

THE PHYSICS ROOM

CONTEMPORARY ART SPACE

Heidi Brickell

PAKANGA FOR THE LOSTGIRL

5 August - 11 September 2022

Curated by Cameron Ah Loo-Matamua

PAKANGA FOR THE LOSTGIRL brings together works by Heidi Brickell (Te Hika o Papauma, Ngāti Apakura, Ngāti Kahungunu, Rangitāne, Rongomaiwahine) in a variety of media: painting, drawing, sculpture, and installation. Brickell's project is founded on the whare structure¹, as a space that synthesises a plurality of languages: visual and oral, metaphorical and spatial. The project is also about our internal landscape, and how this informs the way we engage with the world. Brickell articulates the process of making work as an ongoing wānanga around how we relate to that which surrounds us: as individuals, and within a wider whakapapa.

PAKANGA FOR THE LOSTGIRL was initiated and developed by the artist with Cameron Ah Loo-Matamua, curator at St Paul St Gallery in Tāmaki Mākaaurau. Reconfigured for The Physics Room in Ōtautahi, this showing includes another work, *Kūtorohia these uaua* (2022). This work sits at the threshold of the gallery, large and green as a moss-covered rock. Its title refers to the clenching of muscles, in anticipation of movement: the shift in physical energy that comes with a

desire to learn, and with ease of mind.

Further works are suspended vertically from the ceiling, and reach almost to the floor. Painted on both sides of large triangular pieces of ply, they are multi-dimensional, with bulk, weight, and exposed edges. The picture plane is punctured, washed with pigment, layered with canvas, lined with string and glue, and threaded through with rākau on which the work is balanced. A series of ladders, each rākau 'rung' bound with cotton, beeswax and glue, also connect ceiling to floor. These works compel the viewer to move into one line of sight, then move again to another, so that the act of looking involves the whole body. At the same time, the gallery space itself comes to feel like a prism: allowing certain angles or emitting certain experiences of light.

Visual languages evolving alongside the spoken language of te reo Māori continue to influence Brickell's works. Specifically, she speaks about Ihenga, the whare whakairo carved by Lyonel Grant for the Waiariki Polytechnic in Te Arawa, as having a

significant impact on her thinking. Whakairo enables the mind to travel between past and present sensibilities in a way that is non-linear; Brickell notes, "...the way a whare tipuna functions as a sort of a psychological space, albeit a shared, communal one, is something I'm figuring out in my personal practice. How art can reflect an authentic mind-space, for someone living simultaneously in Māori and Pākehā worlds."

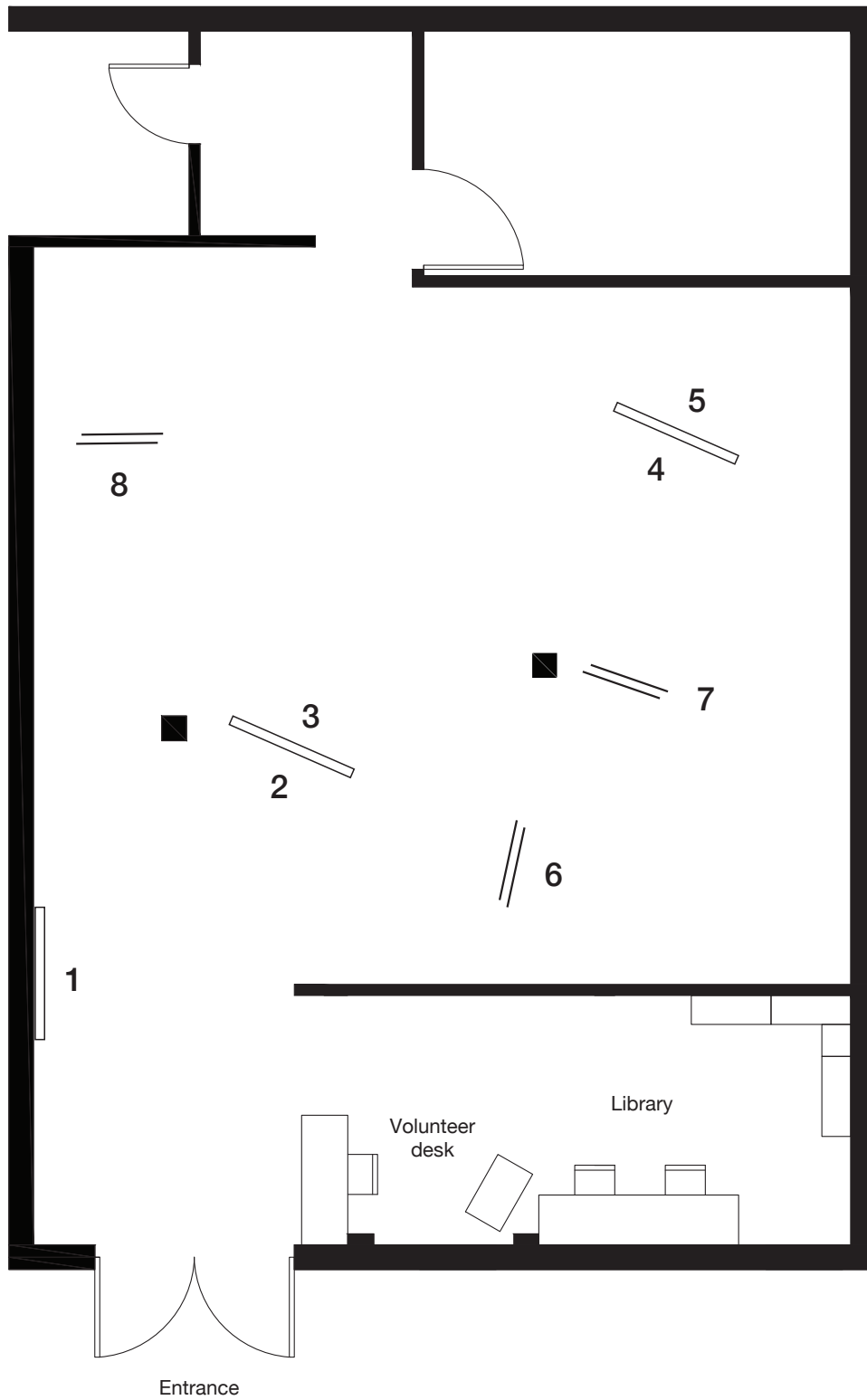
Thinking about language, translation and transformation, is also foundational in this work. The exhibition's title, *PAKANGA FOR THE LOSTGIRL*, makes reference to *te hinengaro*, translated from Māori to English as 'mind, heart, consciousness, psychology, spleen' (P.M Ryan, 1995), or mind-heart continuum. Held within the Māori kupu are the words for 'girl' and 'lost'. These are images that the artist continues to reflect on in relation to living within two languages: what is transformed, what is lost, what continues to wear and change through use over time. In Brickell's research for this exhibition one focus was the etymology of the word *hinengaro*, tracing it in conversation with *tangata-moana* through a *whakapapa* connected to Sāmoa (*finagalo*), Tahiti (*hinaaro*), Marquesas (*hinenao*), and other *motu*.

A further act of translation can be found in the works' surface forms, in which she brings together interpretations of *tohu* Māori with an invocation of formalist geometric abstraction. Brickell describes this approach as a "copulation of *ariā*": a space of engagement where ideas proliferate.

¹ Within *te ao* Māori the *whare* takes many forms, such as *te whare tipuna*, *te whare tangata*, *te whare tapawhā*, all of which speak of the cultivation of connections (*whakapapa*).

List of works

1. ***Kūtorohia these uaua, 2022.***
Cotton duck canvas, cotton twine, fluid acrylic, pigmented tempera, rabbit skin glue. This work was originally made for *Whānau Mārama*, curated by Jade Townsend, 2022. *Kūtorohia these uaua* is shown courtesy of Season, Tāmaki Makaurau.
2. ***Mauri rourou rau: he wehenga, he herenga: matawha mauī, 2022.***
Meranti ply, canvas, rabbit skin glue, string derived from torn canvas edge, acrylic, pigmented egg tempera, cotton twine, beeswax, PVA.
3. ***Mauri rourou rau: he wehenga, he herenga: matatoru mauī, 2022.***
Meranti ply, canvas, rabbit skin glue, string derived from torn canvas edge, acrylic, pigmented egg tempera, cotton twine, beeswax, PVA.
4. ***Mauri rourou rau: he wehenga, he herenga: matawha kātāu, 2022.***
Meranti ply, canvas, rabbit skin glue, string derived from torn canvas edge, acrylic, pigmented egg tempera, cotton twine, beeswax, PVA.
5. ***Mauri rourou rau: he wehenga, he herenga: matatoru kātāu, 2022.***
Meranti ply, canvas, rabbit skin glue, string derived from torn canvas edge, acrylic, pigmented egg tempera, cotton twine, beeswax, PVA.
6. ***Mauri rourou rau: he ara heke, he ara piki: tahi, 2022.***
Peka rākau, cotton twine, beeswax, acrylic, PVA and superglue.
7. ***Mauri rourou rau: he ara heke, he ara piki: rua, 2022.***
Peka rākau, cotton twine, beeswax, acrylic, PVA and superglue.
8. ***Mauri rourou rau: he ara heke, he ara piki: toru, 2022.***
Peka rākau, cotton twine, beeswax, acrylic, PVA and superglue.



Heidi Brickell (Te Hika o Papauma, Ngāti Apakura, Ngāti Kahungunu, Rangitāne, Rongomaiwahine) lives and works in Tāmaki Makaurau. Recent solo exhibitions include *Alluvial Hours* at Laree Payne Gallery, Kirikiriroa (2021), and *Floundering Arms Swallowed by Pendent Whenua* at Paludal, Ōtautahi (2021). She was also in *Outgrowth* alongside Salome Tanuvasa at Motherġ (2020), and *Nine Māori Painters* at Tim Melville Gallery, both Tāmaki Makaurau (both 2020). Brickell was the 2021 recipient of the Molly Morpeth-Canaday Akel Award. In 2011 graduated with a BFA from Elam School of Fine Arts, The University of Auckland.

Cameron Ah Loo-Matamua (Sa Matamua; Sa Muagututi'a; Guangdong) is a writer, curator and educator based in Tāmaki Makaurau. They curated Heidi Brickell's project during their time as Curator at St Paul St Gallery, AUT, Tāmaki Makaurau. Cameron was also a co-curator of the two-part exhibition project *Two Oceans at Once* (with Charlotte Huddleston), which was shown at The Physics Room, Ōtautahi, in 2019. Cameron was the 2017 Education Intern at Artspace Aotearoa, working across both curatorial and public programming with a focus on Moana artists and thinkers, and has gone on to write for art publications nationally and internationally. They are about to begin a Masters in Creative Writing through The University of Auckland.

This text was adapted from an original written by Cameron Ah Loo-Matmua.

PAKANGA FOR THE LOSTGIRL was commissioned by Cameron Ah Loo-Matamua, for St Paul St Gallery, AUT, Tāmaki Makaurau, 6 May - 23 June 2022. *Kūtorohia these uaua* was originally made for *Whānau Mārama*, curated by Jade Townsend at Season, Tāmaki Makaurau, 2022. It is proudly hosted at The Physics Room, Ōtautahi, as a Te Waipounamu venue.