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B.

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Cover and left: Makers unknown *Te Rā [the sail]* (details)
c. 1770–1800. Harakeke, kererū, kāhu and kākā feathers,
dog skin. On loan from the Trustees of the British Museum.
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A warm reception in
a whole new language
– we know the feeling.

WELCOME TO WORLD CLASS



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Courtesy of Te Tuhi, Tāmaki Makaurau
Auckland

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Director's *Foreword*

BLAIR JACKSON

May 2023

A warm welcome to *B.212*, the winter edition of Te Puna o Waiwhetū Christchurch Art Gallery's *Bulletin*. As Matariki reappears in our night sky in July, here in Ōtautahi we will celebrate the arrival of Te Rā, the only customary woven Māori sail known to exist. Building on the success of our exhibition *Te Puna Waiora: The Distinguished Weavers of Te Kāhui Whiritoi* in 2021, it is an incredible privilege for us to share one of Aotearoa New Zealand's most significant taonga with our audiences.

It is not known precisely when Te Rā was made, but it is thought to be over 200 years old. At nearly four and a half metres long, Te Rā is made of thirteen woven papa, or panels. An intricate three-way pattern of weaving extends through the hiki/hono (joins) and papa, something not seen today within Māori weaving. Te Rā illustrates the significance of both raranga and voyaging to Māori culture, and makes connections with Polynesian histories, skills and knowledge. It also represents exploration, expertise and adaptation—both the desire to explore new horizons and the extraordinary skills required to adapt to life in a new world. Te Rā is an important and tangible expression of what makes Aotearoa really special.

Te Rā comes to us from the collection of the British Museum. We are enormously grateful to the Museum for allowing the Gallery and our partner Tāmaki Paenga Hira Auckland War Memorial Museum the opportunity to exhibit Te Rā before she returns to London.

Exhibitions such as this involve many people, conversations and collaborations. We are indebted to Ranui Ngarimu ONZM (Ngāi Tahu, Kāti Māmoe, Ngāti Mutunga), one of Aotearoa's foremost authorities on weaving and its associated tikanga and mātauranga; conservator and textiles expert

Dr Catherine Smith; practicing artist and senior lecturer at the University of Waikato's Faculty of Māori and Indigenous Studies, Dr Donna Campbell (Ngāpuhi, Ngāti Ruanui); and contemporary Māori artist Darcy Nicholas QSO (Kāhui Maunga, Te Ātiawa nui tonu, Ngāti Ruanui, Tangahoe, Tauranga Moana, Ngāti Haua). Originating with a Royal Society Te Apārangi Marsden Fund research project aiming to revitalise the mātauranga embedded within Te Rā, Ranui, Catherine and Donna's extensive research has formed the foundation of the project to bring Te Rā to Aotearoa. In this issue of *Bulletin* we feature an extract from a kōrero between Ranui, Catherine and our pouarataki curator Māori Chloe Cull about Te Rā.

Ship Nails and Tail Feathers is a new exhibition made in collaboration with our colleagues at Canterbury Museum. As the museum is now closed for redevelopment we're delighted to have been able to work with the museum's curator of Māori, Pacific and Indigenous human histories Hatesa Seumanutafa to develop a series of vignettes that bring works from both collections into conversation. By combining works of different media and origin we find equivalences, contrasts and different viewpoints on history and heritage material. As Hatesa points out in her article for this magazine, "the ways that we curate history can make all the difference in the ways we value each other now."

Elsewhere in the Gallery, we're pleased to be showing an important work by Maureen Lander (Ngāpuhi, Te Hikutu, Pākehā), first commissioned for the opening of Te Papa Tongarewa in 1998. Created around the start of the boom in personal computer ownership and burgeoning interest in the internet, *String Games* is an immersive and site-specific work

that explores an intersection between customary Māori culture and digital technologies. We're pleased to be able to bring *String Games* into our *Perilous* exhibition. It is also fitting to note that Maureen is a member of Te Rā Ringa Raupā—a group of skilled weavers who have created a replica of Te Rā here in Aotearoa. For *Bulletin* we asked Te Whanganui-a-Tara based writer and curator Moya Lawson to look at the importance of *String Games*.

Kahu Kutia (Ngāi Tūhoe) is a member of Kauae Raro Research Collective, established by artists Sarah Hudson (Ngāti Awa, Ngāti Tūhoe, Ngāti Pūkeko), Lanae Cable (Ngāti Awa, Ngāti Tūhoe, Ngāti Maru ki Hauraki, Ngāti Pūkeko) and Jordan Davey-Emms (Pākehā) to relearn and recreate the art materials and techniques of their ancestors. Kahu looks at contemporary practitioners who are making art with whenua, or earth-based pigments. Our pagework this issue comes from Sonya Lacey, who presents a thoughtful and contemplative work that is based on her speculative fiction *Chlorophyll Script*.

It's unquestionably a busy time at the Gallery, with lots of collaboration, connection with, and sharing of, knowledge and culture. Come in and visit us this winter.





THE MORE WE LEARN,
THE LESS WE KNOW:

Understanding Te Rā

Makers unknown *Te Rā [the sail]* (detail) c. 1770–1800. Harakeke, kererū, kāhu and kākā feathers, dog skin. On loan from the Trustees of the British Museum. © The Whakaarahia anō te rā kai hau Te Rā Project. Photo: Cultural Heritage Imaging

In July 2023 Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū welcomes Te Rā. This taonga from the collection of the British Museum will be on public display in Ōtautahi for three months before travelling to Auckland Museum and then returning to London. The homecoming of this taonga is a deeply significant moment. In March, pouarataki curator Māori Chloe Cull, was joined by Ranui Ngarimu ONZM (Ngāi Tahu, Kāti Māmoe, Ngāti Mutunga) and Dr Catherine Smith, two members of the research group that has led the project to bring Te Rā to Aotearoa, to talk about what this homecoming means to them.

Ranui Ngarimu: Te Rā is a sail. It's the only known Māori sail from post early contact. It's unique in that it is the only one from that time still in existence. And it's in the British Museum, where it has been for approximately 200 years.

Chloe Cull: Catherine, how did your involvement with Te Rā come to be?

Catherine Smith: It came out of meeting Ranui. I was doing my PhD research on early Māori textiles and I got in touch with Ranui to see if she would like to work with me. Beginning at Canterbury Museum, we travelled around the world together studying kākahu held in different collections. We went to Sweden and we went to Ireland—all sorts of places. We got used to sitting on buses and drinking cups of tea and doing all of those travelling things!

We were having a cup of tea on the last day of a visit to the British Museum and one of the collection managers made the mistake of asking Ranui if there was anything else she'd like to see! She said, "I'd like to see Te Rā". And to our great surprise, then and there they took us to see her. As we were sitting looking at her, Ranui looked over at the table at me and said, "We've got to bring her home".

So we approached Dr Donna Campbell, who was the first Māori person I ever worked with in a

museum twenty-two years ago when I first came to New Zealand. Ranui has worked with her for much longer than that. Together we applied for a Marsden Grant from Te Apārangi Royal Society of New Zealand to do the work, and we were really lucky to be successful. That's how we started off on this journey together, Donna, Ranui, and I.

We never actually dreamed that this day would come, that Te Rā would physically come to Aotearoa New Zealand again. Our kaupapa was to find out what the plant materials were, to understand the weaving, to record it, to document, to look at the provenance, so that all of the different kinds of information contained in her could be accessible again to the people of Aotearoa.

CC: Kia ora Catherine. Whaea Ranui, what was it like when you first saw Te Rā?

RN: It just took my breath away. We didn't see the whole thing—we only saw part of it because they didn't have enough room to unroll it all. The first thing I did was a karanga and then I had a little tangi (well, a big one actually). Then I just spent the rest of the time looking—looking at how it was made, how it was constructed. And it just raised so many questions. I said to Catherine, "What is it doing here, why is it here? We've got to do something about this, we've got to bring this information home."



Makers unknown *Te Rā* [the sail] (detail) c. 1770–1800. Harakeke, kererū, kāhu and kākā feathers, dog skin. On loan from the Trustees of the British Museum. © The Whakaarahia anō te rā kaihau Te Rā Project. Photo: Cultural Heritage Imaging

Thankfully our grant application was accepted and we were able to go and visit Te Rā again. Catherine worked her magic and acquired little bits and pieces to test, which was not easy to do, but in the end the relationship that we built up with the British Museum allowed her to take samples home.

We also took a feather expert, Hokimate Harwood, over there with us, so that she could do some analysis on the feathers. We had a wānanga at Arahura to try and see how we could put the weaving together and realised that the hono in Te Rā was not as simple to the hand as it looked to the eye. We had great debate and excitement over that. We spoke to experts such as Hek Busby [Hekenukumaingaiwi Puhipi Busby] and other waka people who might be able to shed some light on it. We realised that the more we heard, the less we knew. For me, it's an ongoing journey, and it is critical that we gather as much information as we can to share with Aotearoa.

But in the beginning, it just brought me to tears. And it still does.

CS: There are still so many unknowns, which is really exciting I think. Part of the joy of Te Rā coming here is the opportunity to have so many other brains and eyes thinking and seeing. It will be a catalyst for conversations about all of the technology and innovation from Māori when they came to Aotearoa. I think one of the things that's really worth mentioning, as Ranui has already said, is that the weaving is so complex and there are no other artifacts that have the same construction that we know of in Aotearoa. For weavers to be in the presence of Te Rā, means that people who understand the complexity of it can try nut it out, and have that opportunity then to share that knowledge.

It's not easy to understand and it's taken a lot of unpacking to think about how we can transfer that information to other people. We gathered high-resolution complex imaging so there is a

permanent photographic record of Te Rā. We commissioned illustrations by Aroha Mitchell who is an accomplished artist and weaver—two skillsets that are needed to make technical drawings. We were really inspired by the scholarship of Te Rangihīroa [Sir Peter Buck], who would record weaving with diagrams so that he could pass on and protect that knowledge. We are hoping to do that as well.

CC: What was it like for you when you first saw Te Rā Catherine?

CS: I think I was just so shocked that it actually happened. It is constantly amazing to me, the level of expertise that can be achieved by weavers. We've seen so many wonderful taonga, and I don't know if there's ever been a time that we haven't been stunned walking in. Each amazing Māori textile I have visited in an international collection has contained something that I have never seen before.

In terms of Te Rā—the fineness of the whenu, the pattern running across five metres and triple hiki, that combination of beauty and function. It's a high impact, high glamour, high achievement textile. The other thing I always think about when I am with these taonga is the hands that wove them. Many hands wove Te Rā, many hands collected and prepared harakeke, many hands collected and processed feathers—it's a big deal.

RN: The other thing that is interesting for me is that there must have been lots of sails before this one, because it would have taken trial and error to get to this point. Hokimate identified the feathers across the top as being kererū and kāhu, but they are much wider than our kererū feathers are today. So, kererū must have been larger in those precontact days. It was also interesting to talk to many different people about how they thought those feathers were split. We've all tried it, and it's not an easy thing to do.

But then when I talked to the mahinga kai boys down here in Ngāi Tahu, they said, “Oh well kererū feathers will be easy to split, because they’ve got a natural curve in them, and when they’re warm you can put your thumb in them and split them.” Now I didn’t know that, but that’s the specific cultural knowledge that they had.

CC: When you describe splitting a feather, do you mean down the centre?

RN: Yes, the quill has been split from a few centimetres from the bottom to the top. It’s been split so that the feather is in two parts, but the quill at the bottom is still in its original form.

CC: And that’s in order to secure it to something?

RN: Well, we don’t know.

CS: The jury’s out, Chloe. This is one of the wonderful things—you call in people and every person has had a different view. We can’t know. But the more we look and the more we think, the more we learn. Capturing past technology that has been lost is a pretty amazing thing.

RN: The other thing that always interests me is, what other tools did they use to help them make the sail? What were they made from? Because clearly they were using tools, but we don’t know what they were. It’s always good to hear other people’s views on it, and we will never really know. But at least somebody can go away, like Maureen Lander and Te Rā Ringa Raupā did in Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland, and make one.

CS: They made a replica sail, and it is amazing.

RN: Amazing, brilliant.

**“Many hands wove Te Rā,
many hands collected
and prepared harakeke,
many hands collected
and processed feathers
—it’s a big deal.”**



Hokimate Harwood and Catherine Smith in the forecourt of the British Museum. © The Whakaarahia anō te rā kaihou Te Rā Project. Photo: Adam Rowley



Hokimate Harwood at the British Museum. © The Whakaarahia anō te rā kaihou Te Rā Project. Photo: Adam Rowley



Catherine Smith and Ranui Ngarimu inspecting Te Rā at the British Museum. © The Whakaarahia anō te rā kai hau Te Rā Project. Photo: Adam Rowley



Donna Campbell inspecting Te Rā at the British Museum. © The Whakaarahia anō te rā kai hau Te Rā Project. Photo: Adam Rowley



Makers unknown *Te Rā [the sail]* (detail) c. 1770–1800. Harakeke, kererū, kāhu and kākā feathers, dog skin. On loan from the Trustees of the British Museum. © The Whakaarāhia anō te rā kai hau Te Rā Project. Photo: Cultural Heritage Imaging

CC: So, we know that weavers across the motu are going to want to come and look at this up close. I'm wondering about the rest of our communities, the non-weavers around Aotearoa, and what can they learn from this experience?

RN: Well, Te Rā is a sail that's been used on a waka, so anybody who's a sailor will be interested in this. They don't necessarily have to be a weaver. Several times it has crossed my mind that maybe it was the sailors who made this sail, because they would know exactly what they wanted and maybe they became weavers to make it. But anybody who's interested in textiles or things made from natural fibres will be interested in Te Rā. Because in itself, it is a beautiful piece of work, an artwork extraordinaire, and it's worth coming to look at from that point of view. The intricacies of its form and function make it even more exciting. I would like to think that people who come to view it have their curiosity raised and start asking more questions, just as we are. We're still asking questions about it, we've still got a lot to learn.

CS: I think the other thing that makes it a very compelling artifact for any New Zealander or visitor is that this sail is symbolic of the amazing navigational knowledge and skills held by Māori. It embodies a history of adaptation and learning, such as understanding new plants and using them to make textiles to be able to survive and thrive—Te Rā is kind of the apotheosis of that. It shows all of that innovation, all of that adaptation and that story of making an enormous and extraordinary journey. It's a real tangible expression of what makes this country so special.

CC: Is there anything you'd like to add to finish, Whaea?

RN: There's lots of things I'd like to say. Mostly I would encourage people to come, have a look and be inspired by what they see here, not only for what can be done, in terms of the use of textiles and in this case in particular, harakeke. But also for what they might try to do themselves.

CC: Ngā mihi i tō kōrua kōrero.

Chloe Cull spoke with Ranui Ngarimu and Catherine Smith in March 2023. Te Rā: The Māori Sail is on display from 8 July until 23 October 2023. A partnership project between Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū and Tāmaki Paenga Hira Auckland War Memorial Museum.





String Games

Moya Lawson



Maureen Lander and John Fairclough *Digital String Games II* (installation view) 2000.
Interactive digital installation. Courtesy of Te Tuhi, Tamaki Makaurau Auckland

“If you think about it, digital, it’s something you play with string, your fingers and a language of computers, strings of binary code. The interplay of old and new.”¹

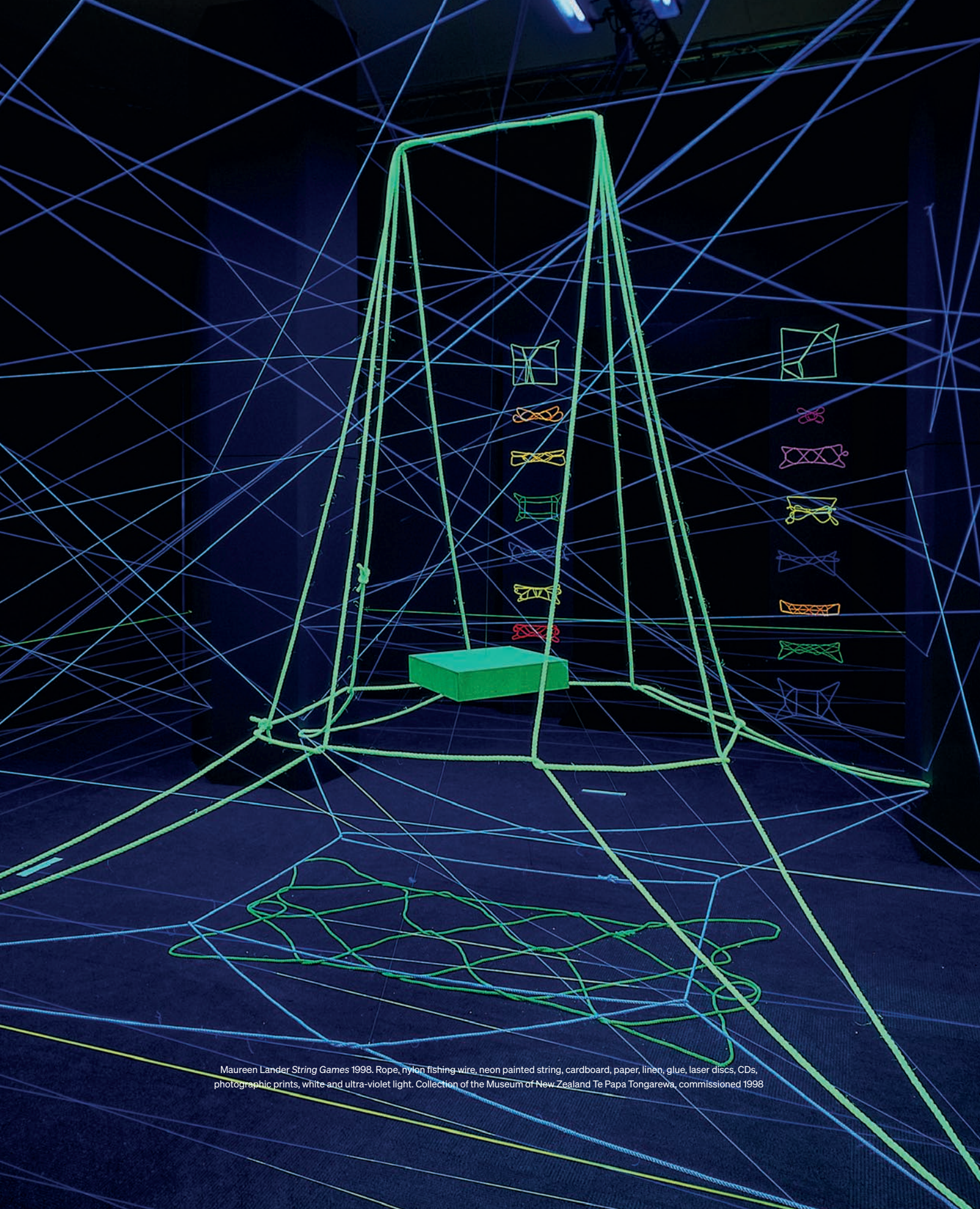
The first instruments we used to count were digits—fingers (and toes). From the Latin, *digitus*, the word was subsequently borrowed to name the numerals one to nine. It is also the root of the term ‘digital’ in relation to machine technologies, which operate along unravelling strings of binary code. Artist Maureen Lander’s 1998 installation *String Games* follows this thread, proposing that the digital can be grasped and rendered like string looped around fingers; correlating the material forms of whai (Māori string games) and digital technologies.

Maureen Lander is an artist and academic of Ngāpuhi, Te Hikutu and Pākehā descent who has been exhibiting, teaching and mentoring in fine art and Māori material culture for the last forty years. Her practice intertwines with te whare pora (the house of weaving), following its materials and processes as channels to tap into the metaphysical ideas that drive her work, as well as the circumstances her work sits within.

String Games was commissioned for the opening of Te Papa Tongarewa on the Te Whanganui-a-Tara Wellington waterfront. Immersive and site-specific, it is dominated by a giant, UV-lit installation composed of fluorescent marine-braided rope and based on a customary string game called a whare kēhua, or house

of spirits. At the centre of this construction is a floating neon-green box. Smaller configurations on the surrounding walls and floor map out various other string patterns practised in Aotearoa, creating the optical illusion that the space extends into a weightless void around them. After its presentation at Te Papa, *String Games* had more iterations, which were retitled *Digital String Games I, II and III*.² Made in collaboration with the Pākehā artist John Fairclough, they introduced new interactive elements that engaged fingers and thumbs, using a game pad to project changing patterns within the installations.

String Games expanded the scope of Lander’s site-specific practice. At this time, she often responded to a site through her choice of materials, considering the meanings they might lend to the work and its broader contexts.³ The new Te Papa Tongarewa was built to reflect recent government policy, which had begun to finally acknowledge the Treaty of Waitangi as the founding document of this nation state. This new museology would overturn old models of representation, packing away “the crusty old museum exhibitions of yore” and identify new treasures and taonga which could tell the nation’s stories.⁴ These objects would be presented within “dynamic”, “interactive” and “challenging” exhibition frameworks that “interpret[ed] our world—and what we’re guardians of—back to ourselves”.⁵ Collection items were unearthed in the hundreds as the key medium of the museum’s new mandate, and artists—including Lander, Lisa Reihana and Greg Semu—were invited to respond to the collection for the exhibition *Facing IT*. Lander’s previous work had for the most part formed connections to site through the incorporation of locally sourced or repurposed natural materials, but *String Games* doesn’t include any of these kinds of materials. I would argue that instead it forms its connections to site through Te Papa’s constitutional material: the items in its collection.



Maureen Lander *String Games* 1998. Rope, nylon fishing wire, neon painted string, cardboard, paper, linen, glue, laser discs, CDs, photographic prints, white and ultra-violet light. Collection of the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, commissioned 1998

The work's first 'material' is a series of photographs of whai made by Pākehā ethnographic photographer James McDonald between 1912 and 1926 among communities in Rotorua; Koritini, Hiruhāmara and Pipiriki on the Whanganui River; and at Whareponga, Waiomatatini, Waitangirua and Te Araroa on the East Coast.⁶ Whai is considered an ancient pastime among Māori, believed to have been gifted by Māui and/or patupaiarehe, but the practice also appears among societies across the world—in the United Kingdom it's called 'cat's cradle'. Muka string is looped around fingers and hands (or groups of fingers and hands) to create symbolic constructions that change with minor adjustments, often animating specific pūrākau and accompanied by waiata. An alcove in the installation is dedicated to these photographs. UV lights illuminate the hands in the photographs like the ropes in the installation. According to Lander, *String Games* recovers this heirloom from a conflicted history of colonial anthropology and makes that knowledge "accessible back to the people it was collected from."⁷

The second 'material' in the work comes from the European modernist Marcel Duchamp, who is represented in Te Papa's collection by an edition of his 1930s series *Boîte en valise*—a 'travelling-suitcase museum' that holds miniature versions of the artist's key works. Lander had wanted to incorporate the real object within her installation, but as this was not possible the floating neon box at the centre of *String Games* acts as a reference—a closed container of unknowable objects. A corresponding alcove includes a photograph of Duchamp's 1942 installation *Sixteen Miles of String*. This work, a canonised precursor to what we now dub 'installation', is a key influence in *String Games*.

While these two materials might seem very different, Lander's work renders them at the intersection of multiple entangled histories. These wind together in two films which present a pair of gloved hands delicately unpacking the contents of

Te Papa's edition of *Boîte en valise*, pausing with each miniature work so the viewer can take it in. Different ungloved hands then begin to refill the box with McDonald's photographs of whai, a copy of J. C. Andersen's 1927 book *Māori String Figures*, and a pair of mussel shells, which are the tools used for creating muka for string. This performance is interwoven between McDonald's archived footage from the 1920s and footage created by Lander of contemporary Māori also creating whai. They sit in green spaces, on park benches, in marae, and sing waiata. Moving back and forth in time, the films chart the survival of the practice.

Channelling questions that Duchamp posed in his own work, but in a context where he himself represents a kind of imperialism, in layered ways these films make clear that *String Games* responds to its site—to the politics of looking, the machinations of the Antipodean museum, its colonial inheritances and its intentions for the future. Lander brings to light a historicised Indigenous practice and reanimates it through the legacy of an imported (or freighted) and fraught colonial art history. *String Games* creates a dynamic allegory that reflects the shifting complexity of cultural relations in Aotearoa New Zealand, amid a rapidly globalising world propelled by technological advancements.

By 1998, nationwide ownership of personal computers was increasing exponentially, in part out of a demand to access the computer network called 'the Internet'. FAQ's written by computer-engineering students for newspapers placed quotation marks around words like 'pages', 'forums' and 'gateways',⁸ anticipating confusion around their employment—the dog-eared corners, podiums, hands and bodies implied in these words were far from the actual experience of 'cyberspace'. At the outset, the increase in PC ownership was driven by the desire for these telecommunications capacities, but even in its early stages discussions alluded to the possibilities of virtual

Glowing as if they are electrified, the strings in *String Games* echo the strings that create whai—harakeke, muka—and the strings that create digital technologies—copper wire, electrons.

interaction, which “allow[ed] people to wander around a simulated world, interacting as if they were physically in the same place.”⁹ While information technology may have only repackaged the ways humans had always communicated with one another, its space-collapsing immediacy radically changed how information was received and thus understood in relation to the environment.

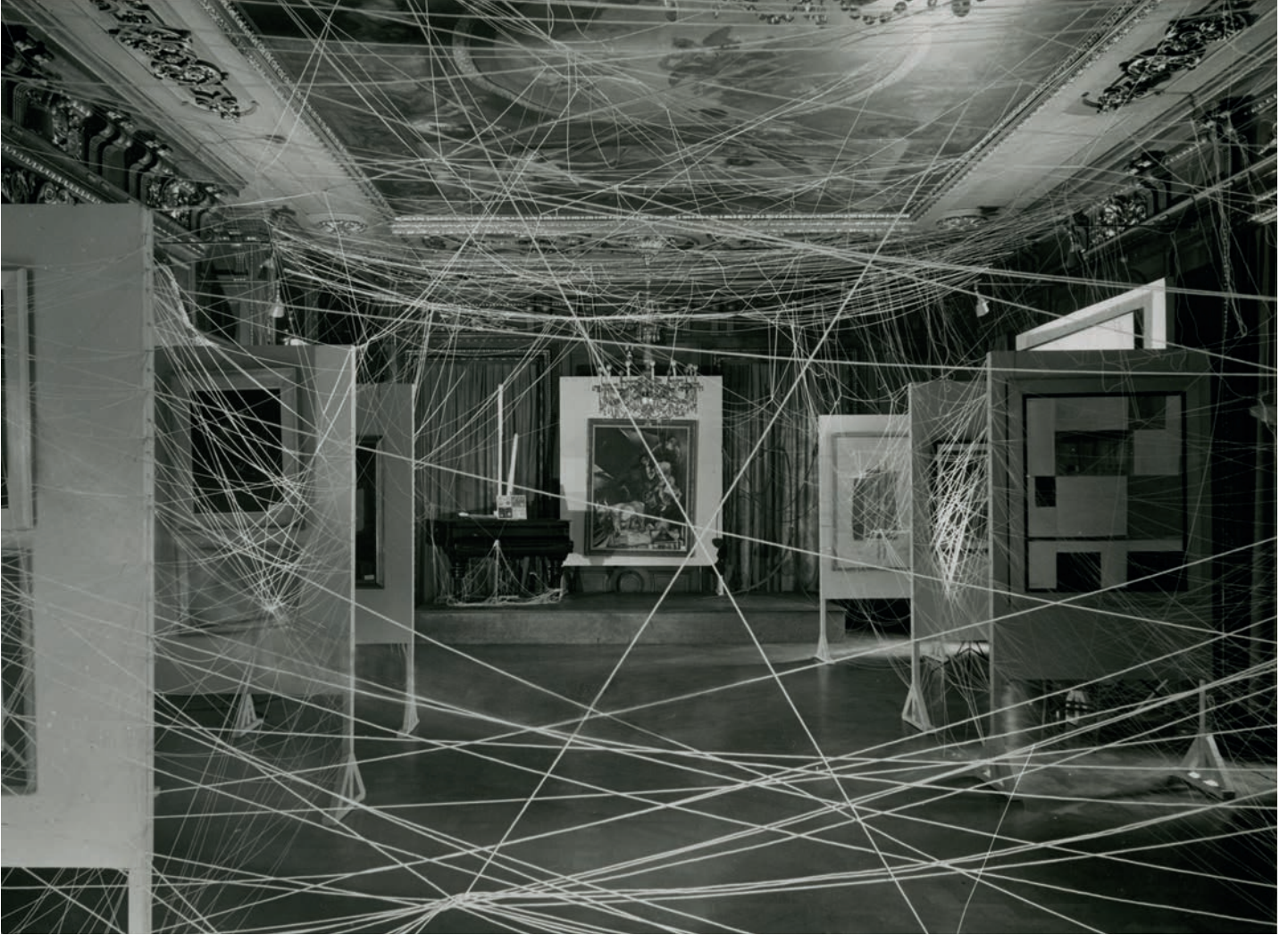
According to Lander, *String Games* would “pick up on the word ‘digit’ which in the older sense is simply the use of ‘fingers’” and find likenesses across the forms and processes of whai and then-new digital technologies: “[creating] a kind of ‘whakapapa’ for the relationship of technology to this particular art form [string games]—manual, photographic, film, video, sound, computer, www.”¹⁰ We might also insert the 20,000-year technology of string into this continuum, as well as the textiles, looms and Jacquard machines it later sustained, which crucially informed computer technologies as we know them today—as philosopher Sadie Plant has said, “weaving wends its way through even the media which supplant it.”¹¹ At the time, Plant probably didn’t realise how true her analogy was: the digital interface, wherein “data and code

function primarily as a single stream or thread”, is now understood to be literally woven or knitted like the pattern for a weave on an eight-thread warp.¹²

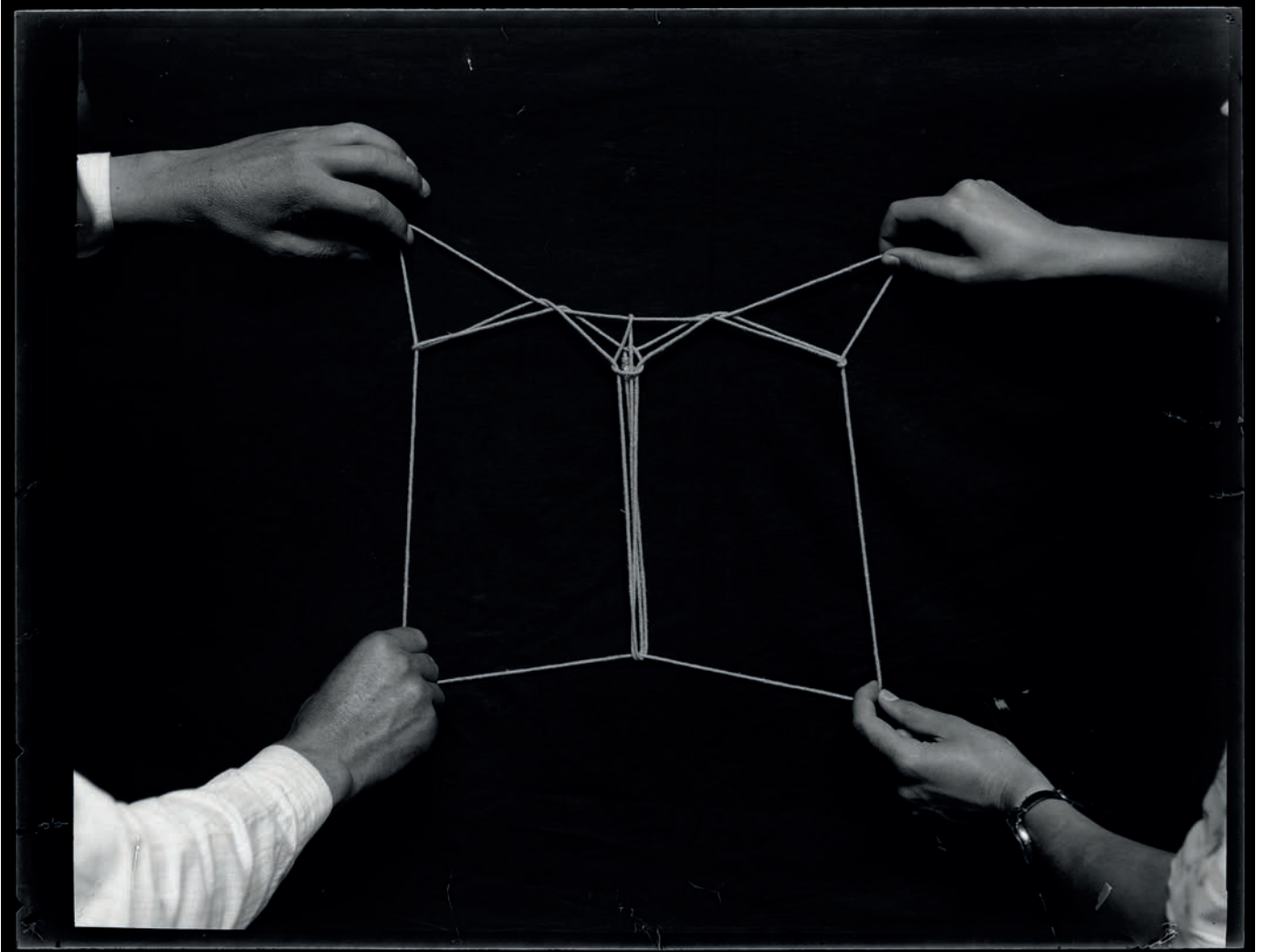
While digitality is commonly associated with immaterial modes of communication, connection and consciousness, along with the utopian possibilities that come with this, *String Games* proposes an alternate route through these perceptions. In order to engage with *String Games* deeper—on a fibrous, mineral level—we need to dwell on the connotations of its materiality and the correlations held within this materiality.

Glowing as if they are electrified, the strings in *String Games* echo the strings that create whai—harakeke, muka—and the strings that create digital technologies—copper wire, electrons. They are one and the same, represented simultaneously. Importantly, both systems are identified as mediums: symbolic constructions that translate stories, or the conduits for digital code that translate text or images. They are both distinctly material, inciting reflections on how digital technologies mediate our relations to the material world. Inherently, *String Games* also stirs an awareness of hands and fingers—digits looped around string that weave and interlace to create discrete symbols. While numerical digits propel the digital technologies we interact with on a daily basis, our fingers have always been the point where we meet them, from the clicking of vacuum tubes in the first warehouse-sized computers, to the tapping of keys on a personal keyboard and the swiping of a palm-sized screen.

Our body is thus inherently involved in *String Games*, too, not only through its allusion to fingers, but also in the way it blurs the boundaries between our corporeal limits and an expanding digital universe. Since the rise of digital technologies, discourse around ‘the body’ has only intensified—responding to the loaded promise that we can leave behind our physical bodies through cyberspace. While some have



John D. Schiff *Sixteen Miles of String* installation by Marcel Duchamp at First Papers of Surrealism exhibition, Coordinating Council of French Relief Societies, Inc. (New York) 1942. Gelatin silver print. Leo Baeck Institute Photograph Collection (13-1972-9303), gift of Jacqueline, Paul and Peter Matisse in memory of their mother Alexina Duchamp. © Leo Baeck Institute, New York. Photo: The Philadelphia Museum of Art / Art Resource, NY



James McDonald Māori String Games—*Ara Pikipiki a Tawhaki* 1912–26. Black and white gelatin glass negative.
Collection of the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa



Maureen Lander *String Games* 1998. Rope, nylon fishing wire, neon painted string, cardboard, paper, linen, glue, laser discs, CDs, photographic prints, white and ultra-violet light. Collection of the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, commissioned 1998

signalled the potential of a streamlined, multipurpose ‘pan-cultural’ language, *String Games* defines digitality at the scale of our fingers, between plasma, glass and thumbs, which weaves through individual and collective bodies and the cultural and historical frameworks that bind them. *String Games* recalls a material world mediated for sensuous bodies by digital technologies.

Multiple material ontologies thus coagulate within *String Games*, especially when you consider that the Western-defined ‘new materialism’ I am partially led by here has historically omitted any acknowledgement of the Indigenous viewpoints that heralded it.¹³ This unsettled, agential nature is inherent to how we might understand *String Games*. As Lander spoke of the work in 2000, she was interested in exploring “the tensions that occur at the interface between the two cultures,”¹⁴ represented across whai and digital systems, and framed by globalism, dial-up internet and Y2K. *String Games* is thus deeply embedded in and formed out of this place, offering a view of space and time that is threaded through local paradoxes of identity, power, place and space.

Whai and digital systems represent the transformation of the raw mineral world into tools of social, cultural and technological value. At the tips of human fingers, they are capable of becoming something other than themselves, and perpetuate their own networks of communication and innovation. *String Games* defines the digital as something held, shaped, applied and exchanged but also material, bodily, earthly. In the shimmering, slippery present, we face a paradox propelled by digital technologies, where surging screen times and a looming Metaverse sees us falling increasingly out of sync with our living, breathing, physical environment. The clairvoyant intuition of *String Games* illuminates relations to the digital that are bound to materials and touch. Despite being over twenty years old, it anticipates our contemporary moment.

Moya Lawson is a writer and curator based in Te Whanganui-a-Tara. She is currently doing an MA in Art History on Maureen Lander’s *String Games* at Victoria University Te Herenga Waka. She is also a curator at City Gallery Wellington Te Whare Toi. *Maureen Lander: Aho Marama Strings of Light* is on display from 12 August 2023.

- 1 Maureen Lander, ‘Strings Attached’, *The Dominion Post*, 3 October 2001, p. 19.
- 2 *Digital String Games I* was shown at ISEA 98 in the UK, followed by *Digital String Games II* in Auckland, and then *Digital String Games III*, which toured Australia in *Cyber Cultures: Sustained Release* during 2000–03. Selected components of *Digital String Games II* were also exhibited in *Techno Māori* in Wellington in 2001.
- 3 Maureen Lander, ‘In Sites: the predicament of place: personal perspectives and intercultural viewpoints on aspects of site related art’, MA in Fine Arts dissertation, University of Auckland, 1993.
- 4 ‘Exhibition space designed for flexibility’, *The Evening Post*, 6 July 1993, p. 13.
- 5 Rosemary MacLeod, ‘Where Our Museum Is Going’, *The Dominion Post*, 24 January 1996, p. 13.
- 6 Johannes C. Andersen, *Māori String Figures*, Wellington: Steele Roberts Ltd, 1927, p. 1.
- 7 *Art Now Correspondences*, MU 422/2 – MU000433/001/0003, Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, Aotearoa New Zealand.
- 8 Peter Wiggin, ‘Welcome to the Internet’, *The Press*, 25 April 1995, p. 25; and Phillip Neeson, ‘Welcome to our World: entangling the Internet’, *The Dominion Post*, 29 May 1995, supp., p. 17.
- 9 Stuart Lyall, ‘Internet Access in New Zealand FAQs’, faq.org, accessed 20 February 2023.
- 10 *Art Now Correspondences*, MU 422/2 – MU000433/001/0003, Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, Aotearoa New Zealand.
- 11 Sadie Plant, *Zeros + Ones: Digital Women + The New Technoculture*, London: Fourth Estate, 1998, p. 69.
- 12 Stephen Monteiro, *The Fabric Interface: Mobile Media, Design, and Gender*, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2017, p. 18.
- 13 Brendan Hokowhitu, ‘The emperor’s ‘new’ materialisms: Indigenous materialisms and disciplinary colonialism’, in Brendan Hokowhitu et al. (eds.), *Routledge Handbook of Critical Indigenous Studies*, London: Taylor & Francis Group, 2020.
- 14 Maureen Lander, quoted in Kathy Cleland ‘Interface: Visions of the body and the machine’, *Art AsiaPacific* 27, 2000, pp. 71–72.

Whenua is a Portal Earth Pigments and Māori Practitioners in Contemporary Art

Kahu Kutia

Raukura Turei Te au a Hine-Moana 2022. Oil, pigment and onepū (black sand) on linen, various sizes. Photo: Cheska Brown



Manawa mai tēnei i Ahuone mai
 Manawa mai tēnei i whenuatia
 Manawa mai tēnei he kapunga oneone
 Tēnei te mauri
 o Papatūānuku,
 o Tūparimaunga,
 o Parawhenuamea,
 o Ukurangi
 E whakaata mai nei e
 Kōkiri!

Sharp volcanic reds, grey river clays tinted with soft blues, yellows like mustard, bright flashes of orange and gemstone purples. Before you spend time searching the environment around you, it's hard to imagine a full spectrum of colour coming from earth pigments, from whenua. We are more used to shiny bottles of coloured acrylic or bright tubes of foreign oil paints—of unknown origin or maker. But for the majority of human history earth pigments have been a primary resource for art making, and in some pockets of humanity, like te ao Māori, the use of earth pigments remains a constant resource of creativity. A highly localised medium, whenua is political, it is cultural and it is sacred.

In Aotearoa, whenua has been used by Māori for many purposes. Whenua is a dye for clothing and a stain for taonga. The bright red adorning a wharenui would have historically been kōkōwai, a rich iron-oxide pigment. The application of whenua could be ceremonial, sacred, but also domestic; there's a painted depiction that I love of a young person from Ngāti Awa adorned with kōkōwai on the cheeks. Sometimes it served a practical purpose too, like layers of pukepoto or clay covering the body to protect from insect bites. The legacy of whenua as adornment was on display at this year's Te Matatini competition in the smoky grey silt on the legs of the Mātangirau kapa from Wairoa—silt gathered that very week in the wake of Cyclone Gabrielle which had destroyed their hometown.

The use of whenua in contemporary art by Māori artists will always speak to the historical legacy of the

resource. I think of Areta Wilkinson and Ross Hemera, both influential Ngāi Tahu artists and members of the *Paemanu* collective, who have been using whenua in their creative art practice for a long time. Hemera has spoken of his childhood visits to sites of Ngāi Tahu rock art, and being prompted by his father to draw them with paper and crayon. Some of those sites are no longer accessible, but are reflected in his artworks. For Hemera, the kupu for kōkōwai is maukoroa.

Wilkinson's work *Tūmatakuru wears me* is a personal joy for me—a sprig of the thorny bush plant tūmatakuru/matagouri cast in sterling silver with a single prick point of kōkōwai as blood. Wilkinson's use of whenua is loaded with meaning. It calls on whakapapa and the practice of our tīpuna. It might also speak to colonisation and to a re-indigenising by reconnection to whenua. As earth



Areta Wilkinson *Tūmatakuru wears me* 2008. Sterling silver, kōkōwai.
 Collection of Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, purchased 2011

that literally comes from a specific place, it speaks to origins and the places that we come from too.

There is also a wider global conversation to be had about the decolonisation and democratisation of the art world. Whenua speaks to a kind of art-making that is accessible, and that accessibility only makes the resource more special. There is little more important to us as Māori than our whenua, when we have lost so much of it through colonisation. As such, whenua is and must be treated with care. Even a smear of earth left in a mortar or on the pestle will be saved.

It feels important to acknowledge that the label ‘contemporary art’ is loaded too. It often comes with the assumption that art made now must be the kind of thing you can view in a gallery. But that definition is limited and exclusionary from a Māori point of view. For a start, it excludes the creatives who might be called ‘traditional Māori artists’—a label that honours legacy but dismisses the innovation, relevance and influence of their own creative practices. Of these artists there are too many to count, but I acknowledge some of my favourites: Veranoa Hetet, Isaac Te Awa, Hamuera Manihera.

There is a younger generation of contemporary artists influenced by senior artists such as Hemera and Wilkinson, and they are overwhelmingly wāhine. Papatūānuku is aligned with ira wāhine, and thus the link with practitioners seems apt. I think first of my tuakana in Kauae Raro, Sarah Hudson, whose work with whenua is influential to many Māori attempting to find and ground in a language of creativity. Her leadership within Kauae Raro is also significant, leading discussions about the democratisation and political practice of whenua, the connection and the joy of it. Exhibited at Blue Oyster Gallery in Ōtepoti last year, Hudson’s *re:place* centred on the Tūhoe concept of *matemateāone*, and whenua was the primary material. I was drawn in particular to the video works featuring dyed fabrics washing clouds of whenua into the moana, and the earth orbs polished to a smooth shine.



Sarah Hudson *Return* (still) 2022. HD Video, colour, sound; 10min Audio composition: Te Kahureremoa Taumata; Cinematography: Rachel Anson. Courtesy of the artist

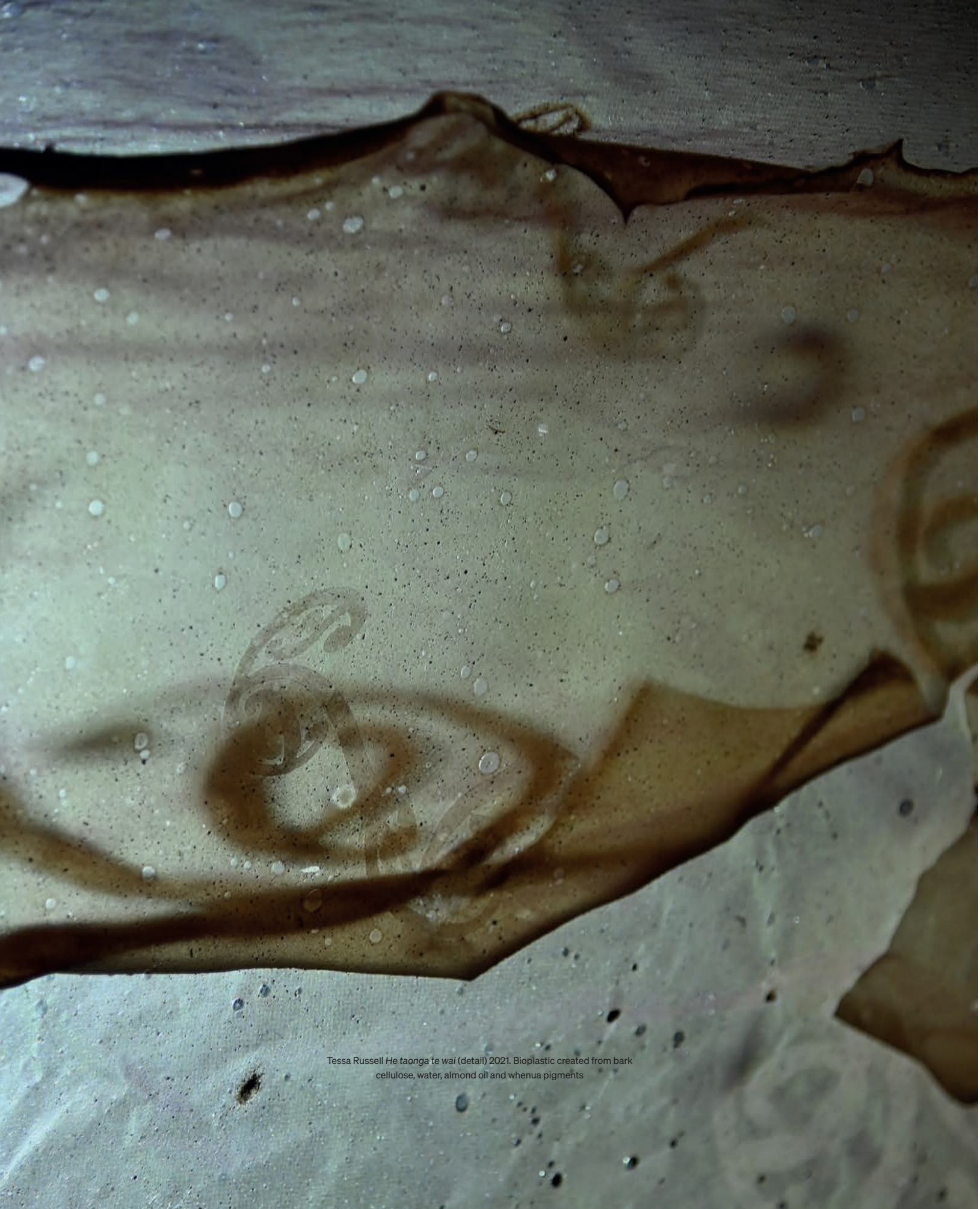
Raukura Turei uses earth pigments like the delicate duck-egg blue *aumoana* from her whenua to create artworks that are magnetic in their daubed patterning. I love the range of colours, the skill used to apply whenua at that scale, and the clear presence of the maker’s hand, reminiscent of the *tuhi māreikura* practice of our *tīpuna*.

Cora-Allan Lafaiki Twiss, who is Māori and Niuean, has primarily worked with whenua within a Niuean context and is a significant figure in the revival of *hiapo*. During the Matariki celebrations at Te Papa in 2022, she spent days sewing small triangles of *hiapo* painted with *kōkōwai* and ashy black ink onto the clothing of visitors to the museum. The triangles were inspired by a *kōrero* with Tūhoe practitioner Chaz Doherty, who talked about how *hiapo* (or the Aotearoa equivalent, *aute*) was used by Māori.



Te Ara Minhinnick He taonga te ware 2022. Courtesy of the artist and Artspace Aotearoa





Tessa Russell *He taonga te wai* (detail) 2021. Bioplastic created from bark cellulose, water, almond oil and whenua pigments



The author wears a corner of aute bark painted with whenua pigments by Cora-Allan Lafaiki Twiss. Handsewn on to garments by Cora-Allan as part of a showcase at Te Papa during Matariki 2022.

Among a new generation of practitioners, the sounds of beating fibres and sloshing buckets of silt ring out. Nikau Hindin is well-known for her use of whenua and aute. Her work often incorporates precise astronomical calculations that echo the navigational abilities of our tīpuna. That skill and dialogue is on display in works such as *Te Uranga*, which shows the rising and setting of the sun at the autumn equinox.

Another young contemporary maker who I am excited by is Te Ara Minhinnick. Minhinnick comes from a place called Waiuku, which could be translated as water filled with clay. It is so appropriate then that uku is central to her work, which often consists of blocks of clay and whenua, on smaller and larger scales. Her work *He taonga te ware* comprised large blocks in uku, onepū, and kerewhenua earth, and I am sad not to have seen it in person at Artspace Aotearoa.

So what is the significance of working with whenua and earth pigments in our contemporary creative context? Why do artists do it and what does it evoke? What are the implications of whenua use? As with much within te ao Māori, the use of whenua is a praxis that

expands conversations out of the sterile art world and grounds them in the real, lived world. Whenua is a political medium that evokes strong emotions in those of us who know how precious a handful of dirt is. There is a whakatauki that we love in the whenua world:

*Tukua mai he kapunga oneone ki ahau, hei tangi māku.
Give me a handful of soil so that I may weep over it.*

Whenua is such a significant art-making material because it can take us back to the waters of Waiuku, or to the rivers where we come from. It is a portal to the future—I think of Tessa Russel’s work melding whenua with a kind of natural bio plastic—and it is a portal to activate the past, as in Kezia Whakamoe’s ceremonial use of earth in her exhibition *Aukati*.

Whenua can activate a simple joy, like children making mud pies on a hot day. It is a portal because it can evoke a sense of closeness and intimacy with tīpuna, or like seeds planted in soil, it might evoke futures to come. Tradition and futurisms look different in the context of an indigenous culture, outside the tireless reflex to innovate purely for the sake of it. To work with whenua feels like that. Past and present and future rolled in to one. In a way that is not contrived, is not forced, but often effortless. More than anything else, with whenua it is the context that matters most.

Kahu Kutia (Ngāi Tūhoe) (she/they) is a writer, journalist and artist hailing from Ngāi Tūhoe and currently based in Te Whanganui-a-Tara. She is a member of *Kauae Raro Research Collective*.

We have not provided English translations for the te reo Māori used throughout this text. If you would like translations to support your understanding, we suggest the following resources:

Te Aka Māori Dictionary (maoridictionary.co.nz)

H. W. Williams, *A Dictionary of the Māori Language*, 7th ed (1971)

He Kapunga Oneone (<https://www.kauaeraro.com>)


The karakia shared at the opening of this text was composed by Te Kahureremoa Taumata and Khali Phillips-Barbara for the purpose of gathering and working with whenua.

Verses and Visions of Ship Nails and Tail Feathers

Hatesa Seumanutafa

The ways that we curate history can make all the difference in the ways we value each other now. As I round the corner on a decade spent working in heritage and curatorial collection management, my beloved museum wrapped in its gothic stone cloak is under decant. It seems the tide is always high, and my mind needs to revel in the freedom of writing in a foreign tongue about that which matters to me. So here is a collection of verses and visions, data and drama about art and artefacts intended to counter what I would describe as the lingering monocular view of histories and heritage material.





Although the past is irretrievable, its presence in heritage sites and material is inescapable, and often extremely powerful. I visited the Canterbury Museum for the first time aged fifteen and was fortunate to gain special access to the old ethnographic storeroom. Experiencing heritage differs for many, and that day I remember the storeroom brimming with the smell of earth and oil; a treasure trove so visually compelling I drank up all that my eyes could see, dreading the end. Hidden from the ill-informed public were rows upon rows of our heritage material; here I encountered the wealth, intelligence and mana of my people. It was an experience of clarity and anchoring, and the impetus to my passion for museums and heritage material.

When Magellan first revealed the South Seas to the Western world in 1521, what followed was inevitable. Our material culture—the manifestations of our shared or individual experiences, needs, experiments, innovations, languages and customs—disappeared to be held in foreign hands and traded in foreign lands. Museums were, by design, systems used as colonial tools to collect and highlight the then perceived physical, intellectual and technological superiority of the colonial empire over indigenous peoples. With our material culture removed from context and collected to educate, entertain or inspire others, we, *tagata o le moana*, eventually became visualised as romanticised static.

It was the beginning of a one-way road, with no markers for the extraordinary histories of Pacific peoples, which began before the fall of the more famed

Minoan civilisation. Our ancestors began the final chapters of human settlement of the globe, navigating and settling the largest of its oceans without modern aides, and thrived in societies with political, scientific, economic and educational systems; they developed trade routes now bordered with passports by opposing military complexes, and medicines now lining the pockets of offshore patent holders and greedy pharmaceutical giants. Our ancestors formed alliances, abundant in a knowledge that upheld accountability to the seasons, the environment and each other.

Museums matter as a space where identities, cultures and ontologies can be discovered, documented, demonstrated and, sadly, dismissed. The present abundance of roles, practices and knowledge pertaining to how we see ourselves and how we see others, how we understand and engage with each other's environs, materials, expressions, practices and so on, are still functioning on the smell of an oily foreign flag. The intricacies of history are drawn mainly from a collection item's provenance, acquisition information, construction methods and media, curatorial significance and perceived rarity. There is no room to inhale the dreamy air of histories afforded so easily in art galleries, where historic artworks—alone in their pristine gallery spaces, gilded wings holding them safely in their places—capture adoring eyes that dream about a clean, stoic heritage. It is easy to be proud of your history in an art gallery, where there is a distancing from realities that are confronted immediately and brutally in museum collections.





Amokura tail feathers. Collection of Canterbury Museum



William Menzies Gibb *Edge of the Bush, Pigeon Bay* 1886. Watercolour. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū, gift of Elizabeth Britton, 1960

The reality of this skewed history was obvious as a mixed heritage Pacific Islander born and raised in Canterbury. I grew up in a time when the cultural significance attached to our heritage material was reduced to the peculiar, simplistic or macabre, presented in the pursuit of info/edutainment for an audience largely made up of non-us. The traditional exclusion of Indigenous art and artefacts from cliquy terms and genres such as fine arts, boutique wares, finery, decorative arts and studio ceramics endorsed the unspoken monologues of those self-important colonial minds, which have from the same platform but to a wider degree set today's systems and standards for religion, education, governance, justice, culture and economics. All to the detriment of our environment, ingenuity and people.

True, the engagement and employment of Māori, Pacific and Indigenous people in museums and art galleries is increasing, but the systemic divide remains. Indigenous material heritage continues to be viewed in the context of a visual hierarchy that places our heritage material as the lesser result of creative endeavours. The opportunity therefore to work with Felicity, Ken and Peter from the Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū whānau, distilling histories into an unusual selection of vignettes, has proven plenteous. Every encounter has been reciprocal and rich with open dialogue unrestrained by, but considerate of, such stagnating metanarratives.

With a rolodex containing images of museum collection items spinning behind my eyes, we entered

a talanoaga, where milieu, innocence, adventure, adornment and opulence became prominent bridges for us to speak on things that mattered to us there and then. Long lists were shortened, and museum material began to overlay scenes created by long-departed artists capturing their then working world. From the curiously ordinary to the challengingly opulent, the following eclectic excerpts are but mere reflections, just some minor or finer points that one might consider on viewing our collective exhibition.

When viewing the water-coloured *Edge of the Bush at Pigeon Bay*, the rarity of this lush bush scene there now stopped the rolodex on the rachis of a handful of amokura tail feathers, and we agree to a shared heritage in loss. Have you ever felt the weight of history while running an eye over the length of an amokura tail feather? Rarely seen in the waters of Aotearoa, this tropicbird is also known to Polynesians as the atavaké, and to sailors as the bo's'n-bird. With distinctive black eye markings and elegant long red tail streamers, amokura caught in easterly gales from their mid-Pacific breeding colonies met their fate along Aotearoa's coastlines, where they were systematically sought and collected. Coveted by Māori, these tail streamers were used as prized decorations, mediums of trade at a price scale equal to that of pounamu. What are our measures now for what is treasured, when the weight of meaning and rarity is no longer traded by those who made the scales? It makes me think of how the love for our fauna and flora in Aotearoa New Zealand is immensely documented and promoted,



Margaret Stoddart *Bush Fire, Paraparaumu* c. 1908. Watercolour. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū, purchased 1959



Hūia nest. Collection of Canterbury Museum. Photo: Jane Ussher, 2019



Charles Meryon *Océanie, Îlots a Uvea (Wallis), Pêche aux Palmes* 1845 1863. Etching. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū, gift of Olivia Spencer Bower, 1979



Maker unknown *Prow ornament*. Pearl shell with human hair binding and decorative cowrie shells. Niue. Collection of Canterbury Museum



Maker unknown *Ration of food paste and fibre cordage*. Pandanus paste wrapped in plaited pandanus leaves, tied with coconut sennit. Collection of Canterbury Museum

yet little is done, little is seen of the degradation, little is heard of the continuous preventable extinctions of native species such as the regal huia.

The wattlebird huia is so instantly attached to visions of snow tipped tail-feathers and intricately carved waka huia that one forgets they are no more. A blur of black beauty extinct by the early twentieth century with so little trace, we know but dust and memories. The charred scene captured before me by Margaret Stoddart flips the rolodex to a lonely huia nest, the only one in existence, it glitched into sight and dropped, lost to the ashes at Paraparaumu.

And what of adventure? Is it a sound bridge for myself and the Christchurch Art Gallery curators to speak of this yearning to explore beyond horizons and settle new places, with friendships and hardships? It becomes abundantly clear that this bridge allows

a viewing of historic art and artefacts in an ocean deep with Eurocentric bias. The sense of adventure is not only felt when thinking about the early settlement of the Pacific but also when thinking of the subsequent immigrants of recent history.

Here, I glimpsed coconut trees in the *Océanie, Îlots a Uvea (Wallis)*, where people are fishing in the nearby reef in muted monochrome. This seemingly idyllic scene is soon to be thwarted by a ship far away—although it is still small, it looms large in the distance. Its masts are above the horizon line, but I see no figurehead of a protective maiden thrust forward at the bow to ensure safe passage and full sails. Off to its side, is that a va'a of the island kind? The spinning rolodex throws hues of similar shades against this scene. A pearl prow ornament lashed with shells and a loved one's hair; a food package containing a ration





Above: Captain George Clapham *Three-masted ship* 1830s. Scrimshaw. Collection of Canterbury Museum

Left: John Gibb *Lyttelton Harbour, N.Z. Inside the Breakwater (detail)* 1886. Oil on canvas. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū, presented by the Lyttelton Harbour Board, 1989



David Wilkie *The Sedan Chair* c. 1817. Etching, drypoint. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū, Ngarita Charlotte Hounam Johnstone bequest, 2022

of paste bound with a singular coconut sennit, a life-saving cord when required unwound for lashing or repairs. All mediums for protection, preparation and belief-based adornment in times of voyaging.

If adventure was once so heavily anchored to heaving seas and billowing sails, industrious ports and ship nails, how do we now scribe our generation's epic tales if not into the ivory teeth of whales? Around the table we pondered this amidst the historic use of whaling pots, harpoons and paddles, and activities such as the hunting of sperm whales. Along with compasses, octants and other navigational devices we realised the importance of telling our shared heritage from under stars and canvas or woven sails.



Maker unknown *Slingshot*. Woven coconut sennit, human bone, human hair. Marquesas Islands. Collection of Canterbury Museum

Just as precious are stories of childhood, when anything could matter except chores and adulthood. From teething to games, shadow casting puppets to mechanical toys, there were no warning labels. Just an understanding that we all in our different cultures experience a sense of wonderment and curious confusion, pure noise and barefoot freedom.

Seen here across the cultural divide, an etching by an artist from Scotland called *The Sedan Chair* immediately makes me smile and think of my father's stories of slingshots in the back streets of Samoa. A staple boyhood tool for mischief, later used to bring down game birds and flying foxes to contribute food to the family table. And so the rolodex spins, stopping on a treasured woven slingshot, with a robust human bone toggle and tassel of thick Island hair.

Far from the playfulness of childhood, we agreed to opulence re-emerging in a vignette dedicated to a selection of unique ceramics and luxuriously applied colour, content and countenance. The artworks presented at our table taste of exquisite colour, and so here I dream up a history connecting two favourites whose content allows a walk into a world of mystery and intrigue. A shattered vase, its precious china fragments repaired, now encases a dragon in clouds against a sky of such deep red that it holds her gaze so rarely seen, for she is captured forever standing in the *Wizard's Garden*.

All around the world for as far back as we can dig, people have shared a love for adornments—it's just working together to realign how we view these. Our team wished to avoid the exoticising of Indigenous jewellers' products that our ancestors wore to accentuate status and movements. Confronted by the gazes of the sitters in a strong group of portraits,





Above: Royal Doulton (Charles J. Noke and Cuthbert Bailey) *Dragon vase* c. 1905. Rouge Flambé glaze bone china with enamelled and gilt decoration. Collection of Canterbury Museum

Left: George Leslie *In the Wizard's Garden* c. 1904. Oil on canvas. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū, presented to the Canterbury Society of Arts by Wolf Harris, 1907; given to the Gallery, 1932



Otto Scholderer *Mrs Elizabeth Watson* 1890. Pastel. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū,
Mrs Amelia Bullock-Webster bequest, 1934



Maker unknown 'Ula lei. Whale ivory. Samoa. Collection of Canterbury Museum

I am taken aback by the portrayal of pālagi women, who lived in a time when they had little to no authority, choice or status. Inwardly I shudder and lean on my families' matriarchal systems, forever providing solidity and strength as well as variety and valour.

And the rolodex spins, searching for a symbol to support Mrs Elizabeth Watson's immovable manner even if it is just a façade for the artist, her family and viewer. An 'Ula lei would more than suffice—a thing of natural beauty yet fatal to the eyes. A necklace of twenty-seven whale teeth ground down to size comes from Samoa presented by Miss Valasi Bleazard and collected by her father, Reverend Colin Bleazard, a Methodist missionary in Western Samoa from 1892 until 1901. Part of a larger collection, it is a perfect awahi in my Island eyes.

I would like to finish here, without further words across worlds, but do trust there is more to feast on when entering these vignettes. Glimpses into history

and heritage material, manifestations and visual documentation of our shared milieu and potential, our sense of adventure, love of adornments and opulence. We have built a bridge from wonder to connect the Museum and the Gallery, aware that the ways we curate history can tip the scale to favour one's non-existence in the hierarchy of art and artefacts, verses and visions, data and drama.

Hatesa Seumanutafa is curator Māori, Pacific and Indigenous human histories at Canterbury Museum. Ship Nails and Tail Feathers is on display from 10 June until 23 October 2023. A partnership project between Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū and Canterbury Museum.

New Book

Te Rā: The Māori Sail

Ariana Tikao and Mat Tait

E Takaroa!

*Your sea spray spores out with
the breeze. I hear your waves
lapping against the waka and feel
the undulating movement
from the swell of your breath...*

\$24.⁹⁰



Te Rā, which means *the sail* in te reo Māori, is the last known customary Māori sail in the world. Woven from harakeke more than 200 years ago, Te Rā has for many years been held in the British Museum in London. In July 2023, it will once again be brought into the light as it returns home to Aotearoa., Evocatively written by Ariana Tikao in English and te reo Māori from the point of view of Te Rā and beautifully illustrated by Mat Tait, this book commemorates the homecoming of our oldest taonga, and celebrates our past, present and future as New Zealanders.

Hardcover with 36 concertina-style pages.

Pre-order now from the Design Store christchurchartgallery.org.nz/shop

Pagework

no.57

Each quarter the Gallery commissions an artist to create a new work of art especially for Bulletin. It's about actively supporting the generation of new work.

The bougainvillea plant, recorded in Sonya Lacey's *Study for Chlorophyll*, belongs to a genus known as the four o'clock family, for the late time of day that their flowers open. Four o'clock precedes five o'clock, and six o'clock and seven; it also comes around again, following three o'clock and two o'clock, and before that, one o'clock, the witching hour. This is to say that for an insomniac or someone experiencing broken sleep, as the unnamed narrator of Lacey's fictional text *Chlorophyll Script* is, the clock is a taunt. In *Chlorophyll Script*, a sleepless body and a bougainvillea both want for metallic supplements to support their adaptation to a new environment, so that they, as synchronised organisms, can recalibrate with time. Magnesium, zinc, iron: these are the elements that regulate the circadian rhythm and support the evergreen activity of an equatorial bougainvillea.

Study for Chlorophyll is from a series that was precipitated by this speculative writing around invisible or innate systems of energy transformation. Ostensibly, here is a plant bathed in red light. In actuality, the light is not illuminating this branch and these leaves; by way of a camera modified to register only the infrared spectrum, *Study for Chlorophyll* shows the relationship

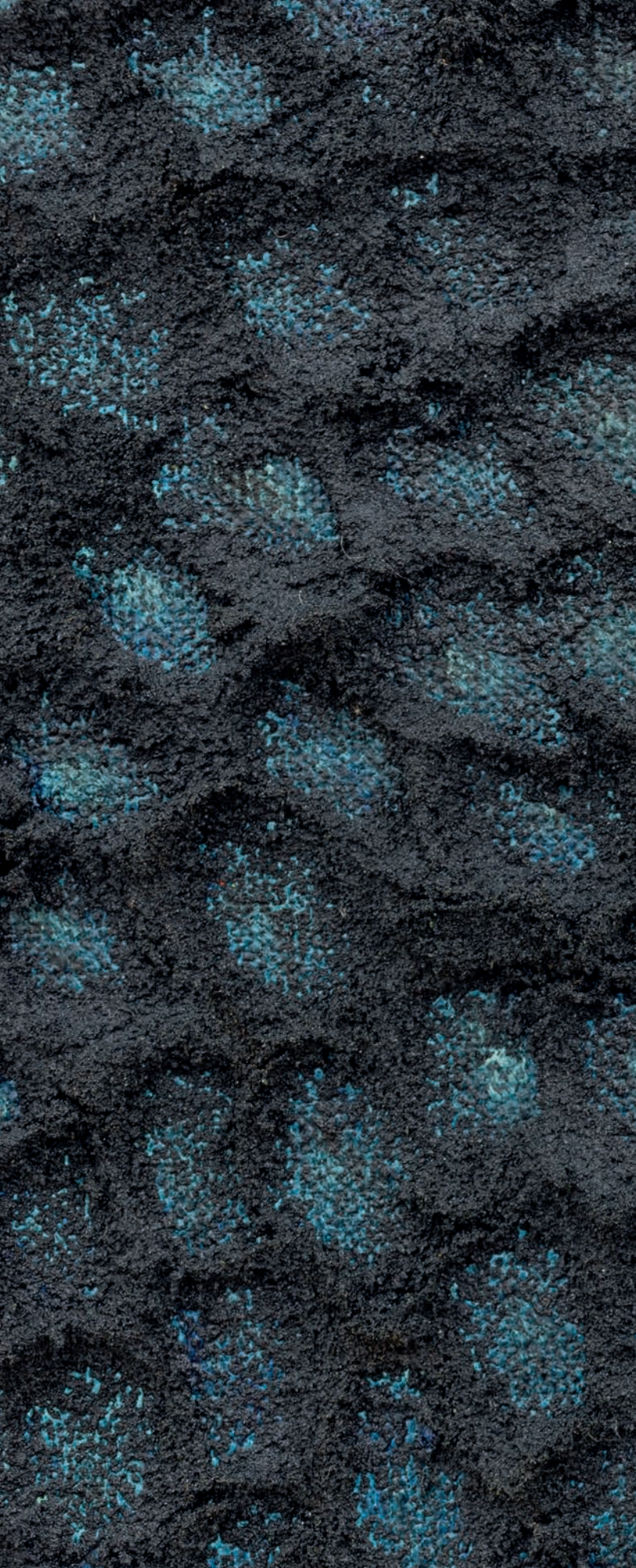
between green and red. Chlorophyll—that particular and special pigment that allows plants to take in light through photosynthesis and enables them to grow and thrive—casts back near-infrared waves into the atmosphere. Though imperceptible to the naked eye, the plant's capacity to reflect a surplus light form away from itself is an advanced evolutionary tactic that can also serve as a metric for health. Measured in nanometres, the colouring in Lacey's image is generated by the plant itself, indicating that it has high enough levels of chlorophyll to produce a diffused red glow. Unlike Lacey's protagonist, then, the bougainvillea in *Study for Chlorophyll* seems to be well-acclimatised.

Lacey's pagework articulates the energetic processes occurring in the world that may have a symbiosis with our own embodied activities. Our light sensitivity and neurological responses to patterns of day and night – the disturbance that takes place if we travel far, or the clocks change – suggests that bodily timekeeping is something innate and absorbed. How does a bougainvillea know it is near the zero point of latitude? Can we be plant-like too?

Jane Wallace
Curatorial assistant

Sonya Lacey *Study for Chlorophyll* 2022. 680nm infrared digital photograph





Exhibitions

Opening this Quarter

Ship Nails and Tail Feathers: Historic Treasures from the Collections of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū and Canterbury Museum

10 June – 23 October 2023

The stories told by rare, extravagant—and even curiously ordinary—objects.

Te Rā: The Māori Sail

Kaua mā te koroingo noa iho, engari mā te werawera rānō*

8 July – 23 October 2023

Experience the wonder of Te Rā, the only known customary Māori sail in existence.

**Robin White: Te Whanaketanga
Something Is Happening Here**

22 July – 5 November 2023

A major survey of the fifty-year career of one of Aotearoa New Zealand's best-loved artists. Jointly developed by Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki and Te Papa.

**Maureen Lander: Aho Marama
Strings of Light**

From 12 August 2023

A magical UV light installation bringing together different art forms and histories.

*The title for this exhibition has been taken from a quote by Te Rangihīroa Sir Peter Buck, gifted by Jamie Tuuta (Ngāti Mutunga). It can be interpreted in English as, "Success cannot be attained by resting on the doings of our ancestors but is achieved by hard work, sustained effort, and unyielding courage".

Raukura Turei Te au a Hine-Moana (detail) 2022. Oil, pigment and onepū (black sand) on linen, various sizes. Photo: Cheska Brown

Closing this Quarter

Salote Tawale: Ripple

Until 18 June 2023

New works from Fijian-Australian artist Salote Tawale exploring cultural identity and dislocated Indigeneity.

Die Cuts and Derivations

Until 2 July 2023

Artists investigate and respond to space, through line, materials and improvisation.

Absence

Until 20 August 2023

Sometimes the most compelling thing is what *isn't* there.

Ongoing

Perilous: Untold Stories from the Collection

Making room for fresh voices, untold narratives and disruptive ideas.

Mata Aho Collective: Tikawe

An ambitious installation that descends from the skylights to zing across the foyer.

Xoë Hall: Kuini of the Worlds

A wild new mural from Kāi Tahu artist Xoë Hall celebrating atua wāhine.

Lonnie Hutchinson: Hoa Kōhine (Girlfriend)

An intricately cut-out billboard celebrating supportive friendships between women.

Martin Creed: Everything is Going to be Alright

A completely unequivocal, but also pretty darn ambiguous, work for Christchurch.

Reuben Paterson: The End

A sparkling elevator installation providing an unexpected space for contemplation and connection.

Séraphine Pick: Untitled (Bathers)

Pick's lush watercolour offers a utopian vision in the carpark elevator.

Tomorrow Still Comes:

Natalia Saegusa

A fragmented, poetic wall painting by Natalia Saegusa.

Kelcy Taratoa: Te Tāhū o ngā

Maunga Tūmatakahuki

A vast painting about how we are bound together.

Coming Soon

Out of Time

23 September 2023 – 28 April 2024

The storytelling power of art uncovered through a lively selection of historical works.

See the Gallery website and *What's On* guide for our events listings.



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Designer: Stefan Sestakov, VisCom, 2022.
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Proud to collaborate with
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and Christchurch Art Gallery
Te Puna o Waiwhetū on *Bulletin*.

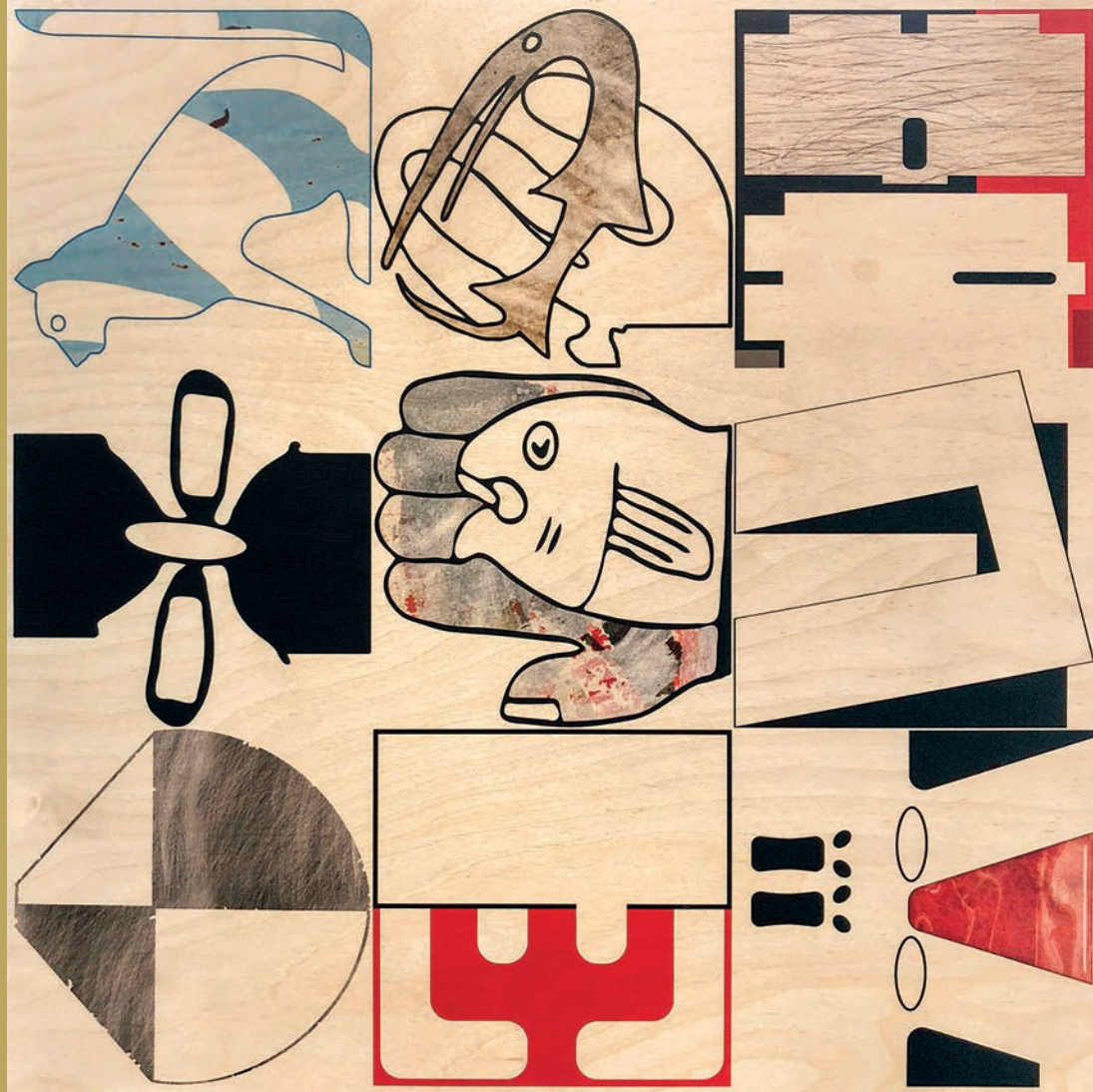
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Auction Event

FRIDAY 25 AUGUST 2023

Friday 25 August, 6.30pm
Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū
Tickets \$70 at christchurchartgallery.org.nz/friends

An evening of spectacular art, great eats from Lizzie's Cuisine and an open bar from Greystone Wines and Three Boys Brewery. Join us as we grow the Gallery's collection.



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TE PUNA O WAIWHETŪ

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Image: Richard Killeen *Rhizome* 2018. Inkjet and varnish on plywood. Courtesy of the artist

Christchurch Art Gallery Foundation

The Christchurch Art Gallery Foundation is committed to building an endowment and a collection that reflects a truly significant period in the history of our city. We have the chance to shape the culture of Christchurch by developing a collection that honours the past, reveals the present and helps us imagine the future. We began the TOGETHER programme in 2014 and are continuing to offer opportunities for businesses and individuals to help us realise our mission.

Level One TOGETHER Partners

Heather and Neville Brown
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Ben Gough Family Foundation
Grumps
Joanna and Kevin Hickman
Gabrielle Tasman
Sheelagh Thompson

Level Two TOGETHER Partners

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The Cosmetic Clinic

Level Three Partners (100) and Hospitality Partners (5)

Please see christchurchartgalleryfoundation.org.nz/together-partners/ for a full list.

Christchurch Art Gallery Foundation's Five Great Works:

Michael Parekowhai Chapman's Homer 2011
1,093 generous donations from Christchurch and beyond, along with proceeds from the first annual gala dinner.

Bill Culbert Bebop 2013

Purchased with assistance from Gabrielle Tasman and proceeds from the second annual gala dinner.

Martin Creed Work No. 2314 [Everything is going to be alright] 2015

Purchased with the generous support of Grumps, and installed with proceeds from the third annual gala dinner.

Bridget Riley Cosmos 2017

Purchased with the generous help of: Heather Boock; Ros Burdon; Kate Burt; Dame Jenny Gibbs; Ann de Lambert and daughters, Sarah, Elizabeth, Diana, and Rachel; Barbara, Lady Stewart; Gabrielle Tasman; Jenny Todd; Nicky Wagner; Wellington Women's Group (est. 1984); and installed with proceeds from the fourth annual gala dinner.

Ron Mueck chicken / man 2019

Purchased with the generous help of: Catherine and David Boyer; Friends of Christchurch Art Gallery; Ben Gough Family Foundation; Charlotte and Marcel Gray; Christchurch Art Gallery's London Club; Jenny and Andrew Smith; Gabrielle Tasman and Ken Lawn; proceeds from the fifth annual gala dinner; and 514 big-hearted individuals and companies.

Christchurch Art Gallery Foundation's most recent acquisition:

Bill Hammond Bone Yard Open Home, Cave Painting 4, Convocation of Eagles 2008

Purchased 2021 with assistance from Christchurch Art Gallery Foundation, Friends of Christchurch Art Gallery, Lyttelton Port Company, Mel and Marcel Brew, Paul and Dianne Chaney, Liz Collins, Brian and Jannie Gillman, Max and Margaret Luisetti, Alison and Ian O'Connell, Gabrielle Tasman and Ken Lawn, Three Lakes Cultural Trust, along with 97 other generous individuals.

Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū



Strategic Partners

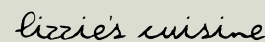


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If you would like to discuss partnership opportunities, contact Jacq Mehrtens on (+64) 21 404042 or jacq@christchurchartgallery.org.nz

christchurchartgalleryfoundation.org.nz

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