

# **An agent for change: A legacy of dance education in Aotearoa**

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## **Abstract**

Thirty-one years on from the founding of the National Diploma of Contemporary Dance (which is currently the Unitec Bachelor of Contemporary Dance—School of Performing and Screen Arts) this reflection celebrates the legacy of dance educator and eco-choreographer Alison East. Initiated by a panel presentation at the *Leap Symposium* held at the end of 2019 at The University of Otago, in Ōtepoti/Dunedin, the panel also marked the thirty years celebration of the Unitec Bachelor of Contemporary Dance and the cessation of the Dance programme within the School of Physical Education, University of Otago. My input to this panel focused on the unique contribution to dance education that Alison East fostered in Tāmaki Makaurau, Aotearoa in the late 1980s and early 1990s. This personal written reflection delves into the currency of East's pedagogy in today's context; its beginnings, the position and relationship of the school to the global scene, its visionary concerns for land, place and a more than human<sup>1</sup> and *more than dance* positioning, with vanguard approaches to dance education and the embodied legacy of dance training that survives in a community of practitioners touched by East's pedagogy over the years.



**Figure 1: Ali East Video still, Hargreaves Street studios, School of Contemporary Dance, 1994**

## Introduction

Six months after the *Leap Symposium in Ōtepoti* we have just emerged from staggered phases of lockdown in Aotearoa, in response to the Covid-19 pandemic that has swept across the world. For a large part of 2020, going to dance classes in a mutually physical location hasn't been possible. We found ourselves in a new, radical situation. We had to become inventive and experimental about how we gather to practise dance, remotely and distanced from one another. Alison East's argument for conscious, embodied and democratic methods for creative practice seems like the precise attention that is needed in the uncertain times we found ourselves this year. "The freedom to express change, to allow radical decisions, to work with uncertainty and to change plans in order to better serve the common endeavour (or, the overall performance) suggests an alignment with active democracy" (East, 2016, p. 179). The values that Ali brings to the practice of choreography were manifested in the skills that we developed as resilient full-time dance students in the mid 1990s at the National Diploma of Contemporary Dance. Through the practice of improvisation and choreography, we learnt how to both read and be able to respond to social, creative, spatial and environmental problems in

real time and in radical ways, not only relying on the discourse of choreography and the body, but also drawing on other performance disciplines, using text, objects and humour holistically in a whatever-it-takes approach for the survival-of-the-moment (or the performance). Ali's eco-somatic approach to dance and her interest in 'situated' and 'translocated' practice seems more crucial in 2020 than ever before (East, 2020a). In this reflection I look back to my roots in tertiary dance education as influenced by Ali's radical and intuitive approaches to a tertiary programme in the late 1980s. I walk backwards and in spirals, first reflecting on a recent class that Ali led in Tāmaki Makaurau and then looking back to the first impulses and context of a pedagogy in dance education that was established in the late 1980s and how we circle back to the currency of these ideas as vital to life and the everyday in the political, social and environmental milieu that we find ourselves in the year of a global crisis.

### **Standing in and with a forest of bodies**

On the 7th of August 2020, we have surfaced from the confines of our homes and into our cities and communities after being in lockdown during the global pandemic of 2020. Alison East, the founding director of the National Diploma of Contemporary Dance (now the Unitec Bachelor of Contemporary Dance), leads a class at the Old Folks Association in Gundry Street on a Friday evening. This is part of the Movement Exchange, a collaborative space to share movement practices that is organised by Slovenian dance maker Neža Jamnikar. It must be about twenty-three years since I have participated in a class led by Ali. The Old Folks Association has been a hub for alternative classes and performances since the late 1990s. Situated behind Karangahape Road, the community hall has been run on the smell of an oily rag by a core group for decades. This is a place of diversity and community, having been the gathering place for local elderly, a group of pipers as well as many avant-garde and experimental performance and music events over the past two decades.

I arrive early and receive a welcoming hug from Ali. Since we both parted at the completion of my training in contemporary dance and choreography at the end of 1996 and also the end of Ali's tenure as co-director of the National Diploma of Contemporary Dance (1989-1996) our paths have continued to intersect. With resonating research interests in choreography, arts practices, social and environmental politics in academic and artistic contexts we continue to connect over the years at dance research conferences as far away as the United Kingdom, and I stay with Ali when in Dunedin on research adventures. Such is Ali's relationship with

many of her past students and why throughout this reflection I speak of Ali by her shortened first name, as this is how she is known best. Local musicians Nigel Gavin (playing electric guitar) and Derek Tearne (playing the bass guitar and numerous other shakers and objects such as an electric toothbrush) have also just arrived. Ali has always insisted on live music for class. Others filter in, and as people materialise I can see the *whakapapa*<sup>ii</sup> emerging in the room. Among them are choreographer, artistic director and filmmaker Morag Brownlie, who was in the founding year of the contemporary dance programme; my colleague and dance educator, performer and choreographer Claire O’Neil (with her two daughters), who followed Morag by a year; dance educator Claire Battersby, another early student of the school; dancer Megan Smith who was in the year before me (1994 intake); and myself (1995 intake). I was among the last cohort that Ali taught when she was co-director for the school, pursuing a path of dance-making, performing, interdisciplinary practice, dance education, somatic practice and, in more recent years, practice-led research in academic and creative contexts. Also attending are some of the year one students from the Unitec Bachelor of Contemporary Dance 2020. Alongside them, choreographer, performer, artist and designer Charles Koroneho, who is the Discipline Leader for the degree programme in 2020. In total there are about fifteen or more of us dancing together in the same space. This in itself seems a significant act in the midst of Covid-19, 2020.

As we begin the class, the familiarity of Ali’s practice and pedagogy surfaces out of the cellular memory of my body; the regular improvisation sessions that were part of the curriculum during my dance training at the National Diploma of Contemporary Dance live on in my bodily memory. I began this journey with Ali in the last independent studio in Hargreaves Street, College Hill in Auckland, in 1995, just before the programme amalgamated with Unitec and shifted location to Carrington Road.

Look around you and notice the other people in the room

Take a moment to stand still

Listen to your breath and the sounds coming from inside your own body.

(Excerpt from Instructions for (re)remembering (#1), Wood, SEAM 2011, The Drill Hall, Rushcutters Bay, Sydney, Australia. September 2011, in Wood, 2015, p. 139)

Led by Ali’s score, the class begins, and we find a place to stand. Ali asks us to stand together, to find a way of standing in this space as a community of bodies.

This is a choreographic, political and social act. The connections between Ali's work and my own materialise before my eyes, as I recall my own choreoauratic headphonic scores "Find a place to stand. What is it to stand? To make a stand. To stand on your own two feet" (Wood, 2014, excerpt from sound score). Interdisciplinary artist and dance academic Dr. Alys Longley also discusses the politics of standing from a somatic and political position in conversation with Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen (Body Mind Centering) and Olive Bieringa while the later were both in Aotearoa for a workshop. They discuss the action of standing up in relation to an embodied practice. Bainbridge Cohen contributes to the conversation, "everybody should be standing up, it's political. It's important that we feel that this work can be shared" (Bainbridge Cohen et al., 2017, p. 4). Longley goes on to discuss the politics of somatic practices, the way this kind of practice creates space for being present and for listening and being an active part of a community.

We become a forest of bodies.

Excerpt from class at Gundry Street, August, 2020 (East, 2020b).

Ali invites us to bring the sounds that the musicians make into our bodies, to allow the sound to settle in different places, the heel, the elbow, the belly. The musicians tune into our movement, and we move into their sound making. This is 'plant-listening'; we listen with every cell (East, 2020b). We 'graze' though the space, being respons-able to the sounds, to space, the planes and the surfaces (East, 2020b). Orchestrating our perception through listening, our focus shifts internally and then externally, oscillating between both. A question that I have asked in my own research practice and that I recall as I move in Ali's class: what possibilities emerge if we foreground listening in choreographic practice? What if we reconsider the materiality of the body and its 'fleshy contents' as 'acoustic chambers?' (Neumark, 2001, p. 89). As artist Norie Neumark suggests in her article *The Well-Tempered Liver*, this may give voice to the organs, toning and pitching through the vibrational field of tension and release in our bodies. Neumark tunes into notions that are also explored in Bainbridge Cohen's system for analysing and understanding developmental movement patterns where organs are expressed through a chorus of energy, movement and consciousness (Bainbridge Cohen, 1993, pp. 1-4). In my own practice of choreoauratics,<sup>iii</sup> the vibrational action of sound entering the body through both ears and headphones dismantles our fleshy borders. Likewise, the vibrating waves of sound released by the musicians in this class comingle body and space; fleshly, guttural and breathy, shifting vibrational fields from one body to the

next, the materiality of the bodies meet the corporeality of the building that we inhabit. We listen through skin surfaces, through walls, through our bones, our organs and the architecture of the space. We're invited to extend our cellular range to the other bodies in the room. We tune into others' bones, breath, rhythms and heartbeats. We become cellular; a community of cells and bodies.

Ali's process of working with improvisational scores as a way of tuning into, not only the body but the ecosystems beyond our bodily range resonates in my current practice in somatically informed choreography. It exists, not only at an embodied level but it also lives on in my choreoauratic methods-through use of voice, sound, choreography, bodies, place and listening. Remnants of Ali's pedagogy endures and coexists in many of the bodies and practices of those who trained at the Contemporary Dance School of New Zealand (1989-1994) during Ali's time with the programme. The archives of this time exist, not just in the decaying videos, the photographs, the tangible and material remain of this period at the school, but most significantly in the cells of the bodies of past students that have embodied these somatically informed processes in their practice, and who now spiral out into the fabric of our dance culture in Tāmaki Makaurau and beyond. Current Artistic Director for Atamira Dance Company, choreographer, writer and cultural ambassador, Jack Gray recognises this in conversation with Ali. Gray and I are peers, both beginning our practice with Ali in 1995. Quoted in Ali's paper, Gray notes "Casting my mind back, the imprint of experiences ... still inform my (now) ever-evolving, global perspectives as a practitioner to this day" (Gray, in East, 2020a, p. 8).

## **Walking backwards and in spirals**

This reflection is written from my experience of how the pedagogies expressed in this training programme became the foundations for my own practice-led research trajectory in dance. This path has manifested a career that is persistent in its speculation of how and what dance is in the arts ecosystem and particularly in Aotearoa. This particular positioning of myself as an artist with an embodied practice emerged from the way diversity in culture and practice was nurtured while training in dance at undergraduate level at the School of Performing and Screen Arts (I came from a background in design). The embodied memories speak through my choreographic practice, on the page, mediated by technology in sound and screen-based outcomes and from my body in somatic education and choreographic practice. The pedagogy that Ali argues for aligns with my current concerns in social and site-based choreography, the impact of new media, choreoauratics and performance. My

continued interest in drawing on the philosophies of place, language, the body, technology and somatics attempt to unsettle the power of the spectacle as a capitalist regime. I propose that rather, we move towards a soft politics of the poetic, ephemeral and matrixial, exploring different ways of coming together, in life and in art.

In class with Ali, we practise being human, and being animal, we become poetry. We practise the resonance of our bodies in space. We learn about taking responsibility for a space, for a moment in time. Tuning in and listening *is* a practice; we test the moments we should make a move, make change, speak up, step forwards or step back. In the way we come together as practitioners we deepen our attention to notice how communities work. This personal eco-political agenda of Ali's was a strong force in her classes and in the course design at the National Diploma of Contemporary Dance. She introduced students to the concept of being in relationship with the broader socio-cultural and artistic community, and the whenua of Aotearoa. Ali refers to Ira Shor, who suggests that critically reflective teaching and learning brings students towards consciousness of their connection with the world and better integration of a sense of self in relation to other (Shor, 1987). Ali suggests this relationship building is a fundamental concept within an eco-choreography pedagogy (East, 2019). "The notion of an ecological as opposed to an ego-centered self is one that acknowledges self in relation to others and to the environment" says Ali (East, 2019).

## **Collective consciousness**

Beyond this personal agenda, Ali worked collaboratively with a number of significant local practitioners working in dance related fields in the late 1980s to develop a contemporary dance course for New Zealand that considered all of the aspects that might be required to create training specific for contemporary dance and dance making at the time. Their mandate is mentioned in Ali's paper and included:

... encouraging the development of personal creativity and artistic process through the theory and practice of the contemporary dance discipline and its related arts...

... reflects the social, cultural and geographical environments of Aotearoa, New Zealand.

... holistic programme is designed to develop a disciplined and sensitive human being and dance artist. (East, 2020a, p. 6)

The course emphasised somatic-based practices which strengthen technical capacity, expand expressiveness, reduce incidents of injury, provide a base for personal practice, and with a concern for interdisciplinary awareness and practice.

At roughly the same time that the School of Contemporary Dance<sup>iv</sup> in Aotearoa was being conceptualised and founded, on the other side of the planet in the Netherlands, the Centre for New Dance Development emerged. This later became the European Dance Development Centre, in Arnhem. Ex-pat kiwi dancer and Body Mind Centering (BMC) practitioner Olive Bieringa trained at the European Dance Centre. Ali met up with Bieringa while travelling in Europe in the early 1990s. She recognised a remarkable synergy in the pedagogies between the two schools. Common to both schools were a concern with developing the whole artist over the technical dancer, integration of somatic techniques and prioritisation of choreographic development, creative collaboration, cultural context and identity, a strong focus on process or method over outcome, forging new ground and fostering the kind of thinking that was starting to emerge and would be seen as the beginnings of practice-led research (Fabius, 2006, pp. 2-3).

### **More than human ecological bodies**

In my opinion, unique to the programme in Aotearoa was its strong recognition of our relationship as humans *and* artists to place. For example, choreographer and dance artist Lyne Pringle speaks of her relationship with the land in her work and in response to Ali's philosophies for dance education. Pringle writes of her sense of turangawaewae<sup>v</sup> (place to stand, and sense of belonging and connection to the land): "I have been shaped so strongly by the landscape here—physically, emotionally, mentally and artistically. The land is the life-blood and the older I get the more important it (the land) becomes" (East, 2014, p. 110). Specific to our position in Aotearoa, we might also say that this connection to our landscape comes from the roots of our indigenous language. In te reo we come to understand land differently. 'Land', in te reo<sup>vi</sup> is whenua<sup>vii</sup> which also means 'ground', 'placenta' and 'together' (Mead, 2013, p. 15). A Māori world view loosens the borders of land and body, also undoing a binary and colonial construction of our relationship to the world towards relational and postmodern ways of understanding. In the age of the Anthropocene, through dance practice and education, we might cultivate attention to a political ecology of things.

In a previous journal article for *Dance Research Aotearoa*, Ali seeks to understand these connections to place, surveying a wide variety of older and younger

Māori, Pacific, Asian and Pākehā dancer/choreographers. When asked to describe a generic New Zealand dancer, they respond with words such as earthy, gutsy, physical, ambitious, fearless, warrior spirited, multi-talented and grounded, a robust physique, strength and agility, hardworking, unrelenting, dedicated, cultured ... aware of culture, emotional, expressive, and passionate (East, 2014, p. 109). Ali identifies this responsiveness to *being* in Aotearoa as a kind of ‘participation in an ecology of place’ and as “somatic empathy” which she suggests as “our human attempts to participate with the shapes, forms and energies of/as nature” (East, 2014, p. 108). Another of Ali’s students from my year, Associate Professor and choreographer Karen Barbour, also recalls her childhood as largely connected to the land and as a fundamental influence “wandering remote areas in the bush and neighbouring high country farms” (Barbour, 2020).

Political theorist and post-humanist Jane Bennett calls for the cultivation of “a patient, sensory attentiveness to non-human forces operating outside and inside the human body” (2010, p. viii). Bennett’s thinking resonates with Ali’s ecological and democratic practice towards the self as always in relation to others and the environment. This also resounds with early ideas of somatic practice such as Glenda Batson suggests whereby somatic practices share this notion of an ‘ecological body’ and the body is always in relationship with the environment (Batson, 2009, p. 5).

Through taking a more than human position, Bennett’s and Ali’s thinking move us towards ideas and processes for relationality. Ali speaks of her own methodologies as “co-operative, liberatory processes” that “shift in emphasis from product to process and from separateness to ‘network’”. She suggests that the “simultaneous fostering of interdependence and co-operation” combined with independence and individuality offer sustainable skills and knowledge that “are relevant to everyday life” (East, 2019). Ali’s intuitive rationale for liberatory learning in the early days of the National Diploma of Contemporary Dance (1989-1996) brought together philosophies that attend to place, to culture, and that lean towards democracy and postmodern thinking.

The practitioners and artists in the late 1980s and early 1990s who helped to shape the curriculum and contributed to the programme were responsive to the times. This was seen in the diverse demographic of students in that first decade, the socio-cultural-ecological landscape, the political climate and the burgeoning contemporary dance scene in Tāmaki Makarau as well as nationally and internationally. Diverse and radical approaches towards the mechanics of the body and movement were emerging out of Europe, the United Kingdom, the United States

and Japan simultaneously, and these ideas naturally began to inform people working in dance and movement related practices in Aotearoa. As mentioned earlier, it appears that the course design for the National Diploma of Contemporary Dance (1989-1996) resonated with the curriculum at the Center for New Dance Development in the Netherlands concurrently, both unique in their global position for progressive thinking in dance education at the time.

Fundamental subjects that were taught during this first stage of the programme and formed the weekly curriculum while I was at the school between 1995-1996 were contemporary technique, improvisation, Skinner Releasing, contact improvisation, choreography, dance history, ballet, yoga, Alexander Technique, muscle and bone (also known as mind and body—a method that evolved from Min Tanaka's Body Weather Training in Japan). The course design was influenced by the professional community and included guest choreographers, short workshops as well as one-off blocks in specialised topics (in no order of significance) music and voice, site-specific dance, interdisciplinary practice, Body Mind Centering, Feldenkrais Method, workshops in Pasifika dance, kapa haka, capoeira, butoh and physical theatre. Ali was also highly successful in keeping up with international innovations and was successful in drawing in many notable international practitioners. In my time I recall working with Joan Laage (butoh), Nancy Stark Smith, ex-pats Carol Brown, Sue Healey and Jeremy Nelson. Ali recalls having also brought over Sarah Pearson, Cathy Ward, Sandy Kurtz, Sally Banes, Joan Skinner, Larry Lavender and Deborah Hay<sup>viii</sup>.

Influences on the curriculum from the USA (as well as other international locations such as Japan, the UK and Australia) came directly through many of the contemporary technique teachers who had trained or spent time working internationally or visited Aotearoa regularly from off-shore. Techniques were mostly release-based and influences came from artists such as Erick Hawkins, Paul Taylor, Steven Petronio, Susan Klein, Joan Skinner, many of the artists working at Judson Church such as Trisha Brown, Yvonne Rainer, Steve Paxton, Nancy Stark-Smith, DV8 Physical Theatre from the UK, Min Tanaka's Butoh based Body Weather training from Japan, among many others. Ali reflects that a major conviction for the course design was that no one style would dominate. This eclectic and intuitive approach to the curriculum was also seen at the Centre for New Dance Development in Arnhem. Steve Paxton comments on the shifting curriculum at the school in the Netherlands, commenting that the intensity of the practice and the quality of the teacher was

more important than offering a particular style and as such the curriculum was influenced by who was teaching at the time (Fabius, 2006, p. 3).

Ali's vision to enable the development of personal creativity and artistic process through the theory and practice of the contemporary dance discipline and its related arts meant that she was often bringing in artists from other disciplines to work with the students (East, 2019). We participated in workshops with practitioners in related fields such as physical theatre and architecture. We created short one-minute compositions (a framework that Ali adapted from Skinner Releasing) making choreographic responses to Haiku poems. Ali mentions the short choreographic animal projects in the class at the Old Folks Association in August 2020. Inadvertently, we enter an informal conversation about post-human ideas while simultaneously I remember this as one of the early choreographic tasks in the new studios in Carrington Road. The culture within the programme, as I recall it, was holistic, personal, community driven, experimental, collaborative, rigorous and progressive.

In the year that I began studying at the school we amalgamated with Unitec. We moved from the old TV studios in College Hill in central Auckland into the current purpose-built studios on the old Carrington Hospital grounds. Becoming part of Unitec ensured the school had a financial future, but it also meant it entered a new phase of compliance with larger institutional management strategies. While the founding of this programme was supported with Ali's input and unflinching vision it was a collaborative venture comprised of multiple voices. The team of artists and educators that had developed the initial pedagogy for the school had based this on both the perceived needs of a new generation of dancer and the strengths of local teachers. "It was important to us," says Ali, "that students were versatile—could work with any of the current choreographers—and that they each developed their own unique choreographic voice and style" (East, 2019). Talking to Ali, there was also a clear idea of establishing a strong point of difference to the other main dance training institute at the time, which was the New Zealand School of Dance. The conception of the school was motivated by a lack of places to train in contemporary dance in Aotearoa. Looking back to the vision of the school in its infancy, it seemed radical at the time.

## **Agents for change**

What resonates for me most as we approach the end of 2020, is the currency that Ali's pedagogy holds today. In this post-human era of uncertain times and amidst

global pandemic and ecological imbalance, Ali's eco-choreographic approaches endure and have evolved to be even more vital today.

Ali invites, "Arguably more than the other arts ... the dance artist experiences the world sensuously, emotionally and physically. ....matching, morphing, shaping and re-shaping the space. His/her rhythms derive from an internal pulse and from the visual and felt rhythms of the landscape" (East, 2014, p. 101).

Notice your own soft fleshy surface in relation to the architecture of the city, and the water of the Leith. The body and the city merge, the bones scaffold, the fluids flushing, networking, creating passages to pass through.

(Excerpt from sound score from *E-bodies: Listen up, tune in, slow down and play on*, Wood, Eastwest Somatic Symposium, The University of Otago, February 2013), in Wood, 2015, p. 165)

As 2020 comes to a close and in the face of a precarious future it seems more crucial than ever before to reposition and relocate our dance practices, to consider new ways of coming together to enable community and diversity, and to become responsible to the way our bodies meet the land and others. Bennett suggests the "The living body is itself the ongoing provocation for inventive practice, for inventing widely varying practices, for using organs and activities in unexpected and potentially expansive ways, for making art out of the body's capacities and actions" (Bennett, 2010, p. 20).

The class at the Old Folks Association in August 2020 culminates in a 'ritual pit' of living bodies, a circular improvisation format where all of the participants in the class are responsible for the space and what occurs in it. This is a format that Ali established in the founding years of the school through her improvisation classes. In a discussion we have at the end of this process, local dancer, choreographer and designer Rachel Ruckstuhl-Mann invites us to consider Ali's way of working with improvisation as a way of emulating and practicing community. We've talked about how we've experienced listening, tuning, knowing when and how to act, to move, to interrupt or to go with. As conative bodies align in a ritual pit, Bennett authenticates this democracy of all matter in her offer to create(ing) the conditions that move us away from individualistic, ego-centred and human-centric instrumentalism (Bennett, 2010, p. xiii).

Ali's work in improvisation, eco-politics and collaborative and interdisciplinary exchanges in her many years in dance education develops "critical consciousness,

democracy and awareness” and is articulated through dialogue and practicing together (East, 2019). This is experienced in fluid and evolving studio conversations that are explored through cross-disciplinary improvisational frameworks. This practice had a firm place within the curriculum at the National Diploma for Contemporary Dance (1989-1996) and is as vital today as it was at the inception of the Performing Arts School in the late 1980s. One of Ali’s closing comments in class at Gundry Street: If it’s boring, or you don’t like what’s happening, then it’s up to you to make a change (East, 2020b).

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<sup>i</sup> More than human refers to theories of the post-human— a position that advocates for a shift in thinking that goes beyond human-centric thinking and looks towards new materialism, acknowledging the vibrancy of all matter as in the writing of Jane Bennett (2010).

<sup>ii</sup> Whakapapa is a traditional Māori method for genealogy that 'starts with the beginning of the cosmos and spirals our from there. [ ] Humans emerge very late in the piece, and are linked by kinship with all other life forms. Rangi, Papa, Tangaroa, Tāwhirimātea, Tāne-mahuta— all these life forces have their own independent lives before humans start interacting with them' (Salmond & Warne, 2020).

<sup>iii</sup> Choreoauratics— is a term that converges critical spatial practice, social choreography and prosthetic listening (Wood, 2015).

<sup>iv</sup> The course became the National Diploma in Contemporary Dance (1989 – 1996) but was also known in its founding years as the School of Contemporary Dance, in 1995 becoming part of The School of Performing and Screen Arts and in 1997 became the Unitec Bachelor of Contemporary Dance within The School of Performing and Screen Arts.

<sup>v</sup> Literally tūranga (standing place), waewae (feet), it is often translated as 'a place to stand'. 'Tūrangawaewae are places where we feel especially empowered and connected. They are our foundation, our place in the world, our home' (Royal, 2007).

<sup>vi</sup> Te Reo Māori is the indigenous language of Aotearoa, New Zealand

<sup>vii</sup> Whenua is the Māori word for land. It also means placenta, 'All life is seen as being born from the womb of Papatūānuku, under the sea' (Royal, 2007) and as binding the body and land together conceptually (Mead, 2013, p.1 5).

<sup>viii</sup> In this recollection of the curriculum there are of course gaps. I haven't listed all of the lecturers and teachers as I am bound to leave some people out. In writing this reflection I identify the need for a larger project that might archive and notate the history of the programme.