

# (Pū)oro

source of vibration



## **Pū**

the source  
an open mouth releasing  
circles of sound  
moving out  
till they are not heard  
only known

## **Oro**

the sound  
the music  
turning dirt to symphony  
moving through  
till they are within us  
only felt





Tēnā koe,

Thank you for contributing to the life of '(Pu)-oro', nau mai haere mai ki tenei wānanga, ki tenei koha mātauranga. This booklet serves as both an accompaniment to the exhibition, and a koha to those who have engaged with it and contributed pūtea and other koha. Pūtangitangi, which feature in '(Pū)-oro' are a beautiful introduction to taonga pūoro, Māori instruments of music, healing, and sound. In this guide, you will find an explanation of the exhibition itself, poetry and photography, and most importantly, a step by step guide on how to craft and play your own pūtangitangi including on how to use natural clay. Through the process of learning to craft these taonga, we engage with mātauranga, whenua, and who we are ourselves within this process. It is crucial to me as a Māori artist that our hauora and pūoro practices are demystified and accessible to our people. Therefore including a guide on how we can create our own pūtangitangi is crucial as part of our collective reclamation and hauora.

Pūoro is often referred to as music, but really it is so much more. It is the origins of sound in all its forms, it is the resonation of sound through all things until it can no longer be heard, only felt. It is a continuous mihi oro to the song that began our world. It is so many things intertwining, so many sounds that have the potential to help, to heal, to uplift, and to release. It is a music that weaves together the 'musical' and what comes before, the primal melodies and rhythms of our survival as Māori. Our sounds hidden in the music, our reo as pure sound.

The artwork, '(Pū)oro', consists of 248 pūtangitangi; small round instruments made by hand with natural clay and pigments. Traditionally (at least post war), pūtangitangi (or ukutangi, būdagidagi) were made by wāhine, often for use as part of tangihanga to help to bring on the crying and wailing for the dead, as well

as to both mimic and contain the emotions of tangi. After holding and helping, these pūtangitangi could be broken down into dirt to return to the whenua from whence they came. Over time, pūtangitangi have become an empowering taonga for many starting on their journeys with taonga pūoro, and te ao Māori. They are one of our easiest blown taonga to play, can be made easily from a natural resource without tools, and they help us to experience, release and intergrate our emotions. We make them at the river with our kids when they tire of swimming, we play them wet with mud on our faces. We make them from whenua at our marae, so we can sing our whenua into the air from our own backyards. We make them when our emotions are too deep to have words, only feelings that we can now distil into sound. Ko au te pū o te tangi. I am the source of this cry.

After it has remained in state and used as a performance object, (Pū)oro will be separated into it's 248 parts with each pūtangitangi being exchanged for pūtea to contribute to the creation of a pukapuka from my doctoral research into the use of taonga pūoro in hauora; health and wellbeing. In this way, one work of art generates another. Like how soundwaves travel out from the source, so will these pūtangitangi. The oro travelling out around the motu as each pūtangitangi is homed and sounded.

Each pūtangitangi in the exhibition has an element of living within it, te ora o te oro. For some, a wheku, for others, an eel or mokomoko slithering. They are made to live, they are made for you to develop a relationship with. When you craft your own taonga, remember to feed them your hā, and together, send out your oro. Tangi atu, tangi mai. Pūoro atu, pūoro mai.

Kā mihinui,

Ruby

# how to make ukutangi



*A guide republished with permission of Kauae Raro research collective. Photos courtesy of Kahu Kutia*

When searching for clay, streams and rivers are your best bet. In Pōneke we have lots of small clay cliffs around, especially around our roadsides. You can see the clay soil within the slips that have happened recently in the rain.

The best way to find clay is to head to the stream or the river, and search it out. Clay soil can be many colours, but often is a goldey colour or a grey. If you can find soil without lots of Hine-ukurangi's children (gravel) within it, that's a great source to use. Or, you can remove the gravel, but this will take longer and most likely won't lead to a taonga that's as smooth and usable as ones made from the more refined clay deposits. Dry clay, away from the stream, will be very fine and crumbly before wet. Wet river clay could feel hard or soft, but will be very pliable with a little water worked into it. If worse comes to worse, try it out! If it doesn't work this time, you can have another try with a different source. Here are some photo examples of the clay in its natural state in the stream we went to.



It's important to locate yourself and how you connect to the awa you are harvesting from. When making the uku taonga in this guide, we went to the Te Puni stream. This is a stream near my home, with Te Ati Awa as mana whenua. Te Puni is the name of a Te Ati Awa chief and this stream flows into the Waimapihi stream which is named after one of my Kāti Māmoē

tūpuna, Māpihi. Even though my iwi are no longer mana whenua here, I'm able to connect through these histories, and it allows me to see myself as a kaitiaki of this place for my ancestors, and for the ancestors of all who whakapapa to this place. When walking into the area, I will usually play kōauau or another taonga pūoro while thinking of this connection, as a mihi to this place and to connect and give back before I use the resources found here.



## moulding your taonga

Once you have orientated yourself to the place and its histories, and found your clay source, it's time to harvest and work the clay. For a pūtangitangi, you are going to need two roughly golf sized balls worth of clay. This means that you want to harvest about twice as much clay as you need as you will be working and refining it. You can put back what you don't use at the end, but make sure to take it in a way that will not cause any soil or banks to slip. Often if there have been slips, you will find clay soil crumbled on the ground beside them, ready for you to use without further risk to the whenua.



Then you are going to make two 'pinch pots' by pressing your thumb into the centre and moving the ball around to create a bowl shape. It's important that the edges of the bowl are even and that the bowl isn't too wide. Here is a picture to show you what you are aiming for.



Once you have your two pinch pots, it's now time to join them together to make the body of your pūtangitangi. Carefully place one bowl on top of the other so that there is a hollow space of air in the centre. Then gently 'pinch' the edges of the pot to join the two together. I've found that just gently rubbing up and down the seam can often work better. You want to keep refining it until you can no longer see the join. You will end up with a round ball filled with air that looks like this.



Now you are going to make the waha, the mouthpiece for your pūtangitangi. You will need a stick about the width of your pinkie. I find it works best if you dip the stick in water, before using it to make a hole in the middle of one of the sides. Be careful not to make a hole in the join as it might make your pūtangitangi unstable. The smaller the hole the higher the sound, the bigger the hole, the lower. But if this is your first time, about the width of your pinkie will work well. You can move the stick around to create an even opening and then tidy up any clay around the opening with your fingers. That will look like this.



# playing your pūtangitangi

If you have played pūtangitangi before, at this stage you should be able to check to see if your pūtangitangi sings... but you are going to get a little messy! Gently place your face on the pūtangitangi, side on to the hole, making a 'lock' with the right hand corner of your mouth. You are then going to make a low whistle across the hole. Sometimes this will sound straight away! But sometimes you might have to listen a bit more closely to the pūtangitangi; you will hear your note or whistle, and then you will hear one from the pūtangitangi, move your whistle closer to that note and eventually they will 'take' and you will hear the rangi of your pūtangitangi. If you're not quite getting a sound at this stage, that's ok! It will be a lot easier to practice in a few days when it's dry. You might find another way that you think about getting the sound too, which might become a way that you choose to teach others when you pass this knowledge on.

If you would like to, you could add wenewene, or finger holes so that you could have a bigger range of rangi on your pūtangitangi. To do this you need a stable twig which you are going to use to pierce the holes. You want to make sure they are not too close to waha, or they may not sound and could make your pūtangitangi difficult to play. I usually only do one or two wenewene as too many can stop it from sounding also. But over time as you make more pūtangitangi, having more, or bigger, or different styled wenewene might be something you would like to experiment with.

When making your wenewene, it's good to see where your fingers sit naturally on the instrument when you will be playing it, and base them from that

while making sure they are not too close together or too close to the waha. As before, simply wet the twig and press it through to make a wenewene, going back and forth a few times is good to ensure all the clay has been cleared. It's good to then check inside the waha that the clay from the wenewene has been cleared.

Now, tidy up any last details around the waha and the wenewene, and you are finished! Your pūtangitangi will be playable in about 48 hours if left to dry inside, and will be fully dry in about a week. Don't worry if you go to have a play while it's drying and can't get a sound! It will come right soon.

I hope that you and your new pūtangitangi form a strong relationship together between whenua, and pūoro. Being able to play the sounds of our lands is a taonga in itself and gives you another way to communicate and mihi to the whenua that you descend from. Tihei mauri ora!

# One- Uku

Uku was in the black beginning as all things

Sound what was shaking inside

The heat and sound drying you out

To form a soup plate lined with sand

The dark waters of fetal movement

Stirring you to a brown blood

In liquid spirals

Up to the surface

That Maui broke

Before you arose

As Papa

Not yet clothed

Married in darkness

To the sky that holds the air that solidifies

The very curves of you

Moulded

After the parting

Brother tawhiri taking the wetness

Along with pre-slowed son

Pūkohurangi rising

Before Tane, a sculptor too

God-hands at kurawaka  
Papa-tū-a-nuku and her redness

Formed to woman

Given sneeze of breathe

And that uku too is daughter

And that uku too is the primordial sands

And that uku too is the mother of the small stones we  
pluck from clay with our hands

Hine-uku--rangi

Rangi too not just as sky as man as father but as song

As tune that rises skyward

As songs that are plucked from air

As songs that live inside the clay

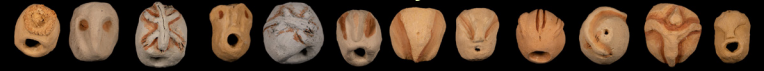
As they did

Back at the very beginning



*This poem explores the whakapapa of uku and relevant atua and pūrākau. When working in this space, I found different people would acknowledge different atua and pūrākau as the source of uku or this practice. Over time I've worked to try have a quantum way of thinking, where all of those timelines and figures can be present within each other, and within the ukutangi we play now whose rangi too was present at the beginning of this 'all time'.*

# Mihī



Ko te mihi tuatahi, Ko Rakinui rāua ko Papatuanuku, ki nga tini tamariki, ki Hine Ukurangi rāua ko Hine Ahuone.

Tēnā Koutou, tīpuna tāwhito, atua tīpuna, tenei te mihi maioha ki a koutou. Ko te mihi tuarua, ki ngā kaitiaki o te whenua, o te uku, ki te mana whenua o ngā whenua i roto te mahi toi nei, koutou te mana o te whenua. I am privileged to have been able to foster relationships with the whenua that has been used to create these pūtangitangi, as well as the kaitiaki whenua and mana whenua to whom this clay and whenua belongs. I hope that the activation of it through oro and breathe helps to keep the mauri alive, as the vibrations spread out across Aotearoa.

Pūoro tū! Pūoro mai! Thankyou to my taonga pūoro whānau, both through this particular journey, and all the others that have formed the ara to take us here. I was initially taught how to make pūtangitangi by Elise Googe, Sebastean Lowe, and Jess Kahukura of Awa Pūoro ki te Ao, and want to acknowledge the whakapapa to them and to Whanganui. Thankyou to all who have supported this exhibition and my work in te ao pūoro. To Jason and Urban Dream Brokerage, thank you for your support and your manaaki. To Taranaki, for the beautiful photos and your constant awahi. To Te Ikahoungata, thank you for creating this beautiful booklet, he taonga! As you are too. To Michelle and Dan, thanks for always stepping up to back me and what I believe in. And to all who have supported this exhibition, financially, a-wairua, a-tinana, a-hariko! Tenei te mihi maioha ki a koutou. May this work continue to resonate out into te ao, ake ake ake.