

Return
to Your



Place of
Nourishment

Aisha Roberts
Maraea Timutimu
Hollie Tawhiao
Aimee Ratana

Curated by Hāwea Apiata

17 April
– 14 June
2025



Aisha Roberts, *He tohu hiranga*, 2024



Whakahoki

Ko tā mātou nei mahi,
he tuitui i a mātou anō
ki ngā wāhi i ora ai
ō mātou kāwai whakapapa,

he whakahoki i ā mātou
mokopuna ki te ū
i kaingia ai i te pō
e ō mātou kahika,

he whakakite atu i ngā
haehae o roto, i ngā
toimaha e kawea nei
e te wairua Māori,

he whakamaumahara hoki
i a mātou anō,
he momo whakaheke
te ātete.

E Hoki Mai Nei ki te Ūkaipō | Return to Your Place of Nourishment brings together works by four wāhine Māori artists, Aimee Ratana, Aisha Roberts, Hollie Tawhiao and Maraea Timutimu, which explore narratives of pakanga (conflict) through toi (art). In this show, the four artists weave together their unique practices and stories to present a cohesive yet diverse examination of conflicts, with a particular focus on the artists' own whānau, hapū, and iwi narratives.

I was asked by the artists to provide creative written responses to their works and while I will endeavour to let those pieces speak for themselves, I will say that the overwhelming feeling I have had from sitting with all of these works over this past month is a sense of reverence for the resistance of our ancestors. We exist because they resisted. All Indigenous resistance to imperialism is sacred. It has ensured (and continues to ensure) the survival of generations of peoples and cultures all over the world and the themes and stories presented in this show are a testament to that resilience.

In the context of this exhibition, it is useful to consider, as historian and scholar Patrick Wolfe succinctly articulated, that colonialism is a structure, not an event:

“When invasion is recognized as a structure rather than an event, its history does not stop—or, more to the point, become relatively trivial—when it moves on from the era of frontier homicide.” (p. 402)¹

While we may live in the aftermath of our ancestors’ *mamae*, as *tangata whenua* we also navigate our own fraught relationship with an ongoing colonial structure that is pervasive in the way it affects how we relate to each other and to our own lands.² All *kaupapa* which are reflected in the *mahi toi* of this exhibition.

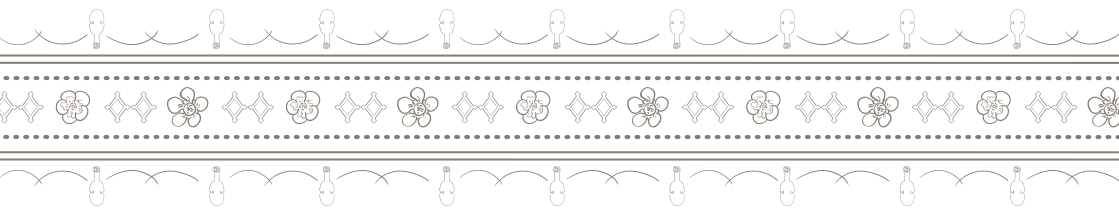
Tawhia’s replica of the wallpaper from her childhood home in the old Frankton Railway Village has been reworked to depict scenes from the Waikato invasion, with particular reference to Rangiriri, a place to which she is connected by *whakapapa*. The subtlety of this piece, titled *Keast*, signals to the ease in which the violence of colonialism can be camouflaged amongst the backdrop of our everyday lives. The scars of settler violence on the *whenua* are everywhere, from picturesque farmland to drained wetlands ‘reclaimed’ for suburban sprawl, along with the devastating effects on environment and culture. How easy it is to forget that these features are not natural to the land. They have not always been here. It is only by continually telling these histories and claiming these narratives that we are able to identify and call out acts of colonial brutality and trace how they continue to affect us today.

Timutimu’s *Parāoa* series of *whānau* recipes marked with earth pigments sourced from her own various ‘places of nourishment’ gesture to the act of providing the literal sustenance for families to persist. It speaks to the *aroha* of our old people which has carried us into the present and will carry us into the future. Her display of recipes also evokes the idea that the recipe or formula of Western imperialism is the same throughout the world. While local ‘ingredients’ may be substituted here and there the overall method is the same and we are not alone in our experience of the colonial project.

Roberts’ adornments *Tāhei pukupuku* and *He tohu hiranga* again point to the legacy of *tūpuna* who instilled a love of and commitment to the *whenua* in their children and descendants. Her pieces are symbols of *mana tupuna* and *mana Māori motuhake* and the use of traditional art practices, materials, and iconography conjures a sense of perseverance and preservation—a nod towards our ancestors’ ability to endure.

¹ Wolfe, P. (2006). Settler colonialism and the elimination of the native. *Journal of Genocide Research*, 8(4), 387-409.

² Iti-Prendergast, S. (2024). Political critique and genealogical vision in *te oriari a Rihī Puihiwahine*, 1870s. *New Zealand Journal of History*, 58(1), 27-48.



Aisha's works also bring to mind the idea that the sites we often think of as our own places of nourishment are themselves layered with stories and generations of experiences—the land has its own whakapapa. While our ūkaipō may be a source of comfort and familiarity to us, those same places have at times also been the setting of profound grief and loss for past generations.

While broaching heavy kaupapa of land and culture loss, Ratana's work Patua, a series of decorated patu which reference the Tūhoe contingent who fought with Maniapoto at Ōrākau, also reminds us that resistance is not always peaceful, nor should it always need to be. It has been said that "colonialism only loosens its hold when the knife is at its throat" (p.61)³ and while reflecting on this thought alongside Aimee's work I have felt the righteousness of our ancestors' anger and their acts of rebellion against the colonial machine. Indigenous peoples have the right to resist, to fight back and defend themselves and what belongs to them.

While many of the works in this collection contemplate the actions and experiences of past generations, they also offer opportunities to consider how past conflict has shaped or had an effect on our world today. As people of the land, our realities are often such that we have to wade through these histories of violence in order to find, forge, or renew our connections to our ūkaipō, pushing through the noise of colonialism to relate to our lands and to each other on our own terms. Indigenous resistance is about the future. And the future is Indigenous.

Hāwea Apiata / Curator

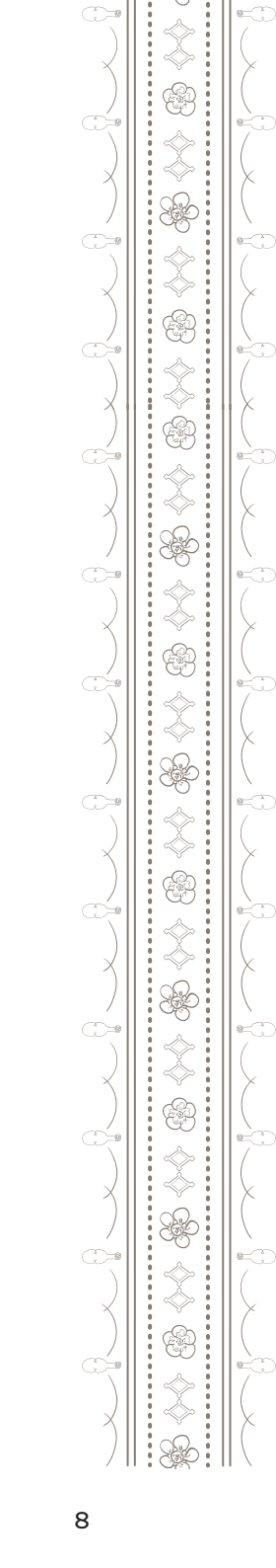
³ Fanon, F. (1965). The wretched of the earth. MacGibbon & Kee.



Aisha Roberts

Tāhei pukupuku, 2024

Muka, natural dyes, toroa feathers



Ūkaipō

After Aisha Roberts

Tātaihia mai ngā whakapapa o te whenua nei,
ngā kōrero mō taku ūkaipō e
—kia mōhio ai au ki te nguha o ōku tūpuna.

Whakaatuhia mai ngā wāhi i whakatapua ai e te riri,
ngā ahumairangi i uaina ai e ngā roimata o ōku pēperekōu.
Waiatahia mai ngā apakura mō taku ipukarea,
ngā tangi hotuhotu a te nehenehenui,
kia rongo au i tō rātou matemate-ā-one.

Tāheitia te mana whāwhārua ki taku kakī,
hei pukupuku mōku e
—kia mahara ai au ko te ū tonu o te wahine
taku oranga i te ao, i te pō.

*Recite the whakapapa of the land to me,
the stories of my place of nourishment,
so I will know the righteous fury of my people.*

*Show me the places made tapu by their rage,
the holy ground watered by my old people's tears.
Sing me the laments of my homeland,
the heaving cries of Te Nehenehenui,
and let me feel their longing for the soil.*

*Hang my mothers' mana from my neck
like a tightly woven guard,
so I will always remember
to drink from the source.*

Hāwea Apiata



Hollie Tawhiao

Rest in Peace, 2024

Upcycled blankets, sheets,
weed matting, laser-cut buttons

7,000mm x 4,600mm

Te riri o te rangi

After Hollie Tawhiao

He aha te rangi e riri nei?
Tihorea atu ōna uwhi kia huraina ai
ngā wāhanga o tana kiko
i werohia ai e ā mātou karanga.
Tihorea atu ngā whakapapa
o te whenua
kia kitea ai ngā taotū o tana makau.

He mea haehae tōku nei ūkaipō
e ngā ara pakanga,
He mea para ōku ngahere e te
ahikauri o te kāwana—
kua riri a runga, kua riri a raro,
kua riri a roto, kua riri hoki a waho.

Ko taku kāinga tonu te whakahere mō
te mahi pāmu, ko ahau tonu tō rātou
whāngai hau—
engari, he uri tēnei nō te rangi, ā,
e rangona ana taku mamae e ia.
Āna, ko te rangi e riri ana, āe mārika,
me pēhea hoki e kore ai?

*You ask me why the sky is angry,
so, I say tear away his covering
and let him
show you where our karanga
pierced his flesh.
Peel back the layers of the land
and see
where his lover was wounded.*

*My ūkaipō bears scars of asphalt
and bitumen,
my bones ache beneath highways
and farmland
and my fury,
my fury
knows no bounds.*

*They tried to offer me as their
sacrificial lamb,
a payment toward the price
of their progress.
But what they do not know is that
I belong to the sky.
He is the apex of my whakapapa.
So, when you ask me about Rangi's mood,
all I can say is
of course the sky is mad,
how could he not be?*

Hāwea Apiata





Maraea Timutimu
'Mai te awa ki te moana, 2024
Kōkōwai, whenua on card

Anamata

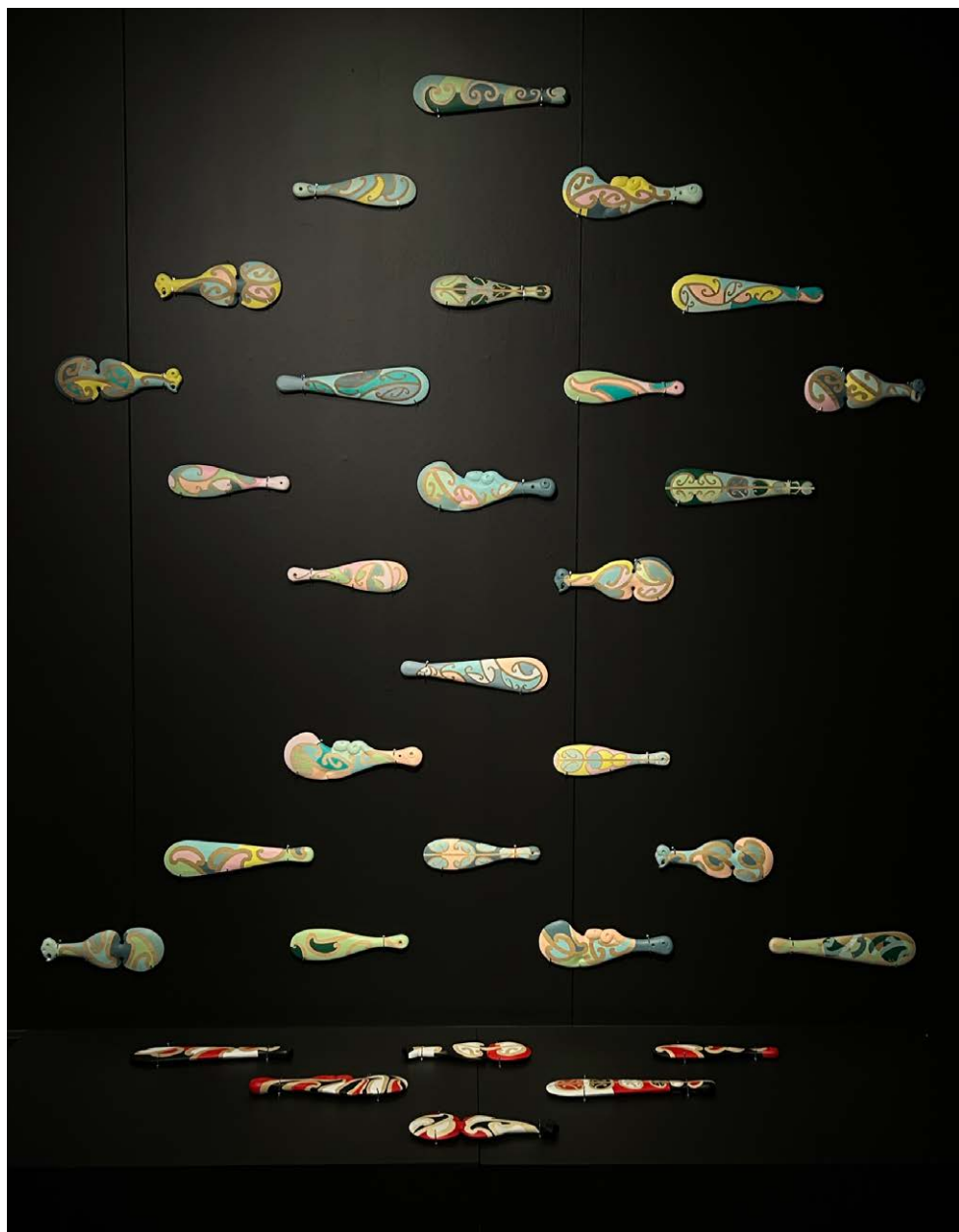
After Maraea Timutimu

E aku uri whakaheke,

Anei aku kupu hei waihotanga, otirā, hei kai mā koutou. Kia maumahara koutou, ko te mātauranga tō koutou oranga tonutanga, ko te mana motuhake o ngā tūpuna tō koutou manapou. Ko ngā kai kei ō koutou ringa ko ngā taonga i okea ururoatia ai e mātou kia mau tonu ake. Heoi, ka rere te reo tupuna i ngā awaawa o tōku nei arero kia mau tonu taua reo ki ō koutou taringa, koia hoki taku reo ā-tuhi kia noho ai te reo rangatira hei kai mā ō koutou karu anō hoki. Kaua e warewaretia, ko te ātetenga a ngā tūpuna tō koutou tauoranga. Ko tāku e hiahia nei kia wātea koutou ki te mahi i ngā mahi ki tā koutou e pai ai, kia ngākaunui ki ngā mahi e whai parāoa ai koutou, kia waihanga i te ao o ō koutou wawata. Kia mōhio mai koutou, ka memeha te mana o te karauna, otirā, te kāwanatanga me āna ture, me āna kaupapa e here nei i a tātou, engari ka ora tonu koutou, ka pūmau tonu te mana o te iwi Māori. Kei aku mokopuna, rangona te reka o te aroha e pāorooro tonu nei ki a koutou i tēnei wā. Toi te kupu, toi te mana, toi te whenua.

Nā tō tupuna

Hāwea Apiata



Aimee Ratana
Patua, 2024
Acrylic on wood

Taku Patu Māori E

After Aimee Ratana

Tirohia
te rau o taku
patu e, kia aro ki te toto
e māturuturu iho nei ki te papa
i tōna mata. Koinei te putanga o tō
apo whenua me tō hiakai ki aku taonga.
Kei taku hoariri, kaua e pōhēhē—ko au te
mokopuna a Tū—Tū-kā-riri, Tū-kai-tauā,
Tū-whakaheke-tangata, nāna i homai taku
wairua nguha, nāna hoki te patu kei taku
ringa i waihangā. Kia tūpatol!
Kei whakatakariri
taku kotiate
nei. Mā taku patu koe
hei ārahi ki ngā tukutata ki Te Rēinga!*
Āna! Māna koe hei tuku ki te nohoanga
o taku whaea, o Hinenuitepō. Kia mōhio
mai koe, e kore au e tuku i taku mana
whenua, i taku mana moana, i taku mana
tangata—e kore au e hauraro. E taku
hoa whawhai e, koinei taku rautaki
kotahi, kia whawhai tonu, ake ake
ake—ko te ātetenga taku taonga
tuku iho, ko te manawaroa
taku waihotanga
e. Taku
kaha
papare. Ka
whakatōrea
au i tō
mahi
raupatu
e. Hī
aue
hī!

See the blade of my patu, note the blood that trickles down from its face. This is the cost of your greed, your hunger for what is mine. My friend, do not be confused—I am a child of Tū—his rage is my inheritance, his anger is what I wield in my hand. Take caution not to stir my kotiate to violence, it will surely show you the shortcuts to Te Rēinga and acquaint you with Hinenuitepō. Know that I will never cede the mana of my lands, my waters, my people—I will not yield. My friend, my one strategy is this, to fight forever. Resistance is my taonga tuku iho, resilience is what I leave for those who come after me. I will resist. I defy your mahi raupatu.

**This rerenga references a line in the Alistair Te Ariki Campbell poem 'Kapiti', from the collection Sanctuary of Spirits (1963), Wai-te-ata Press, Wellington.*



Maraea Timutimu
Mai te awa ki te moana [Detail], 2024
Kōkōwai, whenua on card

Aimee Ratana
Raupatu, 2024
Acrylic on wood



Hollie Tawhiao
Wheoro, 2024
Tōtara, glazed pottery clay



Artists

Hollie Tawhiao (Ngāti Tiipa, Pākehā)

is a contemporary artist working across media including portraiture, sculpture and installation works. Her practice combines Māori visual tropes and Kiwi nostalgia with modern aesthetics, reflecting her heritage and exploring themes of identity, culture, and environmental consciousness. Often assumed to be tongue-in-cheek and topically antagonistic, Hollies' work is quite the opposite, being deeply considered at every level. Often intimate to her own experiences, she incorporates storytelling and symbolic references, making each piece a rich tapestry of meaning and connection to her roots.

Aisha Roberts (Waikato Maniapoto, Ngāti Raukawa)

Having already established her skill as a photographer, with works in collections including here at Waikato University, Aisha has expanded her visual practice across disciplines. Consistent in her oeuvre are exploration of identity, whakapapa and whenua, which has led to her practice turning towards weaving. Aisha's hands-on knowledge of Māori visual art lends itself to her ability to blur the lines of centuries in her works. Relearning the classic techniques of her tūpuna, Aisha brings them to the fore in new ways, whether this be through a large scale tāniko work for the Waikato Hospital made of modern materials; or age-old embroidery of a reimagined historic emblem in traditionally harvested muka. Emulating the non-linear concepts prevalent in te ao Māori, Aisha is able to visually weave together the threads of past and present, bringing new appreciation to our perspectives of old stories.

Artists

Maraea Timutimu (Ngāi Tūhoe, Ngāti Ranginui, Ngāi Te Rangi)

is a multi-disciplinary from Tauranga Moana. She is an experienced art kaiako, having taught in secondary schools and kura-ā-iwi in the Waiariki region. Marahea has produced work across a wide range of mediums—through paint, sculpture, printmaking and installation—though often coming back to our traditional arts, poi, tukutuku, and raranga. In the last three years, she has been using whenua as a medium to delve into her connections and whakapapa. This process has become a meaningful way for her to document the places to which she belongs.

Aimee Ratana (Ngāi Tūhoe)

is a contemporary Māori artist whose practice perpetuates the whakapapa ringatoi within her own whānau. Her work engages themes of reclamation and relearning, with a particular focus on identity and her Tūhoe whakapapa. A significant work, *Taku Tūhoetana*, a photographic installation at the Whakatāne Museum, juxtaposed archival images with contemporary photographs of her whenua, facilitating reconnections with whānau, hapū, and iwi. Solo exhibitions, including *Songs for Matariki* at Fresh Gallery, Te Mana Motuhake at Objectspace, Pōtiki at Tinakori Gallery and a large work for Te Wharehou o Tūhoe, utilising imagery and symbolism to articulate ancestral narratives, enhancing accessibility for future generations. Recent exhibitions include *100 years* at RAMP Gallery 2024, *Taura Pito, Kaula Piko* at Fresh Gallery 2023, *Toi is Rongoa*, Waikato Museum 2022, *Toi Tū, Toi Ora*, Auckland City Art Gallery 2021.

Curator

Hāwea Apiata (Ngāti Kura, Ngāpuhi, Ngāti Toarangatira, Ngāti Koata)

is a Waikato-based writer and curator. His own story-telling is guided and inspired by his commitment and connection to land, language, and lineage. He completed an MA in Māori-language literature and his writing has been published in a wide range of journals and anthologies both in Aotearoa and overseas. He currently works as the Poukōkiri Mātauranga Toi based at the University of Waikato.

Acknowledgements

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Hollie Tawhiao, *Keast*, 2024 (pg 2, 6, 8, 9, 10), digital print on wallpaper

Dan Inglis for support with installation.



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