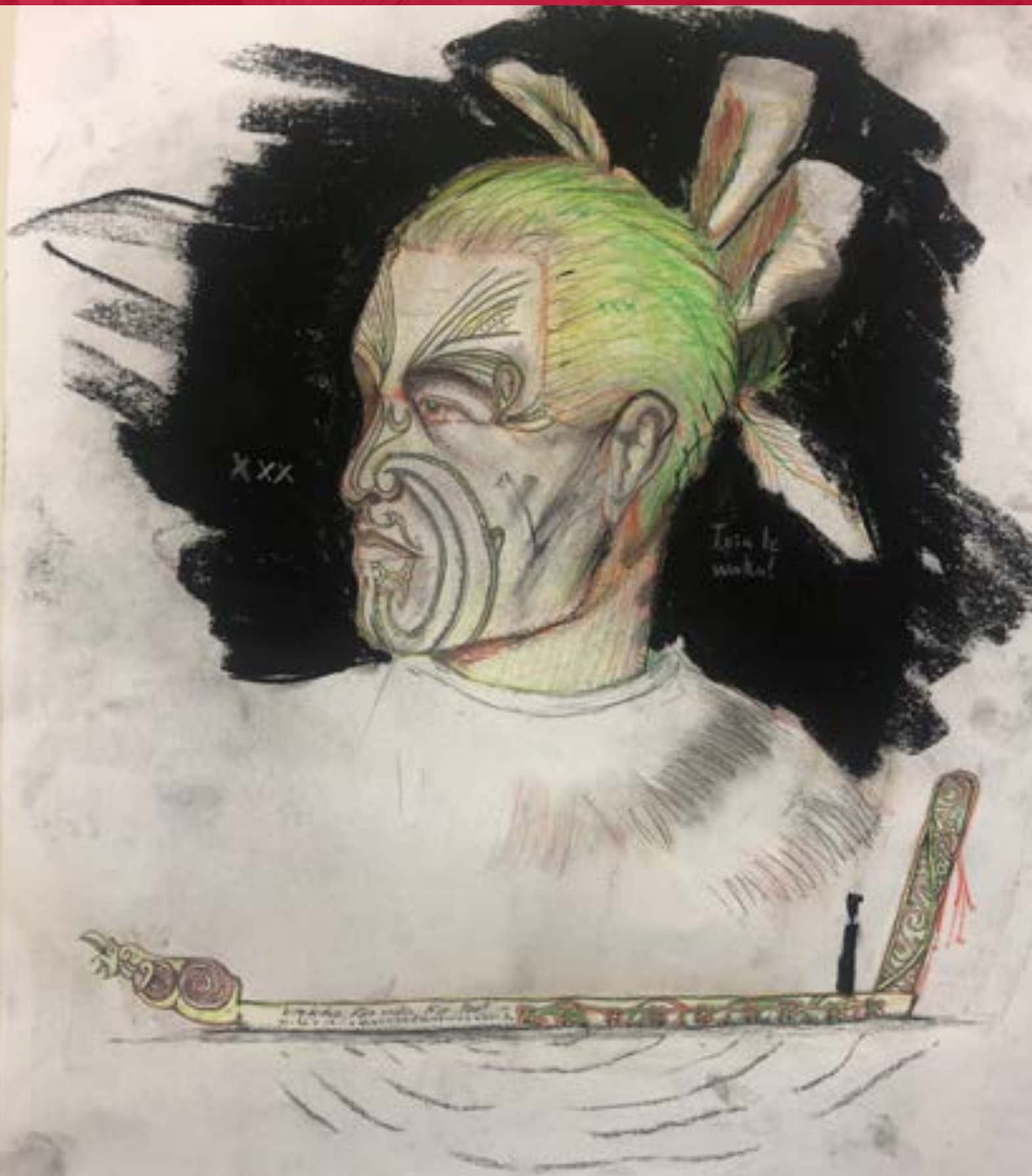


Ko te Pūrākau o Tipa



Cover Art:

Ko Maukatere toku maunga,
Ko Waimakarere toku awa,
Ko Tuiahiwi toku marae,
Ko Ngāi Tūāhuriri toku hapu,
Ko Ngai Tahu toku iwi,
Ko Aidan Geraghty toku ingoa,

Aiden is a young aspiring artist studying graphic design at Otago Polytech who wanted to contribute to the project because of his drive and appreciation for Māoritanga and his belief that the starting place for human rights should be undeniable equity

Figure 17. The cover to *Ko te Pūrākau o Tipa* is a pastel sketch of a young Māori man with feathered top-knot and facial moko beneath which, the silhouette of a solitary figure stands at the back of a carved waka (canoe). A kaihautu, in charge of all of the paddlers.

Ko te Pūrākau o Tipa

Toia te waka (he ha), toia te waka (he ha), ka tahi, ka rua, ka toru, toia ra.

At the back of the waka next to the taurapa stood Tipa, a young excitable tane, with more than a glint of mischief in his eye and energy abound.

It was his turn to navigate the waka to the next island to fish for the whānau and it was his turn to be the kaihautu which meant he was in charge of all the paddlers on the boat. They listened to his calls that would guide the waka to its destination.

Tipa knew like the other young men that being chosen to lead the waka was a wero given to each of them when the time was right and the kaumatua felt they were ready to be tested.

Tipa had been waiting to prove himself to those old wise ones. He wanted them to know he could do this as he had been dreaming about leading his people and being the best navigator he could be. No one in his whānau had done this and he wanted to prove that he could.

Tipa's mum had struggled to look after Tipa when he was a small baby due to Tipa being unwell. She tried but Tipa's illnesses were just too much for her to manage and he was fostered out to an elderly couple they became his Tāua and Poua and they lived in another part of the whenua. Tipa didn't know his father very well so his Poua became his Papa also and taught him respect and whakapapa.

As Tipa grew his troubles became hard to control. He struggled to learn at the kura. He couldn't keep up with the other tamariki, they made fun of him and this made Tipa very angry and very sad. He wanted to play outside and be adventurous he wanted to explore his world not sitting down all day and made to be still. Tipa loved being with his Poua and going with him to the Marae, attending pōwhiri and tangi. He learnt te reo Māori, tikanga and kawa from his Poua. This made Tipa feel calm and proud.

Tipa's could not contain himself any longer and it was his adventurous side that led Tipa into more mischief, more than he could handle. Tipa entered a darker side of his world and explored rongoa kino. Tipa thought he could escape some of his challenges by taking rongoa kino and he found out he was wrong when he was captured by another iwi and became their prisoner.

He felt so sad whilst incarcerated, he thought about his life, his whānau and his choices he had made that led to him being captured. He met others like himself who he befriended and they too were trying to improve their lives. Some got into fitness and were an inspiration to Tipa and others he knew he needed to stay away from because they led him into more danger.

When Tipa's Poua passed away his world came tumbling down. Tipa found it hard to live when the person he considered his toka (rock) had left through the tatau pōhutakawa. But in the depths of his pouritanga (sadness) he remembered what his Poua told him and that was to honour his whakapapa. Keep learning his Māori and tautoko his whānau. Kia kaha, kia maia, kia toa!

Tipa has started his mission to join his mother and spend time with her. He is ready to reunite and cherish her as a mother and improve his relationships with his siblings. They are a little wary of Tipa and his past, but he wants to let them know he is ready for new adventures but this time these adventures involve looking after his tinana, his hinengaro, his whānau and ultimately his wairua.

Tipa has struggled with relationships: with his parents, his brothers and sisters and with partners. He is open to new relationships with other people like himself that have some challenges in life and those who have less challenges. He loves meeting people and getting close and intimate with them if they do too. The thought of having little Tipa's running around excites him and scares him at the same time. Oh the things he can teach them about life, whakapapa and being Māori. Tū ihi, tū wehi, tū mana!

Tipa is now in charge of the waka, guiding his crew to the next destination. Calling the commands and feeling in control as the upcoming kaihautu!

Toia te waka, he ha, toia te waka, he ha! Ka tahi, ka rua, ka toru, toia ra!

Key Messages

Like Tipa, we are all on a journey, away from something and towards somewhere else.

- Tipa's pūrākau made us think about our own life as like a journey away from something and towards somewhere else. We also think;
- Standing next to the taurapa (stern-post), calling out to the paddlers was important to Tipa because he felt he had to prove himself. People with a learning disability often feel as if they have to prove things before they can make same choices other people do.
- One of the key messages we thought Tipa had for people with a learning disability was to be brave. Getting the same things other people have sometimes feels like being on a mission.

The journey towards somewhere else: Setting off in a new direction.

- We all felt that Tipa's pūrāka was describing a new kind of "mission".
- Tipa was telling us that, it is never too late to change your life.
- Tipa was also telling us to never give up on loving and being loved. You can turn your identity into a positive one through good relationships.

Moving towards your destination: He tāngata, he tāngata, he tāngata.

- Our advice to Tipa would be to look for another toka (a relational rock or someone to "ground him"). We were reminded of the whakatauki, He aha te mea nui o te ao. He tāngata, he tāngata, he tāngata (What is the most important thing in the world? It is people, it is people it is people). We also thought;
- For people with a learning disability a small number of people can make a big difference in your life.
- Disability Support Services often don't understand just how important these relationships are.
- People with a learning disability almost never get the chance to talk about how to fill the gap when someone who is important to you dies or leaves (like Tipa's Poua who died).

Paddling away from places.

- We thought that Tipa might be using his waka to get away from places too. We wondered if that included pain in his life.
- We all felt that abuse was common in the lives of people with a learning disability and shared our own stories in the group.

- We also thought people with a learning disability might experience violence or abuse earlier in their lives.
- We wondered how much impact not knowing his parent(s), might have had on Tipa's life. Not being brought up by his mum might be a kind of abuse.
- Abuse is never a woman's fault, but it can make you not think right. You can't help thinking that what happened when you are young makes it more difficult for men to love you.

Little Tipa's running around: Oh the things he could teach them!!

- We liked the way Tipa imagined little Tipas running around as part of his future. In many of the stories, Storytellers imagined themselves as parents one day.
- We liked that Tipa understood that he had things to teach his children as a parent with a learning disability too.
- More and more people with a learning disability are having children now – but even though it is normal to think about being a parent, other people might be surprised to hear Tipa say he wanted to have kids.
- Having the chance to talk about having children acknowledges that we have the same hopes and dreams as everyone else.
- Not everyone will want to have children but always being told “It would be too much work and too expensive” is the way other people close down conversations about becoming a parent.
- Not being able to make small choices or being let down in other areas of your life make it harder to make big decisions like having children.
- Women with a learning disability sometimes do have unplanned pregnancies, and so do other women, but no one thinks they can't have sex or that they will be bad mothers.

He couldn't tell his story without the right words: The importance of te reo Māori.

- Hearing the chant at the start let us know we had to listen differently. We think;
- Tipa couldn't tell his story without having the right words. To him those words were Te reo Māori.
- Tipa said that he felt calm and proud when his Poua was teaching him). We think Tipa may have felt the same things, when he heard his story spoken back to him
- Māori members of the research team said they felt calm and proud too.

What do you think?