

AUCKLAND ART GALLERY TOI O TĀMAKI

Exhibition Partners

Media release

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Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki Premieres *in Pursuit of Venus [infected]* by Lisa Reihana



Lisa Reihana, *in Pursuit of Venus [infected]* 2015, multi-channel video (still), Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, gift of the Patrons of Auckland Art Gallery

This May, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki will stage the world premiere of one of Aotearoa New Zealand's most ambitious screen-based art projects, immersing visitors in the sights and sounds of the Pacific.

Vast in its complexity and scale, artist Lisa Reihana's (Ngāpuhi, Ngāti Hine, Ngāi Tū) multi-screen panoramic video and sound work, *in Pursuit of Venus [infected]*, 2015, uses the latest in film and editing technology to offer viewers a full-sensory experience.

Open from 2 May–30 August with free admission, the 25-metre long by four-metre high installation is the largest video work the Gallery has ever exhibited. Each frame of the 32-minute film contains more than eight million pixels.

in Pursuit of Venus [infected] animates a 19th-century scenic wallpaper, *Les Sauvages de la Mer Pacifique*, 1804–5, which illustrates an idealised European view of the South Pacific and its people, as well as the death of Captain Cook.

Created over six years, the film transports viewers to an imagined, pre-Colonial world inhabited by the life-size characters from Captain Cook's voyages and encounters.

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It is filled with dance, music and cultural ceremonies populated by people drawn from across the Pacific. Individuals are brought alive with remarkable precision through a series of scenes informed by Maori and Pacific practices and European histories.

Production involved more than 100 specialists including animators, technicians, costume makers, and PIPA - Pacific Institute of Performing Art students and performers.

Auckland Art Gallery Director Rhana Devenport says *in Pursuit of Venus [infected]* will be a memorable experience for visitors.

'The technical sophistication of the film, the scale and clarity of the moving image, and the captivating nature of its multiple narratives means visitors will be entranced,' she says.

Artist Lisa Reihana says the project demanded the highest possible production values.

'I've put a lot of attention into its seamless delivery, so viewers can let the stories wash over them without being distracted by the technology. The digital wrangling required has been huge,' she says.

Reihana brings alive the characters and scenery of the wallpaper using green-screen techniques and multiple video channels. Rather than replicate the inaccurate, romanticised view of the 1800s, she speculates and imagines encounters that may have taken place between different cultures at the time.

'Nineteenth-century stereotypes are challenged through this ambitious work and imperialist notions of beauty, authenticity, history and myths are put to the test,' says Devenport.

The presentation of the video work is scheduled to coincide with the exhibition *Printing the Pacific* at the Gallery, which runs until 26 July 2015. *Printing the Pacific* includes the multiple-drop version of the *Les Sauvages de la Mer Pacifique* wallpaper, which is on loan from the Auckland War Memorial Museum.

(ends)

Notes to the Editor:

Image Credit: Lisa Reihana, *in Pursuit of Venus [infected]* 2015, multi-channel video (still), Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tamaki, gift of the Patrons of Auckland Art Gallery

Lisa Reihana: *in Pursuit of Venus [infected]*

2 May–30 August 2015

www.inpursuitofvenus.com

AUCKLAND ART GALLERY TOI O TĀMAKI

Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki
Cnr Wellesley St and Kitchener St
www.aucklandartgallery.com

FREE ENTRY

All ages

The Lisa Reihana: *in Pursuit of Venus [infected]* exhibition will be supported by an extensive visitor programme at the Gallery

To complement the project, the Gallery will also print a major publication *Lisa Reihana: in Pursuit of Venus*, generously supported by Creative New Zealand.

Lisa Reihana biography

Lisa Reihana (Ngāpuhi and Ngāti Hine Ngāi Tū) was born in 1964 in Auckland, where she lives and works. Reihana has contributed powerfully to the development of time-based art in Aotearoa New Zealand. Spanning film, video, photography, installation, performance, design, costume and sculptural form, Reihana's art making is driven by a strong sense of community which informs her collaborative working method. Reihana completed a Masters in Design from the School of Visual Art and Design, Unitec in Auckland in 2014 and graduated with a Bachelor in Fine Arts from Elam School of Fine Arts, University of Auckland in 1987. Reihana's work is held in private and public collections while Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki cares for the largest international holdings of the artist's work.

Matariki

in Pursuit of Venus [infected] will coincide with this year's Matariki Festival on 18 June

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