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Kōanga: September - November



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Takarua: June - August





# //////about walking

15 months of artist walks  
in Tāmaki Auckland



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**15 months of artist walks in Tāmaki Auckland**

Edited by Christina Houghton, Melissa Laing and Becca Wood

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## Marking time, tracing spaces

In the early conversations that established the idea for the *About walking* series, a programme of shared ambulatory experiences, the opportunity for Te Uru Waitākere Contemporary Gallery to get out of the building and into the community quickly became an attractive proposition.

Certainly, the location for each project has been a pivotal part of the programme, and is a layer that adds significant nuance when you move beyond the proverbial walls of a fixed gallery space. But it also became apparent that we would be exploring the flow of time as much as our movement across the landscape. We quickly realised we wanted to give each project its own space in time so the programme would spread across the year. This meant that each project could be delivered on its own terms rather than being bundled into a typical festival type structure where everything happens in quick succession over a single weekend or week. Significant to this thinking was artist and advisor, Pita Turei, who highlighted the system of maramataka, and the guidance the Māori calendar could provide for selecting appropriate times for different activities, both across the seasons and also in alignment with the different energy flows of each lunar cycle. I am sure this closer consideration of natural rhythms is a key reason why only one of our events was significantly affected by weather.

Turei launched the series with a dawn event on the summit of Pukematekeo, from where we could view the isthmus of Tāmaki Makaurau, while taking in the first of several oratory sessions that told of early travellers and their journeys across the landscape we now occupy. val smith's journey took us both across west Auckland and the clock, consciously meandering and making use of queer spaces and timings, with events at dawn, midday, evening and midnight. Christina Houghton, Becca Wood, Suzanne Cowan and Rodney Bell encouraged us to walk in the footsteps of our tupuna, reactivating the stories of those who had come before us through multi-sensory experiences in historic places. Wood and Andrew McMillan also created echoes of parallel timelines through audio recordings in which the recorded time, our memory and imagining of time-and-place was overlaid with the experience of that same space in the present, whenever that might be.

Of course, one factor nobody anticipated was the interruption created by the Covid-19 pandemic, which meant that the programme took slightly longer than originally planned. This introduced further poignance and even some symmetry. When Jeremy Leatinu'u led us down from the base of Ōwairaka (also known as Te Ahi-kā-a-Rakataura) to Waterview at the end of October 2019, we didn't know that it would be almost exactly a year before we would make the return journey in the opposite direction, effectively bundling all the experiences of the intervening year into the project when we marked this particular journey as complete.

We are particularly grateful for the artists who were able to adapt their projects to digital delivery while also dealing with the rapid approach of Aotearoa's first Covid-19 lockdown. McMillan's audio walk was already planned as a downloadable experience to be taken at any time, we just had to wait a little longer before we could experience it as a group walk with the artist. Melissa Laing's performance with Mustaq Missouri, originally intended to be live, was able to be presented as an online video through the fortunate recording of a dress rehearsal immediately prior to Aotearoa's first lockdown. Primarily a commentary on suburban alienation and the precariousness of labour, the footage acquired added resonance by capturing an almost empty suburban shopping district in the process of being shuttered for lockdown. Vanessa Crofskey's project, a community sports day that was to take place in Olympic Park, was also presented through online videos and streaming, and became a timely exploration of the challenges and tedium of recreational possibilities, routine chores and passing time under lockdown conditions. Like McMillan's, Layne Waerea and Lana Lopesi's project encouraged us to explore local landscapes in our own time, responding to the seasonal emergence of fog as we cautiously eased ourselves back into a post-lockdown lifestyle.

Lastly, Richard Orjis' project, *cruising, lazing, leaning* eventually took place in late November as the rest of the city started contemplating end-of-year functions, hoping for a clean slate with the impending arrival of a new year. As a late-night presentation that invited us to find a new, less human-centric pace, in sync with the environment around us, it was a fitting note to conclude the programme.

*About walking* was set in motion in late 2019 and it is perhaps the initial momentum of the first few months that allowed us to continue throughout the challenges of 2020. We were able to complete the project we had begun, and support the team of artists to realise their ideas in the most appropriate way, both for the locations selected, and also the timing with which they were presented. Especially with this in mind, for their unflagging enthusiasm and unfailing reliability, we must acknowledge the enormous efforts of *About walking* curators, Christina Houghton and Melissa Laing. And, of course, all of the artists for coming on board, sharing this journey with us and being so generous in developing ambitious projects.

*About walking* has also appreciated generous funding from Auckland Council: through the Regional Arts Grants programme as well as from the Albert Eden and Whau Local Boards, not to mention the Waitākere Ranges Local Board's ongoing support for Te Uru. We also thank Unitec for their support of this publication.

**Andrew Clifford,**  
Director | Kaitohu  
Te Uru

## Seasons of walking

In 2014 we, Christina Houghton and Melissa Laing, met for the first time in a community hall off Karangahape Road during a walk through the area led by Houghton. The walk, *Survival Strategies - tour of OFA* wove personal and local history together through sensory exploration. Over the subsequent six years we have walked our own walks and the walks of our peers and, in the process, a set of questions have emerged: what is it to know a place through the affective and intellectual affordances that art provides; how does situating your work within and in partnership with the environment it passes through shape live experience and collective connection; what is the relationship between walking, art and knowledge; and, finally, what is specific in Aotearoa New Zealand to creative walking practices, a globally mobilised art form?

In partnership with Te Uru and Pita Turei, we developed *About walking* to explore these questions. *About walking* was a program of performance based walks travelling through time, across a fifteen month period, and through geography, across west Auckland. In the background of our thinking about walking in west Auckland was the importance of respecting the rāhui over the Waitākere forest and how we might offer alternative walks. Our diverse program of works investigated walking as an artistic strategy in the context of Aotearoa with an emphasis on somatic, participatory and social practices. It positioned walking as a participatory activity, co-performed by the artist and walkers – together or together-apart. Threaded through the program was a conscious focus on how walking led by tangata tiriti can acknowledge and respect Māori as the tangata whenua of Aotearoa. With the guidance of Pita Turei and Rereata Makiha, the *About walking* artists responded to and collectively learned from maramataka, the matauranga Māori system of tracking the progression of time, and daily and seasonal change through a lunar calendar and environmental observation.

From the outset, *About walking* was firmly situated in a history of peripatetic and ambulatory performance practices from the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Just as this history moves across artforms, so too do the twelve artists who created works over what was originally intended to be a twelve month period. The artists drew on a diverse range of fields including performance art, experimental music, dance, theatre, and literature, and connected with other walking practices found in education, conservation, science, history, sociology, tourism and recreation. Looking back at fifteen months of walking, three interwoven approaches emerged out of the artist's events: making works which invited or directed actions from their participants based around walking; walks which took the participants on narrative journeys; and ambulatory experiences built around sensing place and environment.

The first walks centred themselves in the tension between the nature of the artist's instruction and the interpretation a participant brings to fulfilling that instruction. Jeremy Leatinu'u's two reciprocal walks *Kawea* and *Mauria* requested

that people bring objects of significance and seeds and carry them on a journey. Through this action exploring the choices people make about what to carry when migrating as well as contemplating what early Māori voyagers might have carried. Following in a similar vein, Vanessa Crofskey's *Sports Day* began as a call to collective activity in the form of an athletics competition. With the advent of lockdown, Crofskey's project pivoted to an instruction-based set of activities that led its audience to repeat the actions she demonstrated at home, creating their own bubble based sports days. Layne Waerea's *Walking About in Fog* built on her earlier *Chasing Fog Club* work and extended an invitation, bound to the timespan of one lunar cycle in Hōngongoi, to go for a walk in fog, photograph it and contribute the photographs to an online repository at walkingaboutinfog.com. She invited writer Lana Lopesi to apprentice with her as a fog chaser. Lopesi contributed drawn and written musings on literal and metaphorical fog in the time of a pandemic, two of which can be found in these pages. These instruction-based works arced back to the practices of conceptual artists that emerged in the 1960s, yet in the context of a pandemic operated more urgently as guidance for collective, creative and emotional survival in a time of crisis.

Our second cluster of walks drew on traditions of oratory, the theatre of place-based storytelling and whakawhanaungatanga. Launching the program and weaving through it, Pita Turei marked four points across the west Auckland landscape, both geographically and with the maramataka. Turei has built a creative practice around ahikā, keeping the fires of indigenous occupation burning, through gathering people around a brazier on sites of significance and telling the oral histories of Tāmaki Makaurau. From Pukematekeo to Rangimatariki, his words wove a history shaped by passion, love and pragmatism that spans over half of Te Ika-a-Māui. Where Turei told the histories of a people and land, Melissa Laing created a walk around a fictional story of one man. *Standing at an Edge*, performed by Mustaq Missouri, communicated the structural impacts of capitalism on people through the form of a personal monologue delivered in dialogue with the in-development spaces of Westgate town centre.

The walks created by Suzanne Cowan and Rodney Bell, Christina Houghton and Becca Wood wove together colonial history and experiential discovery. They used storytelling and somatic rituals of participation to explore the relationship between past, present and future action. Cowan and Bell guided participants through the just-wheel-traversable Byers Walk, exploring the echoes of colonial settlers in the bush of Piha and the tensions of contemporary Pākehā-Māori relations, acknowledging their position as co-descendants of specific historical moments. Becca Wood's choreauratic work *The Public Stand* used archival material, oral histories, instructions and live performers to guide walkers around the inside track of the Avondale Racecourse, claiming the space for community, not commodity. Houghton created two walks through Glen Eden under the title *Wayfinding Waikumete*. The first walk traversed the Waikumete Cemetery and the second the township, both walks drawing out connections between the village and the neighbouring cemetery, the largest in the Southern Hemisphere.

The third body of walks focused on growing and examining sensory relationships to the physical environment. Taking their lead from the maramataka, these works paid close attention to weather, time of day, progression of the moon and season. Andrew McMillan created a suite of four audio pieces from field and data recordings designed to be listened to along the Auaunga creek and Waterview pathway. The audio of *Echo Eco Echo* mingled with the ambient sounds present at the time of listening. val smith led four time and site specific attuning walks at dawn, midday, dusk and midnight, exploring how to queer public space through attentiveness, napping and conversation. Richard Orjis created a nighttime cruise, loosely tethering participants together to be led by the character of a sequined long finned eel, the Ōrea of Te Wai Ōrea. Collectively listening to an ambient soundtrack created by Marika Pratley the group gently cruised the waters edge, spontaneously accompanied by two geese.

This sensory or somatic mode of engagement wove its way through all of the walks through an attention to the sites, times, and seasonal variations inherent in a project that spanned the length of west Auckland and the duration of what became a fifteen month cycle. From the crisp, cool spring dawn on a mountain peak to the dry dust of building sites in the early evening; from the damp feel of elusive fog at the end of your street to the torchlit dark of a public park; from walking across wildflower meadows to standing under the hum of a pylon, the works were created in cooperation with the environment. Here it is useful to think about the concept of walking with outlined by Juanita Sundberg in her essay *Decolonizing posthumanist geographies*, in relationship to the Zapatista's ongoing revolutionary practises.<sup>1</sup>

To walk with is to pay attention to and make sense of the world in human scale and time through embodied movement. In this embodiment, it is also to create relationships with the non-human, to durationally walk with the seasons, weather, landscape, flora and fauna, and the built urban fabric of our city. smith's work in particular drew out the queering framework of walking with, showing how it creates 'an "ontological shift," to think about experience differently, to experience differently, and to experience difference in experiencing.'<sup>2</sup> To walk with is to walk politically. Over the course of the fifteen months, we walked with questions of colonialism, indigeneity, access, queerness, capitalism, migration and belonging. And from March we walked with the uncertainty of a global pandemic and with the technologies we subsequently turned to so we could carry on. In response to these contexts and questions, we walked in multiple ways with different communities, and across different sites at different times; always with the constant movement towards change that is at the heart of walking with.

1. Juanita Sundberg, 'Decolonizing posthumanist geographies', *Cultural Geographies*, Vol 21 Issue 1, January 2014, pp.1-15 <https://doi.org/10.1177/1474474013486067>
2. Patricia Ticineto Clough and Bibi Calderaro, 'Foreword' in Stephanie Springgay and Sarah E. Truman, *Walking methodologies in a more-than-human world: Walking lab*, Routledge, London, 2019, p. xiii

It is impossible to reflect on a durational initiative such as *About walking* without talking about the impact of Covid-19 on live work. From its very conception, live presence and co-creation were underpinning concepts for *About walking*, and the rapid emergence of a worldwide pandemic challenged this. February and March 2020 were marked by a growing uncertainty as to what was safe to do, which was resolved by a national lock down. The restrictions of the New Zealand Government's Covid-19 management plan required the artists and curatorial team to consider, alongside their peers worldwide, what is liveness when the artist and audience cannot be co-present. The neat twelve month intended span of the project sprawled out to fifteen months and half the walks took place under the changed conditions of a global pandemic.

While delegated works such as *Walking about in fog* already posited liveness through the participants collective yet solo actions, and somatic works like *Echo Eco Echo* were designed for asynchronous live presence, the works conceived around co-presence had to swiftly grapple with how to achieve this when physical distance was the order of the day. *Sports Day* and *Standing at the Edge* had to rapidly reconsider what a live, participatory and collective walk could be when people could not gather outside their immediate household. These two works leaned on live streaming and watch parties to gather people together. Taking place under Alert Level Two guidelines, *Whiro* and *The Public Stand* had to negotiate how to safely arrange people in space at times when gathering numbers were restricted. But even the walks whose methods were unchanged had their meaning inflected by how we walked because of Covid-19. *Walking about in fog* embraced the fog of uncertainty and insecurity present in the post lockdown period as a core subject of the work. *Kawea*, *Mauria*, and *Wayfinding Waikumete*, two multi-part walks that extended over this challenging year, found that revisiting the same place with such a traumatic year between created space for moments of reflection, expressions of relief and even for grieving the isolation experienced by everyone in Aotearoa in this time.

In Aotearoa, we collectively turned to the act of going for a walk during the Covid-19 lockdown period. For many people it became the main event of their day. In the changed physical and mental space of lockdown, people experienced a 'quiet world', hearing the sounds of the non-human world without the occluding accompaniment of traffic and construction, and acquired an 'expanded world' as previously car-dominated spaces became available for walking. Due to geographical restrictions, the people out and about were walking in their local places, tracing borders they hadn't traced before, noticing when and where they could and couldn't walk, and discovering that in such times walking can evoke questions: whose land do we walk upon, whose systems govern us, and how do we respond to immediate forms of crisis as well as long-term climate change? These are pressing questions for us to walk with.

We began *About walking* on the spring equinox in 2019 by both barely walking, and walking together at dawn with *Mate Kē Ao* by Pita Turei. We brought the series to a close on a late summer evening in November 2020 with Richard Orjis's *cruising, lazing, leaning* queering Western Springs Park. Within this fifteen month journey, we cycled from Kōanga through the seven stages of Raumati and Ngahuru, embraced the cold of Takarua and revisited the return to Raumati through a second Kōanga. We walked during the quiet reflective times of the lunar cycle and the new beginnings of Whiro. We walked in the unpredictable times of the Tamatea days and learning period of Tangaroa. We walked with the energy of the full moon supporting us. The attention to the seasons and lunar revolutions that the maramataka framework demanded from us allowed for relationships between works and between places to emerge and inflect our understanding of the whole.

If you walked with us, we thank you, as we thank the artists who brought such care to the works they created, and thank Te Uru, who provided the project with a home and a team to help make it happen. We acknowledge the iwi of Tāmaki whose land and histories we walked through, and we embrace our current urban dwellers who are shaping the world to come. Let it be one that walks with the land.

**Christina Houghton and Melissa Laing**  
Curators, *About walking*



*Wayfinding Waikumete*, Christina Houghton. Photo by Jody Yawa McMillan

# The walks

## 2019

**Sunday 22 September, 5.45am**

*Mata Kē Ao* by Pīta Turei

Pukematekeo Lookout, Waitākere Ranges

**Saturday 2 November, 12noon**

*Kaweā* by Jeremy Leatinu'u

Ōwairaka to Waterview Reserve via the Waterview Path and Te Auaunga Creek Path

**Saturday 23 November, 4.10pm**

*Wayfinding Waikumete* by Christina Houghton

Begins at Mt Eden Train Station and finishes at Waikumete Cemetery, Glen Eden

## 2020

**Thursday 16 January, 7.30pm**

*Te Wai o Rakataura* by Pīta Turei

Summit of Ōwairaka – Te Ahi-kā-a-Rakataura

*The walk was cancelled at the request of the Tupuna Maunga Authority, however Turei independently marked the planned moment with an informal exchange of stories and dialogue on the maunga*

**Saturday 15 February, dawn and midday, Sunday 16 February, sunset and midnight**

*queer walk-nap* by val smith

Te Wai Ōrea – Western Springs Park, Heron Park, Ken Maunder Park, Rooftop Terrace, Lopdell House

**Saturday 29 February, 2pm**

*He Owā Maturua, The Hauntology of Inheritance* by Suzanne Cowan and Rodney Bell

Byers Walk, Piha

**Wednesday, 18 March – Sunday 15 November**

*Echo Eco Echo* by Andrew McMillan

Waterview Path beginning at Harbutt Reserve and finishing at Unitec, Mt Albert

**Saturday 4 April, 12noon – 4:30pm**

*Sports Day* by Vanessa Crofskey

Created for Olympic Park, New Lynn and presented online

**Saturday 11 April, 8pm**

*Standing at the edge* by Melissa Laing

Performed by Mustaq Missouri in North West Westgate. Presented online

**Wednesday 20 May, 6am**

*Whiro* by Pīta Turei

Harbourview-Orangihina Park, Te Atatū Peninsula

**6 June – 5 July**

*Walking about in fog* by Layne Waerea and Lana Lopesi

Begins at your front door and is shared online

**Sunday 21 June, 3pm**

*The Public Stand* research walk by Becca Wood

Avondale Racecourse, Avondale

**Tuesday 14 July, 6am**

*Rangi Matariki* by Pīta Turei

Rangimatariki to Motu Manawa, Rosebank

**Saturday 12 September, 3.30pm**

*The Public Stand* by Becca Wood

Avondale Racecourse, Avondale

**Saturday 10 October, 11am**

*Wayfinding Waikumete: Walking Glen Eden* by Christina Houghton

Begins at Glen Eden Train Station and finishes at Lucinda Gardens, Glen Eden

**Saturday 31 October, 12noon**

*Mauria*, by Jeremy Leatinu'u

Waterview Reserve to Ōwairaka Park via the Waterview Path

**Saturday 21 November, 9pm**

*cruising, lazing, leaning*, by Richard Orjis

Te Wai Ōrea – Western Springs Park, Western Springs

# Talking about maramataka

Sunday 25 October 2020

Pīta Turei in discussion with Christina Houghton and Melissa Laing

## Melissa

When we started *About walking*, I had an early conversation with you, Pīta, where you proposed that we use maramataka as an underpinning framework or rock on which to build the project. Christina, Andrew and I had made the initial preliminary decision to run [the series of walks] across a year rather than make it a one month festival. So we'd already made the decision to have the project expand and respond to an entire year and your suggestion gave that decision strength. I was wondering if you could give us some background to that.

## Pīta

First of all, I'll say why I said what I said and that is because, the year before, the Arataki Visitors Centre had organised a Matariki event which they asked me to open. At dawn on the day, I opened and handed it to Rereata Makiha, who was there, and he said 'I don't understand why people ask me to come and look at stars on a day like this. The 28th is the day we should be looking at stars.' So I made a mental note of this and then he handed it over to the astronomical society who had three telescopes set up. But it was cloudy, we couldn't see anything, so they said come inside we'll show you a powerpoint on space junk. I went back out and watched the sunrise, it was better. But I said to the other couple of people who came with me, "OK, the 28th, [let's meet at] Pukematekeo, the lookout up from Swanson." On that morning it had been raining heavily as there had been a storm so I drove up there early to wait at the gate and tell people to go home. But on the way, and I was driving quite slow because it was raining from Piha, I got past Lone Kauri Road and an owl flew in front of my windscreen. It stayed there, just in front of the bonnet, for three or four curves and then it flew off and I thought, well, that was a pretty good sign, and then when I got there the rain had stopped. I set up the fire and fifty people turned up and we saw a total eclipse of the moon, and from that moment I thought, whatever Rereata says, I'm going to do.

I've been observing celestial events for thirty-one years now. Ngāneko Minhinnick had introduced me to the observations of Matariki. So I visited all our wahi tapu of Tāmaki, observing dawn usually, sometimes overnight. After about six years I realised I need to look down as well. In the midst of that, I'd studied celestial navigation with Hec Busby and Mau Pailug. Nainoa Thompson and I did the voyage of Te Aurere up to Rarotonga. So I had a very well versed understanding of our celestial navigation and I'd decided very early on that because it was such a big thing, the sky, especially when you can see it all, that the moon was too tricky. I thought, I'm going to stick with our stars, they give us our direction. I'm just going to ignore the moon. It's not so important for ocean voyaging.

*Mata Kē Ao*, Pīta Turei. Photo by Melissa Laing



Recently I realised I need to understand the moon as well, and my observations, exploring the why of the observations. Why do we have these rituals, ceremonies and practices? Why were they outlawed? Why do we keep them going even though they were outlawed beyond scrutiny? And really, the anchor to that came down to the fundamentals of being cognisant with our environment. And by cognisant, I mean our cells understand what's happening in our environment and the heart of it. It became very clear that to achieve that we do need to understand the moon. The moon influences every drop of water on the planet, every blood cell in every human being, every saucer of milk put out for a pussycat. All water is influenced by the moon and, with that, everything that survives on the water, and so the species and everything else, everything in the environment.

Our earliest wānanga Te Pehi o Manawatere, over on Motutapu in Tāmaki really, from all of the evidence I can gather, was based around anchoring ourselves, using our celestial knowledge to understand our environment, the species within our environment. How to read that. How to coexist. How to survive with it. And so, I need to understand the moon, and I don't. But Rereata has started opening up opportunities for us to conscientise to the māori lunar calendar as it exists here. And, as he's quick to point out, as it exists here is variable to where you are in Aotearoa as celestial navigation identifies us as well. Because wherever we are on the big apple we'll see things from a different perspective. So maramataka is our understanding of that and it's also anchoring our cognisance to that. And if our cognisance is not anchored to that we probably won't survive as a species, if we look at the notion of extinctions.

It's hard to see why it's important when we've got cellphones, but if they stop working then we'd be reliant on the things human beings have been reliant on for thousands of years. It's only in the last fifty [years] we've had cellphones and so we've lost our connections to these things. Cellphones, computers, all the things which keep us from seeing the sky and being in the rhythms.

#### **Melissa**

Christina pointed out to me just before that we could see the moon above us.

#### **Christina**

Yeah I was looking up and seeing the half moon last night because I was wondering about the cats wanting to get out.

#### **Melissa**

Because, I'd just said to her we'd just transitioned into Huna, according to the [maramataka] dial of The Spinoff.<sup>1</sup> We'd just transitioned into a period of contemplation and giving back. This transitions us into thinking about how, when

1. Over the duration of *About walking* the team has been using a variety of sources to aid them to predict what day would fall when. A major tool has been the dial published by The Spinoff at the beginning of their Maramataka series. <https://thespinoff.co.nz/tag/Maramataka/>

you laid down this invitation, it was both an invitation and a challenge to us. We had to think about scheduling differently, not just scheduling, because that's the mechanistic part of it, but also think about what it means to progress across a month, progress across a year, differently.

#### **Christina**

And asking each artist, by presenting what the energy is at the time — saying, you know it's this low energy or contemplative energy — what are you trying to achieve for your project? Through this, getting your artists to think about that in turn and whether it would be a good time for their project to be on this day, given they might not have thought about this already. So maramataka meant we could offer that to the artists.

#### **Pīta**

It has to start with just conscientising ourselves. We know this idea exists and it didn't take long for us to add up that this could be really valuable and useful, but the process of getting to that point is what we are in. We're all in it together and you guys are probably more attuned to it than I am. And if we just conscientise ourselves to it and start working through it, it will become clear and we'll start to understand it.

#### **Christina**

Yeah, and part of that was like, what does low energy mean? Does that mean people want to come out and be together in a different type of energy or do you need high energy to come out, for it to be all fast paced and ooh we're having a festival.

#### **Pīta**

Yeah I think there's a danger in thinking we can schedule the best day, unless it's for watching stars, but there's a value in experiencing the difference. However, I don't think we can totally, literally, employ those notions.

#### **Melissa**

While I've been employing those notions in a mechanistic sense — going this day, this thing — at the same time, I've known that this is not a deterministic method. As you said, you can't predict the best day, rather this quite mechanistic wheel is a way of trying to attune yourself to an attention.

#### **Pīta**

Yes. A way of being informed as to what qualities are associated to this day and then we pay attention and go, oh, low energy means this. It was a low energy day on D day when they invaded, it didn't change anything, much, we still did it, got onto the beach, still got off it. It doesn't mean you have to not do anything because it's a low energy day. It's just a matter of being conscious of what that might mean. It might mean that the eels are sitting still in the river, they're not swimming away as you come past. It's their low energy day. So if we behave in the context of that, it is potentially beneficial if we are aware of that.

## About *About walking*

The *About walking* project coincided with a year that a global pandemic struck the world, and in Aotearoa New Zealand one of our dominant responses has been to walk. We've been able to do this in Aotearoa because, unlike many other countries, we could control our borders, located as we are on islands in the South Pacific with vast amounts of ocean separating us from others. Alongside this geographic advantage and with a government willing to follow scientific advice throughout the pandemic, our communities maintained safe physical distancing practices. Through the pandemic, we've walked within our communities, creating spontaneous walking choreographies while practicing extended kinespheres.<sup>1</sup> We've walked collectively but apart. This collective, separated action is reminiscent of the last decade of walking in art in Aotearoa. Looking back, one can see a resurgence of works that are concerned with place-based and walking practices and methodologies. However, there is little collective documentation of these works.

*About walking* is a first attempt to draw considered attention to this resurgence, bringing together a group of artists situated in Tāmaki Auckland whose work with bodies in urban and not so urban landscapes are connected by the activity of walking. This publication documents the collection of walking works that make up the fifteen month long project curated by Christina Houghton and Melissa Laing and positions this nomadic project within a national and global arts framework. To begin a contextualisation of this collective inquiry situated in Tāmaki, I must mention artists who have contributed to the resurgence of walking-as-art but are not included in the *About walking* publication. An incomplete list of artists and works that spring to mind includes Phil Dadson's various site-based roaming sound performances, Kathy Waghorn and Nina Patel's art and guided walks in west Auckland created as collective Hoop-la, Rachel Ruckstuhl-Mann's durational slow walks associated with bodies of water, Rebecca Hobbs' collaboration with SOUL to combine hīkoi, art and place activation as activism, Mark Harvey's investigations into pedestrian actions of arriving, falling, failing and walking backwards, Carol Brown's site-based ambulatory choreographies, and my own choreoauratic walks located in Auckland, Dunedin and Chicago, leading to my participation in *About walking*.

Walking, which inevitably also becomes about the spaces in/with/on which we walk, prompts us to contextualise the *About walking* collection of works as specific to Tāmaki, Aotearoa. During the process of creating the choreoauratic

audio score for my work for *About walking*, *The Public Stand*, I discussed the idea of hīkoi te whenua (walking on the body of the mother) with local artist Charles Koroneho. Whenua is not only a name for land, but also for placenta, the temporary organ in the womb of the mother that supports the foetus. The name Papatūānuku, also refers to the land — earth mother, a name that gives birth to all things. Through our conversation we explored the idea of the body and land as energetically coexistent and began to open up a relational space that speaks to new materialist thinking, the vibrancy of matter and undoing of the borders between land and body.<sup>2</sup>

Koroneho talks about walking on the body of the mother as a way of mapping life. It's about relationality, and the way that we navigate a kaupapa that positions us with the land in which we live and in relation to the story of our whakapapa. Through hīkoi te whenua we navigate our own life maps in connection with the land.<sup>3</sup> Hīkoi also activates walking and talking. Hīkoi suggests a commitment to movement, to community (coming together) and to connection with the land. Our pedestrian movement through space and on land performs the mechanics of a society. In contemporary times hīkoi has also come to be understood as a way of taking action against or for a specific political or cultural view. Thus, through this local lens, we are led to explore walking as an experiential and transformative practice in a 'more than human' context, as a way of creating community and as a political act.

When we look beyond Aotearoa we find that archival accounts and critical discussions of ambulatory arts practice are predominantly centred on practices based in the colonial nations of the northern hemisphere. Amongst these histories there has been some recognition of indigenous walking practices originating from Australia and the South Pacific, America and the Middle East.<sup>4</sup> More recently, authors Stephanie Springgay and Sarah E. Truman have published a book, *Walking Methodologies in a More-than-Human-World: WalkingLab*. The *WalkingLab* projects are based mostly across Australia and Canada and the authors of the publication bring a critical posthuman, new materialist perspective to walking as art practices. Throughout the book Springgay and Truman look critically at the practice of walking as a 'White-cis-hetero-ableist-patriarchal' canon of scholarship.<sup>5</sup> In challenge to this they posit and critically evaluate an emerging 'walking-with' practice and scholarship that is informed and created by the work of 'queer, feminist, Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour'. With this in mind I'll outline the more commonly referred to art histories, and question some prevailing assumptions, before returning to their text.

1. Gretchen Schiller 'From the Kinesphere to the Kinesfield: Three Choreographic Interactive Artworks' *Leonardo*, Vol. 41, No. 5, 2008, pp.431–43

2. Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: a political ecology of things*. Duke University Press, Durham, 2010  
3. Helen Moewaka Barnes, *The evaluation hīkoi: A Maori overview of programme evaluation* Shore and Whariki Research Centre Massey University, Auckland, 2009  
4. Francesco Careri, *Walkscapes*, 2nd ed. Culicidae Architectural Press, Barcelona, 2003, p.44  
5. Stephanie Springgay and Sarah E. Truman, 2019. 'Walking in/as Publics: Editors Introduction' in *Journal of Public Pedagogies*, no. 4, 2019, p.2

'Walking blurs the borders between arts, between artist and audience'.<sup>6</sup>

Walking as an arts practice accentuates the everyday, whether it be through the positioning of the body in public and ubiquitous spaces, or whether, through being sited within an artist's studio or a gallery, the everyday action of walking is considered art. Bringing walking into an arts context it's often provocative or antagonistic. Walking questions what art is; who is performing or who the artist is and who is participating or witnessing or being the audience. Indeed, the practice of walking is so primal and essential that the points in which it shifts into becoming an act of survival or an act of aesthetic design are elusive. Through testing these borders, boundaries and parameters, walking shifts us and drifts us, it's slippery and fleeting.

In Francesco Careri's book *Walkscapes*, he describes the practice of walking as one of man's earliest art interventions. As such, in Paleolithic times, before objects were first used to mark space, the erratic wanderings of hunters of this era could be said to be the very first spatial interventions known in the history of man. Slow, complex and fundamental to survival; walking, before the invention of mechanised modes of transport, was essential, primitive, mobilising, liberating, creative, contemplative, archival and poetic and as a bipedal action, almost unique to humans. Walking in its symbolic form could be considered as man's first aesthetic act, initiating order in chaos or the void (Te Kore) and transformational of the spaces traversed. Eventually these early human journeys became rituals, processions, sacred paths, pilgrimages and narratives, taking on a functionality or purpose separate from what we consider arts practice today. In terms of tracing walking in an art historical domain it's perceived that it wasn't until the early twentieth century that the journey again became emancipated from the constraints of literature and religion to take on the status of an aesthetic and experiential act.<sup>7</sup>

What we, in the twenty-first century, recognise as walking-as-an-arts-practice is commonly claimed to be founded by the Dada artists in the early twentieth century. Shifts in ideologies, motivations, politics and the psychologies of walking were then marked by the Surrealists, followed by the *dérive* of the Situationists. There became a rhizomatic mapping of language, terms, connections, positions and perspectives that continued to unfold as walking evolved in an arts context after the 1950s. In her book *Walking Sculpture 1967 - 2015*, Lexi Lee Sullivan identifies a critical moment in the history of art, a shift towards the ephemeral brought about through walking. In 1967 Richard Long's first walk-based work, *A Line Made by Walking* marked the landscape through walking a repetitive path in a field, wearing down the grass and then photographing the impression that remained. This defined Long as an artist investigating 'motion and



impermanence'. In America, Fluxus artists integrated art 'with city life through actions that included street theatre, impromptu happenings, city tours, and scores'.<sup>8</sup> *Composition 1960 #10* by the American composer La Monte Young, hailed as an early participatory artwork from Fluxus, provides the instruction 'Draw a straight line and follow it' — a succinct itinerant directive.<sup>9</sup>

In New York City, members of the Judson Church explored the mechanics of everyday walking as a basis for choreography as seen in works such as *We shall run* by Yvonne Rainer and *Satisfyn' Lover* by Steve Paxton, both occurring in 1967, and Trisha Brown's explorations such as *Woman Walking Down a Ladder*, 1973, and *Man Walking down the Side of a Building*, 1973.<sup>10</sup> At a similar time, Bruce Nauman positioned the repetitive act of walking as a studio practice. Through documentation, repetition and a rigour in attending to the embodied process in works like *Walking in an Exaggerated Manner around the Perimeter of a Square*, 1968, Nauman claimed the everyday act of walking for art.<sup>11</sup>

As an automatic and everyday activity, the ability to ambulate through space makes assumptions around accessibility, modes of mobility, and inclusivity. This privileged colonial discourse neglects to speak of the indigenous acts of preserving paths, naming, singing, storytelling and dancing across spaces.

6. Karen O'Rourke, *Walking as Mapping, Artists as Cartographers*, Massachusetts, USA: MIT Press, 2013  
7. Careri, *Walkscapes*, p.66  
8. Lexi Lee Sullivan, *Walking Sculpture 1967–2015*, Yale University Press, USA, 2015, p.17

9. *ibid.*  
10. O'Rourke, *Walking as Mapping, Artists as Cartographers*, p.29  
11. *ibid.*

*Muriwai Valley Fog*, 6 June 2020. Photo by Sarah Mckenzie

The exclusivity seen in the flâneurs who wandered the streets of Paris in the 1880s not long before the Dadaists began their readymade walks, marks the entitlement of gender and class that becoming lost in an urban landscape allows.<sup>12</sup> A liberty specific to the white, able-bodied, heterosexual, bourgeois male. These entitlements are brought to light by *About walking* artists val smith, Suzanne Cowan and Rodney Bell. Further afield and earlier in time, artists such as Mona Hatoum remind us that it is a privilege to be able to wander the streets freely without fear or hindrance. Her 1985 performance — *Roadworks* — saw Hatoum walk through the streets of Brixton, barefoot, dragging boots tied to her ankles by the laces, the same style worn by police and skinheads in response to a particularly violent event in which a woman was shot and paralysed by police.<sup>13</sup> Women, people who identify as disabled, people of colour, queer, gay and other minority groups experience the urban landscape as coded, conditioned, limited, inaccessible and threatening.

It is in response to the Eurocentric, male and mobility privileging discussions of walking practice that Springgay and Truman write. Identifying ‘place, sensory inquiry, embodiment, and rhythm’ as recurring ideas in the existing literature on the field of ambulatory art practices, the authors go on to develop a language that speaks to the “ethics and politics of the more-than-human”. Introducing four concepts; land and geos, affect, transmaterial and movement, they invite new thinking through feminist theory, new materialism, queer theory, post or beyond human frameworks and a postcolonial positioning.

In *Walkscapes*, Careri introduces the fundamental and early separation of two modes of living as settler or nomad through the ancient biblical story of Abel and Cain.<sup>14</sup> Proposing the idea of the nomad as ‘the experimental adventurer’ that unsettled place, Careri describes the nomadic space as a space of going. The nomadic map is perceived as a void where paths make connections between rapidly changing markers. The concepts of the nomadic and the void interweave time and place through posthuman thinking and indigenous ideas of a network of relations.<sup>15</sup> As Careri identifies, these maps ‘seem(s) to reflect a liquid space’, a space filled with transformative and ‘invisible traces’,<sup>16</sup> in which walking finds a way of referencing the void – Te Kore.<sup>17</sup> Te Kore in Māori cosmology expresses a space of pure potential and of chaos.<sup>18</sup>

Posthuman and feminist thinker Rosi Braidotti brings the idea of the nomad into the twenty-first century in her writing of the nomadic subject. Braidotti builds on the infinite, uninhabited, often impervious void that postmodern philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari name as the nomadic space. Like Careri’s ideas of liquid space and spaces of going, the void is seen as a plane of immanence, non-hierarchical, vibrating and of equally intrinsic potentialities. The nomad navigates these spaces of going; always passing through, making multiple connections, resistant to dominant modes of thinking. While the nomad’s relationship to the earth is transitory, it is cyclical, the ethos is not exploitative, rather it is one of reciprocity, consciousness and exchange. Like hīkoi te whenua, the body and land become energetically coexistent, as through walking we navigate spaces of going as the land in which we live.<sup>19</sup> The nomad’s cartography is constantly redrafting itself, ‘it expresses the idea of an identity made of transitions, successive shifts and coordinated changes’.<sup>20</sup> In *About walking*, collective practices of walking become nomadic acts that, by sliding across space and time, prioritise the sensate body over the productive body.

Reflecting on *Walking about in fog*, artists Layne Waerea and Lana Lopesi suggest a radicalisation of bodily movements across space and time that emerged out of the fog during Covid-19, recognising that ‘not all bodies move equally’. In *queer walk-nap*, val smith explores slowing down the do-do-do in resistance to productivity driven capitalist tendencies. In the same walk they ‘at-tend’ to the portals of the body as ‘openings’ that dismantle the idea of our human bodily borders and provoke new ways of being. The nomadic kaupapa unfastens the linear and historic accounts of arts narrative in Aotearoa. Moving towards states of opening, as smith attends to, there becomes a desire for more than human spaces of unproductive potential. As such, we celebrate a future of walking practices as a collective activation of conscious attention to ‘walking-with’ place and the sensate.<sup>21</sup>

## Becca Wood

12. Flâneur as the ephemeral character who ‘rebelled against modernity’, killing time and seeking the absurd and the unusual by wandering through a Parisian city labyrinth. Careri, *Walkscapes*, p.73  
 13. O’Rourke, *Walking as Mapping, Artists as Cartographers*, p.19  
 14. Careri, *Walkscapes*, p.29  
 15. Anne Salmond, ‘Shifting New Zealand’s mindset’ *New Zealand Herald Online Edition* 18 August 2012, [http://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c\\_id=1&objectid=10827658](http://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=10827658)  
 16. Careri, *Walkscapes*, p.42  
 17. Moana Nepia *Te Kore - Exploring the Māori concept of void*. 2012. Auckland University of Technology, Phd Thesis  
 18. Ibid

19. Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: a political ecology of things*  
 20. Rosi Braidotti, *Nomadic theory: The portable Rosi Braidotti*. Columbia University Press, New York, 2011, p.57  
 21. Careri, *Walkscapes*, p.42

## *Kawea* by Jeremy Leatinu'u

Ōwairaka to Waterview Reserve via the Waterview Path  
and Te Auaunga Creek Path

Saturday 2 November 2019, 12noon

## *Mauria* by Jeremy Leatinu'u

Waterview Reserve to Ōwairaka Park via the Waterview Path

Saturday 31 October 2020, 12noon

Jeremy Leatinu'u created two walks for *About walking*. The first walk took place at the beginning of November 2019 and the return walk at the end of October 2020. Together they bookmarked a twelve month period. The two titles, *Kawea* and *Mauria*, both translate as 'to carry' and work as both an instruction and a description of the action we all undertook, each of us carrying an item of significance on the walk. For the first walk, Leatinu'u invited participants to bring along an item of personal importance that he wrapped in newspaper and twine, and then entrusted to another walker to carry. At the end of the walk we each unwrapped the items we carried and returned them to the person who brought them. They then explained why they brought that item. The second walk encouraged us to bring seedlings and seeds. Leatinu'u brought five saplings – Totara, Rimu, Kahikatea, Titoki, Kowhai and a Tahitian Pōhutukawa. Through the invitation to carry personal objects and native or introduced plants, Leatinu'u reflected on the choices generations of migrants have made about what to carry across the seas, from the first waka to now.

*Kawea*, Jeremy Leatinu'u. Video Still. Camera Ian Powell

*Mauria*, Jeremy Leatinu'u. Video Still. Camera Ian Powell



Kia ora Jeremy,

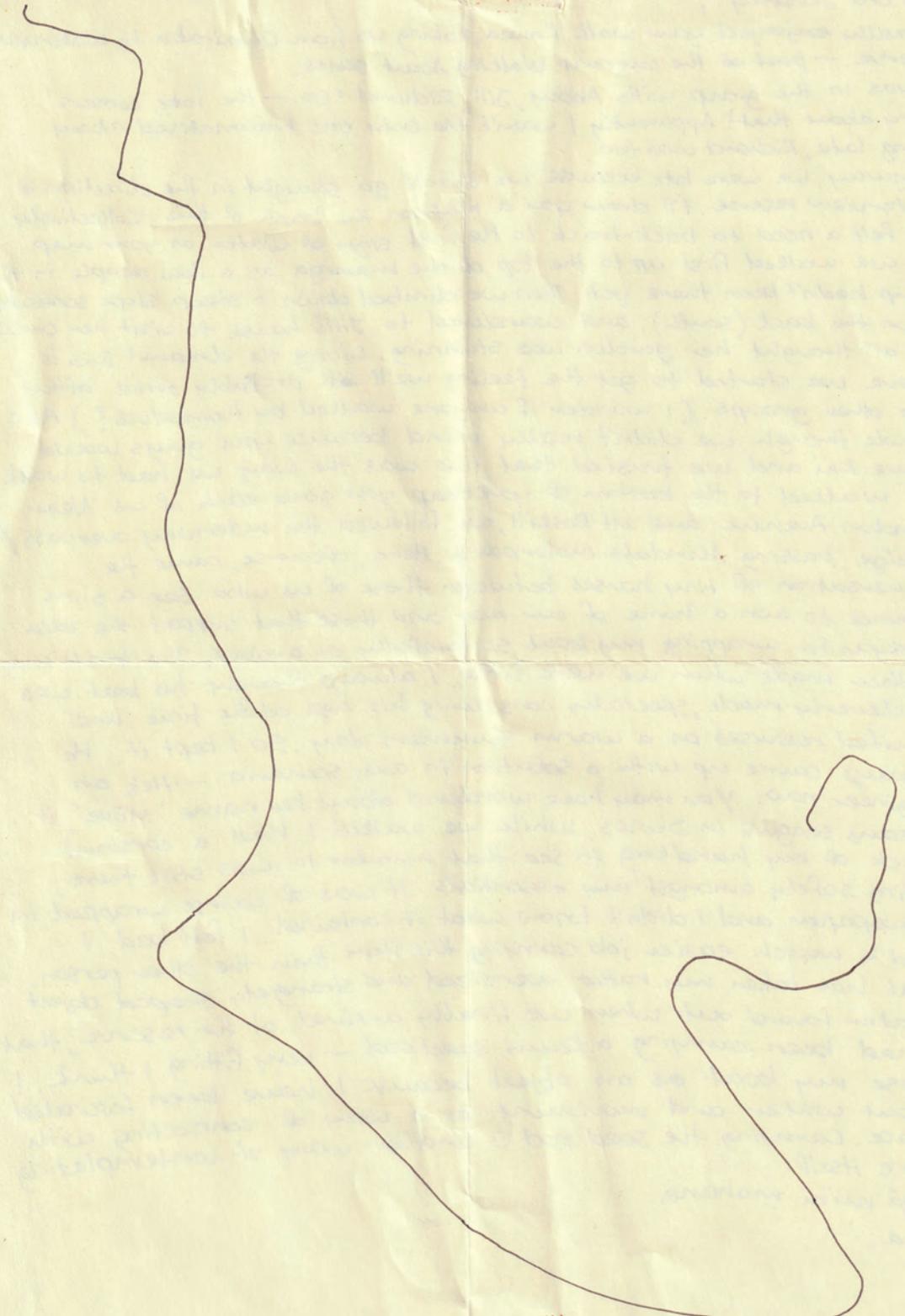
I really enjoyed your walk Kawea, taking us from Owairaka to Waterview reserve. — part of the current Walking About series.

I was in the group with Abbey, Jill, Richard + Co — the late comers! Sorry about that! Apparently I wasn't the only one traumatised about being late, Richard was too.

Anyway, we were late because we didn't go straight in the direction of Waterview reserve. I'll draw you a map on the back of this. Collectively, we felt a need to back-track to the first sign of water on your map. So, we walked first up to the top of the maurua as a few people in the group hadn't been there yet. Then we climbed down a steep slope somewhere down the back (south), and wandered to Jill's house to visit her chickens. We all thought her garden was stunning. Living the dream! This is where we started to get the feeling we'll ~~not~~ probably arrive after the other groups. (I wonder if anyone walked by themselves?) As a whole though we didn't really mind because you guys would have kai and we trusted that this was the way we had to walk. We walked to the bottom of your map you gave each of us. Near Hendon Avenue and Mt Roskill, we followed the motorway overpass/bridge, passing Avondale motorpark. Here, of course, came the conversation of tiny houses between those of us who see a slim chance to own a home of our own and those that support the idea. Thank you for wrapping my boat so carefully on arrival. The boat my brother made when we were little. I always thought his boat was so cleverly made, specially considering his age at the time and limited resources on a warm summer's day. So I kept it. He always came up with a solution in any scenario. — He's an engineer now. You may have wondered about her name 'Möve', it means seagull in Swiss. While we walked I had a constant check of my handbag to see that number 10 was still there, sitting safely amongst my essentials. It was of course wrapped in newspaper and I didn't know what it contained. I felt bad, I had a much easier job carrying this item than the other person that has taken my rather oversized and strangely shaped object. I later found out when we finally arrived at the reserve, that I had been carrying a Kauni seed pod — very fitting I think. I chose my boat as an object because I have been fascinated about water and movement as a way of connecting with place. Carrying the seed pod is another way of contemplating with care itself.

Ngā mihi mahana

Lea



# Sports Day by Vanessa Crofskey

Presented online, created for Olympic Park, New Lynn

Saturday 4 April 2020, 12noon - 4.30pm

With DJ Brown Boy Majik and Hamish Parkinson. Filming by Amanda Jane Robinson

Over four hours, Vanessa Crofskey presented a creative interpretation of the ubiquitous summer athletics festival. It upended the traditional speed- and skill-based games, and rewarded the skills acquired in day-to-day living. Responding to the growing threat of Covid-19, Crofskey redesigned the athletics day races to be undertaken by distance. She created four video guides for turning everyday activity into athletics, ranging from grocery runs and dawdling walks to hyper local triathlons and a race that encouraged gaming your step counter. On Instagram and Facebook, comedian Hamish Parkinson warmed us up with physical and mental stretches. Music for the afternoon break was delivered via Spotify and Soundcloud through playlists for walking created by DJ Brown Boy Majik. At the end of the day the awards ceremony live was streamed live, with Crofskey taking out all the prizes.

Vanessa Crofskey's *Sports Day* was originally intended to be a live event in Olympic Park in New Lynn on 4 April, 2020. Due to Covid-19, New Zealand was under Alert Level 4 restrictions on this day.

## SPORTS DAY RACES

### Sports Day – Groceries Run

How good are you at carrying groceries? This grocery run will be a trio of competitive heats designed for the average person. Compete in speed and precision at carrying armfuls of shopping goods across obstacles.

### Sports Day – Slow and Steady

How (s)low can you go? Compete to be the slowest team member walking around the block. The winner is the last one across the line. The rules: you can only move forward, not backward, and have to keep moving no matter what.

### Sports Day – Speedometer

How many steps can you take in thirty minutes? Registered participants will be given a pedometer each and thirty minutes to max out their step counts. No cheating allowed!

### Sports Day – Championship Triathlon

Our big event of the day! Participants will compete through a set course of challenges that involve every type of walking imaginable. Success is just a hop, skip and jump away

## Slow and Steady

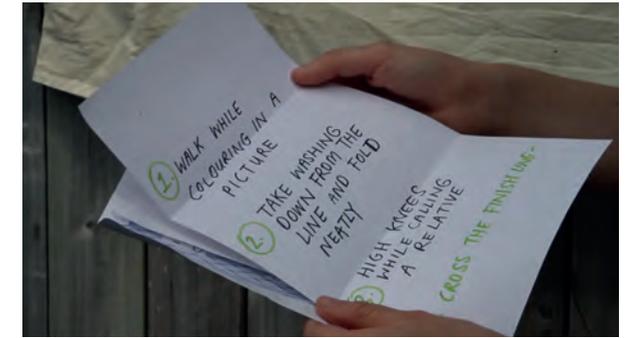
*Our second race is Slow and Steady, which is how we all should be. I reckon we all work too hard in this capitalist environment and should all take time to chill out if we can, which is exactly what this race is about. It's very hard to go slow when you've been running laps your entire life.*

*To compete in this race you require nothing except yourself, some time and a place to walk around.*

*Pick a track, grab a group of friends, if you have those, all socially distanced apart, space yourself out and try to be the slowest person across the designated finish line.*

*There are just two rules to Slow and Steady; you must keep moving and you must keep going forward.*

**Vanessa Crofskey**



*Sports Day, Vanessa Crofskey. Video Stills. Camera Amanda Jane Robinson*

## *Walking about in fog* by Layne Waerea and Lana Lopesi

Begins at your front door and is shared online  
<https://walkingaboutinfog.com>

6 June – 5 July 2020

### Final foggy thought - Lana Lopesi

Published 27 June 2020<sup>1</sup>

If there's one thing I'm beginning to realise is that a crisis (of any kind) is what happens when we don't challenge what we see as the status quo. For my final foggy thought, I wanted to spend some time thinking through the convergence of three crises happening simultaneously: the Covid-19 pandemic, climate crisis and Black Lives Matter.

I was reading Janet Roitman's book *Anti-Crisis* in which she tells us that "Normalcy, Never Again" was the original title for Martin Luther King Jr.'s now landmark speech delivered on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial on 28 August, 1963. However, at some stage it changed and "Normalcy, Never Again" became "I Have a Dream". What's interesting to me, when thinking through these two titles for the same speech, is how possibilities for new futures are inherently entangled with the realities of the day, and how political the very basic desire can be to want something more. For Roitman, crises are moments 'when normativity is laid bare, such as when the contingent or partial quality of knowledge claims—principles, suppositions, premises, criteria, and logical or causal relations—are disputed, critiqued, challenged, or disclosed.' She continues that these are moments of 'epistemological impasse and ... [are] claimed to found the possibility ... for a (new) future.'<sup>2</sup>

There's something both devastating and hopeful in the thought that a crisis offers a turning point. The devastation is that we as humans have to wait until things get bad before we can (hope) to see systemic change of any kind. But the hopefulness of a crisis is that we see any change at all.

#### Covid-19 Pandemic

I'm not really too sure if a pandemic technically counts as a crisis. I guess it's a health crisis.

Covid-19, showed us the way in which we had normalised and prioritised bodies physically moving. Not to mention how fast and global that movement is. By

1. <https://walkingaboutinfog.com/2020/06/27/lana-ranui-6/>  
2. Janet Roitman, *Anti-Crisis*. Duke University Press, Durham, 2013, pp. 3-4

doing so, it seems that this pandemic has brought a series of pre-existing crises to the forefront and exacerbated them, revealing digital, household and class inequities, while also fanning flames onto the already burning fires.

Not all bodies move equally.

So many things that before were too hard within our pre-covid 'normal' were all of a sudden possible. Every student in New Zealand was supplied a device or stationery. Internet connections were made possible in previously unconnected places. Conferences that previously were unable to accommodate those who can't travel suddenly went digital. Workplaces became flexible and thousands of hotel rooms were opened up to house people. Obviously, all of this was extraordinary measures meeting extraordinary circumstances, but the speed in which everything was possible made a mockery of any 'too hard' comments from before.

#### Climate Crisis

Climate change is definitely one of those things that has always been a bit 'too hard'. We always hear reports coming out that even if the whole world miraculously stopped emitting carbon that we still wouldn't be able to reverse the effects of climate change.<sup>3</sup> And yet, as national borders closed like dominos, photos of clear canals in Venice and displaced wildlife returning to their habitats quickly flooded our social media timelines. Is the impossible actually possible?

I don't think even our most staunch environmentalists would want to see the environment benefiting at the cost of human life through disease, but it showed us that we can still participate in a global world while also helping to heal the earth. If anything, with everyone grounded, the global flows of information and images seemed even more intense. The idea of reducing significant emissions didn't seem that miraculous.

When I heard that oil was being sold off at a negative price (as in they were paying people to take it away) I could only laugh. How quickly those who were involved in oil tumbled from the top. I asked people why they couldn't just stop pumping it from the earth? Our greed seems so much more disgusting when we all stand still and the oil which we usually rely on just keeps flowing.

#### Black Lives Matter

I was really proud of my friends and family who had never been moved by any cause to mobilise in light of the violence occurring against Black bodies in the United States. This kind of racialised brutality, we know, is as old as the United

3. In the blog post Lopesi links to: Richard B. Rood 'If we stopped emitting greenhouse gases right now, would we stop climate change?' *The Conversation*, 5 July 2017. <https://theconversation.com/if-we-stopped-emitting-greenhouse-gases-right-now-would-we-stop-climate-change-78882> and Rafi Letzter, 'Are We Really Running Out of Time to Stop Climate Change?', *Live Science*, 26 September 2019. <https://www.livescience.com/12-years-to-stop-climate-change.html>

States itself. But there's something about right now that has people moving. I've been thinking about this breaking point. Why not five, ten, twenty years ago? I've been thinking too about how, when you're already amidst multiple crises, it can seem like there is nothing left to be lost, so then the question becomes, why not now?

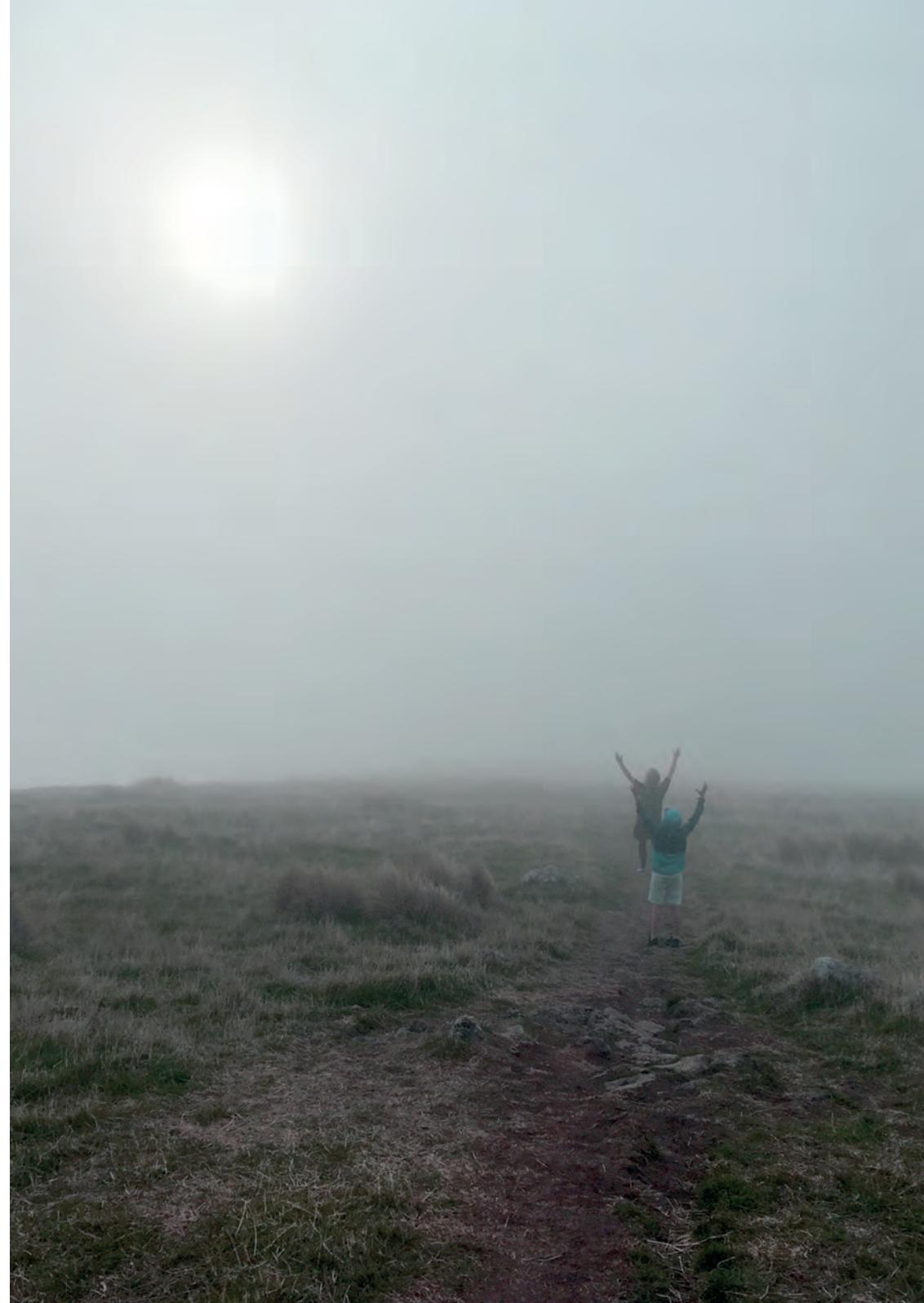
I saw on Twitter someone made a thread about what the protests have achieved so far.<sup>4</sup> It's pretty staggering how much change has been made. It's also incredibly heart wrenching that brutal and sustained loss of life aimed at Black bodies is the crisis.

It wasn't until this project that I saw fog as an analogy to thinking. Like a thought, you don't really know when the fog is going to spring up. But it does require a series of events for it to be possible, some of which you only really recognise in retrospect. When you're in the midst of it, it's hard to make sense of what's happening and what's actually in front of you. You just have to sit in it and wait. Only when it settles do you begin to have some clarity again.

Which begs the final question, as the posts die down, and the lockdown ends, as the international travel picks up again, as the fog is burning off, what change will remain?



4. Mazbou Q, wHāT hAvE tHe pRoTesTs aChIevEd?? A THREAD, Jun 14, 2020. <https://twitter.com/mazbouq/status/1271853259402035200>



## *Mata Kē Ao* by Pīta Turei

Pukematekeo Lookout, Waitākere Ranges

Sunday 22 September 2019, 5.45am

## *Te Wai o Rakataura* by Pīta Turei

Summit of Ōwairaka / Te Ahi-kā-a-Rakataura

Thursday 16 January 2020, 7.30pm

## *Whiro* by Pīta Turei

Harbourview-Orangihina Park, Te Atatū Peninsula

Wednesday 20 May 2020, 6am

## *Rangi Matariki* by Pīta Turei

Rangimatariki to Motu Manawa, Rosebank

Tuesday 14 July 2020, 6am

Pīta Turei's walks marked four points in the landscape of Tāmaki Auckland at four distinct seasonal moments. The act of walking was sometimes in the story, sometimes in the progression to the site and sometimes a gentle circling of greeting, as each of us hongī those present. At the three dawn meeting points he lit a fire of occupation - ahikā - and told the Māori histories of the landscape. These narratives spanned the upper half of the North Island and wove stories of love, passion and conflict into the geography. Turei has been seeking out and telling the histories of Tāmaki for thirty-one years, looking to the stars to locate us and the land to ground us. He situates his walks at times of transition – dawn and dusk – inviting a collective observation of a change from one state to another that is both physical and metaphysical.

Turei's ongoing use of customary practice to anchor our cognisance in the environment and in indigenous histories acts to gently state and re-state unceded tino rangatiratanga and continuing occupation of ancestral land.

Note: The walk *Te Wai o Rakataura* was cancelled at the request of the Tupuna Maunga Authority, however Turei independently marked the planned moment with an informal exchange of stories and dialogue on the maunga.



## *Standing at the edge* by Melissa Laing

Performed by Mustaq Missouri in North West Westgate

Presented online

Saturday 11 April 2020, 8pm

*Standing at the edge* is a performed monologue to camera that wends its way through the streets and open sites of North West Westgate. Originally conceived and rehearsed as a live walk in Westgate and Te Atatū Peninsula, the walk was committed to film on the day Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern announced New Zealand was shifting into Alert Level 4, colloquially referred to as lockdown, due to increased community transmission of Covid-19. *Standing at the edge* used the form of personal narrative to explore the pressures of contemporary society created by capitalism, from the labour and property markets to the urban and social fabric of Tāmaki Auckland. Over the course of the walk, radical possibilities for change emerged. Compellingly performed by Mustaq Missouri in collaboration with the landscape he moved through, the walk captured the zeitgeist of the moment of crises we were in.



*Standing at the edge*, Melissa Laing. Video still. Camera Melissa Laing

## *Standing at the edge* script excerpt

Written by Melissa Laing

*So here we are, standing at an edge of Auckland.*

*I want you to feel the specificity of this time in this place.*

*Look around you.*

*The bitumen, concrete and brick holding the lingering heat of summer.*

*The dust held down by grass and fallen seeds.*

*The faint smell of oil dripped from parked cars waiting to be lifted by the next rainfall. Restaurants sweating as they produce bread, hot chips and fried chicken.*

*Pay attention to the subtle smell, the cooked starches of rice as the last bit of water turns into steam.*

*Can you pick up the delicate overlay of vinegar and soy?*

*Turn and, there, catch the sour edge of rubbish bins holding a week's waste.*

*Feel the wind.*

*It carries the salty muddy scent of the sea washing in and out of the estuary edges of the city, commingled with what the stream brings down from the foothills.*

*The fragrance of the backyards, bushes, factories of the West.*

*Feel the uncompromising press of the seconds piling up against us as we hold this moment.*

*First, it's a faint sense of time creeping into the edges of your vision.*

*Then the brush of minutes passing, feathering your skin, like a fly landing on you, tickling as it sucks the salt from your skin.*

*Feel those minutes, inexorably piling on-top of each other, pushing up against you.*

*It's like being at the front edge of a gig just below the stage.*

*Anticipation hovering in the moment before the mosh pit kicks off behind you.*

*Do you hold your ground to watch up close, or let yourself be swept up into the tumble of dancers?*

*Feel that choice hovering, pushing, shoving at you.*

# A reflection on *He Owha Maturua, Hauntology of Inheritance* by Suzanne Cowan and Rodney Bell

Byers Walk, Piha

Saturday 29 February 2020, 2pm

As dancers and choreographers, we wanted to explore ideas of family heritage, the history of colonisation in New Zealand and notions of partnership within the context of the Ngahere of Byers Walk. The Byers Walk carries the name of Cowan ancestors and marks their role as early settlers in the Piha area. Through traversing the Byers Walk together we reflected on the legacy that Pākehā have inherited in the twenty-first century and paid respects to Te Kawerau ā Maki as tangata whenua of the area.

During the walk, we discussed colonisation and the devastating impact this had on the kauri trees in the Byers Walk. We were fortunate to be joined on the walk by Sandra Coney who is a well-known historian of the area. She gave us a detailed account of the history of kauri logging and its impact in the Waitākere area. Acknowledging this legacy of pillaging the environment to extract wealth, we focused on entering into the Ngahere as a sacred space with an attitude of respect and reciprocity. Our stroll incorporated embodied rituals which helped us tune into our bodies as well as the body of the Ngahere. This encompassed the reciprocity that occurs within all of the different cycles of the Ngahere from the awa that flows through it to the pepeke and manu that live within the rakau.<sup>1</sup> In particular we brought attention to our breath as our most immediate act of reciprocity with the Ngahere as the carbon dioxide that is expelled from our lungs is transformed into oxygen to sustain life.

Ko Puketotara te maunga | Puketotara is the mountain

Ko Waitākere te awa | Waitākere is the river

Ko te Wao nui a Tiriwa te ngahere | The Great Forest of Tiriwa is the forest

Ko nga Tai Whakatu a Kupe te moana | The raised seas of Kupe is the ocean

Ko Te Auotewhenua te tangata | Te Auotewhenua is the Chief

Ko Te Kawerau ā Maki te iwi | Te Kawerau ā Maki is the tribe

Tihei mauri ora! | Let there be life!

Through *He Owha Maturua, Hauntology of Inheritance*, we wanted to explore how we can access Tane Mahuta, the deity of the forest, and be an active part of the lived ecology that surrounds us. This is an on-going enquiry. Through

1. ngahere : forest  
awa : river  
pepeke : insects  
manu : birds  
rakau : trees

attuning to the environment we considered qualities of kinaesthetic empathy, interdependence and inter-corporeality (including the human and non-human). Reciprocity is the word that kept emerging for us in this performance stroll — reciprocity with our environment in the twenty-first century and our movement to expand our connections with the rich ecology around us. Reflecting on the cultures which we inherit, we asked how do we both honour and evolve?

As dancers and choreographers we both have the lived experience of disability which gives us a unique perspective on navigating and choreographing space. As artists with disabilities we are committed to re-framing spaces to make them accessible to all, and especially to future generations. We chose Byers Walk because it is one of the few Ngahere tracks in Auckland that has good access and is a decent length. The lower loop is fully accessible to wheelchairs and the upper loop of the track is partially accessible.<sup>2</sup> Walking tracks are predominantly designed for non-disabled bi-pedal people. People with access requirements are often limited to five to ten minute walk/rolls. Measures taken to reduce kauri dieback, which is threatening our Ngahere, have inadvertently increased the accessibility of the track as new boardwalks have emerged to lift the track above the flora and fauna.

Our walk attracted rollers and strollers who normally don't get to explore our beautiful forests: people with visual impairments, people with chronic conditions and people with small children who were just venturing out into the world again. Attracting more diverse people to these outdoor spaces also broadens our conversations for how we protect them. Do we approach these spaces with the colonial attitude of how they can meet our needs or can we find more inventive ways of re-charging our environment?

*We take in the sounds and attune to the rhythm of the forest –  
the water as continuous healing and life cycle which includes decay. The water  
passes through and is never the same. Transformation occurs as it travels back to  
the sky, the mountains and the rocks.*

*Where are we in our life cycle?*

## Cowan Whakapapa

The Cowans were among the earliest European settlers in the Piha valley. They emigrated from Scotland in 1867. James Ness and Charles Cowan, aged sixteen, were the first Europeans to travel to Piha. They built a small house just above the Kitekite Falls which was named Glen Esk after Glen Esk in the Angus Glens of Scotland. Charles and Peter Keith Cowan later moved down onto the flat land in the Piha Valley when there were still Te Kawerau ā Maki families living in the Wekatahi Valley. Their intention was to harvest kauri and float the logs out to

2. If you are using a chair be aware that in some places as we get closer to the falls the path can be quite steep and narrow. You may need assistance in these sections

sea but they abandoned the idea after log rafts broke up in the rough seas. By 1883, Charles Cowan had moved to Ponsonby with his new wife, Mary Henrietta O'Neill, consequently naming both Cowan and O'Neill streets in Ponsonby.

*note: Suzanne is not a direct descendant of Charles and Peter Cowan but her great grandparents emigrated from Scotland to Aotearoa in the 1860s. They also descended from the Cowan clan in Scotland.*

### Bell Whakapapa

Ko Tainui te Waka | I descend from the Tainui Waka  
Ko Ngaati Maniapoto te Iwi | Maniapoto is the tribe I belong to  
Ko Ngaati Rora te Hapu | Rora is the subtribe I belong to  
Ko Manga-o-Kewa te Awa | Mangaokewa is my river  
Ko Motakiora te Maunga | Motakiora is my mountain  
Ko Te Tokanganui-AA-Noho te Whare Tupuna | Ancestral/Meeting House  
Ko Rodney Bell Taku ingoa | Rodney Bell is my name.

It is an honour to be able to access the Ngahere via the boardwalk in Piha especially in paying respect to the iwi Te Kawerau ā Maki. Te Kawerau ā Maki iwi descend from the Tainui Waka and settled in Tāmaki. They were challenged by other iwi and colonisers over their tribal lands in the Waitākere Ranges and eventually were overwhelmed and pushed south. Having kept their ahikā burning in the area over the last 150 years they have recently taken steps to re-establish a significant presence in their ancestral lands.

I'm honoured to be a seed of Chiefs, descending from the Tainui Waka and also holding a direct lineage to the Kingitanga. I sense the importance of remembering the great sacrifices my ancestors experienced so that I can breathe the air today and also acknowledge what the Ngahere has been through and the efforts we offer to heal it.

*We invite people to imagine their own whakapapa like a family tree which extends from our body, spreading its roots down to the earth, extending into our parents, our grandparents, our great grandparents and uncles, cousins, nieces and nephews, brothers and sisters and children, imagining all these multiple roots reaching out and connecting with other tree roots, other family trees and providing nutrients for each other.*

*He Owaha Maturua, Hauntology of Inheritance, Suzanne Cowan and Rodney Bell*  
Photos by Bronwyn Evans



## Wayfinding Waikumete by Christina Houghton

Mt Eden Station to Waikumete Cemetery

Saturday 23 November 2019, 4.10pm

Glen Eden Train Station to Lucinda Gardens

Saturday 10 October 2020, 11am

The Glen Eden train station lies in the village which was once known as Waikomete (sic) due to its location to the Waikumete Cemetery and before that Waipera. The most significant name change was to Glen Eden in 1926, soon after World War I. The early development of the Glen Eden village was strongly linked to the Western Line (then the Northern train line) which finally reached the town in 1880 and the cemetery which opened in 1886 as an overflow for Auckland City's Symond St Cemetery. At that time the train was important for funerals, the deceased riding in a carriage marked with a white cross while the mourners travelled behind in adjacent carriages. Unfortunately this association, as well as its proximity to the nearby Whau Asylum (recently part of Unitec's campus), meant Waikumete village became known as an undesirable place to live and was referred to as 'The City of the Dead', particularly after the Spanish flu epidemic of 1918.

*Wayfinding Waikumete* aimed to acknowledge Te Kawerau ā Maki, the tangata whenua of the area, and maramataka. The two walks took place a year apart, both in Whiringa-ā-rangi when seasons are shifting from Koānga, spring, to Raumati, summer. Around this time the karaka berries are ripening and the pōhutukawa and the puawānanga flowers are about to bloom. The two walks bookmarked the first and second Covid-19 lockdowns with the first walk taking participants through the Waikumete Cemetery and the second through the town centre and down towards the Waikumete stream.

*I invite you to wear an item of black clothing in recognition of rituals for passing and commemoration. I have given you a black arm band to remember The Perfume Run, The Final Stop and The Cemetery Train as a train route for city people to the cemetery at Waikumete. On the train I spray the scent of roses, eucalyptus and disinfectant to bring the sensory past into the present. The spring flowers are still blooming in the cemetery so it is a lovely time of year to honour those who have passed. The seasons must have been like this back then also. We remember Black November when our city was gripped by the Spanish Flu epidemic. Today the 23rd of November was the peak of the pandemic in New Zealand. Today I also acknowledge anniversaries where a year after the burial many unveil a headstone or grave sites that are visited once a year. There are many November anniversaries.*



The present Glen Eden town centre is a result of a series of attempts to bring life into the village and the local residents' responses to persistent negligence and a series of fires. The village is a mixture of old and new reflecting the ongoing efforts towards economic progress, a capitalist notion of success that has shaped Glen Eden's attempts to move away from being seen as a 'dead end' town. Without a strong community centre the history of the town reveals a constant falling back into disrepair and neglect. Its current iteration is a car centered, consumer focused space. By attuning to this place and enacting somatic rituals for taking care perhaps we can find a way towards being here differently.

*Stand close to either wall on the side of the bakery or the store and feel the solid bricks beneath —taken from the whenua and baked hard in a kiln just down the road. Take a moment to sense these walls held in time with the hot ovens behind and the horses housed out the back. Quietly move further down the lane touching the walls. See the paintings depicting the waterways of Hikurangi, O Kauri Rahi and the West coast beaches and the forest wood from which the original village was built.*

The walks created a wayfinding for the lost name of Waikumete, one that explored an ecology of relations in-between human and non-human that bring attention to what is usually overlooked. The sensory provocations asked where are the waters of the Waikumete bowl and the remnants of the great forest Te Wao Nui A Tiriwa. These actions for attunement might reveal ways in which to witness the recent effects of Covid-19 and acknowledge all that has gone before.

## WAYFINDING WAIKUMETE

Saturday 23 November 2019

Waikumete (waters of the kumete bowl)  
Unveiling stories of past, present and future.

### THE CEMETERY TRAIN • THE FINAL STOP • THE PERFUME RUN Train Ride to Waikumete (Glen Eden)

4:27	Mt Eden Train Station
4:40	Avondale
4:44	New Lynn
4:50	Glen Eden Train Station
5:00	Cemetery
5:15	The Chapel in the Oakes
5:30	Ixia Road
5:45	Eucalyptus Ave
6:00	Acmena Ave

1. Recite a karakia and enter the cemetery
2. Take notice of the first headstone you see
3. Acknowledge the labour of the cemetery workers
4. Take a procession along Ixia Road
5. Enact rituals for those who have passed
6. Remember those who passed in November
7. Visit the memorial to all of those lost to the 1918 Spanish Flu Epidemic
8. Find the markers that mean something to us
9. Share stories about what we remember
10. Enact actions of care: weed a grave
11. Wash our hands as we perform an exit prayer and leave the cemetery



## WAYFINDING WAIKUMETE: WALKING GLEN EDEN

Saturday 10 October 2020

### WAIKOMITI • WAIKUMETE • GLEN EDEN

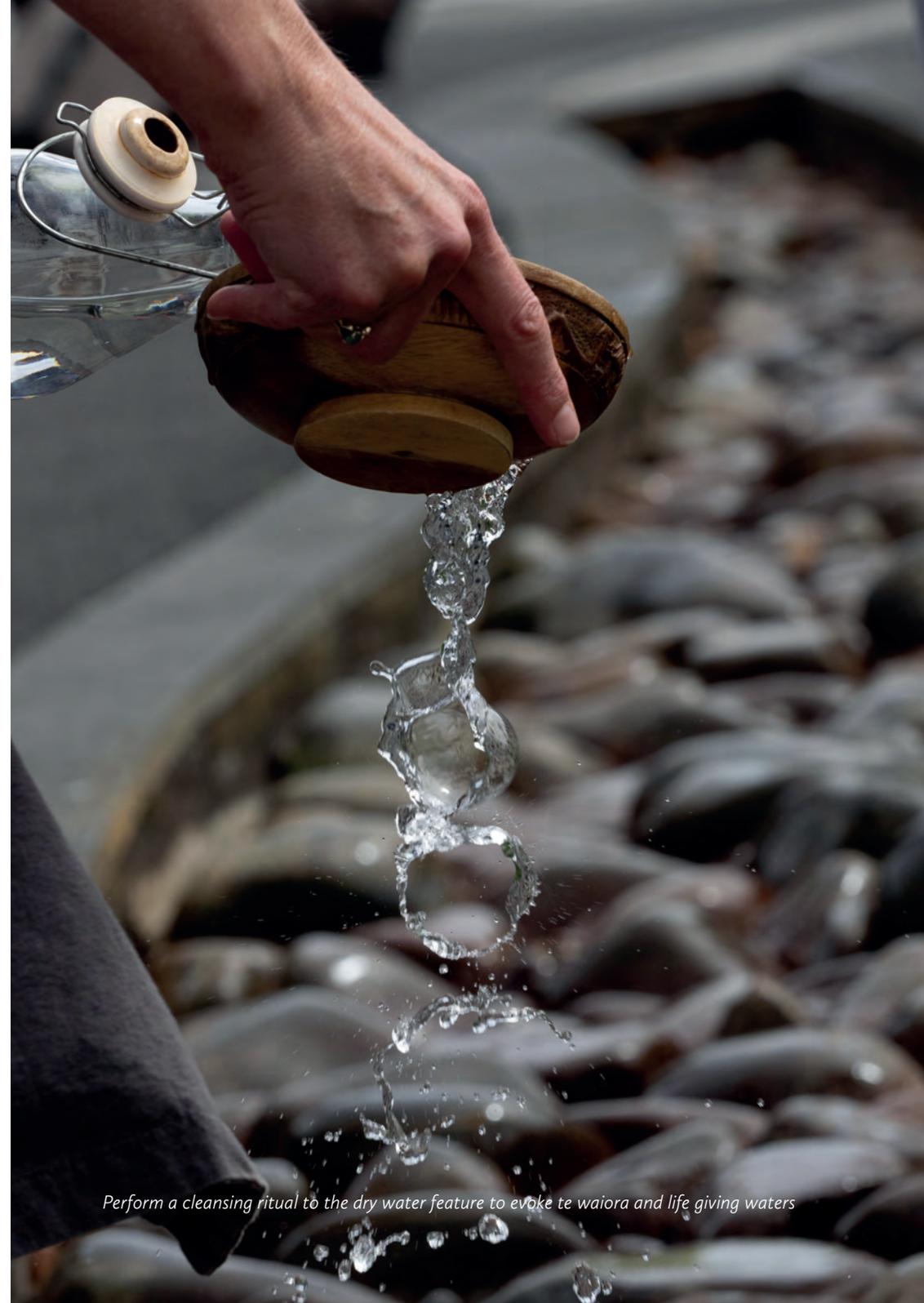
11:00	Glen Eden Train Station
11:15	Bakery Lane
11:25	Library Lane
11:35	Glen Mall
11:45	Library
12:00	RSA
12:10	Playhouse Theatre
12:20	Glen Eden Bowling Club
12:35	Lucinda Gardens

<b>WAIKUMETE:</b>	Waters of the Kumete bowl
<b>WATER - O Kauri Rahi<sup>1</sup>:</b>	The Great Kauri catchment
<b>WOOD - Te Wao Nui a Tiriwa:</b>	The great forest of Tiriwa
<b>CLAY – Onewherowhero<sup>2</sup>:</b>	'Red Ochre' The sacred clay of Papatuanuku

1. Notice the old and the new
2. Look for the brick and wood
3. Listen for another time
4. Notice signs of the stream
5. Remember what is no longer here
6. Dance to an old song
7. Meet the locals
8. Plant something for Raumati

1. Translation taken from Waikumete Streams, Project Twin Streams publication. [http://projecttwinstreams.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/Waikumete\\_Flyer.pdf](http://projecttwinstreams.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/Waikumete_Flyer.pdf)
2. Onewherowhero 'Red Ochre' is considered the name for the area used by Te Kawerau ā Maki in pre-european times. Taken from 'A History of Glen Eden'- Information board in Glen Eden. We acknowledge that many of these names have been lost or mis-translated over the years.

Wayfinding Waikumete: Walking Glen Eden, Christina Houghton. Photo by Bronwyn Evans



Perform a cleansing ritual to the dry water feature to evoke te waiora and life giving waters

# The Public Stand by Becca Wood

Avondale Racecourse

Saturday 12 September 2020, 3.30pm

*To gather together, but a/part*

A response, by Molly Mullen

From where I live, Avondale Racecourse is just over the ridge. By bike it's downhill all the way. Down into the blue-green day's intense sunshine and piercing southerly, free-wheeling past the 3 Guys Supermarket site, playground, asphalt, ball-hoops, bike track, rough gravel, grass. Past tired townhouses and glaring white apartments, to where a few people gather, standing, masked, together but apart. A brown paper bag, too big for a single apple, too small for the awkwardly bent, curled A4 map, colour codes us into our mandated groups of ten.

*Look around you. Can you see other people wearing headphones, make sure you stay two arms lengths apart from one another. We are going to walk together, but apart.*

Together, but apart, like 'physical distancing, social solidarity', is a dramaturgy for a pandemic. Social practice, always-already engaged in the messy business of working out how to be (walk) together, cannot now avoid engaging with what it means to stay safe and well together.

The ten of us make a rough ensemble: a gathering of carefully, if slightly awkwardly, separated bodies. Standing inside the oval of grass embraced by the fenced-in sacrosanct race track, I am struck by, and breathe in, the vastness of the space opening upwards and outwards. Then back to this point in time and space, I sense this ground, listening, finding an orientation to the land and landscape, the grass, soil, my heart towards the Waitākere Ranges, my arms stretching out to Ōwairaka. The wind is so strong that I have to hold my hands over the headphones to stop the sounds and voices blowing away.

We move off from the starting line in a kind of accidental canon, walking clockwise around the track towards the distant ranges. Some co-walkers stride ahead, others seem yet to start. I feel the strain of being, walking, staying together – the urge to race ahead, run maybe, to the 1200m mark. But, I am slowed by a call to consider what it means to be together with and on this land.

*In a time before men, and a time before Pākehā men and women, raupō pushed up through the earth. It was wet underfoot. A marshland. Iwi, living in tune with maramataka, followed the shore line of Te Whau river. Te Whau, a life source, a giver of kai and a pathway between the Waitematā and the Manukau Harbours.*

*1841 much of the land in Tāmaki Makaurau was acquired by the government and then later sold on for profit.*

The establishment of the racecourse in 1880 was fuelled in part by Pākehā speculative desire. A desire to extract ever more monetary value from the site, gambling on the future, on horses, on agriculture, on commerce, on property. But the stories unfolding as we walk suggest it is still possible to connect to the vitality of this land in other ways.

In the year since I moved to Avondale, the racecourse has been a consistent presence, a breathing space in the dense urban sprawl, a landmark for finding one's way, a curiosity. I did not realise races were still taking place until, on this walk, I hear the recording of horses and the rhythmic commentary, and see the large signs, yellow on black — 1400m, 1200m, 1000m — then notice the houses of Wingate Street, the site of the original stand, with old armchairs placed on back decks for a grandstand view.

*When you arrive at the 1200m mark, stop. If there are other people walking with you, see if you can line up across the track, spread out, at least two arms lengths apart. Lift up your right foot and put it ahead of your left foot. Pick it up again and stamp the ground with your foot. Extend both arms above your head and lean forwards.*

A figure in a jockey jersey, who has been walking with us, stops and holds out a wooden staff. Together with the jersey, this action now sets her apart from us, us walkers. We all now look to her. I step into line, still feeling the urge to run, pounding hooves in both ears. Us walkers are stretching the limits of togetherness, some nearly 20m ahead, some as far behind, but still holding this moment, this invitation, the freedom to make divergent responses, in common.

Listening while walking moves us simultaneously through space and time. The daughter, or granddaughter, of Harry, Henry Williams (a doer, a show jumper, a gatherer together) remembers this area being well-populated with horse trainers and stables. I look at the pylons, television aerials, tin roofs, but picture her brothers walking horses to this track across farmland. Then a new voice moves us onwards to a camp for troops in the First World War.

*Clusters of bell tents were set up to the west of the grandstand. By September 1914 there were 500 soldiers – Māori, Samoan, Tongan, Rarotongan, Fijian, 500 warriors, drilling, chanting, sweating, digging, they trained hard for five months. A pioneer battalion, Te Hokowhitu a Tū. The battalion left in a wave of typhoid, uncelebrated.*

Finding synchrony, we line up and walk in single file. We walk to memorialise, each step marking a name, a memory, lost in war or the 1918 flu pandemic, or in the long years of recovery that followed. The histories we are told are ambiguous and episodic. This is also the case with the performative actions we witness as we walk: the jockey, a young woman in white lying on a blanket by the side of the track, a young man in army fatigues moving potatoes from a rough

pile into a neat line. These are fleeting encounters and the signals that they are 'performances' are so subtle some walkers pass them by. Others, like me, watch hesitantly, seeking out connection between these actions, the audio and the place. And then, finally, we gather, standing (roughly) together with hands clasped in front of us listening to the Last Post before lying back on a dry grass bank and gazing at the sky.

*Going nowhere, going in the same direction. Going nowhere together. We fail to fall. Walking becomes an act of recovery.*

Approaching the stand feels like the grand finale, a final act. We take it in, gazing up at this grand relic. It seems still, empty of the vibrant life evoked in the soundtrack: the heat, tastes sounds and smells of the Saturday markets, housie, community sports, family picnics, horse races, old white geezers in white coats, local kids sneaking in, riding bikes, dripping ice blocks.

*There's a sustained interaction with that space that's actually happening and it's happening organically and quietly. We shouldn't dismiss it because it's not shiny, actually it's a really beautiful thing. It's very true to the heart of that space that it's under the radar and it just kind of does its own thing in its own time.*

As a community resource, this public-private place clearly exceeds the real-estate value it represents to the speculators. How do you quantify the value of a heart or a lung?

Silently, I drift to the finish line, marked humbly in straw across the track. One of my fellow walkers leans against the barrier. I ask him if he has ever been in the stand. He replies with an enthusiastic yes, but thinks it is now closed. Another walker stops, she thinks there is still bingo once a week, he wants to know when. We talk about the development of the racecourse and Avondale centre. We would all love a public pool.

Right now, in a global pandemic, a certain level of numbness or disconnection seems essential for mental survival. But, this walk was like a gentle tug on the social fabric, reminding me I am a part of it, even when I feel most apart from it.



## *Echo Eco Echo* by Andrew McMillan

Waterview Path beginning at Harbutt Reserve and finishing at Te Waiunuroa o Wairaka, Unitec, Mt Albert | Guided walk

Available online from 18 March 2020 | Sunday 15 November 2020, 2pm

Created in collaboration with Len McMullen and Ro GR-G

*Echo Eco Echo* took place along the Waterview Path beginning in Harbutt Reserve and finishing by Te Waiunuroa o Wairaka on the Unitec campus. The walk passed through four points for which Andrew McMillan composed short sound works. The participants were invited to walk in silence between the points. The compositions augmented the audible environment listeners were walking through with sonification – sounds based on environmental data gathered at each site – and field recordings gathered from easily seen and hidden spaces along the path. The walk could be independently undertaken at any time from the 18 March 2020. As we came to the end of the *About walking* programme McMillan guided a group on a walk through the work.

On 18 November 2020 Melissa Laing interviewed Andrew McMillan about the walk. An edited version of that conversation is printed here.

### **Melissa**

Tell us a little about *Echo Eco Echo* and how it came to be.

### **Andrew**

As I said on the guided walk, this project started from an experience I had at Ohinetahi, Governors Bay in the South Island. In the bay there were these very small sounds, but there were so many of them, because there were all these ripples rolling in all around the enclosed space of the bay, so it was absolutely deafening. They're tiny ripples, not big waves, subtle micro sounds. But they become deafening because there's so many of them. And then I considered the time aspect, the fact that the water would have been rolling into that bay forever as it went through its environmental changes and geologically constructed itself. The ripples were still there when I was there, and that they were going to still be there doing their thing, and making that sound for millennia afterwards. And, if no one interfered with them too much that was going to be the case continuously, to a lesser or greater extent. So this project drew on that experience and the idea that we can contemplate sound and an environment and we can contemplate its place beyond what we consider its obvious places — the immediate and loud sounds around us or the sounds that present themselves quite clearly or obviously to us. We can contemplate the hidden sounds around us, the small sounds and the undiscovered sounds. And we can also place those sounds in time. Like, what sounds have been possibly more continuous than other sounds? What sounds have we taken in there just by being there? What has

our impact been in the present in what we're experiencing? What sounds will be happening in the future? And, what sounds might we leave behind.

So those are the two aspects, then there was a third element to it, using technology to record all the environmental data of a particular site. So, that for us was measuring the luminosity of the light and the wind speed. There were two temperature sensors, or thermometers, and we recorded ground or water temperature and air temperature. And we recorded humidity. We would record the audio of the environment at a particular time and the environmental data of the environment at a particular time. We would do each for five minutes. I think I did three visits to the site. So we had all those parameters to play with. And that became another aspect of the work, recording data in the environment at the time.

Once I had taken the data and the audio recordings back. I used the data to control parameters that process the sound. They would change the sound in certain ways with pitch and speed and direction and other aspects. And so I made these soundtracks for the sites, from all that recorded sound and recorded data.

### **Melissa**

However as a participant you're not just listening to the recorded sound of the site. In the instructions you give an invitation to set your audio volume at such a point that you can hear the sound of now as well.

### **Andrew**

That's right. The idea is that those recordings were now a sound memory in their own right. Because that environmental data and audio recording, from those times we're in are now in the past. Not a distant past, if you really engaged in your mind as you engage with the environment, you could probably imagine a past a lot further back. But they were still a recording of a recent past. And the idea was to balance the sound of that recording so that it didn't overwhelm the audio or the sound of the environment as you were there. So you get a mix of the two. The audio recording and the sound that was happening around you immediately in the environment.

### **Melissa**

The invitation or the request to walk silently, or silently as you can, from site to site also contributes. Having listened to the audio track and also having listened to the environment right there in balance with it, I noticed that when you walk from site to site you also continue listening.

### **Andrew**

Absolutely, that was the idea, that those recordings are almost an invitation into being more engaged as you walk. In fact, the walking part is probably almost the most important bit in a way. In that from each site throughout - there's the four sites - and they're almost like a break or an away that takes you somewhere else. Because you've got that audio playing. But then when you come out of that between each site, I was hoping that people's listening would get deeper and deeper. The walk between site one and two would be at one level of deep

listening. And the walk between two and three would be slightly more immersive and so on. So as you go further into the walk you start engaging even more so with the natural environment.

**Melissa**

What made you choose those four sites?

**Andrew**

Some of it was proximity for me to get the equipment there. But it was also that I wanted to explore something that I knew reasonably well. A path that I travelled frequently. Initially, you and I talked about how we wanted to get to the waterfall because there would have been interesting things to capture there. But unfortunately, in a wheelchair, that wasn't possible. But that didn't matter in the end, because I discovered a few things. I wanted something very natural so that's where the first site came out of. It's down by the bridge, which was actually a substitute for the waterfall. The two very desolate sites I found really interesting. I chose them because I thought they were almost the most boring sites I could think of.

**Melissa**

Sites where you almost wouldn't expect people to look for interesting sound.

**Andrew**

Yeah, and on any given day, they were even more or less interesting than they could be. That starkness of sound is interesting in itself. I grew up on a ten acre block, and as a kid, you'd get very bored, and you'd have summer days. Where there's just wind, you know, in the grass, and there's no one really around, and all there is, is the sound, the very stark sound of the wind through the grass and the odd sheep baaing or a bird flying by. But there's so much that is interesting in that in itself, because there's so much space between those sounds. And I even remember as a kid, being quite young, feeling engaged with that, to a lesser or greater extent. And also being bored, but still being engaged with that sound. And the loneliness of it in a way if you let it get to you.

Those two stark sites are interesting for different reasons. One is so manicured. The sports fields are so manicured and if you go there when it's busy, it's full of sound. But if you go there when there's no games happening or anything it seems completely stark, except for the odd cyclists riding by. Beside it there's a road that goes nowhere, it just stops with the big concrete barrier. So that one's a manicured kind of site that's desolate and lacks activity but also has extremely high periods of activity but they're quite short when you consider how long they sit there not being used. And then the other one is similar but for different reasons. It's desolate, but it's abandoned. You know, it's this old car park with that great floodlight, that's obviously not doing anything anymore. Just sitting there in the middle of it. And it must have been a car park of Unitec's or the institute near it at some point. I don't know. So that's those two desolate sites. And then the last one was a really interesting discovery that came from doing te reo. They took us on a little walk around the site immediately around the Unitec



Te Noho Kotahitanga Marae and Chance Taylor, a matua at the marae, gave us a history and mythology about the place. There's a sacred spring there that has a wonderful story to it about Wairaka stamping her foot in the ground and bringing up the water.

**Melissa**

Chance's karakia was not specific to Wairaka though was it?

**Andrew**

No, it was a blessing for his pounamu.

**Melissa**

I really liked the story you told about how he just happened to be there at the time of your recording and his karakia was about a moment of calming and regrouping for him in a day. It fits with the contemplative nature of the walk. It's not a hustle walk or restless walk. It's a calming and contemplative walk. A lot of the people involved in this project who come from a dance background have been talking about embodiment and attuning yourself to the environment, and forms of somatic practice. I feel like your work was an audio version of that dance concept. A work which enabled or supported people to attune themselves to the space through which they are moving.

**Andrew**

I think that's great if it comes across because that's how I feel about it. So it ended with that site too, which was really nice. I think it is a cleansing site and it was almost the most fascinating because it brought together almost everything along the walk. There was this lovely spring with a bit of bush around it that they'd obviously done their best to suddenly rediscover as something tranquil. But that could not in any way negate or ignore the fact that right next to it they'd built these huge Unitec buildings with big air conditioners pointing straight at the spring without even considering that place.

*Echo Eco Echo, Andrew McMillan. Photo by Melissa Laing*

## queer walking and napping by val smith

Te Wai Ōrea – Western Springs Park, Heron Park,  
Ken Maunder Park, Rooftop Terrace, Lopdell House

Saturday 15 February 2020, dawn and midday,  
Sunday 16 February 2020, sunset and midnight

*queer walk-nap*<sup>1</sup> was a series of four performance walks that took place over two days in the middle of the lunar month of Huitānguru 2020. Starting from Te Wai Ōrea (the waters of the eel), Western Springs, the events moved westward with the trajectory of the sun over to the Waitākere Ranges. I acknowledge and pay respects to the peoples of Ngāti Whātua o Ōrakei and Te Kawerau ā Maki who hold customary authority over the lands this project moved across and the places we were relating with. Special thanks to Pita Turei as kaitiaki for this project who generously engaged in rich conversation about the specific places and walking pathways I was interested in for the *queer walk-nap* events. Huge thanks to Lusi Faiva for our collaborative time together, and thanks also to Melissa Laing, Christina Houghton, and the other members of the *About walking* team who have been supportive of me in the development of my thinking around an accountable relationship to place as pākehā.

I am white, queer, femme and non-binary. I am able bodied. I am a dancer. I was born on the lands of Ngāti Whātua o Kaipara and have spent most of my life living and working in Tāmaki Makaurau.

The route that linked the four performance walks of this series responded to the invitation from the curatorial team for artists to engage with maramataka, the traditional Māori moon calendar. Whilst acknowledging the knowledge system is not mine as pākehā, I spent time learning about and contemplating Māori methods of marking time by the stars and moon, and about the rhythms and changes of the environment across a month or year. The migration of mature tuna (eels) fascinated me, occurring around Huitānguru out to the Pacific Ocean where they would spawn and die. Appreciating their writhing collective dance, I regularly visited tuna at Te Wai Ōrea (near to where I was living), which became the sparking place for the *queer walk-nap* events. What if we walked from the lake out to the western coastline in support of the journey of tuna to the waters near Tonga? How might we say goodbye?

The public were invited to participate in any or all of the four walks occurring at dawn, noon, dusk and midnight over two days. At each of these key markers of day and night I opened space for sensing the qualities of light and dark. On day one we slowly meandered and rested by the waters of Te Wai Ōrea through the

gentle changing light of dawn. We shared space with pigeons, swans, rabbits and geese. I did not see one eel that day, but in our slowed pace we were shaken awake by competitive humans on a speedy morning running race. We moved along the overland route between north and west for Māori known as Te Ara o Karangahape. I held in mind that Karangahape Road lay behind us, an area of significance for takatāpui whanau, whakawāhine and tangata ira tāne, as well as for extended queer and trans communities. I imagine Karangahape supporting our spines in our tenuous undulation of movement through public spaces. At noon, stopping to meet new participants with the sun directly overhead at Motu Manawa Marine Reserve and within the recreational area known as 'Heron Park', we rolled, rested and ate together. Prominent for me in this event was the symphony of bubbling, social blips and tweets (human and nonhuman), and the clickety clack of our movements across the manawa mangrove swamp boardwalk. I remember tuna here and a story shared about heart wood.

The following day we met at dusk on Te Whau pathway to glide along the banks of Te Taonga Waka (the canoe portage) another important route for Māori. We lay to rest on the sidewalk to view an out-of-this-world carwash performance. By evening, after night walking along the main roadway that leads towards the ridgeline of the Waitākere Ranges, the final gathering occurred on the rooftop of Lopdell House at midnight. This building housed the first hui for artists and curators of *About walking*. At the closing activation of *queer walk-nap* we listened for titi and ruru, and sensed the distancing of tuna. I peeked over the rooftop edge hoping to connect with the rats and chickens below. In a brief moment, the b-side realms of a retail-focused Titirangi clean up summoned and I felt sadness. A yearn for another world perhaps.

Alongside an engagement with maramataka and attempts to acknowledge and undo whiteness, *queer walk-nap* sought to activate experiences of queer time through resting and napping in place with participants. Use of the term 'queer' reflects my Western cultural perspective and I acknowledge the limitations and exclusions that come with this, including an invisibilising of cultural terminologies for genders and sexual identities (such as takatāpui and MVPFAFF<sup>2</sup>). My intention was to explore intersections of queerness and whiteness in approaching and building relationships with place within my performance practice and the implications of pākehā performing in outdoor places in Aotearoa. The following evokes some of the principles that underpin the performance practices of *queer walk-nap*.

### 1. Slow down the do-do-do

Reduce the do-do-do of capitalism and refuse the insistence on productivity and 'success'. Attune to the cadence of place and to queer time instead. *queer walk-nap* utilises slowing down, listening and resting processes to disrupt the demands of capitalist time pressures. *queer walk-nap* sees resting as reparative, advocating for a non-linear softening body; relationally open, sensuous and radiant.

### 2. Interrupt, acknowledge and undo whiteness

Pay attention to implicit bias and to signs of the alive and ongoing mechanisms of colonial destruction and violence. Pine trees on this park hillside for example,

1. The event title was changed to *queer walk-nap* after community feedback.  
2. The Pacifica term MVPFAFF (mahu, vakasalewalewa, palopa, fa'afafine, akava'ine, fakaleiti or leiti, and fakafifine) was coined by Phylesha Brown-Acton.

remind me of the extensive and continuing project of colonisation. Deforestation is part of the attempt to dispossess tangata whenua from their lands and forests. Pines arrived with homesick settler longings. Transplanting the familiar we arrogantly planted the invasive weed of white supremacy. Let's move through these environments with critical care, noticing how we arrive with place. The pull of gravity on our fluid bodies is pertinent, it draws us downward, or is it inward(?). We are of the moon and the stars.

### 3. At-tending

Position yourself as one element of a more-than-human assemblage: of plants – endemic and invasive; of things – discarded and placed; of birds – scavengers and nurtured; of animals – indigenous and trained; of structures – crumbling, rusting, falling and holding. Listen to more-than-human voices and desires through your skin, feet, hands, third eye, all eyes. Let's open fontanelle, mouths and holes, as portals to other knowings. Attending to light and sense connections with the nonhuman as they shift, disperse and deepen.

### 4. Attune to queerbodytime

Attune to queerbodytime without knowing what it is. Interrupt the linear restrictions of straight time. There is no straight bone in the body! Refuse heteronormative markers of progression. Instead, pay attention to the passing of time, to felt time. Attune to the atmospheric tones and moods we are moving through, notice the queer time and space that we are co-creating. What are our shared rhythms? When do we pause, slow down, speed up? Is there a collective pacing of breath, of moving?

### 5. Build relationships with the more-than-human

Establish a flow of communication with the more-than-human realms: move attention to pelvis to sex to branches to legs to toes to dirt to dirty to roots. Let's figure out ways to negotiate unfamiliar queer kinships and radical relationship forms. This is a dance practice of channelling and divination. I refocus creative energy for a meta/physical queer future and perform rituals of hope and resiliency. We communicate across and through entangled tendrils of air, lungs, moss, blood and oceans.

*queer walk-nap* considers an ethics of becoming-with place as colonisers. This is a slow shuffle towards a non-anthropocentric approach to performance making (accepting the inevitable mistakes and ironies of practice). The unavoidable contradictions of at-tending to place when being here, queer and white. The work contemplates different understandings of human relationships with place, challenging white ideas that insist people are separate from place. *queer walk-nap* acknowledges enduring Māori worldviews in Aotearoa that emphasise interconnectivity between humans, animals and the environment. How might we acknowledge and build familiarity with other realms and the more-than-human entities and communities we encounter and experience as significant in their own right and integral to each place. If we move with care with/in an enmeshed environment of humans and nonhuman things, entities and beings, what are the possibilities? What is the potential of a performance practice with place?

*queer walk-nap*, dawn 15 February 2020, val smith. Photo by Christina Houghton



# *cruising, lazing, leaning* by Richard Orjis and Marika Pratley

Te Wai Ōrea, Western Springs Park

Saturday 21 November 2020, 9pm

kia ora, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou katoa  
welcome to *cruising, lazing, leaning*

I acknowledge Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei as mana whenua  
and Te Wai Ōrea, Western Springs Park, the water of the eels

I thank my collaborator, musician Marika Pratley  
and bttm methodology co-conspirator val smith  
along with Christina Houghton, Melissa Laing, Pita Turei  
Andrew Clifford and Chloe Geoghegan

let's lean back, find a comfortable position,  
let's close our eyes and observe the air coming in and out of our bodies

welcome to the here and now, queer idleness, queer ecological connection and  
pleasure-leisure seeking

I am Richard Orjis, he-him-they, I was born by the Whanganui River  
a serpentine body of muddy golden water with human status  
an ancient arterial route that moves from mountain to the mouth of the ocean  
my ancestors arrived here on boats from Scotland, England, Ireland and Germany  
leaving behind lives I will never know, to farm, fish, make homes and families on  
stolen land

this walk is guided by queer and feminist theory and decolonial thinking  
it will explore what happens in the shadows, the underground, in murky streams  
out of sight and in the darkness of public spaces  
let's move away from human-centric, consuming, competitive, productive,  
reproductive modes  
this is a countering movement towards the margins, to the minor  
to construct intimacies with the planet's ever evolving bio-cultural diversity

I acknowledge the moon, Marama  
the lunar calendar, maramataka the moon rotating  
we are in Raumati, summer, the bringer of blossom and warmer weather  
Tamatea a Ngana, Tamatea a Hotu, Tamatea a Io  
the period of unpredictability  
and days of fishing and planting

this ground, Te Wai Ōrea, the water of the eels, is naturally watery, boggy and  
uneven terrain  
it has been home to the eels for millennia

clear spring water begins its life as rainfall that sinks deep into the surrounding volcanoes  
Te Tatua-a-Riukiuta, Ōwairaka, Maungawhau  
it travels via deep subterranean tunnels, filtered by miles of scoria rock, to here

Te Wai Ōrea has long been a popular queer cruising site  
this ground has shifted from wetland to stream, fishing site, and terraformed into  
farmland, urban reservoir, market garden, military camp, sports field, stadium,  
school, public park, zoo  
it has been an illegal rubbish dump that is still digesting  
releasing methane bubbles up through the earth's muddy belly  
to the west of the park lies an AIDS memorial  
a Circle of Friends marked by boulders, paving stones and the names of the dead

land and history are like eels, slippery entities, dark, hard to see  
and endlessly wriggling in and out of focus

feeling eel, I've been thinking about the queerness of eels  
magical, mysterious, maligned

Ōrea, the longfin eel, are endemic to Aotearoa  
Taniwha have been known to take their form  
if Te Wai Ōrea is the Garden of Eden, they are its serpents  
I've been thinking about celebrating Eve, about life emerging from clay  
queer femme witch empowerment  
I've been thinking about lowly, bttm, horizontal positions  
knowledge that resides in the dust, in the earth, in slow time

I've been thinking about the queerness of eels

they can live to a hundred years  
they decide to become male or female only in adulthood  
they occupy liminal space, crossing between fresh and saltwater  
they are at once indigenous and cosmopolitan  
they navigate the vertical, the horizontal  
their smooth, silk-slimy bodies move over grass and up dams  
long with small wing-like fins sprouting by their heads  
and dorsal and anal fins that merge at their tails' end

for Ōrea, reproduction marks their death  
only spawning once at the end of their life  
they leave these familiar waters  
in new bodies, more streamlined, their nearly blind eyes turn blue and belly silver  
their final Pacific odyssey begins as they swim the thousands of miles back to the  
subtropical ocean floor  
where their life began  
female bodies writhe  
in deep trenches between New Caledonia and Tonga  
bursting open with a million eggs, scattering like glitter  
and dancing with sperm clouds in moana currents  
lifeless bodies ascend to the undulating surface

I've been thinking about the queerness of eels  
as youth life takes hold  
eggs turn to larvae, metamorphosing into tiny glass eels  
after months at sea they finally return to the cooler estuaries of Aotearoa  
here they take colour, from the darkest browns to grey to black  
as the saltwater stirs with fresh, they move upstream to live, to mature

like the act of outdoor cruising, they are a species marked by gradual decline  
sensitive to environmental disturbance  
the loss of plant cover, topographical change, pollution  
robbed of freshwater streams that now run thick with nitrogen and cream

let's draw on queer histories of cruising to form more intimate ecological encounters  
let's be strange with strangers  
cruising is to wander in search of sexual encounters  
cruising is to sail, to drift around for pleasure without a destination in mind  
cruising is to create something with a degree of ease  
cruising is a metaphor for how we might create consensual, expansive  
temporary and radical intimacies in the present  
defying oppressive conventions, moralising, partitions, dualisms  
to find meaning, pleasure, community

#1 let's tether ourselves together with rubber, sheets, fabric, cord  
#2 let's explore alternative ways of being together, away from talking, towards  
looking, moving, feeling, sensing  
#3 let's proceed into the park and be guided by pleasure and curiosity  
let's be drawn to barbecues, tables, park benches, waterways, playgrounds,  
towards trees, earthy mounds, artworks, monuments, avian shitiness, boardwalks,  
drinking fountains, weedy lawns, brutalist toilet blocks  
#4 let's cruise, let's laze, let's lean  
#5 let's move together, let's share the lead, let's be passive, let's be active  
#horizontal\_leadership #the\_changing\_guides\_will\_hold\_the\_sequin\_eel  
#6 let's opt-out whenever we want, feeling free to be alone or together  
#7 let's respect the park and its wildlife, other cruising bodies, the human and  
more-than-human

let's stand on polluted sites, sites of shame  
marked with histories of trans-homophobia, colonisations, environmental abuse  
and for a moment imagine the promise of emancipatory relief, alternative realities  
feeling ground, feeling connected, feeling eel

finally, acknowledging Eve Sedgwick and her expansive reparative,  
intersubjective, porous imaginings,  
and her quote, "Promiscuous we! Me, plus anybody else. Permeable we!"

*cruising, lazing, leaning*, Richard Orjis and Marika Pratley. Photos by Ralph Brown



## About walking

September 2019 – November 2020

Curated by Christina Houghton and Melissa Laing

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