

Introduction:

“In all such qualities, those places excel, in which there is a divine inspiration, and in which the gods have their appointed lots and are propitious to the dwellers in them.”

—Plato (Rykwert, 2013, p. 43).

“Your body resonates in coordination with the grounding power of the Earth.”
Foundation quote for the project I did for the final year of my degree in 1999.

Domain:

Visual Arts: Photography and Installation.

Project:

To develop a collection of artworks that seek to invoke a feeling of divinity in my daily life, building on my established installation and mandala art practice. I am applying a post-colonial - post-modern perspective on a contemporary art practice in New Zealand. My aim is to construct a new visual for ancient belief systems whilst grounding my art practice in the current New Zealand landscape and creative environment.

Anneke's Art Practice

- My existing art practice is based around theories of resonance.
- In my early work, I created frequency patterns, comparing digital music to analogue music by way of mirrored cityscapes and mountain-scapes.
- I was fascinated with what rhythm, oscillations, and musical vibrations would look like in space.
- These processes evolved into photographic mandalas; light painting compositions creating kaleidoscopic portal like effects.
- I was exploring what human frequency or energy could potentially look like if captured.
- Ultimately leading me to investigate the mandala as a concept that embodies a portal to the divine.
- In nature, most everything occurs in rhythms, cycles, creating naturally occurring patterns, often referred to as the Fibonacci sequence or golden mean.
- I have alluded to this natural aesthetic a large part of my creative journey.
- Parallel to this, I have poked a stick at invasive frequencies such as mass media programming.
- If we are influenced by the positive power of nature then to me it seems only logical that emf's and city-based & societal frequential patterns may have a negative effect on the human psyche and our ability to feel grounded and whole.
- The next few slides I will be showing you explore past artworks and installations that illustrate these concepts.
- By presenting you with these images I like to establish an overall visual dialogue, not only of technique but also of an established visual viscosity and narrative.

Examples of Past Works

- Early light painting mandalas alluding to the human energy field. 2005
- Workbook images Ara 1997-99 - mountainscapes

- I was interested in how mountainscapes and the limestone rock formations of the Castle Hill area form a natural rhythm like aesthetic motion.
- Workbook images Ara 1997-99 - Frequencies
 - Processes of how I developed the analogue and digital imagery as well as early tapa correlation imagery.
- CPIT Degree final work, Analogue and Digital 1999.
 - Laser-cut steel creating a 2 dimensional capped amen break frequency pattern.
 - And an analogue 3-dimensional plywood frequency pattern utilising the Torlesse range as a base pattern.
- FuBar, Auckland 2002 - 2011
 - Lightbox installation which was an expressive extension of the Amen break, jigsaw cut ply with perspex backing and LED lights.
- Waterfall installation Elam midyear, White Vinyl Wonderland Elam final 2002
 - Billboard print of descending into the Melbourne underground
 - And white vinyl wonderland. A photographic exploration of heterotopic spaces in Auckland during 2002. Complete with 4 large scale lenticular panels and full rolls of film printed in ribbons exploring the cities urban culture at that time.
- Control Freq Exhibition, Workshop Christchurch 2005
 - This is a narrative alluding to mindless waste, with the name control freq pointing to frequency control via mass media. The arrangement of the installation was a take on Manhattan and the twin towers.
- Control Freq Exhibition 2005 - Blocks in detail
 - The blocks of wood were all left as firewood, leftover from the building of one home that I was renting in Wanaka at the time, I kept saving the beautiful big bits of hardwood amassing quite a collection, sanding them and painting them which led to the exhibition/installation.
- Control Freq Exhibition 2005 - Blocks in detail.
- Paradise Blocks, Webs Gallery Auckland 2008
 - These blocks of historic rimu were rescued from the paradise guest house Glenorchy whilst my partner was working on the restoration. The restored guest house has since burnt down.
 - These blocks are a far more refined take on the previous collection.
- The 12. Marquette for lightbox installation 2005
 - Although never realised this proposed installation was due to be installed in the art centre however I was unable to secure funding at the time.
 - It was a narrative on the 7 chakras or energy centres that exist within the body, with different light painting patterns in each lightbox.
 - The number 12 features significantly not only in Christian dialogue with the 12 apostles but also in Maori cosmology with the 12 heavens, as well as the 12 astrological star signs.
- Zoro Mandala print commission 2005
 - A development from the 12 collections.
- Oil painting commissions, 2015 & 2008

- So we come to this significant time.... And this is kind of speaks to why I am wanting to do this masters Bizness!
- In 2008 I along with my family suffered intense collective trauma, which was further exacerbated by my daughters traumatic birth in 2012, whereby I became super unwell with PTSD and postnatal depression. The things that had previously kept me in balance were no longer available to me, art, meditation, yoga, sleep!
- There is a definite prolonged silence then split that can be seen in my art practice.
- My paintings become super defined.
- Dark Water, lenticular imaging lightbox. Bold Horizon finalist 2011
 - And my mandalas took a bit of a dark turn
 - This is Dark Water, my entry for the 2011 bold horizon awards, a lenticular imaging print of 3 frames of water oscillations, commenting on the Japanese Tsunami, and called dark water after the english remake of the Japanese horror film with the same plot.
- Frames from Fire Fire, lenticular imaging print. Scape 2018
 - A commentary on the port hills fires.
- NZ Native Mandala Collection 2018
 - So from the next few years post children, when possible, I threw myself into the photographic Mandala process. They brought me SO much joy! This practice has been a superpower healing art tool for me.
 - The Mandala that incorporate nature are seemingly the most powerful, healing, grounding and centring.
 - With that in mind, this has become the exit from my past practices, and an entry point for the proposed Master's body of work.
 - Ultimately I would like to marry the broad aesthetic and techniques of my cumulative art practice to achieve the goals of which I am about to explain!

Masters Research Project

2020 – 2021

- Masters is an extension of my existing art practice.
- My project is to develop a collection of artworks that potentially could act as conduits to the divine in my daily life.
- I have a desire to explore whether it is possible to visually represent the serenity, peace, and insight obtained through meditation in two and three-dimensional artworks.
- Is it possible to create artworks that incorporate the New Zealand landscapes without assimilating or colonising cultural iconography and/or culturally sacred places or existing traditions that are sacred to Māori?
- Is it possible for me to create artworks that provoke and/or capture the deep spiritual connection that I feel I have with Mother Earth, our home?

Lead questions:

1. Is it possible to visually represent the serenity, peace, and insight obtained through meditation, and from connecting to nature, in two and three-dimensional artworks?

2. Is it possible to create artworks that incorporate natural New Zealand landscapes that do not assimilate or colonise cultural iconography and/or culturally sacred places?

Slides:

- Traditional Tibetan Buddhist Sand Mandala
 - The Dalai Lama refers to the basic properties of mandala as consisting of a centre, symmetry, and cardinal points.
 - “The word mandala is a Sanskrit term that means circle or discoid object. A mandala can be defined in two ways: externally as a schematic visual representation of the universe and internally as a guide for several psychophysical practices that take place in many Asian traditions, including meditation.”
 - The term is applied to any form of a geometric structure and symbol that represents cosmic energy in the physical world.
 - Artist and philosopher José Argüelles (1995) points out in his book on Mandala that “in Tibet, the Mandala has achieved its fullest and most complex development – both in artistic form and as a meditative ritual emphasising cosmic integration.”
- I am a Vipassana meditator, a traditional form of Buddhist meditation as taught by SN Goenka. My mate :)
 - The Noble 8 fold path. Or Wheel of Dharma is as shown...
 - I did my first Vipassana course during my degree here at polytech.
 - It changed everything in my art practice, shifting my output up 5 gears, and solidifying an art practice that has become a lifelong journey.
- I am also Level 4 or Master Reiki attuned.
 - Reiki is a touch-based healing system that incorporates calligraphic symbols.
- The spiritual as well as internal visual insight into the human energy system I have gained through these practices, together with traditional Buddhist mandala, have composed my understanding of the wheel of Dharma, of life, and impermanence.
- It is this cyclic symbolic matrix of eternal life force energy as it evolves through space and time, that I have spent my 25-year art practice trying to translate into visual forms.
 - And I intend to continue to visually infuse aspects of this concept into this new research and body of work.
- What is a connection to the divine?
 - If you google 'connecting to the divine' you are met with numerous self-help and spirituality websites.
 - The imagery is often contrived, reflecting inner spiritual power in a luminescent otherworldly manner, or as Tim put it to me, Corny (these were the best I could find!)
 - Is it possible to capture the feeling these images are describing in pieces of fine art?
 - And can I potentially do this in a way that it is new knowledge?

- In looking into to contemporary artists who utilise Mandala in their work I came across mainly decorative artists. None of them really going where I wish to go with this body of work.
- So I have chosen to instead to look to my artistic heroes - more than models.
- As to model myself off this lot is aiming way too high..... But I hope to involve aspects of the installation techniques and methodologies used in some the works of the following creative beings.

Olafur Eliasson

- The works aim to enhance the viewer's experience of the ordinary.
- Influenced by unique terrain and nature as an artistic material.
- Social and environmental concerns.
- Explores what we consider to be true, as art depends on how we look at it.
- I love his sacred geometric explorations.
- The infusion of ecology, awareness, community, energy, feeling present, journey, space, and structure.
 - The Weather Project. Tate Modern London. 2003 & 2020
 - Ice-Watch 2014. Bankside outside Tate Modern, London, 2018
 - Your Spiral View
 - Olafur Eliasson's 6-foot-tall Yellow atmosphere projector, in colour-effect filtered glass, LEDs, and stainless steel, is at the Marciano Art Foundation in Los Angeles. 2018
 - One Way Color Tunnel
 - Lamp for Urban Movement
 - The model room contains 450 prototypes of Eliasson's work
- I recognise the scale and technicality Olafur employs is out of my range at this point
- But I also recognise that this project is a starting point for what is essentially the next chapter in my art career.
- His work is a north star as to where I want to see myself as an artist in 20 years time.
- Him and the next artists!

Christo and Jeanne-Claude

- Environmental sculptors noted for their outdoor sculptures that often-involved monumental displays of fabrics and plastics.
- Their works force the observer to confront questions regarding the nature of art and to reconsider a particular space.
- Christo's working drawings and sketches were sold to fund the installations, his drawing technique has been influential in my own art practice.
- Christo and Jeanne-Claude desired to spark intrigue, joy and awe through their work.
- The works are not permanent, literally a blessed moment in time.
- Their work defies categorisation and recognises no limit to possibility.
 - Surrounded Islands, 1983 Miami's Biscayne Bay
 - The Gates, New York City, 2005
 - Wrapped Reichstag, 1971–95

Barry Underwood

- Interested in the impact of human engagement in natural environments.
- Interested in Ecological and social history of specific places.
- Long-exposure photographic images of sculptural structures built on-site in specific landscapes are situated at the intersection of Land Art, Staged Photography, and Minimalist Sculpture.
- His process involves a site immersion, researching and instinctively reading the terrain, and then marking the site using foreign light sources and physical processes.
- The final prints offer a sense of intrusion

Neil Dawson - The NZ context

- I had the honour in my third year here at CPIT of visiting Neil Dawson's studio
- Fair to say this was a massive influence on my aspirations as an artist.
- One thing I took away from this visit was how Dawson applied for all his public installations, with to scale models of the proposed artwork, and Every finite little detail resolved. That stuck with me.
- His work is iconically New Zealand utilising modern weather withstanding materials and locally sourced labour.
- Site-specific works
- Use of positive and negative spaces
- His interest in how drawing can work in 3-dimensional spaces
- He allows the environment to become a part of the installation

Then there is this guy!!!

- This is **Ketan Jawdekar'** Eighteen Art Installation. **The** Award-winning design 2019 of The A'Design Award and Competition is for designers, innovators and companies in India.
- I Love the mirrored planes and how they interact with the landscape, I can see mirrored sculptural creations playing a role in my potential mandala-like installations.

Methodology

Methodology wise I initially I intend to:

- Look at/research ritual objects and natural formations that speak to me.
- Research, explore, and take photographs of potential installation environments.
- Expand knowledge of my family tree, find more connections.
 - Roots are what hold us to the ground.
- Find a unifying message and focus the above points on this.

Proposed Outcomes:

- The intended outcome of this body of work is to hold an exhibition of the mandala or mandala-inspired print outcomes in whatever forms they may take, with the three-dimensional sculptural pieces.
- Plus, potentially the permanent or semi-permanent manifestation of an outdoor installation

- Ultimately the creation of small or large objects in conjunction with photographic exploration will inform the creation of the final outcomes.

Cultural referees:

The People I can call upon if I am going to places that are of spiritual or cultural significance, or if I require direction on cultural appropriation.

- Ani O'Neill. Ani was one of my tutors at Elam. She is one of the core members of a group of artists of Pasifika descent who has brought contemporary Pacific art to national prominence and international acceptance.
- Rosanna Raymond. Performance artist and poet. Rosanna is an Honorary Research Associate at the Department of Anthropology and Institute of Archaeology at University College London.
- Makere Ruka Te Korako. Co-author of Songs of the Waitaha and Whispers of the Waitaha (Makere Ruka Te Korako, 2006).
- Tina Wilson. Director of Māori Business at NZTE.
- A Ngāi Tahu referee. Yet to be sourced.

Summary:

- By placing sculptures and/or light installations into natural environments, there may be the potential to capture photographically, moments of intrigue brought about by juxtaposition, and by curiously drawing attention to the austerity of the spaces these potential objects and/or installations could occupy.
- In researching connections between traditional Māori, Polynesian, and Buddhist Mandala art, one can draw the conclusion that there are aesthetic similarities in some of their symbols and motifs.
- There are also cosmological and linguistic correlations between these ancient civilisations.
- Early Māori were exceptional astronomers, with their new year marked by the appearance of the Matariki star cluster, also known as the Pleiades.
- An Australian Aboriginal researcher referred to the Pleiades star cluster as follows: "Revered and worshipped by many diverse peoples, cultures, and civilisations, this small cluster of stars has had an enormous influence on the human psyche and on our collective unconscious."
- Parallels in the cosmological symbology in Māori, Aboriginal, Polynesian and Buddhist mandala art is an area I would like to investigate.
- Potentially new aesthetic knowledge could be developed by drawing upon these correlations and hereby linking my practice with the context of the Pacific and its indigenous traditions without utilising or appropriating their symbols.
- The Te Māori exhibition of 1983-87 explored the art and artistry of Māori and offered their secrets to a then naive New Zealand.
- Uenuku, shown here, was part of that exhibition, this important Tainui artefact is one of the oldest Maori carvings in New Zealand, because of his unusual shape & style, which is more like an East Polynesian carving than Maori. When I saw this work especially, as a 10-year old visiting the McDougall Te Maori exhibition I was intrigued and immersed in its beauty and reverence.

- Rather than recolonising New Zealand iconography, my hope is to seek symbiosis, but reference aspects of contemporary aesthetic language used to capture these artifacts, for example, the lighting techniques used in the catalogue for this exhibition.
- Land art is a practice of semi-permanent, and sometimes permanent art installations that look to highlight the already existing beauty of our planet.
- The land art artists I have been inspired by have created artworks that draw attention to this.
- Their mentioned methodologies and processes may help conceptualise potential installation artwork outcomes if my practice evolves in this monumental artistic direction.
- The Buddhists of Tibet think that there is a possibility to access the divine through their mandala sand art.
- We know that natural wilderness environments can be considered divine.
- I would like to investigate if it is possible to combine these components to create art pieces that suggest a connection to or portal to divinity.
- As an extension, culmination and evolution of my existing art practice, I will explore new and different visual possibilities as a means of communicating what is important to me, drawing on my current conceptual and practical art-making knowledge.
- This prior learning will inform how I approach and engage in the object and image-making processes as well as the potential installations.
- The unifying element will be the motivation and intention behind it.
- I have established that I have an existing connection to the divine and it is something that I treasure.
- In the creation of this new body of work I do not wish to reinvent the wheel of Dharma, I wish to enhance it by representing it in a current context, utilising modern technology and materials in symbiosis with natural materials and environments.
- When we are truly in step with nature we are grounded, peaceful, loving, open, and truthful.
- I wish to create conduits to access the divine in **my** daily life, whether they be objects, images, installation or all of the above.
- Moments of intrigue and wonderment.
- Moments of reflection and austerity.
- As an extension of my existing practice, this project is not about ownership, it is about connectedness.
- Am I a land artist, am I sculptor or photographer, or am I a spiritual being having a 3-dimensional experience?
- Thank you.