

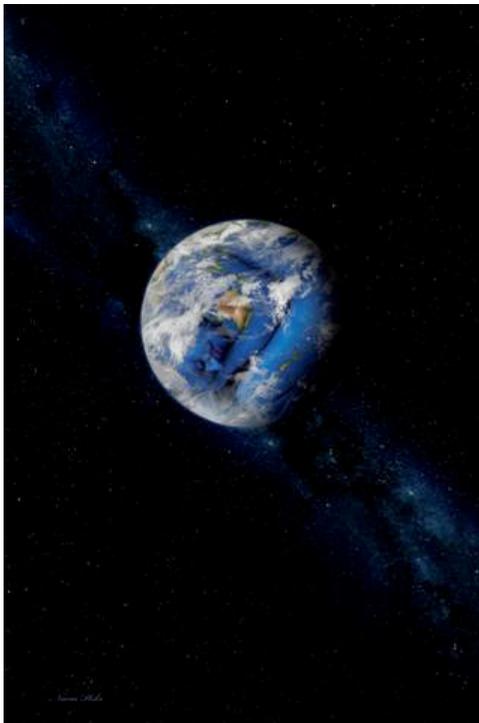
Norm Heke

(Ngā Puhī, Ngāti Kahu, Te Arawa, Welsh and English)
Digital Artist / Photographer

OMGs: Māori Gods in the 21 Century

3 September - 27 November 2011

"I wanted to give Māori gods a renewed presence in contemporary culture, by modernising the characters and contextualising the stories, in order for them to remain alive and vibrant in our society. I chose Photorealism as the medium to build each of the atua a stage as grand as any of the Greek Gods. These are our indigenous super heroes and they deserve to be celebrated." Norm Heke.



Papatūānuku & Ranginui, Norm Heke, 2011
digital photography, 3D print

Several large-scale portraits depicting pivotal characters in the foundational stories that underpin Māori / New Zealand culture were created using 3D and flip effect (lenticular) technology. Narratives are presented simultaneously in the past and the present day. Pivotal characters in Māori whakapapa (genealogy) are highlighted starting from the very beginning of time through to the discovery of Aotearoa / New Zealand.

Norm Heke's love of the natural environment, Maori cultural traditions and attention to detail are evident in this series. Each individual work consists of a multitude of collected photographs of textures and locations procured from numerous travels around the country. The production process involves a flip effect that allows images to be combined and viewed independently when viewed from different sides. Created scenes from the past and the present are incorporated in one frame.

Depictions include: Papatūānuku (Earth Mother and sky father); Tāne (God of Forests); Hinetītama / Hinenuitēpō (Dawn Goddess / Goddess of the night); Tūmataunga (God of War) and Māui (Demi God).

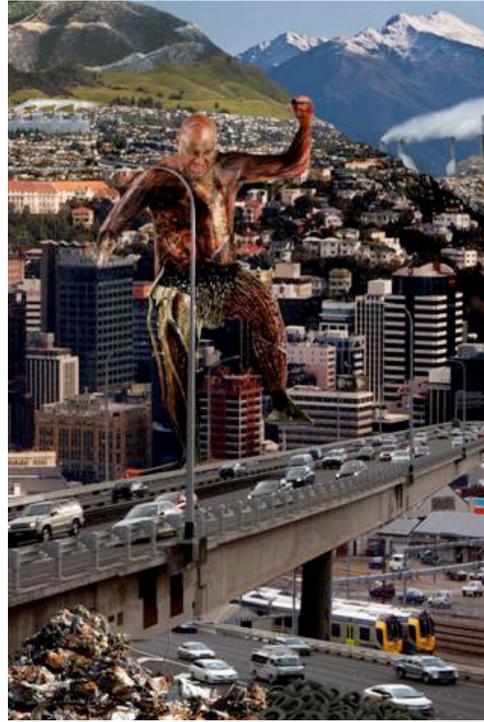
Papatūānuku & Ranginui

In the legend, Papatūānuku (mother earth, female element) and Ranginui (sky father, male element) are the parents of ngā atua (gods) on earth. Similarly their children represent different elements and life forces. It was the close embrace of Ranginui and Papatūānuku that kept their progeny in constant darkness. Their children craved to live in the light and most agreed that the parents should be separated. Attempts were made by many of their children, with Tāne (atua of the forest) eventually succeeding.

Early knowledge of Papatūānuku's form was restricted to the limits of what could be seen with the human eye. In ancient times the highest vantage points were the mountains. Science and

modern technology has given new perspective. Norm's imagery reconfigures ancient stories with a new world view; he says "I wanted to show Papatūānuku (the earth) in a way that hasn't been represented before with a 21st Century awareness. Papatūānuku appears to the viewer as a 3 dimensional sphere, a closer look at the image reveals a human like form in a curled up position.

Tāne, God of the Forest



Tāne, Norm Heke 2011, digital photography, lenticular print

Norm's passion for the environment is evident in Tāne (Atua of the forest). Tāne, known by many names, is credited with numerous colossal feats including creating life on earth such as birds and insects and clothing his mother Papatūānuku. He is known for forming the first human from soil named Hineahuone and clothing his father Ranginui with the stars, the moon and the sun. Tāne is shown in a pristine thriving natural habitat of the past but also in a damaged man-made habitat of the present.

"Awareness of the damage being caused to our natural environment has not impeded the escalating decay and destruction of our once pristine lands by human interference. Collectively we need to take responsibility for habitats that we ultimately depend on for survival. If we don't respect nature it could lead to our own destruction." Norm Heke

Tūmatauenga, God of War

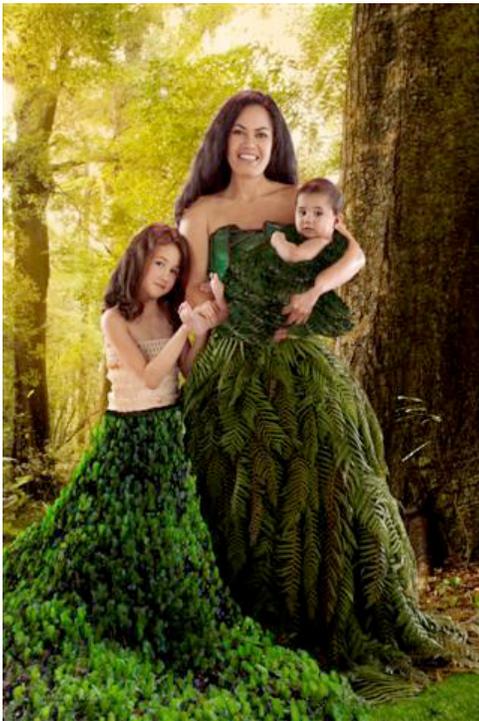


Tūmatauenga, Norm Heke, 2011, digital photography, lenticular print

Tū or Tūmatauenga is the originator of war. Treated with upmost respect, customarily war parties were and are dedicated in his honour. The New Zealand army bears the name Ngati Tūmatauenga. Tū is also responsible for showing the way for mankind to hunt, fish and cultivate by making snares to trap the children of his brother Tāne, nets to trap the children of Tangaroa and implements to dig the ground producing food from his brothers Rongo and Haumia-tiketike. The only brother that Tūmatauenga cannot subdue completely is Tāwhirimātea (god of wind and storms).

A futuristic Tū is clad in metallic bio armour, inspired by the exoskeleton of the native New Zealand insect, the weta. Armed with modern weaponry he is reminiscent of the modern gaming movement, far removed from the brutal hand-to-hand combat common place in early New Zealand wars as shown in the Tū of the past.

Hinetītama, Dawn Maiden / Hine-nui-te-pō, Goddess of the Night



Hinetītama / Hine-nui-te-pō, Norm Heke, 2011, digital photograph, lenticular Print

Hinetītama, the Dawn Maiden in the whakapapa (genealogy) of humanity, is the first born child brought into the world. She later became the wife of Tāne and mother to his children. She later became known as Hinenuitepō, Goddess of the night. Hinenuitepō welcomes all her descendants as they pass from life on earth to the afterlife.

Hinetītama and her children, are surrounded by an abundant luxurious forest. The same degree of elegance is applied to Hinenuitepō, contrasting with warm yet sombre tones. The kahukiwi (kiwi feather cloak) symbolises customs associated with tangi (funerals). Here both Hinetītama and Hine-nui-te-pō exemplify womanly dignity, fortitude and strength.

Most of the garments in both images were designed and constructed by Norm digitally applying textures to the images of the models. It becomes difficult to tell the real garments from the digital ones.

Māui and His Brothers - Māui-taha, Māui-roto, Māui-pae and Māui-waho



Māui and His Brothers, Norm Heke, 2011, digital photograph, lenticular print.

The stories of Māui (demigod) are shared with cultures throughout the Pacific Ocean (Moananui-a-Kiwa). He was known for his clever intellect, ingenuity, leadership and daring risk taking. Māui is credited with a multitude of achievements including slowing down the sun because the days were too short and catching the great fish Te Ika a Māui (the North Island of New Zealand). Te Ika-a-Māui is a transitional story that specifically connects to Aotearoa. The Head of the great fish is the Te Upoko o Te Ika a Māui or Wellington, capital city and centre of politics.

The contemporary adaptation of this story leads to the steps of parliament buildings in Wellington, where Maui and his brothers take political centre stage. Assuming the name 'The Māui Party, this same group similarly gets 'hooked' into present day issues.

CURRICULUM LINKS

Learning Areas – Visual Arts, Technology, Social Sciences

Learning Outcomes – recognise how myths and legends carry meaning and workshop image layering techniques.

Principles – Cultural Diversity; the curriculum reflects New Zealand's cultural diversity and values the history and traditions of all people.

PRE AND POST VISIT ACTIVITIES

RESEARCH the large seafaring waka (vessels) sailed in early Maori migrations

DISCOVER the original Māori names for New Zealand, the North Island and the South Island.

PERFORM a play retelling a Māori legend

CONSTRUCT Māori cloaks using recycled materials

INVESTIGATE 3D and lenticular printing processes.

DISCUSS land conservation issues that affect New Zealand.

LEARN or make up a waiata (song) related to a legend.

ARTIST BIOGRAPHY



Norm is one of New Zealand's most prolific Museum photographers. This is his first solo exhibition.

His work has featured extensively in numerous publications and exhibitions throughout his expansive career. He has worked as a commercial studio photographer and a forensic photographer at the DSIR (Department of Scientific and Industrial Research). Norm was the first photographer to receive the Toi Iho trade mark acknowledging quality in Maori Art.

Norm has worked as a photographer and imaging specialist at The Museum of New Zealand, Te Papa Tongarewa since 1991; photographing exhibitions, major projects and the museum's natural environment collections, taonga Māori, Art and New Zealand history.

Norm's work has appeared in numerous magazines, journals, exhibitions and catalogues including:

- 1992 *Royal Doulton*, ceramic exhibition catalogue
- 1993 *Royal Doulton*, Canterbury Museum
- 1993 *Pū Manawa*, A celebration of Whatu, Raranga, and Tāniko
Kohia Ko Taikaka Anake:New Zealand's largest exhibition of contemporary Māori art, National Art Gallery
- 1993 *Māori art*, National Art Gallery
- 1994 *Kurawaka*, Celebration of five Māori clay workers, Dowse Art Museum
- 1995 *Gold & Silversmithing in 19th & 20th Century New Zealand*
- 1996 *Mataora*:The Living Face, David Bateman
- 1997 *Speaking in Colour*, Sean Mellon, Te Papa Press
- 2001 *He Kawenga*, A collection of Art Works from Te Wananga o Raukawa
- 2002 *Pacific Art Niu Sila*,Te Papa Press
- 2003 *Ngā Taonga*, Te Papa Press
- 2004 *Whenua: Born of the Land*,Tinakori Gallery, Wellington
- 2005 *The Eternal Thread: The Art of Māori Weaving*, Huia Publishers
- 2002
&
- 2007 *Taiawhio One and Two: Conversation with Contemporary Māori Artists*
- 2008 *Te Kāhui o Matariki*:Contemporary Maori Art of Matariki
- 2010 Robert Jahnke, Exhibition Catalogue
- 2011 *Whatu Kakahu*, Māori Cloaks, Te Papa Press

Definition of Whakapapa

Whakapapa is defined as the "genealogical descent of all living things from the gods to the present time (Barlow, 1994, p. 173)." Since all living things including rocks and mountains are believed to possess whakapapa, it is further defined as "a basis for the organisation of knowledge in the respect of the creation and development of all things (Barlow, 1994, p. 173)."

Hence, whakapapa also implies a deep connection to land and the roots of one's ancestry. In order to trace one's whakapapa it is essential to identify the location where one's ancestral heritage began; "you can't trace it back any further (Russell, 2004)." "Whakapapa links all people back to the land and sea and sky and outer universe, therefore, the obligations of whanaungatanga extend to the physical world and all being in it (Glover, 2002, p. 14)."¹

¹ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Whakapapa>