

I sea a vessel filled with tea:

A sculptural practice exploring day-to-day
Wāhine ways through whakapapa layers.

Chantel Matthews \ 2021
Exegesis in support of practice-based Thesis
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Abstract

Mā te wairua o te mauri e kawe te mana kia pā ki te wahine.
Takawai Christine Jacobs (16.03.1938 - 06.10.2020)

Let the essence of the spirit be the transport for the dignity of the woman.
Ngahuia Jacobs (13 June 2020)

This thesis engages in a sculptural practice to explore concepts of wāhine and whakapapa and the complexities these concepts bring to lived realities of wāhine. It is upheld by a scaffold of Māori and Indigenous academics, philosophers, thinkers, and artists that assist in revealing many layers of whakapapa through a strong wāhine lens. Using ‘the everyday’ as an opportunity to incorporate Māori ways of knowing and seeing allows for the unpacking of Māori knowledge systems that embrace and empower, uplift, and inspire through a practice-led sculptural practice. Notions of whakapapa as a kaupapa Māori research method and conceptual tool are used to explore the layers and responsibilities of be-ing a mother, partner, friend, artist, and wahine Māori. This project explores how whakapapa heightens these responsibilities and impacts wellbe-ing through object mak-ing and social gestures, specifically highlighting relationships of wāhine to nature, earth mother, Papatūānuku and the relationship with her as the material uku. The thesis finds ways of understanding ‘the everyday’ through sculptural strategies that honour concepts that include Māori ways of knowing through object-mak-ing practices, valuing what it means to enhance and empower wāhine. Furthermore, it locates a space where wāhine daily realities can be understood in context but allows freedom to walk in-between spaces with confidence.

Table of Contents

Abstract	2
Attestation Of Authorship	7
List Of Figures	8
Acknowledgements	10
Pepeha	12
My Position	13

17	Chapter One: The Art Practice
19	Morning Pages
20	Social Gestures
25	Collecting Wai
27	Chapter Two: Project Platform
30	Wāhine
32	Whakapapa
35	Chapter Three
35	Project Practice Be-ing
51	Project Practice Mak-ing
71	Conclusion
78	Examination Exhibition
98	Bibliography

Attestation Of Authorship

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

Signed

21 May 2021

List Of Figures

He rarangi whakaahua

Whakaahua 1 Chantel Matthews, *Wā-Hine*, 2021, Self Portrait Image, Whaingaroa, Raglan 15

Whakaahua 2 Chantel Matthews, *Morning pages*, April 2020, Visual collage of images taken and music playing during my walk 18

Whakaahua 3 In the early stages, *Morning Pages* were formatted as postcards. They have since been developed into ceramic objects 19

Whakaahua 4 Chantel Matthews, *Help yourself to a cuppa tea*, 2020. Homemade chocolate chip cookies, mandarins, selection of tea, coffee, milk and sugar, purple flowers, 9 September 2020 21

Whakaahua 5 Chantel Matthews, *Help yourself to a cuppa tea*, 2020. Homemade chocolate chip cookies, mandarins, selection of tea coffee, milk and sugar, purple flowers, 9 September 2020 22

Whakaahua 6 Image taken during regular visit collecting wai moana. Whaingaroa te moana, Raglan, 2020 25

Whakaahua 7 Chantel Matthews, *Help yourself to a cuppa tea*, 2020, uku cups mixed and glazed with wai moana Whaingaro 25

Whakaahua 8 Rosanna Raymond, Ro and Rongo, 2017, Artist intervention, Metropolitan Museum, NYC. Photo: Salvador Brown, <https://www.artlink.com.au/articles/4603/the-activations-of-rosanna-raymond> 29

Whakaahua 9 Chantel Matthews, *Morning Pages*, Postcard to my future self, 2020 36

Whakaahua 10 Image from *Morning Pages*, Pt England Reserve, Tāmaki Makaurau, 2020 40

Whakaahua 11 Chantel Matthews, Uku vessels gifted to Natalie Robertson and Monique Redmond with a loaf of bread, and my friends Omahu valley citrus apricot jam and postcard during our first supervisor meeting, 2020 43

Whakaahua 12 Chantel Matthews, Uku vessels gifted to Takawai Christine Jacobs and Debbie White during a cuppa tea and korero, 2020 43

Whakaahua 13 Chantel Matthews, *Untitled*, 2021, Laser engraving on handmade recycled paper gifted by artist Lindsey de Roos 44

Whakaahua 14 This laser engraving work was created by taking the image above from *Morning Pages* and using illustrator software to trace the positive parts of the image. Once the lines are created, this is transferred to the 3D Laser that engraves the lines forming a negative space. This experimentation highlights for me the inbetween space we operate in as wāhine. 45

Whakaahua 15 Joyce Campbell, *On the Last Afternoon: Disrupted Ecologies and the Work of Joyce Campbell and Te Taniwha: The Manuscript of Ārikirangi*, 2019, Adam Art Gallery, <https://www.circuit.org.nz/blog/two-installations-by-joyce-campbell-at-the-adam-art-gallery-27-july-to-20-october-2019> 48

Whakaahua 16 Cora Allan-Wickliffe, *Last Supper with You Revised*, 2020, Moana Legacy (install view) at Tautai Gallery, <https://pantograph-punch.com/posts/remember-with-me> 49

Whakaahua 17 Chantel Matthews, *Help yourself to a cuppa tea*, 2020. Homemade chocolate chip cookies, mandarins, selection of tea, coffee, milk and sugar, purple flowers, , 23 Sep 2020. 52

Whakaahua 18 Chantel Matthews, *Help yourself to a cuppa tea*, 2020, Lemon Yoghurt Cake, Chocolate chip cookies, Selection of tea, coffee, milk and sugar 3 September 2020 56

Whakaahua 19 Public Share, *Carried Forward* for ST PAUL St 2015 Curatorial Symposium, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki. Pt. 2 Shared lunch, Amphitheatre, 21 August 2015. <https://publicshare.co.nz/carried-forward/> 57

Whakaahua 20 Tuaiwa Hautai “Eva” Rickard, campaigning for land rights at Nambassa, 1979, By The original uploader was Mombas at English Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eva_Rickard 61

Whakaahua 21 Chantel Matthews, “*Go back to what you were, go back and be us*” – Tuaiwa Hautai “Eva” Rickard, 2020,Uku Sculpture fired with charcoal iron glaze, mixed with wai moana collected from (Raglan Whaingaroa) 5.31 x 8.46 inches 61

Whakaahua 22 Shona Rapira Davies, *Nga Morehu*, 1988, terracotta figures with muka and wood. Purchased 1992 with New Zealand Lottery Grants Board funds. Te Papa (1992-0001-1/A to Q) 62

Whakaahua 23 Prior to making Eva Sculpture, I was experimenting with stacking uku cups as a way to explore figures using domestic forms. Image of image of uku cups stacked and glazed in Whaingaroa Te Moana with fauna 2020 63

Whakaahua 24 Kai spread including *Ugly Oranges*, during kōrero with Angeline Greensill at Te Kopua Kokiri, Whaingaroa, Raglan, 2020 64

Whakaahua 25 Chantel Matthews, *Collecting Wai with Carter*, 2020, Whaingaroa Te Moana, Raglan 69

Whakaahua 26 *The Distance I Can Be From My Son*, Lenka Clayton, 2013 Image courtesy of the artist and Catharine Clark Gallery 69

Whakaahua 27 Chantel Matthews, *Morning Pages*, Postcard to my future self, 2020 70

Whakaahua 28 Mata Aho Collective with Maureen Lander, *Atapō*, 2020. <https://www.aucklandartgallery.com/whats-on/event/walters-prize-krero-with-the-artists?q=%2Fwhats-on%2Fevent%2Fwalters-prize-krero-with-the-artists> 73

Whakaahua 29 Maureen Lander *DIY-DNA* 2017. Courtesy of the Dowse Art Museum. Photo Mark Tantrum <https://dowse.org.nz/exhibitions/detail/maureen-lander-flat-pack-whakapapa> 73

Whakaahua 30 Judy Chicago, *The Dinner Party*, 1979, Installation view of Wing Two, featuring Elizabeth R., Artemisia Gentileschi, and Anna van Schurman place settings, Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art, Collection of the Brooklyn Museum. <https://www.judychicago.com/gallery/the-dinner-party/dp-artwork/#2875>

Whakaahua 31 Chantel Matthews, *Untitled*, 2021, Installation 77

Whakaahua 32 - 38 Chantel Matthews, 2021, *Wai-rua*, Uku vessels (size varied) Shelves 80 - 85

Whakaahua 39 - 42 Chantel Matthews, 2021, *To be a good wahine, I must behave, Burnt Hydrangea*, 3D Laser engravings on handmade recycled paper, Gifted by artist Lindsey de Roos. 86 - 89

Whakaahua 43 - 45 Chantel Matthews, 2021, *I came via the sea, in a time stood still, she cared me home*, Various jars containing wai moana (Whaingaroa, Raglan) 90 - 92

Whakaahua 46 - 48 Chantel Matthews, 2021, *Help yourself to a cuppa tea*, tea station during examination. 93 - 96

Acknowledgements

For the young Māori girl where school as a child was an escape, where home was owned by the state under a system driven by controlled poverty with no opportunity for relief. Where alcohol and domestic violence was a daily affair, and the term ‘half-caste’ was a thing, and where a job over college was a matter of survival.

For the sisters and brothers, mothers and fathers, grandmothers and grandfathers where opportunities were slim and where the term ‘gutter rats’ was a thing. Where throats were watered down to just bare bones, buried bones astray, severed and separated from whakapapa, and access to maunga, awa, and whenua.

For my husband, who lit and kept the fires warm

For our children who make my heart sing and give me purpose

For all those bottomless cups of tea

For all those who have and had dreams

For all those that have come and gone

For all those that have had to be strong

For all those that may be forgotten

And for all those that have carried space inbetween

This is for you.

I acknowledge local iwi where I was born, raised and currently reside, Ngāti Whatua, Nga Tai, Ngāti Paoa. I give gratitude to my tūpuna, atua, kaitiaki, whānau, and friends who have watched over and guided my life and those who have supported this journey. I give special thanks to Te Puna Reo Okahu Kura - Ngāti Whatua Ōrakei for taking Carter in and teaching him te reo. Whanaunga Angeline Greensill who has been a considerable influence in this thesis and pivotal in my return home to my turangawaewae. To my supervisors Natalie Robertson and Monique Redmond, there are not enough words to express my love and respect for you both. Mon, you give tirelessly, and you do it with such effortless grace. Natalie, just like your orange tie-dye denim jacket, you are like a pou that the sun can't wait to rise for every morning! Thank you both for your support, encouragement, and critical eye. To the AUT Technicians and support, especially Harriet Stockman and Harold Barton, you make it happen, thank you for all that you do. James Charlton, the stone in my shoe and partly responsible for my writing this thesis, don't change, you make me want to be better. To my friends, Layne Waerea, Olivia Blyth, Jamie Te Huia Cowell, thank you for being there and keeping it real. Appreciation to Va Moana Pacific Spaces Cohort, including Albert Refiti, Emily Parr, Arielle Walker and Brett Graham. Rachel Hussey, graphic designer, thank you for elevating this thesis and delivering it in a way that is deserving. Thank you for the support to AUT for a scholarship to study and Ngā Pae O Te Māramatanga Master's In-Progress Support Grant. Lastly, thank you to all the amazing Mana Wāhine in this thesis that have paved the way and created a reality we can all strive for so that we may swim in our awa again.

Pepeha

E Papa, E Rangi, e te whānau atua,
whakatōhia tō koutou manaakitanga
ki roto i tēnei mahi a mātou.

Earth Mother and Sky father and
the family of gods, infuse your blessings upon this work.

Ko Karioi te maunga

Ko Whāingaroa te moana

Ko Tainui te waka

Ko Poihākena te marae

Ko Tainui Awhiro te iwi

Ko Ngāti Hounuku, ko Ngāti Koata, ko Ngāti Tahinga, ko Ngāti Ikaunahi ngā hapū

Ko Turuhira Rapana Hamutana rāua ko Kawharu Kereopa ōku tūpuna

Ko Rangi Tapua Kingi-Taiko (Hohaia) rāua ko Kohi Matiu Kingi-Taiko ōku tūpuna

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Ko Michael Lawrence Pointon tōku pāpā.

Ko Zion rāua Ko Carter āku tamariki.

Ko Chantel Matthews-Perawiti tōku ingoa.

Nō reira, tenā koutou, tenā koutou, tenā tātou katoa

My Position

*Within imperfection, I aim for the latter. I fear flaws for they leave scars.
These scars, however, can produce courage never seen. And yet, milk runs
through my veins - Chantel Matthews 2020*

For as long as I can remember, I have been mothering, partnering, and friending. The artist and wahine (woman) in me came much later. Growing up as urban Māori in GI (Glen Innes, Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland), I felt like I was a mother to my mother and siblings, and then I became a young mother to my eldest son, Zion now 21 years. I do not remember having much fun, just responsibilities. The artist in me arrived at thirty-something years old, somewhere between corporate burnout and my residual grief from cultural disconnection from my Māori whānau (family), hapū (sub-tribe) and iwi (tribe).

Whakapapa (geneology) did not come to me through whānau, or my hapu or iwi, and nor did it come through whenua (land). For like many others, my whānau experienced cultural disconnection due to colonisation. So, whakapapa came to me over a ‘cuppa’ (a colloquial contraction of a cup of tea), which emerged multiple times over bottomless cups of tea, sometimes at home, sometimes with friends, sometimes alone, and sometimes during this project while making handmade cups out of uku (clay). The wahine has always been there innately through my female ancestors, but more recently, has physically appeared for my younger son, Carter who is currently five years old. Hence, he, unlike myself, will grow up with whakapapa, the whenua kind, the turangawaewae (right to stand) kind. He has a place to call home, where the kitchen is warm and filled with the language of his Māori tūpuna (ancestors).

The vision for my thesis is to share my journey exploring wāhine (women) concepts as a woman artist with a ‘stack of responsibilities’. There has never been pressure from anyone to be someone or make something of myself. However, I have always felt that the world is on my shoulders when it comes to my responsibilities as a mother, partner, friend, wahine – and that these responsibilities combined are what defines my art practice. Māori academic Dr Leonie Pihama (Te Ātiawa, Ngāti Māhanga, Ngā Māhanga ā Tairi) writes:

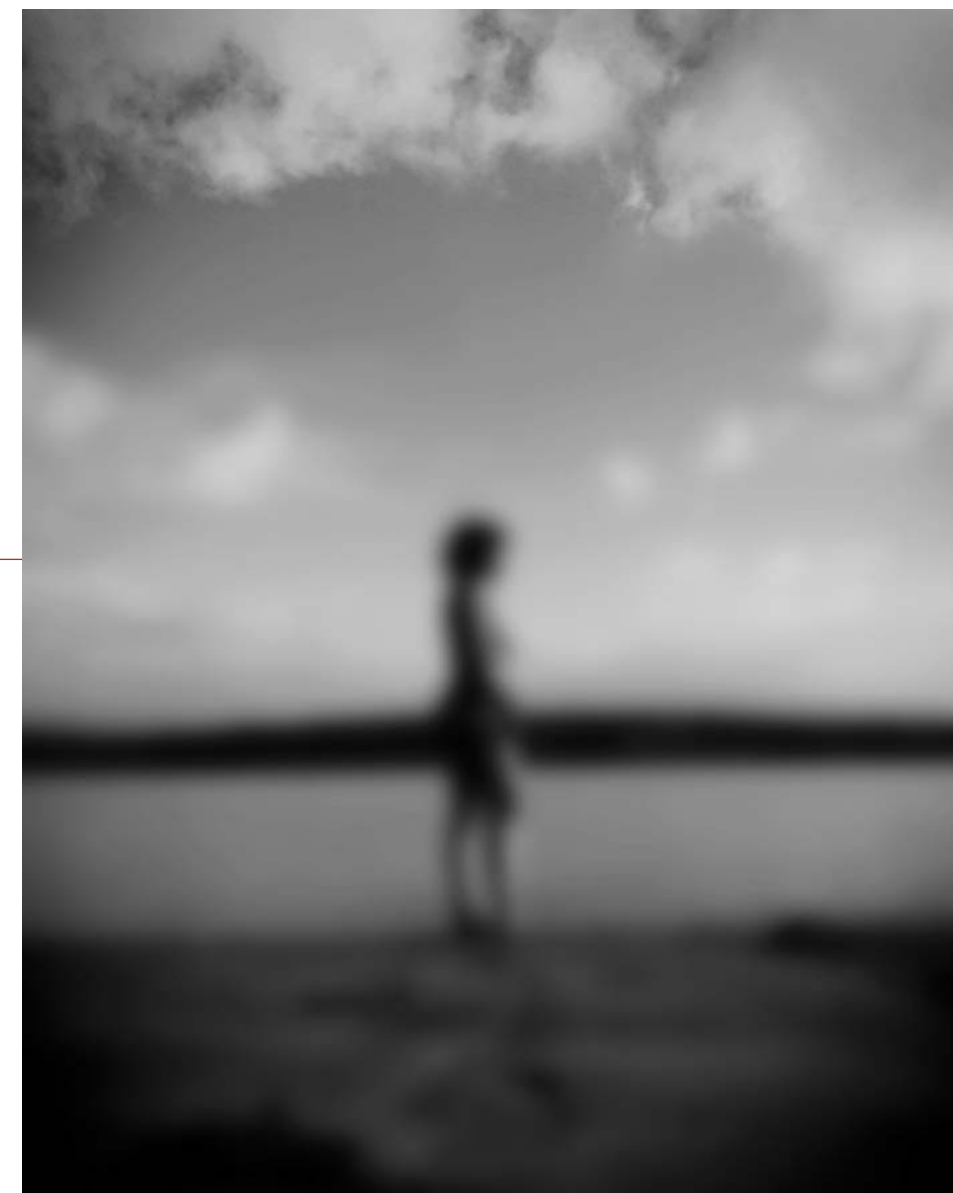
The struggles for our people, our lands, our worlds, and ourselves are struggles that are part of our daily lives as Māori women, they are never just about being Māori or just being women but are about a combination of what those things mean.”¹

This project explores the struggles to make space for my art practice amongst my everyday responsibilities, asking: How might wāhine artists make space for art, when mothering, partnering, friending, and everything else in-between?

This practice-led thesis examines notions of whakapapa as a kaupapa (purpose) Māori research method and conceptual tool to explore the layers and responsibilities I have in being a mother, partner, friend, artist, and wahine Māori. Pihama writes:

Kaupapa Māori is not new. What is relatively ‘new’ is the academic terminology of Kaupapa Māori research and theory. It is the development of a framework as a means of informing our practice that has been articulated clearly in the struggles of the past twenty years. Kaupapa Māori is itself extremely old, ancient in fact. It predates any and all of us in living years and is embedded in our cultural being.²

Kaupapa Māori has underpinned this thesis project through Māori knowledge systems, especially surrounding wāhine and whakapapa theories. Furthermore, how whakapapa heightens wāhine responsibilities and wellbeing through object making and social gestures – or what I like to call ‘sculptural moments’.³ These moments highlight wāhine relationship to nature, in particular, Papatūānuku (Earth Mother) and Ranginui (Sky Father). Together they inform the Māori world view as the primordial parents giving life to all things. Through practice, I examine how the sculptural moments I create with uku and social gestures are informed by my daily activities as a wahine/woman. I note here, that wahine is the Māori word for female or woman, while waahine or wāhine is the plural form.



Whakaahua 1 Chantel Matthews, *Wā-Hine*, 2021, Self Portrait Image, Whaingaroa, Raglan

¹ Leonie Pihama, “Tihei Mauri Ora: Honouring Our Voices. Mana Wahine as a Kaupapa Māori Theroretical Framework,” (PhD Philosophy in Education, University of Auckland, 2001), 232, https://www.tutamawahine.org.nz/tiheha_mauri_ora.

² Leonie Pihama, “Tihei Mauri Ora: Honouring Our Voices. Mana Wāhine as a Kaupapa Maori Theoretical Framework” (2001). University of Auckland, 2001. 79, http://www.tutamawahine.org.nz/tiheha_mauri_ora.

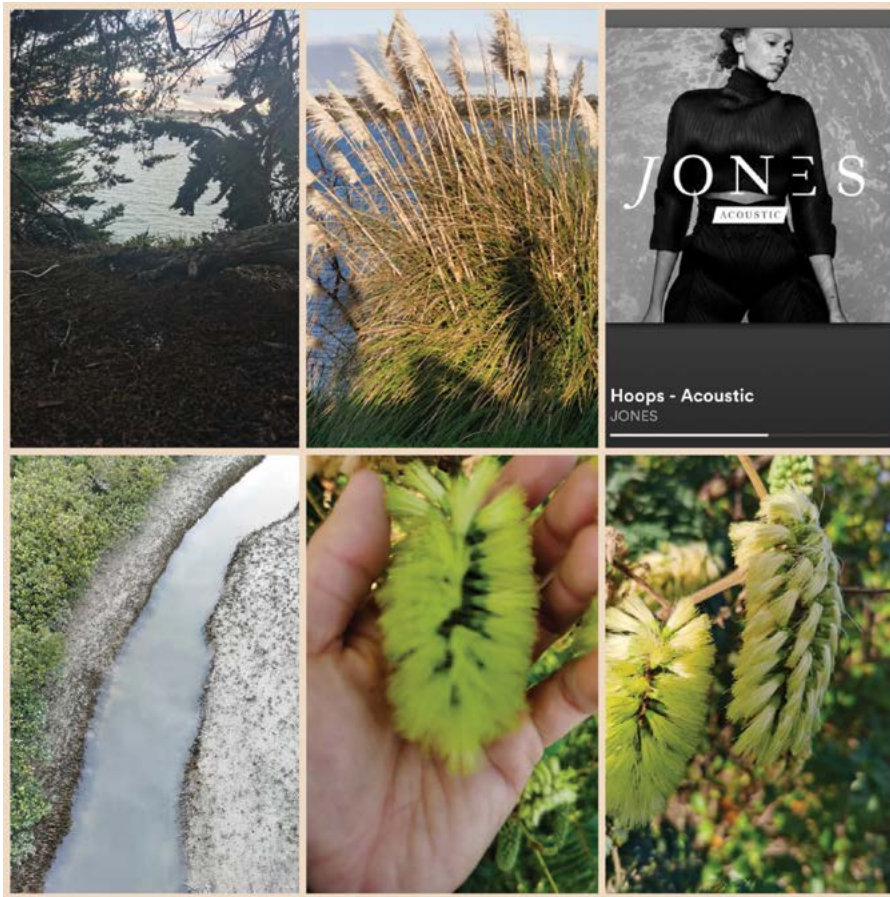
³ Sculptural moments is a concept I use to describe experiences as a presence and form.

Chapter One:

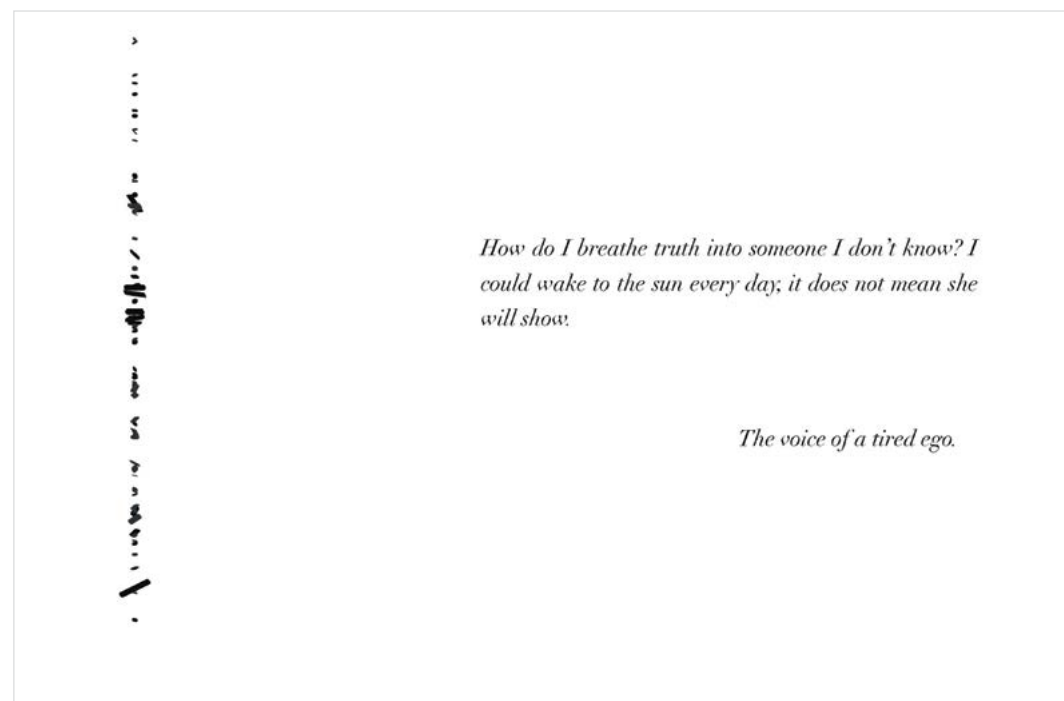
The Art Practice

How do I breathe truth into someone I don't know? I could wake to the sun every day, it does not mean she will show. The voice of a tired ego.
- Chantel Matthews 2020

There are three bodies of practising that run parallel and merge through different tides and timeframes to explore how might I make space for art as a wahine artist when mothering, partnering, friending, and everything else in-between. *Morning Pages* is a visual recording of my role and responsibilities and how nature informs my wellbeing during difficult times. *Social gestures* are an extension of exploring wellbeing for myself and others through manaakitanga (hospitality) and introducing nature through medium uku. *Collecting Wai* (water) involves returning to my ancestral lands regularly to re-connect with whakapapa to inform my being. Combined, these methods of practising inform my sculptural practice with consideration to the day-to-day struggles and complexities as wāhine.



Whakaahua 2 Chantel Matthews, *Morning pages*, April 2020, Visual collage of images taken and music playing during my walk



Whakaahua 3 In the early stages, *Morning Pages* were formatted as postcards. They have since been developed into sculptural works

Morning Pages

Morning Pages emerged as a critical strategy for the project during April 2020 over the COVID-19, Level 4 Lockdown to record my wellbe-ing during unpredictable times. Everyday walks, talks, actions, and observations collated as *Morning Pages*, became a practising diary of visual clues that consisted of everyday collected imagery and text. *Morning Pages* offers the clues and conceptual inspiration that inform my day-to-day practice as a wahine through the act of capturing every day. By creating these daily, I gained insight into everyday influences and how nature became an experiential lifeline to my wellbe-ing. Archiving such moments have informed potential art-making within my sculptural practice as well. Through image and text, experiences are anchored in sculptural moments and have developed to explore the interconnectedness between wahine and nature as an exchange.

Morning Pages is a personal inventory of my everyday well-being and connection with nature. Although crucial to practical outcomes, my decision to abstract these moments into sculptural works is intentional when questioning my practice exploring and internalising the day-to-day struggles and complexities of juggling as an artist, mother, partner, wahine, and everything else in-between. Abstracting Morning Pages offers powerful freedom from representation where Māori ways of knowing are incorporated, allowing an opportunity to embrace, empower and uplift through notions of whakapapa.

Social Gestures

Help yourself to a cuppa tea was a socially-engaged project that operated twice a week, same days and times during September–October in 2020 on Level 3 foyer of WM Building in the Art and Design building at AUT University. It was set up as an opportunity to manaaki (support) others by creating a space where people could stop by a temporary tea station to break over a cuppa and some homemade baking. Meanwhile, during operating hours, I would be next door in the Wet Lab, making the ceramic cups used for people’s cuppas. As I envisaged, through kai (food) and korero (conversation), the tea station established the value of manaakitanga in an otherwise transitional space. Māori academic Dr Georgina Tuari Stewart (Ngāpuhi-nui-tonu) states that:

Manaaki combines the two words mana (see above) and aki (exert or encourage), so refers to practice that uphold mana. Adding the suffix ‘tanga’ switches emphasis from a particular act or situation to the general quality of attention to mana in relationships. The mana of a host group is maintained and enhances through generosity towards visitors, which is why manaakitanga has come to be equated with hospitality.⁴

Through the personal labour of baking fresh homemade signature dishes such as my lemon and yoghurt cake with cream cheese lemon and coconut icing, chocolate chip cookies, cheesy mayo savoury muffins and scones, and Weetbix slices — usually reserved for whānau and friends — showed hospitality in practice. Undertaken with the intention to enhance the wellbe-ing of others, I found that in doing so enhanced my wellbe-ing.



Whakaahua 4 Chantel Matthews, *Help yourself to a cuppa tea*, 2020. Homemade chocolate chip cookies, mandarins, selection of tea, coffee, milk and sugar, purple flowers, 9 September 2020

⁴ Mana is approximated by power, authority or prestige, while tapu is equated to sacred, or set apart. Mana and tapu are two key philosophical Māori concepts, impossible to fully understand and hence prone to distortion, in the absence of an overall appreciation of the Indigenous Māori worldview. Georgina Tuari Stewart, *Māori Philosophy: Indigenous Thinking from Aotearoa*, London, Bloomsbury Academic, Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2021, 91–92



Whakaahua 5 Chantel Matthews, *Help yourself to a cuppa tea*, 2020. Homemade double chocolate chip cookies, Lemon Yoghurt Cake, selection of tea, coffee, milk and sugar, purple flowers, 3 September 2020

Help yourself to a cuppa tea upheld the Māori cultural value of manaaki through its hospitality in providing a space for visitors to enjoy a cuppa and homemade baking, with no agenda other than to hold a nurturing space for people to engage with through sharing. However, in the final weeks, I noticed some interactions had turned the idea of manaaki into a place of expectation and obligation. Regular users began to ask if they could take things back to their studio kitchens, which would otherwise be shared. Requests came for favourite biscuits, foreign dishware would be left behind, and cutlery taken. At this point, I felt that the tea station was no longer serving manaakitanga as I intended. In considering manaaki as linked to mana and the idea of enhancing one's own mana, I reflect on Stewart's comment that:

A more authentic understanding of manaaki as linked to mana, however, extends its application to any and all forms of thinking and action that enhances mana. In this sense, taking responsibility for oneself, acting with integrity, treating others with due respect for their mana and caring for the non-human elements of the environment are all examples of manaakitanga (Patterson, 2000).⁵

During this Masters project, I facilitated a writing retreat (12-14th March 2021) for my fellow student peers which included taking them back to my ancestral lands in Whaingaroa, Raglan at Te Kopua Kokiri. The intention was to create an environment to uplift and hold space for others wellbe-ing as well as my own be-ing through manaakitanga. In this way, manaakitanga expands my art-practice to hospitality through the sharing and engaging in kai and kōrero in wānanga (meeting) on whenua.

⁵ Ibid., 92

Collecting Wai Moana

Hospitality can extend to non-human elements of the environment through connections with whakapapa, such as Māori Atua (ancestors / gods), Papatūānuku, Hinemoana, and Tangaroa. For me, I explored these connections through wai moana (sea water). Collecting wai involved monthly trips from my home in Tāmaki Makaurau to my ancestral waters in Whaingaroa, Raglan. Depending on the conditions of the trip, time, considering tikanga (rituals), and personal observations, I would collect one jar of wai moana (seawater) and an object that may present itself during the collection process, such as a rock or a feather. The jars used for the collection were brought for this purpose only, and if I forgot to take one, I would not collect. On my last visit on Sunday 14th March 2021, which also happened to be the weekend, I facilitated a writing retreat for my fellow peers. I did not have any jars to collect wai moana to take home. However, I was given six empty jars from my whanaunga (relation) Angeline Greensill to collect wai moana. This expression of manaakitanga is significant to the process of collecting the wai moana, as for me, it demonstrated the progression of journeying home carrying my jars to receiving jars from whānau. Through my whakapapa connection with nature came the whakapapa connection with whānau and Māori Atua Hinemoana (Ocean Woman) and Tangaroa (Atua of the Ocean).⁶

The collected wai moana from Whaingaroa was used within my art-making. The wai moana was added to the clay and the glaze for my uku serving cups and female vessels that I was making in the studio. Conceptually, I explored whakapapa as vessels and how they could hold time/space as a vessel. Considering whakapapa as a living, breathing entity, living / non-living, the ‘mauri’ (life force) of the vessel is essential. Making vessels out of earthen matter from the body of Papatūānuku and glazing them with water conceived of as Hinemoana and Tangaroa conceptually engages whakapapa as a never-ending opportunity to tell stories that are empowering to wāhine through our connection to whakapapa. As Māori tohunga whakairo, Dr Takirangi Smith (Ngāti Kahungunu) explains, we can find Māori understandings of wellbe-ing that link to whakapapa: “Mauri ora (energy of life, good health) is linked to the creation of the first human being, an earth-formed woman, Hinehuone, who is created by atua.”⁷

⁶ In describing wai and relationship to Māori Atua: Wai is a source of sustenance and a realm personified by many Māori atua such as Tangaroa (ocean and sea water), Parawhenuamea (fresh water), Hinemoana (ocean maid), and Kiwa (ocean guardian): Benjamin Dimitrius Hanara, Tangaroa Wai Noa, Tangaroa Wai Tapu, Tangaroa Wairoro, Master of Science, Otago, 2020, <https://ourarchive.otago.ac.nz/bitstream/handle/10523/10188/BH%20Masters%20Final.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>
⁷ Smith, Takirangi. 2019. He Ara Uru Ora: Traditional Māori Understandings of Trauma and Well-Being. Edited by Rāwiri Tinirau and Cheryl Smith. Te Atawhai o Te Ao, Independent Māori Institute for Environment and Health), 4



Whakaahua 6 Image taken during regular visit collecting wai moana. Whaingaroa te moana, Raglan, 2020



Whakaahua 7 Chantel Matthews, *Help yourself to a cuppa tea*, 2020, uku cups mixed and glazed with wai moana Whaingaroa

Chapter Two:

Project Platform

Many leaves have fallen this year, some older than most. Despite the loss the hikoi continues with swollen ankles and bags for days. Fresh grass at 7am.
- Chantel Matthews 2020

Throughout my research, I have utilised a scaffold built on the foundation of Māori and indigenous academics, philosophers, thinkers, and artists, that have helped to break down the many layers of whakapapa that exist within my practice. These researchers include but are not limited to Ani Mikaere (2017), Carl Mika (2014), Mere Roberts (2017), Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2011), Leonie Pihama (1999), Moana Jackson (2008), Naomi Simmonds (2011), Takirangi Smith (2014), Georgina Tuari Smith (2017), and importantly, my whanaunga and prominent Māori political rights campaigner, academic Angeline Greensill (2011). As Māori women, our day-to-day realities are complex. Pihama describes Mana Wahine Theory as:

...a theoretical framework that provides analysis drawing upon Māori knowledge and in particular a decolonizing intention in regard to the position and voice of Māori. Theory is important for Māori women; however, it must be emphasized that theory must be developed from our own place.⁸

My project emerges strongly from my place coming out of ‘struggle street’ in GI, then reconnecting with Tainui waka, and my whenua at Whaingaroa. For me, these are places of in-betweenness. I turn here to Māori academic Dr Naomi Simmonds (Raukawa, Ngāti Huri), who writes:

Mana (power) wahine, as art, as theory, as a method, and as a practice, recognises and provides for this in-betweenness and enables the exploration of diverse Māori realities from a position of power rather than having to talk or write back.⁹

My hope for this research is that by unpacking the everyday realities I encounter through my art practice, I can move freely in-between these spaces as, at times, I feel caught in a space between worlds. Building on these theories, my methodology incorporates whakapapa and wāhine concepts that encompass my experiences that arise in my day-to-day. Through process-led exchanges, I find ways of unpacking my daily responsibilities to consider these concepts through object mak-ing practices – a term I describe as ‘*wāhine ways through whakapapa layers*’. To use moments or experiences as a storytelling mechanism is not a new concept to Māori, for oratory and object mak-ing is a way of be-ing.¹⁰ *Wāhine ways through whakapapa layers* relate to whakapapa as responsibilities I actively face every day.

There are two ways that I frame *wāhine ways through whakapapa layers*: ways of be-ing and ways of mak-ing. My use of the hyphen – the breaking of these words – for me symbolises the journeying towards whakapapa through such methods. This strategy has been employed by Aotearoa artist, performer and spoken word activator Sistar S’pacific aka Rosanna Raymond who uses disruptive word play within her performances exploring notions of gender and the Pacific body to decolonise through acti.VA.tions (“Va” is a Polynesian term for spatial relations, a place of exchange, of change.)¹¹ American Samoan artist and writer Dan Taulapapa McMullin describes:

In decolonising her body Raymond developed a series of characters she’s called Sistar S’Pacific, Dusky Maiden, Full Tusk Maiden, Backhand Maiden, SEAoncey, Blood Clot, Pulotu Pollution (Pulotu, the afterlife) and My Va Body. She plays through language with luggage words such as: Conver.SA.tion (Sa meaning family and sacred), Acti.VA.tion, which Reacti.VA.te Pacific objects in Western institutions through what she envisages as Ta/Va (Time/Space) duality or what she calls a “non cannibalistic cognitive consumption of the other”.¹²

In relation to Rosanna Raymond’s use of Ta/Va (Time/Space) as a way of decolonising the Va Body within Western institutions, my practice uses Wā (Time/Space) as a conceptual ‘wahine’ body through *wāhine ways through whakapapa layers*: ways of be-ing and ways of mak-ing, to reclaim space through whakapapa.

It is important to note that wāhine ways through whakapapa layers are an exploratory method



Whakaahua 8 Rosanna Raymond, *Ro and Rongo*, 2017, Artist intervention, Metropolitan Museum, NYC. Photo: Salvador Brown, <https://www.artlink.com.au/articles/4603/the-activations-of-rosanna-raymond>

⁹ Naomi Simmonds, Mana wahine: Decolonising Politics, Women’s Studies Journal, Volume 25 Number 2, December 2011: 11-25. ISSN 1173-6615, 2011 Women’s Studies Association of New Zealand Hosted at www.wsanz.org.nz/

¹⁰ I use be-ing in the context of the ontology of all things that exist, living and non-living, or be-ing in relation to things belonging together as they reveal themselves.

¹¹ Dan Taulapapa McMullin, “The Acti.VA.tions of Rosanna Raymond”, Artlink, 1 June 2017, <https://www.artlink.com.au/articles/4603/the-activations-of-rosanna-raymond/>, (McMullin 2017)

¹² ibid.

Wāhine

that I have developed to better understand my own art-making practice.

I introduce wāhine terms by Māori theorists as it is essential to discuss their ideas concerning roles and responsibilities relative to wāhine ways of be-ing through whakapapa and artmak-ing and as a way of reclaiming and retaining our daily lives. I acknowledge the many voices, including Māori tūpuna, theorists, artists, academics, and writers, who have paved the way for everyday practices like mine, including the use of uku as a material process-driven practice with wāhine and whakapapa concepts to inform artmak-ing.

Mana wahine as theory has been explicitly written about by the following authors Leonie Pihama, 2001; Ngahuia Te Awekotuku, Linda Tuhiwai-Smith, 1999-2019; Ani Mikaere, Nāomi Simmonds, Kathie Irwin, 1991,1992. Pihama (2019) says:

...the concept ‘wahine’ is translated in general terms as meaning ‘woman’. Conceptually we can see wāhine as being the intersection of the two words wā and hine. Wā relates to notions of time and space, hine relates to a female essence”.¹³

In introducing the term mana wahine, Māori academic Dr Ngahuia Murphy (Ngāti Manawa, Ngāti Ruapani ki Waikaremoana, Tūhoe, Ngāti Kahungunu) points to:

Kathie Irwin’s (1991,1992) call for Māori women to reclaim space to articulate their own realities, tell our own stories and define ourselves for ourselves in ways that mobilise tino rangatiratanga has been taken up by mana wahine scholars, artists, activists and educators (Irwin, Ramsden & Kahukiwa, 1995).¹⁴

As a mother, I am aware of my role as Whare Tangata (House of Humanity) in ensuring my children know their genealogy and environmental whakapapa, and how through whakapapa they can make sense of and define themselves. Māori scholar, lawyer and writer, Ani Mikaere (Ngāti Raukawa, Ngāti Porou) states that:

The significance of the whare tangata is rooted in the creation of the world and in the overriding tapu of whakapapa... the inherent tapu of each Māori person is sourced in their connection, through whakapapa, to the rest of humanity, to the atua and to the environment. The role of women, as the bearers of past, present and future generations is therefore of paramount importance.¹⁵

In reclaiming our feminine as Māori women within a contemporary context, Māori academic Dr Aroha Yates-Smith (Tainui, Te Arawa) says:

Modern Māori women have inherited mana wahine from ancient times, retaining some roles of Hine in their everyday life: in the home, on the marae, as well as in places of employment and recreation. The fundamental role of woman remains as creator and mother thus fulfilling the generative function previously carried out by Papa, Hineteiwaiwa, Hinekōrako and the many other atua wāhine. Women are still regarded as te whare tangata.¹⁶

My matrilineal whakapapa as whare tangata can be linked to my material choice of uku through Papatūānuku and the first human Hineahuone. Murphy outlines “Hineahuone, the first human, was sculpted from what is delicately described by scholars as the “red clay” at Kurawaka, the mons veneris of the great mother earth goddess, Papatūānuku.”¹⁷

Considering whare tangata links all of humanity through whakapapa, these concepts contribute to the objects I make as an extension of whakapapa through its connection to atua Papatūānuku (with uku as material and the conception of the vessel), and how wāhine can reclaim and hold space, especially regarding our roles and responsibilities.

Mana Wahine as theory reaffirms and underpins my position, practice, and desire to reclaim a complex space that impacts my everyday realities and that of my children and future generations. Through artmak-ing using uku and wai moana, whakapapa offers vessels as sculptural objects to hold, reclaim and retain whakapapa.

It is through this creativity that I can move freely with confidence in-between the spaces I create. This confidence is ignited by multiple mana wāhine perspectives which Mikaere (2003) explains:

Three female figures play a crucial role in the creation of humankind. Papatūānuku provides both the materials and the advice to enable Tāne to form Hineahuone. Hineahuone, while given physical shape by Tāne clearly possesses an awesome sexual power that comes from deep within her female being. It is she who gives birth to the first true human being, Hinetītama. Hinetītama is a woman who expects and exercises absolute control over her own destiny¹⁸

Here, I acknowledge the scholarship of the Mana Wāhine Reader Volumes 1 and 2, (produced by Leonie Pihama, Linda Tuhiwai-Smith, Naomi Simmonds, Joeliee Seed-Pihama, and Kirsten Gabel), which have been crucial in providing a theoretical framework for this thesis. In highlighting our everyday realities from a mana wahine perspective, space is created to reclaim Māori knowledge systems that are important in our connecting with whakapapa.

¹³ Leonie Pihama, “Mana Wahine Theory: Creating Space for Māori Women’s Theories: Mana Wahine Reader,” A Collection of Writings 1999-2019,” Volume II (2019) 70

¹⁴ Ngahuia Murphy, “Te Ahi Tawhito, Te Ahi Tipua, Te Ahi Nā Mahuika: Re-Igniting Native Women’s Ceremony.” 2019. Doctor of Philosophy, University of Waikato, (2019)

¹⁵ Ani Mikaere, The Balance Destroyed, Otaki, Te Tākupu: Te Wananga O Raukawa (2017), 41.

¹⁶ Aroha Yates-Smith, “ Reclaiming the Ancient Feminine in Māori Society: Mana Wahine Reader,” A Collection of Writings 1999-2019, Volume II (2019)

¹⁷ Ngahuia Murphy, “ Te Awa Atua: The River of Life! Menstruation in Pre-Colonial Times:Mana Wahine Reader,” A Collection of Writings 1999-2019, Volume II (2019) 126

¹⁸ Naomi Simmonds, “ Never-Ending Beginnings: The Circularity of Mana Wāhine: Mana Wahine Reader,” A Collection of Writings 1999-2019, Volume II (2019) 158

Whakapapa

Whakapapa as experience is introduced as a methodological and conceptual tool exploring interrelated paths through Māori epistemologies. As a research methodology, whakapapa is about relationships with living and non-living. The vision for this project is to use whakapapa that is inclusive and acts as a mechanism that embodies narratives that recount stories with everyday experiences at the centre. Conceptually whakapapa serves as catalyst in creating sculptural moments through object mak-ing and social gestures.

Whakapapa as theory reiterates our shared notions of responsibilities as wāhine. Whakapapa is a continuation of past, present, future stories told and retold, an evolving and retaining of identity much like our tūpuna did as a matter of nurture. In Māori storytelling, Māori lawyer Moana Jackson (Ngāti Kahungunu, Ngāti Porou) sees whakapapa as being a series of never-ending stories, stating: “If they are to help us work towards improving the nature and extent of our interconnectedness, if they are to help us to find and nurture those relationships, then they have to be continually in this process of never-ending beginnings.”¹⁹ For me, in trusting Māori ways of be-ing, my art practice can emulate tūpuna acts through object-making practices that identify with concepts akin to wāhine through whakapapa narratives to continue telling our stories.

¹⁹ Dr Joseph S. Te Rito, “Proceedings of the Traditional Knowledge Conference 2008: Te Tatau: The Greenstone Door Traditional knowledge and Gateways to Balance relationships” (Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga New Zealand’s Māori Centre of Research Excellence, University of Auckland, New Zealand, (2008) 27. <http://www.maramatanga.co.nz/sites/default/files/TC-2008.pdf>

Chapter Three:

Project Practice

Be-ing

I am molding myself into the Whenua, wanting to connect with someone or something other than myself, so that I may find myself in the act of be-ing. We are playing together aye? - Chantel Matthews 2020



*I am molding myself into the Whenua, wanting to
connect with someone or something other than myself
so that I may find myself in the act.*

We are playing together aye?

Morning Pages, May 10, 2020.

Zooming in and out of different channels, art secretary, makaurau māmā, kai kōrero, best friend, studies, and kohanga reo. Attempted online CrossFit classes but failing. Instead, turning to morning Māori meditation via Facebook live mixed with online pilates. Sunrise walks, most days, sometimes twice a day, 4-8km. Watching 120 episodes of Betty en New York. Reading everything from Te Reo books to cookbooks. How to be a better parent podcast to Māori sounds of healing. Home-schooling, budgeting. Cooking everything down to the bare minimum. Running out of things to do around the house. Lately, I am napping and staring at clouds.

Through a sculptural practice that incorporates whakapapa and wāhine concepts encompassing experiences that arise in my day-to-day, I aim to tell stories that nurture relationships through a process-led practice that informs my artmak-ing. There are two key ways I explore these concepts; **Be-ing** and **Mak-ing**.

During April 2020, the global pandemic COVID-19, Level 4 lockdown occurred in Aotearoa. As a nation experiencing unpredictable times, the focus shifted to essential living. At that time, I was in the early stages of this project. Released from the 9 am to 5 pm working day, our routines somehow aligned with nature, and my whānau adjusted quickly. Taking care of my whānau during a scary time we had not experienced before, I felt an internal pressure to ensure my wellbe-ing was healthy. What I realised was that for me, nature provided balance and relief from the pressures which were heightened by our intense domestic settings.

Routines included waking and walking to the sun, engaging in Māori meditation led by Ngarino Te Waati via Turuki Healthcare Facebook live stream, and swimming with the tides. For me, all of these kinds of activities became necessary to maintain wellbe-ing due to being housebound during COVID-19 level 4 Lockdown. These habitual engagements became an experiential lifeline that highlighted for me Māori ways of knowing. What initially began as a coping mechanism to get through a nationwide pandemic soon entered into my everyday living within a Te Ao Māori (Māori world view) perspective. Upon understanding these experiences as ongoing practising (recorded through the *Morning Pages*), I started to understand and associate my everyday activities with Māori ways of knowing. An example, waking and walking in the sun could be linked to Māori stories of wāhine creation and wellbe-ing through the term, mauri ora. Takirangi Smith speaks of linking our atua such as Māui who slowed down the sun to create a balance between night and day, and how nature plays a balancing act in all living things:

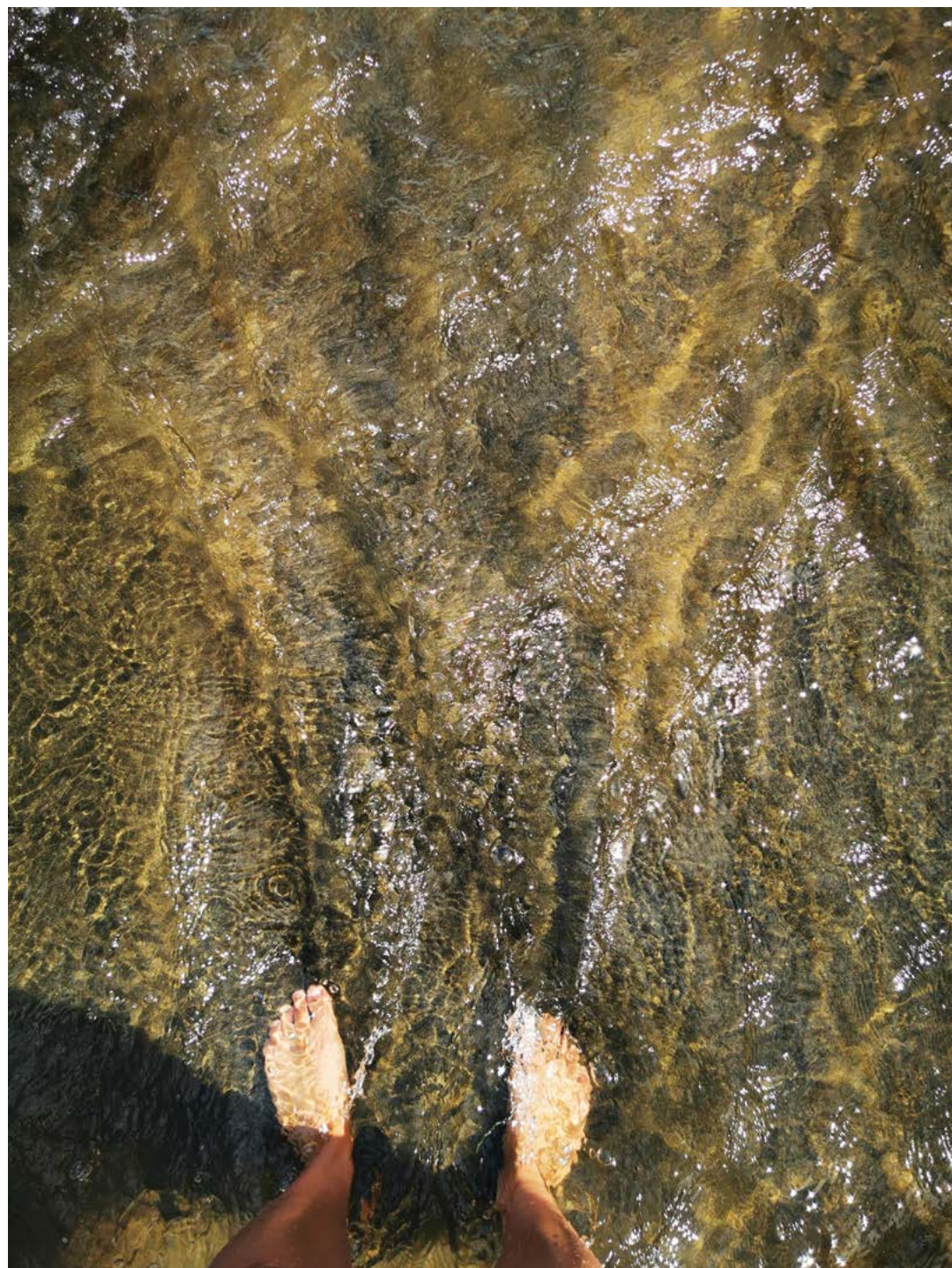
When there is not enough light, mauri mate (ill health and sickness) afflicts the people. When balance of light and darkness is restored, mauri ora is restored. Natural sunlight is considered important as providing mā (energy, light, clarifier) for the internal growth and health of all living things.²⁰

As I consider such stories concerning Māori ways of knowing, the stories of wāhine atua, our roles and responsibilities are down-played and positioned submissively to the male. I am interested in how Ngahuia Murphy describes in her words a ‘ typical standardised version’ of creation of Hineahuone:

Tane the god created the first woman out of earth; he formed her by scraping up the earth into human shape and endowed her with life. He lay on her and breathed life into her and he called her Hine-hau-one... he took her to wife. (Cowan, 1930, p. 8)²¹

Within this description of Hineahuone creation stories, there is an emphasis on the dominant male god while Hineahuone lay idle, refusing to state the power as mana wāhine. This statement is essential to my work because by choosing uku as a medium, I am choosing to acknowledge the mana wāhine and its relationship with Papatūānuku. Through the reclaiming of wāhine through whakapapa using uku within concepts of our roles and responsibilities through object making, highlighting the domestic vessel offers an opportunity to highlight the power within our be-ing wāhine, as such writing new stories. I say new stories because the stories and lived experiences I grew up in were not empowering and signals it may be time to embrace the calling through alternative ways of *Be-ing* and *Mak-ing*. Thankfully stories reclaimed from mana wāhine scholars remind us of our power as Yates-Smith (1998) confirms, “Hineahuone was imbued with her own autonomous power, inherited from her mother’s genital organs. (Pere, 1982, pp. 10–11)”²²

Reflecting on my roles and responsibilities, my relationship to whakapapa as wāhine, and such connections to Hineahuone highlights the importance of listening to our inner strength when it comes to our day-to-day realities and how through whakapapa, we have the power to impact our be-ing.



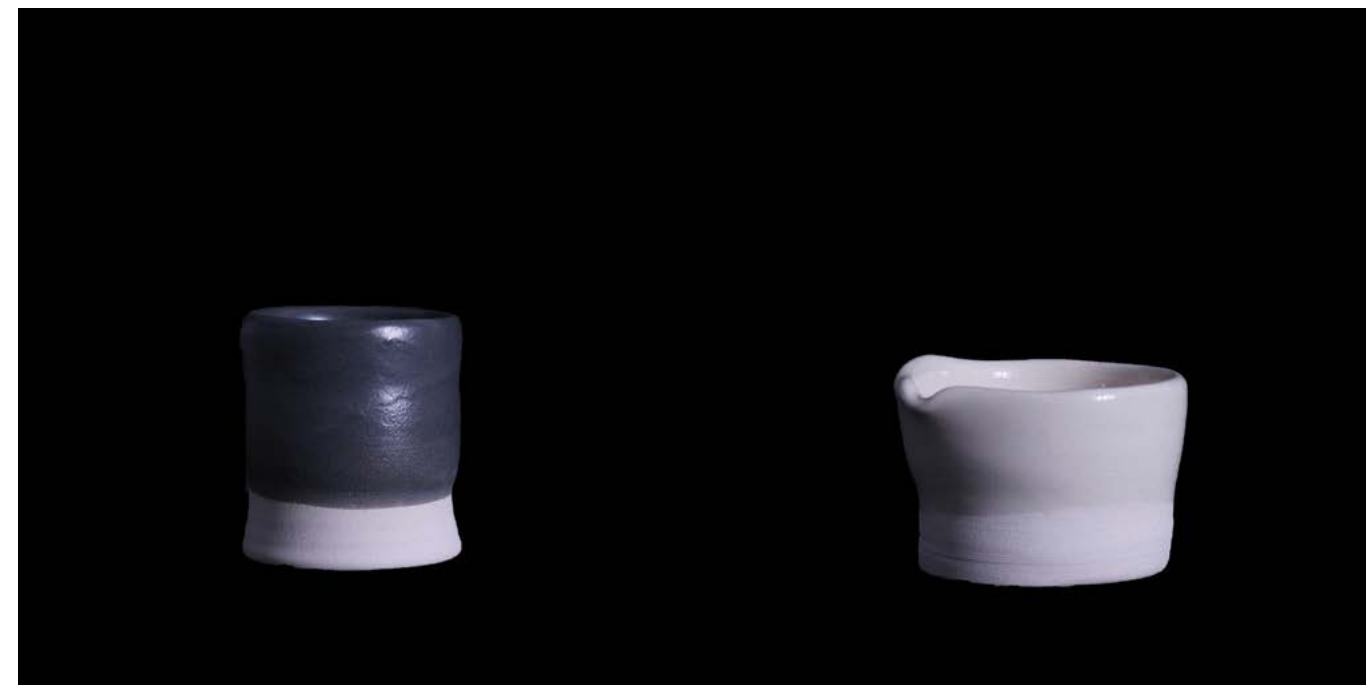
Whakaahua 10 Image from *Morning Pages*, Pt England Reserve, Tāmaki Makaurau, 2020

**Morning Pages, April, 2020. Pt England Beach,
Glen Innes, Auckland.**

It was early evening and I left home for my routine local walk during the COVID19 level 4 lockdown, I was drained from the anomaly of being housebound with intensified energies within my whānau that were also trying to cope with the restrictions. The tide was in, dogs were swimming and as much as I felt the desire to jump in, I continued walking at a distance with the other law-abiding citizens. However, this good intention was short-lived as on my way back; I could not ignore the calling. This calling I believe was wairua (spirit) driven.

As we shifted back into our new normality, the everyday rituals captured via *Morning Pages* during COVID-19, Level 4 lockdown became redundant. The walking and journaling with nature were replaced by the hustle of university, labs, and face-to-face contact. As *Morning Pages* slowed down, COVID-19 memories became a time that stood still. Wanting to explore my experiences as sculptural moments, walking in nature allowed me to experiment with my object-mak-ing practice. Exploring different mak-ing started to reveal trance-like shadows of my past, as subtle lines hinted at nature's relief with burnt edges, metaphorically reminding me of the many sunrises and falling leaves. Soon vessels mimicked my nature walks through bodies of Papatūānuku as nurturing forms. Vessels took shape, creating a space of manaaki for others with a desire to share wellbe-ing for wāhine.

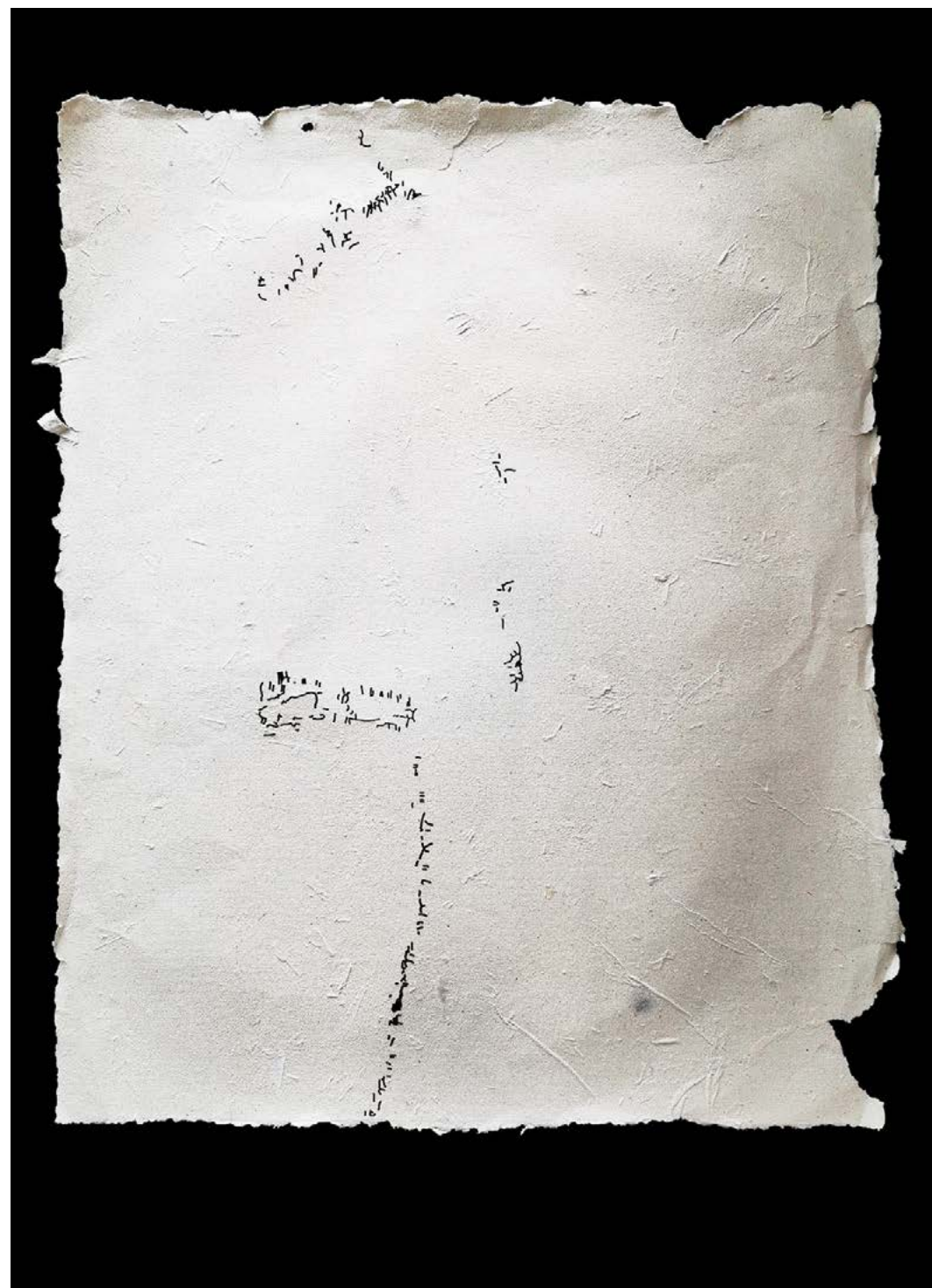
Morning Pages traversed from walks where nature carried me to uku vessels made for the everyday wāhine. As well as exploring vessels made for wāhine, ideas surfaced of the in-between space we hold as wāhine.



Whakaahua 11 Chantel Matthews, Uku vessels gifted to Natalie Robertson and Monique Redmond with a loaf of bread, and my friends Omaha valley citrus apricot jam and postcard during our first supervisor meeting, 2020



Whakaahua 12 Chantel Matthews, Uku vessels gifted to Takawai Christine Jacobs and Debbie White during a cuppa tea and korero, 2020



Whakaahua 13 Chantel Matthews, Untitled, 2021, Laser engraving on handmade recycled paper gifted by artist Lindsey de Roos

In experimenting with the *Morning Pages*, the everyday recordings were digitally transformed, and stories carved trace-like as lasers pierce into recycled handmade paper. When my supervisor Natalie Robertston saw these works, she was reminded of the meaning of the word Whakairo (Māori carving) or Whaka (to cause) iro (maggot). Tā moko artist and carver, Derek Lardelli describes “Whaka-iro”:

You dig into the wood and your removing a negative, and you’re creating a positive, which is the tipuna. And that’s what tipu means, it grows out of that. It grows out of the essence of the wood. So you’re connecting it back to the wood. And that’s an oral tradition.²³



*Most relaxed I've felt in ages, but those days are gone.
It might mess with my creativity: A few of us are
getting one. It will be fine. Am I too old for this shit?
Maybe when they are asleep.*

Do people still use the word fuck?

Whakaahua 14 This laser engraving work was created by taking the image above from *Morning Pages* and using illustrator software to trace the positive outlines of the image. Once the lines are created, this is transferred to the 3D Laser that engraves the lines forming a negative space. This experimentation through it’s abstraction gives freedom as wāhine who operate in-between spaces. It’s inclusive of Māori ways of knowing through embracing notions of whakapapa.

²³ Nēpia Mahuika, Kōrero Tuku Iho: Reconfiguring Oral History and Oral Tradition, Thesis, Doctor of Philosophy (PhD). The University of Waikato, Hamilton, New Zealand, <https://researchcommons.waikato.ac.nz/bitstream/handle/10289/6293/thesis.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y> 133

Joyce Campbell / Cora -Allan Wickliffe

Developing whakapapa through a sculptural practice while dealing with the responsibilities and complexities we face every day as wāhine, artists and mothers, I look to Joyce Campbell and Cora-Allan Wickliffe in their engagement with human-nature relationships and their art practices while juggling motherhood. Joyce Campbell is an Aotearoa New Zealand interdisciplinary artist working in photography, sculpture, film, and video installation. She uses these approaches to examine the collision of natural and cultural systems interconnected through complex biological, spiritual, and representational systems. I first saw Joyce Campbell's exhibition *On the Last Afternoon: Disrupted Ecologies and the Work of Joyce Campbell* at Te Uru Waitakere Contemporary Art Gallery in November 2020. I was drawn to Campbell's work *Hosting* (1997) for its visual aesthetic only to learn these works were of the bodily, fungi bacteria kind. *Hosting* involved swabs taken from Campbell's body (the host), forcing us to question our living environment and how we occupy space.

Reflecting on my work, holding space via manaaki, and the concept of holding space through occupation, I am left to question our impact on the environment through the body, our body, whether it is using the artist to make or using uku the body of Pāpatūānuku. It seems to me that women artists can be an embodiment of their work through holding or occupying space. In describing Campbell's work *Hosting*, writer Warren Feeney says "this work evidences the invisible traces of human occupation. While we might strive for the sanitary, it is forever evading us with apparently entropic resistance. We will pollute the objects which we use and the spaces that we occupy."²⁴

Cora-Allan Wickliffe is a multidisciplinary artist of Māori (Ngāpuhi, Tainui) and Niue (Alofi, Liku) descent. Wickliffe revives the Niuean art form, hiapo. Wickliffe's practice is labour intensive and sustainable. Working with traditional and performative methods, Wickliffe pushed the boundaries with her recent work by taking to her hiapo, which would usually be for looking only into a performance.

For *Our last supper with you revised* (2020), onlookers watched Wickliffe paint the hiapo she had handmade black, right before their eyes as she reflected the weight of responsibility she feels within her art practice. Wickliffe shares:

At that moment, I felt the weight of my grandfather on my shoulder and remembered him passing on to me his love for the knowledge of patterns. I then passed this knowledge of cloth onto the shoulders and hearts of everyone who was standing in the room. The brush hit the cloth and I was moved by the gasp of the collective. My shoulders released a tension I didn't know was there, my heart no longer in my mouth.²⁵

Wickliffe I believe expresses the weight of responsibility she feels within her practice, as both an honour and a burden we carry as wāhine artists and everything else in-between. I can relate to such struggles we carry emotionally, mentally, and physically, especially when working through whakapapa. Like me, both wāhine/women juggle art life with family life and are interested in engaging and connecting with nature. Whether it is holding onto the past through the use of material and methods, such as Campbell's preference for 19th-century analogue processes, or holding fast to tradition like Wickliffe's labour of Indigenous love for her Niuean hiapo. Each of these artists display an honest, nostalgic restraint with depth and integrity for nature – as artists, storytellers, mothers, and kaitiaki for whenua.

²⁴ Warren Feeney, Reviews, Essays & Articles: Break in transmission?, The Press, 1997, August 13, p14, The Physics room: Contemporary Art Space, Hosting Michael Harrison and Joyce Campbell paintings and photographs, accessed 6 May 2021, <http://www.physicsroom.org.nz/exhibitions/hosting>

²⁵ Cora Allan-Wickliffe, Grandpa Lafaiki, Remember with me, 7 August 2020, accessed 6 May 2021, <https://pantograph-punch.com/posts/remember-with-me>



Whakaahua 15 Joyce Campbell, *On the Last Afternoon: Disrupted Ecologies and the Work of Joyce Campbell and Te Taniwha: The Manuscript of Ārikirangi*, 2019, Adam Art Gallery, <https://www.circuit.org.nz/blog/two-installations-by-joyce-campbell-at-the-adam-art-gallery-27-july-to-20-october-2019>



Whakaahua 16 Cora Allan-Wickliffe, *Last Supper with You Revised*, 2020, Moana Legacy (install view) at Tautai Gallery, <https://pantograph-punch.com/posts/remember-with-me>

Chapter Three:

Project Practice

Mak-ing

I don't have to make what my tūpuna made, but I have to make something that says who we are. A shell doesn't try to be a rock.
- Chantel Matthews 2020



Whakaahua 17 Chantel Matthews, *Help yourself to a cuppa tea*, 2020. Homemade chocolate chip cookies, mandarins, selection of tea, coffee, milk and sugar, purple flowers, 23 Sep 2020.

23 Sep 2020, Level 3 WM Building, AUT, Art and Design Building, 10-2pm

Double Chocolate Chip Cookies, Selection of Tea and Coffee, Mandarins, Purple Flowers.

Decided to add some flowers and mandarins to the table today to add spring, colour, and something healthy to accompany the double dark and white chocolate chip cookies that went within 2 hours of the station being open. Interestingly started with approx. 14 cups and were left with 10 with no cups in the used container, which tells me they are walkabouts. This is the first time cups have not been returned, which I quite like. As I was closing up, 2 fashion students came down to use the station and asked if they could take the milk, so I gave it to them. I have noticed that different floors have been utilizing the cuppa tea station, which is nice. Spent the day glazing the 3 Eva sculptures, the 7 cups, and planning the next few weeks of making.

Exploring artists, valuing their art practice, and their position as a conscious need to nurture makes me curious if wāhine/women artists/collectives (including wāhine/women) imagine nature as an escape. An optimistic cultural utopia underpins the harsh and political daily realities. Whether conceptually or traditionally, through human-nature relationships or manaakitanga, there seems to be a hope to make and tell stories, current or historical, to engage as an act of be-ing through mak-ing.

Public Share Collective

Public Share is a New Zealand artist collective that consists of six members, Monique Redmond, Harriet Stockman, Kelsey Stankovich, Deborah Rundle, Mark Schroder and Joe Prisk. “Together they engage in ideas of sharing, production and exchange, object making and site exploration with social engagement and critique, the collective has particular interest in workplace rituals, facilitating events that punctuate the day with pause and conviviality.”²⁶ Bringing the ‘everyday’ to a 10-minute standstill in the form of smoko breaks, their relationship to practising spans far and wide, from excavating material relationships with the land to sharing homemade baking and bottomless cups of tea to the worksite table. A participant in *Carried Forward*, 2015 at the ST PAUL St 2015 Curatorial Symposium, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, art critic, editor and writer Lana Lopesi, commented:

I wanted the glazed beige cup with brown speckles and large dark slightly sharp obtrusions, so I obliged in a tea. To my surprise they actually didn’t expect any more from their co-creators (aka audience) than to slow down, drink a tea and keep their cup.²⁷

Public Share’s material and event-based participatory practice is an excellent example of how art can be reciprocal in its non-obligatory humble way, and examples manaakitanga through its treatment of nature-human relationships.

Between making my uku cups, I found a moment of pause to grab a quick cuppa from the tea station. Chatting briefly with a fellow student from Denmark, discussing our respective practices, the question was posed, “If this tea station you have created is to hold space for others, who holds space for you?”. This was a good question. My immediate response was, “The cup holds space for me.” On the final morning of *Help yourself to a cuppa tea*, I added bought biscuits to the mix of baking on offer and removed the sign that said: “Help yourself.” By shifting the tea station with these actions, I realised I was subtly removing the personal invitations and gestures that had guided this project, leaving the station to its own device.

²⁶ Public Share biography, accessed 24 April 2021, <https://publicshare.co.nz>

²⁷ Lana Lopesi, “Reinstating the Smoko”, UN Magazine, accessed: 24 April 2021 <http://unprojects.org.au/magazine/issues/issue-10-1/reinstating-the-smoko/>



Whakaahua 18 Chantel Matthews, *Help yourself to a cuppa tea*, 2020, Lemon Yoghurt Cake, Chocolate chip cookies, Selection of tea, coffee, milk and sugar 3 September 2020



Whakaahua 19 Public Share, *Carried Forward* for ST PAUL St 2015 Curatorial Symposium, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki. Pt. 2 Shared lunch, Amphitheatre, 21 August 2015. <https://publicshare.co.nz/carried-forward/>

Shona Rapira-Davies

As I continue to work with uku and unpack what it means when I say “the cup holds space for me”, I shift from manaaki to others to manaaki of the obligatory political kind. Here, I would like to introduce Aotearoa sculptor and painter Shona Rapira-Davies (Ngāti Wai ki Aotea). Her art practice confronts the political with the colonial using personal and familial Māori histories, expressing these narratives with text and uku. The documentary *A Cat Among the Pigeons* (1992) follows Rapira-Davies’ journey making the commissioned sculptural work for Te Aro Park (also called Pigeon Park) in Central Wellington. The interviewer asks Rapira-Davies about working with uku, “What do you get out of it, do you get anything back?” to which she responds, “I think it has Mauri in it, it has its own life aye, she gives it, yeah, that’s why I work in clay really... you know, just the feel of her”.²⁸

Somewhere in between making cups and staging *Help yourself to a cuppa tea* in 2020, along with intermittent COVID-19 lockdowns, I made a wāhine figure. With uku, I represented my whanaunga tupuna aunty Tuaiwa Hautai ‘Eva’ Rickard (1925–1997), a prominent and influential activist for Māori Land rights and advocate for women’s rights within Māoridom. Aunty Eva led the Raglan golf course protest in the 1970s. This was the ancestral land taken from our Tainui Awhiro people during World War I, which the New Zealand Government seized, including the burial grounds to make way for an airbase which was not returned after the war, becoming a public golf course – and which sparked the protest by Aunty Eva to restore the land to our people. She stated then: “Firstly Whenua is Land. This is your little bit of Land. No matter where you are in the world, I will be here, and at the end, you can come back”. (Tuaiwa Hautai ‘Eva’ Rickard)²⁹

While making my first wahine figure from uku and being inspired by my whanaunga Aunty Eva, it was a very emotional process. I could relate to Rapira-Davies’ art practice and decision to work with uku, including referring to clay as ‘her’ Papatūānuku. At that stage, I had not seen *Ngā Morehu* (the survivors) (1988). *Ngā Morehu* is a large-scale terracotta installation consisting of twelve life-size female figures representing the Karanga or call of women on the marae, facing a young child. The figures symbolise what Rapira-Davies describes as her tīpuna and their descendants. Displaying the struggle for survival against enforced cultural and social systemic poverty is emotionally visible in its female raw-ness and unfiltered text, reciting the profane voices of western culture. As a significant figurative body of uku work, the act of using whakapapa Papatūānuku in this way offers an opportunity. Wāhine Māori artists become a medium by which we can be guided by whakapapa to recover and reclaim the strength and resilience of Māori wāhine. In Rapira-Davies explaining *Ngā Morehu* as a medium responsible to whakapapa, “When it came to shaping their faces she no longer made decisions, each face shaped itself despite her intentions so she allowed herself to become the physical medium by which each woman made her appearance.”³⁰

I saw *Ngā Morehu* displayed in the most significant Māori art exhibition ever presented by Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki: *Toi Tū Toi Ora: Contemporary Māori Art*³¹ spearheaded by Nigel Borell (Pirirākau, Ngāi Te Rangi, Ngāti Ranginui, Te Whakatōhea), curator of Māori Art. Presented in the exhibition were over 300 artworks from 111 artists, spanning 70 years, all empowering Māori ways of knowing. Of these, *Ngā Morehu* is significant and important because it carries stories of mana wāhine. It carries whakapapa. It carries our stories that not only express our lived realities and the role and responsibilities as wāhine Māori but our continued determination to change our realities.

²⁸ Captured main dialogue between (7:36-8:08) Part One, Nzonscreen, “A Cat Among the Pigeons: Documentary” 1992, <https://www.nzonscreen.com/title/a-cat-among-the-pigeons-1992>

²⁹ Mikaere, Ani. 2017. *The Balance Destroyed*. Te Tākupu Wānanga O Raukawa, Otaki, 42

³⁰ Shona Rapira-Davies In discussing *Ngā Morehu* (the survivors) Shona Rapira Davies, Robyn Kahukiwa, Whakamamae (Wellington City: Art gallery, 1988), 4, <https://citygallery.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/PWM.pdf>

³¹ Toi Tū Toi Ora: Contemporary Māori Art Exhibition, 5 December 2020 – 9 May 2021, Auckland Art Gallery, Tāmaki Makaurau

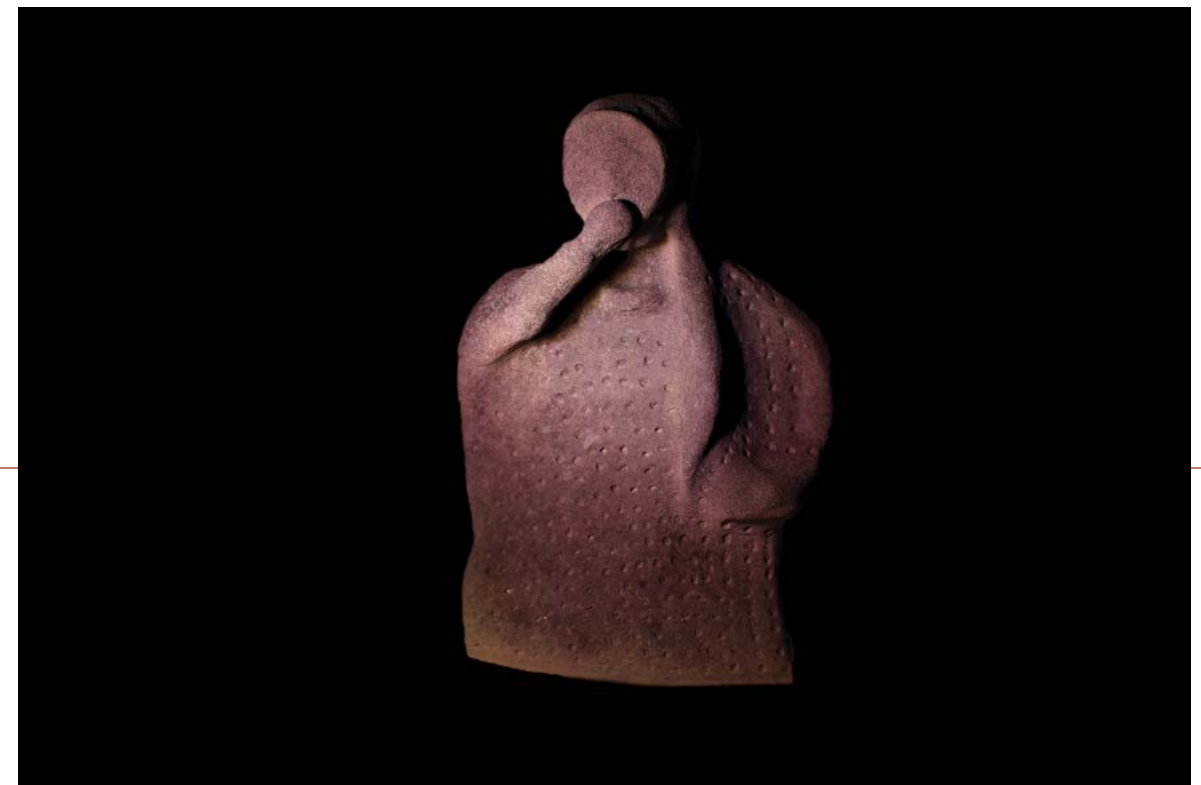
Ngā Morehu is a visually powerful and for me, a spine-tingling artwork that holds emotional struggles while reminding wāhine of their power and obligation as Māori, specifically wāhine. While working on my wahine sculpture, I felt guided through the whole process in a way not easily explained. However, suppose I consider the concept of be-ing as a vessel through whakapapa. In that case, it is easy to consider this ongoing obligation we have to our tūpuna, ourselves, and our work as wāhine and artist.

With my practice being process-led with experiences at its centre, my everyday role as mother, partner, friend, and wāhine informs my work in ways which I only see as it reveals itself. As such, everything becomes experimentation.³² As my practice is heavily rooted in my everyday underpinned by Māori concepts, specifically as wāhine and my relationship to uku through Papatūānuku, I reflect on how I use uku and how it is not just an object but an extension of whakapapa. Through a spiritual connection and partnership with whakapapa, this gives mana to the object. This mana is seen as an obligation and acknowledgment to whakapapa within a Māori context. I want to acknowledge that my working with uku in this manner is a very new exploration within my practice and is at the beginning stages compared to that of Rapira-Davies, a pioneering voice for wāhine Māori since the eighties. I am relating instead to the connections she describes with uku from a Māori wāhine perspective. Rapira-Davies and Auntie Eva, as wāhine Māori artists/activists, have returned our people to their land. Through their different mediums of uku and protest, they remind us that we are not only whakapapa to the whenua, but we are whenua.

³² Similarly, Rapira Davies says, “I am process-driven. I learn so much when it is a failure – it becomes an experiment. I think the kids or going to work; it is all part of what makes the work. Everything informs everything else.” Shona Rapira-Davies In discussing Ngā Morehu (the survivors) Shona Rapira Davies, Robyn Kahukiwa, Whakamamae (Wellington City: Art gallery, 1988), 4, <https://citygallery.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/PWM.pdf>

Whakaahua 20

Tuaiwa Hautai “Eva” Rickard, campaigning for land rights at Nambassa, 1979, By The original uploader was Mombas at English Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eva_Rickard



Whakaahua 21 Chantel Matthews, “*Go back to what you were, go back and be us*” – Tuaiwa Hautai “Eva” Rickard, 2020, Uku Sculpture fired with charcoal iron glaze, mixed with wai moana collected from (Raglan Whaingaroa) 5.31 x 8.46 inches



Whakaahua 22 Shona Rapira Davies, *Nga Morehu*, 1988, terracotta figures with muka and wood. Purchased 1992 with New Zealand Lottery Grants Board funds. Te Papa (1992-0001-1/A to Q)



Whakaahua 23 Prior to making Eva Sculpture, I was experimenting with stacking uku cups as a way to explore figures using domestic forms. Image of uku cups stacked and glazed in Whaingaroa Te Moana with fauna 2020

Whakaahua 24 Kai spread including *Ugly Oranges*, during kōrero with Angeline Greensill at Te Kopua Kokiri, Whaingaroa, Raglan, 2020



Morning pages, 02 August, 2020.

Hui at Poihakena Marae. Sitting next to my whanaunga, academic and mana whenua kaitiaki leader Angeline Greensill, I mentioned during a recent swim that I had collected a jar fill of our wai moana and asked if it was ok. Angeline responded, “ Did you do a karakia and ask permission from Tangaroa³³, god of sea and your tupuna Kawharu?” I said yes, “then it’s ok” she replied.

³³ Tangaroa takes the form widely associated as atua of the maine and marine life. Although there are many marine atua such as Kiwa (Te Moana-nui-a-kiwa), Punga (god of all things strange looking such as sharks and rays), and Hinemoana (Ocean woman), Tangaroa is considered an overarching atua of the ocean and ocean life (Best, 1928: Pomare & Cowam, 1987; Marsden, 2003). Benjamin Dimitrious Hanara, 2020. Tangaroa Wai Noa, Tangaroa Wai Taou, Tangaroa Wairoro (Masters, Dunedin, New Zealand: University of Otago, 2011), 79

In September 2020, I found myself standing in my ancestral waters in Whaingaroa, Raglan. What initially started as attending a marae hui became a regular monthly trip throughout the duration of this project. As stated earlier, I began collecting wai moana in jars from my moana in Whaingaroa on each visit. Following tikanga and systems when collecting – this included karakia (prayer), monitoring tides, maramataka (moon observations), and not collecting during menstruation. I engaged with these rituals to reaffirm the ideas surrounding active kinship, in this case with tupuna Tangaroa.

During this time, Angeline shared a kōrero about the pīngao (native sand sedge plant) being Tāne’s forest atua eyebrows and how he plucked them as a gesture of peace to his brother Tangaroa. The whānau continues this gesture today by planting pīngao to keep the peace. Such stories are relevant because they highlight responsibilities and the active kinship of whakapapa within my whānau. Relating Angeline’s story to Māori cosmology, “Whakapapa, according to Angeline Greensill, is the ‘foundation stone’ within a Tangata Whenua (local whanau) perspective because it represents relationships across generations and species, with all things interconnected through a shared lineage back to our atua.”³⁴

With whānau stories by Angeline being shared with examples of engaging with whakapapa, such as Tangaroa through acts of kinship, I can relate this kinship to the vessels I make using Tangaroa as a medium to connect with whakapapa. Hence through Māori knowledge systems, I find a connection to myself. Māori academic Dr Mere Roberts (Ngāti Apakura, Ngāti Hikairo) critiques Māori ecological belief systems with regard to the self:

These beliefs were held together by whakapapa, which functioned to maintain the solidarity of the kin group rather than the pursuit of certain and true knowledge. What then is meant by ‘beliefs’? These beliefs, otherwise known as matauranga Māori, are best understood as ‘mirror knowledge’. Mirror knowledge is the projection of the self outwards, so that all things are ultimately known through the connection to the self.³⁵

During my collection of wai moana on 6th September 2020, I decided to take the whānau. My little one, Carter (four years at the time) in particular, was very eager to participate. After collecting the wai moana, despite the cold weather of spring, we both stripped down and jumped into the Whaingaroa moana. This engagement with my son, the crossing over between artist and mother, highlighted our roles and responsibilities and how it is impossible to separate as a wahine, artist, and mother.

From the perspective of mothering, I would like to introduce British/American interdisciplinary artist Lenka Clayton, who uniquely displays nurture by giving insight into motherhood’s monotony and everyday nature. Clayton describes her art as a practice that “exaggerates and alters the accepted rules of everyday life.” In her video series, *The Distance I Can Be From My Son*, 2013, Clayton objectively measures how far she will allow her then two-year-old son to wander before motherly instincts kick in and she must retrieve her loved one. Clayton’s choice of places to film seems safe and familiar. Enough to allow her son’s eagerness to venture off without her; however, anxiety is a natural response as you watch on, only to breathe a sigh of relief once you see Clayton run into the shot after her son.

34 Ngāhuia Murphy, 2011. “Te Awa Atua, Te Awa Tapu, Te Awa Wahine: An Examination of Stories, Ceremonies and Practices Regarding Menstruation in the Pre-Colonial Māori World,” (Masters, Hamilton, New Zealand: University of Waikato, 2011), 50, <https://hdl.handle.net/10289/5532>.

35 Mere Roberts, “Ways of Seeing: Whakapapa”, Vol 10, 1 (2013): 110, <https://sites.otago.ac.nz/Sites/article/view/236>, 11

I include Clayton’s artwork for it focuses on where and when the motherly instinct kicks in. I like this particular work, and its allegiance to my everyday responsibilities as a mother in the home, and the anxiety that comes when juggling that with my role as an artist. The never-ending running around, ensuring everyone’s safety, adhering to the rules, and looking like we have it all together – all while making art at the same time.

I have noticed in my art practice that through my desire to escape the day-to-day responsibilities of mothering, partnering, and friending, somehow, whakapapa has brought me right back to all those things. As I conclude this journey and have studied, researched, and immersed myself into whakapapa, I feel more connected because of all the mana wāhine that guides me, whether it be academically, physically, or spiritually. I know the wahine has always been there innately through my wāhine tūpuna. And I realise now that I had returned to whakapapa for my whānau, and especially my little one. Yates-Smith captures this realisation beautifully:

I always feel the presence of something spiritual. I don’t know why that is. A spiritual presence always guides me to perform a task in a particular way. I’ve always known I am guided by my tūpuna. When I think about the spiritual realm, I think about my ancestors first and foremost. Secondly, I think about what gives my family and I strength in life, this is how I view the world.³⁶

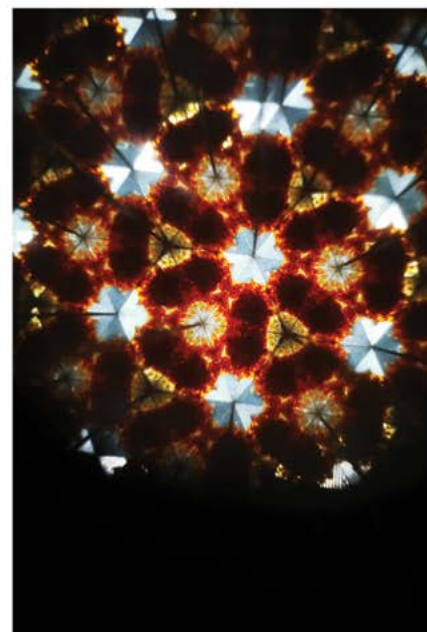
With my world consisting of a wahine artist making space for mothering, partnering, and friending through a process-driven sculptural practice, I find my world a collective one. A world that includes be-ing Māori. One that is layered and stacked, filled with whakapapa, filled with stories and the strength of wāhine.



Whakaahua 25 Chantel Matthews, *Collecting Wai with Carter*, 2020, Whaingaroa Te Moana, Raglan



Whakaahua 26 *The Distance I Can Be From My Son*, Lenka Clayton, 2013
Image courtesy of the artist and Catharine Clark Gallery



*I'm here, not to save lives. I need evidence. Approved, I
drink a litre of juice and water; give blood. Emptying
its contents, I replace it with my own.*

Reversing the gaze.

Whakaahua 27 Chantel Matthews, *Morning Pages*, Postcard to my future self, 2020

Conclusion

*I'm here, not to save lives. I need evidence. Approved, I drink a litre of juice
and water, give blood, Emptying its contents, I replace it with my own.*
– Chantel Matthews, 2020

I would like to conclude with talking about three artists/
collective where their strength is in numbers, seen in
collaboration and within their art practice. My journey towards
whakapapa aims to be a scaffold built on the tūara (back bone)
of wāhine where using the female as a vessel either conceptually
or materially upholds the whakapapa of mana wāhine.

Mata Aho Collective

With Maureen Lander / Judy Chicago

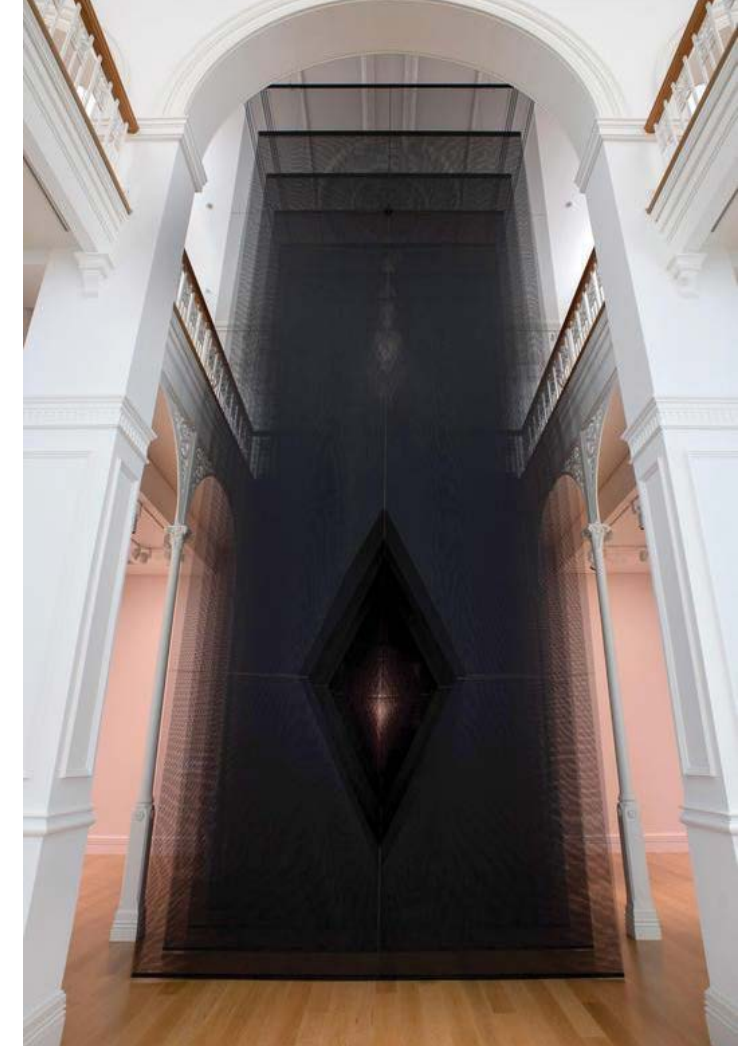
Atapō (Before Dawn), 2020 is a collaboration between Mata Aho Collective and Maureen Lander who have been working together in a tuākana-teina relationship. *Atapō*, 2020 marks the first time they have created artwork together.³⁷ Mata Aho Collective comprises of four Māori wāhine, Erena Baker (Te Atiawa ki Whakarongotai, Ngāti Toa Rangātira), Sarah Hudson (Ngāti Awa, Ngāi Tūhoe), Bridget Reweti (Ngāti Ranginui, Ngāi Te Rangi) and Terri Te Tau (Rangitāne ki Wairarapa). Together they produce large scale fibre-based works, ‘commenting on the complexity of Māori lives’³⁸. Dr Maureen Lander (Te Hikutu, Ngāpuhi) is a weaver, sculptor, multimedia installation artist and academic. Her work looks at contemporary Māori experience and existence within a modern world. *Atapō*, which is a collaboration between Mata Aho and Maureen Lander features a mass installation with layers of black mesh with a diamond-shaped pierced centre that monumentally drapes down two floors at Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki: *Toi Tū Toi Ora: Contemporary Māori Art*, symbolising the transformation story of Hine-tītama (personification of dawn) into Hine-nui-te-pō (guardian of the underworld). This work brings me back to the whare-tangata, as wāhine, mothers and artists, and how through whakapapa and the power of wāhine/women, we can make sense of and define ourselves. Our roles and responsibilities are crucial to our practising, however, I am reminded that these responsibilities are shared because we are never without whakapapa. Lander’s works also share this notion, seeing whakapapa as always being with us. She says, “whakapapa grows with us, and how our genealogy is inherited by our descendants, who continue our heritage lines.”³⁹

³⁷ “Auckland Art Gallery, Toi o Tāmaki” Mata Aho Collective, 5 December 2020– 9 May 2021, <https://www.aucklandartgallery.com/explore-art-and-ideas/artist/11990/mata-aho-collective?q=%2Fexplore-art-and-ideas%2Fartist%2F11990%2Fmata-aho-collective>

³⁸ Mata aho collective about, accessed 18 May 2021, <https://www.mataahocollective.com/about>

³⁹ Dowse, 2017, accessed 13 May 2021, <https://dowse.org.nz/exhibitions/detail/maureen-lander-flat-pack-whakapapa>

Whakaahua 28 Mata Aho Collective with Maureen Lander, *Atapō*, 2020. <https://www.aucklandartgallery.com/whats-on/event/walters-prize-krero-with-the-artists?q=%2Fwhats-on%2Fevent%2Fwalters-prize-krero-with-the-artists>



Whakaahua 29 Maureen Lander *DIY-DNA* 2017. Courtesy of the Dowse Art Museum. Photo Mark Tantrum <https://dowse.org.nz/exhibitions/detail/maureen-lander-flat-pack-whakapapa>

Acknowledging the Mana Wāhine Māori artists that span generations before me working within traditional and contemporary modes of making, I look to them for guidance so that I may move forward in honouring not only my voice but the voice of whakapapa.

Working with my hands I become connected to all women, my mother, my mother's mother, her mother's mother and my father's mother and so on. It spans time and geographical dis/placements.⁴⁰

This brings me to another icon within my artist whakapapa, the mother of all parties, *The Dinner Party*, 1974-79. Judy Chicago is an artist with a practice spanning five decades, and is an author, feminist and educator. *The Dinner Party* comprises of 39 ceramic place settings, each resembling vulvas dedicated to women across time, fictional and real.



Whakaahua 30 Judy Chicago, *The Dinner Party*, 1979, Installation view of Wing Two, featuring Elizabeth R., Artemisia Gentileschi, and Anna van Schurman place settings, Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art, Collection of the Brooklyn Museum. <https://www.judychicago.com/gallery/the-dinner-party/dp-artwork/#28>

⁴⁰ Rennie, Kirsten. 2001. "Urban Maori Art: The Third Generation of Contemporary Maori Artists: Identity and Identification." Master of Arts in art History, University of Canterbury, 30, <https://ir.canterbury.ac.nz/handle/10092/13390>

In relating these works to the wāhine/women in ‘the everyday’ through sculptural strategies while acknowledging the struggles juggling as an artist, mother, partner, friend, and wahine, I am confident in incorporating not only Māori ways of knowing but embracing the female body through a sculptural practice. Exploring whakapapa and wāhine as a method and conceptual tool within my art practice heightens our roles and responsibilities. It has enabled me a space of freedom when walking in-between spaces. Although this project set out to explore the struggles to make space for my art practice, with the question of how might wāhine artists make space for art when mothering, partnering, friending, and everything else in-between, I realise the answer is simple, We just do it. It is part of our mana and manaakitanga as wāhine. All of the wāhine artists, writers and theorists have shown me in this thesis project that as long as our roles and responsibilities remain, we are never alone if we have whakapapa. This project has led me back so that I can move forward and be the wahine I need to be for my children, so they can walk tall and stand in the light of their tūpuna. Unlike the stories I heard growing up, my little one will say, “I come from warriors aye Māmā,” which I always reply, “Yes, you do, my baby, yes you do.”

Ruminating over this thought in the context of my project’s journey, I recall a story from the outset of this project that occurred between my mother and myself – and give my mother the last words. That day as I handed her a clump of bought uku, sitting on her couch, asking if she would consider trying to make an uku cup for me, she says:

*I used to work at Crown Lynn, my mates and me.
This was before your time.*

– Sessie Matthews (March 2020)



Whakaahua 31 Chantel Matthews, *Untitled*, 2021, work in progress, experimenting with uku, concepts of the domestic object (cup) as a vessel that is symbolic of wāhine (whare tangata) and how these vessels can hold space and time through notions of whakapapa.

I sea a vessel filled with tea: exploring the day-to-day Wāhine.

St Paul Street Gallery 23 – 26 June 2021

Whakapapa did not come to me through whānau, my hapu, or iwi, nor did it come through whenua. For like many others, my whānau experienced cultural disconnection due to colonisation. So, whakapapa came to me over a cuppa, which emerged multiple times over bottomless cups of tea, sometimes at home, sometimes with friends, some times alone, and sometimes while making handmade cups out of uku. The wahine has always been there innately through my female ancestors, but more recently, has physically appeared for my younger son, Hence, unlike myself, he will grow up with whakapapa, the whenua kind, the turangawaewae kind. He has a place to call home, where the kitchen is warm and filled with the language of his Māori tūpuna.

Considering the day-to-day struggles and complexities of juggling as an artist, mother, partner, wahine, and everything else in-between, these works use ‘the everyday’ as an opportunity to incorporate Māori ways of knowing that seek to embrace, empower and uplift through notions of whakapapa.

I came via the sea, in a time stood still, she carried me home,
Various jars containing wai moana (Whaingaroa, Raglan), 2021

Wai-rua, Uku vessels (size varied), shelves, 2021

To be a good wahine, I must behave

Burnt Hydrangea,

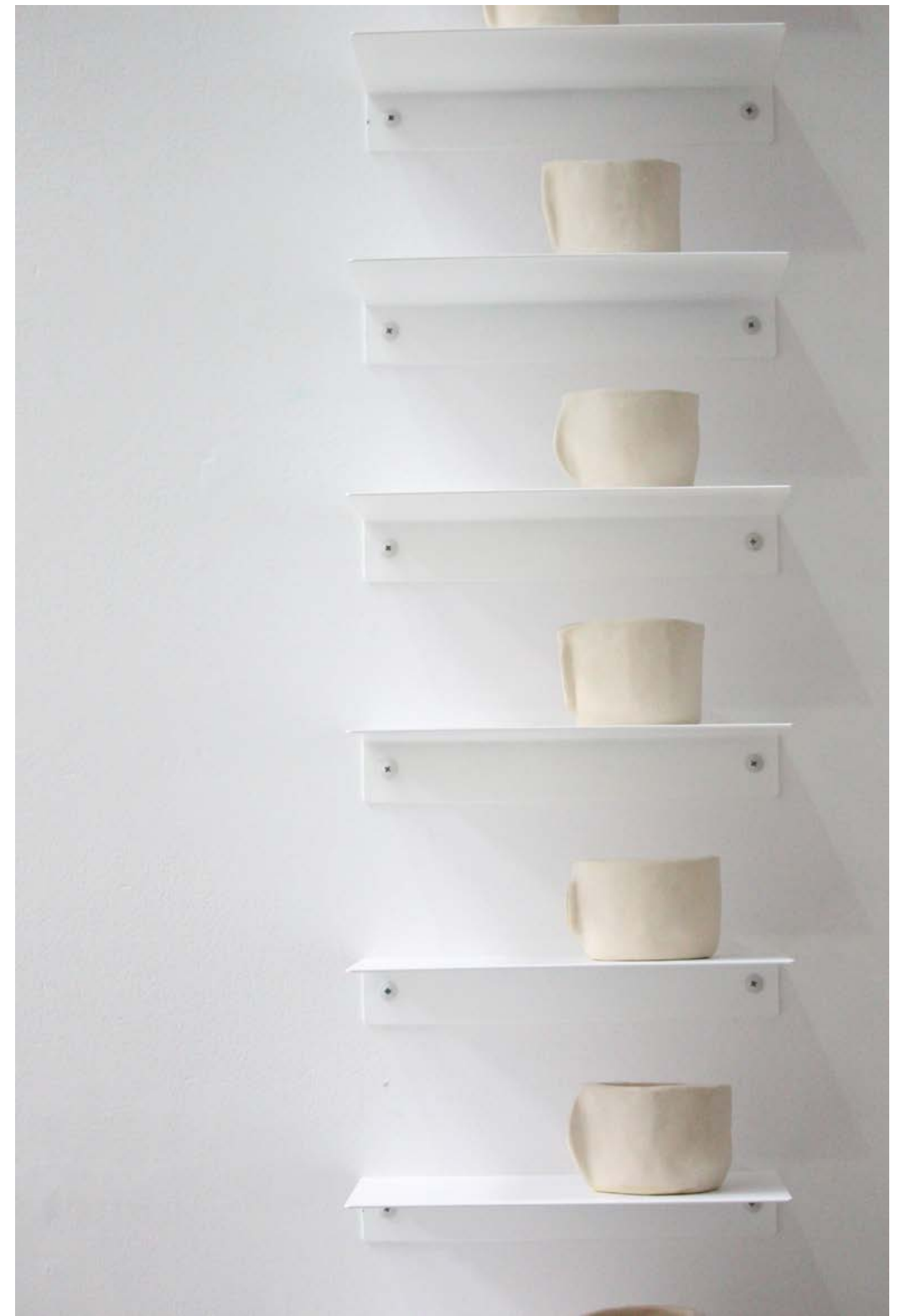
3D Laser engravings on handmade recycled paper, Gifted by artist Lindsey de Roos, 2021

Chantel Matthews

(Tainui Awhiro, Ngāti Hounuku, Ngāti Koata, Ngāti Tahinga, Ngāti Ikaunahi)



Whakaahua 32 Chantel Matthews, 2021, *Wai-rua*, Uku vessels (size varied) Shelves



Whakaahua 33 Chantel Matthews, 2021, *Wai-rua*, Uku vessels (size varied) Shelves



Whakaahua 34 Chantel Matthews, 2021, *Wai-rua*, Uku vessels (size varied) Shelves



Whakaahua 35 Chantel Matthews, 2021, *Wai-rua*, Uku vessels (size varied) Shelves



Whakaahua 36 Chantel Matthews, 2021, *Wai-rua*, Uku vessels (size varied) Shelves



Whakaahua 37 Chantel Matthews, 2021, *Wai-rua*, Uku vessels (size varied) Shelves



Whakaahua 38 Chantel Matthews, 2021, *Wai-rua*, Uku vessels (size varied) Shelves



Whakaahua 39 Chantel Matthews, 2021, *To be a good wahine, I must behave, Burnt Hydrangea*, 3D Laser engravings on handmade recycled paper, Gifted by artist Lindsey de Roos.



Whakaahua 40 Chantel Matthews, 2021, *To be a good wahine, I must behave, Burnt Hydrangea*, 3D Laser engravings on handmade recycled paper, Gifted by artist Lindsey de Roos.



Whakaahua 41 Chantel Matthews, 2021, *To be a good wahine, I must behave, Burnt Hydrangea*, 3D Laser engravings on handmade recycled paper, Gifted by artist Lindsey de Roos.



Whakaahua 42 Chantel Matthews, 2021, *To be a good wahine, I must behave, Burnt Hydrangea*, 3D Laser engravings on handmade recycled paper, Gifted by artist Lindsey de Roos.



Whakaahua 43 Chantel Matthews, 2021, *I came via the sea, in a time stood still, she cared me home*, Various jars containing wai moana (Whaingaroa, Raglan)



Whakaahua 44 Chantel Matthews, 2021, *I came via the sea, in a time stood still, she cared me home*, Various jars containing wai moana (Whaingaroa, Raglan)



Whakaahua 45 Chantel Matthews, 2021, *I came via the sea, in a time stood still, she cared me home*, Various jars containing wai moana (Whaingaroa, Raglan)



Whakaahua 46 Chantel Matthews, 2021, *Help yourself to a cuppa tea*, tea station during examination.



Whakaahua 47 Chantel Matthews, 2021, *Help yourself to a cuppa tea*, tea station during examination.



Whakaahua 48 Chantel Matthews, 2021, *Help yourself to a cuppa tea,* tea station during examination.

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Artists

Judy Chicago Born July 20, 1939 – Chicago, IL Judy Chicago is an artist, author, feminist, educator, and intellectual whose career now spans five decades. <https://www.judychicago.com/about/biography/>

Joyce Campbell is a contemporary interdisciplinary artist and art educator in New Zealand. Working with historical and contemporary forms of photography, as well as video and sculpture, she examines natural and human systems, and their points of interaction. <https://ocula.com/artists/joyce-campbell/>

Lenka Clayton is an interdisciplinary artist whose work considers, exaggerates, and alters the accepted rules of everyday life, extending the familiar into the realms of the poetic and absurd. <http://www.lenkaclayton.com/new-page-1>

Mata Aho Collective is a collaboration between four Māori women who produce large scale fiber based works, commenting on the complexity of Māori lives. Their conceptual framework is founded within the contemporary realities of mātauranga Māori. They produce works with a single collective authorship that are bigger than our individual capabilities. <https://www.mataahocollective.com/about>

Maureen Lander is a weaver, sculptor, multimedia installation artist and academic. Operating from within Te Ao Māori, Maureen Lander's installation speaks to the contemporary Māori experience, where genealogy, cultural values and spiritual beliefs are cloaked by the codes of modern living. Lander's installation shares rare insight into, and encouragement towards, ways that the contemporary Māori existence might be understood and lived. <https://christchurchartgallery.org.nz/exhibitions/maureen-lander>

Public Share is a New Zealand artist collective engaging in ideas of sharing, production and exchange. The members of the collective are Monique Redmond, Harriet Stockman, Kelsey Stankovich, Deborah Rundle, Mark Schroder and Joe Prisk. <https://publicshare.co.nz>

Rosanna Raymond is a New Zealand artist, poet, cultural commentator and member of the Pacific and Māori collective, Pacific Sisters. <https://ceac.org.nz/community/artists/rosanna-raymond>

Shona Rapira Davies (born 1951) is a sculptor and painter of Ngati Wai ki Aotea tribal descent. Currently residing in Wellington New Zealand. <https://www.aucklandartgallery.com/explore-art-and-ideas/artist/879/shona-rapira-davies?q=%2Fexplore-art-and-ideas%2Fartist%2F879%2Fshona-rapira-davies>

Cora-Allan Wickliffe, Māori, Niuean – Ngapuhi, Tainui, Alofi, Liku is a multidisciplinary artist, focussing on the revival of art form Hiapo. <http://www.cora-allan.co.nz>

