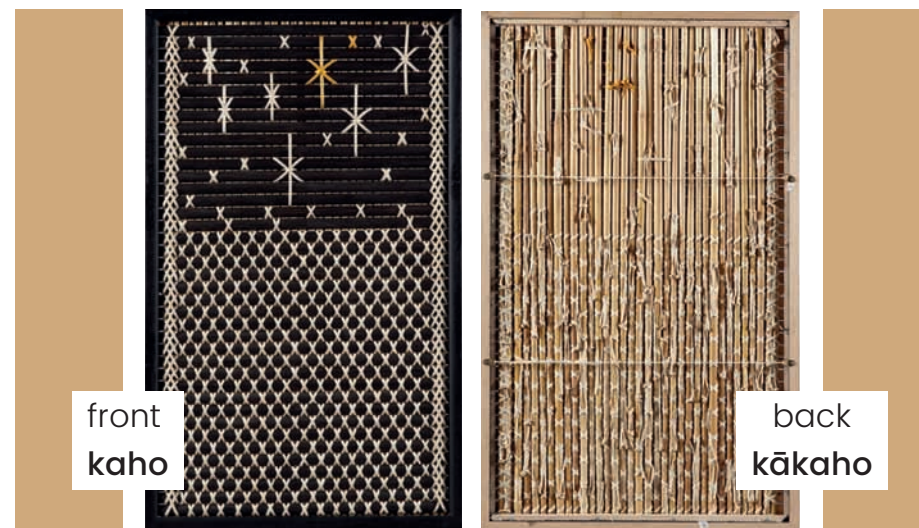


Weaving Tukutuku

by Kelly Joseph



Most tukutuku panels are made with dried stalks of plants such as toetoe. Sometimes thin pieces of wood are used. The weavers tie the stalks together. They place some stalks horizontally (going from side to side) and some stalks vertically (going up and down). The horizontal stalks are at the front of the panel and are called **kaho**. The vertical stalks are at the back of the panel and are called **kākaho**.

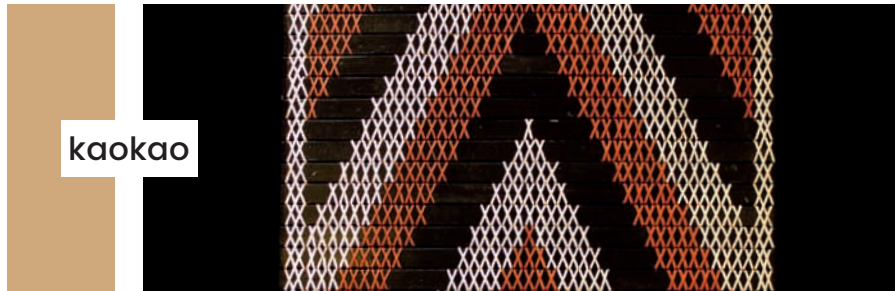
These women are weaving tukutuku panels. Tukutuku panels are used to decorate whareniui (Māori meeting houses). The panels are placed between poupou (carved posts) around the walls. The coloured patterns of the panels help to tell stories.



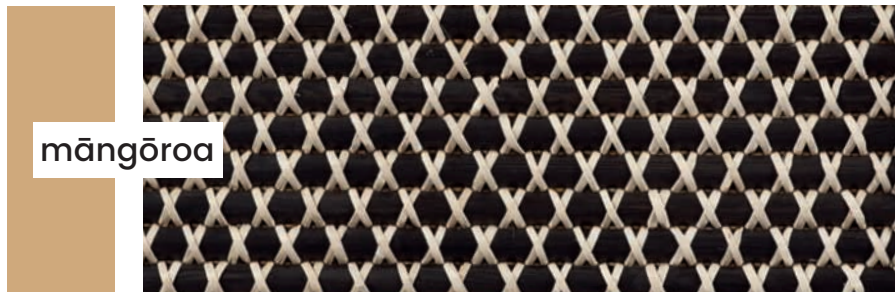
The weavers weave thin strips of grass or flax over and under the stalks. They use different colours to make patterns. For example, **pīngao** is a yellow grass and **kiekie** can be bleached white or dyed black.



Each pattern symbolises (stands for) something.



The **kaokao** pattern symbolises the arms of warriors performing a haka. It also symbolises mountains and the strength and shelter of the meeting house.



The **māngōroa** pattern symbolises the stars, especially the group of stars known as the Milky Way. There is a traditional story that tells how Māui placed a shark in the night sky to form the Milky Way. (Māngō means shark; roa means long.)

It usually takes two people to make a tukutuku panel. One person weaves, and the other person sits at the back tying the ends. The weavers need to be very patient – it can take a long time to complete the hundreds of stitches in each panel.

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