

**F A C E   V A L U E** • V I D E O   P O R T R A I T U R E   F R O M   T H E   P A C I F I C



FACE VALUE • VIDEO PORTRAITURE FROM THE PACIFIC



Vernon Ah Kee • Denis Beaubois • John Gillies • Lonnie Hutchinson • Lyndal Jones • Janet Merewether • James Pinker  
+ Mark McClean • Rachael Rakena • Christian Thompson • Sheyne Tuffery • Jim Vivieaere + Jefferson Belt

Curators: Rilka Oakley and Annabel Pegus

## INTRODUCTION

The genesis for *Face Value* came from a desire to present works that explore a range of representations of identity through the moving image. Our intention is to investigate visual manifestations of identity at a time when digital technology is accessible to the majority rather than a specialist minority. The geographic specificity of the work selected is, in part, a logistical concern as well as an acknowledgment of shared and disparate regional interests. The exhibition represents a selection of new media practitioners who live and work in the Pacific region, whose work is defined in this exhibition as 'portraiture'.

The traditional western genre of portraiture conjures up a range of preconceived ideas, which within this contemporary artistic context, at first appear incompatible. However, *Face Value* remains faithful to portraiture's fundamentals; that it alludes to an individual human being or represents a defined group of like human beings, that actually exist outside the work<sup>1</sup>. If, as Richard Brilliant noted, "the relationship between the portrait and its object of representation directly reflects the social dimension of human life as a field of action among persons, with its own repertoire of signals and messages",<sup>2</sup> then the works in this exhibition speak of this moment. They reflect amongst many things, individual traits and distinctiveness, social and familial origins, historical events, cultural and ethnic communities of the Pacific region informed by technology, globalisation and geographic location.

Our rationale is to investigate the potential of moving image portraiture. Many works are allegorical, fictional or conceptual. Such modes of representation allow for multiple readings such as Sheyne Tuffery's Manukau birds, Christian Thompson's

stereotyped self portrait alter-egos, Jim Vivieaere + Jefferson Belt's intimate objects and personal places, and Rachael Rakena's performers in an ocean of email. Traditional portrait constructs have disguised loaded social messages in Lyndal Jones' emotionally conditioned middle-aged white men and Denis Beaubois' subjugation of racial stereotypes. But Vernon Ah Kee's blunt talking self-portrait is a no-nonsense account of black Australia. John Gillies' *My Sister's Room*, constructed of recollection and snapshot, is a portrait of the nexus between the artist and his sister.

Using the hierarchical pretext of portraiture to her advantage, Janet Merewether has bestowed dignity upon the oft-ignored older woman, who typically knit the characters featured in *Knit-Face*. But, as Ngahiraka Mason questions, has Lonnie Hutchinson liberated Polynesian women from sexual stereotyping in *Black Pearl?* The stark realism of everyday urban people in James Pinker + Mark McClean's *South* has eliminated any residual gloss left over from traditional portraiture's objective to flatter.

*Face Value* with its aim of investigating identity through moving image portraiture has been a unifying project, positively embraced by the artists in collaborating, making and lending work to this exhibition.

### Rilka Oakley and Annabel Pegus

Curators

<sup>1</sup> Richard Brilliant, *Portraiture*, London, 1991, p.8.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid*

(OPPOSITE) Lyndal Jones *He Must Not Cry* 2004 still from video





James Pinker + Mark McClean *South video documentation 01/02* 2003 stills from video

## FACE VALUE / VOICING THE SILENT WITNESS

Video art hits 40 this year; in 1965, the Sony Portapak became available for domestic use internationally, paving the way for inquisitive first-adoptors to seize the medium for their own flagrantly artistic use. Video is however not the newest of technologies when it comes to capturing the 'truth' of human appearances, especially when analytic identification is desired. Conceived in 1936, iris scans became the terrain of sci-fi flicks in the 1980s before being patented in 1994 and immediately put to work for various law enforcement agencies in the US. This year the UK announced that digital fingerprinting will be in place for all immigrants by 2008, while random iris scans are being introduced at 'e-borders'.

Back to video technologies and *Face Value*. Although motivations here are sourced in acutely personal investigative journeys, four paths may be traced through the works – some artists are exploring and disrupting the genre of auto-portraiture, others are examining appearance, memory and loss, in certain work the in-between space holds interest, while for others ideas surrounding authenticity are under consideration.

### Auto-portraiture / Reclamation

Vernon Ah Kee manoeuvres the self-image in *whitfellanormal*, 2004, to confront dispossession and the divisive, racially founded schisms that exist in today's Australia. The artist performs the narration – his words are explicit and lucid;

If you wish to insert yourself into the black man's world, with his history, in his colour, and on the level at which you currently perceive him, then know that you will never be



Vernon Ah Kee *whitfellanormal* 2004 still from video

anything more than mediocre. You will not be able to involve yourself in the decision-making processes of this land, and you will not have any constructive access to the social and political mechanisms of this land. At times this land will shake your understanding of the world, and confusion will eat away at your sense of humanity, but at least you will feel normal.

A dual construction of two separate identities takes place in *Betrayal*, 2005, by writer, curator and artist Jim Vivieaere and painter, musician and camera operator Jefferson Belt. Vivieaere explains how the work looks to 'the peripheral and supportive



John Gillies *My Sister's Room* 2000 installation

imagery that endorses two independent lives ... Two portraits are built forensically on circumstantial evidence. Presence with the absence of body.’<sup>1</sup>

In ... *as an individual and not under the name of Ngai Tahu*, 2001, Rachael Rakena adopts a sideways glance at self-portraiture. Ngai Tahu are the Indigenous Maori people of the southern islands of New Zealand, Te Waipounamu. Text scrolls continuously from north to south over the screen – words snatched from emails that point to the more prosaic dimensions of art making. Beyond the veil of falling words floats footage of a couple dancing underwater – ever so slowly – their movements fashioned by the weight of

endurance and fluid pressing upon them. The ambient electronic soundtrack adds to the weightless touch of the work and alludes to a space of possibility.

‘Everything centre’s around the soundtrack – it is the soul of the piece’, notes Sheyne Tuffery about his work, *Manukau*, 2004. Over the years, Tuffery has collated and constructed a fertile sample bank of around 500 sound loops, he explains;

When you layer 20 to 30 sounds together they start filling in each others’ *lack of something* and it becomes this new entity – which is the best thing about making sound, it’s so much like painting. The soundtrack for *Manukau* is a conglomerate of sounds that emulate the area of the wetlands. Manukau is a Maori word for swimming bird. It is also the name of the harbour and wetlands of where I live in South Auckland.

Tuffery revels in an animated, ‘rustic, flawed, and not-so-techno-smooth’ video language as he examines instinctive behaviours in the natural world as metaphoric arcs to contemporary living, he notes, ‘this portrait is an extension of myself and my obsession with identity’.

### Appearance / Disappearance

Absence is the subject of John Gillies’ *My Sister's Room*, 2000. This intimate portrait reveals how memory is assembled and how loss becomes something that is lived with, something that assumes its own form. Gillies has been making rigorous interdisciplinary work for more than two decades in Australia. His work often possesses a hypnotic quality as it enters into states of alienation and loss, hinting at the paranormal and referring to the



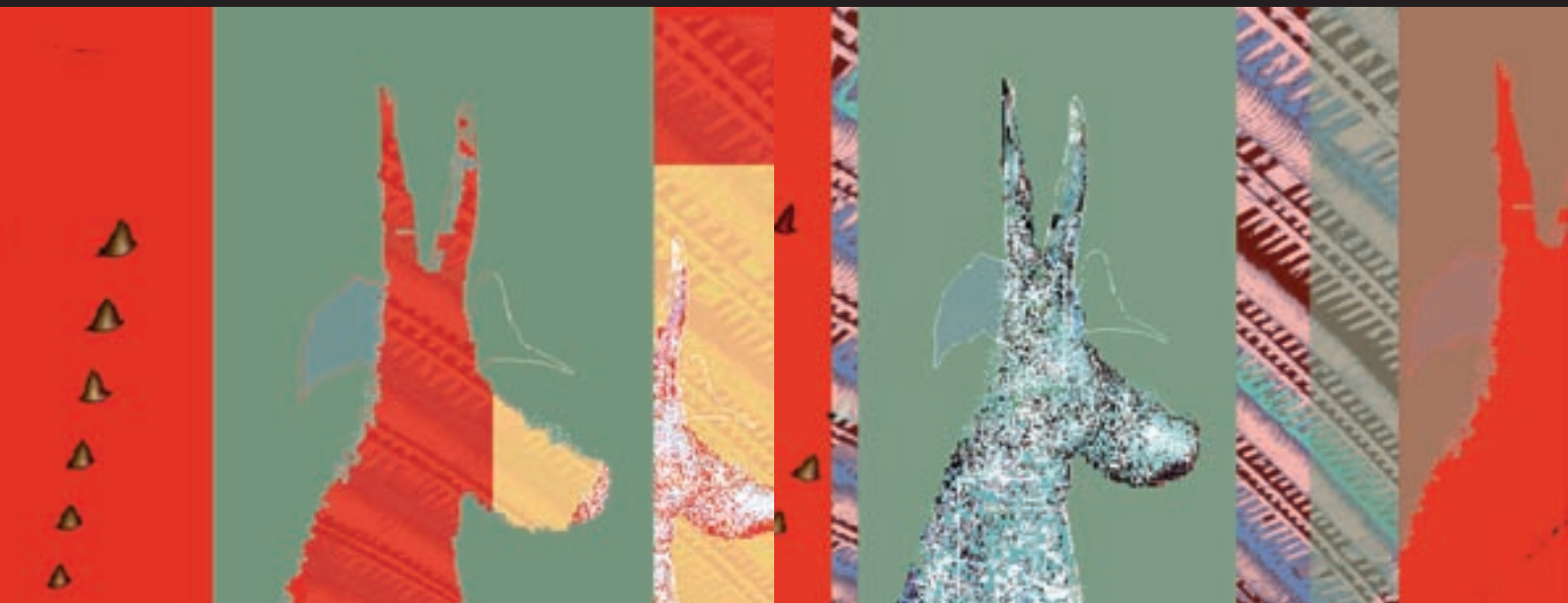
power and uselessness of images. In *My Sister's Room*, a portrait is slowly articulated of the artist's sister who has passed away. Are photographs what we bring to mind as recollected images, or is it our experience embedded as still-frames in our memory? Is one a more authentic memory than the other? The emotive stain is no less present in both. Gillies is committing his own knowing of his sister as he draws a spatial portrait of recollection that burns the edge between filmic and phenomenological worlds.

Back to the biometric zone – along with iris scanning, various digital technologies are currently being developed and as a by-product, our notions of portraiture are shifting. For over a decade, forensic scientists and anthropologists have been devising new software systems for computer-assisted facial image identification. Recent developments with 3D physiognomic analysis have made possible the re-imaging into standard full frontal mode of the odd angled photographs sourced via roving surveillance cameras. For some years, Denis Beaubois has been investigating the phenomenon of surveillance – the 'silent witness'. The artist observes;

I was originally seduced by photography and became interested in its performative and capturing aspects – historically I was interested in the use of light to engender control and how light incriminates people. I then became interested in the performative aspects of photography, running parallel to my interest in the ideas surrounding Sontag's quote about how once she feels herself photographed, she transforms herself before it even happens. I then began devising photographic performances that engaged with the security world outside, and ideas about surveillance. I was not interested in the dystopian or Orwellian regime, instead of protesting or opposing the

form, it was more an act of communication. I found that complicitness undermined the power of surveillance; by giving oneself to the model it debased the form itself.

At times the audience becomes accomplice/participant in Beaubois' work, thus twisting ideas about observation, curiosity and suspicion. During 2002, Beaubois became Artist in Residence with the forensic psychology department at the University of New South Wales (UNSW), working with sophisticated face recognition software. At the time he was particularly interested in witnessing as a performative act. The UNSW researchers were undertaking advanced work with eye-witness recognition and the use of CCTV footage as evidence in court. Further work with the psychology department led Beaubois to develop his virtuosic morphing work, *Constant*, 2004. There is a theory that this technology, through its fluidity and subtlety, may lead to more accuracy and a diminished risk of wrongful imprisonment as a result of suspect line-up identification. *Constant* is a silent and seductive work. Colour video portraits of 11,000 unblinking faces morph into one another, tearing through racial stereotyped features with meta-evolutionary zeal, generations of subtle similarities and distinctions are revealed to us in just seven minutes. Eleven people were originally photographed, and 1,000 transitional frames between them creates the 11,000 individual faces. *Constant* also references new forms of 'racial profiling'; at what point do people *look* Caucasian, or Arabic? Beaubois writes; 'The method of transformation questions the idea of the pure bloodline associated with the politics of race'. What is 'constant' in the work is the viewer and change itself. The work disrupts portraiture. What is the moment of transition between the identification of one individual and another as distinct identities are introduced then withdrawn in recurring states of recognition and forgetting?



Sheyne Tuffery *Manukau* 2004 stills from video

## Va (a space in-between)

*South*, 2003, by James Pinker and Mark McClean, is one of those rare artworks that shaped itself. An organic and still-evolving portrait of community, *South* refers to South Auckland and offers another take on the same Manukau that Tuffery explores. Pinker and McClean created the work with an arts collective/health provider/gallery at the local Otara shopping centre. Still portraits were shot in a portable studio outside the gallery door over two Saturday mornings. The invitation was open to all passers-by and the response was overwhelming. The video component evolved as part of the larger work, Pinker explains;

On the second day I placed a video camera on a tripod and basically let it roll. I then edited it into the location footage I'd grabbed when we were hunting for the street scene locations for the stills. The photographic exhibition was a mix of still photos of not just people, but also houses, marae, power stations and the precinct itself. ... We were starting to dissect a community and place within it other compositions. It was not of our actual design and took on another life.

The work reveals itself slowly, conjuring ideas about locale and belonging. I asked Pinker about the ability of the work to allude to unspoken private worlds;

I think the evocation of privacy comes from the slow motion effect and the slight solarisation of the looping background. I wanted to harness a kind of frantic but colourful exposé of the urban. With the people caught in a dream-like removal.

A very different community holds focus in Lonnie Hutchinson's *Black Pearl*, 2004. The work, described in black and white, is

an elegiac poem about enforced prostitution within the Pacific pearling industry. Hutchinson uses stop-frame animation and ink drawing to suggest rather than explicitly narrate her story. The hand-worked images contribute to the work's potency. 'Drawing is part of my practice ...', Hutchinson says, '... tempting the gaze of the viewer'. The artist manipulates the vibration of pattern and shadow as she casts light through delicate paper cut-outs. Hutchinson, of dual Samoan and Maori heritage, talks about how this compositional aspect of her practice conceptually explores the *va*, a Samoan word that translates as 'a space in-between'.<sup>2</sup> Hutchinson writes;

In *Black Pearl* it is all that ... boundaries are blurred ... the curtain to dignify her existence ... maybe ... entrapment ... viewer/voyeur ... naughty girl/dirty girl ... the body is marked ... but she's fuckin' sexy all the same ... her body is marked ... the shadows move over her body ... again and again ... time ... time spent ... time again ... time measured by shadows ... those of her own and others ... and sounds ... water ... dripping ... waves crashing against wood that swells and creaks ... tides ... in ... out

## Authenticity / Qualia

The genre of artist portraiture is disassembled by Bidjara man Christian Bumbarra Thompson in his work, *The Gates of Tambo (video performance)*, 2005. The video is an extension of a photographic series of the same name wherein Thompson creates 'faux' portraits of 'famous' artists such as Tracey Moffatt, Rusty Peters and Andy Warhol. Placing himself as the actor for each portrait, Thompson complicates his own project by including himself as one of the artists, thus inserting the 'real' into the 'fake'. Thompson's work challenges modes of representation and cultural hierarchies, drawing attention to the symbolic weight



Janet Merewether *Knit-Face* 2004 stills from video

of objects, their purpose and meanings as well as the filters and conditions through which these objects and images are read.

Perceived hierarchies of cultural activity are also teased out in Janet Merewether's vivacious 30 second work, *Knit-Face*, 2004, which, in the artist's words, 'toys' with the idea of the portrait in a pluralist society.<sup>3</sup> The oft-forgotten, low-tech and inexpensive practice of knitting toys is harnessed by Merewether in her playful peek at studio portraiture. Well-loved, gaily-coloured characters eagerly respond to the photographer/narrator's directions. The knitted toys are as idiosyncratic and imperfect as their makers and remain as modest ciphers to more neglected corners within populations.

Authenticity can be described as the condition of significant emotionally appropriate living. In Lyndal Jones' single channel work, *He Must Not Cry*, 2004, from her series, *Tears for What was Done*, 2002–2005, six men are filmed crying to camera against a standard blue screen. The men are shot in close-up, the almost inaudible location soundtrack builds discretely in the closing stages with occasional breathing and muffled vocal sounds. These men are actors (we don't necessarily know this by viewing the work) but they are crying, quietly and earnestly. Interestingly, the territory is not uncommon, Sam Taylor-Woods' photographic series, *Crying Men*, 2004, and Sally Potter's 2001 film, *The Man Who Cried*, come to mind. Yet Jones succeeds in forming an eloquent portrait of familiarity and strangeness, her portrait is not of individuals or behavioural norms, but of emotional authenticity itself. In philosophical debate, the qualia of an emotion are the distinctive subjective aspects associated with the phenomenological experience of actually feeling that emotion. Is it possible that particular video works can trigger our ability to scan memory, pinpoint lived moments and relive

the actual experience of past emotive states – our qualia? Where then does the contour lie between evoked and lived experiences of emotion?

The volatile trajectories of exploration made possible through video as a communicative form are morphing in the hands of artists as the media continues to mutate and redefine itself. Leaks into other digital and biometric technologies are further obscuring and expanding the lexicon of video art. The twin threads of video and portraiture seem peculiarly irreconcilable yet compulsively drawn to one another. Through their sites of collision, fundamental questions continue to be asked as the witness is given voice.

## Rhana Devenport

1. All quotes from artists are drawn from email and telephone conversations with the author, Jim Vivieaere, 15 March 2005; Denis Beaubois, 15 March 2005; Lonnie Hutchinson, 15 March 2005; James Pinker, 14 March 2005 and Sheyne Tuffery, 17 March 2005.
2. See Maud Page, 'Snaring the Pigeon', *Object*, issue no. 43, 2003, p.40.
3. [www.acmi.net.au/knitface.jsp](http://www.acmi.net.au/knitface.jsp)

**Share the information/spread it like butter polyunsaturated/  
help my people make it/  
Che Fu Share the info from the Navigator album**

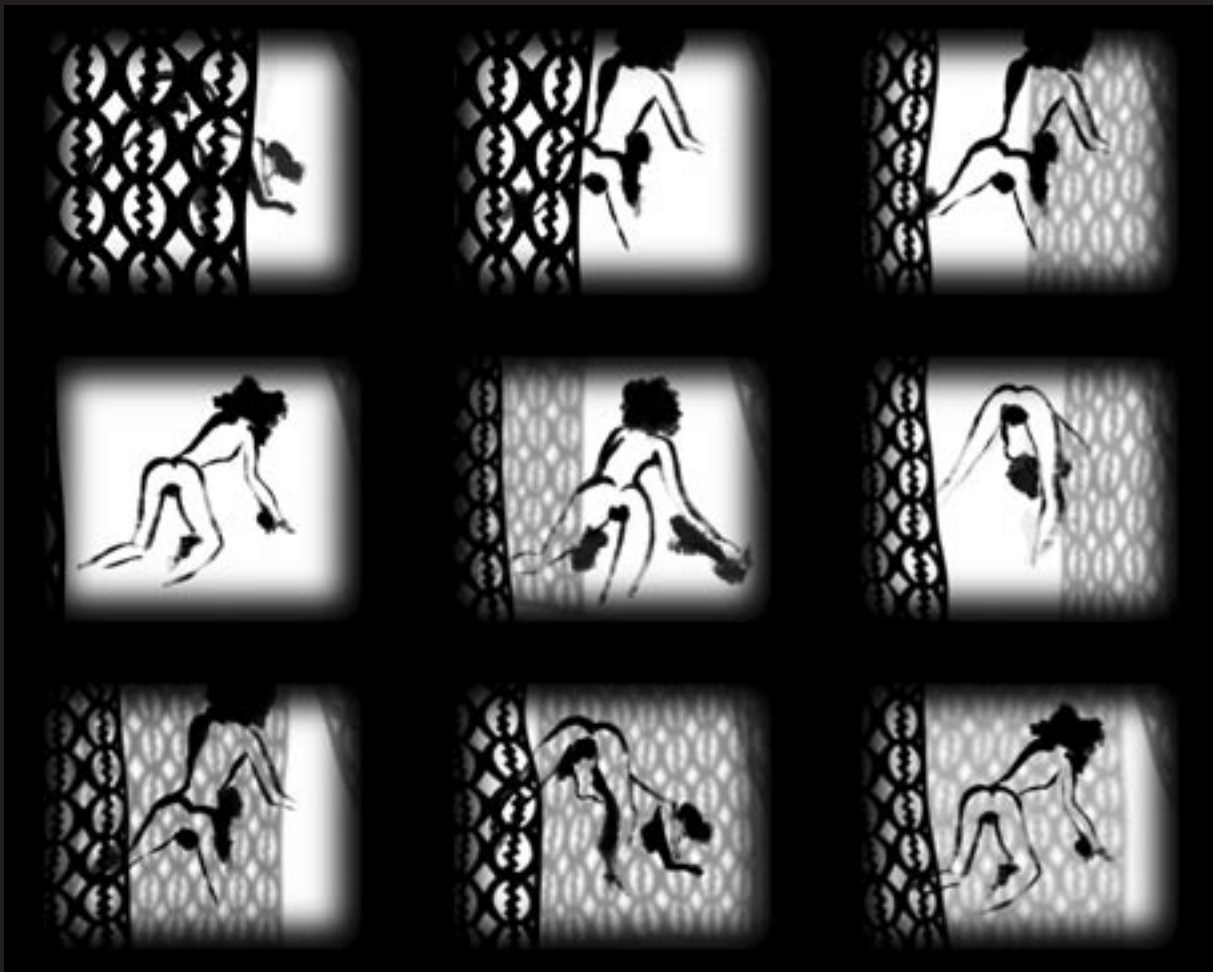
This selection of new media portraits communicates a sense of how it is. Experiences of family, community, social values, traditional concepts, personal histories, codes of behaviour, the environment and nature, deliver a set of visual signs and symbols to decipher. All these things influence their reception, as much as delivers, and locates ideas about portraiture and media.

To describe the artworks as representational portraits or identity projects involves attention. That the selection of works for *Face Value* present as an 'indigenous aesthetic'...begs the questions; what is an indigenous practice, and could it be an aesthetic in itself? If one accepts that Maori and Pacific artists understand that their image represents their 'culture' for others to interpret, how accountable are they, for the way they and their communities are perceived? While the projects deliberately portray identity from a cultural specific perspective, the works also open windows to diverse cultural histories and traditions, exploding any narrowly defined cultural notions of being. Certainly, this is a common element in the works and necessitates explanation.

James Pinker (Te Arawa) and Mark McClean's (Pakeha) collaboration enters and exits the off ramps and urban streets where the beautiful brown people from Otara, in South Auckland live. *South* is a remarkable document for the unsentimental imaging of Polynesian people at home in their environment. The moving image footage is shot 'drive-by' fashion and the portraits are shot in a studio. A large cast of inter-generational community members assert their urbanism while bearing witness

to the passing of time. Some subjects appear like larger than life Polynesian gods surveying the activities of the people and others interact with each other. Posed, serious, spontaneous and extraordinary people delight in representing their community. 'South' styled, their attire consciously suggests new and past traditions. The commercial jostling and blurring of Polynesian faces is a powerful force to be reckoned with and while it characterizes the present, it also enforces inter relationships. Even when Pinker and McClean's treatment of portraiture becomes more important than how we might understand the people, they provide a conduit to the subjects pasts and presents. In this way, *South* powerfully displays urban identity, socio-economic status and foregrounds individual faces connected to a living culture.

Intimacy as a theme is present in *Black Pearl*, which the genre of portraiture allows. The work deserves comment, partly because it reminds us of historical facts and reconstructed histories. Lonnie Hutchinson's (Ngai Tahu, Samoa) project portrays a not-well-known sex slave industry in the Pacific. Polynesian women were kept in the holds of pearl-trading ships for the express purpose of providing sex for crewmembers. From time to time traders transferred women to passing ships thereby exploiting human resources and the gift of pearls taken from the Pacific Ocean. Glimpsed through a cut-out curtain, a nude figure keeps rhythm with the swell of the sea as seagulls screech and cry against a background of washing waves. *Black Pearl* is an intimate perspective of a figure in the image of her Polynesian forebears; a quickly passing vision of a sex-slave's life is manifest, for the observer to consider. Symbolically, it could be said that Hutchinson confidently liberates an anonymous ancestor. By repeating the motion and movement of the sea, she is at the same time transmitting and navigating a moment in the history of Polynesian women. What makes the work



Lonnie Hutchinson *Black Pearl* 2002 stills from video

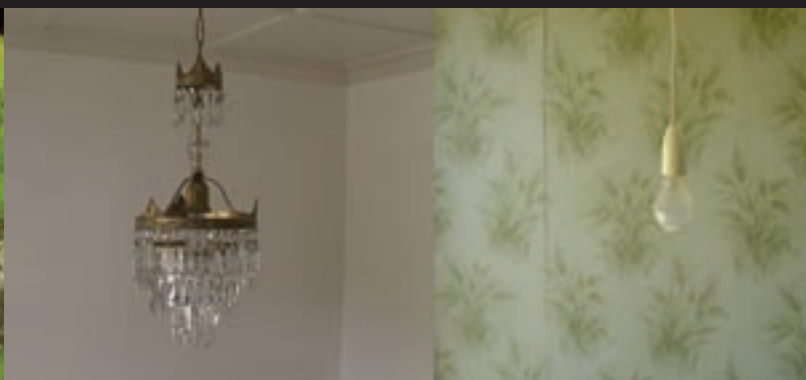
astonishing is the way she (re)constructs and interprets Pacific history; more specifically, for the way she subjugates the figure. In so doing, does she transgress into the field of mediating exotic imagery, thereby flaunting Polynesian sexuality? Alternatively, is Hutchinson making an observation of the high representation of Maori and Polynesian in the sex-industry thereby bringing this to the attention of her community?

The raw material of new media is digital video, the world-wide-web, sound, text and all the extras that technology provides. What makes Rachael Rakena's (Nga Tahu, Nga Puhī) work cutting edge is her collaborative digital practice involving family and friends who operate in cyberspace. Submerged individuals perform a series of haka moves and gestures. The work successfully combines traditional art forms including tukutuku patterns (woven panels) and the body of water that the swimmers bathe in referencing the seas travelled by their ancestors. One could say that Rakena applies concepts of traditional weaving by using new media to transmit contemporary cultural narratives, just as they were recorded in weaving patterns. By marking changes in the way culture is (mis)understood she also highlights the problems of trying to send the same positive message to the masses. Indeed submerging people in water removes them from their usual existence on land, removing their customary source of identity. Metaphorically, the swimmers are awash in an ocean of gobbledygook email of their own making. Perhaps unconsciously, Rakena is suggesting they are refugees from another place, or are in-between spaces and are exposed for their humanness and deep-seated fear of self-misrepresentation. In so doing, she places emphasis on her idea that digital art is an extension of authentic Maori modes for expression and for all the technology in the world, issues of importance to Maori continue to ebb and flow with the tides of change.

A flow of ideas is offered by Jim Vivieaere (Cook Island Maori) + Jefferson Belt (Pakeha). While the individual treatment of portraiture sets the artists in *Face Value* apart from each other, *Betrayal* constructs identity based on a 'context' of the artists making. By extension, Vivieaere and Belt become the subjects in their art through the selected images that endorse their lives and support their identity. They have assembled delicious digital footage of cooking lessons, loved objects and pictures of places that hold special meaning to them. Poignant and revealing home and family shots not only reinforce the importance they place on them, but they also depict an identity separate from each other. Photographs of grandparents, uncles and children provide genetic clues to their identity, while the carefully edited body of forensically gathered information complement the project. Unlike other projects referred to in this essay, Vivieaere and Belt depict themselves as subject in a formal and direct way. On the face of it, the selection of images exposes two middleclass males who live in an interracial and multicultural world. Who else would meticulously prepare circumstantial evidence for the viewer to engage? Metaphorically, the work invokes the artists grappling with something they wish to have control over. Perhaps this is more reassuring to their identity and cultural specificity. In so doing, are they abandoning or even betraying social and political representations of Polynesia and rupturing identity? Does their mode of expression constitute the idea that a cultural specific identity is not about community but more about the individual?

Sheyne Tuffery's (Samoa) project *Manukau* thwacks a wallop for his depiction and connection to Manukau Harbour. It is world renowned as a wetland haven to water and wading birds. Every spring 200,000 wader birds migrate here from the high Arctic on the East Asian Australasian Flyway flight path. Thousands stay and spend the summer on the Manukau and other wetlands in





Jim Vivieaere + Jefferson Belt *Betrayal* 2005 stills from video



Rachael Rakena  
*'... as an individual and not under the name of Ngai Tahu'* 2001  
from the series "Techno Maori: Maori Art in the Digital Age..."  
installation

New Zealand. The ability of birds to find their way here from the other side of the world fascinates the artist, perhaps referencing a longstanding tradition of navigation and migration through his ancestors. Conceptually, the work plays out an obsession with identity and a rough drumbeat promises an epic tale. Tuffery's 'blue dog' leads the tour studying the habitats and multiple histories of the land, observing how modern society has dealt with the natural life and people within and around it. As the star of *Manukau* 'Blue dog' looks like a Scooby Doo character, adventurous but barely superhero. It is hard to discern whether the dog is confident or afraid of what might lurk around the corner. His purpose could be to embrace our human foibles; not perfect and sometimes fearful... but still managing to stay grounded. Patterns taken from Samoan Fale reference Tuffery's ancestry and the dog represents the artist. Two contradictory images in the work are a poised feline who stares out with a pensive stare and a kiwi bedecked in camouflage gear. Their juxtaposition underlines the fact that these animals do not co-exist in harmony. Their usage also describes and explains a cultural survival mindset in Aotearoa and perhaps their inclusion is an effort to resolve or take some of the mystery out of identity. It is hard to imagine that Sheyne Tuffery is descended from a line of subjected people when viewing this work, which is half of the magic of the *Manukau*.

In some way, we owe much to the Westernisation of the indigenous image. As a legacy, it belongs as much to Pakeha as it does to Maori, Aboriginal and Pacific peoples. It also helps us to make sense of the resurgence of identity-based art. These new media portraits come from the communities, in which the artists live and play. Frame by frame the art provides insight into identity, interpretation and deconstruction. The works generate other ways for the artists to talk about themselves as subject.

*Face Value* allows us to tilt and examine the contributions the artists make beyond curiosity and desire and enables us to dig deeper than reality. Where some projects draw on the past, others explore the fast-paced globalised present. The purpose of portraiture, according to the collective ancestors of the artists' is to leave gifts of magnificent beauty and explain cultural specific knowledge to future generations. The works are eloquent markers of this concept and evoke their makers. It is timely then that artists who identify as indigenous, bicultural, of mixed heritage or identify with indigenous groups, give voice to a promising genre of new media portraiture art that refines and makes visible, our 'face' for future generations to reflect upon.

### **Ngahiraka Mason**

## ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES

### Vernon Ah Kee

Vernon Ah Kee is a Brisbane-based artist currently undertaking a PhD in Fine Arts at Griffith University. He has completed a Bachelor of Visual Arts in contemporary Indigenous Australian Art with Honours in Fine Arts. His art practice is primarily concerned with critiquing Australian popular culture and addressing the Black/White dichotomy. Ah Kee's most recent work employs a conceptual use of text and minimal expression, combining a combative writing style with a strong visual sense. Recent solo shows include: *Fantasies of the Good* at Bellas Milani Gallery, Brisbane and *Anothering* at Bellas Gallery, Fortitude Valley, Brisbane. He currently lectures on contemporary Australian Indigenous Art at Queensland College of Art and his interests include Aboriginal education, identity and art.



### Denis Beaubois

#### b. 1970 Quatre Borne, Mauritius

Denis Beaubois is a Sydney-based performance artist and photographer. He is currently undertaking a Masters of Fine Arts in Time Based Arts, University of New South Wales, College of Fine Arts having completed a Masters in performance/photography,



a Bachelor of Fine Arts and a Diploma of Community Theatre Arts. Beaubois has exhibited extensively, both nationally and internationally, with performances and exhibitions being held in the United States, Tokyo, Germany, Amsterdam and Sweden. During 2002, he undertook an artists' residency at the University of NSW, working closely with forensic psychologists. The project, *Constant*, has been assisted by the Commonwealth Government through the Australia council, its arts funding and advisory body. With thanks to Dr Richard Kemp, Helen Patterson and the Eyewitness research laboratory at the School of Psychology, University of NSW.

### Jefferson Belt

#### b. 1970 Wellington, New Zealand

Jefferson Belt has been a practicing artist for over ten years. He holds a Bachelor of Fine Art, University of Auckland, a Diploma of Multimedia Production, School of Audio Engineering, Auckland and studied computer art at Otago Polytechnic. He has worked in a range of mediums, including painting, multimedia, music, film and video. He has exhibited in numerous group and solo exhibitions since 1994. Alongside his painting practice, Belt has been involved in music production for some fifteen years and worked as a camera operator making short documentary interviews on New Zealand artists, as well as documenting several major exhibitions at Dunedin and Auckland City Art Galleries. Belt recently produced and recorded several tracks on the *BabyDum* album, released in 2004.



### **John Gillies**

**b. 1960 Beaudesert,  
Queensland**

John Gillies is an Australian multimedia video artist who explores the scope of interdisciplinary practice through the incorporation of music, performance and film into his video works. A major theme of his art practice is the representation of the body through rhythmic devices. Recent video works include: *The Mary Stuart Tapes*, *The De Quincey Tapes*, *Divide* and *Postscript*. His works have been included in exhibitions and screenings at the Museum of Modern Art, New York; Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sophia, Madrid; *Exit*, Chisenhale Gallery, London and the London, Sydney and Melbourne Film Festivals. Most recently, *John Gillies: Video Works 1982-2001* was presented at Performance Space, Sydney.



### **Lonnie Hutchinson**

**b. 1963 Auckland,  
New Zealand**

Lonnie Hutchinson is a Ngai Tahu and Samoan multimedia and performance artist based in New Zealand. She holds a Bachelor of Design, a Diploma in Textile Printing and a Diploma of Education. Spatial considerations and the formal



qualities of materials are central to her practice as a performance and conceptual artist. She continues to be inspired by her ancestral lands and the way they relate to her dual heritage and sense of spiritual belonging. She has undertaken residencies in Adelaide, Canada and Christchurch. Recent solo exhibitions include *Black Pearl* and *Craft is Love* at Jonathan Smart Gallery, Christchurch, as well as group exhibitions *Summer Season* at Papergraphica Gallery, Christchurch and *National Drawing Awards* at Artspace, Auckland.

### **Lyndal Jones**

**b. 1949 Sydney,  
New South Wales**

Lyndal Jones has been working as a performance, installation and site-specific video artist since the early 1970s. As a multidisciplinary artist, she has ventured into the genres of film, performance, music and experimental painting. She has exhibited widely, both nationally and internationally. She represented Australia at the 2001 Venice Biennale. Her work also appeared in the 1999 *International Biennale Melbourne*, 1997 *Perspecta*, Art Gallery of New South Wales and the 1996 *Biennale of Sydney*. From 1999-2000 Jones was Artist in Residence at ARTEC in London and Art Fellow in Media at the University of Paisley, Scotland 1997-1998. She has also received the Australian Artists Creative Fellowship, 1992-1996.



### **Mark McClean**

**b. 1964 Manchester,  
United Kingdom**

Mark McClean works primarily in photography and digital imaging. He has a Bachelor of Arts with Honours in Fine Arts from Sheffield City Polytechnic, UK and a Graduate Diploma in Electronic Imaging from the Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art, UK. McClean has vast commercial experience working on international advertising campaigns for high profile companies. Significant projects include: L'Oreal Fashion Week's wrap party video graphic installation, TBWA Playstation *Ico* game promotion and advertising campaign and JWT *Gundum* computer game advertisement. McClean currently lives and works in New Zealand where he is employed as tutor and technician in the Design Department of the Manukau Institute of Technology.



### **Janet Merewether**

**b. 1965 Sydney,  
New South Wales**

Janet Merewether is an Australian media artist, film director and producer. She is also the founder of Go Girl Productions. Her award-winning short films and videos have been screened at international festivals including the New York Film Festival, Tampere Film Festival and the New Directors/New



Films at Museum of Modern Art New York. Recently, *Knit-Face*, was screened in the ACMI/National Gallery of Victoria, 2004 – *Australian Culture Now* exhibition, as part of the ACMI/SBS ARTV series. Moreover, Merewether works as a curator, lecturer and a designer of motion graphics and film titles. She is currently completing a Doctorate of Creative Arts at University of Technology, Sydney. Her most recent film is a 52 min hybrid documentary entitled *Jabe Babe – A Heightened Life*.

### **James Pinker**

**b. 1960 Wellington,  
New Zealand**

James Pinker is a New Zealand-based multimedia artist working in the fields of installation, photography and audio/visual art. He has exhibited widely in New Zealand including the recent exhibition *South* at Te Tuhi, with Mark McClean as well as internationally in Australia and beyond. Pinker has been involved in major event co-ordination and set construction, music production, composition, sound engineering and sound design. In 2004 he collaborated with Lisa Reihana on audio works for the *Auckland Triennale* and in 2002 for the *Asia Pacific Triennial*, Queensland Art Gallery. Pinker was sound designer and live engineer for the Pacific Sisters performances at the 2000 *Sydney Biennale*. He is currently employed in the School of Visual Arts at the Manukau Institute of Technology.



### **Rachael Rakena**

**b. 1969 Wellington,  
New Zealand**

Rachael Rakena is a digital and moving image artist of Ngai Tahu, Nga Puhi and Ngati Pakeha descent. She has been exhibiting paper, sculptural and digital works, along with producing, directing and performing in dance, kapahaka and multi-disciplinary performances for over ten years. She has completed a Master of Fine Arts and now lectures in the Maori Visual Arts programme at Massey University. She has undertaken residencies at Unitec, Auckland and Performance Space, Sydney. In 2003 her work was exhibited as part of the *Te Puawai o Ngai Tahu* inaugural exhibition for the opening of the new Christchurch City Art Gallery. Recently, Rakena had a solo exhibition at The Marshall Seifert Gallery in Dunedin and her work was exhibited as part of The Greenhouse exhibition in Frankfurt.



### **Christian Thompson**

**b. 1978 Gawler,  
South Australia**

Christian Bumbarra Thompson is an Australian photographer and installation artist with a Bachelor of Visual Art in Fine Art, Honours. His work negotiates issues of representation, memory and racial identity. It relies heavily



on the relationship between objects, space and history. Thompson's art has been exhibited throughout Australia, at such events as the Melbourne Fashion Festival, Next Wave Festival and Darwin Festival. Moreover, it has been exhibited internationally in Thailand, Netherlands, Finland, Singapore, Canada, France, Italy and New Caledonia. His work is currently held in the collections of the National Gallery of Australia, National Gallery of Victoria and the Aboriginal Art Museum in the Netherlands. Thompson is also a freelance curator and writer.

### **Sheyne Tuffery**

**b. 1970 Wellington,  
New Zealand**

Sheyne Tuffery is a multimedia artist who employs the mediums of painting, printmaking, sculpture and animation in order to articulate his vision of Pacific urbanisation. He holds a Bachelor of Visual Arts from Auckland University of Technology and a Masters in Fine Arts with Honours from Elam School of Fine Arts, University of Auckland. Much of Tuffery's work deals with issues of cultural hybridity and the merging of past and present. He has been exhibiting his work in selected group and solo exhibitions since 1998. In addition to exhibiting extensively in New Zealand, his work has been shown in the United States, Japan, Mexico, England, Portugal and Samoa. Tuffery has been acknowledged with several awards including the 2003 Nagasawa Art Park Artist in Residence, Japan and the 2002 Martin Hughes Contemporary Pacific Art Award.



**Jim Vivieaere**

**b.1947 Waipawa,  
Hawkes Bay,  
New Zealand**

Jim Vivieaere has been active in the visual arts community as a Polynesian/Pacific



Islander artist and curator for over twenty years. His work has been exhibited in New Zealand, Rarotonga, Fiji, Australia, Germany and Lithuania. His most recent work is less concerned with pictorial narratives and cultural metaphors, rather prioritising text over image and working in partnership with other artists. In a recent project, he collaborated with engineers to create a large sculpture commissioned for the Fale Pasifika University of Auckland. Vivieaere's curatorial projects have included: *Bottled Ocean*, Wellington City Gallery, *Sight Specific*, Performance Space, Sydney and contributing to the making of a CD ROM entitled *Artpix NZ* for the Texas Art Gallery. He also curated *Umbr*a *Penumbra*, for the Fourth Noumea Biennale of Contemporary Art, New Caledonia.



## LIST OF WORKS

### **Vernon Ah Kee**

*whitefellanormal* 2004  
digital video  
30 sec  
courtesy the artist and  
Bellas Milani Gallery, Brisbane

### **Denis Beaubois**

*Constant* 2004  
digital video  
7 min  
courtesy the artist

### **John Gillies**

*My Sister's Room* 2000  
digital video  
10 min  
courtesy the artist

### **Lonnie Hutchinson**

*Black Pearl* 2002  
digital video  
6 min  
courtesy the artist

### **Lyndal Jones**

*He Must Not Cry* 2004  
digital video  
8 min  
courtesy the artist and  
Anna Schwartz Gallery, Melbourne

### **Janet Merewether**

*Knit-Face* 2004  
digital betacam/exhibition copy DVD  
30 sec  
courtesy the artist

### **James Pinker + Mark McClean**

*South video documentation 01/02*  
2003  
digital video  
60 min  
Thanks to Wahine Malosi Trust &  
Manukau School of Visual Arts,  
Auckland  
courtesy the artists

### **Rachael Rakena**

*'... as an individual and not under the name of Ngai Tahu'* 2001  
from the series "Techno Maori: Maori Art in the Digital Age..."  
digital video  
9 min  
courtesy the artist

### **Christian Thompson**

*Gates of Tambo (video performance)*  
2005  
digital video  
8.45 min  
courtesy the artist and Gallery  
Gabrielle Pizzi, Melbourne

### **Sheyne Tuffery**

*Manukau* 2004  
digital video  
2.45 min  
courtesy the artist

### **Jim Vivieaere + Jefferson Belt**

*Betrayal* 2005  
digital video  
3.37 min  
courtesy the artists

## **FACE VALUE: video portraiture from the Pacific**

Ivan Dougherty Gallery 15 April – 14 May 2005  
Museum of Brisbane 27 May – 7 August 2005

Exhibition Curators: Rilka Oakley and Annabel Pegus  
Ivan Dougherty Gallery  
UNSW COFA

Tour Management: Annabel Pegus  
Ivan Dougherty Gallery  
UNSW COFA

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FRONT COVER: Christian Thompson *Gates of Tambo* (video performance)  
2005 stills from video  
TITLE PAGE: Denis Beaubois *Constant* 2004 stills from video  
BACK PAGE: John Gillies *My Sister's Room* 2000 installation

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