

MANA WĀHINE MĀORI AND THE MATAAHO COLLECTIVE: THE POWER OF COLLECTIVITY AND HOW WE FEED OUR ROOTS.

RYCHÈL THÉRIN SCOTT

25. MÄRZ 2025

18:30

**ÜBUNGSRAUM
4. STOCK/NIG**



*He wāhine, he whenua, ka ngaro te tangata.
(Without women and without land, humanity is lost)
Maori Whakataukī / Proverb*

Indigenous Feminisms are not new. Mana wāhine Māori envelops concepts of female empowerment, strength and integrity. This lecture discusses the work and practice of Māori artists Mataaho Collective as a holistic embodying of mana wāhine in action.

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Indigenous Feminisms are not new. For many, the idea of feminism might feel like a western notion, but upon analysis it becomes clear that feminist principles are inherent to Maori and other Indigenous cultures. Mana Wāhine, meaning female empowerment, strength and integrity, is interwoven in various forms throughout Maori culture and society. When Māori women act, we are already moving forward from a place of respect and equality within our community. It is the interaction with western and colonial constructs that make us need to rewind and reiterate that our position as women is not suppressed from within our own communities, rather from the constructs and prejudices of the overriding (western, colonial, christian) majority.

The artwork of Mata Aho Collective is firmly based in Te Ao Māori, and purposefully holds Mana Wāhine at the core of the work they produce. In their own words: "Mana wāhine, namely the empowerment and integrity of Māori women, is the mātauranga Māori that forms the basis of our work, including processes of research, development, and wānanga. We employ it as a philosophy through which to view our histories", Mata Aho Collective, 2018.

Taking the process, practice and artistic works of the Mata Aho Collective, and the writings of Dr Linda Tuhiwai Smith, Dr Leonie Pihama, Dr Huia Jahnke and others, this paper will discuss and show how contemporary indigenous art practices operating from a transcultural position can reverberate out and beyond their communities of origin; how indigenous feminisms, such as Mana Wāhine are intrinsically different in priority and aim to western feminism, and how decolonised and decentralised thinking is a crucial component to moving beyond essentialist, binary understandings of what contemporary feminism can be in a interconnected world.

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