

Atareta Black, Laura Donkers, NIWA, Stephen Perry, Te Aata Rangimarie Smith, Bianca Ranson, Nââwié Tutugoro:

Blue Radius



- p.40 Atareta Rerekohu Black, *He rākau rene ki uta, he rākau rene ki tai*, 2022, harakeke, whau, kohatu, pungapunga, kōkōwai, dimensions variable. Photography throughout: Mack Potter
- p.41 Laura Donkers, *Land Radius* 2, 2021, single channel video, 60 mins. Installation view, Depot Artspace, Tāmaki Makaurau, September 2022
- p.41 Bianca Ranson and Te Aata Rangimarie Smith, *Tuakana Teina*, 2022, shredded 1000-page court injunction, shredded Pōhutukawa tree uprooted by marina developers at Pūtiki Bay, coffee husk, organic hay

Global ecological destruction and the climate emergency are direct manifestations of settler colonialism. The recent group exhibition *Blue Radius* showcased a collection of work referencing climate change-induced sea level rise around Tāmaki Makaurau's coastlines. Notably, this exhibition was at Depot Artspace in Devonport, a predominantly white, middle-class seaside suburb on Tāmaki Makaurau's North Shore. The mirror was held up to us, our locality; and the unique ecosystem of the Hauraki Gulf as a microcosm of oppressive forces.

Within the exhibition, there were three inherent concepts. Urgency, (intrinsically related to) linear Time; and Saviourism—how white and western society's desire to help can do more harm than good. Time, in this western sense, is in a cycle of densification, thickening and clouding under the grip of colonial capitalism. The artists have made considerations that both belie and propagate these ideas through the inclusion of biodegradable materials that signal mortality, an installation that appears transitory; and subjects that convey local bays and natural resources. Aside from calling for action against the human-led destruction of our planet, and the slow extinction of living creatures, the exhibition perhaps posits that, through art making, creativity can help us to cope by gesturing to slower modes of engagement.

Te Aata Rangimarie Smith and Bianca Ranson's gigantic static pile, *Tuākana Teina*, captures a prophetic understanding of Time as something that extends beyond our lifespan. Enmeshed and organic, the composting materials probe at the concept of Urgency. Injunction papers issued to 32 kaitiaki and protectors of the Protect Pūtiki occupation campaign on Waiheke Island decompose amongst the mulch, breaking down and morphing into a future microbial energy source. Sheets intended to intimidate and shame those protecting their home, now ease towards renewal, progressing to beyondness.

Protect Pūtiki has seen tangata whenua, mana whenua and protectors traumatised. The occupation and protest at Pūtiki is an unwavering reminder that communities challenging the state's relations with Māori are encouraged to be ashamed of their rights, to submit themselves to arbitrary policy. And that protecting the environment, the oceans, and wildlife, bears the risk of criminalisation, even under councils or departments who should be

under an obligation to protect.

Saviourism spawns from the agenda to discard and bury Indigenous technologies and methods of thriving. Atareta Rerekohu Black channels mātauranga Māori, whakapapa, and kōrero tuku iho, traditional stories, in her eloquent kupenga, fishing net. The kupenga draws on ways to live in tandem with the flowing streams and lavish coast: the blue radius that is Te Moana-nui-a-Kiwa. A reminder that we are not at the centre of the earth, but just a point along the way. Emerging from this is the potent pre-colonial idea of the Moana as a body of water, interdependent, and wonderfully reciprocal amongst the islands. Black's kupenga is knotted from literal and ancestral knowledge and emphasises ethical relations with water and other non-human entities through seemingly obsolete technologies and rituals.

Perhaps by articulating and organising these mammoth ideas within an art context, we are compelled to negotiate and self-soothe against the overwhelming hum of a burning horizon; and instigate dialogue around the pipeline of global ecological destruction and the sea level rise our Island whānau face. As the largest Moana, how can we choose to revive Te Moana-nui-a-Kiwa in a consensual way? How can our relationship to land extend across the Moana if we continue operating through the imposition of colonialism?

