

# Influx

Louisa Afoa, Jasmine Togo-Brisby, Jasmine Te Hira, John Vea, Nina Oberg Humphries, Christina Pataialii, Pati Solomona Tyrell, Valasi Leota-Seiuli, Pelepesite Tofilau and Rhueben Meredith, Shane Tu'ihalangingie

ST PAUL St Galleries One and Two  
23 September – 28 October 2016

Since Paul Tangata, the first artist of Pacific heritage to graduate from the Elam School of Fine Arts in 1965, there has been an influx of Pacific Island students training across art institutions. *Influx* brings together a range of contemporary artworks by eleven artists that reflects tertiary practice as a time where many artists develop a sense of political agency. The artists included are not defined by one set of politics or artistic method, however, but instead work in a constant state of flux.

Hidden histories of the slave diaspora of South Sea Islanders are unearthed through the investigation led by **Jasmine Togo-Brisby**. South Sea Islanders are Australian-born descendants of Pacific peoples taken to Australia as a result of slave labour policies employed by the Australian government between 1863 and 1903. Togo-Brisby's research toward *Re:finery* (2016) revealed that the Chelsea Sugar Company is a subsidiary, importing raw sugar from Queensland, making New Zealand complicit in this history.<sup>1</sup> The artist takes everyday objects and transforms them in a way which incites political awareness: Chelsea Sugar bags are deconstructed, beaten and adhered to make a *nemasitse* (Ni-Vanuatu bark cloth) that pays homage to Australian South Sea Islanders.

In *They sailed through on foreign white clouds* (2016), **Valasi Leota-Seiuli** traces imagery taken during the Second Civil War in Samoa (1898-949) by New Zealand photographer Alfred John Tattersall. Leota-Seiuli has transferred Tattersall's photograph *British, American and German Ships 1899* onto a sculptural frame. Parts of the image are emphasised while others are lost through transferal; the fragmentary result connotes the way in which both image and history can be manipulated.

*The Weight of Skin* (2015) by **Jasmine Te Hira** engages the notion of embodied experiences through repetitive acts that traverse living and spiritual realms. In this moving image work, Te Hira is depicted face down on the ground; her torso is covered in black leaving her shoulders exposed and the only remaining heirloom from her Atiu grandmother, a leather and wooden hair pin. Dirt is flung onto the artist's body alluding to rituals surrounding death. Through performance and non-diegetic sound via the shovel, the work creates evocations of death that are unnerving.

The use of the body as a vessel is also explored by **Pati Solomona Tyrell**, who combines elements of traditional Samoan dance, music and costume with his

contemporary urban experiences in *Fa'afa* (2015). Tyrell embodies the Samoan term *fa'afa*, the concept of half, presented in this instance as an *aitu* (spirit) of *Pulotu* (the underworld). From this otherworldly place, the artist performs a *taualuga* (dance), typically performed as a solo dance by a female, accompanied by narration that alludes to complexities of gender and sexuality. This culminates into the final recitation,

*Once revered, poisoned by palagi lies, a book, a box  
now brought to disrupt.  
I, Samoa's only freedom.  
I am her last resistance.  
I, fa'atama, fa'afine, fa'afa,  
we who live in between.*

Beyond connections between past and present, the exhibition also includes a broad exploration of urban experiences that shift across Auckland. **Christina Pataialii's** works, *Ōwairaka*, *Avondale* and *Plastic still life-his* (2015), feature the familiar red, white and blue plastic bags known as *Hung bak lam doi*. On this surface, collaged objects are intuitively arranged to create still life compositions. This source material is part of a wider investigation of relocation and dislocation, navigating memory and the quotidian.<sup>2</sup> Works are titled after areas of Auckland that hold significance for the artist, which, together with the plastic bags, act as a memory of her migration between suburbs.

Encountering new geographies is explored in the video works *Coconut Oil* (2016) and *Beneath the Surface* (2016) by **Louisa Afoa** which respond to experiences of assumption and prejudice at her new home on the North Shore. The works juxtapose scenes of a swimming pool, where Afoa leisurely swims, with close up shots of the Afoa rubbing coconut oil on parts of her body. The artist recounts the way in which a seemingly minute encounter of prejudice develops into an embodied traumatic memory, and in turn, marks the home as a site of trauma. Upon seeing the artist and her family occupying the swimming pool and home, a next door neighbour reported to the homeowner (Afoa's partner's mother) that the pool was dirty and full of hair. Personal narrative is further utilised in the accompanying wall text which retells the poignant memory of her Father's passing. Together this installation shows that while institutions, tertiary or otherwise, work towards removing systemic inequities, Pacific urban experiences are also marred daily by forms of casual racism.

Contemporary challenges to the home as a site of internalised turbulence are also explored by multimedia artist **Shane Tu'ihalangie**. *Get Your Mind Right* (2014) is a staged self-portrait of the artist taken at his home. Dramatic lighting gives the work a filmic quality of the uncanny, as if something lurks around the corner. Elements of dress deliberately mix traditional Tongan attire, a *taovala* (Tongan waist ornament), with a black bandana worn on his head to connote the influence of American culture in Pacific urban experience – from music to dress. Together, Tu'ihalangie's triptych of images denote the challenges of retaining cultural traditions for Pacific Island communities living in diaspora.

Assertions of Pacific identity are remade in the moving image installation *Rhythm Section* (2014) by Christchurch-based artist **Nina Oberg Humphries**. From a motley collection sourced from cheap thrift stores, Oberg Humphries refashions materials into an alluring dance costume that takes on traditional forms of cultural adornment. The costume comprises an embellished headpiece inspired by a Samoan tuiga (ceremonial headdress) and Tongan tekiteki (feather headpiece) combined with a rakei 'ura (Cook Islands dance costume). The artist dons this costume and uses UV light to create a fluorescent silhouette that emphasises her movement. Further mixing takes form in the artist's dance which shifts from Samoan tauuluga to the Cook Islands ura (dance), all to the tune of Blue Bayou, originally sung by Linda Rondstadt and covered by popular Tongan Reggae artist Swiss. Together these components are representative of urban experiences that inform Pacific identity.

Physical manifestations of cultural exchange are explored through inanimate objects, which adopt a sense of performativity in *Parking Meters* (2015) by multi-media artist **John Vea**. His residency at MTG Hawkes Bay brought him into *talanoa* (conversations) with a Pacific community of seasonal workers, but also, with single-bay coin operated parking meters that are still used throughout the Bay of Plenty region. Vea positions the meters as sculptural forms, where the body of the meter is used to symbolise the incomparable power balances that underpin seasonal work. The emphasis is on the purely transactional nature of the exchange, where workers who labour over recurrent seasons to send remittances back to their homeland are not recognised beyond their capacity to provide temporary labour.

Cultural exchanges between the Pacific and New Zealand are explored through the symbol of the *umu* pack, specially made cardboard boxes often brought back from the Pacific Islands and filled with food. **Pelepesite Tofilau** and **Rhueben Meredith** explore this

exchange process, designing *umu* packs to equip Pacific Island year 11-13 secondary school students for tertiary education. The packs contain relevant educational resources, prospectuses and information that demystify tertiary education for Pacific high school students and their families. The project has developed into a small start-up business, with the designers currently working to create and distribute *umu* packs to secondary schools across New Zealand. At the heart of this project is a transfusion of Pacific Island values that show a way forward for generations of Pacific Island communities.

Each of the artists in *Influx* create moments of heightened awareness that engages and moves beyond the framework of tertiary practice. The creative potential of art is activated in political issues, not as a separate aesthetic experience but embedded in daily life experiences of Pacific peoples. These artists are reflective of a new generation who do not await graduation to explore the interface between art and life; instead they actively pursue the capacity of art to impact their communities and the world around them now.

Ane Tonga

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**Influx is curated by Ane Tonga and marks the eighth Tautai tertiary exhibition.**

**[www.tautai.org](http://www.tautai.org)**

Influx will be exhibited at Pātaka Art + Museum, Porirua, 20 May – 13 August 2017.

An exhibition catalogue will be available in October. If you are interested, please enquire in the gallery.

1. Jasmine Togo-Brisby, 'Panel: A Complex State' (artist presentation, *XII International Symposium of the Pacific Arts Association*, Auckland, 16 March 2016).
2. Christina Pataialii, conversation with author, 22 August 2016.

# Tomonga

Louisa Afoa, Jasmine Togo-Brisby, Jasmine Te Hira, John Vea, Nina Oberg Humphries, Christina Pataialii, Pati Solomona Tyrell, Valasi Leota-Seiuli, Pelepesite Tofilau and Rhueben Meredith, Shane Tu'ihalangie

ST PAUL St Taiwhanga Tahī me Rua  
25 Mahuru – 28 Whiringa-ā-nuku 2016

Nō muri mai i a Paul Tangata, te ringatoi tuatahi nō Te Moana-nui-a-Kiwa kia puta mai i te kura toi o Elam School i te tau 1965, kua tomokia ngā kura toi katoa e ngā ākonga nō Te Moana-nui-a-Kiwa. Ko tā *Tomonga* he huihui i ngā mahi toi nō nāianeī nā ngā ringatoi tekau mā tahi e whakaata ana ko te wā o te ako i te whare wānanga te wā e māhorahora ake ai te hinengaro o te ringatoi ki ngā take tōrangapū. Kāore ngā ringatoi o tēnei huihuinga e tautuhia ki tētahi tikanga tōrangapū kotahi, ki tētahi tikanga toi kotahi rānei, engari e wātea tonu ana rātou ki te mahi i tā rātou i pai ai.

Kua huraina ngā hītori ngaro mō te heke a ngā herehere nō Te Moana ki te tonga mā ngā whakatewhatewhanga i kawea ake e **Jasmine Togo-Brisby**. I whānau mai ngā tāngata nō Te Moana ki te tonga i Ahitereiria, ā, he uri rātou nō ngā tāngata o Te Moana-nui-a-Kiwa. He mea hari rātou ki Ahitereiria i runga i ngā kaupapa whakamahi herehere i whakamahia ai e te kāwanatanga o Ahitereiria i waenganui i te tau 1863 me te tau 1903. I puta mai i ngā rangahau a Togo-Brisby mō *Re:finery* (2016), ko te kamupene huka o Chelsea tētahi kamupene i hoko huka mai i Kuīnirangi, nā reira i whai wāhi ai a Aotearoa ki tēnei hītori.<sup>1</sup> Kua whakawhitihia e te ringatoi ngā hanga o ia rā kia toko ake ai te whakaaro nui i roto i te tangata ki te ngā take tōrangapū: kua wetewetekia, kua patua, kua whakamahia ngā pēke huka Chelsea hei *nemasitse* (he tapa Ni-Vanuatu), he mihi tēnei ki ngā tāngata o Te Moana ki te tonga e noho ana i Ahitereiria.

I roto i tana mahi *They sailed through on foreign white clouds* (2016), ka tūhura a **Valasi Leota-Seiuli** i ngā whakaahua i whakaahuatia i te riri tara ā-whare tuarua i Hāmoa (1898-1949) e Alfred John Tattersall, kaiwhakaahua nō Aotearoa. Kua whakawhitihia e Leota-Seiuli ngā whakaahua a Tattersall, arā *British, American and German Ships* 1899 ki tētahi hanga taitapa. Kei te kaha te kitea o ētahi wāhanga o te whakaahua, engari anō ētahi atu wāhanga kua ngaro i te whakawhitinga; he tohu tēnei tuāhua tuāporoporo i te āhei a tētahi ki te raweke i tēnei mea, i te whakaahua me te hītori.

Ko tā *The Weight of Skin* (2015) nā **Jasmine Te Hira**, he morimori i te whakaaro ki te wairua mā ētahi mahi he rite tonu te puta mai e whakawhitiwhiti ana i te ao mārama me te ao wairua. Kitea ana a Te Hira e takoto tāpapa ana, kapi ana tana tinana i te rau mangu, e kitea tonutia ana ōna pokohiwi, ā, kua tiaia ōna makawe ki te pua. Ka makaia te paru ki runga i te tinana o te

ringatoi, he tohu i ngā ritenga e pā ana ki te mate. Mā te whakaari me te rongo i te tangi a te hāwara e whakaaro ai te tangata ki te mate, rere ana te matakū.

Tūhura ai anō a **Pati Solomona Tyrell** i te whakamahinga o te tinana hei waka, tūhono ai ia i ētahi āhuatanga o te haka Hāmoa, o te puoro me te kākahu i tana mahi nō nāianeī, arā *Fa'afa* (2015). Whakatinanahia ana e Tyrell tēnei ariā Hāmoa, *fa'afa*, arā te haurua, i tēnei horopaki he aitu (wairua) nō Puluotu (Rarohenga). Ka tū te ringatoi ki te tualuga (haka) i tēnei ao rerekē. I te nuinga o te wā, hakaina takitahitia ai tēnei haka e tētahi wahine, ka rere hoki ngā kōrero mō te matatini o te ira me te hōkakatanga o te tangata hei kinaki ake. Ka whakatepehia ake ki te takitaki whakamutunga,

*Once revered, poisoned by palagi lies, a book, a box  
now brought to disrupt.  
I, Samoa's only freedom.  
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we who live in between.*

Kei roto anō i tēnei whakaaturanga ētahi tirohanga whānui ki ngā wheako ā-tāone, horapa i te rohe o Tāmaki makaurau. Kitea ana i tā **Christina Pataialii's** mahi, *Ōwairaka, Avondale and Plastic still life-his* (2015), ngā tohu whero, mā, kikorangi e mōhiotia ana ko *Hung bak lam doi*. I tēnei papa, kua whakaritea noatia ngā hanga piripiri kia puta mai ai he hanganga tūturu. He wāhanga tēnei hanga nō te whakatewhanga mō te nukuhanga me te whakakārangitanga e tāwhai ana i te maumahara me ngā mahi o ia rā, o ia rā.<sup>2</sup> Kua huaina ngā mahi ki ngā wāhi o Tāmaki makaurau e whai tikanga ana ki te ringatoi, ā, āpitihia atu ki ngā pēke kirihou koinei ōna maharatanga ki ōna hekenga i waenganui i ngā rohe.

Ko te toro atu ki ngā papa whenua te kaupapa o te ataata a **Louisa Afoa**, arā *Coconut Oil* (2016) me *Beneath the Surface* (2016). E kīia ana tāna kaupapa, ko A pool is not the Ocean, he wāhanga ngā ataata e rua o tēnei kaupapa, he whakautu tēnei ki ngā wheako whakatatau me ngā wheako whakatoihara kua pā ki a ia i tana kāinga i te Rakipaewhenua. Nō te kitenga atu o te ringatoi me tōna whānau e kaukau ana i te puna kaukau o te kāinga, ka kōrero te kiritata ki te ariki o te whare (arā, ki te hungarei o Afoa), me te kī ake kua kapi te puna kaukau i te makawe, kua paruparu hoki. Kua tāpirihia ki tēnei mahi tētahi ataata o te puna kaukau

e kauhoe noatia ana e Afoa, ā, ka āta kitea te tinana o te ringatoi. I te pātū tūtata e tuhia ana ngā kōrero ake a Afoa kia kitea te āhua o te whakaparahako, o te whakahāwea kua pā ki a ia. Ahakoa e whai ana ngā pūtahitanga me ngā whare wānanga ki te whakakore i ngā whakarerekētanga ā-pūnaha, pā tonu ai ēnei āhuatanga kaikiri ki ngā tāngata noho tāone o Te Moana-nui-a-Kiwa i ia rā.

Ka titiro anō a **Shane Tu'ihalangie** ki ngā wero o te wā nei i tana mahi *Get Your Mind Right* (2014). He whakaahua kiriaro o te ringatoi i tōna kāinga te whakaahua. Rite nei te āhua o te mahi ki te kiriata puta kē nā ngā ahoaho, anō nei e whakapupuni mai ana tētahi i te kokonga. Kua āta whakawhenumitia ngā kākahu nō Tonga, arā te *taovala* (he kākahu Tonga ka mau i te hope), te tipare pango i te upoko hei tohu i te whakaawetanga mai o te ahurea Amerikana ki te noho a Te Moana-nui-a-Kiwa i te tāone – nā te puoro ko te kākahu. Ka tā Tu'ihalangie mahi takitoru he tohu i ngā wero o te pupuri a ngā tāngata nō Te Moana-nui-a-Kiwa e noho tāone ki ngā tikanga.

E whakaūngia ana ngā kōrero mō te tuakiri Moana-nui-a-Kiwa i te puninga toi ataata o *Rhythm Section* (2014) nā **Nina Oberg Humphries**. Kua hangaia mai e Oberg Humphries he kākahu haka ki ngā rawa i tikina e ia i ngā toa hokohoko. He tipare kua whakanikotia tētahi wāhanga o te kākahu, he rite ki tā ngā Kuki Airani *pare rau'ara* (tipare), hei āpiti atu he *rakei 'ura* (kākahu haka); he tipare i whakaawetia mai e tā Hāmoa *tuiga* (tipare taketake) me tā Tonga *tekiteki* (tipare raukura). Mau ana te ringatoi i tēnei kākahu, ā, kua whakamahia e ia te ahoaho katikati ki te whakaahua i tōna ata kia āta kitea ai ōna nekehanga. Ka kitea anō he whenumitanga i te haka a te ringatoi, he whenumitanga o te *taualuga* a Hāmoa, me te *ura* a Kuki Airani, he mea kinaki ki te waiata *Blue Bayou*, i waiatatia tuatahitia e Linda Rondstadt, ā, nō muri mai ka waiatatia e te rōpū waiata Reggae nō Tonga, e Swiss. Hui katoa he tohu ēnei āhuatanga i ngā wheako ā-tāone ka whai wāhi ki te tuakiri Moana-nui-a-Kiwa.

Ka tirohia te whakatinanatanga o ngā whakawhitinga ā-ahurea ki ngā hanga kāore ora ana i te mahi *Parking Meters* (2015) nā **John Vea**. Nā tana noho i MTG i Te Matau-a-Māui i *talanoa* (kōrerorero) ai ia ki ngā hapori kaimahi ā-tau Moana-nui-a-Kiwa, ā, i tūpono hoki ai ki ngā mita whakatū waka, kotahi kapa e whakamahia tonutia ana, puta noa i te rohe o Te Matau-a-Māui. Kua whakatūria e Vea te mita hei hanga whakairo, he tohu te mita i te kaha o te rerekētanga o mana e hāngai ana ki te mahi ā-tau. He whakaata i te āhua o te mahi whakawhitiwhiti noa, kāore e whakaarotia ake te āheinga o ngā kaimahi ka mahi i ngā wāhanga o te tau ki te tuku pūtea ki ō rātou wā kāinga i tua atu i tēnei mahi wā poto.

Ka tirohia ngā whakawhitinga ā-ahurea i waenganui i Te Moana-nui-a-Kiwa me Aotearoa mā te tohu o te pīkau *umu*, he pouaka pepa mātōtoru kī tonu i te kai, he mea āta waihanga, ā, e rite tonu ana te whakahokia mai i Te Moana-nui-a-Kiwa. Ka titiro a **Pelepesite Tofilau** rāua ko **Rhueben Meredith** ki te tukanga o tēnei whakawhitinga mā te hoahoa i ētahi pīkau *umu* hei whakarite i ngā ākonga Moana-nui-a-Kiwa nō te tau 11-13 i te kura tuarua mō te whare wānanga. Kei roto i ngā pīkau ngā rauemi mātauranga e hāngai ana, ngā pukapuka hōtaka me ngā mōhihio e whakamārama ana i te whare wānanga ki ngā ākonga Moana-nui-a-Kiwa me ō rātou whānau. Kua whanake ake te kaupapa nei hei pakihi iti, ā, kei te waihanga ngā kaihoahoa i ngā pīkau *umu* ināianei hei tohatoha ki ngā kura tuarua, puta noa i Aotearoa. Kei te iho o tēnei kaupapa te whakawhitinga o ngā uara nō Te Moana-nui-a-Kiwa hei ārahi i ngā whakatupuranga o ngā hapori Moana-nui-a-Kiwa.

Kua whakarite mai ngā ringatoi katoa o *Tomonga* i tētahi āhuatanga i toko ake ai te whakaaro nui, i nuku noa atu i ngā ritenga o te whare wānanga. Whakahohetia ai te pitomata auaha o te toi ngā take tōrangapū, ehara i te mahi tū motuhake, engari he wāhi tonu nō ngā mahi o ia rā a ngā tāngata o Te Moana-nui-a-Kiwa. Nō te tira hou ēnei ringatoi, kāore rātou e whanga noa kia pōtaetia rātou, kātahi rā ka whakatōmene i te pūtahitanga o te toi me te oranga, heoi anō ka āta whāia e rātou te āheinga o te toi ki te whakaawe i ō rātou hapori me te ao e noho nei rātou.

Ane Tonga

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**He mea rauhi mai a Influx e Ane Tonga, ā, he tohu i te whakaaturanga whare wānanga tuawaru a Tautai.**

**[www.tautai.org](http://www.tautai.org)**

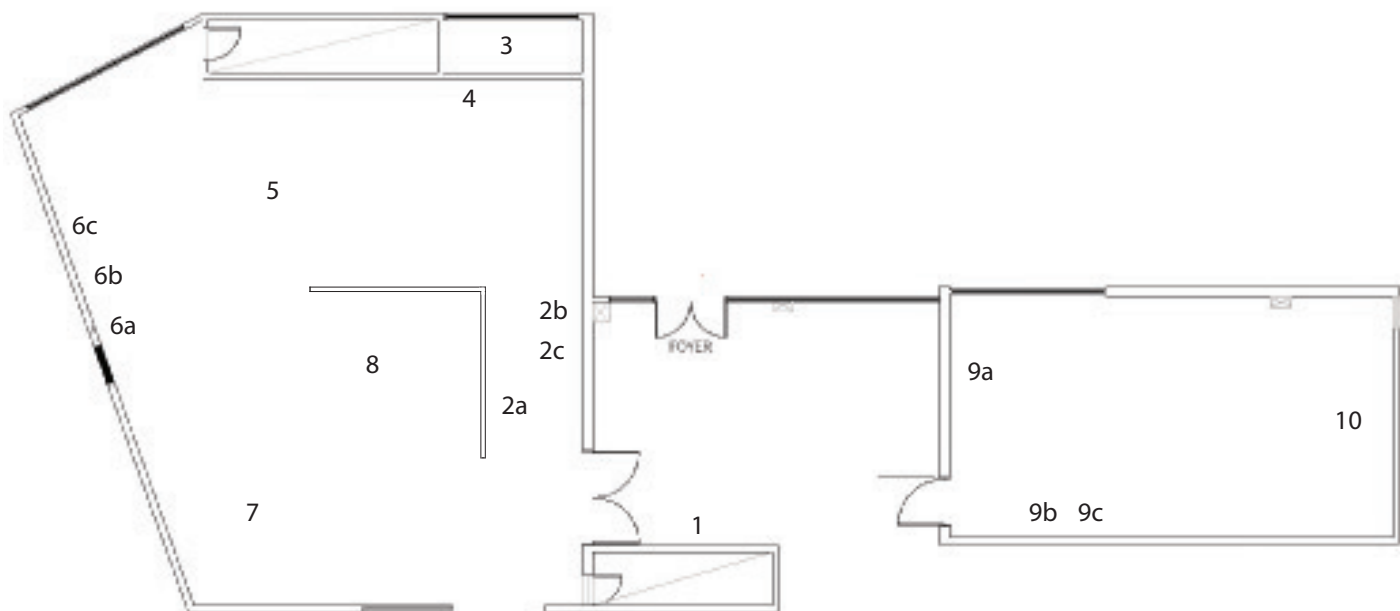
Ka whakaaturia a Tomonga ki Pātaka Art + Museum, Porirua, hei te 20 o Haratua – 13 o Hereturikōkā, hei te tau 2017.

Ka whakaputaina tētahi pukapuka whakaaturanga hei te Whiringa-ā-nuku. Ki te hiahia koe, whakapā atu ki te taiwhanga toi.

**Te Reo translation by Hēmi Kelly**

◀ **ST PAUL ST**





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10. Nina Oberg Humphries  
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Courtesy of the Wrightmann Collection