



## *haptic* HONGI

Aotearoa NZ society is grappling with messy colonial leftovers. In response to this, *haptic* HONGI is the latest XR experience co-designed by PhD Design candidate, Mairi Gunn, and multi-media artist, Tania **Bemana (Ngāpuhi)**, to bring Māori 'to the table'. A reimagined first encounter raises issues of power-sharing, inclusion, and collaborative engagement.

### ***Can playful XR technologies help create cognitive and behavioural shifts in our local reality?***

In the installation, the visitor is invited to join Mairi at a table styled to invite commensal conviviality. After putting on an Augmented Reality (AR) headset, they see a pre-recorded volumetric video of Tania who greets them in a re-imagined, contemporary, first encounter between Indigenous Māori and newcomers. "Who are you? Ko **wai koe?** Are you lost?" The visitors, *manuhiri*, consider their response in an absence of usual social pressures.

After the brief encounter, the virtual Tania slowly leans forward, inviting the visitor to 'hongī', a pressing together of noses and foreheads in a gesture symbolising the sharing of breath of those present and their ancestors. This is felt as a haptic response delivered via a custom-made actuator, built into the visitors' AR headset.

### ***Does the viewer feel a fondness for virtual Tania, or long for an in-person, real-world connection?***

The process leading to *haptic* HONGI has been experimental and iterative. However, the intention was always for technology to play a bridging role across cultures - for the technology to encourage broader social discourse.

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