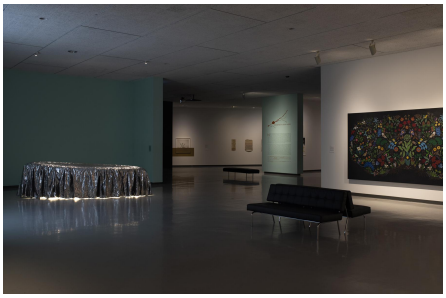
Naahdohbii: To Draw Water & What It Means To Come Together

by Franchesca Hebert-Spence

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Kevin Brownlee, *Birch Bark Canoe*, 2010, birch bark, spruce roots, white cedar, black ash, basswood bark. Builders: Kevin Brownlee, Myra Sitchon, Grant Goltz, Jim Jones Jr., Jim Jones Sr., Austin Dailey, and Christy Hohman-Caine. *Naadohbii: To Draw Water*, 1st Winnipeg Indigenous Triennial, 2021, Winnipeg Art Gallery/Qaumajuq. Photo: Serge Gumenyuk, courtesy WAG-Qaumajuq.



Naadohbii: To Draw Water, 1st Winnipeg Indigenous Triennial, 2021, Winnipeg Art Gallery/Qaumajuq. Photo: Serge Gumenyuk, courtesy WAG-Qaumajuq.



Naadohbii: To Draw Water, 1st Winnipeg Indigenous Triennial, 2021, Winnipeg Art Gallery/Qaumajuq. Photo: Serge Gumenyuk, courtesy WAG-Qaumajuq.



Regina Pilawuk Wilson, *Syaw (Fish Net)*, 2019. *Naadohbii: To Draw Water*, 2021, Winnipeg Art Gallery/Qaumajuq. Photo: Serge Gumenyuk, courtesy WAG-Qaumajuq.



Nova Paul, *Ko ahau te wai, ko te wai ko ahau*, 2018. *Naadohbii: To Draw Water*, 2021, Winnipeg Art Gallery/Qaumajuq. Photo: Serge Gumenyuk, courtesy WAG-Qaumajuq.



Nikau Hindin, *Te Wheiao III*, 2021, paper and pigments, 82cmx95cm. *Naadohbii: To Draw Water*, 2021, Winnipeg Art Gallery/ Qaumajuq. Courtesy WAG/Q.

Aotearoa artists Israel Birch, Nikau Hindin, Jeremy Leatinu'u, Nova Paul, Rachael Rakena and Keri Whaitiri feature in Naadohbii: To Draw Water, *the inaugural Indigenous Triennial at the Winnipeg Art Gallery/Qaumajuq (WAG/Q) in Winnipeg, an exhibition co-curated by Aotearoa curators Reuben Friend and Ioana Gordon-Smith along with Indigenous curators from Canada and Australia.*

In this piece, writer Franchesca Hebert-Spence considers how the collaborative curatorial approach in Naadohbii *fits within recent initiatives encouraging global Indigenous exchange while reinforcing individual visual sovereignty; allowing curators in different international regions to engage with the nuances of the 28 artists' work and their different relationships to water, history and place.*

The title of the exhibition *Naadohbii: To Draw Water* was gifted by Elder Dr. Mary Courchene, an Anishinaabemowin language speaker from Sagkeeng and curator Jaimie Isaac's maternal grandmother. Isaac explained the story of the meaning behind *Naadohbii*, saying, "my grandmother, as a child, with her siblings would go down to the river to collect buckets of water…doing that several times a day to sustain their family."[01] The act of going off on their own, maybe in pairs, maybe not, retrieving something, and bringing it back to the group solidified my understanding of this as a deeply collaborative exhibition. Collaboration is hard. Coming to a consensus, dialogical processes, and compromise require an exorbitant amount of work and trust.

I had the pleasure of visiting *Naadohbii: To Draw Water*, the inaugural Indigenous Triennial at the Winnipeg Art Gallery/ Qaumajuq (WAG/Q) in Winnipeg, Canada, in the Fall of 2021. As an Anishinaabe cultural producer from Winnipeg, a place steeped in a rich Indigenous-curatorial energy, and as an emerging curator who has followed the exhibition programme at the WAG/Q since the appointment of Jaimie Isaac as Curator, I was pleased about this opportunity to reflect on some of the stories that have been shared about *Naadohbii* and how it partakes in a larger shift in curatorial processes. I was able to gain further insight on the curatorial approach by speaking directly with the co-curators based between Canada, Aotearoa New Zealand and Australia; Jaimie Isaac (Anishinaabe), former Curator of Indigenous & Contemporary Art at WAG/Q,[02] Ioana Gordon-Smith (Sāmoan), Curator, and Reuben Friend (Ngāti Maniapoto), former Director at Pātaka Art + Museum, Wellington,[03] as well as Kimberley Moulton (Yorta Yorta), Senior Curator, South Eastern Aboriginal Collections, Museums Victoria and Jocelyn Piirainen, Assistant Curator of Inuit Art at the WAG/Q, who suggested works to include from the WAG/Q collection in conversation with Isaac. The exhibition design was developed in consultation with Destiny Seymour (Anishinaabe) founder of Indigo Arrows, an Indigenous-run design studio located in Winnipeg.

Featuring 28 artists from the three countries mentioned above, the exhibition deftly addresses the nuances and cultural specificity of each artist's engagement with water in a way that demonstrates a serious, sustained commitment rather than a surface exploration.

The Canada-based artists featured in *Naadohbii* are: Lukie Airut, Christi Belcourt, Onaman Collective (Christi Belcourt and Isaac Murdoch), Rebecca Belmore, Kevin Brownlee, Lindsay Dawn Dobbin, Eshuguriak, Maria Hupfield, Mina Inuktalik, Marianne Nicolson, William Noah, Jessie Oonark, Annie Oqaituq, Abraham Anghik Ruben, Nelson Takkiruq, and one unidentified Inuit artist from the WAG/Q collection. The artists based in Australia are: Elisa Jane (Leecee) Carmichael, Dr. Vicki Couzens, Nici Cumpston, Ishmael Marika, James Tylor, Regina Pilawuk Wilson. And those located in Aotearoa are: Israel Birch, Nikau Hindin, Jeremy Leatinu'u, Nova Paul, Rachael Rakena, Keri Whaitiri.

As Indigenous curators, walking that tightrope between supporting artists' work, performing community social obligations, and meeting institutional demands, is a collaborative process; a process that we've committed to. It's with this in mind that I look at *Naado hbii*, seeing it as an extremely interesting exhibition and a culmination of collaborative curatorial trends. In this unorthodox exhibition review, I will address how *Naadohbii*'s curatorial approach fits within recent initiatives encouraging global Indigenous exchange that reinforces individual visual sovereignty.[04] Secondly, I will discuss the curatorial concept and how curators working in different international regions strengthened the nuances in an inaugural Indigenous Triennial. Finally, I will touch on the (inevitable) impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, aspirations around hosting, and take-aways for future projects.



Naadohbii: To Draw Water, 1st Winnipeg Indigenous Triennial, 2021, Winnipeg Art Gallery/Qaumajuq. Photo: Serge Gumenyuk, courtesy WAG-Qaumajuq.



Jeremy Leatinu'u, *Taonga tuku iho*, 2021. *Naadohbii: To Draw Water*, 2021, Winnipeg Art Gallery/Qaumajuq. Photo: Serge Gumenyuk, courtesy WAG-Qaumajuq.



Naadohbii: To Draw Water, 1st Winnipeg Indigenous Triennial, 2021, Winnipeg Art Gallery/Qaumajuq. Photo: Serge Gumenyuk, courtesy WAG-Qaumajuq.

To understand how the collaborative framework lent itself to *Naad ohbii*, a quick review is necessary of various types of visual culture exchanges that have happened between Aotearoa, Australia and Canada. When chatting with Gordon-Smith and Friend, the First Nations Curatorial Exchange (FNCE) was mentioned. This was an initiative that took place from 2015 to 2017, in which Aotearoa, through Creative New Zealand, in partnership with Australia and Canada's arts bodies, brought Indigenous curators together to meet, host and share ideas. The exchange served as a way to introduce Indigenous artists and curators to one another, develop a foundation of knowledge between folks from different regions, and create a network for curatorial exchange. The success of this programme and others like it in supporting Indigenous artists and curators from each region has been demonstrated by the many projects that have grown out of them since, such as *Close Encounters: the next 500 years* (various venues, 2011), and National Gallery of Canada's Indigenous Quintennials *SAKAHAN: International Indigenous Art* (2013) and À*badakone* (2019). In Aotearoa, most recently Pātaka Art and Museum hosted *Among All These Tundras*, an exhibition of artists from the global circumpolar and in 2016, *If We Had Never Met*, an exhibition of Indigenous artists from Canada, Aotearoa, and Australia; were both the results of relationships formed out of the FNCE.

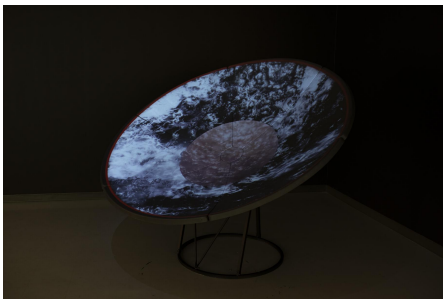
While I'm identifying these exhibitions together as a growing trend of trans-national Indigenous exchange, the approaches vary.[05] One example is a format where curators who come from a specific cultural background and nation-state context, curate an exhibition of Indigenous artists with a global scope. This would include exhibitions such as *Close Encounters: the next 500 years*, where the curatorial team were Indigenous folks from Canada (Candice Hopkins, Steve Loft, Lee-Ann Martin and Jenny Western). A recent example of an exhibition in Aotearoa with this approach is *A Very Different World*, curated by Ngahiraka Mason (Tūhoe, Te Arawa, Ngāti Pango) for Te Tuhi in 2021. This format presents work that is rooted in the discourse and perspective of the organising curator(s), where we are predisposed to search for commonalities. A different format is the curation of an exhibition of Indigenous artists from a geographic region by curators living in or from that region, travelling to an institution in another nation.

Whether the exhibition was curated for the space versus it being curated in another context and then travelling, profoundly shifts the considerations. An example of this would be *Among All These Tundras*, curated by Heather Igloliorte, Amy Prouty, and Charissa von Harringa. Then there is the consultation format, employed within both *SAKAHAN* and À*badakone* at the National Gallery of Canada, a format that Samoan/Persian/Cantonese writer Dr. Léuli Eshrāghi observed is, "informed by extensive curatorial collaboration with external consultants, though the latter are only all named in the catalogues."[06] The consultation format relies heavily on established cultural institutions with their own staff, curators, and materials, therefore consultation projects are limited by what is permissible within these spaces (spaces entrenched with systematic white supremacy that are selective of which forms of Indigenous cultural production they acknowledge). Finally, there is the collaborative curatorial approach, as seen in *Naadohbii*, where the curators are representing regions in the exhibition, and are largely responsible for curating those specific regional contributions, in conversation with the larger curatorial team.

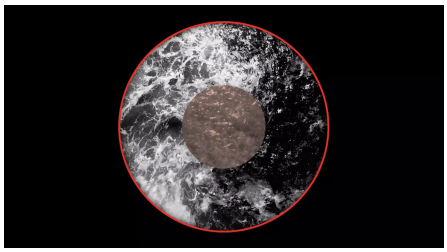
> *"I hope for a plurality of curators and spaces that denies essentialism…"* [07]

Friend, Moulton and Isaac's relationship came out of the FNCE exchange. Gordon-Smith came on board after her appointment in the newly created role of Curator, Māori Pacific at Pātaka in 2019. Friend (who had contributed to the initial selection of artists for *N aadohbii*) then stepped into a supporting role, with Gordon-Smith coming on board as a curator in order to develop the exhibition. The curatorial team met for weekly online discussions in order to develop the project. These meetings were primarily chats about the artwork, how artistic concepts overlapped or differed, and check-ins between the team. This was beneficial in that it allowed the group to build trust and familiarity (which was in turn reflected in the relationships that were nurtured with the artists), while sidestepping the need for artists to educate and contextualise local politics, which is the case when exhibitions are developed by a curator from outside the region. It also created an opportunity for the other curators to become familiar with the work of artists in

geographic regions outside of their own, particularly at a time when COVID-19 made travelling impossible. Gordon-Smith described this process as “enthusing one another.''[08] This ongoing and engaged dialogue made for small but important shifts in curatorial decision-making. One example of this is the curators’ use of the terms Turtle Island and Aotearoa in the didactic panels and exhibition labels. This may not seem significant, but it makes a crucial departure from centering and “educating” non-Indigenous audiences as a key curatorial mandate. Symbolic of this location-specific but unified approach, the exhibition’s didactic text was also collaboratively written, in which Isaac, Moulton, and Gordon-Smith took a single curatorial voice.



Israel Birch, *Rerenga Wairua*, 2021, commissioned video installation projected onto a satellite with audio, 2100 mm diameter. *Naadohbii: To Draw Water*, 2021, Winnipeg Art Gallery/Qaumajuq. Photo: Serge Gumenyuk, courtesy WAG-Qaumajuq.



Israel Birch, *Rerenga Wairua*, 2021 (still). Courtesy of the artist.

In hearing Isaac, Moulton, Gordon-Smith and Friend speak in the online content that was made available for the exhibition, as well as during the *Naadaohbii* Symposium, it’s possible to see how each curator’s interests influenced the content to give more breadth to what could have been a cursory exhibition around water and Indigenous activism. As Moulton states, “we are not one mob”,[09] and proceeds to lay out the regions from which each of her selection of artists come from and what their relationships to place look like in their work. Isaac’s positionality comes from the physical exhibition space being on her territory, and speaking to the responsibilities of water carriers from an Anishinaabe worldview. This is further consolidated when Elder Dr. Mary Courchene speaks of the relationship between women and water in the exhibition launch video, as we see her standing beside four

generations of women in her family.[10] Friend spoke of the possibilities for digital spaces to foster relationship building and further exchange, and the need for granting bodies to recognise and support such initiatives. Speaking last but not least in the video, Gordon-Smith described how in Māori introductions, folks identify the waters they come from as one of the grounding points of identity, and an important marker of their ancestral landscapes.

Rerenga Wairua (2021) a commission by Israel Birch (Ngā Puhi/ Ngāi Tawake/Ngāti Kahungunu/Ngāti Rakaipaaka), echoes Gordon-Smith's reflections. It was developed over many visits and conversations between the artist and curators. *Rerenga Wairua* is a representation of Hine-nui-te-pō and suggests an intersection between multiple spaces, times, and veils of life and death. This plurality mirrors Gordon-Smith's intentions of honouring the multi-faceted ways different communities relate to water. The video installation is projected onto a curved surface that viewers look down on, adding a dimension (pun intended) that would have been flattened on the wall or floor. The suggestion to project onto a curved surface came from Isaac and so perfectly encapsulates the possibilities of commissions and how they can generate exchange between curators, artists, and design teams.

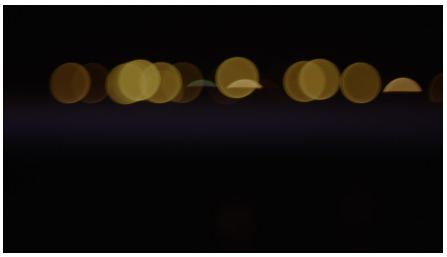
When we think of collaboration, we think about consensus, discourse, or a pooled activity in which a significant portion of collaborative work requires deep listening, trust and *letting go*. In Elder Dr. Mary Courchene's story about drawing water, the kids trek down to the river to fetch water for the benefit of everyone—it's not practical for every family member to go fetch water every time, to make it 'fair'. Collaboration isn't about doing everything together all the time, and there were moments when this was felt in the exhibition. For example, when asked about how the curators managed the installation process at a distance (due to the impossibility of travelling during COVID-19), Gordon-Smith responded that the staff and team at WAG/Q knew their space and she trusted them. Curating and installing an exhibition without being physically present can be quite a disparate experience (I say this from personal experience).

"...I also hope (...) that same plurality still allows for connections across creative people..." [11]

While aspects of collaboration—such as building trust and dialogical consensus—are generally seen as generative processes and something to strive for; I haven't seen this extend to how commissions are developed and framed in the context of large exhibitions such as *Naadohbii*. The relationship between the curator and the artist and their mutual understanding of the exhibition concept has a direct influence on the artwork that is produced for the exhibition. On an individual level, curators become co-investigators in artists' practices. On a larger level, you can see how shared collaborative processes are shaped by the curatorial discourse. In Canadian Indigenous curatorial practice, it's common for Indigenous curators to have an active artistic practice or have been trained as artists, and as a consequence they sometimes get involved in the installation process itself in a hands-on way.[12]



Jeremy Leatinu'u, *Taonga tuku iho*, 2021 (video still). Courtesy of the artist.



Jeremy Leatinu'u, *Taonga tuku iho*, 2021 (video still). Courtesy of the artist.



Jeremy Leatinu'u, *Taonga tuku iho*, 2021 (video still). Courtesy of the artist.



Nova Paul, *Ko te ripo*, 2018. *Naadohbii: To Draw Water*, 2021, Winnipeg Art Gallery/ Qaumajuq. Photo: Serge Gumenyuk, courtesy WAG-Qaumajuq.

Taonga tuku iho (2021) by Jeremy Leatinu'u is an example of a work commissioned for this exhibition that encapsulates its tone and curatorial direction. A compilation of short films, it deliberates on and examines everyday interactions with water within a larger woven storyline instigated by the arrival of a mysterious container of water—hence the title, which in English translates to "treasures handed down". Each film clip is a sensitive consideration of the way water is omnipresent within the mundane and acts as a catalyst for viewers to reevaluate their relationality to water as they move through their day. In this way, the film reflects the overarching curatorial questions such as what is water, what role does it play in my life and what is my responsibility to it? These questions, which are complicated and nebulous, were prompted through direct conversations between Leatinu'u and Gordon-Smith.[13] Watching *Taonga tuku iho* reminded me of how different the rain was when I visited Auckland, compared to how I experience rain here in the Prairies. It hammered home what a curatorial feat it is to retain each artists' lived engagement with water and the complexity of something as universal as water. It means so much to experience an exhibition that connects and complicates cultural and regional engagements with water rather than that specificity being flattened by curatorial themes.

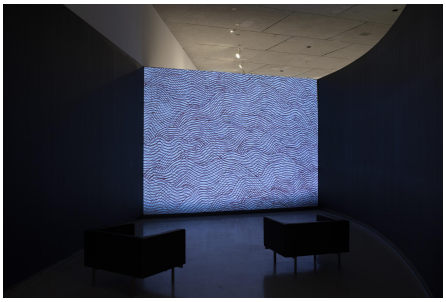
Being able to engage with Leatinu'u's work in a sustained way while sitting in a comfortable space designed to experience video art really aided this contemplative process, and marked a departure from the current experience of viewing work online, since the onset of the pandemic in 2019. As Isaac noted, "as an artist, I want people to spend time with my work. When folks are comfortable it gives them more opportunity to consider its meaning."[14] This focus on the exhibition design and architectural interventions created a unique viewing space within the gallery that had to be experienced in person in order to be fully appreciated. With curved walls for optimum audio effect and seating that allowed visitors to comfortably view longer video works, the design emphasised the physical, tangible elements of the space and made viewing the artworks something to be experienced.

> *"…and (plurality) still provides that kind of crucible that Teresia Teaiwa described as a way of holding each other accountable but in a generous manner."* [15]

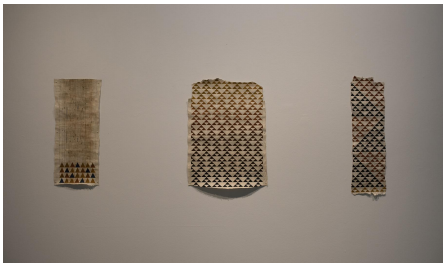
One connecting theme that links the artists in the exhibition across geographic regions is a sustained engagement with water activism, in other words an ongoing commitment, engagement, or protection of water. Cultural production here goes beyond the sphere of art to exist as a community act, one that enables us to hold each other accountable. One of the works in *Naadohbii* that documents actions that could be easily described as 'activist' is *Ko te ripo* (2018) by Nova Paul (Te Urironoi, Te Parawhau me Te Mahurehure ki Whatitiri, Ngā Puhi). This is a video of the artist's cousin, oral historian Dinah Paul, reading from the document given as evidence in their community's Treaty of Waitangi claim. *Ko ahau te wai, ko te wai ko ahau* (I am the water, the water is me), from 2018, is presented alongside this film, showing Paul walking the banks of the Waipau stream, her ancestral waters. What does it mean to be present on your own territory, to spend time with it? As someone coming from a lived experience of displacement, this work was extremely poignant to me. Even the act of making art together with family members: this is how we ensure community accountability within institutions that struggle with the concept. The artists in the exhibition are folks who are beholden, entrenched, and for whom practice is something that is lived—a community-reinforced integrity.

The heavy presence of oft-overlooked craft-based or craft-informed artwork in *Naadohbii* also spoke to a type of activism that allowed for creative connections across regions even while it remained specific to place. 'Craft'-based material processes are often part of a larger community-gathering: even the act of learning requires knowledge transference from community members. When material processes are obscured because of colonial subjugation through assimilationist processes, or environmental fallout that makes materials difficult to locate, the activism becomes labour-intensive, gleaning from extractive ethno/anthropology texts and filling in the blanks within those documents. Nikau Hindin's (Te Rarawa, Ngāpuhi) series of works *Ngaru Nui*, *Ngaru Roa*, *Ngaru Paewhenua* (2021), *Te Wheiao* (2021)

and *Te Awa Tupuna* (2021) are made with pigment on aute, a bark or tapa cloth customarily made by Māori makers and demonstrates a blend of two reclamation processes; going to Hawaiian community makers to learn harvesting and cloth techniques and doing archival research within museums. Overall, Hindin's research process took half a decade. This was possible thanks to cross-cultural generosity and the special relationship between communities within the Great Ocean. Hindin states, "Every island has different processes and even in Hawai'i, individual makers have different methods. I've finally figured out what works for me but not without help. Verna Takashima, Kaliko Spencer and Uncle Wes Sen, they have all been crucial in my learning and understanding of the fibre. The biggest teacher is the plant and I'm still learning."[16]



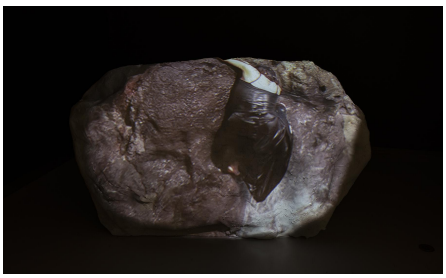
Ishmael Marika, *Rulyapa,* 2021, video animation with sound. *Naadohbii: To Draw Water*, 2021, Winnipeg Art Gallery/ Qaumajuq. Photo: Serge Gumenyuk, courtesy WAG-Qaumajuq.



Nikau Hindin, *Te Awa Tupuna*, *Te Wheiao III* and *Ngaru Nui, Ngaru Roa, Ngaru Paewhenua*, all 2021, paper and pigments. *Naadohbii: To Draw Water*, 2021, Winnipeg Art Gallery/Qaumajuq. Photo: Serge Gumenyuk, courtesy WAG-Qaumajuq.



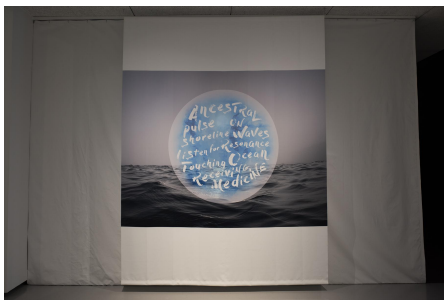
Naadohbii: To Draw Water, 1st Winnipeg Indigenous Triennial, 2021, Winnipeg Art Gallery/Qaumajuq. Photo: Serge Gumenyuk, courtesy WAG-Qaumajuq.



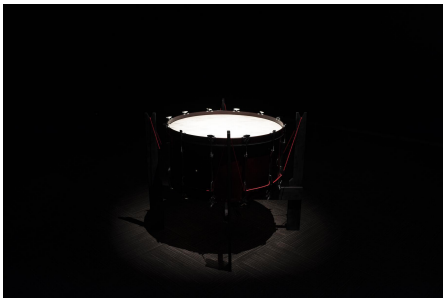
Rachael Rakena and Keri Whaitiri, *Ahakoa he iti*, 2004. *Naadohbii: To Draw Water*, 2021, Winnipeg Art Gallery/Qaumajuq. Photo: Serge Gumenyuk, courtesy WAG-Qaumajuq.



Nikau Hindin, *Ngaru Nui, Ngaru Roa, Ngaru Paewhenua* (detail), 2021, paper and pigments, 29cmx94cm. *Naadohbii: To Draw Water*, 2021, Winnipeg Art Gallery/ Qaumajuq. Photo: Serge Gumenyuk, courtesy WAG-Qaumajuq.



Lindsay Dawn Dobbin, *Touching ocean, receiving medicine*, 2021, sound work and drum, with photographic film still and watercolor text print, commissioned by the 1st Winnipeg Art Gallery Indigenous Triennial. *Naadohbii: To Draw Water*, 2021, Winnipeg Art Gallery/Qaumajuq. Photo: Serge Gumenyuk, courtesy WAG-Qaumajuq.



Lindsay Dawn Dobbin, *Touching ocean, receiving medicine*, 2021, sound work and drum, with photographic film still and watercolor text print, commissioned by the 1st Winnipeg Art Gallery Indigenous Triennial. *Naadohbii: To Draw Water*, 2021, Winnipeg Art Gallery/Qaumajuq. Photo: Serge Gumenyuk, courtesy WAG-Qaumajuq.

Similarly, Lindsay Dawn Dobbin (Kanien'kehá:ka) is an artist and water protector who “aims to bring attention to the natural world as witness, teacher and collaborator in learning”.[17] *Touching ocean, receiving medicine* (2021) closely follows Dobbin’s practice around the Bay of Fundy, Wabanaki territory, which she inhabits as

a guest, and in which she focuses on being present in that particular place. The work is a drum that has the sounds and the tactility of the Bay of Fundy. This work is only a small part of the many different processes in which Dobbin responds to that specific coastline between Nova Scotia and New Brunswick in her place-responsive practice, but specifically documents the ebbs and flows of the edge of the ocean. This ongoing engagement was translated literally to a document that can be felt through touch. Dobbin successfully brings the edge of a moving, shifting, living place she's spent years acquainting herself with into the gallery to be experienced. When I saw the title of the work, I laughed because it reminded me of the phrase "touch some grass" (though it wasn't Dobbin's intent to reference this), which means to go outside and get grounded or connect to the 'real world' as an antidote to having spent too much time in digital spaces. The use of this expression is meant to be an insult, but in the context of Dobbin's work it feels particularly timely. Especially given the feelings of disembodiment or disassociation that many will have experienced throughout the COVID-19 pandemic; locked behind screens and unable to meet in person.

The artists and curators of this exhibition must have felt this need to "touch grass" too, given their inability to travel, host, and gather in person during the development of the project. It is clear, however, that the collaborative curatorial approach they took (made possible through digital avenues) allowed for a plurality of voices and a specificity and place-responsiveness that was deeply reflected in the curatorial framework and the works that were selected and made for the exhibition. The pandemic has brought with it a marked increase in institutions and funding bodies re-evaluating how they support local arts communities, rather than focussing on global relevance and impact, while a focus on digital arts production has played a large part in how institutions have pivoted during this time. As Friend explicitly states, "this project and the commissions related to it wouldn't have been feasible without the push for digital arts funding."[18]

Throughout this essay, there have been quotes from Gordon-Smith demarcating conceptual shifts that helped me to understand collaboration. These quotes come from the essay *Caring for Our Futures*, in which Dr. Eshrāghi asks, "What do you dream about,

and what do these dreams lead you into envisioning five, ten and more years from now?"[19] This is all to say: I found this to be an exceptional exhibition, and despite the difficulties with COVID-19, the curatorial method of the exhibition was built on foundations of collaborative practices of trust and reciprocity. I look forward to seeing future projects by the artists and curators when they have the opportunity to host, celebrate, and connect in person. New funding frameworks, the impact of initiatives such as the FNCE exchange, as well as the advent of Indigenous curatorial positions within institutions have all played a pivotal part in allowing for this unique model to take place and to make exhibitions that go beyond the idea of 'the big blockbuster show'. Curator Nigel Borell (Pirirākau, Ngāiterangi, Ngāti Ranginui, Te Whakatōhea) affirms this power of visual sovereignty when he writes: "The institutional Māori curatorial roles have been a pivotal catalyst that has allowed for a more informed type of authority and agency to be privileged in that exhibition-making and storytelling within the site of the art institution."[20] As Indigenous cultural producers, we can enact that sovereignty together and hold space for one another in that process—*Naadohbii: To Draw Water* soundly demonstrates this.

Footnotes

01. Jaimie Isaac, Ioana Gordon-Smith, Kimberley Moulton, Jocelyn Piirainen, "Naadohbii Water Symposium | Feb 3," YouTube video, 36:00, posted by "The Winnipeg Art Gallery," February 8, 2022, *www.youtube.com/watch?v=TirBq2GD-BM*.

02. At time of publication, Chief Curator at Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, British Columbia, Canada.

03. At time of publication, General Manager of Community and Partnerships at Porirua City Council, Porirua, New Zealand.

04. The exhibitions and parties discussed are not the definitive of global Indigenous curatorial collaborations, and admittedly show a skewed emphasis on blockbuster shows. This review leaves the door open to further discussions of grassroots projects and spaces doing this work, as the Indigenous arts canon is still largely influenced by hierarchies of institutions and perceived impact is measured as such.

05. This isn't to insinuate certain approaches are better than others, just that it shifts the exhibition in terms of framework, scope, or cultural lens and this directly affects what the outcomes can be.

06. Léuli Eshrāghi, "Situating Great Ocean Art in Canadian Museums", *Momus* (October 29, 2021).

07. Ioana Gordon-Smith in Léuli Eshrāghi, “Caring for Our Futures (Dialogues across the Skies with Ioana Gordon-Smith, Kimberley Moulton and Josh Tengan),” in *Becoming Our Future: Global Indigenous Curatorial Practice* (Winnipeg, Manitoba: ARP Books, 2020), pp. 227-234, 229.

08. Ioana Gordon in conversation with author, February 1, 2022.

09. Jaimie Isaac, Ioana Gordon-Smith, Kimberley Moulton, Jocelyn Piirainen, “Naadohbii: To Draw Water - Encore Presentation,” YouTube video, 22:12, posted by "The Winnipeg Art Gallery," November 2, 2021, *www.youtube.com/watch?v=rRfRTX89BvY*.

10. Ibid, 00:50.

11. Ioana Gordon-Smith in Léuli Eshrāghi, “Caring for Our Futures (Dialogues across the Skies with Ioana Gordon-Smith, Kimberley Moulton and Josh Tengan),” in *Becoming Our Future: Global Indigenous Curatorial Practice* (Winnipeg, Manitoba: ARP Books, 2020), pp. 227-234, 229.

12. This is my experience coming from a place of privilege working in spaces that have separate departments and staff; curators at artist-run spaces often have a different experience.

13. Jaimie Isaac, Ioana Gordon-Smith, Kimberley Moulton, Jocelyn Piirainen, “Naadohbii Water Symposium | Feb 3,” YouTube video, 1:20:10, posted by "The Winnipeg Art Gallery," February 8, 2022, *www.youtube.com/watch?v=TirBq2GD-BM*.

14. Jaimie Isaac in conversation with author, February 22 2022.

15. Ioana Gordon-Smith in Léuli Eshrāghi, “Caring for Our Futures (Dialogues across the Skies with Ioana Gordon-Smith, Kimberley Moulton and Josh Tengan),” in *Becoming Our Future: Global Indigenous Curatorial Practice* (Winnipeg, Manitoba: ARP Books, 2020), pp. 227-234, 229.

16. Nikau Hindin quoted in Mark Amery, “The Woman Reviving the Art of Māori Aute,” *The Spinoff*, 27 July 27, 2019. www.thespinoff.co.nz/art/27-07-2019/reviving-maori-aute-nikau-hindin-a-photo-essay.

17. Lindsay Dawn Dobbin, “About,” Lindsay Dawn Dobbin, accessed February 3, 2022, www.lindsaydobbin.com/about.

18. Reuben Friend in conversation with author, January 20, 2022.

19. Léuli Eshrāghi, “Caring for Our Futures (Dialogues across the Skies with Ioana Gordon-Smith, Kimberley Moulton and Josh Tengan),” in *Becoming Our Future: Global Indigenous Curatorial Practice* (Winnipeg, Manitoba: ARP Books, 2020), pp. 227-234, 229.

20. Nigel Borell, “Curating Contemporary Maori Art From the Margins to the Centre,” in *Becomin g Our Future: Global Indigenous Curatorial Practice* (Winnipeg, Manitoba: ARP Books, 2020), pp. 51-64, 61.

Biographies



Israel Birch (Ngā Puhi, Ngāi Tawake, Ngāti Kahungunu, Ngāti Rakaipaaka) holds a visual arts degree from the Eastern Institute of Technology, Ahuriri/Napier, and a Masters in Māori Visual Arts from Massey University's Toioho ki Āpiti, Te Papa-i-Oea/Palmerston North, where he now lectures.

Birch's works are made through a process of etching, grinding and shaping stainless steel. He uses pattern and repetition to engage with light, shape and form. Through this work, he acknowledges the influence of whakairo (carving), the relationship between Te Ao Mārama (the world of light) and Te Pō (the perpetual night), issues of the environment and our relationship to the landscape, and the intangible aspects of te ao Māori (the Māori world).



Jeremy Leatinu'u (Ngāti Maniapoto) is an artist based in Tāmaki Makaurau/Auckland. He graduated with a Bachelor of Visual Arts in 2008, then with a Postgraduate Diploma in Fine Arts in 2009, both from the University of Auckland.

His practice is characterised by public object interventions in which he has choreographed simple actions or movements that negotiate governing protocols of public life. These site-specific performances often question societal order, global mobility and the precariousness of indigenous communities.



Keri Whaitiri (Ngāti Kahungunu and Ngāi Tahu) has worked as an architect and tertiary educator. Over the years, she has diversified her practice by incorporating installation art, jewellery and landscape design. She holds a Bachelor of Architecture (Hons), a Master of Arts (Hons) specialising in Film, Television and Media Studies.



Nikau Hindin (Te Rarawa, Ngāpuhi) is a contemporary artist and with a revivalist agenda to reawaken Māori aute. She completed her conjoint BA in Māori studies and Media studies and Honours in Fine Arts at the University of Auckland. In 2013, she did an exchange at the University of Hawai'i (UH) where she first learned about Māori aute. In 2014 she was part of the crew on Hōkūle'a from Auckland to Golden Bay. She is the recipient of the Māori Battalion VC scholarship and the Sir Hugh Kawharu award which enabled her access to study the Auckland War Memorial Museum collection. She returned to the UH, on a Graduate Assistant Scholarship, where she learned from Master knowledge holders. In October 2018, she completed a deep-sea voyage from Norfolk Island to Tāmaki Makaurau. Nikau completed her Masters of Creative Practice at Toihoukura Art School.

In 2021, Nikau showed at the Auckland Art Fair, Te Uru Contemporary Gallery, Millers O'Brien Gallery. She has been featured recently in three shows around Aotearoa New Zealand: *Native Voices* at Tairawhiti Museum, *Te Rangi Haupapa: A Woven History* at Tauranga Art Gallery and *Tākiri: An Unfurling* at the New Zealand Maritime Museum.



Nova Paul (Te Urirorοi, Te Parawhau, and Te Māhurehure ki Whatitiri, Ngāpuhi) is an artist, film-maker, and Indigenous rights researcher currently residing in Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland. Her film-making practice draws from te ao Māori knowledge as well as early cinema, experimental film histories and fourth wave film discourse to consider the poetics and politics of place and tino rangatiratanga.

Paul has shown at galleries including Whitechapel Gallery, London (UK); Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, Govett-Brewster Art Gallery, Wellington City Gallery, Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū (Aotearoa NZ); Australia Melbourne Museum, Centre for Contemporary Photography, Artspace Sydney (Australia). She has presented films at Sundance Film Festival, New Zealand Film Festival, Short Film Festival Oberhaussen, London Film Festival, Rotterdam International Film Festival, Rencontres Internationale, George Pompidou Centre, and Artists' Films International at the Venice Biennale. *Hawaiki* (2022) premiered at the Sundance Film Festival in 2023.



Rachael Rakena (Ngāi Tahu/Kāi Tahu/Ngāpuhi) has been exhibiting and developing a form of distinctively Māori video art practice for over 20 years.

During her fine arts studies at Otago Polytechnic, in the late 1980s and early 1990s, she was attracted to computer art and moving-image technologies, which foregrounded her collaborative art practices. While at Otago, she completed a degree in Māori studies, and helped establish Kāi Tahu Whānau ki Araiteuru, a group committed to the revitalisation of Ngāi Tahu narrative, tikanga (customs) and kawa (ceremony).



Franchesca Hebert-Spence's first engagements with art were as a maker, creating an emphasis on guest/host relationships and the responsibilities that arise from a non-hierarchical relationality within her curatorial praxis. She is Anishinaabe and her grandmother Marion Ida Spence was from Sagkeeng First Nation, on Lake Winnipeg, Manitoba. Kinship and its responsibilities direct the engagement she maintains within her community as well as her understanding of how institutions move and breathe. The foundation of this practice stems from Ishkabatens Waasa Gaa Inaabateg, Brandon University Visual and Aboriginal Arts program.

Hebert-Spence is a PhD student in Cultural Mediations at Carleton University and holds the Morrisseau Project Fellowship under Dr. Carmen Robertson. She is an Independent Curator and previously served as an Adjunct Curator, Indigenous Art at the Art Gallery of Alberta, and a Curatorial Assistant within the Indigenous Art Department at the National Gallery of Canada.

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