

## LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

Lee Marie Houlihan

For as long as I can remember narrative has been an extremely important part of my life. Much like breathing, it feels totally natural and I need it in order to survive. I have consumed it in its many forms – song, myth, legend, fairytale, books, cinema, television, theatre, comics, art, craft and dreams.

My first stories came in the form of songs. Songs have played a very important role in my life as carriers of personal memories and emotions and also as messages from my psyche. I remember lying in bed with my father on a Sunday morning and singing old songs with him. I have a natural ability to be able to remember a vast quantity of song lyrics and the tunes that accompany them. Parroting these narratives back to my father was pure pleasure.

### *Barefoot days when I was just a kid Barefoot days, oh boy the things I did <sup>1</sup>*

Before the arrival of Pākehā and the written word, Māori histories were oral. In traditional Māori culture children were taught from a very young age to chant many generations of their whakapapa (genealogy) and in some instances also iwi (tribe) and hapū (sub-tribe) histories and stories. There are Māori who are still trained in this art today. As I am of Māori descent I am not surprised that this skill comes easily to me. It has just never served a purpose in my Pākehā world besides me being able to recall many songs and being popular at parties in my younger days. These natural abilities have been unvalued and unacknowledged in the family I was born into.

When I could read I devoured myths, legends and fairytales. Early on I could see patterns occurring in these narratives. I started asking my parents and relatives to tell me stories about themselves and our family. Sometimes I would be rewarded with a snippet of a story and often these were negative and sad. There was a great reluctance from my father to share his stories with me.

So I decided to ask stories about myself. My mother would tell me about how naughty, defiant and wild I was when I was younger. Although she would laugh I was often left feeling bad about myself and my longing was tinged with hurt.

### *Song sung blue Everybody knows one Song sung blue Every garden grows one <sup>2</sup>*

In my own personal experience I have told and retold my personal stories to various psychotherapists, family, friends and strangers. There was always a purpose involved in these acts and it was my intention to make sense, extract meaning, reclaim, reveal and share my stories in an attempt to be well and whole and change the frameworks from which I perceived my experiences. Perhaps reading and hearing others' tragedies also helped me confront my own? Maybe the weight of repetitive narrative, my own and others', forced my psyche into change and release?

I'm not entirely convinced that observing others' stories necessarily opens the door to purging or acknowledging our own emotions and narratives. Denial is a powerful screen and I believe many people keep their emotions and stories tightly locked away. It hasn't always been safe in Aotearoa to share stories about being Māori .

***I was lost and double crossed  
With my hands behind my back  
I was longtime hurt and thrown  
in the dirt  
Shoved out on the railroad track <sup>3</sup>***

I'll never forget the day I realised I was of Māori descent, or 'part' Māori as we were told in those days (though I never was told which part). I was perhaps nine or ten years old. My family had made the journey from Auckland down to Rotorua, and/or up to Rotorua as some Māori would say, to visit my father's mother. In Māori mythology Te Ika a Māui, the North Island, is an ika (fish) which was pulled up by Māui. The head of the ika is the Wellington region and the tail is the far north. So when some Māori talk about travelling up and down the motu (island) they travel down to the end of the fish, which is the opposite of how Pākehā view the journey.

***We listened to Papa's translations  
Of the stories across the sky  
We drew our own constellations <sup>4</sup>***

My grandmother, Rangī, lived in a thermal area of Rotorua. I remember her home surrounded by mist and the wonderful smell of sulphur. Rangī spoke with a wheeze, which she acquired when she contracted tuberculosis earlier in her life. She had long white hair and she smoked a pipe. I knew no one else like her and I thought she was cool.

For as long as I can remember I had been told by my mother in a very derogatory manner; that I was "just like Rangī". These words used to make me feel really angry and confused, as I loved my grandmother and didn't understand how we were both somehow wrong and bad. My mother knew that my grandmother was obviously of Māori descent, but in her Eurocentric reality there was no awareness that my grandmother had been raised by two parents who individually came from two very different worlds and had an extremely different reality from her. As the eldest granddaughter, I was special in the Māori world and my mother saw this as favouritism. To this day I am sure she still has no idea why Rangī treated me differently and why my relationship with her was so important.

My mother strongly disliked Rangī and subsequently I hardly ever saw her.

On the day I arrived to visit my grandmother I ended up outside with my cousin. He asked me if I knew what Gung's (affectionate name for my grandmother) real name was. The only clue he gave me was that it started with the letter 'R'. The first name that sprung to mind was Rose. Laughing, he told me her name was Rangī. Something deep within me woke up that day. I was extremely proud that my Gung was of Māori descent and that of course meant I was also of Māori descent. In that moment my life changed forever.

***When all the dark clouds roll away  
And the sun begins to shine  
I see my freedom from across the way  
And it comes right in on time***<sup>5</sup>

My father is of Māori and Pākehā descent. His mother was Māori and Pākehā/Irish and his father was Pākehā of Irish descent. My mother is Pākehā. Her mother was Pākehā of English descent and her father was South African of Dutch descent. So I am truly a mixed breed.

I was born in 1964, just after the so called birth of postmodernism. I grew up in a Pākehā world, with a tiny window into the Māori world. It has only recently dawned on me that my father saw himself as being Pākehā and 'part' Māori. I have read enough and spoken to enough Māori people to realise that at that time, "Māori was not merely descriptive, it was a put-down".<sup>6</sup> Stereotypes included being happy-go-lucky, lazy, irresponsible, dirty, sexually promiscuous and naturally talented at singing and playing the guitar and ukulele.

My father could easily pass as being Pākehā, though he did go extremely brown in the sun, and I think he had a Māori look about him. Recently I found the courage to phone my father's brother and ask him what ethnicity he identified as. He was fortunate enough to be sent to Hato Petera, which at the time was a private school for Catholic Māori boys. He told me he was the only "white boy" there at the time. As far as he was concerned he had white skin and blonde hair and that meant he was Pākehā. My father's family assimilated extremely negative ideologies and behaviours associated with being Māori and subsequently operated out of a colonised paradigm. This no doubt assisted them in their physical and social survival, but unfortunately I believe it led to fractured lives, disconnection, pain and addiction. It seems in my father's family Māori assimilation into the Pākehā world was fully achieved in my father's generation.

***But it's all relative  
Even if you don't understand***<sup>7</sup>

Māori souvenirs, waiata (songs) and pidgin te reo (Māori language) were present in our home. My father's family is from Rotorua, the Māori tourist capital of Aotearoa. Rangī's sister once operated a tourist shop in Rotorua. Knowing how offensive and insensitive some appropriated souvenirs are, I feel very sad about the collusion involved. I'm not sure how informed my great aunt was. I'm not sure what her father taught her about Māoritanga. He did, however, model survival and financial

independence in a predominantly Pākehā world where a lot of fellow Māori were not only dying, but barely surviving.

My great grandfather, Mauri-oho-oho Timiuha was also known as Mau Timiuha and Mau Tiui. Shortening and changing Māori names was common in those times. Like so many Māori he used the first part of his first name as a last name for his children. I see this as a link in the gradual loss of his family's Māori identity. While it may have been fashionable and necessary at that time, it was another way some Māori were dislocated and whakapapa was lost.

I have read many personal stories about how it was being Māori in my great grandfather's times and my heart feels heavy with the weight of being 'othered' in your own land. Not to mention all the theft of land and subsequent loss of livelihood, dislocation, assimilation, loss of your language and the general ignorance and disrespect of Māori tikanga by the crown and many Pākehā. I know very little about my great grandfather except that he married my great grandmother, Nora Rowan, who I believe came from Ireland and together they had five children. He owned and operated a horse drawn coach service in the Rotorua area.

***Hoki mai e tama ma  
Ki roto (ki roto)  
Ki ngā ringa e tū whera atu nei***<sup>8</sup>

My father was often drunk in the evenings. I think his alcoholism was very complex and I believe growing up with the shadows of being negatively stereotyped and feeling 'less than' can't have helped him. There was contention in our family about how much Māori blood we have. How very sad to want to be less so you could be more Pākehā. I say this without judgement as I didn't grow up in their time and I know society's attitudes have changed a little since then. My father was extremely clean and I would say this bordered on obsessive. Not being 'dirty' was an issue in our family.

My father spoke what I refer to as 'pidgin-Māori', which is Māori and English words mixed together. Small sentences like "you kids haere ki te moe!" (go to bed) are an example. Some nights, depending on his mood and company, he would get out our ukulele and sing songs. This was an acceptable thing for Māori to do as we are good musicians and singers! Music was valued in our family.

***I have a band of men  
and all they do is play for me  
They come from miles around  
to hear them play a melody***<sup>9</sup>

When I was in form one I had my first Māori school teacher. I attended Ellerslie Primary School and lived in a part of Auckland which had a large Māori and Pacific Island population. In the 1970s the Māori renaissance was just gaining power and Māori school teachers were rare. Tikanga Māori was now an everyday part of my school life and I loved going to school. It was at this time that I started asking my father which iwi we were from.

I asked other family members who also could not answer any of my questions. I was persistent

in my need to know and I have never given up asking questions even though this has been and still is problematic. My aunty, who is married to my father's brother, once gave me a beautiful pair of shark teeth earrings which had been passed on to her by whānau (family). I think she sensed my desperation and disappointment that I knew so little about my Māori ancestry. I wear them most days and they are a constant reminder to me of how important random acts of kindness are.

Unfortunately my parents moved from Auckland to Hunterville in 1976. I ended up in a small farming community where Māoritanga was totally invisible at school. Thankfully we ended up moving to Palmerston North in 1977 where I attended Intermediate Normal and joined their kapa haka group. This was the only Māori component on offer at school at that time.

By the time I reached Awatapu College in 1978 I knew I wanted to be fluent in te reo. Mr Sam Tangiora, who was the Māori language and tikanga teacher, was the most gentle, humble teacher I have ever had. He knew I had a passion and hunger for my Māoritanga and obliged by being supportive, patient, kind and inclusive. Every year I was at high school I received a certificate of excellence in Māori Studies. I also entered whaikūrero (speech) competitions, which Mr Tangiora put me forward for.

I was also heavily involved in kapa haka at high school. We were the first kapa haka group the school had ever had and we worked hard so we could enter competitions. I remember spending many lunchtimes and weekends practicing with the group. Our teacher, Davita Mita, worked us hard. Pronunciation, actions, poi all had to be perfect. I was totally committed and my knowledge of te reo and tikanga grew rapidly. Our group once undertook a small concert tour visiting different marae in the North Island. I felt like I had truly come home.

*Takoto ana au  
I te moenga hurihuri  
Tū ake au  
Titiro ki te atarau* <sup>10</sup>

Another area of interest at this time was the development of Māoritanga in Manawatū schools. I was the secretary for a committee called "Te Huingū Āwhina" which organised activities to develop Māoritanga. At this time my Māoritanga was the light in a very dark reality. It truly was my saving grace.

My first love was a gentle, beautiful young Māori man. We were both fifteen years old and he was the first man I made love with. He will always hold a special place in my heart. I'll never forget the first time I brought him to our home. He came over after school and we were listening to music in the lounge (that was where the better stereo was). My mother arrived home from work and introductions were made. My mother is a very friendly person and likes to meet people. After talking for a while she asked if I could help her for a minute. We left the room and she quietly told me that he should leave before my father got home. I can't tell you in words the feelings I experienced at the time. I was absolutely floored. This just made no sense. Without any understanding of assimilation at the time, this insanity compounded the crazy environment I was trying so hard to exist in. There was

no way I was going to subject my boyfriend to any of the racist, cruel, crazy attitudes and behaviours held by my father. I realised that being with a Māori man meant not being in my family. This had a major impact on my life. At this time I was still locked into wanting to be loved and approved of by my family. Little did I know that this would never be a reality whether I was with a Māori man or not.

*When I see you smile  
It feels like I'm falling  
It's not for anybody else to know  
The way your face could light  
The bitter dark of every street  
In every town I'll ever go*<sup>11</sup>

After leaving high school I still persisted in asking extended family members about our whakapapa and iwi. Still no information was forthcoming. I was aware of the concept of Whanaungatanga, which is layered in its meaning, but a simple definition is the knowledge that all Māori are related in some way. Someone somewhere knew about my existence. This concept has always given me hope that I would one day find and know my whakapapa and make real connections with my iwi.

Over the years I have crossed back and forth into the Māori world. I have undertaken further te reo and tikanga classes and have attended Treaty of Waitangi workshops and decolonisation workshops. Tangi (funeral), hui (gatherings) and further education has ensured my Māori identity and knowledge has slowly grown. Years ago I started to learn raranga (weaving) and though I am still a baby I have been fortunate in attending workshops with women who are considered national treasures.

As a child I was told our iwi was Ngāti Raukawa and when my children were small I moved to the Kapiti Coast where Ngāti Raukawa resides. I spent years getting to know some local iwi and made many inquiries in an attempt to find my whakapapa. Eventually a Māori relative, from another branch of the family told me to make inquiries with Te Arawa. My great great grandmother Mere Rangiwahakairi (Timiuha) is buried in Ohau and perhaps that is why Ngāti Raukawa was posed as a possible iwi.

I knew that I needed to know my whakapapa as it is the foundation of my Māori identity and crucial to my sense of self. I wanted to stand on my marae and know who I was from and where I was from. Last year I found my whakapapa. Something shifted deep inside me and I think it has given me more confidence and strength. I think I had romantic dreams about how this would pan out. A gorgeous old kuia or kaumātua (respected elder) welcoming me into our iwi and hapū. Tears, hugs, kisses, singing, a homecoming. Unfortunately it was neither romantic nor personal. My persistence and patience eventually uncovered information that a second cousin had found our whakapapa. After a difficult conversation she sent me a copy of our old handwritten whakapapa and a few notes she took down while she was speaking with a relative unknown to me. She also passed on documentation concerning our shared Māori land in the Waiariki district. I am extremely grateful to her.

I am of Te Arawa and possibly Tainui descent. Our hapū are listed as Ngāti Rangiteaorere and Ngāti Uenukukopako. I recently received a registration form from Ngā Kaihautu o Te Arawa and I hope that by providing five generations of whakapapa they can confirm my affiliation, and most importantly, put me in touch with my people and marae. Perhaps my homecoming is still to come. I certainly hope so.

*Ko tēnei te pō  
I raro o te marama  
Ko tēnei te pō  
I waiata ai ahau*<sup>12</sup>

My Māori identity has mostly been something I have had to seek by myself. It has sometimes been a lonely journey. I have had no whānau holding my hand and passing on tikanga and stories. This has been hard and I have certainly not taken anything Māori for granted. My wairua (spirit) keeps me moving forward. I have learnt to be extremely patient and I now believe everything has its time.

When I was a child sometimes my sisters and I would be referred to as having a “touch of the tar brush”. The underlying message was hurtful and not at all humourous. Identifying as Māori and having white skin has been challenging in both the Pākehā and Māori worlds. I have often witnessed Pākehā freely sharing their racist, negative, uninformed stereotypes about Māori and The Treaty of Waitangi. These comments have deeply hurt and angered me. Being asked how much Māori blood I have is in my opinion a loaded question, as I believe there is always another agenda operating and a total lack of understanding about what it means to be Māori. I am of course aware that my white skin has given me certain privileges that my brown family and friends have not always been afforded. There are some Māori who see me as being inferior; a white Māori. There is a name for me in Māori “nga tangata awarua” – awarua can mean either the flowing of two rivers, a corridor or a passage. It includes meanings of dual heritage, possible discomfort/alienation, of being in-between, and the concept of transition.

In an essay titled “Borders and Frontiers”, Irihāpeti Ramsden articulates a lot of my thoughts on Māori identity: “My Māoriness is my choice. My identity is my choice. As I have crossed some borders and been forced across others, I have made a series of decisions about how I shall be to myself and to the world about me...It seems to me that Māoritanga, like all other realities, is personal.”<sup>13</sup> I have certainly lived my life on the frontier. I have spent many years trying to map my cultural identities and positions. Not feeling like I totally belonged in either culture has meant I have often felt dislocated and unhomed in my own country. This has also been reflected in my physical world as I have moved house thirty-six times.

Society often forces me into a position of choosing between Māori and Pākehā. I don't often fit into the right box. I used to tick both the Pākehā – New Zealand European, and Māori boxes until I discovered that often it is only the first box that is recorded, which is always Pākehā. Why should I, a Māori /Pākehā New Zealander be forced into one box or the “other” ethnic box in my own land?

To move beyond binary classifications, I have found it necessary to explore identity politics.

Postcolonial theorist, Homi K Bhabha, talks about hybridity and the third space. This involves a creation of a “new space” or a “contact zone” where two disparate cultures meet, clash and grapple with each other. In colonial discourse, “hybridity” is a term of abuse for those who are products of miscegenation (mixed-breeds). My problem with an “in-between” space, or the “third space of enunciation”, is that it doesn’t address the inequality and imbalance of power. It can be thought of as masking or ‘whitewashing’ cultural differences.

An alternative, although equally problematic concept currently discussed in postcolonial discourse is “creolisation”. This is the process of intermixing and cultural change. The term has usually been applied to “new world” societies (particularly the Caribbean and South America). More loosely it is applied to those postcolonial countries whose present ethnically or racially mixed populations are a product of European colonisation. “It is the process of absorption of one culture by another and the reciprocal process of intermixture and enrichment, each to each.”<sup>14</sup> “Creolisation” as a word is located outside of Aotearoa. It doesn’t feel right for me to use it when I am trying to celebrate my unique dual identity. I don’t feel comfortable with aligning myself with either hybridity or creolisation.

Life stories are an important tool in identifying and valuing difference. Working with my own stories in the visual arts means I can express my voice in my own way. I research and record my own stories and perspectives. Historically a lot of Māori narratives were researched and recorded by Pākehā. This was obviously problematic due to the links with imperialism, colonisation and the fact that their perceptions and perspectives are very different from those of Māori. Telling our own stories is in effect re-writing the history of Aotearoa.

Linda Tuhiwai Smith, an indigenous researcher, is involved in research methodologies titled “Twenty-Five Indigenous Projects”. She describes these projects as “acts of reclaiming, reformulating and reconstituting indigenous cultures and languages...”<sup>15</sup> I have employed a number of these projects – Storytelling, Celebrating Survival, Remembering, Connecting, Representing, Reframing, Naming and Creating – which are woven through my artworks and writings.

Choosing to work with the geographical outline of Aotearoa, in several scales, has allowed me to create vessels which hold many different narratives, issues and questions. My dual cultural identities, whakapapa, land, commodity, value, colonisation, nationhood and nostalgia are themes I have chosen to work with. Keeping all the ceramic forms white represents my skin colour and also the ‘whitewashing’ that colonisation has created. Making work that fits in-between art and craft is intentional. The ceramic objects are able to be used in a domestic craft context and the overall concepts belong in an art context.

*Educated Tourist* (see next page) is a white, glazed, ceramic ashtray which is made out of paper clay and shaped in the form of Aotearoa. It is made up of three islands – Te Ika a Māui/North Island, Te Waipounamu/South Island and Rakiura/Stewart Island – and is inlaid with a colourful decal which is an appropriated map of Aotearoa taken from a 1950s tablecloth.

This work is the embodiment of many different themes as well as employing several of Linda Tuhiwai Smith’s indigenous projects. The first theme explored is geography. Irit Rogoff describes

geography as "...far more than a mode of charting the known world; geography is a source of authority in the fundamental questions of inclusion and exclusion and plays a crucial role in the determination of identity and belonging...it is a system of classification, a mode of location, a site of collective national, cultural, linguistic and topographic histories".<sup>16</sup> I am also referring to the mapping and locating of my cultural and artistic positions.

My map is an example of how Māori names for cities, towns, rivers, streams, hills and mountains have been overlaid with Pākehā names. There are many narratives implied in this map, which are represented by pictures. This is clearly a Pākehā map. There is one Māori person located above Auckland. It would be hard to find your way around Aotearoa using this map.

Ashtrays are containers for ash, the residue of cigarettes or joints which are associated with addictions and 'bad' habits. I am referencing the ingrained, ignorant, Eurocentric, monocultural, racist attitudes that still exist in a number of the Pākehā population. I liken these to a 'bad' habit and it seems it has become an addiction of sorts. The Māori perspective is too often unknown, unacknowledged, unvalued and not respected.

Paper clay, which is a mixture of both clay and paper, is vulnerable yet surprisingly strong and is a direct reference to me. But most importantly I am referencing earth, the land, Papa-tū-ā-nuku, mother earth. Professor Margaret Mutu, who is head of Māori Studies at Auckland University points out the clash between two very different ways of viewing the land:

When the Crown grants title, it guarantees that person has undisturbed possession of that land and has the right to sell it or lease it. Or whatever they wish to do – alienate it or



*Educated Tourist* (3 islands), 2005, glazed paper clay and decals, 42 x 28 x 2 cm.

whatever they want. Now that's a very English notion. And what we are asking for is recognition of a Māori notion that is really different from that.

The Māori notion is much more about the rights you have – having been there for many, many generations (in many cases that's many, many, many hundreds of years) – as something that was given to you originally by the gods. And you have a responsibility to maintain that area intact for the following generations. So the notion of you having something that you control as a commodity is just not there. At all.<sup>17</sup>

My perspective of land sits firmly in the Māori world. I feel absolute despair about our present laws surrounding who can purchase it and I strongly believe that you must either be born here, or have permanent residency and be committed to our country, to be able to buy land here. Our land is not a souvenir which can be cut up and sold to tourists and movie stars. But at the moment this is what is happening. Aotearoa is now a place where land is often too expensive for the people who live here.

Māori have not traditionally made ceramics, so there are no gender rules or regulations projected onto the material. "Earth and fire feature prominently in our cosmological narratives. Hine Ahu One, the first woman, was made from the earth. Thus the manipulation of clay can be thought of as a creative process that invests earth with life."<sup>18</sup>

Ceramic objects arrived in Aotearoa with the colonisers and have played a very important part in the life of all New Zealanders. There is an obvious connection with the industry of mass



*Wicked Brownie (2 islands)*, 2005, glazed paper clay, 82 x 48 x 6 cm.

production. Ceramics has an extremely long and sometimes contentious history which I feel proud to be a part of. Although historically located in the craft realm it has many histories associated with many movements. In the postmodernist context it has been able to fully stand in many places. I'm not surprised I chose this material to work with as it can also fall 'in-between' craft and art. Clay holds a memory and I believe the earth also holds memories. There is also an issue of value associated with ceramics.

*Wicked Brownie* (see previous page) is a personal narrative about being white on the outside and brown on the inside. I was once introduced this way by one of my Māori language teachers. I had mixed feelings at the time. The work speaks about the consumption of our land, both past and present. It is created out of white paper clay and shaped in the form of the North and South Islands and references a cake/baking tin. I filled the forms with my "Wicked Brownie" recipe and baked them in the oven. I provided 70s-like recipe cards, so I could share my "Wicked Brownie" with everyone.

This artwork unexpectedly turned into an interactive piece. I had cut up the brownie and taken out small pieces to reveal the dark, rich centre, filled with pieces of white chocolate. A knife was found and people started consuming the brownie. Some people took a small amount; others lingered and filled themselves with as much as they could. Some had no respect for the fact that it was an artwork and became rough; while others straightened the islands and put them back in their correct positions. The vessels were left empty with a few crumbs remaining. All gone.

*Inheritance* (see next page) was an installation set up in a symmetrical space. You were greeted with lots of different smells of baking and cooking and could enter or walk around a horseshoe-shaped counter/kitchen bench with a hot red top. Once again most of the objects and food were shaped like the North and South Islands and were placed on top of the bench. All the ceramic forms were white and made of either white clay or paper clay. Chocolate afghans and shortbread rested on wire baking racks. Mixing cups were stamped with measurement amounts relating to amounts of Māori blood in my grandmother, father and me. Stainless steel cookie cutters, a teapot with a Kiwiana cosy and mugs pretending to be enamel sat next to a sugar bowl and milk jug. There were two plates covered with pikelets and dishes containing butter and jam. Rēwena Parāoa (Potato Bread) had been sliced up ready to consume. One casserole dish contained Watties peas, the other a hearty beef stew. Tinned fruit salad and green jelly filled two inverted vessels.

Two hundred and ninety six white ceramic re-appropriated Hei Tiki were hung in symmetrical patterns on the wall behind the back of the counter/bench. In my childhood the plastic Hei Tiki was a strong cultural signifier for me and a lot of other Māori. Cultural identification through appropriated souvenirs was part of my cultural inheritance. Growing up away from iwi and hapū in a predominately Pākehā reality I clung to anything that was visibly Māori. Hei Tiki are taonga (treasures) and as a child and teenager I had no awareness that their true meaning had been misrepresented and abused for commercial gain. It is highly offensive and insensitive to see them on teatowels and on the end of salad servers. Those who are aware of tikanga Māori will understand the tapu and noa implications. Kiwiana can sometimes be extremely dodgy.

I want to create work which opens up, is layered and is able to be read in several ways. Irony and humour, in my opinion, often make questions and statements about matters which are uncomfortable and possibly confronting, more palatable.

I used to think of my identity as a crack, an in-between space, a place of non-belonging, but I don't see it like that any longer. I decided that one plus one equals three. I am more than the sum of my parts. At the moment I am privileging my Māori identity as I have been well educated in the Pākehā world and have a lot more to learn in the Māori world. Due to ongoing Māori cultural recovery I understand and accept that some Māori view the third space as further assimilation and so they reject this. I am both Māori and Pākehā and must be both. It is my genetic inheritance and I believe I am hard-wired in a most unique way. When I visualise my dual identity I see myself with my feet firmly planted in Aotearoa. I am aware that my ancestors' bones are beneath me and have been here for many, many hundreds of years. I see reference points into both the Māori and Pākehā worlds. This means I choose what I take from each culture. These reference points are fluid and change as I grow. I belong to both cultures and I have a choice about what I want to align myself with and what I don't. There are aspects of both cultures which I feel very connected with and aspects of both which I don't relate to at all. It's an 'and/and' position. It could be a lonely position, but I can accept this if it means staying in integrity with myself. I don't have a label for this position. I'm interested in building bridges within and without.



*Inheritance*, 2005, installation view with kitchenware and ceramic pieces.



*Re-appropriated Hei Tiki*, 2005, glazed and unglazed paper clay, each 6 x 4 cm.

- 1 Excerpt from song "Barefoot Days" by The Keys, 1947.
- 2 Excerpt from song "Song Sung Blue" by Neil Diamond, 1972.
- 3 Excerpt from song "Brand New Day" by Van Morrison, 1969.
- 4 Excerpt from song "Constellations" by Jack Johnson, 2004.
- 5 Excerpt from song "Brand New Day" by Van Morrison, 1969.
- 6 C Archie, *Skin to Skin: Intimate, True stories of Māori-Pakeha Relationships* (Auckland: Penguin, 2005), 20.
- 7 Excerpt from song "It's All Understood" by Jack Johnson, 2000.
- 8 Excerpt from Māori waiata "Hoki Mai E Tama Ma".
- 9 Excerpt from song "Ten Guitars" by Engelburt Humperdinck, 1967.
- 10 Excerpt from waiata "Aue Rona".
- 11 Excerpt from song "When I See You Smile" by Bic Runga, 2002.
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