

Moko honouring spirit and culture

Ex-AUT student leading ta moko

by Anna Barge

Long seen as the epitome of skill in the tattooing world, ta moko is starting to gain acceptance.

Ex-AUT student Turumakina Daleyz is at the forefront of moko design.

After completing the Bachelor of Maori Development, Mr Daleyz (Tuhoi, Ngati Awa, Ngaiterangi) thought it natural to get a moko to celebrate his graduation.

"When you go to uni you get a piece of paper that you stick on the wall. For me, I wanted something more."

Traditionally ta moko was seen as a sign of achievement.

"I want to utilise it in a way it was meant to be used," he said.

After refining his skills and touring internationally as a tattooist, Daleyz and two friends will be setting up a studio to do moko in October.

Currently he designs and tattoos moko part time.

He also works as an editor with Tangata Whenua Productions.

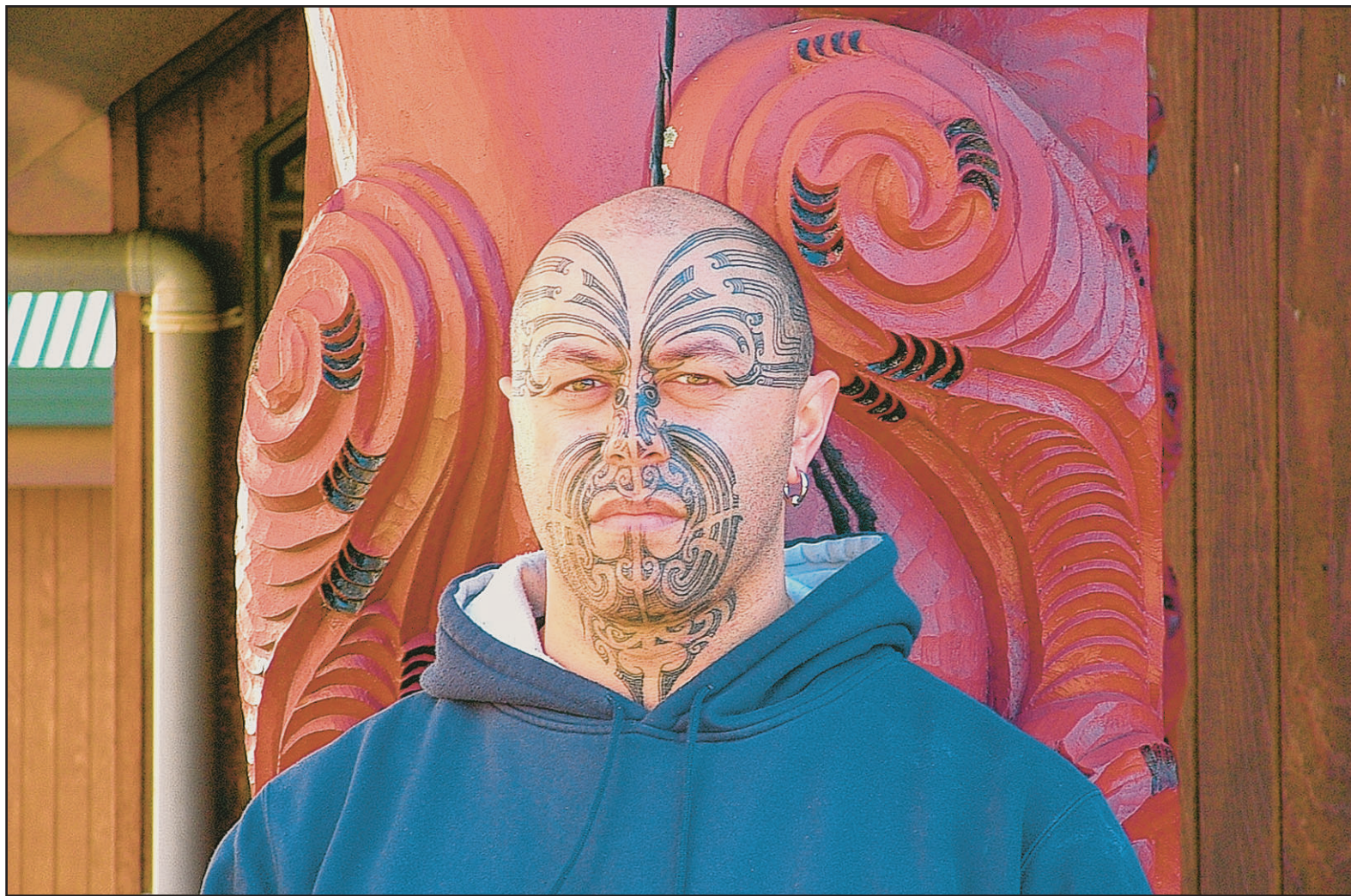
Tangata Whenua Productions makes the daily show *Manu Rere* which focuses on kohanga reo and screens on Maori Television.

Daleyz sees this as an important way to encourage children and teachers to learn te reo and to continue to nurture the language.

He started learning te reo only four years ago, after getting angry he couldn't speak Maori.

Now his two children are going through kohanga reo and his cousins are going to te reo classes.

His oldest child, aged 6, is already talking about the day his dad will give him a moko.



TATTOOIST: Turumakina Daleyz is at the forefront of ta moko design.

by Kate Palmer

Tattooist Broughton Johnson believes Labour rebel Tariana Turia should be honoured with moko after "making a stand for her people".

The historic craft is very much alive for Johnson who practises both contemporary tattoo art and traditional ta moko, the ancient form of Maori body carving, from his studio in Onehunga.

Johnson, of Ngati Kahungunu, worked as a carver on canoes and meeting houses until meeting his mentor, Mark Kopua, from Mangatuna and began learning the craft of ta moko.

"You never stop learning. In studying one's craft you have to be humble and absorb knowledge," says Johnson.

Moko is done using a chisel (uhi) made of either greenstone or bone.

There are two types of uhi. Uhi-mata-hae is straight edged and leaves a groove in the skin

while hi matarau, a comb type chisel with a serrated edge, leaves the skin smooth.

The uhi is hit into the skin with a mallet, called kuru.

Pain is a factor in the application, yet this is part of the tradition and denotes the recipient is mentally ready for the tattooing.

"It's a mental and physical thing, you need to be ready for that," says Johnson, who pulls his own teeth rather than go to a dentist.

A pre-requisite for having moko applied is genealogy and consent from people who share the same whakapapa, based on the belief that moko have to be earned.

Ta moko is a language used to define social structure, ancestral paths and can say much about a person.

Placement of the moko is crucial. For example a moko on the chin of a woman represents a coming of age and attaining speaking rights. Moko on the legs and buttocks are known as puhoro or taurapa, terms which

are also used in the description of transport.

Johnson says ta moko is about whakapapa and the use of the koru (fern) symbol represents the cycle of life, a way of honouring ancestors.

"Ka hinga atu he tete-kura — ka hara-mai he tete-hura" is a Maori proverb that means: "As one fern frond (person) dies — one is born to take its place."

Non-Maori are culturally unable to wear moko, although anyone is entitled to wear kirituhi, which means drawn skin. This is a design with a Maori flavour that can be applied anywhere and doesn't require proof of genealogy.

In recent years singer Robbie Williams has helped lead the trend in kirituhi on an international scale.

Tauranga-based Kopua has been working as a full time moko artist for five years, after a 23-year career as a traditional Maori carver.

He is working on the redevelopment of moko symbolism and

information attached to designs.

"There is a chain of credibility attached to moko design in terms of intellectual knowledge. People trust that you will take care of their genealogy," says Kopua.

Teaching is done through mentoring and Kopua takes on one student at a time.

He cites two key factors important for emerging moko artists.

"They have to have a carving background and speak Maori and they have to commit to my rules and live with me," he says.

This is because traditionally knowledge was passed from father to son.

Kopua can teach the technical and health and safety knowledge in six months but says it takes a further three to five years of travelling the country with a mentor to gain an established reputation.

Kopua says interest in moko is on the increase after a disappearance over several generations of Maori.

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