

Ko Tatau te Tangata : Stuart Foster and Kura Puke
with Dr Te Huirangi Waikerepuru, Te Urutahi Waikerepuru¹ and Ngāti Tawhirikura Trust².

this report is for :

Media Art Project 2014 - Intercreate Research Centre (Map-Intercreate) :
art, science, technology & cultural bridging

<http://www.intercreate.org/2013/03/media-art-projects/>

Values:

working with community groups and individuals

Media art digital or electronic

Tangata whenua

Environment

¹ Dr Te Huirangi Waikerepuru, Te Urutahi Waikerepuru and Kura Puke are founding members of Te Matahiapo Research Organization. Stuart Foster is an associate member.

² Kura Puke is a descendant of Ngāti Tawhirikura hapu, he uri o nga whanau Tapuke raua ko Kipa.

“Ko Tatou te Tangata!”

“We are the people” was part of a jovial proclamation from a Ngāti Tāwhirikura tipuna residing at Katere ki te Moana, Mangaone³ c.1940. The remembrance of this great uncle’s utterance was conveyed by an elder at the time of this project’s formation, and, became a tohu : for the title and underlying inspiration.

‘Ko tatou te tangata’ can be a contemporary affirmation of both commitment and interconnectedness; values at the heart of Ngāti Tāwhirikura’s operationalising kaupapa for ensuring cultural and environmental sustainability and wellbeing. This saying could epitomise the overall character of the current hapū: a continuing sense of cultural vitality, humour, inclusivity and forward-thinking despite the ongoing vicissitudes pertaining directly to the region’s colonial legacy. This saying could also reflect how we might envision the potentiality of contemporary Taranaki, as a diverse but cohesive community.

Hapū wellbeing requires a robust sense of belonging and identity based on ancient knowledge, with its inherent wisdom and values are presented, passed on and continually reiterated through creative modes of which the arts, design and the performative continue as central expression and transmission for the collective.

The project: Ko Tatou te Tangata utilized technology to engage people communicatively and aesthetically, in preserving, creating or innovating modes of knowledge. Essentially the art and design work featured a relay of sound-carrying lights, that transmit voice and environmental sound. From the cliff top marae, iwi participants sent live utterances converted from sound frequency to light waves, in laser beams that crossed the night sky, over the land terminating at the edge of the ancient Te Rewa Rewa pa site. The laser light was received by small solar panels, converted back to sound and made audible through speakers. The result was that waiata, karakia, karanga were visually signified and audibly emitted within the hearing range of participants, and viewers. The laser light itself was seen within the nightscape from a diverse range of views, both near and distant to the site.

³ Mangaone, commonly regarded as a part of the ‘Fitzroy’ block (Crown purchase c.1854).

This analog-based technique was first tested at the Scanz2013:3rd Nature⁴ artists residency. This project: 'Tipi Rā-ngī : Traversing the heavens' focused on technical developments and experimentation, plus research into the histories and whenua of Te Rewa Rewa.

MAP2014 allowed a second phase of inquiry that involved ongoing technical refinement and conceptual consolidation, but focused primarily, to basing this project on relational aspects, particularly to Ngāti Tawhirikura aspirations.

Ko Tatou te Tangata began with involved consultation and collaboration right at the initial planning levels; to confer with the hapū trust that first and foremost required discussion and consent from the elders. Discussions and organisation occurred with the Ngāti Tawhirikura Hapū Trust to ways that this event could contribute as a creative presence to Katere ki te Moana marae, bring together discussion and dialogue to this hapū and extend the event out to include the wider community.

Initial exchange brought into fruition the potential for the project's contribution to the plan and events for an inaugural Ngāti Tawhirikura hapū celebration day, at Te Rewa Rewa. As a strongly populated site recreational use, and with many interested organisations it became apparent that this required a longer organizational scope. Smaller, more focused events were realised in order to establish a platform for this wider continuum. The main activities were agreed as a visit to this significant pa site in a walking tour, followed by a wananga targeting the topic of karanga. The presentation of the laser light relays would occur following this hui, with an extension to a public event in the following weekend.

This is a description of the time-line of Ko Tatou te Tangata project:

23rd January 2014 Stuart Foster and Kura Puke and convened at Te Matahiapo Research Organisation Centre in Pouakai, located at the foot of Mt Taranaki. Here, on Saturday evening 25th January the project commenced with a ceremony, where whanau gathered for the inaugural laser light presentation: in which karakia by kaumatua Te Huirangi Waikerepuru was sent forth as illuminated lines. Discussion followed, allowing the tamariki and visitors to experience the work from technical and cultural understandings.

⁴ 'Scanz2013: 3rd nature : hui and symposium New Plymouth Jan 18-3 Feb 2013.
<http://www.intercreate.org/2012/04/scanz2013-3rdnaturehui/>

The next six days, Kura and Stuart with associates proceeded to work through and construct technical aspects, plan out the Te Rewa Rewa site, meet and work with the project photographer, continue korero and networking with the hapū, and, community groups in regards to the art arena, conservation and matauranga Maori pertinent to the Taranaki-based iwi. Arrangements and activities were actioned by the Ngāti Tawhirikura Trust, including planning, whakapapa research, face to face exchange with wider community groups and whanau (kanohi-ki-te-kanohi), wharenuī working bee, flyers printed and distributed.

On Thursday 31st January, an interview with Access Radio Taranaki where Ian Clothier, Stuart Foster and Kura Puke, introduced the Map/Intercreate project, contextualized Ko Tatou te Tangata within that vision, and proceeded to discuss aspects of the project, and the details of the public showing of the work.

Later that afternoon, the first public activity occurred: a walk onto Te Rewa Rewa Pa with Ngāti Tāwhirikura Trust chairperson Glen Kipa and member Howie Harris, learning about the history and current events for the pa site.

Following this, a mihi occurred at Katere Moana, as Ngāti Tawhirikura wahine welcomed the visiting kaikaranga of the Taranaki area. This was strongly framed as a 'learning and empowering event', which indeed proved to be a warmly supported opportunity for new kaikaranga, for everyone to mihi, at all levels of experience and knowledge. Following a barbeque kai, the hui commenced. Facilitated by Ngamata Skipper aspects of the project were presented and discussed: iwi matauranga by Dr Te Huirangi Waikerepuru, the intentions of karanga by Te Urutahi Waikerepuru, the conceptual underpinnings of Ko Tatau te Tangata, and the technical understandings by Stuart Foster and Kura Puke. As this was a third project collaboration between Stuart Foster and Te Matahiapo, a diverse interweaving of matauranga, Maori values, art and design innovation was articulated. What was powerfully transformative was the resulting dynamic, safe, inclusive discussion and idea exchange in regards to aspects of kawa, tikanga and the understandings and utilization of technologies within the cultural continuum. Participants of the hui were invited to contribute to the proceedings and participate in the scheduled laser presentation.

Saturday 1st February 2014

The work was set up and activated just before night fall. The authorities were notified, both tangata whenua and civic, our photographer Kalya Ward⁵ was in place, with Stuart located with the laser light at Katere ki te Moana marae.

Twilight descended; the commercial area closed, the roads became subdued and the community moved about in the park and pathways enjoying the summer evening. Relaxed voices and laughter became the main sound, as people lay in the grass, walked or rode.

An auspicious night: it was a 'king tide' warm, dark, humming with gatherings near Rotomanu lake, fishing activity along the Waiwhakaiho awa, recreational passer-bys. Iwi members gathered at both Katere ki te Moana marae and by the river⁶ at the edge of the pa site, near the Te Rewa Rewa bridge; the optimum ground-level point to see the extension of light lines. Over the 3.5 km range, the laser sent a bright but increasingly diffused green illumination delineating and activating a powerful sense of space and distance; between the hill-top marae across and down to the river/sea edge.

Following the first broadcast of karakia were waiata, recorded by tamariki at the marae, who then travelled to the point to hear their voices.

The karakia, karanga and waiata emitted from the Te Rewa Rewa cliff to be heard by the people at the river/lake edge and the light lines seen from a myriad of viewpoints both near and far.

Sunday 2nd February, we returned to the marae, for a debrief gathering, further recorded interviews and a working bee. Sunday evening was a final Te Matahiapo wananga at Pouakai.

Tangata Whenua

Through this project, significant events and impacts had occurred.

The walk, the hui and the gatherings to see the work are new events for the hapu and for the wider iwi. Access and visits to the pa site for example are only recent initiatives and opportunities brought about through the intentions to encourage participation of hapu in

⁵ Kalya Ward is a Master Fine Arts student at Massey University.

⁶ A space for optimum viewing: an area triangulated between the Waiwhakaiho river, Rotomanu lake and Clemow Road.

sites and exchange that had previously been denied or discouraged through generations of alienation. The insights became strongly apparent through the hui. Previously a topic where much reticence to voicing opinions or inquiry: discussions identifying aspects of the practice of karanga, was made possible through the endorsement and authority of kaumatua, and the active and positive energy of Ngāti Tawhirikura Trust. This has brought about a sense of security and confidence which opened up understandings of protocol and agency for wahine as active kaikaranga.

This hui occurred organized within the protocols or tikanga of the tangata whenua. From a hapū perspective, the practice and maintenance of Ngāti Tawhirikura obligations through the priorities of whanaungatanga, mana, kaitiakitanga, and manaakitanga were successfully implemented.

For it is through this system of belonging and knowledge transmission that autonomy and belonging allows the extension of these customary values to engage meaningfully and cohesively to the collective which can then be extended out to the wider bicultural community. This is the key to bring about sustainable transformation both internal and external to the hapu.

Community groups individuals

For the wider community, the intention of Ko Tatou te Tangata was to offer a future-forward model to create an experience that may deepen the engagement of local people and visitors through inclusive visual-aural ceremonial and relational events. Pre-planning preparations are in place with several commercial vendors, performance/music groups and kaumatua forums will be included in a future iteration.

Environment

Ko Tatou Te Tangata sought to investigate, through social encounter and art-design culture, how to 'transform an environment often seemingly subsumed by commercial industry into an awareness of the dynamic layered diversity of the land.'⁷ Through the presence of people and creative works, the area may be transformed through a collective sense of ownership and belonging which then cultivates care.

⁷ Tipi-Rā-ngī article 2013 by S.Foster and K.Puke

Ko Tatou te Tangata as a continuation of Tipi Rā-ngī, continued established and initiating new relationships an in the Fitzroy New Plymouth areas.

Further research with the Ngāti Tawhirikura Trust in regards to significant sites, textual histories, whakapapa including place-names, natural resources, land titles and current use.

Some collation of this material was towards the consultation with community agents such as archaeologists, tree/plant specialists, environmentalists.

Networking also occurred with artists, educationalists and health –provider organisations in regards to involvement or participation in further events.

Some collation of this material has informed development towards consultation with potential commercial entities, for kaupapa-based enterprise that will enliven and enrich the recreational and social life of Te Rewa Rewa and Fitzroy area.

Ongoing work with Ngati Tawhirikura Trust; including supporting research, reports and submissions for both environmental and social imperatives.

Media art digital and electronic

This is a substantial field, the Ko Tatou te Tangata aspires to contribute to people- based experiences that open up and ‘warm’ digital/electronic art. The kaupapa of Ko Tatou te Tangata’ was to utilize materials that are accessible and common-place, and apply adaptations or modifications towards creative expression. While these explore technique and effect the work is inherent driven by concepts that ‘make sense’ to and resonate for Maori, and by extension indigenous, worldviews.

Thereotical

This project contributes strongly to the inquiry of both western and indigenous philosophies of notions of ‘the intangible and the unseen energies’ to ponder and visualise ideas about wairua (essence) mauri and the virtual. Stuart Foster, Dr. Haidy Geismar (UCL) and Kura Puke are currently developing a theory termed ‘warming technologies’ to understanding and

utilizing cross-cultural views of the nature and negotiation of the virtual, within a digitally driven information and communication arena.

Research methodologies were kaupapa-based

- these included the longer term view of establishing robust and clear relationships through appropriate iwi members.
- clear consultation early and inclusively.
- Clear reciprocation
- Appropriate tikanga participation undertaken
- Findings of research will be clearly conveyed in the appropriate manner

A central kaupapa is that:

The wider environment is inherently connected to a Maori or indigenous understanding of belonging, identity and continuity. This is increasingly also a mainstream imperative as it is now increasingly understood that environmental sustainability is inextricably tied to social and cultural sustainability.

Ko Tatou te Tangata strove to contribute to relational, creative experiences that may be relevant and resonate within societies striving to increase awareness and connection in a 21st century global 'reality'.

Indicators and Outcomes

Indicators of this Ko Tatou te Tangata' success was the consent, engagement and participation of Ngāti Tawhirikura, the involvement of the wider community through providing a platform and future possibilities for identifying and fostering cultural activities that will contribute to Ngāti Tawhirikura.

It is through these events becoming part of Ngāti Tawhirikura's cultural life, customary values manifest; seen and felt on the land. It is through this presence, that the sense of belonging and meaningful participation will then extend out appropriately to the wider community.

Outcomes of this projects include a positive response and invitation to further creative events involving technology, art design and matauranga Maori, and manifest through hapu members , with contributing external agencies, and the wider public.

It is acknowledged that the confidence and generosity of MAP-Intercreate offered Ko Tatou Te Tangata, made possible the depth and breadth required to facilitate this creative relational process.

What this project highlighted, was a contemporary model of matauranga Maori and essential Maori values, in action.

The interconnections of land, people and the tangible/intangible nature and effects of the visual and aural created a powerful and salient experience of belonging and wonder.

In a debriefing interview, Te Urutahi Waikerepuru talked about the potential impact of the project experiences for her participating mokopuna : “The potential for the new generations to come through to be given access to this new kind of technology expands their consciousness it brings the celestial realm closer to us and there is this engagement that’s happening” (Pouakai, 3 February 2014).

E hara e te tī, e wana ake
Ronald Pohatu Tapuke 1932-2014⁸



⁸ <https://www.reverbnation.com/kanara/songs> 'Te hami mo nga tupapaku'

Ti Kouka, Te Rewa Rewa

Image of aerial view locating laser light transmitting from Katere Ki te Moana (Cody Place) to the Edge of Te Rewa Rewa Pa.



image of panui : created by Ngāti Tawhirikura Trust

YOU ARE INVITED TO: KO TATOU TE TANGATA PROJECT

A project that utilises laser light technology to carry sound has been selected as the Intercreate Media Art Project 2014. Ko Tatou Te Tangata by Stuart Foster and Kura Puke, with Dr Huirangi Waikerepuru and Te Urutahi Waikerepuru.

Laser beams can be sent to a light receptive panel that has speakers. Connected - the result is that waiata, karakia, karanga and sounds of moving water can be transmitted.

"the intangible and the unseen energies" to inquire into and visualise ideas about, wairua (essence), maun and the virtual

RSVP to Ngamata: nskipper@xtra.co.nz or 0277548768

Ngati Tawhirikura wish to **acknowledge, celebrate and thank** all our wahine, kai karanga and kuia by inviting you to participate in a unique event happening this Thursday 24 January 2014

Korero, Katakata, Kai, Karanga, KA MIHARO!

Join us as we begin a series of workshops and activities to make visible our connections across the land.

At dusk a laserlight sending karanga from Katere Marae to Rewarewa bridge
WHERE Katere Marae
WHEN: 30/01/2014
POWHIRI: 7pm

Ko Tatou Te Tangata Project
Naumai, Haere Mai ki Katere ki te Moana
7 Cody Place, Mangaone Puke, Waiwakaiho

image: Waiwakaiho river looking towards Te Rewa Rewa Pa





image of the cliff face Te Rewa Rewa Pa



image from Rotomanu Lake to Katere ki te Moana Marae- Cody Place



whanau members Lake Rotomanu



image from Pathway to the sea



image: an evening test from Katere ki te moana to Te Rewa Rewa (edge of pa site)