

2019 Tertiary Teaching Excellence Awards
Kaupapa Māori Category

Nomination for Dr Ngarino Ellis

Art History

The University of Auckland



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1. Ako: Teaching and learning

Manaakitanga/care and rangatiratanga/empowerment are the heart of my teaching.

As Linda Tuhiwai Smith has remarked, for many students, university is ‘alienating and destructive’.¹ This is particularly true for Māori and Pacific students whose off-campus lives and in-class experiences are often antagonistic. The duality drives many away. I endeavour to engage all students, especially those who do not automatically feel at home in the university. I help them find a place to stand, a voice in which to express their ideas, and a bridge between their off-campus and university worlds.

Art History, at least as conventionally understood, used to epitomise the gap between these worlds. Real ‘art’, so the story went, was made in Europe from the seventeenth century, mostly by ‘Old Masters’. Twenty-first century Art History is different though. During recent decades Art History has turned an expansive and critical lens on itself. The discipline has become interdisciplinary. Colonialism, sexism and cultural misappropriation have all come into view. Students use art to explore history, politics, gender, race, culture and economics. Indigenous art matters.

In Aotearoa/New Zealand, and particularly at the University of Auckland, Māori Art History is central to the contemporary discipline. In 1988 as a new student I enrolled in the first-ever university-level Māori art history course. The inimitable Ngahuia Te Awekotuku showed us that Māori art was intellectually challenging, exciting and important. Her classroom was very different from those in my all-girl, almost all-Pakeha, high school. She talked about taonga tuku iho as living treasures, not museum pieces. Her example was inspiring; I felt proud to be Māori, and proud to be Māori on campus. I endeavour to follow her lead.

In 1988 Dr (now Professor) Te Awekotuku was the only Māori art historian teaching at a tertiary institution; sadly, three decades later I am in the same position. This is often a lonely position, filled with pressure to deliver Māori content across the curriculum. It is a position with the power to make a difference. Just as Ngahuia mentored me, I feel particular responsibilities to Māori and Pacific students. I strive to identify and celebrate their worldviews and aspirations using the language and culture of this land, but do so in ways that I believe enriches the education of all my students.

It is critical I make all students feel welcome. Most novice Art History students have never engaged with Māori art before they take my courses, much less a Māori art historian. I seize opportunities to teach students about art in ways which empower them, and makes understanding Māori art a vital part of their time at the University of Auckland.

My classrooms are collaborative; in them we talk, question, draw, role-play and think together. I plan interactive activities to ensure engagement. Students hear several different voices in each

¹ Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, first edition, Dunedin: Zed Press, 1999, 134.

lecture; artists and curators, their own voices, their neighbours' voices. I endeavour to introduce creative elements so students learn by doing. This might include designing a tāniko/weaving pattern to reflect their aspirations, or mahi raranga; folding strips of paper into fish to learn about weaving. Each class builds on the previous academically and socially. The barriers of awkwardness come down; students learn to trust me, themselves and each other. Everyone belongs.

All my teaching, undergraduate and postgraduate, is anchored in manaakitanga/care and rangatiratanga/empowerment. My goal is to help students feel that Art History is their discipline, and see that being Māori - or knowing about the Māori world - is critical to their on- and off-campus lives. My teaching is deeply rooted in Kaupapa Māori practice, and grounded in my upbringing in a close-knit, strong whānau who spent much time on our marae. My grandparents have gone but I hold fast to the values they embedded in me.

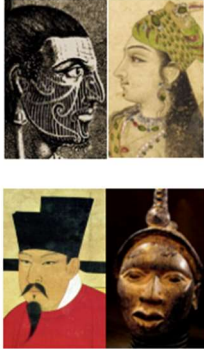
He aha te mea nui, he tangata, he tangata, he tangata.



MUSEUMS 704A/705
**EXHIBITING CULTURES:
MAORI & INDIGENOUS
PERSPECTIVES**

DR NGARINO ELLIS.
MUSEUMS & CULTURAL HERITAGE
SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES, FACULTY OF ARTS.
2019

Global Art Histories



Semester 1, 2019

ARTHIST 115

2. Wānangatanga - Knowledge

Art History departments are increasingly rare in New Zealand universities. My department is now one of only three; I am the only Māori scholar permanently employed in any of them. I teach across a variety of fields but my fundamental commitment is to fostering the study of Māori art forms and practices using Te Ao Māori frameworks. My teaching is necessarily innovative, combining a Kaupapa Māori pedagogy with concepts drawn from Euro-American Art History and the ideas developed in my own research. My teaching and research evolve in tandem.

Currently I lecture in five courses. Typically each year I teach a third of the stage 1 course, a stage 2/3 course and a full-year Honours course (which is a compulsory paper for Museums and Cultural Heritage students):

- ARTHIST 115 Global Art Histories (150-180 students)
- ARTHIST 230/332 Art Crime (60-110 students)
- ARTHIST 233/333 The Art of Body Politics (30-50 students)
- ARTHIST 238/338 Mana Taonga: Tradition and Innovation in Māori Art (25-45 students)
- MUSEUMS 704 Exhibiting Cultures (semester one Māori and Indigenous Perspectives; semester two International) (7-22 students).

The breadth and regular rotation of these offerings ensures that my teaching remains exciting. While these topics seem disparate, ultimately my role as a Māori academic shapes all of them. They are all taught from a Māori worldview and draw on my upbringing and experiences on campus, both as a student and as an academic.

Art History is a dynamic and contested discipline, with the capacity to transform understandings of history and culture through time and space. Indigenous worldviews have been at the heart of disciplinary re-conceptualisation.

My current book project, *Toi Te Mana: A History of Indigenous Art from Aotearoa New Zealand* (with Deidre Brown and Jonathan Mane-Wheoki), is grounded in my teaching. In my courses I have developed a core set of Māori terminology and frameworks to conceptualise disparate time, people and places, in the process identifying critical parameters for Māori Art History, and for the wider discipline. Māori Art History, I argue in my teaching and research, has much to contribute to Art History as a discipline.

My pedagogy is aimed at Māori students first and foremost. They are a small group on campus, subject to unique pressures.² Every academic needs to work for Māori student success and actively engage with expectations under Te Tiriti o Waitangi, but the responsibility is keenly felt by Maori academics.³ The presence of Māori academic role models and courses with

² The proportion of Māori students in the University of Auckland student body has barely grown in recent years, from 7% in 2012 to 7.5% in 2017. Māori are 15% of the national population, 10.7% of Auckland's population and 12% of the national university student population. <https://www.universitiesnz.ac.nz/sector-research-issues-facts-and-stats/building-maori-and-pasifika-success/building-maori-success>.

³ Only 6% of academic staff in the Faculty of Arts are Māori.

significant Māori content is critical to Māori student success. As Linda Tuhiwai Smith reminds us, Māori want ‘Western educations and high-level qualifications. But ... [not] at the cost of destroying people’s indigenous identities, languages, values and practices.’⁴ Courses with Māori content, taught using Kaupapa Māori pedagogies, nurture Māori students.

Creation of mātauranga: new materials

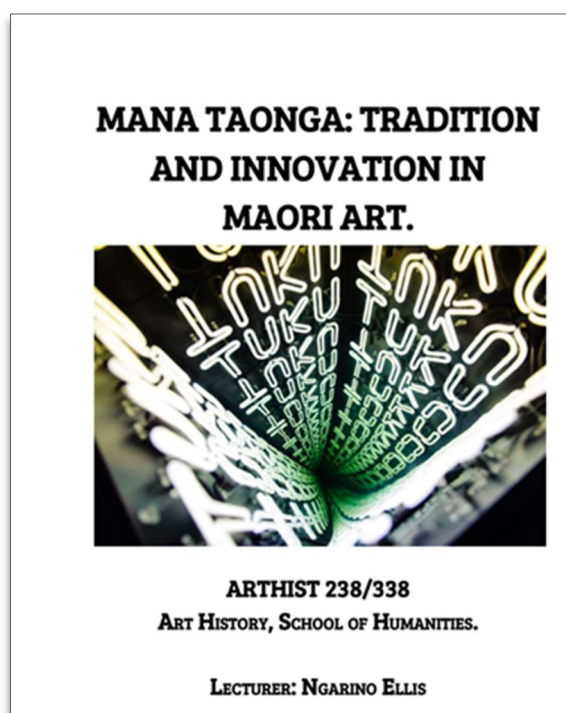
The scarcity of Māori resources in Art History and Museums and Cultural Heritage has been a constant challenge. Too often students only read material written by non-Māori and non-Indigenous authors about Māori and Indigenous histories and culture. This became clear for me when I first taught a course in Museums and Cultural Heritage in 2013.

I began that first year teaching what I had read about indigenous peoples and museums, but by the fourth week I was in a bind – while I was teaching students about the importance of indigenous perspectives, 60-70% of the readings were written by authors from *outside* those communities.

I decided that I needed to shift my approach. I spent the mid-semester break sourcing indigenous writing, and replaced the core readings with indigenous-authored texts. I was adamant that the students must hear and read indigenous voices first, before they are interpreted and summarised by others. When we re-convened I explained to the students about this change in focus and asked for their support. I advised that if they were studying Japanese or women’s art then naturally they would source writers from those groups – the indigenous world is no different.

I later presented a paper about this pedagogical epiphany in Denver at the Native American Art Studies Association conference in 2013, to a positive reception. I also took the opportunity to meet with two of the authors who my Museums students were reading, Nancy Marie Mithlo and Amy Lonetree, to talk about teaching.

At the end of that first year I sought evaluation of the Museums course-book from a number of Native American Museum Studies academics:



⁴ *Decolonizing Methodologies*, 134.

This is a brilliant class, and I wish I could be your student. ... you are making various kinds of knowledge accessible to your students by inviting people from the community to speak in the class... it seems only right to me that you are bringing these perspectives into the class through those who can speak from their own experience and expertise. This seems important for non-indigenous students as well as indigenous students.

- Edgewood College

Some students found it challenging to only use Native sources; others were excited by new worldviews. I reflected that breaking the narrative embedded in their prior learning that privileged and supported non-indigenous writers would take time and the 704 class would be the start of a journey.

Reaching out to indigenous colleagues

What can I learn from indigenous colleagues? I research different teaching approaches, particularly those used by indigenous teachers in Art History, Anthropology and Museum Studies. I experiment in the classroom, and roll successful strategies out across my teaching portfolio. I monitor blogs and articles about teaching looking for examples where student engagement in their own learning is a core concept. UCLA Gender lecturer Nancy Marie Mithlo (Chiricahua Apache), whose work I often cite in my Museum Studies course, has been a helpful collaborator. One of her methods is to drip-feed key terms, introducing two or three each week, rather than assume knowledge, or bombard students with too many concepts at once. Examples include hegemony, selective amnesia, patriarchy, and white privilege; but also include kupu Māori: mana, tapu kōrero, and whakapapa. Students are encouraged to develop their understanding of these key terms in course assessments, and across their whole programme of study.

Indigenising the classroom

How does this philosophy translate into the classroom? Providing culturally appropriate learning environments is crucial to the success of all students; the same techniques I use to encourage Māori to feel that they belong benefit all students, helping them feel welcome and culturally supported even when dealing with sensitive issues. Tikanga surrounding tapu, for instance, is very carefully discussed and woven into my classes. When I teach about moko and human remains this means, not preparing my class around food, endeavouring to hold the classes in a culturally safe space (the meeting house), and asking that students not eat during the class. I do not allow audio recording in order to ensure that students do not eat when re-listening later. I talk about respect for the materials and the ancestors (and by extension Māori values).

Diverse spaces foster diverse learning. We meet inside Tane Nui a Rangi, our University's meeting house, at least once during each course. This is an empowering space, where surrounded by the ancestors, Māori students have their whakapapa (genealogy) and history

validated and reinforced. There I talk about ancestral stories and their educative value. My students learn to see whare as libraries, museums, art galleries, classrooms, and churches.



Ngarino is very engaging and well prepared, and has inspired me to continue my study in the area and reconnect with my iwi. Ngarino's insight and sharing of knowledge has been invaluable.

- ARTHIST 238/338, 2017

You might also see my students at Auckland Museum, presenting their research in front of the taonga tuku iho (ancestral treasures) about which they have chosen to write. They might be in the Māori carving storeroom listening to Bethany Matai Edmunds (Associate Curator, Māori and an ex-student of mine), talking about some of the complexities of the collection; or inside Hotunui, Ngati Awa's whare talking with Chanel Clarke (Curator Māori) about her work with iwi. Another week we might be in the Teu Le Va/Pacific research section to meet the team and discuss the importance of community connections. Leone Samu will talk about her hopes to return to study one day with me, and Ruby Satele may speak of her experience writing an MA thesis with under my supervision. Meeting these people shows my students, particularly the Māori and Pacific students, that learning leads to meaningful careers.

Activating the classroom

Mostly though we are in lecture rooms which are typically never dynamic spaces due to the fixed seating. While learning by listening (pūrakau) is important, so too is learning through

doing. I carefully shape each classes into 15-20 minute blocks, with each centred on a core set of objectives set out at the start. Each block includes a break in which the students do not hear my voice: instead they look at images, talk together, or participate in activities, either individually or in pairs. This changes the energy in the classroom and makes it a dynamic learning space.

Class discussion was open, honest and relaxed: always felt comfortable voicing my opinion despite covering some tricky subjects.

- Postgraduate student, 2017

I am very aware that ‘teaching is a performative act.’⁵ I want students to come to class expecting the unexpected and to leave with new knowledge and a thirst to pursue ideas presented in class. I load follow-up material to Canvas: these are not only texts, but also audio-visual resources and podcasts from which students can pick according to their interests and future aspirations. They report enjoying the breadth of materials and formats.

I feel privileged to be in this class. This course has completely changed the way I think and questioned how I see myself positioned in Aotearoa.

- ARTHIST 238/338 student, 2017

I use a range of class activities, many of them based on the pedagogy of ‘learn by doing’ advocated by the photographer Hulleah Tsinnahjinnie (Seminole-Muscogee-Navajo). My teaching toolkit includes:

- ‘The Blank Map’: after handing out unlabelled maps of the Pacific I introduce the Fijian/Tongan scholar Epeli Hau’ofa’s concept of the Pacific ‘Sea of Islands’, conceptualising the region as connected by water. After talking about Pacific communities in Auckland I read out a list of Pacific countries and ask my students to identify them on the map. Invariably when I show the next slide of where the countries are, the students have a good laugh as their limited knowledge is revealed. I follow-up with three questions: how do they know what they know (i.e. how are schools complicit in this non-knowledge), would it be different if I had shown a map of Europe, and what are they going to do about the gaps in their knowledge?
- ‘Taonga mo ngā tangata katoa – Treasures for everyone’: in the Museums course requires students bring to class something that they treasure – a taonga – and speak about its significance. This is often very emotional because of the depth of feeling they have for the

⁵ bell hooks, *Teaching to Transgress*, New York: Routledge, 1994, 11.

taonga. The activity occurs in week two and brings the students together. Each student's presentation is heard with aroha for them and respect for their taonga. The activity reinforces the global and contemporary relevance of Māori concepts. As many of the treasures are from grandparents, it also relates to Māori concepts of whanau and the reverence for kuia and kaumatua.

- 'International War Crimes Tribunal': in a tutorial in my Art Crime course students role-play two looting scenarios, one based in Iraq and another in Nazi Europe. Students group themselves as lawyers for the looters and for the International Tribunal. Two students act as the judges. I work with the students to establish what constitutes a persuasive argument. Students select speakers for their group, and we re-arrange the room to look like a courthouse. The students then run their cases, and the judges make their decisions. There is a lot of discussion and laughter while students enjoy their role play.


Very thorough and comprehensive tutorials as well as lectures; made learning new ideas easy.

- ARTHIST 233/333, 2016

The videos and case studies in the lectures ... apply the ideas in the class to the outside world.

- Postgraduate student, 2017

ARTHIST 230/332



(Photo: Josh Reynolds/ AP)

ART CRIME

DR NGARINO ELLIS
ART HISTORY

3. Nga Uara - Values. He aha te rito o te harakeke. Titiro ki mua, titiro ki muri – looking back, looking forward

The values instilled by my grandparents shape my life and are at the core of my teaching practice. My teaching is informed by this inheritance and a living Māori pedagogy,⁶ infused by Kaupapa Māori methodologies, my upbringing in a close-knit whānau (family), and exposure to passionate teachers including Ngahuia Te Awekotuku (Art History), Jane Kelsey (Law), and Judith Binney (History).

Changing peoples' lives comes in many shapes and forms. I aim to create opportunities in which students can feel empowered in their learning, and by extension to other facets of their lives. By presenting a living Māori pedagogy, students can begin to understand and engage with Māori perspectives based firmly within tikanga (protocols). This is particularly transformative in my discipline, where typically the majority of the students are non-Māori, and the classes are often the first time they have 'met' Māori worlds; my role then is as a facilitator within that learning journey. For Māori and Pacific students, I make space for them to feel that their worldviews are reflected in the classroom, and that their histories and aspirations are special. For many of them, having a Māori lecturer is a new experience, and they use the courses I teach as part of their pathway to know their own culture better.

As a non-art historian and someone who was not particularly well-versed in indigenous cultures, I really appreciate your taking the time to explain traditions and cultures, as well as the academic side of things ... you guided me to complete the dissertation in a way that I felt was respectful towards the cultures I was visiting about.

- Dissertation student, 2017

Art is a platform to discuss wider social, economic, and political landscapes. We use it to think about class, race and gender.

I am really enjoying lecture and class, and really appreciate the respect towards Māori culture you've shown! [I'm] an American, nothing of that sort happens in the States.

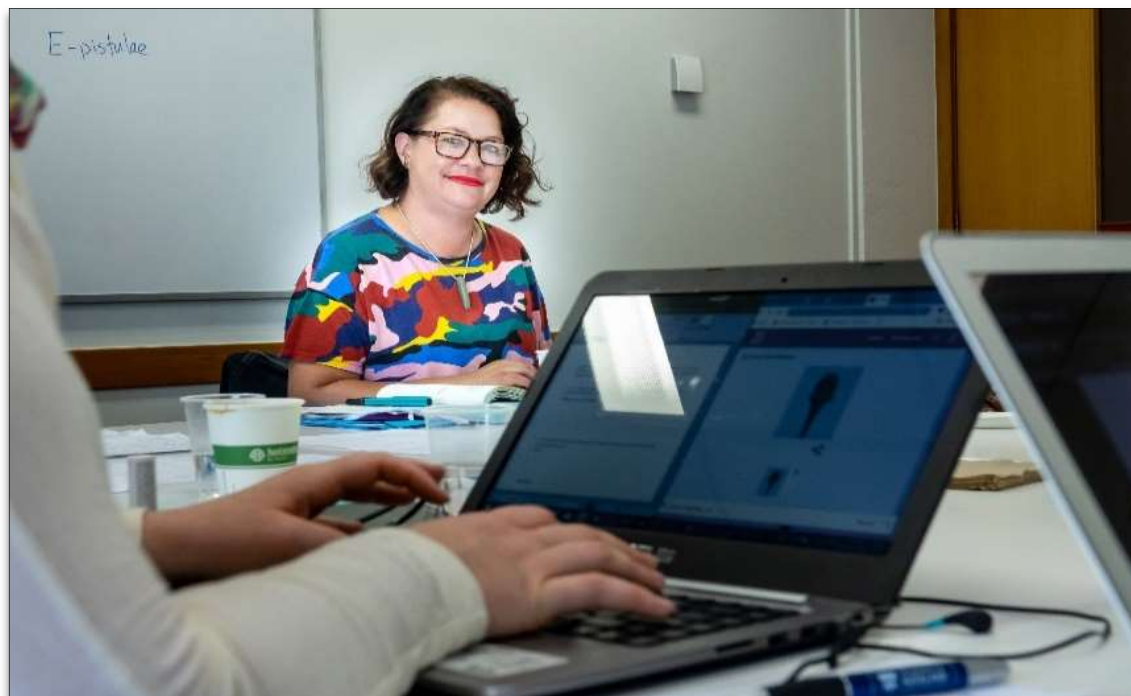
- Stage 1 student, 2018

⁶ L. Pihama, F. Cram and S. Walker, 'Creating methodological space: A literature review of Kaupapa Māori research,' *Canadian Journal of Native Education*, 26.1 (2002): 30–43.

One of my goals as a teacher is to help create lifelong learners. Students should come into class curious, and leave with a thirst for more. I want them to think globally and locally, to be conscious of Māori worldviews, and able to talk about these with confidence using Māori terminology while also seeing the international dimensions of indigenous knowledge. Their written assignments are designed to evaluate what they know already, and to push them into the unknown.

Supervision is a critical component of my Teaching Portfolio. Since receiving my PhD in 2012 I have worked with students to complete one PhD thesis, 14 MA theses, 23 Honours dissertations and four research essays. As I know most of the students from undergraduate classes, I am able to tailor my supervision style to their needs such as providing extra writing support or pastoral care. My interactions with them reflect key values of rangatiratanga (empowering students to take responsibility for their own learning) and manaakitanga (hosting them in informal meetings).

Recently, I have also begun to examine local and international PhD theses, and local MA theses. Good communication is vital. I maintain contact with my graduates and support them in their future careers, for example, by writing references for jobs or scholarships, and referring employment and other opportunities to them. Supporting my students to become future colleagues is a significant and satisfying part of being a teacher, especially in relation to Māori students.



4. Mahi Whanaungatanga – Working together, facing forward

Sharing teaching practices with colleagues is critical. They are my pedagogical stakeholders. I look one way to those teaching in high schools and in the other direction to those in universities. I have disseminated my practice as a teacher at a range of indigenous and art history conferences with the goal of seeking feedback and forming a community of interest:

- 2019 ‘Teaching Museums Studies in Aotearoa New Zealand,’ Museums Aotearoa Conference, Wellington;
- 2018 ‘He maunga teitei: Teaching Māori Art as a Baseline for Art History in Aotearoa today,’ New Zealand Art History Teachers Association, Auckland;
- 2017 ‘Roundtable: What’s a Māori to do? Teaching and Innovating Māori History in the Turbulent Present,’ with Aroha Harris and Hirini Kaa, New Zealand Historical Association Conference, Christchurch;
- 2016 ‘What is Māori Art History?’ Art Association of Australia and New Zealand, Canberra;
- 2016 ‘Plenary: Why I don’t come to conferences like these,’ Art Association of Australia and New Zealand, Canberra;
- 2013 ‘Kia ora te whanau! Going global with Māori Art History,’ Native American Art Studies Association Conference, Denver.

Writing these papers requires reflection on my practice, and has moved my teaching from the classroom into very public spheres.

***Nāu te rourou, nāku te rourou, ka ora te manuhiri* – with your food basket, and my food basket the guests will have enough**

A key aspect of my practice is supporting students on and off campus. One of my most successful strategies is to facilitate Rā Tuhi Whakaruruhau / Writing Retreats. Since 2013 these have been run on-campus at least once a year for post-graduate students in Art History and Museums & Cultural Heritage,

These are very popular with at least 10-20 students attending. I act as kaitakawaenga/facilitator on the day. Each student comes with their own ‘mobile office’ (including laptop, earphones, and research material) and a writing goal that they would like to achieve that day.

During the day the boundaries between Honours, MA and PhD students break down. Students talk about their projects’ highs and lows, and make research connections. At the end of the day we go around the room and talk of what we have achieved (or not). My goal is to create a cohort of students to support each other. In these retreats students join a community of writers, myself included. The Rā Tuhi Whakaruruhau are now a cornerstone of my practice as a teacher and supervisor, with students now expecting at least one a year.

5. Mātaki – Taunaki – Evaluation of Excellence in Teaching and Learning

Course and teaching evaluations: Overall satisfaction with the course

| | Mine | Art History | Arts | UOA |
|-----------|------|-------------|------|------|
| 2016: 233 | 5 | 4.10 | 4.22 | 4.07 |
| 2016: 333 | 4.88 | 4.10 | 4.22 | 4.07 |
| 2017: 238 | 4.33 | 4.49 | 4.17 | 4.02 |
| 2017: 338 | 4.50 | 4.48 | 4.38 | 4.24 |

233/333 *Gender, Ethnicity and Visual Culture (re-named in 2018 The Art of Gender Politics)*.
238/338: *Mana Taonga: Tradition and Innovation in Māori Art*.

Evaluating my practice. *Waiho ma te tangata e mihi* – Let someone else sing your praises

Being responsive to student and peer assessment is core to my practice as a teacher. I use a four-point evaluation strategy:

1. Self-evaluation
2. Informal student evaluation
3. Formal summative student evaluation
4. Peer evaluation.

Self-evaluation: After each lecture and tutorial I evaluate the class, noting what worked, what did not, and what needs following up next time, e.g. new images or resources. These are filed for next time, and the practice ensures that the classes are stronger each time the course is taught. I also note class dynamics, and adjust the lectures accordingly; for instance, when there are more Māori and Pacific students the material is re-framed to bring their histories into case studies.

Informal student evaluation: In the first few weeks of a course I ask the students to name one thing they have enjoyed so far; one thing that would do differently; and one thing they are doing to take responsibility for their own learning. I ask that they be ‘honest but not brutal’. Usually the feedback asks for me to speak more slowly (I get impassioned and tend to speed up) and put more text on the slide (which goes against my natural inclination to let the art have its own space on the screen). It is often revealing when I read what some of the students are doing to take responsibility for their own learning. Next time we meet I provide a summary of their responses, and my actions to address them. I also sometimes post this online. This type of evaluation is important to demonstrate that I am always learning as a teacher.

The context of teaching is also critical – the March 2019 Christchurch shootings affected students in different ways. At the start of the next class I talked to the students about the events, and the nature of secondary trauma - noting that our reactions to events can be powerful despite no direct involvement. I spoke about grief and how individuals process events differently,

observing that there is no time limit for this. To assist, I gave students an extension with upcoming assignments, and encouraged them to see me if they needed extra support.

In a later course evaluation, one student noted I was the only one of their lecturers to have addressed the Christchurch tragedy, and several thanked me for enabling them to take time and space to heal. It is a critical part of my practice that I remain flexible and supportive of students especially in times like these.

Formal summative student evaluation: The University's evaluation system is a useful gauge for my praxis as a teacher as it enables me to not only see how the course has gone this year, but also in relation to others in my department, faculty and across the university. The most important aspect of the evaluations is the open-answer section, where students can comment on the course as a whole. While I endeavour to create a well-engaged and coherent curriculum, these evaluations also assess students' understandings of the assignments and whether they see what I try to deliver.

Peer evaluation: I have been peer-reviewed twice in the past seven years. In 2013, Helen Sword of our Centre for Learning and Research in Higher Education came to visit a class based in the wharehau. Her feedback surprised me. I expected her to see a dynamic learning environment, but instead she responded that I needed more student engagement. This made me reflect on my pedagogy, and I saw that this did not align with my teaching philosophy.

In 2015, I undertook another peer review, this time by a colleague from Art History. The class was designed to be hyper-engaged, with students drawing themselves in a Surrealist style, with the drawings shared. The initial feedback commented: 'I really enjoyed your lecture today ... [it] flew by and the students had lots of memorable things to take with them, along with a sense that learning is fun Very precious! I also like the structure and rhythm, and I would also adopt some techniques that you have pioneered for my own teaching.'

The final review included the following assessment:

Ngarino comes across as enthusiastic, energetic, approachable and spontaneous ... students are attentive and engaged ... I got the impression that they are a group that enjoys being together and sharing ideas ... Rather than reproducing the old pedagogy where the lecturer speaks for one hour with little engagement with the class, and which can produce a kind of lethargy or passivity, Ngarino instead enabled a sense of agency for the students in their learning, encouraging them to go out there and find out new things .

6. Ka huri – and the world turns

My teaching is reflexive and personalised. I challenge myself to make every interaction with students mutually enjoyable and productive. I want students to continually question art, its makers and context, and do so in a supportive and creative environment. They should leave my classes feeling a little braver, more confident and much more passionate about learning. I see my classroom presence, my culture and the values of my tipuna as hallmarks of my teaching. I like to think that students see me first and foremost as a Māori academic, and my pedagogy as one which is clearly located in the reo, tikanga and mātauranga of Aotearoa New Zealand. Knowledge is aspirational and achievable for them all.

He mana tangata, he toi whakairo – human dignity springs through artistic endeavour



