

Turangawaewae

Art Lab

Semester 1 Block 2

Mon/Thurs

Tutors:

Eugene Hansen

Emerita Baik

Sasha Gall

Tūrangawaewae is a concept in Te Ao Maōri which connects us to particular places, literally translated to as ‘a place to stand’. This can mean a physical piece of land such as Marae (Tūrangawaewae Marae being the centre of the kingitanga movement). It can also mean a more nebulous and ethereal sense of connection, more based on our social relationships/culture. From this we develop a worldview upon which shapes our perspective on the people and events that surround us.

As a Pakeha my tūrangawaewae does not respond to places in Te Ao Maōri, nor due to my early childhood of moving constantly around the world is it connected to a specific place. Instead, I derive my grounding from people, my family, and other influential elders within my sphere. I see myself as a child of the world and as such often have a perspective that looks at the macro effects instead of minutiae.

The other shaping of my identity and sense of place comes from being part of the transgender community. I have been out for two years, and in that time have developed a strong sense of connection and community with my local queer collectives. This is further shaped my understanding and empathy for others and become a core part of my tūrangawaewae.

Te Ahukaramū Charles Royal, ‘Papatūānuku – the land - Tūrangawaewae – a place to stand’, Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand, <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/papatuanuku-the-land/page-5> (accessed 1 June 2021)

Where do I stand?

Dale Harding

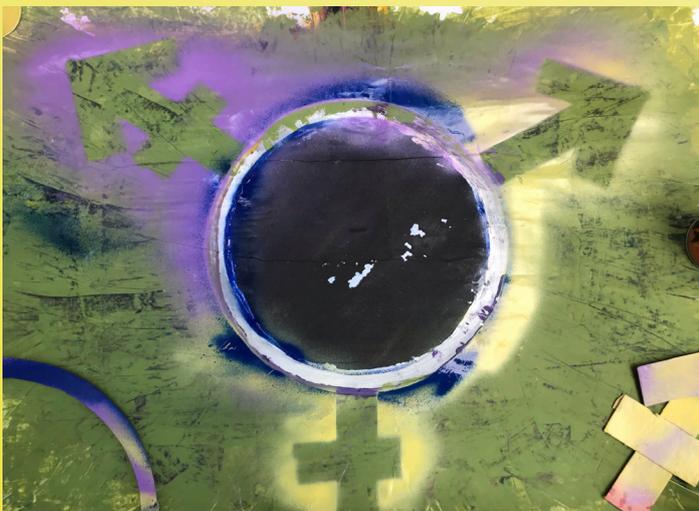


'My Symbol'

In this work i made stencils of the trans symbol denoting third gender. By creating a stencil i am able to transfer this onto many spaces. This could be used as a way of making visible space in a world which often doesnt make those considerations for my community. The background of the work is juxtaposed with the straight edges caused by stencilling, creating a sense/feeling of disparity. The symbol surrounds a dark circle which seems to draw us in despite the focus that should be placed upon the symbol.



This connects to Hardings artist model by using stencils, and creating conversations between the marginal and mainstream. The use of colour is the same as Harding using burnt seina to harken back to aboriginal wall art, here it uses purple and yellow the colours of the non-binary flag, connecting us back to the community.



Yoko Ono

‘A Series of things not to forget’

In this work I create the basis for an instructional set to remind someone of their worth, self-love.

This in accordance to Fluxus style, and in keeping with Yoko Ono’s humanist approach to her art making.

The trans community often has to look inwards for support, it is a case of reminding ourselves we are valuable, and we are loved.

We can use art in order to ground ourselves, be present and mindful.

Find your favourite pillow
Hold the pillow
Caress the pillow
Scream into the pillow
Thank the pillow
Place the pillow back where
you found it

[Link to entire work on website](#)

Pati Solomona



'L'Armour'

The piece is to be worn like armour for battle, in reference to the use of gender performance as a protective shield in wider society. By putting on the 'pauldrons' and 'helmet' we enact the way we get ready each morning.

By presenting and acting more in a way people think you should, the safer you become, the less likely to receive harrasment. Despite that not being how some may inwardly feel. it takes a lot of energy to choose to present in a way that feels authenticy you, CIS or Trans. We feel pigeonholed by societal expectations of dress.

Pati Solomona also creates work concerned with the use of costuming, examaning of the everyday parts of one culture, and the influence that does or does not have over another.

Angela De La Cruz



Cardboard with hole cut out of top
Dripped acrylic

The paint circles the abyss, it clings to itself to stop paint separating and falling into the hole.

Much like a community holds itself together to protect from harm.

**‘don’t
succumb
to the
abyss’**

Especially the trans community, which has an incredibly high rate of suicide and as a result without help from outside mental health service, it falls to the people around us to check in and keep each other safe. Though some do slip through the gaps, as shown with the bits of paint that have collected at the bottom.

I have further emphasised this with an acrylic skin i created to demonstrate the final thickness I would like to acheive with more time.



Hanne Lippard

Work can be heard on website

'hi'

This first work is a record of working through saying hello in many different languages. This shows the universality of greeting in all cultures, it is the first thing we do when interacting with someone. It is the gateway to greater understanding. I have also tracked a reversed version of the greetings, which is disorienting and shows how meaning is automatically lost, how important affect is in conveying a greeting. It is not just the word that is important for communication, but how we approach it.

'I say bath in a bathroom'

The second work deals with language of repetition. It reminds me of times when I was younger and would say a word so many times it would no longer come to mean anything. I notice in this recording the word seems to become more and more slurred as I struggle to make the 'th' sound at the end of bath. It also deals with etymological concepts, why is a bath called a bath? Many questions my 5 year old self would ask and I still have no answer.

Rebecca Ann Hobbs

Work can be viewed on website

‘R.E.M said Tūrangawaewae’

In this work I do a terrible and awkward dance to Stand by REM.

the key words to this song talk about standing or looking to various cardinal directions, placing ourselves within spaces which we normally occupy.

By taking a concious look at where we choose to be in space, we can make a sense of our idenity and tūrangawaewae.

I preform this in my room, and try to follow the instructions to the song by instead looking towards the other places mentioned, places where i spend a majority of my time but often dont associate with outside of thsoe spaces. I do not think of the office space when I am home, this brings disparate elements of my Tūrangawaewae together.

This relates to Rebecca’s work through her own exploration of place through movement, whether dance, or performance art.

“stand in the place where you live”
“now turn north”
“stand in the place where you work”
“now turn west”
and so forth...

Mark Bradford

'Letter to Home'

This work looks to spin Bradford's model on its head. Instead of tearing paper off the wall to reveal what is beneath, I tear and place paper to construct an abstracted landscape. The landscape is loosely based on a Wellington sunset, a time of day when I feel most connected to the literal place I am in, and often Poneke has beautiful ones.

The use of the found object of an envelope is also a grounding element, as they often state your name and address. Courier post knows where you are, but that is only one piece of a puzzle that makes up your tūrangawaewae.



Haegue Yang



'An evening by my window'

I found that Yang's work often has a very serene sensory element to it, to create this sense of being out of place and time. I sought to create that same feeling here with my photo out my condensed window in the evening. The light seems to diffuse and be obscured, the shapes outside blurred but the colour still shines through bathing everything in a warm glow. When in the space, time feels eternal, the world seems to slow down around you, peeking at the edges of our perception of time.

"marginal experiences with poetic possibilities"

Each time a sunset comes i get the same experience, i am transported as if my room is its own gallery and the window is an installation, I am viewing another world and time.

The Most Dedicated: An Aotearoa Graffiti Story

Dowse 27 Mar- 22 Aug Free

The work presented is from over 20 years of the art collective. It ranges from Spray paint, acrylic, Ink on various surfaces and objects.

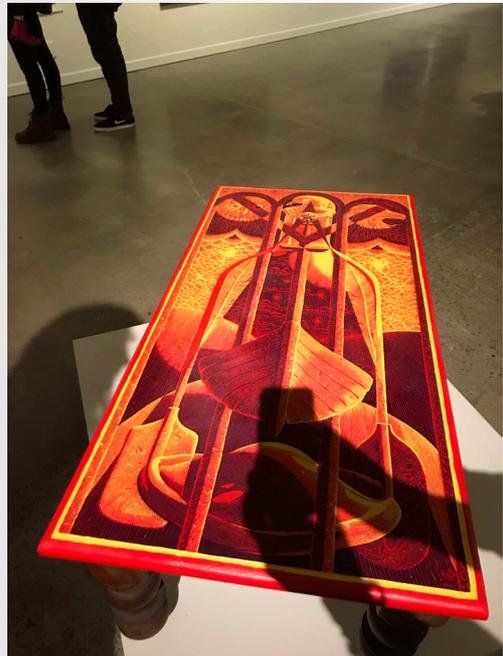
The work on display is considered street art, and has a very graphic, bold style that is heavily intertwined with hip hop. You can trace the history of this graffiti style back to the hip hop scene in New York in the late 70-'s/80's. This is alluded to with the graffiti on the train, which reminds me of famous pictures of the New York subway trains covered in artwork. It is also important to note this type of work for the longest time has been considered outside the realm of fine art, and very much alternative/underground culture. It is a grassroots movement which has a lot of interesting conversations about reclaiming public space, legality of work, and who space is for.

Work shown is highly stylised and personal to each artist, often drawing from their own cultural backgrounds. This is most apparent in a work speaking with flowers, 2021 by Tanja Jade McMillan (MISERY). The acrylic and ink on plywood piece depicts stylised Asian caricatures and vegetables, not only using the imagery of North Asia but contemporary cultural styles. The characters are 'cute-ified' with large round faces and eyes with bright saturated colour, there are no straight lines in the piece, much like advertising mascots from Korea and Japan.

Other work like ko e hala ki hohoko, 2021 by Benjamin Work draw upon Pasifika cultural influences for their work. A large canvas is draped upon the wall and floor, mirroring the break between land and sky. A more spiritual presence can be felt in the work, with the emphasis on the sun/moon rising over the landscape. The colours a stark contrast with black and blues instead of the bright cutesy colours of the other work. It denotes a more serious topic or feeling, though both works are connected by the artists' connection to their heritage.

I enjoy that street art is gaining mainstream appeal in the fine art community, it is a valid form of work that has been left on the outside for too long. Some say that they would wish to remain outside, as the legitimisation of the work denounces its impact by being part of the systems that are often criticised. But again, increasing the diversity of art and thought in the art sphere only seeks to enhance the wealth of knowledge from which people can draw from.

This work is so intertwined with the concept of Tūrangawaewae, it is about place and our relationship to it. Whether spraying directly onto a wall and claiming space, or using heritage as a springboard for work. The graphic style pops and catches attention, and use of colour to create very distinctive moods. I am particularly interested in Works' piece as the installation gives me a lot of inspiration potentially for my own project that I wish to make. The use of blended colour creates an intense backdrop for the lighter elements and figures to pop. Would be interesting to reverse this and see the same effect take place.



Find out more at:

<https://dowse.org.nz/exhibitions/detail/the-most-dedicated-an-aotearoa-graffiti-story>



Benjamin Work
Ko e hala ki Hahoko 2021
acrylic on canvas
Courtesy of the artist

Tanja Jade McMillan (MISERY)
Speaking With Flowers 2021
acrylic and ink on plywood
Courtesy of the artist



Project

Tūrangawaewae as identity/grouping

I want to make something that is part of my communities' cultural practice as a way of grounding myself within it. Usually on November 20, we gather for a vigil on Transgender day of Remembrance. We say the names of all people that have been targeted and killed by hate crime in the last year. By saying the name, we give power back to that person that was taken away.

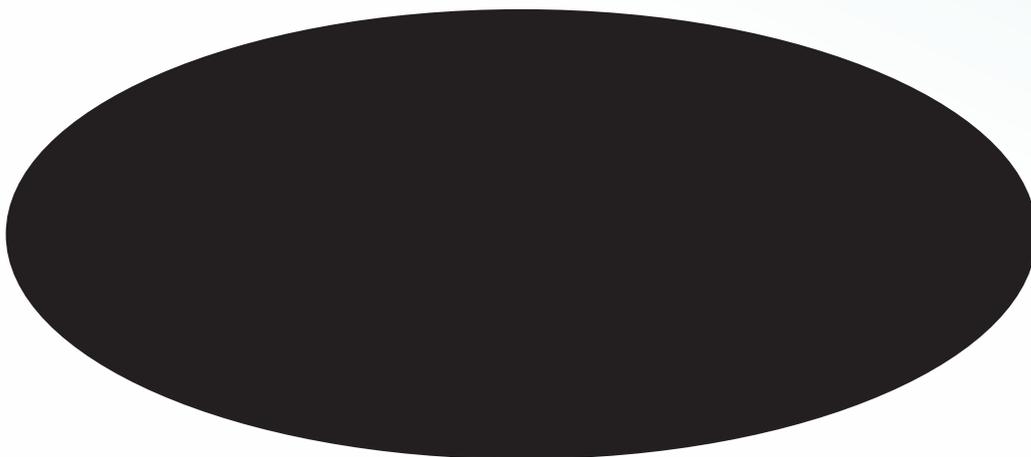
A name in the trans community is incredibly important, most of us pick our own names after coming out – and previous names known as dead names. We create ourselves, which is an immensely powerful image and feeling. When someone uses our dead name, it often is a recognition by the state/external environment that we are not recognised for our true selves.

I wish to create a piece that is in remembrance of these people that died just for being themselves. By writing down their names and displaying them for all to see and experience.

I had the idea of doing the work on a torn piece of bedsheet. This is an object we all experience and have in our house, a universally understood object. Then by morphing a universal object by tearing it, a new meaning can be created, much like how the western concept of binary gender/sex is evolving and being disrupted. I wish to Spray the sheet in a colour scheme of trans and non binary flag colours, taking ownership of the work as of and for the community.

The idea is to use either black marker/spray on stencils of the names. Or on the other hand do it with black paint, watered down and dripping. This would potentially make the marks seep more into the sheet, the name being absorbed/sheltered within the cloth in some way.

I think installing the sheet over a balcony to take in the idea of the scale would be good. I would also want to place an abyss (black circle) at the bottom, almost like it is teetering at the edge of collapse which has been a through line through my previous work in the course. Playing with this idea of holding one another up.



Critique/observations

After talks with lecturers and students, the project as shifted to a performance piece. Continuing to strengthen the thread of holding one another up, I would preform the action of applying the names while trying to not let the sheet touch the ground. This allows space for the awkwardness of just one person alone trying to achieve the task with such a long piece. Embodied action of my tūranga-waewae

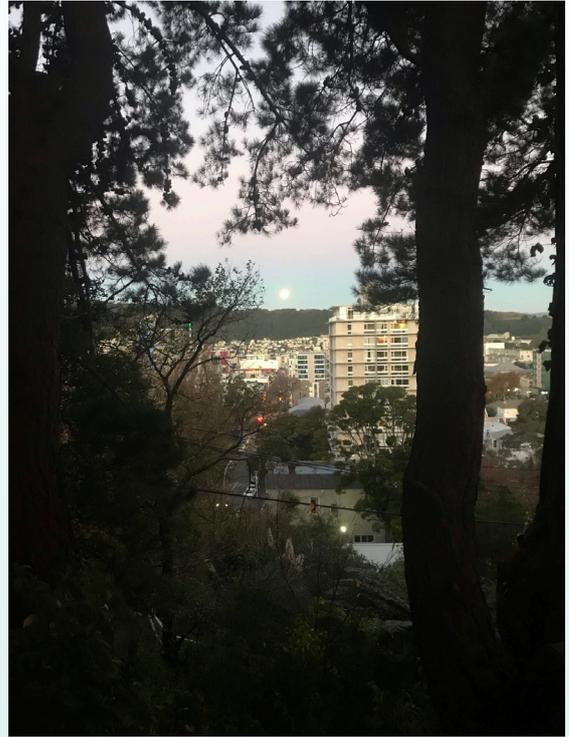
Creating the work

In creating the sheet, I tore down the middle and hung together with eyelets. The sheet is not perfectly flat, which will add to the difficulty of writing comprehensible names. The act of spraying was fun and created a tie dye effect on the sheet, creating a blurring for the audience about how the material was created. I decided to bring back my Dale Harding 'trans anarchy' symbol onto the back, in effort to place the intention of it being me working on this piece. A symbol of power to a marginalised group, that is immediately recognisable to those that know it and one i hold dear.

I decided to perform the piece at night under harsh lighting, creating a sense of scrutiny, I being the only thing lit up in the surrounding. This is exaggerated by performing in a natural setting with a lack of natural light sources. I painted a pallet (to do the performance on) as black as I could to draw attention away/create the abyssal feeling. Then I had a friend call out names to me as I tried to paint with watered down acrylic onto the sheet. The dripping paint added to the difficulty and embodiment of the task, and in the end we stayed out about an hour and half and wrote down 150 names.



Making the sheet



Location

Aftermath

Reflections

This was quite an emotional work to produce, but I am proud of it. I feel I know have a piece of material culture to connect me to my community and strengthen my resolve in my activism. If I were to continue with this work and expand upon it, I would bring in an audience aspect, and try it in different locations, it was even suggested to perform in places where the hate crimes took place. It could even be nice to have a more optimistic companion piece involving more people helping to hold the work up during the performance.

Others have noted that it was an affecting piece of work and I am glad the emotional meaning was put forward through the performance.

A coworker said this work reminded them of a flag, and the importance we place on the statehood of the flag. When a flag is raised/taken down it is never allowed to touch the ground – it is sacrosanct and must be treated with the upmost respect. We give the object its power through our perception of it.

In terms of the conceptual linking with other artists work, I drew from Dale Harding, Pati Solomona, and Yoko Ono. Harding's work within an indigenous context, reifying symbols, and materials to comment on social issues connected with me. Along with my wish to continue my practice of using spray paint in my work, I enjoy the immediate nature of the application. I also brought into it symbols of repetition through colour and the trans symbol. Yoko Ono's Fluxus and performance pieces allowed me to think about performance to engage with subjective experience and forcing people to embody certain actions. Doing a performance was an uncomfortable space I had to put myself in, I do not like being in front of the camera. By forcing myself to adhere to a ruleset I set out for myself, I could create the desired action and effect/affect.

Lastly Pati Solomona had the greatest influence on the work. The immediate comparison is discussing the queer experience through the lens of our own communities. Solomona puts a lot of emphasis on the performance of their culture/gender as this is how we choose to present ourselves to the world, and in turn ground ourselves within it. Working within this shared experience, we bring small marginal communities together. It also answers a question posed during his artist model, who do I make art for? It is resolutely myself.