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

KANE Faith, KILFORD Angela and WITHERS Sonya*
School of Design, College of Creative Arts, Massey University
*s.withers@massey.ac.nz

Within this contribution, as wāhine who whakapapa Pākehā, Māori and Moana tangata, we will consider the shifting, re-wiring and co-creation of our ways through practicing and teaching textile design towards interconnected futures. However, we are experiencing tensions when we facilitate authentic knowledge-based systems and material practices in an academy despite their natural entanglement to nature, people and the wellbeing of society. The urgency to address textile design’s role and responsibility in environmental, economic, and social crises is needed more than ever. How do we activate our textile design practices towards positive change? As we reflect on our interconnected identities and their embeddedness into our scholarly and teaching practices, we will also discuss how we might embody the necessary attitudes for maintaining 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.

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About the Authors

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 and an editor of the Journal of Textile Design Research and Practice.

Angela Kilford (Te Whanau A Kai, Ngāti Kahungunu). Angela Kilford is an artist and designer with a background in textiles and is a lecturer in Textiles. 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 making, large scale public installations and writing.

Sonya Withers is a New Zealand born Pacific creative, (Sama’i, Falelatai, Sāmoa). Sonya has featured work under Miromoda through NZFW, is a Creative New Zealand Tautai internship recipient and worked on Pacific community centred projects with Te Papa Tongarewa abroad (Hawai‘i) and with Auckland War Memorial Museum (Pacific Community Access Project). Sonya is a lecturer in Textiles and Critical and Contextual Studies.