

# TOKO KOI I TE PŌ

While Sir Apirana Ngata proposed that the way forward is to hold the tools of Pākehā in our hands and the knowledge of our ancestors in our hearts, I believe today's equivalent would be an iPhone in one hand and our tikanga in the other. For many of us the internet, and all things digital, are very much ingrained in our daily experience of the world and of each other – our politics, identity, and voice. *Toko koi i te pō* seeks to explore this digital space to allow for refreshed expressions of identity and testing of new ways to engage with intergenerational knowledge.

A concept coined by Grace Dillion as Indigenous futurism, stemming from Afrofuturism, considers the representation of indigenous peoples (or lack of) in science fiction, and furthermore, in the future. I suggest this is a reality we are already living, as digital media is a heavy presence in our daily experience of the world already. Dillions' term extends to literature, games, comics, film, etc. as a space that may allow for positive and self-determined representations of Indigenous narratives, knowledge and environments in futuristic settings. Posed self-portraits of vampire characters by Melody-Jazz Makavani nod to video game and internet culture, flexing full autonomy of portrayal of self beyond the boxes of tradition and cultural identity. While Melody's work leans away from culturally inherited identity, the karaoke video embraces the exchange of intergenerational knowledge by testing ways of learning my mum's composed waiata through another type of rote learning: karaoke.

*Toko koi i te pō* speaks to an emergence from darkness, and the intensity of potential and creativity in darkness and the void. As a framework for these artworks in Gallery Three, *Toko koi i te pō* seeks to explore how new media may be grasped to express autonomy of self, identity and knowledge from the past, in the present, for the future. *Toko koi i te pō* poses an open question to its audience: when we as indigenous people have been defined in the past as the 'vanishing race', how may we utilise new media, technology and the internet to see ourselves and our knowledges as thriving, successful and very much alive in the future?

21 February – 4 March

Melody-Jazz Makavani

Kahurangiariki Smith

Reading/Research list:

'Walking The Clouds'  
Grace L. Dillion (2012)

'Imagining the next  
seven generations'  
Skawennati, TEDxMontreal  
talk, 2017?

'Surviving  
Disappearance, Re-  
Imagining and Humanising  
Native Peoples'  
Matika Wilbur,  
TEDXSeattle, year?

'Te Kore: Concept of the  
Void as a Kaupapa for  
Creative Practice'  
Moana Nepia

AbTec Island, abtec.org

'Princess Mononoke'  
Studio Ghibli, 1996

Final Fantasy VII,  
Squaresoft

# TOKO KOI I TE PO

St Paul St Gallery  
Three  
Level 3  
WE Building  
27 St Paul Street

## List of works:

Melody-Jazz Makavani,  
*Cluster 1*, 2019.

Melody-Jazz Makavani,  
*Cluster 2*, 2019.

Melody-Jazz Makavani,  
*Cluster 3*, 2019.

Melody-Jazz Makavani,  
*Projection*, 2019.

Melody-Jazz Makavani,  
*Statement*, 2019.

Kahurangiariki Smith,  
*He Tangi Aroha-Mama  
Don't Cry (Feb 2020  
edit)*, 2020.

