

Annotated Bibliography Notes for Curatorial Strategies.

Date: Friday 1 May 2015

**Inspiration: The fight for the return of Maoro by Kahurangi Nganeko Minhinnick of Ngaati Te Ata Waiohua**

Art on the Pā: Art, Community, Activation within Marae  
by Amiria Puia-Taylor

There are a few significant reasons for my interests in the marrying and unison of applying contemporary art practices to the traditional world of marae and spaces of indigenous people. I am interested in how we manage people and contemporary art to tell stories, how sacred spaces used to be and should once again be the pinnacle starting point of meaningful discussions of ancient history, its people and the impact these korero have on New Zealanders positively.

One reason why such discourse must take place is by turning up the volume on the silenced or forgotten stories and histories to help them formulate into common knowledge and readily practiced, embraced and appreciated by all. There is a differentiation between what Kaitiakitanga (Guardianship) means to Māori as opposed to what Kaitiakitanga means to New Zealanders. Although they share a mutualistic protection code in protecting the land, this documentary on 'The fight for the return of Maoro by my Nan Kahurangi (Dame) Nganeko Minhinnick' featured on Waka Huia is a stand alone classification of Kaitiakitanga in the eyes of <sup>1</sup>Ahi kā just like every leader, kuia and/or kaumatua of marae from all over New Zealand, same as matai over the lands in Samoa, or Makea in the Cook Islands. <sup>2</sup>There are various viewpoints that can feed this discussion, this can be socially, politically, environmentally, ethically, scientifically consciously and/or creatively. These viewpoints employ all people to act in a way they know and understand.

My ruruhi mentions names of our wahi tapu for the world to hear unto which are not recorded on any piece of paper or compiled in any textbook I own but readily available on Youtube. These sights stretch back 500 years or more to where our ancestors walked distances to bury their deceased. This knowledge she entrusted to us all is for us to learn to understand and gain consciousness over. When I first watched this piece while on my first ever visit to Rarotonga to research my Cook Island Ancestry, it happened to be the only time I got onto the internet. There at the cafe I am sent a link to this documentary sent from my nan herself. Not only did it make me homesick, I believe it was a tohu (sign) that I needed to be reminded of our family's struggle. I cried the rest of my visit, mindful and aware of my family in the islands, their lifestyle did not suffer the way my Maori family did. Their freedom to live off the

---

<sup>1</sup> 2009. Ahi-kā-roa has moved to <http://ahikaroa.wordpress.com>. <http://ahi-ka-roa.blogspot.com/>.

<sup>2</sup> Hutchings, Jessica and Angeline Greensil. *Māori and the Environment: Kaitiaki*, Wellington: Huia, 2010.

land was an everyday practice, the animals they kept and the crops they grew were their sustenance. I was completely inspired by Cook Island culture, although very colonized and conservative, the beauty in caring for the land was not a struggle the way it was in New Zealand. I knew my job was back in New Zealand. There was much work to do.

Coming home I knew there was strength in contemporary arts advocating for Kaitiakitanga. The influence of the evolving digital world may in fact change the way we see ourselves as Kaitiaki. Through film, we can document and capture the words of our kaumatua and kuia just as Waka Huia have. Through music and literature we can create an impact as to how people will interpret that piece of film and the way they feel about our environmental issues. The education of these stories, just as Ruruhi had growing up on the marae is the point of difference of learning, the marae stands as the place of knowledge much like how we see our local library or tertiary full of experts in education. Marae too have this. Seeing as she was only 9 years old when she took up this role to understand the paramountcy of questioning local and national authorities, the marae proved to be the unceremonious way of learning. We could apply our creativity through weaving, through harvesting food, mahi kapahaka, making kākahu out of natural fibres and walking the ara (waterways along the water) or out fishing, our young people can connect with our elderly to spark dialogue that will feed our youths' minds about what it means to be a Kaitiaki but my being on Marae. I think that it is through our younger generation, in their groups of friends, through their social media networks and their interests that this will engage more people to have an understanding of Kaitiakitanga or what it means to be aware. Aiding my ruruhi as she demonstrates that the fight must go on, with peoples talents and strengths there may be more than one answer to how we could have our wahi tapu returned.