

TAUTAI

MARCH 2011

CONTEMPORARY PACIFIC ARTS TRUST

d.a.n.c.e. distinguished all night community entertainers



*Rirkrit Tiravanija, magazine station no.5
Artspace 2008*



*Casual Romance Club
Valentines Day - Albert Park 2010*



*Casual Romance Club
Enjoy Public Art Gallery 2010*

Auckland-based artists collective D.A.N.C.E. Art Club has created a repertoire of exhibitions and events that celebrate the social dynamic as a creative platform. The collective organises events that incorporate art installations and include themed music, entertainment, food and refreshments. They encourage audience engagement and participation as a way of opening up conversation and making art accessible to a wider audience.

D.A.N.C.E. Art Club consists of visual artists Chris Fitzgerald, Ahilapalapa Rands, Linda T. Tanoai and Vaimaila Urale. They continue a rich history of artists collaborating towards a creative vision, in the vein of definitive performance art collective Pacific Sistas, who formed in the 1990s.

Embracing a collective art-making practice

came naturally for these artists, who met while studying art at Auckland University of Technology and formed as a group in 2008. The group's conception came from a desire to facilitate social networks within the larger community at art school. Discovering a natural hierarchy among undergraduates, master's students and staff was the impetus for creating a neutral zone: 'we wanted people to socialise on an equal level, in an equal space.'

D.A.N.C.E. Art Club was born. D.A.N.C.E. being an acronym for Distinguished All Night Community Entertainers Art Club. Regular art gatherings were organised to mobilise their peers and the art-school community. They were given permission to hold events on school grounds and providing free food and beverages such as 'Dodgy Dance Punch' and free DJ music encouraged people to get involved. They also

invited fellow art students, staff and friends to submit artwork and be part of art installations.

The events were challenging on several fronts. 'The fact that we would stage the events had people on edge – lots of tutors and support staff were talking and it was hugely political without us knowing and realising it.' On the surface the events had the aesthetics of a party. It challenged people to think of social interaction as art. 'People began to ask, "Is it art?" Yes, it's an art event; and just because it looks like a party and sounds like a party, doesn't mean it is one.'

The success of the AUT events inspired the collective to continue with the group after graduating. Their events continue to be self-curated and self-funded with a strong focus on collaborative practice. 'It's about how we share space. Our practice is about how we



Linda T Tanoai, Chris Fitzgerald, Vaimaila Urale and Ahilapalapa Rands.
Photograph by Edith Amituanai

relate to each other as individual artists within a collective, how we relate to our audience and how our audience relates to each other.'

In 2008, they presented work outside of AUT for the first time as part of the magazine station no. 5 exhibition at Artspace, in conjunction with leading Relational Aesthetics artist Rirkrit Tiravanija and part of a month-long series of events involving local artists.

This event included setting up a space to make fresh pina colada; the audience were invited to scrape fresh coconuts to make pe'e pe'e. Vaimaila worked with fellow emerging artists Seilala Sini, John Vea and Fristar Viliamu to orchestrate the food-sharing activity. Artist Tiffany Singh was invited to set up a space where she gifted green wax apples in exchange for words/poems or drawings.

Following Artspace, in 2009, the collective were asked to be part of a photographic exhibition called 'I Go Where The Party Takes Me' at James Wallace Gallery in Auckland. They collaborated on a video featuring Ahilapalapa, who has a performance-based practice. The video, 'Laundromat', in which Ahilapalapa impersonates Beyoncé, also featured in 'I Go Where The Party Takes Me' at Sarjeant Gallery in Whanganui and in 'Off Stage' for Tautai, both in 2010.

Conceptually, D.A.N.C.E. Art Club draws on everyday life to explore universal themes. In 2010 they created a year-long trilogy of exhibition events called 'Casual Romance Club'. The Club dealt with romance, love and relationships in the modern age.

The first Casual Romance Club event took place on Valentines Day at the Albert Park rotunda, Auckland. This was the collective's first event in a public space. Linda T. and Chris set up a DJ zone dedicated to love songs and Ahilapalapa and Vaimaila made romantic decorations, sweet treats and love potion.

In June 2010 D.A.N.C.E. Art Club were curated into Enjoy Public Art Gallery's 10th Anniversary Exhibition in Wellington. The collective were

asked to host the exhibition opening and exhibit for one week. Working outside of Auckland for the first time was an exciting challenge. The call to create a unique celebration was the perfect proposition for the collective.

For this project they expanded their collaborations beyond the members of their group. They invited other artists to make work, including Janet Lilo, who in turn chose to collaborate with two young Wellington artists, Jonathan Cameron and Marie Fonoti. The result was a video re-enactment of a scene from the Twilight series' New Moon. Chris worked with artist Jackie McGraw, who produced an oil painting portrait of him. Continuing the romance theme, Linda T. asked friends to text her their 'heartbreak' songs, which she then used as her DJ playlist at the opening. Inspired by watching reality TV show Masterchef Australia, Vaimaila collaborated with two Wellington artists, Emma Nicholls and Keila Martin, to bake a croquembouche, a traditional towering, cone-shaped French wedding cake. The dessert was shared among guests at the opening celebration.

The collective say: 'Romance is heavily mediated through digital communication. We're using internet dating sites, Facebook, mobile texts to connect. We're also influenced by the media's idea of what "romance" should be through popular movies, reality TV and music videos.'

For the Enjoy exhibition the collective produced a self-published supplementary publication. The theme of romance in the digital age gave them the idea to look beyond the art world for a writer to contribute the main text. 'We asked Greer McDonald, who used to write for a well-known singles dating blog called Greer 2.0. It was important for us to include a voice which operated in the blogosphere.' Greer is now the social media editor for www.stuff.co.nz.

Other opportunities opened up for the group. They were invited to take part in a seminar called The Wellington Collaboratorium alongside

New York based collaborative artist Gregory Sholette. This gave them the opportunity to share their practice with other like-minded artists and collectives from around NZ.

The third and final instalment of Casual Romance Club took place at Auckland bar Cassette Number Nine. The venue was the inspiration to hold an evening of musical speed dating. Guests were invited to participate in a soirée of love songs and conversation by candlelight in the form of speed-dating-meets-musical-chairs. Participants were provided with light-hearted conversation-starters such as 'If an alien came down and asked you to go to their home planet, would you go with them?' All conversation-starters were sourced from internet speed-dating sites.

Linda T., the DJ host for the event, signalled partner rotation by changing the music – from Marvin Gaye to Minnie Riperton to Ardijah – setting the scene for romance on this nightclub-meets-gallery occasion. Further into the night, guests were entertained with live drag performances by Ahiyonce and Tekuila Dream, who, in keeping with theme, performed 'Video Phone' by Lady Gaga and 'Telephone' by Beyoncé. The event blurred perceptions of 'art' and 'entertainment', as well as preconceptions about the role of audience, transforming them from onlookers to performers and even instigators for the art project.

Venues are a core part of D.A.N.C.E. Art Club events and the collective is strategic in choosing the right venue for their projects, looking for spaces where they can host late and take the liberties needed to construct the right environment. An event such as their Pool Hall Comp held at K'Rd Ballroom in 2010, where participants were encouraged to take part in competitive rounds of pool, demonstrates how heavily their work can draw on and be informed by site specificity.

While they are focused on collaborative art-making, they do have their individual roles, which they find are always shifting: 'We all bring something different to the table and are constantly learning and honing our practice.'

D.A.N.C.E. Art Club has a full year ahead of them with their main priority being to work on their online presence. Documentation is key to their work, as what they create is ephemeral by nature. The collective are planning to launch their website/blog in May. They have also been curated into the Pacific Arts Summit at Papakura Art Gallery for a one-off event and later in the year they will also be working on a half-hour community television project.

'It's totally inspiring being able to collaborate with people you love and care about. We hand-pick the people we work with and that's power. Power to the people stuff.'

D.A.N.C.E. & Co.

pacific currents

With assistance from Tautai Contemporary Pacific Arts Trust, Pacific Currents a group exhibition featuring work by seventeen artists was held recently at Waiheke Community Art Gallery. Guests were warmly greeted by gallery director Linda Chalmers, Luc Tutugoro welcomed guests with the evocative sound of the conch, followed with a rap blessing by

Rev. Mua Strickson-Pua and a high-energy performance by dance troupe Tatau.

Running from February 25 – March 21 the exhibition featured artists Fatu Feu'u, Lonnie Hutchinson, recent winner of the 2011 Small Sculpture Prize, Chris Charteris with a beautiful carved basalt stone, Niki Hastings McFall, Kay George and Andy Leleisi'uao with one of his

distinctive mixed media installations.

Painting, work on paper, sculpture, mixed media and installation works were contributed by Lily Laita, Sheyne Tuffery, Tui Hobson, Chris Van Doren, Luc Tutugoro, Loloma Andrews and Siliga Setoga. New generation artists exhibiting included Cerisse Palalagi, Leanne Clayton, Lina Marsh and Marlaina Key.



Luc Tutugoro and Loloma Andrews



Tatau Dance Troupe



Cerisse Palalagi



Pacific Currents Opening



tautai news

gud tumas oloketa wantok

Welcome to the first newsletter for the year. It has been a busy start to 2011.

Pacific Currents

We were invited by Linda Chalmers of the Waiheke Community Art Gallery to take a Pacific show to Waiheke. This proved to be a good opportunity to exhibit a range of work. The show opened on 25 February 2011 and closed on 21 March 2011. The opening drew a large number of Waiheke residents and others. It was also great entertainment provided by Tatau Dance Troupe.

DANSE

Niki Hastings-McFall's solo exhibition of lightworks entitled "Danse" opened at Artstation on 1 March 2011. Tautai supported this exhibition

with a catalogue which accompanies the show.

OFFSTAGE3

On 18 March 2011 Tautai hosted another experimental moving image and performance night at Galatos. This was a great opportunity for artists to showcase new and/or experimental art work. Offstage is in its third year, with works shown by students, practicing artists, playwrights, poets and musicians, based in New Zealand, the Pacific and beyond.

Artist in Residence

Selwyn Palmer Teho was in Auckland through March as Tautai's third artist in residence. Selwyn is a painter, sculptor, tattoo artist from Solomon Islands. The Tautai Trustees have decided to continue to fund the residency as a

way of showing support to artists based in the Pacific. We thank Selwyn for providing the greeting and sign off for this newsletter in his language.

Tautai Program

The program for the rest of 2011 includes four Fresh Horizon workshops around the country; a tertiary program of visits and mentoring by Lonnie Hutchinson; a tertiary exhibition at St Paul St gallery; a road trip for tertiary students to an opening out of Auckland; an event to take place during the Rugby World Cup; further website development; and ongoing professional development workshops.

hem nomoa mi garem fo talem
Gina Cole (Chair)

postcard from new york

caa conference

After twenty-one hours of flying, one missed flight and two hours in a customs line at LA airport I finally arrived in the city I often describe as my art Mecca. I was drawn back to New York not only for my love of century 21 and the city fares ('cawfee', cupcakes and bagels with lox) but to present a paper at the 99th Annual College Arts Association Conference which was held over four days, February 9th-12th 2011. Also attending the conference was Dr Caroline Vercoe from the Department of Art History at The University of Auckland and recent graduate and artist Tyla Ta'ufu'ou.

Like the complex subways of New York the 99th CAA conference held multiple parallel sessions that offered every paper imaginable from Manga (a personal favourite) to Narcissism. A number of sessions featured highly acclaimed historians, artists and curators such as W.J.T Mitchell, Coco Fusco and Lowery Sims. Being in the same room with people I have only known as names on my book shelf, left me star struck and with mild RSI as I madly scribbled down pages upon pages of notes. Lowery Sims in her paper Global Africa Project dished out a witty and lively presentation with terms such as 'afro presumptive' (what we think Africa is) that provoked and enlightened the

audience. For four straight days I was a sponge, inspired and ignited by dynamic and cutting edge presentations on contemporary art.

The Pacific Arts Association Affiliated Session entitled 'Documenting Oceania after the 20th Century' chaired by Bernida Webb-Binder from Cornell University, explored the role of documentary as a reference for scholarship about art and identity in the years post millennium. My contribution to the session Ethnic Avatars: Pacific Artists Creating Digital Homelands offered a New Zealand-based Pacific perspective by focusing on the work of Janet Lilo and her social media based installation Top 16 2007-2010. Fellow panelists included Julie Risser from the University of St Thomas, Ursula Siataga from the University of Santa Cruz and Craig Perez from the University of California, Berkley which formed a truly diverse round table of Pacific researchers. Each of the papers offered unique perspectives on urban translations of culture and the growing use and impact of technology in relation to art and identity. The PAA session was well received by an enthusiastic and dedicated audience and gave me the opportunity to present a New Zealand-based Pacific perspective to the global discussions of Pacific art and identity.



Since the conference there have been discussions and plans to continue forums for global talanoa- so continue to watch this space. In 2012 the CAA 100th annual conference will be held in Los Angeles from February 22nd-24th.

I would like to thank the Faculty of Arts Equity committee for awarding me the Faculty of Arts Maori and Pacific Leadership Grant that enabled my travel to New York and the Pacific Arts Association for their conference support.

Nina Tonga

gallery



Crissie Palalagi *White Night*, Waiheke



Leilani Kake and Jim Vivieaere at the opening of *Nga Hau e Wha - The Four Winds*



Selwyn Palmer Teho
2011 Tautai Artist in Residence



Leafa Wilson. In-situ poster installation
in Tyler Street Britomart



Ite 'Uhila. Winner of the Auckland Fringe Award for Visual Arts with his *'Pigs in the Yard'* performance

Patron: Fatu Feu'u

Board of Trustees: Gina Cole (Chair), Caroline Vercoe, Cerisse Palalagi, Colin Jeffery, Graham Fletcher, Janet Lilo, Kolokesa Māhina-Tuai, Ron Brownson, Siliga David Setoga

Tautai Office: Christina Jeffery (Manager), Nooroa Tapuni and Marlaina Key (Creative|Support) Louise Tu'u (Fresh Horizons Program)

danse

When this Tautai supported solo exhibition by Niki Hastings-McFall opened at Artstation Auckland on 1 March the gallery space had its shutters closed. By covering the windows and reducing both the light and the possibility of distraction this also gave maximum effect to the works in the space. The six wonderfully luxuriant works from the Vanitas series were each on their own lamp stand

base and each produced its own light. Faith, resurrection, redemption, reincarnation, life, death, love and loss - were all referenced in this series of work.

The exhibition also included new works in Niki's roadsign vinyl Va series - but with different and striking colours and with another layer added making these works even more 3D.

Tautai have also produced an accompanying (beautiful) twenty four page catalogue written by Dr Caroline Vercoe and Niki and designed by Jacinda Torrance. A publication of this size is a very fitting acknowledgement of Niki's career so far.

DANSE 1 - 19 March 2011. artstation auckland



Kathryn Tsui co-ordinator of Artstation Gallery with artist Niki Hastings-McFall



Photographs taken by Marlaina Key at the opening of DANSE



events & exhibitions

april | may | june 2011

until 10 April. *Mana Takatapui: Taera Tane.*

Includes Dan Taulapapa McMullin, Tanu Gago, Fear Brampton. Deane Gallery of City Gallery, Wellington

until 10 April. *Pacific Heads.* Fatu Feu'u at Corban Estate Arts Centre, Henderson

until 14th April. *ASSUME NOTHING*, incl. Shigeyuki Kihara. Cultural Centre Francesca Bonnemaison, Barcelona, Spain

until 16 April. *Nga Hau e Wha – The Four Winds.* Leilani Kake at Fresh Gallery Otara

until 16 April. *Arytipidal.* Andy Leleisi'uao at Blue Oyster Art Project Space, Dunedin

until 17th April. *Edge of Elsewhere*, incl. Shigeyuki Kihara, Campbelltown Arts Centre, Sydney, Australia

until 8 May. *Ngatu Tu 'Uli.* Stone Kulimoe'anga Maka. Pataka Porirua

until 30 May. *Call Waiting.* A celebration of the NEW Gallery 1995 – 2011. includes John Ioane, Ani O'Neill. Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tamaki

until 6 June. *Stealing the Senses.* Includes a participatory olfactory installation by Tiffany Singh. Govett Brewster Gallery, New Plymouth

until 6 June. *E:SCAPE Sculpture in the Landscape.* Includes John Ioane. Waitakaruru, Waikato

24 March – 1 May. *Dis-discovery.* Includes Shigeyuki Kihara, Sam Tupou. Salamanca Art Centre, Tasmania, Australia

26 March – 17 July. *Hauaga (arrivals).* John Pule at Dunedin Public Art Gallery, Dunedin

27 March. 2-5pm. *The 6th Plinth.* Includes Tiffany Singh. Myers Park, Auckland Central

29 March – 16 April. *Sepik Paintings.* Jeffry Feeger at Whitespace, Ponsonby, Auckland Central

4 – 8 April. *Two Samoans from LA.* Chuck Feesago and Dan Taulapapa McMullin. Okaiocanikart@Reef Gallery, Level 1, 69 Beach Rd, Auckland Central

6th April – 4th May. *Auratica Fantastica.* Curated by Andrea Low and Graham Fletcher includes Tiffany Singh, Lonnie Hutchinson, Ahilapalapa Rands, Melanie Rands, Ani O'Neill and Nooroa Tapuni. Window Gallery, University of Auckland, Auckland Central

8 – 17 April. *Living Room Project: Metropolis Dreaming* includes Ani O'Neill. Various locations around Auckland Central

13 April – 6 May. *Pacific Made from the South Island.* Fatu Feu'u, Steven Gwaliasi and Iosefa Leo. Okaiocanikart@Reef Gallery, Level 1, 69 Beach Rd, Auckland Central

3 May – 11 June. *Alaoleola.* The Path to Life. Fatu Feu'u. The Diversion Gallery at Grove Mill, Marlborough

29 April – 18 May. *The Lost World.* Sheyne Tuffery. Uxbridge Creative Centre, Howick, Auckland South

1 May – 1 June. *10th Year Anniversary of Nowhere Gallery*, incl. Shigeyuki Kihara. Nowhere Gallery, Milan, Italy

3 – 7 May. *Leahna Gill.* Fresh Gallery Otara, Otara Town Centre, Auckland South

7 May – June 19. *New Romantics.* Includes Graham Fletcher, Niki Hastings-McFall. Calder & Lawson Gallery, Academy of Performing Arts, Gate 2b, University of Waikato, Hamilton

9 May – 19 June. Ani O'Neill: *Dancer of the Year 2011.* Mangere Arts Centre – Nga Tohu o Uenuku, Mangere, Auckland South

14 May – 11 June. Sheyne Tuffery: *The Ancient Mariners.* Papakura Art Gallery, 10 Averill St, Papakura, Auckland South

28 May – 22 June. Andy Leleisi'uao at Milford Galleries, Dunedin

1 June – 25 June. *Home/School.* Edith Amituanai. Anna Miles Gallery, Auckland Central

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

www.tautai.org