

THIS ISSUE: Lurlene Christiansen, Chair Report, Chris Van Doren, The South Project, Veronica Vaevae, Events/Exhibitions

Artist Profile

Lurlene Christiansen



As the eldest of nine children, Lurlene grew up in the timber towns of the North Island with her Kiwi father and Samoan mother. From Waihaha, Tokoroa to Waihi, the family finally settled in Wanganui where she has been based for the last 33 years with her husband and children.

Lurlene recalls her first real art experience was when "...at the age of 39 I walked into the Wanganui Potters Club and started to work with clay..." and began to develop an aptitude for art making and started to manipulate the medium in a figurative way. Although she found its pliable nature tended to evolve into more "...alien, not human..." features. "...I start with a steel rod construction and build it up with clay with no preconceived outcome, but when you see a mark and start to bring it out and let it evolve, then the work becomes very spiritual - like 'lost souls waiting to be reborn' - I don't know how else to say it...". The inspiration for the figures was also linked to Lurlene's maternal side, with the myths and legends of Samoa past as a reference point to researching and learning about the history of her mother's birth country. The visibility of her research through art also lead to an enhanced understanding and appreciation for her mother's 'island side' that was, as a child growing up in rural New Zealand "...pretty non-existent...".

During this time she was approached by Gail Salmon, a tutor from the then Wanganui Regional Community Polytechnic to apply for a position on the Foundation Arts course which initiated her thirst for knowledge. As a mature student Lurlene developed a new found love of learning and began to glean as much as possible from her studies in the Ceramic Production and Design program, that would enable her to cross credit into the BFA degree programme at Wanganui Regional Community Polytechnic (now UCOL), and then successfully broker the two year Masters of Art and Design at AUT; the first student to complete the degree by distance.

The work for the Masters programme was in response to the portrayal of stereotypes of Pacific Island women in popular culture, which initiated a change in art making for Lurlene to shift from clay to digital media. "...It [digital media] can say more - you can put text and image; clay doesn't have the same impact...". During this time, Lurlene was actively challenging the objectification of Pacific Island stereotypes not only

through art making - but more recently with a travel agency advertisement that she felt was constructed through the "...old colonial gaze..." that seemed to encourage pedophilia and exploitation of minors by portraying a semi-dressed underage girl in make up. The process involved an email exchange with the Auckland-based company, and resulted in the girl being omitted from the next publication.

Her work 'Catch the vahine and win' was part of the acclaimed 'Dolly(w)raper mix' exhibition of Samoan women artists made possible by Hamilton based artist/curator Janice Leafa Wilson. The title 'Catch the vahine and win' refers to an internet 'pop up' where the 'spoils to the victor' are possible by stopping the maiden icon in cartoon form being caught in order to win a prize, whilst scooting across the screen doing the hula in a seductive manner. The digital work was to reference the Samoan four bird pattern that has been used in mass media to symbolise the frangipani flower. From afar, the digital poster resembles a repeated flower pattern that, upon closer inspection reveals the artist's own body. Lurlene's response to the alarmist reaction from the City Council was equally as steadfast, "...I am a Samoan woman by descent and that's what I feel the media is doing to my body...". Despite the adverse criticism and uneducated publicity that fuelled the press, Lurlene continues to work with self-scanned digital images and is currently working on concepts around plastic identities with the 'Hawaiian' Barbie doll that emerged from another internet discourse, this time with 'Ronald from Texas' and his erotic confession with a Hawaiian ukulele.

In regard to the Tautai Trust, Lurlene has participated in a number of workshops, and has contributed to several national and international symposiums. "...I feel Tautai has always been supportive and because I felt quite alone in Wanganui, I always saw Tautai as a nurturer - I thought 'I want to meet these people' because it feels like family..."

Lurlene is currently working as a secondary teacher, but is keen to return to study and pursue a PhD. "A couple of degrees and letters behind my name and people tend to listen to what you have to say. 'Ronald from Texas' is not going to listen to 'Lurlene the housewife'. Only through art can I really respond and challenge, it enables one to have a speaking voice..."

Lurlene in conversation with Lily Laita.



Chair's Report

Extended Greetings

'Spring' is upon us at last and with the long awaited change of season comes more new and exciting opportunities for the Trust. The Board of Trustees and Management have been very productive in the last quarter with the successful Strategic Planning session held at the Tuila conference room, and also the two consultation meetings that lead to a follow up Strategic day to collate and disseminate the valuable contributions from the major stakeholder, supporters and artist members.

The Annual General Meeting was held at Artstation this year, and despite the cold blast, we were fuelled by warm welcomes from patron Fatu Feu'u QSM and the humble poems of blessing from the very Reverend Mua Strickson-Pua. This was also a chance to welcome artists Loloma Andrews and Melipa Peato as new members to the Board. They have both been involved as participants and contributors to various Tautai workshops, and we look forward to their continued efforts at Governance level. And, as this goes to press, the Board would also like to welcome Dianna Fitsemanu from Pacific Consulting Group as the newest addition to the Trust Board. Dianna

has an extensive academic and business background which includes expertise in Organisational Psychology, Organisational Development and recently was the facilitator and convenor of the Strategic Planning session at the University of Auckland.

Maintaining and strengthening the development of core activities for the Trust is continuing to be our biggest asset as we move into another funding round with Creative New Zealand. The Trust is also looking towards building further strategic partnerships that will support specific projects that will benefit the enhancement of Pacific art not only in Aotearoa, but internationally as well. The Trust is currently updating the website and the process of consultation has begun whereby the Tautai information portal for Pacific art will feature the newsletter in full, as well as other educational and research links.

And lastly, congratulations to all the members and supporters who have been actively involved in producing, exhibiting, participating, representing and receiving accolades for their commitment to the creative process. The combined efforts of the Board and Management team can only be 'art'iculated by the deluge of talent and expertise that springs forth from the nation of Tautai; long may it rain.

la manuia - Lily Aitui Laita (Chairperson)

Emerging Artist

Chris Van Doren



Born of a Niuean mother and a Dutch father, Chris Van Doren grew up in and around Waiuku and in setting out for further study, he gained his trade's certificate in Panel Beating. Today the former panel beater works full-time at his art practice and his sculptural works have been greatly admired by a wide audience, including the many people who saw his work at the recent Pasifika Festival.

Chris's copper and steel sculptures are navigational studies that investigate the idea of movement and in doing so he makes reference to the ancient seafarers in the Pacific. They also stretch to investigate his own movements in the present time. One of his most recent artworks 'Turtle' maps his personal return journey from Niue in April 2004.

The copper and steel panel is beautifully crafted to emanate movement through its directional lines. He has related himself to the characteristics of the turtle;



the hard shell that is crucial for survival is also crucial for Chris, "I need a hard shell to weather the financial storms, to survive as a practicing artist."

Most fascinating is the composition of the turtle, shaped like a pointed arrow. It directs the viewer's sight to look ahead and move on into the future, or as Chris put it "To look ahead at how things could be and not at how they are."

This self-taught artist acknowledges creative guidance from the likes of Fa'afetai Amituan'i, Alex Seton, Fatu Feu'u, and Isabelle Staron-Tutugoro.

Chris's goals include finding more opportunities to obtain commissions for his work which in turn would allow him to spend more time with his son whilst pursuing his art full-time. His work will be featured in the up and coming group installation titled 'Lightboxes', opening on October 21 at the Corban Estate. You won't want to miss it. *Melipa Peato.*

Cook Islands Artist's Residency
– 2004 recipient is **Filipe Tohi**
Congratulations!

Congratulations to Filipe who has been awarded the three month residency which is given annually by the Pacific Arts Committee of Creative New Zealand and supported by the Cook Islands Ministry of Cultural Development. Filipe intends to create some new sculptural works as well as research the uses and patterns of lashings in the Cook Islands during his time there.

The South Project

South 1. The Gathering July 1-4, 2004

It was a great privilege to attend the South conference at the Sydney Meyer Centre in Melbourne. The artists who travelled to Melbourne; Johnny Peninsula, Richard Shortland Cooper and Filipe Tohi all took workshops and participated in group discussions.

The opportunity to hear speakers like Pablo Rivera from Chile, Jasleen Dhamija from India and many others, created an opportunity for the development of ideas and the exchange of experiences. Issues included how artists in Aotearoa respond to biculturalism and how the artists of the Southern latitudes bridge the countries of the South and cope with distance, migration and preserve indigenous identity.

The benefits to the artists involved are obvious and we all felt that artists of Aotearoa had a huge amount to offer and to learn from the exchange.

I was surprised that our group was the only representation of the Pacific Island community from Aotearoa and felt our presence at the Project was essential to give balance to discussions about the South Pacific and the development of contemporary Pacific art from our region.

The workshops our artists participated in were in great demand with Filipe Tohi having to make himself available for an extra two hour session

outside the advertised times. Johnny Peninsula's lively workshops were well attended especially by object makers who work with more precious metals and his workshops were their first opportunity to see carving on bone. He has some admirers keen to come to Invercargill to work with him at his studio. I am not certain they actually understand the geographical location of Invercargill.

SBS interviewed Filipe Tohi about his arts practice and the Australian Broadcasting Corporation spent a whole afternoon with our group interviewing the artists at length.

South 2 is planned for 2006, referred to as The Journey, this next stage will enable artworkers to move throughout the regions of the South and engage in cultural exchange and creative development. The second stage will consolidate relationships initiated by the South Project and will provide physical outcomes to discussions begun.

I hope New Zealand and its Pacific community will continue to be strongly represented in these projects.

Deborah White



Veronica Vaevae Frankfurt, Germany

Veronica, along with 16 other contemporary artists from Aotearoa showcased their work in an exhibition 'Greenhouse' at the open art galerie 'Medienwechsel 3' in Frankfurt, Germany from 29 April to 20 August 04.

Veronica's work 'Mix that Scratch' plays on the word "scratch". Veronica says "I have adapted specific patterns from hand woven purses and ancient tapa designs from the Cook Islands featuring tattoo and a mix of designs from both my mum and dad's islands; Mangia and Manihiki. "At the time of making this, it was a representation of myself and also, in a wider sense, a representation of other urban Polynesian youth in Auckland. I guess like Len Lye, who devised the film making techniques I utilised - I wanted to create my own tribal art".

"I enjoyed being a part of a group of artists representing media art from New Zealand. I particularly liked the architecture where some of the art work was featured, for example, on the opening night my work was projected onto a dome structure, this was shown simultaneously with an infusion of NZ music) - it was a showcase of New Zealand talent".

Veronica says "Mix that Scratch" was an old piece of work, with a new idea that was to involve sound being played in sync and with images that ran upside down and in negative. "I had to re-work the old images because I was using five screens that were to run vertically up the exterior of an outside building".

Curated by Janine Randerson, Art and Design lecturer from Unitec; Veronica says "the feedback has been positive along with ongoing interest via emails from Germany about my work".

Itania Nikolao



Congratulations to Tui Hobson

Tui was on the cover of the Tautai newsletter in May. She was recently announced as winner of the Martin Hughes Contemporary Pacific Art Award 2004. **Well done Tui!**

Tautai Projects

- Tautai Trust Manager, Itty Nikolao, is pleased to announce that Riki Tangaroa has been contracted to project manage Tautai's major participation in the AK05/Pasifika Festivals.
- Itty has also engaged Giles Peterson to update artist's statements on the Tautai website. This will be part of the on-going expansion of our website.



Ian & Kay George have built a new gallery at their home in Arorangi, Rarotonga – the Art Studio opened 30 August 2004



'polinesian wave' Exhibition

Richard Shortland-Cooper and Darren Keith with Fono McCarthy curator of 'polinesian wave' exhibition opening May 2004

Fatu Feu'u Exhibition

John Ioane, Darren Keith, Chris Van Doren, Fono McCarthy, Richard Shortland-Cooper with Fatu Feu'u at the opening of his sell-out solo exhibition 'Vai Pouli' in May 2004.



Upcoming Events, Exhibitions & Awards

- 'Process' includes Richard Shortland Cooper. Mataora Gallery, Parnell. **Until 30 September**
- 'Home/Ground' includes Niki Hastings-McFall, Lonnie Hutchinson, Sofia Tekela-Smith. Former Robert McDougall Art Gallery, Christchurch. **From 1 September**
- 'I.D.' includes Rochelle Stebbings. Artstation, Auckland. **14 September – 2 October**
- 'Black Pearl' Lonnie Hutchinson. Jonathan Smart Gallery, Christchurch. **17 September – 9 October**
- 'Ura Piani' Judith Kunzle, Varu Samuel, Daniel Tomokino, Apii Rongo, Reef Gallery, Auckland. **12 October – 5 November**
- 'A comparison of scale' NZ Medallion Group includes Fatu Feu'u. Percy Thompson Gallery, Stratford **14 September – 2 October**
- 'Weird Names for Girls' includes: Lily Laita, Andy Leleisi'uao, Itania Nikolao, Jim Vivieaere. Platform01 Gallery, Hamilton. **22 September – 10 October**
- 'Major:minor' includes Fatu Feu'u. Warwick Henderson Gallery, Parnell, Auckland. **28 September – 10 October**
- Waikato Home Show Symposium includes: Tui Hobson. Hamilton. **30 September – 4 October**
- Nanette Lela'ulu and Andy Leleisi'uao. Opening show at new address for Whitespace Gallery – new address 12 Crummer Road, Ponsonby. **2 – 21 October**
- Chris Charteris. Janne Land Gallery, Wellington. **5 – 30 October**
- 'it's the Islander coming out in me' Niki Hastings-McFall. fHe Gallery, Auckland. **12 October – 7 November**
- Lonnie Hutchinson. Lane Gallery, Auckland. **19 October – 6 November**
- 'Light Boxes' Fatu Feu'u, Fa'afetai Amituan'i, Chris Van Doren, Isabelle Staron-Tutugoro. Corban's Art Centre, Waitakere City. **21 – 25 October**
- Women's Refuge Exhibition includes Tui Hobson, Chris Charteris. Narrowneck, North Shore City. **4 – 12 November**
- 'Ole Malama' Fatu Feu'u, Isabelle Staron-Tutugoro, Jeff Lockhart. Wine Country Gallery, Havelock North. **6 November – 5 December**
- 'Voyages' Isabelle Staron-Tutugoro. Reef Gallery, Auckland. **9 – 27 November**

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ARTS COUNCIL OF NEW ZEALAND TOI AOTEAROA

Design and layout of the Tautai Contemporary Pacific Arts Trust Newsletter



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Postcard from Wellington

Malo e lelei from Wellington! We've settled in well to our new environment. At this stage we are down here for 3 years but we are at the whim of the Navy so it's always been a matter of being prepared for anything! Lyle is enjoying the challenges of his new job as Navy Recruiter and I continue to embrace the challenges of raising our children!

Part of that challenge is finding time to focus on my artwork. For those with children you will fully relate to the difficulties of finding any sort of time for yourself, let alone your work! The reality for me is that my work is having to slot in to times where I have a few spare, precious moments. I have accepted my season as being a mother and have simply reprioritised my life and career. At least there is no expiry date for us artists!

In terms of projects this year I have just completed my largest work yet, a 2m x

6m mural commissioned by ASB Bank, for a new development in Suva, Fiji. Due to it's scale, work was produced out in our garage, complete with beanie, polyprop and copious layers of clothing! After the recent storm I breathed a sigh of relief that the work was well on it's way to it's destination as our garage received some surface flooding and would have been disastrous to the artwork.

To date I'm also involved with various group shows but the elusive solo show scheduled for next year will depend on how much I can do in the next 6 months. Why you may ask? Yep, baby no. 3 is completing our family and is due late February so if I think it's busy now I've got another thing coming!

Hope this finds all my fellow Tautai friends well. Ofa atu, Dagmar.

Dagmar Dyck is a longstanding Tautai member and ex Board member.