

# TAUTAI

SEPTEMBER 2010

CONTEMPORARY PACIFIC ARTS TRUST

## graham fletcher a cross-cultural imaginary



Images courtesy of Anna Bibby Gallery, Auckland, NZ

*Untitled (Lounge Room Tribalism series) 2010* Oil on canvas, 1500 x 1200mm

Artist was not on the list of career choices when Graham Fletcher was growing up. After schooling at Richmond Road Primary, Wesley Intermediate and Lynfield College, Graham was employed as a draughtsman at Telecom where he was encouraged to study part-time and over three years he completed a Technical Certificate of Draughting at the Central Institute of Technology in Wellington. He worked for Telecom for six years before heading overseas in the early nineties to travel in America and the UK. Aside from a few trips to Australia this was Graham's first overseas experience and the expansiveness of the States made a big impression; from Los Angeles to Vancouver via Idaho and then to New York by way of Detroit where he saw a city in a state of collapse. The experience was offset by a stay at the Dragon Tea House – a boarding house crammed with Asiana. Once in New York he stayed in Times Square where the energy of the city, the diversity of the people he met and their occupations had a huge effect. London was

similar in terms of impact but the drudgery of pub work, there and in Scotland started him thinking that there must be more to life than this!

Graham came back to New Zealand in 1992 and decided not to return to his old occupation but to study for a tertiary qualification; he considered architecture but eventually decided on graphic design and entered the degree programme at Unitec. The first year was exciting and he met and was impressed by lecturers like Richard Fahey and Gina Ferguson. During Graham's third year of study Richard Fahey was made head of the new painting programme which was to be located in Park House. Graham moved into the programme and remembers feeling that this was when painting began to seem like a viable career choice.

Fahey's influence as a teacher was profound because of his thoughtful, critical analysis. Julian Dashper and John Reynolds were also crucial not just as lecturers but also as mentors. Julian was a significant role model and a particularly big influence partly because he had faith in Graham's

ability and facilitated Graham's connection with Anna Bibby Gallery, but also because he talked about professional practice and how to build a profile. Like Julian, John Reynolds was another successful practitioner with encyclopaedic and anecdotal knowledge that he brought to critical conversations about art and painting. Both were highly visible, well respected practitioners and by example, made an artistic career seem like a possibility. A viable career needed a leap of faith and the leap of faith was Graham's first solo show at Anna Bibby's Kitchener St gallery in 1998. The exhibition was called *Mistint* and showed works on board using paint that had been remaindered because it had been incorrectly mixed, hence the title, which like a lot of Graham's work plays on the slippages in language where words can say one thing but open up a multiplicity of other associations. *Mistint* was the first of a series of successful solo shows and led to more opportunities to exhibit nationally and internationally.

In this period Graham was part of Indicator



Studios in Mt Eden where artists and designers formed a community and created a vibrant, practice driven environment that counterbalanced the sometimes lonely and isolated existence of being a painter. Paint and it's material possibilities continued to be a theme in Graham's work and exhibitions from this time like Quarantine, or Bad Medicine or the Wallflowers works, show an artist who is constantly experimenting not just with the materiality of the paint but also the materiality of the grounds; mining the potential of tapa cloth for example in the large scale works from the Quarantine show; or the implications of acetate for the Wallflowers pieces. The language of ideas was also investigated; themes around the legacy of colonialism in the Pacific and the stigmatisation and marginalisation of Pacific Island peoples within New Zealand were explored. Ideas that still resonate contextually in relation to Graham's ongoing research. Invitations to exhibit mounted up and working from show to show meant that Graham's time for experimentation was restricted so in 2003 he enrolled in the MFA programme at Elam School of Fine Arts. This was a necessity he believes; to have a break from his regular practice and have space and time for re-invention and importantly for any artist; to be able to fail.

Practitioner guidance was still as important as it had been in his undergrad study and Graham valued the experience of staff like Peter Robinson as well as the insightful criticisms and encouragement of Allan Smith, who had also been on the staff at Unitec and would supervise Graham in his future studies. The impact of people like Smith has engendered an approach to

teaching that has been a constant through Graham's career, it also reflects the early influence of Julian Dashper whose philosophical attitude continues to inform Graham's own thinking – that teaching is a way of staying connected and of having an ongoing conversation with people who share similar concerns.

Objects and carvings that relied on ethnographic references formed part of Graham's masters project. An idea began to crystallise during that time after a seminal experience from 2002 where he chanced upon a curious mix of modern art and ethnographic objects within the domestic setting of an art collectors home. This was to form the crux of his new research and eventually lead to a proposal for more postgraduate study. The awarding of a substantial doctoral scholarship enabled him to study full time and in 2006 he began his Doctorate in Fine Arts at Elam. What follows is an excerpt from the prologue to Graham's doctoral exegesis *Myth, Magic, Mimicry and Cross Cultural Imaginary*. It describes the experience that left an indelible mark on Graham's painting; recent works are large scale, fifties inspired interiors, inserted into which are ethnographic items of ambiguous provenance:

*Once my eyes had adjusted to the dim light, I was confronted by a strange yet astonishing sight of all manner of 'things'. The room was brimming with paintings, sculptures, prints and ethnographic artefacts—all painstakingly arranged to achieve maximum consideration for anyone lucky enough to be invited within the inner sanctum. Such a room, abundant with mystery and the marvellous, would require several visits to grasp the entirety of the collection—but I recall a number of fantastic folk-art paintings and a fine collection of Papua New Guinea shields among many other ethnographic relics... But my attention was ultimately captured by her lounge and its odd yet complimentary mixture of the contemporary and the sacred... in many ways it has never left my mind.*

During the first year of his doctoral studies Graham travelled to Europe for a four-week research trip to visit ethnographic collections in museums and also to look at as much

contemporary art as possible. A Kandinsky retrospective at the Tate Modern surprised him with the impact it made – seeing the entirety of Kandinsky's practice and viewing firsthand the brilliance of the colour and composition and the thematic dedication. At the Musée du quai Branley in Paris the Oceanic and African ethnographic influences on artists like Picasso and Matisse were striking as were the stunning works from Papua New Guinea and seeing what looked like significant chunks of Greece and the Middle East in the plundered installations of the Pergamon Museum in Berlin. Contemporary artists like Franz West at the Gagosian, Albert Oehlen at Whitechapel, Thomas Scheibitz in Berlin were inspiring as was enjoying the immersive experience of being able to spend time dedicated to looking at and absorbing art.

After four years Graham's study culminated in January of this year with an exhibition titled *Lounge Room Tribalism* at the George Fraser Gallery – the exhibition consisted of ten of the large scale painted interiors as well as a collection of objects and carvings and in April of this year Graham achieved his Doctorate in Fine Arts. While connections with the University of Auckland continue with his new position as Pacific Doctoral Programme Coordinator, painting remains his core occupation and in 2011 he will install works from his doctoral show in the Deane Gallery at City Gallery Wellington as well as sending works to Los Angeles where he will participate in ATA, 'an international gathering of work by contemporary artists of the Samoan diaspora', curated by Dan Taulapapa McMullin and Chuck Fe'esago at Arena One in Santa Monica.

While the doctorate provided a hiatus from the pressure of showing work and gave him time to develop his practice, Graham's first foray back into public exhibitions was rewarded earlier this month when he won The Wallace Arts Trust Development Award for his work *Untitled (NordischeFreikörperkultur)*. The award provides him with a two-month residency in Vermont at the Vermont Studio Centre, USA.

Andrea Low

## wihaan



As a part of the Auckland City Council Micro Sites initiative Tessa Laird and I generated a collaborative project with the Thai Buddhist community of Auckland. We designed, built and installed a temple in Albert Park calling her *Wihaan*. The site we chose was the banana grove in Albert Park, as the natural temple like structure seemed apt for a work with sacred sentiments. Known for being a problematic area in Albert Park we fought hard for her installation there, amidst fears she would not remain safe.

*Wihaan* was/is meant to be installed for three years with a roster of artists with designated colours to honour her, and yet despite becoming

a functioning temple for many locals just three weeks into the project she was seriously vandalised. This act has created a series of meetings with council and local body representatives in order to find resolution and a way forward to address this issue of disrespect and destruction of public art works.

The resolution we reached is to repair and reinstall her despite any damage that may be done; committing to providing creation in the face of destruction. In the hope that the statement we make by not giving up will one day speak volumes.

Tiffany Singh

# tautai news

Ni sa bula vinaka

## Annual General Meeting

The Tautai AGM was held at Joy Bong on Saturday 31 August 2010. Around thirty five people attended. That may not seem like a lot of people but for a Tautai AGM it's like Woodstock. All current board members were re-elected. We welcome Siliga David Setoga who was elected as a new board member. Grace Teuila Evelyn Taylor gave a moving performance of her poem "Intertwined: Being Afa Kasi". I hear ya sistah.

## Creative New Zealand Funding

Tautai's main source of funding has previously been provided from Creative New Zealand's 'Recurrently Funded Organisation' funding. CNZ is implementing a new funding regime and as part of that process Tautai is submitting an 'Expression of Interest' for funding in a new format. In the meantime CNZ have confirmed that Tautai will receive funding until the end of 2011.

## Secondary and Tertiary Student Support

Tautai's continued support of Pacific secondary and tertiary level art students is evident in the stories featured in this issue.

## Fresh Horizons Workshops

The Fresh Horizons Workshops provide Pacific secondary school students with an intensive three day art experience. Senior artists from a range of art forms including film, fine arts and literature act as tutors. The workshops are aimed at supporting and encouraging secondary school Pacific students with an interest in art who may wish to go on to tertiary art education.

## Pat Hanly Awards

The Pat Hanly awards are presented annually to secondary school students by the Friends of Auckland Art Gallery. Tautai sponsors the Pacific recipients of the award. Secondary schools are asked to nominate a student who has made an outstanding contribution to their school during the year. Amongst other things, the nominated students receive free membership to the Friends of Auckland Art Gallery for two years. The nominated students are also able to enter the annual Friends of Auckland Art Gallery student exhibition held at St Paul St gallery 3.

## Annual Tertiary Student Exhibition

The exhibition, this year entitled MAKE/SHIFT, opened on Thursday 9 September 2010 in ST PAUL St galleries 1 and 2. The exhibition provides an opportunity for a young curator to curate a show while being mentored and supported in that role. This year the exhibition is curated by Nina Tonga and includes work from ten senior Pacific students from the five tertiary art schools in Auckland.

The curator chooses work submitted by students which gives them the opportunity to take part in an exhibition; to work with a curator; to meet other students; and to have their work recorded in a catalogue produced for the event. This is the first year that the student's work will be formally critiqued as part of the professional development component of their studies.

The remainder of the Tautai program for the year includes planning the final Fresh Horizons workshop in a prison; arranging visits for artists into schools, and some targeted professional development workshops.

Vinaka Vaka Levu  
Gina Cole – Chair

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## fresh horizons at the unitec mt albert campus

Oscar Kightley was guest speaker on the first day of the workshops and set the tone for three days of hard work and fun. He told the students they should search for their own stories and always be true to themselves.

Media students from six secondary schools (Avondale College, Auckland Girls' Grammar, Mt Albert Grammar, Marist, St Pauls' and Carmel College) came together in the July school holidays to create short films.

The workshops were hosted by the School of Performing and Screen Arts, with the students being tutored by Pacific artists; Janet Lilo, Leilani Kake, Venusi Taumoepeau, Jerry Tauamiti and Danny Aumua.

Students were given the opportunity to make either a short narrative film, a music video, stop-frame animation, or a video installation using Unitec's high-tech equipment.

A large enthusiastic audience of family and friends gathered on the final evening to view the students' work.

The students made new friends, new films and learnt new skills with the whole experience being documented by radio and print media.

Jean Clarkson  
Fresh Horizons Manager



Everybody in



Oscar Kightley sharing his words of wisdom



Short film group with tutor Jerry Tauamiti



Letoyah Ah Lam, Young Ness Ikinofu learning stop frame animation techniques

**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) Jean Clarkson and Louise Tu'u (Fresh Horizons Program)

## d.a.n.c.e

D.A.N.C.E Art Club presented the third exhibition instalment of 'Casual Romance Club' at Cassette 9, Auckland on 31 August. The evening kicked off with the event "Musical Speed Dating" hosted by DJ Linda.T. The night also featured live performances of "Videophone" and "Telephone" by Ahiyonce & Tekuila Dream'.



Photo courtesy of Dylan Adams

Ahiyonce

## before sunrise

Lonnie Hutchinson's exhibition Before Sunrise opened in July at Artstation as part of a regional Matariki program in Auckland.



## pat hanly awards

Pictured below are some of the students who were recipients of the Pat Hanly Awards some of whom were sponsored by Tautai. Organised annually by the Friends of Auckland Art Gallery the Awards recognise talented secondary school students.



Front Row left to right

Bill Liu, Waylan Tupaea-Petero, Dominic Paea, Mafutanga Tanuvasa

Second row

Mauvaefaatasi Brown, Fuapili Mauga, Zea Lingard, Roy Ainuu, Paula Lucas, Margaret Gater, Blake Beckford, Rafael Gonzalez-Quinones, Rebecca Frogley, Emily Parr

## flora koloa and kapkap

Dagmar Dyck, Sylvia Marsters and Ellie Fa'amauri at the opening of their exhibition at okai@reef on 25th August



## events & exhibitions

october | november | december 2010

3 September – 3 October. *Manu toi; artists and messengers*. Includes Siliga David Setoga, Terry Koloamatangi Klavenes, Leilani Kake. Mangere Arts Centre – Tohu o Uenuku, Mangere

11 September – 8 October. *Studium: A Selection of Studies*. Augustine Wilson/Sarah Rose/Teuila Fatupaito/Olga Krause – curated by Leafa Wilson. Combined Artists Studios & Gallery, Whaingaroa/ Raglan

30 Sept – 16 October. *Flora Koloa Kapkap*. Sylvia Marsters, Dagmar Dyck, Ellie Fa'amauri. Calder and Lawson Gallery WEL Energy Trust, Academy of Performing Arts Waikato University, Gate 2b Knighton Rd Hamilton

until 5 December. *You love my Fresh*. Tanu Gago at Te Tuhi Centre for the Arts, Pakuranga, Auckland

until December 2010. *Assembling Bodies*. includes Shigeyuki Kihara at University of Cambridge Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, UK

1 – 29 October. *I-W-A-St-M*. D.M. Satele. Window Gallery, University of Auckland General Library Bldg, 5 Alfred Street, Auckland.

6 – 31 October. *Samoan Art: Urban*. Dan Taulapapa McMullin, Marlaina Key, Siliga David Setoga, Greg Semu, Niki Hastings McFall, Shigeyuki Kihara, Taniela Taniela, Lonnie Hutchinson, Rosanna Raymond, Angela Tiatia, Janet Lilo, Marlon Rivers, Michel Tuffery, Lisa Taouma. de Young Museum, San Francisco, USA

6 – 29 October. *Dan Taulapapa McMullin*, Artist in Residence, de Young Museum, San Francisco, USA

12 October – 12 February 2011. *The last Cannibal Supper*. Greg Semu. Tjibaou Cultural Centre, Noumea, New Caledonia

19 October – 14 November. *Come Here Palangi*. Glen Wolfgramm at OREXART, Kitchener Street, Auckland

20 – 23 October. *Providence*. Written and directed by Louise Tu'u at The Basement, Auckland

1 – 21 November. *Tau malaga folau he Pacific : The navigators of the Pacific*. Chris van Doren. Salamander Gallery, Christchurch

4 – 26 November. *Flora Koloa Kapkap and Hiapo*. Sylvia Marsters, Dagmar Dyck, Ellie Fa'amauri, Cerisse Palalagi. Okaiocianikart, Karangahape Road, Auckland

5 – 14 November. *Tanuki Koji Dance Project* by Janet Lilo. In the window at Whitespace Auckland, 6pm – midnight

27 November – 27 February 2011. Lorene Taurerewa at National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

Saturday 27 November. Tautai End of Year Gathering. Mark in your diaries. Details to follow.

Wednesday 1 December. Applications close for the third Tautai Artist in Residence. Contact Tautai office for details.

3 December – January 2011. *Now and Then*, a collaborative exhibition. Niki Hastings-McFall and Chris Charteris at Woollaston Gallery, Nelson

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

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

# make/shift

The third annual Tautai tertiary student exhibition opened on 9 September at AUT ST PAUL St galleries with a haunting theatrical welcoming call from Siliga David Setoga which drew everyone into the foyer. Once there we were treated to a wonderfully exuberant dance by three dancers from Black Grace who were the guest performers on the evening.

The exhibition spreads between the two galleries, allowing the works space. This year the curator Nina Tonga selected work by ten artists: Caroline Cotter and Chloe Marsters from AUT, Tony Tia, Ane Tonga, Mele Mafile'o

'Uhamaka and Luke Willis Thompson from Elam, Vaimoana Eves and Selina Shanti Woulfe from Unitec, Victoria Patea from MSVA and Nastashia Simeona-Laulu from Whitecliffe. Nina says in her curatorial statement 'The exhibition examines the shifting nature of emergent tertiary art practice and describes the process of research and art making that form the basis of tertiary art'.

Other public events associated with the exhibition were a performance by artist Ite 'Uhila, poetry recitation by three members of the South Auckland Poets Collective and a 'walk and

talk' by the artists and the curator.

Also this year Mark Amery, arts critic, journalist and broadcaster and Charlotte Huddleston, curator and newly appointed director of ST PAUL St Gallery were invited to privately critique the work in the show. This new and successful initiative was part of the professional development provided for participants in the exhibition.

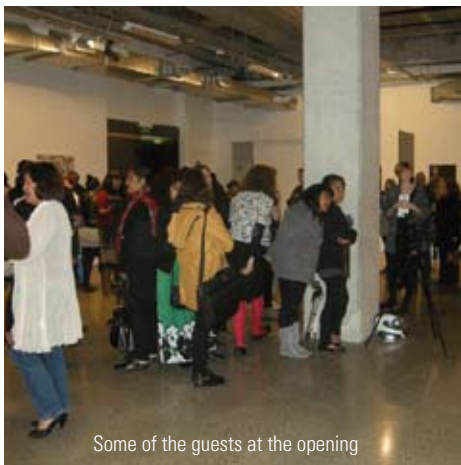
Tautai appreciates the support of AUT ST PAUL St gallery, and Coopers Premier Beverages for their sponsorship and CNZ and ASB for their continued support.



Curator Nina Tonga acknowledging the artists



Black Grace perform Minoi



Some of the guests at the opening



Interested guests on opening night



Interacting with Vaimoana Eves' work



Watching Victoria Patea's moving image work



Tony Tia's work in the window space



Ite 'Uhila during his performance work

Photographs courtesy of Cordelle Feau