

TAUTAI

SEPTEMBER 2011

CONTEMPORARY PACIFIC ARTS TRUST

greg semu

john 8:7

"let he without sin cast the first stone"



Assassination of Atai 2010



Untitled 2007

Celebrated as one of Pasifika's most successful photographers, Greg Semu's practice has shaped migratory narratives of Pacific communities in New Zealand, Paris, Germany and New Caledonia. Greg's photography has reflected the upbringing of generations of Pacific Island people. Through his career he has captured memorable scenes such as first communions, make-shift umu grounds, and tatau in the living rooms of Auckland. Largely self-taught in photography and film, Greg's practice focuses on cultural displacement in relation to the impact of colonisation. Greg speaks of diaspora as an experience of cultural and spiritual displacement. He states, "Though raised in Auckland we're reminded that we're not from here", an experience he believes is shared by many New Zealand born Samoans.

From an early point in his career, Greg has challenged the fictitious nature of photography. In the highly successful photographic series *O le Tatau Samoa 1995* exhibited at the Auckland Art Gallery he challenged the historic European fascination with Polynesian tattooing. By employing the visual language of ethnographic photography he explored the complex relationships between the photographer, subject and audience. Inspired by the photography in Karl Marquadt's seminal text *Die Tatowierung Bieder Geschlechter in Samoa*, Greg problematises Marquadt's photographic practice. Taken with a scientific lens many of the photographs approach the subject as an object. The subjects often shot in studios are cropped to highlight tattooed limbs or torsos. These sterile images of human 'difference' foreign to

Eurocentric knowledge systems helped to further exotic and savage notions of the Pacific.

In response to Marquadt's photography the triptych *Self Portrait with Pe'a 1995* forces a revision of these scientific constructs. In this work Greg casts himself into the role of photographer and subject of the image. Greg adopts the same photographic language as Marquadt by cropping his face and positioning himself in the same frontal and profile poses. Greg comments:

"I remove my identity to illustrate Tatau as a birth right of all Samoan men, a generic passport that grants the bearer many privileges. It is a shared heritage by the individual, inclusive not exclusive, remaining anonymous as opposed to personalising and individualising a cultural icon."



As difficult as it may be to accept the role as subjects of Ethnographic photography, Greg delves into the unnerving power relationships that exist between photographers and their subjects. By placing himself as both artist and subject he confronts and re-positions the silenced voices of Marquadt's subjects.

In 2007 Greg was the first artist in residence at the Musée du Quai Branly in Paris, an institution that houses many primitive artifacts and cultural objects. This marked a pivotal turning point in his career, providing a critical distance from the success of his previous works.

Commissioned by the Musée du Quai Branly, the body of work *The Battle of the Noble Savages 2007* is a series consisting of six photographs. The large scale works involved huge organisation and an ensemble of Maori actors including the prominent sculptor George Nuku. The works were shot in one day yet took months of planning including a month of horse training for one of the actors.

Greg's dedication to historical detail included the lavish costuming (borrowed from the set of

the big budget film *The River Queen*) and the authentic 19th century weaponry. In *The Battle of the Noble Savages 2007* Greg unmasks the romanticised veneer of Gustav von Tempsky's war scenes to explore the epistemic violence of the Maori land wars.

In *Untitled 2007* Greg stages the encounter between the European soldiers and Hongi Hika's Hauhau tribesman, casting Maori into both coloniser and colonised roles. The photograph is layered with visual and historical references of the Franco-Prussian and Napoleonic wars. He references distinct sets of historical war scenes to synchronise the Maori wars and European wars into the same period and in doing so he validates the upheaval in Aotearoa to marry global themes of colonial conquest. The central figure appropriates Jacques Louis David's Bonaparte *Crossing the Saint Bernard 1803* replacing his iconic white horse with a black horse. Hongi Hika is also referenced through the figure on the left holding the musket, his shiny armor a gift from King George which he cleverly traded for 500 muskets. Hika is often remembered as the notorious 'rebel' within the history of Maori Land wars, however Greg pays homage to Hika as a war strategist battling against the role of the noble savage.

His residency at Tjibaou Cultural Centre Nouvelle Calédonie saw the birth of *The Last Cannibal Supper 2010*. The photographic series was exhibited at the Tjibaou Cultural Centre Nouvelle Calédonie, a centre that pays homage to Jean Mariie Tjibaou the leader of the Kanak independence movement who was assassinated in 1989. Greg tailors the body of work to illustrate and resonate with the personal struggles of colonialism, confiscation of lands and resources, and the displacement of cultural practices within New Calédonia.

In the image *The Assassination of Atai 2010* Greg presents the gruesome enforcement of colonialism during the historical assassination of rebel leader Atai. The central figure represents

Atai, the rebel leader of the first Kanak Revolt in 1878, who was handed into French forces by his neighbour. Atai was beheaded and his head was taken back to Paris. In the image Greg presents the two executioners and the beheaded figure as three brothers. Portraying the executioners as brothers, Greg critically focuses in on strategies employed by French forces during the course of colonialism. Often rebel leaders were unable to be captured without blackmail or bribery, resorting to death threats against the rebel leader's family if they resisted. Greg comments on the complexity of cultural and familial division stating

"To preserve the family all rebels were assassinated by their own family, sacrifice one for the lives of many. Ultimately they are illustrations of the extremely successful strategy of colonialism. 'Divide and Rule' turn brother against brother let them kill each other then take all the treasure."

Greg's image reveals the extent of cultural displacement caused by colonial impact which permeated through Kanak clans and families. Greg presents a cultural dialogue that reflects the harsh realities of cultural displacement of Kanak communities.

Greg seizes the opportunity to work with indigenous communities around the world to visually translate stories of cultural and spiritual displacement, but also the resilience of those communities.

Admitting that these residencies are few and far in between, he continues to source opportunities to collaborate with indigenous communities. And in doing so he is able to create works that diffuse and celebrate their crafts, skills and life. With the generous financial support from Kaohsiung Museum of Fine Arts, Tjibaou Cultural Centre Nouvelle Calédonie, and Casula Powerhouse Australia he was able to work with and bring income into the Kanak communities.

Greg's practice fights the double-edged sword of culture as a binding force within one's practice that is often inescapable for many artists of Pacific descent. Learning the colonial dialogue of our visual histories, he photographically re-images the Pacific.

Using photography as a weapon, Greg wields it to recuperate the voices of indigenous communities impacted by colonialism. He ultimately proves that these voices are as necessary if not more important than the historical records that deliberately try to suppress them.

Malo 'Aupito Greg-the agent of change
Ane Tonga



The Last Cannibal Supper 2010

tautai news

Talofa lava

Welcome to this third newsletter for 2011 written at a time when the country seems to be in the grip of rugby fever with RWC games now well under way. Auckland has been a sea of flags, balloons and bunting – the colours of the Pacific at the forefront – and the rest of country from the Far North to the Deep South has gone ‘rugby mad’ as well.

The ‘art scene’ though has received its share of attention in the re-opening of the Auckland Art Gallery in its wonderfully extended and refurbished home. Great to see the artwork of Lonnie Hutchinson being incorporated into the fabric of the new building.

Pacific Arts Village

Tautai gained funding through the Lotteries Commission and Creative New Zealand to run a “Pacific Arts Village” in Western Park Ponsonby from 14 to 19 October and then at Beresford Square just off Karangahape Road from 20 to 25 October. The aim is to provide a place that artists can show and sell a range of art, craft, adornment, fashion – really anything they fancy. We also hope that it will provide a place for live performances from musicians, actors, poets, and storytellers. All proceeds from sales will go back in full to the individual artists.

Next Year Funding

The major funder of Tautai, Creative New Zealand, recently announced the outcome of their new funding arrangements. Tautai is delighted that the hard work and the consistent quality of contribution by everyone involved in the range of Tautai programs over the years has been recognised by CNZ in the amount of funding which they will provide to us for 2012 and 2013. This will enable our core infrastructure to be expanded and for us to continue ‘adding value’ to the Tautai program and activities which support Pacific art and artists.

ASB Community Trust is also a significant funder of Tautai and they too have recently advised us of the funding which they will provide for the twelve months through to the middle of next year. We are grateful for the continued support of ASB Trust.

The staff are currently developing, in consultation with stakeholders, an operational plan which will put into effect the Statement of Strategic Intent set by the Board.

Third Quarter Activities

In this quarter as well as the several events associated with the tertiary students program outlined in this newsletter Tautai has also held the third of four Tautai Fresh Horizon secondary

student workshops for the year. This was at Manukau School of Visual Arts and drew the students from the AimHi organisation.

Tautai has completed an in-depth website development program with Creative New Zealand and the outcomes of this will become increasingly visible over the next twelve months. Angela Tiatia put forward the proposal accepted by Artstation which will see her curating a Tautai exhibition in their gallery during March 2012. Whilst Wellington based writer and critic Mark Amery was in Auckland for the critique session with the students participating in the Tautai Tertiary Exhibition we were also able to have him provide three young writers with mentoring.

The Annual General Meeting of Tautai was held on Saturday 30 July in the very convivial setting of de Ville Lounge Ponsonby and attended by around thirty people. Due to their other commitments Cerisse Palalagi and Kolokesa Mahina Tuai have resigned as trustees and have our thanks for their time and input to the board. Niki Hastings McFall has been co-opted as a trustee and her return to a governance role with Tautai is welcomed.

See you at the Pacific Arts Village
la manuia
Team Tautai

tautai tertiary program

One of the larger components of the annual Tautai calendar is our Tertiary Student Support program. As a lot of the activities fell within the quarter we are featuring aspects in this newsletter. The main parts of the program are the annual Tautai Tertiary Exhibition, the Visiting Artist, and the Art Road Trip.

Tautai Tertiary Exhibition

Each year we invite a recent graduate to curate the show drawing on art work submitted from students attending the five Auckland tertiary art schools.

Graham Fletcher was the curator this year and he chose the work of nine students who had not previously taken part in an exhibition. The show called “*Finding Neitherland*” was held at AUT St Paul St Galleries 1 & 2 from 21 July until 12 August. The support which Tautai receives from AUT St Paul St Galleries for these exhibitions in the last four years is greatly appreciated.

The exhibition is an opportunity for a range of things to happen. It gives a graduate the opportunity to curate and it offers a chance for a number of students to show their work in an

internationally recognised gallery space, to have their work recorded, and to meet peers from other institutions through the networking opportunities facilitated by Tautai.

As a further part of the professional development aspects the students also take part in the wider exhibition program which includes speaking about their work at an artist and curator public talk. They also have the opportunity to have their work critiqued by art professionals. This year their critique session was held with senior artist Lonnie Hutchinson

Photos courtesy of Dr Melissa Laing



Siliga David Setoga calls for attention and welcomes everyone to the opening of *Finding Neitherland*



A moving opening night performance by Terry Faleono



Finding Neitherland Artist talk with Curator Graham Fletcher seen here discussing the floor work by AUT student Darcell Apelu



Artist talk attendees gather to discuss window installation *O oe ma lou fa'asinomaga* by Saimealao Felesa Tapaleao



Poetry performance at the Artist talk by Melanie Rands accompanied by Ahilapalapa Rands and Ross Cunningham on ukulele.



Encounter with History installation with single channel video by Keishya Adams

and well known Wellington based art writer and critic Mark Amery.

Tautai Art Road Trip

The now well-established annual event takes students from the five Auckland tertiary institutions out of town to attend an exhibition opening. Tautai facilitates the trip as a valuable professional development and networking opportunity for a group of Pacific students.

This year was the fifth such event and the trip was to Wellington to attend the opening of Graham Fletcher's exhibition *Lounge Room Tribalism* in the Deane Gallery of the City Gallery. Twenty one students boarded the bus driven by artist|mentor Siliga David Setoga who this year had Maila Urale as chief organiser and tour guide. Siliga's commitment to this event is such that he got a special license to enable him to drive a bigger bus!

As well as attending the exhibition opening on the Friday evening and meeting many art luminaries there, on the Saturday the students visited several other galleries. They also had a

special behind the scenes visit to the Pacific storeroom at Te Papa with the Pacific Collections Curator Grace Hutton.

Tautai Artist Visits

Tautai invites an artist to be the 'visiting artist' for the year. This year that artist is Lonnie Hutchinson and in previous years the artists have been Ani O'Neill, Janet Lilo, Niki Hastings McFall, and John Ioane.

Tautai arranges through the institutions for the artist to make presentations to students, sometimes to the whole of the school and sometimes just to Pasifika students. In the second part of the year we arrange for the artist to return and have one-to-one sessions to assist the Pasifika students with the development of their art.

Due to logistics and the location of the majority of Pacific art students the Tautai artist visits are primarily to the five tertiary art schools in Auckland. However visits have been made to Victoria University and Massey University in Wellington and we are hopeful that contacts

with student groups elsewhere can also be established in the future.

Auckland Art Fair Visit

Tautai extended an invitation to those students who had taken part in the Tautai Art Road Trip and the Tautai Tertiary Exhibition to attend the Auckland Arts Fair as our guests (with thanks to AAF for offering discounted tickets and for providing a guide).

Maila Urale organised the visit and twenty-one students took up the offer and went en-masse to the Art Fair on a very busy Saturday afternoon at the venue.

Tiffany Singh who had been engaged by AAF as one of guides for the public, led the Tautai group through the wonders of the fair. The students were introduced to a number of dealers and were also treated to an impromptu poetry recitation by John Pule which was the highlight for many.

Tautai is pleased to be working with the tertiary institutions to provide support and experiences for the next generation of artists.



Tautai Art Road Trip students in the Pacific storeroom at Te Papa with the Pacific Collections curator Grace Hutton



Some of the students who met John Pule at Auckland Art Fair

Patron: Fatu Feu'u

Board of Trustees: Gina Cole (Chair),
Caroline Vercoe, Colin Jeffery, Graham Fletcher, Janet Lilo,
Niki Hastings-McFall, Ron Brownson, Siliga David Setoga

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

postcard from samoa

Malo from sunny Samoa

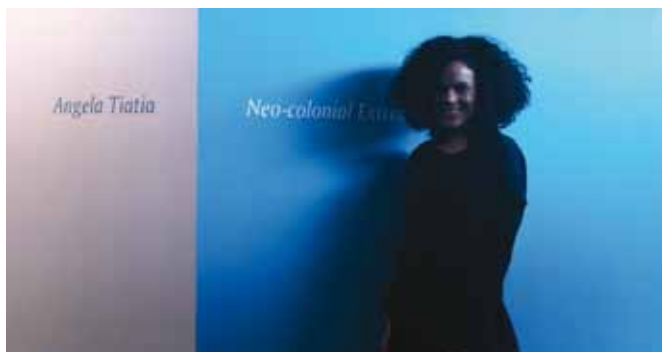
The sun is shining and the projects are doing well. I am working with The Coral Reef Team on a meditation space for the boys and working on a Garden for Peace with National University of Samoa. I feel Jim with me often and Fiona is a gem. I'm spending time with Fatu as we are hoping to have an exhibition together at the end of October. Much love across the oceans.

Enjoy the rugby madness !!
Manuia le aso
Tiffany

Tiffany Singh (second from right) is in Samoa as the recipient of the 2011 Creative New Zealand Samoa Residency



gallery



Angela Tiatia at the opening of her exhibition, Neo-colonial Extracts at Te Tuhi Centre for the Arts Pakuranga.



Painting tutor Nathan Suniula with students at the Fresh Horizons workshop held in July at the Manukau School of Visual Arts. The students were from AimHi, an alternative education program, and the other tutors were Jean Clarkson, Siliga Setoga and Teuila Fatupaito.



Sopolemalama Filipe Tohi with James Pinker, curator Mangere Arts Centre Nga Tohu o Uenuku, at the formal opening of his survey exhibition Fatuemaka mei Falekafa.



A detail of one of the designs of the permanent work commissioned from Lonnie Hutchinson by Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tamaki for their newly re-opened building.

events & exhibitions

october | november | december 2011

6 August – 6 November. *Oceania*. Includes Shigeyuki Kihara, Chris Charteris, Greg Semu, Sophia Tekela Smith, Mathias Kauage, John Pule, Edith Amituanai, Niki Hastings-McFall at City Gallery and Te Papa Tongarewa Museum of New Zealand, Wellington

27 August – 6 November. *Neo-colonial Extracts*. Angela Tiatia at Te Tuhi Centre for the Arts, Pakuranga

3 September – 24 October. *Up and Under. The Art of Rugby*. Includes Sheyne Tuffery, Lina Marsh, Chris Van Doren at LeSa Gallery, Petone

7 September – 22 October. *Fatumaka mei Falekafa*. Sopolimalama Filipe Tohi, survey exhibition at Mangere Arts Centre Nga Tohu o Uenuku, Auckland South

8 September – 9 October. *Metonymy*. Includes Tony Tia at Corbans Art Estate, Henderson

24 September – 4 December. *Niu Warrior* at Casula Powerhouse Art Centre, Sydney, Australia includes *Niu Pasifik Warriors* curated by Giles Peterson which features 50 artists from the Pacific rim; and *Nobel Savage* an exhibition by Greg Semu.

Sunday 2 October. *12 midnight – 12 noon*. Dead Mileage with Jeremy Leatinu'u. Curator Louise Tu'u. East Street, Newton. Live performance.

3 – 31 October. *Kia Ora Aus Aotearoa*. Loloma Andrews, Dagmar Dyck, Leanne Clayton, Suia Westbrook, Filani Macassey, Lina Marsh, Sylvia Marsters, Wilma van Heeswijk, Cerisse Palalagi, Merisa Bickerstaff at Ziegel oh Lac, Rote Fabrik, Zurich, Switzerland

4 – 26 October. *Face to Face*. Rosanna Raymond, George Nuku, Galerie Meyer, Oceanic Art, 17 Rue des Beaux-Arts, Paris, France

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

12 – 14 October. Tautai Fresh Horizons. Tutors Victor Rodger, Matthew Salapu aka Anonymouz, Linda Lepou, Nathan Suniula at Eastern Institute of Technology, Hawke's Bay

14 – 19 October. Tautai Pacific Arts Village - Tautai brings together arts and artists from the Pacific to showcase work during the RWC, Western Park, Ponsonby Rd, Ponsonby

15 October – 19 November. *Double Rainbow*. Tiffany Singh and Tessa Laird at Papakura Art Gallery, Papakura

19 October – 13 November. *Impressive 2*. Includes Fatu Feu'u, Dagmar Dyck, Cerisse Palalagi, Daniel Waswas, Nathan Homestead, Manurewa

20 – 25 October. Tautai Pacific Arts Village - Tautai brings together arts and artists from the Pacific to showcase work during the RWC. Beresford Square, KRd Precinct

21 – 23 October. *Indigenous Ink Expo*. Invited Moko and Tatatau artists include Tufuga tatatau Su'a Suluape Alaiva'a Petelo, Andy Tauafiafi, Tyla Vaeau at TelstraClear Pacific Events Centre, Auckland South.

22 October. *Kick Ya Swag*. A one act play by Ana Notoa and Lesa'e Tagomoa. 2pm, 6pm, 8pm at Repertory House, Invercargill

31 October – 3 November. *Playmarket Brown Ink Playreading Tour*: E Ono Tamai Pato by Maureen Fepulea'i: Director Margaret-Mary Hollins with Stephanie Tauevihi, Olivia Muilaumasealli', Suivai Autagalia, Mary Lose Pahi, Louise Tu'u, and Tanya Muagututi'a at the following:

31 October. Goodman Fielder Room, The EDGE, Aotea Centre

1 November. St Michaels Church, Corban Arts Estate, Henderson

2 November. Papakura Art Gallery, Papakura

3 November. Te Papa Tongarewa, Wellington

26 November – 24 December. *Tongan Style*. Curators Manucina Mahina and Kolokesa Mahina Tuai at Objectspace, Ponsonby

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

www.tautai.org