

*comfort
zone*
&
*reading
room*

Eve Armstrong
Nanette Cameron
Peta Tearle



Pages 2-5

Eve Armstrong

In and Out

from the series 'COMFORT ZONE' 2007

photographic images on adhesive vinyl, packing tape

Courtesy of the artist and Michael Lett, Auckland

Pages 6-9 & 14

Eve Armstrong

COMFORT ZONE PROTOTYPE

from the series 'COMFORT ZONE' 2007

second-hand furniture, carpet underlay, transparent PVC sheeting

Courtesy of the artist and Michael Lett, Auckland

Pages 10-13

Eve Armstrong, Nanette Cameron, Peta Tearle

Reading Room 2007

interior setting

Courtesy of the artists, designers and Michael Lett, Auckland





MONDAY
TUESDAY
WEDNESDAY
THURSDAY
FRIDAY
SATURDAY
SUNDAY







Auditorium



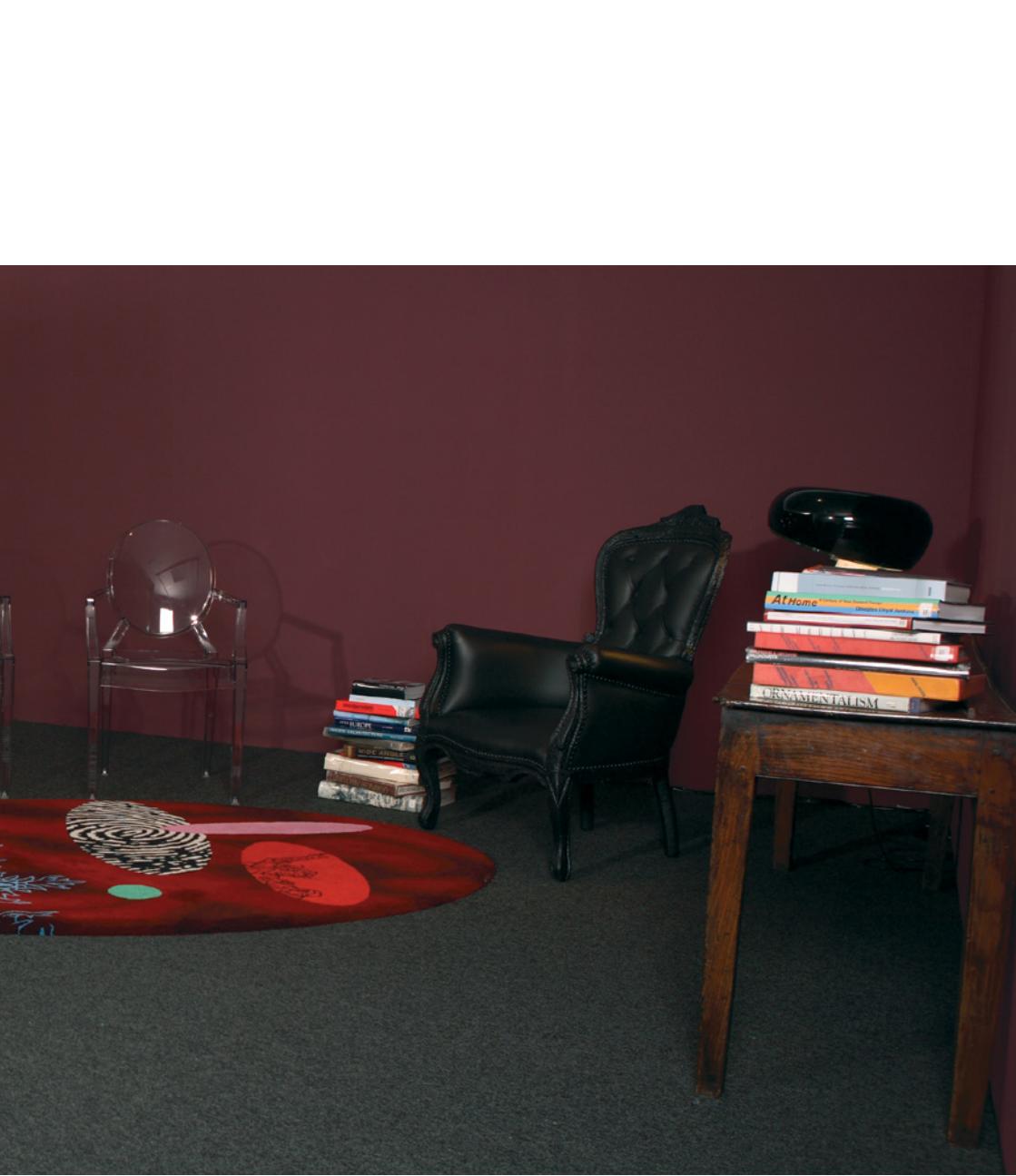












EXIT



PEOPLE, PLACES, PROCESSES

Eve Armstrong: Now that I've decided to make work in the foyer of Te Tuhi, I think that perhaps it was a crazy idea as I've been watching the constant flow of foot traffic through there; kids, families, senior citizens, local workers, Indian wedding parties and so on. It is busy all the time! I suspect I'll have to think more like an interior designer and be far more practical in terms of taking into account how the space is used, the requirements of the space, durability, etc. This is a normal part of my process when making a sculpture or installation and in a way the process suits the way I work which is often to respond to a structure be it physical or organisational and adapt it. I think parameters and limits can help to structure and form your work. I was thinking about how interior design is always responding to, or working with, architecture. If it's anything like the way I work then you take your cue from what is already there and rework or rethink it. You work with givens. Do you find this? What is interesting to you about this process?

Nanette Cameron: Well, if you're working within an architecturally designed home you are really working with the architect's concepts and adapting to their ideas. Some architects don't like having an interior designer. You have to choose an interior designer that really understands what that particular architect is about and not one who is trying to do one thing when the architect's concept is another.

Peta Tearle: There will always be some givens because there's always a client. It depends what kind of an environment you are working with, of course, but the space will also have to appeal to certain people— whoever is going to reside there.

Whether it is about interiors or the exterior of a building it is still primarily about the people. And then there'll be the givens—maybe it's a new building but the given will be the site that it's placed within or, if it's someone's existing house there'll be some special things that they have that they want to feature in the space. Or there may be certain aspects such as surfaces (like flooring) that are not going to be changed due to budget constraints and so on. So there will be those givens. The most important part of that decision making is how the people want to feel in the space.



Top: Peta Tearle, interior colour, Opium restaurant Auckland, 2005.
Photographer, Kevin Emerali.

Left: Peta Tearle, 'Tomorrow, and Tomorrow, and Tomorrow', light box installed within Magnum Restaurant, Auckland, 2007. Image courtesy of Urbis. Photographer, Emily Andrews.



Interior, Peta Tearle's apartment, Auckland, 2003.
Image courtesy of New Zealand House & Garden.
Photographer, Kevin Emerali.





NC: Yes and how the client wants to live—their likes and dislikes. Really you have to choose an interior designer as you'd choose an architect—you've seen something they've done and you know they are on the same wavelength as you. It's the same with an interior designer. As an interior designer you're taking people further than they would have gone on their own. That's why people choose us.

EA: **So what is the process of working with a client and where is the space for your own creativity as an interior designer?**

PT: Well, my own opinions are not so important when it comes to designing someone else's space. They will have possibly chosen me because of an aesthetic that I have. The work that I do for other people is going to be designed around them. First of all I think that the client would want to be able to get on with me as a person. I don't have a particular style that gets imposed on anyone. I wouldn't like someone to enter a room and say 'oh it looks like Peta Tearle's been here'. I want it to be their space.

EA: **I wonder if it's more about a way of working than anything else.**

PT: Yes, I think it would be a way of working. Clients have said 'what I really like about you is that you listened to what I wanted'. I would much prefer this to 'she just did what she wanted to do and she didn't ask me about what I wanted'.

NC: You have to find out how clients want to live and want they like. You may have been called into an existing house the client wants redesigned. They may want to keep a certain number of things and also select some new elements. Or, they might need you to cull their belongings down for them because sometimes you can have too much diversity. The client might say they really like this particular room or relate to certain colours. They may have some things that are handsome or mean a lot to them so you have to incorporate this into a plan. There are so many decisions. Just take a living room—there's the furniture, wall colour, how you treat the windows, accessories, the floor.

EA: **Yes, there are so many decisions, so many details and options. I guess that's where the interior designer comes in...**

NC: If you set out today to do your own living room and you start to look at fabrics—well, you might have to go round about ten fabric houses

yourself. But if you asked a designer instead she might have at her fingertips one or two alternatives that could perhaps be very successful. She knows where the furniture that's going to suit you is; what's happening and where things are. It saves a tremendous lot of anxiety and time for the client, however you don't do anything without them and very often you take the client with you on research outings.

Mostly interior designers should be client focussed because that's what it's really about. Sometimes, and architects say this too, you feel you're a marriage guidance counsellor as much as an interior designer. You get very close to people. And husbands and wives don't always agree.

EA: All those things they never tell you you'll end up doing when you're studying.

NC: Yes. They don't give you any psychology training!

EA: It must be an interesting process because I imagine some clients don't have any particular ideas about what they want. Is it about helping them to realise that actually they do have likes and dislikes and helping them to identify what they are?

NC: Sometimes at the beginning, for instance when you're working with a client on the first room or the first segment of the house then they're a little unsure. But by the time you get to the end of the project you'd really like to do the first part again because the client has grown through the whole experience. They're really much more conducive to seeing what can be done.

PT: The client may initially think they have no ideas but there's always something to start with. I ask them how they want to feel. It's my job to ask lots of questions. The result could be millions of different ways but of course we only have one opportunity until they decorate again or they have another house!

EA: That's how I always think about my art making as well. The end result is just one particular configuration or arrangement with these materials and I could have done it many other ways but this is what's right for this space at this time.

PT: Sometimes with my work it's about resolving a whole lot of issues and the process will be a bit like a jigsaw puzzle. In the end the bits will fit together but there could have been a whole lot of other pieces that could have also fitted together...

EA: I understand. Absolutely. I have a little line 'I don't know how this will work out but it will work out'. I find at the start there are so many loose threads and, in making, you pull some of the threads together.

PT: There are many possibilities but in the end you take the ones which will resolve it and make it work and so you have to be prepared to leave a whole lot of things out.

EA: It's kind of an interesting compromise; well it's not really a compromise...?

PT: I don't do compromise. I encourage the people in a house to have, if necessary, an object or colour that one person loves and the other's not so keen on. But then, in another area of the house to have something that the other person particularly loves. So, it's a give and take situation rather than a compromise.

EA: Compromise sounds like a negative word but I was thinking more about the choices you make with awareness. I like your approach—rather going for a potentially bland middle ground you find a way for opposing tastes to be accommodated.

PT: If someone says, 'I love it' then the other people they live with are going to benefit from that anyway.

EA: And it's funny how with spaces you sort of grow into them. It's like music and art, there are some discoveries that are slow burners.

PT: Yes. Sometimes a client will say, 'when you first showed me that I didn't think I liked it but it's growing on me'. It's about introducing clients to something they might not have thought of. Some people say being a designer is like being a dream merchant because we're trying to make people's dreams come true.

And, it might sound a bit over the top, but it is a bit like that. I have a client at the moment with a dream home they have planned for years, so I want to make quite sure that what I do enhances their life and makes that dream reality.

ENHANCING SPACES

EA: Nanette, I saw you quoted as saying 'interior design enhances everything that's great about the world we live in'. Can you



Nanette Cameron, interior settings, c.1960s. Photographer unknown.



talk about that? How do you think the spaces we make affect and alter the ways we relate to one another and the world?

NC: Through giving people an environment that they are happy in, and that works for them. Helping a client make the right choices and giving them something more creative than they could have first envisaged.

EA: What about you Peta? How would you describe the role or function of colour in an interior setting? What can colour do for a room?

PT: It can change its personality. Colour can give a room a specific personality. It can make you feel differently—warmer, cooler, quieter, more excited, all those kinds of things. It's physiological as well as emotional.

EA: Colour seems to play a very important role in our everyday interiors, the spaces we inhabit each day. For instance corporate offices are often blue...

PT: It's the same thing. As you step into a corporate office the effect they may want is for you to feel secure or to portray an image of reliability. However, if you step into your home you might want to feel it's a serene environment after a busy day. The colour achieves the effect.

EA: Yes, colour plays both an emotional and functional role. I guess this leads on to colour theory or symbolism because of course colour has different meanings for different cultures and individuals. I find it interesting that colour can be so personal and particular yet also have many general connotations. I might loathe pink and yet pink is meant to be a very nurturing colour.

PT: Colours have a negative and positive set, although mostly positive. For example, if we compile a list of responses for each colour, there are more positive responses and explanations for the colour than negative ones. However, it is a matter of personal opinion. There are general ideas about colours, but our personal experiences can have a huge impact on the kinds of colours you like, along with your nature, your own personality. And a building will have a personality of its own as well.

EA: Peta, your colour designs are often described as site specific. I thought all designers would respond directly to the site but is this not always the case? For instance, have you found that

some colour designers do not take the space into consideration so much, and take more of an indirect approach? Are there varying degrees of site specificity?

PT: I always used that term when referring to my commissioned painted work. I wouldn't have painted an artwork on a wall without considering the space. Sometimes a painted wall might have been required to enhance or correct some architectural features.

EA: Yes, I guess that ties in to what we were discussing earlier about the givens and taking cues from the space.

PT: Yes, rather than 'transplanting'. For example, sometimes a client will love the colour scheme I designed for them so much that when they buy the next house they'll just plonk the same colours into the new house, no matter how different the two spaces are. I have one client whose sister loved the scheme I designed, so she got the same colours for her own home.

NC: What have you done with architecture, Eve?

EA: A recent work is a large-scale outdoor collage on the side and back of the Christchurch Art Gallery as part of 'Scape 2006'. I took photographs around Christchurch mostly in the suburbs and industrial zones as I was looking for places which support or have supported Christchurch's inner city. The photographs are on vinyl and are combined with packaging tape. It's the same process as the wall collage for 'Comfort Zone'. Most of the outdoor works in 'Scape' were sited within the cultural precinct of Christchurch and I wanted to contrast the substantial stone architecture which characterises the architecture in this area with the more ephemeral materials and precarious constructions. I was also aware of the contention and debate that arose over the gallery architecture within the community. It was suggested to me that this was due to an international firm designing the building rather than one from New Zealand or rather Christchurch which is well known for its architects.

NC: I do not agree—I am in complete favour of using architects from other countries for major buildings, such as the Christchurch Art Gallery, if we will get a better result. I think there should be an open competition. I find New Zealand far too insular in this respect. This is the reason

why New Zealand has got no major building we can be proud of. You go to Paris, for instance, and it has great architecture by Norwegian, English, Italian and Chinese architects. In Bilbao, in Spain, the famous Guggenheim Museum was designed by a Canadian architect. We need to take a wider outlook. Through history many great buildings have caused controversy. Shen Wren's St Paul's Cathedral in London was being built in the Seventeenth Century and an eighteen foot wall had to be put around the construction to hide it from critics.

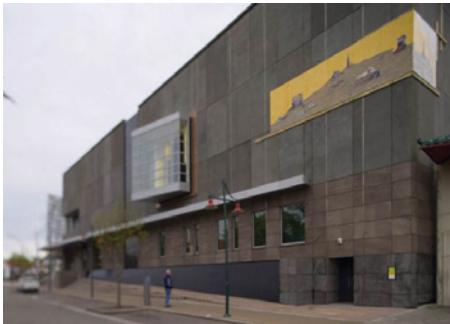
- EA:** It reminds me of the criticism around judged art exhibitions like the Walters Prize when there is an international judge. Some people in the art community criticise this because they think a New Zealander should judge the work but actually New Zealand is so small (everyone knows everyone) and perhaps an external judge is more objective. On the other hand I can see that part of this argument may come from the perception that in having an international judge New Zealand is looking overseas for approval.
- NC: It's a sign of growing up, that you can stop looking for outside approval. However, I do feel that if we had one really good public building on an international level it would raise the standard of a lot of architecture in New Zealand.

SOFT ARCHITECTURE

- EA:** One of my most favourite books is called 'Occasional Work and Seven Walks from the Office of Soft Architecture' and I wonder if the term 'soft architecture' may be an apt description for interior design. Not just for the obvious reasons of utilising fabric and furnishings but also because interior design seems more open to change, less permanent, or at least more easily altered than architecture. Would you agree?
- NC: Yes. I hate the word 'fashion' in relation to interior design but you definitely are influenced by the period that you are living in, the decade itself. There's a deeper reason than just trends as to why colours are important in certain periods of history. Colours really represent what's happening politically and socially in the world as well as people's feelings about that time.

For example, at the end of the 1970s everybody was very frightened about the cold war, nuclear arms and so on. There was the beginning

Eve Armstrong, 'Backdrop',
2006, packing tape,
photographs on vinyl adhesive,
timber and plywood, sited at
Christchurch Art Gallery Te
Puna O Waiwhetu.
Commissioned for SCAPE
2006. Courtesy of the artist
and Michael Lett, Auckland.



Eve Armstrong, 'Arrangement:
Gush', 2007, cardboard,
packing tape, found objects,
Auckland Art Fair. Courtesy
of the artist and Michael Lett,
Auckland.



Eve Armstrong, 'Insulation
Project' (detail), 2002, found
linen and building materials.
Courtesy of the artist.

of new technologies—robots and computers. Life seemed to be getting so much away from anything to do with humanity, therefore to counter this we needed the caring and cosetting of pink. Pink was the theme for hotels like the Regent and the Sheraton, and hair salons. Pink was in our homes, it was everywhere.

The nineties was a time for stepping out. You cannot cosset yourself forever. Blue and yellow were initially popular, leading us to the use of bolder, brighter colours by the end of the decade.

- PT: It's easier to look back on and reflect after the fact, because if we look right now we are only looking at a moment in time whereas when we look back we generally look at a whole decade. In terms of right now I think that possibly one of the central ideas in interior design is 'contrast'. There's a lot of use of strong contrast like black and white for example and I think that we are very aware these days of how contrasting our worlds are because of globalisation and a shrinking world. We're here in New Zealand feeling quite safe and yet other parts of the world are completely in disarray. I don't know if that's why we have a lot of contrast. There are always lots of different things that are fashionable at a particular time.

TEACHING

- EA:** **Nanette, do you think the role of the interior designer has changed and if so how and why do you think this has come about?**

- NC: When I started there was no such thing as interior design. People did their own. But, these days some people have an interior designer, a separate kitchen designer, a landscape designer and a lighting expert. There are so many more materials. As well, a lot of architects don't want to be bothered with the specifics of a kitchen and to get your kitchen efficient it requires a lot of careful planning.

- EA:** **You've been teaching your School of Interior Design at Te Tuhi for about forty years now. Have the classes changed since the early days and how? Do students still want the same thing?**

- NA: The course was set up in the beginning to help women have the confidence to be able to do their own interiors. Giving people the confidence is still a big part of it, but today I have students who work in the field or are sent by their company.

As far as my classes go, a tremendous lot of the tuition they get is about broadening their horizons. A lot of students say their appreciation is much wider and that if they hadn't done the course they'd have much more tunnel vision in their approach to both design and art.

EA: What do you try to teach or communicate about colour in your classes Peta?

PT: I like encouraging students to be open minded about their use of colour and to make them aware that there's lots of different ways to use it. I certainly give them guidelines but leave them without rules.

EA: A framework for working in?

PT: To fall back on perhaps. Hopefully I inspire the students to have a personal approach. I provide them with information and inspiration.

EA: Both of your classes emphasise the opening up of possibilities. I noticed on your hand-outs Nanette that you always include 'quotations to expand our appreciation'.

NC: In one of the introductory pages I have a hand-out from Johannes Itten—artist and lecturer at the famous Bauhaus School of Architecture and Design in the early part of the 20th Century. He says: 'learning from books and teachers is like travelling by carriage, we are told in the Veda' (ancient Hindu scriptures written in the form of Sanskrit). The thought goes on: 'but the carriage will serve only while one is on the high road. He who reaches the end of the high road will leave the carriage and walk afoot. One may travel carriageless and by unblazed trails but progress is then slow and the journey perilous. If a high and distant goal is to be attained then it is advisable to take a carriage at first in order to advance swiftly and safely.' And that's really what I hope to achieve—taking students so far with me but then the rest is up to them...



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Books were loaned from the collections of Bev Smaill, Nanette Cameron and the Te Tuhi Centre for the Arts Research Library.

DESIGN CONTRIBUTORS TO READING ROOM

Cardinal

acrylic flat paint

Courtesy of Porters Original Paints, Auckland

Schizzo or two in one

Designed by Ron Arad for Vitra

birch-faced, molded plywood, constructed with tubular steel connections

Private collection

Wiggle Side Chair

Designed by Frank Gehry for Vitra

laminated cardboard

Private collection

Ghost

Designed by Philippe Starck for Kartell

Polycarbonate

Courtesy of De De Ce, Auckland

Dora – outdoor use

Designed by Ludouica and Roberto Palomba for Zanotta

lacquer finish on Polyethylene frame

Courtesy of Studio Italia, Auckland

Smoke Chair

Designed by Marten Baas for Mooi

burnt frame finished with Epoxy resin

Courtesy of ECC Lighting and Living, Auckland

Tolomeo Mega

Designed by Michelle De Lucchi and Giancarlo Fassina for Artemide

metal and parchment

Courtesy of ECC Lighting and Living, Auckland

Snoopy

Designed by Achille and Giacomo Castiglioni for Flos Lighting and Living

white marble base with enameled metal reflector

Courtesy of Sue Hillary

Rustic Dresser Base

English Elm

Courtesy of Donald Melville Antiques, Auckland

French Folding Wine Tasting Table

French Chestnut

Courtesy of Donald Melville Antiques, Auckland

BIOGRAPHIES

EVE ARMSTRONG is an artist based in Auckland. In 2003 she completed a Bachelor of Fine Arts from the Elam School of Fine Arts, University of Auckland. In 2006 Armstrong was an inaugural recipient of The Arts Foundation of New Zealand New Generation Award and artist in residence at the Enjoy Public Art Gallery in Wellington. Her work has been included in group exhibitions such as 'Turbulence', 3rd Auckland Triennial, Auckland (2007); 'Don't Misbehave', SCAPE Art & Industry Biennial, Christchurch (2006); 'A tale of two cities: Busan-Seoul/Seoul-Busan', Busan Biennale, Busan and 'Public/Private', 2nd Auckland Triennial, Auckland (2004). Solo exhibitions include 'ROAM', Artspace, Auckland (2005) and 'Book Bonanza', rm103, Auckland (2004). She is represented by Michael Lett, Auckland.

NANETTE CAMERON is recognized in the New Zealand design industry both for her own work in both the private and commercial sector, and as a highly influential teacher through the Nanette Cameron School of Interior Design, hosted at Te Tuhi Centre for the Arts, Pakuranga, Manukau City. In its forty-plus year history the school has instilled an understanding and appreciation of design in thousands of students, many of whom have gone on to work as successful designers both in New Zealand and overseas.

Cameron holds a Bachelor of Arts from the Otago University. In 2004 Nanette Cameron was awarded a Queen's Service Medal for her contribution to the community, as a designer and teacher.

PETA TEARLE is an Auckland-based colourist well known for her distinctive approach to colour design. A key aspect of her practice is collaborative work with highly regarded New Zealand architects and interior designers. Tearle has also used her industry expertise to develop a Colour Design course held at Te Tuhi Centre for the Arts from 2000.

Tearle has received awards including winning the Interior Design Category at the 2001 Best Design Awards and a 2001 Colour Award from the New Zealand Institute of Architects, both for apartments in the Shangri La Tower, Herne Bay; working with Malcolm Taylor and Xsite Architects. She has been awarded numerous Dulux Colour Awards, including receiving the Grand Prix Award in both 1999 and 2005. In addition, Tearle was a finalist in the Waikato Summer Art Awards in both 2003 and 2004, and was awarded the Iris Fisher Art Award in 2004.

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a series of artist projects in collaboration with the te tuhi community



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