



names held

in our mouths



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“The past is alive in us, so in more than a metaphorical sense the dead are alive - we are our history.”

– Epele Hau’ofa

Cultural knowledge is often passed on through familial lines, both orally and embodied in practice. As with any knowledge systems, these practices are always in flux and responsive to shifting conditions. Colonisation, capitalism and migration have had a particular impact on how practices are continued. Some fall out of use; others adapt to new materials; still others are fuelled by ongoing social significance.

Today, many Māori and Moana peoples hold differing levels of access to and knowledge of indigenous arts. names held in our mouths considers how artists and collectives are sustaining or reviving arts that are uniquely theirs, with a focus on dormant or at-risk practices. Working primarily outside of formal institutions, modes of regeneration range from transnational exchanges, museum studies, close reading of texts and collective research. They also expose a number



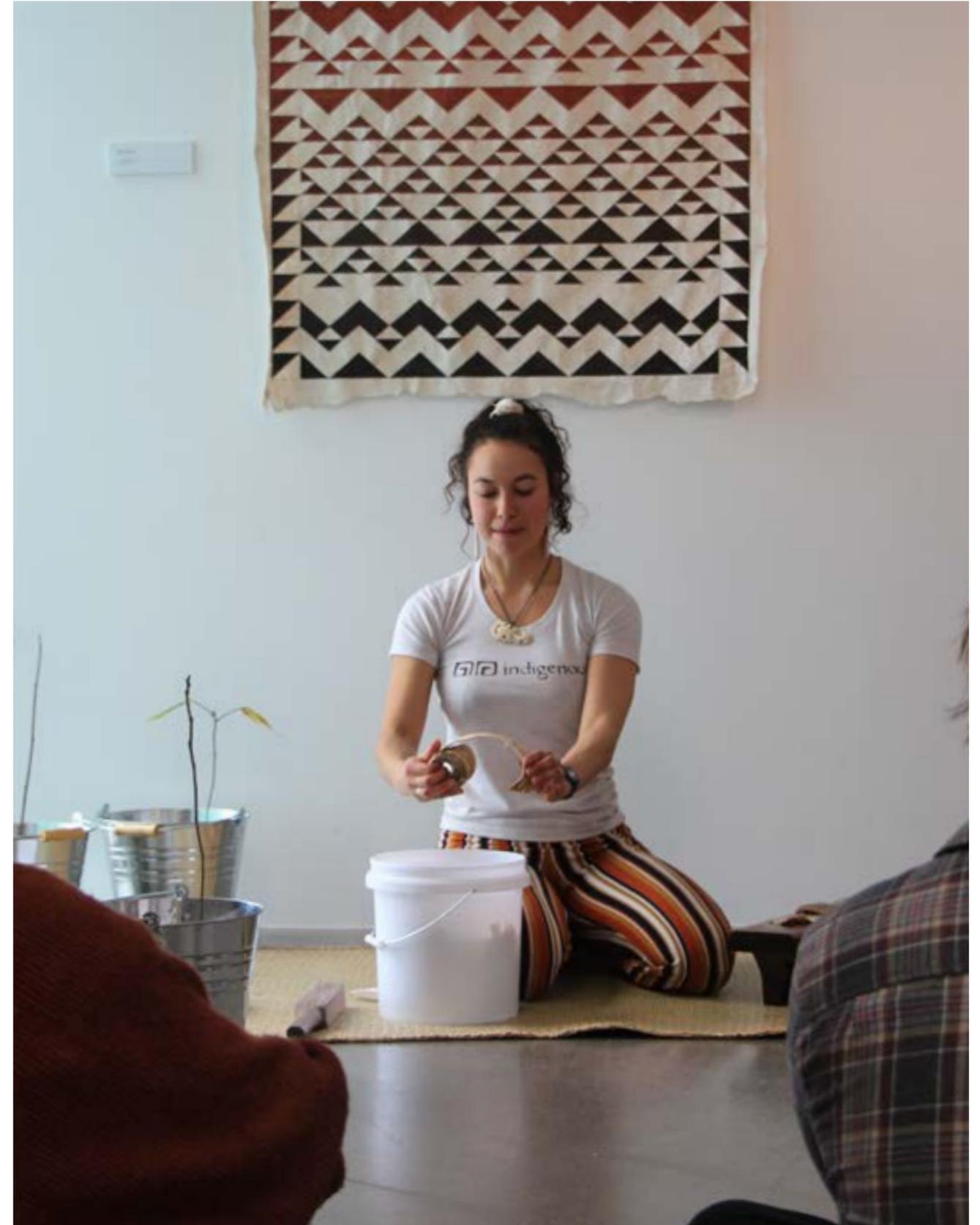
of oscillating concerns, such as the twin needs of protection and open sharing; revival and innovation; speculation and study. It is often cited in Tongan and Māori oratory that we walk backwards into the future. As artists approach art-making as an active space of connection, we can conceive of art practices as pregnant with the past, both informed by and actively constructing our future histories.

**Artists:** Sosefina Andy, Nikau Hindin, Louisa Humphry, Wikuki Kingi, Pacifica Mamas, The Veiqia Project and Kaetaeta Watson.

Supported by the Blumhardt Foundation and Dulux

Curated by Ioana Gordon-Smith

**8 June – 18 August 2019**



# Wikuki Kingi Jr

Wikuki Kingi Jr (Ngāi Tai, Te Whānau-ā-Apanui, Waikato-Tainui, Raukawa) learnt his toi early. In the 1970s, an 11-year-old Kingi was the youngest team member on the waka-building project Tahere Tikitiki, serving as both apprentice carver and kaiwaka (paddler). Kingi has since become a recognised tohunga whakairo, working across a range of contexts and forms.

Consistent across Kingi's practice is the question "if our tupuna had power tools and digital technology, how would they have approached carving?" His weapons and waka hoe here represent processes of play and experimentation. Kingi will pass his weapons to practitioners to test their use, adding additional strike points or considering the influence of wider Moana weaponry to heighten their efficiency. Similarly, different timbers and shapes are explored through his waka hoe. While embracing the possibilities of carving enabled through contemporary tools, Kingi notes that the long-term future of whakairo depends upon a "mental flip" towards sustainable living.

To this end, waka have remained a constant artform across Kingi's wide-ranging practice, aligning with a wider global resurgence of navigation over the past 30-40 years. Kingi's own role within this resurgence has been to cultivate transnational sharing of skills and information across Te Moananui a Kiwa. He was a carver and founding crew member of Haunui, a double-hulled voyaging waka, which combines modern boatbuilding materials with lashing, wooden beams, and carvings. Most recently, Kingi worked with Māori rangatahi in Perth to construct Te Karangatahi, the first, and to-date only, waka built in Australia. His next project takes place at Corban Estate Art Centre in collaboration with the Pacifica Arts Centre, an on-site construction of a waka that is to revitalise shared histories, knowledges and practical skills.







Please click the image or link to open an interview with Wikuki Kingi Jr in your browser <https://vimeo.com/373233675>

# The Veiqia Project

Margaret Aull (Lautoka), Donita Hulme (Nadroga), Joana Monolagi (Serua), Dulcie Stewart (Bua), Luisa Tora (Kadavu), Tarisi Vunidilo (Kadavu).

The Veiqia Project is a collective of Fijian artists, curators and researchers across Aotearoa New Zealand, Australia and Hawai'i who are inspired by the practice of Fijian female tattooing. Veiqia—in which both daubati (tattooist) and recipients are women—literally marks transition into womanhood. While Christian prohibitions endangered the practice, The Veiqia Project have studied museum collections, scoured ships' logs and shared talanoa with women of all ages to regenerate conversations about the practice within iTaukei (indigenous Fijian) communities. This process of recovering, collating, creating and sharing is central to the collective, and is the focus of their work commissioned for Te Uru.

In the centre of the gallery sits Rai Lesu, an artistic model of a bure kalou; a Fijian spirit house and site of guidance. Working in a master-apprentice relationship, Joana Monolagi guides Luisa Tora through the techniques of weaving cane and magimagi. Rai Lesu translates loosely into English as 'to look back'. Here, it supports Monolagi and Tora's intergenerational relationship as a mode of knowledge transmission with a long history, extending beyond the living into the ancestral realm.

Around the walls is a frieze of 19th century Fijian landscapes, paintings of matakau (material representations of ancestors) and weniqia patterns worn and chosen by The Veiqia Project members. The selection links formal and informal archives. It also binds research and contemporary veiqia practice, each propelling the other. As Donita Hulme and Dulcie Stewart note, "weniqia are appearing again on Fijian women's skin, and the words are returning to our mouths".





Please click the image or link to open an interview with Joana Monolagi and Luisa Tora in your browser <https://vimeo.com/373233668>

# Sosefina Andy

*Home: in a chain of memory, 2019*

wool, rebar (construction rods), video

Sosefina Andy (Lotofaga, Vaiusu) stays in touch with her grandmother in Sāmoa via phone calls and messages passed on from family members. Conversations with her grandmother—a weaver and seamstress—is one way Andy maintains a connection to her matriarchal line. Another is Andy's desire to honour her grandmother's craft through her own making practice.

Without access to laufala (pandanus) in Aotearoa, Andy has turned to crochet to emulate weaving's time-based, repetitive labour. Andy's choice is purposeful. Each crochet move must hook through the previous loop to travel forward, a method that maintains a constant connection with the past.

Here, Andy presents two works; a large installation that mirrors the room-divider wall of shelves in her grandmother's house, and a curtain that slightly echoes the beads or fabrics that hang, half-pulled, within a door-frame. The chosen references foreground domestic spaces as key places of learning and memory-making. Positioned between two spaces as either a connector or a divider, the works occupy a liminal space-between.

As is her routine, at the end of this exhibition, Andy will unravel her crochet. Only an animated drawing will remain to record the pattern. While domestic references recall the home Andy shared with her grandmother, this act of repeatedly crocheting and unravelling creates muscle memory. Working from the position that knowledge and memory are embedded in the act of making, Andy considers how knowledge and matriarchal influences can translate from one material, and geography, into another.







Please click the image or link to open an interview with Sosefina Andy in your browser <https://vimeo.com/373233653>

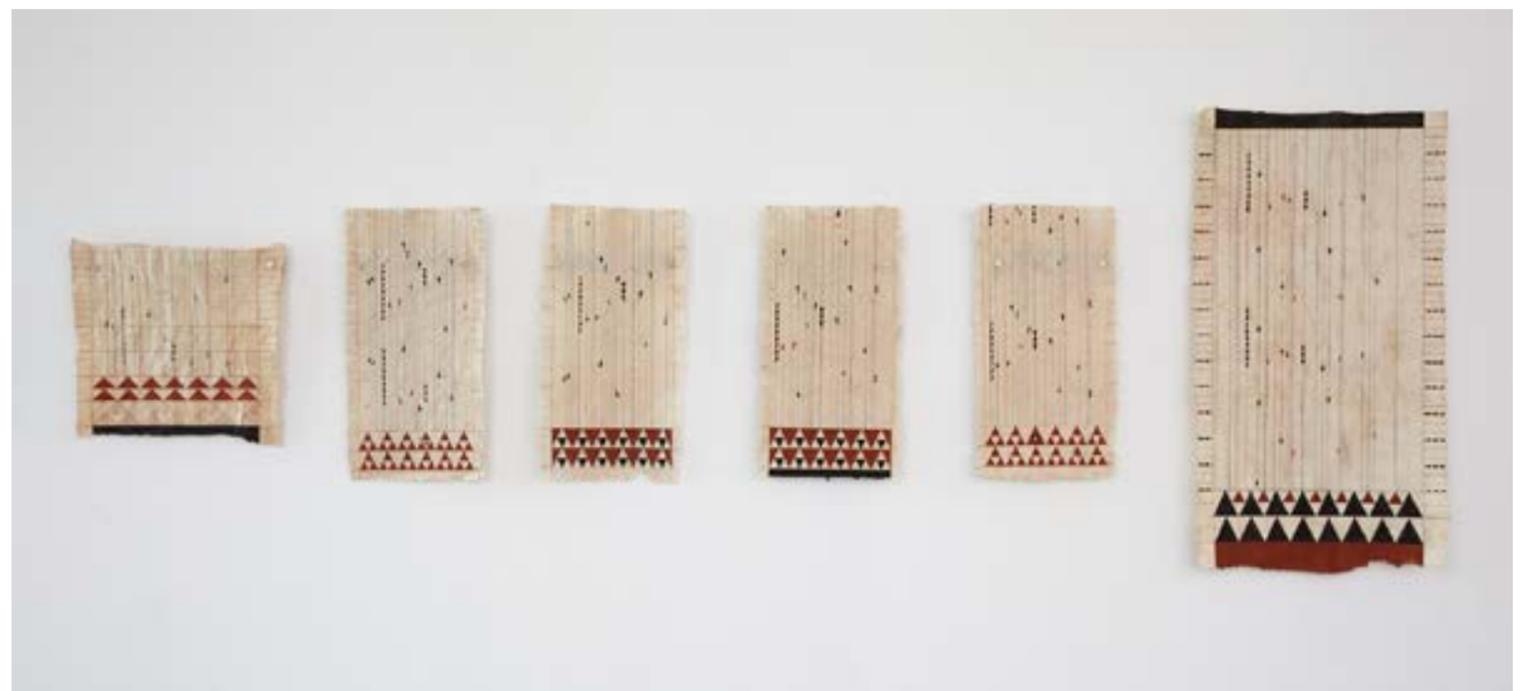
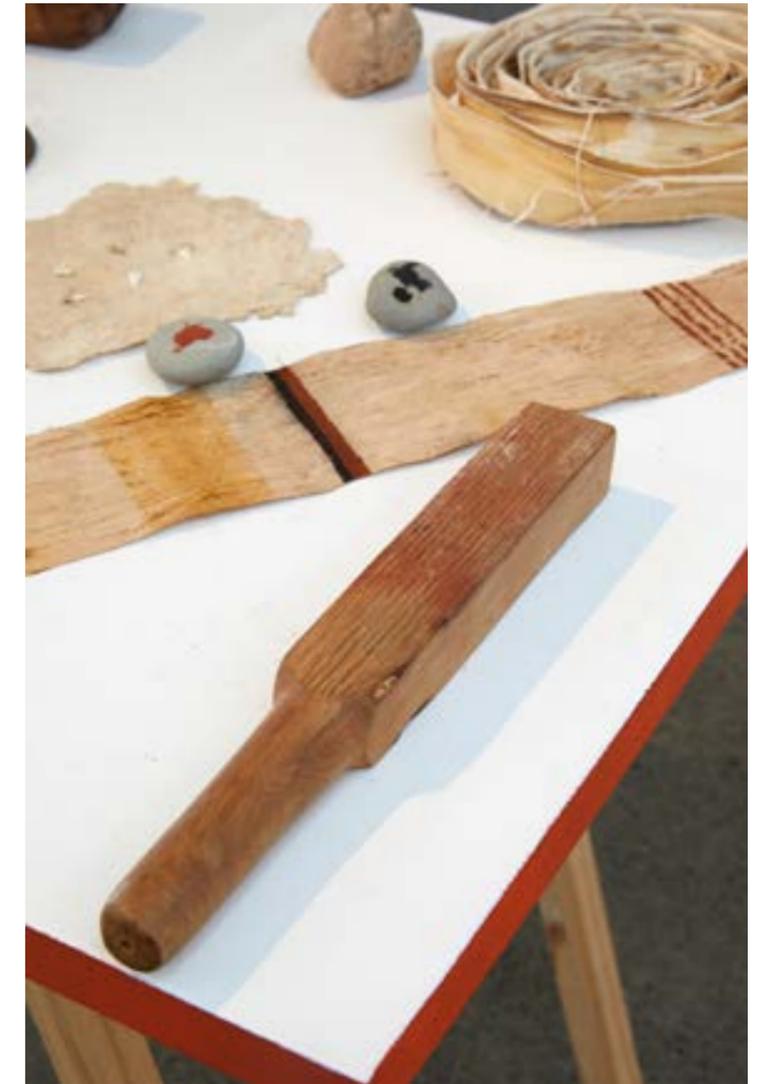
# Nikau Hindin

Nikau Hindin (Ngāpuhi, Te Rarawa) has a revivalist agenda to reawaken the lost art of aute — Māori tapa cloth — last practiced over 100 years ago.

Time is central to Hindin's research. This installation represents the six years Hindin has dedicated to re-learning the processes of growing, harvesting and beating aute. More significantly, Hindin's work is determined by time. In working with plants and traditional pigments, Hindin follows a Māori time cycle that exists outside of the Gregorian calendar. To better understand the pacing and patterns of the natural world, Hindin tracked the movement of stars for the past six moon cycles. The resulting works reflect a visual language that records teachings and knowledge drawn from celestial bodies and navigation. Often, the composition is predetermined by the times stars rise and set.

Hindin's painting systems derive from whatu raranga, tāniko and tukutuku as well as kapa from Hawai'i. Niho taniwha (the triangle pattern) ground the works like silhouettes of maunga. Here, they symbolise star houses sitting below the eastern horizon. Each long, vertical line represents a rising star and its declination. Navigators used the position of stars rising or setting to determine direction; every star rises from a certain star house and returns to this house in the west after travelling across the sky.

Hindin's practice operates on the premise that by reconnecting with taonga—the land, plants, reo Māori, whetū, Maramataka (Māori lunar calendar)—we can decolonise concepts of time by calibrating with the stars and moon. In reviving aute, Hindin not only reawakens an artform, but provides a tool with which to tune into these rhythms.







Please click the image or link to open an interview with Nikau Hindin in your browser <https://vimeo.com/373233645>

# Louisa Humphry & Kaetaeta Watson

Louisa Humphry (Kuria) and Kaetaeta Watson (Tabiteuea) both learned the art of raranga (weaving ni-Kiribati) from the women in their families. Now based in Waikato and Whiritoa respectively, Humphry and Watson continue to weave: as individuals, with each other, and together with other artists.

Collaboration plays an important role in Humphry and Watson's practices. In Kiribati, raranga draws from plant life: coconut palm and its fruit, pandanus trees, and local flowers. Without easy access to these resources in Aotearoa, Humphry and Watson have turned to local materials, both natural and synthetic. For this exhibition, they have set themselves the challenge of trying to make everything from harakeke. Adapting i-Kiribati forms to local materials is supported by sharing between weavers. Together, they can troubleshoot how different materials behave. As Watson notes, "we are able to talk and compare as we go along".

Here, Humphry and Watson present a series of te tai and te itera (headdresses). Te tai — also known as te etete — are woven, single-layer headdresses while te itera require te bibiri (plaiting) as well as raranga.

Also exhibited are full female and male bwaai ni mwaie (dance costumes), featuring te riri (skirt), te kabae (dancing mat), te nuota (belt), te karuru (arm decorations), te ramwane (sash), mwaen te roroa (chest garland) and te tai / te etete (headdress). Song and dance are two of the most popular i-Kiribati art forms in diaspora, but many of the dance adornments continue to be ordered in from Kiribati. Working from local materials, Humphry and Watson have a long-term desire to encourage raranga, too, here in Aotearoa, a practice developed by learning and sharing together.







Please click the image or link to open an interview with Louisa Humphry and Kaetaeta Wilson in your browser <https://vimeo.com/373233638>

# The Pacifica Mamas

Tivaevae patterns on the window reference the iconic doors that welcome visitors into West Auckland's Pacifica Arts Centre, a space synonymous with Moana arts and culture. Formed in the late 1980s by a collective of respected artists and first generation immigrants from a number of Moana nations, the Pacifica Mamas (and Papas) adopted the name of their hub as the Pacifica Arts Centre as one of convenience and easy recognition. Nearly two decades later, they are seeking to rename their space with their original, intended name: *Moanaroa*.

Presented as part of the exhibition names held in our mouths, *Moanaroa: home of the Pacifica Mamas* captures a glimpse of the sheer volume and commitment of the Pacifica Mamas approach to art-making. Eschewing minimalism for a 'more is more' approach, the installation spans works from the mamas' collections, documentary, weaving, and an invitation to settle in and have a cup of tea.

Embracing a warm approach, the Mama's occupation of the gallery rejects a division between art and life. Woven into rituals of laughter, cups of tea, adornment and church, *Moanaroa* suggests that the home of the Pacifica Mamas is rooted not in a physical location, but rather in the relationships that sustain their passion and culture across seas and spaces. Home is where the (he)art is.







Please click the image or link to open an interview with Mary Ama and Jarcinda Stowers-Ama in your browser <https://vimeo.com/373233663>



Published on the occasion of the exhibition  
*names held in our mouths*, 8 June – 18 August 2019  
Te Uru Waitākere Contemporary Gallery

Curator: Ioana Gordon-Smith  
Filmmaker: Robert George  
Photography: Sam Hartnett

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