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Lesson Plan
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Turangawaewae – A Place to Stand

Turangawaewae literally means a place to stand in Māori. Turanga means (standing place) and waewae (feet), a place that empowers us and connects to, a place we call home. This is a powerful concept in creating a sense of belonging for an individual and providing a core to Māori culture; one we know now is crucial to the success of Māori students, and I would argue, all students.

Foundational to the concept of turangawaewae is an awareness of the natural world, of our rivers and mountains, an understanding of the land we come from and return to. This connection to the outer physical natural world serves to provide an even deeper reflection on our internal personal world. This reflection gives us a sense of identity to a land we can connect to and belong to.

Evidence abounds that creating a sense of identity in a young person, very early on in their school life, is hugely empowering. We know this is central and important in Māori culture; I would like to unpack this for my students, and investigate what elements Māori use to connect and create this sense of identity and belonging.

The final outcome would be a mixed media piece combining photography and painting, with the use of stenciling and acetone printing to create a kind of visual pepeha of each student. It would also draw on inspirations from other contemporary Māori painters who have used their art to connect to their own identity and show what turangawaewae means to them.

I would break down each of these layers in the artwork, starting with an exploration of the Māori myth of Papatuanuku-the earth mother and Ranginui- the sky father, as the beginning of all life. We start with the concept that at the beginning there was nothing:

'If you'd been there you would have seen nothing, for colour didn't exist, air wasn't there: the very idea of space couldn't have been there because there were no ideas at all. There was absolutely nothing and I mean nothing. And I mean nothing in the entire universe. No planets. No stars. No sun or moon. Nothing we touch and call home.' (Weaving earth and sky. Robert Sullivan)

This is a powerful image, an embrace between land and sky so tight that not a peep of light could be seen, a loving gigantic embrace from where all life started. This is the first layer in visual terms for the students to investigate, using paints and spray to

create the darkness and depth of Ranginui and stencils and drawings of the land to create Papatuanuku.

We engage the students with Papatuanuku by introducing her form as the land – whenua - the word for placenta, that Māori bury after birth, returning us to the earth. Papatuanuku is portrayed as the place where we come from, which is a very poignant literal act in understanding Māori's deep connection to the land. This also reflects the word tangata whenua – people of the land, caretakers of the land rather than owners a concept that created much conflict with the arrival of Pakeha.

The second layer is then connected to the individual student's pepeha, so an investigation is then needed to gather each student's iwi, waka, maunga, awa, ingoa and kainga. This investigation can then be translated into imagery of what each of these elements represent for the student in a literal or nonliteral form. The exploration of this is done in imagery that is relevant and exciting for the student. Identity for each student is formed by layering these images of self (self portrait) and the visual symbols they find (images of other family members, phrases from songs) and images of sky and land. All this merges and interacts to create and amplify a sense of turangawaewae – the foundation , the place they feel they belong.

Abstracts

Burger Peter, Turangawaewae – A place to stand, NZ Film Commission, 2003

Wi Kuki Kaa plays Tiare, a homeless and dislocated Vietnam War vet who wanders the streets carrying plastic bags of odds and ends that have a deep significance to him. He ritually places these collections on a square of grass in different locations around the city, searching for his turangawaewae – his place to stand. The story is poignant in his search for place, his loss heightened by the horrors he sees in his head from the war. Disconnected from the world around him, he carries earth and grass, a cut out from the land in his bag, testing the ground that surrounds him to see where it can fit. His daughter played by Nancy Brunning convinces him to visit his ancestral home.

Paton Justin. Shane Cotton - The Hanging Sky. Christchurch Art Gallery, 2011

The Hanging Sky brings together four different writers and curators to comment on selected works from Shane Cotton's last two decades of paintings. Shane Cotton's early work in the 1990's critiques that decade's debate about place, belonging and bicultural identity. The book is a combination of these essays with large high-resolution plates of Cotton's paintings. The four essays are written by Elit Weinberg, a translator from New York, who writes a powerful meditation of what he calls ' the ghost of birds'. Justin Paton, a Christchurch curator writes a piece discussing Cotton's defining and searching for spaces within his work. Geraldine Kirrihi Barlow, a Melbourne curator, investigates Toi Moko, the tattooed Māori heads Cotton uses in his work. Robert Leonard from the Modern Art institute discusses Cotton as a ' cultural surrealist exploring the treachery of images'.

Sullivan Robert. Gavin Bishop. Weaving Earth and Sky: Myths and Legends of Aotearoa (The Creation Voyages). Random House, 2002

Robert Sullivan's book retells the stories of the great Māori myths and legends. In his first chapter – The Creation Voyages, he retells the story of Ranginui and Papatuanuku, and their strong embrace of love that was tightly holding in all their sons. Before them there was nothing just an immeasurable void of darkness with no sound, and from this nothing came the gods. How this came about is a mystery and from this great mystery came Ranginui and Papatuanuku. Inside their tight embrace was growing their restless divine progeny who were not happy with the cramped darkness they lived between, so they made a plan to separate Ranginui from Papatuanuku. This wasn't easy and after many attempts it was Tane Mahuta who pushed with his feet and separated the two.

Learning Intentions :

1. Students will gain an understanding of turangawaewae and the importance this has in Māori culture and how different contemporary Māori artists have used this in their own work. They will be introduced to Ranginui and Papatuanuku story and encouraged to think about how this relates to where they think their place is.
2. Students will gain an understanding of what a pepeha is and learn to describe their pepeha in their own visual language, by breaking each part down to produce an image that visually represents each element. For example an image of their waka, an image of their awa etc...
3. Students will gain a deeper understanding of the importance of identity in Māori culture and begin to question and develop their own identity in a visual language of their own and one that they will quickly find fluency and confidence in.

Lesson Plan A

Main Topic: Turangawaewae – A Place to Stand

Year Level : 9 and 10

New Zealand Curriculum Links:

Tai Taiako : Ako and Tangata Whenuatanga

Share ideas about how and why their own ideas are made and their purpose, value and context (NZ curriculum)

For example, found or drawn images of Auckland, Tamaki Makaurau, or specifically the suburb or areas of Tamaki Makaurau they are from.

Investigate visual ideas in response to a variety of motivations, observation and imagination. (NZ curriculum)

like Shane Cotton and how he used different visual elements to describe his place, the land he comes from. Show the image of Shane Cottons 'The Hanging Sky' and the different elements he used in this painting and their meaning.

Explore a variety of material and tools and discover elements and selected principles. (NZ curriculum)

In this exercise the students will. We would look at Shane Cotton in particular for his use of stenciling and paint work representing his image of the sky –Ranui.

Share the ideas, feelings and stories communicated by their own and others' objects and images.

An important part to this final lesson is that all students will have a visual pepeha that they can then walk through with other students, talking them through their waka, maunga, awa and images that represent their iwi, and the place they live now.

Demonstrable Learning Intention :

Students will gain an understanding of what a pepeha is and describe their pepeha in their own visual language. Breaking each part down to produce an image that visually represents. For example an image be it literal or not of their waka, awa etc...

Maori knowledge, language :

What a pepeha is. What turangawaewae means. The Maori legend of Ranui and Papatuanuku. How Maori see the land- Papatuanuku, the creator of all life and it's cycle of returning back to it when we die. Gaining a beginning insight of what identity means.

Relevant Tikanga Maori and how to teach :

Looking at different Maori artist and what they have expressed in their work relevant to their identity, for these lesson I would look at :

Shane Cotton

Ralph Hotere

Robyn Kahukiwaohn

John Beavan Ford

The use of and understanding of
pepeha, turangawaewae, Ranui, Papatuanuku, awa, maunga, iwi, waka .

Success Criteria :

The students will gain an understanding of what their pepeha is. Create a piece of mixed media work that clearly demonstrates an image from each element of their pepeha. They will have a greater understanding of why Māori use pepeha and their importance culturally, how this informs their identity through creating their own pepeha through a visual language.

Learning activities :

Lesson 1 : to create the base of their work by painting a sky- Ranui across their board, looking at Shane Cotton's technique in his use of sky. Graded sky from dark to light. Use of colours and gradation techniques.

Lesson 2: to create the base of their land – Papatuanuku from found images that represent their landscape. Images off the web of landmarks that represent their maunga, either cut out as a collage technique or create the landscape that is then stenciled onto the base of the painting.

Lesson 3 : Simple self portrait taken, with the help of other students that take each others portrait in a formal lit studio setting.

Lesson 4 : Using the self portrait to transfer onto the sky and landscape using an acetone transfer technique

Lesson 5: Search for other meaningful symbols that the students feel represents their identity including images of wakas or ships, phrases place names, their own names using stenciled lettering. A final shellac of the work.

Lesson Plan B :

Main Topic: Turangawaewae – A Place to Stand

Year Level :9 and 10

New Zealand Curriculum Links:
TaiTaiako : Ako and Tangata Whenuatanga

Share ideas about how and why their own ideas are made and their purpose, value and context (NZ curriculum)

Students will come up with words or phrases that describe the place that they call home.

Investigate visual ideas in response to a variety of motivations, observation and imagination. (NZ curriculum)

Look at different contemporary Maori artists like Ralph Hotere and Shane Cotton and how they used words to convey a sense of place in their work. Students will also look at how these artists layered paint and images together to form a narrative within their work.

Explore a variety of material and tools and discover elements and selected principles. (NZ curriculum)

Students will look at the above artist specific techniques and methods they used, from using spray paint, layering of found images, stenciling. Colour choices and their effectiveness to the emotion of the work.

Demonstrable Learning Intention :

Students will gain an understanding of what a pepeha is and describe their pepeha in their own visual language. Breaking each part down to produce an image that visually represents. For example an image of their waka, an image of their awa etc...

Relevant Tikanga Maori and how to teach :

Example of my pepeha : the Maori words used in class in bold

KO Ida Zeigler **Taku Waaka**
KO Momokai **Taku Maunga**
KO Nuhaka **Taku Awa**
KO Pakeha **Taku Iwi**
KO Jessica Bluck **Taku Ingoa**
KO Tamaki Makaurau **Taku Kainga**

A look at early formal portraiture taken of Māori and Pakeha

The use of and understanding of
pepeha, turangawaewae, Ranui, Paptuanuke, awa, maunga, iwi, waka .

Success Criteria :

Students will create a piece of work that layers phrases and words over a formal portrait they have taken of themselves. This will serve to create a deeper understanding of identity and place.

Learning activities :

Lesson 1 : Looking at classical early portraiture of Māori , each student will take each others portrait in this formal studio environment, with a simple white back drop. They will look at physical poses they take and the meaning they make from this i.e sitting, smiling , hand positions.

Lesson 2: Students will then print the image into B/W with a minimal amount of manipulation to emulate the early photography

Lesson 3 : Mount photographic print onto hardboard, using letter stencil, pens and paints write over the portrait of themselves phrases, words , symbols that the students feels connects them to their place their home, and themselves.

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Reference list :

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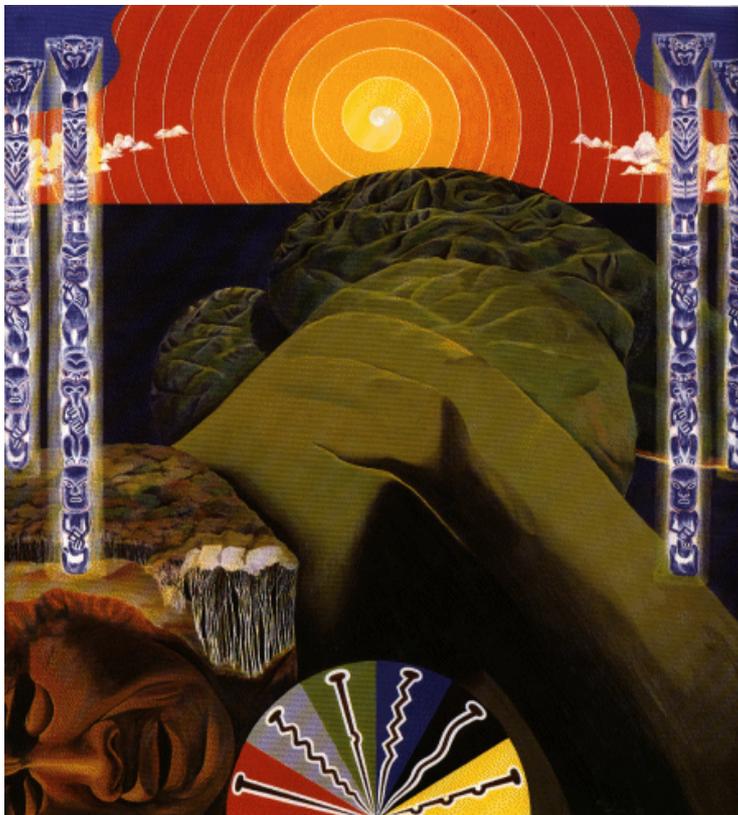
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Shane Cotton. The Hanging Sky. 2007



Robyn Kahukiwa, Hinētītāma 1980



Robyn Kahukiwa, Papatuanuku 1980



Unidentified Woman, Hawkes Bay District 23/ January 1893.



Unidentified Man 1830-1860

