

ST PAUL ST 2015

CURATORIAL SYMPOSIUM

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ST PAUL ST GALLERY 2015 CURATORIAL SYMPOSIUM: PRACTICE, PLACE, RESEARCH

20–22 AUGUST 2015

This year's symposium is focused on expanding an ethics of curatorial practice, with a particular emphasis on alternative modes of education, research, and indigenous knowledge. We begin here by asking questions like: What is the relationship between ethics, education, indigeneity and the institutionalised practices of curating? Can the institution exert moral agency? How does this change the way we practice as curators and researchers: how we look, speak, read, write?

In the Aotearoa New Zealand context, we are specifically concerned with critique of the colonising logic of globalisation, acknowledging that processes of knowledge sharing, propagation and maintenance are always conditioned by context, and that curatorial discourse is in large part a legacy of our colonial past. It is important to stress that the conversation about indigenous knowledge is both particular to this place, and in common with other indigenous peoples, and is interconnected with conversations about alternative educational methodologies more broadly. With regard to the latter, we have at ST PAUL St Gallery through recent exhibition programming and related research attempted to focus on creative practices of knowledge, and on knowledge that *does rather than is*, as fundamental.


We turn to an alternative conception of education as the centre of this discussion, one that prioritises not information or formal knowledges: market-ready products. Rather, as Irit Rogoff has written, it may exist in forms of coming together “not predetermined by outcomes but by directions”.¹ A local touchstone is the Māori term, practice and concept of wānanga, a forum for discussion and exchange with the aim of arriving at a deeper understanding.² Te Ahukaramū Charles Royal writes that wānanga is “the word we can most closely associate with the idea of the creation of new knowledge”.³ An understanding of how this knowledge comes into being is a crucial part of the Māori worldview. It is not something produced, but rather “the pursuit of knowledge concerns the progressive revelation of depth and understanding about the world rather than the construction of new knowledge as one constructs an object.”⁴

The possibilities opened up by thinking about knowledge as distinct from production, as existing between the analytical and the experiential, the known and the imagined, is primary within a broad ground of discussion for the symposium. This implicates alternative perspectives on education, learning, modes of knowing, all through the lens of a “powerful horizontality” and in critique of the abiding institutional (academic, economic) paradigm.⁵

The structure of this year's symposium is integral to its content focus. Subsequent to the keynote presentation, we plan to spend one day in the auditorium with formal presentations. The second day's proceedings, facilitated by the collective Local Time, will take place at Piha on the West coast.

Abby Cunnane and Charlotte Huddleston

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- 1 Irit Rogoff, 'Free', *e-flux* #14, March 2010 <http://www.e-flux.com/journal/free> (accessed 23 November 2014).
 - 2 Wānanga is both a noun — seminar, conference, forum — and a verb — to meet and discuss, confer. See: <http://www.maoridictionary.co.nz/search?idiom=&phrase=&proverb=&loan=&keywords=wananga&search>
 - 3 Te Ahukaramū Charles Royal, 'Indigenous ways of Knowing', *Argos Aotearoa*, iss.1, 2013. <http://argosaotearoa.org/work/indigenous-ways-of-knowing/> (accessed 12 June 2014).
 - 4 *Ibid.*, Royal, 2013.
 - 5 *Ibid.*, Rogoff, 2010.



ST PAUL St Gallery is a non-collecting gallery based within the School of Art + Design, AUT University. The Gallery is dedicated to the development of contemporary art and design through an international programme of exhibitions, events, symposia and publications. ST PAUL St Gallery embraces one of the primary instructions for universities in the New Zealand Education Act (1989), that they “accept a role as critic and conscience of society.” We also interrogate the longstanding proposition that the arts have a particular capacity to speak critically about society.

OPENING REMARKS: CHARLOTTE HUDDLESTON

This is the fourth curatorial symposium convened by ST PAUL St Gallery. Since the beginning in 2011, an aim of the symposium has been to address the local — to talk from here in this place — as it sits within and connects to international discussions, and particularly in relation to the geographical region commonly referred to as the Asia-Pacific, which is our neighbourhood.

Specifically following on from last year, this year's symposium is focused on thinking further on an ethics of curatorial practice, with a particular emphasis on alternative modes of education, research, and indigenous knowledge. In this opening statement I want to note some of the continuing threads we are drawing together for discussion.

Here in Aotearoa New Zealand, we are specifically concerned with critique of the colonising logic of globalisation, acknowledging that processes of knowledge sharing, propagation and maintenance are always developed in and expressive of context, and that what is familiar to us as 'curatorial discourse' is in large part a legacy of our colonial past. Bringing this dominating force into awareness is not to perpetuate it, but means finding ways to think, talk and practice that counter it.

As a university gallery, we turn to an alternative conception of education as the centre of this discussion, one that prioritises not information or formal knowledges: the market-ready products of education, or the educational turn in contemporary art (that perhaps subject to the pressures of exhibition making, often prioritises the aesthetic form of education over its content), rather, we are interested in how education can exist in forms of coming together, as Irit Rogoff has written, "not predetermined by outcomes but by directions".¹



I want to introduce the hyphen here. The hyphen as punctuation that cleaves words is also a space between the words. Alison Jones, who along with Kuni Jenkins and others, has addressed in research and practice Māori-Pākehā educational relationships, in the text *Rethinking Collaboration: working the indigene-coloniser hyphen* has written about the relationships between indigenous and colonial which she hyphenates as 'indigene-coloniser'. As she explains it in the context of education and collaboration, the hyphen is key to learning not *of* or *about* the Other, but learning *from difference*, where "the orientation is to a *relationship* — to the hyphen..."² (original emphasis).

To extend on Jones's very specific use of the hyphen — every place between one thing and another, one place and another, one person and another is a hyphenated space where relationships are negotiated and knowledge is uncovered. The hyphen is a space of meeting and parting, both actively and metaphorically.



Migration is central and foundational to this place, and it remains a pressing topic and issue in many, many ways. This year, geographically we have a particular focus on Oceania or Moananui, the geography defined by the body of water within which the islands in the Pacific region sit. We are also reaching back to the history of colonial geographical and cultural exploration, considering how all of these histories are in us, how they are expressed, suppressed and revealed through not just curatorial and artistic practices but also through education

1 Irit Rogoff, 'Free', *e-flux* #14, March 2010 <http://www.e-flux.com/journal/free> (accessed 23 November 2014).

2 Alison Jones, with Kuni Jenkins, 'Rethinking Collaboration: Working the Indigene-Coloniser Hyphen', in Norman K. Denzin, Yvonna S. Lincoln, Linda Tuhiwai Smith (eds.), *Handbook of Critical and Indigenous Methodologies* (London: Sage, 2008), 482.

and the inextricable connections to ongoing development and expression of political, economic and cultural narratives, and the power relations expressed through these narratives. Among many other references, we have Epeli Hau'ofa's *Our Sea of Islands* and Charles Brasch's "distance looks our way", the Pākehā settler's feelings of isolation and rootlessness, grappling with a place, far from 'home' and surrounded by wide bodies of sea.³ In the roundtable discussion 'Thinking through Oceania' *Now* co-ordinated by Peter Brunt and published in the Auckland Art Gallery journal *Reading Room* in 2010 Teresia Teaiwa notes a difference in points of view when thinking about decolonisation in this region, she acknowledges the difference in perspective between the Pacific relationship to the ocean that Hau'ofa outlines in *Our Sea of Islands* and the more land-based struggles of decolonisation in Aotearoa, and asks "If we go to the water, the ocean, the moana, what might decolonisation look like?"⁴ As for Brasch's "distance looks our way", almost 70 years later, what is the relationship to this distance now? What is the distance? How close is the distance? Or, where is the distance located in our relations?



The structure of the 2015 symposium was integral to its content focus. After the talks and discussion in the auditorium, the programme took us to the West coast to stay together overnight and be part of a day organised and facilitated by Local Time. It began at the beach in the shelter of Te Piha (Lion Rock) with an introduction to ground us in place at Piha, via the stars and some of the local narratives recounted by local historian, storyteller and orator Pita Turei. One of the sites visited at Piha has a history of being a place for people to gather to share knowledge, a place for wānanga. The programme with Local Time engaged with forms of knowledge sharing in ways that are alternative to the forms deployed by the educational institution. This included walking, not just to reach a destination, but to connect with the place, and to engage our bodies and minds through walking, talking, listening and thinking as a way to uncovering and deepening understanding.

There are different ways of knowing. The possibilities opened up by thinking about knowledge as distinct from production — like the hyphen — as existing between the analytical and the experiential, the known and the imagined was primary within a broad ground of discussion for the Symposium. This implicates alternative perspectives on education, learning, and modes of knowing, all through the lens of a "powerful horizontality" and in critique of the abiding institutional (academic, economic) paradigm.⁵



What follows in this publication are papers from four of the presenters — Julia Moritz, Cassandra Barnett, Léuli Eshraghi, and Peter Brunt — and an edited transcript from the conversation between Misal Adnan Yildiz and Marysia Lewandowska. In addition to this we have included a response by Léuli Eshraghi to the time spent at Piha. Other than this response the events of this part of the programme were not recorded.

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- 3 Epeli Hau'ofa, 'Our Sea of Islands', in *We are the ocean: selected works* (Hawai'i: University of Hawai'i Press, 2008), 27-40. Charles Brasch, 'The Islands' in *Disputed Ground: Poems 1939-45* (Christchurch: Caxton Press, 1948), 12-13.
 - 4 Teresia Teaiwa in 'Round Table: Thinking Through Oceania Now' coordinated and edited by Peter Brunt in *Reading Room: A Journal of Art and Culture*, no. 4 (Auckland Art Gallery, 2010), 84.
 - 5 Irit Rogoff, 'Free', *e-flux* #14, March 2010 <http://www.e-flux.com/journal/free> (accessed 23 November 2014).

FINDINGS ON TRAVERSALITY: THINK TANKS AND MOONWALKS

Julia Moritz

Editor's note: this text is from an edited transcript of Julia Moritz's presentation.

I. TRAVERSALITY

Traversality: What does that mean? It's a word that has fascinated me for a while. A compound of a verb, an activity — to traverse — and a suffix — 'ity' — generally used to form a noun that expresses a state or condition. That verb, *to traverse*, is a vulgar form of the Latin 'transversare' that consists of the prefix 'trans' and the past participle of 'vertere', that is: to turn, to change, to converge, to bend, as in to turn toward. Quite literally, then, to traverse means to move across or through something, or somewhere. And more precisely: to do so by a series of sideways movements. In navigation, for example, to traverse describes a zigzag course taken by a ship because winds or currents stop the vessel from taking the direct course. Consequently, to traverse is also used to describe something that expands or extends across something, or somewhere (like a region). Traversality then is a condition of passing that alters or affects others by moving this way through a certain field. In Sanskrit, the root of 'vertate' has a cyclic connotation too (including an offspring to the German word 'werden'): becoming.

Recent cultural analysis uses the term in its proper Latin form: *transversare*. I however am more interested in the more vulgar version. There are a couple of meaningful overlaps of course. Described most succinctly by French philosopher, psychoanalyst and activist Felix Guattari, "Transversality contrasts with — verticality, such as one finds in the representative structure of a pyramid (president, vice-president, etc.); and — horizontality, which can prevail in a hospital courtyard, in the department of the restless or the bedwetters." Guattari further develops his concept of transversality with Gilles Deleuze in their book *A Thousand Plateaus* in 1980, the text most political and cultural critical theory today refers to. Here transversality is deployed in the attempt to break down separate strata within the institutions of knowledge.

Now why, and more importantly, *how*, is traversality a productive idea for experimental curatorial work, or in my case, public programming alongside exhibitions? I'd suggest one of the key ambitions of such work (and my reason for losing interest in more conventional models of exhibition making) is the quest for immediacy. This sits somewhat uneasily within psychoanalytic understandings of mediation as a fundamental condition, like language, or any other symbolic exchange. It also sits uneasily with notions of theory as such — particularly in the wake of the educational turn — which tends to spiral off into specialist, almost fortified, discourse. It's also at odds with the subsequent cultural and political calls for education as a form of mediation between art and audiences. Instead of assuming a curatorial position of a middle-woman I try hard to achieve more vulgar (visceral) experiences and immediate confrontations of art and life, bluntly speaking.

Now if you read the vulgar notion of traversal even *more* ordinarily, you end up with walking. Walking interests me for a number of interrelated reasons — vectors even — that cannot be understood from a single scientific perspective. In anatomy, for example, the transverse plane is a zone that is used to locate a certain area of body parts, organs and activities that all happen below the waist — specifically walking. In the related discourses of anthropology, zoology and primatology, walking is the main distinction between the great apes and homo sapiens, the beginning of upright moving humans. In this forward moving direction we establish a whole civilisation from sedentary to migratory.

From there I became interested in walking within the field of economy. When I lived in Singapore I noticed that there, walking was a decidedly class-based practice. Walking was a question of necessity for people in my

neighbourhood who could not afford a car or even a taxi. Beyond questions of infrastructure, leisure — like hiking, or certain sports — is tied to the technology of bodily improvement or performance. This goes back to the aristocratic practice of being carried or ‘elevated’ above lower working class subjects. (We see this irony also in ‘sidewalk’ — somewhere to the side, where you walk.)

The politics associated with contemporary reality — when movement from the sidewalk spills over to the street, when there are mass demonstration marches taking place — make walking a political practice. See for example the work of Paulo Virno, the Italian philosopher, who develops from the concept of biblical exodus a theory of collectively ‘exiting’ institutions, in a mass migration somewhere between exile and actually leaving a place.

This leads me to art, where the practice of walking is located in the ‘expanded field’. It’s related mostly to site-specific work; when walking becomes an artistic performative practice, it’s one that engages a society in a particular way. This work sits between ‘is it art, or is it not art?’ It tries to renounce the commodification of the gallery circuit by bypassing the space in the first place.

Last but not least, in public programming, we have the guided tour — the most popular and most classical form of institutional art education programme. I often curse the million times that I’ve done guided tours, but also I find a lot of inspiration through just walking and talking together in an exhibition. The guided tour often exceeds general expectations around requiring the right space and the time for contemplative behaviour about art, but also about exiting the space.

This is vast territory; in this last four weeks of travelling and researching the ‘traversal’ I have attempted to process and develop it into various expositions for exiting the art space. In Christchurch in a workshop for example, we explored the image of the zombie as the ‘walking dead’, as a mode of understanding the place, and the cultural implications of civilisation as such.

Today I will look at Michael Jackson’s moonwalk [plays music video of *Billie Jean*]. I am not only interested in the holy figure of ‘Jacko’ but also in the way the moonwalk lives on in practice. I will publicly confess to being perhaps amongst the greatest Jacko fans (and not only because the king of pop and I were born on the same day!). I’ve been tirelessly practicing the moonwalk but it always looks like a zombie...

To be precise, this dance move called the moonwalk is commonly defined as:

“...an illusion involved in creating the appearance of the dancer gliding backwards. Initially, the front foot is held flat on the ground, while the back foot is in a tiptoe position. The flat front foot remains on the ground but is slid lightly and smoothly backward past the tiptoe back foot. What is now the front foot is lowered flat, while the back foot is raised into the tiptoe position. These steps are repeated over and over creating the illusion that the dancer is being pulled backwards by an unseen force while trying to walk forward.”

It was first executed by MJ in a 1983 TV performance of his song *Billie Jean* and is said to have two main sources:

(a) The real moonwalk: the 1969 Apollo 11 manned lunar mission as part of the Cold War ‘moon race’ where Americans Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin became the first to set foot onto the surface of the moon, and famously described the event as “one small step for [a] man, one giant leap for mankind.”

(b) An Afro-American dance move first recorded in 1933 by Cab Calloway — and in the 1940s by French mime artist Marcel Marceau, who called it ‘Walking Against the Wind’, which is interesting when you think of a movement that kind of pulls you back is now somehow naturalised. In the 70s it entered by breakdance scene via B-Boy Mr. Freeze, who professionalised it. It was shown in the first hip hop movie *Wild Style* in 1983, and again that year in *Flash Dance*.

Today I want to summarise what I learnt from looking at, listening to, and doing the moonwalk — why I think it is a productive example for curatorial work in education, or at least a generative exercise in the cultural analysis necessary in working at the thresholds of art and life. There are a couple of implications I want to speak to from anatomical, religious and economic contexts. On a philosophical level, the moonwalk makes sense in looking for a particular epistemology enabling the immediacy that I am seeking.

What's interesting in the moonwalk is the emergence of a two-fold mimicry. On the one hand there is the transposition from dance — a kind of codification of walking as a practice — on the other hand there is an imitation of being pulled back by 'higher powers' but resisting, which generates a reverse move. I think this resistance is the defining thing, not so much the physical gravity or natural references of the movement.

I think the moonwalk operates by activating or responding to affect — the upper bodily performance of compliance — but also that it functions as a call to participate, activates a type of agency. Not in the induction or 'programming' of the pop commodity associated with Michael Jackson mania, rather, there is the potential of people actually *owning by imitation*. While agents of cultural commodity often exploit that process, I think that as long as there is agency there is always possibility for people to turn it against itself. If not in the production and programming of the pop commodity item that is the moonwalk, then in the production of its meaning, that is nothing if simply consumed. Michael knew that: "thinking is the biggest mistake you can make, you have to feel..."

II. AFFECT

I try to not be too enthusiastic about teenage heroes and scientific missionaries. This horizon of cultural industriousness and populist inter-passivity poses a serious question though: What is the difference between imitation and education? Between mere reproduction (the consolidation and maintenance of a status quo) and the actual and potentially subversive production of knowledge (the generative digression from all things given), including its pleasure, and aesthetics?

The crucial lesson from the moonwalk is about affect. In curating publicly accessible situations of exchange (be that the exchange of information, opinions, skills, other practices), it is particularly rewarding and challenging at the same time to work with affect, because it's something (even if not a thing proper) that defies the hegemonic system of things, the logic of scarcity that underwrites capitalist culture.

Affect reverses that logic. It belongs to the realm of reciprocity — when you share it, it becomes more, it's contagious, it communicates while carrying knowledge. Like its twin-brother, desire, it also offers itself rather readily for exploitation by manipulation (as has been debated for example in the case of participatory projects labelled as relational aesthetics) — but besides all the fantastic psychoanalytic Marxist readings (such as Jodi Dean's *The Communist Horizon*, for example) I keep finding the most striking explanations in the roots of the words themselves.

Affect can be understood through its Latin root *afficere*, a compound of *ad* = 'to' + *facere* = the past participle *factus*, 'to make, to do' meaning: constituted, inclined, to act, or to have influence on others (affected); so from this root of 'making an impression' (literally) or (more importantly) the concept of, affect departs into 'being affected'. Firstly this implies emotional movement (I am moved/affected by your presence, I am happy to be here), also making a difference (my talking is affected by your presence, it's different than in your absence...not to be too Heideggerian however) and thereby significantly differing from 'effect', (a result). Most importantly to me here, affect forms knowledge and relationships on the more subcutaneous, gutsy, gory levels of the irrational, just like Jacko's spiritualist methodology that bespeaks possession.

To summarise, I think for curatorial practice it is important not to give up the base, vulgar feeling in this process, but to capture it and work with it. While the figure of moonwalking may seem like an exaggerated proposition for curatorial practice, I am interested in what it offers for new perspectives on knowing, and for curatorial practices

in the expanded field. Since a considerable amount of such 'expanded' practice, in the wake of the educational turn, has been more like a niche formalist experiment with a pedagogical tool box of bric-a-brac, I would like to use this opening statement for our symposium to emphasise and encourage more thinking out of the box, any box (sounds easy: is difficult).

Traversal thinking across fields of knowledge positions us in the arts as amateurs, in the sense of being polygamous lovers of what we don't *know*, but may utilise in our work on the fringes of the socio-political imagination. It compels us not to shy away from recuperating the seemingly compromised territories of collective consciousness and creativity, but to look for cracks within the narration of power structures; to look for contradictions and digressions. We need do away with the modernist residue of autonomous artistic production and its adjacent educational formats, and instead learn from each other how to traverse the quotidian condition of plain experience towards the exaggerated, exceptional, extraordinary and extra-disciplinary potential to be found within it.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS, DAY ONE

Abby Cunnane

I'd like to start by reiterating that this symposium — Place, Practice, Research — has its roots in discussions that we had at the 2014 Curatorial Symposium, and also in a series of projects we have undertaken at ST PAUL St (and involving many of you in this room) in the interim. These include but are not limited to recent programmes at ST PAUL St, such as *Since 1984: he aha te ahurea-rua?, Accompany*, the 2014 research fellowship with Sakiko Sugawa, forthcoming research fellowship with artists Irwan Ahmett and Tita Salina, and *movements materialising momentarily* with Bianca Hester, our current exhibition.

If I were to draw a diagram of the connections between these things, it would be in three dimensions, to accommodate the discussions around local exhibition-making practices and settler and indigenous art histories which connect this series of symposia directly, and then the lateral extensions of these discussions into art practice, into postcolonial and decolonising writing, into contemporary anthropology and ethics and feminism. Into walking and talking, the responsibilities of guest and host.

The diagram would stretch to include this room of people, here in Auckland Art Gallery auditorium, within Tāmaki makaurau, within Aotearoa New Zealand, within the Asia-Pacific — a place within a place within a place within a place — as it's this site where the relational accountability we propose as the foundation for an ethics of research begins. Shawn Wilson, author of *Research as Ceremony*, might express it like this: "You are answerable to *all* your relations when you are doing research."¹ For me that includes people; it also includes places and things, materials, texts and images, and their histories. Another way of putting this, and again I'll be borrowing words, this time from Teresia Teaiwa, as part of the 2010 roundtable 'Thinking Through Oceania Now': "one of our key roles is to keep each other honest. What does it mean to be honest in the context of regionalism? It means naming the inequalities of power (eg. [...] male dominance, Anglophone-centrism, etc.) and being willing to negotiate change in good faith."² A lot of what we'll be talking about today comes back to negotiation, culminating in Misal Adnan Yildiz and Marysia Lewandowska's discussion on the topic at the end of the day.

Last year's focus was on cultural exchange and reciprocity, how both conventional institutions and more emergent organisations perpetuate, or might perform counter to dominant, hetero-patriarchal cultural narratives. Since that time I've returned often to something Meiya Cheng from Taipei Contemporary Art Center said in her presentation: "The public institution is part of the social structure, and to reflect and respond to social issues is always the crucial responsibility of the institution. A public institution can exist in a gathering, on the street, or any other place, according to the context and the conditions."

Having begun by saying this isn't really a beginning at all, but part of a process-in-process, I would position this year's symposium as a local zeroing in on some of those 'contexts and conditions' that Meiya spoke about. We've asked just six speakers this year to present on work they're doing which relates to alternative modes of education, research, and indigenous knowledges. This work is based in Aotearoa, in Australia and the wider Asia-Pacific, and has of course significant links beyond those places too.

These presentations are all practice oriented, as part of an understanding that we learn by doing, and that we are here because we see knowledge as something energetic and always-unfinished, something that is generated collectively and therefore can't be owned. When we talk about research in this context we're not speaking about

1 Shawn Wilson, *Research as Ceremony* (Halifax: Fernwood Publishing, 2008), 57.

2 Teresia Teaiwa in 'Round Table: Thinking Through Oceania Now', coordinated and edited by Peter Brunt for *Reading Room: A Journal of Art and Culture*, no. 4 (Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, 2010), 94-95.

objectivity, rather a very explicit subjectivity, inter-subjectivity, relationality — you'll note that each of the speakers uses the personal pronoun decisively in their presentations.

When I say knowledge is 'energetic', and when we're talking about the decolonisation of knowledge models, I think of the feminist philosopher Elizabeth Grosz, who writes about the concept of freedom as 'the capacity to act.' She writes, "...my understanding of freedom, agency, and autonomy [is] not in terms of a concept of 'freedom from', where freedom is conceived negatively, as the elimination of constraint but in terms of 'freedom to', a positive understanding of freedom as the capacity for action."³ So I want to thank the presenters today in advance, for sharing with us works in progress, which is not always the easiest time to speak, but I think provides a ground where the discussion can be most active.



You might ask, why are we doing this? I'd answer that in two ways. First, the situation of ST PAUL St is an educational institution. This means we hear the word 'research' a great deal, and are increasingly wary about both its instrumentalisation in the here and now, and also its historical legacy — specifically, the logics of domination that have underwritten the academic discourses of social science, anthropology, art history.

When we talk about the academy, we recognise we're invoking a history of practice built on the propagation of (settler colonial) knowledge, at the exclusion of other ways of knowing, doing, and being. As researchers Eve Tuck and Wayne Yang have written, "How do we develop an ethics for research that differentiates between power — which serves a denuding, indeed petrifying scrutiny — and people? At the same time, as fraught as research is in its complicity with power, it is one of the last places for legitimated inquiry. It is at least a place that still claims to care about curiosity."⁴

Later in that same text, under the great title, 'There are some forms of knowledge that the academy doesn't deserve', Tuck and Yang write about acts of refusal, that we don't have a right to know things, that it is a privilege and comes with responsibilities, and this is something we'll be talking about today. We are also aware of Spivak's assertion that "The ventriloquism of the speaking subaltern is the left intellectual's stock-in-trade."⁵ It's in the consciousness of all these things that we arrive at here today. So my second answer goes back to relational accountability, to the insufficiency of any single way of knowing or looking at things, and to the value of the space of two days.

So we are also here to listen. Listening I'd define as indigenous Australian scholar Judy Atkinson has done: "a deep listening and hearing with more than the ears."⁶ To me this is a kind of listening which is not unlike reading — that kind of deep immersion where you are inside of the text as much as just observing it, and where you are aware of your own very specific connections to what is being said, or read. To paraphrase Wilson a second time:

"research is a ceremony...The specific rituals that make up the ceremony are designed to get the participants into the state of mind that will allow for the extraordinary to take place."⁷ So, prosaic as the setting is for now, I would like to open up the next couple of days as a space for the extraordinary to take place.

3 Elizabeth Grosz, 'Feminism, Materialism and Freedom', in Diana Coole and Samantha Frost (eds.), *New Cartographies: Ontology, agency and politics* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 140.

4 Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang, 'R-words: Refusing Research', in Django Paris and Maisha T. Winn (eds.), *Humanizing Research* (Los Angeles: Sage, 2014), 1.

5 Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, in Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin (eds.), *Postcolonial Studies Reader* (Oxford: Routledge, [1995], 2010), 28.

6 Judy Atkinson, *Trauma Trails, Recreating Song Lines: The Transgenerational Effects of Trauma in Indigenous Australia* (Melbourne: Spinifex Press, 2002), 16.

7 Wilson, 2008, 69.

KEI ROTO I TE WHARE / ON HOUSING

Cassandra Barnett

*E aku nei, e aku rahi, e aku rau rangatira, tēnā koutou katoa.
Ko tēnei taku mihi ki te rohe nei.
Rangipuke, tēnā koe.
He mihi ki ngā moana, ki a Manukau, ki a Waitemata...
Ki a Ngāti Whātua, ki ngā tāngata whenua o tēnei rohe...
E ngā kaihautu i whakarite i tēnei wāhi mō tatou, ki a Charlotte, ki a Abby...
Tēnā koutou katoa.
Heoi, ko wai tēnei?
Ko Wharepunga te maunga, ko Waikato te awa, ko Tainui te waka, ko Ngāti
Raukawa te iwi, ko Ngāti Huri te hapū, ko Pikitū te marae, ko Rauti te tupuna kuia.
I te taha o tōku whaea, ko Ngāti Airihi te iwi, nō te rohe o County Antrim ōku tupuna.
He tangati tiriti ahau.
Nō reira, tēnā koutou tēnā koutou tēnā koutou katoa.*

DOUBLE LIVES: A STRUCTURE OF DWELLING

By way of a prologue I wish to begin by offering you three images and two passages of text from some artists/writers whose concerns overlap with my own. First, the images:

1. A formal portrait photograph of a schoolgirl, her neat figure centred against the white oval backdrop. Pinstriped blazer with school crest on the pocket; hands folded demurely in her lap. Glossy hair adorned with a jutting huia feather — tiki at her throat — downturned mouth and eye-whites blazing in full pūkana. [Fig. 1]
2. Another conventional format, the somatological triptych (nude full-length photographs of a human in fixed poses of front, back and profile) — once deployed by anthropologists such as Louis Agassiz in their attempt to classify and hierarchise us humans. In this one the subject is positioned at a more distant remove, outdoors, against the backdrop of Agassiz Range in Canterbury; and the nude figure depicted, in front, back and profile views, is Swiss-Haitian artist Sasha Huber. [Fig. 2]
3. One more vaguely familiar scene: the idyllic Pacific Isles, calmly lapping seas, sandy shores, palm trees awaft in a gentle breeze, pastel blue skies, scantily clad brown bodies and...yes, Captain Cook. Only these Hawaiians, about to kill Cook, are Samoans speaking modern day Samoan. [Fig. 3]

Three jaded tropes from the European archive of images, each inseparable from a certain way of looking (or so we thought). Each associated with singular objectifications, taxonomies, exoticisations. Each now, here, bursting anew with the force of a living spirit, with mauri and wairua — with the appearance of human beings utterly heterogeneous from the form of human these formats were first designed to frame.

Despite many interesting differences between these three artists' practices, the particular images I've highlighted here have in common this structure of a double being or existence or life. In one sense the subjects depicted fit the given format and perform well in the objective guise it lends to them. But simultaneously they exceed it, rupture it, spill over, flood it with their own lifeworlds. So it's a structure of one lifeworld inhabiting another. A structure of dual or multiple worldings. A structure of being displaced but heartily present for all that. A structure of being looked at, performing for that looking, and simultaneously looking right back. A structure of interfacing. A structure of dwelling, flourishing even, on one's own terms, within a setting (an aesthetic world) not intended to nourish one — within a setting, if anything, designed to aid one's demise. A structure of *suffusing*, of the visible being transformed, from the inside out, by other forces. A structure, perhaps, (in a Deleuzian vein) of objects turning back into subjects, counter-actualising (or re-virtualising), outsides giving way to insides.



1. Deane-Rose Ngatai, *Jess*, 'Māori portrait series', 2010. Courtesy of the artist.



3. Lisa Reihana, *In Pursuit of Venus (infected)*, 2015. (Video still of Cook's death). Courtesy of the artist.



2. Sasha Huber, *Agassiz Range, Canterbury, South Island, New Zealand*, 2015. 'Agassiz: the Mixed Traces Series Somatological Triptych of Sasha Huber'. Commissioned photograph by Tom Hoyle © Sasha Huber. Courtesy of the artist.

I think George Nuku (2006) describes something similar when he says,

When you enact your culture you don't need to translate your culture anymore. You should say something clearly to the other world before you present your culture.

As much as there's taonga in a museum, the reasons our ancestors made them isn't in the museum. So we should just carry on making, and stop crying about what we don't have and how that's stopping us from living - stop grovelling to the big guys in the big house so we can have our stuff back.

I feel sorry that the taonga aren't breathing like they would out in the garden or wherever, getting damaged and getting sweaty Maori hands fondling them and snot and tears all over them and being kissed and stuff.

But come on man, do you honestly think a lock and key and maybe a reinforced door is going to contain the power that those things represent? It's like trying to bottle air mate, it's impossible!

And it's here too, in Alice Te Punga Somerville's recent essay (2015) about a Wellington stream, which starts by quoting a Te Ātiawa interviewee:

People were [...] quite surprised to find that though there's no stream, because it's all in an underground pipe now, there's still a large quantity of eels living in the Waitangi stream.' The Waitangi stream, although no longer visible, still flows under the land and up the valley—it's just that now it flows in pipes. And, because the stream was always a specific gathering place of eels, when the water started to flow in pipes instead of above ground, the eels kept on swimming up and down the valley just like they always had...

No one told the eels to start acting differently just because the environment was unrecognizable... No one told the eels to stop acting like eels, not when we found our lives were radically changed by two hundred years of turbulent change; no one told the eels to stop acting like eels, even though our usual pathways have become more narrow than before...

What I see in these images, both visual and written, is a vibrant triumph of a self-sovereign life. Not the specimen exoticised and life-threatened by archiving, taxonomising, anthropologising, objectifying, hierarchicizing, rationalising practices, but the subject that has been vitally there all along. These images seem double-sided, like interfaces that shift or drift me from the reasonably distant subject position of an outside looker towards a closer sense of the subjectivities living 'inside' the image. Not a knowledge of the *actual* singular subjectivity of this person or that eel; not the *kōrero* of a specific taonga — and I don't need to know those things. Rather this double structure I'm seeing simply delivers the fact that vibrant life forces beyond my ken are housed here, in these familiar guises.

This structure — of lives or subjectivities enduring forcefully within unloving surroundings — echoes for me with a structure of existence I was feeling my way towards during the crisis point of my own doctoral research. And the resonance I feel, between these images and quotes and my own thesis experience, has led me to the metaphor of housing or dwelling for this paper. As in, What structure of life is this that can arrive at such an ill-fitting house and make of it a home? Further, if artists and writers can activate this lively mode of dwelling, this unassailable subjectivity, within rigid, outmoded aesthetic forms — can scholars, teachers and culture workers also activate it as dwellers within rigid, outmoded *institutional* forms?

Having introduced this figure of housing/dwelling for my current questions, let me go back to an earlier starting point and tell you the story of that thesis crisis I underwent a few years back. This will eventually lead me, via the thread of some key methodologies I developed, back to this question of how we house ourselves. Along the way I'll re-contextualise and update my story with some more newfound references on slides [here represented as grey text boxes - eds.]: people helping me join the dots of my personal, cultural and philosophical whakapapa.

DOUBLE LIVES, MULTIPLYING: A DOCTORAL JOURNEY

I graduated in 2014 after six years of doctoral study (or five not counting my ‘year out’ to have a baby...). In the midst of that research I had something of a cultural crisis, adding a more personal inflection to the journey I was on, and leading me into a number of writerly methodological experiments as I attempted to resolve that crisis. Methodology — that sludgy academic category loved by research and funding proposals alike — became for me the trapdoor opening onto some much deeper questions. Questions linked to processes, practices, protocols, ceremonies, kawa, tikanga... and also more expansively, linked to wayfinding, journeying, maturing, evolving, harmonising, integrating, synthesising. All these terms are to do with how things are done and how things happen; how we move from one state to another; how we transform (with all the ambiguity that suggests between passive and active engagement). So I’m hoping that my rather close focus on my own methodological story will justify itself as it becomes clear that it was linked to not just personal and subjective, but also perhaps ontological, grappling with a fundamental state of being multiple. It’s *this* dynamic state that everything circles around, this that in a sense I cannot answer.

My proposal for my thesis was to undertake a philosophical analysis of how perception works — that is, to ask what happens when we look at an artwork — as a means of exploring what political effects art can have, or how it can transform its viewers. I set out by conducting in-depth readings of the thinkers who, to me at that time, offered the most profound, convincing and aesthetically useful accounts of the perceptual process: a bunch of men, mostly French, called Henri Bergson, Gilbert Simondon, Gilles Deleuze, Felix Guattari and Brian Massumi. These philosophers appealed (and still do, more reservedly) for the ways they work to articulate the creative and transformational relations between forces and matters and forms. To use the jargon for a moment, they described an imperceptible, molecular reservoir of virtualities — and how that reservoir’s creative forces result in the molar, actualised percepts and forms of art (and life). I was particularly interested in their accounts (e.g. in *Cinema’s* affection-image and *What Is Philosophy’s* percept-affect-concept triad) of how perception is both actualised and virtualised when presented with works of art. Massumi says that the aesthetic perception offered by works of art makes not just the art but perception itself perceptible. This idea became a key portal from Continental Philosophy to the indigenous-ethical dimension of my research, since it opens up the question of *seeing how one is seeing*. But I hadn’t seen that yet. (It’s not really my intention to restage any of that philosophy here, I just wanted to mention where my head was at that time: deep in mātauranga Pākehā...)

(As a slight digression, I would also like to mention that one of my interests, which was then very germinal, is how the cosmologies of the philosophies of difference I’m talking about (such as Deleuze’s) intersect with Māori cosmologies (such as Māori Marsden’s three-world cosmology), notwithstanding all the differences between spirits and virtualities.

A Māori world view

‘I suspect the Māori had a three-world view, of potential being symbolised by Te Korekore, the world of becoming portrayed by Te Pō, and the world of being, Te Ao Mārama... Through the great path of Tāne linking these three realms there is a two-way traffic: the spirits of the departed descending to Hawaiiki and that which is in the process of becoming ascending to the world of being.’ (Marsden 20-1)

A Deleuzian worldview

‘the process of creation involves... three distinct but inter-related aspects... There is first of all the pure impulse or elan of creativity itself... the inexhaustible source of pure potential... [second], the distinct creations that it distributes as vehicles for its manifestation or expression, determinate virtual configurations... third, [the] actual (constituted bodies, presentable states of affairs, articulated propositions...).’ (Hallward 37)

Other ways of knowing were starting to rear their heads for me, and though I'm yet to follow through fully on the implications of these trans-cultural resonances (requiring consideration, for instance, of whether Deleuze's worlding permits a two-way traffic like Marsden's — or just a one-way traffic, as Hallward suggests), I am slowly teasing them out.)

Part of what I loved was the value these thinkers gave to perceptual and affective, feeling and subjective dimensions of experience and art experience. But in that first stage/section of my thesis I was nevertheless trapped in these writers' *discourse*, their *conceptualisation* of the feeling sides of life. Thus, I would explain a particular concept, then describe in detail the percepts and affects I experienced before a particular artwork (I was then looking at Alex Monteith, Daniel Crooks, Lisa Benson and Francis Upritchard), then show how the former (the concept) could be used to explain and unpack the latter (my own perceptual experience before the artwork) — that is, to explain why and how I felt what I felt, but without dwelling too much on *what* I felt. In this way I converted my own nuggety and jagged personal experiences back into the smooth impenetrable discursive flow of English academic prose.

I practised like this for three shortish chapters, though from the outset I was uncomfortable with it — mainly because it felt like I could have done the same with *any* concept, *any* theory, as PhD students regularly do: take a theoretical framework and 'find' it at work in some art or other. Many half-decent philosophical concepts can be 'applied' in this way — including those I find politically worrisome — but as a response to an artwork this seems somewhat starved and stale and lazy and ultimately a betrayal of the art. I was using the art to illustrate the theory, putting the art in the service of the discourse, and slyly privileging the objects of intellectuality and cognitive, calculating faculties over the art itself. Whereas what I wanted to do was participate in what art does on its own terms. I wanted to stay on the side of the forces, the matter, the movement.¹

(Here I'll pause again to quote randomly a few people I've read since that time, who contextualise/articulate well the problems I was facing: from Shelley's attack on the "unmitigating exercise of the calculating faculty", to Richard Tarnas on the social ills of too much skepticism, to performance-ethnographer Victor Turner resisting the cognitive dominance of the written... I'm clearly fudging concepts here, but they have in common that they're resisting dominant culture, working at ethnographic contact zones, or on the margins of Western discourse if not yet actually 'across the line' into non-Western zones of thought.

Cognitive dominance

Shelley:

'Such [anarchy and despotism] are the effects which must ever flow from an unmitigated exercise of the calculating faculty.' (43)

Tarnas:

'Skepticism is the chastity of the intellect (Santayana)... Yet... chastity is something one preserves not for its own sake, which would be barren, but rather so that one may be fully ready for the moment of surrender to the beloved... Only with that discernment and inward opening can the full participatory engagement unfold that brings forth new realities and new knowledge. Without this capacity, at once active and receptive, the long discipline would be fruitless. The carefully cultivated skeptical posture would become finally an empty prison, an armored state of unfulfilment...' (xiii)

Turner:

'our discipline will have to become something more than a cognitive game played in our heads and inscribed in... tedious journals. We will have to become performers ourselves, and bring to human, existential fulfillment what have hitherto been only mentalistic protocols.' (111)

1 Of course further questions might also be raised here, about which art to participate in and why to privilege that; about Peter Hallward's critique of Deleuze, and about the problematic political implications of valuing the forces of creation unconditionally...

Taylor:

‘performance “constitutes a repertoire of embodied knowledge, a learning in and through the body, as well as a means of creating, preserving, and transmitting knowledge”’ (paraphrased in Magnat 36)

‘the schism does not lie between the written and the spoken word but between discursive and performative systems... between literary and embodied cultural practices.’ (7)

And of course many also reiterate the *other* powers that art has, outside of the discursive — see for instance, Danny Butt on art practice’s irruptive effect on academic conventional discourse and institutions.)

Butt:

‘Creating objects that bridge and breach boundaries in the imagination requires practitioners to... trust in the recipient... The consumer of knowledge is not a passive object, but its creator, in a social world of meaning...’ (np)

Yes, I wanted to become, as writer and *in* my writing, an art ‘recipient’ first and foremost. A fellow traveller in that boundary riding and bridging and breaching, that rupturing movement of counter-actualisation, from fixed, cognitive knowings to other, more dynamic and immanent modes of knowing — and preferably not a critic, not an analyst, not a creator and refiner of precisely consistent discursive systems at all. I wanted my work to live, like the art did.

A break with that early methodology and my more or less Victorian rationalist (and thesis conventional) style of writing came with my next chapter on Lisa Reihana’s installation *Digital Marae* (2001-2007). I started out in the same way as before. This time my main theory text was Brian Massumi’s ‘The Thinking-Feeling of What Happens’ (*Semblance and Event*, 2011), and if there was one key idea I took from that text it was the idea that *if* we want to evaluate an artwork’s effects (the value of evaluating art at all being contestable!), a useful/productive approach is to ask what kind of subject the artwork houses. Or in my words, *Who* does it give life to? *Who* does it allow to live? And (I would add), is that subjectivity helpful or healthy or positive or productive as a possible becoming for us to experience via an artwork? To get to the question of what subject *Digital Marae* housed I proceeded once again via detailed descriptions of both the formal and material percepts and the virtually arising affects the installation offered to its viewers.

Now, I was already aware that all my art responses were subjective. So while on one level I thought I was seeking to interrogate philosophically and ‘objectively’ assess how art affects *us*, on another, emergent level I was trying to live through and describe how this art affected *me*. I was using myself as the guinea pig in my thesis; *I* was the case study of a viewer. At some level I knew that the answer to the question of what subject the work housed was never going to be a universalisable one. But I hadn’t yet fully understood how specifically located I was. And I had certainly not doubted my capacity to *have* a response to an artwork, or my capacity to know and consciously articulate that response. (Retrospectively we might say that until then I had blithely performed a knowing subject position before each artwork. Even when I was describing how both Benson’s and Crooks’s works disoriented me, how Monteith’s work ungrounded me and exploded my temporal sense, or how Upritchard’s scale shifts simultaneously enlarged and diminished me, I was still *able* to describe these things. They were still occurring within the horizon of my understanding; or at least, I could work them into it through my various acts of thought, felt engagement.)

With *Digital Marae*, however, after I’d used all the words at my disposal to describe the audio-visual, formal, material, spatial and compositional details of the work *and* how they cross-fertilised to produce powerful combined effects, *and* all the rich allusions and references these elements made to a vast virtual reservoir of artistic and cultural and pop cultural becomings (the ones I knew of at least) — *after* I’d done all that, I came unstuck. I felt no closer to capturing or crystallising the powers of this work or the subject housed by it. Because the references I had — my own experiences and mātauranga pertaining to Mahuika and Māui, Kurangaituku and Marakihau, and all the other tupuna

and atua depicted there, and to pouwhakairo and wharehau and marae more generally — were frankly inadequate. All my detailed, probing reading of the work did was reveal more and more painfully my own limitations. Painfully because I *am* Māori. Thus I collided with the admission that ‘I do not know myself; in this regard, I cannot speak for myself (let alone for my people).’ It was embarrassing and shameful. But most of all it was *weird*. I did not know what to do, what to think, what to feel. I did not know who I was anymore. It is hard to articulate the shift that happened here. I had always been ‘proud’ of my Māori whakapapa, while being aware I did not know that much about it beyond having it all written down. But it had never struck me as a personal identity crisis until I was challenged by this artwork to write a Māori subject position ... a position which in my own way I did feel, but for which on a conscious and linguistic level I had no words, no concepts. I could *not* get into alignment. I had lost my voice.

Now here (leaping forward from my thesis-story again) I want to mention some of the accounts out there in the world of these different selves I was discovering inside me. On the one hand I knew I could be described as that *Māori* who is outside her own culture, the urbanised, displaced, deculturalised Māori; the kind of Māori who (in Ihimaera’s words) might not be accepted as Māori. (They do indeed, at my marae, say with one breath, *This is your place, you should be buried here, and, Oh, you’re from the Pākehā side...*)

Colonised Māori?...

Patricia Grace:

‘I agree with Witi Ihimaera’s definition of who is a Maori writer: they are people with Maori genealogy who identify as Maori and people who are accepted as Maori.’

‘But, can there really be a definition? There are writers like Roma Potiki, for example, who was brought up by non-Maori parents ... There are so many different experiences. There are people who have been traditionally brought up, whose first language is Maori, and people who have been deculturalised, and a wide range of people in-between.’ (Qtd in Calleja-Fresno 112, 113)

Charles Te Ahukaramū Royal:

‘During the early period of my ‘Māori’ learning... [w]hat was driving me was a desire to feel and be ‘Māori’. Overall, I was concerned to reclaim pre-existing knowledge and to construct in my consciousness an experience of ‘being Māori?’ (9)

I might also be the Māori who, in Charles Royal’s words, is trying to ‘feel Māori’, wanting to find and feel and embody a thread back to her roots so she feels whole again. But as I slid around exploring *these* possible subject positions, I also found a harsh gaze turning back on other parts of my being. That is, I found that on the other hand I might be described as that *Pākehā* who operates comfortably within dominant Western subjectivity: the confident, cognitive ‘knowing’ subject. I started worrying that I actually *was* that Westerner who realises she is outside of something (or in a contact zone) and immediately wants to know everything about that something; that I was Mary Louise Pratt’s ‘seeing man’; or Alison Jones and Kuni Jenkins’ coloniser who wishes to understand entirely by ‘giving voice’ to the indigene; or Glissant’s self who cannot let the Other be opaque; pursuing Spivak’s and Bhabha’s ‘myth of representational clarity’...

...Or Pākehā coloniser?

Mary Louise Pratt:

‘the “seeing-man,” an admittedly unfriendly label for the European male subject of European landscape discourse – he whose imperial eyes passively look and possess.’ (7)

Glissant:

‘A racist is someone who refuses what he doesn’t understand. I can accept what I don’t understand.’

Opacity is a right we must have. . . what was barbaric was imposing one's own transparency on the Other.' (62)

Jones & Jenkins:

'researchers and educators interested in liberation wish to "hear the voices" of the colonized/ oppressed/other . . . It is the colonizer, wishing to hear, who calls for dialogue.' (478)

Spivak and Bhabha:

'Both Spivak and Bhabha make calls to Western intellectuals and researchers to abandon the myths of representational clarity and total accessibility to the Other' (paraphrased in Jones & Jenkins 481)

If I took on any of those subject positions it seemed I would be dualistically divided against myself, doomed on both sides to failure and endless life-denying battle. I could feel my soul splitting, multiplying, fracturing, fragmenting, and I knew I needed to both listen to the call that had suddenly called me *and* proceed gently and carefully to find my way beyond a binary fracturing to the meaning of this newfound multiplicity.

So that was my crisis. Needless to say that moment of awakening triggered for me a slow journey of reconnecting with my marae and Ngāti Huri whanau and of ever so slowly learning my reo. I am telling this so I can explain how my methodologies then developed. And also to keep this story grounded in something real. But what did I *do*, as a writer, in my thesis at that crisis of self? I expounded at length about how *Digital Marae*, through its mix of contemporary high-tech media, Western tropes and iconography, reimaginings of ancestral and mythical Māori tupuna and atua, and assembled aural, digital and installational strategies, succeeded in creating a semblance of an immersive, relational marae experience, while avoiding the essentialising dangers of more customary imagery and techniques. A contemporary, hybridised marae experience, in fact, especially for the likes of this split, evolving me, or so it (eventually) seemed. This split self seeking wholeness through the marae *was* the subjectivity Reihana's artwork housed for me (but I cannot say whether everyone would find that subjectivity housed there).

But as I was describing these things, something else was bubbling up. By now I was so over that objective discursive knowing abstracting PhD writing style (both the theory and the art description) that I actually felt polluted. Not helped by the horror I was feeling as I fully recognised how much my own education had colonised my own mind and knowing and capacities of being and feeling. I simply *had* to drop it, to break with it, to break it. That, or abandon the whole project and run away and hide in a hole! And right there, I suddenly found myself talking directly to the figures on the walls. Reihana's tupuna whare's poupou. There, in my middle thesis chapter, appeared these conversational addresses coming from me to Ranginui, to Marakihau, to Māui. Like an apology for having ignored them for so long, for having talked about them but not to them. In my voice (of course). In English (of course). But speaking to them *as* tupuna, as living, and as the pou that they are, at least for the whare (Reihana's) I was then standing in, housed by, as I wrote that chapter. And when I did that, the world spun around and righted itself. Sometimes I cringe upon rereading those first awkward passages of direct address; sometimes I despair at the Englishness of it all. *But* they did what was needed. They broke the spell of objectivity. Replacing it with a semblance of intersubjectivity and relationality.

This small pronoun shift from the impartial observer's 'they' to the participant's 'you' and 'I' disrupted the conventions that were suffocating me — and offered a hint (whispered to me from those tupuna or so it felt) of a way forward for this art writing business. That mode, the direct address, the 'second person voice' is one methodological device I have carried forward from my thesis. For instance I used it again in a text I wrote more recently for Fiona Amundsen², responding to a photograph of a living man, and feeling the only way I could ethically do this was by (in part) speaking to him. I feel, just in doing this, that I am forced into a more accountable

2 Cassandra Barnett, 'Strange face: A Sovereign Countenance', Fiona Amundsen, *The Imperial Body* (Auckland: split/fountain, 2015).

subject position. I am in conversation; connected, in an encounter, in a relationship. I am being *looked back at* (or *at least talked back at*) by the ancestors, or the subjects of the art, or the artwork itself, or the artist, or the other artists, writers, people I am engaging with.

And once I had found myself at this edge of hearing voices, I could not shake it. In the second half of my thesis I revisited chapter by chapter every artist I had already written about, looking at new work and this time striving to start from a place of just ‘listening’ to the work without imposing conceptual frameworks: feeling for the kinds of subjects the work housed, and for their familiars — the milieu of voices such subjects might be likely to carry around with them — as well as looking to the work for visual, formal clues as to how to write those subjects into being, thus deepening my engagement with that work. Like the Oulipo and other constraint-based writers of Western literature I sought to use such structural and syntactical devices to demote my standard, ‘trained’ writerly voice, demote my own tangled subjectivity, and as far as possible work simply to prolong the affects of the work itself.

Constraints

‘Postcolonial: At first glance, it would be easy to dismiss constraint-based writing as the idle literary exercises of a privileged, leisured class. Doing so, however, ignores perhaps the most interesting facet of such writing: that the writers, typically white, middle class men, willingly adopt, in their writing, a subaltern subject-position or something close to it—a position where the writer’s/subject’s freedoms have been curtailed. What’s more, these writers contend that such a situation is, paradoxically, liberating. It must be pointed out, however, that their situation is fundamentally different from that of a true subaltern, since the latter subject-position is by nature involuntary. Even so, this complex power relationship means that every constraint-based text implicitly interrogates, willy-nilly, the very concept of freedom itself.’ (Bury n.p.)

Thus I hoped to use each artwork as not just a site of practice at deeply encountering another being, but as practice at actually getting out and over to another subjectivity altogether, another way of knowing and being. And I was getting clues that this wasn’t about crossing from one ‘cultural’ subjectivity to another, but about something — dare I say it — deeper and more universal. We’ll come back to that. For now it seemed that art-viewing and writing were becoming for me a way to escape myself... And to find myself.

In particular, amongst other constraints and explorations which I won’t go into here, the experiments of each subsequent thesis chapter ushered in new voices. I went from being voiceless to being something of a ventriloquist. My second chapter on Francis Upritchard (on *Gesamtkunsthanderwerk*, a work she made in collaboration with Karl Fritsch, Martino Gamper and a number of other artists and makers), was littered with voices from old European folk stories, fairytales and psychedelic-folk music; my second Daniel Crooks chapter (on his tai chi work, *Seek Stillness in Motion*) included Taoist voices and Chinese ideographs (which I tried to simply hold a space for, without capturing and dissecting and interpolating them into my own discourse). And in my second Alex Monteith chapter I wrote a long section written from the point of view of the sites, the ground against which she filmed her works (Ohakea, Manawatu, Parihaka, Taranaki). That is, I wrote as Papatūānuku looking back at the actors using those sites (choppers, planes, surfers, sheep and dogs, jeeps). To me, the land was the ultimate protagonist in all those works, the loudest presence despite some pretty noisy machinery, and I felt driven to voice it in my text. At the same time this move felt ethically and culturally ambiguous. I felt so strongly the impossibility of speaking as those sites, which I understood as more Māori than Pākehā (since my reo was lacking and I did not have strong connections with the local iwi); but I felt equally the call to do so (for they *are* sites I am connected with through the Toa-Raukawa-Ātiawa heke South that my tupuna participated in; and it is that heke that I explored in this text). I expressed the tensions I felt by constraining myself to use only use the letters (and/or sounds) of the Māori alphabet for these passages of text written in English. Another way of ‘constraining’ my hegemonic English voice, minoritising it (in Deleuze and Guattari’s terms), and simultaneously feeling my way orally and aurally into my reo Māori, my Māori tongue.

VOICING DANGERS

Now, I cannot wade into this territory of voices and pronouns without acknowledging the many potential pitfalls it opens up. Indeed these are pivotal concerns of postcolonial literature, from Tonto's "What you mean we, white man?" to Spivak's "Can the subaltern speak?". So all of my voice exercises, all of my attempts to escape the universalising monopoly of the 'They', the 'I' and the 'We', had me teetering on equally dangerous ethical brinks. Here are some of those fears:

When I invent a character and voice and words for you, or even just activate your presence through the pronoun 'you,' am I putting words in your mouth? Am I thinking I know you when I don't? Am I stereotyping you, reinventing you, characterising you wrongly, in my own terms, in my own image? Am I corrupting you? Am I using you merely to redefine my own limits? Am I only silencing you once more, by standing in your place, speaking with your voice, commanding you to speak at all? In claiming to give you voice, am I actually stealing your voice, and also stealing your right to silence — commanding you to open up and share what you know?

These dangers, especially in relation to the coloniser-indigene coupling or 'hyphen', are well articulated by Alison Jones and Kuni Jenkins in 'Rethinking Collaboration' and also by Simon Njami in relation to African experience.

Talk to me

'researchers and educators interested in liberation wish to "hear the voices" of the colonized/oppressed/other ... It is the colonizer, wishing to hear, who calls for dialogue.' (Jones & Jenkins 478)

'In attempting, in the name of justice and dialogue, to move the boundary pegs of power into the terrain of the margin-dwellers, the powerful require those on the margins not to be silent, or to talk alone, but to open up their territory and share what they know. The imperialist resonances are uncomfortably apt.' (ibid. 480)

'On a continent where voice is a privileged means of expression, creativity does not speak... this silence... [is a] refusal to lay itself bare, to give in to the rules devised for and by others. A refusal to partake in self-comment... [African artists'] refusal to raise their voices ... marks their deliberate will to master their own space...' (Njami 17)

It is an edge I teeter on and sometimes fall off. In the case of living subjects (whom I have only 'written' in this way once or twice) it is especially concerning, however much care I exercise, since in my writing they are unlikely to get a right of reply or redress. In the case of fictionalised or mythical characters, whom my words cannot hurt, I feel less concerned but still careful, still aware of my responsibilities in contributing to their depictions among humans. I sometimes think to set myself blanket rules about such things — but then find myself avoiding difficulties rather than taking risks and working them through.

In my Upritchard and Crooks chapters, my references — the voices I quoted — were all from public domain literary texts. Which in the Western paradigm is officially fine, but is really just like saying that a taonga has come from the museum — it doesn't mean it has been well cared for there. I thought of these voices of past writers as the tupuna of others, to whom I had a duty of care (out of respect for my own tupuna); and in the process of citing them they were becoming tupuna of mine too. I felt as if I was calling them down, while trying not to plunge them too rudely into my own worlds of knowing. I was trying to uphold their difference, counter-actualise (or re-virtualise) them — in the face of their over-familiar usage in Western cultural discourse.

At the same time, I was trusting their presence to rupture slightly the flow of my main thesis text, performatively breaking holes in the text's veneer, perhaps in the spirit of Victor Turner's performance ethnography, perhaps in the spirit of George Nuku's unbottlable wairua or Alice Te Punga Somerville's stubborn eels.

Performing a different knowing

‘...the experiential dimension of performance is conducive to a particularly productive form of intersubjectivity, which [Victor Turner] considers to be crucial to ethnographic research...’ (Magnat 31)

“The deep bonds between body and mentality, unconscious and conscious thinking, species and self have been treated without respect, as though irrelevant for analytical purposes.” (Turner 111)

‘Advocating the performance of ethnographic texts in order to break away from the cognitive dominance of the written, Turner proposes... to establish “a dialectic between performing and learning,” so that “one learns through performing, then performs the understanding so gained” (Magnat 31 qtg Turner 104).

I was trusting their presence to shift the terms of reference, frame right back the text that was framing them, and thus bring it to a performance of its own ‘unknowing’. Of course, these are also performances on *my* part, practices at a relational knowing that respects the opacity of the others it meets; a knowing that is experienced not cognitively but bodily, via the interaction I *really* experience as I write it, the *experience* I am writing into being. (I’m also starting to think about this opacity of the other’s subjectivity in terms of the tapu of manuhiri — a necessary phase before (if appropriate) that distance can be mutually bridged, the tapu broken and whakanoa enacted. If good protocols are followed (and such protocols are well defined in te ao Māori), the process of seeking and listening to others’ voices can be a vitalising, mutually affirming one rather than a dominating, oppressive, life-denying one. But again these are germinal thoughts that themselves require much bridging work to be done...)

I’m not saying I nailed this practice of embodied unknowing in every experiment, not by any means. Merely that the experiments were all part of me working out my protocols, in a relatively ‘safe’ environment.

FROM MULTIPLICITY TO EMBODIED KNOWING

By now I’ve moved through my thesis journey from my initial awakening to a fragmented self with multiple tupuna voices flowing in, to a period of destabilisation, doubt and polarisation; to a dawning learning of ethical processes for slowly entering into communication with those voices and learning to dwell alongside them. I slid around, during that thesis experience, between various positions: coloniser, decolonising coloniser, Māori, decolonising Māori, and of course many others besides — my Irish, English, Scottish, Rwandan and other whakapapas... all feeding in and influencing me... I’m a daughter, a mum, a companion, friend, colleague. I’m in direct relationship, in different power dynamics, with different voices everywhere... To the point where it feels like a fiction to say there are two main lines of tupuna running through me, the Pākehā and the Māori, the colonizer and the indigene (coloniser-indigene hyphen!)... There are many many lines, each with their own memories of domination or subjugation — and no one of them (as a body of mātauranga, or a way of looking) holds the single answer to all my questions.

So I surrendered to the state of being multiple, learning to feel how — as Denise Taliaferro, extending Spivak, suggests, it is good for us all.

Embracing multiplicity

Taliaferro:

‘double-consciousness need not only be a burden, but might be a virtue as well. ... we should all seek to understand it and those who have escaped the pain of splitting soul should surrender to the possibility’ (90-91)

Seifert:

'[Taliaferro's] call for the development of double-consciousness is the same as postcolonial theorist Gayatri Spivak's call for 'holders of hegemonic discourse' to 'learn how to occupy the subject position of the other... For...Taliaferro, it is the imagination and the arts that can facilitate the development of double-consciousness.' (25)

Meyer:

'The 'one-truth' epistemology describes an Aristotelian position—one cannot hold two opposite truths to be true simultaneously. This notion ultimately dismisses Quantum Science findings, that is, the Uncertainty Principle.' (154 n.42)

Glissant:

'I say that nothing is true and everything is alive... There isn't one absolute truth, but truths. Everything is alive; everything is a Relation of differences, not contraries, but differences.' (63)

Though I cannot embrace that if it is an 'eat your greens' kind of good for us — it needs to be a joyful, harmonious YES of a good. Which I suspect Manulani Meyer is beckoning with her critique of Aristotelian 'one-truth epistemologies'. And Edouard Glissant seems joyful too, in his celebration of multiplicity as the outcome of Africa's diasporic journeys. This is a point I come back to repeatedly, as the splitting keeps splitting further still, as I find myself deeper and deeper into beliefs that do not add up. It is ok to believe more than one thing. It is not just OK, it is the joyful answer. In practice in our world that seems pretty radical, and hard (beware the hypocrisy police!)... *But* if we do (consciously and knowingly let ourselves) believe in more than one truth, those truths have other ways of coming together.

To dig into how the multiplicity, with all its differences, becomes ok in the *living*, I'm going to return briefly to that hyphen (e.g. in the 'coloniser-indigene' coupling) that has dogged me. If the hyphen puts one race or culture or set of beliefs on one side, and another on the other side, for *me* that creates a problem. It seems to keep me in a place of internal resistance, self-suspicion and struggle. So I need to change the terms. I need to clarify things and say, on one side is what we might call a colonising, *or* colonised, way of knowing (rational, cognitive, etc.); on the other side is the subjective, embodied knowing — often associated with indigeneity, because it is cultivated and cherished more in indigenous traditions, but not exclusive to indigenous people as an experience — that I was trying to find in (of all places) my PhD research.

Embodied knowing

Massumi:

'The poles of relation lived-in and lived-out cut across every experiential distinction we can make. Take the senses... As art plays on the poles of interaction and relation, so do the senses... It is all well and good for the senses to function. But if they want to potentialize, they have to fuse... This eternal return of experiential fusion passes unnoticed. It is nonconscious... At the limit, the sense poles of experience are in constant virtual contact. They are always in resonance, aquiver together at an analogical distance from each other that makes a destiny of their covariation as part of the same ecology of experience.' (74-6)

On thinking-feeling: 'A kind of direct and immediate self-referentiality of perception. I don't mean self-reflexivity, which would be thinking about perception as from a distance, or as mediated by language... This is a thinking-feeling, in visual form.' (44)

Meyer:

'Time to extend knowing beyond cognitive accumulation perfectly rendered in textual form' (155)

‘Cultural empiricism is knowledge gained via sensory modalities shaped and directed by one’s culture’ (155 n.43)

‘Knowing something is bound by how we develop a relationship with it... Knowing is embodied and in union with cognition’ (156)

On the “instinctual sense”: ‘feelings shape epistemology and bring us back into our senses, ‘our basic perceptions’... [and] shape how and what we know. Knowledge is not carved from anger or joy. Knowing something is feeling something, and it is at the core of our embodied knowledge systems...’ (142)

All my multiple selves, defined in their differences, are only separate and distinct according to my cognitive thought processes. But when I feel (rather than think) my way into their in-most singularities, the sense of embodied knowing that arises is shared across them, becoming a moment’s resonance in which the differences connect and fuse.

In fact I think embodied knowing is that which *has*, however temporarily, processed differences into a felt, immanent resolution. Indigenous traditions talk of such processing in terms of storying, of ceremony, of relationally accountable enquiry that assumes we are all deeply connected with the cosmos. Brian Massumi describes a lived-in thinking-feeling, the immanent perception of perception in the process of resolving different sensory inputs into a harmonious whole.

Of course, right here we need to be careful. I’ve identified a shared goal of housing multiple subjectivities under cumbersome inherited roofs, and indicated that embodied, reparative, creative, affectionate knowings might be a key. But this resonance which I am saying is possible across some singular worldviews (which do each in their own way seem to value such an embodied approach to knowledge) is only possible if the difference of each worldview is also respected and can continue to evolve in its way too. Glissant reminds us that elements do not blend or lose themselves in order to be in relation; Massumi suggests that immediate relational lived-in sense experience is *amodal* — it is not *in* any of the different modes that it fuses together.

Relation fuses while differences endure

Massumi:

‘The point I did not bring out into relief enough is that in the immediacy of that between of different senses, the experience is not in one sense mode or another. It is not strictly speaking cross-modal. It is amodal. The relational pole of sense experience is amodal. Live abstraction, lived in-most, is an immediacy of amodal living.’ (74)

Glissant:

‘In relation, elements don’t blend just like that, don’t lose themselves just like that. Each element can keep its – I won’t just say its autonomy but also its essential quality, even as it accustoms itself to the essential qualities and differences of others.’ (63)

‘we’ve understood that we can’t understand everything and that there are things that remain within themselves.’ (63)

Jones & Jenkins:

‘the Other cannot be totally learned about, known, or understood by me. The relationship is necessarily much more oblique.’ (480)

Meyer:

‘It is impossible for our knowledge to be acultural.’ (Paraphrased in Wilson 91)

The whole thing only works in fact, because we have multiplicity. Distances to bridge. Cognitive dissonance says Paul Chaat Smith. Disparations to resolve, Simondon would say. All the sensitive negotiations between tapu and noa. The relief when a spell of separation and distance is broken... But that relief is not a collapse into laziness and homogenous blah; it is uplifted by and uplifts our simultaneous awareness of the enduring differences.

So before I make my last comments, let me quickly recap the thesis journey I've shared. I showed you at the start three images offering a shift from objectification to full self-sovereign subjectivity expressing itself. These images echoed with the forceful singularity I wanted for each of the multiplying voices within my thesis text (my hope that, despite their placement within a highly conventionalised normative discourse, the autonomy of each voice was preserved). I touched on my hope that (as in the images) the dominant discursive mode could be subverted by the other voices' presence, rendered uncertain, open to change and interface and intersubjectivity. And I hoped to arrive at a place of not just intersubjectivity but affective communality through this staging or performing of a participatory experience (for myself and for my readers). But the undoing cannot happen only through those puncturings, those ingressions of voices from virtual realms. I need the dominant, over-thinking, authority voice to realise it is its own worst enemy, too, and to willingly, *joyfully* embrace a strategy of unknowing itself, embracing uncertainty and multiplicity (or what we might variously call living in relation to the hyphen, in relation to the opacity of others, in relation to the mystery, in relation to the movement of virtuality, or in relation to the world of becoming, Te Pō)...

The culturally diverse views that align on my picture (focusing only on the ones I've read post-PhD) combine: a space of *not* knowing Others and relating to our own not-knowing — thus better knowing ourselves (Jones & Jenkins), with a sense of being multiple and having multiple truths (Taliaferro, Glissant, Meyer), with a positive cognitive dissonance (Chaat Smith), with embodied knowing (Meyer), with non-textual knowing (Conquergood), with reparative knowing (and ameliorating and giving pleasure) (Sedgwick), with an economy of affection (Henare) *and* with performative intersubjectivity (Turner)... (And all of these views work together to resist paranoid knowing (Sedgwick), one-belief epistemologies (Meyer), economies of exploitation (Henare) and cognitive dominance (Turner).) I mention the performative turn of Turner last in the list because this links us to my concluding concerns, which are about the *how*.

In alignment

Jones & Jenkins:

'[A]n orientation to the hyphen [rather than to the Other] invites colonizer peoples to seek to know ourselves in the relationship with Others, to locate ourselves in the "between."' (482)

Glissant:

'you can be with the Other, you can change with the Other while being yourself, you are not one, you are multiple, and you are yourself. You are not lost because you are multiple. You are not broken apart because you are multiple...' (61)

Conquergood:

'the vast realm of human knowledge and meaningful action that is unlettered' (147, qtd. in Magnat 32)

Sedgwick:

'paranoid knowing (in which "exposure in and of itself is assigned a crucial operative power") [is juxtaposed] with reparative knowing, which is driven by the desire to ameliorate or give pleasure.' (Paraphrased in Kester n.p.)

'the many ways selves and communities succeed in extracting sustenance from the objects of a culture – even of a culture whose avowed desire has often been not to sustain them' (150-1)

Henare:

‘[the koru of Māori ethics:] a cosmic, religious world-view and its philosophy, from which can be identified an economy of affection [rather than an economy of exploitation]. . .’ (paraphrased in Henry & Pene 236)

Somé

‘things stay alive proportionally to how much silence there is around them. Meaning does not need words to exist. . . meaning does not have a body. . .’ (258)

‘Questions are the mind’s way of trying to destroy a mystery. The mind of the village elder has become accustomed to living with questions while his heart dances with the “answer”.’ (264)

THE HOW IN HOUSING: TECHNIQUES, PRACTICES, PROTOCOLS, KAWA, CEREMONIES

In this quest for harmonious housing, we have to come around, away from the conceptualising, back to practice. *How* to enact or provoke the move I am talking about from cognitive knowing to embodied knowing? If it is to be more than just chaotic rupture, if it is to be meaningful and lasting, it needs carefully and caringly devised protocols (or in the philosophical vocabulary of Massumi and Erin Manning, techniques). In a very rich conversation recently at Massey with Te Huirangi Waikarepuru and some of my Māori colleagues, we arrived at a deep understanding of the context-dependent fluidity of tikanga; the way tikanga hold and guide us in what is right — but also are complexly adaptable to the needs of a situation (though not randomly of course and not by anyone). This question of how to dwell together is in a way a quest for shared, nuanced, sensitively adaptable practices — practices designed to regularly bring us into embodied respectful connection with each other. (I love the word practice because it includes everything from art to physical exercise to high ceremony.) Yes, for Massumi, the practice is art. Although he clearly stresses that we are resolving differences into embodied knowings constantly (at the perceptual level), he then says that art (some art, at least) draws that out, invites our attention to dwell on it. In indigenous traditions meanwhile ceremony is one of the main practices for generating communal embodied experience.

I have described the range of methodological practices I needed to develop to accommodate different peoples in the ‘home’ my thesis was building — and how those practices had to constantly evolve to make space for the kōrero of my manuhiri and to remove the tapu from them (or in some instances, preserve it). By listening out for and responding to the many tupuna voices coming through, speaking to me through artworks and texts and life, I was trying to enact a practice of respect, reparation, affection. . . learning to protect those voices, maintain their truths, but also run them through my own life as a way of updating them and me, adjusting my ways of knowing in order to keep them alive just as they keep me alive. In Massumi’s sense I was seeking techniques to help me see (and expand) how I was seeing until my overall knowing undid itself and shifted gear. Of course I am still working on those techniques, evolving that methodology, refining my protocols — as fresh cobwebs appear in the corners, further kēhua need farewelling, new manuhiri show up and the housekeeping carries on.

In Shawn Wilson’s sense, that thesis was my ceremony — but here I use this term advisedly and somewhat generically, since thesis research constitutes a pretty protracted, attenuated, interpolated, ad-hoc and self-serving ceremony compared with the formalised, communal, live and spiritually or cosmologically grounded ceremonial practices that exist within te ao Māori and other indigenous cultures.

Wilson on ceremony

‘[A ceremony] is the knowing and respectful reinforcement that all things are related and connected. It is the voice from our ancestors that tell us when it is right and when it is not. Indigenous research is a life changing ceremony.’ (61)

‘In an indigenous ontology there may be multiple realities... rather than the truth being something that is “out there” or external, reality is in the relationship that one has with the truth.’ (73)

‘We separate the secular from the spiritual, research and academia from everyday life... We need to recognise the inherent spirituality, as well as the everyday applicability, in our research.’ (137)

‘The purpose of any ceremony is to build stronger relationships or bridge the distance between our cosmos and us. The research that we do as Indigenous people is a ceremony that allows us a raised level of consciousness and insight into our world.’ (137)

Ceremonies are refined, staged communal practices for bringing people together and breaking down distances between them; whereas of course ‘my’ ceremony has so far primarily benefitted ‘me’ the writer, not the ‘us’ that got folded in (be they the literal whanaunga and tupuna I reached out to during that time, or the metaphorical whanaunga and tupuna cited in my bibliography). Only I really can attest to the sacred experience I underwent through that process of moving, via my own more or less elaborate methodologies, from atomised cognitive knowing to a more embodied knowing — though I *do attest* to that. All up it was pretty transformational for me (especially if you count the stuff that happened *outside* of my thesis *because* of my thesis).

Basically, as with the kinds of ‘interactive’ or ‘relational’ art experience Massumi discusses, the transformations offered in writing are mostly serial and individualised — now your turn, now your turn... Not the same thing as synchronous communal experience. There’s still a big difference between a complex shared protocol for communion, grounded in shared metaphysics, and an optional aesthetic experience (even a collaborative, participatory one) offered in the hope of opening a few people up to some embodied and affective knowing. So if I have made a case in this paper for some resonances between these different performative, embodied, practised experiences, I guess it is because I would like us to think those resonant potentials through even further. To, through this thinking, evolve a more nuanced ecology of communal affect — in which embodied experience (with all its virtual repercussions) is not just something we shockingly ‘crash’ or ‘fall’ into (the modes of transport seemingly privileged by the Western 20th century counterculture, from Bataille to drugs and hippies) but something we gracefully activate at the right moments. And to deeply consider, assuming we have some agency in this, the protocols and techniques by which we might activate, navigate and negotiate such an ecology.

In the images I started with, I described the singular force of the wairua that makes itself at home even in dusty old image systems designed to classify and hierarchicise and separate people. Throughout this paper I have wondered about the give and take between that force and its framing by institutional formats, be it portrait photograph, doctoral thesis or educational institute, and sought to describe techniques and protocols that enable multiple intersubjective voices and embodied knowing to arise. I would very much like to think that if this can happen in images it can happen in institutions too. And on that note, I would like to finish with one more image that loops back to my starting point — an image taking us beyond the artwork itself.

At the Te Whare Hēra artists’ residency site in Wellington recently, Massey University’s then artist-in-residence Sasha Huber (of the somatological triptych [see Fig. 2]), her partner Petri Saarikko and their son Basil had a farewell. During that occasion, in a small formal moment, Sasha gifted her silver staple-gun portrait of two huia [Fig. 4] to local Te Ātiawa artist Ihaia Puketapu to take home to Waiwhetu marae, as she felt it should stay on this land. Ihaia in turn presented some taonga, a sperm whale bone heru made by Ihaia for his wife and gifted from her to Sasha, and two pounamu from his grandmother for Petri and Basil. Two economies exchanging in the cultural

interface, in a zone of indiscernibility. Artwork become taonga. Taonga become artworks. Drifted, perhaps, yet resolutely carrying their mauri with them into new realms.

It is an image of heterogeneous lifestreams held together in a moment's resonance. It works because the European manuhiri (though as mentioned Sasha has Haitian whakapapa too) started from a place of *unknowing* the dominant paradigm they carry with them — by gifting something that *could* have been sold on the global market or at least entered into the gallery system. Instead, it enters a Māori paradigm, and starts accruing *kōrero*... Other values surface too: *utu*, *kaitiakitanga*... The *huia* will stay in Aotearoa, they will survive. Images are not just images, they can carry *mauri*, *wairua*, *mana*, *ihi*, *wana*. In the moment of the exchange the visitors embody these knowings *just* a little and — perhaps — see more than they saw before. *Ihaia's* taonga can flow over. There are tears, and for a moment the distance between all of us present is broken. Of course once the *kōrero* starts the understandings may fail. The full resonance of that gift may be lost on many — but it is not lost. And it might just have been a moment's reparative knowing, a moment of ceremonial encounter kindling the affection between us, a moment's practice at joint housekeeping. A moment's understanding that, as the *whakatauki* goes, *He waka eke noa*. We are all in this boat together.



4. Sasha Huber, *God Save the Huia*, 2015. Metal staples on fire burned wood. 80x100 cm. Courtesy of the artist.

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MOANANUI CURATORIAL RESURGENCE

Léuli Eshraghi

Tēnā koutou katoa kua huihui mai nei i tēnei rā.

Ko Vaea te māunga

Ko Loimata o Apaula te awa

Ko Hāmoa me Perekāni ōku iwi

Ko Seumanutafa tōku hapū

Nō Papauta me Najafābād ahau

Ko Léuli Māzyār Luna'i Eshrāghi tōku ingoa.

I live in Wurundjeri country near the banks of the Merri yaluk that joins the Birrarung yaluk in central Narm Melbourne. Sepās gozāram Bunjil, Waa va ādamā-ye Kulin: I offer fa'amalama votives of gratitude to the creators Bunjil and Waa, and to all Kulin and First Nations peoples for their generous hospitality in community life and on sacred country. Far from transnational Sāmoan and Persian communities for many years of my life, my artistic and curatorial practice is not about claiming identity. Through my work, I hope to contribute to grounding complexity, diversity and alterity, and contesting the structures, representations and discourses of contemporary settler colonial Australia. As a multilingual, multiethnic cisgender queer person with strong cultural practices, I navigate my position in the British Empire's ongoing genocide, Anglo-Celtic ethnocentrism and heteropatriarchal violence over the integrity of 500 sovereign First Nations.



Léuli Eshraghi, *Merri Yaluk (Wilam)*, 2015. Type C print on Kodak Lustre paper. Image courtesy of the artist.

In this text I set out to explore my current research on decolonising, indigenising, and queering presentation and discourse around Indigenous art practices. My priorities lie in the resurgence of Indigenous languages, spatialities, temporalities and body sovereignties. My current Curatorial Practice PhD research at Monash Art Design and Architecture in Narm Melbourne will take me to 2017, and has already expanded from focusing solely on Australia to include Aotearoa and further afield. My curatorial work has developed out of a need to trouble and decolonise the dynamics of dominant representations and knowledge frameworks in the Australian cultural landscape. This followed work in Moananui and Francophone literary studies, French-English translation and interpreting, diverse arts management roles, and research on Measina sacred treasures collections.

In the settler colonial context of Australia, the invisibility of representation and agency of diverse Indigenous peoples from the Moananui, Africa and the Americas is part of ongoing colonial discourses and practices. Last year, Melbourne Museum and Australian Museum were hiring for two rare curatorial roles working on Moananui material culture. The new Australian Museum role went to a Māori artist-curator colleague with extensive community connections, while the first Melbourne Museum role in five years went to an Anglo-Australian anthropologist with no existing community relationships. This was echoed in the appointment of an Anglo-Australian anthropologist to the Southeastern Aboriginal Australian curatorial role at Melbourne Museum. Qualified, talented and community-engaged candidates from Moananui backgrounds were mostly not interviewed. It all appeared a bit of a closed shop.

Wardandi curator Clothilde Bullen, until recently curator of Indigenous Art at the Art Gallery of Western Australia, further believes Australian art institutions need genuine succession planning before we can see Indigenous agency embedded in their values, structure and programming. In 'A Call to Arms' in the *Blak Wave* publication, she brings her clear assessment of the sector to bear: "Still, central to the tradition of Indigenous succession planning is the idea that ownership of knowledge is privileged, and that the ownership brings responsibility and an innate degree of advocacy that is required for cultural continuity."¹ Clothilde equates this condition with a platform for First Nations economic, political and cultural sustainability. The structures of museums, these cultural institutions of empire, and their reform in the favour of Indigenous peoples, is vitally important to understanding and negotiating local Moananui and global First Nations curatorial practice.

In June this year, I wrote in *Overland* journal about the link between the dispossessions of First Nations peoples from their homelands in so-called 'remote' regions of Australia, and the ongoing lack of Aboriginal, Zenadh-Kes/Torres Strait and broader Moananui presence and agency at Australia's largest art museum. The National Gallery of Victoria has not employed a single First Nations Australian curator in five years, and the art practices of the Americas, Africa and the Moananui are relegated to subsets of the Indigenous art department staffed by an accomplished Anglo-Australian curator and a hard-working, committed Bougainvillean curator.² Beyond the specifics of each person's background, the structural lack of Moananui and broader First Nations curatorial, artistic and intellectual voices in this and other Australian visual cultural spaces is unacceptable. A number of state and territory institutions no longer have designated Aboriginal and Zenadh-Kes/Torres Strait curatorial roles, and very few for the art practices of the Americas, Africa, Asia and the Moananui.

First Nations voices as curators and artists, and presences as communities are not only underrepresented in the apparatus of cultural production and presentation in Australia and elsewhere, they are continuously undermined by the colonial structures of the non-profit and public art museums and galleries. Yorta Yorta curator Kimberley Moulton, of the Bunjilaka Aboriginal Cultural Centre at Melbourne Museum, is currently undertaking a National Gallery of Australia-Wesfarmers Indigenous Curatorial Fellowship at the Kluge-Ruhe Aboriginal Art Collection at the University of Virginia. In 'Indigenous Curators: Contextualising Culture, Creating Conversations' in the *Blak*

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- 1 Clothilde Bullen, 'A Call to Arms', *Blak Wave*, Tahjee Moar and Emily Sexton (eds.), (Narm Melbourne: Next Wave Festival, 2014), 42.
 - 2 Judith Ryan is Senior Curator, Indigenous Art, and Aunty Sana Balai is Assistant Curator, Indigenous Art with a focus on Art of the Pacific, at the National Gallery of Victoria. Aunty Sana Balai belongs to the Hakö people of Bougainville.

Wave publication, she asserts: “The problem is that Indigenous people are missing from positions within the major institutions and regional galleries, and they are the primary facilitators of this dialogue [around Indigenous arts practices]. [...] The number of Indigenous people in leadership roles within the industry is completely inadequate and this contributes to what is often absent — our voice.”³ Why am I focusing on art museum and gallery structures? As key stakeholders and cultural producers, local and global First Nations communities are pivotal to exhibition and discursive projects being able to mean anything significant at all in European-based visual cultural spaces.

Languages are extremely important to my work and life. I apply the term Indigenous interchangeably with First Nations to the local and global contexts. I define decolonisation in the ‘Australian’ context as the end of intersectional colonial oppressions such as hetero-patriarchy, sexism, capitalism, Eurocentric knowledge systems and race-based hierarchy. The fluid zone known as Te Moananui a Kiwa in Aotearoa Māori, Te Moananuiakiva in Rarotonga Māori, and Ka Moananuiākea in ‘Ōlelo Hawai’i, amongst many other names, is the grounding point for my work on local and international First Nations art practices. I imperfectly apply the concept of Moananui as a signifier to all Indigenous peoples in this region, and not only the peoples associated with ‘Australia’ and ‘the Pacific’. I’m interested in challenging how we compartmentalise our First Nations sovereign visual cultural practices through settler colonial states like ‘Australia’. I prefer multiple terms to the colonially imposed singularity of ‘Pacific’ and partially indigenised ‘Pasifik/a’ as the Indigenous language terms can include and transpose peoples, territories and practices from Maluku, West Papua, Lutruwita and Timor-Leste to Kaho’olawe, Rapa Nui, Rekohu and Pora Pora. This is not adversarial against migrant Chinese, Indian, European and other peoples at home in the region, but a desire to contribute to First Nations’ resurgence. In time, I hope to learn equivalent concepts in close friends’ languages Kuanua, Hakō, Boon Wurrung, Motu, Caac, Gunai, and Quandamooka.

Tā mana a tagata moni ma sipa ‘o vā tapu ma noa ‘o le faiva ‘o valiata ile Moananui ma le ao ‘atoa⁴ as a PhD research project is inspired by *Indigenising Curatorial Practice*, a seminal essay by Yamatji curator and University of Sydney art history lecturer Stephen Gilchrist. He reflects on contemporary curatorial challenges and opportunities around and for Indigenous art practices.⁵ Only the third Indigenous Australian curator of Indigenous art (2005-10) at the National Gallery of Victoria, Gilchrist has worked in various capacities in Australia and Turtle Island North America.⁶ His text interprets “the incremental acceptance of Indigenous curatorial practices, [through which] Western paradigms of museology are being reconfigured and transformed”.⁷ Gilchrist enjoins curators of Indigenous art practices “to devise installations and exhibitions that interrogate [the] dominant interpretive binaries”, of temporality, ethnicity, discipline and intent.⁸ Significantly for my PhD research and projects, Gilchrist’s text and practice address interventionist curatorial practices of Indigenous resistance and survival in ethnographic and art museums, and contemporary art galleries.

3 Kimberley Moulton, Chantelle Woods and Tahjee Moar, ‘Indigenous Curators: Contextualising Culture, Creating Conversations’, *Blak Wave*, Tahjee Moar and Emily Sexton (eds.), (Narm Melbourne: Next Wave Festival, 2014), 68.

4 *To mark Indigenous and Queer mana in tapu and noa relational spaces of curatorial practice in the Moananui and all the world*. Sāmoan concepts: Vā: social relational spatiality ordering collective responsibilities between people, and between people and objects; Tā: to demarcate time/moments through beats, marks, lines; Mana: transferable, accrued socio-spiritual presence, power and energy; Tapu: sacred spatiality of restricted access; Noa: unrestricted spatiality of open access.

Reo Māori, Rarotonga Māori and Hawai’ian concept: *Moananui*: Te Moananui a Kiwa, Te Moananuiakiva or Ka Moananuiākea denote the great ocean linked to ancestor spirit Kiwa, Kiva or Wakea respectively. I prefer Moananui to prevalent terms Pacific, Islander, Pasifika, South Seas in order to most clearly align with millennial naming practices and the sea of islands theory developed by the late Epele Hau’ofa.

5 Stephen Gilchrist, ‘Indigenising curatorial practice’, *The world is not a foreign land*, Quentin Sprague (ed.), (Narm Melbourne: Ian Potter Museum of Art, University of Melbourne, 2014), 55-59.

6 See http://sydney.edu.au/arts/art_history/staff/profiles/stephen.gilchrist.php

7 *Ibid.*, 55.

8 *Ibid.*, 55.

Gilchrist offers a damning analysis of the two disciplines and their ineffectiveness in responding to Indigenous art practices' need to be 'valued differentially' to Western art.⁹ He goes on to situate the present moment in light of the imperfect reality of working within European-derived visual cultural institutions around the world with vastly different Indigenous civilisational approaches to aesthetics, languages, corporalities, temporalities and spatialities. "The decoupling of Indigenous art from the clutches of anthropological discourse that occurred in the 1980s [...] was widely seen as an emancipatory exercise. Art history — presumably innocent of primitivising overlays — was thought to be a superior and more flexible category in which to be situated. Of course the conceit of both disciplines is that they could never apprehend the totality of Indigenous knowledge, experience, or power, through any one methodology. By contrast, the generative value of curatorial practice is that it is intentionally multidisciplinary; it does not and should not align to one single framework."¹⁰ As such, I centre my approach to understanding what Moananui art and curatorial practices are, and could be, through the epistemological, ontological and linguistic prisms of Sāmoan and broader Moananui theorists and practitioners. I look to ground my work at the intersection of local and global Indigenous art practices in relation to decolonisation, postcolonialism, queer and feminist theories of the body, spiritualities and lands and waters-based histories.

Sāmoan spatial theorist and architect Lealiifano Albert Refiti's important text 'Whiteness, Smoothing and the Origin of Sāmoan Architecture' has also been fundamental to my research.¹¹ In discussing the concept of measina, treasured persons and things, Refiti notes that before European arrival en masse in the Moananui a Kiwa, measina were solely understood as links to the aesthetic and political origin of light and whiteness in social relational spaces provided by aitu ancestor spirits and atua gods.¹² Equivalent terms are taonga in Aotearoa Māori and bilas in Papua New Guinean Tok Pisin. If Moananui curatorial practices can organise social relational spaces of interaction around measina, bilas and taonga then and now, then Refiti provides an informed understanding of making and curating art practice through the prism of making the social and material environment. He signals that "the making of space, by extension, was oriented towards the production of things that were white, smooth and open, because these were to be placed before the circle of the fa'amatai [Elders and leaders in falefono meeting houses], towards the ancestors. Teu was also an obligation to perform the rite of clearing, making order from the materiality of the world; to perform is to teu in readiness, and in readiness something is stored up, which is the other meaning of teu: storing and saving. Architecture has to perform, or teu, the co-openness of the vā."¹³ Moananui art and curatorial practices are then the ordering of bodies and interests in social relational spaces, in dialogue with languages, aesthetics, and histories, through assembled or inferred artists, curators, orators, bodies of work, or groupings of ancestors.

Refiti's assertions correspond with Gilchrist's position on contemporary Indigenous curatorial practices that gesture toward participatory and relational experiences of culture. Gilchrist notes that "The role of the Indigenous curator is to ensure that objects are not only cared for materially, but are culturally and spiritually reconstituted."¹⁴ Not content with Eurocentric models of curating objects and creating visitor experiences, many¹⁵ have contributed significantly to reconstituting the material and performative dimensions to contemporary art practice by Moananui peoples in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand. I agree with Gilchrist's identification that "there are curatorial-like practices

9 *Ibid.*, 58.

10 Gilchrist, 2014, 58.

11 Lealiifano Albert Refiti, 'Whiteness, Smoothing and the Origin of Sāmoan Architecture', *Interstices Journal of Architecture and Related Arts*, 10 (2009), online, retrieved from interstices.ac.nz/previousfiles/INT10_Refiti.pdf, 15. Whiteness here refers to a desired coloured texture in 'ie fala, 'ie toga and 'ie sina pandanus fine mats, or other forms of Sāmoan aesthetics, and not to ethnicity.

12 *Ibid.*, 15.

13 Refiti, 2009, 14.

14 Gilchrist, 2014, 55.

15 Including but not limited to Tess Allas, Aunty Sana Balai, Nigel Borell, Eric Bridgeman, Clothilde Bullen, Tanu Gago, Stephen Gilchrist, Ioana Gordon-Smith, Genevieve Greaves, Dale Harding, Lisa Hilli, Taloi Havini, Yuki Kihara, Lana Lopesi, Kirsten Lyttle, Kolokesa Māhina-Tuai, Sean Mallon, Ngahiraka Mason, Ruth McDougall, Imelda Miller, Kimberley Moulton, Fulimalo Pereira, Lisa Reihana, Greg Semu, Salote Tawale, Latai Taumoepeau, Ema Tavola, Angela Tiatia, and Michel Tuffery.

that exist within Indigenous cultures. The reverence of and care for sacred objects is but one expression.”¹⁶ The lāuga customised oratory recitations of site-based genealogies and movements are another form that is cared for and understood to incorporate countless possibilities and divergences in Sāmoan art practice.

And yet, the educative role of the Indigenous curator is still a given for Gilchrist, stating that they are responsible for naturalising “the idea that Indigenous galleries are spaces *of* Indigeneity and not only *for* Indigeneity.”¹⁷ In the context of global First Nations’ art practices present in art museums and galleries, the demographic reality points to the necessity of addressing the non-Indigenous public through educative exhibitions and public programming in the vast majority of sites. Exceptions would be towns and cities of large local and diasporic or displaced Indigenous peoples such as Garrmalang Darwin, Mbantua/Mparntwe Alice Springs, Manukau South Auckland, to cite a few locales.

What does it mean to naturalise the conception of Indigenous art exhibitions as spaces *of* and *for* Indigeneity? In the archipelagic and larger lands contexts of Moananui peoples, these questions remain fruitful and poignant depending on the local demographic and socio-political environment.¹⁸ In the context of my projects, this provides for dynamic research and consultation with contemporary art professionals and community members. Fundamentally, what can decolonisation mean when living and working within European-based visual cultural frameworks grafted onto unceded yet occupied First Nations territories across the Australian settler colonial state? How could European diasporic architectures of the art space be expanded to incorporate local Moananui architectures of art in social relational spaces? What could realisations of Moananui concepts for sexual, spiritual, and aesthetic ecologies look/sound/feel like? What could a multilingual First Nations exhibition look/sound/feel like?

To understand these questions and seek to locate responses, I have looked at Gilchrist’s descriptions of First Nations social practices around aesthetics, and aspirations for future multivocal curatorial practice, with Refiti’s theorisation of Moananui art after *Bottled Ocean*. Curated by Rarotonga Māori curator Jim Vivieaere at City Gallery Wellington in 1994, the landmark exhibition *Bottled Ocean* rendered the art gallery context noa for Moananui peoples by lifting the attendant tapu in Aotearoa New Zealand. I plan to look in depth at the similar process for Aotearoa Māori art practices, especially painting and carving, several generations earlier. My understanding is that similar work was undertaken in Warrang Sydney, Meanjin Brisbane and Narm Melbourne at ethnographic museums and social practice-based Moananui art exhibitions and festivals in the late 1990s and early 2000s, roughly 15 years after similar strong steps for local First Nations practices.¹⁹ In contrast to the Waitangi Treaty and Tribunal context here, all art and work practice in unceded sovereign First Nations territories across the settler colonial entity ‘Australia’ cannot possibly be noa, unrestricted, for there has been no moments of treaty and understanding for tapu, sacred limitations, to be lifted and mana, cumulative energy and presence, to be framed within Indigenous hospitality in allowing ‘guests’ on country.

Gilchrist makes clear the holistic approach in local and global First Nations cultural practices: “Indigenous art has always served a community function; it was never viewed as something separate from life itself. However, Indigenous people are largely absent from visitation figures to art galleries, a fact that suggests there is a dire need to remove the elite Western bias from these institutions to create culturally resonant spaces that cater more successfully for multi-ethnic audiences.”²⁰ His indictment of the colonial-era institutions for culture that contemporary society has inherited in Australia is pertinent for the Aotearoa New Zealand, Kanaky New Caledonia and Turtle Island North America

16 Gilchrist, 2014, 56.

17 Gilchrist, 2014, 56.

18 I’m referring here to the stark differences in demarcating Indigenous spaces in majority Moananui populated territories and countries such as Vanuatu or Palau, and minority Moananui and majority settler migrant populated territories such as Kanaky New Caledonia, Hawai’i Nei, Aotearoa New Zealand, Australia, Chile, Argentina, the United States, and Canada.

19 See my recent essay focusing on archipelagic Moananui art practices: ‘We are born of the fanua: Moananui arts practice in Australia’, *Artlink Indigenous: Global*, Issue 35:2, June 2015, Warrang Sydney, 60-65.

20 Gilchrist, 2014, 56.

contexts also. The prevalent urban legend of terminology around art practice not existing in Indigenous languages is another form of adaptive colonial usurpation. Measina is an appropriately useful and used Sāmoan concept in the archipelago and in the diaspora, and other similar Moananui concepts abound, awaiting their application in the contemporary art context. I focus on the potential formal transformation of European-based institutions, as these will have a large impact interculturally, though I am fully aware of the significant work and healthy status quo amongst diverse Indigenous institutions of cultural learning and presentation as well.

How have we done this in the past? Following Refiti, contemporary Moananui art and curatorial practice in Aotearoa New Zealand has descended from the genealogical ancestor event where tapu was lifted: “This is what *Bottled Ocean* accomplished: the show transgressed the inaccessible boundaries of mainstream New Zealand art, made the place noa safe and common for Pacific artists to enter and participate.”²¹ The tapu and noa ordering of vā social relational spaces connected to aitu ancestor spirits and atua gods, is clear within Moananui art practice up to the Gregorian 20th century. It “was a way to harness the mana and potency of the divine, the ancestor, the unknown and the foreign, in an attempt to tame it and store it up in the work. Noa untangles the potency of the work using ritual and prayer, and often ‘trickery’ was employed to pacify the mana and make it safely available to us.”²² Contemporary curatorial and artistic strategies of subversion, play, contention and resistance could be encouraged in changing and generating healthy Moananui cultural practices.

I see Refiti’s understanding of art museums and galleries being made noa for Moananui practitioners to enter, but also that this is not at all dependent on the decolonisation or Indigenisation of these important European-based spaces of visual culture. Gilchrist, in his essay and curatorial practice with living artists in Australia and Turtle Island North America, amongst many others, leads the sector towards urgently asserting and practicing decolonisation and Indigenous self-determination. It is necessary, and potentially healing for societies where the foundational violence and trauma of colonisation continues to wound all within. Gilchrist positions First Nations peoples as the rightful authors of their representations: “Not content with being disenfranchised from their own material culture, Indigenous people have made their way into art museums and galleries, taking symbolic and actual possession of the objects themselves and the social practices that accompany them.”²³ This has not entirely come to pass for local and global First Nations art practices in Australia or across the Moananui a Kiwa, as anthropologists and social scientists, overwhelmingly drawn from European settler peoples, continue to control the discourses and valuations conferred. It is not a requirement to maintain strong working relationships grounded in Moananui social relations with communities, though I would argue it is a rising trend that proves the worth of such visual cultural and theoretical work.

Gilchrist’s proposition for cross-cultural experiences within spaces *of* and *for* Indigeneity provides a self-determined basis for differential approaches to understanding, framing and curating contemporary local and global First Nations art practice. I see his territorialisation of Indigenous difference and complexity as inclusive of myriad linguistic/textual, temporal/spatial and sensorial/experiential configurations: “Creating more thematic and comparative installations that cross linguistic, cultural and geographic boundaries can help to recalibrate pedagogical takeaways from the racial to the conceptual and perhaps even to the aesthetic.”²⁴ The recurrent use of the universalising ethnic ‘Pacific’, ‘Polynesian’, ‘Melanesian’ and ‘Micronesian’ monikers is clearly an advantage and a disadvantage, depending on the audience and the framework. Seeking to position Moananui practice by underplaying the essentialist labels and stereotypical belonging given to an individual art practice could go a long way in addressing some of these tensions. Though the choice of ‘non-ethnicity’ appears to apply primarily to Anglo-Celtic or ‘passing’ artists and their practices on a purely generalised view.

21 Lealiifano Albert Refiti, ‘Building the House of *Noa Noa* and *Lave Lave*: a possible theory of Pacific art’, Ron Brownson, Kolokesa Māhina-Tuai, Lealiifano Albert Refiti, Ema Tavola, Nina Tonga (eds.), *Home AKL: Artists of Pacific Heritage in Auckland* (Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland: Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, 2012), 11.

22 Refiti, 2012, 11.

23 Gilchrist, 2014, 59.

24 Ibid., 57.

As I mentioned above, I've chosen particular First Nations language concepts that I feel comfortable using relationally in my practice. As Refiti noted above, Gilchrist also provides an impassioned argument for the creation of new repertoires of Indigenous concepts as they come into curating and artmaking. "Foregrounding aesthetic encounters with Indigenous works of art with localised concepts can awaken people to the beauty of the world and Indigenous peoples' responsiveness to it. It would be reductive and absolutist to continue to use Western art historical terms rather than seek a new linguistic repertory that can speak to the complexities Indigenous art presents."²⁵ At the fruitful boundary zone between different epistemological, linguistic and ontological frameworks, my curatorial work is connected to that of my local and global First Nations hetero and queer peers who seek to undo colonial and neo-colonial representational and interpretive modes.

Sāmoan writer and curator Lana Lopesi recently wrote an important comparative analysis titled 'Decolonisation Frameworks: Indigenous Curatorial Practice', comparing the impact on Indigenous artists of the textual and spatial approaches of Stephen Gilchrist, Kolokesa Māhina-Tuai and Manuēsina 'Ofa-Ki-Hautolo Māhina, Lucreccia Quintanilla and myself.²⁶ "We live in a time where our global communications are mainly controlled through key colonial — now hegemonic — languages and cultural prisms of English, French, Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch, Arabic, Russian and Chinese. When Indigenous artists use these (and notably English) in this part of the world, it only reaffirms what we know as being other to who we are. Language determines how we express ourselves, learn, and come to place ourselves in the world."²⁷ Lopesi dissects the current reception of Indigenous art practices, calling for their multilingual assertion within Indigenous knowledge paradigms in these terms: "In a way, Indigenous practice requires far more resources to receive an authentic understanding of practice. We need to produce multilingual interpretations, overcome cultural barriers and educate, as well as appreciate. What this does though is establish laborious frameworks before the audience has even laid eyes on the artwork. This experience of viewing furthers the us-them dichotomy by marginalising the work as 'Indigenous Practice'; instead what these practices deserve is an equal treatment with an understanding of Indigenous epistemologies and philosophies. This can happen through the decolonisation of language."²⁸ Importantly for my considerations of languages and their nuanced value in representation and destabilisation within the art gallery context, Lopesi is adamant on what is ahead.

Joining Gilchrist and Refiti, Lopesi argues that beyond developing new representational or interpretive models, the curatorial expression of protest, of sexual and spiritual difference, of diverse local and global Indigenous experiences, through aesthetics is a fine outcome indeed. To Lopesi, the practices of Māhina-Tuai, Māhina, Gilchrist, Quintanilla and myself "have become a mode of cultural activism, not necessarily by breaking new ground but by exploring the social practices of our Indigenous communities. Of course, there are many ways to make art in the world and there are thousands of different art histories, yet the dominant lexicon of art seems to fit only one of these interpretations. Indigenous cultures have been exhibiting, curating and making for thousands of years. Today, in a multicultural society with engrained notions of class and race hierarchies, the underlying question is how we maintain the integrity and multiplicity of all art."²⁹

Lopesi's view of Moananui curators' projects being relevant and important for the wider art world is a sign of the globalised interconnectedness and concurrent emphasis on complex locality that exists today. This is also a return to the applicability of Gilchrist's new repertoires of Indigenous concepts, as working with peer artists, curators, writers and Elders is a matter of course for Moananui artists and curators. To Gilchrist, "curators of Indigenous art should aspire to create detailed localised art histories that have been co-authored with community members

25 Gilchrist, 2014, 58.

26 Lana Lopesi, 'Decolonisation Frameworks: Indigenous Curatorial Practice', *Runway - Outside*, 1 (27), 2015, online, retrieved from runway.org.au/decolonisation-frameworks-indigenous-curatorial-practice/.

27 *Ibid.*, np.

28 *Ibid.*, np

29 *Ibid.*, np.

to tease out cultural significations in ways that resist interpretive banalities and help facilitate a new critical language. [...] Indigenous art doesn't have to borrow from Western iconographies but its semantic description borrows from the vocabulary of art history, often with disappointing results."³⁰ It is now that we are writing, making and curating the new repertoires.

What forms could decolonial Moananui curatorial resistances take?³¹ Myriad — to'a tele! In Taumafa-mua Whiringa-ā-rangi November this year, the first curatorial project within my PhD, *Vai Niu Wai Niu Coconut Water* will open at Caboolture Regional Art Gallery in Gubbi Gubbi country. It will apply my current thinking around Indigenising and decolonising the European-based art gallery context, primarily through Moananui languages. The exhibition engages contested sites of movement and memory spanning shifting lands and waters right across the Moananui a Kiwa. Contemporary work in still and moving image, sculpture, print and performance address the thirteen artists'³² concerns, including indigeneity, displacement, blackbirding, slavery, plantation colonisation, militarism, ecological shift, memory, healing, and cultural renewal. The works range from 500 sugarcane and epoxy resin skulls to video performance works, from Killing Kuki aloha shirts to raranga woven archival photographs in a customary colour palette. The starting point for this project is the disconnection between the hipster beverage, plantation colonisation, and continuing sacred practices across the Moananui, centred on the young coconut.

Vai Niu Wai Niu Coconut Water will be the first exhibition project in Australia conceived as trilingual Sāmoan-Māori-English, responding to Māori and Sāmoan being the most common community languages after English locally, and creating didactic, catalogue and promotional resources in line with this audience. As someone who grew up in nearby Bundjalung and Yugambah countries, my lived experience attests to the only nuanced representations of Sāmoan and Māori visual cultural practices, and languages, being in the Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art at the Gallery of Modern Art in Meanjin Brisbane. It is important that I at least test our collective capacity in community-focussed art museums and galleries to devise exhibitions, writing and public programming for, and reflective of, the local context. It is unfortunately not possible for me to work with Gubbi Gubbi Elders and linguists to ground the project in the local First Nations' worldview, as theirs is a language practice being revived within the community at this stage.

The English language catalogue and didactic texts will go through an approval process with the marketing department of the Moreton Bay Regional Council this month, but more license for unencumbered Indigenous voices can come in the Sāmoan and Māori language versions. I will be working with two experienced translators to ensure that their voices as consumers and producers of cultural practices can come through in the translations, in addition to mine. Architecturally and financially, I don't have huge scope to adapt the European-based gallery space. I will be including ipe and 'ie fala pandanus mats in the two larger open spaces of the exhibition layout. These will be used for able-bodied participants in the public programming over the dry season, and will contribute to Moananui inflections in the exhibition design. I intend for the open spaces of Sāmoan falefono meeting houses to be echoed in *Vai Niu Wai Niu Coconut Water*, as the installations of 'ie toga fine mats and 'ie fala pandanus mats achieved at Carriageworks in the recent *Siamani Sāmoa*³³ performance work by Michel Tuffery and the Royal Sāmoa Police Band. The recent *Ganybu* exhibition³⁴ of larrakitj hollow log and painted barks by Djapu artist Marrnyula Mununggurr, curated by Anglo-Australian writer and curator Helen Hughes at Gertrude Contemporary, is another example of simple yet effective strategies to frame the work within 'culturally resonant' spaces.

30 Gilchrist, 2014, 58.

31 I have deliberately relied on art texts to ground my discussion in the reality of my craft in this paper, rather than expanding into academic research-based argumentation through important texts by Linda Tuhiwai Smith, Qwo-Li Driskill and others.

32 Torika Bolatagici, Eric Bridgeman, Stevie Fieldsend, Chantal Fraser, Taloi Havini, Lisa Hilli, Cecilia Kavara Verran, Kirsten Lyttle, Salote Tawale, Latai Taumoepeau, Angela Tiatia, Jasmine Togo-Brisby, James Tylor.

33 See <http://www.carriageworks.com.au/?page=Event&event=SIAMANI-SAMOA>

34 See <http://www.gertrude.org.au/exhibitions/gallery-11/past-14/marrnyula-mununggurr-1597.phps>

In Au-nunu Haratua May next year, the second project within the PhD, currently titled *Ua numi le fau* will open at Gertrude Contemporary in Narm Melbourne. In developing this project, I am fortunate to learn with mentors from Gertrude Contemporary, curators Helen Hughes and Jacqueline Doughty, as part of the Next Wave Emerging Curators' Program as well as advisor, artist Tony Albert. In the context of few Moananui curators working in art museum and non-profit art spaces in Australia as I have discussed above, with many Aboriginal curators leaving positions to work independently, and very few from the archipelagos of the Moananui, I have sought mentorship amongst and beyond the local Indigenous and Anglo-Australian curatorial sector. Not necessarily considered 'curators', some of my mentors include artists, activists, and Elders from the Wurundjeri, Sāmoan, Yorta Yorta, Boon Wurrung and other peoples. They are teaching me valuable lessons in cultural protocols, politics and practices of our regions and beyond.

Ua numi le fau will assert local and international queer Indigenous histories, communities and practices in considering multiple futures. Through *vā*, the project will frame diverse diasporas, embodiments and material presences. Ten local and international First Nations artists have been selected based on practices that are grounded in Indigenous queer conceptions of bodies, sovereignties and resurgent ecologies. I maintain strong relationships with Kulin Nation Elders, artists, curators, and community members. The north central language, Woi Wurrung, is a revival language also. I'm hopeful that the translation from the English catalogue text original will assist in generating new resources and visibility for these important and sacred treasures, Woi Wurrung and Sāmoan. This is dependent on Wurundjeri Elders approving and leading the translations, and if adequate financial resources can be secured for the time and effort to be enabled. Articulating Indigenous complexity in three languages will be spread over the exhibition didactics and publication. Public talks by artists, recorded language versions of the catalogue essay, readings of significant queer Indigenous practitioners, and performances will further contextualise Indigenous sexual and spiritual complexities. The diverse Indigenous artists in this project live sexual, ethnic, spiritual and kinship practices that are not reducible in a straightforward way. This is also the case of the significant Indigenous, migrant and queer histories and practices of Fitzroy, Collingwood and Abbotsford neighbourhoods in Wurundjeri territory.

I am aware of the limitations to the linguistic and spatial framing that I can develop around diverse work in video, textile, photography and installation by local and global First Nations queer artists. I have started with the revised Sāmoan concept of *sipa* as an expansive, Indigenous term roughly equivalent to *takatāpui's* import in Aotearoa Māori and inclusive of non-gendered and gendered possibilities. I am seeking to contribute to the contemporaneity of the Sāmoan language and accompanying cultural practices, by finding a curatorial way out of the colonial and postcolonial oppressions of heteropatriarchy and gender in Sāmoan cultural practice. I take my lead here from significant Fa'afafine artists Yuki Kihara and Dan Taulapapa McMullin, in their large and nuanced output in discourse, art and performance. Taulapapa McMullin is unequivocal on pre-Christian millennial histories in his major essay 'Fa'afafine Notes: On Tagaloa, Jesus, and Nafanua': "...curse words had to do with the family, the collective body, about shaming one's family, being selfish, having no mana. [...] It would have been absurd in the old days to curse the other's sexual and gendered body."³⁵ In focusing on queer First Nations conceptions of collective and individual bodies, genealogies, sexualities and histories, I am seeking to contest the homonormative assimilationist discourses and practices which serve to marginalise the erotic, exotic Other of Anglo-Celtic LGBTI communities. Here, Indigenous Queer Theory and lived histories are paramount.

Architecturally, *'O Gafa Fa'asipa Queer Genealogies* may include neon lighting and low walls to counter habitual gallery layouts, inspired by the recent exhibition *Sanctuary: Tombs of the Outcasts* at the Ian Potter Museum of Art at the University of Melbourne, by established Wiradjuri artist and curator Brook Andrew. Where Andrew reflects and dissipates the residues of wars against global Indigenous peoples, I am not seeking to enforce another spatial neutrality in contesting the European-based art gallery space, but rather to engage with the conflicted dynamics of all spaces, and curating of experiences in the settler colony of Australia. Spatially and sensorially, the exhibition

35 Dan Taulapapa McMullin, 'Fa'afafine Notes: On Tagaloa, Jesus, and Nafanua', *Amerasia Journal*, Iss 37:3, (2011), 122.

may include sipa/takatāpui/queer-specific spaces and times such as a closed cultural exchange ceremony, public performance work by voguers, large performance video projections, delicate textile works and intricate installations.

Our embodied sovereignties, our unfettered being, can be made manifest in special moments of transgression of the policed sexual colonisation of our global First Nations bodies. Taulapapa McMullin states: “If only among the trees at night, the night of our pōula, our pouliuli, our polytheistic day.”³⁶ What I have presented is my work in progress, pointing to a continual becoming of our potential, curatorially, culturally, sexually, politically, spiritually.

Nō reira, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou katoa.



Lisa White, Léuli Eshraghi image for <http://inbedproject.com.au/>

36 Taulapapa McMullin, 2011, 127.

EXHIBITING OCEANIA — IN THREE ACTS

Peter Brunt

My work as an art historian has become increasingly focused on the business of exhibiting ‘Oceania’, a concept I have some personal stake in. I teach the art of the region at Victoria University; I recently co-edited a big book on the topic; I convened a roundtable called ‘Thinking through “Oceania” now’, published in *Reading Room*; I have reviewed exhibitions on the subject and written for exhibitions on the subject. Indeed, everything I’ve done as an art historian could be situated within this overarching idea.¹

However, I did not start out with ‘Oceania’ as an academic field to which I planned to contribute. Nor was it a special concept I wanted to explain and champion to the world. ‘Oceania’ is a discourse long in play in which I found myself involved before I fully knew it. Its significance to me has crept up on me like a dawning realisation. Indeed, I feel like the idea has captured me as much as I have spoken it, with the corresponding sense that I am not in control of its meaning. I’m not saying I don’t have agency or responsibility for the work I do or the decisions open to me. But that is not control.

On another level though, ‘Oceania’ is deeply personal to me in a way captured by Albert Wendt in his poem, *Inside Us the Dead*, and in a different way by Epele Hau’ofa’s famous essay ‘The Ocean In Us’.² ‘Oceania’ is my history and my genealogy, my *gafa*, my *whakapapa*. More than any other term, it captures the historical currents and crosscurrents of diaspora and indigeneity that make me who I am. What I especially like about Wendt and Hau’ofa’s evocation of ‘Oceania’ is the way they hold the experience of diaspora and indigeneity in tension. One is never allowed to simply forget or displace the other. They are not binary oppositions.

I consider myself a subject of two historical diasporas: of English migrants who left towns and villages in the nineteenth-century to settle in various parts of the colonial world, including the islands of Samoa, where both my paternal and maternal grandfathers married Samoan women; and of Samoan migrants who left towns and villages after World War Two to settle in various parts of the ‘post-colonial’ world. My extended family today embodies a vast geographical dispersal of people away from ancestral places. All the Samoan Brunts in the world (and many other ‘half-caste’ families) trace their ancestry back to two places as a consequence of my paternal grandparents’ marriage in the 1860s. One is the village of Lano in Savai’i, where my grandmother’s ancestry goes back seven or eight generations, recorded by name as successive holders of the title of Vui. The other is Biggleswade, near London, where my paternal great-grandfather was born in 1790, where the Brunt family goes back ten generations. In my familial consciousness, Lano and Biggleswade constitute markers of indigenous dwelling against a modern history of diaspora.

Therefore I do not think of myself as a possessor of indigenous knowledge. And only in a remote sense am I an indigenous person. What I know as experience comes from the experience of migration and displacement. I am not talking about some generic sense of deracinated subjectivity because my sense of identity is strongly connected with specific places, people and historical trajectories. But I don’t have a deep connection to any single place. For others of course it is different. The reason I say all this is to tell you who I am. But also because the relationships between subjectivity and history, between diaspora and indigeneity, are central to the three projects I want to talk about, all concerned with the business of ‘exhibiting Oceania’.

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- 1 Peter Brunt and Nicholas Thomas (eds.), *Art in Oceania: A New History*, London: Thames & Hudson, 2012; and Peter Brunt (editor and coordinator), ‘Roundtable: Thinking through Oceania Now’, *Reading Room: A Journal of Art and Culture*, no. 4 (Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, 2010), 82-104.
 - 2 Albert Wendt, ‘Inside us the Dead’, from *Inside us the Dead: Poems 1961-1974* (Auckland: Longman Paul, 1976), 7-15; Epele Hau’ofa, ‘The Ocean in Us’, Anthony Hooper (ed.), *Culture and Sustainable Development in the Pacific* (Asia Pacific Press, 2000), 32-43.

For the last four years, I have been involved with a research project called *Multiple Modernisms*, which involves an international group of mainly art historians working on case studies of indigenous artists in the twentieth century engaged in the practice and discourse of modernism.³ My own work has focused on the careers of Wallis Islander Aloï Pilioko and his French-Russian partner, the painter, collector and exhibition-maker Nicolaï Michoutouchkine.⁴ [Fig. 1] They met in New Caledonia in 1959 and formed a remarkable life-long partnership devoted to travel, collecting and the continuous staging of exhibitions of ‘Oceanic art’ from the late 1950s to the 1990s. Both are well known in the Pacific Islands, especially the French Pacific, but less so in New Zealand. Yet as Christian Coiffier has noted, the proliferation of exhibitions of Oceanic art in museums and art galleries today as part of an ever-expanding culture of ‘world art’ display, was foreshadowed in many respects to their exhibitionary adventures.⁵



Fig 1. Nicolaï Michoutouchkine and Aloï Pilioko, Honiara, Solomon Isles, 1963. Image courtesy of Aloï Pilioko.

Both have complicated stories, which I can only summarise in this context.⁶ Michoutouchkine was born in France in 1929 to Cossack parents exiled after the 1917 Communist revolution in Russia, along with thousands of other

3 For more information, see: www.multiplemodernisms.org

4 See my chapter, ‘Falling into the World: The Global Art World of Aloï Pilioko and Nicolaï Michoutouchkine’, *Multiple Modernisms: Indigeneity, Colonialism and Twentieth Century Arts*, Ruth Phillips and Elizabeth Harney (eds.) (Durham NC: Duke University Press, forthcoming in 2016). Excerpts from this chapter have been used for this essay. See also Peter Brunt, ‘Nicolaï Michoutouchkine and Aloï Pilioko: The Perpetual Travellers’, *Reading Room: A Journal of Art and Culture: Elective Proximities*, no. 6 (Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, 2013), 86-103.

5 Christian Coiffier, ‘Futuna, catalyseur de la symbiose des deux artistes: Aloï Pilioko et Nicolaï Michoutouchkine’, *Le Journal de la Société des Océanistes*, No. 122-123 (2006), 173-186, 173.

6 For more on Pilioko and Michoutouchkine see the exhibition catalogue, *Nicolaï Michoutouchkine et Aloï Pilioko: 50 ans de creation en Océanie*, Gilbert Bladinières (ed.) (Nouméa: Éditions Madrépores, 2008); Marie-Claude Teissier-Landgraf, *The Russian from Belfort: Thirty-Seven Years Journey by Painter Nicolaï Michoutouchkine in Oceania* (Suva: Institute of Pacific Studies/University of the South Pacific, 1995); and a short booklet on Pilioko by Michoutouchkine, *Aloï Pilioko, Artist of the Pacific* (Suva, Fiji: Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific, undated [c.1980]).

Cossacks dispersed around the world. He was ten years old when France was invaded by the Nazis, fifteen when the war ended. He was immersed in the culture and language of Russia at home; of France at school and the wider society. He was enchanted by the local Belfort museum as a boy. And he was gay.

In 1953, Michoutouchkine left France and set out eastward on an open-ended, backpack and penny-in your-pocket travelling adventure that took him through Italy, Greece, Palestine, Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Tibet, Nepal, Burma, Ceylon and Australia before ending up in Noumea, New Caledonia four years later — although I shouldn't say 'ending up' because Noumea in fact represented a doorway to another phase of his travelling adventure, focused on the Pacific Islands.

Now just to step back, I don't want to stereotype Michoutouchkine as a deluded exoticist or primitivist, although those desires are undeniably part of what was driving him. I've glossed over so much — everything that matters — in reciting what is basically just an itinerary, but a more detailed account of his travels is not possible here. One crucial aspect of these travels, though, is the artist's discovery of the political exhibition as his *modus operandi*. In almost all of these places, he stages exhibitions of his work as a modern travelling artist in embassy rooms, local arts societies, educational offices, faith centres for religious diplomacy and the like. When I say 'political', I don't mean they were animated by an ideological cause but rather their exploitation of the diplomatic value of art to the political powers that be (many of which happened to be the ambassadors, diplomats and political leaders managing the political currents of decolonisation). [Fig. 2] And when I say 'exhibition' I mean the exhibition itself, as social event, as agent of quasi-diplomacy, as a repeatable formula of invitations, openings, social gatherings, pictures on the walls, newspaper reviews and so on, transferable, like himself, from one place to another. His paintings themselves, typically of local sights, are slight, rapidly executed, and of no lasting importance beyond the novelty of their occasion. They take no root in any local tradition or history. And neither does he as after a few months, sometimes longer, he *uproots* and moves on in the dialectic of perpetual travel. He was not oblivious to the political currents he passed through; his travel diaries are pasted with newspaper articles and ephemera documenting them; but he was essentially a *flâneur* of these conditions and events; witnessing them without critical distance, immersed in the spectacle and experience of his travels.



Fig 2. Nicolai Michoutouchkine with the Dalai Lama at an exhibition of his paintings in Tibet, c.1956. Image courtesy of Aloï Pilioko.

The pattern continues upon his arrival in Noumea where he resides between 1957 and 1959. There he becomes a galvanising force in the town, making exhibitions of Kanak artefacts in the Noumea Museum, hosting visiting French officials, and opening an art gallery on the waterfront in an old colonial villa, which becomes a hub for expatriate and travelling artists and local ‘demi’ socialites. In fact Michoutouchkine’s gallery is a nodal point within a network of what might be called ‘Island Modernism’, outposts of the globalizing impulses of modernism and modernist culture concentrated in townships like Papeete, Port Vila, Noumea, Auckland, Honolulu, but webbing out all over the Pacific Islands. It is also in this context that he begins to collect ‘Oceanic art’, beginning with collecting expeditions to the ‘bush’ in New Caledonia itself.

It is also in Noumea that he meets Pilioko, who revolutionises his life. Pilioko was also a young, gay man ‘on the road’. Born and raised in Wallis (or Uvea) where his family has lived for generations, he left the island in 1957 to work on a copra plantation in the New Hebrides (now Vanuatu) before moving on to Noumea, where he encountered Michoutouchkine’s gallery and the subculture of ‘township modernism’.⁷ Pilioko is riveted by this cosmopolitan art scene surrounding Michoutouchkine’s gallery and — to cut a long story short — decides to become a modern artist, unprecedented for a Pacific Islander at the time. There are anecdotes about how shy he was and how Michoutouchkine took him under his wing but what strikes me is the peculiar resonance of this modern art scene for his sense of being already a modern person.

Obvious as it may sound, one of the legacies of the Western binary between the ‘modern’ and the ‘primitive’ is the occlusion of the modernity of the Pacific Islands. Wallis had been Catholic for almost a hundred years by the time of Pilioko’s birth in 1935. It was Christianised in the 1840s and had been a formal French colony since the 1880s. Marist nuns and priests had administered the territory and education system since the nineteenth century. American soldiers were stationed on the Island in the thousands during World War Two when Pilioko was a boy. He heard Latin at mass and spoke French as well as his native Uvean. As historians John Connell and Robert Aldrich have noted, of all the islands of the French Pacific, Wallis was “the most quickly or thoroughly changed by Catholicism, yet also the one where other elements of French culture have been slowest to infiltrate.”⁸ Indigenous culture continued to thrive: language, titles, kingship, food, medicines, houses, weaving and building traditions, etc. Although none of this was directly reflected in this strange modernist subculture, I would argue that it nonetheless made sense to him; indeed it made sense of *him*. Most people in it shared a complicated relationship to France, as he did. Most had left home, as he had. They were ‘on the road’ as he was. They were strangers on other people’s land, as he was; land which had been colonised by France, as his had. But what did ‘France’ or ‘being French’ mean beyond the limits of his experience in Wallis? And what was the ‘Pacific’ they were so interested in, full of Islanders like himself, yet barely known in his own experience.



Fig 3. Aloï Pilioko, *Tattooed Women of Bellona, Solomon Isles*, 1966, Wool tapestry and oil paint on jute (copra sacking), 68.5 x 222 cm (27 x 87 ¾ in). Private Collection. Image courtesy of Aloï Pilioko.

7 The term is borrowed from Ian Baucom’s essay, ‘Township Modernism’, Laura Doyle and Laura Winkiel (eds.), *Geomodernisms: Race, Modernism, Modernity* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2005), 227-244.

8 Robert Aldrich and John Connell, *France’s Overseas Frontier: Départements et Territoires d’Outre-Mer* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 180.

In any case, from 1959 their narratives became permanently entangled. Pilioko became a committed modernist, developing a reputation for his so-called ‘needle paintings’, tapestries in coloured wools sewn into sacking from copra bales, first exhibited in Rotuma in 1966. [Fig. 3], But it is not their work that I want to focus on today but the relationship between their travel, exhibitions and diasporic and indigenous identities.

From 1959 they embarked on a collecting and exhibition-making project that would take them all over the world, driven in part by Michoutouchkine’s desire to create a museum of Oceanic art in the Pacific for Pacific Islanders, and by his desire to stage a return to Europe, via exhibitions of Oceanic art, coupled with his own work and that of his modernist protégé Aloï Pilioko. After an interlude together on Futuna, they established a studio base in Port Vila on Efate in 1961 and began to travel throughout the Pacific Islands amassing a vast collection of ‘ethnographic’ artefacts [Fig. 4] while simultaneously mounting (where possible) improvised exhibitions in school rooms, embassies, churches, ship cabins, airport lounges, hotel lobbies and the like. Travelling on passenger ships, commercial airlines and cargo boats, hitching rides on private schooners, getting around on buses and motor scooters, exploiting diplomatic contacts and church networks, the places they visited and the sociality of their relationship as guests of local people was truly remarkable: Futuna and Wallis; Noumea and Papeete; all around the New Hebrides; the Solomons (including out of the way islands like Tikopia and Bellona); Tonga, Samoa, Fiji, Rotuma; Tarawa; every one of the Marquesan Islands; Sydney, Auckland and Canberra; a big collecting expedition to Papua New Guinea in 1964, to the heart of the tribal art trade; and more.



Fig 4. Pilioko with carvings, Santa Ana, Solomon Isles, 1963. Image courtesy of Aloï Pilioko.

Pilioko’s fame in the Pacific was born of these exhibitions as he in turn was inspired by his travels to define himself as a pan-Pacific artist. In 1967 they went to France — Michoutouchkine’s first return after fourteen years away — where they staged exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art in Paris, at the Abbey Prémontrés in Pont a Mousson and the Belfort Museum in Michoutouchkine’s home town. [Fig. 5] In the 70s they continued to exhibit in Europe in mainly ethnographic museums as well as back in the Pacific. In the 80s they exhibited in Moscow and seven other cities in the Soviet Union, another — very moving — return to Michoutouchkine’s ancestral homeland, and



Fig 5. *Melanesian and Polynesia Art: Collection Michoutouchkine*, installation view, Belfort, France, 1967. Image courtesy of Aloï Pilioko.

in countries like Japan and Indonesia in the 1990s. [Fig. 6] I know this just sounds like an itinerary and I promise to spare you further details. Like I said, everything important happens in-between but I can't go into that here. The question is: what does this travel and exhibition-making mania have to do with diaspora, indigeneity — and curating? Here I want to steal a connection made by Okwui Enwezor between the figure of the contemporary curator and what the anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss referred to disparagingly as “modern Marco Polos.”⁹



Fig 6. Opening of *Ethnography and Art of Oceania*, c. April 1981. State Museum of Ethnography, Sardarapat, Armenia, USSR. Image courtesy of Aloï Pilioko.

9 Okwui Enwezor, ‘On Curating’, *Modern Painters* (June 2014), 40-42. See also Claude Levi-Strauss, *Tristes Tropiques*, John and Doreen Weightman (transl.), (London: Jonathan Cape Ltd, 1973 [1955]), 15-17 and 44-47.

In 1955 Levi Strauss published his famous book *Tristes Tropiques*, a mixture of travel writing, memoir and ethnography and famous among other things for being a travel book about how much he hated travellers and travel books. There he expresses his disdain for young French adventurers who travel to remote countries in some deluded pseudo-ethnographical quest for the self-redemptive experience of encountering the authentically “exotic” or “primitive” other. The anthropologist’s disdain is partly intellectual; these “so-called explorers” are merely following the well-beaten tracks of real ethnographers who preceded them decades before. They produce no new knowledge of any scientific value. Their adventures are just narcissistic fantasies that feed a popular Western fascination, rampant in the immediate post war decades, for illustrated stories in magazines and newspapers of the “last” this and that.

Levi-Strauss has Michoutouchkine’s number here. “Nowadays,” he writes, “being an explorer is a trade, which consists not in discovering hitherto unknown facts after years of study, but in covering a great many miles and assembling lantern slides or motion pictures [one might add exhibitions of ethnographic artefacts collected on the spot by one’s own hand] so as to fill a hall with an audience for several days in succession. For this audience, platitudes and commonplaces seem to have been miraculously transmuted into revelations by the sole fact that their author, instead of doing his plagiarising at home, has supposedly sanctified it by covering twenty thousand miles.”¹⁰ Michoutouchkine undoubtedly saw the Pacific — or at least certain parts of it — in primitivising terms. He even primitivised Pilioko, whose artistic gifts were naturalised in primordial terms. It was a modernist-European mindset, ubiquitous at the time. Moreover, the popularity of his exhibitions in Europe and the Soviet Union turned on their reception in similar terms.

And yet, something more is going on in Michoutouchkine’s travels and exhibitions with Pilioko than Levi-Strauss’s dismissal quite accounts for. The anthropologist’s dislike for modern Marco Polos fails to recognise their encounter with the global conditions of modern. It fails to recognise — in the case of Michoutouchkine and Pilioko — the dialectic their exhibitions staged between the indigenous modern and the ethnographic; or their immersion in the relational life-worlds they encountered everywhere they went (and which I can’t do justice to in this talk). In any case, Michoutouchkine never claimed to be an ethnographer.¹¹ He acquired his collection he says as an artist and a lover; it was a curatorial palette to stage constant exhibitions.

In ‘On Curating’, Enwezor attempts to draw an analogy between the figure of the ethnographic traveller, including his specious double dismissed by Levi-Strauss, and the contemporary curator. All are creatures of wanderlust, possessed, he says, citing Susan Sontag, by a “form of ‘homelessness’... brought about by the inhuman acceleration of historical change [that] has led every sensitive modern mind to the recording of some kind of nausea, of intellectual vertigo” — the cure to which, Enwezor adds, “is a type of extreme tourism, undertaken as a rite of passage in which the sensitive modern mind strikes out into the unknown world and seeks out the company and kinship of societies lost somewhere in the mists of time.”¹² I’ve already said that is only part of Michoutouchkine’s story — and the least interesting thing about it. In drawing out his analogy between the ethnographic traveller and the contemporary curator, Enwezor wonders whether Levi-Strauss’s “cool rational intellectual” distance in the face of the “bewildering diffusion of globalisation” is adequate to that experience or whether those who throw themselves into it, yield to its vertigo, are not equally necessary to the analogy? Whatever the answer, Enwezor’s analogy continues to valorise the experience of travel — of homeless wanderlust — as the key trait of curatorial subjectivity. The question of indigeneity falls outside the paradigm.

Yet, what is striking about the overall trajectory of Michoutouchkine’s travels is the degree to which they were animated by what James Clifford calls a kind of “homing” or “indigenous desire”.¹³ Born in the Cossack diaspora,

10 Claude Levi-Strauss, *ibid.* 16.

11 Nicolai Michoutouchkine, “À propos de ma collection,” *Nicolai Michoutouchkine et Aloï Pilioko: 50 ans de creation en Océanie*, Gilbert Bladinières (ed.), *op. cit.*, 135-6.

12 Okwui Enwezor, *op. cit.*, 41.

13 James Clifford, *Returns: Becoming Indigenous in the Twenty-First Century* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2013), 76.

'home' was never a straightforward place for him. And as for wanderlust he obviously had it bad. From 1961, however, after establishing a base in Port Vila, his travels became more like looping returns towards different sites of 'home' rather than the aimless wandering of the nomad: to France or what he called "old Europe", the home of his youth and parents' exile. To Russia, his ancestral and cultural homeland, from which point he increasingly came to embrace his 'Russian-ness'. The irony of these returns is the role 'exhibiting Oceania' played in bringing them about. Whatever those exhibitions were supposed to say about the region they represented, they were agents in Michoutouchkine's reconnection with his own indigeneity and its turbulent history. On the other hand, his travels were also looping returns to the Pacific and his studio home in Port Vila, which he shared with Pilioko in Vanuatu, where both had become citizens. I'm not suggesting that Vanuatu was now simply home — his relationship to the country and to Vanuatu was complicated in all sorts of ways. But that is precisely the question of indigeneity the wanderer came to face.

For Pilioko, by contrast, the connection to home was never existentially broken, despite migration and travel. As a traveller, his sense of being Wallisian went with him. He became a 'man of the world' precisely because he knew and loved the place he came from, which was never in question. He embodies what Clifford calls, the other end of the continuum; a "specifically indigenous kind of diasporism", of "dwelling-in-travel".¹⁴ But if he remained a Wallisian, he was a Wallisian like no other.

In my second project my role shifts from an art historian to curator, where I find myself in the same arena, broadly speaking, forged by Michoutouchkine and Pilioko. I also have to shift registers to talk about this project, from critical analysis to something more like an announcement. As some of you know, I have been invited to co-curate with Nicholas Thomas an exhibition of Oceanic art at the Royal Academy of Arts in London in the northern autumn of 2018. The proposal for the exhibition came from the Academy in about 2012, when the then artistic director approached Nicholas with the idea of such an exhibition sitting within a series of 'historical cultures' or 'civilisation' type exhibitions the Academy periodically stages, such as *Africa: Art of a Continent* (1996), *Aztecs* (2008), *China* (2005), *Turks* (2009), *Byzantium* (2009), and so on. However, the occasion of the exhibition makes it something more than just another 'civilisation' show, for it will commemorate the 250th anniversary of both the founding of the Royal Academy in 1768 and the sailing of Cook's first voyage to the Pacific the same year. The exhibition will occupy the whole gallery and draw primarily from taonga in the great collections of British and European ethnographic (or world culture) museums, with a few things, we hope, from New Zealand. It will include small number of modern and contemporary works — such as Lisa Reihana's *The Pursuit of Venus [infected]* (2015), if we can borrow it — but the bulk of the exhibition will be drawn from historical material in museum collections. It will be the first major survey of the region at a major art gallery since *The Art of the Pacific Islands* at the National Gallery of Art in Washington D.C. in 1979 and the first ever in the United Kingdom.

Nicholas and I began seriously working on the show last year and it remains a work in progress. I cannot — and do not want to — say too much about it at this stage as it is still in conceptual development with a host of still-underdetermined conceptual and organisational tasks ahead from loan requests and layout design to catalogue development and public programming. But broadly speaking the exhibition will take its inspiration from Epeli Hau'ofa's essay 'The Ocean In Us', focusing on the centrality of water to Oceanic cultures as both material element (rivers, lagoons, mountain lakes, swamplands, rainforests, seas or the open ocean) and metaphor (waterways in narratives of the arrival of ancestors or departures of the dead, or as figure for the social and existential mobilities which have defined the lives of Islanders over hundreds of years). Within this overriding concept, the exhibition is further conceptualised around three overlapping and dialectical subthemes: voyaging, making place and encounter. I'm sure the exhibition raises many questions, but it needs to be made, like a work of art in the studio, before it is open to public critique.

Research for the exhibition however, has given me the extraordinary opportunity to visit ethnographic collections and storerooms in the United Kingdom and Europe, and to meet and talk with ethnographic curators. The collections

14 *Ibid.*, 52.

are both awesome and sobering to behold. One cannot visit those storerooms without feeling dumbfounded by the history of colonial imperialism they bear — sitting there in all those things — and the complexity of the ethnographic project, past, present (and future?). What struck me was the diversity of institutional situations and the various ways ethnographic museums are reconfiguring themselves in the present. I visited one which was de-accessioning large portions of its historic collections and putting them on the market — in effect (though one might question the method), marking its emphatic distance from that colonial past. Other museums in countries that once invested huge state funding in the methodical acquisition of their collections were struggling with smaller and smaller portions of civic budgets (in comparison to what went into contemporary art galleries). Others were forward looking and had a real energy and vision about them, with strong links to many of the communities their collections represented, international researchers working on their collections, and popular public exhibitions. I got a real sense too of how much these collections are in exhibition around the world. They are part of the global exhibition industry that is speeding up, not slowing down. Curators struggle to keep up with all the loan requests. Oceania at the Royal Academy is just one more.

Anyway, it was in the context of these visits that I want to present my third ‘act’. In July last year I was in Germany for a week looking at the Oceanic collections in Leipzig and Dresden, and then spent the weekend in Berlin where I planned to revisit my favourite Oceanic display at the Ethnological Museum in Dahlem, a Berlin suburb. In 2014 the Museum also happened to be one of three sites hosting the city’s 8th Biennale, but I bypassed the contemporary works that day to spend time in the Oceanic display. The museum was busier than usual, but not where I was. Everyone was looking at the contemporary work in other parts of the building.

The next day I visited the KV building in central Berlin to start on the Biennale and came across a striking installation on the third floor by Canadian artist Judy Radul. *Look. Look Away. Look Back* (2014) comprised a scaled-down replica of a section of the ‘display system’ of the Melanesian exhibit in the Dahlem Museum, but emptied, as it were, of its ethnographic contents. I was stopped in my tracks, excited and implicated at the same time. By making these things ‘disappear’, Radul had brought into visibility the conditions of their appearing; that which is usually background, secondary or transparent to the featured masks and carvings: the avenue of stalls, the coloured walls, the glass panes, the white sand, the gridded lighting system and the ritual of the walk through.

Radul’s stalls were not literally empty, but what they contained — lengths of rope propped into artful lines, a still life of window cleaning and touch-up tools, various text panels, subtractive gestures such as the removal of wall sections revealing piping and framing (see the [artist’s website](#) for detailed images) — were not so much other objects with different meanings as quasi-objects, negations and words that seemed to bring into question the very nature of ethnographic display, from its mundane material conditions to the enigmatic translation of ‘becoming art’ (or so I read the metaphorical theoretical significance, evoked to in the text panels. One explained the imminent closure of the Dahlem Museum and the coming transfer of its collections of Oceanic, African, Asian, Native American and other arts to the Berlin Palace-Humboldt Forum in the centre of Berlin, currently under restoration. There, the plan is, these ‘world art’ traditions will join the arts of the West on Museum Island, where all the tourists are, in a historical *re-appearance* in 2019 in a new ‘display system’ (to be designed by Ralph Appelbaum Associates and malsyteufel) reflecting our ‘postcolonial’, ‘post-ethnographic’ present. Another panel, by contrast, spelled out website links to the Free West Papua movement, pointing up the failures and unfinished business of global decolonisation.

But that is not all. The installation was also configured as a kind of film set in which spectators entering the arcade were recorded by three closed-loop video cameras and incorporated into a double-screen video projection at the end of the arcade, which they could sit and watch. On the right was a projection of visitors strolling through the installation arcade, represented in the elementary act of looking. On the left was a pre-recorded film loop, shot in the corresponding section of the real museum, populated with artefacts and briefly dramatised by the entrance into the frame of two women and a man, whose vaguely distracted attention looking at the displays is disturbed by their inter-subjective awareness of each other (a playlet which gives the work its title: *Look. Look Away. Look*

Again). Both projections were structured according to an identical sequence of framings and camera moves: panning, tilting, zooming, and cutting away at exactly the same time.

I liked the critical reflexivity of Radul's work and its focus on the spectator and the act of looking. But I was also troubled by it. It seemed to me complicit in the disappearance of these ethnographic objects, as if they had to disappear to make the spectator visible and to defamiliarise us from the strange culture of ethnographic display. Those are both powerful interventions in a moment of historical transition towards a new 'post-ethnographic' culture of display. I wanted the spectator to be visible *through these things*, in *relation* to them, which won't disappear and arguably shouldn't disappear. I also wondered about the 'end of ethnology' ('post-ethnographic') moment in history it seemed to be registering, whereas I think our historical subjectivities are still embedded in that discourse and in relation to these things. We can ask new questions about them and create new relationships with them and through them, but I don't think they should disappear.

ON THE POLITICS OF NEGOTIATION: A CONVERSATION BETWEEN MARYSIA LEWANDOWSKA AND MISAL ADNAN YILDIZ

Misal Adnan Yildiz: Hi everybody. You will see some images — in the process of turning the image file into a PDF, it created an amazing visual accident. It is not the file that I handed over but now I'm looking at it with you, it looks like quite accidentally beautiful. But our content is here, Marysia is here, so I am very confident about this conversation; it will lead us into a form of dialogue that in itself talks about negotiation, as one of the tools used during the making of exhibitions.

For people who are maybe not familiar with your practice, even the ones who are not familiar with contemporary art, how would you define your practice in a very open way?

Marysia Lewandowska: Good afternoon. First of all, thank you to Charlotte and Abby for inviting me to join because I know the invitation was originally made to Adnan. Well, I'm totally overwhelmed. This is my first time in New Zealand and my first time in Auckland. My exhibition here at Artspace happened through an intense period of collaboration, with all decisions and installation processes executed remotely. It is the first time that I have ever worked in this way, entrusting the final shape of the exhibition to the curators.

My practice, spanning the last 30 years, has been characterised by interventions within art and academic institutions, working closely with their entire apparatus. I am interested in the specific conditions that an institution provides for artists to extend their engagement with the social imaginary, not simply acting in a physical space, but activating a dialogue and gathering different actors together. I have often found myself contesting everything that has informed our understanding of what artists do, what curators do, and what still remains relevant in the exchanges between artists and curators. In the practice that I've developed over those 30 years, most of it has been collaborative. Especially between 1993 and 2008, while I was working with artist Neil Cummings, establishing a platform called Chanceprojects. The outcomes of that collaboration are archived under www.chanceprojects.com.

My practice is not defined by objects, it is mostly defined by relationships. I have been aware of Artspace, and its history of supporting non-mainstream practices; this was what attracted me to working with Adnan, someone whose work I have been following for many years. Charlotte already mentioned in her introduction that we got to know each other inside an educational framework, when I was teaching in a programme called CuratorLab at Konstfack in Stockholm. I don't come from Stockholm, I am originally from Warsaw, and I was raised and educated under communism. More recently I have been reflecting on my various relocations, geographical as well as ideological. I commuted from London to Stockholm for 10 years where, apart from contributing to CuratorLab, I established, together with Swedish artist Mäns Wrangé, the Art in the Public Realm Masters programme. But what is of relevance here is that we met in an environment which is itself already strongly defined by negotiation.

Education at its best is a platform for giving and receiving, for co-production of knowledge and testing ways of knowing. My project at Artspace is a result of an ongoing conversation with its foundation in education. Of course Adnan has since taken up curatorial positions, which allowed him to negotiate with many people outside of the academic environment. I am happy to have been able to be part of that genealogy and transform conversations we began many years ago into a public encounter.



'Partial Disclosure' (2008), selection from *Women's Audio Archive* (1984–1990). Photograph: Sam Hartnett.

MAY: The conversation about making a solo exhibition at Artspace started in Brisbane while you were on a research visit at the IMA (Institute of Modern Art). At that moment, the idea of developing a solo exhibition — a presentation through your artistic research related to open source, including your collaborative networks, and also dealing at the same time with authorship — was a good challenge for us. We were talking about it this morning. I was challenged when you were more interested in making a solo exhibition, an installation rather than a programme of event-based discussions. I had to confess to Marysia that during the time we have known each other, the whole transition around education, the educational turn, public programming, and discussions around how to present research was very strong, so we were completely full with the idea of alternative forms of exhibitions, developing new audiences, conducting and presenting new research. I am happy that a solo exhibition as an extension of those discussions has worked very well, even if it is still a conservative form, and one that I never thought Marysia would be really interested in.

The material we worked with is this amazing Women's Audio Archive (which is online at www.marysialewandowska.com), around 80 audio recordings from the time Marysia left Poland in 1982. She recorded a lot of conversations between 1984 and 1990, public events and personal conversations. In 2009 at the invitation of Maria Lind she spent four months as Artist-in-Residence at the CCS (Centre for Curatorial Studies) at Bard College, upstate New York, which facilitated the digitisation of the original analogue audio tapes from her collection. Marysia worked with a group of students on negotiating with the people whose voices she had recorded to consider their authorship and allow for the archival materials to be licensed under creative commons and enter into the public domain.

I was interested in revisiting this research and bringing it back into the gallery space as an installation, and re-contextualising the whole audio archive with the new film *Triple C. Editing the Century* (2015). At Artspace, especially during the conception and preparation of this show, I was trying to push discussion around architectural change, reorganisation of space, how we can work better in a more creative environment, including our audiences and the artists we work with; how we can develop a better space. All these references exist in Marysia's work, and in the exhibition gave the project of architectural change another level of context and relevance.

During the process we made many decisions. One of the strongest decisions I've made was concerning the budget, not to spend it on alcohol for the opening, but to create a more intense public programme. When we were programming these discussions, we managed to communicate with an open audience in a really efficient way thanks to our beautiful education programme intern Louisa Afoa (she is not here today). People came back to us. One of these conversations was based on a visit from the group Auckland Women in Architecture, which surprised me a lot, because this was initiated from outside of our public programming. Through a self-organised discussion event, the audience responded to our programme.

People visiting the exhibition were invited came back to us with ideas. Some said they really wanted to re-organise the discussion around housing and commons, which touched me a lot because since I came here I didn't see as much political discussion in an art context as I would have in Istanbul or Berlin. And housing is the number one burning issue in this city. The exhibition operated very well in its organic way and seriously created a public moment, not only through its curatorial blah blah but through its contextual references, it touched on something real.

And I was feeling part of it, not only as a curator or as someone working in a public institution, but as someone who lives in Auckland and thinks about resources, commons, citizenship, being part of the society, and my potential contribution. Inevitably, I went back basically to the first discussion we'd had on the day we met at Konstfack. Marysia was suggesting then that we might question the difference between survival and contribution.

ML: That was eight years ago.



Public Space Panel discussion produced by Architecture+Women•NZ in collaboration with Marysia Lewandowska and Artspace. Photograph: Leah Mulgrew.

MAY: Yes. I would like to ask how you felt during the exhibition. Because it was quite difficult to translate the whole experience to Marysia, as she was not here during the public talks. How does an artist deal with institutional space and leave that space open? How can you leave ownership/authorship up to others so generously, and the show still remain yours? With chairs on loan from the Auckland Art Gallery, and utilising materials from our previous exhibitions? How do you still make it your own show?

ML: Well, I think it was an excellent provocation on your part to suggest that I do a solo exhibition — as a way of subverting the idea of a 'solo', a very well rehearsed model, mainly showcasing male artists. It is not the most

obvious proposition to suggest a solo exhibition to an artist whose work is research based, process based, relational, motivated by politics and institutional critique.

There are many things you can do within an exhibition without focusing it around the display, even though the display will always play a part, as the grammar for the conceptual lexicon. When we started thinking about which existing works would be good to include, Adnan proposed three different projects — the recent film *Triple C. Editing the Century; The Women's Audio Archive* and *Subject to Change* — and by doing so he has effectively written the script for me and for the public.

Going back to our collaboration, one of the questions was how can you have a solo exhibition and insist on not retaining sole ownership, how could the process of collective decision-making be made visible? There was a team that you as Director are responsible for and already know very well: Henry, Leah and Anna were all involved in different ways in the production, and contributed to the final shape of the installation, generating texts for published materials, publicity and public programmes. You will notice that all of these words share 'public' as their root. I have made most of the decisions in a way that acknowledged the projects' histories, while collectively the Arspace team have been empowered to contextualise them. For me the discussion of ownership has to shift towards belonging. When you, Adnan, talk about the reception of my work in the context of what are the concerns right now in Auckland, you suggested that there is already a strong interest and engagement of artists, architects, activists in the questions of property here.

Ownership, public responsibility, heritage, these are the themes which the projects you have chosen for the exhibition to address. The resonance they create within a collective consciousness exceeds any intended outcome. The show acts as a conduit bringing focus to what people already care about; it allows them to connect, to intervene, and to develop the conversation further. The way the public events were curated extended the idea of conversation, which is so central to the *Women's Audio Archive*, a project that began as research driven by personal circumstances. Through a gradual process, which is common to many practices, you transform that which you care about and which forms part of your intensely private world, into a public experience. It is the function of exhibitions to provide both artists and curators with tools which shape the encounter with others around the issues they feel passionate about.

MAY: In the [leaflet](#) we designed for our visitors, in response to one of my questions you start with a statement about considering the economy of art, not only from a market-orientated perspective, but also considering the potential of commoning and the politics of sharing, and how the institutional space might function as a kind of 'editor', proposing alternatives that then become public. So I want to ask another question... a very practical question: dedicating yourself to discussions around 'commons' and dealing with open source and open domain, how is it possible to pay your own bills? How do you manage to live like that?

ML: Well, where should I start? Everyone has an idea about what they need in life and how to get to that point where you know the value of what you are contributing, and how important it is to be financially rewarded for it. To be able to insist on the kind of practice I have been developing over that last thirty years, it has been mainly made possible through involvement in education. Teaching has been my stable source of income and intellectual support. I felt especially valued in Sweden where teaching, research and practice are taken into account as components of remuneration. I have evolved a way of working which requires more of a mixed economy. I insist that you Adnan make sure that your institution continues to pay fees to artists. I am of course very grateful!

I had a similarly rewarding experience while working with the Institute of Modern Art in Brisbane, run by Aileen Burns and Johan Lundh, as they too made the economy a part of their agenda. You cannot claim that you are supporting artists and their work without supporting them financially as well. Today artists find themselves demoralised by the conditions imposed by the art market. It is obviously a force that you cannot ignore, but once you develop a sales-dependent attitude, it has consequences for the independence and integrity of your long-term practice. Preferences such as collective ownership and creative commons don't necessarily mean that you

give everything away, but they encourage people to rethink how economy effects your conduct as an artist and how politics and ethics are embedded in the way you act.

There is just no way around it, at least for me, but I am obviously talking like a dinosaur who was grew up under a very different system, a state run system. The art market was non-existent before 1989. Now, Poland is in a very different economic and ideological situation, having fully embraced the western model of consumerism. I am not at all orthodox as to how you should practice; you have to make sure that whatever you want to do finds support. It would not be credible to bow to the pressures of the market while at the same time looking for alternatives.

MAY: It was a very good answer to a stupid question! I want to move into the film through another question about Maria Lind, who has been very important for both our practices. She suggested to me that I think about curating as a form of re-allocation of resources within an inter-institutional framework. So going back to our ideals and conversations — basically, these were about how you allocate the budget, how you borrow things, allocate things, recycle things, reconstruct things, distribute things: each relates directly to idea of economy. Our economic decisions come from very different cognitive and creative and psychological processes to the dominant motives driving economic decision making — growth, profit etc.

Another thing we should say is that *Triple C*, installed as part of your solo show at Artspace, was commissioned for the first edition of the Vienna Biennale by its curator Maria Lind and was premiered on the 11th of June at MAK (Museum für Angewandte Kunst, Austria). The film reflects upon how social spaces are disappearing, and how the Chinese context — a transitional point of view, from communism into capitalism — effects places other than China. I want to ask you about the relationship between the social space and property development, which the film directly raises via the question ‘How can we learn from the commons, and from the history of communism?’ Do you have tips, tools or anecdotes for us...if some people are interested in this conversation, where should we start this research?

I believe in this connection between the commons and communism, I mean the discussion that happened at Artspace, where architects with different approaches — from commercial or academic or activist backgrounds — were beautifully negotiating and dealing with their understanding of property, but also acknowledging at a very critical moment that capitalism does not work anymore, that we cannot keep on building just to support housing, we should come up with another solution. And it’s so ironic that in the next room the film is running and whispering ‘commons, communism...’ so, where should we start?



Triple C. Editing the Century (2015), 18:49 minutes (installation view). Photograph: Leah Mulgrew.

ML: Well I don't have any tips — or rather I hint at something in the title of the film, *Triple C*: standing for *Commons*, *Communism*, *Capital* as the conditions which defined the 20th century. These ideas are part of our legacy, so how can we negotiate those states, how do they intersect with our contemporary experience?

In the film, I take as a starting point archival materials referring to an Austrian architect Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky (1897-2000), who lived through the entire 20th century and remained a devoted communist all of her life. What astonishes me, having lived under communism myself, is how uncritical she was after a certain moment, when communism revealed itself as a repressive system as much in China as in Poland, and the rest of the Soviet Empire. There was an incredible price so many people had to pay for this ideology, which has persisted throughout at least half of my life. Her particular engagement with architecture as a social practice (she mainly designed kindergartens) made me want to discuss communism by extracting ideas of the commons and communisation — as ways of challenging private enclosure through real estate development and corporate ownership today.

Coming back to the exhibition and to the gallery as a ready-made, the space itself became a site of negotiation. What I realised was that there was an installation of Billy Apple's 'red wall' occupying one corner. For me it was almost a coincidence that there was a red wall...the wall...the Great Wall of China... a lot of possible connotations. I was unaware that the red wall was a permanent artifact, one I very much wanted to 'borrow' but also to alter its original meaning. I proposed to enter into a conversation, leading to a negotiation with a celebrated and internationally well-established local artist. While Adnan was initially reluctant to accept such a radical alteration by covering his work with silver paint, I felt it was my responsibility to approach Billy, to have an artist-to-artist agreement. Negotiation makes something else possible, as it introduces another condition. Billy was very open to that.



Triple C. Editing the Century (2015). 18:49 minutes (final film frame). Photograph: Sam Hartnett

There is a lot of rivalry in the art world, a lot of egos, there are a lot of things that often turn ugly and wrong. But I believe in opening up lines of communication through conversation. I ended up partially painting over Billy's wall, modifying his artwork, but I also left enough of it for his gesture to remain legible. Simply to say that I acknowledge

what was there before. This is important, especially here in Aotearoa New Zealand. Acknowledging what existed before you, and however sceptical you may be of certain legacies, or how you might have a very strong desire to dig it all up in order to alter the mindset, but the least you must do is to properly acknowledge the efforts of others.

I mentioned this the other night at the IMA's talk in Brisbane. What my work encourages is the paradigm shift from a culture of permission, where you always have to ask someone if you can do something, to a culture of acknowledgement. I believe that commons, and especially well developed creative commons, provide us with a framework of trust, a mutual agreement inside which all you need to do is to acknowledge the author, point to the source. I can of course then contest both the acknowledgement and what you have done with my work, but in the end what is the point of making something public and then actually wanting to enclose it?

We don't use our power of influence enough. Artists often agree to the conditions that they encounter for reasons of symbolic gain, economic gain, exposure and visibility—all kinds of legitimate reasons. I would like to encourage artists and others to feel confident to be able to say 'no' to people or situations they don't wish to support for one reason or another. And yes, that might mean that they will never have an exhibition somewhere, but that is not so important; in the end what is important is how to maintain whatever you think is your integrity. Because once that goes there is nothing else to hold onto.

Editor's note: please find the online materials referred to in this conversation at the following sites:

Interview with Marysia Lewandowska on the occasion of the Artspace exhibition:

http://artspace.org.nz/doclibrary/public/Marysia_Lewandowska_interview_web.pdf

Artspace Public programme: open conversations on the politics of negotiation:

http://artspace.org.nz/exhibitions/2015/marysialewandowskarenegotiation.asp#public_programme

Women's Audio Archive:

<http://www.marysialewandowska.com/waa/>

SINGING ACROSS TE TAI O RĒHUA

Léuli Eshraghi

A response to the ST PAUL St Gallery 2015 Curatorial Symposium, held at Te Wānanga Aronui o Tāmaki Makaurau, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, and Te Piha.

There we were, in late Here-turi-kōkā Pālolo-muli August, an assembly of people at Piha beach on the West coast of Te Ika a Māui, Māui's Fish. We had travelled westward from the city, from within the armature the Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki's auditorium. After an intense day of debating and presenting on Indigenous epistemologies, innovation in curatorial practice, embodied knowledge, spatial relationships, and the place of decolonisation, we were stimulated and enlivened.

Gathered then around a large fire at the foot of the headland mound where the taniwha Kaiwhare lives, Pita Turei led us through the mihi welcoming, hongī affirmative sharing of breath, and the local area's whakapapa. We delved more deeply into the day's kōrero, whilst going deeper into a space for all the senses. Nestled between the tidal shore and the harakeke flax bushes, we listened and talked, kōrero Māori me Pākehā carrying on the matangi winds on that cool pō.

After a shared meal at the local Piha Café, we continued discussions on curating, histories, knowledges, agency, spaces and institutions at Pita Turei's house. After midnight there were still a few keeping the ahi kā home fires burning. We started singing waiata, and to my surprise, I remembered two from earlier years spent with Māori musicians at an annual festival on Minjerribah island in Quandamooka country near Mianjin Brisbane.

I used to work on the Moananui arts programming and French↔English and Bislama↔English interpreting alongside the First Nations Australian arts programming that framed the music acts in the annual festival. In 2011, there were workshops organised with the local school children and Indigenous art centre before the festival weekend. Charissa and Tihikura Hohaia from Parihaka in Aotearoa, and the Joséphine group made up of the Touyada brothers and cousins from Ouégoa and Pouébo in Kanaky New Caledonia led the singing and dancing workshops.

One afternoon as we learnt and sang the E pāpā Waiari waiata, the Kanak musicians joined in, and we all realised that schools in Kanaky New Caledonia teach it but without the content and origin explained. And as Tihikura and Charissa were teaching the children the English and Māori versions, we thought of translating it into Caac. Caac is the main Kanak language spoken and sung in Joséphine's music spanning kanéka, roots, reggae and jazz genres. Lead singer and eldest brother Patrick Touyada and I first had to translate the English text into French before then rendering it in Caac. The Caac language has less than 2000 fluent speakers, mainly in its home northern villages and in the suburbs of Nouméa. Translating and singing in this Kanak language became, unconsciously, part of sharing and speaking this sacred treasure, in the same way many people have done before with reo Māori and countless other endangered Indigenous knowledges.

At Pita Turei's whare in Piha, and into the early hours huddling together overlooking Te Tai o Rēhua lapping on the shore, I taught Kanak arts manager Allan Haeweng and Māori artist Aroha Rawson the Caac version. We had our own kind of ceremonial space, singing this waiata of yearning and loss in Māori and Caac, that had travelled vast distances, cultural and linguistic worlds, to join us together in relationship to ancestral knowledges. And the wise, considered kōrero of all the presenters, hosting and gifting artists, curators, Elders and writers came into focus, ebbing and flowing as the mana, cumulative energy and presence, of this special few days in existence became part of us and the world we relate to.

MĀORI

E pāpā Waiari
Taku nei mahi
Taku nei mahi
He tuku roimata

Ē aue, ka mate au
E hine hoki mai rā
Ē aue, ka mate au
E hine hoki mai rā

Māku e kaute
Ō hīkoitanga
Māku e kaute
Ō hīkoitanga

CAAC

É Papa Waiari
Manegn me nô gó me heem
Manegn me nô gó me heem
Wérérivaam
Keraac mwa ! [Keratch]
Keraac mwa !
I pwii rô na wan aam
Tevora, é amé mwa celegn [tchelegn]
Tevora, é amé texiro [tékh^hiro]

Wa nô pinaa mwa tale manem hem
Wan ô uri mwa man ceenig' zo [tchéning tho]
Keraac mwa !
Keraac mwa !
Zo tèbezero [Tho têngbéthero]
Tevora, é amé mwa celegn
Tevora, é amé texiro

CONTRIBUTOR BIOS

Cassandra Barnett (Ngāti Raukawa) is a writer and art theorist who has published in a range of publications including *World Art*, *Landfall*, *Eyeline*, *Metro* and *Art News New Zealand*. She currently teaches in and coordinates the Critical and Contextual Studies programme at the College of Creative Arts at Massey University (Wellington). Barnett completed a PhD thesis, 'Song of Seeing Hands: A molecular encounter with taonga and tupuna / art and ancestors in Aotearoa New Zealand' in 2014. Barnett contributes to Māori academic development at Massey's Whiti o Rehua School of Art, and is interested in the relationship between contemporary rhizomatic and molecular philosophies of art, postcolonial and decolonising thought and indigenous aesthetics.

Peter Brunt is Senior Lecturer in Art History at Victoria University in the School of Art History, Classics and Religious Studies. He is co-editor of the books *Art in Oceania: A New History* (Thames and Hudson, 2012) and *Tatau: Photographs by Mark Adams: Samoan Tattooing, New Zealand Art, Global Culture* (Te Papa Press, 2010). For the latter he curated the associated exhibition *Tatau: Photographs by Mark Adams*, which has been shown in galleries in New Zealand, Australia, Canada and the UK. He has also published in journals such as *Reading Room: A Journal of Art and Culture*, where he convened the Roundtable 'Thinking Through Oceania Now' (2010) and written catalogue essays for exhibitions such as the Asia Pacific Triennial (2012) and the retrospective of leading New Zealand artist John Pule (*Hauaga: The Art of John Pule*, University of Otago Press, 2010). His research and curatorial interests focus broadly on art and cross-cultural exchange in the Pacific from the late eighteenth century to the present. Last year he co-organised the Wellington symposium *Indigenous Modernisms: Histories of the Contemporary* as part of an international research collaboration called [Multiple Modernisms: 20th Century Modernisms in Global Perspective](#). Current projects include research on the work of Pacific modernist Alo'i Pilioko, and co-curating (with Nicholas Thomas and Adrian Locke) an exhibition on the art of Oceania for the Royal Academy of Arts, London, in 2018. Before entering academia Peter worked as an actor with the Mercury Theatre Company and the Tantrum Actors Collective in Auckland. He was born in Auckland to migrant parents from Samoa.

Marysia Lewandowska is a Polish born artist, based in London since 1985. Through collaborative projects she has explored the public function of archives, collections and exhibitions in an age of privatisation. She was Professor of Art in the Public Realm at Konstfack, Stockholm 2003–2013, where she established *Timeline: Artists' Film and Video Archive*. In 2014 she was Visiting Professor at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. Throughout 2014/15 she is Artist in Residence at the Asia Art Archive in Hong Kong. Lewandowska's most recent projects engage with questions of ownership and forms of knowledge sharing, including *Women's Audio Archive* (2009) at CCS Bard College, NY and *Open Hearing* (2010) at the Women's Library, London. *Subject to Change* (2011) explored the history of student protest and was developed with the Curating Contemporary Art programme for *Shadowboxing* at the RCA, London. *Re-Distributed Archive* (2011) featured at the Congress of Culture, Wrocław; *Publishing in Process. Ownership in Question* (2012) (with Laurel Ptak), was at Tensta konsthall, Stockholm. In 2014 her project *Shanghai Exhibition Histories*, curated by Bilijana Ciric, opened at Osage Gallery, Shanghai. In 2015 a new film *Triple C. Editing the Century* was commissioned by Maria Lind for the Vienna Biennale at the Museum Angewandte Kunst (MAK). Forthcoming as part of the 40 years celebration is *Unlimited Edition*, a project for Institute of Modern Art (IMA) in Brisbane. Her book *Undoing Property?* (Sternberg Press), co-edited with Laurel Ptak, was published in 2013. Marysia Lewandowska is visiting as a guest of Artspace.

www.marysialewandowska.com

www.womensaudioarchive.org

Julia Moritz is an art historian and curator. She headed the *Maybe Education and Public Programs* at dOCUMENTA(13), Kassel (2012) and is currently the Curator of Theory and Education at Kunsthalle Zurich. She was formerly curator at the University of Lüneburg, where she was responsible for the programme of the university's art space, Kunstraum, and taught cultural studies seminars. During postgraduate studies in Vienna, New York and Bilbao she wrote a doctoral thesis on issues relating to institutional conditions in contemporary art. Independent projects include *Critical Complicity* (with Lisa Mazza) in Vienna, Ljubljana and Bolzano (2010). She previously worked for Manifesta 7 in Trentino/Alto Adige (2008) and the German Pavilion at the 52nd Venice Biennial (2007). The volume *Question of the Day* (2007, co-edited with Nicolaus Schafhausen and published by Sternberg Press) gives insight into Moritz' ongoing dialogical inquiry into the formats of art's production and reception. Julia Moritz's visit was made possible with the support of Goethe-Institut and The Physics Room Residency Programme.

Léuli Eshraghi is an artist, curator, writer and PhD candidate. His research is focused on issues of decolonisation, queerness and Indigeneity. Sāmoan, Persian, born in Yuwi country in Australia, he was brought up there and in Bundjalung country, and on his family lands in the Sāmoan archipelago. Eshraghi holds qualifications in Indigenous Arts Management (2012), French and Pacific Studies (2009), and French, East Asian, and Indigenous Studies (2008). In 2015, before beginning a PhD in curatorial practice at Monash University, he was Tautai Trust Artist in Residence. While in Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland he presented work in a solo exhibition 'O lā 'āitu lāitiiti, *We have always been here* for the Auckland Pride Festival at Studio One Toi Tū, and in the group exhibition *Queer Resistance* at RM Gallery. He recently edited the Contemporary Pacific Arts Festival publication *Oceania Now*, and curated the exhibition *Coconut Water* (2015) for the Caboolture Regional Art Gallery in Australia.

leulieshraghi.com

Misal Adnan Yildiz took up his position as Director of Artspace in November 2014 after being the Artistic Director of Künstlerhaus Stuttgart since 2011. He participated in the travelling curatorial research program Curatorlab/Konstfack (2006-2008) and worked as a researcher in Valand Art Academy's Independent Study Program (2009) in Stockholm. Yildiz realised the exhibition *A History of Inspiration* as part of the Nouvelles Vagues at the Palais de Tokyo (2013), while also working as a curatorial collaborator for the 13th Istanbul Biennial. He was a nominee for the ICI Independent Curatorial Vision Award in 2012 and shared with two other nominees the Curate Award 2014 prize (Fondazione Prada & Qatar Museums Authority).

Local Time is a four-person collective — Danny Butt, Jon Bywater, Alex Monteith and Natalie Roberston — based in Auckland, Aotearoa New Zealand. Local Time has been a collective since 2007, usually working in collaboration with maintainers of local knowledge in specific sites. Our individual practices engage in debates concerning colonial histories and cross-cultural exchange through time-based media art projects, contemporary art teaching and critical writing. Our shared past includes two international symposia, which attempted to incorporate bi-cultural principles in their staging as well as in their thematics, establishing settings for exchange and dialogue shaped by tikanga Māori. This genealogy reflects our attempt to reconcile our experiences of colonial and indigenous knowledges and temporalities, the connection between the aesthetic and the political, and with the way the cultural is political.

local-time.net

Public Share is a seven member collective that situates projects within everyday social structures in order to engage in making, sharing and exchange. Sharing initially occurs through a collective process of making, which then extends to a socially engaged event. Of particular interest is the relating of site (or location), place and production through a cycle of exchanges — discussion, negotiation, collection, testing, making and sharing. Public Share includes Monique Redmond, Harriet Stockman, Kirsten Dryburgh, Joe Prisk, Deborah Rundle, Mark Schroder and Kelsey Stankovich.

publicsharecollective.com

PROGRAMME

Thursday 20 August:

Keynote lecture Julia Moritz: Findings on Traversality: Think Tanks and Moonwalks, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki Auditorium

5.30pm	Registration
5.45 – 6.00pm	Mihi whakatau
6.00 – 6.15pm	Conveners' welcome: Abby Cunnane and Charlotte Huddleston
6.15 – 7.30pm	Julia Moritz: Findings on Traversality: Think Tanks and Moonwalks

Friday 21 August:

Presentations, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki Auditorium

9.00am	Registration and Carried Forward, shared refreshments: morning coffee and breakfast snack by Public Share
9.45am	Welcome and introduction
10.00am	Cassandra Barnett: Housings
10.50am	Response from Abby, question time
Short break	
11.30am	Léuli Eshraghi: Moananui Curatorial Resurgence
12.20pm	Response from Charlotte, question time
12.30 - 1.30pm	Lunch: Carried Forward, shared refreshments: soup by Public Share
1.30pm	Peter Brunt: Exhibiting Oceania in Three Acts
2.20pm	Response from Abby, question time
Short break	
3.00pm	Misal Adnan Yildiz and Marysia Lewandowska in conversation: On the Politics of Negotiation
3.50pm	Response from Charlotte, question time
Wrap up for the day	
4.30pm	Delegates head to Piha
6.30pm (approx.)	Arrive Piha Mill Camp (accommodation)
7.00pm (approx.)	Karakia at Te Piha
7.45pm (approx.)	Dinner at Piha café, followed by fireside chat at Piha Mill (weather permitting)

Saturday 22 August:

Full day at Piha, informal discussion and walking, facilitated by Local Time

Pre-Dawn	Invitation to Te Ahua Pa with Pita Turei (Ngai Tai ki Tamaki, Ngati Paoa, Nga Rauru Kiiitahi)
8.00am	Breakfast at Piha Mill
9.00am – 2.00pm	Discussion at Piha Mill (including lunch)
2.00pm	Pack out of Piha Mill Camp by 3pm

Convenors:

Abby Cunnane and Charlotte Huddleston



The ST PAUL St Gallery 2015 Curatorial Symposium
is presented in partnership with:



ST PAUL St Gallery are:

Charlotte Huddleston, Director

Abby Cunnane, Assistant Director

Tosh Ahkit, Gallery Assistant

Eddie Clemens, Gallery Technician

Intern, Allan Haeweng

Special thanks to:

Fiona Amundsen, Emma Bugden, Saskia Buedel, Janita Crow, David Cross, Kate BrettKelly-Chalmers, Karl Chitham, Elizabeth Ellis, Dieneke Jansen, Bianca Hester, Rebecca Ann Hobbs, Anna-Marie White, Kim Paton, Nova Paul, Bruce E. Phillips, Laura Preston, Janine Randerson, Monique Redmond, Thomasin Sleigh, Zara Stanhope, Megan Tamati-Quennell, Linda Tyler, Layne Waerea, Leafa Wilson, Amanda Yates.