Looking for a Wave explored notions around space and form, cosmogenesis wave forms and flow in time. In the work the red of the earth is our origin and represents life. The contour lines of the land are topographical and metaphorical. The four emblems at the top of the painting represent the four pillars holding up Rangi.

In Māori cosmogony Rangi and Papa were the primal parents, Sky Father and Earth Mother. In the
beginning their embrace was so close that only a feeble glimmer of light could reach the children of
the earth ao taruaitu. The separation of the Rangi from Papa (Sky and Earth) tells the next chapter
of the story;

Tane and his companions succeeded in forcing the heavens up on high, and supporting them in
that position by means of four poles used as props, the names of which are the names of the four
Winds. In order to bring light into the world, Tane went forth in search of the Whanau Marama,
the light-giving ones, the Children of Light, whom he found in charge of Te Ikaroa (the Milky Way).
These he placed in position on the breast of Rangi, the Sky Parent, which they still adorn. They
are the sun, moon, and stars.¹

This whakapapa continues, to tell the stories of the stars, the children of the heavens, and is
common to many Pacific stories, as the basis of traditional astronomical concepts and way-finding,
for example on the Hawaiian and Gilbert Islands;

The cardinal points. The four directions on the horizon were associated with the four kukulu,
or supporting pillars of heaven, with the diurnal motion of the sun, and with the motion of the
trade-winds. In the names of the cardinal points, kukulu evidently refers to the four great pillars,
supporting the dome of heaven at these points.²

Once thought of as “merely” the stuff of tribal fireside tales, these stories are the treasured baskets
of knowledge of mātauranga Māori, recognised as one of the great astronomical resources. They
have been unpacked and validated through modern scientific observations and are once again
valued as astronomical knowledge and form the basis of traditional Oceanic navigation.³

James Bellaney has been exhibiting locally and nationally since completing his BFA at the Dunedin
School of Art in 2011. His work includes painting and drawing as well as performance art. He exhibits
in galleries, and in artist and community spaces. James was a finalist in the Clifton Art Awards,
2012, and the New Zealand National Art Awards in Waikato, 2013, and has received commissions
for public artworks in Dunedin. His work explores narrative through the process of painting, using
symbolism, marks and Māori culture to express universal stories.

1. Elsdon Best, Some Aspects of Māori Myth and Religion, Illustrating the Mentality of the Māoriland his Mythopoetic
   Concepts, Dominion Museum Monograph No.1, Published by the Dominion Museum, Wellington, New
   Zealand, under the Authority of the Hon. The Minister of Internal Affairs, 1922. https://www.knowledge-basket.
   co.nz/kete/taonga/contents/taonga/text/dm/dm1.html
   Society, http://pvs.kcc.hawaii.edu/pdfs/Hawaiian_-_astronomy_i.pdf [accessed 28 November 2016], from a
   paper in 1939. Kukulu also appears to have the derived meaning of circle, as in the phrase for horizon, probably
   coming from the idea of a circular wall surrounding the earth and holding in the ocean.
   maoriastronomy.co.nz/resources. Alongside their work in cultural preservation, SMART (Society of Māori Astronomy
   Research and Traditions) is also revitalising tātai arorangi. One aspect of this revitalisation is the combining of
   tātai arorangi with current astronomical research. The 2012–2013 waka hourua voyage of the Waka Tapu from
   New Zealand to Rapanui closed the Polynesian triangle. This confirmed that it is possible to travel successfully and
deliberately great distances by canoe while navigating without modern instruments.