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A conversation between artists Fiona Amundsen, Dieneke Jansen, Natalie Robertson and curator Charlotte Huddleston.

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Charlotte: The potential for photography to represent and address notions of reality and truth is at the centre of the conceptual enquiry under the title *Kenosis* developed by Gilberto González for Fotonoviembre 2017. In response, I think we should begin our conversation with our understanding of this. By way of beginning: each of you work with lens-based media—both still and moving image—using techniques of documentary practices. This is the unifying thread for the exhibition *Before is Now—Ko Muri Ko Nāianeī* as your work is focused on quite different subjects—cultural and community histories and environmental protection; gentrification, social justice and the rights of government housing tenants; and the involvement of Japan in the Asia Pacific Theatre of War of World War Two.

Gilberto's concept of *Kenosis* refers to Jacques Derrida's use of the term, where photography is a cenotaph of 'something that has happened, that no longer exists', and therefore is an archival form.[1] In Derrida's words, 'one keeps the archive of "some thing"... which took place once and is lost, that one keeps as such....a sort of cenotaph: an empty tomb...is there anything photographic without kenosis?'[2] So the image remains firmly in the past and coupled with that, as Gilberto goes on to say, Derrida's position can also be understood from the viewpoint of

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Gilberto cites three images that are key to his realisation of *Kenosis* and I want to pick up on Gordon Matta-Clark's *Conical Intersect* (1975) in particular. I am interested in the position that the work 'conceals the paradox of how, once as recorded images, actions to protest against contemporary urban speculation are turned into commodities for the voracious art market.'^[3] Putting the art market aside, I want to think about the more general commodification of artwork and its content in an exhibition context. How do you position yourselves as exhibiting artists in relation to the often sensitive content of your work? Sensitive because it involves the representation of people and their lives, their struggles, their trauma, which while it might be about the past, it is also firmly in the present, and therefore also has a future. This positioning is the crux of our response to the invitation to exhibit in Fotonoviembre 2017 and is made known through the title *Before is Now—Ko Muri Ko Nāianeī* (a bilingual title that is English translated into Māori), and through my suggestion that the archive is considered as a relationship. That the archive is not something to be retrieved from the past, but something that we are in relation to, and coexist with. How do you work to reconcile the relationships you have with those represented in your work with your practices as exhibiting artists?

Fiona: This is something I grapple with a lot. I'm working with intricately layered histories and experiences connected to specific WWII Asia Pacific Theatre narratives, experiences and events. This raises important ethical questions concerning not only who gets the right to represent and work with these now 72+ year old histories, but also the complexity of working with this via translation across time, culture, and language *into* image. I often think about how to live such ethics in relationship to my own selfhood. Here it is important to locate myself within my work in the sense that I have been influenced by my personal connection to Japan, which although it has changed over the last decade it has fundamentally influenced how I see, and why I'm so interested in the Asia Pacific Theatre. I am super aware that my subjective connection needs to be problematised away from a simple rationale

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experiences have to the present, as well as how to work with this currency, regardless of who you are and where you come from.

In saying this, I'm cognisant of the ethical dilemmas my work throws up not just for viewers, but for me too; particularly the ethics of using a lens to work with marginalised experiences that are clearly not mine. I think this is where *connecting* becomes really important in the sense that this is where relationship starts; it's where listening begins, but through making images. However I think caution is required too in the sense that it's important to acknowledge that even when an ethical listening, relating and connecting are trying to be embodied I still have niggling doubts that ask:

am I putting words in your mouth? Am I thinking I know you when I don't? Am I stereotyping you, reinventing you, characterising you wrongly, in my own terms, in my own image? Am I corrupting you? Am I using you merely to refine my own limits? Am I only silencing you once more, by standing in your place, speaking with your voice, commanding you to speak at all? In claiming to give you voice, am I actually stealing your voice, and also stealing your right to silence – commanding you to open up and share what you know?[4]

Again, this kind of questioning must be asked of any kind of relationship—particularly when a camera is involved—regardless of if there's a so called right to represent it. What I mean by this, and to be slightly provocative, I find problematic claims that suggest if there is a bloodline access (between the image-maker and what they are imaging) then the resulting representations will somehow automatically equate to ethical representations. In saying this, I'm not referring to the importance for people, whose lives, experiences, bodies, narratives, histories, and cultures have been repeatedly marginalised and violently butchered through white colonial capitalist

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relationships. Doesn't representation start with a relationship, either or not.

To bring this back to lens-based media, I think it's important to think about how relationships and ethics aren't actually a material property of an image. What I am meaning is we cannot see ethics, in spite of the camera's so called ability to visually deliver. This makes me think of the idea of a listening, as opposed to seeing, camera. This originates with Māori filmmaker Barry Barclay; particularly his statement 'I believe we might do well to further explore how to make the camera a listener. As a Māori, you are taught how to listen, you sit at the feet and open your ears. You have "no right to know." The knowledge is gifted to you at appropriate times and appropriate places'.^[5] Barclay explored this, and other related material, in his text *Our Own Image: A Story of a Māori Filmmaker* (1990) where he contemplated how Māori ways of being could effectively become strategies for camera methods within documentary filmmaking.

I'm really interested in Barclay's idea of how a camera may enable a form of visual and ethical listening. However I think this requires huge amounts of trust in terms of what images are showing, be it literally visible or not, and how all this gets negotiated. What's more this is obviously difficult as the painful legacies of colonial representation are still very much in the present. Without doubt we need to be critical of the camera's role (and problematic origins) as connected to perpetuating capitalist imperial ideology.

I fear I may have backed myself into a corner now! To come back to your question Charlotte... I'm not sure the relationships with the people who feature in my work need reconciliation per se. Rather what's needed is resistance, meaning a resistance to assuming there might be some kind of representational scandal that needs exposing, or that I'm denying someone's agency. This brings me back to *trusting*—an active energized verb.

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interested in the potential to be moved, to take on a connected and active relationship between now and with past infiltrates the present. But this also means trusting in the people that I work with in the sense that they have trusted me with their stories, and trusted the artworks that will come out of the meaningful ongoing connections we form through the sharing of memory, story and listening. But to achieve all this trust listening must be privileged over knowing, over seeing.

Dieneke: Archives have a temporality and infinitude. Archives, like photographs, may suggest a fixity through context and power relations that affirm particular agendas, however they are always contingent and relational. My work *90DAYS+ Why is it Necessary for You to Move?* embraces the notion of a living archive. Like the Internet, it does not complete itself—relationships with people, images, and struggle are ongoing. I have had a relationship with the Tamaki Housing Group (THG) since 2012, when I first undertook site interventions as political gestures in support of their fight for State Housing and against the gentrification of Niki Rauti's community in Glen Innes, Auckland. One might consider the working methods of the project collaborative, and it is at Niki Rauti's request that my camera and I have been present throughout the days of occupation of her house after she received an eviction notice from the company that manages the housing for the government.[6] Niki directs many aspects of this - from what to record to editing. However, it would be delusional to think that the power relationship in the articulation of this archive is entirely collaborative. I must always be aware of holding the means and tools of production. With that comes a responsibility to listen, beyond observing reality. It is both a burden[7] and a privilege to accept the role of observing this community's reality and to become a trusted non-resident member of this activist housing group. In the project at large there is mutual respect—we are both archivers, we are both making visible what the dominant voice obscures and obliterates.

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land, some 10,000 kilometers away. This had asked me what people in Tenerife could make of the work – an important question to consider. Conditions of housing, boom and bust cycles of investment, gentrification and expulsion of communities currently dominate urban discourses as the disastrous consequences of late capitalism. Tenerife experiences related problems with offshore property investment and the British pre-Brexit buy-up. Consequences and legacies of colonialism manifest in land and home ownership, and its disregard for social justice proliferate in both Tenerife and Aotearoa, historically and currently. What do viewers make of this work when Aotearoa is so often projected as a paradise?

More broadly, public art institutions by their mandate share their real-estate and resources, however with documentary it is always at risk of carrying information about a group of powerless people to the socially powerful. In a desire for social change, this power relation also needs challenging. Charles Esche suggests there is an opportunity to use social democratic institutions of art as useful sources of material support, while finding strategies that transform our understanding of ourselves and the power structures of our existence.[8] My practice is driven by a desire to expand the potentialities of art, to sustain tensions between artistic and social critiques; to work simultaneously as artist/activist, cultural provoker/cultural producer.

In addressing ethics, social documentary photography has a problematic history, as ‘social work’ it has maintained the notion of charity, and essentialised the ‘other’ as needing rescue.[9] Therefore expanded documentary practices have this problematic historical relationship with moralism rather than revolutionary politics. Okwui Enwezor suggests that this is because it is caught in the tautological game of being both document and analysis.[10] With this awareness, my methods attempt to form a stronger relation with revolutionary politics, using a camera to help create social space and support listening. Relating does not require moral judgements, but requires a kaupapa (agreed upon foundational principles and values) of respect that includes social justice.

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from a position of care – it does not get me on the hook – it requires the kind of listening that from positions, ‘listening must be privileged over knowing, over seeing.’

Natalie: In this exhibition, my video work *Waiapu – Confluence to the Sea* shows a view from above a river, following it from the meeting point of two rivers – Tapuaeroa and Mata – to the Waiapu River mouth where it meets Te Moananui a Kiwa (the Pacific Ocean). The river is in environmental crisis. The deforestation that began back in the 1890s has had far reaching consequences that continue to impact land, ecologies and human lives now and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future. This type of slow-moving catastrophe[11] doesn’t emerge from a single moment or event. The impacts are therefore not traumatic in the usual sense of the word, but are evident after every storm when acres of land erode into the river, or when endless dust stirs up off the degraded river bed in north-easterly summer winds. It might appear on the surface that there is no relationship to reconcile here. There are no people represented in front of the camera. However, for Ngāti Porou, my Māori tribe, the river is an ancestral mother and home to many beings. Taking on the task of ‘representing’ an ancestral mother requires a different form of ethic than when negotiating with an individual. Earlier this year (March 2017), Te Awa Tupua (Whanganui River Claims Settlement) Bill passed into New Zealand law conferring a legal personality on the Whanganui River.[12] ‘A legal person is an entity that has the same rights and responsibilities as a person. In New Zealand law, a number of entities have legal personhood including companies, trusts, and societies.’[13] According to the Act, the purpose is to acknowledge the special ancestral relationship the Whanganui tribal people have with the river and therefore to ‘provide for the river’s long-term protection and restoration by making it a person in the eyes of the law’.[14] In the landmark Act, in Subpart 2 the Whanganui River is recognised ‘as an indivisible and living whole,... from the mountains to the sea, and all its physical and metaphysical elements.’[15] My tribe signed our Ngāti Porou Claims Settlement with the New Zealand Government in 2012, followed in 2014 by the Waiapu River Accord. These agreements acknowledge the sacred relationship we have with the Waiapu River, and legislate for a restoration process.[16] However, as a member of the tribe, I don’t require our river to have a

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you might wonder how I do this, especially when the river includes all the elements from the mountains, many kilometres inland, to the sea. My people are from the river mouth. Everything flows to the sea. I walk down to the river mouth and explain out loud what I am doing. I meet with the most senior tribal elders of the river and discuss with them what I am doing, and ask for their karakia, their prayerful blessings. After making the work, I take it to senior tribal elders to show them. I invite city-dwelling members of the tribe to attend the exhibition openings, and to lead the ceremonial encounters with the work in the gallery. I work with heritage language speakers to learn more about the stories of the river that are held in oral history archives.

The soundtrack to *Waiapu—Confluence to the Sea* is a melodic chant sung by Rhonda Tibble—a language teacher and heritage speaker who is the great-granddaughter of Matoroa Ngarimu Reedy, one of the most senior women of the tribe in the twentieth century. It is a mōteatea, a form of Māori oratory storytelling told in song form. This song *He Tangi Mo Pahoe – A Lament for Pahoe*, tells of a young man swept down the Waiapu river by floodwaters while trying to raft it.[17] He is dragged down to the riverbed, tumbled by the stones and then washed out to the mouth of the river. Pahoe's body is found by his grandfather tangled in driftwood. The lament is an expression of grief of this traumatic event. It is the archive of tribal knowledge, containing within it a map of the river, references to fish species and to an ancestor long since passed on. The song was written down in the 1920s, after having been composed many years prior, possibly in the late 1800s. Matoroa, along with others, recorded many mōteatea, but this one has not been found in the archives.[18] No longer sung within the tribe; the decision to revive it for this artwork is my way of being in a living relationship to our ancestors in this present moment.

Charlotte: Next I want to discuss another aspect of the lens-based image – that of its capacity for truth. Suspicion of both the intention and the reception of an image that is also contained in the *Kenosis* concept is especially complex as we are overcome with images, many of which are exploitative, attached to deliberate falseness and

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curator Erika Balsom's text that comments that:

photography's great capacity is to focus, not just optically but also—and correlatively—conceptually; that is to say, it is able to place the focus, the point of attention, on a certain issue (visually) ignoring or silencing the rest of the context that is left outside of the focus. Interpreting the "truthful document" from a photographic perspective consists in underscoring and adding and, at the same time, in ignoring part of the information that it comes from.[19]

And the second reference is Erika Balsom's essay *The Reality-Based Community* that you shared with me Fiona, in particular her statement that 'All objectivity is situated; all vision is partial. Simple truths and totalizing meanings are the real fictions.'^[20]

Both appear to align at the point where there is a deliberate choice about what to focus on, but they seem to diverge somewhat when talking about what is left out, or how something becomes left out. Balsom at least seems to be more positive about this situation as a congenital matter of fact around position – objectivity is situated, vision is partial – whereas Barrena's choice of words seems to lean towards a more calculated approach to omission – ignoring or silencing context. The difference is in how an image is being related to; Barrena is talking about viewing or receiving an image, where Balsom is talking about making images, about practice. With the making and the reception of images in mind, in working with lens-based media and documentary techniques what to you is crucial in bringing viewers' attention to the specific contexts and stories in your work?

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otherwise sits outside fields of vision. Here resides the potential for operating outside of propaganda and 'common sense', that which Jacques Rancière refers to as 'the distribution of the sensible'.^[21] Filming and photographing might provide possibilities not just for the visibility of resistance, but for politics itself. Here I refer to Rancière's politics as a place of dissensus, emphasising the value and import of contestation, thereby supporting a space of difference. More than turning a social issue into an aesthetic one, an invited camera presence can be an assertion. The moment of capture, the presence of the camera, while observing and archiving can also add dimension to the reality and labour of activism.

It is not the lens that witnesses, it is the viewer who is called to be trusted witness and form relations. This is a relationship with viewer, with people, with place, with histories, with moments of its making, with the mahi (labour) of its events – eventful and uneventful. It is a relationship to each other, all of which is contingent.

To problematise the lens's relationship with reality, questions reality itself. Within the physical reality of 'housing as a commodity', the fight for housing as a condition and the struggle for social justice is a reality. In the case of *90DAYS+ Why is it Necessary for You to Move?* this is Niki Rauti's reality and the reality of her community. At the core of this activism are several approaches to visibility, to being heard, to which this work contributes. A desire to enable and expand space for politics is crucial to this project. My ways of working attempt to question both art and activism agendas, and to explore gestures that traverse the didactic and the poetic.^[22] My approach aims to expand capacities for listening in the hope that it activates our rights to politics and our passion for social justice. As mentioned, this aims to do more than turning a social issue into an aesthetic one. Approaches to visibility vary across this activism and in *90DAYS+ Why is it Necessary for You to Move?* this particularly focuses on the a living archive, with Niki Rauti's desire to '...document everything, to get a true indication of what's going on'.

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approaches, they are connected through a cultural context. The common element that the work hinges on is the song *He Tangi Mo Pahoe – A Lament for Pahoe* first published in *Nga Moteatea – The Songs* in 1928.[23] I tracked down a copy of the first edition of the book which features many songs collected by Ngāti Porou leader and politician Āpirana Ngata. This is a collection of songs that are tribal narratives. Often taking the form of love songs, they contain a lot of information, at times including mapping systems that outline tribal territories; communication of values and philosophies; and information on things like fishing grounds and ecology. A number of these were recorded in the 1930s and 1940s. Ngata collected ninety for his first publication. Altogether, there have been four volumes of his collection of songs published, numbering in the hundreds. A hugely significant source of tribal knowledge, Ngata's *Nga Moteatea* signaled a shift from collation of songs (as undertaken by George Grey in the early 1850s), to the vital task of contextualising them.[24] As pre-colonisation Māori was an oral culture, the songs were one of the central methods of telling tribal histories. In 1923, five years before publishing the book of songs, Ngata had established the Board of Māori Ethnological Research to ensure that Māori knowledge would have a place in academia. In photographing the cover of the first edition, with the frontispiece and compliments slip stamped with the Board of Māori Ethnological Research, and the pages with *He Tangi Mo Pahoe*, I wanted to consider how Māori knowledge had shifted from oral memory into this academic publication in the wake of colonisation. By the 1890s, dispossession from land, disease and warfare had contributed to a devastating decline in the Māori population, resulting in a diminishing record of tribal knowledge.[25] In the early 1900s, this was compounded by the impacts caused by prohibition of speaking Māori in schools.[26] In the book publication, the words are recorded but the rangi or the rhythmical tune and the musical structure have been lost from living memory. Certain songs are sung by particular groups or families, so sometimes a song dies when a key person passes away. For me, the political backdrop of British colonisation of Aotearoa (New Zealand) is necessary to begin understanding Māori laments for loss of land, culture and knowledge. Ngata understood that art and cultural practices are central to cultural survivance.[27] Another significant aspect of my work with this material and place is that the restoration of songs can contribute to restoration of rivers. Therefore, making videos and

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Fiona: With my practice I'm invested in asking, 'how is the documentary embedded in its social conditions, and how can it work on transforming them?'[28] For me, this connects to trying to reignite the significance of the camera's indexical connection to a physical reality. This is in direct contrast to the last thirty or so years of documentary theory and practice, with its 'deep and pervasive suspicion of its relationship to the real and, more particularly, a robust rejection of its observational mode, a strain that minimises the intervention of the [practitioner], eschews commentary, and accords primacy to lens-based capture'.[29] Part of this critique concerns the ways in which reality was situated as a mere construction, where a lens-based image could only ever function as a simulacra copy. Furthermore, this simulated version of reality was deemed truer than the actual reality from which it derived, meaning the copy was more 'authentic' than the physical world that had assisted its production. This effectively 'lifts the heavy burdens of gravity, belief, and action, effecting a great levelling whereby all [lens-based image] statements float by, cloaked in doubt'.[30] Such thinking (as we have discussed above) thereby raises significant questions concerning how documentary images may induce forms of visibility, witnessing, presence and ultimately ethics.

My work as part of this exhibition is contextualised within this field of contemporary documentary theory and practice, particularly Erika Balsom's recent essay 'The Reality-Based Community'. Although I am interested in this fickle relationship that images have to reality, my focus concerns how this functions socio-politically to enable heightened relationships and connections to the specific reality being represented, which is in this case involves a relatively unknown story linked to the Asia Pacific Theatre. Accordingly, key to my practice is Balsom's question – in a so-called post truth context – of what is required to allow images to communicate something of the world that they have an undeniable indexical relationship to. In other words, can a critical distrust of lens-based imagery's relationship to representation be acknowledged, but also pushed aside to allow space for what images can

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essayism, heightened subjectivism, and deconstruction as new methods to overly critique the ways in which documentary and lens-based media construct the representation of reality.[31] Although this is theoretically, ethically and practically important—something that my work does not take for granted—Balsom argues that through such concentrated critique of reality's construction something is lost. This perpetuates the idea that 'reality was seen to be an effect of images rather than their cause; [lens-based] truth was debunked as a discursive construction, the power of the indexical guarantee deflated'.[32]

By glossing over the undeniable connection that images have to the reality they represent, powerful conceptions of belief, trust, truth, imagination and care are stuck in cyclic loops of critical scepticism. Such thinking reflects a certain socio-cultural position of privilege, meaning to be able to write off reality as something not made of real physical phenomena, but rather as one of total construction, is not afforded to all social groups and communities: the *constructing* of reality is far from egalitarian. Accordingly, rather than simply folding to the assertion that reality is total artifice, and therefore nothing is to be trusted, Balsom calls for a different thesis, which I align myself with. Balsom's 'reality-based community' is therefore interdependent with embracing reality and problematic ideas of truth, as well as the idea that knowledge can be gained – consciousness raised – by believing in what is being witnessed: all aided by the presence of a lens. However, this is a tricky position for documentary images to take up because 'unlike the written word, [they have] an indexical bond to the real, offering a mediated encounter with physical reality in which a heightened attunement to the actuality of our shared world becomes possible. But precisely [because of this], documentary is simultaneously a battleground, a terrain upon which commitments to reality are challenged and interrogated'.[33]

So to bring this back to your question Charlotte... As you know, I'm interested in the historical context of the Asia Pacific Theatre of WWII, specifically the hidden trauma memories, feelings, and experiences of this conflict that

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how a lens may be able to stutter, paradigmatic scenes, cultural histories and narratives associated with New Zealand Pacific Theatre events are officially memorialised. The work in this exhibition brings together a present-day audio recording that comes from a Prisoner of War campsite – now functioning as a memorial – in Cowra Australia, with an interview with Japanese former prisoner Teruo Murakami, now aged 97, and an archival image held at the Australian War Memorial Museum. The audio from the campsite operates as a type of externalised official voiceover that tells the story of how at this site just over 1,000 Japanese WWII POWs attempted a mass breakout – resulting in 235 deaths. This functions in direct contrast to Mr Murakami's voice which stutters and falters as he slips in and out of recollection, and resisting remembering his participation in this event: the archival image stands in as another form of official memory to the event. Throughout these various accounts, there is a constant alluding to memory itself, meaning Murakami goes a certain way to remembering but then he stops, and the reasons for this are never fully resolved or answered by the work – there is a blurriness between him simultaneously not being able to remember and not wanting to. This is what I am most interested in. Even although three forms are brought together – Mr Murakami's testimony, the memorial site and the archival image – they all fall short in the sense of providing viewers any exact certainty about this historical event. That is what I want to give attention to; not so much a disbelief in images themselves (or the reality that formed them), but the kinds of relationships that they bring into being. In particular, human relationships that grapple with the legacies of how this violent past still lives on in the bodies of the present. For me, this is super important as these bodies are literally dying of old age – I keep asking myself how a camera can help us to learn something of these small stories of humanity before they are gone; particularly in light of the current political context of the Asia Pacific region which is far from only 'constructed'.

Natalie: In 2009, I interviewed Māori language activist Huirangi Waikerepuru about the role of photography in Te Ao Māori – the Māori world – in order to better understand my own negotiations with my camera – when to use it, when to be fully present to the situation without the intervening lens or when it was required to be present.

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recording history, adding that our mana rangatiranga is now photographic.[34] I have written elsewhere that rangatiranga is 'a cornerstone paradigm for Māori.'[35] It 'is a dynamic not static concept, emphasising the reciprocity between the human, material and non-material worlds.'[36] Here, mana rangatiranga (roughly translated as authority, trusteeship and self-determination) is understood to be an expression of culture through forms that may include film, television stories, songs, carvings or photographs. To return to my earlier point about river personhood legislation, Claims Settlements and the 2014 Waiapu River Accord, I see my current work as a way to commence recording stories about the river that communicate her current state. Using mōteatea as vehicles to understanding Māori modalities of learning, I want to create new mōteatea that take the form of video or photographic series. My intention is to contribute to tribal knowledge that can be used not just in gallery contexts but also 'back home' on the marae, working with local Ngāti Porou rangatahi (youth), as I will be late 2017 during the New Zealand summer. I'll be showing the video of the river and of the erosion as a way to develop knowledge about the relationship between the forests, the rivers, the land and sea. That's my immediate contribution. My challenge to myself is to dive into activating photographic rangatiranga, deepening my personal protocols for working with the reciprocity between the human, material and non-material worlds. I'll be back talking with the river, with O Hine Waiapu, and with the trees and the birds and the fish. Rhonda Tibble and I plan on teaching people back home to sing our mōteatea to revitalise it. I imagine one day hearing it sung again on our marae at home, in sight of the river. The photographs and videos are not endpoints in themselves as artworks. I see them as being part of the past, the now and the future, in a helix of time and space as ways to connect back to our places, our songs and our culture.

In response to Erika Balsom's discussion of the impact of documentary image-making's indexical bond to the real that makes it 'simultaneously a battleground, a terrain upon which commitments to reality are challenged and interrogated' I see that my video work can offer a heightened attunement to the non-human species and the personhood of the Waiapu River.[37] Simultaneously, it might serve as a reminder to visibly recall the signed

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stories, recording history as a resistance to slow catastrophes that may otherwise remain invisible. [30]

Charlotte: All of your responses have a strong presence of care and consideration – particularly on listening. The importance you place on ethical conduct within the specific relationships with people, and in your work Natalie with place and the ancestral relationships of care with the environment is a commitment to a reciprocal duty of care. Part of this care also involves the meeting of potential problems – and even sustaining tensions in the work as you note Dieneke – of things such as representation, knowing, understanding, the problems of the negative reception of modes of social documentary as ‘social work’ and the ‘othering’ that compounds this. As you note Fiona the relationships and ethics are not a material property of an image, they cannot be *seen* but are located in the conduct of the relationships.

The Reality-Based Community has been a helpful tool and reference for my thinking about your work and about this exhibition, and although it has been well quoted in our conversation I want to finish with another reference to the text. Balsom makes the point that any assertions that reality has collapsed under post-truth, fake news, and conspiracies is really a hand-wringing proclamation of unreality that only creates confusion and allows escape, effectively paralysing any counter response. Following from this she takes Karl Rove’s 2004 derisive judgement of the reality-based community as ‘people who believe that solutions emerge from...judicious study of discernable reality’ declaring this judicious study to be ‘a task of the greatest urgency...because so many claim it is not the way the world really works anymore.’[39] Balsom is arguing that we have a duty of care that needs to be honoured.

The opposite of reality is falseness, and of truth it is lies. In *All About Love: New Visions* bell hooks writes, ‘More than ever before we, as a society, need to renew a commitment to truth telling...In today’s world we are taught to

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...form because it might be unpalatable and social and material privilege provides a barrier from its harshness, as you write Dieneke it is not the lens but the viewer that is called to witnesses and to form relations.

I recently read *The Interregnum: Rethinking New Zealand* collection of essays edited by Morgan Godfrey.[41] The book's title and grounding comes from Antonio Gramsci's use of interregnum: 'The crisis consists precisely in the fact that the old is dying and the new cannot be born; in this interregnum a great variety of morbid symptoms appear.'[42] The self-devouring of reality and truth that we are experiencing feels exactly like a morbid symptom. The final text in *The Interregnum*—'The Politics of Love' by Max Harris—offers us love, a presence I feel in Balsom's appeal for us to 'imagine a reality-based community together.'[43] 'Love is a way of relating' and this is what underpins the the ethical considerations given and practiced in the relationships you have.[44] The ways you are working follow bell hooks's love ethic, which when embraced 'means that we utilize all the dimensions of love —"care, commitment, trust, responsibility, respect, and knowledge"—in our everyday lives. We can successfully do this only by cultivating awareness. Being aware enables us to critically examine our actions to see what is needed...' [45]

If we practice a loving criticality through cultivating awareness then there exists the space for difference, ecologies of knowledges, experiences and understandings that reside in relationships of care, not power and domination. This is far reaching. In your work, there is a collective honoring of relationality and relationships; memory is partial, record keeping is partial, images and texts are partial, interpretation too is partial. The image is undeniably a powerful tool and while there are many problematic aspects in both construction and reception, real value lies in the generous, loving and critical practice of listening, which these practices offer to us.

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BEFORE IS NOW - KO MURI KO NAIANEI EXHIBITION

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