

‘O le ūa na fua mai Manu‘a

17 January – 18 April 2020

Curator: Dr Léuli Eshrāghi (Sāmoan, Darwin/Montreal)

‘O le ūa na fua mai Manu‘a’ brings fresh international perspectives to current endeavours to embody and awaken Indigenous sensual and spoken languages. The exhibition takes its title from a Sāmoan proverb that describes the incoming rain from the Sāmoan island of Manu‘a (currently within the unincorporated territory of the US) and bittersweet or melancholic moments leading to much-needed change.

This archipelago of Indigenous moving image works moves away from Western thinking of ‘the Pacific’ as an untethered region at the periphery of the action (Australia, Australiasia, Asia) from a place somewhere over the horizon from where we find ourselves on Eora Nation shores and where contemporary culture is made in Australia. Instead, Indigenous concepts of relational space-time kinships and responsibilities spanning the Great Ocean ground this project.

Works that span the intellectual and material territories of Yirrkala to Santiago, from Sydney to Kuujuuaq, 'O le ūa na fua mai Manu'a' invites consideration of chosen genealogies and bloodlines meeting through language, movement, body and kinship, The works deepen understandings of complex Indigenous life today: focusing on language, memory, desire and pleasure (from sensitivity/care to queer, trans, feminist and matriarchal forms of belonging and kinship without being prescriptive).

Exhibiting Artists: asinnajaq (Inuk, Montreal), Sarah Biscarra Dilley (yak tityu tityu yak tihini, Oakland), Sebastián Calfuqueo Aliste (Mapuche, Santiago), Mariquita 'Micki' Davis (Chamorro, San Diego), Amrita Hepi (Ngā Puhi/Bundjalung, Melbourne), Caroline Monnet (Anishinaabe, Montreal), Faye Mullen (Anishinaabe, Montreal), Shannon Te Ao (Ngāti Tūwharetoa, Wellington), Angela Tiatia (Sāmoan, Sydney), Gutjarra Yunupinju (Dhuwalandja/barrkunju waṅa, Yirrkala)

‘O le ūa na fua mai Manu‘a

Expanded Artwork Labels

asinnajaq

Rock Piece (Ahuriri), 2018

HD video, 4:02 minutes

Courtesy of the artist

Performed multiple times around North America before being filmed while on a residency in Aotearoa, Inuk artist asinnajaq’s ‘Rock Piece (Ahuriri)’ is a visual meditation on colonial burdens, collective memory and knowledge regained through archival research. After research in the National Film Board of Canada’s archives, considering Inuit art histories and ritual practices, asinnajaq came to understand the placing of stones over a body as a ceremonial gesture open to multiple interpretations. These range from burial dependent on the season, discarding of the amassed weight of discriminatory policies in Canada, and a signalling of people being born of the Earth.

Sarah Biscarra Dilley

kʔimitipityʔi, 2019

HD video, 13:01 minutes

Courtesy of the artist

For yak titʔu titʔu yak tiʔhini artist Sarah Biscarra Dilley, 'kʔimitipityʔi' is a form of visual sovereignty whereby she asserts connections and returns home again and again. This, her first animated work, includes family photographs and the signature chevrons that imprint timeless relationality between land, water, sky and kin beings in Biscarra Dilley's visual language. It is also a form of sovereignty that is spoken into being through the beautiful future-present significations on true Indigenous territoriality within the phrases in her tʔinismuʔ tiʔhinktitʔu language, over images from tissimassu, a yak titʔu titʔu yak tiʔhini village in southern California whose name means true north. "I am singing a working song because this is the work. tsimiyiʔ tsimiyiʔ tsimiyiʔ, it is true, it is true, it is true."

Sebastián Calfuqueo Aliste

Welu Kumplipe, 2018

HD video, 2:04 minutes

Installation: resin text in Mapudungun and soil from Bidjigal lands

Courtesy of the artist

Mapuche artist Sebastián Calfuqueo Aliste's work brings the artist directly in front of the camera to speak Mapudungun retranslated texts by art theorist Cristián Vargas Pailahueque. In 'Welu Kumplipe', Calfuqueo Aliste conjures the Unidad Popular political context of then-president Salvador Allende, who decreed the short-lived Indigenous Law, which would have provided for the return of Indigenous self-government and lands. In asserting Mapuche rights to much larger territories still occupied by the Chilean settler colonial state, the artist questions historical conciliations, and seeks responsibility from Allende in soil and resin letters: 'he ought to fulfil what has been promised'.

Mariquita 'Micki' Davis

Udai (Means of Transport), 2019

HD video, 6:45 minutes

Courtesy of the artist

Chamorro artist Mariquita 'Micki' Davis delivers a queer feminist account of a Chamorro creation history where young women wove a net from their hair to save Guåhan from being devoured by a giant fish. With Toni Temehana Pasion, Davis honours famalo'an loving intimacy through the Finu' Chamoru verb udai. From the diaspora, these performative gestures reach homewards to the Mariåna archipelago, as potent refusal of centuries of Spanish and American military colonial rule. Davis particularly targets religious and linguistic violence that sought to destroy Indigenous matrilineal ceremonial-political structures, drawn from Fu'una, the ancestral maga'håga leader who originates the universe.

Amrita Hepi

A Body of Work (At The End Of The Earth), 2017

HD video, 2:56 minutes. Soloist: Waangenga Blanco.

Soundtrack: Lavurn Lee. Courtesy of the artist

A Body of Work (At The End Of The Earth), 2017

HD video, 2:19 minutes. Soloist: Jahra Rage.

Soundtrack: Lavurn Lee. Courtesy of the artist

Through performance, 'A Body of Work (At The End of the Earth) (Waangenga Blanco)' and '(Jahra Rager)', from a series of four works by Ngā Puhi and Bundjalung artist Amrita Hepi, entreat double inversion: gestures in mundane or spectacular lands that reference current socio-political concerns. Describing these as 'argonautical physical dialogues', Hepi's works are intimate portraits of resistance to empire, cultural memory spanning the Great Ocean, and renegotiation of traditions to inform intersectional innovation. Focusing on the rawness of life's struggles as held in the moving and still body, Hepi also draws on Katherine Ossip's 2016 poem 'Go' as a springboard.

Caroline Monnet

Creatura Dada, 2016

HD video, 3:03 minutes. Director/Writer: Caroline Monnet. Cinematographer: Eric Cinq-Mars. Editors: Sébastien Aubin, Caroline Monnet. Produced in association with Festival du Nouveau Cinéma & Desc images. Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Division, Montreal

Anishinaabe and French artist Caroline Monnet recreates grand narratives in 'Creatura Dada', where we see Dadaism as an artistic movement led by Indigenous women working in culture. Deftly editing archival moving image and layering still image and installation elements in recent works, the artist here traces a francophone Indigenous art history spanning generations and First Nations: senior Abenaki director and artist Alanis Obomsawin is centred in the visual and culinary feast, flanked by fellow Anishinaabe, artist Nadia Myre and playwright sister Émilie Monnet, Dene artist-chef sisters Swaneige Bertrand and Nahka Bertrand, all served by Acadian curator Stefan St-Laurent.

Faye Mullen

AASAMISAG., 2019

HD video, 23:17 minutes

Collaboration on soundscape with Mich Cota

Courtesy of the artist

‘AASAMISAG.’ is a performance gestural work in Anishinaabemowin, French and English ruminating on walls and border-mongering by Anishinaabe artist Faye Mullen. Mullen critically contextualises the wall as vestige of heteronormative colonisation and political infrastructure claiming bodies, waters and lands. By valuing their deconstruction, the artist navigates the myriad forms and significations of walls in the present context of multiculturalism, information access and international communications. Layering multiple references acts here as the braiding of kinship ties to make the screen porous and make multiple relations known beyond bordered perspectives.

Shannon Te Ao

my life as a tunnel, 2018

Two-channel HD video with sound, 9:48 minutes

Cinematography: Iain Frengley

Courtesy of the artist and Mossman, Wellington

With 'my life as a tunnel', Ngāti Tūwharetoa artist Shannon Te Ao depicts an intimate portrait of two Māori men expressing care, melancholy, within a context of Indigenous language loss, un/translatability, and genealogical ways of knowing that relate to all living things. Tūhoe actor Tola Newberry and Tainui-iTaukei Viti actor Scotty Cotter chose the version we hear of a mōteatea remembering one of Te Ao's slain ancestors, from many versions back and forth between reo Māori and English. Their bodies interlace, their gestures at once firm but soft, holding the viewer in their embrace, while the verses they sing offer rich possibilities to understand territoriality and corporality in reo Māori.

Angela Tiatia

Dark Light, 2017

HD video, 4:00 minutes

Courtesy of the artist and Sullivan+Strumpf, Sydney

With 'Dark Light', Sāmoan artist Angela Tiatia returns the European gaze and claim to Indigenous bodies and territories depicted across centuries of painting, etching and photography. With her own body, marked with intellectual histories relating her to animal, human and deity ancestors, Tiatia deconstructs the racist hierarchy projected onto Indigenous women subjects seen as available across the Great Ocean, and the ethnic cleansing that enables Max Dupain's 1937 photograph *The Sunbaker*. Various forms of violences still inflicted are purposefully disempowering, by ecclesiastical design for continued control. The tensions within this work echo the ongoing struggles for conceptual and embodied wellness today.

Gutiŋarra Yunupiŋu

Garruṯu'mi Mala (My Connections), 2019

Two-channel HD video

Purchased 2019

Telstra Collection, MAGNT

Courtesy of the artist and Buku-Larrŋgay Mulka Centre

In 'Garruṯu'mi Mala (My Connections)', emerging Yolŋu artist Gutiŋarra Yunupiŋu illustrates the garruṯu kinship system through ten signs in his first language, barrkuŋu waŋa, language from a distance, or Yolŋu Sign Language (YSL). Yunupiŋu demonstrates his connections to his clan and territory, and further to all Yolŋu clans and territories. On the left screen, we see Dhuwa kinship names, on the right screen, Yirritja kinship names. An accomplished chief editor and cameraman working at Buku-Larrŋgay Mulka Centre in Yirrkala, with this work Yunupiŋu won the Multimedia award in the 36th Telstra National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Awards in 2019.

Catalogue Essays

E pala ma'a, 'ae lē pala 'upu

Dr Léuli Eshrāghi

Fa'atālofa atu ma fa'afeiloa'i atu le pa'ia ma le mamalu le asō.

As I stand along the ocean shoreline of Garrmalang, the tropical region of Larrakia Country known to settlers as Darwin, I think about the communities I belong to in the Sāmoan archipelago and the Iranian plateau. Both the urban centres of Montreal, known as Tiohtià:ke in Kanien'kéha and Mooniyang in Anishinaabemowin, and Melbourne, known as Narrm in Woi Wurrung and Birrarangga in Boon Wurrung, are territories of Indigenous multilingualism where I and many others have been supported in growing creatively and intellectually in chosen kinship.

Writing and thinking these lines in English, a language imposed on my ancestors and those of you who read this with ease, it becomes clear that to use this cultural,

philosophical, economic framework to consider the wealth of endeavours currently underway to awaken and embody Indigenous languages is ineffectual. Nevertheless, in discussing a few of the moving image works exhibited in *‘O le ūa na fua mai Manu‘a*, let us examine the dynamics of language, relationality, borders and communications in this age of climate transformation.

Anishnaabe artist Faye Mullen offers a complex and layered multilingual lecture and performance gestural work, *AASAMISAG*. 2019. Within it, moving deftly between Anishinaabemowin, French and English, between a visual constellation of artworks, films, militarised lines and borders, DIY videos and voicing quotes from major thinkers, Mullen honours lifeforce. Lifeforce is present through Mullen’s visual territory, dissecting the bifurcations through lands and waters, though they, like animals and plants, do not abide by them. She asks us to pinpoint when we became locked into a logic of containment. Can this be attributed to the

so-called Enlightenment when western Europeans forgot their landed responsibilities and cultural pluralism to the detriment of all peoples they colonised and exploited from then onwards? Mullen recalls that 'le premier objectif des colonisateurs était d'éjecter, carrément éjecter, les femmes de la Terre, les femmes de notre Mère première.'¹

Imaginary lines have come to divide oceans, lands, skies according to Euro-American design, yet the fluid expanses beaming with living beings known and unknown to us defy and have always defied these arbitrary rules. Mullen reminds us that the devastating genocide of 49 million Indigenous peoples since 1492 in North America remains in the air circulating over that landmass. What about the attendant mass deaths in animal, plant and bird species and habitats? What of the unprecedented fires raging across Australia since winter 2019, their smoke haze that has blanketed major cities

¹ Artist Faye Mullen's translation: The first objective of the colonisers was to eject, outright eject, womxn from the Land, women from our first Mother.

and large swathes of territory in southeastern and eastern Australia, northern Aotearoa New Zealand and Kanaky New Caledonia? The airborne remains of billions of animals, plants, insects and birds lost forever in the hundreds of years since the colonial incursion began in 1788 in Australia and adjacent dates in neighbouring landmasses haunt us yet. With the just attention given to the colossal losses now, it bears remembering the ecological, linguistic and demographic devastation that has accumulated with numerous First Nations murdered and/or removed from their millennial roles in adept land stewardship, within which visual, sensual and spoken languages are keystone organising frameworks.

Mullen offers further counsel in considering the ways that surfaces on which contemporary culture is accessed and consumed can be understood as the 'skin of an image', further to the surface of a wall, conceptual as it is physical. The doctrines of discovery, manifest destiny and racial hierarchy that underpin Euro-American settler colonialism in the Americas and

southwestern Oceania do not account for survival, for affirmative refusal, for Indigenous renaissance. The porous nature of online social activism that enables global Indigenous solidarity and artistic networks is also the latest tentacular manifestation of state and corporate surveillance control mechanisms. There is hope in dealing with these lines and algorithm-fed echo chambers: images pile up as cultural memory, walls give into fiction, silence precedes creation.

Profound knowledges reside within the ceremonial-political structures and territory-centred kinship systems that Indigenous visual, sensual and spoken languages hold, care and make. The core of yak tityu tityu yak tiłhini artist Sarah Biscarra Dilley's Indigenous futurity-directed practice, as demonstrated in *k?imitipiti?i* 2019, motions and moves, breathes and sings, within the language-territory of t?inismu? tiłhinktiyu. For Kanaka 'Ōiwi scholar and educator Noelani Goodyear-Ka'ōpua,

Indigenous futurities are enactments of radical relationalities that transcend settler geographies and maps, temporalities and calendars, and/or

other settler measures of time and space. (...) As styles of thinking, practices of living and logics of ordering knowledge, Indigenous futurities tend away from controlling and possessive modes of knowing. Instead, they frequently include ways of relating that involve putting our bodies in motion with various kinds of non-human rhythms that engage multiple senses.²

Biscarra Dilley's research fellowship in 2019 at the Bancroft Library, University of California, Davis, drew out compelling frameworks of colonial extraction and geocultural mapping. She became fascinated with the settler imaginary in its profound belief in ink lines on paper transforming physical territory with new barriers, enclosing and exploiting Indigenous peoples in the territories currently assembled as California. What Goodyear-Ka'ōpua describes as a 'multiplicity of land-centred literacies' is what we glimpse in the

² Noelani Goodyear-Ko'ōpua, 'Indigenous Oceanic Futures: Challenging Settler Colonialisms and Militarization', in Tuhiwai Smith, Linda, et al., ed., *Indigenous and Decolonizing Studies in Education: Mapping the Long View*, Routledge, London, 2018, pp. 86-87

steadfast imagery and sonority of yak titʻu titʻu yak titʻhini territoriality and materiality. Biscarra Dilley sees these Euro-American mapping practices, in service of occupying miners, ranchers, settlers, as drawings belonging to an imagined, disordering world. In their stead, she positions this work, and her body in the ancestral territory surrounding the camera and the post-production computer, as a simple act of 'making relations known'. It is an affirming living practice of being on the land, knowing and singing the land, that asserts a much older and still emerging history.

If non-translation of a minoritised, Indigenous language into a major colonial language is read as refusal to engage or share in the common native English speakers' reaction, it is a misguided, superficial reading of a complex series of entanglements. Visual territories that abide instead by a commitment to Indigenous connectedness, completeness, require a negation of settler colonial entitlement to Indigenous lands, peoples and cultural practices. Kanaka 'Ōiwi scholar and writer Brandy Nālani-McDougall defines settler colonial

entitlement as “a correlative for native repression, by recognising that settlers become entitled not only to land and natural resources, but also to Indigenous intellectual, cultural, and creative property.”³ We see this demonstrated in the field of visual culture in indignation over non-translation, over unashamed sensual and epistemic difference, over withholding outsider access to Indigenous art histories and ceremonial-political practices. Of course, settler colonial entitlement extends from the assumed rights to pillage, collect and own Ancestral belongings and remains in Euro-American archives, museums and libraries, to the assumed rights to know, contain, possess and explain Indigenous practices, in opposition to those who are initiated into and inheritors of these forms, traditions and territories fulfilling their purposes.

Through regular visits to lands and waters dispossessed in the successive Mexican and American colonial regimes, Biscarra Dilley walks the country, alongside

³ Brandy Nālani McDougall, ‘Mo‘okū‘auhau versus Colonial Entitlement in English Translations of the Kumulipo’, *American Quarterly*, Volume 67, Issue 3, September 2015, p. 750

industrial and national parks that monumentalise their suppression of long relationships to place maintained across generations of her family. The grounding images come from tissimassu, a village site whose name means true north, near San Simeon, California, obscured by barbed wire fences and eroded coastlines. The chevrons on the wall below this moving image work draw us closer without divulging the secrets of this sacred shore of the Great Ocean. Belonging to an Indigenous nation rendered a diaspora in their own homelands, bodies, and life ways, Biscarra Dilley enacts kinship as a citation – kinship that is lived and practised in negotiations for moving through neighbouring ranches, peoples, and industries. To return yak tityu tityu yak tihini territoriality, materiality, and bodies to the places they are made for, she sings a working song, conceptually undoing the settler colonial presences in her territory, physically undoing in a future yet to come: *tsimiyi? tsimiyi? tsimiyi?, it is true, it is true, it is true.*

With my life as a tunnel 2018, Ngāti Tūwharetoa artist

Shannon Te Ao offers a moving, intimate depiction of two Māori men in a long orbit. The black and white two-channel work brings a closer perspective on expressions of care, melancholy, loss. Tūhoe actor Tola Newberry and Tainui-iTaukei Viti actor Scott Cotter make performative gestures, languid, long, deliberate and focused. They occupy a relational space imbued with ruminations and reflections on language loss and revival, un/translatability and resolutely Māori ways of knowing through whakapapa, the genealogical kinship-centred relational ordering of the world and all living things within it. Te Ao commissioned numerous translations of the 1960 song *This Bitter Earth*, based on Dinah Washington's performance in Charles Burnett's film *Killer of Sheep* 1977. These went back and forth between English and reo Māori into the deeply poetic musical form mōteatea. Newberry and Cotter sing this version in the soundscape enveloping the embrace we see on screen. For Tūhoe, Ngāti Hauiti, Taranaki, Ngāti Whakaue curator and writer Matariki Williams, who wrote an in-depth analysis of this work by Te Ao and the multiplicity of close visual and linguistic readings

available through reo Māori prisms, the use of reo Māori in his work is ‘pointed’, demonstrative of language loss, particularly as most viewers will not understand the emotional, aural value to this state of being.⁴ Indeed, “if people were able to access the richness of mōteatea, they would have a great insight into the Māori world and ways of thinking. Mōteatea are written to respond to particular moments, but the ways in which they are performed, through chanting, singing, lamentations, transcend the circumstances in which they were written.”⁵ Williams continues on to share the complexities of word choice by the various translators as dependent on belonging to specific clan or nation estates. Each hold their own territory-based genealogies and ceremonial-political structures, though much of this knowledge and epistemic diversity is dormant due to centuries of assimilationist policies.

The vulnerability and relational space navigated by the

⁴ Matariki Williams, ‘The Singing Word: On Shannon Te Ao’s my life as a tunnel’, *The Pantograph Punch*, 22 June 2018, <https://www.pantograph-punch.com/post/singingword> [Accessed 15 November 2019]

⁵ Matariki Williams, *ibid.*

two Māori figures in this work are apt allusions to the vulnerability of Indigenous knowledges, with their own logics, economies and purposes. Dark figures against the interior of a glass greenhouse, shadows and light refract, sounds and rhythms of reo Māori bounce off surfaces, relating to and through each other, despite all the disruptions. Indigenous languages continue to draw on richly layered, haunting repositories of meanings through oratory expressions and artforms that attest to times and rhythms past. “As I was drawn around the room by the work, this swirl, the physical and metaphorical taiāwhio of time, was made tangible. The grief of losing a loved one, the heartache in broken relationships, the desperation for equilibrium – these feelings are cavernous, and Shannon has created a work that allows you to sit with them, to sit with pain.”⁶ I wonder what rich possibilities to understand territoriality and corporality are entering my body in sung waves that I may one day understand, or not.

Featuring a chandelier suspended from a lush, nocturnal

⁶ Matariki Williams, *ibid.*

forest, the lines and rays in *Dark Light* 2017 by Sāmoan artist Angela Tiatia are evidence of many things besides ubiquitous tropical humidity and colonial plantation estates. Clothed in the malu tattoo, though perceived as naked by Western mores, the artist engages with Sāmoan and neighbouring Indigenous peoples' ways of being and knowing in these continuing capitalist times. As a potent symbol of Euro-American domination, the chandelier stands in this work for the missionary zeal that belittles and subjugates. The 'coming of the light' is celebrated under settler and missionary colonial duress. Above all, the feminine and multigendered Indigenous subjects of the Great Ocean are held within the confines of heteropatriarchal control from Europe, and the economy of consumption kept in place by militourism. I-Banaba, I-Tungaru and African American theorist and scholar Teresia Teaiwa defined the militourist industrial complex in multiple contexts across the region as being rooted in Fernão de Magalhães' 1521 encounters with Chamorro in Guåhan and as expanded by various empires emboldened by settler colonial entitlement. "Militourism is a phenomenon by which military or

paramilitary force ensures the smooth running of a tourist industry, and that same tourist industry masks the military force behind it.”⁷ As iTaukei Viti, Sāmoan and Sicilian writer and researcher Talei Luscia Mangioni asserts, the visual culture representing this region is dominated by “a vulnerability and an acceptance of a demise of an Oceania pushed to the brink of habitability.”⁸

Operating on a wholly different symbolic plane, Tiatia instead offers an invitation to restore our rights to knowledge through place, what colonisation attempted to remove and destroy. A reading of her work as situated in ‘darkness’ would remain part of Eurocentric epistemic violence, furthering the introduced binaries of light/dark, good/evil, civilised/savage, hard-working/lazy,

⁷ Teresia Teaiwa, ‘Reading Paul Gauguin’s Noa Noa with Epeli Hau’ofa’s Kisses in the Nederends: Militourism, Feminism, and the “Polynesian” Body’, in Hereniko, Vilsoni, and Wilson, Rob, eds., *Inside Out: Literature, Cultural Politics, and Identity in the New Pacific*, Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, New York, 1999, p. 251

⁸ Talei Luscia Mangioni, ‘Oceanic Sovereignty, Climate Justice and Art-Story’, *Runway Journal*, Issue 39: Oceans, September 2019, <http://runway.org.au/oceanic-sovereigntyclimate-justice-and-art-story> [Accessed 16 November 2019]

all maintained by Judeo-Christian militourist fantasy. Instead, this is a real site of genealogical, intellectual orature, where the forest and the body are entwined in relational space, enacting mutual citations of Indigenous spirituality, territoriality and balance. Everything seen and unseen in this frame is animate and has agency through a Sāmoan epistemic prism as in countless other Indigenous worlds. There is then, no such thing as inanimate or matter not deserving of consideration. Mangioni is adamant that across the Great Ocean, “Instilled was an environmental literacy of ourselves in relation to our surroundings. Such artforms conveyed stories of the human genesis from the environment, cross-species relationships and lessons on proper stewardship of the land.”⁹ Euro-American societies long used the discourses of ‘civilising the savages’ and ‘freeing the savages from sin’ to alter peoples, knowledges and ecologies, but Tiatia suggests here that the biggest ensuing threat to this status quo is Indigenous renaissance when coupled with the restoration of Indigenous sovereignty and ecological

⁹ Talei Luscia Mangioni, *ibid.*

balance. *Dark Light* brings back suppressed cultural memory of ceremonial-political structures the likes of which the Sāmoan archipelago has not known since the mid-1800s. Tiatia pushes this present moment as pivotal in redressing the 'religious pathology' that buttresses Western stereotypes of sexually available Indigenous peoples of the Great Ocean in media, sports, cinema and advertising.

This is a form of fa'amalama, enlightened veneration of lands, waters, pleasures, kin, echoed in the centre of the all-knowing forest. The work deploys the double binds of the absence-presence of accumulated energy and power, and the skies-nights of genealogical time, as strategies to resist heteropatriarchal capitalism, to push back on structures of time, space and the individual emanating out of Europe. The collective marking, tā, of moments in service to the ancestors, into tau, was forcibly shifted to linear 'time', taimi. Never allowed to access complete humanity and fully express our sexual desires and pleasures based in 'heathen' forms of kinship, or worse, to honour our ancestors, goddesses

and spirits in everyday expressions and forested temples. The conjuncture of Christian control in spirituality, racist hierarchy in society, and heteropatriarchal capitalism in the home means that sovereign Indigenous resistance and confrontation becomes necessary and affirmative of world-making outside a Euro-American purview. In part produced in response to settler artist Max Dupain's 1937 photograph *Sunbaker* where he symbolically, and perhaps unknowingly, claims the beach for Queen and Country, Tiatia's work instead holds space for Indigenous art histories and futurities. Like the beach, our bodies are inhabited, haunted, by ideas, images, smells and traumas lived and worn by ancestors past, manifest in our genetic and spiritual memory whether we fully know or not, particularly through continuing forms of settler colonial entitlement and containment. Mangioni is unequivocal on this phenomenon: "Given the legacy of unconsensual colonial impositions on our islands and waterways, climate change represents just another

chapter in a continuation of apocalyptic dispossession and violence upon Oceanic people.”¹⁰

Beings from beyond European linearity and Gregorian temporality yet currently bound to them, instead many Indigenous languages in the Great Ocean directionally place the future ‘behind’ and the past ‘ahead’ of us – portents for networked knowledges that are centred and derived from the Earth. Ae ‘o fea e ala mai ai so tātou fa‘alumaina? Where does our shame come from? I ask this question to understand the framework of internal and external struggles for we who are learning or deepening capacities in Indigenous languages of the Great Ocean and its shores across the vast expanses grouped together by European design as continents. Tongues belonging to ancestral land and water territories with which our forebears lived, governed, loved, speculated and created. And particularly those visual, sensual and spoken languages belonging to territories where we make temporary and longer-term

¹⁰ Talei Luscía Mangioni, *ibid.*

homes due to settler, militourist and extractive colonial displacements and dispossessions.

I returned from a summer break in Boorloo in Whadjuk Country to find my body enveloped in the tropical humidity and sweet languid air as we wait for the monsoon's tardy arrival, and the onward rains to soothe the scorched expanses across southern and eastern Australia. The gagana Sāmoa word *sui* and its semantic extension *suiga* denote ever shifting, flowing existence, changes, shifts, dissimilar to Western fixed positionalities and knowledges. This *sui/ga* then enables us to see each other over the horizon, through the haze of fake news, climate inaction, political and corporate collusion, to a place where the *alagā'upu* at the beginning of this essay rings true. Even stones erode away, but words will never decay. Such is the affirmative, world-making potential that can be actualised by speaking Indigenous renaissance into being, in making Indigenous art histories centred on lands, waters and skies once more, in realising Indigenous sovereignty in gesture and movement. We

can remember that making room for dissent, for difference, for care and kin creatures and habitats are important ways to manifest our consideration of this, the second climate apocalypse for Indigenous peoples. On every shoreline of the Great Ocean, of all oceans, when next we meet and gather, let us hear and speak our languages, in turn rendering us bound together in futurities from the depth of genealogical time and ancestral knowledges. Talei Luscia Mangioni sums the stakes perfectly because:

In Oceania, the arts are the calyx, or vital channel for resistance, critique and mobilisation of regionalism in times of ecological crisis. Articulations of planetary stewardship and fierce environmental attachments are core and omnipresent themes imparted by ancestors to their children.¹¹

Mālō le soifua ma le lagi e mamā

¹¹ Talei Luscia Mangioni, *ibid.*

Embodied Practices and Acts of Exchange

Dr Julie Nagam

Race matters in the lives of all peoples; for some people it confers unearned privileges, and for others it is a mark of inferiority.

Aileen Moreton-Robinson¹

There is a magnetic pull that draws people over the vast distance of the Pacific Ocean. This could be the fire that rests deep below the water, sparking a connection to our sacred fires on Turtle Island (North America). Like a moth, we are drawn to the light of the fire in distant locations, forging bonds between knowledges and embodied practices. The physical distances between the many smaller islands scattered throughout the ocean and the larger ones such as Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand have resulted in distinct cultures. Though the global shift that grants total access to media has begun to break down some of these differences,

¹ Aileen Moreton-Robinson, *The White Possessive: Property, Power, and Indigenous Sovereignty*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 2015, p. 10

much local knowledge remains embodied and practiced in lifeways that are specific to place. Each location has its local histories and cultural practices, which become more transparent with each recurring visit I make.

Colonialism is often bounded by the geopolitics of particular spaces. These can dictate settler, newcomer, and refugee relations with Indigenous peoples, whose actual and imagined relationships to the places they are from are shaped by the local histories and stories of those particular places. These relationships might be further complicated by a disconnect between the home nation and where a person currently lives, for example, as a guest in another Indigenous territory. Building on my previous scholarship of Indigenous stories of place, which I argue form relationships tied to land and water, and the localities of bodies and bones within a specific space, each artist in this exhibition reminds us of their own stories from their place. Throughout this essay, I will explore concepts of embodied practices, connection to land/water, movement and migration of bodies.

Racialized and Indigenous bodies move through space

differently depending on their local and national historical relationships with enslavement, sexism and colonisation.

The exhibition *‘O le ūa na fua mai Manu‘a* includes moving image works from artists living in or from Australia, Sāmoa, Aotearoa New Zealand, Canada, Chile, and the United States, thus covering several territories connected by the Pacific. Witnessing each work, I am drawn to gather them through references to place, embodiment, language, and the body. When watching each work, there is a strong connection to Indigenous scholar Audra Simpson’s concept of creating scholarship and art practices that are “declarative and practice-oriented acts of independence.”² The place and practice-based images and videos in this exhibition are therefore part of a larger project by Indigenous scholars, critics, and artists to locate racialized/gendered bodies and the concealed geographies of colonised and

² Audra Simpson, ‘Faculty Profile: Audra Simpson’, Department of Anthropology, Columbia University, New York, n.d.
<https://undergrad.admissions.columbia.edu/explore/faculty/audra-simpson>

enslaved subjects. Scholar Katherine McKittrick understands geography as space, place, and location in physical materiality and imaginative configurations and regards the concealing of non-white/non-European geographies as “rational spatial colonisation and domination: the profitable erasure and objectification of subaltern subjectivities, stories, and lands”.³

The conquest and control of Indigenous peoples and their lands are part of the social production of space. Practices of subjugation are spatial acts, and how Indigenous and Black people have been bound by colonialism and conquest confines their histories and relations to place. For example, enslaved bodies are bound to colonial spaces through forced/indentured labour. As French theorist Henri Lefebvre states, “if space is a product, our knowledge of it must be expected to reproduce and expound the process of production. The ‘object’ of interest must be expected to shift from things in space to the actual production of

³ Katherine McKittrick, *Demonic Grounds: Black Women and the Cartographies of Struggle*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 2006, pp. 10; 12

space”.⁴ Lefebvre continues: “Social space subsumes things produced and encompasses their interrelationships in their coexistence and simultaneity – their (relative) order and/or (relative) disorder”.⁵ Our everyday actions are part of the land that surrounds us; it is the physical and metaphysical space that impacts our relationship to the land/water we occupy. McKittrick argues, “geography is not, however, secure and unwavering; we produce space, we produce its meanings, and we work very hard to make geography what it is”.⁶ Each of the artists take up how these meanings are produced. This is evident in the placement of their bodies within the frame that reveals and exposes their relationships to people, language and place.

The works in this exhibition focus on Indigenous stories

⁴ Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, Blackwell Publishing, Oxford, 1974, pp. 36–37

⁵ Henri Lefebvre, p. 73

⁶ Katherine McKittrick, p. 11

of place – their histories and politics – within socially-produced colonial spaces. Each of the artists focus on the production of social space and postulates the material realities of concealed geographies and their stories of place. Many of the works concentrate on ideas of place through interventions into the political geographies of the artists' home territories. There is a strong theme of embodied practice and gender through the racialized body and we are witness to different bodies that move outside of the heterogender norms marked by race. For example, in Shannon Te Ao's *my life as a tunnel* 2018, the viewer is witness to compassion and love. This soundtrack evokes feelings of connection, haunting loss, and sadness, with beautiful moments of light even for the untrained ear of the non-Māori speaker, allowing the viewer into a personal and intimate video. In this tender embodied exchange, their gender is operating outside of heterosexist binary and is more ambiguous. You witness compassion between humans. In Amrita Hepi's portrait of dancer Waangenga Blanco, depicting acts of engagement through movement and intimacy but with no landscape to

geographically place the video, the viewer is informed by fabrics, patterns, sound, and the racialized body in the video. This exchange is created by thoughtful intention with each prop placed in specific locations and the acts of movement deliberate. The conscious decision of multiple images of the racialized male body to be present and seen in the work of Gutinarra Yunupingu. Each body is wearing the same baller outfit and moves through different barrkunju wanju or Yolngu sign language gestural actions with the body. It marks his body as a visible, racialized body that flows through the screen. It reminds the viewer the colonial stranglehold still in place in Australia.

The vastness of land/ocean-scape locates all of the artists' works, drawing connections between places and the knowledge they hold. Cultural and postcolonial theorist Homi Bhabha distinguishes the two trajectories of identity in the colonial context: the philosophical tradition or "the process of self-reflection in the mirror of (human) nature; and the anthropological view of the difference of human identity as located in the division

of Nature/Culture”.⁷ For the colonial subject who is an absent person/being in this discourse of identity construction, however, the “space of representation” is disrupted.⁸ As a result, the invisible or missing colonised person can only be seen through the mirrored reflection of the Other. The works in this exhibition bypass these divisions by encompassing both culture and nature/land/water, thereby rejecting invisibility and rendering the Native visible within their place/space. Hawaiian scholar Noenoe K Silva explains that genealogies are concepts of time that explore the space around us and teach us the identities of our ancestors.⁹ Many of these works demonstrate an interest in identities and languages and their relationship to stories of place. For many Pacific artists, this understanding of time that Silva references is entrenched in their genealogies, and this can be read throughout their work.

⁷ Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, Routledge, New York, 1994, p. 66

⁸ Homi Bhabha, *ibid.*

⁹ Noenoe K. Silva, ‘The Merrie Monarch: Genealogy, Mele, and Performance Art as Resistance’ in *Aloha Betrayed: Native Resistance to American Colonialism*, Duke University Press, Durham, 2004, pp. 87–122

Many of the works in the exhibition envision the body as land, not to lock into the landscape but to complicate the shifts and changes of this relationship. Amrita Hepi's *A Body of Work (At The End of the Earth)* 2017 series, for example, invokes the physical body as land through movement; the land takes over the human presence, the dancer's body blending into stone before returning to form so that the body is again the primary focus and the landscape is pushed to the background. The work demonstrates the push and pull tension between the land and the body, reminding the viewer of the magnitude of the physical landscape compared to the meek human body. In Angela Tiatia's *Dark Light* 2017, the body lies nude lit under an extravagant light fixture with the rest of the frame embedded in lush flora. It confronts the viewer with the process of self-reflection and is mirroring light and dark. The shades of the colonial gendered body lay below the bright light above it, almost a beacon. Similarly, in asinnajaq's *Rock Piece (Ahuriri)* 2018, the artist embeds herself into the land to breathe through the stones so that a body emerges and then is buried back in the land. This rhythmic cycle locks

the body into the physical land, reminding us of the connection to place. Each of these works communicates the importance of water and land in concepts of Native space, marking territories through bodies. These works are part of the artists' embodied practices of telling Indigenous stories of place to critique settler ideologies in the occupation of space. At the same time dealing with the divide between Nature/Culture visually demonstrating that they are intertwined not at odds.

In Sebastián Calfuqueo Aliste's *Welu Kumplipe* 2018, the artist stares directly at the viewer while a narrator speaks urgently of territorial autonomy. Even without translation, the viewer knows the work is about land and the struggle for it. Aliste's body contains this urgency with sufficient power for the viewer to experience the importance of the message. Similarly, in Faye Mullen's *AASAMISAG*. 2019 images and words overwhelm the viewers to disorient or displace them. Walls and borders block the migrations and movements of people through space and place. The message in Caroline Monnet's work *Creatura Dada* 2016 is playful, a creation of the

beauty of life and the strong female matriarchs who demonstrate this richness. As so much of our media and lived experience as Indigenous women is violence and oppression, Monnet pushes past these experiences in her film by accessing high culture. Monnet asks the viewer to consider Indigenous women in extravagant outfits, drinking champagne, eating oysters, and laughing without any apologies, pushing against spaces of representation and allowing for a more nuanced, complex and playful understanding of Indigenous women. Sarah Biscarra Dilley superimposes landscapes and symbols in her images, attempting to locate place and language through a visual narrative. Each image is grappling with her relationship to her knowledge of these spaces by exploring visual and literal language. All of these works explore their relationships to place, grounded in their own cultural and geographic locations. Each artist places importance on the body and land so that it mirrors our self-reflections and genealogies of time and space.

Curator Dr Léuli Eshrāghi has selected each work to create a cross-ocean dialogue. These artists are drawn together through migrations and movements across the waters. In my past research, I argue that it is a canoe that can metaphorically transport us through place, time, and space to rupture static and lifeless colonial renderings of time and place within the North American context.¹⁰ The canoe as methodology transmits Indigenous knowledge as both object and embodied practice, merging the archive and the repertoire.¹¹ It builds on existing concepts of Native Space, understood as a network of relationships akin to those traditionally navigated over waterways and across land, which is part of Indigenous connections to and stories of place. The canoe methodology relates to the concept of the waka (Māori canoe/boat) as introduced by scholar Hirini Moko Mead, who understands the Māori meeting house as the

¹⁰ Julie Nagam, 'A Home for Our Migrations: The Canoe as Indigenous Methodology' in Maggie Groat, ed., *The Lake*, Art Metropole, Toronto, 2014

¹¹ Diane Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas*, Duke University Press, Durham, 2003

foundation of Māori world views.¹² The architectural components of the Māori meeting house derive from the up-turned waka, the hull of the canoe, forming the spine of the house, and the painted oars forming the ceiling beams. The meeting house has informed the curatorial practice of elders and the work of Māori critic and director of Pātaka Reuben Friend, who explores the development of the Whare Toi Framework, which is closely aligned with the canoe methodology.¹³

In this curatorial framework, Dr Eshrāghi has invoked each of these meanings, creating a meeting space for these artists and their work that is transported through transmissions of technology and allows for the conditions of this exchange. Each of the artists are in a dialogue through time and space because their moving images hold memory and connect the physical and

¹² Sir Hirini Moko Mead, 'Māori Art on the World Scene' in *Māori Art on the World Scene*, Mātau Associates Ltd; Ahua Design & Illustrations Ltd, Wellington, 1997, p. 158

¹³ Reuben Friend, 'He Whare Toi, He Whare Whakaruruhau: Creating Space for Māori Curatorial Practice' in Carly Lane, Julie Nagam, and Megan Tamati-Quennell ed., *Becoming our Futures*, ARP Books, Winnipeg, 2020 (forthcoming)

metaphysical concepts surrounding bodies both in the past and the present through their stories of place. Water/land/nature and knowledge of our genealogies, the canoe/waka, and meeting spaces allow us to connect through the multitude of Indigenous stories of place despite the thousands of kilometres that separate us. The works in this exhibition remind us that distance, time, and boundaries are colonial constructs that bind us to linear ways of thinking. They are fluid, experimental, and emotional, pulling at our ability to read visual narratives regardless of geographic location. The show allows for viewers to see the generosity of each of the artists who share their embodied knowledge about their stories of place and the acts of cultural exchanges within the moving image framework. Each exhibition that bridges the Pacific in this way, renders the ocean a space of transportation and transference instead of emptiness, and brings our respective places closer together.