

# Tātara E Maru Ana The Sacred Rain Cape of Waiapu

**Natalie Robertson**

**St Paul St Galleries One and Two  
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Centuries ago, Tāmokai of the inland Te Aowera people spoke to his kinsman Kōkere and said: “Hoake tāua ki te Waiapu tātara e maru ana—Let us go to Waiapu, where the rain cape is thick.” This proverbial reference to a woven rain cape, usually made of harakeke (Phormium tenax), speaks of the shelter provided by the richly forested Waiapu valley, here on the East Coast of Aotearoa. The image of prosperity is reinforced at the end of the first verse of the Horouta Waka pātere composed by Arapeta Awatere: *Kei Waiapu te tainga o te riu o Horouta, Ko te iwi tēnā Ngāti Porou, Tātara e maru ana* which refers to the Waiapu where the emptying of the Horouta canoe took place, and to the beginnings of Ngāti Porou around the river, where they lived in great numbers. The Horouta waka is renowned for bringing kūmara to Waiapu, where this prized crop was extensively cultivated.

According to Tā Āpirana Ngata: “...the Waiapu river in its lower reaches made up for its steep, broken and sometimes violent course by the great extent of cultivable land on both banks backed by terraces suitable for pa sites. Hence the great development of the population there, which drew from Tāmokai of the inland Aowera tribe the cry, “*Hoake taua ki Waiapu ki tatara e maru ana*”. When the words were first uttered by Tāmokai, he imagined a sanctuary, a safe haven for rising generations. With abundant food cultivations, freshwater springs, ample material wealth, and a flourishing culture, Te Riu o Waiapu was indeed a haven. Today, the Waiapu River is in the midst of a century-long catastrophic environmental disaster due to deforestation. Waiapu Kōkā

I neherā, i mea atu a Tāmokai o te hapū o Te Aowera ki tōna whanaunga a Kōkere “Hoake tāua ki te Waiapu tātara e maru ana”. Ko te whakatauaaki nei e whakahuahua ana i te tātara, he momo kākahu i hangaia mā te harakeke, he whakatauaaki e pā ana ki te huhua o te wao i te Riu o Waiapu, he wāhi i roto i te Tairāwhiti. Kei roto i ngā kupu o te pātere a Arapeta Awatere e whakaū ana i te kōrero mo te huhua o te takiwā nei te Riu o Waiapu: “*Kei Waiapu te tainga o te riu o Horouta. Ko te iwi tēnā ko Ngāti Porou, Tātara e maru ana*”. Ko ngā kupu nei, he kōrero mo te taunga o te waka tapu a Horouta ki Waiapu, i reira i whakangitia hoki te waka. Mai konei, ka timata ko te orokohanga o te iwi nui tonu a Ngāti Porou. E rongonui ana hoki te waka tapu a Horouta mo te haringa mai o te kūmara ki roto i te takiwā o Waiapu.

E ai ki a Tā Apirana Ngata “ahakoa te poupou, te pākarukaru, me te hūkerikeri o te rere o te awa o Waiapu ka hua tonu he whenua pai mo te whakatipu kai i ngā tahataha o te awa, ā, ka hua tonu he parehua, he whenua pai mo te whakatū pā. Nā wai rā ka pupū ake te tini me te mano tāngata i reira, nā koia te taketakenga mai o ngā kupu a Tāmokai o te hapū noho waenga parae a Te Aowera “*Hoake taua ki Waiapu ki tatara e maru ana*”. Nā te whakahuahua o wēnei kupu ka puta te whakaaro i a Tāmokai mo te whenua haumaruru mo ngā uri whakaheke. Ko te Riu o Waiapu hoki taua whenua haumaruru, nā āna kai maha, nā āna puna wai, nā āna whai rawa katoa, me āna tikanga, kawa huhua

Hūhua is an ancestral mother of many; a river of many female leaders. In response to mass erosion, Te Runanganui o Ngāti Porou iwi and hapū have set forth a one hundred-year plan for the revitalization of the river called Waiapu Kōkā Hūhua in partnership with the Gisborne District Council and Ministry of Primary Industries. They agreed on a shared vision for the restoration of healthy land, rivers and people.

When I first heard of the Waiapu Kōkā Hūhua plan, I immediately wondered how one hundred years from now, would people know what changes had occurred unless there was a visual record? In the 2012 Waiapu River Catchment Study Final Report, hapū identified 'desired state' environmental indicators including that 'Underground springs are used and protected'. Elders speak about times when there was 'a tuna in every puna', an eel in every spring to keep the water clean. Assisted by oral histories and land court records, I work with my Te Whanau-a-Pokai hapū around Tikapa Marae to locate freshwater springs and other sites of significance and markers in the land, to visually record their current state. This series of photographs and video is a direct response to the Waiapu Kōkā Hūhua plan.

How do we find hope and optimism in the face of unimaginably large-scale disasters? The scale of the Waiapu River erosion disaster requires many generations of restorative work. Yet healing the tributaries and freshwater springs of the catchment is conceivable in shorter timeframes. Our elders who once used freshwater springs maintaining strict tikanga (protocols), retell stories that inspire me. It is imperative to find collective ways to activate change to uplift the mauri (lifeforce) of the water in their lifetimes. Investigating ancestral places associated with water is important because they reveal the cultural and ecological

katoa. Ko te īngoa taketake o Waiapu ko Waiapu Kōkā Huhua, he kōkā nō te tini me te mano, he wahi i noho ai ngā ariki mareikura maha hoki. Heoi, i wēnei rā, nā te whakatopetope ngahere i ngā rau tau kua pahure e raru ai te taiao o te awa. Nō reira, i whakaritea te Runanga Nui o Ngāti Porou me ngā hapū o te Riu o Waiapu i tētahi rautaki mo te whakaoratanga o te awa e kīa nei ko Waiapu Kōkā Huhua. He mahinga tahi hoki i waenganui te Kaunihera o Turanganui a Kiwa me te Manatū Ahuwhenua i runga i te whakaaro kotahi mo te orangatonutanga o te whenua, o te awa, me ngā uri.

I tōku rongotanga atu mo tēnei rautaki a Waiapu Kōkā Hūhua, i puta mai te whakaaro i au me pēhea te tangata e mōhio i ngā rerekētanga mai ngā rautau ki mua tae rāno ki wēnei rā ina kāore i a rātau he rikoatatanga whakaata? I roto i te 2012 Waiapu River Catchment Study Final Report, i meatia atu ngā hapū i ngā tūmanakotanga mo te taiao, ko te whakamahinga me te kaitiakitanga o ngā puna wai rarowhenua. I meatia hoki ngā pakeke o te takiwā nei e pā ana ki ngā wā o te tuna, arā i te wā i reira ngā tuna i roto i ia puna wai, ko te mahi a te tuna ko te whakapai i te puna wai. Ko aku mahi i te taha o toku hapū o Te Whānau a Pōkai i Tikapa Marae ko te tohu i ngā puna wai Māori, me ngā wāhi whai take, me te rikoatanga a ataata nei i te āhua o wēnei wāhi mā te whakamahi i ngā kōrero tukuiho me ngā tuhinga a te kōti whenua. Ko wēnei whakaahuatanga me ngā whakaaturanga katoa he whakautu mo te rautaki Waiapu Kōkā Hūhua.

E pēhea ai tātau rapa i te tūmanakotanga me māriutanga roto i ngā parekuratanga nui? Nā te rahi o te horowhenua i Waiapu Awa, e kore e tutuki ai te mahi whakaora i te awa i roto i te tipuranga kotahi, engari i roto i ngā tipuranga maha pea e taea te tutuki. Heoi, e taea pea te whakaora i ngā puna wai Māori

mātauranga-a-iwi (tribal knowledge) of our tīpuna (ancestors), within tribal organizational boundaries marked by genealogies. A measure of a return to this way of thinking, is that water is looked after.

Seeking hope, I identified a distinctive eastern Tairāwhiti language of light, where the rising sun is of particular importance. For example, Porourangi was born in the crimson red-tipped dawn: his full name is Porou-ariki Mata-tara-a-whare, te tuhimāreikura o Rauru. This observance of the quality of light is a part of our history. I apply this thinking photographically.

*Tera te haeata e takiri ana mai i runga o Hikurangi!*

*Behold the first light of dawn is reflected from the crest of Hikurangi!*

This line from an East Coast men's ceremonial haka taparahi (haka performed without weapons) called *Kura Tiwaka Taua* is adapted from a portion of the ancient Tākitimu canoe chant that is over seven hundred years old. In this Ngāti Porou version, the word 'te haeata' communicates the significance of first light as it strikes the ancestral mountain Hikurangi. This observance has guided the dawn photographs. The sun rises directly through the Waiapu river mouth to touch the summit of Hikurangi unimpeded by hills only twice a year in May and again in late July to early August. The triptych and the red-tipped dawn photograph were taken at dawn on 6th August 2020. In the triptych, there is a small lapse of time between each image, as the sun first strikes Hikurangi in the right-hand photograph, then Pōhautea in the centre, and the coastline on the left. For these, I used a 5"x4" 1953 Linhof Technika sheet film camera—the type with bellows and a

me ngā kōawaawa i roto i te hā-awa i te wā iti noa. Ka tipu mai te hihiritanga me te manawanui i roto i au i roto i ngā kōrero a ōku pakeke e pā ana ki ngā tikanga o te whakamahi i ngā puna wai Māori. He mea nui te tiro tiro haere i ngā wāhi whai take e whai pānga ana ki te wai no te mea ka whakaatutia te mātauranga-ā-iwi a ngā tīpuna mo te taiao, mo ngā tikanga o ngā wāhi-ā-iwi. Ko te tieki me te manaaki i te wai te hua mo te huri atu ki tēnei momo āhua whakaaro.

Nā te tūmanako nui, i kitea e au i tētahi reo whai māramatanga taketake ake ki te Tairāwhiti, he reo e whai pānga ana te haeata o te rā. Ko te īngoa o Porourangi Arikini tētahi o ngā tauira o tēnei reo taketake, i whānau mai a ia i roto i te ata wherowhero, ā, ka tapaina ko tōna īngoa tūturu ko Porou-ariki Mata-tara-a-whare, te tuhimareikura o Rauru. Ko wēnei kōrero mo te rā me mārāma he kōrero tuku iho no mātau. Koia nei aku whakaaro mo te tango whakaahua.

Koia nei tētahi o ngā whiti ō roto i tētahi o ngā haka taparahi i roto i te Tairāwhiti a *Kura Tiwaka Taua*, ko wētahi o ngā kupu i tangohia mai tētahi oriori mo te waka tapu o Tākitimu e whitu rau te tawhito. I roto i ngā kupu a Ngāti Porou, nā te kupu 'te haeata' ka whakamōhiotia te tino whai pānga o te ata hāpara me ana hihī e pā atu ana ki te Maunga Tapu a Hikurangi. Koia nei te kitenga i arahi atu i ngā whakaahua o te ata. Ka whiti te rā i waenga nui te ngutu awa o Waiapu kia taea atu ōna hihī ki te taumata o Hikurangi, e rua noa iho ngā wā ka kitea whānuitia ngā hihi o te rā i runga i te mata o te maunga, i te Mei me te takiwā o te Hūrae-Akuhata. I hopungia ngā whakaahua tokotoru me te whakaahua ata wherowhero i te ata o te 6 o Akuhata 2020. I roto i ngā whakaahua tokotoru, he nekenga wā iti kei waenga i ia whakaahua, ā, ko te rā me ōna hihī e pā mai ana i te

hood over the viewfinder. This is a slow and deliberate method. The majority of the black and white photographs are made in the same manner, as I want the negatives to still be here in one hundred years.

In this exhibition, I also draw on historical photographs of the Waiapu valley, taken by earlier photographers, to illuminate past lives and landscapes in the spiral of time. Today, I photograph for past-present-future generations, beyond my own lifespan. My desire comes from a wellspring of aroha for whenua, awa and moana, for the people who are the hau kāenga living ‘at home’ and for those like me, who renew ancestral connections. As a Ngāti Porou person, I had to begin with myself, re-invigorating my relationship with land and river, by learning from the ground up and being in the flow of the water.

The weather-worn kōruru carving from the Tikapa-a-Hinekōpeka Marae whare tūpuna Pokai is mounted above the sentinel mountain Pōhautea at the Waiapu River mouth. On the morning of November 6th 2020, this exhibition opened with a blessing by Archdeacon Morehu Te Maro—widely known as Papa Boycie. Afterwards, Tairāwhiti Museum staff invited us to view the kōruru recently placed in their care. For over one hundred years, this Iwirākau-style whakairo adorned the apex of Pokai, until Tikapa Marae was restored with new whakairo by Lionel Matenga in 2018. Papa Boycie has permitted this kōruru to take up a new role here in this exhibition, looking out across the many of the same landscapes he could see from atop Pokai.

– Natalie Robertson  
November 2020

mata o Hikurangi i te whakaahua taha matau, ko te whakaahua o Pohautea Maunga kei waenganui, ka waiho atu ko te ākau ki te taha mauī. Whakamahia e au te kāmera rīpene Linhof Technika e 5”x4” te matanga mai te tau 1953, he kāmera whai pērō me te uhi i runga i te mataaho. He tukunga pōturi tēnei, ā, ko te nuinga o ngā whakaahua pango me te mā kua whakaahuatia pēnei, i te mea me noho ora tonu te tōrarotanga i roto i ngā rautau kei tua i a tātau.

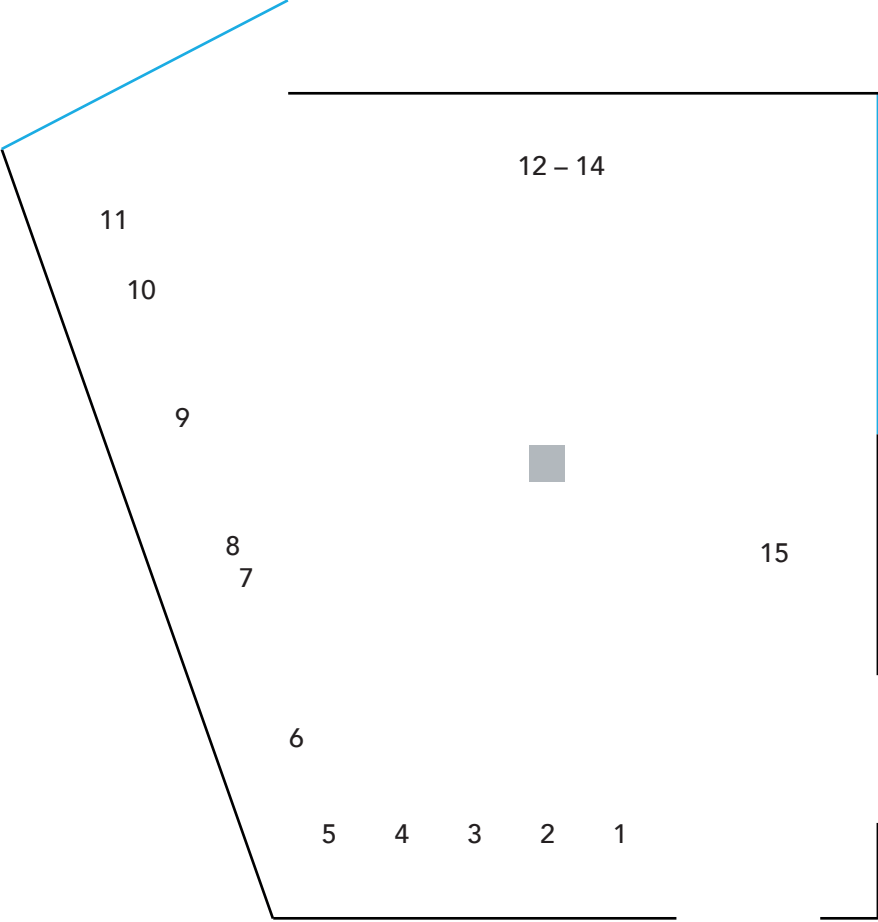
I roto i tēnei whakaaturanga, ka whakamahi au i ngā whakaahua tawhito o te Riu o Waiapu nā ngā kaiwhakaahua o mua i hopu ki te whakaahua atu i ngā rerekētanga o te taiao me te āhua o te whenua i roto i ngā tau kua hipa. E whakaahuatia ana awau i wēnei rā mo ngā tipuranga o mua, ngā tipuranga o naianei, me ngā uri whakaheke. He hiahia oku te whakamahi i ngā pukenga kei au hei whakatinana atu i te aroha mo te whenua, te awa, te moan, mo te hau kāenga me ngā tāngata e rite nei ki au, te hunga e whakaoratia anō ngā hononga whakapapa. He uri au nā Porourangi rāua ko Hamo te Rangī, ko te whakaihiihi ōku ake hononga ki te whenua me te awa te whaingā matua, mā te ako, mā te tipu mai te rekereke ki runga me te taka me te rere ki rō wai.

E whakairingia ko te kōruru mai te whare tūpuna o te marae a Tikapa-a-Hinekōpeka, a Pōkai, i runga ake i te whakaahua o Pohautea Maunga i te taha o te ngutu awa o Waiapu. I te ata o te 6 o Noema 2020, nā te pāpā te Ati Rīkōna a Morehu Te Maro (e mōhiotia whānuitia ko Papa Boycie) i whakatapungia, i whakatūwherangia hoki te whakaaturanga nei. A muri iho, i pōwhiritia mai ngā kaimahi o te Whare Pupuri Tāonga o te Tairāwhiti ki te kite atu i te kōruru katahi anō ka riro i a rātau ki te manaaki me te tieki. Koia nei te kōruru i whakairingia ki runga te whare tipuna o Pokai,

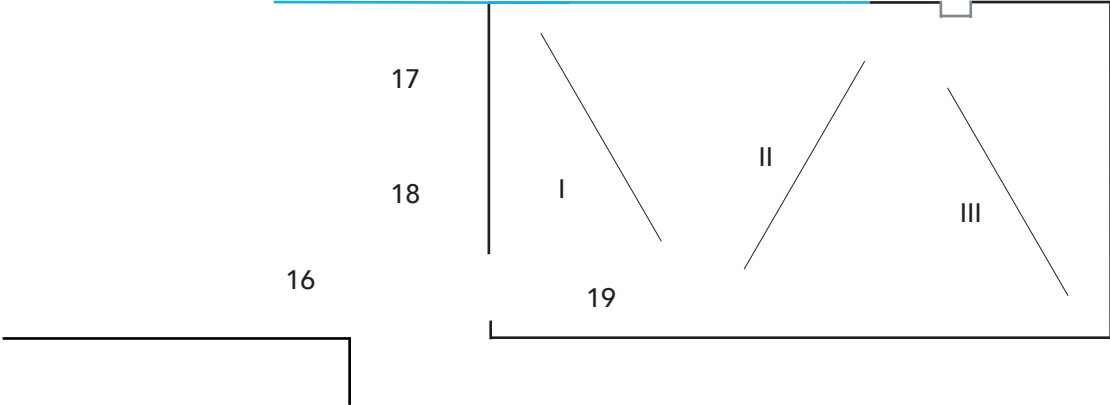
he momo whakairo nā te tipuna a  
Iwirākau, tae rānō ki te tau 2018, i te  
wā i whakairingia ngā whakairo hou i  
runga i te whare, nā Lionel Matenga  
i tā. Kua whakaaengia a Papa Boycie  
kia whakairingia tēnei kōruru, kia whai  
wāhi ai ki tēnei whakaaturanga. Tiro  
whakawaho ana ki te taiao e kitea nei e  
ia i runga i a Pōkai.

– Te Reo translation by Hunaara  
Waerehu

Floorplan



Gallery One



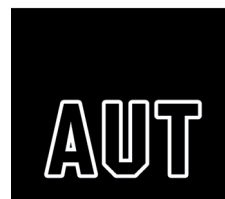
Foyer

Gallery Two

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- 1 *Puna wai, Kuri a Pawa*, 2020
- 2 *Puna wai on Taumata o Tūwhata, Kawenga Wahi a Te Aowhiua*, 2020
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- 4 *Puna wai (possibly Ngākōhuru-amomona) in the vicinity of the former site of the marae of Hineauta, Kawenga Wahi a Te Aowhiua*, 2020
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- 6 *Te Puna o Rangitauāki, Te Rimu*, 2018
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- 10 *Waiapu Bridge pier, ki uta*, 2020
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- 15 *A Red-Tipped Dawn — Pōhautea at Waiapu Ngutu Awa (7th August 2020)*, 2020
- 16 *Camera on the deck — the first known photographs of Port Awanui, William F. Crawford, 1887 / 2020. (State funeral of Ngāti Porou military leader Major Rāpata Wahawaha, Tuesday July 13, 1897)*
- 17 *Waiapu Ngutu Awa, Whites Aviation, 1951 / 2020*
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◀ ST PAUL ST



TE WĀNANGA ARONUI  
O TĀMAKI MAKAU RAU

## **Tātara e Maru Ana** **The Sacred Rain Cape of Waiapu**

Exhibition Guide

St Paul St Gallery  
Auckland University of Technology

### Visit

Level 1, WM Building  
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Tuesday – Friday, 10am – 5pm  
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