

## Lonnie hutchinson a shifting view



*Shangri La* (2011)



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I have been familiar with Lonnie Hutchinson's practice since I came across it by chance in the Auckland Art Gallery exhibition *Purangiaho: Seeing Clearly* (2001). Hutchinson has since become an established member of the New Zealand art community. Her combined Maori and Samoan heritage have informed her work significantly. The beautifully articulated cutouts she produces have been described as "pay[ing] homage to Pacific women and their traditional arts such as *siapo*, *tivaevae* and weaving" ([www.tautai.org/lonnie-hutchinson/](http://www.tautai.org/lonnie-hutchinson/)) but also suggest a line of deeper investigation that often references ideas related to social, cultural and gender issues.

Following my fleeting introduction to Hutchinson's work I began to get a sense that there was far more to this artist's vision than

I was seeing at first glance. She has always had an interest in performance and moving image but there appears to have been a more concerted shift in recent years towards works which engage more directly with her audience. These projects, which more often than not have an interactive element or focus to them, allow Hutchinson to explore her subjects beyond the limitations of paper and scalpel that have become a staple of her practice.

It was not until relatively recently that I was made aware of Hutchinson's interest in public and community engagement. By chance one evening I caught the TVNZ programme *New Artland* in which she was commissioned to create a public artwork for Christchurch. The initial project idea was to produce an enormous lei of living flowers for the gateway to the

Bridge of Remembrance. Due to engineering and budget issues this concept was not able to be realised but the resulting work *Peace on Godley Head*, a giant installation made up of potted flowers and school children spelling out the word AROHA (with a peace symbol for the 'o'), was in many ways more successful because of the investment of local communities.

This move between spheres is something of a continuum for Hutchinson. It is the transitional spaces or the veils that separate one thing from another that have consistently motivated her art making. Issues of public and private have been seen in exhibitions such as *Black Pearl* (2004) and *Parallel Seductions* (2006) but in many respects have more poignancy in Hutchinson's community projects. There is a sense that the artist is trying to make tangible the thing that



separates spaces - the present from the past or the spiritual from the physical. Her practice is a constant teasing out of these themes suggesting a set of core relationships that the audience may not necessarily be aware of.

The idea of the threshold was first explored as a physical manifestation in the installation *Before Sunrise* (2010) at Artstation. This work featured a thin line of blood red chalk dust that separated the viewer on one side of the gallery from the intricately patterned cutouts on the other. Created for the Te Taumata Exhibition Series as part of the Auckland Matariki Festival, the installation featured seven of Hutchinson's signature hand-fabricated works that lured the audience, often unwittingly across the demarcation. Many were so intent on investigating the work in the purposefully dimly lit environment that they failed to notice this crossing until after the fact. This work intentionally provoked a conscious relationship between the viewer, the art and the space they both inhabited.

Hutchinson's recent commission for the newly renovated Auckland Art Gallery performs on an even more subtle level. Created specifically for the portals between the foyers and the gallery spaces this work literally takes on the role of a threshold, resting in the uncertain space between interior design and art. Although the work incorporates Hutchinson's familiar iconography it signals a change in the artist's relationship to her audience. It is no longer just

to create stand alone works that sit comfortably within the gallery setting; it is about a mindful engagement with the audience and their ability to perceive art in a much broader context. Hutchinson talks with great enthusiasm about the news that her multiple works titled *Honoa Ki Te Hono Tawhiti: Te Taumata* (2011) have become a highlight for many of the gallery's visitors who enjoy the ability to interact unheeded with the relief wall designs.

Although not the first venture into interactive possibilities, earlier examples have not always required the audience to make specific decisions about their involvement in the work or its purpose in the greater scheme of things. Commissioned specifically for SCAPE: Christchurch Biennale of Public Art Hutchinson's work titled *Beat the Feet* (2008) was a virtual viewing station sited within the Christchurch Anglican Cathedral. Described by Hutchinson as being, "about Waitaha, Ngati Mamoe and Ngai Tahu, [the people] that used to traverse the Christchurch plains [and] the evidence of occupation prior to European settlement in the area", this artwork attempted to reflect a history that was not reliant on the physical structures we have come to see as the typical trappings of human history. When the viewer looked through the apparatus they were presented with a moving panorama of birds, insects and plants all created in Hutchinson's unique black cutout style – the only concession to the building it was created for were two virtual pillars that also existed in real-time.

This was not Hutchinson's earliest foray into this technically challenging arena. For her dual exhibition with fellow Ngai Tahu artist Nathan Pohio titled *Phantasmagoria* at Jonathan Smart Gallery in Christchurch, Hutchinson created what she describes as a virtual augmented reality work. Called *Untitled (Garden)* (2006) this work was an enclosed viewing device that recreated the room in which it was sited for the exhibition. The audience could view an artificial rendition

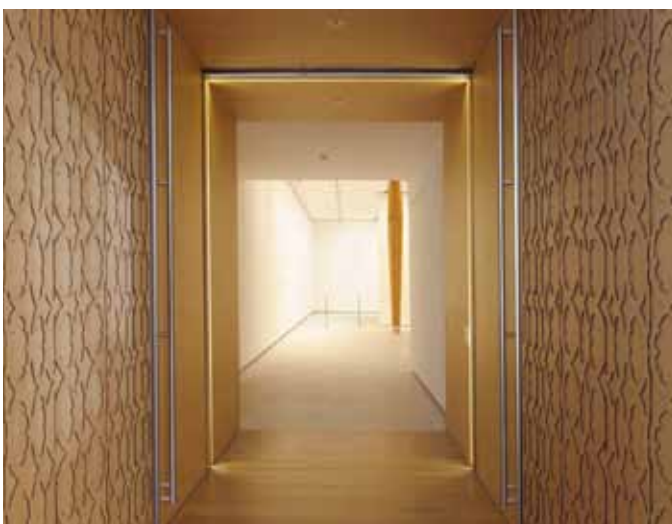
of the gallery space resplendent in kowhaiwhai pillars with birds darting through and around them. Although the limitations of the technology were evident it was nevertheless an exciting re-visioning of Hutchinson's practice.

More recently Hutchinson has produced a work for the Chews Lane district of the Wellington CBD. Commissioned by a private developer in conjunction with Athfield Architects this work builds on her previous explorations of binocular viewing stations. Designed to be a complete 360 degree virtual reality experience, *Shangri La* (2011) employs technology and skills not previously available to the artist. For this work Hutchinson wanted to create an "imagined paradise", an animated environment that infects the contemporary landscape with the fauna and flora of the past. This is also one of the few examples in which Hutchinson has illustrated actual characters from history in the taniwha's Naki and Whitaitai who were said to have inhabited the harbour when it was still a lake an acknowledgement of the area's Maori cultural and natural history.

It is interesting to consider that with the change in scale and technology that Hutchinson has more frequently taken on the role of producer and art director. This however, does not mean that she has given up the hand-made meticulously crafted cutouts she has become nationally and internationally known for. Her practice has merely expanded to include a diverse range of media that still incorporates the silhouette as a distinct element within her practice. Her interest in veils, thresholds and transient spaces continues to inform her work and it is not surprising that many of Hutchinson's public projects currently under development play on these ideas.

Karl Chitham

(Karl Chitham is a curator, artist and writer and is currently the Art Collection Curator at the University of Waikato, Hamilton)



*Honoa ki te hono tawhiti: Te Taumata* (2011)



*Untitled Garden* (2006)

# tautai news

Bula Vinaka

Welcome to the final newsletter for 2011 which is capping off what has been a busy and very positive year for Tautai.

When going to print for the previous issue, rugby fever had hit New Zealand and Tautai was about to launch our own Pacific Art Village in a container with the intention of showcasing and offering for sale work to RWC visitors. We had some drawbacks, the weather being one, which restricted the number of days we could open, but feel it was a worthwhile exercise.

As usual it was the intangibles such as artist conversations and new contacts that made it successful. It was wonderful having Johnny Peninsula with us for a week and our thanks to the volunteers who were there to help Jenni Heka and Venus Stephens who very efficiently project managed the event for us.

Also in October was the fourth and final Tautai Fresh Horizons workshop for the year which was hosted by the Eastern Institute of Technology at

their Taradale campus. EIT were wonderful hosts and generous partners for this workshop which also received an enthusiastic welcome from the local Pacific community. Over forty students took part in classes run by Victor Rodger, Linda Lepou, Nathan Suniula and Matthew Salapu aka Anonymouz. Our thanks to all involved in making this such a successful event. Our thanks also to Louise Tu'u for her work with the Fresh Horizons Program. Louise has recently resigned from her role as Fresh Horizons Program Manager in order to spend more time concentrating on her own art practice.

The artist profiled in this newsletter, Lonnie Hutchinson, was also the 'Tautai artist' this year, giving talks, making presentations, and doing one-to-one critique sessions at all the Auckland tertiary art schools. In October she also went to Wellington and gave presentations at both Victoria and Massey Universities. Our thanks to Lonnie for her time and commitment during 2011 to this Tautai program of support for Pacific tertiary students.

Tautai has continued our commitment to providing professional development opportunities for artists through small targeted workshops with Tim Walker. This part of our program also included an entire day in November held specifically for tertiary students and recent graduates. More information about that day is covered below.

Planning and preparations for the 2012 program is now well underway. With additional resources available with funding by Creative New Zealand, next year will see the continued growth of Tautai. Watch for the fortnightly email with listings for events or check the calendar on the website for information about what is on.

Our thanks to everyone who has taken part in or supported Tautai activities this year. We wish you and your families a very happy and safe festive season.

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Team Tautai

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## professional development life after art school

Worried about what's going to happen after you graduate? Don't have a plan or a starting point? Maybe you're unsure about how to approach established companies or galleries?

Tautai approached some second and third year students, from all five Tertiary Institutes in Auckland and put these questions towards them. What would help make the transition from art school to real life smoother?

An overwhelming response helped set the wheels into motion. The result was a well-rounded information packed day, held in the board room of the Auckland Art Gallery. It featured speakers, who were not only professional but also had a wealth of experience in their fields of practice.

The lucky ones who attended soaked up all the knowledge on offer. Judging by some of the

furious pen on paper action, this was a really valuable opportunity and the students were making the most of it.

After a warm and friendly welcome by Christina Jeffery, Manager of Tautai, it was in full swing. Janet Lilo (Artist), Makerita Urale (Artist and Senior Advisor Pacific at Creative New Zealand), Vaimaila Urale and Ahilapalapa Rands (D.A.N.C.E Artist Collective) took us through their experiences and adventures to date and gave us some great questions to think about in relation to ourselves. It was great to have such inspirational artists, who we could relate to, speak to us. Achieving our own goals was beginning to feel tangible already.

Lynn Lawton (Financial and Career Planning for your Future), Tim Walker and Marlaina Key (Public and Dealer Galleries) gave us sound

advice about the business and financial side of the art world. Tips ranged from building relationships/networking to starting your own business. Afterwards we headed over to FHE Gallery to experience firsthand an exhibition opening, kindly hosted by Ane Tonga and Mink (gallery assistants at FHE).

Feedback from this day was encouraging. Students were grateful, happy and smarter! Tautai are hoping to make this workshop available again in the future due to the high demand. Nurturing and keeping creative minds alive straight out of tertiary learning is an important one. Thank you again to all the wonderful speakers, Tautai, and of course the students who took part and made this day a success.

Reina Sutton  
Unitec Visual Art Student



Paul Lafaele, Xavier Winterstein, D.A.N.C.E Art Club member Vaimaila Urale, Mink from FHE Gallery, Chris Ryan and Daniel Tautua



Students at FHE Gallery after attending the Tautai Professional Development Day

# fresh horizons hastings

Eastern Institute of Technology campus at Taradale was filled with the sounds of music and laughter as forty students from nine secondary schools in the Hawke's Bay area participated in three days of intensive art making on 11, 12, 13 October. The artist tutors for this workshop were writer Victor Rodger, fashion designer Linda Lepou, painter Nathan Suniula, and all round musical genius Matthew Salapu aka Anonymouz. Assisting the tutors were three current EIT students Silofa Taula,

Litia Sapoti, and Louisa Kerisiano. As usual, some great work was created, friends were made, and lessons were learnt in a welcoming environment as EIT were wonderful hosts. The event co-ordinators Maryanne Marsters and Raewyn Patterson along with Tevivi Daniel did an amazing job and had great support from many of the local Pacific community all of which ensured a most successful workshop.

Thank you Hawke's Bay - look forward to being with you again next year.



Fresh Horizons Tutors - Victor Rodger, Linda Lepou, Mathew 'Anonymouz' Salapu and Nathan Suniula



Assistant tutor Silofa Taula modelling a creation from fashion students working with tutor Linda Lepou



Music students learning how to lay a track with tutor Mathew 'Anonymouz' Salapu



Painting group getting creative combining tapa and cut outs

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## postcard from germany

I was granted a Visiting Scholar program by the Goethe Institute in Wellington to travel to Germany from August till October 2011 to conduct a series of projects. This included researching museum archives for information pertaining to German occupation of Samoa between 1890 and 1914.

These ethnographic museums were in Berlin, Hamburg, Stuttgart, Cologne and Frankfurt and I was assisted by my local guide and Berlin based German choreographer Jochen Roller. I also participated in an international choreographic residency entitled 'Matchpoint' which was held at Theatre Hebbel am Ufer, Berlin.

Going through museum archives is almost like walking into a forest because there are

so many things to observe. However my main interest was looking at photography from early 1900's from Samoa. There were times I would see the photos and shed a tear feeling nostalgic and overcame with emotion, longing for the presence of past lives.

My residency with Theatre Hebbel am Ufer in Berlin involved contributing as a mentor for choreographers who travelled from Europe, Asia and the Pacific region. A true meeting of artistic minds, many of the theoretical discussions amongst choreographers challenged me to think about ways in which dance is made and understood internationally. Till this day, I'm still exploring the difference between 'conceptual' and 'post-conceptual' dance.



Photo courtesy of Jochen Roller

I will be giving a presentation about my research in Germany at the Goethe Institute office in Wellington in late February 2012.

For more information please visit [www.shigeyukihara.com](http://www.shigeyukihara.com)

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Shigeyuki Kihara

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## gallery



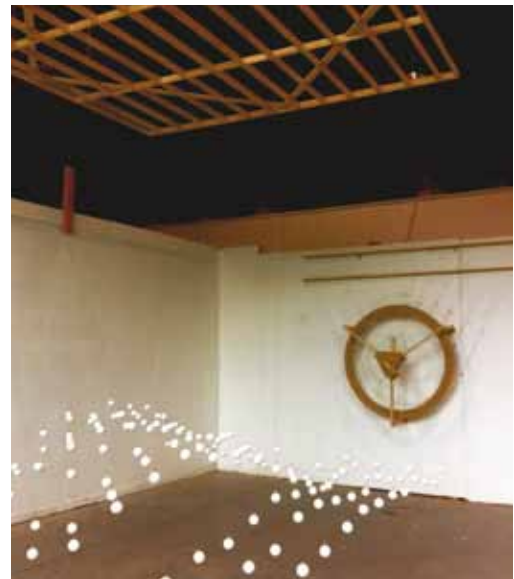
Children from Sistema Aotearoa ready to perform at the Telstra Clear Event Centre. *Sistema Aotearoa is a partnership between Auckland Philharmonia Orchestra and Ministry for Culture and Heritage where children from the Otago community receive free music tuition.*



Artist and volunteer Merisa Bickerstaff helping to set up the Tautai Pacific Arts Village at Western Park, Ponsonby in October during RWC finals.



Darcell Apelu, AUT Graduate Exhibition



MSVA graduate, Sam Tuimauga, Untitled, mixed media 2011



Doryne Milo, Unitec Graduate Exhibition



Artweeks Southern Gallery Express was hosted by D.A.N.C.E Art Club, pictured here with Sopolomalama Filipe Tohi at his solo exhibition at Mangere Arts Centre

## events & exhibitions

### january | february | march 2012

9 October – 12 February. *Sculpture in the Gardens*. Includes Tui Hobson. Auckland Botanic Gardens, Manurewa

5 November – 22 January. *A Whole in the Heart* curated by Kevin Webby. Hastings City Art Gallery

13 November – 19 February. *Michel Tuffery: Siamani Samoa*. Pataka, Wellington

19 November – 5 February. *Kermadec*. Includes John Pule at Tauranga Art Gallery, Tauranga

8 December – 12 February. *Tree House: McCahon Residency Five Years On*. Includes Andy Leleisi'uao, Lopdell House Gallery, Auckland

17 December – 22 April. *Unveiled, 200 Years of Wedding Fashion*. Includes Linda Lepou. Te Papa Tongarewa, Wellington

17 December – 25 March. *John Pule: Hauaga (Arrivals)*. Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tamaki, Auckland Central

5 January – 5 February. *Kiss the Ground*. Chris Charteris at Waitaia Advanced Native Tree Nursery, Kuaotunu, Coromandel Peninsula

13 January – 6 February. *Voyagers*. Includes Sylvia Marsters, Chris Van Doren, Tui Hobson, Waiheke Community Art Gallery, Waiheke

15 January – 26 February. *Pre(Serve)*. Tiffany Singh at Hastings City Art Gallery, Hastings

7 February – 16 March. *Typeface*. Vaimaila Urale at Digital Art Live - Aotea Centre, The Edge, Auckland

16 February – 10 March. *Chinese Horoscope Show - Wellington Arts Festival*. Includes Tiffany Singh. Enjoy Gallery, Wellington

17 February – 25 March *Drawing Show*. Daniel Tautua, Francis Pesamino at Mangere Arts Centre Nga Tohu o Uenuku, Auckland South

17 – 19 February. *Seven Hues of Harmony*. Tiffany Singh at Splore Festival, Auckland

21 February – 10 March. *Anatomy of Paradise*. Tanu Gago, Ahilapalapa Rands, Nastashia Simeona, Nooroa Tapuni, Kalisolaite 'Uhila and Vaimaila Urale. Tautai exhibition curator Angela Tiatia. Artstation, Auckland Central

1 March. *OFFSTAGE: 180*. 4th Tautai experimental moving image and performance event. This year at Artspace, Auckland Central

1 March – 27 March. *Woven Between* – new works by Dagmar Dyck. Flagstaff Gallery, Devonport

Photo courtesy of Michael Hall and Creative New Zealand.



## cnz arts pasifika awards 2011 winners

The 2011 CNZ Arts Pasifika Awards were announced at a function in Wellington on the 24 November. The category winners pictured here were Kulimoe'anga Stone Maka – Emerging Pacific Artist, Marlana Devoe, Iosefa Enari Memorial Award (her father Sulu Devoe pictured here), Janet Lilo, Contemporary Pacific Artist, Kalameli Ihaia-Alefoso, Pacific Heritage Artist and Annie Crummer, Senior Pacific Artist.

watch the Tautai Website and the Pacific Arts Diary  
for news of upcoming events and exhibitions

[www.tautai.org](http://www.tautai.org)