

He Pounamu Ko Āu: Celebrating a mana wahine Māori narrative

My master's is a kaupapa Māori creative, practice-led study that explores my wahine Māori identity. I expound on my journey through moving image, mōteatea (traditional Māori chant, sung poetry), ambient sound, and installation, sharing my healing process of overcoming the adversity of colonisation and the impacts it has had on me as a wāhine Māori. On an artistic level, my research showcases the wahine Māori worldview through film. I use my maternal whakapapa (genealogy) to celebrate intergenerational wāhine talent. As a finale, I honour my Māori creativity through an exhibition: an immersive experience installation at St Paul's Gallery at Auckland University of Technology. Delving deeper into my research, I explore the application of a mana wāhine Māori paradigm, drawing knowledge from whakapapa, whakawhānaungatanga (process of establishing relationships) and wairuatanga (spirituality). My understanding is supplemented with personal experiences, empowering my wāhine Māori pūrākau (stories). Moreover, applying a conceptual identity framework of a pounamu (jade, nephrite) pūrākau methodology (developed by my mother, Dr Alvina Jean Edwards) reinforces my Te Ao Māori worldview understanding and ways of knowing. Further, the pounamu pūrākau methodology provides a valuable lens to review my experimental and explorative moving-image practice. It guided me to my whenua in Te Waipounamu (South Island), activating my art-making process. Finally, Papatūānuku (mother earth) is my atua (god) who is chosen for her healing character and represents a central mana wahine figure within my wahine Māori pūrākau. In this presentation, I will discuss the pounamu pūrākau methodology and the creative methods I took to create all the components for the final exhibition He Pounamu Ko Āu.



Edwards, A. J. (2020). *Blood Quantum' A Pūrākau approach to understanding the impact of "Blood Quantum" in Māori Identity'* [Doctoral Thesis, The University of Waikato]. <https://hdl.handle.net/10289/13766>

Still image of moving image of composite reimagined pounamu. Final Exhibition, He Pounamu Ko Āu. Single channel projection on wall. HD Video. Colour. 4.34mins. River Kohatu Installation. St Pauls Gallery Three, AUT City Campus. 5th September 2022. Auckland. Photography by Emily Parr.