

Whose Oceania?

by James Belich, Lana Lopesi, Matariki Williams, Pauline
Autet

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James Belich, Matariki Williams, Lana Lopesi and Pauline Autet, *Whose Oceania?* panel discussion hosted by Contemporary HUM on 29.09.2018 in London. Photo: Crystal Te Moananui-Squares.



Oceania, entrance to the Royal Academy, London. Photo: Contemporary HUM.



London from the balcony of the New Zealand High Commission Penthouse, *Whose Oceania?* panel discussion hosted by Contemporary HUM on 29.09.2018 in London. Photo: Crystal Te Moananui-Squares.



Kiko Moana by Mata Aho Collective. Installation view of the *Oceania* exhibition at the Royal Academy of Arts © David Parry/ Royal Academy of Arts.



Installation view of the *Oceania* exhibition at the Royal Academy of Arts © David Parry/ Royal Academy of Arts.



Whose Oceania? panel discussion hosted by Contemporary HUM on 29.09.2018 in London. Photo: Crystal Te Moananui-Squares.

In the continuation of its publishing activity, on occasion, HUM facilitates special events. The following discussion was held at the New Zealand High Commission in London on 29 September 2018 with panelists Jamie Belich and Matariki Williams, and was chaired by HUM Editor Pauline Autet and Lana Lopesi. The panel gathered to discuss and interrogate Oceania, a temporary exhibition of ancestral and contemporary Oceanic art held at the Royal Academy, London. As the largest group display of New Zealand and Pacific art in Europe this year, we felt this was a significant moment and one that required space for open and critical debate. This special project was funded by Creative New Zealand.

LANA LOPESI What is your relationship to Oceania?

MATARIKI WILLIAMS My people, Ngāi Tūhoe, are inland people. I have spent most of my life returning to the hills of Te

Urewera and the valley of Rūātoki. We trace our lineage back to the union between Te Maunga, a comet, and Hine-puhoku-rangi, the maiden of the mist.

My relationship with Oceania is not where my identity immediately lies. But through my work and relationships, it's become a really important aspect to how I express the term in my work title, Mātauranga Māori, translated generally as systems of Māori knowledge. These systems are as expansive as the ocean, the islands and the people that make up Te Moana Nui a Kiwa (the Pacific.)

JAMES BELICH I'm part of New Zealand's reverse diaspora whose project is to recolonise Britain and reframe it as the very north island of New Zealand. Brexit, some of you may not realise, is only stage one of this project.

Oceania in the east stretches to Easter Island and had some contact with South America, - because the kumara, the South American sweet potato was redistributed through the Pacific. What's less well-known is that Oceanic influences also stretched west, to Madagascar. So Oceania was part of a remarkable globalisation that spread across the whole Southern Hemisphere, from South Africa to South America, the long way.

When European expansion began, this was the widest-spread culture group in the world. So what you see in *Oceania* is not just local and particular histories, though it's that too, but also artistic expressions of one of the world's great globalising cultures. That's the big history of Oceania which engages me as a global and New Zealand historian. It's relatively unsung compared to European driven globalisations, but it's very important in terms of global history.

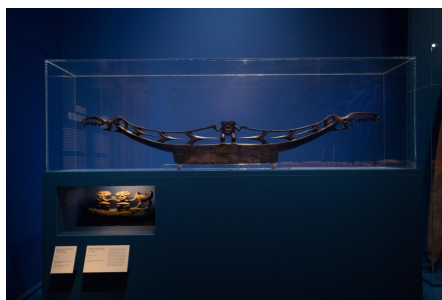
The other thing that intrigued me is that its history is not only big, but it's also fast. The latest evidence suggests that New Zealand Māori arrived in the 13th century. So even a culture as dynamic and sophisticated as the Māori is only 800 years old. Tahiti and Easter Island are not much older. And, of course, the Pākehā

people of New Zealand, of whom I am one, have an even shorter history, of around two centuries.

What Oceania teaches us is that history does not have to be long to be resonant and significant. This is something my colleagues in the Northern Hemisphere have yet to fully grasp.



Installation view of the *Oceania* exhibition at the Royal Academy of Arts © David Parry/Royal Academy of Arts.



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PAULINE AUTET Could you expand on the significance of this moment, the unprecedented collaboration between museums from both New Zealand and the Pacific and European museums such as the Royal Academy, which have loaned works and contributed to making *Oceania* happen?

JB I think this is an interesting moment for this kind of cultural enterprise. Until about 1970, European New Zealanders, as they're still described, and European Australians saw themselves as pretty comfortably British. Not in a colonial cringing way, but as better British, capable of teaching the old

British of this location a few lessons on rugby and battlefields and climbing mountains.

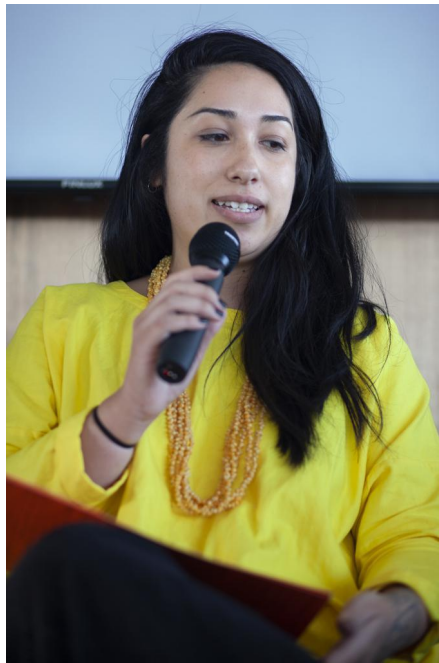
The world has changed since then and settler societies, like those of Australia and New Zealand, have undergone what I call a settler's somersault. They suddenly change from being contented colonisers to positioning themselves among the colonised. Up to the 1960s, Pākehā had privileged access to what was effectively their own metropolis, namely London. But that access came from being 'Better Britons'. Since then, we have had to recalibrate our identity. We sometimes turn to Māori culture for this purpose.

In many ways this is a good thing. It generates the wonderful hybridity you can see in Michael Parekowhai's piano in the exhibition (*He Korero Purakau mo Te Awanui o Te Motu: story of a New Zealand river*, 2011).

But it also creates problems. To whom does historical Oceania belong? To whom does contemporary Oceanian culture and art belong? How do Māori react to increasing Pākehā willingness to co-opt Māori culture as it's symbol? The haka in the rugby game, the koru on the aircraft, the Māori greeting for the VIP visit. All very well but how far does this process go? And to what extent might it be in Māori interests to encourage an autonomous Pākehā culture to which it is connected but from which it is distinct?



Matariki Williams, *Whose Oceania?* panel discussion hosted by Contemporary HUM on 29.09.2018 in London. Photo: Crystal Te Moananui-Squares.



Lana Lopesi, co-chair of *Whose Oceania?* panel discussion hosted by Contemporary HUM on 29.09.2018 in London. Photo: Crystal Te Moananui-Squares.



James Belich, *Whose Oceania?* panel discussion hosted by Contemporary HUM on 29.09.2018 in London. Photo: Crystal Te Moananui-Squares.



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LL Matariki, you're here because of your connection to *Kiko Moana*, the contemporary work by Mata Aho Collective which greets you as you enter the exhibition. Could you tell us about that work?

MW I'm one of four curators in the Mātauranga Māori team at Te Papa (New Zealand's national museum.) Historically, our engagement has been mostly with taonga tuturu (object that relates to Māori). We have 30,000 taonga (treasures) in our collection, predominantly from the 18th and 19th centuries. Myself though, I have much more of a contemporary interest and that is often where I work.

Going back to what I was saying about the definitions of Mātauranga Māori, and the limitless nature of what it is that we as Māori can do, I have collected a whole range of different things, working alongside the communities that they've come from.

When Mata Aho were selected for Documenta 14 last year in Kassel, they contacted me and I brought them into our collection storerooms where they undertook research into Māori sewing techniques.

One thing I find beautiful about their practice is that they surface some lesser known aspects of not just Te Ao Māori (the Māori World) but also wāhine (women) Māori. The main practice that is associated with Māori women creators and the practice of wānanga, is weaving. But what is lesser known is that Māori are also sewers.

Kiko Moana, an 11 metres long work made of tarpaulin sewn together, is incredibly multi-layered, physically but also in terms of everything that they wrap around it. Alongside the physical work, we also collected a recording of their [Instagram account](#) and collected the [website that they produced featuring stories of taniwha](#) who are guardians of many places, including our waterways. Collecting those stories from friends and whānau was a really important aspect of the creation of the work.

PA Matariki, you also work with many historic objects and ancestral belongings at the national museum Te Papa. We'll call those taonga although the limitations of that word as being New Zealand-specific should be noted as the exhibition includes many pieces that are not from New Zealand.

Could you describe the way in which taonga are treated and the protocols around display and presentation within Te Papa and New Zealand museum practice and whether this might differ here?

MW First I want to acknowledge that I'm not here to speak on behalf of the other island nations represented in the show. Everything I say is specifically from a Māori perspective.

And just to immediately contradict that, the New Zealand artist of Samoan and Japanese heritage Yuki Kihara whose work is on display in *Oceania*, was talking about the Monday morning blessings that took place before the opening of the show. Because it was such a powerful experience for so many of the people involved, she commented that it must be such a decolonising process for them. And I loved that she positioned it as that. It's a decolonising process for *the institution*.

The way I interpreted this is that it's not a decolonising process for us, this colonisation of people throughout the Pacific and throughout the world. And that's not our burden to bear. My take is that we work towards uplifting our communities. That is where I want to put my energy. I don't see it as a decolonising process though, I see it as a Māori-fying or indigenising process.

At Te Papa, the inclusion of taonga, tikanga Māori or a blessing is a very normal standardised process for every single exhibition that comes on the floor at Te Papa.



Michael Parekowhai, *He Korero Purakau mo Te Awanui o Te Motu: story of a New Zealand river*, 2011. *Oceania*, Royal Academy, London. Photo: Contemporary HUM.



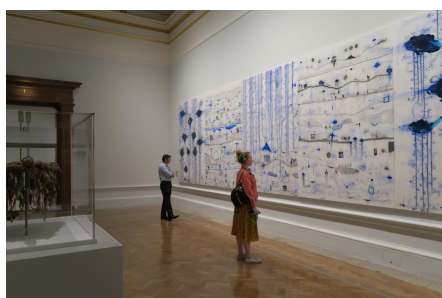
Mark Adams, *Chalfont Crescent, Mangere, South Auckland. Jim Taofinu'u. Tufuga tatatau: Su'a Sulu'ape Paulo II, 30 June 1985*. *Oceania*, Royal Academy, London. Photo: Contemporary HUM.



Lisa Reihana, *in Pursuit of Venus [infected]*, 2015-17. *Oceania*, Royal Academy, London. Photo: Contemporary HUM.



Entrance of the exhibition, with *Kiko Moana* by Mata Aho Collective (2017). *Oceania*, Royal Academy, London. Photo: Contemporary HUM.



John Pule, *Kehe tau hauaga fooo (To all new arrivals)*, 2007. *Oceania*, Royal Academy, London. Photo: Contemporary HUM.



Fiona Pardington, *Portrait of a life cast of Kakalei (painted)*, Salomon Islands, 2010 and *Portrait of a life cast of Tou Taloa (painted)*, Samoa, 2010. *Oceania*, Royal Academy, London. Photo: Contemporary HUM.

LL When I first went into *Oceania*, I did a really quick whip around to find what treasures were there from Samoa. I acknowledge that the show functioned on that level.

Then I was also really gutted to see that one of the treasures was from Te Papa – I had come all this way to London and I wanted to see everything that was out back! The way I interacted with that exhibition was to see these treasures I really wanted to see, show them some love and let them see us again. I was also trying to find my space within the *Oceania* show.

A question I have for both of you is, now that you've seen the show, whose Oceania you find is represented in the exhibition and maybe more importantly, who or what is not there?

JB It's a complex question. One could talk about the kind of layers of exploitation and cultural homogeneity being imposed on most parts of Oceania by European expansion. But there's another quality that strikes me and it has to do with the Tahitian priest and expert, Tupaia. Several of his realistic drawings which were made to illustrate things to his ignorant friends, Joseph Banks and James Cook, are in the exhibition.

When Tupaia arrived in New Zealand, his voyage enabled by Cook's ship Endeavour in 1769, he was the only person who could actually speak to Māori. His Tahitian was still 80% comprehensible.

So from the point of view of Māori, the most interesting person on the Endeavour, the alleged discoverer of New Zealand, was Tupaia the Tahitian. It became clear when, on Cook's second voyage, Māori described the Endeavour as Tupaia's ship. So for all the venereal disease they also distributed, Cook and co. did enable a reunion of Pacific peoples. And in a sense there's an analogy within this *Oceania* exhibition itself.

There are incrustations of colonialism. The jarring sense of seeing a carving here that should really be in Rotorua. And there will be many Pacific people who see these wonderful treasures who wonder where do these really belong? There will be all sorts of other legacies of colonialism. Yet by inverting the process of colonisation and using some of the same tools, the British Museum, the Royal

Academy, the significance of the Cook legacy, the New Zealand connection with London has managed a reunion of those Pacific peoples.

MW I've been to the show three times now, each time quite quickly. I did the same as you Lana, went searching for Māori taonga, I think it's quite natural to want to see yourself reflected back at you but also to see how other people have interpreted you.

The most recent time I went was this morning when the exhibition was officially opened to the public and that was the most overwhelming of the three visits because of the amount of people taking photographs. In the room where Fiona Pardington's photographs are on display, there is a hei tiki (carved pendant) which I have gone to see a couple of times and have touched the glass of the case, but I've not been able to touch the pounamu (greenstone). The label says that it was collected in 1769, and that it's not from a New Zealand collection. The sense of loss that is on display is immense and that it's so far from home is awful.

One thing that is not in the exhibition is the people. So many people from these islands would not be able to view the exhibition because it's in London and the question was raised at the Royal Academy symposium this week whether it could tour.

We spoke of the problems, even the financial reasons, for why exhibitions of this nature will possibly not be able to travel. These include insurance reasons and loaning institutions wanting to have reassurance that the buildings that they go into will have security and the right kind of humidity levels.

For me, that's what's missing: the people from these places being present.



Mata Aho and Fiona Pardington presented by Christina Barton, Royal Academy Symposium, London, 2018. Photo: Contemporary HUM,



Nicholas Thomas, John Pule, Taloi Havini and Yuki Kihara in discussion, Royal Academy Symposium, London, 2018. Photo: Contemporary HUM.



Making Place section, *Oceania*, Royal Academy, London, 2018. Photo: Contemporary HUM,



Installation view of the *Oceania* exhibition at the Royal Academy of Arts © David Parry/ Royal Academy of Arts.



James Belich, Matariki Williams, Lana Lopesi and Pauline Autet, *Whose Oceania?* panel discussion hosted by Contemporary HUM on 29.09.2018 in London. Photo: Crystal Te Moananui-Squares.

PA Indeed, I think it is an exhibition where the object labels are very important. I kept looking again for the collection name, to know where the item is held.

One question I had entering the show revolved around the way in which the histories of the items on display, especially the ancestral belongings, would be communicated. This is especially in this context of being *outside* the Pacific.

There is an audio guide accompanying the exhibition from which you can get an insight and an understanding as to where some of those items have come from, of their journey.

So my question is, what is the importance of the communication surrounding an exhibition like this, whether in an audio guide format, or within labels? And how important is it for people to have access to the information related to the journey, history and significance of the item they're looking at?

Do either of you have comments on displaying works of this significance outside of their home context, and whether there are important things that we need to keep in mind to avoid the risk of them being exoticised: to be looked at and appreciated for their aesthetic value more than sometimes spiritual, religious, and cultural significance?

MW Well, despite all the conflict I have about attending, you can't deny the huge sense of pride it is to see these contemporary works and these taonga on display in the exhibition. It's not a simple answer because we're dealing with a third of the world's surface. I like your interpretation, Jamie, that it is a bringing together of peoples again.

And then also from an institutional perspective, I know that what you see on the floor and what you read on the labels is not the final story. Any institution worth its salt will have public programmes where they invite in differing opinions or differing perspectives of the source communities. That's when you get to complicate the situation. And I mean that as a good thing, to complicate these histories, because they are complicated.

JB I don't have a personal claim to any of the treasures that are in the exhibition but it does strike me that many of them demand to be seen. They're rooted in particular places and particular times but they also have stories to be told.

It's a dilemma, isn't it? If these things are living things, what would they prefer? To be buried in a vault? Or to be seen, ideally in their original home? I'm inclined to think they'd choose being seen, especially if they're seen in a context of respect.

In the end, everything is a compromise. And I think that on balance, the Oceania curators seem to have steered pretty damn cleverly between Scylla and Charybdis.

LL Because I'm an art critic, I watch people watch art. Listening in to people's conversations, there was real appreciation

of the masterful craftsmanship and the materiality behind everything that was being shown which I had a lot of appreciation for as well. The show is not easy but I think there are props to be given as well.

PA Conversations of these last few days have highlighted the positive outcomes that have already started to emerge from this exhibition. The forward-thinking discussions around museum practice and how that might be evolving. The understanding and appreciation for the craftsmanship but also the living cultures represented in the exhibition are definitely very positive outcomes.

I've only heard good things from the artists involved, they are well looked after and appropriate protocol and events were put into place for the opening week. At the same time it's important to encourage critical debate and reflect on the ways we can do things better. Certain issues raised by this exhibition are problematic and complicated, like you said.

So my next question is probably one of the first questions I heard being raised when the show was announced last year. It has to do with the potentially inappropriate and uncomfortable juxtaposition of conveying the exhibition as a celebration of Oceania and at the same time marking the 250 years of Captain Cook's departure from the UK to the Pacific, because this moment is seen by many as the beginning of colonisation in the region.

Now that the exhibition is here, how have these two things been negotiated and can they even fit together, is it possible to combine the two?

MW I'm not sure if I've seen any reference to Cook. But like Jamie said earlier, the reference given to Tupaia and the reverence held amongst Māori for Tupaia to be represented in the show, that is what is important for me. Māori were also going the other way, as voyagers coming to the UK.

I met someone the day of the exhibition opening, Ropata Diamond, who was invited because his tipuna, Tuai, set foot in the UK 200 years ago to the day on Monday just passed. That's incredible.

I actually can't remember the question. Cook? See, I'd already forgotten him.

JB It is an interesting irony, isn't it? Someone said earlier that people in the Northern Hemisphere weren't as aware of Captain Cook as in the Southern Hemisphere. It's an iconic name, a kind of symbol, of several things, actually, not just the spread of colonisation, but also of science, of a kind of humble Yorkshire man who manages to make a name in places like the Royal Society and the British Museum, despite the fact the British elite despised him.

I've always been intrigued by the possibility that the writer of *Star Trek* was fascinated by Cook's voyages – Cook/Kirk, Endeavour/Enterprise, an interesting resonance, yes? Cook has been colonised in his turn by American television.

Then there's the Tupaia factor which I think is important. But you raised the point that hundreds, maybe thousands, of Māori and also Tahitians and Samoans went the other way. One of the greatest collections of Māori artefacts in the world is in Salem, Massachusetts because that's where whalers went. There's a huge diaspora of Māori men.



James Belich, Matariki Williams and Lana Lopesi, *Whose Oceania?* panel discussion hosted by Contemporary HUM on 29.09.2018 in London. Photo: Crystal Te Moananui-Squares.



From the balcony of the New Zealand High Commission Penthouse in London, *Whose Oceania?* panel discussion hosted by Contemporary HUM on 29.09.2018. Photo: Crystal Te Moananui-Squares.



Whose Oceania? panel discussion hosted by Contemporary HUM on 29.09.2018 in London. Photo: Crystal Te Moananui-Squares.



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Matariki Williams, Lana Lopesi and Pauline Autet, *Whose Oceania?* panel discussion hosted by Contemporary HUM on 29.09.2018 in London. Photo: Crystal Te Moananui-Squares.



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LL A couple of reviews of *Oceania* have made comparisons to the exhibition *Te Māori* which is held in such regard in New Zealand, so it's a big comparison to make. I wondered if you had thoughts about that comparison. It's a big claim to make.

JB *Te Māori* (1984) was a major exhibition of Māori art which had a huge impact and on the whole, a benign effect. *Te Māori* was much more focused on one island people, although it had its own federalism, as it were, in terms of multi-tribalism, a powerful but problematic force in Māoridom.

In honour of *Te Māori*, let me note this. When my wife Margaret and I were involved in curating exhibitions at the Auckland War Memorial Museum in the late '90s, we proposed an exhibition called *Te Pākehā* which would have been about the Europeans of New Zealand as seen through Māori eyes. It would have presented

Māori portrayals of Pākehā and early explorers and Cook and so on. That didn't go down too well to be honest.

European New Zealand history was considered too recent to have museum-able objects. So there is an intriguing difference: Māori objects had the status of being in museums. Congratulations.

MW That's quite complicated, too. I work in a collection that has been built predominantly by European men so it's very masculine and high status. From my perspective as a wahine Māori, it's a collection full of gaps because there's very little to do with women, children, the everyday. But there's a huge amount of weaponry and tools that were arguably used by men. Great that our taonga is seen as having mana but to the founding collectors, only *some* of them were.

For a Māori person working or wanting to work in a museum, *Te Māori* is like an albatross around your neck. At the same time there is very little interrogation of the fact that there are no wāhine Māori artists represented.

One similarity I see with *Oceania* is the amount of exposure that it is receiving and the way that is affecting mainstream media back in New Zealand.

I don't want to speak on behalf of Mata Aho but seeing this clip of them with royalty make it to Māori media, and mainstream media, and that being the angle in which the exhibition is being spoken about rather than the virtue of their work... Last year, they were at Documenta, the first time New Zealand was selected for this incredibly important art exhibition. But it takes, until they have a hongi (pressing noses in greeting) with the Duchess of Sussex for media to pick this up – a year later.

PA Perhaps it's also important to note that there are other forces at play and potentially other reasons – what with *Oceania* receiving a major sponsorship from the New Zealand government, as well as other Pacific nations.

There are leveraging events that accompany these sponsorships to also push other agendas, such as tourism and diplomacy. I think it's important to remember that yes, the cultural, the intellectual and educational elements are the core interests but other motivations also influence the way it is presented here in London.

To come back to the subject of contemporary works, several contemporary New Zealand and Pacific nations artists are included in this exhibition, and it seems quite unusual to present them alongside historic works, mingling within the same rooms.

Do you think they influence or interact with each other or the way we read the exhibition as a whole? Do those contemporary works inform the way we read the historic works and vice versa?

LL I'll switch into panellist mode, and say that for me, what is time? Time is not linear and actually it makes a lot of sense to have all these things together and to remind people that we're not dead, not in the past. We've survived context. We're very different. There's a lot of diversity, thousands of languages still spoken, diaspora populations are big. It's multifaceted and complex and complicated. So why wouldn't you do that? Why don't we see it happen more?

When I walked into the show I was greeted by *Kiko Moana* and the spoken poem. Obviously I was there to see these ancestral belongings which had been locked away but to have that really contemporary introduction to the exhibition, I thought was a really exciting move. And while my curatorial mind thinks, of course we should hang it there because that's the highest ceiling, I also think that makes a really politically strong statement. It's a room full of young women. That's dope.

MW I had a really great manager when I first started at Te Papa whose viewpoint on this continuum between taonga tuturu and contemporary taonga was that everything is knowledge, it just takes a different form. He described contemporary art as being at the sharp end of that knowledge because it forces us to think. I'm

definitely of the school that there is no division between this being taonga and this being art.

There are three taonga from the Te Papa Mātauranga Māori collection currently on display in *Oceania*. A pennant flag from Tūhoe, a tā moko carved panel from Ngāti Tarāwhai and *Kiko Moana*. To me, they come from the same base of knowledge and world views but manifest in different ways and that is how I see this curatorial overlay.

JB There's an interesting tension between what's just been said by both panellists and the historian's perspective that time is linear and that things need to be seen in the context of their own time. There are dangers in letting times blur and merge because are you being fair to people in the past when you do that?

At the same time, I think historians can get too precious and hung up on that. In a sense what the contemporary art in the exhibition demonstrates is the importance of hybridity, of the mishing and merging, though not blurring, of these specific island cultures and how significant that can be.

Hybridity is a very powerful force in history which has been underrated by the propensity to nationally package history so that it's not the interaction between two cultures that matters but the separation between them. It's possible for those two perspectives towards time to learn from each other or at least benefit from each other to some extent.



Siva in Motion (2012) by Yuki Kihara at *Oceania*, Royal Academy, London, 2018. Photo courtesy of the artist.



Exit of *Oceania*, Royal Academy, London, 2018. Photo: Contemporary HUM.



Oceania, Royal Academy, London, 2018. Photo: Contemporary HUM.

PA I wanted to share a testimony included in the audio guide of the exhibition that seems quite fitting to finish. The Hawaiian woman speaker describes her visit to London and her finding in various museums that Hawaii has little to no footprint within the displays while she also knows that some of the most significant cultural items from her country are held within these collections.

She says that “in order to reconnect with and to recall with clarity and dignity what those items mean and continue to mean to my community, it is important for those objects to come home.”

LL So our last question, to rephrase the last part of that quote, is, how do we get these objects to come home?

JB This is the Elgin Marbles question, isn't it? My view is that the Elgin Marbles should go back to Athens, if there's an Athens. But if that's too hard, then there has to be some kind of compromise solution whereby if not the whole exhibition then a version of it.

Several smaller, packaged exhibitions about the Pacific, drawing on immense collections of the British Museum, the Natural History Museum and Oxford, and circulate them amongst say the Pacific Islands, and perhaps throughout New Zealand. That might be some kind of solution.

The other point is that it's not just a colonial issue but also a national one – one that Te Papa engages with all the time when artefacts which have very specific tribal roots are displayed in Wellington. Not always to the delight of the tribes concerned. Te Papa has a lot of experience in negotiating compromised solutions as to how that might be handled, and maybe with its advice, the British Museum could be led into the 21st century.

MW This is a complex question and one that probably needs its own symposium. Recently, Rapa Nui (Easter Island) requested the return of a Moai from the British Museum. The museum's response was "six million people come through our doors every year, we do not want to deprive those visitors of this engagement with your culture". They felt it was important that Rapa Nui was represented in the museum.

In response to that, where does the value lie here? Is it the quantity or the quality? How long do these visitors spend with the Moai? What is their interaction like? How can you compare that to a lived, engaged, involved engagement back in Rapa Nui? They are incomparable.

I know that there are digital repatriations that take place around the world as well. Te Aitanga-a-Hauiti have projects whereby they digitally repatriate taonga that they know they may not have physically returned to them but they want to have their image and their likeness with them.

Some of these taonga have very long histories and are currently conserved in conditions that could not be replicated back home. But then the question is, well, they're suspended in this almost false life at the moment, in museum collections where everything is controlled and they are packaged in various storerooms. What brought the immediacy of this argument to me was the recent fire at the museum in Brazil. How awful was that? Knowing that taonga

from New Zealand and throughout the Pacific, human remains from New Zealand were lost in that fire and that they will never return home.

The loss is so immense and is felt so intensely knowing that taonga exist on the other side of the world. So my visceral gut reaction is that they need to come home and go to their people but the reality is undeniably complicated.

LL Maybe the replicas should be the ones that stay in the museums...

PA Thank you very much to everyone who has supported us in making this event happen. That includes Jo Walsh of the New Zealand Studies Network, the New Zealand High Commission, Creative New Zealand, everybody we've been talking with in the last year. This has actually been a year in the making so thank you to everybody and all those conversations. Finally thank you to our amazing panellists and co-chair.

This transcript has been edited for length and clarity.

Special thanks to Creative New Zealand for funding the event, New Zealand High Commission in London for hosting, and New Zealand Studies Network for their support.

Biographies



Fiona Pardington (b. 1961) is of Māori (Kai Tahu, Kati Waewae and Ngāti Kahungunu); Scottish (Clan Cameron of Erracht); MacDonald and O'Niell descent. Her photography explores themes of memory, time, history, photographer and subject and includes taonga Māori (historical treasures), nature specimens and other museum artefacts.

Pardington has a Doctorate in Fine Arts from Auckland University, and has had work included in countless international group exhibitions, biennials, and public collections, including LACMA, Musée du Quai Branly, Paris, and the National Gallery of Canada. In 2016 she was made a Chevalier of the Order of Arts and Letters by France, and a Member of the New Zealand Order of Merit in 2017.



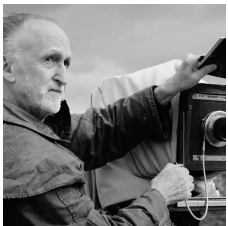
John Pule (b.1962, Liku, Niue) immigrated to New Zealand at the age of two and first visited Niue as an adult in 1991. He has since returned to live and work. Pule is arguably one of the Pacific's most significant artists and has been at the forefront of contemporary New Zealand art since he began his painting practice in the early 1990s. His strong interest in the history and mythology of Niue continues to inform his work to this day. Pule is an accomplished painter, printmaker, poet and writer. His work is highly inventive, particularly in its adaptation of traditional Pacific art forms.

His work is held in major public collections in Australasia including Auckland Art Gallery, Te Papa Tongarewa, The National Gallery of Victoria and Queensland Art Gallery. In 2004 he was honoured with the prestigious Laureate Award from the Arts Foundation of New Zealand and in 2012 he was awarded an ONZM (Officer of the New Zealand Order of Merit) for services as an author, poet and painter in the Queen's Birthday Honours. Career highlights include his inclusion in exhibitions at the Neuer Berliner Kunstverein, Berlin (2007), Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane (2011), and at the Museo de Arte Contemporaneo, Santiago, Chile (2012). In 2010, City Gallery Wellington hosted *Hauaga*, a survey exhibition of his career to date, which travelled to the Auckland Art Gallery in 2011/2012.



Lisa Reihana (b. 1964) is a multi-disciplinary artist from Aotearoa New Zealand (of Ngāpuhi, Ngāti Hine and Ngāi Tū tribal descent) whose practice explores how identity and history are represented, and how these intersect with concepts of place and community. The subjects of Reihana's portraiture inhabit a world in which the boundaries of past, present, and future are mutable; their identities are likewise unfixed and transgress everyday expectations of cultural and social norms.

She graduated from Elam School of Fine Arts, Auckland University, with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in 1987, and recently completed her Master of Design through the Unitec Institute of Technology. Reihana has an extensive exhibition history in New Zealand and abroad and in 2014 she was awarded an Arts Laureate Award by the Arts Foundation of New Zealand. Her works are held in private and public collections including Te Papa Tongarewa; Auckland Art Gallery; Australia National Gallery; Staatliche Museum, Berlin; Susan O'Connor Foundation, Texas and Brooklyn Museum, New York.



Mark Adams' photographs of Samoan tatau, Māori-Pakeha interactions around Rotorua, historic sites around the South Island and his investigations into New Zealand's post colonial history have been extensively exhibited within New Zealand, as well as in Europe, Australia, South Africa and Brazil's Sao Paulo biennale.

Mark attended Christchurch's Ilam Art School from 1967 to 1970 majoring in graphic design so he "could do photography" as there was no separate photography major in those days. Following art school, he gained an interest in painting through artists Tony Fomison and Theo Schoon. Marks first exhibition was at Snaps a Photographers Gallery, in Auckland in 1976 and he has since built up an impressive exhibition record. His books include *Cook's Sites: Revisiting History* (1999, with Nicholas Thomas) and *Rauru Tene Waitere, Māori carving, colonial history*, 2009. Mark was the recipient of one of two Marti Friedlander Photographic Awards made in 2009. Mark Adams lives in Oxford in Te Wai Pounamu and practices out of Studio La Gonda on Karangahape Road, Auckland with Haruhiko Sameshima.



Mataaho Collective is a collaboration between four Māori women who produce large-scale textile-based work, commenting on the complexity of Māori lives. Their conceptual framework is founded within the contemporary realities of mātauranga Māori and together they produce works with single collective authorship that are bigger than their individual capabilities. Members are Erena Baker (Te Atiawa ki Whakarongotai, Ngāti Toa Rangātira), Sarah Hudson (Ngāti Awa, Ngāi Tūhoe), Bridget Reweti (Ngāti Ranginui, Ngāi Te Rangi) and Terri Te Tau (Rangitāne ki Wairarapa).

Recent exhibitions include *Océanie*, Musée du Quai Branly, Paris, France (2019); *Oceania*, Royal Academy of Arts, London, UK (2018); *Signature Art Prize* Singapore Art Museum, Singapore, (2018); *documenta 14*, Kassel, Germany (2017); *Making Space*, Centre of Contemporary Art, Christchurch, NZ (2017); *Noho 16*, Whau Art Centre, Auckland NZ (2016); *Disrupting the Narrative*, Thistle Hall, Wellington NZ (2015); and *International Artist Initiated*, David Dale Gallery, Glasgow UK (2014).



Michael Parekōwhai (b. 1968, Porirua, NZ) draws upon an abundant range of both vernacular and collective vocabularies in his work. He re-manufactures these lexicons into complex narrative structures and formal languages, exploring perceptions of space, the ambiguities of identity, the shifting sensitivities of historical memory and the fluid relationship between art and craft. Ideas of camaraderie, tools of teaching and childhood learning, as well as quotes from modern art history and popular culture, also play out in many of Parekōwhai's stories.

Parekōwhai graduated with a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Elam School of Fine Arts, Auckland in 1990, followed by a Master of Fine Arts in 2000. Parekōwhai was selected to represent New Zealand at the 54th Venice Biennale in 2011 where he exhibited *On First Looking into Chapman's Homer* at the New Zealand pavilion. In 2015 he exhibited *The Promised Land*, a retrospective survey of his practice at the Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane. In 2018, Te Papa Tongarewa's opened its newly expanded contemporary art galleries with *Détour*, a major solo exhibition from Parekōwhai. His work has been included in: *Toi Tu Toi Ora: Contemporary Māori Art*, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki (2020); the 5th Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art, Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane (2006); the 5th Gwangju Biennale (2004); the 13th Biennale of Sydney (2002) and *Headlands: Thinking Through New Zealand Art*, Museum of Contemporary Art Australia, Sydney (1992).



Yuki Kihara is an interdisciplinary artist of Japanese and Sāmoan descent. Working across a range of media including performance, lens-based media and sculpture, Kihara's research-based approach has led to a comprehensive body of work and curatorial practice that examines gender roles, consumerism, (mis)representation, and the past, present and future societal issues from an Indigenous perspective. Kihara lives and works in Sāmoa, where she has been based over the past 11 years.

Kihara's works are in the permanent collections, among others, of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, British Museum, Queensland Art Gallery/Gallery of Modern Art, Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, Kaohsiung Museum of Fine Arts and Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen. Her works have been presented at the Asia Pacific Triennale (2002 and 2015), Auckland Triennale; (2009), Sakahan Quinquennial (2013), Daegu Photo Biennale (2014), Honolulu Biennale (2017) Bangkok Art Biennale (2018) and Aichi Triennale (2022). Kihara has been appointed by the Arts Council of New Zealand Toi Aotearoa to represent New Zealand at the 59th Venice Biennale in 2022. Kihara is a research fellow at Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen. Kihara is represented by Milford Galleries Dunedin and Queenstown.



James Belich has been a Beit Professor of Commonwealth and Imperial History at Oxford University and a Fellow of Balliol College since 2011. He previously taught in New Zealand, and has published several books on New Zealand history in global context, including 'The New Zealand Wars' (1986), which later became a television series, and a two-volume general history, 'Making Peoples' (1996) and 'Paradise Reforged' (2001). In 2009, he published a global comparative history of settler societies, 'Replenishing the Earth: The Settler Revolution and the Rise of the Anglo-world, 1783 -1939' (OUP). He was an editor of, and contributor to, 'The Prospect of Global History', (OUP 2016) and was a co-founder and director of the Oxford Centre for Global History.



Lana Lopesi is Assistant Professor in the department of Indigenous Race and Ethnic Studies, University of Oregon. She is the author of *False Divides* and *Bloody Woman* and co-editor of *Towards a Grammar of Race: In Aotearoa New Zealand*, and *Pacific Spaces: Translations and Transmutations*. In 2022, she co-founded Flying Fetu with Grace Iwashita-Taylor, an organisation committed to uplifting the work of Moana writers, and in November they held their inaugural writers festival at Basement Theatre.



Matariki Williams (Ngāi Tūhoe, Ngāti Hauiti, Taranaki, Ngāti Whakaue, Te Atihaunui-a-Pāpārangi) is a doctoral candidate, curator, writer and editor in the arts and cultural sector. Previous roles include as Senior Historian, Mātauranga Māori at Manatū Taonga and Curator Mātauranga Māori at Te Papa Tongarewa.

She co-authored *Protest Tautohetohe: Objects of Resistance, Persistence and Defiance* with Puawai Cairns and Stephanie Gibson and co-founded *ATE Journal of Māori Art* with Bridget Reweti. Her writing has appeared nationally and internationally in print publications including *Declaration: A Pacific Feminist Agenda*, *Māori Moving Image*, *Climates. Habitats. Environments.*, and online publications including *frieze*, *Art in America*, *Pantograph Punch* and *e-Tangata*. Williams is a committee member for the national Māori curatorial network, and serves on the editorial board of the *Turnbull Library Record* journal. She is a Trustee on the Judith Binney Trust, and former board member of Museums Aotearoa and *Contemporary HUM*.



Pauline Autet is a curator and producer in the field of contemporary art, working across research, development, design, editing and production of exhibitions and publications. She has worked alongside artists and art professionals from emerging to established, in public and private sectors in Wellington, New Zealand and abroad. In 2015, she was involved with the New Zealand pavilion for the Venice Biennale and in 2016 she moved back to Paris and founded *Contemporary HUM*. She is also in charge of *TextWork*, editorial platform of the Fondation Pernod Ricard and Trampoline, a non-profit initiative of private actors of the contemporary art scene in France.

