

ABSTRACT

Applying Atua Māori Scientific and Technological Innovation in the Design and Construction of a Pātaka Mātauranga Story-house

Zena Elliott

Keywords: Mana wahine, Whakairo, Pūrākau, Kaupapa Māori, Mātauranga, Rongoā, Pātaka

The research seeks to understand the impacts of colonisation on wahine whakairo through mana wahine theory. “Orooro te toki na Hine-tua-hoanga” It is through the lens of a toki (adze), originally shaped and sharpened by atua wahine Hine-Tua-Haonga that we may reclaim, reimagine, and reshape our past, present, and future. The research inquiry adopts a pūrākau methodology that functions simultaneously with practice-led research and kaupapa Māori theory. The key research findings are carved and painted components that are part of a wider collective and hononga (connect) to construct a pātaka mātauranga story-house for communities to gather and wānanga. The design and construction of a contemporary carved story-house, that encompasses and connects mātauranga Māori past, present, and future, aims to provide an archive of indigenous knowledge that is relevant to our time and space. Contemporary lived experiences and information is embodied on the inside and outside of the structure through the application of customary and contemporary methods and materials. Because the creative process involves using repurposed or rescued ancient native timber, I realised there was a need to innovate a rongoā to support the wood for construction and to withstand natural deterioration. During the research, a rongoā embodied with ethical Māori values was created to function as a satin finish for carved taonga and to help restore repurposed or damaged rākau within Māori architecture and whakairo. This unique rongoā is a sustainable and natural remedy that can be applied within the marae restoration and creative industries. Contemporary whakairo practitioners could seal, heal, and restore the rākau used for building construction or carving. The ingredients within this rongoā are derived from the atua, making it a supreme sealant, and protectant that reduces decay. The rongoā rākau will be presented through a creative exhibition that showcases a small component of the pātaka mātauranga story-house.