



Lisa Reihana

Emissaries

NEW ZEALAND

Imperialism's gaze is returned with a speculative twist that disrupts notions of beauty, authenticity, history and myth in *Emissaries*. Lisa Reihana's vast panoramic video *In Pursuit of Venus [infected]* 2015- 2017 is a cinematic re-imagining of the Neoclassical French scenic wallpaper *Les Sauvages De La Mer Pacifique*, created in 1805 and well known as 'Captain Cook's voyages'.

Two centuries later – and almost 250 years after the original voyages that inspired them – Reihana employs complex twenty-first century audio-visual technologies to animate the wallpaper with real and invented narratives in a cultural endeavour of reclamation and reimagining. The artist re-casts this original European fabrication of the Pacific to suggest a more complex story.

The expansive video panorama is populated by characters drawn from across Aotearoa New Zealand, the Pacific and Europe to create a compelling and mesmerising experience. Reihana intensifies the death of Cook in Hawai'i as the dramatic moment of rupture. This and other narratives play out within a looping visual and sonic world where time is cyclical. Heightening the emotional arc of the work, an integrated soundscape weaves together live capture of performances, the winding of an original clock used on Cook's voyages, and rare recordings of the taonga pūoro (Māori instruments) that he collected.

Her soundscape includes the ticking of the clock Cook used on Cook's second and third voyages - an object prized and still wound daily at its home in the Royal Society's London library nearly 250 years later.

Cook's legacy literally marks the seconds of time, the value of longitude and even the creation of a system of coordinates that govern GPS, perhaps used by many Biennale visitors to find their way around Venice. Navigation and globalisation are but two perspectives in a work brimming with meaning and fascination. Lisa

Reihana: Emissaries engages viewers in breathtakingly diverse ways, and unashamedly concerns the world and its people.

Critically acclaimed as one of the most memorable projects from the 2017 Venice Biennale, Reihana's monumental video unravels Enlightenment ideals, cartographic and scientific endeavour, and the raw, ever-present impulses of expansionism, power and desire.

In Lisa Reihana: Emissaries, curated by Rhana Devenport, imperialism's glare is returned with a speculative twist and the exhibition aims to unravel Enlightenment ideals and philosophy, the colonial impulse, and the pervasive gaze of power and desire.

Lisa Reihana biography

Lisa Reihana of Māori (Ngā Puhi, Ngāti Hine, Ngāi Tu) and British descent, is at the forefront of experimentation and has helped forge the development of time-based and media art in Aotearoa New Zealand. Influenced by indigenous filmmaking, her technically ambitious and poetically nuanced work disrupts gender, time, power, and representational norms. Reihana's work spans film, sound, photography, spatial design, live-action, costume and sculptural form. Her art making is driven by a powerful connection to community which informs her collaborative working method described as *kanohi ki te kanohi* (face to face). She completed a Masters in Design from the School of Visual Art and Design, Unitec in Auckland in 2014 and graduated with a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Elam School of Fine Arts, University of Auckland in 1987. Reihana lives and works in Auckland, Aotearoa New Zealand.

Reihana's work has featured in significant museums and major exhibition projects including Global Feminisms at Brooklyn Museum, the Yinchuan Biennial, the Havana Biennial, the Noumea Biennale, the Liverpool Biennial, the Adelaide International at Samstag Museum, the 12th Biennale of Sydney, the 2nd Auckland Triennial at Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, the 2nd and 4th Asia Pacific Triennials of Contemporary Art at Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art, Paradise Now? Contemporary Art from the Pacific at Asia Society Museum, New York, Suspended Histories at Museum Van Loon, Amsterdam, imagineNATIVE Film & Media Arts Festival, Toronto, The 4 Trickster at Gyeonggi Museum of Modern Art, South Korea, and Toi Toi Toi at Museum Fridericianum, Kassel. Reihana's work was recently included in the inaugural Honolulu Biennial 2017, a multi-site, contemporary visual arts festival.

Reihana has undertaken numerous international residencies and commissions, was made an Arts Laureate by the New Zealand Arts Foundation in 2014, and received the Te Tohu Toi Kē Te Waka Toi Māori Arts Innovation Award from Creative New Zealand. She was shortlisted for the Signature Art Prize at the Singapore Art Museum in 2014 for *In Pursuit of Venus*; as well as for Double Take, the Anne Landa Award, Art Gallery of New South Wales in 2009 and The Walters Prize at the Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki in 2008, both for Digital Marae. She was shortlisted for The Walters Prize 2016 for *In Pursuit of Venus [infected]*, 2015. Reihana was named a 2017 Distinguished Alumni by the University of Auckland, in recognition of her outstanding achievement in the field of fine arts.

John Curtin Gallery, 4 February – 22 April 2018

Website: <http://www.inpursuitofvenus.com/>

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Wendy Martin is the Artistic Director 2016 – 19.

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