waewae taku haere: stepping into belonging in storied landscapes

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abstract

The sites of spatial design practice are storied landscapes. Most spatial design projects begin with site analysis—a research process of coming to 'know' site, context, parameters, and opportunities. Even more fundamental is a process of listening; of attuning. In colonised countries such as Aotearoa New Zealand, the contexts of site include histories of colonisation and the marginalised stories of the Indigenous peoples whose lands, place names, and histories are often over-written by settler-colonial stories, education systems, and built environments. How might spatial designers attune to Indigenous stories in the land? What new processes, modes, relationships, and understandings are required? How and to what extent should those who are not mana whenua (tribal groups with local territorial rights, relationships, and responsibilities) have access to this knowledge, often located within oral traditions of story and song? How do we prepare to work with these stories—a journey often filled with uncertainty and emotion—and keep ourselves and others safe throughout the process? These are essential skills for spatial designers in a decolonising/re-indigenising world. This text-based research essay constitutes a journey of critical reflection and conversation around an experimental studio project the authors ran with third-year undergraduate spatial design students. Led by tangata whenua (Māori), tangata Tiriti (non-Māori treaty partner), and mana whenua researchers, the project was conducted within a bicultural framework informed by mātauranga and tikanga Māori (Māori knowledge systems and protocols). Students were introduced to a waiata pātere—a Māori chant that 'maps' places in a landscape—that had been composed for our learning community. They employed embodied methods of research and representation to generate immersive experiences that responded to the pātere and the stories in the land, as a way of coming to belong to, rather than to 'know', place.

keywords

re-indigenising; decolonising; spatial design pedagogy; embodied experience; bicultural practice; reconnection to place

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karakia tīmatanga

Whakataka te hau ki te uru
Whakataka te hau ki te tonga
Kia mākinakina ki uta
Kia mātaratara ki tai
E hī ake ana te atākura
He tio he huka he hauhū
Tīhei mauri ora!

This karakia (chant) was used to open sessions for the kaupapa (project) discussed in this essay. It speaks of beginnings, having likely been composed by an early voyager to Aotearoa embarking on a fishing expedition at dawn.[01] When working with our students to step into the uncertain space of a bicultural studio, we used the alternative ending 'haumi e, hui e, tāiki e', in which everyone joins in with 'tāiki e'. This common ending performs the function of binding together everyone present.

mihi:[02] jen

Ko Ngātokimatawhaorua te waka, ko Hokianga te moana, ko Ngāpuhi te iwi. Nō Ingarangi, nō Kōtarangi, nō Aerangi hoki ōku tūpuna. Ko Jen tōku ingoa.[03] My ancestors (Māori, English, Scottish, and Irish) all sailed across oceans to Aotearoa,[04] facing uncertainty in pursuit of new beginnings. Over the last decade I have embarked on my own journey to reconnect with my Māoritanga (Māori identity)—which was sadly not part of my upbringing—and identify as both Pākehā (of New Zealand settler descent) and Māori. As a spatial designer, researcher, and educator, I have learned the importance of being open about my identity and cultural positionality, uncertainties and all. I am committed to processes of re-indigenisation, and to equipping students with skills for a decolonised, Te Tiriti-led[05] future in Aotearoa. Tēnā koutou.

mihi: stuart

I am fifth-generation tangata Tiriti (non-Māori New Zealander, here by right of the Treaty of Waitangi); my ancestors landed in Aotearoa in 1862. They were working-class immigrants escaping a post-famine Ireland that was entering a stage of major political conflict and upheaval as a result of British colonisation. Just over twenty years after the signing of the Treaty, my ancestors were unwittingly entering a land where the impacts of colonisation were both freshly present and still emerging. I stand today in a place where my identity as a tangata Tiriti spatial designer, educator, and researcher can occupy a space of true partnership in upholding Māori rights and values, as we navigate the challenges of building and living within a bicultural society.

mihi: kura

He puawai au nō runga i te tikanga
He raurengarenga nō roto i te raukura
He taku raukura he manawanui ki te ao

Ko Tokomaru te waka, Ko Taranaki te mounga, ko Te Ati Awa te iwi, ko Kura Puke tōku ingoa. As part of the developmental team of Te Rau Karamu, our Pukeahu campus marae (communal meeting grounds/complex), I participated in prestigious wānanga (forums/deliberations) with the cultural experts, and received ongoing guidance where aspects such as roles,

responsibilities, values, intentions, and protocols were deliberated carefully and consistently, creating a pathway of certainty for the design, build, and opening of this marae. One of my ongoing roles is as a mauri (caretaker of the energetic dimension of place) with the understanding that the marae is for all staff and students. Composed to be shared with all, the marae's waiata pātere (chanted song) 'Waewae Taku Haere'[06] locates the community within the landscape, providing knowledge, identity, and belonging. Tēnā koutou katoa.

whakatuwhera o tēnei kōrero

This essay outlines the beginning of a journey we hope will evolve into a pou (pillar) of our creative arts pedagogy. We are motivated by the need to take seriously our institution's commitment to becoming Te Tiriti-led (honouring the spirit and principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, Aotearoa New Zealand's founding document that established terms for co-existence of Māori and Pākehā in this land). This involves the work of both decolonising the institution and re-indigenising—that is, restoring the rightful place and power of Māori knowledge systems and pedagogies—in equitable partnership. Given it was only in 2022 that the history of Aotearoa's colonisation became part of the mainstream school curriculum, many staff and students are under-equipped for this journey. Conversely, as a new generation of well-equipped Māori-immersion school leavers enter tertiary education, the purportedly Te Tiriti-led learning environment may fall disconcertingly short of their expectations. We have a responsibility to rise to the occasion, to become ready to prepare all students for success in a Te Tiriti-led Aotearoa, not just within the dominant Pākehā paradigm. In order to achieve the university's Te Tiriti-led aspirations, it must first become commonly recognised that a different, Indigenous, paradigm exists, with its own knowledge systems and ways of being in the world. To that end, we developed a six-week project to introduce students to te ao Māori (the Māori world) and stories in the land. This essay reflects on the design and delivery of the project from the perspective of the rōpū kaiako (teaching group), as part of our ongoing efforts to decolonise and re-indigenise our pedagogy.

te rōpū ako

Our rōpū ako (learning group) for this kaupapa consisted of the three of us and a group of twenty-seven students (Grace Apperley, Hilary Armstrong, Kate Ashworth, Shyla Chhika, Nina Cole, Samuel Dunstall (Ngāti Tūwharetoa, Ngāti Kahungunu), Hannah Fahey-Quine, Briar Grounds, Celia Hamling, Amba Hancock, Lottie Harper-Siolo (Iva, Savai'i, Samoa / Palagi), Kate Healy, Rhiannon Higgs, Aidan Johnson, Kate Jowsey, Sabina Lacson, Mollie Nicol, Holly Patchett, Tegan Pirimona, Marie Preuss, Kezia Redman, Annie Sansom, Maddy Thompson, Libby Tonkin, Nhi Tu and Keeley Waller) from a third-year undergraduate spatial design studio. While our roles might conventionally be understood as that of the teaching team (Jen and Stuart) and

an expert, guide, or collaborator (Kura), we consider ourselves as a rōpū kaiako (teaching group) engaged in a reciprocal relationship of learning with one another and the students. This is in line with the Māori concept of ako, which means both to learn and to teach, revealing learning as a relational activity. For the three of us, our relationships and learning together began well before this kaupapa, something that was an essential precondition for the mahi (work) we will discuss. It also continues beyond the mahi with the students as an ongoing process of wānanga (deliberation), of which the development of this essay is part.

The students are a diverse group including Māori, Pacific (Samoan), Pākehā, and other tauiwi (non-Māori). We thus avoid homogenous references to, or assumptions about, identity and lived experience with te ao Māori. This also applies to Māori students, some of whom may have had limited access to te ao Māori due to colonisation. Even those immersed in their own iwitanga (tribal identity) may not be familiar with stories and practices of other iwi/hapū (tribal/sub-tribal groupings). None of the students in this particular group identified as mana whenua (from an iwi or hapū with local authority in this place). In terms of local knowledge, therefore, we were all in the learning journey together, with Kura as our mana whenua guide in the creative arts domain. This sense of collective endeavour was also embodied by the entry of the student work in the 2022 Best Design Awards, with all twenty-seven students named as designers.[07]

ngā taonga

As a rōpū ako, we were also guided on our journey to decolonise our relationship to place by three taonga (treasures). The first is the land itself—the whenua—the living manifestation of Papatūānuku (the ancestral earth mother). The second is a pātere, gifted to our learning community for the opening of Te Rau Karamu by Kura Moeahu, a leader of the local iwi on whose ancestral lands we learn. The pātere—'Waewae Taku Haere'—names important sites in the landscape, taking us on a journey and breathing life into the stories in the land [Fig. 01]. The third taonga is a person—Moana Jackson—a leader in Māori thought, particularly around Te Tiriti, and author of a guiding text for our kaupapa: 'Where to Next? Decolonisation and the Stories in the Land.'[08] Jackson's writing has a way of cutting through the noise around Tiriti politics and the culturally inflected semantics around the nature of 'stories', returning us to the hopeful promise of reciprocal relations of care between people of the land and people of the treaty. The stories in the land give voice to the relationship between land and people as a living history of inhabitation, and the possibilities of stories yet to be written. We would like to acknowledge this great man—he tōtara i te waonui-a-tāne—who passed away last year.

Figure 01.
Authors and students, 2022. Illustration mapping the eight verses of ‘Waewae Taku Haere’ in the landscape, and student responses. From Best Design Awards entry.

part one: setting

beginning to begin

For those who are newcomers to engaging with te ao Māori, there is often much uncertainty about how to begin, or even if it is okay to begin. This includes both non-Māori, and Māori who may not have been brought up in te ao Māori due to the varied impacts of colonisation. For non-Māori students, teachers, and researchers engaging with tangata whenua (the Indigenous people of Aotearoa), relationships may be 'tricky, contingent, uncertain and constantly under negotiation.'[09] Some may be tempted to act as cultural tourists of sorts, 'look[ing] for a simplified and neatly packaged instant experience, while the process through which an iwi hands on its knowledge to others (including its rangatahi) requires them to serve a period of apprenticeship first, both to demonstrate their worthiness to receive that knowledge, and to gain the maturity necessary to appreciate its worth.'[10] Requiring comfort with not-knowing, this space of apprenticeship 'eschews certainty, solutions, and judgement, and embraces uncertainty, contingency, reflexivity and engagement.'[11]

As we move toward a Te Tiriti-led institution and society, the idea that one might somehow avoid these kinds of engagements becomes untenable. Therefore, in order to prepare students for success, it is imperative to create safe spaces for modelling and engaging in cross-cultural contexts and partnerships. Penny Allan and Huhana Smith present one model of a design studio at the interface, stating that any bicultural learning environment should 'be preceded by an apprenticeship in the culture, its history, cosmogony, customs and language.'[12] We note it would be dangerous to assume any such apprenticeship could be a finite, commodifiable thing—a short course or box to be ticked that would then give anyone licence to proclaim themselves 'Te Tiriti-led certified'. It must also be safe and meaningful for Māori students. So how might we begin to offer the sort of cultural apprenticeship that is, itself, a meaningful beginning? And how might we embrace the necessary uncertainty of this journey rather than reaching for neatly packaged and readily co-optible knowledge?

the sea of uncertainty

> When the ancestors crossed Te Moana-nui-a-Kiwa, they overcame what seemed impossible and realised that courage is simply the deep breath you take before a new beginning.[13]

To begin a journey into a new paradigm can challenge the very foundations of certainty in one's own worldview, which, if it sits within a dominant paradigm, may have been thus far invisible. This can be destabilising or, at best, offer up the exciting potential of the uncertain. In this era of change—climate change, socio-political change, pandemic-induced change, changes of hearts and minds—many of us already feel at sea, as if the land under our feet has liquefied. This was the undercurrent in our

teaching team at the beginning of 2022, as we faced a confluence of uncertainty. We questioned whether these were appropriate conditions in which to introduce a bicultural studio kaupapa and ask students to step into the additionally vulnerable space of apprenticeship. Ultimately, we decided that this was in fact an opportunity to reframe our relationship to uncertainty: to create āhuatanga ako (conditions for learning) that would help the rōpū ako to take a deep breath as we began a journey of preparation.

orientating ourselves for the journey

In order to embark on any journey, one must know where one stands, and what direction to head. Designing for the built environment, we often start with a site analysis, which generally frames 'site' as something on or within which to build. In Indigenous thought, the land is not a resource, but a living entity, with which we are always already in relation. What happens if we use spatial design methods to better understand the whenua and our relationship with it, rather than trying to 'know' site in order to commodify it? The kaupapa of our project became not to design a built outcome, but to employ 'spatial design fundamentals of embodied, multisensory experience [to] facilitate embodied engagement with stories of place, enhancing wellbeing, care and connection.'[14] This raised a key area of uncertainty around ways of 'knowing' the whenua.

storied landscapes

When colonists arrived in Aotearoa, they set about obtaining 'knowledge' of the land through surveying and mapping, with the intent to demarcate 'certain' boundaries and claim possession. Tangata whenua had different ways of knowing and recording landscapes, often through oral mechanisms such as story or song. Storied landscapes are relational; living histories of occupation, events, tūpuna (ancestors) and phenomena. Pātere are one way in which these stories are recorded and relayed to others, whether to uphold identity and belonging via reciting connections to whenua and tūpuna, or to facilitate the intergenerational transfer of knowledge. 'To be a mokopuna of an iwi or hapū was to know the stories in the land [...] part of an archive of belonging that was never far away.'[15] Colonisation attacked these mechanisms of belonging through land dispossession, dismantling of knowledge systems, and writing over the stories in the land. Honiana Love describes how the erasing of her ancestor's place names from the landscape coincided with the coloniser's attempt to also erase the people. The impact of this loss is still being felt today, not just for mana whenua 'no longer able to find themselves in the landscape,'[16] but for Pākehā who, in neglecting to 'listen to the stories that were already in the land,'[17] were themselves dispossessed of the opportunity to flourish in the context of a balanced relationship and develop a Pākehā identity as 'a diverse people [...] defined by living in Aotearoa and relating to Māori, not by being in opposition to Māori.'[18] As Rebecca Kiddle puts it, 'colonisation sucks for everyone.'[19]

decolonising relationships to the land

For Honiana Love, the task of bringing back mana whenua place names is 'part of the journey of bringing ourselves back.'[20] Similarly, Wildcat et al. suggest that 'if colonization is fundamentally about dispossessing Indigenous peoples from land, decolonization must involve forms of education that reconnect Indigenous peoples to land and the social relations, knowledges and languages that arise from the land.'[21] There is an opportunity for spatial designers to work together with mana whenua as Te Tiriti partners in this kaupapa, through supporting such moves as restoring Indigenous place names or making Indigenous narratives visible on the landscape. In order for these acts to meaningfully re-write relationships to the whenua across both sides of the Te Tiriti partnership, however, tangata Tiriti must first learn how to listen to the stories in the land. First Nations professor of education Jo-ann Archibald calls this 'becoming story-ready.'[22]

becoming story-ready

In *Decolonizing Research: Indigenous Storywork as Methodology*, editors Archibald, Jenny Bol Jun Lee-Morgan (Māori professor of Māori research), and Jason De Santolo (Aboriginal Australian creative researcher) gather accounts of Indigenous storywork across Canada, Aotearoa New Zealand, and Australia. The Aotearoa section focuses primarily on pūrākau (stories) and the emergence of a pūrākau approach across a range of disciplines: 'a unique methodology and pedagogy grounded within a Māori cultural framework.'[23] The diversity of sophisticated Māori narrative practices is also acknowledged to include waiata (song) and whakataukī (proverbs). In the Foreword, Linda Tuhiwai Smith warns that Indigenous storywork necessarily inhabits Indigenous and decolonising paradigms, rather than coming from 'a dominant perspective that has assumed the right to tell the stories of the colonized and the oppressed that they have re-interpreted, re-presented, and re-told through their own lens.'[24]

In her work with Indigenous knowledge holders in Canada, Archibald recounts how she 'had to learn more about the nature of and protocols for telling and using Indigenous stories, and had to get herself culturally worthy to work with these precious stories.'[25] She refers to practices of doing cultural work with Indigenous stories as 'Indigenous storywork,' in which 'storytellers, story listeners/learners, researchers, and educators can pay better attention to and engage with Indigenous stories for meaningful education and research.'[26]

Archibald offers an ethical framework for becoming story-ready that includes respect, responsibility, reverence, reciprocity, holism, interrelatedness, and synergy,[27] and begins with an invitation to work with the story. In an Aotearoa context, we approached our mahi through existing Māori frameworks that included consideration of tāonga, tikanga (protocols), manaakitanga/kaitiakitanga (reciprocal care) and aroha (love/respect). These sit within a relational Māori worldview in which everything is interconnected, linked

by whakapapa (genealogy) in which humans, non-human beings, natural phenomena, and atua (ancestral deities) are related as kin. Becoming story-ready involves developing an understanding of the relational network affected by the storywork. In our case, this network was activated by a pātere.

pātere as a mechanism for orientation and shared learning

Our own storywork began with an invitation in the form of a precious gift. In 2018, Kura Moeahu (Te Āti Awa) composed a pātere called 'Waewae Taku Haere' for the learning community of Te Kunenga ki Pūrehuroa Massey University located at the site of the new Pukeahu campus marae, Te Rau Karamu. The rangi (melody) was created by Ngātaihururu Taepa. The chanted pātere breathes life into the stories and place names of the local landscape and its histories of mana whenua occupation. 'At the heart of the pātere,' Moeahu says, 'is the gift of shared knowledge'; it is intended as a mechanism of shared learning.[28] Accompanying the gift is an unspoken challenge: to find ways of working with it that align with the spirit in which it was given; this includes becoming story-ready. In taking up this challenge, it was important that both we and the students understood the pātere, and its sharing of mātauranga (Indigenous knowledge), as a tāonga. Tāonga are not just objects of art or design, but purposeful entities with the ability to 'weave descendants to land, travel beyond tribal horizons and ameliorate life-crises [...] powerful symbols of tribal identity [that] remain inseparably layered within a wider genealogical cloak of knowledge which shrouds the whole of [...] Aotearoa-New Zealand in a living ancestral past.'[29]

establishing our kaupapa

In becoming ready to engage with the pātere as tāonga, we followed ethical principles to ensure the work was culturally safe, and did not inadvertently perpetuate colonial practices of co-opting and redefining stories.[30] This was part of affirming our commitment as educators to doing storywork that unsettles settler-colonial landscapes. We took up Kura Moeahu's gift of the pātere as a mechanism of shared learning, along with the accompanying challenge: to begin to remove layers of colonisation, decolonising place names replaced without mana whenua permission, and revealing te kura i huna—the hidden gifts of knowledge.[31] With the pātere as a guide, we explored the potential of a project-based cultural apprenticeship of sorts, in which students participated in storywork in a safe space, as a way of becoming story-ready.

learning as ceremony

The learning context in which this project was situated was already filled with potential for storywork. In 2014 our College introduced a curriculum framework informed by the Māori ceremony of pōwhiri—a ritual of transformation from outsider to one who belongs.[32] In the first studio block of third year, the framing concept is whitiwhiti kōrero, which refers to sparking of and engagement with conversation. We understand whitiwhiti kōrero to carry with it such whakaaro (ideas)

as permissions to engage, engagement as event, and potential for energetic transformation. Conceptualising the project as an event within a larger ceremonial framework parallels Shawn Wilson's notion of research as ceremony:

> *Something that has become apparent for me is that for Indigenous people, research is a ceremony.* In our cultures an integral part of any ceremony is setting the stage properly. When ceremonies take place, everyone who is participating needs to be ready to step beyond the everyday and to accept a raised state of consciousness. You could say that the specific rituals that make up the ceremony are designed to get the participants into a state of mind that will allow for the extraordinary to take place.[33]

As well as allowing for the extraordinary, ceremony also protects. Māori concepts of tapu and noa differentiate between the sacred and the everyday. These are spatial concepts, in that one moves in and out of states of tapu, with rituals such as karakia, waiata, and kai (food) activating the transitions. Tikanga serve as navigational guides, informing what we might consider holistic health and safety—a kind of physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, and relational safeguarding. Undertaking this storywork necessitated determining the tikanga that would create the conditions for both safe and extraordinarily transformative experience.

part two: story

In this final section we provide further examples of how tikanga were applied as we stepped into and through each phase of the kaupapa. In the context of mutual, interdependent, and reciprocal relationships, the benefits of following tikanga were mutual, safeguarding both mana whenua and the knowledge in the land, as well as us and our students as we embarked on the journey of becoming story-ready and doing storywork. We use a narrative mode of storytelling to bring to life aspects of the ahuatanga ako (learning conditions) created for and by the project, shaped by our experiences of the eight verses of the pātere. Adopting a spatial conceptualisation of cultural apprenticeship, attunement, and learning as ceremony, we walk through incremental processes of 'stepping further and further in'. This is not a comprehensive or replicable 'step-by-step' process, but a non-linear series of relational acts. The steps are woven together with the pātere verses and student responses: immersive spatio-temporal experiences employing a range of embodied modes of narrative and atmospheric representation, developed across six weeks [Fig. 02]. We invite you to join us on our storied re-presentation of the ahuatanga ako that allowed us to safely step beyond the certainty of the everyday and open ourselves to the extraordinary.[34]

Week	Ceremony/project phase	Studio/site activities
1	Whakatakoto tūāpapa (grounding)	intro, site visits, site mapping, developing initial 1:1 experiential response
2	Whakaeke (stepping in)	critical and contextual research, concept generation, 1:1 testing
3	Whakatuia (intertwining—1)	concept selection and development, 1:1 testing, critical reflection-in-action
4	Whakatuia (intertwining—2)	developed design
5	Whakatau (exchange/settling)	design refinement and communication
6	Whakakapi (concluding)	design communication and (re)presentation

Figure 02.
Table showing six-week project schedule, weaving together a ceremonial and design process framework. Ceremony phases were inspired by pōwhiri framework. Note that extensive kōrerorero (discussion) also occurred each week.

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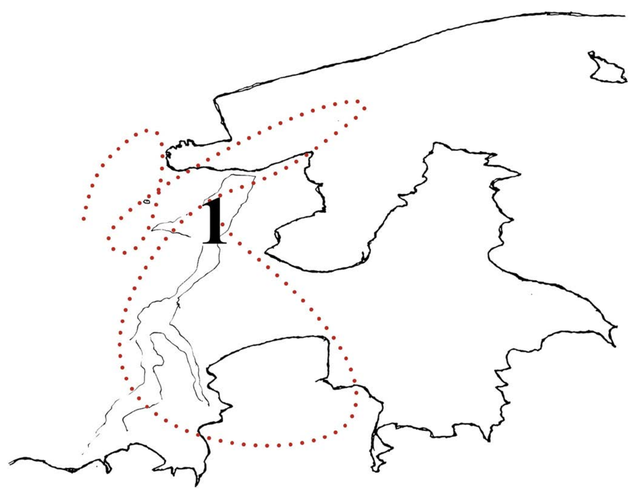
Figure 03.
Ranga-a-Hiwi site qualities, documented by students Rhiannon Higgs, Aidan Johnson, and Maddy Thompson, 2022. Composite image by authors.

Click here for the sounds of Ranga-a-Hiwi

Figure 04.
Audio from *Ka eke* immersive experience by Rhiannon Higgs, Aidan Johnson, and Maddy Thompson, 2022.



Before we embark on our story journey, we orientate ourselves. We attune to our bodies, to where we stand, to the easterly and southerly winds, and to a primary landmark—the Ranga-a-Hiwi ridgeline. We speak the names of those who once occupied this land, both people and tupua (ancestral phenomena), giving voice to a storied understanding of place. We name the sensation of the wind on our skin. We acknowledge that this place where we stand is the site of a historic pā (fortified stronghold), now zoned for houses of education.

Steps taken to orientate ourselves to where we stand included:

→ hīkoi (walking the land)—as a teaching team in preparation for the project, and then with the students in the first week
→ listening to kōrero (oral communication) of the histories of this place—beginning outside our studio building, on the remnants of a decapitated hill—gathering at the memorial to the prisoners from Parihaka—spending time with the stories of this place
→ reciting karakia (chants) to open and close our sessions—acknowledging the pātere and the stories in the land as taonga (things of great significance and power that must be treated with care)—and creating a protected space within which to engage with them.

The students' response to the opening verse of the pātere embodies 'an anticipation in the dawn. The earth is warm and the air begins to vibrate with awakening life, heralding the long summer day ahead. Before the cicadas chirp and the first light rays blink, there is an almost-stillness [...] With every breath, the hau (breath/breeze/essence) ripples in the slowly rising light. [...] [Making] use of projection, sound and air movement, captured in the gossamer-like folds of draped sheer fabric', the immersive experience 'bring[s] to life the atmospheric sensations of wind, ascent, and finally descent onto the ridge, nestled amongst the trees [...] [A]udio draws attention to the breath and heartbeat, awakening the senses in an elongated instant of otherwise fleeting anticipation.'[35]

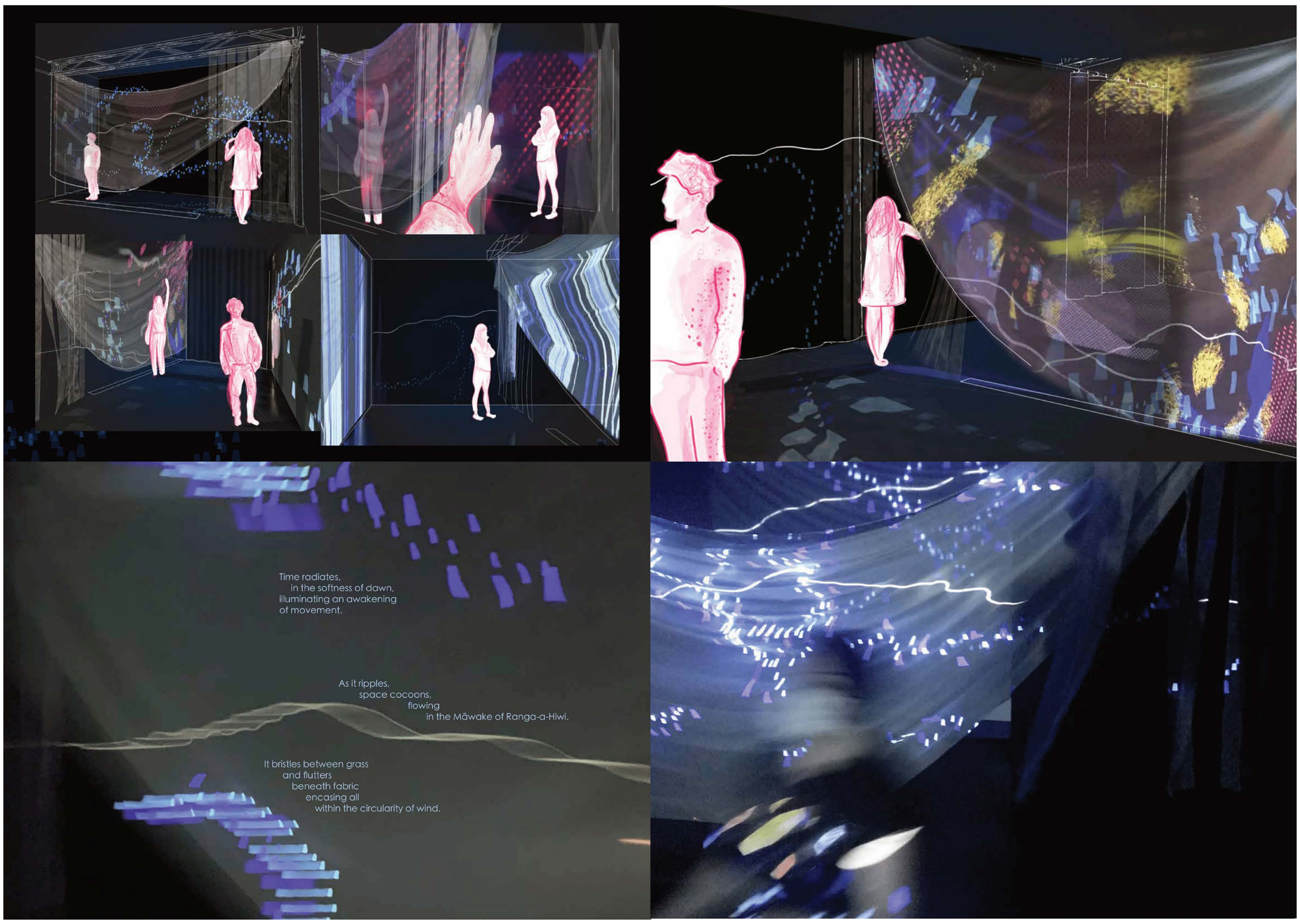
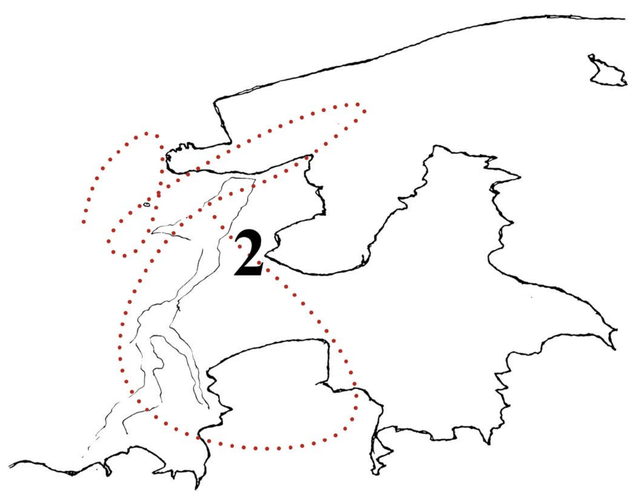


Figure 05.
Excerpts from *Ka eke*—a proposal for immersive experience by Rhiannon Higgs, Aidan Johnson, and Maddy Thompson, 2022.

2

Figure 06.
Waipapa site qualities, documented by students Nina Cole, Samuel Dunstall (Ngāti Tūwharetoa, Ngāti Kahungunu), Kate Healy, and Tegan Pirimona, 2022. Composite image by authors.



Click here for the sounds of Waipapa

Figure 07.
Audio from *Rukuruku au* immersive experience by Nina Cole, Samuel Dunstall, Kate Healy, and Tegan Pirimona, 2022.

In order to listen to human and more-than-human stories in the land, we must decolonise our modes of perception and ontological understandings. We follow the journey of wai (water) as it travels down from the ridge, becoming a stream and flowing out to the bay. Its path is alive with the deafening sounds of birds, insects, and then waves, resounding on the rocky shore. This is the landscape as it existed before the dual upheavals of earthquakes and colonisation.

Steps taken to re-learn how to listen included:

→ reading about and discussing the relational and interconnected nature of being in te ao Māori, understood through whakapapa that links people, environment, and other beings as kin descended from common spiritual ancestors

→ asking how we might listen to land and water as living and lively matter—practising listening with our whole bodies, and expressing what we ‘hear’ via this embodied listening through visual, audio, and spatial modes of representation.

The students' response to the second verse of the pātere 'follows on from the opening call and awakening of the senses, envisaged as a welcome and offering a form of mihi or pepeha [...] embodied through following the whakapapa journey of wai (water) as it starts from a single drop falling from te rangi (the sky), making its way from the maunga (mountain), through the whenua (land), to become the awa (river) and finally the moana (sea). Sound and projection are employed to spatialise the journey, simultaneously capturing the past atmosphere of the thriving waterway and its current shadowy existence as a piped stream.'[36]

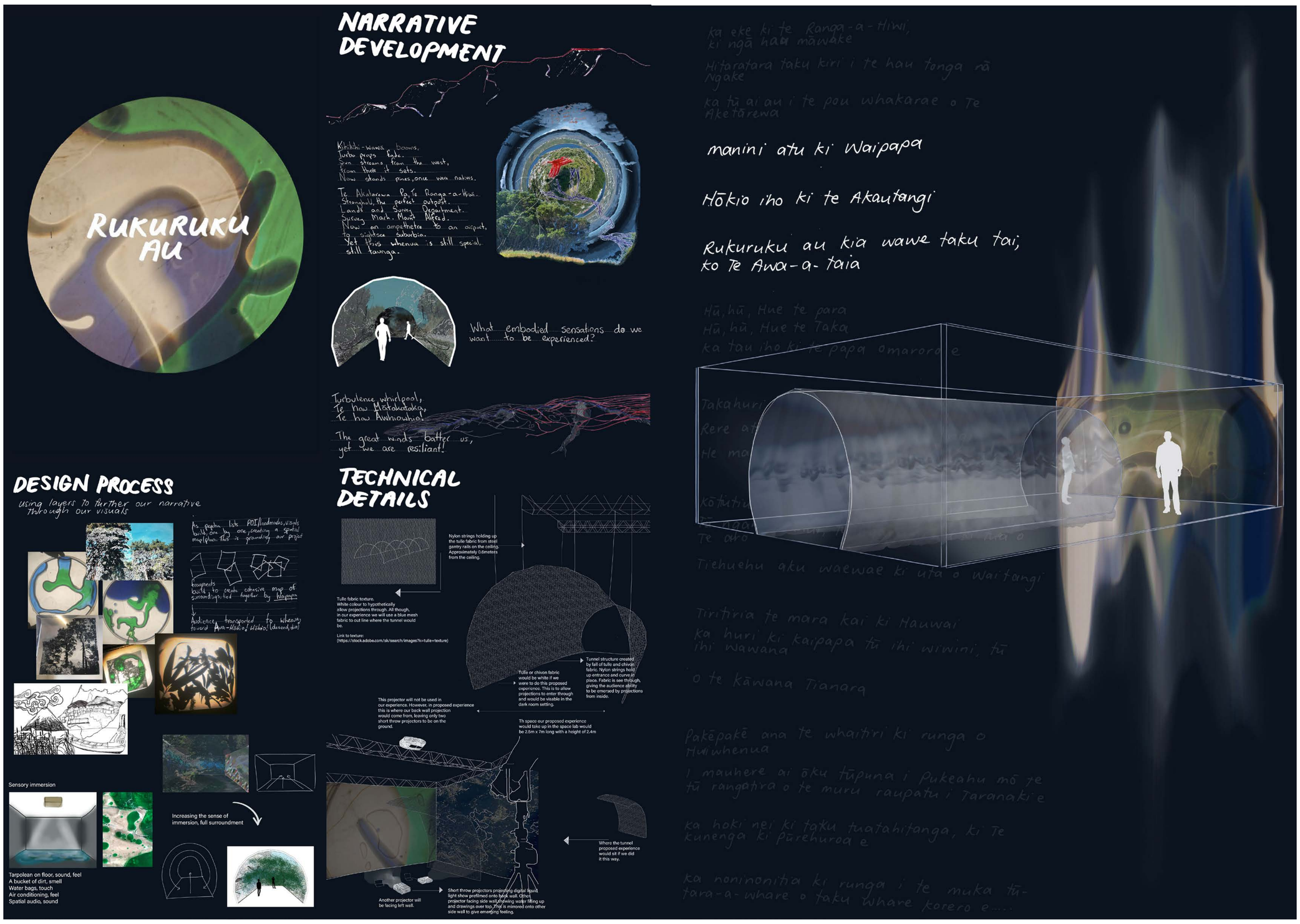


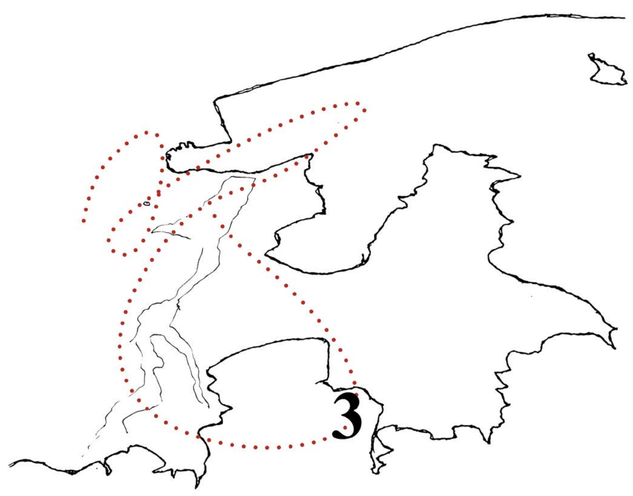
Figure 08.
Excerpts from *Rukuruku au*—a proposal for immersive experience by Nina Cole, Samuel Dunstall, Kate Healy, and Tegan Pirimona, 2022.

3

Figure 09.
Hue te Para site qualities, documented by students Grace Apperley, Kate Ashworth, Lottie Harper-Siolo (Iva, Savai'i, Samoa / Palagi), and Nhi Tu, 2022. Composite image by authors.

Click here for the sounds of Hue te Para

Figure 10.
Audio from *Āio* immersive experience by Grace Apperley, Kate Ashworth, Lottie Harper-Siolo, and Nhi Tu, 2022. Audio samples taken with permission from Whāia Te Māramatanga by Rob Thorne [Extended Mix], Rob Thorne (Ngāti Tumutumu), 2014, © Rob Thorne.[37]



The third verse names two south coast bays shaped like hue (gourds), and calls our attention to the booming of the waves. These sites have, in recent times, been places of sewage out-flows, airport in-flows, and daily tides of recreation and consumption. As we voice these names and that of a food cultivation area further inland, we are reminded of our interdependent relationship of care with the moana and whenua as that which sustains us. We recognise our collective responsibility to one another (manaakitanga) and the environment (kaitiakitanga).

Steps taken to care for our collective and relationships to land and sea included:

→ preparing to welcome the students by inviting them to tell us of any particular needs so we might design inclusive learning activities
→ forming the groups around shared connections to the natural world as a way of acknowledging the embodied knowledge individuals already brought to the collective
→ rituals of care and protection such as karakia and tautoko (a practice of indicating support—responding to each group's presentations by singing their verse)
→ regular talking circles to check in and share the load

→ approaching the project as a collective endeavour, with each individual and group contributing to the whole—and celebrating the success of the project in the same way.[38]

In the students' response to the third verse of the pātere, 'we are guided through a ritual designed to support, ground and hold us on our learning journey [...] we engage with the philosophy of kotahitanga (oneness) [...] Listening for the silent karanga (call) of [a] stone [...] we gather, hold, and bathe this taonga, then tuck it carefully into a kete [basket]. During learning sessions, the taonga are taken from the kete and placed in our hands, the warmth of our bodies slowly transferring to the cold stone [...] the stones are cleansed again, before being returned to their places on the shore [...] on the day of the moon Hina, a day of giving back to Tangaroa.'[39]

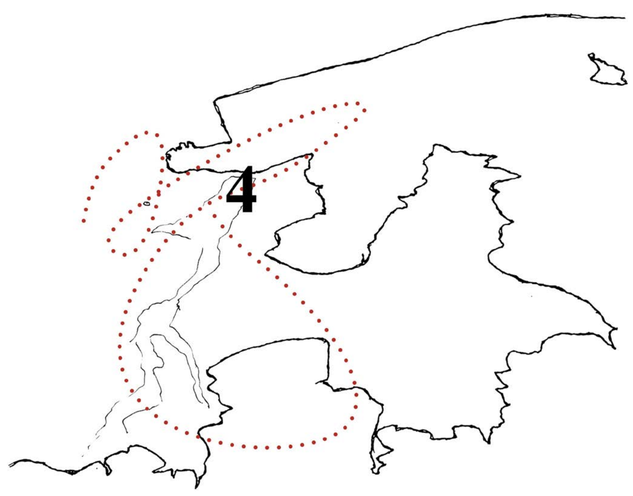
Figure 11.
Excerpts from *Āio*—a proposal for immersive experience by Grace Apperley, Kate Ashworth, Charlotte Harper-Siolo, and Nhi Tu, 2022.

4

Figure 12.
Matairangi site qualities, documented by students Hilary Armstrong, Shyla Chhika, Hannah Fahey-Quine, and Keeley Waller, 2022. Composite image by authors.

Click here for the sounds of Matairangi

Figure 13.
Audio from *Matairangi* immersive experience by Hilary Armstrong, Shyla Chhika, Hannah Fahey-Quine, and Keeley Waller, 2022.



Verse four of the pātere flies us over another food gathering/growing site—Te Ō—up to the maunga Matairangi, the nearest high peak from which to view the stars, commune with the atua, and observe te taiao (the environment). We are reconnected to deep time and the movements of the heavens and earth. We are reminded of the cyclical nature of existence as embodied by the piercing rays of the dawn.

Steps taken to consider time and reflection in our work included:

→ structuring the six weeks as ceremony
→ incorporating unstructured time for discussion and reflection: Lottie (Samoan) observed ‘that the conversations and reflection[s] […] took up quite a bit of time but I think creativity is often produced best through talanoa and times for reflection […] I wish there were more papers like this as I believe it would open up a whole other world to university and working collectively’; Rhiannon (Pākehā) reflected on ‘the importance of reaching beyond what you know […] it really felt like there was a shift that was beginning to happen within me—in being more confident and aware of perspectives and beliefs beyond the one I have grown up with […] There were times in which I felt

like this was more than an assignment, but a gateway into our future practice'[40]

→ engaging in ongoing wānanga as a rōpū kaiako—a process of deep reflection, kōrerorero, and writing as a transformative practice.

The students' response to the fourth verse of the pātere offers 'a meditative space for reflection [...] a place from which to face the night sky [...] Audio and projection [evoke] the atmosphere of the hilltop at dusk—wind, rustling trees and harakeke, cicadas. As the sun sets in the west [...] the bright stars of the night sky appear, stretching from one horizon to the other [...] time suspended in an elongated night [...] a time for reflection [...] for sharing those conversations that flow more easily in the dark [...] [as] the sun rise[s] in the east [...] we emerge from the tranquility and closeness of the shared experience back into the energy of the day ahead.'[41]

Figure 14.
Excerpts from *Matairangi*—a proposal for immersive experience by Hilary Armstrong, Shyla Chhika, Hannah Fahey-Quine, and Keeley Waller, 2022.

5

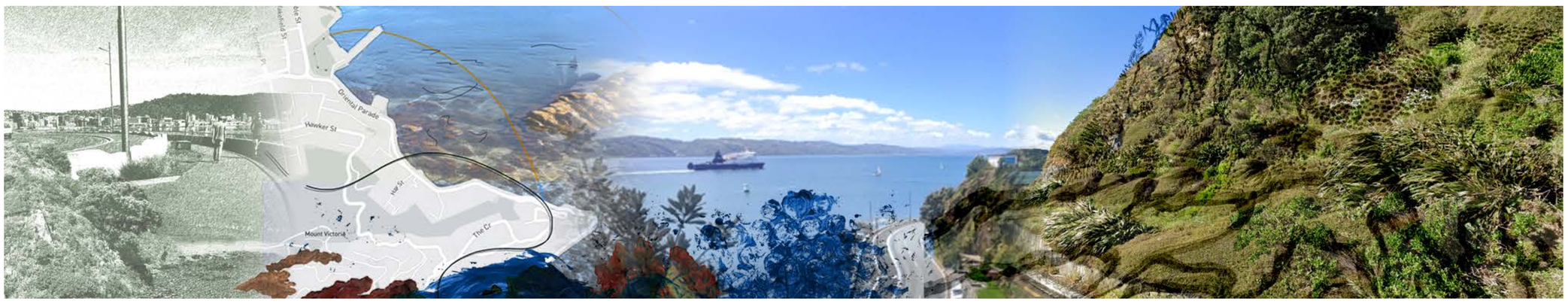
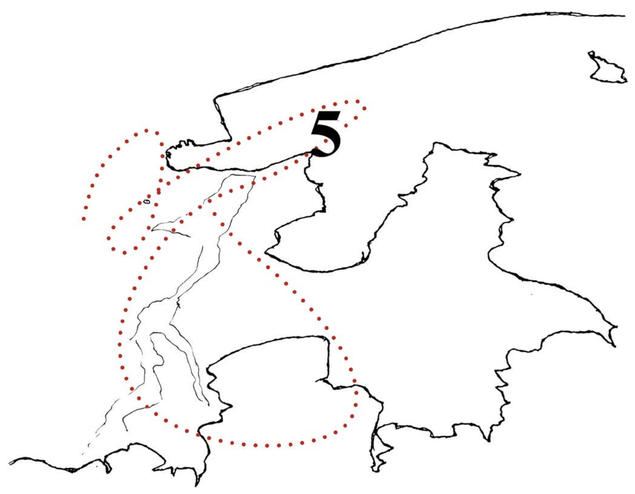


Figure 15.
Waihirere site qualities, documented by students Briar Grounds, Celia Hamling, Sabina Lacson, and Millie Nicol, 2022. Composite image by authors.

[Click here for the sounds of Waihirere]

Figure 16.
Audio from *Kōtiutiu* immersive experience by Briar Grounds, Celia Hamling, Sabina Lacson, and Millie Nicol, 2022.



In verse five, our attention is drawn to the rushing energies of water—gushing over a cliff and building as waves that strike the shore. Standing in the face of these energies were once Māori settlements. We are reminded that, despite the forces of colonisation that attempted to sweep them away, they remain—rooted to the land, caretaking the stories, embodying strength and continuity. We splash inland through wetlands, doing the work of gathering food and resources.

As we write this, communities in the north and east of the North Island are recovering from severe weather events and flooding. The power of water to endanger lives and livelihoods is amplified by climate change and the ways in which the settler-colonial built environment has neglected to listen to the stories and signs in the land. It is imperative that we attune to both the nourishing and dangerous characteristics of water, and similarly, of flows of knowledge. In pre-colonial Māori society, the ability to read stories and signs in the land was carefully protected through tōhunga (spiritual experts) and whare wānanga (sacred schools of learning). Knowledge was passed down intergenerationally through storytelling, song, dance, and material practices such as carving and weaving. Disrupted by colonisation, many generations of Māori have worked tirelessly to restore these flows. We must therefore abandon any sense of entitlement to knowledge and certainty. Without the necessary cultural apprenticeship, access to both nourishment and the required protection from these flows of knowledge may be compromised.

Steps taken to understand the flows of knowledge and accept uncertainty included:

→ ensuring that the knowledge we were working with did not exceed the level of that already accessible to the descendants of those connected to the land and the stories

→ becoming okay with not knowing, and acknowledging what we didn't know

→ embracing embodied ways of knowing, through the senses, that privilege face-to-face relationships and plural, subjective experience over objective certainty.

The students' response to the fifth verse of the pātere 'resumes at Waihirere pā, where [...] heavy rain brings a flood that sweeps through and surges out to sea.' The proposed experience, incorporating projection mapping, sound, light and large-scale installation, 'embodies a flowing body of water [...] [it] invites people to become water, feeling the sensation of its movements, before returning to our bodies with a new sense of our shared relations with water and site.'[42]

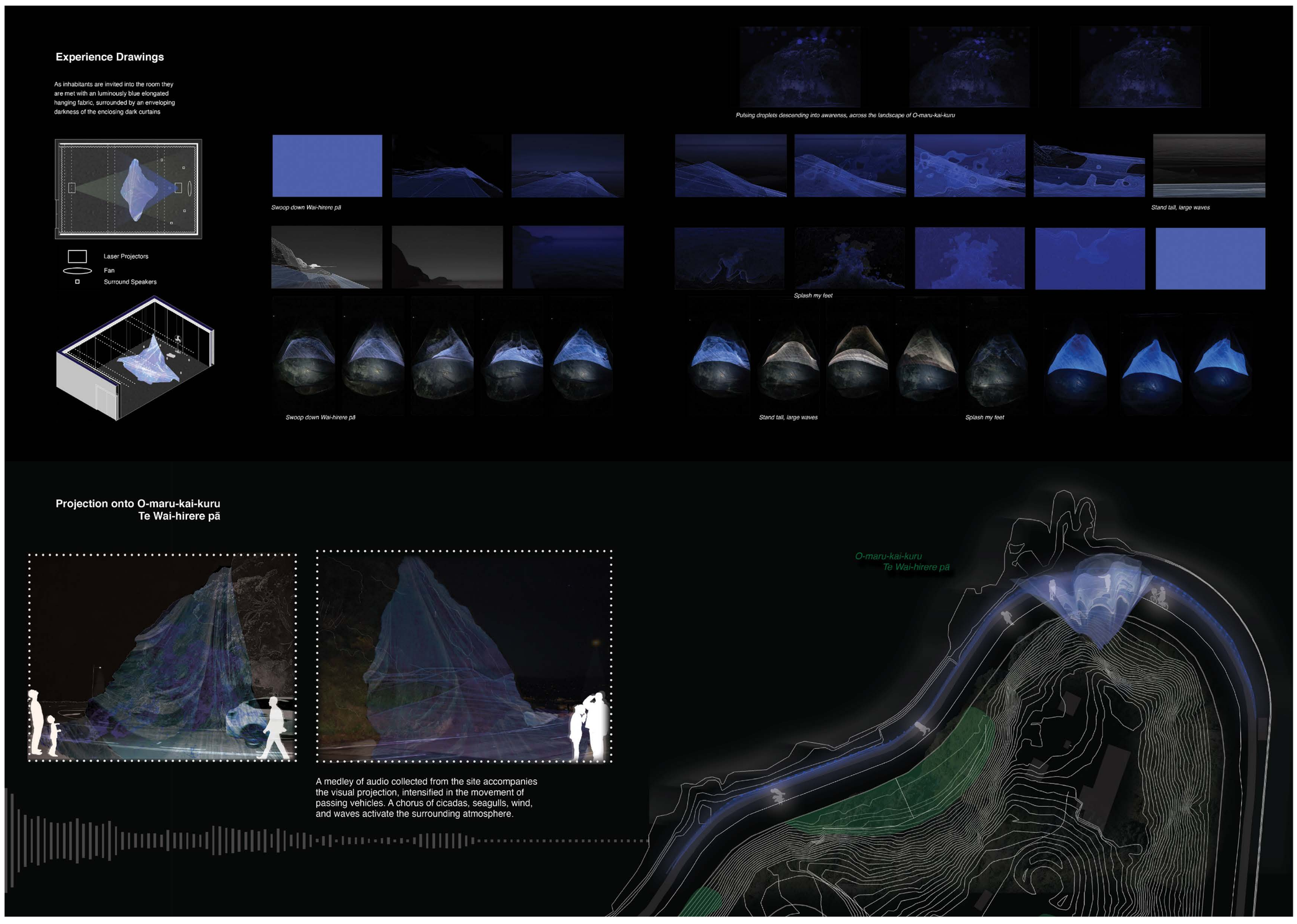


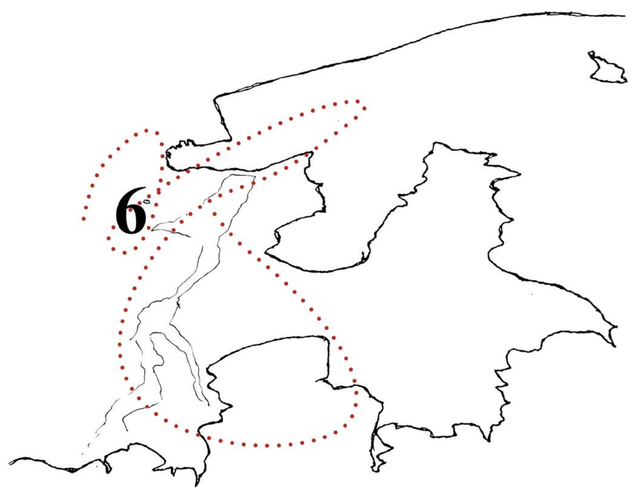
Figure 17.
Excerpts from *Kōtiutiu*—a proposal for immersive experience by Briar Grounds, Celia Hamling, Sabina Lacson, and Millie Nicol, 2022.

6

Figure 18.
Hauwai site qualities, documented by students Amba Hancock, Kate Jowsey, Holly Patchett, and Kezia Redman, 2022. Composite image by authors.

Click here for the sounds of Hauwai

Figure 19.
Audio from *Tiritiria* immersive experience by Amba Hancock, Kate Jowsey, Holly Patchett, and Kezia Redman, 2022.



In verse six, we turn to what was once a thriving wetland and food gathering area, with extensive cultivations nearby. The former was drained by natural then settler-colonial forces and prisoner labour. The latter became the grounds and residence of the seat of the Crown's power in Aotearoa—Government House. We ponder questions of land rights, food sovereignty, and the over-writing of the stories in the land by colonisation and the contemporary urban environment.

Steps taken to grapple with the colonised landscape included:

→ reading about and discussing Te Tiriti and the history of colonisation in this place
→ learning from Moana Jackson's 'Where to Next?'—embracing the promises of reconciliation offered by Te Tiriti, of an 'ethic of restoration,'[43] a 'politics of love,'[44] and the power of the stories in the land to 'allow a different way of thinking about how to ease the hurt and hara [violation] that colonisation causes'[45]
→ turning to notions of renewal and growth.

The students' response to the sixth verse of the pātere took the form of 'a light and soundscape, experienced behind closed eyes—a seeing without seeing [...] the pātere conjures landscapes of rich wetlands and cultivation areas [...] no longer visible through the eyes of the colonised mind [...] But beneath our feet lies the same earth, ready to be turned, to at once reveal the past and prepare for new growth. Driven by an impossible desire to till the soil beneath the concrete, [we adopt] a non-human lens in order to see differently [...] We are transported to the sensorium of the cicada as it journeys from subterranean hibernation up into Te Ao Marama—the world of light.'[46]

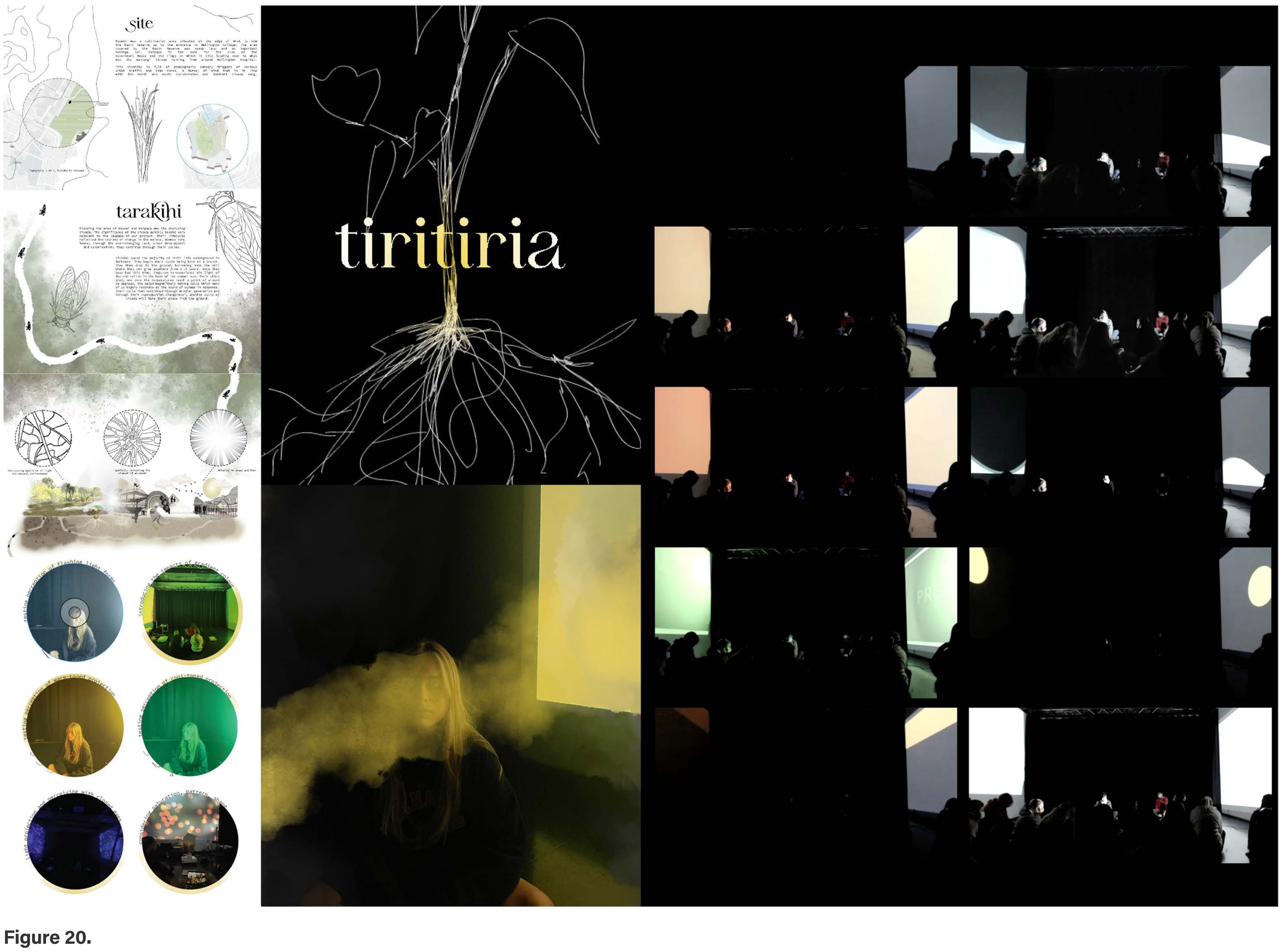


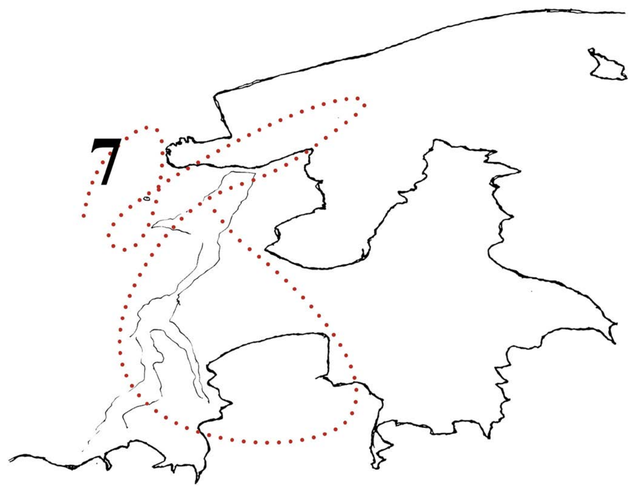
Figure 20.
Excerpts from *Tiritiria*—a proposal for immersive experience by Amba Hancock, Kate Jowsey, Holly Patchett, and Kezia Redman, 2022.

7

Figure 21.
Huriwhenua site qualities, documented by students Marie Preuss, Annie Sansom, and Libby Tonkin, 2022. Composite image by authors.

Click here for the sounds of Huriwhenua

Figure 22.
Audio from *Pakē pakē* immersive experience by students Marie Preuss, Annie Sansom, and Libby Tonkin, 2022.



In verse seven, energy and emotion rise up and burst forth as we follow the sound of thunder up toward Pukeahu. This sacred hill was flattened to form the prison where Parihaka tūpuna were incarcerated without trial and put to hard labour making bricks and building roads that still comprise the fabric of our city. Such unjust treatment for passively resisting land confiscation by continuing to plow their land, and 'encouraging Māori to lead a pacifist, non-violent way of life [...] [led to] inter-generational trauma and whakamā (shame) [that] is still evident today.'[47]

Steps taken to process anger and other strong emotions included:

→ kōrerorero in which confronting histories and emotions were acknowledged
→ returning to messages of strength and hope for the future, uplifted by Kura, the words of Moana Jackson, and the spirit of shared learning offered through the pātere itself
→ working to redirect negative emotion into positive action.

The students' response to the seventh verse 'shifted from ignorance, to disbelief, grief and anger. This coalesced into motivation to channel that strong emotion into care through knowledge and labour, [paving] a new ground for meaningful action that honours and learns from the past. The experience follows the journey of the soils of Pukeahu out into the city. It reveals

an understanding of land as whenua, as placenta, as life-blood. [...] Sound, visuals and colour are employed to surface the emotive narratives, acknowledging their affective power. [This is] converted into action through [...] physical labours of working with clay [...] [through which] our understanding of this place shifts from conceptual, to emotional, to embodied.'[48]

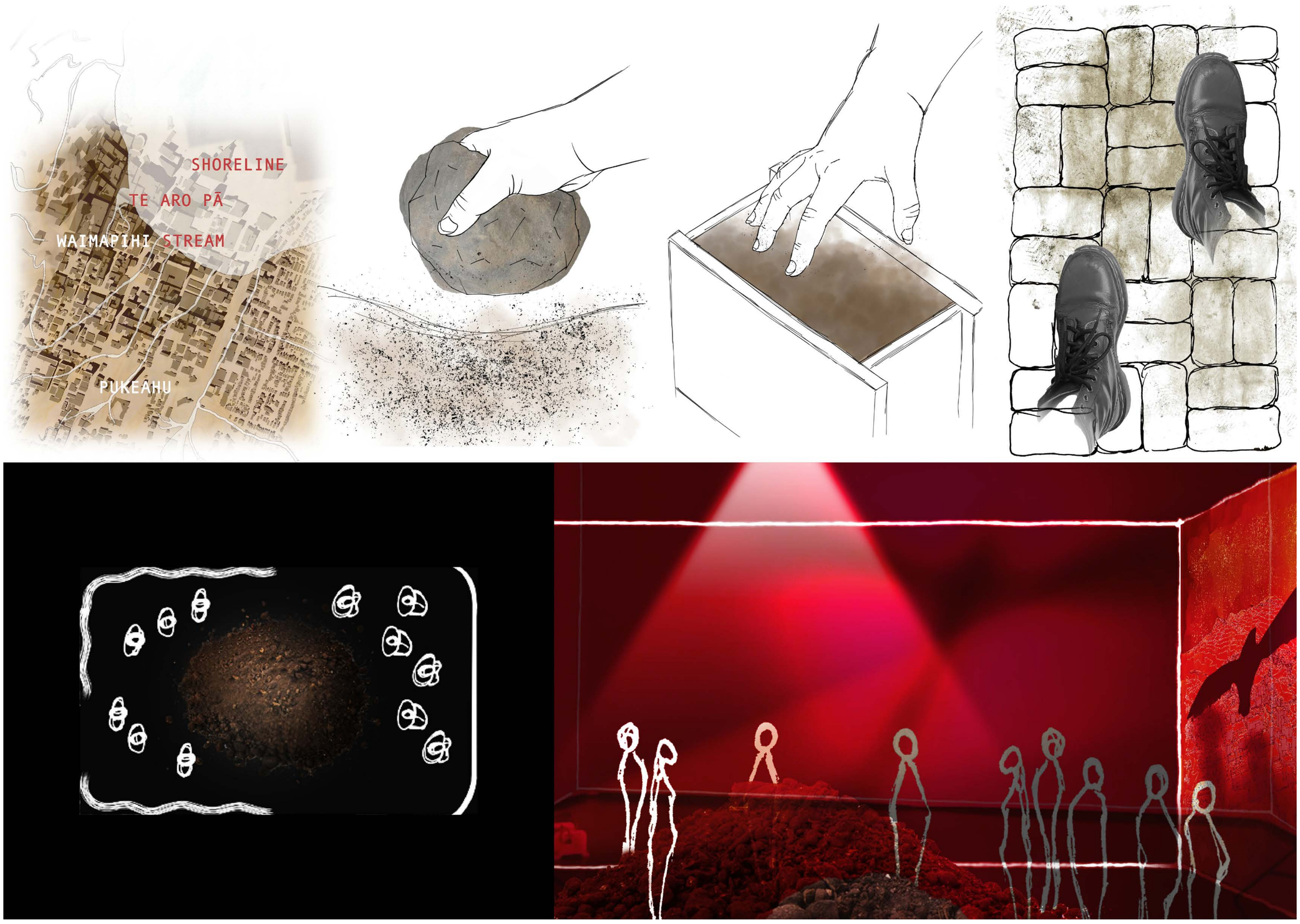


Figure 23.
Excerpts from *Pakē pakē*—a proposal for immersive experience by students Marie Preuss, Annie Sansom, and Libby Tonkin, 2022.

8

Figure 24.
Authors, 'He ata te taonga. The awakening dawn over Te Ranga-a-Hiwi', 2022. Closing image and text for Best Award competition entry. Produced by the rōpū kaiako as a form of tautoko for the students' mahi.

The final verse of the pātere lands us back at the marae. A pātere is an identifier of who you are and where you belong. Our marae—Te Rau Karamu—is for the students, and for us; we all belong here. Our identity is imprinted in the walls of the house of dialogue. The pātere has helped us to step into this belonging, to a certainty that comes with belonging rather than with knowing, and that knowingly admits both uncertainty and plurality. This space we have stepped into offers a new way of learning that is specific to this time and place: a Te Tiriti-led, Te Rau Karamu way of learning. Once we are ready to take that learning out to the world, the pātere becomes our way of defending it, of naming our place in the storied landscape.

Steps we might take to develop and practise a Te Rau Karamu way of learning include:

→ understanding the place where we stand and work, and its stories
→ embracing uncertainty and not-knowing as fundamental to becoming story-ready
→ centring relationships—sitting with uncertainty requires aroha
→ learning the tikanga required to provide the certainty of safety—to a point—along with the understanding that even tikanga are not certain and can change

→ developing practices of rongo (sensing, commonly referring to hearing) as embodied listening
→ acknowledging that listening, feeling, and knowing are not only human activities
→ struggling and succeeding together, co-creating new knowledge as a collective
→ understanding the responsibilities that come with knowledge and story-work.

'The journey up to this point has provided us with the opportunity to come to know the land on which we gather, and the stories with which ours now intertwine. We orientate our bodies and our minds to the places around us and to the land on which this wharenui stands. [These] experiences have prepared us to step onto the marae [...] We enter understanding why we are here and what this means for the many ara (pathways) that now open to us. We acknowledge the pātere as a taonga that will continue to guide us. And as this phase of the journey comes to a close, we join voices, and sing.'[49]

karakia whakamutunga

Ki runga
Ki raro
Ki roto
Ki waho
Hau pai mārire

Tēnā koutou katoa.

he mihi

Along with the aforementioned students, we would like to acknowledge Kura Moeahu (Te Āti Awa, Taranaki Whānui), Ngataiharuru Taepa (Te Āti Awa, Te Arawa), Josh Ambler (Ngāpuhi) and Georgina Stokes (Ngāi Tahu). We also mihi to Te Rau Karamu marae and all the descendants of the people and places of the pātere, to whom this knowledge belongs.

notes

01 Joseph Williams, *The Honourable Justice Joe Williams explaining the Karakia "Whakataka te Hau"*, podcast episode, hosted by Steven Moe, Seeds, 8 May 2019 <https://seeds.libsyn.com/justice-joe-williams> [accessed 20 January 2023]

02 Mihi is a type of greeting that for Māori often contains a pepeha or introduction by way of genealogical connections to ancestral entities (e.g. mountain, river) and people.

03 Our pepeha are given in te reo Māori (the Māori language), but henceforth we provide contextual interpretations in brackets for Māori words. We prefer 'contextual interpretation' to 'translation', as words and concepts often do not have direct English equivalents.

04 Aotearoa refers to our country of Aotearoa New Zealand.

05 We use Te Tiriti to refer to both the Māori and English versions of Te Tiriti o Waitangi / The Treaty of Waitangi.

06 'Waewae Taku Haere', kupu (words) by Kura Moeahu, rangi (melody) by Ngātaiharuru Taepa (2018–19).

07 Grace Apperley, Hilary Armstrong, Kate Ashworth, Shyla Chhika, Nina Cole, Samuel Dunstall (Ngāti Tūwharetoa, Ngāti Kahungunu), Hannah Fahey-Quine, Briar Grounds, Celia Hamling, Amba Hancock, Lottie Harper-Siolo (Iva, Savai'i, Samoa / Palagi), Kate Healy, Rhiannon Higgs, Aidan Johnson, Kate Jowsey, Sabina Lacson, Mollie Nicol, Holly Patchett, Tegan Pirimona, Marie Preuss, Kezia Redman, Annie Sansom, Maddy Thompson, Libby Tonkin, Nhi Tu, Keeley Waller, *The Stories in the Land*, Silver Best Design Award citation for Student Toitanga category, 2022 <https://bestawards.co.nz/toitanga/student-toitanga/massey-university-college-of-creative-arts/the-stories-in-the-land-1/> [accessed 19 January 2023]

08 Moana Jackson, 'Where to Next? Decolonisation and the Stories in the Land', in *Imagining Decolonisation*, ed. by Rebecca Kiddle and others (Wellington: Bridget Williams Books, 2020), pp. 55–65.

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11 Jones, 'Dangerous Liaisons', p. 109.

12 Penny Allan and Huhana Smith, 'Research at the Interface: Bi-cultural Studio in New Zealand, a Case Study', *Mai Journal*, 2 (2013), 133–149 (p. 147).

13 Jackson, 'Where to Next?', p. 62.

14 Jen Archer-Martin, Stuart Foster, and Kura Puke, 'Whitiwhiti kōrero: The Stories in the Land' (unpublished design studio assignment brief, Te Kunenga ki Pūrehuroa Massey University, Wellington, 2022).

15 Jackson, 'Where to Next?', p. 59.

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17 Jackson, 'Where to Next?', p. 61.

18 Jen Margaret, 'State of the Pākehā Nation', *Groundwork* (2018), p. 5. <https://groundwork.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/state-of-the-pc481kehc481-nation2.pdf> [accessed 24 January 2023]

19 Rebecca Kiddle, 'Colonisation Sucks for Everyone', in *Imagining Decolonisation*, ed. by Rebecca Kiddle and others (Wellington: Bridget Williams Books, 2020), pp. 30–41.

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21 Matthew Wildcat and others, 'Learning from the Land: Indigenous Land-based Pedagogy and Decolonization', *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society*, 3 (2014), I–XV (p. I).

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27 Archibald and others, 'Introduction'.

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30 Jackson, 'Where to Next?', p. 61.

31 Moeahu, 'A Gift of Knowledge', par. 11.

32 Original emphasis. Rebecca Sinclair and Jacob Tapiata, 'Toi Rauwhārangi and the Pōwhiri Framework: Māori Perspectives Underpinning Art and Design Curriculum Development at Massey University, Wellington, New Zealand', *Journal of Australasian Indigenous Issues*, 19 (2015), 132–146.

33 Shawn Wilson, *Research Is Ceremony: Indigenous Research Methods* (Halifax and Winnipeg: Fernwood Publishing, 2008), p. 69.

34 Wilson, *Research Is Ceremony*.

35 Project description excerpts taken from Jen Archer-Martin, Stuart Foster, Kura Puke, and students, *The Stories in the Land*, Best Design Awards competition entry, 2022. [see note 7]

36 *The Stories in the Land*, excerpt.

37 Rob Thorne (Ngāti Tumutumu), Whāia Te Māramatanga by Rob Thorne [Extended Mix] (Youtube), from the album Whāia Te Māramatanga (Rattle Records), 2014. © Rob Thorne.

38 *The Stories in the Land*, award citation [see note 7]

39 *The Stories in the Land*, excerpt.

40 'REFLECTION_whitiwhiti kōrero_the stories in the land_2022 (Responses)', unpublished google form responses, 2022.

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42 *The Stories in the Land*, excerpt.

43 Jackson, ‘Where to Next?’, p. 58.

44 Jackson, ‘Where to Next?’, p. 64.

45 Jackson, ‘Where to Next?’, p. 62.

46 *The Stories in the Land*, excerpt.

47 Moeahu, ‘A Gift of Knowledge’, par. 9.

48 *The Stories in the Land*, excerpt.

49 *The Stories in the Land*, excerpt.