

The author describes museum collections as “fragmented, partial... representations of people and things.” They definitely are. The household artifact collections that I have been examining in the course of a Santa Isabel Cultural Heritage Programme at first also appear to be fragmented and partial. The difference here is that these items have stories attached to them. In some cases, these are myths, though mostly they are historical accounts of their origin and relationship to the holder. These artifacts are connected through their stories.

Being focused on the physical appearance of an artifact, most collectors failed to recognize the importance of an artifact’s social “place,” so this information did not accompany the artifacts on their way to museums. However, I believe that much can still be done to give these museum collections life. Information we are collecting in Santa Isabel, through empowering and training village cultural investigators to seek out and photograph the artifacts held by village households and to document their stories, is being fed back to the British Museum to better inform its holdings.

I agree with the author’s idea that ethnographic collections could be reassembled or reclaimed by paying closer attention to the social practices of which they were once a part. However, to get the best from that step described by the author for “reassembling the collection,” I feel that the association with community should be through a continuing exchange of information, as we are doing through links between our Santa Isabel Cultural Heritage Programme and the British Museum (and, of course, our own Solomon Islands National Museum).

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Note

1. For visitor figures, see http://www.culture.gov.uk/what_we_do/museums_and_galleries/3375.aspx and <http://www.guardian.co.uk/culture/2011/dec/01/national-museums-double-numbers-free-entry>.

9

Artifacts in Waiting

Altered Agency of Museum Objects

Chantal Knowles

The museum is a repository for artifacts, where they can be stored, preserved, cared for, researched, and exhibited; through these systems and processes, they acquire value (Clifford 1988; see also the introduction to this volume). When museums actively acquire objects, enabling them to become part of a collection, the things are inscribed with categories and classifications and are frequently presented as authentic representations of a place, time, people, or culture. The classificatory system imposed by the museum may be alien to the makers or to previous owners, but it implies scientific value, research potential, and authenticity. The resultant cumulative collection is a product of the museum’s history and the individuals, in particular the curators, who work within its institutional framework. When scholars examine the history of research or display at a particular museum, the same artifacts are regularly brought to the fore, and consequently many other artifacts remain in waiting for a change in fashion or circumstance, for when a different curatorial gaze is turned on them.

Taking as a case study A.UC.767, a Māori *waka*, or canoe (figure 9.1), in the National Museums Scotland (NMS), I will examine the encounter between the artifact, artist, conservators, and curator during its restoration for exhibition in the new Pacific Gallery in 2011. This large sculptural piece had resided in the stores for at least a generation, and as curator of the Pacific collections and lead curator for the gallery, I was keen to see it go on permanent display.

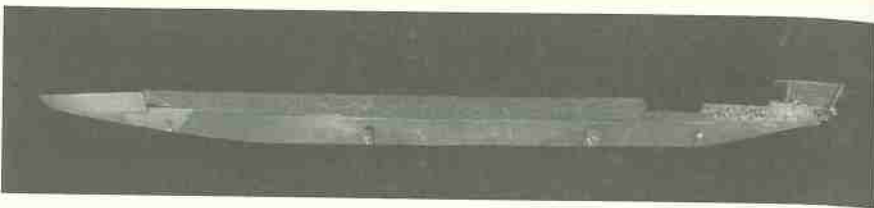


FIGURE 9.1

The waka A.UC.767 as she was examined in September 2006. The absence of a stern post and her degraded state are clearly visible. © National Museums Scotland.

It soon became clear that it was badly damaged, lacking a key feature of any war canoe—the *taurapa* (stern post), an intricately carved fretwork piece that rises high above the canoe hull and at the base of which would be seated the chief when the vessel was at sea. In the conservation workshops, a series of questions about the genesis of the canoe and its early history were raised, and it became apparent that the canoe was not what it was thought to be. The archival record suggested that its inherent complexities had led to its being overlooked by visiting researchers and the museum curators, and I therefore looked to members of the Māori community to better understand the object and find a solution that would enable its display and interpretation for a wider public.

This object is a conundrum; it survived nearly two hundred years of being ignored. The canoe was not reminiscent of other waka, being an ill-fitting assemblage of component parts, and hence did not fit the received museum categories. It has required active participatory engagement with the object to get beyond that. This project confronted the canoe as a marginalized object (Douglas 2010[1966]; the introduction to this volume), which was therefore unstable in its anomalous state. Rather than abandon the object in favor of something more complete and simpler to display, by bringing it back into place within Māori culture and museum practice, I sought to challenge people to engage with it, which became a key strategy of the project. The new gallery presented a unique opportunity to confront this artifact's ambiguity, address its historical importance, and make it accessible to a wider audience.

KNOWLEDGE AND CLASSIFICATION: WORDS AROUND THINGS

Early in the development of the new Pacific Gallery, the Māori canoe was identified as a key artifact. Principal drivers in choosing to include

it were the fact that it had not been on display within living memory and would therefore be new to the public and that it was a large object, thus considered to be a striking visual “hook” for the gallery. The canoe, described in the museum database as a war canoe, was incorporated into the gallery's brief and themes as such. The catalog also recorded that, at only twenty feet in length, it was considerably shorter than other known examples of Māori war canoes, which could reach up to a hundred feet in length, and was damaged to the extent that it would require significant conservation prior to display.

Museum Words

Analysis of the documentation, classification, and cultural context of the canoe became the starting point for the project that eventually unfolded. The original, undated, handwritten register entry read: “A.UC.767. *War Canoe*, Maori. Prow highly carved: upper portion of sides carved with grotesque figures in which the eyes are inlaid with mother-of-pearl and lashed to the boat by strong cord. Wood. L. 20'6." W. 2' (Damaged).” The entry provided an early date for the object by labeling it “A.UC.,” indicating that it was part of the Edinburgh University Collection, which was the founding collection for the national museum in 1854.¹ The damage suggested a need for conservation or repairs, which, given its age and purpose for use in warfare, was not unusual. There were three supplementary notes, each attributed to visiting researchers from New Zealand. The earliest reads: “According to Mr Duff, of Canterbury Museum, Christchurch, N.Z., Jan. 1948, this is probably a small river canoe converted into a canoe model by the addition of top strakes of a full size canoe.”² This suggested that the original museum category of “war canoe” might be flawed and misleading. The second note provided a regional provenance and also queried the original entry: “Milled[?] planks, prow of stern too small, hull may be a real one-man canoe which has been remodelled by flattening the keel. Gisborne area: D. Simmons, June 1978.”³ The most recent reads: “2 July 1998: War canoe. c. 1830s/1840s: Roger Neich, Auckland Museum, N.Z.”⁴ Each scholar had visited the collection before commenting on the canoe, and it is believed that they saw the canoe firsthand. None of these scholars singled out the object as an item of note, nor mentioned it in their diaries or notes pertaining to their trip.⁵ Although several Māori visitors had come to the museum between 1997 and 2002 and could have seen the canoe in the museum stores, no response to the canoe was attributed to them.⁶

The regional card index was checked for further information, and information about the artifact was found to be filed under the region “New

Zealand” and object type “canoes, paddles,” with the card for the canoe additionally recording in pencil “above case” and “58–61,” notes that most likely located the canoe above the numbered wall cases within the ethnography gallery at some point before 1940.⁷

As stated above, the canoe had originally come from the Edinburgh University Museum as part of the founding collection of the National Museums Scotland, and on consulting the daily record books, I found an entry dated 29 November 1827: “Yesterday arrived from Kelso a large New Zealand Canoe,” followed three weeks later on 22 December with the entry “The New Zealand Canoe Repaired” (National Museums Scotland Archives 1827a, 1827b). Although not described in these records as a war canoe, it seems likely that this referred to A.UC.767 as both its size and damage merited comment.

This new archival evidence, which had not previously been associated with the canoe, created a potential link with Sir Thomas Makdougall Brisbane (1773–1860), a former governor of New South Wales (1821–1825) who retired to the Scottish Borders town of Kelso. Thirty-seven additional ethnographic artifacts in the National Museums Scotland collections are directly attributed to him, all of which came from the Pacific. Two of these objects, a feather box (*wakahuia*, A.UC.503+A) and a “staff of office” (*taiaha*, A.UC.518), originated in New Zealand, and there is evidence that Brisbane, in his role as governor and through his own scientific interest, collected for various institutions in Scotland (Morrison-Low 2004; Saunders 2004). Henare (2005:91–92), in documenting exchanges between Māori people and Europeans, cites an instance in 1823 when the Māori leader Te Ara wrote to Brisbane, offering a “New Zealand Matt” in exchange for a “fowling piece to shoot birds for food.” Brisbane had the intellectual curiosity, the means, and the opportunity, in his role as governor and residence in Sydney, to access many artifacts through his acquaintances and through curio traders in Sydney (e.g., Harrison 2011a). Given his associations with New Zealand and the university museum, the probability is that this canoe was acquired by him.

I inspected the canoe further to supplement the information available in the museum documentation, repeating the measurement of the object’s dimensions and undertaking a series of photographs of specific elements of the canoe. In 2006, I sent some of the photographs to Roger Neich, requesting further clarification as to the function of the canoe in an attempt to clarify the conflicting notes in the registers. In response, he wrote:

The carvings are all you would expect of a war canoe, although

20 feet is quite small for a war canoe. The side strakes [*rauawa*] and prow are carved in the very specific form for a war canoe—you would not see these compositions on a fishing canoe.... I would say it is definitely a war canoe, probably from the Bay of Plenty, and looks to date from about the 1830s to 1840s period. The stern post would have been quite tall and completely composed of open-work carving, with a small figure at the base facing into the canoe. It would probably be the largest war canoe in an overseas museum. (Roger Neich personal communication 15 September 2006)

Accepting this as confirmation of the object’s status as a war canoe, with three diagnostic attributions to the Bay of Plenty region, Brisbane, and the unexpectedly early date of 1827, I began to reflect further on the canoe’s Māori history in order to envisage how it could be displayed.

Māori Histories

Māori artifacts in museums are described by the Māori people as *taonga*, which Tapsell defines as

any item, object or thing which represents a Maori kin group’s (whanau, hapu, iwi) ancestral identity with their particular land and resources. Taonga can be tangible, like a greenstone pendant, a geo-thermal hot pool, or a meeting house, or they can be intangible, like the knowledge to weave, to recite genealogy, or even the briefest of proverbs. As taonga are passed down through generations they become more valuable as the number of descendants increase[s] over time. All taonga possess, in varying degrees, the elements of ancestral prestige (mana), spiritual protection (tapu), and genealogically ordered narratives (korero). (Tapsell 2000:13)

It was essential from the beginning of working with the waka to consider it both as a canoe and as an item of ancestral importance.

The Bay of Plenty, Te Moana ā Toi, is situated on the west coast of the North Island of New Zealand, and the Māori *iwis* (nations) resident in the area trace themselves to three ancestral canoes (Te Arawa, Tākitimu, and Mataatua). Since the region in the early nineteenth century had increasing access to European trade and a thriving carving tradition, the canoe or its various components could have been produced by carvers from

one or more of these associated iwis (McKinnon 2009). Unfortunately the limits of the archival record do not allow us to associate the canoe with a specific iwi.

In Māori culture, the canoe in all of its forms is of great significance. Every Māori will trace his or her *whakapapa* (genealogy) back to an ancestral canoe, the large vessels that brought their ancestors to New Zealand (Cooper 1989:24). Who the Māori are, their spirit, their past, present, and future, are inextricably interwoven with their ancestral canoes. After their Polynesian ancestors settled Aotearoa (New Zealand), Māori people developed a series of dugout canoes for specialized purposes. *Waka tiwai* (river canoes) lacked ornamentation and were used for river and lake transport. *Waka tētē* (fishing canoes) were used at sea for fishing and for travel along the coast; these could reach up to twelve meters in length and had side strakes but minimal carving on prow and stern (Best 2005[1925]; Hamilton 1896:9–16; Howe 2007:240). The large kauri tree of the North Island enabled canoes of great size to be made, and the *waka taua* was the largest and most impressive. Carrying up to a hundred warriors, it held an important place in the Māori culture. War canoes were essentially people carriers, designed to move war parties to battle, and they were cleverly constructed to allow easier portage between lakes and rivers and dismantling into their component pieces for storage. The stern and prow were each carved from a solid log, and the hull and side strakes connected these carvings. The side strakes were lashed to the sides with a batten running the entire length of the hull. Decorative streamers of feathers and bindings were added to the prow and stern, with feathers interwoven into the bindings on the hull to give the finished canoe an impressive, animated visual appearance. Each *waka taua* would be individually named at the final part of the process of assembling the materials and then making and carving the canoe. There is a clear distinction between the *tapu*, or spiritual status, of a war canoe for certain members of the community, such as women and children, and the free access for the whole community to a river or fishing vessel.

The canoe was of such significance in Māori life that it helped form the representation of the Māori as a particularly “warlike” people. The canoes are the focus of many early writings describing the contact experiences. Captain Cook praised the “great ingenuity and good workmanship” of the canoes, the largest of which he noted were “built wholly for war” (qtd. in Thompson 1997:113). Yate (1835:163), relating a visit to the region, described the emotion evoked by the sight of a full war party at sea: “A fleet of a hundred New Zealand vessels is a dreadful sight, inspiring, from the shouts of the warriors whilst paddling along, the utmost terror in the minds

of those whom they are about to attack. None can view unmoved a hundred of these canoes in action.”

The role of war canoes in the popular imagination embedded and reinforced the outsider’s assumption of what it meant to be Māori. The overriding view of the Māori culture and identity at that time, as being rooted in war, was continually played out in their representations in the British and colonial press (see, for example, Sydney Gazette 1830). As a consequence, artifacts such as weapons and preserved heads, representative of a warrior race, were sought by Europeans (Henare 2005:93; Thompson 1997:116), and it is therefore no surprise that what was thought to be a war canoe was bought by a collector such as Brisbane.

Since *waka taua* were named canoes with an important role in a community, it is unlikely that they would be traded often. However, in the 1820s, when the museum’s canoe was most likely to have been constructed, the Māori in New Zealand were engulfed in intertribal warfare. Inter-iwi battles stretched between the North and South Islands. This period is known as the “Musket Wars” because it was characterized by the introduction into war raids of muskets acquired from Europeans through trade. While the first use of muskets in a Māori battle dates back to 1807, the wars intensified in the following years as sporadic contact and trade with Europeans increased access to firearms. It is against this background of disruption and warfare that our *waka* quite probably came into the hands of Governor Brisbane. The prospect for trade represented by the desire of Europeans to acquire “curiosities” and Māori people’s need to acquire European arms led to a convergence of motives and opportunity that may well have created the circumstances under which the canoe was crafted expressly for trade and sold.

Through the uncovering of this multiplicity of evidence relating to its origins, the *waka taua* at the NMS gradually began to emerge as a complex artifact. Its history within the museum included numerous conflicting attributions and categories, which changed as each subsequent researcher viewed it. An initial visual appraisal with museum conservators had also identified a series of ambiguities in the artifact, not least its size and scale in relation to its purpose. A review of the contextual history reconfirmed these uncertainties and suggested that the canoe was unlikely to have been strategically valuable to an iwi in warfare. Nonetheless, in Māori terms, it remained inextricably linked to the diagnostic features of a war canoe.

The more I researched the *waka* in my role as curator, the more difficult I found it to understand and categorize in Māori and museum terms. Nevertheless, in discussion with conservators and colleagues, I began to

consider ways of restoring the canoe for public display. From the museum's perspective, the physical absence of the *taurapa* (stern post) became an influencing factor in how the project unfolded, because without this component part the canoe was incomplete and its poor overall condition was likely to impede visitor engagement and an aesthetic response. Neither the conservators nor I felt comfortable with pursuing the repair and restoration of the canoe without expert guidance; we therefore agreed that a replacement stern post should be produced by a Māori carver. This would be entirely consistent with Māori practices of renewal and repair (Sully 2007). As we could not approach a particular *iwi* for guidance, we initially turned instead to the British Māori community. In September 2006, I invited the Māori artist George Nuku to view the *waka* in the museum collections. This allowed us the opportunity to view the canoe together and discuss the appropriateness of a new stern post for the *waka* being carved by him.

ARTIFACT PRODUCTION

The arrival of Nuku at the museum stores provided the impetus to marshal sufficient staff to move the canoe out of its storage niche and into a space where unconstrained access was available. During the subsequent inspection of the canoe—involving conservators, curator, and artist—it became apparent that the task before us was not the simple addition of a new *taurapa* to an existing artifact. Observed in its entirety, the artifact's many different components presented us with several notable problems. To begin with, the side strakes were bound low along the sides of the hull,⁸ and it was not clear where one element of the canoe ended and another began. Moreover, the carved insets for the thwarts, which are so characteristic of a war canoe, did not correspond with each other across the hull and thus could not actually have accommodated the thwarts. The photographs that had previously been taken to document elements of the canoe had in fact presented a distorted view. Each photograph had captured a limited aspect of each element (because of the *waka*'s scale), such that these led to the interpretation that we were looking at a war canoe. However, the moment we unwrapped the canoe and began to look at the proportions and overall shapes, it immediately became clear how misleading the individual photographs were in providing a true sense of the whole piece. Thus, the comments of Duff and Simmons, though not their conclusions, in the accession register were the most accurate reflection of our canoe: this was a composite artifact that was difficult to categorize, describe, interpret, and exhibit. Consequently, this *waka* also presented singular difficulties in our efforts to restore it.

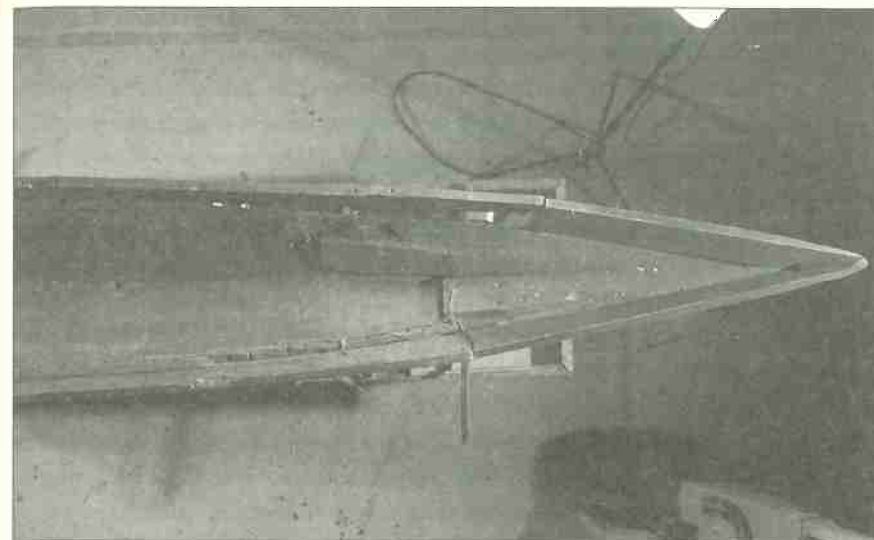


FIGURE 9.2

The hull stern interior, showing what is presumed to be the museum repairs documented in 1827.
© National Museums Scotland.

Material Encounters

Our engaging with the canoe visually and through touching and moving around it exposed the limitations of the archival sources, so often the backbone of a museum curator's research. The elicitation of diagnostic features and the categorization of the artifact, which on paper clearly defined the canoe, had provided only fragments of knowledge rather than a true representation of the physical whole. In sharp contrast, the material approach that we then began to pursue allowed the object to be researched in its entirety. This further study was undertaken by a small project team consisting of George Nuku, me, and conservators Charles Stable and Sarah Gerrish, who had expertise in ethnographic artifacts and wood conservation, respectively.

At this early stage, our appraisal of the canoe enabled us to identify three separate component pieces: a modified hull that most likely derived from a river boat; well-worn side strakes, which appeared to originate from a full-sized war canoe and had been cut and bent to fit the hull; and a scaled prow that was badly damaged, possibly suggesting a prior use on a large-scale model canoe. In addition to these three Māori components, there were uncarved wooden additions, or repairs, which had been tinted to mimic the Māori components. Closer examination of the hull stern

revealed it to be a later addition that was tapered to a V and thus resembled neither the shape of a war canoe stern nor that of a fishing canoe hull. When viewed externally, the hull stern appeared to be a linear continuation of the hull; however, an internal view showed an agglomeration of battens and screws that belied the clean lines of the exterior (figure 9.2). Additional smaller pieces of wooden infill had been stained and bound into the canoe. There were several types of cordage used in the binding and a proliferation of different nails and screws. Nuku examined the Māori elements and commented on the various signifiers that pertained to each carved element. At the same time, he asked museum staff a series of probing questions about the waka's condition and history. Most of these proved extremely difficult to answer, and we therefore began to develop a series of new hypotheses relating to the genesis of this artifact.

The proposed project began to change shape as we examined the canoe further, and it became apparent that we could not simply commission a new stern post but would have to allow Nuku to work on-site with museum staff to facilitate the removal of the museum additions and the incorporation of a stern onto the existing hull. At this stage, as the complexities of the project were revealed, we could have decided against proceeding, but the canoe had resided within the museum stores for nearly two hundred years, waiting for an appraisal and engagement. Therefore, despite the problems and ambiguities that the object exposed, the importance of the canoe in terms of its age and size compelled me to act. I believed that if we did not engage with the canoe now, when funds, time, and the willingness to do so were there, when would we ever do so? This project presented a unique opportunity to bring the canoe out of the storeroom and into the light—to make it “alive,” as we began to say. We finally had a chance to position this waka in the public gaze and allow our visitors to be drawn to and engage and interact with it.

In pursuing this goal, the project group felt that we would be continuing the intent of the original maker(s), whether Māori, European, or museum, to create a war canoe to trade. In doing so, the maker(s) had brought together and juxtaposed through the assembling of all the component pieces the work of several different Māori artists. Each piece of the assembled whole had a history before it was traded to Brisbane, making each piece potentially considerably older than the 1827 date of arrival at the museum. Therefore, repairing and renewing the existing parts and sympathetically adding contemporary carvings to substitute for missing elements made sense from a Māori perspective (Wijesuriya 2007:64). Furthermore, this endeavor felt ethically correct from a museum perspective as we would

be preserving the canoe, stabilizing it, and ensuring that all of our actions were documented and, if necessary, reversible (Stable 2012).

Making the decision to proceed raised the possibility of criticism within each separate discipline or culture for all members of the group, particularly from our peers. Because of the partial images and fragmented documentation, I had requested further information, which resulted in some attention from scholars, especially as it was the largest canoe known to exist outside New Zealand. However, when confronted with the complexities of the whole artifact, the interest and engagement of researchers faltered. I considered that, if stored separately, the hull, side strakes, and prow ornament might have provoked research, yet the unique, complex nature, indeed the very existence, of the canoe denied each component a fair appraisal. I perceived this as a sidelining of an important historic artifact and was therefore determined to provoke interest and a greater understanding of and engagement with the canoe by those who would encounter it in the gallery in the years to come.

Unfolding Creative Responses

George Nuku was invited to work at the museum in the conservation workshops in order to be in close proximity to the waka. This enabled daily interactions with the canoe and also encouraged discussion and debate between artist, curator, and conservators. Nuku made four extended visits to the museum, and a number of additional pieces were added to the canoe. In his work at the museum, Nuku drew not only on the canoe's attributes but also on his own Māori approach and knowledge. At the moment of embarking on his work with the canoe, he brought the team together to address it. Although aware that he was not working with an actual, categorized, classified waka taua, he acknowledged the power and effect of the component parts, their long history, and their biographies. He named the canoe *Te Tūhono*, which means “To Join,” a name that recognized and gave consequence to the composite nature of the vessel, accepting its existence as a hybrid. Although never a war canoe, unable to seat warriors, *Te Tūhono's* iconography and diagnostic features meant that we would continue to address the object as a war canoe. At this point, we began to personalize the canoe and refer to “it” as “her,” addressing her as she would have been in the Māori context. This created a closeness between those working on the canoe and the canoe; thus, the collaboration was among all the agents on the project team, including the canoe herself.

I commissioned Nuku with a very specific brief: to create a new stern post for the canoe and work with conservators to repair the loss and damage

to the other parts of the canoe. Nuku chooses to work in a modern material, acrylic, which has a myriad of uses across museum displays, such as mounting or casing artifacts. In selecting Nuku as our artist, we were responding to the object as a composite work to which we were adding a new strand. The acrylic would provide a visual distinction between the old and the new, defining the canoe in our own terms yet displaying it in an honest way that could engage with the public and with Māori people. We understood that there would be practical complexities in doing this, which involved the binding of two materials of differing densities, weights, and characteristics, but Nuku was keen to use this material to create a sense of both continuity and change within the work. He explained:

My mother's people came to New Zealand from the Pacific, and when they came to New Zealand, it was a world of trees. They were able to define their world through the trees, their houses were made from trees, and the canoes and all the weaponry and implements were largely made from wood, and in fact the people called themselves trees. However, we don't live in the world of trees any more. We live in a plastic world now, where our currency is plastic, even parts of our body are plastic, and plastic is all around us. And my concern is that we consume the plastic in an unconscious manner and that my role is to introduce that consciousness to the plastic to enrich it, enriching our relationship with the plastic as we do with the trees. (Nuku, interview with Maia Jessop 2010)

Nuku began his work by drawing the canoe, familiarizing himself with her form, size, and style. He then carved in polystyrene a design for the stern post and a template for the hull stern on which it would sit. This allowed him to test scale and experiment with the proposed changes to other elements of the canoe. Accommodating the taurapa required the development of a specific shape for the stern end of the hull, distinct from the style seen on a fishing canoe and not achieved by the museum repair decades ago. Yet, the existing museum repair was integrated and integral to the current canoe structure and made it sound and relatively stable. Any addition or change would reverberate along the whole structure, requiring a reconfiguration and realignment of the rest of the canoe, including the lifting of the side strakes so that they sat on the hull sides rather than overlapped them and the raising of the prow. The absent thwarts would be needed to provide stability to the raised side strakes.

At the beginning of the conservation project, we painstakingly stripped the canoe and took her apart, preserving each piece, documenting it, photographing it, and bagging samples of nails, wood, and other materials for analysis. To understand the origin of the modifications, we needed to undertake further research into the background of the canoe and to compare her with full-size canoes in existing collections, such as Te Toki-a-Tāpiri in the Auckland Museum. Nuku examined this canoe on a visit to Auckland but also obtained a series of photographs, which we were able to use as a basis for deciding how to conserve the NMS canoe. We attempted, with little success, to engage in a wider discourse of the project through presentations on the New Zealand museum's website and to the public in Edinburgh and Canberra.⁹

The process of dismantling and rebuilding the canoe in order to replace and repair specific elements of her made us feel at once comfortable and uncomfortable about the trajectory of the project. This level of intervention into an object that was already part of the collection, although acceptable in the past when previous invasive repairs had been made, was now highly unusual. In particular for museum staff, there is normally an obligation to preserve objects as they are on arrival at the museum because at that moment they "represent" something and are considered "authentic." Our attempt to intervene to change and adapt our canoe challenged the central ideas of our curatorial and conservational responsibilities. For Nuku, there was a responsibility to his own culture and his art, although renewing and creating were part of his daily practice. Of key importance in helping us to address our experiences during the project were our weekly team meetings, which we recorded and filmed. At these times, significant pieces of the object would be unbound or unscrewed, so we could all watch and participate in discussing the often confusing story that was unfolding. At these moments, we would discuss the work, including any new research or discoveries from the written records or from examining the canoe herself. We also discussed the next steps, what we hoped to achieve, and any problems, technical or ethical, that these might present for us.

The distinct disciplines in which we worked became more explicit at these meetings; for example, when it came to removing and taking apart the prow, we spent several hours examining the component pieces, trying to work out what was original and what was museum made, discussing the purpose of a complete reworking and whether we had the skills to embark on it. When we were unable to agree, we each went away to research and think through options before coming back to the canoe and working through the viability and benefits of any change. The canoe herself often demanded

change, as each incorporation of new work threw other, seemingly more stable aspects of the existing canoe out of line and changed the structure. In the case of the prow, we eventually decided to continue to incorporate a blank addition to the prow hull—inserted by museum technicians probably more than 150 years ago—in order to provide stability for the prow carving. Inserting additional new carving was felt to be unnecessary, and in this instance, we had an opportunity to recognize the work of the museum technicians, who had undoubtedly had a key role in the canoe's preservation. Despite the reassurance throughout this process that each of our interventions was reversible and none affected the integrity of the whole, the nature of the project meant that the canoe's assembled form would change dramatically.

In our deciding to act—or being provoked into action by the canoe and the sense of curatorial responsibility that she engendered—the methodological approach to the artifact was transformed. The paucity of documentation, the singularity of the object, and its lack of clear cultural “fit” made inevitable a physical encounter. A forensic, investigative approach to the object was taken to seek out embodied and embedded knowledge. The materials, tool marks, abrasions, and wear all offered up clues for further investigation and, in turn, influenced and limited the parameters and goals of future action, moving the process inexorably from straightforward restoration to a reworking of the artifact.

Repair and Renewal

In the work on Te Tūhono, there was a novel series of challenges, of which the most apparent was the creation of a new stern for the hull to support the new stern post. Nuku's rough form in polystyrene gave our conservator, Stable, a template from which to work in creating a new hull stern to replace the early nineteenth-century repair. However, the action of creating such a striking stern post, and thus modifying the hull, exposed the overall damage and wear to the remainder of the canoe. There was a sense among all involved in the project that this was the opportunity to return to the waka her dignity. Due to the extensive additions and repairs required, the work constantly challenged our levels of knowledge and practice in our chosen field (see Stable 2012).

Nuku was very keen to see each missing piece replaced, and although the flat sheets of acrylic mimicked planks of wood, from which the stern post could be carved, the loss on some elements challenged the limits even of modern sheet acrylic. Of particular concern were the complex 3D sculptures on the prow and stern; however, Stable was able to bring his skills as



FIGURE 9.3

Charles Stable uses custom-made metal frames to hold the side strakes in place in order to model a new stern for the hull. © National Museums Scotland.

a conservator and combine them with Nuku's understanding of the canoe form and his preference for clear plastic. To create the stern end of the hull, Stable constructed a metal frame (figure 9.3) to hold the side strakes in their new position, then created a plaster former, from which a putty stern was modeled. This was carved by Nuku (figure 9.4) before being cast by Stable in resin, then returned to Nuku to be inlaid. This process was replicated for the legs and feet of the prow figure.

The new positioning of the side strakes allowed Sarah Gerrish to measure the loss, then infill and consolidate the side strakes so that large gaps would not be left on either side of the battens. Areas of loss were filled and strengthened with wooden blanks tinted to match the existing pieces; this was structurally important in order to rebind the canoe. Each intervention reverberated along the canoe, creating new alignments and the need for further work. Above all, there was a need to harmonize the historic pieces with Nuku's modern additions in order to facilitate the reconstruction or reassembling of the canoe as Te Tūhono.

At times, our group expertise was not sufficient to carry out all the elements of the project; for example, the realignment of the canoe pieces



FIGURE 9.4
George Nuku carving an acrylic stern post for A.U.C.767, September 2009.
 © National Museums Scotland.

required a specialist's knowledge of canoe binding. A fortuitous encounter between Nuku and Tahiaraii Pariente, a Tahitian boat maker and navigator, gave us the opportunity to bring him to Edinburgh. A skilled canoe binder, he worked on the canoe for a day, binding the prow pieces together and teaching the team how to secure the binding along the battens securing the side strakes and hull in place (figure 9.5). As Nuku had done, before beginning his work, Pariente brought everyone working on the canoe together, addressed the waka, and encouraged her cooperation. His knowledge of the properties of wood instilled a confidence in the team to bend and bind the wooden components and integrate the feather decoration. Again, among the group there was the sense that the canoe was a willing participant in the process, her dry ancient wood becoming pliant to accommodate her new configuration. Pariente's knowledge of the tolerance of wood and his skill in binding enabled each piece of the canoe to be repositioned accurately. The result belied the painstaking efforts of the project team: it was simply as if the canoe had finally had the opportunity to push back her shoulders and sit up straight. Over two days, the prow, side strakes, and finally the stern were bound to the hull, each using existing holes and incorporating white feathers.

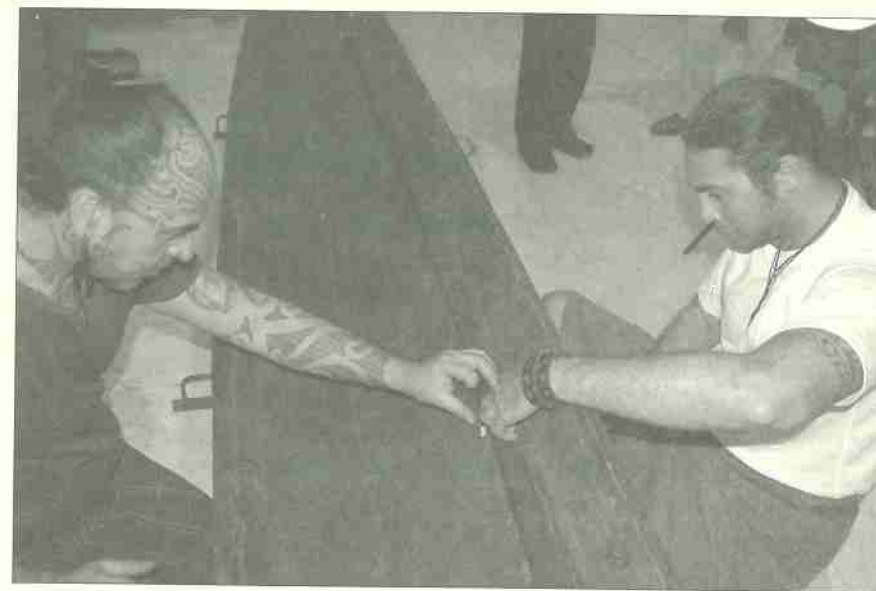


FIGURE 9.5
George Nuku and Tahiaraii Pariente binding the side strakes to the canoe hull, February 2011. © National Museums Scotland.

The properties of plastic differ to the properties of wood, so when I am binding these two elements together, it is more of a collaboration than a restoration. From my experiences as a Māori artist, we are taught to do this anyway...for example, with wood, inlaying it with shell and binding it with feathers is bringing together three forms of divinity: from the land, from the forest, from the trees, from the shell of the haliotis, the abalone, the paua shell from the ocean, and the feathers from the domain of the air. And the plastic fits perfectly in line with that. It is a match made in museum heaven, it really is. (Nuku, interview with Maia Jessop 2010)

The production of Te Tūhono took place in front of our eyes and at our fingertips, echoing the collaborative forces that had brought together the original canoe so many years before. As each piece was repositioned and Nuku's stern post attached, there was an emotional journey, a revival and reawakening of the original parts. Within the project team, we acknowledged our respect for the canoe and her original carvers and makers;

we discussed her carvings, their meanings, and the circumstances under which they were made. Through the process of rebuilding, we felt, each accretion to the object was a reinforcement of the original intent for this to be a “war canoe.”

The purpose of Nuku’s final visit was to bind acrylic thwarts on top of the side strakes. These had been initially conceived by the museum as important to the structural integrity and positioning of the side strakes, but after the completion of the rebinding, it became clear that they were no longer necessary in structural terms. At this point, there was a discussion about the validity of continuing to add to the canoe; some of us felt that we had been swept along by various forces, and we paused to reflect on whether we had moved the project beyond its original scope. From the museum perspective, we believed we had, but Nuku reminded us that this had become more than a restoration process, that we were *making* something, and from his perspective the inclusion of the thwarts was essential to the completion of Te Tūhono. The thwarts were added to the canoe in January 2011.

This discussion about the validity of the thwarts, after their structural need had been obviated, was indicative of much of the process of the project. Nuku carried a Māori vision of the waka taua and a clear sense of the end point. He was formally making Te Tūhono, creating her in a form that was prescribed by generations of ancestral Māori carvers before him. Although never explicitly discussed, it became clear that there were agents at work whose influence resonated through the centuries to the project in the present day.

The canoe was finally raised into the gallery in May 2011. Immediately prior to her being hoisted into position, a feather decoration bound by Rosanna Raymond and George Nuku and including feathers from Scottish birds of prey was suspended from the stern; this type of decoration would have been essential if she had been launched in the waters of New Zealand.

COMMUNITIES OF ENGAGEMENT: CATEGORIES, RESPONSIBILITY, AND AGENCY

In a discussion of exhibitions of Māori works, McCarthy (2007:12) notes: “Display in the late twentieth century should be seen, not as ‘inauthentic’ but as a creative recoupling, or rearticulation of constituent elements in response to social and political forces in settler colonies” (see also Clifford 2001; the introduction to this volume). This provides a context for understanding the genesis of the NMS waka in the colonies and her later re-creation in Scotland. In fashioning the original composite waka two centuries ago, the makers created something outside the frames of

reference of both European and Māori communities. At that specific moment in time, individual artifacts were brought together to create something unique yet undeniably Māori. The composite whole altered the perception of these parts or at least prevented their merits from being recognized. When assembled in this way, the natural trajectory of the component parts (for which there are prescribed actions) was interrupted and a unique artifact created, but this distinctiveness was uncomfortable and, in this state, the canoe was sidelined by the museum as a distortion of Māori material culture. This also explains why, despite her age and rarity, non-Māori scholars and Māori people alike never lingered on this object but were attracted to artifacts that conformed to a known set of diagnostic characteristics and could be read within cultural, art historical, or ethnographic taxonomies.

Objects in Place

The tension in museum categories that caused the canoe to slip into obscurity was even more troubling within the Māori system; the tapu status of a war canoe conflicted with each of the canoes whose elements were combined to make the waka. This was exacerbated by the poor workmanship that was obvious in the assembly, which affected indigenous pride and the importance of taonga (see Sully 2007). This waka represented “matter out of place” (Douglas 2010[1966]), and her hybrid nature deterred interaction or research because it prevented any Māori from approaching the canoe in a known, culturally prescribed way. The damaged nature of each element, especially the losses in the side strakes’ binding points, the missing limbs on the prow, and the uneven cut of the keel, suggests that the component pieces had ended their useful lives and were actually intended to be left to rot away and go back to the earth. Whereas in other instances carvings have been recycled into other uses (see Tapsell 2000:68–77, which documents perhaps the most famous example of this, Pukaki), it seems likely that the level of damage suffered by the waka components meant that their collection and composition into a canoe arrested their decay, interrupting the natural cycle and thus preserving them out of their place and time. Their repurposing as a model, curio, or souvenir created a problematic artifact that obscured the knowledge, value, and workmanship that lay at the heart of the production of each component part. In effect, the canoe became a conundrum, resonating down the centuries. Museum staff had initially repaired the canoe and displayed her, but out of reach and partially obscured by lower display cases. She had then been put into storage, where visual and physical access to her was limited. Due to her size,

she was even kept remote from other Māori carvings, thus separating her from other taonga, or ancestors, and sidelining her from future research.¹⁰

For some objects, the transition from source community to museum is relatively straightforward. Although the context of use changes and therefore its classification or category is transformed, the object sits comfortably in both. For other objects, the transition into a museum is incorporated in an acceptable trajectory of artifacts for the source community. Although the New Ireland *malangan* figures should be destroyed after use, it has been argued that trading them to visiting Europeans was viewed as equally appropriate because they were no longer accessible to the community and their removal was similar to their ritual dismantling (Küchler 1988). However, I would argue that the NMS waka never existed comfortably in either a Māori or museum space because it was fabricated on the margins at a moment of great upheaval. The vessel could never reside within the Māori community in the Bay of Plenty without role or purpose, and the inherent power of the component pieces may have troubled the order of things. Once in Brisbane's collection and then in the museum, her Māori/non-Māori status limited her interpretation as an authentic representation of Māori art, as an example of the warlike nature of the Māori, or even as an example of daily life, and she therefore could not be accommodated within the didactic themes of the NMS galleries.

The project, and in particular the initial naming ceremony by Nuku, addressed Te Tūhono as a war canoe and reengaged with her transformation into a war canoe, begun in the nineteenth century. Her acceptance as such placed her within a category that the participants in her restoration could accept and explain to others. Furthermore, this repositioning and redefining as a war canoe fit her back into Māori taxonomy, reconnecting her with her ancestral past and acknowledging the Māori engagement in the production of her parts, if not the resulting whole. In realigning the component pieces, replacing the loss, and creating new artworks, Nuku fashioned an object that was new but nonetheless rooted in a long-standing tradition, thus restructuring the museum's view of the canoe and the Māori and non-Māori public's view of it. Today, in the gallery interpretation, the museum describes her as a war canoe. Yet, Te Tūhono is also an art object that can be enjoyed by the public. The inherent ambiguities of the canoe, her unique status, and her researched biography have become primary documentation whose very existence establishes the canoe wholly within the museum space. She is no longer on the margins of the museum collection and consequently can fulfill a role: center stage in the new gallery.

The constraints imposed by the ways in which objects are codified and

understood in their cultural contexts create a liminal space in which certain objects exist (Douglas [2010]1966:119–120). The NMS waka is one of these objects, the embodiment of an encounter between Māori people and Europeans at a moment of great change in both communities. These origins made the waka at once unique and anomalous, an object to which both contemporary Māori culture and museum culture found it difficult to ascribe meaning. Importantly, it was this very instability that set the stage for a new encounter in the twenty-first century. While I use Douglas's theory to understand our responses to the canoe now, I regard Te Tūhono as being unique but very much *in her place* within a specific historical context. Not only did this turbulent period of change and disruption for the Māori community provide the opportunity for Governor Brisbane to acquire a war canoe, but it also produced the circumstances and unique moment in time when this particular, peculiar war canoe was made.

It is as essential to preserve and display the waka, despite her complex nature, as it is to display artifacts that conform more closely to notions of authenticity with regard to Māori material culture. My responsibility as a curator is to care for and research objects in my collection and, by doing so, make them available to others. Nevertheless, some objects demand, or even command, attention (Gell 1998; Wingfield 2010), and others remain in stores, waiting for the right set of circumstances to trigger a renewed focus upon them. As a custodian, I have to consider the objects and their original makers and descendants, all of whom may have a continued association with them.

When George Nuku stated, "No Māori made this canoe," he meant that the assembling of the pieces could not have been carried out by a Māori. He suggested instead that they were brought together outside New Zealand in the store of a Sydney curio seller (e.g., see Harrison 2011a). While I agree that this is a probable source for our waka, I would argue that the evidence is not conclusive. Moreover, the actions of individuals are not necessarily those of a group acting within the constraints of tradition and consensus. There are many histories of enterprising Māori and Europeans in this period, as well as of Europeans who took up residency in or married into Māori communities (Salmond 1997; Tapsell 2000). This evidence of the complexities of the period means that on one level we must simply accept the canoe for what she is. In order to preserve this history of development and change, I had to ensure that we remained true to the component pieces of the canoe *and* the assembled whole. In deconstructing and then reassembling the canoe as a war canoe, we respected and preserved the original intentions of its creators while respecting Nuku's agency and that of

Te Tūhono herself. Throughout this process, I was aware that we could have, and perhaps should have, left the canoe as she was. However, as her curator, I felt strongly that the possibility of the waka finally being on public display made such reappraisal essential. This was the moment for Te Tūhono to receive the focused research that would allow her to be placed once more in the gaze of multiple audiences, in particular, Māori people and scholars of Māori material culture. To have abandoned this process simply because of the ambiguities presented by the canoe would have been to abandon my responsibility as a curator. Reengagement and renewed interest in the canoe may provoke a reappraisal of her interpretation in our gallery, but, following the principles under which the project was undertaken, we have documented the whole process from source material to the integration of the contemporary artwork. As a result, we have an archive from which further dialogue can be encouraged.

Curatorial Responsibility

I remained true to aspects of my curatorial praxis by placing certain constraints on the project, above all, that our interventions had to be reversible. As a consequence, every action was recorded in detail, and a system of documentation was established that is as yet unparalleled in any other NMS project. Maia Jessop, a Māori filmmaker and scholar of Pacific ethnography, recorded over forty hours of film, including interviews, of our work in the museum. The museum photographers and project participants took several hundred photographs, and Gerrish sampled six separate materials for scientific analysis. The paper archive now includes two curatorial notebooks, the reports and minutes of meetings, and two file boxes of research notes and correspondence—a record of the project and a tangible legacy for future researchers. Stable was concerned about the differing rates of deterioration of acrylic and wood, so, for the first time, the museum commissioned a 3D scan of all the canoe's component pieces, old and new (figure 9.6). This not only facilitated the rebinding and repairs, since we were able to model the process on a computer, but also allows access to each of the individual elements by researchers even though these are now bound back into the whole. Where once only a series of register entries existed, A.UC.767 now has her own significant archive.

The lack of documentation for this artifact at the outset of the project was both constraining and liberating. We were forced to appraise the physical object itself; we were pushed to examine, take apart, and contemplate the waka. This continual reassessment of our objectives was in many ways due to the physicality of the canoe *coercing* our actions. By limiting our

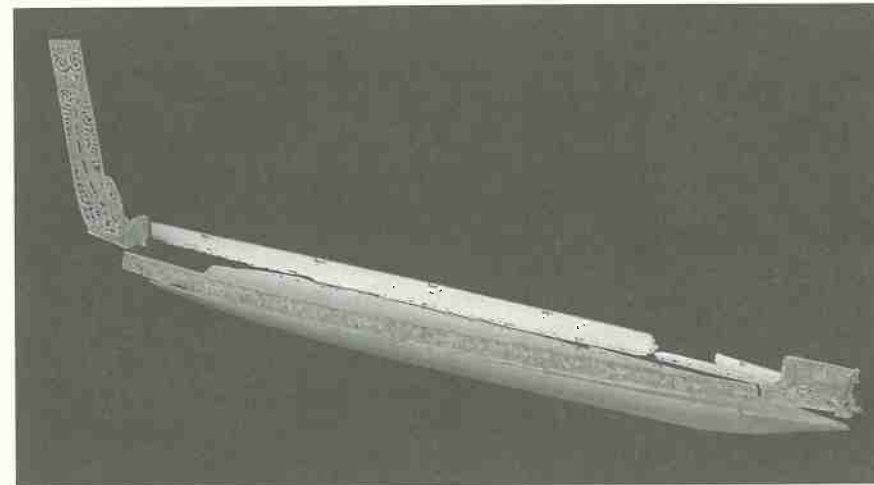


FIGURE 9.6

A virtual reconstruction of the canoe with additional pieces by George Nuku, modeled from 3D scans. © National Museums Scotland.

options and taking us out of the museum's comfort zone of minimal intervention, the situation forced us toward a creative response, with the materiality of the canoe a key agent in the project.

In September 2006, the canoe had sat slumped in the stores due to the aged binding, which slung the side strakes low along its length, and the considerable damage to prow and stern. My curatorial responsibility was to draw attention to this object and provide a space for the canoe in the museum, both physically and intellectually, thus giving those that encounter her an opportunity to engage with her, despite the problematic history of her fabrication. In order to do this, I had to engage with the systems that both Māori and museum had created, which had preserved the artifact in her current form. Uppermost in my thoughts were the agency of the object, the intent of the original creators of both the component pieces and the vessel that arrived at the museum in 1827, and the crucial need to preserve the trajectory, however unusual, that brought the canoe into being.

Within the team, Nuku was most at ease with the trajectory that the project began to take, because he had a very clear sense of his personal goals within the endeavor. A war canoe would have been taken apart, remade, and rearticulated during her lifetime in the community. When stored, a war canoe was often unlashd and dismantled and the hull stored in a special canoe shed; one hull could over its lifetime have various sets of carvings. Furthermore as meeting houses became the community focal point and

war canoes gradually stopped being made, carved elements of war canoes were repurposed and reused in meeting houses (Neich 2008[2001]:174–175). Gerrish, who was familiar with the extensive restoration required to preserve European furniture within the museum, was often surprised by Stable's and my conservative responses to the changes the addition of a new stern post had provoked; we were used to minimal intervention in order to stabilize objects, rather than creating or combining works. Despite our common "museum" perspective, our responses remained individual, and at times tension arose in the group about how best to proceed while respecting what had gone before. These debates took place in the presence of the canoe and across and around her as new solutions were tried and tested.

Fragments of Agency

As a consequence of the complexities of its creation, this artifact embodies a dialogue that crosses time, space, and disciplines. It is an artifact of encounter, with its origin at a time of flux when several interests coincided in its creation. In the assembling of the original component parts, people *and* things with different histories came together at a moment in time and created the canoe (see the introduction to this volume). In doing so, their interaction became part of the canoe, and in reassembling the canoe, in the creation of Te Tūhono in the museum for display, a new community of participants (new things and different people) engaged with one another. Across the centuries, the canoe represents the work of several artists acting together to pay homage to a continuing tradition while being responsive to the changing demands of collector, curator, and museum. The dialogue between makers, curators, conservators, and canoe is bound into the fabric of the waka; their actions and intent marked Te Tūhono as clearly as the tool marks on the wooden hull, the inlay in the carvings, the knots in the bindings. The set of relationships—the communities of engagement that have circulated and included the canoe—required to create the object in the 1820s and its remaking in the 2000s contributed to the decisions and actions we undertook. The component parts of the composite canoe come together or collide, engaging their past lives and inventing new ones. The ambiguity of the canoe, her tendency to avoid classification, even clear description, meant that working with the canoe, physically getting to know each element and how it shaped future additions and accretions, changed the way we think about the object and feel emotionally about Te Tūhono. The agency of those involved in the process over time is ever present, even though the trajectory that the canoe's component pieces have

traveled is not necessarily what was originally anticipated, or hoped for. Understanding this and working with Nuku brought a power to the whole object, which was conveyed through the detailed tool marks of the carving despite being belied by the physical whole.

The juxtaposition of new pieces with old now plays out not only across the whole but also where wood and acrylic meet. There is a visual distinction between the original encounter and today's, which is also a contrast of weight, texture, and hue. Although this doubtless creates new ambiguities, the reworked canoe draws the eye, invites engagement, and grabs attention. This has been evident from the public interest in the project (Edinburgh Evening News 2008, 2009) and the widespread use of the image of the canoe in press coverage leading up to and immediately after the opening of the new gallery.

In comparing the history of the waka with Pukaki (Tapsell 2000), a gateway sculpture created by Māori people for their own use and then gifted away before being returned, the trajectory and agency of the sculpture were quite distinct from those of the canoe, which never had a home in the community (since it was composed of fragments of other things). Therefore, I question whether it could have followed a cultural trajectory that Tapsell likens to a comet (being sent out, transformed, and then returned), or did the museum become Te Tūhono's orbit? At the outset of the project, the trajectory that the artifact has followed was not predictable, although it has certainly been a transformative process.

In taking a single object and making clear how the artifact itself shaped the multiple human agencies and responses to it, I hope to provide food for thought and discussion. In rooting this chapter in a project that involved a practical undertaking, that involved *making things*, I hope to reveal that objects do have the power to shape and change our responses (Gosden 2005:196).

CONCLUSION

Despite many of the ways to describe the role of objects in everyday life and in social networks across time and space, objects alone cannot influence behavior. Circumstances arise that trigger the production of an artifact—the availability of materials, the context, and the people—and the factors involved interact in such a way as to create a network of influence that produces a particular thing. The example of the Māori canoe demonstrates a very specific moment in time when a series of influences connected and created a unique object alien to two cultures (Māori and colonial) yet inalienable

to both. Two centuries later, the desire to display the canoe provided the catalyst to reconstruct and re-create the artifact, precipitating a new cross-cultural encounter in the museum.

The making of Te Tūhono started out as a simple restoration; however, in revealing the waka's history and by engaging a Māori artist, this production became a new dialogue between the museum culture and Māori culture. An understanding of each other, including the limitations of our practice, our ethical codes, and our culture, was necessary in taking each stage forward, creating a forum for new agents to work together and new pathways for the future. The guidance from Nuku enabled the waka to be reclaimed and repositioned as essentially Māori, yet her complex history remains part of her essence, inscribed in her component parts and the histories that created her and made explicit through her naming as Te Tūhono. As Te Tūhono, she remains a unique reminder of the complexities of European and Māori engagement, evidence of the skill and artistry of Māori people, and a testament to museum endeavors to preserve artifacts in perpetuity. Bell (2006; chapter 5, this volume) and Edwards (2001) discuss objects and photographs as "sites of intersecting histories": Te Tūhono is a site of many continuing intersecting histories. Complex and diverse, these histories have helped carve a new place for Te Tūhono in both Māori culture and museum culture, and through this project, renewed and beautiful, she can participate in both our worlds again.

The canoe now mounted in the new gallery (figure 9.7) is interpreted by an object label and a series of short films addressing aspects of the project, including the creation of the "war canoe" displayed. In opening up the history of the object, the background to the project, and the cultural significance of canoes, we hope that the artifact will engage the public. So far, observations show that Te Tūhono is attracting significant dwell time from those who choose to visit the gallery, suggesting that she is encouraging interaction and engagement. Thus, the canoe has become a portal, engaging with an unusually complex world very different from the concrete, uncontested facts usually experienced in the museum. The interaction between canoe and museum visitor is a sensory encounter of body and object, a shared experience that is a crucial part of engagement with collections (Dudley 2010). Te Tūhono's written label is simultaneously too complex, fragmentary, and incomplete for visitors, so instead we have to encourage their visual encounter, their personal perspective and engagement with the artifact. We have to elicit their response and provoke their imagination, rather than use the object to tell a story.

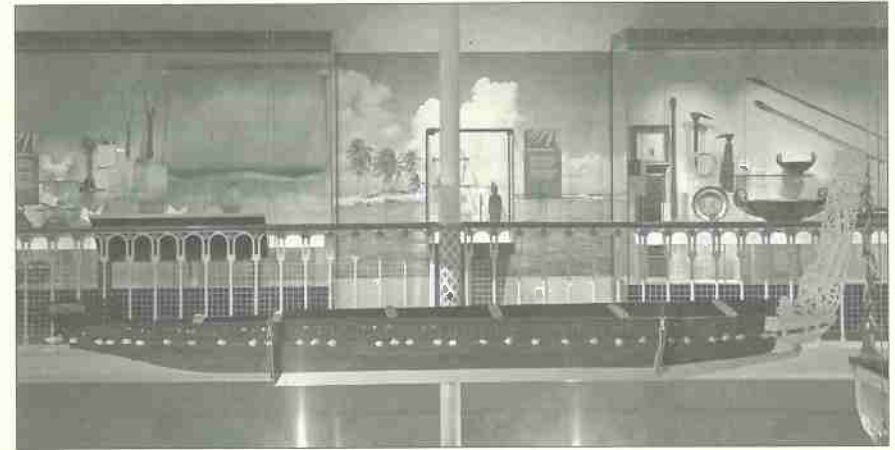


FIGURE 9.7

Te Tūhono in the Pacific Gallery called "Facing the Sea," July 2011. © National Museums Scotland.

Te Tūhono is ripe for further research, ready to be reassembled, rearticulated once again, creating new events, new debates, and new encounters (Clifford 2001). The voyage of this particular canoe is ongoing and will be influenced by things as calamitous as the degradation of the acrylic or as prosaic as tourists photographing their moments of encounter. Each moment illuminates fragments of the agency of those involved in the waka's creation, who set her upon her voyage, journey with her, and interact with and transform her.

Acknowledgments

Although I am the sole author of this chapter, I have tried to give voice to George Nuku through direct quotes from interviews, and I hope I have represented fairly both his thoughts and those of the museum staff involved. Without the participation of Nuku and Charles Stable, the project could not have happened. Stable challenged his own working practices in order to participate in the project and also brought a technical knowledge that allowed the pieces of the canoe to be brought together. I am wholly indebted to him. Other key members of the team included Maia Jessop, who created a fabulous film archive of the project, and Sarah Gerrish, who consolidated all the restoration on the original pieces and provided advice and expertise for Nuku's reinstatement of the paua shell. Many other staff members, in particular the staff of conservation and the Department of World Cultures, were instrumental in the project's success, especially

CHANTAL KNOWLES

Neil McLean, Rachel Smith, Kylie Moloney, and Brenda McGoff. I dedicate this chapter to Brenda, who tragically passed away before seeing Te Tūhono completed and the gallery open. Support also came from Henrietta Lidchi and Jane Carmichael in agreeing to the initial commission; both recognized the risks in the project but supported and championed it. Many other colleagues worldwide commented, queried, and critiqued the project as it progressed, but particular thanks go to my colleagues at the SAR seminar, who encouraged me to reflect on the project, and the volume editors, Sarah Byrne, Rodney Harrison, and Annie Clarke, who helped marshal my many diverse thoughts into this chapter. Any errors that remain are my own.

Notes

1. The National Museums Scotland was founded by an act of Parliament in 1854 under the name the Industrial Museum of Scotland; in 1862 its collections were opened to the public in a temporary home; by 1866 the first phase of a newly built museum was completed and the collections, including the recently transferred natural history collection, opened to the public. The University Collections include both natural history collections and “natural curiosities,” which includes the ethnology collections and A.UC.767.
2. Dr. Roger Duff, the director of Canterbury Museum, visited various UK museums in 1948, funded by a British Council scholarship.
3. David Simmons, a former curator of ethnology at Auckland Museum, New Zealand, visited the museum to review the collections in 1978.
4. Dr. Roger Neich is a former curator of ethnology at Auckland Museum and a professor of anthropology at the University of Auckland.
5. Roger Neich personal communication 5 September 2008. Neich kindly confirmed the absence of any mention of the canoe in his own or Simmons’s notes; his experience of working with Duff’s notebooks suggested that they would not prove particularly fruitful.
6. In 1998 the British Museum curated a special exhibition called “Maori.” Several artists were invited to demonstrate their skills in the exhibition, others attended the opening, and many took the opportunity to visit other collections while in the United Kingdom. Those who visited National Museums Scotland included Lyonel Grant, a leading carver.
7. A photograph captioned “West Wing Looking South c. 1895” in the National Museums Scotland picture library shows a series of tall wall cases filled with Pacific artifacts. Large-scale objects are displayed in the space between the tops of the cases and the ceiling, and there is a possibility that the NMS waka was part of this display.

8. For consistency, I have used Neich’s translation of *rauawa* as “side strakes,” although they can also be referred to as “top strakes.”

9. See <http://www.nz museums.co.nz/news/the-waka-presents-a-mystery-to-us>; http://www.nma.gov.au/audio/transcripts/vaka/NMA_ocean_crossings_20090826.html; and <http://fruitmarket.co.uk/education/past-projects/barclay-seminar>.

10. The NMS stores cultural objects from the same communities together whenever possible. Māori artist Lyonel Grant was keen for a new work of his acquired by the museum in 2002 to stand in the store with the other Māori carvings so that the ancestors could be with one another (Lyonel Grant personal communication May 2003).