MAI Review, 2007, 1, Intern Research Report 7

Hei tiki and issues of representation within contemporary Māori arts.

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Abstract: This research project explores the field of contemporary Māori arts to ascertain issues of representation of Māori imagery and design. The notion of representation is located in the indigenous iconographic form, the hei tiki. A material interface to a distant past, hei tiki currently rides the eclectic wave of mainstream fashion. Its scope of success can be measured as being an elite object keenly demanded by international collectors of art or as an enduring symbol of pre-European Māori cultural identity, or as a patriotic symbol of nationhood. The participant is Rangi Kipa. He is used in this research project because of a series of work he created titled, 'This is a tiki'. The legacy of hei tiki has recently propelled a visual conversation between artists and curators, that it can be perceived, that tiki was lost in the visual chatter of the art institution. Strikingly however, amongst the blinding noise, this exceptional body of work is being pursued, relentlessly so from collectors internationally. This series of work can be described as transcultural, modernised reproductions of a traditionally Māori culturally symbolic icon. It can be interpreted as offensive, as Pākehā, as kūpapa, as intellectual, and as distinctly Māori. Powerful interpretations instigated by masterful manipulations of colourful plastic composite materials. It is exactly those subjective charges that relocates the plastic hei tiki from the obscure realm of art to an equally obscure realm of academic discourse. It is these dynamics that has captured the curiosity of the author.

Keywords: Contemporary Māori art

The issue of representation compels an analysis of the roles and the rights of practitioners of contemporary Māori art, who are of Māori descent. Whilst hei tiki have manifested variously to be inscribed into society, conversely Māori art praxis also manifests itself. The aim of this research project is to understand the influences that guide practitioners of Māori descent, who are specialists in the production of hei tiki.

This research project required a distinction between past and present, traditional and contemporary. While that may temper theoretical debate, this research project finds grounding in an understanding of pre-European Māori cultural production of hei tiki. Notwithstanding, the imperialist agenda of early studies, still remains in museums and manuscripts of a century ago, access to information of Māori cultural value that continues to be relevant today.

The approach of contextualising historically the hei tiki reveals a process that finds hei tiki with ancestral links to the wider Polynesian community and of sharing a common experience of colonisation with those communities. It is illustrated that the profound impact of these factors serves to validate the representation of hei tiki by at least one practitioner of contemporary Māori art.

Philosophers of western art struggle to clarify succinctly what art is. The concept of contemporary Māori art is explored here to identify any defining characteristics exemplified in the self-determining practice of one prominent artist. A case study of the practice of Rangi Kipa informs this research project. Rangi Kipa is regarded as a master exponent of Māori art, having

transversed the known boundaries of historical and contemporary expressions of Māori art. His selection to participate was influenced by a series of work entitled, 'This is a Tiki.' This series of works features plastic tiki that have since generated varied responses, bringing into acute focus the hei tiki.

This concept labelled contemporary Māori art barely hides the fact that each term here is extremely fragile, highly contested and symptomatic of a colonist past. Despite this, and ironically so the concept of contemporary Māori art has the potential to embody all that artists or curators of Māori descent envision it to be. This research project relates any such findings of defining characteristics or problematics of contemporary Māori art as expressed by the artist and is applied to a 'working' model for qualitative assessment of Māori creative practices developed by Robert Jahnke and Huia Tomlins-Jahnke (2003).

The hei tiki has been exploited repeatedly by the souvenir industry to transform even to plastic handles of salad servers. To combat this type of exploitation Jahnke and Tomlins-Jahnke (2003) advanced a model to establish control towards protecting the quality of Māori cultural production. Jahnke and Tomlins-Jahnke (2003) demonstrate against fallacies that state historically Māori did not make qualitative judgements on their cultural products. The point of this exercise is to reveal not specifically a methodology of assessment, but rather to disclose issues of representation in contemporary Māori arts.

According to Williams (2003), a hei tiki is defined as

n. 1. A personification of primeval man. Te aitanga a Tiki, *aristocracy*. Te manu pirau a Tiki, *a corpse.*
2. A post to mark a place which was tapu.
3. A rough representation of a human figure on the gable of a house.
4. A flat grotesque figure of greenstone worn on a string around the neck. Kia hei taku ate i te tau o tana tiki. (M. 204).

Hei tiki is a personal adornment belonging to the Māori people. Niech and Pereira (2004), Barrow (1968) and Davidson (1996) state, these ornaments were worn by men and women. Best (1974, p. 185) however believed only women wore hei tiki except in rare circumstances.

The use of personal adornments was sometimes symbolic, sometimes aesthetic, sometimes both. Niech and Pereira (2004) notes one role Hei Tiki performed, "For Māori needing to mourn the death of a relative lost in battle whose body cannot be recovered, his *hei-tiki* could be used as a surrogate through the funeral ceremonies." Hamilton (1998, p. 305) quotes Yate, whose view was that the Hei Tiki acted as a point of reference to remember those who have just departed, including "others by whom it was worn."

G.F Angas publication of 1847, noted the rite of inheritance as descending from the patriarchal line, "…the grotesque little representation of a human figure, which is worn around the neck by both sexes; this latter is called E tiki (tiki or heitiki), and is regarded as a heirloom, descending from father to child."

Robley (1997, p. 73) refers to the story of the hei tiki, Mihi Rawhiti. Mihi Rawhiti belonged to the family of Maru Tuahu, the descendants had divided int two factions. One resided in Thames, the other in Taranaki. Mihi Rawhiti would be buried with the person who was wearing it at the time of death. In due course, the bones would be exhumed and the opposing family to whom Mihi Rawhiti would return carried the responsibility of interment. Thus, Mihi Rawhiti maintained a living bond between the descendants of Maru Tuahu.

Te Papa Tongarewa (2004) has the hei tiki, Maungarongo. Maungarongo belonged originally to Rangi Pūrewa, a tohunga of Wairau Valley. He gave the tiki to Te Pukekōhatu, also of Ngāti Rārua. His wife's slave, wearing the tiki was presented to Te Rauparaha in exchange for one of Te Pukekōhatu's relatives who had been taken captive. The hei tiki, in this instance was a peace offering.

Figure. 1: Hei Tiki: Maungarongo - Ngāti Rarua/ Ngāti Toa Rangatira/ Rongowhakaata

Beck and Mason (2003) state the typical figure of a hei tiki has a large, angled rounded or pointed head, usually just less than half the total length and with the mouth in either the left or right side…usually the remainder of the body featured a relatively large abdomen and the legs in a squatting position, with the heels together and both hands resting on the thighs.

Variations occur with the positioning of the hands and manipulations of finer features like mouth, hands, feet, and the presence or absence of genitalia, breasts, ribs, and ears.

Buck (1950, p. 292-294) states that the leg positioning remained constant and noted that the inclination of the head has no symbolic meaning. The head was perforated close to the edge to accommodate the lashing for the cord suspension. The rectangular head it is suggested involves the least labour.

Skinner (1974, p. 47) elaborates that there are usually three fingers and toes, the tongue is normally forked, the back when bent, is curved concavely. Sex when indicated is usually female. The head, when bent, turns face to one-side, it is never side profile.

Robley (1997, p. 56-57) notes that the reverse side of the hei tiki is plain, showing only the piercings which shape the limbs and the hole for the suspension cord. Although, he conceded a rare example of a hei tiki in the British Museum was exhibited to show carving detail on the back. Figure 2. from Kai Tahu is another example. There are, he observes no marks indicating "tattoo". Robley concurs that there are never more than three fingers and adds that the thumbs are always shown. Eyelashes are represented by serrated edges along the pāua shells disks that indicated the whites of the eyes.

Figure 2: Hei Tiki o Taiaroa - Kai Tahu

Robley (1997) identified two categories to analyse hei tiki forms.
Type A
Ribs: one or two pairs indicated by raised ridges forked at the lower ends, sometimes the navel is carved.
Head/ Neck: is not defined as head rests solidly on the shoulders.
Figure. 3 is an example of Type A described by Robley.

Type B
Head/ Neck: is generally cut free from shoulders and not resting upon them. Neck is thicker.
Ears: are shown.
Eyes: are smaller than Type A due to differing proportions.
Ribs: generally there are none.
Hands: One hand is positioned over breast, the other remains on thigh.

Figure 3: Hei tiki - Taranaki

Figure 4: Hei Tiki - Whangarei

"The hei tiki shape represented on a drastically reduced scale the upright figurative form in woodcarving:..." Te Awekotuku (1996, p.43). The treatment of the human figure conform to conventions applied in wood, thus it is assumed by Skinner that personal ornaments followed other artforms. This view was supported by Davidson (1992) and Niech and Pereira (2004).

Such conventions have been identified by Archey (1960), who studied several types of Māori objects including parts of a wharenui, waka taua, waka huia and freestanding forms. From a

comparative analysis to other Pacific material cultures Archey (1960) concluded that, " the one item that is common to all Polynesian wood-carving is the human figure and a local pattern produced from it,…"

In Māori art he found that the human figure was present in all types of objects and that they were applied variously according to functional and aesthetic requirements of the object.

Figure 5: Poupou - Taupo

Skinner (1916) demonstrated that the Hei Tiki form was due to carving on a flat, rectangular piece of stone, commonly on a greenstone toki. From this, Archey (1955 p. 51) concluded, "…the hei tiki is a counterpart, in jade, of the human figure or tiki commonly forming the decoration of poupou or wooden wall slabs in house carvings."Archey also claimed that the elongated, wavy pendant, common to Te Tai Tokerau correspond to the elongated, wavy figures found in the trapezoid form of a canoe prow, which is also a northern style. These artefacts are commonly called kuru.

Figure. 6: Whakakaipiko - Mahurangi, North Auckland

Figure.7: Whakakaipiko

Additionally, Archey (1960) discerned the notion of symbolism inherent to Māori art and suggested that the art from commemorated the human figure over a very wide range of expressive forms. Pounamu is an indigenous product, its origins are remembered in pūrakau, of which there are tribal variations. In addition, Skinner (1936) has noted the existence of several versions.

Hei Tiki is uniquely associated with greenstone. Beck and Mason (2003) argue the term greenstone is debated because mineralogically it does not exist. Pounamu, is the Māori term generally used to mean greenstone and refers to nephrite and bowenite. There are four main types of stone: kawakawa, kahurangi, inanga and tangiwai. Pounamu is noted for its rich yellow-green colour and its high degree of translucency. Properties inherent to pounamu are evaluated by its appearance, feel, sound and durability. The primary source of greenstone is confined to the South Island, in particular, the Taramakau and Arahura rivers in Westland, coastal South Westland and Lake Wakatipu.

Davidson (1992) stipulates the use of greenstone for ornaments is of course unique to New Zealand in Polynesia and notes that the earliest archaeological excavation of greenstone pendants is dated 1500AD from Shag Point, North Otago.

Historical records validate that hei tiki were seen and described in the East Coast and far North. Furthermore, a statistical study of the ear pendants, kuru, suggest three distinct regional styles that leads one to believe that greenstone-working occurred in the Northern districts. In a study of findings of hei tiki, by Davidson (1984) whole or fragmented, and toggles it was revealed that only at the sites in the South Island were toggles and pendants found present together. Skinner (1974, p. 48) states that outside of New Zealand there are no closely related forms to the hei tiki imposed by the adze form. This feature, according to Skinner (1974, p. 48), was predominant in post-European times due to the increasing redundancy of the toki in preference of the European steel adze combined with an insatiable market demand for hei tiki.

Niech and Pereira (2004, p. 25) comments that hei tiki figure styles followed regional and tribal styles of woodcarving, which was considered a tapu art reserved for men. The working of nephrite for tools, weapons and ornaments therefore was restricted to men.

According to Makereti (1986, p. 323) “All greenstones, whether weapons or ornaments, are a source of wealth, and may be given in utu, which is payment for insult, in dowry, or as a kōpaki for the dead.” Thus, wealth was determined by the value of the raw material and was observed by Colenso, as recorded by Best (1974), “The most esteemed goods, the real personal wealth of the ancient New Zealanders, were greenstone (unworked or worked as axes, war-clubs and ornaments), finely woven flax garments, tōtara canoes,..”

The notion of the value of greenstone, while obvious to Colenso, could not be overestimated. For example, hei tiki carried intimate, personal and sometimes covert qualities unknown to the foreigner. Hei tiki were named by some Māori. Te Awekotuku (1996, p. 44) provides some examples, “Some hei tiki also carried personal names, and were presented as oath gifts - one outstanding example is the hei tiki ‘Te Pirau Kakai Matua’, acquired by Govenor Grey from Te Paki of Waikato; another is the exquisite, enigmatic friendship token Titore of Ngāpuhi gave to Captain Sadler in 1834.”

Pei Te Hurinui Jones (1995, p. 310-311) refers to Ngata (1929) who published a lament by Tū-te-Mahurangi, in this waiata aroha, the greenstone tiki personifies Tū-te-Mahurangi’s son who died by extreme burns. “…Taku tiki pounamu ko te huanga ake; taku kōkō tangiwai ka motu i te taringa; taku rake tī hauora nāu i tāmoe…” Best (1974, p. 106) refers to Te Matorohanga when he

stated that when a hei tiki was been ground into form a "charm" was repeated, this validates for him his statement claiming, "There was no tapu pertaining to the working of any other stone than nephrite, and the origin of this tapu is not known."

The acquisition and use of pounamu was, in essence, a tribal investment that reflected tribal wealth. The collective effort required negotiation with other tribes. Elsdon Best (1974) recorded one such account in the 1850's illustrating exchange and communal effort,

.., the Tūhoe tribe obtained two fine slabs of nephrite from the Waikato natives, giving in exchange for them a drove of pigs, which were driven from the Urewera country to Waikato, and there handed over the prized *pounamu.* ...These slabs were taken to Rua-tāhuna, and great preparations were made for the cutting of them: extensive cultivations were made, the land being cleared, the felled bush burned, large quantities of potatoes [&c.,] grown, quantities of forest-food products collected and preserved, and houses built to accomodate the workers and their friends. Then the people of Tūhoe collected from far and near, and assisted in the labour of cutting up the blocks of greenstone. Such gatherings were much enjoyed social gatherings.

Hei tiki were also fashioned with human bone and whalebone. Te Awekotuku (1996, p. 29) points out that elaborately carved pendants were fashioned by cranial bones and finger bones were transformed into toggles.

Buck (1950, p. 291) notes that Skinner suggested that bone was the material more commonly used because of the difficulty of accessing and the extreme value of nephrite

Figure. 8: Hei Tiki - North Island

Other materials were used to complete construction of Hei Tiki. Best (1974, p. 91) noted that the eyes were formed by placing small discs made of Haliotis shell (pāua) in circular ring compressions surrounding a central cylindrical piece left in the manufacture. Hamilton (1998, p. 305) recorded the preference of using red seal wax in his time. While, Best (1974, p. 75) notes that cockle shells were used to engrave. Niech (2004) comments that there was the significant absence of metal for the production of jewellery and in the provenance of one Hei Tiki, dated at 1797, the original flax cordage remains (Figure 3). Robley (1997, p. 76) referred to poro toroa, the albatross bone used for a toggle or wood thence named a pūau, its substitute. The cord that went around the wearers neck was called a kaui. Robley (1997, p. 76) explains, " The tiki was

firmly fixed to the kaui by it's own separate fastening, which was a loop passing through the suspension hole and made of the wiry fibre of the toi or mountain palm (cordyline indivisa), ..."

There was a difference between Hei Tiki of a high and poor standard of craftmanship. Best (1974, p. 185), asserts that tiki popohe is the term describing crude or unfinished hei tiki, or made by persons not expert enough to finish them, and possibly also to some uncommon forms that are occasionally seen.

Hamilton (1998 reprinted: 305) describes tiki popohe as "short of perfection..." Skinner (1932, p. 306) disputes that the term tiki popohe applied by Hamilton is correct for the specimen described. As mentioned previously, Skinner stated that pendants of no distinct form, were worn purely for aesthetic appeal, in pre-European time. Figure 9, is such an example and is described by Skinner (1974, p. 55) as, "A pale nephrite pendant which has an irregular, possibly humanoid shape found in ancient examples."

Figure 9: Hei - Aotearoa

Figure. 10: Hei Tiki - North Island

Hamilton (1998, p. 305) describes a specimen that appears to be in transition from hei tiki to hei matau. Generally, the matau represents Māui.

Figure 11: Hei tiki - Tai Tokerau

Dodd (1967, p. 253) cites a hei tiki made from the human skull. It has distinct features. The inward-facing figure has the limbs outstretched. Two large eyes represent the head, the manaia form represent the hands, which do not rest on the body rather the left hand is disconnected from the body and the right resting on the right leg. This hei tiki has surface decoration.

Not surprisingly, Hei Tiki were ascribed some quite arbitrary meanings. Savage, according to Salmond (1997, p. 335) believed that the greenstone tiki was an image of a "protecting deity", worn both by men and women around their necks particularly in times of danger. Tiki, was referred to as 'the man in the moon' and, (1997, p. 339) and 'was always worn in full dress.' Best (1974, p. 185) thought Hei Tiki possessed some fertilising quality, "Hei tiki…This item, it is believed, represented the human foetus, and was suppose to possess inherent fructifying influence when worn by women."

Yates (cited in Hamilton, 1998), argued the use of personal adornments as a substitute for the absence of a loved one, "They are by no means connected with any of their superstitions, nor are they, as it had been imagined, representations of Gods whom they might be supposed to worship. The latter was conceived from the Hei Tiki been taken off the neck, laid down in the presence of a few friends meeting together, and then wept or sung over." Robley (1997, p. 53) notes that carved figures were made to "…preserve the memory of deceased relatives or in honour of some god…it was merely a symbol of the unseen."

In his analysis of Hei Tiki, Robley (1997, p. 57) asserts that hei tiki conform to certain conventional designs that were handed down through the generations, to deviate from "… the lines laid down by their forefathers" would be considered an aitua, or ill-omen.

It is asserted that eurocentric interpretation of Māori narratives fed ideas that Māori were barbarian and savage and that Pākehā were necessarily dominant and superior. Māori imagery and design thus endured similarly to its people the violent repercussions of antagonist ideology. As a victim, hei tiki represents the 'perversions' of a primitive race.

Buck (1950, p. 295) asserts that the first male was created by Tāne and named Tiki. Thus the first woodcarvings of the human form were in turn called Tiki. Buck (1950, p. 295) refers to Best who stated that the mythical Tiki created by Tāne was in reality a personification of the phallus. Buck therefore acknowledges this symbolism as a local invention due to notable absence of phallic imagery in Hawaii, Marquesas and central Polynesia that were also termed Tiki. He could not explain Hei Tiki with female genitalia.

Skinner (1974) also referred to Best, who stated that "the first hei tiki made was for Hine-te-iwaiwa by her father." Furthemore Skinner (1974) argues against Bests' views that the hei tiki represents either notion of the personified phallus or the form of a human embryo, partially or whole. Based on analysis of the artistic conventions applied to constructing a tiki, any resemblance to the human embryo is evident only by the disproportionate head size. This is also a characteristic of Marquesan, Hawaiian and Austral carving that does not lead one to believe in its representation as a human embryo.

Best (1923) asserted that the Hei Tiki represented the notion of the protective power of the phallic. The destruction of humankind by Hine-nui-te-Po was therefore its nemisis. Citing the rite of kai ure, a traditional ritual of protection or self-presevation that required male masturbation and refering toTutakangahau,who affirmed that, "The male organ is destructive, for it can save man from death." Best (1923) concluded that Māori were primitive because of an explicit focus to sex, sexual organs and reproduction.

The concept of Pūrakau is worth noting here. It is asserted that Pūrakau contains core information central to Māori identity and philosophy. Pūrakau is inherent to the concept of mātauranga Māori.

Thus, Soloman (2006) explains mātauranga Māori is defined by the Waitangi Tribunal 262 Statement of Claim, filed in 1991 and amended in 1997, by tribal elders of Ngāti Wai, Ngāti Kurī and Te Rarawa to the Waitangi Tribunal as;

> "...mātauranga Māori has as its basis the notion of whakapapa or genealogical interconnectedness, leading to the following characteristics:
> the inter-relatedness of all things;
> The basis of knowledge being in the natural environment;
> The inseparability of the spiritual (tapu) and the life force (mauri) from every aspect of knowledge."

The supposition is that tiki, the idea and any manifestation of, is culturally validated in possessing all the characteristics described by the claimants above. Edward Shortland (1882) and Percy Smith (1913) cite tiki in whakapapa and karakia. With a basic understanding, it is suggested that, the primal source of Tiki originates with Tāne and that the karakia published by Smith (1913) affirms to sanctify the female and male relationship.

It follows therefore, that tiki, the idea and any manifestation of, was ritually empowered with tapu and endowed with mauri.

Having established categorically the historical foundation to this report, a case study of one contemporary Māori artist was conducted. The case study is informed through one two hour interview. The interview took place at the Art and Visual Department of Te Whare Wānanga o Awanuiarangi, in February 2007.

Figure 12: Rangi Kipa Hei Tiki

An introduction then is in order. Rangi Kipa is a 41-year-old carver. He has a Diploma in carving from 3 years at Maraeroa Carving School in Wellington, various teaching certificates, an undergraduate degree in Social Anthropology through Waikato and a Masters Degree in Māori Visual Art through Massey. 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.

Rangi Kipa is of Te Ati Awa descent, but in the interview declined to respond to this enquiry. His tribal identification is noted to confirm his Māori heritage in relation to the idea of contemporary Māori art . Until tribal specific identification is irrelevant within the movement of contemporary Māori art, tribal identification is preferred for the purposes of this research project. However, it will be demonstrated while Rangi Kipa exercised his right to decline to respond he simultaneously showed that his tribal identification 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, "I mean 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." Previous 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 ta-koha as a mode of exchange.

Rangi Kipa has not avoided the debate between what is traditional and what is contemporary. According to Rangi, 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, you know and, and actually it's far more liberating and the world is far bigger than looking at all these people that contribute to your genetic and your characteristic pool, …" (Kipa, 2007).

By such instances, Rangi 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 where as humans we explore and endeavour to draw meaning and definition to reconstitute and validate our place in the world. Thus, Rangi 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 Rangi Kipa sought a way to contribute to a New Zealand society through his art practice.

The initial phase required that Rangi 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 Rangi Kipa carved for all people. While the irony is that this icon is inherently culturally "loaded."

This process in Rangi's words, "…took a leap of faith." Admittedly feeling highly indoctrinated by what is acceptable as Māori art, Rangi criticises the notion of validation because it imposes

limitations antagonist to 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 trade mark, toi iho Māori made™. toi iho Māori made™ 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 co-production™ 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.

Rangi 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 ™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.

Rangi 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) to whom he is currently lobbying for change to an appendice that would allow the movement of resources across borders.

The participant 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. Thus Kipa commented that ‘the West’ were invariably responsible for the current stocks shortage and that Māori communities, he argues, did not hunt whales but benefitted from stranded beasts.

A new medium was discovered by accident actually. Corian® was given to Rangi to experiment with. Experimentation proved that, corian® was heat resistant, when broken it broke like stone and when grinded, 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 manderine-coloured. Another one was blue. It sold at the Auckland art gallery to a collector from Switzerland for a sum of $700.00US. A new dilemma arose, Rangi 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 has entered the fray, from the affects 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 that 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 Rangi Kipa's artwork production has moved markedly in recent times. In a biographical artists 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 tupuna and their inter-relationship 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 tupuna of the past."
> (Kipa, 2007).

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 this time. Rangi Kipa addressed these sentiments by what was never spoken, "Well, some people did think that but you know 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 Rangi Kipa's hei tiki are Māori culturally valid. From the view that the customary practice of kanohi ki te kanohi was not engaged to debate any accusation of cultural offending. The complexities of what that might have been is daunting at the least. The second point, acknowledges categorically for Rangi the fact that he was not challenged because of the integrity of his artwork. A fact he strongly defends,

> "You know 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!" (Kipa, 2007).

The integrity of ones work implies the notion of relativity. A rudimentary assessment compared to what is known historically will clarify further the idea of integrity. Rangi 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." (Kipa, 2007).

Corian® is the point of difference that causes undergraduate art classes to debate whether indeed, Rangi Kipas hei tiki are in fact hei tiki. It seems, that there are no limits in art. One wanders, to what end would, or rather to what end could Rangi Kipa take these hei tiki? He replied simply, "…there is a point when a Tiki is not a tiki."

This research project explores the field of contemporary Māori arts to ascertain issues of representation of Māori imagery and design, particularly the hei tiki. The aim of this research project is to understand the influences that guide practitioners of Māori descent, who are specialists in the production of hei tiki.

The approach was a literature review and a case study of one contemporary Māori artist consisting of one formal interview. It was anticipated that there would be at least one other participant, but due to unforeseen circumstances this could not eventuate.

Background work included reviewing contemporary New Zealand art and Polynesian museum and artefact literature. Viewing also the 'Te Kete Aronui' television series, produced by Kiwa Productions featuring profiles of Māori artists filmed in their own environments and speaking about their lives, families, inspiration and work was an exercise that offered a broad and general spectrum of ideas, feeling, issues and perspectives held by other contemporary Māori artists.

The model of qualitative assessment of contemporary Māori visual arts practice provided by Jahnke and Tomlins-Jahnke (2003) is a helpful tool that permits focus on different aspects of Māori art practice. A model like this is intended to eliminate abuses of Māori imagery and design and was used to illustrate souvenir industry products abuses against Māori. The principle of protection against cultural abuse meant that methods of determining quality control needed to be established. This is the purpose of this model. Jahnke and Tomlins-Jahnke (2003) index six areas to consider;

1. Whakapapa Māori
2. Maatauranga Māori
3. Aahua Māori
4. Waihanga Māori
5. Waahi Māori
6. Wairua Māori

Accordingly Jahnke and Tomlins-Jahnke (2003) justify that for cultural images and design to be Māori, Māori should create them. Rangi Kipa is Māori. For cultural images and design to be Māori, they must incorporate a Māori referent, implicit and/or explicit. An implicit referent is the philosophical framework that influences the explicit referent. Its shape, form, pattern, media or structure identifies the explicit Māori referent. The Rangi Kipa hei tiki are undoubtedly Māori in shape, form and pattern yet the media is non-Māori. As was explained earlier Māori processes are used in the application of techniques yet the technology is modern. The fundamentalist view, state Jahnke and Tomlins-Jahnke (2003), would find creative processes sanctified by ritual and production New Zealand based. Whilst the entire model is vulnerable to challenge, initially these points grate against ideas of an individual rights to privacy and to be Māori artist living elsewhere. According to this model, the Rangi Kipa hei tiki do not represent an alignment to customary or non-customary art.

As the researcher, the mood is perplexed. Katahi nei te kapa e taka! Self-identification is the key to the definition of contemporary Māori arts. Rangi Kipa's tribal identification was 'not applicable.' His right to not choose to identify his tribal affiliations relinquishes the paradox of orthodoxy. For him, history served to envision a future.

Rangi Kipa believes he has achieved an overriding goal to cater for all New Zealanders in his art practice. It has been a practice and a process, that he believes has resulted in empowering people to, consciously or not, connect across cultures. It has been a practice and a process, that confronts

global, national, tribal and personal realities. The case study introduces the idea of a continuing culture, inclusive of all others whom this land nurtures.

Constantly instigating incremental change to suit his practice needs, Rangi Kipa rejects the notion of static time. Labels like traditional or contemporary are of no consequence and his practice avoids the theoretical torture. Intuiting instead a visual culture vibrant, colourful and eco-friendly. Integrity demands a quality product regardless from what, or for whom an item is carved. Perhaps this too is part of the inheritance, the transfer of mauri. To this extent, and beyond the human form, hei tiki also represents humanity.

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Author Notes

The author expresses sincere appreciation to: Rangi Kipa for sharing and elucidating ancient knowledge; to all of the staff of the Tohu Paerua at Te Whare Wänanga o Awanuiarangi for their tremendous support; and to Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga for the grant that enabled this research.

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