

Turangawaewae
an exploration through painting

Aroha Gossage

2015

Exegesis submitted in partial fulfilment of requirements for
Master of Art & Design (Visual Arts)
Auckland University of Technology, 2015

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ATTESTATION OF AUTHORSHIP

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge, 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 accepted for the award of another degree or diploma or a university or institution of higher learning.

Signed

20 October 2015

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my supervisors for their ongoing support and encouragement. To all AUT staff members and students who have given their time and advice throughout the years I have been at AUT.

My whanau have been the backbone of my project who have held me up along my journey and enabled me to pursue postgraduate study.

I would also like to acknowledge my tupuna for their guidance and their aroha that has always surrounded me.

ABSTRACT

This project explores painting in relation to concepts of tangata whenua (people of the land), whakapapa (genealogy) and turangawaewae (a place to stand) that is informed by cultural, historical and spiritual connections to whenua (land). The project focuses on articulating my desire to imbue the work with a sense of wairua (spiritual essence) and mauri (living life principle) that may communicate a transcendental sensibility or quality to the viewer. It also outlines the context of my practice as a wahine painter, drawing on aesthetic and thematic parallels to other New Zealand artists. Generally the project explores the potential of how my paintings could open up a way for the viewer to experience the sensibilities of the specific landscape/places I am depicting, and convey a sense or feeling of the subtleties of Māori history and ancestry, an awareness of an environment that is in continuous change, and empathy for an indigenous emotional and spiritual connection to landscape.

1 INTRODUCTION

The approach taken to the practice-based research is to explore how, as a *process*, painting involves connection and flow, in time and through space. In particular it explores how the connection and flow inherent to a Māori conception of inseparable permeation between Whakapapa, Mauri, Wairua, and Whenua. From this, my own perspective as Māori, Euro-centric notions of landscape painting and its traditions are subsumed within whenua, and it is through the process of painting that I explore my own immanence to whenua. Painting is not approached as a form of representation, but as a *process* allied to the continuous becoming of my own living and spiritual ecology, and also allied to the continuous becoming of geology and ecology of land. The paintings focus on a personal and spiritual relationship with that particular coastal area north of Auckland, named Pakiri.

The exegesis naturally starts with pepeha and whakapapa, before proceeding to draw in other related concepts and qualities informing my painting.

2 PEPEHA

In the first instance a pepeha should acknowledge and identify the speaker's Mātua Marae, taking into consideration that the speaker may belong to several or more Marae and, depending on the degree to which the speaker wishes, in a particular circumstance, to identify those whakapapa connections. In here, the waka I am using are the whakapapa lines that tatai to the whenua and surroundings of our main marae " Omaha Marae".

- Manuhiri : because he is first and foremost our principle ancestor from Ngāti Awa , Kawhia and Northern Taranaki.
- Tahuhunuiarangi : the commander of the Moekaraka waka that landed at Hawere. Manuhiri defeated these people and they married into us in 1654 when he arrived on the coastline before heading out to Hauturu.
- Mahuhukiterangi : Rangihokaia was the big Rangatira of Ngāti Wai his grandson married Kupapa who begat Te Wera who begat Te Kiri. So through that link we whakapapa to Ngāti Wai when we are standing in our Omaha Marae. Tenetahi was linked in many ways to Ngāti Wai but born and bred on Aotea.

Tainui — Manuhiri

Moekaraka — Tahuhunuiarangi

Mahuhukiterangi — Rangihokaia

PEPEHA NGATI MANUHIRI

Tainui raua ko Moekaraka raua ko Mahuhukiterangi nga waka

Tamahunga te Maunga

Pakiri te Awa

Omaha te Marae

Te Kiri te whare Tupuna

Hine Hauturu te Whare Kai

Ngā oneone haea o Pakiri taku Kainga

Ko Aroha Gossage toku Ingoa

Ko Ngāti Manuhiri Ahau

Terrence (Mook) Hohneck CEO Ngāti Manuhiri Settlement Trust

Taranaki whakapapa -Joseph Gavier Haddon>Josephine Haddon>

Ko Aotea te Waka

Ko Taranaki te Maunga

Ko Waingongoro te Awa

Ko Aotearoa te Marae

Ko Okahu te Hapu
Ko Inuawai te
Ko Ngā Ruahine te Iwi

3 WHAKAPAPA GENEALOGY



Figure 1. *In Front of Stars*, ink on paper, 72 cm x 55 cm

Maki-nui = Rotu

|
Turangi
|
Te Awa
|
Kupapa
|
Te Wera
|
Te Kiri
|
Te Roa = Rahui + Tenetahi
|
Kereihi Brownx
|
Josephine Haddon
|
Aroha Gossage

Whakapapa is expressed through rituals, stories and genealogies. Knowledge and histories are passed on through oral storytelling. Whakapapa provides positioning and relationships between people and landscape. Whakapapa, which is defined generally as being genealogy, also encapsulates the way in which Māori view the world. It is a way of thinking, of learning and storing and debating knowledge. In terms of Kaupapa Māori research whakapapa is integral as it allows for the positioning and contextualising of relationships between people, communities, participants, landscape, and the universe as a whole.¹

Whakapapa provides links, interrelationships with whanau, hapu and iwi. It allows us to see ourselves and understand who we are in relation to our collective being. Whakapapa is the knowledge of who we descend from, and how ancestry connects us to others, forming relationships and a spiritual connection to our relations, our whanau, through our tupuna. Mereana Taki locates whakapapa as central to Kaupapa Māori analysis. It provides us with a positioning in the world and affirms that particular positioning and cultural identification. It is a spiritual connection that brings together all aspects of Te Ao Māori. Through whakapapa our links are identified and it is a means through which we are able to place ourselves not only in the world but also in relationship to each other.

Whakapapa is an essential element of what it means to be Māori. Providing cultural identification, it informs our relationship with the world, the understanding of creation through Papatūānuku and Ranginui and all the atua that make up the Māori world. Whakapapa is also an expression of evolution and the relationships between all created things.

Whakapapa is about identity, knowing who you are, where you are from and where you belong. In the Māori worldview, all things are related – people, the environment and animate and inanimate objects, where whakapapa is a genealogical reference system for this interconnectedness.²

The concept of whakapapa as a symbol of Māori identity is directly related to land. Descent is commonly traced back to Papatūānuku, further serving to strengthen that bond. The importance of association made by Māori between tupuna and land is central to an understanding of tribal identity. There is a belief that whakapapa links a person inextricably to the area where his or her tupuna dwelled. It is not necessary to trace descent right back

¹ Graham Smith, *Research Issues Related to Maori Education*, (Auckland, NZ: The University of Auckland, 1992)

² Huhana Smith, *E Tu Ake:Maori Standing Strong*, (Auckland, NZ, 2001)

through the tribal histories and stories to Papatūānuku in order to establish a direct link with the land. That link has already been established by a person's whakapapa to the tupuna who are buried in that region, the tupuna who named and shaped the land, who bestowed upon the place the stories and histories.³ On a spiritual level the land was carved with the histories of the iwi, thus hosting the living and also the past, the tupuna who had gone before and the tribal atua that guarded the rohe.

My work is informed by the histories of the land that have been passed down through oral storytelling. The knowledge of when and where my tupuna have lived is kept alive through oral histories throughout generations. Growing up knowing the histories and events of the past creates an attachment to your tupuna through the land. An example of this is the pa site of chief Te Kiri, which is sacred to us as we know about the history that it once was a fortified past, invested with meaning.



Figure 2. *Ben's Hill*, oil on canvas, 72 cm x 55 cm

In the painting depicted in Figure 2 the trees stand in profile, from the perspective of below, looking upwards. The light is behind the hill and there is a slow gradation of colour

³ Hana O'Regan, *Ko Tahu, ko au: Kai Tahu tribal identity* (Christchurch, N.Z: Horomaka Publishing, 2001).

up towards the sky. The painting shows a slow gradual shifting in time and light as the afternoon sun fades, casting shadows from the pohutukawa trees. It shows a short period of time when the green grassy hill is covered in warm golden sunlight as the sun dips below the horizon. The painting has a simplicity, a freedom from accuracy and exact likeness. It is painted in movements without the intention of being a correct representation but to give the impression of the slow gradual shifting of movement and changing faded light in passing time. My painting process involves the idea of whakapapa as a storing of knowledge, a learning process. This is a place I have painted many times before and spent time studying and this is all related. It is painted, again, in Figure 3 at a different phase of movements within the world, and within me.



Figure 3. *Ben's Hill II*, oil on canvas, 72 cm x 55 cm



Figure 4. *Ben's Hill III*, watercolour on paper, 25 cm x 20 cm

The watercolour depicted in Figure 4 was painted outside, *en plein air*. At the time of painting I was troubled by this work, which I saw initially as somewhat naïve and lacking in topographical accuracy—and was inclined to discard it. However, through time, my thinking has changed. I realised that the purpose was to let me spend time in the land, and that this time spent looking, thinking, feeling, and painting was part of the unfolding of all my subsequent work. It reflects this time I spent looking and studying spending time in the land. In a way it is an ancestor to my more previous work, it has led to insights and understandings. It is part of my learning process and storing of knowledge, experience, that relates to the notion of whanau and the interrelation within my work, how it is all connected and the way the experience of the process of making, feeds into the other work. This becomes precious to me as it has all my memories of being in the land at that time, attached to it. I regard it to be valued, because it holds a connection to the time in my life when I painted it; through it I see the land at that time, connected to the time I painted it, it holds a place in time for me. I see myself having that painting in years to come, as not only a reminder of the past, but as an important part of my life inherent to the concept of whenua, mauri, whakapapa—as taonga.



Figure 5. *Ben's Hill IV*, oil on board, 72 cm x 55 cm

Historically, this hill depicted in Figure 5, was a lookout vantage point of particular significance as Kahikatearoa, the son of Manuhiri and his descendants, occupied it until the 1870s. I have walked around the hilltops with my uncle as he pointed out places, still visible, that were carved out in the earth to be used as hiding places during land battles. I imagined what happened in the past, whether lives were lost and blood was shed on this land. These oral histories, which have been passed on through generations, shape my understanding and perception of place. When I go up to the top of this hill and sit under the old pohutukawa trees that look out over the coast, contemplating, there is a sense that something else has happened there but also a separation from that time of the past and a living in the present there. The site/place has its own whakapapa, its own history and as tangata whenua and being deeply connected with the land you have an awareness of things of this nature. This is what I see as differentiating my work from the European practice of 'landscape painting' (discussed later in this document). My painting is *of whenua*, as an unfolding of whenua, rather than a representation of a landscape that is perceived from a position outside its (the land's) own life. In this respect my painting is a performing of whenua and could not be representational. For me, the artist's being is inseparable and separate from the land, as if composed of the same substance so you feel it and are in touch with it. It is as if this deep connection is a part of your body and you can feel it breathing, the pulse of it. You can hear it speak and feel the vibration as if it was breathing.

This painting more explicitly expresses/embodies my wairua, spiritual connection, the idea of whakapapa and history.

In this work the trees and sheep tracks in the hill are less detailed. Features are less defined using many layers and sanding back of the surface then repainting then removing. It has a haziness that is lacking in clarity, alluding to a time of the past. A liminal space connected to the sensation of experiencing a presence of the past that still inhabits place. It suggests what is un-seen, what dwells or still occupies that place to imbue the work with a sensibility of a subtle awareness, a quiet recognition in the viewer of something other.

The concept of whakapapa relates to the idea of immanence through the continuation of life. Physically the blood of my ancestors becomes a part of who I am, what I am composed of. Their existence is also immanent within the land. As I walk to the top of the pa I am walking in the company of my ancestors with an awareness of the assurance of their guardianship. This presence lives on through my connection to them through the land. They are in me and they are in the land. To a foreign person the same experience may be of taking walk up a steep hill to a lovely lookout point with an expansive view, that of an observer. Inherent within my experience is being connected to the land as being a part of it, as I see my tupuna are. But for me when I go to our pa my wairua connects with a feeling of love and protection here. Standing on your hau kainga there is a feeling of empathy, sense of grace and love of being protected. In the Māori worldview all things are related, people, the natural environment and animate and inanimate objects, and whakapapa is a genealogical reference system for this interconnectedness.



Figure 6. *Middens*, oil on canvas, 60 cm x 45 cm



Figure 7. *Paki Bush*, oil on board, 72 cm x 55 cm

In the following painting by Darcy Nicholas (Figure 8), the artist uses photographs of his ancestors, painting their likeness within an image of the land. Using layering, transparency, the faces are integrated into the sky, in the trees, in the earth, refers to the belief that our tupuna return to the land and become part of the whenua. Our spiritual ancestral connection to our tupuna is through the land, they are present there within it. The painting embodies the concept that whakapapa forms the interrelationship between people and the world.



Figure 8. *Forest of Tane*, Darcy Nicholas (2012), acrylic on board, 75 cm x 58 cm

Oral history says we were always on this land. Our stories tell of the creation of the land from the lava flow, emerging out of the sea, to the birth of the mountains, the rivers, the trees, and the creatures of the land. Our ancestors were Kahui Maunga, Kahui Ao, Kahui Rere, Taitawaro, Ruatamore, Pananehu and Maru Iwi. Our genealogies were linked to the mountains and the sky.⁴

⁴ Darcy Nicholas and Keri Kaa, *Seven Maori Artists: Interviews with Darcy Nicholas and Keri Kaa* (Wellington, NZ: Government Printer, 1986).



Figure 9. *Children of Tane*, Darcy Nicholas (1985), oil and acrylic on board, 73 cm x 99 cm

In this painting (Figure 9), also by Nicholas, we have a sense of distance and space, of scale that shows a recession, and that we interpret as landscape. Then there are the images of the faces present, and the two figures. They are painted thinly, they are translucent and the light passes through them. They are not concrete physical representations of people walking through that space, we associate them as being otherworldly. The work evokes the physical and spiritual nature of existence as well as the ancestral attachment to land.

There is another world beyond the one we see.⁵

The painting refers to the spiritual dimension addressing ideas of whakapapa in terms of history, the past, of what exists and inhabits land and space through time. The complex interconnection within Te Ao Māori of the past and the present that transcends the perception of space and time.

4 WHENUA

The Māori word for land, whenua, also means placenta. All life is seen as being born from the womb of Papatūānuku. Traditionally the whenua and pito umbilical cord of newborn babies are buried in a significant place that reinforces the relationship between the newborn child and the land of their birth. The close Māori spiritual relationship with the land stemmed from his traditional concept of the basic origin of mankind deriving from the loving union of the earth mother, Papatūānuku, with the sky father Rangi-nui-tu-nei.

⁵ Darcy Nicholas and Keri Kaa, *Seven Maori Artists: Interviews with Darcy Nicholas and Keri Kaa* (Wellington, NZ: Government Printer, 1986).

By the separation of Rangi and Papa the world of light, of existence came into being. Te Ao Mārama the world of light and reality, the dwelling place of humans. After this, their children became gods of various parts of the natural world.

Tangaroa, god of oceans and all that dwells in the sea.

Rongomātāne, god and father of all cultivated foods.

Haumia-tiketike, god of fern roots and all wild foods.

Tūmatauenga, god of war.

Tāwhirimātea, god of the wind.

Tāne Mahuta, god of the forest.

The central characters in the myths are gods, their progeny and their human descendants. The stories are narrated in prose form, with the notion of an evolutionary sequence conveyed by the storyteller linking the main characters through the traditional method of genealogical recital. Inherent in the genealogy of earth and sky, the gods and their human descendants, is the notion of evolution and progression.⁶

These Māori beliefs inform the knowledge and understanding and interaction for Māori living in the world. We can see ourselves as human descendants of these gods and view our existence in relation to, and within the sequence of this evolution and progression. We come after and whakapapa to this notion of creation. The tribes who evolve around these mountains are bound to genealogy, for example your maunga is seen as a mountain and as an ancestor. Our brothers and sisters are the wind, the rain, our elders are the moon the sun and the stars. We are of it, to be composed of its elements, derived from and originated in it.

⁶ Ranginui Walker, *Ka Whawhai Tonu Matou: Struggle Without End* (Auckland, NZ: Penguin, 1990).



Figure 10. *Waterfall*, oil on canvas, 60 cm x 45 cm

In this painting (Figure 10) I see whenua in this way, as both land and placenta. The perspective is upset so there is a moment where land and body intertwine. There is an interesting shift where, through the strong sense of movement, of shifting brushstrokes with life and energy, the body of the mother Papatūānuku might reveal as her hair, or what might appear to be the rushing of water, or like sinew that is about the strength and power of the whenua.

Today atua (gods) are believed to exist in the natural world, inhabiting land and place as kaitiaki (guardians). They are a very real and alive part of Māori living and understanding. Although not able to be seen they are a part of the awareness and sensory ways of Māori perception. They are respected and acknowledged. There is a difference between the perception of land and whenua. Māori have a relationship with whenua that is part of their genealogy they are tied and bound to the land.

A Māori identity is secured by land; land binds human relationships, and in turn people learn to bond with the land. Loss of land is loss of life, or at least loss of that part of life that depends on the connections between past and the present and present with the future. Whatu ngaro-ngaro te tangata, toitu te whenua. People perish but the land is permanent.⁷

⁷ Mason Durie, *Te Mana, Te Kawanatanga: The politics of self-determination* (Auckland, NZ: Oxford University Press, 1998).

A sense of Māori identity is secured by land through growing up on the whenua of your Turangawaewae. Your lived experience, these memories and ancestral memories form and establish a connection to the whenua as if you are a part of it, you grow up amongst your own people your whanau that surrounds you and with your whenua that nurtures you also. It becomes central to who you are, as you grow up and may move away you will always be connected to your papakāinga and will always return back and carry it within you everywhere you go. It becomes an intrinsic part of who you are and how you choose to navigate throughout the world. The bond and relationship with your whenua instils an everlasting connection of knowing who you are and where you come from, you belong to that place and to the people of that place who have been there in the past and the present and also the future. Having these spiritual and cultural values and connections strengthens a Māori identity.

Man perishes but the land remains.⁸

The Māori aphorism expressed the traditional attitude towards land as a permanent resource to be handed down to succeeding generations. Land was a communal resource, owned and defended by the collective efforts of the tribe.



Figure 11. *Awa*, oil on canvas, 42 cm x 33 cm

⁸ Ranginui Walker, *Ka Whawhai Tonu Matou: Struggle Without End* (Auckland, NZ: Penguin, 1990).

The Māori space-time construct can be thought of like a constellation with the past and the people of the past always felt in the present, like the constellation of the sky to the voyager enmeshing, surrounding always before you, always behind forming patterns that can be interpreted in various ways.⁹

This painting (Figure 3) of the Pakiri Awa is about being in the land. Painting myself with the land and internally the land in me that is coming out through painting. I am painting land as whenua, my deep connection with it that connects me with the people of the past, the feeling of their presence. The act of painting becomes a performing, a calling up of, and a bringing into being. As I paint this awa I have all my ancestral memories, histories, stories of all the generations that have passed through it and across it those who have navigated this awa. Also I bring all my personal memories my lived experience and attachment, familiarity of this river and surroundings place. When you go floundering, the best time to go is between tides when the water will be still and clear, so you can see the shape of the fish in the mud. In this image I have painted the river as it begins to start coming in, I know that feeling when you feel the pulling, the pressure, and the movement of the water on your legs. Here the water quickly starts to rush around the bend and creeps further and higher into the reeds. The gestural mark creates movement and fluidity, the occurrence of continual change taking place. A whole constellation of duration, time, change, memory, history that is all brought to the surface through the act of painting which influences and informs my decisions and the outcome of my work.

My painting technique is to use thin paint (usually oil paint), where the relatively slow-drying wet medium allows the surface to be worked into, shaped, and moulded through additive and subtractive processes—including layering, wiping and scraping away, scratching, and moving around of the pigment, which may incorporate minerals/pigments taken directly from the land that is depicted. This performing of the paint is the performing of whenua, in me as I paint.

⁹ Bill McKay and Antonia Walmsley, “Maori Time: Notions of Space, Time and Building Form in the South Pacific”, in Maryam Gusheh and Naomi Stead (eds), *Progress: Proceedings of the 20th Annual SAHANZ Conference*, (2003): pp.199-204.



Figure 12. *Paki Bush II*, oil on canvas, 72 cm x 55 cm

Similarly, for John Walsh painting is also a way of becoming ‘in tune’ with the echoes of the past. Echoes of the past that emerge through his painting process and imbue his imagined painted landscapes, from personal experience. He describes how:

While painting I tune into the ancient echoes of the past. Subconscious connections are made and rhythms start to flow.¹⁰

In his painting *Whenua* (Figure 13) the land looks primordial, so that it evokes a prehistoric period when man and nature were closely intertwined and interdependent. These ‘pristine’ landscapes are related to the earliest period when the land was in a primitive state. Derived from indigenous Māori culture, that relates back to the idea of *whenua* as the placenta being of birth in a natural state. His connection to the past becomes present through his recalling and bringing about of the past into existence. Walsh gives his *whakapapa* as New Zealand Irish and Te Aitanga-a-Hauiti of Tolaga Bay, his ancestral connections with *whenua* provides him with a connection to the past. “Through our relationship with the ancestors, Māori are able to connect with the mythical world even though it is often a universe away

¹⁰ *Review*: New paintings by John Walsh at John Leech Gallery (n.d.) Retrieved September 5th from http://www.nzherald.co.nz/entertainment/news/article.cfm?c_id=1501119&objectid=10598522

from how we have to live now”.¹¹ This relates to the idea of whenua being created through the separation of Ranginui and Papatūānuku; the mythical creation legend of Māori origin.



Figure 13. *Whenua*, John Walsh (2012), oil on board, 115 cm x 120 cm



Figure 14. *At a water hui with Manet*, John Walsh (2012), oil on board, 115 cm x 120 cm

In his imagery Walsh draws upon Māori myth and legends. As shown in Figure 14, the figures in the landscapes focus on spirits that for Māori inhabit these shores and waterways. Often they are depicted with human bodies and faces of ancestral tūhono (helpers and bringers of knowledge)—or as marakihau (mermen) and patupaihere (fairy people). Through the depiction of these kaitiaki (guardians) in his imaginative landscapes Walsh

¹¹ Gow Langsford Gallery (n.d.) Retrieved September 5th 2015 from <http://www.gowlansfordgallery.co.nz/artists/john-walsh>

makes them visible. He takes the belief and understanding within Māori culture of unseen guardians and gives sight to them, his interpretation provides us with a visual picture of what is only felt or imagined. Painting becomes a way of giving form to a presence embodying a spirit.

5 TAONGA TUKU IHO

Taonga Tuku Iho is a key element in Kaupapa Māori theory, this concept refers to all things that are held as treasures both tangible and intangible, that have been handed down to us from our ancestors. Those taonga include a vast array of things including whenua (land), moana (oceans), awa (rivers), maunga (mountains).

The Māori idea of value is incorporated into the inclusive holistic term 'taonga' a treasure, something precious, hence an object of good or value. The object or end valued may be tangible or intangible, material or spiritual.¹²



Figure 15. *Maunga Tamahunga*, oil on canvas, 60 cm x 45 cm

¹² Marsden, Maori. 2003. *The woven universe : selected writings of Rev. Māori Marsden*. Ōtaki, N.Z. : Estate of Rev. Māori Marsden

Māori, Tangata Whenua, people of the land, understand land as Taonga Tuku Iho. A treasure passed down on the basis of whakapapa, leadership and continual occupation, or Ahikāroa. Inherent in the concept of Ahikāroa, is not just authority over the land, but also the responsibility and obligations of guardianship of the land and the past present and future generations of people who have relationships with that land. Tangata whenua connection to land is perceived both physical and meta-physical, knowledge is through being, a wisdom of specificity grounded and affirmed in experience of specific place.



Figure 16. *View from bridge*, ink and graphite on paper, 25 cm x 20 cm

The notion of Taonga Tuku Iho serves as process of knowledge transmission and reproduction between generations. This sketch (Figure 16) shows the part of the river where my mother told me is the best place to catch flounder. Here she taught me how to spear fish, how to set a net. The knowledge of when the best time to fish is in relation to the moon and tides, how to read the signs in weather. She would stare up into the sky and be able to foresee the changes in wind and temperature, a knowing formed over time and a close relationship with this place. This is also ancient knowledge formed over generations passed on to her from her grandmother and her grandmother's grandmother. Our people have a knowledge of place that has evolved over generations through a constant occupation of the land. Where and which types of soils are best for planting vegetables and which seasons to plant. In this image along the edge of the river are the flax beds where we are taught how to harvest, to recognise the different types grown and which are best for weaving. The manuka tree drawn in the image is where my mother would collect and break

up and tie into bundles for starting fires, she taught me how to collect the seed pods and let them dry then shake them and all the tiny seeds would fall out and how to propagate them. It taught me to value and gave me an attitude that our whenua provides for us and we are to nurture it. Within this learning she is passing onto me the traditions of those old people who taught her. What she teaches me, this knowledge as gifts are taonga or treasures handed down throughout the generations. We need to draw upon these fundamental values, beliefs, understandings and practices in understanding our current context and future developments for our tamariki.



Figure 17. *Tenetahi Te Kiri, Rahui Te Kiri, Ngapeka Te Kiri*, photographs

The photographs in Figure 17 are of Tenetahi and Rahui Te Kiri and her daughter Ngapeka, 1893. Rahui Te Kiri was born in 1830 and lived her childhood in Pakiri. Her father was Te Kiri chief of Ngāti Wai, Rahui inherited Te Kiris land rights at Pakiri, Omaha, Little Barrier Island and offshore islands. She was my mothers' great grandmother. Matrilineal knowledge through and of the land has been passed down the female line. My father, Peter Gossage is of English and Scottish descent. It has been through my mothers' heritage and teachings that have most prominently formulated my identity and culture.



Figure 18. *Hauturu*, oil on canvas, 130 cm x 83 cm

Hauturu, Little Barrier Island where Rahui Te Kiri and Tenetahi lived has been a re-occurring subject throughout the year. The island is visible from almost all parts of the traditional rohe or tribal domain of Ngāti Manihiri. The painting above is from memory of when the sun was going down in the evening and the whole sky changed to pink and purple and there was a low cloud that surrounded and covered the island like a blanket so that the peaks - ngā puke tarahunga o Hauturu were all that were visible. From the mainland the profile of the island changes as you go further north or south, *Hauturu* is painted from the angle of looking out from Taumata situated by Pakiri river mouth, where our whanau home is, and a view I have seen all my life. From this angle the shape of the island looks like a woman lying down, my mother told me how she sees it as a symbol of her great grandmother Rahui who was one of the last to inhabit the island, who is laying at rest peacefully.



Figure 19. *Pa o Te Kiri overlooking Hauturu*, oil on board, 42 cm x 33 cm

Key events within our whakapapa has been the dispossession of Hauturu, in 1896, when our tupuna were taken off the island and brought to the mainland of Pakiri that is inhabited today with unbroken occupation by Ngāti Manuhiri descendants. In 2012 an amendment settlement deed between the Crown and Ngāti Manuhiri was written in agreement of the gifting back to convey exclusive mana whenua over Hauturu-o-Toi. My painting of the island in relation to the notion of Taonga Tuku Iho is not only associated with, and occupied by, the ancestors of Manuhiri, the island is also seen as being a tupuna in its own right. The physical presence of Hauturu, its mauri and spiritual essence, and its traditional history are central to my identity, and extending over many generations to the present.



Figure 20. *Hauturu looking across from One Haea*, oil on board, 72 cm x 55 cm

Here (Figure 20) I look out to Hauturu from the shore of Pakiri beach. The moana shows the separation and distance between that place, and myself it evokes and longing, a yearning for. This whenua, which is handed down from our ancestors who lived here, is a taonga because of its intangible and spiritual value. This intangible worth is connected to the whenua through its embodiment of our people of the past; it is a living connection to our tupuna that are present in the spirit of the land.

6 RANGATIRATANGA/KAWANATANGA

My research project has been a process of thinking about how I position my work within a landscape painting context—how my painting of land, as whenua, differs from landscape painting in the context of a European tradition. My research has involved understanding the comparisons of Māori and European colonial attitudes towards land.

Māori attitudes towards ownership were collective within a tribal whanau communal system, where occupants are part owners or trustees. For Māori, land has spiritual, cultural and economic significance, and is valued for tribal identity and security for next generations. Māori had different classifications of land – ancestral (take tupuna), gifted (take tuku), conquered (take raupatu), which related to Māori views for agriculture, hunting and resource management. The Māori system of land ownership worked in the best

interests of the people and the land, and given the strength of identification Māori have land, it was regarded as a sacred trust and asset for people as a whole.

The tribe's land was not only the source of economic well-being. For each Māori it was also the burial-ground of the placenta and of the bones of ancestors, and the abode of the tribal atua and of many gods as well. The ancestral lands were therefore regarded with deep veneration, and not merely as an economic resource.¹³

Colonial views were of individual title as sole ownerships or as tenants. From a colonisers' perspective, the significance of land lay in its economic value, with market potential and potential for employment. Colonial classifications of land were freehold, leasehold, wasteland/arable land. It was utilised for agriculture, horticulture, mining and settlements. All this history of conception, value, use, or abuse, is in the whenua as I paint.



Figure 21. *Awa o te Pakiri*, oil on canvas, 60 cm x 42 cm

¹³ H.C Evison, *Ngai Tahu Land Rights* (Christchurch, NZ: Ngai Tahu Māori Trust Board, 1987).

Also in my painting, are these Māori cultural conceptions and contexts for whenua:

Papa Tipu or Customary Title

When the original canoes arrived from Hawaiki the regions were settled and chosen by the crews. Land was subdivided into regions occupied by individual tribes. The settlers arrived somewhere between 500 and 800 AD. Landings continued from Hawaiki and possibly other sources until 1350AD. They formed tribes and sub tribes, giving the country place names. The ancient Māori held title to their land under a variety of different headings.

Whenua Kite Hou or Right of Discovery

The first Māori arrivals established their claims to chosen areas by personal discovery. The right of descent and occupation claimed Land. Every block of land and every natural feature of the land, boundaries and markers were named.

Ahi Ka or Right of Occupation

Ahi Ka means when land has been continuously occupied by successive and numerous generations. When occupation has remained upon the land this confirmed rights, the maintenance of a continuous presence.

Take Raupatu or Right of Conquest

This is land that could be lost or won in battle

Take Tuku or Right of Gift

The right to gift land was by a chief, but only in the interests and with consent of the tribe and hapu.

Take Ohaki or Right of Deathbed Disposition

Take Ohaki is similar to Take Tuku except a person near death made the gift. The chief of a large tribe would allocate tribal land before his death.

Whenua Tipu or Customary Land

This is land that has never been put through a Māori Land Court to have the native title extinguished by sale to Europeans, or by transfer to European title. By Māori customary title the land had to be physically occupied and worked on. The whole country was held by tribes under customary title. Whakapapa is an important determinant in customary land tenure and rights to tribal land and resources are handed down through bloodlines to the succeeding generation.

Crown Title – Treaty of Waitangi

The Treaty of Waitangi in 1840 was notable in that it confirmed customary title but immediately initiated action for destroying it in favour of the colonists' wants.

Māori land remains a cornerstone for Māori identity and a sense of continuity with the past.

Although the policies, legislation, and practices of successive governments have conspired to separate Māori from their land, Māori land still remains. The task now is to extend the holdings, develop them and make connections between people and the land, so that future generations may come to experience firsthand the nurturance of Papatūānuku.¹⁴

Within my own hapu of Ngāti Manuhiri we have maintained Ahi Kā in our rohe of Pakiri, the connections between people and place have remained throughout time. Durie emphasises the importance of holding on to that firsthand experience with Papatūānuku. I was born and raised on whanau Māori land and being Māori has meant having strong connections to our Turangawaewae. My research project has been focused on these connections that have been kept alive. I have steered away from focusing my project on land or Treaty grievances, political issues of ownership or dispossession. My practice is influenced by my lived experience I have had as tangata whenua, the close engagement with Papatūānuku and our whakapapa through the continual living on the whenua and sense of whanau within a rural hapu environment.

My first experiences of understanding rangatiratanga came from being around my Kuia and Kaumātua and growing up with my mother. It was through oral histories I learnt about my whakapapa, stories of the old people and how they lived, overheard discussion and heated debates on the marae. I was told about the struggles that they endured to hold on to their whenua, the battle to maintain mana whenua over Pakiri Beach. My mother is like them, the old people, the old set, brought up on kahawai and kamokamo. Her strong character and mana she held as a strong Māori woman I recognised in all my aunties and kuia and see the strength that carries on throughout the generations. One time I remember very clearly as a young girl when, we were at the rocks collecting kaimoana, this was a private bay close to our marae and as we were collecting kina in the rock pools a nudist man came wandering past. My mother pulled out her huge butcher knife and pointed it at the man and told him to “get the bloody hell out you’re not allowed here”. I would get shocked when my mother was like that, she would often yell at people and tell tourists off for trespassing. I always understood that she had the authority and right to be that way and people respected that because

¹⁴ Mason Durie, *Te Mana, Te Kawanatanga: The politics of self-determination* (Auckland, NZ: Oxford University Press, 1998).

of who she was. We were told that this was our place and here, not to let anyone walk all over you. Rangatiratanga was instilled in us, to me it is a sense of pride and belonging that you carry with you and is a part of protecting the taonga that comes from your tupuna.



Figure 22. *Manuka*, oil on paper, 15 cm x 12 cm



Figure 23. *Old Tea Tree*, oil on paper, 15 cm x 12 cm



Figure 24. *Okareka*, John Kinder (1866), watercolour on paper

John Kinder was initially hired as a draughtsman for the NZ Company, which helped to settle the country by acquiring land from the Māori and selling it to the first settlers. The function was to depict New Zealand, and the perspective was that of a Euro-centric viewpoint. The main intention was to provide useful information about the lie of the land, harbour access, availability of fresh water or the like. In Figure 24 we see that the emphasis is on topography, so that the painting is a representation of a specific place as it appeared at a particular time—a form of visual mapping. In panoramic format, these views serve to survey the scene, and provide useful information for an anticipated settlement—data about a land waiting to be farmed, fenced and developed. Kinder's sketches often were accompanied by names, heights and names of mountains, along with other data.



Figure 25. *Pukawa Lake Taupo from Oneti (Mr Graces) December 1861*, John Kinder (1861), water on paper, 19 cm x 33 cm

This was an art in conformity with the ideology of British imperial expansion, and of progress. His depictions are summarised, and idealised. The work in Figure 25 shows tidy fenced pastures with a practical yet charming footbridge through the land—a picturesque mode derived from the traditional ways landscape had been painted in England and Europe, with a technical accuracy of perspective and scale.



Figure 26. *Wairua Tapu*, oil on board, 72 cm x 55 cm

By way of contrast, my view and perspective of the land is as tangata whenua. I see the land through the filters of my whakapapa, in relation to the people of the past and with interest for the generations of the future. Ingrained within my memory is the ancestral history, which is embedded within the whenua and within myself as a descendant of the indigenous people who have inhabited this land, who have lived with it and become of it, continuously, through generations.

Tangata whenua view the landscape as Taonga tuku iho, as a treasure handed down from ancestors. The understanding of this concept influences the way the landscape is perceived, what is seen is what is intangible and of spiritual value. These are aspects that lie behind the material physical associations with landscape, which differentiate my work from representational landscape painting. My work is an acknowledgement of these lands as

sacred whenua that are inherited settlements. In respect of the histories and powers of the sea, sky and earth that have spiritual authority.

In comparison to the landscape paintings of John Kinder, the images I create are not an attempt to realistically represent or describe aspects of the landscape in a traditional way. They were made to have a sense of scale, are descriptive to represent and show a likeness to the physical aspects of the environment. In the image above as I was painting I was thinking about my lived experience in the land, all my memories, and the duration of playing outside until everything starts to lose its colour but there is still that light just above the horizon in the distance so you still know where you are. My approach is not intended for an audience, it is without concern for creating a picturesque landscape or realistic interpretation of a particular place. So the painting process doesn't involve planned decisions that make the work an accurate representation of what we see. For me, the process of making is thinking and being of this land, the work becomes experience. The act of painting is a way of bringing into being this process of creating an image an act of calling into being my connection to the land and my connection to my tupuna. They are there in the whenua and they are present in me and they come about of the land because my tupuna are in me. This is a connection through my lived experience and through my painting process I am drawing upon that and attempt to articulate this through painting to imbue the images with that sense, evoke an experience the sensibility of the aroha and wairua felt through the whenua. It happens naturally, I let it happen and is part of that process of painting

It is history

It is time

It is whakapapa

It is tupuna

It is whenua

It is wairua

My painting, it is all of that.

Aroha Gossage



Figure 27. *Mauri-ora*, oil on canvas, 72 cm x 55 cm

7 WAIRUA — MAURI

The wairua o te whenua, (spiritual essence of the land), and mauri (living life force) are both inherent in the concept of whenua. The wairua of the land is connected to whakapapa, an invisible presence that persists through time and within the tangata whenua (people of the land) and their duration of living on the whenua.

My forebears have fought over this land, they lived off it, fed off it, died on it, bled into it and are buried under it... the whole area to me is Māori (local people). That's my Turangawaewae, my place to stand, because of the people who have gone before me.¹⁵

Wairua and mauri are essential essences of the land. The landscape comprises more than merely what is physically observed. Visual elements represented by the landscape are composed not only of what lies before our eyes but what lies within our hearts and minds.

Immanent with all creation is mauri – the life force, which generates regenerates and upholds creation. It is the force or energy, the bonding elements within the Universal 'Procession' given creation its unity in

¹⁵ Josephine Haddon, personal conversation.

diversity. It is the bonding element that holds the fabric of the universe together.”¹⁶

It is an unseen life force that inhabits place and land as well as all living things. Everything has a mauri, including people, fish, animals, birds, forests, land, seas, and rivers; the mauri is the power, which permits these living things to exist. The concept of mauri in Māori thought is a vital element possessed in all living things, including mankind where it might be regarded as an inner dwelling spirit with a difference between the wairua, and the mauri.



Figure 28. *Toitōi Flats*, oil on canvas, 60 cm x 42 cm

In the context of painting landscape, mauri is a part of my understanding and perception of how I see and feel in relation to the things I am painting within the natural environment. The belief and awareness of the concept of mauri affects my relationship with the living world by how I recognise the life giving power and essence that exists within the rivers, oceans, lands, plants. I think about mauri as a creation of and from Io (god), that life giving essence that dwells in myself, I am a kin to the living things around me; we are from the same creator. I experience this in the landscape through feeling in tune with the energy

¹⁶ Marsden, Maori. *The woven universe : selected writings of Rev. Māori Marsden*. (Otaki, N.Z. : Estate of Rev. Māori Marsden, 2003.)

that is flowing through my living being and the life force of all the land around me. The bonding element of mauri creates a connection with the living environment to sense that the land is living, existing and alive. The conditioning of an internal receptive space for experiencing the sensibility of mauri is an important part of my approach to painting, and is later discussed as part of the method.

I talk about mauri and some people talk about tapu. Perhaps the words are interchangeable. If you apply this life force to all things – inanimate and animate – and to concepts, and give each concept a life of its own, you can see how difficult it appears for older people to be willing and available to give out information. They believe it is part of them, part of their own life force, and when they start shedding this they are giving away themselves. I have been talking about such things as life force, aura, mystique, ethos, and lifestyle. All this is bound up with the spirituality of the Māori world and the force this exerts on Māori things. It seems to me that people who want to enter this world need to enter it with a lot of respect and always be aware of these different life forces which are going on and which Māori believe are part of his being.¹⁷

Rangihau talks about the belief that Māori have that mauri is a part of them, it is inherent within them, they carry it with them. He says how it is difficult for older people to give out information they are giving away part of themselves. I relate this to my painting process how my act of painting involves my emotional response, my giving and releasing of the spiritual and emotional attachment I have for our whenua. Drawing upon the aroha and empathy I have for my whanau and the land. Rangihau thinks that those who want to enter this world should have a lot of respect and awareness. Before I begin painting I will say a karakia, a short prayer taught to me by my mother that comes from Te Haahi Ratana.

Mātua, Tama, Wairua Tapu, me nga Anahera pono me te mangai hei tautoko mai ienei akeni ae.

Father, Son, Holy Spirit, Faithfull Angels and the divine mouthpiece Tahupotiki Wiremu Ratana.

I will ask that my tupuna watch over me and be with me as I do my mahi. I ask for their guidance and that I am given the faith to listen and trust in their direction. I feel this allows me to enter into another subconscious space, allows things to come enter flow. To change

¹⁷ Barry Barclay, *Mana Tutura: Maori Treasures and Intellectual Property Rights* (Auckland, NZ: Auckland University Press, 2005).

and sense a shift in my own mauri and receptive to other forces. To hear be attuned to the voices, senses, signs of my tupuna that come to me through me and guide and influences my decisions in the painting process. At the end of my painting time I will say another karakia that for me allows me to step back from this space a way of protecting myself so that I don't carry things around with me. This is out of respect for my whakapapa and having an awareness of other mauri or life forces that can become. Creating the artwork is, in part, a giving away or shedding of my own being, and I find it is best to not allow myself to become too absorbed so that my own mauri is not depleted and remains strong.



Figure 29. *Awa o te Pakiri II*, oil on canvas, 42 cm x 33 cm

My method and process is informed initially by my lived experience of the landscape of Pakiri, growing up on the land and living my whole life being on the land and in this place. Memory connects me with the land and nature having childhood memories of wandering for hours across the sand dunes, building huts in the trees, swimming in the river with my cousins. Developing a real familiarity with where our whanau calls home that is firsthand experience with Papatūānuku. Figure 30 is a photograph taking with my cousin and sister making figures out of mud from the river.



Figure 30. Racheal Aitken, Star Gossage, Aroha Gossage (1995), photograph

As well as personal memory, ancestral history of the land and place the occupation of my tupuna. This is handed down through oral histories, storytelling of events that happened, where things occurred. This information informs my knowledge of sites that have historical and cultural importance. This brings an awareness of specific areas of the land that are sacred and certain places or areas that carry associations with people from the past, for example where the old kumara pits were or the places in the dunes where the rubbish and discarded food shells were stored. This knowledge influences the way I read the landscape by recognising features like trenches, knolls, remnants of the past, traces of existence and habitation. Physical visible marks in the environment that have that ancestral attachment.



Figure 31. *Pakiri*, Nick Monks (2015), photograph

I regularly return to Pakiri in order to spend time exploring the land, and to study the environment and find things places where I want to paint. Even though these are places I am familiar with, like the river mouth, I will make a point to really explore and spend time there, walking around sitting or going into long tussock that I would normally go around. Taking tracks and creating new pathways where no one has yet ventured, into the swamp or up onto a high point that I have never seen before. I am visually recording in my mind and memory these images and collecting through my experience all the things that I see, hear and feel, like a video that I can play back in my mind when I return to my studio, like an archive. This is a storing of information, absorbing everything around. I will also spend long periods of time in one spot watching and observing, noticing the energy and vibration of the land, focusing on the slow changes of movement taking place around me. As part of this process I make some works on site, *en plein air*, such as the drawing in Figure 32, and the oil painting in Figure 33.



Figure 32. *Sketch*, pencil on paper, 10 cm x 10 cm



Figure 33. *Awa study*, oil on paper, 30 cm x 25 cm

Here painting or drawing is a way of being in the landscape and spending time, looking, and being still. It is a different experience from walking or passing through the landscape. Here, I use painting and drawing to ground myself in time and space, and as a way of being deeply engaged with looking and taking in what I am seeing and what is

around me. It is a period of time that is concentrated on being in the land and in the space there and being present. The purpose is not primarily to make a finished painting or drawing. It is to have that type of experience—and to create in memory a resource to be drawn upon later—especially how it *felt* to actually be there.



Figure 34. *Pakiri Beach*, oil on canvas, 60 cm 45 cm



Figure 35. *Pakiri Beach*, photograph

I will usually take photographs to be used as a reference when I am painting— not for copying, but to refresh my memory, and to evoke the sense of being there. In the studio they provide a sense of scale and depth, and give some information about

distance that will influence some decisions about composition. My exploration with working closely with the photograph as a reference has led me to see that the static images caught by the camera take away more than they provide—the snapshot taking away the life, change and movement that I experience in the environment. Where there is a continuous, sometimes swift sometimes gradual, changing of conditions and shifting of relations associated with a living ecosystem. The photograph fails to show the continual evolving and transformation taking place, the variation of colour and light between one moment and the next, the gradual growth and development of living things. Using the nuance and language of paint these qualities can be articulated through the process of painting.

9 WORKING PROCESS

Throughout the project my work has been about testing and trialling—exploring and learning through making. Experimenting with different ways of painting and learning what methods create different effects, textures and surfaces. The images have emerged through this process, just as through this process I have become more ‘as one’ with the whenua. I have worked in series, creating works in groups that explore similar techniques, and where each work informs the next. Just as the land is in a gradually evolving and change I feel my work has the same successive growth and building up of process where each painting is a layering of experience and time spent thinking and making. Here the important thing is to be making—to be painting so that this process of becoming in and with whenua is facilitated, and so that there is flow and continuity and relationship between the works. As part of this process, separation from my work has also been important, with time spent away from my studio in order to return to Pakiri and to spend time in the land, to spend time in reflection, and to strengthen my wairua. There I feel strong again, jumping in the ocean and taking off my shoes, feeling the grass on the bottom of my feet as I walk up to the top of the hill where the wind is blowing strong against my body I feel the mauri of the land and I absorb that. Connecting to it replenishes my energy and restores a balance in my tinana (body), my hinengaro (mind) and my wairua (spirit). My process requires an engagement with this sense of connection, this inherent force within the land and that exists within me. I am drawing out or pulling out these feelings as I paint bringing them to the surface, a recalling, and this influences what comes out in the work, what comes through me and imbues the work. This act of painting is a calling into being, an emergence of a presence

which is an attuned awareness that has an intensity, when I am in tune with this space rhythms start to flow, the motion of the brush is instinctive, the forms in the painting begin to take shape naturally. I don't have a plan about what I want the painting will look like, I am reliant upon how I see myself in the landscape, what I see in front of me on the surface of the painting and I bring in into being with the paint, from memory and lived experience. When I stop, step back and put down my brush it feels like I am removing myself being in that state of feeling and thinking.

Something else happens when I become lost in the painting space. Subconscious, process in which the mind is not fully aware starts to be in another place. Painting starts with a certain articulation. Decisions and movement become intuitive. This is where my close familiarity with the landscape is applied in order to make decisions, so that the application of paint comes easily and fluently, with the movement of the brushstroke corresponding to the rhythms and movement in the landscape, and in my own perceptions of whenua.

10 CONCLUSION

It is through painting that I am able to bring the past into the present, and so painting becomes an act of whakapapa to that past. This is the mauri of connection and flow that is the vitality to both painting and life, as they constitute an enfolding and unfolding of wairua. My painting happens in this synthetic interaction between time and space.

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12 APPENDIX

Documentation of Exhibition

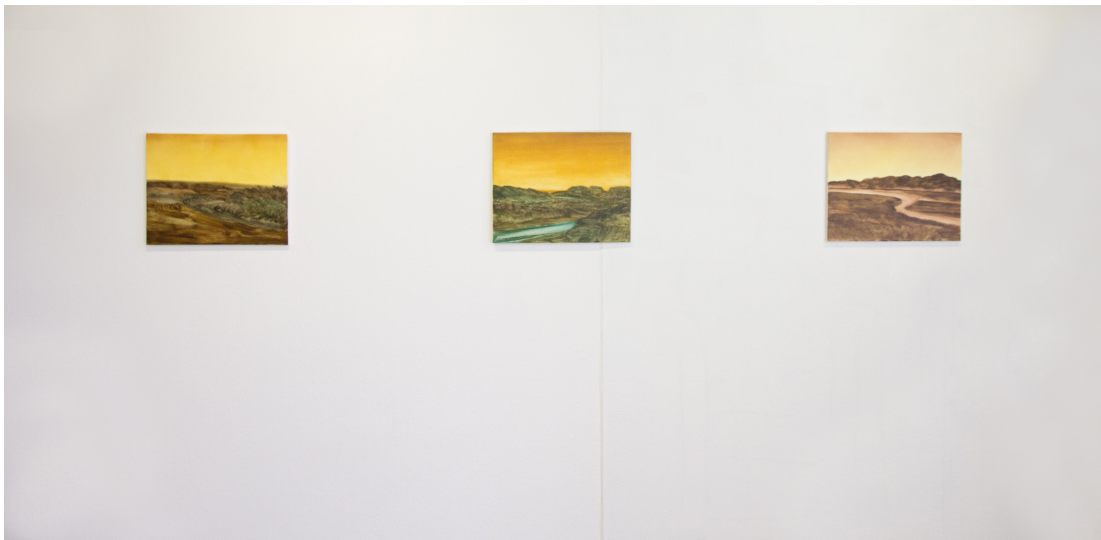
The exhibition presented nine paintings. Six larger works on panel were presented on the longest wall, spaced evenly in order to give each work its own presence with the series.. The three slightly smaller and more freely painted works on canvas were installed on the opposite wall, in order to reinforce the notion of dialogue—between each work, and within all the works, and between the processes of sketching and more intensive painting, and between artist, whanau, whakapapa, whenua, – between the present and the past.



Figure 36 Exhibition installation view.



Figures 37 Exhibition installation view



Figures 38 Exhibition installation view – opposite wall