



ABOUT THE NZ RAIL EXCELLENCE AWARDS LOGO

ARTIST PROFILE

Kahurangi Matagitoko Falaoa is a gifted Māori artist and designer who has seamlessly blended his cultural heritage with his creative talents to make a meaningful impact. A graduate of the Prestigious Māori Art School - Toi Houkura, Teacher of Whakairo and Visual Art at Gisborne Boys High School, representative rugby coach and cultural advisor to various New Zealand Rugby teams.

Kahurangi is currently a Deputy Principal at Manutuke School, continuing to inspire youth to follow their passions. His passion for design and storytelling led him to create the striking Māori All Blacks jersey, *Te Tauihu Matua*, in collaboration with New Zealand Rugby and adidas. This jersey is more than just a design—it's a powerful representation of whakapapa (genealogy), connection, and identity, embodying the rich cultural values of Māori heritage. Kahurangi's work has been celebrated on a national level, showcasing his ability to honour tradition while bringing it to life in a modern and impactful way.

The Meaning

Within this design are deeply embedded elements of traditional Māori art, each carrying powerful meaning.

The kowhaiwhai patterns featured are Mangopare and Puhoro.

The Mangopare, representing the hammerhead shark, is a symbol of courage, strength, tenacity, adaptability, speed, agility, and the pursuit of excellence. At the centre of the design, Mangopare forms are oriented upwards, symbolising leadership and the rise of new potential—the next rising star. Additional Mangopare elements point inward from the sides, reinforcing the idea of collective striving toward excellence.

The Puhoro pattern, traditionally seen on Māori warriors, waka (canoes), and whare (buildings), speaks to speed, agility, growth, and adaptability. It reflects leadership through movement, knowledge of the environment, and navigation—qualities essential for those who journey across vast oceans. These are also the values behind the awards this design represents: excellence in Sustainability, Diversity, and Inclusion.

The Haehae pattern, seen throughout, honours sacrifice, hard work, and the interconnected lines of whakapapa (genealogy). It acknowledges the heritage of NZ Rail and the many connections forged across Aotearoa, helping to shape and build our nation.

Hidden at the very heart of the design is a cross-section of an iron rail track, symbolising the foundation and strength of rail in New Zealand's growth and progress.