

landscape and memory

kate birss





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NB. All images taken by author unless otherwise stated.

introduction

The importance of connection to place is real and abiding.

The view is not separate from the viewer, place is not separate from those who inhabit it. Engagement with place must be maintained, even if through memory alone. Landscapes we carry with us even in absence, those we are physically remote from become so amplified, so deeply a part of us.

It is this understanding of place I aim to capture and communicate - here on the South Coast of England and in memories of landscape in New Zealand, my childhood home.

Explorations have been made through photography, location and studio-based sketching, contextual research and physical investigations, to develop ideas towards 3D resolutions in wood. My material holds a primitive familiarity. A warmth. It's reassuring to me that it already has its own life and narrative, we have an immediate dialogue. I believe we are collaborators.



research locations



Shoreham-

A270

Research Location B

Research Location A

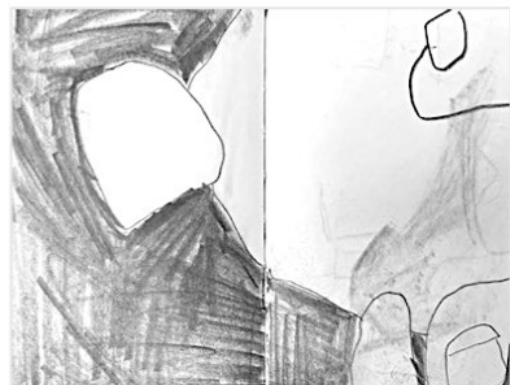
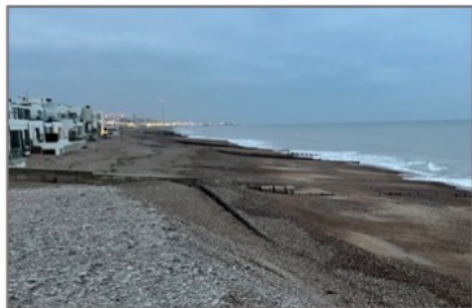
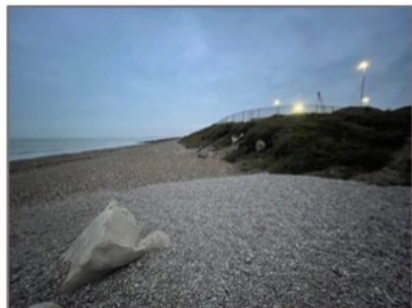
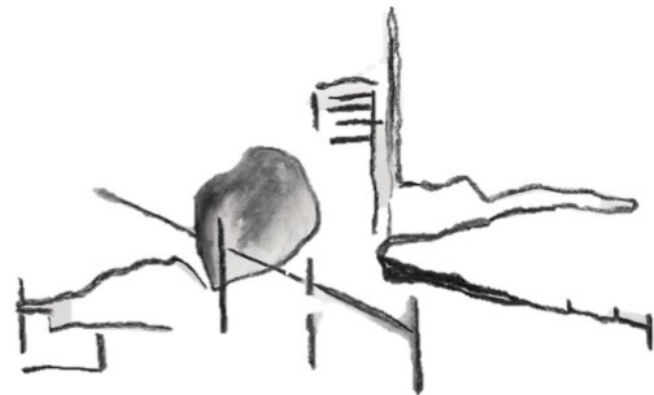
Research Location C

A259

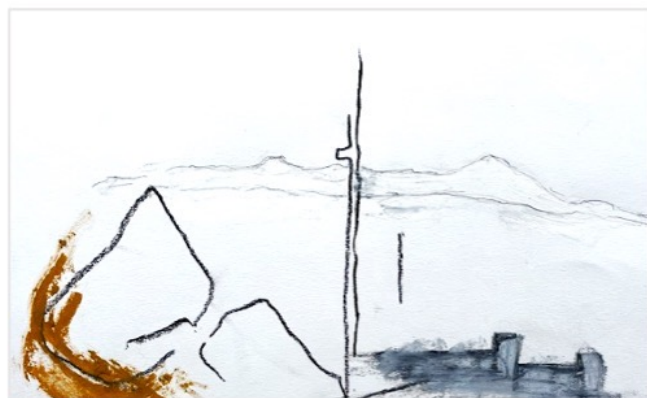
Brighton

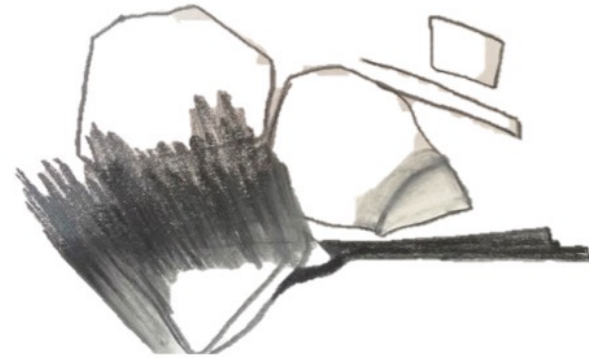
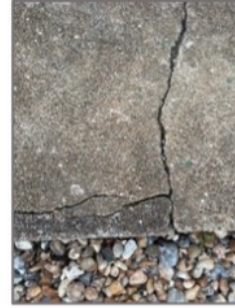
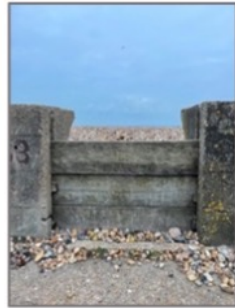
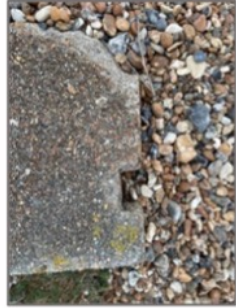
Research Location D

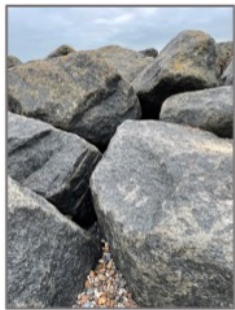
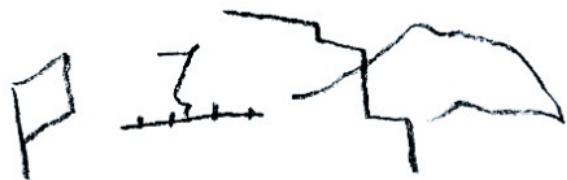
ROTTING

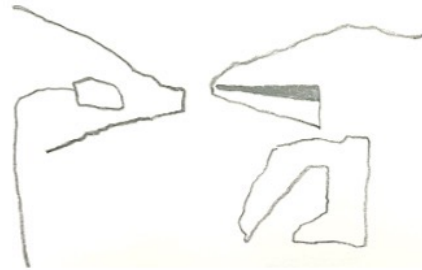
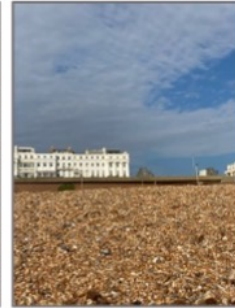
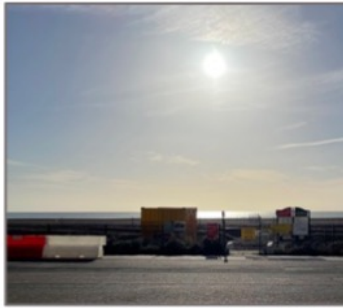
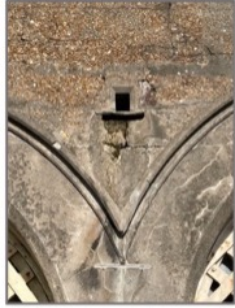
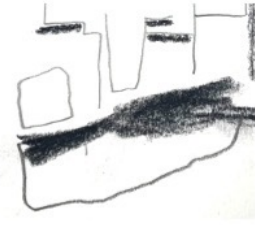


Using expressive mark making and a reduced colour palette whilst allowing a focus on line and form to record sensory, physical and emotional experience of place.



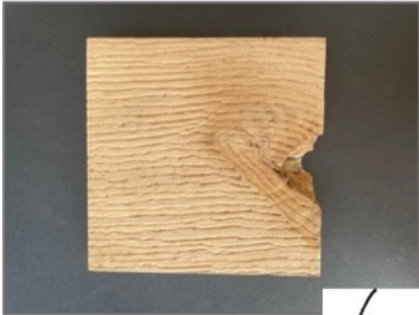
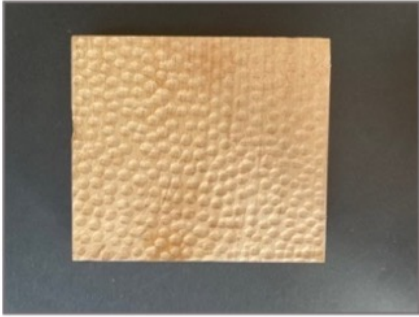






recording sensory experience of place through texture

Dremel.



Too mechanical, want more direct contact with the material and to see the hand of the maker.

Hand Tools.



Small gouge



6mm V-chisel.



Swiss 5/16 and 8/10



*Small 100k gouge
8/14 - with clear rx.*



6mm V-chisel.

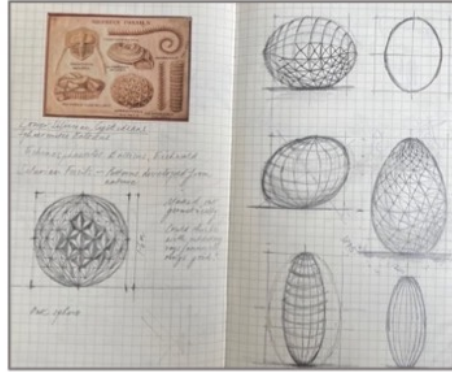


*Small 100k gouge
8/14*

technical skills progression - hand carving



interview & studio visit - Alison Crowther



interview & studio visit - Nic Webb



"The grain, individual tree growth give the wood its unique qualities. The wood already comes loaded with ideas." Nic Webb



"...taking the journey, not knowing where I end up, it's a lovely adventure." Nic Webb

exhibition - *'Signature in Wood'* Sarah Myerscough Gallery, London



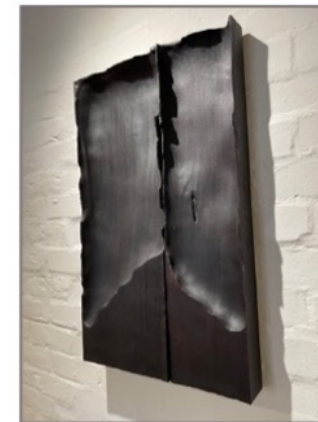
Christopher Kurtz *Ascender*, 2019. Hand carved linden wood & burnished graphite finish.



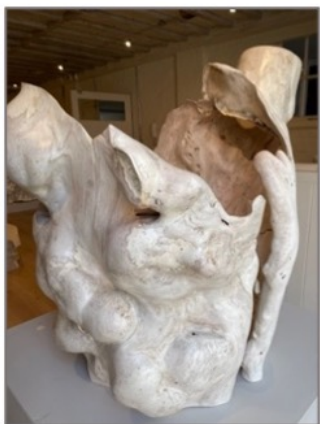
Egevaerk. *ICE Bench*, 2021. Danish Ash.



Jim Partridge and Liz Walmsley *Rocking Chair*, 2021. Oak.



Katrien Doms *Ukiyo 002*, 2019. Solid soft wood.



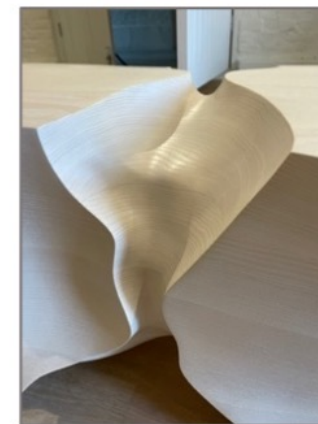
Julian Watts. *Untitled*, 2021. Bleached big leaf maple.



Eleanor Lakelin. *Homage Bowl*, 2021. Horse Chestnut burr

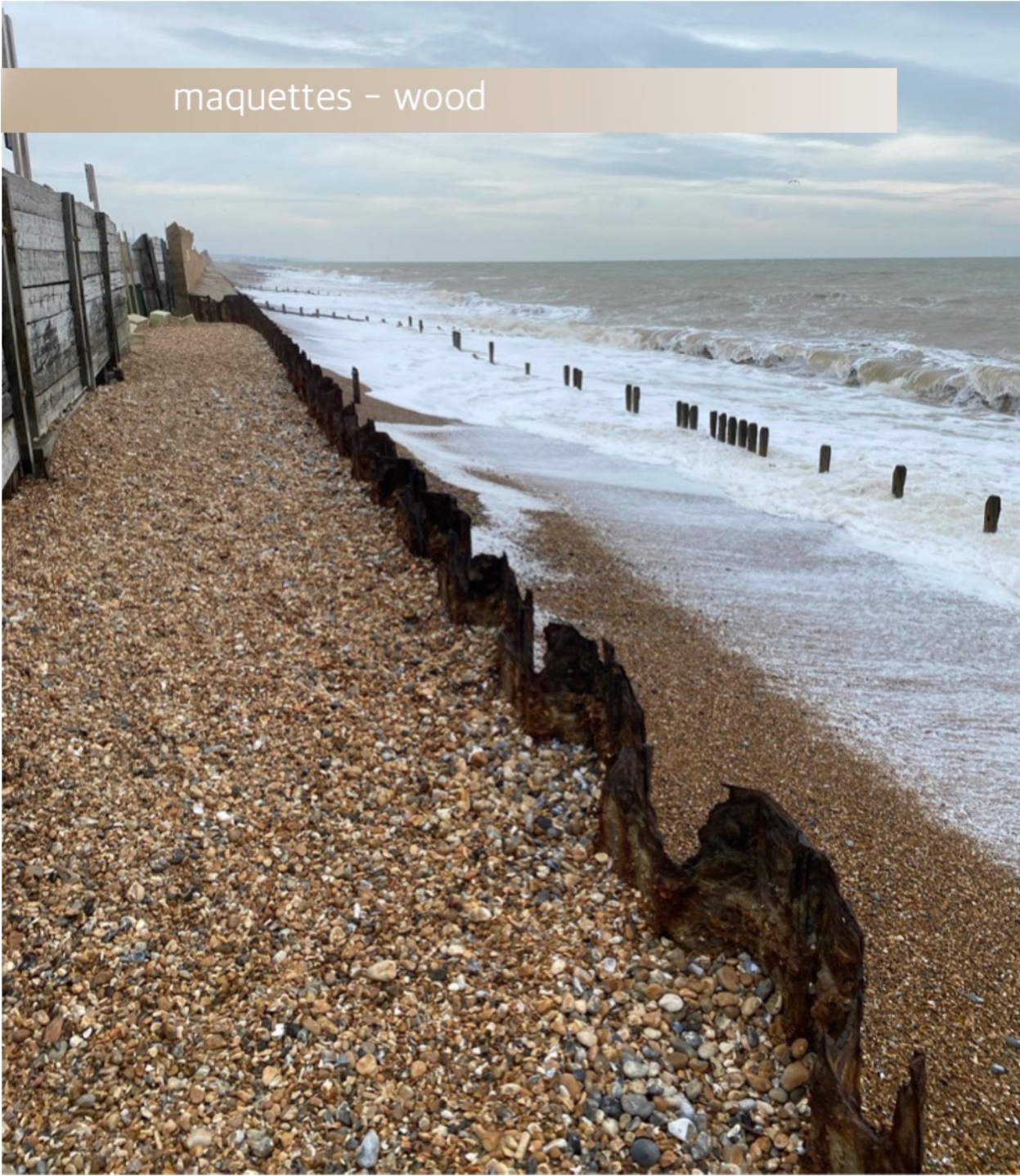


Nic Webb. *Form within Li*, 2021. Thuja.

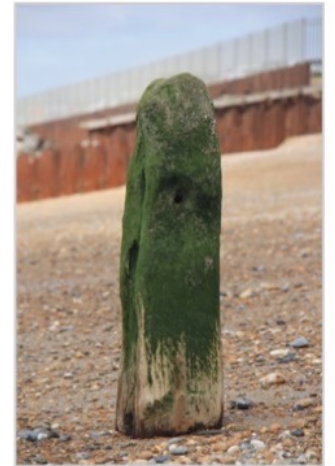
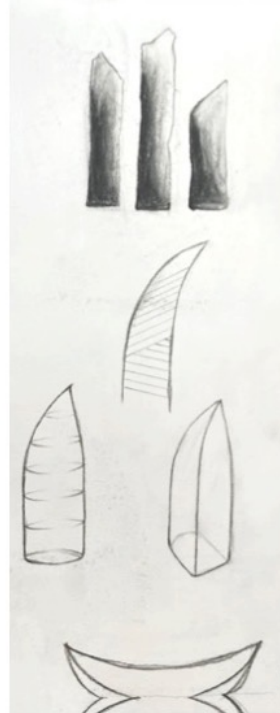
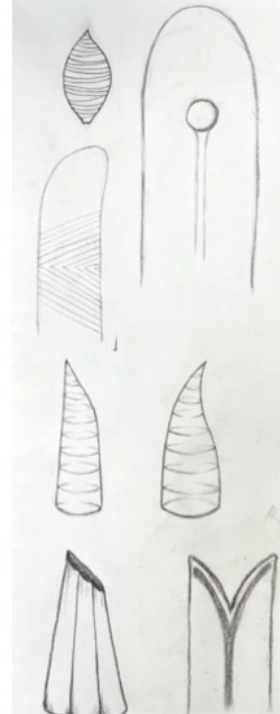
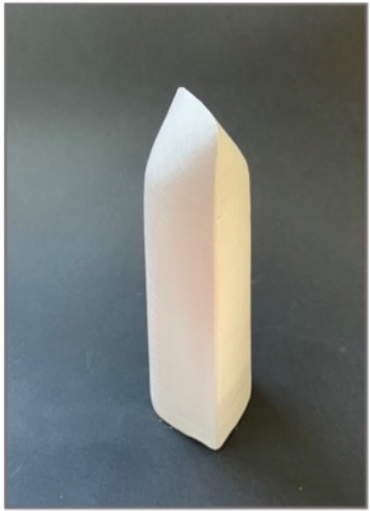


Egevaerk. *ICE Bench*, 2021. Danish Ash.

maquettes - wood



maquettes - plaster



maquette collection exploration

Perspective

Composition

Position

Relationship

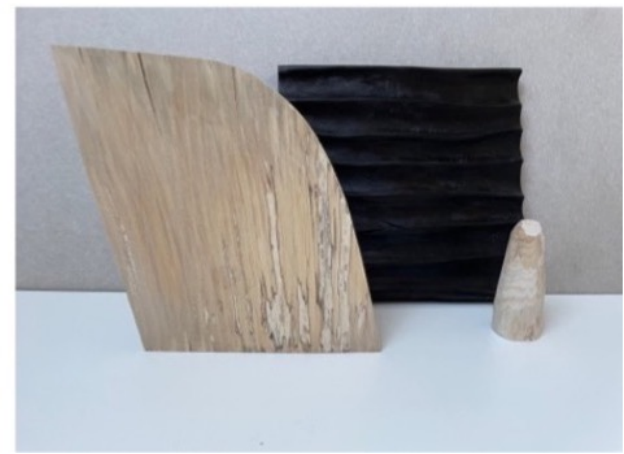
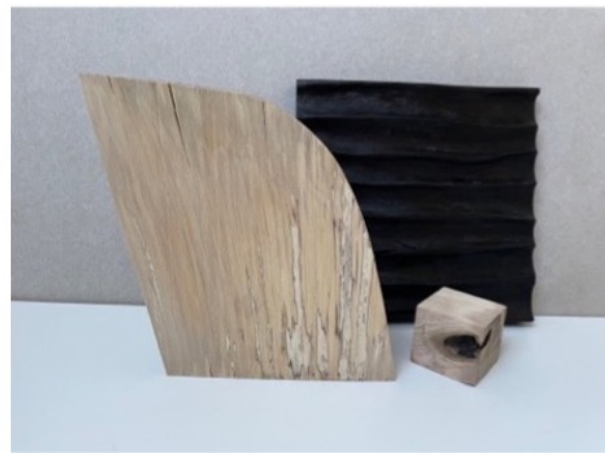
Proportion

Connection

Interaction

Chorography

Dialogue



deadends



‘memory sticks’

bespoke
commission
pieces



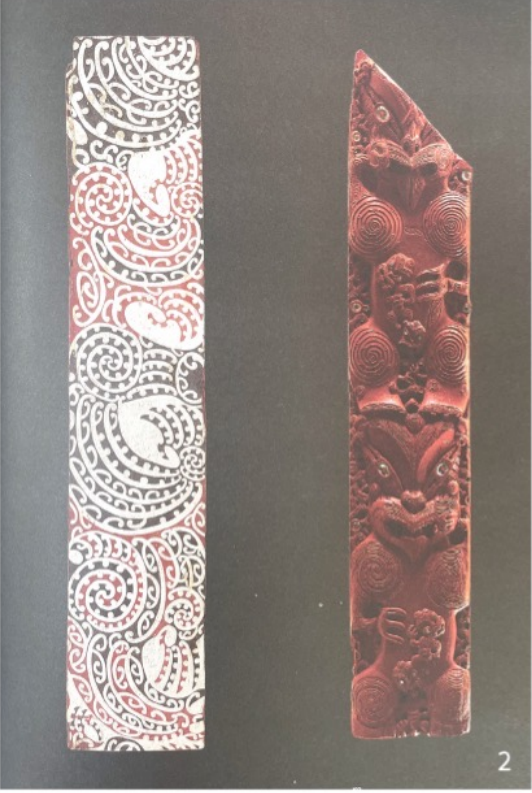
Whilst researching the landscape and memories of my homeland alongside my extended essay topic centred around Māori whakairo (wood carving) and Hinemihi whare tupuna (Hinemihi ancestral meeting house), I have been submerged back in the rich practices and spiritual beliefs of the Māori. I am not of Māori descent; I am a pakeha (New Zealander of European heredity) but growing up in New Zealand one is surrounded by the Māori culture and language. It is a source of national pride. I wish to nod to the influence this had on me growing up, whilst avoiding any cultural appropriation.

These are meditative objects inviting touch and interaction. A physical act of remembrance.

Hold

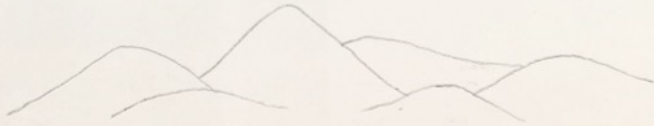
Remember

Māori carving and design



design and development

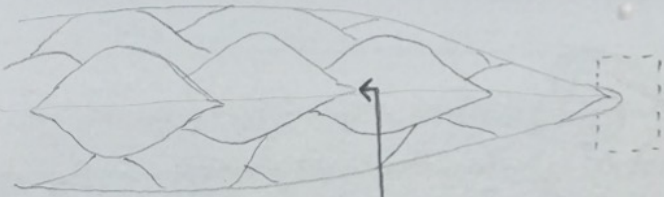
Look at sketchbook/pdf # for images of NZ hills.



X

MY TURNED MEMORY STICKS

- Q. • How could this repeat around the form?
- Q. • How to finish the ends of the object?
- Curvically has credit for holding in vice to make it easy to hold curve.



X

Q. How to address these meeting points?

This mirror image of hills isn't working!

Consider tactility - invite touch, a physical act of remembrance!



Make decisions on what is to be removed and what is to remain.



YOU ARE HERE (GOOGLE MAPS)

The shape itself is reflective to me of land and sea - but I can't add to this to tell more of my story?



land and sea.



meeting points



NZ hills

divided?

X

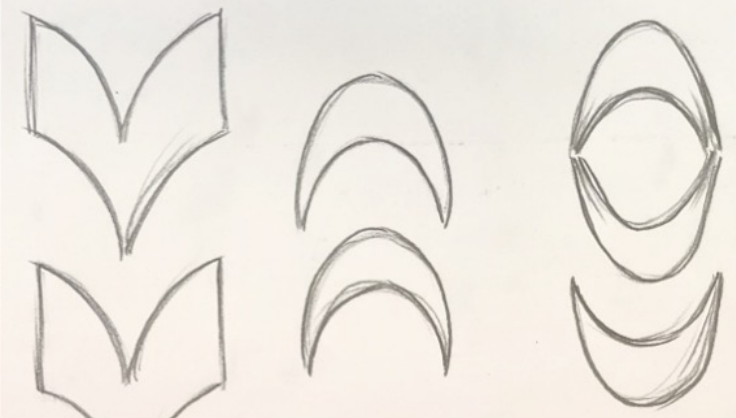


Q.

• Keep the main, central area as the focal point to carving?

Here these are the chosen outwards to end points - this elongates the form nicely.

Q. Utilise that double known design?



• I then found it easier to draw directly onto the stick, using a paper ruler to measure various points.

HIGH POINTS

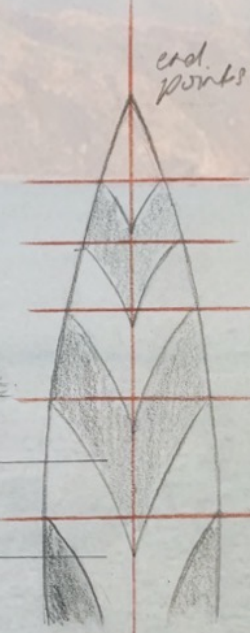
CARVED AREAS

Rolling waters and mountains of NZ and SE of UK meeting and coming together.

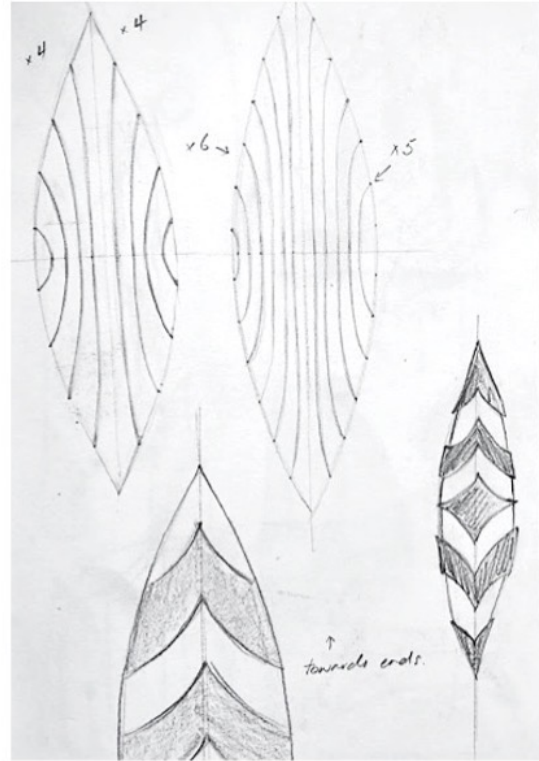
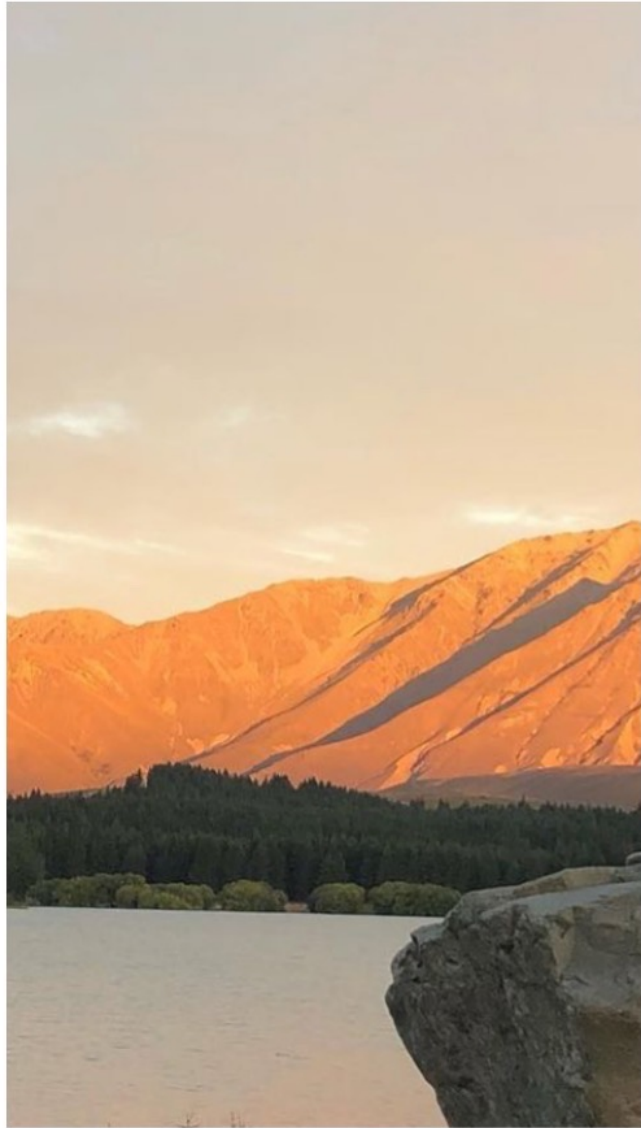
towards centre ↓

Mountains - Sea / Sea

end points?



making



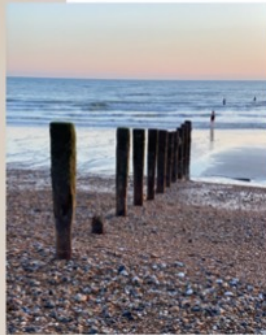
memory stick I & II



Responsibly sourced Ash,
turned and hand carved.
330x40x40mm.. 2021, 2022.

'connected'

land art
installation
proposal



Coastal studies led to a fascination with the water and weather worn sea groynes. Once incongruous to the coastal landscape they are now embedded in its story, monuments to time and place.

They disappear into the sea like war torn soldiers, in fact they are embarking on an epic journey. They travel in an undeviating line along the seabed to New Zealand, where they emerge on a Wellington shore. Connecting. More than land. Travelling in either direction they are going home, and those elements that are seen, permanently embedded in the landscape, become a place of contemplation and connection.

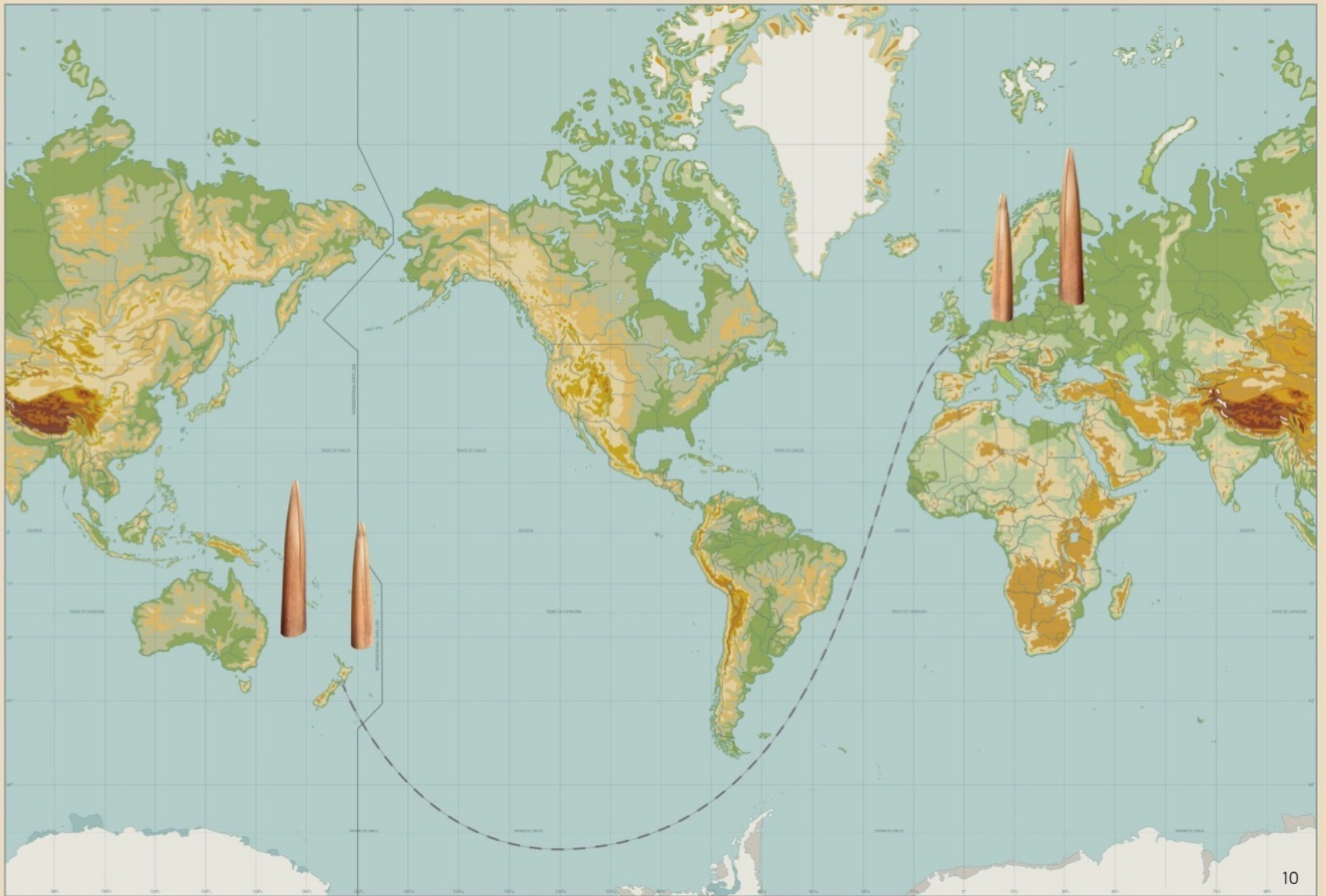
Duality

Distance

Longing

Connection

Places collect people



land art
installation
proposal

Hove
England



Wellington
New Zealand



'connected' land art installation proposal



1 x pair of 'Connected' works to be installed in each country location, at a set distance from each other and at a position which will allow them to be within water when the tide is in.

Walnut I - 10ft, Walnut II - 7.5ft, (discounting structural anchoring).

* Full physical location investigations and testing to be conducted.



Industry offcut Walnut, turned and hand carved.

Form I (L) -

261(h)x50(w)x35(d)mm

Form II (R) - 300(h)x50(w) x

40(d)mm. 2022

'remutaka range -

form I & II'

gallery pieces



When standing at the sea in Hove I still expect to look across the water to be met with the rolling 'Remutakas'. It is the southernmost range of a mountain chain in the lower North Island of New Zealand. A view I grew up with, and utterly breath taking when touched by the glowing evening sun.

Form

Texture

Duality

The space between

design, development, making

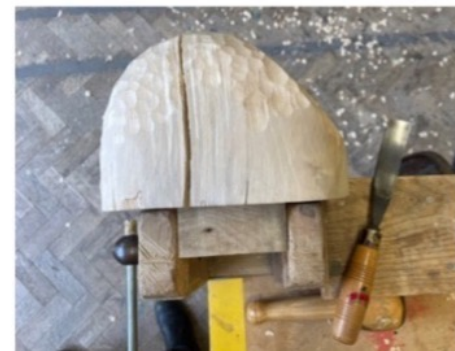
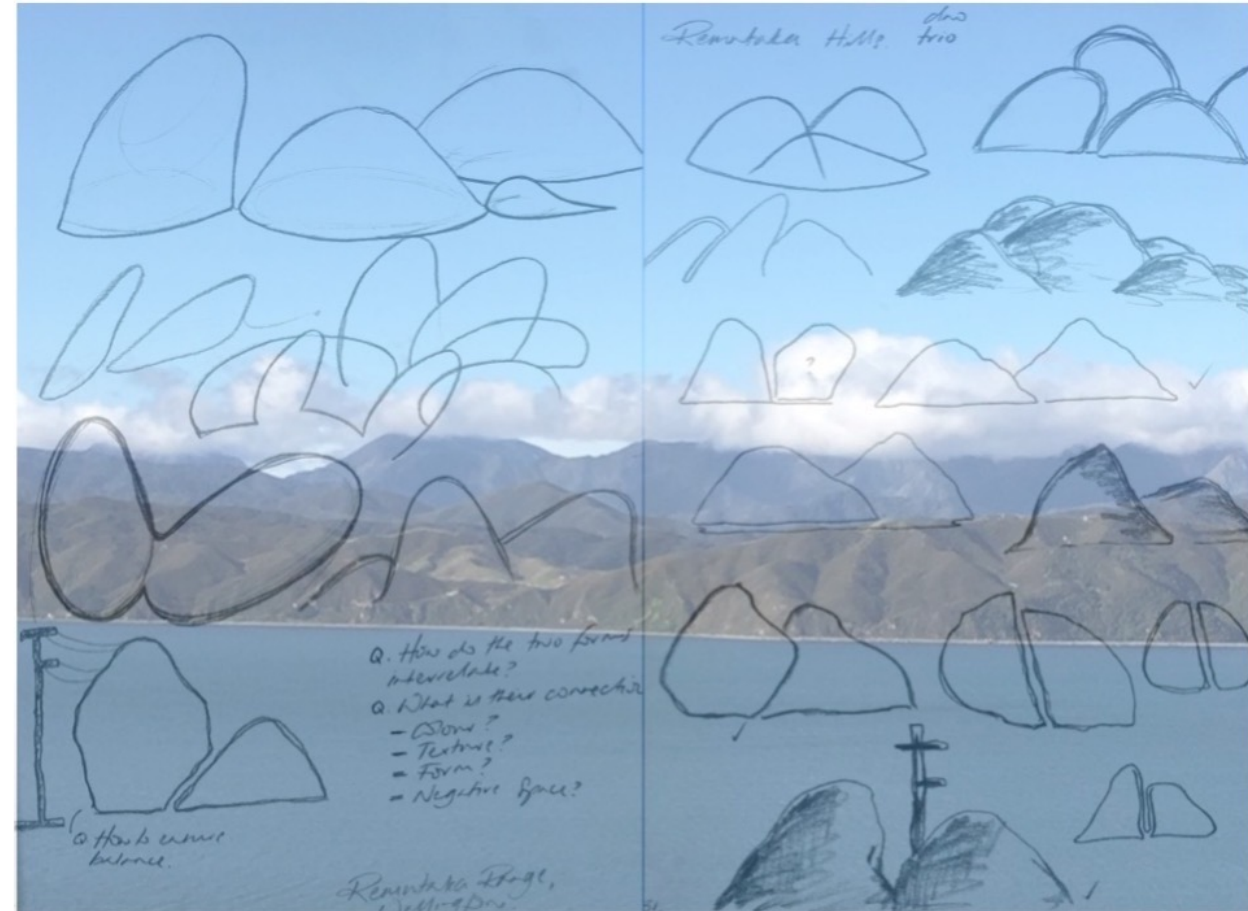
Direct physical involvement with material in the act of making, to be part of visual language.

Tension vs harmony.

Invite touch / communicate tactility.

Duality, but not in opposition, rather two elements of equal importance.

Natural and metaphoric associations.



remutaka range - form I & II



Work photographed in gallery.

Cherry Plum (from my garden), hand carved, black wood dye, dark wax.
Form 1 (L) - 180(h)x185(w)x115(d)mm. 2022. Form II (R) - 130(h)x210(l)x125(d)mm. 2022

bibliography

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Deguara, Brittney. You can sail from Britain to NZ in a straight line new map shows. Stuff. 6 Feb. 2019. Web. Accessed 21.03.22.

<https://www.stuff.co.nz/world/europe/110414449/you-can-sail-from-britain-to-nz-in-a-straight-line-new-map-shows>.

Kelly, Lynne. *Memory Craft*. Australia: Allen & Unwin, 2019. Print.

MacFarlane, Robert. *The Old Ways, A Journey On Foot*. London: Penguin Group, 2013. Print.



figures list

Fig. 1. *Research Location Map*. Google Earth. Web. Accessed 30 Apr. 2022. <https://earth.google.com/web>

Fig. 2. *A kōwhaiwhai panel and a poupou*. (1849–1863). Wood and paint, wood and pāua shell. Chitham et al. *Crafting Aotearoa: A Cultural History of Making in New Zealand and the Wider Moana Oceania*. 2019. 107. Print.

Fig. 3. *War Canoe Model*. (1800–). Wood. 245cm. Auckland War Memorial Museum Te Papa Whakahiku. Brake et al. *Te Maori: Treasures of the Maori*. Auckland [N.Z.: Reed in association with Auckland City Art Gallery and Te Maori Manaaki Taonga Trust, 1994. 57. Print.

Fig. 4. *Taiaha* (long fighting weapon). 1800–1850. Wood. L172cm. Museum of New Zealand. Web. Accessed 9 May 2022. <https://collections.tepapa.govt.nz/object/137635>

Fig. 5. *Bright red Māori mask with silver eyes*. iStockphoto. Web. Accessed 30 Apr. 2022. <https://www.istockphoto.com/photo/bright-red-maori-mask-with-silver-eyes-gm152541650-13418758>

Fig. 6. *Short wooden Māori club*. Wood and shell. Sothebys. Web. Accessed 26 Apr. 2022. <http://www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/ecatalogue/2014/arts-afrique-oceanie-pf1408/lot.3.html>

Fig. 7. Sir Tipene O'Regan. *Taonga korero* (a personal pendant that tells a story). Whale tooth. Flintoff, Brian. *Kura Koiwi: Bone Treasures*. Nelson, N.Z.: Craig Potton Pub, 2011. 121. Print.

Fig. 8. *Post Figure*. (1800–). Wood. 97cm. Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa. Brake et al. *Te Maori: Treasures of the Maori*. Auckland [N.Z.: Reed in association with Auckland City Art Gallery and Te Maori Manaaki Taonga Trust, 1994. 37. Print.

Fig. 9. *St Clair beach*. 100% Pure New Zealand. New Zealand Tourism. Web. Accessed 10 May 2022. <https://www.newzealand.com/in/feature/st-clair-beach/>

Fig. 10. *Vintage Color America Centered Physical World Map*. No text. Adobe Stock. Web. Accessed 9 May 2022. <https://stock.adobe.com/uk/images/vintage-color-america-centered-physical-world-map-no-text/172254810>