HUMcard

Notes from
an artist

*Kia ora and **welcome to our fourth** **HUMcard of 2022**. We're sending you these special mailouts six times a year to say thank you for joining our Publishers Circle or for supporting HUM. They're produced in collaboration with contemporary artists/curators from Aotearoa New Zealand highlighting an international project they're working on, and we hope you've been enjoying them.*

For our previous HUMcard, *we had Alex Monteith share details of her project at APT10 in Mian-jin Brisbane. For this edition, we've invited the Aotearoa collective **FAFSWAG** to reflect on their participation **at documenta fifteen in Kassel, Germany, from 18 June - 25 September 2022**.*

FAFSWAG are the only Oceanic artists to be invited for this documenta, presenting existing and new works that model cultural restoration as told through archival discourse and re-imagined indigenous futures. Scroll down for a written reflection and exclusive images from the collective while preparing for documenta, as well as pics from FAFSWAG's work installed in Kassel, taken by HUM's Editor Pauline Autet during last week's preview days. In the coming months we will also be publishing new essays responding to this major quinquennial exhibition, keep an eye out!

From FAFSWAG
at documenta fifteen in Kassel

Image: FAFSWAG Arts Collective. L-R: Mahia Jermaine Dean, Falencie Filipo, Tanu Gago, Tapuaki Helu, Nahora Ioane, Moe Laga, Tim Swann, Pati Tyrell, James Waititi and Elyssia Wilson Heti. All images courtesy of FAFSWAG unless otherwise stated.

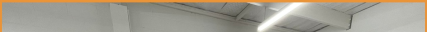
"It's Sunday June 5, 2022, members of FAFSWAG Arts Collective are sitting in the McCahon House studio in Titirangi, in the Waitakere ranges. Attempting to timeline the past 19 months of remote work, from November of 2020 to current day. It's a hazy process at best. "That was in August," someone says, till another artist with a laptop tracks the earliest email from Ruangrupa and the Documenta curators. It's settled, and we open our timeline on November 21, 2020.

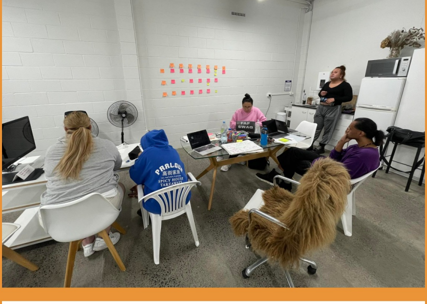
This back and forth of semi-reliable memories is scrutinized, debated, and patched together with intermittent facts, time stamps, and emails chucked in by the more pragmatic members of the collective. This process continues for another two hours before someone screams out SMOKO!! We all step back from the wall to reveal a rainbow of post-its chronicling all the milestones of our engagements with Ruangrupa, Documenta and the Lumbung; a resource network made up of various collectives from around the world."

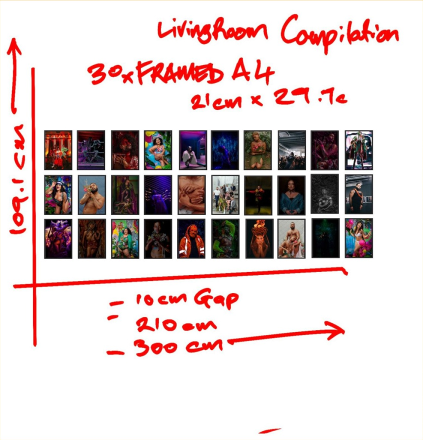
Both images: BTS from *ALTERATION*, 2022. Moving image work, featuring Baby Bloodclots. Created by FAFSWAG Arts Collective; **(top, #1)** Photo: Mahia Jermaine Dean; **(bottom, #2)** Photo: Pati Tyrell.

"This process has seen 19 months of production split down the middle with a period of making workshops followed by a period of collective curation, exhibition design, writing and combing through our archives, finalised by six months of film production. Throughout this process our systems begin to reveal holes, showing us what it actually looks like to swap an annual programme of events for a singular project once a year.

Mental health is no joke, so everyone is practising mindfulness around personal capacity, which means some workloads swell and others shrink, and we discover the true cost of agency and self-determination is that decisions are made painstakingly slowly. In this same time period there are two lockdowns, the borders remain closed, and we all catch COVID except for Tapuaki."



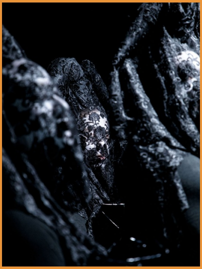




Images: (top, #1) BTS - Pre-production for new moving image work *ALTERATION*. Operating out of Ari Studios in Kingsland. L-R: Nahora Ioane, Lauryn Jade McCormick, Elyssia Wilson Heti, Moe Laga, Jermaine Dean. Photo: Mahia Jermaine Dean. Photo: Pati Tyrell; **(bottom, #2)** *ALTERATION* Archival Exhibition install images.

"This very crude summary of our process is really the heart of the project. As an arts collective with a digital and social practice, the actual artwork has been this almost two-year process of collective decision making, resource distribution, power sharing and interpersonal negotiation. Subsequently mirroring the provocation initially set by curators Ruangrupa, in which collectives share their ecosystems, interlocal connections and systems for making art sustainable.

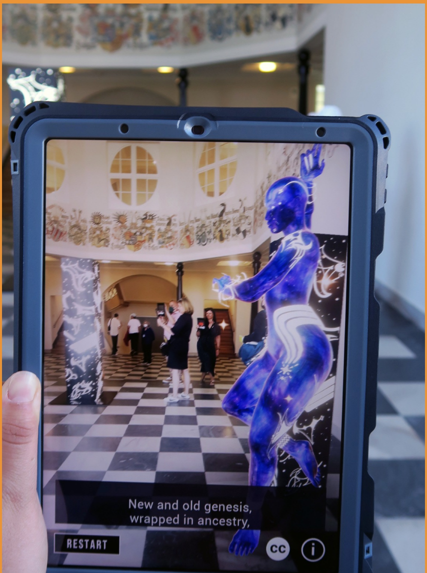
This project has allowed us to begin to untangle our work from the expectations of our community, the art world, and the internet, and really answer many of these systemic and philosophical questions for ourselves. However, in classic FAFSWAG form we're still serving you work that is slick, sexy, unapologetically Queer, and seeded in a deep cultural interrogation of identity and representation."



All images: BTS from *ALTERATION*, 2022. Moving image work. Created by FAFSWAG Arts Collective; **(top, #1)** L-R: Moe Laga, Pati Tyrell, Elyssia Wilson Heti. Photo: Mahia Jermaine Dean; **(middle L, #2)** L-R: Pati Tyrell, Elyssia Wilson Heti, Moe laga. Photo: Mahia Jermaine Dean; **(middle R, #3)** Featuring Saimone Akau McCormick. Photo: Pati Tyrell; **(bottom, #4)** image still from *ALTERATION,* 2022. Moving Image work. Created by FAFSWAG Arts Collective.

"FAFSWAG will present three site-specific works across three separate venues within the festival: *ALTERATION* - an archival mixed media exhibition at Stadtmuseum Kassel; *ALTERATION* - a companion piece to the exhibition staged as a moving image installation at Hübner Areal; and *ATUA* - an AR sculptural installation at Hessisches Landesmuseum.

Presented with support from Creative New Zealand, artists Mahia Jermaine Dean, Falencie Filipo, Tanu Gago, Tapuaki Helu, Nahora Ioane, Moe Laga, Tim Swann, Pati Tyrell, James Waititi and Elyssia Wilson Heti will present our public programme on the 22nd of June at Hessisches Landesmuseum."



Images: (above, #1&#2) FAFSWAG, *Whānau Wall (Portraits)*, **(middle, #3)** *ATUA*, and **(bottom, #4&#5)** *ALTERATION*, documenta fifteen exhibition view, Kassel, June 2022. All photos: Contemporary HUM; **(header)** documenta fifteen, Kassel, June 2022. Photo: HUM; **(below)** FAFSWAG, group portrait at the Arts Foundation Laureate Awards, Wellington, 2020.

More on the artist

FAFSWAG was established in 2013 as an informal Queer arts collective from south Auckland. As artists and activists FAFSWAG is committed to social change through arts and innovation, producing bespoke cultural activations that are cutting edge, culturally responsive and socially relevant. Operating across a multitude of interdisciplinary art forms and genres, FAFSWAG artists work collaboratively to activate public and digital space, speaking to our contexts as Queer Indigenous arts practitioners.

The collective has since exhibited and performed around the world, at the Centre Pompidou in Paris France, Moku Pacific HQ in London, Emergency Gallery in Vevey Switzerland, Rotterdam International Film Festival, ImagineNATIVE Toronto Canada, Asinabka Indigenous arts Festival in Ontario Canada, MGM Grand in Las Vegas, and in 2020 represented New Zealand at the 22nd Biennale of Sydney NIRIN. FAFSWAG was also awarded the 2020 interdisciplinary Arts Laureate award by the New Zealand Arts Foundation.

Learn more about the collective here.

FAFSWAG x HŌHUA, *Botanical Badassery*, 2017. Presented at University of Canterbury Library, 2018.

FAFSWAG performing at the Auckland War Memorial Museum for the Auckland Pride Festival 2018.

We hope you've enjoyed this HUMcard *and we look forward to sharing more projects with you throughout 2022. With your generosity and encouragement, you help us champion New Zealand's creative practitioners working in an international context, increasing their—and Aotearoa's—visibility on the world stage.*

***If you know anyone interested in New Zealand arts please consider sharing our** Support page **with them.** Every donation helps us continue our work. Thank you and ka kite anō!*

HUM

HUM is the only platform dedicated to the international activity of creative practitioners from New Zealand. In December 2021, HUM celebrated 5 years of documenting and publishing about Aotearoa arts abroad!! As always, we want to thank all of you who have supported us over the years.

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