

# InSEA 34<sup>th</sup> Congress

Melbourne  
10 July 2014



- ◎ The see-saw of visual arts in early childhood education: Are we up, down or somewhere in between?

Picture credit:  
<http://citygirlinthecountry>

## Pepeha

- ◎ Tēnā koutou katoa
- ◎ Ki ngā maunga o Moehau oku maunga
- ◎ Ko Waihou te awa
- ◎ No Thames ahau
- ◎ Ko ngāti Pakeha te iwi
- ◎ Ko Helen Wrightson ahau
- ◎ Tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā tautou katoa



Context theme: How do we address/contest/maintain arts education in diverse contexts?



**Contexts to consider:**

- My context
- Current context of early childhood visual art education in Aotearoa/New Zealand
- Recognising, promoting and maintaining indigenous visual arts in an early childhood

**My context**



- Previously an early childhood teacher
- Currently lecturer – Bachelor of Teaching (Early Childhood Education)
- Doctoral student

**AUT** POSTGRADUATE

## Doctoral studies research

### ◎ Part one:

#### Methodology:

- ◎ Genealogy
- ◎ Using discourse analysis
- ◎ What discourses influence early childhood visual arts pedagogy?

### ◎ Part two:

- ◎ Teacher observations
- ◎ Interviews about their philosophies and practice

## United Nations Committee

- ◎ “on the Rights of the Child announce the adoption of an official document, or “General Comment” (GC), that clarifies for governments worldwide the meaning and importance of article 31 of the Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC)” (International Play Association, 2013, p.1).

## Article 31

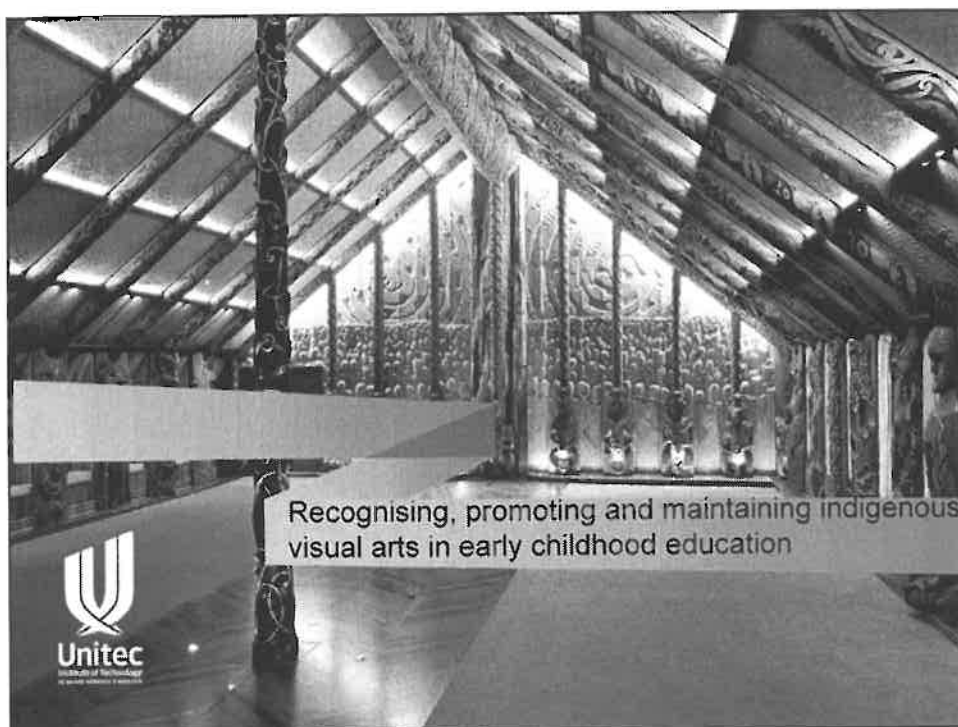
- ⦿ Been considered the “forgotten article”
- ⦿ It now “ensures that **States Parties recognize the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities...and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts**”  
(International Play Association, 2013, p.1)

The evolution of visual arts pedagogy and influence of philosophical and theoretical perspectives on the discourse at the time has been reviewed (McArdle & Piscitelli, 2002; Terreni, 2010 & Visser, 2005)

- ⦿ Teacher-directed approach - rote art
- ⦿ Developmental based
- ⦿ Child-centred approach
- ⦿ Movement to socio-cultural orientation
- ⦿ critical theories
- ⦿ And, Kaupapa Māori

Movement towards socio-cultural theories influencing visual arts pedagogy has been acknowledged but there is still evidence of "developmental, progressive education and psycho-analytical theories still" dominating practice in Aotearoa (Visser, 2005, p.1).

- o These theories also influence debate about the following dichotomies:
- o "process versus product,
- o academic versus non-academic,
- o integration versus segregation of the arts,
- o free play versus adult-direction, and
- o play versus work" (Wright, 1991; Ritchie, 1999; Gunn, 2000, cited in Visser, 2005, p.1).



## Conference concepts

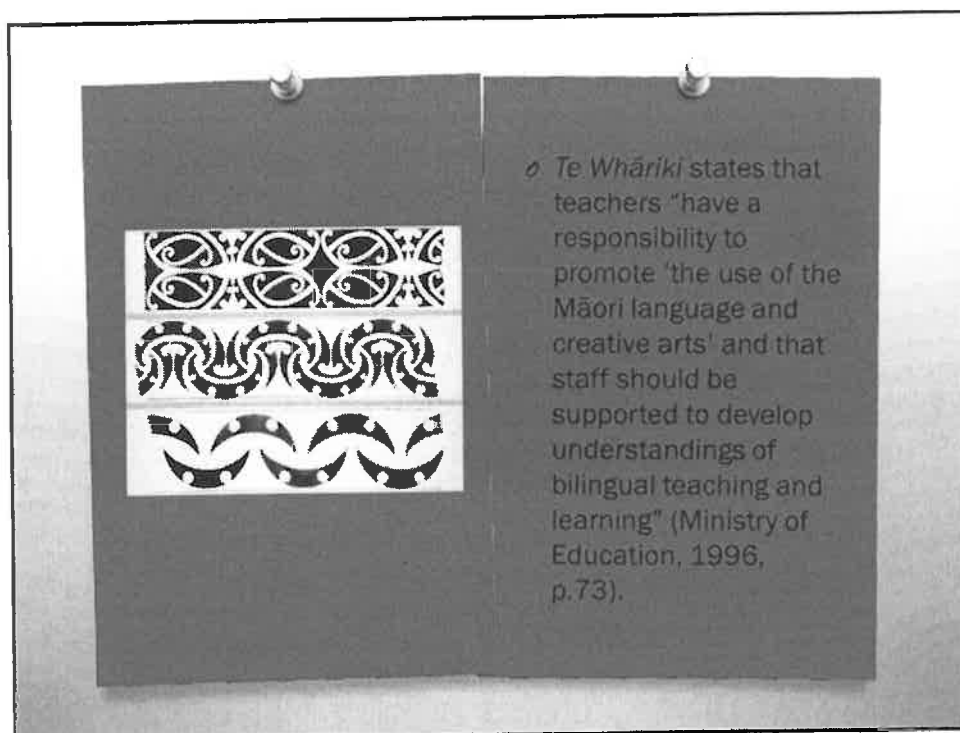
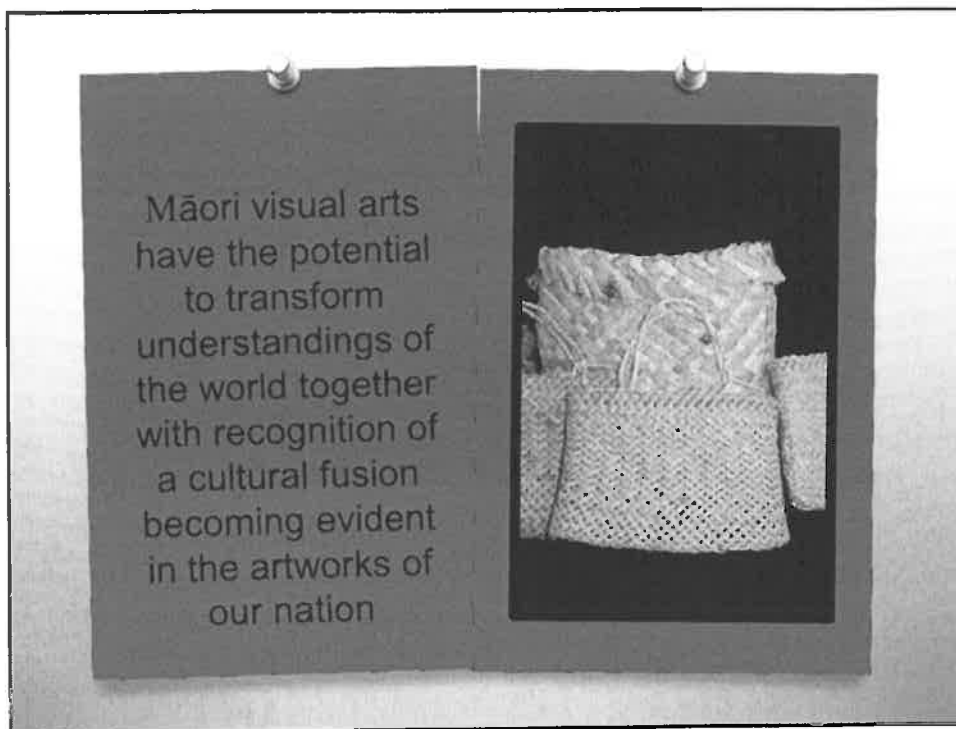
- o Indigenous visual arts
- o Relationship to ancestors – way of knowing, being and doing
- o Tangata whenua: people of the land
- o Emphasis on culture
- o Communal ideas
- o Real learning – field based training
- o Visual art 'events' - disturbance

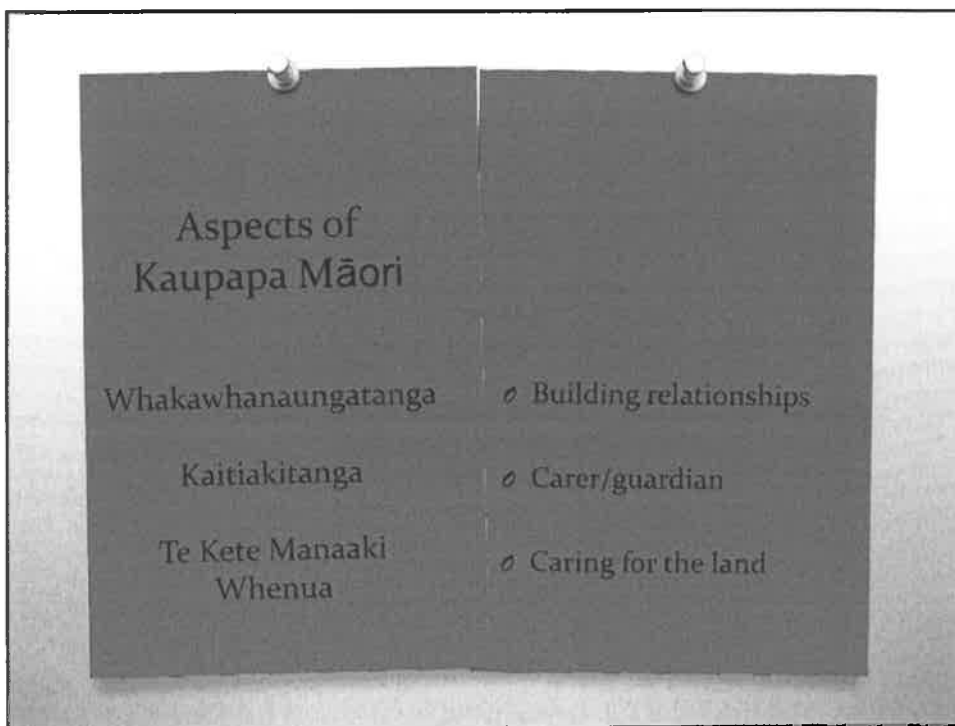
## Chapter 2:

Ngā taonga tuko iho  
– Māori visual arts  
and cultural fusion:  
studying authentic  
engagement

Collaboration with  
Yo Heta – Lensen:  
the promotion of  
ngā toi ataata







## Making connections between nature and symbolic representations





Promoting sustainable practices through the use of ephemeral art experience



Students recreate images they have sketched when out in the natural environment using clay



"In this way, tamariki of Aotearoa can also appreciate the influence of Ranginui me Papa-tū-ā-nuku by expressing their experience, interpretation and representation of the world through visual arts."  
(Wrightson & ...)

“The rich kōrero and whakapapa (narratives and histories) contained within Māori art are evident in the patterns and the rhythms created in the kōwhaiwhai rafters, whakairo carvings and the tukutuku (lattice panels)” (Hindle, 2002, cited in Wrightson & Heta-Lenson, 2013, p. 13).



### Creating a pou

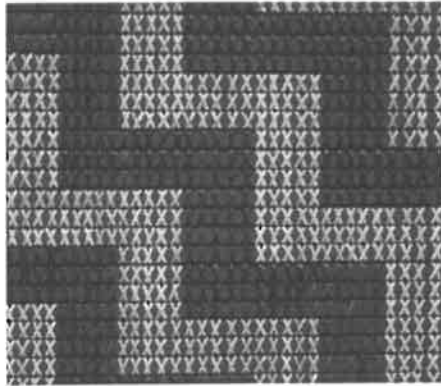


The carved panels in the wharenui

They tell the narratives and histories of the iwi/hapu/whānau

Students depict their stories through the creation of their own pou

## Poutama



Detail of a Tukutuku Panel in the Field Museum of Natural History



Have the potential to assist in knowing the child, their family and culture

o Visual arts have an important place in early childhood programmes as they “engage our senses, capture our imaginations and record our memories” (Wrightson & Heta-Lensen, 2013, p. 13)



- ◎ Teachers of Aotearoa/New Zealand are urged to recognise, promote and maintain indigenous visual arts in an early childhood context and demonstrate commitment to symbolic, visual and oral literacies of Māori (Ministry of Education, 1996).

## Thanks

- ◎ To the students who allowed me to use their images in this presentations
- ◎ Image of my grand daughter, Willa
- ◎ Yo Heta-Lensen for working in collaboration with me
- ◎ Thank you for listening

## References

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