

# NEKE MOA: WEAR A STORY

## EDUCATION RESOURCE

McCAHON  
HOUSE

### About this resource

The vision for the Parehuia Education Resources is to connect ākonga to local artists, their work and their stories, and to grow students creative and critical thinking skills. In doing so, they will be able to see the value of art and stories made here in Aotearoa, and see themselves as makers of culture.

This resource [accompanies this video](#) and is aimed at ākonga in years 3-8 (or curriculum levels 1-4) and is designed as an adaptable toolkit for teachers to use selectively in devising their own units of classroom learning. Key sections are designed to be easily extractable as handouts for direct distribution to students. It is primarily devised for Visual Arts, but may also be used in Māori or Social Sciences learning areas.

This resource is also relevant for a majority of the level 1-4 achievement objectives in the New Zealand Curriculum for Visual Arts, especially *Understanding the Visual Arts in Context*, *Developing Ideas* and *Communicating and Interpreting*. It also connects to many of the Big Ideas outlined in the Curriculum, especially *Taonga Tuku Iho — Visual Arts is a medium to explore, discover, express and value te ao Māori*; *Whakapapa — Visual Arts descends from, embodies, and creates forms of cultural expression*; and *Visual Arts communicates ahurea tuakiri and evokes responses*.



Neke Moa  
Hāka  
2022  
paewai, kōwhatu turua, hemp, shell, peita, nīkau and hururoa  
(Atrina zelandica) holder  
Image courtesy of Season Aotearoa

Key themes: pūrākau and storytelling, te taiao (the environment), adornment

### Neke Moa

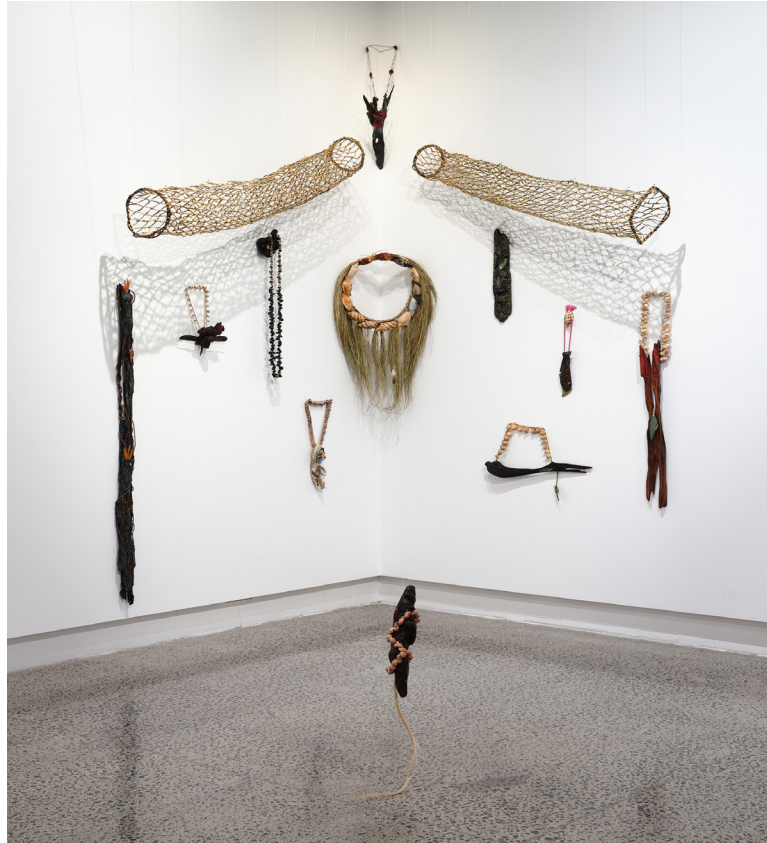
Born 1971, Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland  
lives and works in Ōtaki

Neke Moa (Ngāti Kahungunu ki Ahuriri, Kai Tahu, Ngāti Porou, and Ngāti Tūwharetoa) is an artist who works mostly with **adornment**—objects you can wear on your body, like jewellery. She finds most of her materials in nature, from the ngahere (forest) or the tahatai (beach) near her home in Ōtaki.

Neke describes her artworks as stories you can wear. She believes that stories, especially those about atua (Māori gods), are important because they help us understand who we are and bring people together.

*“A great way to share a story is to wear it—something that feels special to you—so you can pass it on to others.”*

**Adornment** is something added to a person or thing to make it special, beautiful, or meaningful, like jewellery, ribbons, or decorations.



Neke Moa  
*Te Papakāinga o Papaīra* (installation view), 2022  
Part of *A Stone, an Echo, a Sign*  
Objectspace, Tāmaki Makaurau  
Image courtesy of Objectspace

### Inquiry questions

- Watch [the video](#) of Neke and Jade. What are some of the materials they talk about Neke using to make her artworks? What other materials could we find in nature?
- Have you ever made something using natural materials? What did you use, and how did it feel to work with?
- Why do you think some artists prefer to use materials from their surroundings instead of buying them?
- Neke calls her artworks “stories you can wear.” What do you think she means by that?
- Have you ever worn something special that had a story behind it? What was it, and why was it important to you?
- Why do you think stories about atua (Māori gods) are important to Neke’s work?
- What’s a story you would like to share through art? How could you turn it into something wearable?
- Neke’s artworks are inspired by the place she lives (Ōtaki) and her Māori heritage. How can where we live or our culture influence the things we make?

Neke Moa  
Papaīra  
2022  
driftwood, bone, kūkupa (kererū) feathers, seaweed,  
seed necklace, muka, paint  
Image courtesy of Season Aotearoa



### **Making activity: Story Walk Adornment**

**Create a wearable artwork using natural rauemi (materials), inspired by a story from your surroundings.**

Go for a walk around your local park, forest (ngahere), beach (tahatai), school or even your neighbourhood—anywhere there is nature around you.

While on your walk, notice what is around you. What type of ground are you walking on, is it dirt, sand, concrete, grass? What plants can you see? Do you know their names?

As you walk, think of a story—it could be a Māori pūrākau (myth), a family story, or something personal.

Gather natural materials that connect to your story—leaves, shells, feathers, driftwood, or small stones. Make sure you collect your materials without harming yourself or te taiao (the environment). Try to collect things that are no longer living, such as leaves that have already fallen to the ground, rather than picking from the branches.

Spend time arranging the objects you have gathered. When you are ready, arrange your materials into a wearable piece, such as a necklace, bracelet, headpiece, or brooch.

Use string, flax (harakeke), or wire to connect the materials.

Think about how each piece represents part of your story—does a feather symbolise freedom? Does a shell represent the moana (ocean) in your story?

Once your adornment is complete, share your story with the class. Explain how the materials connect to the story and why you chose them.

*Variation: For younger tamariki, you could retell a well-known pūrākau, such as the tale of Maui, fishing up the North Island and collect materials that represent the moana, the fish, and the waka.*