

# **How is Ngāpuhi art linked to tribal identity, beliefs and practices?**

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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.’

### **Intellectual Property Rights**

I, Iritana Ngaro Tewhata own all intellectual property rights for this exegesis, however, for all imagery of the mini-taonga I have sought ethics approval from each artist, kaumātua, kuia and other whānau members who have partaken in this research, and their work remains under the umbrella of their intellectual property rights.

### **Ethics Approval**

As this exegesis involved interviewing and filming several Ngāpuhi artists, kaumātua and kuia and other whānau members who have partaken in this research, it was necessary to gain ethics approval through the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC) and from each participant before proceeding. The ethics approval for this research was approved by AUTEC, 19 March 2010. The ethics application number for this exegesis is 10/22.

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Na reira, e te whānau.

<i>Nōu te rourou</i>	<i>With your basket of knowledge</i>
<i>Nōku te rou rou</i>	<i>and my basket of knowledge</i>
<i>Ka ora ai te iwi</i>	<i>people will flourish</i>

## **Abstract**

Ngāpuhi knowledge is based on oral traditions passed down to successive generations, allowing for the transmission of information to remain contextualised and localised within Ngāpuhi. This has provided grounds for Ngāpuhi to justify, explain, protect, direct and guide the dissemination of tribal knowledge to their audience. Ngāpuhi were able to modify and adapt according to the changing environments in that customary practices such as tā moko and whakairo maintained fundamental principles of tikanga. The Ngāpuhi proverb ‘Ngāpuhi- kōwhao -rau’ expresses hapū autonomy, with each of the hundred holes or kōwhao of a fishing net representing each hapū and the whole net Ngāpuhi. By casting the net out, the intention of this research is to advance thinking of Ngāpuhi art within the broader context to the research question: How is Ngāpuhi art linked to tribal identity, beliefs and practices. Accordingly this research endeavours to capture the rich and diverse cultural aspects of Ngāpuhi art as articulated by artists’ who identify themselves as Ngāpuhi. This is evident in the artefact/documentary of several Ngāpuhi artists’. This research comprises a written exegesis and a documentary. Each component complements the other.

## Chapter 1 Introduction

The purpose of the thesis is to capture the rich and diverse cultural aspects of Ngāpuhi art. In reality, the diverseness of the art is a product of the individual life experiences of the artists and, Ngāpuhi concepts that are unique to Ngāpuhi and, whether or not Ngāpuhi art is linked to tribal identity, beliefs and practices.

Ngāpuhi tradition essentially is viewed within whakapapa (genealogy) holistically, connecting people inextricably with the land, sea and space. All life forms and phenomena like the sky, sun, wind and rain are bound in an ancient genealogy. This primeval genealogy is the beginning of Ngāpuhi identity. The following karakia, provided by Pat Hohepa, is specific to Ngāpuhi and figuratively describes the territory of Ngāpuhi:

The house of Ngāpuhi was erected so that Papatūānuku, the earth mother, is the floor. The mountains are the pillars [and] Ranginui, the sky father gazing down, is the roof. Puhanga Tohora (Whale spume) looks to Te Ramaroa a Kupe (Kupe's eternal beacon); Te Ramaroa looks to Whiria (Plaited), the taproots of strife, and the bastion of Rahiri (Ngāpuhi founding ancestor); Whiria looks at Panguru and Papata - to where the trees lean, standing in the westerly winds; Panguru-Papata - looks at Maungataniwha (the *Taniwha* mountain range), Maungataniwha looks at Tokerau (Hundred worms or north) Tokerau - looks at Rakaumangamanga (multi branched tree); Rakaumangamanga - looks at Manaia (named after an ancestor Manaia); Manaia - looks at Tutamoe; and Tutamoe looks at Puhanga Tohora. (Waitangi Tribunal, 1993, B25[a]:3)

These mountains stand as ramparts watching the territory between them, and represent the mana (prestige) of Ngāpuhi.





**Figure 1:**The Traditional Lands of Ngāpuhi. The Encyclopaedia of New Zealand)

E kiia mai nei kua ngaro Ngāpuhi  
Waiho kia takoto he tikoki waka nui  
He tūturu wharenuī,  
ko Puhi Taniwharau, Ngā Puhi Kowhao Rau

The Ngāpuhi proverb ‘Ngāpuhi-kōwhao-rau’ expresses hapū autonomy, with each of the hundred holes or kōwhao of a fishing net representing a hapū (sub-tribe) and the whole net Ngāpuhi. By casting the net out, the intention of this literature review is to advance thinking about Ngāpuhi art within the broader context of the research question of this thesis: How is Ngāpuhi art linked to tribal identity, beliefs and practices? Different literatures, including oral history, interviews, and inherited kōrero like mōteatea (laments), and existing artworks such as whakairo (carvings) are ways in which cultural knowledge has been transferred down the centuries. Robert Jahnke (2006) states:

....that trans-cultural practice in contemporary art can resonate with Maori if the art maintains visual correspondence or visual empathy with tribal customary form. In their absence, cultural resonance can be achieved through grounding of the content, informing the art, in a paradigm of Maori cultural relativity and relevance. The genealogy of the artist is a further determinant for resonance (p. i).

An in-depth account of Ngāpuhi origins and philosophy provides the Ngāpuhi cultural framework for the study. While the articulation of tribal knowledge in customary and contemporary art usually depicts symbols of tribal identification, Ngāpuhi art also reflects Ngāpuhi traditions and beliefs. Ngāpuhi art forms include:

- Ceramics
- Choreography
- Mōteatea
- Painting
- Taonga Puoro (singing treasures)
- Theatre
- Waiata
- Weaving
- Whāikōrero (speech)
- Whakairo (carving)

Notwithstanding the origins of Ngāpuhi are complex and this is exacerbated by the philosophical belief (applicable to all Māori) that humanity is linked through whakapapa to the environment:

We are the children of Papatūānuku, the Earth Mother, one of our divine Primal Parents. We contend that all of Nature derives from her – our lands, forests, rivers, lakes and seas and all life contained therein. As such our spirituality is deep-rooted in the earth, the lands upon which our forebears lived and died, the seas across which they travelled and the stars which guided them to Aotearoa. They were also physically sustained by the produce of Tane and Tangaroa. The sanctity of the Mauri of all things was respected. (Waitangi Tribunal Report, 1977, p. 15)

In essence, according to Nin Tomas (Ngāpuhi, Ngāti Korokoro, Te Hikutu, Te Rarawa, Ngāti Kahu, Te Aupouri and Taranaki) (2006), Ngāpuhi customary law was always associated with whakapapa and family ties to the land. It is still practised today, and will continue in future generations (p. 115).

The figure of Kupe Ariki (the ‘navigator’) provides the link between Ngāpuhi ki Hawaiki and Ngāpuhi ki Aotearoa. Kupe was the first to discover Aotearoa before the Hekenga Nui (Great Migration) and his wives were Hine-i-te-aparangi and Kuramarotini (Tau, 2007; Keene, 1975 & 1963; Buck, 1987; Waitangi Tribunal, 1993,

B25 [a]:3-4). Though there are many versions of this story, Kupe sailed to Aotearoa on Matahourua (double-hulled vessels) from Hawaiki after battles with Hoturapa, and after he had stolen the latter's wife, Kuramarotini. He had decided to voyage there in search of the fish of his ancestor, Maui-Tikitiki-o-Taranga (Buck, 1987; Keene, 1975 & 1963; Waitangi Tribunal, 1993, B25 [a]:3-4). At the same time Kupe was searching for Tawhaki, (Kaitangata's mokopuna). The genealogy of Tāwhaki varies somewhat in different accounts. Tāwhaki is grandson to Matakerepo (also known as Whaitiri), a cannibalistic goddess who marries the mortal Kaitangata (man-eater), thinking he shares her taste for human flesh. Her disappointed discovering that Kaitangata did not rave human flesh, she leaves him. Matakerepo is known as the guardian to the vines, which form the pathway into the heaven' in which Tāwhaki ascends in search for his beloved.

During his journey Kupe saw something glistening in the distance and upon sailing closer he saw that it was a mountain whose cliffs shone in the setting sun. He named it Te Ramaroa (eternal beacon of Kupe) and later the harbour would be named Hokianga (the returning place of Kupe) (Waitangi Tribunal, 1993, B25 [a]:3-4). Hohepa (Waitangi Tribunal, 1993, B25 [a]:5) explains that the name Ngāpuhi was in reference to two Puhi (chiefly virgins) and Kupe's wives.

Kupe's sailing instructions were handed down through several generations to Nukutawhiti and Ruanui, who eventually travelled together directly to Hokianga. It was Kupe's canoe, Matahourua, which was re-fashioned on its return from Hawaiki into Ngātokimatawhaorua, which refers to the adzes (nga toki) (Buck, 1987; Kawaharu, 2008; Keene, 1975; Waitangi Tribunal, 1993, (B25 [a]:6-9)):

The wives of Nukutawhiti were Hineariki and Aniwaniwa (also known as Niwa). His esoteric minders or taniwha were Niua and Araiteuru, while his other main minder, Puhimoanaariki, returned to Hawaiki. Puhimoanaariki was also known as Puhi Te Aewa (Puhi the surfer) because she needed to surf in order to avoid the nets of Kauhura when she was leading Ngātokimatawhaorua from Hawaiki. This taniwha Puhimoanaariki is also credited with being the origin of

the name Ngāpuhi. Her second name is the origin of Ngāti Te Aewa, the name adopted by Ruanui's people as their tribal name, later replaced by the tribal names Te Rarawa and Te Aupouri. (Waitangi Tribunal, 1993, (B25 [a]:6-9))

Ngāpuhi have a range of origin narratives. These are recounted in detail here because although Ngāpuhi identity is Ngāpuhi whakapapa, the origins of the name Ngāpuhi are multifarious. According to one tradition, recounted by Sonny Tau (2007), Kare-o-Ariki (Ngāpuhi's mother), an expectant mother, craved the heart of a high-born. Due to Kare-o-Ariki's role as a chieftainess, her request was granted with the sacrifice of her niece. It was from these actions three names emerged: Puhi-Kai-Ariki, Puhi-Moana-Ariki and Puhi-Tani-Wharau. However, Sonny Tau (2007) does not explain the tradition fully.

At an Ngāpuhi wānanga held in 2005, renowned Ngāpuhi scholars Hone Sadler and Hone Elliot presented a rational explanation. There was a high-born woman named Kare-o-Ariki who had desired to eat a human heart. Her young niece, a Puhi in her own right, was taken to the moana, and placed in the still waters. An incantation was performed in order to place her into a deep sleep prior to the removal of her heart. This act gave rise to the names Puhi-Kai-Ariki, Puhi-Moana-Ariki and Puhi-Taniwha-Rau, or the three Puhi, collectively referred to as 'Ngā Puhi'.

Another version suggests the removal of her heart transformed the niece into the first taniwha, Rangi-uruhea, who gave birth to Niniwa and Aria-te-uru, who guard the entry to 'te waha pū o Hokianga' later known as Te Hokianga-a-Kupe. It has also been suggested the names came from the captain of the Mātātua canoe, or even the Puhi (feather streamers) attached to the double prows of Matawhaorua.

Another traditional origin narrative refers to the brothers Puhimoanaariki, Puhikaiariki and Puhitaniwharau. These later became generational names claiming ancestral ties to Ngāpuhi (Kawharu, 2008; Tau, 2007). In this version Ngāpuhi derives from the pakiwaitara (legend) in which the taniwha Puhi-Moana-Ariki was known as Puhiteaewa

(Kawharu, 2008). Then there are the myriad of taniwha making up the name Ngāpuhitaniwharau. Kawharu (2008) believes these taniwha swarm in our harbours, rivers, estuaries, geothermal pools, lakes and in the minds of the people (Tau, 2007, Waitangi Tribunal Report, 1997). There is also reference to Puhi o Matātua, the younger brother of Toroa, by Ngāpuhi scholars in various publications (Kawharu, 2008; Te Ara, 2006; Keene, 1975).

In terms of the actual name Ngāpuhi, there is ubiquitous reference to Ngāpuhi-kōwhao-rau (Ngāpuhi of the hundred holes), a proverbial expression explaining hapū independence and autonomy (Kawharu, 2008; Waitangi Tribunal Report, 1993 & 1997). The holes are that of a fishing net', in which each hapū symbolises a kōwhao (hole) and the whole net Ngāpuhi. Ngāpuhi-kōwhao-rau is a metaphor alluding to other dimensions of wairua (spirit), taniwha and guardians (Kawharu, 2008; Waitangi Tribunal, 1993). As Kawharu (2008) explains:

These accounts are the stories of the name Ngāpuhi. Add to them the common descriptive epithet – Ngāpuhi Kōwhao Rau – for Ngāpuhi of the hundred holes - of the Ngāpuhi who will never be captured because there are so many escape holes and also Ngāpuhi tūturu – the real Ngāpuhi whose birthplace is on the wide-wetted mat of the land within the House of Ngāpuhi (p. 70).

## **Chapter 2 Literature Review**

Different artistic forms and styles can be seen as intrinsic perceptions in which tribal visual culture and contemporary art within tribal environments are contextualised as trans-cultural continuums (Jahnke, 2006, p. i). The literature revealed the approximation of Māori art to Western forms affects the extent to which it is readily appreciated in the West. For example, commercial or public art gallery contexts may cause artists to be displaced from tribal knowledge, leading to a more generic Māori approach to their art, rather than a tribal one.

This displacement from tribal knowledge can be explained in relation to the historical experiences of Ngāpuhi and in particular the diaspora. This literature review will consider the impact of colonisation on Ngāpuhi for two reasons. The first is its impact on traditional art forms and on the sustainability of pre-contact and traditional Ngāpuhi art. As a result of Christian influence, many post-contact Māori became literate, while at the same time being confronted by new religious and economic structures (Szekely, 2002). The cultural dimension of colonisation was reflected in the alienation of indigenous knowledge and culture along with land, forests, fisheries and other physical property (Wareham, 2002).

Secondly, and perhaps more profoundly, is there an impact from the diaspora, on Ngāpuhi artists and their art. Requisite to the discussion on the impact of colonisation on Ngāpuhitanga is the challenge of defining conceptually the nature of Ngāpuhitanga. It remains impossible to precisely define this term because it is subjective. However, Ngāpuhitanga can be understood as the shared beliefs, customs, and practices of Ngāpuhi and, in relation to the language, the dialect of the members of the tribe.

### **Ngāpuhi Art**

Ngāpuhi oral histories describe ‘numerous stories of carved dwellings’ but sadly little evidence is apparent today (Ellis, 2007, p. 17). Ngarino Ellis (2007) notes, that art from

this time period preserves elements of a Pacific style, resembling its strong geometric effects that incorporated key motifs, such as the chevron. She also describes these taonga as being smaller pieces worn as personal adornments, from simple reels to intricate rei niho (chevron pendants) produced from serpentine and whalebone for easier transportation. These taonga held information about the status of the wearer and encapsulated esoteric knowledge such as whakapapa:

These Polynesian pioneers came with the knowledge of the arts, of tattooing, of woodcarving, and with the technology for working bone, stone and wood. Successive generations kept the knowledge alive. (Mead, 1986, p. 20)

Mead (1986) believes Ngāpuhi art traditions were among the ‘richest and contained the most intriguing earlier regional styles’ (p. 35). He surmises that the Ngāpuhi regional style could possibly go ‘back deeper in time than others’ (p. 35). Deidre Brown (2003) explains that Ngāpuhi carvings have a figurative nature, showing humanoid characteristics, such as the mania, where the ‘female figure dominates even though male and genderless characters feature in small accounts’ (p. 24). According to Mead (1986), Ngāpuhi whakairo had a curvilinear method seen in pieces such as the Pukepoto (stative). He notes that the Kaitaia carving and the taniwha prow from Doubtless Bay pre-date 1769 (p. 36). As Brown (2003) observes,

The majority of [Ngāpuhi] figures have three fingers on each hand, often with an inverted thumb originating from the base of one of the fingers, although a small number of two, four and five-fingered hands were made. Heads are generally narrow, elongated, upright and domed or rounded at the top, with a heart-shaped mouth either the same width or slightly larger than the rest of the face. The mouth often features a rounded tooth in either corner and a visible tongue that can extend beyond the lips. Eyes are rounded or oblique. Surface decoration is restricted to the brows, lips and nose on stylized heads, although male and female moko kanohi (facial tattoo) are incised on the naturalistic faces carved onto a variety of taonga. (Brown, 2003, p. 24)

The figures depict a sinuous or serpentine style where the body is portrayed in an active pose. The arms and legs were ‘frequently adorned with patterns like waka tūpāpaku and surface decorations’ (Brown, 2003, p. 25) were used sparingly; spirals combined with

ritorito (young shoot) or unaunahi (fish-scaled) designs were the dominant features of surface decorations (Mead, 1986, p. 36). In earlier accounts by Earle (1832) and D'Urville (1837), many carved chief whare are noted as a wealth of finely decorated storehouses.

Brown (2003) believes Ngāpuhi history was marked by successive waves of internal migrations and battles over land (p. 27). In her estimation, Ngāpuhi art can be sourced through ancestral, contemporary kōrero and historical information.

Theresa Reihana (Ngāpuhi, Ngāti-Hine) (2010) strongly identifies as Ngāpuhi and lives in the Ngāpuhi rohe (region). Her paintings consistently reflect her commitment in creating awareness about the desecration to Papatūānuku (Mother Earth) and environment. However, Shane Cotton (Ngāpuhi), was raised in Upper Hutt, away from his tribal lands of Ohaeawai in the North, and yet still closely identifies with his Ngāpuhi heritage (Strongman, 2003). His work depicts the land of his ancestors and in particular Maungaturoto. Colleen Waata-Urlich (Te Popoto) is a clay artist whose most acclaimed work is inspired by Lapita pottery and the historical origins of Māori including Ngāpuhi. For her, working with clay means working with the body of Mother Earth, and she decorates her work forms with weaving patterns or adding muka (flax fibre), feathers and shells.

Selwyn Muru (Ngāti Kuri, Te Aupouri) (1964) bases his painting on the philosophy of Pablo Picasso, in which all images spring from personal experiences (Vincent, 1964). Horomona Horo (Ngāpuhi), a composer, art practitioner and cross-genre collaborator, has fused both traditional instruments of the taonga puoro (singing treasures) within a diverse range of cultural and musical forms. Rob Mookaraka (Ngāpuhi, Tuhoe), meanwhile, is a New Zealand actor known for his work on film, television and the stage.



All of the artists' works carry not only their Ngāpuhi heritage but also the effects or cultural influences of tauiwi. Ngāpuhi were the first inhabitants of Aotearoa to be colonised, resulting in the alienation of their lands and the demoralising effects of war and the heavy influence of Pākehā culture (Smith, 1989; Lee, 1983; Keene, 1963). While estimations of the Māori population prior to colonisation range from 200,000 to 500,000, it had severely declined by 1896, nearly 60 years after the signing of the Te Tiriti o Waitangi (Durie, 1998, p. 30). In 1833 began the large-scale baptism of Māori converts of Christianity and Waimate North in Northland became the centre of the expanding Anglican missionary movement. Māori conversion was the direct result of dislocation within their lives and new problems arising within Māori society due to the advent of European settlers (Binny, 1996, p. 321).

Areas previously thriving, like mission settlements and pā districts such as Kaeo, became uninhabited or severely depopulated; the inhabitants killed or isolated after the Musket Wars (Brown, 2003, p. 52). Material and spiritual poverty disengaged Māori through acts of 'desecration' and in some cases they faced religious opposition condemning 'carvings as works of the devil' (Walker, 2008, p. 100). Even though Brown (2003) believes there is no evidence suggesting missionaries influenced Ngāpuhi tohunga whakairo (master carvers) to abandon carving (p. 53), however there is a sense of the imminent death of Māori peoples through Musket wars, diseases and deliberate defiling of tapu (sacred) rituals prior to conversion to Christianity (Binny, 1996, p. 321).

Ani Mikaere (2011) argues that Māori suffered considerably as a result of European contact, for example whakairo rākau became a highly sought after commodity either through purchase, barter or appropriation (Dominion Museum, 1942). Some wharehau (meeting houses) had carvings, such as 'tekoteko seen on gable apex', along with a number of pātaka (storehouses) being fully carved on the exteriors (Ellis, 2007, p. 21).

Māori were able to modify their customary practices by applying the same principles to different situations to achieve different outcomes. Pākeha technology allowed for speedier processes and increased innovation for the producing of woodcarving and permitted quicker construction in order proliferate decoration on wooden objects (Davidson, 1984; Selwyn, 1996). By 1820 muskets began to supersede metal tools and references to ‘carvings being produced by non-Ngāpuhi experts’ began to appear (Brown, 2003, p. 38). In addition, by 1831 there was a change in the quality of Ngāpuhi whakairo and by 1940 it was in severe decline, with little carving compared to former periods. This decline devastated traditional whakairo almost to extinction (Brown, 2003; Selwyn, 1996).

Ellis (2007) and Brown (2003) note that through establishing the School of Māori Arts and Crafts, Apirana Ngata was able to stem the decline of customary arts of carving and weaving through the revival of tribal whare whakairo (carved houses). A driving focus for Ngata was defining tribal styles and he also emphasised ethnological and socio-political aspects, with particular interest in the ‘distinctiveness and unique traditionalism’ of the Māori kin-based gathering place (Brown, 2003, p. 20).

Eventually Ngāpuhi were forced to abandon their rural subsistence lifestyles to engage in Western industrial capitalism. This necessitated moving from traditional tribal areas into the towns and cities in search of paid employment. Ellis (2007) shows that the tempo of migration accelerated, after the Second World War through the influence of cosmopolitan experience overseas. What emerged from this diaspora was the first generation of contemporary Māori artists.

There are significant tohunga whakairo in Ngāpuhi oral history whose legacies continue to be an aspiration in Te Tai Tokerau, such as those of Whakatau, Nukutawhiti, Kupe and Ruanui (Ellis, 2007). Kupe adzed two waka (canoes) for Toto’s daughters,

Rongorongo and Kuramarotini (who later became Kupe's wife), and is regarded as the most notable of these carvers (Simmons, 1976). Harrison (1988) explains that Whakatau was a descendant of another expert canoe builder, Wahieroa. Whakatau helped his relatives Kupe, Nukutawhiti and Ruanui to re-fit and re-shape the waka Matawhaorua, which as we have seen was eventually re-named Ngātokimatawhaorua. Another significant carver during these earlier times was Toi, and his whakapapa is cited by Pat Hohepa from Kupe to a principal ancestor of Ngāpuhi, Rahiri. His whakapapa was recorded by Aperahama Taonui in 1848 (Waitangi Tribunal, 1993, B25 [a]:5):

```

graph TD
    Kupe --> Matiu
    Matiu --> Makaro
    Makaro --> Maea
    Maea --> Maahu
    Maahu --> Nukutawhiti
    Nukutawhiti --> Papatahuriho
    Papatahuriho --> Papatahuriake
    Papatahuriake --> Mouriuri
    Mouriuri --> Morekareka
    Morekareka --> Morakitu
    Morakitu --> Whiro
    Whiro --> Toi
    Toi --> Apa
    Apa --> Raurukitahi
    Raurukitahi --> Kauea["Kauea who was made a taniwha and travelled below the earth: his exit is south of Kerikeri"]
    Kauea --> TaKauea["Ta Kauea ko Te Tokooterangi"]
    TaKauea --> TeRangi["Te Rangi Taumuhumu"]
    TeRangi --> 

```

Te Rangi Tauwhanga  
 |  
 Te Hekana  
 |  
 Poupa  
 |  
 Maroro  
 |  
 Te Ika Taurangi  
 |  
 Awa  
 |  
 Awanuiarangi  
 |  
 Rakeitapunui  
 |  
 Tamakitera  
 |  
 Puhimoanaariki  
 |  
 Te Hauangiangi  
 |  
 Rahiri

Other carvers recorded as creating work held in public collections include Rukuwai and Kawerau of Ngāti Whātua, who were probably responsible for a whakawae (two door jambs) for a rua tāhuhu (semi-subterranean storehouse) (Brown, 2003, p. 31), and Hongi Hika who carved a representation of his head for Samuel Marsden (Ellis, 2007, p.23). There are oral accounts of surviving whakairo from the North yet there were only two carvers mentioned working during the period 1500–1800 that are ‘remembered through tribal narratives’ (Ellis, 2007, p. 19). There are accounts from various authors stating that Kohatu (Kohuru is misprint [TeWhata, 2012]) Te Whata of the Ngāi Tūteauru hapū, a descendant of Whakatau, was renowned for carving several waka kōiwi (burial chest) found at sites in Tautoro near Kaikohe and Kohekohe near Waimamaku. It is also believed that Te Whata initiated many stylistic innovations which played a significant role in the development of whakairo (Ellis, 2007; Brown, 2003; Selwyn, 1996; Harrison, 1988). Another carver recorded by Ellis (2007) and Ngata and Te Hurinui Jones (1961) was a woman named Pakiri of Mangamuka, who

was the sister of Mohi Otene. She appears in waiata aroha (love songs), identifying herself as an expert carver (Brown, 2003, p. 31).

The style of Ngāpuhi whakairo was present in the north prior to 1830 according to Simmons (1985) and questions still remain regarding whether the attributions of Ngāpuhi whakairo during these periods are of Ngāpuhi origin. There are extensive reports of Ngāpuhi whakairo being produced by other carvers from different regions like Thames and the Bay of Plenty due to dwindling numbers of Ngāpuhi tohunga, and it was believed that Rangatira (chiefs) began sourcing artists from other areas (Ellis, 2007; Simmons, 1985):

It is apparent that the Bay of Islanders were dependent on carvers, if not instruments, from other more isolated areas. (Binney, 1968, p. 135)

Mead (1986) considers the possibility that Te Tai Tokerau contains elements of former art styles closely associated with other tribes such as Ngāti Kahungunu, Ngāti Awa, Te Ati Awa, Ngāti Te Rangi, Ngāti Tamatera and Ngāti Porou (p. 35).

While researching the relationship between Ngāpuhi and missionaries, Shane Cotton discovered references to a prophetic sect in the Hokianga which he later depicted in his artworks, known as the ‘Blackout Movement’ series (Strongman, 2003, p. 26). These paintings reveal deeper philosophical influences which Cotton believes are uniquely Ngāpuhi. The waka transformation as described by Cotton is seen as restaging Māori spiritual and temporal awakenings by reviewing Ngāpuhi acculturation to Christianity and examining tribal identity. In his works, Cotton invokes the spirit of the acclaimed Hokianga tohunga Papahurihia and his loyal followers by depicting them travelling in a waka across a dark canvas; perhaps reciting karakia (prayers) (Strongman, 2003).

## **Conclusion**

This study investigates how artists actively involved in or cognisant of their tribal identity integrate tribal knowledge into their art practice, as opposed to artists displaced

from tribal knowledge, which has resulted from the historical experiences of Ngāpuhi, and in particular the diaspora. Defining Ngāpuhitanga is a challenge conceptually because the exact nature of Ngāpuhitanga is impossible to define, due to its subjectivity.

The literature reveals that Ngāpuhi art had close associations with Pacific styles originally but little evidence of early Ngāpuhi art works exists today. The impact on Ngāpuhi from colonial contact not only saw the demise of traditional art forms but also the devastation of Ngāpuhi communities that once thrived. It is clear from the literature that Ngāpuhi ancestors came to Aotearoa already equipped with the knowledge of the arts such as tā moko and whakairo and possessed the technologies to work bone, stone and wood. In this way they ensured Ngāpuhi tradition would be passed down to successive generations to keep the esoteric knowledge a live (Mead, 1986, p. 20).

It has been suggested by Mead (1986) that Ngāpuhi art was probably among the richest, intriguing and perhaps earliest regional styles in Aotearoa and he argues that other tribal groups are possibly linked to Ngāpuhi, as the art tradition of Ngāpuhi held significances to the Māori nation as a whole. There is no question in Mead's (1986) mind that Ngāpuhi art traditions encapsulated a wealth of artworks but he emphasises the need for further research.

The next chapter will explain the methodological approaches adopted by this thesis to examine the linkages between Ngāpuhi artists and their art practice. These approaches include the consideration of kaupapa Maori theoretical frameworks and qualitative research approaches.

## Chapter 3 Methodology

This chapter explains the methodological approaches used in this exegesis to examine the linkages between Ngāpuhi artists and their art making. These include a consideration of kaupapa Māori theoretical frameworks and qualitative research methods. Kaupapa Māori theory is not embedded exclusively in Te Ao Māori because it is being applied to a contemporary world and takes into account the colonial experiences and impacts of European ideas on tūturu (authentic) Māori thought.

Qualitative research has been used as the most effective and appropriate tool to explore the influence of Ngāpuhitanga on Ngāpuhi artists and their art for this study. Additionally, there is a practical component to the methodology which involves interviewing or conversing with Ngāpuhi artists and discussing their thoughts on cultural identity in their art practice. These discussions were later transformed into a mini-documentary.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The study adopts the kaupapa Māori theory (tribal model) because it recognises that Māori people have an understanding about their lived realities and, within these realities there can be transformation. Even though this research is embedded in Ngāpuhi philosophical beliefs and acknowledges the importance of storytelling, it is difficult to define Ngāpuhitanga because it is a subjective concept. Ngāpuhi is ‘through our tatai’ (genealogy) our connection to ‘Io-matua-kore’ (Supreme Being) and where ‘true Māori begins’ (Matene, 2012, 0h05m20s). Ngāpuhi rohe (boundaries) stretch from the bottom of the Bombay Hills to Thames, skirts around Auckland, and then extends right up to Kaitaia, though it is believed Cape Reinga has its own iwi and hapū:

Ngāpuhi have our own ways nē ...even by our own Reo; people say if your Ngāpuhi you know all Ngāpuhi o rātou tikanga: hare ko te tikanga: haere koe ki te tetahi iwi; tētahi o te whānau i roto Ngāpuhi rere ki ana: he rere ki ana kopu koe, koe tenei pai koe ahh...a mātou no konei hou kainga o Ngāti Rangi, Ngāti Moerewa i roto ki a Tautoro; ahh...Ngāpuhi kei konei tatai mo te ra nei, mo te ki

Matene (2012) explains that Ngāpuhi have their own autonomy, such as how they walk onto a marae, ‘he tane’ (the males) wearing the tauwa (head piece), although in some hapū women wear tauwa, and having their own language. While there are differences between iwi and hapū within the boundaries of Ngāpuhi, it is these differences which make them unique and renowned for Ngāpuhi kowhaorau, (Ngāpuhi of a hundred holes): even though they might seem to be fragmented, in times of need they band together (Matene, 2012). This world has been conceived as part of an integral whakapapa (genealogy) created from a ‘woven pattern of cyclic interaction’, whereby the potentiality for life is recognised by natural universal laws (Waikarepuru, 2008, disc 2, 6:04). These natural and physical laws were understood by Māori through observing principles of tikanga (cultural practice), such as marae protocol. Traditional Ngāpuhi values and knowledge link Ngāpuhitanga to the ‘universe’ (Waitangi Tribunal Report, 1977, p. 15). These cultural views have persisted:

Knowledge has a tapu, that knowledge belongs to the group, that people have a responsibility to treat knowledge carefully, that knowledge should be used to benefit others, that knowledge can lead to the ‘world of light’ (enlightenment), that knowledge acquisition and learning can be an end in itself. (Smith, 1997, p. 174)

In understanding these cultural beliefs, kaupapa Māori emphasises all dimensions of ‘conscientisation, resistance and transformative praxis’ (Smith, 1997, p. 164). Conscientisation is seen as beginning a process in which people come to know their personal truths and the constraints within their lives. Resistance is perceived as resolving to take action to transform these circumstances, and praxis involves people taking the necessary critical and reflective actions to transform oppressive or exploitative circumstances (Smith, 1997, p. 84). These processes weave in and out of cultural practice, by utilising knowledge of Western frameworks and an understanding of Māori history under colonisation (Tiakiwai, 2008, disc 4, 12:42). The processes are



organically driven, where the principles must continually relate to people in ways that they understand, and impart meaning, in terms of a reflection on their realities, for example the industry of carving and its relationship to the north. According to Te Whata,

People did carve, and then they buried them and, that's why you don't get wharenui in the north. We've only just started in the last 50 years, as far as carving is concerned or might be two houses, Mangamuka and Otiria. Then people started carving their houses. We had a tūpuna, his name was Kohatu Te Whata and over time people called him Kohuru, but it's a miss print. He's done so many meeting houses, I've seen them and that is the calibre of the man from the 1700 to 1800. (Te Whata, 2012, 14m18s)

Kaupapa Māori theory strengthens and affirms life experiences which are unique and distinct from one another. Kaupapa Māori theory is composed of key elements or principles which were initially identified by Graham Hingangaroa Smith (1990). There are six principles or elements of kaupapa Māori, which Smith (1990) illustrates within the context of educational intervention embedded in Kura Kaupapa Māori and research. These elements and principles have since been expanded by other kaupapa Māori theorists such as Linda Smith (1997), Leonie Pihama (2001) and Taina Pohatu (n.d.). Other theorists who have contributed to the development and growth of kaupapa Māori methodology include Russell Bishop (1996), Kuni Jenkins (2001), Cheryl Smith (2003) and others. The key elements or principles of kaupapa Māori research developed by Graham Smith (1997) are:

### ***Tino Rangatiratanga – The Principle of Self-Determination***

‘Tino Rangatiratanga relates to sovereignty, autonomy, control, self-determination and independence. The notion of Tino Rangatiratanga asserts and reinforces the goal of kaupapa Māori initiatives in which Māori are able to control their own culture, aspirations and destiny.’ (p. 466)

### ***Taonga Tuku Iho – The Principle of Cultural Aspiration***

‘This principle emphasises the significance and legitimacy of Te Reo Māori, Tīkanga and Mātauranga Māori. Distinct concepts of kaupapa Māori can be viewed as Māori ways of knowing, doing and understanding the world and are considered valid in their own right.’ (p. 467)

### ***Ako Māori – The Principle of Culturally Preferred Pedagogy***

‘The principle of Ako Māori acknowledges teaching and learning practices that are fundamentally unique to Māori, including practices that may not be traditionally derived but are preferred by Māori.’ (p. 468)

### ***Kia piki ake i ngā raruraru o te kainga – The Principle of Socio-Economic Mediation***

‘This principle asserts the need to mediate and assist with the lessening of negative pressures and disadvantages experienced by Māori communities. This principle asserts a need for kaupapa Māori research to be of positive benefit to Māori communities. It also acknowledges the significance and success that Māori derived initiatives have in regards to intervention systems for addressing socio-economic issues that currently exist’ (p. 468).

### ***Whānau – The Principle of Extended Family Structure***

‘The principle of whānau is a fundamental core of kaupapa Māori. It recognises the relationship between Māori, has to each other and the worlds around them. Whānau along with the process of whakawhanaungatanga are key elements of Māori society and culture. This belief acknowledges the responsibility and obligations of the researcher to look after and maintain these relationships and realizes there is an intrinsic connection not only between the researcher, but also the researched and the research’ (p. 471).

### ***Kaupapa – The Principle of Collective Philosophy***

‘The 'Kaupapa' refers to the collective vision, aspiration and purpose of Māori communities. In which the larger context of the research refers to the aspirations of the community. So the research topic or intervention systems as a result can be considered an incremental and crucial contribution to the overall kaupapa’ (p. 472).

### ***Ata – The Principle of Growing Respectful Relationships***

‘The principle of Ata was developed by Pohatu (n.d.) primarily as a transformative approach within the area of social services. The principle of Ata relates specifically to the building and nurturing of relationships and acts as a guide to understanding of relationships’ (p. 5).

All of these principles provided a framework for the study. While not overt the principles underpin the way the research was undertaken and gave precedence to a uniquely Māori approach to investigating the relationship between the artist, their artefacts and their cultural heritage.

### **Qualitative Research**

Qualitative research has been useful for Māori research because the methods can be easily recognised (Moewaka Barnes, 2008, disc 3, 10:03). Rangahau Māori (research methods) involve a range of methods which take into account people’s voices and their stories, which are traditional modes for transferring Māori knowledge. However, qualitative research raises questions in relation to its audience: Is it interesting? What is the research intended for? Who will benefit from this research? And what are the possible risks?

Qualitative inquiry employs a variety of knowledge claims: strategies of inquiry, methods of data collection and methods of analysis (Creswell, 2003). This research

takes a holistic approach. The researcher is Ngāpuhi, an artist, and, importantly, has established relationships with each person over a long period of time. These relationships and connections provide a pathway for the researcher to listen and record the participants' stories, and for the participants to share their own narratives using their own language (Smith, Tuuta, Tiakiwai & Moewaka Barnes, 2008). The artefact/documentary led to the amalgamation of several Ngāpuhi artists' in an intensive and purposeful sample of information which includes video-recorded conversations arranged into a mini-documentary format focusing on artists' perspectives about how is Ngāpuhi art linked to tribal identity, beliefs and practices.

Each conversation varied, and in some cases required improvisation on the part of the researcher. For instance one artist was occupied with farm work upon arrival, so the interview was re-scheduled for the following morning at five o'clock, before church. Another interview was conducted after a whānau hui (family gathering) at the marae, and another interview was conducted in a work shed, on the farm. Semi-structured filmed interviews require preparation, such as being familiar with the technical aspects of the filming equipment, and ensuring there is access to power outlets, extra extension cords and batteries (Munhall, 2001; Wengraf, 2001). Most importantly, it is advisable to check each interview after it has been filmed for sound quality and picture quality to avoid any future re-shooting, and to make sure there is enough 'cut away' which may be needed later when constructing the final cut.

In one interview an artist felt uncomfortable with re-shooting, and only informed the researcher after a significant time had elapsed after the first shoot. This led to using transcripts when referencing this artist's work rather than video footage. A researcher must maintain equilibrium and be creative in problem-solving not only for the participant in feeling safe, but also to preserve the integrity of the kaupapa. These types

of incidents can occur for varying reasons, so it is important as a researcher to maintain good relationships. The principle of whānau is the fundamental core of kaupapa Māori, given that it recognises relationships between Māori and the world around them. These beliefs acknowledge the responsibility and obligations of the researcher to not only look after but also maintaining these relationships. This research records real-life situations, conducted in familiar surroundings for each artist where conversations can ‘unfold naturally, with no predetermined’ outcome established by the researcher (Patton, 2005, p. 40). Purposeful sampling is one of the core distinguishing strategic themes of qualitative inquiry and typically involves in-depth interviews and relatively small samples (Patton, 2005, p. 230).

### **Participants Profile**

Artists with Ngāpuhi whakapapa selected to participate in this research utilise different materials and processes, both traditional and contemporary art methods, and had different genders, ages and life experiences. Conversations with these artists explored their personal perspectives around cultural identity in art practice. These conversations were then transcribed into edited scripts in order to identify themes or patterns.

The synthesis of this research will give a picture of how these Ngāpuhi artists view their world. Transcriptions can be a good analytical tool, which benefits the researcher in becoming familiar with the data (Munhall, 2011). Through transforming these perspectives into a mini-documentary, and through visual language, embedded concepts such as whānau, hapū or iwi can be fleshed out and broadened (Jenkins, 2008). Video-recorded conversations are a key element in capturing what has been spoken, and highlight embedded truths which become more transparent or accessible as recurring themes are revealed (Flick, von Kardoff, & Steinke, 2004; Hardy & Bryman, 2009).

Individual themes can then be compared to other conversations to see whether similarities or tensions emerge from transcripts, such as different opinions regarding

buried taonga. In this research, only parts of the interview conversations applicable to cultural linkages to identity and art practice were transcribed into edited scripts. In two interviews there was poor sound and light quality; these are referred to but were not used in the mini-documentary. The findings were categorised on the strength of the artists' perceptions regarding the research topic and artists will be identified by name.

### **Conclusion**

The relationships between interviewer and interviewees were complex in nature and overlapped, raising further questions. The responses to the research question – whether Ngāpuhitanga influences art practice – was enlightening, because some of the artists had not recognised that embedded concepts, such as whānau ('my mother taught taiaha' and 'my nani was a waiata man') were influential aspects of growing up in Te Tai Tokerau and, impacted their work, when they created artworks in remembrance of their tūpuna (ancestors). However, what emerged from the conversations was a series of stories and a collection of experiences which reveal an understanding of how these Ngāpuhi artists view the world around them, and how these ideas provide a foundation in artistic influence, leading to a multiplicity of possible outcomes and ways in which this knowledge is applied.

Specific parts of each conversation that related to cultural identity in art practice were collated into a mini-documentary format, and are accompanied by a written component. A part of this process involved structuring the video according to how strongly each artist felt regarding the linkage to cultural identity and art practice. Even though thematic analysis assists in identifying recurrent patterns, this process attempts to represent a view or reality while using a systematic process to identify topics.

These conversations focused on cultural identity in art making practices, and highlights what is embedded within these narratives. It involves 'interpreting data' in the 'light of personal lessons learned' and comparing these findings with past literature and theory to

raise questions (Creswell, 2003, p. 206). When selecting diverse data the analysis yielded detailed descriptions from life experiences and shared patterns of significance, emerging from embedded concepts within these descriptions. What stood out emphatically in the analysis were ideas on Ngāpuhi origins (whakapapa), whānau (family), iwi (tribe), hapū (sub-tribe), cultural practices, education, cultural narratives and influences from religion. Rather than splicing footage thematically, each interview is presented sequentially, starting with the artist who feels most strongly about their artwork reflecting Ngāpuhitanga.

There were a number of themes that emerged from the conversations a recurring theme was the influence of whānau on cultural identity, or on art practice. In relation to cultural experiences in one case an artist felt intimidated going onto a marae, having not experienced marae life while growing up, but knew on a subconscious level that ‘it feels right, because on some level I already know’. Other issues of importance were raised such as why taonga (carvings) were buried and why there is a huge space ‘devoid’ of cultural knowledge or what the embedded messages within cultural practices are.

These interviews began by asking how Ngāpuhi art is linked to tribal identity, beliefs and practices and, documenting various artists, through a series of conversations to ascertain a link. Each artist in this research holds their own perceptive of Ngāpuhi and what Ngāpuhitanga means for them. Other issues of significance were of course raised throughout the interviews, like growing up with Pākehā parents or the sense of dislocation because of not being familiar with marae protocols or knowing whakapapa, and the frustration of not speaking Te Reo.

The diaspora on Ngāpuhitanga was brought about by European settlement within tribal boundaries, and even though Ngāpuhi became renowned for innovation and adaptability through trading with whalers and sealers, this eventually led to the Musket Wars in the

early nineteenth century. Ngāpuhi chiefs were a part of the signing Te Tiriti o Waitangi. The urbanisation following the Second World War saw many Ngāpuhi struggling to meaningfully hold onto their Ngāpuhitanga (Thom, 2006, p. 2). Tupari Te Whata, a tohunga whakairo from Tautoro, south of Kaikohe, explains in the interview:

Everything relates to your upbringing, the key to life is being joyous, goes through your family, and goes through your mahi, your capability and your accountability.

The link to Ngāpuhitanga was complex as the artists had varying views about whakapapa, hapū, whānau and how or where they were raised as influencing factors. These perceptions overlapped and intertwined, rather than answering the hypothesis, and raised further questions. The artists' work is therefore contextualised within their own biographies rather than Ngāpuhitanga shaping and determining their work. The geographical setting of the research was not confined to the tribal boundaries of Ngāpuhi.

Even if those involved in the study were residing in their tribal area, there is not a sense that they are inextricably tied to Ngāpuhi culture. Rather these interviews raise further questions regarding the complexities of each artist, their perspectives regarding Ngāpuhitanga, and their art making practices.

The following chapter captures the rich and diverse aspects of Ngāpuhi art, which in reality is a product of individual life experience and concepts which are unique to Ngāpuhi. Each artist is identified because interviews were video-recorded and transformed into a mini-taonga, and their artworks identified.



## Chapter 4 Findings

The articulations of tribal knowledge into contemporary art depict symbols of tribal identification, reflecting deeper philosophical influences (Strongman, 2003). Each artist that participated in the mini-taonga presents their thoughts in this chapter: Anahera Kingi (Ngāpuhi, Ngāti Kahu, Scotland), Allen Wihongi (Ngāpuhi), Theresa Reihana (Ngāpuhi, Ngāti Hine), Huihana Rewa (Ngāpuhi), Natanahira Pona (Ngāpuhi). The artists Moata McNamara (Ngāpuhi, Māhūrihuri, Scotland) and Tupari Te Whata (Ngāti Wai) will be referenced towards the latter part of the research findings.

### **Anahera Kingi**

Ngāpuhi artist Anahera Kingi describes her works as an art practice which occurs subconsciously, always relating to the land. Her passion for working with wood means her material is a visual reminder that it once was a tree, standing, living, breathing, and taking hundreds of years to grow; a tree that still has a life force and energy. That just like her, this rākau (wood) bleeds and is sustained by Rangi and Papatūānuku. This process involves many layers of painting, grinding, sanding, drawing and writing upon the surfaces of her found materials. Kingi is passionate about the environment and global political issues:

It comes from wood, its native timber, it's a beautiful rākau, chopped down so many years ago and built into a house. Then pulled down, ripped into pieces because the land there was worth more to the developer, than the whare on it.



**Figure 2:** Painting. *Untitled*. Anahera Kingi.



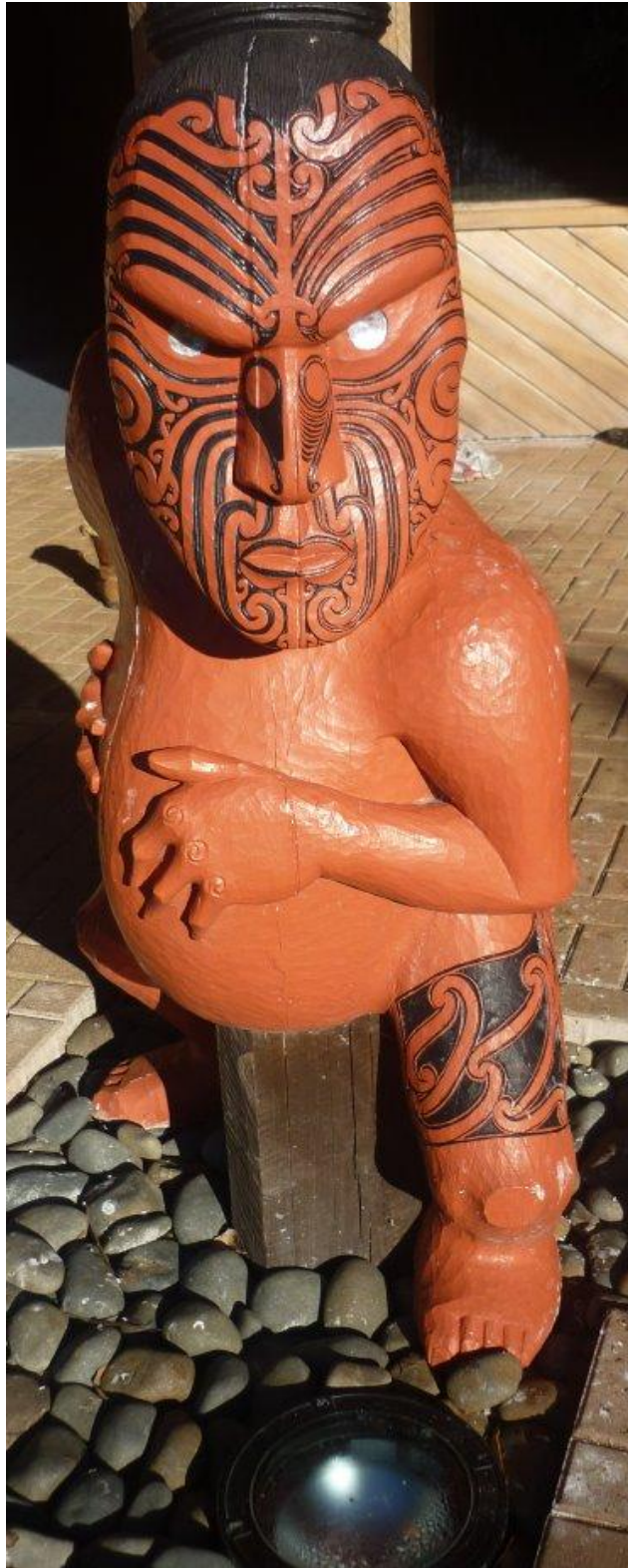
**Figure 3:** Painting. *Untitled*. Anahera Kingi.

## **Allen Wihongi**

Allen Wihongi was inspired by earlier works of whakairo (carving) produced in the Bay of Islands. He returned to teach in Kaitaia and while there met Bruce Gregory (New Zealand Politician of the Labour Party in 1980, committed to advancing Māori arts), who advertised in the local newspaper seeking those interested in learning how to carve.

Two years later he was teaching at Opononi Area School introducing Māori arts into the curriculum, with a focus on varied media like painting, rather than just carving. The first works at Opononi Area School were murals. Seeing these, Wiremu Wiremu and Bill Thompson said ‘Boy, these works aren’t for up here, you should be down on the marae.’ They recognised that the knowledge belonged within the marae context, and so Wihongi began teaching students and whanau at Kaiwaha marae.

This involvement led Wihongi into learning traditional arts and assisting with carving Kaiwaha marae for a year. Kaiwaha was the first meeting house carved in a contemporary style, up until then only three houses had been carved in Ngāpuhi: Rahiri in Dargaville, produced by Ngati Porou links, Mangamuka, Otiria and Te Whare Rūananga meeting house at Waitangi, produced by Eramiha Kapua. Wihongi’s interest in Māori art became the vehicle for Māori education.



**Figure 4:** Poupou. *Rahiri*. Allen Wihongi. Puhimoanaariki Marae, Kaikohe, New Zealand.





**Figure 5:** Painting, *Whakarongo*. Allen Wihongi.



**Figure 6: Painting. *Untitled*. Theresa Reihana**

### **Theresa Reihana**

Theresa Reihana's perspective of life changed after giving birth; and due to poor health she returned to her rohe in Awanui. Her earlier artworks were poetry and stories, told from the heart to her children, which eventually led her to painting. For her painting is like a rongoā (medicine), providing a way to release her creativity, which depicts the natural environment of Ngāpuhi.

If you want to tell someone about a take and, you talk about it you can see you have lost them, but if you paint a picture, it was a way to reach them, they would ask you about the painting. Maori relate to the image because they understand what is in it. (Reihana, 2010)



**Figure 7: Theresa Reihana Papatūānuku (I cry for your tattooed and desecrated face)**

Powerful elements and imagery not only reflect Reihana's knowledge and passion of Ngāpuhitanga, her works have many layers which examine traditional Ngāpuhi art forms. She feels her art 'belongs to me and [is] created by my tūpuna (ancestor)'. All her works are based on and are reflective of Ngāpuhitanga, whether depicting her native environment, storytelling, karakia or waiata. Her paintings may not be instantly recognised; patterns like kōwhaiwhai and, traditional patterns of Ngāti Hine have been a source of inspiration. The use of human forms, subtle gestures, reduced details, tightly designed compositions, and bold colours has been attributed to her ancestors.

Painting has enabled Reihana to share her worldview of Ngāpuhitanga.

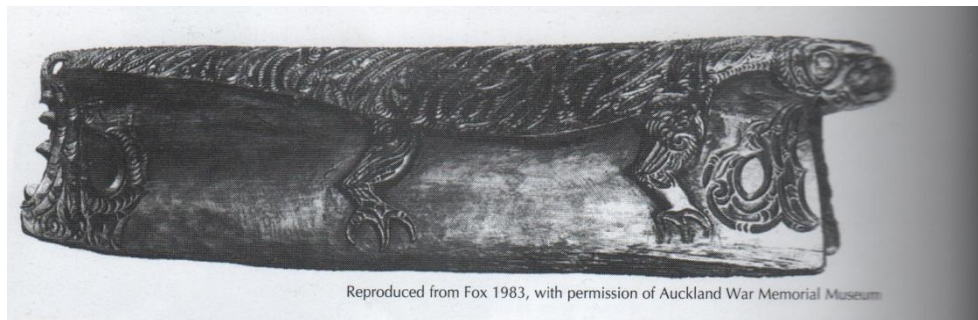
*Papatūānuku (I cry for your tattooed and desecrated face)* was created with layers of medium mixed with earth, ground with flat rock and baked in the oven. This was to add the element of kōkōwai (red ochre) and the sacred essence gifted from Papatūānuku for the creation of mankind and the creation of Hine-hau-one. The pattern is one half of pātiki (flounder), which was broken to symbolise sustainability, and the inability to provide kai (food). The three segments depict the broken earth, the segregation, and the desecration of the landscape. Her moko (facial tattoo) represents the threads, the roots, the foundation, the source, and origins.

### **Natanahira Pona**

Natanahira Pona a tohunga whakairo (master carver), believes there are no rules when it comes to carving. Ngāpuhi oral histories recount numerous stories of carved dwellings, yet there remains little evidence today (Ellis, 2007). There are ample examples of Ngāpuhi whakairo, such as waka tūpāpaku (deceased). Surface decorations can be seen on taniko (weaving) patterns of kākahu (cloaks) taken from Captain James Cook and housed at the Peabody Museum.



**Figure 8:** Poupou. Natanahira Pona. Ruapeka Marae. Commissioned as part of ANZAC (Australian & New Zealand Army Corps) commemorations planned for 25 April 2011



**Figure 9:** Papahou. Acquired by Thomas Kendall in the Bay of Islands in 1814. Auckland War Memorial Museum, Tamaki Paenga Hira. AM36720-b.



The lining inside these kākahu was impregnated with kōkōwai (red ochre). The way in which carvings were regarded, and the significance of the processes used to create these works, such as kōkōwai smeared onto the surface of bones, resonates with Māori attitudes towards death. For instance, the term ‘whakairo’ refers to ‘make like a maggot’ – the tūpāpaku (deceased) was placed onto a platform in order for the flesh to rot and be eaten by maggots. Once the bones were cleaned; they were taken down and smeared with red orca and placed in caves. Pona believes the Ngāpuhi carver goes through a similar ritual. By cutting off the shavings the carver eats into the flesh of the wood. The tapu associated with carving ceremonies is similar to that of the tūpāpaku process.



**Figure 10:** Waka tūpāpaku (burial chest) found by James Morrell at the entrance of the smaller Kohekohe cave. Rego no. 5658. Deposited by the Minister of Māori Affairs in 1902.

The next work (Figure 10) tells of Ngāpuhi tradition recounted by Pona relating to Tāwhaki, known for his great skills in waka construction because the Tāwhaki traditions are central to Pona’s work they are described here in detail. Tāwhaki met an ariki named Hāpai who gave birth to their daughter Pūanga. The legend recounts his search for his family after he refused to perform appropriate karakia on the birth of his daughter, and eventually his ascent into the heavens. With his brother and two slaves, Tāwhaki came upon a kuia named Matakerepo who was wife to Kaitangata (an Ngāpuhi ancestor). She sat at the base of some vines and helped Tāwhaki ascend into the heavenly realms.

This kuia was blind and while counting her taro, Tāwhaki teased her by hiding them. She growled asking ‘Who is there?’ sniffing the air she recognised her grandson. As a sacrifice, Tāwhaki offered his two slaves, and to gain insight Matakerepo removed the slaves’ eyes. ‘Why are you here grandson?’ she asked. His reply was ‘I have come in search for my wife and child’.



**Figure 11:** Whakairo. *The Journey of Tāwhaki*. Natanahira Pona.

Matakerepo responded, ‘It is unfortunate because she has returned to her people and the only way to her realm is by climbing these vines, however if you take the wrong vine you shall fall back to earth and never see your family again.’

Tāwhaki watched as his brother grabbed hold of the vine and then fell back to earth, leaving only one vine left for Tāwhaki to ascend. Making his way to the top, Tāwhaki came upon a party of men working on a canoe. Disguising himself as an old man he

offered his service. At the end of the day Tāwhaki followed the men home, realising they were his wife's brothers. He returned to work on the waka overnight until it was completed. The following morning the men found the old man lying beside the completed waka. They carried him back to the village and gave him food. Standing, Tāwhaki sat upon Hapai's seat. The people called out to Hapai, 'There is a slave in your seat!' Hapai said, 'WHO ARE YOU!' Transforming before her eyes, Tāwhaki approached Hapai and embraced her.

Pona's reflection of Ngāpuhitanga is clearly evident within his whakairo of Tāwhaki, and links into Ngāpuhi through the marriage of Kaitangata and Matakerepo (the flesh eater). In addition there is reference to Ngā uri o Hika kai tangata (the descendants of Hongi Hika the cannibal) (Ellis, 2007). Puhi-taniwha-rau, – means Ngāpuhi of the hundred [many] taniwha, alluding to Rangi-uruhea, who gave birth to the first taniwha, Niwa and Aria-te-uru, or the three Puhi, collectively referred to as 'Ngāpuhi', these hold the history of Ngāpuhi.

### **Huihana Rewa**

Huihana Rewa dedicates her artworks to the kuia Te Paea Hinerangi (Guide Sophia), the first guide at the Pink and White Terraces at Lake Rotomahana, Whakarewarewa, who was married to Koroneho Tehakiroe of Te Māhūrihuri from Waima. The restriction of carving for women in Te Arawa, spurred Rewa toward bone carving; the material was perfect because it captured form, light and shadow. These pieces represent the cycle of life, we are born perfect and as time passes our physical being diminishes – our body breaks down until it totally collapses. Her attention to detail, soft flowing lines and polished finishes demonstrate her craftsmanship and quality as an artist.

People bury bone, they don't respect bone, they respect whale bone, it's a shame really, and it's quite a beautiful material. I mean Tutanekai made a kōauau from a tohunga bone. Quite precious, and has significance, the fact they used bone in that way 'e ngā wā e mua', to make beautiful pieces from the human bone

Rewa believes her work does not demonstrate Ngāpuhitanga, but rather delves into the art form of sculpture. Her works do not involve carving as such, but focus purely on form, surface, and texture. Her choice in working with bone was due to how light casts shadow. This can be subtle, essentially making the object appear multi-dimensional.



**Figure 12:** Bone Carving. *Untitled*. Huihana Rewa. Graduating exhibition show held at Waiariki Institute of Technology.



**Figure 13:** Bone Carving. *Untitled*. Huihana Rewa. Graduating exhibition show held at Waiariki Institute of Technology.

### Moata McNamara

Moata McNamara is another artist not resident in their tribal boundaries who closely identifies with her Ngāpuhi heritage. There are visible signs of Ngāpuhitanga throughout McNamara's art making but they are not easily recognised by others. Her process always reverts back to tikanga-a-Ngāpuhi, such as Ngāpuhi karakia (prayer) or Ngāpuhi waiata (song): She says 'when I'm lost I take it back to tikanga and to the reo'. Though her work is described by some as 'strange scribble work with a Japanese appearance, such as her roimata toroa (albatross tears) design, she always has a mindfulness of her connections to Ngāpuhi.



**Figure 14:** Digitally manipulated image from Dreyer, C. T. (1999). *The Passion of Joan of Arc* [Black & White DVD-Video, Silent, 82 minutes] with charcoal drawing on paper. Moata McNamara.



**Figure 15:** Still Shot. *Ecce Wahine*. Moata McNamara.





**Figure 16:** Still Shot. *Ecce Wahine*. Moata McNamara.

The two images above are still shots taken from McNamara's video work *Ecce Wahine* (2012) which examines interstitial sites of wahine (female) writing. Working with the etymological connections between text and textile, it draws connections between the two genealogical threads that this wahine has inherited.

Situated on the foreshore it also makes reference to current political issues regarding the foreshore, seabed and the translation of issues around rangatiratanga and ownership. There are clearly two different thought processes evident in the notions of rangatiratanga and ownership in the new legislation shifting the foreshore and seabed from Crown ownership to the public domain, with public access guaranteed and no right to sell. Furthermore Iwi have to prove exclusive use and occupation since 1840 (New Zealand Herald, 2010). This is in spite of Ngāpuhi lineage tracing back to Rāhiri and through his marriages and uri (descendants), that solidifies the unification of Te Whare Tapu o Ngāpuhi, and descending from Ngātokimatawhaorua and Maataatua oku waka to name a few (Te Runga A Iwi O Ngāpuhi, 2009).



**Figure 17:** Whakairo. *Tane Hiira Pou Karanga – Te Awhio Whio* (The welcoming spirit of sound above *Tane Hiira*, the king of the cedar forest). Tupari Te Whata. 1986. Cowichan Valley, Vancouver Island, British Columbia, Canada.

### **Tupari Te Whata**

Though born and raised in Tautoro, there were things that happened in Te Whata's past that led to Ngāpuhitanga being placed on the shelf, until such a time when he needed to draw on this knowledge and experience. These sentiments are mirrored in Brown (2003), Wihongi (2010) and Meads (1986), where the possibilities of other tribal groups being linked to Ngāpuhi and influencing traditional art forms, especially in the cases of Mangamuka, Otiria and Waitangi Maraes, are seen as ramifications of European settlement.

A part of the creative process in carving is the spiritual journey the artist takes, according to Te Whata 'it is another form of recording other than the oral tradition'. His carvings depict domains from the Māori world, rather than from his birthplace, and his imagery is inspired by spiritual worlds, people, the sea and the forest. The prominent

placement of the two poupou (carved posts), unveiled at the Paihia i-Site in Paihia, Bay of Islands, emphasises the artist's exploration of the effects of the diaspora on Ngāpuhitanga.



**Figure 18:** Whakairo. Tupari Te Whata. 'Carver's gift to the North'. *Northland Advocate* 2011, NZ.



## Chapter 5 Conclusion

This chapter aspires to identify the links between Ngāpuhi artists and Ngāpuhitanga. In previous chapters I have explained how Ngāpuhi have adapted and modified with the changing times which is evident in their utilising of metal tools to assist in the art of tā moko and whakairo. This is also evident in the varying tools, materials and processes used by the artists' involved in this project. Essentially, Ngāpuhi maintained relationships between hapū and their connection to ancestral lands prior to the arrival of Europeans in the North. But events such as the Musket Wars, the Second World War, and the assimilation of Ngāpuhi into the cities were successive stages in their demise. Regardless of European intentions to assimilate Ngāpuhitanga, what went unrecognised was that Ngāpuhi have whakapapa steeped with ancestral links to Puhi-moana-ariki, Kupe, Nukutawhiti and many more, which have been passed down through oral traditions to successive generations. The transmission of knowledge through oral traditions and practices are the fundamental concepts which still underpin Ngāpuhi art such as whakairo and tā moko today.

Drawing attention to what Ngāpuhitanga means for each of the artists interviewed for this research establishes in the first instance whether there is a cultural connection to their art practice. Secondly, what do these conversations actually mean, and how is this knowledge applied in everyday life? Ngāpuhi art informs the way in which a person works, regardless of the type of materials used; rather it is the significance placed upon the narrative and its meaning. It is not the taonga each artist produces which makes it a treasure, rather the korero that goes with it, because as Allen Wihongi insists, it is 'the story it tells' which gives it value.

There is a whakapapa when it comes to Ngāpuhitanga and art, meaning that each person involved in this research not only has tribal links to each other, they also have all been

influenced in some manner by previous artists who have had connections to Ngāpuhi, such as Maori Marsden, Fred Graham, Buck Nin, to name a few. These great men influenced younger artists such as Nathan and Wihongi, who in turn have influenced successive generations. Their experiences and knowledge has inspired artists like Anahera Kingi, Huihana Rewa, Moata McNamara, Natanahira Pona and Theresa Reihana. Remember that the whakatauki (proverb) ‘Ngāpuhi kōwhao rau’ or ‘Ngāpuhi of the hundred holes’ alludes to many escape routes, or diversities and differences, which is the strength of Ngāpuhi.

The art forms of the artists interviewed ranged from painting, whakairo, bone carving, film and performance, poetry, and many other areas. Artists such as Kingi, Reihana, and McNamara based their art around political and environmental issues not only affecting Ngāpuhi, such as the foreshore and seabed and the damage of lands and waterways. Wihongi has utilised art as a vehicle in order to inspire Ngāpuhi people into education, and to support local communities. Te Whata has also influenced the frameworks of education at Te Wananga o Aotearoa and Ngā Puna Waihanga. Pona and Rewa both felt displaced from their Ngāpuhi origins, stating their works were either in remembrance of past tūpuna or for commercial use. Rewa was captured by form, light and shadow in bone carving, which depicted for her the cycle of life.

Throughout this research varying and different perspectives about Ngāpuhi art and Ngāpuhitanga have been expressed. What has been highlighted is what has been lost in terms of cultural knowledge as a result of European colonisation. Despite this cultural knowledge seemingly being lost, each artist interviewed for this research has forged their own pathways through their creative endeavours. As Manos (2010) notes, artists are giving the stories back to Ngāpuhitanga in tangible forms.

Edward Said (1994) argued that the complexities of inter-cultural relationships arose from colonial experiences. A result of colonisation is the fusing of different systems of beliefs, such as culture, philosophy or religion, forging new cultural configurations. Edward Said (ibid) aptly describes this process as ‘overlapping territories and intertwined histories’. Thus like many cultures in a shifting global landscape Ngāpuhi are subject to external influences that impact forcefully on their way of life and the diversity and complexity is reflected in the art work of the artists.

The exploration of Ngāpuhi artists and Ngāpuhitanga has provided a rich and fascinating snapshot of cultural influences on their work. The influences are broad and begin with the migration of the ancestors from Hawaiki to the impact of the contemporary diaspora. While the research certainly opens the field of cultural influences I am not certain it can claim to open “the future direction of Ngāpuhi visual arts”. What it does do that deserves to be stated is bring together a fairly wide range of Ngāpuhi artists, providing a whariki for future face to face encounter between those involved.

It also crosses academic boundaries of Art and Design, Cultural Studies and Māori Development and by doing so advances thinking around the insignificance of such boundaries to kaupapa Māori research. The conclusion also needs to return to the intention stated in the abstract, “to advance thinking of Ngāpuhi art, and its’ links to tribal identity, beliefs and practices.’

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