

EXISTING ON TWO PLANES

NOV 12 | NOV 29

MELBOURNE
GRIN
FESTIVAL
12—29
NOV 2020



Brian Martin
Frances Tapueluelu
Lisa Waup
Tama Sharman
Tāne Te Manu McRoberts
Veisia Tonga
Michael Jalaru Torres

Existing on Two Planes

Curated by Kimba Thompson

About the Exhibition

Existing on Two Planes

Omens, portents and messages from the other side. Stories of dreams, ancestral spirit visitors and the messages we receive daily as we walk through life. They are often warnings or telling of family events or suffering. A portent of death or of future birth. A warning of impending pain or a harbinger of future happiness. As Indigenous and First Nations people we walk through life tuned into the spirit plane as well as the living plane. We weave mana and meaning into the things we create and understand that the spirituality of things is integral to its existence in the material world.

The show offers unique contemporary First Nations and Pacific art and includes sculpture, print, weaving, digital multimedia and floral installation.

The Artists:

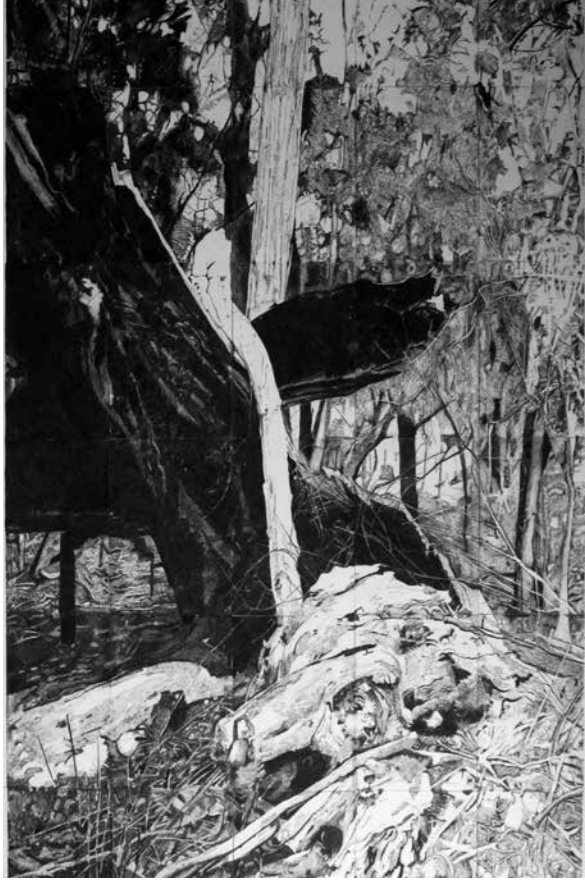
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Blak Dot Gallery acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land on which we work, live and create: the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people and Elders past and present of the Kulin nations, Naarm (Melbourne).



We are excited to be opening for Fringe Festival 2020, Nov 12 - Nov 29. Keeping safe Blak Dot offers a contactless check-in, we strongly encourage everyone to wear a face covering while in the gallery. Thank you this will help protect you and our community.

| Brian Martin |



Nuenonne # 1

The name Nuenonne refers to the Country of Bruny Island and Wathaurong locates Country of the greater area of Geelong and in particular Ocean Grove. Methexis, a Greek term (and hence a western term) has been garnered to understand the performative power of Indigenous cultural practices. Methexis is understood as a sense of action, which encompasses performance that is not individualized, but has a direct relationship to the group and the commemorative act. Methexis is the performative action that brings something into being and existence.

Methexis emphasizes a physical ground and it is through this ground that Indigenous practices resonate. Indigenous culture is based on an ancestral history where various aspects of culture are not isolated. For example, there is no distinction between art, culture and living in the mediated experience of human beings. However, this mediated experience is from the other substantial plane or 'space' of Country. Our relationality with Country is vital to how we view the world. And here, world is a multiplicity- the tangible, the intangible, material, immaterial, physical and metaphysical.

This is why these works are Countryscapes instead of landscapes as a way to reiterate that Country and in this case Neunnone and Wathaurong Country, are living subjects as opposed to being objects. Land or landscape tends to convey the notion of object whereas Countryside denotes subjectivity. These works attempt to articulate this plane of subjectivity, of agency, of a differing agency of the non-human.

My practice is an attempt to demonstrate this framework of an Indigenous understanding of the world and at the same time reveal the dynamic of what constitutes contemporary Aboriginal creative practices. I use drawing as an immersive and embodied practice and work in the form of charcoal on paper and on a large scale. The works are specifically landscapes that attempt to demonstrate the crucial role of "Country" (Land) and its importance to the foundations of Indigenous ideology and culture.

Brian Martin is a descendant of Bundjalung, MurraWarri and Kamilaroi peoples and has been a practising artist for 30 years exhibiting in the media of painting and drawing. His research and practice focus on refiguring Australian art and culture from an Indigenous ideological perspective based on a reciprocal relationship to Country. He has published numerous essays and articles and is an impassioned educator and communicator. His work has been recognised in various art prizes and is held in various private and public collections including the National Gallery of Victoria. His publication history has investigated the relationship of materialism in the arts to an Indigenous worldview and Aboriginal knowledge framework and epistemology. He has further reconfigured understandings of culture and visual practice from an Aboriginal perspective.

Wathaurong # 2



| Frances Tapueluelu |



Fanga manupuna 'oe talatupu'a 'o motu 'o Tonga

1. Ki'i manupuna lanumata 'o e Tu'i

2. Ma'afu Toka Ma'afu Lele

3. Ke malu'i koe I ho'o fonoga

Medium: ngatu (tapa cloth) clay sequins branches beads paint glitter sand shells

Birds are the connection to my ancestors, their physical spiritual and mythical presence is inside me.

These three works are the origin stories from Tonga, these works are dedicated to my ancestors. I will always tell your story, because you have told mine.



Frances Tapueluelu's culturally motivated and often politically-charged works extend from textiles, wearable art and print media to spoken-word performance. A New Zealand-born Tongan, of Vava'u and Nuku'alofa descent, Frances graduated with a degree in Fashion Design, going on to work in the New Zealand fashion and film industries before migrating to Naarm (Melbourne) where she is currently based. Her works have featured in numerous exhibitions across Australia and New Zealand and have been added to permanent collections internationally.

| Lisa Waup |

Spirited Connections 1 & 2

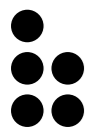
Medium: Screen Printed Tapa Cloth, Assorted Feathers, Seed Pod, Pyrography, Shark Vertebrae, Shells, Coconut Fibre, Cotton Thread

Spirited Connections represents the presence of my ancestors in my life, they are omnipresent and eternal. They live around me and in me, they guide me at times when I am lost. They show me and support me when I create my practice is an extension of this duality and connection.

I draw on the strength of my ancestors, and at times I feel I am a conduit for their messages. The sculptures represent my ancestors my family, and the innate relationship I have to Country, this is enforced by using natural materials and elements in my practice. I strongly believe that all objects – regardless of living or passed share the same soul trees, rocks, spirits etc. Spirited Connections are a direct line to Mother Nature, they are made from her and are a part of her being. For me it is a tangible connection to the intangible.



Lisa Waup is a mixed-race First Nations and Italian woman with a multidisciplinary art practice and is also a curator, born in Naarm (Melbourne) and currently a visitor on Boon Wurrung Country. Waup's practice is studio-based, and involves the creation of objects, with a strong connection of symbology through her work and materials which connects her to family, Country, history and story. She works across weaving, printmaking, photography, sculpture, textiles and installation and her work eloquently illustrates her life's journey through discovery and connection. Waup's practice highlighting the importance of tracing lost history, ancestral relationships, Country, motherhood and time which ultimately are woven stories of her past, present and future into contemporary forms.



| Tama Sharman |

Ki waenga

Medium: mixed media on blind

Conversation with my friend

Dead sounds so final and it's not

People are always with us

I spent time in my friends

House just before it was demolished using the materials from her

Whare as the basis of the conversations i had with her between planes

It was a transmuting of the pain and sadness

Into witness and continuing of her power this is a portrait of witness and power always.



Tama was born in Otepoti Aotearoa. Tama works across a variety of mediums and surfaces and enjoys creating in abandoned buildings, "empty galleries" and painting on found objects. His practice delves into the darkness of trauma as a ward of the state and reflects the daily struggle he has seeking healing. His works are often conversations with himself and reflects his challenges with identity. It explores and examines the question of, how do you embrace the cultures you've been placed with, while also honouring cultural inheritance.

| Tāne Te Manu McRoberts |

Herenga Wairua

Medium: Harakeke (Native New Zealand Flax), Hemp twine, resin, Leather, chicken feathers.

Navigating between two worlds, the Tohunga or high priest had many roles within the tribal community, being able to cross the veil into the plane of light, to receive messages to help guide the tribe onto the right path.

This Paki and Maro piece (Shoulder shawl and loin cloth type garment) pays homage to our Tohunga of the past and casts light to our many Tohunga of the future.



Tāne Te Manu McRoberts is a Māori weaver and designer of fine and intricate Polynesian attire. Inspired by his ancestral lineage he creates traditional and contemporary works, from natural and modern resources.

Tāne Te Manu is direct descendant of Ngāti Mākino & Ngāti Rangitihī- Te Arawa & Te Whānau ā Apanui- Tauria Mai Tawhiti, all of which are descendants of Tahiti, Ra'īātea (Māohi) & Hawai'i (Māoli).



| Veisia Tonga |

Felehuhuni: Demon or Demi-God?

Material: Kakala (plant material) bound together by wires.

In my younger days in Tonga, I was warned to beware of Felehuhuni whenever I ventured outside at dusk.

Felehuhuni is a tevolo (Ghost/Demon). Who was said to appear as a beautiful young man or woman to people at night and seduce them then lure them to Pulotu the underworld. A seductive Pied Piper who preyed only on the beautiful. I wonder if he/she/they were once a Tongan Deity relegated to being a tevolo (devil, a loan word from English) with the advent of Christianity? Was Felehuhuni our Gender fluid Goddess of Love and Desire demonised by Christianity? A remnant of our sex-positive past demoted to being a cautionary tale for the young, consigned to forever walk the darkness forgotten by her people?.



Veisia Tonga is a Kakala (plant material) Artist. A settler who is creating on the lands of the Kulin Nations. Veisia marries her training in western floristry with her traditional kakala knowledge to create installations with plant material gleaned from her surroundings. Plants in Tonga tell stories of place and are often symbolic of lineage and legends. Veisia is interested in examining how this can evolve on a foreign land using foreign kakala.



| Michael Jalaru Torres |

ONUS, 2020

Iford gold fibre gloss
Edition of 5

“This snake has followed me from birth. It has presented itself in many forms over my lifetime and continues to make its presence felt throughout my adult life. It reminds me that even through pain and loss it is my responsibility to my children to guide them so they can prepare themselves for life’s challenges. This entity is no friend or foe but balance”.

‘My photography draws on my own stories and personal history and explores contemporary social and political issues facing Indigenous people. Much of my work involves conceptual and innovative portraiture and abstract landscape photography.

Through my portraits of people taken ‘on country’ I promote positive and individualised representations of Indigenous people. I also incorporate etching, drawing and other design work into my conceptual photography, combining traditional and iconic Kimberley imagery within a modern aesthetic.’

Michael is an Indigenous photographer and media professional from Broome, Western Australia, who is now currently based in Naarm Melbourne, Victoria. As a Djugan and Yawuru man with tribal connections to Jabirr Jabirr and Gooniyandi people, he is inspired by the unique landscapes and people of the Kimberley region, which feature prominently in his work.



Billboards

| TAMA SHARMAN |
When I thought I was Dead
 Series 1-7#

Abandoned seemed Wasted

Existing a new being

A continuing

Mahi atua

Seeking

Valuing the spaces where I belong

Valuing my culture

Valuing my connections

I was dead and sometimes

It made me panic

So, I kept painting

Cause I was on my way home



Gallery 2#

| FRANCES TAPUELUELU |
How to make an axe and a spear, 2018

Video Instalation 6:30mins

This part of How to make an axe and a spear my ancestors have sent me a bird who is their messenger I speak Tongan to her because on Earth I am last speaker of language she will take my message and longing for Tonga back to my ancestors. I tell them that I am looking after a camp of women and children after a nuclear war - I teach them how to make weapons like an axe and a spear.



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