

Interconnected Futures: Material practices and knowledge-based systems in the academy

KILFORD Angela; KANE Faith and WITHERS Sonya*

Massey University of New Zealand, Te Kūnenga Ki Pūrehuroa

*S.Withers@massey.ac.nz

More than ever, the role of textile design in environmental, economic, and social crises globally is being revealed. This presents a challenge to activate textile design towards positive change through centring practices that are relational, place-based, and deeply attuned to justice and the wellbeing of our planet: Areas of concern that have been embedded in indigenous ways of Te Moana-nui-a-kiwa for over a millennium. However, as wāhine who whakapapa Te Moana-nui-a-kiwa and Pākehā, we are experiencing tensions when we facilitate authentic knowledge-based systems and material practices that were once naturally entangled to nature, people, and the wellbeing of society.

Within this contribution, we will consider the shifting, re-wiring, and co-creation of our ways of practicing and teaching textile design towards interconnected futures. To do this, we will reflect from the position of our interconnected identities and their entanglement with our scholarly and teaching practices within the academy. And how we might embody the necessary attitudes required to practice, co-create, and maintain the resilience of our ways towards a more 'just' future for Aotearoa and its place among Te Moana-nui-a-kiwa. We will be mindful, throughout, in perceiving our ways and tools as 'alternative', for these have a distinct genealogy but have not traditionally been validated within academic institutions.

Interconnected futures, Knowledge-based systems, Textiles and Materials Design, Te Moana-nui-a-kiwa

1. Introduction

There is some hesitation to frame this discussion as a tool for an alternative future. The traps of modernity and its internalized residue within our colonial frameworks of thinking, even as people who whakapapa Te Moana-nui-a-kiwa and Pākehā, are constantly challenged when we give way to authentic knowledge-based systems and material practices that were once naturally entangled to nature, people, and the wellbeing of society. Throughout this discussion, we should be mindful to consider our ways as ‘alternative’, for these ways still exist but within a space that challenges and at times denies its validity. Instead, this discussion will focus on the shifting, re-wiring, and co-creation of our ways as wāhine who whakapapa Pākehā, Māori and Moana tāngata, teaching within an ‘academy’ through the field of textile and materials design.

More than ever, Textile and materials design and its interdisciplinary expanse has revealed its role in environmental, economic, and social crises globally (Drazin, 2015). This presents a challenge to activate textiles and materials towards positive change (Karana et al., 2018) and highlights the need to centre design practices that are relational, place-based, and deeply attuned to justice and the wellbeing of our planet (Escobar, 2017): areas of concern that have been embedded in indigenous ways of Te Moana-nui-a-kiwa for over a millennium.

To illustrate this, we will reflect upon our interconnected identities and their entanglement with our scholarly and teaching practices within the academy, drawing out how they might embody the necessary attitudes required to practice, co-create, and maintain the resilience of our ways towards a more ‘just’ future for Aotearoa and its place among Te Moana-nui-a-kiwa. Our discussion aims to productively focus on ways in which indigenous understandings of the world can transfer knowledge to future generations through teaching and learning at a tertiary level. We will look to draw out how indigenous customs and techniques, specific to Mātauranga Māori, Tikanga Māori and Fa’a Sāmoa are embedded in our research-led teaching within the confines of a western design style framework to contribute to positive change. Notably through partnership, community building, the valuing and respect of ancestral knowledge, forming non-hierarchical research teams and the importance of tempering positionality whilst reminding ourselves – ‘who’ is of benefit among our creative practices?

We will reflect on our initiatives: the development and delivery of workshops that scrutinize materials through the lens of Māori concepts such as whakapapa and mauri (Yates, 2017). The participatory workshops are further rationalized through western concepts of the circular economy and draw on ideas from McHattie and Ballie’s case studies exploring the principles of design needed to instigate change within textile and material design research (McHattie and Baille, 2018). And in addition, the development of design briefs and assessments to bring about change, that recognize injustice, unpack complex topics over a longer timeframe, giving our students the opportunity to reflect on topics such as decolonization, the complexities of their positionality and their relational awareness to those around them (Noel, n.d.) (Kiddle et al., 2020, 83-106). In contrast to this, we will also highlight some of our struggles and the traps we have fallen through despite ‘good’ intentions when striving to practice and argue our ways as fundamental to the outlook of our futures against a dominant western design framework.

As noted earlier, to revisit our hesitation around ‘tools’ and ‘alternative’ futures. We respect and understand the complexities each area of the globe may offer towards some of the pressing issues highlighted in response to textile and materials and continue our discourse through the different elements of our planet as interconnected living systems, considering for example, the Māori concept of Whakapapa (Roberts, 2013) and the concept of, ‘our sea of islands’ as manifested by the late Tongan/Fijian scholar Epeli Hau’ofa (Hau’ofa, 1993, 126-139). How might we value other forms of interconnected knowledge systems outside of academia to recognize and imagine more transnational

and interdisciplinary ways? Particularly in a canon of modernity that now requires us to reconnect with our impacted pasts to retain the wellbeing of our futures.

We begin with a transcription of a conversation between ourselves – three textile and material design researchers and teachers working within the Ngā Pae Māhutonga, Toi Rauwhārangī, Te Kūnenga Ki Pūrehuroa in Aotearoa. The conversation was recorded for the Pivot 2021 online conference convened by the Design Research Society's Pluiversal Design Special Interest Group and Ocad University, Canada. We later reflected further on our conversation to extend the discussion.

2. The Conversation

Angela

Let me introduce myself. My name is Angela Kilford.

I am of Māori and Pākehā descent, from Aotearoa New Zealand.

Much of the Māori knowledge that is embedded in me has been handed down from my aunties and uncles through dedicated ancestry sessions at family meetings or through the written genealogies and histories that my family meticulously keep.

I've not been lucky enough to grow up living on our ancestral home and have had sort of restricted access to our ancestral houses which tell stories through the Māori carving, painting and weaving that adorn our ancestor.

My father was born into a house speaking only the Māori language, but slowly lost his language through assimilation and schools and in society. I have very little Māori language and so I draw on the Māori scholars and academics with vast knowledge of ancient teachings and language. Scholars such as a Rangimarie Turuki Pere, Mason Durie, Graham Smith, each of whom have produced frameworks for education and health based on Māori concepts and knowledge.

Sonya

Tālofa lava everyone.

My name is Sonya and very similar to Angela, I have mixed heritage, so my father was born in New Zealand and has European settler heritage. But my mother was born in a village in Sama'i, Falelatai which is located in the Sāmoan islands which is part of the Pacific or otherwise known indigenously as Te Moana-Nui-A-Kiwa. Positioning myself more and more, I probably refer to myself as an Aotearoa born Sāmoan. Some other terms might have been used within our diasporic community here in Aotearoa, but it is the one I probably stand to most. At one point of my younger years, I used to be able to fluently converse in Samoan, but over the years and living in a country that is predominantly English speaking, it becomes more hard to maintain language, which I think really is something that is deeply connected with how we position ourselves here.

But why is that important to me? It's important to me because as a creative, I'm always thinking about, you know, what does it look like to materialize my mixed heritage, such as a whole and the image that I've used here to introduce myself is one example of how I've attempted to do that.

Faith

Hi, I'm Faith Kane. I'm from the UK, specifically from the Midlands and I've been living in Aotearoa for the last five years and I'm now a resident here.

My research at the moment and for the last few years has focused on place-based fibre-led, textiles and materials design working towards sustainable and regenerative futures.

And so, the picture here is of European flax which is cultivated in Leicestershire which is the region of England that I'm from and where my children were born who are now becoming very much rooted here in our Aotearoa. And so, I'm really grateful today to be part of this discussion with my colleagues and friends, Angela and Sonya to really look at and explore how our identities and practices interconnect through the textile design space.

Sonya

So, as Faith was saying textile design is the space in which we all connect together here.

But we do deliver in different areas here. So, for my colleague Angela, she delivers a lot of teaching around materials with our students. For Faith, she delivers a lot of teaching around, weaving and soft structures. And myself, I teach the print and repeat pattern courses here.

Angela

So even though we all have our different specialisms and we have found space to collaborate through our interest in knowledge systems. This has been evident in our collaborative projects which makes topics such as fibre research and Mātauranga Māori, Māori knowledge systems or in place-based dye research.

One of the key concepts that has informed my art and design practice, my teaching and also my materials research is the Māori concept of whakapapa. Within Māori cosmology there is only one set of primal parents Ranginui and Papatūānuku, from whom all things ultimately descend. Māori stories of creation can be found in recited forms of whakapapa and further explain the relationships between ourselves, our ancestors and all the forms of nature that surround us.

In this illustration, on the slide here, we see that harakeke, New Zealand Native flax, a plant is aligned with people and descends from a common ancestor. And this type of illustration has served as a proposition projects and has led to materials workshop where students examine different types of materials through the lens of whakapapa.

In the workshops, the students are asked to think about what lies beside and behind, in front of, in, and around the material to discover the cultural and technical intersections of their materials. Of course, each student's personal background and heritage will shape their experience of a material and the way in which they choose to explore it. But by introducing, them to a cultural context first, there is an invitation to step away from a personal worldview and consider materials research from a different perspective.

Here we have in this photograph Material Lab students visiting Te Papa Tongarewa, New Zealand's National Museum, to spend time with the back of house Pacific collection.

Pictured here is my colleague Sonya with students talking about the differences between each of the artifacts with the students and discussing the different perspectives on those artifacts.

Sonya

So as Angela was saying perspective is really important in these spaces, and especially as people who have interconnecting identities but also differences as well. A tool that I tend to use in teaching in these spaces is that of Talanoa. So, Talanoa can be quite formal, but it can be also informal as well, and it's something I've grown up with as a Pacific person in Aotearoa. We know when using Talanoa in these spaces, like teaching for example is successful, is that it offers individuals who engage in Talanoa a sense of agency and autonomy through conversational movement. For students, it's successful because it can also help expand their critical thinking beyond the course requirements. So, in my 300-level paper on print, you know we always ask the question, how can print be transformational and communicational?

And that's when we have to really dig deep into ourselves. I'm going to present an extract from one of my students who designed this work here. She's also a student that identifies as a Pākehā student in Aotearoa and in her workbook, she wrote these discussion points out, and she said, "I don't think my final piece can be the main focus of this research project. I can't just insert myself into a conversation or discourse that does not need me as a spokesperson. Rather, my research should stand on its own".

And she was talking about that in response to the theme we were talking about: decolonization. She also said, "I used to follow a stupid meme account on Instagram, set up by someone in America who graduated art school around the same time as me, following the Black Lives Matter protests. In May this year, she handed over her account to African American women. This immediately gave them a huge following reach. And instead of being able to ignore or not engage with these posts, previous followers were not now seeing these posts every hour or so".

In this, part she is talking about the way in which people outside of a minority worldview, once they begin to realize these other identities or these positions with levels of nuances existed or finding ways to move the space or look at the space, hold themselves accountable with a sense of responsibility to look outside of themselves: who's around them.

The student then goes on to say, "I think we do not need to recognize that as Pākehā, students researching within a 12-week paper, we will not have a clear stance on where we will end up. The value and importance of this paper has more to teach us about listening to voices outside of our immediate classroom. We will not fix these injustices. This is just our start in a struggle that Pākehā have refused to acknowledge for decades". Now, I think that end contribution by her is really important to consider here. You know, I think in terms of design, we're constantly thinking what are solutions that we can get out of this? And another thing with Talanoa is, solutions don't come from the one person, but the engagement collectively as a class encourages individuals within that class to think outside of themselves - but to also think how do we work together on this?

Faith

So, in terms of ways of being and knowing in connection to design, I'm coming from a Northern European framework, but through textiles as my ways are very much rooted in hands on engagement with materials and making processes and also drawing intuitively and through collaboration from science and engineering.

Very much drawing on understandings and theories around craft practice and so for me designing and making textiles and materials is very much about an interlacing of different types of knowledge and different ways of doing. But what's become more important for me, and it has come into increasing focus for me being here in Aotearoa is the need for me to really clarify my position and my attitude and my approach and contribution in those moments where different knowledge systems, different ways of doing interlace together.

Particularly as before coming here, I hadn't been hugely pressed to do this, working within the dominant European worldview. Yeah, so this is very much a journey that I'm on within my own research and practice and then consequently within my teaching of constructed textiles and materials design. So, something that I found really useful is Leslie Ann Noel's discussion around positionality and the importance of evolving a positional statement as a designer as visualized by the diagram that you can see on the slide shown here.

So, at the moment I'm exploring and testing how I might use this as a tool within my teaching of woven textiles and how I can encourage students to kind of create a positional statement as part of their design process and practice. Particularly, in a way that is specific to their concerns of textile material design, so thinking about raw materials, colouration, making processes, pattern, and touch. And thinking about that in terms of their own response to these elements within the design and making process, but also thinking about how those elements are then going to be received by others within the kind of many application areas for textiles and in particular thinking about those textiles within interior design context specifically.

ALL

Sonya

As much as we can practice these tools in our academic spaces, we do come across tensions in trying to be these people that we are in these spaces. So, I thought we'd just talk a little bit about some of the traps that do get set. I know for myself when I'm using "tools" like Talanoa in an academic space. Uhm, I say that because I know there are... it puts it at risk of operating outside of an indigenous space, and I'm only saying that because an academic space was never designed to include indigenous ways of doing things. The other risk that comes with practicing something like Talanoa in this space, is it, um, puts it at a level that could potentially make it out of reach for people within our own Pacific communities who might use it every single day as part of their daily lives. And that goes back to what I was saying earlier about it being used at a high or low level. UM, we do, even within our own Pacific academic circles, we have seen people publishing on the concept of Talanoa. We have seen arguments around whether it's a tool or a methodology, but we've also seen people jump in and say, how can you use Talanoa if you don't speak the language? Because we also know that language can teach us a lot as well in terms of the gafa of Talanoa, or the spiritual, mental and social constructs that are attached to Talanoa when you engage in those spaces. And Talanoa is also being argued as something that challenges Western constructs of time which I think is really interesting, when that students work that I shared, she talks about 12 weeks. It's not enough to kind of make some great leaps around decolonisation when we're using things like Talanoa in that space. Yeah.

Angela

But can add to the traps I guess, and I want to talk a little bit about finding a time and place for sharing indigenous knowledge. And when I was reading on Rangimarie Turuki Pere's indigenous framework for health, she talked about how she used the Māori lunar calendar to choose her time to share knowledge with people. So, there was a particular moon phase that only comes up and stars aligning and everything and it was coming up in about, I think the 1980s. She says that she missed the timing by a couple of years even, but she was trying to use her own indigenous frameworks to work out when would be a good time to share this knowledge. And you know, by the time she had written her research and shared it with people, she wrote a book to make it more accessible, a sort of picture book as well. And I think in the end she still wasn't really sure if it was the right time to share the knowledge. It seemed as though the rest of Aotearoa society was ready for it, but once it is out you can't take it back again. She was looking for a safe space and safe time to share this knowledge when it wouldn't be taken out of context. So, it's really difficult because we put things out there and then they're out of your hands, yeah.

Just the other thing I want to talk about, especially in this sort of conference format, is because of the Esoteric nature of the knowledge, the terms and concepts need to constantly be explained in-depth. You know, for other conference participants to sort of understand the intentions of our tools, the interventions and class activities that we designed to challenge existing Western methods of teaching, it takes time to develop that knowledge and any kind of depth that might be meaningful for the participants, so yeah, the actual conference setting makes it difficult too, yeah.

Faith

Yeah, so just in response to thinking about safety and time. Uhm? Safety and time and picking the right time to explore and introduce these tools. I think it's a huge challenge for us collectively within the academic institution, as colleagues working together to actually create the time to build the relationships needed to do a lot of this work. And so, yeah, I think that's for me, one of the biggest challenges in this space, but also one of the hugely, hugely big benefits from working together and having been able to have those moments of relational connection to explore and discuss all this stuff.

3. Reflections**3.1 Angela**

I think it is important to present our conversation in its unedited state to illustrate the complexities and difficulties of working across different knowledge systems. What we have shared is a dialogue between three researchers, each with their own worldview, but with a common language of textile making. We set out to explore the different traps that we fall into when practicing embedded knowledge with people outside of our own culture.

Personally, this has led me to further reflection and instead of moving forward with confidence, I have returned to Māori writings of the 1990s for insight on how to integrate my indigenous thinking into Western styled classroom teaching. An article that I particularly relate to and is explicitly structured to protect and respect Mātauranga Māori, is *Kaitiakitanga: Māori perspectives on conservation* (Roberts et.al, 1995). The article begins with a set of cautions, leading to a brief explanation of Māori cosmology (worldview). The authors then discuss Māori and the valuing of land, before finally entering a discourse on kaitiakitanga. The framework used in the article to prevent damage to indigenous knowledge, can

only protect it to a certain extent. The writers caution the sharing of knowledge with people uninitiated or unoriented towards a Māori worldview, as words and concepts can become disconnected from their original context, compromising indigenous values and understandings. Unfortunately, there will be people who ignore the cautions and even with knowledge of indigenous value systems, will proceed to appropriate Māori knowledge, customs, motifs, and artefacts without remorse. In the classroom, I have a responsibility to provide a safe environment for students to learn in and need to ensure my own cultural safety when engaging students in Te Ao Māori. My fear is that if I have not prepared students sufficiently to receive Māori knowledge, they will be at risk of disrespecting my culture and potentially taking their misunderstandings outside of the learning environment, compromising themselves and others.

One way of minimising the misappropriation of culture, is to work together with colleagues to scaffold learning laterally so that the students intersect with different worldviews throughout their education. From my collaborative encounters with my colleagues Sonya and Faith, I have identified the markers of those initiated in a worldview beyond their own as having an empathetic understanding of the ongoing impacts of colonisation and a belief that we are all casualties of the brutalities of Imperialist nation building. Finding commonality in our different perspectives, I hope that we will continue to practice and teach in a way that feels natural to each one of us, and in turn decolonise our learning spaces.

3.2 Sonya

It is so funny, how living through academia is a constant negotiation of time: meetings, classes, student office hours, teaching preparations, deadlines... oh and COVID-19. In the lead up to the Pivot conference and post pivot conference, the struggle has been real in trying to initiate and engage in *kanohi ki te kanohi* between ourselves - a concept my close Māori acquaintances have taught me: face to face, a concept that also intersects with authentic practices of Talanoa.

Reading Angela's reflection reminded me about the importance and reciprocity of dialogue. What does it mean to "make sense of time?" (Tuinamuana & Yoo, 2021, 53). The administrative operation of academia tends to take centre over the potential for serendipitous moments of Talanoa. The example of my student's response to the constraint of a 12-week paper demonstrates how the academic system can obstruct the potential to deeply engage in Talanoa, particularly around the principles of decolonization. It is pertinent to understand, that Talanoa can enable the engagement of decolonization: we can begin by positioning ourselves, weaving through relational differences, academic time has no place in Talanoa when you are "drawn to 'difference'" (Tuinamuana & Yoo, 2021, 59) because these intangible forms of vulnerable engagement become more than completing a 12-week paper.

When I think of prominent Pacific scholars who have grappled with this concrete space before me, I am reminded of how their sense of time disrupted the conformity of academia. The late Epeli Hau'ofa (1939-2009) and the late Dr. Teresia Teaiwa (1968-2017) were well known for investing a stillness of time with their students, including us Pacific students who were not even enrolled in their papers. Despite not being in the living present with us today, Hau'ofa's writing on, "*The ocean in us*" (Hau'ofa, 1998) and Teaiwa's epigraph she offered, "*We sweat and cry salt water, so we know that the ocean is really in our blood*" continues to underpin their hopes for us to disrupt "*externally generated definitions of our past, present, and future.*" (Hau'ofa, 1998, 392). We must first acknowledge their pluriversal oceanic identities: Hau'ofa was born to Tongan parents, in Papua New Guinea, and was based at the

University of the South Pacific in Fiji. Teaiwa was born to African American and Kiribati parents, born in Hawai'i, raised in Fiji, yet settled in Aotearoa, a leader in Pacific studies at the University of Victoria. Imagine living and breathing your right to pluriversal oceanic lineages, in a euro-centric-systemic space that has historically benefited from the extraction of our environmental resources, objectified our bodies, produced ethnographic studies of our cultures, territorialized our moana and continued to enforce a playing field that results in the low retention rates of Pacific student achievement. I can only imagine what it must have been like to work and live between contrasting worlds of thought and power dynamics, whilst being at the intersect of time: teaching our oceanic truths to us Pacific students who were also voyaging into our futures. Hau'ofa and Teaiwa's hopes to continue to pierce through the constraints of academia, beyond their living presence.

I teach classes that are made up of Pākehā students and a small minority of students who gafa to Te Moana-nui-a-kiwa and beyond. When we consider Te Moana-nui-a-kiwa, it needs to be pointed out that Aotearoa is part of the vast moana that connects us to the shores of Sāmoa, Tonga, Tokelau, Niue, Fiji, Rarotonga, Kiribati and every other motu seated within Te Moana-nui-a-kiwa. But most days I must pinch myself to remember this or remind others of this underrepresented lineage of relationality. But the pitching of terms like 'Pacific' homogenizes our plethora of motu across the moana and continues to be used in a way to separate ourselves from the New Zealand narrative. When we engage in Talanoa in the class and start to unpack our 'differences', we can begin to better understand each other and disrupt our own ideas of ourselves. During this process, we can agree that identity is fluid. For example, a lot of our Pākehā students might be born here in Aotearoa but can trace their gafa back to areas of Europe. We have also seen this with our Asian Aotearoa students (Asia is another term that is homogenizing) and so on. Talanoa allows unpacking and to expose the underrepresented areas of ourselves to our parents, or even our ancestors. In the 12-week paper where we go into the depths of decolonization, for some students, it's finally a space they can reconnect with these lineages – for example we still have students excluding their Māori and/or Pacific contexts when they enrol at university. But without focusing too much on ethnic lineages, it's the commonality of how much we have yet to engage in knowing ourselves and each other and how euro-centric-systems such as academia lack the support for this. I grew up with the concept of Talanoa: I'd Talanoa to myself, listen at the knee to Talanoa, engage in Talanoa with my uso (sister-like cousins, friends) well before studying at university made me conscious of it as a 'concept'. At university I began to read about Talanoa (Vaiotele, 2006), I observed critical debates theorizing Talanoa, expanding its space as plural and universal or as Tongan curator and writer Kolokesa Uafā Māhina-Tuai describes as, "*critically, yet harmoniously*" (Lagi-Maama Academy & Consultancy, 2020, 2) in Talanoa. So, it is only natural for me to fall into Talanoa in the teaching space. Especially in a place like Aotearoa. But there are times where I must catch myself out: A Pacific academic, practicing a common Pacific framework of communication in a space where Pākehā are the dominant majority? Is the agency still with me as a Pacific Academic, or have I unconsciously participated in contributing to the agency of the majority? Especially when there is still a lack of equity for our future Pacific students in the academic system which continues to create an uneven playing field for their successes? I would like to think that these questions are no longer relevant if Talanoa is enabling us to disrupt, "externally generated definitions of our past, present, and future" (Hau'ofa, 1998, 392) for all students unravelling the depths of their contexts.

3.3 Faith

In re-reading our conversation for the Pivot 2021 online conference and what Angela and Sonya have written, three things remain on the surface for me for further reflection. The first is a recognition of the need to more fully understand who I am, where I am from and how that shapes my approach to research and teaching within textile and materials design. And, from there continuing a journey to understand how I position myself in relationship to the work of decolonisation within this space. The second is a growing realisation that I am drawn to look for familiar systems, replicable models and usable ‘tools’ that I can master and become comfortable with in order to partner in this work. The third is the overwhelming sense of privilege and gratitude that I feel to be teaching with Angela and Sonya and to be involved in collaborative research that is rooted in Mātauranga Māori.

As I noted in the conversation transcribed above, I am from the UK and have lived in Aotearoa now for five years. Within this context I am tauiwi but share much in common culturally with Pākehā and am drawn to the values embodied in the identity of Tāngata Tiriti. Amanda Thomas, in her contribution to ‘Imagining Decolonisation’ (Thomas, 2020, 107-132) writes that to do the work of decolonisation Pākehā need to better understand who we are. We need to know ourselves more fully within all spheres of our lives, including within our design practice. But, as Yoko Akama, Penny Hagen & Desna Whaanga-Schollum surface in ‘Problematizing Replicable Design to Practice Respectful, Reciprocal, and Relational Co-designing with Indigenous People’ (Akama et al., 2019, 59-84), as designers rooted in western thinking, we rarely give deeper descriptions of our backgrounds, sociocultural context, philosophy, or values. They refer to anthropologist Lucy Suchman (2002) in noting that this cyclically fortifies a ‘design culture of nowhere and nobody’ (Akama et al., 2019, 62).

Understanding and articulating who we are can at once be enlightening and confronting ((Thomas, 2020, 107-132). I fully relate to the discomfort bound up with shame, guilt, and tension that Thomas articulates, and I accept the need that she identifies to stay with those feelings and consider what they can teach me about myself and my behaviours. Leading my students in such a journey is equally enlightening and confronting. Whilst I have found the work of Lesley-Ann Noel (no date) on positionality amazingly helpful in beginning to facilitate students to unpack and articulate who they are within their design practice – to position themselves – I find this hugely challenging. The discomfort rightly and needlingly persists. How can we collectively create learning environments that are inclusive and safe for all students to explore and articulate who they are confidently and without fear to let their creative voices be heard and impact the world for good? How do we do this within an academy that leaves little time to invest in the personal and relational work that is required and provides little sense of safety and security?

I recognise that I am drawn to look for easy answers where there are none. I look for familiar systems, replicable models and usable ‘tools’ that I can master and become comfortable with in order to partner in this work and ‘get it right’. I am beginning to understand that this is ingrained in my western mindset and is embodied in dominant models of design such as the Double-Diamond (Design Council UK) that, as Arturo Escobar writes highlighted by Akama, Hagan and Whaanga-Schollum (Akama et al., 2019, 60) have been “exported to many world regions over the past few hundred years through colonialism, development and globalization.” How do we resist the inclination to rely on such ways? Akama, Hagan and Whaanga-Schollum (Akama et al., 2019, 62 & 64) provide some helpful critique and explore ‘respecting design in the periphery’ and ‘accounting ourselves and our stories’ as important behaviours. Over the last five years, within my own design research and teaching practice, I have slowly begun to

learn to step back, listen, learn from others, and wait. To be ok with mistakes and to stay with the tension and trouble. To let a way through emerge step by step rather than reverting to the well-worn and comfortable dominant path. This has only been possible through the relationships I have been lucky enough to build and the opportunities I have had to work collaboratively.

I am hugely grateful to teach with Angela and Sonya and to be involved in research to revitalise the Harakeke fibre industry in Aotearoa. The Harakeke plant is native to Aotearoa and is a taonga species. In working with this plant and its fibre, which is called muka, I have the immense privilege to learn about Tikanga, Kaupapa Māori and Mātauranga Māori and have had the opportunity to work in partnership with leaders in this space including Rangi Te Kanawa. Through a shared love and understanding for textile making, to which we bring different perspectives and knowledge, this work has, as Angela noted in her reflections, enabled me to engage in a worldview beyond my own. I have experienced that it is in nature that we find the time and space for the connection with self and others that we need. Without these opportunities, experiences and most importantly relationships, I would not have come anywhere near as far on my journey towards being a partner in decolonisation.

As I was reminded on a visit to Te Papa Tongarewa (the National Museum of Aotearoa) with my eight-year-old son and his friend this morning, “We’re all connected, with our own stories to tell. Listen.” (In Te Taiao). As someone from the dominant story I must stop and listen. But I must also dig deep to acknowledge, face, and find meaning in my own story to bring something to share rather than take.

Glossary

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| • Aotearoa | New Zealand |
| • Fa’a Sāmoa | Ways of Sāmoa, Sāmoan way |
| • Gafa | Sāmoan for ‘genealogy’ or history |
| • Harakeke | New Zealand flax plant |
| • Kanohi ki te kanohi | Face to face |
| • Kaupapa Māori | Māori principles and approaches |
| • Mātauranga Māori | Knowledge/wisdom of Te Ao Māori (Māori worldview) |
| • Mauri | Life force |
| • Moana | Ocean |
| • Moana diaspora | Pacific Peoples located in Aotearoa |
| • Moana tāngata | Pacific Peoples |
| • Motu | to mean ‘Island’ in both Māori and Sāmoan |
| • Muka | Prepared flax fibre |
| • Ngā Pae Māhutonga | The School of Design, within Massey University’s College Creative Arts |
| • Pākehā | New Zealander of European Descent |
| • Tāngata Tiriti | People of Te Tiriti O Waitangi |
| • Taonga | Treasure |
| • Tauīwi | Foreigner |
| • Te Kunenga Pūrehuroa | Māori name for Massey University |
| • Te Moana-nui-a-kiwa | Pacific Ocean |

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About the Authors:

Angela Kilford (Te Whanau A Kai, Ngāti Porou, Ngāti Kahungunu). Angela Kilford is an artist and designer with a background in textiles and works also within the College of Creative Arts, Massey University, Wellington New Zealand. Her inspiration comes from Māori concepts and knowledge. Angela's most recent works have explored the whakapapa of local ecology and the lesser-known connections between living and non-living entities. These ideas are examined and expressed through walking, performance, collaborative marking, large scale public installations and writing.

Faith Kane a design researcher and educator working in the area of textiles and materials. Her interests include place-based design towards sustainability and regeneration, collaborative working in the design/science space, transdisciplinary research practices and the role and value of craft knowledge within these contexts. She is an Associate Professor for Textiles at the School of Design, College of Creative Arts at Massey University in Wellington New Zealand. and an editor of the Journal of Textile Design Research and Practice.

Sonya Withers is a New Zealand born Pacific creative, with lineages to Scotland and Sama'i, Falelatai, Sāmoa. Sonya has featured work under Miromoda (Indigenous Māori Fashion Apparel Board) through New Zealand Fashion Week, is a Creative New Zealand Tautai internship recipient and worked on Pacific community centred projects with Te Papa Tongarewa abroad (Hawai'i) and locally with Auckland War Memorial Museum (Pacific Community Access Project). Sonya is motivated by the support of her community and is committed to surfacing how design and creativity can serve the past and present of Te Moana-nui-a-kiwa. Sonya is a lecturer at the College of Creative Arts, Wellington School of Design and teaches between Textile Studio and Critical and Contextual Studies.