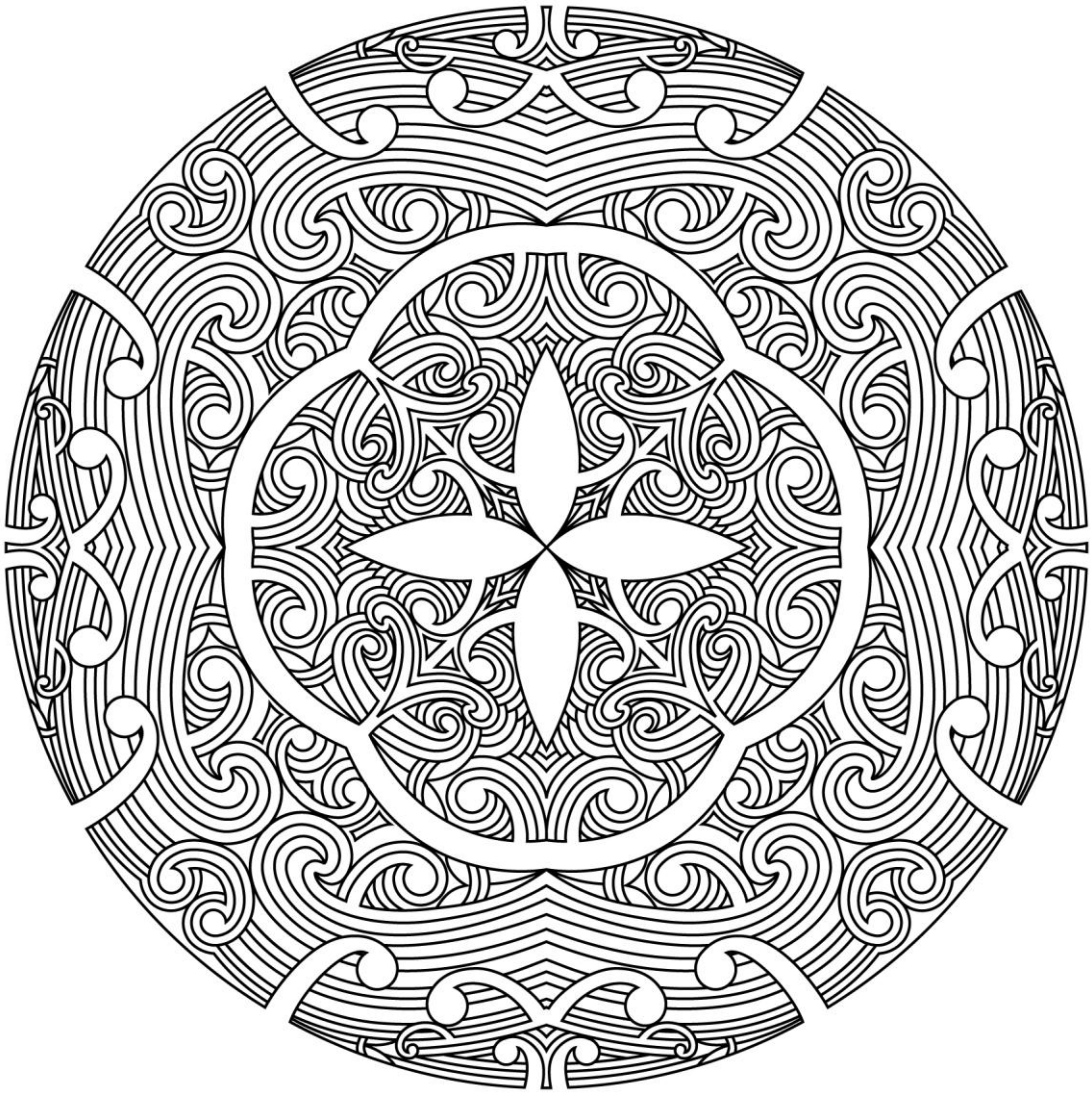
Te Reo Tātaki o te Ringa

Māori narratives and contemporary technology

David Hakaraia



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Abstract

This research explores how Māori tradition and narratives along with modern fabrication techniques can be used to make contemporary Māori design. The aim of this thesis is to document my work history and findings; and to add to the continuation of contemporary Māori design discourse.

Part of the documentation process was interviewing leading Māori artists and craftspeople. This helped me to develop and reflect upon my tikanga (correct procedure), which in turn allowed me to create a body of physical works that fulfilled the compositional component of this thesis.

There are two dominating components to my work: the engagement of narratives which I have a personal interest in and my use of new technologies to generate these works. The narratives used predominantly relate to my Māori cultural heritage and background. These stories have captured my imagination and I have enjoyed expressing them in a way that departs from the customary tribal style and creates a personal contemporary design approach that is distinctly my own.

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Māori Whakatauki (proverb)

"Titiro ki muri kia whakatika ā mua"

"Look to the past to proceed into the future"

Pepeha

Ko Rākaumangamanga te maunga

Ko Taumarere te awa

Ko Ipipiri te Moana

Ko Ngā toki matawhaorua te waka

Ko Ngāpuhi te Iwi

Ko Ngāti Kuta me Patu Keha ngā hapū

Ko Te Rawhiti te Marae

Ko Shelly rāua Wiremu Alamein ōku mātua.

Ko David Hakaraia Tōku ingoa

Chapter 1 - Introduction

This dissertation documents my tikanga and how it is evident in five of my projects. My methodology is through personal reflection that has been informed by discussions with leading Māori designers. This interaction has helped develop my own design tikanga.

Background

There is a quiet but lively debate in the Māori community that contemporary Māori art/design expressions are accorded less merit than those customary art/design practises of pre-contact art forms because they have departed away from their customary foundations.

Damian Skinner in his 'book '*The Carver and the Artist',* discusses the quandary of the debate regarding the carver as the artistic 'hands of the people' (customary narrative carving) versus 'moving away from the marae entirely' and working in the 'space of contemporary art' to allow for 'the process of innovation' to happen unfettered. He later describes this situation, at least in the 1990s, as 'two seemingly incompatible positions'[1].

Hirini Mead refers to the *Te Māori* exhibition in the U.S.A which opened in1984 as a 'groundbreaking success'. This was not because Māori taonga had been taken overseas for a major exhibition, as many Māori pieces had been exhibited extensively in Europe and the U.S.A in the preceding century; rather, he qualifies the success due to the acknowledgement from the former Chairman of the Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council of New Zealand, Hamish Keith, who wrote that 'regardless of legal ownership or physical possession, no one work could be included unless its spiritual owners – the people from whom it came – agreed'.[2] This was one of the first times that the various agencies of Government, 'private collectors, museums, art galleries or even by various tribal groups or individuals' recognised that 'Māori art is an integral part of the culture of the Māori people'.[3]

Mead took stock of the 12 years subsequent to the departure of *Te Māori* from New Zealand (Aotearoa) shores in his paper *Toioho ki Apiti* which he presented at a Māori Arts conference at Massey University in 1996. Mead outlined the progressive hardening of attitudes in the media and Government policy towards Māori aspirations and development. He went on to document that Māori artists in general appeared to ignore Government policy, stating that they 'continued to create, to produce, to hold exhibitions, to direct some of the changes that

[1] *The Carver and the Artist* pg VI
[2] *Māori art on the World Scene* pg 160
[3] *Māori art on the World Scene* pg 160

are occurring, to revive such arts as tā moko (*tattoo*) and raranga (*weaving*)…to participate in workshops on a variety of topics… and so on. It appears to me that our artists were not deterred by changes in Government policies and that such policies seemed to be irrelevant to their work'.[4] Mead offered a framework of eight statements in an attempt to define what is, and what is not, Māori art/design is. This is of course an incredibly difficult notion to define and is ultimately governed by the political and other inclinations of the author's world view/s and experience.

Mead's seventh of the eight statements is of most interest to me as an artist/designer;

Statement VII:

> Changes in Māori art are brought about by Māori artists who employ new technologies, introduce new images, and recombine elements of Māori art in new and exciting ways that are accepted by the Māori public.[5]

Arapata Hakiwai, the current Director of Mātauranga Māori at Te Papa, in his conclusion of '*Māori Society Today'* (1996) reiterates that;

> The arts are healthy and strong and new artists are emerging from all walks of life. Contemporary Māori artists are drawing strength and inspiration from both modern influences and from their own tribal traditions and experience. Māori cultural competitions are held in all tribal areas and the growing number of groups participating emphasises the importance of speechmaking and other forms of the performing arts.[6]

Hakiwai also notes the significance of waiata (song) as a performing art, stating that 'the importance of the Māori language, of holding on to our customs and traditions, of learning our histories are some of the key messages contained in these songs'.[7]

Story telling is an important tool for the intergenerational continuity of knowledge transmission. Narratives are a source of entertainment, but also convey more subtle issues of value to the community such as morals, information and history. These narratives could also include, but not be limited to, proposing ethical issues, societal norms, values, code of conduct and community principles. Māori shared narratives and passed-down tales of their

[4] *Māori Art on the World Scene* pg 230
[5] *Māori Art on the World Scene* pg 231
[6] Arapata Hakiwai, *Māori Society Today* 1996
[7] *Māori Art and Culture*, pg 67

ancestors and history either in the oral arts or by using tools and technology available to them to produce tangible material culture such as Whakairo (carving), Raranga (weaving) and Tā moko (tattoo). Mead discusses the 'code of woodcarving' in *Māori Art in the World Scene* as giving 'meaning to the object'[8].

In the oral arts, it has been recorded by some of the earliest writers on Māori, such as Grey and Colenso, that there was an aesthetic dimension to Māori chant. Grey unhesitatingly classed the chants, which he had in his collection, as poetry. Colenso did the same. Best and other students since, have all sensed the aesthetic quality of Māori chant. That is to say, they realised that the texts did not represent ordinary speech but were more like texts of English poetry.[9]

This significance of what Mead, Hakiwai, Grey and Colenso are saying for me, is that as a Māori designer the use of contemporary technology continues to be an innovative and relevant means of expression that, if used correctly, can create meaningful pieces of work. My work is about respecting the past while creating for the future. Through the use of digital technology the outcomes will add to the pedagogy of Māori design.

1.1 Toi Māori-Māori Art

'Toi' has a dualistic meaning in the context of Māori art and design. It refers to the creative process and also the pinnacle of achievement, thus *Toi Māori* refers to the pursuit of excellence in the creative sectors. As Mead stated, 'Māori art/design conveys certain ideas about the fundamental assumptions that underpinned Māori society, the real nature of Māori people and the perceived place of Māori in the natural universe'.[10] This presents the role of whakairo 'as objects that had an important role to play in regulatory processes within Māori society' [11] and also as a mnemonic aid for the memorisation of narrative as 'the carvings themselves provided a historical record'.[12]

Māori oral and visual narratives, though stemming from the past, have become a defining part of preliterate indigenous communities' means to carry cultural history and principles into the future. They connect us with and engage defining concepts such as Whakapapa (genealogical history) and provide a strong foundation for interpreting our place in the world.

[8] *Māori Art on the World Scene* 97 pg 126.)[8](The National Museum of New Zealand, *Taonga Māori- treasures of the New ZealandMāori people,* Australian Museum, 2000.)
[9] *Māori Art on the World Scene* 97
[10] *Māori Art and Design* pg 11
[11] *Māori Art and Design* pg 16
[12] *Māori Art and Design* pg 16

In recent times with the radical changes Māori have experienced in the last two decades since the Waitangi Sesqui-Centennial celebrations of 1990. As, Rangi Kipa said in his interview;

> Many contemporary Māori artists and designers have broken with the historically culturally loaded imperatives of communal narration and have begun to emphasise their own narratives as they journey to seek and define who they are in a world that is not bounded by, or oriented from, a Māori epistemological world view.[13]

This departure away from customary Māori art production has been facilitated either by new narratives that illustrate our current era, and/or the introduction of new processes or media. The availability and inclusion of new media in Māori art/design production is always expanding; they include (but are not limited to) composite plastics, glass and digital media processes. (Figure 1)

Figure 1

These groundbreaking Māori artists are part of a wider movement that combines Māori tradition and contemporary cultural experience by utilising a combination of traditional and modern technologies and techniques. However, in the field of 'design' there is a paucity of Māori designed objects, which are not solely art pieces, but are also functional. Carin Wilson agrees with this and says, 'but I find it a challenge'... 'We are moved to do things that not many other cultures are moved to do'.[14]

Functional objects are typically the focus of the design disciplines. This presents a unique opportunity to integrate Māori narratives in a way that makes use of the modern technologies and processes currently available to designers.

[13] Interview with Rangi Kipa (Appendix 3) 18/07/2010
[14] Interview with Carin Wilson (Appendix 2) 15/07/2010

I have had the opportunity to produce contemporary expressions of collective and personal narratives using contemporary manufacturing techniques such as the laser cutter, CNC (Computer Numeric Control) technology and 3D Printing. I have done this by developing tikanga – a personal design philosophy and protocol – that respects my Māori heritage and which is continuously being expanded and refined. These protocols will seek to express my culture, but at the same time individualise my own work. My tikanga is constantly developing and evolving; the more I learn about my culture, the more I am able to communicate this in my designs. Also, having access to practitioners of traditional and contemporary Māori design, allows me to gain guidance and insight that will help in the progression of my design philosophy.

In terms of my culture, I consider myself a product of the two predominant ethnicities in Aotearoa. My father is Māori and my mother is Pākehā (New Zealander of European descent). I understand the tensions of living in both worlds. Even as an adult, I still find that I am trying to understand how I fit into the scheme of things, negotiating the external and internal politics and expectations and pursuing how I might respect the past and create for the future utilising my own set of ideas and skills.

As I have learned more about contemporary design tools, I have become more aware of how these tools can engage Māori principles and contribute to the continuity of Māori cultural expression. One of the more important personal objectives of my master's degree is for my completed designs to inspire more Māori to become part of the field of design that shapes our physical, cultural and intellectual landscape.

My research explores how modern fabrication techniques and Māori narratives can combine to create contemporary Māori design. This will take Māori creativity in a new direction whilst drawing on a rich legacy of history and cultural development. The expansion of traditional Māori conceptual thinking into the field of modern design will expose new avenues of learning and understanding. The experimentation with digital technologies such as the laser cutter, CNC machines and 3D printers presents an opportunity for Māori knowledge to be communicated and shared using the modern-day mediums of design and computer software. These digital technologies have become tools of expression that can offer a level of integrity comparable to our arts and crafts of the past.

Most people identify Māori design origins or influences through recognition of canons of form, motifs and/or iconography incorporated within the piece. However, the meanings behind the piece are often lost or are not obvious due to the symbolism of the respective designs and

their treatment. This customary nature of Māori knowledge and motif are not always understood by the wider audience, this is because they lack either the knowledge or discourse needed to fully appreciate the works.

It is proposed that this research explores Māori narrative expression that will add to Māori mātauranga (knowledge). The amalgamation of traditional Māori knowledge with modern technological capability could enhance Māori cultural expression creating wider applications in the field of contemporary Māori design.

Chapter 2 - Development of Tikanga

This chapter explores the different aspects of my research that informed my design tikanga. These include whakapapa, traditional tikanga, the connection between the physical and metaphysical, Māori and esoteric knowledge and mnemonics which are prevalent in many Māori artists/designers creative works and practises. It was vital to have an understanding of all of these aspects so that I could adapt traditional practices to the technology of today and my craft. This way my work could better connect to my whakapapa (which includes ancestors and tribal lands) while expressing myself and my design sensibility.

2.1 Whakapapa-the fundamental Māori concept

The literal meaning of whakapapa is: *to lie one generation upon another*. These layers include the past, present and our future. Whakapapa not only includes our tūpuna (ancestors) and whānau (family) but also mythological, spiritual and our personal narratives that constitutes the diverse fabric of humans' interpretation of their world.[15] Māori design and whakapapa are intrinsic to one another; they are essentially the documentation of the natural world and human experience through Māori eyes. In her book *Māori Art and Design*, Paama-Pengelly describes explains whakapapa in the following way;

> For Māori, all elements of the universe are inextricably connected: whakapapa sets up a series of relationships between all things in the universe. The conjoined primeval parents, Ranginui (sky father) and Papatūānuku (earth mother), provided the template through descent relationships with other atua or gods, and this is expressed through regulatory mechanisms of tapu and noa.[16]

Paama-Pengelly goes on to explain that;

> Tapu is inherited from the atua and described as an 'awareness of the divine' or 'the application of caution'; it results in restrictions being placed on certain objects, localities, or particular persons. Noa, on the other hand, makes those things that are restricted available or accessible once again for common use or contact, but can also simply refer to mundane objects or areas...the adherence to the principles of tapu and noa are governed by a series of tikanga, conventions or rules.[17]

[15] Barlow, *Tikanga Whakaaro: Key Concepts in Māori Culture*
[16] Paama-Pengelly, Māori Art and Design, pg 16
[17] Paama-Pengelly, Māori Art and Design, pg 16

Bradford Haami offers a complimentary definition; 'Whakapapa acts as a cognitive template for the ordering and understanding of the visible and invisible worlds, as a paradigm of reality'.[18] Māori understanding states that everything has a *Whakapapa*; 'birds, fish, animals, trees, and every other living thing'.[19] It is accepted that inanimate objects are also recognised as having a mauri (*life-force*) and therefore are part of the relevant genealogical scheme. Customarily, Māori artists and designers usually reflect their respective tribal affiliations, knowledge and values specific to those affiliations.

I am a product of bi-ethnic influences; as I stated earlier my whakapapa is of Māori and European heritage with ancestral and environmental connections to the wider Pacific.
My cognitive processes that shape the way I see and interpret the world are a testament to the power of tradition that is alive in my life. I propose that all communities shape their next generation by the way they fashion their interpretation of their existence; in my case, my life is a Māori, European and Pacific tapestry. A self assessment of who I am and the way I design shows that my Māori heritage is the dominant cultural imperative.

My tribal links are to Ngāpuhi, situated in the northern part of Aotearoa and my hapū (sub-tribe) are Ngāti kuta and Patu keha originating from Te Rawhiti in the Bay of Islands. I have a rich heritage that extends back through the ages to Matahourua, the original waka used by Kupe to travel from the homelands in the eastern Pacific to Aotearoa, and eventually, on Kupe's return to Hawaiki. The waka was adzed many years after and used by Nukutawhiti, Kupe's grandson, to populate what is now commonly known as Northland.[20] The final works for my master's study are a product of my negotiation between my tribal narratives, whakapapa, my own personal korero and finally the interview process.

2.2 Tikanga – process – *in practise*

Traditional Tikanga were a set of lores, customs and traditions that governed Māori activity. These processes structured the management of daily life that maintained compliance with Māori ethics, values and norms 'necessary to keep order in Society' [21].

The definition of 'tika' is things that are 'true or correct'.[22] A more fitting description would be 'those things that are considered appropriate, or in line with and support the maintenance of the shared principles of that community'[23]

[18] Haami, Bradford, *Pūtea Whakairo: Māori And The Written Word*
[19] Barlow, Cleve, *Tikanga Whakaaro: Key Concepts in Māori Culture*
[20] Nga Waka o Nehera, pgs 94-104
[21] Meads, Moko, Hirini. *Tikanga Māori- living by Māori values*
[22] http://www.Māoridictionary.co.nz.

These protocols have been continued for generations, each iwi (*tribe*) have tikanga that align with their differing genealogical and historical identity/realities. Each iwi, hapū (*sub-tribe*) and whānau (families) has evolved systems that encompass their respective realities. It must be realised that the whānau being the smallest social and economic unit, have different physical imperatives that may need to be augmented and adapted when related whānau units unify to operate politically and economically as a hapū.

Mead in a paper published in 1990 makes the distinction between the arts of specific iwi:

> Often a tribe has a distinctive style of art and a reputation to uphold and that of the hapū. In most cases this is the art – producing and art – owning group. I focus upon hapū art/design, because for us identification with this art is the strongest. This does not only relate to with woodcarving but with traditional dances and music, with cloak making, basketry and so on. At this level tribal art is very close to the individual members of the hapū and it forms an essential part of one's sense of being human and cultured.[24]

With the changing realities of the cultural, societal and vocational dimensions of the Māori artist, the variations of tikanga that have evolved are also evident in the way Māori artists now engage with their own work. My research has reinforced the teachings of my upbringing; that there is a need for me to be respectful to aspects of culture and its traditions when expressing my ideas back to my constituent community. This is because I have come to realise that the relationship is a symbiotic one. The genus of designs and artistic canons of form, which I draw from, comes from these Māori communities and logically I have a responsibility to maintain the integrity of the *collectively owned* design language.

This is particularly important when designing products that have a Māori ideological element. My desire is not to recreate something that has already been done, but to navigate customary designs and using them as a springboard to develop my own designs, which also, in turn, informs a new conceptual tikanga framework.

Regardless of whether an artist or designer uses traditional or contemporary techniques in their work, their tikanga would be a major component of their creative process. While there

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[23] Paama-Pengelly, *Māori Art and Design*
[24] Mead, *Art and Identity in Oceania, pg 1.*

are culturally/community based tikanga, they may not be the only processes or principles for engagement.

I argue that everyone's life, and consequently their *practice* of living and daily actions, is filtered through their political, economic, social position and spiritual beliefs of their times. Today I suspect our Tūpuna (ancestors) would struggle to comprehend our present practices. Their beliefs associated with their arts practise was mediated by their spiritual/cultural cognition. Paama-Pengelly explains that 'art objects had an important part to play in these regulatory processes within Māori society. Their function was overseen by atua, and the adornment of art objects ensured the favour of atua,'[25] It is difficult to explain the conceptual understanding of customary Māori *atua,* but for the purposes of this thesis, it may be best to describe the concept of *atua* as the personification of specific knowledge systems of the Māori world. These respective knowledge systems had physical and ideological parameters that governed their use and application in the customary Māori world.

A significant part of the promotion of a student in the applied arts relates to becoming an expert in fields such as carving and weaving and gaining a wider understanding and application of protocols that comply with art forms of each respective atua. Rituals, which initiated students into particular disciplines, were essential in making possible more effective education and knowledge. Not only did students learn about the physical applications of Māori design, but they also became conversant with the atua – and to the ideological parameters linked to their particular area of expertise.

A customary Tohunga Whakairo (expert carver) engages their respective *tikanga,* their code of practise, throughout the whole process of application. These tikanga governed the tapu (sacred*)* and noa (or spiritually defiling) nature of his work and in turn protected his personal wellbeing. He chose his timber, reciting the appropriate Karakia (prayer) to acknowledge the realm of that *atua* and their role in extinguishing the mauri of a living tree. The role of tikanga was well understood at 'mythological, ancestral and practical levels'.[26] An example of this, was when a carver removed wood shavings from his work, he would not blow or use his breath,[27] this was made obvious when referring to mythological narratives that explained the tapu nature of a person's hā *(*breath*),* Hā is encoded in the creation narrative of the first woman Hine-Titama by blowing into her nostrils and thus bringing about life. These observances were mainly preoccupied with the recognition of the concept of tapu and noa, a

[25] Paama-Pengelly, *Māori Art and Design* pg 16
[26] Whakairo, *Māori Tribal Art*, pg 52
[27] Meads, *Tikanga Māori- Living By Māori Values*

conceptual idea of maintaining a ‘balance in all things’, a structure of culturally oriented ethical behaviour and the recognition that all things are inter-connected.

Thus, tohunga whakairo were tapu throughout their acceptance of an artistic commission and consequently were fed by attendants through the use of feeding funnels with food and water in order to preserve their own tapu as food was considered noa. The community monitored and governed any infringements, with any transgressions being considered as compromising the balance and safety of the whole community and the consequences were usually severe.

I discovered in a contemporary sense, through my interviews with present-day art and design practitioners, that it was apparent that while some of their tikanga were customary based, they had modified and even developed new tikanga in response to their circumstances. As Roi Toia and Todd Cooper have stated, ‘We might evolve and our interpretations might change, however the essence that make us Māori stands fast through spiritual, oral, performing and visual arts’.[28]

2.3 The Metaphysical Dimension

An essential part of customary Māori design was the metaphysical dimension. The Māori epistemological framework considered the physical and the spiritual realms as interconnected. Rangimarie Pere has stated, ‘Just as there were physical requirements in order to effectively teach and learn. So too were there spiritual implications’.[29] The way that customary students would learn was diverse, and included tikanga and karakia (*prayer*).

Particular Māori cultural facets are fundamentally underpinned by the strong spiritual relationship to the land, seas and all that occupy them.[30] Traditionally Māori carvings and designs referenced that bond. Even now, in the modern westernised culture of New Zealand, we have a stronger spiritual connection to land than most other cultures. The Māori sense of the sacred challenges that secular culture of Pākehā. ‘Māori ways reminds us that progress is not solely a material matter’**.**[31] This metaphysical quality is something that is hard to quantify. It is something that is usually indiscernible to outsiders, but it is there to those who are aware of it.

Personal experience has shown me to trust in my own instincts when applying these metaphysical constructs to my work. It’s not as simple as choosing the right tools and

[28] Toia & Couper, *Kāhui Whetū- Contemporary Māori Art*
[29] Pere, *Ako: Concepts And Learning In The Māori Tradition*
[30] Meads, Te toi Whakairo
[31] Renwick, *Creating a National Spirit*

materials without an idea to which they can be applied. You have to understand how they can be used as a means of expressing your values whether they are physical or metaphysical. Otherwise you risk your work becoming soulless and meaningless.
This is an issue that transcends culture; John Ruskin's prose about the rich designs of the stones of Rouen cathedral illustrates our shared ideas on this matter: 'it is all as dead as leaves in December; there is not one tender touch, not one warm stroke on the whole façade'.[32] He considered that the heart of the sculptor must be in the work, or it's not worth being called good if there are no traces of the artist to be seen in the work. It is not the object that is important, but the sincerity that the sculptor has put into it.

Carin Wilson talks about his own creative process saying, 'we can't separate ourselves from the notion that we are a part of what we are working with' and he suggests that 'there is some sort of cellular connection going on, creating a kind of metaphysical resonance'.[33] He continues that with 'as a Māori creative, what we are looking for is that sympathetic interaction of one material with another, connecting at a molecular level rather than purely at a material level. So it creates certain demands on your creative capabilities because you're trying to do something that is quite deep in your psyche'.[34]

2.4 Mātauranga Māori

Mātauranga Māori is the formal study of Māori knowledge systems.[35] Today mātauranga is being revitalized. Some of these initiatives encompass education, broadcasting, publishing and community-based projects.[36]

Mead stated: 'Mātauranga Māori is a holistic body of knowledge that is taught in many institutions in Aotearoa'.[37] This includes aspects of philosophy, astronomy, language and design. My particular area of interest and enquiry is the use of these bodies of mātauranga and traditional narratives in contemporary Māori design.

In normal circumstances esoteric mātauranga is passed on to chosen students through a structured process called wānanga (*place of learning*), thus these esoteric knowledge systems can be family, or tribally-bounded, knowledge.[38] Due to continual changes in technology and the influence of the many pervading external social and cultural influences

[32] Ruskin, *The Seven Lamps Of Architecture*
[33] Interview with Wilson Carin (Appendix 2) 15/07/2010
[34] Interview with Wilson Carin (Appendix 2) 15/07/2010
[35] Meads, *Tikanga Māori- living by Māori values*
[36] Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies*
[37] Meads, Te toi Whakairo
[38] Haami, *Pūtea Whakairo*

into the Māori sphere, the availability and dissemination of Māori knowledge is more readily accessed by Māori and Non-Māori alike.

2.5 Māori Esoteric and its associated political issues.

Arthur Versluis describes esoteric knowledge as 'knowledge reserved for a few and implies inner or spiritual knowledge held by a limited circle'.[39] In traditional Māori society it was the tohunga (*a Māori expert or practitioner of any skill or art*) who maintained this knowledge handing it down to specifically chosen recipients. For the occidental ethnographer, Māori esoteric knowledge was something which remained concealed from external inquiry.

However, the social upheaval of Māori society caused by the colonial process also affected the quality of maintenance of Māori educational continuity.[40] In my interview with him, Lyonel Grant, a master carver, acknowledges this and goes on to discuss sharing this knowledge collectively with his contemporaries, noting that this would have been present in one person in the days of old.[41] Since the early 1980's there has been a revitalization of the te reo Māori (*language*), and the arts. This has contributed to the gradual restoration of these bodies of mātauranga Māori. Māori creative's are continuing to use this expanding body of knowledge to express their concerns, ideas and aspirations.

I have started to engage esoteric knowledge with digital technology which requires me to understand the software being utilised, as well as the manufacturing tools that are essential in fabricating my designs. Although more people are using these techniques, it still requires a reasonable amount of knowledge to produce objects that are transferred from the digital/virtual world into the physical. It could be argued that this design software knowledge could be classed as knowledge of an 'esoteric nature'; that by its own definition, is knowledge that is understood by only a few. I argue that I am following in the same vein as those Māori throughout the contact and colonial period, who engaged with new media and technologies in their daily lives.

In my process of creating specifically Māori works, I have, in a sense, indigenised the process by using all available tools and technology from another cultural sphere and applying it to a purpose that could be construed as trans-cultural.[42] It was important for me to develop an understanding of these two knowledge bases which were essential in developing and manufacturing my final designs.

[39] Gallagher & Ashcraft,
[40] Robinson, *The Revival Ancient Knowledge Modern Era*
[41] Lyonel Grant (Appendix 4)
[42] Jahnke, *He Tataitanga Ahua Toi* (pg 3)

2.6 Mnemonics

As noted in Section 1.1.1, traditionally, Māori have relied heavily on mnemonic devices which act as a tool for memory and or learning aids. Some of these mnemonic devices are visual like Raranga, Whakairo and Tā Moko,[43] an excellent example is *rakau whakapapa* which are whakapapa sticks with wooden nodules along their length aligned in a row, as a tangible aid for the recitation of genealogies. (Figure 2 L/H side)

Audible mnemonics like *waiata* (*song*), *whakatauki* (*proverbs*), are important compositions and words from revered ancestors. These 'Korero tuku iho' (*words handed down*),[44] were sacred, and had great power and validity.

Kinaesthetic mnemonics are action songs which use movement to create a narrative. An example of this is the wiri which is a quick side to side shaking of the hands. To some, wiri represents the heat waves that shimmer on a hot day, while to others it represents the sparkling of the waters as the sun dances across the waves, depending on the context in which it is used.

Customarily, Māori rely on linguistics for the transmission and retainment of knowledge and historical accounts, but the mnemonic use of objects (personal or communal) adorned with symbolic patterned forms were used to record/express narratives in abstracted form. They functioned as mnemonic devises to trigger memory or to express significant figures or events.[45] These objects not only described the makeup of the environment but formed a physical expression of Māori beliefs through narrative. Within this mnemonic system of communication, each individual iwi (tribe) has its own set of styles and iconography, which through symbolisation; communicate where they are from and how they come to be in the present. Using symbol combinations and arrangement, the basic abstraction of ideas are there ready for interpretation and embellishment so that an observer can develop meaning from a work.

Writing in a western tradition Roland Barthes states, 'it is language that speaks not the author'.[46] The author is always considered absent. The audience may only see the product and may not have the tools required to have complete insight into everything the designer wanted to express. It is the application of the audience's knowledge that creates their understanding. Māori carving is a prime example, because it carries cultural patterns that

[43] Haami, *Pūtea Whakairo*
[44] Haami, *Pūtea Whakairo*
[45] Paama-Pengelly, *Māori Art and Design*
[46] Barthes, *Image Music Text*

may be difficult to decipher. People viewing a piece may have differing interpretations and understanding of the piece's narrative depending on their knowledge of Māori iconography and motifs which act as mnemonic triggers.

Māori designs have been developed from the flora and fauna of Aotearoa creating traditions and a practise of storytelling that is connected to a culturally distinctive set of forms (Figure 2) and a visual narrative structure. For some time this has been arguably expressed in limited media given the wealth of communicative technologies that now exist within contemporary society.

My research creates a narrative that expresses my stories, but without the use of the typical iconography associated with Māori design. My focus was to create a personal design language that represents and stylistically personalises my whakapapa and narratives though the exploration of media, process and digital technology.

My works reference traditional techniques and narratives, while triggering memories so that the narratives being told may be evoked by the materials I've used, or the way I have arranged the piece. In this way the observer can navigate their journey.

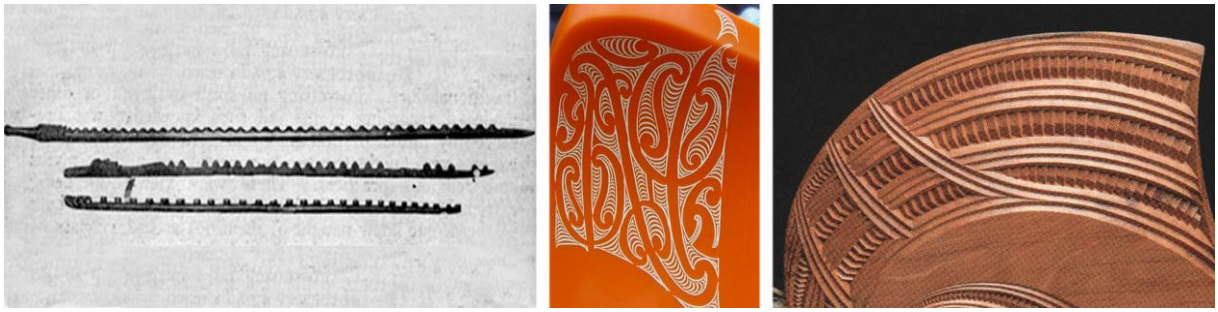

Figure 2

Chapter 3 –Modern Technologies

Māori have a long history of innovation, one determined by cultural need and based on Aotearoa's distinctive culture and environment. This chapter looks at the evolution of technology employed by Māori and the influences behind this evolution. It also describes the various contemporary technologies I have employed in the creation of my pieces. These technologies are clinical and precise in their nature but can still be used to craft objects that are intricate not just in appearance but in meaning also.

3.1 Technology

"Every epoch, in fact, not only dreams the one to follow, but in dreaming, precipitates its awakening."[47]

Māori have a history of innovation, technological endeavour and insight which they have encountered and developed to benefit them, thereby ensuring a brighter future for successive generations. Māori cultural aesthetic has evolved over the last 300 years, changes in materials, tooling and processes have allowed Māori to create innovative pieces whilst passing on the cultural history from our tūpuna (ancestors).[48]

Māori have always shown an incredible ability in developing and understanding technologies. They used their environment to their advantage by utilising the resources such as pounamu (green stone), rakau (wood), harakeke (flax) and other materials. They devised original ways to make those primitive tools work for them, immediately seizing the advantages this new technology provided. [49] This is also apparent in the mid-1700s when Māori acquired a variety of metal tools. Carin Wilson discusses the interaction between Māori and early European settlers and the fascination that Māori had with the nail. This, he stated, is where Māori interest in technology began, as far as he could tell.[50] Lyonel Grant believes the best carvers were in that cross-over period. He recalls that first metal tooled carvers were good with stone tools but they could see the advantages of using metal through the cuts that they were creating. This was a more expedient way of getting to where they wanted to go. It was like taking a weight off their back allowing them to fly. Lyonel continues to say that maybe the type of people who were good with metal chisels and wood, could also be the best suited to

[47] Walter, *The Arcade Project* pg 13
[48] Barrow, *The Life and work of the Māori carver*
[49] Buck, *The Coming Of The Māori*
[50] Interview with Wilson, Carin (Appendix 2) 15/07/2010

crossing over and using digital technology.[51] This is evident in some of the work Lyonel has created in the wharenui (meeting house) Ngakau Mahaki at Auckland University of Technology.

Drawing from studies by Paama-Pengelly and Barrow,[52] Table 1 indicates the historical changes to Māori design, identifying the tools and the influences that have shifted developing traditions through time. I place my own design work within this scheme, because I also respond to the new technologies of my time, using them to push the boundaries of my craft drawing from traditions of the past.

Table 1 – Historical changes in Māori design

Different time era's of Māori culture	Dates	Tools used	Māori styled carving	Influences
Moa hunter period	900's - 1300's	Stone tools	Very few carvings closer to the style of tropical Polynesia	Early Polynesian settler adapting to new surroundings but still having similar design as the other related Polynesian cultures
Classic Māori	1300's - 1760's	Stone tools like pounamu used for carving. Suitable karakia and formal procedures (tikanga) over tools are said	Surface adornment. Sculptural forms	Full utilization of local materials such as wood and pounamu tools, bone, and stone, the arguably pinnacle of Māori design
European contact	1760's - 1860's	Pounamu replaced by European metals such as iron, copper. Karakia and formal procedure (tikanga) decline. Use of European tools and adzes	Changes in styles more refined designs due to the new iron and steel tools. Intricate surface decoration, cut deep with less importance on sculptural form	Decline of tradition ideals influenced by European colonization. European religion replaces Māori religion
Māori culture slow decline in arts and language	1860's - 1970's	Completely equipped European joinery tools set employed	Further intricate designs but also a decline in the discipline of Māori arts, a lot of copying and not much original works	Desertion of many artistic Māori forms, traditional Māori values decline
Māori culture renaissance Current	1970's - Current	European tools used, with the emergence in the lost arts and processes of tikanga,	Creating elaborate works which include film photography, new materials and processes	Rediscovering of artistic forms, artists and designers creating own forms, emergence of new technologies and processes
2009 – 2011	My design work	Use of digital technologies Which includes 3D software and digital manufacturing machines	Reinterpreting Māori narratives personal and shared, creating functional objects that are a reflection of myself and culture	Influenced by my Māori contemporaries and the skills that I have acquired over time. Also the need to express my own take on Māori narratives

[51] Grant, Lyonel (Appendix 4) 20/07/2010
[52] Paama-Pengelly, *Māori Art and Design* & Barrow, T. *The Life and work of the Māori carver*

3.2 Digital Technology

Digital fabrication is an emerging technology with significant implications for both society and schools. It involves the use of a digital design to create a physical object. Tools such as 3D printers, CNC cutters and laser cutters can be used for desktop manufacturing.

Through the assistance of digital technologies it is now achievable to create all forms conceivable, making the design process easier for designers to streamline the process from idea to manufacture. Designers are using digital technologies to accomplish creative visualisations. Any limitations that these technologies have are embraced and turned into design qualities. Their growing accessibility allows designers and customers to apply a personalised approach to their designs.

Computer digital technologies have been used since the 1970's.[53] It is now achievable to not only to utilise digital technology to create prototypes, but to also use it as a means of production.

These exciting technologies allow Māori creative's such as myself, to explore and design original ways to express our culture. For me this just reiterates what the Māori academics have said in chapter 1 about Māori using innovative methods and technology to communicate their narratives and ideas.

3.3 Digital craftsmanship

Craft is defined as the rational method involved in producing an object. It denotes the implication of principle knowledge over matter and the application of a skill that is involved in its production.[54]

Traditional craft was, and still is skilled work and involves the function of a technique and application of a human intellect that usually requires the application of the human hand. We would not attribute a high level of craftsmanship to a machine which produced thousands of Hei Tiki in an hour; this type of mass production usually falls into the categories of industrial design and mechanical technology. Craft is not a word that is usually associated with digital technologies but this need not be the case. The human mind still plays a part in the development of a product, regardless of the tools that are used. In terms of digital

[53] Paul, *Digital Art*
[54] Pye, *The Nature And Art Of Workmanship*

technology, computer software is the tool used, however the designer must still possess technique and skill to be able to create a digital representation of their idea.

With the advancement of digital technology we have more control over the machines than people used to. With the CNC machine you not only control the way the form is made, but also the tooling pattern created on the surface of the form via programming different tooling paths (refer section 3.6). Because of this, people can engage with the piece to a greater degree.[55]

For example, a traditional carver will leave the surface treated traces of his technique on the design. This provides the audience with an idea of the effort used. In some places where more weight was needed to take away more wood and in other places a lighter hand would have been used where the piece required delicacy. This enables the audience to engage with the marks left behind by the carver. With digital technology I can retain the carver's visible touch through having control over tooling paths and pressure. Working within this digital realm allows us to become craftspeople of digital technology. Design and creation in this virtual world permits me to look at form and materiality. It also allows me to apply real world stress and forces to the pieces so that we better understand them.

3.4 3D Printer

The technology for printing physical 3D objects from digital data was first developed by Charles Hull in 1984.[56] 3D printing is used in commercial settings to streamline the design process. Prototype designs that once had to be made by hand can now be 'printed' in a matter of hours, at a portion of the cost of older methods. The 3D printer is similar to a normal printer that prints on paper, but it prints over the same area many times building up layers until a 3D object is formed. This is done through 3D software where you create an object in the virtual world of the computer.

When people look at well-crafted objects they understand the amount of work that has gone into creating those pieces. No two designs are the same. However, with the arrival of the industrial revolution we lost that feeling of personalization and originality. Mass produced designs were generated by these machines at a rate that devalued a lot of products. Though the 3D printer can still be considered a mechanical tool that can be used for mass production, I believe there is an opportunity to personalize each object being made. When

[55] Miller, *Digital Technologies And The Potential For CNC Texturing Of The Built Environment,* Pg 1

[56] Hilton, Peter. D

using 3D software and 3D printers, we are more like creators than designers. Māori try to connect everything that they make to the natural world, to Whakapapa. With the 3D printer there is a sense of growing objects that is reminiscent of nature which in turn generates complex forms that cannot be made in any other way. (Figure 3)

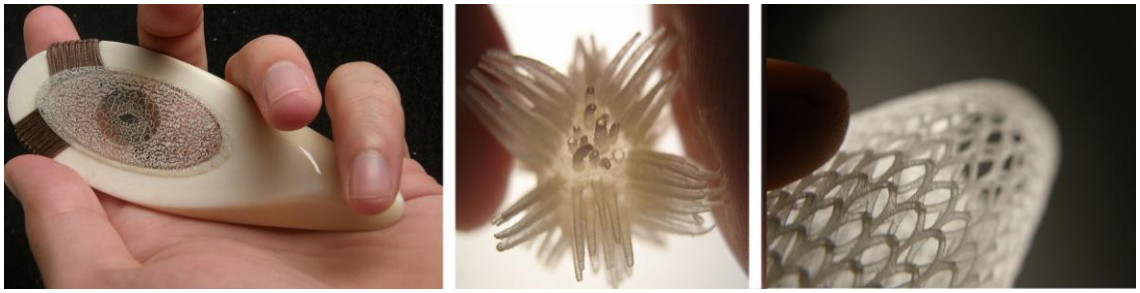

Figure 3

3.5 Laser cutter

Laser cutting is a technology that employs a laser to cut materials with a precision not easily replicated by the human hand (Figure 4). It was first developed in 1965. The first production laser cutting machine was used to drill holes in diamond dies.[57] Typically the laser cutter is used in the production line for industrial manufacturing applications and cutting profiles.

Laser cutting works by directing the output of a high power laser, by computer, at the material to be cut. The material then melts, burns, and vaporizes, leaving an edge with a high quality surface finish. This technology can also be used to etch graphics onto materials such as bone, which I have experimented with. (Figure 4 R/H side) Bone, of course, was used by many traditional Māori artists. [58]

Figure 4

[57] Bromberg, *The Laser In America*
[58] Bromberg, *The Laser In America*

3.6 CNC (Computerized Numerical Control) Router

During the 1960s-70's CNC routers were created which use automated machine tools, such as drills and lathes, and operating from instructions determined in a computer software program. CNC router machines are used in manufacturing tasks such as milling, turning, punching and drilling to form 3D shapes (Figure 5). CNC's drastic advancement of machine tool control deeply transformed the culture of manufacturing[59]

Figure 5

Chapter 4 - Ngā Mahi Toi - My designs.

4.1 Final pieces

My master's research was completed by composition, or in "research by design". Creating these physical works allowed me to generate objects that demonstrate my findings. I have developed a series of objects through which I seek to define what I consider to be contemporary Māori design. The objects designed express my cultural and personal narratives. I have chosen to communicate these ideas through the use of digital technology. From my pieces I am able to draw conclusions which help in the development of my tikanga. I can collect information, which will then form the basis for the creation of a new theory. This runs counter to traditional models of research, where the researcher chooses a theoretical framework, and only then applies this model to the studied phenomenon.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, Māori artists and designers are making use of innovative ways to express their tribal and personal narratives. I want to be able to add to this discourse by creating objects that seek to tell my stories through digital technology. Through this process I am able to develop my personal tikanga. As I learn more about the mythological, ancestral and practical constructs that encompass Māori design my tikanga will constantly evolve.

[59] web ref http:// en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Numerical_control

All my designs were created simultaneously. During the experimental stages of this research I looked at different fabrication techniques, modes of representation and scales which resulted in an overlapping aesthetic that visually linked the works together. Some designs not included in the text of this thesis stemmed from the experimental stage of my research and have been included in a wider body of work to exhibit. This body of work includes furniture, fashion and art. These designs were correlated together to form an exhibition and subsequent booklet called 'Te Toi Ora - The Art of Living'.[60] Because these works are functional it requires more than visual capability. The viewer is invited to interact with the works. By this action the audience critically engages with the narrative as they navigate their way around the design.

[60] Te Toi Ora- The art of living (Appendix 6)

4.2 Ranginui and Papatūānuku

Figure 6

Figure 7

4.2.1 Introduction

This work is about communicating a narrative through materials and the compositional arrangement of them. This creates a story using mnemonic devices allowing the viewer to navigate their way around the work. This is comparable to a Māori artist who uses motif as a visual aid in telling their stories. With most narration designs the viewer needs to have an understanding of the story or be able to interpret the visual cues to fully understand the piece. More often than not, it is a person's knowledge of the design language which will assist them in navigating the work.

The mythological origins of Māori society begin with the creation myth of Ranginui (sky father) and Papatūānuku (earth mother) and how Tāne Mahuta (god of the forest) used his mighty strength to separate them. This narrative is part of every Māori whakapapa. These are the ancestors from whom every iwi and whānau is descended.

The myth describes how in the beginning Papatūānuku and Ranginui were locked in an embrace of love where there was only darkness. Their children trapped within their embrace quickly tired of this situation and decided to separate their parents. The strongest of them was Tāne Mahuta. He was the only one that could do this and as strong as a tree, he placed his hands against his mother the earth Papatūānuku, his feet against his father the sky

Ranginui, and pushing hard separated his parents. For the first time the children saw the light of day.

During my youth I always enjoyed listening to Māori myths and legends and the various ways they were told. This was motivation for me to use my skill set to add to these iterations. When thinking of a product that could express the narrative of Ranginui and Papatūānuku, a table first came to mind. I have strong memories of sitting around a table with whānau, swapping stories, laughing, playing, eating and enjoying each other's company. These are the things for me that characterise the life of a whānau. The table is a product that enables people to be brought together. I set out to emulate traditional Māori craftspeople who infuse their work with their whakapapa, hopes and inspiration. For me, this was achieved by instilling the essence of whānau and the myth of Ranginui and Papatūānuku into this design.

I decided that the design of the table had to be solid because this narrative is one of creation. This is the basis on which everything was formed. It's a powerful narrative that all Māori whakapapa are connected to. Imbedding this into the piece was important to me. The design took this narrative and divided it into its three main elemental components of the myth being Ranginui, Papatūānuku and Tāne Mahuta.

To represent Tāne Mahuta the main body of the table is steam-bent native New Zealand timber called tānekaha (celery pine). In the past tānekaha made good taiaha (spear) and was an excellent source of material for the hulls of boats as it is a straight-grained dense timber which possesses great strength, elasticity and durability. These qualities make tānekaha the ideal material to represent Tāne Mahuta the only child strong enough to separate his parents, the earth and the sky. The form of Tāne Mahuta within the table was designed to convey the force exerted when he thrust his parents apart. The bowed shape of the tānekaha alludes to the physical strain on Tāne Mahuta when straddling Papatūānuku, placing his hands in the earth thereby taking root, and placing his feet against the sky to separate the two elements. (Figure 6)

Papatūānuku is represented by the footings of the table which are made of cast hydro-stone, a plaster cement composite. This is shaped from three dimensional Cad files to fit the wooden frame. The hydro-stone footings envelope the hands of Tāne Mahuta which have taken root into the earth. The connection between the hydro-stone and the wooden frame is fastened with waxed binding string. This technique references traditional binding seen on some personal taonga which people wear. This signifies the connection between Tāne

Mahuta and Papatūānuku and how they are united together like the roots of a tree into the earth. (Figure 7 Bottom R/H corner)

Ranginui is represented by a glass table top of 12mm toughened glass. Although it is difficult to embody the notion of 'the sky' in a solid material, I felt the transparent nature of the glass and the organic shaping of its form best symbolised the vastness of the open space above us. Like a canopy of a forest reaching for the sky, the feet of Tāne Mahuta are pushing up against Ranginui. This moment of connection between the feet of Tāne Mahuta and vastness of Ranginui is expressed by a slight radius on the top of the wood where the glass rests on two thin strips at each end of the table. (Figure 7 Top L/H corner)

To a lesser degree Tāne Mahuta is again expressed in the piece along with some of his brothers. Although Ranginui and Papatūānuku had over 70 children, there are five brothers who consistently appear in the many variations of this myth. They are Tangaroa (*god of the sea*), Tūmatauenga (god of war), Rongo (*god of crops*), Haumia-tiketike (*god of wild plants*) and Tāwhirimātea (*god of weather*). Tāne Mahuta and his brothers are represented by six laser-etched bone inserts. These fit into the side of Tāne Mahuta's body. (Figure 27)

4.2.2 Initial design

My initial design used 3D digital software that allowed me to examine and assess the appearance of the final product. (Figure 8) Although I wanted this piece to be unyielding, the stone feet seemed arbitrary and overpowered the rest of the table and, by extension, the other parts of the narrative. The metal toes between the wooden body and the glass top over complicated the piece and appeared to distract from the principal parts. I wanted the audience to look at the piece and only see the three major elements that represent this narrative.

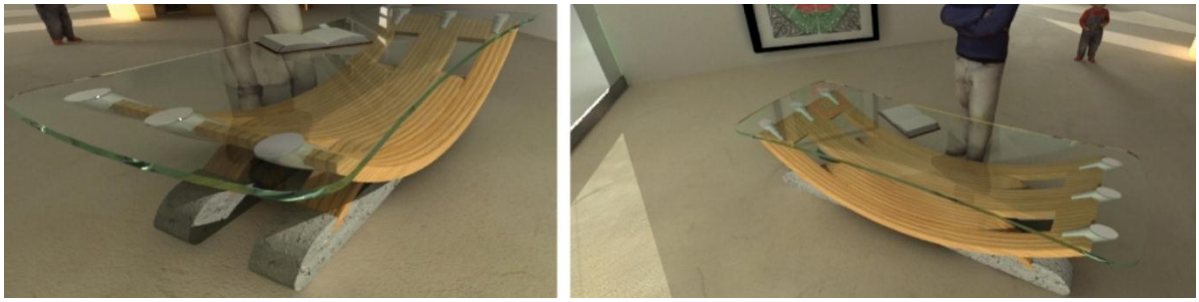

Figure 8

4.2.4 Final design

The final design developed with Solidworks 3D Cad software, which allowed me to take account of material mass, density and strength parameters, allowing me to ascertain stress loadings within the table components. Digital software has permitted me to create a model which allows substitution and testing of the parts and materials in order to optimise and represent the generating narrative. It has also facilitated the streamlining of the manufacturing process of necessary parts of the table by creating jigs/formers for the steam bending and the formation of the hydro-stone. Another exciting possibility of digital design is the relative ease of being able to experiment with different sizes and shapes. This technology lends itself to creating limited edition pieces, which are all slightly varied in design without the potential waste of materials associated with physical experimentation.

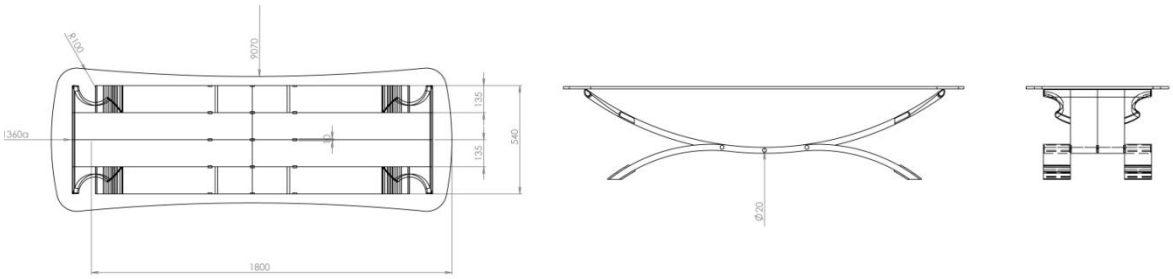

Figure 9

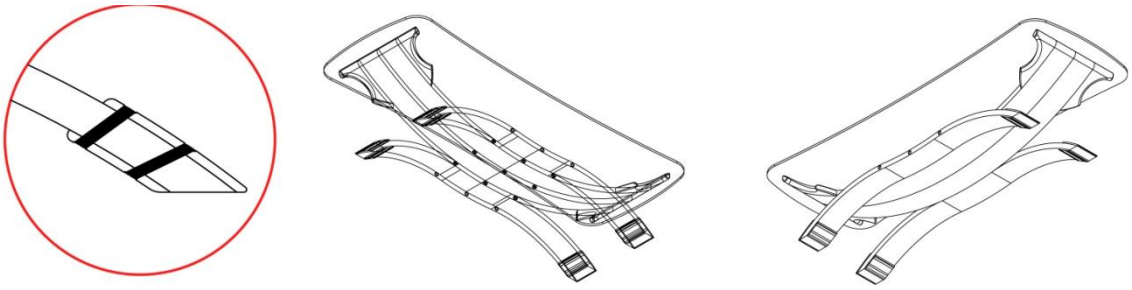

Figure 10

From 3D digital sketches and forms (Figures 9 and 10), I was able to make 1:1 cardboard mock ups of the table to get an understanding of the size that was most appropriate for this piece (Figure 11). From this experimentation I was able to determine the final shape and fine tune the design.

Figure 11

The jigs/formers for steam bending were made with pieces of MDF (Medium-density fibreboard - wood product formed by breaking wood residuals into wood fibres) which were pinned and glued together. The jigs were strengthened with wooden ribs running lengthwise along the formers (Figure 12). This strength is needed so that the jigs don't warp as they need to withstand the pressure of the tānekaha being clamped to them. For this part of the process I steam bent and clamped a number of different types of wood before choosing tānekaha. I wanted to express the strength of Tāne Mahuta and the tension within his body when he separated his parents and supported the sky. There are two MDF formers used for steam bending the tānekaha that represent Tāne Mahuta's legs and arms. (Figure13)

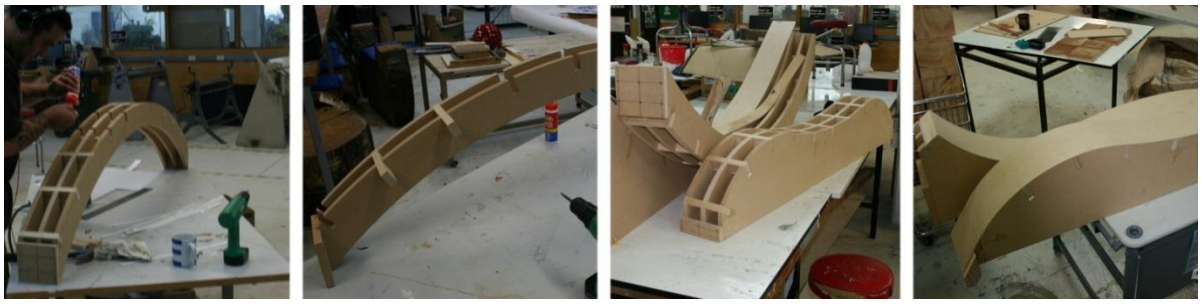

Figure12

Figure 13

Because it would have been difficult to steam bend a solid piece of timber I cut the tānekaha into lengths of 6mm laminates. These thin laminates gave me the flexibility to bend the wood into the desired shape. Once glued together, the laminates became strong enough to permanently take on the shape created by the formers.

The steam bending apparatus (Figures 14 and 15) was made from ply and sealed so that once the wood was steaming; heat could not escape to prevent the wood from becoming pliable. On either side of the steam-box were two steel bins with high pressure hoses connected to the steam-box. Underneath each bin was a gas element which heated water to produce steam. Two bins were used so that once the timber was placed in the steam box; it would receive an even flow of steam. A rack was also created to separate the timber and ensure an even distribution of steam.

Figure 14

Figure 15

Once the wood was placed in the steam boxes it was sealed and slowly heated to 100˚C for 20-40 minutes depending on ambient room temperature. Five to ten minutes after reaching 100˚C, the wood was removed and placed in the MDF formers/jigs (Figure 16). This had to be a quick process as there was only a small window of opportunity before the wood cools making it harder to hold the required forms. The tānekaha was then clamped into place and left to cool for a few hours before being removed from the clamps and formers (Figure 17).

Figure 16

Figure 17

The process of steam bending and clamping before gluing was carried out so that the timber was left with a residual memory of the steam bending. This made the process of gluing and re-clamping the timber laminates into one form easier. The glue used was two pack epoxy glue with microfiber additives (which is also used in boat building).

Figure 18

Once the timber pieces were formed I was able to dry clamp them to see if any pieces had warped. This also gave me an opportunity to test the look of Tāne Mahuta's feet (top of table body) with cardboard before deciding on a final shape. I utilised the shape of the Kape Rua (Figure 19 centre). This form is usually used on traditional 2D kowhaiwhai patterns and represents a seed pod which symbolises the containment of knowledge, potential growth and strength. For me this exactly personifies Tāne Mahuta within this piece.

Figure 19

To join the laminated forms together I needed to make a jig that corresponded to the two different steam bent forms so that I could drill locating holes for fastening timber dowels

(Figures 20 and 21). The dowels are made from 12mm diameter New Zealand beech, which material was chosen because of its fine, even texture and strength.

Figure20

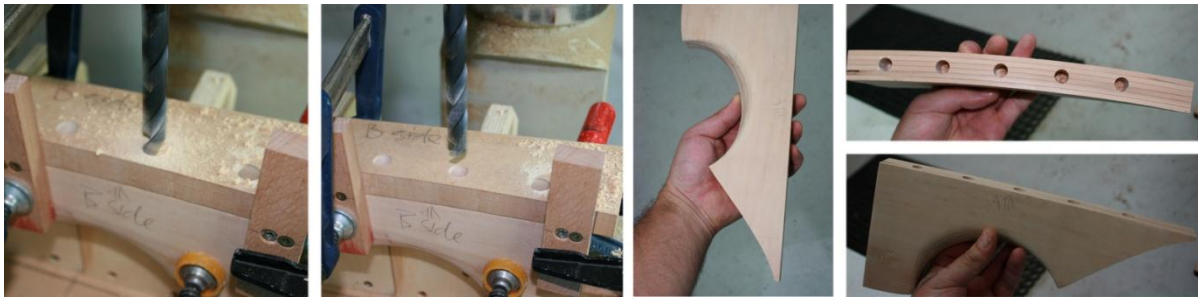

Figure 21

The forms were glued together with epoxy glue, clamped overnight to set and then sanded (Figure 23). Before painting the surface of the timber with semi gloss and moisture curing polyurethane, it is wiped with a wet cloth, left to dry and then lightly sanded to take off the fine fibres that may have risen on the surface of the timber. (Figure 24)

Figure 22

Figure 23

The hydro-stone feet representing Papatūānuku were created using forms made of MDF. The forms were manufactured using 3D digital files that were transferred to the CNC milling machine to cut them out (Figure 24). From the MDF forms I made moulds for casting the hydro-stone. Once dried, the hydro-stone was sanded to fit flush onto the Tāne Mahuta frame (Figure 25).

Figure24

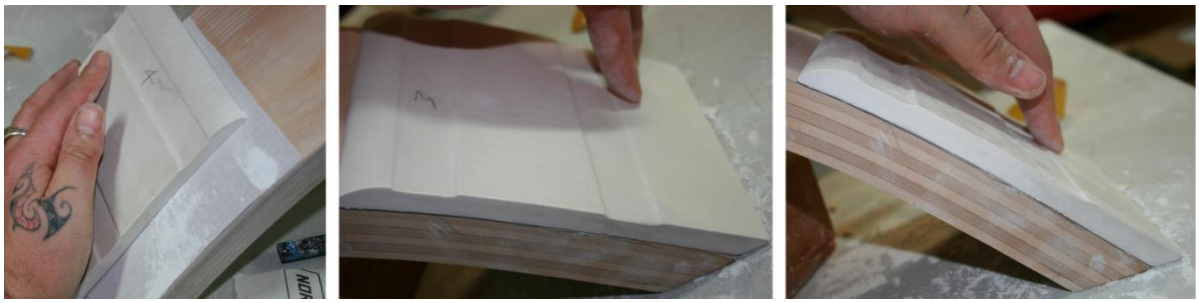

Figure 25

Finally, the feet were bound to the Tāne Mahuta frame using wax string and a binding technique replicated from some Māori taonga which adorn the neck. This symbolises how Tāne Mahuta has penetrated Papatūānuku like the roots of a tree winding through the earth, forever being bound to one another.

Figure 26

The bone inserts represent Tāne Mahuta and his brothers; Tangaroa, Tūmatauenga, Rongo, Haumia-tiketike and Tāwhirimātea. These have been laser etched from a 2D digital file of my signature design (Figure 27).

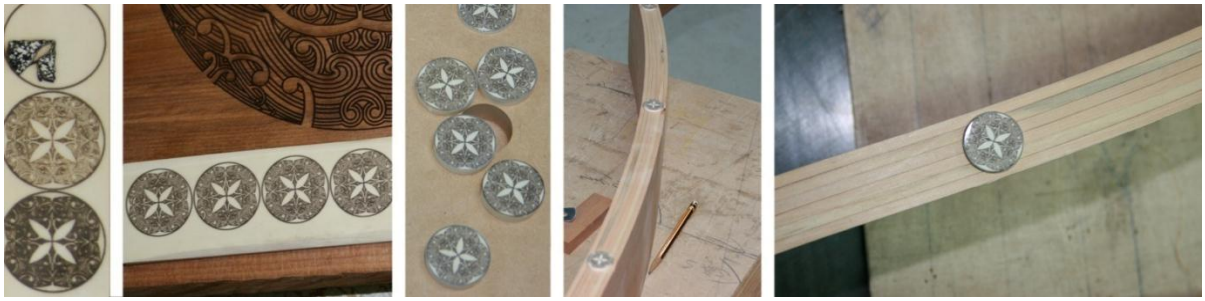

Figure 27

4.2.4 Conclusion

This table (Figure 28) is my contemporary interpretation of the myth of Ranginui and Papatūānuku. It acts as a functional piece of furniture with a narrative imbued within. The story has been clearly communicated through the materials and the compositional arrangement of them; nothing is arbitrary within this design. This table creates a visual mnemonic that allows the viewer to determine its narrative and the characters involved. Although this table is something that is tangible, there are hidden elements that transcend the pragmatic. To me it also embodies a whakapapa; a history that all Māori are connected to.

Figure 28

4. 3 Waka Whakaka

Figure 29

4.3.1 Introduction

This design looked at the complexity of materials and how their intrinsic qualities could be used as a means to express craftsmanship through digital technology. The experimentation process required making and observing the outcomes and responding to them. Traditional Māori artists/designers worked on a pragmatic and spiritual level connecting their creative works to their whakapapa, people and land.

I think contemporary designers have lost touch with the emotional connection to their work. I wanted to demonstrate that contemporary Māori design through digital technology can have the same honesty and emotional resonance as the old arts.

4.3.2 Initial design

The original idea for this light was to create a piece that incorporated my whakapapa and heritage which is a mixture of Māori and European ancestry within an environment that has connections to the Pacific. Initially I looked at the intertwining nature of weaving to express my whakapapa and felt that a light was a suitable product to articulate this. My first renders (Figure 30-31) show a light concept that connects to a weaving tradition. When the light is switched off the piece is a static woven object, but when switched on the piece is transformed casting patterns on its surrounding and revealing the intricacy of the weave. These patterns are significant because they are an aesthetic language that is prevalent in all pacific cultures.

Figure 30

Figure 31

The original design used natural fibres such as flax or wood veneer to create the weave, thereby paying homage to the traditional materials of Māori design. However, this materiality neglected the technology available to me and I saw this piece as an opportunity to use digital fabrication. This next stage of the design was created in a 3D Cad program and the test piece was manufactured using a 3D printer. The 3D printer produces layers which align to the idea of whakapapa. Also, printing by layering fine threads of plastic composite to build the 3D form felt very much like weaving materials together to create an object. The test piece was 100mm in length (Figure 32) and even in such a small scale is an exciting and intricate object that demonstrates the possibilities of the technology. However, for this piece the plastic composite lacked warmth that is inherent to natural fibres, so the design changed to incorporate natural materials.

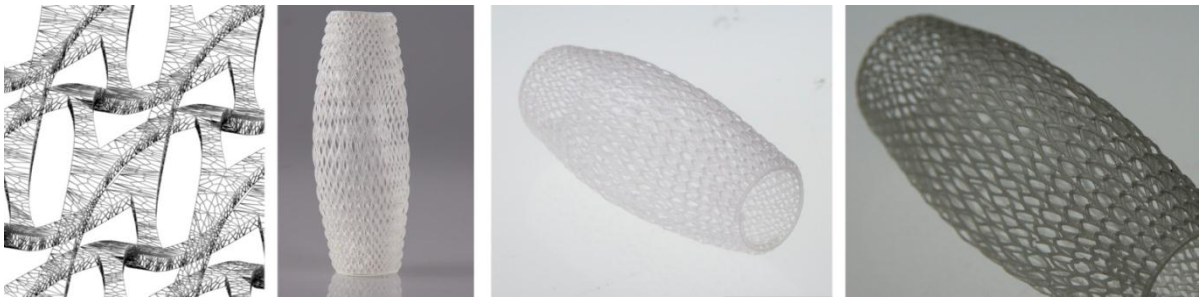

Figure 32

For the final design I looked at other stimuli as a means to inspire this next stage in my work. This inspiration came from traditional Māori artefacts combined with the digital technology of the laser cutter.

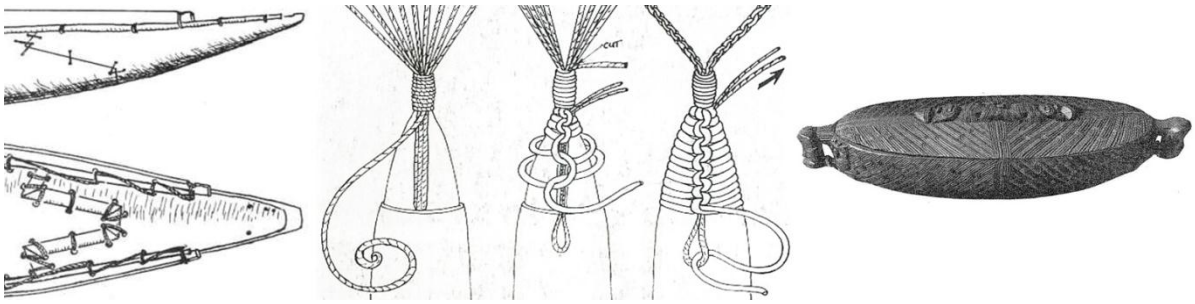

Figure 33

There are numerous stories of our past that tell of the journey to Aotearoa. Our ancestors came to the shores of Aotearoa in waka (Māori Canoes), which carried our ancestor's cultural history, our whakapapa.

As stated in my Pepeha, my iwi is Ngāpuhi and the waka I have links to is called Ngātokimatawhaorua. Some traditional Māori waka were lashed together combining timber to make up the hull (Figure 33 L/H side)[61]. This is partly what I wanted to reference in this design.

My investigations of lashing focused upon the different techniques used to bind taonga that are worn around the neck. The knotted ridge technique was the chosen option because it creates a taut binding that is simple and straightforward to produce. (Figure 33 centre)[62]. Waka huia (Figure 33 right)[63] were designed to be suspended from the ceiling of Māori whare (houses) where their skilfully carved forms could be seen. They held taonga (treasures), such as hei tiki and other personal adornment. This piece references taonga and wakahuia both of which have physical and metaphysical properties to them.

4.3.3 Final design

This piece was about reflecting my own personal whakapapa. I chose Māori, Western and Pacific motifs that symbolize my connections to these cultures. This combined motif is my interpretation of my heritage and history. (Figure 34)

[61] Buck, P. H. (1950). *The coming of the Māori*. Wellington
[62] Timmings Jim (1996). *Bone Carving*.
[63] Phillips W.J. (1946). *Māori Waka Huia*. Harry H Tombs

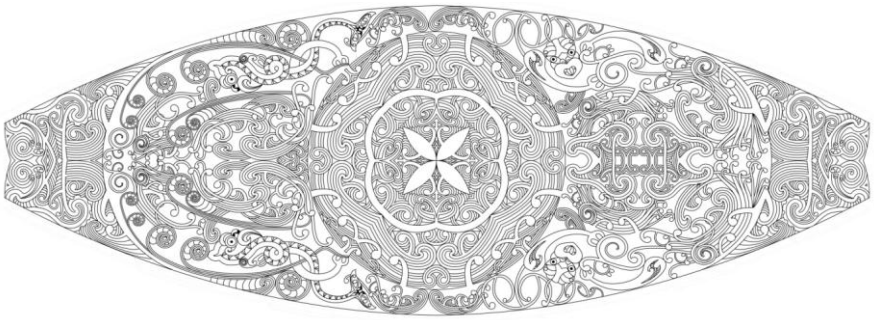

Figure 34

The digital technology I used to tell this story was the laser cutter. As Lyonel Grant says 'we can't let the technology dominate us, we have to take control of the technology'.[64] I was reluctant to make the standard stencilling cut-out that the laser cutter can produce This I feel has no artistic integrity allowing the technology to dictate the form. What I've found is that there are levels of complexity that can be explored and utilised within this technology. First you need to understand the technology itself, its capabilities and the material you are cutting. Through experimentation, you calibrate different speeds and power of the laser so that you obtain an optimal cut/etch inherent to that particular material. By doing this the designs will better reflect the designer's intention and what they are trying to achieve. Allowing technology to drive your designs can result in cheap looking and touristic artefacts.

My primary tests used the laser cutter to cut/etch a range of wood veneer types at various depths. (Figure 35) Changing the intensity of the laser and speed for each material allowed me to compare best results for each type find the best possible settings for each material and to compare the results. After extensive testing I chose American Oak as the most dynamic material. The coarse sunburst grain is varied across the veneer creating a unique yet unified pattern.

Figure 35

[64] Lyonel Grant (Appendix 3)

The graphic is laser etched on to 1.5mm wood veneer. The depth of the cut is meticulously calibrated so that the laser penetrates the soft fibres of the wood, but not the hard grain in the wood veneer. (Figure 36) This creates a delicate, slightly obscured graphic design that is only fully revealed when the light is turned on and gives this work a level of complexity that exposes layers representing the diversity of my whakapapa.

Figure 36

The distinctive pattern of the veneer added to the complexity and richness of the design (Figure 37). Because each veneer panel was different there needed to be a re-calibration of the laser so that the laser cut veneer created the desired result. This was achieved through trial and error, just as an earlier craftsperson would try different techniques and materials to produce the outcome they required.

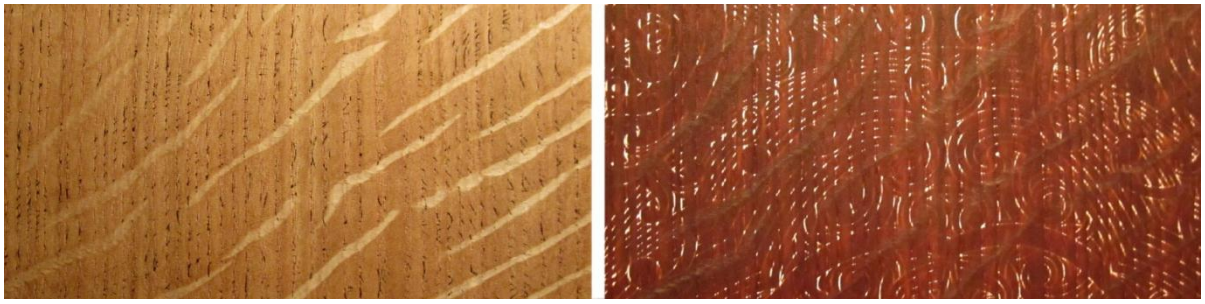

Figure 37

The veneer panels are delicately thin and needed to be supported to give it rigidity. The veneer is glued onto clear 1.5mm PETA plastic to so that the delicate form of the laser cut veneer does not break apart. Because the veneer is perforated with the graphic design, clear lacquer is also sprayed over the wood veneer giving it added strength and protection (Figure 38).

Figure 38

There are three panels to every light. These are bound and lashed together using the method inspired by the knotted ridge technique, as I've already stated. This lashing technique is used on many bone and pounamu taonga pendants (Figure 33).

Figure 39

Finally I tested different light sources for this work. I tried halogen, fluorescent and incandescent light bulbs, but found that when left on for too long the interior heat warped the veneer, damaging the light.

The lights I used in this design are low energy, low intensity 12v LED (Light Emitting Diodes) strips, which have a minimal heat output so the veneer won't distort. There are three LED strips per light, which are attached to a rod that runs down the centre of the light. These LED strips gave a more even flow of light through the piece (Figure 40).

Figure 40

4.3.4 Conclusion

The laser cutter is considered cold, clinical and precise. Waka Whakaka clearly demonstrates that this contemporary design tool can create something of beauty responding to varying material qualities through digital technology.

Craftsmanship is apparent in the judgement that guides the choice of material, and the use of the tool to achieve the required effect. As the fabricator I determine the required depth of cut by taking account of the material's textural qualities. As noted earlier, the complexity of the pattern has a latent effect, only revealed when the light source operates. (Figure 41)

The design process of this work gave me an understanding of the material and technology that is difficult for an outsider to appreciate. The reason is that as the creator, only I know the visual quality that I desire through the nature of observing the outcomes and reacting to them accordingly. This is similar to what a traditional Māori carver does; they would know the amount of pressure needed in applying their chisels to their chosen material so that they achieved the required texture, pattern and result. In this project the laser becomes the chisel.

Figure 41

4.4 Puipuiaki

Figure 42

4.4.1 Introduction

Māori are tāngata whenua (*people of the land*). This means we have a distinct connection with the environment supported by a multifaceted spiritual, social, cultural and economic value system that is regarded as an important part of who we are. The environment is looked upon as a taonga (treasure) and we are kaitiaki (*guardians*) of it, protecting it for the future generations of our people. Puipuiaki (treasure) is a storage cabinet explores this idea of our connection to the land. Also, Māori are a communal people and value collective participation and membership. Traditionally, participation and membership was founded on genealogy, lineage and descent.[65] This piece reflects the communal aspect of design that Māori embark on as a process in creating.

4.4.2 Initial Designs

The initial idea of Puipuiaki was designed by Earl Stewart in the furniture design paper SARC 312.[66] The idea was still at the conceptual stage when we started discussing how we could evolve it to create a piece that expressed our shared iwi and heritage. From then on the design and manufacture of this piece was evenly shared.

Earl and I are of Māori and European descent and together we have affiliations to the Ngāpuhi Iwi of Northland. We understood the importance of co-making this piece of work and wanted to communicate these links through our work. Having a good bond with our hapū, allowed us access to whānau members as a means of discussing our ideas and gaining feedback. We looked at how we could use digital technology such as the CNC milling machine as a way of expressing our tribal affiliations, heritage and connection to the land of Aotearoa.

[65] Barlow, Cleve. *New Zealand genealogist: The Scope of Māori Genealogy.*; vol.18, no.172 (1987) pp. 34-36.
[66] Wellington Victoria University Architecture and design school

As stated earlier, a customary Māori craftsperson used a variety of motif and patterns that were esoteric in nature and had a particular significance to their Iwi. Some of these motifs have different names and meanings depending on the region they come from. The craftsperson was able to generate a connection between their works and where they were from through a combination of motif. This was an integral part of the design practice. As designers we wanted to replicate this idea through a contemporary medium, creating a sense of place and belonging that symbolised our relationship to our iwi and the whenua (*land*) from where we come from. Both Rangi Kipa and Carin Wilson also speak about creating a sense of 'place' and 'self' within their work.[67]

For this piece we took the sense of place as a literal meaning. To best reflect the digital technology we were using we explored digital manifestations of place through the medium of Google maps, open source software (free to use) that allows the viewer to explore maps of countries, towns and streets. This is done by typing names or coordinates of places into Google maps search engine. From there you have the option to switch between a 2D map and the 3D digital topographical image. (Figure 43)

Initially I chose the 3D topographical copy of my iwi maunga (mountain) Rākaumangamanga (Figure 43 L/H side) and then converted it into a digital file (Figure 43 R/H side) where it was manipulated in to a manageable scale for the CNC milling machine.

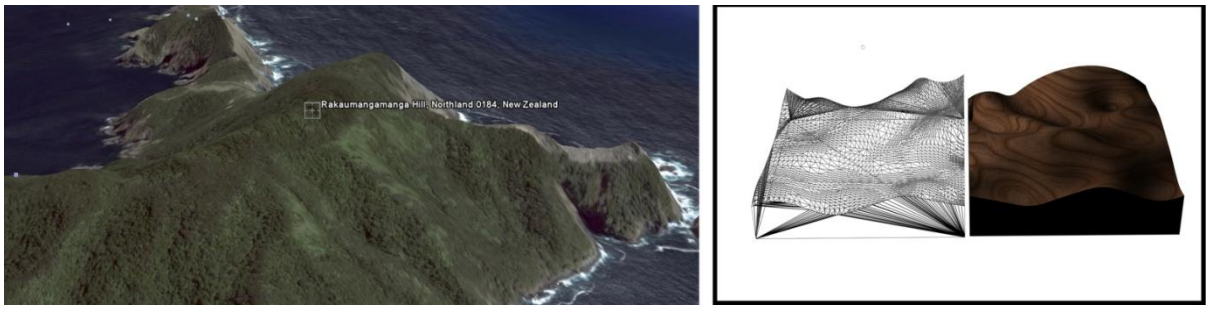

Figure 43

The file was then milled on the CNC milling machine creating a physical representation of the digital file. (Figure 44) From here we looked at different topographical areas from within our Iwi to experiment with. We were also able to control the tooling path of the cutting tool, which means we were able to mill/cut the same topography a multitude of times while at the same time generating a different surface texture, giving us the option to personalise each piece (Figure 45). This is similar to what a carver would do. They might use a similar carved 3D

[67] Carin Wilson (Appendix 2), Rangi Kipa (Appendix 3)

form, but their surface treatment varies communicating their own and their peoples' unique stories.

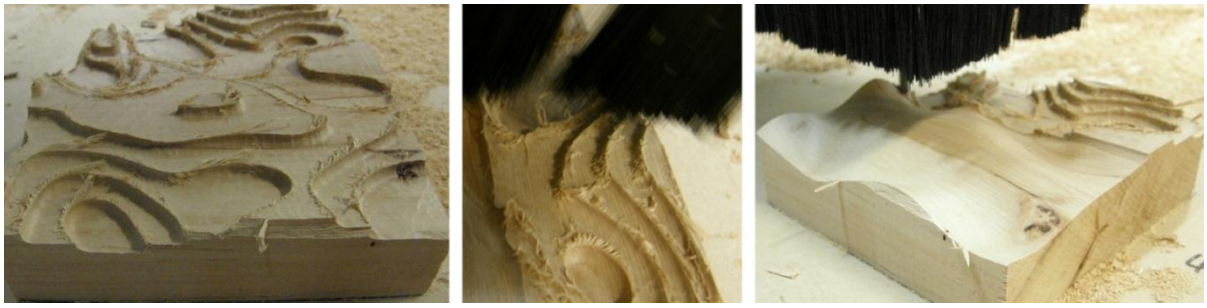

Figure 44

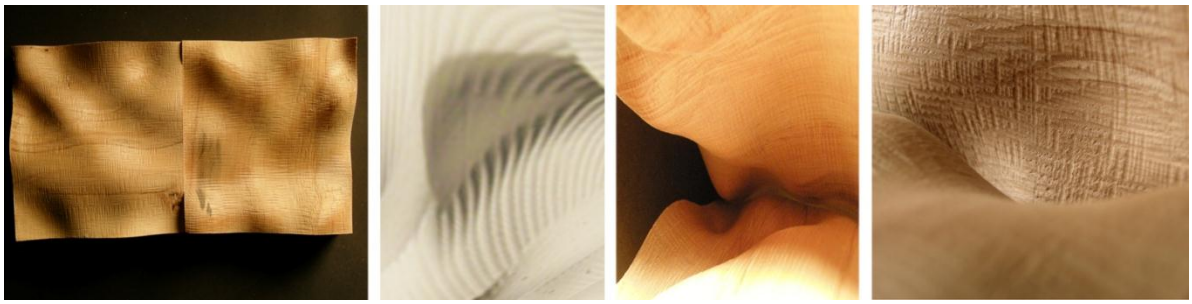

Figure 45

The next experimentation stage looked at combining areas of our tribal lands to create a form that represented the common connections we share through our Iwi, friendship and as co-producers of this work. From our Hapū we obtained the 3D images of our sub-tribes which are Hikutu in Whirinaki for Earl and Patu Keha in Rawhiti for me. From our chosen 3D landscapes we created section cuts to make two 2D cross-sections (Figure 46 middle) and merged them together to create a form that that represented our combined hapū (Figure 46 R/H side).

Figure 46

This experiment considered tukutuku panels (Figure 47 L/H side), which are the woven panels that decorate Whare Nui (meeting houses) and are placed between poupou, (carvings on the wall).Their function is to compliment the poupou in telling iwi stories. The

Tukutuku pattern I chose is called niho taniwha (*teeth of the sea monster*) which signifies strength and whakapapa.

We cut two dissimilar types of timbers in to equilateral triangles and merged them together to replicate a wooden representation of the woven pattern of the tukutuku panel. We then used the CNC milling machine to mill a representation the landscape of our combined Iwi into the panel. This signified our whakapapa and the relationship we have to our tribal lands.

Figure 47

4.4.3 Final design

The final iteration of our idea combined aspects of the earlier experiments. We used a site within our Iwi that was special to us, transferring and manipulating the topographic data. Because the 3D Digital file of the landscape is organic in form, we abstracted it to the extent that it gained some of the qualities of the tukutuku panel. (Figure 48 L/H side) The 3D software modifier simplified the form creating a faceted landscape (Figure 48 R/H side) that alludes to the triangular pattern of the tukutuku panel. This digital process enabled us to represent our whakapapa and our connection to our tribal land.

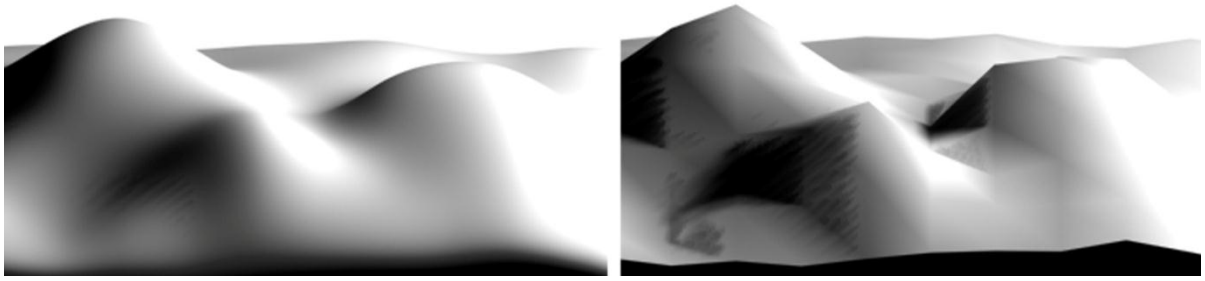

Figure 48

This abstract 3D representation of the topographical tukutuku panel is then milled into the exotic hardwood and totara timbers. The tooling paths used created a range of different textures on the faceted timber surface. This part of the design became the facade of the cabinet/drawers (Figure 49).

Figure 49

The word Puipuiaki means ‘treasure’ and this design was created to house treasures and memories that were precious to us, creating a storage device that is autobiographical in its design, developed out of discussion with our whānau. It is an extension of who we are, telling our stories and where we are from. The design of Puipuiaki alluded to the form of the pataka (*Māori hut*) which were elevated off the ground to store valuable objects to keep them safe[68] (Figure 50 L/H side).

The frame is made up of two halves which are an abstract representation of both mine and Earl’s ethnicity of Māori and European origin. These two halves are of contrasting colours that correspond to our Māori and European background. The European side is made from totara a native timber to Aotearoa. This was intentional because it talks of the intermixing of the two cultures. We wanted this part of the frame to remain unadorned and monolithic to characterize the one dimensional knowledge of our European heritage which we are largely disconnected from (Figure 50).

Figure 50

[68] Buck, Peter

Our European ancestors and heritage remain mostly unknown to us. The other side of this frame represents our Māori heritage (Figure 51). This patchwork of timber for us suggests the interweaving connections that we have through our iwi, hapū and whānau. We know precisely where our people are from. This is a reflection of our roots that are grounded in Aotearoa, which is in stark contrast to our more distant European heritage.

Figure 51

As I have stated, Māori have a strong connection to the land. This was illustrated by lashing the bottom of the feet demonstrating our link to whenua (Figure 52).

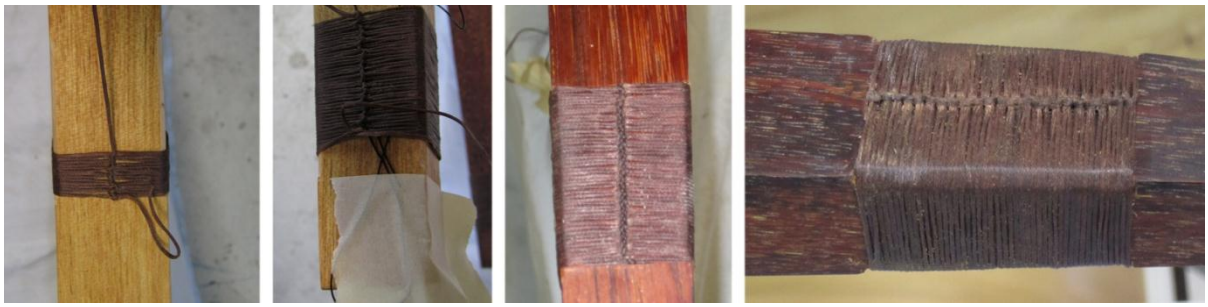

Figure 52

The inside of the drawers are similar to the facade, using topographical 3D milled forms delivered from Google maps. (Figure 53) The difference with these is that they represent landscapes that both Earl and I have chosen because they hold great significance to us personally. The internal timber topography represents places we have been from memories which we treasure. The drawers are inserted into the frames interior using piston hinges (Figure 54).

Figure 53

Figure 54

4.4.4 Conclusion

Although this work is autobiographical, its embedded sense of whakapapa connects both Earl and I to the land and our Iwi. It is a design that externally explores and represents our community in the far north of Aotearoa and internally speaks of places that have been important to us through our lives (Figure 55).

This piece has shown that through communal consultation a design can be reached that reflects both individual and collective knowledge to represent the all important relationship that our people have to the whenua.

Figure 55

4.5 Ngāpuhi light boxes

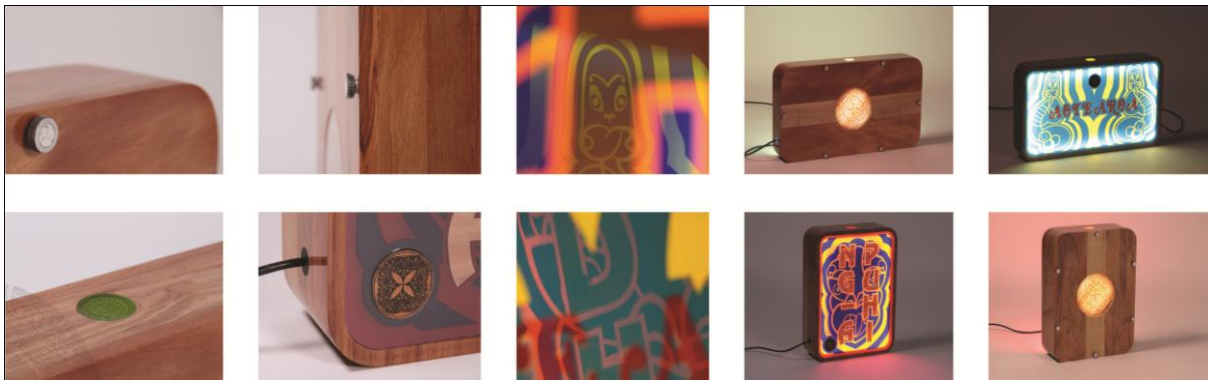

Figure 56

4.5.1 Introduction

This piece looks at combining Māori whakapapa, identity and different methods of digital production. I wanted to demonstrate that the shift from traditional to contemporary materials can still preserve the quality of the narrative while maintaining an integrity that is usually associated with traditional Māori artefacts. My work is a combination of different ideas and experiences that explore identity, merging time periods and their aesthetic styles, mass culture and living as an urban Māori in Aotearoa.

4.5.2 Initial Designs

My initial experimentation looked at tukutuku panels (Figure 57) and their associated patterns such as Pātikitiki (Flounder) and Niho Taniwha (sea monsters teeth) (Figure 57). Both of these patterns have relevance to me. Patikitiki is a delicacy abundant on my iwi waters. The Niho Taniwha represents the four taniwha that accompanied Nukutawhiti from Hawaiki in the waka matawhaorua to populate the Northern iwi of Ngāpuhi.[69] The idea behind using the weaved patterns of the tukutuku panels and presenting them in a contemporary format was a simplistic way of connecting Māori tradition with my urban identity. Only two materials were chosen for this piece – wood (tānekaha) and perspex – so as to reflect traditional patterns in a modern aesthetic.

[69] Nga Waka o Nehera, pgs 94-104

Figure 57

The tukutuku light boxes, though contemporary due to their materials and the manufacturing process, did not require any interpretation or development of traditional Māori symbolism on my part. A common Māori pattern was used on a different material and that was the extent of the design. Although I understand the meaning of the patterns I felt like I was appropriating the original tukutuku panel design.

Before exploring the next stage of the design in terms of symbolism used I decided to develop the basic aesthetic of the light box design. I worked on a retro shape to represent the era in which I was born, the seventies. I also started to think about mass culture and identity and decided to experiment with a friend's fashion company (Dan Buckley and Huffer). I chose a fashion brand because people often use fashion to help create their identity. Groups of people following the same fashion trend to me could be considered a modern tribe where people of similar taste are easily identifiable and can equally identify with one another. The Huffer brand can be identified by its logo of three circles (Figure 58). Tā moko was the inspiration behind abstracting the logo (Figure 58 centre). I looked at line work and negative and positive spaces that make up the visual aspect of tā moko design.

Figure 58

4.5.3 Final design

My final designs moved away from mass culture and fashion to concentrate on my identity. As an urban Māori I wanted to reflect the large majority of Māori like myself that live in towns and cities of Aotearoa. Again tā moko was used. Tā moko is a permanent marking of the

body. Every tā moko contains tribal narratives that are relevant to the wearer. These can include the wearer's whānau, hapū and iwi affiliations and their placing within these social structures. Traditionally tā moko was carved into skin with uhi (*chisels*), leaving the skin with shallow grooves, rather than the smooth surface of a normal tattoo. For this piece, the lines created by the laser cutter references the uhi used on skin.

To develop the idea of representing my identity I researched the iconography of my iwi, Ngāpuhi, in particular traditional Ngāpuhi figureheads (Figure 59) and Māori pou (Figure 59 R/H side) which again links back to the original tukutuku panel idea. Both pou and tukutuku panels can be found in wharenui. Together they are used as mnemonic devices to tell narratives of that particular iwi. I wanted to use the idea of the pou combined with Ngapuhi figureheads to create a piece of my identity and my narrative created with contemporary technology and materials.

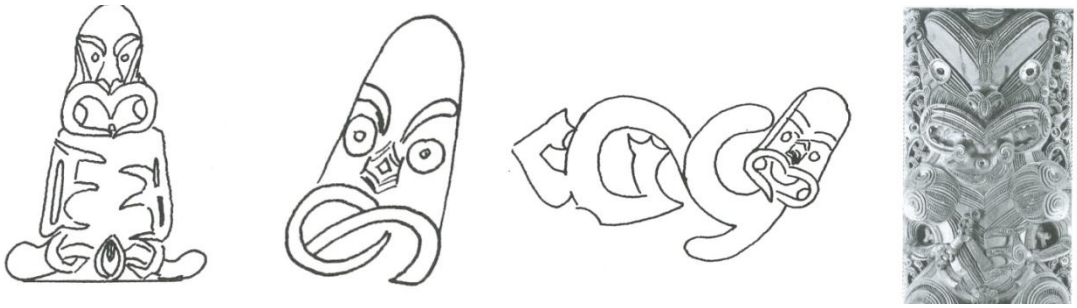

Figure 59

My final designs were created using 3D digital software (Figure 60). Both look to explore my identity in opposing ways. The ‘Aotearoa’ light box (Figure 5 L/H side) contains a manaia with a face that is distinctly Ngāpuhi. People that have knowledge of Ngāpuhi iconography would be able to identify with this light box on a different level to the rest of the audience who would only see the word ‘Aotearoa’ as the identifier. The ‘Ngāpuhi’ light box (Figure 5 R/H side) on the other hand identifies my iwi more literally. The tiki face in the background is a generic facial design but the use of the word ‘Ngapuhi’ very easily identifies this light box as belonging to this iwi for the whole audience. These light boxes explore both aspects of my cultural heritage; Māori and European. The Māori part uses iconography and symbolism whilst the European uses written language.

Figure 60

For the outside of the frames I used heart rimu (Figure 61). This material references the traditional materials used in pou. The CNC milling machine milled the frame to the desired form from a 3D digital file. By using this machine I was guaranteed precise measurements which were needed to fit the laser cut Perspex (Figure 62). The colour palettes of these works are not traditional but rather a reflection of my style and my urban roots.

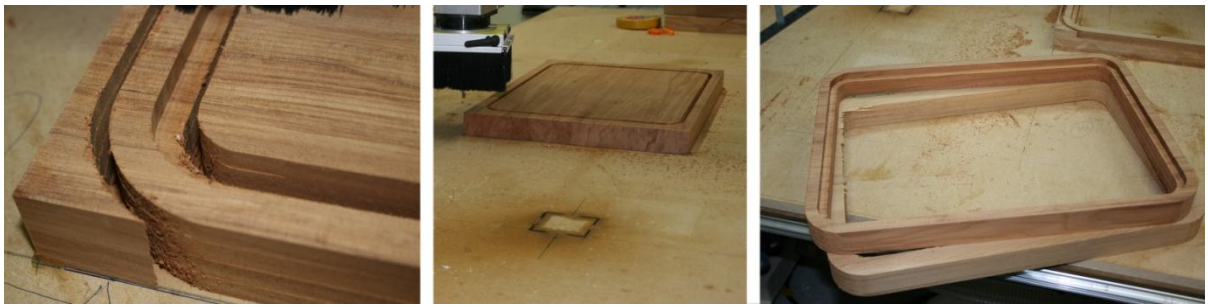

Figure 61

Figure 62

The manufacturing process used digital technology as a means to reflect my identity in a contemporary style. These digitally crafted pieces are made complete by the details that have been placed on the surface of the light boxes. I wanted to pay homage to traditional Māori artists that used surface treatments such as paua inserts and red ochre as highlights on whakairo. My details include bone inserts (Figure 63 L/H side). Bone is a traditional material used extensively by Māori craftsmen. This was placed inside stainless steel screw

heads which were crafted by hand on the lathe as opposed to being chosen from a selection in a hardware store.

The letters and my signature graphic were laser cut from rimu veneer (Figure 62). Veneer was chosen as it allows light to filter through the material (Figure 66 bottom). The eye inserts of the 'Ngapuhi' light box are polished stainless steel (Figure 62 L/H side). This material and its treatment is a contemporary version of the iridescent paua eye inserts used in traditional whakairo.

Figure 63

Figure 64

The final stage of the manufacturing process was the insertion of the LED lights. Initially I tried florescent tubes but these produced too much heat which resulted in the laser cut Perspex warping. LED lights in contrast have a lower heat output. Another benefit of these lights and their position within the light boxes is the soft glow they emit from the edges inward. This is a far more polished solution than two fluorescent tubes that would be seen as parallel bands of light.

Figure 65

4.5.4 Conclusion

These light boxes clearly show my Ngāpuhi whakapapa and identity within a contemporary aesthetic. Contemporary digital technology and manufacturing processes have been utilised to bring together retro styling and colouring as well as symbols that closely resemble traditional iconography. I feel my tribal roots are reflected in a way that is both modern and light-hearted, but is also at home in the urban setting in which urban Māori such as myself live. The attention to detail is a key part of the design as it harks back to the beautiful surface treatments of traditional artefacts. This detailing, coupled with the appropriate use of iconography and the thought process behind the narrative give these pieces an integrity similar to that of traditional Māori craft.

Figure 66

4.6 Mahuika

Figure 67

4.6.1 Introduction

This final piece is similar to that of the Ranginui and Papatūānuku piece in that it uses the compositional arrangement of materials to express a narrative. As stated in Chapter 1; Background, narratives are not solely a source of entertainment, but can also demonstrate morals, information and history. Traditional Māori artists would communicate these ideas through motif and patterns in their work for the audience to interpret the narrative for themselves. My work is about expressing my chosen narrative in a way that displays my skills and explores the use of digital technology within the context of contemporary Māori design.

This piece expresses the legend of Maui and Mahuika which explains how Māori gained the knowledge to create fire. There are many versions of this tale both in Aotearoa and throughout the Pacific. I have used the story that I was brought up with where Maui's grandmother Mahuika the fire goddess was tricked into giving the knowledge of fire to Maui. The legend describes how Maui extinguishes all the cooking fires in his Pā (village). Maui – the trickster - offers to find Mahuika in the underworld to make use of her fingernails of fire. On finding Mahuika, she hands Maui one fingernail to take back to the village. Maui doesn't go far before he extinguishes the flame and returns to her to ask for more. Mahuika supplies more flame only to have Maui repeat his mischievous antics until all but one of Mahuika's finger nails is left. Mahuika becomes angry at Maui for tricking her and throws her last nail to the earth, burning everything. Maui escapes by transforming into a hawk and flying above the flames. He calls on Tāwhirimātea the god of weather to quench the flames but not before Mahuika throws a spark into the Kaikomako tree. The wood of the Kaikomako is still used for making fire when rubbed forcefully along a groove in a dry piece of Pata wood.

4.6.2 Initial design

My initial design and explored translating the idea of Mahuika's fingernails of fire into a set of five lamps representing one hand. Using 3D software to create the design allowed me to experiment with forms. I followed this with the application of materials and producing renders to give an impression of what the final appearance of the lamps might be. I wanted the final form to combine elements of Mahuika's fingernails and a flame. The original idea for the material was cast mottled translucent glass with orange LED's producing the light. The mottled nature of the glass was intended to imitate flickering flame and a glow coming from within the light (Figure 68 - 69).

Figure 68

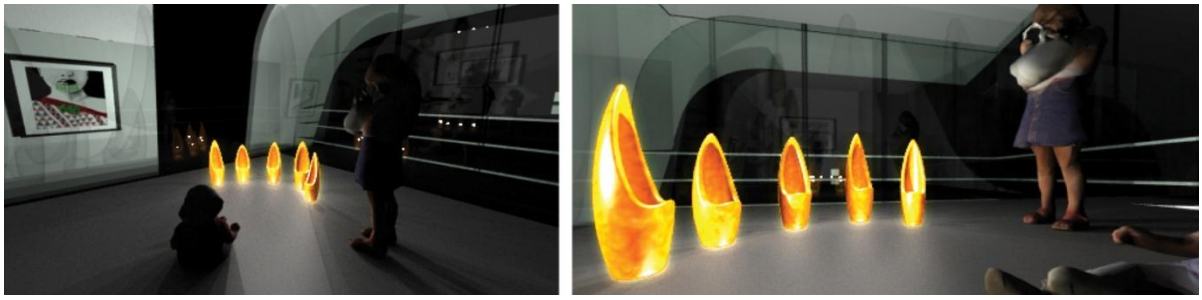

Figure 69

4.6.3 Final design

For the final design there was development from the initial concept in that I wanted to combine the legend of Maui and Mahuika with the idea of Ahi Ka (the home fires). Ahi Ka can be translated as 'burning fires of occupation'. [70] This is done through the use of whakapapa where Māori are able to lay claim to particular areas within their iwi land. In the context of Ahi Ka, fire is not only a physical symbol suggesting a presence or occupation but also a metaphorical symbol that states 'I am here. This is my place.'

I represented 'my place' in this piece by using a 3D topographical image of my hapu/tribal area from Google Maps and transferring it into digital software allowing the topography to be

[70] http://www.maoridictionary.co.nz/index.cfm?dictionaryKeywords=ahi+ka

milled into the totara base with the CNC milling machine (Figure 70). The second timber used, rimu, was also milled but with the 3D topographical image inverted so that the two timbers could fit together perfectly (Figure 70 – middle). These two native timbers represent the kaikomako and pata timbers traditionally used to make fire. I intended to use kaikomako and pata for this piece but I could not source this material.

Figure 70

MDF was used as the mould to create the translucent portion of the lamp (Figure 71 – L/H side). This part of the piece was also created using 3D digital software. The base of the MDF had to be milled so it fit the rimu section. The three materials (totara, rimu and MDF) were joined together and placed on their side so that the back half of its form could be accurately milled (Figure 71 – R/H side).

Figure 71

Due to the organic shape of the back side of the lamp a jig was made to allow the front side of the lamp to be milled (Figure 72 – L/H side). Once the front side was milled I was able to take the completed form out of the jig. (Figure 73 L/H side).

Figure 72

Figure 73

After the overall shape was made I used the MDF section to make a cast (Figure 74 L/H side) for the translucent piece. Porcelain was chosen because of the semi-transparent qualities that allowed the soft light to emanate from it. The material also evokes the earthly qualities needed to symbolise Mahuika, who originated from the underworld.

There were issues with the use of porcelain. For example, during the firing process the wall thickness can become very thin which makes it weak and susceptible to breaking (Figure 75 middle). Another problem is the shrinking rate of porcelain which is approximately 6% – 12% of the original size after firing. This resulted in the porcelain not fitting the base and the base needing to be remade so the wooden base fitted the porcelain top.

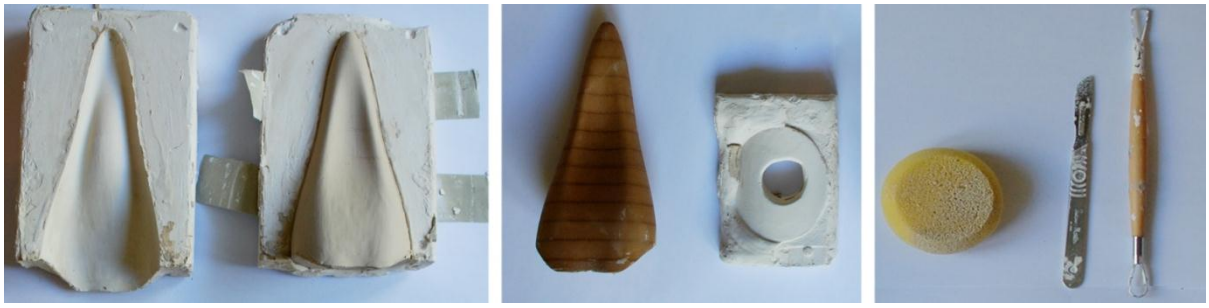

Figure 74

Figure 75

The final task for the lamp was adding the light itself. The light chosen was a RGB – LED light (Figure 76 L/H side) that can cycle through different colours (Figure 77). The reason behind this choice of light is that it represents the kaleidoscope of colours that can be seen when you look at a naked flame. The casing for the transformer was made from perspex

(Figure 76 L/H side). The casing was laser etched with my signature graphic. There is also a switch that allows you to manually cycle through the different colours or to let it do it automatically.

Figure 76

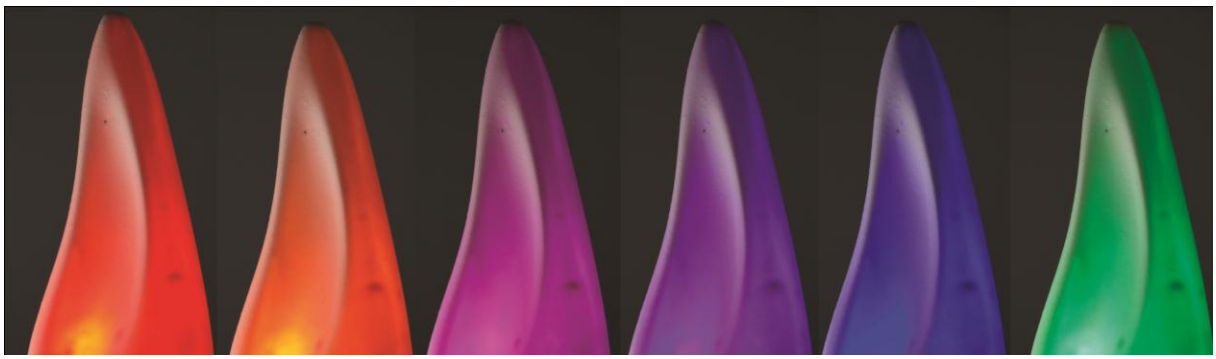

Figure 77

4.6.4 Conclusion

This piece has expressed the legend of Maui and Mahuika through the combination and arrangement of materials that have been formed using contemporary technology. This form – an abstraction of a flame and fingernail - is one that becomes a mnemonic representation of the narrative. As the audience interact with the lamp, they don't so much become part of the narrative, but rather bring their understandings of the Maui - Mahuika story (and other stories & memories) to that interaction. They will find other resonances with the lamp form, materials and shifting light pattern which may which may enrich the audience's personal understanding or appreciation of the work.

Chapter 5 - Conclusion

Māori design is something that is constantly evolving. We have willingly taken on new technologies to express our heritage and changing sense of self. My research has identified how Māori narratives and traditions can be expressed through functional objects such as lights and furniture which are manufactured with contemporary technology. I consider that my final works possess the capacity to express both a collective cultural history and my own personal history without sacrificing the integrity of the Māori art traditions. They are imbued with the same intrinsic value historically recognised in great works of Māori art and design, relevant to the period or time of their production.

Understanding and respecting the values of Māori culture has highlighted the metaphysical dimension as being as important as the physical. Māori knowledge and tikanga handed down through generations has provided a template for the creation of my distinctive final works. This and the interview process with successful Māori artists/designers and consultation with my iwi, whānau and hapū has helped me create a tikanga which is personal to me. My tikanga takes narratives that are of great meaning to me and Māori as a people and translates them into contemporary, functional designs that express these narratives through a process of digital craft, material choice and digital technology to make new forms. The final pieces I believe standalone as aesthetically pleasing designs, but by expressing narratives they also contain layers of tradition, values and genealogy that have been passed down from our tūpuna.

As a Māori living in modern society I wanted to be able to bring narratives that represent my whakapapa and important stories of Māoridom that I've been brought up with into the 21st Century. Narratives such as 'Ranginui and Papatūānuku' and 'Maui and Mahuika' are inherent to Māori culture and will be passed on to future generations through traditional methods such as tamoko, whakairo, raranga, whaikorero and waiata. This research aimed to add to the methods of storytelling with functional pieces that one can surround themselves with in a modern setting.

As we move towards an increasingly technological world, Māori are well placed to get the most out of the advances made in technology whilst preserving strong cultural identity and practices. Māori have long history of innovation, one determined by cultural need and based on Aotearoa's distinctive culture and environment. Technology is constantly developing; it's up to Māori to assess how contemporary technologies can be used within a traditional framework. This research has been my assessment.

Despite the technological advances of media and design explored in these works, mnemonic devices such as iconography and the integrity of function over pure ‘decoration’ encourage an engagement or understanding of both narrative and role in society that the object serves. Despite their apparent ‘non-traditional’ appearance, the ‘viewer’ perceives the object as embedded within a cultural context.

As I have achieved greater mastery of contemporary design tools, I have become increasingly aware of how Māori viewed the traditional tool itself and its relationship to the artist and material in engaging Māori principles and beliefs. Conceptualising the tools of the artist within this epistemology builds continuity for the development of Māori cultural expression.

My hope is that my own design tikanga inspires more Māori to seek inspiration and relevance, for them as contemporary Māori artists, in the fields of design. Toi Māori will continue to shape our physical and intellectual landscape in Māori art/design as it did for our ancestors ensuring knowledge is preserved for future generations.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 – The interview process

Part of my research included consulting and interviewing relevant practitioners in Māori art and design. To a great extent Māori design, especially large scale works such as the wharenui, there is communal input in the design and creation of the work. Even on a smaller scale, such as with the creation of a tiki, the interaction between the artist and their tūpuna continues.

The interviews in the following appendices were undertaken with leading Māori designers on their use of contemporary modes of creation and expression in their designs. This is a very important step as their process, understanding and insight has guided and assisted me to develop my own design philosophy. Initially I emailed the interviewees a set of questions which conformed to VUW ethical processes. This questionnaire presented my pepeha and gave an indication of the direction of my thesis and the underlying impact of design on my tikanga. On meeting the interviewees the questions became open ended, with overlapping prompts generating a conversation that explored other paths related to the topic of contemporary Māori design.

Contemporary Māori design questions:

- What do you think contemporary Māori design is and what are your thoughts on it?
- Who do you think is creating good Māori design? Why?
- What do you think makes contemporary Māori design successful?
- What direction do you think contemporary Māori design is heading?
- Are there any elements consistent in contemporary Māori design that you have seen?
- Do you think Māori could be better represented in the areas of contemporary Māori design?
- What do you think are the differences between traditional and contemporary Māori design?
- Do you think contemporary Māori design contributes to the New Zealand/ Māori society?
- Where would you like to see contemporary Māori design in the next 5 years?
- Where do you gain stimulation from that helps you generate your own designs?
- Who inspires you? Are any of them Māori?
- Have you undertaken design work for Māori?
- What is your design experience in the Māori context?
- Can you describe your own design process when dealing with Māori components?
- What cultural elements are involved in your design process?
- Do you use Māori motifs? Where are they sourced from?
- What are your thoughts of the appropriation of Māori cultural relics by designers?
- Do you think there are ethical and moral responsibilities to maintain? Or can anybody take advantage?
- Do you feel strict guidelines must be followed when dealing with Māori inspired design?
- Is there a permission seeking process that you are aware of?
- Do you think cultural communication is important?

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON
Te Whare Wananga o te Upoko o te Ika a Maui

School of Design
Te Kura Hoahoa

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH

Project Title: Mātauranga Māori Me Tikanga and Contemporary Design Technology

Email to participants:

Ko Rākaumangamanga te maunga

Ko Taumarere te awa

Ko Ipipiri te Moana

Ko Ngā toki matawhaorua te waka

Ko Ngāpuhi te Iwi

Ko Ngāti Kuta me Patu Keha ngā hapū

Ko Te Rawhiti te Marae

Ko Shelly rāua Wiremu Alamein ōku mātua.

Ko David Hakaraia Tōku ingoa

I am a Design Masters Student at the Victoria University School of Architecture and Design School in Wellington. My research topic is 'Mātauranga Māori Me Tikanga & Contemporary Design Technology'. I will be looking at contemporary technology/methods to express Māori narrative and the tikanga and matauranga required around this sort of work. As a well known professional in your field I am very interested to come and meet you in person and hear your thoughts about the process you go through to create your work.

An outline of my research project is attached below along with some possible questions I would like to ask you.

If you agree to take part in my research can you please print and sign this consent form, scan it then e-mail it back to me as a PDF attachment.

Thank you for your time.
Yours sincerely,

David Hakaraia
I agree to be interviewed for the purposes of the student assignment named above and to have the interview recorded.

The purpose and nature of the interview has been explained to me, and I have read the participant information sheet.

I agree that the interview will be recorded on a Dictaphone.

I agree to have my opinions attributed to me.

I understand that I am able to withdraw from being an interviewee until Friday 20 December 2010.

Name of interviewee: _____

Signature of interviewee: _____

Date: _____

This study is being carried out by a student from the School of Design, Victoria University of Wellington. If you have any questions or would like to receive further information about the project, please contact;

Robin Skinner
Senior Lecturer
School of Architecture
Victoria University of Wellington
P O Box 600
Wellington 6140

Phone: (04) 463 6273.

Appendix 2 – Carin Wilson interview

Interview with David Hakaraia 15/07/2010

Carin Wilson has been designing and making furniture for a couple of decades. His work is beautifully crafted and draws on our culture's rich history. He has implemented several tertiary art education programmes and is currently teaching at a studio called Te Hononga with Māori Architect Rau Hoskins at Auckland University. This Undergraduate studio is vertically streamed to take 2nd, 3rd and 4th year students, so that there is good exchange of experience transferring from Carin and Rau down to the varying levels of students. This method of teaching ensures everyone benefits from the knowledge being shared. Carin is putting into practice both westernized and traditional methods of teaching where the traditional methods of teaching is that of a tohunga (expert practitioner).

What is your philosophy on the way students are taught?

It starts with students who have apprenticed themselves to the tohunga. These younger guys were able to attach themselves to these highly skilled craftspeople, and they talked of the magic of the experience and just of the privilege of learning how to sharpen the chisel. Because that guy had figured ways of using certain grits on the edge of the chisel when he sharpened it that just gave it a beautiful edge, so they were all things that you seldom learn at institutions because most people who are working in institutions, they really don't have time to do the stuff. Something that I've noticed to be absolutely true over the years is when they are teaching, you've very seldom got a decent body of work coming from those people. Especially now the demands of being an educator have just got so great that you're just so bound up in all the red tape. You are not doing stuff that you really love to do.

To cut a long story short, I am trying to nurture this stream of setting something like this up. And really Te Hononga, the studio that Rau (Hoskins) and I do at the school of architecture, is kind of an expression of that. It's us going out into the field and taking a body of students with us. We always try to stay on the location if possible so you've kind of got that marae like experience. It may not be on a marae, nevertheless it's still staying together cooking – you know, hanging out at night, and not going home, but really a high concentrated experience.

So I had this dream to establish something like that and, you know, it does really work for me in the city. I also really wanted it to be in the bush maybe or in one of those beautiful parts of New Zealand that we all love. So I've got this piece of land just up past Mangawhai up north and I'm building new studio space there. I'm basically building an environment where we can do this thing, where we can live this dream. That's a major part of what I'm doing at the moment. Like we have got the structure of the building up now and I'm going through the process of getting a roofer in and laying the floor. I kind of project manage it and I'll work for a week putting the structure up with a couple of friends and I'll keep it trickling along. But our Te Hononga studio will be going on this site so our studio project is about building something with recycled materials and really giving the students in the studio a chance to learn. We stayed up there a week and we are going back there Labour Weekend for another week to finish it off.

Are these students' undergrad students or post grad students?

Undergrad students for this studio, we call it vertical streaming – we take second, third and fourth year students and put them together so that you've really got a nice exchange of experience going on,It sort of trickles from Rau and I down to the fourth years and on to the third years and the second years really get to benefit from that.

Are they Māori students or a mixed culture

Definitely mixed cultures, but the emphasis we are doing is on Māori and Polynesian. But we've been doing this since 2001 and the word has got around the school that A) this a very good studio if you want to understand Māori and pacific cultures; B) It's a good studio because you get more practical experience than you would in the whole five years of doing this degree; and C) for the foreign students, it gives them an insight into Māori culture in particular, and into a fragment of life in Aotearoa that they wouldn't otherwise see. We've found we have been getting some of the best results from those foreign students because they really get into it – and from some of the stuff they write, you know, they take it on as a very deep research opportunity to understand a culture other than their own.

What do you think contemporary Māori design is and what are your thoughts on it?

We could just about go on for the day just talking about contemporary Māori design – what is it for me. First of all, it's a chance to mix it with technology, definitely. I think if you look back, if you just go right back to the fascination with the nail, which is where Māori interest in

technology began, as far as I can tell. We were trading baskets of kumara and potatoes for nails. Why? Simply because it represented a different technology than what was available to them at the time. So even though we showed tremendous skill in developing and understanding the technologies we were using around pounamu, rakau and the harakeke and all those materials, we figured a way to make them work for us.

We straight away leapt in to the advantages of this new technology. That to me explains a lot about my fascination for the technologies that are available to us now. I just think that the opportunities available through CNC technology and being able to create something on a program here save it as a Dfx file and send it to someone else, and talk with them about how to process it and work through those process issues with them. I'm finding that this is a really interesting part of just opening a whole new vista of opportunity in my own work. So there is that, but that's no good on its own unless we are strongly anchoring it in cultural values and in this thing that I call a sense of place. I think that sense of place is best expressed in the mythologies. So I keep going back to what I think is the mythological underpinning of the culture, mythology and cosmology.

The works that were written by some of those early enquirers who wrote stuff for the *Journal of the Polynesian Society (JPS)* and so on, where they talked to people that we don't have access to now and where generations have diluted the narrative in such a way that we almost have to return to some of those JPS writings in order to grab the essence of what they were talking about at the time. So for me in what I'm doing there is a very rich lode – this sort of mining lode of information for us to tap into that can totally re-inform the way we are going about what we are doing now, sort of adding another layer to the authenticity of our expression of our self in a cultural sense.

Who do you think is creating good Māori design and why?

I think I've already said it, Rangi Kipa and Lyonel Grant – both guys who have just really hit the peak, when you've hit your straps and there are people wanting to buy your work it just gives you an incredible sense of confidence about what you can do and what you're willing to risk that demand that you push it that much further. So I think those guys are doing great work. But I think as Māori I would like to suggest that we expand the horizon beyond. I mean we are, we work in 3D but think there is some tremendously inspiring work being done in theatre dance and music. I think that we are all feeding each other in a way. I know that what's developing out of the expression of music I find that very inspiring.

For me part of my practice is finding the rhythm of interaction with the material. I don't want to sound too obtuse, but I think there is a rhythmic character to all materials and there are some things you can push it to do and there are some things you just can't. You've got to understand what that is. There is even a rhythm about the use of machines, I've seen people try to get a machine to do something and the machine blows up because they don't understand or they don't get the beat of it and I think that my take on it is part of what it is to be Polynesian – is that we have the capability to understand these things because we are kind or engaging in all of those processes at a level that is beyond the mere physical. Our sensory apparatus gives us a chance to sort of strike that harmonic kind of vibe with whatever it is that we are working with. That when it's at its best, that's what enables really great results to come out.

With the work that I'm interested in, I've been looking at products like furniture and lighting, and the thing is that I can't find much work apart from yours that deal with Māori design in the realms of functional contemporary design. When I have looked at work by other New Zealanders and Māori they have taken two separate things furniture design and Māori motif and they merge them together so that it's a sort of a surface treated piece of furniture – not to say that some of this work is not beautiful, because it is. It's just that I want to create something that has that Māori narrative, but does not necessarily have to have Māori motifs and iconography to express these narratives. I want to be able to position or marry the materials together to tell these stories. I find it difficult to find Māori practitioners doing that sort of work.

Definitely there is a lack of contemporary Māori design in our field but I find it is a challenge. I totally identify with what you're saying. We are moved to do things that not many other cultures are moved to do, because all the time going on in the sub-conscious of our creative process, there's this proposition about whakapapa. You know, I've only really only come to understand this through some of the readings that I've done.

For me we can't separate ourselves from the notion that we are a part of what we are working with, you know... because we see that. I tried to explain it a moment ago in a way that sort of suggested that there is some sort of cellular connection going on, creating a kind of metaphysical resonance. And it's very hard to put into words too.

What I think is when the creative process is really working for us is when we bring a number of elements together, and what we are looking for is that sort of that sympathetic interaction of one material with another, connecting at a molecular level rather than purely at a material

level. So it creates certain demands on your creative capabilities because you're trying to do something that is quite deep in your psyche. But at the same time you have to grapple with it at a physical level and it's just the pure performance characteristics of the material. So when it's really starting to work you sort of mange to cross a boundary that almost enables them to start speaking to each other. When that happens there is a magic about it. This is why I like reading about mythologies and there is some amazing material that has been written. There was a friend of mine that gave me a book for my birthday and it was called '*A fire in the mind'* and it's about the life of an American guy and he was instrumental actually in helping to develop some of the thematic content of the first Star Wars movie, which essentially has a whole lot of mythological stuff that comes out of Star Wars and addresses some of these issues I have mentioned.

There is one body of writing that talks about the alchemist and the way he turned iron into gold and that sort of stuff. You know, that writing is not about fanciful propositions – it's that there can be a certain sort of transmutation of energy and form that in the right hands can make that leap.
And I think that the most ambitious of our aspirations as makers is kind of dealing with some of those questions, and our inclination as Māori and Polynesian is to want to engage with what we are doing at that level. Now the hard thing about that is that it demands a lot of focus and a high energetic application to what we want to achieve and we have to be persistent. So as it is, a lot of aspirations of Māori designers are not being realised at the moment because in their training the dimension missing is what in the past would have been transferred as knowledge from the tohunga, right?

Now tohungatanga was about understanding these things that I was talking about. And so in the past someone who was selected from an early age to learn those things would have been coaxed along in the understanding of these quietly invisible dimensions of the practice – but you're not going to get that from design school

To establish the over arching of Nga Aho (A Māori collective of designer, architects and Artists) is important, which is why the programme we are doing with Te Hohonga is also important. Because at least there we can begin to try and transfer and pass on some of those propositions. We have to go back into research to try and find some of that knowledge and then from research we have to move it from distant intellectual understanding into application and practice so this is really what I think Māori design is all about right now. And I just think there are few people that have managed to hit, who have really been fortunate enough to sort of ... just through the advantages of their upbringing or through the people

they have come into contact with or they are just absolutely brilliant in what they do, but they have kind of got it.

I just read the book by Ranginui Walker about Paki Harrison. You've got to take every single element from Paki's upbringing you know from is stately character of his grandmother Mataroa and all that sort of Ngāti Parou heritage and you've got to see that, that carries through in contacts that he made thought his life and then how he gradually began to draw it out in the expression in his work. For me it was Ching our master carver down in Ngāti Awa, we would talk about something and a couple of sentences from that guy, and I'd think 'of course why didn't I think of that', but it just falls off the tip of his tongue. Unless you have access to that then I think what you've got is design just going on in this rather Securitas meaningless way. For example creating a table in the shape of a Koru and calling it Māori design when it's not is, as you have said,as you've said - ultimately disposable and don't really have any intrinsic mana or wairua. They are just products of a process. That's what I've found with some of the surface treated objects that I've seen – they don't have the same integrity as the older works done by Māori.
I think you have to trust that response. That's the first thing you trust, that and then you begin... and you use that trust in what you are seeing and what you are perceiving in that work like in those dimensions beyond what your eyes are telling you, you're picking up something else. As you learn to trust that, then the trust of what you invest in, then your own process becomes better informed. Because, you know that you've seen something that has alerted you to a kind of indefinable quality and it's that indefinable quality, as far as I can tell in all the work that I've seen all over the world, that makes it special. So what is it you're trying to do? Well you're trying to put something in it that somebody else will pick up in the same way that you do.

What do you think makes contemporary design successful?

It is some of what we have talked about – but for it to be successful to me, it's definitely referencing not necessarily imagery from the past. It is looking to express in a contemporary way some of those things that have occurred over several hundred years of the evolution of the Māori culture in Polynesia. It has been left to us as the legacy of that time, so we as Māori have developed an approach to design and design iconography that is quite different to Samoan or Tongan. There is something about life in Aotearoa that produces a certain passion, likes it's in some of the moves of our carvers and it's in the way that we developed some extraordinary expertise in our understanding of the fibre materials and so in the way that we work with harakeke and pingau. There's enormous evidence of truly understanding

the potential of the materials, and so for me contemporary design has also got to continue the evidence of that level of capability. I'm talking about this a lot but that sympathetic interaction with the material really has got to be in evidence for that work to be able to speak to me.

How has your work defined you and how did you get to be where you are?

It was an Italian household that I was bought up in. My father was training in Christchurch to be a pilot –all the mates that flew with him at the time that I've met tell me that he was an extraordinary pilot. He met this Italian women my mother in Christchurch while he was training to go flying in the Pacific, and she came from a family where her father was a watch maker and her mother was an opera singer. They had come to New Zealand, we are not clear what was the main driver about them coming out here, but my grandfather did say to me his father had said to him, that there really wasn't enough room for both of them to live there (laughs about it). So there was this sort of heritage – so my early childhood was about Italian ways as they live in lived in the Italian community which was a small and quite close knit community, very whānau like in the way that it operated.

But the things that I remember best about childhood were the trips we used to take to see my father's mother who was up in Whakatane and the visits to where they lived in a little house adjacent to the marae, to Rangihouhiri. She embodied for me a quality about Māori women which I think is pretty special, her aroha is one of the most memorial experiences of my childhood - as with my Italian grandmother, she allowed me to engage with her wairua which I really appreciated hugely.

Carin went to Victoria University and studied Law and a BA then went on to work in the record industry. He also did a management course with the Institute of Management before travelling overseas.

The thing with my travel overseas is that I was always in art galleries or museums and every city that I went to that was the first place that I wanted to go and my constant companion most of that time was the book '*The Coming of the Māori'* which was written by Te Rangi Hiroa. This book gave me a chance to engage with Māori culture anywhere I was in the world. I came back to New Zealand after having seen the work of artists and designers which sort of filled me with this inspiration to do something myself.

A couple of things then happened. One, we bought a little cottage which was pretty run down. We had very little money so I started making furniture for it and a friend of mine who saw some of the furniture commission me to make something for her. I made something for her and sort of took the money that she made for it and said none of our household expense can touch any of this, it's going to buy me the next timber that I will use to make the next thing I was going to make. So it was sort of pretty much hand to mouth in that sense and a number of things started to happen.

Another guy, who was already established in Christchurch city as a blacksmith, saw some of the work that I was doing and he said I should keep going and just those words of encouragement took me a step further. I put an exhibition together and one guy who had been working in the furniture industry all of his life in England was working part time for a big furniture stall in Christchurch and he came along. I had no idea that he had come along with the authority to buy all of the work if he liked it, and he asked how much would it be as "I'd like to buy it" - so I just totted up these figures, gave them to him and he takes out his cheque book and writes it out and said "when the exhibition is over deliver it to the store and I'll put it on display". Really the place for my work to be seen was in exhibition rather than in a retail environment, so I quickly began to target the way I presented my work through exhibitions rather than going out into the market and finding agents and retailers. My whole modus operandi was about putting a show together, so my first exhibition was in a real gallery at the Canterbury Society of Arts gallery, about 3-4 years after I started making stuff and that proved to be quite an important thing to do. It got reviewed in the newspaper and then people started coming to me because they read reviews and when they started coming then the confidence came with the affirmation of what I was doing. All of my learning was coming from books and magazines that I was reading, which I was investing in hugely. If I could find a book that would enable for me to hear somebody else's story or begin to engage deeper into the process I found was working for me then (clicks his fingers like that's the one!) I never hesitated to buy it.

But the most important thing that happened right though that whole experience was in the little property that we bought. I found an old gate under the hedge – it was weathered and I didn't know what the timber was. I started with a little block plane that I owned and worked my way back through the layers of the timber. There were two really important things that happened to me while this was going on. First of all I could see that there was a certain quality about the way the timber was weathered, I was beginning to uncover beneath the surface, and it was like there was a certain dialogue about the past-present. The other thing is I made a direct connection with the wairua of the timber or the mauri of it. It was that connection that just turned my life around like from that moment I knew what I needed to do.

Something had enabled me to make this connection and so that is why most of my early years was about working with wood and trying to unlock that potential that I saw.

What do you think is the difference between traditional and contemporary?

What's fantastic about the opportunity we have now is that we do have access to the legacy of our traditions, but I don't think we are fully appreciative of how rich that is. I'm saying I don't think the skills are being taught in the right way, there is a missing dimension, so we should be investing more *[in our traditions]* and draw that out. Some of it is coming out in master's thesis and PhD that are being written and that's great. But that knowledge has almost got to become part of the foundation principles on which the work is then developed. And it seems to me that it's the moment that it just exists (chuckles) as a curious dimension of our history or our heritage, but we are not looking to it as a really kind of primary driver of how authentic Māori design should evolve.

I am hopeful through Nga aho, the perfect example from that hui is the contribution that Hare (Friend) made. He has wisely seen that role of encouraging us to still respect the process around Karakia and so on was important.

With the karakia and the waiata, how do you think they help with the design process?

Well I don't consider myself to be religious but I think that we as Māori can't resist the notion that we are guided by our whakapapa all the way back to Ranginui and Papatūānuku i.e. those relationships with the elements, Tangaroa, Tāwhirimātea, Tāne Mahuta.
Whenever we have built a whare, whenever we have been out in the field on one of our Te Hononga studios, before we start building there is the karakia and we have always planted underneath one of the Pou, a stone to invest the mauri in the structure. When I started building this structure up north I got up when the sun was coming up and I went down to the stream that runs down through the property. I collected some stones from the stream and bought them up the hill, and on my own me and the Atua there in the morning just had this little ceremony of planting one of them in each of the buildings and kind of speaking like really from my heart about how I want them to favour this whole thing that we were doing there. The other thing was that Hare has taught me to offer some appreciation, like be thankful for what it is we have. And, shit, it was such a good feeling just being there doing that stuff and manifesting that communication in a way that sort of came from the deepest part of myself. I think that the way that I work in the world is as close as I can get to making

that connection with the Atua and with whoever it is that is looking after us in the physical environment.

What I've learnt from elders about karakias and Tauparapara (takutaku) is that you have to look to your surrounding before you proceed. Initially I had never actually thought about that, the looking for signs in the environment and the surroundings that will help you out with your decisions whether it's a physical or a metaphysical queue? I think you need to be less self absorbed when make these calls

I'm enjoying some of the historic writing about the observers that came from England. The thing that amazed them was how well tuned Māori were with the environment and that they have it because that's what they grew to understand. Genetically it's been past down to us, it's just that some of it has been diluted by the way the society has evolved. You know you've got sort of 85% of the thrust and direction of the society coming from a culture that doesn't see the same value in those things that we do.

I realise I need to learn but It's not something I'm going to get just doing a masters it's going to take my whole life and even then that might not be enough.

It will always be like that, you will just go from level to level and I can assure you of I will be learning till my life's end too.

Where would you like to see contemporary Māori design in the future?

Well here's a point you see, you ask a really interesting question. For contemporary Māori design to survive we have got to have interest in the work and while we are going to find some interest in the work from Māori we are actually quite dependent on a lot of interest in our work coming from the Pākehā population. That's the key to its survival and there is like a growing communication between Māori designers and the market. I'm not talking about that in the manipulative sense – I'm talking about it in a very genuine and honest engagement in fostering that understanding of what it is that we are doing. I think that I can say from my experience that there is a very strong listening for that out there in the market place because a lot of my clients and a lot of my work that is being commissioned for me has been commissioned by the Pākehā in our society. They really appreciate the opportunity to engage at a level that gives them a stronger sense of connection with the Māori people

I have heard from a couple of Māori artists that a lot of Māori can't afford their work and some of their work is sent off overseas to foreign buyers. How do you gauge the amount you charge for your work?

All Māori artists work at different levels. We all work, not because we are compelled to but because we like to embrace the proposition of Koha (gift) as a way of being rewarded for our work. I've done work that the cost more to produce than the cost I have negotiated. But there is that thing about koha at work there for me. If I want somebody to have it and if I'm in the position to be able to produce it and let them have it – for me it's all about the connection and interaction. So I'll just do it. I mean it's kind of been like that all my life.

Actually I will always produce and negotiate a price for work that has got very little to do with what it costs to make it. But once again I think it just is a characteristic of who we are (as a Māori creator) – but other artists, who think that Māori cannot afford our work, are right too – because that's a framework that we operate in. Māori as a community or as societies haven't got to the point where we value stuff on that sort of dollar award for dollar invested basis. There are areas where you will see the right price paid for the work – like korowai (Māori Cloak)for example – because they are strong symbolic sort of value in having the korowai and you know that when you buy it, you're buying it for generations. I mean there's 12 months or more that can go into a kakahu (type of Māori cloak), but they are still being sold for $30,000. Well, you know, it's hardly enough. If you're trying to own a roof over your head... and it does sound a lot of money for a woven garment but it is isn't really in the overall scheme of things, if you are applying the proper value to it, then that's a $150,000 work. It's just if you apply cost principles to it and you look at all the distribution from artist to gallery and then out into the market, then that's what it should be. So it's true that there may not be that many Māori in society that are willing to pay the true cost of what it's costing, but there may be some that will.

There is a company in Italy that makes really superb furniture and there is a very high front-end investment in their furniture product. It can take four to five years from the idea to get the product to the market place. I used to think to myself I don't know why it takes them so long from an idea to the way it manifests in its finished form. So I'm looking at 150-200 hours. How come it's taking you that long? But that was before I understood that every single screw and casting and all that sort of thing goes through a really intensive quality control and production process. And they were so exact about the way they go about it that it does take a long time, and by the time they are ready to launch it to market they can already produce 5000 of them. So, all that adds to the cost as well. So, they work on the principle that 0.6 of

1% of the total world population is likely to be interested in their product. So their market analysis is gone to that level where they have to be able to define that range as being the potential.

I think that's what we have to do to take our work out there to the market and to see it bought by Māori. We have to engage in those conversations that the ideas that it is world product that they should be investing their disposable dollar in, rather than the work of Māori artists. For me to surround myself with the things that properly express who I am and my relationship with my culture then I should be looking for the work of Māori designers and other Māori artists. But the truth is they don't even know who they are, they don't know who you are and they don't know about the work you are producing. We have work to do in building an understanding within our own culture of the quality of the work and the potential that it has to enhance their lives. It's in helping each other to find the market that we are going to be able to survive. How our society used to work is. We used to support our artists right? We fed them, in the time of tohungatanga. We housed them; we basically provided them with all their needs that were going to enable them to do their work. It's not the same society we are living in now and the money economy has definitely replaced a lot of the ways we were able to do that. But the idea that art only comes out of desperate circumstances, and that you have to find yourself on the bread line – you know, I don't subscribe to that.As a society I think we have never subscribed to that either because we have always made sure that our artists are comfortable, and we still do I think.

Yes, I remember reading some of what you have just said in the book about Ranginui Walker and how the changes from traditional Koha had changed to monetary imbursements. And how the hierarchy of the establishment he was working for were using tikanga and tapu as a way to control the way he worked. (*Carin laughs at this*)

Did you find you find that interesting? I thought that was the most fascinating part of that book, the others that sort to control his work or once the work had been done they wound themselves up to take the honour for it. Man I was just... (laughs about it in exasperation). Oh every Māori artist or designer should read it.

Yes definitely an amazing book.

Do you use Māori elements or cultural motifs in your work?

That's really some of the important stuff that I'm involved with at the moment because of what I'm trying to do with my work right now. I'm trying to give expression to some of our mythologies which are (points to a piece on the wall (below))

There is a narrative going on here about Ruamoko and there's another one about the land and its formation and finding ways to give expression to that. It's sort of a important impulse or driver that is going on with my work at the moment and also honouring some of this stuff [markings done by chiefs to represent themselves on a legal document of 1831]. All artists are fascinated by mark making, but I'm really interested in how to articulate all of these signatories to that document – where in generating a mark that reflected for them for how they saw their own tohu.

What I think is really interesting is that they knew how to do it. This is at a time before we had begun to develop those skills in the alphabet. Now there is stuff about the alphabet and the limitations of it, which I think are really important.A few years ago a friend of mine gave me a book. I'll just ready you this passage it tells me so much about who we are as a culture.

The dominant organ of sensory and societal orientation of pre-alphabet societies was the ear the phonetic alphabet forced the magic world of the ear to yield to the neutral world of the eye so man was given an eye for an ear. Western history was shaped for some 300 years by the introduction of the phonetic alphabet a medium that depends solely on the eye for comprehension so you've got this capacity for the ear to be hearing and to be transferred to the eye, the alphabet is a construct of fragmented bits and parts which have no semantic meaning in themselves and which must be strung together in a line bead like in a prescribed order, it's use fostered and encouraged the habit of perceiving all environment in visual and spatial terms particularly in terms of a space and of time that are uniform, continuous and connected.

So the line the continuum became the organising principle of life, so what the alphabet did was force us down a track where expression became linear rather than comprehensive and multi sensory. My evidence for that is that these forms that our ancestors were able to generate as expressions of themselves had nothing to do with that kind of linearity. What I'm trying to look to do is to find our way back and to recover a time when we were operating more at that level. This I think is the key difference between pre-European Māori society and our society now – that we did function at a multisensory level. I think that the two import clues we have to work with at the moment are the tohu and the cave drawings which are the only record that we have of other symbolism or imagery generated in the pre colonial culture. I see those as the two guiding beacons if you like for us in shaping a Māori expression of the future. We've really got to go back and integrate into the way that they were able to see the world as unfettered by these linear processes. Linearity is becoming more and more a driver a lot more architecture is driven by that (laughs about it). Why I like the challenge of working with technology is that we have to force the technology back away from the purely linear which it's very capable of doing. We are also capable of having it turn to producing what we want it to do, but we have to engage with it and the technicians in order for it make it work for us better.

The knowledge that you gain to create your work, is it your interpretation of it, or are you trying to make it a collective where everybody has input into what it is, and then come up with a concept?

No, I think that we all do it in our own way, but there is an inevitably a process that comes out of korero/talking with each other and we like to do that, we like to understand. I mean me and Ross (Ross Hemera) just happened to talk to him about how fascinated I was by those cave drawings and the reason why I use them or use that facsimile of them to line the Aotea space at Māori television with them, because they are icons they are truly a part of our iconography. But one of the people on the board at the time when we were putting that space together said 'Carin why did you use all that weird stuff out there?' and I said 'Didn't you know that it was our ancestors that produced those?' And she said, 'No, I never knew that.'

I think a lot of people would know that they can only identify Māori tohu such as Koru as being distinctly Māori. I have found some people think that the Māori design that were created in the classical period were the pinnacle of our culture.

Yes, yes like Uenuku and the kaitaia lintels (well known Māori carvings)(laughs) and that we can't surpass that level.
I look at Rangi's Kipa's work and Lyonel Grant's marae... Mind you that is a very interesting period to be investigated by us as designers and I think of it kind of like this – I'll try and paint the picture for you. Arrival in Aotearoa, fish just about jumping out of the water, forest, huge trees: it must of been just like arriving in paradise. You just about had everything you needed, the moa! Then over a period of time – we are talking centuries –resources started to diminish and before long we found ourselves in the situation where we were really competing for control of those resources. There is a period where a lot of that really interesting work came from, the times of Uenuku and the Kaitaia lintel and so on. That was period when life must have really been happening, like going great. And out of that maybe some of that really interesting stuff was coming from that time when life here was full of wonder and probably relatively comfortable and we had time to give our attention to what we were doing. So we probably discovered the ways that we could work the pounamu and all of that during that period. I think that for us as designers there is a certain magic about that work did come out from around that time. And we should be working to recapture the essence of it and integrate it into the way that we are working now.

Another thing people say is, 'If it has no Māori motifs on the work then it is not Māori', and things like, 'There was no furniture back in the old days so that can't be considered Māori either'. What do you think about those statements?

I just kind of dismiss it as uninformed bullshit. The waka, right, the ocean was just like a big ocean plain to us. Whoever designed these amazing craft that could traverse that plain. We worked out the engineering, like what made them hang together and what didn't work. Not only that but we understood how to move about on that plain. We designed or developed systems that enabled us to navigate those craft – like a hierarchy, like an order on board the vessel so that there was command and everybody had their job and so on. And some of that I'm sure has also been transposed to the land-based systems, so there is a certain commonality about the organisation.

So we can't separate the way the cultures have been working on the land from the way it evolved on the waka, because that is what bought us here and it was only our competence as sailors, or whatever you want to call them, of those craft that enabled us to get here. We did live a life that was largely unprotected from the elements like we had learnt to work with the elements. Alot of the comforts in our life came from the clothing that we produced to protect ourselves. So that's where our expertise was. We only crawled into the whare to

sleep. And there is evidence that we fashioned head rests, which could be seen as a form of furniture.
Now furniture wasn't necessary to the way life that was happening at that time. But if you look at the throne seat at the museum that came from Rarotonga, furniture did exist in the Polynesian culture. It's just that we weren't deeply focused on the production of it because we had found other ways to live in our environment. But being Māori designers does not mean we can't engage, because huge transformations have taken place in our lives.

What are your thoughts of the appropriation of Māori culture by designers?

What do you mean? The appropriation of our motifs outside our culture?

Yes.

Like the toy maker?

That's right the Bionicle toys by Lego with Māori names.

Yes, which Lego withdrew once they were told about it. I mean it was those first Pākehā that came here. They were truly fascinated by this culture. We want Pākehā New Zealanders, I mean, we really want anybody who is an immigrant, anybody who came after us we want them to respect our culture and to acknowledge our status as Tangata Whenua. So we are asking them to do that and one of the ways that they can show their appreciation of the culture and their willingness to engage in that understanding is by doing the things that we do, engage in the mythologies.

Recognising the creation myth of Rangi and Papa is easily as valid as what is written in Genesis. That over seven days the creation of our world was made. I think when people from another culture first came into contact with us here in Aotearoa, they were really quite intrigued by this other view of how all this came about. And most people just love the story of Rangi and Papa because it's just so romantic in its own way. So what are they going to do, well they are going to do exactly what's happened – you've got Pākehā illustrators and writers rewriting and illustrating the mythology in the way that they have come to understand it, and have accepted ownership of it. So in a way what we've done is said, 'Well for you to properly engage in a society in Aotearoa where both cultures respect each other, then just as you might want us to understand where you are coming from, we want you to understand

where we are coming from'. And what we are finding is that's happening, our view of certain things how to engage with the environment was so compelling that, that is what they want to be, right? So in a way we have set a little bit of a trap for ourselves, we've drawn them into the trap and once we have gotten them in there then we don't necessarily want them to stay (laughs about this).

So I think we have to be very careful about the way we are criticising at the moment. The way that a Pākehā artist or designer, for example, might look at something that he admires, that has come out of our heritage and feels moved. The conversation that we have to start carrying on with them is not to plagiarise it, but to acknowledge it,.engage in its further development in your own way. Don't look to the kowhaiwhai and pick up one of those patterns, but really engage in the origination of the kowhaiwhai and get yourself to a point where kowhaiwhai as a decorative element is now being extended in way where you can actually call it your own. I think only you and I as designers can do that, and that is the reason that Te Hononga is important. If we see something come up in the design awards, for example, that is heavily borrowed on Māori iconography, then I think we have got to be willing to say this is not the right way to have done it.

I've got this PowerPoint presentation that I have taken to a couple of architectural firms and I've kind of walked them through it and said: 'Look if you want to be really authentic about producing and conceptualising the stuff you are making at the moment then I think that as the culture of your practice you've got to take it on and this is the right way to go about it'. I think that it's going to satisfy us as Māori that we are not being plundered for the rich load of imagery that has been produced by the culture, but that we are also not just standing there and criticising it. We are getting out there and engaging in the process.

Appendix 3 – Rangi Kipa interview

Interview with David Hakaraia 18/07/2010

Do you think there is a requirement to do contemporary Māori design, because you yourself are using corian a contemporary material? Especially in regards to my area of design which encompasses products and furniture.

There should be Māori stuff everywhere because this is our part of the world, so it doesn't make any difference what it's in. It should be in everything, it should be in product design, industrial design, in everything. That's just the reflection of our part of the world, so the answer is 'yes'. I don't know about a whether it's a 'requirement' because that's a funny word 'requirement'. What I think is that if we are honest to ourselves about who we are then a reflection of who we are would answer that question as being 'yes'. So if we are talking about being honest about who we are instead of the traditional imports of western models of whatever, culture and so on, if we are just a bit more responsive and a bit more honest about who we are, then Māori design alongside collaborative expressions of identity would be evident in all aspects of our lives. Many contemporary Māori artists and designers have broken with the historically culturally loaded imperatives of communal narration and have begun to emphasise their own narratives journeys that seeks to define who they are in a world that is not bound by, or oriented from, a Māori epistemological world view.

So does that lead into what you think contemporary design is?

Māori design full stop is the reflection of our existence and our presence in this world. So I have a problem with the word contemporary, because it splits it into time frames. And I'm not sure if that is actually relevant. We just don't live today and then tomorrow have no recognition of our accumulated cultural history and accumulated social history, we are manifestations of all the time before us as well as the present existence that we have and present experiences. So there will be times as a contemporary practising artist e.g. a person who is practicing in the here and now that I don't practice yesterday, I practice here and now. That's the accumulation and experience of previous manifestations of our cultural and social design language, as well as ones that I'm experiencing as a living entity today here and now.

Ok, so not everybody would agree with that – that there is a separation between past and present.

So the problems lie in when you start using the terms ‘contemporary’ and ‘traditional’ – there is a debate about value. In some sectors of our world people will imply that things that are created today somehow don’t have the same mana as things created in the old days.

Yeah, that’s bull!

Exactly, bullshit because if that’s the case then that means we are a watered down version of something that existed in another time. Bullshit!

I’ve always thought that our culture has always evolved, so we should be evolving our culture again and looking at new opportunities to express ourselves. Do you agree or what do you think?

Yeah, well there are a whole lot of reasons why that idea is out there and we could probably talk about that and give you some history about that later. What I’m trying to say is as soon as you’ve made that distinction between contemporary and tradition you start engaging in a debate that is, I think, unhelpful for everybody. So I think once you understand what the issue of the nature of what that debate is you just start talking about design.

See for me, I’m not even interested in really having the discussion around Māori design. I’m simply interested in design and people look at my work and go that’s Māori design – but it’s simply that people look at my life and my life happens to be Māori orientated. But I don’t see myself that way. I just see myself as living my life and that just happens to be the life that I’ve had. But when you compare to someone that hasn’t had any contact with Māori, quite evidently they will class it as Māori design. I find what I do more interesting than Pākehā stuff, because I find that there is a lack of engagement with our environment through Pākehā design.

What do you think is successful design within our culture?

For me successful design is design that works well, and design that works well can have a number of different ways with which you can measure that. It might be that it fills a particular engagement with the principles of design. Also look at it in another level, design might simply be that it’s contextualized within New Zealand, that it’s contextualised within certain community, so it might be successful because it has meaning. People find some relevance or connection to it because it’s a reflection of their world, their environment or social history, or social cultural context. So you might design something that is made out of materials that

harkens back to a time that reflects the Māori presence in this land and people draw a connection to it on the basis of that. Also you might design another product that looks like a flower of a pohutakawa, which everyone understands what the context is and kind of has a latent love affair with it because it's a reflection of their summer experiences for their life time in New Zealand. So, as I said before, successful design is simply design that works well.

So, if you're trying to tell a Māori narrative in your design, how do you feel about not using Māori motifs and iconography?

No, of course you don't. Once again it's a trap having to use the term Māori narrative... For instance, we might have a narrative in Taranaki about the arrival of the Tokomaru waka and it might have special significance to the people that descend from the Tokomaru waka. This doesn't mean that it doesn't have relevance to Pākehā people or to anybody else that might be interested in the narrative for any reason.

I mean I only have a basic knowledge of Māori motifs, so initially I didn't want to use them on my work. But I feel that other cultures will be able to draw on their own narratives when looking at my work.

Isn't that what it's about though? The interesting thing about the use of language is that if you start using the term 'motif' the idea of motif immediately for me starts saying something about what we have been talking about... you know, sometimes it's important, sometimes it helps, sometimes it gives a level of ownership over whatever you are talking about in the work, sometimes it's a point of distinction. But actually, at the end of the day, for me anyway as a practicing artist, it's not the only tool I use to tell a story. And simply after years of telling stories with using motifs, I have the desire to try and tell a story and it's a private challenge without using Māori motif. You know I'm trained as a carver, so I'm sick of using the same old shit in the same old way, because it doesn't offer me a challenge as a story teller, and it seems ludicrous to restrict yourself to politically loaded and politically correct things like motif when there are so many thousands of ways of telling stories.

Do you think there is a market for Māori narratives told though furniture and products as I think there could be a market for it, without having Māori motifs splashed over it?

Off the top of my head, I'm not sure that... see I think that... at least my initial response when you are talking about product design or creative furniture and stuff like that, I think the most important part about that is making sure that something is aesthetically beautiful and

functional. It wouldn't be my first response to expect that those things tell a tribal narrative or something like that, because I think it's too hard to try and do that unless you cover it with motif. Not to say that would be really seductive, but I think just covering with customary Māori motifs is just really corny these days. Some of the stuff I have been doing on works that I've done for New York and works that I've done for Denver and stuff that have produced a really interesting narrative, because it has stepped outside of the customary boundaries of motif, you know?

Yes, like your masks and the use of some of the iconography you have used on the contemporary wharenui you created. How were those works received overseas?

Really well. I was surprised and I was a bit worried that it would be so far de-contextualised outside of the community that people wouldn't get it. I failed to realise that structures, that housing structures are universal and people, they got it straight away. They got it before I even realised it, if you know what I mean. So I was so deeply involved with what I was trying to do and say that I kind of forgot about the overall picture of what the whare was saying to people outside of our customary context.

What is your design experience in the Māori context?

It's alright. In reality most of our own people have been green about things, so that's the reason why they come to people like us, although I've become more and more reluctant to just design stuff. Because a lot of what I've been doing in the past five years is developing my own design language that is actually an amalgam of customary design that I have either warped or changed to suit my own design tastes and also my, I suppose, aspirations for the direction that the country is going to take over the next thirty years. I've been trying to influence that as well by producing not only designs that step outside of the customary paradigm, but also trying to generate stuff that reflects and invests parts of Māori and non-Māori design language.

So what cultural elements do you use in your design process?

Stuff that I've learnt and experienced. I don't know how to explain that because my process is fairly organic. I don't go 'I want do a carving about the sea, so I'm going to go to tangaroa and I am going to go to this and that'. For me there are a thousand different ways in which I might approach something, that going to talk about the sea it might be simply a story about the life experience I've had with my father in relation to the sea, or the love that I have for

seafood, or it could be about my concern for the well being of the sea as part of our ecosystem. But as I said there are many different ways that I might approach it and I don't restrict my expressions of something to simply cultural elements. Discussing the issues around culture is one of my specialities because my undergraduate degree was in social sciences, which is about the way that humans communicate with each other and the way they express themselves. So a quick explanation of culture is a whole series of things, for instance, morals, laws, values, codes of conducts, ethics – a whole gambit of things that make up this word called 'culture'. Now when we usually talk about Māori culture we are actually usually only talking about human interaction or material culture and its way bigger than that. It's a whole lot of other things so, as I said, if we are talking about morals, laws, values, codes of conducts, ethics, then we can't separate out the contemporary experience of Māori in the last 300 years, since Pākehā have become involved in our lives. So for me it's actually about my whole life experience as well as our social and cultural history in this country and our place in the world, not just our place in Aotearoa. So I just want you to be clear that when I'm talking about that, I'm not just talking about the material culture, which is, for instance, all of the stuff that Māori produce. When you go to the museum all you see is the material culture. You actually don't see a living Māori from the 1600's. What you see is the material left over from their existence of that time.

What about all the holistic essence that make up the Māori, you say you're not just looking at the material culture, what else?

Everything, or anything. Usually your first response to something is pretty good, so you know what I do is that I run with whatever bro. You know, I don't have any hard and fast rules, usually I go for the bigger things rather than the smaller things, I'm always looking for something that encompasses or engages more more holistically then I'll choose that over something that engages with only one aspect of it. I will always look for something that will communicate wider rather than looking for a narrative that might be only relevant to a small community of people.

Is there anything constant in Māori design?

Depends who is doing it. You get 'Jack' down the road that might only use customary stuff – I use whatever and whenever. The most consistent elements are the curve, the whole kind of pitau, koru, takarangi spiral – all that sort of stuff is used a lot.

Where do you go to help you stimulate these own designs of yours?

Life experience bro, nowhere else.

Well who inspires you then?

To tell you the truth, I don't kind of operate in that manner and that's partially because I've been independent for so long, but even so, even way back there weren't many people that specifically inspired me. There are people that I really enjoy their friendship and that's because they share a lot of things in common with me and usually those things are philosophical things and on the basis of that and their aspirations those are the people that motivate me do enable me to develop my own design. I think it is important that we have multiple streams of design being generated all the time, because it is what keeps us vibrant. Yep, people like Carin Wilson, you know. But there are all sorts of people that I appreciate. They are not just Māori either. Jule's (Rangi's wife) has a big part to play in that. I see stuff that she does and it bounces off me and then designs that I do bounce off her. We influence each other. It's because we spend a lot of time working in the same space. I don't get out to see a lot of stuff. But I draw a lot of inspiration from a lot of the old stuff. If I do get out, I try to go looking for stuff that I haven't seen before.

What do you think of the differences of traditional and contemporary Māori design?

I don't think anything – it's simply what it is.

Do you have a certain way of doing things? A tikanga if you like?

I don't have any particular rules... my background is in a customary carving but I have moved on from that. My tikanga is my own and no one else's. Its ever changing as I move, learn and enhance my skills.

Where do you think Māori design is heading though?

That way (he points), now it's gone that way (has a laugh at that) I think it's going to head where ever we choose to make it head. That's why I choose to try and lead because I think you actually need some balls to do that, but the only way to do that is by having a sound grounding. You know, I definitely wouldn't have done any of the stuff that I've done in the last ten years if I didn't have a sound grounding, because I knew that back then I was very scared to do things, and I spent most of my time just following stuff. But I realised I had a

whole set of different experiences, and one of them was when my father died. Also, there isn't any buffers any more for me. This is my life, you know? It's not my parents' life, it's not my grandparents' life – it's my life. And so I'm responsible and I'm charged with the responsibilities with creating a future for our kids.

Do you think for you, and for many other Māori artists and designers, it's about self expression?

Well what's the alternative? Is it someone else's expression? I guess when people associate Māori design with Māori motif, and you're not actually doing that with a lot of your work, so it's your expression in your own way. You might have begun with the same ideals as say a customary Māori designer but in the end it's your work. What you've got to realise is that, and this is what a lot of people don't put together, that the stuff that we call traditional design anyway is generated by people – generated by people and their experiences. They could be telling other peoples' experiences, but it comes through their hand, so all I'm doing is just continuing what we've always done. So a lot of people see what I'm doing as being new and sometimes quite radical. All I'm doing is just continuing the continuum of human expression. So I'm not doing anything different than what other people are doing – I'm just continuing to tell our stories, my stories. When you realise that, and a lot of people don't... some people go 'Oh moko's this' and 'moko's that', and I go 'Well, where do you think that came from and how did it get to here'. It simply got there because someone created something, or started cuting things into their skin or cutting the skin and it became marked. And they started generating design that talked about their reflection of themselves and their world, in as many ways as that might be expressed. That's simply all it is, and the only reason why we say that 'This is moko' and 'That is moko' and 'This here, is this type of moko' is simply because we continue to practice it. Now, if we change it, then there is nothing wrong with that, it's simply changing it, and because it had to change because our people didn't simply straightaway start off with facial moko as you know it. They started off with a couple of lines maybe, and as they became more adept at it, and they started experimenting more with it and refined it and we have just continued that process.

So it's about evolving our work and the way we tell our stories?

Yeah, well, simply using it, it's evolving. The trick is when you use the term 'evolving' the impression is we are somehow making it more refined, or better, I just say we are keeping the continuum going. The perception of whether it is better or worse will happen as people make their assessments later on after we are gone or over the course of our career. I care

about my own practice but, as I said, people will make that assessment about my work anyway.

So do you care what other people think about your work?

Fuck yeah, all the time. I'm hypercritical about my work. That's part of the reason why a lot of my work is good though. I don't say that with a big head. I'm simply not interested in creating mediocre shit. There's heaps of people that can do that, I don't need to too. I'm about trying to do the best that I can, so that the foot print that I leave is nothing but good. The more good stuff that you do, the more power that you have to create change, and I'm all about change, about making our world better than what it's been over the last 200 years. And if the best you can do is not good enough for someone else then fuck them. Invariably, if it's the best I can do then it's a fucking sight better than a lot of what anybody else can do. Only because that's where I pitch my work at. You know, you saw my bone work – there is no one else that does that stuff in the country, only because I push myself to extraordinary lengths to produce the best that I can. There will be a time that I won't be able to do it, because my eye sight will have gone or my hands would have gone and that's all good, but at least I've left a legacy that everybody else has to step up to – even my moko work. I'm not interested in producing mediocre work. I'm only interested in producing the best that I can. When I can't do that, I'll give it up. Realistically, I am unsure as to why someone would want to do something half good.

Yes, there is a lot of half-pie stuff out there that makes me cringe.

Yeah, there is a lot of shit out there only because we are behind the eight ball, we have been left outside the design industry, except for our customary cultural design industry – that we have a handle on. But industrial design and product design as well as every other fucken thing: banking, real-estate, you name it, every other part of the industrial and business sector in New Zealand we have been left out. We are on catch up, we are 100 years behind.

Do you think Māori design contributes to the New Zealand and Māori Society?

It contributes to generating a sense of self, I think that's the reason why I do it bro, it's the most important things that drive me to do that, we are generating a language of self, not of the past, but a language of now. For so long Māori have been defined by what people see in the museums. That isn't us. It was, but it isn't us now. So what we have to do is that we have to generate, and that's what I've been doing for the last ten years. I've sat down and just tried

to tussle with who I am to realise that I'm not someone from the 1300s, 1400s or 1600's, and I have realised that what's missing is that we don't actually talk about ourselves today and the diversity of our cultural makeup and expression.

I'll give you an example: in Taranaki we were who we were before the Pākehā arrived. All of those tribal entities, hapū entities and individuals. When Europeans arrived things started happening, and we started to let them settle on our land so that we could have access to their European goods and so on. Then they wanted more land when we wouldn't give them more land and they were reliant upon us to feed them. Because they didn't have enough land to grow things, they became pissed off because they wanted more, so what they did is they penned a whole series of acts, many of which were focused purely on Taranaki, like Taranaki Māori Prisoners Act, the West Coast Settlements Act, Wastelands Act, all these different Acts to stop us from being able to protect our land. Then they eventually, after starting war in the Waikato, they eventually started a war with the Taranaki people in about 1863 or something and it finished in Parihaka in 1880 so 17 years later when they sacked Parihaka. A lot of those songs in Taranaki are all about the land confiscations and about what happened to our people when they took all our land off us. They sing about the oppression, they sing about rape and destitution, and I'm not going to sing those fucking songs bro. So we've gone from being this tribal and authoritative entity to being this oppressed people that sings about all of the fucking things that happen to them. I'm not teaching those kids any of those songs, I refuse to do it. I learnt a lot of those songs and I picked up a lot of that *mamae* (pain) from my old people and that is actually what drove me to do really well. I decided that I wasn't going to be treated like my grandmother was treated, or how my father was treated. So I decided I was going to be the best at what I chose to be and that's also why I've decided that's not going to be the inheritance for my kids. I would teach a song like that to my enemies' kids, if I wanted to destroy them those would be the songs that I'd teach them. So we have to reconstitute who we are, because I'm not about walking about with my head down between my arse and crying about how oppressed I am, because that fucks your psyche up. I'm not prepared to accept that as my inheritance so I've got to create another inheritance. And that's what I'm about bro. I can't talk about anybody else's social or cultural experience. I can talk about my own one, but that's the reason why I'm prepared to make a change, or to contribute towards making change – and hopefully my art can do that. I use it as a tool for social change and cultural recovery.

So what do you think about appropriation of Māori designs? I think you've basically already answered it.

Well, it is what it is. Once again, it's also important to recognise that the word that we live in, including New Zealand, doesn't just belong to Māori. I'm really clear, and it may upset some Māori, that our future lies in not only recognition of a Māori world and recognition of a Pākehā world, but a recognition of a world that is larger than just these individual ones – a world that is shared and that every culture has an invested interest in it. So that's my approach. I now create tiki's that are coloured and stick outside the Māori paradigm, but still carry some of loadings from the Māori paradigm, because we still have to generate a design language that reflects these cultures. Because we don't live in a vacuum, Māori and Pākehā can't occupy this country by themselves. So as soon as we realise that, our future is actually safe only if we have a vested interest in each other. It's only then we can start going forward, and have some level of equity.

Tino rangatiratanga can't work unless somehow all the Pākehā people get sucked up by a UFO, or something else! But also the only reason why tino rangatiratanga is there is because Māori have been shat on for so long, and their aspirations haven't been taken into consideration. So I expect that things would change quite dramatically if our aspirations were taken into consideration as a normal part of everyday decision making. Then the draft for tino rangatiratanga wouldn't be as demanding as what it is. So the only reason why the cry for tino rangatiratanga is so strong is because Māori have been marginalised for so long. You know, I hear Māori shit on how Pākehā want to learn Māori and then in the next sentence they talk about them not understanding our culture – there has to be some movement, we have to figure it out or else it's going to keep going around and around.

Appendix 4 – Lyonel Grant interview

Interview with David Hakaraia 20/07/2010

Lyonel Grant is a well known carver who has worked and carved here in Aotearoa and overseas. This includes many waka and three meeting houses, his most recent work being the wharenui Ngakau Mahaki at Auckland's Unitec. His tikanga is one of the Māori world views where karakia, tapu and noa are prevalent throughout his process of work. He is always striving for that x-factor and that will be remembered through the ages. Grant's work explores the connection between customary and contemporary Māori art. He has built on his heritage as a customary carver creating a discourse about the development of Māori art in the 21st Century.

Lyonel - When I first received your questions I didn't know where to start but let's go through them.

Sweet, ok, then there will probably be cross-over in the questions and answers. So what do you think contemporary Māori design is and what are thoughts on it?

Well, I think contemporary Māori design is what is happening right now, in the here and now, and I guess if you are going to answer that accurately then you need to have a full overview of what other people are doing to ascertain an answer and so it's complex and it's even harder just to break it into subsets.

It used to be 50's, 60's you had your Para Matchitts your Tovey (Gordon Tovey) generation and they were all on their own pathway; then you had the contemporary traditionalist, the customary practioners. We are moving on another branch of the tree and never the twain would meet. There was a distinct modernist movement, young Māori uninhibited by the culture or the depth of the tradition, where they wouldn't get hung up by all that stuff of using design from the east coast on a building in Auckland. But that were like 'I just like the shape of it so I'm going to rip its head and I'm going to twist around sideways then I'm going to yank it up and then I'm going to put on another head from tainui' (laughs). They wouldn't worry one way or the other about those sort of structural hang ups, where a carver that was trained classically would go (inhale of breath as a means of disapproval) 'oh jeez, you must have the right design for that style of manaia, you can't etc.

Everything was a consequence of its design whakapapa, so there were far more stringent rules that you could argue stifled the movement. Now we can use any materials we want. We can use any design we want. We don't care where it came from, we know it comes from the east coast but we are trying to change it in to something else.

How do you feel about that?

I sort of don't feel about it one way all the other, but I understand the thinking at the time. The jury is out whether the product was innovative, was beautiful, was sound design. And some of the earlier stuff was naff and it followed Pākehā trends. A lot of the tutors that taught the young Māori gave them tools from the Pākehā garage to see and to produce, and so those tools came from a European background. So these people were uninhibited because they had those tools to create stuff. Whereas the tools that I inherited came from that tradition that I spoke of. So my growth was probably at a different rate and different way to the Tovey generation. But having said that, I find what they did is useful now in retrospect. So where I've got to now with my career, I can look back on what Para and them did and I can see in a more clear light because of what I've learnt in my journey. Whatever they did then – good or bad – doesn't matter. I can review it and understand the political climate that was around what they did, because it gives us a point of reference. it sort of explains the sequel, I guess, because now those two movements have come together, and they cross over in so many ways that there isn't two distinct clear paths any more. It's gone back into one, but it's a multifaceted taura like a rope, and everybody has their own little strand in it. Some strands are weak and some are strong, doesn't matter. As a movement, it sets a continuous strand where there were two different strands in the 50's and 60's.

So I'm an industrial designer and I've found it hard to find designers that are creating lighting and furniture that tell Māori narratives in different away. I mean Carin Wilson is one such designer who is doing that but as I said it's hard to find others. And then there is a lot of work that takes design and surface treats it with Māori motif.

There is a lot of appropriation and there always will be. You pick up a t-shirt and someone has stuck a little Māori design on it. I was looking at one this morning a guy was wearing one – it had Aotearoa on it and a few little muddled kowhaiwhai things on it that looked ho hum. But it will be used and abused and I guess the best thing to counter that is for us to do the best we can because it's out of control.

Who do you think is creating good Māori design and why?

That sort of goes back to my first comment about having a good overview of what's going on and post-marae I don't have a very good overview of what's going on right now. I can have a educated guess at what's happening especially on the traditional, you know, the tā moko. There are a lot of gifted young people out there that wear their culture on their sleeve and want to design a tā moko exponent and want to be the carving exponent. But I see a lack of training in a lot of these, where the wananga and the establishment have availed young people of the chance to dabble, but haven't really given the tools to explore it fully. It's like not having the vocabulary to speak and your sentence becomes short and muted. I see short muted parts of design and that's what I believe is the problem. The thirst for the design knowledge is strong, but the formality of the training is impaired. Even some of the tutors, I sort of scratch my head at some of the calibre, who haven't even been out and done stuff for themselves and they are trying to teach students this is the away to go when they haven't done anything themselves. So I see problems there. This is more on the classical side, so that has a filtered down effect into tā moko where I see some designs not well thought out, not well conceived, usually well executed I suppose. I mean it made the mark in the skin and you can see a clear mark. What more do you need? In places that the angst is in the artist and you can see it in their work, and other times the technique overrides the actual piece itself. So you get guys from the institute, that are post-institute, they have got the skills, but what they do is that they tailor their work to galleries. That's what I think anyway.

Some American galleries like pretty clean laboured pieces that are almost like sterile, but that is what they like, so galleries like it so it actually has sway on how a piece should go, you know. I almost feel like I want to take someone's chisel and blunt it a bit or take one arm and tie it behind their back and make them struggle for it, because it's all to formulaic. So these are some of the things I've seen from a traditionalist point of view. If you wanted to know more about say the art side, such as painting, then you're probably better off asking Bob Jahnke.

I've always liked yours and Rangi Kipa's work and the way you guys push the boundaries and also have a high level of craftsmanship, which is one of the reasons I wanted to talk to you.

Rangi Kipa mostly creates at a smaller size and that has to be well executed. Because it is small, you look at it 300mm away you're looking at it close up. You know his finish is second to none, and nobody finishes to that level and he knows that, so you could say that's his

forte. He has rendered one of my designs on a rangatira from Te Arawa (Tā Moko), Rangi cut it and he did a really good job, so he's a smart guy. He has academia on his side, so I probably respect him more than some others that are in that sort of space.

I'm not trying to be a carver, that's not what I want to do. I'm a furniture/product designer that bases my work on Māori narratives, whether it's my stories or well known stories of our culture. I get the feeling that, because my work is not classically Māori, some people will have a problem with that, and say that it is not Māori.

Well, if a Māori made it then it is Māori, if you want to go as simple as that. But I kind of understand. Before I used to feel that way, if you take it from a carver's point of view or perspective, your elders would say, 'You carve it that way boy that's the way your koroua (grandfather/uncle etc) did it,' and that doesn't leave any more for you as a individual artist to sort of make it how you want to make it. It's always how the audience wants you to make it. So for years and years I was dominated by that because somebody that was my senior said to do it like that, so I'd do it like that. Now I invite someone to kind of tackle me about that, because I know for a fact why I did it, how I did it and the whole gambit. As long as you're sure in your mind why you can do it, you can counter any challenge – if it worries you and it can be as simple as 'if it's Māori made, it's Māori design'. To what degree you've used traditional or classical thinking and motif is up to you, and that could suffice, but as long as you're sure and you've done your home work then who can shake you.

I see that you yourself are using new technology like the laser cutter.

I think new technology is going to have a huge impact, and it already has, and already is, you know. So it depends on how good we are with those technological devices. There is one thing that I'm making at the moment that is based on scrimshaw.

I've been playing around with the laser cutter and bone and there is a lot of work in trying to get the right intensity of the laser so that it looks right.

Exactly, I use CorelDraw and you have to program every line to get the right look as it can end up looking naff. So what I'm trying to do is extend on what I do in the meeting house. Some of the electronic files, the residual files, I have got from the marae and I'm trying to take them to another level, in retrospect. Because I have got those base styles I could change them and maybe I was thinking 'Oh if I had the time I'd extend on this idea, I'd

change that, or I'd try it in a different material,' because when you're doing it on the marae, then that's it. It could be in Perspex, white Perspex. I could use those files and etch like scrimshaw and then put light behind it.

As I said I've been experimenting with new technology, such as laser cutting, CNC milling machines and also 3D printers to try and express my narratives in different ways. Where do you see this technology going in regards to your own work?

I see a problem, no not a problem but I see something. Like a few years back I was involved with music and there was these synthesizers that could make these amazing sounds. Like Stevie Wonder was one of the first ones to get on to it and make the new synthesizers sounds and stuff. And what would happen is the musicians would get them and they would be playing music from these weird sounds they could make, and what happened was that the synthesizer was starting to dominate the musician. So they were not playing music just sounds, you know. Then a change a subtle shift happened where they started to sample real sounds, like a real piano sound and a synthesized sound and you'd get this amazing synthesize of sound and the musicality started to come back with those real sounds starting to come back in. So the musicians were starting to take control of it again and the music incorporated those sounds rather than dominating the music. I think the same thing is going to happen with electronic gadgetry in the arts. People will say 'Oh that's CorelDraw – the little effect you put on using that tool in CorelDraw'.

Yeah I see that all the time with students using filters and tools from Illustrator and Photoshop, so that when we see their work it's quite easy for us to say this is how you've done it and there is no design intent. As you said, the program is dominating the designer. These students have all this awesome technology, but they are not really pushing it forward – everybody is doing similar things.

Yeah and you go that's that thing done in CorelDraw, and it can end up being almost naff, because it's as if all they have done is flick a switch to make it do that. And that's fine, but when you get someone who understands and knows this technology and programs, then they can say, come on you can't do that, you've just rewritten that to change the shape or subtly used it to enhance the piece. But what you're really doing is flicking the switch in the same way as a musician used a synthesizer.

I think the trick is finding new ways to use this new technology.

You use the technology – don't let it use you. I think you want to be able to use this technology so that it has the same integrity as the old arts. And that's subjective as well, and probably a lot of it is in your own head. I went to a hui in Wellington and there were thirty carvers sitting around a table and these thirty carvers were trying to come up guidelines for the teaching of carving. Some of the carvers were totally against it and some were totally for it and all points in-between. I looked around the table and I thought, gee, the collective might sitting around this table – there is probably really only one master carver for Māori who would know the seasons to get the trees, who would know the right way to drop the tree without a chainsaw, who would know how to render the tree down in the bush and pull it out or who would know the architectural intricacies of the marae who would know the design, the whakapapa. You know, all those multifaceted things that would be present in one person in the days of old, but now we have thirty guys expulsing what one person would know. This occurred to me privately and so then I thought to myself what do I do that somebody of old wouldn't do? Well ok, I can set up a compressor and I can program air pressure brushes and things. I can program a vinyl cutter so that I can make stencil. Oh yeah, I can program a computer to use the laser cutter. You know, maybe some of those old skills that the old carver wouldn't have had on his horizon. It's a bit like taking stone tools and changing to metal, and the first metal tooled carvers were good with stone tools, but they could see the advantages of using metal through the cuts that they were creating, which to them was a more expedient way of getting to where they wanted to go. It was like taking the weight off their back and they could just fly. So I think the best carvers were in that cross-over period. It would have been like running with a 20 kilo pack on your back and then taking it off, and all of a sudden you were like a ninja and you can leap over buildings and these fullas artistically could jump over buildings. They were set free with the technology of metal, so maybe the ones that are good with metal and chisels and wood can be those cross-over ones that go into technology. But I don't know, but they are interesting thoughts aren't they.

What and who inspires you and your work?

I always look back for inspiration. But that again gets down to how observant you are to what's happening around you. And if you've been buried in a marae project for six years you don't really see a lot of what is going on around you, the marae is your wall. It's kind of hard when you know most of the artisans in your hemisphere. I think I have to go outside the country to get newly inspired. I'm too familiar with the carvers around me. I mean, I know where most of them were trained, whether it was at the institute or at the wananga. so you sort of go, 'Oh yeah, you've got theories whether that guy is on the right track or what he is doing is right or not an how much it is influenced by galleries or not'. So I'm too close to it, to

actually say who inspires me. So you have to go out to other artists, so you flick through a sculptures book and you think fuck I like that and think that's different, that is way out of your sphere of consciousness.

So there are a couple of old stainless steel sculptures that were produced in maybe the 60's, 70's that I really found interesting and really well done. Their application and their scale were exciting. I mean there was the sort of a thing going on where people would make things they called leve strips where the end of the strip doesn't start or stop. But some of these were like those convoluted bloody stuff that was going on in the 60s and some of those were really quite successful like the ones in Shanghai. I looked at those and I really liked them – they were on the approach to the Nanpu Bridge. The bridge is really high, it's way up above the city and to get up to that height they have these spiral roads leading up to it. In the middle of it is one of these sculptures I used to pass it every morning. It used to always catch my eye and fascinate me and I'd look at the fabrication big huge sheets of stainless. The welds were all really well done. Also some of the architecture of Shanghai was awesome and inspiring too, and that's another artistic element that was really nice to see, being able to look at another cultures work and ideas. So some of the pavilions (at the Shanghai World Expo) had the 'wow factor' and you look at it and think that's awesome, whether the inside married up with that I don't know. The kiwi one was more conservative but it had a live performing arts element, it had an audio visual element, it had this experience which was a little piece of horticulture, a pōhutukawa tree that was bought to Shanghai, so it was good.

What is your process? And what kind of pieces would you like to create?

My own process is just angst ridden. I would love to create an iconic piece. If you go back into say some of the museum pieces, we have some iconic pieces like Uenuku, and straight way as soon as you say Uenuku then boom there's that recognition. Also there are classic pieces done by Tene Waitere and Wero, people like that, whose work have stood the test of time and 150 years later you're looking at their work and going wow, and at that time there was that amazing form and progressive, innovated, spiritually charged.

So you're saying you haven't reached that level yet?

No, I don't think I have, the marae I've done probably has a chance in places to get there. Essentially it's a marae, the approach is built on something that is hundreds of years old in that country and so in a way it does qualify because it hasn't stepped away from that classic format even though all the individual components have changed and have been manipulated

and convoluted and hopefully enriched. I mean it is what it is in that space. But I don't see it as a Uenuku, and I would like to be able to create something iconic one day. It may be 2 inches high. It may be 2 miles high. I don't know what it is, but I haven't hit it yet and I'd really like to think that it's in me somewhere to do it, hopefully before I croak.

So you're saying you want to step out of the traditional?

No, I want the traditional to be that piece, whatever it is it needs to take that quantum leap into it, become a general art language, where I could take it to France and be understood anywhere in the world and be understood as a pure art piece. It's Māori and that's what gives it its distinctive note, I really want to get to that space I don't quite know how I will do it.

Exactly I want to be able to create pieces that other cultures can look at and draw their own meaning and stories from it.

Yeah yeah, because what gives us our distinctive edge is our Māoriness and the link to our ancestors. Now however you negotiate those links could be your success or your demise, because I know carvers that are so linked to the past, or so connected they wear their path on their sleeve, it stifles their ability to go forward, because they are always trying to measure themselves up against the old fullas. There is a time where you have to say I have to let that go, I have to pay tribute to them and what they did and I have to take as much as I can from their learning's their teachings – but I have to find a way that I can get stronger from that. At first you've got to understand it and learn it and absorb it and then try and build on that. I know a lot of carvers that still can't escape that gravity, they are always comparing their pākati against somebody and they can't think of any other way to do a pākati, but to do those haehae first and getting the skew. Instead of saying, 'Maybe I could get a picture or section of a pākati and pixelate it and change it to a eps file, stick it on a vinyl cutter, cut it out, sand blast it into the carving and it would be a picture of a pākati sand blasted onto a carving'. They can't think laterally like that, because they are so absorbed in the past that it's just got a hold on them that they can't break out of that force field. But then there are others that haven't been subjected to that discipline and history that will never feel the force field because they are not even aware of it. They are making all this stuff that they see in books. I've seen some famous painters that you and I both know with literal images out of books in the middle of their paintings and stuff, that's sort of, like, so blatant.

What do you think cultural relics are and should there be an ethical and moral way to how we design?

Cultural relics by design we just touched on that just slightly then. I think the ethical and moral responsibilities are up to you. It's up to you to conduct yourself affably in what you think the ethics are. Some people are short on ethics and then they are never going to get to that rarefied atmosphere that is good, or that top level of where they want to go. It will always be appropriated and from appropriation you can't get good growth. It's based on pretence or it's based on lack of knowledge. Why do you have to appropriate an image?

I mean there is a lot I need to learn and I'd like to learn.

Fuck, we all do man. I mean the more you think you know, the less you actually do know, you know? (laughs) I don't think I'm any better off than I was ten years ago.What do you think when people say the classical period of the Māori was the best period and that we will never be able to surpass it? Like I said, when you look at those carvers that decided to put down their stone tools and pick up the metal implements and use them with attitude. Not be scared of it, embrace it and go for it. They could only do that because they had that prior skill and connection to the old ways which were stone – what stone could give them. Once they had maxed that out, they were ripe to use something that would take them to the next level, where they could fly. So maybe steel has run its course now and maybe the next meeting house that you and I go into should be a virtual meeting house, you've got to put on a suit to go into it (laughs) to experience the space. Maybe the only way you could do one well is having carved one and to know the angst of the process then the digital world allows you to take it to the next level – maybe this is the time now. So maybe that's where I see it going to and you could only do it subject to your own horizon. It's interesting.

Appendix 5 – Lisa Reihana interview

Interview with David Hakaraia 21/07/2010

Lisa Reihana is a contemporary Māori artist whose work is reflected in her bicultural upbringing. Her work is a diverse collection on Māori mythology and contemporary culture. Lisa takes Māori tribal stories and creates a contemporary twist on them using mixed media. Reihana has a notable exhibition record. Reihana has received much critical acclaim and has represented New Zealand internationally and most notably at Te Papa Tongarewa Museum in Wellington.

You've read the questions I've sent and you can answer them how you want?

Yes I've gone over them; we could just talk about your work. I'm picking up that you are a furniture designer, right? In terms of this, the only other Māori furniture designer I know of is Fletcher Vaughan. Have you come across him? And in a sense he is not doing anything 'Māori' even though he is a Māori designer. So then you question semantics or your own understanding. Is culture the most important quality of what you're looking for? Do you identify good design first and then gauge your response as a Māori person, and then see where you fit within that? These are issues Aroha Lewin (one of Lisa's former students) is investigating, she's been making works featuring hei tiki and wallpaper, and selling them through different exhibitions. So when you eventually see her work, you're bound to recognise those questions within it. We are having similar discussions around use of Māori motifs. There are so many other Maori, and non-Maori using this imagery that it's easy to become aligned with tourism. Perhaps it's not tourism per se, but being sullied by notions of economics. So how do you incorporate Maori design elements without losing your integrity?

With my work it's about telling stories and even though I may use some Māori motif, I only have a basic understanding of it and I feel a lot of people are using Motif without any understanding. But I think my point of difference in telling these stories, is in the materials I choose and the way I position them to convey those narratives, also technology plays a part in how I express them.

I was saying to Aroha, that using Maori motifs is bound to bring up issues, and these won't go away, but they might shift as you develop your personal philosophy and become comfortable with what you're using. Initially it's about finding a place where you feel

comfortable in order to continue your practice. To me it's about a philosophical approach, the materials you work with and developing narratives. It's probably also about where your line in the sand is drawn, and knowing that they might shift in time.

During the classical period, our culture created the most beautiful carvings. When I present my work, I sometimes get the sense that because some of my work does not look Māori then it can't be considered Māori. Do you ever get people saying your work is not Māori because you dont use traditional methods? Do you consider your work Māori?

Yeah, yeah I do, but it's the philosophy and the story telling and the materials I am investigating that is more important. I've made many different types of work, filmmaking is where I started - in animation. I like making 'things' and I liked puppetry and experimenting. I'm not interested in my work being obviously Māori, I know it is, I've worked out a position long before it goes pulbic. For me the inherent integrity is my line in the sand. It's important that I push the boundaries. I've completed a series of photographic works and was able to work with korowai (Māori Cloaks) from Te Papa's collection. I styled the korowai with contemporary jewellery, not Hei Tiki as I stopped using these traditional motif's a long time ago.

I played the Maori card back in the early eighties – during the rise of Biculturalism. I used to wear a denim jacket with heaps of plastic tiki's sewn on to it when it was on the edge of being 'out there'. My friend John Miller offered to put L.E.D lights in the Air New Zealand tiki eyes. No one was delving into that stuff then, it was a provocative to wear that jacket in the 80's as the tiki was aligned with tourism, not cultural determinism. My reasons for publically wearing a sassy denim jacket were about reclamation, not unlike Black Americans using the word 'nigger', so they could absorb the derogatory nature and make something new.

I'm at a different point now, while I was working with Charles Koronneho in *Digital Marae* (Reihana's work talks about multifaceted ideas about the Māori uniqueness and our bi-cultural living. This series of images recreates a wharenui within a digital realm with representations of Māori ancestors, gods and demi-gods.) I said to him *"in this image there's nothing in this to visually signal that you're Māori, except the fact that you are Māori."* I'm not interested in representing anything outside of that. It's about finding a way for this model (image of Maui), to embody the notion of being Maui.

Tukutuku Textiles was made for the Te Papa commision *Mai i te aroha, ko te aroha* and were created using a grid format to create Maori inspired patterns that were then digitally

printed onto a New Zealand hemp fabric. In terms of an internal Maori logic, the hemp recalls early Maori harakeke production, and there is the visuality of weaving plus the fabric was beautiful to work with. It could have been cotton or linen, but the fact that it was hemp embeds a cultural resonance. It's that conceptual level of thinking that you want to attain. You need to be the best you can as an artist or designer.

I guess in some ways I feel the same way, maybe slightly anxious in that am I heading in the right direction, and I take it to heart when some say's that your work is not Māori...

Yes but that is someone else's opinion. It's problematic and hard to take. Maori are often put in the position where you are asked to defend ourselves. You wouldn't go up to a Pākehā designer and say *"that's not a Pākehā design".* And if they utilise 'Māori design elements' you'd contest it as a Māori design because the maker is Pākehā (laughs). I discovered during my years at art school - and this was a big thing at the time, if you couldn't speak Te Reo Maori, then you weren't considered a Māori artist. I found that really tough.

Animation was a great medium to work with because traditionally you assign a sound or instrument as a characters voice (the Italian animation Pengu never spoke, but conveyed much through a squeaky sound as his voice) and so that's what I would do. Because I'd been told that unless you could speak Te Reo then you aren't Māori. So with *A Maori Dragon Story* I retold Māori lore without using language, and no subtitles to explain the narrative. I wanted the story to be conveyed through soundscape – an oral tradition. So, it's like I investigated my chosen medium and was discovering my voice within that. I mean that is all you can hope to do? It's very easy to be knocked off course if people are saying your work is not this or not that, but it's only opinion, and at the end of the day everyone is entitled to their own opinion and everybody is evolving at their own rate. Yeah, I've learnt through the work I create that everybody has different tastes and something you might love will be hated by another. In the end, if I'm happy with it, then that's good enough for me and it's a bonus when other people like it too.

Creative people need to trust their gut feeling, and gut feeling is real – it's not nothing its intuition and that is a skill. You know, it takes a long time to develop your own narrative, your own history and once you start building those things - you have a pool of knowledge to draw upon that are your own tools, and these help you move towards wherever it is that you need to go. I make my own aesthetic choices, and it's up to me to decide what is good. It's difficult to put your finger on, but it is a real thing that is true to you.

It''s a concern if peoples comments aren't useful, if information stops you from moving forward, and by that I mean being able to create artwork, then disregard it and move on – make work. At another point in time, you'll get to another place and think 'Well, I could have done that a bit differently, and next time maybe I will. But now I know that and I know that from making – as a practitioner. So it's embodied physical knowledge. These were things I previously struggled with and I see students struggling too. It is a contemporary condition, even if you aren't looking at customary work there are other external expectations. I still get it now, when questioned on what I do and I say 'I'm an artist!' often the reply is 'Oh, you're a painter'. You're going to get that because people's expectations of what an artist is. Then I'll say, 'No, no-no I don't do that, I do a bit of photography,' and the reply - 'Do you want to do my wedding' (laughs). It's better to find the path which enables you to produce work, even if at another point of time you cringe and wish you hadn't done that. I guess the more you create, you're can better placed to create your own style.

I recently interviewed Para Matchitt, and we discussed how his generation began working with sheets of MDF and hardboard. He said that I the nineteen sixties it was so hard for us to source traditional materials associated with Marae projects, but there was a need by the communities. So what they had access to at the time was these wooden sheet materials - they used it and developed a new material language. During this process they changed the protocols such as obtaining permission to go into Ngahere, and the karakia rites etc. And Para also said, by making that shift, they could do things differently and that enable them to work with women. It is bridge to free ourselves up. I'm not suggesting you go work with MDF, but it is an example of how the previous generation were able to make art. I've also talked to Arnold Wilson about his work and the Tovey generation, they were teaching with nothing. That's why they did a lot of work in clay, because they could go into the bush and dig it out, they had few resources as Māori trainees.

I want to be to create my own designs in a way that represents me and who I am, and from what I've learnt and read of other Māori artists/designers, like Paki Harrison, there is always someone trying to restrict you or tell you, you can't do that.

That's why it's not useful when people say you can't do this or that, and I always ask 'why?' As young Maori women I chose to work in photography and film, and I was interested in the technical challenges too, but I perceived these mediums as places where 'there are no rules'. It was a strategy for me to cross boundaries and lines. When I finally began work on *Digital Marae* I realised the idea had been hatched a long time before. I wanted to create a sort of digital weave. I learnt about raranga (weaving) first, before investigating digital

outcomes. While *Digital Marae* are photographic, I think of them as sculptures because that's what they reference. While a medium is just a medium, you've got to aspire to the very best work you can, some feedback has questioned whether the images are trying to emulate magazine quality. But not about that, I'm seeking the same beautiful quality of image and polish as a homage to the finish a master carver seeks in his work. It doesn't have to be obvious, because I think your philosophy is more important. Whereas touristic imagery is about selling units not integrity.

What might be useful is to look at the kind of concepts that you want to use to move forward. What supports you from a customary view point, do you have a whakatauki? Everytime *Digital Marae*, is installed I sing a song to activate that space; whenever I can I have a powhiri. It's not that the general public knows this has happened, but it's a feeling invested in there. I have a process of sorts and wonder if I do enough. It's about setting up the space - cleaning the tools before and after I've used them, making sure they are stowed in the right places. It's a beautiful place to start, and a work methodology.

Appendix 6 – Te Toi Ora booklet