

Poetry Reading in Colonial War HQ

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The most striking feature of monuments is that you do not notice them

Robert Musil (61)

What might decolonial poetry performances look like in a settler-colonial setting? There is, of course, no clear blueprint. Writing in 1999 Linda Tuhiwai Smith (Ngāti Awa, Ngāti Porou), in her landmark work *Decolonizing Methodologies*, argued that the ‘project of decolonizing has to set out ways to proceed through a colonizing world. It needs a radical compassion that reaches out, that seeks collaboration, and that is open to possibilities that can only be imagined as other things fall into place’ (xii). Smith’s decolonising theory anticipates what cannot be anticipated, holding postcolonial hope when there is no clear ‘post’ (no after) in a settler-colony. There is no straightforward act of removal that will guarantee decolonisation since, unlike a colony, the design of a settler-colony envisages no return, usually telling a story for settlers of ‘either total victory or total failure’ (Veracini). How, then, can people living in Aotearoa hope to decolonise in support of Tino Rangatiratanga (absolute chieftainship), as promised in Te Tiriti o Waitangi? Smith’s agenda-setting call to work against settler-colonial arrangements of power requires conceptual frames that move beyond victory-failure binaries and instead allow divergent experiences and histories to coincide.

One context in which the poetics of decolonial ambivalence plays out is in the apprehension of settler monuments. Hungry for a linear sense of progress and authority, many monuments seek to silence dialogue with the settler-colonial past and present. Decolonisation, in the context of a settler-colony, involves interrupting monumental monologues, instead embracing and performing the layered and oftentimes disappointing, irreconcilable and downright unredeeming associations of a colonised place. Te ao Māori (the Māori world) already has ways of addressing and hosting temporal entanglements and apparent contradictions, where the past, present and future are not cut off from one another. In this article, I explore the approach that poet and teacher Jacqueline Carter (Ngāti Awa, Ngāi Te Rangī, Ngāti Pākehā) takes to working outside the victory-failure binary. Of particular interest is the way that Carter responded in the form of a poem that she read during a June 2019 *LOUNGE* poetry

reading held in what is now called Old Government House, in the grounds of the University of Auckland. My proposition is that Old Government House is a settler-colonial monument. However, it took the experience of witnessing Carter's poem to both notice the house's monumental status and also to consider a tikanga-informed approach to decolonisation – one that invokes the law of the whare (house) and its relational impetus.

LOUNGE readings are hosted – like the journal *Ka Mate Ka Ora* – by the New Zealand Electronic Poetry Centre (nzepec) at the University of Auckland. Established in 2001 and coordinated by Michele Leggott and Brian Flaherty, nzepec is committed to archiving and hosting new and existing poetry from Aotearoa and the Pacific, as well as hosting in-person events such as symposia and readings. Since 2008, in conjunction with Auckland University Press and the Faculty of Arts, nzepec has held regular poetry evenings under the event name *LOUNGE* in Old Government House on the University of Auckland campus. Usually an exclusive space for staff, the Senior Common Room in Old Government House, for one night at a time, becomes *LOUNGE*: a common room – a room in common. Curated by Leggott and guest MCs, each evening hosts ten poets who are each invited to read five minutes of their best work. *LOUNGE* poetry readings are more than their venue (they have shape-shifted and adapted to each roving setting and iteration prior to their current location) but do they owe something to the place of their hosting? Invited to read at *LOUNGE* 68 by guest MC Makyla Curtis, Carter's poetry reading in the setting of the former colonial war headquarters prioritised tikanga (correct protocol or law) as she addressed the house. In doing so she performed decolonial ambivalence: the house, for Māori and for anyone that cares about reckoning with the settler past and present, is a problem; the house is also a host. Before attending to Carter's poem, I examine the house and the ways that its presence and business have been rendered invisible in its life as a monument.

Old Government House holds a monumental legacy: not in the form of a commemorative statue, but in the form of a house. This house serves as a monument in its commemorative function, trafficking in a heritage value rather than standing simply as a shelter with transferable utility value. In its name the house declares its loyalty to the past – not any past, but the past of the early colonial settlement and its early governors. Such commemorative naming attempts to make the presence and power of a settler government on indigenous land more normal and natural, working to secure consent for ongoing settler sovereignty. However, Te Tiriti o Waitangi only granted Kāwanatanga (a qualified form of chieftainship) to the Crown. The existence of a settler government was not inevitable, nor was it given consent by iwi and hapū (tribes and extended family groupings). Old Government House in Auckland has been home to decisions and declarations that have harmed and haunted both tangata whenua (people of the land) and the whenua (land) itself.



Figure 1 University of Auckland. *History of the House*. A low angle photograph of Old Government House as it stands today, as featured on the University of Auckland website [entry](#) on *Old Government House*.

In terms of the site and its history of indigenous-settler relations, settler governor Robert Fitzroy (successor to William Hobson) welcomed Te Wherowhero (Waikato) to the first building on the present site of Old Government House in the mid-1840s when Te Wherowhero offered armed defence against Hone Heke (Ngāpuhi) and his feared (though never eventuated) attack on Auckland. The first building burned down in 1848 and the present one was completed in 1856. By 1858, when Te Wherowhero became Pōtatau, the first Kingi of the Kingitanga (Māori king movement), goodwill was rapidly dissolving. Five years later, in 1863, the settler leader Governor Grey launched the British invasion of the Waikato from his headquarters at Government House by ordering that his troops cross the Mangatāwhiri stream – a threshold that Te Wherowhero had declared an aukati (line not to be crossed). Te Wherowhero died in 1860, so Tāwhiao became the second Kingi through the duration of the Waikato war and on through the confiscations until 1894. None of these violent histories or broken relationships are apparent in the name or in the presentation of Old Government House and its place in the site's since-added layer of the university. Like a validating statue, the house's generic heritage associations (for instance, the *Old* in Old Government House) lend it a generic kind of credibility, part of a desired texture of unquestionable place-based power. The settler use of history is not so much about sharing what happened, but celebrating that anything happened at all: *see, we were here, this is ours*.

The current institutional custodian of the house does little to publicly contend with the multiple histories of the site. Old Government House is now ostensibly a site of learning and has, since 1969,

formed part of the property portfolio of the University of Auckland. In its marketing materials and official commissioned literature, the university itself does little to address the indigenous origins of the site of Old Government House. There is no mention of the land beneath the house and the central city campus being connected to Ngāti Whātua, nor of the community use of the land as the pā village Pukerangi. Keith Sinclair, in the 1983 centennial history of the university, does address a ‘site row’. However, in Sinclair’s telling, the row refers not to any argument over the site’s layers of indigenous and settler occupations, but instead to an intra-settler tension related to the University of Auckland’s position in a mercantile city dedicated more to industrial than academic advancement, with the university positioned as an underdog (12). In the university’s official commissioned history the ‘site row’ also refers to the university’s desire to acquire Old Government House. Sinclair reports on the university’s early insistence on entitlement to the property as a form of ‘compensation’ for ‘Auckland’s great grievance – that the capital had been moved from Auckland to Wellington in 1865’ (7). By focusing on intra-settler concerns, the house is able to stand for the go-getter status of both the university and city in the face of their respective ‘grievances’, rather than having to confront the deeper conflict over the presence of a settler institution in an indigenous place. Stories of settler struggle are told at the expense of the indigenous dispossession upon which settler institutions are built.

As well as failing to address the immediate setting of the house as a place with indigenous significance and sovereignty, the university also does little to address the lands around Te Ika-a-Māui (the North Island) that were alienated and subsequently endowed to the University of Auckland. An early point in the introduction to the University of Auckland’s centennial history contains the only reference in the 365-page book to any form of ethical unease in regards to the colonial establishment of the University of Auckland:

university education in New Zealand – eventually, indeed, in Auckland – came to be founded on a great wrong, the confiscation of large areas of Maori land in 1863, during the Anglo-Maori wars.

Sinclair (4)

Sinclair goes on to give a matter-of-fact list of the confiscated and endowed lands, as laid out in the 1885 Auckland University College Reserves Act, including ‘10,000 acres at Taupiri; 10,000 acres in the Waikato; 10,000 acres at Whakatane’ (30). The ‘site row’ over Old Government House is nowhere in sight when it comes to the listing of these settler-confiscated lands. However, it was Old Government House from which Governor Grey launched the programme of confiscation by commanding British troops in the invasion of the Waikato. The funding of the university’s establishment and maintenance was made possible by the military moves made on its current grounds.

The material, social and spiritual consequences for iwi stripped of their lands is absent in the university's perfunctory telling. The monumental impulse makes invisible the origins of the land beneath Old Government House, as well as the business of the house's first use as colonial headquarters, making it possible for the university to tell a single story about itself: success breeds success breeds success.



Figure 2 Author, 2019. *Success Breeds Success Breeds Success*.
A three-storey University of Auckland billboard on Symonds Street, Auckland.

In her doctoral thesis, Linda Tuhiwai Smith responded to the university's success-breeding story by centring the realities of Ngāti Awa, whose Whakatāne lands were confiscated. Smith takes her time to set out the experiences of her iwi:

In concrete terms the University of Auckland has been a direct beneficiary of the oppression of one of my own iwi, Ngati Awa and of other iwi who fought the government last century in a bid to defend their lands ... Originally 194,120 acres were confiscated from Ngati Awa in 1865. However, 1,870 acres were eventually returned to Ngati Awa, and of the remaining 116,250 acres, 10,000 were given by the state to the University of Auckland as part of an endowment. Ngati Awa and other tribes who fought to defend their lands were punished severely. Lands were not only confiscated but were awarded to soldiers who fought for the government, and to other Maori hapu who supported the government during the campaigns against Ngati Awa and other Maori tribes. In this way Ngati Awa were hemmed in by their enemies or dislocated entirely by the land confiscation. Individual Ngati Awa were also punished through a series of court martials and civil trials. Whilst some of these men were eventually released others were hung and others sentenced to life imprisonment.

Nga Aho o te Kakahu Matauranga (96–97)

Smith never claims to tell the whole story of the effects of the Governor's ordered land confiscations that would later become the University of Auckland endowment lands – the capital engine for the running of the institution – but I share this segment of her thesis in full in order to re-present just one of the many examples of violence rendered invisible by the monumental treatment of Old Government House.

Monuments both big and small can become almost invisible in the sites of their location – easily walked right past, or filed right into – until a contemporary event refreshes scrutiny. From Bristol to Kirikiriroa, imperial monuments have been questioned or removed by the direct action and political pressure of anti-racist protestors in the global wake of the May 2020 police killing of George Floyd in the USA. Perhaps because of their discrete (rather than systemic) stature, memorials to colonial figures or institutions can become galvanising targets for protest and resistance. The valorising monument is an in-your-face synecdoche for hegemonic power, a single point of view literally placed on a pedestal or engraved onto a plaque. Moana Jackson (Ngāti Kahungunu, Ngāti Porou) notes that monuments 'are a point of view, an our-story about who has the power to define what is "great" and memorable'. In Aotearoa monuments have provided one way for settlers to claim ownership over history and over representations of history, treating the ground beneath their feet as blank and fit for settler stories and systems, despite the existence of tikanga protocols and chiefly sovereignty that were in place before European colonisation. Creating and hosting 'our-stories' is a way of securing consent for a transplanted set of protocols and power that rarely seek to relate to the first protocols of

the place. It is not only statues that exemplify the technology of the monument. Old Government House might be a literal designation of a building's prior purpose, but, like statues, the house also plays a role in growing the settler presence in the past.

In terms of what to do in response to colonial monuments, Avril Bell favours 'possibilities that keep these troubling historical monuments in some form [...] but retells their stories in light of what we are now ready to face about our painful past. However, [as Pākehā] it's not my decision'. It is for tangata whenua (the people of the land) to decide. Of course, tangata whenua, unlike the settler monuments on their whenua, are not monolithic. Diverging indigenous responses to monuments imply that there is no centralised process to decide how to think about the past. Instead, letting go of centralisation might be part of the collaborative decolonial process outlined by Tuhiwai Smith. In their 2020 'MANAFESTO (after Miriama Aoake)', Hana Pera Aoake (Ngāti Raukawa, Ngāti Mahuta, Tainui/Waikato) – another reader at *LOUNGE 68* – along with Morgan Godfery (Ngāti Awa, Lalomanu) call for 'the immediate defacement and annihilation of all colonial statues' and demand that 'tikanga is recognised as law, not lore'. In her 2019 poem 'Tikanga Tells Me' Jacqueline Carter does not call for annihilation but instead addresses the painful entanglements of a settler-colonial monument via the first protocols of the place. Carter's work is not emblematic but it is generative. Carter takes the 'invisibilised' monument of Old Government House – the monument whose history more often goes without saying as we go about our learning and performing within its walls – and, instead of the single story of its name, decides to prioritise the *house*.

In June 2019 Jacqueline Carter, like the audience and fellow readers in attendance, could not have precisely foreseen 2020's high-profile global reckoning with monuments when she performed at *LOUNGE 68* in the University of Auckland-occupied Old Government House. However, speaking back to monuments is located within the long indigenous struggle for self-determination. Like Linda Tuhiwai Smith, Carter's reading on the night reinforced that her animating principle is a decolonising one. Like Smith, Carter also reaches out with radical compassion to those affected by the colonial past and present as she imagines anti-colonial alternatives. In her poetry performance Carter addressed Old Government House, with its associations of both colonial (or monumental) reverence and anti-colonial (or anti-monumental) revulsion. In her poem 'Tikanga Tells Me', Carter played with the ambivalence of both recognising and disavowing the authority of the monument of the colonial headquarters. In doing so, Carter unfolded possibilities for a type of writing that can perform its relationship to a contested place. Carter not only performed *in* but responded *to* the invitation to speak in Old Government House. As we saw in the University of Auckland's official literature, the time zones of 'colonial war HQ' and 'university' are rarely allowed to rub up against each other - a separation that Carter was keen to complicate on the night of June 5th, 2019. Her framework for the simultaneity of time zones and associations can be found in an understanding of the whare.

For tangata whenua a whare (house) is more than its walls. The whare is a microcosm of the cosmos, with Ranginui (sky father) above and Papatūānuku (earth mother) below. Wharenui are as diverse as their many makers. The whare, with its architectural limbs and roofed ribs, is often the body of an ancestor. The whare is also a library, with the whakairo (carvings) of the walls and pou (poles) telling manifold stories. Novelist Patricia Grace (Ngāti Toa, Ngāti Raukawa, Te Ati Awa) writes that ‘our main book was the wharenui, which is itself a story, a history, a gallery, a study, a design structure and a taonga. And we are part of that book along with the family past and the family yet to come’ (117). A whare is a being, with relationships. In the world of Carter’s poem, Old Government House is a whare. Carter invoked tikanga because, to her, it was the right thing to do: to enter the house as manuhiri (guest or stranger) is to become part of the house, whether one likes it or not. Carter’s priority for the like-it-or-not of tikanga also brings the settler house under Māori law. It was not only in the world of the poem, but in the worlding work of the poem: not merely a metaphor, the poem made sure that Old Government House *is* a whare. Negotiation rather than imposition rule when the back and forth of guest and host are invoked, under tikanga. In Carter’s performance, addressing the house, then, was not a forfeiting of power to a settler host, but a continuation of indigenous power, as though to say *on this whenua tikanga applies* (like it or not). Addressing a whare directly is to move away from monuments. Colonial monuments serve their authority-building function when they are not much noticed; a sign of their success is a bland or shrugging acceptance of their right to tell a singular story of the past. When we utter the words ‘Old Government House’ the monument has successfully patterned our speech so as to talk about the building as a singular story. Tikanga told Carter to address the house as a being, to acknowledge it rather than let her tongue skip over its one official given name.

Carter’s tikanga demonstrated the way that we can learn to speak *to* rather than talk *about* sites that possess multiple layers of often painful associations. Architect Michael Linzey sets out an ongoing way of being in te ao Māori that foregrounds relationships above definitions and dialogue above description:

There are many kinds of thing, strange things, new things, unborn things, beautiful things and numinous things, that we experience difficulty in talking about because to talk about them requires us to name them, to fix them in the system of unified signs, demands that we know their name; and in attempting to name them it is as if their very meaning dissolves and shifts awkwardly [...] A more appropriate and respectful comportment to take towards nameless things is to address them directly, to draw them into imaginative dialogue, to find out who they are by speaking to them. (59)

Linzey not only advocates for beings remaining unnamed, but also calls out the knee-jerk temptation to pretend that we know how to explain everything, whether it be events, places or houses. Carter’s ‘Tikanga Tells Me’ is grounded in relationships to places and events. Carter’s performance was also grounded in the ambivalence of decolonial work – in this case, the discomfort in following tikanga when it involves greeting a house of pain. The University of Auckland was established, at least in part, as a means to actualise the imperialist vision of a settled world. It makes sense that it would make use of the building and name of Old Government House. The university – with universality already claimed in its naming – talks about itself in authority-building terms. Carter urged us, instead, to talk *to* contested places, together, against the grain of the monumental programming of settler-colonial houses and their ‘settled’ histories. Carter’s poem has since been recorded and is available as part of nzepc’s [Six Pack Sound](#). My close reading is based on a print form of this recording.



Figure 3 Tim Page, 2019. *LOUNGE 68: 5 June 2019*. Jacqueline Carter performs *Tikanga Tells Me* in Old Government House’s ground-floor common room. Tim Page’s photographs of the evening are available via [nzepc](#).

The title of Carter’s poem informs us of its animating protocol. ‘Tikanga tells me’ is a compulsion and an obligation (a law, not lore, as Aoake and Godfery put it). Carter made it her first priority as a reader to learn more about the house that hosts not only the event but a litany of layers and painful associations. Not only did Carter learn in preparation, she also performed her learning. Carter’s poem – as it was performed, and as it lives on as a recording – functions, in part, as a narration of her

process of grappling with honouring a protocol that demands respect for the hosting house, while also honouring the suffering of her iwi – suffering that arose from the deeds plotted in the very same house that she is compelled to acknowledge. The poem addresses the ways that the house and its settler leaders have robbed freedoms, and at the same time the poem acts as if it is free: as if tikanga is *the* law of the land.

*Tikanga tells me
to acknowledge this whare
Te whare e tū nei, tēnā rā koe*

*But a glimpse at its history
makes me wary
of its “important part
in the government of New Zealand”
until 1865
when Government moved to Wellington
two years in
to the wars for sovereignty in the Waikato...*

In line with Linzey’s speaking-to priority, Carter honours tikanga by speaking to the hosting house, ‘te whare e tū nei,’ to the house standing here. The house has breathing room to be considered a being in its own right. The consideration speaks back to Sinclair’s representation of the university’s ‘site row’ that treated the house only as a source of contemporary desire, rather than a place of layered associations. Carter then makes a stanza break, giving the tikanga protocol its rightful space, letting the greeting sit in the air of the common room for all to hear before moving on to share her misgivings: ‘But a glimpse at its history / makes me wary / of its “important part / in the government of New Zealand.”’ By marking the troubling phrase with inverted commas, Carter lets us know that this is source material and part of her research for the poem. The quotation marks also draw attention to the constructedness of settler-colonial history, distancing her greeting to the house from the reported words of others. Carter does not swallow the source material, nor does she deny it. She reports it. Her pause following ‘the wars for sovereignty in the Waikato...’ helps keep the historicising, representative reflex at bay by leaving the account unfinished, open for listeners to fill the gap with their own connections. Carter connects the site to figures and places, accumulating rather than winnowing associations as she speaks. After addressing the house and her own feelings of wariness, Carter turns to her audience, using second person pronouns to bring her listeners into contemplation of just one of the stories associated with the house:

*Did you know that Tāwhiao
the second Māori King
once took shelter
at Governor Grey's residence
on Kawau Island
after running away from his father?*

*He'd helped himself to some money
to go to town
and Pōtatau Te Wherowhero
ended up chasing his son
around the grounds at Pukekawa
or the Auckland Domain
where they were living then...*

*But then fast forward
to 1863
when Tāwhiao warned
his former protector
that should Government troops
cross the Mangatāwhiri River
it would be seen
as an invasion of the Waikato*

*to which Grey responded
by crossing the Mangatāwhiri...*

Carter's use of pauses again allows the house's connected histories a freedom from foreclosure and containment. The pauses also insert some of Carter's own response to the story of Grey's crossing of the Mangatāwhiri. She performs her indignation in the aghast hang of the gap. These stanzas connect Old Government House to a network of linked sites: Kawau Island, Pukekawa, the Mangatāwhiri. Carter allows the site to radiate with its connections to other sites, rather than representing it as a single, sealed place belonging to the institution of the university. She goes on to make reference to the term *hoariri* when she considers the legacy of Governor Grey and the inherited house in which she speaks:

Nō reira rā, I'm reminded of the old adage

Some of your enemies

Are actually your friends

And some of your friends

Are actually your hoariri

Carter's use of repeated parallel structures – 'some of your...' and 'are actually...' – in these four lines produce a harmonious, balanced and logical effect. The culminating message that 'some of your friends / are actually your hoariri' creates a subversive conclusion, however, since hoariri is not simply a Māori translation of the English enemy. Anne Salmond observes that 'in Māori, hoa is the term for "friend" or "companion" ... while hoa riri ("angry friend") is the term for an enemy. It is the relation (captured by the term hoa) that is ontologically prior' (121). The ontological priority of relatedness comes from the logic of whakapapa, a logic that arranges people, places and other-than-human beings in layers. As Te Maire Tau observes: 'All things, from emotions to flora and fauna, were part of an organic system of relationships' (70). The relatedness connects to the opening address to the house, too, and the idea that manuhiri become connected upon entry. For Carter, pain inflicted by systemic colonial domination and individual betrayals is given room for expression, but the hurt cannot erase the interrelated status of lives lived out in connection to the site of the house. Carter closes by performing a process of recognition:

And while I'll abide

by the tikanga that tells me

to acknowledge this house

Te whare nei tēnā rā koe

I will remember

that at its heart

was the will of a people

bent on assimilating and colonising

and that this University

was built with the profits

of the land that was confiscated

from my people of Ngāti Awa

and while we can try

to forgive and forget

the latter is near impossible
and I haven't yet...

Carter bows to tikanga and pledges an ongoing remembrance. The past is not over and done with; the poem cannot seal off the past in a neat representation. Instead Carter offers one staging or one participation in an ongoing, never resting project of listening and layering. She returns to her opening address to the whare – a nod to the ongoingness of tikanga; the hope-filled persistence of te ao Māori in a colonising world. However, one development is offered. The opening stanzas of the poem see tikanga and grievance as mutually exclusive, ‘Tikanga tells me to acknowledge this house ... *but* a glimpse at its history / makes me wary’ (emphasis added). The tone is conflicted and on guard, as though bracing herself for what her tikanga is asking her to do. By the end of the poem, Carter removes the ‘but’ from the equation, moving seamlessly from tikanga to, ‘I will remember’. An *and* joins the tikanga protocol of respectful direct address to the ongoing stance of questioning and participating in the site’s contradictions and enmeshed relationships. Carter is able to seize the opportunity of speaking in and to Old Government House, honouring *and* hacking the ‘beneficence’ of the colonially-inherited university setting. The organisers of *LOUNGE* do this, too, when they provide a platform for participation in the usually secluded space of the Senior Common Room. Carter’s poem is not *the* law, but it is one negotiation with the first law of the land, as it relates to the first site of settler governors – a relationship that defies linear settler thinking and insists on the past radiating in present relations. A performance is not meant to last forever but more performances may spring from a first hearing. A performance is anti-monumental, even if it does not topple but rather interacts with a monumental house.

Carter’s final line implies that ‘I haven’t yet [forgotten]’. This implication of steadfast memory is a retort to the erasing attempts of the house-as-monument: every act of whakapapa thinking, of placing people and places in layers, is a decolonial act against the master story of a monument. In addition, the last line, heard alone, ‘I haven’t yet’, suggests a truncation of a line of thought – I haven’t yet *what*? The truncation is not a failing or a weakness, but a necessary condition of writing and performing on colonised ground, in a colonial institution. A master monument cannot simply be met with a counter-monument or complete, single voice. A constellation or collective of voices is needed to make new worlds possible. We need the calls for annihilation (Aoake & Godfery) as much as the calls for habitation: decolonial work from without and from within the house of settler-colonial entanglements. How can a poetry performance imagine a radically different world, or to try to make a decolonial dent in a situation of constraint, in the shadow or under the roof of a monument? Linda Tuhiwai Smith advocated for an openness to possibilities that can only be imagined – a call that is taken up and performed in Carter’s work. Carter’s reading in Old Government House was an action that imagined the house as falling under the first law of the land. It was not an inert or merely

aesthetic choice, but a performative one: the house, via Carter's reading, became accountable to tikanga. Using tikanga to address the house asks what would it mean to not have a socio-political order founded on settler-colonialism. Tikanga demands a more reflexive imagination from guests in colonial houses, since such houses are designed to appear normal, natural and permanent in a land in which they are anything but. Addressing the house that hosts us – even when the right to host is deeply troubled – allows us to think relationally about the past, present and future. We do not have to be *of* the colonial war HQ while being inside it, but we do have to make it visible and speak to it, just as tikanga tells us.

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