

Étienne de France (FR)
Fiona Clark (Aotearoa)
Francisco Huichaqueo (CL) & Stevei Houkāmau (Aotearoa)
Francisco Vidal (PT)
John Pule (NU/Aotearoa)
Kimsooja (KR)
Maureen Lander (Aotearoa) & Kaetaeta Watson (KI)
Nathan Pohio (Aotearoa)
Nicolas Molé (FR/NC) & Mariana Molteni (AR/NC)
Richard Digoué (NC) & Simane Wenethem (NC)
Sandra Monterroso (GT)
Visesio Siasau (TO/Aotearoa)

DE-celerate?

A meditation on time and its suspension

By Gabriela Salgado

When a radical life changing event occurs, time seems to stretch or compress. At the present moment, revisiting philosophical concepts of time may allow for a deeper understanding of this phenomenon. For the ancient Greeks, there were many modalities of time. The Aristotelian notion of time – *chronos*, as a measure of movement, sequential time – was only one of them. Conversely, *kairos* signalled an opportune moment, a suspension contained in an instant, crucial to creativity and play, within which extraordinary events may unfold. The most encompassing of these concepts, however, is cyclical time, represented by the god Aion, associated with the zodiac and visually represented in connection to the Earth. This boundless, circular notion of time and its intrinsic bond to life on Earth seems close to the South Pacific time-space concept embedded in *wā/vā*.¹

The exhibition *DE-celerate* attempts to capture the fluctuations in artists' thinking at the time of a worldwide pandemic. The basic human ability to adapt for survival meets the hope that better times may emerge from uncertainty. In a non-didactic manner, and acknowledging the inter-relationship between humans and

¹ 'Important to the Samoan view of reality is the concept of the *vā* or the *wā* in Māori and Japanese (*ma*). *Vā* is the space between, the between-ness, not empty space, not space that separates but space that relates, that holds separate entities and things together in the unity-in-all, the space that is context, giving meaning to things.' Albert Wendt, as cited by Albert Refiti, 'Making Spaces: Polynesian Architecture in New Zealand', in Sean Mallon and Fuli Pereira (Eds.), *Pacific Art Niu Sila: The Pacific Dimension of Contemporary New Zealand Arts* (Wellington: Te Papa Press, 2002), 209.

nature within mātauranga Māori, the exhibition explores how ways of doing, thinking and being in the world have the potential to shift at this time. It proposes that criticality and positive connections may also be nurtured by the demands of resilience.

As an exhibition and an ongoing reflection, *DE-celerate* is articulated through artists' works and activations. Drastically limited by the travel restrictions preventing many artists' visits, the activations take place instead through the invitation for visitors to take home or barter for certain objects. These exchanges are intended as a gentle way of satisfying an increased appetite for human interaction after self-isolation.

The participating artists were invited to consider how isolation and confinement affected their thinking, and, by extension, their practices. For many of us, the fragility of the status quo, social atomisation, and the challenges posed to individuals' health revealed by the pandemic was also an opportunity to slow down and consider how to live with more empathy and compassion in relation to our environment. Bruno Latour recently addressed the suspension of the order of things, particularly in relation to systems of productivity. At the start of the pandemic, Latour said: 'To every ecologist's argument about changing our ways of life, there was always the opposing argument about the irreversible force of the "train of progress" that nothing could derail "because of globalisation", they would say. And yet it is precisely its globalised character that makes this infamous development so fragile, so likely to do the opposite and come to a screeching halt.'² In the light of these considerations, the question remains unanswered: are humans ready, or even able, to decelerate? As the pressures imposed by savage capitalism grow daily, is this global economic paradigm based on a suicidal idea of progress forcing us to return to patterns of behaviour that are both inhumane, and dangerous?

These questions are at the core of *The Waitara Project*, Taranaki-based artist Fiona Clark's restaging of a long-standing community recycling project, active for over 30 years. The hokohoko (bartering) activities started in the 1980s as the Poverty Shop, later named the Waitara Project Community shop. Conceived to generate social engagement through an economy based on exchange, it effectively counteracts capitalist consumerism and waste.

² Bruno Latour, 'What protective measures can you think of so we don't go back to the pre-crisis production model?'. Trans. Stephen Muecke, 29 March 2020: <http://www.bruno-latour.fr/sites/default/files/P-202-AOC-ENGLISH.pdf>

In the same spirit, several drawings by Francisco Vidal are made available for the public to take away, a gesture of generosity that enables visitor's involvement. Te Tuhi presents a mural-like display of several drawings made during self-isolation in his Lisbon apartment. Vidal explained that during the time of confinement he 'kept busy doing things to remain conscious of his humanity'. Unable to source his usual drawing materials, he developed a series of visual diaries in his customary graphic style, using only what he had at hand: white sheets of paper and black ink. The resulting drawings show everyday compositions of domestic elements. They also document some remarkable global events, including the passing of two pillars of black cultural history: Cameroonian music star Manu Dibango and pan-Africanist filmmaker Sarah Maldoror. Soon after this, the impact of Georges Floyd's brutal assassination took Vidal's attention from the daily still lives and saw him engage in the global outcry for racial justice. From images of self-isolation, his works became banners of protest, standing as flags of hope against the politics of fear, greed and despair.

In Aotearoa, as maintaining social isolation, resilience and reducing our consumption to basic levels became the primary focus, we had an opportunity to replace our wants with our basic needs. This was prompted by the requirement to avoid unnecessary movement and travel, which in turn highlighted our dependency on the outside world – where the danger of contagion lurked. As society became atomised, reconfigured into 'bubbles', and for some, communication was conducted mainly via technology, we embraced an idea of a productivity that would inevitably lead to a problematic blurring of private and work spheres. The pandemic has triggered widespread financial meltdown that threatens millions of people worldwide with unemployment, and rising poverty levels are already visible. However, one of the single hardest parts of living in a pandemic is the fact that our experience of contact between human bodies has shifted, from being a means of showing affection, to being a possible cause of infection.

This new reality, with artists' livelihoods compromised by the inability to travel, to exhibit and to collaborate physically, presents many challenges to the arts sector. However, as creative people, artists inevitably find reasons to move forward, and generate imaginative ways to make sense of the unknown. The compassionate and determined gestures of women artists in this exhibition, the capacity for observation that it reveals, tunes in with the need for slower living.

Kimsooja's *A Needle Woman* series began in 1999 and was developed in three different iterations. Presented as multiscreen

video installations, the work shows the artist standing still in the middle of moving crowds in a number of world cities. The work exhibited as part of *DE-celerate* was performed in three different locations in Paris and projected on the façade of the Hôtel de Ville. The artist comments: 'Since starting in one of the most crowded streets of Tokyo in 1999, I have performed *A Needle Woman* in many different cities around the world. I had to stop on the spot and stand still – creating a contradictory position against the flow of the pedestrians, like a needle or an axis, observing and contemplating them coming and going, weaving through and against my body as a medium, like a symbolic needle.'

Maureen Lander and Kaetaeta Watson's collaborative commissioned work *Baau and Pare* presents materials collected during their beach walks woven into the shape of head garlands customary in the Pacific and Aotearoa. The wall piece points to the rich possibilities within practices of resourcefulness and resilience. The large circle is in turn formed by twelve smaller circlets, symbols of the passing of time, a dynamic that is also suggested by the fresh and dry materials that make up the work.

In addition, women's voices stand at the centre of Mapuche Nation artist Francisco Huichaqueo's film *Mujeres Espíritu / Spirit Women*. The work invites us to stop and observe with empathy the claim for space made by indigenous poets, whose poems and songs reformulate old questions in contemporary terms. In the context of the pandemic, Huichaqueo defines his work as a reflection on his circumstances at a time of adjustment, a time of medicine. Huichaqueo's choice of women poets is related to the fact that 'it is time for women to show the way from solidarity and love'. He notes, 'we live in ecocidal and homicidal times'. In a world shaken by shifts on a tectonic scale – changes brought about by the pandemic, ecocide, racism and poor leadership, among many other contemporary conditions – women lead the way with their voices.

Mujeres Espíritu / Spirit Women is an ambitious work filmed in the territories of San Cristóbal de las Casas, Chiapas, Chamula, Chenalhó and Xochimilco in Mexico; Salar de Uyuni, Oruro, La Paz and Isla del Sol in Bolivia; and Wallmapu/Maicolpue, Chiwimpüllü, Contulmo, Millawinkul in Araucanía and Los Lagos, Biobío, in Chile. The five women lend their voices in their ancestral languages: Stotsil, Mapuzungun, Quechua as well as Spanish. Their poems and songs aim to restore balance, because 'the loss of the land's health wounds the eyes', as Enriqueta Lunes explains during an online gathering. The women poets explain that their poems and songs are like medicine, that in the times of the pandemic serves to heal the spirit, as the virus is not only a physical sickness but also the fruit of spiritual imbalance. These artists are creating their own narratives, in their own words,

'producing self-ethnographies that dignify the bodies by building their own archive'.

Titiro ki muri, haere ki mua: walking towards the future while looking back.

Indigenous cinema integrates knowledges and brings people together to counteract the atomisation of different communities and its consequence: the weakening of indigenous peoples. Speaking about his methodology, Huichaqueo comments:

Mapuche people dream of other people and communicate with them in the dream space...The images come to me in the state of *pewma* (revelation, dream, journey) informing my film making. I capture images and place them in a timeline, only filming where I am welcomed and allowed to enter or leaving if these conditions are not met. For all the pre-existing peoples of the earth, the flesh hurts, as our common narrative is colonial violence, the imposition of languages and narratives.

With the work *NGATU 'o VAVANGA 'ATALOA*, commissioned by Te Tuhi, Visasio Siasau delivers a powerful message through collective endeavour, and in light of the indissoluble relationship of humans and nature embedded in Pacific epistemology. The artist immerses himself in the ancient tradition of *ngatu* making, a working methodology named *fakahoko* (practice) in Tongan language. *Fakahoko* is an expression of *vavaanga*, a process of knowing that originates in one's mind, heart and soul. This is imbued with theory containing profound perception, and promoting intense participation. For a number of years, Visasio Siasau and Serene Tay have been collaborating with traditional Tongan *ngatu* makers, to integrate ancient material culture with contemporary visual representations. Their approach articulates the complex relationship of indigenous knowledge and western perceptions of subjectivity derived from colonial imperial projects.

The time of change

Pachakuti – translated as the return of time – is upon us: for the Quechua people of the Andes, this is a time of upheaval and cosmic transformation and disturbance, a reversal of the world or overturning of the prevalent space-time continuum. Every 500 years this cycle returns. In the early sixteenth century, the arrival of Europeans to the Americas coincided with Pachakuti. Perhaps this signals a time for humanity to enter a new era.

At a time of crisis, to count on a solid core of fundamental principles may be more significant than ever. Honouring the land in which I am writing, I would like to close with a quote from Ani Mikaere, which points to balancing of change with the upholding of tradition:

If the key to creating that better world does not lie in forgetting our past, where does it lie? [In Aotearoa,] I suggest that the answers may well be found in tikanga Māori. Tikanga Māori has been defined by Charles Royal as 'ethical behaviour, based upon fundamental principles or values. While the practice of tikanga may adapt over time, the underlying principles or 'conceptual regulators' (as Justice Taihakurei Durie has called them), comprising values such as whanaungatanga, manaakitanga, aroha, mana, tapu, noa, wairua and utu, do not. Durie has pointed out that Māori society was open to change but 'protective of the fundamental norms or principles of the conceptual regulators' and that this approach 'enabled change while maintaining cultural integrity.'³



Francisco Huichaqueo, *Mujeres Espiritu / Spirit Women*, 2020 (still). HD video, 42 mins. Courtesy of the artist.

³ Ani Mikaere, 'Are We All New Zealanders Now? A Māori Response to the Pākehā Quest for Indigeneity', *Colonising Myths Māori Realities: He Rukuruku Whakaaro* (Wellington, New Zealand: Huia Publishers, 2011).



Francisco Vidal, From the series *Humans Go Home*, 2020. Courtesy of the artist.

Étienne de France

The Green Vessel, 2020

I remember images of a lake between the hills covered with forests. I remember sparse memories of this large lake whose shape was divided into large open parts and hidden estuaries.

As I approached the water slowly from the forest, I could discern in the mist the shadow of shapes floating. As I got nearer, the last volutes of condensation escaped the quiet surface.

I saw a complex structure slowly emerging, floating in the water. Four, five, six modular forms were assembling to create a metamorphic architecture. The floating log had grown up and multiplied. The singing floating log had engendered various rooms, fragmented terraces, floating bridges, as well as creating moving staircases.

The wooden structures were mixed with a profusion of branches, vines, shrubs and grasses.

The same bumblebee I had seen at the same hour every day on the same week just flew over my shoulder in the direction of these structures.

Getting closer to the edge of the water, my eyes could embrace a part of what seemed now to be a very large raft, a floating community living in houses and spaces moving on water, covered by leaves and flowers.

It was a magnificent network of islands, pyramids and passages.

A slow choreography was opening new shapes, collective places but also spaces for solitary dreaming, creating an assembly of emancipated landscapes...

The green vessel.

Fiona Clark

The Waitara Project, 2020

The Waitara Project is a long-standing community recycling project, active for over 30 years. We used to be known as the Poverty Shop, and now as the Waitara Project Community Shop, but in the community we are commonly referred to as the 'hokohoko shop' (hoko: to barter, exchange). The shop allows the Waitara and wider community to recycle items, recognise the value of objects, generate and foster community.

The Waitara Project is run by a collective of volunteers. Any excess pūtea (money) is distributed within the local community. Cheques received by local groups from the Waitara Project still bear its very first name: The Taranaki Undermining Project.

The Project questions consumerism and undermines the present economic system of profit, waste and exploitation, and so does its extension at Te Tuhi: an area for free, non-monetary exchange. The seed items for the exchange area come from Waitara. They carry with them the history of the project and of Waitara itself.

The Community Shop was not operating during the lockdown, but our community was. We phoned to check on each other, and we made sure that everyone was looked after. The Waitara Project was briefly disrupted by the pandemic, but the environmental, climate and social injustices that it was founded to counter continue, and so does our work.

Alongside the hokohoko area are other pieces of work that demonstrate how my life and practice continued during the pandemic lockdown. Although galleries were closed and shows were delayed, I continued living and working much as I would have otherwise. I grew vegetables, wrote letters and made phone calls, made bread and dog biscuits, and reviewed work from my archives. Some of these practices that before the lockdown might have been seen as unusual (like making, not buying, my dog's biscuits) are increasingly being accepted by others as normal. I have chosen to share several dog biscuit recipes that I regularly make, and some printed discussions from old publications about making them.

John Terilli, two-time Mr Universe, who I photographed in 1980, called me during lockdown to talk and to ask about the

¹ My communications with John Terilli continued on from conversations and emails last year about my show at the Govett-Brewster Art Gallery, *Raw Material* (2019). John was happy for the 1982 photographic poster to be shown and given away as part of *Raw Material* also.

photographs I had of him. I sent him a number of images digitally, and posted him several copies of the poster I made in 1982 from a photograph of him I took at the Mr Universe Competition in Sydney in 1980. He was enthusiastic about the idea that the rest of the remaining posters be shared in the gallery and given away.¹ Although John Terilli has never performed as a body-builder in New Zealand, he sees this gifting of his image as a way for him to be present, and to have posed here in New Zealand.

Another significant correspondence I had during lockdown was with Dan of Levin, a collector of domestic tins. His collection spans biscuit and cake tins, match boxes, baking powder tins, tobacco tins and others. Dan took an interest in my recent show *Egmontiana* at the Adam Art Gallery, and because of this he shared with me a selection of photographs of his beautiful tins, and then posted me some of the tins themselves. We selected 42 tins from his collection and my own, one for every successive day that I stayed home during lockdown levels three and four. By bringing these tins to the gallery, I acknowledge the value of our correspondence, the domestic tins themselves, and the building of relationships.

² In the early 1980s the National government, led by Prime Minister Robert Muldoon, pinned their hopes for a 'better' New Zealand economy on massive state projects. In Taranaki, this meant the extraction of gas and oil from under the sea, building a petrol plant at Motunui, and establishing a methanol refinery in Waitara. The immediate destruction this brought to the local environment was obvious to people of Waitara, and is documented alongside other environmental threats in the Wai 6 Motunui-Waitara Waitangi Tribunal Report of 1983, made in response to Aila Taylor's application to the Tribunal on behalf of Te Atiawa. Of course, the long-term climate costs are also clear: The struggle against petrol companies (now branded 'energy' companies) continues in Taranaki, where fracking and flaring of natural gas is still happening.

The final work is my friend Tertius' painting *On The Fence*. Tertius painted this in 1980, at a time when the then-Prime Minister Robert Muldoon was accelerating environmental destruction in Taranaki with the 'Think Big' strategy.² The work shows Tertius and me, standing in a then-future gas industry land wasteland in Taranaki. *On the Fence* is a window into the environmental and social threats that made The Taranaki Undermining Project necessary when it started in 1988, and that have continued to motivate how I live and work. The female figure in the painting (me) is standing with her hand on Tertius' shoulder. It is a pose that I recognise from how my mother would comfort people and affirm connection with them. Tertius says of *On The Fence's* title: 'When you sit on the fence, and don't make a choice, the future will be decided for you.' For me, forming a community is about making better choices visible, possible, and imaginable for everyone.

I understand the mentality of 'the team' that the pandemic has brought about in New Zealand, but the team is very diverse. Being part of a group show like this one, I notice that my specific experience of lockdown was not one of deceleration, but of just acknowledging the new situation and getting on with life and making work. And I think that comes from having practice in being in a community that makes choices collectively, based on care and connection.

Kimsooja

A Needle Woman – Paris,
2009



Kimsooja, *A Needle Woman*, 2009 (still). Video performance, 25 mins, looped, silent. Performed and filmed in Paris, France. Commissioned by Nuit Blanche Paris 2009. Collection of the Fonds municipal d'art contemporain de la Ville de Paris (FMAC). Courtesy of FMAC, Axel Vervoordt Gallery and Kimsooja Studio.

A Needle Woman is a series of videos documenting a performance of standing still. Since starting in one of the most crowded streets of Tokyo in 1999, I have performed *A Needle Woman* in many different cities around the world. Originally, I wanted to create one performance in the city – standing still in Shinjuku, Tokyo, and another in nature – lying down on a limestone mountain top, as a body exploring two axial relationships within the world. For the first performance in Tokyo, after long hours of walking, trying to find the right moment and space and accumulating the energy of the people, I arrived at a street in Shibuya where hundreds of thousands of people were constantly passing through, like waves of a human ocean ebbing and flowing. It was a breathtaking moment. A silent inner scream hit my body like a needle. I had to stop on the spot and stand still, a contradictory position in relation to the flow of the pedestrians, like a needle or an axis, observing and contemplating the people coming and going, weaving through and against my body as a medium, like a symbolic needle. In this moment, I suddenly became aware of the meaning of my walking.

As I intensified the state of my isolation, the presence of my body seemed to be gradually erased by the crowd. Simultaneously, the sustained immobility of my body was leading me toward a state of peace and balance in my mind, that connected the self and the other. I reached a point at which I could ‘breathe’ others into my own body and mind.

Through a uniform gesture of stillness while confronting different realities, geographies and conditions of humanity, *A Needle Woman* weaves together social, cultural, economic and political concerns with an investigation into immobility as performance, inverting the notion of the artist as the predominant actor.

Maureen Lander and Kaetaeta Watson

Baau and Pare, 2020

The wearing of baau (Kiribati head-garlands) and pare (Māori headbands, wreaths) symbolises important life events – times of joy, celebration and dance, but also moments of loss and mourning. We have configured twelve head garlands into a large circle on the wall to represent time and the 'cycle of life.'

Each bau or pare may carry a more specific meaning, linked to the materials or techniques used. Some evoke the quiet moments and simple pleasures we experience in our lives, such as childhood memories of making daisy chains (Maureen) or picking frangipani spontaneously from the garden, making a fresh bau and wearing it around home (Kaetaeta). The materials are those we have found around home or picked up on beaches and bush walks near where we live. Some were gathered on walks during Covid-19 lockdown. We have plaited and twisted them into circlets to represent the gradual passing of time, from bright colour and growth to eventual fading and decay.



Maureen Lander & Kaetaeta Watson, *Baau and Pare*, 2020 (detail). Miscellaneous natural and man-made materials found in the artists' environment. Commissioned by Te Tuhi, Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland. Photo by Sam Hartnett.

Nicolas Molé

Insulatus, 2020

State change. It is this state, this post-Covid and pre-referendum time, that New Caledonia is living in. An examination of who we are, young and old inhabitants of this island. Isolation, insularity, isoïr – the French term for voting booth; insulatus – in Latin, separated like an island, to put a body out of contact with other another body. Like Russian dolls in their introspection. Divided between a fast-paced life, running after time, and the desire to take time to live. Divided between a rich natural environment and the virtual world proposed by our screens, beyond our ocean. Enclosed in a box, wanting to run out there. It is a transition. We will face ourselves when we make a choice.

2020 will have been the year of Covid for a great part of the planet, but it is also the year of the referendum for full sovereignty of New Caledonia, its independence. It would have been necessary to self-isolate for a month to reflect on the state of our planet; it would have been necessary to consider more than 30 years of history, and to vote to reflect on the state of our country. It's a new step. All of our futures are implicated in the choices that are imposed on us today.

Our work *Insulatus* is an expression of such sentiment. The body in the box, the body in the screen. With the scale shifting, we transit from a body in a garden, contained in this ballot box, to the human in the middle of an island's forest. A pharmacopoeia, vegetation with medicinal properties, protects the architecture, the human body and its habitat from the frenetic pace of our contemporary world. Our contemporary society is becoming increasingly chronophagist and cannibalistic in light of the upheaval of our planet. At the time of resource exploitation, overconsumption and overproduction, of always-faster, connected by our machines and immersed in a virtual sublimation, we have forgotten the pace of nature. It is the mirror in which we look at ourselves every day before going out that we would like to break.

Sandra Monterroso

*Musiq' / Respiración
del espíritu / Breath of
the spirit, 2016*

Estoy respirando con una bolsa de papel marrón puesta en mi boca. Sobre la bolsa de papel está impreso: 'el racismo es una herida colonial que se puede curar.' La palabra musiq' en idioma maya q'eqchi' significa respiración de espíritu, estoy vestida con el traje maya q'eqchi' mientras voy respirando, voy moviéndome entre pupitres de escuela de madera, antiguos; mientras voy caminando por el espacio como una acción de liberación del espíritu.

I am breathing into a paper bag. On the paper bag is printed: 'racism is a colonial wound that can be healed.' The word musiq' in Maya Q'eqchi' language means 'breath of the spirit.' I am dressed in the Mayan Q'eqchi' costume while I am breathing. I'm in the middle of school desks, walking around the space, as an action to liberate the spirit.

Stevei Houkāmau

Wāhi, 2020

For me as an artist this form of collaboration is the most effective one possible in our current climate. To collaborate with an international artist via Zoom, through a translator, is very new for me – perhaps a window into a new normal. However, what this process demonstrated to me most clearly is that as indigenous artists we share many commonalities, spiritual connections and intentions. With patience and space to express and share knowledge and kōrero, we find that this inherent connection cannot be destroyed or erased by the current world climate and pandemic.

For me this ipu (vessel) is the container of aroha, understanding and connection. What it holds is out of my hands, but what is within my control is the intention that I approach the making of the work with. Having belief in Francisco Huichaqueo's mahi toi is paramount; trust is formed through the commonalities that our cultures share as tangata whenua Māori in Aotearoa, and Mapuche Nation, Chile. It is an honour to be trusted to create a vessel that interacts with Francisco's moving imagery. The ipu acknowledges, protects and is a form of tautoko for Francisco's mahi, kaupapa, kōrero and experiences.

The wāhi (space, place) created through this interaction between Francisco and my work operates on both conscious and subconscious levels. The works speak to each other, and as the viewer you become a part of that conversation. It is through these interactions that we find commonality, comfort and support. The issues of indigenous people have not faded; this pandemic has shown that more than ever we as indigenous peoples, tangata whenua Māori, Mapuche, should be holding strong in our beliefs and culture and offering tautoko to each other. This collaboration is one recognition of that relationship: through our commonalities we will continue forward while acknowledging the past and accepting and understanding our present.

Visesio Siasau

NGATU 'o VAVANGA 'ATALOA, 2020

in collaboration with Serene Tay
and Saimone Fonohema

The concept of Vavaanga 'Ataloa ngatu is a technological approach utilising Vavanga knowledge.

Vavaanga is a process of knowing that originates in one's mind, heart and soul. It stems from the word and concept of Vavaa – unified space and its spontaneous, pliable, unlimited potentiality. *Nga* is a suffix that modifies the knowing into doing, in connection with the realities of existence within our Tongan cosmology: as part of the universe, inheriting the wholeness of Vavaa. *'Ata-loa* is a Tongan word that I constructed based on ancient Tongan words: *'ata* – shadow/images that are both concrete and abstract; *fuo* – form, realities of natural phenomena; and *loa* – time, power and energies.

This concept and way of working becomes alive in the ngatu (Tongan tapa cloth) through visual representation: a narrative depicting powerful political figures and ideologies that are systemically enforced and controlled. Covid-19 highlights imbalances of political power – international 'superpowers' dominating the media, imposing and perpetuating their hierarchies, which extend even to controlling vaccine access for other countries. These ngatu 'ataloa portray the realities of contemporary global power structures and material production, in contrast to the cadences of the natural world.

Ngatu is made from the inner bark of the hiapo (paper mulberry, *Broussonetia papyrifera*). Starchy root vegetables, such as the maho'a'a Tonga (Polynesian arrowroot, *tacca leontopetaloides*) and manioke koka'anga (cassava or tapioca) are rubbed on the feta'aki (tapa cloth) sheets to paste them together. Kupesi (rubbing stencils) with kolona (Coronavirus) images sewn into them are made from shipping raffia and fishing line. The kupesi are stained into the cloth with tree bark dyes known as koka (red cedar, *Bischofia javanica*), tongo (native mangrove, *Rhizophora mangle*) and tuitui (candlenut tree, *Aleurites moluccana*).

About the artists

Étienne de France

Étienne de France is a visual artist born in Paris, France, where he is currently based. He studied art history and archaeology at the Sorbonne University in Paris in 2005, and completed a bachelor's degree in visual arts at the Iceland Academy of the Arts, Reykjavik in 2008. Known for interdisciplinary projects mixing hypothetical scenarios with reality, such as *Tales of a Sea Cow* (2012) and *Icelandtrain* (2009), de France works across media including film, photography, writing, drawing and installation. More recently his practice has engaged in questioning landscapes as spaces of resilience and imagination, cooperating with farmers, environmental activists and architects to produce works including *The Green Vessel* (2015–2019), *Looking for the Perfect Landscape* (2017) and *Field* (2020).

Fiona Clark

Fiona Clark is a lens-based artist from Taranaki. She graduated from the University of Auckland's Elam School of Fine Arts in 1975. Clark's photographs relate to significant local social histories, often investigating the politics of gender, identity and the body. Clark is also a central member of Friends of Waitara River Inc., an environmental organisation that campaigns to protect the quality of water in Waitara River and the immediate surrounding areas. Clark lives and works in Tikorangi, Taranaki, Aotearoa New Zealand.

Francisco Huichaqueo

Francisco Huichaqueo is a filmmaker, curator, professor, and artist from the indigenous Mapuche Nation in Chile. His practice explores the social landscape, history and culture of the Mapuche people. He is also focused on dialogues with other nations: his work has been exhibited in international festivals of indigenous cinema including ImagiNative in Toronto, Canada, the Toulouse Latin American Film Festival and in museums, including the Museo Arqueológico and the Museo de Bellas Artes of Santiago, Chile and the National Museum of the American Indian in the USA. Huichaqueo is a participating artist in the 11th Berlin Biennale for Contemporary Art (2020). He is currently a professor at the School of Visual Arts, University of Concepción, Chile.

Francisco Vidal

Francisco Vidal was born in Lisbon, Portugal and lives and works between there and Luanda, Angola. The artist's work blends various influences, including Cubism, African wax-print textiles, 1980's hip-hop culture, and contemporary graffiti and street art. Vidal's practice deals with ideas connected with the diaspora experience, narratives and identities. Colonial histories and their consequences are interrogated in his work, with a strong emphasis on the impact of labour practices, conflict and violence. Vidal's work has been shown internationally, including within the Angolan Pavilion at the 56th Venice Biennale in 2015.

John Pule

John Pule was born in Liku, Niue and migrated to Aotearoa New Zealand in 1964. Pule works with painting, printmaking, and poetry, informed by his enduring interest in the history and mythology of Niue. Pule's work is held in major public collections in Australasia, and in 2010 it was the subject of a survey exhibition at the City Gallery Wellington. Pule's work was included in the exhibition *Oceania* at Musée du Quai Branly – Jacques Chirac, Paris (2019) and Royal Academy of Arts, London (2018). He has previously exhibited at Museo de Arte Contemporáneo, Santiago, Chile (2012), Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane (2011) and the Neuer Berliner Kunstverein, Berlin (2007). His work is the subject of several books including the monograph *Hauaga* (Otago University Press, 2010). Pule is also a published writer and poet. He was the recipient of the New Zealand Order of Merit for the services to the Arts in 2012.

Kaetaeta Watson

Kaetaeta Watson is a weaver from Kiribati, based in the eastern Coromandel. She is a strong advocate for the maintenance and transmission of i-Kiribati raranga (weaving) and te bibiri (plaiting). Watson has worked collaboratively with Chris Charteris and Lizzie Leckie on a project to revive of the making of Kiribati armour, which received support from Cambridge Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, UK, where the works are now exhibited. Another Kiribati armour was made using te kora (Kiribati coconut fibre string), which led to the participation at Asia Pacific Triennial (2018). The headdresses, baau, made with drinking straws were also exhibited. Supported by Creative New Zealand, the collaboration expanded to include Louisa Humphry, Mwemwetaake and Rareti Ataniberu, Chris Charteris, Lizzie Leckie and Watson.

Kimsooja

Kimsooja is a multi-disciplinary conceptual artist based in New York, USA and Seoul, South Korea. Her practice combines performance, film, photography and site-specific installation, using textile, light, and sound. Drawing on her principles of 'non-doing' and 'non-making,' she investigates questions concerning the conditions of humanity, while engaging issues of aesthetics, culture, politics, and the environment. Since 1999, Kimsooja's video series *A Needle Woman* has been performed and shown across multiple major international institutions. Following her previous four participations in the Venice Biennale (1999, 2001, 2005, 2007), she represented South Korea at its 55th edition with *To Breathe: Bottari* (2013).

Mariana Molteni

Mariana Molteni was born in Buenos Aires, Argentina. She studied visual arts at the National Academy of Fine Arts in Buenos Aires. Molteni moved to France in 2006, where she became interested in cartography and aerial view representation. Since 2011, she has lived and worked in New Caledonia, with periods in Argentina where she gained a degree in cultural management from the Abaco Foundation at the University of Córdoba. Molteni's practice sits at the confluence of Latin-American, Pacific and European cultures, which allows her to fluently mix techniques and materials, sculpture and painting.

Maureen Lander

Maureen Lander (Ngāpuhi, Te Hikutu, Pākehā) is a weaver and multimedia installation artist. Lander first began flax weaving in Māngere during the 1970s before learning from noted Māori weaver Diggeress Te Kanawa in 1984. Since 1986 Lander has exhibited widely, as well as researching, writing, teaching and mentoring in the field of Māori fibre arts. In 2002 she became the first Māori artist to gain a Doctorate in Fine Arts at a New Zealand university and she continues to exhibit work nationally and internationally. Recent exhibitions include *Flat-Pack Whakapapa* (2017), The Dowse Art Museum, Lower Hutt and currently touring Aotearoa New Zealand from 2018-2021, and *Ebb* with Denise Batchelor (2020) at Mokopōpaki, Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland. In 2020 Lander was appointed a Member of the New Zealand Order of Merit for services to Māori art.

Nathan Pohio

Nathan Pohio (Kati Mamoe, Kai Tahu, Waitaha; Ngāi Tūāhuriri, Ngāti Wheke, Arowhenua) works primarily in moving image,

drawing on a variety of photographic and cinematic practices. He also works as a curator at Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū, and is a founding member of Paemanu collective of contemporary Ngāi Tahu artists. Across these roles he operates from a Ngāi Tahu tribal position to bring iwi perspectives on history and to reflect on the experiences of contemporary Māori society. In 2017 he represented Aotearoa at Documenta 14 in Kassel, Germany and Athens, Greece, with his work *Raise the anchor, unfurl the sails, set course to the centre of an ever setting sun!* Pohio lives and works in Ōtautahi Christchurch.

Nicolas Molé

Nicolas Molé was born and educated in France, and relocated to New Caledonia in 2010 to connect with his extended family and his Kanak heritage on his father's side. His practice engages with this heritage and its contemporary articulation. Moving between drawing, animation and video, Molé constructs animated multimedia installations that respond to the natural and cultural environment of New Caledonia. These works are often performative in nature, requiring an audience to activate or transform them. They are also interventionist, adapting existing buildings, sites or places.

Richard Digoué

Richard Digoué is a Kanak choreographer and dancer who lives and works in Nouméa, New Caledonia. The director of Niyan Dance Theatre, Diogoué's compositions range from portraits of his Kanak culture to explorations of the physical language of dance as a dialogue of bodies. He regularly collaborates with Kanak visual artists for performances, and is closely engaged with Jinu Owa, an association of contemporary Kanak artists.

Sandra Monterroso

Sandra Monterroso is a Guatemalan artist whose work relates to the acknowledgment of her Maya Q'eqchi' roots. This has been the impetus of her artistic practice over the last twenty years, traversing the discussion of gender, racialised bodies, community feminism, modernity and coloniality, using a variety of media including video, performance, painting and sculpture.

Monterroso's work has been exhibited internationally at the 56th Venice Biennial (2015), the 12th Havana Biennial (2015), the Frestas Triennial de Sorocaba, Brazil (2017) and the Contemporary Native Art Biennial (BACA), Canada (2018). Her work belongs in the collections of Reina Sofia, Spain; Yes Contemporary, USA; the Museum of Contemporary Art and Design (MADC), Costa Rica; the Essex Collection of Art from

Latin America, England; the Ortiz Gurdíán Foundation, Nicaragua; the Paiz Foundation, Yaxs Collection, and private collections in Guatemala. Monterroso holds a PHD from the Academy of Fine Arts, Vienna.

Simane Wenethem

Simane Wenethem is a Kanak dancer, storyteller, slam poet and actor. He was born on the island of Lifou, and lives in Nouméa, New Caledonia. He emerged as a hip-hop dancer, a member of the UBC crew and the Posuë company, while developing his practice as a contemporary dance performer in Richard Digoué's Niyan company. Wenethem is interested in exploring Kanak culture through dance and performance.

Stevei Houkāmau

Stevei Houkāmau (Ngāti Porou, Te Whānau-ā-Apanui) was born and raised in Porirua. In 2011, she enrolled in a Bachelor of Māori Visual Arts, Toihoukura, at the Eastern Institute of Technology. She developed her interest in uku (clay) from Wi Taepa, Baye Riddle and the late Manos Nathan of Ngā Kaihanga Uku, the collective of Māori clayworkers. In 2020 Houkāmau had a solo exhibition of ceramic works at Pātaka in Porirua. Her work references the indigenous tattoo practices of tā moko and tatau, customary vessels, matriarchal relationships and growth cycles, to consider connections between past, present and future.

Visesio Poasi Siasau

Visesio Poasi Siasau is a contemporary Tongan artist who comes from a hereditary guild of Tongan tufunga (ritual practitioners) from Haano, Haapai and Fungamisi, Vavau islands. Siasau holds a master's degree in applied indigenous arts/philosophy and is currently undertaking a PhD in Hawai'i and Tonga. He works with perspex, glass, bronze, installation and large-scale painting on tapa cloth and canvas. In 2015 Siasau was the first Tongan artist to receive the Paramount Award in the Wallace Art Awards. He has undertaken artist residencies in the Solomon Islands, Taiwan, China and the United States, including a six-month residency at the International Studio and Curatorial Program (ISCP) in Brooklyn, New York in 2016, where he was invited to lecture at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. In 2018, Siasau was Visiting Fellow at Mellon Indigenous Arts Initiative at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville, Virginia, USA.