

Pacific Sisters: He Toa Tāera | Fashion Activists opens at Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki



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Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki presents the major retrospective, *Pacific Sisters: He Toa Tāera | Fashion Activists*, opening Saturday 23 February.

A collective of Pacific and Māori fashion designers, artists and performers, the Pacific Sisters electrified 1990s Auckland, bringing the ground-breaking style of an urban, New Zealand-born Pacific generation to the mainstream.

Pacific Sisters: He Toa Tāera | Fashion Activists showcases the collective's innovative costumes and performances, which began as street style before expanding into multimedia experiences in venues ranging from night clubs to art galleries.

Over 27 years, the Pacific Sisters have collaborated on pioneering performances, installations and exhibitions that combine art with fashion. The collective's work has served to overturn stereotypes about Pacific culture, celebrate mana wahine, and affirm Pacific arts and cultural heritage.

This retrospective exhibition highlights the Pacific Sisters' varied Pacific identities and backgrounds, their unique bond of sisterhood and friendship, and a convergence of influences ranging from high-end fashion to the urban environment, and Indigenous politics and advocacy.

Continues overleaf

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Exhibition developed
and toured by the
Museum of New Zealand
Te Papa Tongarewa.

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Founded in 1991 by Selina Haami, Suzanne Tamaki and Nephi Tupaea, the Pacific Sisters core members include Lisa Reihana, Rosanna Raymond, Ani O'Neill, Henzart @ Henry Ah-Foo Taripo, Feonaa Wall and Jaunnie 'Ilohahia.

Auckland Art Gallery's Head of Curatorial and Exhibitions Sarah Farrar says, 'The Pacific Sisters have remained highly influential on art, design, fashion and performance in Aotearoa New Zealand over nearly three decades.'

'The exhibition highlights the collective's daring creativity, ground-breaking fashion and activist spirit.'

Pacific Sister and artist Feonaa Wall says, 'Auckland is Pacific Sisters' original base, where we met, grew organically and thrived! This is like a homecoming for us, and we can't wait to share these works and our history in the city where it all began.'

The touring exhibition will be extended at Auckland Art Gallery with a new interactive art installation, *DiscoVERY* by Rosanna Raymond and Ani O'Neill in the Gallery's Creative Learning Centre. The Pacific Sisters are also collaborating with the Gallery for a special late night event, *Art After Hours: F'Rock Da Base*, featuring performances, fashion, music, food and art. *Art After Hours: F'Rock Da Base* is to be held on Thursday 28 March from 6–11pm with tickets to be available through aucklandartgallery.com.

Pacific Sisters: He Toa Tāera | Fashion Activists has been developed and toured by the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, and was curated by Te Papa curator of Pacific Art Nina Tonga.

For more information, high-res images and interview requests contact:

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Exhibition details

Pacific Sisters: He Toa Tāera | Fashion Activists

When:

Saturday 23 February to
Sunday 14 July 2019

10am – 5pm daily, except Christmas Day

Where:

Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki
Cnr Kitchener and Wellesley Streets
Auckland, New Zealand

Admission:

Free with Gallery entry

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