TE AHO MUTUNGA KORE: TEXTILE AS CULTURAL CONTINUITY

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Abstract

Indigenous weaving in Aotearoa utilises native taonga plants (treasured resources) that embody protocols and practices that sustain and conserve not only the plants but the culture itself. Māori customary fashion created from these taonga plants exude innovation in construction and design. Kākahu Māori is the term used to describe a myriad of customary woven cloaks and clothing, intricately woven from plant fibres embellished with feathers and impressive tāniko (complex weave) borders, each garment embodies narratives of the maker and the wearer, containing histories of place and space. These garments continue to inspire contemporary raranga and whatu (Māori woven fibre arts) practice today.

These practices provide a unique design aesthetic founded on mātauranga Māori (Indigenous knowledge systems). The technologies of these practices connect the maker to existential and embodied ancestral wisdoms, informing and encouraging innovative thinking. Through the praxis of raranga and whatu a dialogue with the materials and the maker arises, connections to the past, the present and future are experienced. In contemporary practice, these connections are valued and sustained through cultural practices pertaining to these art forms.

This presentation discusses how these techniques and materials are used to create sculptural garments that are situated at the interface of art, fashion, and customary practice. These garments convey cultural narratives as contemporary expression and extend the current discourse of fiber arts practice in Aotearoa.

Also discussed is cultural practice within the Māori weaving arts claiming Indigenous space and voice which are considered through kaupapa Māori and Mana Wahine frameworks that acknowledge research from a Māori worldview. This presentation is discussed from the lens of the weaving artist.

This paper is based on sections of Donna Campbells doctoral research: Ngā kura o Hineteiwawa: The Embodiment of Mana Wahine in Māori Fiber Arts. Waikato University 2019.

Introduction

The title of this paper ‘Te aho mutunga kore’ refers to the eternal threads that link past present and future—the threads that are woven by Māori weavers bringing together ancestral knowledge and contemporary realities. Contemporary practice in the Māori fibre arts is exciting and dynamic, kairanga (weavers) inspired by the artistry of customary taonga, reinvent, reclaim and re-affirm tūpuna (ancestors') gifts. The creation of textile from our native plants continues the legacy of perpetual genealogy and affirms cultural connections.

Within contemporary practice, Māori weavers have many fine historic exemplars of Māori weaving, basketry, and clothing. These are housed in national and international museums and galleries. They are also in people's homes cherished as family heirlooms, expressing whakapapa (genealogical links) and connections to place. Despite the erasure of much Māori history and language through colonial settlement, the Māori fibre arts endure as expressions of a vibrant indigenous culture.

Contemporary weaving practice in Aotearoa draws on urban conversations of fashion, art and design and cultural discourse of place. The re-presentation of customary indigenous weaving practices reflects these influences. Contemporary practice re-imagines and re- interprets Māori customary woven textile. Often these re-imagined fibre works cross over into costume and performance and are represented in non-traditional contexts, such as the fashion catwalk and gallery spaces, as well as expected areas of performing arts such as kapa haka. This paper presents three kairaranga whatu (Māori weaving artists) through the lens of contemporary practice, and how they value tūpuna knowledge in the modern world.

Continuity

Many of us, as kairanga, continue and nurture the art form through customary preparation and construction informed by sartorial garments of old (Campbell, 2019). Stories are remembered, retold, reclaimed through the unique cultural connection kairaranga have with their taonga plants for weaving, the language of weaving reflecting the intrinsic to the relationships we have with our tūpuna, our world view and our bodies affirming cultural identity. Kairaranga practice in transitional spaces where the concept of time becomes fluid, connections arising with those who have gone before us, surfacing within the fingers, the mind, all senses. These connections are awareness of whakapapa (lineage, genealogy, descent) and of Māori knowingness. My own experience is of a liminal space, at the boundaries the edges of the physical and the spiritual, happening as a result of linking past and future through the weave of the textile. Erenora Puketapu-Hetet (1989) views kairaranga (Māori weavers) are repositories, linking the knowledge of the past with that of the future.

> We have a phrase – I ngā rā o mua – which refers to the past. But the word “mua” also means “in front of you”. In our concept of time we cannot separate ourselves from our ancestors or the generation in front of us. Our past is our future, and also our present, like the eternal circle (1989, p. 5).

Creative practice in Māori fibre arts is centred on the use of taonga plants of this land Aoteaora. There are a wealth of native taonga plants used in the raranga and whatu methods of textile creation. The customary weaving technologies of raranga and whatu are used today much as they were centuries ago, along with the gathering and preparation of plants as tikanga (cultural rituals) dictate. Whatu using extracted fiber from the harakeke plant employs single pair twining of wefts across warps for weaving items of clothing as well as fish traps and nets: raranga employs the leaf material for plaiting mats, sails and baskets through the manipulation and interlacing of left and right hand strands (Evans and Ngarimu, 2005).

These taonga resources provide cultural grounding for us as kairaranga whatu, attesting to the connection as an Indigenous person to this place; they proffer a wealth of textures, colours and forms to create. These plants also contain memory, memories of the environment they are harvested from, the memory in the weave of ancestral knowledge, as well as memory in the sculptural sense. The cultural principles or tikanga kairaranga practice are informed by Māori knowledge systems and by practising them we learn how to sustain our cultural selves and the land that we belong to.

Harakeke is one of our most prolific native plants, it is considered a taonga (culturally valuable objects or resources) plant by kairaranga. This plant is coded with cultural references around whānau, and how we take care of whanau. In a practical sense we never harvest the baby leaf the pēpi in the center of the plant, it is nurtured by the mātua or parent leaves on either side of it. We only harvest the outer leaves referred to as rangatahi (teenagers) or sometimes as the tūpuna. This practice ensures that the plant will sustain as it grows from the center. In the representational sense we are reminded of the need to nurture our young ones by enveloping them with aroha and safety, thus ensuring the pēpi of the plant is protected, then the network of whānau is also signified by how each leaf of the plant supports the leaf next to it, even the root systems of a plantation of harakeke supports the plants next to it.

Therefore, interpretations of whānau and extended whanau are represented within the plant and the whenua as reminders for us of the power in the collective, and also the strength of the individual within the collective. Colonialism through urbanization has disconnected the way many Māori relate to the whenua, we are severed, undone on many levels. Through engagement with the whenua, we learn through our tinana (bodies), hinengaro (our minds), wairua (our spirituality) by experiencing the land as teacher. As Hawaiian scholar and educator Manulani Aluli-Meyer (2006) explains “Other ways of knowing something must be introduced if we are to evolve into a more enlightened society. It will not occur with scientific or objective knowledge only” (Aluli-Meyer, 2006). Through learning how to care for our taonga plants we experience ancestral knowledge which helps us to learn about ourselves and our relationships and responsibilities with each other and to the whenua.

Māori art, especially Māori creative practice, are not only vehicles to express identity but also offer us avenues to challenge hegemonic systems that devalue cultural values and wellness. Māori epistemologies are founded on the way we view the world, from our creation pūrākau, tikanga practices, and mātauranga Māori, informing the relationship Māori can have with the environment (Marsden, Palmer, and Goodall, 1988; Henare, 2001).

By acknowledging the Māori world-view of the interconnectedness of all things, the relationship with the whenua can become more meaningful and related. Mohawk scholar Taiaiaike Alfred writes on the concept of colonialism as a "multigenerational and multifaceted process of forced dispossession and attempted acculturation—a disconnection from land, culture, and community" (2009, p. 44). As Māori our relationships with the natural world have been eroded by colonisation, however through everyday action, we can address this erosion. Practical solutions to this disconnection can arise through Māori creative practice that is created from the land, through which we regenerate our tūpuna knowledge. In this vein the writings of Angela Wilson Waziyatawin on Indigenous knowledge recovery within the context of the Native American experience and the negative impacts of academic power structures refers to the 'carving of new space' for indigenous knowing as validating its importance. She goes on to say that colonisation has "methodically eradicate[d] our ways of seeing, being and interacting with the world" (Waziyatawin, 2004, p.1). I propose that creative practice from Māori and Indigenous perspectives carve new space within the academy, re-presenting or re-presencing through performative Kaupapa Māori frameworks is Māori knowing from the center, where language and culture are critical.

The arts of raranga and raranga whatu are often carried out through wānanga, a collective practice that creates an environment of support, of sharing and learning and a sense of solidarity. Wānanga are cultural learning contexts and very different to other forms of non-Māori sites of learning. The wānanga process enables cultural responsiveness that facilitates the practice of tikanga Māori and is a powerful vehicle to learning and re-learning information. The pedagogy of a wānanga approach engages in what Graham Smith (1997) calls indigenous transforming praxis, bringing together theory, action and reflection emergent as conscious awareness and transformation. They are activation spaces of decolonization through the collective experience connecting with ancestral knowledge and practices. The passing on of techniques, applications and design theory is part and parcel of working within a collective that acknowledges the whakapapa of the art forms. These wānanga create the space for critical reflection in the sharing of Māori creative practice grounded in kaupapa Māori (Māori language and culture). The recognition of collectivity in the fibre arts is based in a kaupapa Māori approach that values the interconnectedness of all things. The acknowledgement of the whakapapa of the art forms ensures valuing the inspiration for contemporary work. So wānanga support the development of conscious subjectivity that Meyer (2008) talks about and that research needs to be bound in meaning and a contribution to others, to the collective.

My own creative practice research values existing Māori wisdom in the fibre arts and finds new ways of understanding and applying that accumulated learning. The research is deliberately subjective, inspired by the taonga our tūpuna created before us. I have had many teachers and the work I have created is not only mine but also belongs to my tūpuna and those who have contributed to my learning. Being a practitioner of the weaving arts for over 20 years, working with our native plants and teaching for much of that time, informs my interpretation of the world (Campbell, D. 2019).

Mātauranga Māori

Mātauranga Māori knowledge systems encompass mind-body-spirit connections, linking us intrinsically with the Māori world. I suggest that raranga is a portal to access our mātauranga that affirms and celebrates us holistically. To consider Papatūānuku and Ranginui as cultural bodies is then to reflect on our own bodies as created of / and from Papatūānuku and Ranginui. Then the practices of tikanga (cultural imperatives) around and for the body, the mind and the spirit are performed as integral to our indigenous worlds.

Contemporary Māori fibre art is dynamic and vibrant with many practitioners creating stunning modern works all informed by the gifts our tūpuna have left for us. Our fashion conscious tūpuna (Te Awekotuku, 1991) were making textiles that were innovative, elegant and sartorial, with carefully considered design and application. Following in the footsteps of such innovative tradition inspires freedom to create new and inventive works. The inventive works discussed in this paper are exemplars of the materials and processes that articulate cultural identity, through the fibre arts. The artists presented here are Māori practitioners in raranga and whatu using native materials producing contemporary garments that occupy the nexus of culture, fashion and art. The works are located in the local and express the global context of textile creation and clothing as representing culture.

Mana Wahine and Kaupapa Māori research

Kaupapa Māori theoretical praxis is developed from within Māori communities to reclaim self-determination or tino rangatiratanga (Smith, 1997). Leonie Pihama (2001) explains Kaupapa Māori as "conceptually based within Māori cultural and philosophical traditions" (p. 94), and as such these theories are naturally privileged in this study. Graham Smith (1997) further argues "the deliberate co-option of the term 'theory' has been an attempt to challenge dominant Pākehā notions of theory and provide "counter-hegemonic practice and understandings" in terms of how theory is constructed, defined, selected, interpreted and applied" (p. 455). Kaupapa Māori theory then, as form and thinking, underpins my own creative practice (Campbell, 2019). Kaupapa Māori conveys Māori understandings of the world, and how our values and beliefs are predicated on these understandings (Pihama, 2001). Māori knowledge and knowing is central to the study of raranga and whatu practice and as such a Kaupapa Māori approach is essential in order to validate "...our ways of knowing, our imagery, the things we create and produce" (Smith, 1999, p. 1). Kaupapa Māori theory positions creative practice research with clarity so there is no guise of neutrality of assumed objectivity (Smith, 1999). Utilizing Kaupapa Māori theoretical frameworks identified first and foremost is an affirmation and assertion of our cultural worldviews. As Māori weaving praxis is Māori creativity embodied through and of the native materials of this place, practiced with associated Māori cultural protocols, it is logical that Kaupapa Māori approaches would apply. My own creative practice (Campbell, 2019) is engaged in from Māori women's perspectives, relating through creative practice, Māori women's realities, and therefore a Mana wahine theoretical approach informs my creative work. Mana wahine theory as a branch of Kaupapa Māori theory concentrates on the many aspects of the expression of the feminine.

Mana Wahine theory is a theoretical framework that provides for a Kaupapa Māori analysis that focuses on issues that directly impact on the unique realities of Māori women (Pihama, 2001).

The Makers

Kohai Grace

Ngāti Toa Rangatira, Te Āti Awa, Ngāti Raukawa, Ngāti Porou.

Kohai Grace is a well-established artist, teacher and expert kairaranga whatu. She has exhibited nationally and internationally and continues to create through bringing together the customary skills of her tūpuna. Her work is based on customary practices of raranga and whatu using native materials and has been described as having a "strong contemporary edge." Kohai Grace's use of the customary art form of whatu is a forerunner in contemporary contexts of Māori fibre arts. Her *Tūī Cloak*, (Grace, 2004) (Figure 1) shown in the exhibition entitled *Toi Māori: the eternal thread* at Pātaka Art Gallery and Museum in Porirua, Wellington is an exquisite example of this. The cloak is created from harakeke fibres, feathers, and copper wire.

Figure 1. *Tūī cloak* by Kohai Grace (2004), Museum of New Zealand, Te Papa Tongarewa collection.

Her kākahu, *Wahine o te Pō* (2007), (Figure 2) was created entirely from muka fibre, dyed with commercial dye to achieve a durable black. Grace understands the corrosive salts inherent in the customary paru (mud dyes) and chose the deeper and more robust commercial version for this piece. A sophisticated design created in the whatu technique, Grace has woven in strands of lurex thread in the bodice to transform this into an appropriate dress for *Wahine o te Pō*, the woman of the night (Grace, 2007).

Figure 2. *Wahine o te Pō* (2007) Traditionally Inspired Award at Style Pasiifka, Auckland.

Grace describes her work as "bringing together the old and the new, in celebration of weaving of the past, present and future, honouring the knowledge and skill those who taught her the art of weaving." Her piece 'Ti Tapua'[1] tells the story of Kupe; this piece recognises Kupe as a voyager expert navigator and the original discoverer of Aotearoa. Kupe's discovery of toroa (albatross) in Ngāti Toa rohe (tribal region) create a direct link between the artist, toroa and Kupe. This connection is expressed in her kahu toroa (albatross cloak). The island that Grace is referring to in her piece was populated by toroa the albatross. Consequently 'Ti Tapua' is displayed as if flying, (New Zealand Maritime Museum, 2020, 1:54) created from muka and graced with toroa feathers. Of 'Ti Tapua' she says, "That's what I like to do, I wanted to make something historic and something that's sort of part of my imagination." She goes on to say:

> It's the materials it's doing something with your hands, how I still get amazed at how this muka [releases] and what our tupuna did. Holding that muka in my hands is a highlight. The materials is everything, you are going to prepare your materials the best possible way you can in respect of what you've taken. You're going to make something beautiful. So, it's all about your intent and that's, that's tikanga. (New Zealand Maritime Museum, 2020, 2:20)

[1] *Te Tapua* is displayed at the Maritime Museum Auckland, https://twitter.com/nz_maritime/status/1189001013157683201

Figure 3. Kohai pictured here with her kahu toroa *Ti Tapua*.

Grace says of her most recent work 'Te Iti Kahurangi 2022' is a kākahu imbued with symbolic meaning. The kākahu is woven from muka (harakeke fiber) with a tāniko border at the hem while feathers from kiwi, kererū, tōroa, pukeko, tuī and kea adorn the bottom. "Where once weaving skills were used to produce all manner of kākahu (clothing) today a woven garment is usually a highly prized piece imbued with significant aesthetic and symbolic meaning" (New Zealand Fashion Museum, 2022).[2]

In 'Unfurling Tākiri' (New Zealand Maritime Museum, 2020) Grace shares the making of this kākahu named Te Iti Kahurangi (The Most Treasured) (Figure 5); the name was drawn from the whakataukī " Whaīa te iti kahurangi, ki te tuohu koe me he maunga teitei: seek the treasure you value most dearly: if you bow your head, let it be to a lofty mountain." Te Iti Kahurangi was two years in the making acknowledging the design thinking, then the harvesting, the preparation of the materials and the creation through whatu of this amazing taonga. Naming this kākahu is reference to the University of Otago who commissioned this piece. Referring to the personal naming of such a taonga acknowledges the mauri or life force inherent within the garment as Ngahuia Te Awekotuku explains "Māori taonga are living entities, best addressed as 'her' or 'him' or ideally by a personal name" (Te Awekotuku, 1991, p. 138). Te Awekotuku warns against using the impersonal pronoun, 'it', when talking about taonga suggesting that to do so "neutralises an artefact, not only demeaning the power within, but distancing the treasure from the beholder, the toucher, the caregiver" (1991, p. 138). Therefore the naming of Te Iti Kahurangi reminds wearers of the treasures of our ancestors that a kākahu such as this represents.

[2] Fashioning Assembly Aotearoa. Hui Auaha O Aotearoa. To find out more and to witness how this project is growing visit https://www.nzfashionmuseum.org.nz/fa... The Fashioning Assembly Aotearoa hui was supported by the Auckland City Centre Targeted Rate.

Figure 5. *Te Iti Kahurangi* Modelled upside down to show the tāniko border.

Shona Tawhiao

Ngai Te Rangi, Whakatōhea, Te whanau Āpanui

Shona Tawhiao is an established raranga artist, and fashion designer. She has been creating and exhibiting her kākahu raranga for over two decades. The basis of Tawhaiao's creative practice in grounded in the practice of raranga, utilising predominantly the taonga plant harakeke. Having trained in traditional Māori raranga weaving techniques and methods, by Kahutoi Te Kanawa, Tāwhiao's talent has been described as exquisite and undeniably unique. The fusing of her love of fashion and culture with her specialised techniques in weaving has enabled Tāwhiao to create haute couture from harakeke. This has resulted in her unique style being dubbed ‘Harakeke Couture.’ Tāwhiao’s multi award-winning collections of Harakeke Couture have been presented at New Zealand, London, Malaysia, Fiji, Hong Kong and Melbourne Fashion Weeks since 2010 (Tawhiao7, n.d.).

Her work is intimately connected to her identity and she acknowledges that she does not think she would be doing this mahi if she was not Māori. “Being a Māori artist and designer influences everything I do with my work, life and family.” Tawhiao revels in the opportunities to weave together her mātauranga Māori that intuitive and experiential knowledge, with the freedom to innovate and create.

Much as our tūpuna would have done, in the discovery of the properties of harakeke then developing the technologies to create textile, leaving us a legacy of design and symbolism that we can be inspired by.

Through making kairaranga engage all the senses, working with our native plants the engagement is not just the physical senses, but the spiritual senses as well. The expression of raranga and whatu originates from te ao Māori, our unique worldview. Through working with native materials, the consciousness of the Māori world as embodied in the art form arises. The kairaranga knows that the practices of raranga and whatu "are understood not only as way of making things by hand, but also as a way of thinking through the hands" (Nimkulrat, 2012, p. 64) that is to say all the senses are ignited through the hands. Thinking through the hands therefore is a means for thinking through the senses. The senses are activated through experiencing the material then we are enacting our value systems, exploring our intellectual worlds, and engaging in mātauranga Māori. Charles Royal (2011) explains:

> Mātauranga Māori is a modern term for a body of knowledge that was brought to these islands by Polynesian ancestors of present-day Māori. Here this body of knowledge grew according to life in Aotearoa and Te Wai Pounamu. (p. 20)

These bodies of knowledge were impacted in many and significant ways by the arrival of Europeans settlers endangering the veracity of Māori knowledge systems. "Important fragments and portions—notably the Māori language—remain today" (Royal, 2003, p. 31). I would add to Royal's discussion that the visual arts of raranga, raranga whatu and whakairo rākau (wood carving) are also important "fragments and portions" that remain to inform and inspire us today.

Tawhiao's contemporary designs in raranga celebrates these "fragments and portions" presenting to us a dynamic and fierce body of raranga that shatters any notion these practicesare merely cultural remnants. Much of her oeuvre represent wahine toa (powerful, potent women) as in Figure 6,[3] and reflect an exquisite sense of the sculptural qualities of the woven textile in harakeke. By successfully exploiting these properties, her kākahu are dramatic and bold forms. Shona describes herself as a weaver first, and the kākahu she creates as a commitment to mahi raranga or the artform of raranga and Māori design. "I realised they both work together to create something really unique to Aotearoa and I love the fit between the two" (New Zealand Fashion Museum, 2019).

[3] Retrieved from: https://www.facebook.com/photo?fbid=1154510771356507&set=pcb.1154511648023086

Figure 6. Shona Tawhiao, Raranga garments. Used with permission.

A prolific maker and designer Tawhiao has won many design awards and continues to show at New Zealand Fashion week (New Zealand Fashion Museum, 2019). Her collections include designs in fabric alongside the harakeke couture she is known for inspiring kairaranga whatu across the globe.

Figure 7. Shona Tawhiao with a woven kupenga lace bodice in the background. Retrieved from: https://nzfashionmuseum.org.nz/shona-tawhiao/

Donna Campbell

Ngā Puhi, Ngāti Ruanui

For me there is nothing more satisfying than harvesting materials respectfully from the land, processing them and creating something beautiful. I admit, I am obsessed by raranga. Making through raranga processes has been a source of cultural reclamation and grounding that I otherwise would not have experienced. Harvesting and preparing the materials is foundational to the making process. These processes are culturally significant as is the creation process itself (Campbell, 2021).

Along with Grace and Tawhiao, Campbell's work is grounded in cultural practice. The processes of working with materials of the land speak through the finished kākahu. The works presented here were created for her doctoral study (Campbell, 2019) the pieces embodying the Atua or deity of the creation pūrākau of the Māori world.

The two works presented here embody the Atua Hinetitama of the Dawn and her transformation to the deity Hinenuitepō of the Night. These pieces represent the phases of transformation she went through to finally express her own mana wahine (autonomy). Hinetitama is known as the mother of humankind, the first true human “being a fusion of the godly and earthly elements and born of woman” (Kahukiwa and Grace, 1984, pp. 70). She was the daughter of the deity Tāne Mahuta and Hineahuone who bound earthly night to earthly day. After discovering that Tane Mahuta was not only her husband but also her father, she discarded the form of Hinetitama to then become Hinenuitepō, the protector of souls. The corset piece represents the liminal space where Hinetitama chooses to transform into the state of Hinenuitepō.

The piece Hinetitama (Figure 8) is framed by a dark weave within the weave are ridges and whiri (plaits), these indicate the confusion she faced when discovering her father and husband were the same man. The piece reflects a fragmentation of self, a breaking apart and coming back together at the same time, in the form of the whakairo karu hāpuku (raranga diamond pattern). The piece represents herself-reflection and her ultimate decision to become Hinenuitepō.

Figure 8. *Hinetitama*. Harakeke, synthetic dyes, muka collar.

As she decides to alter her state, she informs her partner pragmatically, “you will take care of our living mortal children and I will care for them when they die and move to next plane of existence.” Hinetitama ultimately decides her own fate, embracing her strength and self-determination.

The piece Hine nui te pō (Figure 8) reflects the relationship I have with the materials, celebrating the sculptural properties of harakeke. The cone shapes are a new direction in raranga in my practice and reflect (in this work) the wairua of Hinenuitepō as she chose to transform from Hineteiwaiwa. I am interested in designing and creating sculptural garments that become animated when worn, and can stand alone as art objects.

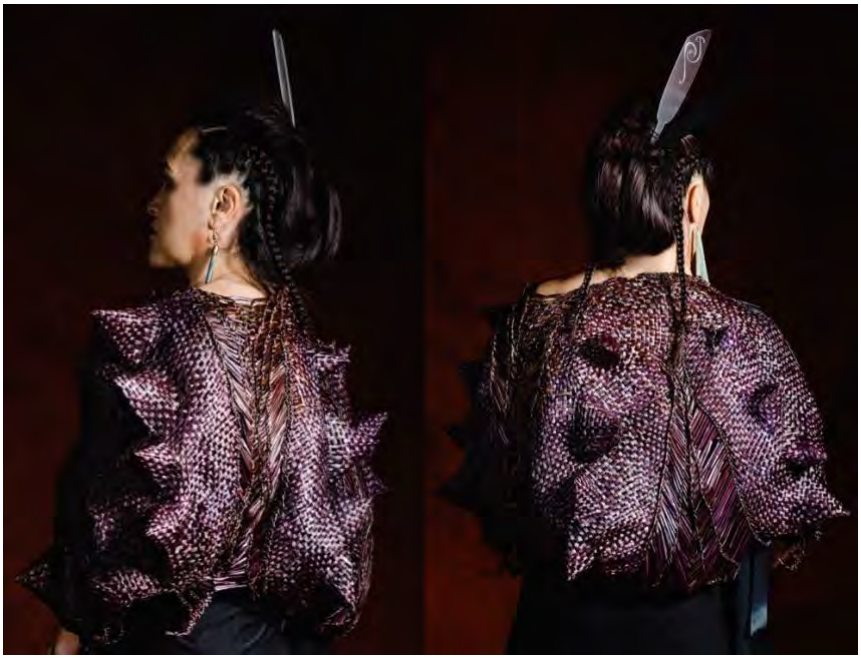

Figure 9. *Hinenuitepō The Great Lady of the Night*. Harakeke, synthetic dyes.

Tawhanga Nopera (2019) reflects on Campbell's creative work in this way:

> The expertise it takes to weave the garments that Donna has created … is unparalleled, because although the techniques used are part of a collective vocabulary, Donna's use of these are innovations beautifully unique to her identity as Māori woman of the Hokianga. It is as though by often weaving without an ara, Donna is able to envision trajectories for her works which are alternatives to what is expected. Donna is in the process of creating new boundaries for weavers, by evolving the knowledge and mastery of tūpuna Māori. This process is regenerative, adding new knowledge to very ancient traditions and shaping Māori futures that we can neither yet see nor experience. However, in Donna's revivication she is imagining healed places for our bodies which have been both traumatised and denied through colonisation. Through her advancement of techniques, new forms create protections that nurture our ability to have mana through our connection to whenua.

Through my practice as a kairaranga, our tikanga pertaining to the arts is a haptic experience where I can connect through all the senses to that cultural imprint otherwise articulated as whakapapa. Awareness for me arises through the practice and application of tikanga, by engaging the senses of the body with the tactile nature of raranga and whatu a rhythm of thinking is stimulated where the praxis of body-mind is captured in the art of making. I come to understand my body as a knowing entity, as is the whenua. This deep connection is between our indigenous bodies and the land is evidenced in the Māori language by the word whenua

meaning the land and also meaning the placenta. These two entities are inextricably linked, in language and the manifestation of taonga that kairaranga create (Campbell, 2019).

Conclusion

While contemporary taonga created in the fibre arts draw on collective memories they can also address dominant artistic boundaries of Māori art through the weaving arts. Like other Māori artists contemporary kairaranga are not always content to replicate the taonga examples left for us, but to push the artistic limits to create works that engage and challenge. We can engage in what Hooks calls cultural legacies (1995, p. 162), for me the cultural legacy is raranga and whatu and the legacy of innovation our tūpuna have left us. Hooks reminds us that "cultural legacies can sustain us, protect us against the cultural genocide that is daily destroying our past" (1995, p. 162). Through working with Māori arts practice, creating taonga makes us aware of we keep our traditions past and present alive (Pendergrast, 1984; Buck, 1950; Tamarapa, 2011; Evans and Ngarimu, 2005; Maihi and Lander, 2005); through tapping into this knowing, we are potentially empowered to heal and transform our lives. American feminist activist Margaret Randall states that "authentic power comes from a fully developed sense of self, possible only when both individual and collective memory is retrieved" (1992, p. 171). I agree with Randall that understanding how one is located within the collective, past and present is key to knowing the self. A potential catalyst to the realisation of belonging to something larger than oneself is the experience of the women's collective of raranga. Essential to the experience of the weaving arts, is the collective expressed as whanaungatanga (kinship rights and obligations), connectedness and development of reciprocal relationships. I suggest that practising the cultural legacies embodied through the weaving arts we are reminded of collective memory embedded in our bodies, minds and spirits. These are tūpuna memories, treasures and ceremony that affirm Māori knowledge as vital and valid in the modern world.

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