The water flows from the Rhine in Switzerland, to the waters of the Wairoa in Aotearoa, back to Te Auaunga where I now live: Exploring transnational movement and place through a visual art practice.

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Exegesis in support of practice-based thesis
Master of Philosophy (Visual Arts)
Auckland University of Technology, 2020

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 acknowledgments), 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



January 22, 2020

For my brother and sister, Samuel and Josephine Schlatter.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

It would not have been possible to reach this point without the help of my brilliant grandmother Elsa Schlatter and my immediate family Judith Elsener, Bruno Schlatter, Samuel Schlatter and Josephine Schlatter. Thank you for being open, sharing and supportive throughout this process. Thank you to my supervisors Monique Redmond and Natalie Robertson, for your patience, sound guidance, and energy over the last two years. It has been an absolute privilege. Thank you to Tangaroa Paul for your warmth and inspiration that has helped me immensely. Thank you to all of the lovely people that have been involved and have supported me along this journey; Emma Anderton, Tanja Vegar, Layne Waerea, Jeremy Leatinu'u, Jody McMillan, William Horsley, Mark Harvey, Melissa Laing, Whau the People, my Mount Albert Library Whānau and the staff and students at AUT.

ABSTRACT

This practice-led research is primarily located in Aotearoa and in reference to Switzerland, my country of birth. Various materials have been utilised as tools to visualise and examine my presence in Aotearoa as tauiwi (foreigner/immigrant) and being tāwāhi (distant) to my ancestral homelands. As a daughter of two first-generation Swiss immigrants that have chosen to live in Aotearoa, questions about my transnationality have led to this investigation. The outcome of my project is an exhibition *Te Wairoa: The Long Water* that assesses my privilege and critiques my movements as tauiwi around a significant site from my upbringing, the Wairoa. This river is one of two bodies of water central to this research (the other being the Rhine in Switzerland). The research has seen a transformative development to the idea of 'being in' rather than 'belonging' to a country. A provisional event *Walking the Wairoa,* has resulted in a refocusing to (preliminary) actions (including walking and swimming practices) that have encouraged my own thoughtful movement through place.

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INTRODUCTION

RESEARCH QUESTION

How can an installation/lens-based art practice, built from a position of transnational belonging, contribute to a conversation about lifestyle migration, identity and place in Aotearoa New Zealand?

This exegesis is written from my perspective as tauiwi (guest or immigrant) in Aotearoa. I am the daughter of two lifestyle migrants that chose to move their family from Switzerland to this country in 1998. My parents Bruno and Judith created a new life here with their children, Josephine, Samuel, and myself (Lea). This move in 1998 followed their first and unsuccessful attempt in 1991. My family's ability to move back and forth across international borders with relative ease, for me, demonstrates the position of privilege we occupy as lifestyle migrants.[1] Since arriving in Aotearoa at the age of 5, I feel that water has provided me with a sense of belonging, in particular the Wairoa River, where I grew up and where the project is based. I am aware of the colonial history in this country and thus my practice-led research sits within a post-colonial framework. It is a context that informs the critical and ethical considerations that have established parameters and methodologies for *Te Wairoa: The Long Water.*

The project started off as a personal exploration of site and material enquiries to think about my relationship to dual locations, Switzerland and Aotearoa. Throughout this exegesis I may refer to artworks as either gestures or experiments. Gestures are an action linked to the body in an attempt to communicate, extend or form a connection between people or places whereas experiments refer to process-based works/learning tools. Chapters Three and Four show a developmental shift to the use of (preliminary) actions, a term used to describe artworks that have accumulated as the result of planning towards a provisional walk *Walking the Wairoa*.

[1] The relationship between lifestyle migrants and their position of privilege is identified by migration sociologist Michaela Benson as relating "not to the individual affluence and wealth of migrants – although it is clear that this too may play a role – but the privilege wrought by the migrants' citizenship of powerful nation-states" such as Switzerland.
Michaela Benson, "Negotiating privilege in and through lifestyle migration" in *Understanding Lifestyle Migration* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 49.

In Chapter One, I introduce the significant relationship between my Switzerland-based grandmother Grosi and myself. I reference Aotearoa artist Monique Jansen to introduce the close relationship that my methodology shares with a drawing practice when working with familial objects and discoveries. Through my art, I navigate the space between *here* and *there* where *here* is Aotearoa where I grew up and *there* is Switzerland where I was born – an idea of transexperience characterised by Chinese/Australian art curator and writer Melissa Chiu. Chiu's research introduces a more fluid relationship that contemporary migrants have with place that acts as a contextual frame in this chapter.

In Chapter Two, I begin by discussing the pivotal work in my research: *This is the deepest blue that I think I have ever seen.* I explain my thinking around a concept I will call an 'imagined space' that I used as the basis to create an experiential installation (a visualisation of my lifestyle-migrant experience). I then introduce Rebecca Solnit's writings on distance and longing, which have been influential to my exploration of transnational belonging. To challenge my practice, I look at the work of Chinese/European artist Jun Yang in the context of *The Shouting Valley* (group exhibition at Gus Fischer Gallery by gallery director Lisa Beauchamp), 2019 – comprising many migration stories in one place and incorporating artists from diverse cultural backgrounds.[2] I refer to key writings by Canadian artists/writers Stephanie Springgay and Sarah Truman to consider my own movements within the environment. As a result of this analysis, the chapter concludes by reflecting on an exhibition space as a space to think about walking and movement.

In Chapter Three, I begin with the work *Folded Paper Boats*, which situates the project in its current site, the Wairoa River in the Kaimai Range. I begin by introducing the customary tribal ownership, Wairoa hapū – Ngāti Kahu, Ngāti Pango, and Ngāti Rangi. Working with this current awareness, I situate myself as a researcher, being in this place as tauiwi. I then renegotiate my understanding of belonging in context with Western and Indigenous Ideologies of relating to place. The video work *Following the Wairoa* investigates the concept

[2] Lawrence Abu Hamdan (Lebanon), Hoda Afshar (Iran/Australia), Shahriar Asdollah-Zadeh (Philippines /Aotearoa New Zealand), Cushla Donaldson (Aotearoa New Zealand), Jun Yang (Austria/Taiwan/Japan) and Manus Recording Project Collective (Melbourne/Manus Island). Gus Fisher Gallery, "The Shouting Valley: Interrogating the Borders Between Us," accessed December 20, 2019, https://gusfishergallery.auckland.ac.nz/the-shouting-valley/

of water as providing a sense of belonging for tauiwi and is an example of an experiment I undertook to look for progressive ways of relating to place.

In Chapter Four, I discuss the (preliminary) actions undertaken to organise a 30-km walk along the Wairoa River. I explain how these actions (including walking, mapping, swimming, making activities and talking with neighbours) have become artworks and are centred in the project as part of the methodology. After analysing other artists approaches to walking – Janet Lilo's *The Normandy Research Project* 2014 and Jeremy Leatinu'u's walk *Kawea* – I build on artist and writer Phil Smith's identification of the interplay between presence (the site of the work) and absence (the non-site or gallery where the work is exhibited) to draw a link between my actions on site and the gallery space where evidence of the work is exhibited.

Relations built in the process of planning/movements are an essential component of this research, which is a relationship that has formed over time. The exegesis has been structured to parallel the journey taken toward this realisation.

Critical contexts:

Walking:

Walking within this research project is used as a method of moving from one place to another to be physically present in the space and learn with ones surroundings. As a (preliminary) action, small walks are used to test sections of what was originally intended to be a 30 km distance, endurance walk.

Objects (found):

Objects have been found/handed down to me through familial relations and exist in my project as art objects when their stories, histories have aligned with particular ideas or have mirrored my own family's movements.

Objects (made):

Objects have been made with a considered intention, often to encourage a particular conversation or interaction to take place between people.

Video and Photography:

Video and photography are mediums primarily used as a documentary device to record artworks – events/actions. Photographs and videos are also considered to be functioning artworks depending on their context.

Prints on fabrics:

I have used fabric three times as a material in my art making within this project, each time with a different practical intention. Firstly, my grandmother and I used our bedsheets as a readily available fabric in the home to make cyanotype prints as a conversational object. Secondly, I used hemp fabric to print digital images for an art installation. Thirdly, I used a 5m roll of Calico to paint a map as a functioning tool in the greater project. Fabric is used as a medium in this project for its movability and tactility.

Gestures:

With this project gestures are actions linked to the body and generally involve another person or being in an exchange or offer. These are movements that demonstrate an emotion. To communicate, extend or form a connection between people or places.

Experiments:

Experiments refer to process-based works and I consider these as sketching tools to visualise thoughts and ideas in order to learn and arrive at new directions.

(Preliminary) actions:

(Preliminary) actions is used in the latter half of this exegesis. This term demonstrates a developmental shift in thinking in this project. (Preliminary) actions refer to my own movements that are preparatory in the lead up to a propositional event (a long walk of 30km in length). (Preliminary) suggests these actions are working towards, an attempt, testing or learning.

CHAPTER ONE / *SETTING THE SCENE: A CONVERSATION WITH MY GRANDMOTHER*

A conversation with Grosi

In this chapter, I discuss my recall of an illuminating conversation I had with my grandmother, Grosi, as a foundational influence on this research. I explain my relationship with Grosi and the significance of her statement, "Ich glaubä diis Dihei isch i Neuseeland" (I think your home is in New Zealand), for me in this project. This chapter highlights some critical works in my art practice (gestures/experiments), made in response and the distance between Aotearoa (*here*) and Switzerland (*there*).

My grandmother is Elsa Schlatter – I call her by the Swiss-German colloquial 'Grosi,' meaning grandmother. Grosi joined my family in Aotearoa and lived with us between years 2000 and 2004 before moving back home to Switzerland, on her own, due to homesickness.

My visual arts research explores my relationship with dual locations *Aotearoa* and *Switzerland*. Art writer Melissa Chiu discusses dual locations in relation to "Chinese artists who migrated to the West (Australia, the United States, and France) during the late eighties and early nineties."[3] Chiu uses the term "Transexperience" to discuss a "fluid perception of one's relationship to the homeland"[4] exampled in the artists freedom of movement and ability to stay connected through technology. I can relate to the term transexperience to my project as it suggests that dual locations are linked through the migrants past and present experiences in either place.

In November 2016, I travelled to Switzerland, where I lived with Grosi for about one year in my family's hometown of Schaffhausen. I drew out the sentence from a conversation I had with her in the early spring of 2017. I had been debating for several weeks whether my home is in Switzerland or Aotearoa. While I was helping Grosi in her warm sunlit kitchen – we were

[3] Melissa Chiu, "Transexperience and Chinese Experimental Art, 1990-2000" (PhD thesis, University of Western Sydney, 2003), 13.
[4] Melissa Chiu, "Transexperience and Chinese Experimental Art, 1990-2000" (PhD thesis, University of Western Sydney, 2003), 3.

washing lettuce and grating potatoes for dinner – I asked for her opinion on where she thought I belonged. To which Grosi responded, "I think your home is in New Zealand". I wanted to know from Grosi whether my home is just where I am biologically linked (Switzerland) or is it where I grew up and developed meaningful experiences (Aotearoa). Although Grosi's statement helped me to make my decision, I still do not feel rooted in either place. My conversation with Grosi allowed me to begin an investigation with text-based works that further considered this question.

Linking my methodology to a drawing practice

Ich glaubä diis Dihei isch i Neuseeland is a text-based drawing (experiment) that speaks to my relationship with Grosi as well as my attachment to thinking about dual locations *here* and *there*. This work spans across a six-metre-long wall in my studio. With a pencil, I sketched the words through a stencil to form a drawing.

The drawing *Ich glaubä diis Dihei isch i Neuseeland* included the manual processes of cutting and gluing. The combined stages of preparing and drawing as process introduced the idea of labour into my art practice. This experiment was made to physically connect with Grosi's statement by transferring it onto my studio wall. Architect and writer Daniel Willis endorses a relationship with labour rather than work because labour, in contrast to work, does not designate a finished object.[5] To build on Willis's ideas, I feel that by focusing on the fluid process of labour in this drawing, I have been able to open up my relationship with Grosi's response. Apart from the initial printing of letters onto paper, this transfer was completed by hand with utilitarian materials and methods.[6] The drawing has a temporary quality as its surface has not been fixed, and it exists directly on the wall rather than on paper. These everyday materials found in my studio inform labour as an intuitive and fluid process. Aotearoa artist Monique Jansen uses labour-intensive methods in her drawing practice. She talks about this process as combining humble materials and simple actions to transform a single modest gesture through accumulation, repetition, and scale.[7] Similarly, rather than

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[5] Daniel Willis cited in Neil Maycroft, "Labour, Work and Play: Action in Fine Art Practice," in *The Labour of Art*, ed. Chris Dunne, Phil Eastwood, John Plowman, Neil Maycroft and Ian Waites (Lincoln: The Beehive Press, 2005), 2-3.

[6] In preparation, I glued standard A4 sheets of paper together to compile the sentence roughly five metres in length. I then proceeded to cut out each letter with a craft knife. To draw the letters directly onto the wall with the prepared stencil, I used a standard HB pencil.

[7] "Monique Jansen; Co-founder of Drawing Open," Drawing Open, n.d, https://www.drawingopen.com/monique-jansen

ordering commercially produced vinyl for stencils, I recognised the purpose and significance of drawing, using everyday materials readily available in my studio. Finally, by utilising drawing as an iterative process I began to understand that more emphasis should be placed on activities in which we are likely to develop emotional and imaginative attachments to things.



Figure 1.1-1.2. 2019, experiment: *Ich glaubä diis Dihei isch i Neuseeland* [pencil on wall, various dimensions]. Making the wall drawing in studio using a standard HB pencil, masking tape and a paper stencil.



Figure 1.2. 2019.



Figure 2. Monique Jansen, 2013, *The phenomena of thousands of starlings flocking, swarming, folding and unfolding, gathering and collapsing or the continuous murmur of a crowd* [cotton, various dimensions], Te Tuhi, Auckland, New Zealand.

In April 2019, I staged an exhibition in the studio to see how *Ich glaubä diis Dihei isch i Neuseeland* would read alongside found objects. To accompany the work, I made a museological arrangement of a set of found objects on tables. I titled this collection *My grandmother's hand-sewn cloths, repurposed from old sheets.* This collection contains a set of objects (cloths) that my father Bruno passed onto me in February 2019. He handed me a brown cardboard box and said, "Grosi brought these with her to Aotearoa. She put much time into making them but never used them. These are made from old bedsheets that our family slept on." Of course, the responsibility to look after these excited me: they are objects made for a utilitarian purpose – that of cleaning – which is a kind of end-of-line purpose. They interest me as objects both in their relationship to the human body (being sheets that my father and Grosi have slept on) and in the way they have echoed our family's migration from Switzerland to Aotearoa. I presented the cloths on a row of plywood tables along the length of the drawing and wall. The cloths have travelled a long distance and, until now, lived in Bruno's garage. Due to moisture, inconsistent temperatures and time in their storage locations(s) each piece had developed a series of brown stains, which continue to change. Similarly to the text-drawing, the stains indicate to me a relationship to place, literally and metaphorically.



Figure 3. 2019, example of one of 30 found objects [cotton, various dimensions].

This photograph is one of my grandmother's hand-sewn cloths, repurposed from old sheets. The collection of 30 cloths is stored in the original brown cardboard box my grandmother put them in after she made them about 33 years ago. This box containing the cloths travelled with my grandmother to Aotearoa (2000), where they remained in storage and have now been given to me to look after.



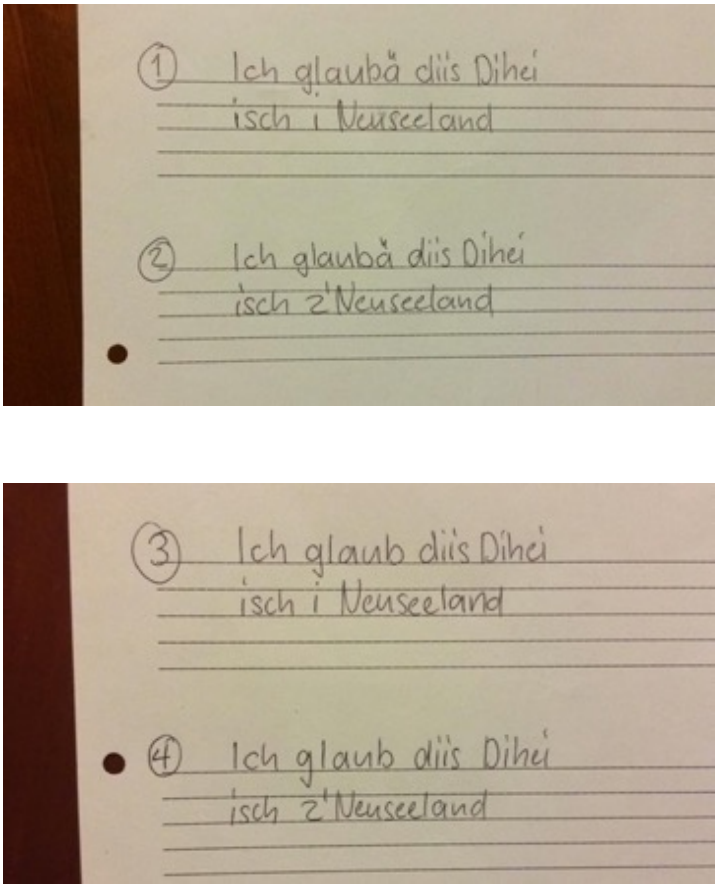
Figure 4.1-4.2. March 2019, experiment: installation of *Ich glaubä diis Dihei isch i Neuseeland* and the displayed found cloths.



< Figure 4.2. March 2019, experiment: detail of cloths on table.

Family knowledge and relationships

I retained my understanding of Grosi's statement "I think your home is in New Zealand" through my memory of the conversation. However, before I could use it as a text drawing, I needed an accurate translation because I didn't have sufficient grammatical understanding. To explain further, Swiss-German has no official written form, and it is possible in my remembering of the exchange that I adapted Grosi's statement, especially its spelling and punctuation – to be able to retain it through my childish vocabulary. I asked my father, Bruno, to help me write the most accurate version of Grosi's statement. Feeling an urgency to know the answer, I discussed this with Bruno in a phone call. The diptych *Handwritten Text from Bruno* shows two photographs – captured and sent to me from Bruno's mobile phone following this phone call. The work *Handwritten Text from Bruno* points to our relationship that has enabled the wall drawing. This is an example where I have looked to Bruno as an interpreter to acquire information and develop emotional and imaginative connections through our exchange.



< Figure 5. January 2019, gesture: *Handwritten Text from Bruno* [2 x digital photographs].

These photographs are a gesture from my father Bruno as a translator. On recollecting my grandmother Grosi's phrase "Ich Glaubä diis Dihei isch i Neuseeland," I asked for Bruno's help to translate my version of the phrase to written text. His response was a pxt message from his mobile phone: two photographs that document four handwritten versions of the phrase that has existed in my head. This, together with the fact that Swiss-German is a dialect that does not have an official written form, makes it impossible to distinguish a perfect written version.

As another way of approaching the space between Switzerland and Aotearoa, I return again to my and Grosi's relationship. I made two large-scale cyanotype prints, one in each location. A cyanotype is a traditional photographic technique using sunlight to expose a surface that has been treated with a photosensitive coating. I consider this work to be an experiment. The exchange of cyanotypes between Grosi and myself mirrors our physical movements across continents. The purpose of this action was to create a portable work that I could practically take with me to Grosi's house in Switzerland. In Aotearoa the substrate for the first cyanotype was my bedsheet while the objects exposed were leaves and stones gathered from the walkway along Te Auaunga—the creek near my house in Avondale, Auckland—on the same day as making the exposure in May 2019.[8] The second cyanotype print was made together with Grosi in Waldfriedhof, a forest near her house in Schaffhausen, Switzerland in June 2019. For the substrate, we also used an old bedsheet that belonged to Grosi. I was interested in the bedsheet as a material object due to its relationship to the human body, its immediacy as a material and its transportability. I brought the sheet and activity to Grosi so that she could

[8] I lay these objects onto the prepared cyanotype fabric to make the uv exposure.

touch this fabric and talk about it with me. I wanted to bring an object with me that could invoke Grosi's past experience in Aotearoa New Zealand and create a potential dialogue as a conversational object.

I do not consider these objects to be souvenirs, as they are handmade and contain the trace of lived experiences of Grosi and me. Although they act more as evidence or archive, I consider it useful to think about them in context of Susan Stewart's description of the souvenir:

> We do not need or desire souvenirs of events that are repeatable. Rather we need and desire souvenirs of events that are reportable, events whose materiality has escaped us, events that thereby exist only through the invention of a narrative. Through narrative, the souvenir substitutes a context of perpetual consumption for its context of origin. It represents not the lived experience of its maker but the "second-hand" experience of its possessor/owner [removed] from its "natural" location. […] The souvenir speaks to a context of origin through a language of longing, for it is not an object arising out of need or use-value; it is an object arising out of the necessarily insatiable demands of nostalgia.[9]

Although the cyanotypes speak "to a context of origin through a language of longing", not dissimilar to Stewart's descriptions of a souvenir, our handmade objects promote shared actions and connections between my grandmother and me. I have not moved physical items such as leaves, stones, bark and moss from their place of origin in the making of these fabrics; rather, I have carried their traces within the cyanotypes to talk about the environment they were made in.

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[9] Susan Stewart, *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1993), 135.



Figure 6.1-6.2. June 2019, experiment: fabrics made in Switzerland [video still].



Figure 6.2. June 2019, experiment:
This work was an exchange. A set of two fabrics was made using the cyanotype printing process on cotton sheets (bedsheets). The first was made at Te Auaunga (Oakley Creek), Avondale, Aotearoa, using my bedsheet as material available to me as a gesture for my grandmother, Grosi. The second was made in Waldfriedhof, Schaffhausen, Switzerland with Grosi. I was able to take this to Aotearoa while Grosi kept the other.



Figure 6.3. June 2019, my grandmother Grosi identifying plant species [video still].



< Figure 6.4. June 2019, example of fabric made in Switzerland [digital image].



Figure 6.5. June 2019, example of fabric made in Aotearoa, hanging in my grandmother Grosi's living room [digital image].

Despite the privileges of transnational lifestyle migration, I have felt a physical disconnection between *here* and *there*.[10] By recognising labour-intensive tasks in my making process, I have found this to be a positive way to bridge this gap, by connecting with place through material actions. This not only opens up ideas of connectivity; it is a way to communicate with others' in the process.

[10] Melissa Chiu, "Transexperience and Chinese Experimental Art, 1990-2000" (PhD thesis, University of Western Sydney, 2003), 36-37.

CHAPTER TWO / *PLACE ONE: THE RIVER RHINE IN SWITZERLAND*

This is the deepest blue that I think I have ever seen

This chapter discusses installation practices as a method to expand my research. I talk about the installation *This is the deepest blue that I think I have ever seen*. I have always felt a strong connection to water as a migrant, especially rivers like the Wairoa river in Tauranga or the Rhine in Schaffhausen, Switzerland. This work is significant as the outcome of a research trip to the Rhine to recreate a particular space in the Rhine falls that is inaccessible to people. Frederick N. Bohrer visualises (being) and (longing) in two parts of equal length in a comparison to identity. He explains, these remain equal no matter how far away from each other they are located and that belonging only becomes evident through some degree of Distance. [11] This installation expands my initial visualisation of feelings of distance and longing as a lifestyle migrant, by considering an installation space that was designed to move through.

In June 2019, I visited Schaffhausen on the Rhine River, where my family are from and where I was born.[12] Although I grew up far away here in Aotearoa, I feel a strong connection to the Rhine. The purpose of this visit was to spend time with Grosi, but also to visit the Rhine River.[13] While I was visiting I spent a lot of time watching the water flow in two locations that I could easily access – the Rhine Falls (a waterfall and main tourist attraction) and Badi Flurlingen (a popular swimming location for locals). I found the Falls to be magnificent. The water always flows rapidly through this bend of the river, creating the Rhine Falls.[14] I was mesmerised by one particular element: there appeared to be a quiet centre lull in the middle of the falls. I know that this centre is too dangerous for swimmers to access. While I

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[11] Frederick N. Bohrer "Borders (and Boarders) of Art: Notes from a Foreign Land" in *Belonging and globalisation: critical essays in contemporary art and culture*, ed. Kamal Boullata (London: Saqi Books, 2008) 28.

[12] I can understand my parents' decision to move their family across the world, with this exposure to multiple cultures. The Rhine reflects Switzerland culturally as what anthropologist Dominik Müller calls "a conglomerate of parts and only in a secondary sense […] a coherent unit." Dominik Müller, "European Integration and Swiss Identities," *The Journal of the International Institute*, accessed January 13, 2020, https://quod.lib.umich.edu/j/jii/4750978.0002.101/--european-integration-and-swiss-identities?rgn=main;view=fulltext

[13] The River Rhine is one of the major rivers of Europe – the only river that connects the Alps with the North Sea. It flows 1320km, from two small headstreams in the Alps of east-central Switzerland, north and west to the North Sea, passing six countries (Austria, Liechtenstein, Switzerland, France, Germany and the Netherlands) and receiving tributaries from three more countries (Italy, Belgium and Luxembourg).
M. H. Bik, *The Rhine*. Vol. 5. Berlin, Germany: (Springer Science & Business Media, 2006), 5.

[14] On my trip, however, the water levels were higher than they have been in three years. My friend Jeremy told me that this was due to a tremendous amount of snow that had melted and flowed down from the mountains after the previous winter, which elevated the river's water level and the extremity of the Rhine Falls this summer (between June and August 2019). (Jeremias Happle, conversation with author, Badi Flurlingen, June, 06, 2019.)

photographed it through my telephoto lens, I imagined what it might feel like to be present in this part of the water.



Figure 7. Google Maps, 2020, *The Rhine in Schaffhausen, Switzerland* [Digital file] Retrieved April 6, 2020.

In response to recording these images, I created a series of works titled *This is the deepest blue that I think I have ever seen* which were exhibited in August 2019 at AUT. The exhibition has two components, the installation of photographs from the Rhine Falls and a stack of postcards, designed to aid viewers with a map, providing context from the perspective of Badi Flurlingen. The photographs taken at the Rhine Falls were printed onto five large pieces of hemp fabric printed almost to the selvedge/edges. They were installed in a semi-zig-zag arrangement across the space, inviting the viewer to wander; portraying a view from the centre of the Rhine Falls, looking outwards. The printed fabrics are suspended from the ceiling – simply attached to steel rods with white cotton thread. The fabric sways when animated by a body moving through the space – a kind of interaction that suggests an in-between, of a place far away and the audience here.

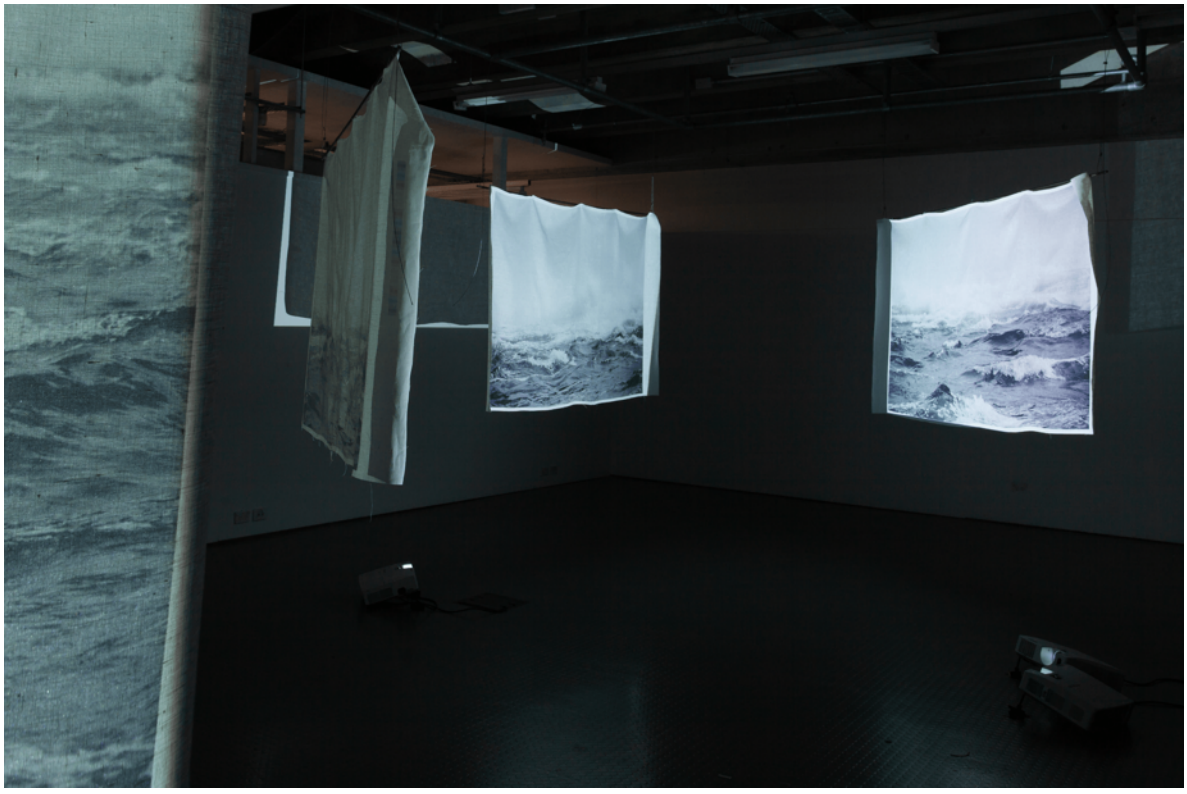

Figure 8.1-8.5. July 2019, experiment: *This is the deepest blue that I think I have ever seen* [installation view, 5 x inkjet prints on hemp fabric 1280 x 1930mm].
The exhibition included five photographic prints on hemp fabric, lit with projectors and hung with steel rods and wire.
Installation video can be viewed at https://vimeo.com/355047603



Figure 8.2. July 2019, experiment: detail view.



Figure 8.3. July 2019, experiment: detail of fabric suspended on steel rods with white cotton thread.

This is the deepest blue that I think I have ever seen included social elements to provide further context for a viewer. I realised these images of bodies of water are more likely to associate to an ocean setting for a viewer in Aotearoa – which is a country surrounded by the ocean, in contrast to Switzerland, which is land-locked. Therefore, I positioned myself by standing at the entranceway as a tour guide to help viewers navigate the space and to host the artwork experience. I felt this was necessary due to the art audience's potential unfamiliarity with the location but also to engage in some conversations and interactions. I was able to take part in conversations and learn of viewers' relationships with various oceans and rivers. This interaction and exchange became an essential component of the work.

To further aid the viewer in establishing a context for responding to *This is the deepest blue that I think I have ever seen*, visitors were offered a postcard on entry to the space. The front reveals a photograph, an etching of the Rhine Falls, hidden by a light curtain, on a wall in Grosi's flat. On the reverse is a hand-drawn map that was created in conversation with Aotearoa artist Monique Redmond (my supervisor).[15] The postcard is considered a gesture to help people to navigate this exhibition space.

[15] Coincidentally, my second supervisor and Aotearoa artist Natalie Robertson had traveled passed this location in the train. This map is what I scribbled on a piece of paper during my explanation of the Rhine Falls location. This shows the waterfall from the perspective of Badi Flurlingen. It also points to the direction of Grosi's house as well as that of my father, Bruno, who was in a transitional phase moving back to Switzerland and lived close by.



Figure 8.4. July 2019, example of *Postcards* in *This is the deepest blue I think I have ever seen* [Postcard, 110 x 162mm].

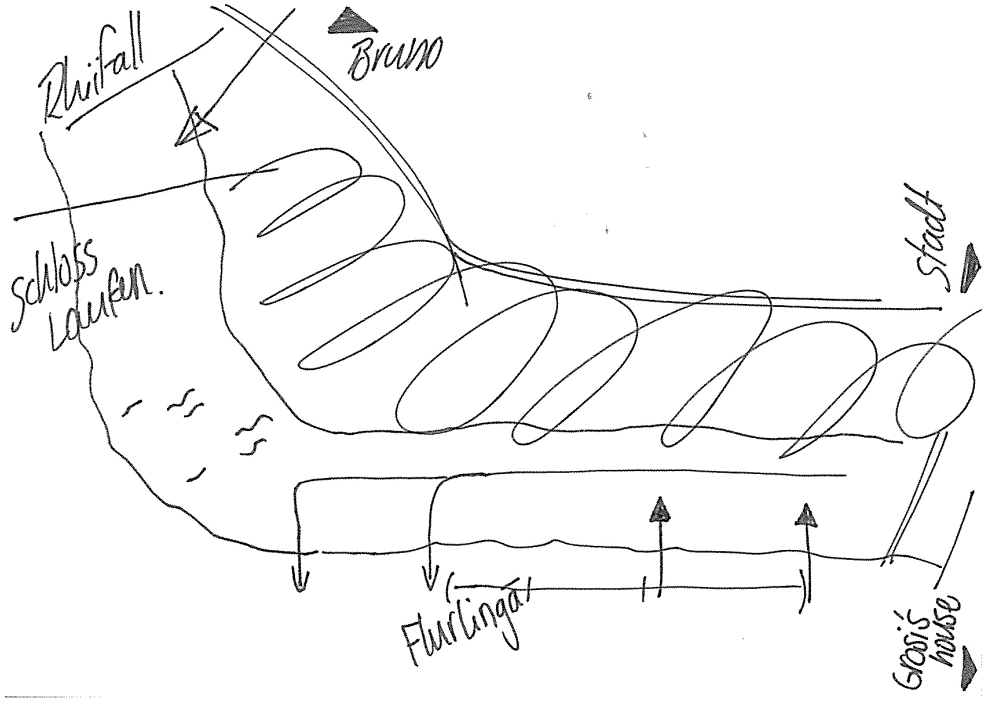

Figure 8.5. July 2019, postcard: reverse.

In *This is the deepest blue that I think I have ever seen*, the colour blue is prominent in the work, as suggested by its title. The colour is used for its many connotations, in particular, those associated with our emotions. American writer Rebecca Solnit writes, it is "the color of solitude and of desire, the color of there seen from here, the color of where you are not. And the color of where you can never go."[16] Lit by cold light from four projectors in the dark space, the inkjet-colour fabric prints emanate shades of deep blue. Solnit talks about blue as the colour of longing, for the distances you never arrive at.[17] On my journey (Schaffhausen, June 2019), I had been reading Solnit's *A Field Guide to Getting Lost* and was captivated by her descriptions of the colour blue. She talks about the blue of distance as the deeper, dreamier, melancholy blue that exists in waters like those of the Rhine Falls.[18]

This is the deepest blue that I think I have ever seen offered two key developments for my research. Firstly, an opportunity for me to walk through the space of my imagination and to occupy and experience the quiet lull I perceived at its centre. The essence of the installation was my imagining of what it might feel like to stand and move physically through the centre lull of these falls. The work was an experiential exploration, and the ability to talk with people added a new social element. This seemed to encourage thinking around place and how various people might relate to it.

Spaces designed for movement

I make work as a way to feel out a space, to learn about a space in slow, thoughtful movements to help me understand my surroundings – like the way a child would investigate the earth beneath their feet, the smells and the textures of objects surrounding them.
In *Stone Walks: Inhuman Animacies and Queer Archives of Feeling*, Springgay and Truman talk about movement in relation to friction, describing "friction [as] a force that acts in the opposite direction to movement."[19] This movement is replicated when viewers move backward and forwards, left and right within the exhibition space. In considering human and non-human worlds, I strongly agree with Springgay's methodology of moving with and

[16] Rebecca Solnit, *A Field Guide to Getting Lost*, (London: Canongate Books, 2006), 29-30.
[17] Ibid.
[18] Ibid.
[19] Stephanie Springgay and Sarah E. Truman, "Stone Walks: Inhuman Animacies and Queer Archives of Feeling," *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education* 38, no. 6 (2017): 851-863, 2.

against, as a way of "learning with the world, rather than about it."[20] I, too, consider how an installation can aid viewers to practice moving more consciously. I turn to installation works by artist Jun Yang to build on Springgay's thoughts of moving through spaces.

Movement is also required from viewers to experience a work by (Vienna, Taipei and Yokohama) artist Jun Yang. His work *Becoming European or growing up with Wiener Schnitzel* was part of *The Shouting Valley: Interrogating the border between us* at Gus Fisher Gallery, Auckland. The work consists of text, visual and audio components, and speaks to Yang's trans-national upbringing. The third iteration of this work, at Gus Fisher Gallery, was made specifically and reconfigured to the Auckland region of New Zealand.

The large scale of the work has an immersive effect on the viewer. On entry to the gallery space, the first thing you see is wallpaper covering two walls of the gallery. Wallpaper is used as a key tool in navigating viewers through the exhibition. It elicits a state of slowness and contemplation. This wallpaper references Chinese immigration in Aotearoa through imagery and text in both Chinese and English translations. As a viewer, I found myself walking from one end of the gallery to the other, engaging with the work by reading the text across the walls. The viewer is led to a screen. This audio/video component consists of a search of Google's image repository, which seeks to comprehend a new and unfamiliar culture, utilising key search terms such as 'refugees', 'migration' or 'Chinese'.[21] I noticed an interesting comparison between the immersive nature of Yang's artwork and my own interest in considering the way people are manoeuvred through exhibition spaces. Similarly to my postcards, Yang's wallpaper is an image-based strategy for providing context, and does not restrict the viewer's movement but encourages it. The all-encompassing large-scale install of the wallpaper is another component that builds an immersive effect.

[20] Ibid.
[21] Jun Yang, "Becoming European or How I Grew Up with Wiener Schnitzel," accessed December 20, 2019, http://junyang.info/project/becoming-european-or-how-i-grew-up-with-wiener-schnitzel/



Figure 9.1-9.3. Jun Yang, 2015, *Becoming European or How I Grew Up with Wiener Schnitzel* [installation view], Gus Fisher Gallery, Auckland, New Zealand.



Figure 9.2. Jun Yang, 2015.

Considering other voices

The Shouting Valley: Interrogating the border between us questions why freedom of movement often appears to be a Western privilege.[22] The exhibition as a whole brought me to think about the privileges that underlie lifestyle migration and how this form of migration sits amongst others. According to Samoan writer Talei Si'ilata "*The Shouting Valley* is a timely and necessary interrogation of the global and local implications of migration and movement through the experiences of those who are restricted from exercising these freedoms."[23] Considering other artists in this exhibition telling such stories in *The Shouting Valley,* I have become more aware of my position as a lifestyle migrant, which affords me the freedom to travel back and forth between Aotearoa and Switzerland. This freedom of movement is something I try to acknowledge in my work by becoming more conscious when moving through spaces and is something that I explore further in Chapter Four.

To develop or contribute to a conversation of dislocation I find it helpful to think about Yang who was born in 1975 in Qingtian, Mainland China, and grew up in Austria.[24] As mentioned earlier, writer Melissa Chiu adopted the term transexperience to describe contemporary Chinese migrants. She talks about how for Chinese living in Western parts of the world, there is a physical dislocation from China, but at the same time continued philosophical and emotional ties to the homeland.[25] Yang explores becoming European and multicultural confusion as a result of growing up between places. I feel I can relate to Yang's confusion that exists from growing up away from the homeland.

Transexperience is a term that encourages a more fluid perception of one's relationship to the homeland.[26] For Chiu, it is the division between *here* and *there* that characterises much discussion of migration politics. In particular, I am interested in Chiu's idea of contemporary migrants' ability to engage in a bilateral relationship between the past, present, and future,

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[22]Gus Fisher Gallery, "The Shouting Valley: Interrogating the Borders Between Us," accessed December 20, 2019, https://gusfishergallery.auckland.ac.nz/the-shouting-valley/

[23] Talei Si'ilata "untitled," exhibition essay, *The Shouting Valley* (Auckland: Gus Fischer Gallery, 2019), https://cpb-ap-se2.wpmucdn.com/blogs.auckland.ac.nz/dist/e/421/files/2019/10/Talei-Siilata-3.pdf, 1.

[24] His family comes from both sides of the Taiwan Strait – his grandparents were part of the Kuomingtang Army, who retreated to Taiwan in 1949; his family left the People's Republic of China for Austria when he was four. "Jun Yang: About," Jun Yang, accessed December 20, 2019, http://junyang.info/about/

[25] Melissa Chiu, "Transexperience and Chinese Experimental Art, 1990-2000," 13.

[26] Ibid., 13.

which holds potential for evolution.[27] Like Chiu, I too believe that by exploring this space (a space of transexperience which connects two places) there is potential for valuable conversation and connecting people with a sense of self and community.



Figure 9.3. Jun Yang, 2015.

In this chapter I have discussed the dual connection for me between Aotearoa and Switzerland; the dual connection being water, as a moving transforming entity. This thinking sits in parallel next to my thinking on movements within exhibition spaces. Analysing Jun Yang's work has revealed to me a transformative power in movement as a way to interpret and engage with an artwork or a place. These ideas are fundamental to this project in considering the positivity in thoughtful and contemplative movements through various spaces. It is important to be aware of other voices when moving through various spaces such as a gallery or site/location. Si'ilata states:

> If we ourselves can arrive at the conclusion that migration has in large part shaped our human history, it is imperative now more than ever, that we ask ourselves if we are

[27] Ibid., 37.

> demonstrating our understanding of the right of migrants to maintain and celebrate their culture, language and ethnicity here in Aotearoa. Running parallel to this is the simultaneous responsibility of migrants to have an understanding and appreciation of the unique rights of indigenous peoples and the distinctive relationship they have to the land within which they are living.[28]

As a lifestyle migrant it is important to consider the voices of other migrants stories. Si'ilata adds a consideration for indigenous knowledges at the site of settlement, which for me is Māori in Aotearoa. This consideration is important to my work when I am working in a context that has existed long before my arrival in 1998.

[28] Talei Si'ilata "untitled," exhibition essay, *The Shouting Valley* (Auckland: Gus Fischer Gallery, 2019), https://cpb-ap-se2.wpmucdn.com/blogs.auckland.ac.nz/dist/e/421/files/2019/10/Talei-Siilata-3.pdf, 1.

CHAPTER THREE / *PLACE TWO: THE WAIROA RIVER IN AOTEAROA*

Working in an existing context

After thinking through the importance of water to my sense of belonging as an immigrant a link between two rivers in Switzerland and Aotearoa, the Rhine (Switzerland) and the Wairoa (Aotearoa). This is perhaps because one reminds me of the other. This chapter is about situating myself as a researcher within a new context. Although I grew up here, I still consider myself a visitor because my ancestors are not from this land and the context was here before I arrived with my family in 1998. I will first explain another key work I made with my grandmother, *Hand-folded Paper Boats*, which situates me as a researcher within the context of the Wairoa River. Within this chapter, I outline the Wairoa's relevance to Wairoa hapū (Ngāti Kahu, Ngāti Rangi and Ngāti Pango), tangata whenua and descendants of original occupants of this area. I then move to explain how my status as tauiwi is explored in the work *Following the Wairoa* where sociologist Laymert Garcia dos Santos' distinguishing between Indigenous and Western ideologies was pivotal to this exploration of 'being in place' rather than attempting to belong to a place as tauiwi.[29] My distinguishing between these two ideologies is important in maintaining authenticity in my work, as well as in recognising my status as tauiwi. This status informs my works made in and around the Wairoa River. Stephanie Springgay and Sarah Truman's "learning in conjunction with the world, rather than about it,"[30] mentioned in Chapter Two, was pivotal to this development.

To introduce my relationship with the Wairoa River, the work *78 Hand-folded Paper Boats* explores my own relationships with land and water. I made boats in collaboration with my grandmother, Grosi (June 2019 which evolved into an ongoing exchange between us. The paper boat is a memory marker that speaks not only to my relationship with my grandmother but also with the Wairoa River which flows out of the Kaimai mountain range, in the Bay of

[29] Garcia dos Santos in *Belonging and Globalisation* writes about an idea of 'not belonging' in the context of Yanomami people (Indigenous Peoples of Brazil). He states that to the Yanomami "territory is something alive, like them and thus capable of change and movement, in permanent transformation, not an inert plot of land on which to live." Santos then goes on to ask "would it not be preferable to focus on not belonging."
Laymert Garcia dos Santos, "Belonging and Not Belonging," in *Belonging and Globalisation: Critical Essays in Contemporary Art and Culture*, ed. Kamal Boullata (London: Saqi Books, 2008), 50

[30] Stephanie Springgay and Sarah E. Truman, "Stone Walks: Inhuman Animacies and Queer Archives of Feeling," 851-863, 2.

Plenty where I grew up[31]. The work *78 Hand-folded Paper Boats* is based on a memory from 2000-2004 when my grandmother Grosi lived in Aotearoa. Sitting on the edge of the Wairoa, Grosi taught me how to fold a boat from newspaper. [32] On my research trip in Switzerland (June 2019) I noticed newspapers in neatly stacked bundles outside each door due to it being recycling month. I asked Grosi to fold boats with me. Folding and conversing, I saw Grosi's humble gesture as a faciliatory device for conversation and learning experiences.



Figure 10.1. June 2019, gesture: my grandmother Grosi folding boats on her balcony in Switzerland [video still].

[31] Malcolm McKinnon, "The Kaimai Range lies west of Tauranga and separates the Bay of Plenty from Waikato. Of volcanic origin, it has many valleys and is mostly forested, with summits between about 550 and 950 metres,", "Bay of Plenty region – Ranges, Rivers and Forests," *Te Ara – the Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, accessed 1 January 2020, http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/photograph/5538/the-kaimai-range

[32] My family owned a property a fair distance from the Wairoa. Changes in private land ownership affect access to the river. For recreation, we relied on both public and private access points, of which there are few.



Figure 10.2. June 2019, local newspapers in Schaffhausen, Switzerland, outside homes for recycling [digital image].



Figure 10.3. June 2019, arising moment: folded paper boat on my grandmother Grosi's living room floor in Switzerland [digital image].

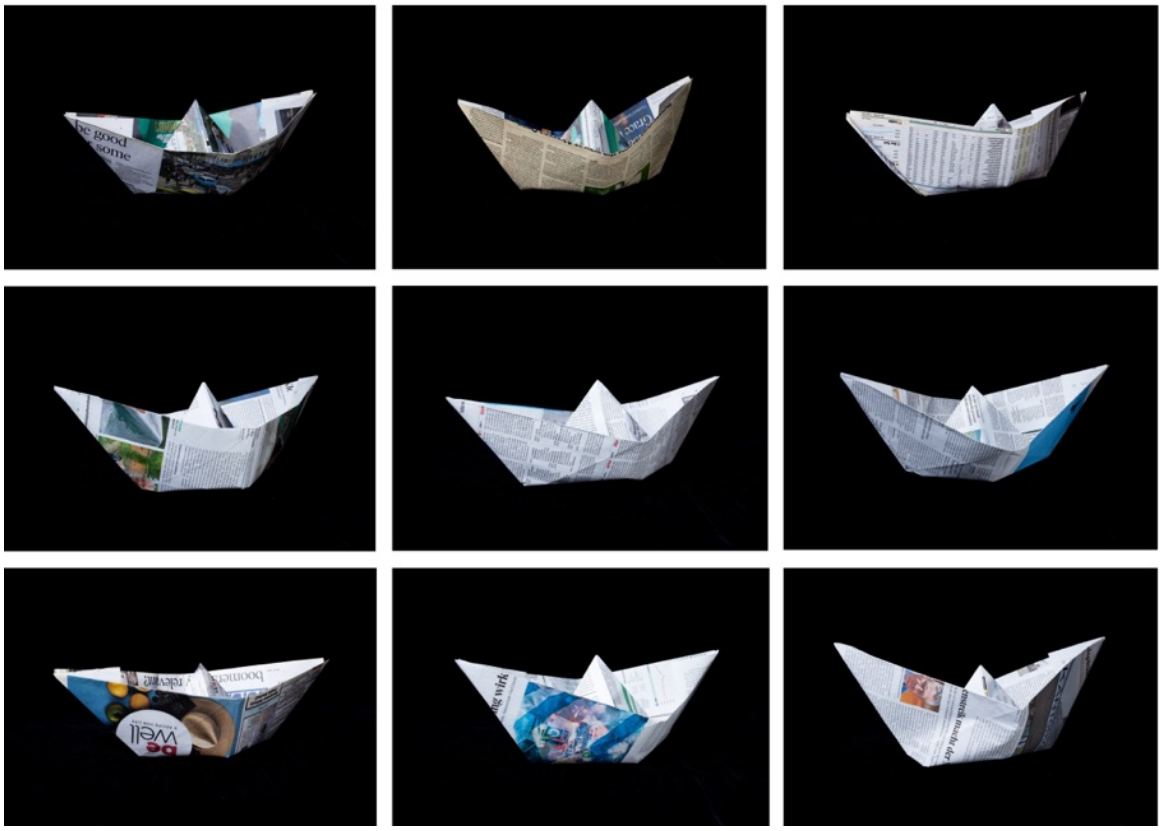

Figure 10.4. June 2019, gesture: *78 Hand-folded Paper Boats* [series of 78 digital images].
Photographed in studio as a collection of objects.



Figure 10.5. February 2019, looking back at our favourite swimming spot beyond sightline, farmland on State Highway 29, Aotearoa [digital image].
This is the site where my grandmother, Grosi, showed me how to fold a paper boat. The Wairoa river flows parallel on the left of the fence.

Artist Rebecca Ann Hobbs (Tauiwi, Australia) expresses in her doctoral thesis *Ngā Puia o Ihumātao (The Volcanoes of Ihumātao*) that "[her] own sense of freedom as a non-indigenous person in Aotearoa is intricately bound with Te Tiriti o Waitangi and [her] status as tauiwi."[33] As I make art in this context, it is important to acknowledge the colonial history of Aotearoa, and its ongoing effects in the present. Ngāti Kahu, Ngāti Rangi and Ngāti Pango iwi "have occupied the region for over eight hundred years and would no doubt have been among the first inhabitants of this land" according to cultural heritage expert Antoine Coffin (Ngai Te Rangi, Ngāti Ranginui and Ngāti Raukawa), [34] Originally inhabited by these Wairoa hapū, European military invasion and settler incursions led to raupatu—the confiscation of Tauranga lands in 1865.[35] These iwi inhabiting Kaimai and along the Wairoa River were deeply impacted by "the structure of a new colonial society [that] emerged in a burst of immigration and development after 1870 [and] the Treaty of Waitangi receded from settler consciousness".[36] With these issues and disconnects that are still present, I am conscious of my presence as tauiwi, testing my tentative connections to place through an art practice that aims to explore and strengthen my own relationship with the environment. When I am walking along the Wairoa, I am aware that I am on Māori tribal land that was inhabited for more than 800 years before Europeans settled here.[37]

[33] Rebecca Hobbs, "Ngā Puia o Ihumātao (The Volcanoes of Ihumātao)" (PhD diss., University of Aucklnad, 2017), 78, ResearchSpace@ Auckland.
[34] Antoine Coffin, *Changes in a Māori Community* (Tauranga: Waitangi Tribunal, 1997), 5.
[35] Stokes, Evelyn. "Te Raupatu o Tauranga Moana= The confiscation of Tauranga lands.[Volume 1]." (1990). Preface
[36] Claudia Orange, *The Treaty of Waitangi* (Wellington: Bridget Williams Books, 2015), 174.
[37] Antoine Coffin, *Changes in a Māori Community* (Tauranga: Waitangi Tribunal, 1997), 5.d

This content has been removed by the author due to copyright issues.

Figure 11. n.d., *Tauranga District and Wairoa Hapū* [map].
"At the base of the map can be seen Tauranga City (right) and Greerton (centre). The realignment area (circled), is situated not far from Bethlehem – Tauranga. The area
most affected by the realignment was the eastern bank of the Wairoa River around Wairoa Pa and is the ancestral domain of Ngāti Kahu."[38]

[38] Marinus La Rooij, *Wairoa Hapū and the Realignment of State Highway 2* (Tauranga: Waitangi Tribunal, 1999), 6.



Figure 12.1. September 2019, view of the Kaimai Range from the Waikato Region [digital image].



Figure 12.2-12.4. September 2019, Poripori, a popular swimming location: view 1 [digital image].



Figure 12.3. September 2019.



Figure 12.4. September 2019, landslide on path to Poripori.

Being in place

In August 2019 I visited Poripori—named for the in-dwelling taniwha—which is a site in the lower Kaimai, one of few public access points to the Wairoa River.[39] When I lived there (1998-2010) with my family, we often went swimming at Poripori. There is a pool of deep water following a bend in the river. Although it lies parallel to State Highway 29, this site is peaceful. The terrain is largely rock, surrounded by steep banks of trees and bush on which residents live. I experimented making work from the Wairoa riverbanks as an intuitive way of learning about site through my observations of it. *Following the Wairoa* is an experimental work, videoing on site as a performance. I preceded to exhibit this series of tests in AUT's TestSpace. Being the sole viewer I thought of this as a training ground for walking. *Following the Wairoa* is a contemplative, experiential video work that explores my 'being in place' physically with my body and using the camera as a learning tool. At the time of videoing I used a basic tripod and I panned the camera with my hands to try and follow the water's rhythm. Despite limitations encountered while directing the camera with my hands, I was able to capture glimpses of the water's altering forms, which resulted in this large archive of footage. I attempted this experiment in several locations where I could access the river.

Following the Wairoa talks about my 'being in place' physically with my body. In retrospect, I see these videos as evidence of a performance on site, where the body became a method in the work. In parallel, Testspace became important to physically interpret the footage with the idea to return to the site with improved thinkings. The camera became an extension of my body because of the way I interacted with it. Similarly, Hobbs explains that for her "the impetus was to start from [her] body, to be physically present in the space, so as to encounter whenua first-hand."[40] Practice-as-research theorist Robin Nelson explains, "experience is perceived through the body and its immersion in the world."[41] Through Hobbs and Nelson, I

[39] I always felt safe and protected while swimming here and owe my thanks to the guardian taniwha Poripori, The legend of Poripori and other taniwha inhabiting the Wairoa illustrates the river's significance and the significance and movements of Wairoa Hapū; Poripori lived in a cave behind a waterfall in the tributary stream (Ruangarara – meaning two lizard-like creatures) where Poripori preyed on people from the lower Wairoa. Ngāti Kahu who ventured upstream in search of eels and koura were sometimes ambushed by Poripori, as were men who went into the bush and women in the kūmara fields. A great battle between Poripori and Te Pura the guardian taniwha of the lower Kaimai ended in Poripori being chased far away from Tauranga moana by Te Pura. Rachael Willan, *Wairoa River Report* (Tauranga: Waitangi Tribunal, 1996), 8.
[40] Rebecca Hobbs, "Ngā Puia o Ihumātao (The Volcanoes of Ihumātao)," 33
[41] Robin Nelson, "Practice-as-research and the Problem of Knowledge," *Performance Research* 11, no. 4 (2006): 110

can see how centring my bodily performance (as research) can bring the focus to what Nelson calls "an 'encounter' in a subject-object inter-relationship."[42]



Figure 13.1. September 2019, experiment: *Following the Wairoa* [video still].
View full video at:
https://vimeo.com/359675545

The exhibition space

As a secondary component of this experiment, I looked at how this work would translate into an exhibition space. I edited short sequences of video—10-15 seconds in length slowed down by 70% into a single channel—to test as an installation In AUT's TestSpace. Each segment was separated with black pauses to represent the space between locations in which I trialed, while audio continues. I projected two videos—one from each riverbank of the Wairoa —onto two opposing walls to give the effect of the river flowing through the space. As a viewer, I was able to move forwards and backwards around the space watching water flowing, moving, changing, shifting, coming into contact with various stones, branches, algae and earth along the riverbed. This oppositional installation set up conditions to consider my movements in relation to the projected images of moving water). This test viewing builds on Stephanie Springgay and Sarah Truman's thoughts of friction and movement discussed in *Spaces designed for movement* in Chapter Two. Moving physically through water, we experience

[42] Ibid.

friction. This is accentuated in rivers, moving either with or against the current. Although the immersive experience of being in water cannot be replicated with a visual projection—an indirect encounter—this installation was nonetheless a useful process for my research. I realised that the ability to move freely—without much friction—in this created space is a secondhand encounter with the environment for a viewer and is a problem that I explore further in Chapter Four.

Following the Wairoa (both as a performance on site and exhibition in TestSpace) was a valuable process that I feel has increased my self-awareness in various spaces. I think of the exhibition as a training ground where I can think about walking and practice walking with a focus on 'being' in place rather than 'belonging' to a place.[43]



Figure 13.2-13.3. September 2019, experiment: *Following the Wairoa* [installation view].
View full video at:
https://vimeo.com/356533714

[43] I acknowledge the works of Nova Paul, Natalie Robertson, Jeremy Leatinu'u and Shannon Te Ao as Māori artists who have recorded waterways as significant sites. Their works influenced earlier studies in my Honours study 2018.



Figure 13.3. September 2019.



Figure 14. Rebecca Ann Hobbs, 2017, *Ōtuataua hīkoi, led by Brendan Corbett and facilitated by Rebecca Ann Hobbs. Live hikoi event 02:00:00, photographic documentation by Rebecca Ann Hobbs, Ihumātao* [digital image].
Ōtuataua hikoi guided tours on behalf of SOUL address socio-political issues relating directly to Ihumātao and mana whenua sovereignty (July 17, 2017).

CHAPTER FOUR / *A GUIDE FOR WALKING*

Introducing walking as a methodology

In the previous chapter I discussed 'being in place' as a concept for the project. I also discussed how an exhibition space can be used like a training ground for walking. In this chapter I discuss how I have incorporated walking within site as a methodology in my art practice and my decisions around a provisional event, *Walking the Wairoa.* In this chapter I explain a shift in my methodology to '(preliminary) actions' (actions made in order to prepare for this walk) and how these actions became the central focus of the project. I discuss documentation of these actions and their potential to exist in an exhibition context.

It felt vital to my project to attempt to experience terrain along the Wairoa's entire length. *Walking the Wairoa* was driven by the idea of 'being in place', which naturally developed to walking as a method in the project. *Walking the Wairoa* was proposed as a 1.5-2-day walk from the lower Kaimai Range to Tauranga Harbour. It is provisional and may take place in the future. Before I move on to describe the (preliminary) actions that have taken place to plan for this walk I am going to talk about my thought process behind it:

When I was on location (Poripori) videoing experimental footage in *Following the Wairoa*, I realised that this location was one of three vantage points predetermined by public access — Poripori, Waimarino and a piece of farmland on State Highway 29. I became curious about the source of the Wairoa and its journey to the Tauranga harbour, as well as the space between these locations.



Figure 15. NZ Topo Map, August 2019, working map: *Walking the Wairoa* [map and Post-It Notes].

I realise there is much more to the practice of walking than simply a perambulatory form of travel exampled by artist Richard Long pioneering walking in his classic work, *A Line Made by Walking* (1967). In this work, Long walked backwards and forwards in a Wiltshire field until a trail was pressed into the grass.[44] His performance left a temporary mark where he walked and speaks to his interactions with the world around him in the English countryside. This has highlighted for me that in any walk, the environment is affected by traces, whether a walker is trying to be subtle or not. In my project the (preliminary) action of walking a section of my overall route (as a test) feels like a method to sketch and plan in order to be aware of

[44] Allison C. Meier, "The Art of Walking," *JSTOR Daily*, accessed November 05, 2019, https://daily.jstor.org/the-art-of-walking/

particular effects I may have on the environment as I walk among other observations. This may be a simple trace or footprint. Walking artist Carl Lavery talks about walking as being "an open-ended phenomenon" which is "self-generating, contingent, improvisatory, light footed and rooted in the everyday."[45] In a similar way, walking helps me to learn about my relationship with place through lived experience.

Different parameters and conditions in the environment shape a walking experience. As art, walking can remove an element of control from the artist and leaves them open to unexpected experiences. To document her walking experiences, Māori/Sāmoan/Niuean artist Janet Lilo employed a diaristic approach to *The Normandy Research Project* (2014). This was a planned solo walk from the city of Rouen to the coastal city of Le Havre in Normandy, France.[46] Similarly to my project, the start and end points were predetermined but the journey between the two points was left "open-ended"[47] and out of Lilo's control. Lilo recorded her encounters with regular reflections in the form of blog posts and drawings evident in her resulting work *Walking encounters: found objects, people and situations*. I see this collection of drawings as playful, poetic and humorous recordings of daily events that took place. Lilo's process of documenting the walk, through written text and small drawings reflects unexpected encounters. The nature of a walking practice within art is to open up one's practice, and it offers new ways of thinking about one's relationships with place and people encountered.

[45] Carl Lavery, "Interruption: Walking and Ruination, or What it Means to Keep a Secret," in Clare Qualman and Claire Hind, *Ways to Wander*, Vol. 1, no. 1 (Dorset: Triarchy Press, 2015), 8.
[46] "Janet Lilo: Britomart People," Britomart, accessed November 05, 2019, https://britomart.org/janet-lilo/
[47] Carl Lavery, "Interruption: Walking and Ruination, or What it Means to Keep a Secret," 8.

This content has been removed by the author due to copyright issues.

Figure 16. Richard Long, 1967, *A Line Made by Walking* [photograph, gelatin silver print, 375 x 324mm].



Figure 17.1. Janet Lilo, 2*014*, *Walking encounters: found objects, people and situations* [mixed media, various dimensions].

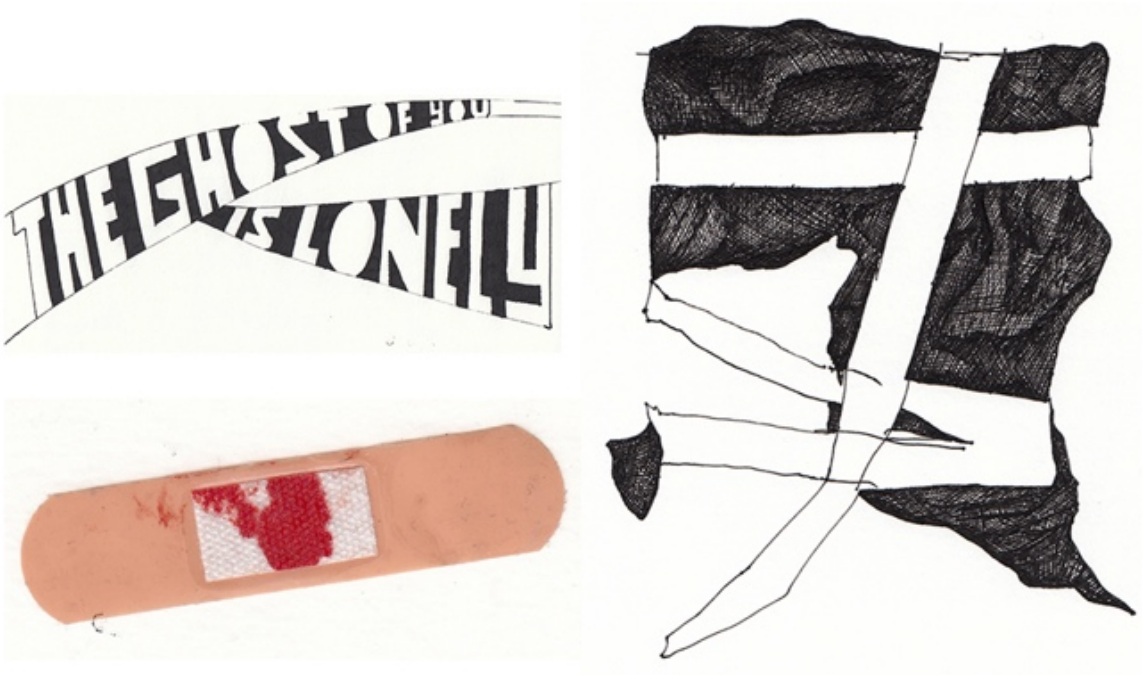

Figure 17.2. Janet Lilo, 2*014*, *Modes of protection – for self and from others, either as gifts or potential threats* [mixed media, various dimensions].

(Preliminary) actions in my project are a way to scout sections of *Walking the Wairoa*. A section of the walk in the lower reaches of the Wairoa from Waimarino to Te Puna Station Road (approximately 4km) is only accessible by swimming. Permission to access the river and surrounding land was sought from the local marae (Te Runanga O Ngāti Kahu) and was granted by kaumātua. In relation to ideas of friction and movement discussed in Chapter 3, I realise that swimming this distance is different from walking on land. The 1.5-2 hour swim in the tidal zone allows me to flow with the current resulting in less friction. Fresh water provides a different set of variables, such as the temperature of the water and the flowing current, which requires extra planning. I tested this route at low tide which allowed me to walk in waist deep water in the same direction as the current. This was a way to contemplate my own body's motion alongside the river's currents and expands on movement through space in a totally immersive manner.

To document the action of walking in the river, I carried Bruno's 35mm camera as a note-taking device. Although walking through water is an unlikely scenario to use such a camera, I did so because it belongs to Bruno. I found a box of his photographs (1982-1984) depicting a similar subject matter – water, rocks and plants. Using this camera in the Wairoa River involved a slower, more contemplative process, and a maximum of 36 exposures. I carried

this camera in a dry sack in my backpack and made exposures at certain moments. My use of the camera (originally intended as a sketching tool) reflected an intuitive way of documenting my direct encounter with the water and surrounding environment. In retrospect, I am concerned about the selective and controlled process involved in using the camera to document my experience. I am wary of what Angela Wanhalla describes as "the colonial history of photography and its links to imperial policy and expansion as well as settler colonialism."[48] Because "place-based learning and research is entrenched in settler colonial histories",[49] I feel that this method of documenting actions in my project is inadequate as a form of documentation when I am aiming to off-centre my own gaze and sense of control.



Figure 18. Bruno Schlatter, *2014*, various photographs dated 1982-1984 [35mm colour photographs].

[48] Angela Wanhalla, "The Meaning of 'Colour': Photography and Portraiture, 1889-1904" in *Early New Zealand Photography: Images and Essays*, ed. Angela Wanhall and Erica Wolf (Dundein: Otago University Press, 2011), 118.
[49] Stephanie Springgay and Sarah E. Truman, *Walking Methodologies in a More-than-human World: WalkingLab*, 17.



Figure 19.1-19.5. December 2019, experiment: section test from Waimarino to Te Puna 4km/1.5-2 hrs appx: looking back to Waimarino [Ilford Hp5 Plus 400 – 35mm].
35mm photograph taken with my father Bruno's camera.



Figure 19.2. December 2019.



Figure 19.3. December 2019.



Figure 19.4. December 2019.



Figure 19.5. December 2019.

An original motivation behind this project was to consider my own presence and movement through an environment as tauiwi in Aotearoa. This has involved my learning of land ownership and riparian rights along the riverbed. I explained the contextual setting of this physical location in Chapter Three, which is an example of 'being' as the importance of learning about such contexts. Coffin says:

> From the 1880's, land tenure on the banks of the Wairoa has resembled a patchwork quilt, made up of squares of Crown confiscations, European and Māori land. Therefore, it is difficult to ascertain the ownership of the Wairoa. Many questions hinge upon the acceptance or rejection of riparian ownership rights attached to land adjoining the river.[50]

Indigenous and Western ways of understanding and relating to place are fundamentally different.[51] The riparian ownership and boundary lines invented by/for use by tauiwi is influential to this project and my walking methods. Social Anthropologist Avril Bell, in her text

[50] Rachael Willan, *Wairoa River Report* (Tauranga: Waitangi Tribunal, 1996), 19.
[51] Henri Lefebvre argues that the notion of space has been appropriated by mathematics, which has claimed an ideological position of dominance over what space means. Henri Lefebvre, cited in Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (London & New York: Zed Books; Dunedin: University of Otago Press, 1999), 53.

Performative Hybridity in the 'Ruins of Representation', talks about "the uncanny moment [that] marks the disruption and unsettling of binary logics and systems of discursive domination",[52] which for her relates to the Freudian 'uncanny' or unheimlich (unhomely).[53] Bell's reminder to be aware of "mimicking indigenous authenticity"[54] reinforces considered movement through spaces by tauiwi. Walking in this project is a constructive method of relating to place. I have started to think about (preliminary) actions as detailing a guide for my own future ways of walking.

Making maps and talking with people

Another action, that of mapping, also contributed to my curiosity about riparian rights along the Wairoa River, and became an embodied way of seeing my route. Mapping was a process that I had not explored before in my practice and it appealed to me as a tactile method of familiarising myself with the terrain and boundaries along the river. According to walking artist Karen O'Rourke, "like walking, mapping is an embodied experience carried out from a particular point of view that makes possible both the finiteness of one's perception and its opening out upon the complete world."[55] Although the incorporation of craft in my mapping process was useful as an embodied experience, a map is also a functional object and a practical guide, which I will talk about in this section. My mapping process involved highlighting the full length of the Wairoa River on a computer using Google Earth and Photoshop. Next I transferred the digital map to calico using fabric paint, in order to make a physical version (five metres in length). This process allowed me to become familiar with the shape of the river and allowed me to see its full view. In collaboration with my mother, Judith, in the corridor of her house, we washed the fabric and allowed it to dry. Then we finally ironed it into its current form to complete the final map to be used as a planning device.

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[52] Avril Bell, "Performative Hybridity in the 'Ruins of Representation'," in *Relating Indigenous and Settler Identities*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 99.
[53] Avril Bell, "Performative Hybridity in the 'Ruins of Representation'," 99.
[54] Ibid., 97-98.
[55] Karen O'Rourke, "Introduction," in *Walking and Mapping: Artists as Cartographers* (Cambridge, MA: MIT press, 2013).

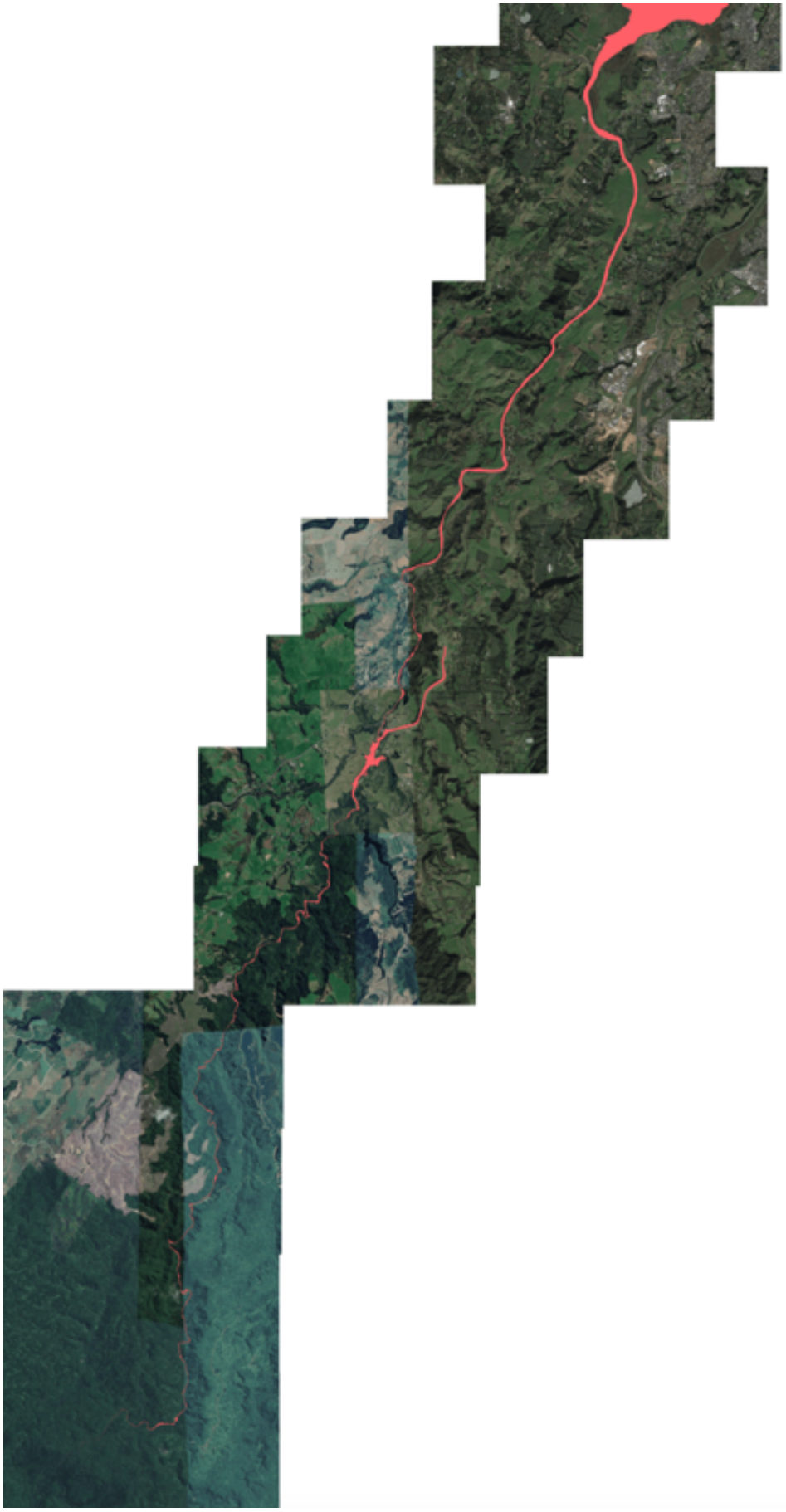

Figure 20.1. Google Earth, October 2019, working map: *Walking the Wairoa* [digital map drawing].



Figure 20.2. October 2019, working map: *Walking the Wairoa* [fabric paint on calico, 4790 X 1150mm]. 1:6263 scale

In order to prepare for *Walking the Wairoa* I introduced a consulting approach, in which I carried my map with me to various people for external input. My map acted as a talking aid to communicate *Walking the Wairoa* to others, and to highlight obstacles and boundaries along my route. I have made the map portable by forming creases, with reference to a standard topographical map technique, allowing me to carry it in my backpack. Among several one-to-one sessions with others, I approached my friend and hiking expert William Horsley to check my route for potential dangers. Using my map and additional topographic contour maps that I had brought with me, he pointed out any dangerous areas that I should avoid, such as indications of cliffs and heavy waterflow. Similarly to my use of artworks that also act as visual aids, Sydney based artist Bianca Hester's first solo show in London "approached The Showroom's gallery space as an 'expanded studio', a 'base camp' from which the young Melbourne artist aimed to develop a series of collaborations."[56] This show is an example of Hester's continual use of objects as "props" to establish a meeting point between people.[57] Hester's use of props is exampled again in her 2015 project *Movements Materialising Momentarily* at ST PAUL St Gallery, which was a 14km walk involving 40 people, following the contour of lava flow from Te Kopuke (Mt John summit) to Te Tokaroa (Meola Reef) in the Waitematā Harbour.[58] This walk involved the shared carrying of three 5.6-metre long bronze rods which, in Hester's words, "requir[ed] multiple hands to bear their modest weight and awkward length."[59] Similarly, because of my hand-made map's large size, people help me with its unfolding and placement, and finally storing it back into my backpack, which brings about a kind of shared care for this object and temporary relational encounter.

[56] Sam Thorne, "Bianca Hester: The Showroom London UK," *Frieze*, accessed November 5, 2019, https://frieze.com/article/bianca-hester
[57] Ibid.
[58] John Hurrell, "Bianca Hester in Auckland," *Eye Contact*, accessed November 2019, http://eyecontactsite.com/2015/09/bianca-hester-in-auckland
[59] Bianca Hester, "Movements Materialising Momenterily," *Movements Materialising Momentarily* (blog), accessed November 5, 2019, https://movementsmaterialisingmomentarily.wordpress.com/walk/



Figure 20.3. October 2019, working map drying after wash: *Walking the Wairoa* [digital image].



Figure 20.4. October 2019, working map in my mother Judith's living room and hallway: *Walking the Wairoa* [digital image].



Figure 20.5. November 2019, working map in my friend William Horsley's living room: *Walking the Wairoa* [digital image].



Figure 21.1-21.2. Bianca Hester, 2015, *Movements Materialising Momentarily* [digital image].



Figure 21.2. Bianca Hester, 2015.



Figure 21.3. Bianca Hester, 2015, [installation view], ST PAUL St Gallery, Auckland, New Zealand.

Another example of props used in a walk is Māori/Sāmoan artist Jeremy Leatinu'u's *Kawea* (2019), in which I was present as a participant. This event was part of a walk series entitled *Walking about*, involving 12 artists over 12 months. The walk spanned from the base of Owairaka to the point where the river Te Auaunga commingles with the tidal waters of the Waitematā.[60] Participants were invited to bring an object of personal significance. These were wrapped carefully on arrival and dispersed randomly among participants. With the contents of each package unknown, these were carried along the route. Carrying one another's objects of personal significance was like carrying some kind of narrative. I was already thinking before I arrived, would someone else take good care of my object without knowing its story? Or, if I told them the significance of the object, would they carry it differently? This also requires me to take care of their object in a kind of reciprocal relationship. Following *Kawea* I wrote Jeremy a letter to share my experience with him. I explained the significance of my personal object – a boat my brother made. Here is an extract from the letter:

> *Thank you for wrapping my boat so carefully on arrival – the boat my brother made when we were little. I always thought it was a clever design, considering his age and limited resources on a warm summer's day, so I held onto it. He always came up with a solution in every scenario – he's an engineer now. You may have wondered about her name. Möve means seagull in Swiss…I chose my boat as an object because I have been fascinated about water and movement as ways of connecting with place…*[61]

This is an object that I always appreciated due to my brother's craftsmanship but also the boat's relationship with movement and water. The opportunity to review this object reminded me of important familial connections also arising in my research. Because my brother and sister are of my generation and share a similar transexperience, I realise that I am carrying out this research for them as much as I am for myself and others in a similar position. The act of writing this letter to inform Jeremy of my experience, helped me to think about gestures in my project in relation to notions of care and consideration for materials and people involved in my project.

[60] Te Uru, "Walking About: Jeremy Leatinu'u, Kawea," eventfinda, accessed November, 2019, https://www.eventfinda.co.nz/2019/walking-about-jeremy-leatinuu-kawea/auckland/mt-albert

[61] See letter in full in Appendix 1



Figure 22.1-22.3. November 2019, walking to Kukuwai Park: *Kawea, Walking about* [digital image]. Images sent with letter.



Figure 22.2. November 2019.



Figure 22.3. November 2019.

In my own project as another (preliminary) action, I made postcards to distribute to neighbours in a similar vein of care and courtesy. These postcards had an image of the Wairoa River on one side and were blank on the other. I printed a pile of these cards and carried them with me as I scouted this area. My intention was to handwrite notes on the postcards to either give to neighbours or leave in their letterbox. As an example, the Ruahihi Power Station is an obstacle in my route, so I dropped a note in a letterbox to ask the property owner if I could exit the river on their property to bypass the dam. In negotiating access for walking, the postcards are a gesture towards relationships with land occupants. Care and acknowledgement of others is important to my project in order to unsettle "binary logics and systems of discursive domination."[62] For me, this idea of care and responsibility provokes positive actions that can be applied to walking.



Figure 23.1. September 2019, Poripori, a popular swimming location: view 3 [Digital image].

[62] Avril Bell, "Performative Hybridity in the 'Ruins of Representation'," 99.



Figure 23.2-23.3. October 2019, gesture: postcard for neighbours [Postcard, 110 x 162mm].
Postcard: front.



Figure 23.3. October 2019, Postcard: reverse.

Documenting (preliminary) actions

In this section I revisit the exhibition space as an opportunity to think about what is taken away from the site as the document of an action. Phil Smith distinguishes two components to a walking practice. He frames these as "the act of experiencing the site (the moment of immersion) and the act of producing work from the site (the moment of abstraction)."[63] Emerging from my exploratory walking works, were a series of swims. Documents from these swims formed much of the content of my exhibition *Te Wairoa; The Long Water*. This February 2020 exhibition was located at All Goods; A Space for the Arts in Avondale, where I currently live in Auckland. The exhibition connects these two places and is a strategy in sharing my considered movements through place.

I swam a section from Redwood Lane to the Te Puna Rowing Club (10km, approx 1.5-2hrs). I am interested in documentary methods that de-emphasise my personal viewpoint and can engage my local community in my process. I have already framed the importance of giving up a sense of control in documentation, and that documentation should emphasise the performance of swimming down the river as an artwork. When using a camera, Hobbs' concern about a "detached single perspective" is relevant in this project because this "would potentially create power imbalances between the subject, the camera and thus the audience."[64] To give up control and avoid a second-hand experience for an audience, I attached two GoPro cameras to a custom-made belt on my backpack carried on my body to document the swimming performance, recording what passed by me on either side of the riverbed as I swam.

These swims took place during summer months (Nov 2019 -Feb 2020). This also happens to be the same time of year that eels or taniwha are migrating upstream. This swim tested my body's limits while being in cold water. The steady stream of footage being recorded by the cameras allowed me to focus on the immersive experience during the performance, an opportunity to observe what surrounds me such as eels travelling in the rivers depths and my acknowledgment of taniwha such as Poripori.

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[63] Deirdre Heddon, Carl Lavery, and Phil Smith, *Walking, Writing and Performance: Autobiographical Texts* (Bristol: Intellect Books, 2009), 52.
[64] Rebecca Hobbs, "Ngā Puia o Ihumātao (The Volcanoes of Ihumātao)," 63.

The exhibition *Te Wairoa; The Long Water* was a way to share my relationship with water and my movements as tauiwi in Aotearoa. Sharing this directly with my friends and neighbours in Avondale provided an opportunity to form broader relations and contexts while maintaining my engagement with the Wairoa River.

CONCLUSION

Through small material enquiries and larger endurance performances this research has opened enquiries around transnational identities in Aotearoa. This practice-based research has focused on ideas of being and has experimented with ways of forming important relationships in places.

My grandmother's statement *Ich glaube diis dihei isch I neuseeland* guided me through the exploratory stages of this research. Here, I utilised various materials from drawing this sentence on my wall in pencil to folding paper boats with my grandmother. I realised my own position in Aotearoa as tauiwi (foreigner/immigrant) as well as being tāwāhi (distant) to my ancestral homelands. My research has aimed to acknowledge where I have come from as a lifestyle migrant while focusing more immediately on being and moving through spaces respectfully. This has been a way to acknowledge Māori who already have long standing relationships with whenua (land) and the Wairoa River.

A key realisation of this research has been my personal relationship with water as tauiwi. My attraction to two significant bodies of water the Rhine (Switzerland) and the Wairoa (Aotearoa) has drawn me to water as the main focus of this research. *This is the deepest blue that I think I have ever seen* and *Following the Wairoa* have explored my connection with water across places (including Te Auaunga in Avondale, through the exhibition). This translation across places has opened a rich inquiry around personal movement, particularly through places that are not of one's origin.

Inspired by writers Rebecca Solnit, Stephanie Springgay and Sarah Truman, the research has taken into account walking methodologies to think about ways of moving through spaces effectively. In preparation for a provisional walk of the entire length of the Wairoa River the research has seen a developmental shift to (preliminary) actions including mapping, swimming and connecting with neighbours along this river. A series of swims were undertaken in the lower reaches of the Wairoa River. In realising the complexity of this action, swimming became a key method in the research in the way that it connects the body. Through practice, I have discovered the significance of disregarding the idea of belonging in favour of actions that encourage observation and learning through experience.

Appendix 1 – A Letter to Jeremy

A LETTER TO JEREMY

I really enjoyed your walk, Kawea*, taking us from Ōwairaka to Waterview Reserve – part of the current* Walking about *series. I was walking with Abbey, Jill, Richard + co – the late-comers! Sorry about that. Apparently, I wasn't the only one normally traumatised by arriving late to things. We were late because we didn't go straight in the direction of Waterview Reserve. I'll draw you a map on the back of this. Collectively, we felt a need to back-track to the first sign of water on your map. First, we walked up to the top of the maunga, as a few people in the group hadn't been there. We climbed down a steep slope down the back and wandered to Jill's house to visit her chickens and see her garden, which we all thought was stunning. This is where we started to get the feeling we would be the last group to arrive. I wonder if anyone walked by themselves? As a whole we didn't mind being late, because you all had kai waiting for you and we trusted that this was the way we had to walk. We walked to the bottom of the map you gave each of us – near Hendon Avenue. We followed the motorway overpass bridge, which passed Avondale Motor Park. Here came up a discussion on tiny houses between those seeing it as a chance to own their own home and those that supported the idea.*

Thank you for wrapping my boat so carefully on arrival – the boat my brother made when we were little. I always thought it was a clever design, considering his age and limited resources on a warm summer's day, so I held onto it. He always came up with a solution in every scenario – he's an engineer now. You may have wondered about her name. Möve *means seagull in Swiss. As we walked I proceeded to check my bag continuously to see that number ten was still sitting safely among my essentials. It was wrapped in newspaper and I was unaware of its contents. I felt bad, I had a much easier job carrying this item than the person carrying my oversized, awkwardly shaped object. I later found out when we finally arrived at the reserve, that I had been carrying a kauri seed pod – very fitting, and makes me think about the care we all put into this walk and carrying these items seriously. I chose my boat as an object because I have been fascinated about water and movement as ways of connecting with place. Carrying the seed pod is another way of contemplating care itself.*

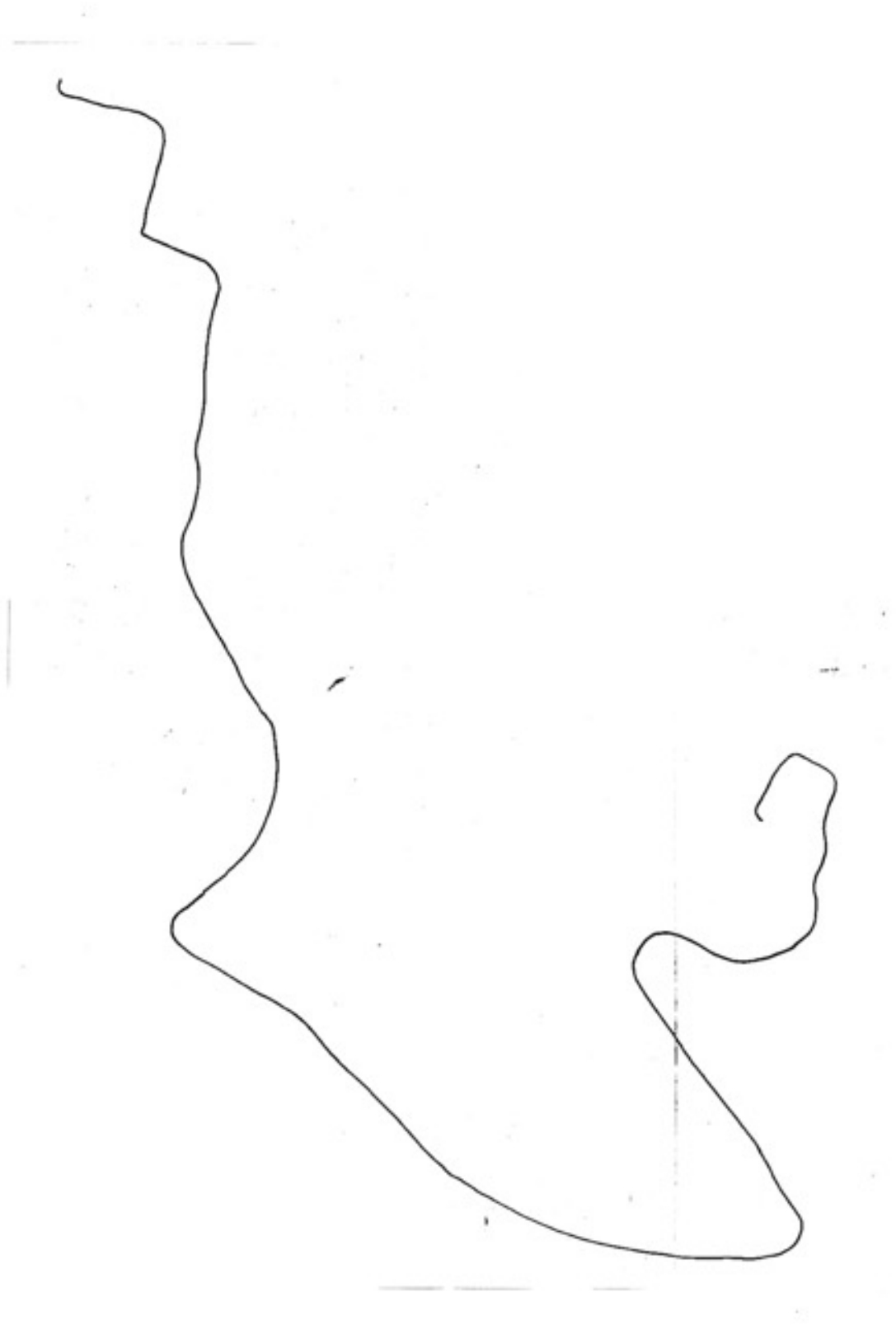

Figure 24.1. November 2019, gesture: the reverse side of my Letter to Jeremy; *Kawea*, *Walking about* [pen on paper].

Appendix 2 – Kit



Figure 25.1. November 2019, *Kit*, [Digital image].



Figure 25.2. November 2019, *Kit*, [Digital image].



Figure 25.3. November 2019, *Kit*, [Digital image].



Figure 25.4. November 2019, *Kit*, [Digital image].

Appendix 3 – Exhibition

The Wairoa River (Aotearoa) and The Rhine (Switzerland) are two bodies of water central to this research. The research has seen a transformative development to the idea of 'being in' rather than 'belonging' to a country which is explored further through the exhibition Te Wairoa; The Long Water. The exhibition geographically connects to a third body of water Te Auaunga (a creek near my home in Avondale) through the exhibition location.

The exhibition is located in Avondale's All Goods; A Space for the Arts by Whau the People (a community art collective). On entry to the exhibition space a viewer approaches a three metre long map lying on the floor (geographically accurate, oriented in a North/East facing position). This object (made from calico and orange fabric paint) maps the entire length of the Wairoa River from the Kaimai mountain range to Tauranga Harbour. The sounds of moving water and my breathing play from the in-built speakers of two 42" television screens mounted on walls, either side of the sliding doors ahead. These doors face out to the community garden and courtyard. The central kitchen space was used during the opening to serve food and drink to guests.

The left and right positioning of the screens mimics the two views from Go-Pro Hero 7 4K cameras mounted on my backpack as I swam down the river. The cameras were attached to my backpack using a belt that I custom-made for the purpose [see figures 25.1-25.3]. These videos document this experience/performance – a 10 kilometre swim (approx 1.5-2hrs) down a lower section of the river between Redwood Lane and the Bay of Plenty Coast Rowing club as titled in the video works.

A table was borrowed from the community space to display ephemera. Viewers are free to touch and interact with these items. The contents are derived from my interactions with this river and the surrounding community – (preliminary) actions. Included are detailed maps, ringbound booklets containing photographs taken with Bruno's camera, notebooks, documents, postcards and the belt made to hold the cameras to my backpack.

I view this exhibition as an extension of the project. I have continued to learn as a gallery host and community member. This is evidenced by interactions that I have had with others in the space. The fabric map on the floor remained a significant faciliatory device for the duration of the exhibition. A particular conversation I recall was with Silvia Spieksma (tauiwi, Netherlands). Silvia described her relationship to fresh water as it relates to her memories growing up in and around de Maas, a river in the Netherlands (this river connects to Belgium and France – la Meuse).[65] I enjoyed Silvia's particular description for the river that she connects with – not too wide but also not too narrow, and without too much coverage from the canopy. Silvia's description was specific to her memories of swimming home in de Maas for approximately 45 kilometers. These shared understandings were brought up through conversation. Although we set specific conditions based on past experiences, this draws us to new places with an innate appreciation. Water is itself a fluid and moving entity that flows through places.

[65] Communication with Silvia Spieksma at Te Wairoa: The Long Water, (Gardener at All Goods: A Space for the Arts, Avondale), February 20, 2020.



Figure 26.1. February 2020, Te Wairoa: The Long Water, [Installation view, various dimensions].

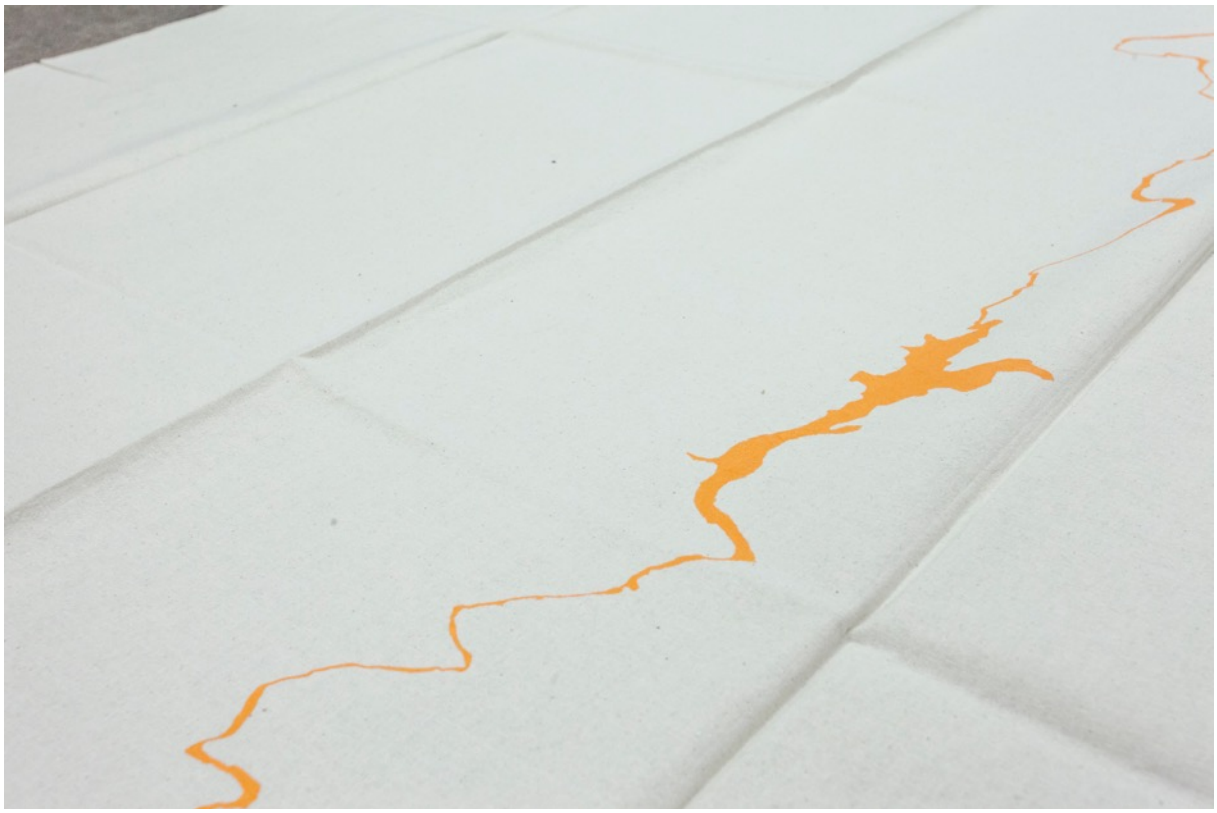

Figure 26.2. February 2020, Te Wairoa: The Long Water, [Map detail, fabric paint on calico, 4790 X 1150mm 1:6263 scale].



Figure 26.3. February 2020, Te Wairoa: The Long Water, [Installation view, various dimensions].



Figure 26.4. February 2020, Te Wairoa: The Long Water, [Video detail, 42” screens].

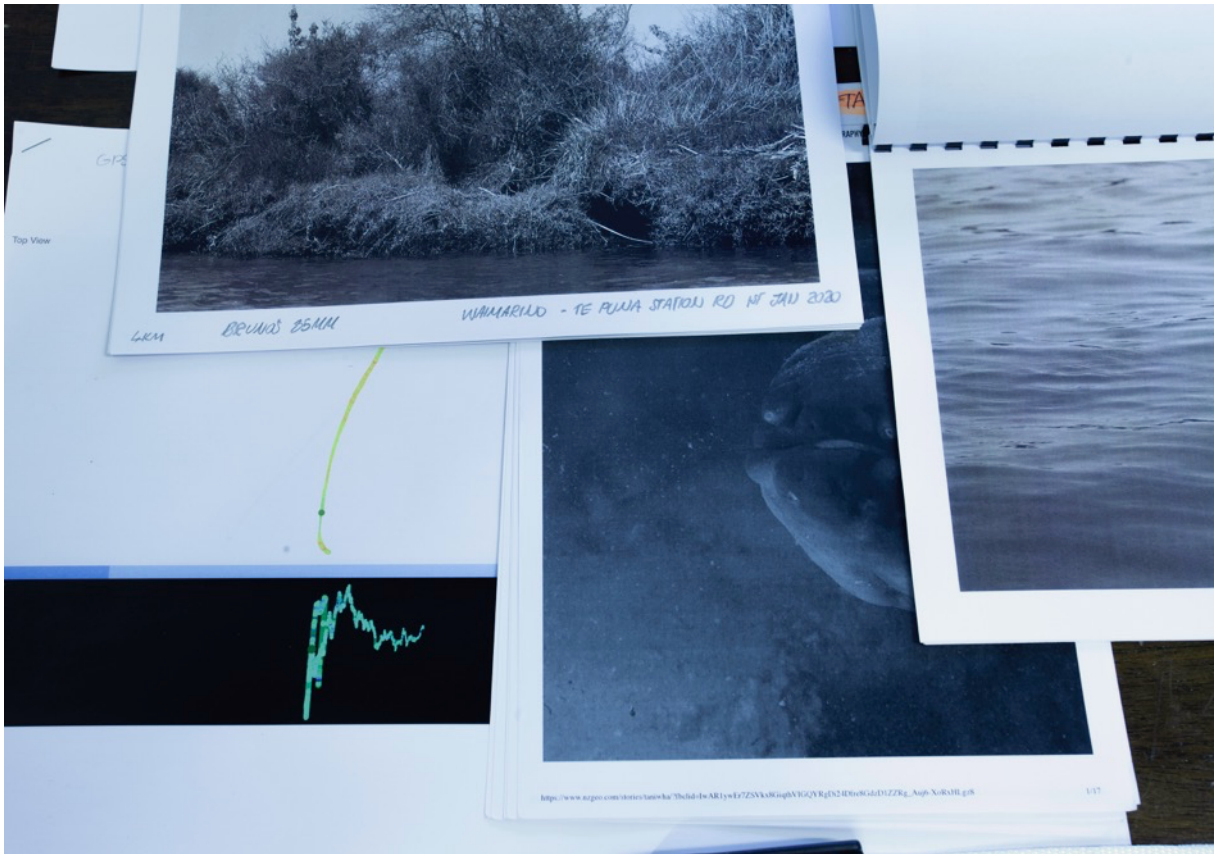

Figure 26.5. February 2020, Te Wairoa: The Long Water, [Installation view, various dimensions].

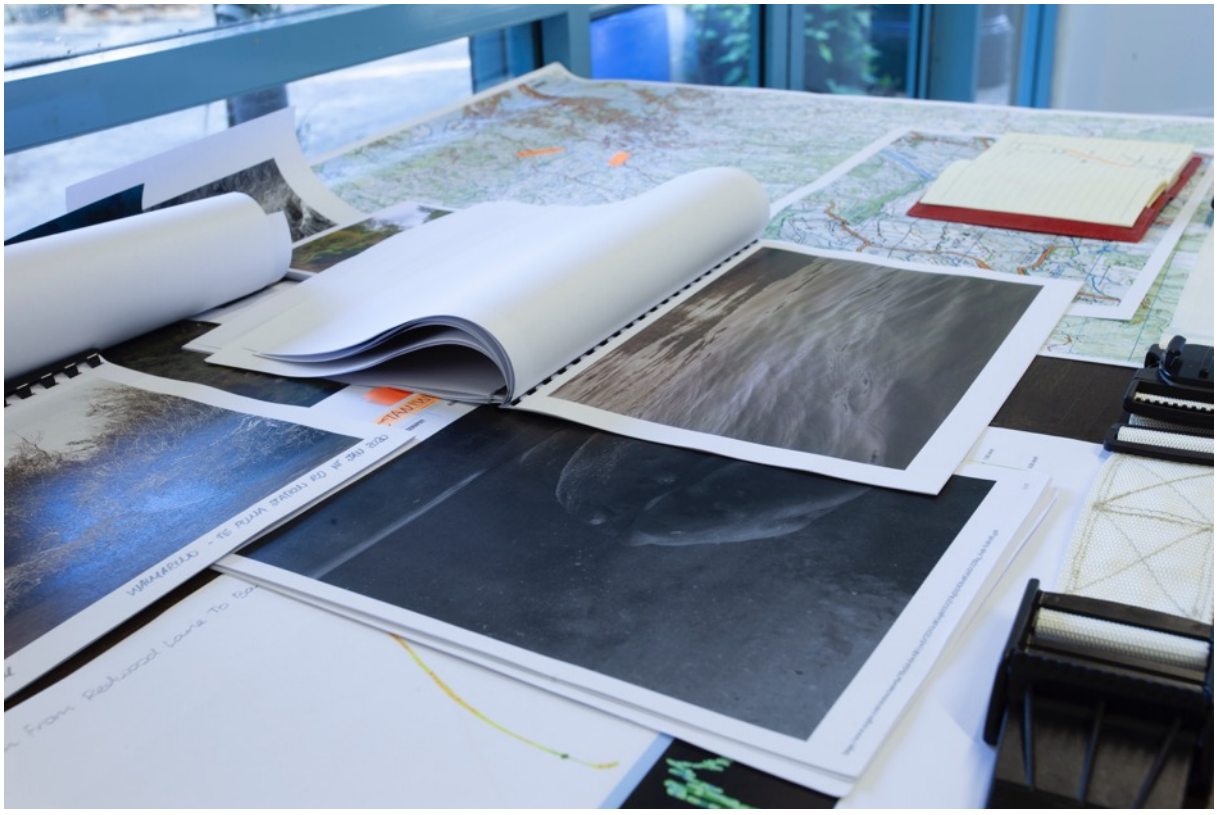

Figure 26.6. February 2020, Te Wairoa: The Long Water, [Installation view, various dimensions].

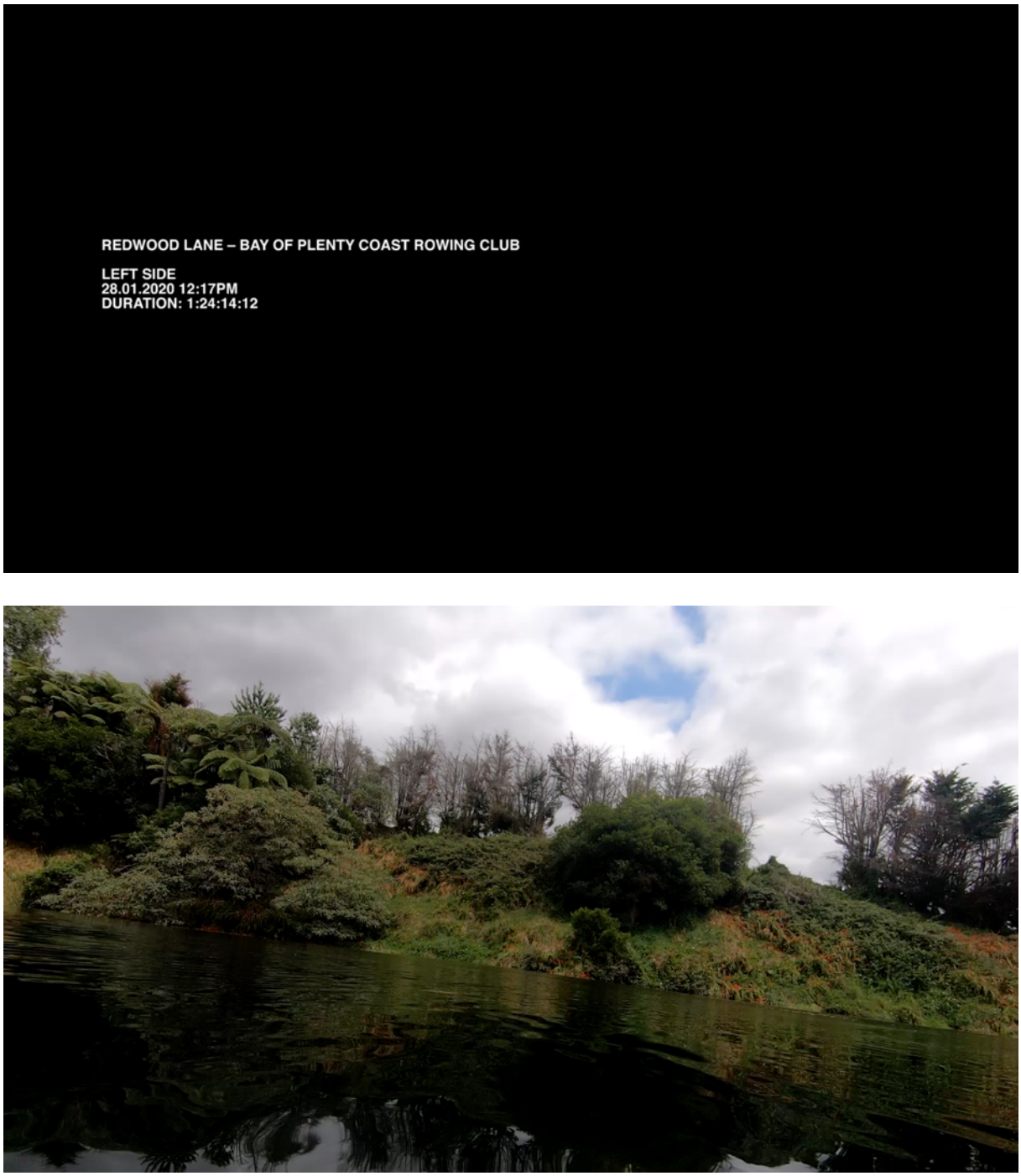

Figure 26.7. February 2020, Te Wairoa: The Long Water, *Redwood Lane – Bay of Plenty Coast Rowing Club: Left Side* [Video still]. View video sample at https://vimeo.com/404954914





Figure 26.8. February 2020, Te Wairoa: The Long Water, *Redwood Lane – Bay of Plenty Coast Rowing Club, Right Side* [Video still]. View video sample at https://vimeo.com/404955445



Figure 26.9. February 2020, Te Wairoa: The Long Water, [Catalogue 255 x 145mm].

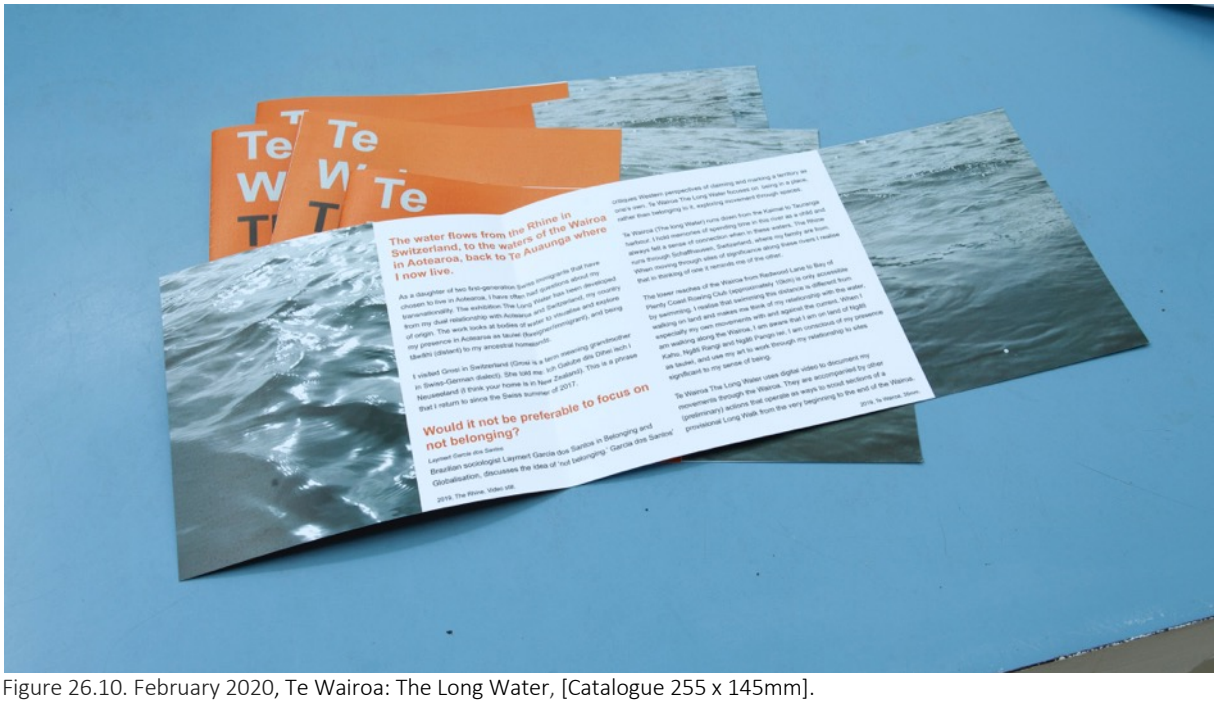

Figure 26.10. February 2020, Te Wairoa: The Long Water, [Catalogue 255 x 145mm].

Laymert Garcia dos Santos, "Belonging and Not Belonging," in Belonging and Globalisation: Critical Essays in Contemporary Art and Culture, ed. Kamal Boullata (London: Saqi Books, 2008), 50.

All Goods.
99 Rosebank Road
Avondale

Open hours
13th-29th February 2020
Thurs.-Sa. 10am-4pm

Closing celebration
Fri. 28th February 5pm







2019, Installation view, digital image.

All Goods A Space for the Arts.

All Goods is a community led arts space nestled between the Avondale Community Centre and Library, and previous home to the Avondale Community Preschool. Managed by Whau the People it welcomes artists and community members in to run projects, hold workshops, hang out and make and experience art. Its a space for people to experiment, make, show and connect.

Find out more here: https://whauthepeople.com/

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ALL GOODS.
A SPACE FOR THE ARTS

WHAU THE PEOPLE

AUT
TE WĀNANGA ARONUI O TĀMAKI MAKAU RAU

Te Wairoa The Long Water

A Guide for Walking

Lea Schlatter



The water flows from the Rhine in Switzerland, to the waters of the Wairoa in Aotearoa, back to Te Auaunga where I now live.

As a daughter of two first-generation Swiss immigrants that have chosen to live in Aotearoa, I have often had questions about my transnationality. The exhibition The Long Water has been developed from my dual relationship with Aotearoa and Switzerland, my country of origin. The work looks at bodies of water to visualise and explore my presence in Aotearoa as tauiwi (foreigner/immigrant), and being tāwāhi (distant) to my ancestral homelands.

I visited Grosi in Switzerland (Grosi is a term meaning grandmother in Swiss-German dialect). She told me: Ich Galube diis Dihei isch i Neuseeland (I think your home is in New Zealand). This is a phrase that I return to since the Swiss summer of 2017.

Would it not be preferable to focus on not belonging?

Laymert Garcia dos Santos

Brazilian sociologist Laymert Garcia dos Santos in Belonging and Globalisation, discusses the idea of 'not belonging.' Garcia dos Santos' critiques Western perspectives of claiming and marking a territory as one's own. Te Wairoa The Long Water focuses on being in a place, rather than belonging to it, exploring movement through spaces.

Te Wairoa (The long Water) runs down from the Kaimai to Tauranga harbour. I hold memories of spending time in this river as a child and always felt a sense of connection when in these waters. The Rhine runs through Schaffhausen, Switzerland, where my family are from. When moving through sites of significance along these rivers I realise that in thinking of one it reminds me of the other.

The lower reaches of the Wairoa from Redwood Lane to Bay of Plenty Coast Rowing Club (approximately 10km) is only accessible by swimming. I realise that swimming this distance is different from walking on land and makes me think of my relationship with the water, especially my own movements with and against the current. When I am walking along the Wairoa, I am aware that I am on land of Ngāti Kahu, Ngāti Rangi and Ngāti Pango iwi. I am conscious of my presence as tauiwi, and use my art to work through my relationship to sites significant to my sense of being.

Te Wairoa The Long Water uses digital video to document my movements through the Wairoa. They are accompanied by other (preliminary) actions that operate as ways to scout sections of a provisional Long Walk from the very beginning to the end of the Wairoa.

2019, The Rhine, Video still.

2019, Te Wairoa, 35mm.



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