

—BIOGRAPHIES

Mitiana Arbon is an Indigenous Pacific Studies scholar completing his PhD thesis on Pacific Art at Australian National University. Mitiana's interest in his PhD topic stems from a broader interest in the framing of Pacific people and cultural heritage within 'western' institutional settings.

Winnie Dunn is a Tongan-Australian writer and community arts worker. She is the manager of Sweatshop: Western Sydney Literacy Movement and the literary editor of 'Sweatshop Women', 'The Big Black Thing' and 'Bent not Broken: Ten Years of Creative Writing'.

Dr Léuli Eshraghi Sāmoan artist, curator and researcher, intervenes in display territories to centre Indigenous presence and power, sensual and spoken languages, and ceremonial-political practices. Through performance, moving image, writing and installation, ia engages with Indigenous possibility as haunted by ongoing militarist and missionary violences that erase fa'afafine-fa'atama from kinship structures.

Ruha Fifita is a visual and performing artist investigating the histories of collaborative frameworks for art-making and the evolution of the social values and functions that they fulfil and/or have the potency to capture, propagate, and influence.

Rebecca Ann Hobbs focuses her creative practice on collaboration in an attempt to create performative artworks that celebrate dynamic bodies and their relationship with specific sites.

Shivanjani Lal works across mediums to explore her dislocation that seeks to account for memory, erasure, healing and the archive. Her current research posits that her body and the landscapes she is from hold the grief of being removed.

Enoch Mailangi is an Indigenous and Polynesian TV writer and text-based artist. Their practice and writing primarily champions themes of Black mediocrity and explores celebrity culture as a vehicle of colonisation.

Marianne Nicolson is an artist activist of the Musgamakw Dzawada'enuxw First Nations. Nicolson works as a Kwakwaka'wakw cultural researcher and historian, as well as an advocate for Indigenous land rights. Her multi-disciplinary practice encompasses photography, painting, carving, video, installation, monumental public art, writing and speaking.

Aunty Maxine Ryan is an Aboriginal woman from the La Perouse Aboriginal Community, located on the northern side of Botany Bay. She has a background in education and works in the local public schools, and with families who have family members with a disability. She has passed on her passion for Aboriginal arts and crafts to her grandchildren, especially shell-art, a craft that has been passed down through generations in her family.

Talia Smith is an artist and curator of Sāmoan, Cook Island and European descent. Smith's curatorial practice examines notions of time, memory and the ruin with a particular focus on photographic and time-based practices.

Latai Taumoepeau is a contemporary Punake — a body-centred performance artist whose artistic practice tells the stories of her homelands, the Island Kingdom of Tonga, and her birthplace of the Eora Nation, Sydney. Working in durational performance and photographic documentation, she addresses issues of race, class and the female body.

Salote Tawale was born in Suva, Fiji Islands and grew up in the South Eastern suburbs of Melbourne, Australia. Cultural identity is a central focus in her research. The inherent conflict of being from a mixed heritage (Fiji and Australia), that simultaneously includes and excludes Tawale from a dominant post-colonial Australia, is a significant consideration in her arts practice, which is intrinsically performative — employing photography, video, drawing, sculpture, installation and live actions.

Angela Tiatia explores contemporary culture, drawing attention to its relationship to representation, gender, neo-colonialism and the commodification of the body and place, often through the lenses of history and popular culture.

Vaimaila Urale is an artist and creative collaborator who works across a range of mediums including installation, performance and digital media. Vaimaila is a founding member of Auckland art collective D.A.N.C.E Art Club (formed in 2008).

—SYMPOSIUM

WAINSOLOWARA

UNSW Galleries

Saturday

18 January 2020

10.30am–5.30pm

Presented in conjunction with **Wansolwara: One Salt Water**, a series of exhibitions, performances and events staged across UNSW Galleries and 4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art in association with Sydney Festival 2020.

One ocean, one people

This symposium draws together diverse perspectives on the Great Ocean to focus our attention on this waterscape as a connector to culture, ancestral traditions and the movement of people. Wansolwara – a pidgin word from the Solomon Islands meaning ‘one salt water’ or ‘one ocean, one people’ – encapsulates the idea of a single, connected expanse that holds within it distinct and diverse communities.

—The ocean is our greatest connector and a dynamic living force that has no consideration for borders or divisions. In the Western world, understandings of the Great Ocean, Oceania and the Pacific have been anchored by colonial explorers. This has been perpetuated by tourism that constructs and fetishises a perceived authenticity of ‘traditional Pacific culture’ where change is equated to ‘loss’ of culture.¹ However, contemporaneity continues in the Great Ocean facilitating paradoxical understanding in artistic practices and destabilising static Western understandings of ‘authenticity’ and how culture should be ‘lived’ and ‘preserved’.²

—Exhibiting artists, writers and thinkers will discuss some of the multifaceted issues experienced by communities and cultures throughout the Great Ocean. Sessions will highlight histories of displacement and the impact of labour systems, cultural activism in the face of ongoing colonisation, and the creation of new cultural phenomena that disrupt static and preconceived understandings of ‘authentic’ culture. Alongside the Wansolwara project, these conversations aim to celebrate the continuing practices, knowledges and depth of contemporary visual and material culture throughout the Great Ocean.

¹ ‘Wansolwara: One Salt Water’, 4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art catalogue essay, January 2020

² Albert Wendt, ‘Towards a New Oceania’ in *Mana Review*. Vol 1, Issue 1 (1976), pp.54

UNSW Galleries acknowledges the Bidjigal and Gadigal peoples of the Eora nation, the traditional custodians of the land upon which it stands.

This symposium is presented in conjunction with **Wansolwara: One Salt Water, 17 January – 18 April 2020**. Additional public programs will take place throughout the exhibition period. For more information visit unsw.to/gallery-eventbrite.

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UNSW Galleries
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—SYMPOSIUM PROGRAM

10.30am	WELCOME TO COUNTRY	Aunty Maxine Ryan, La Perouse Local Aboriginal Land Council.
10.50am	INTRODUCTION	UNSW Galleries Director José Da Silva introduces ‘Wansolwara: One Salt Water’.
11.00am	CONVERSATION	A conversation with artist and curator Talia Smith, exhibiting artist Shivanjani Lal and artist Salote Tawale to discuss the enduring effects of displacement from histories of indentured labour, migration and ongoing colonial forces for communities living in the diaspora.
11.45am	BREAK	—————
12.00pm	TALANOA	An intercultural dialogue with Tongan-Australian writer Winnie Dunn, exhibiting artists Ruha Fifita, Latai Taumoepeau and visiting Musgamakw Dzawada’enuxw First Nations artist activist Marianne Nicolson. Together they will discuss art as a site of advocacy, activism and social engagement. The term talanoa is used across the Pacific to reflect a process of inclusive, participatory and transparent dialogue.
1.00pm	LUNCH	Lunch provided by Kallico Catering, run by Daryll and Nene Brown, offering Indigenous and non-Indigenous styles of cuisine. Gluten-free and vegetarian options available.
2.00pm	KEYNOTE	‘Indigenous artist-curator relationships in the militarist present’ by Dr Léuli Eshraghi. Response by Indigenous Pacific Studies scholar Mitiana Arbon.
3.00pm	BREAK	—————
3.15pm	CONVERSATION	Writer and text-based artist Enoch Mailangi is joined by exhibiting artists Angela Tiatia, Vaimaila Urale and Rebecca Ann Hobbs for a conversation on the convergence of the traditional and contemporary in popular culture and the creation of new, hybrid phenomena.
4.15pm	BOOK LAUNCH	‘Transits & Returns’ is a significant contribution to the emergent discourse on global Indigenous art. The publication explores the complexities of being Indigenous in the 21 st century as expressed through recent art, curation and scholarship by Indigenous practitioners. Organised by the Vancouver Art Gallery and Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane, curated by Tarah Hogue, Sarah Biscarra Dilley, Freja Carmichael, Léuli Eshraghi and Lana Lopesi.