

Kauri Hawkins

I'd volunteer for the First World War, I would, but I would not be conscripted.

What I've been looking at in particular is the Māori contribution to World War One and also the events surrounding conscription to a lot of particular Māori tribes within New Zealand.

Being 21, I would have been conscripted, possibly. If I was from Waikato, if I was from Maungapōhatu I would have been jailed. If I was from Ngati Parou I would have been a volunteer. The story is so complex, I'm trying to make the audio and the film just as complex, but in a simple version.

Back in 1916, the Pioneer Māori Battalion were a labour force building telecommunication lines, digging trenches, creating roading, infrastructure for other battalions, "fighting battalions", to go and fight this war. There's a link there between 1916 and 2017 when you think about those jobs. You can find the same, possibly descendants of these men digging up your Ethernet cables, putting them into your tar sealed roads.

I've always had an interest within hip-hop and the way that this links back is sort of how artists in the hip-hop scene would cut and mash certain clips, certain sayings, and me being an artist and not necessarily can to rap, I can cut the same audio and I can make a narrative out of that, the challenge has always been to create the story that people can engage with now.