

TE PUNA O ĀIO, THE TEMPLE OF POTENTIAL

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ABSTRACT

As a contemporary Māori artist, within Aotearoa, New Zealand, I research what is meant by spirituality or wairua in my art practice; and why Māori art is both a practice and a philosophy that can revive the spirit. I explore my connection to the natural world and the primordial elements to define what is meant by an Indigenous psyche. Steeped in the same wairua of customary Māori art, I am in the realm of imagining,¹ feeling and activating a force from within. I project non-physical images/ideas into the physical world. Being in the realm of wairua Māori informs my art practice, despite the impacts of colonisation. Enacted through Whakapapa to the natural world, my art practice is a pathway to reviving an unwritten/oral philosophy; a primordial remembrance activated by a creative process.

Through my own creative art practice and research, I have awakened my own primordial connection to Nature's biological intelligence and created a realm that enriches wairua. Wairua exists within all Whakapapa. I create this artwork, *Te Puna O Āio, The Temple of Potential*, with its own spirit and Whakapapa. Wairuatanga and Māorioritanga evolved as frameworks through an ease or lightness of approach. This research proposes a counter-narrative to creativity as hard work, instead positioning art as an elemental flowing spring of our creative potential that emerges with a lightness and *Ease*.² This Ease is a method I use to create directly from my innate self, my spirit base, where there is no end, therefore, no struggle. The more we go with the current of our energy, the easier we flow.

The simple notion that grounds this research is that we have a spirit and it must be active; both to contribute to "thought" and to activate our inner potential. The spirit joined with our physical being contributes to a multi-dimensional reality. It is an acknowledgment of our potential to be anything we can imagine, regardless of our circumstances. Using an Indigenous-auto ethnographic methodology, this thesis explores how *Te Puna O Āio, The Temple of Potential*, as a piece of contemporary Māori Art, constitutes the space of the acknowledged spirit. The Temple is a place to remember our multi-dimensional potential, as well as the living example of the spirit in action.

¹ Imagining is used here as the ultimate place of our creative force that gives us the faculty to create anything we can think of. First as ideas from our psyche, which when focused upon become living artworks. Imagination is the chamber for the incubation and discovery of the new world. The world that has to still be imagined and therefore created.

² Ease is positioned as a higher consciousness of being and translated here, at times, as māoriori, to be contented, serene, at ease.

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my Grandparents who all made me and contributed in many ways to this exegesis both directly and indirectly, consciously and sub-consciously.

He maimai aroha ki aku matua tupuna. Ka nui te aroha ki a koutou.

With love and respect, I include them in this exegesis cover image collage as follows:



Top left to right; Hinemotu Paama Harawira, Heeni (Jane) Henry Tawhiao; Bottom left to right, Tukapa Harawira, Taukiri Tawhiao (Wendy Tawhiao), Isla Ngatai Carston and Kevin Carston.(1917–2017)

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Attestation of Authorship

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sally Taylor', written in a cursive style.

SIGNED

DATE 14/11/2018

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Aroha atu, Aroha mai.

Nga mihinui, Arohanui ki a koutou katoa.

TE PUNA O ĀIO, THE TEMPLE OF POTENTIAL

Artist Manifesto:

To revive the Indigenous psyche in all people, to revive our remembrance of creation.

To revive direct relationship with nature.

To communicate with human nature, not creed or race.

To connect to the miracle of love.

To restore balance of mind, body and soul as proof of the divine.

The thought precedes all outcome that is the first.

Whakapuakanga Ringatoi:

Kia whakahaumanu mai i te awe wairua taketake i ngā tāngata katoa

Kia manatu mai i te orokohanga

Kia whakarauora mai i te whakawhanaungatanga ki a Papatūānuku

Kia whakawhitiwhiti mai i te ira tāngata, ēhara i te mātāwaka, ēhara i te momo noa iho.

Kia hono ki te āio a tōna aroha

Kia whakahauora i te ihomatua, te kiko me te awe hei whakatūturutanga mo te wāhi ngaro

Ko te Hinengaro ki mua Ko te putanga Ki muri.³

³ Translation by Isaac Bishara (Ngāti Tuwharetoa, Ngāti Ranginui), Māori Philosophy Mentor.

PART ONE

Introduction

1.1 Pepeha

Ko Mātaatua te waka

Ko Ngāi te Rangi, Whakatohea, Ngāti Tuwharetoa, nga iwi

Ko Ngāi Tuwhiwhia, Tauwhao, Te Ngare, Ngāi Tamawhariua, Ngāti Tauaiti, nga hapu

Ko Matakana te motu

Ko Mauao te maunga

Ko Tauranga te moana

Ko Tracey Tawhiao ahau

Art activates my indigeneity: based on a series of kaupapa Māori whakaaro, I have incrementally uncovered my buried Indigenous psyche. Contemporary art has not only been a vehicle for this recovery but also an effective way to divert the negative perceptions of Māori. In order to research a Māori understanding of the Spirit in Art or the meaning of Wairua (spirit) and Mauri (vital force) in art, there are historical and cultural factors that underpin contemporary Māori Art that require contextualisation in terms of this research project. This project is informed by Māori cosmological knowledge, in a post-colonial context. It is still a highly⁴ developed field of innate knowledge, even although there has been a disruption in the delivery of narratives passed through generations of tribal lore. Canadian Indigenous writer Vanessa Watts (2003) states:

Our understandings of the world are often viewed as mythic by “modern” society, while our stories are considered to be an alternative mode of understanding and

⁴ I say highly because there are still key knowledge holders within each tribe who hold the understandings through close connection to Māori language, place and people. Many choose to keep their knowledge oral to prevent further colonial interference. They do not want to be quoted or named. Oral cultural norms are still not fully appreciated as important to Māori, nor are they fully understood. I argue that oral paradigms are connected to spiritual understandings of nature as an organic and changing information centre, and as such are not served by the written word, which is static.

interpretation rather than “real” events. Colonisation is not solely an attack on peoples and lands; rather, this attack is accomplished in part through purposeful and ignorant misrepresentations of Indigenous cosmologies. (p. 3)

As Watts (2013) argues, for the Indigenous person, stories of cosmological origins and the spiritual nature of matter are not fictional stories, they are pathways to the psyche. I will commence with *Te Puna O Āio*, the centre of this project and where this exegesis begins and ends.

1.2 *Te Puna O Āio, The Temple of Potential*

This exegesis describes the evolution of *Te Puna O Āio*. A—vibration of the sacred feminine. I—vibration of the sacred child potential. O—vibration of the sacred masculine. ĀIO—peace, calm, serenity, tranquility, balance of potential.⁵ *Te Puna O Āio* is not a direct translation of The Temple of Potential, as an architectural form; instead it is a vibrational equivalent that expresses this spiritual potential.

Te Puna is a spring or flow—the spring that flows naturally from the vibration of human beings. This concept embodies the human potential to flow with the source of life from inside out. I *imagine Te Puna O Āio* as a space that can enliven our larger connection to our spirit and therefore our Indigenous psyche, the pre-colonised mind, the unmeasured Māori that is not set against a colonial backdrop of knowledge. The self is placed in the centre of the temple of life, in connection to the collective all, within the temple of the world, within the temple of the universe, within the potential of what we cannot see or know. Indigenous cosmologies are very important to my work as *Te Puna O Āio* draws on the biological intelligence of the Māori Gods, not as mythic but as real. Marcia Browne (2005), in her thesis on wairua says:

Mātauranga Māori is an epistemology that incorporates the spiritual dimension which makes room for transformative learning. Tau argues that “secular and theological” (Tau 1999:15) knowledge united within a whakapapa template brings

⁵ Isaac Bishara (Ngāti Tuwharetoa, Ngāti Ranginui), Māori Philosophy Mentor’s oral recall of whaea Rose Pere’s teachings.

wholeness to knowledge. Whakapapa is the “skeletal backbone to our knowledge system” (Tau 1999:20) (Royal 1998a:3) and therefore the paradigm to work from, where “an engagement of the senses with internal or external phenomena” (Aranga 2002:4) is considered legitimate. (p. 15)

My art practice engages with internal and external phenomena, including how the effects of Christianity have influenced my perception of Māori spirituality. The resulting melding of worlds has inspired *Te Puna O Āio*. The marae and the church are entities I accept within the design of the Temple because they existed before this artwork as places of spiritual connection to a higher dimension.

Our Ancestors passed down to us knowledge that "we come from the stars." These are small messages of great magnitude, passed through oral genealogies. Like stars, we are made up of the four major elements: Oxygen, Carbon, Hydrogen and Nitrogen in scientific terms. Air, Earth, Water and Fire are also embodied spiritual elements, according to Māori knowledge (and early Classical understandings of the cosmos). Without Western science and literature, Māori held this embodied connection to the stars in the cosmos. How did they know? Māori were connected consciously by whakapapa. They were born knowing.

My artist's life has shown me back to the very beginning of myself, which I understand now as infinite. Every creative work reflects the beginning of a new sacred world, within an existing sacred world. Māori philosopher Carl Mika (2007) writes that in our culture:

Sacredness may not be attributable to one specific essence but may manifest itself through an interplay of a number of realms. Certainly, much of Māori belief in their creation stories reflects the constant chaos of change. The Io explanations of creation, for example, demonstrate a constant folding over of states of nature such that they all created the universe and could not be isolated into their specific mechanisms. (p. 190)

Similarly, when a work of art finds itself and then reveals itself, there is no separation between all the states of how one receives the information of that discovery. Mind, body and emotion all play their part.

For this thesis, I use an Indigenous auto-ethnographic methodology (Whitinui, 2014). This gives me the opportunity to share my own knowledge. I want to communicate broadly to Māori artists and communities beyond Academia. For this reason, I will write in plain English and often in the first person. I review my own Art practice to create *Te Puna O Āio*, this Temple of Potential.

The thesis is structured into four parts, including this introduction, which summarises some of the key literature I draw on. This is followed by discussion of methodology based on Kaupapa Māori and Indigenous auto-ethnography in Part Two, a discussion of the Symbolology used in *Te Puna O Āio* in Part Three and then finally a close reading of the Artwork itself in Part Four. In between these sections there are inter-pages in italics that represent a more speculative, inner voice.

1.3 A Summary of Key Questions

- i. *What is the Indigenous psyche?*
- ii. *What is Wairua or Mauri Art, within contemporary Māori Art?*
- iii. *What is Māori Spirituality?*
- iv. *How is Te Puna O Āio, The Temple of Potential a revival?*

1.4 What is the Indigenous psyche?

This work originates from an 'Indigenous Psyche'. I use this term to include all people, not only Māori, in order to situate *The Temple of Potential* as a place for All. We all originate as bloodlines from this earth, genealogically, spiritually and mythically evolving; we are all made from the same biological matter. I will examine these two words, Indigenous Psyche, separately in this introduction.

- Psyche (*noun*): psyche; plural noun: psyche. The human soul, mind or spirit.

I use the English word psyche to suggest the inner nature that connects me to Māori concepts of mauri or wairua. In Greek cosmology, the goddess Psyche is the famously, beautiful, mortal woman that Eros (God of Love) falls in love with and marries. She represents our innermost self—a mortal that the God of Love himself falls in love with. This presents the possibility that the innermost self of us is loved by a God of Love. Our innermost self is a loved Love. A proverb from the collection *Ngā Pēpeha a Ngā Tipuna* is “Aroha mai, aroha atu.” The reciprocal flow of life, love coming to us, love coming from us (Mead & Grove, 2001, p. 19).⁶

In psychoanalysis and other forms of in-depth psychology, the psyche refers to the forces in an individual that influence thought, behaviour and personality. Carl Jung (1969) describes the psyche as the place where our godlike thoughts are invested (p. 36).⁷ I understand the psyche is the place where cosmological beliefs are vital and for Māori, the deeper connection is in our blood through whakapapa, a coding process of biological significance. If the thought precedes all, then the word follows the thought and the Māori language, apart from communicating the thought, is also forming the seed of the thought. This is highlighted in Carl Mika’s (2007) comment that “(Māori) language holds perception to present the world rather than just cognitively apprehend and represent it” (p. 182). From a Māori perspective, the psyche is not ‘wairua’, ‘mauri’ or ‘whakapapa’ (DNA), but it is part of all three. It is in here where all our conscious and unconscious understanding, of who we are, resides. Manuka Henare (2001) explains in his philosophy of vitalism that:

Wairua is necessary for the existence of the body. Its conspicuous feature is that it is the part of the human being that dreams, and if the person is threatened, it is the *wairua* that experiences the threat. It is the *mauri* that binds the *wairua* and the embryo-body

⁶ Translated by Tracey Tawhiao.

⁷ Jung, C. G. (1969). *Collected Works of C.G. Jung, Vol 9 (Part 2): Aion; researches into the phenomenology of the self*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. Retrieved from https://archive.org/stream/collectedworksof92cgju/collectedworksof92cgju_djvu.txt

(*tinana*) together, and in this integral entity life exists... *Mauri* is life itself. Together, the body, *wairua*, and *mauri* constitute a living being. (p. 202)

In other words: our energy is resourced by our spirit in the physical realm. And our dreams are the energy from our physical realm in the spirit realm. Fear will find itself equally as all other dominant feelings do, in the dream.

- Indigenous (*adjective*). Originating or occurring naturally in a particular place; example, native, 'the indigenous peoples of Aotearoa'. Along with these indigenous peoples is indigenous knowledge.

Māori describe themselves as part of all nature and in Aotearoa/New Zealand some identify as originating from the earth itself. Others refer to being descended from Stars. Others from the mist. Many Māori trace their whakapapa (lineage) to other forms of life. In all cases we are relating to the physical world as our primordial parentage. In Te Rangi Hiroa's *The Coming of the Māori* (1949) he writes: "The earliest inhabitants of the Chatham Islands, were sprung from the soil (no ro whenua ake), being descendants of Te Aomarama and Rongomaiwhenua. Te Aomarama (World of light) probably personifies space and light and Rongomaiwhenua may personify the earth (whenua) and the two may be a local form of the Sky-father and the Earth-mother" (p. 14). Whakapapa means 'whaka' as an activating prefix and Papa(tūānuku) is the Earthmother; we are layers of our ancestors connecting back to her, the primordial mother of life.

Arun Agrawal (1994), in *Dismantling the Divide between Indigenous and Scientific Knowledge*, states:

[...] indigenous knowledge is not just about immediate technical solutions to everyday problems (Juma, 1988; Marks, 1984; Norgaard, 1984; Richards, 1985), but that it also contains "non-technical insights, wisdom, ideas, perceptions, and innovative capabilities which pertain to ecological, biological, geographical, or physical phenomena (Thrupp, 1989: 139)." (p.15)

Our Indigenous psyche is activated by a spiritual relationship to Nature. I have revived my Indigenous psyche through the active ingredient of Kaupapa Māori Art. This means an active purpose to recover philosophical beliefs inherited through whakapapa, and identification to significant Māori symbology.

1.5 Where does Wairua Art reside within contemporary Māori Art?

Wairua is commonly translated as the Soul or Spirit. According to Hirini Mead (2003) it lives on after the body dies. It is constant in the evolution of birth and death, the essential part of a person that resides in the non-physical aspect but very much a force of the body. As Marcia Browne (2005) states: “The journey to te taha whenua, where one is grounded in one’s language as tangata whenua, can be arrived at through wairua which must be felt and experienced rather than taught to be understood” (p. 37). Wairua is a fundamental component in Art as creative concepts are sparked in the unseen and brought to life by the hands. Ringatoi/Artists are but the conduits (Wilson, 2007).

Wairua resides in my being and in the artwork that comes from my being. As a contemporary Māori artist, I respond to my Māori heritage, urban situation and Western education by producing works that are intended as a merging of Māori and European art forms and practices. Wairua also resides in the symbols from Māori traditional patterns, and I do not repeat traditional patterns because the wairua is contained within my line. I morph these symbols into my own visual language, accessing my relationship to the natural world through my own natural hand-drawn line.

The repetition of symbols and the intuitive yielding of the symbols has opened my psyche up in much the same way meditation does, as I will discuss in the next section. I began to understand the Māori relationship to patterns as a form of writing when there was no written word. It is not writing merely to communicate but it is a writing that meditatively connects the mind, body and soul relationship. The repeating of symbols unlocked a pathway to my subconscious memory, a concept described by Marsden (2003) as, “Te Mahara” in his whakapapa of creation (p. 180-81).

From this viewpoint, my art is neither traditional nor contemporary; it is Wairua Art, derived from the non-physical (Ira Atua) and comes through the physical (Ira Tangata) into the artwork. Symbols remind us how close everything is, past, present and future. The times have changed but the symbols have not.

1.6 What is Māori Spirituality (in relation to my art practice)?

According to Best (1922), a missionary once said to Te Matorohanga, a Kahungunu Tohunga: "Your religion is false; it teaches that all things possess a soul." Te Matorohanga replied, "Were a thing not possessed of the wairua of the atua, then that thing could not possess form" (p. 2). If all things did not possess a wairua, then they would all be lifeless, and so decay. Te Matorohanga assured Best that even stones possess a wairua, otherwise they would not be entities (Best, 1922). The premise that all entities possess spirit has led to *Te Puna O Āio*. It is a physical place of primordial connection to that spirit.

While we have a spirit and know all things contain a spirit, it is important to note how little attention is paid to it today. Life itself depends on the presence of wairua, nature is filled with wairua, and so are we. Wairua is Art. This is why I call this Temple an artwork, and why it is relevant and important to my work. If we are Mind, Body, Spirit, or in Māori, Mōhiotanga, Matauranga, Māramatanga then, as Manulani Aluli-Meyer (2013) proposes: "*The whole is contained in all its parts. Body/Mind/Spirit is One idea*" (p. 94).

The one primary creator God to Māori was Io, who was not commonly worshiped, or carved or painted. The only physical manifestation of Io is blood. The blood holds everything that is called the universe within it, including the primary creator God. Even God is in the whakapapa of Māori. Io carries the genealogical connections to the Universe through us. A special form of Christianity that merged Māori and European beliefs resulted in faiths such as Ringatū, Te Ratana and Pai Mārire. The old ways of connection direct to nature began to be lost. According to my Kaumatua, Māori also spent thousands of years in direct relationship with the Sun, Te Ra,⁸ as well as the moon, Te Marama and the stars, Te Whetu.

⁸ The Sun itself, the source of actual light and life, soon became a non-virtual reality in the spiritual realm and instead Jesus was called the Son of God and became the new light that could only be felt by man's preaching of it. He was killed at 33

All the different stages of light from sunrise to sunset are meticulously named. One could forget but never erase our connection to the Light source that made us. As a source of primary energy, the Sun is a God,⁹ as are all the other natural elements, created for our existence. They were all here when we arrived at birth. In the Colonial period, Māori were eventually persuaded by preachers to go into a church and look at a representation of the Sun through Jesus and accept the “Light of Christ”. Christianity spread a different kind of awareness of the infinite light in man in place of the Māori Gods, and this light was followed by many iwi out of desperation. Colonisation used guns and disease to create the trauma and the church to help it mend.

In Māori cosmology, according to Isaac Bishara (in personal conversation April 3, 2018), the Principle of vibration embodies the truth that everything is in motion; everything vibrates; nothing is at rest; facts which Modern Science endorses, and which each new scientific discovery tends to verify.¹⁰ Māori refer to this vibrational force of life as Mauri,¹¹ more commonly translated as life principle. However, the whakapapa of vibration is extensive. Each life form possesses a vibration, both unique and unified. The word Reo is the form of vibration that is language. There is a human reo, a bird reo, water reo, tree reo, mountain reo, etc. Each has a unique vibrational meaning assigned to their specific, interrelated worlds.¹² This is important to note because this vibration transfers from hand to artwork in different ways. There is a creative vibration. Some people see art and feel a strong vibration or ihirangaranga, while other art has no, or low, ihirangaranga.

years of age. In the preaching of Jesus, a new light was a man with God’s word put inside him by hierarchies of other men. With Jesus gone the symbol of Jesus as the Son of God, the sun of life became the religion of Christianity.

⁹ God not as primary creator but as higher consciousness of the natural world that lives as a source of intelligence connected within us.

¹⁰ The differences between different manifestations of Matter, Energy, Mind, and even Spirit, result largely from varying rates of vibration.

¹¹ Karl Mika (2007) says that it is important to note that these translations are incomplete. The concept of mauri defies exact definition, and perhaps it is only right that this is so, for as I later argue, its form constantly changes, and the essentialist practice of describing it tightly by definition could be inappropriate. Many writers have described its emergence within all that exists, while acknowledging its changeability, but in a loose sense mauri can be taken to refer to ‘life force’ and is associated with an element of sacredness. Mauri can also be described as originating from physical aspiration... (p. 183).

¹² In conversation with Isaac Bishara, Mentor in Māori Philosophy and Māori Language expert.

1.7 Impacts of colonisation, resistance and liberation

Contemporary Māori Art, unlike traditional Art, is living Art, and as such it cannot delete the colonial¹³ reality of these times. Colonisation was a military project of claiming land and enforcing government; our country was settled by force, as argued by Norman Anaru (2011), following Franz Fanon (1963). My art practice is focused on creating restorative artworks with the deeper intent to subvert the many negative impacts of colonisation and to assert Māori sovereignty, which was arguably not ceded by all Māori under Te Tiriti O Waitangi in 1840. My work is focused on both asserting my right to be Māori, as myself, rather than a post-colonial projected version of a 'Māori', and to heal the layers of erasure. Indigenous writer Zoe Todd (2011) suggests our 'past', once the preoccupation of the colonisers, forced us to develop codes to negotiate the performative nature of being the Aboriginal of an imagined past. Now our future is the growing preoccupation, while the power dynamics remain.

As evidence of colonial suppression of Māori culture, the Tohunga Suppression Act 1907 forbade Māori to continue their cultural practice beliefs. The act stated: "Every person who gathers Māori around him by practicing on their superstition or credulity, or who misleads or attempts to mislead any Māori by professing or pretending to possess supernatural powers in the treatment or cure of any disease, or in the foretelling of future events, or otherwise," was liable for prosecution (Victoria University, n.d, para. XX).¹⁴ This Act caused Mātauranga and Wairuatanga Māori knowledge to be diverted underground and many Māori were alienated by this separation. Our spirit, being the fundamental to super-nature, went underground too. In order to assimilate, supernatural aspects had to be buried. There was a clash of beliefs and an erosion of faith in the Māori ways.

Bronwyn Elsmore (2000) states, "Belief in spirituality was further suspended by disease which, in turn made Māori lose faith in their ancient ways" (p. 42). Relatively high death

¹³ Ian Pool (2015) writes: "The driving force underpinning the narrative here is colonisation: how contact with Pākehā was followed by missionary, trade and then political intervention by British and other Europeans; then by the cession in 1840 of New Zealand to the British Crown. From 1840, New Zealand's trajectory followed that of some other 'settler colonies', especially those of the 'Anglo-World', Australia, Canada and the United States" (p. 55).

¹⁴ 1907, No. 13. An Act to Suppress Tohungas. Retrieved from <http://nzetc.victoria.ac.nz/tm/scholarly/tei-Gov1907Acts-t1-g1-t12.html>

rates, with low birth rates, saw a rapid decline in the Māori population between 1840 and 1878. Between 1840 and 1891 the Māori population halved. The population continued to decline until the century was nearly over. Between 1840 and 1891 disease, as well as social and economic changes, had serious negative effects on Māori health, and a significant impact on the population (Lange, 2011).¹⁵

The Sun can be considered a metaphor for Colonisation and Christianity. Anaru (2011) suggests, “Plato’s allegory of the cave holds some rather disturbing reflections when applied to the colonisation of Aotearoa/New Zealand. Māori were deliberately kept in the dark (cave) as to the real intentions of the colonizers... and were left chasing the shadows on the cave wall projected by the hand of the colonizer” (p. 45). In Plato’s *Republic*, in the allegory of the cave, a group of people are shackled in a cave seeing only their shadows reflected by a fire on a blank cave wall. They think their shadows are the only reality. It is revealed to them that the real world exists only outside the cave when one day the prisoners break their bonds and find the sun (Plato, 1987, 514a-520a). The Plato’s Cave allegory became important to some of the formal features of *Te Puna O Āio*. The Temple places us in space with the Sun, Moon, and Stars. In the Temple, not only are we out of the cave, but we are sitting alongside all the primordial elements as projections of light itself.

The reality of identity displacement for urbanised Māori came to head in the 1980s when decolonisation became a word synonymous with “seeing the Sun”, as an extension of the analogy to Plato’s Cave. I imagine our future as a symbol of the Sun, and the power dynamics as Plato’s Cave. The final stage of our enlightenment is to look directly at the Sun itself. The negative health, education and incarceration statistics of Māori¹⁶ are a reflection of our severed, spiritual relationship with all Light. The difference is that Plato’s cave dwellers had never seen the light before, while Māori lived in constant communication with it. Upon seeing the Sun, we greet him as Tama Nui Te Ra, a well-known member of our cosmic family.

¹⁵ Lange, R. (2011). Te hauora Māori mua – history of Māori health – health devastated, 1769 to 1901. In *Te ara – the encyclopedia of New Zealand*. Retrieved from <https://teara.govt.nz/en/te-hauora-maori-i-mua-history-of-maori-health/page-2>

¹⁶ Statistics New Zealand, Tatauranga Aotearoa. (n.d.). Māori. Retrieved from http://archive.stats.govt.nz/browse_for_stats/people_and_communities/Māori.aspx

The Plato's Cave allegory became important to some of the formal features of *Te Puna O Āio*. The Temple places us in space with the Sun, Moon, and Stars. In the Temple, not only are we out of the cave, but we are sitting alongside all the primordial elements as projections of light itself.

Russell Bishop (1996) suggests that all Māori are affected by the inter-generational trauma of colonialism in the following statement:

The process of colonisation developed an alienated and alienating mode of consciousness that has tried to take away a fundamental principle of life from indigenous peoples. We know that there is a way of knowing, that is different from that which was taught to those colonised into the western way of thought. We know about a way that is born of time, connectedness, kinship, commitment, and participation. (p. 157)

Colonisation effectively wipes out the Indigenous psyche, which then has to be re-established, by dissolving resistance.¹⁷ The Decolonisation movement in New Zealand during the 1980s understood that resistance was based on a lack of information about the harm of colonisation upon Indigenous peoples worldwide. Damaging colonisation processes were occurring all over the world. Fanon (1983) writes:

The metaphysics, or, less pretentiously, his customs and the sources upon which they are based, were wiped out because they were in conflict with the civilization that he did not know and that imposed itself upon him. The black man among his own in the 20th century does not know at what moment his inferiority comes into being through the other. (p. 110)

¹⁷ In the doctoral thesis of Jarrett Martineau (2015) entitled, *Creative Combat: Indigenous Art, Resurgence, and Decolonisation*, he argues: "Art making, the act of creation, connects us not only to the long continuum of resistance that indigenous people have waged against colonial invasion and dispossession, but also to antecedent creative forms that have existed since the world was first created. Resurgence remains our decolonizing imperative... Indigenous creativity provides us with inventive forms of decolonizing praxis: methods of resistance, techniques of resurgence" (pp. 3-4).

From Fanon's analysis, the Indigenous psyche was manipulated under colonial law, religion, education and imperial command. For Fanon (1983), there are three stages of liberation. The first stage he calls unqualified assimilation, which he explains is the unquestioned appropriation of colonial ideology. The second stage is the resurgence of tradition, and involves celebrating the very qualities that are denigrated by the settler. Nevertheless, this process is inadequate as the Indigenous person still perceives him/herself through the eyes of coloniser and so finds him/herself wanting. The third stage is defined by action, with the formation of politicised groups to counter the ideology of the individual used against Indigenous populations as a divisive mechanism.

I would like to add a fourth stage of liberation to Fanon's list, Revival. The Revival of the primordial memory of our primary selves as spiritual sovereigns by divine connection – this Revival is expressed by the creation of the *Temple of Potential*. Anaru (2011) argues that the challenge for Māori is to “put into place a counter-plan to put a stop to the eroding effects of colonialism on contemporary Māori society as it continues to manifest in a variety of forms” (p. 82). Symbolic Art-making is one form of countering such eroding effects through the positive value of revival.

1.8 *Te Puna O Āio, The Temple of Potential—a revival of the spirit?*

This section draws on personal stories to understand the role of the Tohunga, which augment records, such as those made by Reverend Māori Marsden. Marsden (2003) states, “The Tohunga was a person chosen or appointed by the gods to be their representative and the agent by which they manifested their operations in the natural world by signs of power” (p. 14). These signs are given by nature. Included in the definitions of Tohunga in the *Reed Dictionary of Modern Māori*, is ‘Artist’ (XXXX, p. xx).

When my grandmother Hinemotu Paama Harawira¹⁸ witnessed the flow of supernatural phenomena, she innately understood it, but also knew not to gossip about it. This split, created by colonial expectation of ‘normal’ meant a reworking of the physical experience of

¹⁸ My Paternal Grandmother Hinemotu Paama Harawira born, raised and died on Matakana Island. B. 16 Jan 1917 d. 4 April 2014.

phenomena within an innate Māori knowledge system. My grandmother used crutches in her younger years before she was married. Soon after she was married she visited Religious Healer and Tohunga, T. W. Ratana and, according to her, there was a pile of optical glasses and crutches that people had cast off because Ratana had healed their disability and eyesight. She said she walked in with her crutch and saw Ratana, and left without it and never needed it again.¹⁹ In her stories my grandmother relayed messages rather than saying things directly. This story made me realise the extent that these supernatural experiences had disappeared not only from public life but more importantly from familial life.

All my Māori grandparents used allegory or metaphor to explain things of this nature to me. They all preferred to keep this information quiet. No one was shouting known phenomena from the roof-tops. I rationalised this as the Māori way, but it was the way of Māori who knew it was not good to talk about these things in a Pākehā world. She was, effectually, physically oppressed by the Tohunga Suppression Act and explained that she had to stop her own healing work of delivering babies because the Pākehā doctor had spoken to our grandfather. She admitted she had no idea how to deliver a baby but the baby came and so she delivered it. Our grandfather told her to stop. So she stopped. This story only came out because I began practicing light healing on her. She felt the effects of my hands and began recalling her own abilities; she was well into her late eighties when she told me of her gifts, it was as if she was remembering a dream.

Another story she related was that, as a young woman, she knew of women from our ancestral island Matakana who were famous for their ability to calm the Wind and were able to ward off storms hitting our island. How they did this was not explained, but it was accepted by my grandmother. My grandmother called these Wind taming women Tohunga; this was a revelation to me, because I had only ever heard men called Tohunga.

My grandmother only began telling me these things after I started doing mirimiri that alleviated her pain. She suffered from arthritis and I could often put her into a deep sleep that she found quite unusual. She said to me that I had the hands of a healer so I began

¹⁹ Elsmore (2000) writes, “Ratana’s mission spread quickly and widely largely as a result of his gift for healing” (p. 190).

helping other kaumatua. However, I stopped when a devout Christian kaumatua became perturbed by my ways. It was made clear that the effects of colonisation, though not overtly expressed, affect us all in ways that have become synonymous with our own self-repression. When Arnold Wilson²⁰ saw my painting on the cover of *Taiawhio—Conversations with Māori Artists*,²¹ (Smith, 2002) for the first time, he called me and said my paintings informed him I was a matakite, or a seer. I had never met him before this. I'd had no Māori Art education. I had no idea that I was an Artist until much later. I immediately denied his claim. I was repelled by post-colonial trauma versions of matakite placed on me.²² His insistence that I was a seer, combined with other supernatural experiences, created a clear pathway for me to live as I wished. I had by then had experiences that felt supernatural. For example, highly visible and strong mist coming out of my body in a toroidal form; the spirit's physical appearance. One blade of grass dancing in a slow sway amongst a lawn of still grass; Tawhirimatea's (God of Wind) intimacy and gentleness in such a personal signal meant only for me to see. The magic of random intimacies with nature. Then, in an earth ceremony in the Waitakere forest, I went in an instant from the bush to a cave with a sparkling aqua spring and a crystal-hued light that felt familiar. There I was greeted by my spiritual parents and whānau (tūpuna); we hugged and wept but when I expressed a wish to stay rather than return they pushed me into the spring and I was back in the Waitakere bush. These things changed my perception. I had no practical explanation for how these things were occurring but I had no problem accepting them. I did not need to be a matakite, when it was clearer to be an Artist. Art offered me more freedom to be true to myself.²³ The Artist was not suppressed and it became the best ground to grow in.

As a Māori Artist, it is imperative to remain connected to Māori understandings, such as the view that the Māori Gods are real, and to rely on this as the primary source of knowledge

²⁰ Arnold Manaaki Wilson, MNZM QSM (11 December 1928 to 1 May 2012), was a New Zealand artist and educator of Māori (Ngāi Tuhoe, Te Arawa) descent. He is regarded as a pioneer of the modern Māori art movement.

²¹ Smith, H. (Ed.). (2002). *Taiawhio, conversations with Māori artists*. Wellington, New Zealand: Te Papa Press.

²² The post-colonial darkness associated with Matakite as a repressed form of understanding nature, was problematic to me since I felt nothing but light in it.

²³ Later, Selwyn Muru visited my studio and said, "This is a tapu place but in the light." He inadvertently associated tapu with darkness. He contrasted that with what he felt in my studio as light. It is the same light energy that presented painting to me as a way to communicate with my inner world. The vibration I work with mostly is light energy and earth energy, but I am also tuned into water bodies and plants. I am conscious of these life forces and how they affect my thoughts and my work.

rather than relying on any kind of external validation which can be corrupted by colonisation. Institutional validation can come at the cost of Tino Rangatiratanga/self-determination. Sarah Hunt (2014) has this to say:

The potential for Indigenous ontologies to unsettle dominant ontologies can be easily neutralized as a triviality, as a case study or a trinket, as powerful institutions work as self-legitimizing systems that uphold broader dynamics of (neo)colonial power (pp. 27-32).

If Plato's Cave can be understood as a symbol of colonisation, using Māoriori (Ease) as a kind of methodology, which I will discuss in the next chapter, allows us to perform the simple act of walking out into the Sun, to relate directly to Te Rā, our Ancestor. My kaupapa is to create physical evidence of the spirit's existence as an Artist. According to my Kaumatua, Tohunga were not known for making altars or worship before colonisation, but they did have places of primordial connection direct to nature. Special places on the whenua, where whatukura rocks existed—the stones brought down by Tane. This Temple is a symbolic construction of such places. Imagined, symbolised and created in Te Reo Māori, it is named *Te Puna O Āio*, as it embodies a primordial flowing spring of our creative potential. So while churches require us to have a religion and marae require us to have a whakapapa, *Te Puna O Āio, The Temple of Potential*, only requires us to be ourselves. This Temple is a space of symbols that reflect multiple understandings of the Spirit within a Kaupapa Māori world.



Figure 1. Newspaper painting by Tawhiao; cover of H. Smith. (Ed.) (2002). *Taiāwhio: Conversations with Māori Artists*. Wellington, New ealandZ: Te Papa Press; Stonehenge, England; Tawhiao, *A good day for Revelations* painting, as an example of the spirit of this exegesis.

Our cosmology connects us to everything in the universe and was an everyday feature of life. I once examined the shovel used by Māori to dig the kumara patch, and on it was depicted Rongo, the god of peace and cultivated plants. His face was on the place you'd put your foot. It revealed to me that everyday tools were all works of art, and they symbolised the greater universe to which we belong. Art is a natural communication with the Gods.

I started from the premise that I am grounded in an ancient culture that gives a whole and relatable view of the world to me. I studied Greek philosophy as an undergraduate and it was clear then that Māori philosophy had more to offer not only me but also the western world.

Whereas Greek philosophy relies on the words of a few men like Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, Māori philosophy has no men or women who formed it. Instead it was developed collectively, both orally and innately through a direct, tangible and intangible, conscious and unconscious, physical and non-physical relationship to nature.

I began to understand that a living philosophy existed within every handmade implement Māori made.

PART TWO

Indigenous Framings of Methodology

2.1 Kaupapa Māori Methodology

My research project is grounded in *Kaupapa Māori*, as both a set of philosophical beliefs and a set of social practices (*tikanga*). Henry and Pene (2002) argue:

These beliefs and social practices are founded on the collective (*whanaungatanga*) interdependence between and among humankind (*kotahitanga*), a sacred relationship to the 'gods' and the cosmos (*wairuatanga*), and acknowledgement that outlines; connection between mind, body and spirit. Taken together, these ethics inform traditional *Māori* ontology and assumptions about human nature; that is, 'what is real' for *Māori*. (p. 237)

It is because of important Kaupapa Māori scholarship, by writers such as Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999), Russell Bishop (2005) and Leonie Pihama (2002), that I am interested in writing, and able to write, this exegesis at all. This methodology assists me to bring out my own knowledge and experiences as a Māori Artist and be free of any resistance to Western methodologies. There are clear reasons for resistance to European frameworks, as Waiti (2005) outlines:

[...] resistance of Māori communities to traditional 'research' stems from the negative effects of the Western practices applied. Ngā Wānanga have been established by Māori communities (iwi and hapū) as an alternative to the mainstream educational system in Aotearoa New Zealand, therefore to perpetuate a Western agenda is inappropriate. (p. 251)

Wairuatanga is a significant aspect of my practice. What is real, for me, is that all entities including the entity that pushes my hand to paint or write, have a 'wairua' and 'mauri'. My

challenge is to create an installation that presents spirituality made from hands, within a contemporary Māori Art context. This context includes the social, political and spiritual realities of our time—a physical space that symbolises non-physical reality, a connection to our spirit, and a place we carry deep within, that connects us to a light within, which holds our potential to grow. Māori Marsden (2003) sums up the intuitive-subjective, rather than an analytical approach to creating of Art, as follows:

The route to Māoritanga through abstract interpretation is a dead end. The way can only lie through a passionate, subjective approach. That is more likely to lead to a goal. As a person, brought up within the culture, who has absorbed the values and attitudes of the Māori, my approach to Māori things is largely subjective. The charge of lacking objectivity does not concern me, the so-called objectivity some insist on is simply a form of arid abstraction, a model or a map. It is not the same thing as the taste of reality. (p. 2)

2.2 Wairuatanga and Māorioritanga as methods

The way I create the concept for any art project is, I align with my inner self. This means I let go of any preconceptions or value judgements. I calm myself into a clear space within. I align with my creative innate self. Ideas arrive easily. I let the ideas come in and out easily and never try to over-think the idea. How I come to my paintings is never by study, it is by direction from my inner nature. The way that this manifests is not objective. For me the communication is very direct. Either I see it in a visual form or I hear it in the form of an inner voice talking to me, or I feel so relaxed ideas are allowed to free-flow during the painting.

Māorioritanga as method is primarily a process of bringing inside out without any qualification or external measure to that inner knowing. I believe, from personal experience, that Ease is a natural Māori way because I never saw any of my Māori grandparents stressed about anything. Sad yes, angry yes, but never stressed. Yet colonisation gave them a lot to be stressed about. The closest translation of Ease, as an inferred philosophy in Māori, is *māoriori*, free from anxiety, contented. That this word includes the word Māori supports the

idea that Māori themselves are, in their natural state, at Ease with life. I submit that this Ease permeates our very being and is a primary rhythm in my art.

During an in-depth conversation with my Māori mentor Isaac Bishara (April 2018) about the notion of Ease as a higher consciousness, he hypothesised the following analysis based on my experiences, paraphrased here:

A state of being which required no abeyance to the external or the internal other than to understand the unifying whakapapa of mā and its vibrational oriori. Mā: Māramatanga enlightenment from Ease. Oriori: vibrationally attuned whakapapa, dense waiata sung into the womb for the unborn embryo to invoke their development with the ancestral magic of atua source, karakia enriched, attraction. Mā, joined to Oriori, equals Ease. Ease, the third²⁴ great philosophy practiced on earth by our 'anceSTARS' in the largest ocean of the planet, whose star paths connected us all, as the Polynesian nation. The largest unified nation ever to exist philosophically at Ease with nature. (Personal communication, April 2018)

The simplest English translation of Oriori, is rhythmical chanting. From this I imagine a state of letting inside out easily, a flow of the inner being. A relevant translation of Mā is unencumbered, quick or light, not heavy. Taking the path of Ease is important in my work. It infers harmony and balance.

An earlier example of Ease as a creative methodology can be found in the installation *Te Ao*. George Nuku and I were invited to create an installation in Chapelle Calvaire, St Roch Church, Paris, in 2013. We had no funding and only one month to prepare. We had to find accommodation, studio space and materials, and create the installation. We were forbidden to use nails and, in this Parisian Chapel, there was amazing Art everywhere already. It was, on the face of it a hard task. In these situations we have to get Easy. We work with our

²⁴ The West is said to possess a philosophy of externality, which springs from the notion of separation derived from Western duality of cause and effect. The East is said to possess a philosophy of internality, which springs from the notion of yin-yang complementarity, derived from the Eastern duality of balance. The world was colonised with this West versus East duality. The unknown third great philosophy gave no attention to 'duality' other than to acknowledge the duality, in the multiplicity, of unity. (In conversation with Isaac Bishara)

wairua and a pathway opens up. In this instance there were four metal bars up high and so we came to occupy the centre air space of the room, where everything was hung from two wires tied to those bars in a cross. This was the only space that was not already occupied by Art. This process of Ease is magical, as everything unfolds in front of us clearly. We both have learnt how to do a lot with a little, in order to do our own Kaupapa Māori exhibitions, unimpeded by lack of institutional backing. I call it the strings and mirrors method of installing. It is an Art in itself. Taking the path of Ease is important in our work manifesting from our imagination into reality, with no resistance. Hard simply means I'm doing it the wrong way. Often it's a simple adjustment of seeing the right way in the wrong way and then Ease returns. My art-making practice is at first purely for the self-fulfillment of a spiritual action, only later the audience interacts with the work through their own level of spiritual awareness. In the next section I discuss Ease as a methodology in the major project of this thesis, *Te Puna O Āio*.

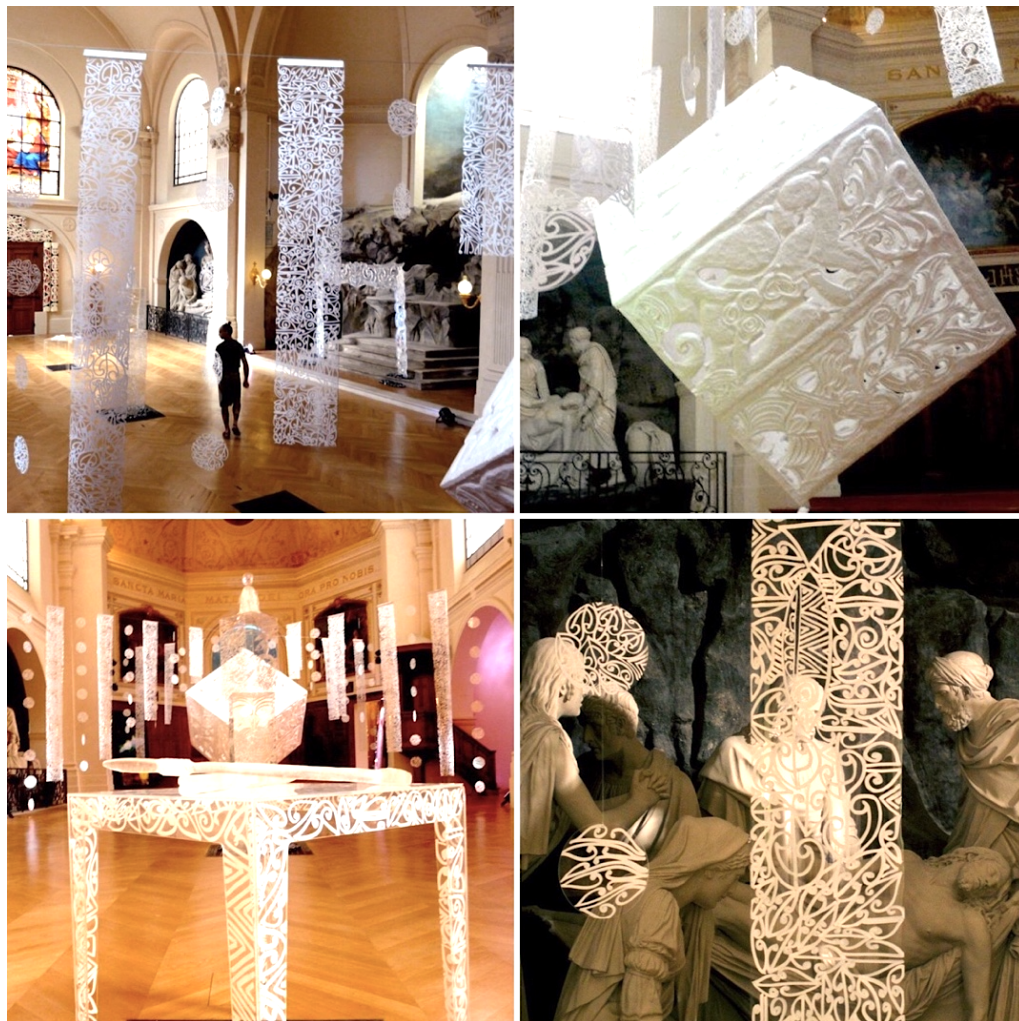


Figure 2. Tawhiao with George Nuku, Te Ao exhibition, chapelle du Calvaire, Church of St Roch, Paris, France (2013).

2.3 A working method for *Te Puna O Āio*

For *Te Puna O Āio* the idea came out on the beach quickly and easily. I simply meditated on the purpose of my exegesis and everything came out at once, in line with my process of *māoriori*. I wanted to research the way Art has awoken my own innate knowledge of the spirit and the power of that spirit, to navigate and instruct me, to create from my innate self. It felt as though the Earthmother, Papatūānuku, gave me this design based on the Circle, Triangle and Square as symbols I had drawn in the sand (see Figure 12).

Additional models or drawings were minimal after this initial sketch in the sand. I see everything as a mental picture without judgement, this is where there are no mistakes. This makes my working process fluid. If it gets difficult, I stop and realign with myself consciously, until I find an easy path to flow on. This way of knowing, or spiritual process, runs counter to traditional Euro-American sculptural and painting methods that involve making models, drawings and studio-based planning. In many Art projects where models are required, I simply cannot and will not supply them. The best I can offer is descriptions of my intent because the actual Art has to arrive of its own accord, in its own way. Anything too prescribed can often work against my natural flow.

The creative process has its own energetic flow and often is not able to flow as well as it could within colonial/institutional paradigms. For example, there is the idea that one must study art to learn to be creative, rather than being born creative. There is an innate knowledge I have found within my own DNA or whakapapa ancestry, including my ability to communicate directly with nature. This might be understood as an “Indigenous auto-ethnographic” method, but it extends beyond that to a revival of my own Indigenous psyche and spiritual power.

2.4 Indigenous auto-ethnographic method

Auto-ethnographic in approach, this exegesis hones in on research processes and motivations that I follow as an Artist in the act of creating. In this section I outline a number of exhibitions and processes where my particular creative methodology evolved. I came to my work from a philosophically Māori perspective and politicised my connection to the ancient world by working from the view that I am my whakapapa. Paul Whitinui (2014) seeks to reposition auto-ethnography from an Indigenous perspective in the following statement:

Grounded within a resistance based discourse, indigenous auto-ethnography aims to address issues of social justice and to develop social change by engaging indigenous researchers in rediscovering their own voices [...] the desire to ground one's sense of self in what remains sacred to us as indigenous peoples in the world we live and the way we choose to construct our identity, as Māori. (p. 456)

My newspaper paintings (2000-2018) are deliberate acts of enhancing the vital potential of Māori away from the negative perceptions of Māori in the media. I imagined them to be the news from my tūpuna and in this way, as well as others, those newspaper paintings are alive. These paintings come from the vibratory realm of the wairua, tupuna or non-physical realm. My grandmother Hinemotu Paama Harawira said²⁵ I had been given powers; and she usually said this when she was eating the food I'd cooked her. Sometimes she'd just stare at me saying she could see the top of my head popping off. It was while living with her that I began painting on newspaper. Years later I was painting another series of newspaper paintings at her kitchen table and she said, "You must be able to afford proper paper by now." She did not know I was recreating the new news from the old. I was happy to tell her that they were paintings for a church in Venice, Italy.²⁶ She scoffed at me, then realising I wasn't joking, she sat down and wept a little bit. Not because she was overwhelmed by my paintings being installed in a church in Italy but because my paintings were simple works of Art that she gave away every day, just as they were intended to be, in her humble home, from which she gave and gave and gave. The ease of the giving and the ease of the creating gave us both joy. In the background my grandfather laughed, nothing surprised him. The

²⁵ When I mention my grandmother, I am recalling conversations I had with her when she was alive.

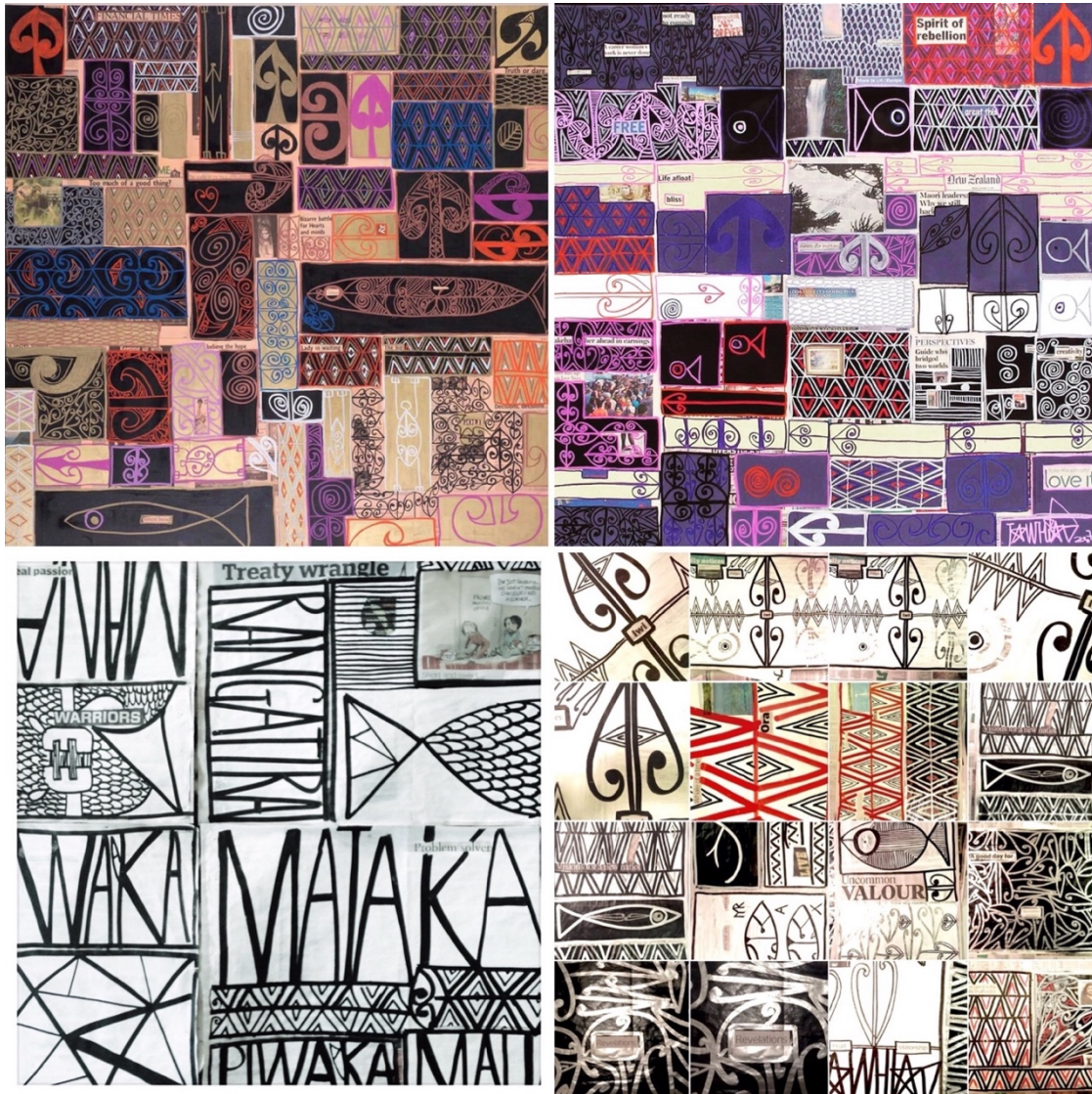
²⁶ I was commissioned by CNZ to create paintings for the New Zealand Room, at the 2009 Venice Biennale.

local content of my work is the joy of it and it's only from this place that it has any enduring value.

Auto-ethnographic material, such as the stories remembered from my grandmother, are vehicles to assimilate Māori philosophy, through creativity by inner guide. This sense of an inner subject as guide is expressed in Aluli-Meyer's (2006) statement:

Using body, mind, and spirit as a template in which to organize meaningful research asks us to extend through our objective/empirical knowing (body) into wider spaces of reflection offered through conscious subjectivity (mind) and, finally, through recognition and engagement with deeper realities (spirit). Finally, we are defining places science can follow into but not lead or illuminate. Other ways of knowing something must be introduced if we are to evolve into a more enlightened society. It will not occur with scientific or objective knowledge only. (p. 3)

Our ancestors left behind ways of being and ways of knowing that foster connection to the multiple dimensions of life. Be easy, be connected to nature, not disconnected, be protectors of nature, not destroyers, be unified with the source of our wellbeing received through direct connection to each other and the physical world. The knowledge in my innate self is a living system of knowing, inherited by whakapapa and awakened and expanded by my Art practice. An Indigenous auto-ethnographic methodology held with a Kaupapa Māori Methodology, has helped me to use my voice and uncover my own knowledge through the process of my art practice of twenty years. I appreciate this opportunity to speak for myself, as a contemporary Māori Artist.



3. Selection of Tawhiao newspaper paintings (2010-2016).

Nature does form so well, she's the painter of all paintings. I want to focus on the act of doing and let the natural world come out in any way it can through me. Whatever comes out of my hand in that moment is the perfect fish, even if it looks like no fish you've ever seen. I learnt repetition was a key of nature. I found it natural to repeat symbols and create my own patterns. I trusted the fluidity and the shame of imperfection. I was overcoming the shame of not being good enough. I had to overcome it and just be. I soon realised, I don't like perfect; I don't like exact repetition. I like freedom.

Nature's perfection also showed me that the flaw is perfect, that the mistake is not wrong and that life is a series of organic particles that create shifting forms. Even the earth is not a perfect sphere and this made my untalented, hand-drawn line perfect in all its incapacities. This helped me to interact with nature by going with the natural rhythms of my energy system in order to create from my heart.

Heart-centred work is very easy to do. This perfect imperfection is like a portal to our unique and individual design. In this place everyone is creative. I put my trust in nature and I would have given up but nature reminded me to never stop. She said, "Imagine if I stopped, then where would we be?"

Nature is a nurturer and her teachings are molded to our unique way of perceiving the phenomena of life beyond our day-to-day lives. But we must actively seek the connection; receiving is our only action required in the gifting.

PART THREE

Review of Symbolology and Knowledge in Art Practice

Symbols are profound historical prompts that connect us to a multi-dimensional universe, they can open our memory and feeling centre to perceive a non-physical world. Symbols open our intuitive, unconscious mind. Through the creation of symbols in my art, I communicate in a reo that vibrates with its own intention. To expand on my proposition of Revival as a fourth stage of liberation, I see the need for symbols to anchor us, patterns to secure us, reinforce us. This is a physical-world action that creates a connection with a non-physical world within us. Also the whenua is the physical connection to Papatūānuku and through the creation of a symbolic Temple on Earth, representing the Gods of the Natural world, our connection to the other dimensions of the universe is made. I call this “Wairua Art” to be true to the spiritual dimension of art-making. It is a raft out of the colonisation culture that takes you into the supernatural. It’s not hard to transition if you live amongst forests and oceans and lakes. The Air, Earth, Water and Fire are not merely elements that are in the world but they are elements we are made up of and therefore connected to.

3.1 Review of Symbolology

I argue that Māori symbols are decolonising symbols by virtue of their whakapapa as pre-colonial narratives. My identity is intrinsically tied to these symbols. The symbols I use are set against colonisation in order to break away from the Western standard of what art is. They allow me to forge a pathway that, although not traditional, is still identified as Māori. Being aware of the colonisation culture is fundamental to the re-engagement with our spirit path and our Indigenous psyche.

I focus on the symbols of the Fish, the Spiral, the Koru, which transforms into other forms, such as the butterfly, the Spirit and the original seed of human beings as a cell in all its potential. I also use, and focus on, the sacred geometric symbols, the Triangle, the Square and the Circle. These symbols are steeped in their own language and represent ideas

beyond the shapes, where every shape has a connection and a meaning of philosophical and esoteric value as part of a sacred geometry.

In the Temple the interaction of the symbols brings a whole and magical arrangement and rearrangement. Through light and movement within the layers of circles, the paintings interact and reflect off each other within the 'now' time and space. The effect is a different visual and emotional experience each time you enter the Temple. It changes according to your perception and placement within the whole, exactly as if you were a star in the galaxy, affecting the whole.

3.2 The Triangle

To paraphrase Aluli-Meyer (2006); Imagine, Remember, Awake. Decolonise, Transform, Mobilise. In *The Triangulation of Meaning* she uses this three-point grouping to make one idea stronger by association; Seeing, Thinking, Being. Force, Power, Liberation. She continues, "Triangulation, three intimations of one idea, should be noted as a guide to edifying coherence among associations" (p. 257).

In my art practice, the Triangle is an important symbol, and a feature of many of my installations and paintings. The conscious use of symbols opens a portal of learning. The Triangle connects the dots between the space of imagination and reality. In geometry, the statement that the angles opposite the equal sides of an isosceles triangle are themselves equal is known as the *pons asinorum*, Latin for 'bridge of donkeys'. There are two possible explanations for the name *pons asinorum*, the simplest being that this triangle resembles an actual bridge. But the more popular and creative explanation is that it is the first real test in the elements of the intelligence of the person, and functions as a bridge to the harder propositions that follow. In essence, it is a critical test of ability to understand (Bridge of asses, 2016).²⁷

I propose that the trinity of Sun, Earth and Sky is the bridge of connection to our spiritual life in the physical world. Remembering Sun as a symbol of enlightenment, connected to our

²⁷ Bridge of asses. (2016). In *New world encyclopedia*. Retrieved from http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Bridge_of_Asses

Earthmother and Skyfather, the floor and roof of our cosmic home, the universe.

In Māori design the Triangle is in the Taniko pattern, this pattern describes the heavenly celestial sphere, the sacred geometric reality of the Triangle Whakapapa. A major design pattern in Taniko is *waharua kōpito*, which consists of vertically paired diamond shapes. The literal translation is 'a point where people or events cross'. The pattern is a reminder that change occurs at such meeting points (Te Papa, n.d.).²⁸ The Pacific Triangle is mostly ocean. The three points of the Pacific Triangle are Rapanui (Easter Island), Hawaii and Aotearoa (New Zealand). The trinity that these three island groups form contains a spiritual source of energy, according to Polynesian oral histories.

Within my practice, I create from wairua, execute from thought, and deliver from body in action. This triad or trinity in esoteric terms expresses a rigid structure, and demonstrates the stability within all creation by virtue of these three simple lines joined. For immediate proof of its structural stability, please take a closer look at your own skin. From repeating this symbol in my art I connected to a curiosity for the Triangle's esoteric value. According to Jackson (1972), "[...]the artist [exists] half-way between mythological thought and scientific thought" (p. 35).

3.3 The Circle

The Circle is one of the most universal and ancient symbols used by humans. In many settings it is revered as a symbol of religious significance. The Circle is regarded by many cultures as an icon of the ineffable oneness; the indivisible fulfillment of the Universe. The ratio of the circumference of a circle to its diameter, Pi, is the original transcendental and

²⁸ Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa. (n.d.). Taniko. Retrieved from <https://collections.tepapa.govt.nz/topic/3644>

irrational number, Pi equals about 3.1415[...]. Its exact value is inherently unknowable and



Figure 4. A collage of circles sourced from Tawhiao's personal collection of images.

represents the value of infinity (Hom, 2013). This aligns with *The Temple of Potential*, the infinite space and the potential it holds in us all.³⁰ Dawn Whitehand (2009) in *Patterns That Connect*, argues: "As an inherently recognised symbol, the circle was probably embedded in human consciousness due to parallels with the sun, moon, planets and stars; hence the speculation of some natural historians that stone circles had astrological purposes" (p. 13).

³⁰ Hom, E. J. (2013). What is Pi? Retrieved from <https://www.livescience.com/29197-what-is-pi.html>

The Circle is part of many ancient cultures' sacred symbology and includes the healing circle, the sacred circle, the medicine wheel and the magic circle, the mandala, the circle of life, symbol of the sun, symbol of infinity, the halo, the wheel of dharma, circle of flames, prayer circles, meditation circles and so much more. The essence of the Circle exists in a dimension that transcends the linear. This includes our holistic perspectives, feelings, and intuitions encompassing the finite elements of the ideas that are within them, yet have a greater wisdom than can be expressed by those ideas alone. Within the Temple we are immersed in the Circle of elemental symbols. This immersive experience provides a physical experience of the Circle's power to transform.

In *The Temple of Potential*, the Circle represents the inner self and the outer self. In between these selves are the elements of nature that give us life. Though there are separate Circles within each other to make the Temple, the reality is that all life starts within us and is manifest out, though often we believe the opposite, that our outer life informs our inner life. This belief has unfortunately created a denial of our spirit as real or necessary. Our spirit as an inner world creates our outer experience of the physical world. This idea is one of the elements of the Māorioritanga. It allows an easy relationship with our inner world as sacred through the symbols of language, of design, of hapu and iwi, of whanau and the circle of birth, life, and death.

The Circle, Square and Triangle all shape reality. Geometrically, the Square and the Triangle are born out of the Circle, they are parts of it but represent different elements of it. While the Circle represents relationships, unity, duality and time, the Square grounds us in the physical world, while the Triangle strengthens our structure. To see symbolic relationships to sacred geometric forms is to begin to activate the primordial power of geometric symbols within.

3.4 The Square

The Square symbolises the earth and stability. The four-sided spatial orientation connects to the points of the compass, which represent unification with the Circle. How Pythagoras determined that the geometric frame of the Square is the best symbol of finite perfection

came as a result of a process known as squaring the circle, which means to construct or find a square equal in area to a given circle, an insoluble problem in Euclidean geometry. The expression 'squaring the circle' is sometimes used as a metaphor for trying to do the impossible, because it is bringing together two things normally thought to be so different that they cannot exist together. The Square is the symbol of the physical elements and is realised in the four major directions of earth, north, east, west and south, in the four seasons, spring, summer, autumn and winter, and the four primary elements, fire water, air and earth.

Whitehand (2009) says of the square: "The square symbolises the earth and when combined with the circle, strives to unite heaven with the earth, encouraging order, rendering the mandala a potent symbol to reinvigorate the contemplative nature of the installation" (p.13).

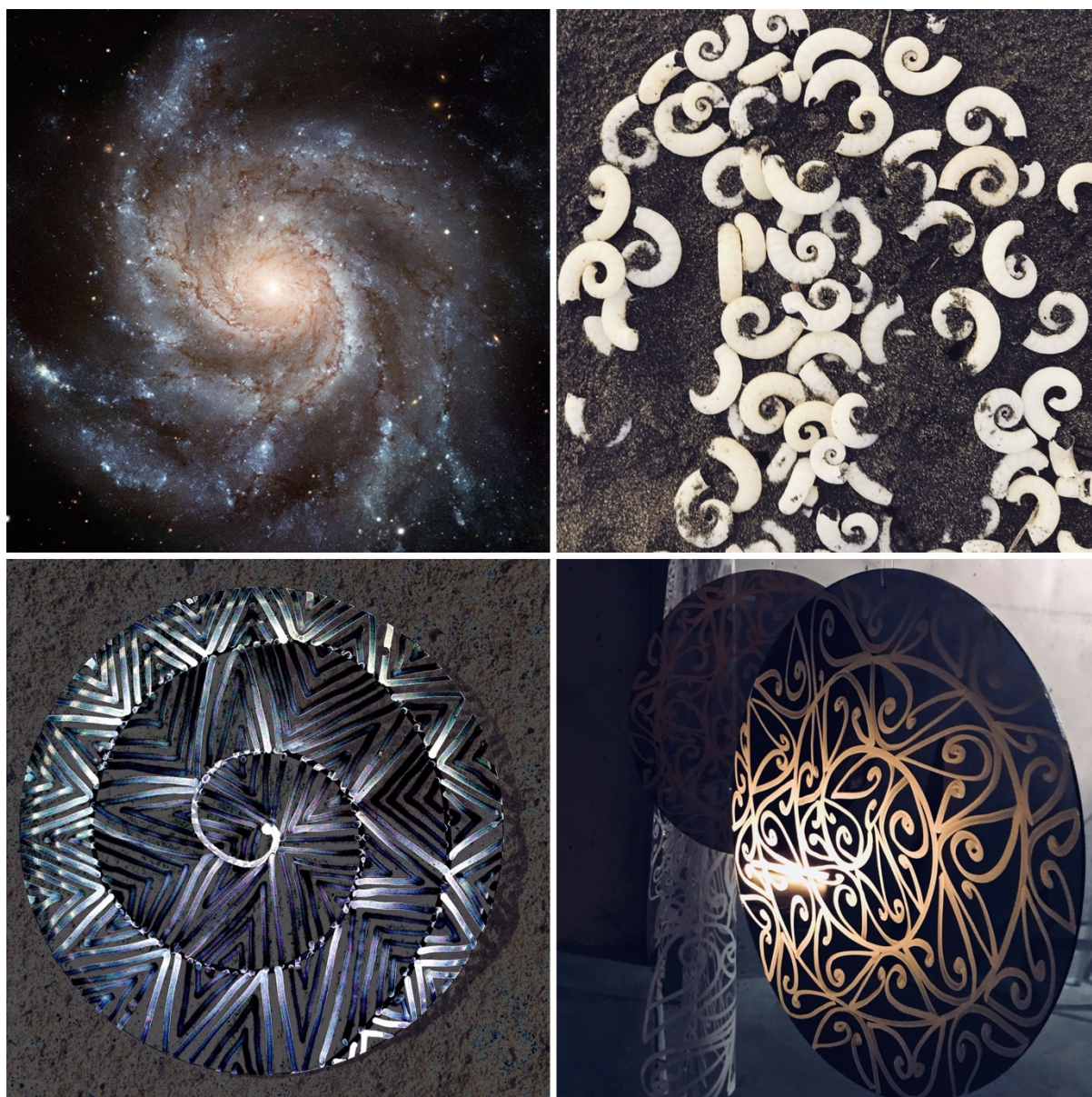


Figure 5. A collage of spirals in nature and Tawhiao's Art from personal collection.

3.5 The Spiral

Through symbolism and creativity, the living natural library gives you a library card to withdraw knowledge. Sometimes this relation to symbols in nature is overt and at other times unconscious. When I paint a Spiral, it's like taking out an old familiar friend; the Koru informs me of the bigger picture without words. The cycle of the Spiral is not telling us that time is infinite, it is telling us that we are infinite. The Spiral is found in structures as small as the double helix of DNA and as large as the galaxy. The golden ratio is a natural 137.5

degree movement around itself, which forms a vast number of patterns in natural forms. The smaller is to the larger as the larger is to the whole, creating a spiral pattern (Hom, 2013).³¹

The powerful generative ratio causes spirals in plants to mathematically distribute leaves on a stem to minimise overlap. The Spiral besides being reflected in natural forms such as plants, shells, DNA and the galaxy, exists in our fingerprint. The Spiral is a code that is imprinted into life and represents a symbol of everything we can see and not see. In the third dimension, if we are a point that moves through a spiral of time we know our experiences exist in the past even though we can't see them anymore, thus the Spiral informs us that the deep past is imprinted into our immediate experience and still part of us.

Spiral time is central to a Māori ontology, or understanding of being. Wiremu Woodard (2008) argues: "Stewart-Harawira (2005) in her explication of an indigenous global ontology uses the metaphor of the double spiral or takarangi to capture the ontological and epistemological position of an indigenous worldview. Takarangi literally means chaos and the double spiral represents the concepts of pre-existence and potentiality. The spiral is a symbol representing the interconnectedness of all existence. The center of the spiral is Te Kore: The void or the realm of potential being which contains movement towards te ao mārama—the world of light and actualization—while simultaneously moving back into nothingness." (p. 23)³²

³¹ Hom, E. J. (2013). What is the Golden Ratio? Retrieved from <https://www.livescience.com/37704-phi-golden-ratio.html>

³² Woodard, W. (2008). *Entering the void*. (Masters dissertation). Auckland University of Technology, Auckland, New Zealand. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/30040521_Entering_the_void

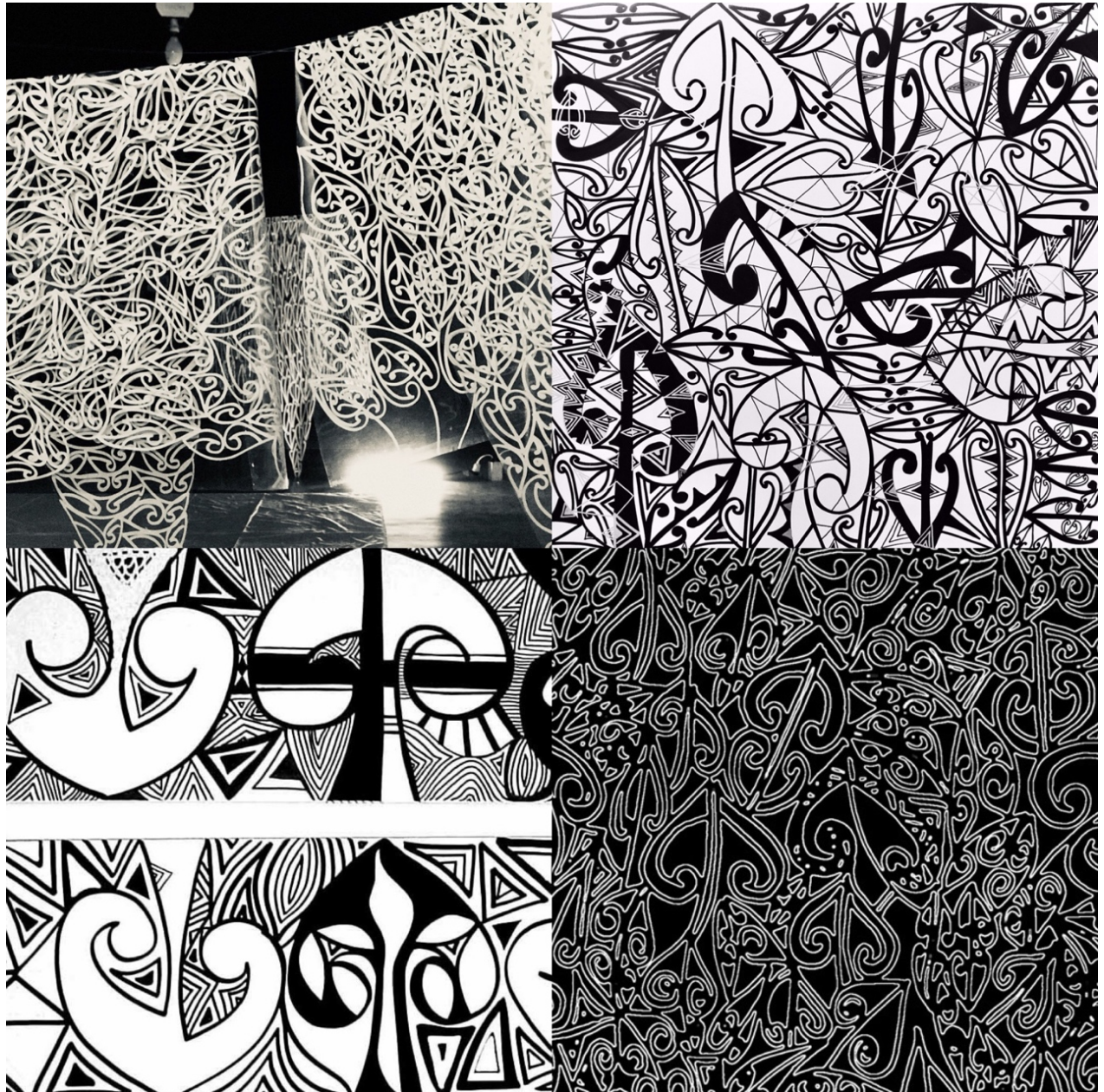


Figure 6. Paintings on canvas, vinyl and newspaper by Tawhiao (2010-2017).

3.6 The Koru

The Koru is inspired by the fern-tree frond unfurling as it grows, and is therefore related to the Spiral. Its most basic translation is a 'loop'. But it is also very similar in design to the first weeks of the fetus's growth and represents the beginning of a spiral and so symbolises new life and growth. Rather than use it as a formulaic pattern as is seen in the Wharenuī (meeting house), I use an aspect of the Koru out of traditional patterns and let it flow freely.

Normally Māori use this symbol in quite specific patterns in whakairo (carving) and ta moko

(tattoo). I wanted to move away from the usual pattern into the unknown space. It was a reflection of how I felt as a Māori colonised. There were no symbolic patterns in this new life, there seemed to be bits here and bits there. I translated that into my work. But miraculously there was still a harmony in the non-prescribed pattern. I found a balance to hold the form of the Koru without systemising the pattern; it was, for me, the very purest form of letting my spirit reign.

Flowing downstream, by following this inner journey, is less stressful than swimming against the tide, and so all our wellness must lie downstream. I found a way to be mindful, and easy, trusting and free, using the Koru. It brought out a harmony from an intuitive balance. Within the free flow, several forms arrived; the butterfly, in Māori called wairuaatua or spirit god. The motif of the caterpillar can be found in Rudolph Steiner's writings as the life form that spins its cocoon from light to advance from caterpillar to chrysalis and then eventually butterfly (Steiner, 1923).³³ I also interpreted designs to fit my intention, so the double-ended Koru came to represent to me the seed of man and woman as one.

When I painted these forms in the Parisian Church, the Priest accused us of being pagan. I informed him that my paintings and George's carvings represented the unseen spirit as a symbol of love. It was a painting of the spirit free of religious judgement.

3.7 The Fish

The paintings that initiated my fulltime art life were all communicated to me from a Fish. That is why Fish endure in many of my works of Art. We all have an inner voice and through practice that voice becomes clear and intelligent. When I say the Fish communicated with me, it was a Fish that told me to go to the newspaper and paint Fish over it. By opening my perception and looking into the Fish's eye the idea arrived fully formed, from *out of nowhere*.

Since nowhere in a cosmic universe is really the everywhere we cannot perceive, I knew

³³ Steiner, R. (October 8, 1923). *On the nature of butterflies* [Lecture]. Retrieved from <http://wn.rsarchive.org/Lectures/19231008p01.html>

why it came when I looked into the Fish eye. It came from my inner being in relationship to the natural forms of life. Ideas are interesting as we form them often from inspiration, contemplation, dreaming and imagining them. But where they come from is up for examination and interpretation. In my creative experience we are connected to everything by laws of nature and I experience that connection physically, emotionally and intelligently. That is why I say, the Fish told me.



Figure 7. Tawhiao Fish Paintings on wood, newspaper, print paper (2008-2018)

Jung (1969) identifies Fish as a symbol of what can rise out of unknown depths and relate to the psychic experiences that come out of the unconscious (p. 186). Rudolph Steiner (1907) discusses in esoteric terms how the Fish is also the symbol for spiritual being as it has

developed itself out of the Sun.

How the Sun and Fish are connected is a symbol in itself, but from a Māori perspective the Milky Way star cluster is called Te Ikaroa a Maui, which means the long fish of Maui. Te Ika a Maui (the North Island of Aotearoa or New Zealand) is also the fish that Maui caught. These are very basic descriptions. However, every part of those stories holds symbolic revelation in a psychic, narrative form.

These symbols are present in all of my paintings and each symbol has opened me to the extensive vocabulary such simple things as the Fish inspire. It is a dynamic and vital relationship with these symbols that has led to the idea of the *Temple of Potential*.

3.8 Review of Knowledge on Art Practice

In my early years as an Artist I drew inspiration from the ‘primitivism’ and abstraction of European art which, was derived from the ‘primitive’ Indigenous people such as the Aboriginals of Australia, the First Nations of America, the Aztecs of Mexico, to name but a few. Several European modernist artists influenced my early practice, such as Picasso and Matisse; both were famously influenced by Indigenous Art. The irony of my early attraction to these artists is that the formal developments that made their work ground-breaking (reduction of forms to geometries, and of three dimensions in one dimension), was based on their appropriation of Indigenous Art, as documented (and later critiqued) in the exhibition and catalogue *Primitivism in the Twentieth Century: Affinity of the Tribal and the Modern*, (MoMA, 1984-1985). In the same year, the exhibition *Te Māori* (1984) was launched at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. Also in that same year, I sat School Certificate in six subjects and failed Art. Māori Art was not taught for School Certificate in 1984 and while the *Te Māori* exhibition launched a whole new perspective on Māori Art, my failure was the grassroots reality of being Māori artist in twentieth-century New Zealand Art education. My early failure turned into my life’s primary work when I discovered my own creative flow a decade later.

The *Te Māori* exhibition³⁴ was a milestone in Māori cultural renaissance of the 1970s onwards. This show highlighted the spiritual nature of Māori art and it also opened the world to understanding an art form that had, until then, been considered a relic of the past, as if the dead Māori of the past were the real Māori, while the rest of us were not.

A significant exhibition in the development of my practice that forged a connection between Toi Māori of the ancient world and contemporary art was *Pasifika Styles* at the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge, England (2006-2008). This exhibition was designed to bring attention to the fact that Māori Art was a continuum—not dead, but very much alive. I set this agenda by visiting the Museum and pitching the idea to then-curator, Amiria Salmond. By bringing contemporary art into the Museum it could speak directly to the collection and enliven the existing collection of Māori Art housed in the Museum. The idea for this came in very strongly when I visited the Museum and was given access to the mokomokai, the preserved tattooed heads collected by many museums in Europe (Palmer & Tano, 2004).³⁵ We unpacked the boxes and made a greeting to these preserved heads. It was clear by the way these heads were packed in boxes in the dark cupboard that museums collected but didn't engage. The heads said, "Engage, engage". The resulting exhibition was curated by Amiria Salmond and Rosanna Raymond. I was invited as one of fifteen featured artists. We each created artworks that placed the artefacts into a living situation with the intention of showing the living nature of all Māori art both traditional and contemporary.³⁶ The long-term vision I had was for other Indigenous people to do the same with their own Taonga (Artefacts) held in museums, with the view of expanding cultural understandings within the Museum and eventually overturning the concept of collection and replacing it with connection.

The urgent need for social justice for the Indigenous disenfranchised came in the form of a group show, titled *Te Urupatu, Scorched Earth* (1998). I curated this show with Tame Iti in

³⁴ This exhibition featured traditional Māori artworks and toured the USA in 1984 to great acclaim and success.

³⁵ Mokomokai is the name for the traded, tattooed and preserved heads of Māori. Palmer, C., & Tano, M. L. (2004). *Mokomokai: Commercialization and desacralization. Commercialization of the mokomokai*. Denver, CO: International Institute for Indigenous Resource Management. Retrieved from <http://nzetc.victoria.ac.nz/tm/scholarly/tei-PalMoko-t1-body-d1-d3.html>

³⁶ George Nuku and I were featured artists in a television documentary that follows our journey to installation in this exhibition in Cambridge. (<https://www.nzonscreen.com/title/toi-maori-on-the-map>)

the cow paddocks on the border of the land confiscated in the Urewera.³⁷ This show was a series of artist installations covering the confiscation line and the townships of Ruatoki and Taneatua. It highlighted the wrongful taking of Māori land by the Government. The artists included Shona Tawhiao, who made woven panels to catch the light, installed in cow paddocks; Rongotai Lomas, who created an audio visual moving image that was exhibited in the completely blacked-out Tuhoe Embassy; George Nuku who made carvings in polystyrene that included a gateway with the message, “Trespassers will be eaten”; Darryl Thomson and Daniel Tippett, graffiti-painted car wrecks that lay on the side of the road and had been set on fire. My own works were hand-painted banners revealing all the legislation that had removed Māori land from Māori hands. This exhibition sparked open a whole new relationship with Nature for me. The mist, the rainbows, the air and the light all showed up at our dawn opening. This experience changed my whole view of what Art was for. After this show I learnt it was, amongst other things, a connection point for communicating with Nature.

³⁷ Parliament passed legislation (NZ Settlements Act 1863) for the confiscation (raupatu) of Māori land to punish tribes deemed to have “engaged in open rebellion against Her Majesty’s authority” in the early 1860s. Pākehā settlers would occupy the confiscated land.

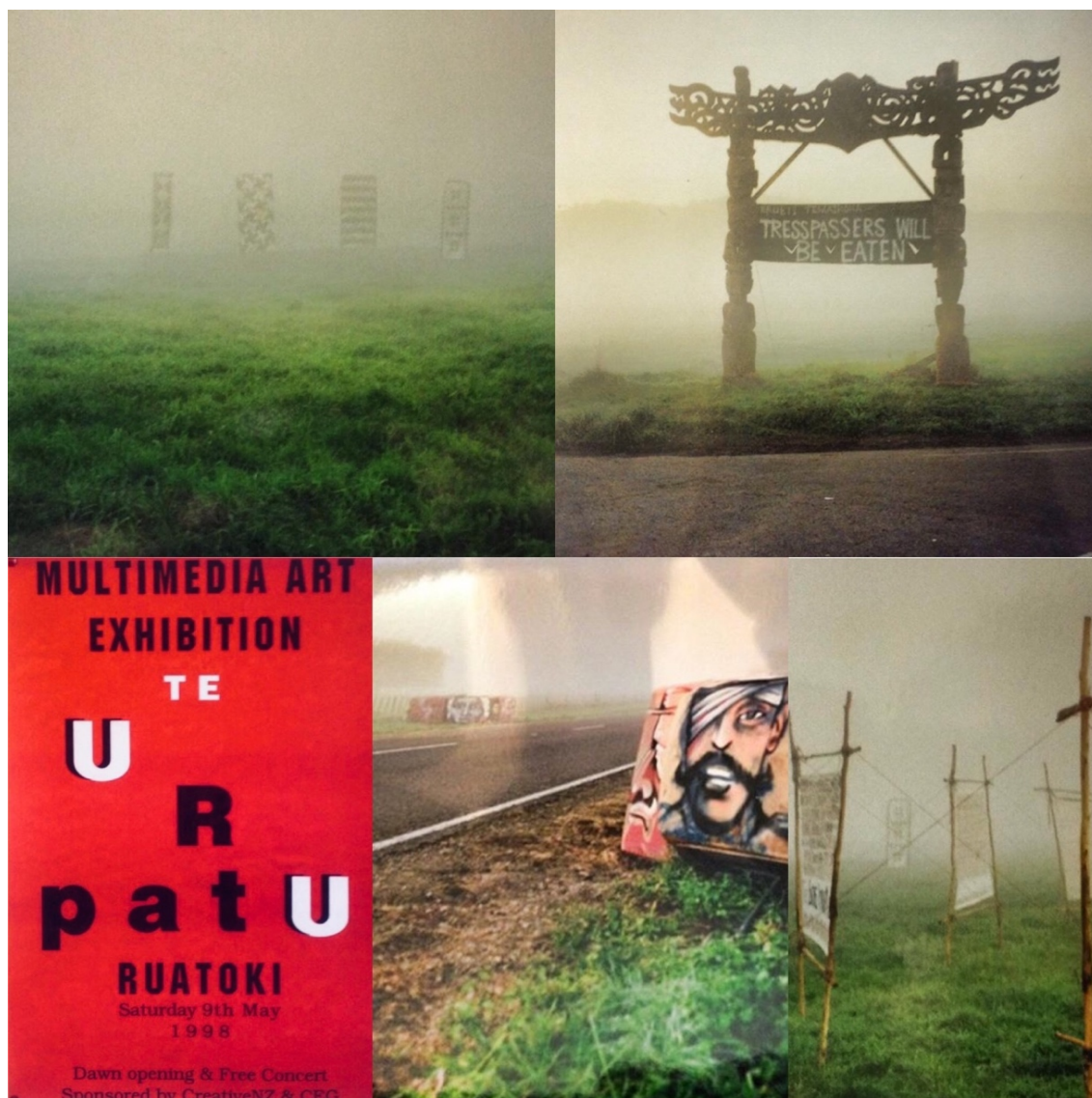


Figure 8. Group Exhibition, Te Urupatu, Scorched Earth, Ruatoki and Taneatua, NZ (1998). Top right, Shona Tawhiao, Te Ao Marama, weaving; George Nuku, Te Waharoa (gateway); Daniel Tippett, Daryl Thomson spray-painted cars, Tracey Tawhiao, vinyl banners. Exhibition invitation Art by Rongotai Lomas.

We did not see Māori Art on walls in my childhood. The only place it blatantly existed was in the Wharenuī³⁸ and most abundantly in Nature. The curve of the mountains in the sky, the patterns of fern in clusters in the bush. The animals in the clouds. The perfect patterns made by Tawhirimatea on the sand and water.

However, by the time I was a young mother with a law degree, I was most affected by Māori Artists who set themselves in direct revolt to colonisation. Māori artists such as Robyn

³⁸ Wharenuī in this context refers to the meetinghouse of Māori in general as opposed to a specific house.

Kahukiwa, who made Māori beautiful, in contrast to the mainstream media portrayal of Māori as poor, drunk criminals. Kahukiwa showed resistance to these negative portrayals. Tame Iti was an activist first and foremost. He came to Art later as a positive way to protest. He activated Art as a primary tool for challenging racist assumptions and ignorance about Māori.

George Nuku, as a carver, leads the movement of using non-natural materials. He was an early adopter and visibly works with Wairua. He has a psychic approach to Art that makes him dynamic and inspirational. His work is pushing the boundaries of what a carver could be. George made it possible to imagine a whole new reality that was futuristic. This gave a sense of hope in a deluge of negative statistics on Māori. George has also been my long-time collaborator; we have worked together on five international installations and many national shows. George says he is a cannibal who eats with a knife and fork. This sums up his Art practice—he is at heart a cannibal, an eater of all living energy as equal, he does not value one thing above another, he takes equally from it all.³⁹ The reference to the knife and fork is symbolic of his use of plastic, he is not going to stop being a cannibal just because times have changed and the materials he uses are no longer traditional. He has instead attributed plastic with a Whakapapa. It is sometimes made from whale fat and this makes it natural. Also, man as natural creates plastic from the tools of earth and all of earth has a Whakapapa. He works within the tension of the old world and the new world, and brings this to his work by holding his own space between these worlds. Irony and paradox are part of his landscape as a Māori Artist. Michael Jackson (1972), in *Aspects of Symbolism and Composition in Māori Art* says, “The Tapu of the Māori artist can be seen as far more than a mystical association between man and a sacred object. By being perpetually involved in those unifying transformations which so much art symbolises, the art occupies a socially ambiguous position somewhere between being and becoming” (pp. 36, 37).

George is the closest thing to Art School I got. He grounded me in the supernatural by his single-minded process of inhabiting that space naturally and easily.

³⁹ A conversation that started with our first international, self-curated Exhibition, *Trespassers will be Eaten*, Williamsburg NYC (2004). In this exhibition we positioned the cannibal as the person who eats of life equally, not putting one thing in life over another as ‘okay’ to eat. The cannibal was an equality guru in our exhibition.

This making of modern art or contemporary Māori Art is a realm of the continuing practice of the philosophy of Māori in a modern world. These Artists laid a visual and political direction of where Māori art was going, could go, and also where it wasn't going. But they too had the almighty privilege of thorough access to the tupuna designs within the Wharenui. We have all been influenced by our ancestors in that house as a potent symbol of our connection to them and our own bodies.⁴⁰ As an example, Michael Jackson (1972) says:

But we do know that Māori symbolised certain psychological attributes and affections in various organs [...] according to their view, every part of man is emblematic of and applicable to the Supreme Being [...] Thus the liver (ate) was the seat of the emotions, and the kidney or spleen (hinengaro) was the seat of thought and life. The hands in many Māori Pare refer us directly to the position of these organs in the body. (p. 49)

At high school, I was taught about Pākehā Artists⁴¹ like Colin McCahon⁴² and James K. Baxter.⁴³ They were famous Pākehā men and Artists who epitomised a revolt against colonisation. McCahon showed the spirit of the land in his landscapes. Baxter showed the value of honesty in English words and they both showed bravery of Artists who worked with spirit against the conservative Art world of that era in New Zealand.

They were Pākehā who had the effect of making it 'allowable' to use art to revolt against the perceived norms. In a colony, in the 1980s, when a Pākehā did something that equated to being pro-Māori, it legitimised Māori discontent. No one was teaching us about colonisation then. It was still ignorantly active, or actively active; simply, rampant.

Contemporary Māori Art has taken off with the introduction of Bachelor programmes of Māori Visual Art. This new wave of contemporary Artists are not only well versed in colonisation but they are also fluent Māori speakers and articulate in their practice and process. Artists like Reweti Arapere, Ngatai and Kereama Taepa, and Johnson Witehira are

⁴⁰ Māori women artists, such as Maureen Lander in her work, *Huna: Kaitiaki o te Harakeke* (<https://collections.tepapa.govt.nz/object/1403406>), Ngahina Hohaia in her work *Roimata Toroa*, exhibited in *Parihaka Poi* (2009), have similar spatial concerns for circles and the curvilinear lines in site-specific artworks. And Lonnie Hutchinson, in her work, *Sista7* (2003), working with cylindrical pou, paper cut-outs lit from within, shows the feminine divine.

⁴¹ Pākehā Artist is a symbolic word grouping in the context of Māori Artist.

⁴² Colin McCahon is widely recognised as New Zealand's foremost painter, born 1 August 1919, died 27 May 1987.

⁴³ James K. Baxter is one of New Zealand's best known and loved poets, born 29 June 1926, died 22 October 1972.

creating works that don't actively react to colonisation but fit into a digital age expressing the future of Māori Art, beyond colonisation.



Figure 4. Tame Iti, Te Tangata, Te Urewera (2010); Robyn Kahukiwa, Hinētītama (1980); George Nuku, Te Whare O Tangaroa (2015).

This ultimately gives hope to the highest end of assimilation, where Māori are immersed in te reo and open to new ways of expressing our cultural values. And in spite of being young Māori men who are impacted most in the negative statistics of Māori, they embody a better future. It is my belief that this generation of Artists is embodying their Art practice without any form of protest but instead with a keen celebration of their culture within a Pākehā paradigm, and for this reason their work is important to me in the post-colonial era of Art making by Māori. Star Gossage is a great example of a Wairua artist, her paintings embody

the spiritual realm as reflected in the ethereal, spiritual element to her people depicted in many of her paintings.



Figure 10. Ngatai Taepa, Hierarchical Scale #1 (2011); Reweti Arapere, #1 Paieka, #2 Katauri, #3 Tawhaki, #4 Ringa-huia, #5 Te Motu, #6 Rangiatea (2012); Kereama Taepa, Finish what you've started (2015), limited edition print of 30. Star Gossage, Untitled (Portrait in profile) (2006); Johnson Witehira, Edmund Hillary (2012).

Finally, the Artist I love for being herself is the late Sally Gabori, an Indigenous woman of Australia who started painting at the age of 80 years old. In an article after her passing in 2015, 'Farewell Sally Gabori', this was stated: "'Danda ngijinda dulk, danda ngijinda malaa, danda ngad - This is my Land, this is my Sea, this is who I am' [...] Mirdidingkingathi

Juwarnda Sally Gabori[’s] [...] language is Kayardild, and virtually no one apart from her late-80s self actually speaks it any longer” (Aboriginal Art Directory, 2015, para. 1, 2).⁴⁴

Therefore, her art is the only way she can share the history, geography ecology and stories of Bentinck Island, in the Gulf of Carpentaria, where she was born and grew up. For me, Sally Gabori represents a Wairua Artist. She has worked from a desire to leave an imprint of her world. The colour and the freedom of her line soothes and excites and is an outstanding example of her resilience as an Indigenous woman, whose people were permitted to be hunted and killed by white Australians (Stockton, 2016).⁴⁵ This history further highlights the importance of Art as a form of resistance, but in Sally’s case she also highlights the lightness of spirit in her map-scape portrayals of her homelands.



Figure 11, Sally Gabori with her work Mirdidingkingathi Juwarnda (2012) beside a collection of her paintings.

⁴⁴ Aboriginal Art Directory. (2015). Farewell Sally Gabori. Retrieved from <https://news.aboriginalartdirectory.com/2015/02/farewell-sally-gabori.php>

⁴⁵ Stockton, R. (2016). Australia’s centuries-long genocide against Aboriginal people. Retrieved from <http://allthatsinteresting.com/australia-genocide>

The selected artists I have briefly surveyed here, are linked by their Wairua, and their resistance to colonial imperatives through portrayal of Māori and Indigenous Australians as part of the future, not the past. They are important because they represent their culture with creative potency, in spite of colonisation. They not only survived it but they revived a mandate of cultural pride.

The earth floor is alive and conscious. It is connected to a primordial mother. Māori had fires to keep their home warm and the pa site vital and before colonisation there were fires as far as the eye could see. Te Ahi Kaa.

Everything important to Māori philosophy was outside. This Temple installation pays tribute to our connection to a Super-nature. Super-nature is the sacred and miraculous force of nature. Seen in fractals, seen in natural disasters, seen in the details of the air we breathe and the water we need to survive. Our existence and the oneness of human nature, within a Super-nature, embodies this installation.

Pre-colonial Māori gathered outside in special places of significance to the tribe. The Skyfather, Ranginui, was the roof of our temple/spirit house and the Earthmother, Papatūānuku was the floor.

There are no walls, only mountains, waters and rocks marking boundaries. The philosophy of Nature came from being in it. A physical relationship. This is where all the Indigenous knowledge comes from, Nature and her body of work.

I always ask what is the purpose of making new work? What is the driving force of this creative energy? The answer is always the same, aroha, love.

Love is the energy that unlocks the keys to our cellular information centres. It is the vibration that can shut down the matrix of disconnection. The saying, 'Love is the Key', is a spiritual truth. Love is what is driving the hand and mind to create this Temple.

PART FOUR

TE PUNA O ĀIO, THE TEMPLE OF POTENTIAL

4.1 The theory of *Te Puna O Āio*, *The Temple of Potential*

Te Puna O Āio is a simple construction of a multidimensional reality. There are no rules except one—the audience must navigate to the centre of the Temple without touching any part of it. To avoid touching is to remain conscious of the space and reverent to the forms within it, as if they are alive. In Euro-American philosophy, psychiatrist Silvano Arieti (1976) has made a study of the psychodynamic and sociodynamic factors that enter into the creative process. His understanding of art as vital resonates with my own when he says: “Art is vitalistic in its expression of religion and philosophy, particularly where it is the intention of the artist to enhance vital potential. The art is said to be alive” (p. 183).

In this chapter I discuss the philosophy behind the *Te Puna O Āio*, the guiding principles of construction and relationship to site. I began creating from an intuitive recognition that as a colonised Māori woman, I needed to connect to my own centre. According to Marsden (2003):

This center is where a person must create for herself an orderly system of ideas about herself and her universe in order to give direction and purpose to her life...and she will exhibit a sureness of touch that comes from inner clarity. (p. 27)

The Temple of Potential springs from a place that Aluli-Meyer (2013) describes as ‘deep knowing’. It is also the opposite to the Western view of ‘hard work’. I propose a counter-narrative to the value of ‘hard work’ and instead turn to Māoriori, or Ease as a quality often referred to as *natural*.

This is a Temple of five circles that fit within one another, a symbolic structure that floats between the Sky and the Earth. The form of the *Te Puna O Āio* also derives from our body’s make-up. We are pieces of cellular art, evolving in function for millions of years. Our bodies

developed with a common geometric progression from one to two to four to eight primal cells and beyond. It comes from the womb of every woman and the seed of every man. It comes from the forces of nature and holds the universe. It is a guardian of our spirit as it lives on earth—a portal direct to our higher self— Te Heke Tika.

Life itself as we know it is inextricably interwoven with geometric forms, from the angles of atomic bonds in the molecules of the amino acids to the helical spirals of DNA. We can trace the spherical prototype of the cell, to the first few cells of an organism. These assume tetrahedral, and star (double) tetrahedral forms prior to the diversification of tissues for different physiological functions (Mercer, 2017).⁴⁶ If our essence is truly spiritual omnipresence, then perhaps the point of our being here is to recognise the oneness we share, validating all individuals as equally precious and sacred aspects of that one.

In ancient systems around the world there are inevitably three main ways in which to view and experience knowledge: (1) via the objective, physical, outside world, the world of science and measurement; (2) via the inside subjective world, the space of thought, mind, idea and inner being that helps us understand meaning and our linkages with phenomenon; and finally (3) via the quantum world, a spiritual dimension unlinked to religious dogma, described in ethereal, mystic, and yet experiential terms.

Simply put, this is Body, Mind, Spirit. Or in Māori: Tinana, Hinengaro, Wairua. Aluli-Meyer (2013) describes how Hawaiians refer to this epistemologic trilogy as manaoio, manaolana, and aloha; Fijians see it as vuku, kilaka and yalomatua (p. 94).

⁴⁶ Mercer, C. (2017). The frequency of the human body. Retrieved from <http://www.biotechenergypatch.com/the-frequency-of-the-human-body/>

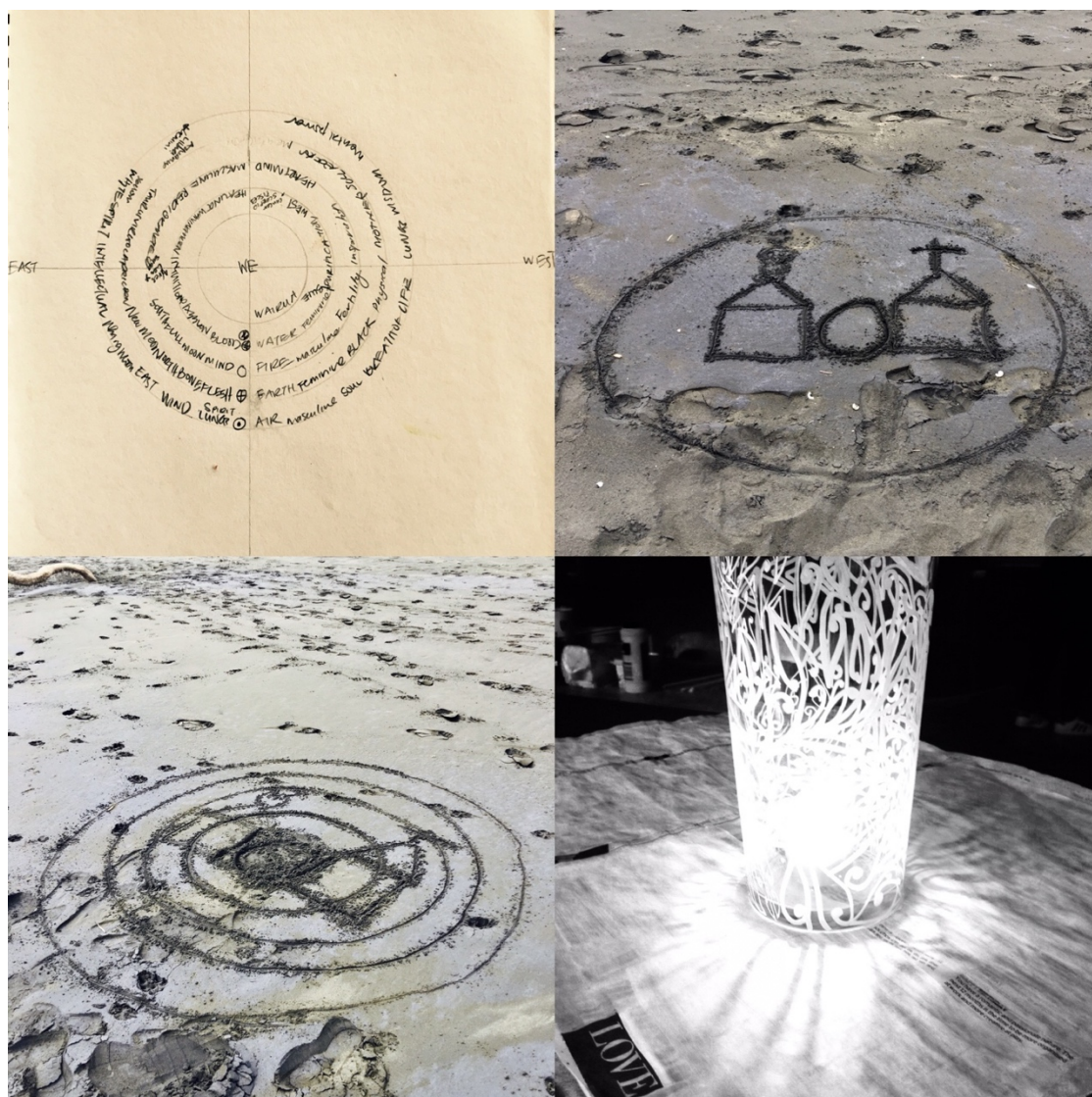


Figure 12. Tawhiao drawings of Temple in the sand, a page from her notes, and hand-painted light beacon.

4.2 The construction of the *Te Puna O Āio, The Temple of Potential*

It emerged that my research project would take the form of a Temple and a Circle, after looking at what was already offered as a space to connect with a higher dimension today; the Christian Church and the Tribal Wharenuī; both post-colonial structures.

On the Beach, in the sand, I drew a Church, it was a triangle on top of a square with a cross on the top, and then a Wharenuī, a triangle on top of a square with a tekoteko on top. When I saw these basic images in the sand, it was easy to see they came from the same design, and it was the first time I understood that the Māori meeting house was post-colonial.

My grandmother, Hinemotu, had said there were not so many meeting houses everywhere in the old days, everyone ate together on the grass, they laid white table cloths on the ground. The table cloths a sign of the new times, when houses still had to be built. Squares and triangles began to activate in the once-open spaces.

In the Earth I drew a circle between the church and Wharenuī and then I drew another circle around all three. The inner circle is the human being between the two worlds or church and marae, the outer circle is the universe as a whole, including all the elemental gods. The circular structure resists the architecture of straight lines. Friedensreich Hundertwasser says:

The straight line is godless and immoral. The straight line is not a creative line, it is a duplicating line, an imitating line. In it, God and the human spirit are less at home than the comfort-craving, brainless intoxicated and unformed masses.⁴⁷ (1958, 1959, 1964, para. 21)

In Te Ao Māori, there is a hierarchy of the elements ranging from the most spiritual and rarefied to the least spiritual and most material. This hierarchy determines the placement of elements from the centre of the circle outwards. Self, Fire, Water, Earth, Air. In *Te Puna O Āio*, the point is the centre of the Temple and represents the inner world of the human, the Spirit, the Fifth Element. The four circles surrounding that inner centre follow the symbolism of four as follows:

The Four Material Elements: Earth, Water, Air, Fire.

The Four Directions: North, West, East, South.

The Four Natural Colors: White, Red, Black, Gold.

The Four Physical Orientations: Left, Behind, Front, Right.

The Four Day Times: Night, Dusk, Dawn, Noon.

⁴⁷ Hundertwasser, F. (1958, 1959, 1964). Mouldiness manifesto against rationalism in architecture. Retrieved from http://www.hundertwasser.at/english/texts/philo_verschimmelungsmanifest.php

The Four Moon Phases: New Moon, Waning Moon, Waxing Moon, Full Moon.

The Four Earth Seasons: Winter, Autumn, Spring, Summer.

The Four Lifetime Periods: Old Age, Maturity, Birth, Youth.⁴⁸

For the physical construction, I have designed a metal frame of five circles, that can be hung from above. The largest circle is 6000mm diameter and the inner four circles are 600mm apart, decreasing in size. I set up a fundraising event on Boosted, an arts funding platform based on donations, where I raised the \$6000 to have this made by a steel engineer. Members of the public have personally donated to this Temple. It was designed to fit the space available for this thesis. Limitations become openings.

The mathematics of the dimensions become symbols in themselves. The five circles, the six-metre diameter and the 600mm space between each circle provide another layer to the sacred. Twelve is coming in as I paint and design. There are twelve paintings for the outer Air circle and twelve for the Earth circle.

For the purpose of this project, I am hanging it in a performative space that has no natural light. It is called the black box, which is symbolic of the square that will hold the circle. This will put all the light energy of the Temple into the symbolic art itself. It is artificially lit and resembles a giant chandelier both in design and in purpose. A chandelier is an elaborate light and in a lightless basement, this will be the only light source. The installation falls at the time of Matariki so, like stars, this Temple hovers between sky and earth. Like an elevator that has our body on earth and our inner being in the stars.

Part of my process has involved creating a smaller sacred realm, which centres the non-physical dimension of my work. It could be called the divining of a higher purpose for the work. I wanted to construct a place to set the intention of the project and vibratory alignment to the earth. So, from a pile of dirt and cast-off marble and granite lying around outside my studio, I made symbols of earth intelligence as representations of Whatukura and I painted glass light beacons. Together they energise the space with what I feel is a

⁴⁸ This list is probably infinite, like the rest of our expanding universe.

significant connection to Papatūānuku, the mother of the gods. This is also a connection to the whanau of the Taniwha, as well as the Taniwha himself, Horotiu, who lies in waterways directly beneath the black box. This Taniwha is declared to be there in narratives of Tainui and Ngāti Whātua—both tribes are related to the Waihorotiu stream. The Horotiu Taniwha is credited with carving out the main street of Auckland as well as the Auckland harbor.



Figure 13. Tawhiao studio pictures for the painting of the Temple. Skyscape from studio doorway at sunset. Working notes for the design and elements of the Temple. Coco Kora, artist's assistant.

The reptilian Taniwha are living energies within our inner earth, they are able to remain invisible to us but they have outer forms that we can see in rock formations.⁴⁹ So when I constructed the small sacred realm with rocks, they became symbols of connection to the Taniwha realm. We can make these kinds of connections by visualisations, by words or by karakia, but if we make something in the physical world to symbolise the unseen world, in my experience, we connect to it in the physical world. This is why artistic expression of the simple things, like the God of cultivation Rongo depicted on the traditional garden implements, has symbolic power of connection to that God on Earth. Or the more complicated patterns and pou in the Wharenui symbolise our whakapapa to the natural world, vibrationally connecting it to us in the physical world. I am so accustomed to listening to my inner voice now, that when I am told, "Build a small temple in the Taniwha realm," I know that it has to be easy and everything I need to do it is already on hand. And it was. After I built this small Temple, I lit the candles each night. This is exactly how the idea for the *Te Puna O Āio* was designed. I merely listened and acted as though it was already done while I worked my way to making it visible to others.

⁴⁹ In the same way that the Fish told me to paint it on the newspaper, the Rocks spoke to me about who they are and what they represent in our dimension. They stated that they are in our DNA as an Ancestor. And just as the Fish told me to paint it the Rock told me to use it as a symbol of the Taniwha realm. These communications I accept as psychic and I do as I am asked. It is unusual but not impossible to receive this kind of communication from other forms of life.

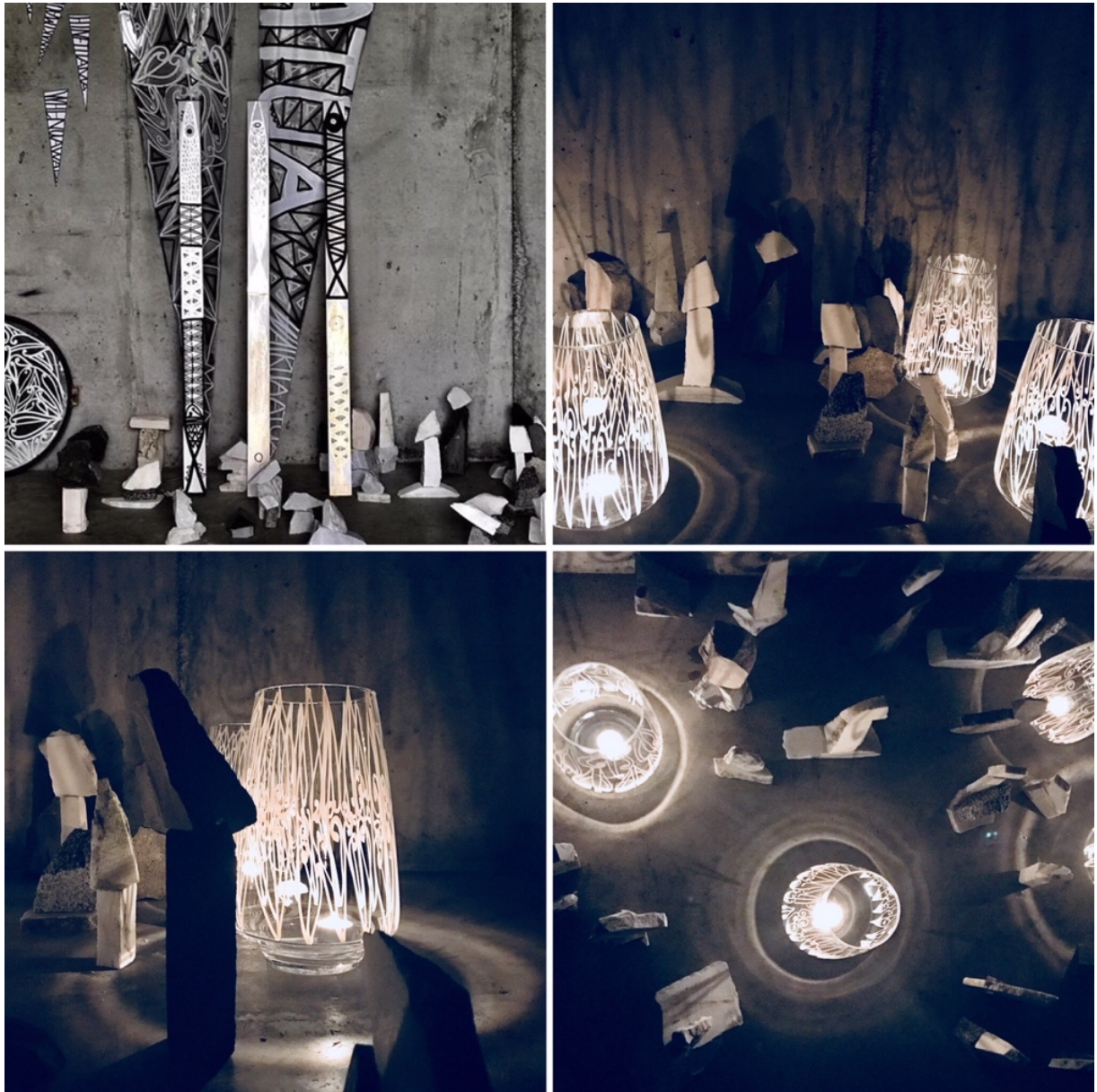


Figure 14. Tawhiao, small sacred realm to hold the sacred intention of Te Puna O Āio, The Temple of Potential.



Figure 15. Tawhiao, installing Te Puna O Āio, The Temple of Potential, AUT Performance Space (WG210), 2018.



Figure 16. Public interaction, *Māori Mirimiri (healing)* by Moana Skipworth-Lousi and poetry reading by Karlo Mila in Te Puna O Āio, The Temple of Potential, 2018.

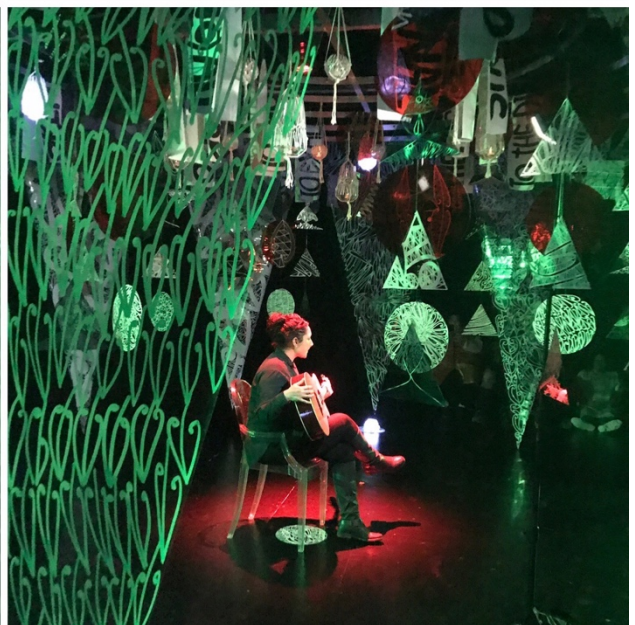
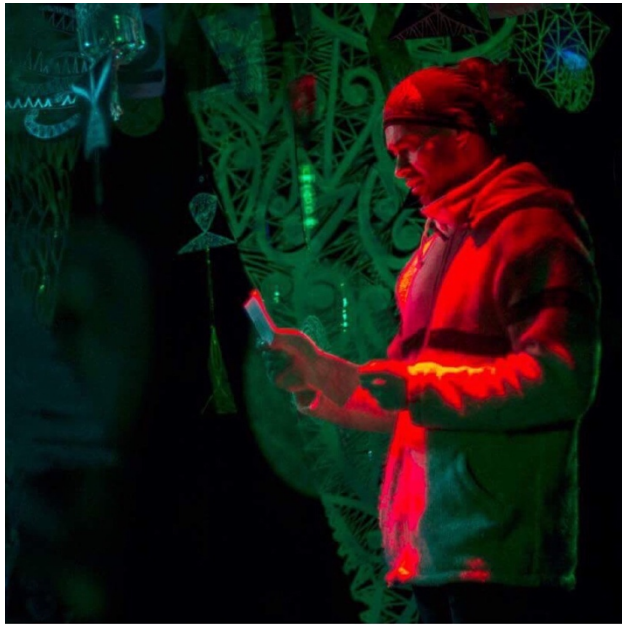


Figure 17. Four performers: top left, Antonio Maioha; top right, Karlo Mila; bottom left, Lacey Hill; and right, Mary Campbell.



Figure 18. Four different lighting stages of the installation. The chair was placed in the centre to encourage people to take a moment to sit and reflect.

The Temple also includes a soundscape that is 528Hz, and from the ancient Solfeggio Scale. According to this scale, the 528Hz sound frequency is the tone 'Mi' used to return human DNA to its original perfect state, bringing transformation and miracles. The Love frequency (Attuned Vibrations, n.d.).⁵⁰ This is not a religious space; it is a spiritual space. These sounds are another layer of spiritual awareness through sound frequency. The sound becomes part

⁵⁰ Attuned Vibrations. (n.d). What are the Solfeggio frequencies? Retrieved from <https://attunedvibrations.com/solfeggio/>

of the transformative experience of the Temple and the key element for creating an easy flowing tone that clears the mind of worry and stress. It sets the tone for the space immediately upon entering.

4.3 The opening of *Te Puna O Āio*

On Friday 15 June 2018 *Te Puna O Āio* was full of people, poems and music, and I experienced everyone's reaction as they came out of the Temple. The date was numerologically a '5' and this resonated with the five parts of the temple. Karlo Mila wrote a poem to lead the people through after a discussion with me and after reading my document (See Appendix 1). We decided groups of 12 people only would enter at a time. This enabled an amplification of their spiritual experience in a very busy event. The installation was built as a place for extended community and a place to heal and activate spirit. Karlo's poem wove people into the Temple in a way that gave them some indicators and narrative. Karlo's narrative was her interpretation of the Temple, rather than mine. The reactions of people were pure positive energy. My experience was receiving the audience's experience. Their comments were deeply moving. I didn't record any, but people felt uplifted, and expressed it in their words and their expressions.

For the two weeks of the exhibition there were people coming into the Temple and finding their way to the chair, and often I arrived to find someone quietly sitting there. The circle is generous in its inclusion of all, with no hierarchy, and the centre brings connection and visibility. Children were drawn to the centre like magnets. During this open period of the exhibition, during Matariki, musical artists Dam Native, Mary Campbell and Lacey Hill came and informally sang in the Temple. Poets Karlo Mila and Antonio Maioha performed in the Temple. To activate the sense of smell, I burned sage to create a smell that induces a sense of a healing space. Performance within a circle highlighted the inherent connection between performer and audience as one, creating a collaborative, inclusive environment.

5.0 CONCLUSION

5.1 *The Temple of Potential use*

My research as an Artist has revealed one main truth:

We have a Spirit, it resides in all that we are and do, it is active in the non-physical world but affects every part of our physical world. Māori spirituality has often been marginalised by formalised religion, and relegated to a mythic past. In this context, the purpose of this Art Installation *Te Puna O Āio, The Temple of Potential* is to revive our connection to our Spirit, to our Wairua, as an active force that connects us to our birth, to our death and to this life that provides everything for our physical and spiritual existence.

Te Puna O Āio is not a building, it has no walls. It is not a place of worship and it has no ceremony or altar. It simply has the intention of joining us to our Spirit. We enter from anywhere in the circle and weave our way to the centre through hanging artworks, hung in layers of meaning that are open to multiple interpretations and cultural meanings. We find our centre within the circle's centre. This centre represents us and our Spirit. Everything outside of us and our centre is connected to us within the circle. This is a place to remember who you are as a Sovereign and self-determined Spirit, regardless of your culture, or your religion, or your knowledge of your own Whakapapa.

Honoring the directions of the Sacred Circle is a widespread spiritual practice in ancient and contemporary Indigenous practices, including the circle of four directions or Nga Hau e Wha⁵¹ and the Medicine Wheel originally used by several different Native tribes of the USA. The recurring symbol of the Sacred Circle as a place of balancing, healing, and wholeness is a reflection discussed in Part Three. I have referred to Indigenous philosophers such as Manulani Aluli-Meyer, Carl Mika and Māori Marsden to support my intuitive basis for the construction of the Temple, based on spiritual principles. Whitiui's writing on Indigenous auto-ethnographic methods validates the importance of inner knowledge as a guide to art-making, including family stories, chants and a close study of the meaning of words, even

⁵¹ When I was born my grandmother Heeni Henry Tawhiao took me outside and pointed me to all four directions. This was a common practice to ground and locate me in this world.

down to the translation of Te Puna O Āio, have been a territories of knowledge that have extended my earlier practice. It has given me a lot of joy and a sense of the bigger picture, called Life.

The temple is an open, free, public place to attune to the spirit, not an isolated closed place. I believe I created this from my non-physical self to help my physical self attune to the infinite spiritual being in a physical world. To create the artworks included in Te Puna O Āio I created a chant. This chant was used to bring intention to the work as I created it. I said it when I entered the studio. The days I forgot to do my chant were marked by indecision, accidents and anxiety. I soon learnt not to forget. Māori used chants to create every part of the waka and I followed their lead in this construction.

5.2 The Chant for *Te Puna O Āio*

This is the space of my potential
This is the space of our potential
This is the time of my light
This is the time of our light
This is the womb of my creations
This is the womb of our creations
This is the eye of my sovereignty
This is the eye of our sovereignty
This I see. This I dream. This I Love.
This Temple Artwork in here is done.

Ko tēnei te wāhi ma tāku pito mata
Ko tēnei te ātea mo tō tātou torohū
Ko tēnei te ia ma tāku aho
Ko tēnei te wā mo tō tātou māramatanga
Ko tēnei te ewe ma āku toi
Ko tēnei te kopu mo tō tātou taha auaha

Ko tēnei te mata ma tāku manawa ora
Ko tēnei te kanohi hōmiromiro mo tō tātou mana motuhake
Ko tēnei Ka kitea
Ko tēnei Ka moea
Ko tēnei Ka arohaina
Mai ea mai ea
Kua ea kua ea
Ka Tau!
Ka Tau hā whakatau hā
Ka Tau rangi whakatau rangi
Ka Tau papa whakatau papa
Tūturu mai, Ō whiti
Whakamaua kia tīna, TĪNA
Haumi e, Hui e, Tāiki e.¹⁵²

My greatest wish is that these kinds of spaces are in every public park in the world next to the swing and the slide and the sandpit. A place so usual that our spirit is spoken to daily in the manner we choose freely as people of all races, cultures, ages and religion.

Wairua and Māoriori have helped me to align with my life purpose as an Artist. Paul Whitinui (2013) states:

Indigenous auto-ethnography as a resistance-discourse is intended to inspire people to take action toward a legitimate way of self-determining one's collective and cultural potential. Indigenous auto-ethnography also aims to "construct" stories that invoke a deep sense of appreciation for multiple realities and lives concerning indigenous peoples' ways of knowing. As indigenous auto-ethnography continues to develop, distinctions between our potential as cultural human beings and what is required to protect our existence as Māori, "Native," or being indigenous, will thrive. (p. 481)

⁵² Māori Translation by Isaac Bishara, Māori Philosophy Mentor.

In the realm of Artist, I can create in any form I wish, I can hold myself in any space I wish and I can focus on whatever I wish. No one is the boss of me except my higher self. From this place I can be as free as anyone can be in this life. In this free space I can make choices based not on what I have to do, but what my inner world is telling me to do. I am free enough to hear it and now wise enough to listen to it. My discussion of the philosophy of Ease, or Māoriori, a counter-narrative to art as hard work, positions art as an elemental flowing spring of our creative potential. Proposing this approach to Art making has become a central finding of my research process.

The key purpose of my research is to examine my Art practice and share any discoveries with others who may also wish to connect to the Ease of their spiritual power. At the very end of this paper, I discover that *Te Puna O Āio* metamorphoses to Te Pū Nao a Io, the source, essential, creative energy, influence of the creator within us all.⁵³

⁵³ Isaac Bishara introduced me to the multiple meanings within Māori words. These re-interpretations are all due to his generous guidance. Interesting discussions also took place with Jani Wilson, Te Ara Poutama, AUT, over the translation Te Puna O Āio or Te Puna a Āio.

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APPENDIX

Te Puna O Āio, The Temple of Potential

Examiners' notes before the public opening, June 12th 2018.

Entering the Temple: *Te Puna O Āio*

The simple notion that we have a Spirit and it must be activated; both to contribute to “thought” and to activate our inner potential is a gateway to the Temple. The spirit joined with our physical being contributes to a multi-dimensional reality. You enter the Temple from anywhere in the circle that feels good to you. This is an intuitive feeling place. But also it's a mindful space. To avoid touching the work as you pass through it you are invited to pay attention to it and yourself with it. This attention brings us closer to our inner selves. The energy of the body activates the hanging moving artworks kinetically and this movement creates unique patterns and reflections seen only by you at any given moment from where you are standing in it.

The Arctic and Antarctic Poles and compass points of Earth are significant and made obvious with the light source on the ground of the Temple at the poles. This light also provides a spatial dimension to float the Temple as if in space. I have made these lights to appear as rocks of light to create the illusion of imagined star rock particles. The crosslines of the metal chandelier were laid over the exact lines of the compass; by coincidence or divine inspiration perhaps, but certainly not by my design. After the circular framework was added I checked where the poles were and they were in line with the crossbar of the frame.

This project is informed by Māori cosmological knowledge, in a post-colonial context. My art practice engages with internal and external phenomena, including how the effects of Christianity have influenced my perception of Māori spirituality. The influence of the Church and the Marae has inspired *Te Puna O Āio*. The cross of Jesus is transformed above into the cross that holds the five infinite elements, starting from the outer circle: Air, moving in to Earth, Water, Fire and finally Us, people. These elements are considered the building blocks of all existence. Mātauranga Māori is an epistemology that incorporates the spiritual

dimension which makes room for transformative learning. I've joined traditional patterns with sacred geometric symbols from modern materials to create a dynamic relationship between the ancient and the now.

Methodology

My research proposes a counter-narrative to art as hard work, instead my art is an elemental flowing spring of my own creative potential. Māoriori. At its best it emerges with Ease. This Ease combined with my Spirit has meant *Te Puna O Āio* flowed out of me day and night, in an all-consuming way, until it was done. I created twice the amount of work needed to make this, as like a tap turned on fully, the flow is strong and abundant.

This sense of Ease extends to the materials I use for hanging. Everyday items that have become sacred to me are fishing line, because it also catches food; duct tape, because it holds everything imaginable together; and zip ties—a new sacred element added in this installation—are very strong, and like the other two materials are very multifunctional. These materials could build a house, and replace the nail as the icon of change in any Māori woman's home toolbox. Sacredness may not be attributable to one specific essence but may manifest itself through an interplay of a number of realms. I have as simply as I can connected the interplay of the Church and the Marae into a new symbol of our spiritual expansion.

IO Words

Enacted through Whakapapa (genealogical connection) to the natural world, my art practice is a pathway to reviving an unwritten/oral philosophy. The painted words on paper are the different names of IO, the primary creator god. IO the binary represents the universe including us. I have chosen to use the English translation to symbolise the colonisation of our spirituality and relationship with nature. To open this Māori world to all those who do not speak Māori, and to visually make protest over the colonial gaze and assumption of Māori spirituality as a forbidden, unknown. The IO explanations of creation, for example, demonstrate a constant folding over of states of nature, such that they all created the universe and could not be isolated into their specific mechanisms.

And so here the English names of the primary creator IO, on paper, are folded over the five primary elements of our human world. This installation can be understood in an academic framework as a work of Indigenous auto-ethnography, so my family, Whakapapa and personal politics are woven into the wider cosmological meaning of the work. I have added a personal mother's touch into this temple. The IO names are hung like washing over the clothesline (the temple frame resembles a clothesline) to acknowledge women's domestic goddess vitality, and to elevate the mundane domestic into the sacred feminine. I have added three black triangles into the centre as a symbol of myself and both my daughters. As a mother and a woman I personalised this space as a nurturing feminine space made by my hand and hung with the help of my daughters. Part of my practice is going with the moment and finding or appreciating value in it. Every moment is a research and knowledge-gathering moment.

Movement

The kinetic movement between the objects and light is a visual reflection of our universe and the cosmic movement within it. This motion enables us to be still, as everything moves and changes around us and, by osmosis, we change. Belief in our creation stories reflects the constant chaos of change and the resulting expansion. Every creative work reflects the beginning of a new sacred world, within an existing sacred world. This is manifest in the layers of light and reflection, where through movements of people, place and forms, we experience a changing sacred world within an existing sacred world. Impermanence is reflected in every movement, seen or unseen.

Stone Realm

I have revived my Indigenous psyche through the active ingredient of Kaupapa Māori philosophy. This means, an active purpose to recover philosophical beliefs inherited through Whakapapa, and identification to Māori cultural symbology. Horotiu is the Taniwha of the waters that this room sits directly over. I acknowledge the stress this Taniwha endures having his waters built over and blocked up—inhibiting Te Puna, the spring or flow. I bring the smaller temple creations from stone to connect directly to the Taniwha. These reptilian creatures are invisible to our eye but are believed by some to live in the inner earth, revealed to us as rocks. Here I reveal them in these rocks in respectful tribute to the

Taniwha of this space. These rocks also anchor the temple to earth/whenua. As a Wairua Artist these magical realms often arrive before I begin work. This realm arrived on the first day of painting. I began painting and then was told to go out to a pile of rocks by my studio and make an ancient realm in the room from them. After I made it the work began to flow. I was also told to work with the elements as guardians. I was told to create a work chant to protect the Wairua of the Art. I was told to stay alone with the creating as much as possible. I did all these things.

Music

Listening to the 528Hz frequency allows us to tune in to the wisdom of the universe. It resonates inside our body, releases emotional blockages, and expands our consciousness. It creates unity instead of separation. The most elemental state of vibration is that of sound. Everything has an optimum range of vibration (frequency) and that rate is called resonance. Music tuned to 528Hz resonates with our physical, mental, emotional and spiritual body. While installing I had a very strong moment towards the end when I felt I'd created a discotheque. A giant chandelier of moving glittering light and so I put on Boney M's 'Brown Girl in the Ring' and danced. I know that the fastest and easiest way to experience our spirit is through dancing, so I wondered if maybe dancing inside this temple might be the real connection needed to activate our spirit. I love that this space has no rules and no parameters beyond being conscious of our movement within it. This concept could broaden to include the lives we live.