

MARK JAMES HAMILTON

**NURTURING
INTERARTISTS**

PROJECT REPORT

Kotahitanga ma te rerekētanga

*Kō Mark James Hamilton tōku ingoa.
He tāne tauivi ahau. He tāne
takataapui ahau. Kō Ouse tōku awa. Kō
Goole tōku papakainga. Kō Yorkshire
tōku rohe. Kō Ingarangi toku whenua.
He tohunga mahi toi ahau. He hoamahi
ō Mika ahau. Kua hoki ahau ki
Aotearoa: kua timata anō ahau tōku
mahi toi i te whenua nei.*



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ARTS COUNCIL OF NEW ZEALAND TOI AOTEAROA

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MARK JAMES HAMILTON

Dr. Mark James Hamilton received his BA and MPhil in theatre from the University of Birmingham. There, he began exploring holistic arts practice: embodied voice work with Nadine George, Jerzy Grotowski's body and voice work with Zygmunt Molik and Jolanta Cynkutis, tai chi with Supawan Green, and Laban Action Efforts. After Birmingham, Mark trained in Indian classical dance, yoga and kalaripayattu (Kerala's martial art) - principally with Priya Shrikumar. In 1998, Mark began collaborating with takataapui performer Mika, and in 2000 they formed Torotoro - a company of young performers who toured their haka and hip-hop fusion around the world. Mark helped lead Torotoro by coordinating a unique intercultural interdisciplinary training program fostering creative resilience and holistic self-development. In 2010, this program was consolidated to form the embodied arts syllabus for the Mika Haka Foundation. In 2011, Mark received his doctorate from University of Christchurch for a comparison of Torotoro with Samudra (Kerala, India). Mark has recently completed a 9-year post in London as a principal lecturer in world theatre. From 2014 onwards, his principal collaborator has been Daneil P Cunningham, with whom he has developed an innovative program of practices centred explicitly on performance as an holistic embodied art. In 2019, Mark completed foundation certificates in psychotherapy counselling and human anatomy and became a Senior Fellow of the Higher Education Academy.



PROJECT OVERVIEW

NURTURING INTERARTISTS was a research and development project. I spent my spent time determining the most effective ways to begin a new phase of work since my return to Aotearoa. This project allowed me to understand how I could help nurture our interarts practitioners — supporting the growth of their creativity, wellbeing and entrepreneurship, through sharing my ways for making a holistic integration of daily life and creative practice.

NURTURING INTERARTISTS particularly investigated ways for me to support artists' searching for unique ways of working during and after Covid -19 through innovation in their arts practice. The challenges raised by the Covid-19 pandemic have made clear the importance of empowering artists to be proactive, resilient and adaptable — finding ways to be creative in changing contexts with changing resources.

Through NURTURING INTERARTISTS, I researched artists' needs to understand how daily embodied practices can best empower their creative work. I consulted with both experienced artists who know my own work well (through our shared histories and long-term connections). I also met with artists who do not know my work so well. These interactions have enabled me to discover how my sharing of my practice can best address particular issues recurrent in our conversations. This document includes summaries of these conversations.

NURTURING INTERARTISTS has revealed to me a range of ways in which I can support artists' development - including my potential engagement with national arts strategic bodies and the tertiary educational sector. This report, however, addresses this project's objective - that is, to find out how my embodied working methodology, evolved over 32 years, can be now used to support our nation's unique intercultural interarts field.

PHASES OF ACTION COMPLETED

Phase 1: Conversations

I met with professional interartists to learn their perspectives about the ways in which they have nurtured their creative resilience, artistic wellbeing and professional opportunities - especially in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. The range of communities to which these artists connect include Māori, Pasifika and Pakeha peoples. The artists included Kasina Campbell, Kura Te Ua and Feeonaa Clifton, with whom I closely shared aspects of my embodied arts practice during the early 2000s. I also met with Rosanna Raymond and Blair Zaye, with whom I collaborated on performances and arts events in the UK. A number of the people I spoke with are closely connected to the development of the work I instigated in the early 2000s with Mika, including Mika himself, Sonny Bishop, Lance Laughlin and Pare Keiha. Tracey Tawhio was the one artist I spoke with who was not previously known to me. Except for Lance and Pare, all of these conversations were held face-to-face. All the artists with whom I spoke have careers based in Tāmaki Makau Rau.

Phase 2: Analysis

In the light of the discoveries made during Phase 1, I reviewed how I have shared my practice with others over my career to date. I looked back in detail at how I have worked with: different gatherings — one-to-one, small groups, large groups; different timescales — one-off meetings, weekly sessions, weekend intensives; and different formats — formal training and tuition, supervising new creation of work, and other combinations of mode. I selected from these options those that will best enable me to support interarts practitioners in Aotearoa, based on what I learned in Phase 1. The model that is most fitting is a collective developmental process during which each individual's particular work process can become expanded and enriched.

Phase 3: Discoveries

I elaborated what actions would best enable me to share my practice with NZ interartists. My forward action plans have become differentiated into three strands. The first two are developments to be made with governmental agencies, social development foundations and tertiary education bodies. The first strand is the elaboration of wide-scale strategies addressing a new vision of the 'arts as holistic life-practices', as well as being professions resulting in creative industry products. The second strand is syllabus development to embed practical apprenticeship in training, to connect arts practice with diverse curricula including business and health disciplines, and the integration of social entrepreneurship and digital platform strategies in arts training. Setting these aside for future projects, I focussed on the third strand of my forward plans; that is, the trialling of a new model for immersive embodied interactive interarts workshops. This is my immediate focus and the one that can be developed with arts bodies. This report is focused on this action as my vital next step.

Phase 4: Next Steps

I consulted with Daneil P Cunningham (my collaborator since 2014) and Mika to arrive at a model for a workshop series that will allow me to begin nurturing interartists by sharing my practice in a mode that is informing, supportive and evocative. Such support is a vital resource at this time when many are having to revise their practice. The trial workshops will broaden and deepen my understanding of how best to support interartists through testing the model developed through this research project. I will go forward in this process with a special focus on artists practicing in centre's other than Tamaki Makau Rau. I want to hold trial workshops in different parts of Te Ika-a-Maui. This will allow me to expand my conversations with practitioners beyond the limits of Tāmaki Makau Rau and learn more about the challenges practitioners face outside this major centre. I have identified organisations and funders to help me implement this trial workshop series and will begin collaboration with them to develop a calendar of events. (Insights from these future workshop interactions will inform the other strands of my forward plans.)

CONVERSATIONS

1. ROSANNA RAYMOND
2. KASINA CAMPBELL
3. LANCE LOUGHLIN
4. BLAIR ZAYE
5. KURA TE UA
6. FEEONAA CLIFTON
7. SONNY BISHOP
8. TRACEY TAWHIAO
9. PARE KEIHA
10. MIKA X

ROSANNA RAYMOND

Sistar S'pacific, aka Rosanna Raymond, is an innovator of the contemporary Pasifika art scene as a long-standing member of the art collective the Pacific Sisters, and founding member of the SaVAge K'lub. Over the past twenty years, Raymond's activities have made her a notable producer of — and commentator on — contemporary Pacific Island culture, in Aotearoa New Zealand, the UK, and the USA. She specialises in working within museums and higher education institutions as an artist, performer, curator, guest speaker, poet and workshop leader. Raymond is an Honorary Research Associate at the Department of Anthropology and Institute of Archaeology at University College London and has held a Chester Dale Fellowship at the Metropolitan Museum in NYC.



Rosanna

Relocating Rosanna's face-to-face practice into the digital world (required by lockdown measures) has required her to access or activate a new range of "transferable skills". She reflects that she (and the collectives with whom she works) have been prompted to review "what do we stand for, and how does this transfer into this new landscape". Rosanna's reading of Dr Moana Nepia's writing about the creative value of te kore [the void] has helped her to "allow the space of nothing to be a space of nothing", countering the "pressure to produce" and embracing the importance of research time in her creative cycle. Rosanna notes the empowerment gained through a focus on 'outcomes' as well as 'outputs' - that is, qualitative and substantial changes to practice and process as well as completion of an artwork. Artists need, she says, opportunity to "bring on board new information, feed the creative desire." Rosanna understands her "performative practice" as the means by which she can "unpack very complicated questions." These kinds of understandings, she notes, support a movement away from a "Western-based notion of commodification" of the arts towards Polynesian understandings of utu [repay] and reciprocity. Rosanna celebrates the "wrap around support" Creative New Zealand has provided during the Covid-19 pandemic but notes that there "is not an infinite pot of financial support" and this immediate funding context is a "honeymoon period." The pandemic's disruption means, she states, "We could be working like this for the next couple of years." In this kind of reality, Rosanna suggests artists are forced to contemplate that "now is about all we've got." This makes paramount the need to "refocus, readjust, recalibrate."

KASINA CAMPBELL

Kasina is a performer working in a range of fields - from spectacular entertainment to live art, from stunts to realist acting, from kapa haka to contemporary. She began her career training and performing with Kahurangi Māori Dance Theatre led by the pioneering artist Tama Huata. She later became the female principal in the Mika HAKA production which travelled to the UK, Australia and across Aotearoa. This role included work on television, and she became artistic director of New Native Movement (the self-led dance company developed from this work) who travelled to Japan and India. Kasina was the main woman artist in Lemi Ponfasio's company Mau for many years; her international travel was extensive and her work greatly celebrated. She now combines her solo career with work for a range of Maori collectives and roles on screen.



Kasina

Kasina says, "Resilience comes from understanding the potential of my capabilities and aligning myself in the environment to use those capacities." In this light, she emphasizes that her art "requires an audience" that must stretch beyond a small circle of "fanatics." Seeing her art as "therapeutic for those who do not dance", she endeavors to ensure the work she shares is "at the highest potency, because it is an antidote." It is not enough, she says, to say that art is "deep"; the work offered has to be "penetrating" and a continuation of the "groundbreaking" sensibility of her tupuna who "turned themselves inside out and crawled underthings to find things out." In her career, Kasina has always invested in the creative process, but initially focused on her "part of the 'machine'", feeling somewhat "bogged down by massive messages." Kasina also says, "I only allowed my physicality to speak for a long time. I squashed my voice." Latterly, she has understood the resonance between her professional roles and her wider life and the ways in which her actions impact in her professional and personal communities, and that these "different environments require different awareness;" this engages her in process of constant adaptation. Reflecting on the impact of touring internationally for many years, Kasina says "I spent a long time going out from my land; I have to re-tailor my conversation to this environment." When it comes to the messages she communicates, Kasina says, "sometimes the environment requires you not to just articulate what you did [in your art], but to live the talk."

LANCE LOUGHLIN

Lance Loughlin is trained in technical and performance aspects of live and recorded works. He is a creative producer and has been responsible for coordinating innumerable projects generated by the Mika Haka Foundation. These include large live events on a festival scale, screen works for TV and cinema, and diverse events developed by and around the work of the foundation's emerging leaders artists' program. Lance also volunteers his time to community projects that build awareness towards anti-bullying and suicide prevention programs, targeted at NZ youth (specifically Maori & LGBTIQ+). He has extensive experience managing budgets, completing reports and applying for funding.



Lance

Lance spoke of his shift to "producing more than performing." He has discovered that this role is thought of as the "person with all the answers." It requires capacities for "perseverance" and "patience." He notes that many artists struggle to develop a "producer mentality" and their projects flounder because they cannot grasp "what is required to make money." Lance understands that the arts function for many audiences as a form of "escape" and as such they are a vital "outlet for mental health." He acknowledges that it is "important to know your audience" but that there is "no need to entertain a physical audience anymore." He describes how "accessibility of social media and technology has restricted the traditional system of marketing a creative project - this is completely different in terms of success than what it once was." He observes too that the ways in which artists interact with one another has altered: "arts communities are coming together more than they used to." Whereas weekly gatherings, "was a traditional way of forging relationships with enthusiasts [...] more than ever artists can make a mark through digital media." In connection, he sees "the classifications of amateur and professional is dissolving." He says, "professional is not about training or qualification anymore." Considering the wider impact of arts practice, he notes "the arts can be integrated into [health agenda] projects." He has seen many projects "using the arts as progressive way to bring in youth and attendees of all sorts to a health focus and to open up discussion." He acknowledges that "the arts can heal" but also sees that artists' contributions can become "a second focus or a minor contribution towards a project." He understands the motivations that lead to these kinds of situations; artists "want to create art so that the stories they wish to be told are told, to do this with a suitable budget is harder and harder, so artists are going to other avenues that don't predominantly fund projects." He sees that this kind of arrangement "can take away from the purpose that the artist intended", leaving artists asking "is this the arts project I wanted to do or am I simply delivering the service that the major health funder wants?"

BLAIR ZAYE

Blair Zaye is an artist/curator with a Bachelor of Visual Arts from Auckland University, New Zealand and a Masters in Fine Art at Chelsea College Of Arts. Until his return to Tamaki Makau Rau in February 2020, he was based in London since 2008. He has exhibited extensively all over the world from the UK to the US, Germany, Russia and New Zealand as a multidisciplinary artist working in painting, video, performance and immersive installation and interactive technologies, Blair's work attempts to interrogate a wide range of contexts; art history, counter culture, urban art and post-graffiti, technology, consciousness, phenomenology, the transcendental and the nature of realities.



Blair

Blair has been redeveloping his practice "far away" from his normal life as an artist in London. "Returning to New Zealand and trying to reconstruct my place, the art is the bridge." This 'bridge' has been part of sustaining his "mental health"; he says, "to feel like a functioning bit of reality I have to be outputting something". As he searches for ways to "re-cultivate" links in Aotearoa, he acknowledges, that "not being in my normal place, the uncertainty means that ideas have to be reined in", "you cannot plan too far ahead", "everything is so much in flux." He explains that these circumstances mean "it is hard to put too much into anything outside of my engaging with the canvas." At the same time, as he 'recreates' his practice, he is moving away from "the romantic notion of the poor artist starving in his studio." Blair has been "changing the mindset that if one is not suffering the art is not any good," because, he says, "there is still inherent suffering" in all arts practice. He has made a "conscious decision" to foster a "mature approach to do something more comprehensible" than some of his earlier work, and is engaged in "creating immersive interactive installation pieces", with a focus on "trying to create a feeling of 'awe' in the audience." This work is aimed at "cultivating the experience of the audience" rather than "directing people towards having experiences." Some of his past work drew upon his exploration of "meditation, yoga, spiritual - things that enhance your inner world." He recounts, "I was trying to express this in text on canvas in a confrontational way." Now, his work is a "rethink - instead of trying to tell someone and describe the experience, I wanted to give them an experience itself" through a form of "immersion." Blair reflects that "these days as an artist you have to have many hats to be able to translate your work to different people"; "being able to translate from art to science is a certain sort of skill. From all the reading and the research, you try to pick up different languages to navigate that."

KURA TE UA

Kura Te Ua is the Creative Producer, director and principal performer of Hawaiki TŪ. She is also Kaiarataki Toi Māori at Auckland Live and Kaiarahi Māori-Performing Art Network NZ Auckland. She studied performance at University of Auckland and has become a leading figure in bridging the world of kapa haka with dance theatre and progressive developments of new live integrations of te ao Māori me te ao hurihuri. Kura has taught in a range of educational institutions including her own stand-alone haka theatre training program. She is a long time member of the kapa Te Waka Huia.



Kura

Kura grew up immersed in kapa haka and says its "values have been embedded in me." Her career has involved "ways of looking outside of the box" towards "a unique way of practising my art form." This she has found in a "hybrid space" where the arts of the marae merge with those of the contemporary world. Having found this intersection, she continues to "hover in that space" because "that's the space where there is freedom." Kura understands her arts practice to be "90% intuition" - she draws from her "pumanawa" to enable her to balance her roles as a mother, performer, director and consultant. In that array of tasks, "decisions need to be made very fast." She notes, "I've learned to tune in quite fast," "feel quickly, feel clearly, more than thinking." To do so requires focus: "distractions can lead us away from what we know instinctively." Her focus comes from asking "Why did I start this in the first place?" She recognises that recent "life experience knocked me into a place of true realisation", reviving her kaupapa and realigning her work with her core values. The support she draws upon include collaboration with a tohunga maramataka, but at the same time she emphasises the importance of "trusting myself and the vibrational world we live in", finding sustenance "back in the ngahere, back in the awa." Kura says that "well-being comes from daily practices", such as her integrated daily routine of gym, meditation, and journaling; "It is important to know who we are and where we are from." She states "everything I do, I do it from a Maori lens" and "we need to be able to find our way to do things, which is not always the way the big corporates like to do things." Kura understands her art contributes to "enabling" other Maori to enter new spaces, and that "opening the door" for such opportunities is an important outcome. Reflecting on her role at Auckland Live she says, "it's like a needle in haystack, you have to have a thick skin to hold a Maori position in a Western organisation". Her focus in this process is on "the ecology of Maori in Aotearoa" and the coexistence of Maori, Pakeha and tauwi. She extends this work into various organisations for which she is consultant, where she helps develop an appreciation that Maori "come with our values of how to look after people," "we are not blank." To continue this kaupapa requires grit "to know it is a long game, ideally you are changing the mind set of Eurocentric colonising forces."

FEEONAA CLIFTON

Feeonaa was a founding member of The Pacific Sisters, a collective of Pacific and Māori fashion designers, artists, performers, and musicians that electrified 1990s Auckland and continues to be a powerhouse for innovation and experimentation. The group began on the fringes, but their ground-breaking style and performances brought the urban lives of a New Zealand-born Pacific generation into the mainstream spotlight. Feeonaa performed for sometime with the Mika HAKA production and supported the work as an established Pasifika artist. She has recently contributed to online presentations by the Pacific Sisters which continue the prominence of the collective in the public eye, following the significant retrospective of the group staged at Te Papa in 2018.



Feeonaa

Reflecting on Pasifika developments in Aotearoa arts, Feeonaa says "our generation was about gathering this wave" and now "there is huge wave behind us, on us." Nevertheless, sustaining practice still requires artists to be "very clear on your vision and keeping focused on that." Feeonaa notes that this means "not allowing distractions to deter you from trying to get to that moment that honours the vision you first saw." She suggests that it is necessary to "utilise the resources that you have" and to "see how much you have within your own network." This does not negate the importance of "being able to pay people properly" but can help artists to determine "which projects would I work with the community for, and accept less pay." There is a need for artists to acknowledge that "if I can't achieve the fullness of [my vision] can I at least achieve part of it." Feeonaa understands that "as long as you are clear about every stage people will follow you." It is important to "not create expectations you can't live up to", which is to "risk ending up burnt out and over worked." While this might require some revision or delay, she says "what you have is not static, the more skills you have, the vision can become bigger." Collaboration is a key component. Feeonaa says, "in NZ in particular it is an important feature of our artist's landscape that we try to look out for each other and look after each other"; "people will reach out to help you if you are upfront about it." Considering the "the advent of technology" she notes that "visibility" has escalated massively for all artists. To share work now involves putting "your heart and soul out there and it is scary." because digital platforms mean that the audience is much bigger and "the interactivity goes up - you receive comments." She understands that each artist has "tips and tricks to feel balanced" in such a complex process; "depending on the state on mind you are in really depends on how you take someones criticism." She recognises that "honest feedback is not going to make you want to give up".

SONNY BISHOP

Sonny Bishop is a composer who integrates work in the field of commercial hip-hop with creation of soundtracks for film and accompaniments for live performance. Drawing on his Te Arawa upbringing he has recently created digital tracks to integrate with kapa haka choral compositions for the work *Taurite*, by Hawaiki TU. He began work with Mika in 2010, arranging a song for performance by a full orchestra, and has continued to develop his work as a participant in the emergent leader program supported by the Mika Haka Foundation. He is signed with an LA hip-hop production house and will travel to collaborate when circumstances allow.



Sonny

As a producer-composer of hip-hop, Sonny is "creating every day". He is, he says, "in love with the process, the craft itself"; "in terms of making beats daily, its automatic for me." He acknowledges that his work is "isolating, the gift is to sacrifice a lot of celebrations, clubs and parties". What carries him on is a vision of the reach his music can find: "I think of the bigger picture and think that 100,000 people are going to be jumping to this, and its worth it." There is also, for Sonny, an intrinsic satisfaction in discovering his capacities; he recalls the inspiration of achieving results and "impressing myself, thinking 'wow' I can actually do this." He finds motivation in looking at the work of others and will often "watch a clip of a producer I respect working." These producers are mainly people in LA, whom Sonny sees as being "the epitome of my craft, the level I want to be at." He aligns his ambitions with clear points of achievement; "I want multiple Grammys, because the team I work with, the guy I'm signed to, has a couple of Grammys." Sonny sees his rhythm of "creating on a daily basis" as connected to his childhood experiences when "karakia, himene, and haka" were central to the school day. Reflecting on this aspect of his art he says, there is "a spiritual aspect to me creating now, I'm definitely tapping into my Maori spirituality, because the industry I am in you have to be cool, but I am trying to be more spiritual and tap into my Maori side"; "it feel's tapu, in a way ". He shares his sense of vocation by saying "I just feel like I am born to do this, it affects everything - wairua, physical and the emotional." As such, when working with singers he says, "I try my hardest to help provoke their emotions into the music; I don't want them to just record, they have to express their truest selves." His long term ambitions connect to the nurturing he has enjoyed through the Mika Haka Foundation; "I want to get to the point where I can do what Mika does and give back to the youth." Sonny says, "I plan on opening an academy for producers - computer access, studio access, because that is all I feel the youth need - access to the tools"; "I feel like I can easily inspire at least one kid" - "I want the kids to feel that one spark; that would be my mission."

TRACEY TAWHIAO

Tracey Tawhiao is multi-skilled: a writer, performance poet, filmmaker, qualified lawyer and practising artist. An acclaimed aspect of her diverse practice is the use of the unconventional art material of newspaper. Her use of this media evolved from her interest in the written word and text and is an extension of her live performances in which she highlights the oral aspect of Maori history. Tawhiao employs pages of newspapers and obscures certain passages of their text using blocks of colour and symbols sourced from Maori rock art and Creation myths. Her blanking out of news stories acts to 'rewrite' them from an alternative, Maori perspective.



Tracey

Tracey noticed the academic framework, rather than a practitioner focus, informing my questions. She suggested that they inclined to the overview and says that, for artists, "when you are doing it, activating it, you don't have that overview. You do eventually over time." She says that "you're not consciously knowing it, you're dreaming it and occupying it"; that is, perspectives about resilience, wellbeing and entrepreneurship can't be voiced because "you don't know it, because you've never seen it before." Instead of these drivers, Tracey proposes that "deep trust can be the only thing that compels an artist to make work." She says, "you have a feeling inside and you know you have something to express." The driver for creation is "taking something that only you can feel inside and make it visible to others." The artist is indeed "learning along with everyone else in the active practice." By contrast, "the academic practice is the looking alongside at that" and done well it is especially able to answer the questions about the social relevance of the art "in the way the artist cannot." Tracey proposes that "artists and academics should be synergistically having conversations around what is happening so that we can all get picture of where we fit in to the landscape and the narrative - because these conversations happen later and we should be able to get a sense of it while it is happening." The artist cannot access such perspectives alone being "too immersed in it to have the circumspection while sitting in the middle of something." She notes too that "it is too overwhelming to have the outside view from outside" at points in an arts practice. She understands "the healing part [of art] is the practice - because you are actively taking inner and bringing it outer." In her own practice, it has been vital to understand "how 'perfect' imperfection, failures or flaws are" and has relished learning that arts practice requires recognition that "it is absolutely fine to be a failure." She welcomes interaction with peers but emphasises that "we should show up as a group prepared to contribute." It is vital to meet with the commitment that "we need to construct."

PARE KEIHA

Professor Pare Keiha is the Pro Vice Chancellor for Māori Advancement, Dean of Te Ara Poutama, the Faculty of Māori and Indigenous Development, and the Dean of the Faculty of Culture and Society at the Auckland University of Technology. He has supported a number of Auckland based arts and culture charities and is currently chair of the Mika Haka Foundation, a member of the board of the Auckland Philharmonia Orchestra, and a member of the board of the Prince's Trust New Zealand. He was honoured by the Queen in the 2008 New Year's Honours List when he was made a Companion of the Queen's Service Order (QSO) for his services to business, education and Māori. He advises a number of Māori enterprises, including both tribal and pan-tribal organisations, and state sector entities in the areas of business development, management and strategy. He is a trustee of the Te Whānau-a-Taupara Trust Board and his tribal affiliations lie with the principle tribes of Turanga (Gisborne), specifically Te Whānau-a-Taupara o T'Aitanga-a-Māhaki, and Rongowhakaata.



Pare

What helps you face challenges, recover inspiration & move forward? Always a huge sense of gratitude for what I have and the realisation that the privilege I have acquired through my education is an opportunity to give back to others less fortunate than me. Whether the phrase is tino rangatiratanga or agency, I have reached a time in my life where I am grateful for what I have and even more grateful for what I can do for others. I just wish I was less busy!!! That said I understand that the alternative is boredom and I think it is called unemployment! But I do look forward to eventually retiring so that I can do less ... without feeling guilty!

How does creativity support your wellbeing? Whilst not a creative per se, I enjoy on a daily basis the fruits of the creativity of others. Whether it be music, the written word, the artistic brush stroke or the well-crafted film my wellbeing is a significant product of the creativity of others. I am a creative omnivore and so enjoy a wide diet of creative expression. Such a diet opens the mind, quickens the heart, challenges our assumptions, makes us cry, brings joy to our lives and if we are lucky also makes us laugh. They are ingredients in life which ultimately bring us peace.

How does art connect to the communities, organizations & resources around you? I am not an artist. I am an educator and as such I say that I have the best job in the world. Because I do magic with others. We change the lives of young peoples, their families and the communities in which they live, forever. And forever is a very long time. My day job however allows me to support the arts. I chair the Mika Haka Foundation and a board member of the Auckland Philharmonia and am a member of the Prince's Trust New Zealand. Consequently I find myself equally busy in my spare time as at work. My role at the Auckland University of Technology where I have been for 22 years, has allowed me to develop an extensive network of students, alumni and peers. Consequently I find myself reconnecting, brokering and enhancing the networks I have for the benefit of others.

MIKA

The 21st Century Mika is a modern Māori tohunga whose artistic achievements stand proudly alongside his philanthropic work as kaitiaki of the Mika Haka Foundation, a charity organisation committed to keeping young New Zealanders active and healthy through physical culture and the performing arts. Throughout a broadly rewarding career, Mika has given back by educating and inspiring new generations of Māori and Pacific artists and performers. This multi-talented tribe includes actors, dancers, singers and musicians, visual artists and fashion designers. As Mika says, "Art doesn't have boundaries – minds do."



Mika

Mika The prominence of social media, says Mika, compels young artists "to release something every week." They become caught in an "instant gratification culture" where talk is "about how many followers they have, not what the work is about." It fuels "ego-driven, platform reaching" and a "Coca-cola" concept of success – based on the understanding that "if they are famous, they will be loved and get more fame." He sees that the value of social media changes for artists when they understand "what it does – and does not – do." This shift helps them access "a deeper purpose" and their capacity to bring "philosophy" into people's lives, or indeed a "political message." Mika observes that an artist above all needs "access" to education that equips them to create and to work professionally. He differentiates between "access" and "privilege", noting that (for some artists) access is not enough in itself when other limiting personal or social factors also prohibit progression. Mika proposes that artists are individuals who require individual guidance. Moreover, he says, "certificates, diplomas, are part of a colonial construction of education." He suggests that free "online learning options" offer greater flexibility but can lead to artists gaining knowledge but not the know-how of how to apply it. At its worst, it creates "You Tube clones"; that is, artists whose cultural uniqueness has been washed away. Immersion in a creative context is what is required for the arts process to flourish, and kapa haka continues to offer the best model for how arts communities can develop and thrive. "Artists' energy is in the art", he observes, and finding connections to funding bodies is not their focus. Many struggle to access the "financial or structural ability to write the applications" and to strategize about "how their work gets exploited in a business sense, on all platforms" — thus "training individuals to be arts entrepreneurs" has become a key element of his work.

DANEIL PETER CUNNINGHAM

Daneil is a white African performance artist and facilitator born in KwaZulu-Natal. He began his career singing in gospel choirs in the heart of London. He was a member of the resident company at the Grotowski Institute in Poland for three years. On returning to London he founded and led an immersive, experimental, multidisciplinary, punk performance collective called Soundboxed. Through his solo work, begun in 2016, Daniel has centred his practice on converting the complexities of his personal intercultural and queer life experiences into healing works of public art — shared through live events, film and photography. In 2019, Daniel completed his professional yoga teacher training at the Sivananda-lineage Yoga Vedanta Ashram in Kerala, India. Since 2018, he has taught in four acting schools in London and, with Mark, facilitated workshop series for professional artists and therapists.



Daneil

I have been collaborating with Mark since 2014. His research model for working with artists in Aotearoa, especially in this time of Covid-19, will be a crucial contribution to supporting creatives' focusing to find actions forward. I accompanied Mark to all the meetings reported within this document. I became aware through listening to the various artists throughout the research, that the creative act and the artist's well being are interlinked — the artist's well being has to be an important factor to create a longterm sustainable artistic career that consequently contributes to a wider community. Mark's model for working with artists connects to this idea of a sustainable practice, which nurtures the artist in a holistic sense.

Before my work abruptly came to a halt, due to the Covid-19 outbreak, I was teaching embodied theatre and yoga practice to artists in four leading drama schools in London. I was sharing practice developed by Mark and I throughout our collaboration. I delivered embodied practice that could be adapted and changed by the student (once it had been learnt), so they could incorporate this into their daily practice to support their creative needs. This individual daily practice points to an artists sense of autonomy and ability to nurture their mental and physical well being through times of creativity, embedding a sense of volition. In these times of uncertainty, I believe artists can create their own certainty by investing in a daily embodied practice, which supports their artistic career but also invigorates their body and mind contributing to a happy, healthy life — contributing to their overall sense of well being.

Mark has a wealth of embodied knowledge that is useful in creating a sense of clarity in an artist's vision. As an artist myself, I know that artists need support and space to allow ideas to be expressed without the need to immediately create product. The workshop model Mark has developed will allow participants, through the use of embodied practice, to refocus their artistic visions in order to understand how their work can function or adapt to the current global pandemic. The workshops will open a space for interacting with other artists in the same position — creating a sense of support and community. The participants will learn an embodied daily practice to help support artistic vision but also add to the overall sense of their health and well-being.

CONCLUSION: NEXT PHASE

I gained some key insights from the conversations. Interarts practice offers a special freedom to meet the unexpected and to learn - on many levels - through hybrid processes. In the present flux and change, shifts in awareness are needed to access new potential and continue making work. Certainty can be found by trusting one's creative instincts and focussing clearly to realise bold artistic visions. Artists need to look after each other and offer honest feedback to one another. Well-being comes from a daily practice.

From the conversations with the artists, key recurrent needs, issues and themes emerged. These discoveries have closely informed my modeling of a trial workshop series, which I will begin to implement through collaboration with a range of target arts organisations and key individuals in centres across Te Ika-a-Maui. Through this series, I will begin sharing my embodied creative practice in ways tailored to nurture interartists in Aotearoa, especially in this time of Covid-19.

My research identifies that there is a need for holistic immersive workshops that can provide a space and time for artists to explore constructing new individual methodologies that are interconnected with those of others. This will foster both strong personal daily practice and help build ways of bridging from this personal process to that of others - enabling effective collaborations. To create the model for a trial workshop series, I have isolated particular aspects of my work in Aotearoa, India and the UK.

The trial workshop series will help artists explore embodied practice as means of 'performance philosophy' - that is, the evolution of new creative perspectives and artistic visions through action. In particular, I will bring forward my use of Gendlin's 'focussing' methodology. Using solo and group practices (involving movement, voicework and reflection) the workshops will help artists develop a personal means of sustaining their focus and resilience, while also enabling them to explore their creative values and artistic vision and ways to communicate these to others - through words, images and actions.

The workshops I have modeled are multi-layered. They will use movement practices holistically to foster; physical alignment as a support to mental clarity; inner stillness and physical presence, as preparation for being responsive and adaptable in collaborations; and nuanced modes of feedback, to foster skills for contextualizing practice and guiding with others. Participants will be enabled and empowered through the acquisition of skills that support development of an individual daily practice rooted in embodied exploration. In addition to enriching personal wellbeing, this will enable the participants to keep developing their capacities as reflective practitioners - particularly the ability to access critical distance when creating, as well as during times of reviewing and planning work. Connecting reflective thinking to the flow of action will help strengthen artists' clarity of vision, enabling them to make effective timely decisions as their practice responds to the current shifting contexts.

The trial workshop series will be outcome oriented - offering the participants the space to access and articulate their core values in these complex times. The workshops will be spaces in which the participants can enjoy the support of others as they refocus and recalibrate.