

Elevating Heirlooms

Hei Tiki

Education Resource

New Zealand hei tiki (tiki)



Extract from '[Concepts to understand](#)', New Zealand Intellectual Property Office:

Familiar

The hei tiki is one of New Zealand's most popular and recognisable Māori symbols.

Culturally significant

Hei tiki represents the unborn child and is associated with Hineteiwaiwa, the Māori goddess of childbirth.

Special consideration and respect

Hei tiki is culturally significant and deserves special consideration and respect.

Using hei tiki for particular products or services may be offensive to Māori. This can be raised as an objection against your New Zealand trade mark or design application, and may impact market sales.

Mātauranga Māori

Extract from [‘Concepts to understand’](#), New Zealand Intellectual Property Office:

Traditional knowledge is a living body of knowledge, typically passed from generation to generation, that may be linked to cultural identity. The nature of traditional knowledge as a living and developing thing can mean that it is difficult to protect using intellectual property rights.

For example, in the case of patents and designs, the invention or design must be new and/or original, whereas inventions derived from traditional knowledge may be neither new nor original. Also, intellectual property rights are owned by individuals or an identifiable commercial entity, whereas traditional knowledge belongs to a collective group, and may have developed over centuries.

Extract from [‘Concepts to understand’](#), New Zealand Intellectual Property Office:

- Tapu is the strongest force in Māori life. It has numerous meanings and references. Tapu can be interpreted as ‘sacred’, or defined as ‘spiritual restriction’, containing a strong imposition of rules and prohibitions. A person, object or place that is tapu may not be touched or, in some cases, not even approached.
- Noa is the opposite of tapu, and includes the concept of ‘common’. It lifts the tapu from the person or the object. Noa also has the concept of a blessing in that it can lift the rules and restrictions of tapu.
- To associate something that is extremely tapu with something that is noa is offensive to Māori.

The relationship between people and all living things is characterised by a shared origin of life principle referred to as mauri. Any acts undermine or disrespects mauri is therefore objectionable.

- Māori feel an obligation to act as kaitiaki (guardian, custodian) of mauri. Mauri is not limited to animate objects – a waterway, for example, has mauri, and a mountain has mauri by virtue of its connectedness to Papatūānuku.

Values that enhance and protect mauri are:

- Tika: truth, correctness, directness, justice, fairness, righteousness
- Pono: to be true, valid, honest, genuine, sincere
- Aroha: affection, sympathy, charity, compassion, love, empathy

A recent example of inappropriate use of hei tiki for commercial purposes



Extract from '[Concepts to understand](#)', New Zealand Intellectual Property Office:

Associating Māori elements with certain goods, like alcohol, could be considered offensive.

It would be inappropriate to associate some goods and services with Māori elements. For example, alcohol, tobacco, genetic technologies, gaming and gambling all have the potential to devalue Māori people, culture and values.

Associating Māori elements with these types of goods and services could be considered offensive. Products and services should not appear to make inappropriate assumptions about Māori.

Historical examples of cultural appropriation of Hei Tiki



1914



1927



1935

Images from Richard Wolfe, *Well Made New Zealand: A Century of Trademarks*, Reed Methuen, 1987.

Extract from '[Concepts to understand](#)', New Zealand Intellectual Property Office:

These historical examples of inappropriate inference would not be acceptable today for many reasons, including the combining of noa and tapu.

Elevating Heirlooms: Hei Tiki



Unknown artist, *Hei Tiki*, date unknown
pounamu (nephrite)

Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, gift of Sir George Grey, 1887
on loan to Auckland War Memorial Museum Tāmaki Paenga Hira

This hei tiki features a thick head, resting directly upon the shoulders, with both hands positioned on the thighs.



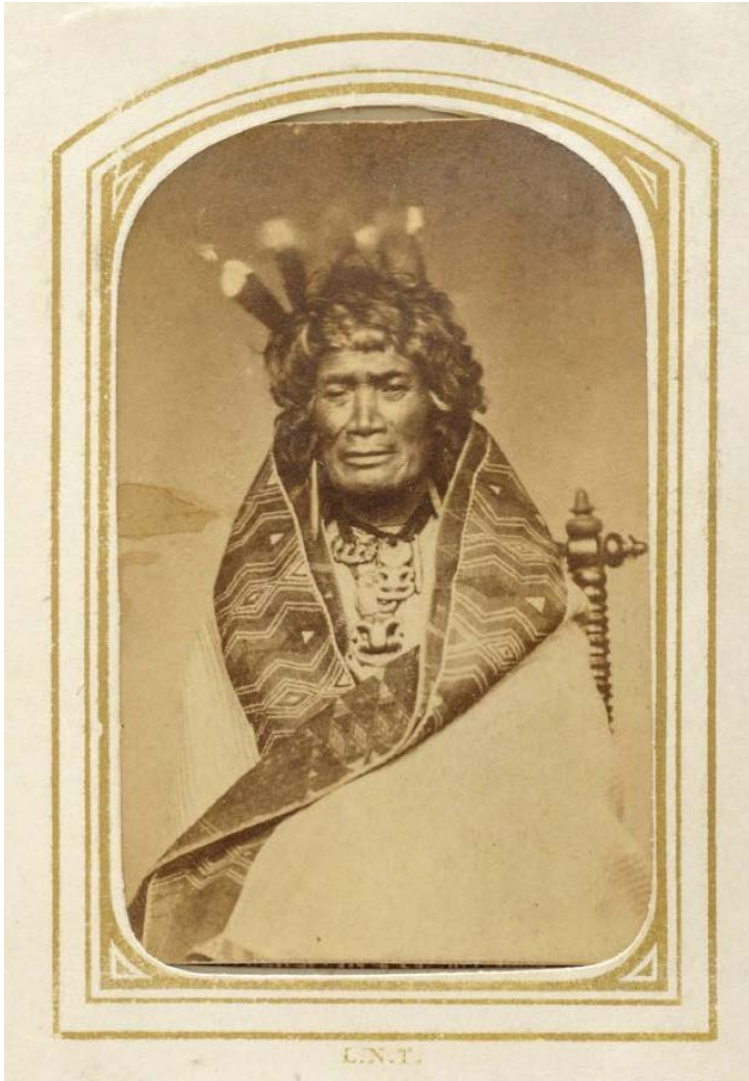
Unknown artist, *Hei Tiki*, date unknown
pounamu (nephrite)
Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, gift of Sir George Grey, 1887
on loan to Auckland War Memorial Museum Tāmaki Paenga Hira

This hei tiki features a distinctive peaked head and the left arm raised to the chest. It also has grooved eyes.



Unknown artist, *Hei Tiki*, date unknown
pounamu (nephrite)
Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, gift of Sir George Grey, 1887
on loan to Auckland War Memorial Museum Tāmaki Paenga Hira

This hei tiki features a distinctive head, positioned with the tongue out in the form of a pūkana. It also has curled-in lower legs and strong arms resting on the thighs.



E S Richards, *Rangī Topeora*, 1863–1875
 albumen silver photograph
 Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, purchased 1995

Extract from [‘Rangī Topeora’](#), Whakamīharo Lindauer Online:

Rangī Topeora, a chiefly woman of the Ngāti Toa Rangitira iwi, was born in Kawhia. She joined the southern migration by Ngāti Toa and other iwi to Kapiti Island and the nearby Cook Strait coast – her uncle, the chief Te Rauparaha, led this migration in about 1820. She was a direct descendant of Hoturoa, rangatira of the Tainui waka, which came from to Aotearoa as a part of the great migration. Her mother was Waitohi, Te Rauparaha's sister, and her father was Te Rakaherea. Topeora was one of only five women to sign the Treaty of Waitangi, at Kapiti on 14 May 1840.



Gottfried Lindauer, *Rangī Topeora*, date unknown
oil on canvas
Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, gift of Mr H E Partridge, 1915

Extract from '[Rangī Topeora](#)', Whakamīharo Lindauer Online:

In Gottfried Lindauer's portrait, Topeora wears multiple pounamu hei tiki, denoting the high regard with which she was held by her people. The portrait is taken from a photograph by Edward Smallwood Richards (1834–1917) and shows the sitter wearing feathers from the now-extinct huia bird in her hair and a kaitaka korowai (flax cloak).



Foy Brothers, Pare Whakerongomai (Pare Watene), circa 1872–86
 cabinet card with albumen silver print
 Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, on loan from Peter Langdon (custodian),
 Frances Langdon, Mark Langdon and Paul Langdon, whose father John
 Marshall (Jack) Langdon was the son of Louisa Langdon, one of the seven
 children of James Joseph Foy

Extract from [‘Pare Watene’](#), Whakamīharo Lindauer Online:

Little is known of Pare Watene, also known as Pare Watana. According to James Cowan, her father was Hemi Watene of Ngāti Maru.

Lindauer’s 1878 portrait of Pare Watene is a good likeness of the Foy Brothers photograph taken in Thames between 1871 and 1878. The name Whakaarorangi is inscribed on the back of the photograph – this was her married name.



Gottfried Lindauer, *Pare Watene*, 1878

oil on canvas

Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, gift of Mr H E Patridge, 1915

The television series [Behind the Brush](#) (Awa Films, 2015) featured many tīpuna whose portraits were painted by Gottfried Lindauer, including Para Watene.



Gottfried Lindauer, *Te Paea Hinerangi (Guide Sophia)*, 1896
oil on canvas
Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, gift of Mr H E Patridge, 1915

Extract from [‘Te Paea Hinerangi’](#), Whakamīharo Lindauer Online:

Te Paea Hinerangi was a famous guide in the Rotorua thermal area, during the 1870s and thereafter. It is said that she saw a ‘phantom canoe’ foretelling the eruption of Mount Tarawera, the week before it happened in 1886.

Te Paea (Sophia) was the daughter of Kotiro Hinerangi (Ngāruahine) and Scotsman Alexander Grey. Born in Kororareka (Russell), she was the fourth of five children.

Te Paea married twice, firstly to Koroneho Tehakiroe (Ngāpuhi), with whom she had 11 children, and secondly in about 1870 to Hori Taiawhio, with whom she had a further three children. Te Paea relocated from the Bay of Islands to the village of Te Wairoa, on the shores of Lake Tarawera, soon after the time of her second marriage. Here, she became known as Guide Sophia. She was bilingual and was a tourist guide for some 16 years before the famous volcanic eruption that wiped out the renowned silica terraces.

After the devastation at Te Wairoa, the settlement’s survivors, including Te Paea and her family, relocated to Rotorua’s main thermal attraction, Whakarewarewa. In 1896, when her portrait was painted by Lindauer, she was appointed guide to the thermal reserve.

In this portrait, Te Paea wears a hei tiki that is likely to have been her own (rather than the painter’s), as it is a female form and appears in other photographs of her.



Arthur J Iles, *Woman Wearing Heitiki, Clematis and Huia Feathers*, circa 1899
gelatin silver
Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, purchased 1984



Josiah Martin, *Susan*, Rotorua, 19th century
oil on canvas
Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, gift of Mr H E Patridge, 1915



Fiona Pardington, *Inanga Pounamu (Greenstone) Heitiki Y6521*, 2003
gelatin silver print
Chartwell Collection, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, 2003



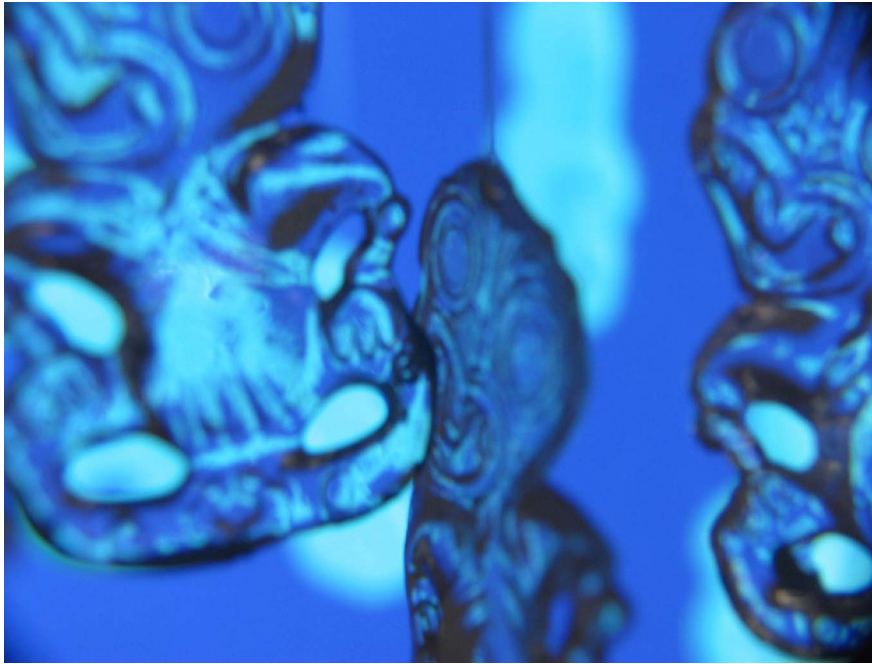
Fiona Pardington, *Pounamu (Greenstone) Heitiki 30187, Whareakeake – Murdering Beach*, 2001
selenium-toned gelatin silver print
Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, 2001



Fiona Pardington, *Pounamu (Greenstone) Heitiki 30182, Kaiapoi*, 2001
selenium-toned gelatin silver print
Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, purchased 2001



Fiona Pardington, *Pounamu (Greenstone) Heitiki 30189, Timaru*, 2001
selenium-toned gelatin silver print
Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, purchased 2001



Aimee Ratana, *Hei Tiki 2*, 2005
 digital C-type print
 image courtesy of the artist © Aimee Ratana

Extract from [‘Hei Tiki 2’](#), Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki:

The hei tiki provides the inspiration for this photographic work by Aimee Ratana, which acts as a catalyst to explore issues of identity, whakapapa and authenticity. Can resin and plastic hei tiki be taonga tuku iho (treasured items passed down)? The hei tiki form is a strong, easily identifiable symbol of identity for Māori. However, instead of opting to photograph bone or pounamu, the artist chose to focus on plastic hei tiki of the kind that swamped the New Zealand tourist market in the 1970s and 1980s. This commodification of hei tiki intrigued Ratana because it brought into focus questions about the authenticity of an object.



Aimee Ratana, *MMVA_IMG: 14*, 2005
 digital C-type print
 image courtesy of the artist © Aimee Ratana

Extract from '[MMVA-IMG: 14](#)', Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki:

This exploration of objects and materials also frames how Ratana negotiates her own identity. As she explains:

'My work incorporates the commodified plastic hei tiki as my explicit signifier to identify myself and my work. I attempt to reconnect the plastic hei tiki to taonga tuku iho from which they were originally appropriated. Similar to my personal journey in which I will continue to reconnect myself to my iwi and Māoritanga.'

Experimenting with various colour cross-processing techniques and exposure times, Ratana's large photographic prints amplify this once small adornment item into a commanding figure captured in moody colour fields that open up surreal terrains in which the hei tiki, as image and object, illuminates.



Aimee Ratana, *Paraikete*, 2008
C-type photographic print



Aimee Ratana, *Hinepukohurangi*, 2008
C-type photographic print



Aimee Ratana, *Tūhoe*, 2008
C-type photographic print

Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki,
gifts of the Patrons of the Auckland Art Gallery, 2019
images courtesy of the artist © Aimee Ratana

Extract from '[Tūhoe](#)', Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki:

This series of photographs recall the artist's whakapapa ties to Tūhoe iwi and Te Urewera region in the eastern Bay of Plenty. Titled *Taku Tūhoetana*, the suite of images captures significant landmarks, events and moments specific to Tūhoe tribal history. The artist interlaces historical images with contemporary photographs to reflect a connection to the past while locating the conversation in the present. We see this connection echoed with photographs in which parts of the body act like a form of self-portraiture that place the artist in a Tūhoe narrative.

For Ratana, this suite of C-type photographic prints, with their custom-made oak frames, echo those found in the Māori meeting houses of the early 1900s, a time of great cultural change. In this regard, the artist collapses past and present to offer a nuanced conversation about heritage and connection. The series explores notions of collective memory and presence and the importance of whakapapa as the conduit to the past, present and future.



Jasmine Te Hira, *The Beauty of Invisible Grief*, 2016

water, pearls, sterling silver, cord, vitrine, iMac, single-channel video, USB hardware
Image courtesy of the artist © Jasmine Te Hira

Extract from [‘*The Beauty of Invisible Grief*’](#), Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki:

A trained jewellery and applied arts maker, Jasmine Te Hira explores our intimate relationship with adornment. In this video portrait, the ornament around her neck is made from water collected from her awa (river), near the Hokianga, and frozen into a hei tiki form. The numbness and pain of ice on skin recalls the loss of material knowledge. Warmed by contact, the hei tiki slowly weeps onto Te Hira’s chest. Its loss is documented on the body and in perpetuity by the camera.

Presenting the screen under the vitrine directly comments on museum collection histories and practices that have created barriers between taonga and their communities. It reflects a desire to keep taonga – tangible and intangible – warm and to activate their mauri (life force).



Areta Wilkinson, *Hei Ata Āhua*, 2018
 24ct Ōtakau and Te Tai Poutini gold, fine silver
 Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, commissioned 2017
 Photo credit: Studio La Gonda

Extract from [‘Hei Ata Āhua’](#), Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki:

Areta Wilkinson’s art practice combines jewellery, applied arts and customary Māori adornment making. This gold heiti pendant is inspired by a heiti tiki collected by Johann Reinhold Forster and/or George Forster during Captain James Cook’s second voyage onboard the *Resolution* in 1773, when it visited Tōtaranui/Queen Charlotte Sound. Its gold was locally sourced, consonant with the artist’s desire to incorporate materials connected to the land and to her Kāi Tahu tribal histories.

The artist has specified that this work must be worn from time to time, in keeping with the Māori practice of acknowledging the mauri found in all objects.

Wilkinson invited the Gallery’s staff and Māori advisory group Haerewa to name the work. *Hei Ata Āhua* was chosen, with ‘ata’ meaning shadow and ‘āhua’ meaning semblance or form. When both words are run together it creates the word ‘ātaahua’ meaning the beautiful form. If the work is not on display, it is probably being worn by someone here in the Gallery. Wilkinson’s work relating to the life of objects has initiated a paradigm shift in how art institutions might understand and engage with collection objects.



Areta Wilkinson, Mark Adams, 9.08.2016 *Silver Bromide Photogram.*
1886.1.1167 Queen Charlotte Sound. Collections of Pitt Rivers Museum,
University of Oxford, UK, 2016
silver bromide photogram
Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, gift of the artists 2018
Photo credit: Studio La Gonda



Areta Wilkinson, Mark Adams, 928.09.2017 *Blueprint*. Z6469 Cheviot Hill.
Collections of Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge, UK, 2017
cyanotype blueprint
Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, gift of the artists 2018
Photo credit: Studio La Gonda

Rangi Kipa

Extract from [‘Rangi Kipa’](#), Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki:

Working primarily as a sculptor, carver and tā moko artist, Rangi Kipa’s practice explores the articulation of cultural and tribal identity through the whakapapa of adornment and ethnographic taonga.

Raised in Waitara in Taranaki, Kipa first trained as a carver at Maraeroa Carving School in Porirua in 1986, later completing a Master of Māori Visual Arts at Massey University in 1999. He has since forged a practice that investigates how customary Māori motifs, materials and techniques can be re-envisioned in a kōrero between the past and present. He has used traditional materials like whalebone and pāua to directly reference customary Māori weaponry, whereas his hei tiki, a central focus of his work, incorporate synthetic, composite materials with traditional ones, to more explicitly interweave the customary and contemporary.

Edited extract from Pania Waaka, [‘Hei tiki and issues of representation within contemporary Māori arts’](#), 2007:

Rangi Kipa has a Diploma in Carving from Maraeroa Carving School in Wellington, various teaching certificates, an undergraduate degree in Social Anthropology through the University of Waikato and a Masters in Māori Visual Art through Massey University. He argues for other qualifications beyond formal mainstream education ‘... graduating through the ranks of particular types of art forms . . . and being recognised nationally or internationally for those things.’ He is acknowledged for his services to the revival of hoe waka and taonga pūoro in Taranaki, and is also a tā moko practitioner.

Kipa’s Te Āti Awa whakapapa clearly informs his practice. The Taranaki lands claim process, as with other tribes, has impacted heavily on descendants in many ways. As an individual and in his capacity as an artist, Rangi too was emotionally burdened with the entire process. Through that experience, he was cognisant of the fact that despite any reparation afforded by the claims process, indeed there was nothing to facilitate a healing process. He stated, ‘The land claims is one thing but I couldn’t see how our people were going to heal back together again and find a common future, Māori and non-Māori.’ Prior to this point, in his practice, Rangi had only engaged with a Māori market. His work and practice corresponding to ideas of what is traditional, including tā koha as a mode of exchange.

Kipa has not avoided the debate between what is traditional and what is contemporary. According to him, traditional is anything done in the past and that the retrospective gaze to past practice is safe and easy when the aim is to define or draw meaning from it. That aim does not necessarily make relevant that past practice today. This was elaborated through a conversation on tā moko.

'I encourage people now with moko. For instance, so many come along with their whakapapa as the source or the puna for their moko that I'm saying to them, well, your whakapapa, that's those people, what about you? . . . moko's actually about celebrating you. It's about wearing this particular kaupapa and it's about this kaupapa covering your body, and actually . . . the world is far bigger than looking at all these people that contribute to your genetic and your characteristic pool.'

Kipa has concluded that Māori openly portray the damaged psyche of the colonised by being tethered to romantic notions of warrior or voyager or protester, crippling the ability to transcend the boxes of tradition that limit us today.

He also holds the view that things change, and naturally so. That, he asserts, is a process from which we as humans explore and endeavour to draw meaning and definition to reconstitute and validate our place in the world. Thus, Kipa finds these terminologies oppressive and liberating, variable to 'differing markets, differing peoples, differing agendas'. It is from this background, with a view to assist the healing process for all New Zealanders, that Kipa sought a way to contribute to a New Zealand society through his art practice.

The initial phase required that Kipa accept a non-Māori clientele and the idea of sharing Māori imagery and designs with non-Māori. Ultimately, his approach was decided. He was going to create things that anyone can wear and can feel comfortable wearing because there were no 'cultural loadings'.

The hei tiki then became one icon of choice that Kipa carved for all people. The irony is that this icon is inherently culturally 'loaded'.

This process, in Kipa's words, 'took a leap of faith'. Admittedly feeling highly indoctrinated by what is acceptable as Māori art, Kipa criticises the notion of validation because it imposes limitations on creative will. Is this therefore, a characteristic commonly felt by other contemporary Māori artists?

The notion of validation encompasses, within the contemporary Māori art movement, a declaration of identity through whakapapa. It is a notion institutionalised in the form of a registered trademark Toi Iho Māori Made™. This is used to promote and sell authentic, quality arts and crafts, and to authenticate exhibitions and performances of Māori arts by Māori artists. Toi Iho Māori Made™ is accompanied by Toi Iho Mainly Māori™ and the Toi Iho Māori Coproduction™ mark. It is an initiative administered by Te Waka Toi, a subsidiary to the government funding body Creative New Zealand. Its concern centres on economic development.

Kipa is registered to Toi Iho Māori Made™. Thus, whakapapa conferred his right to the label and all benefits and disadvantages thereof. The use of the label affirms the view that Māori determine what is culturally acceptable and valuable. Toi Iho Māori Made™ is important because the label distinguishes from people who exploit Māori images or iconography. In contrast, whakapapa can be used merely to enhance personal gain. Regardless of intent, and most importantly, Toi Iho Māori Made™ certifies undoubtedly quality craftsmanship from people of Māori descent.

The site of such major and transformative practice was the hei tiki. Rangi Kipa recognised, however, that the use of customary media conforms to traditional aesthetics, appealing to that type of clientele. Furthermore, indigenous media are limited resources and less accessible. He predominantly works in 3D using customary mediums, stone, wood, bone, teeth, feathers, skin, shell and fibres.

Kipa has 10 years' involvement working with Te Ohu Kaimoana and the World Council of Whalers. New Zealand is a signatory to CiTES (Convention for the Prevention of Trade of Endangered Species), whom he is currently lobbying for change to an appendice that would allow the movement of resources across borders.

He is aware of global issues, particularly those pertaining to whaling, that not only impact on his own practice but on indigenous communities who struggle to retain rights to customary practices in their own waters. Kipa commented that the West were invariably responsible for the current stock shortage and that Māori communities, he argues, did not hunt whales but benefitted from stranded beasts.

A new medium was discovered by accident. Corian® was given to Kipa to experiment with. Experimentation proved that Corian® was heat resistant; when broken, it broke like stone, and when ground, it reacted like bone, except without the stench. Therefore, it possessed qualities of strength and durability. Additionally, Corian® was available in a range of colours and is in essence a recycled material.

An icon, a medium and a very skilled artist, the Rangi Kipa hei tiki was produced. His first piece was mandarin-coloured. Another one was blue. It sold at Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, to a collector from Switzerland, for a sum of US\$700. A new dilemma arose: Kipa had to accept the monetary value of his work. As he said, 'It actually blew the door down really and forced me to confront my own isms!'

A dynamic twist had entered the fray; from the effects of monetary reward flowed a freedom to authorise a process, a personal process within his art practice. He would, in his words, 'experiment with departure points' in a bid to shift from what previously always used to be. It is a process he continues with today, which requires reflection, analysis and projection largely used to critique the production of his artwork. Thus, a modified tool, design, technique or material is experimented with to improve the execution of production.

The development of Kipa's artwork production has moved markedly in recent times. In a biographical artist's statement, he reveals fundamental connections to ancestral knowledge that, for some, confers a right and a rite to practice.

'My own subjective positions are exposed with the use of customary Māori art and design processes is the basis of my own artistic narrative.

'The majority of my work has its foundation in customary techniques.'

'The process of relearning customary techniques is that it allows you to understand the thought processes of our tūpuna and their interrelationship with their environment. These processes effectively are an inheritance of over a thousand years of occupation and the unbroken transfer of the mauri, they are doorways to walk with our tūpuna of the past.'

Reaction to the Rangi Kipa hei tiki were not all favourable or visible. For were not these plastic hei tiki just plastic hei tiki, not too unlike the red-eyed versions of Air New Zealand? Only decades later, the 'offence' is initiated by a Māori.

Kipa addressed these sentiments by what was never spoken: 'Some people did think that but no one . . . no one ever said anything to me, though . . . but I think at the end of the day people know the integrity of my artwork as well!'

This is a two-fold situation. Firstly, one might suppose that Kipa's hei tiki are Māori culturally valid. From the view that the customary practice, *kanohi ki te kanohi* was not engaged to debate any accusation of cultural offending. The complexities of what that might have been is daunting to say the least. The second point acknowledges, categorically for Kipa, the fact that he was not challenged because of the integrity of his artwork. A fact he strongly defends.

'The tiki is a celebrated form in its own right. I might change it, and I might change radically the colour and I might change radically who I might be aiming for it to be worn by. But it wouldn't be anything different and I don't put any less or more energy into something whether it was made out of resin versus Corian® . . . versus whale tooth or whale bone, which is a high valued cultural material. I don't put any less into any one of those things!'

The integrity of one's work implies the notion of relativity. A rudimentary comparison to what is known historically will clarify further the idea of integrity. Kipa claims, 'The process for me, carving them, is the same. The genesis, and the genesis of design, is the same or the source of the design and the narrative is the same. And ultimately the reason why I'm making it or the role it plays is the same.'

Corian® is the point of difference that causes undergraduate art classes to debate whether, indeed, Rangi Kipa's hei tiki are in fact hei tiki. It seems that there are no limits in art. One wanders to what point Kipa could take these hei tiki. He offers simply, 'There is a point when a tiki is not a tiki.'

[‘Rangi Kipa on Māori Art and Cultural Recovery’](#), YouTube, accessed October 2021:

‘Art is a really strong tool for decolonisation work, cultural recovery and a doorway through time.’

While training as a tauira whakairo at the Maraeroa Carving School in Porirua, 1983–84, Kipa worked in the style of his ancestors and has since led a reawakening of the renowned Te Āti Awa serpentine carving style, which hadn't been practiced in Taranaki since the early nineteenth century.

At that time, Kipa remembers that the wearing of taonga by Māori was regarded as a major political statement. He also came to realise that the visual language of Māori art was under the same threat as te reo Māori. These experiences influenced his dedication to stimulating knowledge about the language and function of whakairo and encouraging the normalisation of taonga – including moko – in the contemporary lives of Māori today.

‘Our art forms are languages and play a fundamental role in the transmission of our knowledge systems and our identity. As dream weavers and sages, our job is to be activists and protagonists and propose alternatives to our present realities because most of our present reality is sculpted by the West and, in many ways, we are responsible for purging ourselves of what we don't need, what doesn't serve us anymore.’

Te Hei Tiki



Te Hei Tiki, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, 2005

11 June 2005–4 September 2006
Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki
Curated by Ngahiraka Mason

Extract from '[Te Hei Tiki](#)', Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki:

Hei tiki are treasured taonga and adornment items. Commonly called tiki, these objects are properly referred to as hei tiki, hei meaning to wear around the neck. Through time, hei tiki have become an icon that is unique to Aotearoa New Zealand.

The exhibition *Te Hei Tiki* considers how over many generations hei tiki have captured moments and movements in Māori and New Zealand histories. Through hei tiki, artists have related stories that are about taonga, relationships between people, place, art, collecting, peace, war, consumerism and cultural politics.

Te Hei Tiki retells stories from oral and documented histories explaining how hei tiki were made and for whom. Hei tiki are highly valued taonga, not only for their materiality, but also for the connections they make across generations and the tribal histories they continue to evoke.

From the time of early encounters with explorers hei tiki have been of interest to Europeans; Captain Cook's artists depicted them and they quickly became sought after by explorers and collectors. Subsequent generations working within the Western art tradition have represented hei tiki in a diverse range of media and from distinct perspectives. It will also consider the role of popular culture in our twenty-first century understanding of hei tiki.

Fundamental to the exhibition are the linkages between taonga, historic, modern and contemporary art. *Te Hei Tiki* brings together works ranging from taonga to contemporary representations of hei tiki, Māori portraits by Gottfried Lindauer to a painted mural by Arnold Wilson. Sometimes contentious, frequently identity-affirming, the exhibition explores the enduring history of hei tiki.

Elevating Heirlooms

Objects and Memory

Education Resource



Bill Culbert, *Sugar*, 1981

black and white photograph

Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, gift of the Patrons of the Auckland Art Gallery, 2001

courtesy of the Bill and Pip Culbert Trust



Bill Culbert, *Standard Lamps, Day, Night*, 1995

black and white photographic prints

Chartwell Collection, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, 1999

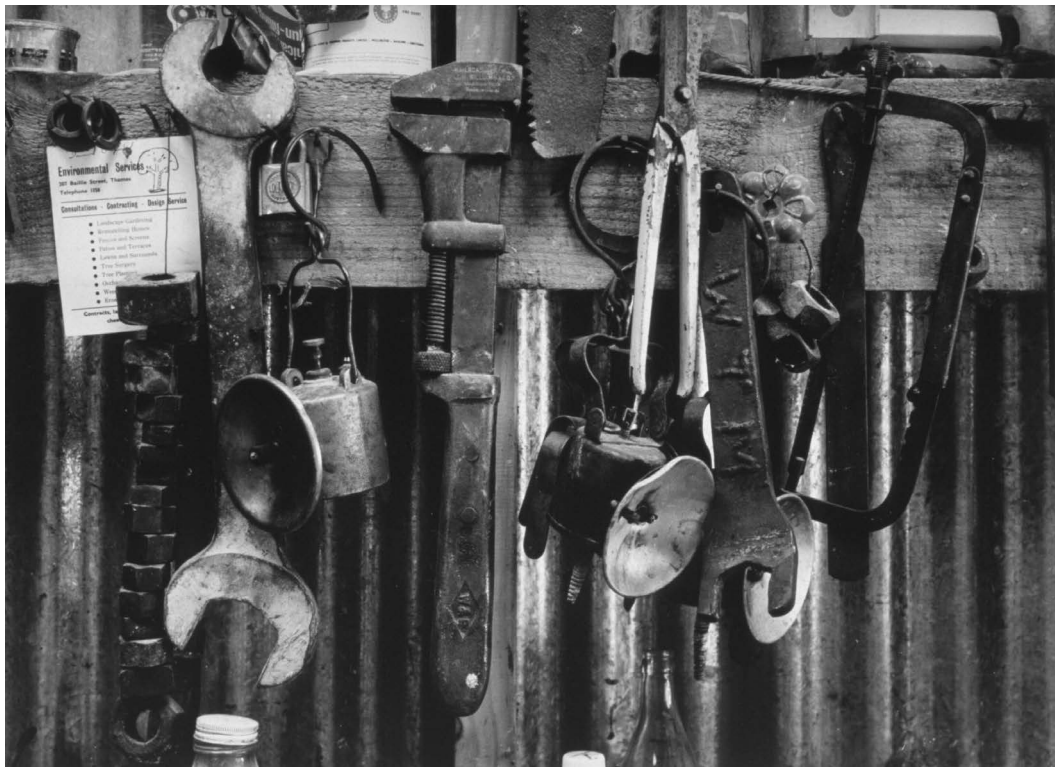
courtesy of the Bill and Pip Culbert Trust



Mark Adams, *Library at Williamson Avenue, Grey Lynn, 14 February 1990*, 1995
gelatin silver print, toned with gold
Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, gift of Mark Adams and the Partners of Ernst & Young, 1995



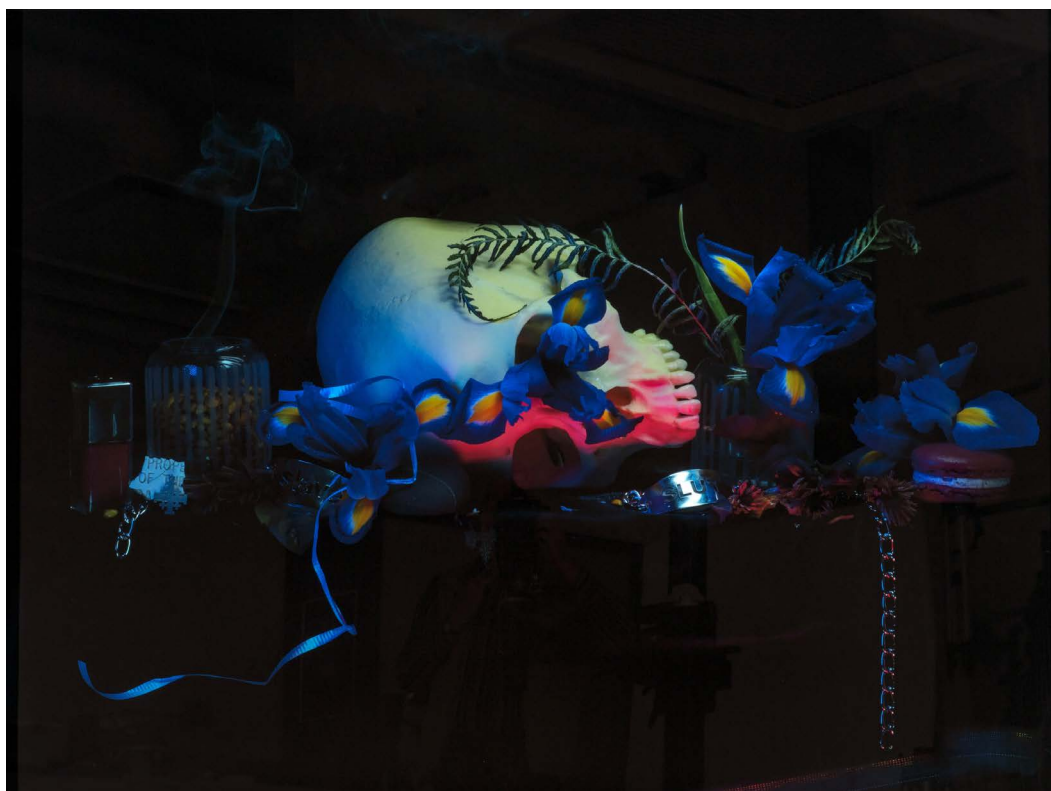
Mark Adams, *Stairwell at Gunson Street, Ponsonby, 1975, 1995*
gelatin silver print, toned with gold
Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, gift of Mark Adams and the Partners of Ernst & Young, 1995



John Fields, *Thames, New Zealand, 14 February, 1975*
black and white photograph
Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, gift of the artist, 1976



H James, *A spectacle of spectacles*, date unknown
gelatin silver print
Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, purchased 2010



Fiona Pardington, *Still Life with Iris, Skull and Magnolia*, 2013
pigment ink on paper
Chartwell Collection, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, purchased 2013



Talia Smith, *Lei II* (from the series *Still and or Moving*), 2019–20
digital print on matte paper
courtesy of the artist



Ngahuia Harrison, *Uncle Hone's Kete* (detail), 1988, 2017
digital print on matte paper
courtesy of the artist



Installation detail of *Ways of Being: Representation and Photography from the Dowse Collection*, 2018–19, The Dowse Art Museum

['Ways of Being: Representation and Photography from The Dowse Collection'](#),
The Dowse Art Museum

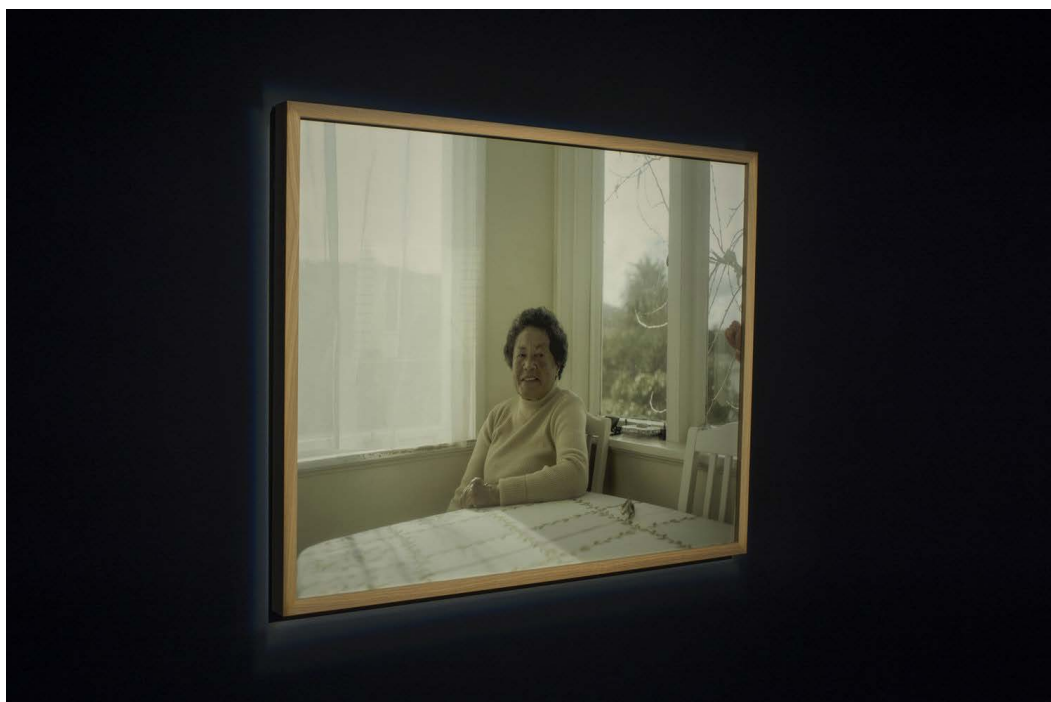


Installation detail of *E takarae ki te muri i raro mata raranga mai kaewa ki te rangi ko au ki raro whakairo rangi ai*, 2017, ST PAUL St Gallery



Ngahuia Harrison, *Kahu who is named by his Grandfather*, 2017
inkjet photograph
collection of The Dowse Art Museum, purchased 2017

['Ways of Being: Representation and Photography from The Dowse Collection'](#),
The Dowse Art Museum



Ngahuia Harrison, *Aunty Reo*, 2018

['Ngahuia Harrison - reviewed'](#), PhotoForum Online



Ngahuia Harrison, *Aunty Mihi*, 2018

Extract from [‘Ngahuia Harrison - reviewed’](#), PhotoForum Online:

Together, these two wāhine encapsulate the title of the artist’s most recent series, *Ngā Paepae Tapu*. Paepae, the noun given to the bench from which kaikōrero speak during occasions like pōwhiri, is not the noun used for this bench where Ngahuia is from. Instead, the use of the word speaks to other meanings, referencing the role of wāhine welcoming people through karanga.