



# Strands

Weaving a New Fabric



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E kore e taea e te whenu kotahi ki te  
raranga i te whāriki  
kia mōhio tātou kiā tātou.  
Mā te mahi tahi ō ngā whenu,  
mā te mahi tahi ō ngā kairaranga,  
ka oti tenei whāriki.

The tapestry of understanding  
can not be woven by one strand alone.  
Only by the working together of strands  
and the working together of weavers  
will such a tapestry be completed.

**Whakatauāki from Kūkupa Tirikatene**

Textiles dominate our daily life yet such is their ubiquity that they remain largely unremarked upon and removed from our consciousness. The sheets we sleep between, the kilim underfoot, the bath towel, the tea towel, the upholstery on our chair, the clothes on our back, all are made from woven material, but in our modern urban environment we are so far removed from the processes of their manufacture that we no longer recognise them as weaving. Industry, technology and globalisation have distanced us from understanding and connecting to the very fabric that gives warmth and comfort to our lives.

**Strands: weaving a new fabric** is the first exhibition in a proposed series at Objectspace that will explore and examine the current state of a variety of craft processes that are trans cultural. By bringing together a diverse group of hand-weavers and a sampling of their work, **Strands** will make weaving, the earliest of technologies, more visible.

While machinery has taken over the production of the cloth of our everyday existence, making it cheap and plentiful, the makers included in this exhibition strive to make something that machines cannot. Each has their own unique practice but all have in common strategies to adapt this heritage skill for contemporary application creating pieces that are relevant, useful, visually appealing and desirable.

Fundamentally all weaving is the simple process of interlacing of two groups of threads at right angles in order to create something more substantial, a new material, and the more clearly that this original formation is preserved the stronger the weaving. In contrast to other methods of fabric making such as knitting and crochet which form a single filament structure, weaving is a marriage of two oppositional strands that through their union become stronger than their component parts. Classical Greek philosopher Plato saw it as a metaphor for a strong society proposing that the integration of the diverse characteristic of its citizens would create a harmonious world that offers shelter, protection and fulfilment in which all people could live their lives according to their nature. Within Te Ao Maori, raranga is not only literally weaving but is also used metaphorically to describe the building of strength of whanau, hapu and iwi.

In the weaving process the vertical strands, known as the warp, are stationary, while the horizontal strands, known as the weft (or alternatively filling, woof, pick) are in motion; both components require different qualities. Because the warp is held under high tension during the entire process of weaving the material of the warp must be of a superior quality, tough and tenacious, while the material of the weft can be softer, more pliable. The warp is created and set up first and requires forethought and precision because the concept of the whole finished piece is embedded within this first step which creates the foundation on which the work can be developed. Weavers often describe the looming up of the warp as mathematical, requiring sharpness of mind and concentration. In contrast the filling is most often experienced as meditative. The weft weaves in and out of the warp, rhythmic, fluid and floating it generates the surface texture whether by taking up a position in the foreground as in weft faced weaving or serving to raise the profile of the warp as in warp faced cloths or sharing one for one as in plain weave. Whatever the desired finish, together the warp and the weft form a dynamic unity, realising a new entity created from separate strands that are working together while retaining their own identifiable individual qualities.

The weavers we have brought together in this exhibition recognise the universal humanity inherent in the process of weaving and while they represent a variety of traditions, practices, skills, aesthetics, training and motivations they

share common threads. All embrace the craft of weaving as a strategy to examine and challenge contemporary issues of globalisation, consumption and value. Globalisation is seen as a double edged sword; on the one hand the accessibility of global communication networks, such as YouTube, have contributed to the sharing of knowledge and skills, creating opportunities for the sharing of craft practice and process, while on the other hand the lack of borders, the instant sharing of information and trends which amalgamate and homogenise distinctive local markers is leading to an all pervasive universal sameness.

Weaving can be understood as a political act. By employing and referencing traditional weaving practices in their work makers such as Molima Pihigia (Nuiean), Soe Meh Nga (Karenni) Louisa Humphry (Kiribati), Prem Tyler (Pakeha), Kohai Grace (Maori) assert the value of what is unique and distinctive in their cultural heritage. But while tradition informs their work it should not be dismissed as pre-industrial, rather for these practitioners the handmade is a sharp contrast to slick mass production, offering resistance to the ongoing commoditisation of art, craft and design. Their handwork raises issues of individuality and our need to create our own narrative in the face of the encroaching global world and its generic productions.

Handweaving makes no sense in terms of our economic system which seeks to reduce the labour component in production and promote the standardised regularity of the machine made. In contrast the contemporary resurgence of the art and skill of weaving derives an alternative economic value from the act of being made by hand; denoting craftsmanship. Crafting something well requires time; time to acquire the skills, to practice, to develop ideas, to make mistakes, to refine and hone your adeptness. For Christopher Duncan and Patricia Bosshard Browne weaving is a daily activity while Karl Leonard and Alison Francis also share their skills by teaching others. These practitioners affirm that much of the allure of weaving lies in the development and mastery of the age old processes of the craft.

Authenticity and sustainability confer economic value in an emerging alternative values based system. The natural limits of hand production confer exclusivity, while knowing who the maker is, is an attractive attribute which gives a sense of community and place. Weaving is being reclaimed in the service of this new modernity by emerging practitioners like Marta Katarzyna Buda who embraces weaving as a way to convey colour, shape and texture to objects for the contemporary domestic environment and Rachel Long who makes wearable woven “livelihood” necklaces. As a fibre artist Michelle Mayn is mindful of the sustainability of her materials, chosen from the natural world, while Shona Tawhiao’s contemporary renditions

of raranga woven garments confer an authentic modern Maori identity on their wearer. Natural and hand dyed local wools are the material of choice for many working with new materials, while discarded, recycled and reused materials provide an alternative sustainable strategy for Czarina Wilson’s cloak, Molima Pihigia’s bread bag basket and Christopher Duncan’s blanket incorporating repurposed Sari silk.

These weavers have found contemporary application for the heritage craft of weaving and are giving it a fashionable moment. We have canvassed some of its social and cultural relationships but a question remains about why people are attracted to weaving, what gives it personal resonance? I would contend that it lies in the intimate relationship between cloth and the body. Significantly woven lengths of fabric are often described as wraps, a word that encapsulates important actions which are part of the human relationship with cloth: swaddling, enfolding, binding, wrapping, containing. The experience of these words is deeply ingrained and integrated into our physical memory and bring with them some of the most primal of life’s experiences with their suggestions of comforting, warming, healing and ordering. While these attributes are easily read in the garments and lengths of cloth in this exhibition they also inhabit the other pieces drawing on a sense of the familiar so that the cushion offers comfort, the woven vessel offers containment, and the decorative neck and head pieces binding us to our culture.

Understanding and recognition of weaving may well have slipped from our conscious awareness but our physical bodies do remember the primal feel of textile giving it resonance beyond the visual, igniting memories of warmth, security, protection and belonging. Metaphorically weaving can be envisaged as the embodiment of our humanity and our society, integrating the many diverse and seemingly contradictory facets of our nature. Weaving binds opposites; strength with softness, the rational head with the intuitive heart, the masculine with the feminine, harmonising these dualities into a rich and durable new fabric.

**Doris de Pont, Curator Objectspace**



**Kohai Grace**  
Ngāti Toa Rangatira, Ngāti Porou



Kohai believes her interest for Māori art stemmed from childhood, having been taken along by her parents to the Māori Artist and Writers conferences held annually around Aotearoa (NZ) during the 1970's.

Exposure to māori visual and performing arts in this way, came also with the visits and stay on different marae (common meeting place of the local tribe) where the conferences were held sleeping in wharehau (meeting houses) of which the carved, woven and painted ornamentation within, remained strong visual imagery for Kohai.

Māori art activity amongst her own tribal community where she grew up was an extension of this.

Alongside her family and relatives, Kohai, at a young age, was involved in fundraising activities and developments for the building of a new marae complex; her skills of weaving placing her in a leadership role in the making of tukutuku (woven lattice panels) for the marae's traditional meeting house.

In 1986 Kohai studied on a weaving course held at the Wellington Art Centre.

Over the years she has produced work for various commissions, iwi (tribal) projects, fashion shows, exhibitions and collections held nationally and internationally.

She has been able to travel to some of the exhibition events held abroad to present her work, or on invitation as an artist in residence.

Further study of weaving and art continued at Te Wānanga-o-Raukawa (Māori university), completing the degree in Māori design and art (BDA) under master (tōhunga), weaver and carver Rangi and Erenora Puketapu-Hetet, followed by study at Massey University, completing the Master of Māori Visual Arts (MMVA) under Professor Robert Jahnke.

Kohai has taught weaving at a number of educational institutions around New Zealand, including a long term Director's and teaching position for the degree programme at Te Wānanga-o-Raukawa.

Currently in a tutor position with Whitireia NZ, Kohai relishes the unique opportunity she has to deliver the weaving programme on her marae at Hongoeka, where she also lives, and this year, in 2015, teaching a new stream of the degree programme, namely, the Bachelor in Applied Arts — Toi Poutama (weaving).

## **Tūhaepō**

**2010**

flax fibre (muka), dye (rit black, black thread (wefts))

The fibre of the flax is extracted from the plant leaf, and rolled on the leg, bringing fibres together to make the warps (io, strands), thus being a customary method of muka (fibre) preparation for the making of garments. This piece is based on customary Māori practices and methods of cloak making. The weaving technique applied is called "whatu aho rua", using two weft pairs, and woven by hand. No looms or machines are used, but a working frame is often used to hold piece in place while it is being woven.

The making of *Tūhaepō* was inspired by the ancient garment type called *pihepihe*, a garment that was worn around the shoulders or the waist.

## **Pari Revisited**

**2006 & 2015**

flax fibre (muka), harakeke (flax), dye (rit, black)

The fibre of the flax is extracted from the plant leaf, and rolled on the leg, bringing fibres together to make the warps (io, strands). The same process is used to make the wefts (aho); used to weave the strands of the cloak or garment together. Harakeke, or flax, has been processed and dyed black; used for raranga (plaiting) at the top of this garment. This piece also incorporates the raranga (plaiting) weave and a "lacey-like" pattern called "māwhitiwhiti". The making of *Pari Revisited* was inspired by the woven pari or bodice, that were popular as costume for women during the emergence of Māori cultural performing groups in the early 1900's. These, often featuring tāniko weaving of geometrical designs, are still made and worn today by kapa haka groups, but tapestry weaving has commonly replaced tāniko.

This piece has been "revisited", being first produced in 2006, and taken up recently to modify and present differently, but still staying in the context of the pari.

## **Tipu Rua**

**2014**

flax fibre (muka), houheria (lace bark), natural dye

Similar to the process described above, but this time only the weft (aho) threads have been rolled together. The warp fibres haven't been rolled together, rather, they have been left as is, and woven together, making this piece look more like a "closely woven" fabric than the other garments do. This was an intentional outcome, and brings softness to this piece. The making of *Tipu Rua* was inspired by the customary (Māori) cloak, and has been woven in the exact same way. Where the cloaks were made and worn to the waist or longer, this garment is intended as a "wrap" for the shoulders, hence its title "*Tipu Rua*", to mean "two shoulders".

I have enjoyed incorporating the materials of houheria (lace-bark) into this piece.



Marta Katarzyna  
Buda



The interaction of energy between maker and materials is very important to me and my process. The idea that something can be made free of any force other than the actions of my body has dictated and directed the mediums I work with. Through weaving I can construct compositions that create dialogues between colour, shape and texture. As a maker I don't see imperfections as mistakes but rather as a reflection of my hand within my work. I'm primarily interested in materials that are the closest to nature; cotton, wool, linen, silk-substances that can be all be formed by hand from one natural state into another. I learnt to weave on an 8 shaft loom in 2007 at University, this was a compulsory part of my Textile Design degree at Massey University.

Although I learnt to weave on a floor loom I have since only used table looms or tapestry looms in my work to date. I have only been more seriously interested in weaving in the last year and a half. In the beginning I was making items for pleasure — for myself or my friends, however after receiving a warm response I have since been making bespoke items such as cushions or bags and also exhibited woven wall hangings which I also make on commission.

For me the most personal choice within the process is my relationship to the materials as these dictate the whole of the weaving and are usually the first decision I make. I see weaving as an extension of painting; a means to convey colour, shape and texture. When I am making a wall hanging I primarily use composition to translate ideas or concepts that I have for the work. I'm very interested in how the harmony of a composition can change with the viewer's relationship to my work. As the relationship develops over time, discomfort with aspects of the work can be soothed to familiarity and vice versa.

I'm excited that the recent resurgence in handmade items and crafts has brought interest and value to traditional ways of making. I feel like we are at a crossroads in our culture where we can no longer deny the damage of mass produced factory items on our world and society and where we can progress by adopting slower ways of making and consuming. I feel weaving is an important part of this as it can be applied to many areas of our life, from clothing to furniture, decorative or utilitarian. I'm hopeful that people are unlearning the bad habits of mass consumerism and are now valuing items that take a long time to make and that will not be replaced quickly.

**Cushion**  
**July 2015**  
undyed wool

Made on a rigid heddle loom, plain weave with hand tufted sphere.

**Cushion**  
**July 2015**  
undyed wool

Made on a rigid heddle loom, plain weave with hand tufted sphere.

**Bag**  
**July 2015**  
linen / cotton warp, raw hemp twine weft  
Made on a rigid heddle loom.





Prem  
Tyler



I love making, textiles, fibres, patterns and colour and grew up with parents that MADE and taught me that I could do the same. I started weaving after being a knitter, sewer and doing other crafts. I love the process and the opportunity to create useful and warm designs. I learnt to weave from a friend who had great experience in the craft. She taught me the technical side of using the loom and then how to work with different materials to weave. Since then I have developed my own style and have been weaving for 25 years and am now a full time weaver. I have sold my work for about 20 years, in Galleries all over NZ and now sell myself from large markets and on line and commissions. I enjoy the relationship with the fibres and with the loom and other tools; it's a totally manual process with the loom essentially the same as those made over the last 200 years. These links creates a real connection for those wearing the pieces. I'm excited about the prospect of weaving by hand as a sustainable craft which has a future in the slow fashion movement and LOVE the process. I encounter a lot of interest in the manual process and I feel there is a turn towards quality, local and handmade now. I use NZ produced fibres to create beautiful garments that are also warm, and teach weaving to others.

### **Chevron winter sun wrap**

**August 2015**

red alpaca / merino warp, gold wool weft

The pattern is called Chevron. The warp in a colour pattern and made in 2 pieces. When woven the fabric is washed to even up the fibres and then finished by hand sewing.

My process is the same for all 3 pieces in the exhibition:

- I make the warp using a warping board, wrapping the warp threads around the pegs on the board in a colour pattern. The warp is made in 2 pieces.
- The warp is then wound on to the back of the loom and threaded in a pattern sequence through the 4 shafts and then the front of the loom ready to weave.
- The fabric is woven one row at a time using shuttles threaded individually and a pedal sequence to create the desired pattern.
- When woven the fabric is washed to even up the fibres and then finished by hand sewing usually.

### **Cuddle Up blanket**

**August 2015**

goat angora warp, merino / possum fur / silk weft

The possum fur in this wool is collected by a man who works primarily as a conservationist in the bush in Aotearoa.

### **Weka feather cape**

**June 2015**

merino / possum fur warp, alpaca / merino weft, weka feathers

The weka feathers were gathered from Cape Foulwind on the west coast of the South Island. They are bunched and hand sewn onto the cape. The pattern is Patiki in the Māori tradition and is the flounder pattern representing providing for others, plenty and favourable times. In the northern hemisphere the pattern is called goose eye which is seen to be protective of the wearer.





Soe Meh  
Nga



Weaving is part of the tradition in the area of Burma that I come from.

My mother taught me when I was a teenager. We were refugees from our village which had been burnt down and we were living close to the Thailand border.

I only weave in my spare time and since I have been part of the Wise Womens Collective I have made some pieces that they have sold. It is difficult to find yarns here in New Zealand that are right for the weaving I do, but I have been experimenting and working with some different materials that have been gifted to the Wise Women.

Weaving connects me to my home and to my family tradition, when I weave I feel I am keeping that alive. I hope my children will follow the tradition.

I am excited about the new technologies and am looking forward to seeing the practice of the other weavers in the exhibition and showing my children, in the hope they will be excited by what is possible.

## **Tunic**

**2015**

cotton, nylon

Densely woven traditional warp faced cloth with the weft firmly beaten into place with an “ena”, a hardwood beater, after every pick. The finished woven panels are hand stitched together and the joins are embellished with hand made cords.

## **Scarf**

**2015**

discarded materials, unknown composition

This is one of two woven on the same warp. This is a pattern often seen in Karenni weaving.

## **Continuous wrap**

**2015**

discarded materials, unknown composition, boucle finish

The WISE collective project is for women from a refugee background, supporting them to develop the necessary knowledge, skills, confidence and resources to start-up or contribute to activities for generating income for their families. As such it is often the recipient of gifted materials such as those used for this piece.





Christopher  
Duncan

The potential of weaving has always fascinated me. I found the wood used in their construction and the musical movements required to operate them very beautiful. My journey to weaving happened in a backwards logic, I progressed from a fashion industry based on a numbers game to the starting point of clothing. It all seemed natural; I had to redefine what use my skillset could be, and my practice and our space, TÜR, is a progression of this. My work currently draws on my past in the garment industry, most of my textiles are turned into kimono type garments where I create strips of cloth that are purpose woven for their place on the body. I incorporate a zero waste thinking into my work, because in 2015 it is our responsibility as contemporary designers to do so. However I also find it a shame to cut into beautiful cloth. I'm self taught; through open sourced internet based learning and trial and error and I've been weaving 3 years now, and have recently made it my full time practice. I work out of my open studio; TÜR at 486 K'rd. Although much thought goes into the imagined cloth; like the maths of the warp, a set of yarns, structures, textures and colours I will always leave some composition for my time at the loom. As the cloth winds around the front beam I lose sight of the work I've completed and so there's an element of intuitive design that I enjoy, and have had great results with. I think that worldwide there are many people learning to use their hands again, or changing their thinking and finding that the handmade possesses something that the perfection of the machine can miss. People creating with their hands are reclaiming art and what we know as wealth.

### **Repurposed Silk & Cotton Blanket July 2014**

mercerised cotton, denim cotton and repurposed sari silk from India

This blanket represents the happy mistakes in being self taught; the warp of cotton was originally wound with a tartan in mind, once that piece was completed the repurposed sari silk was a natural choice for texture and weight.

### **Alpaca Kimono April 2015**

black undyed alpaca, mercerized cotton painted with Indian Ink, denim cotton, repurposed textile off-cuts from local designers

Before weaving I painted the warp with Indian Ink, and variegated the sett so that some areas appear more structured than others.

### **Denim Poncho July 2015**

fine merino wool warp, denim cotton weft, mercerised cotton weft & ties

Thick mercerised cotton is added at stress points and as ties along the waist to create structure in the garment. It combines variations of plain, twill and crepe weave structures.





Czarina  
Wilson

My childhood memories drew me to weaving as a practice. I was always inspired by the collection of decorative fine mats/ mats my Tongan grandmother had. Some her own creations, handed down to my mother, and then my sister and me.

Unfortunately my grandmother didn't keep up her craft in New Zealand unless it was decorating fine mats, or repairing. So I learnt by observing, reading and researching what I could find at the local library. I would also frequent op shops buying gems that I could find, small woven bags/ or other that might have had an unusual weave and then would teach myself how to do it first by cutting cardboard strips/ then using fabric.

I still have much to learn with this art form. Over the years I have become more known for the use of weaving denim fabrics and also faux leather. These are the two mediums I mainly use in my practice — weaving pieces for exhibition use as well as commercial bag designs.

I am uncertain about the future of weaving in its traditional form. I don't know if there would be enough interest in the generation below me to carry this practice through on to the next generation. With weaving comes a lot of patience and I have found in my own workshops with youth that patience is lacking, therefore not following through or just can't be bothered. I am excited however about weaving in its contemporary form in the hopes of teaching youth to think outside the square where they could use other mediums to create woven pieces. Possibly combining 3d printing to see what could be created, woven fabrics perhaps, recycling, creating something sustainable for future production.

## **Re-woven**

**2007**

faux leather / vinyl

The planning, preparation and finish was probably the most time consuming. Putting the design together on maths grid paper, then hand cut vinyl strips to weave the design. Weaving it, adding an adhesive backing and then handsewing the pattern down. The black & white woven 'korowai' piece took a number of hours to make spanning 3 months. Weaving it 'reversed-colour side down so it would be easier for me to iron on an adhesive backing and then hand sewing the pattern down. Inspired by weaving techniques and wanting to step outside the box using not so traditional fabrics.

## **'Manulua'**

**2015**

faux leather / vinyl

Manulua is the name for one of the oldest design patterns found in the making of traditional Tongan bark cloth and refers to two birds or two pairs of bird wings. The deeper meaning of this pattern is to bring two groups or families together to form a new union. The underlying multi coloured weave I have used represents diversity.

All pieces were prepared by hand, ruling and cutting before weaving the multicoloured base. This is then backed with an iron on adhesive before black strips are interwoven into the base specifically to form the 'manulua' pattern. Each piece is then hand sewn/ tacked into the base weave to ensure it doesn't come apart and also strengthening the design so it doesn't warp out of shape easily.





## Molima Pihigia

My name is Molima Pihigia and also known as Molly. I was born in Alofi, Niue and came to Aotearoa when I was 19 years old. As a child I watched my mum and her mum all the time whenever they do any kind of weaving. I have lived in Aotearoa for 45 years. When I returned to Auckland after living in Wellington for 17 years my interest in the Niuean weaving began. My husband and I with a

few Uhomotu women formed a group, Falepipi he Mafola Niuean Handcraft Group Inc on April 1993. We could see the older people's need at the time were isolation, and the ageing process was a concern for individuals and the family. The group enables the older people to come together every Thursday at the Otahuhu Town Hall. They enjoyed the fellowship, cultural activities and upskilled themselves with wellness programme and community activities.

My main role for 22 years is the Coordinator and Treasurer of the group. I used to work full time till July 2014. It was a most challenging time for I lost my dad and my husband



through cancer in the later part of 2013. I needed to concentrate on my best performance so resigning from a position I enjoyed took a lot of courage. That's when I started to take up weaving more actively and I find it most therapeutic. When I organised a weaving project I often empower the weavers to weave their story. It was not that easy because as I was growing up the weaving of a story was not on their weaving process except for the many different patterns and styles of weaving.

Before I weave, the story and my hands was my main focus and have no sketch or pattern but rely on my own judgement. The left hand hold the work and the right hand holds the tapestry needle. The coordination is a skill of the hands plus determination is all I needed to improve my weaving. I weave and make adjustments as I proceed to the very end.

The Niuean heritage art is my passion and in the last four years I taught younger Niueans how to weave and they thoroughly enjoyed regardless of the many challenges as nothing happened overnight. My only encouragement for the beginners to try their very best and never give up. You'll be amazed as you got older the skill of weaving became easier and most of all so therapeutic.

Being at the Strands Exhibition is exciting and a wonderful opportunity to display three pieces of my own weaving.

#### **Lalaga Kiekie – Wall Hanging 2012**

kiekie, etched pearl shell

The Lalaga Kiekie was woven especially as a wall hanging. It was woven with kiekie leaves a plant ('Freycinetia banksii'), found in both the North and South Islands of New Zealand. It has long slender linear leaves that range in size from 0.5 to 1.5 metres long.

The process of preparation required a lot of time in selecting the kiekie and boiling the leaves first before commencing any weaving. This piece of artwork was my first attempt in weaving a Lalaga Kiekie which took me a week to weave and completed. The style of weaving reminded me of how lots of women in the Falepipi he Mafola Group used to weave.

#### **Fakatukey – floral vase 2015**

kaniu, raffia

The artwork is called, the fakatukey [floral vase], and woven with kaniu and contemporary resources called raffia. Let me tell you the story of my amazing discovery about weaving. The brown round base represents Niue where I was born in Alofi, educated and left for Aotearoa when I was nineteen years old. The green circle signified the richness of the land. The yellow circle represents Christianity which enable people to connect locally and globally.

The five posts in different colours, begins my journey with Falepipi he Mafola Group in Auckland. The red is the Vision, orange is the Mission / Purpose, the light blue is Heritage,

yellow is Wellness and the light green is The Treaty of Waitangi. The brown between the coloured posts, signified a valuable heritage of the people of Niue in Aotearoa.

In the middle of the two single white designs are the three different colour which are the three key people in the group. The green is the Chairperson, the purple is the Secretary and the red is the Treasurer. The white designs are the people and members.

The next design are dark green background with twelve yellow and green symbols which are the twelve principles and values of the group.

The next design represents the three project group and team leaders that manages the weekly activities. In the middle of the two white rows were three colours. The green is for the Cultural, the purple is for Education and the red is Healthy Living. The white are people and members.

The next designs are twelve symbols of orange and yellow with blue background. The twelve symbols are the twelve programmes of the group and the blue empowers to aim for the highest the sky, sun and the stars.

The next design is the third similar design of the Fakatukey which is green, purple and red in the middle of the two white rows. It signifies who we are as people. The green is the body, purple is the mind and red is the soul. The white designs are the people that we connected with and members.

The next design are nine coloured symbols and to do with connection with one another for achievable goals. The red is Love, green is joy, purple is peace, light blue is patience, pink is kindness, gold is goodness, orange is faithfulness, yellow is gentleness and blue is self-controlled.

In conclusion, I pause and smile at the final and amazing work of my hands. The brown is my final journey, one day at the very end of all things, united with our beautiful Creator of heaven and earth. I realize at the beginning of my artwork, He was there and right through to the very end He was there. No one can have a successful and fulfilling journey without Him.

#### **Fakatukey – floral vase 2015**

kaniu, wheat meal bread bags

The artwork is called Fakatukey and traditionally woven with kaniu and wheat meal bread bag. It was my first attempt to use bread bag and it took me a month to weave and completed. The idea arise from the recycling promotion of the Auckland Council. We were encouraged to do something about plastic bags and some women from Niue were already used bread bags to weave hats.

The bread bag is fun to weave with because it has a natural colourful patterns. My only concern as I weave I must not pull so hard because the strands are easily stretched. Every time I bought a wheat meal bread I fold the empty bag and cut into five strands. It took forty bread bags to make this Fakatukey.





I have always been very interested in art forms. Weaving is a passion I have had since childhood. I learnt lots of this from my homeland of Kiribati where most crafts and weaving are related to everyday living and survival, mats for sleeping, making thatch for roofs, plaiting coconut leaves for walls of houses, baskets for storing and collecting food and so on. There is also the art of dance costume making and this is where my pieces for this exhibition have been derived. I am so interested in being versatile with materials and although I adore the traditional material I also have admired the creativity of being able to create an original design with what is available.

I have learnt over time from my mother and other women in my family, and women in general in Kiribati. When I came to New Zealand I connected with Maori women and men, Tangata Whenua, who have taught me the wonderful properties of harakeke. I also love creating pieces, and these are self-taught.

I have been weaving and creating for all my adult life and enjoy doing this. I have had exhibits at the Auckland Art Gallery, and am currently exhibiting there under the Wunderruma and also with Fingers Jewellery. I have also had an exhibition at the Waikato Museum. I enjoy showing and selling my art at several markets around the country.

I love passing on the passion for weaving to the young ones and have been involved in several cultural workshops that involve sharing ideas and doing different forms of weaving. I love seeing other works from different artists and weavers and I think the aspect of passing on to our future generations is exciting because in a lot of the weaving processes also are woven in there the cultural aspects of our lives.

I think weaving has a very exciting revival at the moment and it is very exciting to see shows such as **Strands** to highlight the works that have been lovingly created by people with such passion.

## Te Tai – Kiribati Head Adornment for Dancing

### Traditional Kiribati materials [2 pieces]

**2014**

pandanus leaves

pandanus leaves, red ribbons

Made with materials sourced from Kiribati for 35th Independence Celebrations.

### Traditional New Zealand Harakeke

**2012**

harakeke

Made with fresh harakeke leaves for the Pasifika Festival in Auckland.

### Natural Phoenix Palm Leaves

**2014**

phoenix palm leaves

Made with leaves that I saw someone cutting in their garden.

### Ribbon on Ribbon [2 pieces]

**2015**

harekeke, metallic, ribbon, repurposed synthetic lei flowers

florist's ribbon

### Straw! [2 pieces]

**2015**

plastic drinking straws

I have to say that using this material is very exciting and I have to give credit to whoever first decided to use straw because I think it shows creativity and I first saw this in a dancing competition in Kiribati and admired the inventive mind! It is rather hard on the hand to make.





Alison  
Francis

I was first introduced to weaving as a student teacher in the art / craft department of the Teachers' College. My interest in fibre was already established as I learned to knit when I was 4 years old and learned to spin on a drop spindle whilst at secondary school. Weaving, however became a passion, and for many years I was an enthusiastic hobbyist, taking part in many classes at the Handweavers and Spinners Guild.

In the early 90s I enrolled in the Craft Design Course that then existed at Unitec. This course changed my direction entirely as I was taught about the design process and weaving became more than a "technical exercise" but rather an exploration of an idea, manifested in a woven product.

Since my graduation I have established my studio and have been involved with weaving on a full time basis.

My practise is based on both a love of a beautifully structured cloth and the "backstory" that has informed the decisions about colour, form, texture and structure.

When I took up weaving in the 70s, being involved in a craft was seen as a desirable activity, but as the craft aesthetic has waned in subsequent years, it has only been the true obsessives that have carried on. It is so encouraging to see a revival of interest in craft skills and to hear "slow fashion" talked about and know that this is what I have always done.

## **Winter Coat**

**2013**

hand dyed wool, hand dyed cotton, alpaca / silk yarns, hand dyed silk fabric (lining)

This garment was part of an exhibition, called Japonisme, that referenced the Japanese Aesthetic and clothing styles.

The twill pattern used on the body of the coat is an original threading that I derived from a very simple drawing of a leafless tree.

The motifs on the edging fabric are cyanotype photographic prints. The negative was made by me from a digital photograph of leafless trees and then printed onto the handwoven fabric using the cyanotype (blueprint) technique.

The obi style sash is hand dyed, handwoven cotton fabric with kumihimo braid ties. The kumihimo braid was woven by me on a Japanese braid loom called a marudai.

## **Autumn Jacket**

**2013**

hand dyed bamboo yarns, hand dyed silk (lining)

This garment was also part of the Japonisme exhibition. I took my inspiration from old woodcuts showing the fabrics and patterns of traditional kimonos. I noticed that many styles of fabrics were used; florals, stripes, geometrics, rhythmical lines; often linked by a common colour palette. The Autumn jacket is made up of five different fabrics that emulate the fabric mix of those original kimonos.

The ties are hand braided kumihimo braid.

## **Ocean Waves Wrap**

**2015**

hand dyed and natural coloured bamboo yarn

This is the most simple of my pieces, but with it I return to a favourite theme of water. It is the second in this series. By "reading" the wrap across its width, you can see a waves progressing from the trough to the peak with the accompanying foam. The water colour lightens as the wave peaks and darkens as it descends back to the trough. The challenge of this piece was to combine two different weave structures to express the flowing water and the airy foam.





**Karl Leonard**  
(Ngāti Rangiwewehi, Ngāti Pahipoto, Ngāti  
Raukawa, Te Arawa, Mataatua, Tainui)



I was raised around all Māori arts forms (carving, weaving & performing arts) from a young age. It is instinctive, and second nature. I had some small lessons from my grandmother but the majority of my skills were taught to me by kuia who were guides at the NZ Māori Arts & Crafts Institute now known as Te Puia. I have been weaving officially since 1983 but did not start exhibiting until around the year 2000. I concentrated solely on weaving for a few years but it was too difficult to survive financially so now I also teach. Everything contributes to the end result. The materials, the narrative at the time (theme) and those who the piece is intended for all contribute to the finished piece. Being able to weave and produce pieces, normalises our art in a modern setting, ensuring that the end result and the processes used to achieve it are still accessible to our and future generations. It is what nourishes the creative spirit.

**Matariki – kotahi poi hei ariki  
2005**

flax fibre, natural dyes – kōkōwai, tāwhero, paru

All the processes are lengthy and laborious. Fibre is extracted by hand from the flax leaf and spun on the leg to various gauges. The natural dyes are obtained by hand. Kōkōwai, red ochre clay, I gathered, baked and ground into a powder. Tāwhero is collected from the tree and boiled as a mordent solution. Paru is peat and collected from a swamp.

**Mai i tawhiti, mai i tarawāhi ao  
2013**

coloured cottons, leather, flax fibre

To create a circular sphere there are a large number of insertions to expand the piece and then the reductions to reduce it. Portraying the lizard figure underneath, while expanding the base, was challenging.

**Te ata kai whetu  
2014**

flax fibre, natural dyes – raurekau, tutu, paru

The natural dyes are obtained by hand. Raurekau, tree dye, is collected and boiled to produce yellow. Tutu collected from the tree and boiled as a mordent solution. The places that dyes are collected from are often kept secret as are actual weaving techniques.





Patricia  
Bosshard Browne

After closing my gallery of 20 years duration, I retrained at the Craft and Design Course at the Otago polytechnic and Graduated in 1991.

I weave on a Mecchia Counter Marche loom acquired with a grant from Q.E.II Arts Council in 1991.

I kept an open workshop in central Dunedin for 5 years before moving to the Strath Teieri area. I now work in an old stone stable 12 km from Middlemarch near the Otago Rail trail and 1¼ hours from Dunedin.

Since that time I have practised my craft most days for about five hours. The direction I took came from a long appreciation of textile traditions and an acknowledgement of New Zealand being a wool producing country. My main interest is in making colour. The wonderful nuances produced with a plain patterns and 2 colours give endless possibilities. From a distance there is a glaze or haze, tint or tone. While up close the vibrant individual colour set side by side is rather like looking at pointillist paintings. My newer work has softened in colour and now uses a variety of fibres.

#### **Shawl or table runner**

**2004**

cotton

Tabby and inlay woven with two shuttles using hand dyed gold coloured thread

#### **Bolt of Cloth**

**2009**

cotton

Tabby woven with two shuttles in blue, black and white yarns.

#### **Shawl**

**2012–13**

wool, rayon, silk

Tabby woven with two shuttles using Perendale South Island wool with rayon inlays and silk flow through.





Rachel  
Long

Colour, pattern, textures, I love to experiment with materials and enjoy the tactility of yarn. The technical aspect of weaving is something I enjoy and am very attracted too also, the precision of warping up a loom and weaving is full of challenges and is a completely satisfying process.

My first experience with weaving was in the 1997 where I was taught Raranga whakairo with harakeke at the Ngai Kaimahi O Te Po trust on Cuba street in Wellington. This taught me a great deal about woven structures, pattern work, tension and dye work.

I learnt my loom weaving skills at Massey University, where I completed a bachelor of design with honours majoring in textiles.

During my time at Massey I started to specialise in woven structures and natural dye. Since finishing I have built a big floor loom in my studio in Wellington where I have been developing further works for exhibition.

I feel like I am continuously developing knowledge and concepts within my weaving practice. Considering the complex nature of weaving I feel learning and self teaching will be ever present.

I have been weaving for about two years in between projects, study and work.

I am working hard to realise my weave practice into a full time occupation.

The most important interactions in my weaving practice is process, materials and tools.

I love the physical ,rhythmical act of weaving, i enjoy the meditative space, the disintegration of time that the weaving process creates. My loom is my favourite tool, it is amazing to work with this big, complicated, beautiful object and create cloth, it is an intimate, inspiring experience.

Materials are important in my work, I consider relationships between dye, yarn and structure, as a painter would with pigments on canvas.

Considering how the light is interacting with the yarn and colour pigments is important in my work.

Structure, colour, light are elements that I am continuously engaged with in the development of work.

For me the exciting aspect of a future of a contemporary weaving practice lies in the challenges of developing a sustainable practice in an area where opportunity is largely self made, continuing a practice of textiles as Art is inspiring and is an area that I am especially drawn to and enjoy.

### **Imagining the Antarctic Light 2014**

blue lengths: natural indigo dye, wool weft, cotton warp

pink length: natural quebacho dye, wool weft, cotton warp

green length: natural gorse, natural indigo dye, wool weft, cotton warp

Lengths of cloth were designed to be situated together in a way that will allow the light in a space to connect with the cloth, to then create an aura of colour that is suggestive of my Antarctic Imagination.

‘Imagining the Antarctic Light’ is a textile collection created from investigations into the Antarctic imagination and the natural light phenomena experienced by Ernest Shackleton in Antarctica in 1915–1917.

The textile processes of natural dye and weave, along with materials wool and cotton, were used to illustrate investigations into the relationships between light and mind from varied perspectives, detailing the connections between inner human light and the outer light of nature.

In the text South: The Story of Shackleton’s Last Expedition 1914–1917, Shackleton described his encounters with mirages, aurora australis, light refraction and light reflection in Antarctica, and how this natural light phenomena challenged his sense of reality and at times uplifted the spirits of himself and his men, while on voyage in the remarkable, mystifying environment of Antarctica.

Colour, light, and materials were pivotal in the design of this textile collection. Soft, subtle pattern and textures created through natural dye processes and loom woven cloth interpret my imaginings of Shackleton’s experience with the natural light phenomena in Antarctica. Lengths of cloth were designed to be situated together in a way that will allow the light in a space to connect with the cloth, to then create an aura of colour that is suggestive of my Antarctic Imagination.

### **Iceberg Kimono 2015 wool**

Iceberg Kimono is a continuation on from the Imagining the Antarctic Light textile collection.

Research undertaken in the development of Imagining the Antarctic light collection included investigations into frozen salt water ice. Creating miniature icebergs from collected saltwater and growing salt crystals and painting textures allowed the exploration of imagining the light and textures of icebergs and nunataks described by Shackleton. Beautiful lines and surfaces became apparent in the research and this informed the work Iceberg Kimono.

A swedish pattern was woven with the natural wool to realise the textures and lines of the Imagined Antarctic Icebergs.

### **The Livelihood 2015**

wool, sterling silver, glass, silk, silk merino, natural indigo, gorse, cotton

The livelihood neckpieces are where textile and jewellery design collide.

Along with textile design I also have a silversmithing, jewellery design practice.

The Livelihood is where I can explore colour and materials on a smaller scale and enjoy creating smaller works for commercial enterprise, hence the label The Livelihood.

Silversmithing bits from my desk, weave samples, found and naturally dyed yarn, vintage glass beads collected when travelling and japanese silks have all utilised when creating these works.





Shona  
Tawhiao

I have been weaving for over 20 years and learnt traditional Maori Fibre techniques and methods at Unitec in Auckland. Kahutoi Te Kawana was my tutor I spent 2 years learning as much as possible. Mahi raranga found me and I'm still learning today. I'm a full time artist and work freelance on costume and event productions. My work is inspired by culture, Maori, hip hop indigenous, art, design and life. I combine traditional weaving with contemporary design to help it travel and keep the artform alive here in Aotearoa and globally. Mahi raranga for me is still growing and I hope to carry on sharing it with the universe there are no limits.

**Ma is White  
2010**

Harakeke

The finished raranga bodice is sprayed with high gloss paint, the skirt is made from harakeke that is picked, stripped, softened, dried and then dyed using commercial fabric dye. The lace work of the head and neck pieces is called Kupenga and is a series of twisted strips. It's an old decorative style of weaving used on kete and potae that I have adapted to my own style of contemporary weaving. All pieces from the Te Whiri collection shown at NZ Fashion Week in 2010.

**Hinemanu  
2014**

Harakeke, feathers

Spray painted raranga dress, raranga cape with feather, Kupenga headpiece. Pacific by Nature Section Winner, Cult Couture 2013.

**Whero  
2014**

Harakeke

The tatua, Maori war belt, is woven from dyed red and natural undyed flax. Whero was shown at Melbourne Fashion Week 2014.

The tatua is usually worn by men as they go into battle and has an opening at the top where weapons and Taonga can be stored like a fanny.





## Michelle Mayn

I first learnt *raranga*, which is a Maori plaiting technique done with just the fingers, no loom, in 2008 and from the beginning it felt like a perfect fit; the spiritual lessons shared by my teacher, harvesting and working with the *harakeke* (NZ Flax) plant, being able to create something that could be sculpted as it was woven, and the mathematical challenge and visual dynamic of whakairo patterns found in *raranga* all inspired me to want to keep learning more. In 2008 I attended a community class with Herapia Cairns and learnt how to make *kete* and *korowai*. In 2011 I went on to study Traditional & Contemporary Maori Weaving at Unitec Art & Design (Auckland) under

Judy Robson-Deane this included learning more about traditional *tikanga* / protocols associated with traditional weaving, the conservation and harvesting of natural fibres and the techniques for making *kete*, *whariki* and *piupiu*. I've been working full time as a contemporary fibre artist for the past 2½ years. I'm currently based in Kohukohu in the Hokianga Harbour (NZ) and New York City. I have work available through selected galleries in the North Island and have exhibited in a number of shows in Northland and Auckland. My creative process begins during the initial interaction with the *harakeke* plant. Harvesting and preparing the natural fibres I use gives me a sense of mindfulness of my environment, I'm thinking about how I can use different plants, leaves, feathers or other found items. I can continue this practice (of working with materials to hand) even in an urban environment like New York. I discovered there is a number of trees and plants in Central Park that can be used for natural dyes

such as Black Walnut shells (but apparently you have to get in before the squirrels do!).

When preparing and working with natural fibres I often see a characteristic that sparks an idea or image, I try to bring out that unique quality and merge it with my own individual ideas and ways of gathering, working out and constructing to transform it into whatever 'it' wants to be. It often feels like the piece already 'is' and all I have to do is connect with 'it' — when that happens I see those as my most successful.

Incorporating contemporary detailing into my pieces is an element that has become a part of me connecting myself to the work, my contemporary 'signature'.

From a practical point of view there is a growing interest in the use of traditional methods of dyeing using plants to create a more sustainable practice within the fashion and textile industry. I believe a lot can be learnt from looking at traditional methods of weaving, harvesting and preparing natural fibres that is relevant for today and the future.

From an artistic perspective looking at overseas artists creating contemporary sculptural work such as Cambodian artist Sopheap Pich who uses traditional materials and techniques, Mo Kelman's smaller delicate works and the large scale installations inspired by traditional fishing nets by Janet Echelman reinforces how effectively weaving and construction methods can be used in a contemporary art practice.

Other two dimensional textile works such as *Mappa del Mondo, 1989* (Map of the World, 1989) by artist Alighiero Boetti which is on view in the permanent collection of the Museum of Modern Art in New York, shows how a conceptual idea can be expressed through a textile medium in a way that is relevant today. Even more interesting in this piece for me is that he has worked with traditional Pakistan and Afghan artisans to execute his conceptual ideas with their practice and choice of colour determined by what they sometimes had at hand becoming an integral part of the work. He says,

"For me the work of the embroidered Mappa is the maximum of beauty. For that work I did nothing, chose nothing, in the sense that: the world is made as it is, not as I designed it, the flags are those that exist, and I did not design them; in short I did absolutely nothing; when the basic idea, the concept, emerges everything else requires no choosing."

**Alighiero Boetti, 1974**

There is a lot that excites me for the future as an emerging fibre artist. From an artistic perspective the unlimited possibilities of weavings continually sparks my imagination. My work is reflecting the above themes of using hand-weaving techniques to create a more conceptual 'painterly' type weaving that will be on show in an exhibition later this year at Northart. Being selected as a finalist in the World of Wearable Art later this year I'm also excited about continuing to use traditional methods to create sculptural pieces that can be worn.

## **Recycled Rain Cape**

**March 2015**

polyethylene plastic bags, computer cable wire

Based loosely on a traditional Maori Rain Cape (*Pake*), this modern interpretation was exhibited in a recent show called **RUBBISH — the transformation of used and waste materials into contemporary art**. This work is a statement about how art can change the material. Cold plastic and discarded computer wiring gives form to something soft and protective.

Using everyday plastic bags and discarded computer wire that has been prepared into workable strips the piece is hand-woven using single-pair weft-twining (*whatu aho pātahi*). Two horizontal threads (*aho*) twist around each vertical thread (*whenu*). One *aho* passes in front of the *whenu*, the other behind.

A traditional Maori Rain Cape (*Pake*) was a garment made from materials at hand and designed to channel off rain. The garments were "made by attaching hundreds of leaf strips, called *hukahuka*, to a woven foundation." Traditionally, when harvesting there is very little waste and all parts of the plant are used. The small amount of waste material that remains after preparing the fibre is mindfully returned to the land to ensure the resource is cared for and available for future generations. This mindful approach to resources has much relevance in today's urban environment and my objective was to show that any resource provided to us need not be considered 'rubbish'.

## **Tauira (Sampler) of Life**

**March 2015**

flax fibre (*muka*), tanekaha, ruarekau, indigo and commercial dye

The tauira / sampler is part of a series of works based around a schema, an organized pattern that organizes categories of information and the relationships among them. Based on the format of an annual calendar, each monthly segment is filled with patterns and symbols to visually organise a set of daily experiences finishing with a raw unfinished edge to acknowledge this is not an ending but another beginning.

The muka / NZ flax fibre has been extracted using a traditional method called haaro, a kuta / mussel shell is used to remove the green outer layer, called para, to expose the fibres.

Fine aho / weft threads and slightly thicker whenu / warp threads have been hand-rolled together on the loom in a process called miro.

The piece is woven using traditional Māori weaving techniques beginning with the top black *taniko* / weft-twined border. The body of the work uses two-pair weft-twining / *whatu aho rua*. A number of decorative and weaving elements have been used to create symbols. The blocks of colour are done in *taniko* technique, the pompoms called *Ngore* are created by winding a coloured thread around the *aho* (weft) while weaving and the cross over pattern is called *Maawhitiwhiti*.

The fibres have been dyed using a variety of methods. The browns use a traditional method where the water and beaten tanekaha bark is bought to the boil in a wooden vessel using rocks



heated in a fire, the fibre is then added and left to soak. The fibre is removed for the dye bath after an hour or two and rolled in ash, the mordent used to fix the colour. Yellow and pinky / mauve is from Raurekau bark. The blue comes from the indigo plant using a fructose method and black is a commercial dye.

### **Tribal Offering July 2015**

piupiu (dried and rolled harakeke / flax), muka (harakeke fibre), feathers, copper, wooden bracelet charms & beads

The *tauirā* / sampler is part of a series of works based around a schema, an organized pattern that organizes categories of information and the relationships among them. Based on the format of an annual calendar, each monthly segment is filled with patterns and symbols to visually organise a set of daily experiences finishing with a raw unfinished edge to acknowledge this is not an ending but another beginning.

The *muka* / NZ flax fibre has been extracted using a traditional method called *haaro*, a *kuta* / mussel shell is used to remove the green outer layer, called *para*, to expose the fibres.

Fine *aho* / weft threads and slightly thicker *whenu* / warp threads have been hand-rolled together on the leg in a process called *miro*.

The piece is woven using traditional Maori weaving techniques beginning with the top black *taniko* / weft-twined border. The body of the work uses two-pair weft-twining / *whatu aho rua*. A number of decorative and weaving elements have been used to create symbols. The blocks of colour are done in *taniko* technique, the pompoms called *Ngore* are created by winding a coloured thread around the *aho* (weft) while weaving and the cross over pattern is called *Maawhitiwhiti*.

The fibres have been dyed using a variety of methods. The browns use a traditional method where the water and beaten tanekaha bark is brought to the boil in a wooden vessel using rocks heated in a fire, the fibre is then added and left to soak. The fibre is removed for the dye bath after an hour or two and rolled in ash, the mordent used to fix the colour. Yellow and pinky / mauve is from Raurekau bark. The blue comes from the indigo plant using a fructose method and black is a commercial dye.