Place Imaginaries:
Photography and Place-Making at Te Awa River Ride

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Abstract

Contemporary photographic practice has evolved into a field of possibilities, which includes a flux of representational modes that depict experiences, feelings and emotions. This PhD with Creative Practice Components investigates how photography is embedded within ways of knowing, experiencing and making places and the subsequent visual constructions of place imaginaries. Drawing on contemporary photographic practice and theory, I position myself as a qualitative researcher engaged in creative practice, specifically lens-based approaches and modes of photographic representation. In contrast to photography's dominant discourse centred on indexical and objective assumptions, I understand photographic practices and images as constructions of multiple meanings.

I use Te Awa River Ride as my research locale, a place where different practices and discourses entangle, forming a diverse set of dynamic and intersecting meanings. Te Awa River Ride is a shared pathway, with a planned total length of 70 kilometres, that edges the banks of the Waikato River from Ngāruawāhia to Cambridge, in the central North Island of Aotearoa New Zealand. I understand Te Awa River Ride as a place-composite, layered by multiple place imaginaries, including indigenous Māori, Pākehā and European ways of meaning and place-making. In this thesis I draw upon place imaginaries as a way of expressing visual possibilities, constructions and affective responses to my own and others' experiences at this unique research location.

My photography practice aims to actualise particular place imaginaries through curation and sequencing of lens-based explorations of light, movement and water. This process and the compilation of imagery into curatorial products, such as photography installations, generate novel ways of perceiving the Waikato River and Te Awa River Ride, revealing the centrality of photography in place-making processes.

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Preface

Figure 1. The white dog. Source: Rodrigo Hill, 2017.

> All the way from Taupiri the child river rippled merrily after the little white dog. When Taupiri and her people saw the water approaching their delight was echoed in the welcome cry, “Haere mai! Haere mai! Haere mai e te waiora e! Responding happily the river slowed down its currents and spread its flow so that the people could enjoy its cool refreshing waters … since then the river has been faithful to the command of Tongariro. To this day it carries joy and sustenance to Taupiri, her people and the lands of the Tainui. The river is called … Waikato. (Mataira, 1983, p. 31)

There is an ancient Waikato Tainui story about the Waikato River and its origins. The story is of a white dog that leads the way for the healing waters of Tongariro to reach Taupiri. In this story, Taupiri was seriously ill, and she sent a servant to the lands of Tuwharetoa for help. The servant had a white dog as a companion and was instructed to go south of the rising sun towards the mountain region of Tongariro. The white dog then led the way back for the healing waters of Tongariro to flow down to Taupiri. The story of the white dog is intrinsically

connected to the Waikato River and Valley[1]. Mataira recorded the story into the book called *The River Which Ran Away* "for the generations now living and those yet to be born" (p. i). This book was fundamental to my research and creative practice. It opened up novel ways of perceiving the Waikato River, informing and guiding my photography practice throughout the course of this PhD project.

The River Which Ran Away is about place, place imaginaries and place-making. This story is a way to actualise[2] further routes to place-making, routes that move beyond sight and yet are photographically perceived. This is the point where photography intersects with place and place-making, the moment a photograph emerges from the virtual to becoming, a process of place actualisation.

The story of the white dog and the photograph from Figure 1 exemplify my underpinning theoretical frameworks focused on place, place imaginaries and photography. My photography practice sits at this intersection. Te Awa River Ride then becomes my studio, a studio that stretches wide, so it covers the many entanglements between discourses, practices and imagery. This research project is therefore an artistic investigation of place based on feelings and emotions connected to the land, particularly the land of the Waikato Valley, where Te Awa River Ride is located.

This is a PhD thesis with creative practice components. This thesis is written connectively, linking ideas and images with theoretical constructs underpinning the entire project. Throughout this body of written work there are many images, juxtaposed, curated and sequenced to emulate particular (academic) arguments and conclusions. Curation, sequencing and compilation are important stages of my photography practice and methodology, a dynamic and complex body of methods that endure constant overlapping. This methodological system is actualised in the field when I am at Te Awa River Ride looking, seeing, feeling place and making photographs. During the preliminary stages of my research, I developed a form of ethnographic fieldwork in which fundamental place perceptions were constructed. This ethnographically informed first stage of the research was useful to gather a

[1] The book *The River Which Ran Away* is dedicated to the memory of Rore Erueti and Te Uira Manihera of Waikato. According to Katerina Mataira the story from the book "…was related to Te
[2] The terns actual and virtual will be explained in chapter two in my theoretical framework. The term actual is connected to the ways photography can represent particular place imaginaries.

preliminary sense of place and subsequent creative developments towards my research locale. As part of my photography practice, I also developed processes of editing, curating, sequencing and compiling images. As a result, I was then able to compile photographs into bodies of work that evoked multiple themes, feelings and meanings. My photography practice involved four creative milestones, with my last creative PhD output, a photography installation, exhibited at Ramp Gallery in Hamilton, in July 2018.

Introduction

Rodrigo Hill: Researcher-artist-self

The relationship between photography and place fascinates me. My first contact with photography dates back to 2002 when I was travelling in Indonesia. Since then I have become deeply interested in research that explores the dynamics between photography, place and identity as well as the power and politics of visual representation. My early photography practice was informed by observational photographic approaches and conventional documentary photography modes of representation. Photography came spontaneously to me and later I realised that there was a vivid photographic tradition in my family and an inclination for photographing social and other events. My grandfather was an amateur genealogist (Hill, 1986) and photographed the various places where my ancestors lived, particularly in the United States of America and later in São Paulo in Brasil (Brazil). My father carefully photographed our family travels and other significant occasions. My first contact with a photographic camera was through my father's point-and-shoot Canon camera. I have a number of memories from slide show presentations and the practice of the photographic family album. My late uncle also developed an interest in photography and was very supportive throughout my early years as an emerging photographer. Figure 2 exemplifies my early years as a photographer and my persistent choice for the visual language of black and white photography. This photograph is from my third visit to Bali in Indonesia in 2006 following previous visits in 2001 and 2002. For me, these travel experiences were very humbling and inspiring. Later, through the course of this PhD project, I became familiar with Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson's (1942) *Balinese Character*: *A Photographic Analysis*. By looking at Mead and Bateson's images, I located a sense of curiosity and place-making aspirations, which partly resonated with my Balinese photographs.

Figure 2. Hindu ceremony, Bali. Source: Rodrigo Hill, 2006.

I was born in Porto Alegre, Brasil to Brasilian parents. My mother's family background is linked to generations of Portuguese immigrants who migrated to Southern regions of Brasil. My father's family background is linked to both European and North American ethnicities (Hill, 1986). In 2006 my wife and I moved to Aotearoa[3] (New Zealand), specifically to the Waikato region. As an immigrant in Aotearoa I was and I am constantly exposed to various levels of personal place-making processes. Similarly, at various levels, the core of my experiences in Aotearoa is entwined with forms of place-making in which I struggle and/or succeed. Photography became central to my place-making experiences and processes as both place mediator and maker medium. Coincidentally, my interest in photography emerged while I was away from my birth country and going through intense cultural experiences. Suddenly photography became an integral part of my life and a way I could ground myself to a particular place.

From 2007 to 2013 I worked as a professional photographer at a busy portrait studio in Kirikiriroa (Hamilton), a medium-sized Aotearoa city in the Waikato region. This professional experience gave me some valuable insights into the

[3] According to Te Puni Kōkiri Ministry of Māori Development (2018) "Te Reo Māori is the indigenous language of Aotearoa, New Zealand. It is one of three official languages of the nation. The language itself is central to Māori culture, identity and forms part of the heritage of our country" (para 1). I opt to use Aotearoa (instead of New Zealand) throughout and do not italicize Māori words (translation provided as they first appear in text).

dynamics of photographing people and the subsequent cultural issues of visual representation. This work experience also provided me photographic place-making engagements with my portrait sitters and their family stories connected to the Waikato region. These experiences offered valuable socio-cultural insights surrounded by common cultural and identity knowledge represented and mediated by commercial portrait photography discourses.

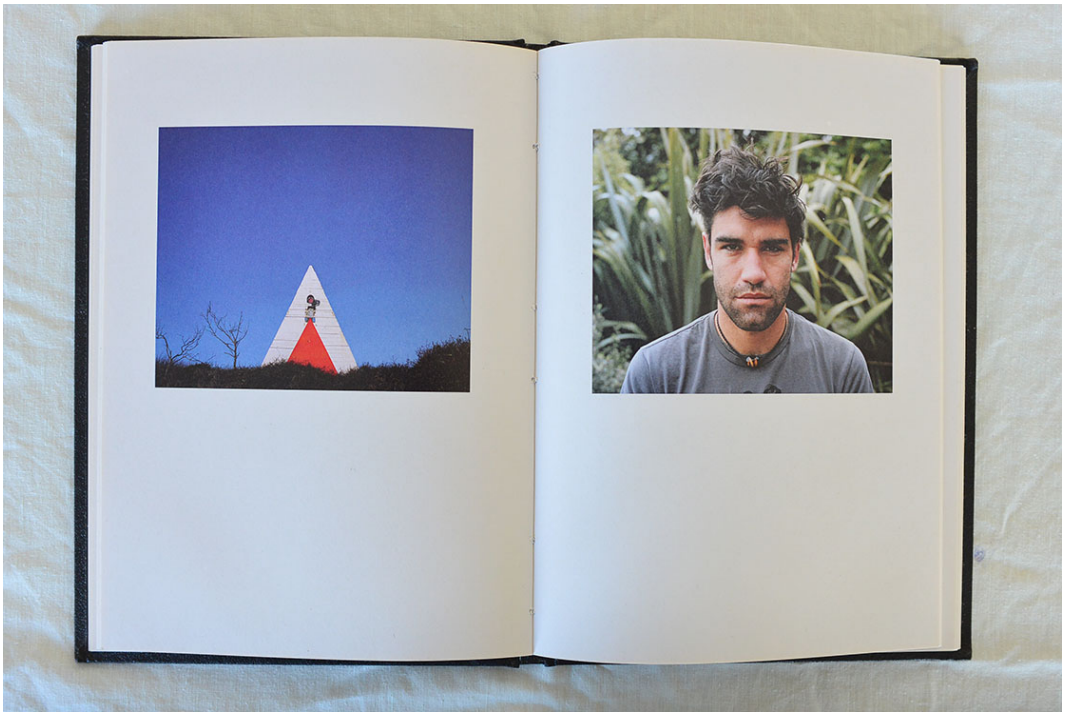


Figure 3.Page spread of The Harbor. Source: Rodrigo Hill, 2013.

In 2013 I concluded a Bachelor of Media Arts First Class Honours at the Waikato Institute of Technology (Wintec) in Kirikiriroa. During the completion of my Wintec degree I engaged deeply with theoretical constructs that both supported and challenged my photographic approach and research methodologies. My honours thesis project consisted of a photobook and a public exhibition. My project, titled *The Harbor* (Hill, 2013), explored the psychological state of being, adaptation and self in between two cultural systems. It concentrated on how immigrants deal with identity construction and the sense of belonging in my residential coastal Waikato hometown of Whaingaroa (Raglan). This research project was informed by contemporary documentary photography. Figure 3 shows a page spread from my photobook *The Harbor* (Hill, 2013). The photobook was my chosen curatorial platform and covered explorations of image sequencing and juxtaposition. For this project I used the Whaingaroa harbour as a theme and motif to illustrate the idea of in between or coming and going (as port of arrival and

departure). The page spread from Figure 3 shows the way I used the harbour's marine orientation lights as metaphors for arrival or departure pathways juxtaposed with portraits of overseas immigrants.

In 2015 I started as a freelance sports photographer, covering marathons and cycling events throughout Aotearoa. This professional experience offered valuable insights into contemporary modes of photographic representation of sports and other mobility practices. I became aware of the dominant photographic discourses surrounding these practices and the ways movement or moving bodies is coded and depicted photographically. The normative conventions of this genre of photography provided points of expansion for my photography practice through consideration of utilised and/or discarded photographic methods.

Through the course of this PhD research, I have significantly expanded my photography practice, fusing a range of different modes of representation, building on my established photographic approaches and methodology. The expansion of my photography practice was informed by theoretical frameworks around place, place-making and place imaginaries. My photographic responses to these concepts were materialised from my efforts as an artist looking for routes of expression. These concepts fuelled novel ways to photographically approach and represent place. In the remainder of this chapter, I offer a brief introduction to photography and place-making, followed by statement of research topic, outline and the research questions and objectives guiding this project.

Photography and Place-Making

Photography and place-making have an interesting and long-standing relationship. Photographic practices were initially part of the wider perspectives of modernism, assigned with making sense of the world through scientific principles of information gathering, especially observation (Kossoy, 2001). Historically, colonial photography from 1860 to 1920 offers a crucial starting point for the use of photographic methodologies (Edwards, 2011). During this time, photography was used as a discursive mechanism to generate a particular set of assumptions and perceptions with regard to the colonised societies (Dench, 2011b; Schwartz & Ryan, 2003). This paralleled with the conceptualisation and the advancements of

the term ‘landscape’ and its implications (Bender, 1993; Park, 2006; Stewart & Strathern, 2003; Wells, 2011). These ideas infiltrated the progression of the medium of photography and the technological advancements proposed by pioneering companies such as Kodak in the first half of the twentieth century. Amateur and tourism photography then gained momentum as a social practice, generating a form of ‘visual revolution’ in the ways places and societies were perceived and subsequently (photographically and psychologically) made (Aquino, 2014). At present, this ‘visual revolution’ or the use of (digital) imagery to generate social and geographical (place) understandings has become one of the main routes through which individuals establish place-makings (Lombard, 2013; Pink, 2011a; Urry & Larsen, 2011). Renowned scholar Joan Schwartz and human geographer James Ryan (2003) highlight the reverberating effects of photographic practices and imagery connected to geographical understandings of place and place-making:

> …photographs have been used not only in a multiplicity of ways, but also in profoundly influential ways to shape modern geographical imaginations. From daguerreotypes to digital images, from picture postcards to magazine illustrations, photographic images have been an integral part of our engagement with the physical and human world. A powerful means of ‘picturing place’, both literally and figuratively, they participated actively in the making and dissemination of geographical knowledge. (p. 5)

The relationship between photography and place-making has been examined and critically analysed in the disciplines of tourism, anthropology and recently in human and cultural geography[4]. However, further considerations of contemporary photography practice and imagery as routes to place-making are yet to be investigated. Digital photographic technologies are user-friendly and widely available, allowing daily life to be (partially) recorded in a fluid manner; social life has indeed embraced the visual as a collective feature of existence (Knowles & Sweetman, 2004). In this sense photography has become embedded within ways of knowing, experiencing and making place. In addition, to generally investigating the points of intersection between photography and place-making, I use my own photography practice as means to understand the ways photography is used towards place-making and the work of different place imaginaries within

[4] There is notably a rising field of multidisciplinary studies adressing the intersection and potentials of photographic practice and imagery and broader geographical place understandings. (Schwartz & Ryan, 2003).

these processes. The final research product involves a number of curated images compiled in a gallery-based photography installation where multiple meanings can be read and interpreted.

I use Te Awa River Ride as the chosen place-event where photographic engagements occur. Within this scenario, this doctoral research aims to reveal how visual photographic practices unfold within densely layered spaces, and the use of imagery to create meanings and understandings of place based on feelings and experiences connected to the landscape. Therefore, through the course of this research, I have adopted an interdisciplinary approach, drawing on contemporary photography practice and theory, anthropology, ethnography and environmental psychology as well as human and cultural geography. By engaging with theories of place and photography practice, this research aims to understand the cultural, social, political, environmental and affective dynamics surrounding Te Awa River Ride and the related photographic practices.

As a place, Te Awa River Ride is intersected by a contrasting set of dynamics such as the contested landscape, the various European, Pākehā and Māori views, and cultural perceptions of the Waikato River (water and ecology). Lastly, in the contemporary context, Te Awa River Ride has been designed primarily for recreational use, such as cycling, running, skateboarding and walking. These many place imaginaries and layers formed a starting point for my photography practice and the ways I further actualised Te Awa River Ride place imaginaries. In analysing my photography practice, I demonstrate and critically reflect on the ways my photography practice was used as a route to place-making and the personal emotions and feelings that were attached to my creative processes.

Statement of Research Topic and Research Outline

In this project I study the multiple possibilities that surround photographic practices. I examine how photography is used as a way to represent place imaginaries, informing perceptual and place-making processes. The research focuses on the sensorial ways of knowing, experiencing and making places and consequently in the photographic technologies, practices and imagery that are part of these processes (Pink, 2011a). Sarah Pink (2011a) argues that “when amateur

photography is understood as practice, an understanding of how practices are related to the event of place is required" (p. 93). Pink's point underpins some of my motivations in this research: to investigate the moment where photography is fused into place-making and the subsequent place perceptual processes may unfold. I am interested in identifying and investigating the points where photography (both amateur and artistic photography) intersects with place experiences, makings and meanings. Pink's (2011a) research highlights the idea of photography as a practice and its relationships to the creation or "event of place". Place and practices are intrinsically related, but I have been driven to research the role of photography in the making of places. More specifically, I investigate the intersections of photography and place-making informed by my photography practice and the construction of artistically based photo narratives of place. I explore the possibilities of photographic compilations and their potential to generate meanings through various photo narrative platforms such as photobooks and installations. This involves the construction of an archive of visual possibilities and modes of representation crucial to further complex curatorial processes of sequencing and juxtaposition of photographs.

Places can be seen as contested spaces where distinctive discourses come into play in how they are represented, interpreted and experienced. Te Awa River Ride, in the centre of a region which bears the legacy of resistance against and negotiation with the British colonialism, can be understood as a contested space. For example, the way the leisure and tourism industries imagine and value spaces is based on pre-established culturally loaded 'place stereotypes' derived from Eurocentric traditions of representation (Urry & Larsen, 2011). In this sense, the landscape is viewed in accordance with aesthetic assumptions of how the Waikato River and its banks should be represented and currently used for cycling and other physical leisure activities. Local iwi (indigenous Māori tribes), however, have understandings of the Waikato River based on cultural beliefs firmly grounded in historical relationships with the land and the waters flowing through it. According to Linda Te Aho (2010), "the Waikato River is conceptualized as a living ancestor by the Waikato Tainui peoples and is recognized as having its own mauri (life force) and spiritual identity" (p. 285).

Writer Geoff Park's (2006) ideas elaborate this point about the contrasting ways place and landscape are spatially perceived in New Zealand and the subsequent different visual practices that may unfold from such exchanges. As a starting point, it is useful to understand the impact of the Claude Glass[5] in landscape paintings and later colonial photography as ways of seeing or modes of aestheticisation and consumption of the colonised land. In parallel, colonial photography in the Waikato was used as a discursive mechanism to claim and justify the British military occupation and confiscation of many Waikato Tainui territories (Dench, 2011b).

While the present scenario is quite different, it cannot be separated from various socio-cultural discourses that operate through representations and lived experiences of Te Awa River Ride. I argue that Te Awa River Ride and the Waikato Valley share similar discursive dynamics and a continuation of an agenda of aestheticisation and land consumption. These intersections and the ways individuals and myself perceive place through the medium of photography are the points that most interest me.

Research Outline

In this section I introduce some key strategies related to the writing and structure of this PhD thesis, taking into consideration its function as an academic document integrated with my creative photographic component (appendixes 1,2,3,4 and 6). This thesis document both supports and is supported by the creative photographic component. I propose an adaptation to a connective model of writing (Hamilton & Jaaniste, 2010) that both fits and supports current academic thesis formats and creative practice research. In practical terms, my creative research does not have findings, but rather creative milestones (research products) that are informed by various theoretical concepts. This way, the creative process and products are positioned right in the centre of the research, having the role of generating critical thinking through practice. I suggest it is inevitable therefore that this PhD thesis integrates similar creative methods that are then extended to the craft of editing,

[5] Park (2006) traces back to the creation of the Claude Glass as a visual practice through which "connoisseurs could render this feat of spatial organization instantly, the Claude Glass was invented: a darkly tinted, convex pocket mirror" (p. 116).

curating, sequencing and compiling of written arguments as well as images and underpinning theoretical concepts.

The first chapter covers an introduction of indigenous Māori views of the Waikato River and its spiritual and cultural relevance. Similarly, I will outline the European histories of the Waikato Valley, highlighting land confiscation and early uses of colonial photography in the Waikato, especially during the British occupation in the 1860s. These are juxtaposed with broader British/European traditions of landscape and colonial photography and its imperialist underpinnings. This chapter then includes an introduction to Te Awa River Ride place and its evolving recreational and mobility practices. These are intersected with photography practices and the developments of tourism.

Chapter two then provides the theoretical framework for this thesis and includes a detailed discussion and explanation of key underpinning theoretical concepts. My theoretical framework was constructed from an array of theories, combining ideas from multiple disciplinary domains in order to illuminate my notions of place-composite, place-making and place imaginaries. This theoretical discussion begins by introducing Henri Bergson's ideas. I draw particular arguments around perception from Bergson's book *Matter and Memory* (1911) to later build and expand key conceptual notions through Gilles Deleuze's lens (1988, 1989; Deleuze & Guattari, 1994, 2004). These initial theoretical discussions mark a progression from Bergson's ideas to Deleuze's notion of the crystal image. In this chapter I connect these authors' ideas, aiming to establish a theoretical foundation for my concept of place imaginaries.

The term 'imaginaries' within this framework is conceptualised as a free-flowing imagery space between the actual and the virtually perceived. My photography practice then functions as a mediator of these perceptual spheres actualising particular layers of place imaginaries. I complement these ideas with theories from the disciplines of human geography, environmental psychology and anthropology. I selectively draw upon key concepts of these disciplines connected to the notions of place, space and perception. As part of a qualitative approach to research I combined multiple ideas to construct a wide-ranging conceptual framework for the development of my photography practice. Place imaginaries

are then examined as a conceptual framework for the development of my photography practice through a multimodal project of representation where curation, sequencing and installation play major parts as sense-making methodological elements.

Academic researchers and artists Lesley Duxbury and Elizabeth Grieson (2008) argue that creative practice research methods are developed as a "thinking through making" (p .7) practice, comprising valid models of academic investigation and argumentation. In parallel, Patricia Leavy (2014) advocates the idea of *carving* novel research tools and methodology in order to construct academic models of argumentation. I concur with Leavy's argument that creative researchers are *carving* new research tools to answer research questions that suggest the use of novel methodological routes. These are central to addressing and navigating research questions in pursuit of novel answers and subsequent constructions of final academic creative research products.

I agree that visual explorations of place require innovative and creative methodological approaches in order to generate alternative modes of representation (Myrvang Brown, Dilley, & Marshall, 2008). In my photography practice at Te Awa River Ride, I constantly faced the challenge of creating representations that powerfully reflected ideas and perceptions. I argue that this is the point where contemporary photography practice becomes a useful representational platform. As I explain later, contemporary photography practice has been infiltrated by postmodernist strategies and has become a highly amorphous genre with endless representational possibilities. Contemporary photography practice has moved on from the objective paradigm. It is now infiltrated and infiltrates different photographic and artistic practices. It has become harder to pin it down as the lines between photojournalism, fine art and documentary photography are blurred (Price, 2004). Within this scenario, my goal is to explore the possibilities around contemporary photography practice, starting from the idea of photography as an artistically based form of inquiry.

Chapters three, four, five and six cover detailed description and analysis of my photography practice (methodology). I begin by outlining the ways ethnographic methods informed the early stages of my creative fieldwork at Te Awa River Ride.

Chapters four, five and six, more specifically, cover detailed examination of my four creative milestones and the ways I use curation, sequencing and compilation of photographs to emulate particular arguments through the compilation of four different bodies of work. The structuring of these milestones is fundamental to the arguments and for articulating theoretical concepts employed through the progression of my photography practice. Each milestone is examined in order to critically discuss and analyse particular methodological developments and overall refinements of my photography practice and methodology. Chapters four, five and six also cover the processes connected to four different curatorial platforms: photobook, digital sequence, installation (group exhibition) and installation of my final solo exhibition, *South of the Rising Sun* (complete curatorial project). These chapters comprise detailed reviews of relevant artist models that informed my research and photography practice at various stages throughout this project. The last creative milestone is the focus of chapter six. In this chapter I represent the amalgamation of key photographic methods successfully tested within this PhD project and the curation, sequencing and installation of *South of the Rising Sun*. Curation, sequencing and installation will be demonstrated as valuable methods to resolve aspects of my photography practice, actualising my main research frameworks around photography, place-making and place imaginaries.

Research Questions/Objectives

Building from my interest in photography, place, place-making and place imaginaries, the following research questions guide my PhD research and photography practice (methodology):

- How is photography embedded within ways of knowing, experiencing and making places?
- What are the possibilities for representing and curating imagery towards narratives of meaning, place-making and place imaginaries?
- How can photographic images and practices articulate place imaginaries within Te Awa River Ride?
- How do photography practice methodologies represent and generate perceptions and making of place within Te Awa River Ride?

Chapter One

Waikato River: Tupuna Awa (living ancestor)

Figure 4. 2017 Tūrangawaewae Marae Annual Regatta. Source: Rodrigo Hill, 2017. Photographed with permission from Tūrangawaewae Marae.

To begin I offer a brief introduction to Waikato River's background history and issues around Waikato Māori land and river settlement throughout the area of Te Awa River Ride. It is useful to contextualise Te Awa River Ride within the history of the Waikato Valley and Waikato River in order to have a more complete understanding on the underpinning dynamics of this place. I will be later addressing conceptual frameworks of place imaginaries and place-making as well as how my photographic practice intersects with such theories. Therefore, with this brief introduction to the Waikato River and regions, I intend to show my respect to its Kaitiaki or guardians and tangata whenua, the Māori communities that inhabited and still inhabit this area.

The Waikato River is the longest river in New Zealand, totalling 426 kilometres. It begins at Nukuhau near Taupō and is fed by a number of smaller rivers and streams as well as lake Taupō, flowing northwest towards Port Waikato and the Tasman Sea (Muru-Lanning, 2016). I am aware of past and present power

dynamics and political complexities surrounding the Waikato River and land as well as the contrasting Māori and European views on rivers and places. Recent debates on the Waikato River and its governing organisations have instigated further discussions over water ownership and power relations between Māori and the state (Muru-Lanning, 2016; Salmond, 2017). My focus here is to introduce Māori holistic views on rivers and places and the ways tangata (people) and whenua (land) are deeply connected through symbiotic processes of place understanding, identity and belonging. These are crucial points to my PhD research as they inform my creative developments and the opening of novel ways to photographically perceive the Waikato River and Valley.

The Waikato River is described as a tupuna awa (living ancestor) part of a discursive context related to the Waikato River and coined by Kīngitanga leaders Princess Te Puea Hērangi and Sir Robert Mahuta (Muru-Lanning, 2016). The idiom tupuna awa as Muru-Lanning points out "defined the Waikato River as an important tribal ancestor" (p. 2). In addition, Michael King (2013) points to the narratives that are part of the construction of shared cultural knowledge and meanings about the Waikato River:

> The river's associations grew and ripened with the history of its inhabitants until memories of heroes and villains, of battles, significant journeys and natural disasters, of settlements erected and destroyed-all became part of the river's story, all were commemorated in names and features along its banks. The life of the river became inseparable from the life of the people, and each took the name of the other. (p. 49)

These points are relevant to my PhD research and photography practice as they form further place imaginaries. Time, narratives, landscape and ideologies are part of tangible and intangible forms of imaginaries. These position the Waikato River as a bearer of perceptual stories, historical totalities, place layers and imaginaries.

Māori developed rich place understandings by demarcating tribal areas according to geographical features of the land such as mountains and rivers. According to King and Roa (2015),

> every tribal group had its own sacred mountain and the significance of the mountains, of the valleys, of the landmarks and the stories the tribe maintained in its relationship to the landmark reflected on the mana (prestige) of the people. (p. 45)

Māori oral traditions are also part of a collection of place understandings; geographic features, such as rivers and mountains, are embedded with a wealth of knowledge and meanings that are represented through legends and stories (King & Roa, 2015). According to Muru-Lanning (2016), "these traditions include whaikōrero, pepeha (tribal sayings), whakataukī (proverbs), tongi (prophesy), waiata, karakia and whakapapa" (p.43). In addition to Muru-Lanning's quote above, I include the English interpretations of whaikōrero (formal speeches), waiata (songs), karakia (prayers) and whakapapa (genealogy and a basis for Māori social relations). As Muru-Lanning (2016) and others suggest, such traditions can be interpreted as ways of actualising particular aspects of places towards dynamic and unique place-making processes. Through such traditions, symbolic spaces and place-identities are then encapsulated and eventually actualised.

Figure 5. Waikato iti, the source of the Waikato River. Source: Rodrigo Hill, 2017. Photographed with permission from Tuwharetoa Māori Trust.

Muru-Lanning (2016) explains the ways these oral traditions work as well as their importance: “Firstly, they connect various iwi and hapū to specific regions and places of the Waikato River; and secondly, they demarcate iwi and hapū boundaries and territories” (p. 43). These processes therefore propose unique ways of perceiving and making sense of the land. Land is then represented via stories that travel through generations and are part of a compelling collection of place imaginaries. Ngāti Wairere historian, consultant and activist Wiremu Puke illuminates this topic further:

> We knew how to interpret landscapes because they are embodiments of stories of creation, ancestors and deities, monuments of our past, monuments to our ancestors and their deeds. So the story is an aid to explain an environmental phenomenon. That is often how stories have evolved. (Cook, Puke, & Valentine, 2011, p. 73)

I will later unpack the concept of place imaginaries and how it informs my photography practice at Te Awa River Ride. For now, however, it is important to highlight the intrinsic connections of such place imaginaries to the development and progression of my photography practice.

Whenua is a significant term within Māori culture, used to mean both land and placenta. As Geoff Park (2006) summarises, “Whenua is a product of people living in Pacific ecosystems in which they understood and regarded themselves as tied to the land, water and life around them, as children of a surrounding, sustaining Earth Mother-Papatuanuku” (p. 242). Moreover, the concept of whenua plays a crucial role within Māori views of imagining, understanding, experiencing and making place. The concept of tangata whenua (people of the land) also has a remarkable connotation within the process of place-making. Tangata whenua reveals the genealogical weavings that link people and collective knowledge about the land and thereby composes the dynamic process of creating, imagining and knowing of place. Photography, within this scenario, can mediate various place histories, stories and imaginaries, foregrounding and actualising particular points and layers connected to the Waikato River and Te Awa River Ride.

Te Awa River Ride is located within the broader territory of many Waikato Tainui iwi (tribe), hapū (sub-tribe) and whānau (extended family) that inhabited the area between Huka Falls and Te Puuaha o Waikato, including the Waikato region (Waikato Raupatu Lands Trust, 2008). The tribes that lived in the Waikato Valley

were essentially river people who regarded the Waikato River as great spiritual sustenance as well as a source of food and transportation network (King, 2013). As outlined in the Waikato Raupatu River Settlement information package (2008), "to Waikato-Tainui, the Waikato River is a tuupuna (ancestor) which has mana (prestige) and in turn represents the mana and mauri (life force) of the tribe" (p. 27). The Waikato River therefore is essential for the establishment and maintenance of Māori identity and chiefly power as Muru-Lanning (2016) highlights:

> When referring to the Waikato River as a tupuna awa, I suggest that Waikato Māori are in fact demonstrating that they view the river holistically and as an intrinsic part of their culture, politics, economy and identity. (p. 153)

Land and place are therefore paramount to Māori and the surrounding relationships between tangata and whenua (Fisher, 2016a). Researcher Martin Fisher highlights the importance of land to Māori and the many connections and place-making developments between people, land and place (2016a). Fisher locates in a Māori proverb the ways tangata and whenua are intrinsically connected: "Te toto o te tangata he kai, te oranga o te tangata he whenua" ("The lifeblood of a person is derived from food; the livelihood of a people depends on land") (p. 19). These ideas around the ways Māori, and specifically Waikato Tainui, perceive and make place are useful to understand subsequent place-making developments within the Waikato Valley and Te Awa River Ride. The geographical area where Te Awa River Ride is located comprises Waikato Tainui land territories confiscated during the wars in the 1860s (as discussed below). Some of the land territories were later returned to Waikato Tainui after the Waikato Raupatu Claims Settlement Act in 1995 (Boast & Hill, 2009; Waikato Raupatu Lands Trust, 2008). Within this scenario, Te Awa River Ride becomes a place intersected by crucial Waikato and Aotearoa historical layers and views.

During the second half of the nineteenth-century, hostilities between European and Māori begun to occur and the Kīngitanga movement[6] arose as an effort to unify tribes against the effects of rapid British settlements and subsequent purchases or stealing of land (Te Aho, 2008). Settler Government saw Kīngitanga

[6] Kīngitanga was a movement to provide a leader to speak in equal terms with the British monarchy. The movement took place in the North Island of Aotearoa, more specifically in the Waikato during the British invasion in the 1860s.

as a threat and declared war endorsed by the Crown's colonial expansion agenda. The first invasion dates to July 1863 and involved a number of assaults on the northern areas of the Waikato (Belich, 1986). The assaults comprised the invasion of Meremere and Rangiriri and the taking of King Tāwhiao's headquarters in Ngāruawāhia (Muru-Lanning, 2016). The waiata below is a compelling lament written by King Tāwhiao after the British confiscation of Waikato Tainui lands and river; the poem describes relevant landmarks and locations from hapū groups who endured land confiscation after the British invasions (Muru-Lanning, 2016). This poem was initially brought to my attention during a conversation I had with Associate Professor Dr. Tom Roa at his Waikato University office. Dr. Roa highlighted the significance of the poem and its connections with the Waikato River and Valley. I am fascinated by the poetry and the way place-making is emotionally actualised through the words of a king and his beloved land and river. The poem follows below in te reo Māori (Māori language) and then interpreted in English. According to Carmen Kirkwood (2000) "this waiata of the King expresses the depth of his longing and love for the Waikato" (p. 75):

Ka matakitaki iho au ki te riu o Waikato
Ano nei hei kapo kau ake maaku
Ki te kapu o taku ringa,
Ka whakamiri noa i tona aratau,
E tia nei he tupu pua hou

Kia hiwa ake au i te Tihi o Pirongia,
Ina hei toronga whakaruru hau mona
Ki toku tauawhirotanga.

Anaa! Te ngoto o tona ngawhaa i ona
uma kihai i arikarika
A Maungatautari, a Maungakawa,
Oku puke maunga, nga taonga tuku iho:
Hoki ake nei au ki toku awa Koiora
me ona pikonga
He kura tangihia o te matamuri

E whakawhiti atu ai i te kopu mania
O Kirikiriroa
Me ona maara kai, te ngawhaa whakatupu
ake o te whenua momona,
Hei kawe ki Ngaruawahia, te huinga o
te tangata
Araa, te pae haumako, hei okiokinga mo
taku upoko,
Hei tirohanga atu ma raro i nga huha o

Taupiri

Kei reira ra, kei te oroko hanganga o te
tangata,
Wahia te tungaroa o te whare, te
whakaputanga mo te Kingi.

Figure 6. View of the Waikato River and Tūrangawaewae Marae on the background. Source: Rodrigo Hill, 2017.

I look down on the valley of Waikato,
As though to hold it in the hollow of my
hand
And caress its beauty
Like some tender verdant thing.
I reach out from the top of Pirongia
As though to cover and protect its
substance
with my own.
See how it bursts through the full bosoms
of Maungatautari and Mangakawa,
Hills of my inheritance:
The river of life, each curve more beautiful
than the last.
Across the smooth belly of Kirikiriroa,
Its gardens bursting with the fullness of
good things, towards the meeting place at
Ngaruawahia.
There on the fertile mound I would rest
my head And look through the thighs of
Taupiri.
There at the place of all creation
Let the king come forth.

(Kirkwood, 2000, p. 75)

By 1864 the British had proclaimed victory, and most Māori land was confiscated, including the entire territory of the Waikato tribe and consequently the area where, at present, Te Awa River Ride is located. In 1995 the Waikato Raupatu Claims Settlement Act offered NZ$170 million in cash and land as compensation for unjust military action and illegal Māori land raupatu (confiscation) (Boast & Hill, 2009; Fisher, 2016b, 2016a). The 1995 Waikato Tainui Raupatu settlement, as noted by Fisher (2016a), "focused on the return of land to address grievances related to the war and confiscation that marked the Waikato region in the 1860s" (p. 19). Yet this financial and land compensation was conducted under the Crown's political control and framework (Fisher, 2016a) and could never make up for thousands of Māori displaced.

Waikato Valley history surrounds Te Awa River Ride and is an important layer of meaning that continues to affect the multiple and continually contested views of place. As discussed above Māori views of place encompass deeper connections between people and land while European modernist assumptions typically approach land as a commodity (Salmond, 2017). It is useful to highlight that Te Awa River Ride was developed following the application of European understandings of place and landscape, as well as an agenda of aestheticisation and consumption of the land. The European model of perceiving the land has provided a framework for the construction of the actual concrete path, land layout and design. However, there has been a process of acknowledgement of relevant pā sites (Māori villages) along the Waikato River as well as consultation and partnership with a number of Waikato Tainui iwi groups. Interestingly, as noted by Wiremu Puke, it is known that old Waikato Tainui Māori populations have created a number of networking walking tracks that connected villages, pā sites and other key locations (Cook et al., 2011). So mobility practices and walking tracks are arguably embedded into place-making practices (Barbour, 2016) since early Māori inhabitation of the Waikato Valley. Te Awa River Ride, within this scenario, can then be perceived as an extension of these early mobility practices intersected with colonial, recent recreational and tourism agendas; indeed, a flux of layers, views and practices. I will unpack these points further during the introduction to Te Awa River Ride section of this chapter.

Landscape and Colonial Photography in the Waikato

The term landscape was initially introduced as a technical word used by artists and thereby taken up to describe artistic representations of land scenes (Stewart & Strathern, 2003). Landscape as an artistic genre, more specifically painting, emerged in the west towards the end of the fifteenth century as a backdrop for biblical or mythical stories. During this period the concept of landscape emerged as a 'way of seeing' alongside Renaissance systems of linear perspective as well as the rise of mercantile capitalism (Cosgrove, 1985). According to Denis Cosgrove (1985),

> landscape first emerged as a term, an idea, or better still, *a way of seeing* the external world, in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. It was, and it remains, a visual term, one that arose initially out of the renaissance humanism and its particular concepts and constructs of space. Equally landscape was, over much of its history, closely bound up with the practical appropriation of space … in painting and garden design landscape achieved visually and ideologically what survey, map making and ordnance charting achieved practically: the control and domination over space as an absolute objective entity. (p. 46)

Cosgrove highlights the shift to objectification and the dualism between nature and culture. The idea of landscape as a way of seeing was intrinsically connected with the development of linear perspective and the rendering of three-dimensional spaces into a two-dimensional surface (Cosgrove, 1985). Gunhild Setten (2010) explains further:

> The linear perspective provided power to the eye, giving it absolute mastery over space and ultimately uniting science, architecture in particular, and art. The scenic perspective of landscape was materialized in landscape paintings. The "enclosed space" mediated through these paintings brought with it a new notion of authority and control, power and ownership. (p.137).

In parallel, the industrial revolution and the advancements of capitalism reinforced the notion of nature as an objectified commodity as well as a resource to be exploited (Peden & Holland, 2015; Setten, 2010). The optical technique of linear perspective informed and grounded the steady advances of capitalism through surveying, map making and land charting (Cosgrove, 1985). In addition, "the mathematics and geometry associated with perspective were directly relevant to the economic life of the Italian merchant cities of the Renaissance, to trading and capitalist finance…"(Setten, 2010, p. 50).

Figure 7. Charting Rebellious New Zealand. Source: Messer A.B. 1864.

The colonial map of Waikato (Figure 7) illustrates my point about how linear perspective and the rendering of two-dimensional surface images informed map making and land charting. These advancements were fundamental to the British colonial campaign in the Waikato during the late 1800s, facilitating strategic

surveying and the study of particular features of the Waikato Territory. On this note, authors Robert Peden and Peter Holland (2015) highlight the technological advances during this period as key to "a new conception of human power over the physical environment" (p. 92).

These ideas were underpinned by British imperialist tendencies added to concepts of progress and improvement (Peden & Holland, 2015). Figure 7 depicts a colonial map downloaded from the Internet under the file name of *Charting Rebellious New Zealand* (Messer, 1864). On the website it says,

> chart from the medical and surgical journal of A B Messer, Assistant Surgeon aboard HMS Curacoa. The map shows the area of New Zealand in which his brigade was employed in putting down a Māori uprising in the summer of 1863. This assault is sometimes called the Waikato invasion and was the largest conflict between European migrants and the Māori in the mid-19th century New Zealand Wars

Maps as modes of visual representation have endured criticism framed by cultural context, perspective and orientation. Similarly to photography, maps and cartographic practices, as well as its objective underpinnings, have been challenged in the light of cultural context and construction discourses (Schwartz & Ryan, 2003). For instance, by studying the map from Figure 7, one is able to trace underpinning discourses and power relations materialised through mapping, captioning and location of 'native villages', mountains, swamps, and English redoubt areas as well as the actual course of the Waikato River and subsequent strategic geographical locations.

So returning to the origins of the term landscape, European aristocracy during the eighteenth century developed a fashion for the grand vistas. As Wells (2011) explains, "This era witnessed a consolidation of European landscape styles in painting, architecture and, most particularly, landscape gardening as aristocracy and wealthy bourgeois families variously commissioned new villas and formally laid out parks and gardens" (p. 28). Wells' point resonates with the nineteenth-century colonial project of British settlers in the Waikato and the inclination for conquering, settling and managing of fertile land territories across New Zealand. Vistas and landscapes were well inserted into the colonial agenda and the construction of places that followed a set of particular social economical patterns as well as aesthetic guidelines. So in this sense, Te Awa River Ride is a

contemporary form of laying out land into aesthetically man-built places such as recreational parks and gardens. Of course, to some extent, Te Awa River Ride does not follow nineteenth-century colonial ideals entirely, but does still combine European models of place and landscape.

Figure 8 *The Long Walk, Windsor*. Source: (Fenton, 1860)

Figure 8 is titled *The Long Walk, Windsor* and was photographed by British photographer Roger Fenton in 1860. Wells (2011) contextualises *The Long Walk, Windsor* with the rise of nineteenth-century royalty and the ways "the commanding view from the house on the hill over its own park reinforced the symbolic status of the owner for whom this (expansive) space was 'my place' (p.29). Coincidentally, this photograph was produced in the same year as William Temple's *Scene in the Bush* (Figure 10, below). My goal is not to compare these photographs but rather analyse the photographer's intentions behind the images as well as the operating discursive contexts of the time. Interestingly, in both photographs there is a concern and focus on the landscaping or taming of the land as well as a kind of celebration of the Imperial achievements. In *Scene in the Bush*, however, there is an apparent inclination from the photographer to record the 'land pioneers' and the taming of the land. On one hand, *The Long Walk, Windsor* depicts the grand vistas and magnificent gardens of Windsor, and on the other hand, *Scene in the Bush* depicts the taming yet to be magnified. Yet both photographs convey a sense of ownership and, as pointed out by Wells, the idea of a particular space as 'my place'. It is important to note that the technological

processes to construct photographs in the 1800s were very limited and involved a lengthy set up. As a consequence, the photographs had to be carefully planned and conceived (Dench, 2011a). In this way, I argue that in Fenton's photograph the long walking path has been deliberately framed in the central part of the image. Perhaps this was done to highlight the size of the walking path and its meticulously designed features and grand vistas. This photograph could be reinterpreted as a product of the European ideals of the time, a way to reinforce and ascertain particular ideologies such as landscaping, gardening and architecture as well as entrepreneurial success and ownership. This photograph becomes then an embodiment of imperial and colonialist thought, depicting the power and beauty of Britain as an established imperial player. These thoughts are interpretations based on my critical and contextual readings of these photographs. I question Fenton's absolute intentions and the reasons; for example, the two individuals in the photograph were part of his choice for subject matter and composition.

My point, however, is to highlight the tendency of this emerging genre of photography to document the 'progress' and achievements of a particular society. This is linked to the ways images such as *The Long Walk, Windsor* and *Scene in* the Bush "served to maintain cultural values, social beliefs and political relations" (Schwartz, 1996, p. 31) connected to colonialism. In addition, I highlight the resemblances between the *The Long Walk, Windsor* and Te Awa River Ride construction architecture and landscaping styles, particularly the walking path (Figure 9). My goal with these discussions is to trace the possible waaaaays British colonial photography from the 1860s may have informed Te Awa River Ride's place construction and making. I share the photograph above to illustrate how the British tradition of laying out parks and gardens has potentially informed the design of Te Awa River Ride. In addition, how these colonial images from the Waikato and England can work as capsules for 1800s European ideals and subsequent repositories for the ways the Waikato has been perceived. These photographs are ultimately part of a collection of shared collective imaginaries that at times form the basis of further place-making processes at Te Awa River Ride and in Waikato. In parallel, Simon Dench (2011b) explains the influences of photographic representations during the colonisation of the Waikato region in the latter half of the nineteenth century:

Figure 9. Te Awa River Ride, construction of the Horotiu-Ngāruawāhia section during spring 2017. Source Rodrigo Hill 2018.

> During this period the Waikato was transformed in the region's cultural and physical landscapes and its tangata whenua were subjugated using a variety of strategies, including violent force as well as more subtle forms of coercion. The Waikato was a discursive as well as military battleground and photography was implicated in both of these linked campaigns, as Europeans attempted to claim and justify control over actual and symbolic spaces. (p. 67)

Dench focuses his efforts on investigating the discursive implications of key photographic representations from the colonial period in the Waikato. Dench (2011a) argues that "rather than merely being seen as depictions of place, images can be interpreted as actual sites of colonization in their production and as artefacts" (p. 33). In addition, photography and cartography were used as mediums to re-present the Waikato within a European model of 'seeing' the land (Dench, 2011b). The colonial map *Charting Rebellious New Zealand 1864* (Figure 7) helps illustrate Dench's point of how images can be perceived as both acts and objects of colonisation as well as predetermined ways of perceiving the land.

As another example I discuss Figure 10, a photograph taken by William Temple and titled *Scene in the Bush.* The location where this photograph was taken and its

context are relatively unknown. It is assumed that the location is what we know as the Waikato today and the year was 1860, during the military occupation of the Waikato region. During the 1860s the Waikato was a contested space and the photographer William Temple took part in a campaign to reshape the Waikato region according to European priorities and practices (Dench, 2011b). *Scene in the Bush* therefore could be argued as an instrumental photograph intrinsically connected to the colonisation of the Waikato region during the British occupation. Photographs like *Scene in the Bush* may function as place-makers, contributing to the construction of "imaginative geographies" (Schwartz & Ryan, 2003) surrounded by powerful discursive contexts. These imaginative geographies allowed Waikato and international viewers of these photographs to create and share a particular sense of place and subsequent place-making processes. These processes triggered a kind of visual, ideological and discursive construction of the Waikato, benefiting British imperial aspirations towards the colonised land (Schwartz, 1996).

In addition, authors Eric Pawson and Tom Brooking emphasise the underlying power relations and political dynamics behind the production of colonial photographs. The authors highlight how "photographers brought to their images, especially in the selection of viewpoints and the manner of framing scenes, an 'imaginative geography' that implicitly betrayed their view of nature and its relation to the human endeavour" (Pawson & Brooking, 2015, p. 18). In this sense, one can argue that colonial photographs were also informed by technical approaches and ways of framing subject matter that favoured or induced a particular reading, actualising ideas such as land taming 'progress' and 'pioneering'. I ponder on William Tample's intentions when photographing *Scene in the Bush* and the photographic strategies he used to convey particular ideals. Temple chose to photograph a scene in the bush where individuals are depicted in their domestic practices such as hanging the clothes on the line, which may have reinforced the idea of taming the land and pioneering. The individuals from *Scene in the Bush* were the praised actors, possibly representatives of Britain and therefore they had to be photographed.

Scene in the Bush as a photographic artefact, and how it directly depicts the domestic practice of hanging the washing on a clothesline fascinates me. My point

is not to highlight the effort these individuals went through to set up this hut camp or the act of pioneering the land. On the contrary, the maintenance of an ordinary domestic practice and the reshaping of a space/place to fit and maintain such practices stun me. I locate a sense of dislocation and a strong desire to place-make an area in pursuit of a place to call 'my place'. The dislocation of a commonly domestic practice refitted to serve contextual ideals becomes indeed a powerful colonial place-making statement. Nevertheless, it can be argued that these individuals were trying to make sense of the 'new' place by carrying out such practices, and this photograph therefore is arguably a colonial place-making image. This is an interesting point, the ways these spaces/places were reshaped and constructed according to a set of expectations, revealing how "the world view of Europeans reflects a subject position that constructs nature as something external to the individual" (Pawson & Brooking, 2015, p. 20). Moreover, there is a sense of intensity and contrast between the tamed land on the foreground and the native forest on the background. I am intrigued by the apparent 'road' shape on the bottom third of the photograph and how it resembles Te Awa River Ride's concrete pathways.

Figure 10. Temple, William, 1833-1919. Scene in the bush showing a thatched hut, three people, and washing on a line. Source: Ref:1/2-004135-F. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington New Zealand. /records/22718238.

Figure 11. Te Awa River Ride, constructions of the Horotiu-Ngāruawāhia section, Spring 2017. Source: Rodrigo Hill, 2017.

An Introduction to Te Awa River Ride: Place, Leisure, Tourism and Photography.

Theoretical ideas underpin my understandings and conceptualisation of Te Awa River Ride. My goal in this section is to introduce Te Awa River Ride as a constructed place initially designed for leisure and physical activities. My aim is also to highlight some of Te Awa River Ride's social-cultural and economic benefits to local and international communities. Moreover, I highlight Te Awa River Ride's geographical location and ability to provide access to many parts of the Waikato River. These features represent sets of dynamic intersections encompassing psychological, cultural and social connections between Te Awa River Ride, the Waikato River and its histories as well as the Waikato region as a whole. Finally, I will briefly introduce key theoretical ideas and my conceptual views on Te Awa River Ride as well as the notion of place-composite and how it informs my photography practice.

Te Awa River Ride can be understood as a sequenced place, designed and organised in a particular way with sections that are interlinked, juxtaposed and

finally presented as a ‘River Ride’. As a non-linear narrative, Te Awa River Ride has disruptions or unfinished sections that mark tensions. The links are contrapuntal, going from city to rural scenes in a matter of minutes.

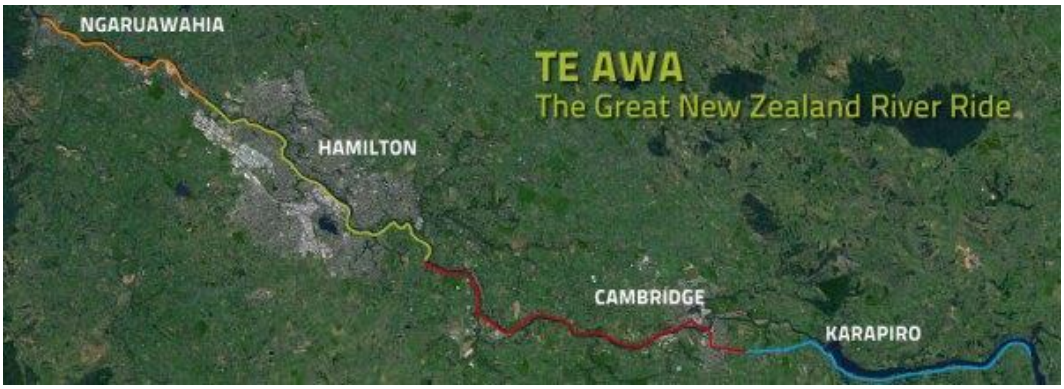


Figure 12. Te Awa River Ride map. Source Te Awa River Ride, used with permission.

Te Awa River Ride is a shared cycle/walkway with a planned total length of 70 kilometres that edges the banks of the Waikato River, New Zealand’s longest and largest river. The Ride is being built in sections with the full 70 kilometres aimed to be completed in 2021 and is supported by various regional and national trusts, businesses and organisations. At present, there are a number of open sections totalling over 30 kilometres. Te Awa River Ride is expected to attract nearly 300,000 users each year, including international, local leisure riders, commuters, pedestrians and other groups (Te Awa, 2017). It covers a vast length of urban and rural areas with the aim to link the Waikato communities of Ngāruawāhia, Horotiu, Kirikiriroa, Tamahere and Cambridge. The section from Ngāruawāhia to the Hamilton Gardens has been completed and totals 27 kilometres. One of the major features of this section is the newly built Perry Bridge, “one of the longest walk/cycle bridges in New Zealand” (Te Awa, 2017, para. 2).

Te Awa River Ride Project started in 2010 and received funding from various sources including the Central Government Urban Cycling Fund, Waikato District Council, New Zealand Transport Agency, Hamilton City Council and many local supporters (Waikato District Council, 2015). The project had an initial NZ$3 million investment from Brian Perry Charitable Trust to start work on the river paths. The track’s design and three-metre width favours elite and novice riders as well as walkers, people in wheelchairs and families. According to Jennifer Palmer, Brian Perry Charitable Trust and Te Awa River Ride Trust general manager, Te Awa River Ride aims to “bring people together” (Leaman, 2015). The River Ride

intends to build a strong link between communities and the Waikato River through archways and artwork, signage, rest areas and interpretation panels, which will be supported by online social media and mobile applications (Waikato District Council, 2015).

Te Awa River Ride can be seen as an international tourist destination constructed according to particular views and assumptions and catered to attract particular groups such as cyclists and other (sports) tourists. Besides following a European model of landscaping and aestheticisation of the land, Te Awa River Ride also follows the European trend of cycle tourism (Ritchie, 1998). Brent Ritchie's research dates back to 1998 and points out the implementation of this particular kind of tourism enterprise in New Zealand. Similarly, in Italy, academic researchers Paolo Pileri and Alessandro Giacomel (2017) discuss the importance of cycle tourism as a form of "…systemic strategy triggering urban, territorial and social reactivation" (p. 1). Academic researchers Michal Bil, Matina Bílová and Jan Kubeček (2012) examine the expansion of cycling and cycle tourism as well as the need for adequate infrastructure in a number of regions of the Czech Republic. Similarly, academic researcher Michael Meschik (2012) locates crucial social and economic benefits triggered by cycle tourism. Meschik's research discusses cycle tourism in Austria, particularly the Austrian section of the Danube Cycle Path. Meschik focused on the sustainable aspect of cycle tourism added to key components such as the scenic Austrian landscape and adequate infrastructure. These components offered the basis for a successful model of cycle tourism based on scenic, experiential and sustainable aspects (Meschik, 2012).

Similar to Te Awa River Ride, the Danube Cycle Path edges the bank of a river (Danube River in Europe), covers a number of European regions/countries and is surrounded by scenic landscapes ('Welcome - Cycling the Danube cycle path', n.d.). Both Waikato and Austrian regions therefore share similar discursive socio-geographically appealing points informed by particular views on the land and its value (Park, 2006). Geographical and historical place layers are then perceptually and discursively reconfigured to create a model of cycle tourism common to key geographical regions of the globe. In addition, as noted above, cycle tourism requires adequate infrastructure added to experiential aspects such as local attractions particular to specific regions along the cycle trails. In this sense, Te

Awa River Ride successfully offers its users a combination of scenic landscapes along the Waikato River as well as the possibility of experiencing local river attractions including waka (canoeing), speedboats, rowing and others.

I argue, therefore, that Te Awa River Ride is both a continuation of established European models of cycle tourism as well as a contemporary version of this kind of tourism enterprise. Don Scarlett and Rebecca Evans (2013) from Hamilton and Waikato Tourism define cycle tourism as "recreational visits, either overnight or day visits away from home, which involves leisure cycling as a significant part of the visit" (p. 11). In addition, cycling and mountain biking have been identified as relevant sectors for inbound tourism as well as potential enablers for the development of a unique tourism niche and the subsequent influx of higher value tourists (Scarlett & Evans, 2013). These help locate Te Awa River Ride in the global picture of tourism and land developments where cycling and walking are the major appealing points. Within this scenario, the Waikato Valley and Waikato River becomes the ideal backdrop for such activities added and strengthened by an established narrative of tourism and recreational activities in New Zealand.

The European models of landscaping and cycle tourism offered Te Awa River Ride a useful platform to successfully design and construct the concrete pathways along the Waikato River. These models were then informed in partnership between Te Awa River Ride, Waikato Tainui, and a group of archaeologists (Hamilton City Council, Nga Mana Toopu O Kirikiriroa Limited, & Resource and Cultural Consultants, 2003; Phillips, 2014; Puke, 2011; Te Awa, 2016). This is an interesting aspect of Te Awa River Ride as it merges different views into a form of curation of sources towards a single place-product. It also connects with my notion of place-composite, this time encompassing the conceptual, perceptual and historical ways of place-making at the Waikato Valley and Te Awa River Ride. The partnership between Te Awa River Ride and the mentioned groups was crucial to the identification and acknowledgement of Māori landmarks and waahi tapu (sacred sites) along the Waikato River (Hamilton City Council & Nga Mana Toopu O Kirikiriroa Limited, 2003). A number of important waahi tapu have been recognised, following iwi protocols as well as the implementation of informative signage for users and visitors. The interpretive panels, as depicted in Figure 13, have relevant historical information and mapping of significant areas. On this note,

academic researcher Renata Fox (2012) explains the informative and symbolic aspects of tourist signage and panels: “When in their informative capacity tourist attraction signs tell us about locations, direction and work hours, in their symbolic capacity they embody social relations, hierarchies and power” (p. 111).

The panel in Figure 13 contains a map of the area as well as historical and archaeological information. The map has informative illustrations on how the area was inhabited and some of the social cultural practices. Building on Fox’s arguments, I locate the informative and symbolic aspects of Figure 13 as crucial place-making elements. These elements open new perceptual thresholds, highlighting crucial historical layers as well as the underlying power dynamics surrounding past land confiscation and present use (as noted earlier in this chapter).

Figure 13. Information panel at Te Awa River Ride, Avantidrome section, Cambridge. Source: Rodrigo Hill, 2018.

Designed and constructed outdoor and recreational places such as Te Awa River Ride may function as an arena for place-making progressions through the practice of particular recreational activities. There are an array of relevant scholarly studies about place and outdoor recreational and leisure spaces (Best, 2010; Blackshaw, 2013; Gartner & Lime, 2000; Harris, 2005; Ramthun, 1995; Brown, 2012). For

example, Katrina Brown (2012) draws from social and cultural geography to investigate recreational outdoor spaces and the ongoing challenge of accommodating diversity as it converges a rising number of distinctive mobile practices on the same limited time, space and resources (Brown, 2012). In parallel, Roy Ramthun (1995) studied the rapid growth of mountain biking and the conflict created with other user groups in natural areas in the United States of America. Social identity in leisure settings is also a useful lens to analyse identity construction within Te Awa River Ride's multiple user groups. Social or leisure identities are based on pre-established displayed meanings and narratives that are in accordance with the social setting in which they operate (MacClancy, 1996). Therefore, identities are forged within discourses and it is crucial to understand interpretations of Te Awa River Ride as products of specific historical and institutional ways of knowing the land within specific discursive formations and practices (Hall, 1990). On the other hand, particular leisure/recreational practices should be seen as 'embodied practices' generating new meanings whose interpretation and representation are highly negotiable and contestable (MacClancy, 1996). These studies investigate multiple processes of identity construction, as well as place meaning and making through different practices associated to outdoor recreational activities. This relates to the aims of my doctoral research in which I investigated the multiple (photographic) discourses and practices embedded in the process of place-making at Te Awa River Ride.

Within the research briefly discussed above on place and recreation and leisure, visual methods in social research in leisure and recreational settings have become increasingly popular (Azzarito & Kirk, 2013; Chalfen, 2014; Evers, 2016; Mackenzie & Kerr, 2012; Phoenix & Smith, 2011; Pope, Luca, & Tolich, 2010). Researchers are using an array of (wearable) digital media to record and collect data. Go Pro cameras, for example have been used to evoke and enact experiential knowledge in surfing (Evers, 2016). Evers used a wearable Go Pro camera in his research on gender and surfing cultures in Australia to investigate the interconnections of technology, sociality and embodiment as catalysts for experiential processes (Evers, 2015). While I artistically investigated experiential processes and subsequent perceptions of place mediated by photographic technologies. I used both my own and participants' photography practices to

access nuances of integral processes of place-making and place imaginaries related to Te Awa River Ride.

Additionally, Te Awa River Ride can be seen as an international tourist destination constructed according to particular views and assumptions, catered to attract particular groups such as cyclists and other (leisure) tourists. This trend follows a global agenda of incentives towards the promotion of (leisure) tourism (Gibson, 2013). In parallel, multiple digital technologies for gathering and sharing information (for example, mobile phone photography and Facebook) are embedded within the average tourist travel experience and the way places are perceived (Jansson, 2007). So photography and practices related to the making of places are fundamental to this PhD research as well as how places can be perceived as a composite of many layers.

In the next section I outline the intersections between tourism and photography at Te Awa River Ride. Places like Te Awa River Ride have great photographic appeal informed by the idea of photography and its recording capabilities, particularly the practice of recording experiences and lived moments to be shared (online/social media). It is fundamental therefore to understand the implication of tourism photography and its underpinning dynamics.

Photography at Te Awa River Ride: Tourism and Amateur Photography

Brasilian academic researcher Lívia Aquino (2014) has traced some of the origins of tourism photography as a genre in itself and a fusion between amateur photographic practices and tourism. This process has been facilitated and propagated by Kodak's technological advancements, marketing agendas and subsequent practices of production and consumption of photographic images (Aquino, 2014). Therefore it is impossible to discuss tourism and photography without foregrounding Kodak's major influences within these subjects. This 'Kodak moment' I argue as a second moment of visual homogenisation. I have discussed how colonial photography and other visual practices were fundamental to create a form of visual homogenisation of colonised societies. These visual homogenisations (photographic and non-photographic) articulate discursive contexts in charge of triggering desired place imaginaries in benefit of

imperial/capitalist agendas of domination. The 'Kodak moment', on the other hand, functions as a delineator of what and how to photograph catalysed by Kodak's ongoing developments and popularisations of different photographic technologies and apparatuses (Aquino, 2014). At this time, early in the 1900s, Kodak was laying the visual grounds of the well-known present photographic clichés such as the family portrait and the tourist photography of particular sites and scenes. In 1920, Kodak assigned its best marketing and advertising experts to drive around the United States taking photographs of the 'best' scenic locations and vistas. These locations were then sign posted with the words 'picture ahead, Kodak as you go' (Aquino, 2014). This collection of images has formed a kind of visual inventory of vistas around the Unites States and perhaps the beginning of what I define as the second moment of photographic homogenisation. I understand Kodak's 'picture ahead' signs as delineators of places to be made photographically, according to Kodak's definitions and guidelines of places that are worthy of being photographed and consequently 'made'. This practice is surrounded by extremely powerful discourses and control mechanisms inscribed within the ways photography practice intersects with places and place-making processes. This is how Kodak outlined new ways of seeing and perceiving places, seducing the photographer (tourist) to 'see', choose and photograph Kodak's pre-established photo-cliché places (Aquino, 2014).

According to Urry and Larsen (2011), "photography has thus been crucial in developing the tourist gaze and tourism more generally; they are not separate processes but each derives from and enhances the other, as an ensemble" (p. 186). Within these studies I locate two key points that relate to my research: 1) the way places are perceived and the role of photography in this process and 2) the multilayered aspect of places and the way Te Awa River Ride is constructed and aestheticised according to particular views and assumptions derived from a European way of imagining the geography and its value (Park, 2006). I am interested in the ways photography is used at Te Awa River Ride as a vehicle for place understanding and making. I am not solely focused on the tourist gaze and resulting photography practices but more broadly in the array of photographic practices that are embedded within processes of place-making at Te Awa River Ride. These various place-based photographic practices are important as they inform my photography practice. I acknowledge, however, the strong presence of

the tourist gaze approach to photography at Te Awa River Ride as both consequence and response to the beauty and experiencing of such a place and its tourist appeal. 'Te Awa River Ride photography' could then be relocated and positioned at the intersection of past colonial photography practices with later developments of the tourist gaze/photography and the photographic recording of lived experiences. These are then added to contemporary uses of digital and mobile phone photography as well as online sharing platforms such as Instagram.

Figure 14 is more about one's impulsive desire to retain landscape beauty, a hangover perhaps from the tourist gaze and the immediate response to a landscape: taking a picture. Through my studies and analysis of several visual sources about Te Awa River Ride, such as Instagram, Te Awa River Ride's image archive and historical photographs, I have located similar cliché photographs of the Waikato River, bushes and pastures.

Figure 14. Instagram user qofd. Source: Sherylin Lee, 2017. Used with permission.

The Instagram user 'qofd' was perhaps motivated by the clear weather, bush scenery and blue skies to create this photograph, a depiction of the Waikato in its best picturesque form. The resulting photograph thus conforms to normative aesthetics around landscape photography and its modes of representing scenes and vistas. This creates an immediate visual recognition and familiarity with the picturesque, all en route and part of place-making developments at Te Awa River Ride. Moreover, I highlight the case of a mobility practice, such as cycling, as

intersecting place-making element with photography, specifically the practice of Instagram.

In her book *On Photography,* Susan Sontag (2010) talks about how the tourist gaze is embedded with an obsessive picture-taking approach to record experience. Photographs within this model and within the model and discourses of Te Awa River Ride have assigned purpose and function as confirmed realities (Sontag, 2010). Within this scenario, perceived reality is very close to the photographic image (Sontag, 2010). So the photograph above may function as a confirmation that one has ridden/walked that particular section of Te Awa River Ride. This visual 'confirmation' takes the form of the 'beautiful photograph', depicting the Waikato landscape, river and blue skies, a visual 'crowd pleaser' no doubt.

During the first months of my creative fieldwork at Te Awa River Ride, I conducted an extensive gathering and analysis of an array of visual sources on the Waikato River and Te Awa River Ride. As a photographer and researcher, I was committed to study my subject matter before making photographs. This process offered me potential visual points to build on as well as ideas of what and how to photograph or not photograph. This was a useful starting point. Part of my analysis of visual sources involved careful study of Te Awa River Ride's image archive. Brian Perry Charitable Trust and Te Awa River Ride Trust General Manager Jennifer Palmer generously offered me access to their database, which covered a vast archive of images, maps, Power Point presentations and written documents about Te Awa River Ride. I was impressed with the breadth and depth of Palmer's research team. I have selected two photographs to briefly comment on.

The photographs from Figures 15 and 16 are part of a collection of imaginaries on the Waikato River and region as a whole. They also communicate different meanings. I am interested in these photographs and how the river and Te Awa River Ride are represented and embedded into different social-cultural discourses. The first image, 'the family portrait' is indeed fascinating as it intersects the amateur family portrait approach to photography with the practice of cycling and Te Awa River Ride. As captioned, I am unsure of the date and author of this photograph. I presume an amateur photographer/family member has taken it because a professional portrait photographer would never leave a subject hidden

in the background (there is a child on the left side behind the girl with the 'Lee' shirt).

It also appears that this photograph has been planned as when one calls out the shot after considering the exact moment to be taken. I chose this photograph because it reminded me of the many years I have worked as a portrait photographer in Hamilton. I have photographed hundreds of families at the very same location as this photograph. This kind of family portrait is therefore part of a collection of photographic imaginaries specific to Kirikiriroa (Hamilton) and the Waikato River. Moreover, I argue that photographs such as the one from Figure 15 are intrinsically connected to identity formation and place: the construction of the family as a social body linked with a prominent geographical icon, namely the Waikato River, through which place-making is established and developed.

Figure 15. The family portrait at Te Awa River Ride, date and author unknown. Source Te Awa River Ride, used with permission.

Figure 16, *View of the Fairfield Bridge, Hamilton*, is a crossover between colonial photography and Kodak's 'picture ahead' moment. As I argued above, colonial photographers in the Waikato were very interested in documenting settlers' advancements in the new colony and photographic documentation of bridges and roads were an established part of the colonial repertoire (Dench, 2011a). The 'picture ahead' appeal may be a hangover from Kodak's approach to delineate the ways scenery or vistas should be photographed. The photograph from Figure 16

shows the classic approach to landscape photography where the photographer uses composition to add value to the subject matter. Value that already exists and has been pre-established by powerful discourses through which the bridge (photograph) functions as a symbol of development and 'progress' from the settler society. These two photographs are pertinent to my research as they inform the types of existing place-related imagery as well as the contexts behind them.

Figure 16. View of the Fairfield Bridge Hamilton, date and author unknown. Source: Te Awa River Ride, used with permission.

To conclude, I share two screen shots from a Google image search to exemplify and visually introduce the Waikato River and Te Awa River Ride. These images are useful to locate an array of practices, views, layers, snapshots, blind spots, virtual totalities as well as maps and charts of the Waikato region. I am impressed with the variety of visual genres and practices. These results came up on the first page after typing 'Waikato River' and 'Te Awa River Ride' into the Google image search. In parallel, when I ran a Google image search on Te Awa River Ride, the results followed similar visual patterns covering maps and landscape images to name a few. Yet in these images the focus has shifted from the river to the actual concrete pathways as well as people on bicycles as prevailing visual motifs. I am interested in the kinds of images that 'appear' after running a particular search for a particular topic/subject and how these images function as

confirmations for dominant understandings of place and existing visual assemblies and composites.

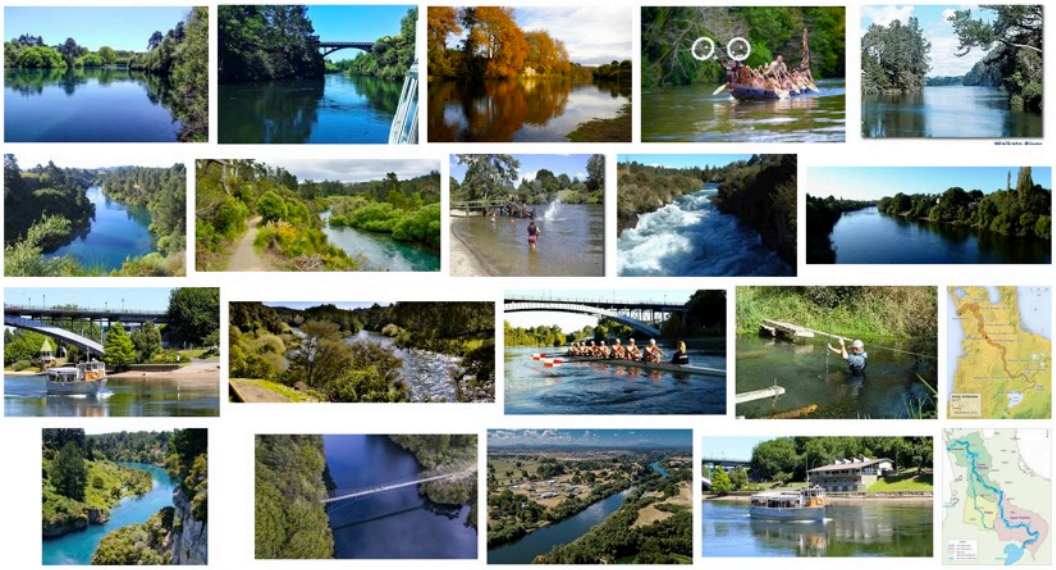


Figure 17. Screen shot of Google image search results for 'Waikato River'. Source Rodrigo Hill, 2018.

At the same time these assemblies as well as the revolving photographic practices and imagery are products of dominant place understandings connected to the ways the banks of the Waikato River should be utilised and represented. It is easy to note that the Waikato River is present in both searches. I also note the recurrence of diagonal lines and the use of perspective and depth of field to depict both the Waikato River and Te Awa River Ride.

Figure 18. Screen shot of Google image search results for 'Te Awa River Ride'. Source Rodrigo Hill, 2018.

These features are part of normative conventions and photographic codes, particularly landscape photography, and the appropriate placement of the main

subject matter in the frame. Again, this creates a form of visual homogenisation of the ways the river has been photographed and the subsequent generated visual place-makings from local and, to some extent, international audiences.

The collection of photographs from this chapter prompted discussions of the utilised modes of photographic representation and discursive contexts. My photography practice aims to move beyond dominant representations underpinned by colonialism, landscape and 'leisure/tourist photography' related to Te Awa River Ride and the Waikato Valley. The next chapter covers my theoretical framework and the ways it enables my photography practice to move forward en route to further representations of place imaginaries

Chapter Two
Theoretical Framework

In this chapter I outline and explain the paradigms that inform the design of my qualitative research. Most importantly, I locate my photography practice at the core of my qualitative research approaches. In order to explain the theoretical frameworks of my PhD research, I intertwine ontological and epistemological assumptions with my photography practice. Once the links between methodology, theoretical perspectives and epistemology have been outlined, I then progress to further connect these ideas with notions of place and place imaginaries. A range of overlapping disciplines and fields constitutes this complex conceptual framework. I draw on different disciplinary approaches, such as photography, place, place-making, place imaginaries as well as anthropology, ethnography and geography, to inform the developments of my creative research methodology

Photography: Early Developments, Objectivity, Truth and Visual Anthropology

As a starting point, I firstly link the invention of photography, during the first half of the nineteenth century, with wider objective paradigms and ways of making sense of the world. Photographic practices were initially part of a wider paradigm of modernism, assigned with making sense of the world through scientific principles of information gathering, mostly observational (Kossoy, 2001). Photography was developed from the principle of the camera obscura, an optical instrument that allowed a pre-visualisation of a particular scene according to the principles of linear perspective (Kossoy, 2001). A dark chamber or camera was used and through a single small hole an image was projected inside, allowing painters to pre-visualise a scene or vista. Apparatuses to aid artists in the production of images had existed for centuries, developing particular relevance during the Renaissance period (Marien, 2002). Visual strategies, such as the pantograph as well as engravings, landscape and portraiture paintings (shadow portraits technique), were integral and well established within an agenda of making sense of the world as Mary Warner Marien (2002) points out:

> Because our culture places great value on the imaginative art of the past, it is sometimes forgotten that one of the most common uses for visual depictions in the centuries before photography was to copy the observable world and to communicate visual information in an uninflected manner. (p. 3)

Photography, therefore, emerged from an already established theoretical arena of objective rendering of the visible world. Photography, however, is a medium that enables an almost identical copy of the observable without relying on the artist's subjectivities but on the nature of a chemical-based process (this assumption will be challenged later). Photography's copying and recording capabilities were certainly appealing and, during the 1840s, the medium of photography became quickly integrated in various projects and ways of making sense of the world. These included colonisation, land surveying, portraiture as well the documentation of landscapes, war conflicts, road constructions and scientific expeditions (Kossoy, 2001). Some of these earlier objective uses of photography, specifically in New Zealand, have been outlined in the first chapter of this thesis, more specifically in the colonial photography in the Waikato section.

Interestingly, photography and the discipline of anthropology both emerged during the nineteenth century, photography in 1839 and anthropology in 1837 (Pinney, 2011). In the 1850s biologist Louis Agassiz and anthropologist Thomas Henry Huxley's inaugurated a history of nineteenth-century photo ethnographies and uses of photography for scientific purposes (Smith, 2004). In 1898 Alfred Cort Haddon's Torres Straits Island expedition integrated film and photography as tools of anthropological studies (Edwards, 1997). Haddon's project was informed by an interest in the senses and used moving and still images as part of a grand multimedia project (Pink, 2006). Haddon was not the only one to use visual ethnographic methods. Franz Boas, Baldwin Spencer and Frank Gillen also used photography and film as part of their methodological agendas; in fact Boas' use of visual methods predates Haddon's expedition in 1898 (Pink, 2006). These anthropologists marked an era of intense exploration of photographic methods and attention to sensory experience, influencing the use of visual methods within long-term fieldwork. Sarah Pink (2006) offers some additional insights into the parallel histories of photography, anthropology and colonialism: "The colonial project entailed initial application of anthropological methods to an interdisciplinary project with non-academic ends, and the sensorium was implicated in the early

anthropological theory that informed colonialism" (p 5). In the previous chapter I outlined some of the early uses of photography connected to colonialism as part of the modernist/scientific agendas of the late 1800s.

On the other hand, it is argued that (visual) anthropology appeared during World War I and was influenced by the work of Bronislaw Malinowski, Franz Boas, A.R. Redcliffe Brown and Marcel Mauss (Pink, 2006). Like Haddon, Malinowski and Boas made extensive use of photography in their fieldwork. These anthropologists advocated the long-term fieldwork method, pursued methodologies for cultural understanding, excluded the evolutionary paradigm and framed anthropology as a comparative relativist discipline (Nielsen & Eriksen, 2013). Gradually, photography, film and the sensorium suffered a decline in interest as anthropology shifted from the evolutionary model to a relativist one. Therefore, none of these methodologies fitted with the process of anthropology's solidification as a scientific theoretical discipline (Pink, 2006).

The theoretical concept of photography as the perfect mirror of reality as proposed by French philosopher Philippe Dubois (1993) is useful to understand the enthusiastic acceptance of photographic documents and methodologies by anthropologists, scientists and imperial societies of the late nineteenth century. Anthropology and other disciplines were content to take photography as an "objective *analogon* of the real" (Dubois, 1993, p. 26). Within this context, photography became part of projects of historical research, categorisation and archiving. As an example, Mary Warner Marien (2002) unpacks the work of French photographer E. Thiésson (Figure 19), highlighting the visual strategies applied to categorise non-western colonised societies:

> …he developed a specific visual vocabulary, posing his subjects from the side and from the front, and using a plain background. The appearance of neutrality and the distance of subjects from the camera were conventions that developed slowly and unevenly during photography's first decades, as ethnographers adopted a standard, "styleless" style to connote truth. (p. 39)

Photography's observational mode of representation linked with the idea of documentation formed the backbone of the multiples genres and photographic practices as well as ways of seeing and representing the world. Broadly speaking,

"all non-fictional representations, in books or in images is documentary" (Marien, 2002, p. 280).

Figure 19. 'Botucudo'. Term used to name Indigenous Brasilian Individuals. Source: E. Thiésson, 1844, acervo Musée du Quai Branly, France.

Consequently, documentary photography, photojournalism and photographic ethnographies were initially driven by observational and documentation methodologies. Moreover, the human condition became a common theme during the 1900s, and, according to Douglas Harper (2012), "many great documentarians worked very much like visual sociologists" (p. 18). Documentary work, therefore, seemed to "belong to the history of a particular kind of social investigation" (Price, 2004, p. 69). Like documentary photography, photographic ethnographies from 1930 to 1980 stressed the idea of photography as pure representation of the real, guided by observational methodologies commonly known as a 'fly on the wall' approach (Harper, 2012). The immersive and embodied aspect of these methods allowed both visual ethnographers and documentary photographers to imbue their practices with notions of truth and authenticity. Visual practitioners, within the conventions of these modes of representation, were regarded as neutral observers

and recorders of facts (Marien, 2002). These ideas were grounded on structuralism where photographs were considered 'self-contained entities' or as Victor Burgin (1982) defines it, a "work … whose capacity to mean was nevertheless dependent upon underlying formal structures common to all such works" (p. 32). In this sense, photographic images were confined to specific discourses of authenticity where the camera operated as a passive recording device of reality.

Visual anthropologists, photojournalists and documentarians used to photograph mostly on black and white film and often unobtrusively. The observational approach aimed for a pure documentation of 'reality as it was', surrounded by notions of truth and authenticity (Wells, 2004). In other words, the documentary factor of these methods granted the images assumptions of an "indexical relation to the historical world" (Nichols, 1991, p. 27). Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson's *Balinese Character: A Photographic Analysis* (*1942*) illustrates these ideas at the core of its unobtrusive and observational methodology. Their work clearly brought to light anthropology's concern with the 'real' or the unmediated and direct (Edwards, 2011). These strategies were part of Mead and Bateson's agenda of locating the anthropological truth and therefore a space where subjectivities could be controlled (Edwards, 2011). I share a passage from *Balinese Character: A Photographic Analysis* in which Bateson (1942) comments about photographic approaches and strategies utilised: "Of the 759 photographs reproduced in this book, eight can fairly be said to have been 'posed' in the sense that the postures of the subjects were directly influenced by the knowledge that a picture was being taken" (p. 49). Bateson continues explaining that he and Mead (1942)

> …tried to shoot what happened normally and spontaneously, rather than to decide upon the norms and then get Balinese to go through these behaviours in suitable lighting. We treated the cameras in the field as recording instruments, not as devices for illustrating our theses. (p. 49)

These are thought provoking points and insights into Bateson and Mead's photography practice fieldwork agendas. Posing or directing subjects in order to construct particular photographs was clearly not part of their photographic repertoire. These decisions were informed by epistemological and ontological assumptions connected to scientific principles and the generation of

anthropological truth in which photographic documents were part of. Therefore, there is a clear choice for the use of photography as an observational recording instrument. The notion of a posed photograph here is connected to the subject's awareness of the camera. However, I question if the subject's awareness of the camera was somehow already present regardless of the photographer's efforts and gestures to 'appear' in disguise. In contrast, through my photography practice and gestures involved, I seek to be recognised and noticed by my subjects. I engage with subjects in order to collaboratively construct a photographic image that represents ideas informed by my research frameworks. I aim to illustrate my theses through my photography practice without undermining the idea of conveying 'truth'. Rather, I am taking another route where further complexities can be rendered and represented without losing indexical[7] traces to reality and yet carrying strong points of meaning and knowledge expansion.

However, it was only after the 1980s that mainstream anthropologists started to consider questions of experience, the senses and the status of the written text itself. This shift was side-lined by visual anthropologists and their firm beliefs in the value of visual and sensory methodologies (Pink, 2006). During this time anthropology's positivist assumptions and scientific approach to knowledge, truth and impartiality were questioned. Gradually the visual recovered its status within ethnographic methodologies, and as Sarah Pink (2006) points out: "…it was recognized that ethnographic film or photography were essentially no more subjective or objective than the written texts…" (p. 3). Nevertheless, contemporary visual strategies within the disciplines of visual ethnography and anthropology are still very attached to objective modes of representation and perhaps a persistent hangover from conventional documentary photography and photojournalism (Sutherland, 2016). All of these are linked to anthropology's obsession with data gathering and analysis through rigid ethnographic research regimes. I acknowledge the stimulating moment the discipline of anthropology is going through and its expansion into an exciting field of multimodal possibilities (Pink, 2014). However, I reiterate my point, adding that most of the disciplines (design, photography and moving image to name a few) that have been

[7] The idea of index is connected to Roland Barthes' conception of the nature of photography. Barthes conceptualised a photograph as a form of trace of evidence of a given moment in time. The trace is considered to be the link between the photographic image and the 'real'. C.S. Pierce offered these ideas as Indexical signs.

incorporated into anthropological/ethnographical research are still being treated as additions and not as a totality in terms of practice. These creative disciplines are therefore put into service to generate novel routes to knowledge and yet informed by similar epistemological and ontological assumptions connected to the discipline of anthropology. The same would apply to ways of displaying visual outputs connected to anthropological and ethnographical research regimes. Considerations around sequencing and curation of images are yet to be implemented and expanded into curatorial platforms such as photobooks and photography installations.

In the photography practice chapter (three), I will discuss how sensory ethnographic methods informed the initial stages of my creative fieldwork at Te Awa River Ride. I highlight Pink's point above and how it parallels with contemporary underpinning notions on photography and subjective processes of meaning-making to be discussed in the coming section.

Documentary Photography: Objective and Contemporary Approaches

With the postmodernist turn, photographic images, practices and meanings started to be challenged, and the idea of images as pure depictions of reality became severely deconstructed. Essentialist objective approaches such as documentary and anthropology soon became scrutinised and contested. Broadly, postmodernism denies the idea of absolute truth, channelling its efforts on the instabilities or limits that surround core knowledge (Williams, 2005). In this sense, through a postmodernist lens it is possible to analyse the multiple elements that form the basis of meanings without reaching a final or absolute truth. In fact, it credits every other unstable system as possible forms of truths (Williams, 2005). A range of theorists have explored these ideas, and I am particularly interested in Roland Barthes (*Camera Lucida*, 1980), Susan Sontag (*On Photography*, 1977), Allan Sekula (*The invention of photographic meaning*, 1982) and Victor Burgin's (*Thinking Photography*, 1982) postmodern readings of photography. I am also interested in the works of writers John Berger, Teju Cole, John Gossage, Gerry Badger, Abigail Solomon-Godeau, Luigi Ghirri, Joan Fontcuberta and others. In summary, these authors made solid contributions towards a theory of photography

in an attempt to "uncover the complex working of the photographic sign system" (Edge, 2013, p. 328). In this regard, the idea of the camera as a witness of truthful data became outmoded. The act of photographing, the choice of subjects, light settings and technology were then analysed and integrated into the process of constructing reality (Nicholls, 1991). Therefore, essentialist photographic approaches became eroded by postmodernist trends. The term documentary inevitably implies a reference to objective modes of visual representation. However, contemporary documentary photography approaches have reconfigured key underpinning notions around the practice of documentary (Bright, 2011; Chevrier, 2006; Gelder & Westgeest, 2011; Lombardi, 2007; Rosenthal & Corner, 2005; Rosler, 2003; Sekula, 1978; Wells, 2004).

While the term documentary photography may apply to my photography practice, it is necessary to position my practice within contemporary approaches where documentary photography functions as an elastic and amorphous genre of visual representation. An alternative to this could be the relocation of the term documentary photography to a contemporary reading on photography and broader lens-based practices, namely 'post-photography' or 'post-documentary' (Shore, 2014). This discussion is problematic as the term documentary within my framework disciplines of anthropology and sociology is linked with objective projects of representation. Documentary photography has a shared history with the disciplines of anthropology and sociology; anthropologists have used photography as a warrant for authenticity and truth, while sociologists' interests were more reform-orientated and socially concerned (Bright, 2011). In addition, the actual term documentary is historically loaded and bounded to the idea of representing truthful photographed reality. I am, however, not questioning the documentary factor of photographic images and its indexicality. On the contrary, I acknowledge that photographic images do carry traces of the 'real' without necessarily having to burden the idea of being truthful representations of the world. In this sense, the indexical aspects of a photograph are only part of a visual vocabulary of expression and "each invites the spectator to actively *read* the image, and all, variously, implicate questions of subjectivity and identity" (Wells, 2004, p. 283).

As noted earlier, the idea of the camera as a witness of truthful facts became redundant. The act of photographing became integrated into the more openly acknowledged processes of reality construction (Nicholls, 1991). Therefore, objective photographic approaches became eroded by postmodern trends pushing photographers to alternative routes, as Susan Bright (2011) writes:

> Contemporary documentary has not lost its powers to convey information as it did in the past; it has just moved on. Images are now more open to interpretation from the viewer, using ambiguity as their strength rather than an authorial voice dictating meaning. (p. 159)

I agree with Bright, that contemporary documentary has moved on. It is now infiltrated and infiltrates different photographic and artistic practices. It has become harder to pin it down as the lines between photojournalism, fine art and documentary photography became blurred. In parallel, the idea of the 'truthful' photographed reality has been eroded by the use of digital technologies and the postmodern tendency to question and analyse the photographer's intentions towards the work (Rosler, 2004). Within this scenario, contemporary documentary photography has become fractured by postmodern conventions and strategies such as plurality, fragmentation and use of mixed media to tell stories. The new generation of documentary photographers became more concerned with personal and intimate issues, aiming not to "reform life but to know it" (Szarkowski, 1967, para. 2). These points are particularly important to my photography practice. My photography practice is therefore infiltrated by several postmodern concepts such as plurality (camera technologies and multiple modes of visual representation) and fragmentation (when I rely on mediation and successive acts of cutting and creating visual fragments). In addition, my photography practice makes use of ambiguity, mystery and metaphorical underpinnings for image construction as well as the concept of place imaginaries as a possible route to alternative ways to perceive the world. The idea of construction is therefore central to my work as it is to the postmodern and the emphasis on the forging, fabrication and staging of pre-conceived images (Köhler, 1989; Wells, 2004).

Allan Sekula (1978) argues that "documentary is thought to be art when it transcends its reference to the world, when the work can be regarded, first and foremost, as an act of self-expression on the part of the artist" (p. 864). In other words, documentary is no more or less faithful to reality than art ─ they rather

constitute different versions of the 'real'. This is an interesting point because it highlights the idea of contemporary photography production as less indexical and more iconic or aesthetic (and here is where self-expression comes in).

Post-photography, Post-documentary: A Qualitative Approach to Visual Research

Contemporary photographic practice has evolved into a field of possibilities, a flux of representational modes and ways to transcribe experiences, feelings and emotions. Robert Shore (2014) uses the term 'post-photography' to describe contemporary photographic practices of an artist who works with photography or 'artist with a camera'. In addition, Shore (2014) proposes alternative routes for the contemporary photographer-artist: "A new approach to photography is seeing the light-photographers without cameras. The need to press the shutter is replaced by a direct interest in images ─ not necessarily in making images" (p. 14). Shore's approach relocates the photographer's role to a broader field of practices. For example, the act of editing a group of images and giving voice to the material through a process of curation has become just as important as the act of making images. Besides that, the act of compilation and ways of displaying lens-based material have, too, become part of a process of authorship where the photographer has control over these different stages in pursuit of an authorial voice over the work. It is not unusual, however, for the contemporary photographer-artist to work with a team of experts that may include designers, curators, filmmakers as well as other photographers.

In parallel, contemporary photography practice can be argued as a form of qualitative practice where the photographer draws from different practices and disciplines, creating images that are part of subjective processes of meaning making. I bring Denzin and Lincoln's (2011) term "bricoleur and quilt maker" (p. 4) to help illustrate these ideas. As a photographer and artist-researcher, I am drawing from different sources and narratives in an attempt to photographically actualise particular place layers of Te Awa River Ride. Denzin and Lincoln (2011) explain that qualitative research is "a field of inquiry in its own right. It crosscuts disciplines, fields and subject matter" and thus may be problematic to define simply (p. 3). Similarly, contemporary photography practice has become a flux of

possibilities where the lines between various photographic genres and practices have become blurred. However, attempts to define qualitative research should at least include the idea that there is a researcher equipped with interpretive and material practices (research methods) that have the capacity of making the world perceptible through an array of different representational modes (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Within this scenario, I use photography, curation, sequencing and compilation as methodological sense-making tools in charge of providing me an array of representational modes that will be later compiled into a single creative/academic product. The ways my photography practice unfolds are similar to the quilt-making processes where one tries to compile a cohesive piece of work through the combination of various dissimilar units.

Research Paradigms

Sound research projects are framed by clear epistemological and ontological paradigms, as Markula and Silk (2011) explain:

> Paradigms provide the orientations towards how researchers see the world (ontology), and the various judgments about knowledge and how to gain it (epistemology). Together the ontological and epistemological assumptions form the philosophical parameters that guide decisions on appropriate methodological practices. (p. 24)

In this sense, the design process of a research project should involve consideration of the methods that are going to be used, the methodologies that frame the methods, the theoretical perspectives that inform the methodology, and the epistemology that informs the theory behind the methodology (Crotty, 1998). I am interested in paradigms in which 'truth' is understood as a construction of multiple shared truths where meanings are created from our exchanges with the social world, therefore rejecting the notion of a single objective truth (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Within these paradigms, I position myself as a qualitative researcher, beginning with a constructionist epistemology and interpretive research paradigm. I therefore reject the idea of photographs as pure depictions of reality or single objective representations. On the contrary, I understand photographic practices and images as sources for the construction of multiple meanings. The photographic act, within this scenario, can be argued as a compression of the photographer's intentions and social-cultural contexts. The photographic practice of portraiture, for example, ultimately relies on

collaboration where multiple subjectivities are fused into a photographic image. In this sense, the interpretive position is useful to "understand the participant's subjective experiences and through these experiences, interpret the participant's meanings" (Markula & Silk, 2011 p. 34). The interpretation of meaning happens, in this case, through the collaborative making of a photographic portrait. This dynamic constructivist researching process unfolds through interactive engagements between researcher and participant and leads to multi voiced narratives based on experiences, and meanings (Markula & Silk 2011). The ways I engaged with research participants were informed by ethnographic methods that were facilitated and mediated by my photography practice. My engagements with participants was crucial to understanding the various Te Awa River Ride related narratives and imaginaries. Each participant offered me a key to a particular set of meanings that was then translated and made into a photograph[8]. On this note, critic Corinne Robins (1984) adds that contemporary photography practice has shifted from the realistic arena to a space where feelings and meanings can be visually represented. She argues that this shift generated a

> new kind of concentration on narrative drama, on the depiction of time changes in the camera's fictional moment. The photograph, instead of being presented as a depiction of reality, was now something created to show us things that were felt rather than necessarily seen. (p. 213)

Once curated, sequenced and compiled in a particular order, my photographs become visual units that compose multi-voiced narratives such as photographic installations. Within this scenario photographic images come 'alive', unlocked, contextualised and opened to meaning-making processes. The interpretive researcher believes that knowledge and the actual research process are subjective and generated from subjective meaning-making engagements (Markula & Silk, 2011). The act of interpretation is extended to the individual or viewer when reading a group of photographs and consequently creating subjective processes of meaning making.

Brasilian researcher Katia Lombardi (2007) situates imaginary documentary photography within the realm of documentary, but without the burden of an objective project concerned with pure documentation of the real. This view aligns

[8] Participant's narratives triggered the construction of particular photographs. I have used participant's narratives both directly and in combination with narratives from different participants towards the construction of key photographic responses.

with contemporary modes of photographic representation where the aesthetic qualities prevail over the recording aspect of photography. Photographers, within this scenario, have more freedom to visually explore ideas and concepts. I am interested in how Lombardi situates the actual term imaginary (as opposed to imaginary documentary) and its influences on photographic practice and the ways the photographer's subjectivities will prevail through a fluid methodological project. This positions authorial voice as a catalyser for the flow of specific and unique ways of conceptualising, producing and distributing photographic work (Lombardi, 2007). Thereby, the actual photographic act is materialised through a compression of images, feelings, experiences and memories that are related to the imaginary of the photographer (da Silva, 2003). Technology also plays an important role within the photographic act in the sense that each type of apparatus may deliver a particular image (or set of images) that is more or less related to the feelings, experiences and memories of the photographer; and only the photographer will know if the desired visual product is successfully representing these 'imaginaries'.

Similarly, Schwartz and Ryan (2003) talk about "the ways in which photographs, in conjunction with other kinds of images and texts, shape distinctive 'imaginative geographies'" (p. 5). The term imaginative geographies does not clash with my concept of imaginaries as it offers a tighter (geographical) definition based on more rational and objective discourses. In addition, Schwartz and Ryan highlight the act of projection of (imaginary) possibilities pertinent to grouping processes of different visual discourses. Therefore, maps and architectural design plans are loaded and useful visual elements as they invite the viewer to 'unpack' places, opening up the various historical, cultural and geographical layers of the locale. In this way the imaginary is intrinsically connected with subjective processes where one is in charge of making a particular set of meanings. For example, when a Te Awa River Ride user is reading an illustrational map of a particular pā site along the Ride, she or he is faced with an immediate psychological response where the mind starts to create (re) projections of that particular locale. So the whole process of perception is then reconfigured to generate new or alternative understandings and makings of place. My photography practice works in a similar fashion where I combine multiple imaginaries of place such maps and drawings to create my own version of Te Awa River Ride.

Figure 20. Architectural planning of Te Awa River Ride. Source Te Awa River Ride, used with permission.

Photography and Affect

To begin this brief discussion I highlight the complex nature of the term affect and the multiple ways it has been investigated by a number of disciplines including anthropology, psychology, geography, art criticism and others. To explore affect in relation to photography and more specifically contemporary photography practice I initially draw on psychology's definition of affect connected to human experiences and emotions. In contemporary psychological terms affect refers "to the mental counterpart of internal bodily representations associated with emotions, actions that involve some degree of motivation, intensity, and force…" (Barret & Bliss-Moreau, 2009, p. 1). This definition may be linked to the gesture of photographing and meaning-making processes of photographic images as I discuss below.

Within the field of photography criticism, theorists such as Roland Barthes (1980) and Susan Sontag (2003, 2010) provided fundamental discussions around affect and photography. Both Barthes' *Camera Lucida* and Sontag's *On Photography* as well as *Regarding the Pain of Others* offered expanded readings on the photographic beyond the semiotic and more focused on feelings and emotions (Brown & Phu, 2014). Within the field of anthropology and more specifically the anthropological studies of photographs and photographic practices renowned author Elizabeth Edwards (2012; 2015) provides key discussions around affect and photography. Edwards (2012) highlights the idea that "photographs cannot be understood through visual content alone but through an embodied engagement with an affective object world" (p.221). In addition, Edwards (2015) points out

that “photographs and responses to them are woven into the very fabric of contemporary experience and the negotiated relations between past, present and future, and living and dead, spirits and ancestors, and places and spaces of connections” (p. 248). This is a key point as it highlights the centrality of photography in contemporary experience and the ways photographic images and practices facilitate and mediate a number of socio-cultural processes including place experiencing and making. Edwards (2015) concludes that “ultimately photographs are evidence of affect, of how people feel, and think and negotiate their worlds…” (p. 248). So affect is arguably embedded into the photographic practice, artistic or amateur, the mechanics of the photographic act and gestures involved are undeniably surrounded by feelings and emotions. The contemporary photographer artist explores these complex territories and the balancing of conceptual, technical and emotional triggers to the photographic. I argue therefore that my photography practice and uses of feelings and emotions are personal and not prescribed. As an artist my affective responses to my experiences at Te Awa River Ride consequently take form of the photographic place imaginaries I construct. The feelings and emotions I aim to emulate are personal and subjective, however these may be extended beyond my intentions as when one develops further affective responses to my photographs. In this sense, my research focus is not on the possible interpretations of particular feelings and emotions from viewers. I do not aim to analyze viewers’ affective responses and meaning-makings, although I acknowledge that these are part of sense-making processes of my photographs. As an example I return to my photograph of the white dog and the ways it may trigger particular feelings and emotions to local Waikato Tainui communities. This photograph provides a point of connection between different place layers; the affective response here may offer a form of crystallization triggered by the photographic image, place imaginaries. Here the viewer has the opportunity to go through states of deep reflection initiated by involuntary affective engagement (Deleuze & Howard, 2003).

Affect in my photography practice is connected to my feelings and emotions and the ways I channel these to create photographic place imaginaries. These are part of my place-making process at Te Awa River Ride. I have mentioned earlier the complex nature of contemporary photography practice, a flux of representational modalities to emulate experience, feelings and emotions (Shore, 2014). However,

it is complex and perhaps problematic to pin down my specific feelings connected to the construction of specific photographs. My photographs carry traces of my feelings and consequently visual moods reconfigured into motifs. The black and white photographs from *Let Light Create Imaginary Spaces,* for example*,* offer experimentations and ways of representing internal psychological states, feelings and emotions. All of these are challenging themes to represent. On the other hand, the colour photographs from my last creative milestone *South of the Rising Sun* offer feelings and emotions through different creative routes and yet are able to convey particular feelings connected to memory, place and identity. These are part of processes of cultural perception and subsequent place-makings of Te Awa River Ride and the Waikato River.

Photographic portraits are another useful example and undeniably loaded with feelings and emotions. Early photographic studies on the human facial expressions and emotions marked pioneer explorations of photography and affect (Phu & Steer 2009). Charles Darwin (1872) used photographs to research facial expression while in France doctor Guillaume-Benjamin-Armand Duchenne (1862) used the photographic camera to record facial reactions and emotions on humans. Photography's early practices during its primal decades attested the presence of photographic affect in its most obvious manifestation, the human face. My portrait photography practice, as I will discuss later in this thesis, involves particular gestures and directorial inputs to emulate particular feelings and emotions from research participants. These are connected to the ways I interpret the actual process of place-making and how affective responses can be represented in photographs to tease out particular ideas. As mentioned previously affect and place-making are abstract concepts and impose a representational challenge. I came up with a version of how these can be represented by working collaboratively with portrait participants.

Place and Place-Making

In this section I unpack and outline the relationships between theories of place, place-making and place imaginaries as well as the actual photographic practice as means to place-making. I argue that photographic practices are intrinsic to our daily lives and also part of an agenda of understanding (places). As Sarah Pink

(2011a) outlines, "photography can be understood as both bound up with everyday practice, conventions, technologies *and* as emergent from specific experiential engagements with the physical environment" (p. 95). In this sense, theories of place as well as an artistic (photographic) investigation of place are fundamental to this PhD research. I draw on a range of scholars from different disciplines in order to investigate Te Awa River Ride's notion of place-composite and my photography practice. In the first chapter of this thesis I have introduced the place histories of the Waikato Valley and Te Awa River Ride, covering Waikato Māori and European perspectives as well as the conceptualisation of Te Awa River Ride as a place-composite. I now focus on the theoretical intersections around the concept of place.

Place

As an introduction to the idea of place, I draw on the influential works of Relph (1976), James Gibson (1979) and Tuan (1977). These authors have been fundamental to many contemporary scholarly understandings of place; hence my interest in these early works that dates back to the 1970s. These authors offer initial thoughts on place and perception, outlining the experiential and perceptual aspect of places and the ways photography intersects with place-making processes. This will lead to my core ideas around the term imaginaries and the subsequent connections with my photography practice. Relph (1976) points out that

> By taking place as a multifaceted phenomenon of experience and examining the various properties of place, such as location, landscape, and personal involvement, some assessment can be made of the degree to which these are essential to our experience and sense of place. In this way the sources of meaning, or essence of place can be revealed. (p. 3)

Alternatively, Tuan (1977) argues for a creation of place through visibility:

> Place is whatever stable object catches our attention. As we look at a panoramic scene our eyes pause at points of interest. Each pause is time enough to create an image of place that looms large momentarily in our view. (p. 161)

Some moments are captured in the mind and may become memories of embodied experiences. Other moments are turned into visual recording mediated by an array of media such as digital cameras and mobile phones. In this thesis I build upon Tuan (1977) and others to consider the ways photographic practices may become infiltrated within the sequential act of pausing, gazing and creating an

(photographic) image towards place-making. For many Te Awa River Ride users and myself, such acts of pausing take place during their movement practices (i.e., cycling, walking), and thus the relationship between photographic and movement practices is also significant to this thesis.

James Gibson's (1979) definition of perception as a "psychosomatic act, not of the mind or of the body but of a living observer" (p. 239) offers additional insights into processes of place-making. The term 'living observer' is particularly interesting in the sense that it locates us humans as actors of perceptions and not passive organisms who only receive and process inputs from the world. On this note Gibson (1979) adds that "perceiving is an achievement of the individual, not an appearance in the theatre of his consciousness" (p. 239). This is a pertinent point to ground my multimodal approach to image making and the term imaginaries as a whole. My multimodal approach to image making is a way to suggest personal and collective subjective perceptual processes and subsequent development of a number of place imaginaries. Gibson's point is helpful to understand the construction of imaginary perceptions of place particular to each individual who is in charge of constructing hers/his version of the world.

Imaginaries and Place Imaginaries

The term 'imaginaries' is a way to describe visual possibilities, constructions and psychological visual responses to my experiences at Te Awa River Ride. This process is intrinsically connected to subjective processes of perceiving and understanding the world and subsequently the ways I photographically explore dimensions of memory, affect and cultural perception. I argue that the expansion of my photography practice to encompass a project of imaginary constructions of place is a useful route to ground the multi modal aspect of my practice, and strongly linked with postmodernist approaches to photography. Within this context my photography practice is therefore liberated from objective views, opening up multiple representational possibilities all based on the idea of constructions at times collaborative, performed, posed and composed (Köhler, 1989). In the next section, I will introduce some key conceptual ideas on imaginaries. I will start discussing the work of philosopher Henri Bergson and how it relates to my concept of place imaginaries.

Henri Bergson

The work of French philosopher Henri Bergson (1911), specifically the book *Matter and Memory,* helps to further illuminate the concept of place imaginaries and my use of this term in relation to place and Te Awa River Ride. In this section I explain the conceptual parameters around the notion of place-composite and the ways I use my photography practice to render and actualise place imaginaries. I aim to build a conceptual model from some of Bergson's key ideas on perception and the motor-sensor mechanism. Bergson's ideas offer a framework where I am able to build a range of intersecting theories around imaginaries and my photography practice. My goal is to construct this theoretical frame from the compilation of a number of theories. This approach enables me to extend the boundaries of a single theoretical concept, namely place imaginaries in order to design a complex framework capable of sustaining the multi modal factor of my creative photographic methodology.

It is useful to outline from the start that in Bergson's terms matter is image; therefore, the material world as well as the atom, the brain and so forth are images. And once this is cemented, the dichotomy between mental images and material world ceases. So to Bergson (1911), images don't need to be perceived to exist as they are already there in the material world. Bergson's point goes beyond the disassociation of realism and idealism or thing and representation (1911). Matter to Bergson (1911) is rather

> …an aggregate of "images". And by "image" we mean a certain existence which is more than that which the idealist calls a representation, but less than that the realist calls a thing ─ an existence placed half-way the thing and the "representation". (p. vii)

So images are self-existing and independent from perception processes. What we humans do is subtract an image of an already existing image, and this process is what Bergson calls perception. Bergson (1911) argues that "an image may *be* without *being perceived*; it may be present without being represented; and the distance between these two terms, presence and representation, seems just to measure the interval between matter itself and our conscious perception of matter" (p. 27). And within this scenario, imagination or imaginaries is a process where the mind goes through an act of addition and projection. This is perhaps a point of collision because projected imaginary mental images would sit outside the regime

of matter/images and material world. Imaginaries, therefore, could be argued as bounded to the real-unreal and its distinctions, never attached to the actual images from the material world or what we might call the 'real'. As I mentioned, the perceived image to Bergson is a subtraction of the totality, a virtual totality. The imaginaries here could then be argued as the space of exchange between the virtual and the actual (perceived) image. This space between the subtracted and the totality is imaginary, not projected but simply existent. This point is illustrated in the photograph from Figure 21, where the light is reflected from the Waikato River. This photograph is not necessarily an act of subtraction from the material world (although it could be argued as one), like an objective photographic representation, for example. This photograph sits between two spheres, one in which humans make perceptions or extract versions of the world that are bounded by interest and how much our motor-sensor mechanisms can afford. And the other that proposes infinite (virtual) totalities, beyond the perceived material clichés, yet not unreal, just part of a different regime. These totalities are images in variation, in motion, and through my photography practice I am able to render specific visual variations at times beyond the humanly perceived. This process, I argue, opens up alternative photographic perceptions of place.

Figure 21. Light reflections on the Waikato River. Source: Rodrigo Hill, 2017.

Bergson conceptualised a mode through which humans consciously perceive matter as part of a 'discernment' based on interests and needs (1911). This

‘interest’ is what guides us to perceive, subtract and “between this perception of matter and matter itself there is but a difference of degree and not of kind” (Bergson, 1911, p. 78). Therefore, the photographic camera can render degrees of the same matter but not kinds. This could be explained following the logic that matter exists before perception. The mind within this logic does not function as a theatre for representations transmitted or mediated through bodily sensors (Ingold, 2011). Humans, to perceive, make subtractions, assigning centres to matter, rendering a particular perceptual degree. In this sense, to change the kind of matter is to add something to a totality, which could then be considered a process of imagination. The photographer-artist searches for totalities and plunges into a territory of ‘degrees’ in search of images to be photographed. My photographs, however, do not need to necessarily appear extraordinary or fantastic to represent ‘degrees’. For example, my self-portrait photograph in Figure 75 does not represent the degree of image that I am solely focused on. The self-portrait photograph represents, perhaps, an obvious way, a strategy to render material-virtualities or imaginaries of place. Still, this image belongs to a selection of images that I consider perceptions of the material and virtual regimes. Whereas snapshots, for example, I argue are ‘pure’ and ‘direct’ representations of the material world with specific intensities and durations pertinent to a specific band of clichés and discernments all part of localised perception processes. My photographs, on the other hand, are not fantastic images of places but images through which further variations and flows are explored and depicted. Also, the ambiguity at times present in my photographs reinforce the uncommon, the singular points that subsequently lead to further place-making processes. So Bergson has some key points that are worth revising. First is the way Bergson understands the world as a system of images in constant movement and flow. These images (not representations) have no centre and are with immediate relationship with bodies, in this case human bodies.

Once the relationship between images and body (or the world of the living) is outlined then further processes are developed such as affection, perception and action. To Bergson, affection is the capacity to choose, creating an interval between received sensorial inputs and the subsequent re-action. The living bodies, including us humans, create a process of slowing down movements and forces, giving centre and closure to things, delineating and framing interested movements.

This is part of a constant process of selection and categorisation. Captured movements generate affections bounded by memory. These are combined to generate an 'adequate' action into the material world. Bergson calls this the motor-sensor mechanism. Also note that there is no perception without memories, so memory here has a crucial role within Bergson's ideas. Perception is an act of interest and a combination of memory and affection. Affection to Bergson (1911) is "that part or aspect of the inside of our body which we mix with the image of external bodies; it is what we must first of all subtract from perception to get the image in its purity" (p. 60). Affection is connected to the sensorial mechanisms of the body. These mechanisms evolve through gradual training as Bergson explains:

> For all that education can do is to associate with the actual affective sensation the idea of a certain potential perception of sight or touch, so that a definite affection may evoke the image of a visual or tactile impression, equally definite. (p. 61)

Memory, then, works as an archive of images, like a 'bag' from which one pulls images when a matching affection arises. This 'bag' of memories works like a categorising mechanism in charge of the 'memory-images' or 'recollection-images' (Bergson, 1911).

To conclude this short review on Bergson's work, I will attempt to align these ideas to my current framework of imaginaries. It is crucial to understand that imaginaries, according to the logic of Bergson's philosophy, would be the space of exchange between the virtual and the actual. Within this space images are open and in constant movement. This free-flowing territory is from where images are 'pulled' into perceptions and also where images flow in virtual totality. Once subtracted images become perceptions, the remaining field of virtual possibilities becomes the space I most hope to dive into in search of alternative place imaginaries. This space does not endure processes of addition or projection; one does not add realities to an already 'complete reality'. On the contrary, one seeks to dive into these other realities and make contact with these flows in order to render crystalised photographic imaginaries of place.

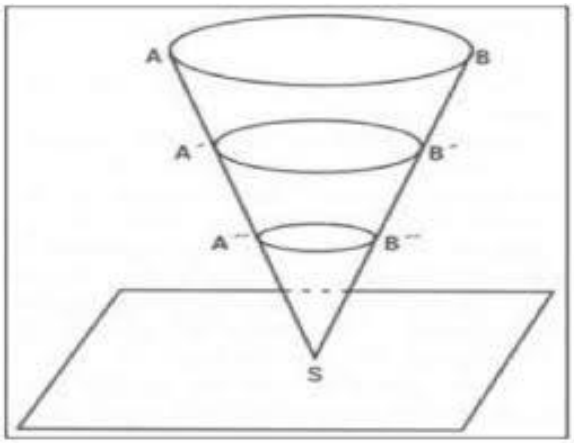


Figure 22. Image from Bergson, Henri, *Matter and Memory* (New York: Zone Books, 1988) Fig. 5, pp. 162. Used with permission.

Gilles Deleuze was influenced by Henri Bergson's philosophy. Deleuze's notion of the crystal image was built on Bergson's concepts, particularly the points I have outlined above. Therefore, to understand my conceptualisation of imaginaries according to the logic of Bergson (and now Deleuze) it is useful to revise the implications of the term 'crystal image'. To start I highlight the following extract from Deleuze's (1989) book *Cinema 2: The Time-image*:

> We have seen how, on the broader trajectories, perception and recollection, the real and the imaginary, the physical and the mental, or rather their images, continually followed each other, running behind each other and referring back to each other around a point of indiscernibility. (p. 69)

What Deleuze describes here is the deceptive idea that there are two images, real and unreal, or real and imaginary. For example, the case of my 'imaginary images' or mental images of place as doubles for my photographic representations. Deleuze (1989) continues explaining:

> But this point of indiscernibility is precisely constituted by the smallest circuit, that is the coalescence of the actual image and the virtual image, the image with two sides, actual and virtual at the same time. We gave the name opsign (and sonsign) to the actual image cut off from its motor extension: it then formed large circuits, and entered into communication with what could appear as recollection-images, dream-images and world-images. But here we see that the opsign finds its true genetic element when the actual optical image crystalizes with its own virtual image, on the small internal circuit. This is a crystal-image, which gives us the key, or rather the "heart" of opsigns and their compositions. (p. 69)

Deleuze clarifies the notion of the crystal image, the crystallisation of perceived images (actual images, opsign) into virtual images. This is useful to again clarify my conceptualisation of imaginaries, making clear that there is a virtual image (non-imaginary and real). These virtual images are totalities and may appear as dream-images or mental projections when they are actually virtual totalities waiting to be crystalised. I argue that the actual terming of these ideas is not as important as the logic behind them. So, yes, I have been working on the term imaginaries as part of a logic visual system for my photography practice. But, most importantly, it is crucial to understand the actual logic that drives these concepts. And to understand this logic I must again return to Bergson. Figure 22 represents Bergson's (1911) ideas on time, duration and memory. Point S represents perception and the actual images. The area from AB on the wider top part of the cone represents memory, time and duration. This area AB encompasses the virtual images or the smaller internal circuits as Deleuze (1989) explained above. The AB area closer to the S point represents the larger circuit that works with recollection-images and dream-images. Remember, perception is an act of matching a recollection-image with affection; this is an act of subtraction from the virtual images. Artistic practices, when not inserted into the regime of images from the larger circuit can have the capacity of rendering virtual images from the smaller circuit. For example, abstract painting deals with a regime of images from the smaller circuit. Similarly, contemporary artistic photography plays with the same regime of images from the smaller circuit. I have demonstrated the influences of the postmodern turn and the critique of objective models of visual representation. These ideas connect with photographic approaches that aim to reach and work within the virtual totalities in the smaller circuit. My photographic practice at Te Awa River Ride aims to render some of the additional movements and flows pertinent to actual images.

Henri Bergson and Te Awa River Ride

I propose an analysis of Te Awa River Ride through Bergson's lens. I start with the assumption that Te Awa River Ride is obviously part of the material world of images. Te Awa River Ride ─ geographical place ─ is located on the geographical area from Lake Karapiro to Ngārauwāhia, precisely the point where the Waipa meets the Waikato River. To perceive Te Awa River Ride is to make a

subtraction of its totalities. One has to subtract to perceive and if one keeps subtracting further, one will perceive the arising sequential and curatorial images of Te Awa River Ride. I have argued that Te Awa River Ride has been conceived from a European model of perceiving the land. This model is rather simply another system of images that has been ingrained in place and yet belongs to the virtual totalities of Te Awa River Ride. These totalities may be called memory-images, historical-images and other virtual images. I also take into consideration the geographical location, the landscape, the Waikato River and many more (geographical) images. These 'other' images (memory-images, geographical-images and place-images) I call place layers, and through my photography practice I am aiming to coalesce these images with actual perceived images. Of course I cannot identically replicate a memory-image from Te Awa River Ride, but I can photograph images that may coalesce with these totalities. Let's take the case of the Waikato River as an example. I bring back the ancient Waikato Māori story about the Waikato River and its origins. The story, as introduced at the beginning of this thesis, is about a white dog that leads the way for the healing waters of Tongariro to reach Taupiri. The story is part of the virtual place totalities of Te Awa River Ride. My photography practice aims to reach some of these virtual images in an attempt to coalesce them with actual perceived images. However, the question I keep asking myself is, what does the white dog from the story look like? Also, would this process be an imaginary? I do not have the answers for these questions, but I argue that photography here goes through imaginary process of coalescence between images that are in a quest for virtual-material indiscernibility. Photography then becomes a quest for shadows, wandering ghosts in search for visual 'reincarnation'.

Blind Spot

Blind Spot is the title of Teju Cole's (2017a) latest book, a combination of small writing installments and photographs. The book is a fusion of words and photographs and could be considered a photobook. However, in my opinion, *Blind Spot* offers the reader a fresh take on photography, sequencing and how words can open up multiple arenas within the photographic field of meanings. New York based scholar Siri Hustvedt (as cited in Cole, 2017a) offers some useful insights in the foreword section of *Blind Spot*. According to her

> inside each human eye and the eyes of other vertebrates there is a blind spot where the retina meets the optic nerve. This area, the optic disc, is insensitive to light and receives no visual information. Every person should therefore experience a significant blind spot in her or his visual field-about the size of an orange held at arm's length. And yet, normally sighted people do not walk around with a hole in their vision. Somehow this absence is filled. (p. ix)

The question of how this absence is filled and if we either perceive the world directly or via internally generated representations is indeed crucial. This is problematic terrain, and I am not intending to solve this enigma, but rather find a model through which I can frame and explore photographic possibilities. Bergson's model to me leaves no room for mental projections, as everything (matter/image) is out there in the world where nothing is hidden. This perhaps could be argued as a direct model where matter or a part of it, is what is perceived, subtracted from its totalities. So matter exists without perception; things are already what they are, but when perceived they may become a sub-matter/image of its total composites. Hustvedt (as cited in Cole 2017a) argues that

> there is considerable evidence, however, that perception is not purely passive—that we do not take in the world, we also make it, and that learning is part of that creativity. Experience establishes patterns of repetition, and those repetitions become recognitions that in turn generate prediction about the world. (p. ix)

I note that we are revisiting some of Bergson's ideas again. Experience establishes patterns of repetition and these become recognitions. So it seems that we are revisiting Bergson's point about education and association of a certain image facilitated by a process of memory. Maybe the making of the world is rather a process of education and association of memory and perception/action with no projection but simply a process of mental curation of images. This curation can be extended through artistic practices and, in my case, photography. Photography then becomes a complex apparatus of matching.

So returning to *Blind Spot*, a book that may be considered a travel guide to various places, is actually an in-depth visual study on place and place perception. Cole travels to a multitude of locations around the globe and takes photographs. He avoids, however, the common visual clichés, refusing to photograph main touristic places. Cole is rather concerned with what we are missing when we look at the world (Cole, 2017a). The book's title follows Cole's personal experience of waking up one morning and realising he was blind in one eye. After several visits

he finally found a specialist who diagnosed him with the blind spot syndrome. Cole admits that after this incident his way of perceiving the world changed as well as his photography practice. His sight eventually returned to normal but his perception did not. Cole is a kind of disciple of the great essayist and art critic John Berger. Berger (2003), on his essay *Understanding a photograph,* outlines the unique power of a photograph, highlighting "what it shows invokes what it is not shown" (p. 217). Berger's paradigm coalesces with his protégé's. The blind spot of every photograph is indeed a shadow, a trace to its invisible composites.

In a recent interview about his book *Blind Spot*, Teju Cole (2017b) reflects on the missing place histories. Cole (2017b) highlights that places have invisible layers of violence and conflict. At every place Cole visited, he focused his efforts into remembering how "each society is fundamentally formed by conflict, that is later 'invisibilized' (Cole, 2017b). This is a noteworthy point as I have stressed the turbulent historical past that backgrounds Te Awa River Ride and the region as a whole. So, I argue, these are the historical layers, the virtual totalities, historic-images or memory-images pertinent to a particular locale. Some of these images on Te Awa River Ride are widely available in books and on the Internet. In addition, I have demonstrated earlier how photography was used as an instrument of colonial control and land surveying (Dench, 2011b). As Teju Cole did, I am also looking for these 'blind spots', these gaps between perceived images and its totalities. Cole focuses his gaze on the underlying, the latent violence of a place and how it is place (mis) represented. I am also following some of Cole's ideas; however, my focus is at the wider totalities and its various sub layers such as the historical conflicts, tourism and recreation, to name a few. These various layers inform my photography practice, providing potential points of coalescence between the actually and the virtually perceived.

Place Imaginaries: Expanded Frameworks

In this section I introduce some key ideas on the term place imaginaries, aiming to explain and intersect it with place-making processes as well as my photography practice at Te Awa River Ride. I have discussed imaginaries in conjunction with my photography practice as well as some of its geographical applications, as the use of maps as instruments of geographical imagination. I begin discussing the

applications and foundations of the term imaginaries followed by its uses within the disciplines of anthropology, cognitive anthropology, ethnography, human geography and cultural studies to name a few.

It has become common in anthropology to replace the terms *meanings*, *culture* and *cultural beliefs* for *imaginaries* (Strauss, 2006). In the words of Claudia Strauss (2006), "*The imaginary* is just *culture* or *cultural knowledge* in new clothes" (p. 322). Strauss' point brings preliminary assumptions on imaginaries as a system of cultural knowledge or beliefs. This applied to Te Awa River Ride would locate the notion of imaginaries as place-cultural knowledge composed by various layers. I can link these preliminary assumptions with what Bergson calls virtual totalities, more specifically historical images, place-images, memory-images and so forth. In parallel, Strauss (2006) brings further insights into the imaginary:

> We need a way to talk about shared mental life: if culture is too redolent of Otherness, fixity, and homogeneity, then another term will have to be found. Ironically, however, the imaginary in the hands of some authors has taken on many of the same connotations of homogeneity as culture did. (p.322)

I agree with Strauss that the imaginary is often used to refer to a homogenised mental state in close proximity with culture. I am, however, unsure of how fixed these states are. To analyse this question, I propose a brief review of Stuart Hall's (1990) cultural identity models. Hall proposed two identity models focused on shared and individual cultural identity formation. My attempt here is to adapt this model to place identity formation, taking into consideration the cultural beliefs or place imaginaries and the subsequent processes of place-making. The first position focuses on core, fixed elements, referring to origins and traditions, whereas the second defines cultural identity as an ongoing series of transformations focused on the process of 'becoming' (Hall, 1990). On the first model, Hall analyses identity from its core and elemental positions. Within this view, he establishes a strategic and essentialist take, searching for reference points (Hall, 1990). Therefore, traditions and customs constitute the backbone for this model. They offer the individual a sense of reference and location. Identity is constructed from the recognition of common origins and shared characteristics within a specific group or person (Hall, 1996).

Hall's second model is informed by Derrida's theory of '*differance*', supporting the idea of identity being a construct produced through the interplay of differences. These points of difference constitute what we really are or have become (Hall, 1990). Therefore, ruptures and discontinuities are essential for the spark of a chain reaction towards identity construction. These ideas can be applied to place identity and the ways Te Awa River Ride has been constructed and perceived. Within Hall's first identity model, the core elements of Te Awa River Ride could be argued as the river and its original inhabitants. This re-positions Te Awa River Ride within its core collective elements, cultural beliefs and imaginaries. For instance, within Māori worldviews, time, narratives, landscape and ideologies are inseparable elements. Whakapapa (kin belonging across generations) and taonga (ancestral treasures) are the receptacles of Māori identity. These elements have the capability of promoting cultural identity consistency as well as place referencing throughout generations (Tapsell, 2011). In addition, place referencing and identity are also present in the ways Māori developed understandings of place. Each tribal area was demarcated according to the geographical features of the land such as mountains and rivers (King & Roa, 2015)

However, it may become problematic to pinpoint the core place layers of Te Awa River Ride. In this sense, it is useful to also look at the European histories of Te Awa River Ride as a possible way to trace alternative place layers (not origins). Hall's identity model offers a lens to magnify each place layer without claiming specific origins, but acknowledging the disruptions and place layer constructions. Tourism, for example, can be perceived as a possible place layer derived from a form of place disruption that originated from a new sphere of place perception.

These points are very stimulating to me as they form further place imaginaries. Time, narratives, landscape and ideologies are part of tangible and intangible forms of imaginaries. Taonga is also connected to place, so objects and perhaps the actual Waikato River are bearers of perceptual virtual totalities, place layers and imaginaries. I argue, therefore, that these views constitute a form of shared cultural knowledge or imaginaries from which I draw photographic coalescences with present place identities and representations.

Through the lens of Hall's second model of identity I can identify Te Awa River Ride as a place-becoming, full of sequenced ruptures, at times curated from an array of place models and ways of perceiving the land. At this intersection, Te Awa River Ride-place becomes an overwhelming unstable composite of images, practices, views, layers, snapshots, blind spots and virtual totalities. This is the rich terrain I creatively dive into in search of singular perceptions outside the clichéd and yet part of existent totalities.

To work with the imaginary is to work with crystallisations, not additions to the virtual. This is helpful to sustain my photographic practice as a practice of the 'real', not fantasised but at times crystalised and in search for actual images within the virtual totalities. This process generates novel ways of perceiving the world, triggering further place-perception processes. In addition, these points generate further interesting debates on contemporary photography strategies and artists' modes of visual representation. I propose, therefore, a brief introduction to Cristina de Middel's (2016) work, *The Afronauts*. I argue that de Middel's work is a valid example of photography that dives into crystallisations rather than fantasies or fiction. In the next chapter, I review a number of relevant artist models and modes of visual representation, including the work of de Middel. However, I discuss de Middel here because her methodology and modes of visual representation are useful to illustrate some of my theoretical ideas and subsequent photography practice. In 2012, de Middel reconstructed the story of a failed Zambian space programme from 1964. The work was conceived from true accounts; however, the artist's biggest challenge was to recreate the story, rebuilding what happened and documenting it (Laurent, 2013). This actualising process may be argued as crystallisations or coalescences where one dives into a regime of virtual images in search for actualities. The artistic process here is focused on playing with the virtual totalities, so again the work of the imaginary is the work of crystallisations and the possible becomings of these images.

Figure 23. *The Afronauts*, 2012. Source: Cristina de Middel, used with permission.

To further illuminate my conceptual framework of place imaginaries, I introduce philosopher Charles Taylor's (2002) work on social imaginaries. Taylor (2002) understands imaginaries as "the way ordinary people 'imagine' their social surroundings, and this is often not expressed in theoretical terms; it is carried in images, stories, and legends …" (p. 106). I am particularly interested in the way Taylor assigns the representation of imaginaries to images, stories and legends. I have discussed the story of the Waikato River, according to local Waikato Tainui accounts. I have also discussed the photographic work of Cristina de Middel. These are part of carried imaginaries, conveyed through images, stories and legends. These are also the work of coalesced totalities, and therefore not imaginaries per se, but collections of actualities. To illuminate my argument I return to Bergson (1911). To Bergson a psychological process is intrinsically connected with acts of subtraction and not projection (Bergson, 1911). So images, stories and legends are repositioned within the realm of the virtual and its totalities. So here Waikato Tainui legends and stories may represent the ways the

group or iwi in question disrupts the motor sensor mechanism to generate perceptions beyond what is considered the 'real' (here perceived by a 'normal' motor sensor mechanism). These 'new' perceptions are then brought into the regime of the actual images and therefore becoming part of this particular tribe's cultural values and beliefs.

French anthropologist and ethnographer Barbara Glowczewski has done extensive research work on Australian Aboriginal history. I am particularly interested in her research on Aboriginal creativity and how Glowczewski conceptualised the idea of dreams and imaginaries. I share this passage of Glowczewski's (2012) article titled *From academic heritage to Aboriginal priorities: Anthropological responsibilities*:

> I had translated two Warlpiri cosmological concepts in the following way: kankarlu, which means "above" and public, as "the actual'; and kanunju, which means underneath and secret, as the virtual: men and women have different roles in the constant transformation of virtual into actual and vice versa. The virtual secret realm needs to be actualised in ritual or through the birth of new children and the reproduction of any totemic species (Dreamings), while some aspects of the actual public realm return to the virtual at death, spirits waiting to be embodied again in people and things. This analysis allowed me to step away from the exclusive oppositions between real and imaginary, nature and culture, which too often reduces Indigenous people to nature and the notion of the Dreaming to a mythical time. The Dreaming is a space-time matrix with past, present and future potentials: its expressions (the Dreamings as totems) are embodied in places, people and other things but they need to be reactivated through emotions during some rituals, nostalgia in exile and the happiness experienced in return to place, sleeping in special places, and dream revelations of new images and sounds to nourish the rituals. (p. 8)

Glowczewski describes here how Aboriginal virtual totalities become actualised and how the analysis of this process helped her to move away from the dichotomy between real and imaginary. I find it interesting how she explains the embodiment of dreamings as place-totems. This prompts me to reflect on how the story of the Waikato River is embodied into Te Awa River Ride and the region as a whole. Glowczewski (2012) talks about Aboriginal paintings as enacted dreamings, ways Aborigines actualised the virtual. I ponder now on my white dog photograph (Figure 1), displayed earlier in this thesis, and if this image would be considered a totem, a form of virtual-becoming (into actual). I am notably focusing on artistic ways of virtual actualisation. Pā sites along Te Awa River Ride could be then

argued as totemic places, actualised in the form of carvings and spaces that equally need to be reactivated through traditional Waikato Tainui waiata or karakia. Within this scenario, I argue how much one can access or actualise by simply experiencing these places along Te Awa River Ride. Also, how photography becomes a tool of eventual actualisations within these spaces, the dynamic intersection between virtual, actual, photography and place-making.

Peter Whitridge (2004), in his article titled *Landscapes, houses, bodies, things: Place and the archaeology of Inuit imaginaries,* highlights the

> emergence of a landscape archaeology focused on practical, meaningful, and socio-political aspects of people's relationship to the natural and built environment, place has increasingly acquired a specialized sense opposed to space, as the local and the meaningful are opposed to the universal and the objective. (p. 213)

Whitridge focuses on the dichotomy between place and space illustrated through the analysis of "Inuit geographic knowledge practices" (Whitridge, 2004, p. 213). Whitridge brings an interesting discussion, tracing the concept of space, initially conceived through phenomenological geography. Space here is connected to the abstract, universal and spatially extended, whereas place refers to a historical, qualitative and experiential mode of being in the world informed by personal and collective significances (Whitridge, 2004). In addition, Whitridge (2004) conceptualises place imaginaries as

> sites of attachment of the real to a space of circulation of socially intangible significations, in which entities that are incommensurate with respect to their materialities-landscape, houses, bodies, things-freely exchange properties in the form of conceptual attributes and symbolic associations. (p. 240)

To me, it seems that Whitridge is referring to coalescences or sites of attachment between the 'real' and a collection of intangible significations. These ideas take me back to Te Awa River Ride and my effort to conceptualise it as a dynamic and overwhelming intersection of significations and materialities. These contrapuntal spaces offer me an exciting creative territory where photography can play the role of creating coalescences towards further processes of place-making. My photography practice here functions like a mediator of various perceptual spheres and the passing of specific significations into the material (perceptive) world. Feminist human geographer Doreen Massey (Massey, Allen, & Sarre, 2007) approaches space as place

> as the sphere of juxtaposition, or co-existence, of distinct narratives, as the product of power-filled social relations; it would be a view of space which tries to emphasize both its social construction and its necessarily power filled nature. Within this context, "places" may be imagined as particular articulations of these social relations, including local relations "within" the place and those many connections which stretch way beyond it. And all of these embedded in complex, layered histories. This is place as open, porous, hybrid ─ this is *place as meeting place*… (p.18)

I agree with Massey, particularly her point about place as open and hybrid. This is linked with Hall's (1990) second model of identity as an unfinished product, always in the process of becoming. Applied to place, the same pattern may persist, the idea of flux through ongoing processes of place-becomings. These place-becomings are hybridised forms of places or a kind of Te Awa River Ride. On this note, Whitridge (2004) concludes that "people do not move through an abstract biophysical matrix, but through meaningful cultural landscapes, within socially variable envelopes" (p. 243). He continues arguing that "landscapes are shaped by on-going histories of place-making, the hybrid conjoining of heterogeneous semantic fields ─imaginaries ─ with the material world" (p. 243). Clearly, the exchanges between space and place are mediated by imaginaries where virtual spaces can be coalesced (crystalised) with the actual places. In this sense, there is no space without place imaginaries. So this reinforces the importance of imaginaries as both part of place-making processes, and fertile territory for my photography practice.

The concept of place imaginaries is rich and multifaceted. I have demonstrated some of the definitions and applications of this term within the parameters of my theoretical framework and photography practice. My goal with this chapter was to outline the theoretical ideas behind my photography practice, linking a qualitative review of literature as possible framings for the advancement of my creative methodologies. I have also outlined the notions of contemporary photography practice, highlighting its previous and current theoretical underpinnings and how these ideas are connected to my photography practice. In addition, the opening up of possibilities around the term place imaginaries was useful to carve a theoretical frame that encompassed the various intersections between place, place imaginaries and my photography practice. I have stated at the beginning of this chapter that my approach to qualitative research and its theoretical underpinnings were complex systems, part of an overlapping research organism. These helped to

inform the multi modal nature of my photography practice and how it is influenced by qualitative and postmodern research approaches.

Figure 24. Te Awa River Ride, place-composite. Source: Rodrigo Hill 2017.

To finish this chapter, I offer the image above as a possible way to represent the various theoretical ideas that have been discussed. I relate to this image in a profound way. It feels like I am looking into the cone of memories through a screen inside my mind. I see a collection of images from which I curate memory-images. I am looking at this composite, trying to perceive it. Place is layered, background and foreground. My reflection appears amongst my memories; I am trying to see it. Someone is holding this space for me; the firm hand of a British fisherman from Whaingaroa supports this process. I then make a photograph.

Chapter Three
Photography Practice-Methodology

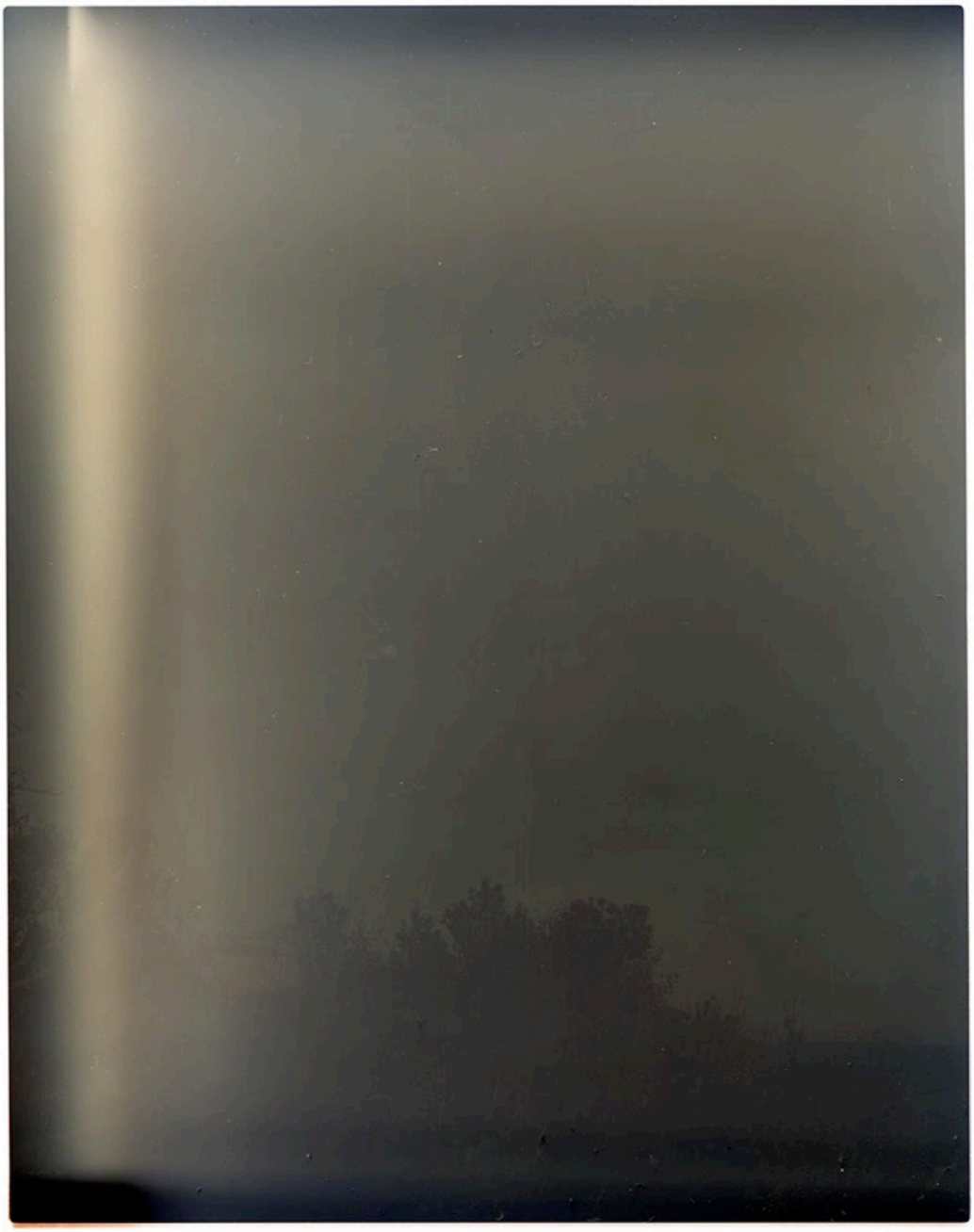


Figure 25. Dawn at the top of Hākarimata, Ngāruawāhia. Source: Rodrigo Hill 2018.

My alarm goes off — the clock reads 5:00am. When I wake up at this time in the morning to start my journey to Te Awa River Ride I think about the story of the servant from The River Which Ran Away *(Mataira, 1983). In this story, Taupiri was seriously ill, and she sent a servant to the lands of Tuwharetoa for help. The servant had a white dog as a companion and was directed to go south of the rising sun towards the mountain region of Tongariro. The white dog*

then led the way back for the healing waters of Tongariro to flow down to Taupiri. Through the course of my photographic work at Te Awa River Ride, I favoured the morning light for the construction of my photographs, thinking about the ways I could suggest the 'birth of place', as it was the healing waters of Tongariro, sent early one morning, that became the Waikato River.

At 5:00am I wake up and start my journey, heading eastwards from Whaingaroa towards the Waikato Valley. I arrive at the river; the sun has not risen yet. I wait. This is the moment when internal psychological processes arise, a form of concentration, 'plunge' into imaginaries, spaces to be coalesced photographically.

Introduction

In this chapter I discuss and critically analyse the various layers of my photography practice and the ways I amalgamate these into a complex methodological research system. I start with a brief contextualisation of my photography practice within broader academic creative research approaches. The relocation of my photography practice to fit wider artistic based forms of inquiry is useful to sustain my practice within cohesive academic research frameworks. The description of my specific creative methodology and sensory ethnography follow this section.

Contemporary photography practice has evolved into a field of possibilities, which include a flux of representational modes that depict experiences, feelings and emotions. My practice works within this flux, grounding my efforts towards a multimodal project of photographic representation of multiple place imaginaries connected to Te Awa River Ride and the Waikato River.

The multimodal aspect of my photography practice towards ways of representing place and place imaginaries opens up new possibilities for exploring place-making at Te Awa River Ride. The representational possibilities generated from my photography practice extend previously tested modes of representation common to objective documentary photography, visual anthropology and ethnography. I demonstrate below how my photography practice encompasses some selective sensory ethnography research approaches en route to a complete methodological

progression. I discuss both my creative and ethnographic components juxtaposing, and at times critiquing ethnographic research practices.

In addition, I outline my creative methodology of curation, sequencing and photo narrative production. These methods were fundamental to the development of my photography practice and subsequent modes of representing particular Te Awa River Ride and Waikato River place imaginaries. Curation, sequencing and photo narrative production comprise key methodological features through which conceptual ideas were conveyed. Through my photography practice I offer a counter approach to Eurocentric modes of representing place, validating multiple place imaginaries connected to Te Awa River Ride and The Waikato River. My photography practice had four significant research moments where I used curation and sequencing to construct creative milestones. Each creative milestone was configured to generate particular ways of engaging with Te Awa River Ride, encapsulating a number of creative strategies. The conceptual notions around place-making and place imaginaries imposed substantial creative constraints around the construction of compelling photographic representations (single and compiled images). I also necessarily discuss the limitations of the medium of photography to represent my conceptual frameworks, analysing the depth and breadth of the medium and its affordances.

Creative Practice Research: Photography

In this section I propose a link between my photography practice and creative practice research in general or research with arts-based components. My goal is to contextualise contemporary creative practice research within the possibilities of broader academic research approaches (Butt, 2017). Academic researchers Lesley Duxbury and Elizabeth Grieson (2008) argue that creative practice methods are

> in closer proximity with what it means to think through making and all that is involved in sustained forms of creative practice ― questioning, reviewing, reflecting, analysing, performing, speculating, relating, remembering, critiquing, constructing and ultimately further questioning. These are sustainable forms of scholarship and enquiry in the academy; they are ways of legitimating affective understandings and perceptions, ways of exposing not only aesthetic but also epistemological and ontological understandings. We are talking here about the process of creating in a way that reveals something more than self-perpetuation. It is

> a process of bringing forth awareness or appearances through the work of art. (p. 7)

In parallel, Patricia Leavy (2014), a creative practice activist, believes that "arts-based researchers are not "discovering" new research tools, they are *carving* them" (p. 3). Leavy proposes a relationship between *shape* and the forms of academic work, and how the form *shapes* the content. Leavy argues that arts-based researchers "see and build in different shapes" (p. 3). In this context, my photography practice at Te Awa River Ride is my attempt to *carve* a set of research methods, pursuing a methodological model that informs my research frameworks and products. In addition, I am aware of the necessity to shape a model that incorporates a range of elements from my photography practice. This model integrates the idea of imaginaries, the affordances of different kinds of photographic apparatuses, as well as my own aesthetic sensibilities to construct my images. This model consists of photography practice as a complex set of strategies. I use photography as a starting and ending point. I draw on a wide range of conventions in the medium en route to novel ways of knowledge construction. This is no straight route and it comes with no guide as I draw on multiple disciplines aiming to intersect ideas and methods into a dynamic methodological organism.

Photography Practice

My photography practice is the main research methodology informed by contemporary sensory ethnographic methods (Catanzaro, 2015; Lombard, 2013; Pink, 2011b, 2012, 2013, 2015; Russell & Diaz, 2013; Sonn, Quayle, & Kasat, 2015). The sensory ethnographic component involved participatory ethnographic methods including field notes/creative journaling, participant observations, photo voice and semi-structured interviews. Visual analysis of sources was a complementary method where I conducted an extensive online and archival visual analysis of photographs and photographic practices that were related to Te Awa River Ride and the Waikato River. Moreover, building upon my past visual research practices (Hill, 2013), I have explored and expanded the conventions of contemporary photography methods, aiming to create an artistically based narrative (Chevrier, 2006) on how photography is embedded in ways of knowing, experiencing and making places.

To reiterate, my multi-method qualitative approach consisted of two main phases, with some overlap between them:

Stage 1: Sensory ethnography (including field notes, creative journaling, participant observations, photo voice and semi-structured interviews). During this stage I have engaged with research participants in informal conversations and semi-structured interviews. A number of research participants from this stage were then selected to stage 2: Photography practice and collaborative portraits.

Stage 2: Photography practice (including collaborative portraits with participants selected from stage 1). My photography practice covered the construction of four bodies of photographic work formatted into creative milestones. The creative milestones were useful catalysts, helping to move the project forward in some way. Each milestone offered specific understandings of the potential to generate meaning from the curation and sequencing of imagery from my growing body of photographic work. Each creative milestone was developed from a specific curatorial platform surrounded by conventional curatorial uses and subsequent sequencing strategies. The iteration of the creative milestones generated useful outcomes and ways of understanding particular photographic compilations and possibilities around sequencing and curation.

My photography practice is framed by constructionist assumptions where I created photographic images that represented understandings of the views of participants and myself, as well as wider understandings of place and practices. These views and ways of understanding the Waikato River and Te Awa River Ride are located under wider collections of stories, histories, images, and practices. The many Te Awa River Ride place layers and the idea of place-composite have been conceptualised in chapter two, theoretical framework, as place imaginaries. It was not my goal, therefore, to create single objective photographs or offer a singular account of how photography was used towards place-making. Instead my interpretations and representations were interpreted from multiple views and ways of knowing and multiple truths. In the first chapter of this thesis, I have discussed both Māori and European views on the Waikato River. These were useful to my

photography practice as sources for historical place layers that were then re-worked through my photography practice.

In addition, I have engaged in informal conversations and semi-structured interviews with a number of participants from stage 1. These exchanges were part of my daily encounters with participants in the field; all originated by a form of self-inquiry added to experiential/sensorial fieldwork aspects (Read & Simmons, 2017). The encounters with participants offered me further insights into unique place-makings and place imaginaries at Te Awa River Ride. Participants' place imaginaries were catalysts for the construction of my photographs, as I will demonstrate later in this chapter. In this sense, it was not my main goal to give 'voice' to research participants or represent their views. But rather acknowledge their unique place-makings and place imaginaries as catalysts for my photography practice and creative developments. I have engaged with a wide range of participants and organisations connected to Te Awa River Ride and the Waikato River. These include the following organisations: Ngāruawāhia RSA History Group, Ngati Haua Mahi Trust, Tuwharetoa Māori Trust Board, Tūrangawaewae Marae, Brian Perry Charitable Trust and Te Awa River Ride Trust, Opus Archaeologists, Waikato Raupatu River Trust and River Riders Ngāruawāhia. The insights offered from each of these organisations as well as research participants' views and place imaginaries offered an indexical trace to aesthetic processes connected to the construction of my photographs. The final research product can then be seen through a postmodern lens, in the sense that it allows the viewer to re-create her/his own subjective meanings of the work and perhaps read the work as a construction rather than a seamless record of the real.

Below is an outline and description of my research design and qualitative methods. While I separate stage 1 and 2 here, it is important to note that my photography practice continued throughout stage 1, with an ongoing dialogue between sensory methods and my photography practice. Although I formally separate these two stages, I consider photography practice as the lead methodological system ─ at times informed by sensory ethnography. However, through the course of my research, I came to realise a developing tension between my artistic and ethnographic research methods. This tension evolved as I was searching for ways to express myself through the practice of photography and, at the same time,

moving away from the actual use of photography as a data-collecting tool. The differences from ethnographic and artistic methods became more evident when I started to group my photographs towards a form of curatorial product. In this sense, I aimed to create meanings and conclusions by curating and compiling my photographs into bodies of work that could be read and interpreted as final research products or creative milestones. This is in contrast to visual ethnography and broader ethnographic methods which are ultimately aimed at data collection and where photographs, for example, can be treated as single objective units of interpretation. As a result, I became more critical about ethnography and some of its implications on the creative process. In the next section I will outline some of the sensory ethnographic methods I have used as well as some critical discussion on these methods and their implications.

Stage 1: Sensory Ethnography

It is useful to start this section with the statement that I am not an ethnographer but an artist. However, I acknowledge the presence and use of ethnographic methods within my research approaches. I drew upon specific ethnographic methods, using them strategically to prompt my photography practice. Interestingly, some of the ethnographic methods I have utilised were part of an established set of methods already embedded into my photography practice. The practice of engaging in informal conversations with participants is a practice that I conducted early in my career as a documentary and portrait photographer. My collaborative approach to photographic portraiture, for example, implies a significant level of engagement and rapport with participants. Engagement with participants was developed from purposeful field approach-encounters framed by my photography practice and conceptual frameworks. I have engaged with a high number of participants, ranging from 80 to 100 individuals. Research participants' demographics covered a diverse range of international and New Zealand wide Te Awa River Ride users, local Waikato residents (including residents mowing their lawns, walking their dogs or fishing in the Waikato River as well as runners, cyclists and walkers from the region and international visitors) and tangata whenua. My engagements with research participants consisted of informal conversations that were at times followed by participatory research actions such as photo voice and collaborative photographic portraits (appendix 5). On some

occasions informal conversations with participants were followed up by further encounters where I was invited to participants' homes. Within this scenario, the ethnographic methods of participant observation and informal field conversations offered me a useful framework to help catalyse my photography practice. The ethnographic stage of my research was therefore a useful starting point where methods were implemented and reconfigured to my photography practice.

Sensory ethnography is a contemporary form of ethnography, an expansion of former classic ethnographic methods common to anthropology (Pink, 2015). Classic ethnographic research is best described by three main methods: researcher participation in daily life activities, participant observation and interviews (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995). These methods constitute the foundation of my ethnographic approach. However, I argue that a re-configuration of these methods with emphasis on sensory perception and emplacement (Pink, 2015) is useful to understand and represent subjective processes of place-making and the photographic practices involved in these engagements. David Howes (2005) presents an interesting view in regard to the sensorial turn in academic practices:

> …scholars might have felt a shift from library to "open air research" required a corresponding shift in their investigative approach, the assurance from semioticians such as Barthes (1980) and Ricoeur (1970) that the world (and action in the word) was itself a "text" has enabled legions of scholars to comfortably go right on "reading" even when the book was replaced by a meal, a dance, or a whole way of life. (p. 1)

Howes' (2005) point helps lay the possible foundations for contemporary ethnographic research models. The idea of the world and practices as 'texts' is in itself very liberating and it opens up new layers of research methods and areas of investigation.

Building on a range of different contemporary scholars (Howes, 2005; Nakamura, 2013; Pink, 2015; Pink, Hubbard, O'Neill, & Radley, 2010; Stevenson, 2014; Warren, 2012) I have expanded conventional ethnographic approaches by combining sensory ethnography and my photography practice as part of a multilayered project of qualitative research. My sensory ethnography fieldwork consisted of cycling/walking around Te Awa River Ride, immersing myself in daily events, taking notes and photographs, observing participants, listening and engaging with individuals in possible informal (cycling/walking) conversational

interviews. I have also engaged in prolonged water observations of the Waikato River. These research practices informed my own embodiment and emplacement at Te Awa River Ride and subsequently the creation of visual perceptions that led to a collection of sensorial based photographic constructions of my experiences and processes of place-making at Te Awa River Ride.

On the other hand, Tim Ingold (2014) critiques the predictability of some ethnographic methods, explaining that

> …to attribute "ethnographicness" to encounters with those among whom we carry on our research, or more generally to field work, is to undermine both the ontological commitment and the educational purpose of anthropology as a discipline, and of its principal way of working-namely participant observation. (p. 383)

I agree with Ingold, the ethnographic component, when applied to encounters in the field, functions as a framing structure that undeniably will delineate any field research activities. Artistically-based research projects, on the other hand, rely on degrees of unpredictability and the idea of expression and conceptual (visual) representation to generate outcomes. The ethnographic fieldwork then becomes so predictable in the sense that the researcher almost already knows how many people he or she will encounter and what will happen once encounters unfold. As my photography practice evolved, I tended to move away from predictability and rigorous ethnographic data collection regimes in order to carve my own set of methods and research approaches. Ingold (2014) points out that the 'ethnographicness' within the discipline of anthropology actually happens after encounters in the field and becomes tangible through the literal act of writing about people. Within this scenario my photography practice at Te Awa River Ride becomes more fluid, less predictable and more reliant on the natural flow of encounters, focusing on visual, sonic, kinaesthetic and other sensorial possibilities of doing research (Law & Urry, 2004). My creative photographic methodologies are then liberated from ethnography, advancing into a territory where artistic expression prevails through a project of loose but purposeful field approach-encounters.

In this sense, the actual practical component, the fieldwork, can be claimed as ethnographic; however, I prefer to refer to it as photography practice in the general and photographic sense. The nature of participant encounters was

purposeful and aimed at the construction of visual representations and/or understandings of how photographic mediation, imagery and place imaginaries are used to create place-making. These encounters were crucial to my photography practice, catalysing further research explorations. These encounters are not regarded as pure 'ethnographic data' collection actions but keys to 'mental images and image-objects' (Derrida & Stiegler, 2002) that informed my creative research approaches. These encounters were, in summary, part of a powerful life flux that one cannot master but simply surrender to a flow of movements that may be guided by what we call research boundaries. Secondly came my own interpretations of place and subsequent place-making processes at Te Awa River Ride. These engagements originated from my personal sensorial exchanges with my research locale. Both of these research processes were fundamental for the construction of photographic representations. These representations are gathered visual fragments, units or 'cuts' (Kember & Zylinska, 2012) from the field of life, or as Deleuze and Guattari (1994) theorise "a matter of articulation, of cutting and cross-cutting" (p. 16).

Visual Analysis of Sources

Figure 26 Heaphy, Charles, 1820-1881. [Heaphy, Charles] 1820-1881:Naval attack at Rangiriri [1863]. Ref: A-145-004. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand. /records/22571035.

Visual analysis of relevant visual or digital photographic representations has been conducted. The analysis covered archival images, paintings, maps, architectural designs, websites, blogs, online discussions as well as video and photography sharing websites related to the Te Awa River Ride space. In this regard I am following Sarah Pink's argument that "fundamental to understanding the significance of visual and digital media and the practices associated with them in ethnographic work is a reflexive appreciation of how such elements combine to produce visual meanings and ethnographic knowledge" (p 47).

This analysis informed my photography practice and the actual construction of photographic images at Te Awa River Ride. Within ethnographic research frameworks the expected research action upon *data* encounter is the correspondent academic analysis, framing and findings. My research approach, however, consisted of a process of thinking of the visual analysis of relevant sources through the making of my photographs. Analysis and findings were therefore merged into a creative process of thinking through practice (Duxbury et al., 2008). The figures below illustrate my creative thinking through my photography practice and how I used photography to actualise particular place imaginaries at Te Awa River Ride. Figure 26 depicts an illustration of a war trench battle scene at Rangiriri in 1863. The invasion of Rangiriri, a strategic town located north of Ngāruawāhia, was part of a series of British assaults on the northern areas of the Waikato (Belich, 1986). The town of Rangiriri is not located within my research territory nor is it related to Te Awa River Ride directly. However, this illustration is part of a collection of images, practices and discourses particular to the ways European societies imagined the Waikato in the 1860s. This illustration came to my attention while reviewing historic imagery on the Waikato region.

Figure 27 depicts a war trench located at Lake Karapiro, near the town of Cambridge, southern section of Te Awa River Ride. The replica trench has been constructed within the Lake Karapiro area and very close to Te Awa River Ride's concrete pathway. So technically this replica trench is part of the broader Te Awa River Ride area, and it actualises, in my opinion, the turbulent historical past of this region. As I mentioned earlier, some of the analysed archival imagery became key sources for my photography practice and the construction of particular

photographs. Similarly to the engagements I had with research participants, the analysis of archival images also became crucial forms of place imaginaries to my photography practice and subsequent construction of my own versions of these exchanges.

Figure 27. Replica Trench Project, Lake Karapiro-Cambridge. Source: Rodrigo Hill, 2018.

The visual analysis of sources is a present and persistent habit in my photography practice where I am constantly searching and researching visual sources related to a particular theme. The visual sources can be broad in terms of references and, in my case, they ranged from other photographers works (as part of a visual review of relevant models) to digital archives and research participants' photographic archives. This analysis of visual sources can be positioned within broader research schemes and current photographic practices. Authors Shirley Read and Mark Simmons (2017) explore the nature of the creative process, focusing on the role of research within photographic projects. The authors point out that "research

materials can be drawn from many sources including specialist archives of all kinds" (Read & Simmons, 2017, p. xi).

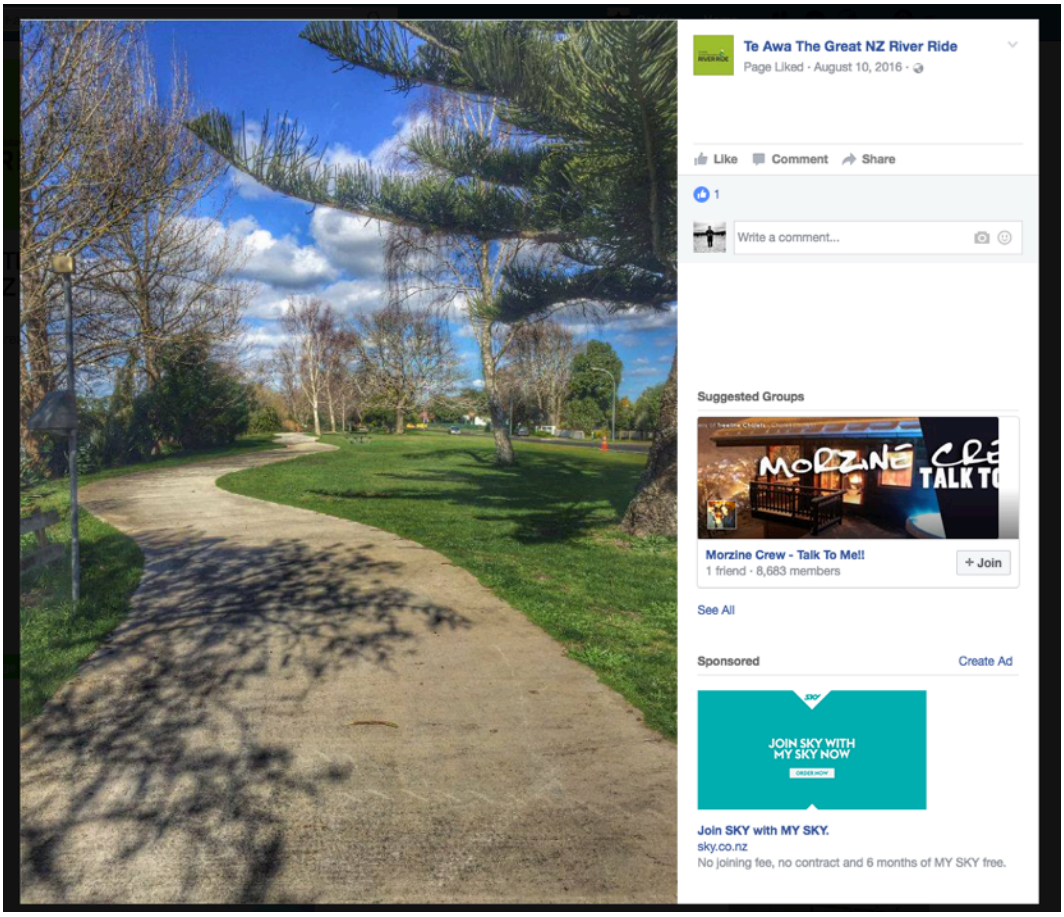


Figure 28. Te Awa River Ride. Ngāruawāhia section. Source: Te Awa River Ride Instagram, used with permission

I also have an Instagram account where I post images captured on my mobile phone. My Instagram practice works like a diary where I note particular visuals, all part of an ongoing project or habit of looking at photographs. For example, I have followed Te Awa River Ride's Instagram page and by looking at the posted images I could have a sense of particular aspects of the landscape/River Ride at a particular time of the year. The image above is from Te Awa River Ride's Instagram page. This image was posted on the 10th of August 2016, and I remember looking at this depiction and thinking of ways I could photograph this particular section of the ride located in Ngāruawāhia. In this sense, the ongoing analysis of multiple visual sources was useful to inform particular aspects of the landscape, light and ways of photographing Te Awa River Ride. Thus, I was partly responding to the circulation of Instagram and other banal photographs shared and distributed online.

Photo Voice

The research method photo voice (appendix 5.2) played a significant role throughout the initial stages of my creative fieldwork at Te Awa River Ride. Through the use of this participatory research method I was able to access participants' place imaginaries and their photographic practices related to place-making. Participants' photographs and interviews offered me additional points to construct my photographs on. In addition, I have used photo voice as a route to access participants' perceptual processes, geographical knowledge and photographic place-making developments at Te Awa River Ride. Similarly to the analysis of relevant visual sources, the ability to analyse and hear about participants' photography practice was useful to my practice and subsequent construction of my photographs. It is important to highlight that my uses of photo voice was not aimed at the generation of content to be analysed towards findings and conclusions. In this sense, my uses of photo voice did not follow conventional academic research agendas and broader ways of utilizing such qualitative research method.

Photo voice is a contemporary research method under the umbrella of wider participatory action research methodologies and generally used by researchers working in oppressed and underprivileged communities (Corbett, Francis, & Chapman, 2007). Photo voice consists of photography that is done by research participants and is framed by three theoretical understandings (Wang & Redwood-Jones, 2001). The first is based on Brasilian scholar Paulo Freire and his views on critical education. Freire argued that individuals are capable of critically looking at the world around them, and photography or visual images are tools that enable individuals to perceive their social reality (Freire, 1993). The second position is based on feminist theory and the suggestion that "empowerment is realized as the researcher and the participants join together to illuminate power inequalities and to explore the power imbalances. Through this process participants find their voice and engage fully in the research process" (Corbett et al., 2007, p. 86). Lastly, I emphasise the community aspect and setting of the photo voice enterprise (Wang & Redwood-Jones, 2001). In her research in urban informal settings in Mexico, Melanie Lombard (2013) used photo voice as the main methodological approach to access alternative forms of geographical knowledge as well as to give voice to

individuals from communities with a shared background of hardship and oppression. In a similar way, I used photo voice as a community oriented project with the goal of giving freedom to individuals to create their own interpretations of place at Te Awa River Ride.

I recruited seven participants from stage one (sensory ethnography) to engage in a photo voice exercise followed by a semi-structured interview. Participants were briefed to collect images of Te Awa River Ride and use their own camera equipment (cell phone and/or digital camera). It is crucial to highlight that this process was followed up by semi-structured interviews where I enquired about participants' interpretations and meanings from their own images. According to Lombard (2013), "the follow up interview is critical, in order for the photographer to reflect on why the images were produced" (p. 29). I am particularly interested in alternative routes to knowledge construction that place participants as engaged actors, allowing me to access specific nuances of place perceptions and imaginaries. In addition, researchers studying everyday geographies of specific groups have used photo voice as an alternative to verbal communication and as a route to explore participants' visual observations of place (Lombard 2013). According to Boulding, "place meaning is socially structured and closely associated with image, a mental picture that is the product of experiences, attitudes, memories and immediate sensations" (cited in Relph 1976, p. 56). Photography then becomes a powerful tool to mediate individuals' interpretations and meanings providing valuable insights into particular processes of place-making at Te Awa River Ride (Sonn et al., 2015).

Essentially, the photo voice exercises I conducted were useful to help me gain a broader visual sense of Te Awa River Ride and the multiple readings and meanings individuals unpacked from distinctive images during the follow-up interviews. This approach allowed me to access participants' alternative narratives of place and place imaginaries as well as its underpinning feelings and emotions. The images produced by research participants were also useful as prompts for the construction of my own photographs, a sampling of the range of alternative interpretations of place that emerged through my own photographic practice. The interviews were equally useful in the sense that I could access particular narratives of place and the role of photography in place-making. These shared narratives,

both photographic and oral, within my research frameworks were considered part of a collection of imaginaries on Te Awa River Ride and the Waikato region. Some research participants, for example, presented me photographs of the Waikato River followed by oral narratives on the river and its aura of mystery. Ambiguity and mystery then became important underpinnings for the construction of my photographs as they were reinforced by many of my research participants' oral accounts or imaginaries on Te Awa River Ride and the Waikato region.

Figure 29 depicts trees by the Waikato River in Ngāruawāhia. A photo voice participant and Ngāruawāhia resident, Andrew Fraser, made this photograph. The trees depicted are part of the present ecology of the Waikato River and indicates the introduction of a number of plant species such as pines and willows. Waikato Valley's ecology endured periods of substantial transformation, mostly influenced by colonialism and European settler landscaping practices (Pawson & Brooking, 2015; Peden & Holland, 2015). Colonial landscaping practices were ultimately connected to farming and the idea of 'progress' by subjugation of local Māori societies and ecologies. The present ecology of the Waikato River and Valley is very different from what it used to be. Wiremu Puke (2011) describes Waikato Valley's pre-European ecologies:

> The region was generally flat to gently rolling country divided by a number of gully systems. There were areas of peat and swamp, interspersed with forests of Kahikatea, Tawa, Hinau, Totara and Miro trees. Manuka, Toetoe, flax, raupo, Wiwi (native grass), ferns, Maire and Manawa grew in the swamps themselves, with stands of Nikau around the margins. Kanuka and ferns grew in the gully systems with kanuka and Kowhai on the river banks. (p. 3)

The tree formations from willows by the Waikato River and its banks were the most fascinating and intriguing to me. Tree branches and whole tree trunks' contorting shapes seemed to be surrounded by a historical aura of mystery. The tree's shapes and patterns offered eloquent visual motifs that I worked through my photographs. Trees that are bending to the weight of time and history, a symbolic act of surrender, yet firmly attached to the roots from a land that never neglected sustenance. Figure 30 depicts one of my photographs from *South of the Rising Sun*. I have constructed this image during a dusky full moon autumn night in Ngāruawāhia.

Figure 29. Waikato River, Ngāruawāhia. Photograph by photo voice participant Andrew. Source: Andrew Fraser, used with permission.

Figure 30. Waikato River, Ngāruawāhia. Source: Rodrigo Hill 2018.

Figure 29 presented useful referential points and some visual motifs to build on such as riverbank tree branches and formations, the Waikato River and the water or sky as metaphors for the river. These motifs are place-making ecological elements particular to the Waikato River and Te Awa River Ride's present landscape. In addition, these motifs may be considered part of an imagined

geography particular to some European regions and introduced in Aotearoa as part of a process of colonisation and place-making (Pawson & Brooking, 2015).

The analysis of photo voice photographs and interviews illustrates one of my creative strategies and the ways photo voice outcomes informed my creative thinking and photography practice. At this point, the process of ethnographic data analysis was extended into a project of artistic expression. The following section will cover discussions around key aspects of my photography practice, demonstrating my creative strategies and ways I have constructed some of my photographs and subsequent creative milestones.

Stage 2: Photography Practice

Figure 31. 4x5 film camera on tripod. Waikato River, Ngāruawāhia. Source: Rodrigo Hill 2018.

Photography practice or lens-based research practice is located at the core of my project, a space which feeds both theoretical and creative research approaches. This is the crucial moment when I try to align theoretical frameworks with photographic image construction processes and subsequent curation, sequencing, compilation and presentation of images. This section aims to connect my photography practice with descriptions of my methods and broader photographic methodologies and creative milestones. The stepping through of the creative milestones is intended to allow an understanding of my research methods and how these methods work together as part of a creative methodological research system. I explain and unpack my four creative milestones as well as their theoretical underpinnings and methodology.

The photography practice component of this PhD research covered the construction of a body of photographic work aiming to represent the ways photographic practices and technologies are embedded within the ways we perceive place and create place-making. My photography practice is primarily informed by contemporary photography methods where I explore the possibilities of a range of modes of photographic representation such as documentary, portraiture, landscape and fine art photography. Part of my practice included taking portraits of individuals at Te Awa River Ride. With these photographic portraits I aimed to represent participants' place imaginaries and my own sensorial embodied experiences at Te Awa River Ride and how identities are constructed, reflected and layered from these processes. Photography cannot escape from its own index and the idea of 'evidence' is attached to this process. The index will always point to some form of evidential source of 'reality' that will reference the images within a particular (historical) discourse. This referential system will offer a stable foundation for the subsequent process of images as constructions of reality. The idea of index marks a useful starting point to both the construction and interpretation of my photographs. The indexical traces embedded into my photographs also mark points through which I push against the very notion of 'reality' and subsequent multitude of interpretations and meaning-making constructions derived from particular photographs.

The photograph below (Figure 32) helps illuminate these points further. Undeniably, there is a person standing by the Waikato River in the below

photograph. The indexical trace is therefore present and connected to this fact. The same indexical trace can be used to trigger assumptions connected to the veracity of the subject's actions and if this was posed and composed or was in fact a 'real' scene that happened. It was indeed collaboratively posed and composed and yet it 'happened'. The ambiguous way the subject is standing added to the overall aesthetics of the image mark points of disturbance where alternative meanings can be constructed, and yet this scene 'happened'. My photography practice at Te Awa River Ride unfolded through three main movements: photographic production, curation and compilation/photo narrative production. So curation here encompasses the editing of the images and subsequently a complete selection process that leads to a final displayed collection.

Figure 32. Collaborative portrait by the Waikato River. Source: Rodrigo Hill 2018

The editing of images unfolds as a complete process of image selection informed by conceptual, technical and aesthetic research parameters. I start discussing my photographic production and methods, and this will be followed by curation and sequencing as methods that travel through most of my (creative) research processes, including writing (and the writing of this thesis).

Photographic Production

In this section I unpack particular aspects of my photographic production at Te Awa River Ride. Detailed background information on the ways I have constructed particular images is also present throughout this chapter and following creative milestone chapters. My goal here is to provide an overview of my methods and camera apparatuses used during my creative fieldwork. As a crucial starting point, I highlight the use of multiple photographic apparatuses such as digital cameras and film cameras in multiple formats (35mm, 120mm and 4x5). In addition, I highlight the collaborative aspect of my portrait photography practice added to the idea of photographs as constructions. This is connected to my qualitative approach to research and the ways I understand photographic practices and images as sources for the construction of multiple meanings.

My first visit to Te Awa River Ride occurred in November 2015. At this stage of my project I was working on my research proposal. I walked or cycled Te Awa River Ride for at least four hours once or twice a week during the first six months of my research. During this time, I was pending on my ethics application and approval to approach and photograph research participants. The photography component followed this stage and my first photography-focused creative fieldwork trip to Te Awa River Ride occurred in May 2016. From this period onwards, I made consistent creative fieldwork trips to Te Awa River Ride, at least three times every week for six hours each time. I worked with the seasons of the year and available light, focusing on the early morning light. During my creative fieldwork for *Let Light Create Imaginary Spaces* I changed my strategies and focused on the mid-day hours and light with more contrast, luminance and brightness[9]. The estimated number of hours I have spent at Te Awa River Ride covered a range of activities such as cycling, walking, driving to strategic locations, scouting further locations and spending time at key locations as well as making trial and targeted photographs. There were periods of intense creative fieldwork followed by periods of intense studio work as well as writing of thesis chapters and reviewing of literature. I also spent a number of months in my home

[9] I discuss my creative choices and strategies for *Let Light Create Imaginary Spaces* in chapter four. I chose to photograph during the mid-day sun to achieve more contrast and strong highlights. This strategy was connected to my approach to black and white film photography and my film processing techniques.

country of Brasil. This period worked as a self-imposed set of time constraints where I worked on the editing and curation of compilations from my growing body of photographs. My creative fieldwork comprised periods of intense photographic production that became increasingly targeted as the project progressed forward. Overall my estimate covers the minimum of two thousand hours spent at Te Awa River Ride from May 2016 to August 2018.

The initial stage 1 of my creative fieldwork consisted of strategic use of ethnographic visual study of Te Awa River Ride. This approach was framed by sensory ethnography (Pink, 2008b, 2015; Stevenson, 2014; Warren, 2012) and the use of photographic technologies to generate place understandings and making (Lehmuskallio, 2016; Pink, Kürti, & Afonso, 2004; Sonn et al., 2015). In addition, throughout this early stage, I located and studied particular locations that later became strategic to my photography practice. The act of making trial referential photographs is connected to the idea of research within photography-based projects (Read & Simmons, 2017). My ethnographic methods of walking, cycling and making photographs had a significant intuitive aspect of gathering of perceptual elements. Psychoanalyst and writer Christopher Bollas (2011) talks about intuition as "a sense we have of where to look, what to look at and how to look at" (p. 71). Bollas structures intuition and perhaps creative thinking through initial generation of undeveloped ideas and trials that progress into what one feels or considers correct. This process allows the creative practitioner, for example, to develop a specific and enhanced perception on a particular theme (Bollas, 2011).

Figure 33 depicts three photographs from the top of Pukete pā in Kirikiriroa, northern city section of Te Awa River Ride. Pukete pā is one of the most significant pā sites within Kirikiriroa and was initially a fortified pā strategically located on a bend of the Waikato River (Hamilton City Council & Nga Mana Toopu O Kirikiriroa Limited, 2003). Ngati Koura and Ngati Ngamurikaitaua were the original habitants, local hapu, of this area (Hamilton City Council & Nga Mana Toopu O Kirikiriroa Limited, 2003; Puke, 2011). The pā has commanding views of the Waikato River both looking south and northwards. The views and strategic geographical positioning are therefore crucial place-making elements and subsequent visual motifs that I have explored. Figure 33 depicts three different photographs produced in different times of the year. The first photograph (top left

corner) dates back to February 2017 and it was part of my trial digital photographic studies of Te Awa River Ride. This first photograph is underpinned by intersecting frameworks of ethnography, photography practice and intuitive creative processes. This first photograph was nonetheless crucial to my photography practice and creative processes. It supported both personal visual understanding of Te Awa River Ride and my creative developments towards the construction of future key photographs. The second photograph (top right corner) was made in August 2017 on my mobile phone while I was re-visiting the site and taking further notes. The last photograph (bigger photograph) was made in May 2018 and I used my 4x5 film camera.

Figure 33. Pukete pā, Kirikiriroa. Source: Rodrigo Hill 2018.

The two primary images were part of a fluid and intuitive process of rendering photographic responses to my experiences at Te Awa River Ride. This stage was followed by a more intensive process of image construction through the revising of key locations and photographs all informed by theoretical and methodological frameworks. The use of the 4x5 film camera represents the culmination of these ideas, as it required a more thoughtful and careful constructive process where I tried to align aesthetic and conceptual elements. The construction aspect of my photography practice happened within and through the making of all three images as part of an assemblage that culminates with the final image. The term final is a reference to the last photograph created and it does not involve the construction of an absolute representation of a theme. Yet this last or final photograph was considered a successful representation and consequently moved on to the curatorial stage of my practice. The other two photographs also played important roles within this process and could have been chosen as final representations for that particular theme.

Formal and conceptual aspects of the final photograph were elaborated and articulated through the stepping through of all photographs. My choice for the 4x5 film camera for the last image was based on its operational approach and formal qualities underpinned by the ideas of place imaginaries and making. In this sense, I was interested in both the camera apparatus and the way it influenced my way of seeing added to the careful consideration of formal photographic aspects such as composition and light. These formal aspects, underpinned by theoretical concepts, added to my intentions as an artist looking for means of expression. Each camera apparatus that I used offered a particular kind of affordance and ways of rendering light. During the final curation for *South of the Rising Sun,* I focused on the selection of particular photographs with particular formal qualities and contents. I was interested in the morning light, for example, and the top two photographs from Figure 33 did not have that particular quality that I was after, so the actual making and selection of the final photograph became a more purposeful act influenced by intuitive creative processes. These developments can also be repositioned to my habitual creative processes of purposeful iteration of trial and error, sifting through possibilities in my photography practice and image construction strategies.

As an example I share the work of photographer Patricia Townsend (2016) and her project titled *Under the Skin.* Townsend's project explored psychological feelings and emotions connected to the artist's experiences at the sand banks of Morecambe Bay, North West Coast of England. Part of Townsend's practice and creative processes required a degree of experimentation and trailing, in her words:

> …to find the images that seemed to fit, but I did not yet know what the fitting might be. That is, I did not have a clear sense of what images I needed but I knew that if I began to make and look at photographs of the sands they would start to visually articulate my ideas in a way that simply trying to think through alternative approaches would not do. (p. 206)

So building on Townsend's approach and thinking through making processes I have created visual progressions of particular motifs, as exemplified in Figure 33 towards a final constructed photograph. Final photographs underwent a process of curation, which involved the editing and subsequent sequencing and displaying of selected photographs. The iteration of my visual progressions and initial acts of curation highlighted particular possibilities that I then explored in more focused, targeted ways of image construction. The main photograph from Figure 33 was not selected for the final collection for *South of the Rising Sun*. Yet this photograph successfully aligned key motifs such as the Waikato River, the morning light and tree branches as well as my personal psychological place-making developments and responses to the area.

Figure 34 shows a montage of three photographs. The images are part of my portrait photography practice at Te Awa River Ride. The conceptual and technical unpacking of these three photographs is a useful route to my photography practice and how I collaborated with research participants during my creative fieldwork. These three photographs show a progression of my methods and also reveal my researcher-photographer self in the process. By assembling these three photographs I am revealing my photographic gestures or the photographic actions and the ways I manipulated and constructed the photographs. This is connected to the photographic practice of making a contact sheet that displays all photographs made within a roll of film. Similar to contact sheets, the montage from Figure 34 reveals my processes and gestures. These three images are part of a ten-exposure 120mm film roll shot with a Mamyia RZ 6x7. The montage from Figure 34 reveals how I constructed particular photographs, going from one position to

another. Each position reveals the place where I was standing as well as the place depicted in the photographs as a form of place imaginaries.

Gesture, therefore, is an intrinsic aspect of photographing, and my goal is to discuss my photography practice, critically examining my actions and the ways I have manipulated and constructed the photographs from Figure 34. Philosopher, writer and journalist Vilém Flusser (2011), in his article *The Gesture of Photographing,* examines the idea of gesture within photography practices, dividing it into three aspects:

> A first aspect is the search for a place, a position from which to observe the situation. A second aspect is the manipulating of the situation, adapting it to the chosen position. The third aspect concerns critical distance that makes it possible to see the success or failure of this adaptation. Obviously there is a fourth aspect: the release of the shutter. But this process lies in some sense outside the actual gesture, for it proceeds mechanically. (p. 286)

Flusser argues that these aspects are crucial to the gesture of photographing which involves the act of photographing and the gestures involved. The first aspect is related to place and in the case of my photography practice and gestures utilised, my chosen place is Te Awa River Ride. This is an obvious assumption and does not directly determine the second aspect, the manipulating of the situation (Flusser, 2011). So using Flusser's model on the gesture of photographing, I propose an analysis of the photographs from Figure 34. The critical analysis of these images is useful to facilitate a process of reflexivity on my gestures and photography practice actions at Te Awa River Ride.

I met Lawrence (participant's real name, appendix 5.3) during one of my field trips to Te Awa River Ride. This dates back to the summer of 2017 when I was working on my second creative milestone *Let Light Create Imaginary Spaces*. At this stage I was focusing my photographic production and practice on black and white film photography, using two different cameras, a Mamyia 120mm and a Leica 35mm. Lawrence works as a senior planner for the Hamilton City Council and he was surveying a particular area by the Waikato River. He had a flat board, pen and a small point and shoot digital camera. As I cycled past him I noticed he was making some photographs of the river, pointing his camera to the eastern banks, across the Waikato River. This immediately caught my attention, and I

decided to go back and introduce myself. I approached him and explained my project and that I was intrigued by his gestures and actions both with the camera and flat board. Lawrence then explained that he was there working and doing some preliminary assessment/planning of an area around the Waikato River. So, in a sense, Lawrence is a professional place-maker and this conclusion came to me very early during our conversation. As a result, I asked him to collaborate on a photography portrait. He promptly agreed and from this point on my gestures of photographing became more evident. From the moment he agreed to be photographed to the final photograph I made of him, fifteen to twenty minutes elapsed. From the moment he agreed to be photographed Flusser's second aspect of the gesture of photographing became evident. This, according to Flusser (2011), is "the manipulation of the situation under consideration" (p. 287). The series of images from Figure 34 depicts the ways I manipulated the situation, working collaboratively with my research participant. From the moment he agreed I had to think really fast about possible visual solutions to bring into light key research concepts such as place imaginaries and place-making (emerging concepts at this stage of my research timeline).

I then asked Lawrence to climb up a set of steps so I could try a photograph from a lower angle, suggesting the idea of 'looking away' as part of place-making. I made the photograph and moved on to the next gesture. I usually move around my subjects, looking for a position from which to photograph. Position is crucial to the construction of the photograph and, as Flusser (2011) points out, "it is the manipulation that governs the search for the position" (p. 287). I kept moving around the subject and manipulating the scene as the third aspect of the gesture of photographing arose as a form of critical evaluation of my positioning and adaptation of the situation (Flusser, 2011). I realised that my first photograph had the potential of failure and this instigated a perpetuation of my gestures into the next photograph, a full body composition. So I asked Lawrence to stand in the middle of the concrete path to try a different photograph. I moved around and found my position. It is important to note that the equipment I used makes me check and control every formal aspect of photography, such as light and exposure, for example. At this point of my photography gestures and actions I am intensively thinking about the light, exposure, composition and other aspects, trying to align these with my conceptual ideas. I used an external flash to give

more detail on the foreground, creating contrast and mood as the light under the trees of the concrete path can at times be dull and flat. The close-up photograph from Figure 34 was part of my third positioning. This photograph exists because of my self-criticism and a methodology of doubt that drives the photographer from one positioning to another (Flusser 2011). This doubt is then clarified through the process of editing and curating of photographs where particular images gain specific roles and assertion towards a specific assemblage, all part of a specific context. The term doubt in the context of the gesture of photographing is not connected to purpose or the photographer's goals towards a particular situation. Flusser (2011) explains that

> the gesture of photographing is a movement in search of a position that reveals both an internal and an external tension driving the search forward: this gesture is the movement of doubt. To observe the photographer's gesture with this in mind is to watch the unfolding of methodical doubt. (p. 288)

Figure 34. Lawrence at Te Awa River Ride. Source: Rodrigo Hill 2017.

My goal when I approached Lawrence was to construct a particular photograph, inviting certain arrangements and poses. I then tried a number of gestures and different poses before releasing the camera's shutter and making a photograph. I briefly invited Lawrence to hold his digital camera closer to his face to add the idea of photography into place-making. But I quickly doubted and thought this would have been overly descriptive rather than suggestive, so I moved on to the next gesture. Flusser, when examining doubt, points out the play of dialectics "first between goal and situation and then among the various perspectives on the situation" (p. 287). Therefore, within this scenario, I can say that I set out to photograph Lawrence and his point and shoot digital camera, pen and flat board. Yet this situation is then gestured and manipulated into three different forms including a close-up portrait of Lawrence looking away. The close-up brings additional expansions, it reveals reflections on Lawrence's prescription glasses, reflecting place and bringing place into the making eyes of the subject.

It is possible, however, to make a single photograph where the photographer, after careful self-criticism, declares the photograph in question successful. This is a problematic decision as successful photographs may be bound by certain conventions and analysed in the light of these conventions without necessarily reflecting key conceptual ideas. So a 'good' photograph may not necessarily be a 'keeper' and, in this instance, I rather remain in a state of 'intuitive-doubt' when making my photographs. Doubt and positioning are, therefore, overlapping and mutually connected elements within my photography practice, including portraiture, and the obsessive search for positioning. This stage was followed by more explicit consideration of the possibilities of meanings within particular compilations. Consequently, my curatorial processes became more targeted to particular photographs connected to specific meaning-making possibilities within particular compilations. Within this scenario, juxtaposition and sequencing became strategic methods of meaning to create more openness and interpretation for any individual photograph.

The exchanges I had with Lawrence while photographing him are part of a dialogue, "a complex mesh of actions and reactions" (Flusser, 2011, p. 287) all, at times, triggered by my manipulating gestures and actions. Postmodern theories offer a useful lens to analyse my approach to portrait photography and the idea of

manipulation of a scene. On this note, writer Michael Köhler (1989a) points out that

> the "Post-Modern" artist can restrict himself to the role of a primarily conceptual manipulator of mechanical processes yet still remain a "painter" ― a role model to which the photo artist, due to the peculiarities of the photograph as a medium, has indeed always been confined. (p. 25)

So the gesture of photographing when analysed in accordance with my photography practice and broader postmodern theories is also a gesture of arranging, composing, staging and controlling of mechanical and aesthetic conventions ― all connected to conceptual intentions (Köhler, 1989). These ideas lead to a point where photographic 'truth' can be challenged, revealing the very gesture of photographing as a disturbance en route to possible place imaginaries. So returning to Lawrence and the close-up photograph from Figure 34 I highlight the progression from full body composition to a closer framing of Lawrence's face. This progression suggests further place-making triggering points as the 'looking away' motif has been dramatically emphasised. Lawrence's physiognomy here may trigger particular interpretations connected to "the idea that faces carry meanings" (Cole, 2018, para. 3). I invited Lawrence to perform the action of looking away and this became a common feature of all three photographs. The motif of looking away has, therefore, been trialled and gestured (by Lawrence and myself) in three different ways. An initial sense of purpose followed by gestures of intuitive-doubt informed this progression, culminating with the releasing of the camera's shutter, click. Curation and sequencing then helped clarify my gestures.

The idea of staging and composing is common to contemporary photography practices informed by postmodern theories (Köhler, 1989). The contemporary photographer encompasses the role of a director, inventing or fabricating subject matter instead of simply finding it (Köhler, 1989). This is an interesting point as it partly contradicts the ways I work with my research participant subjects. I do not use models for my portraits (fabricate subjects); however, I invite research participants to perform for my camera. Yet the term *directorial* applies to my photographic approach and broader postmodern approaches. According to Coleman (2014), "the arranging of objects and/or people in front of the lens is essentially directorial" (p. 279). I have a preference for meeting and engaging

with ‘real-life’ Te Awa River Ride users, as they are the ones that hold and make particular place imaginaries. A portrait model, on the other hand, would offer me a more stylised approach, which involves several production aspects such as clothing and locations. In this case, the contemporary photographer may play the role of an advertising photographer. A good example is the work of North American photographer Gregory Crewdson and the ways he constructs his cinematic photographs. Crewdson works with a production team, scouting particular location-sets and using cinematic lighting to construct his photographs. The results are visually compelling and powerful.

I work at the opposite end of the spectrum to Crewdson’s practice and yet both Crewdson and my practice share similar aspects, rendered, of course, in different degrees. My preference to work with ‘real-life’ participants is also due to the idea of index and how participants can offer me an indexical place-making relationship with Te Awa River Ride. This aspect is fundamental to my photography and broader PhD research practice, functioning as a starting point to the developing of shared place imaginaries and subsequent photographic constructions. If my preference was for models instead of research participants, my approach would have been different. In the case of using models for my portraits, the construction of photographs would have been based only on my own place imaginaries imposed into a situation and constructed solely under my directorial inputs. My white dog photograph (Figure 1), for example, is underpinned by a predominantly directorial approach where I read the story from the book, interpreted, found a white dog, and constructed a photograph to represent this particular place imaginary.

Another postmodern aspect of contemporary photography practice is the idea of manipulation of negatives or digital files, revealing the very nature of the photographic processes. According to Köhler (1989), “manipulations of negatives and prints are not only permitted but welcome. The more imaginative, the better” (p. 19). It is noticeable in some of the photographs from Figure 34 particularly the close up and full body photograph, a chemical stain from film processing. I hand processed all my black and white negatives from this project, and I have tried multiple techniques, experimenting with developing times, photographic chemicals and agitation of developing tanks to create particular effects. These

techniques were connected to the rendering of place imaginaries. I intentionally left the chemical stains from Lawrence's portraits with the goal of revealing or suggesting the photographic construction processes involved. In this sense, Köhler (1989) advocates the choice for exposures and manipulations as a "function of the particular intentions of the individual artist" (p. 19). These creative strategies also challenge the idea of photographs as truthful depictions of place, reinforcing the idea of photographs as pictorial objects or *texts* (Barthes, 1981; Köhler, 1989b).

Figures 35 to 37 depict some of the experimentations I did with black and white film processing and negatives. These photographs are part of my conceptual explorations around place imaginaries and place-making. Also, some of these photographs were part of my final selection for *South of the Rising Sun*, my creative milestone#4. Figure 35 shows a form of bending on the top right corner of the frame. I have done this intentionally to the negative, hoping to create particular effects on the surface of the negative and image. The bending of the negative may suggest a peeling effect where place is represented as layered. So in this case, the 'top' image now has a peeling point where layers can be revealed imaginatively. Figure 36 shows my experimentation with 35mm negative developing tanks and when light is leaked into the tank creating particular effects in the photograph. The white luminous form may suggest some kind of spiritual presence connected to the Waikato River and its background stories (King, 2013). The photograph from Figure 36 was not part of my final selection for *South of the Rising Sun*. After careful analysis, I considered this photograph not as successful as Figure's 37 for example. During this stage of my creative fieldwork my goal was to construct strong photographs connected to overall aesthetic qualities and parameters. My iterative process connected to trial and error of techniques and possibilities of black and white photography offered aesthetic parameters to the construction of what I considered strong photographs. Later, this approach to my creative fieldwork became more targeted and designed to feed into specific creative milestones. Overall, I had a strong sense of the aesthetic parameters of a 'good'/strong photograph, but I was pushing to explore and experiment with particular motifs and parameters in motivated, semi-structured ways.

Figure 37 carries further experimentations with black and white film. The film I have used to make this photograph was first submerged in the Waikato River and

then loaded into an old 120mm Yashica model A camera I have. My intention was to wet the film surface and then immediately load it into the camera to then rapidly make 12 exposures before becoming too sticky. The film was then unloaded and dunked into the Waikato River again. To process this film I used the water from the Waikato River in a chemical mixture with the film developer. The final results presented unusual formations on the film surface as well as a yellowish tint possibly from the river waters. Most of the techniques I have used to both photograph and develop my black and white films were experimental. This is connected to the multiple ways in which photography can render perceptual thresholds and subsequent place imaginaries. I have used a number of techniques, revealing photographic processes that are embedded in the actual photograph/photographic surface as a route to challenge the idea of 'truth' bounded to photographic representations.

The use of the waters from the Waikato River to both shoot and process films is connected to place-making and photography. Here the concept of place is extended beyond the visual photographic motif, becoming a tangible place-trace, imbedded in the photographic processes and surfaces. Again, and to conclude, the idea of index becomes undeniably present and acknowledged, and yet extended into an aesthetic representation through which photographic 'truth' becomes a "suspension of disbelief" (Coleman, 2014, p. 279).

Figure 35. Te Awa River Ride, Ngāruawāhia section. Source: Rodrigo Hill 2017.

Figure 36. A possible reference to a taniwha. Source: Rodrigo Hill 2017.

Figure 37. Blossoming flowers during early spring 2017. Source Rodrigo Hill 2017.

Throughout this section I highlighted particular aspects of my photography practice and the camera apparatuses I used during my creative fieldwork. In addition, I discussed my intuitive creative processes combined with the use of particular cameras. My goal now is to examine my motivations towards the use of multiple camera apparatuses and how each camera informed my photography practice and creative processes. I draw once more on Flusser and his ideas around the camera apparatus. To start, Flusser (2000) explains that "the camera is programmed to produce photographs, and every photograph is a realization of one of the possibilities contained within the program of the camera" (p. 26). The camera's programme encompasses a number of possibilities or symbols that once combined are able to produce information (Flusser, 2000). Each camera apparatus I used is therefore capable of producing information through the combination of symbols (or perhaps camera settings). The information produced is rendered in a particular degree connected to the camera's technical and optical affordances. Overall, my approach and camera apparatuses utilised can be structured into three

categories: point and shoot, medium format and large format. Point and shoot encompasses the use of two different 35mm film cameras, a digital SLR and my mobile phone camera, all part of trial creative processes. My medium format or 120mm film camera apparatuses (Mamiya RZ and Hasselblad) were used to make 'deeper cuts' or rendering of more aesthetically and technically sophisticated photographs.

Figure 38. Hasselblad 120mm camera apparatus. Source: Rodrigo Hill 2018.

Finally, the large format camera apparatus was used strategically to render specific photographs, especially portraits. This approach is connected to the photographer's search for different possibilities to render information (Flusser, 2000). The rendering of information is connected to my core conceptual frameworks and the ways I understand photographic practices and images as sources for the construction of multiple meanings.

The play of different camera apparatuses is a deliberate strategy to suggest the many ways place imaginaries can be photographically rendered and actualised. Place-making is then photographically actualised through paradigms in which 'truth' (place) is understood as a construction of multiple shared 'truths' (place imaginaries) rendered from multiple camera apparatuses.

In the next section, I discuss the implications of the term curation within my photography practice, starting with the origins of the term and how it is connected to qualitative approaches to research and art practices.

Curation

French ethnologist Claude Lévi-Strauss, in his book *The savage mind* (Lévi-Strauss, 1966), adapted the art term *bricolage* into a free form of improvised integration of elements. This system of free flowing thought was "a kind of cognitive *bricolage* that strived for both intellectual and aesthetic satisfaction" where the *bricoleur* is "anyone attempting to plan, solve and create" (Balzer, 2015, p. 24). Therefore, *bricolage* in contemporary terms can be argued as a form of curation (Balzer, 2015) where one is in charge of selecting, editing, combining and presenting a curated product. A good way to illustrate this is through the work of a music DJ that selects and combines multiple musical fragments into a single music tune. The music DJ looks for patterns over different musical rhythms in an effort to compile a conceptually bounded piece of music.

My work as a photographer (-artist-researcher) develops in a similar fashion where I look for visual patterns or motifs in an attempt to later compile fragments into a single piece of visual work. I am, however, not a curator in the institutional professional sense of the term as a museum or gallery curator. I am, rather, an artist that uses curatorial methods to make sense of my work. The curatorial objectives are nevertheless similar; both the institutional curator and I are in pursuit of contextualising frameworks for a particular body of artworks (Thea & Micchelli, 2008). Curatorial context is therefore crucial to the construction of meaning and enabling of the viewer's understandings. Sequencing, for example, is a conventional mode of arranging photographs/imagery; once inserted into my curatorial methodology, it becomes a method at times connected to curated photographic exhibitions. My photography practice is therefore informed by curatorial methods and the idea of generating curatorial products such as exhibitions and photobooks. Within this scenario, my curatorial project starts with the editing of images, maps, documents, drawings as well as research participants' interviews. This initial stage involves attentive analysis and selection of particular items informed by my contextual frameworks. I provide critical discussions of

these processes in the following creative milestone chapters of this thesis. The editing and selection set up the next step of making sense of the work through compilation/assemblage of groups. Grouping of images led into non-linear narrative construction of photo narratives through sequencing and displaying followed this.

However, the actual display and sequencing processes happened almost simultaneously simply because the ways images can be sequenced are linked to various displaying agendas. For example, the way images are sequenced for a photobook can differ from a gallery installation[10]. However, both exhibition and photobook require similar curatorial practices such as editing/selection of images and juxtapositions/sequencing towards the construction of a photo narrative. The photobook's main goal is narrative and subsequently the trigger of meanings and feelings. Photobooks also have specific displaying agendas and ways to layout images that are different from galleries. It is useful to consider my curatorial approach, as described here, as an alternative approach to the institutionalised gallery or museum curator. On this note, artist and curator Rirkrit Tiravanija (2008) explains his approach when curating his own bodies of artwork: "I've always been both artist and curator, and I see that for an artist to curate always brings a different methodology and perspective" (p. 79). My curatorial methodology is enabled by my photography practice and is therefore informed by photographic methods such as editing and sequencing. These conventional methods are then intersected with multidisciplinary conceptual frameworks, all part of a complete curatorial project. This dynamic context reinforces the role of curation as a crucial instrument of mediation as Carolle Thea (2008) explains:

> The expanding geography of the art world, the complexity and interdisciplinary nature of artistic proposals, and the demands of various publics create a situation in which mediation plays an even more crucial role in the exploration and dissemination of art. (p. 7)

[10] It is important to also note the differences of curatorial platforms, such as photobooks and installations, connected to the affordances of each of these mediums. Photobooks are based on a two-dimensional printed platform while installations are formatted as spatial collections of imagery.

Figure 39. *Incoming*, 2017. Source: Richard Mosse, used with permission.

The contemporary photographer is familiar with the idea of curation as well as the multimodal nature of distinctive curatorial platforms such as photobooks and exhibitions. The mediation of bodies of work into curatorial products in some cases happens through adaptation processes in order to fit the same body of work into different displaying platforms. So presentation becomes an equally crucial process since the way the images are displayed and arranged is a catalyst for the photographer's vision. Presentation is the materialisation of the author's voice and his/her final statements before the audience starts further engagements of meaning-making of the work (or perhaps another process of curation). Richard Mosse's latest work *Incoming* (Figure 39) is a good example of how a body of work can be curated into a powerful visual statement about the current migration crisis in Europe. Mosse used a temperature sensitive camera that captures body heat; this camera is considered a military weapon to locate illegal immigrants from distance (Seymor, 2017). The work is more recognisable as a feature documentary film rather than photographic-based, and it has been adapted to a gallery installation displayed on big semi-circular panels (Seymor, 2017). But it has also been released as a photobook with a selection of over 280 stunningly metallic tritone printed images. My photography practice shares some of these displaying capabilities where I can format curatorial strategies to different presentation platforms such as photobooks, online and art galleries. These curatorial strategies are informed by my theoretical concepts and will follow a project of alignment of key research concepts, themes and methods. For instance,

I am working with the concept of place imaginaries as a root concept for image construction and therefore my chosen displaying platforms will be conceptually driven by the same concept. So the actual creative research product will function, alongside the images and the ways they are arranged, as a prompt for the concept of place imaginaries.

The term curator gained popularity during the eighties and the art-world boom in the United States and Europe. The overwhelming number of artists and art-works demanded someone who could help make sense of the works (Balzer, 2015). Thus, the figure of the art curator as a connoisseur emerged as an attempt toward "demystifying exhibition- and art-making, and then remystifying them on new terms" (Balzer, 2015, p. 47).

The term *bricolage* is also related to qualitative research paradigms where the researcher works as a "bricoleur and quilt-maker' (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 4). So building on this idea and research paradigms where truth is constructed or curated from multiple shared truths, I argue that curation is intrinsically connected with qualitative approaches to research. Thereby, it makes sense to incorporate a curatorial stance within every research step, from early creative photographic ruminations to reflexive and academic writing developments. Next I will discuss my key curatorial method of sequencing and how it underpins sense-making processes of my photographic work.

Sequencing

In this section I introduce key ideas around the concept of sequencing. These ideas will be expanded and discussed in more detail in the creative milestone chapters of this thesis. My goal is to contextualise the concept of sequencing and the ways it is underpinned by modernist assumptions on photomontage and narrative (Moholy-Nagy, 1947, 1969; Nelson, 2006). In addition, I highlight the importance of photomontage and photo narrative as well as sequencing and juxtaposition as fundamental methods of visual argumentation. Essentially, grouping of images as in assemblages/compilations require a form of ordering and juxtaposition to convey a particular argument or idea (Lyons, 2012).

To understand photographic sequencing, it is necessary to first understand the concept behind it. North American photographer, curator and educator Nathan Lyons (2012) articulated his ideas around editing and sequencing of photographs in his seminal photobook *Notations in Passing* (Lyons, 1974). Lyon's photobook intersects photography practice with historical-theoretical research, articulating photographically the author's arguments, experiences and meanings (Bonduki, 2018). So this is similar to my intentions when curating, sequencing and presenting/installing my creative milestones; a way to articulate theoretical arguments, experiences and meanings (place-making and place imaginaries and the way photography is embedded into these processes).

In the press release of Lyons' exhibition *Seven Days a Week* at the Eastman House in 1958, the author signalled his concerns over the grouping of photographs and their interrelationships:

> The added concern of the way in which a series of photographs is presented is of primary importance … and can not only create the proper atmosphere in which the presentation is made but also become an extension of the "visual flow" conveyed by the relationship of images. (Lyons, 2012, p. 9)

Lyons' concerns are underpinned by earlier ideas conceived by his predecessor, the Bauhaus artist and writer László Moholy-Nagy (1969). In his book *Painting Photography Film*, Moholy-Nagy "provides the opportunity to reconsider the relationship between image and text and the definitions of (photo) narrative structure in terms of motion and stasis, diachronic and synchronic time" (Nelson, 2006, p. 259). These are key points to understand sequencing and the construction of photo narratives connected to motion, stasis and subsequent juxtapositions and cadence of visual motifs. Essentially, Moholy-Nagy's innovative ideas explored perceptual processes and the affordances of the photographic technologies involved as well as the ways photo narratives can be structured and articulated towards particular visual arguments. The ways Moholy-Nagy explored photographic technologies are connected to the opening of perceptual thresholds and subsequent basis for the construction of photo narratives (Nelson, 2006). So building on these ideas, I have used a range of different camera formats to create a grammar of perceptual photographic thresholds that later formed the basis for the construction and sequencing of my photo narratives (Creative milestones #1, #2, #3 and #4). Within this context, one of the possible premises to construct

photographic sequences is to have a diverse range of singular photographic units to be inserted into cadenced juxtapositions.

The concepts of sequencing and curation function like beacons, delineating the ways in which my curatorial research products are organised and presented. Curation, therefore, can be argued as a methodology and sequencing as a method within the curatorial methodological system. I bring back Bergson's (2001) analogy of the mind as cinematographic as a useful lens to further comprehend the visual montage aspect of my practice. The grouping of visual fragments is an initial step that relies on movement or some form of sequencing, tempo, rhythm and narrative to convey an idea or intention (Colberg, 2016; Lyons, 2012; Moholy-Nagy, 1947; Smith, 2010a).

The approach of photomontage was informed by Bauhaus modernist assumptions and was originally conceived for printed publications such as magazines and particularly photobooks. According to Andrea Nelson (2006),

> serial imagery in montage, which I term "narrative montage", was vital to the development of modern, printed photobooks … The technique of narrative montage shaped the underlying structure of photobooks and provided a pedagogical model for visual literacy for mass audiences. Narrative montage recognizes the spaces between juxtaposed photographic and graphic elements, emphasizing the spatial and temporal construction of series. (p. 258)

Therefore, the conceptualisation of montage towards photo narratives provided a model for visual literacy during the modernist epoch of the 1950s. This model is crucial for the development of more sophisticated forms of montages and sequencing towards a range of different curatorial platforms such as exhibitions/installations and photobooks. The mass audiences have therefore developed, over the years, a certain visual literacy and familiarity with montages. Instagram, for example, has specific montage mechanisms through which images can be sequenced and juxtaposed. Instagram's scrolling displaying system also follows an algorithmically attuned model where images are ranked and displayed to mass audiences according to particular hierarchies of values and agendas.

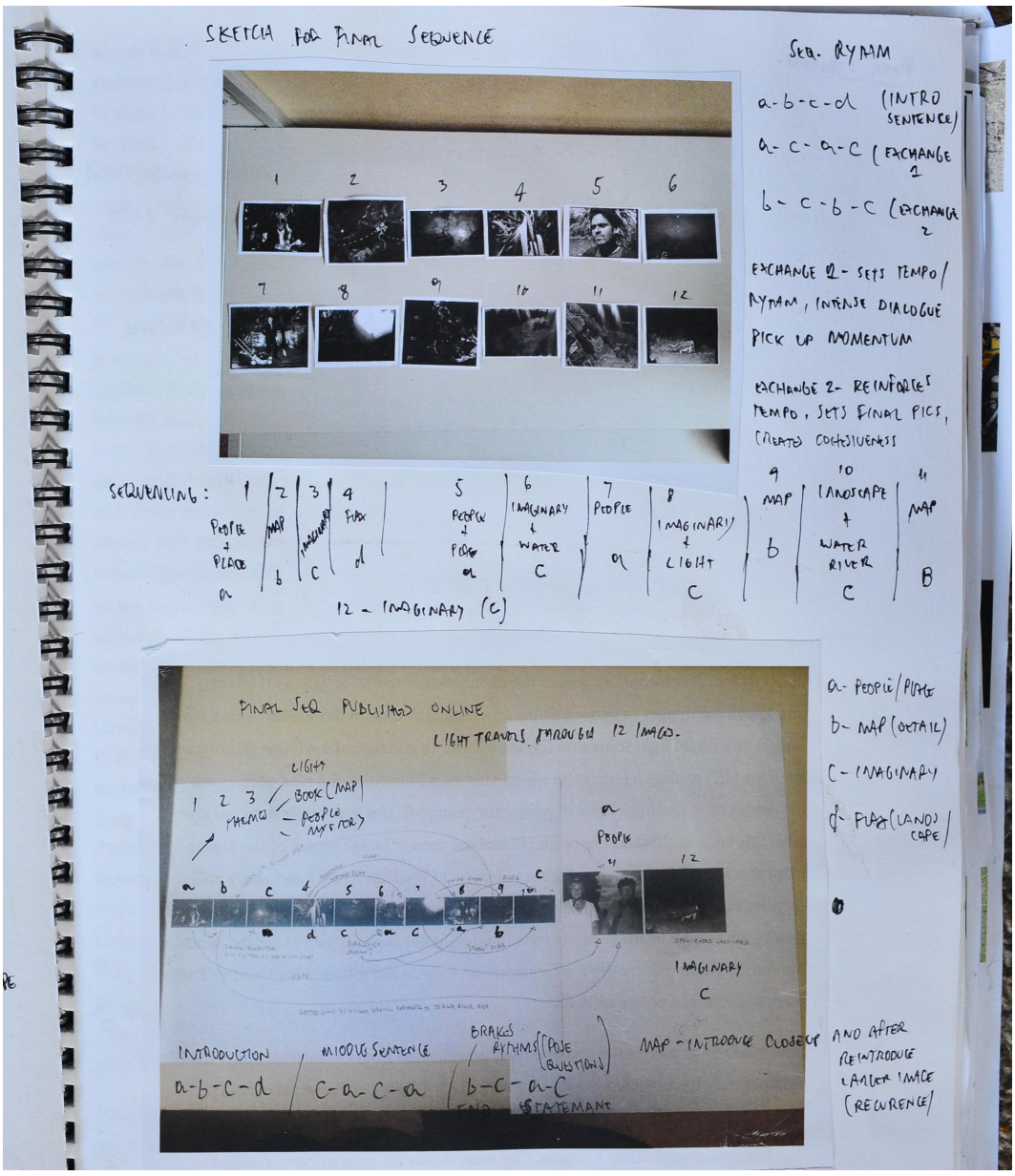


Figure 40. Sequencing notes from *Let Light Create Imaginary Spaces*. Source: Rodrigo Hill 2017.

So returning to Lyons and his ideas on sequencing, I highlight his analysis of sequencing or visual progression as "a progression of associative objects" (Lyons, 2006, p. 189). In this sense, broader sequential considerations are informed by crucial structural considerations such as context, ordering of elements, juxtaposition, symbols and the actual (photobook's) materiality/physical characteristics/graphic qualities (Lyons, 2012). Initially, Lyons conceived these structural considerations towards the photobook narrative platform. I have built on Lyons' considerations to edit and sequence my final creative milestone, a photography installation. I have adapted these considerations to the photography installation narrative platform, following Lyons' progression of associative objects as a key strategy to construct *South of the Rising Sun*. I will discuss these

ideas further in the creative milestone #4 chapter of this thesis. Lyons (2012), and later Keith Smith (2010), proposed a differentiation of series and sequences where

> series or serial image is structured so that the relationship of terms is such that each successive term is derived from the one preceding it by application of a specific principle. A sequence is structured by allowing one image to follow another by an order of succession or arrangement which is not apparently thematic or systematic. (Lyons, 2012, p. 199)

Lyons' definitions above offer crucial underpinnings to the ways I have structured and sequenced my creative milestones.

In this section I introduced fundamental ideas on sequencing. These ideas form a useful platform for the development of my photo narratives to be discussed in the following chapters. Moholy-Nagy and Lyons' ideas provided substantial theoretical and practical background for the progression of sequencing and further structural considerations towards assemblages such as photo montages. More recently, author Keith Smith (2010) built on these innovative authors' concepts to conceive a complete guide and structuring of the visual book. I will discuss Smith's ideas and the ways I have adapted and integrated them into a methodological project towards the construction of my creative milestones.

The following chapter will introduce my creative milestones as a methodological approach. I will provide in-depth analysis on each of my four creative milestones, outlining key methodological aspects and strategies. This will culminate with detailed examination of my creative milestone#4, a photography installation titled *South of the Rising Sun*.

Chapter Four
Creative Milestones: A Methodology of Iteration

This section introduces my creative milestones as a methodological strategy towards my final PhD creative research product, a photography installation titled *South of the Rising Sun*. In addition, I introduce a number of lens-based practitioners as part of a section in which I review relevant models of photographic representation.

Creative milestones were curatorial research products. They marked points within the overall research time frame. Each creative milestone involved the construction of a photo narrative. In the first creative milestone, I used the photobook as a narrative platform. The second creative milestone involved the construction of a digital sequence of images. The third and fourth creative milestones marked further explorations around sequencing, photo montage and photo narrative within photography installation platforms. So, essentially, a creative milestone, within the parameters of my research, was a curated photo narrative product, structured within particular conventions and aimed at the argumentation of particular ideas. The completion of each creative milestone was accompanied by a contextual writing piece. This process was useful to the development of my creative methodology and the subsequent coalescing between my theoretical frameworks and photography practice. The creative 'milestoning' was highly iterative and covered experimentations with possibilities and techniques connected to multimodal representational systems. The iteration of photographic possibilities and exploration of techniques informed the generation of specific creative milestones and strategies connected to curation and sequencing within creative milestones.

Each creative milestone marked the end of a phase within an iterative process and the beginning of the next one. For example, my creative milestone #2 was a digital-based black and white photographic sequence. The actual visual product or milestone is the final moment of a particular creative stage in which I have explored a particular set of strategies and methods in order to achieve a particular creative result. The creative milestone is one of many possibilities, a way to curate images into a cohesive body of work. In this sense, the creative milestone could

be more about the iteration of curating, sequencing and assembling images within particular conventions rather than the actual techniques and methods used within a given creative time frame. In parallel, my photographic production at Te Awa River Ride steadily progressed and within this progression I tested and implemented new methods while building on some already established strategies. However, it is possible to argue that at each creative milestone time frame a particular set of methods has been tested and implemented. This is clearer in my creative milestone #2 in which I only focused on the medium of black and white photography and its representational possibilities. Within this scenario the creative 'milestoning' becomes a sequential act, not necessarily linear but with enough energy to progress forward.

The creative milestones were, most importantly, ways of working through particular collections of images informed by conventional ways of imagery juxtaposition and displaying. These processes were intersected with my multidisciplinary frameworks. Therefore, through the process of explaining and contextualising my creative milestones, I am simultaneously proposing a focusing of my methods as part of a complex methodological system. In the following chapters, I will discuss and contextualise four creative milestones. I start with creative milestones #1 and #2 and my initial developments on editing and curation of the images (which is extended to all milestones). These two milestones were part of my initial photographic explorations at Te Awa River Ride during the first eight months of my creative fieldwork. Creative milestone #1, *Riding the River Ride*, was a continuation of my previous photography practice (Hill, 2013) and culminated with the assemblage of a photobook (prototype). Creative milestone #2, *Let Light Create Imaginary Spaces*, was focused specially on black and white photography and possibilities of these techniques for the rendering of imaginaries (at this stage imaginaries was still a rising concept within my research framework). Creative milestone #3 was titled *Stimuli* and covered further curatorial and sequential developments through the use of gallery installation curatorial methodologies. Lastly, *South of the Rising Sun* is a photography installation exhibited at Ramp Gallery.

The next section will cover detailed reviews of relevant artist models that informed my photography practice and the production of creative milestones.

Each reviewed artist works with a particular curatorial platform such as photobooks, installations and online-based methods of displaying photographs. The analysis of each body of work underlies and informs my methodology and creative decisions involved. Some of the reviews are juxtaposed with commentary on my own photography practice.

Review of Relevant Artist Models

The works reviewed below were part of my visual research agenda during the initial stages of my PhD project. These artists informed my photography practice and overall methodology throughout my PhD research at both theoretical and creative levels. I will add more artist reviews as I progress through the explanation and contextualisation of my creative milestones. The works listed below were fundamental to my photography practice and the ways I constructed photo narratives for each creative milestone. I consider these artists key practitioners of their fields and modes of representation. The reviewing of the works below is useful to discuss and position my practice and modes of photographic representation I have utilised. Through the reviews I highlight particular aspects of my photography practice, juxtaposing artists' strategies and methodology as prompts for brief discussions on my photography practice and multidisciplinary approach to research.

New Zealand Colonial Painting

Figure 41. Kennett Watkins, The Phantom Canoe: a Legend of Lake Tarawera, 1888. Oil, 1020x1705, Partridge Collection, Auckland City Art Gallery.

Figure 42.Waikato River studies. Source: Rodrigo Hill.

As a starting point of my artist reviews I highlight the work of Kennet Watkins and the colonial paintings from the late 1800s. The painting above is part of a series of representations that followed the eruption of Mount Tarawera in 1886. A range of substantial Tarawera reports soon appeared after the incident and most paintings from the eruption were based on scientific reports and popular disaster accounts (Bell, 1992). Watkins' use of dramatic lighting and mood added an interesting twist to this painting as the actual crossing of the canoe occurred during daylight, revealing Watkins' "taste for the mysterious and the extraordinary" (Bell, 1992, p. 159). Watkins' representational strategies are thought-provoking, and the idea of collecting reports and various accounts on the incident to then construct a painting is at least intriguing. In a sense, this connects with the strategies I used to construct my photographs. My creative process starts from the gathering of accounts from multiple sources, such as Te Awa River Ride users, added to sensorial and imaginary perceptions of place, to arrive at a point where everything intersects with my own place-making processes. One could argue that both my practice and Watkins' rely on the imaginary as vehicles to construct representations. However, Watkins' painting operates within a context of colonisation surrounded by powerful discourses and imperial implications as well as an agenda of land consumption and aestheticisation of 'sublime' landscapes (Park, 2006). My photographic work, on the other hand, fuses both

Waikato Māori and European place imaginaries and accounts, taking into consideration both discursive formations.

One could argue that figures 41 and 42 share similar moods and use of dramatic light to create an atmosphere of mystery. I was inspired by how Watkins used light reflections on the water to create mood added to smoky clouds that open to a full moon. My intentions behind *River studies #1* were to depict a river and its mysteries, giving context to the region where Te Awa River Ride is located and acknowledging historical layers that are attached to the Waikato River. The light bouncing on the water adds a hazy element to the image, emulating the fog as a common visual feature of the winter months in the Waikato Valley.

Astres Noirs 2016. Katrin Koenning and Sarker Protick

Astres Noirs is a collaborative photobook project edited and published by French independent publishing house Chose Commune. This project has been shortlisted by *TIME* Magazine as one of the best photobooks of 2016 and, in my opinion, it brings a fresh approach to photography, reinvigorating the possibilities of the medium of black and white photography. According to curator Sunil Shah (2016), "both artists come at the medium with a desire to seek the extraordinary in order to access invisible states of consciousness" (para. 4). Building on Shah's comments, my photography practice at Te Awa River Ride similarly seeks extraordinary layers of place perception in order to enter a psychological domain of place-making processes. Within this scenario, the language of black and white photography can be useful to strip down colours, focusing on the rendering of imaginary representations, textures, light and feelings. Koenning and Protick's work, therefore, appears to be "rooted in the personal and meditative relationship they have with metaphysical thought and less with rigid notions of representing a photographic reality" (Shah, 2016, para. 4). This articulates a motivation for my work and the idea of representing emotional states, processes and feelings rather than confining the work within the realm of 'truthful' representation. Although black and white has been widely used and linked to objective ways of representing reality, I believe that by pushing this language forward one can open new territories for the expansion of the medium of photography as a whole (Shore, 2014).

Figure 43. One of Koenning's images in *Astres Noirs* 2016. Source: Katrin Koenning, used with permission.

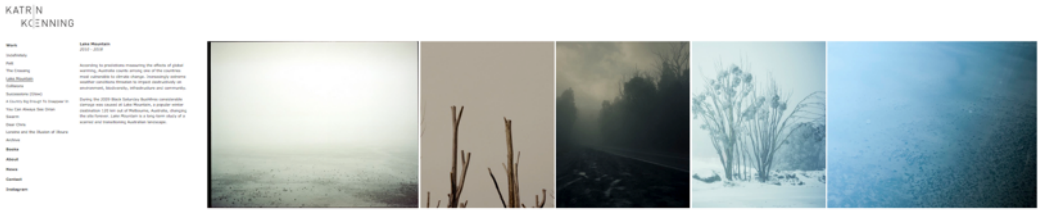


Figure 44. Screen shot from Katrin Koenning's website. *Lake Mountain* 2010-2018. Source Katrin Koenning, used with permission.

In parallel, Katrin Koenning also presents her work through online-based digital sequences. On her website, the viewer needs to scroll rightwards to view the collection of photographs (www.katrinkoenning.com/work/Lake_Mountain). The images are sequenced in a particular order and introduced by a small body of written text.

Koenning's digital curatorial strategy is different from her collaborative photobook project. In fact, *Astres Noirs* was edited and curated by the editors from Chose Commune, the publisher. The project *Astres Noirs* originated from Instagram and online conversations between the artists (Koenning and Protick) and the publishers. After following both artists on Instagram, and noticing similarities on their visual styles, the editors from Chose Commune invited Koenning and Protick to send a collection of their images to be edited and curated into a photobook. The artists had some control during this process but, ultimately, they entrusted selection and curation of the images to the editors. Also, it is interesting to mention that all the images from *Astres Noirs* were photographed on mobile phones. Koenning and Protick's mode of representation and use of the medium of black and white photography were very inspiring to me. I am interested in the ways the artists rendered the light, creating atmospheric representations. The moody luminosity aspect of the work intrigued me and the ways light was uniquely rendered.

The black and white aesthetics from *Astres Noirs* informed the construction of key photographs for the *Let Light Create Imaginary Spaces* body of work. I share two examples from my experimentations with black and white film photography during the first half of my creative fieldwork period at Te Awa River Ride. Figure 45 depicts a shiny broken glass by the Ngāruawāhia section of Te Awa River Ride. While Figure 46 depicts luminous reflections on the Waikato River. I have used similar techniques to produce these images, underexposing the light and over developing the film to increase contrast and grain. The combination of both these techniques generated high contrasted images with accentuated highlight areas. The final results conveyed valuable possibilities around light, photographic film exposure, processing and the rendering of lyrical representations of my psychological subtleties. These assumptions were linked to my rising concepts of place imaginaries and psychological place-making processes connected to dimensions of memory, affect and cultural perception. These psychological processes impose challenges, pushing the limits of photography as a medium of representation. As single images, the photographs from Figures 45 and 46 have limited narrative capabilities to convey such extended concepts. This is when moving images or videos may be more useful as a medium of representation that can carry expanded sensorial and narrative elements. On the other hand, I also

assumed that Figures 45 and 46 need a form of context to actualise desired latent meanings and metaphors. In this sense, the production aspect of these images can be targeted to render specific motifs that once synthesised into a single photographic representation become units in standby mode for further meaning activations (through curation and sequencing).

Figure 45. *Let Light Create Imaginary Spaces*, experimenting with black and white film photography. Source: Rodrigo Hill 2017.

Figure 46. Difference between evenly exposed and underexposed photographs. Source: Rodrigo Hill 2017.

I have added two images in Figure 46 to illustrate my experimentations with light exposure, starting from an evenly exposed photograph and progressing through an

underexposed photograph. The underexposing technique adds more contrast, accentuating shapes and forms into abstracted modes of representation.

Sleeping by the Mississippi, 2004 Alec Soth

Figure 47. *Sleeping by the Mississippi*, 2004. Source: Alec Soth, used with permission.

Sleeping by the Mississippi was Alec Soth's debut photographic project. *Sleeping by the Mississippi* follows the North American photography tradition of Soth's predecessors Robert Frank and Walker Evans. The project was well received and positioned with seminal representational works of the United States from both Frank and Evans (Soth, 2017).

In an interview from 2004 for the *British Journal of Photography* Soth (2017) revealed key aspects of the project:

> In the beginning the project had nothing to do with the Mississippi … It evolved from a project called *From Here to There* in which one picture lead [sic] to another, linked by an idea or a theme. In the process, I travelled down the Mississippi, and I got to thinking that the idea was too gimmicky. So I shifted to the idea of the Mississippi being the link. (para. 4)

Similarly to Soth, the Waikato River offered me a link to key socio-cultural constructions and connections between place and place-making. This is a suggestive aspect of cultural perception and the way rivers can flow through many perceptual composites including, of course, its core geographical features. The Waikato River is also a substantial geographical feature (the Mississippi is the longest river in the United States). Both rivers have rich historical context and socio-cultural aspects. So, in a sense, both Soth and I had to deal with a complex place-making framework surrounded by equally complex underpinnings and dynamics then turning them into visual motifs and themes. However, as Colin Pantall, Soth's interviewer for the *British Journal of Photography*, points out, "*Sleeping by the Mississippi* is more about the spirit of wandering and peoples' dreams than the river itself" (Soth, 2017, para. 5). So the river may function as a compelling backdrop to participants' cultural and psychological processes.

To construct his photographs, particularly the portraits, Soth worked collaboratively with his participants as Pantall explains:

> …one of the strengths of Soth's work is his openness to people and ideas. He portrays people often at the fringes of society … but captures their ordinariness. He puts this down to the dynamics of the large-format camera he carried, which he says changed the whole relationship between him and his subjects. (para. 12)

I used a similar camera apparatus during my creative fieldwork at Te Awa River Ride. The camera apparatus I used is a smaller version of Soth's 8x10 large format. My camera was a 4x5 large format in which the negative plate is the size of a postcard compared to the 8x10's A4 paper sized negative plate. Both apparatuses, nevertheless, triggered similar photographic gestures and practices. The 4x5 camera requires a slow paced photographic portraiture approach and process through which I developed a form of rapport and trust with my participants. To illuminate this process, I share Soth's (2017) account of his large format photographic practice:

> I normally don't have a camera with me when I approach somebody, so immediately it's less threatening … Then people ask me about the project and only then do they see the camera. It's big and old-fashioned and my head is covered by a dark cloth, which also changes things. They can't see my face, so the situation becomes more relaxed. Because it takes so long, you have a conversation with them and the result shows. (para. 13)

Soth worked with a range of themes to construct a narrative of dreams around the Mississippi River. His motifs ranged from death, religion, race, dreams and others. These were represented through portraits, landscapes and interior photographs of participants' homes.

Figure 48. *Sleeping by the Mississippi*, 2004. Source: Alec Soth, used with permission.

Similarly to Soth I have experimented with photographing interiors of participants' homes. Figure 49 depicts the interior of an old home that was used as a military post during the British invasion in the Waikato in the 1860s. According to the owner of this home, the room depicted in Figure 49 has fortified bulletproof walls and it is strategically positioned facing the area where Tūrangawaewae Marae is currently located across the Waikato River.

Figure 49. Old home by the Waikato River in Ngāruawāhia. Source: Rodrigo Hill 2018

***The Afronauts*, 2012. Cristina de Middel**

Figure 50. *The Afronauts*, 2012 (also refer to Figure 23). Source Cristina de Middel, used with permission.

Spanish artist Cristina de Middel came up with a very different collaborative strategy. She based her 2012 photobook project on an African space programme story. In 1964, the nation of Zambia began a space programme, aiming to send the first African to the Moon. This fact constitutes the starting point of the *Afronauts* (2012). De Middel edited and sequenced the photobook from a body of curated photographs, drawings, documents, maps and related sculptures, all explicitly fictional in most elements (Laurent, 2013). In doing this, de Middel creates an interesting dialogue between fact and fiction (Schwendener, 2013). As a photobook project, *The Afronauts* expanded photo narrative and sequencing conventions by combining a multitude of imagery, graphic design and paper stock. In this sense the photobook platform was crucial to support the construction of sophisticated photo narrative developments. In other words, the author's ideas needed extra support since the photographs alone could not deliver more elaborated forms of photo narratives. Thus the book complemented key conceptual ideas, improving narrative construction as well as expressing feelings and concepts. De Middel clearly pushed conventions further by using images that originally did not 'belong' to the project's conventions and yet expressed the desired concepts. Therefore the idea of 'cohesive' narratives constructed from aesthetically consistent imagery can be put into question. However, I argue that

The Afronauts is a compression of opened imagery generated by highly refined editing and sequencing approaches. De Middel claims that the *Afronauts* is the "most successful documentary story I've made in my life" (as cited in Laurent, 2013, para. 12) in the sense that she was able to successfully (re) construct a story that happened in 1964. She adds that she was not playing with fiction deliberately but working with imagery that made sense within the project.

Cristina de Middel worked with models, using performance and arranged imagery to recreate her version of 1964 Zambia's space programme. De Middel worked collaboratively with project participants in order to achieve a particular visual result that would be otherwise different if not possible. It would have been different if de Middel had chosen to work with 'real' people from Zambia, instead she actually used participant-models and shot the whole project on a remote location in Spain. 'Real' subjects may demand the photographer more time and an ethical commitment with how one is represented. There is also more freedom in working with participant-models as they may have fewer expectations and a stronger willingness to perform for the camera. Alec Soth, however, works collaboratively with people he meets during his project journeys. This could be another useful strategy as Soth gets to know his subjects better and perhaps get the visual results he is after. Both strategies are useful and I considered these strategies within my portrait photography practice at Te Awa River Ride.

Figure 51. *The Afronauts*, 2012 (also refer to Figure 23). Source Cristina de Middel, used with permission.

***River/Road Journeys Through Ecology*, 2011 David Cook, Jonty Valentine and Wiremu Puke.**

David Cook's collaborative project *River/Road Journeys Through Ecology* is a direct influence to my research and photography practice as it explores concepts and themes related to the same area as this PhD project. Moreover, Cook is a former lecturer at the Waikato Institute of Technology (Wintec) where I completed my Bachelor of Media Arts Honours degree. During my honours project Cook was assigned my supervisor and had a significant impact on my practice.

Cook's project *River/Road Journeys Through Ecology* comprises a photographic journey through the ecologies of a road and a river, respectively named River Road and Waikato River. Cook's methodology is informed by his formal training as a botanist and unfolded through the sampling of photographic impressions collected at every 6oo metres from both the road and river sides (Cook et al., 2011). Cook became aware of the limitations of photography's two-dimensional representational capabilities to render complexities of places. Cook then turned to collaboration and oral history to actualise further place layers connected to the area. Wiremu Puke was then invited to contribute his words (Cook et al., 2011). I have cited Puke in this thesis as he carries deep connections with the Waikato Valley. Puke played major roles consulting for the Hamilton City Council and Te Awa River Ride, issuing assessment reports (Puke, 2011) and providing valuable insights into the Waikato River and its ecologies and histories.

River/Road Journeys Through Ecology provided a very useful set of place references and subsequent motifs to my photography practice at Te Awa River Ride. My methodology, however, was different than Cook's as I was studying the whole area from Ngāruawāhia to Cambridge and looking at connections between the river and Te Awa River Ride. Similarly to Alec Soth's *Sleeping by the Mississippi* and Cook's *River/Road Journeys Through Ecology*, the (Waikato) river provided a complex background to the construction of photographs as well as functioning as a motif within the artists' and my photography practice.

Cook built his photobook on sequential progressions, cadenced by motifs such as people, the river (water and landscapes), ecology (plants and animals) as well as

the actual River Road (vehicles, road signs and others). These were useful referential motifs to my photography practice, especially within the early stages of my creative fieldwork at Te Awa River Ride. I expanded these motifs into movement (connected to leisure and physical practices), river (water studies and landscapes), ecology (flax plants, trees and bushes), historical referencing, people, light and luminosity and later key motifs connected to the story from *The River Which Ran Away* book.

The photobook *River/Road Journeys Through Ecology* encompasses a number of sequenced photographs captioned with key historical/sociological/ecological insights connected to a map depicting the location where the images were produced.

Figure 52. *River/Road Journeys Through Ecology.* Source: David Cook, used with permission.

The collection of photographs is complemented by a number of essays written by Wiremu Puke. In one of Puke's essays titled *From the Road* he highlights the existence of old Māori walking tracks that "linked up various pā, villages and cultivation sites along the eastern river bank" (Cook et al., 2011, p. 81). Puke (2011) continues explaining that

> when surveyors first came in they established their survey pegs all along the banks of the river, following those old tracks. It made logical sense for road surveyors to follow the old established tracks that my ancestors had already cleared. (p. 81)

This is a very important point to my research, the embedded idea of mobility and movement across various regions within the Waikato Valley linked with the Waikato River and present Te Awa River Ride cycle/walking track. So the idea of walking tracks can be traced back to old Māori mobility practices. It is indeed a surprising unveiling to have established mobility practices connected to the construction and development of networking tracks, linking places into place-makings. So Te Awa River Ride becomes a form of continuation of these ancient mobility practices, now adapted to recreational uses and improved accesses to the Waikato River. It can be argued, therefore, that Te Awa River Ride is not only a continuation of European traditions of laying out land into human built places, but a flux of both ancient Māori mobility practices and European models of landscaping.

Creative Milestones #1 and #2: Initial Methodological Developments.

In this section I discuss the relationship between photography and printing practices. I begin by outlining key ideas connected to photobook making practices and the use of sequencing within this curatorial platform. Although my second creative milestone, a digital-based sequence, has not been printed or formatted as a photobook, it followed similar curation and sequencing strategies, but geared toward the affordances of digital display. Moreover, the process of sequencing images digitally can be connected to photobook-making practices where one goes through a number of curatorial stages aimed at the construction of a photo narrative. I will demonstrate how these two creative milestones are connected and the strategies I have implemented during each stage of my photography practice. These two creative milestones covered the initial period of my creative fieldwork and photography practice where I tested a number of representational techniques and strategies. This period within my research timeline marked important testing and establishing of preliminary themes and motifs that were later refined through my photography practice and creative milestones.

As a continuation of my past visual research practices (Hill, 2013) I have chosen the photobook format to output my first creative milestone, *Riding the River Ride*. The practice of photobook-making is a way to curate, sequence and compile images into a single narrative product (Colberg, 2016). These strategies are intrinsically connected to the developments of my creative photographic practice and the idea of outputting narrative-based curatorial products. To start, I outline some key points about the photobook format and its connections with past and contemporary photography practice.

Introduction to the Photobook

Photographers have been making photobooks ever since the creation of photography in the mid-nineteenth century. Photobooks are therefore a familiar and well-established platform for photographers to develop narratives, conveying meanings and arguments. For many photographers the photobook is the most useful and important vehicle for the communication of their vision (Parr & Badger, 2014). The first published photobooks date back to the mid to late 1800s and mainly depicted landscapes and some still life. This period was highlighted by intense technical activity, experimentation and achievement. The technical advancements were critical for the development of photography as well as the printing and production of photobooks (Parr & Badger, 2014). In this sense, the history of photography runs in parallel with the history of photobooks. Photography's strong tendency for printing made the book its best companion.

The nineteenth-century books illustrated Great Britain and France's imperial desire for exploration and sense-making of the world. By the 1930s the photobook became a tool of political propaganda throughout the Soviet Union, Nazi Germany and the United States. After the World War II, photobooks reflected the conflict and projected the making of a new Europe. The late 60s and 70s saw the photobook as a platform for a generation of Japanese photographers consumed by post Hiroshima and Nagasaki and Japanese-American relations (Badger, 2010). From the 70s onwards, American and European photographers intensively explored the photobook language. This era marked a positive explosion in North American photographic activity, influencing and shaping contemporary practices (Badger, 2010). Photographers were starting to experiment with mixed media and

technologies. In parallel, there was a strong sense of questioning the nature of photographic representation and the idea of the photograph as a 'true' record of reality. These factors influenced photobook practices, allowing photographers to experiment with different narrative structures and imagery.

On the other hand, printed publications, such as magazines and newspapers, devoted their pages to the format of the photo essay. The rise of agencies, such as Magnum Photos, parallels the implementation and use of the photo essay as a normative format to display and arrange groups of photographs within particular editorial constraints. Author Derrick Price (2004) illuminates these ideas further:

> The spread and new excitement of photojournalism from the 1930s also owed much to the fact that there were many outlets through which such work could be shown and for which it could be commissioned. These magazines, which were based on the extensive use of photographs to tell stories constitute the start of the modern movement of photojournalism. (p. 70)

In parallel, Patrick Sutherland (2016), in his article *The Photo Essay,* advocates the employment of this curatorial platform to generate critical and reflexive commentary within anthropological research contexts. Sutherland (2016) stresses that "undertaking an intimate, responsive, and embodied reportage is a process of visual investigation that parallels ethnographic field note taking. It involves intense attention to detail and concentration on observation and recording" (p. 120). So here the practice of photography is clearly delineated by ethnographic methods. The use of the words 'observation' and 'recording' is useful to grant a sphere of authenticity rather than generating new models of representation and subsequent routes to knowledge. The photo essay platform has been used for decades in magazines such as *Life*. Photographs were primarily black and white and often shot unobtrusively. The great photographer Eugene Smith perfected the format of the photo essay; I highlight his seminal project titled *The Country Doctor* (published in *Life* magazine in 1948). The photo essay generally follows a serial linear progression with beginning, middle and end. Photographs are presented on various types of composition such as verticals, horizontals, close ups and panoramic shots, allowing designers and editors more flexibility to establish an overarching tone and structure to the story (Sutherland, 2016). The photo essay in this sense follows a particular structure connected to the discourse of photojournalism and reportage.

Contrarily to the photo essay format and linear narrative strategies, contemporary photobooks have embraced a wide range of strategies applied within processes of curation, sequencing, compilation and presentation of a particular group of images. Graphic design and the actual book's physical properties became crucial elements for the shaping of the photographer's vision (Colberg, 2012, 2016). Within this context, the photobook appears as a very useful canvas for the photographer, offering a vast range of options in terms of narrative construction and strategies. The book format allows contemporary photography practice to be successfully expanded through the use of words, materials, design, documents and imagery (Colberg, 2012). The whole book (as well as other narrative assembling platforms) can be seen as a *text* that carries meaning, offering multiple reading points. All these factors reinforce the idea of narrative content that most photographers strive for. Ultimately, this search for quality and narrative is what draws photographers to the photobook (Badger, 2010).

The goal of the photobook is narration, but there are different types of narratives. I am interested in works that have non-linear or elliptical narratives (Badger, 2010), which is one of the main strategies used by contemporary photographers. In order to understand the photographic book and narratives, it is useful to look at how filmmakers approach story telling in the sense that both may have similarities. Narrative in film terms is made up of a linear arrangement of events, sequenced in a logical order and temporal sense (Badger, 2010). Films with a linear narrative have a beginning, middle and end. Elliptical narrative is different, though it is possible for linear narrative to be elliptical, proceeding in a temporal sense through mysterious and indirect imagery (Badger, 2010). Authors that choose linear narratives do so because of its predictability and perhaps comfortable reading. However, through the use of non-linear or elliptical narratives authors can instigate multiple reading points, opening up meanings. Contemporary photography practice became more focused on artists' personal issues, expressing internal experiences and putting less attention on external aspects (Badger, 2010). This trend offered opportunities for alternative forms of photobook narratives and quickly photographers started to embrace the use of non-linear narratives. Surrealist movies introduced the use of montage and disrupted narratives while French *Nouvelle Vague* explored ideas rather than plot (Badger, 2010). William Klein's *New York* (1957) and Robert Frank's *The Americans* (1958, reprinted in

2017 by Steidl, eleventh edition) are valid examples of authors that used elliptical narratives through montage and symbolic imagery. I would argue that these two books were very influential for contemporary photographers due to the different approaches applied. Klein worked interactively with his subjects while Frank went for a poetic and political take on the United States.

Riding the River Ride and *Let Light Create Imaginary Spaces*

Riding the River Ride (appendix 1) and *Let Light Create Imaginary Spaces* (appendix 2) share similar curatorial approaches where I produced and curated a group of images towards a specific creative product. The actual photographic style and techniques were different and yet aimed at the construction of a photo narrative. *Riding the River Ride* was my first attempt to compile a number of photographs, maps and words into a particular narrative platform, namely the photobook. *Riding the River Ride* is one version of my experiences and the ways I used photography to perceive and construct Te Awa River Ride. In addition, this project was deeply informed by ethnographic research methods predominantly from stage 1 of my photography practice (methodology). During this stage, I focused on familiarising myself with the area, scouting for key locations, cycling and walking and making photographs. The title *Riding the River Ride* was therefore informed by these practices and the construction of a photobook (or a form of visual journal) covering my experiences. The practice of photobook-making was a useful strategy to make sense of my initial experiences and photography practice at Te Awa River Ride.

I consider this project a primary curatorial exercise and a way to print and test sequenced images. Some photographers prefer the term photobook ‘dummy’ (a visual draft towards the final book) as a way to describe compiled products generated during the testing stages before making the final photobook version of a work. So within this context, *Riding the River Ride* is a form of photobook prototype where I tested a number of possibilities around a number of photographic images. The photographs used on this project were shot during the first six months of my creative fieldwork at Te Awa River Ride.

Let Light Create Imaginary Spaces is a different project where I only experimented with the language of black and white photography and the assemblage of a sequence. My goal was to move away from the photobook format in which images can be sequenced in pairs, following a page-after-page narrative progression. In contrast to my photobook, I wanted to experiment with a platform that allowed me to focus on the idea of sequencing without the specific publishing demands of a photobook project. Next, I will discuss some key points about photobooks and how these help photographers expand their vision into a complete visual narrative product. For now, however, I highlight *Let Light Create Imaginary Spaces* as a useful sequential exercise where I focused on the ordering of 12 black and white images.

Riding the River Ride: Methodology

Figure 53. Page spread of *Riding the River Ride*, 2016. Source: Rodrigo Hill 2016.

Printed publication platforms allow contemporary photography practice to be successfully expanded through the use of words, materials, maps, design, documents and imagery (Colberg, 2012). The whole publication can be seen as a *text* that carries meaning, offering multiple reading points. Drawing on these ideas, I have edited *Riding the River Ride* non-linearly, combining and juxtaposing multiple elements such as maps and architectural plans from Te Awa River Ride, images and written text. I developed great interest in the maps, particularly the

ones that explain Māori land settlements (Hamilton City Council & Nga Mana Toopu O Kirikiriroa Limited, 2003) and how areas were used or what kind of historical significance they have. Maps and architectural design plans are very useful visual elements as they invite the viewer to "unpack" the landscape, opening up the various historical, cultural and geographical layers of the locale. This process could be considered a door to 'geographical imaginaries' of place. The visual sequencing practice of juxtaposing multiple representational images creates further readings on the landscape and thereby triggers alternative perceptual processes. Within this scenario, *Riding the River Ride* may be considered a montage of perceptions that together propose an additional reading or a door to a whole new process of re-perception. Building on Lyons' (2012) concept of the photographic sequences based on "disjunctive relationships" (p. 199), I have paired the images disjunctively as micro narrative bodies within the grand photo narrative sequence. I will unpack how I edited and sequenced the pairings below.

Words and Images:

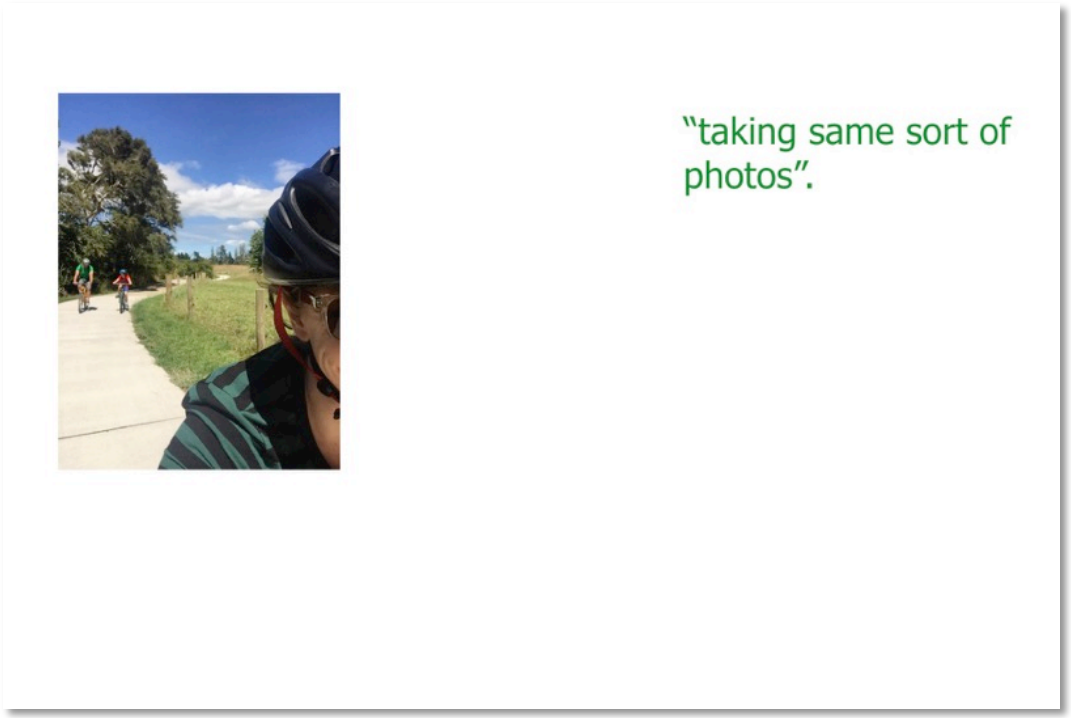


Figure 54. Page spread of *Riding the River Ride*, 2016. Source: Rodrigo Hill 2016. Photograph by Jennifer Palmer, used with permission.

Some of the images from this project were edited from photo voice exercises carried out during the first six months of my fieldwork at Te Awa River Ride.

Figure 54 is credited to Jennifer Palmer, project manager of Te Awa River Ride. I have conducted a photo voice exercise with Jennifer Palmer, followed by an interview where we discussed some of her images. The image and text above, "taking same sort of photos" are both Palmer's, and the text was extracted from her photo voice interview. I have included this photograph because of its almost idyllic social media aesthetic appeals; however, the image has a slightly different cropping than most of the conventional selfies. It is an 'on the go' kind of photograph and cropping 'mistakes' may happen when one is moving along the Ride. Also I am intrigued by the image's 'three dimensional' qualities and how the foreground 'pops out of the frame'. On the other hand, within the conceptual parameters of this photobook, I argue that the image in question can be more than a selfie; it can be expanded into a photographic reflection of one's place-identity and place-making engagements. This strategy of combining fragments of text from research participants has been previously implemented during my past photobook project, *The Harbor,* where I asked participants to write about their feelings and experiences as immigrants in Whaingaroa, Aotearoa.

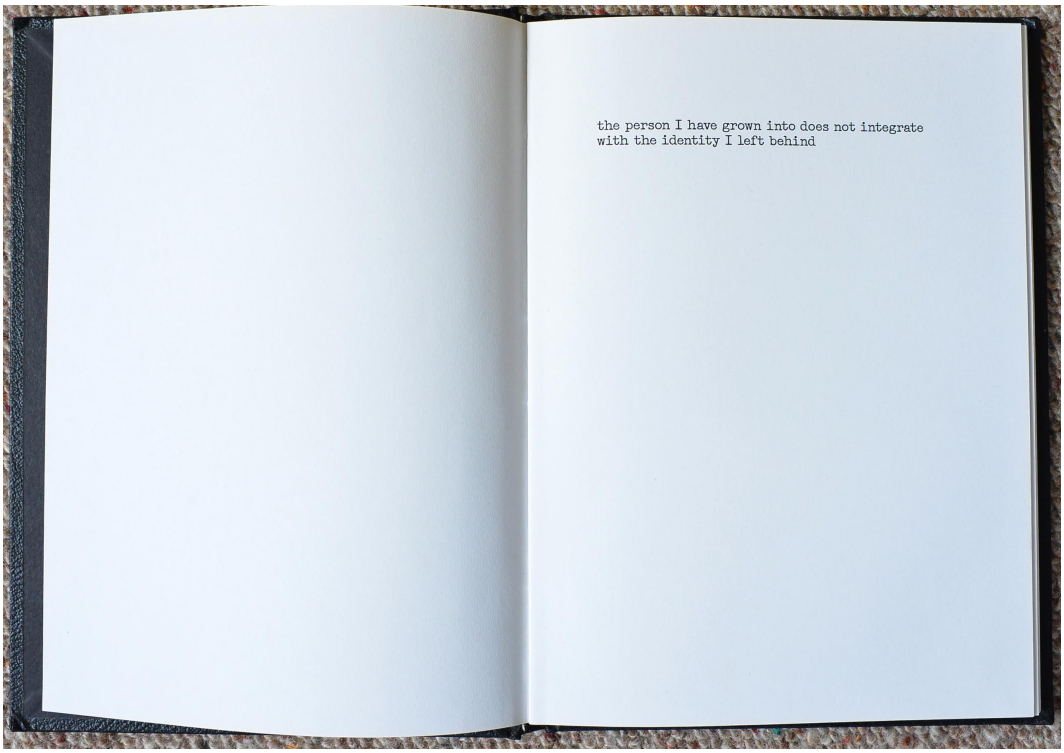


Figure 55. Page spread of *The Harbor*. Source: Rodrigo Hill 2013.

The words used on the editing of *Riding the River Ride* are fragments from ethnographic interviews undertaken with research participants. The interviews were part of photo voice exercises where participants took photographs around Te

Awa River Ride and were followed up by an interview. I have listened to the interviews carefully and extracted some fragments that had connections with participants' photographic place-making practices at Te Awa River Ride. These fragments are small perceptual elements and like the photographs are part of a narrative. The idea of using small written fragments juxtaposed with the images is informed by the ways words can open up multiple arenas within the photographic field of meanings. In the theoretical framework chapter I have discussed Teju Cole's (2017a) book *Blind Spot* and how Cole uses words and images as a sequencing strategy to help prompt, frame and complicate meaning. Cole juxtaposed elaborated and eloquent writing fragments with photographic images while I have used small fragments from participants' interviews. Within the parameters of my participatory research approaches, the words give voice to participants, and by adding these narratives I am deliberately reinforcing the idea of reality as a subjective construction based on many individuals' interpretations of the world.

The selection of the actual written fragments was part of a fluid and experimental editing process where I looked for particular words that were potentially related to the image's aesthetic features. My goal was to use the written words to complement and 'unlock' particular meanings in the photographs and vice-versa. The words also add a complementary layer to the narrative, demarcating recurring points within the sequencing and overall narrative. The recurrence of elements, such as the words and visual motifs, is useful to create a sense of cohesiveness without compromising the non-linear progression of the narrative. Non-linearity is another strategy common to contemporary photography and photobook making practices. Non-linear narratives are more open to meaning-making processes where the viewer has the ability of creating alternative perceptual conclusions about the work. Juxtaposition, mystery and ambiguity are therefore fundamental for the creation of such non-linear narratives and the subsequent disjunctive relationships between the visuals.

A final note on the book's design. The design features of *Riding the River Ride* are minimalistic; the images sit on the top third of the page, leaving blank white space in the bottom third. This is done so the squared format images can sit in the

page and not on full bleed (full bleed could look really interesting; however, it would add a higher visual impact on the narrative).

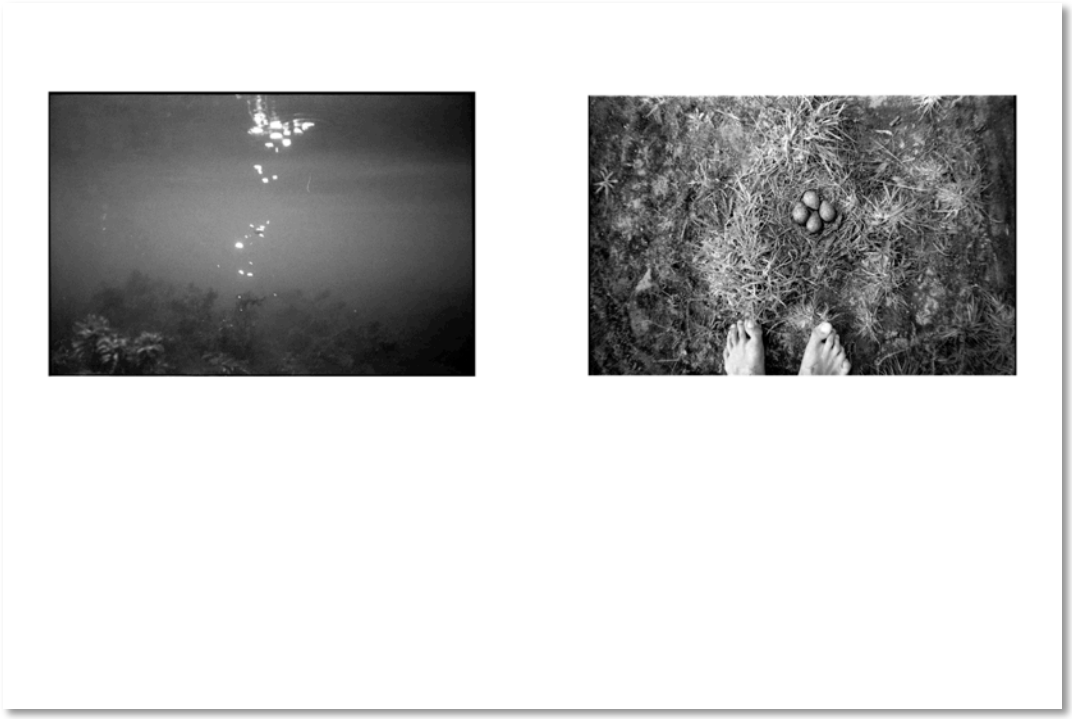


Figure 56. Page spread of *Riding the River Ride*, 2016. Source: Rodrigo Hill 2016.

I believe the upper third design works well, particularly when multiple image formats are used. The upper page layout allows for a continuation through the images despite the multiple image formats (panoramic, square and horizontal).

Production Stages:

I begin by outlining some of the representational challenges I went through and the limits of photography to render abstract concepts such as emotions and feelings connected to personal experiences. As discussed in chapter three, the initial stages of my creative fieldwork at Te Awa River Ride were informed by sensory ethnography. So the sensorial and experiential played key roles in my photographs and the ways I explore photographic possibilities of knowing, experiencing and making places.

The use of black and white, and colour images was deliberately experimental at this stage in the project. I was purposefully playing with different colour/black and white tones, searching for ways to represent feelings and experiences ─ all of which are extremely difficult to capture and portray photographically. Curator and

writer Lyle Rexer (2013) connects the limitations of photographic representation to its early modernist/positivist framings and the idea that photographs are analogous copies of the real. Rexer explains that within the modernist paradigm "there is a conviction that experience manifests deep unities that are not logically or immediately perspicuous" (Rexer, 2013, p. 11). Moreover, the surrounding codes and ways of decoding photographs delineate the production and interpretation of photographs within its own conventionalities. So there is clear historical struggle connected to photography's ability to represent abstracted concepts through a "continuing urge to transcend the visual through the visual" (Rexer, 2013, p. 11). Within this scenario, I rely on the codes, language and affordances of photographic apparatuses and practices to represent or suggest particular notions beyond the depicted. So, at first, some of my photographs may have failed in this achievement. But photographs are not necessarily static. Photographs can be expanded and liberated from the primary indexical burden of representation into a disturbance towards the construction of extended meanings. Within this scenario, I argue that photomontages, photo narratives and sequencing of photographs are powerful mechanisms to disrupt the indexical factor. Moholy-Nagy (1947) argued that a photograph once inserted into sequences has the ability to "lose its separate identity and becomes a part of the assembly" (p. 208). So my urge to expand the apparentness of a photograph into suggestive visual affections starts in the playing of possibilities within the actual domains of my chosen medium of photography. This is then transcended through a project of curation, sequencing and compilation where stable signifiers are expanded into a complex network of signified meanings.

So I was deliberately playing with photographic possibilities using my own subjectivity in an attempt to experiment with the technical abilities of different camera apparatuses. I argue that some of the black and white images have an aura of dreams and fantasies that was informed by participants' stories and narratives related to Te Awa River Ride and the Waikato River. Aesthetically the images ranged from landscape to contemporary documentary photography modes of representation. I have used the Waikato River as a narrative motif as well as the images that depicted moving bodies. So there was an overarching visual frame around the images, although the actual image-to-image relationship was contrapuntal. The portraits were deliberately arranged, posed and constructed. The

subject is always looking at the camera, which implies certain guidance from the photographer. Generally, I asked people to not smile and just ‘look’. These directions created uniformity throughout the portraits and continuation in the narrative; however, this strategy does not leave much room for aesthetic unpredictability.

Light plays a crucial role in the development of an aesthetic style and at the same time can communicate particular geographical features; for example, the predominant light style of the Waikato River and the reflections, highlight low light dynamics and colour tones throughout the seasons. These aesthetic strategies must be considered carefully because they are the representational materialisation of the overarching concepts that surround the work.

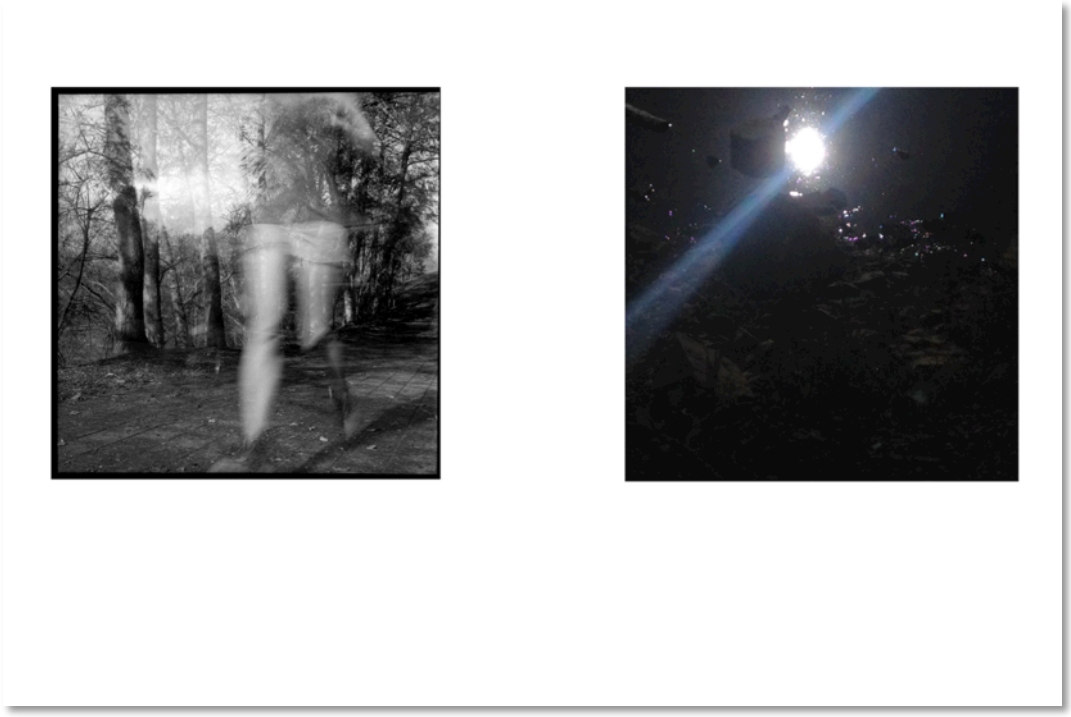


Figure 57. Page spread of *Riding the River Ride*, 2016. Source: Rodrigo Hill 2016.

Both creative milestones #1 and #2 shared similar editing and curatorial processes aimed at the production of different products, photobook and digital sequence. The assembling process towards a final creative photographic product is intrinsically connected to the process of editing and curating photographs. This applies to both more refined and elaborated products such as gallery installations and finished photobook projects as well as micro curatorial/sequential exercises such as *Let Light Create Imaginary Spaces*. The photobook, for example, is a curatorial object with the purpose of conveying narrative and authorial voice. So

to get to the finished product there are a few stages the photographer must go through. For the creation of *Riding the River Ride* and *Let Light Create Imaginary Spaces,* I have started with a broad editing exercise, cutting down images to a number of potential 'keepers'[11]. The selected keeper images functioned as guides for the subsequent sequencing process. However, once images were juxtaposed and weighted against each other, further editing decisions took place, shuffling and including or excluding images from both selected and broader collections. This editing and juxtaposition process is ultimately framed by the author's intentions and possibilities of vision and expression (Lyons, 2012).

The conceptual parameters for *Riding the River Ride* and *Let Light Create Imaginary Spaces* were based on the idea of place-making and subsequently imaginaries as well as my experiences and the ways I used photography to perceive and construct Te Awa River Ride. These parameters formed the boundaries of my editing, added to the form and content of the images as well as the selection of technically successful images (Colberg, 2016). Note that form and content are connected to subject matter, composition and lighting and these must be then connected to the actual conceptual framework of the project, which also guided technically successful images. I based my editing on the idea of place-making and imaginaries therefore the images were supposed to aesthetically carry some of these conceptual notions. My intentions at this early stage of my PhD research were to experiment with my images aiming to generate critical and reflexive responses towards my creative methodology. For both projects, I started with a large number of images that were then edited down to group successful images to be printed as test prints. The test prints offered me a useful starting point for my sequential developments where I shuffled and juxtaposed images, weighting images against each other into a combined process of selection and juxtaposition.

During the editing and sequencing of *Riding the River Ride* I focused on pairing of images as a sequential strategy and this helped me to edit a few more photographs down to an even smaller number of 34 paired core images. The next and last step was the sequencing of the pairings. This stage works like a puzzle

[11] 'Keeper' photographs had strong aesthetic qualities and offered curatorial possibilities towards compilation and sequencing processes as well as potential for further sense-making developments.

where everything is shuffled around and several possibilities are tried. I followed Nathan Lyons' and Keith Smith's approach on photographic sequences. Keith Smith (2010) understands sequences as a construction based on cause and effect where "several pictures react to, or act upon each other, but not necessarily with the adjacent picture, as in a series. The structure is contrapuntal. A sequence is a geometric progression, a montage" (p. 218). *Let Light Create Imaginary Spaces* followed a less structured process where I holistically tested the sequencing of 12 images. I also had a set number of final images in mind and the editing in this sense was more fluid and with less concern on the pairings but on the overall image-to-image relationships.

The images for both projects were initially categorised by visual motifs such as the Waikato River (water), portraits (people), maps and the more experimental dreamy looking representations (visual responses to my personal processes of experiencing and making of Te Awa River Ride). The relationships between the images were informed by the actual aesthetic and conceptual qualities of the images as well as the relationship between words and photographs.

Figure 58. *Riding the River Ride*. Pairings: selected images in pairs but without a sequence. Source Rodrigo Hill 2016.

Some of the pairings on *Riding the River Ride,* for example, were more playful while others were juxtapositional around the image's form and content (formal qualities). There was no hierarchy between the images and the pairings; my goal was to emphasise the juxtapositions and non-linearity of the narrative. So there was no set beginning, middle or end and the rhythm was cadenced by recurring visual motifs and juxtapositions.

Overall, *Riding the River Ride* functions well as a photobook narrative and prototype for a more ambitious photobook project, which would include more refined design and sequencing approaches. For example, the use of one doubled-spread image in the sequencing may disrupt the continuity (not linearity) of the narrative as there is only one image laid out this way. While in terms of colour toning there is a form of dark, muted toning throughout the images with notes of distinctive shades of green connecting them. So gradually a sense of coherence and possibilities for meaning-making emerged through careful processes of sifting, selection and testing configurations, all part of intuitive, semi-structured and at times purposeful creative actions. [12]

Figure 59. *Riding the River Ride*. Selected pairs organised in a sequence. Source: Rodrigo Hill 2016.

[12] The ethnographic method of cycling and embedding myself in activities at Te Awa River Ride became gradually replaced by strategic uses of a bicycle as a method of transportation to key scouted locations. My early uses of cycling and other forms of mobility were also connected to my approach to know and familiarise myself with the extent of Te Awa River Ride. I therefore acknowledge the strong presence and significance of mobility practices, particularly cycling, as both dominant place practice and key factor in the construction of the River Ride.

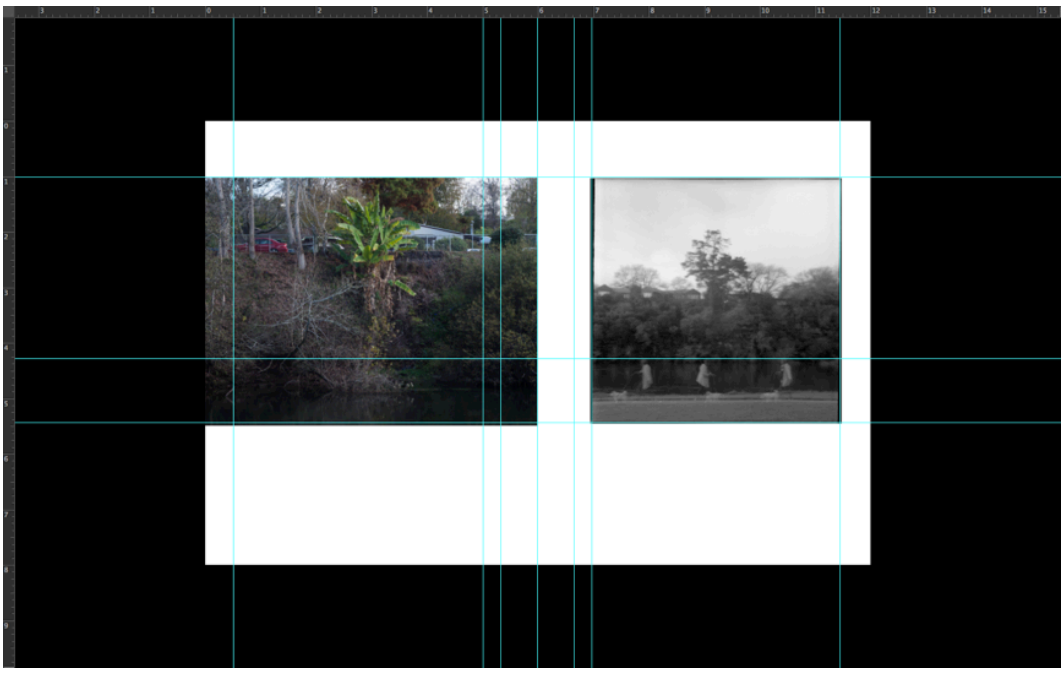


Figure 60. Design and page layout stage on Photoshop. Source: Rodrigo Hill 2016

The production of the photobook was divided into two stages: a) computer stage: page layout and design on Photoshop (Figure 60), and b) handcrafted: printing and assembling pages into book format (see Figure 61 for video of photobook).

Figure 61. Still of online video of *Riding the Rive Ride.* Source: Rodrigo Hill, video posted on Vimeo: https://vimeo.com/185391553.

Let Light Create Imaginary Spaces

Figure 62. Harakeke (flax plant) at Te Awa River Ride. Source: Rodrigo Hill 2017

In the previous section I have outlined a few differences and similarities between my creative milestones. In this section I discuss in greater depth my creative photographic processes and production of *Let Light Create Imaginary Spaces.* Contrary to my previous creative milestone, a hard copy photobook, *Let Light Create Imaginary Spaces* has been entirely conceived and presented digitally. However, I argue that the digital formatting and compilation of the images may also be used for the creation of a photobook where images are similarly sequenced in a particular order. Therefore, *Let Light Create Imaginary Spaces* can be considered a fragment of a complete photobook project where I 'zoomed in' on a particular production stage to explore in depth the act of sequencing photographs. In addition and in contrast to photobooks, I decided to conceive *Let Light Create Imaginary Spaces* as a purely screen-based product. This strategy reinforces the interplay of the virtual and the actual and how photography or curatorial photographic products can coalesce place imaginaries. The work comprised the sequencing of 12 black and white images. The images were curated and sequenced in a particular order in an attempt to illustrate the developments of my theoretical framework on imaginaries. The language of black and white photography was my chosen medium to explore notions of place and place-making. This shift in my photography practice was a deliberate choice, moving

away from colour photography, so I could open up further experimental possibilities around curation and sequencing. The actual practice of black and white photography also intersected with my creative fieldwork agenda and the ways I constructed photographs.

This creative milestone #2 was the result of a number of months exploring the possibilities of black and white film photography, and its representational capacities towards imaginary spaces and place making processes at Te Awa River Ride. Building on the black and white works of Katrin Koenning and Sarker Protick, I explored the medium of black and white photography as a route to represent internal feelings and processes. This more conceptual approach to black and white photography goes against the conventional and objective uses of this medium championed by anthropologists and photojournalists. My goal was to experiment and push the conventions of black and white photography into a mode of expression. In this sense, the territory 'in between' the actual Te Awa River Ride physical place and the subsequent geographical imaginaries marked the starting point of my photographic production. Consequently, the end point of my photography practice unfolds through curation, sequencing and compilation/assemblage of images. *Let Light Create Imaginary Spaces* is the final compression act of a particular stage of my photography practice and simultaneously the opener for reflections and explanations on my creative decisions.

The images in *Let Light Create Imaginary Spaces* are possibilities, constructions and psychological visual responses to my experiences at Te Awa River Ride. The images are bound by the language and conventions of black and white photography, a deliberate narrowing of techniques in image production. My goal was to create dreamy/atmospheric looking representations of psychological processes of place understanding and making. Similarly to my previous creative milestone, the images were built around motifs such as light, water, movement and people. These images represent durations or micro perceptions of place. The idea of playing with the possibilities of 'reality' and how a camera can construct alternative versions of spaces and places is a useful underpinning for expanded approaches to photographic representation. As I mentioned in the theoretical framework chapter two of this thesis, my photography practice is a practice of the

real-mediation between place virtualities and actualities. This is the space I dive into in search of the actual images. The imaginary spaces are therefore grounded in the real, linking spaces and places through an artistic investigation of dimensions of memory, affect and cultural perception. These ideas are useful conceptual frameworks for the experimental developments and multimodality of my photography practice at Te Awa River Ride.

Figure 63. *Let Light Create Imaginary spaces*, 2017. Source: Rodrigo Hill 2018 (zoom in, alternatively see appendix 2.1)

To construct *Let Light Create Imaginary Spaces* I have used multiple analogue film cameras (35mm and 120mm film formats) and shot with the legendary Kodak Tri-X 400 black and white film. Once digitally scanned, the images can then be presented online on websites or blogs as well as in printed formats such as photobooks (curatorial and assemblage stages). In this sense, I followed similar strategies from my previous creative milestone, putting attention not only on the act of producing photographs but also on the actual process of making sense of the work through curation, sequencing and compilation. Because of the smaller number of images produced and narrowing of techniques utilised, I had more focused ideas on the ways these images would function as curated products.

Te Awa River Ride is an imagined place, constructed and layered according to specific design agendas. So building on these ideas I am extending the concept of imaginaries and pushing it into a creative realm of (photographic) possibilities in order to generate further understandings and meanings on place perception and construction. As previously tested in *Riding the River Ride*, I have used maps as a visual motif in the sequencing of *Let Light Create Imaginary Spaces*. The maps alongside the images work as catalysers for questions and alternative meaning creations. Besides that, the maps provide a sense of location where the narrative takes place. Visual diversity then becomes crucial to sustain the idea of imaginaries and the construction of a complex body of visual sources to place-making processes.

Notes on Black and White Photography

Philosopher Vilém Flusser argues that black and white photography is abstract and detached from day-to-day life and consequently a useful route to visually represent theoretical concepts (2000). Flusser goes further and argues that reality is actually 'colourful' (2000). In this sense, black and white photography becomes a powerful tool to create alternative versions of the world that are not primarily connected with our immediate perception capacities. Thereby, when looking at an abstract black and white image one is more prone to be led to a pondering state rather than an immediate chain reaction of recognition. For instance, Figure 42 (third image in the sequence, see appendix 2.1) depicts the Waikato River but because it is black and white the viewer is invited to create alternative meanings and perhaps conclude that the image is about clouds, smoke or even the moon. Within this scenario I argue that the language of black and white photography can be a poetic and lyrical way to render images, prompting audiences into more interpretive modes of reading the work.

Let Light Create Imaginary Spaces is about light and place imaginaries. Black and white photography's raw material is light or the lack of it. Black and white film reacts to light; the very basic principle of photography, and the amount of light that enters the camera and touches the film creates shapes and forms based on oppositions-shadows and brightness. Colour photography also reacts to light but it is guided by distinction where one colour tone complements the other (Puls, 2016). This is an interesting point because my photography practice at Te Awa River Ride was influenced by light and how it creates shapes and forms. I am interested, therefore, in the *photo* (graphic) reactions that are part of my place perception and making processes as well as the ways the medium of black and white offers me a compelling way to capture and render these processes.

The legendary Kodak Tri-X 400: Black and white film in general is more tolerant to light, providing wider latitude with rich highlights and deep blacks. It captures more details, showing subtleties. Black and white film also has more exposure latitude and the Kodak Tri-X 400 is a champion film in tonal range and exposure latitude.

On the other hand, I am aware of the loaded history of black and white photography and its objective uses to represent reality. So I was trying to deliberately play against these dynamics by exploring the multiple representational and technical possibilities of the medium. My photography practice at Te Awa River Ride sought extraordinary layers of place perception in order to enter a psychological domain of place-making processes. Within this scenario, the language of black and white photography was useful to strip down colours, focusing on the rendering of imaginary representations, textures, light and feelings.

Let Light Create Imaginary Spaces: Methodology

From October 2016 to February 2016 I produced over 500 images, all photographed on film, hand processed and scanned into digital files. The production workflow is complex and divided into multiple stages, from making my own 35mm film rolls to scanning the negatives, adjusting the images on Photoshop, making proof sheets as well as work prints for editing. These steps encompassed significant changes in my creative process compared to the initial stages in which I used digital and film cameras. I still consider the size and volume of the work small as it was shot over a relatively short period compared to long-term artistic/research projects where photographers spend a number of years working on the same project.

Digitally-based platforms can offer the photographer a useful display platform to present long- or short-term photographic projects. In my case I consider this platform particularly useful because it allows me to produce, curate, test and present the work in a fluid way with no need to enlarge fine art quality prints or publications. In addition, I can publish work as I produce it, letting me compile and present multiple bodies of work within the grand Te Awa River Ride creative PhD project. So, in this sense, *Let Light Create Imaginary Spaces* is another kind of a prototype where I tested the possibilities of a body of black and white photographs, triggering reflective/reflexive commentary on my photography practice.

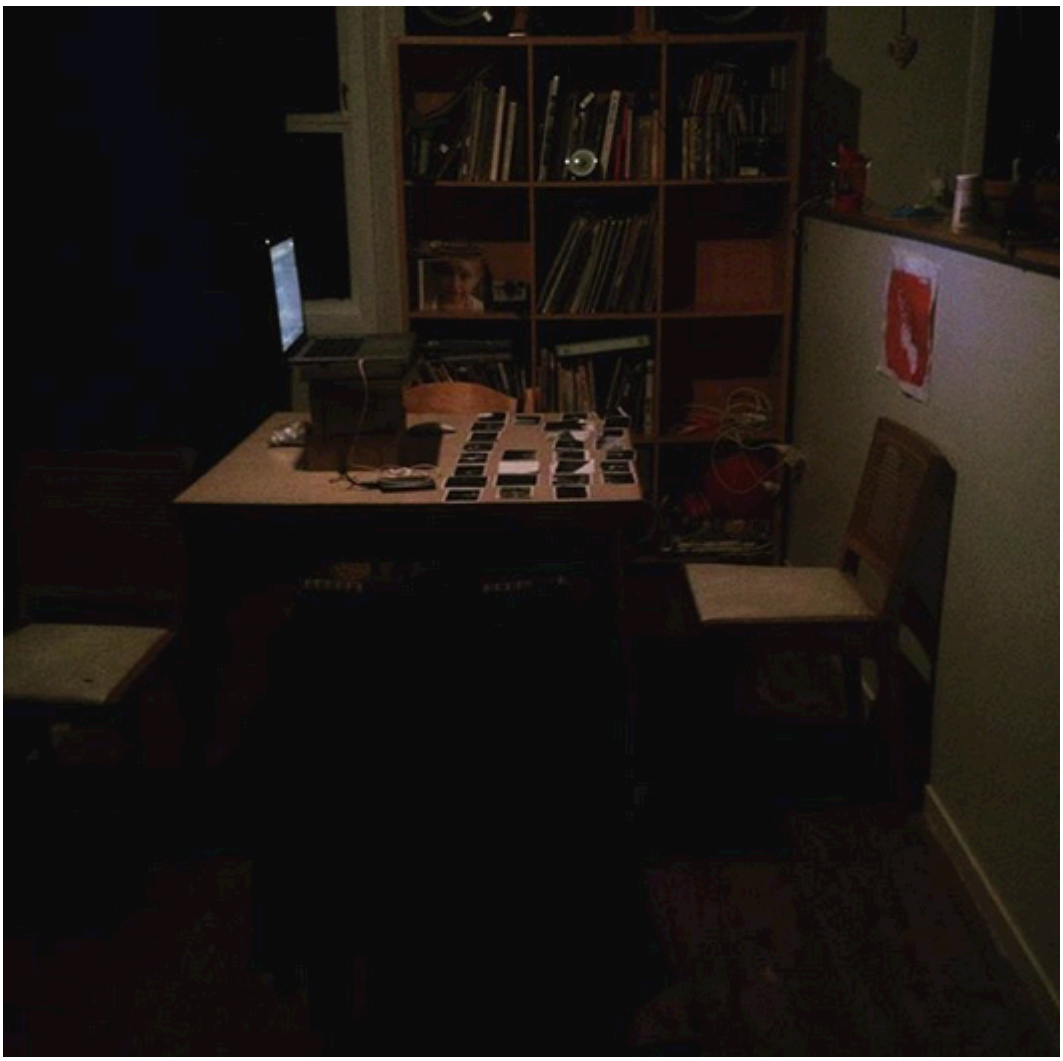


Figure 64. Editing of *Let Light Create Imaginary Spaces* 2017. Source: Rodrigo Hill 2017.

Let Light Create Imaginary Spaces is a digitally-based visual sequence with 12 black and white images arranged in a particular order to create a sense narrative. In order to deconstruct and explain the work it is useful to start with the term sequence and its implications. Artist Keith Smith (2010) offers some seminal insights into how to compile images based on visual book-making. Smith's ideas are also useful to ground the sequencing of my previous creative milestone, *Riding the River Ride*. However, for the purposes of my second creative milestone, I have adapted Smith's ideas to assemble a group of 12 sequenced images. The concepts I will discuss next are in essence applied to visual publications, artist books and photobooks. However, I argue that these concepts can be applied to any ordered group of images displayed in various types of platforms (as in websites, photobooks and gallery exhibitions). Smith (2010) categorises image amalgamation in three types of organisations: groups, sequences and series. Group is a list with a common subject matter. Series is a group of images linked in a

straight linear line, as Smith (2010) explains it: "A series is linear, arithmetical progression, each picture, an extension of the previous, modifies the next: a succession, a metamorphosis, or a narration … a series is *linking movement*" (p. 218). Lastly a sequence is

> constructed by cause and effect; it is contingent in structure. Several pictures react to, or act upon each other, but not necessarily with the adjacent picture, as in a series. The structure is contrapuntal. A sequence is a geometric progression, a montage … a sequence is *conditional movement.* (Smith, 2010, p. 218).

I ground *Let Light Create Imaginary Spaces* on Smith's sequence definition above. Within this context, contrapuntal structures where several pictures react and act upon each other can reinforce the sense of ambiguity and mystery in a body of work. My photography practice is infiltrated by several postmodern concepts such as plurality (camera technologies and multiple modes of visual representation), use of ambiguity, mystery and metaphorical underpinnings for image construction and lastly the idea of fiction as reality. Photographs once juxtaposed may trigger distinctive meaning-making process and this may influence the reading and interpretation of particular concepts. The Photographic series, on the contrary, are more predictable due to its linear nature. A series is more likely to weaken the sense of ambiguity and mystery that I rely on to construct my photographs. In addition, the reading of a photographic series has a beginning, middle and end with little room for alternative meanings and readings, like photographic reportages for example. This is connected with objective approaches to photography where photographs are created and displayed in a linear fashion with a clear story line and theme.

Let Light Create Imaginary Spaces has set motifs that are constantly referred to over the 12 images. The motifs are visual and thematic, such as the Waikato River (water) or the use of highlights on the photographs. The motifs travel along the sequence, giving coherence to the visual photo narrative without compromising the sense of ambiguity of the images. The digital sequence can be viewed and instantly read as a totality contrarily to a visual book that only allow two pages at time and more comprehensive interpretive processes. The digital sequence allows particular affordances and ways of engaging with the images. It functions as a totality, designed and sequenced for instant interpretations in which references are

revealed, and “only then is a sequence “seen”, because only after the fact all pictures are placed into context” (Smith, 2010, p. 263).

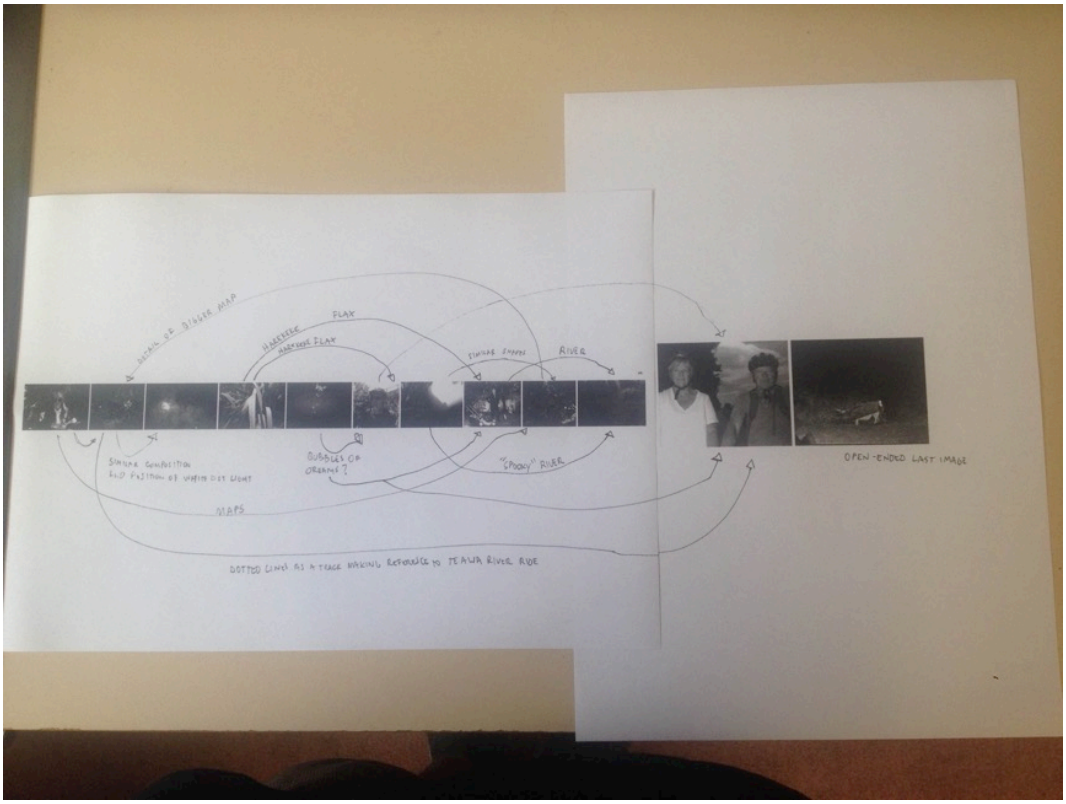


Figure 65. Sequencing scheme of *Let Light Create Imaginary Spaces.* Source: Rodrigo Hill 2017.

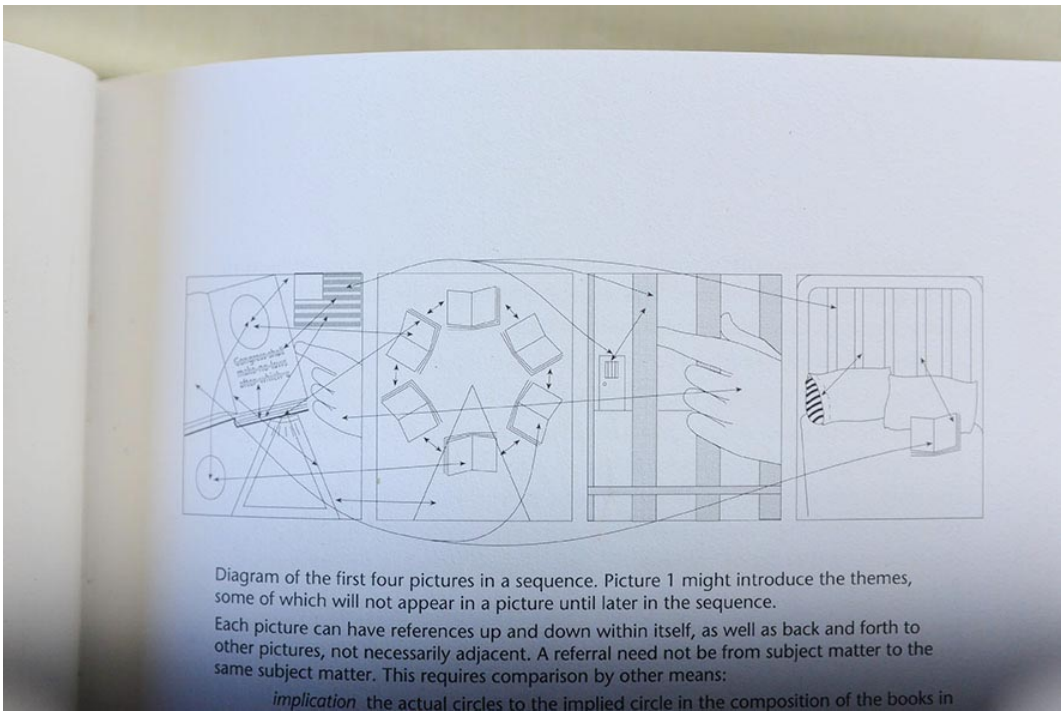


Figure 66. Sequencing map. Photograph of Keith Smith 2010, Structure of the Visual Book, page 263. Source Keith Smith (http://www.keithsmithbooks.com/index.htm).

In *Let Light Create Imaginary Spaces,* the main theme referred to is light as it travels through all the images in various forms; for instance, as a highlight spot on the woman's face (first image) or a bright light formation (depicted on the seventh image of the sequence, see appendix 2.1). The first image depicts a woman reading a book, marking a useful start as it introduces the idea of imagination (as when one is reading a book of poetry, for example). This image carries tension and mystery. The woman holds an open book in her hand and she is looking directly at the camera. We do not know what this book is about, so I have introduced the second image (detail of the bigger map) as a suggestion, and then it goes to the third image (Waikato River water study and light reflections), another close-up photograph. The close-up map and river images are similar in shape and composition. These two images, however, are thematically contrapuntal; they do not follow a logical order. They mark tensions and pose questions. Aesthetically, however, they may look similar as they have common black and white tones. It was a challenge for me to pin down *Let Light Create Imaginary Spaces* as a sequence as it sometimes resembles serial movements like how it flows from the first image to the second. Perhaps there are small serial exchanges within the sequence, but overall my intention was for the work to be read as a totality and not as a group of linked movements.

The map from Figure 67 has been manipulated and cropped in. I used the original map from Figure 7. The original map depicts the whole extent of the Waikato River including the Raglan Harbour area (the place where I start my fieldwork journeys to Te Awa River Ride). I cropped a smaller detailed area of the map that represents Kirikiriroa, a central area within the Waikato Valley and one of my main targeted locations when doing my creative fieldwork. I have manipulated the map on Photoshop in order to achieve similar tonal range than the other images (high contrasted black and white). This way the motif of light/luminosity (represented on the map as the white dotted lines) can travel through each of the 12 images creating conceptual cohesion. The title *Let Light Create Imaginary Spaces* supports and reinforces the idea of 'light' and imaginaries. The title works as a metaphor for place-making or 'journeying' (physically and/or psychologically) through spaces letting light possibly shape the way we perceive and create imaginaries of Te Awa River Ride.

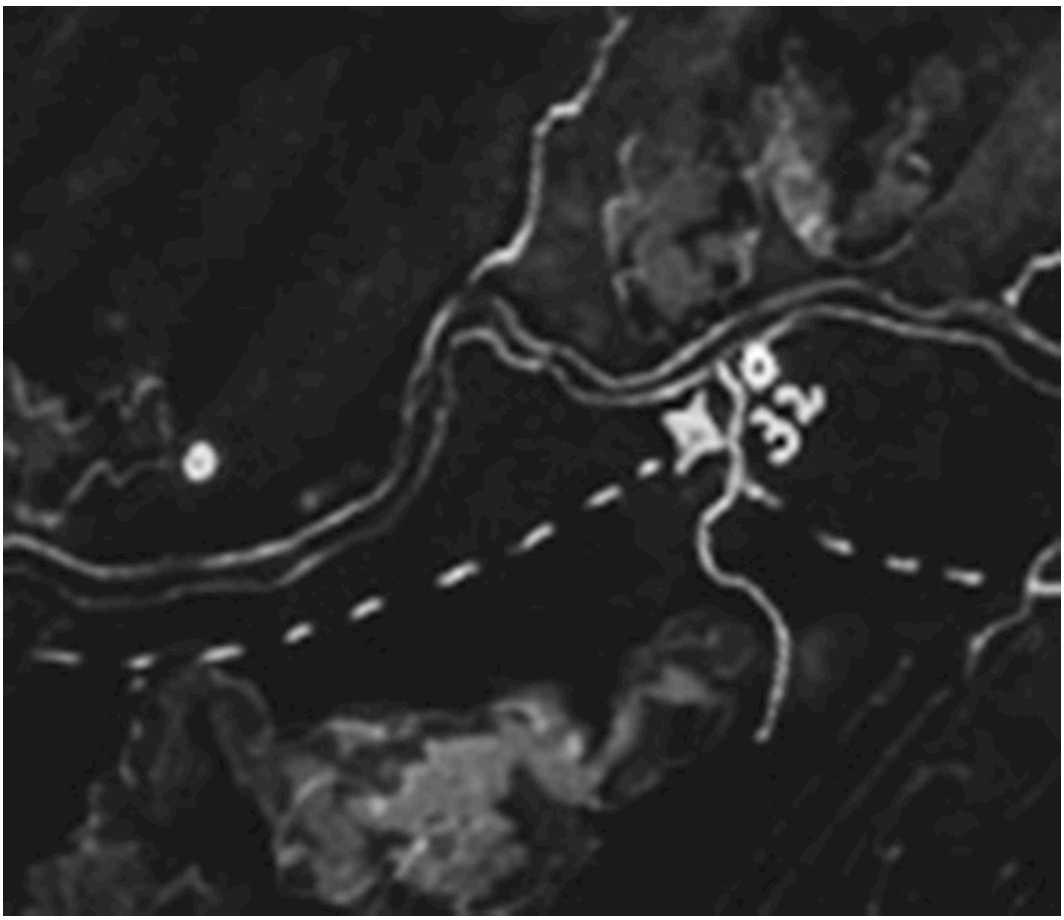


Figure 67. Detail of map manipulation from *Let Light Create Imaginary Spaces*, 2017. Source: Rodrigo Hill 2017.

There are four portraits spread across the sequence and they work as additional motifs. Two of the portraits depict cyclists and their helmets work as motifs as well. The first cyclist (Figure 68) was riding the northern city section of the Ride and we met under the Horotiu Bridge while having a break from the hot summer sun. This shot is actually a 'moment between moments'. As I was talking to him and giving some instructions, I decided to fire the camera because I saw that he moved his head upwards as when one is thinking/wondering. I thought it created a curious effect combined with the haziness of the image (it was bright midday sun). My goal was to create dreamy/atmospheric looking representations of psychological processes of place understanding and making. The second cyclist portrait (Figure 69) depicts a couple at the Cambridge section of Te Awa River Ride. They were on a kind of cycling tour around the North Island, stopping at various locations and going for rides. Their expressions have that wondering look and the close-up frame works well with Te Awa River Ride in the background. The light has a dramatic/atmospheric mood, creating tension. I think there is a bit of humour in this image, the look on the woman's face and how her helmet is

slightly tilted. At this stage of my photography practice, particularly portraiture, I was testing a number of directorial strategies and ways of working with research participants. In parallel, some of my key theoretical research frameworks were still under development, and as a photographer and artist I was looking for tools and methods to express key ideas connected to my research frameworks. This included experimentation with black and white photography and portraiture practices.

Figure 68. Research participant at Te Awa River Ride. Source: Rodrigo Hill 2017

Figure 69. Research participants at Te Awa River Ride. Source: Rodrigo Hill 2017

The recurrence of the motifs was useful to create tempo in the sequence. A rhythmic order linear or nonlinear creates (visual) narrative and gives meaning to the work. So meaning here can be manipulated by how images are ordered and displayed. I have ordered the images in a particular sequence, aiming to enhance the concept of imaginary spaces and place-making. However, I am aware that the same 12 images could have been sequenced differently towards different themes and concepts. Visual motifs are therefore useful punctuation elements to create movement and meanings either in photographic series or sequences, as pointed out by Smith (2010): "The references, which reveal the movement, determine the interpretation of the subject matter by placing pictures into context" (p. 265). This is a valuable point for the development of juxtaposed sequences and meaning interpretation processes. References and recurring motifs are crucial to the development of movement and progression within a particular sequence. The use of black and white photography imposed a narrowing of meaning and possible meaning-making processes. The smaller number of images produced was justified by the approaches I used and the slower photographic processes connected to film photography, film processing, testing and making proofs. The smaller number of images also allowed for tighter curatorial and authorial control. When compared

to digital sequences, photobooks involve more complex curatorial and production strategies. The final photobook can be therefore considered a more open and layered object that enables a wider range of meaning possibilities.

The curation and sequencing of *Let Light Create Imaginary Spaces* was a useful curatorial exercise to establish a methodology of compilation through curation and juxtaposed ordering of sequenced imagery. The actual digital platform where I constructed this creative milestone provided specific interpretation approaches, at times limited by the nature of the displaying method. The alignment of 12 images in a digital stripe implies a form of linear reading of the images, going from left to right and vice versa. The sequence then becomes more fixed with confined meaning possibilities, movements and progressions.

In the next chapter, I discuss my creative milestone #3, a photography installation titled *Stimuli*. My move to installation as a curatorial platform was partly motivated by an effort to explore how to open up my curated archive of photographs for more sense making. My initial motivation was to move from platforms connected to individual audiences and ways of engaging with photographic compilations to platforms that allowed individual and collective spatial engagements and interpretations.

Chapter Five
Creative Milestone #3: *Stimuli*

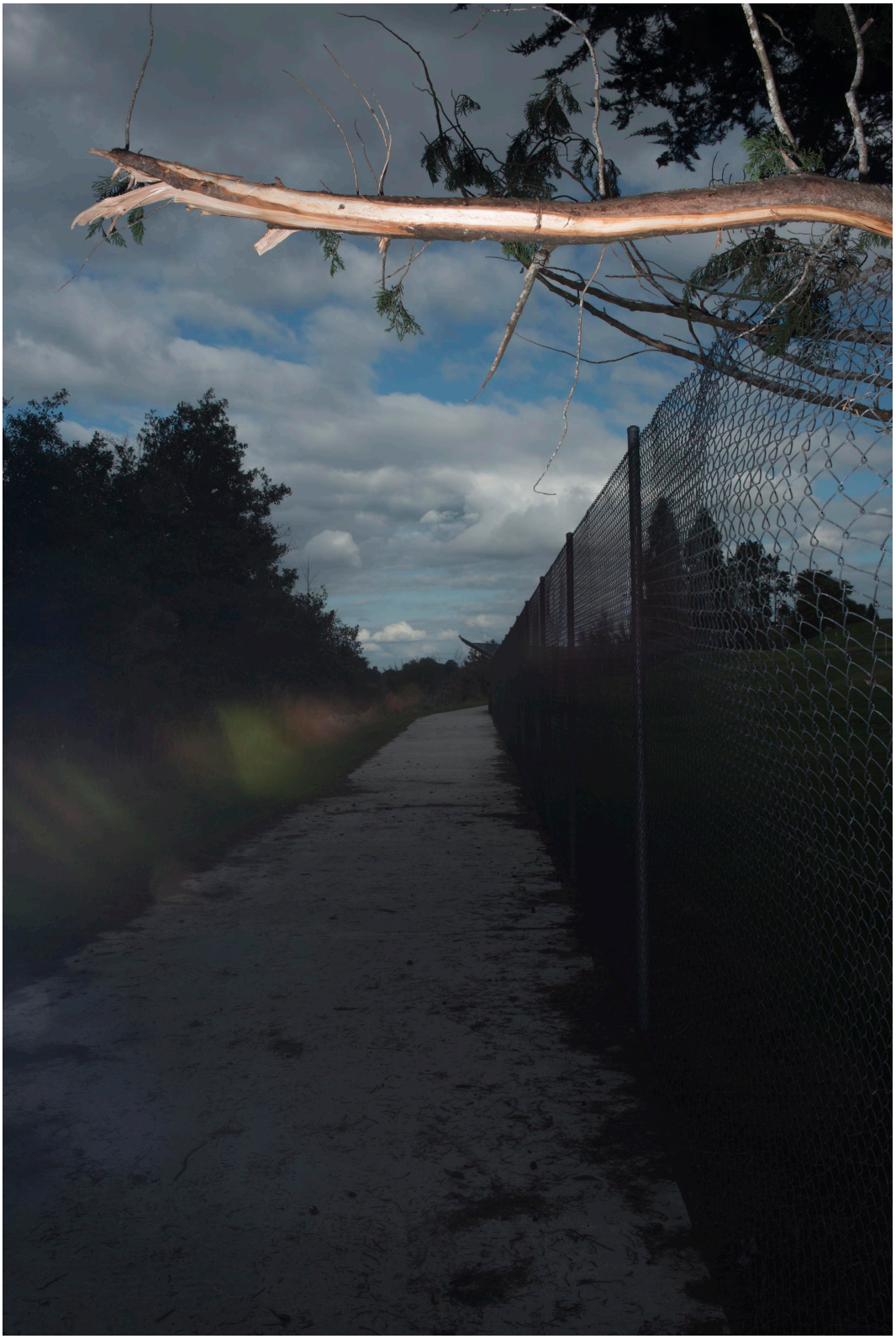


Figure 70. From *Stimuli*. Concrete path of Te Awa River Ride at dusk in Ngāruawāhia. Source: Rodrigo Hill 2017

In this chapter I aim to introduce installation art and the points of intersection between photography installation and my creative milestone #3, *Stimuli* (appendix 3). This creative milestone followed a progression in which I explored a particular set of strategies and methods in order to achieve a particular creative result. The spatial nature of installations provided useful points of expansion to my photography practice, moving away from two dimensional platforms to more considerate use of space to help represent place. The gallery space also provided more possibilities to explore scale, juxtaposition and sequencing of images that differ from my previous chosen curatorial platforms. I consider *Stimuli* a very useful curatorial exercise where I was able to test a number of sequential compiling strategies in order to compress multiple images into a cohesive visual statement. As an installation *Stimuli* provided an alternative way for audiences to engage with photographic sequences (more commonly bounded to photobooks), moving into and around the body of images.

Stimuli was part of a group exhibition titled *Newphotomedia2017*, a curatorial product that displayed the works of 14 different visual artists and the ways they use a multitude of visual practices (mostly lens-based) to perceive the world. The exhibition's opening was on June 6th 2017. The *Newphotomedia2017* exhibition was part of the Auckland Photography Festival core programme. *Newphotomedia2017* was also formatted into a photobook type of publication, showcasing the works of all 14 artists as well as written essays from the curators Becky Nunes and Anita Tótha (2017).

The title for this creative milestone came to me while re-reading some of my previous writing pieces and by noticing the recurrence of the word 'stimuli'. Later in this chapter I will unpack the reasons for the term stimuli and how it connects to the body of images and more broadly to my research frameworks. In addition, I will demonstrate my creative methodologies and how I used installation-based methods of curating, sequencing and displaying my photographic work.

Conceptual Framework

In this section I discuss some of the theoretical and philosophical underpinnings of *Stimuli*. The framing of *Stimuli* encompasses some of the ideas from installation art as well as the overarching conceptual framings on place imaginaries and visual perception. To start, I propose a return to James Gibson's (1979) seminal book, *Ecological Approach to Visual Perception*. I have referred to Gibson's work previously and the ways he conceptualises perception as a 'psychosomatic act'. Because photography and installation are visual mediums I will focus the idea of stimuli on visual perception. Gibson (1979) highlights the difference between the ways a stimulus has been conceptualised by the disciplines of physiology and psychology. Initially, as Gibson (1979) explains,

> the concept of stimulus comes from physiology, where the first meant whatever application of energy fires a nerve cell or touches off a receptor or excites a reflex response. It was taken over by psychology, because it seemed that a stimulus explained not only the arousal of a sensation but the arousal of a response, including responses much more elaborate than reflexes. If all behavior consisted of responses to stimuli, it looked as if a truly scientific psychology could be founded. This was the stimulus-response formula. (p. 56)

Gibson (1979), however, opts for the initial use of the term in the physiologic sense, where "anything that touches off a receptor or causes a response; it is the *effective* stimulus, and whatever application of energy touches off the receptor is effective" (p. 56). The point that I would like to highlight is that perception is not necessarily an immediate reaction to a stimulus but an action of information pick-up independent of the presence of information or the amount of stimulus (Gibson, 1979). It is known that our sensory mechanisms operate within a threshold of possibilities and affordances in which stimuli become more or less present (Gibson, 1979). These ideas take me back to French philosopher Henri Bergson and the way he talks about the elements that precede perception or "snapshots, as it were, of a passing reality" (Bergson, 2001, p. 295). This is a stimulating intersection and it makes me conclude that we sense within a threshold, a window where humans' sensory mechanisms slice fragments of the world. For example, I can look at a beam of light coming through the bushes of Te Awa River Ride. I see the light and my eyes can bear a particular intensity of rays and brightness. My eyes automatically adjust, letting pass through the pupil a particular amount of light. Therefore, humans' capacity to see is limited by the kind of light radiation

that excites the photoreceptors in the eye after entering the pupil (Gibson, 1979). A photographic camera, however, does not follow the same principle. I can adjust the aperture of the diaphragm to allow more or less light radiation to excite the film or digital sensor, and subsequently create multiple visual effects. The camera, therefore, 'sees more' and by letting more light rays pass through the lens mechanisms I am able to create alternative perceptual possibilities.

In 1923 Moholy-Nagy (2014) argued that humans' perceptual processes were the result of the ways "our intellectual experience complements spatially and formally the optical phenomena perceived by the eye and renders them into a comprehensible whole, whereas the photographic apparatus reproduces the purely optical picture (distortion, bad drawing, foreshortening)" (p. 131). Because of photography's capabilities of rendering a gamma of light rays beyond the humanly perceived, the medium has been used as an instrument of scientific purposes (Moholy-Nagy, 2014). These ideas are connected to the indexical discourse and realism of photographic depictions. However, as Köhler (1989) points out,

> The creative achievement of the camera artist consists in his choice of motifs and their photographic depiction as determined by the selection of camera view, focal length and exposure time. All affections of "painterly" or "graphic" effects diminish the realistic quality of the photograph and are therefore to be avoided. (p. 18)

Figure 71. Light rays going through tree branches at Te Awa River Ride. Source: Rodrigo Hill 2017.

So, on one hand, the affordances of camera apparatuses to render 'reality' beyond the humanly perceived are part of scientific agendas and indexical discourses. On the other hand, these affordances may be perceived, within the modernist paradigm, as excessively aesthetic offsetting the realistic nature of photographic depictions. These ideas are connected to the photograph in Figure 71 and the way the light rays are rendered, suggesting a possible photographic flaw, namely flare, and which photographers conventionally aim to avoid (and perhaps perceive it as an optical aberration). An alternative example of an appropriately applied photographic technique is the use of high shutter speeds to freeze movement. The avoided effect and exposure technique would be the use of lower shutter speeds and the resulting blur effect on the photograph, conventionally quoted as another flaw, within particular photographic conventions and modes of representation. These concepts and techniques were then taken into curatorial processes connected to gallery spaces. The spatial nature of installations provided here an interesting intersection with the techniques I used and overall aesthetic parameters. I engaged with the constraints and possibilities of site-specific staging of my photographs, moving away from the affordances of mediums such as photobooks and screen-based digital sequences.

Brief Introduction to Installation Art

Installation art started to appear around the same time as postmodern theories and the feminist movement in the late 1960s and early 1970s (Bishop, 2005). At this time feminist thought challenged patriarchal systems of thought, focusing on approaches in which multiple individuals could know multiple truths and could all contribute as knowledge producers. Feminist artists then turned to photography, installation and performance as a way to create discussions on the female body, sexuality and gender (Zalewski, 2003). As an example, Judy Chicago's *Dinner Party* (1979) as well as Carolee Scheemann's performance works represented a turning point in the art world. In relation to these two artists and their works, installation art can be framed and perceived as "theatrical, immersive or experiential" (Bishop, 2005, p. 6). At present, installation art has become a hybrid discipline, covering a vast territory of inquiry and practice connected to notions of exhibiting and displaying within contemporary art (De Oliveira, Oxley, & Petry, 2006). The term installation has been expanded to explain any organisation of

objects in any particular spaces. Like curating, installation could have become a way to describe the ordering of elements or objects, from the simplest music play list to artistic ordering of furniture (Hoffmann, 2014). Installation essentially is a (curatorial) method of putting fragments together, drawing attention to the relationship between art and life and thereby connecting the audience and the work. In this case, the viewer may become part of the work, creating new forms and meanings through different perceptual processes.

Installation art is therefore different from traditional art displaying methods where photographs, for example, are mounted at eye level and generally side-by-side. These more traditional positions address the viewer as a 'surveyor' that gazes at the work from a distance (Bishop, 2005). Contrarily, installation art

> presupposes an embodied viewer whose sense of touch, smell and sound are as heightened as their sense of vision. This instance and the literal presence of the viewer is arguably the key characteristic of installation art. (Bishop, 2005, p. 6)

So building on these points I have installed *Stimuli* in a way that the viewer could become a participant, acknowledging hers/his embodied presence and experience. The way I have installed the photographs invites the viewer's body to move closer to the work to see the smaller sized images, and far from the work to look at the overall piece. I actually refer to *Stimuli* as an (photography) installation for these reasons, the interactions, the displaying method and the sensory experience, in this case more focused on the vision. However, because *Stimuli* is part of a group exhibition, in which other works were displayed and installed with sounds and music, the viewer had the opportunity to develop an almost full sensory experience. Therefore, group exhibitions such as *Newphotomedia2017* can offer both individual and collective ways of experiencing and making sense of the works. Within this scenario, audiences' interpretations of *Stimuli* were possibly intersected with broader meaning-making processes connected to other art works exhibited in the same space. These helped to open up more possibilities for audiences to create multiple interpretations of both *Stimuli* and *Newphotomedia2017.*

Installation art gained momentum during the 1980s when the actual term installation started to be used more frequently (De Oliveira et al., 2006).

Fundamentally, the term installation was used to describe a kind of art that favoured the consideration of the connections between various objects and the subsequent interactions between elements and their contexts (De Oliveira et al., 2006). Essentially, installation art is about multiplicity and interactions, allowing already expanded art forms to be pushed further by the viewer. Next, I will examine photography installation more specifically, bringing some examples of how artists use installation methods to display photographic work.

Review of Relevant Photography Installation Works

In this section I review the work of relevant artists that use gallery spaces and installation-based methods of curation and compilation of photographic works. This collection of reviews is not a final collection but a sample of key installation practitioners. I have studied a number of contemporary works and artists such as Bryan Schutmaat, Alec Soth, Paul Graham, Taryn Simon, Yumi Goto (curator), Sunil Gupta, Muholi Zanele, Gregory Halpern and many others. Each of these artists has particular ways of curating and displaying works both through installation and/or photobook platforms and provided a variety of points of inspiration for my own site specific designs.

Wolfgang Tillmans

Wolfgang Tillmans' practice and installation strategies offer a useful framework for the development of my key methods of sequencing and juxtaposition of images. The diversity of mediums and modes of representation Tillmans explores are key premises to photomontage, photo narrative and sequencing progressions (Moholy-Nagy, 1969). In this sense, the diversity and multimodality of a particular body of photographs can offer compelling juxtaposition approaches to the construction of sequenced-based gallery installations.

Wolfgang Tillmans is an important name within contemporary photography practice. Originally from Germany and residing in London for the past 20 years, Tillmans was the first photographer to win the prestigious Turner Prize in 2000 (Jobey, 2010). The award opened new debates on photography and art, raising questions about Tillmans' practice and his snapshot style of photography to be

granted the status of artistic work. Tillmans' practice is in fact hard to pin down. There is a constant process of progression and innovation that pushes the boundaries of most if not all genres of contemporary photography practice (Fergusson, 2010). Tillmans' work is indeed fascinating and complex; the ways he renders experiences into photographs, connecting contrapuntal elements through a cohesive installation statement are very inspiring to me. Within Tillmans' work everything counts, as art critic Renate Puvogel (2013) explains:

> Equally as diverse as the material and techniques used in the photos is their spectrum of content: the subjects embrace quite personal experiences as well as political events-not just portraits, interiors, landscapes, astronomical images and still life, but also those abstract images that are produced without using a camera lens in the darkroom. (para. 3)

I have included below one example of Tillmans' installation works and how he uses different wall spaces to install the images. Tillmans also works with a range of materials that may include photocopies, documents, newspaper clippings and magazine pages. I like how he uses the tall gallery walls (Figure 72) to hang photographs well above eye level and printed in significantly larger sizes. The multiple sized photographs may lead the viewer to move across the room, leaning closer or standing afar to gain different viewpoints, like zooming in or out of a picture to see more or less detail.

Figure 72. Wolfgang Tillmans 1998. Installation view at Andrea Rosen Gallery, New York. Source: Andrea Rosen Gallery (http://www.andrearosengallery.com/).

Tillmans does not follow any hierarchical displaying methods; photographs are hung directly on the wall and next to prints and framed images (Puvogel, 2013). The layouts are complex and multilayered, as Renate Puvogel (2013) explains:

> This method sets new standards as it demands a new approach to photography and the way it is presented ─ an approach that does not focus on originality and value, but more on a piece's significance as a direct reflection of individual experience. (para. 2)

Tillmans' methods surely demand novel approaches to photography; his displaying and installing strategies are directly connected with his photography practice and the ways he renders his images. A fragmentary and fluctuant style where multiple images are created with the use of multiple mediums, such as digital and film photography (including photographic darkroom, camera-less ways of creating images), sets the background of Tillmans' work. His complex installation work is therefore built from a multimodal photography practice through which he constructs an array of visual representations. This is a very liberating approach as it opens up alternative ways of generating and displaying photographic work.

Katrin Koenning: *Dear Chris* 2013

Figure 73. Katrin Koenning. *Dear Chris*. 2013. Source: Katrin Koenning, used with permission.

Katrin Koenning's body of work *Dear Chris* was exhibited at the Edmund Pierce Gallery in Melbourne, Australia. The show was open from April 11th to May 4th,

2013. *Dear Chris* is about Koenning's cousin Alana and her husband Chris. Chris ended his own life after suffering from depression for several years. As Koenning (2017) explains on her website, Chris' "death came almost exactly a year after he attempted suicide in one of the grand state forests of his native Queensland, Australia" (para. 2). Koenning visited these forests in Queensland. The images have a kind of dreamy look, perhaps a reference to Koenning's own personal journey of trying to imagine Chris' footsteps through the Queensland forests. The photographs, particularly the forest ones, function as visual imaginaries of place and are part of a complex set of psychological projections. Katrin Koenning went further; she photographed Chris' personal belongings and added archival snapshots from family albums. This strategy granted an extended complexity and multilayered aspect to the work.

Koenning, differently from Tillmans, frames her photographs and arranges the images on organised balanced shapes, where pictures are hung mostly at eye level. Similarly, however, both artists work with a vast number of imageries. For example, in Koenning's case, family snapshots, still life objects and dreamy landscapes. Installation here becomes crucial to successfully compiling and subsequently arranging and displaying these different images. Tillmans perhaps aims for an overwhelming display of images where the viewer is taken on a kind of visual roller coaster ride. Katrin Koenning, on the other hand, has a gentler way of pointing directions, a subtle gridded approach to laying out her images through which she emulates ideas of dreams, memories and sorrow. Katrin Koenning is aware of her subject matter and the concepts she is trying to convey. These ideas are carried through from image construction to displaying stages of the project. Both conceptual frameworks and installation strategies require certain levels of engagement from audiences. Tillmans' installation strategies suggest careful interpretations of the high number of images, distributed in multiple sizes and printed in different mediums. Audiences here are implied with more complex interpretation processes with no set narrative progression. In this sense, Koenning's work may present itself as more 'visually approachable' and yet requiring a high level of engagement and interpretation from audiences. Therefore, throughout the curatorial and production stages of installations, the artist must take into consideration the audience and possible entry points for individuals to make sense of the works.

I draw predominantly on Tillmans' practice, building on his strategies around pinning photographs on the wall, unframed and displayed in various shapes, above and below eye level. I used scale and size to emphasise points of view and perceptual states. This way, similarly to Tillmans and to some extent Koenning's work in Figure 74, I deliberately pointed (multiple) directions through the compression of multiple sized and scaled imagery. Koenning's installation strategies also provided me ways of working with juxtaposition and sequencing of images applied to gallery walls and other spatial spaces.

Figure 74. *Dear Chris*, 2013. Photograph of installation at Edmund Pierce Gallery, Melbourne, Australia. Source: Katrin Koenning, used with permission.

Newphotomedia2017

The group exhibition *Newphotomedia2017* is a curatorial product that displays the works of 14 different visual artists and the ways they use a multitude of visual practices (mostly lens-based) to perceive the world. The works were displayed in a gallery environment and shown in the form of "photobooks, installations, digital media, still photographs, moving image and sound" (Tótha & Nunes, 2017, p. 49). As in any group exhibition, each artist is allocated a particular physical space inside the gallery. The allocated space basically dictates the physical size as well as the displaying capacities and possibilities of the artistic work. The initial space that was allocated to my work consisted of two walls divided by a column; the dimensions were approximately three metres wide by over four metres high. For

these spaces I designed two photography installations. Later, however, my space in the gallery changed and I ended up installing my work on a 3 metre wide by just under three metre high wall. This changed everything. I will elaborate more on these ideas in the next section of this chapter. My point now is to highlight the significance of gallery spaces when combined with the actual installation process and dynamics as well as the conceptual frameworks behind the work. *Stimuli* is not a walk-in type of installation, so it does not offer all the possibilities for a direct relationship with space. However, the physical properties of the gallery space have an impact on the laying out and sequencing of my photographs. Installation space therefore forms the backbone of the installed work; the subsequent formed space(s) is experiential and dependent on various stimuli to convey perceptual processes (De Oliveira et al., 2006). Experiential processes are subjective to each individual, but triggered by stimuli, at times, provided by the artist. My body of work provided the viewer a sequence of visual stimuli, displayed through 11 photographs. My work carried no sound or moving images; however, the viewer, by looking at the images, could have developed a series of alternative (imaginary) stimuli, such as smell or sound. This could have happened as one would look at my eel photograph (Figure 83), for example, and imagined the smell of fish. The image opened up a certain threshold of (imaginary) sensory possibilities.

Stimuli: Methodology

Stimuli was my attempt to extract a fragment of the overwhelming totality of my photography practice at Te Awa River Ride. There were well over a thousand images stored on my hard drives, all part of a whole year from May 2016 to May 2017 of photographic explorations at my research locale. I begin discussing and explaining my methods of editing and curation, highlighting key points related to my photography practice.

Editing/Curation

My editing selection criterion was based on the concept of place imaginaries and the ways photographic images can render these psychological place-making processes. So I focused on the dreamy, metaphorical looking images, moving

away from the more literal and objective imagery. The conceptual parameters of *Stimuli* were, at core, based on the idea of imaginaries. These parameters formed the boundaries of my editing added to the form and content of the images as well as the selection of technically successful images (Colberg, 2016). As implemented in *Let Light Create Imaginary Spaces*, form and content of the images were connected to subject matter, composition and lighting. The actual technical boundaries of my images are, in fact, more elastic in the sense that I can include on my final edit technically 'poor' photographs, as long as they are in tune with my conceptual parameters (Colberg, 2016). Because I am working through multimodalities of photographic representation where my focus has moved away from the idea of reality recording, I can, therefore, extend particular technical conventions in order to render specific visual imaginaries of place. So again, what would be considered a technical flaw could be reinterpreted as a visual feature.

I bring my self-portrait photograph depicted in Figure 75 into the discussion to illustrate my point. This image is technically underexposed and there are areas where the light has been overexposed which in practical terms would compromise, for example, technically sound photographic printing processes. Obviously I intend my images to print well on paper, but what one would consider a technical flaw could be reinterpreted as a feature once correctly inserted into the designed conceptual parameters. This way, audiences are prompted to consider the technical affordances and limitations of different camera apparatuses connected to possible underlying meaning-making processes. My images represent imaginary processes of place-making where light, place, water and people play crucial visual motifs. Note that the idea of movement is inserted in each of these motifs. I used these four elements to construct my interpretations of place. These motifs imposed a constant representational challenge for me, the challenge of creating conceptually driven photographs. In addition, my photography practice made use of ambiguity, mystery and metaphorical underpinnings for image construction as well as the idea of imaginaries. This complex conceptual system opens up multiple representational possibilities (not always technically sound). I was looking for place imaginaries connected to the virtual totalities of the Waikato River and Te Awa River Ride. I was looking for traces of expanded totalities in order to render particular visual responses to my psychological processes of place-making. I channelled my photography practice to construct some representations

that were not, at first sight, similar to the perceived reality and yet faithful to perceptive processes.

Figure 75. Self portrait by the Waikato river. Source: Rodrigo Hill 2017

My self-portrait in Figure 75 underpins my personal responses to the fog as common meteorological and socio-cultural phenomena intersected with my place-

making developments at Te Awa River Ride. I have used the self-portrait as a strategy to emulate these ideas. By locating myself in this photographic representation I am proposing a form of personal interpretation of commonly known clichés such as the fog in the Waikato Valley. The luminous point over my head suggests my psychological/mental efforts to make place photographically. As a single photograph this image is extremely ambiguous and may pose more questions than answers. This photograph therefore needs context in order to have further points of meaning activated and suggested to the viewer. Nevertheless Figure 75 photograph was able to merge multiple elements, bringing together some of my main research motifs such as light, place, ecology and water. My photography practice here escapes the compromise of representing the world 'truthfully' by entering into an artistic realm of multiple modes of representation, at times indexical, iconic and subjective. This strategy disrupts the addictive interrelationships between objective-indexicality and subjective-iconicity (Boer, 2014).

The fog is a familiar element during the winter months in the Waikato, and to me it brings an aura of mystery. Within the local Waikato Tainui culture and views on the Waikato River, the fog is connected with processes of mourning (King, 2013). To illustrate this idea I highlight this compelling passage from the book *Te Puea: A Life* from writer and biographer Michael King (2013):

> …particularly in winter the fogs rolled off the water and blanketed the whole valley for days at a time, often during a period of mourning. When these coincided with frosts, it was as if a new ice age had risen out of the earth-grass and thistles stood stiffly, trapped in white crystals that seemed like a death shroud in the dull light, but which sparkled and danced when the sun finally broke through to warm the earth. (p. 50)

King's description of the Waikato fog makes me think about Figure 75 in different ways. The morning I made this photograph was indeed very foggy and very cold. The fog persisted through the morning and the sun took its time to break through. There was a silence in the air and no one was around; it was early in the morning. The self-portrait carries an additional aura of mystery. The bright light over my head functioned like a veil separating two different worlds, two different spheres (of perception).

I tested the external flash light kit, shooting against the fog. This generated an interesting visual effect, the light bouncing off suspended water particles in the air. I tried this to emulate the idea of imagination as when one has a thought or a moment of imagination. On this note, Gibson (1979) proposes an interesting take on light and the actual human ability to see light, in his words:

> A single point of light in an otherwise dark field is not light; it specifies either a very distant source of light or a very small source, a luminous object. A single instant or "flash" of such a point specifies a brief event at the course, that is, the *on* and the *off*. (p. 54)

The flashing of my external light kit towards the fog represented the *on* and the *off*. This brief window of vision offered me (photographic) stimuli, triggering a chain reaction of perceptual processes. I could not see the light from the flash but I knew that the camera apparatus could. The camera turned *on* and *off*, and during this brief window at 1/200 of a second, 800 ISO and lens F stop number 11, the camera 'saw' the light.

As explained, I had a clear concept in mind, which partially linked with what the curators of *Newphotomedia2017* intended for the show, a time-capsule of visual collections of the world (Tótha & Nunes, 2017). Therefore, the combination of my already established ideas added to the curator's intentions for the group exhibition offered me a useful lens to view and select a particular number of images for this project. I started with a broad scanning and selecting of all my images, carefully revising older and recent work

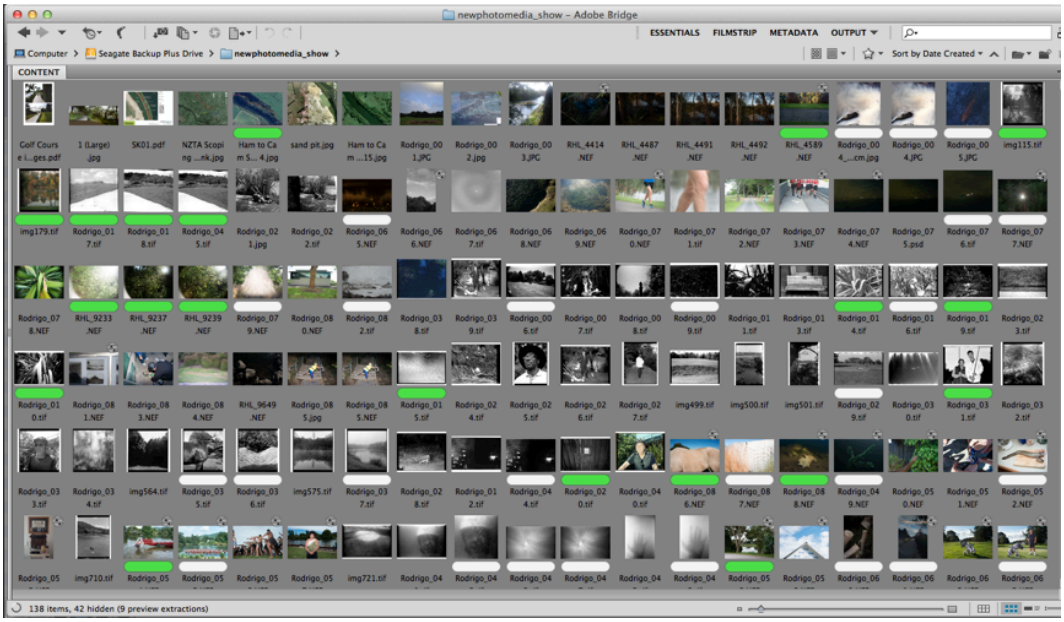


Figure 76. Editing process of *Stimuli*. Source: Rodrigo Hill 2017.

This process was done digitally by looking at images on the computer screen (Figure 76). From this initial scanning I selected more than 100 images, a small collection compared to the grand body of work. From this small collection I marked (green and white) an even smaller number of images. From this collection I made test prints that underwent another selection process as per Figure 77. My next step was to group a smaller number of images into layout formations, testing for colour palette, sizing/scale and sequencing movements. I was therefore looking for an overall aesthetic coherence while trying to keep potential meanings open.

Figure 77. Test prints. Source: Rodrigo Hill 2017.

The drafting of installation designs was done in two ways as per descriptions below:

a) Screen based, installing images on Photoshop (Figures 78-79). This method allowed me to test several different images and sizes, scaling the sizes to the actual wall measurements. Figure 78 has similar wall proportions to the actual gallery walls while Figure 79 shows my layout process. The gridded lines in Figure 79 were placed at one-metre intervals, so three metres wide by four metres high. The grids were useful to scale the images on the wall as well as setting the exact printing size for each image. I was exploring flow and fluid shapes towards

the final installation, not so rigid and static, where images could ‘float around’. This would allow the viewer to look at every single image with no guiding structure opposed to when one is looking at grids of images and reading it from left to right/top to bottom. The installation design on the right (Figure 78) is a valid example of a more gridded structure where images have similar sizes and follow a more predictable pattern. As I mentioned earlier, the final installation product was meant to carry the conceptual ideas behind the work, so ambiguity, mystery and imaginaries would have to somehow be present on the final displayed product. Therefore, it made more sense to arrange the images through unusual or unpredictable and yet fluid shapes in order for the viewer to create hers/his own perceptual processes. In this sense, the experiential act of the viewer would be materialised through a compression of images, feelings, experiences and memories that are related to the viewer’s imagination (da Silva, 2003).

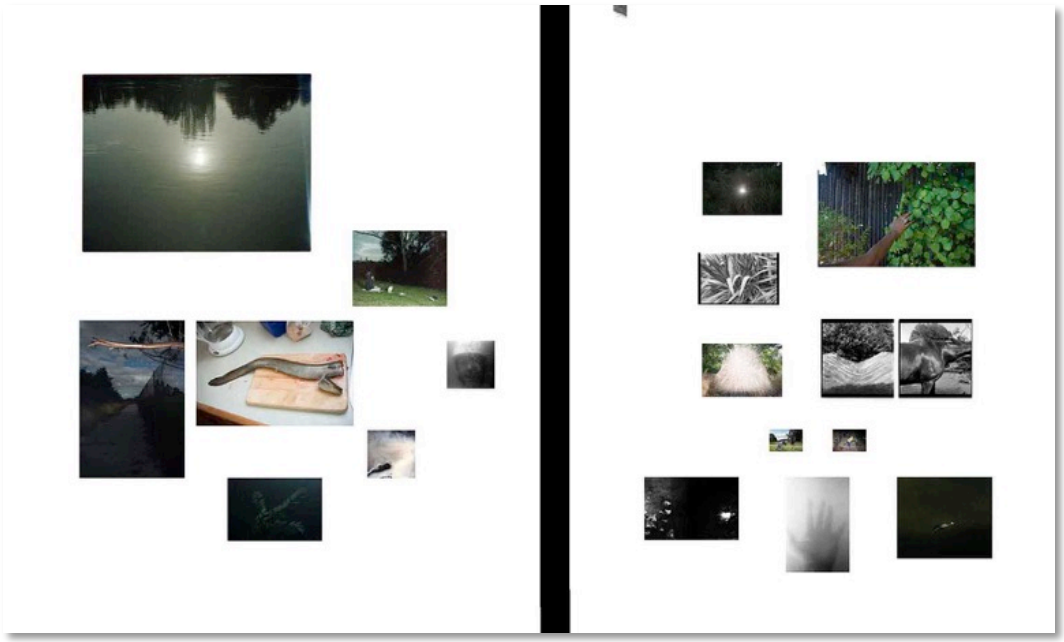


Figure 78. Installation draft done on Photoshop. Source: Rodrigo Hill 2017

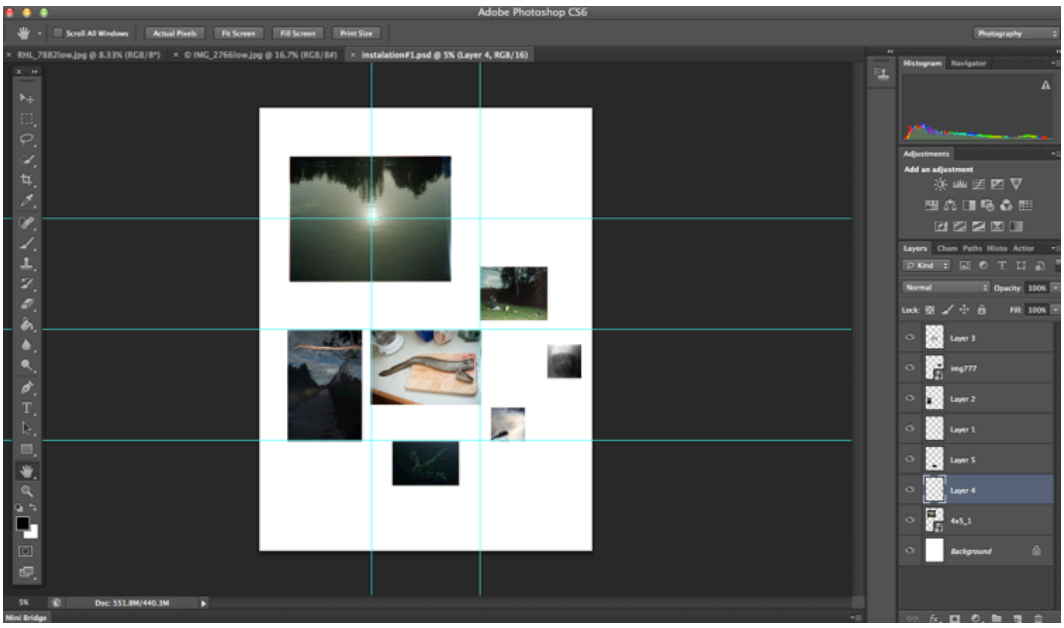


Figure 79. Installation lay out on Photoshop. Source: Rodrigo Hill 2017

b) Installing images with hard-copied test prints (Figure 80). This process allowed me to have a feel of how different images would work together in terms of toning and colour palette. This method is a continuation of the ways I sequenced my previous creative outputs (photobook and online based sequence). I like to work and look at printed images, and test prints are useful to construct visual references towards the final installation work.

Figure 80. Installing with test prints. Source: Rodrigo Hill 2017.

Part of my photography practice is to work and look at printed images, and test prints are useful to construct visual references towards the final installation work. The play of test prints does not allow me to test sizing and scaling but I gain on seizing the overall mood of a particular visual selection. So perhaps a combination of methods, screen and test prints, can be a useful way to draft installation layouts. Figure 80 shows an installation draft done with test prints. I have based this installation on pairings and triplets, sequenced by colour tone as well as form and content. The highlight spots are present in three different images and I have continued to use this strategy as a guide for my install layouts. It is useful to note that the actual process of drafting different layouts is in itself a form of editing and curation of the images. During this process images are included or taken out of the selection as part of a fluid curatorial project of iteration.

***Stimuli*: Installation**

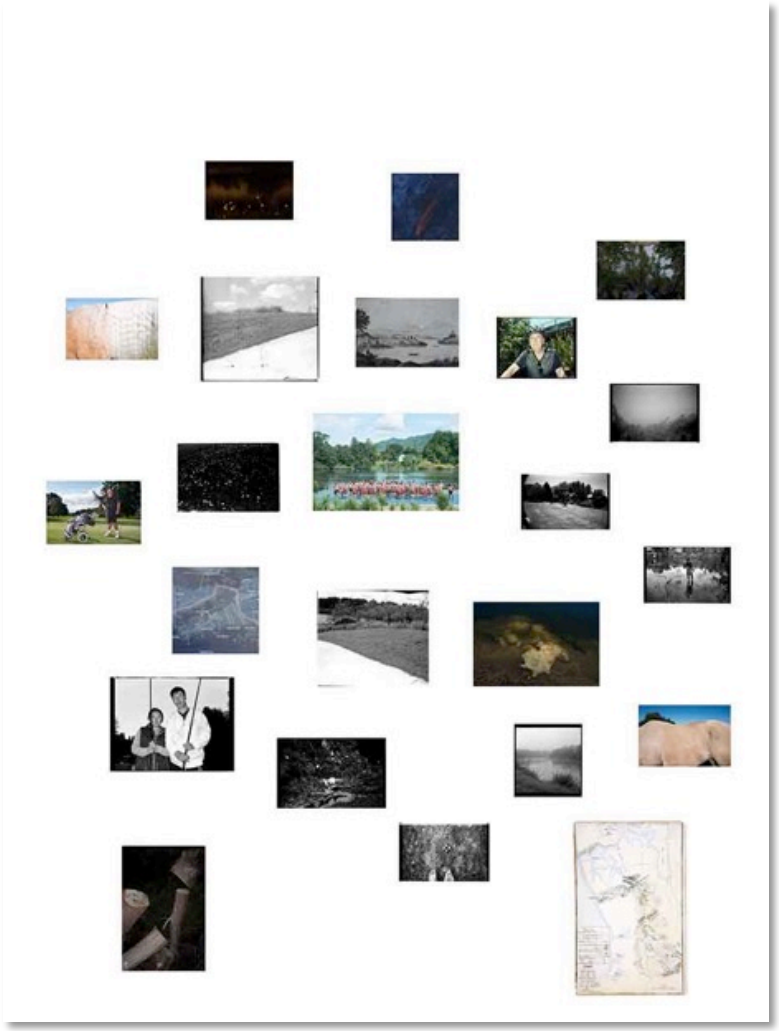


Figure 81. Testing multi-image install options. Source: Rodrigo Hill 2017.

One can ‘read’ the installation in Figure 81 starting from any image and finishing at any other image. Each image, in this sense, is undergoing a constant process of becoming the next. The aesthetic qualities of each image are not necessarily connected to the qualities of the other images. Although one may argue that the light beams on some of the images are similar; yes, they appear to be so, but these light beams vary, they move, expanding and contracting in size and scale. Similarly, the images from the installations do not function as units but rather as ‘dimensions’ of place, offering momentary ‘captures’ or perceptions, imaginary recollections of place.

The installation from Figure 81 is an alternative way to combine multiple types of images such as landscapes (metaphorical and objective), maps, portraits, water shots, movement shots, historical images from the internet and lastly the under lying historical/cultural Māori context. This installation would have covered most of my allocated wall space, from top to bottom. Most of the prints would have been around an A4 size. This sort of multi-image installation style has been perfected by Wolfgang Tillmans. I looked at many of his examples in order to find useful references for the assemblage of the installation in Figure 81. I believe this layout assemblage would have been useful, based on the number of different categories and visual fragments I have collected at Te Awa River Ride. However, my original allocated wall space changed to a single wall, approximately three by three metres. The new wall space had a smaller, squarer shape, and I concluded that this installation style would look visually excessive and conceptually misinterpreted.

So I changed my strategy and decided to re-install the work. The new wall space was in the central part of the gallery, and the actual wall properties were more beneficial for the displaying of the images. Once the new space was confirmed, I then started to work on my last installation edit. The last edit covered a curation of the past selections added to my recent photographic production at Te Awa River Ride. I was basically editing the final work and shooting some additional images at the same time. This final editing and shooting process was aimed at more targeted constructions of key photographs. The ideas and motivations towards these key photographs arouse careful consideration of the whole collection of photographs.

Figure 82. *Stimuli* 2017. Final installation on the wall. Demo Space Gallery, Auckland. Source: Rodrigo Hill 2017.

This then generated a need for particular images to be constructed to fill in editing and possible sequencing gaps. The foggy self-portrait was an example of a recent image that made the last edit. After sifting through the collection of photographs, I realised that there was no visual reference to the fog as a common cultural and geographical feature to the Waikato Valley in the winter months. This motivated me to carefully choose a location and time to construct a photograph connected to the theme of fog. I also realised that there was no referential colour images to the theme of water/river and this motivated me to construct a specific photograph that connected these themes and had possible sequential possibilities. Colberg (2016) talks about the ways editing is embedded into photographic practice and vice-versa. In his words, "photography is editing, editing is photography" (p. 81). Colberg presents the use of the view camera (4x5 or 8x10 large format camera) to illustrate his point:

> For example, one of the technically most deliberate ways to take a photograph is to use a view camera. A photographer operating the view camera will compose the photograph in possibly the most deliberate way, with the camera sitting on a tripod, and every one of the camera's movements requiring separate deliberate attention. (p. 81)

I used the same camera Colberg referred to, and I agree with him. The use of this camera implies a refined form of in-camera editing approach to photography. But this does not mean that images from this type of camera will always be keepers (Colberg, 2016). In fact, I had two images from my 4x5 camera and I chose one. The selected photograph from the 4x5 camera was a water/river study with light reflections (Figure 82 bottom right image). I do, however, try to carry the careful 4x5 view camera approach to my other cameras, even the digital one. The foggy self-portrait was a sort of ready-made edited digital photograph.

Brief Discussions on Portraiture Practice

The final edit covered the selection of 10 photographs and one map (found image from Te Awa River Ride's image bank), totalling 11 images. The bigger vertical images were almost one-metre high and the map was smaller than a postcard size. It is worth highlighting that there were no depictions of human faces in this selection. In other words, there was one self-portrait and one portrait with no clear reference to human faces. I considered this a shift in my practice since I previously based my photographic production on portraiture. I have not, however, discarded portraits from my project. At this point, by critically analysing my work, I came to the conclusion that my portrait images were not yet completely in tune with the conceptual ideas that I was working with. I was working with ideas that often imposed a representational challenge for me, particularly within my portraiture practice. I have tried different strategies, giving my subjects specific directions and trying to make them dramatise particular feelings and emotions attached to place-making processes (Lawrence's portraits, for example, Figure 34). These strategies presented useful results but there was still scope for improvement. After *Stimuli* I focused my portrait photography practice on the 4x5 large format camera, testing new strategies. At this stage in the project I was trying to push my portrait photography practice further.

Final Installation Sequence

Curation and editing are about making statements by extracting the strongest and most capable version of the work. At this stage in the project, I focused on my strongest body of work within the imaginary looking images, and I have translated this into my final editing. The portraits were still successful images in their form

and content and some were indeed very eloquent and yet objective, direct and literal when sequenced next to the metaphorical images.

Therefore, I focused my editing on the visual imaginaries, selecting aesthetically and conceptually cohesive images. It is important to note that, not at all times, both aesthetical or conceptual parameters were present. For example, the tuna photograph is a literal, objective photograph. It is a direct representation. One can look at it and affirm that the image in question depicts an eel with its head chopped off. So, in this case, the tuna photograph, on one hand, 'fails' on the dreamy visual aesthetics and, on the other hand, it succeeds on the concept of place imaginaries. The tuna is part of an underlying collection of stories about the Waikato River and how the river is perceived by Māori as a source of food such as kōura, kaeo and tuna (crayfish, river shellfish and eel respectively) (Tūrangawaewae Board of Trustees, 2011). The tuna photograph, nevertheless, plays a crucial role within the installation sequencing and my overall photography practice. This image once inserted into my photography practice and context becomes a useful icon, triggering multiple (place) meanings.

Besides this, its shape and aesthetical qualities are similar to the shapes of the Waikato River as well as the contours of Te Awa River Ride. These aesthetical features offered me points of meaning expansions and useful metaphorical routes towards possible imaginaries of Te Awa River Ride. In this sense, my goal was not to unveil and fix all Te Awa River Ride meanings. Place imaginaries and icons, such as the tuna, are part of cultural knowledge and meaning constructions particular to the Waikato. Within this scenario, and because of cultural knowledge, particular place imaginaries can have particular sets of meanings and yet carry layers of interpretation open to different audiences.

In his seminal book, *Camera Lucida* (1980), Roland Barthes proposed a very interesting perspective on photography through the duality of elements that were, according to him, essential to photographic images. He called these elements *studium* and *punctum* (Barthes, 1980). *Studium* refers to the obvious meanings that are restricted to a particular image. Reality within *studium* is not disturbed. On the other hand, *punctum* works like a disruption through the awakening of a latent trigger point of meaning.

Figure 83. Waikato River tuna (eel), Ngāruawāhia. Part of *Stimuli* 2017. Source: Rodrigo Hill 2017.

The tuna photograph has or is *studium*; it has obvious meanings relatively undisturbed. This photograph, however, takes on additional meanings once inserted into a sequence, a fluid visual organism that twists meanings and disrupts the obviousness of *studium*. The tuna photograph as a single entity has limited or constrained meanings. Once grouped and, in this case, sequenced with other images, it starts to gain additional meanings, it becomes a form of *punctum.* On this note, Hungarian Bauhaus artist Moholi-Nagy (1947) concludes,

> this is the logical culmination of photography-vision in motion. The series is no longer "picture" and the canon of pictorial aesthetics can only be applied to its mutatis mutandis. Here the single picture loses its separate identity and becomes a part of an assembly; it becomes a structural element of the related whole which is the thing itself in this sequence of separate but inseparable parts… (p. 208)

Look around the eel photograph in the installation and you may find a river, a girl with fishing rods and a broken tree branch that also has a tuna contour shape. This invites the viewer to unlock imaginary progressions and subsequent meaning-making processes. The wall installation invites the viewer to *punctum-stimuli*, offering clues, disruptions and perceptual stimuli to alternative processes of place-making. There is a river and a girl, fishing rods and a concrete path, a horse and a tuna with no head, a map, light beams, a sort of trench as well as water and rocks that look like moon craters and before I forget, a man with a luminous head.

Figure 84 below shows a mapping of my final installation edit and layout. The mapping outlines possible pathways between the images, entry and exit points that connect one point to another. This installation system is unstable and amorphous, with no start or endpoint, and always undergoing a process of becoming. The installation system is back grounded by a complex curatorial project of editing, assemblage and sequential displaying of images. As implemented on my previous creative milestones, I have built on Keith Smith's (2010) notion of sequencing images (see chapter 4 *Let Light Create Imaginary Spaces*: Methodology), pushing his ideas further into a sequenced-based model of installation displaying.

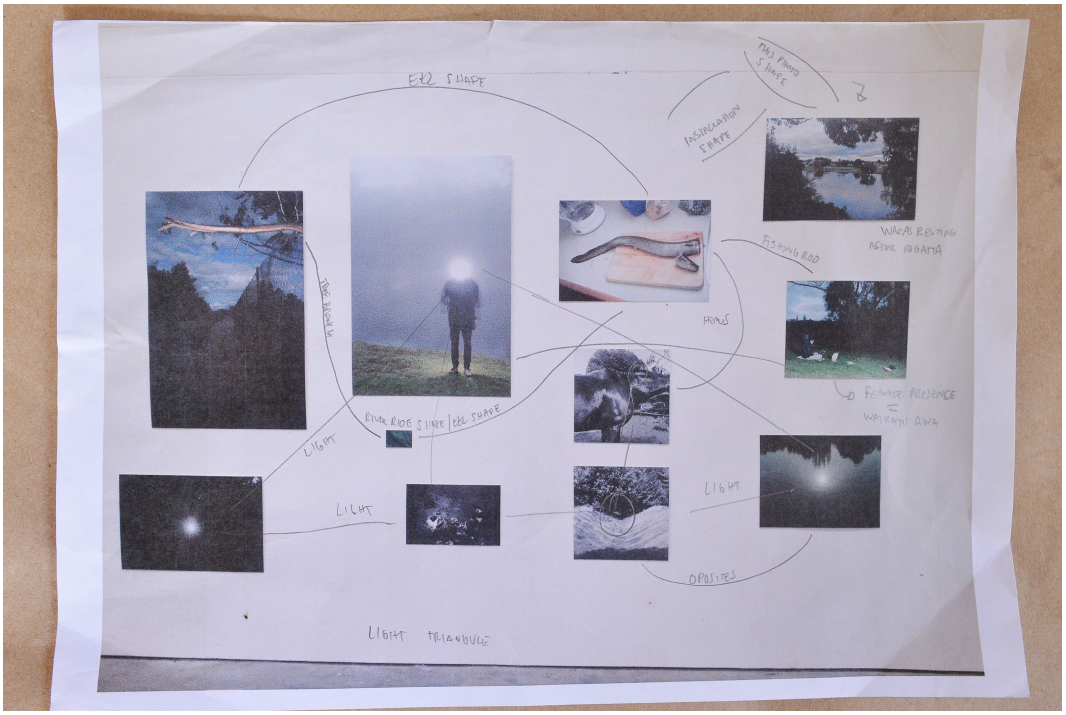


Figure 84. Mapping of *Stimuli*. Source: Rodrigo Hill 2017

Smith conceptualised the notion of sequence based on and formatted for the visual book display platform. The visual book's sequential movements follow particular patterns and motions where progressions are interdependent with movement, as when one turns the book's pages. So there exists a sense of continuation (linear or nonlinear) with a beginning, middle and end. Photography installation, however, does not follow the same principles, and yet relies on sequences to generate movements and meanings. Some photography installations therefore may have no beginning or end but only middles that undergo a constant state of flux.

Conclusion

I have demonstrated in this chapter how useful installation methodologies are to my photography practice. Installation's sensory, spatial and participatory nature complements my photographic methods and strategies. As a complex methodological organism and curatorial system, installation works as a useful platform where I can arrange and display an array of visual products. This multitude of imagery offers the viewer multiple entry and exit points to (photographic) processes of meaning and place-making.

Coming from a photobook-making background, the use of gallery space provided me significant insights into the curatorial and sequential possibilities within space. The progression from a two-dimensional platform to three-dimensional space also provided me a richer understanding of the impact of spatial constraints. The use of a smaller space within a group exhibition was useful to instigate these reflections and the potential for my work to be curated and sequenced within bigger gallery spaces. This motivated me to have an entire space in which I could expand my curatorial strategies, exploring my whole archive of photographs. These ideas form a stimulating starting point for the developments of my final creative milestone, an installation titled *South of the Rising Sun*.

My installation strategies and use of spatial gallery spaces prompted different ways to approach my creative fieldwork and photography practice. The *Newphotomedia2017* group exhibition also motivated me to create and explore new techniques of image production, including the use of the 4x5 large format film camera. This camera apparatus was strategically introduced and aimed at the production and printing of larger photographic prints, all part of curatorial processes of installation.

Chapter Six
Creative Milestone #4: South of the Rising Sun
Whakatetonga O Te Whitinga O Te Rā

Figure 85. Looking south during sunrise on top of the Hākarimatas, Ngāruawāhia. Source: Rodrigo Hill 2018.

The photography installation *South of the Rising Sun* was my final creative milestone and a progression from my previous creative milestone #3 *Stimuli.* I understand *South of the Rising Sun* as a complete curatorial project, comprising the curation and sequencing of two bodies of photographic works, one colour and the other black and white, that together function as a visual installation of place imaginaries. South of the Rising Sun functions as a system of meanings where photographs "may be seen in terms which are simultaneously personal, political, economic, dramatic, everyday and historic" (Berger, 1980, p. 63). The works are not a final response to place-making or an absolute representation of my research locale. On the contrary, *South of the Rising Sun* represents a version, an iteration and a way to photographically coalesce place imaginaries, actualising particular place layers connected to the Waikato River and Te Awa River Ride.

South of the Rising Sun had an opening night on the 4th of July 2018 at Ramp Gallery in Kirikiriroa (see appendix 4 for detailed documentation of the installation and photographs). The show was open for public visiting from Wednesday 4th of July to Friday 13th of July 2018. The opening night was successful with many visitors from a wide range of Waikato communities. The opening night had an official blessing from Waikato Tainui kaumatua Tame Pokaia followed by kōrero (speeches) by Waikato University Associate Professor Dr. Tom Roa, my chief supervisor, Associate Professor Dr. Karen Barbour and myself.

I understand this creative milestone as a complete curatorial project because of its many creative layers and decision-making processes in the journey of curating, sequencing and installing images on a gallery wall. An art exhibition of this kind demands many layers of creative engagement, including the analysis of the actual gallery physical space, the arrangements for the opening night, invitations, exhibition catalogue, audience and many others.

The title for the exhibition came to me after re-reading the book, *The River Which Ran Away* (Mataira, 1983). In this story, as introduced earlier, the servant was instructed to go south of the rising sun towards the mountain region of Tongariro. This geographical direction provided the servant a lead to place-making which was fundamental to the 'birth of place', as it was the healing waters of Tongariro, sent early one morning, that became the Waikato River; and thus, the origins of the Waikato Valley and subsequently what we know today as Te Awa River Ride. These are, of course, my personal interpretations drawing on the story of *The River Which Ran Away* and the ways I used the story as a frame and guide to the construction of *South of the Rising Sun*. These interpretations were then connected to the actual body of images and editing/sequencing strategies. I will unpack further the reasons for the title and how it connects to the body of images and more broadly to my research frameworks. I will then focus on my photography practice and its multimodal aspect. In addition, I will discuss and analyse my key methods of curation and sequencing towards the construction of my final installation-based curatorial product.

Conceptual Framework

South of the Rising Sun is not intended as an absolute materialisation of key theoretical concepts such as place-making, place-imaginaries and place-composite. I have discussed these ideas in the second chapter of this thesis. However, it is useful to re-visit a few points that are pertinent to the production of *South of the Rising Sun* and its conceptual underpinnings. My goal here is to briefly discuss these concepts and later explain their applications within my creative processes.

The idea of Te Awa River Ride as an unstable composite of images, practices, views, layers, snap-shots, blind spots and virtual totalities is a useful underpinning to *South of the Rising Sun*. The multiple imagery and installation strategies I have used hint at the notion of place-composite and the many place layers that compose Te Awa River Ride. These were materialised through the different sizes of images and camera formats utilised, hanging strategies, curation and sequencing of both the black and white, and colour works. The concept of place imaginaries and the various ways Te Awa River Ride can be perceived and culturally/discursively constructed complements my research locale as a composite of many place layers. Within this theoretical environment, the story of the white dog from *The River Which Ran Away* becomes a useful metaphor and guide to *South of the Rising Sun* and the ways my photography practice opens certain thresholds of (imaginary) place possibilities.

In the next section of this chapter I reiterate key points about installation art that are connected to *South of the Rising Sun*. However, I begin introducing additional contextualising ideas to my installation strategies, highlighting broader sensorial and experimental aspects of art installations. Art researcher Monica McTighe categorises the experiential aspect of art installation into three different strains: immersive, observational and material (McTighe, 2012). I can locate *South of the Rising Sun* within the second category which comprises "works that seek to engage the viewer in reflection on the process of perception, such as sight or sound" (McTighe, 2012, p. 102). *South of the Rising Sun* has no sound component within the installation strategies. However, I argue that the viewer's senses may be activated through the images as when one is looking at a photograph depicting flowers and remembers smells and/or other sensorial recollections. The way I

have arranged and sequenced the photographs on the wall may also trigger further sensorial responses as when the viewer starts to connect multiple visual juxtapositions. This process *may* trigger further mental narratives, which can actualise an array of memory-images accompanied by further sensorial references. In this sense, a photograph can be argued as a medium of possible actualisation of memory and recollection images, at times connected to particular place imaginaries. The core ideas around installation art, such as the immersive and sensorial aspects of art works (McTighe, 2012), are then repositioned to the viewer's subjective/experiential processes and affective responses (Brower, 2018). In this sense, curation and sequencing strategies can succeed in the task of offering the viewer more than what the actual single photograph depicts. Within this context, the boundaries of the single photograph become extended beyond the synthesis of its frame (Abreu, 2018), opening up new meaning-making spaces catalysed by juxtaposition and sequencing of multiple imagery.

The act of installing photographs is connected to a form of contextualisation where images are inserted into conceptual frameworks. The practice of grouping photographic images is common within the practices of photography as when one places images into sequences such as the family album (Sutton, 2009). The grouping and sequencing of images is useful to make sense of the paradoxes of time and movement inherent to photographic images (Sutton, 2009). In this sense, each image within a body of work (installations, family albums and photobooks to name a few) acquires a particular extended role within the whole system. Installation systems are always undergoing a process of becoming that relies on the viewer's perceptual interpretations when looking at multiple photographs on the wall. Each photograph from *South of the Rising Sun* undergoes a process of 'contraction' (Bergson, 1911) where "recollection-becoming-image enters into a coalescence with the present" (Deleuze, 1988, p. 65). This is connected to my core frameworks around place imaginaries and the role of my photography practice in actualising particular place recollections, imaginaries and realities. My photography practice here mimics memory, constituting "a past as an *other*, and as with memory, we enter the photograph's "pastness" in order to make sense of the collapse of the 'then' and 'now' that it represents" (Sutton, 2009, p. 54).

Installation Art

In this section I offer a brief summary of key points related to installation art. As introduced in the previous chapter, creative milestone #3 *Stimuli*, installation art has become a hybrid discipline, covering a vast territory of inquiry and practice connected to notions of exhibiting and displaying within contemporary art (De Oliveira et al., 2006). Essentially, installation art is about multiplicity and interactions, allowing already expanded art forms to be pushed further by the viewer. The points I have listed are crucial underpinnings to *South of the Rising Sun* and the ways I have curated and sequenced various photographic fragments towards and within a particular context. The installation principle of connecting multiple elements is intrinsically linked to my assumptions around curation and sequencing and the subsequent assembling/installing of photographic images. These ideas are helpful to sustain my practice within the broader installation art strategies, generally (but not necessarily) applied within the gallery's physical space. I will expand these comments on installation art into a set of reviews of key works that are useful references to *South of the Rising Sun*.

Review of Relevant Artists Models

The following reviews of artist models have informed my creative process and decisions around the construction of *South of the Rising Sun.* These artists and their practices were useful additional references to my own photography practice and the ways I used curation and sequencing to represent place imaginaries. I reiterate, however, the overarching influence and relevance of Wolfgang Tillmans' work and installation strategies to broader photography installation practises and the ways I installed *South of the Rising Sun*.

Max Pinckers

Figure 86. Max Pinckers *Will They Sing Like Rain Drops or Leave Me Thirsty* 2014. Source Dillon Gallery, New York 2015, used with permission from Max Pinckers

Belgium academic researcher and artist Max Pinckers (2018a) explains his creative practice as "visual storytelling strategies in documentary photography" (para 1). Pinckers (2018) focuses on the relationship between "aesthetics, images and their subjects" (para 1). These are interesting starting points as I have discussed some aspects of documentary photography and the ways objective conventions can be disrupted through image construction and later displaying and sequencing. Pinckers goes further and proposes an interesting take on documentary photography by referring to it as a form of 'speculative documentary'. In his words, "the documentary attitude, critical method, or gesture, is a way of coming to terms with reality ─ a way of doing, engaging and creating that embraces the multiple and mutable realities of our world" (Pinckers, 2018b, para 3). These positions are helpful to ground my photography practice as a form of speculation of the 'real', where I look for possible imaginaries of place, the mutable and multiple realities of Te Awa River Ride and the Waikato River. Pinckers advocates the use of the photobook platform to convey narrative and meanings. He also uses the gallery as a chosen curatorial platform. Photobooks and gallery installations then become useful and crucial platforms to build conceptual and aesthetic developments towards the representation of the multiple

and mutable speculated place imaginaries. Again, this is helpful to sustain the very nature of photography installations and the connection of multiple interacting visual fragments that together ignite further meanings and, in the case of *South of the Rising Sun*, place imaginaries.

Pincker's project *Will They Sing Like Rain Drops or Leave Me Thirsty* explores the ways "young Indian couples are confronted with their romantic fantasies when encountered by family traditions of honour, religion and caste" (Pinckers, 2018b, para. 3). Pinckers is dealing with a form of imaginary construction fuelled by cultural impossibilities and a couple's desire to be together. By looking at his work and reflecting on my own work, I can locate a level of collaboration and construction of multiple versions, speculations or imaginaries around Indian couples and their adventurous relationships. It seems useful, therefore, to have these multiple representations displayed and sequenced on an installation in which images have multiple sizes and are hung at multiple height levels. Different hanging styles can evoke different readings from the viewers, and it is important to have an awareness of the curatorial strategies and the impact these decisions may have on the work.

Cristina de Middel

I have discussed Cristina de Middel's work earlier and it is useful to reference *The Afronauts* again but this time as a gallery installation as depicted in Figure 87. I find the way this show, at the Foam Museum in Amsterdam, has been curated is very evocative. I was intrigued by the use of different images in comparison to the *Afronauts* photobook. This kind of formatting of a body of work to different platforms is a useful development to illustrate the many distinctive ways photographic works can be sequenced and displayed and yet conveying similar arguments (in the case of *The Afronauts* and the construction of a photo narrative about Zambia's space programme in the 1960s). This is connected to my photography practice and the ways I have formatted different collections of photographs into different curatorial and displaying platforms. With regard to the Foam Museum installation for *The Afronauts*, I note the choice of framing and prints pinned on the wall, arguably in an attempt to differentiate archival and actually produced work. Also interesting to note how there is a clear focus on the

actual astronaut and the elephant, all connected by similar colour palette. The colour works have a kind of low saturated green tones whereas the archival material has been printed on black and white for obvious reasons. These two mediums create an interesting dialogue, reinforcing the ambiguous relationship between fact and fiction, a territory where Cristina de Middel's work is activated. This strategy is helpful to show where photography can succeed and where it can fail when attempting to represent multiple realities. The black and white archival prints within Cristina's installation play the role of indexing the whole body of work, while the colour photographic constructions disrupt the real/unreal relationships, twisting imaginaries and generating further readings on African identity and culture and how it is represented on the main stream media for example. Similarly, through my work, I aim to actualise and activate further realities and imaginaries, proposing a counter approach to the ways the Waikato River have been previously represented (as discussed in chapter one).

Figure 87. Cristina de Middel *The Afronauts*, 2013. Foam Museum, Amsterdam. Source Cristina de Middel, used with permission.

Cristina de Middel proposes unconventional ways to photograph and represent the world, actualising particular imaginaries that conventional objective photographic approaches at times fail to convey (de Middel, 2018). De Middel uses stories that have have attested historical relevance and impact as guides and structures to the construction of her photographic narratives.

South of the Rising Sun: Methodology

In this section I aim to unpack my creative processes involved in the curation, sequencing and installing of *South of the Rising Sun*. As I mentioned earlier, this creative milestone demanded intensive creative and conceptual efforts towards the making of my public exhibition at Ramp Gallery. As a starting point I will highlight some initial considerations around my creative processes and curatorial decisions as well as the actual relocation of exhibition-making within my methodological research frameworks. The idea of exhibition-making is intrinsically connected with curation and the editing, compilation, sequencing and installation of artworks (Dernie, 2006). The curatorial process starts with the editing of images and it is followed by making sense of the work through compilation, sequencing and, in this case, gallery installation. My previous creative milestones provided rich conceptual and methodological references as part of an iterative process. In addition, my artist models and the exploration of multiple modes of representation also provided me important sets of reference points. In this sense, stepping through the creative milestones does not necessarily lead to a final absolute product but an iteration of methods and strategies that had its latest moment as a gallery exhibition. Each creative milestone provided significant insights into curation and sequencing that were then filtered and reconfigured to the production of *South of the Rising Sun*. Within this scenario, compilation and sequencing of images led into narrative construction (informed by curatorial and conceptual decisions) enhanced through the displaying method of photography installation. However, the actual installation and sequencing processes happened almost simultaneously simply because the ways images can be sequenced are linked to the installation agendas and strategies connected to the gallery's physical space.

It is important to unpack installation as a method within my exhibition frameworks and the overall "discipline of exhibiting" (Celant, 1996, p. 373). These ideas led to my assumptions of *South of the Rising Sun* as a complete curatorial exhibition project, encompassing many creative layers and factors. Art critic, curator and writer Germano Celant illuminates this point further:

> The idea of a totality, which is not undifferentiated, but organized according to a sequence ranging from personal discourse to historical-

> theoretical schemes, establishes a methodology for exhibiting whereby issues of where and how to install are linked to specific, non-generalized constant factors. (p. 375)

The totality of exhibition-making as a complete curatorial project creates a useful platform for the development of my key methods of sequencing and installation. The curatorial project for the exhibition involved the conceptualisation and titling for the show, culminating with final creative considerations and opening night arrangements. In this sense, the making and designating of public art exhibitions of any sort comprises a number of steps, at times beyond the actual creative work and yet connected to main conceptual frameworks.

Photography exhibitions and photobooks share similar creative stages such as editing and sequencing of images (Colberg, 2016). However, the actual image selection may vary from a photobook to an exhibition edit. Most of the ideas around editing and sequencing of images I have used were drawn from photobook making practices. These were then modified in my second creative milestone to suit screen-based platforms, and then reconfigured to suit spatial constraints as in creative milestones #3 and #4. Also, some of the literature I have reviewed focused on photobooks but acknowledged the versatility of such strategies and its applications towards photography exhibitions (Colberg, 2016; Lyons, 2012; Smith, 2010). I start drawing on Nathan Lyons' considerations towards the making of a photobook/exhibition project. Lyons emphasised the question of context, the order or sequencing of images, juxtaposition and use of motifs or symbols as crucial structural considerations. These considerations will be unpacked through the course of this chapter. My aim now is to discuss key ideas around the making and designing of my exhibition *South of the Rising Sun*. I continue foregrounding the assumption that exhibitions are multidisciplinary platforms and a form of curatorial practice in charge of activating meanings and knowledge construction.

Exhibition-making and design comprise a complete curatorial project where the artist/curator uses the exhibition framework as a form of creative expression (Dernie, 2006). In this sense, the actual exhibition and installation of artworks become an important medium of interpretation and sense-making of a particular body of work (Dernie, 2006; Celant, 1996). I stress, therefore, the importance of curatorial platforms, such as photobooks and exhibitions/installations, as useful

mechanisms of creative resolution. David Dernie (2006) brings additional understandings around exhibition-making:

> To exhibit is to hold out, to offer, to display objects or works: to expose. Fundamentally, exhibition-making is focused on the content of the works to be displayed and concerns the ordering of these works as a sequence, to be understood in relation to each other and in dialogue with the conditions of the viewing environment. (p. 6)

Dernie's points are helpful to understand exhibitions as multidisciplinary and fluid platforms of expression surrounded by complex boundaries. Installation then becomes a crucial interpretive method within any exhibition project (Dernie, 2006). Within installation the method of sequencing has significant importance, as it will determine the ordering, juxtaposition and interconnections of various objects (Smith, 2010). Sequencing, within this context, is a crucial kind of sub-platform where objects sit and acquire further meanings and readings by the viewer. This is a remarkable point: the ways sequencing can disrupt particular meaning construction, opening up possibilities for further sense-makings. These ideas are connected to underpinning collections of cultural knowledge embedded into some of my photographs and the ways the images can be interpreted. Sequencing becomes a useful method to destabilise and open meaning-making constructions connected to local Waikato and other audiences.

The production of *South of the Rising Sun* comprised several practices within my practice of photography. For example, to successfully print my work I needed to know the kind of paper that would respond well to the colour palette and style of my photographs as well as the actual printer machine. This step involved detailed knowledge on printing, colour balance and paper. Photographic printing is in itself a separate practice where there are experts that know exactly how different papers and printers work. This falls under the whole practice of photography, and this seems a logical statement to me, as photography, since its early days, had the printing format as its best companion. The contemporary photography practitioner, therefore, needs to consider the relocation of the photographer's role to a broader field of practices (Shore, 2014). The whole exhibition-making process and ways of displaying lens-based material have, too, become part of a process of production where the photographer has control over different stages in pursuit of an authorial voice over the work. It is not unusual, however, for the contemporary

photographer to work with a team of experts that may include designers, curators, printers as well as other photographers.

Figure 88. Printing of *South of the Rising Sun* 2018. Source Rodrigo Hill 2018.

South of the Rising Sun comprised the editing of my entire photographic archive on Te Awa River Ride, which consisted of more than two years of creative fieldwork at my research locale. Through this period I have tested a number of photographic strategies and constructed a vast body of photographs. So, in this sense, the editing processes of *South of the Rising Sun* took me back to the first and last produced photograph, as I will explain next.

Editing/Curation

In this section I discuss my editing strategies towards the curation and sequencing of *South of the Rising Sun*. I will discuss editing, sequencing and installation separately. However, I am aware that these are overlapping methods that inform each other through a fluid methodological process. My editing process comprises a number of steps, from selection of images on the computer screen to hard-copied work prints. I will bring visual references and discussions around these steps and the ways I intersected key research concepts with the selection of images towards my last creative milestone.

The editing process of *South of the Rising Sun* comprised a number of stages, from a comprehensive analysis of my photographic archive to final considerations,

sequencing and designing/layout of installation. The editing strategies were similar to *Stimuli*; however, my conceptual parameters were now clearer as I was getting closer to the resolution of this PhD project. My core ideas matured, and I had key parameters around place-making, place imaginaries and place-composite.

The form and content of the images as well as the selection of technically successful images worked as aesthetic extensions of the conceptual parameters (Colberg, 2016). In addition, my visual motifs were equally more developed aesthetically and conceptually. The photographic treatment and the aesthetic/stylistic features of these motifs have progressed. Through the final stages of my creative fieldwork I developed strong photographic responses and strategies towards the representation of place imaginaries. The main visual motifs I have explored throughout the creative fieldwork at Te Awa River Ride were the actual Waikato River (water and ecology), movement, light, people, Te Awa River Ride (concrete path) and place imaginaries. These motifs were reworked through a process of iteration connected to my creative milestones.

Figure 89. The motifs of water and ecology as place-making visual elements, Ngāruawāhia 2017. Source Rodrigo Hill 2017.

I started with a broad analysis of my entire photographic archive on Te Awa River Ride. This initial stage covered the culling of technically poor photographs that had no connection with my conceptual parameters (Colberg, 2016). Figure 90 is an example of a technically poor image where the research participant has his eyes closed and was photographed unsuccessfully (poor composition, exposure, soft focusing and lighting). This portrait is connected to my early portrait photography practice and reflexive commentaries outlined in the previous chapter.

Figure 90. Portrait of a research participant at Te Awa River Ride, 2016. Source Rodrigo Hill 2016.

Another editing strategy I used during the initial culling stage was to compare similar photographs and choose the most successful one. I also categorised the images in groups, Figure 91 shows how I selected successful images to illustrate the motif of movement. This process was cumulative and a practice I have carried through the whole two and a half years of creative fieldwork at Te Awa River Ride. So when I started looking at images for *South of the Rising Sun* I already had a group of pre-selected successful photographs to look at and analyse.

The selected photograph for the motif of movement that was inserted into the installation edit was chosen and sequenced through the final stages of the installing process. These final stages were crucial and when I juxtaposed and sequenced final photographs. At this stage pre-selected photographs were tested against each other and within the overall installation system to then be allocated a position within the sequential ordering.

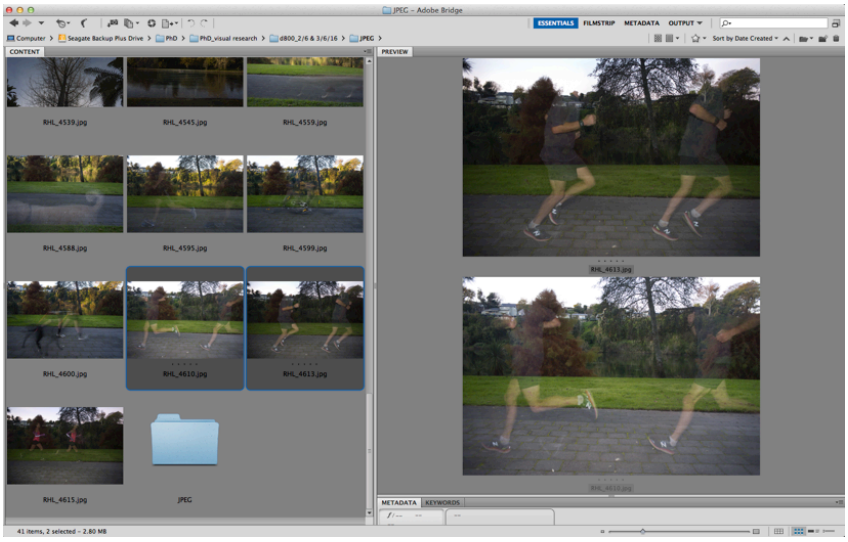


Figure 91. Early editing process of *South of the Rising Sun*, 2018. Source Rodrigo Hill 2018.

Figure 92. Final photograph for the motif of movement, *South of the Rising Sun*, 2018. Source: Rodrigo Hill 2016.

Stimuli and *South of the Rising Sun* had similar editing processes in which I started culling images on the computer screen to then later progress through hard copied work prints. This time, however, I had two complete bodies of photographic works as depicted on the photographs from Figures 93 and 94.

Figure 93. Selection of colour photographs for *South of the Rising Sun*, 2018. Source: Rodrigo Hill 2018

Figure 94. Selection of black and white photographs for *South of the Rising Sun*, 2018. Source: Rodrigo Hill 2018.

My original intention was to combine both works within the installation, which I still did achieve, although I grouped black and white photographs together and colour photographs together. My original intention was to edit and sequence both works together where images would range and be juxtaposed from black and white to colour with no hierarchy. Through the editing process I came to realise that the works had different treatments and were aesthetically dysfunctional at times (but not because of the black and white/colour polarities). The differences were in the ways I shot and approached the medium of black and white photography, focusing on the rendering of light and metaphorical representations. I built on the editing of *Let Light Create Imaginary Spaces* where the main theme, the light, travels through all the images in various forms.

Figure 95. Editing process of South of the Rising Sun, 2018. Source: Rodrigo Hill 2018

So the editing to separate the black and white and the colour works was a strategy I built and carried through the processes of sequencing and installing of the images. The separation was a solution (of many others) to resolve the work and this was based on the approach and, to some extent, the aesthetic qualities of the photographs. Figure 95 exemplifies the aesthetic/conceptual dilemmas I worked through. When paired these images work only because they share similar aesthetic features as the shape of the 'smoke' and the concrete path. The black and white image is more abstract than the colour one and it becomes harder to pin down its actual subject matter as the fog or water or some kind of lunar representation. On this note, philosopher Vilém Flusser argues that black and white photography is abstract and detached from day-to-day life and consequently a useful route to

visually represent theoretical concepts (2000). So the works had different underpinnings, which is a valid feature and can be used towards further curation and sequential developments. However, and to conclude this discussion, my plan was to separate the black and white from the colour works as part of a strategic curatorial plan towards the installation of *South of the Rising Sun*. This provided me the opportunity to articulate two different sequences that could play against each other in interesting ways to keep meaning open.

Figure 96 photographs are helpful to illustrate one of my editing strategies to select a panoramic landscape type of photograph for the exhibition, and how the book *The River Which Ran Away* provided a frame for this.

Figure 96. Editing process of *South of the Rising Sun*, 2018. Source: Rodrigo Hill 2018.

I climbed the Hākarimata Ranges on the morning of the 2nd of May, 2018. I was following the weather maps and noticed the forecast for good weather on this day. This very day marked the 160th anniversary of the crowning of Potatau Te Wherowhero as the first Māori King. At this point in my research timeline, I was writing chapter three methodology and ideas for photographs were very present in my mind. Although I was getting closer to the preparations for my exhibition, I was still open for some final and persistent image-thoughts. The view from the top of the Hākarimata Ranges covers a good extent of Te Awa River Ride and some of the Waikato River. This photograph of the view is therefore a strategic place-making location-photograph because of its social-cultural significance and geographical features. Mountains and rivers have particular perceptual

significance to Māori and these cultural views are also fundamental to further processes of place-making and imaginaries (King & Roa, 2015). From the top of the ranges one can see a significant part of the Waikato Valley, including the Waikato River and Te Awa River Ride stretching southwards to Cambridge. In a recent newspaper article the Hākarimata Ranges were highlighted as both a place for recreational activities and embedded with great cultural significance to local Waikato Tainui (Nyika, 2018). The article also pointed to the launch of a mobile phone application through which users could access a narrated tour guide through the histories of the area, all according to local Waikato Tainui accounts (Nyika, 2018). The use of technology to mediate and actualise place imaginaries, triggering place-making processes, is a common feature of my photography practice and the mobile phone application in question. On this note, Urry and Larsen (2011) argue that places are "intertwined with people through systems that generate and reproduce performances in and of place" (p. 119). The view from the top of the Hākarimata Ranges has indeed great photographic appeal due to its advantageous view point and embedded photographic practices and discourses (Urry & Larsen, 2011). So photographic depictions from the top of the ranges become place infiltrated and part of shared (photographic) place imaginaries and imaginative geographies. In this sense place-making photographs produced or shared from the top may function as a way to actualise particular Waikato Valley place imaginaries or to confirm that allegedly one has climbed over one thousand steps to reach the very top of the walking track.

I do not know the route the servant from *The River Which Ran Away* used to get to Tongariro from Taupiri (region located north of Ngāruawāhia and the Hākarimata Ranges). As part of my personal processes of artistic interpretation and construction of related photographs I propose that the commanding view from the top of the ranges may have offered the servant a punctual place-making direction to head south of the rising sun to Tongariro. These personal thoughts are all connected to the story and by knowing the story I was able to construct a photograph where the sun was depicted at its rising point and the camera pointed to the south of the rising sun. The top of the Hākarimata Ranges seemed to me a valid location to construct this photograph. The editing and final selection of this photograph then became obvious, as the photo I needed had to suggest the idea of a place-making direction south of the rising sun. As a consequence, I chose the

photograph depicted in the opening of this chapter. At the same time, this photograph was the most obvious depiction of the geographical place-making instruction to the creation of the Waikato River and Valley. This approach has a metaphorical and conceptual underpinning surrounded by the idea that photography is able to actualise particular place imaginaries.

Wiremu Puke (2011) in one of his essays from *River/Road Journeys Through Ecology* comments on the story of how the Waikato River was formed, referencing the story of the dog and the servant. I share here Puke's insights and account of the story:

> When you look at Taupiri Mountain from the other side of the river, on the Hākarimata Road, the mountain's geological profile resembles a woman giving birth with her knees tucked up. This geological metaphor is illustrated in King Tāwhiao's waiata that he composed immediately after the land war confiscations of 1865. Taupiri fell ill and because she had a very close affection for Tongariro, a servant and his dog were sent to the central plateau to fetch the curative waters of Tongariro. (p. 72)

Puke (2011) continues explaining the geological features of the region where the Hākarimata Ranges is located and how it is connected to the story of the white dog:

> The ancestral gods called to the dog to divert the torrent in order for the river to follow in its intended pathway. You can still see the original course where the river used to flow to the Hauraki. Eventually the waters came to Taupiri and broke through the Hākarimata Range to form the Taupiri Gorge. (p. 72)

Puke perceives the story of the white dog as a way to actualise a particular phenomenon connected to the environment and place (2011)[13]. Photography in this case may take similar roles as storytelling, the role of actualising particular place imaginaries, illuminating further place-making processes and understandings about land and environment. So going back to my photograph depicting the view from the top of the Hākarimata, I highlight the underlying complexities this photograph may acquire with the aid of contextual platforms such as curated gallery installations. I return to my early argument that my

[13] Puke also highlights the points of connection between western science and Māori stories of creation when referring to the original course of the Waikato River where the river used to flow to the Hauraki (2011) and later changing course to the Kirikiriroa basin as a result of a volcanic eruption (Brenstrum, 2005).

photography practice works with the activation of particular latent meanings embedded into single images and actualised through sequential juxtapositions.

As another example, the choice of the photograph of the white dog (Figure 1) became an obvious choice for inclusion, equally informed by the story from *The River Which Ran Away*. This photograph represents a shift in my practice where I purposefully aimed at the photographic construction of selective place imaginaries informed by research participants' personal accounts and other sources (in the white dog's photograph the book played a major influence). This strategy is similar to Cristina de Middel's use of stories that have attested historical relevance and impact as guides and structures to the construction of her photographic narratives. *The River Which Ran Away* has indeed attested historical relevance particularly within Waikato Tainui communities. This story and the photograph of the white dog offered me a compelling framework to build on as well as points of meaning construction for viewers at the exhibition.

There is an interesting story behind this image (Figure 1). During one of my walks around the river I spotted a woman walking her white dog. This happened not long after I became familiar with the book. (I met the author's daughter and she gave me a copy of *The River Which Ran Away.*) I instantly 'recognised' the dog and my first reaction was to approach the woman and explain my project and that I had the intention of photographing her white dog. The woman was from Ecuador and explained to me that 'Luna' (moon in Spanish), the white dog, came from Ecuador with her. We exchanged contacts so I could book a day of her preference to photograph Luna by the Waikato River. After some time we booked an early morning in November 2017 to photograph Luna. This coincided with Luna's morning walk by the Waikato River. Associate Professor Tom Roa, during his opening night speech for *South of the Rising Sun,* commented on my encounter with the white dog and how it was framed by an act of purpose and not coincidence. This is linked with the actualisation of particular place layers and the role of photography in opening thresholds of perceptual possibilities. Arguably, because I became so deeply invested in my project, these other place totalities became 'visible' and through my photography practice I was able to crystalise particular place totalities. These thoughts are useful to inform my editing process and the idea that my photographs do not need to be fantastic representations of

place. On the contrary, I was more interested on the idea that my photographs could carry multiple totalities, balancing strong content and aesthetic forms.

Lastly, I highlight again my self-portrait by the Waikato River. This photograph (Figure 75) represents my internal place-making processes and a photographic response to place imaginaries. This is an important photograph within the whole project as it locates myself in the (creative) research work, conveying a version of my key ideas on place-making and imaginaries. It needs, however, the context of the installation to be able to function as such. This photograph also intersects the visual motifs I have used to construct the whole body of work. The beam of light/highlight spot is also a recurring motif within the installation system and sequencing.

The explanations and discussions around my editing methods and strategies are useful background to the development of my sequencing and installation methods. As I mentioned earlier, these are overlapping steps that informed each other towards the resolution of *South of the Rising Sun* as a curatorial exhibition. In the following section, I will discuss sequencing and installation as additional methods within the exhibition-making of *South of the Rising Sun*.

Sequencing and Installation

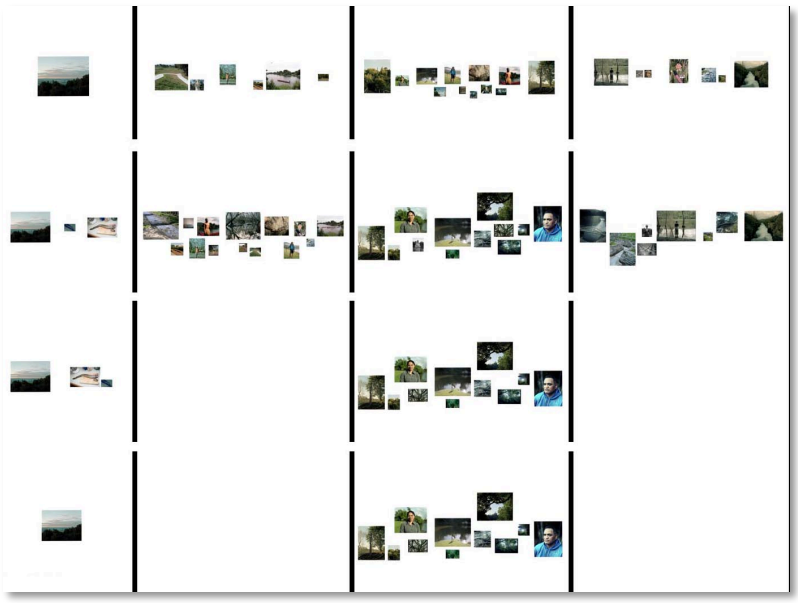


Figure 97. Sequential and installing progressions of *South of the Rising Sun*, 2018. Source: Rodrigo Hill 2018

To understand my sequencing and installing strategies it is useful to locate the actual physical space I have used as a platform for these developments. The image in Figure 98 is the floor plan from Ramp Gallery in Hamilton. The gallery curator Wendy Richdale sent me this image as part of an entry package to the gallery and its exhibition properties.

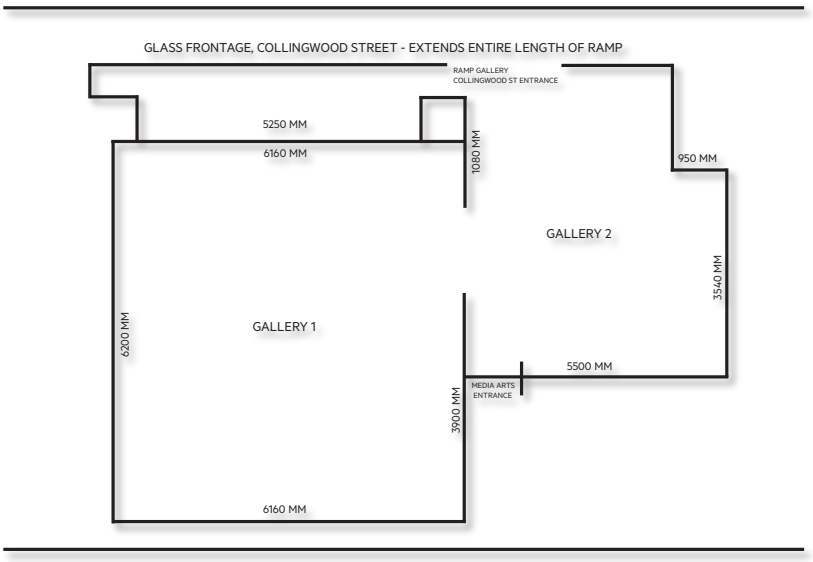


Figure 98. Ramp Gallery floor plan. Source: Ramp Gallery, used with permission.

The gallery is divided into two main internal spaces (gallery 1 and 2) and a front window space where works can be displayed. The room spaces have squarer dimensions with white painted walls and light timber flooring. Daniel Buren (1996) describes this style of room architecture "…as an aseptic and (so called) neutral place…" (p. 316). In addition, Buren points out that "this architecture is the well-known kind, since it is more or less what is found in all the museums and galleries of the Western world, a place architecturally adapted to the needs of the market implied…"(Buren, 1996, p. 316). The two main spaces, gallery 1 and 2, posed a problem for me as they presuppose the physical separation and subsequent resolving of artworks. So I had to make careful consideration of the place where my works would be installed as an integral part of curatorial approaches (Buren , 1996). However, because of the ways I have edited the black and white, and colour works separately, it made sense to then carry this approach through to the installation process. So the gallery's space connected the ways I have responded to my photography practice and installation strategies of curating the black and white, and colour works in different spaces. The front window functioned as a third space where I had to work on a particular installation style.

Each of the three spaces had its own form of photo narrative that together function as one cohesive photo narrative product. The three bodies of work follow particular sequential and installation strategies and they function as micro sequential narrative units within the whole installation system.

The ideas and strategies I discuss in this section are informed by Keith Smith's work on the structure of the visual book (2010). Smith built on his predecessors Nathan Lyons' and Moholy-Nagy's notions of photo montage, photo narrative and sequencing. I have discussed Lyons' ideas in chapter three in the sequencing section. The initial points I highlight here are connected to Lyons' arguments around contextual platforms as catalysers for photo narratives and sequencing developments. Lyons was an advocate of the photobook as a contextualising platform to a group of sequenced photographs (see chapter four about photobooks and my creative milestone *Riding the River Ride*). According to Lyons (2012), to create sequential associations between images one has to take into consideration that "the dominant theme of one image may be suggested much later in another, a hint of texture or a graphic form might repeat, taking on several identities" (p. 27). In this sense, juxtapositions can be used to disturb and extend meanings within a sequential progression, as Lyons (2012) explains:

> If metaphor is a verbal strategy to evoke images, then as a photographer I'm interested in combining images to alter associations by extending the image itself. A juxtaposition of images enhances this possibility, while an extended sequence of images establishes a highly interactive structure that does not simply identify objects or events in a narrative sense but transforms the meanings of objects. (p. 27)

I have adapted these ideas to the photography installation platform, based on the premises of curation, sequencing and then installation. Sequencing is a crucial method within my photography practice as it triggers multiple meaning-making processes, a feature that is intrinsic to the very nature of this PhD project. I have introduced Smith's definition of sequence in the previous creative milestone #3 chapter of this thesis. My goal here is to extend the implications of sequence further through a complete project of photography installation.

As a part of a process of sequencing and installing images I started making computer generated design plans. These worked as sketches or 'mock-ups' for the final installation design and layout. Figure 101 represents gallery 1 space

(appendix 4.3 for installations design iterations) and it was designed on Photoshop following the same scale and dimensions as the actual gallery room. This design plan works when imagined as a three dimensional version of the room going from left to right. The horizontal green line marked the 1.5 metre height mark as an indication of scale and the black lines marked the wall corners of the room.

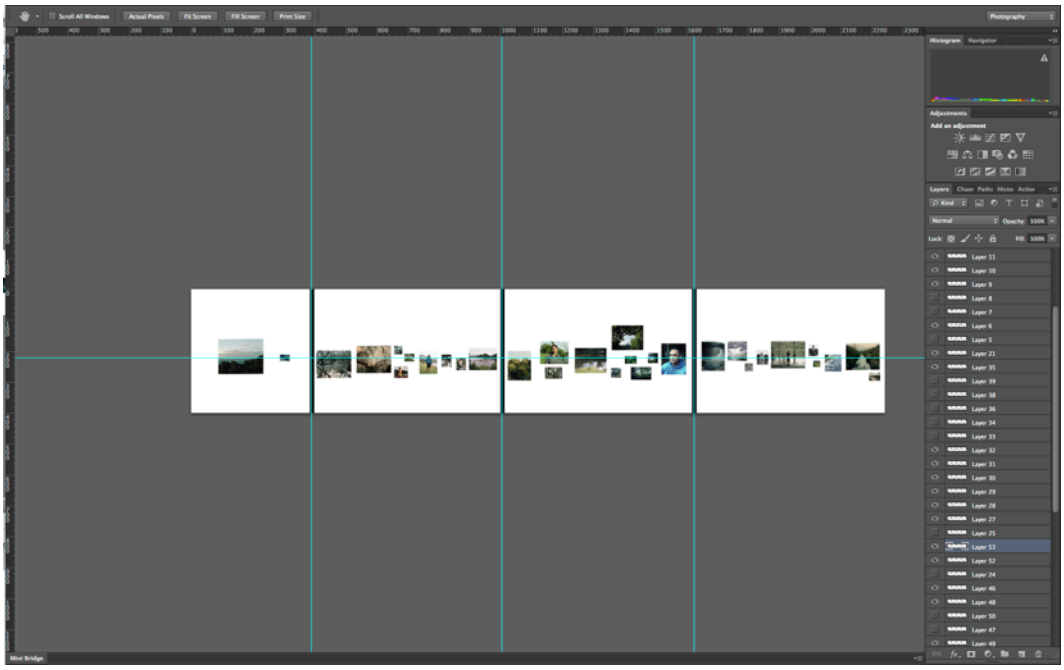


Figure 99. Photoshop design sketch for gallery 1 space installation. Source: Rodrigo Hill 2018

This Photoshop design became a very useful testing platform for the sequencing and installing of the photographs. Here I could test a number of pre-selected images on different scales and layouts. As implemented in *Stimuli*, I built on this process with sequential playing of hard-copied work prints pinned on the wall.

The sequencing and installing tests with hard-copied work prints were useful to simulate a number of different designs, layouts and how different photographs worked together. The example from Figure 100 depicts an early sequencing test in which I tested black and white, and colour images. The black and white portraits are from the performers of a theatrical play about the Waikato River and its histories. These images have a different look from the others and carry a kind of faux historical aura when juxtaposed with the other photographs. This was a test and I concluded that this strategy was unsuccessful, as I could not create recurrence of these motifs throughout the sequenced installation. Within this scenario, the use of the hard-copied work prints offered a good sense of colour palette and toning added to the construction of the overall mood for each

installation section, aiding my decisions around editing and sequencing of images. This method is a continuation of the ways I sequenced my previous creative outputs. However, I note that the sifting, editing and sequencing processes were similar but aimed at different conceptual and spatial ends.

Figure 100. Early sequencing and installing test with hard-copied work prints. Source: Rodrigo Hill 2018.

The work prints were useful to construct visual references towards the final installation work. However, the testing of sequential possibilities through work prints does not allow me to test sizing and scaling but I gain on seizing the overall mood of a particular sequenced installation grouping. During this process images were included or taken out of the selection through an ongoing curatorial project. The designing of each installation section was mostly done on Photoshop and followed up with the work prints. The method of pinning work prints on the wall allowed me to simulate the viewers' experience in the gallery when one walks closer to look at a single picture (Colberg, 2016). In this sense the testing of prints on the wall offered me a guide to later make decisions on scale and sizing of the actual final prints and how the images would work together. The combination of the play with work prints and additional computer simulating and designing were then crucial to the creative decision making stages of *South of the Rising Sun*.

Figure 101. Early design for *South of the Rising Sun* (appendix 4.3, iterations Gallery1_005). Source: Rodrigo Hill 2018.

Figure 102. Sequence detail of *South of the Rising Sun* (appendix 4.3, iterations Gallery1_detail3). Source: Rodrigo Hill 2018

The feeling of having a whole gallery as a canvas presented itself as an exciting challenge. My reaction was then to think about ways and strategic platforms to edit and sequence the images. My initial plan was to display the images in gallery 1 according to the geographical locations they were produced (both black and white, and colour photographs together). The walls from gallery 1 would follow a particular flow, going from north to south and representing the Ngāruawāhia, central Kirikiriroa and south/Cambridge regions respectively. This strategy would also represent the whole geographical extent of Te Awa River Ride. I then started testing a number of sequences on these walls, trying to focus on the images that were produced in each region of Te Awa River Ride. Figures 101 and 102 show my early sketches. The geographical ordering of the photographs offered me a useful starting point and a solid framework to work on. However, with the developments of my sequences and installations I found this strategy confining. It limited each gallery wall to a number of images and, at times, I found that some of the sequences were not successful. The colour palette and tone of the photographs also played a significant part. As a result I started the whole process again, retaining some of the sequential sections that worked and did not work.

The design from Figure 102 is a detail from the overall installation test for gallery 1 space. This installation design represented the ‘Ngāruawāhia wall in gallery 1. I consider it unsuccessful for the following reasons: the tree photographs on the left

are repetitive and constitute a case for more accurate editing. The door photograph between Sergeant Sally and the European man does not work in terms of sequencing; it actually disrupts the flow from the overall outdoor scenery. For this image to work I would need to include another indoor type of photograph within the installation to then create a sense of sequencing and narrative continuation. Overall, in terms of themes and motifs this installation fails in creating a cohesive sense of narrative as it lacks adequate sequential punctuations, influencing mood and rhythm. The European man and the Māori man, however, form an interesting juxtaposition and I kept these two photographs as part of my final installation. A hanging style where the photographs are positioned in various heights and sizes was also incorporated in the final installation. So overall this sequential section revealed some relevant approaches that I utilised in the final installation while other aspects were tested and discarded. The geographical structured approach to the gallery spaces provided valuable starting points paralleled with my commitment to sequencing, juxtaposition, use of scale and composition to open up meanings.

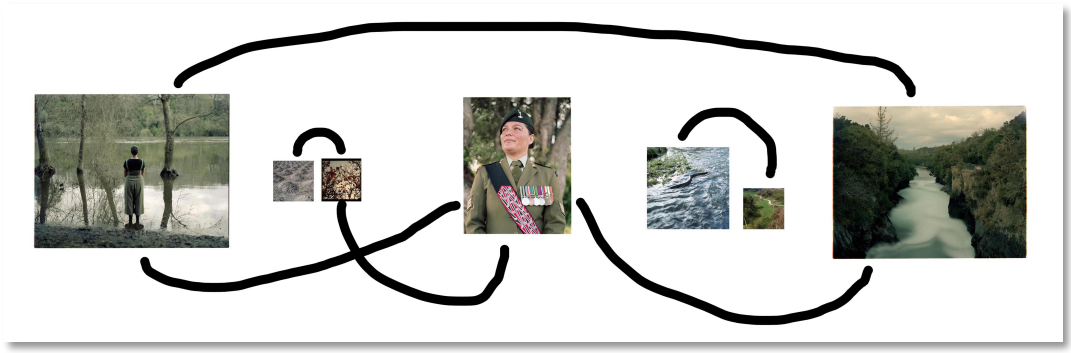


Figure 103. Sequence detail, *South of the Rising Sun* (appendix 4.3, iterations Gallery1_detail2). Source: Rodrigo Hill 2018.

The installation from Figure 103 shows the points of connection between the images and how these operate as part of a fluid sequential narrative. This sequence follows Lyons' approach, establishing recurrent hints of visual motifs such as colour palette (muted greens), the eel shape and others. The juxtaposing of these motifs creates a form of continuation where particular elements are reintroduced as the sequence progresses. Overall, this sequence is successful and was part of the final installation, positioned on what would have been the 'south of Hamilton/Cambridge wall (far right wall section on the Photoshop design). The final installation testing stages consisted of refinements of each wall section and the ways these sections complemented each other. These sequential sections were

built from the geographical installing strategy where particular wall spaces would have photographs from the corresponding geographical areas (southwards wall would have the photographs from Kirikiriroa south /Cambridge area, for example). This approach was useful as a starting point and then reworked through a non-hierarchical system where images were freely shuffled around all the wall sections towards a complete sequential system of installation.

Conceptually, the sequencing of the photographs from Figure 103 actualises some Te Awa River Ride imaginaries. The tuna, for example, is one of my established motifs and a form of 'place icon' connected to a collection of underlying stories about the Waikato River. The tuna photograph is then reworked when juxtaposed with Te Awa River Ride's twisting concrete path photograph, actualising further place imaginaries. The combination of these two images and the whole sequential system form a compelling narrative full of metaphorical meaning-making entry and exit points. This is underpinned by strong aesthetic features as *punctums* of meaning expansions and useful metaphorical routes towards possible imaginaries of Te Awa River Ride. In addition, the portrait on the far left of this sequence depicts my personal responses to place-making and the act of gazing at the land and river as possible sensorial motivations for these psychological processes (Gibson, 1979). The portrait photograph works well as a possible entry point to the sequence and as a form of pillar to the middle images. In this sense, the far right photograph of Huka Falls works equally as a pillar supported by aesthetical shapes and colour palette. Both photographs share a centred subject matter that cuts through the compositional middle thirds. Colour wise there is an overall cohesive sequential scheme with muted greens and hints of red (flowers and details on Sergeant Sally's uniform) and shades of brown (tree branches, soil and rocks). The shapes are recurrent as the tuna and cycleway. The red details on the Sergeant's uniform expand as blossoming flowers on the previous photograph. The motif of water is punctuated through the sequence. Overall, each photograph complements each other and yet they form a contrapuntal progression where multiple meanings are actualised. Photography here gains full narrative expression through the awakening of multiple juxtaposed visual *punctum.*

The hanging and scaling of the photographs from Figure 103 were informed by the camera apparatus I used and photography approaches involved. The larger

photographs were produced on a large format 4x5 film camera. This camera renders fine detail and sharpness. Because of the nature of this photography practice and apparatus, I decided to have most of the large format camera photographs printed bigger and used as referential points within the installation system. The bigger images create a form of tempo that is cadenced by the smaller sized photographs. This strategy creates a form of flow through points of contraction and expansion where meanings can be interpreted differently upon visual sizing and scale progressions. As referential points these photographs (in the case of the sequence from Figure 103, the images are the portrait on the left, Sergeant Sally and Huka Falls) work and are connected by formal elements supported by the actual scale hanging strategies.

The practice of large format photography offers a careful and considerate image-making process where formal aesthetic aspects are taken into deeper consideration. The portrait photograph (woman facing the Waikato River left side in Figure 103, alternatively see Figure 32) was constructed through the making of only one full body composition portrait opposed to making a number of photographs from different gestures to then select one final photograph. I did try different gestures and close up angles at times without actually making a photo. Once I found a useful position for the scene I then constructed the portrait photograph. This approach to photography is connected to Flusser's ideas on the gesture of photography (2011) as discussed in the photographic production section of chapter three. The use of the 4x5 camera apparatus to construct this photograph does not guarantee, however, that the portrait photograph will be automatically inserted into a final sequence. It was indeed an image that had careful and thoughtful production added to strong conceptual and aesthetic features. Yet this image would have to be weighed against other images and within sequential processes of photography installation.

In this section I have demonstrated some key points and strategies implemented in the sequencing and installing of the colour work inside gallery 1 space. Next, I will unpack some considerations around the same processes in relation to the black and white work in gallery 2. Once both works have been unpacked and discussed I will then progress through final considerations, sequencing and installing processes of *South of the Rising Sun*.

Let Light Create Imaginary Spaces

Let Light Create Imaginary Spaces represents a possible introduction, complement, but also complicating of *South of the Rising Sun.* The two works are different and constitute different units that are part of a curatorial totality. The works have a unique aesthetic and conceptual treatment and yet they constitute a curatorial totality composed of contrapuntal juxtapositions within the sequential units. These ideas underpin my earlier point about exhibition-making and the construction of *South of the Rising Sun* as a complete curatorial project.

Let Light Create Imaginary Spaces is a progression from my early creative milestone #2 with the same title. The early black and white work marked a starting point and a form of rehearsal for the final work. Through these bodies of work, I constructed visual responses to my internal personal place-making processes at my research locale. The medium of black and white photography offered me another route to render my conceptual frameworks, opening further perceptual thresholds. The whole installation system then becomes a form of crystalisation where multiple units were broken down into further perceptual fractals surrounded by multiple entry and exit points.

My goal with *Let Light Create Imaginary Spaces* was not to impose a beginning to *South of the Rising Sun,* but to suggest to the viewer one of the many entry points to meaning-making processes. The editing and sequencing processes were similar to the colour work and involved similar stages as the computer screen culling of images to further developments with hard-copied work prints. The installation process started on Photoshop. As I did for the colour work, I designed a wall plan for gallery 2 space, the smaller room at Ramp Gallery.

I started with a larger number of images, as depicted in Figure 104 testing juxtapositions and sequential options. The playing with work prints supported this process. The editing of the early *Let Light Create Imaginary Spaces* was useful as a starting point and structure for the new editing and sequencing. There were also a larger number of new black and white photographs that I had produced over the course of the whole project. The editing of the new *Let Light Create Imaginary Spaces* focused on the more ambiguous and mysterious imagery as a form of representing abstract internal processes connected to affect. I treated this work

with an increased level of creative freedom and the idea that it was representing my personal sensory feelings and psychological constructions.

Figure 104. Early installation design and sequence for *Let Light Create Imaginary Spaces*, 2018 (appendix 4.3, iterations Gallery2_001). Source: Rodrigo Hill 2018

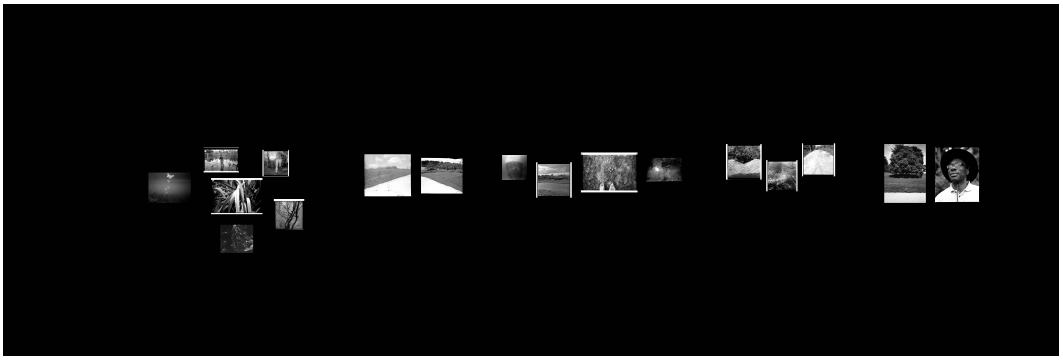


Figure 105. Semi-final installation design and sequence for *Let Light Create Imaginary Spaces*, 2018 (appendix 4.3, iterations Gallery2_006). Source: Rodrigo Hill 2018

The final sequence had recurring motifs and points of connection with the main colour work. Again, I have used similar motifs to creative milestone #2 such as the concrete path, water, light, movement and a colonial map of the area where my research took place. The overall size of the images was smaller than most of the colour ones. This was a deliberate decision to emphasise the personal aspect of the work added to the idea of intimacy (or the suggestion of a more intimate experience for the viewer) when looking at the images on the wall. The gallery section where the images were hung was painted black to create another layer of distinction from the colour work. The black wall also provided a frame for the installation and made the images stand out, which created a particular mood for the sequence, again different from the colour works. The idea of going from black to white walls was also useful to emphasise or suggest the 'birth or place' or when the sun is rising from the dark night. In this sense, the black and white work could almost be interpreted as dreams or dreamy representations of place. The idea of dreams within my conceptual framework is not connected to fantasies or fictions,

but to different perceptual mental states where virtual totalities can be actualised (Bergson, 1911).

Figure 106 depicts a section of the final black and white installation. The lines demonstrate how the photographs are connected by motifs as well as content and form. For example, I note the way the three branches resemble the lines of the colonial map image and the legs of the runner. Also, how the flax leaves connect the water bubbles and legs of the runner. These photographs together form a narrative of place where the viewer can create a multitude of stories and meanings. Moreover, the narrative effect is reinforced by the recurrence of a particular theme. The theme or motif of water, for example, has been punctuated in three different images. On this note, Keith Smith (2010) argues that "in viewing the body of work, repetition brings clarity" (p. 212). Smith calls these relationships 'referrals' and my decisions on the placing of the water motif was a deliberate and 'direct referral' (Smith, 2010, p. 216). This is a crucial point as the water motif is present throughout the whole installation, both black and white, and colour works.

Figure 106. Sequence detail, *Let Light Create Imaginary Spaces*. Source: Rodrigo Hill 2018.

As another example, The Huka Falls photograph (Figure 106 bottom left image) proposes a link with the main body of colour works as I have used a very similar representation of the falls in both of the installations. My goal, however, is not to unpack every single point of connection between the photographs, as they are

multiple and deliberately left open. I would instead like to emphasise the validity of sequencing within complex installation systems, and how these operate as gateways to a multitude of meaning-making processes. All of these then reconnect to the concept of place imaginaries where photography is able to actualise particular layers towards further processes of place-making.

Final Installation: A Complete Curatorial Project

Figure 107. *South of the Rising Sun* at Ramp Gallery, Hamilton, 2018. Source: Rodrigo Hill 2018

In this section I present and discuss final considerations of the production of *South of the Rising Sun* as a complete curatorial exhibition project (appendix 4.2). My goal is to intersect the many production aspects of the exhibition, unpacking particular points as part of broader PhD research process of argumentation. I have demonstrated key underpinnings for both my colour, and black and white works installed at gallery 1 and 2 respectively. These two works form the body of the exhibition added to the front window space, which I will discuss next.

Figure 108 shows the frontage of Ramp gallery. Exhibiting artists displaying artworks often use this window space. In my opinion, the space is useful to

display some kind of artwork that may function as an entry point to or summary of the overall exhibition.

Figure 108. Detail of Ramp Gallery's front window space. *South of the Rising Sun*, 2018. Source: Rodrigo Hill 2018.

The works displayed in general have a greater public appeal in order to attract the wider public to the show. It is a display window in the end, and it will function as such, according to discourses surrounding this method of displaying and the ways the wider public perceives and engages with it. So within this context, and further conversations I had with Ramp Gallery's curator, I decided to choose two images to be displayed in large formats. My rationale for these images was that they had a form of appeal and aesthetic impact. At the same time, I wanted these images to represent my main research frameworks.

My front window photographs were hung at a considerable distance, divided by the exterior window frame. So, in my opinion, they operate as single photographs or "variations on a theme, expanding meaning or extending meaning" (Smith, 2010, p. 211). In addition, these two photographs have a unique form of display which influences the ways meanings are constructed and interpreted. This creates a multilayered dimension to the works underpinned by metaphorical constructions of my personal and psychological responses to Te Awa River Ride. I argue that these two images are compounds surrounded by context of language where, as

Smith notes, “the single picture exists in context with the artist’s body of work. On one level the single picture is only a segment of the body of work” (p. 211)

Single images at times may fail in the task of telling a story or conveying particular meanings. This is linked with the tradition of photojournalism and perhaps street photography where the photographer looks for a powerful single image to summarise a whole event as photographer Matt Stuart (2017) notes: “There is often one picture I can find that you can pull from something if you absolutely have to, and my daily grind is to try and get one picture from the day of what actually happened” (para. 7).

Photographer Patrick Zachmann (2017), on the other hand, considers himself a mixture of an artist and a photojournalist where his “commitment to photography is to tell stories” (para 9). Zachmann is an advocate of the long-term approach to projects where one can access multiple entry angles and perspectives and subsequently create multilayered photographic narratives (Stuart & Zachmann, 2017). Zachmann’s approach relies on the production of a number of photographs that once compiled will form the basis for a narrative as in a photobook or gallery exhibition. Stuart, however, is content to summarise events into a single and aesthetically strong photograph. To further illuminate this discussion author Keith Smith (2010) argues that “a picture does not exist in isolation. Every picture is a compound, or an implied compound picture” (p. 211). Smith unpacks this notion by dividing the single picture into five forms of compounds: by format construction, by context of language, by levels of meaning, by point of view and by influence of environment (Smith, 2010).

Final Installations: Gallery 1 and 2

Figure 109. *South of the Rising Sun*, 2018. Gallery 1 space, Ramp Gallery, Hamilton. Source: Rodrigo Hill 2018.

This section covers additional discussions and commentary on *South of the Rising Sun* and final installations from gallery 1 and 2 spaces (appendix 4.3). I begin discussing the colour work installed in gallery 1 space. The images below show the installations' progression, covering the four walls going from the left to the right of the room (see gallery's floor map for referencing). Gallery 1 installation is introduced by the panoramic image that I produced from the top of the Hākarimata Ranges. This photograph works well as an establishing shot and a metaphor for the exhibition's title. It is interesting to note that the actual geographical location and representation for the title *South of the Rising Sun* is implied in the panoramic image and yet it may not be clearly noticed or literally described.

The installation then enters into the spatialities of Te Awa River Ride through a gateway photograph that suggests a path into the 'unknown' (as a reference to abstract place-making processes). The sequence then starts to unravel through the punctuation of multiple sized images, motifs, forms and contents. The portrait photograph of a woman is followed by the white dog and opens into a larger scaled, full body portrait.

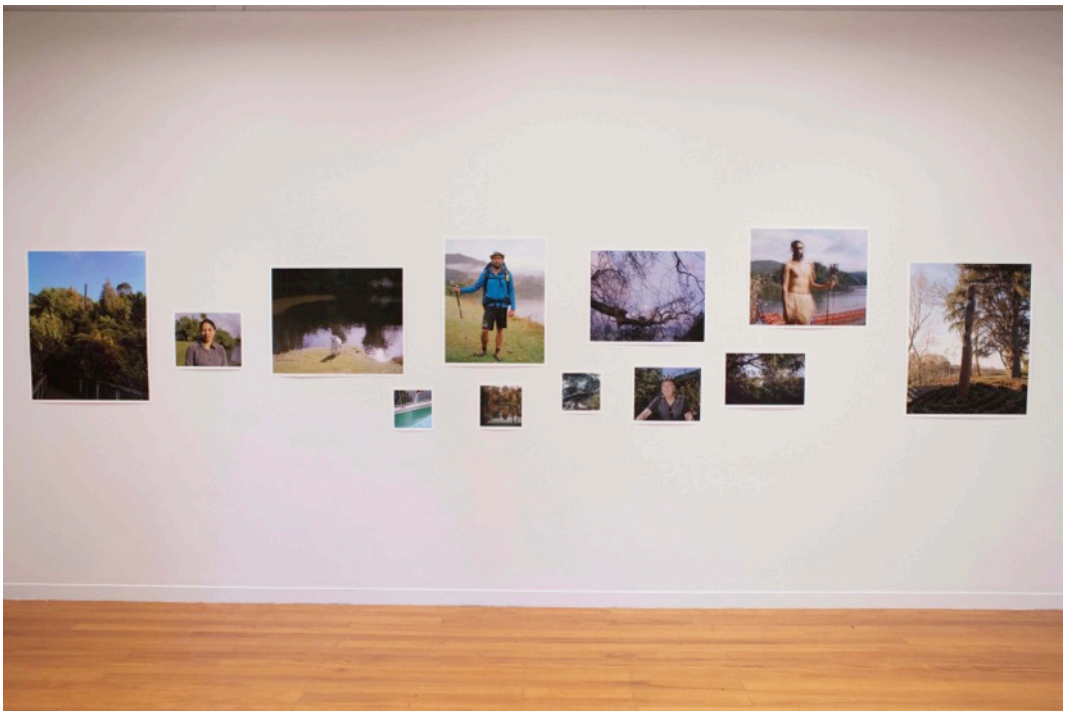


Figure 110. Detail of *Let Light Create Imaginary Spaces* installation at *South of the Rising Sun*, 2018. Gallery 2 space, Ramp Gallery, Hamilton. Source: Rodrigo Hill 2018.

This progression is informed by *The River Which Ran Away,* where the Ecuadorian woman, depicted in the portrait, may suggest the presence of Taupiri (mountain and woman entity from *The River Which Ran Way*), followed by the white dog and the European man. The full body portrait of the European man may suggest the 'settler presence' within the historical framework of Te Awa River Ride's place imaginaries. The portrait of Turanga Barclay-Kerr[14] (Māori men) juxtaposes the European man photograph mediated by a dusk scene that functions as another icon of punctuation and break between the portraits. The main upper section is then concluded with a depiction of a pou (landmark or place-making artefact) marking Kirikiriroa Pā in the central region of Kirikiriroa (Hamilton City Council & Nga Mana Toopu O Kirikiriroa Limited, 2003). The smaller images provide additional sequential points and juxtapositions. The cyclist portrait brings the referencing to movement and the many (outdoor) practices connected to Te Awa River Ride. The tuna comes in as an aesthetical socio-culturally informed representation that connects the many shapes of the trees above and beside. The small photograph underneath the European man is a marker of time as when the waters of the river flood over the old jetty depicted.

[14] Turanga Barclay-Kerr son of Turanga Hoturoa Barclay-Kerr (Tainui) waka hourua captain, educator and descendant of the Tainui waka.

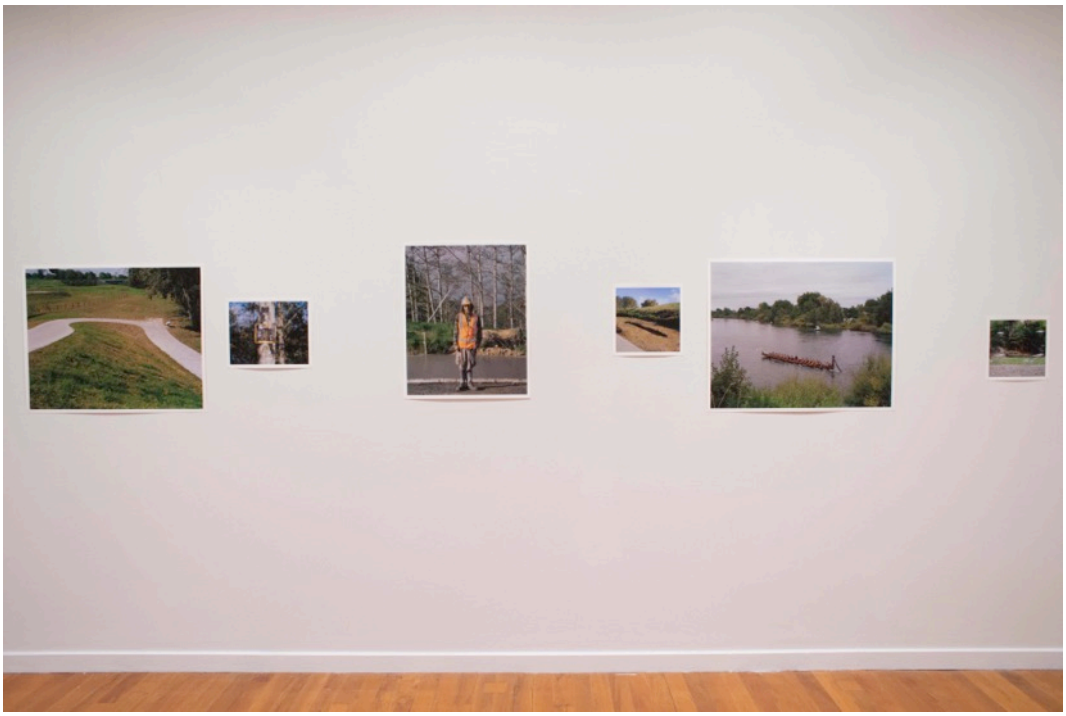


Figure 111. *South of the Rising Sun*, 2018. Gallery 1 space, Ramp Gallery, Hamilton. Source: Rodrigo Hill 2018.

Colour palette, referred motifs and aesthetic elements (form and content) constitute the punctual components of this installation sequence. The hanging style of the photographs suggests the flow and waters of the Waikato River as well as the contours of Te Awa River Ride's concrete path. The portrait of the construction man is placed in the middle as a direct referencing to place-making (Figure 112). The motif of the concrete path is present in most of the photographs. The shape of the concrete path on the first photograph recurs on the second photograph's main subject matter. A similar connection happens on the following sequential compound where the shape of the excavation pit is connected to the waka taua (customary Waikato Tainui war canoe). Flow and rhythm are cadenced by scale added to aesthetic punctuation and recurrence of particular colour palettes. The overall hanging style where images are placed in different heights is present in a more subtle way, creating pace within the overall installation.

The last installation, as depicted in Figure 112, functions as a suggested closing statement. The sequence is concluded by a geographical referencing photograph of the Huka Falls, south of Te Awa River Ride and one of the main features of the beginning of the Waikato River. However, and important to note, the order of reading the installation will be decided by the viewer.

Figure 112. *South of the Rising Sun*, 2018. Gallery 1 space, Ramp Gallery, Hamilton. Source: Rodrigo Hill 2018.

So the installation from Figure 112 may function as an entry point as well. Further to this argument, it needs to be acknowledged the many entry and exit points of my actual research locale, Te Awa River Ride, where one can start and finish cycling or walking from and at various distinctive points. In parallel, the Waikato River, as described in *The River Which Ran Away,* flows northwards from Tongariro to Taupiri. The sequences from my installation, however, flow southwards from Ngāruawāhia to Huka Falls and Waikato iti (source of the river). I reiterate, therefore, my earlier arguments around *South of the Rising Sun* and its many entry and exit points through which the viewer is encouraged to articulate hers/his meaning routes. Ultimately, my role as an artist is to provide indications, signalling particular points upon which meanings may be constructed.

Figure 114 depicts the installation of *Let Light Create Imaginary Spaces*. This panoramic image shows the full sequential progression of the installation while Figure 113 depicts a detail of the title wall. The curatorial decisions, such as lighting, black painted wall and sequencing, played a major part as key exhibition strategies. The hanging style was similar to the colour works in gallery 1, mimicking the flow and waters of the Waikato River. This hanging style also created a form of motion to the photographs connected to the idea of movement pertinent to Te Awa River Ride. The wall corner was used as a connecting

sequential element, linking both sections through aesthetically similar photographs. The black painted wall was useful to create a 'floating' effect on the black and white images. My goal with this strategy was to mimic mental states and other (place-making) psychological processes. Again, motifs were punctuated and refereed through the sequence, creating juxtapositions and conditional progressions where motif-elements were triggered by constant contrapuntal referencing (Smith, 2010).

Figure 113. Detail of *Let Light Create Imaginary Spaces* installation at *South of the Rising Sun*, 2018. Gallery 2 space, Ramp Gallery, Hamilton. Source: Rodrigo Hill 2018.

My idea of creating a particular atmosphere for *Let Light Create Imaginary Spaces* worked more efficiently at night time when the internal gallery lights were noticeable. At daytime, daylight flooded in, illuminating most of gallery 2 space. So the actual atmospheric effect on this work was stronger at night, perhaps referencing the very nature of some mental images actualising from the dark into the light. Either way, I argue that there is an interesting relationship between the works and light and how the light behaves within the gallery's space.

Figure 114. *Let Light Create Imaginary Spaces* installation at *South of the Rising Sun*, 2018. Gallery 2 space, Ramp Gallery, Hamilton. Source: Rodrigo Hill 2018.

Catalogue

The catalogue for *South of the Rising Sun* (appendix 4.4) was part of the exhibition's curatorial project where I collaborated with a graphic designer to develop the catalogue's design. This project involved careful consideration of several factors such as fonts, paper, printing and arranging of the photographs. The catalogue was also intended to carry the installation approach to photography, this time using the actual catalogue as a displaying platform. In this sense, as in a photobook project, every design aspect needs to be connected with the conceptual parameters of the project (Colberg, 2012).

The catalogue had two written texts, one in te reo Māori by Associate Professor Dr. Tom Roa and the other in English where I provided personal and contextual insights into my work. The texts complement each other, but neither is a translation of the other. The text in Māori offers some contextual insights into the Waikato River and the book *The River Which Ran Away*. In my text I also reference the book and the story of the white dog. My goal was not to provide a complete explanation about the book and my exhibition. On the contrary, I was more interested in providing some key suggestive insights for the viewer to then reinterpret these into further meanings.

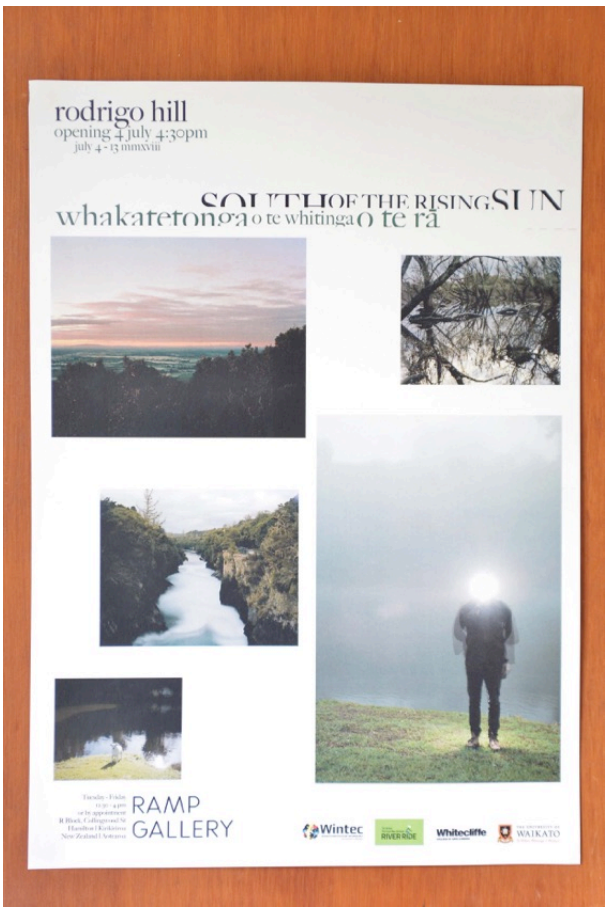
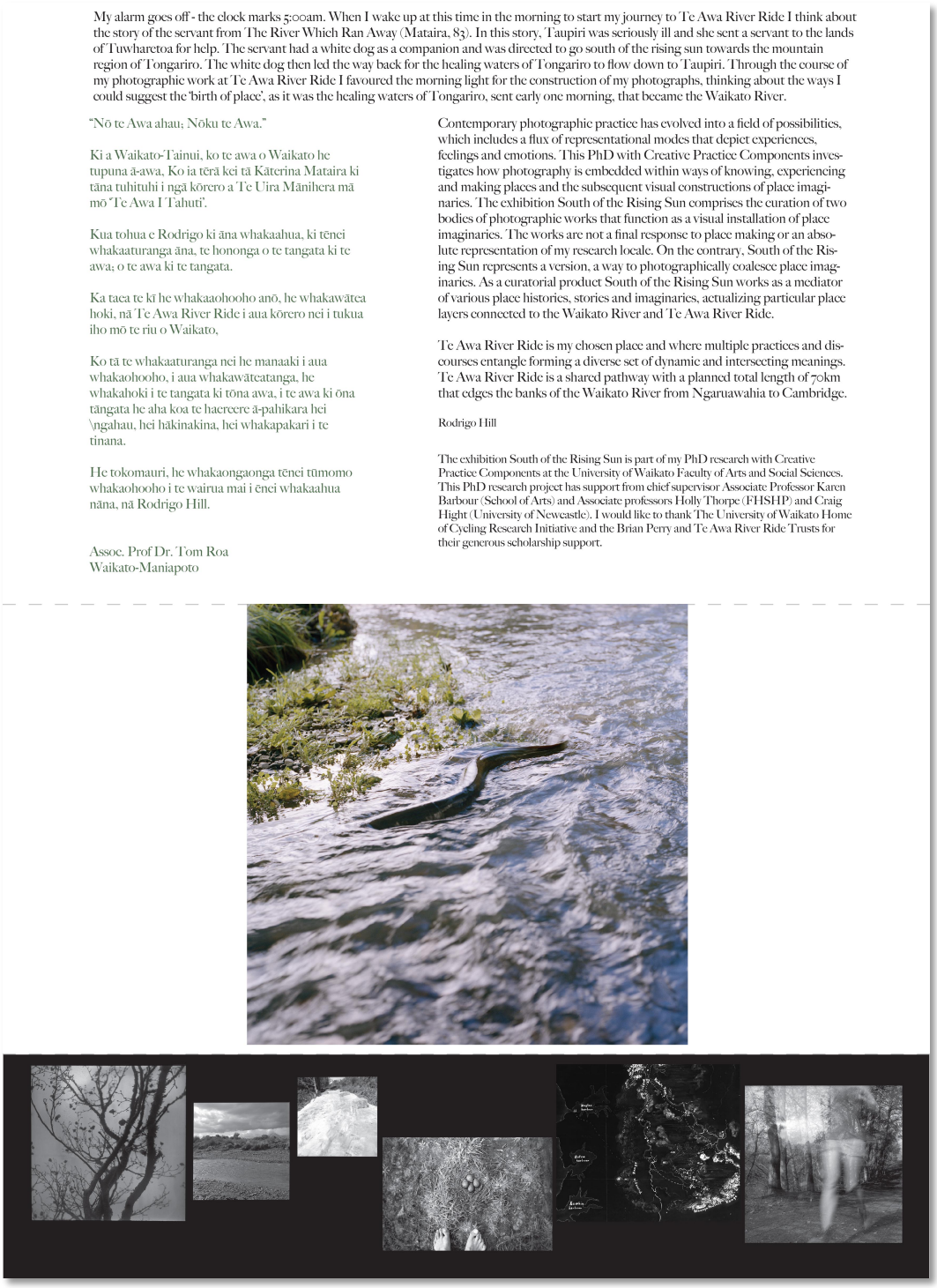


Figure 115. *South of the Rising Sun* catalogue. Source: Rodrigo Hill 201

I have discussed in this chapter the curatorial processes involved in the production of my exhibition *South of the Rising Sun*. The progression from two-dimensional curatorial platforms such as photobooks to spatial gallery spaces of installation informed key curatorial processes connected to *South of the Rising Sun*. As a complete curatorial project my exhibition encompassed deeper considerations around sequencing and juxtaposition of images within gallery spaces. These expanded the conventions of sequencing, opening up possibilities for meaning and sense-makingof photographic compilations and photo narratives within space.

The progression from small gallery spaces within a group show (as demonstrated in chapter five-*Stimuli*) to bigger gallery spaces (*South of the Rising Sun*) opened up curatorial possibilities linked to my entire photographic archive on Te Awa River Ride.



My alarm goes off - the clock marks 5:00am. When I wake up at this time in the morning to start my journey to Te Awa River Ride I think about the story of the servant from The River Which Ran Away (Mataira, 83). In this story, Taupiri was seriously ill and she sent a servant to the lands of Tuwharetoa for help. The servant had a white dog as a companion and was directed to go south of the rising sun towards the mountain region of Tongariro. The white dog then led the way back for the healing waters of Tongariro to flow down to Taupiri. Through the course of my photographic work at Te Awa River Ride I favoured the morning light for the construction of my photographs, thinking about the ways I could suggest the 'birth of place', as it was the healing waters of Tongariro, sent early one morning, that became the Waikato River.

"Nō te Awa ahau; Nōku te Awa."

Ki a Waikato-Tainui, ko te awa o Waikato he tupuna ā-awa. Ko ia tērā kei tā Kāterina Mataira ki tāna tuhituhi i ngā kōrero a Te Uira Mānihera mā mō 'Te Awa I Tahuti'.

Kua tohua e Rodrigo ki āna whakaahua, ki tēnei whakaaturanga āna, te hononga o te tangata ki te awa; o te awa ki te tangata.

Ka taea te kī he whakaaohooho anō, he whakawātea hoki, nā Te Awa River Ride i aua kōrero nei i tukua iho mō te riu o Waikato,

Ko tā te whakaaturanga nei he manaaki i aua whakaohooho, i aua whakawāteatanga, he whakahoki i te tangata ki tōna awa, i te awa ki ōna tāngata he aha koa te hacreere ā-pahikara hei \ngahau, hei hākinakina, hei whakapakari i te tinana.

He tokomauri, he whakaongaonga tēnei tūmomo whakaohooho i te wairua mai i ēnei whakaahua nāna, nā Rodrigo Hill.

Assoc. Prof Dr. Tom Roa
Waikato-Maniapoto

Contemporary photographic practice has evolved into a field of possibilities, which includes a flux of representational modes that depict experiences, feelings and emotions. This PhD with Creative Practice Components investigates how photography is embedded within ways of knowing, experiencing and making places and the subsequent visual constructions of place imaginaries. The exhibition South of the Rising Sun comprises the curation of two bodies of photographic works that function as a visual installation of place imaginaries. The works are not a final response to place making or an absolute representation of my research locale. On the contrary, South of the Rising Sun represents a version, a way to photographically coalesce place imaginaries. As a curatorial product South of the Rising Sun works as a mediator of various place histories, stories and imaginaries, actualizing particular place layers connected to the Waikato River and Te Awa River Ride.

Te Awa River Ride is my chosen place and where multiple practices and discourses entangle forming a diverse set of dynamic and intersecting meanings. Te Awa River Ride is a shared pathway with a planned total length of 70km that edges the banks of the Waikato River from Ngaruawahia to Cambridge.

Rodrigo Hill

The exhibition South of the Rising Sun is part of my PhD research with Creative Practice Components at the University of Waikato Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences. This PhD research project has support from chief supervisor Associate Professor Karen Barbour (School of Arts) and Associate professors Holly Thorpe (FHSHP) and Craig Hight (University of Newcastle). I would like to thank The University of Waikato Home of Cycling Research Initiative and the Brian Perry and Te Awa River Ride Trusts for their generous scholarship support.

Figure 116. *South of the Rising Sun* catalogue. Source: Rodrigo Hill 2018.

Ramp gallery's spatiality and multiple spaces (gallery 1, 2 and front window) provided a platform for the resolving of different bodies of work (black and white, and colour). This was connected to the ways I responded to different modes of photographic representation and the subsequent curation and installing of *South of the Rising Sun*. The use of multiple camera formats is connected to the idea of perception and how I can render different perceptual points through different camera apparatuses and modes of representation. The choice of equipment to

construct particular images was a combination of an intuitive but purposeful approach to image making. As part of a creative iteration, my last creative milestone offered novel ways of representing place and place imaginaries through a fluid place-making platform of installation. The following chapter covers additional insights into my photography practice and place as well as my final conclusive remarks on this PhD project.

Chapter Seven
Conclusion

Figure 117. Waikato te tuna. Source: Rodrigo Hill, 2018.

In this PhD thesis I have explored how photography is embedded within ways of knowing, experiencing and making places, revealing the centrality of photography in place-making processes. Through my photography practice, I have demonstrated the ways photographic images and practices can actualise particular place imaginaries informing unique place-making processes. In this final concluding chapter, I begin with a brief summary of this thesis, highlighting previously introduced ideas from chapters one to six, followed by reflective commentary into the nature of this project.

The photograph in Figure 117 demonstrates evocative ways to interpret and create meanings connected to Te Awa River Ride. The tuna as introduced in the Final Installation Sequence section in chapter five, is part of an underlying collection of stories about the Waikato River and the ways the river is perceived by Māori. In chapter six I referred to tuna as a form of place-icon, demonstrating how I juxtaposed the tuna photograph with an image of the twisting concrete path of Te Awa River Ride. The pairing in Figure 118 was part of a sequential section (see Figure 103) highlighting the symbolism of tuna as an icon connected to the Waikato River. In this sense tuna can be perceived as an image that encapsulates particular place imaginaries, at times physical or psychological and connected to forms of cultural knowledge. Photography and curatorial practices here become an opening tool to place imaginaries, actualising some of the many encapsulated ways to perceive and make Te Awa River Ride and the Waikato River.

The pairing below helps illustrate some of the underpinning ideas from this thesis and the ways photographic compilations can generate meanings through various forms of curation, sequencing and juxtaposition. Photographic compilations, however, depend on the actual practice of photography and the production of an archive of virtual possibilities to be compiled and curated. Sequencing and juxtaposition are equally facilitated by multiple visual possibilities and modes of representation, all connected by motifs, aesthetics and conceptual parameters. In this sense photography practice plays the role of generating multiple possibilities that will then be reworked into further possibilities for meaning and sense making. The multimodal aspect of my photography practice becomes a crucial underpinning to my sequencing strategies and the ways juxtaposed photographs can generate meanings. Throughout this thesis and my creative practice, I have demonstrated the potential for photographic compilations for generating meanings through various photo narrative platforms. I have explored the potential of photobooks, screen-based digital products, group installations and solo exhibition installations. These creative milestones were part of an iterative process that had its final moment, as a photography installation titled *South of the Rising Sun*.

Figure 118. Pairing from a sequential section of *South of the Rising Sun*. Source: Rodrigo Hill, 2018.

Brief Summary of Chapters

In the introductory chapter of this PhD dissertation, I outlined and discussed key relationships between photography and place and the ways photography has informed the construction of multiple "imaginative geographies" (Schwartz & Ryan, 2003). I began outlining the modernist and colonial uses of photography as an instrument of documentation, assertion and creation of particular discourses and power relations related to nineteenth- century European imperialist and colonialist aspirations (Dench, 2011b, 2011a; Kossoy, 2001; Pawson & Brooking, 2015).

These stand in contrast to indigenous Māori views on the Waikato River and its spiritual and cultural relevancies (Cook et al., 2011; King & Roa, 2015; Muru-Lanning, 2016; Puke, 2011; Te Aho, 2008) encapsulated in Waikato Tainui oral traditions of storytelling. Researching European histories of the Waikato Valley, the British occupation, land confiscation and later land settlement processes (Belich, 1986; Boast & Hill, 2009; Fisher, 2016b; Waikato Raupatu Lands Trust, 2008) contrasted Māori views on the Waikato River and Valley. The British and European ways of conceiving of the land added to colonial, and later tourist and landscape uses of photography constitute the dominant discourses of perceiving

and representing places. These European-derived dominant discourses reinforce the appeal and ways of perceiving Te Awa River Ride as a leisure/tourist place. Through my photography practice, I explored possibilities to open up the multiple Te Awa River Ride place imaginaries, coming from a position in which a variety of place imaginaries were recognised and valued. This way I was able to explore what the Waikato Valley and Te Awa River Ride meant as a place to a range of different individuals. Te Awa River Ride, as I have come to understand it, is a place-composite of many layers, practices and place imaginaries.

In my photography practice, informed by a constructionist epistemology and an interpretive research paradigm, I engaged in an iterative process. I focused on particular modes of photographic representation at particular stages of my creative fieldwork. The production of creative milestones facilitated processes of making sense of photographic potentials for meaning and place-making. This is materialised through a project of 'thinking through making' where my photography practice works a catalyst for academic argumentation. I offered my photography practice as a multimodal practice of representation informed by postmodernist assumptions connected to the erosion of objective approaches to visual representation (Barthes, 1981; Bright, 2011; Chevrier, 2006; de Middel, 2018; Gelder & Westgeest, 2011; Lombardi, 2007; Rosenthal & Corner, 2005; Rosler, 2004, 2004; Sekula, 1978; Shore, 2014; Sontag, 2010; Wells, 2004). Within this context, my photography practice became liberated from the burden of truthful representation. This shift instigated expanded modes of representation still undeniably connected to indexical traces and yet capable of generating aestheticised modes en route to artistic expression. As a photographer-artist-scholar, I became motivated to explore multi representational modalities aimed at unique processes of place actualisation and making.

I drew ideas from multiple authors in order to illuminate my concepts of place-composite, place-making and place imaginaries (Bergson, 1911, 2001; Deleuze, 1988, 1989; Deleuze & Guattari, 1994; Glowczewski, 2012; Massey et al., 2007; Sonn et al., 2015). The imaginaries within this framework have been conceptualised as a free flowing imagery field between the actual and the virtually perceived. Photography then functioned as a mediator of these perceptual spheres, actualising particular layers of place imaginaries. I intersected these ideas with

human geography and anthropology theories around space and place and how place is constructed from a collection of cultural perceptions, histories, stories, memories emotions and experiences. Place 'imaginaries' thus became a useful conceptual framework for the development of my photography practice. A key part of my practice has also been to play with the affordances of multiple camera apparatus to explore their implications for photographic ways of knowing, experiencing and making places.

In chapter three I offered a detailed explanation and analysis of my photography practice (methodology). I began highlighting the ways ethnographic methods informed the early stages of my creative fieldwork at Te Awa River Ride (Nakamura, 2013; Pink, 2006, 2011b, 2012, 2013, 2015; Pink et al., 2004; Prosser, 1998). Unpacking of my photography practice then progressed through rigorous explanations and analysis of my four creative milestones (chapters four to six). The structuring and unpacking of these milestones became a fundamental process of iteration and progression of my photography practice. The iteration of methods and modes of representation allowed specific explorations of photography and curation to refine understandings of the centrality and possibilities of photography practice in relation to place and place-making.

My first creative milestone was informed by ethnographic methods and covered a general process of gathering of initial perceptions and place-makings at Te Awa River Ride. I produced *Riding the River Ride* as a visual diary of my initial experiences at Te Awa River Ride and photographic modes utilised. Following *Riding the River Ride,* I moved forward to black and white photography and the rendering of more internal and abstract place-making processes. These explorations were useful to open up possibilities within the genre of black and white photography and the ways these were applied to place and place-making. The production of *Let Light Create Imaginary Spaces* aimed at a different output, a digital sequence, in which I moved from a tactile object to a screen based product. The following creative milestones *Stimuli* and *South of the Rising Sun* covered more selective photography gestures and curatorial explorations of photography installations as platforms for meaning and sense making. The progression of all four creative milestones did not follow a predetermined sequence but an intensive and iterative photographic process of possibilities.

Chapter six and *South of the Rising Sun*, however, do not represent the final result of all the photographs I produced and the subsequent curatorial processes involved. In this sense, my photography practice does not aspire to offer an absolute representation to the ways places can be represented. The curatorial platform of installation was useful to set up a context in which individuals could create meanings and interpretations connected to place. My final installation, *South of the Rising Sun,* was not a definitive answer to place and the ways the Waikato River and Te Awa River Ride should be represented but a fluid platform for place-makings.

A Place-Making Methodology of Iteration

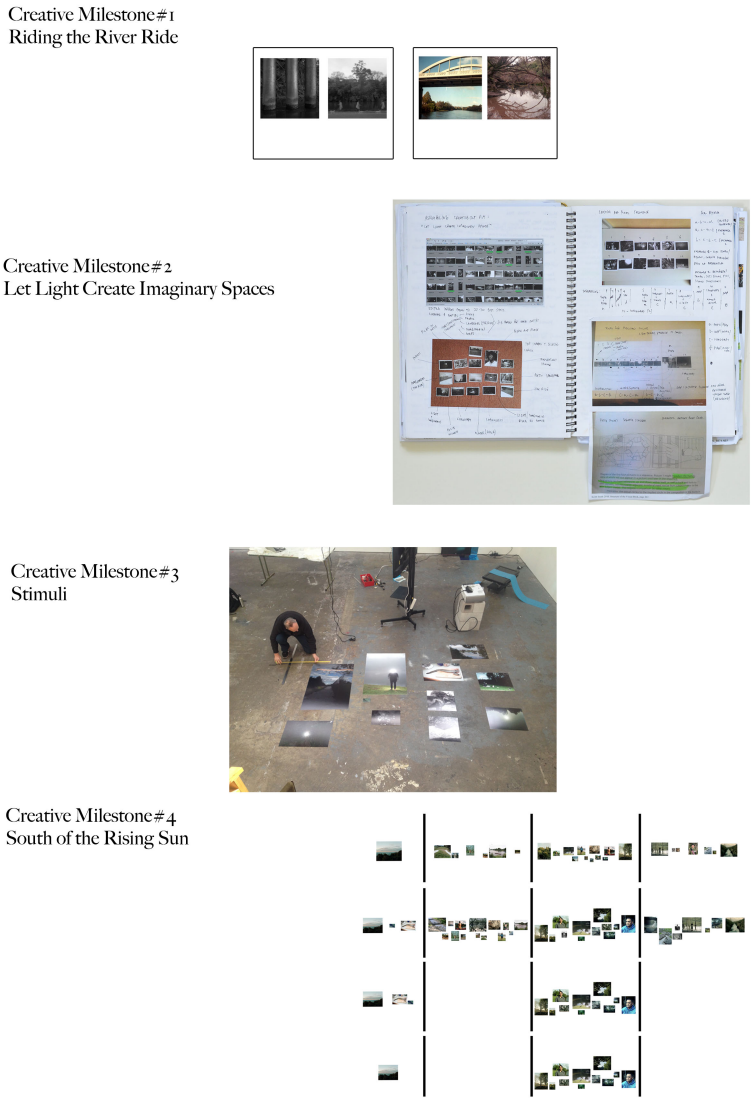


Figure 119. Creative milestones iteration. Source: Rodrigo Hill 2018

The visual installation from Figure 119 represents four different periods of sequencing, juxtaposition, compilation and curation of images towards the respective creative milestones. The processes I used during each stage comprised my efforts to perceive, photographically represent and place-make Te Awa River Ride. These developments were part of strategic iterations and experimental processes connected to my photography practice and place-making. As I mentioned in the introduction chapter, place-making is at the core of my experiences in Aotearoa. Te Awa River Ride became my studio, a place I could experiment and extend both my psychological and creative efforts towards gestures of place-making. This is an infinite process as places are always on the verge of becoming, always evolving and never fixed ─ my photography practice aimed to follow this pattern. This is connected to my creative fieldwork at Te Awa River Ride and the relentless search for new ideas and understandings through my photographic cameras. The abstract nature of place-making turned my photography practice into a practice of recreation and then grounding. Yet place was never fixed.

Long-term fieldwork is an established strategy embedded in slower models of photojournalism, documentary and visual anthropology. During this PhD project and through my photography practice I developed a different approach to long-term fieldwork, focusing on visits and bursts of creative fieldwork at Te Awa River Ride. The early stages of my creative fieldwork were informed by ethnographic methods and therefore covered more prolonged daily immersions at Te Awa River Ride. Thereafter, I focused on deepening my interpretations based on exposure to particular forms of cultural knowledge (and places) in which I located significant creative points of expansion. At each stage and with each form of cultural knowledge I became immersed within, I developed a particular creative response. The more than two thousand hours I spent at Te Awa River Ride over the period of two and a half years were fundamental to allow the exploration of different photographic methods and for curatorial strategies to emerge The diversity of my photographic archive and modes of representation utilised made possible for a range of curatorial possibilities and strategies such as sequencing to be tested and implemented. In this way I was able to have a sense of the affordances of each curatorial platform and sequencing strategies involved. I was then able to test the ways each platform conveyed specific place imaginaries

through the plays of sequencing and displaying of particular compilations. Each creative milestone intersected particular points between photography and curatorial possibilities; all of these connected to place and place-making.

My multimodal approach to photographic representation was vital in generating a layered archive of imagery. My frameworks of place imaginaries and place-composite informed this process and, in one sense, the resulting archive is one example of the nature of places as composites of many layers.

In chapter one I highlighted in Figures 17 and 18 the results of my Google image search for Te Awa River Ride. The visual results predominantly made reference to cyclists/cycling and the landscaped places around the Waikato River. I argued these referential images are part of a dominant discourse on how the Waikato River and Te Awa River Ride should be represented. Within this context, particular modes of photographic representation are put into place to both create and perpetuate tourist and leisure discourses. These modes of representation comprise ways of depicting movement/moving bodies and place/landscape according to normative coded aesthetic parameters. The resulting place-makings are delineated by specific ways of viewing the Waikato River and Te Awa River Ride. In contrast, my concept of place imaginaries encouraged more multifaceted and richer insights into the many layers of place-making beyond smiling bodies on bikes and towards the multiple cultural knowledge connected to past and present totalities.

Contribution to Literature and Study Limitations

In this brief section I outline the contribution of my PhD project to creative practice and broader academic research fields as well as the limitations of my methodological approaches to place and place-making. There are valid points of contribution, ranging from my approach to ethnography and qualitative research as well as the development of a multimodal approach to visual representation. The limitations for the application of my creative methods and photography practice are more prominent in research areas that are not connected to creative practice and the idea of thinking-through-making.

This thesis and my creative methodology offer novel ways of approaching place and place-making. My photography practice and creative methodology added to my conceptual notion of place imaginaries comprised a methodological model through which place can be perceived and represented. This model can also be understood as an artistic methodology of place-making. My uses of sensory ethnographic methods to facilitate my artistic gestures encompassed novel ways of approaching ethnography and fieldwork. I challenged the predictability of ethnographic fieldwork approaches, carving my own set of methods and fieldwork agendas. Within this context, my photography practice became a fluid multimodal practice of representation, advancing into a territory where artistic expression prevailed through a project of loose but purposeful field approach-encounters. This methodological model offers artists and researchers a starting point into alternative fieldwork agendas focused on artistic expression rather than conventional ethnographic data collection regimes. In this way, the analysis of research 'findings' does not happen through data analysis but through the actual production of creative milestones (creative products), resulting from stages of creative fieldwork as described in chapters three to six. The fieldwork itself was not a separate stage within the research project but an ongoing creative process of iteration in charge of generating visual fragments to be reworked through the later stages of curation, sequencing and photo narrative production.

The production of creative milestones generated rigorous critical analysis of my creative processes and photography practice. In a sense the four creative milestones may be interpreted as a form of research 'findings' focused on processes and generated creative products. The iteration of methods and production of creative milestones offered a model through which artists from an array of disciplines can explore place, place imaginaries and place-making. The trialling of photographs and photographic modes of representation connected to forms of cultural knowledge within Te Awa River Ride provided a valid methodological solution to my research questions. The process of curating and compiling single creative fragments towards a creative milestone was fundamental to this PhD project and its emergent critical thinking. This was an important aspect of my creative practice research, focusing on the making of single visual fragments and later sense-making of these collections through curation and production of creative milestones. My focus, therefore, was not only

on the act of making photographs, but also on the possibilities for sense-making embedded into forms of curation and production of creative milestones. These ideas extend to the act of *making* into articulated forms of sense-making connected to conceptual argumentation. For example, a sculptor is able to create a number of different sculptures related to Te Awa River Ride connected to one's responses to processes of place-making. In critically analysing the produced works, one is able to reach particular conclusions. I argue, however, that by compiling the works towards a curatorial product, one is able to open further routes and possibilities to knowledge and meaning creation.

In addition, the notions of place imaginaries and place-composite are useful creative frameworks for the application of my place-making methodology. Possibilities around this framework offer a conceptual platform to artistically informed and conventional qualitative research approaches. This model, however, imposes limitations connected to creative practice and the ability to generate creative products such as photography, paintings, sculptures, performance art and other forms of artistic expression. Therefore, the researcher, in this case, must have strong creative practice background in order to engage in the thinking-through-making aspect of this kind of research methodology. The core premise and focus of creative practice research is the *making* aspect. The *making* generates critical thinking underpinned and informed by theoretical constructs. Within this context, creative practice is able to fuel the progression of ideas and critical analysis of produced creative products. These are informed by theoretical constructs that may be carved from an array of disciplines including relevant literature connected to creative practice and the chosen artistic medium of expression. The alignment of ontological and epistemological assumptions with theories connected to creative practice is crucial for the development of a cohesive academic platform of argumentation. In the case of this PhD project, I carved a theoretical model informed by an array of disciplines in which photography theory and practice are positioned at the centre. The idea of place imaginaries and place-composite functioned as a theoretical model of perception intertwined with my creative practice and underpinned by the notion of 'truth' as a construction of multiple shared truths. Yet this theoretical model needed a form of creative activation of place imaginaries to become a cohesive platform of argumentation.

In parallel, the notions of place imaginaries and place-composite can be applied to a range of disciplines such as human geography, anthropology and environmental psychology. The notions of place imaginaries and place-composite carry traces of particular ideas connected to the disciplines mentioned above. In this sense, the reworked ideas within my theoretical model can be reapplied to correspondent disciplines and fields beyond, contributing towards further qualitative research processes of theoretical *bricolage*. This qualitative process or *bricolage* may be extended to further fields beyond the creative practice domains. More specifically, this PhD project and my notions around place and place imaginaries contribute to bodies of literatures around place, perception, place-making, creative practice, qualitative research, ethnography and photography. In addition, there is much potential for other visual ethnographers, visual artists and photographers (entering the realm of academic research) to develop and adapt my creative methodology.

As demonstrated in chapter two, contemporary approaches to photography offer valid qualitative approaches to visual research. I argue that the leap from objective to contemporary approaches to photography must be considered in order to generate further routes to knowledge production and ways of interpreting meanings. Qualitative research approaches to visual research informed by contemporary photography practice allow photographers, visual artists and ethnographers to extend their practices, moving away from the idea of photography as a mere tool to record reality. In this context, qualitative visual practitioners have the opportunity of entering into a stimulating research arena of possibilities where further meanings can be catalysed. The constructionist epistemology is useful to support the idea that 'truth' is connected to forms of reality and ways of perceiving the world. The constructionist epistemology informed my approaches to photography and the ways I collaborated with participants to construct my photographs. In a similar way, photographers, visual artists and ethnographers can adopt these strategies to represent accounts from several sources in order to illuminate the research topic. I note that research participants' accounts in this scenario may be represented without the anthropological intent of giving voice to particular individuals or groups. Photography practice here does not operate singularly as a medium to give voice but to represent an idea connected to and informed by a set of realities, imaginaries or 'truths' related to a given research topic. I also highlight the idea of

curation and compilation of creative milestones or products as an important aspect of any creative practice followed by careful considerations towards the actual production of curatorial products. These, I argue again, do not diminish the validity of academic products, on the contrary, it opens territories for further critical debates.

The place-making methodology I developed throughout this PhD can be applied to a range of projects where place is the central topic. The idea and creative strategy of recreation of stories and accounts related to places presented valid insights into representational possibilities linked to the contesting nature of places. In relation to this PhD project, for example, Waikato Tainui's views and stories about the Waikato River provided inspirational points to my photography practice. Working alongside collaborators such as Māori scholar, Associate Professor Dr. Tom Roa was fundamental to my photography practice and the development of key ideas towards the construction of particular photographs connected to Waikato Tainui and the Waikato River. In addition, my supervisory panel had three scholars with different research backgrounds covering creative practice, documentary and sports sociology, and each contributed with valuable insights into my research and creative processes. Multidisciplinary studies can require a level of collaboration either with research participants and/or scholars from different disciplines and I intend to further develop this model, seeking future research collaborations.

Final Remarks

Places and place-making are open processes, fluxes of possibilities for meaning. My photography practice is also a flux of modes of representation. At each mode I concentrated my artistic efforts to respond to and represent my place-making developments and the many place imaginaries connected to these processes. To approach place photographically, I had to be open to all accounts and forms of place imaginaries as they all constitute what one calls a place. I draw inspiration from the waters of the Waikato River as well as the stories I heard from a local resident mowing his lawns by Te Awa River Ride. Nothing is hidden; place imaginaries are inherent to place. The photograph from Figure 120 depicts the last

roll of 120mm colour Kodak film I used during the final creative fieldwork stages of *South of the Rising Sun*.

Figure 120. Undeveloped last 120mm film roll for *South of the Rising Sun.* Source: Rodrigo Hill, 2018.

I did not develop this film, and I cannot recall the possible images that are inside the roll. In this sense the images inside the film roll are a form of imaginary waiting to be actualised. These images are sequenced in a particular order and curated from a series of gestures aimed at representing a particular idea, place imaginaries. This roll of film is open as place and place-making are, open territories of meaning and knowledge production.

My incessant explorations with curatorial platforms opened up possibilities towards the curation, sequencing and compilation of photo narratives of place and place imaginaries. Installation here became a valuable curatorial platform through which I expanded conventional sequencing strategies in order to emulate dimensions of memory, affect and cultural perception connected to cultural knowledge, place imaginaries and place-making processes. These ideas imposed representational challenges connected to the medium of photography and its affordances. In this sense, the multimodal approach to representation was useful

to enumerate a number of successful and unsuccessful possibilities. This revealed my urge to expand and play against indexical photographic elements into aesthetic representations of place as well as subsequent place imaginaries and place making-processes. The camera apparatuses I used, and the photographs I made, added to the implemented curatorial methodology comprised my efforts as an artist in search of expression. This is an expression of perception. Looking, feeling, hearing, making photographs, making a place-perceptual place, subtracted from a totality, a durational cut. The photographic then emerges; the quest for imaginaries has begun.

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