

INFLUX of political agency

INFLUX brings together diverse artworks that collectively push and pull our understanding of the Pacific from a perspective that is much larger than Aotearoa New Zealand.

The Tautai exhibition of tertiary students' work opens at Auckland's ST PAUL St Gallery, AUT on September 23 (until 28 October), and at Wellington's **PATAKA** Art + Museum in 2017 (20 May-13 August).

INFLUX curator Ane Tonga says the exhibition reflects tertiary practice at a time when many artists begin to develop a sense of political agency. "*INFLUX* marks a moment where student practices within an academic context find a renewed sense of purpose, embedded within their wider political and social field. Artists such as Jasmine Togo Brisby draw our attention to the legacy of colonisation and the complexities of the South Sea Islander identity. Further provocations can be seen in work by Pati Solomon Tyrell which makes visible Pacific narratives of LGBTQI experiences." *INFLUX* also includes works by Jasmine Te Hira, John Vea, Nina Oberg Humphries, Valasi Leota-Seiuli, Shane Tuihalangiengie, Christina Pataiali'i and Louisa Afoa, and other artists to be announced.



Shane Tuihalangiengie's *Get your mind right*, 2014.

INFLUX is the eighth exhibition of tertiary students' work presented by Tautai Contemporary Pacific Arts Trust and the first in a new biennial cycle that sees the exhibition open in Auckland in September 2016, then in Wellington next May – supported by an expanded public programme.

“I’m approaching this as an experienced artist and curator *and* as someone who, while studying at the Elam School of Fine Arts, participated in past tertiary exhibitions,” curator, artist and writer Ane Tonga says. “This provides insight into how beneficial this experience is for students - as a platform into the art world and to work with a curator where they will form ideas and drivers in their practice that extend beyond the exhibition. Like many past exhibitors, these students will go on to shape, and push the boundaries of, contemporary art in Aotearoa New Zealand.”

“Tautai provides an important platform between tertiary studies and the arts sector,” Ane Tonga says. “It does this in a variety of ways, such as mentoring with senior artists and industry professionals, providing opportunities to curate and exhibit, and sharing its expansive networks across Aotearoa and further abroad.”

“Tautai has supported me through each of these avenues which have been crucial to my professional development as an artist and created inroads into curating as a profession. Different exhibition opportunities allowed me to work with curators and exhibit work early in my career. By the time I'd graduated from Elam, I already had an exhibition history, an understanding of gallery infrastructure, and even began to build my own networks.”

“Tautai facilitates professional development, where recent graduates can learn from industry professionals, and plays an integral role in local and global art scenes. In the last ten years Tautai contributed to an increase in Pacific Island graduates across tertiary institutions, a growing number of Pacific people employed in a spectrum of roles in art galleries or art related roles, and Pacific artists included international biennial events.”

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**ST PAUL St Gallery, AUT
PATAKA Art + Museum**

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Tautai Contemporary Pacific Arts Trust has been showcasing tertiary students' work since 2008.

While the scope of the projects has expanded, the core objectives remain - to give artists an opportunity to show their work, better understand the preparation required for an exhibition, and strengthen peer networks beyond their tertiary institution. The exhibitions also provide Pacific curators, writers and artists with opportunities to curate, document, and participate in artist talks and critiques. The first tertiary exhibition was held in 2008, at AUT's St Paul St Gallery Three, and for the next five years at St Paul St Galleries One and Two. In 2014, the project broadened its reach further, with works from artists in tertiary institutions outside Auckland featured in the online exhibition <http://www.the-drowned-world.com/>. In 2015, Tautai and long-time partners St Paul St Gallery, decided to move to a biennial project, expand the public programmes, and engage an experienced curator. The result, *INFLUX*, opens this year in Auckland (23 September – 28 October) and in Wellington in 2017 (20 May-13 August).

Tautai is dedicated to the development and ongoing support of Pacific arts and artists.

The name Tautai draws on the Samoan word for navigator, reflecting a desire to work alongside artists and offer guidance in enhancing their art practice. Tautai not only helps Pacific artists to grow and succeed in their chosen contemporary art form, but also in their lives and as individuals making positive contributions to their wider communities. Since the 1980s Tautai Contemporary Pacific Arts Trust has supported the growing number of contemporary Pacific artists living in Aotearoa. Implementing Tautai's goals has evolved to take account of the changing art world and widening art practices. Tautai supports the production of new and innovative work by practising artists, runs programmes for secondary and tertiary students of Pacific heritage, manages internships, and maintains a comprehensive website on Pacific art and artists, www.tautai.org

Recent Tautai projects include:

- *Tautai | Navigate: Thirty years of navigating contemporary Pacific art* Studio One Toi Tu
- *Myths and Legends in my veins* Papakura Art Gallery
- Lonnie Hutchinson *Black Bird* Gus Fisher Gallery and Dowse Art Museum
- *Fresh Horizons* workshops Manukau, Wellington, Hamilton and Tokoroa
- *Pacific Materiality* Studio One Toi Tū
- Niki Hastings-McFall's *Flock* Whitespace and *Fale Ula* Auckland Arts Festival
- Building potential arts managers through Creative New Zealand-funded Pasifika art internships, and partnering with Artspace Gallery's Education Internship programme
- Artist Residency Programme, visiting artist/curator Léuli Eshraghi

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