Tangata~Whenua: A documentary installation

by Toiroa Arapeta Williams

KARAKIA

He hōnore, he korōria ki te Atua He maungārongo ki te whenua He whakaaro pai ki ngā tāngata katoa Amine

Honour and glory to God Peace on Earth Goodwill to all people Amen



Tangata~Whenua: A documentary installation by Toiroa Arapeta Williams

CURATED BY: Professor Hinematau McNeill Te Ara Poutama — AUT University

WHAKATAUĀKĪ, WRITTEN POETRY, PŪRĀKAU AND AUDIO NARRATION Toiroa Arapeta Williams

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Tangata-Whenua: A photopoetic documentary

Professor Hinematau McNeill

EXHIBITION CURATOR

In the realm of artistic expression, the interplay of different cultures and traditions often results in a tapestry rich in texture and depth. The Tangata-Whenua exhibition is a harmonious synthesis of Te Whakatōhea, the people and the land. Pūrākau lie across the land, revealing the interconnectivity of the relationship. The tribe's historical experience is reflected in the moody hues of the images. They capture the intricate web of relationships, referencing both the living the dead, and the primeval ancestors Papatūānuku and Ranginui. This imbues the work with wairuatanga, spirituality that is intrinsic to a Māori worldview.

Curated from the research undertaken during Toiroa Williams' PhD journey, this collection stands not only as an selection of photographs portraying Te Whakatōhea and our history. Williams' collaboration with Dr Marcos Mortensen Steagall exemplifies a confluence of diverse perspectives. It is a testament to the potential of collaborative endeavours that prioritise mutual respect and deep understanding. Their shared narratives, juxtaposed against the backdrop of te ao Māori and the essence of Brazil, encapsulate a journey of trust, mutual reverence, and genuine connection. The sojourn to Ōpōtiki, records the photographer being embraced within community. This reflects the principle of collectivism embedded within te ao Māori.

The ethos of prioritising partnership over individual objectives is not merely a theoretical concept but a lived reality, embedded in traditional Māori values. The core tenets of whanaungatanga (kinship), manaakitanga (hospitality and care for others), and kaitiakitanga (stewardship of the land and community) resonate through each frame, elucidating the communal nature intrinsic to Māori society.

The methodology behind each photograph is evident in the duo's approach, be it waiting for the land's auspicious reveal or harnessing the capabilities to register the ethereal beauty of the landscapes within Te Whakatōhea. Positioned at the intersection of tradition and innovation, the Tangata-Whenua exhibition is an homage to collective narratives. It serves as a conduit through which viewers can engage with, and reflect upon, the multifaceted dimensions of tradition, kinship, which is the perpetual dialogue between land and its people.



Tangata~Whenua: The photographs

Toiroa Arapeta Williams

The photographic installation Tangata-Whenua represents the culmination of my PhD research project, Tangohia Mai Te Taura: Take This Rope, conducted within the disciplines of Art and Design. This installation serves as the tangible embodiment of my PhD thesis, that explores creative possibilities within the phenomenon of expanded documentary making. Comprising three distinct components, Tangata-Whenua seeks to immerse viewers inside complex connections between people and their ancestral land.

At the core of this installation is a photopoetic essay featuring photographs by Dr Marcos Mortesen Steagall and poetry and pūrākau I have composed. We are led into the space by an anchoring, photopoetic work called 'Whakapapa' that features my mother (and the family matriarch, Barbara Maria Williams), seated in front of our whānau's 'angel wall'.

Inside the installation space we encounter eleven, large photographs depicting our ancestral land. These are supported by whakatauākī (proverbs), poetry in te reo Māori and English, and pre-recorded pūrākau that can be accessed through a QR code. (These pūrākau can also be accessed inside this catalogue using the unique QR barcode that accompanies each page of photography and poetry). Through these pūrākau one can listen to an extended oral description where I narrate stories significant to each location.

This collaborative body of work explores not only the physical but also the ancestral connections to the whenua (land) that were disrupted by historical events. Specifically, it investigates the impact of the state execution of Mokomoko, our ancestor who was wrongfully accused and subsequently pardoned. This tragic event holds immense significance within the narrative of our iwi (tribe) and relationships with our ancestral land.



Tangata~Whenua: The mōeteatea

Toiroa Arapeta Williams

In addition to the printed photographs and written narratives, Tangata-Whenua features two, looping, audio-visual mōteatea that connect tangata (people) and whenua (land). These screen works are positioned on adjacent monitors, nestled into the heart of the photopoetic documentary.

The first is titled Kāore te tākiri (The Great Hanging). This is a waiata composed by Mokomoko in Mt Eden prison. From this work, a prominent line, "Take this rope from my neck so that I may sing my song," has, over time taken on a deeper, symbolic meaning. Today, for Te Whānau a Mokomoko, this line signifies the strength of voice against suppression and the relentless pursuit of truth.

The second moeteatea, E au to moe (May you rest well), is my heartfelt response

and homage to Mokomoko. This work reflects the original tone and rhythm of Mokomoko's lament and is an intimate portrayal of our shared lineage, that emphasises our collective position as his many descendants.

Kāore te tākiri evoked profound emotions in me, unearthing deep-seated pain, aroha, and a heavy sense of historical injustices that our ancestors faced. While the initial vision for filming this work had been set within the confines of the historical Mt Eden prison, myriad challenges prompted a shift in my vision. What emerged was a poetic abstraction, with imagery shot in varied environments, using significant symbols including rope, flowing water and a crucifix.

In contrast, E au tō moe delves into personal emotions. Through this piece,

I've tried to capture the essence of the lands Mokomoko longed for in life. The rugged coastlines, teeming rivers, and lush hills of Te Whakatōhea, all symbolise a journey home that our ancestor was tragically deprived from completing.

Waiata a Mokomoko: Kāore te tākiri

Composed by Chief Mokomoko (1866)

Tangohia te taura i taku kakī, kia wajata au i taku wajata.¹ Kāore te tākiri e tute nei ki te moenga kei te hori te tangata, tēnei au kei te raweke he pono, te kī nei tāku rauika ki te moenga koia kei te tangata mate kau au ki a te uira whakarewha te titiro te hukinga mate ia hau tītī/hamuti he wareware noa, te eke noa i te kai puke he ahi mumura te pānga mai o te whakamā me kawe ki tawhiti hei homai mo te mekameka te rerenga o te rā, ko te Kāwana kei Ūropi, māna e kī mai me tau au ki te tauwati hai tūtaki

ake mō te kūaha o te pouaka. Haramai nei au ka tūraki mate ki te moenga e. E mate hara kore ana ahau. Tēnā koutou Pākehā mā. Hei aha.²



¹Today Te whānau a Mokomoko use the opening line of this waiata as a whakatauākī with the following interpretation: Tangohia te taura i taku kakī, kia waiata au i taku waiata. Have the strength to speak up and the truth will not be silenced.

² The lyrics of this waiata have been taken and adapted from the Mokomoko (Restoration of Character, Mana, and Reputation) Bill (2011), retrievable here: https://www.legislation.govt.nz/ bill/government/2011/0343/7.0/09 6be8ed807af7ba.pdf



A song from Chief Mokomoko: The great hanging

Take the rope from my throat so I am able to sing my song. This rope around my neck steals me to death. These people lie, they sabotaged the truth, condemning me to this grave. With the flash of lightning, my life is to end like of a tornado, I am furious and vengeful. Why have I been brought upon this ship? A burning fear emerged as I was taken to lands afar, bound in shackles, and as sun sets over the powers in Europe,

their words are the ones who said I must hang, in these fishnet gallows. So that I might meet with the lid of my coffin. Right or wrong I am to die. Farewell Pākehā. I die an innocent man. So be it.

Waiata a Moko: E au tō moe

Composed by Toiroa Arapeta Williams (2023)

Kāore hoki nei te kakī whakarāoa e tangi noa auē ake nei tō tira e Moko. pō raruraru ana Kimohia te ūpokoiri, hori ana Aani e tangi noa³ mō te rau tau, i te wahangū ngāti tō-hē-tohe i hekea koe i Te Pūriri, Mautini, Maurahi, Maumau moe mai e hika i a toka tiotio,⁴ pēhia rawatia aua ka e oho e Te Warana i o moemoeā tō ati e koro māna hei rapu i a kõiwi tapu māna hei hahū mā te tira

tapu⁵ murua te mate harakore, Tuiringa⁶ raupa me ko te rākau hei utu one kore, para kore, korekore rawa e te tiki atu nei i taua taura taretare,⁷ kia whenua ai koe i te papatipu⁸ e au tō moe, tō waiata e Mokomoko e!

³ Kimohia: The first wife of Mokomoko, ūpokoiri: A hanging head.

⁴ Toka tiotio refers to the concrete platform of the mass grave under which Mokomoko and others were buried in Mt Eden prison.

⁵ Tira tapu refers to the party who went to collect the remains of Mokomoko and others in the mass grave.

⁶ Tuiringa refers to Tuiringa Mannie Mokomoko, the prominent leader who was instrumental in returning Mokomoko home.

⁷ Taura taretare: That awful noose.

⁸ Papatipu: Refers to a traditionally held title of ancestral land.

A song from your grandson: May you rest well

The coughing throat does not easily sing.⁹ Your people Mokomoko are weeping,¹⁰and left confused and divided by your execution. In a blink of an eye, you were executed as Arnev emboldened the lies that killed you.¹¹ Te Whakatōhea the once stroppy and stubborn – silenced¹². still mourning 157 years later¹³. You were wrongfully executed by hanging from that Pūriri¹⁴, in the place where lives are squandered; Mt Eden; where you were buried in jail. Te Warana do not wake from vour dream¹⁵,

your legacy has been upheld, by your descendants, your father's remains have been found. Those workers who worked tirelessly during the scared ritual of the hahū, to return you home. From your death, we, were gifted a tree, without land, what a travesty!¹⁶ Now we, are burdened by that rope, of tragedy, however we, live and hope! Now you rest in your homelands, Rest in peace, Koro Mokomoko, Let your song be sung. ⁹ This line refers to the hanging of Mokomoko and his wish to sing his song of innocence – as indicated in the first verse of his waiata.

¹⁰ This speaks of Mokomoko's many wives and the later divisions caused within the Mokomoko whānau and inside Te Whakatōhea.

¹¹ Arney was the Chief Judge who presided over Völkner's case and sentenced Mokomoko to be hanged.

¹² Te Whakatôhea are named after the nature of their seminal ancestress, Muriwai, who was a powerful, stubborn speaker and debater.

¹³ It was over 157 years after the execution of Mokomoko that the Crown officially apologised to Te Whakatôhea.

⁴⁴ Pūriri was a grandson of Mokomoko's third wife Hirotipa. Völkner was hanged from a willow tree near a Pūriri tree. The word is used here to refer to the gallows of Mt Eden prison.

¹⁵ Te Warana the first was the son of Mokomoko. His namesake was also a descendant of Mokomoko who dreamed of being trapped underground. It was Te Warana who distinguished Mokomoko's bones from others in the mass grave at Mt Eden prison.

¹⁶ This line refers to Mokomoko's pardoning tree that was gifted by the Crown at the ceremonial reconciliation. At the ceremony Tuiringa Mannie Mokomoko challenged the government representatives asking, "How can this tree grow, if you have not returned the land in which to plant it in?



Whāia te iti kahurangi

Whāia te iti kahurangi. Tū ana i Ōpōtiki Mai Tawhiti. i runga i ngā hiwi herehere. Hiwi rangaranga rā i ngā uri o Tarawa, mai Hawaiki. Ōpōtiki Tānahanaha ka makere ki rō puna. Ōpōtiki Mai Tawhiti nō tuawhakarere e. Reaching to the heavens, This is Whāia te iti kahurangi. In a small corner of Ōpōtiki, carvings that weave together whispers of unity. They tell of Tarawa, a voyager from distant Hawaiki, who was guided by two taniwha fish, Tānahanaha named Ngā Pōtiki Mai Tawhiti. Released in a nearby spring called Ōpōtiki Mai Tawhiti, the home of two pets from afar. Etching Ōpōtiki Mai Tawhiti into the annals of time.

Whakatauākī

Kei te rangi, he tini te whetū, ngā pōtiki mai tawhiti ki tai, he kura ki uta

Like the many stars that adorn the night sky, so too are the wonders of the land and sea adorned by the people of Õpõtiki.





Muriwai

Muriwai He awa, nō te pūtake i ngaromia. He awa e werowerohia nei e te rākau Pākehā. Kohakohatia, wharemaremaretia. He auē. He awa iti nei, kaha nui tonu. Kaikai ana i te one, i te toka, i te rākau, ka tae ki te wainui a ngā pōtikirua. Aonui, aoroa, pōnunui, pōroroa ka kae, ka tae. He pūtake tonu o te kaha, o te ihi, o te wana Whakatōhea.

Muriwai A creek, of unknown origin. A small, constant flow, Blocked by driftwood, coughed up by the sea. But carved into the sand, the resolute path, seeking the open ocean. The rising and setting of moons, Over determined stories. This is resilience.

Whakatauākī

Ko te puna i rukuhia, ko terere o Muriwai, tere maiaia o Whiro, ki Mutuwhenua rā anō. Te tapu o Muriwai e.

These sacred springs we all bathe in, flow from Muriwai herself, with a determined current unyielding, from Whiro to Mutuwhenua. Such was the ordained authority of Muriwai.





Te Ahiaua

Tirea rama e whāiroiro rā i aku ripo tai. Tērā ia Te Ahiaua e moe tapu ana i rō moana i patua. Haramai ō tamāhine i a Mutu, i a Whiro. Ākuanei ka noa ko wai hai te whāngaitanga ki te kai takutai o Te Whakatōhea. Deep in calling waters, of Te Ahiaua. A fragile moon, reflected night, the consecrated gathering place of our people, Ngāti Patumoana. Each ripple, a message from our ancestors, through time. Sustaining. Our people say, to eat from these sacred food bowls is to be nurtured by the daughters of Te Whakatōhea.

Whakatauākī

Pipi hura, Pipi hura, kia rongo koe i te hāmama a Hineiahua.

When foraging, you reveal the pipi, and on their lips, they will whisper the story of Hineiahua.



Te Ahiaua: Campsite Ōpōtiki Aotearoa New Zealand 37°59'36.0"S 177°12'10.0"E



Whitikau

Pūrua ana aku manga hihi, aku manga haha wai wiwi, wai wawa wai o Weka e eka ana ngutu ana i te waha. Tāwhana kau ana. tūwhanawhanatia i runga rā. E au, e koe, e te iwi nui nei e auē. He iwi manga kua tukua ki paripari. Whakanako whenua. rāwaho whanoke. Ka maunu ki te oneone, e auē. Ko au ko te awa, ko te awa ko au. Koau ana. tohetohe ake nei koau ana. tohetohe ake rā. Kua mākūkū ki te wai. ki te kai, ki te kupu Tūtāmure i te Muriwai. Tohetohe ake nei. Tohetohe ake rā.

The merging of rivers, Unbound, unrestricted, driving forward. Spanned by the bridge of Waioweka, connecting whanau, hapū and iwi. We have suffered raupatu. Our lands seized. Driven to a reservation. But we are driven. moving forward, Te Whakatohea, the connected. Rich in knowledge. knowing who we are, knowing our stories, knowing our whakapapa. Knowing.

Whakatauākī

Nukutere ana, nukunuku ana, teretere ana, e Waioweka nei.

The gathering of our people is like the strength of our river, Waioweka.





Papakāinga

I runga i te puke ka titiro whakawaho ki te pae o te rangi. Tū ana a tai, mihi ana mai, tangi ana mai. He kõrero tawhito nõ kõnei tonu e whāki nei i ngā whenua i takahia ngā kāinga i tahua, ngā tipua i whakairitia e te pene. Kua ngaro taku whenua, engari kei konei tonu. "Haere rā e hika ki Ōpape, hai whenua tipuna tūturu mohau." Koia hoki rā tāu kupu, e te ūpoko i karaunatia. Hiahia tō māhētī.

I walk to the top of a hill, And look out, To where the land meets the sea. Each wave, the arrival of hope. Reaching back over 157 years, 144, 000 hectares of fertile land, our nurturing home, seized by the strike of a pen. Reduced to 20,000 hectares. They marched us to the Ōpape reservation, to be tenants on our own land. By order of the crown.

Whakatauākī

Kauahia i Ōpape, te ahikā i tawhiti, hei ahikā mai tawhiti

Ōpape, the home fires from afar.





Mākeo rāua ko Waiaua

Māuatahi ko taku tipuna kōkā Papatūānuku kei raro iho rā. Hei tuarā, hei ara hoki kāinga. Ko tāku noa he piki tuarā he heke roimata i taku hokitanga atu mā taku tipuna kōkā e. Kei runga ko Mākeo tipua, Mākeo tawhito. Aku waewae ki ngā wiwi. He karangatanga kāinga nō ngā wai, ngā puke ngā tīpuna rā kua kotahi nei ki roto Wajaua ki raro iho rā. E orooro ana i tana korokoro he reo no tuawhakarere.

I walk with my mother. Papatūānuku, the Earth. The rural roads of home, in gentle curls through the farmlands of our people. I look up to Mākeo, our ancestral mountain. My feet brushed with grass. My senses, touched by the call of summer waters. A connection beyond ownership, the memories of ancestors, flowing with Waiaua ... The rhythm of our generation's past.

Whakatauākī

Maunga tū, wai rere, mātuawhāngai whakarere kōrero

We exist today because of the mountains and rivers that loved us like their own.





Manawaroa

Whakatōhea, whakapehapeha. Whakatōhea, whakawhiti tai. Whakatōhea, rongonui. Whakatōhea, te waha o Ōpōtiki. Ka tae te tau 1866. Ka tae te rāwaho. Ka tae te pū i ō ringaringa, Pākehā. Tō mahi kōhuru. Tō mahi kōhuru. Tō mahi kōhuru. Tākahanga Pākehā, mau whenua. Tāke kore. Whakatōhea wawā, Whakatōhea wahangū. Whakatōhea. Embracing seafarers and traders, our gateway to the world, this river mouth at Ōpōtiki. But, in 1866, here is where war clambered ashore. Torn by waves of blood and anguish. Hundreds of colonial soldiers, Killing. Killing. Killing. Rewarded with our land, Our hearts, torn with pain, our shoreline - the debris of grief.

Whakatauākī

Ka māunu ngā maramara rīriki ki te wai.

You may split our waka into pieces, but the remnants will continue to float.





Parohutu

E hoki kāinga ana ki raro Pōhutukawa. Mihi mai e koro Mokomoko. Ka hoki ngā mahara ki ngā tau kotahi rau mai i ngā tīpuna, ki ngā mokopuna. Coming home. The sheltered embrace of Pōhutukawa. Watched over by Parohutu the Pā site of Mokomoko. This passage of light and dark, a hundred years of witness, to the resilience of our ancestors. A journey to the future.

Whakatauākī

Kia poto, poto ake, poto rawa te ara whakahoki tangata, kia mihia koe e ngā raurākau, e ngā menenga tangata hei te hokitanga ki te kāinga.

May the path home be short, and may you be welcomed by the ancestral trees and the smiles of our people.



Long beach shot with lagoon Waiotahe beach Ōpōtiki Aotearoa New Zealand 37°59'28.3"S 177°14'09.8"E



Ūkaipō

Kua kitea rā e ngā mata maunga ngā pikitanga tīpuna. He mea kõrero anō e rātau i roto i ngā wā. ō tamariki, te kāinga, te tika, te pono. Ngā mahi a ōku mātua ki runga ki te whenua. He mahi tīeki. He oranga tamariki. He papatipu tuku. He ūkaipō tonu. Koia rā te kupu matua, kōrero maunga.

A silent witness. These mountains, the stories of our ancestors, whispered on the wind. Ōpōtiki. Our home. Our history. The toil of my mother and father. Etched into this land. For us, their children, our source of sustenance. He ūkaipō.

Whakatauākī

Kimihia rangahaua ō whenua taurikura, ruia he kākano

Seek out the most precious elements in all of your lands. Find your paradise and plant seeds there.





Whakapapa

Kei roto i te rūma noho, noho ai. He pikitia o rātau kua wehe, kei kōnei tonu i ō rātau kākā papai. Kei reira hoki rā ngā kōrero e hiahiatia nei, ōku kaumātua, tīpuna, mātua, kōkā, he whakapapa aroha, motuhake. Kei reira hoki rā ngā wawata, ngā moemoeā, ō rātau tonu, ō tātau hoki rā. Nō mai rānō rātau e noho pakitara mai nei, kekeho iho ai. Te rūma i whakarākeitia e taku kōkā. Ko tana he whakairi i te aroha, i te whakapapa, i te tangata, i te whenua.

In my parents' lounge, adorned with ancestral photographs, I found the story I had been searching for. My grandparents, great grandparents, uncles and aunts. A tapestry of resilience and love. The lighted interweaving of hopes and dreams. The touching of past and future. They have been here since I can remember. Watching over us, on the walls of my mother's living room, through her, our family's legacy lives on. Whakapapa. Tangata. Whenua.

Whakatauākī

He uri nō Te Whakatōhea.

I am a descendant of Whakatōhea.



Barbara Maria Williams with our family angel wall at Hinewai Farm Ōpōtiki Aotearoa New Zealand 38°00'10.7"S 177°13'57.6"E



Taku whenua

Kua whakawhenuatia au e te kuia. Ki kōnei. Te pūtake o te oranga. He rākau tipuna tū ana i te kāenga. He rākau mokopuna. Tū tonu, tū tonu, tū ake, tū ake. He hau hou e pupuhi mai ana. He āwhā kai rākau. Horahia ngā rau ki whenua iwi kē. Engari rā, ko te pū, te more, te weu, te aka, me te rea, kei taku rākau tīpuna tonu. Kei Te Whakatōhea. Here. The buried placenta of my birth. This tree, in the heart, E tū. When the winds of change, tear through its branches, scattering my life in foreign worlds. My heart calls, seeking journeys home, to this deep anchor of my roots. Te Whakatōhea.

Whakatauākī

Kia whakawhenua au i ahau.

May I become the land.



Guardian tree of our family placenta at Waiaua, Toatoa Valley Õpõtiki Aotearoa New Zealand 38°01′39.2″S 177°26′29.8″E



Mauri ora

Te kani i a Rangi Te kani i a Te Ikanui. Ka kitea te moana i runga. Ka kitea te moana i waho. Au tahi ana, rē hua rā. Whāiroiro i te kanohi. Mauria i roto rā. Puritia kia mau, mau kita. Te mauri o Waiotahe e. The ethereal dance, of the luminescent. Heavens touching the sea, liquid in the night, reflecting stars in shimmering embrace. Such visions are rare, emerging as secret breath. Beyond the body. The mauri of Waiotahe. The embrace of dark and light, the spirit of eternity ... An unexpected discovery.

Whakatauākī

He kaha nei i ahau ki te kimi ki te rapu ko wai au.

Be strong, seek out the histories and genealogies that make you who you are... that bring us together.



Bioluminescent algae at Waiotahe beach Õpõtiki Aotearoa New Zealand 37°59'27.7"S 177°14'10.3"E38°01'39.2"S 177°26'29.8"E

WHAKATAUKĪ

Whatungarongaro te tangata toitū te whenua.

As man disappears from sight, the land remains.

Kupu Popoto: Thesis Abstract

Hoki whakamuri, kia anga whakamua.

We must look to our past in order to forge the future.

This whakataukī (proverb) speaks to Māori perspective of time and the importance of knowing one's own history in order to move forward. An interpretation of this statement is, 'In order to navigate our future with clarity and purpose, we must look to our past and move as if we are walking backwards into our future.' The present and past are certain, however, the future is unknown.

Tangohia mai te taura (Take This Rope), is a practice-led research project, that inquires into whānau (family), identity, belonging, whenua (land) and historical injustice. The thesis study involves the conceptual and physical creation of an documentary of installed photographs, waiata (songs), whakataukī (proverbs), poetry and filmed mōteatea (traditional chant) that artistically consider connections between Mokomoko, whenua and whānau. Thus, the thesis artistically explores the potentials of documentary making in relation to form, space and kaupapa Māori (Māori research approaches).

The significance of the study lies in its potential to rethink documentary inquiry as culturally located practice. In so doing, the thesis not only contributes to the corpus of research about Mokomoko, it also extends how processes of indigenous documentary making might be approached and constituted, in the pursuit of a communicative space that elevates whānau narratives and rhetorical assertion.

