Research papers   |   Artículos de investigación   |   Artigos científicos

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**Abstract | Resumen | Resumo**

Though short, Aotearoa/New Zealand’s history is rich and holds an abundance of knowledge preserved in the form of songs, beliefs, practices, and narratives that inform this country’s unique place in the world as well as the identity of its people. This paper observes that with migratory history and a heritage of colonization, the people of Aotearoa/New Zealand express three identities: indigenous, colonial and migrant, all with a claim to appropriate representation in the country’s built fabric. It discusses the current state of knowledge by looking at the history and architectural tradition manifested in Auckland, the largest and fastest-growing city in Aotearoa. It adds that further research is required to understand and develop an appropriate methodology to address Auckland’s growing multiculturalism, which lacks adequate expression.

Aunque breve, la historia de Aotearoa-Nueva Zelanda es rica y encierra inefable conocimientos preservados en forma de canciones, creencias, prácticas y narraciones que explican el lugar único de este país en el mundo, así como la identidad de su gente. Este artículo de investigación muestra que, con la historia de las migraciones y de la colonización como patrimonio, la gente de Aotearoa-Nueva Zelanda expresa tres identidades: indígena, colonial y migrante, que reclaman una representación adecuada en el tejido urbano. Se plantea un debate en torno al actual estado de los conocimientos mediante el estudio de la historia y la tradición arquitectónica, que se pone de manifiesto en la ciudad de Auckland, la ciudad más grande de Aotearoa y la que más depreisa crece. Se sostiene que hace falta seguir investigando para comprender y desarrollar una metodología adecuada para abordar el creciente multiculturalismo de Auckland, que carece de una expresión adecuada.

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**Biography | Biografía | Biografia**

Pedro P. Palazzo  
Pedro is an architect, architectural historian, and historic preservationist. He graduated in Architecture from the University of Maryland (2003) and completed his Ph.D. in Esthetics and Semiology of Architecture at the University of Brasília (2010), where he has taught architectural history and theory since 2015. He is a former Coordinator of Museums and Historic Preservation in the Federal District (Brazil) Culture Department (2016) and visiting scholar at the University of Coimbra, Portugal (2019–2020). His research areas include traditional architecture and urban form in Portugal and Brazil, and he interfaces between classical and modern architectural theory.
Embora curta, a história de Aotearoa-Nova Zelândia é ainda assim rica, e detém uma abundância de conhecimentos preservados sob a forma de canções, crendas, práticas e narrativas que caracterizam a posição única deste país no mundo, bem como a identidade do seu povo. Este trabalho de investigação revela que, tendo como herança uma história migratória e de colonização, o povo de Aotearoa-Nova Zelândia expressa três identidades: Indígena, Colonial e Migrante, que reivindicam uma representação apropriada dentro do tecido construído. Inicia uma discussão em torno do estado actual do conhecimento, através do estudo da história e da tradição arquitectónica que se manifesta na cidade de Auckland, a cidade mais e com o crescimento mais rápido de Aotearoa. Argumenta que é necessária mais investigação para compreender e desenvolver uma metodologia apropriada na abordagem ao crescente multiculturalismo da cidade de Auckland, que carece de expressão adequada.

Introduction

This paper joins the ongoing discussion between architects and historians, both cultural and academic, agreeing that Auckland has since its origins possessed qualities encouraging people to gravitate toward it. As a result, it is today one of the world’s most culturally diverse and dynamic cities, yet at the same time it lacks an interpretative appreciation of its rich past, perhaps because almost half of its population was born elsewhere. This picture of Auckland as a place of migrants and immigrants reflects a fascinating and dynamic past shaped by the spirit of adventure, a tradition of voyaging and narratives rooted in a multicultural reality. As Stone explains,

* Twenty-first-century Auckland is a city of considerable cultural diversity. It is well to remember that although Auckland, as we know it, was a European creation, it had its very beginning a mixture of peoples (Stone 2001: 286).

Consequently, Auckland is a "new home" for many of its citizens whose roots lie in their place(s) of origin and who lack a sense of belonging to this new place. This also means that Aucklanders are united in their migratory journeys to their new home, and have employed certain means of relating to it collectively.

With that in mind, we offer three initial observations. First, the architectural tradition of Aotearoa* New Zealand has three identities: indigenous, colonial and migrant; second, each asserts itself by manifesting its narratives; and third, all three identities have a claim to appropriate representation in its built fabric. Auckland, the fastest-growing and most diverse city in Aotearoa, is chosen as a case study. Our study aims to recognize and analyze patterns, techniques, theories, and methods used by these three identities to establish their "place" within the built fabric of the city.

This paper is divided into two sections. The first will look at Aotearoa/New Zealand’s history and tradition and discuss early indigenous architectural traditions, followed by the development of Maori and colonial architecture as well as post-war architecture. The second will discuss the translation and continuity of tradition seen as manifestations of placemaking in the built environment. The continuity of tradition will be considered through traditional building, traditional craft techniques, and art.

We use Te Reo Maori language to illustrate the importance of the tongue in the culture and tradition of Aotearoa. The richness of Te Reo goes far beyond what appears in our paper; for more on this, see the Glossary of Maori Architecture by Dr Deidre Brown, taken as a guide to translate Te Reo here.

Aotearoa/New Zealand: history, tradition and architecture

The first human contact with the islands of New Zealand seems to have been made in the mid-1200s by Oceanic people descending from a place called Hawaiki in Polynesia. They named their newfound land Aotearoa: Land of Long White Clouds, on account of the large white clouds they saw drifting over the landmass. The indigenous oral tradition of preserving and passing on knowledge tells us that several fleets of canoes voyaged to Aotearoa in 1200-1300 BC from Polynesia (Brown 2009: 20). These early inhabitants formed tribes with identities linked to the waka* that they navigated in. Their traditions were based on their collective knowledge, the experiences of their voyage, and their challenges and achievements. Their communal bonds were further cemented by the obstacles they faced in order to survive after landing on the shores of Aotearoa. They developed a culture of their own, initially like that of Polynesia. But it evolved with their ability to adapt to the unique geographical and ecological features of their new homeland.

Early indigenous architecture

A culture unique to Aotearoa became evident between 1500 and 1800 AD (Brown 2009: 20). This was a response to the presence of unprecedented environmental challenges as well as the availability of new resources and building materials which shaped Māori society and subsequently its architecture. Early accounts of vernacular architecture report semi-permanent dwellings whose inhabitants often moved from one place to another in search of food (Brown 2014). These dwellings were organized in groups of approximately 10 houses, each occupied by a single family (Fig. 1).

Houses could be round, rectangular or oval. They had a wooden frame covered with reeds such as raupu (bulrush), toetoe or nikau palm leaves, and sometimes other materials such as bark. The earth floors were covered in tough flax mats, and the only furnishings were beds made of finer matting laid over fern leaves (Brown 2014).

This architecture typology relates to the Polynesian roots of Aotearoa’s early architectural tradition, with an important link between the waka canoe and the whare* or fale*, as “the ‘upturning’ of one [is] claimed to be the origin of the other” (Brown 2009: 24). In the Samoan version of this story, the...
wealth and status of a tribe to neighbors and enemies (Brown 2014). Kaitaia (Fig. 3) on the other hand, were light-framed shelters for food preparation, built using timber and lashings and lined with rāpopo and harakau. Construction involved many tasks divided between the men and women of the community, with men performing the heavy jobs such as preparing, dressing and transporting timber logs, carving, and thatching. Women wove the kākahu panels, first collecting totara and harvesting rāpopo, then treating, coloring and drying the fibers. According to historical evidence, the term Māori identifies the indigenous people of Aotearoa, though those people did not identify themselves as Māori yet. As Deidre Brown explains: It was not until the arrival of Abel Tauman in 1642, and of subsequent explorers (…) that Māori were forced to view their society as a single body that was indigenous to this land. This was a slow process, which took around 200 years to complete (Brown 2009: 36).

Māori was the term used by the people of Aoteaoroa at this point in history to identify themselves collectively and vis-à-vis newcomers, whom they named Pākehā. The architecture discussed so far belongs to the Māori. We can conclude that the first thing the people of Aoteaoroa inherited from their early ancestors was the tradition of voyaging, adaptability and a communal sense of place as identity. Now we transition into a new era of identity and architectural tradition, as Aoteaoroa begins to be known as New Zealand.

After subsequent expeditions by various European explorers, Captain Cook of Great Britain (1728-1779) ventured to Aoteaoroa in 1769 and again in 1773 and 1777 (NZ History 2019). The land was claimed in the name of Queen Victoria as New Zealand after the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi – New Zealand’s founding document named after the place in the Bay of Islands where it was first signed on February 6, 1840 (Fig. 4). The Treaty is an agreement in Māori and English made between the British Crown and about 540 Māori rangatanga. However, the validity and purpose of this document have been a source of conflict over the years due to differences in translated meanings as well as its nonobservance by the colonial government (New Zealand Ministry for Culture and Heritage 2017). The details and use made of this treaty continue to be debated, with an ongoing dialogue over the nature of the relationship between Māori and Pākehā.

Toward the end of the 18th century, the New Zealand Company began recruiting settlers in order to establish the British colony of New Zealand. The tradition of voyaging to a new land continued as migrants came to the shores of Aoteaoroa from Britain and its colonies in Africa, India, the Caribbean, Australia, and many allied countries. An introduction to new architectural types, styles and resources as well as social behaviors and religious beliefs brought by the British and their colonial cousins began to influence the Māori. This was a time of growth, stimulated by inspiration, availability of new resources and adaptation, but also of conflict, fueled by resistance, segregation and war.1 Māori architecture

Architecturally speaking, the diversity of thinking and resource present at this time gave rise to new architectural types in the Māori tradition: wharenui and hākāri. The Māori combined the mōnū of the pitōka and the open plan of the wharenui with an increased footprint to produce the wharenui, a flexible space used for congregational purposes such as inter-tribal meetings and large communal gatherings organized to discuss the issues of the day, such as the presence of Christianity, increasing numbers of Pākehā migrants, land sales to Pākehā, or the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi (Brown 2009: 38). Our next section relates a case study on Te Niko Koutahintanga Manawo and a specific type of wharenui better known as a whare whakairo (Figs. 19 and 20). Although the terms wharenui and whare whakairo both refer to meeting houses and can be used interchangeably, there is a key difference between them: The word whakairo means design or pattern, as well as to ornament with a design or pattern so it can be used to refer to carving, woodcarving, painting and tatting… a whare whakairo is a house or a building transformed by the power of whakairo wharenui and wharenui in this case means carving (whakairo raika), woven panels (tukutuku) and painted patterns (kowhaiwhai) (Skinner 2016: 16).

The structure of wharenui and whare whakairo is very similar to that of wharepum, as discussed above. But the wharenui is bigger in scale, and in the case of the whare whakairu, meticulous detailing and ornamentation is involved before the building process can begin, because the carvings are structural in nature. The carving, weaving and painted patterns are not arbitrary but rather a language communicating ancestral and communal narratives.

The Māori meeting house is a particular place where Māori feel a special sense of belonging and connection to the land, their ancestors, to history and to each other (Skinner 2016: 14).

The building can be thought of as a human lying face down – the carvings on the gable at the front of the meeting house are the ancestor’s face, arms and fingers; the porch is the brain, the door is the mouth and the window as the eye; carved and painted elements on the roof inside the building are the spine and the ribs, and the interior pillars in the centre of the meeting house are the heart… “this visualization of the house as an ancestor… brings together its individual members into a united organism sharing a common life and heritage” (Skinner 2016: 16-17).

Hākāri feasting stages facilitated communal and inter-tribal gatherings (Fig. 5). Unfortunately, there are no surviving examples of this structural type because hakāri were used only temporarily. They were post-and-lintel assemblies built with timber and flax lashings as multi-level platforms that could be conical or pyramidal in form (Brown 2009: 39). The host tribe would erect the structure to welcome their guests and showcase their wealth and prosperity, and dismantle or abandon it after use.

Architecture of the 19th and 20th centuries

As mentioned, the New Zealand Company began recruiting settlers in Britain and its colonies after the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi. But residential architecture with the presence of Christianity, increasing numbers of Pākehā migrants, land sales to Pākehā, or the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi (Brown 2009: 38). Our next section relates a case study on Te Niko Koutahintanga Manawo and a specific type of wharenui better known as a whare whakairo (Figs. 19 and 20). Although the terms wharenui and whare whakairo both refer to meeting houses and can be used interchangeably, there is a key difference between them: The word whakairo means design or pattern, as well as to ornament with a design or pattern so it can be used to refer to carving, woodcarving, painting and tatting… a whare whakairo is a house or a building transformed by the power of whakairo wharenui and wharenui in this case means carving (whakairo raika), woven panels (tukutuku) and painted patterns (kowhaiwhai) (Skinner 2016: 16).

The presence of the colonial cottage is still evident (Fig. 7), however, and the rāpopo house has not survived due to its flammability, as demonstrated in the 1842 fire of Wellington, which consumed 57 rāpopo houses in 30 minutes and led to a decline of the type. In the 1860s the villa became a prominent aspect of the townscapes of New Zealand’s emerging cities and eventually turned into the...
New Zealand villa, an adaptation of the pre-existing type to the local context. Initially mere replicas of British villas, they soon began to express regional characteristics such as a smaller footprint, limited ornamentation, use of timber as a primary building material even when tradition required brick or stone (in which case the facades were aesthetically presented as stone), and the addition of a porch or veranda.

The British structures were often of grand proportion in comparison to the NZ copies but possessed the same notable features including a rectangular footprint, hipped roofs with small eaves, symmetrical facades and regular windows. The NZ models usually added ground-floor verandas and had a central hallway with regular windows. The NZ models usually added ground-floor verandas and had a central hallway with regular windows.

A variety of architectural styles were explored at this time, including the Georgian villa (Fig. 8), the Victorian villa (Fig. 8), Renaissance revival (Figs. 8 and 11), Gothic revival (Fig. 9), Queen Anne, and the Edwardian villa. While the dominant colonial architecture was British in style, other national styles were also present, namely Welsh (Fig. 12), Danish, Irish, Bohemian, German, French, Spanish (Fig. 13), Indian (Fig. 10), and Chinese. Their presence contributed to the culture, economy and urban ecology of New Zealand's cities, and to the styling of villas.

The New Zealand government's involvement in expanding settlement by establishing new industry and infrastructure in the early 1900s led to the development of affordable housing for workers, better known as New Zealand state houses (McKay 2013). These can be identified as detached suburban dwellings, with a weatherboard or sometimes a brick finish, a tiled roof and standardized windows: bigger windows with three panes and smaller ones with two.

The prevailing state house style originated [...] from Garden City planning with the houses generally adopting an appearance derived from the English Cottage style and you can even spot a bit of the Georgian [style] in some porches (McKay 2013).

The early state house may be identified stylistically as a villa or bungalow (McKay and Stevens 2014: 14), whereas the medium-density housing and multi-story apartment blocks of the 1940s-50s show the influence of post-war émigré modernists, such as the famed Austrian architect Ernst Pletschke (McKay 2013). This demonstrates the diversity and adaptability present. The initial focus was on Pākehā developments and “assimilation” of Māori in Pākehā society. This mindset did not change until the 1960s, when an influx of Pacifica migrations and the concentration of Māori in city centers made the government consider mainstream state housing also for Māori (McKay and Stevens 2014: 94).

The most interesting aspect of state houses is that many of them are not government housing; they just look like it. This is because other agencies such as Māori Affairs and the Education, Forestry, Police, and Public Works departments also produced affordable housing based on plans approved by the Housing Division. The government also offered cheap loans for housebuilding based on pre-approved plans (McKay and Stevens 2014: 12). Hence these houses are similar in design, construction, and materials. The state house, much like the New Zealand villa, became a familiar feature of New Zealand cities over time and is considered a part of their architectural heritage. The Lighthouse sculpture discussed in section two is an example of one.

Neoclassical style was adopted in the civic sector with enthusiasm and it remained popular well into the 20th century (Shaw and Morrison 1991: 41). The Neoclassical Auckland War Memorial Museum designed in 1929 by the practice Grierson, Aimer & Draffin, featuring New Zealand armed forces in action during the First and Second World...
seeking refuge here. The built environment responded to Auckland and across the country. In post-war New Zealand, the built environment shifted rapidly from low-rise suburban housing, especially in the 1920s (Era Designs 2016). It became the dominant style for commercial and institutional structures in the 1930s, followed by Art Deco (Figs. 16 and 17) in the 1930s, which remained popular until after the Second World War. The town of Napier has the most spectacular collection of Art Deco buildings in New Zealand. At this time, the built environment responded to competition between architectural traditions and urban environment and public art are presented as evidence of the continuity of tradition over the country’s landscape. In this section, case studies in the field of architecture, landscape design/urban environment and public art are presented to demonstrate the evidence of the continuity of modernism, expressionism and brutalism, diversity and connection with the natural landscape. In this section, case studies in the field of architecture, landscape design/urban environment and public art are presented as evidence of the continuity of architectural tradition in Aotearoa/New Zealand, prompted by the need for appropriate representation and a sense of identity.

Continuity of tradition in Aotearoa/New Zealand architecture through traditional building, traditional craft techniques, and art

Much diversity of culture, technology and architectural tradition was brought to Aotearoa/New Zealand through the process of colonial settlement. Research has highlighted placemaking by continuity of tradition over the country’s history, guided by key narratives of commemoration, biculturalism, diversity and connection with the natural landscape. In this section, case studies in the field of architecture, landscape design/urban environment and public art are presented to demonstrate the evidence of the continuity of architectural tradition in Aotearoa/New Zealand, prompted by the need for appropriate representation and a sense of identity.

As mentioned, a wharenui meeting house is used for communal congregation and for this reason it is always sited at the heart of an urban complex, facing an area – an outdoor public space. The complex is called a marae. Te Noho Kotahitanga Marae has a total of four buildings: Ngākau Māhaki, the wharenui, wharaki*, maanaki, and pukenga (Fig. 20), the Māori school designed by Rewi Thomson (1953-1961) in 1993 (Brown 2017). Ngākau Māhaki is the newest addition to the complex and reinforces the Unitec Institute of Technology’s commitment to the Treaty of Waitangi by ensuring a Māori presence in its research and teaching facilities.

The position of this whare results from several factors. First, it faces the rising sun. The wharenui are traditionally oriented toward the rising sun on burial, and as a wharenui is seen as the living embodiment of an ancestor, most of them have this orientation (L. Grant, personal communication 2021). The whare was also set out following a careful study of the site, with its natural features, flora and adjacent buildings. Thus it faces Te Wai Umaroa or Wairaka, a natural spring revered by local Māori. According to legend, a woman named Wairaka caused the spring water to burst out of the ground on stepping her foot on the spot while complaining of thirst. Māori see water as precious because it comes out of the ground on stamping her foot on the spot while complaining of thirst. Māori see water as precious because it comes out of the ground on stamping her foot on the spot while complaining of thirst. Māori see water as precious because it comes out of the ground on stamping her foot on the spot while complaining of thirst. Māori see water as precious because it comes out of the ground on stamping her foot on the spot while complaining of thirst. Māori see water as precious because it comes out of the ground on stamping her foot on the spot while complaining of thirst. Māori see water as precious because it comes out of the ground. When I was preparing to choose the actual site, I obtained an aerial photograph of the general site. On closer inspection there were several features such as clumps of manuka and shadow play (...) that suggested an entity lying prone on the site. I decided to formalize that idea and create a manuka form that would incorporate the adjacent structures and literally become a body occupying the land – discernible overhead if one was to use Google Earth.

It took eight years to materialize the vision of Ngākau Māhaki. Construction began by sourcing appropriate timber from a site 350 km south of Auckland (L. Grant, personal communications 2021). This was followed by the dressing of the timber members of the whare and then by meticulous carving. Each element is inscribed with whakairi: detailed carvings that represent selected narratives of communal identity and diversity. While traditionally Māori, the carvings tell stories about both Māori and non-Māori, thereby taking a step toward multiculturalism and creating a space for all to belong in.

I wanted to do something new, not just decorate a box, but create a showcase for our culture that’s unique in the world. To do that I had to turn the clock back 100 years, look at the traditional techniques, and then work out how modern construction methods could be used to complement those techniques, given that this wharenui is maybe three times bigger than the classical model (Unitec 2019).

Not every carving and pattern can be detailed here, but we may briefly describe the back wall, central pillar and front wall. The back wall features carved figures standing in front of an infinite multitude and a koru* pattern in the background. This koru is the alter ego of the takarangi that appears on the front wall, representing a swirling constellation-like presence of the heavens (L. Grant, personal communication 2021). The figures are structural elements carved in wood and the pattern on the wall is woven using flax which was then vacuum-pressed and affixed to the wall. This is ari* and the figures are ancestors of the local iwi standing in front of us. We see past and present sharing the same space, with the wall acting as a thin veil between us and those who came before us.

The poutokomanawa*, the central pillar, represents the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840. It is engraved with sections of the treaty and features two intertwined climbing vines symbolic of two communities coming together to create a new society (Grant and Unitec 2009). The treaty divides the whare into two parts. Narratives that took place before the treaty was signed are presented between the back wall and the poutokomanawa, and narratives taking
A carved pou in Auckland showing Mt. Albert and the neighboring suburbs.

where it stands vis-à-vis the chronology.

are communicated through the way each is carved and where it stands vis-à-vis the chronology.

The interior of the front wall features a carved map of Auckland showing Mt. Albert and the neighboring suburbs. A carved tahau* and a takarangi* on the wall is revealed as the map peels off in the center. The takarangi relates to the swirling tides of Waitemata Harbor. It reminds us that our history is infused in the landscape around us. It is still evident at the present moment and if we were to simply “peel off” suburbia, this knowledge would be revealed (L. Grant, personal communication 2021).

The design and structure of this whare features a combination of traditional building techniques, hand-carvings and modern media, employed together with a post-and-lintel system and traditional lashings. It is worth noting that this whare does not use modern joinery, and that all the carved elements are structural in nature. Every pou* was carved before installation. Each one is different, representing a narrative in the story of this whare and its people. Similarly, each rafter was painted with traditional patterns before installation. The internal furnishings combine traditional woven interior panels and modern textiles. Carving and weaving patterns are a language in their own right and have been used as a means of preserving and passing on knowledge in the Māori tradition for centuries.

Crafting techniques: Kopupaka Reserve, Auckland (2016), by Ithmus Group

An example of continuity of tradition through traditional crafting techniques in Aotearoa/New Zealand today is the Kopupaka Reserve – a project making an eloquent gesture to Māori culture through design. Designed by non-Māori but with respect for Māori through engagement with them, the project is a case study using the Te Aranga Māori Design Principles. These are a set of outcome-based principles founded on intrinsic Māori cultural values and designed to provide practical guidance for enhancing outcomes for the design environment.4

Te Aranga seeks to foster culturally appropriate responses to the built environments of Aotearoa/New Zealand, that are strongly grounded in the concepts of place and belonging intrinsic to Te Ao Māori, the Māori world (New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects 2016).

The Kopupaka Reserve is designed by Ithmus Group, a design studio said to be “guided by a set of principles and ideas that remove the boundaries between the disciplines of architecture, landscape and urban design, and based on deepening the relationships between land, people and culture” (Ithmus 2016). Kopupaka Reserve is a new form of a park including streams and wetlands in its design – a 22-hectare landscape made up of five stormwater wetlands (Frearson 2016). By including ecology, culture, community, and engineering in its design, it illustrates how urban growth and ecological restoration can combine to create new public space and develop a sense of place informed by Māori cultural values.

The Wetland respectfully acknowledges Māori Culture through design in translating the concept of hinaki (eel baskets), which innovatively takes on the architectural form of a river–wall system (Frearson 2016).

The overall design refers to the history of the site – traditional activities and a history of food-gathering. The tradition of weaving is acknowledged and referenced, along with the architectural form of a tuna* gathering basket (Frearson 2016). A series of timber structures around the edges of three ponds create forms that weave their way across the landscape (Figs. 22 and 23). The landscape narrative subtly but evidently guides the design. The innovative use of the cell-wall system of interlocking timbers (Fig. 24) is a simple yet sophisticated design response inspired by both elements. Thus the form adopted for the structural features of Kopupaka Reserve is a creative and cultural design expression – a continuum with the past that links architectural tradition into a cohesive narrative (Auckland Design Manual 2016). Here a subtle referencing rather than an overt application of a more traditional Māori design vocabulary is used to express belonging and place, still ensuring that Māori stories are told.

Research has shown that both Māori and colonial settlers began building in Aotearoa with pre-existing architectural types adapted over time to the context of their new home, in a commemoration expressed by the architecture discussed thus far. Later generations of New Zealanders growing up with exposure to both indigenous and colonial identities express appreciation for both and have produced works that promote a bicultural identity. The two artworks discussed below are examples of this growing biculturalism, redefining commemoration.

A Māori Figure in a Kaikaitaia Chook (1967), by Molly Macalister, and Lighthouse (2013), by Michael Parekowhai

Continuity of tradition: A Māori Figure in a Kaikaitaia Chook, by Molly Macalister

Research has shown that both Māori and colonial settlers began building in Aotearoa with pre-existing architectural types adapted over time to the context of their new home, in a commemoration expressed by the architecture discussed thus far. Later generations of New Zealanders growing up with exposure to both indigenous and colonial identities express appreciation for both and have produced works that promote a bicultural identity. The two artworks discussed below are examples of this growing biculturalism, redefining commemoration.

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A Māori Figure in a Kaikaitaia Chook, by Molly Macalister

Our paper has recalled the journey that brought people to Aotearoa and shaped its architecture. As discussed, Auckland, on an isthmus between two coastlines, with an intricate network of inlets, springs, creeks, and wetlands, has many desirable qualities making it a popular location for locals and migrants alike. Its most distinctive landmark is its volcanic field with 49 discrete volcanos, and though many have been quarried, 30 remain well preserved. Studies of the early architectural tradition of Aotearoa show that the land began its journey on the slopes of those volcanic cones as pu sites*, and it has continued to evolve over time with an influx of migrants.

Many years of struggle have carved the way for a bicultural national identity to be publicly accepted long after the
The case studies presented show that in Aotearoa today, the typology. Our second part looked at case studies that are strongly narrative in the context of Aotearoa, which can allow urban environments to be more ethnically diverse than before (IOM 2015). But current research shows that, “we live in an era of unprecedented human mobility,” International Organization for Migration (IOM) says.


8 For more on this, see Bell, Leonard, Strangers Arrive: Emigrés and the Arts in New Zealand, 1930–1980, Auckland University Press, 2017.

9 Kidde compares the ideologies underlying pre-colonial wharenui and faps placemaking, centered on wharenui (extended family) and hapu (sub-tribe) units, with colonial placemaking, premised on the conversion of communally owned land to individual property; see Rebecca Kidde, “Contemporary Māori placemaking” in: Kevin O’Brien, Rebecca Kidde, and Langiggy Patrick Stewart, Our Voices: Indigeneity and Architecture, ORO Editions, 2019; see also Hae-A Ono Amada, “What is Māori Heritage?”, Māori Cultural Heritage Program, talk given in the Auckland Art Gallery Trust Board, 11 February, 2020; see also www.archdaily.com/business-investment/growing-business/networking-events/events/public-talks/tours/what-maori

* Glossary (Glosario) | Glossário

As guided by the glossary of Māori architecture by Dr. Deirdre Brown.

Aotearoa is the name given to the country commonly known as New Zealand, by its native people. It belongs to the Te reo language and means “the land of long white clouds.” For the purpose of this paper, the authors prefer to use both names in their work because it reminds us of the shared heritage and tradition of this country and its people.

Araí is a subliminal barrier; the facade that the recently departed must navigate to enter the spirit realm. In the case of Ngāikau Mahāri, the Araí is represented by the primary local iwi representatives who elegically stand in the path of those who desire to pass beyond.

Hākātē are feasting stages.

Hauaraki is a type of reef; native to Aotearoa.

Tahuhu is a ridge pole, symbolic of the spine of the ancestor.

Takarangi is an intersecting double spiral pattern that signifies humanity’s celestial origin born at the beginning of the Universe. Used widely in Māori carving and art, the Takarangi uses space to separate its two solid spirals; it is this space that allows us to see the spirals.

Tūī is a type of swamp bird; native to Aotearoa.

Waiata is a canoes carved out of timber.

Where is a dwelling. Fale is the Samoan variation of the word. Wharenui is a meeting house.

Wharepuni is a rectangular, gabled dwelling designed for communal sleeping.

Shelter the space allocated to food preparation.

Kow is a traditional spiral pattern featured in carving and tattooing. It refers to the appearance of a new unfurling silver fern frond.

Mana is prestige.

Māui is an ancient mythical being with a bird’s head and a human form. It is said to be the messenger between the earthly world of mortals and the domain of spirits. Māui holds great spiritual energy and is a guardian against evil. It is a popular form in carving.

Pataka is a raised and highly decorated store house.

Paua is a type of shellfish with a shiny blue-green internal shell pattern, similar to mother of pearl; native to Aotearoa.

Pou is a carved structural pillar.

Poukakamiana is a central structural pillar.

Rangatane is a tribal chief.

Raupe is a type of flax; native to Aotearoa.

Aotearoa is a type of reed native to New Zealand and build on land, and to ensure Māori culture is valued and used.

8 The difference between cultural and academic historians: Academics are “academically” accepted and credited to have knowledge on a given subject, accessible through presentations, publications and alike. With the term “cultural historians” we include Māori scholars in the conversation as qualified with extensive knowledge of the subject but who may not have any published work. Such knowledge is usually passed down within a tribe orally as lessons and techniques as well as in the form of carvings. Access to this type of knowledge can be attained by being attuned to the cultural and traditional practices of the tribe and respectfully engaging with its elders. In recent years, we have seen a new generation of Māori who have attained knowledge from their elders and are also training as researchers, academics and professionals; they are accepted and credited as knowledgeable in both worlds, and through their cultural knowledge is becoming more available to the academic world.


10 Colloquially is an ongoing issue that has impacted generations and left many feeling lost in their own country, with a story that requires another article. For more on this, see Kevin O’Brien, Rebecca Kidde, and Langiggy Patrick Stewart, Our Voices: Indigeneity and Architecture, ORO Editions, 2018. For a brief information to the mid-’80s when...


Hochstein, Gina; and McKay, Bill. 2020. Alien Subversives. Architecture Placemaking in Auckland in response to its growing multiculturalism. She has studied the history of Aotearoa/New Zealand, the theory of phenomenology, and the concepts of public space, collective memory, and migration with a view to understanding the importance of placemaking and its application in the built fabric. She is currently employed as a teaching assistant at Unitec. She is pursuing further study and aspires to lead an academic career.

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The Architectural Tradition of Ponnani, Kerala: A Historic Malabar Port Town

La tradición arquitectónica de Ponnani, Kerala: Una ciudad portuaria histórica de Malabar

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Abstract | Resumen | Resumo

Ponnani, a historic port town located at the mouth of the Bharathappuzha River on the Arabian Sea, was a prominent trading center on the Malabar coast of Kerala, India, in the 15th and 16th centuries. It is one of Malabar’s few surviving historic towns, with its heritage sites intact along with its building types, historic streets and alleys, local culture, and traditions. But some of its historic buildings are on the verge of dereliction and need immediate attention. This study attempts to convey an understanding of Ponnani, with an analysis based on field visits and existing literature. The relationship between the region’s architecture and landscape and current threats to its heritage is explored. Its vanishing traditional knowledge systems and vernacular architectural types are also discussed, in what may serve as a reference for adaptive use by future generations.

Ponnani, una ciudad portuaria histórica situada en la confluencia del Mar Arábigo y el río Bharatapuzha, era uno de los principales centros comerciales de la costa de Malabar, en Kerala (India), durante los siglos XV y XVI. Es una de las pocas ciudades históricas que quedan en Malabar con sus recintos históricos y tipologías de construcción ancestrales; sus calles y callejones antiguos, su cultura y las tradiciones de las comunidades locales totalmente intactas. Sin embargo, algunos edificios históricos están a punto de ser abandonados y necesitan atención inmediata. Este estudio pretende ampliar el conocimiento sobre Ponnani mediante el análisis sobre el terreno a partir de visitas y la bibliografía actual. En este artículo se explorarán la relación entre la arquitectura y el paisaje de la región y las actuales amenazas para el

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Vernacular settlement, Traditional knowledge systems, Built heritage typologies, Communities, Cultural traditions

Asentamientos vernáculos, Sistemas de conocimientos tradicionales, Tipologías de patrimonio construido, Comunidades, Tradiciones culturales

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