronfeld Collection to others assembled while empires were expanding across the Moana, in order to understand the forces that propelled treasures: firstly, into private collections; and later, into museums. Significant forces include the influx of missionaries into Moana Oceania, land alienation, and the colonial impulse to 'preserve' the material of cultures perceived as dying out or becoming tainted (ironically, by colonialism).<sup>214</sup> Clark suggests that the rivalry between Germany, France, and Britain for islands in Moana Oceania "could also be seen reflected in the size of the ethnographic collections made by those countries."<sup>215</sup> History is littered with reasons why treasures may have left their systems of relation for a collection. Just a few examples can demonstrate the variety of justifications for the plunder. In 1891 the HMS *Royalist* looted 548 artefacts during punitive raids in the Solomon Islands.<sup>216</sup> At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Governor Solf banned Samoans from using nifo'oti, hooked clubs, in dance;<sup>217</sup> by 1927, Te Rangihīroa believed that most of the clubs had already left Sāmoa for private and museum collections.<sup>218</sup> Even when colonial conquest was not an official goal, Steinmetz proposes that "by introducing new objects and animals and setting in motion cultural revolutions, scientific explorers were sowing the seeds for a more formal annexation sometime in the future."<sup>219</sup> Worlds were colliding across Moana Oceania, and taonga, measina, and treasures were drawn into their wake.

In a context of empire expansion, of worlds colliding and the making of new ones, what does a gift or trade represent? Thomas proposes that objects are "powerfully constitutive of relations and transformations. Their use may inaugurate, enact, or announce a relationship."<sup>220</sup> The textures of these relationships, however, are often obscured within the

---

<sup>214</sup> On salvage colonialism/salvage anthropology, see Steinmetz, *The Devil's Handwriting*, 301.

<sup>215</sup> Clark, *Resonant Histories*, 74.

<sup>216</sup> Clark, *Resonant Histories*, 19.

<sup>217</sup> Steinmetz, *The Devil's Handwriting*, 338.

<sup>218</sup> Sean Mallon, *Samoan Art & Artists: O Measina a Samoa* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2002), 94–95. The Kronfeld Collection holds examples of all six club forms.

<sup>219</sup> Steinmetz, *The Devil's Handwriting*, 267.

<sup>220</sup> Nicholas Thomas, "Materiality, Gifts, Histories, and Collections: Reflections on Entangled Objects," *West 86th: A Journal of Decorative Arts, Design History & Material Culture* 28, no. 1 (Spring/Summer 2021): 3, <https://dx.doi.org/10.1086/718014>.

museum: power is not necessarily distributed evenly across relations; mutual understanding is not always present. Smith, directly connecting the expansion of knowledge, trade, and empire, outlines this unevenness in no uncertain terms: “The term ‘trade’ assumes at the very least a two-way transaction between those who sold and those who bought” and “that human beings and other cultural items were commodities or goods and were actually available ‘for sale’ ... From indigenous perspectives territories, peoples and their possessions were stolen, not traded.”<sup>221</sup> In Aotearoa New Zealand, this is evident in two reo Māori terms, *tuku* and *hoko*, that are used in Te Tiriti o Waitangi (1840). Neither is equivalent to ‘sale’: *tuku* signifies “the release of something important into the keeping of another, with the expectation of an ongoing relationship”;<sup>222</sup> and *hoko* is “a simpler idea of exchange through trade.”<sup>223</sup> Te Kawehau Hoskins (Ngāti Hau, Ngāpuhi) and Alison Jones (Pākehā) explain that *hoko*, while it might be understood in a European context as a sale, an act of alienation, was a form of exchange contextualised by *tuku* — “always and already relational.”<sup>224</sup>

Jackson argues that the control of land was the basis of British colonial policy, geared towards establishing a capitalist hegemony. The land must first be alienated, and then its use “restructured within a framework which promoted resource distribution not on a basis of communal need, but on individual profit. The earth was to cease being the mother of us all, and the sharing of her *taonga* was no longer to be just.”<sup>225</sup> While Jackson means ‘*taonga*’ in the broadest sense, this was also true for artefactual *taonga* that shifted into private ownership. Paul Tapsell echoes Jackson, assigning responsibility for the imposition of individual title onto communal lands to the Native Land Court system introduced in the 1860s. As *whenua* was alienated from *iwi* during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, *taonga* became “part and parcel of the transaction (legally or otherwise), or were presented to the new tenants, removed to *tapu* burial grounds, abandoned where they lay, forgotten, sometimes burned, or perhaps sold to eagerly waiting collectors.” Tapsell concludes that *taonga* associated with alienated *whenua* “seldom served as anything more than sad reminders of what had been lost. Some *taonga* survived in old trunks or closets, up in the attic, or in museums, but most became irreversibly separated from their once rich *korero*.”<sup>226</sup> The decontextualisation of *taonga* that occurred through land alienation in Aotearoa New Zealand is still felt in our public museums. It reminds us that the return of *taonga* and *whenua* are intimately connected in the decolonial project.

Not all trade or sale of treasures falls easily into the ‘alienation’ category, however. Some treasures map the dynamics and relationships evolving between Moana Oceanic peoples

---

<sup>221</sup> Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies*, 92.

<sup>222</sup> Amiria Henare, *Museums, Anthropology and Imperial Exchange* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 121, quoted in Te Kawehau Hoskins and Alison Jones, “Non-Human Others and Kaupapa Māori Research,” in *Critical Conversations in Kaupapa Māori*, ed. Te Kawehau Hoskins and Alison Jones (Wellington: Huia Publishers, 2017), 50.

<sup>223</sup> Hoskins and Jones, “Non-Human Others,” 50.

<sup>224</sup> Hoskins and Jones, “Non-Human Others,” 51.

<sup>225</sup> Jackson, “Land Loss,” 72.

<sup>226</sup> Tapsell, “The Flight of Pareraututu,” 332-3.

and settlers or traders. Ray Ingrey, Dharawal person from the La Perouse Aboriginal community, noted that, “our people quickly adapted to the value of the dollar ... they were making artefacts to sell, and they were trading their implements for things like metal axes.” Ingrey confirmed that the return of legitimately traded material is still welcome, but that it is approached differently to stolen belongings.<sup>227</sup> Art collector Joe Chan (Papua New Guinea) mentions an anthropologist visiting Papua New Guinea in the early 1900s, who observed that Trobriand Islanders were making and selling objects that interested tourists. Chan points out that, “while this was happening, their traditional objects were not being carved,” hypothesising that “this is why some of the traditional types, of which only a very small number were collected, do not exist anymore.”<sup>228</sup> Thomas writes that, for Malangan sculptures of New Ireland, “disposal was essential to their effect. Historically, they are said to have been destroyed or dumped in forests, but over the latter decades of the nineteenth century what almost certainly became the dominant mode of their destruction was sale to European traders.”<sup>229</sup> Furthermore, the sculptures are an example of a continuum of practice, inflected in both directions by trade: as new tools and dyes entered New Ireland, the sculptures’ forms changed.

In the 2018 book *Kambek: Reconnecting Collections*, people associated with the Papua New Guinea National Museum and Art Gallery (PNGNMAG) reflect on selected treasures from the MacGregor collection.<sup>230</sup> Several contributors raise the impact of Christianity and the intersection of Indigenous belief systems with settlers. Curator Hillary Miria (Papua New Guinea) recounts that Yule was a communally structured society, and one of the first places in Papua New Guinea to be introduced to Christianity, when Catholic missionaries settled there in 1885. Miria writes that most surviving treasures were removed by village elders during a period when missionaries took away items that were not ‘Christian.’<sup>231</sup> Nora Vagi-Brash (Papua New Guinea) speaks to the complexity of the collision between Christianity and Indigenous ritual practices through the example of a widow’s mourning garment in the collection. Vagi-Brash recalls an encounter in a cemetery with women wearing such garments, “waiting for the corpse, for the skin to burn so they could take it to the caves.” Her father was a young Evangelist with the London Missionary Society, and it was her parents’ task “to stop the burning of the dead and to bury them the Christian way. Sadly, I know that my antecedents were responsible for some of the wonderful things that have been lost, and

---

<sup>227</sup> Ray Ingrey, Paul Irish, and Maria Nugent, “La Perouse: Community Engagement with UK Museums” (panel discussion at the RETURN: Reconnecting Objects and Collections with People and Places Symposium, CSU Riverina Playhouse and online, June 27-29, 2023).

<sup>228</sup> *Kambek: Reconnecting Collections*, ed. Kiri Chan (South Brisbane: Queensland Museum, 2018), 30.

<sup>229</sup> Thomas, “Materiality, Gifts, Histories,” 15.

<sup>230</sup> MacGregor was the first Administrator, and later Lieutenant-Governor, of ‘British New Guinea.’ His collection of 11,000 items was assembled between 1888 and 1898, and is the foundation of PNGNMAG. MacGregor’s long-term vision was for his collection to return to British New Guinea once the territory had a museum. Andrew Moutu, “Reconnecting the Collection,” in *Kambek: Reconnecting Collections*, ed. Kiri Chan (South Brisbane: Queensland Museum, 2018), 1.

<sup>231</sup> Chan, *Kambek: Reconnecting Collections*, 93.

this body covering was one of them.”<sup>232</sup> Expanding on this complexity, Vagi-Brash also reflects on the importance of the wealth of knowledge contained in the museum, which would have disintegrated had Sir William MacGregor not collected it.<sup>233</sup> Conservator Jethro Stalen (Papua New Guinea), however, is curious about how MacGregor may have collected a grass skirt, access to which is forbidden (particularly by men) after a woman has used it, in most Papua New Guinean societies. Stalen hypothesises that, perhaps once he had earned their respect, people saw MacGregor “as someone that the taboos or unseen forces that harm normal people would not affect, so they let him have it.”<sup>234</sup> MacGregor’s collection has been thoroughly analysed, and these accounts help to understand how encounters between differing belief systems contributed to the Kronfeld Collection, and to museum collections more generally.

Reciprocity, a fundamental principle in Moana Oceania, also extends to gifting practices. Former director of PNGNMAG, Andrew Moutu (Papua New Guinea), speculates about whether “local people gifted cultural objects to [MacGregor] because he was a powerful person. They probably hoped he shared their concept of reciprocity and would respond by giving them something valuable in return.”<sup>235</sup> Archaeologist Nick Araho (Papua New Guinea) suggests that a gift can also be a challenge, a political manoeuvre, a signal of superiority, or a gesture of friendship.<sup>236</sup> Archaeologist Betty Neanda (Papua New Guinea) wonders about MacGregor’s collecting motivations and methods. With regards to a club collected in the late 19th century (sharing a timeline with Gustav’s collecting), Neanda hypothesises that, given such clubs were highly treasured when MacGregor collected it, he must have given something equally valuable in return — according to the practice of exchange in Papua New Guinean societies.<sup>237</sup> Whether Gustav understood that reciprocity was inherent to the gifting of treasures in Moana Oceania, and whether what he provided in return for treasures was deemed adequate by the givers/traders, is difficult to glean from the archive. The reciprocal relationships he entered, whether knowingly or not, could be considered generational: an inheritance, of sorts. Thus, in a long arc, and without negating his role in their historical oppression, MacGregor’s collection also gave something valuable to the people of Papua New Guinea. Exploring the return of treasures from the Kronfeld Collection, generations later, may likewise enact the reciprocity of the gift.

As differing worldviews and languages collided in a context of empire expansion, the collecting of taonga, measina, and treasures caused ruptures that come to the surface now, in the process of bringing collections ‘into the light.’ Many museums hold items in their collections, such as human remains, obtained through profound breaches of trust and

---

<sup>232</sup> Chan, *Kambek: Reconnecting Collections*, 133.

<sup>233</sup> Chan, *Kambek: Reconnecting Collections*, 135.

<sup>234</sup> Chan, *Kambek: Reconnecting Collections*, 121.

<sup>235</sup> Moutu, “Reconnecting the Collection,” 1.

<sup>236</sup> Chan, *Kambek: Reconnecting Collections*, 18.

<sup>237</sup> Chan, *Kambek: Reconnecting Collections*, 102.

humanity. Tonia Pondikou (Papua New Guinea) speaks to the conflicting nature of the MacGregor collection, noting that people from the Central Province still talk about how MacGregor stole and gave away their land, but, without his presence, PNGNMAG would not have the collection today.<sup>238</sup> As art historian Hanahiva Rose (Te Ātiawa, Ngāi Tahu, Ngāti Toa Rangatira, Ra'iātea, Huahine) proposes, "collections are assemblies of relationships, where every connection made carries with it an initial rupture. In this way, for every presence there is an accompanying absence."<sup>239</sup> Ruptures also permeate collections of treasures traded or gifted without coercion: when they were removed from their systems of relation and committed to a museum, their mauri or tapu, the kōrero and obligations that accompanied them, were altered, obscured, or lost. How might these ruptures be repaired? If we belong to a woven universe, can severed threads be reconnected; can restorative pathways be stitched?

---

<sup>238</sup> Chan, *Kambek: Reconnecting Collections*, 110.

<sup>239</sup> Hanahiva Rose, introduction to *Uneven Bodies (Reader)*, ed. Ruth Buchanan et al. (Ngāmotu New Plymouth: Govett-Brewster Art Gallery, 2021), 56.

## Art and the Imperial Imaginary

The first European credited with ‘discovering’ Tahiti is Captain Samuel Wallis. John Hawkesworth, also the chronicler of Captain Cook’s first voyage, wrote an account of Wallis’ 1767 arrival. According to Steinmetz, it was this skewed account of Wallis’ “successful ‘pacification’ of Tahiti that cleared the way for the depiction of the island as idyllic. Here, as in Samoa ... an extremely violent initial interaction was subsequently erased from the dominant register of ethnographic memory.”<sup>240</sup> Wallis was closely followed by Louis-Antoine de Bougainville, who, in a pamphlet published upon his return to France, dubbed Tahiti ‘New Cythera,’ “after the Greek island mythically associated with Aphrodite, goddess of love and beauty. His rendering of Tahiti as a living museum of European antiquity became a mainstay of subsequent representations of Polynesia.”<sup>241</sup> The circulation of material in Europe portraying Moana Oceania as a peaceful paradise was not an insignificant factor in the expansion of empire. Curator and art historian Rebecca Rice notes that “from the moment James Cook arrived back in England following his first voyage to the Pacific in 1771, a flurry of illustrated publications spread news and information about his travels. Over the next few decades interest in the Pacific continued unabated.”<sup>242</sup> The artworks and field recordings produced during Cook’s voyages are saturated with the imperial imaginary that gave rise to the collecting of treasures.

Of particular relevance to this research are two major artistic projects, Lisa Reihana’s *in Pursuit of Venus [infected]* (2015), and Cora-Allan Lafaiki Twiss’ (Ngāpuhi, Ngāti Tumutumu, Niue) *Encountering Aotearoa*. Both artists counteract the imperial imaginary by revisiting the artworks from Cook’s voyages, generating their own works from the steadfast position of Indigenous women. In *Pursuit of Venus [infected]*, abbreviated to POV, Reihana shifts our gaze — so often set by the artists/researchers implicated in empire expansion — onto the artists/researchers themselves. The panoramic moving-image work re-interprets *Les Sauvages de la Mer Pacifique*, a wallpaper produced by Joseph Dufour in 1804 that references illustrations from the era of Cook’s voyages and “models Enlightenment beliefs and ideas of harmony amongst mankind.”<sup>243</sup> The wallpaper is a fantastical depiction of some Garden of Eden where (multiracial but overwhelmingly pale) people are preparing for a feast, followed by more Dionysiac forms of merriment as night falls. While still set in Tahiti, Reihana’s work recasts the characters depicted, animating vignettes of encounters between Europeans and Indigenous peoples across Moana Oceania: there are ceremonies, women weaving, and dancing, but also tense and violent interactions. Captain Cook, botanist Joseph Banks, and Tahitian navigator Tupaia are all present. Described as returning “the gaze of imperialism with a speculative twist,” the final version of the work “makes visible some

---

<sup>240</sup> Steinmetz, *The Devil’s Handwriting*, 247.

<sup>241</sup> Steinmetz, *The Devil’s Handwriting*, 248.

<sup>242</sup> Rebecca Rice, “Les Sauvages de la Mer Pacifique (the Native Peoples of the Pacific Ocean),” Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, last modified February 2019, accessed July 24, 2023, <https://collections.tepapa.govt.nz/object/1495632>.

<sup>243</sup> Lisa Reihana, “In Pursuit of Venus,” accessed July 24, 2023, <https://www.inpursuitofvenus.com/about>.



**Figure 13.** Lisa Reihana, *in Pursuit of Venus [infected]*, 2015, single-channel video, UltraHD, colour, 7.1 sound. Courtesy of the artist.



**Figure 14.** Polaroid photos of Cora-Allan, Kelly Lafaiki, and me in Kelly's journal. Cora-Allan and Emily Parr, *Encountering Aotearoa*, 2023, single-channel video/audio.

historical narratives absent from the original wallpaper, such as ... differing ideas of ownership and reciprocity [that] resulted in misunderstandings and violent outbursts.”<sup>244</sup> Taonga, measina, and treasures were, of course, caught up in these misunderstandings as worlds collided.

<sup>244</sup> Reihana, “In Pursuit of Venus.”

In March 2023, I accompanied artist and hiapo (Niuean barkcloth) practitioner Cora-Allan on board the *Heritage Adventurer*, documenting our journey and the development of her works with moving-image — works and documentation later exhibited in *Encountering Aotearoa* (2023–present). Over a fortnight, we sailed the eastern coastline of Te Waipounamu and Te Ika-a-Māui (North and South Islands), from Rakiura (Stewart Island) to Waitangi, crossing Te Ara-a-Kewa and Te Moana-o-Raukawa (Foveaux and Cook Straits) and visiting significant sites from Captain Cook’s voyages. Our contemporary voyage mirrored those earlier ones in several ways: while Tupaia had Taiata, Cora-Allan had her father to support her; and, like Tupaia and Taiata, we were the only people of Māori or Moana descent on board. Questions of documentation were ever-present: how had Cook’s artists/researchers documented the whenua? How would Cora-Allan document it from her position as an Indigenous woman on the ship’s decks? How would I document her encounters with whenua and moana without unintentionally feeding the colonial imaginary? Documentation is political.

Natalie Robertson’s reflection on the role of the camera comes to mind here: “Telling stories through camera-based practices ... can motivate acts of cultural and environmental reclamation. Whose hands the camera is in reflects how the act of witnessing is undertaken —through whose eyes do we see?”<sup>245</sup> During our conversations aboard the ship, I was particularly interested in Cora-Allan’s preoccupation with the documentation of Cook’s voyages. Visiting Tamatea, it became clear to us that William Hodges’ romantic renderings of the sounds originated from a European sensibility, rather than these shores. Cora-Allan observed that these places were painted in a way that made them appear easy to settle, in turn motivating the sale of whenua by colonists.<sup>246</sup> In other words, the imperial imaginary contributed to the expropriation of Māori land. Rather than continuing the legacy of extraction that Cook’s ships left in their wake, Cora-Allan chose not take anything tangible from the whenua. She had intended to harvest whenua pigments and beat plant life into hiapo — instead, she soaked hiapo in water that could then be returned to the moana and made a series of cyanotypes. The mauri of the spaces we visited imbue her works, but their lifeworlds were left intact. Reihana and Cora-Allan engage with histories of empire expansion — Cook’s voyages, in particular — through decolonial practices. While our artistic resolutions may differ, we share the aspiration of re-orienting the gaze, prioritising Indigenous narratives, and re-imagining encounters.

---

<sup>245</sup> Robertson, “Nga Whatu-Ora,” 134.

<sup>246</sup> Emily Parr, *Encountering Aotearoa*, recorded March, with Cora-Allan Lafaiki Twiss, single-channel video/audio.



**Figure 15.** Cora-Allan making a cyanotype on hiapo, Te Wharawhara (Ulva Island), 2023.

# Travelling Taonga, Measina, and Treasures

## From Private Collections to Public Museums

There are many reasons why treasures may enter the public museum: financial gain, 'preservation,' protection, public accessibility, and more. In the case of the Kronfeld Collection, the reason seems to be public accessibility combined with the straightforward need to house it after Lousia's death in 1939.<sup>247</sup> Five years earlier, Te Rangihīroa had argued that 'found' taonga should primarily be "housed in the local museum."<sup>248</sup> Rather than risk their discovery by 'curio hunters' in search of wealth, he suggested proactive archaeological surveys to find and protect taonga Māori collectively, as "treasure trove and the property of the State."<sup>249</sup> This argument was of a time when numerous taonga Māori had already been lost to overseas museums. According to a study by Ngarino Ellis et al., over 16,000 "were removed from Aotearoa and dispersed across the globe, with many moving through private collections and institutions."<sup>250</sup> Buchanan remarks on the grim reality of global museums, full of unprovenanced, stolen, and illegally exported antiquities, that "the trick is to look the other way."<sup>251</sup>

Between 1908 and 1962, the export of taonga Māori from Aotearoa New Zealand was regulated by the Maori Antiquities Act, which was flawed.<sup>252</sup> According to Buchanan, taonga were only protected if they had been made with 'ancient tools,' rather than 'European' ones.<sup>253</sup> Additionally, curator Moira White explains that the legislation was also used to fulfil the predicted needs of smaller museums:

When it was passed, our first antiquities legislation was closely linked to the idea of establishing a single national museum in which material barred from export could be placed. Two decades later, the general sense of numbers and operation of museums in New Zealand had altered, and by 1926 the Government, advised by Dominion Museum staff, was moving to use the provisions of the Maori Antiquities Act 1908 to provide for anticipated collection requirements of the country's smaller museums.<sup>254</sup>

---

<sup>247</sup> See the Appendix, "Into the Archive: The Kronfelds."

<sup>248</sup> "Maori Culture: Scope for Research; Dr. P. H. Buck's Suggestions," *Taranaki Daily News* (Taranaki), August 28, 1934, <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/TDNI9340828.2.110>.

<sup>249</sup> "Maori Culture: Scope for Research," *Taranaki Daily News*.

<sup>250</sup> Ellis, Macdonald, and Almeida, "Taonga in a Digital World," 366.

<sup>251</sup> Buchanan, *Te Motunui Epa*, 61.

<sup>252</sup> Moira White, "The Trouble About Your Combs Arose This Way... Changing Interpretations of the Maori Antiquities Act 1908," *Tuhinga: Records of the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa* 18 (2007): 1, <https://collections.tepapa.govt.nz/document/3042>.

<sup>253</sup> Buchanan, *Te Motunui Epa*, 177.

<sup>254</sup> White, "The Trouble About Your Combs," 8-9.

Through the exchange of treasures with international institutions, Aotearoa New Zealand's borders remained porous to taonga. White suggests that, for the nation's museums, exchanges circumvented the need for purchasing funds and the limitations of the domestic market. While the exchanges of H.D. Skinner, former Director of Otago Museum, usually sent taonga Māori away, some were aimed at bringing them back into Aotearoa New Zealand.<sup>255</sup> Two treasures from the Kronfeld Collection appear to have travelled overseas via this mechanism: a carved wooden patu (hand weapon) sent to the American Museum of National History in 1952, and a Fijian club exchanged for a Chinese merchant's door sign.<sup>256</sup>

For the taonga Māori and treasures from Moana Oceania held in museums across the world — and even those already in Aotearoa New Zealand's institutions — one can hope their travels are not over yet; that they may still return home. Tapsell cautions that “getting home is not so easy, especially if the trajectory happens to take *taonga* to the other side of the world where they may become captured within Western society's orbit, in museums and private collections,” but remains hopeful that “even these *taonga*, if their *korero* remains intact ... could yet find their way back.”<sup>257</sup> Buchanan, recounting the gripping trajectory of Te Motunui Epa, carved panels raised from a Taranaki swamp in 1971 and exported illegally, proposes that legal action mounted to return the taonga home effectively placed a global rāhui on their sale: “Our tūpuna were now recognised as tapu around the world. The only movement that would be allowed was the journey home.”<sup>258</sup> Of course, many treasures will remain in their overseas resting places. Either way, Shaun Angeles, Penangke, Kungarakany, and Arrernte man and AIATSIS<sup>259</sup> Assistant Director, commented that it gives the old people “a weird sense of relief” to find out where in the world the old treasures are, and that the real magic happens in provenance research involving cultural experts.<sup>260</sup> This highlights the importance of knowing, first and foremost, where treasures are, so that decisions can be made about their futures. Curator Matt Poll (of South Sea and Torres Strait Islander heritage) recounted how an elder, among a group with whom he had travelled to visit objects in a Finnish museum, spoke to the objects: “Farewell, I won't see you again, but we know you are here and I will tell my family where you are.”<sup>261</sup> When treasures from Moana Oceania are unable to journey home, we, their descendants, must travel to them instead.

It appears that many taonga, measina, and treasures are stilled or frozen once they enter the museum.<sup>262</sup> They may still be repositories of relationships, but they cannot enact these while

---

<sup>255</sup> White, “The Trouble About Your Combs,” 2–3.

<sup>256</sup> Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, Taonga Māori Report emailed to the author, July 3, 2023.

<sup>257</sup> Tapsell, “The Flight of Pareraututu,” 354.

<sup>258</sup> Buchanan, *Te Motunui Epa*, 139.

<sup>259</sup> The Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies.

<sup>260</sup> Michael Aird et al., “The Relational Museum: Theory and Practice” (panel discussion at the RETURN: Reconnecting Objects and Collections with People and Places Symposium, CSU Riverina Playhouse and online, June 27–29, 2023).

<sup>261</sup> Aird et al., “The Relational Museum.”

<sup>262</sup> They do literally go through a freezer cycle to ensure no pests enter the museum with them.

behind glass or in storage. However, the history of international exchanges, ongoing exhibition touring, and expanding repatriation efforts indicate that motionlessness is not universal. Our treasures have whakapapa and systems of relation that extend far beyond the time scale of a human lifetime. The movements and encounters yet to come may be beyond our imagination — think of how the Motunui Epa, as Buchanan writes, “travelled on, unchanged, beneath the surface of time — not dead, not extinct, but dormant.” They wanted to do something: “So, our ancestors stretched their tongues, rolled their eyes and got ready to wake up. The old world was about to meet the new.”<sup>263</sup>

## Roots and Routes

This research attempts to trace the ‘routes’ of taonga, measina, and treasures in the Kronfeld Collection, in hope of finding their ‘roots.’ Many taonga, measina, and treasures are meant to travel through time, from one generation to another; they travel between people, binding them together; they travel between villages and across the Moana, enacting reciprocity. Treasures do not travel passively: they are thrust into particular trajectories by particular forces. These forces include colonisation, land alienation, and religious conversion, but they also include alofa, peace-making, and the honouring of obligations. There is another story here: tracing the connections of the Kronfeld Collection not only illuminates the expansion of empire, but also the roots and routes, the cosmopolitan relations, that have existed in Moana Oceania for millennia.<sup>264</sup> In particular, the measina gifted to the family — rather than purchased or traded by Gustav — express these connections. Following my presentation at an August 2023 Vā Kōrero,<sup>265</sup> former Deputy Prime Minister of Sāmoa Misa Telefoni Retzlaff told us a story intended to demonstrate the importance of gifting in Moana Oceania, and how the value placed on gifted items differed between islands. He recalled travelling to an occasion with an ‘ie tōga, a fine mat, to gift to Fiji. In return, he received a tabua, the tooth of a sperm whale, highly regarded in Fiji. Misa’s senior was fully cognisant that tabua are as important to Fijians as ‘ie tōga are to Samoans. Retzlaff also noted that such gifts were intended to continue circulating; he suggested that perhaps the ‘ie tōga gifted to the Kronfelds by Ratu Kamisese Mara and Queen Sālote Tupou II after Leo Kronfeld’s death represented a return.<sup>266</sup> Coincidentally, shortly after the Vā Kōrero, my search of ‘whalebone

---

<sup>263</sup> Buchanan, *Te Motunui Epa*, 26.

<sup>264</sup> For the origins of roots and routes in scholarship, see historian James Clifford’s three-volume series: James Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988); James Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997); James Clifford, *Returns: Becoming Indigenous in the Twenty-First Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013). Clifford acknowledges the influence of his postgraduate students at the University of California, Santa Cruz (including Vincente Diaz and Teresia Teaiwa), from whom he “learned a lot ... about different lived experiences of roots and routes.” Clifford, *Routes*, 59.

<sup>265</sup> Vā Kōrero is a quarterly platform used to support the research and practice of Vā Moana cluster members and our extended network. Affiliates and candidates are invited to share in ceremony, food, and presentations of research.

<sup>266</sup> Misa Telefoni Retzlaff, during discussion at a Vā Kōrero session. (Auckland University of Technology, August 3, 2022).

paddle' in Papers Past<sup>267</sup> revealed a tabua gifted to the Kronfelds by Queen Sālote: in a 1937 issue of the *Auckland Star*, the whale's tooth with braided sennit is pictured alongside the hoe parāoa and taonga pounamu (greenstone).<sup>268</sup> I wonder where it is now, and what its trajectory was before entering the Kronfelds' world. Sometimes, I feel that 'Oli 'Ula had a kind of gravitational pull for these treasures.

The routes of treasures, the Kronfeld family, and Moana Oceanic peoples more broadly, are not one-way trajectories. Rather, they loop, link, secure, return — like threads stitching across a surface. As Epeli Hau'ofa asserts, they travel “ancient routes drawn in bloodlines,” for “it is in their blood to be mobile.”<sup>269</sup> Sa'iliemanu Lilomaiava-Doktor (Sāmoa), human geographer, critiques the conventional academic view of migration that implies “severance of ties, uprootedness, and rupture” and “the scholarly dichotomies of village/metropolitan and local/global.”<sup>270</sup> Investigating Samoan conceptions of malaga, travel back and forth, Lilomaiava-Doktor demonstrates that mobility is essential to maintaining vā in kin relationships.<sup>271</sup> These social connections determine Samoan mobility rather than geographic boundaries: vā “allows us to conceive of movement in terms of links, pathways, juxtapositions of locations, and the networks that people reestablish as they move. Distance does not separate *āiga* [kin group], but only provides further interconnecting social pathways.”<sup>272</sup> Lana Lopesi puts the concept of roots and routes to work in “Moana Cosmopolitan Imaginaries,” arguing that the ‘cosmopolitan’ intervention “enables Moana people to understand mobility and place as simultaneously connected.”<sup>273</sup> Lopesi continues that, for ‘Moana Cosmopolitans,’ “a sense of globality or of crossing borders is normal, and in fact heightened through increased use of digital technology. But this is arguably not at the cost of a local identity rooted in place.”<sup>274</sup> Already, the Kronfelds were a cosmopolitan family: they were multi-cultural and multi-religious; made homes away from their homelands, in Tonga and Aotearoa New Zealand; tended to their roots with repeated returns to Sāmoa; opened 'Oli 'Ula to other Moana Cosmopolitans. As Lopesi contends, “acknowledging a Moana identity as *rooted* and *routed* requires an *imaginary* that moves beyond the *diasporic imaginary*, which fixes Moana people in diaspora as fractured and displaced.”<sup>275</sup> Understanding ourselves and our stories as both

---

<sup>267</sup> Papers Past is a digital archive maintained by the National Library of New Zealand Te Puna Mātauranga o Aotearoa. Among its holdings are digitised 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century newspapers from Aotearoa New Zealand, the Cook Islands, and Sāmoa. See <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/>.

<sup>268</sup> “Museum House. Relics from Past.”

<sup>269</sup> Hau'ofa, “Our Sea of Islands,” 156.

<sup>270</sup> Sa'iliemanu Lilomaiava-Doktor, “Beyond 'Migration': Samoan Population Movement (Malaga) and the Geography of Social Space (Vā),” *The Contemporary Pacific* 21, no. 1 (2009): 1, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23724742>.

<sup>271</sup> Lilomaiava-Doktor, “Beyond 'Migration,’” 20.

<sup>272</sup> Lilomaiava-Doktor, “Beyond 'Migration,’” 22.

<sup>273</sup> Lopesi, “Moana Cosmopolitan Imaginaries,” 98.

<sup>274</sup> Lopesi, “Moana Cosmopolitan Imaginaries.”

<sup>275</sup> Lopesi, “Moana Cosmopolitan Imaginaries,” 99.

rooted and routed enables us to imagine restorative futures for treasures that, like us, live beyond our homelands, but not beyond our connections to them.<sup>276</sup>

Albert L. Refiti proposes that cultural knowledge — encompassing rituals and traditions of exchange involving sacred objects — is important for the reformation of identity in a diasporic context, given it can travel. Refiti observes that, in Moana Oceania, people and objects are generally treated “as on a par with each other, since both represent the human and the nonhuman. Objects carry aspects of the person, and the person carries parts of the object in return.” This, according to Refiti, is the context in which the Samoan notion of *vā* was reformulated.<sup>277</sup> Measina, then, can be understood as manifesting *vā* relations: they travel along routes, recalling, activating, and maintaining roots. Lilomaiava-Doktor affirms that people’s *malaga* and acts of giving and receiving enact *vā*, and that, during *fa’alavelave* (life-cycle events), “the exchange of gifts symbolises the importance of genealogical links to the past.”<sup>278</sup> Similarly, Hau’ofa stresses that reciprocity is a fundamental, ancient practice of Moana Oceania cultures: “for everything homeland relatives receive, they reciprocate with goods they themselves produce, by maintaining ancestral roots and lands for everyone, homes with warmed hearths for travelers to return to permanently or to strengthen their bonds, their souls, and their identities before they move on again.”<sup>279</sup> ‘Oli ‘Ula became a locus outside of Sāmoa in which travellers received the hospitality — with cosmopolitan inflections — that they might expect in their homelands. The *measina* and treasures that adorned its walls recall the guests’ roots and routes in the wider network through which they circulate in Moana Oceania. Despite discontinuities often caused by processes typical of ‘ethnographic’ museum collections, they still teach us about relationships and dynamic worlds. Perhaps it is through looking to their roots and routes, and resisting narratives of fragmentation, that we can best honour their power.<sup>280</sup>

### The Hoe Parāoa and ‘ie Tōga

The hoe *parāoa* and ‘ie *tōga* in the Kronfeld Collection have a strong gravitational effect on me and raise questions I feel compelled to answer. These *taonga* and *measina* share histories of travelling, but the forces causing their movement are different. The story of the hoe *parāoa* reveals contexts of private collecting, land alienation, uneven trading relationships, and ruptures. The stories of the ‘ie *tōga* illuminate an expansive network of roots and routes traversing Moana Oceania. The hoe *parāoa* re-presents difficult histories and

---

<sup>276</sup> For a critique on James Clifford’s concept of routes as applied in the Pitt Rivers’ ‘relational museum’ project (2004–2007), see Dan Hicks, *The Brutish Museums: The Benin Bronzes, Colonial Violence and Cultural Restitution* (London: Pluto Press, 2020), 30.

<sup>277</sup> Refiti, “Mavae and Tofiga,” 15–16.

<sup>278</sup> Lilomaiava-Doktor, “Beyond ‘Migration,’” 21; Sa’iliemanu Lilomaiava-Doktor, “Samoan Transnationalism: Cultivating ‘Home’ and ‘Reach,’” in *Migration and Transnationalism: Pacific Perspectives*, ed. Steve Tupai Francis and Helen Lee (Canberra: ANU E Press, 2009), 65.

<sup>279</sup> Hau’ofa, “Our Sea of Islands,” 157.

<sup>280</sup> Chan, *Kambek: Reconnecting Collections*, 81.

wrongs I wish to right, whereas the 'ie re-present a beloved constellation of relations I am proud to descend from. Together, they speak to the contradictions and complexities found within the Kronfeld Collection.

Tohunga tohorā (whale expert) Ramari Stewart (Ngāti Awa) shares that “in traditional Māori culture, beached whales were recognised as he taonga Tangaroa or he koha ā Tangaroa,” a treasure or gift from Tangaroa, atua of the ocean. The tikanga, or practice, “was to utilise beached whales regardless of their state when they came ashore.”<sup>281</sup> Stewart advocates for re-learning to harvest taonga in accordance with tikanga Māori, and by extension, “preserve the mauri (life essence) of each individual whale within each of the recovered resources.” As Stewart observes, “the ancestors of today’s whales knew my ancestors, so it is not just the physical entity of the whale that lies dead on the beach, but the spiritual entity too.”<sup>282</sup> Through this lens, mauri activates the system of relations connecting us with our tīpuna, with tohorā, and with the taonga created from them. According to marine mammal expert Barbara Todd, taonga carved from beached whales were relatively rare, as parāoa were not actively hunted by Māori.<sup>283</sup> However, the relationship between tohorā and Māori changed drastically when European whalers entered the waters of Aotearoa in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century and turned whales into a commodity. By the 1840s, nearly half of the whalers operating in Aotearoa were Māori.<sup>284</sup> Todd refers to the hoe parāoa in the Kronfeld Collection as an example of whalebone taonga “made as ceremonial objects representing a more practical counterpart.” As most waka paddles were undecorated and made from wood, this one was likely carved for ceremonial use.<sup>285</sup>

By the family’s private accounts, the hoe parāoa in the Kronfeld Collection was purchased from a Māori man who approached Gustav at his Auckland offices sometime between 1890 and 1910. Apparently, this man was suspected of taking the hoe from a burial place in the North. Gustav’s initial insistence on proof of ownership eventually waned in the face of a desperately under-priced offer and his desire to possess such a significant taonga.<sup>286</sup> It *is* magnificent — a pair of figures are carved into the top of the handle, and a face where it widens into the blade. The bone, from the jaw of a sperm whale, gleams. When Louisa gifted the Collection to the Dominion Museum in 1939, the hoe parāoa was said to be the only one known to exist.<sup>287</sup> Searching the archive, I found this to be inaccurate. The *Auckland Star’s* “News of the Day” reports on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of October, 1929:

One of the most curious of ancient Maori relics is the canoe paddle made from whalebone. Only two specimens, owned privately, have been known to

---

<sup>281</sup> Barbara Todd, *Whales and Dolphins of Aotearoa New Zealand* (Wellington: Te Papa Press, 2014), 100.

<sup>282</sup> Todd, *Whales and Dolphins of Aotearoa*, 101.

<sup>283</sup> Todd, *Whales and Dolphins of Aotearoa*, 103.

<sup>284</sup> Todd, *Whales and Dolphins of Aotearoa*, 106.

<sup>285</sup> Todd, *Whales and Dolphins of Aotearoa*.

<sup>286</sup> For a more thorough version of events, see the Appendix, “Into the Archive: The Kronfelds.”

<sup>287</sup> “Museum House. Relics from Past”; “South Seas Curios for Museum.”

exist, but another, attractively ornamented, with carving at the butt, shaft and base of the blade, was brought to Auckland last week by a native of the North. It is made from a fine solid piece of sperm jawbone, 5½ feet in length, and is in a good state of preservation, apparently having been a treasured tribal heirloom. It is believed that whalebone paddles were merely used by chieftain orators on important ceremonial occasions.<sup>288</sup>

The report was republished in the *Manawatu Times* with an additional detail: the other two hoe were privately owned in Auckland (one, presumably, by Gustav).<sup>289</sup> An ensuing article on the Museum's acquisition states, "like all Maori heirlooms this paddle has a name, and as the following legend will show, the appellation [sic] of 'Tutunui' is most appropriate." It goes on to tell the story of Tinirau and the whale Tutunui, concluding that the hoe parāoa is the first of its kind to be obtained for the museum, and that it is believed to be 90 years old.<sup>290</sup> If so, Tutunui would have entered the world at the time when Te Tiriti o Waitangi was signed. I located Tutunui's disappointingly sparse accession record at Auckland Museum: "Whalebone Canoe Paddle," "Purchased at sale," and a question mark beside the locality. The name of the hoe is not recorded, nor is the seller.

Tutunui was not the only hoe parāoa to surface during my search: the Wanganui Public Museum's November 1908 report lists a whalebone paddle (albeit with the incorrect depositor).<sup>291</sup> Its register elucidates that, circa 1891, a Miss Higginson took a "Whale Bone Paddle" and "Maori Coffin (lid missing)" from a cave between Pākaraka and Ngaheia in Northland.<sup>292</sup> Trish Nugent-Lyne, Collection Manager at Whanganui Regional Museum, aided my search by locating two Miss Higginsons on the 1908 electoral roll: Florence and Harriet Lucy, daughters of a British Captain, who lived in Whanganui. The burial chest, or waka kōiwi, was the 'star' of an exhibition in the Museum's concert hall. The Wanganui Chronicle reports, "it is the first time that a burial chest has been exhibited here and indeed only three or four Museums in the world that can boast of any."<sup>293</sup> One Miss Higginson retrieved the hoe parāoa and waka kōiwi from the Museum in March 1910. Both sisters died as 'spinsters': Miss Florence Higginson in 1939 in Australia; Miss Harriet Lucy Higginson in 1940 in Devonshire.<sup>294</sup> Despite locating their Wills, I found no trace of the hoe parāoa after it left the Wanganui Museum.

---

<sup>288</sup> "News of the Day," *Auckland Star*, October 3, 1929, <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/AS19291003.2.39>.

<sup>289</sup> [Untitled], *Manawatu Times*, October 11, 1929, <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/MT19291011.2.25>.

<sup>290</sup> "Whalebone Paddle," *Auckland Star*, October 7, 1929, <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/AS19291007.2.99>.

<sup>291</sup> G. R. Marriner, "Wanganui Public Museum: Monthly Report for November, 1908," *Wanganui Chronicle*, December 3, 1908, <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/WC19081203.2.3>.

<sup>292</sup> Trish Nugent-Lyne, email conversation with the author, July 25, 2022.

<sup>293</sup> "A Rare Exhibit," *Wanganui Chronicle*, November 14, 1908, <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/WC19081114.2.5>.

<sup>294</sup> *Index to Wills and Administrations (1858-1995)*. National Probate Calendar (London: The National Archives, 1995), 251.

The waka kōiwi, however, resides in the British Museum. Miss Higginson (likely Harriet Lucy) bequeathed it to a Miss Veneables/Venables, who gave it to Devon's Bideford Museum, where the British Museum purchased it in 1950.<sup>295</sup> In 1980, Aileen Fox, English archaeologist, assessed the range of known Māori burial chests. Fox identified that they were found primarily in Northland, between the Whangārei and Whangaroa harbours, mainly in Ngāpuhi territory. Fox notes that “only 36 of the 60 chests are sufficiently well provenanced to be included on the map,” as “many others were acquired from dealers who were intentionally vague about the precise localities of the discoveries since they had been looted from the sacred burial caves.”<sup>296</sup> Given the waka kōiwi left Aotearoa New Zealand sometime between 1910 and 1950, while the Maori Antiquities Act was in place, it was presumably illegally exported. Indeed, correspondence from W.R.B. Oliver, then-Director of Dominion Museum, to H.D. Skinner, corroborates this: “You are quite right in informing Oldman that permission will never be given for a Maori burial chest to leave New Zealand, at least I would never recommend such a thing.”<sup>297</sup> An unidentified, potentially clandestine, point of departure makes tracking this hoe parāoa all the more difficult.

With a vague idea of the time period, and two place names more specific than ‘North,’ I researched further to flesh out the figures of Pākaraka and Ngaheia in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The original protagonists are the chiefly landmarks of Ngāpuhi, as presented by reo Māori scholar Tā Patu Hohepa to the Waitangi Tribunal:

The house of Ngapuhi was erected so that Papatuanuku, the earth mother, is the floor. The mountains are the pillars [and] Ranginui, the skyfather gazing down, is the roof. Puhanga Tohora (Whale spume) looks to Te Ramaroa a Kupe (Kupe's eternal beacon); Te Ramaroa looks to Whiria (Plaited), the taproots of strife, and the bastion of Rahiri (Ngapuhi's founding ancestor); Whiria looks at Panguru and Papata — to where the trees lean, standing in the westerly winds; Panguru-Papata — looks at Maungataniwha (the Taniwha mountain range), Maungataniwha looks at Tokerau (Hundred worms or north) Tokerau — looks at Rakaumangamanga (multi branched tree); Rakaumangamanga — looks at Manaia (named after an ancestor Manaia); Manaia — looks at Tutamoe; and Tutamoe looks at Puhanga Tohora.<sup>298</sup>

*This* was likely the first house of all three hoe parāoa. Who, then, might have been the rangatira (chief) who wielded the taonga? Te Ruki Kawiti, Hongi Hika, Tāmāti Wāka Nene, and Hōne Heke Pōkai were among the notable Ngāpuhi figures, circa 1770–1870. And what of the settlers? Henry Williams arrived in the Bay of Islands in August 1823 as a member of the

---

<sup>295</sup> “Burial-Chest,” The British Museum, accessed August 25, 2022, [https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/E\\_Oc1950-II-1](https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/E_Oc1950-II-1).

<sup>296</sup> Aileen Fox, “A New Look at Maori Carved Burial Chests,” *Antiquity* 54, no. 210 (1980): 7, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003598X00042782>.

<sup>297</sup> White, “The Trouble About Your Combs,” 8.

<sup>298</sup> Waitangi Tribunal, *The Ngawha Geothermal Resource Report 1993* (Wellington: Legislation Direct, 2006), 11.

Church Missionary Society and, in 1840, was tasked with translating the English draft of the Treaty of Waitangi into te reo Māori.<sup>299</sup>

In 1835, Williams purchased 11,000 acres in the Taiāmai plains that became known as the 'Pākaraka Estate.'<sup>300</sup> Controversy around the purchase led to a reduction in acreage by the Land Claims Commission in 1844 and to Williams' dismissal from the CMS in 1850, after which he lived at Pākaraka on the eastern edge of the Pouērua lava field.<sup>301</sup> The maunga Pouērua rises from the Taiāmai plains, a garden for Ngāpuhi that was highly valued over centuries due to the volcanic soil, abundant water sources, and strategic pā sites.<sup>302</sup> Pouērua is associated with Nukutawhiti — who adzed the Ngātokimatawhaorua waka in Hawaiiiki — and was occupied by the hapū Ngāti Rāhiri.<sup>303</sup> Considering the mana of those with connections to the area, I can only imagine the tapu of kōiwi (human bones) and burial taonga that resided within its caves. As Tapsell reminds us, “the greater the *mana* of a *taonga*, the greater its *tapu*, which demands careful management of the item.”<sup>304</sup> If Miss Higginson's recollection of entering a cave between Pākaraka and Ngaheia<sup>305</sup> is accurate, the hoe parāoa and waka kōiwi potentially came from one of several wāhi tapu in the area.

Together, the journeys of the three hoe parāoa make visible a spectrum of fallout from colonisation. One, stolen by a Pākehā woman. A second, reportedly stolen by a Māori man. A third, sold by a Māori man to the Museum. It is possible that the man who sold Tutunui to Auckland Museum did so without the pressures of colonially imposed forces — we may never know, as his name, iwi, and hapū are not on record. I am reminded of Buchanan's reflection that the story of the Motunui Epa “is not an easy story for uri [descendants] of Taranaki to tell, because the first taking was committed by one of our own.”<sup>306</sup> Without knowing who the tangata Māori implicated in the journeys of the hoe were, it is impossible to determine what motivated them, which pressures they faced or potentially desperate situations they were in. I share these stories not to condemn them, but to extrapolate on the wider impact colonisation had on taonga. At present, the current location of two hoe parāoa are known, while their places of origin are not; conversely, the location of one hoe parāoa is unknown, while its place of origin can be approximated. In bringing their stories into the

---

<sup>299</sup> Robin Fisher, “Williams, Henry,” *Te Ara—The Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, 1990, accessed September 15, 2022, <https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/1w22/williams-henry>.

<sup>300</sup> Douglas Sutton, Louise Furey, and Yvonne Marshall, *The Archaeology of Pouerua* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2003), 15; Waitangi Tribunal, *Tino Rangatiratanga me te Kāwanatanga: The Report on Stage 2 of the Te Paparahi o te Raki Inquiry* (Wellington: Waitangi Tribunal, 2022), 323.

<sup>301</sup> Sutton, Furey, and Marshall, *The Archaeology of Pouerua*, 15.

<sup>302</sup> Waitangi Tribunal, *Tino Rangatiratanga Me Te Kāwanatanga*, 143.

<sup>303</sup> Waitangi Tribunal, *Tino Rangatiratanga Me Te Kāwanatanga*, 97; 133–4.

<sup>304</sup> Tapsell, “The Flight of Pareraututu,” 328.

<sup>305</sup> Ngaheia Station was built circa 1866 on a recorded pā site, part of the Pakaraka Estate, for Williams' son, Joseph Marsden Willams. See Alfred Sharpe, *Sharpe, Alfred, 1836–1908: Ngaheia House, Bay of Islands. Residence of Jos. Williams, Esq. / Alfd Sharpe 1882, 1882*, watercolour, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, <https://natlib.govt.nz/records/32252889>.

<sup>306</sup> Buchanan, *Te Motunui Epa*, 21.

light, I hope they may still be recognised, reclaimed, returned. Whales and paddles, after all, are meant for movement — the travels of the hoe parāoa may not be over yet.

‘Ie tōga circulate through Samoan society as elements of ritual and ceremonial exchange at significant life events.<sup>307</sup> Sean Mallon (Sāmoa, Ireland), Senior Curator at Te Papa, asserts that ‘ie tōga are the highest ranking item in the Samoan exchange system, and, “as their age increased and more people or events became associated with them, so too did their intrinsic value.”<sup>308</sup> Following the original 1939 accession, the children of Gustav and Louisa added to the Collection over time through donations to Auckland Museum and Te Papa’s predecessors. Moe Kronfeld gifted two nineteenth century ‘ie tōga to the Dominion Museum in 1972. One has the names ‘Tupuasā Fa’avae Olosa’a’ and ‘Leota’<sup>309</sup> written on it, the other was sent to Minna Kronfeld by her lifelong friend, Queen Sālote Tupou III. Joyce Heni Kronfeld, wife of Leo Lea’ega, gifted another two ‘ie tōga to the Auckland Institute and Museum in 1987. Both were sent in 1947 when Leo died, one by Queen Sālote, the other by Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara. Although only one, or possibly none, of the four Kronfeld ‘ie tōga resided in ‘Oli ‘Ula, they express relationships grown within the house or of its time. As Mallon suggests, “the performance aspect and the occasions and relationships ‘ie toga mediate are perhaps just as or more important than the cloth itself.”<sup>310</sup> Mallon and Nina Tonga share that the red feathers adorning ‘ie tōga evoke the once-thriving trade network connecting Tonga, Sāmoa, and Fiji. These valuable parakeet feathers were usually obtained in Fiji and transported to Sāmoa by Tongan seafarers, who would then return to their islands carrying ‘ie tōga stitched with the feathers. ‘Ie tōga circulated throughout this network until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>311</sup>

By the time of their accession to Auckland Museum, it was no longer known who sent which mat for Leo’s funeral. One ‘ie tōga bears the text ‘MULI OAIGA.’ When I discussed this with I’uogafa Tuagalu, he suggested that ‘muli’ could refer to someone’s position as the youngest (or end) of the family — after Tui’s death, Leo became the youngest. Further, he felt that a fine mat called ‘Muli o Aiga’ would have been given by someone intimate with the family.<sup>312</sup> Given that she considered the Kronfelds family, it is likely *this* is the mat sent by Queen Sālote. As Tonga notes, towards the end of her life, Queen Sālote sent mats to friends “to be kept in readiness for their funerals.” In 1965, she gifted one, identified by Te Papa as a ‘kie hingoa’ (Tongan named fine mat), to Minna “to drape over her coffin at her passing.” However, Minna outlived the Queen, who died later that year.<sup>313</sup> This mat is particularly

---

<sup>307</sup> Mallon, *Samoan Art & Artists*, 80–81.

<sup>308</sup> Mallon, *Samoan Art & Artists*, 79.

<sup>309</sup> Refiti and I determined this spelling; however, the names were provided by Te Papa as ‘Fupuasa Taavae Jolosaa’ and ‘Leotu.’

<sup>310</sup> Mallon, *Samoan Art & Artists*, 82.

<sup>311</sup> Nina Tonga, “Kie Hamoa (Fine Mat),” Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, 2018, accessed April 10, 2023, <https://collections.tepapa.govt.nz/object/91520>; Mallon, *Samoan Art & Artists*, 79.

<sup>312</sup> I’uogafa Tuagalu, email conversation with the author, May 19, 2022.

<sup>313</sup> Tonga, “Kie Hamoa (Fine Mat).”

special: it is stained, possibly with menstrual blood. Grace Hutton (Palmerston, Tuamotu, Manihiki), Collection Manager at Te Papa, had the stain tested, and the results were nearly certain that it is indeed blood (although from who or what is undetermined). Recalling her discovery of the bloodied kie, Lopesi invokes the Queen herself, “who is quoted as saying, ‘Our history is not written in books, but in our mats.’ And written in blood, perhaps you could add.”<sup>314</sup> According to Mallon, the Tongan Royal Family considers the ‘ie tōga they hold, some dating back to the 17th century, to be among their most valuable heirlooms.<sup>315</sup> Therefore, the two mats gifted to the Kronfelds from Queen Sālote demonstrate the depth of her relationship with the family, as well as the vā that the circulation of measina creates and attends to across the Moana.

In the context of German Samoa, George Steinmetz notes that, despite “sweeping interventions in Samoan custom, the state’s commitment to a cultural salvage operation was not insignificant ... generally the Germans agreed to move within a world that was draped with Samoan webs of meaning.”<sup>316</sup> An example is the German administration’s attempt to continue the distribution of fine mats while exerting control over it: Governor Solf attempted to manage the major distribution of ‘ie tōga at the event bestowing the title of paramount chief to Matā’afa Iosefo in 1900.<sup>317</sup> Solf was concerned about what this ceremony would communicate:

The circulation of mats began in the districts with the local elites, and moved from there to the *tupu* [king], who then redistributed the mats back to the districts. The direction of this flow signaled to the Samoans that the *tupu* owed his position to the regional *ali’i* [chiefs] and *tulāfale* [orators] and to the leading lineage groups, the two high families of Samoa. The Germans, however, wanted to insist that Mata’afa had been crowned *ali’i sili* [paramount chief] by the German kaiser and his local representative, the governor.<sup>318</sup>

When two thousand ‘ie tōga were brought to the platform at Mulinu’u for Matā’afa to distribute, Solf undercut the paramount chief by reallocating mats to appease districts that felt short-changed.<sup>319</sup> The Governor’s manoeuvring symbolically undermined Matā’afa’s political power and negotiation of dynamics with chiefs and districts. More broadly, the German administration attempted to exert control over the exchange of mats by determining their exact worth, but a capitalist European perspective could not be applied to their sacred value system.<sup>320</sup> Steinmetz concludes that German efforts “to preserve Samoan social forms

---

<sup>314</sup> Lana Lopesi, *Bloody Woman* (Wellington: Bridget Williams Books, 2021), 10–11.

<sup>315</sup> Mallon, *Samoan Art & Artists*, 82.

<sup>316</sup> Steinmetz, *The Devil’s Handwriting*, 321.

<sup>317</sup> Steinmetz, *The Devil’s Handwriting*, 331, 339.

<sup>318</sup> Steinmetz, *The Devil’s Handwriting*, 340.

<sup>319</sup> Steinmetz, *The Devil’s Handwriting*.

<sup>320</sup> Steinmetz, *The Devil’s Handwriting*, 341.

while breaking up established political power structures provoked intense resistance.”<sup>321</sup> Lilomaiava-Doktor confirms that “*Fa’a-Samoa* frames work within local idioms, which in turn feed into and influence change. Local culture is not simply acted upon by external agents, as many accounts of change in Samoa suggest, for people are dynamic, proactive, and perpetually creative.”<sup>322</sup> The political power and complex social worlds of ‘ie tōga demonstrate this dynamism: they circulate through sacred systems of exchange that have persisted for centuries, and they are layered with meaning and value determined by their roots and routes.

Tuagalu proposes that particular prestige items manifest genealogical energy, and that “the acquisition and circulation of these items are part of the energy flows as they wax and wane through the Samoan universe, pushing and pulling on objects in that universe.”<sup>323</sup> Further, the circuitry of an ‘ie tōga “traces out the extent of its field, area of influence.”<sup>324</sup> While many of the roots and routes of the four Kronfeld ‘ie tōga have faded in memory, tracing their trajectories enables us to recall the relationships they tended to — across generations and the Moana — and the forces that propelled them. Alofa, mana, and tapu, according to Tuagalu, are forces that can bind and repel objects in vā relations.<sup>325</sup> While the ‘ie tōga in museums may be stilled, they retain these genealogical energies and forces, just as their creases remember being folded and stored in a family home. Beyond the Kronfelds, fine mats — woven in Sāmoa, adorned with feathers from Fiji, transported by seafarers from Tonga — demonstrate the interconnectedness of our sea of islands; of life-giving roots and routes.

---

<sup>321</sup> Steinmetz, *The Devil’s Handwriting*, 356.

<sup>322</sup> Lilomaiava-Doktor, “Samoan Transnationalism,” 67.

<sup>323</sup> Tuagalu, “Tāla’iga o le Gafa o le Vā,” 103.

<sup>324</sup> Tuagalu, “Tāla’iga o le Gafa o le Vā,” 106.

<sup>325</sup> Tuagalu, “Tāla’iga o le Gafa o le Vā.”



Figure 16. Tāmaki Paenga Hira Auckland War Memorial Museum, 2022.

# The Museums: “South Seas Curios”

## Imaginaries

### Museum Imaginaries

There is a proverb that asserts, Rārangi maunga tū te ao, tū te pō: rārangi tangata ka ngaro, ka ngaro. (A range of mountains stands day in and day out, but a line of people is lost, is lost.) The art of the ancestors used to disappear by being consumed by fire, eaten by worms, hidden in burial caves, or simply left to rot. Thanks to the Western practice of collecting “quaint” works of art and to modern conservation techniques, the art treasures of a nation can now be likened to a range of mountains. ... But the artists and their world of ideas, beliefs, and cultural practices are, as the proverb says, a line of people who have disappeared forever from this world of light.<sup>326</sup>

The museum is regarded as a site of preservation: an expert, controlled environment in which to conserve objects in perpetuity. But it is also a site of forgetting. In the nineteenth century, the concept of the museum was imported to Aotearoa New Zealand from Europe. Earlier still, treasures from Moana Oceania had been taken out of their systems of relation and into museums in Europe itself. This thesis proposes that once treasures enter the museum, they are captured by its imaginary. What would be ‘preserved’ and forgotten depended on what the colonial powers deemed important. Historically, Indigenous peoples’ treasures have been recontextualised by museums, and what is or is not recorded and presented reveals what the colonial powers *imagine* them to be.<sup>327</sup> If I look to the museum to teach me about the origins and relations of the Kronfeld taonga, measina, and treasures, what threads do they trace? Conversely, what might be learnt by listening to the treasures themselves?

Ngahua Te Awekotuku asserts that we must *remember*, as “humanity’s struggle against power is memory’s struggle against forgetting ... Collecting, the acquisition of material culture, was the principal activity of museums in the colonies and the imperium. They reinforced

---

<sup>326</sup> Sidney Moko Mead, ed., *Te Maori: Maori Art from New Zealand Collections* (Auckland: Heinemann Publishers, 1984), 20.

<sup>327</sup> The MacGregor collection illustrates this tendency. According to Andrew Moutu, “the material collected by MacGregor and his colonial officers provides the most concrete evidence of how [the modern nation of Papua New Guinea] was imagined at its inception.” Moutu, “Reconnecting the Collection,” 1.

and sustained the victors, they smudged or objectified memory.”<sup>328</sup> But whose memories, Te Awekotuku asks, do we consider? The museum — and the ways in which it collects, conceals, displays, categorises, and contextualises — is responsible not only for storing collective memory, but for creating it: its acts of creation rely on imaginaries and, while it is saturated with the colonial imaginary, there is also room in the museum for a decolonial imaginary to grow. This we owe to the treasures residing in basements, like long-dormant seeds lying in darkness, waiting to germinate. I dream of a future in which the decolonial imaginary becomes firmly rooted, extends its reach into the exhibition halls, pushes through the boundaries, and transforms the museum into something unrecognisable.

### **The Colonial Imaginary**

In 2017, I participated in a summer youth programme at Auckland Museum. During a tour, we were introduced to a conservator painstakingly stripping layers of paint from taonga Māori. We were told that, in the early years, curators considered Māori use of common paint to be ‘untraditional.’ The museum covered the colourfully painted taonga with a uniform red. This encounter shifted my perspective on notions of preservation, tradition, and the work required to strip back layers of the colonial imaginary. It was not for non-Māori curators to decide what authenticity means for taonga Māori, but, as George Steinmetz proposes, “colonialism necessarily redefines indigenous culture in the very act of traditionalizing it.”<sup>329</sup> Relatedly, Paul Irish, historian and archaeologist, observed that from the 19th century, the notion was widespread that Aboriginal culture cannot change without losing ‘authenticity.’ Change was regarded as loss, rather than adaptation.<sup>330</sup> This colonial notion has a ‘freezing’ effect: anything before the rupture is ‘pure,’ ‘traditional,’ ‘authentic.’ Often, this effect creates a desire to return to the ‘before time,’ and treasures held in museums aid us in doing that; they aid us to understand and reclaim ancestral practices through our taonga tuku iho that have been lost or dormant. But our cultures are living and our practices exist on a continuum: coloured house paint is, after all, a readily available echo of whenua pigment.

The colonial imaginary is not an abstract idea. Rather, it has material consequences wrought by the colonial project. Scholar Anna Boswell argues that “settlement is as much an imaginative undertaking as it is one of physically taking up residence.”<sup>331</sup> In translocating their home world to Aotearoa, “imaginative and physical modes of occupation converge in activities such as mapping and surveying lands, felling forests, draining swamps, laying down communities, [and] establishing institutions (churches, schools, governments, museums).”<sup>332</sup> Beyond these shores, Lana Lopesi identifies that a perception of Moana Oceania “as an

---

<sup>328</sup> Te Awekotuku, “Decolonising and Indigenising Museums.”

<sup>329</sup> Steinmetz, *The Devil's Handwriting*, 314.

<sup>330</sup> Ingrey, Irish, and Nugent, “La Perouse: Community Engagement.”

<sup>331</sup> Anna Boswell, “Fractured Atmospherics,” *Interstices*, no. 15 (2014): 38, <https://doi.org/10.24135/ijara.v0i0.475>.

<sup>332</sup> Boswell, “Fractured Atmospherics,” 38.

idyllic region of disparate and dislocated islands occupied by noble savages and dusky maidens is a prime example of a colonial imaginary.”<sup>333</sup> Reinforcing Boswell, Lopesi asserts that, from the 16<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, this imaginary “was institutionalised through mechanisms like the census, cartography and museums.”<sup>334</sup> Relatedly, Linda Tuhiwai Smith describes how cultural institutions in particular are “deeply implicated in the making and sustaining of colonialism as a structure of power and control.” As knowledge institutions, museums “consciously protect, create, sustain, reiterate and store the cultural memories, motifs and artefacts, national stories and mythologies, and the attendant discursive apparatus that supports concepts of ‘culture’. They are protectors and interpreters of national cultural meaning and identity.”<sup>335</sup> Considering that, as Smith attests, Aotearoa New Zealand’s museums were forged by our colonial story,<sup>336</sup> it is no wonder that we must confront — and strip back — the colonial imaginary as their legacy. Colonialism must first be halted within the museum, and its histories laid bare rather than obfuscated. This work is necessary because our taonga tuku iho, and by extension our tipuna, can be found within.

The colonial imaginary did not only come into play once treasures entered museums; rather, it determined what was collected for them in the first place. Isaac Te Awa (Kāti Māmoe, Kāi Tahu, Waitaha, Ngāpuhi), Te Papa Curator, describes how collections from Moana Oceania were primarily assembled by Pākehā men, and reflect their ethnographic interest in the tropes of the noble savage, the dusky maiden, and the warrior. As a result, “we are left with a collection that is already biased towards how Pākehā perceived us. [Telling] Māori stories out of these taonga is a challenge.”<sup>337</sup> On the paradox of colonial collections, Louis Owens (Choctaw, Cherokee, Irish-American) writes that, while Indigenous peoples often inherit photographs filtered through the dominant culture and its framing, “nonetheless what adheres is the living air of a people and a culture ... My Yurok friend sees her Yurok family, not vanishing Americans.”<sup>338</sup> This paradox permeates my work in the museum, a site where both joy and pain is unearthed, both despite and because of the biases and colonial violence present. Above all, the museum is a site of potential: for discovery, reconnection, restoration. What better place to ‘tuitui’ relations than an edifice of the very thing that rended them?

---

<sup>333</sup> Lopesi, “Moana Cosmopolitan Imaginaries,” 64.

<sup>334</sup> Lopesi, “Moana Cosmopolitan Imaginaries.”

<sup>335</sup> Linda Tuhiwai Smith, “Decolonising Cultural Institutions—An Urgent, Necessary, Challenging yet Hopeful Journey Beyond Colonialism,” in *Uneven Bodies (Reader)*, ed. Ruth Buchanan et al. (Ngāmotu New Plymouth: Govett-Brewster Art Gallery, 2021), 6.

<sup>336</sup> Linda Tuhiwai Smith, “Decolonising Cultural Institutions,” 7.

<sup>337</sup> *Lost in the Colonisation Machine*, directed by Kahu Kutia (Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, 2022), <https://www.tepapa.govt.nz/discover-collections/read-watch-play/watch-nga-taonga-tuku-iho/watch-nga-taonga-tuku-iho-l-lost>.

<sup>338</sup> Louis Owens, “Afterword: Their Shadows Before Them: Photographing Indians,” in *Trading Gazes: Euro-American Women Photographers and Native North Americans, 1880–1940*, ed. Susan Bernardin et al. (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2003), 192, quoted in Sean Mallon, Philipp Schorch, and Nina Tonga, “Materializing German-Sāmoan Colonial Legacies,” in *Refocusing Ethnographic Museums through Oceanic Lenses*, ed. Philipp Schorch (Dunedin: Otago University Press, 2020), 138.

When treasures were removed from their systems of relation, museums recontextualised them through the colonial imaginary. As Matariki Williams articulates, “those who put the taonga in the cabinet, those from whom the taonga were taken, and those outside the cabinet viewing the display may all understand the ownership and display of taonga very differently.”<sup>339</sup> Similarly, Paul Tapsell notes that it is unsurprising that many Māori feel alienated from their taonga held in museums: “Apart from the physical barriers of distance and glass cases,” foreign labels and hierarchies “not only separate taonga from their descendants and ancestral lands, but also recontextualise them in Western culture as objects assigned monetary valuations and institutionally defined in terms of legal possession.”<sup>340</sup> With the discontinuities associated with decontextualisation in mind, and despite their capturing by the colonial imaginary, the power of treasures persists. They move us, move the world around them, despite being stilled — akin to waka, observing the ever-changing cosmos surrounding their fixed point.<sup>341</sup>

Speaking to the gravitational affect of taonga, Williams’ reflection on the *Oceania* (2018) exhibition illustrates the disjunct between displays mediated by the colonial imaginary and the experience of coming kanohi-ki-te-kanohi (face-to-face) with taonga in the museum:

With every visit, I found myself in front of a *hei tiki* [carved pendant], displayed in a glass case at head-height. The label explained it was collected by Johann Reinhold Forster during Captain Cook’s second voyage in 1773–74. It also includes an ethnographic description of a *hei tiki*, written from the distance that comes with writing of another’s culture. What was absent from the interpretation was a questioning of what its collection had done to the *hei tiki*: removed it from its people, their names not recorded, and taken it to the other side of the world where it remained in the collection of the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford for 246 years. Pounamu, the material of the *hei tiki*, warms in your hands and many Māori will wear it close to their skin. When was the last time this one was warmed?<sup>342</sup>

Trapped behind glass in controlled temperatures, with no flesh to warm them, taonga are literally cooled. The scales of time/space, operating differently within the museum, also ‘cool’ them: treasures no longer move. They are stilled, frozen in time through preservation and decontextualisation, held in stasis by the colonial imaginary. As curator Dan Hicks observes, “silence and stillness are not natural conditions for the displaced objects on display here. They are the effect of a stilling, as when detention interrupts transit.”<sup>343</sup> Hicks positions the

---

<sup>339</sup> Matariki Williams, “To Stand, to Fight: A Matter of Interpretation,” in *Māori Moving Image*, ed. Melanie Oliver and Bridget Reweti (Christchurch: Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū, 2022), 117.

<sup>340</sup> Tapsell, “The Flight of Pareraututu,” 341.

<sup>341</sup> Maia Nuku explains that, “conceptually, the canoe remained in a fixed point so the lead navigator could focus on interpreting the signals as they presented themselves.” Nuku, “Oceania.”

<sup>342</sup> Williams, “Complicating the Narrative of ‘Oceania’.”

<sup>343</sup> Hicks, *The Brutish Museums*, 5.

museum as “intervening with time, decelerating memory,” and stolen objects as “an unfinished event,” asking, “what do we see when a light is shone into these most hesitant, uncertain of spaces, unresolved and raw?”<sup>344</sup> Furthermore, what might we find if our encounters with treasures were not mediated by glass, gloves, and the colonial imaginary?

Critically reflecting on the 1984 exhibition that saw taonga Māori journey to New York’s Metropolitan Museum of Art, Te Awēkotuku considers that “*Te Maori* was a triumph, but it was also about us frozen in time.”<sup>345</sup> Notably, textiles were excluded from the exhibition, but those attending the opening were told to wear their kākahu (cloaks) “like living exhibits.”<sup>346</sup> Pointing to one of the positive outcomes of *Te Maori*, Te Papa Curator Amber Aranui (Ngāti Kahungunu, Ngāti Tūwharetoa) cites the exhibition as the beginning of Aotearoa New Zealand’s involvement in the repatriation movement, as it showed that “taonga were not separate from the people to whom they were associated. Maori were a living culture, a people still very much linked to their past.”<sup>347</sup> Perhaps it can be said that exhibitions like *Te Maori* and *Oceania* simultaneously reinforce and resist the colonial imaginary: markers in the journey of the museum’s attempt to decolonise itself, which calls for both celebration and nuanced analysis. What *is* clear is that when treasures leave the museum, no longer stilled by the colonial imaginary, they do not re-enter the same world they left. They may have been preserved as if no time has passed, but beyond the walls housing them, time/space has continued to spiral. They are received by living, evolving, continuous cultures.

### Counteracting the Colonial Imaginary

The Kronfeld family, in many ways, refuses to be captured by the colonial imaginary.<sup>348</sup> Their Collection, too, can be a site from which to counteract it. In Aotearoa New Zealand, many museum workers counteract the colonial imaginary from within, as do artists — both inside and beyond the museum. If decontextualisation from their systems of relation is a key aspect of treasures being captured by the colonial imaginary, then reactivating these relations and contexts must be critical in countering it. Te Awēkotuku speaks to the importance of context and power within museums, establishing that they “remain sites of conflict, which can perhaps be indigenised, resolved, by context — but whose context? Because museums are places where the stories of people are told, or made up, or talked up, or re-presented — and this is where the real power resides.”<sup>349</sup> Regarding contextual and classifying language, Te Awēkotuku determines that in te reo Māori, we already have the

---

<sup>344</sup> Hicks, *The Brutish Museums*, 6.

<sup>345</sup> Te Awēkotuku, “He Atamira a Huatau.”

<sup>346</sup> Te Awēkotuku, “He Atamira a Huatau.”

<sup>347</sup> Amber Aranui, “Tahuri Ana Te Tai—The Changing Tide of Repatriation in Current Museology,” in *Uneven Bodies (Reader)*, ed. Ruth Buchanan et al. (Ngāmotu New Plymouth: Govett-Brewster Art Gallery, 2021), 61.

<sup>348</sup> See the section, “The Kronfeld Collection in a Moana Cosmopolitan Framework.”

<sup>349</sup> Te Awēkotuku, “Decolonising and Indigenising Museums.”

words “to effectively reclassify and Indigenise our taonga tuku iho.”<sup>350</sup> Even in English, Williams finds, the root of ‘curator’ is the Latin ‘cura,’ meaning ‘to heal.’ This infers that curators “work in a way that brings no further harm to taonga and their associated knowledge.” Williams views research within collections as “an opportunity to heal some of the gaps of knowledge; furthermore, it enables others to create into these gaps. This is where I see the latent potential of collections, and where I see artists challenging institutions to be better.”<sup>351</sup> Curators who understand the privilege and responsibility of caring for collections, who work with and facilitate access for descendants and artists, are vital in counteracting the colonial imaginary.

Smith establishes that “as a relational contract between the Crown and Māori,” the Treaty of Waitangi “ensures a mechanism for ongoing dialogue and also for creating new cultural meanings.”<sup>352</sup> The principles in Articles Two and Three “provide cultural institutions with a dynamic, a platform and a set of principles for reimagining themselves and what they do.”<sup>353</sup> As a bicultural national museum, Te Papa should be an ideal site for this reimagining to occur. The vision of Sir Kingi Matutaera Īhaka (Te Aupōuri) was for “a museum in which I will feel at home and comfortable. It means cooperation, partnership, and interdependence between two groups, Māori and Pākehā in one nation.”<sup>354</sup> Arapata Hakiwai credits *Te Maori* with influencing the creation of Te Papa and the Museum’s Mana Taonga Principle,<sup>355</sup> which “affirms and acknowledges the spiritual and cultural connections of the people to taonga or treasures.”<sup>356</sup> Sean Mallon and Nina Tonga describe Mana Taonga as “a contemporary fusion of the ancient concepts of mana and taonga. It thus embodies a contemporary, historically grounded ‘Indigenous articulation,’ a creative recoupling, or rearticulation, of constituent elements in response to global forces.”<sup>357</sup> They also praise the policy’s ability to empower and facilitate collaboration with any community, including that of Te Papa’s Pacific Cultures collection, despite being framed in Māori conceptual terms.<sup>358</sup> Reflecting on Te Papa’s formation, Te Awekotuku expressed ongoing distress that “our Pasifika whānau, our relatives by whakapapa and language, suddenly became the foreign ‘other.’ Another form of colonisation.”<sup>359</sup> As of 2023, Te Papa still does not have a framework for engaging Moana Oceania communities in the Museum, but a recently published report indicates their

---

<sup>350</sup> Te Awekotuku, “Decolonising and Indigenising Museums.”

<sup>351</sup> Williams, “To Stand, to Fight: A Matter of Interpretation,” 117.

<sup>352</sup> Linda Tuhiwai Smith, “Decolonising Cultural Institutions,” 7.

<sup>353</sup> Linda Tuhiwai Smith, “Decolonising Cultural Institutions.”

<sup>354</sup> Te Awekotuku, “Decolonising and Indigenising Museums.”

<sup>355</sup> Hakiwai, “He Mana Taonga, He Mana Tangata,” 74.

<sup>356</sup> Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, *Annual Report 2005/2006* (Wellington: 2006), 26, [https://www.tepapa.govt.nz/assets/76067/1692680509-annual\\_report\\_2005-06.pdf](https://www.tepapa.govt.nz/assets/76067/1692680509-annual_report_2005-06.pdf).

<sup>357</sup> Mallon, Schorch, and Tonga, “Materializing German-Sāmoan Colonial Legacies,” 122.

<sup>358</sup> Mallon, Schorch, and Tonga, “Materializing German-Sāmoan Colonial Legacies,” 123.

<sup>359</sup> Te Awekotuku, “Decolonising and Indigenising Museums.”

commitment to developing one.<sup>360</sup> Aranui sees the future of museology as institutions relinquishing their power over narrative, enabling people to story themselves and their taonga, concluding that being given the ability to speak again is “really what mana taonga is about.”<sup>361</sup> The Mana Taonga principle is one internal mechanism by which Te Papa seeks to counter the colonial imaginary, through, in essence, uplifting the mana of taonga with respect to their mauri, tapu state, and whakapapa links.

Auckland Museum’s Pacific Collection Access Project (PCAP) is another relevant example of efforts to counteract the colonial imaginary within the museum. Operating from 2016–2019, PCAP emerged from the Museum’s Pacific Dimension, “Teu le Vā,” which can be translated as ‘nurture the relationship.’<sup>362</sup> Scholar Lupematasila Melani Anae (Sāmoa) attested that the “power of teu le vā as a relational framework is its recognition and insistence on spiritual energy in the sacred and pragmatic reciprocal essence of relationships” — an energy that is missing from Western frameworks.<sup>363</sup> Reflecting on her involvement in PCAP, Leone Samu Tui acknowledges that “our institution was failing to engage descendants and kin of these treasures who were living and thriving in our own city.”<sup>364</sup> The PCAP sessions “held stories, laughter, tears, singing and chants,” and Samu Tui describes a desire among staff to safeguard the sacredness of the space. Concerns, too, were raised about protecting gifted Indigenous knowledge in the context of museums aiming to be open access.<sup>365</sup> Samu Tui wants museum practice to transform through institutions engaging with this dynamic:

At this point in time when, despite our best intentions, our institutions can still come across as extractive, we need to actively continue the exchange and find ways to do so that carry mana. Alofa mai, alofa atu [love and compassion received, love and compassion given]. This can include access when done right, surfacing hidden stories and significance, relinquishing more power to communities to determine what is named, what is sacred and what can be shared. This should be what’s embedded in our museum culture and how we teu le vā.<sup>366</sup>

---

<sup>360</sup> Matada Research Group, *Pride, Belonging & Identity: Understanding Pacific Peoples Access to and Consumption of Museum Content* (Matada Research Group, 2023), <https://www.tepapa.govt.nz/assets/76067/1702845658-pacific-peoples-and-museums.pdf>.

<sup>361</sup> *Repatriation*, directed by Kahu Kutia (Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, 2022), <https://www.tepapa.govt.nz/discover-collections/read-watch-play/watch-nga-taonga-tuku-iho/watch-nga-taonga-tuku-iho-4>.

<sup>362</sup> Auckland War Memorial Museum, *Teu le Vā: The Pacific Dimension at Auckland War Memorial Museum* (Auckland: Auckland War Memorial Museum, 2013), 5, <https://www.aucklandmuseum.com/getmedia/1f0cb555-8206-4cb3-adce-3e8cd838f026/auckland-museum-teu-le-va-the-pacific-dimension-2016.pdf>.

<sup>363</sup> Melani Anae and Leone Samu Tui, “Teu Le Vā as Indigenous Relationality in Contemporary Museological Praxis” (paper presented at the Vā Moana: Space and Relationality in Pacific Thought and Identity Conference, held online, November 24–25, 2021).

<sup>364</sup> Leone Samu Tui, “Teu Le Vā: Evolving Relationships and Practice in the Wake of the Pacific Collection Access Project (PCAP),” in *Uneven Bodies (Reader)*, ed. Ruth Buchanan et al. (Ngāmotu New Plymouth: Govett-Brewster Art Gallery, 2021), 25.

<sup>365</sup> Samu Tui, “Teu Le Vā,” 27.

<sup>366</sup> Samu Tui, “Teu Le Vā,” 28.

While the risk of the Museum expropriating Indigenous knowledge under the banner of 'decolonisation' is ongoing, Toluma'anave Barbara Makuati-Afitu (Sāmoa), of Lagi-Maama Academy and Consultancy, considers it our responsibility, in this time/space, to take opportunities like PCAP to privilege Indigenous knowledge, so that our descendants are not having the same conversations in the next decades.<sup>367</sup> Samu Tui's critical analysis of PCAP speaks to both the risks and transformational power of counteracting the colonial imaginary, through relational Indigenous frameworks, within an institution that grew out of colonialism.

### **The Decolonial Imaginary**

Beyond identifying, critiquing, and counteracting the colonial imaginary within the museum, the ability to imagine decolonisation is fundamental to the institution's transformation. What, then, is the relationship between the decolonial imaginary and the museum? Can an institution built from the foundations of colonialism be decolonised, and is that even the point? Smith contends that, regarding Aotearoa New Zealand's "institutions of colonialism," it is always timely to ask, "What is the role and purpose of cultural institutions in a decolonising imagination?" and 'is there a role and purpose for cultural institutions in a decolonised future?'"<sup>368</sup> I believe the museum will continue to have a purpose, although what that is will depend on what we can imagine for a decolonised world beyond it. Ariella Aïsha Azoulay, curator and filmmaker, cautions that "it is not possible to decolonize the museum without decolonizing the world."<sup>369</sup> Azoulay argues that decolonising the museum is important work, but must coincide with the awareness that it "cannot be limited to discrete objects, museums, or archives."<sup>370</sup> Furthermore, beyond hiring individual curators from peoples who have had their wealth expropriated, decolonising the museum is "about opening the imperial borders and letting people re-build their worlds in proximity to their objects."<sup>371</sup> Perhaps if the museum is 'indigenised' enough, it might itself become a spring for the broader decolonial project; perhaps it will become so transformed we can no longer call it a 'museum.' Presently, as the holder of memory, stories, and treasures, the museum holds power over collective understandings of the intertwined past, present, and future: how can we know where we are going if we do not understand where we have come from, and how we got here?

The museum also holds the evidence of relations ruptured through the expansion of empire and settler-colonialism, and is therefore a potential site for decolonising through restoration. As Smith reminds us, "decolonising is only partly about dismantling colonialism. It is also partly about restorative processes for addressing and healing the past ... [and] the reclamation

---

<sup>367</sup> Peter Brunt et al., "Writing Plentitudes," *Marinade: Aotearoa Journal of Moana Art*, no. 1 (2022): 79.

<sup>368</sup> Smith, "Decolonising Cultural Institutions," 6.

<sup>369</sup> Sabrina Alli, "Ariella Aïsha Azoulay: 'It Is Not Possible to Decolonize the Museum without Decolonizing the World,'" *Guernica Mag*, March 12, 2020, <https://www.guernicamag.com/miscellaneous-files-ariella-aisha-azoulay/>.

<sup>370</sup> Alli, "Ariella Aïsha Azoulay."

<sup>371</sup> Alli, "Ariella Aïsha Azoulay."

of Indigenous Māori sovereignty. These things then create new spaces for imagining a different future.”<sup>372</sup> Echoing Smith, Lopesi argues that the decolonial imaginary has a dual mission: critiquing colonialism, as it ties itself to the colonial imaginary while simultaneously rejecting it, and building new worlds, possibilities, and ways of doing things.<sup>373</sup> The decolonial project, therefore, can be understood as a process of dismantling and rebuilding. Imagination is the realm of artists, and artistic practice is often one of world-building. Lopesi draws our attention to the generative potential of the decolonial imaginary, describing it as “a productive force: in reacting and relating to the limits of a colonial imaginary, it is involved in a world-building process. Dismantling pervasive colonial structures of thought, while building something else, occurs at the most creative level of the imagination.”<sup>374</sup> Herein lies the transformational power to be found at the intersection of artistic practice and the museum. Lopesi attests that imagining “a social world beyond the colonial imaginary’s institutions of cartography and nation-states is imperative to remember deep histories of Moana Cosmopolitanism and work toward collective decolonial futures.”<sup>375</sup> The social world through which Moana Cosmopolitans imagine, according to Lopesi, “is built on the relational ethic of vā relations, expressed locally, globally and virtually to mediate its place in the world.”<sup>376</sup> In reclaiming Indigenous knowledge, sovereignty, and histories, and reactivating our systems of relation and world-building, decolonial museum ecologies come into view.

---

<sup>372</sup> Smith, “Decolonising Cultural Institutions,” 7.

<sup>373</sup> Lopesi, “Moana Cosmopolitan Imaginaries,” 64.

<sup>374</sup> Lopesi, “Moana Cosmopolitan Imaginaries,” 72–73.

<sup>375</sup> Lana Lopesi, “Vā Moana: Relational Geographies of Moana Cosmopolitan Worlds” (paper presented at the Vā Moana: Space and Relationality in Pacific Thought and Identity Conference, held online, November 24–25, 2021).

<sup>376</sup> Lopesi, “Vā Moana.”

## Artists Within the Museum

Imaginaries are the territory of artists: they are often at the forefront of decolonising the museum. Throughout this research project, I have asked the question, what responsibility do I have to the museum? Ana Iti (Te Rarawa, Pākehā), asks the inverse: “What responsibility does the Museum have to me?”<sup>377</sup> In Iti’s moving-image work *Treasures Left by Our Ancestors* (2016), the artist crouches in front of two exhibitions at Canterbury Museum. Writing on Iti’s work, Simon Palenski (Pākehā) notes that the first diorama “is dedicated to, in the Museum’s words, tangata whenua and the extinct moa; ‘the giant, flightless birds they [tangata whenua] hunted.’”<sup>378</sup> On her work, Iti states:

Did I, as a child, walk through the Canterbury Museum and feel like I saw my ancestors looking back at me? Could my Māori ancestors only stand if crouched in anticipation to extinguish a species while the forest burned in the background? It was as if Māori had never been explorers who came to Aotearoa using a sophisticated system of navigation by the stars and ocean currents. That instead, they passively sat while, according to the accompanying display text, ‘The sea supplied an abundance of fish, marine mammals, shellfish and other foods’. So I ended up there crouched in front of the dioramas, trying to be a part of it, really looking.<sup>379</sup>

In the work, footage of Iti squatting in the dim exhibition space is interspersed with close ups of her hands and legs, struggling to hold their position; the camera shifts back and forth between the mannequins’ faces and the artist’s, directed towards them. It is as if Iti is trying to commune with the characters on display, much like I have with taonga in the museum. *How did you come to be here? What have you witnessed from behind the glass? What message would you like to transmit?*

The dioramas are an absurd rendering of the colonial imaginary. In conversation with Palenski, Iti reveals that it struck her how almost all of the mannequins are crouching or kneeling, in contrast with colonial European ones elsewhere in the museum, standing “uniformly tall and upright.” Iti’s chosen position, nearing eye level with the mannequins, is partly “to empathise with the people depicted, and to get closer to what it might feel like to kneel or crouch for such a long time.”<sup>380</sup> Williams recalls that the dioramas have been disavowed by Ngāi Tahu leaders and the Canterbury Museum’s iwi liaison group, Ōhākī ō Ngā Tipuna, since their 1992 opening.<sup>381</sup> Ōhākī member and Ngāi Tahu representative on the Museum’s board, Puamiria Parata-Goodall (Ngāi Tahu, Ngāti Māmoe, Waitaha, Ngāti

---

<sup>377</sup> Simon Palenski, “Ana Iti: Before the Displays,” *Circuit*, January 14, 2018, <https://www.circuit.org.nz/writing-and-podcast/ana-iti-before-the-displays>.

<sup>378</sup> Palenski, “Ana Iti.”

<sup>379</sup> Ana Iti, “Ana Iti, *Treasures Left by Our Ancestors* (2016),” 2016, accessed January 5, 2024, excerpt from moving-image work, <https://www.circuit.org.nz/work/treasures-left-by-our-ancestors-excerpt>.

<sup>380</sup> Palenski, “Ana Iti.”

<sup>381</sup> Williams, “To Stand, to Fight: A Matter of Interpretation,” 121.



**Figure 17.** Ana Iti, *Treasures left by our ancestors*, 2016, single-channel digital video, colour, sound. Courtesy of the artist.

Kahungunu), describes the exhibition as portraying early Māori as cave-dwelling Neanderthals: “That is not an accurate portrayal of my ancestors and it locks them in that space. It leaves us hanging back there as though we disappeared. And we didn't disappear, we're still here.”<sup>382</sup> Canterbury Museum’s ‘representation’ of Māori is summoned and frozen in time by the colonial imaginary. In 2020, the Museum addressed responses to the dioramas by partially covering them and producing a label declaring their commitment to working with Ngāi Tahu on replacing the displays.<sup>383</sup> In 2022, the models were removed in a ceremony held with mana whenua and staff. Parata-Goodall expressed that this healing step meant the narrative could begin to be rebalanced from an iwi perspective.<sup>384</sup>

*Treasures Left by Our Ancestors* has an ongoing legacy in Ōtautahi Christchurch. Acquired by Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū, “Ana’s work will remain in the city as an enduring witness to the displays” and a reminder of the persistence of Ngāi Tahu and other tangata whenua in calling for “a more respectful and accurate representation of history to hold space in the museum.”<sup>385</sup> In Iti’s work, Williams sees “generations of people grappling with how tīpuna are displayed and how history has been interpreted in museums.”<sup>386</sup> Similarly, Bridget Reweti and Melanie Oliver propose that through Iti’s practice we are asked “to consider the expansiveness of our histories and question who is making our archives for

<sup>382</sup> Williams, “To Stand, to Fight: A Matter of Interpretation”; Cate Broughton, “Complaints About Māori Exhibit Not Addressed for Four Years,” *Stuff*, June 15, 2020, <https://www.stuff.co.nz/the-press/news/300035413/complaints-about-mori-exhibit-not-addressed-for-four-years>.

<sup>383</sup> Williams, “To Stand, to Fight: A Matter of Interpretation.”

<sup>384</sup> “Canterbury Museum Removes ‘Offensive and Inaccurate’ Māori Mannequins,” *Stuff*, August 17, 2022, <https://www.stuff.co.nz/the-press/news/129600842/canterbury-museum-removes-offensive-and-inaccurate-mori-mannequins>.

<sup>385</sup> Williams, “To Stand, to Fight: A Matter of Interpretation,” 124.

<sup>386</sup> Williams, “To Stand, to Fight: A Matter of Interpretation.”

future generations to discover.”<sup>387</sup> Works like *Treasures Left by Our Ancestors* firstly act as a mirror, reflecting the colonial imaginary back to us so it may be examined, and, secondly, stitch these moments of rupture/reflection/repair/restoration into the archive for others to find. Palenski suggests that “through a simple, sustained act, her intervention considers how we imagine the past and what kind of stories and impressions are left on the museum visitors by these displays as they pause, look and then move on.”<sup>388</sup> Set apart from the other visitors, who walk by and speak in hushed tones around her, Iti holds a different kind of space: not a visitor, not on display, but a living embodiment of true ngā taonga tuku iho — in all of their complexity.

Filmed without asking for permission from the Museum,<sup>389</sup> Iti’s work is an instance of counteracting the colonial imaginary from *within* the museum, but *outside* of a relationship with them — a renegade activation of a collection. An arts collective that takes this to new heights is Looty. Founded by Nigerian English designer Chidi Nwaubani and Somali Swedish creative director Ahmed Abokor, Looty seeks to “continuously reimagine and redefine the digital sphere.”<sup>390</sup> Following ‘digital heists’ from the British Museum across 2022–2023, Looty have proliferated their cultural heritage through digital and physical realms, using LiDAR and augmented and virtual reality technologies. Wearing hockey masks, the artists legally captured LiDAR scans of treasures stolen from the African continent.<sup>391</sup> Their scans of the Benin Bronzes were sold as limited-edition NFTs, with 20% of the profits going to a fund supporting young African artists,<sup>392</sup> while the Hajar Rashid (Rosetta Stone) was digitally repatriated to its hometown in Egypt.<sup>393</sup>

In 2023, Looty collaborated with Milele Museum, an African virtual museum that celebrates “both historical artifacts and contemporary African art, independent of Western validation,” to develop a treasure hunt game,<sup>394</sup> and were featured in the Venice Biennale. In their installation *SA ‘EY’ AMA: To Commemorate*, plastic crates serve as plinths for 3D printed and digitally rendered treasures. The project is described as the “digital repatriation of stolen art, comprised of digital remnants of looted objects from prestigious institutions located primarily in the Global North.”<sup>395</sup> Looty state that through this process of “digital restitution,” they can avoid bureaucracy and free up access for a younger generation of Africans to “connect with their rightful heritage. Current debates rage endlessly around whether

---

<sup>387</sup> Oliver and Reweti, “A Celebration of Māori Moving Image,” 9.

<sup>388</sup> Palenski, “Ana Iti.”

<sup>389</sup> Ana Iti, Instagram message to author, September 1, 2023.

<sup>390</sup> Looty, “Looty,” accessed January 6, 2024, <https://www.looty.art/>.

<sup>391</sup> Chantel Tattoli, “A High-Tech Heist at the British Museum,” *The New Yorker*, April 17, 2023, <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2023/04/24/a-high-tech-heist-at-the-british-museum>.

<sup>392</sup> Dan Hicks, “How NFTs and 3D Printing Are Changing Restitution,” *Frieze*, January 3, 2023, <https://www.frieze.com/article/how-nfts-and-3d-printing-are-changing-restitution>.

<sup>393</sup> Looty, “The Return of Rashid,” accessed January 6, 2024, <https://www.looty.art/works/rashid>.

<sup>394</sup> Looty, “Collaboration with Milele Museum,” accessed January 6, 2024, <https://www.looty.art/works/milele>.

<sup>395</sup> “Looty: Mnemonic,” La Biennale di Venezia, accessed January 6, 2024, <https://www.labiennale.org/en/architecture/2023/mnemonic/looty>.

artefacts should be physically returned; Looty have taken matters into their own hands.<sup>396</sup> Looty injects a radical, autonomous, futuristic energy into the discussion around repatriation. Rather than wait for museums filled with stolen treasures to decide to do the right thing, Looty uses emerging technologies and the tools at hand to push against the boundaries of institutions, extending our ability to imagine what restitution and sovereignty over one's collective artistic heritage might look like. Looty's projects also demonstrate that restitution is not one-size-fits-all: different cultural contexts demand different pathways. In Aotearoa New Zealand, where museums are full of treasures that ritually manifest ancestors and atua, mechanisms for safely negotiating tapu and noa, mauri and whakapapa, are vital considerations in their potential digital rendering and proliferation.

Regarding artists working with museum collections, Te Papa Curator Megan Tamati-Quennell (Te Ātiawa, Ngāi Tahu) reflects that "it is clear that artists read and work with collections differently than curators do or perhaps can. 'Artist-as-curator' projects ... are liberating in the way that collections are reconsidered and experienced, and in the ways that institutions are critiqued."<sup>397</sup> For Maia Nuku, the goal of working with artists is to activate static galleries. Nuku asks, "How do we convey to visitors the dynamic, sensual repertoire of words, gesture and dance that were originally conceived as an integral part but are now absent?"<sup>398</sup> An artist that has worked with museums for two decades is Rosanna Raymond, long-time member of the Pacific Sisters (1992) and the SaVĀge K'lub (2010). In this space, her work "has focused on the revitalisation and reactivation of the mana (power) and mauli [cosmological energy] trapped in body adornments or measina in museum collections." Some of these are crafted by Raymond, while others were made by unnamed creators and "enmeshed with the colonial legacies that acquired them," legacies which Raymond shares with them. Through her exploration of the 'Vā Body,' the artist's body becomes "the primary material through which I acti.VĀ.te the mauli ... of my artistic creations." Describing museums as "a multiverse of red tape," Raymond advocates for the importance of learning to navigate them in order to reactivate and create relationships with the people who work, and the measina that reside, within the institution.<sup>399</sup>

*Pasifika Styles — Artists inside the museum* (2006) was a two-year exhibition co-curated by Raymond and Amiria Salmond (Pākehā) at Cambridge University's Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology (MAA). Described by Andrew Moutu as "a polyphonic collage,"<sup>400</sup> the

---

<sup>396</sup> "Looty: Mnemonic," La Biennale di Venezia.

<sup>397</sup> Megan Tamati-Quennell, "From the Ground up... Building the Modern and Contemporary Māori and Indigenous Art Collection at Te Papa," in *Uneven Bodies (Reader)*, ed. Ruth Buchanan et al. (Ngāmotu New Plymouth: Govett-Brewster Art Gallery, 2021), 13.

<sup>398</sup> Kathleen Ash-Milby et al., "Knowledge Positions in Aotearoa and Turtle Island Art Museums," *Artlink* 40, no. 2 (June 2020): 17, <https://dx.doi.org/10.3316/informit.I32778571812385>.

<sup>399</sup> Rosanna Raymond, "Conser.Vā.Tion | Acti.Vā.Tion: Culti.Vā.Ting Niu Museology Practices through the Vā Body," in "Vā Moana: Space and Relationality in Pacific Thought and Identity," ed. Tina Engels-Schwarzpaul, Lana Lopesi, Billie Lythberg, Emily Parr, Albert L. Refiti, and Arielle Walker, unpublished manuscript, August 30 2024.

<sup>400</sup> Andrew Moutu, "Pasifika Styles: A Polyphonic Collage at the University of Cambridge Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology," *Anthropology Today* 23, no. 2 (April 2007): 24, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4620350>.

exhibition was an opportunity for thirty-five artists of Moana descent to reconnect with and respond to treasures in the MAA collections. The project aimed “to challenge the divide between art and artefact, past and present practices” and speak to the Museum’s legacies. Ultimately, the artists’ presence “had the greatest impact on the museum staff and protocols, and for the artefacts.”<sup>401</sup> The project also had a profound effect on Raymond’s practice:

MAA is where I experienced mana, maui and the measina as tangible entities ... It is where I saw the collections reinvigorated by the presence of their gafa (living descendants). This cemented my feeling that the museum had a feagaiga (a covenant) with the living, which needed to be conserved; it was not enough to conserve the past or the physical condition of the measina. Rather, museums need to acknowledge the relationships, past, present and future and to tend to them, to teu le vā.<sup>402</sup>

Lisa Reihana’s work in *Pasifika Styles, he tautoko* (2006), attends to and enlivens these relations extending from taonga. Reihana responded to a tekoteko, a carved figure in MAA’s collections that she is connected to through Ngāpuhi. In *he tautoko*, the tekoteko, whose name is lost, sits in a glass vitrine with headphones over his ears. Behind him, 35 minutes of HD video play on a portrait-oriented screen. Reihana assembled the video through recordings she made of taonga Māori in the collection, “heitiki pendants, weaponry, kauri gum and kete [baskets], as well as the accession numbers indelibly written on pounamu,” using “digital filters and editing techniques to create multilayered images and animated tukutuku patterns.”<sup>403</sup> Footage of Aotearoa is interspersed, including blue skies, evoking the placement of tekoteko atop wharenuī.<sup>404</sup> Outside the vitrine, three telephone handsets connect to stereos playing 15 minutes of different audio tracks. They include the tapping of Lyonel Grant (Ngāti Pikiao, Te Arawa) carving patterns from the tekoteko, a Māori choir singing, and Reihana reading conflicting provenances from the taonga’s catalogue cards in “an authoritarian BBC voice.”<sup>405</sup> The viewer listens to the soundtracks via handsets while standing kanohi-ki-te-kanohi with the headphone-wearing taonga, a dynamic that Reihana conceives as evoking a conversation with a tipuna.<sup>406</sup> Between the video and audio, the tekoteko is “contextualised by sounds and images of home.”<sup>407</sup> The digital tukutuku panels, which reflect in the vitrine’s panes, recall the woven walls of a wharenuī. The taonga is, albeit temporarily, immersed within his system of relations; housed by his whakapapa connections.

---

<sup>401</sup> Raymond, “Conser.Vā.Tion | Acti.Vā.Tion.”

<sup>402</sup> Raymond, “Conser.Vā.Tion | Acti.Vā.Tion.”

<sup>403</sup> Julie Adams et al., eds., *Artefacts of Encounter: Cook’s Voyages, Colonial Collecting and Museum Histories* (Dunedin: Otago University Press, 2016), 252.

<sup>404</sup> Lisa Reihana, “*He Tautoko* (2006): A New Media Installation,” in *Pasifika Styles: Artists inside the Museum*, ed. Rosanna Raymond and Amiria Salmond (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology; Otago University Press, 2008), 52.

<sup>405</sup> Reihana, “*He Tautoko* (2006),” 51.

<sup>406</sup> Reihana, “*He Tautoko* (2006),” 52–53.

<sup>407</sup> Reihana, “*He Tautoko* (2006),” 52.



**Figure 18.** Alex Monteith, *Coastal Flows / Coastal Incursions: In Light of Time*, 2017, four-channel video. Installation view, Te Wai Ngutu Kākā Gallery (formerly ST Paul Street), Sam Hartnett. Courtesy of the artist.

In *he tautoko*, Reihana’s desires for the taonga echo my own for the Kronfeld Collection. Furthermore, the work excites me as an example of bringing taonga tuku iho and new technologies together to reflect Māori worldviews — a continuum of practice that is simultaneously ancient and futuristic, a quality of this project’s artworks, too. Maree Mills posits that Reihana “uses new technologies to give a new history back to old *taonga*.” In Mills’ view, the contrasting of taonga in the collection with Reihana’s own imagery creates “a fusion of old and new representations of taonga. She rehabilitates objects that have been stripped of their cultural context and significance and now reside halfway across the world.”<sup>408</sup> In *he tautoko* and *Pasifika Styles*, more broadly, the ancient and new coalesce, recalling Mills’ and Robertson’s shimmering, liquid posts.<sup>409</sup> As Moutu also observes, it is no wonder the exhibition expresses a sense of fluidity when the artists’ personal and collective histories summon movement across oceans.<sup>410</sup>

I understand *Coastal Flows / Coastal Incursions*, a work by Belfast-born/Aotearoa New Zealand-based artist Alex Monteith, as a decolonial approach to museum collections through collaboration. In the work’s 2019 iteration installed at the Dunedin Public Art Gallery, relationships between artists, mana whenua, archaeologists, and museums unfold. Monteith’s years-long research project brings pre-colonial and early contact archaeological material

<sup>408</sup> Mills, “Contemporary Māori Women’s New Media Art Practice,” 77.

<sup>409</sup> Mills, “Pou Rewa”; Robertson, “Nga Whatu-Ora,” 144.

<sup>410</sup> Moutu, “Pasifika Styles,” 24.

excavated from Te Mimi o Tū Te Rakiwhānoa (the Fiordland coastal and marine area) between 1968 and 1972 ‘into the light.’<sup>411</sup> Conservators and curators reveal and catalogue the material in a four-channel moving-image work. Their conversations begin to reconnect the material to people, place, and a lifeworld preceding the darkness of a storage box. Monteith intersperses footage of the inventory process and archival matter with the fiords themselves, reminding the viewer of the material’s origin place. Having experienced Tamatea myself, I can easily grasp the immensity of the filmed environment, its glacier-carved, ocean-flooded valleys teeming with life. In the work, we observe relationships being restored. Each piece of re-surfaced material becomes a knot in the web of relations, its threads connecting across deep time scales of the whenua to its present-day descendants. Although different in form, the aims of Monteith’s project resonate with my own.

Beneath a light shaft in Auckland Museum’s *Te Whiwhinga The Imaginarium* gallery is an artwork by Will Ngakuru (Te Roroa, Ngāti Pou, Te Rarawa, Ngāpuhi) and Nicole Charles, *Haumanu: Will you breathe for me?* Referencing the story of Rātā, the sculptural tree has branches reaching into the corners of the space and a hollow ‘trunk’ that visitors can enter. In a way, this organic column form — assembled from macrocarpa, tōtara, and kauri panels — is an antidote to the marble ones of the Museum’s original facade: the artists were struck by the colonnades’ size and representation of “the colonial legacy of empire.”<sup>412</sup> Ngakuru and Charles’ community of Waimamaku has a long history with Auckland Museum: in 1902, waka kōiwi, wooden vessels containing bones, were removed from burial caves in their valley and deposited in the Auckland Museum. Their ancestors’ bones were returned to the valley around 1988. Ngakuru reflects that, in some ways, the work is “a small gesture, where we’ve now given back to the museum this taonga, received back our bones, and the museum still holds those vessels, or waka kōiwi.”<sup>413</sup> For Ngakuru, *Haumanu* is a way to acknowledge this history, and the work’s opening ceremony was an opportunity for the Waimamaku community and the Museum to form a connection. Additionally, in the weeks spent within the Museum assembling the work, Ngakuru found getting to know the workers and how they look after the taonga to be healing.<sup>414</sup> Beyond being an example of positive outcomes through artists working within the museum, *Haumanu* raises the idea of exchange: something in place of another. Following the repatriation of kōiwi, a descendant of those tipuna offered something that *does* have a place in a future-oriented museum: an artwork that acknowledges both rupture and restoration, and provides a place of respite within a challenging space. Out of a painful history, healing and hopeful relationships were able to grow. They are imbued within *Haumanu*, a rākau (tree) whose branches unfurl across the gallery, canopy stretching towards the light.

---

<sup>411</sup> David Eggleton, “Kā Paroro o Haumumu: Coastal Flows/Coastal Excursions,” Circuit, September 4, 2019, <https://www.circuit.org.nz/writing-and-podcast/ka-paroro-o-haumumu-coastal-flows>.

<sup>412</sup> Will Ngakuru, in Auckland War Memorial Museum, “Haumanu: ‘Will You Breathe For Me?’ Auckland Museum,” January 9, 2023, video, <https://youtu.be/i45fJDOFH2M?si=INUB4NkzMr-N78Lr>.

<sup>413</sup> Ngakuru, in Auckland War Memorial Museum, “Haumanu.”

<sup>414</sup> Ngakuru, in Auckland War Memorial Museum, “Haumanu.”



**Figure 19.** Kauri, Aotea (Great Barrier Island), 2023.

# Decolonial Museum Ecologies

## Returns and Reconnections

Repatriation is a strong current in decolonial museum ecologies, carrying treasures home. Noelle Kahanu (Kanaka Ōiwi), veteran of the Bishop Museum, asserts that “there is no better definition of sovereignty than the return of our ancestral treasures and our ancestors to the sands of their birth.”<sup>415</sup> Amber Aranui, founder of the New Zealand Repatriation Research Network, outlines repatriation as “the return or something or someone back to their place or country of origin ... it’s about reconciliation, reunification, and reconnection of taonga and tūpuna back with us that live today.”<sup>416</sup> Aranui stresses that, for tangata whenua, the importance of repatriation lies in understanding that the dead and their resting places are tapu — removing them breaks that tapu, disrupting the wairua of both person and place. Repatriation restores the mana of the tūpuna: “Enabling the wairua or spirit of the person, the tūpuna, to finally rest upon their return home to the whenua, renews the connections between the dead and the land, and strengthens the connection with the living.”<sup>417</sup> Regarding stolen treasures, Kahanu questions whether, “in the moment of the theft, are the seeds of their return sewn? And when we talk about the tā or the time ... it’s as though the fate of our ancestors is directly tied to our consciousness today.” Kahanu wonders if “our contemporary liberation is intertwined with ... the original wrongness, such that only by our actions can the pain of the past be undone.”<sup>418</sup> If we understand the museum as part of an ecology, existing within the vā or wā, it follows that Kahanu is correct: we are threaded to our ancestral pasts; we stitch their/our futures.

It seems that a major hurdle for the museum in recognising the sovereignty of Indigenous peoples over their treasures is to relinquish control over decisions around their fate. There should be no question about whether human remains and treasures (stolen or otherwise) should travel home when their communities seek their return — regardless of whether an ideal conservation environment awaits them. The preservation of treasures in perpetuity, is, after all, entangled with the imperial desire to hold the unknown in stasis; to examine it, define, and display it. Indigenous peoples should be empowered by the museum to fulfil their wishes for their treasures — to conserve, lay to rest, return to circulation, or otherwise — intertwining their ancestral practices, present realities, and desired futures. As an example in te ao Māori, Paul Tapsell shares that when some taonga imbued with the wairua of particular ancestors become too fragile for display, they are committed back to the

---

<sup>415</sup> Glass et al., “Knowledge and Power.”

<sup>416</sup> Aranui, “Tahuri Ana Te Tai,” 61; Kutia, *Repatriation*.

<sup>417</sup> Aranui, “Tahuri Ana Te Tai,” 62–63.

<sup>418</sup> Noelle Kahanu, “Contextualizing Re(Generations) and the Louis R. Sullivan Collection of Bishop Museum” (paper presented at the Vā Moana: Space and Relationality in Pacific Thought and Identity Conference, held online, November 24–25, 2021).

whenua and the wairua is ritually transferred into a new taonga.<sup>419</sup> Henry Arifeae (Papua New Guinea), Cultural Coordinator at PNGNMAG, offers another perspective, expressing gratitude to MacGregor for removing treasures from Papua that would have likely perished if they remained. Arifeae calls for Papuan treasures kept in global institutions that are not represented in PNGNMAG's collections to be returned, so that emerging generations can know and understand their cultural heritage.<sup>420</sup> Highlighting the importance of access to collections, Gaye Sculthorpe proposed that often the first step in reconnecting treasures is the research process to find them and untangle their journeys and stories.<sup>421</sup> I hope that through this project, the beginnings of reconnecting the Kronfeld taonga, measina, and treasures with their systems of relation are kindled.

When treasures come home, it is not just the tangible item that returns: ancestral knowledge, practices, and ways of being return with them. A striking recent example is the homecoming of Te Rā, the only known surviving pre-colonial Māori sail, from the British Museum. On a drizzly dawn in November 2023, I attended the pōwhiri for Te Rā at Auckland Museum. The karanga resounding through the marble atrium was transcendent. It was incredibly moving to be in the presence of Te Rā. The Museum's exhibition, *Te Rā: Navigating Home* (2023), charts a timeline of the sail, which radiocarbon dating suggests was woven after 1770. During Captain Cook's first voyage to Aotearoa New Zealand, a botanist sketched a waka featuring a similar sail (1769); on the second voyage, a naturalist described a waka with a feather-fringed sail (1772-1775). Likely after rediscovering Te Rā in the British Museum's basement, the English ethnologist James Edge-Partington printed a sketch of the sail in his *Ethnographical Album of the Pacific Islands* (1898). The ethnologist sent a photograph of Te Rā to the director of the Dominion Museum, who published it on the cover of the 1908 museum bulletin. In 1922, Te Rangihīroa presented a wero (challenge) to weavers and the Auckland Museum Institute: that detailed photographs of Te Rā "should be obtained from the British museum and replicas plaited for our own museums ... Sails have been so long out of date that the possibility of obtaining such a copy of an authentic old-time sail should not be neglected."<sup>422</sup>

Almost a century after Te Rangihīroa's wero, the weavers picked it up; with Maureen Lander as their mentor, Te Rā Ringa Raupā was formed in 2019. Te Rā has held a "quiet fascination" for Lander, artist and weaver, for three decades.<sup>423</sup> She travelled to the British Museum in 1998, where Te Rā was exhibited for the first time in *Maori*. All but one seam was covered by Velcro for display purposes.<sup>424</sup> Describing Te Rā as a kuia (female elder), Lander observed

---

<sup>419</sup> Tapsell, "The Flight of Pareraututu," 331.

<sup>420</sup> Chan, *Kambek: Reconnecting Collections*, 22.

<sup>421</sup> Sculthorpe, "Finding Your Ancestors' Objects."

<sup>422</sup> Janke and Lander, "Te Wero o Te Rangihīroa."

<sup>423</sup> Janke and Lander, "Te Wero o Te Rangihīroa."

<sup>424</sup> Janke and Lander, "Te Wero o Te Rangihīroa."

that the sail is like the sun: she was kept in the dark for a long time, before rising again.<sup>425</sup> Te Rā Ringa Raupā wove Hine Mārama, a smaller model of Te Rā, in 2021; the following year Māhere Tū ki te Rangī, a recreation of the sail, was completed. Weaver Makareta Janke (Ngāpuhi, Ngāti Porou, Tainui) shared that Te Rā has been their teacher, bringing home mātauranga (knowledge) and resurfacing techniques that were not known previously by the weavers.<sup>426</sup> Presently, Te Rā reclines majestically in Auckland Museum’s exhibition, with her mokopuna, Hine Mārama and Māhere Tū ki te Rangī, nearby. However, the return of Te Rā is only temporary: the British Museum has ‘loaned’ her back to her people. The display records Lander’s hope that “she will eventually come home to stay. But in the meantime, we’ve got the knowledge, the mātauranga.”<sup>427</sup> These rā were used coastally, and in harbours and rivers to augment paddling.<sup>428</sup> She was created to travel, but Te Rā was never meant to voyage across oceans — she should be free to travel the currents and flows of her own whenua.

The museum is a site of discovery for artists and practitioners seeking to reawaken ancestral practices. If settler-colonisation had not disrupted these practices, reclamation would likely be unnecessary. However, the surviving treasures — collected and preserved as ‘relics’ of fading peoples — act as embers, ready to ignite dormant artforms. As a curator, Isaac Te Awa facilitates access to Te Papa’s Mātauranga Māori collection for Māori artists to engage with taonga and develop their own practices, explaining that it is “about bringing people inside the building and connecting with things that they’ve been so detached from.” Te Awa contends that Māori have “been so separated from whakapapa toi taonga that we’ve forgotten how to make a lot of these.” The taonga, whose “lives are being artificially extended by being in the museum, are also providing an invaluable resource to teach our people. [They] are helping to rebuild us culturally as a people.”<sup>429</sup> A few examples among many of practitioners making use of museum collections are: Matthew McIntyre Wilson (Taranaki, Ngā Māhanga, Titahi), artist and weaver who cites ‘maker unknown’ as the most important collaborator in his hīnaki (eel basket) research;<sup>430</sup> Nikau Hindin (Te Rarawa, Ngāpuhi), aute (Māori barkcloth) maker whose process is informed by 15 beaters in collections;<sup>431</sup> and Mokonui-a-rangi Smith (Te Arawa, Tainui, Takitimu, Horouta), tā moko (tattoo) artist dedicated to reviving the tools for marking skin. Treasures in the museum can act as portals between Indigenous pasts and futures, allowing artists and practitioners to slip through the spiral of time/space. They reclaim, reawaken, and reimagine creative practice, in line with Te Awa’s reminder that “our people aren’t static ... we were always dynamic, and we always evolved to our environment

---

<sup>425</sup> Janke and Lander, “Te Wero o Te Rangihiroa.”

<sup>426</sup> Janke and Lander, “Te Wero o Te Rangihiroa.”

<sup>427</sup> *Te Rā: Navigating Home*, 2023, Auckland War Memorial Museum.

<sup>428</sup> Janke and Lander, “Te Wero o Te Rangihiroa.”

<sup>429</sup> Kutia, *Lost in the Colonisation Machine*.

<sup>430</sup> Isaac Te Awa, “Mahi ki te Awa Whanganui: Revival on the Whanganui River; An Interview with Artist Matthew McIntyre Wilson by Isaac Te Awa,” *The Vessel*, November 2021, <https://vessel-magazine.no/issues/1/archives/matthew-mcintyre-wilson>.

<sup>431</sup> Rongomai Grbic-Hoskins and Nikau Hindin, “Aute” (presentation at the Toitū te Mātauranga, Toitū te Ao Toi symposium, Waipapa Marae, The University of Auckland, Auckland, November 24, 2022).

and our practices.”<sup>432</sup> As both a curator and a maker, Te Awa understands this intimately. Furthermore, he believes “that our taonga carry the living mauri of our thoughts.”<sup>433</sup> Repatriations, returns, and reconnections do not solely concern treasures in tangible form: knowledge of art, life-sustaining, and ritual practices is brought into the light. When we engage with treasures, we also engage with the cosmological energies<sup>434</sup> of our ancestors, imbued through the treasures’ creation and utilisation. We loop another thread in our systems of relation, our whakapapa or vā; we tuitui a small tear in our woven universe.

In the context of returns and reconnections, what does ‘home’ mean? If a treasure is repatriated to a national museum rather than its community of origin, has it come home? There are perhaps as many answers to this question as treasures held in museums — pretending otherwise would do them a disservice. For people in today’s world of cosmopolitanism, urbanisation, or displacement, ‘home’ can have elastic and permeable edges. Notions of reconnection and return are nuanced by Sa’iliemanu Lilomaiava-Doktor’s concept of malaga, travelling back and forth, and Lana Lopesi’s thinking around the host and home binary. Lilomaiava-Doktor explains that malaga “represents the different places Samoans live without inserting them into dichotomies such as *i’inei* (home, local) and *fafo* (overseas, abroad).” According to Lilomaiava-Doktor, neither *i’inei* and *fafo* are static places; rather, they “meet and overlap in various places in the ‘diaspora’ as contemporary population movements maintain the social space, vā, between people.”<sup>435</sup> Lopesi echoed Lilomaiava-Doktor in asserting that “cross border practices are not limited to the host and home binary of transnationalism.”<sup>436</sup> Calling for the need to conceptualise Moana social worlds, Lopesi raised the fact that Epeli Hau’ofa “famously criticised this geographical deterministic view that focusses on national boundaries, instead asserting the Indigenous Moana perception of relationality that moves beyond today’s national borders.”<sup>437</sup> She continued:

The emphasis on relationality in a Moana worldview, as expressed through the concept of vā, demonstrates how relationality plays a key role in determining a moana social world. The moana social world is no longer restricted to just host and home ... Being based in relationality and not one’s physical or geographic location, vā moana, like moana cosmopolitanism, is based on the ordinary experience of the world of crossing borders whether it be physical, figurative or digital.<sup>438</sup>

---

<sup>432</sup> Kutia, *Lost in the Colonisation Machine*.

<sup>433</sup> Kutia, *Lost in the Colonisation Machine*.

<sup>434</sup> Jamie Averill Metzger, “Mauri and Museums: Who Really Cares? The Tensions between Kaitiakitanga and Museology” (PhD thesis, University of Otago, 2022), ii, <http://hdl.handle.net/10523/12773>.

<sup>435</sup> Lilomaiava-Doktor, “Beyond ‘Migration,’” 12.

<sup>436</sup> Lopesi, “Vā Moana.”

<sup>437</sup> Lopesi, “Vā Moana.”

<sup>438</sup> Lopesi, “Vā Moana.”

In understanding Moana Oceania as a ‘sea of islands,’ and people as simultaneously rooted and routed, rigid boundaries and binaries fall away. What, then, might this mean for treasures housed by the museum?

Reconnection with ancestral treasures and practices can, of course, occur in diasporic museums. Maia Nuku shares that “for those of us with blood-ties to the Pacific, who live and work overseas, working as kaitiaki (custodians) taking care of Pacific collections outside the region, the taonga act as anchor points which connect us to home.”<sup>439</sup> Kirsten McGavin expresses similar sentiments about Papuan treasures, seeing “value in having some of MacGregor’s collection in Australia because there are lots of people who can connect to their place through those objects ... These objects can serve as a bridge between them and ... their place.”<sup>440</sup> Some scholars refer to overseas treasures as ‘ambassadors.’<sup>441</sup> “While many Māori may wish for their taonga to be repatriated,” Ngarino Ellis et al. posit, “others such as Ngāti Porou at Tokomaru Bay with their whare Ruatēpupuke in the Field Museum, Chicago, are content that their treasure is being used as an ambassador for New Zealand and a hub for Māori living in the US.”<sup>442</sup> Even if they *can* come home, perhaps not all treasures are meant to. That some home communities choose the museum as an ongoing house for selected treasures signals a role it might fulfil in future decolonial ecologies.

## The Digital Realm

The digital realm constantly presents new opportunities, challenges, and possibilities for the museum. While the digital realm is an exciting and significant context engaged by the moving-image element of this thesis, it should augment and expand modes of engagement, rather than repeal and replace analogue ones: we may live in a digital age, but not everyone has equal access to it.<sup>443</sup> Regarding access to museum collections and archives, Lopesi articulates the decolonial potential of the digital realm. She notes that a “shift away from physical spaces also prizes the archive away from the privacy and control that its housing within an institution implied.” The resulting “increased accessibility contravenes the aim of the colonial archive, which was to distance knowledge from public discourse, reserving it for select persons ... Memory making online is collective.”<sup>444</sup> The research repeatedly encounters Lopesi’s ideas in action. Kronfeld material is spread across museums, archives, and the internet. This ever-morphing archive is much like a web with nodes that do not communicate well. The Kronfeld Collection has not been fully digitised by Te Papa,

---

<sup>439</sup> Ash-Milby et al., “Knowledge Positions in Aotearoa,” 23.

<sup>440</sup> Chan, *Kambek: Reconnecting Collections*, 83.

<sup>441</sup> See Billie Lythberg, Wayne Ngata, and Amiria Salmond, “Curating the Uncommons: Taking Care of Difference in Museums,” in *Curatopia: Museums and the Future of Curatorship*, ed. Conal McCarthy and Philipp Schorch (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2019), 239; Thomas, “Materiality, Gifts, Histories,” 12.

<sup>442</sup> Ellis, Macdonald, and Almeida, “Taonga in a Digital World,” 374–5.

<sup>443</sup> See Amiria Salmond, “Digital Subjects, Cultural Objects: Special Issue Introduction,” *Journal of Material Culture* 17, no. 3 (2012): 213, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1359183512453531>.

<sup>444</sup> Lopesi, “Your Non-Archivable, Our Archival Assemblage,” 97.

therefore my access to it is restricted to when I can travel to the museum as a pre-arranged visit. I am privileged to have access to Auckland Museum's collections, where I can trace the transfer of information from accession register to catalogue card to Vernon CMS (Collection Management System) entry, and identify errors or gaps. A case study on Māori adornment by Ellis et al. demonstrates "the importance of institutions uploading information about taonga onto the internet. Given the vast distances between Māori in Aotearoa and museums overseas and the sheer cost of visiting them, an essential first step is knowing what is where."<sup>445</sup> This research project has been shaped by access: my inability to spend significant lengths of time in Te Papa rendered my original vision impossible, while special access to Auckland Museum came to the rescue.

Given the colonial origins of the museum, questions around access and the increasing digitisation of collections are not only justified, but necessary. Ellis et al. caution that "the museum's role in the twenty-first century continues to evolve, as we understand them as not neutral places but rather generators of knowledge and culture, as sites of cultural production. We know now that digitisation is also not neutral."<sup>446</sup> The path towards increased access is, while necessary for decolonial transformation, paved with complexity. Ellis et al. elaborate on the balancing of access and protection from an Indigenous perspective:

The type and amount of information online about taonga, quite apart from the politics of whether to put up an image, is a tricky issue. For Talei Tu'inukuafe who is researching Māori and Pacific head-dresses in museum collections, 'Knowledge, information or objects that are by nature 'secret', sacred or prohibited need to be regulated, carefully managed, and in extreme cases (where appropriate) protected from digitisation if it could lead to potential exploitation'.<sup>447</sup>

The museum remains the gatekeeper (willingly or otherwise). Tensions around digitisation are not new, as a special journal issue following a 2010 workshop at the University of Auckland, *Digital Subjects, Cultural Objects*, elucidates.<sup>448</sup> Introducing the issue, anthropologist and curator Amiria Salmond remarks that "as museums and archives make their collections more and more publicly accessible, they increasingly have to justify the rights with which they are legally invested over the material they hold."<sup>449</sup> The rights to treasures are asserted in the disjunctive space where Indigenous concepts of belonging meet non-Indigenous frameworks of property.<sup>450</sup>

---

<sup>445</sup> Ellis, Macdonald, and Almeida, "Taonga in a Digital World," 372.

<sup>446</sup> Ellis, Macdonald, and Almeida, "Taonga in a Digital World," 377.

<sup>447</sup> Ellis, Macdonald, and Almeida, "Taonga in a Digital World," 372-3.

<sup>448</sup> Salmond, "Digital Subjects, Cultural Objects," 224.

<sup>449</sup> Salmond, "Digital Subjects, Cultural Objects," 222.

<sup>450</sup> For a discussion on this issue, see Deidre Brown and George Nicholas, "Protecting Indigenous Cultural Property in the Age of Digital Democracy: Institutional and Communal Responses to Canadian First Nations and Māori Heritage Concerns," *Journal of Material Culture* 17, no. 3 (2012): 307-10, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1359183512454065>.

Ellis et al. propose that “data sovereignty is a growing concept in the digital age—who has access to, control of, and rights to digital media and information is contentious, especially in museums and their holdings.”<sup>451</sup> Chris Cormack (Kāi Tahu, Kāti Māmoe, Waitaha) defines Māori data as “digital or digitisable information or knowledge that is about or from Māori people, our language, culture, resources or environments” — essentially, everything created in or about Aotearoa New Zealand.<sup>452</sup> Cormack’s position is that Māori sovereignty over Māori data is entrenched in Te Tiriti o Waitangi, given that ‘taonga’ includes data; however, “you cannot have sovereignty until you control the [data] stack the whole way through.”<sup>453</sup> Data stored offshore, or potentially onshore in storage facilities owned by overseas companies, is not within the legal jurisdiction of Aotearoa New Zealand, let alone under the control of iwi/hapū/whānau.

In their 2020 text *Not One Byte More: From Data Colonialism to Data Sovereignty*, Cormack, Donna Cormack (Kāti Māmoe, Kai Tahu), and Tahu Kikutai (Ngāti Tiipa, Ngāti Kinohaku, Ngāti Māhanga, Te Aupōuri) remind us that although data sovereignty “is a relatively new term, Indigenous peoples have a long and rich history of data collection and protection, recording observations in ways such as oral traditions, winter counts, songs and carvings.”<sup>454</sup> Data sovereignty represents a new site for existing conversations. Cormack et al. assert that Māori Data Sovereignty offers “a collective sovereign refusal”<sup>455</sup> of data colonialism, and, simultaneously:

Māori Data Sovereignty presents possibilities for a radical alternative data future grounded in tikanga and relational ways of being ... The privileging of purported economic benefits over environmental costs is a familiar colonial way of thinking about technology that has played out many times before in relation to the land. Whereas data colonialism promotes a dehumanised, disembodied understanding of data, Māori Data Sovereignty recognises that all things — both human and non-human or more-than-human-relations — are connected.<sup>456</sup>

Through this lens, data, including digital reproductions or renderings of treasures, becomes part of our systems of relation. This research calls for the imagining of what a decolonial data ecology might look like — not just for Māori, but across Moana Oceania, where different textures of data colonialism, environmental concerns, and access to digital technologies

---

<sup>451</sup> Ellis, Macdonald, and Almeida, “Taonga in a Digital World,” 371.

<sup>452</sup> Chris Cormack, “Introduction to Data Sovereignty” (workshop facilitated at the NDF23 Whanake\Evolve Conference, Wellington, November 20–22, 2023).

<sup>453</sup> Cormack, “Introduction to Data Sovereignty.”

<sup>454</sup> Chris Cormack, Donna Cormack, and Tahu Kikutai, “Not One Byte More: From Data Colonialism to Data Sovereignty,” in *Shouting Zeros and Ones: Digital Technology, Ethics and Policy in New Zealand*, ed. Andrew Chen (Wellington: Bridget Williams Books, 2020), 76.

<sup>455</sup> Cormack, Cormack, and Kikutai, “Not One Byte More,” 83.

<sup>456</sup> Cormack, Cormack, and Kikutai, “Not One Byte More,” 79.

abound. The challenges of data sovereignty also prompt a renewed commitment to upholding the mana of taonga, measina, and treasures in this frontier space.

Within the GLAM<sup>457</sup> sector, a CMS might be considered the ‘hub’ of a digital data ecology. There is ample opportunity to decolonise the database, as demonstrated by Samu Tui, who recalls the futility of attempting “to split a rich body of knowledge out into fields in a spreadsheet or a record ... Generally speaking, content management systems (CMS) used by museums are not set up to accommodate Indigenous knowledge—they’ve not needed to in the past.”<sup>458</sup> As digitisation and the collection of ‘born-digital’ artefacts increases, and as museums come around to their decolonial obligations, the need for appropriate methods and protocols for storing and sharing Indigenous data intensifies. Salmond notes that, in the process of digitisation, GLAM institutions “have created countless digital ‘surrogates’ of objects, images, publications and manuscript material, in the form of database records, electronic transcripts, digital images, sound files, video footage and even 3D scans,” contending that “such innovative solutions throw up as many problems as opportunities.”<sup>459</sup> Salmond questions the nature of digital objects themselves, “both in relation to the original items they ostensibly ‘stand for’, and in their own right,” and whether restrictions should be placed on the digital material, given that they “are sometimes placed on the ways in which certain kinds of material objects may be handled, for reasons of culture or conservation.”<sup>460</sup> Here, curator Jenny Newell’s reminder of the false dichotomy between ‘digital’ and ‘material’ is useful: “Digital objects have their own materiality; they take up space in bytes, after all.”<sup>461</sup> Relatedly, Deidre Brown and archaeologist George Nicholas propose that “acknowledging that tangible and intangible knowledge are indivisible, as is the case for many indigenous peoples, requires new modes of protection, especially in the digital age.”<sup>462</sup> This project is interested in the adaption and creation of protocols for digital treasures that slip between these permeable spaces.

At the 2023 National Digital Forum, Whanake\Evolve, I was fascinated to learn about a digitisation project from members of the National Film and Sound Archive Australia (NFSA), Wodi Wodi woman Gillian Moody, and digitisation specialists Cameron Rees and Gerard O’Neill. They outlined working with Senior Men, Elders, and NFSA Men’s Group to digitise film and audio recordings of men’s-only sacred and secret ceremonies in the Strehlow Collection, preserving the at-risk analogue recordings and digitally repatriating them. Describing it as one of the most important Indigenous ceremonial collections in the world, Moody et al. shared that, through co-design, the Collection was renamed and cultural

---

<sup>457</sup> Galleries, libraries, archives, and museums.

<sup>458</sup> Samu Tui, “Teu Le Vā,” 27–28. Samu Tui also points to the emergence of Indigenous-focused content management systems and tools such as Mukurtu and Traditional Knowledge Labels.

<sup>459</sup> Salmond, “Digital Subjects, Cultural Objects,” 214–15.

<sup>460</sup> Salmond, “Digital Subjects, Cultural Objects,” 215.

<sup>461</sup> Jenny Newell, “Old Objects, New Media: Historical Collections, Digitization and Affect,” *Journal of Material Culture* 17, no. 3 (2012): 292, <https://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1359183512453534>.

<sup>462</sup> Brown and Nicholas, “Protecting Indigenous Cultural Property,” 320.

protocols were established: restricted storage with soundproofing, blocked windows, and signage was purpose built; items were restricted in the CMS and labelled physically; material was handled and transported only by authorised male staff. To facilitate access to the recordings on Country, the NFSA constructed a digital access studio, installing it at the Strehlow Research Centre in Mparntwe/Alice Springs and training Aboriginal Heritage Officers to manage the system. As Moody et al. noted, digitisation projects such as this are crucial for revitalising ancestral practices and intergenerational knowledge transfer.<sup>463</sup> Not only can the men play the original recordings, but they can also record new ones, enlivening and expanding the archive on Country. The most stimulating and relevant aspect of the project, for my research, is that the digital material came under similar cultural protocols to physical items, recognising that digital treasures are more than bytes: they have social, spiritual, and ancestral power.

Questions of sovereignty, protocols, and ethics come to the fore in discussions around virtual museums and digital repatriation — possibilities opened by evolving digital technologies. Dan Hicks contends that “the Euro-American museum is no longer imagined to be a one-way street, which simply piles up treasures from cultures around the world and across the human past.” As approaches to restitution are being worked through, a commonly considered option is “using new technologies of digital reproduction and 3D printing to facilitate the return of an original item while the display can remain the same.” Hicks asks, “what, then, are the possibilities and the risks of such an approach to keeping the museum vitrines full?”<sup>464</sup> Surely, there are institutions that would prefer to keep their vitrines and storehouses full by keeping the original treasures, instead ‘repatriating’ the reproductions. Indeed, Salmond does not think it “farfetched to hypothesize that some museums may regard ‘digital repatriation’ as an alternative (rather than a precursor) to the ‘real’ return of artefacts that some tribal groups clearly have in mind as the endgame of carefully cultivated institutional relationships.”<sup>465</sup> Hicks raises important questions around control, intellectual property, and the ethics of digital reproduction in contexts where treasures are understood to constitute the enduring presence of ancestors, linking 3D reproduction with “longer-term regimes of display.”<sup>466</sup> Acknowledging the optimism produced by the potential of reproduction in processes of redress, Hicks concludes that “the ethics of restitution begins with the admission that a case-by-case approach is essential ... Making copies is no silver bullet for restitution. Sometimes, perhaps, the museum case should be left empty — as a space for reflection and remembrance as well as return.”<sup>467</sup> Through a *vā* lens, we understand that space is not empty: the same is true for a vacant vitrine or shelf. What might the relationships and encounters threaded through that space teach us about our pasts/presents/

---

<sup>463</sup> Gillian Moody, Gerard O’Neill, and Cameron Rees, “First Nations Knowledge and 21st Century Technology” (presentation at the NDF23 Whanake\Evolve Conference, Wellington, November 20–22, 2023).

<sup>464</sup> Hicks, “How NFTs and 3D Printing Are Changing Restitution.”

<sup>465</sup> Salmond, “Digital Subjects, Cultural Objects,” 218.

<sup>466</sup> Hicks, “How NFTs and 3D Printing Are Changing Restitution.”

<sup>467</sup> Hicks, “How NFTs and 3D Printing Are Changing Restitution.”

futures in place of the treasure it once held? And in situations where digital repatriations are preferable, or a promising beginning point, for communities of origin, what might be enhanced within the museum through working together?

Reflecting on tribal museums and “Indigenising the museum environment from within,” Ngahuia Te Awekotuku raised an “exciting, utterly singular option: digitisation of iwi-specific material held in collections all over the world so that a virtual museum is constructed for viewing, for learning, for uplifting.”<sup>468</sup> Since the turn of the millennium, the east coast iwi Te Aitanga a Hauiti has turned to the digital realm to locate their taonga, “now scattered among the museums, archives and private collections of the world,” and reconnect with them using “the latest technologies to advance a distinctive tribal agenda.”<sup>469</sup> Canvassing projects undertaken by their iwi organisation, Toi Hauiti, Wayne Ngata (Ngāti Ira, Ngāti Porou, Te Aitanga a Hauiti), and Hera Ngata-Gibson (Te Aitanga a Hauiti), in collaboration with Amiria Salmond, discuss plans to build Te Rauata, a digital whare taonga residing on iwi-owned and housed servers.<sup>470</sup> The authors’ perspective on digital taonga emerges from their understanding that any item is a potential taonga:

Since the *taonga*-status of an object is relationally determined ... the particular form *taonga* may take is subject to infinite variation. ... This includes digital objects: a hologram of the ancestral house *Te Kani a Takirau* is as much a *taonga* to people who know and/or are related to this ancestor and his or her history as the carved wooden panels from which it was made, that are now scattered among museums ... For Toi Hauiti, then, there is nothing unreal or inferior about ‘virtual’ repatriation.<sup>471</sup>

Within this worldview, the argument for utilising the digital technologies at hand to reconnect descendants with their ancestral treasures and knowledge, while also generating new taonga, is particularly compelling in working towards a sovereign, flourishing, future.

Offering a perspective from Moana Oceania, Vilsoni Hereniko (Rotuma), filmmaker, scholar, and weaver, shares that his experiences of visiting museums in the region evoke images of “cultural objects in glass cases that reflect an era which is dead and gone.”<sup>472</sup> Hereniko contrasts this with better-funded and more vibrant museums that often “house valuable cultural treasures of their country’s former colonies.” Through his afterword in *Curatopia*, Hereniko explores ideas for enabling access to Moana Oceanic collections in overseas museums via the digital realm, arguing that museums today should have both a physical and

---

<sup>468</sup> Te Awekotuku, “Decolonising and Indigenising Museums.”

<sup>469</sup> Wayne Ngata, Hera Ngata-Gibson, and Amiria Salmond, “Te Ataakura: Digital Taonga and Cultural Innovation,” *Journal of Material Culture* 17, no. 3 (2012): 230, <https://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1359183512453807>.

<sup>470</sup> Ngata, Ngata-Gibson, and Salmond, “Te Ataakura,” 241.

<sup>471</sup> Ngata, Ngata-Gibson, and Salmond, “Te Ataakura,” 242.

<sup>472</sup> Vilsoni Hereniko, “Virtual Museums and New Directions?” in *Curatopia: Museums and the Future of Curatorship*, ed. Conal McCarthy and Philipp Schorch (Manchester, United Kingdom: Manchester University Press, 2019), 327.

a virtual presence.<sup>473</sup> Drawing attention to unequal wealth distribution between Europe/ North America and Moana Oceania, and the subsequent inability for most people from the region to fly across the world to see their treasures, Hereniko floats the idea of exhibitions travelling to the islands from which the displayed treasures originated *virtually*.<sup>474</sup> Hereniko considers virtual repatriation the next best alternative to physical repatriation, foreseeing two consequences: the emergence of Indigenous accounts of acquisition encounters that compel revision of European ones; and the making whole of a people formerly alienated from their treasures and the mana of their ancestors.<sup>475</sup>

While most discussions on repatriation focus on the treasures themselves, Hereniko raises an attentional shift away from the tangible:

It was not uncommon in Oceania ... for elaborate art works to be produced and used in certain rituals with the intention that at the end these creations would be destroyed or left outside to rot. The focus, after all, was not on the objects themselves, but on shared memories, feelings and emotions, as well as human connections, all of which are intangible. When visitors to Oceania ... started to collect or hoard these sacred objects, attention shifted from the intangible to the tangible, resulting in these objects becoming valuable items for sale in the marketplace.<sup>476</sup>

Hereniko further suggests that virtual museums “could help to mitigate the capitalist impulses” which began with these visitors and now result in treasures circulating through private collections and auction houses, until, sometimes, entering the museum.<sup>477</sup> It strikes me that — while not neglecting the importance of reconnection with physical treasures — the digital realm offers decolonial approaches to museum ecologies through its ability to conjure or render the intangible, and to revisit Indigenous ways of relating to treasures that are not defined by the imperial imaginary.

Climate justice is an important thread in decolonial museum ecologies: you cannot return treasures to islands whose very existence is under threat. What happens to treasures after their repatriation, whether they continue to be conserved or otherwise, should be a decision for communities of origin. However, losing your ancestral treasures to extreme weather events and rising seas is not a choice. Innovations in the digital realm may necessarily be spearheaded and instituted by islands across Moana Oceania, given the risks posed to physical museums, archives, and cultural centres by climate change and other threats. For example, artist Sopolemalama Filipe Tohi wants Tongan material to be digitised rather than repatriated to the islands’ new museum, both due to environmental risks and his awareness

---

<sup>473</sup> Hereniko, “Virtual Museums,” 327–28.

<sup>474</sup> Hereniko, “Virtual Museums,” 329.

<sup>475</sup> Hereniko, “Virtual Museums,” 330.

<sup>476</sup> Hereniko, “Virtual Museums,” 333.

<sup>477</sup> Hereniko, “Virtual Museums,” 333.

that digitisation is a way to reach and pass knowledge to younger generations.<sup>478</sup> Additionally, scholar Lilikalā Kame'eiehiwa (Kanaka Ōiwi) wants the Hawaiian archival material on O'ahu, including that in the Bishop Museum, to be digitised, so that if the island is struck by a nuclear missile — they are a 'first strike' target — or fire rips through, the material lives on.<sup>479</sup>

Tuvalu is at the forefront of reconstituting 'home' in an era of climate crisis. NDF23 keynote speaker, Simon Kofe (Tuvalu), politician and leader of the Future Now project *Te Ataao Nei*, outlined Tuvalu's journey to becoming a digital nation. The project is underpinned by Tuvaluan values, which Kofe contended can offer solutions to problems faced by Moana Oceania. The 2023 Tuvaluan constitution declares that the state "shall remain in perpetuity in the future, notwithstanding the impacts of climate change or other causes resulting in loss to the physical territory of Tuvalu."<sup>480</sup> Kofe elaborated that "Tuvalu insists that all countries forming relations with Tuvalu recognise the statehood of the nation as permanent and its existing maritime boundaries as set, even if Tuvalu loses its land territory due to sea level rise." If the world recognises this statehood, Kofe continued, they also acknowledge that Tuvalu can continue as a digital nation. While Kofe framed the initiative to become a digital nation as "preparing for the worst case scenario," he also asked, "how can we best use technology to improve the lives of the people [and] to preserve our culture?" The project, which involves creating a 'digital twin' of Tuvalu, is complex, long-term, and multi-purpose. It is intended to become a 3D record of Tuvalu today, a place for diasporic Tuvaluans to connect with their culture, an archive of history and culture, and more.<sup>481</sup> Tuvalu's efforts to become a digital nation — while compelled by a devastating situation — offer insights into how the digital realm might be harnessed to store, transmit, and activate elements of a home world and its relations, long after they may have left *this* realm. There is ample opportunity, too, for museums in Aotearoa New Zealand and beyond to collaborate with and resource islands of Moana Oceania to establish virtual museums, enabling decolonial ecologies connecting people with the housing of their treasures.<sup>482</sup>

The digital realm asks us to consider methods, protocols, and ethics over and over again. As much as it could be a site for ongoing colonialism, working through questions and complexities can be a route to creating and extending decolonial museum ecologies. As Cormack et al. remind us, "Māori have always been scientists, philosophers and innovators. Since the time of our voyaging ancestors, we have embraced and adapted technology and tikanga to enhance our own ways of being, doing and knowing."<sup>483</sup> Particularities of the

---

<sup>478</sup> Sopolomalama Filipe Tohi, conversation with the author, November 22, 2023.

<sup>479</sup> Lilikalā Kame'eiehiwa, conversation with the author, November 25, 2023.

<sup>480</sup> The Constitution of Tuvalu 2023, October 1, 2023, [https://tuvalu-legislation.tv/cms/images/LEGISLATION/PRINCIPAL/1986/1986-0001/ConstitutionofTuvalu\\_2.pdf](https://tuvalu-legislation.tv/cms/images/LEGISLATION/PRINCIPAL/1986/1986-0001/ConstitutionofTuvalu_2.pdf).

<sup>481</sup> Simon Kofe, "Future Now: Preparing Today to Secure Tomorrow" (keynote address to the NDF23 Whanake\Evolve Conference, Wellington, November 20–22, 2023).

<sup>482</sup> Recently, Lagi-Maama Academy & Consultancy and Auckland Museum co-hosted the Falemata'aga Museum of Samoa in Aotearoa New Zealand, as part of Lagi-Maama's A.I.G.A. (Aotearoa Indigenous GLAM Association).

<sup>483</sup> Cormack, Cormack, and Kukutai, "Not One Byte More," 72.

questions we face may be new, but many of the answers can be reached through considering the purpose underpinning protocols and ancient modes of relation. Hicks remarks that proposals for the digital reproduction of treasures also find a continuous thread in museum practices, such as making plaster cast copies for display and material interventions by conservators, suggesting that “to some extent, the potential of 3D scanning and machining simply expands these longstanding practices.”<sup>484</sup> Extending this line of thinking into Indigenous collections, Barbara Makuati-Afitu and Kolokesa Uafā Māhina-Tuai (Tonga) of Lagi-Maama Academy and Consultancy “describe digitisation as ‘merely a tool for sharing knowledge and information’ though they remind us that ‘many of these [taonga] are ‘not’ just objects—they are ancestors—with mana ... so that responsibility needs to sit with us in this time-space’.”<sup>485</sup> Ellis et al. confirm that “taonga in museums today circulate within a digital world.”<sup>486</sup> It is up to us, then, to let emerging technologies expand the possibilities we can imagine for transforming the museum, while balancing excitement with careful consideration of protocols and ethics in digitisation. The continuum of Indigenous life and creative practice offers an antidote to the museum’s tendency to freeze Indigenous cultures and treasures in time: in the digital realm, collections like the Kronfelds’ may have a chance to thaw out and be warmed again.

## Museum Futures

Having considered the origins of the museum, how imaginaries take root within it, and how it extends into the digital realm, what might the future of the museum-as-edifice hold? Te Papa curator Puawai Cairns (Ngāti Pūkenga, Ngāti Ranginui, Ngāi Te Rangi) believes in the power of museums and their storytelling purpose. Describing institutional change as “an act of defiance, an act of optimism, [and] a belief in potential,” Cairns contended that “it is sometimes about enduring disharmony in order to generate or provoke a necessary new state, it can be about dismantling and breaking, disrupting and repairing, rather than trying to heal the unreconcilable.”<sup>487</sup> Highlighting the notion of disharmony as it relates to restoration serves as a reminder to not idealise the journey towards the transformation of an institution inscribed with ruptures, as well as a reminder of why it is necessary to begin with. Noelle Kahanu considers that in the vā of the museum, “historical trauma coexists in the past and the present, but can be healed through intergenerational aloha [love, compassion]. By our actions today can we heal the pains of the past.”<sup>488</sup> Kahanu considers that the purpose of decolonisation in the museum sphere is “to de-centre the Western focus and to allow for Indigenous agency and activism, both in the present and in the past. It is to

---

<sup>484</sup> Hicks, “How NFTs and 3D Printing Are Changing Restitution.”

<sup>485</sup> Ellis, Macdonald, and Almeida, “Taonga in a Digital World,” 366.

<sup>486</sup> Ellis, Macdonald, and Almeida, “Taonga in a Digital World,” 372.

<sup>487</sup> Puawai Cairns, “Planting Seeds of Change: Ruminating on Change and Speculations for the Future” (keynote address to the NDF23 Whanake\Evolve Conference, Wellington, November 20–22, 2023).

<sup>488</sup> Kahanu, “Contextualizing Re(Generations).”

look into the vā of the past and find our ancestors looking back.”<sup>489</sup> Similarly, Nuku described museums as cosmological puzzles or time capsules that guide and steer us into the future rather than locking us into the past, proposing that we can move beyond grief and loss to celebrate our cultures that continue to evolve and flourish.”<sup>490</sup> Nuku is optimistic that “museums want to evolve and change—why wouldn’t they? This is exciting terrain!”<sup>491</sup> Indeed, decolonial transformation is exciting — although unsteady — terrain.

Leone Samu Tui draws hope and “cautious optimism” from the reality that Auckland Museum “will become irrelevant if Indigenous relationality doesn’t become the thing that’s at the centre of our museum.”<sup>492</sup> Further, she cautions that “fostering genuine connection is not just a ‘nice to have,’ it’s a means of enacting decolonisation.”<sup>493</sup> The museum’s ability to maintain relevance as a critical public space for learning and reflection, ensuring its own survival, depends on its ability to transform, slowly but surely. Hicks questions “the agency and complicity of the anthropology museum — as a project put to work in the name of brutal colonial and racial violence.”<sup>494</sup> He asserts that the museum must reject and address these legacies; that “Britain needs to come to terms with its Victorian colonial-militarist past in a totally new way — and that anthropology museums offer spaces for doing this, sites of conscience, and of restitution, reparation and reconciliation.”<sup>495</sup> The spirit of Hicks’ argument holds true for museums of Aotearoa New Zealand, a former colonial outpost of Britain, where learning about colonisation, accurately and polyvocally, can become the impetus for decolonisation.<sup>496</sup> This project strongly advocates for the museum becoming a place that holds (self-determined) Māori, Moana, Pākehā, and tauīwi (non-Māori) stories, records, and treasures; a nexus for understanding and honouring the life and relationships extending across these islands and Moana Oceania. Relinquishing imperial or colonial imaginaries can be freeing for *everyone*.<sup>497</sup>

I came to think about ‘something in place of another’ through two key experiences at Auckland Museum: attending a repatriation ceremony of Warumungu treasures in November 2022; and encountering *Haumanu*, an artwork by Will Ngakuru and Nicole Charles. In both situations, a gift was given from communities of origin after their treasures were returned by the museum. Not an expectation, or even a direct and immediate exchange, the gifts were

---

<sup>489</sup> Kahanu, “Contextualizing Re(Generations).”

<sup>490</sup> Maia Nuku, “Unpacking Time: Museum Collections as Cosmological Time Capsules” (presentation at the The Museum as Archive: Using the Past in the Present and Future Symposium, held online, December 14-16, 2021).

<sup>491</sup> Ash-Milby et al., “Knowledge Positions in Aotearoa,” 19.

<sup>492</sup> Anae and Samu Tui, “Teu Le Vā as Indigenous Relationality.”

<sup>493</sup> Samu Tui, “Teu Le Vā,” 26.

<sup>494</sup> Hicks, *The Brutish Museums*, 17.

<sup>495</sup> Hicks, *The Brutish Museums*.

<sup>496</sup> For Hicks’ critiques on the Pitt Rivers’ Relational Museum project, ‘object biographies,’ and ‘relational entanglements,’ see Hicks, *The Brutish Museums*, 25-31.

<sup>497</sup> For a Scots Pākehā reflection in a similar vein, see Makyla Anne Curtis, “Folding Time: An Exploration of Family Stories through Experiential Research,” (master’s thesis, Auckland University of Technology, 2021), 140, <https://hdl.handle.net/10292/15295>.

the result of relationship building: reciprocity is intrinsic to relationality. Through the exchange of treasures with something offered in their place, the museum could become a place to learn about and commemorate *relationships*, rather than ruptures; a place filled with artworks and stories given rather than extracted. Chantal Knowles, Head of Human History at Auckland Museum, believes that, while a physical gap may open on the storage shelves when a treasure is returned, something else is presented, such as relationships or stories (although Knowles clarified that this should never be a prerequisite to repatriation).<sup>498</sup> Reflecting on the Warumungu return, Knowles asked, “what happens when four items leave the museum? The box is lighter.” Rather than a loss, Knowles views it as positive space; a reconnection that recalibrates relationships and re-centres the Warumungu men.<sup>499</sup> Relationships have the potential to outlive structures of the colonial museum. Hicks contends that what the museum “saw as relics or curios” are “forms of cultural endurance unfolding over centuries, which will outlast this wooden case, these steel mounts in which they are held, but for which colonial histories need to be not so much reversed as somehow dug into.”<sup>500</sup> Digging into the irreversible means that the museum cannot simply return a treasure and pretend it was never there; continuing to obscure its exploitative history only feeds into colonial amnesia.<sup>501</sup> Making what remains or has grown in the treasure’s place visible offers something generative. Decolonising is, after all, about building as much as dismantling. Rather than pretend the fabric was never rended, let us admire and learn from the stitches that repair it.

The reality is that many treasures will reside in the museum for the rest of their lives, for reasons including lack of provenance, having no suitable place to return to, or their community of origin wanting them to remain there. Albert L. Refiti raised the notion, in a Moana Oceania context, that when something leaves its circuit is when it becomes dangerous.<sup>502</sup> In Sāmoa, *measina* are expected to travel and not return — when they do, they are ‘out of time’ and can cause ruptures. Therefore, the museum can be a safe place to keep sacred treasures.<sup>503</sup> During another discussion, Leah Lui-Chivizhe, Torres Strait Islander and museum scholar, mentioned that in the Torres Strait, many treasures will not be wanted back because they have a power nobody now knows how to wrangle. Lawrence Bamblett, Wiradjuri historian, echoed this idea, sharing that often communities know treasures will be safer with AIATSIS, but highlighted the importance of access.<sup>504</sup> The museum does also keep treasures safe through environmental controls and conservation; their wealth of resources,

---

<sup>498</sup> Chantal Knowles, Jacob O’Keefe, and Juliana Satchell-Deo (panel discussion at the On Indigenous Collections: Provenance, Repatriation and Ethics event, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, October 28, 2023).

<sup>499</sup> Aird et al., “The Relational Museum.”

<sup>500</sup> Hicks, *The Brutish Museums*, 15.

<sup>501</sup> See Harkin, “The Poetics of (Re)Mapping Archives,” 5.

<sup>502</sup> Refiti, “Vā Kōrero.”

<sup>503</sup> Liisa-Rávná Finbog and Albert L. Refiti, “Care, Community & Apocalyptic Time” (discussion at the Pacific Basin Institute: Decolonizing Art and Curatorial Practices Webinar, held online, November 22, 2022, 2022).

<sup>504</sup> Laurie Bamblett, “Museums, Archives and Black Lives” (workshop at the RETURN: Reconnecting Objects and Collections with People and Places Symposium, CSU Riverina Playhouse and online, June 27–29, 2023).

including highly skilled workers, signal an ongoing role. What might decolonial ecologies look like for the treasures remaining in the museum indefinitely? How might their ongoing presence transform the museum?

Rather than viewing them as relics of the past, decolonial museum ecologies must understand their collections as intrinsic to living, evolving, reawakening, and emerging practices. Undoubtedly, the fact that the museum has preserved treasures which would have otherwise been lost is a gift, but what were they preserved for, if not to be an active part of their peoples' present and future? Discussing the return of spears, Ray Ingrey reflects that while they are important to the Gweagal people, the spears do not define who they are, given that Gweagal culture is continuous.<sup>505</sup> Moreover, Ingrey has observed museums working to make exhibitions more engaging, particularly for Indigenous communities, and notes that exhibitions showing the continuation of cultural practices are "a shift away from what museums were originally established for."<sup>506</sup> The era of the imperial imaginary capturing 'dying' peoples is over: their descendants are here, and they are ready to reclaim sovereignty over their stories and treasures. In Aotearoa New Zealand, Te Awa is hopeful that we are moving towards a future where taonga in institutions are used to teach: "I want to see them used to rebirth, I want to see them inspire, and I want to see them out in the community again."<sup>507</sup> The vision, perhaps, is of a more permeable museum — one that does not just allow descendants, artists, and practitioners to enter and connect with their treasures, but also enables the treasures to flow outwards.

Te Awekotuku proposed that museums and galleries "are about uplifting the people." Opening the possibility of moving beyond these physical spaces, Te Awekotuku asked, "what about outside the galleries? What about under the sky?"<sup>508</sup> Tapsell posed similar questions while summarising Kahanu's talk: how do we re-cast the conversation so that museums can participate in a critical future, analogue or digital? What will you do if the lights go out? What can you do with your hands and natural light?<sup>509</sup> The COVID-19 lockdowns of 2020–2021 prompted a reconceptualising of the museum: Cairns shared that Te Papa had to figure out what they were as a museum without a physical building.<sup>510</sup> Ellis et al. also refer to that period, sharing that the sense of isolation many of us felt made them "consider how many taonga (treasures) must feel in museums—separated from those who made them and the landscapes in which they circulated ... Yet the ever-changing dynamic of digital technologies may offer a mechanism in which reconnection might be possible."<sup>511</sup> Here, we return to the potential of the digital realm for restoring relations, and the imagining of treasures being

---

<sup>505</sup> Ingrey, Irish, and Nugent, "La Perouse: Community Engagement."

<sup>506</sup> Ingrey, Irish, and Nugent, "La Perouse: Community Engagement."

<sup>507</sup> Kutia, *Lost in the Colonisation Machine*.

<sup>508</sup> Te Awekotuku, "He Atamira a Huatau."

<sup>509</sup> Glass et al., "Knowledge and Power."

<sup>510</sup> Cairns, "Planting Seeds of Change."

<sup>511</sup> Ellis, Macdonald, and Almeida, "Taonga in a Digital World," 363.

immersed within their lifeworlds, outside, under the sky, bathed in light. What might we discover if we think beyond the museum's boundaries — if we let the treasures transform the house themselves?

### **The Kronfeld Collection in a Moana Cosmopolitan Framework**

In *Moana Cosmopolitan Imaginaries*, Lana Lopesi suggests that the concept of Moana Cosmopolitanism “offers an interesting alternative framework for thinking through collection items like those belonging to the Kronfeld family. How could we understand webs of relation differently if we applied a Moana Cosmopolitan frame to collections and the items they hold?”<sup>512</sup> This question has remained with me throughout my research and proves useful in thinking through the future of the Kronfeld Collection. Describing Moana Cosmopolitanism as “a Moana experience of life that is routed globally,”<sup>513</sup> Lopesi contends that “Cosmopolitan Moana worlds have always existed, even though they are now rewired through new routes.”<sup>514</sup> These routes, in addition to roots, are conditions of Moana Cosmopolitanism that “allow for regional expansiveness without sacrificing local specificity. This makes room for understanding the multiple ways of being in the Moana diaspora enabling people to simultaneously hold onto identities which are rooted specifically and routed expansively.”<sup>515</sup> Simultaneous expansiveness and specificity is particularly important when working with a collection of taonga, measina, and treasures from a multitude of villages, kin groups, and islands. Moana Cosmopolitanism articulates a web of relations that holds me, the Kronfeld family, and their Collection, across generations, seas, and cultures. Lopesi also theorises that Moana Cosmopolitans imagine beyond the colonial imaginary, through a social world built on vā relations. Imaginaries are central to this project: through immersing digitally rendered taonga and measina in moving-image artworks reflecting their whakapapa and vā relations, I imagine restorative futures for the Collection.

A Moana Cosmopolitan social world, Lopesi argues, is “emancipatory and expansive, placing Moana people back into global webs, remembering the cosmopolitan character of Moana life in which they have creative sovereignty or mau within their complex and multifaceted lives.”<sup>516</sup> In this sense, I understand the Kronfeld family as Moana Cosmopolitans who, in many ways, refuse to be captured by the colonial imaginary. The story of their life in Tāmaki Makaurau, and of other Moana families like them, extends the timeline of what might be considered the typical migration narrative of Moana Oceanic peoples relocating to Aotearoa New Zealand. The kava ceremonies held between Tongan royalty, the Kiingitanga, and German/Samoan/Tongan diasporic families; early 20<sup>th</sup> century camping trips with friends

---

<sup>512</sup> Lopesi, “Moana Cosmopolitan Imaginaries,” 82.

<sup>513</sup> Lopesi, “Moana Cosmopolitan Imaginaries,” 86.

<sup>514</sup> Lopesi, “Vā Moana.”

<sup>515</sup> Lopesi, “Moana Cosmopolitan Imaginaries,” 91.

<sup>516</sup> Lopesi, “Moana Cosmopolitan Imaginaries,” 19.

and family from the Islands; the hosting of travelling sporting, musical, and literary figures, all evoke a vibrant network of roots and routes that was cultivated without being mediated by dominant Pākehā/Pālagi frameworks (albeit with European inflections). The family may not have considered their lives to be a refusal at the time, but as their descendant, I look to their multiplicity and fluidity as my guide to finding ways of being that counteract the colonial imaginary.

In particular, the family's matriarch, Louisa, denies the trope of a docile 'dusky maiden.' Her children and grandchildren recount stories of a strong-minded and widely-respected woman. As a seventeen year-old, a protective Louisa stood on a chair behind the front door and waited for her brother-in-law to return home drunk. When he entered, she thumped him on the head with a weighty bible, knocking him unconscious.<sup>517</sup> While living in Vava'u, she hired an eighteen-foot cutter and three men to take a young child in urgent need of medical care to Sāmoa. She waited weeks for the child to recover before sailing home.<sup>518</sup> In her older years in Tāmaki Makaurau, Louisa was followed home. She reached the gates of 'Oli 'Ula, paused, and when the man drew close enough she smacked him around the ears with her umbrella, shouting, "How dare you follow me! If we were in Sāmoa you would be horse whipped!"<sup>519</sup> Louisa's disciplined convent upbringing was present, too: the children were lined up in the hallway before outings for her 'grand inspection,' and she walked "like mist over water ... Her grace was almost alien to the colonial hurry of Auckland."<sup>520</sup> The stories of Louisa express the multiplicity of growing up as a daughter of Sāmoa in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, leaving her home, and becoming a mother to many from the Moana; they express her rooted and routedness.

The Kronfeld Collection could be placed in three groups: treasures that Gustav collected from Moana Oceania; taonga Māori he purchased in Aotearoa New Zealand; and gifts to the family that were accessioned intermittently after the 1939 donation. Given the Collection's diverse and complex origins, I lean on Moana Cosmopolitanism's notions of relational ethics and tensions of difference:

Moana Cosmopolitanism is an identity that is rooted and routed, it relies on the imaginary for new ways forward, and relational ethics of cohabitation. It offers a break from the Moana creations of the colonial imaginary, projecting another alternative proposition: ... a world not flattened but where the social world in which we are all intimately linked emboldens a need to hold the tensions of difference.<sup>521</sup>

---

<sup>517</sup> Kronfeld, *Gustav and Louisa Kronfeld*, 53.

<sup>518</sup> Hixon, *Sālote: Queen of Paradise*, 47.

<sup>519</sup> Kronfeld, *Gustav and Louisa Kronfeld*, 56.

<sup>520</sup> Hixon, *Sālote: Queen of Paradise*, 49; Hector Bolitho, quoted in Hixon, *Sālote: Queen of Paradise*, 47.

<sup>521</sup> Lopesi, "Moana Cosmopolitan Imaginaries," 103.

My responsibility to the Kronfeld Collection is part of my relational ethic as its descendant, and someone who simultaneously recalls Māori, Moana, and Pākehā/Pālagi ancestral legacies. I consider this responsibility an intergenerational inheritance of the gift — those given to Gustav, to Louisa, to their children, and to the museums. It motivates me to build and maintain relations with the taonga, measina, and treasures (and their home peoples), seeking restorative futures for them within or beyond the museum. On the gift and debt, Dan Hicks proposes that any knowledge made in the museum “holds within it constant ties that bind, an obligation or promise, a kind of yearning even ... The obligation in these objects is temporal” and, for “each obligation constituted in material form, the knowledge involved is a kind of memory, a re-collection.”<sup>522</sup> That I feel an obligation towards the Kronfeld Collection four generations after its assemblage correlates with concepts of vā and wā, in which we are genealogically and relationally connected through time/space. The deep temporal scales of cosmogonies, whakapapa, and even treasures, prompt us to ask not only what our obligations are as a descendant, but also an ancestor. I stitch a path into the future with threads from the past, resurfacing and repairing as I go.

How, then, might a Moana Cosmopolitan framework help to orient possible futures for the Kronfeld Collection? Most of all, the measina gifted to the family express Moana Cosmopolitanism. The gifts are travellers — both rooted and routed — enacting relationality and reciprocity extending across generations. The foremost example are gifts from Queen Sālote to Louisa and the children she became closest with while living with the family. Reportedly, even two decades later, “scarcely a ship from the Islands arrives but it brings some gift from Salote to Mrs. Kronfeld.”<sup>523</sup> Long after Louisa had passed, her granddaughter, my grandmother, visited the Queen for tea while the two were in London, tending to the relations intergenerationally.<sup>524</sup> Among the many treasures the Kronfelds received, four fine mats (including two from Sālote) were gifted to the family, who, in turn, gifted them to Aotearoa New Zealand’s public museums. The ‘ie tōga were our family’s to gift, unlike many of the other treasures in the Collection. My sense is that the museum has become the right place for them — that they might even guide the museums as they navigate their transformation. The ‘ie tōga can act as a touchstone for other descendants of the Moana who find themselves in Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland or Te Whanganui-a-Tara Wellington: a way to learn about their roots and routes; to connect with their ancestral homelands from their new ones. I sense that the ‘ie tōga might like this too, so long as they are brought out to be admired, touched, and talked to every so often.

A relational ethic determines that it is not for me to decide the future of most of the Collection, as someone not genealogically connected to them. Rather than replicate imperial tendencies in pretending I know what is best for them, I aim to facilitate reconnection with

---

<sup>522</sup> Hicks, *The Brutish Museums*, 20–21.

<sup>523</sup> “Museum House. Relics from Past.”

<sup>524</sup> Elizabeth Wood-Ellem, *Queen Sālote of Tonga: The Story of an Era 1900–1965* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1999), 241.

their communities of origin, undertake provenance research, and remain a tether between the taonga, measina, and treasures and the family who gathered and housed them. My hope for the taonga Māori — the hoe parāoa in particular — is that provenance might one day be established so they can return home to their whenua. If repatriation requests are made by museums in Moana Oceania who want to house their islands' treasures, it would be my privilege to support them. The part of the Collection that grieves me most are the treasures from islands whose people were taken as indentured labourers. Perhaps knowing with certainty whether the acquisition of these treasures was tied to blackbirding would offer clarity, but regardless, they were collected in the context of an unreconcilable history. I hold on to the words of Juliana Satchell-Deo (Solomon Islands; Torres Strait Islands; Papua New Guinea), Associate Curator at Auckland Museum, who, thinking of her ancestor taken from his home by the British, expressed that the return of ancestors and material culture is healing. Satchell-Deo reflects that “most of us continue to thrive to find healing for our own stories, and we rejoice in sharing with those that get that opportunity to hold and reconnect to place through returned ancestors and material culture. And even then, the healing continues.”<sup>525</sup> So, too, does the work to restore relations.

Many of the Kronfeld treasures exist, like people, in diaspora. Moana Cosmopolitanism, however, “offers a way beyond the non-belonging of ‘diasporic,’” according to Lopesi.<sup>526</sup> Perhaps thinking beyond the host/home binary extends an alternative to alienation for the treasures that cannot or will not return to their homelands. The museum is increasingly becoming a site of reconnection between people and treasures that *both* reside away from their place of origin, with decolonial ecologies opening possibilities of activating and enlivening connections and practices.<sup>527</sup> For now, while contact with museum treasures is usually mediated by gloves, at least they can be warmed by their caretakers and communities. I think of curators like Matariki Williams, who works in service of taonga, taking “their reo — their language — to them.”<sup>528</sup> Like Williams, I speak to the taonga, measina, and treasures in the Kronfeld Collection when we meet; I tell them they are not forgotten, that I hope to see them again. I still dream of them in the unregulated air, pressed to skin, roused by song, lulled by water, lit by celestial bodies. The forces that brought the Kronfeld Collection together were prompted largely by colonialism, but the forces propelling its treasures now can be alofa, mana, and tapu. After nearly a century of mostly being static in the museum, the moving-image artworks in this project enable the taonga and measina to move again. Reaching beyond the museum and into the digital realm, they can travel along their routes while remaining connected to their roots, restoring relations as they go.

---

<sup>525</sup> Juliana Satchell-Deo, “Breathing and Reflecting on Indigenous-to-Indigenous-led Practice,” (presentation at the On Indigenous Collections: Provenance, Repatriation and Ethics event, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, October 28, 2023).

<sup>526</sup> Lopesi, “Vā Moana.”

<sup>527</sup> For example, Auckland Museum’s textile and fibre knowledge exchange centre for Māori and Pasifika communities, Te Aho Mutunga Kore, is an exciting development launched in 2023.

<sup>528</sup> Williams, “Complicating the Narrative of ‘Oceania.’”

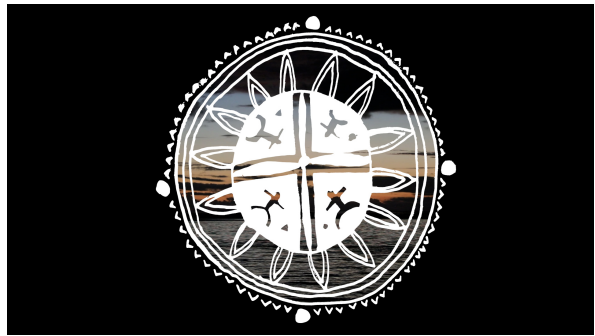
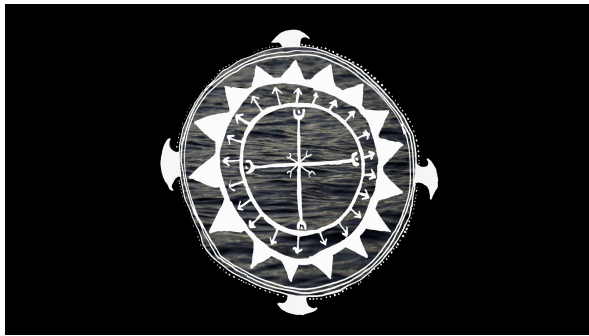


Figure 20. Te tōga set up to 3D scan, 2023. Auckland War Memorial Museum Tāmaki Paenga Hira, 1987.700, 52588.

# Part Three

# Assembling a Shelter

Part Three outlines the concepts, methods, and processes that generated the major practice-based outcome of the project. The first chapter describes the formation of kaleidoscopic moving-image 'lifeworlds' and the digital rendering of taonga and measina as point clouds, developing a notion of the artworks as 'cosmospheres.' It also reviews related art practices that digitally render worlds. The second chapter addresses the six taonga and measina included in the artworks. It discusses the selection rationale, protocols of engagement, and their agentic qualities.



Figures 21-23. Emily Parr, John Pule, and Salvador Brown. *Moana Cosmograms*, 2021, single-channel video/audio.

# The ‘House’

## The Cosmosphere

### Worlding

The etymology of ‘cosmos’ includes the universe, the world; to order and adorn.<sup>529</sup> Combining ‘cosmos’ with ‘diagram,’ Albert L. Refiti constructs ‘cosmograms’ as a “spatial exposition and diagrammatic outline” of cosmogonies and systems of relation.<sup>530</sup> Similarly, spatial architect Rafik Patel develops cosmograms in his drawing/printmaking practice, using “a perspectival frame to construct a window into a cosmological reality.”<sup>531</sup> In November 2021, the Vā Moana research cluster hosted a conference, *Vā Moana: Space and Relationality in Pacific Thought and Identity*. After it became clear that it would need to be held online, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we considered elements that could enable ritual, tikanga, and breathing space digitally. I created *Moana Cosmograms*, three short moving-image works that ushered everyone into and out of sessions, and transitioned us from pre-recorded presentations to ‘live’ talanoa. The works layer my moving-images with Niuean artist John Pule’s painted cosmograms and Moana practitioner Salvador Brown’s soundscapes. Through the moving-image recordings, the *Moana Cosmograms* travelled from the east coast of Aotearoa at sunrise, to Tonga at dusk, then Sāmoa at sundown, crossing Te Moananui-a-Kiwa and following the sun’s cycle. The circular window created by Pule’s cosmograms remained with me as I began to imagine the artworks that would house the Kronfeld Collection.

Shortly after, I was commissioned by Emily Karaka (Ngāpuhi, Waikato-Tainui) to make a moving-image piece evoking a volcano for her 2022 exhibition, *Matariki Ring of Fire*, at Te Uru Waitākere Contemporary Gallery. The piece was to project upwards into the centre of a conical structure, bound by a circle. Considering I could not actually film inside a volcano, I recorded smouldering embers and flames, layering and mirroring the footage in each quarter of the circle. Using moving-image to reach towards the atua, ancestral, and physical power of the volcano had me again thinking about the cosmogram. ‘Diagram’ evokes a graphic, two-dimensional quality (although not necessarily restricted to it).<sup>532</sup> In the artworks I planned to make, I wanted to conjure instead the globe, celestial bodies, and the three-dimensional forms of taonga, measina, and treasures. While their 3D forms are ultimately housed in 2D

---

<sup>529</sup> *Online Etymology Dictionary*, s.v. “cosmos,” accessed October 26, 2023, <https://www.etymonline.com/word/cosmos>.

<sup>530</sup> Refiti, “Vā Atoa.”

<sup>531</sup> Kshetra Collective, eds., *A Place to Stand* (Auckland: Auckland War Memorial Museum, 2022).

<sup>532</sup> Refiti determines that the faletele itself is a cosmogram, as “the bridge across which the cosmic flow [between Lagi and Papa] enters from above and expands as it lavelave (ravels) with social reality.” Refiti, “Vā Atoa.”



**Figure 24.** Emily Parr, *Ring of Fire*, 2022, single-channel video. Installation view, courtesy of the artist and Te Uru. Made with the support of The Chartwell Project. Sam Hartnett.

moving-image works, movement occurs through 3D space within the circular frame. Thus, I consider these artworks to be ‘cosmospheres.’

In the cosmospheres, the taonga and measina are immersed within their ‘lifeworlds.’<sup>533</sup> I arrived at this term through the intention of enlivening their systems of relations: their whakapapa or vā; the cosmological, genealogical, ceremonial, social, and natural elements of their world. Engaging the imaginary, their life beyond the museum is emphasised — rather than their stillness within it. A powerful realisation during the research was that although the provenance of most treasures in the Kronfeld Collection has been lost, they still have whakapapa and gafa. Even if I could not determine who made, housed, or parted with them at the time of their collecting, I could still acknowledge and enliven their relations.<sup>534</sup> The artworks could be a way to house treasures whose specific provenance was not recorded upon their collection. Ngarino Ellis et al. articulate how whakapapa *is* a kind of provenance:

<sup>533</sup> Refiti and Anna Boswell also use the term ‘lifeworlds.’ Refiti, “Mavae and Tofiga,” 216; Boswell, “Fractured Atmospherics”; Anna Boswell, “Climates of Change: A Tuatara’s-Eye View,” *Humanities* 9, no. 2 (2020): Article 38, <https://doi.org/10.3390/h9020038>.

<sup>534</sup> See the Appendix, “Into the Archive: Reflections from the Museum.” Thanks also to my research proposal reviewer, Moana Nepia, who helped me to reach this realisation.

These different moments (collection, re-connection) can be considered as part of a continuum for the taonga. The time frame might begin as far back as Te Kore, before light emerged and with it the creation of original atua (deity) of different materials such as stone or harakeke [flax] ... and then move through time to the point of making into a particular form ... and then moving through time still towards—in the case of museums—the moment of collection. Yet this earlier provenance which we conceptualise as whakapapa is dismissed within the auction scene, where only the identity of non-Māori ‘owners’ is privileged.<sup>535</sup>

In the artworks, these networks of transformation and relation are recalled to assemble the lifeworlds of the taonga and measina. The multisensory elements are intended to reach and move people, akin to the suggestion in *Su’esu’e Manogi* (2018) that “the smells of a place or land, like a song or dance, touches the senses in ways that can transcend time and space. They urge us to act, feel, think, connect and remember.”<sup>536</sup> The cosmospheres are, therefore, created through a process of ‘worlding.’ Their visual language is intended to evoke the macro and microscopic, the whole universe and the particle, and remind us of our interconnectedness while still enabling specificity.

Decolonising is a world-building process: as Lana Lopesi proposes, “we could banish ourselves to be subsumed within the colonial imaginary, or we could emancipate ourselves from it completely and imagine something otherwise for ourselves.”<sup>537</sup> By imagining decolonial ecologies, the artworks look to the past, recalling cosmological and genealogical relations, *and* the future. Refiti describes gafa “as a memory-archive [that] tethers past and present together as they move through the ‘ever-moving present’.”<sup>538</sup> Relatedly, scholars Hana Burgess (Ngāpuhi, Te Roroa, Te Ātihaunui a Pāpārangī, Ngāti Tūwharetoa) and Te Kahuratai Painting (Ngāpuhi, Ngāti Rongo, Ngāti Raukawa, Ngāti Tūwharetoa) contend that “each generation coexists like droplets immersed in the ocean of time. Knowledge of whakapapa allows us to navigate the intergenerational currents that constitute this ocean of never ending beginnings.”<sup>539</sup> Burgess and Painting assert that whakapapa is a Māori futurism, “perpetually immersed in creation, informing our ways of being, knowing and doing intergenerationally.”<sup>540</sup> The whakapapa and gafa presented in the works conjure relations that

---

<sup>535</sup> Ellis, Macdonald, and Almeida, “Taonga in a Digital World,” 373.

<sup>536</sup> Tofilau Nina Kirifi-Alai, Tamasailau M. Suaalii-Sauni, and I’uogafa Tuagalu, introduction to *Su’esu’e Manogi: In Search of Fragrance: Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Ta’isi Efi and the Samoan Indigenous Reference*, ed. Tamasailau M. Suaalii-Sauni et al. (Wellington: Huia Publishers, 2018), 3.

<sup>537</sup> Lopesi, “Moana Cosmopolitan Imaginaries,” 10. Conversely, settler-colonisation can be understood as grafting a new world onto an existing one. See Boswell, “Climates of Change,” 4-5.

<sup>538</sup> Refiti, “Vā Atoa.”

<sup>539</sup> Hana Burgess and Te Kahuratai Painting, “Onamata, Anamata: A Whakapapa Perspective of Māori Futurisms,” in *Whose Futures?*, ed. Anna-Maria Murtola and Shannon Walsh (Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland: Economic and Social Research Aotearoa, 2020.), 219.

<sup>540</sup> Burgess and Painting, “Onamata, Anamata,” 219.

spiral far beyond human lifespans — both into the past and future. It is fitting, then, that the cosmospheres have a kind of trippy, futuristic quality.

Art enables us to imagine and articulate our futures. As Ngāhuia Te Awēkotuku observed, “Māori creatives saw themselves in an imaginary space between the ancient and the contemporary.”<sup>541</sup> Maree Mills picks up on this thread, identifying that “Indigenous cultural reductionism can take the form of a refusal to use non-traditional media as a mode of resistance to colonisation.” Mills proposes that “video media allow users to go beyond resistance, towards making new alternatives to colonial modernism, rooted in the past but capable of an autonomous evolution into an autonomous future. It is a liberating space of slippage for contemporary Maori artists.”<sup>542</sup> Similarly, Natalie Robertson positions camera-based arts “as contemporary ways of maintaining ancient practices, embracing ancient values, and asserting ‘seeing’ as a political act,” through which “we are empowered to speak from the position of our islands, about our islands.”<sup>543</sup> Using the technologies of the present to create kaleidoscopic moving-images and 3D renderings of taonga and measina, while summoning relations that extend deep into the past, extends a reach into the future. In the cosmospheres, I imagine the taonga and measina of the Kronfeld Collection once again immersed in their ecologies.

### **The Camera is a Portal**

The cosmospheres are bound by a circle. The origin of circles and portals in my work could perhaps be traced to the flukeprint, appearing after a parāoa returns to the depths: “if you wait, you will see a smooth circle of water appear on the surface—a trace the parāoa left behind. I wish I could leap into the water, where I feel most at home, and follow them down the portal; I wish we could be eye to eye.”<sup>544</sup> The language of the eye is mirrored in the camera: both have an iris, opening and closing to allow light to pass through. The nature of moving-image means that the iris is open for a longer duration than is required to make most photographs. In these durations, I am interested in what *else* might pass through — the camera, too, is a portal. I came to this realisation during a talanoa with Vaoala Olivia Blyth (Sāmoa, Pālagi) for her doctoral research.<sup>545</sup> Olivia asked me what I think a camera is (a question I had never asked myself). I responded that I think of a camera as a hole — or portal — through which light and other elements pass through. The body built around this hole is of less importance. The opening, often mediated by shutter and aperture, has an intrinsic relationship with space/time. When Olivia asked me what I think light is, I described it in relation to vā: like the relations connecting across the vā, light is intangible

---

<sup>541</sup> Te Awēkotuku, “Decolonising and Indigenising Museums.”

<sup>542</sup> Mills, “Pou Rewa,” 245.

<sup>543</sup> Robertson, “Nga Whatu-Ora,” 136.

<sup>544</sup> Parr, “Surfacing.”

<sup>545</sup> Vaoala Olivia Blyth, conversation with the author, September 12, 2022.

but not ineffective. ‘The space between,’ and therefore the space opened by an iris, is not empty. Light reaches us, and reaches into the camera to create some kind of image. Its presence or absence materially alters film. For Robertson, the camera is a way to slow down and be present in relation to seasons and light: being an artist demands learning from the whenua.<sup>546</sup> Light is fundamental to our experience of the world, and therefore to a practice of ‘worlding.’

In te reo Māori, the verb for photograph or film is ‘whakaahua.’ The parts of the word and its multiple meanings offer a sense of how the image is conceived in te ao Māori. ‘Āhua’ can mean shape, nature, form; ‘whakaahua’ can mean to acquire form, or to transform.<sup>547</sup> An image brings something into being. Robertson elaborates on the significance of this:

In this spiral of time–space, photographs or films made in the distant past are taonga (ancestral treasures). They may be repositories for the energies present at the moment of the film negative’s exposure to light ... Whaka activates āhua. Whaka calls the word that comes after it into becoming, or being. The activity inherent in the term āhua, and expressly in whakaahua, asserts from a Māori perspective, that photographs are not dead or lifeless objects but are constantly in a process of becoming form as things with their own agency and interconnected relations in the phenomenological world.<sup>548</sup>

Through the opening in a camera, light and other energies pass. It acts as a portal, enabling something to transform and take shape, and herein lies the magic. While recording moving-image, I decide where to locate the frame and what to focus on, and then I wait, attuning to my surroundings. I cannot control the images being made any more than I can control the wind, the flow of water, or the pace of our movement around the sun. Rather than ‘capturing,’ ‘taking,’ ‘shooting’ — words often used to describe image-making — I find the process to be more of a ‘surrendering’ to the elemental, relational, forces of the world. These forces become present in the cosmospheres, forming lifeworlds for the taonga and measina to be immersed in.

### **Rhythmical Patterns and the Kaleidoscope**

Within the cosmospheres, the moving-images are mirrored both horizontally and vertically in four quarters of the circle, butterflying out from the centre. Forms converge and diverge, fold into and extend out from each other. The ever-transforming patterns bring my worldview into moving-image form, creating webs, networks, lattices; evoking vā and

---

<sup>546</sup> Robertson, “Netting in the Archives.”

<sup>547</sup> *Te Aka Māori-English, English-Māori Dictionary and Index*, s.v. “āhua,” accessed March 17, 2024, <https://maoridictionary.co.nz/word/13180>; *Te Aka Māori-English, English-Māori Dictionary and Index*, s.v. “whakaahua,” accessed March 17, 2024, <https://maoridictionary.co.nz/word/9347>.

<sup>548</sup> Natalie Robertson, “Activating Photographic Mana Rangatiratanga through Kōrero,” in *Animism in Art and Performance*, ed. Christopher Braddock (Cham: Springer International, 2017), 47.

whakapapa relations. When I imagine the *vā* or the fabric of the universe, it is through these forms, micro and macro invoking each other. These imaginings align with scholar Manulani Aluli Meyer’s (Kanaka ‘Ōiwi) evocation of an epistemological arena in which “patterns develop themselves and then intersect, fractal and converge with others in an infinite array of evolving life.”<sup>549</sup> The artworks also echo Refiti’s description of the spatial exposition of a Samoan personhood, which “works like a fractal, where each particle or loop mirrors every other stage of the system—from macro to micro and vice versa.”<sup>550</sup> In addition to this mirroring, the moving-image patterns have a rhythmical quality. Here, I return to the whare wānanga view of the world as a woven fabric: “as a music, a singing, as ‘rhythmical patterns of pure energy.’”<sup>551</sup> Rhythm and symmetry are also fundamental to the TāVā philosophy of reality. Cultural anthropologist Tēvita O. Ka’ili (Tonga) outlines that “within reality there is a rhythm, a vibration, a beat, a movement, a motion, within space.” TāVāism claims that, within Moana Oceania, space/time is arranged symmetrically, leading to harmony and beauty.<sup>552</sup> David Fa’avae also raises the idea that *vā* has rhythmic conditions. Fa’avae proposes that, if we are to describe *vā* and its possibilities, perhaps we need to perceive it as transcendent, able to carry things, including knowledges and aspirations: “Vā echoes, *vā* embodies, and *vā* rhythms.”<sup>553</sup> In the artworks, the rhythms come from Papatūānuku and Ranginui, or Papa and Tagaloa, and their descendants. The ‘music’ organising symmetrical patterns is water rippling, embers flaring, leaves oscillating — the movements of a relational, woven world in flux.

I first experimented with moving-image patterns in the 2021 Matariki project, *Whānau Mārama*, curated by Jade Townsend (Ngāti Kahungunu, Pākehā). My looping work, *Whakamārama*, observes the setting and rising of the sun, acknowledging cyclical rhythms. Filmed in Tauranga Moana at dusk and dawn, the moving-images layer through tāniko patterns referencing my maternal whakapapa, ancestral migration across Te Moananui-a-Kiwa, and the Matariki cluster.<sup>554</sup> My shift towards kaleidoscopic patterning was no doubt influenced by *Te Pūtahitanga ō Rehua* (2005), a digital video by Reuben Paterson (Ngāti Rangitihī, Ngāi Tūhoe, Tūhourangi) exhibited in *Toi Tū Toi Ora: Contemporary Māori Art* at Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki (2020–2021). In the darkness of the ‘Te Kore’ section, Patterson’s video is projected onto glitter, and a “puna (spring) unfolds into a cosmic stream of star imagery.”<sup>555</sup> Seeds of glittering light explode into being; swirling, spiralling, pulsing. Other digital artists who utilise patterns include Tanya Te Miringa Te Rorarangi Ruka

---

<sup>549</sup> Manulani Aluli Meyer, “Holographic Epistemology: Native Common Sense,” *China Media Research* 9, no. 2 (2013): 99.

<sup>550</sup> Refiti, “Vā Atoa.”

<sup>551</sup> Marsden, quoted in Royal, editor’s introduction to Marsden, *The Woven Universe*, xiii–xiv.

<sup>552</sup> Tēvita O. Ka’ili, “Interview with Tēvita O. Ka’ili (Videographer: Emily Parr),” interview by Albert L. Refiti and Ata Siulua, 2023, Vā Moana—Pacific Spaces Research Cluster, <https://www.vamoana.org/talanoa>.

<sup>553</sup> Fa’avae, “Vā Beyond.”

<sup>554</sup> I acknowledge my whatu kaiako, Whaea Rose Greaves, for teaching me this visual language.

<sup>555</sup> “Te Pūtahitanga ō Rehua,” Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, accessed January 11, 2024, <https://www.aucklandartgallery.com/explore-art-and-ideas/artwork/31285/te-putahitanga-o-rehua>.



**Figure 25.** *Whakamārama: dusk/dawn (Tauranga Moana)*, 2021, single-channel video/audio.

(Ngāpuhi, Ngāti Pākau, Waitaha), Jamie Berry (Te Aitanga-a-Māhaki, Rongowhakaata, Ngāti Porou, Ngāpuhi), Pelenakeke Brown (Sāmoa, Pākehā), Darcell Apelu (Niue, Pākehā), and Sione Faletau (Tonga). Māori Marsden proposes that “cultures pattern perceptions of reality into conceptualisations of what they perceive reality to be; of what is to be regarded as actual, probable, possible or impossible. These conceptualisations form what is termed the ‘worldview’ of a culture.”<sup>556</sup> Indigenous contemporary artists’ use of digital patterns is fitting for worldviews based on relationality and reciprocity, as well as the strong lineage of patterned art forms in Moana Oceania. Furthermore, they are a means to communicate in layers, revealing information to those who are intended to understand it.

The permutations of mirroring in the cosmospheres speak to multiplicity and movement as the images form different relationships and connections where their edges meet, much like a kaleidoscope. Multiplicity, Lopesi argues, is a way to break free from perceptions inherited from the colonial imaginary: “Looking through a kaleidoscope, we can see that one entry point results in infinite fractures; as you turn the kaleidoscope the light and the image shatters, changing again and again.”<sup>557</sup> Relatedly, Jenny Newell suggests that “while classical historical endeavour privileges the linear narrative, the kaleidoscope of perspectives that a digital research environment can convey encourages thinking and history-telling from a variety of vantage-points.”<sup>558</sup> My use of kaleidoscopic patterns advocate for meeting taonga, measina, and treasures with an eye to their expansiveness. The continuous movement and serendipitous formations within the works are, in part, a refusal of the imperial imaginary’s

<sup>556</sup> Marsden, *The Woven Universe*, 56.

<sup>557</sup> Lopesi, *Bloody Woman*, 28–29.

<sup>558</sup> Newell, “Old Objects, New Media,” 290. See also Philipp Schorch, “An Ethnographic Kaleidoscope,” in *Refocusing Ethnographic Museums through Oceanic Lenses*, ed. Philipp Schorch (Dunedin: Otago University Press, 2020).

desire to determine, to freeze, to wholly know. The organic patterns are also a balm to the colonial patterns settled onto land — as grids, pasture, lines on maps.<sup>559</sup> The kaleidoscope brings fragments back into relation; rather than pretending the fragmentation never occurred in an attempt to obscure and absolve, reassembling the fragments into new formations offers a reparative vision.

## Resonance and Atmosphere

The temporal qualities of the cosmospheres bring forth a resonance through space/time. The moving-images and their accompanying sounds are slowed, invoking an ever-presence or deep time. Simultaneously futuristic and of the ancient past, the lifeworlds become a way for the taonga and measina to travel through not only space, but also time. Ellis et al. posit that digital media has the ability to provide the museum visitor with an immersive experience, and “thus shift through time and space to be in another reality.”<sup>560</sup> Resonance is not only a characteristic of digital media, but also of the taonga and measina themselves. Researcher Kiri Chan (Papua New Guinea), in the closing remarks of *Kambek: Reconnecting Collections*, notes that each treasure in the book “tells a story linking the past with the present. A faint echo of each object’s previous life reverberates throughout the personal reflections and connections offered by the story-tellers.”<sup>561</sup> Resonance can have a powerful, affective, atmospheric quality. Anna Boswell explains that “affects and atmospheres are inter-implicated. They involve ... traversing bodies and worlds, and the forces and intensities that permeate or shuttle between.”<sup>562</sup> Boswell continues, suggesting that “the challenge of capturing or conveying this ‘thing’, or this sense of ‘thereness’ — its valences, vectors, shimmerings, cracklings, pulsings — can make language go flat.”<sup>563</sup> I look to art as a medium through which to reach towards people on a heightened emotional, experiential level.

The sonic elements of the artworks are linked more directly with resonance. Sione Faletau (Tonga) is a digital artist who brings particular ecologies into visual and sonic form. Recording audio in specific sites, Faletau brings sound waves into being through animated kupesi (patterns). I consider his practice to be a form of visualising vā, with sound being the material of ‘the space between.’ Unfolding the potential of resonance and echo through her sonic arts research project, *Te Oro o te Ao*, Rachel Shearer finds that “technology is a transducer activating *echoes* and *resonances* [Shearer’s emphasis] ... Across different senses and practices, both echo and resonance are metaphors expressing an idea of connectivity through space and time,” and allow them “to be apprehended or imagined simultaneously.”<sup>564</sup>

---

<sup>559</sup> See Mackintosh, *Shifting Grounds*, 60; Boswell, “Climates of Change,” 4.

<sup>560</sup> Ellis, Macdonald, and Almeida, “Taonga in a Digital World,” 365.

<sup>561</sup> Chan, *Kambek: Reconnecting Collections*, 148.

<sup>562</sup> Boswell, “Fractured Atmospheric,” 36.

<sup>563</sup> Boswell, “Fractured Atmospheric,” 37.

<sup>564</sup> Shearer, “Te Oro o te Ao,” 57.

In this sense, sound becomes a connective tissue in systems of relation. In the 2021 iteration of *Whānau Mārama*, Hāmiora Bailey (Ngāti Porou Ki Harataunga, Ngāti Huarere) held an Utu Whakamutunga for their artwork, during which siblings Abigail Aroha Jensen and Alejandra Jensen-Whakataka (Ngāti Porou, Ngāi Tāmanuhiri) played taonga pūoro (musical instruments). As we heard and felt the taonga pūoro travel through the atrium, I imagined our tīpuna gathering around us — something I often do, but never before in a mall. Through the resonance of the instruments, the ancient and the intensely modern connected through space/time. I have continued to experience this sensation through the evolving Vā Moana project, Logo ī Pūlotu, in which a group of Māori and Moana sonic practitioners (including Faletau and Jensen) collectively respond to various spaces or prompts.<sup>565</sup> The taonga pūoro (and electric instruments used non-conventionally) conjure a kind of resonance between realms; they awaken things, or bring an ‘aliveness.’

---

<sup>565</sup> See Vā Moana—Pacific Spaces Research Cluster, “Event: Te’u Le Roots & Routes at Fale Maota,” April 14, 2023, <https://www.vamoana.org/news/event-te-u-le-roots-routes-at-fale-maota>.



Figure 26. 'Oli 'Ula (from *Moana Calling Me Home*), 2020, single-channel video/audio.



Figure 27. Installation view of *Surfacing*, 2021, The Physics Room.

# Rendering Taonga and Measina

## Rendering

The etymology of ‘render’ includes repair, represent, translate; give back, return, restore.<sup>566</sup> In this project, I render selected taonga and measina from the Kronfeld Collection in 3D digital form through photogrammetry, point cloud, and animation methods. These renderings are an artistic representation or translation of their original forms, but are also intended to offer some kind of return and restoration. Rendering treasures has a long whakapapa in my practice: I began to draw them upon meeting the Collection in 2012. In *Moana Calling Me Home* (2020), line drawings of archival documents, photographs of ancestors, and taonga and measina became a key component in the works, layered with moving-images and narrative voiceover — a technique continued in *Through the Time Spiral* (2021-2022). Drawing the outline of the hoe parāoa onto a gallery’s column ignited this research project. Digitally drawing taonga, measina, and ancestors felt like a ‘safe’ approach to negotiating tapu and noa. No physical erasure or destruction of an image was needed, and these translations seemed freer from restrictions than working with their originals would be. Rendering the taonga and measina as point clouds, ephemeral light forms that appear and disappear, is an extension of this drawing practice. Simultaneously, the point clouds’ creative treatment evokes the treasures’ spiritual and emotional power. These renderings sit in a permeable zone: what carries over, or translates, from original form to rendering? Are they an extension of an entity, or do they become their own? The hoe parāoa, for example, has undergone a series of translations: from atua or ancestor to carving; from carving to photograph; from photograph to line drawing. Noelle Kahanu argued that the emotionality of the physical form can never be replaced by the digital form.<sup>567</sup> Rather than seeking to replicate the taonga and measina, these artworks question what *else* their digital forms might offer, or heighten. What might they conjure, give back, or restore?

## Point Clouds, Nebulae, and the Hologram

To digitally render the taonga and measina, I 3D scanned them using an iPhone 14 Pro and 3D scanning application, Polycam. After experimenting with the app’s LiDAR capabilities, I chose the photogrammetry function, which enables the taonga and measina to be moved during the scanning process and produces more detailed textures. I reworked and animated the resulting point clouds using Blender. Spatial researcher Carl Douglas explains that a point cloud is a visualisation of data: thousands of points are produced through a laser scanner, “timing how long light takes to bounce back from a surface” to measure distance, or

---

<sup>566</sup> *Online Etymology Dictionary*, s.v. “render,” accessed October 26, 2023, <https://www.etymonline.com/word/render>.

<sup>567</sup> Glass et al., “Knowledge and Power.”

through an image sensor recording “the visible colour of this point in space.”<sup>568</sup> Douglas proposes that “the term ‘point cloud’ is suspended between the apparent certainty and exactitude of the mathematical point, and the vague ungraspability of vapour.”<sup>569</sup> Noting the frequent use of scanning in the museum context, Douglas links ‘capturing’ or “the ideology of grasping and acquiring” to 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century museological practices.<sup>570</sup> Countering the language of ‘capturing,’ often used in 3D scanning, the technical aspects of rendering a point cloud — the measurement of light or colour and the ephemerality of dispersed points — underpin the artworks, conceptually.

In a practice-oriented context, Douglas highlights that, beyond being a “means for collecting and visualising precise information,” 3D scanning can “offer alternative ways of seeing.”<sup>571</sup> It generates imagination, through which “we attribute meaning to the world and discern what possibilities for action lie open to us.”<sup>572</sup> How, then, might point clouds operate in the decolonial imaginary? What action might be prompted through visualising taonga and measina immersed in their systems of relation once more? While 3D scanning technologies can be utilised by the colonial imaginary, they also enable us to imagine other worlds, relations, or affects. Douglas argues that “intuitions, assumptions, and narratives associated with physical experiences of material bleed into our understandings of technology. Here, imaginings of particles, clouds, and dust are found to permeate the practice and aesthetics of laser scanning.”<sup>573</sup> Point clouds simultaneously evoke the micro and the macro, cosmic dust and nebulae. As Douglas contends, a 3D scan is “always on the brink of coming apart before our eyes. What appears to be solid matter dissipates as we move closer, so that we are no longer able to resolve its outlines and see only a murmur of dots.”<sup>574</sup> While working with the 3D scans of taonga and measina, I zoom into the point cloud until I am among the dots — an unexpectedly intimate way of seeing them anew. It is akin to moving through stars in the galaxy.

In the artworks, the taonga and measina are rendered as shimmering, translucent point clouds, rather than their photorealistic forms. I wanted to highlight their intangible, otherworldly power and relations — those we might sense, but not see or touch — and for the point clouds to resemble nebulae and cosmic dust. My renderings were influenced by Marsden’s ‘woven universe’ and NASA’s 2022 James Webb Space Telescope images. In September 2022, I journeyed to the edge of the observable universe in the Stardome Observatory and Planetarium’s theatre. The different temperatures at this spherical edge

---

<sup>568</sup> Carl Douglas, “Point/Cloud: Diffusive Spatial Imaginaries,” *Idea Journal* 20, no. 1 (2023): 27, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.37113/ij.v20i01.496>.

<sup>569</sup> Douglas, “Point/Cloud,” 26.

<sup>570</sup> Douglas, “Point/Cloud,” 28.

<sup>571</sup> Douglas, “Point/Cloud,” 33.

<sup>572</sup> Douglas, “Point/Cloud,” 39.

<sup>573</sup> Douglas, “Point/Cloud,” 28.

<sup>574</sup> Carl Douglas, “Epizeuxis: Point/Cloud,” in *Into the Under World/Ngā Mahi Rarowhenua: Suburban Lava Caves of Auckland; A Selection of Critical Texts* (Auckland: Chirag Jindal, 2018), 6.

cause the galaxies within our universe to form a web: a web of relations in grand scale. Among the unknowables and across differences, I can be certain that we — us, the taonga, measina, and treasures — are part of this cosmic web of relations, this woven universe.

Within the cosmospheres, the rendered taonga and measina slowly rotate on a horizontal axis, while moving-image elements of their lifeworlds furl and unfurl around them. This slow rotation recalls Albert Wendt and Carl Mika's notions of an 'ever-moving present'<sup>575</sup> or the 'now-ness of the All.'<sup>576</sup> Additionally, after making the first artworks, I found resonance between their shimmering, rotating forms and Refiti's work on Samoan cosmogonies. "To understand Tagaloa-[a]-lagi, the progenitor," Refiti proposes, "is to understand the condition of emplacement just before the creation of the world as a continuum, without extension or time, in which Tagaloa-a-lagi spun back and forth in Vānimonimo's embrace." Vānimonimo, while providing a spatial context for the creation process, is not a conventional, definable place.<sup>577</sup> Refiti elaborates:

A Polynesian etymology of the word nimo suggests active motion: 'move round in a circle' or 'to encircle'. Nimonimo also denotes something shimmering or flickering, moving in and out of sight, appearing and disappearing ... The stars in the night, for instance, have the same qualities of going in and out of sight because they exist in a faraway place. Equally, nimo is an unknown property of an object within proximity (which we may see, even touch, but cannot comprehend).<sup>578</sup>

In reaching towards the unknowable and the qualities of Vānimonimo, the point clouds trace threads of relations all the way to cosmogenic realms of potential. Refiti explains that "Papa is designated in the cosmogony as a stratum," establishing "lines that connect and encircle the world, a place where creation takes place and from which to extend. In the cosmogony, Papa allowed Tagaloa to find a foothold in the world, an orientation towards all corners of the earth." Through Papa, who replicates via "qualities that spill out and form spaces and worlds," Tagaloa gains orientation and direction.<sup>579</sup> Within the circular cosmospheres, the moving-images are mirrored across four orientations. The resulting patterns, like Papa, extend outwards in different formations. The taonga and measina, like Tagaloa, rotate in place, facing all orientations.

The point cloud is a relative of the hologram, a three-dimensional image conjured by beams of light. Manulani Aluli Meyer develops a 'holographic epistemology' that integrates physical, mental, and spiritual aspects of knowledge — an interconnected understanding of

---

<sup>575</sup> Refiti, "Vā Atoa."

<sup>576</sup> Mika, "Wā and its Countercolonial Possibilities."

<sup>577</sup> Refiti, "Vā Atoa."

<sup>578</sup> Refiti, "Vā Atoa."

<sup>579</sup> Refiti, "Vā Atoa."

knowledge cross-fertilised by Indigenous realities and Western classical sciences.<sup>580</sup> Meyer asserts that “it has been proven, stitched, sung and experienced that *we are more than our bodies*, more than our minds. *Matter is not separate from spirit*” [Meyer’s emphasis]. Indigenous scholarship becomes the third beam, “the laser that popped images into three-dimensional holograms surprising the world with its implicate wholeness, even as shards splintered on scientific floors across the planet and we discovered *the whole of life is found in all parts*” [Meyer’s emphasis].<sup>581</sup> The holographic epistemology engages a triangulation of elements. Similarly, this project’s digital renderings of taonga and measina summon their tangible and intangible qualities: their carved or woven forms, and their cosmological energies and relations. The relationship between the whole and its parts is emphasised by the point cloud: the points from which the cloud is assembled have individual forms, each possessing the elements of their progenitor, bound together. Viewed in chorus, they take on recognisable forms to be encountered in the artworks.

### **Cosmological Energies**

Facing the tipuna conjured by Lisa Reihana in her looping moving-image work *IHI* (2020), I felt the intensity of cosmological energies. Papatūānuku and Tāne slowly revolve, moving through te pō into te ao mārama, muscles contracting and flesh reverberating. By the time Papatūānuku’s gaze met mine, I felt in it a profound recognition of *all* her descendants, spanning the cosmos. Refiti defines mana as the “residue echo” of Tagaloa, proposing that this “remainder of what took place in the primordial space vānimonimo continues to emanate as an impersonal force that ... manifests itself in the brilliance, or *shining*, of things” [Refiti’s emphasis].<sup>582</sup> Here, we recall that measina can be imbued with mana, taking on a shimmering, brilliant quality. Notions of mana in a Moana context resonate with mauri in te ao Māori. Writing from the perspective of the Motunui Epa, Buchanan stories the accumulation of mauri in the taonga:

Where does our power come from? Trees are alive. They have their own mauri. We talk about this all the time, but do we know what it means? When we chop down a tree, we always acknowledge its life force. The life of the rākau is still present in the wood even when the tree is gone. ... The trees, the carvers, the figures they created, all these various actors gave us the mauri that remains.<sup>583</sup>

My artworks ask: can a point cloud manifest mauri? I aim to render the intangible, such as mauri originating in taonga, then transferred to their digital forms.

---

<sup>580</sup> Meyer, “Holographic Epistemology,” 94.

<sup>581</sup> Meyer, “Holographic Epistemology,” 97.

<sup>582</sup> Refiti, “Vā Atoa.”

<sup>583</sup> Buchanan, *Te Motunui Epa*, 208.

Natalie Robertson notes that Marsden's comprehension of mauri as radiating energy "clarifies how it might come to reside in inanimate objects, such as photographs."<sup>584</sup> Developing a 'Māori creation narrative camera model' in her doctoral thesis, Robertson proposes that "the mana, mauri and wairua of the world apprehended in front of the lens" enters the camera, and "leaves an impression on the film."<sup>585</sup> Douglas extrapolates notions of transference between world and film to point cloud. Just as photographs index rather than symbolise (via light sensor or chemical reaction), Douglas considers point clouds to be evidential images: "Each digital point testifies to some real surface from off which a laser bounced, and to the distance of a photon's flight."<sup>586</sup> In the cosmospheres, the taonga and measina are rendered through light: beams travelled the space between them and the camera, touching and assembling them in point cloud form. The creative treatment of the oscillating digital treasures imagines what mauri or mana might look like, if visible to the human eye. Their forms are influenced by how I personally sense mauri — as the shimmering of stars and density of salt water. However, like Robertson, what I propose through practice "is not offered with any certainty that the mysteriousness of ... circuits and energies can, or should, be apprehended."<sup>587</sup> The artistic rendering of taonga and measina follows Maree Mills' assertion that "digital media celebrate material culture in an abstract way where the *mauri* ... of the *taonga* ... exists but is no longer bound by original narratives."<sup>588</sup> Therefore, the digital taonga and measina are *renderings* rather than *replicas* of their originals. They echo carved and woven forms, hold the transference of light and cosmological energies, but become something new.

---

<sup>584</sup> Robertson, "Activating Photographic Mana Rangatiratanga," 58.

<sup>585</sup> Natalie Robertson, "Tātara E Maru Ana: Renewing Ancestral Connections with the Sacred Rain Cape of Waiapu Kōkā Hūhua" (PhD thesis, Waipapa Taumata Rau University of Auckland, 2021), 156, <https://hdl.handle.net/2292/57917>.

<sup>586</sup> Douglas, "Point/Cloud," 4.

<sup>587</sup> Robertson, "Activating Photographic Mana Rangatiratanga," 61.

<sup>588</sup> Mills, "Contemporary Māori Women's New Media Art Practice," 81.

## To World, Adorn; to Render, Restore

Decolonial artists render worlds both ancient and new. Curated by Rachael Rakena (Ngāi Tahu, Ngāpuhi, Ngāti Pākehā) and Mike Bridgman (Tonga, Ngāti Pākehā), the 2019 iteration of *Mana Moana* projected digital works by Māori and Pasifika artists onto a large water screen in Te Whanganui-a-Tara, another ephemeral way of rendering worlds. The 2020 'Digital Ocean' was housed online. Utilising a range of digital media, the artworks hover over a 3D rendered sea, portals with shimmering reflections.<sup>589</sup> According to Lana Lopesi, the role of the decolonial scholar or artist "is to first engage the social and political conditions of their experience, acknowledging the prevailing nature of the colonial imaginary ... while also building new worlds, outside the power of colonial apparatus."<sup>590</sup> Contemporary queer Moananui arts collectives Pacific Sisters and FAFSWAG, and artist Ahilapalapa Rands (Kanaka Maoli, iTaukei, Pākehā), all digitally render their imagined worlds, casting aside colonial apparatuses.

In a 2022 talanoa, FAFSWAG co-founder Tanu Gago (Sāmoa) shared that world-building is tied to the contradictions of cultural space he experiences as a queer Moana man: "sometimes ... in order to see a potential future you have to imagine one first." Reflecting on the social impact of FAFSWAG, Gago observes that this "space of imagination has been able to manifest something in the real world. A type of energy or a type of place, even if that place is only understood on an emotional level."<sup>591</sup> FAFSWAG reimagine the realm of Moana gods in their augmented reality sculpture *ATUA* (2022), which features a floating, otherworldly figure with iridescent skin of purple hues and radiant white markings. The audience is invited to "become immersed in an expansive tale of time and space, in this intimate user experience that reframes Pacific cosmology through a queer Indigenous lens."<sup>592</sup> Similarly, the Pacific Sisters created 'niu aitu' (ancestors) — portraits activated through augmented reality — in *Te Pu o Te Wheke*, for the 2022 Hawai'i Triennial.<sup>593</sup> The reclamation of space through digital practice is a powerful act of decolonisation — it not only disrupts colonial notions of queerness across the Moana, but expands Moana worlds.

The emancipatory, world-building qualities of digital media are exemplified by Rands' three-channel work *Lift Off* (2018). Responding to the installation at Brisbane's Institute of Modern Art, Lopesi describes animated satellites that "jump, leap and gyrate to the beat of the master drumming teacher, the Kumu Hula. Eventually, the towers obliterate into pixels of digital confetti, until there are no more colonial intrusions left on the volcanic expanse of Hawaii's Mauna Kea." Importantly, Rands "imagines Hawaiian epistemologies—specifically

---

<sup>589</sup> "Mana Moana," Mana Moana Collective, accessed February 17, 2024, <https://www.manamoana.co.nz>.

<sup>590</sup> Lopesi, "Moana Cosmopolitan Imaginaries," 72.

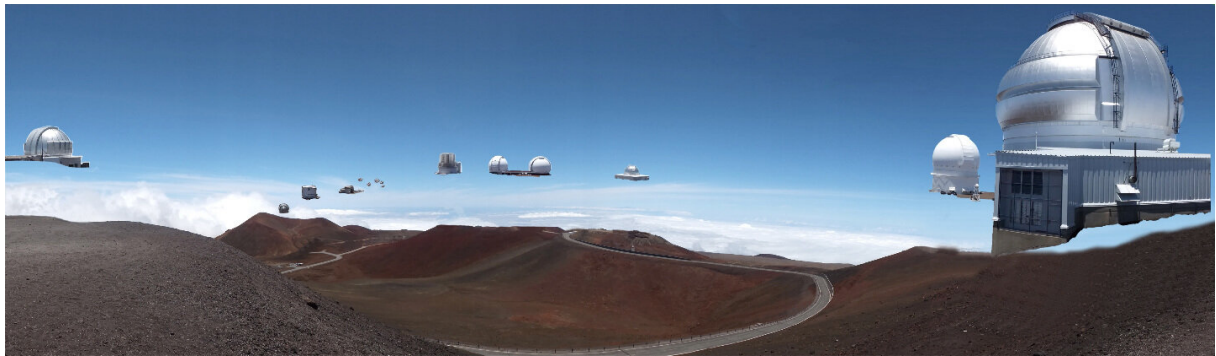
<sup>591</sup> Tanu Gago, "Talanoa," interview by Nigel Borell, 2022, McCahon House Trust.

<sup>592</sup> Fafswag, "Atua reimagines the realm of Pacific gods in this sculptural AR experience that claims space for gender-diverse identities," Facebook, January 24, 2022, <https://www.facebook.com/FafSwag/posts/atua-reimagines-the-realm-of-pacific-gods-in-this-sculptural-ar-experience-that-/4743484735744355/>.

<sup>593</sup> "Te Pu o Te Wheke," Scape Public Art, accessed March 13, 2024, <https://www.scapepublicart.org.nz/artwork/te-pu-o-te-wheke/>.



**Figure 28.** Tanu Gago and Jermaine Dean, *ATUA*, 2022. Written and directed by Tanu Gago, created by FAFSWAG, produced by PIKI Films, digital creative direction by Wrestler. Augmented reality experience. Courtesy of the artists.



**Figure 29.** Ahilapalapa Rands, *Lift Off*, 2018, single channel of three-channel animation, sound. Courtesy of the artist.

that of hula—to be the powerful forces by which the telescopes are removed.”<sup>594</sup> Calling upon ancient practices and filtering them through animation, Rands’ futurist approach imagines a liberated Mauna Kea: “I wanted to just see it ... I love Indigenous futurism as a way of just birthing these worlds, and birthing this kind of emancipatory future and reality.”<sup>595</sup> Art offers a means to bring imagined realities into being, so that we might turn them over in our minds, our mouths, and then build them together. Like Rands, I want to see the Kronfeld Collection out of their glass cases, storage boxes and rolls, immersed by multi-sensory elements of their lifeworlds. Placing the digitally rendered taonga and measina in the centre of their cosmopheres, I imagine restored relations.

<sup>594</sup> Lana Lopesi, “Solidarity through Distance: Radical Imagination in the Work of Ahilapalapa Rands,” *Circuit*, January 25, 2019, <https://www.circuit.org.nz/writing-and-podcast/summer-reading-series-2018-3-solidarity-through-distance>.

<sup>595</sup> Vehia Wheeler, host, and Ahilapalapa Rands, guest, “Ahilapalapa Rands,” *Native Stories* (podcast), October 18, 2020, 54:14, <https://nativestories.org/ahilapalapa-rands/>.

# The Taonga and Measina

## Selection and Process

### Rationale

The project generates cosmospheres for six taonga and measina of the Kronfeld Collection: two 'ie tōga (fine mats), a tanoa fai'ava (kava bowl), a hoe parāoa (whalebone paddle), a toki (adze), and a mähē (sinker). I dream of housing the entire Collection, researching and recovering their genealogies from which to create their lifeworlds. For this project, I have worked with these six taonga and measina, basing their selection on logistics and ethics. Most of the Collection resides in Te Papa, which came to feel impenetrable for several reasons: my residing in a different city, the arrangement of access, and the incomplete digitisation of the Collection. As the hurdles grew, so did my ethical concerns: most of the Collection originates from islands I have no genealogical connection with. I am cognisant that the exclusion of treasures from the western islands of Moana Oceania, in particular, may appear to reinforce what activist and academic Nathan Rew (Papua New Guinea, Pākehā) describes as “limited and sometimes even false appeals” to collective relationalities of an Oceania in a world of colonial-capitalism that “excludes Black Oceania.”<sup>596</sup> However, it felt inappropriate to ‘house’ these treasures by myself. Rather, the artworks offer a creative proposal for others to contribute to and build upon.

Initially, my selection included four taonga and measina from Auckland Museum's collections that could be safely 3D scanned, and five that they currently hold on loan from Te Papa. A refusal by Te Papa to allow scanning of four taonga Māori — including the hoe parāoa — led to a revised selection. Due to unknown iwi, hapū, or whānau provenance, Te Papa would not be able to satisfy their Mana Taonga principle. However, I was permitted to 3D scan the tanoa fai'ava, as it is connected to my family. Having felt like a forensic researcher in my attempts to locate its origins, I was immensely disappointed at being unable to digitally render the hoe parāoa. I had desperately wanted to render in light this taonga who has spent so much time in the darkness of a basement (with an equally shrouded kōrero). Nonetheless, I respect the Mana Taonga principle and Te Papa's decision. The institutional permission request process, although lengthy, was useful. Thinking through the ethics or tikanga around 3D scanning (a relatively new form of imaging) must be undertaken by artists *and* museums — especially as museum storage facilities are increasingly opened to artists looking to reconnect with treasures and incorporate them into contemporary practice. My artworks are intended as a means to restore relations, rather than

---

<sup>596</sup> Nathan Rew, “The Water to Which We Belong: Aqua Nullius and Frames of Wara in a Black Oceania” (PhD thesis, Waipapa Taumata Rau University of Auckland, 2023), 7, <https://hdl.handle.net/2292/68866>.

being a totalising outcome in themselves. Therefore, I assembled a cosmosphere for the hoe parāoa, a gesture born from hope that it may one day be reconnected with its people. The digital hoe parāoa, an approximation rendered from a 2D photograph rather than a 3D scan, indicates an unfinished journey.

### Agency, Listening, and Protocols

The ancestral and atua power and agency of treasures in the Kronfeld Collection is a thread running through and beyond the duration of this research. In Moana Oceania, treasures are understood to have agency. Paul Tapsell refers to the belief of his Te Arawa elder, Tomairangi Kameta, that “*taonga* are our ancestors, they are like people, you can belong to them, but you can never own them. They have a freedom of their own. Some *taonga* become travellers. The old people use to say that eventually all *taonga* return home.”<sup>597</sup> Relatedly, reflecting on her experience of taonga-led repatriations at Auckland Museum, Chantal Knowles puts forth the idea that taonga “know when they want to return and where they want to go.”<sup>598</sup> Rachel Buchanan also raises agency in the journey of the Motunui Epa, observing that “on the surface it might seem like the finder, the dealer and the collector were calling the shots, but as this research unfolded, the reverse seems true.” The taonga, Buchanan suggests, “let themselves be taken from the swamps and out of the country, and they gave the signal when they were ready to come back. They were in charge.”<sup>599</sup> While this project does not involve the active return of Kronfeld treasures at present, it remains open to and led by their agentic qualities. For instance, a Solomon Islands barkcloth was among the items at Auckland Museum that I initially considered 3D scanning. Despite searching several times, we could not locate it. Rather than being upset that the barkcloth would not be included in the artworks, I interpreted this as a *tohu* (sign) that it did not want to participate — that it would reveal itself in time.

Te Kawehau Hoskins and Alison Jones propose that “Māori constantly evoke relational ontologies and recognise that the non-human world has agency. That is, Māori take for granted that the material things of the world — whether a forest, a lake, or a building — can ‘speak’ to human beings; we are always already *in relation* with certain material objects” [Hoskins and Jones’ emphasis].<sup>600</sup> I enact a relational research paradigm through my engagement with the Kronfeld Collection, attuning all senses to receive signs of their agency. The many hours I spent wandering the Museum, chronicled in “Into the Archive: Reflections from the Museum,” reflect an understanding shared with Buchanan that “you’ve got to let things reveal themselves. You can’t force anything. Seek the essence. Look, contemplate. It’s

---

<sup>597</sup> Tapsell, “The Flight of Pareraututu,” 343.

<sup>598</sup> Aird et al., “The Relational Museum.”

<sup>599</sup> Buchanan, *Te Motunui Epa*, 21.

<sup>600</sup> Hoskins and Jones, “Non-Human Others,” 49. See this text for a Kaupapa Māori engagement with post-humanist theory/new materialism.

not a waste of time.”<sup>601</sup> In “Non-Human Others and Kaupapa Māori Research,” Hoskins and Jones ‘listen’ for what Hongi Hika’s moko-as-signature might have to say.<sup>602</sup> The authors note that, in Indigenous thinking, it is common “for ‘objects’ — whether Hongi Hika’s tā moko on paper, a dead body, a forest, or a piece of greenstone — to be understood as determining events, as exerting forces, as volitional, or as instructing people.”<sup>603</sup> Picking up on the significance of tā moko, I return here to the experience of tracing the hoe parāoa onto a column while installing *Surfacing* at The Physics Room in 2021. My concerns around representing the taonga using this physical drawing method were different from my usual digital method: the drawing would have to be erased at the exhibition’s close, and the site specificity introduced caution about the unknown historical relationships between the mana whenua of the gallery and the iwi of the hoe. I grew afraid to reproduce the carved face and figures in particular. After karakia, I began tracing the outline of the hoe. I then asked for guidance on whether to continue with tracing the face and tā moko. At a sense of pressure in the centre of my forehead, I decided not to continue, and the uneasiness in my gut dissipated. In this moment, I felt that the hoe parāoa and I entered into a relationship — the threads of which had been spun generations earlier. These forms of ‘listening’ to taonga, measina, and treasures continued throughout the project, bringing us deeper into relation.

Protocol, or tikanga, is an essential aspect of the research project. Robertson explains that “in te ao Māori, cultural, philosophical and metaphysical concepts guide everyday living in a practice and protocol matrix called Tikanga Māori.” Tikanga is “based on ancestral values, drawing on accumulated knowledge as tools for understanding and evolving as new technologies emerge. Photography and film technologies have given rise to new guiding principles.”<sup>604</sup> Ngarino Ellis et al. note that “tikanga can and does evolve based on ever-changing dynamics within communities, but some aspects remain constant.”<sup>605</sup> While creating a digital database of Māori adornment in global museum collections, the researchers approached data about taonga (including text and photographs) as they would physical taonga, particularly in regards to proximity with food.<sup>606</sup> Auckland Museum has integrated various tikanga to maintain the tapu of taonga within its walls, facilitating how I embed tikanga into my research there. Before 3D scanning the taonga and measina, I ask for their permission. Upon leaving, I use the wāhi whakanoa (place to remove tapu) at the doorway of Te Ao Mārama, the southern atrium. I begin and end with karakia. Editing of the artworks, which involves digitally rendering the taonga and measina, occurs in my studio, which is divided spatially so that food remains separate from my desk. I treat the 3D renderings as tapu. However, there is conflict with how this delineation operates on a daily basis. Douglas points out that “scans, like the collector’s objects, render portable, accessible, manipulable,

---

<sup>601</sup> Buchanan, *Te Motunui Epa*, 208.

<sup>602</sup> Hoskins and Jones, “Non-human Others,” 50.

<sup>603</sup> Hoskins and Jones, “Non-human Others,” 52.

<sup>604</sup> Robertson, “Activating Photographic Mana Rangatiranga,” 55.

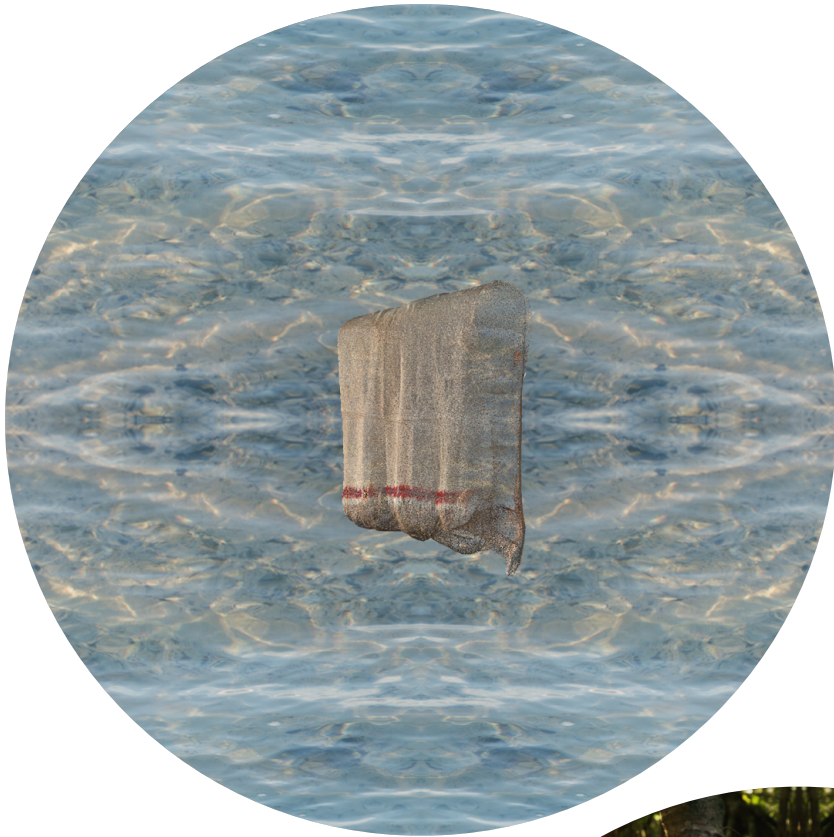
<sup>605</sup> Ellis, Macdonald, and Almeida, “Taonga in a Digital World,” 374.

<sup>606</sup> Ellis, Macdonald, and Almeida, “Taonga in a Digital World.”

and intricately detailed objects.”<sup>607</sup> If film negatives hold traces of mauri, what happens when the camera is taken into profane spaces? An iPhone storing 3D models of treasures? A book containing photographs of taonga? Such questions iterate throughout the research, and I approach them with thoughtfulness, curiosity, and an openness to continuous learning and sensing.

---

<sup>607</sup> Douglas, “Point/Cloud,” 31.



**Figure 30.** *Cosmosphere: 'Ie Tōga*, 2024, single-channel video/audio. Pūoro: Salvador Brown.

'Ie tōga: Auckland War Memorial Museum Tāmaki Paenga Hira, 1987.700, 52588.

**Figure 31.** *Cosmosphere: 'Ie Tōga (MULI O AIGA)*, 2024, single-channel video/audio. Pūoro: Salvador Brown.

'Ie tōga: Auckland War Memorial Museum Tāmaki Paenga Hira, 1987.700, 52589.

# Lifeworlds

## 'Ie Tōga

Two 'ie tōga (fine mats) were gifted to the Auckland Institute and Museum in 1987 by Joyce Heni Kronfeld, wife of the late Leo Lea'ega (ninth child of Gustav and Louisa). Both were sent to the family after Leo's 1947 death, one by Queen Sālote Tupou III, the other by Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara. At the time of their donation, which mat came from whom was unknown.<sup>608</sup> The accession records note that both are woven from pandanus leaves and feature a row of red feathers. The 'ie with 'MULI OAINGA' written on it measures 1350mm wide by 1680mm long, and the other is 1480mm wide and 1490mm long. The records state that there should be access for descendants to view.

Sean Mallon identifies 'ie tōga as the highest ranking mat, the important tactile qualities of which “manifest in an 'ie toga's softness, shine and fineness.”<sup>609</sup> The value of 'ie tōga reach beyond the aesthetic, as they also mediate “aspects of the relationships and values of fa'asamoa.”<sup>610</sup> Mallon also references the origin stories of 'ie tōga: pandanus was first planted at Falealupo by Nafanua, and 'ie tōga carried from Pulotu into the world of the living by her father.<sup>611</sup>

In May 2023, I travelled to Sāmoa to film for the project. I visited the Laumua o Tumua house of weaving in the village of Afega. The committee's secretary, Tumua Seneturi, shared that the fale lalaga started around two years earlier, and in that time the women have learnt the process from growing the plant to finishing the fine mat. The process is lengthy: after the leaves are harvested, they are cut, laid in the sun, rolled and boiled, split and braided, submerged in seawater, rinsed in fresh water and scraped, dried in the sun again, flattened in a roll, cut into strips, and rubbed with coconut oil.<sup>612</sup> This elemental process — from earth, to water, to fire — is recalled in the moving-image lifeworlds, as is the weaving itself through the hands of a Laumua weaver, Lauamanu. 'Ie tōga acquire value through presentation: through the artworks, the Kronfeld 'ie tōga are 'presented' once again.

---

<sup>608</sup> See the section, “The Hoe Parāoa and 'Ie Tōga” for a lengthier discussion on the fine mats.

<sup>609</sup> Mallon, *Samoan Art & Artists*, 79.

<sup>610</sup> Mallon, *Samoan Art & Artists*, 75.

<sup>611</sup> Mallon, *Samoan Art & Artists*, 79.

<sup>612</sup> *The Making of Fine Mat and Samoan Siapo*, directed by Galemalemana Steven Percival (Tiapapata Art Centre, 2019), Alexander Street Ethnographic Film.



**Figure 32.** *Cosmosphere: Tanoa Fai'ava*, 2024, single-channel video/audio. Pūoro: Salvador Brown.  
Tanoa fai'ava: Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, FE010512.

## Tanoa Fai'ava

A newspaper article published after the Kronfeld Collection was gifted to the Dominion Museum attributes the tanoa fai'ava (kava bowl) to Tupua Malietoa To'oa Matā'afa Iosefo. It describes the tanoa as “hewed from a single piece of wood, beautifully symmetrical and highly polished.”<sup>613</sup> Matā'afa, Paramount Chief of Sāmoa from 1900–1912,<sup>614</sup> is identified as Louisa's relation.<sup>615</sup> How the tanoa came to be in the Collection is unknown. The tanoa is understood to be over a century old, and, with a diameter of 760mm, originates from a tree much older still.

Mallon explains that tanoa fai'ava are used to prepare and serve a drink made from the roots of the kava plant. To make the vessel, a solid piece of timber is selected and hewed, the inside carefully removed and flat rim created, and then soaked in water to season the wood and prevent it from splitting. The oldest forms (including this tanoa) have four legs.<sup>616</sup> Mallon speaks to the ritual and relational importance of tanoa, noting that “the preparation and serving of 'ava is an art form in itself and so the significance of the tanoa fai'ava goes well beyond its shape and form. Its role on formal occasions and the discussions and relationships it mediates are just as important.”<sup>617</sup> Sāmoa's former Head of State, Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Ta'isi Efi, elaborates that 'ava ritually connects the present with the past. An 'ava ceremony symbolises “the sharing of sacred drink, the sharing with the mythological Gods who gifted the 'ava to the mortals, the sharing of alofa. 'Ava stands for continuity.”<sup>618</sup> Samoan scholar Papalii Failautusi Avegalio expands on notions of continuity and the 'aliveness' of the cosmos, sharing that the circular symbol of the tanoa represents the sacredness of regeneration, of “the circle of life and its divine origins.”<sup>619</sup> Importantly, Maia Nuku notes that portable vessels such as kava bowls can embody ancestors.<sup>620</sup> Tanoa, therefore, are already travellers of space/time. In different phases of its life, the tanoa fai'ava lived in the forest. It activated chiefly ceremonies and ritually recalled cosmogonies. In the artwork, the lifeworld of the tanoa engages these origins, ritual practices, and stories relating to Matā'afa and Louisa's lineage.

---

<sup>613</sup> “South Seas Curios.”

<sup>614</sup> Steinmetz, *The Devil's Handwriting*, 320.

<sup>615</sup> Kronfeld, *Gustav and Louisa Kronfeld*, 15.

<sup>616</sup> Mallon, *Samoan Art & Artists*, 93.

<sup>617</sup> Mallon, *Samoan Art & Artists*, 93.

<sup>618</sup> Tupua Tamasese Ta'isi Efi Tui Atua, “More on Meaning, Nuance and Metaphor,” in *Su'esu'e Manogi: In Search of Fragrance: Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Ta'isi Efi and the Samoan Indigenous Reference*, ed. Tamasailau M. Suaalii-Sauni et al. (Wellington: Huia Publishers, 2018), 98.

<sup>619</sup> Papalii Failautusi Avegalio, “Reconciling Modern Knowledge with Ancient Wisdom,” in *Su'esu'e Manogi: In Search of Fragrance: Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Ta'isi Efi and the Samoan Indigenous Reference*, ed. Tamasailau M. Suaalii-Sauni et al. (Wellington: Huia Publishers, 2018), 309.

<sup>620</sup> Nuku, “Oceania.”



**Figure 33.** *Cosmosphere: Toki*, 2024, single-channel video/audio. Pūoro: Salvador Brown.  
Toki: Auckland War Memorial Museum Tāmaki Paenga Hira, 1977.88, 26356.

## Toki

The accession register at Auckland Museum reveals that the toki (adze) was gifted in 1977 in the late Sam Kronfeld's name (the third Kronfeld child) by his sister-in-law, Joyce. The basalt toki was reportedly found at Long Bay by Mr. J. Vaughan on his seafront farm in the 1930s. Its polished poll is described as typical of Auckland/Waikato type adzes. Both rounded and sharp edges are chipped. My father recalls that Sam (his grandfather) was friends with Tommy Vaughan, and used to camp on his farm. It is likely the toki came into Sam's possession through this connection.

Long Bay was home to many hapū during the centuries of occupation before the Crown's 1841 purchase of the Mahurangi Block. The 1998 Mahurangi Waitangi Tribunal Report describes a "quilt of multiple and overlapping transactions,"<sup>621</sup> indicating the Crown's ineptitude in dealing with whenua that has layered histories and iwi interests. The Crown negotiated first with the Hauraki iwi collective Marutūāhu, then with Ngāti Whātua, then with Kawerau descent groups.<sup>622</sup> These layered histories also make determining the origin community of the toki difficult: further research and engagement of experts is required.

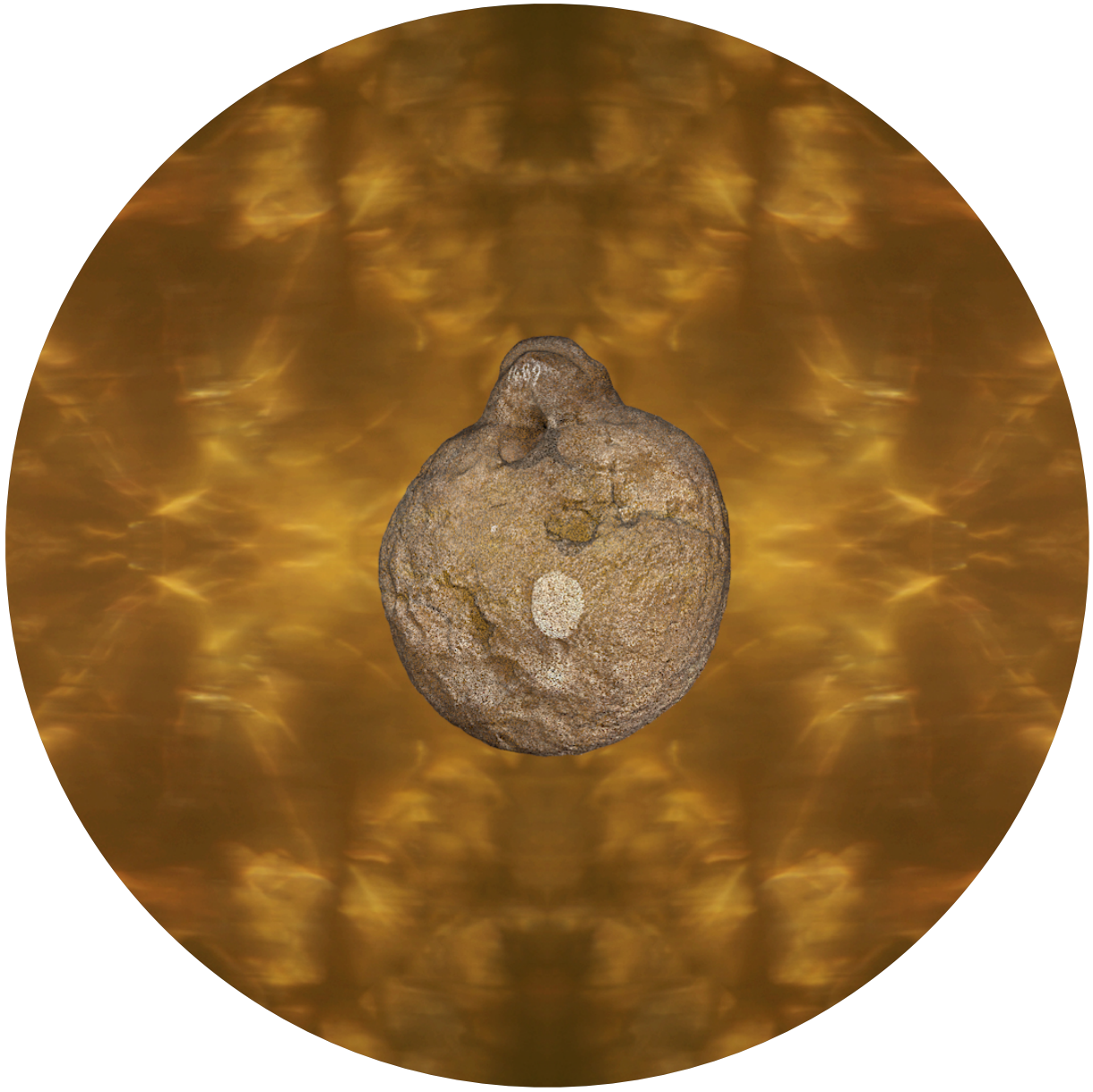
Looking to an extended whakapapa, the toki is genealogically connected to the Māori atua or ancestor Mataaho, given it is carved from basalt, a volcanic rock. Lucy Mackintosh refers to the tradition in which "Mataaho created all of the volcanic formations of Tāmaki ... the rocky landscape of Tāmaki is perceived as a living, breathing ancestor who is part of the land, and who continues to govern and shape life's processes and outcomes in Auckland."<sup>623</sup> Shaping, carving, forming — much like a toki. The artwork's lifeworld invokes these relations to volcanoes and the shoreline of Long Bay, the deep time scales of rock sculpted by ceaseless tides and lunar cycles.

---

<sup>621</sup> Barry Rigby, *The Crown, Maori, and Mahurangi 1840–1881: A Historical Report Commissioned by the Waitangi Tribunal* (Wellington: Waitangi Tribunal, 1998), 2.

<sup>622</sup> Rigby, *The Crown, Maori, and Mahurangi*, 19.

<sup>623</sup> Mackintosh, *Shifting Grounds*, 27.



**Figure 34.** *Cosmosphere: Māhē*, 2024, single-channel video/audio. Pūoro: Salvador Brown.  
Māhē: Auckland War Memorial Museum Tāmaki Paenga Hira, 1928.28, 614812.

## Māhē

The māhē (sinker) was a solitary gift from Sam Kronfeld to the Auckland Institute and Museum in 1928. Its accession record denotes the locality as ‘Maori,’ and it resides in the ‘Unlocalised (NZ)’ box of māhē. Made from porous volcanic stone, the māhē measures 114mm by 104mm and is heavy in the hand. The head is perforated and has worn grooves. In the *Te Maori* catalogue, ethnologist David R. Simmons explains that in addition to being functional for fishing, some sinkers are ceremonial, bearing mauri and ritually invoking the assistance of atua.<sup>624</sup> Referring to a māhē decorated with a double spiral from my own iwi, Ngāi Te Rangi, Simmons notes that such features identified the people to whom the sinker — and the net or line it held in place — belonged.<sup>625</sup> While the māhē is considered unlocalised, a newspaper article offers a clue. In 1934, the Auckland Museum loaned a number of items to the Kaitaia District High School’s museum: a knobbed sinker is described as rare, and a perforated sinker as a type “only found in the Auckland province.”<sup>626</sup>

Māhē straddle the ceremonial and utilitarian, the air and water. Materially, their volcanic stone connects to Mataaho, and, through their use as sinkers, they inhabit the realm of Tangaroa (like Pōhutukawa, who grow from the whenua but are in his domain as shoreline-dwellers). The lifeworld of the māhē recalls these whakapapa relations.

---

<sup>624</sup> Mead, *Te Maori: Maori Art*, 190.

<sup>625</sup> Mead, *Te Maori: Maori Art*, 199.

<sup>626</sup> “Kaitaia District High School Museum,” *Northland Age*, September 21, 1934, <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NORAG19340921.2.39>.



**Figure 35.** *Cosmosphere: Hoe Parāoa*, 2024, single-channel video/audio. Pūoro: Rāhana Tito-Taylor.  
Hoe Parāoa: Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, ME011588.

## Hoe Parāoa

The hoe parāoa (whalebone paddle) was deposited in the Dominion Museum on loan by Moe (the eighth Kronfeld child) at the time of the Collection's 1939 donation. Moe officially presented the hoe to the Museum in 1969.<sup>627</sup> A newspaper article reports that Gustav “regarded it as the rarest article in his extensive collection.”<sup>628</sup> Te Papa lists the production as unknown, the period of influence as 1800-1900, and the measurements as 132mm wide, 1507mm long, and 30mm deep.<sup>629</sup> This hoe was likely a ceremonial counterpart to the usual wooden waka paddles. As Ngarino Ellis shared, parāoa were sacred, and made into taonga usually restricted to rangatira and ariki (high ranking chiefs).<sup>630</sup>

The whalebone from which the hoe parāoa was carved was a gift from Tangaroa.<sup>631</sup> It holds the memory of the ocean's depths, of travelling the vastness of Te Moananui-a-Kiwa. Given that the taonga likely came from Te Tai Tokerau, the whale may have once dwelled in the waters of Ipipiri (the Bay of Islands). We could speculate that the blubber of this parāoa was rendered into oil, long before its jawbone was carved to form a hoe — long before it was rendered in a photograph, drawing, or digital apparition. The migratory journeys and significance of whales are threads winding through the waters encompassing Aotearoa. They feature in stories of ancestral navigation as guides, protectors, and taniwha, and place names record these stories.<sup>632</sup> Whales, and this hoe, continue to guide me. The lifeworld of the hoe parāoa conjures oceanic journeys and the realm of Tangaroa — a sacred, relational space. A digitally rendered hoe parāoa, immersed within the lifeworld, traverses the moana once more.

---

<sup>627</sup> Janet Davidson, letter to Margaret Hixon, May 17, 1993.

<sup>628</sup> “South Seas Curios.”

<sup>629</sup> Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, “Hoe (Paddle),” Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, accessed March 1, 2023, <https://collections.tepapa.govt.nz/object/106259>.

<sup>630</sup> Ellis, “Ngā Taonga o Wharawhara.”

<sup>631</sup> Todd, *Whales and Dolphins of Aotearoa*, 100.

<sup>632</sup> Todd, *Whales and Dolphins of Aotearoa*, 90-91, 95-96.

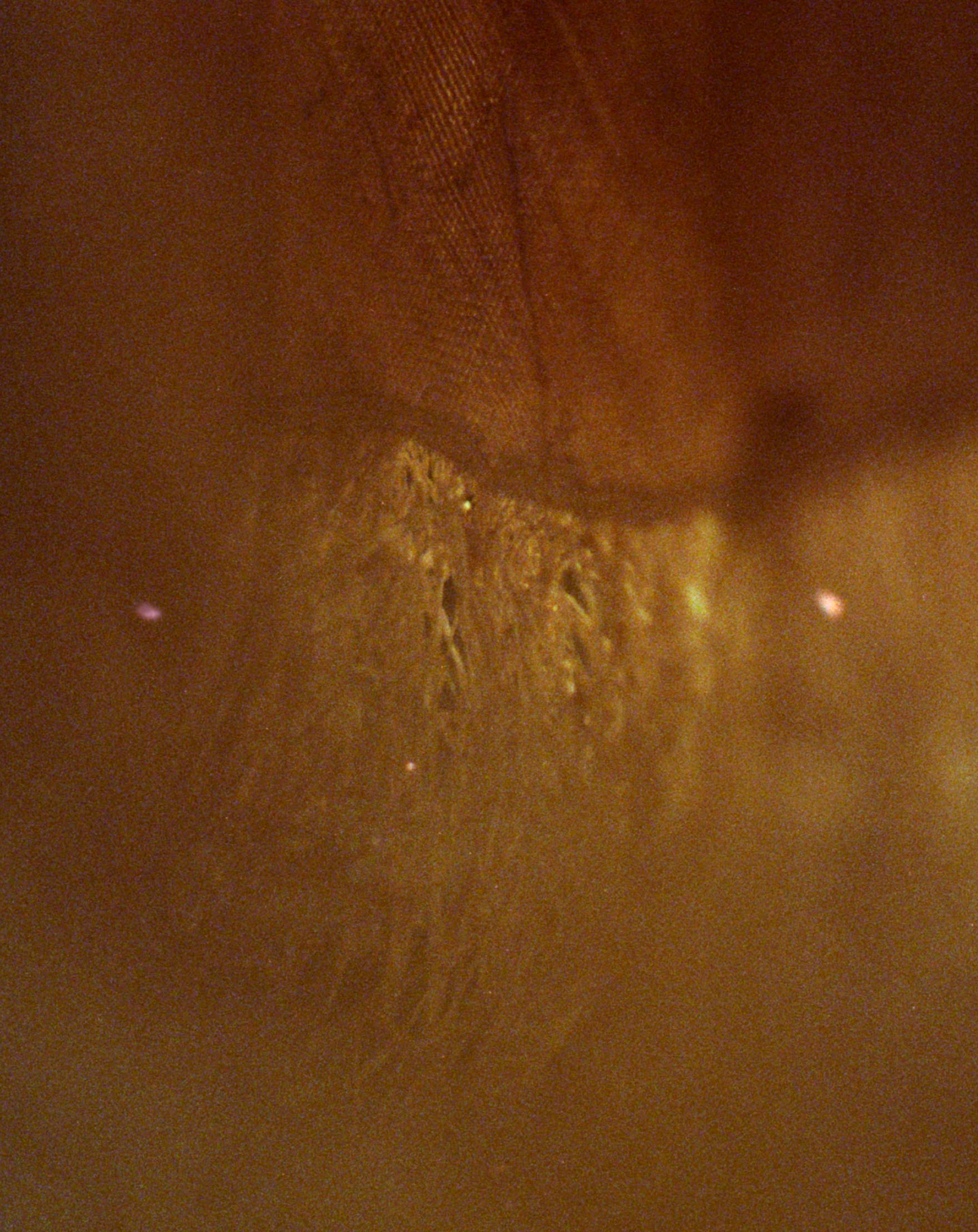


Figure 36. Te tōga, 2023. Auckland War Memorial Museum Tāmaki Paenga Hira, 1987.700, 52588.

# Closing

From the time of its gifting in 1939, the Kronfeld Collection was shrouded in darkness, held in stasis within storage crates at the Dominion Museum. In the 1970s, the taonga, measina, and treasures came out of the darkness and were warmed by the Friends of the National Museum and Moe Kronfeld, who assessed the Collection. They have, for the most part, remained in storage ever since. This research project significantly contributes to the historical record of the Collection and the family, through stitching together material gathered by Kronfeld descendants, associated contextual scholarship, and discoveries gleaned from the archive. Through combing accession records and correspondence at the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa and Tāmaki Paenga Hira Auckland War Memorial Museum, the research has identified gaps and errors, and written back into the archive, expanding the Collection’s presence. As I sought to bring the taonga, measina, and treasures ‘into the light,’ I discovered what a relationship with a museum collection might look like when nurtured.

I am threaded into the Kronfeld Collection’s systems of relation. Thus, the first relations in need of restoration or establishing were my own: with the treasures, with the family, and with the museum. Early stages of the research were spent on the floor of my parents’ home, carefully leafing through photographs, letters, newspaper scraps, and other ephemera gathered and stored by four generations. I continued this process in the libraries and content management system of Auckland Museum and travelled to Te Papa to access the records there. Facing an inhospitable spreadsheet, I compiled my own inventories of the Collection tracing fluctuations between the lists made for, with, or by the Auckland and Dominion museums in 1917, 1924, and 1939. The early research phase generated the exploratory series of artworks *Through the Time Spiral*. Making these works — bringing stories, memories, and the home of the Kronfeld family to life — drew me closer to my great-great-grandparents and their children. It also deepened my relationship with Tāmaki Makaurau, the city I have lived in nearly my whole life, but experienced anew as each layer of familial history was revealed. The museum is intertwined with these histories, and not just with the Kronfelds, but across my Ngāi Te Rangi and Pākehā whakapapa, too. The experiential, intuitive, speculative mode of research within the museum is recorded in the appendix “Into the Archive: Reflections from the Museum.” This piece is a twin to the appendix “Into the Archive: The Kronfelds,” which traces a historical account of the family and Collection. These written outcomes, and the period of research that produced them, foreground the process of coming into relation with the Kronfeld Collection.

It was not until coming kanohi-ki-te-kanohi with the taonga, measina, and treasures — introducing myself, speaking to them, touching them — that I felt our relationships becoming active. Their mana and mauri were palpable. In each encounter, there was a sense of recognition. The project culminated in the ‘cosmospheres.’ I 3D scanned selected taonga and measina using photogrammetry, digitally rendering them as point clouds. The methods of scanning and rendering were surprisingly intimate processes. Scanning the taonga and measina, I moved around them, being sure to photograph them from every angle. While

editing their point clouds, I zoomed *into* them, viewing them anew from within their multitudinous points of light. Researching the provenance, whakapapa, and vā relations of the taonga and measina became a sacred process. I spent countless hours searching for traces, searching for threads glimmering with connection. Filming the ‘lifeworlds’ of the treasures, the research moved beyond the museum to their origin places, or locations that recall elements of their systems of relation. The camera functioned as a portal, opening me and my present to time spirals, to ancestral and atua realms. Editing the recordings into lifeworlds that would encompass the digital taonga and measina, as well as the resulting rhythmic, patterned formations, brought my experience of relational ecologies into being. Through coming to understand whakapapa and vā relations as an extended form of provenance, and enlivening these relations in the cosmospheres, I began to see transformative futures for museum collections. Treasures will only remain lost to museum imaginaries if their systems of relation are perpetually erased or forgotten. Whakapapa and vā link us through space/time: they propose a life beyond maker/‘owner’/collector, and offer repair where it may seem beyond reach.

As concepts of whakapapa, vā, and wā determine genealogical and relational connections through space/time, it follows that I feel bound to the Kronfeld Collection four generations after its assembly. From the outset of the project, I have considered my relation to the Collection as an ancestral responsibility. I have also come to think of this responsibility as an intergenerational inheritance of ‘the gift’ — the gift of taonga, measina, and treasures given to Gustav, Louisa, and their children; and the gift of the Collection to the museums. Through undertaking the research, I have learnt about my role in the ongoing care of the Collection, required as part of this inheritance. Making the artworks was fundamental to learning how I might fulfil my role — they are both the process and the result. Reciprocity is inherent to gifting in Moana Oceania: the cosmospheres are a way for me to enact the reciprocity of the gift.

The practice is also how I imagine decolonial museum ecologies through a world-building process. Assembling a shelter in the digital realm, I can render the intangible and conjure the otherworldly. Indigenous ways of relating to treasures, outside of the imperial imaginary, can move to the fore. Despite their capturing by museum imaginaries, and without erasing the discontinuities associated with decontextualisation, the power of treasures persist — moving and transforming the world around them. At the project’s completion, I plan to deposit the artworks in both Auckland Museum and Te Papa as a ‘born-digital’ artefact. My intention is that the artworks keep the Kronfeld Collection company, and provide some of the context or ‘worlding’ that is otherwise missing. Furthermore, if the museum is to become a house of stories and relationships, as this research proposes, and as treasures leave their collections, what might be gifted in their place? These artworks are my gift, residing in place of the taonga and measina, should they return home. The cosmospheres, while able to co-exist with the museums’ collections, will not be suspended within them — they have the ability to travel and ‘live’ beyond them; to move along their routes and reconnect with their roots.

Through undertaking this project, the worlds of the taonga, measina, and treasures began to unfurl before me. Rachel Buchanan's research on the Motunui Epa considers what can and can no longer be known, "and creates a new, extended provenance" for the taonga tuku iho, one "that embraces the life, actions and achievements of our tūpuna as they carved a path across the world." Like Buchanan's, this research favours "a new kōrero based on regeneration, sustenance and life, rather than sorrow, shame and death, a kōrero based on riches and abundance."<sup>633</sup> While the thesis offers a historical and artistic contribution to the Kronfeld Collection, much work remains to be done. Restoration and the fostering of relationships are not processes that can be rushed. There is ample opportunity for communities of origin to deepen the research, and for us to work together on returns and reconnections if, when, and how that is desired. Ultimately, 'housing' should be a reciprocal, collaborative practice.

As practice-based research, the project has housed taonga and measina from the Kronfeld Collection in moving-image artworks, thus restoring some of their relations. Guided by a tuitui methodology, I linked fragments of information from across archives, oceans, and centuries. I also stitched moving-image, sound, and 3D rendering methods together to assemble the cosmospheres. The kaleidoscopic works bring fragments back into relation, reassembling them into new formations that offer a reparative vision (without denying their initial fragmentation). The project brings together the tangible learning of developing a new style of art-making in my practice with specific relational and theoretical frameworks, and contributes this approach to the wider field of practice.

Here, I return to the question, "E taea e rātou te tuitui?" "But do they know how to sew it back together again?"<sup>634</sup> Utilising contemporary technologies to render ancestral treasures offers a way to repair rended relationships in a woven universe. This process of rendering — repairing, returning, restoring — emerged as significant to the research. So, too, did the cosmos and its related notions of worlding and adorning. Rather than being *replicas* of their carved and woven forms, the digital taonga and measina are *renderings*. Created through the transference of light and cosmological energies, they became something new. Their shimmering, nebular, ephemeral forms — simultaneously ancient and futuristic — summon cosmological resonances across deep spatiotemporal scales. These resonances prompt us to consider our obligations to treasures and our relational worlds, as both descendants and ancestors. A single point in our expansive web of relations, I tuitui into the future with threads from the past. In bringing the Kronfeld Collection back into the light, and enlivening the systems of relation of the taonga and measina, their transformational power within a woven universe, a sea of islands, is illuminated once more. And in the glow, we might witness tears in the fabric binding together again, ocean currents meeting like old friends.

---

<sup>633</sup> Buchanan, *Te Motunui Epa*, 11-12.

<sup>634</sup> Marsden, quoted in Royal, editor's introduction to Marsden, *The Woven Universe*, xiii.



**Figure 37.** *and so we find them all over the universe now, 2023, clay, cotton, and stainless steel.*

# Glossary

## Te reo Māori

Definitions from *Te Aka Māori-English, English-Māori Dictionary and Index*.

āhua	shape, nature, form
ao	world
ariki	paramount chief
ātea	open area in front of the wharenuī
atua	ancestor with continuing influence, god, deity
aute	cloth made from the bark of the paper mulberry tree
hapū	kinship group, pregnant
hīnaki	eel basket
hoe	paddle, oar
hoe parāoa	whalebone paddle
hou amokura	red-tailed tropicbird feather
iwi	extended kinship group, tribe, people, bone
kaikōrero	speaker
kaitiaki	guardian
kākahu	cloak
kanohi-ki-te-kanohi	face-to-face
karakia	incantation, ritual chant, prayer
karanga	ceremonial call
kaumātua	elders
kete whakairo	finely woven patterned basket
kōiwi	human bone
kōkōwai	red ochre
kōrero	speak, narrative, story, conversation
kuia	elderly woman, grandmother, female elder
māhē	fishing-line sinker
mana	prestige, authority, spiritual power
manu	bird, any winged creature
manuhiri	visitor, guest
marae	courtyard; the open area in front of the wharenuī
mārama	light
mātauranga	knowledge, wisdom, understanding
mau rākau	Māori weaponry
maunga	mountain
mauri	life force, vital essence
moana	sea, ocean
ngāhere	forest
noa	to be free from the extensions of tapu, unrestricted
Pākehā	European; New Zealander of European descent
parāoa	sperm whale
patu	hand weapon
pono	to be true, genuine

pou	post, support
pounamu	greenstone
pōwhiri	rituals of encounter, welcome ceremony on a marae
pūrākau	story/stories
rākau	tree, wood
rangatira	chief
reo	language
tā moko	tattoo
taiaha	long wooden weapon
tāne	man
tangata whenua	people born of the whenua
taonga	treasure, anything prized
taonga pūoro	musical instruments
taonga tuku iho	something handed down
tauīwi	non-Māori
tekoteko	carved figure on the gable of a meeting house, canoe figurehead
tewhatewha	long weapon with a flat section at one end
tika	to be correct, true, just
tikanga	correct procedure, practice, protocol
tipuna/tipuna	ancestor/ancestors (eastern dialect)
tohorā	whale
tohu	sign
tohunga	skilled person, chosen expert
toki	adze
tuitui	to lace, sew, thread on a string (repeatedly), bind; lashing, sewing
tukutuku	woven, patterned panels
tupuna/tūpuna	ancestor/ancestors
wā	time, season, duration; area, definite space
wāhi	place
wairua	spirit
waka	canoe, receptacle
waka huia	treasure box
waka kōiwi	burial chest
waka taua	war canoe
wero	challenge
whakaahua	to acquire form, transform, photograph, image
whakairo	to carve, carving
whakamana	empower
whakanoa	to remove tapu
whakapapa	to place in layers, genealogy, lineage, descent
whare pora	house of weaving
whare tangata	house of humanity, womb
whare taonga	museum
whare wānanga	place of higher learning
whare whakairo	carved house, meeting house
wharenuī	meeting house
whenua	land, placenta
whetū	star

## Gagana Sāmoa

Definitions from Milner, G. B. *Samoan Dictionary: Samoan-English English-Samoan*. Auckland: Polynesian Press, 1993; Pratt, George. *A Grammar and Dictionary of the Samoan Language, with English and Samoan Vocabulary*, 3rd ed. London: The London Missionary Society, 1893; \*Chitham, Māhina-Tuai, and Skinner.

alofa	love
atua	god, divine
fale	house
fale lalaga	house where fine mats are woven
faletele	round house for entertaining and holding meetings
gafa	lineage, genealogy
'ava	a beverage made with the dried and pulverised root of kava
'ie tōga	fine mat
'oli	tree
'ula	garland, necklace of flowers
malaga	ceremonial visit, journey, travel
mana	supernatural power
mea	thing, genitals
measina	cultural treasures and heritage of Sāmoa
Pālagi	European
pale fuiono	headdress of a High Chief
siapo	Samoan barkcloth
sina	white
su'ifefiloi	the threading of flowers to make a necklace or garland
ta'alolo	ceremonial presentation of food and other gifts
talanoa	converse together
tanoa	bowl
tanoa fai'ava	kava bowl
tapu	to make sacred, to place under restriction
vā	distance, space, relations (between two places, things, or people)

## Tongan, Niuean, and Fijian

tabua	sperm whale tooth
kie hingoa	Tongan named fine mat
kupesi	patterns
hiapo	Niuean barkcloth
kie Hamoa	fine mat
masi	Fijian barkcloth

# List of figures

All works are my own unless otherwise stated. All photographs are my own unless otherwise stated, and are digital scans of 35mm film.

**Figure 1.** *Flukeprint*, Kaikōura, 2021.

**Figure 2.** Pandanus on the southern coast of 'Upolu, Sāmoa, 2023.

**Figure 3.** The contents of an envelope in my family's archive labelled "Oli Ula," 2024.

**Figure 4.** Lissy and Rudy Robinson-Cole, *Wharenui Harikoa*, 2023. Sam Hartnett. Courtesy of the artists.

**Figure 5.** *Digging at the roots* (from *Moana Calling Me Home*), 2020, single-channel video/audio.

**Figure 6.** *Through the Time Spiral: 'Oli 'Ula*, 2021, single-channel video/audio.

**Figure 7.** *Through the Time Spiral: 'Oli 'Ula*, 2021, single-channel video/audio.

**Figure 8.** *Through the Time Spiral: Te Muri I*, 2022, single-channel video/audio.

**Figure 9.** *Through the Time Spiral: Te Muri II*, 2022, single channel of three-channel video/audio.

**Figure 10.** *and so we find them all over the universe now*, 2023, clay, cotton, and stainless steel.

**Figure 11.** 'Te tōga, 2020. Auckland War Memorial Museum Tāmaki Paenga Hira, 1987.700, 52588.

**Figure 12.** 'Oli 'Ula, number 9 Eden Crescent, 1902. Digital scan from original 120mm film negative. Kronfeld/Parr collection. L-R: Sam and Jenny Kronfeld, Annie Bartley (from Sāmoa), Moe, Minna, Isi, Leo, and Manny Kronfeld.

**Figure 13.** Lisa Reihana, *in Pursuit of Venus [infected]*, 2015, single-channel video, UltraHD, colour, 7.1 sound. Courtesy of the artist.

**Figure 14.** Polaroid photos of Cora-Allan, Kelly Lafaiki, and me in Kelly's journal. Cora-Allan and Emily Parr, *Encountering Aotearoa*, 2023, single-channel video/audio.

**Figure 15.** Cora-Allan making a cyanotype on hiapo, Te Wharawhara (Ulva Island), 2023.

**Figure 16.** Tāmaki Paenga Hira Auckland War Memorial Museum, 2022.

**Figure 17.** Ana Iti, *Treasures left by our ancestors*, 2016, single-channel digital video, colour, sound. Courtesy of the artist.

**Figure 18.** Alex Monteith, *Coastal Flows / Coastal Incursions: In Light of Time*, 2017, four-channel video. Installation view, Te Wai Ngutu Kākā Gallery (formerly ST Paul Street). Sam Hartnett. Courtesy of the artist.

**Figure 19.** Kauri, Aotea (Great Barrier Island), 2023.

**Figure 20.** 'Te tōga set up to 3D scan, 2023. Auckland War Memorial Museum Tāmaki Paenga Hira, 1987.700, 52588.

**Figures 21-23.** Emily Parr, John Pule, and Salvador Brown. *Moana Cosmograms*, 2021, single-channel video/audio.

**Figure 24.** Emily Parr, *Ring of Fire*, 2022, single-channel video. Installation view, courtesy of the artist and Te Uru. Made with the support of The Chartwell Project. Sam Hartnett.

**Figure 25.** *Whakamārama: dusk/dawn (Tauranga Moana)*, 2021, single-channel video/audio.

**Figure 26.** 'Oli 'Ula (from *Moana Calling Me Home*), 2020, single-channel video/audio.

**Figure 27.** Installation view of *Surfacing*, 2021, The Physics Room.

**Figure 28.** Tanu Gago and Jermaine Dean, *ATUA*, 2022. Written and directed by Tanu Gago, created by FAFSWAG, produced by PIKI Films, digital creative direction by Wrestler. Augmented reality experience. Courtesy of the artists.

**Figure 29.** Ahilapalapa Rands, *Lift Off*, 2018, single channel of three-channel animation, sound. Courtesy of the artist.

**Figure 30.** *Cosmosphere: 'Te Tōga*, 2024, single-channel video/audio. Pūoro: Salvador Brown. 'Te tōga: Auckland War Memorial Museum Tāmaki Paenga Hira, 1987.700, 52588.

**Figure 31.** *Cosmosphere: 'Te Tōga (MULI O AIGA)*, 2024, single-channel video/audio. Pūoro: Salvador Brown. 'Te tōga: Auckland War Memorial Museum Tāmaki Paenga Hira, 1987.700, 52589.

**Figure 32.** *Cosmosphere: Tanoa Fai'ava*, 2024, single-channel video/audio. Pūoro: Salvador Brown. Tanoa fai'ava: Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, FE010512.

**Figure 33.** *Cosmosphere: Toki*, 2024, single-channel video/audio. Pūoro: Salvador Brown. Toki: Auckland War Memorial Museum Tāmaki Paenga Hira, 1977.88, 26356.

**Figure 34.** *Cosmosphere: Māhē*, 2024, single-channel video/audio. Pūoro: Salvador Brown. Māhē: Auckland War Memorial Museum Tāmaki Paenga Hira, 1928.28, 614812.

**Figure 35.** *Cosmosphere: Hoe Parāoa*, 2024, single-channel video/audio. Pūoro: Rāhana Tito-Taylor. Hoe Parāoa: Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, ME011588.

**Figure 36.** *Te tōga*, 2023. Auckland War Memorial Museum Tāmaki Paenga Hira, 1987.700, 52588.

**Figure 37.** *and so we find them all over the universe now*, 2023, clay, cotton, and stainless steel.

**Figure 38.** East of Te Ika-a-Māui from porthole window in my cabin on board the *Heritage Adventurer*, 2023.

#### **Exhibition Documentation: 'Oli 'Ula**

**Figures 39-41.** Views of the entrance to the darkened exhibition space (Gallery Two, Te Wai Ngutu Kākā). Two shelves held the *Into the Archive* books and a hand-made clay vessel with water to whakanoa. The water was sourced from Te Wai Ariki, a sacred spring emerging near where 'Oli 'Ula once stood. The exhibition roomsheet was placed on the bench.

**Figures 42-44.** *Into the Archive: The Kronfelds*, 2024; *Into the Archive: Reflections from the Museum*, 2024. Hand-bound books, 120gsm cartridge paper, 300gsm cover with metallic foil.

**Figure 45.** Installation view of *Cosmosphere: Te Tōga*, 2024, 5 min. POV: corner near entrance. Dual-channel projection, four-channel audio, in a looping sequence of *Cosmospheres* (duration of 30 min).

**Figure 46.** Installation view of *Cosmosphere: Te Tōga (MULI O AIGA)*, 2024, 5 min. POV: centre of wall near entrance. Dual-channel projection, four-channel audio, in a looping sequence of *Cosmospheres* (duration of 30 min).

**Figure 47.** Installation view of *Cosmosphere: Tanoa Fai'ava*, 2024, 5 min. POV: corner along from entrance. Dual-channel projection, four-channel audio, in a looping sequence of *Cosmospheres* (duration of 30 min).

**Figure 48.** Installation view of *Cosmosphere: Toki*, 2024, 5 min. POV: furthest corner facing entrance. Dual-channel projection, four-channel audio, in a looping sequence of *Cosmospheres* (duration of 30 min).

**Figure 49.** Installation view of *Cosmosphere: Māhē*, 2024, 5 min. POV: centre of wall facing entrance. Dual-channel projection, four-channel audio, in a looping sequence of *Cosmospheres* (duration of 30 min).

**Figure 50.** Installation view of *Cosmosphere: Hoe Parāoa*, 2024, 5 min. POV: corner facing entrance. Dual-channel projection, four-channel audio, in a looping sequence of *Cosmospheres* (duration of 30 min).

## Exhibition Roomsheets

**Figure 51.** Exhibition roomsheet, front.

**Figure 52.** Exhibition roomsheet, inside left page.

**Figure 53.** Exhibition roomsheet, inside right page.

## Cosmospheres

**Figures 54-58.** *Cosmosphere: 'Te Tōga*, 2024, single-channel video/audio. Pūoro: Salvador Brown. 'Te tōga: Auckland War Memorial Museum Tāmaki Paenga Hira, 1987.700, 52588.

**Figures 59-63.** *Cosmosphere: 'Te Tōga (MULI O AIGA)*, 2024, single-channel video/audio. Pūoro: Salvador Brown. 'Te tōga: Auckland War Memorial Museum Tāmaki Paenga Hira, 1987.700, 52589.

**Figures 64-68.** *Cosmosphere: Tanoa Fai'ava*, 2024, single-channel video/audio. Pūoro: Salvador Brown. Tanoa fai'ava: Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, FE010512.

**Figures 69-73.** *Cosmosphere: Toki*, 2024, single-channel video/audio. Pūoro: Salvador Brown. Toki: Auckland War Memorial Museum Tāmaki Paenga Hira, 1977.88, 26356.

**Figures 74-78.** *Cosmosphere: Māhē*, 2024, single-channel video/audio. Pūoro: Salvador Brown. Māhē: Auckland War Memorial Museum Tāmaki Paenga Hira, 1928.28, 614812.

**Figures 79-83.** *Cosmosphere: Hoe Parāoa*, 2024, single-channel video/audio. Pūoro: Rāhana Tito-Taylor. Hoe Parāoa: Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, MEO11588.

## *Through the Time Spiral*

**Figures 84-86.** *Through the Time Spiral: 'Oli 'Ula*, 2021, single-channel video/audio.

**Figures 87-89.** *Through the Time Spiral: Te Muri I*, 2022, single-channel video/audio. The work features the Kronfeld, Silva, Greig, and Geddes families, with additional friends and Queen Sālote Tupou III.

**Figures 90-92.** *Through the Time Spiral: Te Muri II*, 2022, three-channel video/audio.

# Bibliography

- “A Rare Exhibit.” *Wanganui Chronicle*, November 14, 1908, <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/WC19081114.2.5>.
- Adams, Julie, Billie Lythberg, Maia Nuku, Amiria Salmond, and Nicholas Thomas, eds. *Artefacts of Encounter: Cook's Voyages, Colonial Collecting and Museum Histories*. Dunedin: Otago University Press, 2016.
- Affeldt, Stefanie, and Wulf D. Hund. “From ‘Plant Hunter’ to ‘Tomb Raider’: The Changing Image of Amalie Dietrich.” *Australian Studies Journal Zeitschrift für Australienstudien* 33/34 (2019/2020): 89–124. <https://dx.doi.org/10.35515/zfa/asj.3334/201920.06>.
- Aird, Michael, Chantal Knowles, Sam Leah, Howard Morphy, Shaun Angeles Penangke, Matt Poll, Craig Ritchie, and Mariko Smith. “The Relational Museum: Theory and Practice.” Panel discussion at the RETURN: Reconnecting Objects and Collections with People and Places Symposium, CSU Riverina Playhouse and online, June 27–29, 2023.
- Alli, Sabrina. “Ariella Aisha Azoulay: ‘It Is Not Possible to Decolonize the Museum without Decolonizing the World.’” *Guernica Mag* (March 12, 2020). <https://www.guernicamag.com/miscellaneous-files-ariella-aisha-azoulay/>.
- Amaama, Safua Akeli. “Joseph Churchward’s Handcrafted Typefaces.” In *Crafting Aotearoa: A Cultural History of Making in New Zealand and the Wider Moana Oceania*, edited by Karl Chitham, Kolokesa U Māhina-Tuai, and Damian Skinner, 245–259. Wellington: Te Papa Press, 2019.
- Anae, Melani, and Leone Samu Tui. “Teu le Vā as Indigenous Relationality in Contemporary Museological Praxis.” Paper presented at the Vā Moana: Space and Relationality in Pacific Thought and Identity Conference, held online, November 24–25, 2021.
- Andrews, Jilda, and Aaron Glass. “Interventions: Museums, Anthropology and their Publics.” Presentation at the SIMA: Putting Theory & Things Together Webinar, held online, October 7, 2021.
- Aoake, Hana Pera. *A Bathful of Kawakawa and Hot Water: Selected Writings*. Auckland: Compound Press, 2020.
- Aranui, Amber. “Tahuri Ana Te Tai: The Changing Tide of Repatriation in Current Museology.” In *Uneven Bodies (Reader)*, edited by Ruth Buchanan, Aileen Burns, Johan Lundh, and Hanahiva Rose. Ngāmotu New Plymouth: Govett-Brewster Art Gallery, 2021.
- Ash-Milby, Kathleen, Nigel Borell, Léuli Eshrāghi, and Maia Nuku. “Knowledge Positions in Aotearoa and Turtle Island Art Museums.” *Artlink* 40, no. 2 (June 2020): 12–23. <https://dx.doi.org/10.3316/informit.132778571812385>.
- Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki. “Te Pūtahitanga ō Rehua.” Accessed January 11, 2024. <https://www.aucklandartgallery.com/explore-art-and-ideas/artwork/31285/te-putahitanga-o-rehua>.
- Auckland Institute and Museum. *Annual Reports 1901–1917*. Auckland: Auckland Institute and Museum, 1901–1917.

- Auckland War Memorial Museum. "Haumanu: 'Will You Breathe For Me?' Auckland Museum." January 9, 2023. Video. <https://youtu.be/i45fJD0FHzM?si=INUB4NkzMr-N78Lr>.
- . "The History of Auckland Museum." Accessed May 18, 2022. <https://www.aucklandmuseum.com/your-museum/about/history-of-auckland-museum>.
- . *Teu Le Vā: The Pacific Dimension at Auckland War Memorial Museum*. Auckland: Auckland War Memorial Museum, 2013.
- Avegaglio, Papalii Failautusi. "Reconciling Modern Knowledge with Ancient Wisdom." In *Su'esu'e Manogi: In Search of Fragrance: Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Ta'isi Efi and the Samoan Indigenous Reference*, edited by Tamasailau M. Suaalii-Sauni, I'uogafa Tuagalu, Tofilau Nina Kirifi-Alai, and Naomi Fuamatu. Wellington: Huia Publishers, 2018.
- Bambllett, Laurie. "Museums, Archives and Black Lives." Workshop at the RETURN: Reconnecting Objects and Collections with People and Places Symposium, CSU Riverina Playhouse and online, June 27–29, 2023.
- Barclay, Barry. "Celebrating Fourth Cinema." *Illusions Magazine*, July 2003.
- Barnett, Cassandra. "Kei Roto i Te Whare/On Housing." Paper presented at the St Paul St 2015 Curatorial Symposium: Practice, Place, Research, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, Auckland, August 21, 2015, [https://stpaulst.aut.ac.nz/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0003/14988/2015-Curatorial-Symposium-papers\\_ST-PAUL-St-Gallery.pdf](https://stpaulst.aut.ac.nz/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/14988/2015-Curatorial-Symposium-papers_ST-PAUL-St-Gallery.pdf).
- . "Listen Your Way Home: Rachel Shearer's *Te Oro o te Ao*." *Ate Journal of Māori Art* 1 (2019): 30–43.
- Best, Elsdon. *The Māori Canoe: An Account of Various Types of Vessels Used by the Māori of New Zealand in Former Times, with Some Description of Those of the Isles of the Pacific, and a Brief Account of the Peopling of New Zealand*. Wellington: Government Printer, 1976.
- Bollard, A. E. "The Financial Adventures of J. C. Godeffroy and Son in the Pacific." *The Journal of Pacific History* 16, no. 1 (1981): 3–19. <https://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00223348108572410>.
- Boswell, Anna. "Climates of Change: A Tuatara's-Eye View." *Humanities* 9, no. 2 (2020): Article 38. <https://doi.org/10.3390/h9020038>.
- . "Fractured Atmospheric." *Interstices*, no. 15 (2014). <https://doi.org/10.24135/ijara.v0i0.475>.
- Broughton, Cate. "Complaints About Māori Exhibit Not Addressed for Four Years." *Stuff*, June 15, 2020. <https://www.stuff.co.nz/the-press/news/300035413/complaints-about-mori-exhibit-not-addressed-for-four-years>.
- Brown, Deirdre. "Māori Architecture: Whare Māori." In *Te Ara—The Encyclopedia of New Zealand*. Last modified October 22, 2014. Accessed January 11, 2023. <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/maori-architecture-whare-maori>.
- Brown, Deidre, and George Nicholas. "Protecting Indigenous Cultural Property in the Age of Digital Democracy: Institutional and Communal Responses to Canadian First Nations and Māori Heritage Concerns." *Journal of Material Culture* 17, no. 3 (2012): 307–24. <https://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1359183512454065>.

- Brunt, Peter, Ioana Gordon-Smith, Lagi-Maama Academy & Consultancy, Lana Lopesi, and Daniel Satele. "Writing Plentitudes." *Marinade: Aotearoa Journal of Moana Art*, no. 1 (2022): 74–85.
- Brunt, Tony. *"To Walk Under Palm Trees": The Germans in Samoa: Snapshots from Albums; Part One*. Auckland: Self-published, 2016.
- Buchanan, Rachel. *Te Motunui Epa*. Wellington: Bridget Williams Books, 2022.
- Buck, Peter Henry. *Samoa Material Culture: By Te Rangi Hiroa (P. H. Buck)*. Millwood, NY: Kraus Reprint, 1988.
- Burgess, Hana, Donna Cormack, and Papaarangi Reid. "Calling Forth our Pasts, Citing our Futures: An Envisioning of a Kaupapa Māori Citational Practice." *MAI Journal* 10, no. 1 (2021): 57–67. <https://doi.org/10.20507/MAIJournal.2021.10.1.8>.
- Burgess, Hana, and Te Kahuratai Painting. "Onamata, Anamata: A Whakapapa Perspective of Māori Futurisms." In *Whose Futures?*, edited by Anna-Maria Murtola and Shannon Walsh, 207–233. Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland: Economic and Social Research Aotearoa, 2020.
- "Burial-Chest." The British Museum. Accessed August 25, 2022. [https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/E\\_Oc1950-11-1](https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/E_Oc1950-11-1).
- Cairns, Puawai. "Planting Seeds of Change: Ruminating on Change and Speculations for the Future." Keynote at the NDF23 Whanake\Evolve Conference, Wellington, November 20–22, 2023.
- "Can Claim Cloak." *New Zealand Herald*, February 25, 1975.
- "Canterbury Museum Removes 'Offensive and Inaccurate' Māori Mannequins." *Stuff*, August 17, 2022. <https://www.stuff.co.nz/the-press/news/129600842/canterbury-museum-removes-offensive-and-inaccurate-mori-mannequins>.
- Chan, Kiri, ed. *Kambek: Reconnecting Collections*. South Brisbane: Queensland Museum, 2018.
- Chitham, Karl, Kolokesa U Māhina-Tuai, and Damian Skinner, eds. *Crafting Aotearoa: A Cultural History of Making in New Zealand and the Wider Moana Oceania*. Wellington: Te Papa Press, 2019.
- Clark, Alison. *Resonant Histories: Pacific Artefacts and the Voyages of HMS Royalist 1890–1893*. Edited by Nicholas Thomas. Vol. 6. Leiden: Sidestone Press, 2019.
- Clifford, James. *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988.
- . *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997.
- . *Returns: Becoming Indigenous in the Twenty-First Century*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013.
- Cormack, Chris. "Introduction to Data Sovereignty." Workshop facilitated at the NDF23 Whanake\Evolve conference, Wellington, November 20–22, 2023.

- Cormack, Chris, Donna Cormack, and Tahu Kukulai. "Not One Byte More: From Data Colonialism to Data Sovereignty." In *Shouting Zeros and Ones: Digital Technology, Ethics and Policy in New Zealand*, edited by Andrew Chen, 71-83. Wellington: Bridget Williams Books, 2020.
- Cunnane, Abby, Amy Weng, Hamish Petersen, hosts, and Carl Mika, guest. "Wā and Its Countercolonial Possibilities: Implications for the Human Self." Art Not Science (podcast), episode 44. January 28, 2023. <https://plainsfm.org.nz/prog/artnotscience>.
- Curtis, Makyla Anne. "Folding Time: An Exploration of Family Stories through Experiential Research." Master's thesis, Auckland University of Technology, 2021. <https://hdl.handle.net/10292/15295>.
- "Died Aged 90." *Auckland Star*, February 19, 1938. <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/AS19380219.2.156>.
- Douglas, Carl. "Epizeuxis: Point/Cloud." In *Into the Under World/Ngā Mahi Rarowhenua: Suburban Lava Caves of Auckland; A Selection of Critical Texts*. Auckland: Chirag Jindal, 2018.
- . "Point/Cloud: Diffusive Spatial Imaginaries." *Idea Journal* 20, no. 1 (2023): 26-43. <https://doi.org/10.37113/ij.v20i01.496>.
- Eggleton, David. "Kā Paroro o Haumumu: Coastal Flows/Coastal Excursions." Circuit, September 4, 2019. <https://www.circuit.org.nz/writing-and-podcast/ka-paroro-o-haumumu-coastal-flows>.
- Ellis, Ngarino. "Ngā Taonga o Wharawhara: The World of Māori Body Adornment and Art History." Presentation at the Toitū te Mātauranga, Toitū te ao Toi symposium, Waipapa Marae, The University of Auckland, November 24, 2022.
- Ellis, Ngarino, Eliza Macdonald, and Eleanor Almeida. "Taonga in a Digital World: Maori Adornment and the Possibilities of Reconnection." *Journal of the Royal Society of New Zealand* 53, no. 3 (2022): 362-380. <https://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03036758.2022.2090967>.
- Fa'avae, David Taufui Mikato. "Vā Beyond: A Post-Human Speculation." Paper presented at the Vā Moana: Space and Relationality in Pacific Thought and Identity conference, held online, November 24-25, 2021, <https://www.vamoana.org/conference-presentations>.
- Fafswag. "ATUA reimagines the realm of Pacific gods in this sculptural AR experience that claims space for gender-diverse identities impacted by colonial first contact." Facebook, January 22, 2024. <https://www.facebook.com/FafSwag/posts/atua-reimagines-the-realm-of-pacific-gods-in-this-sculptural-ar-experience-that-/4743484735744355/>.
- Finbog, Liisa-Rávná, and Albert L. Refiti. "Care, Community and Apocalyptic Time." Discussion at the Pacific Basin Institute: Decolonizing Art and Curatorial Practices Webinar, held online, November 22, 2022.
- Firth, Stewart. "German Firms in the Western Pacific Islands, 1857-1914." *The Journal of Pacific History* 8 (1973): 10-28. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/25168133>.
- Fisher, Robin. "Williams, Henry." In *Te Ara—The Encyclopedia of New Zealand*. 1990. Accessed September 15, 2022. <https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/1w22/williams-henry>.
- Fox, Aileen. "A New Look at Maori Carved Burial Chests." *Antiquity* 54, no. 210 (1980): 7-14. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003598X00042782>.

- Glass, Aaron, Noelle Kahanu, Maia Nuku, Tiffany Shellam, and Paul Tapsell. "Knowledge and Power." Panel discussion at *The Museum as Archive: Using the Past in the Present and Future Symposium*, Centre for Research on Colonial Culture, University of Otago, Dunedin, held online, December 14-16, 2021.
- Godsen, Chris, and Chantal Knowles. "People, Objects and Colonial Relations." In *Collecting Colonialism: Material Culture and Colonial Change*, 1-26. Oxon: Routledge, 2020.
- Gordon-Smith, Ioana, and Lana Lopesi. "On Marinades and Moana Art Histories." *Marinade: Aotearoa Journal of Moana Art*, no. 1 (2022): 6-13.
- Graham, Brett, Ioane Ioane, Lily Laita, Lemi Ponifasio, and Albert L. Refiti. "Tausiga 'o Vā: Pacific Art and the Vā Relational Turn in the 1990s." Panel discussion at the Vā Moana: Space and Relationality in Pacific Thought and Identity Conference, held online, November 24-25, 2021.
- Gray, Robin R. R. "Rematriation: Ts'msyen Law, Rights of Relationality, and Protocols of Return." *Native American and Indigenous Studies* 12, no. 1 (2022): 1-27. <https://doi.org/10.1353/nai.2022.0010>.
- Grbic-Hoskins, Rongomai, and Nikau Hindin. "Aute." Presentation at the Toitū te Mātauranga, Toitū te Ao Toi Symposium, Waipapa Marae, The University of Auckland, Auckland, November 24, 2022.
- Hakiwai, Arapata Tamati. "He Mana Taonga, He Mana Tangata: Māori Taonga and the Politics of Māori Tribal Identity and Development." PhD thesis, Victoria University of Wellington, 2014. <https://doi.org/10.26686/wgtn.17008429.v1>.
- Harkin, Natalie. "The Poetics of (Re)Mapping Archives: Memory in the Blood." *Journal of the Association for the Study of Australian Literature* 14, no. 3 (October 2014): 1-14. <https://openjournals.library.sydney.edu.au/JASAL/article/view/9909>.
- . "Weaving the Colonial Archive: A Basket to Lighten the Load." *Journal of Australian Studies* 44, no. 2 (May 2020): 154-66. <https://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14443058.2020.1754276>.
- Hau'ofa, Epeli. "Our Sea of Islands." *The Contemporary Pacific* 6, no. 1 (1994): 147-61.
- Henare, Amiria. *Museums, Anthropology and Imperial Exchange*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.
- Hereniko, Vilsoni. "Virtual Museums and New Directions?" In *Curatopia: Museums and the Future of Curatorship*, edited by Conal McCarthy and Philipp Schorch. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2019.
- Hicks, Dan. *The British Museums: The Benin Bronzes, Colonial Violence and Cultural Restitution*. London: Pluto Press, 2020.
- . "How NFTs and 3D Printing Are Changing Restitution." *Frieze*, January 3, 2023. <https://www.frieze.com/article/how-nfts-and-3d-printing-are-changing-restitution>.
- Hixon, Margaret. *Sālote: Queen of Paradise*. Dunedin: University of Otago Press, 2000.
- Hoskins, Te Kawehau, and Alison Jones. "Non-Human Others and Kaupapa Māori Research." In *Critical Conversations in Kaupapa Māori*, edited by Te Kawehau Hoskins and Alison Jones. Wellington: Huia Publishers, 2017.

- Index to Wills and Administrations (1858–1995)*. National Probate Calendar. London: The National Archives, 1995.
- Ingrey, Ray, Paul Irish, and Maria Nugent. “La Perouse: Community Engagement with UK Museums.” Panel discussion at the RETURN: Reconnecting Objects and Collections with People and Places Symposium, CSU Riverina Playhouse and online, June 27–29, 2023.
- Iti, Ana. “Ana Iti, Treasures Left by our Ancestors (2016).” 2016. Accessed January 5, 2024. Excerpt from moving-image work. <https://www.circuit.org.nz/work/treasures-left-by-our-ancestors-excerpt>.
- Jackson, Moana. “Land Loss and the Treaty of Waitangi.” In *Te Ao Mārama: Regaining Aotearoa: Māori Writers Speak Out*, edited by Witi Ihimaera. Vol. 2. Auckland: Reed Books, 1993.
- Janke, Makareta, and Maureen Lander. “Te Wero o Te Rangihiroa: Recreating a Rā.” Presentation at the Toitū te Mātauranga, Toitū te Ao Toi Symposium, Waipapa Marae, University of Auckland, Auckland, November 24, 2022.
- Johnson, Miranda, and Miranda Powell. “Empire, Indigeneity and the Archive in the New Zealand Realm.” Presentation at The Museum as Archive: Using the Past in the Present and Future Symposium, Centre for Research on Colonial Culture, University of Otago, Dunedin, held online, December 14–16, 2021.
- Kahanu, Noelle. “Contextualizing Re(Generations) and the Louis R. Sullivan Collection of Bishop Museum.” Paper presented at the Vā Moana: Space and Relationality in Pacific Thought and Identity Conference, held online, November 24–25, 2021.
- Ka’ili, Tēvita O. “Interview with Tēvita O. Ka’ili (Videographer: Emily Parr).” Interview by Albert L. Refiti and Ata Siulua. 2023. Vā Moana—Pacific Spaces Research Cluster. <https://www.vamoana.org/talanoa>.
- “Kaitaia District High School Museum.” *Northland Age*, September 21, 1934. <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NORAG19340921.2.39>.
- “Kava Ceremony.” *New Zealand Herald*, October 22, 1936. <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NZH19361022.2.5.9>.
- Kerekere, Elizabeth. *Growing Up Takatāpui: Whānau Journeys*. Auckland: Tiwhanawhana Trust and RainbowYOUTH, 2017.
- Kimmerer, Robin Wall. “The Serviceberry: An Economy of Abundance.” *Emergence Magazine*. October 26, 2022. <https://emergencemagazine.org/essay/the-serviceberry/>.
- Kirifi-Alai, Tofilau Nina, Tamasailau M. Suaalii-Sauni, and I'uogafa Tuagalu. Introduction to *Su'esu'e Manogi: In Search of Fragrance: Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Ta'isi Efi and the Samoan Indigenous Reference*, edited by Tamasailau M. Suaalii-Sauni, I'uogafa Tuagalu, Tofilau Nina Kirifi-Alai, and Naomi Fuamatu. Wellington: Huia Publishers, 2018.
- Knowles, Chantal, Jacob O'Keefe, and Juliana Satchell-Deo. Panel discussion, On Indigenous Collections: Provenance, Repatriation and Ethics, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, Auckland, October 28, 2023.
- Kofe, Simon. “Future Now: Preparing Today to Secure Tomorrow.” Keynote address to the NDF23 Whanake\Evolve conference, Wellington, November 20–22, 2023.

- “Koha Goes Back to Marae.” *New Zealand Herald*, February 14, 1975.
- Krämer, Augustin. *The Samoa Islands: An Outline of a Monograph with Particular Consideration of German Samoa*. Translated by Theodore Verhaaren. Auckland: Pasifika Press, 2023.
- Kronfeld, Tony. *Gustav and Louisa Kronfeld: Some Notes Prepared by Their Grandson*. Waikanae: Self-published, 1992.
- Kshetra Collective, eds. *A Place to Stand*. Auckland: Auckland War Memorial Museum, 2022. Published following the exhibition *A Place to Stand* at Te Taunga Community Hub, Auckland.
- La Biennale di Venezia. “Looty: Mnemonic.” Accessed January 6, 2024. <https://www.labiennale.org/en/architecture/2023/mnemonic/looty>.
- Lilomaiava-Doktor, Sa’iliemanu. “Beyond ‘Migration’: Samoan Population Movement (Malaga) and the Geography of Social Space (Vā).” *The Contemporary Pacific* 21, no. 1 (2009): 1–32. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23724742>.
- . “Samoan Transnationalism: Cultivating ‘Home’ and ‘Reach.’” In *Migration and Transnationalism: Pacific Perspectives*, edited by Steve Tupai Francis and Helen Lee. Canberra: ANU E Press, 2009.
- “Local and General.” *Samoaianische Zeitung* (Apia), May 23, 1924. <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/SAMZ19240523.2.16>.
- Looty. “Collaboration with Milele Museum.” Accessed January 6, 2024. <https://www.looty.art/works/milele>.
- . “Looty.” Accessed January 6, 2024. <https://www.looty.art/>.
- . “The Return of Rashid.” Accessed January 6, 2024. <https://www.looty.art/works/rashid>.
- Lopesi, Lana. *Bloody Woman*. Wellington: Bridget Williams Books, 2021.
- . “Moana Cosmopolitan Imaginaries: Toward an Emerging Theory of Moana Art.” PhD thesis, Auckland University of Technology, 2021. <http://hdl.handle.net/10292/14298>.
- . “Solidarity through Distance: Radical Imagination in the Work of Ahilapalapa Rands.” Circuit, January 25, 2019. <https://www.circuit.org.nz/writing-and-podcast/summer-reading-series-2018-3-solidarity-through-distance>.
- . “Vā Moana: Relational Geographies of Moana Cosmopolitan Worlds.” Paper presented at the Vā Moana: Space and Relationality in Pacific Thought and Identity Conference, held online, November 24–25, 2021.
- . “Your Non-Archivable, Our Archival Assemblage, a Samoan Perspective.” In *Uneven Bodies (Reader)*, edited by Ruth Buchanan, Aileen Burns, Johan Lundh, and Hanahiva Rose. Ngāmotu New Plymouth: Govett-Brewster Art Gallery, 2021.
- Lost in the Colonisation Machine*. Directed by Kahu Kutia. Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, 2022. 12m 02s. <https://www.tepapa.govt.nz/discover-collections/read-watch-play/watch/watch-nga-taonga-tuku-iho/watch-nga-taonga-tuku-iho-1-lost>.

- Low, Andrea, 2024. "In a Room, in a House, on an Island, in an Ocean." *Waka Kuaka: The Journal of the Polynesian Society* 133, no. 1 (2024): 9–14. <https://doi.org/10.15286/jps.133.1.9-14>.
- Lythberg, Billie, Wayne Ngata, and Amiria Salmond. "Curating the Uncommons: Taking Care of Difference in Museums." In *Curatopia: Museums and the Future of Curatorship*, edited by Conal McCarthy and Philipp Schorch. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2019.
- Māhina-Tuai, Kolokesa. "Fijian Breastplates Inspire Contemporary Artist." March 24, 2014. <https://www.aucklandmuseum.com/discover/stories/blog/2014/fijian-breastplates-inspire-contemporary-artist>.
- Mackintosh, Lucy. *Shifting Grounds: Deep Histories of Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland*. Wellington: Bridget Williams Books Ltd, 2021.
- Māhina-Tuai, Kolokesa Uafā, Albert L. Refiti, and I'uogafa Tuagalu. "Rethinking Time and Space." Discussion at The Museum as Archive: Using the Past in the Present and Future Symposium, Centre for Research on Colonial Culture, University of Otago, Dunedin, held online, December 14–16, 2021.
- Mahuika, Apirana T. "Maori Culture and the New Museum." *Museum Anthropology* 15, no. 4 (1991): 9–11. <https://dx.doi.org/doi.org/10.1525/mua.1991.15.4.9>.
- Makoare, Bernard. "Te Puna Mātauranga o te Toi Whakairo." Presentation at the Toitū te Mātauranga, Toitū te Ao Toi Symposium, Waipapa Marae, University of Auckland, Auckland, November 24, 2022.
- Mallon, Sean. *Samoa Art & Artists: O Measina a Samoa*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2002.
- Mallon, Sean, Philipp Schorch, and Nina Tonga. "Materializing German-Sāmoan Colonial Legacies." In *Refocusing Ethnographic Museums through Oceanic Lenses*, edited by Philipp Schorch. Dunedin: Otago University Press, 2020.
- "Mana Moana." Mana Moana Collective, accessed February 17, 2024. <https://www.manamoana.co.nz>.
- "Maori Culture: Scope for Research; Dr. P. H. Buck's Suggestions." *Taranaki Daily News*, August 28, 1934. <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/TDN19340828.2.110>.
- "Maoris and Tongans." *Waikato Times*, October 3, 1936. <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/WT19361003.2.78>.
- Marriner, G. R. "Wanganui Public Museum: Monthly Report for November, 1908." *Wanganui Chronicle*, December 3, 1908. <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/WC19081203.2.3>.
- Marsden, Māori. *The Woven Universe: Selected Writings of Rev. Māori Marsden*. Edited by Te Ahukaramū Charles Royal. Ōtaki: Estate of Rev. Māori Marsden, 2003.
- Matada Research Group. *Pride, Belonging & Identity: Understanding Pacific Peoples Access to and Consumption of Museum Content*. Matada Research Group, 2023.
- McKenzie, Mina. "A Challenge to Museums: Keeping the Taonga Warm." *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie* 118, no. 1 (1993): 79–85. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25842297>.

- Mead, Sidney Moko. *Ngā Karoretanga o Mataatua Whare: The Wanderings of the Carved House Mataatua*. Whakatane: Te Runanga o Ngāti Awa, 1990.
- , ed., *Te Maori: Maori Art from New Zealand Collections*. Auckland: Heinemann Publishers, 1984.
- Metzger, Jamie Averil. “Mauri and Museums: Who Really Cares? The Tensions between Kaitiakitanga and Museology.” PhD thesis, University of Otago, 2022. <http://hdl.handle.net/10523/12773>.
- Meyer, Manulani Aluli. “Holographic Epistemology: Native Common Sense.” *China Media Research* 9, no. 2 (2013): 94–101.
- Mikaere, Ani. *Colonising Myths: Māori Realities; He Rukuruku Whakaaro*. London: Huia Publishers, 2013. ProQuest Ebook Central.
- Mills, Maree. “Contemporary Māori Women’s New Media Art Practice.” In *The Aotearoa Digital Arts Reader*, edited by Su Ballard and Stella Brennan. Auckland: Aotearoa Digital Arts and Clouds, 2008.
- . “Pou Rewa: The Liquid Post, Māori Go Digital?” *Third Text* 23, no. 3 (May 2009): 241–50. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09528820902954879>.
- Moody, Gillian, Gerard O’Neill, and Cameron Rees. “First Nations Knowledge and 21st Century Technology.” Presentation at the NDF23 Whanake\Evolve Conference, Wellington, November 20–22, 2023.
- Moutu, Andrew. “Pasifika Styles: A Polyphonic Collage at the University of Cambridge Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology.” *Anthropology Today* 23, no. 2 (April 2007): 24–25. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4620350>.
- . “Reconnecting the Collection.” In *Kambek: Reconnecting Collections*, edited by Kiri Chan. South Brisbane: Queensland Museum, 2018.
- “Museum House. Relics from Past.” *Auckland Star*, November 29, 1937. <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/AS19371129.2.34>.
- Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa. *Annual Report 2005/2006*. Wellington: Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, 2006.
- . “Hoe (Paddle).” Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa. Accessed March 1, 2023. <https://collections.tepapa.govt.nz/object/106259>.
- Newell, Jenny. “Old Objects, New Media: Historical Collections, Digitization and Affect.” *Journal of Material Culture* 17, no. 3 (2012): 287–306. <https://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1359183512453534>.
- “News of the Day.” *Auckland Star*, October 3, 1929. <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/AS19291003.2.39>.
- Ngata, Wayne, Hera Ngata-Gibson, and Amiria Salmond. “Te Ataakura: Digital Taonga and Cultural Innovation.” *Journal of Material Culture* 17, no. 3 (2012): 229–44. <https://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1359183512453807>.
- Nuku, Maia. “Unpacking Time: Museum Collections as Cosmological Time Capsules.” Presentation at The Museum as Archive: Using the Past in the Present and Future

- Symposium, Centre for Research on Colonial Culture, University of Otago, Dunedin, held online, December 14–16, 2021.
- Oliver, Melanie, and Bridget Reweti. “A Celebration of Māori Moving Image.” In *Māori Moving Image*, edited by Melanie Oliver and Bridget Reweti. Christchurch: Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū, 2022.
- Oliver, Melanie, Lisa Reihana, and Bridget Reweti. “Lisa Reihana.” In *Māori Moving Image*, edited by Melanie Oliver and Bridget Reweti. Christchurch: Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū, 2022.
- Owens, Louis. “Afterword: Their Shadows before Them: Photographing Indians.” In *Trading Gazes: Euro-American Women Photographers and Native North Americans, 1880–1940*, edited by Susan Bernardin, Melody Graulich, Lisa MacFarlane, and Nicole Tonkovich. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2003.
- Palenski, Simon. “Ana Iti: Before the Displays.” Circuit, January 14, 2018. <https://www.circuit.org.nz/writing-and-podcast/ana-iti-before-the-displays>.
- Parr, Emily. *Encountering Aotearoa*. Recorded March 2023. With Cora-Allan Lafaiki Twiss. Single-channel video/audio.
- . “The Ocean Is Calling Me Home: Settler-Indigenous Relationships of Te Moananui a Kiwa.” Master’s thesis, Auckland University of Technology, 2020. <http://hdl.handle.net/10292/13699>.
- . “Surfacing.” Physics Room, July 30, 2021. <https://physicsroom.org.nz/exhibitions/surfacing>.
- The Making of Fine Mat and Samoan Siapo*. Directed by Galemalemana Steven Percival. Tiapapata Art Centre, 2019. Alexander Street Ethnographic Film.
- Pratt, George. *A Grammar and Dictionary of the Samoan Language, with English and Samoan Vocabulary*, 3rd ed. London: The London Missionary Society, 1893.
- “A Rare Exhibit.” *Wanganui Chronicle*, November 14, 1908. <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/WC19081114.2.5>.
- Raymond, Rosanna. “Conser.Vā.Tion|Acti.Vā.Tion: Museums, the Body and Moana Artefacts.” Paper presented at the Vā Moana: Space and Relationality in Pacific Thought and Identity Conference, held online, November 24–25, 2021. <https://www.vamoana.org/conference-presentations>.
- Refiti, Albert L. “Mavae and Tofiga: Spatial Exposition of the Samoan Cosmogony and Architecture.” PhD thesis, Auckland University of Technology, 2015. <https://hdl.handle.net/10292/9248>.
- Reihana, Lisa. “*He Tautoko* (2006): A New Media Installation.” In *Pasifika Styles: Artists inside the Museum*, edited by Rosanna Raymond and Amiria Salmond. Cambridge: University of Cambridge Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology; Otago University Press, 2008.
- . “In Pursuit of Venus.” In *Pursuit of Venus*. Accessed July 24, 2023. <https://www.inpursuitofvenus.com/about>.
- Repatriation*. Directed by Kahu Kutia. Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, 2022. 10m 50s. <https://www.tepapa.govt.nz/discover-collections/read-watch-play/watch-nga-taonga-tuku-iho/watch-nga-taonga-tuku-iho-4>.

- Rew, Nathan. "The Water to Which We Belong: Aqua Nullius and Frames of Wara in a Black Oceania." PhD thesis, Waipapa Taumata Rau University of Auckland, 2023. <https://hdl.handle.net/2292/68866>.
- Rice, Rebecca. "Les Sauvages de la Mer Pacifique (the Native Peoples of the Pacific Ocean)." Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa. Last modified February 2019. Accessed July 24, 2023. <https://collections.tepapa.govt.nz/object/1495632>.
- Rigby, Barry. *The Crown, Maori, and Mahurangi 1840-1881: A Historical Report Commissioned by the Waitangi Tribunal*. Wellington: Waitangi Tribunal, 1998.
- Robertson, Natalie. *Activating Photographic Mana Rangatiratanga through Kōrero*. In *Animism in Art and Performance*, edited by Christopher Braddock, 45-65. Cham: Springer International, 2017.
- . "Netting in the Archives, Netting in the River: Enmeshments between the Archival 'Catch' and Waiapu Kōkā Hūhua." Presentation at The Museum as Archive: Using the Past in the Present and Future Symposium, Centre for Research on Colonial Culture, University of Otago, Dunedin, held online, December 14–16, 2021.
- . "Nga Whatu-Ora: We the Living Are the Seeing Eyes of Our Sleeping Ancestors." *Public* 27, no. 54 (Winter 2016): 132-45. [https://doi.org/10.1386/public.27.54.132\\_1](https://doi.org/10.1386/public.27.54.132_1).
- . "Tātara E Maru Ana: Renewing Ancestral Connections with the Sacred Rain Cape of Waiapu Kōkā Hūhua." PhD thesis, Waipapa Taumata Rau University of Auckland, 2021. <https://hdl.handle.net/2292/57917>.
- Rose, Hanahiva. Introduction to *Uneven Bodies (Reader)*, edited by Ruth Buchanan, Aileen Burns, Johan Lundh, and Hanahiva Rose. Ngāmotu New Plymouth: Govett-Brewster Art Gallery, 2021.
- Royal, Te Ahukaramū Charles. "Interview with Te Ahukaramū Charles Royal (Videographer: Paul Janman)." Interview by Brett Graham. March 25, 2021, Vā Moana—Pacific Spaces Research Cluster. Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland. <https://www.vamoana.org/talanoa>.
- . "Tangaroa — the Sea - Ruatepupuke and the Origin of Carving." *Te Ara—The Encyclopedia of New Zealand*. Last modified June 12, 2006. Accessed November 10, 2022. <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/tangaroa-the-sea/page-4>.
- . "Te Ao Mārama: The Natural World." *Te Ara—The Encyclopedia of New Zealand*. September 24, 2007. Accessed October 27, 2022. <https://teara.govt.nz/en/te-ao-marama-the-natural-world/print>.
- Salmond, Amiria. "Digital Subjects, Cultural Objects: Special Issue Introduction." *Journal of Material Culture* 17, no. 3 (2012): 211-28. <https://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1359183512453531>.
- Samu Tui, Leone. "Open Access." *Marinade: Aotearoa Journal of Moana Art*, no. 1 (2022): 16-29.
- . "Teu Le Vā—Evolving Relationships and Practice in the Wake of the Pacific Collection Access Project (Pcap)." In *Uneven Bodies (Reader)*, edited by Ruth Buchanan, Aileen Burns, Johan Lundh, and Hanahiva Rose. Ngāmotu New Plymouth: Govett-Brewster Art Gallery, 2021.
- Satchell-Deo, Juliana. "Breathing and Reflecting on Indigenous-to-Indigenous-led Practice." Presentation, On Indigenous Collections: Provenance, Repatriation and Ethics, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, October 28, 2023.

- Schorch, Philipp. "An Ethnographic Kaleidoscope." In *Refocusing Ethnographic Museums through Oceanic Lenses*, edited by Philipp Schorch. Dunedin: Otago University Press, 2020.
- Schwartzkoff [pseud.]. Letters. *Bulletin* (Sydney). June 2, 1894. Accessed November 10, 2023, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-489324624>.
- Sculthorpe, Gaye. "Finding Your Ancestors' Objects in Britain." Lecture at the RETURN: Reconnecting Objects and Collections with People and Places Symposium, CSU Riverina Playhouse and online, June 27-29, 2023.
- Sharpe, Alfred. *Sharpe, Alfred, 1836-1908: Ngaheia House, Bay of Islands. Residence of Jos. Williams, Esq. / Alfd Sharpe 1882*. 1882. Watercolour. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington. <https://natlib.govt.nz/records/32252889>.
- Shearer, Rachel Mary. "Te Oro o te Ao: The Resounding of the World." PhD thesis, Auckland University of Technology, 2018. <http://hdl.handle.net/10292/11712>.
- Smith, Hinekura Lisa. "Whatuora: Whatu Kākahu and Living as Māori Women." PhD thesis, The University of Auckland, 2017. <http://hdl.handle.net/2292/36334>.
- Smith, Linda Tuhiwai. "Decolonising Cultural Institutions—An Urgent, Necessary, Challenging yet Hopeful Journey Beyond Colonialism." In *Uneven Bodies (Reader)*, edited by Ruth Buchanan, Aileen Burns, Johan Lundh, and Hanahiva Rose. Ngāmotu New Plymouth: Govett-Brewster Art Gallery, 2021.
- . *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*. 2nd ed. Dunedin: Otago University Press, 2012.
- Smith, Valance. "Interview with Valance Smith (Videographer: Paul Janman)." Interview by Brett Graham, 2021, Vā Moana—Pacific Spaces Research Cluster. <https://www.vamoana.org/talanoa>.
- Somerville, Alice Te Punga. "‘I Do Still Have a Letter’: Our Sea of Archives." In *Sources and Methods in Indigenous Studies*, edited by Chris Andersen and Jean M. O’Brien, 121-127. Abingdon: Routledge, 2017.
- "South Seas Curios for Museum." *Dominion* (Wellington), July 13, 1939. <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/DOM19390713.2.53>.
- Steinmetz, George. *The Devil's Handwriting: Precoloniality and the German Colonial State in Qingdao, Samoa, and Southwest Africa*. Chicago Studies in Practices of Meaning. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007.
- Sutton, Douglas, Louise Furey, and Yvonne Marshall. *The Archaeology of Pouerua*. Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2003.
- "Table Talk." *Auckland Star*, October 5, 1929, <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/AS19291005.2.9>.
- Tamati-Quennell, Megan. "From the Ground up... Building the Modern and Contemporary Māori and Indigenous Art Collection at Te Papa." In *Uneven Bodies (Reader)*, edited by Ruth Buchanan, Aileen Burns, Johan Lundh, and Hanahiva Rose. Ngāmotu New Plymouth: Govett-Brewster Art Gallery, 2021.
- Tapsell, Paul. "Decolonising and Indigenising Museums and Archives." Discussion at The Museum as Archive: Using the Past in the Present and Future Symposium, Centre for

- Research on Colonial Culture, University of Otago, Dunedin, held online, December 14–16, 2021.
- . “The Flight of Pareraututu: An Investigation of Taonga from a Tribal Perspective.” *Journal of the Polynesian Society* 106, no. 4 (1997): 323–74. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/20706753>.
- Tattoli, Chantel. “A High-Tech Heist at the British Museum.” *The New Yorker*, April 17 2023. <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2023/04/24/a-high-tech-heist-at-the-british-museum>.
- Tau, Te Maire. “The Death of Knowledge: Ghosts on the Plains.” *New Zealand Journal of History* 35, no. 2 (2001): 131–52.
- Taylor, Alan. “Maori Burial Chests to be Destroyed.” *Tu Tangata*, April 1, 1987. <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/periodicals/TUTANG19870401.2.13>
- Te Awa, Isaac. “Mahi ki te Awa Whanganui: Revival on the Whanganui River; An Interview with Artist Matthew McIntyre Wilson by Isaac Te Awa.” *The Vessel*, November 2021. <https://vessel-magazine.no/issues/1/archives/matthew-mcintyre-wilson>.
- Te Awekotuku, Ngahuaia. “Decolonising and Indigenising Museums.” Keynote address to the Ngā Kākano Wānanga Series, Tāmaki Paenga Hira Auckland War Memorial Museum, December 7, 2020. <https://www.aucklandmuseum.com/nga-kakano-decolonising-and-indigenising-museums>.
- . “He Atamira a Huatau: Staging Images, Contemplating Forms: Māori Art & Transformation.” Keynote address to the Toi Te Kupu Whakaahuatanga Wānanga Toi Māori Symposium, Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland, June 15–16, 2022.
- “Te Pu o Te Wheke.” Scape Public Art. Accessed March 13, 2024. <https://www.scapepublicart.org.nz/artwork/te-pu-o-te-wheke/>.
- Tengan, Ty P. Kāwika, afterword to *Refocusing Ethnographic Museums through Oceanic Lenses*, edited by Philipp Schorch. Dunedin: Otago University Press, 2020.
- Thomas, Nicholas. “Materiality, Gifts, Histories, and Collections: Reflections on Entangled Objects.” *West 86th: A Journal of Decorative Arts, Design History & Material Culture* 28, no. 1 (Spring/Summer 2021): 3–18. <https://dx.doi.org/10.1086/718014>.
- Todd, Barbara. *Whales and Dolphins of Aotearoa New Zealand*. Wellington: Te Papa Press, 2014.
- Tonga, Nina. “Kie Hamoa (Fine Mat).” Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa. 2018. Accessed April 10, 2023. <https://collections.tepapa.govt.nz/object/91520>.
- . “Looping through Time and Space: Observations of Māori Moving Image out in the World.” In *Māori Moving Image*, edited by Melanie Oliver and Bridget Reweti. Christchurch: Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū, 2022.
- “Tongan Queen.” *Auckland Star*, October 5, 1936. <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/AS19361005.2.122.4>.
- Tregear, Edward. *The Maori-Polynesian Comparative Dictionary*. Wellington: Lyon and Blair, 1891.

- Tuagalu, I'uogafa. "Gafa, Vā, History and the c.19<sup>th</sup> Sāmoan Energetical Worldview: Implications for the Archival Museum." Presentation at The Museum as Archive: Using the Past in the Present and Future Symposium, Centre for Research on Colonial Culture, University of Otago, Dunedin, held online, December 14–16, 2021.
- . "Tāla'iga o le Gafa o le Vā: Storying the Ontology, Genealogy, and the Energetics of Vā; The Development of Samoan Worldview c.1000AD–1914." PhD thesis, Auckland University of Technology, 2023. <http://hdl.handle.net/10292/16859>.
- Tui Atua, Tupua Tamasese Ta'isi Efi. "More on Meaning, Nuance and Metaphor." In *Su'esu'e Manogi: In Search of Fragrance: Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Ta'isi Efi and the Samoan Indigenous Reference*, edited by Tamasailau M. Suaalii-Sauni, I'uogafa Tuagalu, Tofilau Nina Kirifi-Alai, and Naomi Fuamatu. Wellington: Huia Publishers, 2018.
- Turner, James B. "Coloured Labour in Cane Growing. (to the Editor)." *Auckland Star*, March 14, 1901. <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/AS19010314.2.20.2>.
- . "Letters to the Editor. The Gaudin Case." *New Zealand Herald*, January 12, 1915. <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NZH19150112.2.118>.
- [Untitled]. *Manawatu Times*, October 11, 1929. <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/MT19291011.2.25>.
- Vā Moana—Pacific Spaces Research Cluster. "Event: Te'u Le Roots & Routes at Fale Maota." April 14, 2023. <https://www.vamoana.org/news/event-te-u-le-roots-routes-at-fale-maota>.
- . "Talanoa." Accessed March 8, 2024. <https://www.vamoana.org/talanoa>.
- Waitangi Tribunal. *The Ngawha Geothermal Resource Report 1993*. Wellington: Legislation Direct, 2006.
- . *Tino Rangatiratanga Me Te Kāwanatanga: The Report on Stage 2 of the Te Paparahi o te Raki Inquiry*. Wellington: Waitangi Tribunal, 2022.
- Wendt, Albert. "Tatauing the Post-Colonial Body." *Span* 42–43 (1996): 15–29. <http://www.nzepc.auckland.ac.nz/authors/wendt/tatauing.asp>.
- Westbrook, G. E. L. "The Late Gustav Kronfeld." *Samonische Zeitung* (Apia), April 25, 1924. <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/SAMZ19240425.2.9>.
- "Whalebone Paddle." *Auckland Star*, October 7, 1929. <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/AS19291007.2.99>.
- Wheeler, Vehia, host, and Ahilapalapa Rands, guest. "Ahilapalapa Rands." Native Stories (podcast), October 18, 2020. <https://nativestories.org/ahilapalapa-rands/>.
- Whistler, W. A. "A Revision of Syzygium (Myrtaceae) in Samoa." *Journal of the Arnold Arboretum* 69, no. 2 (April 1988): 167–92. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/43797837>.
- Whistler, W. Arthur. "Annotated List of Samoan Plant Names." *Economic Botany* 38, no. 4 (October–December 1984): 464–89. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4254688>.
- White, Moira. "The Trouble About Your Combs Arose This Way... Changing Interpretations of the Maori Antiquities Act 1908." *Tuhinga: Records of the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa* 18 (2007): 1–10. <https://collections.tepapa.govt.nz/document/3042>.

Williams, Matariki. "Complicating the Narrative of 'Oceania.'" *Frieze*, November 22, 2018.  
<https://www.frieze.com/article/complicating-narrative-oceania>.

———. "To Stand, to Fight: A Matter of Interpretation." In *Māori Moving Image*, edited by Melanie Oliver and Bridget Reweti. Christchurch: Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū, 2022.

Wilson, Shawn. *Research Is Ceremony: Indigenous Research Methods*. Halifax: Fernwood Publishing, 2008.

Wilson and Horton, *New Zealand's Jubilee 1840-1890: The First Fifty Years of Our History; The Varied Fortunes of the Colony; A Wonderful Record*. Auckland: Wilsons and Horton, 1890.

Wood-Ellem, Elizabeth. *Queen Sālote of Tonga: The Story of an Era 1900-1965*. Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1999.



**Figure 38.** East of Te Ika-a-Māui from porthole window in my cabin on board the *Heritage Adventurer*, 2023.

# Appendices

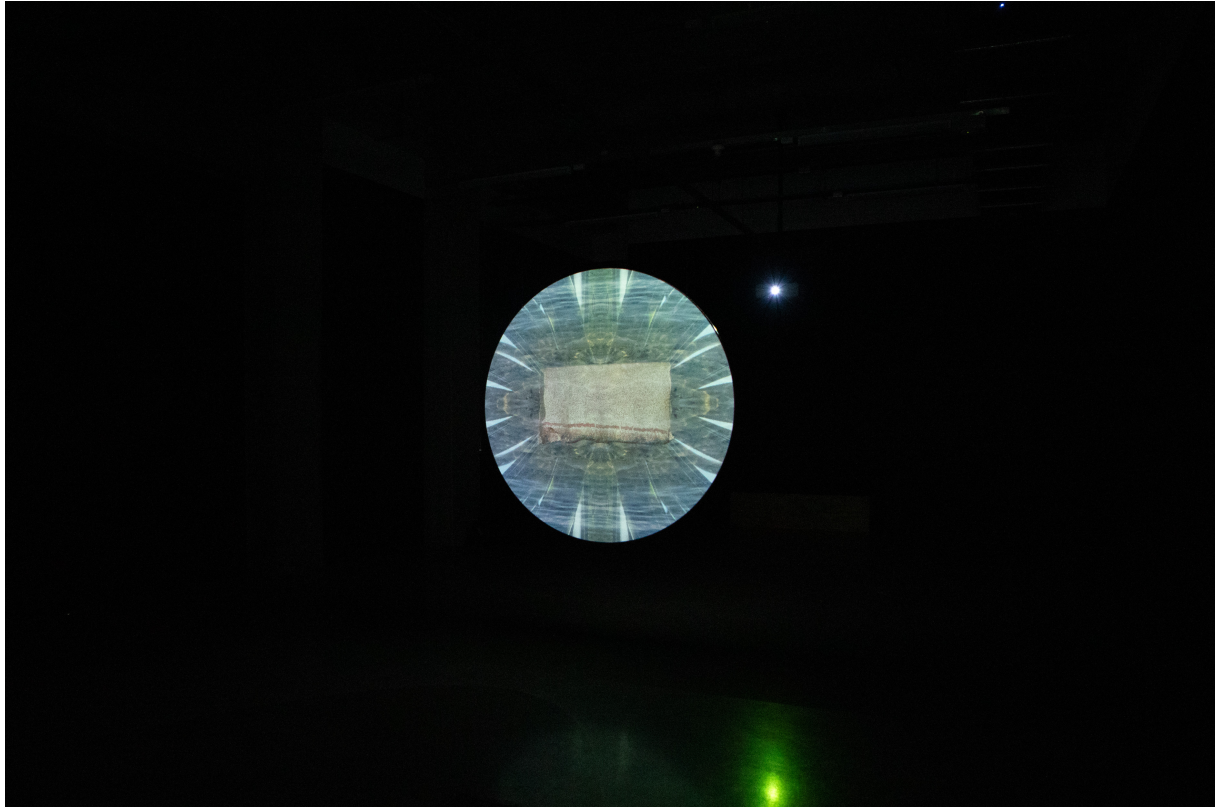
## Exhibition Documentation: *'Oli 'Ula*



**Figures 39-41.** Views of the entrance to the darkened exhibition space (Gallery Two, Te Wai Ngutu Kākā). Two shelves held the *Into the Archive* books and a hand-made clay vessel with water to whakanoa. The water was sourced from Te Wai Ariki, a sacred spring emerging near where ‘Oli ‘Ula once stood. The exhibition roomsheet was placed on the bench.



**Figures 42-44.** *Into the Archive: The Kronfelds*, 2024; *Into the Archive: Reflections from the Museum*, 2024. Hand-bound books, 120gsm cartridge paper, 300gsm cover with metallic foil.



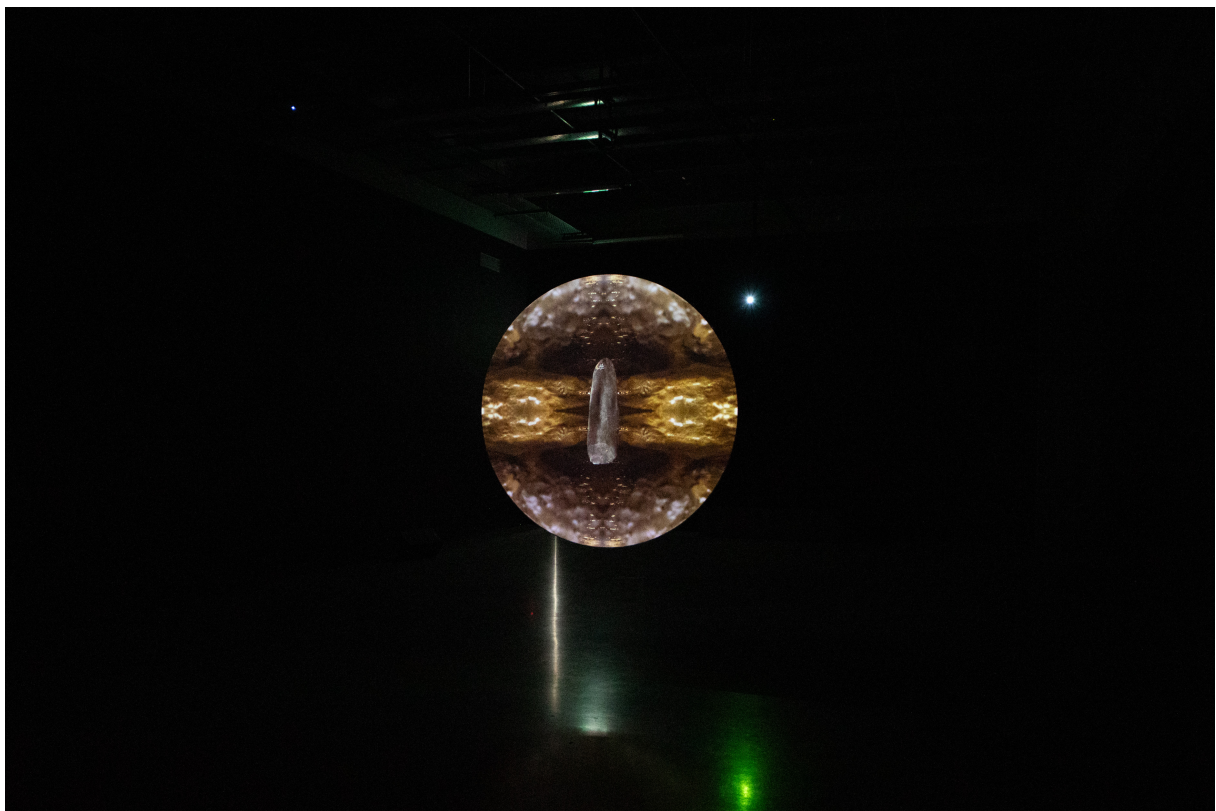
**Figure 45.** Installation view of *Cosmosphere: Te Tōga*, 2024, 5 min. POV: corner near entrance. Dual-channel projection, four-channel audio, in a looping sequence of *Cosmospheres* (duration of 30 min).



**Figure 46.** Installation view of *Cosmosphere: Te Tōga (MULI O AIGA)*, 2024, 5 min. POV: centre of wall near entrance. Dual-channel projection, four-channel audio, in a looping sequence of *Cosmospheres* (duration of 30 min).



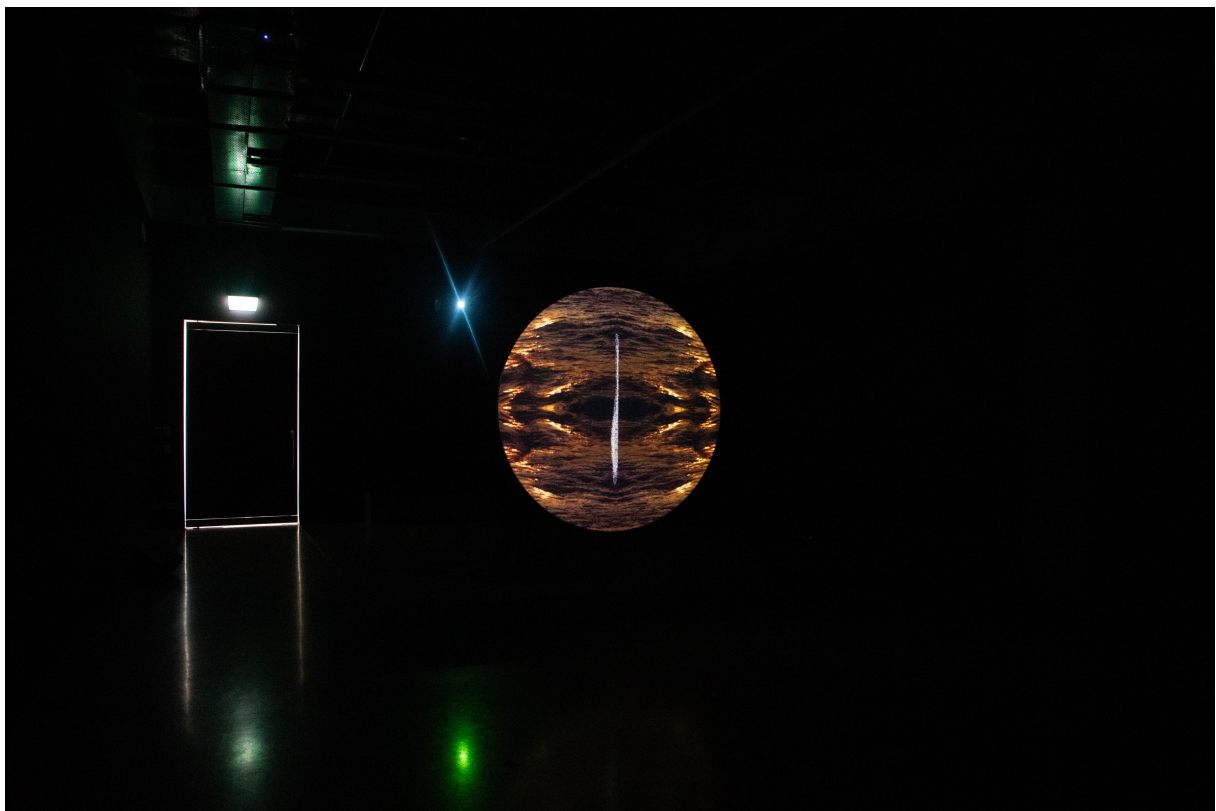
**Figure 47.** Installation view of *Cosmosphere: Tanoa Fai'ava*, 2024, 5 min. POV: corner along from entrance. Dual-channel projection, four-channel audio, in a looping sequence of *Cosmospheres* (duration of 30 min).



**Figure 48.** Installation view of *Cosmosphere: Toki*, 2024, 5 min. POV: furthest corner facing entrance. Dual-channel projection, four-channel audio, in a looping sequence of *Cosmospheres* (duration of 30 min).



**Figure 49.** Installation view of *Cosmosphere: Māhē*, 2024, 5 min. POV: centre of wall facing entrance. Dual-channel projection, four-channel audio, in a looping sequence of *Cosmospheres* (duration of 30 min).



**Figure 50.** Installation view of *Cosmosphere: Hoe Parāoa*, 2024, 5 min. POV: corner facing entrance. Dual-channel projection, four-channel audio, in a looping sequence of *Cosmospheres* (duration of 30 min).

# Exhibition Roomsheet

Tātaki Whakakitenga  
Exhibition Guide

‘Oli ‘Ula

—

Emily Parr  
10 - 31 May 2024

NGUTU KĀKĀ

**Figure 51.** Exhibition roomsheet, front.

Between the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the Kronfeld Collection was assembled by Gustav and Louisa Kronfeld, a Jewish merchant and a Samoan matriarch. As European empires expanded throughout Moana Oceania and settler and Indigenous worlds collided, the Collection travelled to the Kronfeld family's home in Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland. Their house, 'Oli 'Ula, was named for a garland of fragrant red flowers from the 'oli tree, once cultivated in Sāmoa. The taonga, measina, and treasures adorned its walls, encircled by this symbolic garland.

The Kronfeld Collection is comprised of treasures from Moana Oceania that Gustav Kronfeld purchased, traded, or was gifted; taonga Māori that he purchased in Aotearoa New Zealand; and gifts to the family that were accessioned by Tāmaki Paenga Hira Auckland War Memorial Museum and the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa between 1916 and 1993. In 1939, Louisa Kronfeld gifted around 270 taonga, measina, and treasures of the Collection to Te Papa, then known as the Dominion Museum.

As a descendant of the Kronfeld family, my doctoral research into my great-great-grandparents' Collection seeks to 'house' the taonga and measina and enliven their systems of relation. The artworks, or cosmospheres, digitally render taonga and measina from the Collection as three-dimensional point clouds, and immerse them in kaleidoscopic moving-image lifeworlds. Engaging the reparative notion of 'tuitui' (sewing, threading, binding), the project proposes that rendering ancestral treasures using contemporary technologies might offer a restoration of relations. Looking to whakapapa and vā as forms of provenance, the artworks bring these treasures out from the basement and 'into the light,' and enact the reciprocity of the gift, generations later.

The cosmospheres house two 'ie tōga (fine mats), gifted to the family by Queen Sālote Tupou III and Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara upon Leo Lea'ega Kronfeld's death in 1947; a tanoa fai'ava (kava bowl) attributed to Tupua Malietoa To'oa Matā'afa Iosefo, Paramount Chief of Sāmoa from 1900-1912 and Louisa's relation; a toki (adze) found at Long Bay in

the 1930s and held by Samuel Tonga Kronfeld until after his death in 1977; a mähē (sinker) gifted by Sam in 1928 to the Auckland Institute and Museum. 3D scanning of a hoe parāoa (whalebone paddle), purchased by Gustav in Tāmaki Makaurau but originally from Te Tai Tokerau, was not permitted. The rendering of the hoe indicates an echo, an elsewhere presence, an unfinished journey.

#### Acknowledgements

With thanks to Lauamanu and the Laumua o Tumua o Afega for contributing their weaving to the 'ie tōga cosmospheres; Rāhana Tito-Taylor (Ngāpuhi-nui-tonu, Ngāti Whātua Kaipara, Waikato Tainui) for his sonic response in the hoe parāoa cosmosphere, and Salvador Brown (Sāmoa, Tuvalu, Gaelic, Norse) for his sonic responses in the 'ie tōga, tanoa fai'ava, toki, and mähē cosmospheres.

Acknowledgements to Tāmaki Paenga Hira Auckland War Memorial Museum for permission to 3D scan the two 'ie tōga (1987.700, 52588/52589), toki (1977.88, 26356), and mähē (1928.28, 614812); and the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa for permission to 3D scan the tanoa fai'ava (FE010512).

Thanks to Glenn Maxwell for constructing the projection screen and shelving. Making of the screen was supported by Eddie Clemens and Sophie Sutherland, the books by Fleur Williams, and the vessel by Harriet Stockman, ET Sung, and Sav Mattyasovszky. Thanks to Zak McNeil, Stephen Cleland, and Mitchell McGrath for exhibition installation.

Emily Parr, May 2024



#### Exhibition Guide

Te Wai Ngutu Kākā Gallery  
Auckland University of Technology  
2022

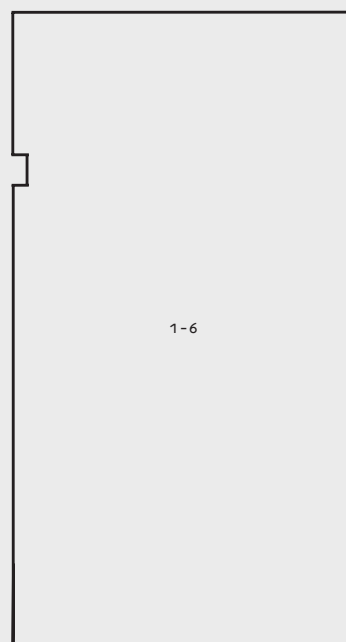
#### Wāhi

Level 1, WM Building  
40 St Paul Street  
Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland 1010

#### Kōrero Mai

ngutukaka@aut.ac.nz  
(09) 921 8313  
ngutukaka.aut.ac.nz

Figure 52. Exhibition roomsheet, inside left page.



## ARTWORKS

- 1 COSMOSPHERE: 'ie tōga 2024, 5 min
- 2 COSMOSPHERE: 'ie tōga (mulī oaiga) 2024, 5 min
- 3 COSMOSPHERE: tanoa fai'ava 2024, 5 min
- 4 COSMOSPHERE: tokī 2024, 5 min
- 5 COSMOSPHERE: mähē 2024, 5 min
- 6 COSMOSPHERE: hoe parāoa 2024, 5 min

All works, dual-channel projection,  
four-channel audio, 30 min loop

## ACCOMPANYING MATERIAL

- 7 INTO THE ARCHIVE: The Kronfelds 2024  
book, 145×207mm
- 8 INTO THE ARCHIVE:  
Reflections from the Museum 2024,  
book, 145×207mm
- 9 Clay vessel with water to whakanoa  
(become free from the extensions of  
tapu). The water is sourced from Te Wai  
Ariki, a sacred spring of Ngāti Whātua  
Ōrākei emerging near where 'Oli 'Ula  
once stood.

Emily Parr (Ngāi Te Rangī, Moana,  
Pākehā) is an artist/researcher  
whose moving-image practice explores  
relational ecologies of Te Moananui-  
a-Kiwa. She is part of the Vā Moana  
cluster at AUT, a research associate  
with Tāmaki Paenga Hira Auckland War  
Memorial Museum, and a 2024 Springboard  
Award recipient.

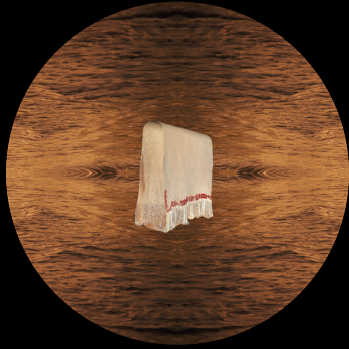
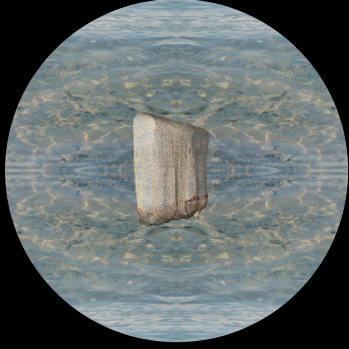
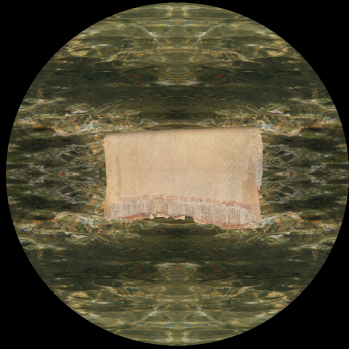
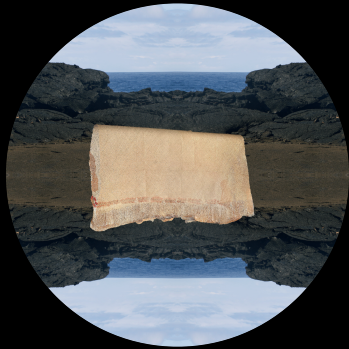
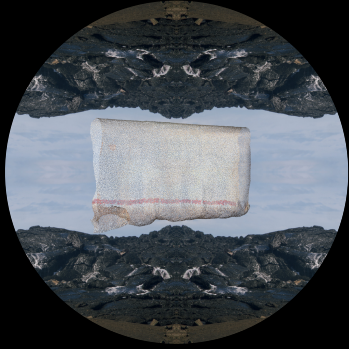
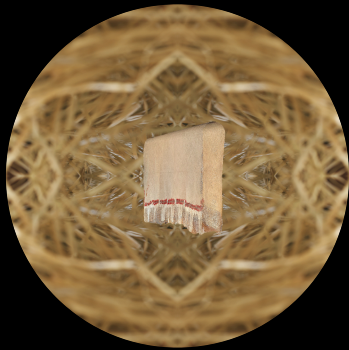
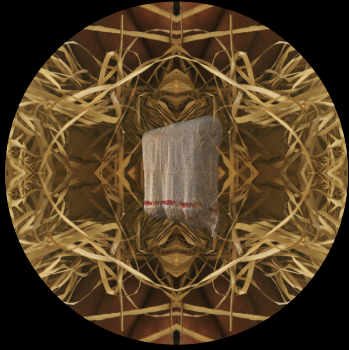
**Figure 53.** Exhibition roomsheet, inside right page.

# Cosmospheres

**Figures 54-58 (left column).** *Cosmosphere: 'Ie Tōga*, 2024, single-channel video/audio. Pūoro: Salvador Brown. 'Ie tōga: Auckland War Memorial Museum Tāmaki Paenga Hira, 1987.700, 52588.

**Figures 59-63 (centre column).** *Cosmosphere: 'Ie Tōga (MULI O AIGA)*, 2024, single-channel video/audio. Pūoro: Salvador Brown. 'Ie tōga: Auckland War Memorial Museum Tāmaki Paenga Hira, 1987.700, 52589.

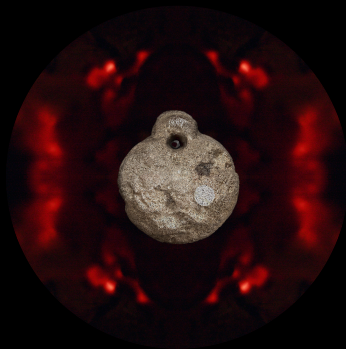
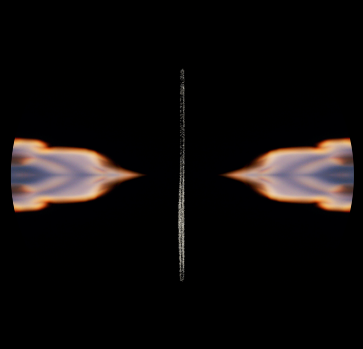
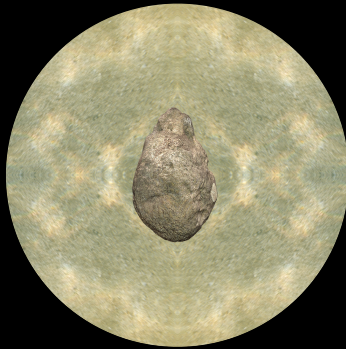
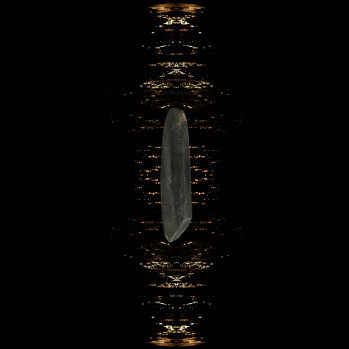
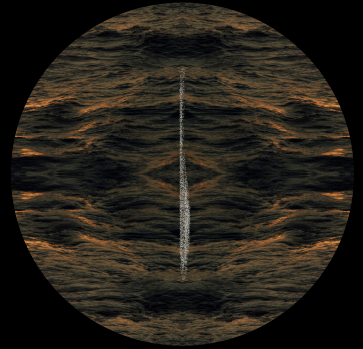
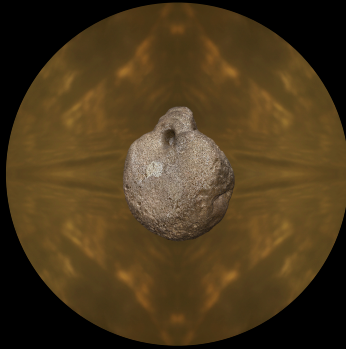
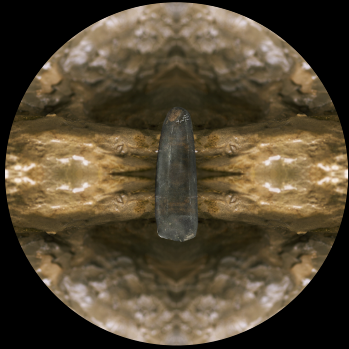
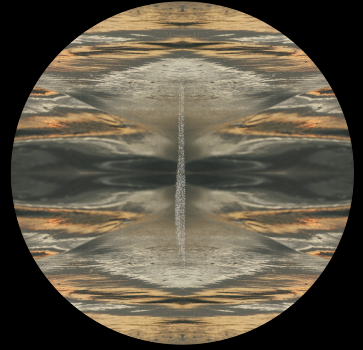
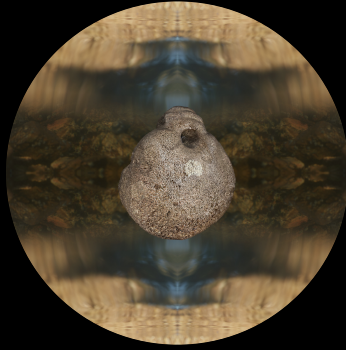
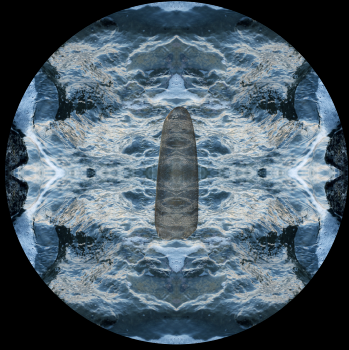
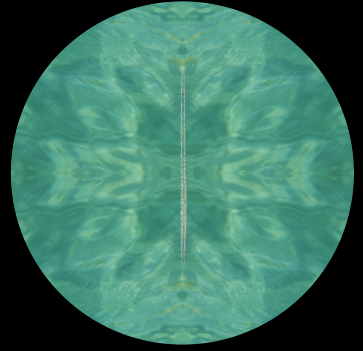
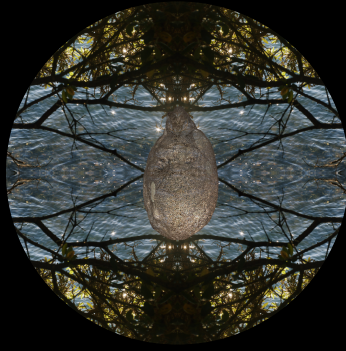
**Figures 64-68 (right column).** *Cosmosphere: Tanoa Fai'ava*, 2024, single-channel video/audio. Pūoro: Salvador Brown. Tanoa fai'ava: Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, FEO10512.



**Figures 69-73 (left column).** *Cosmosphere: Toki*, 2024, single-channel video/audio. Pūoro: Salvador Brown.  
Toki: Auckland War Memorial Museum Tāmaki Paenga Hira, 1977.88, 26356.

**Figures 74-78 (centre column).** *Cosmosphere: Māhē*, 2024, single-channel video/audio. Pūoro: Salvador Brown.  
Māhē: Auckland War Memorial Museum Tāmaki Paenga Hira, 1928.28, 614812.

**Figures 79-83 (right column).** *Cosmosphere: Hoe Parāoa*, 2024, single-channel video/audio.  
Pūoro: Rāhana Tito-Taylor. Hoe Parāoa: Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, ME011588.



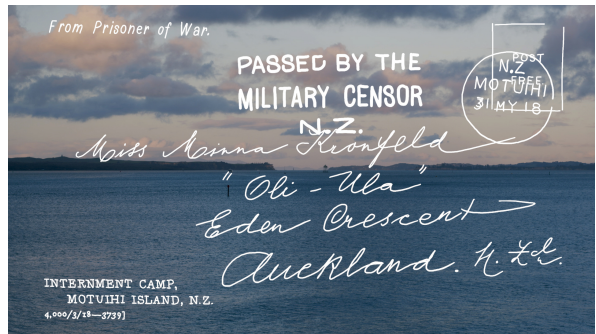
# *Through the Time Spiral*

## *Through the Time Spiral: 'Oli 'Ula*

Number nine Eden Crescent is beside a brick wall from which the spring Te Wai Ariki emerges. Until 1976, a beautiful two-storey house with twenty-something rooms, wide balconies and stained-glass windows stood here. The house was named 'Oli 'Ula, in reference to the fragrant red flower of the Samoan 'oli tree. Built in the early 1900s by my great-great-grandparents, Gustav Kronfeld, a Jewish merchant, and Louisa Silveira of Lotofaga, the walls were adorned with measina. 'Oli 'Ula was a vibrant home for Gustav and Louisa's ten children and Moana peoples travelling to Tāmaki Makaurau.

*Through the Time Spiral: 'Oli 'Ula* reconstructs this home using a su'ifefiloi methodology, reflecting the Sāmoan tradition of making flower garlands in which a mixture of flowers are sewn together and strung into a necklace, an 'ula. The walkthrough is guided by a voiceover assembled from recorded memories of Moe (Gustav and Louisa's eighth child) and his son Tony. Remaining faithful to their words, I bring them into the present tense and link their memories with my own words — stringing the flowers into the 'ula.

During the First World War, Gustav was interned on Te Motu-a-Ihenga under suspicion of aiding the Germans, spending several years separated from his family. Among my family's archive from this period are messages that travelled between postal censors and military authorities; the family and the government; the island and 'Oli 'Ula. The work imagines Te Wai Ariki as a witness to these unfolding histories, and a portal into a time spiral.



***Through the Time Spiral: Te Muri I***

*Through the Time Spiral: Te Muri I* revisits camping trips my family made to a small bay on the Mahurangi Peninsula during the early 1900s. Te Muri is only accessible by foot across a stream at low tide, and in this work, the tidal stream is imagined as the threshold to a time spiral. Drawing on my family's archival material, I re-tell stories that were recorded by the campers as they pose for photographs in fields and on the beach.

My great-great-grandparents, Gustav and Louisa Kronfeld, made these trips over many summers with their children in tow. They were joined by family visiting from Sāmoa, girls in their care from the Islands, and other families who share similar stories of cultural multiplicity and mobility. These trips manifest their expansive web of relations across the Moana, which they continued to nurture after migrating to Aotearoa.

**Figures 87-89.** *Through the Time Spiral: Te Muri I*, 2022, single-channel video/audio. The work features the Kronfeld, Silva, Greig, and Geddes families, with additional friends and Queen Sālote Tupou III.



***Through the Time Spiral: Te Muri II***

In *Through the Time Spiral: Te Muri II*, I sit near my great-great-grandmother, Louisa Kronfeld. My brother, D'arcy, is beside our nana, Tui; our great-grandfather, Sam Kronfeld; and Sam's brother-in-law, Otto Wolfgramm. My father, David, stands with his great-grandfather, Gustav Kronfeld.

**Figures 90-92.** *Through the Time Spiral: Te Muri II*, 2022, three-channel video/audio.



## **Into the Archive: The Kronfelds**

Into the Archive

**The Kronfelds**

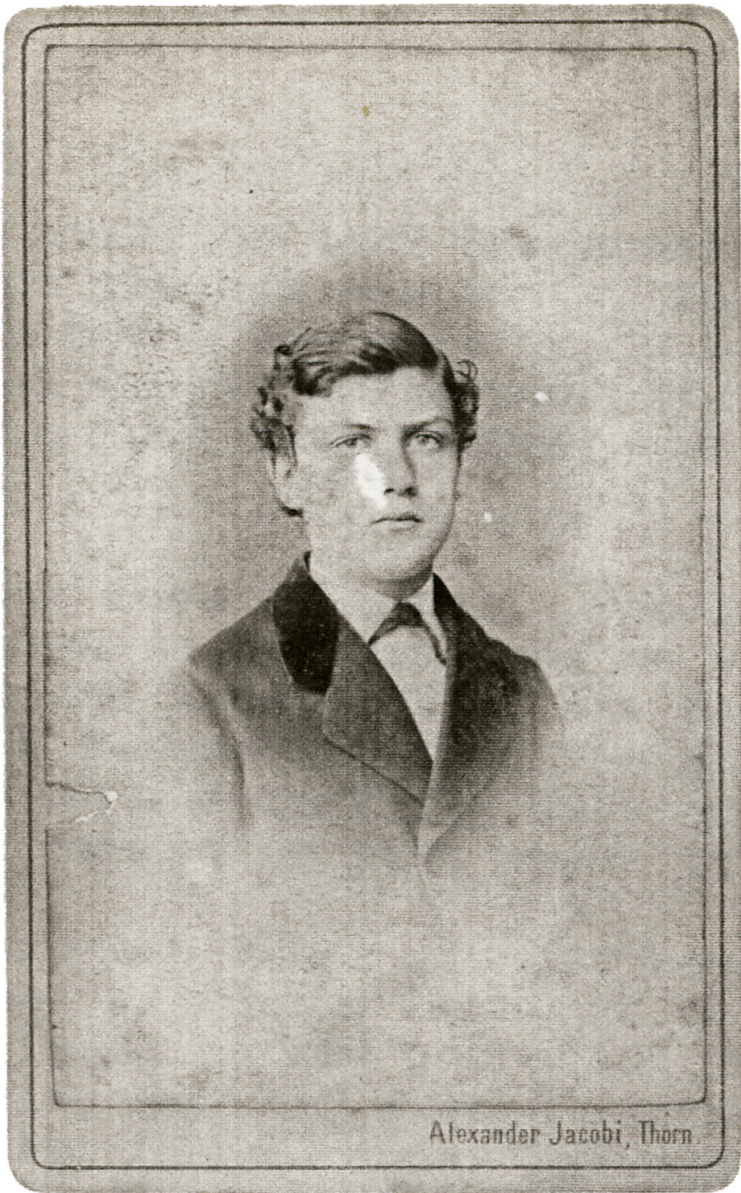


## Many Hands in the Archive

Many hands have recorded fragments of the Kronfeld family and Collection's story throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century and into the 21<sup>st</sup>. My great-grandfather Sam's cursive can be found in forewords of books and borrowed leaves. My nana Tui gathered his notes and newspaper clippings in well-worn envelopes, writing her additions into his margins and the gaps on miscellaneous paper. After she passed and the material remnants of her life were organised into boxes, my father David made sure to keep the ones labelled 'Kronfeld family.' I inherited his magnetism toward the archive — we have both spent endless hours pulled into time spirals, correlating these fragments, eventually emerging somewhat dazed. My great-grandfather was one of ten children: the hands and the records are multiplied across other lines of descent from Gustav and Louisa Kronfeld. While the story of the Kronfeld family and Collection can never be entirely known, this writing stitches together and expands on information found in museum accession records, wartime archives, historic newspaper articles, and the memoirs of our elders.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> My deepest gratitude goes to Anthony Leo Kronfeld (Tony), for compiling *Gustav and Louisa Kronfeld: Some Notes Prepared by Their Grandson* (1992) before his death; Margaret Hixon for researching the Kronfeld family so thoroughly for her biography on Queen Sālote (2000); Moe and Sam for sharing their memories, and Tony, Roger, and Tui for having the foresight to record them.



Gustav Kronfeld. Kronfeld/Parr collection.

## Origins of the Family

This story begins in the medieval town of Thorn (present day Toruń, Poland) on the banks of the river Vistula. Toruń is a site of historical turmoil, of which Gustav witnessed a brief period: when he was born in 1856, the town was in Eastern Prussia, and by the time he emigrated in 1873, it was in the German Empire. Gustav was the eighth child of Samuel and Minna Kronfeld's nine. The family were Jewish — Samuel was a cantor and teacher who played the violin and chess. At the age of 16 or 17, Gustav's father procured him an 'Emigration Passport' and he left Prussia, renouncing citizenship as he went.<sup>2</sup> We can only speculate as to his reasons for emigration — perhaps it was the political and cultural tensions in Toruń, a desire to see the world or seek a fortune — but Gustav joined his older brother and two sisters in Australia.<sup>3</sup> He gave up assaying gold in Ballarat due to poor eyesight, and had more success in Melbourne learning accountancy and merchandising.<sup>4</sup> In 1876 he saw a newspaper advert for a clerical position in

---

<sup>2</sup> 16 according to Moe in Tony Kronfeld, *Gustav and Louisa Kronfeld: Some Notes Prepared by Their Grandson* (Waikanae: self-pub., 1992); 17 in a letter from Gustav to the Minister of Justice, August 9, 1915, reproduced in Kronfeld, *Gustav and Louisa Kronfeld*, 160.

<sup>3</sup> Moe in Kronfeld, *Gustav and Louisa Kronfeld*, 25.

<sup>4</sup> Margaret Hixon, *Sālote: Queen of Paradise* (Dunedin: University of Otago Press, 2000), 48.



Louisa Silveira. Ethnological Collection, Städtische Museen Freiburg, XHF/II/0264. Photo: John Davis; Reproduction: Axel Killian.

Sāmoa with the trading firm 'Johann Cesar Godeffroy und Sohn' (later D.H.P.G.). Twenty-year-old Gustav sailed for Apia and, according to his son Moe, "a new life full of excitement and romance."<sup>5</sup>

It was here, in Apia, that Gustav met Louisa. Her father, Augustino Silveira, was a sailor and former Catholic priest from the Azorean archipelago of Portugal who jumped ship on the south coast of 'Upolu in the 1840s. After landing at Falealili,<sup>6</sup> Augustino travelled to Lotofaga where he married Malaisala, daughter of High Chief Fiamē, in the Roman Catholic church.<sup>7</sup> Born in 1865, Louisa was the youngest of their five children, and only a small child when her mother died. She was orphaned by nine. After Malaisala's death, Augustino placed the youngest two girls in a convent.<sup>8</sup> In his Last Will and Testament, Augustino bequeaths his land at Matafele, known as Savalalo, In Trust to the Sisters of Mercy and

---

<sup>5</sup> Moe in Kronfeld, *Gustav and Louisa Kronfeld*, 25. If Gustav had instead returned to Toruń, as his sister did, this story would have ended differently. By the Second World War, most of the siblings and their families had already left Toruń. Those who remained managed to escape Nazi Germany, with the exception of Mabel Meyer (nee Wittkowski) and her husband, who died in concentration camps. Sam in Kronfeld, *Gustav and Louisa Kronfeld*, 17.

<sup>6</sup> "Died Aged 90," *Auckland Star*, February 19, 1938, accessed March 29, 2024, <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/AS19380219.2.156>.

<sup>7</sup> Unfortunately, Augustino and Malaisala's marriage certificate burned with the church.

<sup>8</sup> Sam in Kronfeld, *Gustav and Louisa Kronfeld*, 13.

his eldest daughter, Anna. The younger sisters, Mary and Louisa (and Anna if she wished), were to live in the convent until Louisa turned 21, at which point they inherited the property.<sup>9</sup> Little is known about Louisa's youth in the Savalalo convent — no known first-person accounts exist from her lifetime. However, there is one family story about 17 year-old Louisa being prepared to protect her sister with a bible that speaks to both her physical and mental strength.<sup>10</sup> Each time I travel to Sāmoa I make sure to visit the Chinese restaurant that is now housed by the convent building.<sup>11</sup> Sitting between coral block walls and arched windows, I imagine Louisa gracing the halls: ruffles at collar and wrist, hair elaborately pinned, and a will to test the nuns' patience.

Louisa and Gustav wished to marry, however, their differing religions presented a dilemma. Historian Margaret Hixon surmises that “when Louisa met Gustav, she was a dainty young person with a mind of her own. No one approved of their plan to marry, least of all the family's priest, though the Mother Superior was suspected of secretly supporting the union.”<sup>12</sup> Around

---

<sup>9</sup> Augustine Sylva, “Last Will and Testament,” 1874. Kronfeld/Parr collection.

<sup>10</sup> Kronfeld, *Gustav and Louisa Kronfeld*, 53.

<sup>11</sup> During my May 2023 visit to Sāmoa, I found the building being cleaned out, with the restaurant's bulbed sign in a pile of rubbish.

<sup>12</sup> Hixon, *Sālote: Queen of Paradise*, 44.

this time, Gustav was promoted from cashier to the branch manager of D.H.P.G. in Neiafu, Vava'u (Tonga), which succeeded Godeffroy & Sons following bankruptcy.<sup>13</sup> In Neiafu, Gustav met a Wesleyan minister, Reverend Henry C. Oldmeadow, who agreed to marry them. According to Moe, in 1883 arrangements were made for Louisa, her sisters, and other to sail from Apia to Vava'u for the wedding.<sup>14</sup> Five children, Jenny Lotomua, Gustav Silveira, Samuel Tonga, Fritz Falevai, and Manuel Vavau, followed in quick succession over the next seven years.

In October 1890, the Kronfeld family relocated to Aotearoa New Zealand, where Gustav had resolved to establish his own trading company. On the day they arrived in the port of Auckland on the SS *Wainui*, high tide was near noon and midnight and the moon was in its first quarter. The next five Kronfeld children were born in Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland: Minna Priscilla Else, Isidore Fiame, Moe, Leo Lea'ega, and Walter Tui. All ten were raised Anglican, for it was St Paul's Church on Symonds Street that welcomed the Jewish/Catholic bunch. Louisa did consider converting to Judaism so her children could choose their religion — however, after a

---

<sup>13</sup> G. E. L. Westbrook, "The Late Gustav Kronfeld," *Samoaianische Zeitung* (Apia), April 25, 1924, <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/SAMZ19240425.2.9>.

<sup>14</sup> Moe in Kronfeld, *Gustav and Louisa Kronfeld*, 2.



The Kronfeld family, 1912. Auckland Libraries Heritage Collections 31-WPO344. Photographed by Herman John Schmidt. Standing: Moe, Manny, Sam, Gus, Fritz, Isi, Leo. Seated: Jenny, Louisa, Tui, Gustav, Minna. Seated (in front): Jenny's children, Louie and Gus.

trip to meet and be approved by Gustav's family in the late 1890s, she returned "furious and unconvertable" having been disrespected on a racial basis. While Sam did study for his bar mitzvah, the children remained Anglican.<sup>15</sup>

---

<sup>15</sup> Kronfeld, *Gustav and Louisa Kronfeld*, 311.



Sam at the Brick Pillar  
Jenny sitting on left of steps  
Ammi Barkley (Mrs Lober) of Hye Samon.  
in white dress  
Moe, Marina, Leo  
Leo in the arms of Marina.  
Photo taken during 1902

'Oli 'Ula, 1902. Kronfeld/Parr collection.

Sam's note in a Kodak envelope holding the original negative of 'Oli 'Ula, a single print, and a 1968 order slip for eight 4¾ x 6½ enlargements. Kronfeld/Parr collection.

## ‘Oli ‘Ula: The Centre of the Orbit

In 1902, the family home was built at number nine Eden Crescent. ‘Oli ‘Ula was the centre of the Kronfeld family’s orbit. In this house, an extensive network of relationships, taonga, measina, and other ancestral treasures from across Moana Oceania, converged. What would become the Kronfeld Collection adorned its walls, and the songs and antics of many guests filled its rooms. ‘Oli is the name of a tree once cultivated in Sāmoa with “a red sweet-smelling flower”<sup>16</sup> and aromatic fruit that was strung around the neck and worn in the hair as oil.<sup>17</sup> ‘Ula can mean necklace, joyful, or red.<sup>18</sup> Introducing *Su’esu’e Manogi: in Search of Fragrance* (2018), the book’s editors

---

<sup>16</sup> Tofilau Nina Kirifi-Alai, Tamasailau M. Suaalii-Sauni, and I’uogafa Tuagalu, introduction to *Su’esu’e Manogi: In Search of Fragrance: Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Ta’isi Efi and the Samoan Indigenous Reference*, ed. Tamasailau M. Suaalii-Sauni et al. (Wellington: Huia Publishers, 2018), 2. They also note that the ‘oli flower is usually associated with the village of Salani, whose “aumaga (untitled men’s guild) is known as *tama o le oli ‘ula* (guild of the red *oli*). Krämer records that Salani and Lotofaga, Louisa’s village, are either side of the Vaigafa or Fanatoloa river – perhaps this is why the ‘oli tree held special significance for the Kronfelds. Augustin Krämer, *The Samoa Islands: An Outline of a Monograph with Particular Consideration of German Samoa*, trans. Theodore Verhaaren (Auckland: Pasifika Press, 2023), 372.

<sup>17</sup> W. Arthur Whistler, “Annotated List of Samoan Plant Names,” *Economic Botany* 38, no. 4 (October–December 1984): 471, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4254688>; W. A. Whistler, “A Revision of Syzygium (Myrtaceae) in Samoa,” *Journal of the Arnold Arboretum* 69, no. 2 (April 1988): 183, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/43797837>.

<sup>18</sup> *A Grammar and Dictionary of the Samoan Language*, 3rd ed., s.v. “‘Ula.”

explain that “to speak of the fragrances of a culture is to deliberately appeal to its nuances. For special Samoan village affairs, the flowers or plant parts that make up a garland for guests are specially picked, both for their sweet aromas and for their associations with people and place.”<sup>19</sup> Perhaps Louisa and Gustav chose the name for a cherished memory. For me, the ‘oli ‘ula has become a symbol, something I cherish in place of the memory itself. The period between the turn of the century and the war was as vibrant as the ‘oli flower. While the house was demolished in 1976, the memories recorded by Kronfeld children open a portal through which we might enter it.

‘Oli ‘Ula became a cosmopolitan household: a nexus for visiting artists, musicians, and children of relatives or similarly bicultural families sent to Aotearoa for schooling. It was Louisa’s duty to care for these children, along with her own, and run the household — which she apparently did with a grace “almost alien to the colonial hurry of Auckland.”<sup>20</sup> The front entrance was, peculiarly, not at the street-front, but on the right side of the house. Moe recalled that upon entering, “what struck the visitor

---

<sup>19</sup> Kirifi-Alai, Suaalii-Sauni, and Tuagalu, introduction to *Su’esu’e Manogi*, ed. Tamasailau M. Suaalii-Sauni et al. (Wellington: Huia Publishers, 2018), 2.

<sup>20</sup> Hixon, *Sālote: Queen of Paradise*, 47.

was the walls which from floor to ceiling were covered with Maori and Polynesian artifacts of all kinds. Dad had a remarkable collection.”<sup>21</sup> This hallway, which ran parallel to the street, is where the children once roller-skated while the adults were away and would line up for Louisa’s ‘grand inspection’ before an outing.<sup>22</sup> The drawing room was inside the front door to the left. Carpets with delicate roses ran between the walls, which were papered with an almost indiscernible silvery pattern and hung with paintings. In the window alcove was Gustav’s rocking chair and in the corner a Bechstein grand piano.<sup>23</sup> Minna would play the Bechstein during the family’s musical evenings, joining voices with her siblings and friends. The pianist (and later prime minister of Poland) Ignace Jan Paderewski graced its keys, and the American band conductor John Philip Sousa was entertained in the drawing room; Gustav often invited touring musicians staying in nearby hotels to ‘Oli ‘Ula. Louisa did the same with sporting stars, including the Hawaiian swimmers Duke Kahanamoku and Pua Kealoha. Her boys were stars in their own right. Reportedly, the house contained so many trophies that when Gustav suggested they were a “confounded

---

<sup>21</sup> Moe in Kronfeld, *Gustav and Louisa Kronfeld*, 44.

<sup>22</sup> Bizarely, Gustav owned several roller-skating rinks in Auckland. Hixon, *Sālotē: Queen of Paradise*, 49.

<sup>23</sup> Moe in Kronfeld, *Gustav and Louisa Kronfeld*, 44.



Auckland waterfront from Queen Street Wharf, 1906. The Kronfeld building is second-in from the left. Auckland Libraries Heritage Collections 1-W1006. Photographed by Henry Winkelmann.

nuisance,” the boys had their 64 medals melted and made into a butter dish. Its place on the table was regarded with pride.<sup>24</sup>

Moe remembered the kitchen storeroom smelling of freshly ground coffee mixed with the sweetness of fruit: “you see, Dad was a merchant and the major part of the business was trading with the Pacific Islands — Sāmoa, Tonga, Fiji, The Cook Islands and Tahiti.”<sup>25</sup> While Gustav had “severed his connection with the D.H.P.G.” upon relocating to Tāmaki Makaurau and starting his own company, in “recognition of his long services, the D.H.P.G. appointed him their buying agent, a position he held up to the outbreak of the war.”<sup>26</sup> His wealth enabled the construction of a warehouse on Customs Street East, shortly after ‘Oli ‘Ula was built. In 1903 he took out a 50-year Auckland Harbour Board Lease, and the headquarters of his trading company were erected by the end of the following year. Vessels approaching the port would have seen the four-storey brick building with arched windows and G. KRONFELD painted across the top through plumes rising from the railway lines. Records of goods shipped between Aotearoa, Europe, and the South Pacific Islands were chalked onto beams

---

<sup>24</sup> Hixon, *Sālote: Queen of Paradise*, 52.

<sup>25</sup> Moe in Kronfeld, *Gustav and Louisa Kronfeld*, 43.

<sup>26</sup> Westbrook, “The Late Gustav Kronfeld.”



Gustav and Louisa Kronfeld, 1912. Auckland Libraries Heritage Collections 31-69617. Photographed by Herman John Schmidt.

in the basement. General products were exported to the islands, fruit was imported to Aotearoa, and copra sent to Europe.<sup>27</sup> At Christmastime, crates of food, toys, and “other goodies” were packed for an orphanage in Hamilton established by the Mother Superior of the convent Louisa was raised in. The pre-war years were prosperous: “while the money was there it was lavished on living, education and travel for the family and education subsidies for people from the islands.”<sup>28</sup> Between Gustav’s trading and Louisa’s hospitality the family’s networks across the moana were thoroughly tended to.

Gustav became New Zealand agent to the Tongan government during the reign of Tupou I through friendships with Tongan chiefs (presumably formed during his time as manager of the D.H.P.G. branch in Vava’u).<sup>29</sup> King George Tupou II was well-acquainted with Gustav, and the two attended the theatre together in Tāmaki Makaurau. Hixon imagines a peculiar pair: “the giant figure of the King, undoubtedly scented and sartorially splendid, born to rank and privilege; and the older merchant, short in stature, benignly twinkling through thick spectacles, a self-made man who had

---

<sup>27</sup> Hixon, *Sālote: Queen of Paradise*, 43.

<sup>28</sup> Kronfeld, *Gustav and Louisa Kronfeld*, 311.

<sup>29</sup> Hixon, *Sālote: Queen of Paradise*, 43.



The family at Te Muri, c. 1912. Standing: Louisa, her brother Manuel Silva, Maggie Silva, Princess Sālote, Mary Silva, Moe, Gustav, Herman Brown Geddes, Fritz, Annie Peckham. Sitting/kneeling: Selina Krause, Manny (holding Gus and Louie), Jenny, Leo, Annie Silva or Katie Bayerlein. Kronfeld/Parr collection.

taken constant risks throughout his life. Both were wilful, tempestuous, affable and responsive to the arts.”<sup>30</sup> Sam also remembers Louisa and the King reciting genealogies from Sāmoa, Niue, and Tonga until the early hours of the morning during his visit to ‘Oli ‘Ula. As granddaughters of High Chief Fiamē, Louisa and her sisters were required to memorise titles of chiefly lines and lands.<sup>31</sup> It was for this reason, according to Hixon, that “in all of Auckland Louisa Kronfeld was the one person qualified by birth to look after the royal princess of Tonga.”<sup>32</sup>

Sālote Tupou III steamed into the Waitematā Harbour on the *Tofua* in 1910 with her attendant, Lesieli.<sup>33</sup> She was to reside with the Kronfelds for three years, to become accustomed to life outside of Tonga before entering Diocesan High School for Girls. Gustav wasted no time in transporting Sālote and Lesieli to Te Muri, where the Kronfelds holidayed in the summertime, often with

---

<sup>30</sup> Hixon, *Sālote: Queen of Paradise*, 50.

<sup>31</sup> Sam in Kronfeld, *Gustav and Louisa Kronfeld*, 19. Additionally, Sam remarks that at a 1932 ta'alolo (ceremonial presentation), Mata'afa Faumuina Fiamē Mulinu'u I called him as third ranking chief as Louisa's son, rather than by his father's name. Sam Kronfeld, handwritten note, 1970, Kronfeld/Parr collection.

<sup>32</sup> Hixon, *Sālote: Queen of Paradise*, 44.

<sup>33</sup> Sam's middle name, Tonga, was given after Lesieli's husband, Tēvita Tonga. Hixon, *Sālote: Queen of Paradise*, 43.

friends and family visiting from Sāmoa.<sup>34</sup> In a tape recording, Sam laughs as he recalls Gustav's frustration at arriving at the campsite to find Louisa and the boys out fishing. While they did not return until late afternoon, at least it was with a decent catch. Sam notes that the princess became absorbed into the family very quickly and her shyness disappeared — although she retained her majestic reserve with strangers. Sālote always called Louisa 'mother.'<sup>35</sup> While the younger children were rambunctious (certainly more than the Princess would have been used to), they were also kind — they never let their piano teacher leave without a bunch of flowers.<sup>36</sup> Sālote formed particularly special friendships with Minna and Moe. Minna and Sālote shared a room and love of reading, with Minna recounting stories to Sālote after finishing a book.<sup>37</sup> In a striking gesture, Tupou II adopted Moe, naming him 'Uluvalu. Hixon notes the Tongan practice of honouring a lesser chief, and speculates that "the gesture may have reflected honour bestowed on Gustav for the care of Sālote." Furthermore, she wonders whether part of the bond between Moe and Sālote came from a shared

---

<sup>34</sup> These included the Silva (Louisa's brother and nieces), Greigs, and Geddes families.

<sup>35</sup> Sam in Kronfeld, *Gustav and Louisa Kronfeld*, 25.

<sup>36</sup> Moe in Kronfeld, *Gustav and Louisa Kronfeld*, 43.

<sup>37</sup> Hixon, *Sālote: Queen of Paradise*, 47.

understanding; as children, both had received royal welcomes on their respective journeys to Sāmoa and Vava'u.<sup>38</sup> Through looking to these deep relationships held between the Kronfeld and Tongan Royal families, light can be shed on the Kronfeld Collection.

---

<sup>38</sup> Hixon, *Sālote: Queen of Paradise*, 50. As a small child, Moe visited his namesake and great uncle, High Chief Moefa'auō. Every morning, the High Chief would beckon Moe over and carry him down to the river to bathe. Moe in Kronfeld, *Gustav and Louisa Kronfeld*, 34.



Vavau, Tonga. From the back of Fritz Wolfgramm's store looking towards the wharf and the old DH & PG store up to the right. Wharf copra sheds below.

Neiafu, Vava'u. Looking towards copra sheds and the German firm's store. Kronfeld/Parr collection.

## Assembling the Collection

The Kronfeld Collection can be ordered into three categories: treasures traded for or gifted to Gustav from peoples across Te Moananui-a-Kiwa; taonga Māori Gustav purchased, commissioned, or was gifted while living in Aotearoa; and gifts (mostly from Queen Sālote) to the family during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. I suspect Gustav began collecting while living in Sāmoa and working for the German firm, as many of the treasures originated from islands that the company had agencies in, rather than those Gustav was later importing to and exporting from. Further, descriptions of the sizeable collection in ‘Oli ‘Ula suggest a long period of gathering. Godeffroy agents were permanently stationed on the Duke of York Islands in the Bismarck Archipelago of Papua New Guinea (PNG) from 1876 — the year Gustav sailed to Apia. By then, the firm’s stations were spread across Moana Oceania from Tahiti to the Mariana Islands, visited once or twice a year by a vessel from Apia to collect copra and shell goods.<sup>39</sup> Perhaps Gustav travelled on this vessel during the period he was in Apia (c. 1876-1883), collecting treasures in addition to his official duties. Considering his position as office worker and

---

<sup>39</sup> Stewart Firth, “German Firms in the Western Pacific Islands, 1857-1914,” *The Journal of Pacific History* 8 (1973): 12, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/25168133>.

then cashier, and scant other references to islands predominantly to the west of Sāmoa, this appears the most plausible reason that treasures from PNG form nearly half of the Collection.

The exploitative practices of the German firm are part of the context in which Gustav's collecting occurred. After combing through archival records and correspondence, I found four sources alluding to the nature of his collecting practices. The context of empire expansion in Moana Oceania is touched on by his grandson, Tony, as he hypothesises on the connection between Gustav and Tupou II; another grandson, David, shares his impression of Gustav as a 'tough' trader; Hixon describes a peculiar set of relations; and a volunteer at the National Museum gleans information from Moe:

"I understand that Gustav had a very good name throughout the whole South Pacific for his square dealing as far as trading was concerned, so much so that he was able to go where other white men feared to tread. It must be remembered that at the time he was trading around the islands, it had not been very long since Bully Hayes and his ilk were blackbirding, and there was a great deal of distrust of any European appearing on the scene."<sup>40</sup>

---

<sup>40</sup> Tony Kronfeld, letter to Margaret Hixon, July 20, 1990.

“He used to go once or twice a year around the islands and collect cash in a brown leather bag. In 1916, he sent Sam around with the same bag, and when Sam came back the bag was empty.. What amazes me is that Gustav collected and remained alive. The people he traded with must have wanted what he traded and wanted him alive.”<sup>41</sup>

“Around the Western Pacific, in Fiji, the Solomons, the Admiralty Islands, Gustav had become known as Mata Fā (‘Four-Eyes’). Being nearsighted, he went ashore wearing spectacles, the first seen in some of the remote places he travelled to by schooner twice-yearly, as an agent of the Godeffroy firm. He learned local languages and went exploring beyond the copra sheds, so that chiefs began to present him with gifts.”<sup>42</sup>

“Kronfeld had by now [1883] acquired the ‘collecting fever’ and as his work took him all over the islands, he became well known and was soon purchasing articles of good quality and was on occasions given things because his interests were now known. He soon built up quite a large collection.”<sup>43</sup>

---

<sup>41</sup> David Kronfeld (Sam’s son) in Kronfeld, *Gustav and Louisa Kronfeld*, 4-6.

<sup>42</sup> Hixon, *Sālote: Queen of Paradise*, 45.

<sup>43</sup> J. V. Hobbs, “Notes from the National Museum,” 1982, reproduced in Kronfeld, *Gustav and Louisa Kronfeld*, 75.



Likely to be a photograph of Gustav Kronfeld's 'Samoan Court' at the 1899 Auckland Exhibition by Britt and Heatley. Kronfeld/Parr collection.

Based on Sam's indication that most of the taonga, measina, and treasures were gifts from chiefs to Gustav, David believes that "Gustav must have brought out the best in most people."<sup>44</sup> After relocating to Tāmaki Makaurau, Gustav continued travelling the moana a few times a year by steamer. He would be away for a month to six weeks, and during his absences the younger children slept in their parents' bedroom, two with Louisa, and two on a mattress on the floor.<sup>45</sup> Presumably, he returned with more treasures to be housed in 'Oli 'Ula.

Based in his downtown offices, Gustav became well-known in Tāmaki Makaurau as a merchant *and* a collector, and the Collection grew with taonga Māori purchased, traded, or gifted. Gustav also commissioned Gottfried Lindauer to paint two rangatira; the portraits hung facing each other in 'Oli 'Ula, above the drawing

---

<sup>44</sup> David in Kronfeld, *Gustav and Louisa Kronfeld*, 7.

<sup>45</sup> Moe in Kronfeld, *Gustav and Louisa Kronfeld*, 44.

room and master bedroom doors.<sup>46</sup> There is one notable break from what appear to be Gustav's above-board collecting practices: a hoe parāoa, a magnificent paddle carved from the jawbone of a sperm whale, resides in the Collection.<sup>47</sup> A 1937 newspaper article reports that Te Rangihīroa (then Director of the Bishop Museum), "who has known the Kronfeld family for years, said he had never seen one like it. Mrs. Kronfeld said the paddle came into her husband's possession over 40 years ago."<sup>48</sup> Another article, published two years later, writes that "as far as is known no similar one is in existence. Dr. [Moe] Kronfeld's father acquired it from an old Maori chief, half a century ago, and thereafter regarded it as the

---

<sup>46</sup> Moe in Kronfeld, *Gustav and Louisa Kronfeld*. A Cordy's catalogue of sale from the collection of L.M. Lennard Esq. identifies the rangatira as Chief Mateue te Motuku of Rangitikei and Chief Ke Mahikai of Hawkes Bay. Comparing the first portrait to others by Lindauer, the first rangatira strongly resembles his portrait of Tomika Te Mutu, a Ngāi Te Rangi chief who died in 1867. The second rangatira may be Harawira Te Mahikai, a Ngāti Kahungunu chief who died in 1886. Comparing the portrait to another of Te Mahikai by Lindauer, the taiaha in his hand and tooth hanging from his ear appear to be the same, and the moko kanohi is nearly identical. The painting is signed 1907.

<sup>47</sup> I have written about this taonga previously. See Emily Parr, "The Ocean Is Calling Me Home: Settler-Indigenous Relationships of Te Moananui a Kiwa" (master's thesis, Auckland University of Technology, 2020), 36-38, <http://hdl.handle.net/10292/13699>. Then, I was under the impression that the hoe parāoa was included in *Te Māori* (1984). I believe this to be incorrect, as the hoe is not included in the exhibition catalogue, Sidney Moko Mead, ed., *Te Maori: Maori Art from New Zealand Collections* (Auckland: Heinemann Publishers, 1984).

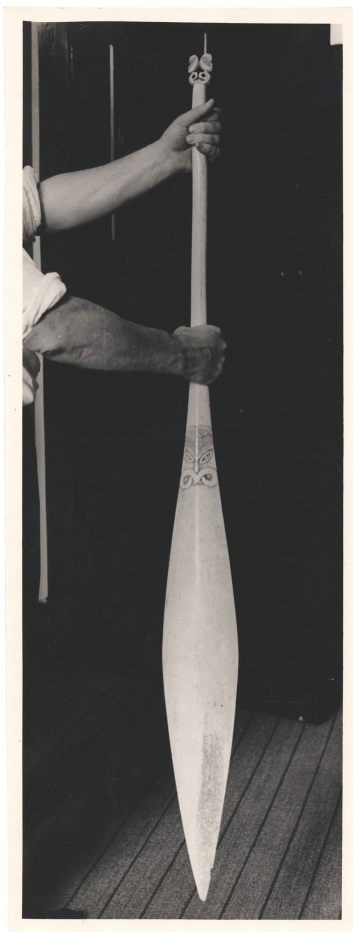
<sup>48</sup> "Museum House. Relics from Past," *Auckland Star*, November 29, 1937, <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/AS19371129.2.34>.

rarest article in his extensive collection.”<sup>49</sup> The source of the hoe parāoa given in public records differs from the one shared in private. Only so much factual weight can be attributed to a story told and re-told among family — even Tony’s version written in two places differs — but it is likely the closest we will come to an account of the paddle’s acquisition.

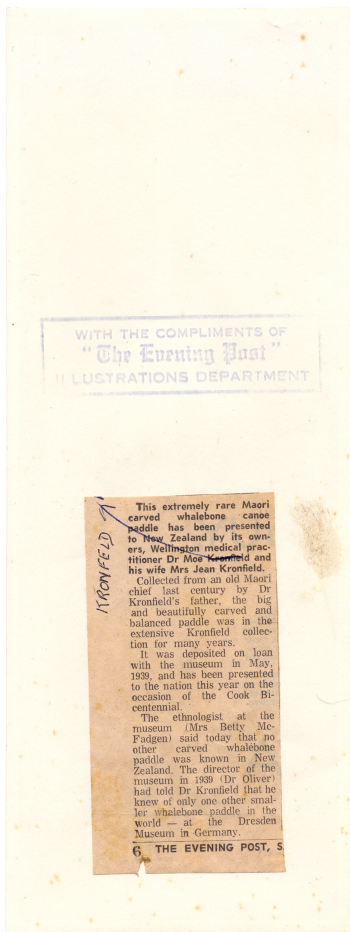
As the story goes, artefact collectors in Tāmaki Makaurau were being ‘touted’ a whalebone paddle around 1910. A Māori man with the paddle approached Gustav at his office, asking £500. Gustav declined the offer, stating it was far too expensive. A rumour began to circulate that a Northland grave had been robbed. Reportedly, the thief was known to the iwi and tohunga were travelling to Tāmaki Makaurau. A week after his first visit, the vendor returned to Gustav’s office — far less confident and with an asking price of £250. Again, Gustav refused, telling the man he does not buy “the pigs in the pokes” and to come back when he could prove ownership. As another week passed, word was the tohunga were approaching the city. The man returned again, in a heightened state of panic and an offer of £100. Gustav roared, “do you think I am to buy stolen goods? I should get the police on you.” As the man turned to run, Gustav yelled for him

---

<sup>49</sup> “South Seas Curios for Museum,” *Dominion* (Wellington), July 13, 1939, <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/DOMI9390713.2.53>.



The hoe parāoa photographed by *The Evening Post*. Kronfeld/Parr collection.



WITH THE COMPLIMENTS OF  
 "The Evening Post"  
 ILLUSTRATIONS DEPARTMENT

KRONFELD

This extremely rare Maori carved whalebone canoe paddle has been presented to New Zealand by its owners, Wellington medical practitioner Dr. Max Kronfeld and his wife Mrs Jean Kronfeld. Collected from an old Maori chief last century by Dr Kronfeld's father, the big and beautifully carved and balanced paddle was in the extensive Kronfeld collection for many years. It was deposited on loan with the museum in May, 1939, and has been presented to the nation this year on the occasion of the Cook Bicentennial. The ethnologist at the museum (Mrs Betty MacFadgen) said today that no other carved whalebone paddle was known in New Zealand. The director of the museum in 1939 (Dr Oliver) had told Dr Kronfeld that he knew of only one other small whalebone paddle in the world — at the Dresden Museum in Germany.

6 THE EVENING POST, 5

The photo's verso. I suspect Dr. Oliver may have confused a hoeroa in the Museum für Völkerkunde Dresden with a hoe parāoa. Thanks to Tina Engels-Schwarzpaul for helping me to search their collections.

to wait and laid £50 on the desk. The man threw down the wrapped paddle, grabbed the cash, and fled.<sup>50</sup> Perhaps the allure of the taonga overpowered Gustav's usual ethics. I have inherited the legacy of this rupture,<sup>51</sup> but I can also work to remedy it — in bringing a museum collection 'into the light,' even the uncomfortable parts of it must be illuminated.

'Oli 'Ula, the home of Gustav's private collection, was just around the corner from the original Auckland Institute and Museum (AIM) on Princes Street. According to AIM annual reports, Gustav's first official contribution was a donation towards the purchase of the Mair Collection in 1901-1902, and he was an AIM member until 1917.<sup>52</sup> He was also acquainted with AIM curator, Thomas Cheeseman.<sup>53</sup> It is curious to think about the potential influence this proximity to the Museum had on Gustav's collecting, and how this period prefaced the transfer of taonga, measina, and treasures from a private collection into Aotearoa's public museums.

---

<sup>50</sup> Kronfeld, *Gustav and Louisa Kronfeld*, 8-9.

<sup>51</sup> The notion of rupture is a way for me to think through disruptions between treasures and their vā or whakapapa relations.

<sup>52</sup> Auckland Institute and Museum, *Auckland Museum Annual Reports 1901-1917* (Auckland Institute and Museum, 1901-1917), <https://archive.org/details/aucklandmuseumannualreports>.

<sup>53</sup> J. V. Hobbs, "Notes from the National Museum," 77.



Gustav arriving at the internment camp on Motuihe. Photograph by R. Hoffman in an album belonging to Alfred Schultz. Kronfeld/Parr collection.

## The War Years

The splendid and spirited era of 'Oli 'Ula came to an end with the First World War. A shroud of silence descended on this time; the Kronfeld children did not speak about it to their own children. As a boy, Tony asked Minna about WWI: "she wrinkled her nose and waved her hand in a way only she could, and said 'at that time people were very cruel and nasty, and I prefer not to talk about it.'"<sup>54</sup> To glean a sense of what happened, Tony gathered every document referencing Gustav from the National Archives circa 1990 and compiled them in the family book. The documents tell a story of escalating suspicions and panicked decisions as tensions with Germany erupted into war. The Aliens Enemies Commission were building a case against Gustav for 'trading with the enemy.' Before leaving on a six-week business trip to Sāmoa in May 1915, Gustav incorporated the company. 'G. Kronfeld Ltd' became the 'Pacific Trading Company Ltd'; shares were gifted to Louisa, Sam, Minna, and his associates (and later all ten children); and Gustav became an advisor rather than General Manager and Director of the company.<sup>55</sup>

---

<sup>54</sup> Kronfeld, *Gustav and Louisa Kronfeld*, 117.

<sup>55</sup> Kronfeld, *Gustav and Louisa Kronfeld*, 88.

The rest of the family did not escape the anti-German sentiments circling Tāmaki Makaurau, either. While Gustav was away, a rumour spread — and was reported to the Prime Minister — that ‘Kronfeldt’ and his daughters had gloated over the sinking of the British RMS *Lusitania* by the Germans. Jenny and Minna were subsequently investigated and cleared by the police. Gus, the eldest son living in the United States, was also rumoured to be fighting for the Germans. It did not matter that Gustav renounced German citizenship when he left Prussia at age seventeen, nor that he became a Naturalised British Subject in 1893 — Gustav was declared an Alien Enemy. In his correspondence with the Aliens Commission, a concern for the reputation and freedom of his children is prominent. He writes, “as one who is well advanced in years, being almost sixty, and as one whose entire associations are wrapped up in this country, I am especially anxious to ascertain how far certain of my children are affected by this Proclamation.”<sup>56</sup> Gustav also had his own fate to worry about; the Solicitor-General was determined to intern him as a prisoner of war, and recommended as much to the Minister of Defence.

---

<sup>56</sup> Kronfeld, *Gustav and Louisa Kronfeld*, 160.

When Gustav arrived home from Sāmoa, a Detective was the first to board the SS *Tofua* wanting to speak to him.<sup>57</sup> The following month Gustav was interrogated by the Alien Enemies Commission. Tony reflects that in the Commission's reports, Gustav "opens up his soul... and we get some glimpses of his character that otherwise would not have been available to us."<sup>58</sup> The Commission's case hinged on a few copies torn from his business letter book and a cable. In November 1914, a Censor had flagged a cable from Gustav to his business partner as suspicious for mentioning a vessel in the North Sea. The Censor writes, "it is quite possible that German Reservists may take passage in the ship or it may be used for the purpose of supplies to German Warships."<sup>59</sup> Gustav explains to the Commissioner that he was attempting to charter a vessel to ship copra from the islands to England, and understood 'the North Sea' to mean London. The negotiations did not come to fruition (luckily for Gustav).<sup>60</sup> On the letter book deletions, Gustav explains they were a personal letter to a nephew in New York, and two letters to Williams Diamond & Co.

---

<sup>57</sup> Alien Enemies Commission, "Examination of Gustav Kronfeld," August 23, 1915, reproduced in Kronfeld, *Gustav and Louisa Kronfeld*, 178.

<sup>58</sup> Kronfeld, *Gustav and Louisa Kronfeld*, 117-18.

<sup>59</sup> Captain Frank Colbeck, cable to Chief Censor, November 24, 1914, reproduced in Kronfeld, *Gustav and Louisa Kronfeld*, 89.

<sup>60</sup> Alien Enemies Commission, "Examination of Gustav Kronfeld," 188.

in San Francisco. One of these letters was to order a German newspaper, and a follow-up was to cancel the order after learning that having such a paper could be regarded as seditious if war was declared. Unfortunately, the company were bankers for the D.H.P.G. — whom Gustav was the New Zealand agent for — and the D.H.P.G. was under suspicion of trading with Germany via the company.<sup>61</sup> The Alien Enemies Commission were satisfied with Gustav's explanations of the correspondence and concluded their investigations in September 1915. On the question of whether he should be arrested and interned, the Commissioners write, "No further action should be taken."<sup>62</sup>

Early in 1916, however, Gustav was arrested for "meeting Germans in Victoria Park"<sup>63</sup> and interned on Te Motu-a-Ihenga (commonly known as Motuihe). From the island's shores, the twinkling city of Tāmaki Makaurau can be seen across the Hauraki Gulf. My family possess a photo album that belonged to my other great-great-grandfather, Alfred Schultz. It holds a bizarre record of their internment by a fellow prisoner, R. Hofmann — a glass

---

<sup>61</sup> Alien Enemies Commission, "Examination of Gustav Kronfeld," 178.

<sup>62</sup> Alien Enemies Commission, "Report on Case of G. Kronfeld, Auckland," September 1, 1915, reproduced in Kronfeld, *Gustav and Louisa Kronfeld*, 206.

<sup>63</sup> Listed as Gustav's reason for internment in Kronfeld, *Gustav and Louisa Kronfeld*, 281.

plate photographer. The black and white images, faded to brown, depict German men posing in suits, dwellings with tapa covered walls and paths lined with white stones, handicrafts made to fundraise for the Red Cross, morning swims and volleyball, men toiling in the farm, tents the prisoners were moved to during the influenza epidemic, assembled D.H.P.G. managers, the barbed wire erected after the (failed) escape of Count Felix Von Luckner. In the photo captioned 'arrival of old Kronfeld,' Gustav squints toward the camera, two bags (one paper) and an umbrella in his hands. A guard strides in the opposite direction. As far as prisoner of war camps go, Motuihe was comfortable — although less so for Gustav, a Jewish man among Germans, some of whom were anti-Semitic.

In my favourite photograph, a smiling Gustav sits at a table set with teacups and flowers sent by his family for his 60<sup>th</sup> birthday.<sup>64</sup> Surrounding the table are Friedrich Stünzner, his wife and Louisa's niece, Ellen Mary, and their five children. Due to Friedrich's illness, his family relocated from Sāmoa to Motuihe to care for him. While an internment camp is no place for children, I imagine Gustav enjoyed their presence during the separation from his own family. In a letter addressed to Minna on

---

<sup>64</sup> Tony Brunt, *"To Walk Under Palm Trees": The Germans in Samoa: Snapshots from Albums; Part One* (Auckland: self-pub., 2016), 92.



Gustav's birthday party with Friedrich and Ellen Mary Stünzner (Louisa's niece) and their children. Photograph by R. Hoffman in an album belonging to Alfred Schultz. Kronfeld/Parr collection.

her birthday, Gustav writes: “I think kindly and lovingly of you with hopeful trust, that you are keeping good and helping Mother in the household, so that when the days of my imprisonment come to an end — I may be able to live yet a few hours in peace and gladness amidst you children.”<sup>65</sup> Three months later, Gustav and Louisa’s youngest child, Tui, died of meningitis. Acknowledging Tui’s passing, the newspaper printed: “Tui, in addition to being one of the world’s speediest boy swimmers, was a little gentleman as well, and his pretty face will be sadly missed from the starting platform of the various baths this coming season.” Gustav was allowed one night at home, with armed guards outside the bedroom door.<sup>66</sup> In a sense, Gustav was lucky — his name was on the list of Prisoners of War to be released unconditionally in 1919 (nearly a year after the war had ended). He was allowed to remain in Aotearoa, with his family, rather than be repatriated to Germany.<sup>67</sup>

---

<sup>65</sup> Gustav Kronfeld, letter to Minna Kronfeld, May 29, 1918, reproduced in Kronfeld, *Gustav and Louisa Kronfeld*, 248.

<sup>66</sup> Jean Kronfeld (Tony’s mother) in Kronfeld, *Gustav and Louisa Kronfeld*, 259.

<sup>67</sup> My other great-great-grandfather, Alfred Schultz, was returned to Germany after his internment. Alfred’s daughter, Clara, married Gustav’s daughter, Sam. The family never saw him again.



Gustav and Louisa photographed on the steps of 'Oli 'Ula. Kronfeld/  
Parr collection.

## A Fallen Moon

Gustav lived the remainder of his 67 years at 'Oli 'Ula, passing away at home on the 26<sup>th</sup> of March 1924. An extended obituary printed in the *Samoanische Zeitung* speaks of Gustav's hospitality and generosity.<sup>68</sup> Shortly after Gustav's death, Louisa returned to Sāmoa for several months, before travelling on to Tonga as a guest of Queen Sālote. Her imminent arrival on the SS *Tofua* was reported in the paper, with the comment that "Mrs Kronfeld is a near relative of some of the highest chiefs of Samoa, who are extremely glad to welcome her here again."<sup>69</sup> Perhaps Louisa had been unable to travel home for some time due to Gustav's ill-health, or family and friends in the islands were an antidote to mourning. She never returned to Sāmoa permanently.

In 1920, prior to Gustav's death, Sam was staying with family in Lotofaga. He was awoken early and told to dress hastily in preparation to receive a deputation of chiefs. Matā'afa Fiamē Fauminā Mulinū'u I and Tuimaleali'ifano Si'ua'ana, along with about 200 men, arrived to request that Louisa return to Apia to hold court. Nearly all the Society who had memorised

---

<sup>68</sup> Westbrook, "The Late Gustav Kronfeld."

<sup>69</sup> "Local and General," *Samoanische Zeitung* (Apia), May 23, 1924, accessed March 29, 2024, <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/SAMZ19240523.2.16>.



Kronfeld family members and their partners on the steps of 'Oli 'Ula.  
Top photo: Annie, Minna, Jenny; Alma (t.b.c.), Louisa, Gustav; Louie,  
Olive, unidentified. Bottom photo: Otto, Manny, Gustav, Leo; Sam, Gus,  
Andy, Isi. Kronfeld/Parr collection.

genealogies had died in the 1918 influenza epidemic, including Louisa's sister and leading arbitrator, Anna. Sam gives different reasons for the refusal in different places: inside his copy of Krämer (1901) donated to Auckland Museum's library, he cites Louisa's ill-health;<sup>70</sup> in a tape recorded for family, he says that Gustav refused because it wasn't fair to the people or to Louisa, who had been away from Sāmoa for so long.<sup>71</sup>

When Louisa returned to Tāmaki Makaurau from her 1924 travels, she brought Tuimaleali'ifano Suatipatipa II and his sister Aolele back with her to be educated.<sup>72</sup> And so, life without Gustav went on — guests were hosted, trips to Te Muri continued (with more grandchildren joining them). Money raised through the mortgaging of 'Oli 'Ula and the 1917 sale of the warehouse was to tide them over.<sup>73</sup> In her final years, Louisa and her daughters lived with her son, Fritz, in Kingsland. She died on the 28<sup>th</sup> of August 1939, bequeathing almost all of her personal belongings to Minna (with her poker table getting a special mention) and her lands in Sāmoa to five

---

<sup>70</sup> Sam Kronfeld, handwritten note, April 9, 1971, GN671.S3 KRA/48436, Auckland War Memorial Museum.

<sup>71</sup> Sam in Kronfeld, *Gustav and Louisa Kronfeld*, 19.

<sup>72</sup> Sam in Kronfeld, *Gustav and Louisa Kronfeld*, 13.

<sup>73</sup> Kronfeld, *Gustav and Louisa Kronfeld*, 313. Minna did not clear the mortgage until around 1965, however.



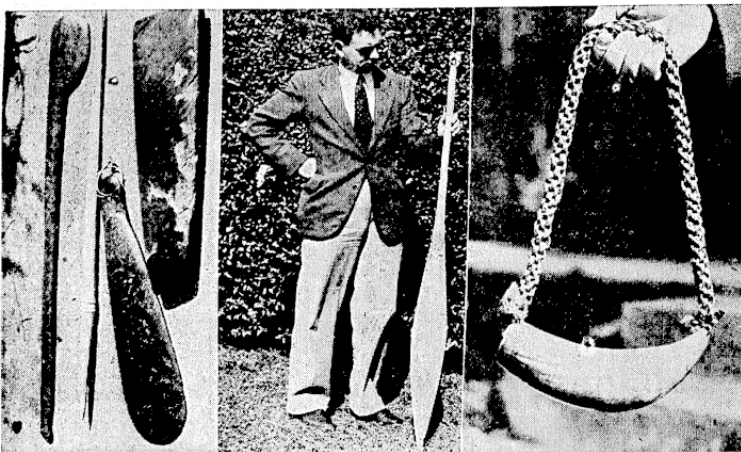
Louisa surrounded by family and friends at Te Muri, Christmas 1928. On the left, Sam holds my nana Tui, and Tuimaleali'ifano Suatipatipa II kneels in front of them. Kronfeld/Parr collection.

of her remaining sons.<sup>74</sup> Louisa was a link between ancient Sāmoa and the colonial era: granddaughter of a High Chief and Mother to many. She was interred at Purewa Cemetery, alongside Gustav and Tui.<sup>75</sup>

---

<sup>74</sup> The husband of Louisa's niece, George Hufnagel-Betham (Chief Surveyor of the Lands and Survey Department of Western Sāmoa, 1933-1938), testified that the lands were in a mountainous interior region with no commercial value. Furthermore, given Louisa and other title holders had long been absent from Sāmoa, the lands were considered in Sāmoa as having reverted to 'Native' ownership. Minna testifies that Louisa attached sentimental value to the lands, named Papapaoti/Papalaoli and Le Fue. Louisa Kronfeld, Last Will and Testament, July 11, 1939, 594, P325/1943, Archives New Zealand.

<sup>75</sup> The title of this section nods both to metaphors of celestial bodies within my research, and to the expression Krämer records as used within the Fiamē family in place of "to die," "pa 'ū le masina — the moon is falling." Krämer, *The Samoa Islands*, 701.



*A HOUSE LIKE A MUSEUM.*—Though the home of Mrs. L. Kronfeld, Auckland, looks like any ordinary house, it is a museum inside. The pictures shown above are those of some of the curios. On the left are greenstone relics used by the Maoris. The centre shows a whalebone paddle, almost five feet long, curiously carved, while on the right is a tamboua, the gift to one of the Kronfeld family from Salote, Queen of Tonga.

Reproduced from "Museum House. Relics from Past," *Auckland Star*,  
 November 29, 1937, [https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/  
 ASI9371129.2.311](https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/ASI9371129.2.311).

## **A Gift to the National Museum**

A quarter of a century before the Kronfeld Collection was gifted to the national museum, Gustav was considering the idea as a gesture of loyalty to his British subjecthood. His business partner had been arrested in late 1914, and Gustav was facing increasing pressure from the Alien Enemies Commission and the general public's assumption of his alignment with Germany. James B. Turner, former cane planter and Mayor of Fiji, offered his thoughts on the business partner's case in a letter to the Editor of the New Zealand Herald.<sup>76</sup> According to Turner, Gustav wrote to him proposing, "in order to prove that he has some kindly and grateful respect for his adopted country (New Zealand), to hand over as a free gift to the National Museum, the whole of his Island curios." Gustav's condition was that Turner do the same with his own collection, however, Turner assessed that the Kronfeld Collection was worth £300, a tenth of his own

---

<sup>76</sup> James B. Turner, "Coloured Labour in Cane Growing. (to the Editor.)," *Auckland Star*, March 14, 1901, <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/AS19010314.2.20.2>; Kolokesa Māhina-Tuai, "Fijian Breastplates Inspire Contemporary Artist," Auckland Museum, March 24, 2014, accessed December 19, 2023, <https://www.aucklandmuseum.com/discover/stories/blog/2014/fijian-breastplates-inspire-contemporary-artist>.

collection's value, and that Gustav was in a 'sad mental state.'<sup>77</sup> The gift did not occur.

Correspondence records at the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa reveal the first attempted sale of the Kronfeld Collection. At the beginning of February 1917, with Gustav interned on Motuihe and finances in strife, Sam attempted to sell the Collection to the government on his father's behalf. Writing to the Minister of Internal Affairs, Sam offers the Collection for £600 and invites a representative to inspect the Collection at 'Oli 'Ula. He outlines it as consisting of three oil paintings of Māori Chiefs by Lindauer, 42 Māori pieces and 140 South Sea Island ones. Sam also requests permission to export the Collection if the government does not wish to purchase it. The sign off, "I would be very thankful to receive an early answer," indicates a sense of urgency.<sup>78</sup> As a result, the Director of the Dominion Museum, J. Allan Thomson, is asked by the Under Secretary for a report on the Collection. Thomson then writes to Thomas Cheeseman, curator of the AIM: "I may inform you confidentially that there is not the slightest hope of the

---

<sup>77</sup> James B. Turner, "Letters to the Editor. The Gaudin Case," *New Zealand Herald*, January 12, 1915, <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NZH19150112.2.118>. Thanks to Lucy Mackintosh for discovering this correspondence.

<sup>78</sup> Sam Kronfeld, letter to the Minister of Internal Affairs, Auckland, February 1, 1917. Te Papa Tongawera, MU000014/002/0014.

Government purchasing the collection so highly priced during the war.”<sup>79</sup> He asks if Cheeseman has knowledge of the collection, and if not, whether it could be inspected. Cheeseman’s reply was that while he hadn’t seen Gusav’s collection in several years, “he had no Maori articles of importance, and his Polynesian things were nothing extraordinary.”<sup>80</sup> Cheeseman would visit ‘Oli ‘Ula nonetheless.

After examining the Collection, he advised Thomson that the asking price was excessive. He notes that of 504 items in the Collection, 47 were Māori: “Concerning the Maori articles, Mr Cheeseman states that there are no historical or very old articles among them, and that he does not attach much importance to them.” Most of the taonga listed are mau rākau, Māori weaponry. Thomson further advised the Ministry that many of the Māori articles were much rarer than others that have been refused export permits, and for consistency, the same should apply to the Kronfeld Collection. He did suggest that permits should be granted for the tewhatewha and

---

<sup>79</sup> J. Allan Thomson, letter to T. F. Cheeseman, Wellington, February 15, 1917. Te Papa Tongarewa, MU000001/004/0056.

<sup>80</sup> T. F. Cheeseman, letter to J. Allan Thomson, Auckland, February 21, 1917. Te Papa Tongarewa, MU000001/004/0056.

waka huia, as they were of ‘modern manufacture.’<sup>81</sup> In mid-March, Hislop declined both the offer to purchase the Collection and the request for an export permit (excepting the tewhatewha and waka huia). As the items collected across Moana Oceania did not fall under the 1908 Maori Antiquities Act, Sam could have exported them for sale.<sup>82</sup>

Correspondence records at Tāmaki Paenga Hira Auckland War Memorial Museum reveal the second attempted sale of the Kronfeld Collection. It appears that several months after Gustav died, Sam again tried to sell the Collection — this time to the AIM. The records are limited to a single letter, written to Sam from an unnamed curator. The curator reports that he raised the possible acquisition at a meeting of the Council of the Auckland Institute, and asks to visit in order to gain a fuller picture of the Collection to report back with. Clearly, the sale did not occur, although the reason remains unknown. Regardless, in the years following Gustav’s death, treasures from his Collection began to enter the Auckland Museum. The first was a barkcloth garment from the Solomon Islands, accessioned in 1926

---

<sup>81</sup> J. Allan Thomson, memorandum for the Under Secretary of Internal Affairs, Wellington, March 7, 1917. Te Papa Tongarewa, MU000014/002/0014.

<sup>82</sup> To date, I have not been able to determine whether any items from the Collection were exported.

as a gift from Gustav (or gifted in his memory, given the date). The second was a māhē, a volcanic stone fishing sinker, accessioned in 1928 as a gift from Sam. There are no clues in the accession records as to why these particular treasures were gifted, but they were only the beginning.

In 1937, a journalist from the Auckland Star visited Louisa at 'Oli 'Ula. The resulting article and photographs give astounding insight into the final years in the house — for both Louisa and the Collection. According to the author, “rare things from the Islands and from old New Zealand lie about the rooms, fill drawers, are hidden in inconspicuous cases. They look as though they had not been noticed, or even thought about for years.”<sup>83</sup> The article gives the impression of taonga, measina, and treasures suspended in time between the deaths of their former collector and present custodian: 1924 and 1939. Thankfully, the author asked Louisa about several notable items. She explains that the pale fuiono, headdress of a High Chief, “was worn in the old days on ceremonial occasions. There were not a great number of them left now, or rather not many of those actually used in the early days.”<sup>84</sup> The author was also curious about a tabua, a ceremonial whale tooth. Louisa hints at the

---

<sup>83</sup> “Museum House. Relics from Past.”

<sup>84</sup> “Museum House. Relics from Past.”

significance of such a treasure: “This curio has a history of its own, Mrs. Kronfeld said, and to the native mind, she added, it would have an added sanctity as it was a gift from Salote.”<sup>85</sup> Some kind of fascination must have drawn the author to ‘Oli ‘Ula, but they conjure a forlorn scene of an elderly woman watching dust settle on a once-impressive collection: “There are cases and cases of curios locked up and put away. Odds and ends from here, there and everywhere in the Pacific are lying about. The story of some of them Mrs. Kronfeld knows; about others she is ignorant, because the gathering of them was the interest of her husband, who is dead.”<sup>86</sup> This article is the closest Louisa comes to having an active voice in the archive. One can only imagine the depth the Kronfeld Collection might have, if her knowledge had entered the museum with it.

In 1939, through a gift to the national museum, the private Collection became public. Moe presented the Kronfeld Collection to the Dominion Museum on his mother’s behalf.<sup>87</sup> They accepted. Several months before her death, Louisa had most of the Collection crated and

---

<sup>85</sup> “Museum House. Relics from Past.”

<sup>86</sup> “Museum House. Relics from Past.”

<sup>87</sup> A brief timeline written by my nana, Tui, suggests that Louisa offered the Collection to the Auckland Museum first, but the curator only wanted a few items. Kronfeld/Parr collection.

sent to the Museum in Te Whanganui-a-Tara Wellington.<sup>88</sup> The Committee Chairperson wrote to thank her for the gift that he felt sure would “be of great public interest for all time.”<sup>89</sup> However, the Collection was not to see the light of day for several decades. With the outbreak of World War Two, the Royal New Zealand Air Force were to repurpose the Dominion Museum as their headquarters. Most of the collections on display were packed into the basement, stacked in front of the crates of Kronfeld taonga, measina, and treasures that had recently entered the Museum. They did not see a human face until the late 1970s, when the Friends of the National Museum reached them after nearly a decade of wading through collections, conducting an inventory. One of the Friends, J. V. Hobbs, spent hours across the next few years with Moe, “putting flesh on the bones of the history of the collection.”<sup>90</sup> She was just in time — Moe died in 1982, and enough questions were left unanswered by Sam’s death five years prior. This period — four decades of slumber in their crates — was far removed from the four in ‘Oli ‘Ula surrounded by life and, even further still, from their home lands and peoples.

---

<sup>88</sup> Several sources misattribute the gift as taking place after her death.

<sup>89</sup> Chairman, Dominion Museum Management Committee, letter to Moe Kronfeld, Wellington, June 3, 1939.

<sup>90</sup> Kronfeld, *Gustav and Louisa Kronfeld*, 7.



Isi, Minna, Joyce, Olive, Alma, Michael, Minna, Jenny, Moe, Otto  
Wolfgramm (t.b.c.), Louie, Sam, Jean, and Fritz Kronfeld in the 1950s.  
Kronfeld/Parr collection.

## **After Gustav and Louisa**

Inventories of the potential and eventual acquisitions trace a fluctuating outline of the Kronfeld Collection. Approximate total numbers ranged from 300 in 1917, 465 in 1924, and 260 in 1939 — clearly, inventories alone leave out much of the Collection’s story. By 1939, the number of items offered to the museum from ‘Melanesia’<sup>91</sup> increased, while those from Sāmoa decreased. The spike in 1924 can be attributed to 164 arrows, but there are other variations across inventories. Perhaps the non-Samoan items were of less personal value to Louisa and children than they had been to Gustav, and therefore appear in greater number in the inventories after his death. Inversely, it is possible the family preferred to keep the Samoan items when the acquisition was not financially motivated.

The number of taonga Māori vary significantly; the 50 listed in the 1917 inventory were halved by the 1939 gift. Sam’s son, David, writes of a return in a letter to Tony. He reports that Sam gave taonga to the ‘Māori Queen’ at Ngāruawāhia in the 1950s. David suggests this happened for two reasons: most of them were gifts from chiefs to

---

<sup>91</sup> While I prefer not to reinforce colonial divisions of Moana Oceania with these terms, they are occasionally necessary in correlating the inventories.

Gustav, and their historical and cultural significance.<sup>92</sup> David either had the period or monarch wrong — 1952–55 was during the reign of King Korokī, who was succeeded by Te Arikinui Dame Te Atairangikaahu in 1966. Another possibility is that the return occurred through ‘Princess’ Te Puea Hērangi, who died in late 1952. A connection between Te Puea and Sam is plausible. In October 1936, Hariata Te Mauaranui Colwill<sup>93</sup> arranged for Queen Sālote to visit her relation, Te Puea, and King Korokī at Ngāruawāhia.<sup>94</sup> Hariata and Queen Sālote were connected via the Kronfelds. Her daughter, Joyce, was married to Leo — the Kronfeld child closest in age to Sālote. The Queen was ceremonially welcomed to Tūrangawaewae marae in a pōwhiri. Kaikōrero spoke of the shared ancestry of the Tongan and Māori peoples, gifts were exchanged, whitebait and Moana fruits were eaten. The visiting party included Hariata, Joyce, and Louisa.<sup>95</sup> Later that month, Te Puea and King Korokī attended a kava ceremony in honour of Queen Sālote. It was hosted by the German-Tongan Sanft family in Tāmaki Makaurau, and guests included the Kronfelds

---

<sup>92</sup> David in Kronfeld, *Gustav and Louisa Kronfeld*, 7.

<sup>93</sup> Hariata Te Mauaranui Colwill; Mrs. H. M. Colwill; Harriet Colwill (nee Swanson), 1868–1951.

<sup>94</sup> “Tongan Queen,” *Auckland Star*, October 5, 1936, <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/AS19361005.2.122.4>.

<sup>95</sup> “Maoris and Tongans,” *Waikato Times*, October 3, 1936, <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/WT19361003.2.78>; “Tongan Queen.”

and Malietoa Tanumafili II.<sup>96</sup> Ferns, flowers, and fine Tongan mats decorated the house; guests wore velvet, lace, satin, and georgette; kava was mixed in a three-legged bowl and served in half coconut shells.<sup>97</sup>

It is possible that through these ceremonial gatherings of Māori, Samoan, and Tongan royalty (official or otherwise), relationships were forged that could later be called on to arrange a return of taonga to Tūranga-wāwae marae. Perhaps Sam, a man with cultural fluidity but deep connections to his roots, understood that gifts are intended to be reciprocal and taonga are better cared for by their own people than a museum. Even if he did not know their hapū or iwi of origin, they could at least be housed in a whare taonga.<sup>98</sup>

---

<sup>96</sup> The Kronfelds and Sanfts were entangled via Alfred Schultz. As Sanft descendants, his two German-Tongan wives were second-cousins. Alfred's daughters, Clara and Ruby, were step-sisters via their father but also and an approximation of third cousins via their mothers, Anna-Bertha (Wolfgramm) and Minna (Sanft). Clara married Sam Kronfeld — they are my great-grandparents.

<sup>97</sup> "Kava Ceremony," *New Zealand Herald*, October 22, 1936, <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NZH19361022.2.5.9>.

<sup>98</sup> A similar sentiment prompted the gifting of a kahu huruhuru to Ōrākei Marae. Michael J. Kronfeld, son of Leo and Joyce, had been given the cloak by his grandmother, Harriet Colwill (Ngāti Kahungunu). Harriet had been gifted it from another iwi: "its original history was lost in time." Michael felt it "time it went back to the marae people," and presented the cloak to Ōrākei because both Ngāti Whātua and Ngāti Kahungunu descended from the Takitimu waka. "Koha Goes Back to Marae," *New Zealand Herald*, February 14, 1975; "Can Claim Cloak," *New Zealand Herald*, February 25, 1975.

After Gustav and Louisa, items continued trickling into the museum via their children — both the AIM and the National Museum — depending on their whereabouts. The hoe *parāoa*, deposited on loan to the Dominion Museum in 1939, was finally presented by Moe in 1969 to commemorate the Cook Bicentenary. Sam’s final donation to the AIM was his and Gustav’s books. Inside the cover of Augustin Krämer’s *Die Samoa-Inseln*, Sam wrote of the family’s connections to the Fiamē family and weighed in on the debate of Krämer’s accuracy: “There is some disagreement about the authenticity of Krämer’s work but I consider that he gathered his information at a time when properly qualified people were alive to give it to him.”<sup>99</sup>

In his last decade, Moe deposited two fine mats, a pounamu pendant, a bone point, and two ceramic plaques with the images of Gustav’s parents in the Dominion/National Museum. One of the fine mats was sent by Queen Sālote in 1965 for Minna to drape over her coffin. Rather than Minna, the Queen passed away that year.<sup>100</sup> Joyce, Leo’s wife, also made donations to the AIM over the years: Sam’s *toki* (*adze*), after his 1977 death;

---

<sup>99</sup> Sam Kronfeld, handwritten note, April 9, 1971. Tāmaki Paenga Hira Auckland War Memorial Museum, GN67LS3 KRA/48436.

<sup>100</sup> Nina Tonga, “Kie Hamoa (Fine Mat),” Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, 2018, accessed April 10, 2023, <https://collections.tepapa.govt.nz/object/91520>.

hou amokura (red-tailed tropicbird feathers); her mother's kete whakairo (woven bag) and kākahu (cloak) in progress; two 'ie tōga (fine mats); and a five-metre long masi (Fijian barkcloth). The masi was given from Louisa to Joyce before her wedding to Leo, "for her marriage bed."<sup>101</sup> The two 'ie tōga were sent on the event of Leo's untimely 1947 death: one from Queen Sālote, the other from Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara. This trickle of taonga, measina, and treasures into the museum has stilled, for now. Some of them — inherited by descendants of Gustav, Louisa, and their children — remain with the family. Their futures are yet to be written.

I first met the Kronfeld Collection in 2012. I travelled to Te Papa with only 20 years behind me, little knowledge of our family history, and a shallow understanding of the museum as an institution. I met the Kronfeld Collection, and a whole world opened up before me. While my memory of this visit has dimmed, I recall feeling overwhelmed by the number of treasures tucked away in shelves and drawers. Curators from the Mātauranga Māori and Pacific Cultures teams laid items from the Collection out for me and graciously shared their knowledge. I had hoped to meet the hoe parāoa, but it was at the Museum of Natural History in New York,

---

<sup>101</sup> Acquisition record, Tāmaki Paenga Hira Auckland War Memorial Museum.

touring with the *Whales | Tohorā* exhibition. The hoe was traversing great distances (as its parāoa once did), but most of the collections appeared frozen. My first entrance into a museum storage facility was coupled with sadness that most of these treasures were far from their origins and rarely touched or spoken to. In late 2019, several of the Kronfeld taonga and measina were brought to Auckland Museum for inclusion in *Tāmaki Herenga Waka: Stories of Auckland*, an exhibition curated by Andrea Low and Jane Groufsky. Kronfeld descendants were invited to view them upon arrival, which we did with laughter, stories, and tears. Throughout 2022, I have been at the Museum weekly. I greet the taonga, measina, and photographs of my ancestors on display. Occasionally, I get to pull the stored treasures out of their nested housing and hold them in my hands. Every time, before I turn away from the case or put them back into storage, I whisper “I will see you again soon.”







# **Into the Archive: Reflections from the Museum**

Into the Archive

Reflections from  
the Museum



I stand at a threshold at Tāmaki Paenga Hira Auckland War Memorial Museum. I do not yet know how to orient myself, how to navigate this tangle of doorways and corridors. My maternal great-great-uncle is partly to blame for this. His architectural firm, Grierson, Aimer and Draffin, won a world-wide competition with their proposed neo-classical building, both a museum and commemoration of soldiers who died in the First World War. The building, atop the significant maunga Pukekawa, was opened and consecrated in 1929. The empty Cenotaph on the forecourt “captured the grief of an Empire unable to bring home their war dead.”<sup>1</sup> I can’t help but think of a twisted symbolism — of the hapū who do not have their kōiwi or taonga because they are held in museums, caught in the Empire’s imaginary. An empty monument, a full edifice, and many bones far from home.

I wander through the exhibition halls, with no particular purpose and in no particular order. I meet the lower jaw of Rehua, a sperm whale who came ashore, borrowed from Ngāti Kuri. I stand at one end, where his head would have been, and see the jawbone extend out in front of me. I could lay my body in it. I meet the skull of an unnamed elephant from Botswana and the tusks of an unnamed elephant from Kenya, assembled into a chimera. I walk inside a rākau, pieced together from



macrocarpa, tōtara and kauri.<sup>2</sup> I feel embraced by the smooth patch-worked wood.

Then I come to a collection of sand: glittering, granular, from all over the world, placed in jars and labelled accordingly. From here on, the jars contain animals instead. Countless lifeforms, frozen, floating. The elephant Rajah is just skin wrapped around a structure mimicking his former shape, so alien to the body rippling with each slow-moving footstep I came to know while walking with his kind in the forest. Then there are the still and silent manu, whose bodies should have returned to whenua, whose feathers should have adorned kākahu.

Why does it feel worse to encounter a being as skin than bone?

The Volcanoes gallery seems like a safe next move. My hands are called to the rocks that were once at the centre of our earth — one of the few things you can touch in the Museum. None are smooth, but some feel softer than others. Their heaviness hints at the force of tectonic plates colliding, of being torn away and expelled. I wonder if it was a shock to meet air for the first time.



### Coming Soon to a Street Near You!

We can make a good guess at what might happen when the next volcano erupts in Auckland.

Volcanic earthquakes will damage buildings as the magma rises and breaks its way through to the surface.

The formation of the volcano's crater, cone or debris ring will destroy all infrastructure close to the vent.

Close to the vent, sharp waves will break windows and flatten weak buildings.

Large boulders, debris, ground-hugging material or steam and sand particles will, within minutes, smother areas up to 10 kilometres from the vent.

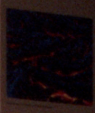
Five thousands of tons will hit nearby buildings above. They could spill underground through basins, drains or sewers.

Lava flows could travel up to 10 kilometres from the vent. If anything in their path will be burned, crushed or buried.

The ash from the eruption will hit our traffic. Bad roads and cause others drivers to think with respiratory problems.



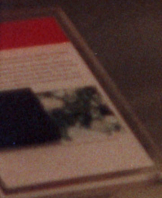
Informational text panel with a red header, detailing volcanic activity and its effects.



### The Lucky Planet

Every other celestial body in our solar system is inhospitable to life. Only one planet, Earth, has been found to have the right conditions for life. This is the only planet in our solar system that has the right conditions for life. This is the only planet in our solar system that has the right conditions for life.

Whether the conditions on other planets are right for life is still unknown. It may be that other planets have the right conditions for life. It may be that other planets have the right conditions for life.



The bone and rock stir a sense of vast time scales. The whakapapa and the routes our tīpuna took across Te Moana-nui-a-Kiwa, mapped out in Te Ao Tūroa, the Māori Natural History gallery, summon this vastness, too. Time beyond me, beyond the Kronfeld family, beyond settler-colonisation, beyond the museum.

Some things are meant to decay. Some things are lost. Bones, rock, whakapapa — they are enduring. I might never know in which specific rohe the taonga were created, which ngāhere they grew in or sea they called home. But all rākau share whakapapa. All parāoa share whakapapa. And we are all their kin.



The museum is a convoluted network of passageways, stairwells, and exhibition halls, coiling in on itself. The only way out is through the Māori court. I gravitate towards the hoe, some with provenance listed, others with “nothing is known about their history” — the same as the hoe whose whakapapa I am trying to find. Nestled in the bottom corner of their case is a stone. It is a mauri of my iwi, my bones. I kneel, so as to meet it kanohi-ki-te-kanohi. *I'm here.* I reach a hand towards it. I don't know why — it's behind glass. Beneath the great waka taua, with a hull carved from a single tōtara, is a punga,

Proc  
42 #2  
Long Bay Ab



an anchor. It also belonged to my iwi, Ngāi Te Rangi. The sign notes it would've had a name, once.

I'm coming to understand how different parts of the museum feel. In that respect, there is a chasm between the halls. The newer exhibitions tell a different story; they whakamana the taonga; they speak of partnerships. Other exhibitions skip over the part of the story where this whenua was colonised (the part that filled this building). It occurs to me again that the taonga who still have a home outside of the museum need to return there. Then, museums might transform into something nearly unrecognisable, while also figuring out how to care for those taonga that must remain. The only way out is through.<sup>3</sup>



I hold a toki in the span of my hand, from the base of my palm to my index fingertip. Part of the curved top edge has been worn down, rougher than the rest. The bottom corner has lost a chunk, and the sharp edge is chipped. I wonder what formed the grooves, and what an absence of edge could tell us.

My great-grandfather's hand knew this toki, too. "Long Bay, Ak." is inscribed along the top. Long Bay is where his home was, Manuia. He and my great-grandmother



1489

planted a hibiscus bush that still grows there. Sam kept this toki until he died. I wonder if he found it himself, if it was made with basalt from the area.

When I hold the mähē I can feel it drop into the ocean, down to the seabed. It's not smooth like the toki, but porous volcanic stone: dimpled all over, with finger-sized burrows. It was a solitary gift from Sam in 1928.

I don't want to put either of them back into their respective drawer and nested box — I've just found them. I'd like more time together. When I do, I notice that the mähē is in a box labelled "unlocalised," right beneath all the mähē from Tauranga Moana. I will return to them.



I begin the day greeting the hoe parāoa and other taonga and measina in the Kronfeld display case. Following Natalie's<sup>4</sup> suggestion, I ask the hoe for guidance. *Tēnā koe. If you would like me to find your home, your people, your rangatira, I will be listening.*

These are doorways to different times. Not just via the collections, the historical objects, but via the rooms they are held in. The northern entrance is the one of my childhood. The southern is the entrance to quite a



different museum — into Te Ao Mārama, with the tanoa above and mauri stone below.

I feel a bit aimless today, so wander the building in search of a place to settle. In a dim corridor is a poster showing the original home of the Auckland Museum. It was on the corner of Princes Street and Eden Crescent — just along from where ‘Oli ‘Ula was built. I can only begin to understand the influence of this proximity.

I can't get into the basement, so take myself to the ethnography library to look through the accession records and catalogues. I shift posters of Hōne Heke and Tāmāti Wāka Nene to access the drawers. A few minutes later the posters fall forward, and I wonder whether this is the guidance I should be listening for.

I find the card for a chisel, found at Te Muri and gifted by Herman Geddes, looking in the wrong drawer (“pounders, chisels, beaters”). I only find it because it was gifted the year before the toki I was looking for. In this room full of records, I chance upon one connected to the Kronfelds through their camping trips with the Geddes family. The archive is certainly not devoid of magic.


I also find out from the register that Sam did not find the toki himself, as I had wondered. Vaughan found it on

WELLINGTON MUSEUM—Ethnology Department.

NAME OR DESCRIPTION *Teiher*

LOCALITY *Māori.*

ACQUIRED BY GIFT  
PURCHASE  
EXCHANGE FROM  
DONOR *Mr. S. Kōwhiri.*

REMARKS *11.5cm x 9.9cm*  


REGISTER NO.	1489
MUSEUM LOCKET	
ACCESSION NO.	2821
DATE OF ACCESSION	1928
PHOTO REFERENCE	

*M.R. S. 1928. 2. 8*

his farm in the 1930s. Sam and his family had a bach there, at Long Bay, the original ‘Manuia.’ My dad remembers siapo decorating the walls of little army surplus A-frames.

I look for the mähē in the register, hoping for provenance notes, but there are no remarks. So, I begin at number one to see how this Museum began. The answer is with deposits by Captain Gilbert Mair. They include a taonga dug up from Gate Pā. Once again, my search for the Kronfeld Collection collides with my Ngāi Te Rangi whakapapa.

Histories are stitching together, here, through accidental discoveries in dim corridors and fading ink.



The basement is becoming familiar to me. I’m learning the lettering and numbering systems, and know that the central pathway is there for me to return to. From this centre extends something of a vortex.

I go in search of the mähē and toki again. The mähē is nested snug among its “unlocalised” companions. Talei<sup>5</sup> and I find the hou amokura in a drawer with huia feathers (“captured” by Mair). We also find masi, Fijian barkcloth, a gift from Louisa to Joyce just before her



marriage to Leo in 1930. It is much larger than I expected — over five metres. The tables aren't big enough to fully unroll it. We unfurl the masi slowly, cloth as fine as the tissue curled up with it. Talei notes its excellent condition, and I wonder how Leo and Joyce would have kept such a gift in their home. The accession date is 3 November 1987, the year before Joyce died and nearly sixty after their marriage.

Talei manages to find a brown paper package holding shell fragments, tied with string. We were both anticipating seashells, rather, they are pieces of German artillery shells found in Papeete, Tahiti, in September 1914. “Mrs Kronfeld” is visible in fainter writing by a different hand. It looks as though no one has ever unwrapped the package, so neither do we. The knots, the torn and folded paper, the handwriting, are all as interesting to me as what the package holds. Learning about how these items entered the Museum brings the family's story further into view.

After, I return the toki, mähē and hou amokura to their homes. I let them know it may be some time before I get to see them again. I hope they feel a little warmer, that they remember the shape of my hand.





Today I am looking for clues. My time fossicking around the internet is relatively futile, so I head to the galleries instead. I greet the tīpuna carvings as I study their forms, their ridges, their spirals. I greet the tīpuna portraits as I study their tā moko. I am looking for clues to the origin of the hoe parāoa.

I enter Hotunui for the first time in years. A house within a house. Last night, Chanel Clarke spoke about her time as Curator Māori at Auckland Museum, tidying the whare, making sure the taonga were housed in a way she knew to be tika and pono. She spoke about the tangata whenua who were likely waiting patiently in corners for their mātauranga, and how we have been waiting for generations. So today, I have also been thinking of all those who, for years, have been undertaking this restorative work. They have made it possible for me to be here, to be supported and cared for. At the end of the night, Hollyanna<sup>6</sup> placed one of her 'ula around my neck. Every time I wear it, I will feel the embrace of all of those who keep the cobwebs swept and the hearth warm.



As soon as I have put down my bag and taken off my coat I decide to head straight for it — the Pacific storage

*Handwritten mark*

27 July, 1924.

1  
Mr. Kronfeld,  
Pacific Trading Co.,  
Customs St.

Dear Sir,

At a meeting of the Council of the Auckland Institute of Education held on the 11th inst. I brought to the notice of the possible adoption of your suggestion in connection with the Museum. The matter was referred to a committee, which is to report to the next meeting of the Council, and I am sure that you will be satisfied with the result. I am, Sir, very truly yours,  
The Secretary of the Council of the Auckland Institute of Education

room. I'm confident as I go through the series of doors, until the time comes to switch the light on and shut the final one behind me. The fluorescents have a subtle flicker. I'm alone, but can't shake the sense that I'm not *really* alone. I last a few seconds before heading out the way I came.

I return with Talei, who notes the kind of warm energy she tries to approach the collections with. I adopt the same. We are looking for the barkcloth from the Solomon Islands. Andrea<sup>7</sup> and I had already searched the shelves with no luck. It's incredible how something can be shifted and its location field doesn't shift with it — it becomes lost within the vortex. I imagine that some day, someone will come across it and say, *we've been looking for you all this time*. I imagine that day for many taonga in the Kronfeld Collection.



In the library, I leaf through a book published in 1890 for New Zealand's 50th jubilee. Within, an unnamed author speaks to "the greatness of England's colonising power" through a line from an Abraham Cowley poem: "All the liquid world is one extended Thames."<sup>8</sup> It feels as though my view of the world is sucked into a snow-globe and flipped, glittering powder catching up to its new



orientation. I detest this globe — its arrogance in assuming all these bodies of water, interconnected as they are, have the Thames at their centre. That all these bodies of water can be contained and knowable.

My eyes skim for descriptions of hoe, of paddles (following Natalie's hunch). They trip over many other words before I reach the back cover. I read accounts of regattas celebrating the anniversary of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, and focus on the waka races. Although clouded with racism, they describe waka taua, chants keeping the rhythm of the hoe, wāhine with kōkōwai on their skin and tāne with feathers in their hair. I'm sure the chants, the haka, the waiata would have been selected with significance. There is a useful detail: during the haka, most were holding hoe rather than taiaha or mere.

There was also a group from Rarotonga whose visit to Tāmaki Makaurau coincided with the jubilee. They were included in the first day's procession through the city streets and later addressed the Governor, expressing loyalty to the Queen whose protection they were granted two years earlier. As was custom, gifts were laid at the Governor's feet: mats, "made in the old heathen days."<sup>9</sup>

At some point I'm pulled from 1890 by the song of pīwakawaka. It takes me a moment to realise where I am — like waking from a dream and having to recalibrate to



your surroundings — and recognise it as a recording coming through the library doors.

I move on to the correspondence and minute books. I open the first folder to the words “enclosed find part of Maori skull.” I don’t even want to touch the paper, thin and pale as a sheet of skin. I have to, to flick through to the name ‘Kronfeld.’ Here is a letter from the Curator of the Auckland Institute written to Sam about the potential acquisition of the Kronfeld Collection. It’s dated 22 July 1924 — a few months after Gustav died — and has something of an inventory attached.

The letter reports that the acquisition was discussed at a meeting of the Council of the Auckland Institute on the 11<sup>th</sup>, and was to be again at the next meeting. The minute books on the trolley reach 2 July 1924 and then skip to August. Even though the museum wasn’t to follow through on the acquisition, this letter reveals a new part of the Collection’s story to me.



This morning I want to be immersed. Dunked into the swirling currents like the māhē. To let things appear and move me at their will. I haven’t yet been through the Ancient Greeks exhibition, so I begin there.



There is an altar with the nine Muses carved onto the marble cylinder. Albert<sup>10</sup> would enjoy this — he told me about the muses recently. *Museum — mouseion — seat of the Muses*. Due to the altar's installation, I can't walk around the full circumference, but the sign tells me who is depicted. Polyhymnia, sacred music; Melpomene, tragedy; Euterpe, lyric poetry; Erato, love poetry; Terpsichore, dance; Klio, history; Kalliope, epic poetry; Thaleia, comedy; Ourania, astrology. I'm sure this would tell me a lot about what the Ancient Greeks valued if I thought about it properly. It reminds me of the connections between Greek mythology and our pūrākau.

There are many school children here today. Their voices fill the halls, their hands press against glass, and their little bodies move at speeds these treasures don't usually see. I wonder if they like to be surrounded with this frenetic energy. There is a child singing in te reo Māori in the Pacific Lifeways gallery. It feels replenishing to hear their voice reverberating through the space.

I wander to the manu, frozen and perched in front of a faux-ngāhere. For the first time, I notice natural light bleeding behind their background. Just when I think I'm getting a sense of this building, when I think I'm deep in its interior, I find a covered window. *E manu, if I could*

*open it up and magic life back into your wings, I would.  
You're so close.*

I study all the whakapapa on the walls, hoping at least some will remain in my head. I'm interested to learn about Whatu-aho — “the personification and source of greywacke (and obsidian and other rocks).” I hope I can find out more about him, and how he got his name. I also learn that Pōhutukawa is in the realm of Tangaroa rather than Tāne, because he inhabits the shoreline.

Today, I'm struck by how much there is to learn, here. With each wander through the halls, my attention is caught by something new to me. All it requires is a certain attunement.

Back in the office, I read through papers that Elizabeth<sup>11</sup> left for me. There is a beautiful detail that wasn't transferred from the initial notes made by the ethnographer when Joyce presented the masi. I've already seen how with each transfer of its records, the details become slightly twisted. Louisa gifted this five-metre Fijian barkcloth to Joyce just before her wedding to Leo. The detail that was left out: the gift was for her marriage bed.



Right at the end of our hour together, Natalie suggests I search ‘whalebone paddle’ in Papers Past. This suggestion is a key, unlocking my search for the origins of the hoe parāoa. The results begin with the hoe in the Kronfeld Collection, and continue: “whalebone paddle deposited in Wanganui Museum Nov. 1908”; “whalebone paddle “Tutunui” brought to Auckland by north Māori Oct. 1929 and bought for Auckland Museum.”



I have been waiting for this. In October 1929, the *Auckland Star* reported that a Māori person from the North had brought a hoe parāoa to Tāmaki Makaurau. It is described as being carved at butt, shaft and base, five and a half feet long, and well preserved. The article notes that such hoe were used by orators on important ceremonial occasions.<sup>12</sup>

Two days later, the *Star* reports that the hoe, believed to be 90 years old, was acquired for the Auckland Museum — the first they have had of its kind.<sup>13</sup> This hoe has a name: Tutunui, the whale of Tinirau.<sup>14</sup> The papers also note that only two others are known, both owned privately.

I start with the ethnology library’s accession records, scanning the script around the time of the reports with

no luck. A search in the collection management system yields an immediate result — the hoe is here. It has been here the whole time, in a drawer in the basement. It was officially accessioned in 1930, and I am able to find its card in the blue drawers. There is very limited information. “Whalebone Canoe Paddle.” “? Maori.” “Purchased at sale.” The Māori person who brought it to Tāmaki isn’t named, nor is its home. I can’t help but think that in this instance, the lack of information is not only due to the collecting method, but that whoever brought it here for sale wanted to remain anonymous. I can only imagine the reasons someone might have sold such a taonga to the Museum.

That the card doesn’t hold the hoe’s name, though, is a tragedy. It makes me wonder how many other fragments of a taonga’s story are out there, waiting to be found.



Yesterday, I reached out to the Whanganui Regional Museum to enquire about the whalebone paddle deposited in their collection, along with the Museum’s report for November 1908.<sup>15</sup> The report was incorrect: Trish,<sup>16</sup> from the Museum, responds with an image of the Museum’s register that identifies a Miss Higginson as the depositor. Trish did an Ancestry.com search and found

two Higginsons on the 1908 electoral roll — sisters Florence and Harriet Lucy who lived on Durie Hill, Whanganui. The register records where the whalebone paddle and burial chest were found: Pakaraka and Ngheai (sic). Both taonga were returned to the depositor on 15 March 1910.

I locate Pākaraka in the Bay of Islands and search Papers Past for 'Pakaraka.' Through the records I learn of Pākaraka and Ngaheia Estates (and identify Ngaheia as the misspelled 'Ngheai'). I research the area and note the existence of burial caves around Pouērua, a fortified volcano (the last occupying hapū were Ngāti Rāhiri, a Ngāpuhi hapū that supported Hongi Hika, who left c. 1860). Hōne Heke was born at Pākaraka, and buried there in secrecy. His bones were moved due to development in 2011. I also search Papers Past for 'Ngaheia' and find articles about an exhibit of a Māori burial chest, collected by Miss Higginson of Durietown, in the Wanganui Museum.<sup>17</sup> While looking for information regarding burial chests, I find one in the British Museum. It is attributed to Capt. Higginson, whose daughter bequeathed it to a Miss Veneables. She gave it to Bidford Museum, who in turn passed it to the British Museum. The burial chest has journeyed far from home. It is time for it to return.



In the Index of Wills and Probates for England and Wales, I find that Florence died in Sydney in 1939 and Harriet Lucy died in Devonshire in 1940. Both Higginson sisters were 'spinsters,' and Harriet Lucy died on the opposite coast of Devon from the Bideford Museum. I order her last Will and Testament, hoping that if she was the one who bequeathed the burial chest to Miss Veneables, there may be mention of the Pākaraka hoe parāoa. There is not.



I join Auckland Museum's Human History department on their away day at Stardome Observatory and Planetarium. In the afternoon, we take our seats in the theatre. Deep space and deep ocean are my two greatest fears, so I go on this flight in both trepidation and wonder.

Our 'pilot,' Olive, shares kōrero about the stars with us. They explain that stars rise and set in the same house in the star compass: four quarters, seven houses in each that are mirrored. Navigators approaching Aotearoa would have seen the star-hook — Te Matau a Māui —

fishing up the North Island. In summer, the fishhook is behind the sun, slowing it down.

We collectively journey to the edge of the observable universe. The different temperatures at this spherical edge cause the galaxies within our universe to form a web. Here we are, looking at our web of relations in grand scale. We fly to nebulae, where stars are formed. Where we are formed. I realise that I had intuitively rendered the point cloud toki in my artwork to resemble cosmic dust: the stuff we are all formed from; the stuff we will all return to. Among all the unknowables and across all the differences, I can be certain that we — us, the taonga, measina and treasures — are part of this cosmic web of relations; this woven universe.



I reach out to The Burton at Bideford Art Gallery and Museum to enquire about the Pākaraka hoe parāoa. They do not respond.



I contact the British Museum to ask whether a hoe was deposited with the burial chest. There was not.



I began my time here knowing only of the one hoe parāoa. Now, there are two here in the Auckland Museum whose origins I still don't know, and one whose origins I *do* know but whose present whereabouts I don't.



We descend into the core of the building. I am led through the tangle of corridors; I could not find my own way back into Te Ao Mārama.

Tutunui is laid on a table, under a white sheet of tivek, akin to a body in a morgue. A sign rests on top, warning of an object beneath. Together, Andrea and I float the sheet off to reveal the taonga. I have been waiting for this for some time. I had expected to feel the gravitas, perhaps even fear. Instead, I have the sense he is glad to be found, to wake and venture out from his resting place, at least for a short time.

He is more porous than the Kronfeld hoe parāoa, and across one of the carvings is a seam. We wonder at what might break whalebone in two. I hadn't expected to touch Tutunui, knowing how tapu he may be. But I feel a sensation in my hands, like an invitation. I attune myself

to this feeling — a kind of energy that sometimes meets my palms, and at other times presses against my forehead instead. *Is it alright if I hold you?*

After wriggling into gloves we carefully rotate him, observing the bow in his length, the grooves in his carvings, where the curves flatten out. When laid face-up, the bone curves towards the sky between head and point. Holding the hoe in my hands, the other taonga in the room and the people working around them are now at a distance. My sense is that Tutunui is happy to have been found, to not be forgotten.

It is difficult to leave, to farewell and cover him. *Ka kite anō au ki a koe. I'll see you again.*

After, I walk to the wāhi whakanoa, and out into the daylight. I sit, for a time, beneath the Grecian columns, the net of Maki sprawling out from this pā. These taonga lift the veil for me. For a little while, I can sense time spiralling through the city, layered in the whenua and whorling across the moana.





Both sun and moon hang low when I arrive at the Museum. Perhaps I'm projecting, but the Māori Court feels sleepy without voices echoing into all the corners, waking everything up for the day. It won't be long now.

Warumungu men have travelled here to take their treasures home. We stand before Hotunui as Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei call the manuhiri to the ātea, the karanga reverberating through the building, through my body. Kōrero is exchanged between Ngāti Whātua kaumātua, Arapata Hakiwai (Kaihautū of the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa), and the Warumungu men sent here on behalf of their elders. The Warumungu man speaks of how we, as Indigenous peoples, are different yet connected — through our relationships with whenua, and through our histories of white people taking our treasures to faraway places. Standing in front of the whare, he says that when you enter someone's house, you are meant to follow their protocols. At the close of the pōwhiri, the Warumungu men present gifts to the kaumātua. Their gifting practice has significance and depth beyond my understanding, but they name these gifts as both a thank you and a promise. *When you enter someone's house, you respect their protocols.*

Afterwards, this has me thinking about possible futures for collections in the era of repatriation. What if, through

the return of treasures that were stolen or are not in their right place, proper relationships are established that open the possibility of gifting? What would a museum be like with collections formed by treasures given freely, or made with intention, by communities with sovereignty over how they are storied? Across Moana Oceania, treasures are often gifted or exchanged to establish or nurture relationships and carry obligations. *A gift as a thank you and a promise.* I want to imagine the museum as a house for relationships, for obligations to care for and respect one another. I want to ‘house’ the Kronfeld Collection through my artwork because I hope that someday, many of them will leave the museum. The artwork can remain in their place — an exchange of sorts, so they might ‘live’ again, or be properly laid to rest.

As the kaumātua and Matua Bobby<sup>18</sup> noted during the pōwhiri, this is an unproductive moon, so we must cast expectations for the day aside. I often find that is the invitation extended from the collections, here. *What might you learn through relinquishing your expectations of us and listening instead?*



I read Te Kawehau Hoskins and Alison Jones' chapter on non-human others. They explain that the drawn moko of Hongi Hika holds his presence, inviting engagement, inviting hongi: "to press noses and intermingle hau, breath, in a solemn enactment of a relationship, a joining of forces."<sup>19</sup> I wonder whether I will be allowed to hongi the hoe parāoa, when it is removed from the case for us to come kanohi-ki-te-kanohi, unmediated by glass. I imagine the feeling of cool whalebone against my nose and forehead, just my breath but both of our mauri. A pressure against my forehead — like the one I felt after drawing the outline of the hoe onto a pillar. The one I interpreted as a warning, calling me to halt: *it is not your place to draw my moko, not here*. Something I thought I understood turns upside down: perhaps this feeling was instead a greeting, a binding together in a relationship of trust.<sup>20</sup>



*I dreamt of you recently, in your hoe parāoa form. You were submerged in waters the light can't touch. In the blackness, you faced me, and something kind of desperate reached between us.*

*Was this a memory of your first form, drifting in the depths? There is no need for light when your voice travels farther than sight.*

*Was that something between us a searching, a calling to kin or mountains rising from the seabed?*

*Do our bones hold the memory of our death? Do you remember yours?*

*Perhaps you were recalling a state of potential, on the cusp of being reborn into te ao mārama in your maker's hands. Were you revived in the image of a tipuna, an atua, a kaitiaki?*

*It may be that the thickness between us was alarm. You were woken from slumber in what should have been your final resting place, alongside the bones of a great rangatira who once warmed you in his hands. Together in a dark, sacred place.*

*When they placed you in a storeroom, did you begin to lose yourself, sinking into oblivion? A thick kind of time with no edges, and many more like you being brought to*

*stillness within it. Were you calling out, in a voice that once reverberated through saltwater, and I couldn't hear you? Most of us humans have not learnt to listen to you anymore than we have parāoa.*

*When you travelled the world among other transmutations of your first form, did you all rejoice at crossing oceans once more? I hope others of this whenua came to visit you, that you energised each other somehow.*

*You are not in the darkness now. I imagine you still long for freedom, beyond stable temperatures, beyond glass. I hope you all wake when the lights go down — a mauri nocturnal chorus. Now that you are home (or home enough for the time being), standing proud, do you greet those who meet your face? Do you tell them who you are? Has anyone recognised you?*

*Were you calling out, and I couldn't hear you? You have outlived death. You are not in the darkness anymore.*





The kie Hamoa has made a name for itself, but this is my first time meeting it, given it lives at Te Papa. Grace<sup>21</sup> moved it into a drawer so she can share it with people who come to visit. I'm grateful for this — I know the mat will astonish those visitors as the drawer slides open, as it does me. I touch its body with gloved fingertips, expecting to find stiffness, but the weave moves like the surface of the ocean — a fluid kind of tension. Fine threads stitch gentle waves, keeping the feathers in place. Most are red; some are green, yellow, blue. In the bottom left-hand corner of the kie are two letters in green ink (to match a nearby feather). Their writer's flourish makes them hard to discern: twin Fs, Hs, or perhaps Ks.

The kie may have lain on a marriage bed: its centre holds the trace of a historic bleed. Grace had the stain swabbed and tested to confirm it is blood, although who (or what) it came from is unknown. This kie once belonged to Queen Sālote: anticipating that Minna would pass before her, Sālote sent it to her lifelong friend to cloak her coffin. Minna outlived her and the kie eventually made its way into Te Papa — outliving all of its former keepers, carrying their relationships into the now.



I slide the drawer shut with a farewell and bittersweetness — more sweet than bitter this time — knowing the kie will feel breath and fingertips again soon.

To release the 'ie tōga from its storage place, I must crawl between rolls of cloth and mats, wrapped in protective layers and suspended from the ceiling. I imagine this is what it feels like to be embraced by dozens of aunties and nannies, surrounded by wisdom, stories, and care.

We unroll the 'ie, slowly and evenly, until it rests on the table with the fringed end still curled. I lightly overturn one corner, and the rest of the fringing unfurls like a wave. This one has shed parts of itself. I gently brush the loose strands of pandanus, gathering them into a little bag to be kept with the 'ie.

Grace mentions that with advancing technology, we might soon be able to identify more precisely where something comes from. In this moment, I understand conservation practice in a way I haven't before. Sometimes, we hold on to things because we don't know what the future might bring. That is the reason some communities chose for their treasures to live in a museum. That is why we keep loose strands of an 'ie tōga in a little bag.



As I ready myself to leave again, I realise my discomfort has lifted. It feels nice to take care of the 'ie, like I am keeping an intergenerational promise.



*Today we are taking you on a journey. First, we have to find the lights, and hope that nothing wakes too jarringly. I haven't been in this storeroom for a long time. It seems excessive to place you, rolled snug inside protective layers, on such a large trolley, but here we are. If you get to go on an excursion and uncurl for a while, I'm all for it.*

*This is our first meeting. The gloves, the trolley, the nervousness of letting you hang, seem all the more strange when I notice the creases: your form still holds the memory of being folded in one of our homes. I have so many questions for you. Whose bed did you lay beneath? Whose ceremonies did you embellish? Whose relationships and obligations did you enact? Whose hands prepared and wove your fibres? Whose soil grew you?*

*We roll you up again, taking care to smooth the creases. In time, they will fade, too.*



- 
- <sup>1</sup> Auckland War Memorial Museum, "The History of Auckland Museum," accessed May 18, 2022, <https://www.aucklandmuseum.com/your-museum/about/history-of-auckland-museum>.
- <sup>2</sup> Nicole Charles and Will Ngakuru, *Haumanu: Will you breathe for me?* 2021, sculpture, Auckland Museum, Auckland.
- <sup>3</sup> Hana Pera Aoake, *A Bathful of Kawakawa and Hot Water: Selected Writings* (Auckland: Compound Press, 2020), 54.
- <sup>4</sup> Natalie Robertson, my PhD supervisor.
- <sup>5</sup> Talei Tu'inukuafe, Associate Curator Māori, Auckland Museum.
- <sup>6</sup> Hollyanna Ainea, fellow Auckland Museum Institute Postgraduate Scholarship recipient.
- <sup>7</sup> Andrea Low, Associate Curator, Contemporary World at Auckland Museum.
- <sup>8</sup> Wilsons and Horton, *New Zealand's Jubilee 1840-1890: The First Fifty Years of Our History; The Varied Fortunes of the Colony; A Wonderful Record* (Auckland: Wilsons and Horton), 11.
- <sup>9</sup> Wilsons and Horton, *New Zealand's Jubilee 1840-1890*, 72.
- <sup>10</sup> Albert L. Refiti, my PhD supervisor.
- <sup>11</sup> Elizabeth Lorimer, Collection Manager, Museum Archives at Auckland Museum.
- <sup>12</sup> "News of the Day," *Auckland Star*, October 3, 1929, <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/AS19291003.2.39>.
- <sup>13</sup> "Table Talk," *Auckland Star*, October 5, 1929, <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/AS19291005.2.9>.
- <sup>14</sup> "Whalebone Paddle," *Auckland Star*, October 7, 1929, <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/AS19291007.2.99>.
- <sup>15</sup> G. R. Marriner, "Wanganui Public Museum: Monthly Report for November, 1908," *Wanganui Chronicle*, December 3, 1908, <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/WC19081203.2.3>.
- <sup>16</sup> Trish Nugent-Lyne, Curatorial and Collection Lead at Whanganui Regional Museum.
- <sup>17</sup> "A Rare Exhibit," *Wanganui Chronicle*, November 14, 1908, <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/WC19081114.2.5>.
- <sup>18</sup> Robert Newson, Tumu Here Iwi Relationships Manager at Auckland Museum.

---

<sup>19</sup> Te Kawehau Hoskins and Alison Jones, “Non-Human Others and Kaupapa Māori Research,” in *Critical Conversations in Kaupapa Māori*, ed. Te Kawehau Hoskins and Alison Jones (Wellington: Huia Publishers, 2017), 53.

<sup>20</sup> Hoskins and Jones, “Non-Human Others.”

<sup>21</sup> Grace Hutton, Collection Manager at Te Papa.









