

Reflective Summary

This project was inspired by a ring gifted to me by my grandparents; a taonga that represents the strength and love of my family, and the whakapapa that shaped who I am. It reminds me of the generations that came before me, the sacrifices made, and the stories passed down. I wanted my design to honour that sense of connection and gratitude.

My packaging design reflects my identity through its form, material, and symbolic pattern. The tulip shape represents growth, unfolding, and the layers of my personal and cultural background. The tulip also connects directly to my heritage, Hungarian, Dutch, and Austrian; where it holds symbolic value within our patterns and motifs. I created a custom pattern incorporating visual styles from all three cultures to reflect how I carry multiple identities as one.

I used leather as my sole material because it ties back to traditions across all parts of my ancestry. It's also a material that ages with time, symbolising how our identities are constantly evolving. I stitched the leather by hand, designed and painted a custom stencil, and integrated a button to hold the taonga securely.

Through this process, I learned how deeply my creative decisions are shaped by my background, often in ways I hadn't fully realised. I also discovered the power of restraint: using one material, one colour, and one pattern challenged me to design with intention. This project reshaped how I see design; not just as aesthetic, but as storytelling rooted in identity and meaning.