

Toi Māori: The Eternal Thread

Hallie Ford Museum of Art at Willamette University
September 24 – December 22, 2005

Teachers Guide

This guide is to help teachers prepare students for a field trip to the exhibition, *Toi Māori: The Eternal Thread*; offer ways to lead their own tours; and propose ideas to reinforce the gallery experience and broaden curriculum concepts. Teachers, however, will need to consider the level and needs of their students in adapting these materials and lessons.

Goals

- To introduce students to the history and culture of the Māori people of New Zealand
- To introduce students to the art of Māori weaving
- To introduce the relevance of continuity to a culture

Objectives

Students will be able to

- Discuss the art of weaving in relation to the history and culture of the Māori people
- Identify the traditional techniques of Māori weaving, *whatu* and *raranga*
- Identify the traditional forms of Māori weaving, *kete* (baskets), *whāriki* (mats), and *kākahu* (cloaks)
- Discuss tradition and innovation in relation to contemporary Māori weaving
- Explain the metaphor “The Eternal Thread”
- Make connections to other disciplines

Preparing for the Tour:

- If possible, visit the exhibition on your own beforehand.
- Using the images (print out sets for students, create a bulletin board, etc.) and information in the teacher packet, create a pre-tour lesson plan for the classroom to support and complement the gallery experience. If you are unable to use images in the classroom, the suggested discussions can be used for the Museum tour.
- Create a tour
 - Build on the concepts students have discussed in the classroom.
 - Have a specific focus, i.e. the theme “Tradition and Innovation,” or object category (baskets, cloaks, mats, etc.).
 - Be selective – don’t try to look at or talk about everything in the exhibition.
 - Include a simple task to keep students focused.
 - Plan transitions and closure for the tour.
- Make sure students are aware of gallery etiquette.

At the Museum:

- Review with students what is expected – their task and museum behavior.
- Focus on the works of art. Emphasize looking and discovery through visual scanning (a guide is included in this packet). If you are unsure where to begin, a good way to start is by asking, “What do you see here?” Follow with questions that will help students back up their observations: “What makes you say that?” or “Show us what you have found.”
- Use “**At the Museum**” suggestions from this packet.
- Balance telling about a work and letting students react to a work.
- Use open-ended questions to guide students in looking and to focus their thinking on certain topics and concepts.
- Slow down and give students a chance to process.
- Respect all responses and deal with them.
- Be aware of students’ interest spans (usually about 45 to 50 minutes) and comfort.

INDEX

Toi Māori: Māori Art, A Statement from Māori Artist Darcy Nichols	4
The Māori: An Introduction, by Rebecca Dobkins.....	5
I. The Eternal Thread: Māori Weaving.....	7
II. Traditions, Materials, Techniques.....	9
III. Taonga (Treasures).....	13
IV. Pronunciation Guide.....	21
V. Glossary.....	22
VI. Selected Bibliography/Webliography.....	23
VII. Visual Scanning.....	25
VIII. Common Curriculum Goals.....	26

TOI MĀORI: MĀORI ART

A Statement from Māori Artist Darcy Nicholas

Māori art is inseparable from Māori culture. It is like a living organism that exists in the spirit of our people and drives them toward wider horizons and greater achievement. As Māori we call ourselves *Tangatawhenua*, literally *people of the whenua* (placenta). The land is referred to as the *whenua*, or placenta, the living substance from which we evolved or were born. We are fortunate in being Māori, because it enables us to understand our relationship with the elders who held us as children, and told us stories that link us with the sun, the moon, the stars, the mountains, rivers, trees, and the living creatures and plants that help to sustain life.

Our oral history says that we were born out of our land, *Aotearoa*, and have lived here since the beginning of time. Today, we are known as New Zealand. It is a beautiful modern country full of mountains, rivers, green pastures, forests and friendly people. This exhibition reflects the history and the evolution of the Māori people from the first ray of light that separates the earth and the sky, to the strands that weave us into the lives and cultures of the world. As Māori, we are caught in an ancestral thread that leads us into a world of creativity that has no end.

Darcy Nicholas
Director
Pataka Museum
Porirua City, Aotearoa/New Zealand

- Help students with the pronunciation of the word Māori (**mah** ree).
- Use the traditional Māori greeting Kia Ora! (hi!) (**kyo** ruh).
- Have students read this statement and list the main points the author makes. Discuss students' findings and list the points on the board to be used as reference during following discussions. During discussions, create a vocabulary list on the board.

THE MĀORI: AN INTRODUCTION

by **Rebecca Dobkins, Associate Professor of Anthropology, Willamette University and Faculty Curator, Hallie Ford Museum of Art**

According to their oral history, the Māori have been on their land, now New Zealand, from the beginning of time. Oral history recounts the formation of the main stretch of mountains and the subsequent arrival of successive canoe migrations. The first migrants arrived around a thousand years ago, traveling in mighty ocean-going canoes, or *waka*, across the South Pacific. Tribal stories explain that the canoes came from a legendary homeland of Hawaiki in Polynesia. The new arrivals called the land Aotearoa, the Land of the Long White Cloud, after the clouds that linger on the high mountain peaks of the South Island.

Contemporary research suggests that the ancestors of the Māori have been journeying across the globe for thousands of years: more than 15,000 years ago their ancestors left the land now called China, and then traveled via Southern Asia, Taiwan, and the Philippines to Indonesia. About 6,000 to 9,000 years ago these ancestors moved on through Melanesia, to arrive in Fiji around 3,500 years ago. They then traveled on to Samoa and the Marquesas. Around 1,700 years ago the ancestors of the Māori turned southwest to Tahiti, then the Cook Islands, and finally arrived in Aotearoa/New Zealand around 650 A.D. or even earlier. Over these generations of sea-faring, they developed extraordinary knowledge of navigation, based on intimate observation of the stars, the ocean, and the creatures within and the birds above the seas.

Māori ancestors arrived in successive *waka* (collectively referred to as the Fleet), and each gave rise to different tribal groupings, who today trace their genealogy back to the canoe of their ancestors. Thus, there are many stories of migration and origins, rather than a single account. These stories continue to live in Māori arts today.

Once in Aotearoa, the Māori faced new challenges. The climate was temperate, with cooler temperatures and dramatically different vegetation and fauna than in tropical Polynesia. Few of the crops brought in the *waka* for cultivation could survive in the new land. Yet, the Māori adapted quickly, harvesting the riches of the coastal waters and learning about the edible plants of the forests. Birds, many of which had become flightless on the isolated islands without predators for millions of years, provided another food source, yet many were quickly hunted to extinction. Complex rules about the timing and processes related to hunting, collection, cultivation, and harvesting arose, having the effect of conserving precious natural resources.

A rich aesthetic system emerged from the historical Māori experience of exploration, subsequent isolation, and the innovation and invention that followed. Carving and weaving, the two fundamental forms of Māori art, are best understood as intertwined. Their interrelation continues to be profoundly seen on a *marae*, the traditional center of a Māori community. The meeting house, or *wharenui*, is decorated with carvings of the ancestors, and is in fact referred to as the ancestor house, or *whare tupuna*. Inside, *tukutuku* panels, a weavers' art, are interspersed between more carvings. Participants in ceremony may be adorned with woven garments such as

cloaks and skirts. The performance arts of song, oratory, and dance are also integrated into *marae* ritual.

The arrival of Europeans in Aotearoa, beginning with Captain Cook's voyage in 1769, brought profound changes to the Māori. Cook charted New Zealand, and brought back to England news of the island with its fierce inhabitants and their complex society. Over the next few decades, only a few hundred Europeans came to settle in the islands, but with them they brought muskets, introducing a disastrous element into pre-existing Māori intertribal warfare traditions.

The nineteenth century saw increasing European, primarily British, settlement, and along with it warfare over land and resources. In 1840, the Treaty of Waitangi was signed, wherein New Zealand was annexed by England, and a process was established by which land was to be acquired from the Māori by the Crown. The treaty required the Māori to cede sovereignty to England in exchange for retaining "te tiro rangatiratanga," authority over their lands, dwelling places and treasures. The Māori and the British understood the terms of the treaty very differently, particularly what it meant to acquire property yet retain authority over lands.

In the decades following the signing of the treaty, land disputes continued. Many Māori began to organize politically, and several movements for self-governance arose. The Māori were granted four guaranteed seats in the New Zealand Parliament in 1867, and reforms in the 1990s have led to further expansion of Māori political representation. In 1975, the Waitangi Tribunal was founded to investigate historical injustices resulting from breaches of the Treaty and make recommendations for remedies. The Tribunal's activities have brought into focus the complex processes of interpreting the past and of creating a just society for both Māori and non-Māori.

Today of course it is overly simplistic to speak of one "Māori people": not only do the individual *iwi*, or tribes, have differing histories, but most Māori people share ancestry with the English, Scottish, French, Irish, and many other Europeans. Nevertheless, within the multicultural society that is New Zealand, recent decades have seen a vibrant renaissance of Māori arts, language, and political organizing. Beyond their shores, the Māori have actively cultivated international indigenous networks, learning from other native peoples and sharing their own struggles and successes. This exhibition and festival are a vibrant strand of this thread, now stretching across the globe.

- Review basic map skills.
- In paragraph 2, the author outlines the Māori migration according to contemporary research. On a map, have students trace the route taken by the ancient Māori to reach their final home in New Zealand.
- Discuss legend and theory.
- Study the *iwi* (tribes) map (www.takoa.co.nz/iwi_maps.htm) vis a vis a contemporary map of New Zealand.
- Learn more about Māori wayfinding (non-instrumental navigation) at www.pbs.org/wayfinders/index.html

I. THE ETERNAL THREAD: MĀORI WEAVING



Ranui Ngarimu, chairperson of the national Māori weavers group, flanked by Elder Katerina Waiari, lead the weavers' procession at the welcome for the Weavers Nation Hui (gathering) in 2003.

Image #1

A group of senior weavers wear their *kākahu* (cloaks) in a ceremonial procession.

Photography: Toi Māori Aotearoa

Image courtesy of Toi Māori Aotearoa

There is a phrase – I nga ra o mua – which refers to the past. But the word ‘mua’ also means ‘in front of you.’ In our concept of time we cannot separate ourselves from our ancestors or the generation in front of us. Our past is our future, and also our present, like the eternal circle. This concept is very important to the weaver, who sees herself as a repository, linking the knowledge of the past with that of the future.

Erenora Puketapu-Hetet, weaver

While weaving is an ancient artform among the Māori, the works featured in *Toi Māori: The Eternal Thread* were created by contemporary Māori weavers. Their work represents and embodies the spirit and traditions of this evolving art, one that welcomes creativity and adaptation while honoring the rituals, techniques, and practitioners that came before. The weavers draw on this inspiration while adding their own variations – such as using new materials or new forms – to honor the past and ensure the future – to continue the eternal thread.

The concept of *taonga* (treasures) and *mana* (prestige) are embodied in Māori weaving as an artform and in the individual pieces created. The works in the exhibition are considered treasures of great beauty and meaning, and as such they reflect the *mana* of the artform and the artists, the owners and wearers, and the collective knowledge and history of Māori weaving. As objects, they are also seen as having a life. The *kākahu* (cloaks) in this exhibition may be worn as symbols of honor in ceremonies and other special events; other pieces will be given as gifts or returned to the families who own them. Just as they were treasured by the weavers who created them, they will be treasured by their owners or their wearers, and will gain *mana* as they continue their journey and become part of the stories of life.

- Have students read and analyze the quote by Erenora Puketapu-Hetet. Is this concept relevant to our own lives?

- Are there traditional artforms or crafts from our own culture that have evolved over time? Give examples and explain the evolution. How has history, technology and ideas about art influenced this change?
- Discuss the concepts of *taonga* (treasures) and *mana* (prestige). How do objects become a part of stories of life? What objects do you or your family have that tell a story?
- Discuss the idea of ceremony and celebration and the special objects associated with these events. List special ceremonial clothing used in our culture (caps and gowns, uniforms, wedding dresses, holiday apparel).

At the Museum

- Discuss the importance of context in how one views, or experiences, the works in the exhibition. How do the photographs of the ancestors wearing the cloaks influence or affect your response to the individual pieces?
-

Back in the Classroom

- Write a summary of your experience and how the metaphor *The Eternal Thread* applies to one's own life.
- Write a poem called *The Eternal Thread*.
- Make a collage using one's own words and thoughts with images and objects that illustrate the concept of *The Eternal Thread*.

II. TRADITIONS, MATERIALS, AND TECHNIQUES



Elaine Bevan works on a *whāriki* (woven floor mat), interlocking strands of cut and dyed *harakeke* (flax).

Image # 2

Elaine Bevan, weaver

Photography: Pataka Museum

Image courtesy of Toi Māori Aotearoa

There are traditions involved in every aspect of Māori weaving, from gathering the materials and creating the individual works, to the passing of knowledge from one weaver to another, and from one generation to another. In traditional Māori society, young people who showed signs of potential were taught by older weavers who shared not only technique, but also the customs. While this is still normally done by a senior member of the family, today many new weavers learn from experienced weavers through organized programs through schools or art centers. The rituals and prohibitions associated with flax gathering and weaving still play an important part in instruction although it is important to note that most weavers adhere only to customs of their particular *iwi* (tribe).

The Discovery of Weaving: The Legend of Hine-rehia*

According to the **Hauraki** peoples, women acquired the knowledge of weaving techniques from a fairy woman named Hine-rehia who had married a human and went to live with him and his people. Hine-rehia was an expert in the preparing and dyeing of flax, weaving garments, and plaiting baskets and mats. As was the custom of the fairy people, she wove only at night or on foggy days. When dawn arrived, Hine-rehia would put away whatever she was working on to hide it from the sunlight, which would undo a weaver's work and cause her to lose her skills.

The women were eager to learn Hine-rehia's weaving techniques, but because she only wove in the dark it was impossible. They persuaded a *tohunga* (priest) to confuse Hine-rehia's senses so she would not realize that the sun had risen and keep on working for the other women to see. They hid as she unknowingly worked in the daylight, and learned all her weaving secrets.

When Hine-rehia finally grew tired and set her work aside, she realized it was daylight and that she had been deceived. She sang a sad song of farewell to her husband and children and was

* Adapted from *The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Māori Myth and Legend* by Margaret Orbell, pages 60-63

carried off on a cloud to her home with the fairies. Sometimes at night, or during a heavy fog, it is said people can hear Hine-rehia's song of sorrow coming down from the roof of their house. It is an omen of death.

Once the knowledge of weaving techniques came into the light, it became a part of weaving tradition to ensure it never returned to the darkness. As a fairy, Hine-rehia could only weave at night, which was her proper time, and trouble befell her when she went against these strictures. Human women, however, only prepare fibers and weave during the day – which is *their* proper time – and cover up their unfinished work before nightfall. When young women are careless about following these traditions they might be warned, “Remember how Hine-rehia came to grief.”

***Harakeke* (Flax)**

Harakeke, or flax, is the traditional material of Māori weaving and is considered a *taonga* (treasure). Its use also illustrates the versatility and ability to adapt that is inherent in the artform – indeed it is one of the earliest examples.

The Māori brought the knowledge of weaving with them when they arrived in New Zealand from the tropical Pacific, but they had to adapt what they knew to their new environment. Since New Zealand was much cooler than their original homeland, their light garments of tapa cloth (a paper-like fabric made of bark) had to be replaced. They soon discovered that the native flax plant provided a warmer, more durable material. By adapting and modifying their traditional weaving skills, they developed a number of uses for the flax leaves and its fiber.



Harakeke (flax)

As with many customs associated with Māori weaving, there is a right time and a right manner to harvest and prepare flax. Traditionally, summer and autumn were the seasons for this, with winter and spring being the weaving seasons. This convention is still adhered to by many weavers. Flax should not be gathered at night, or in the rain, frost or wind. As Erenora Puketapu-Hetet states, “By following customs and collecting ‘when the fruits of nature are ripe’ one discovers that all becomes easier.”¹ There is also a proper way to cut the flax from the plant. The *rito* (the young shoot at the center) and the *awhi rito* (the two leaves on either side of the *rito*) are never cut. In this way, the plant remains strong and its growth is ensured for future generations. In addition, flax trimmings and waste should not be burned, but returned to Papatuanuku (mother earth) to help enrich the soil.

¹ Puketapu-Hetet, Erenora, page 3

Raranga and Whatu: Two Weaving Techniques

Raranga and *Whatu* are the techniques most common in traditional Māori weaving and the two distinct categories illustrated in the exhibition. Each technique uses different parts of the flax plant and has remained largely unchanged through the centuries. In *raranga*, the long leafy blades of the flax plant are cut into strips and plaited, interlacing the left-and right-hand strip. This is the technique traditionally used in making baskets (*kete*) and floor mats (*whāriki*). *Whatu* uses the sinewy *muka* (fiber) inside the leaves which is then rolled into threads. The **weft** (*aho*) threads are then twisted around the **warp** (*whenu*) threads to create the weave. *Whatu* is traditionally used to make cloaks (*kākahu*) and is therefore referred to as the cloak weave. Natural dyes, mostly made from mud and bark, provided variations of black, yellow and tan in addition to the natural color of the flax. Unfortunately, many of these natural dyes, and the **mordants** used to set the color cause the fiber to disintegrate over time. Today, the life of the dyed fiber as well as the color range can be extended using commercial dyes or mordants, often in combination with natural dyes and mordants.

As with the gathering and preparation of flax, there are customs associated with weaving, such as restrictions against eating, drinking or smoking while weaving and keeping children away when weavers are immersed in their work, unless they are old enough to understand the basic courtesies and can be left unsupervised. These customs are not only practical but may be based on the concept of *tapu* (sacred; subject to religious restrictions that protect sacred objects, beings or places); for example, there are many *tapu* traditionally associated with food. Other practices include putting one's work out of sight if strangers appear, and beginners giving away the first piece of weaving they complete. Again, these traditions and customs may differ depending on the particular *iwi*.¹

- Discuss the tradition and the importance of handing down knowledge and practices within a family or a community. Have students share examples of knowledge and practices they have learned from their parents, grandparents, or someone in the community (through stories, conversation, formal and informal instruction, etc.). How would they share this with each other? With the next generation?
- Discuss the ways the Māori interacted with and adapted to New Zealand's environment. Investigate and compare ways different groups of people have interacted with and adapted to our own region (native peoples, pioneers, contemporary non-native Oregonians, etc).
- Discuss the different uses for *harakeke* (flax) in Māori weaving. Describe the different qualities of the *harakeke* fiber used in *raranga* (images #3, 4, 6 and 7) and *whatu* (images # 5, 6 and 7).

¹ Puketapu-Hetet, Erenora, pp.3-5.

- Practice the basic over-and-under weaving technique.
 - To create the warp (*whenu*) cut straight vertical lines into a piece of heavy paper (using a horizontal orientation). Do not cut all the way – leave an inch or so at the top.
 - Cut strips of paper from a second sheet – these will be your weft (*aho*).
 - Weave one weft strip through the vertical cuts on the first sheet of paper in an over and under pattern. If this first weft strip began over the warp, begin the next row under the warp. It is the alternating rows that create a solid structure in weaving.
 - Repeat weaving your strips in this pattern.
 - Experiment with 2 or more colors and other structural configurations.
- Experiment with common natural dyes such as fruit juices, tea, turmeric, or onion skins. **www.dltk-holidays.com/easter/natural/htm** is a good site for ideas and techniques.
- *Whai*, or string games, were a very popular Māori pastime, and a good way for a potential weaver to improve finger dexterity. Have students try some simple string figures.
 - **www.folksong.org.nz/purerehua/index.html**
Includes a folksong to accompany a *whai* butterfly figure
 - **<http://Turlock.k12.ca.us/ditcher/japan%20site/catscradle.htm>**
Detailed pictures on how to make cat's cradles
 - **www.darsie.net/string/easy.html**
Easy string figures
 - **www.alyson.org/string.htm**
Includes kid's guide to easy string figures

At the Museum

- Look for examples of *raranga* and *whatu* techniques.

III. TAONGA (TREASURES)

***Kete*: Baskets**



*Ko koe ki tena
Ko ahau ki tenei
Kiwai o te kete*

*You have that handle of the basket
I have this handle of the basket
Let us together uphold the mana of
weaving*

Image #3

Sonia Snowden

Iwi: Ngā Puhi, Ngāti Whātua, Ngāti Wai

Title: *Kete Whakairo* 2003 (patterned woven basket)

Medium: harakeke, muka, commercial dye

Photography: Norman Heke

Image courtesy of Toi Māori Aotearoa

Kete (pronounced **kih** teh), or baskets, embody the *mana* (prestige) of weaving and provide examples of the extraordinary virtuosity of Māori weavers. They also serve as symbols of knowledge and wisdom because of their association with the story of how Tāne-te-Wananga (the guardian of forests and birds) climbed to the highest heaven to obtain for mankind the three *kete* of knowledge* :

- Wisdom, building, arts and agriculture
- Ancient rites and ceremony
- Incantations, war, magic and the tradition which includes the history of the people

Baskets, which were traditionally woven using the *raranga* technique, had a variety of uses and were made in a number of sizes and styles depending on their function. Some took a long time to make and their craftsmanship and beauty made them appropriate for ceremonial purposes, while others were made very quickly as needed, to use to boil food, carry stones or shellfish, etc. While readily available modern containers have replaced most baskets for everyday use, contemporary baskets are still valued as both practical and ceremonial objects.

* To read and hear an abridged version of the story as told by the Rangitaane, Ngati Kahungunu and Ngati Ira people of the Wairarapa region of Aotearoa/New Zealand go to www.maaori.com/whakapapa/ngakete3.htm

Baskets are generally made of flax and may be all one color or patterned. The handle is typically made by braiding together twined flax fiber (*muka*). Feathers, *paua* (a shellfish similar to abalone), or dyed strips of fiber may decorate baskets. However, in the spirit of innovation and adaptation that is integral to Māori weaving as an artform, many contemporary weavers use non-traditional materials and some baskets (including examples in the exhibition) are made using the *whatu* technique normally used for cloak-making.

Patterns found on baskets, which may abstractly reference natural elements such as creatures and plants of the sea, are often associated with particular extended families and tribes (*iwi*). Some patterns can have different names in different tribal areas and usually reflect the lifeways of that tribe. The diamond **motif** on the basket illustrated here has more than one name, but it is called *patiki* or *patikitiki* by tribes living by the sea. *Patiki* is the name of the flounder, a common flat fish found near beaches and estuaries of the New Zealand coast, as well as the Māori name for the group of stars near the Milky Way called “The Coal Sack.” Both the fish and the constellation are diamond-shaped, and are linked together as symbols of plenty. Historically, the stars were used to determine the weather: when the diamond was parallel to the Milky Way, fine weather could be expected. If the diamond pointed away from the Milky Way, it was a sign of bad weather to come. When the weather was good the flounder, and other seafood, came into shallow waters where they could be easily caught.

- Discuss how pattern and stylization of natural forms are used (such as the *patiki*).
- When patterns are constrained by technology such as weaving or beading, the designs are called *plectogenic*. What effect does the woven “grid” have on the way the patterns are formed on the basket? Have students create designs using graph paper. Try translating a round or curved object into the plectogenic design.
- Find the constellation *Patiki*. www.astronynz.org.nz/Māori/star_charts.htm provides star charts that simulate the seasonal stars that the Māori used for their guide.

At the Museum

- *Kete* (baskets) are traditionally utilitarian, used for practical purposes like cooking or carrying. Do all the examples in the exhibition adhere to this definition? Why or why not? Find examples that challenge the traditional concept of the *kete*.

Whāriki: Mats



Image #4

Matekino Lawless

Iwi: Ngāti Raukawa, Tainui

Title: Whāriki 1996 (woven floor mat)

Medium: harakeke, commercial dye

Photography: Norman Heke

Image courtesy of Toi Māori Aotearoa

Whāriki (pronounced **fah** ree kee), or woven floor mats, are another *taonga* (treasure) of the Māori people. There are several types of mats made in a variety of textures and for different purposes. Mats can be simple and roughly-made, used for everyday life, or finely plaited and patterned. The latter are symbols of community and kinship sharing, hospitality and warmth and as such are considered a cherished component of a community's *whare tapuna* (ancestor house), even those with wall-to-wall carpets and underfloor heating that make the utilitarian purpose of the woven mat obsolete. Finely-made mats are used on special occasions and may be kept for special purposes. In former times, they may have been used as a birthing mat. Other uses still exist today: a wedding party may stand on such a mat during the ceremony or a tribe may drape a coffin with a particular mat to honor the deceased.

Although the art of weaving floor mats went into decline in the early twentieth-century, it is currently enjoying a renaissance as experienced weavers teach a new generation the skills and techniques unique to the artform. To create the extended width of the mat, weavers plait sections called *papa*, and join them together using additional plaiting strips. There are different methods for joining new strips, complicated techniques that are usually mastered under the guidance of an older, experienced weaver.

In this *whāriki* (woven floor mat), the weaver Matekino Lawless has created a variety of patterns within patterns. From a distance it appears that each *papa* section has a pattern of alternating natural and dark brown rhombus shapes. Closer inspection reveals that within the dark brown shapes she has introduced another pattern based on vertical and horizontal lines that form triangles. This pattern is known in some areas as dragon's teeth and in others as canoe sails.

- Discuss woven floor mats (*whāriki*) as symbols of community and kinship sharing, hospitality and warmth. Name similar examples from other cultures. Why do we associate these objects with community, hospitality and warmth?

- Discuss positive and negative elements in the pattern on this *whāriki*.
- Explore the concept of tessellations (patterns that repeat endlessly without leaving gaps) using the two main patterns on the *whāriki*; the overall rhombus pattern and the triangles within each rhombus. Have students create their own tessellations using geometric shapes.

At the Museum

- Compare and contrast the two *whāriki* (woven floor mats) hanging next to each other in gallery.

***Kākahu*: Cloaks**



*The kākahu are part of us and we of them.
Together we can enter new and exciting spaces.
Our ancestors walk with us as we travel with
them – that is what this exhibition is about.*

Waana Davis, Chair, Toi Māori Aotearoa

Image #5

Emily Rangitīria Schuster

Iwi: Te Arawa, Tuwharetoa

Title: *Kākahu*, 1995-96 (Cloak)

Medium: muka, feathers

Photography: Norman Heke

Image courtesy of Toi Māori Aotearoa

Traditionally, weavers used *whatu* techniques to make a variety of garments such as aprons, kilts with swishing reed-like strands and *kākahu* (pronounced **kah** kuh hoo), or cloaks. The most prestigious of these were ceremonial garments worn on special occasions as a symbol of special status. In pre-European times, chiefs owned and wore the most prestigious of these garments, and cloaks were among the most treasured. According to Mick Pendergrast, “The most exalted cloaks were honoured with a personal name and their fame became widespread. In value they were regarded as equivalent to the greatest treasures of the land, and there are recorded instances of cloaks being exchanged for war canoes.”¹ Today, cloaks and other ceremonial garments are worn to emphasize Māori ancestry and to celebrate the status of both the occasion and the wearer. Such garments may be worn at graduations, funerals, and ceremonial processions. They may also be draped over a coffin to “represent chieftainship, kinship solidarity and obligation, as well as symbolic readiness and appropriate dress for the deceased person’s journey to the ancestors.”²

A cloak may take an experienced weaver many months of preparing materials and hand weaving. The fiber (*muka*) used to weave a cloak is scraped from inside the flax leaf with a mussel shell. Once extracted, the weaver spins the silky fiber into *miro* (twining), usually by rolling several strands on her bare leg. Once the fiber is prepared, dyed or bleached, and dried, the warp threads (*whenu*) are suspended between two upright rods and the weaver works her way downwards, twisting the weft threads (*aho*) around the warps with her fingers.

¹ Pendergrast, Mick, *Te Aho Tapu: The Sacred Thread*, page 4.

² Evans, Miriama and Ranui Ngarimu, *The Art of Māori Weaving: The Eternal Thread*, page 21.

Cloaks are distinguished by their form of decoration. *Kaitaka* are honey-colored fiber cloaks, adorned with a geometric **taniko** border on the sides. *Korowai* are cloaks whose outer surface is decorated with long dark cords made from flax fiber. The cloak illustrated here is an example of the highly prized *Kahu hururu*, cloaks ornamented with feathers. Emily Rangitīaria Schuster has used undyed flax fiber to weave a diamond criss-cross pattern. To create bands of color and texture, she has attached feathers of the pheasant, kiwi, pūkeko and kererū to the warp (*whenu*). The top edge is finished with fringe made from the ends of the warp (*whenu*).

Over the last hundred years, protection of native birds has become necessary, including those whose feathers were traditionally used in making *Kahu hururu*. The kiwi and kererū, whose feathers are used in this cloak, are among the species protected in New Zealand. Both the birds and the feathers are owned by the New Zealand Government. The Department of Conservation collects feathers from dead protected birds and puts them in a feather bank to be allocated for indigenous cultural purposes. Through an application process, weavers may be granted feathers for their weaving.

- Discuss how weaver Emily Rangitīaria has used pattern, color, line, shape and texture in *Kākahu*.
- Discuss issues of conservation and cultural resources in relation to the Māori and other indigenous peoples.
- Learn more about the birds of New Zealand at www.nzbirds.com/gallery.html
This website provides information about New Zealand's birds, endemic, native and introduced, and their conservation status. Includes images of the individual birds.

At the Museum

- Compare and contrast the different cloaks. What qualities would you use to describe them?

Contemporary Innovations



Images #6 and #7 (detail)

Donna Campbell

Iwi: Ngā Puhī, Ngā Ruanui

Title: *Ngā Karu o te Ao (Eyes of the World)*, 2002

Medium: harakeke, commercial dye, fabric

Photography: Norman Heke

Images courtesy of Toi Māori Aotearoa

A younger generation of artists, well-tutored in traditional techniques, is creating innovative contemporary work that improvises upon the conventional conceptual foundations and materials of Māori weaving.

Some artists featured in the exhibition employ non-traditional materials to extend the boundaries of weaving, such as builder's paper in Lonnie Hutchinson's cut-out cloaks or fine copper wire used by Diane Prince in her delicate cloak. Others blend non-traditional and traditional materials and techniques, often drawing inspiration from the land: Maureen Lander's illuminated *maro* (apron) of split flax fiber, nylon fishing line, and fluorescent paint is based on a waterfall in the Hokianga region, while the copper and flax fiber cloak created by Kohai Grace evokes the birds that fly around her home. Media artist Lisa Reihana's video interpretation of weaving, entitled *tauira* (apprentice; student) pays homage to the process, traditions and customs of weaving. Collectively, these artists and their works engage in lively dialogue with the ancestors, traditional weavers, and the contemporary art world.

Donna Campbell is known for her sculpture and wearable art based around the female form, which she describes as "sourcing the feminine in Māori art." In *Ngā Karu o te Ao (Eyes of the World)*, she has created a three-piece ensemble using mainly *raranga* techniques; the interlacing

of left- and right-hand strands used in the making of baskets *kete* (baskets) and *whāriki* (mats). The skirt has the *whenu* (warp) ends drawn into a braid down the center, while the headdress has long alternating black and white *whenu* warps woven together by several widely spaced rows of *aho* (wefts).

- Compare and contrast *Ngā Karu o te Ao (Eyes of the World)* with the *kete* (Image #3) and the *whāriki* (Image #4). How are they similar? How are they different?
- What is traditional about *Ngā Karu o te Ao (Eyes of the World)*? What makes it innovative?
- Discuss the title “Eyes of the World.” Why might the artist have chosen this?
- Discuss the artist’s statement that her work explores “sourcing the feminine in Māori art” and how this may be reflected in *Ngā Karu o te Ao (Eyes of the World)*.

At the Museum

- Find the works by Lonnie Hutchinson, Diane Prince, Kohai Grace, Maureen Lander and Lisa Reihana. Compare and contrast them with more traditional works, looking for influence, inspiration, and innovation. Are there other works you find that fit into the category of “contemporary innovations?” Explain.

IV. PRONUNCIATION GUIDE

This is adapted from *100 Words Every NZer Should Know* at www.nzhistory.net.nz/Gallery/tereo/words.htm. Audio reading of each word is featured on the website.

The five vowels **a e i o u** are pronounced as in Italian. The following English equivalents are a rough guide:

a as in far
e as in desk. It should be short and sharp.
i as in fee, me, see
o as in awe (not 'oh')
u as in put, foot

There are fewer consonants, and only a few are different from English:

r should not be rolled
t is pronounced more like d than t, with the tip of the tongue slightly further back from the teeth
wh counts as a consonant; the standard modern pronunciation is close to the 'f' sound; in some districts it is more like an 'h'; in others again more like the old aspirated English pronunciation of 'wh' (huence for whence).
ng counts as one consonant and is pronounced like the 'ng' in the word "singer." It is **not** pronounced like the 'ng' in "finger." i.e. Whāngārei is pronounced Far-n(g)ah-ray (not Fong-gah-ray)
The macron – a little line above some vowels is used to indicate vowel length; some words which look the same have different meanings according to their vowel length; for example anā means "here is" or "behold" but ana, with no macron, means a cave.

V. GLOSSARY

<i>aho</i> (weft)	the strands that cross the warp
<i>harakeke</i>	New Zealand flax
Hauraki	the tribes who traditionally inhabited the region of harbors, islands and peninsulas in Aotearoa/New Zealand stretching from Mahurangi, north of Auckland, to Katikati near Tauranga.
<i>iwi</i>	tribe
<i>kākahu</i>	cloaks
<i>kahu hururu</i>	highly-prized feather cloaks
<i>kete</i>	baskets
<i>mana</i>	prestige
mordant	The agent that fixes the dye color
motif	a recurring theme, element, or design in an artwork
<i>muka</i>	fiber found inside the flax leaf
plaiting	The technique used in <i>raranga</i> ; interlacing left-and right hand strands; similar to braiding
<i>raranga</i>	Māori weaving technique of interlacing left-and right-hand strands
<i>tapu</i>	sacred; subject to religious restrictions that protect sacred objects, beings or places
<i>taniko</i>	a pre-European finger weaving technique used to decorate the borders of garments. Also refers to the patterns themselves.
<i>taonga</i>	treasures
<i>whāriki</i>	woven floor mats
<i>whatu</i>	Māori weaving technique in which the wefts are twisted around the warps
<i>whenu</i> (warp)	The strands or base that supports the weft

VI. BIBLIOGRAPHY and WEBLIOGRAPHY

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String Games

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Gryski, Camilla. *Cat's Cradle, Owl's Eyes: A Book of String Games*. William Morrow and Company, New York, 1984. Illustrated by Tom Sankey.

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www.Maori-arts.com/weaving/index.htm

A Māori arts website

www.aucklandmuseum.com/site_resources/EducationPDF/Māori_01RarangaTuturu.pdf

Raranga Tuturu Māori Education Kit, Auckland Museum. This education kit looks at the traditional Māori weaving

www.learningmedia.co.nz/ngata/

Māori to English/English to Māori word translation

www.maori.org.nz/

The main Māori culture site on the net. Includes links to many other Māori sites

history-nz.org/maori5.html

The Māori in New Zealand history

<http://maaori.com/people/>

A brief outline of Māori history both before and after the coming of Europeans to Aotearoa New Zealand, and some notes on Māori culture. Includes the Māori Creation myth.

VII. VISUAL SCANNING

Scanning is meant to guide the viewer in looking at a work of art. To avoid tedium, one may choose not to use all six points during each scanning.

1. SUBJECT

Subject is usually a good starting place, but should one of the other points “speak” to the viewer first, by all means, begin there.

What is the subject of the work?

What objects can be identified or recognized?

If there is no imagery, the formal qualities may be the subject (line, shape, color, etc.)

2. COMPOSITION

Identify the formal qualities (line, color, shape, form, etc.)

How are these formal qualities organized?

repetition

contrast

balance

movement

scale

unity

visual rhythm

3. TECHNIQUE & MEDIUM

How was the work made? (painting, sculpture, prints, textiles, installation, etc.)

Does the particular technique contribute to the total? How?

4. EXPRESSION

What is the role of cultural conventions? (Egyptian, for example)

What is the mood or emotional content?

What is the message or meaning?

What has the artist done to “send” the message?

5. CONTEXT (STYLES)

How is the work a product of a particular culture?

Where and how does the work fit into history?

6. CRITIQUE

Has the artist succeeded in expressing thoughts, emotions, and ideas? How?

Viewer’s response: like or dislike. Why?

How can a work that one dislikes still be a valid statement of the artist?

Prepared by W. Ron Crosier, Museum Education Specialist, 2004

VIII. COMMON CURRICULUM GOALS

The suggested discussions and activities included in this packet can be used to support the following Common Curriculum Goals developed by the Oregon Department of Education. For specific benchmarks for your grade level check with your school district or on the Oregon Public Education Network (O.P.E.N.) www.ode.state.or.us/search/results/?id=53

The Arts

Aesthetics and Criticism

- Use knowledge of technical, organizational and aesthetic elements to describe and analyze one's own art and the art of others.
- Respond to works of art, giving reasons for preferences.

Historical and Cultural Perspectives

- Identify both common and unique characteristics found in work of art from various time periods and cultures.
- Understand that the arts have a historical connection.
- Explain how a work of art reflects the artist's personal experience in a society or culture.
- Understand how the arts serve a variety of personal, professional, practical and cultural needs.

Create, Present, and Perform

- Apply artistic elements and technical skills to create, present and/or perform works of art for a variety of audiences and purposes.
- Communicate verbally and in writing, using knowledge of the arts to describe and/or evaluate one's own artwork.
- Express ideas, moods and feelings through various art forms.

Language Arts

Reading

- Connect reading selections to other texts, experiences, issues and events.

Writing

- Use a variety of written forms (e.g. journals, essays, short stories, poems, research papers) to express ideas and multiple media to create projects, presentations and publications.

Speaking and Listening

- Communicate knowledge of the topic, including relevant examples, facts, anecdotes and details.
- Demonstrate effective listening strategies.

Media and Technology

- Acquire information from print, visual and electronic sources, including the Internet.

Social Sciences

Geography

- Understand the spatial concepts of location, distance, direction, scale, movement, and region.
- Use maps and other geographic tools and technologies to acquire, process, and report information from a spatial perspective.
- Locate major physical and human (cultural) features of the Earth.
- Understand how people and the environment are interrelated.

History

- Analyze cause and effect relationships, including multiple causalities.
- Interpret and reconstruct chronological relationships.
- Understand recognize, and interpret change and continuity over time.

Math

- Analyze characteristics and properties of two- and three-dimensional geometric shapes and develop mathematical arguments about geometric relationships.
- Use visualization, spatial reasoning, and geometric modeling to solve problems.













