



# The Loni and Roni Show

Pacific Arts Trust . The Physics Room . June 2003

Image titles in order of appearance

**lole lolé**  
(jelly jetplanes)  
Lonnie Hutchinson

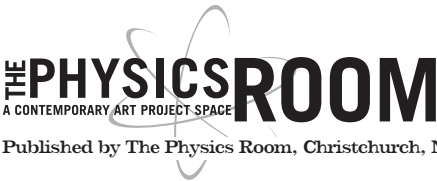
**...blue**  
(video & marble work)  
Veronica Vaevae

**bikini babe**  
(coke can lei)  
Lonnie Hutchinson

**lush**  
(spa pool, astroturf)  
Lonnie Hutchinson

**a lovely line of coconuts**  
(copra drawing)  
Lonnie hutchinson

**NFS**  
(video projection stills)  
Veronica Vaevae



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'Credentials' courtesy of Anton Carter, Beats and Pieces.  
'all she wants is a Mermaid Barbie' by Danielle O'Halloran.  
Photography by Rory Kinahan.  
Layout and design by Aaron Beehre.

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#### **Enter the Pacific from Down Under**

Kiaora, Kia orana, Talofa lava, Greetings.

Acknowledging the Pacific as a changed and fragile environment ‘The Loni and Roni Show’ represents the domestication of the Pacific, which is as much about the aftermath of our travels as consumers as it is about our colonial and capitalist legacy. It extends warm Pacific greetings to visitors, family and friends and attempts to address the disparity in our conception of the Pacific as tropical when its local context and reality is framed by snow capped mountains and morning frosts.

In Otautahi/Christchurch, temperature is a cultural metaphor. Experiences of Polynesian art, heart, identity and culture rarely spill out into the day-to-day experience of our dominant cultural mainstream or institutionalised public arenas; they usually manifest as ‘guest appearances’ or performances adding ‘colour’ to formal and official occasions, heightening the experience of being a ‘hot house flower’ one minute and literally ‘out in the cold’ the next. As such, this exhibition of digitised imagery, poems and ready-mades began in response to the Pacific Arts Association Symposium and the opportunity it brought to add to the construction of a ‘Pacific Art experience’ in this strangely shaped South Pacific that is Christchurch.

The Loni and Roni Show contemplates the Pacific.

## Prehistory/ Genealogy

“Take the sea away in a bottle and it remains the sea with all its imperceptible currents and identical tides. Bottled Ocean is held as water within four walls..... These artists have a commonality. They feel the tidal pull from the Pacific which is their provenance...What they have in common is heightened by the pure sound of the Pacific Ocean.” (Curator, Jim Viveaere 1996)

Eight years ago, the grey-stone Victorian walls of the Christchurch Arts Centre’s Annex Gallery were graced with a glittering plethora of Contemporary Pacific artworks comprising the exhibition Bottled Ocean. Still the most significant exhibition of Contemporary Pacific Art to date, Bottled Ocean openly challenged the over presiding politics, stereotypes and cliché expectations associated with Pacific Art by ‘showeasing’ the creative vitality and conceptual savvy of an urban Pacific arts consciousness.

Bringing ‘brown’ faces into ‘white’ spaces (many entering an Art Gallery for the first time), Bottled Ocean’s national tour and subversive curatorial practise staged a temporary occupation and colonisation of space and place that gave affirmation to the reality of our creative resource and identity as urban Pacific people. It defines our arts as being a place making, space-taking tool of practice.

The Loni and Roni Show continues this tradition and its conceptual undercurrents, the ebb and flow of themes that manifest as stereotypes and clichés, washing in and out, reshaped, rounded off, resubmitted, worn down and tumbled over again by the sea. Derived from the comedy series ‘The Two Ronnies’ the title of the exhibition acknowledges the way artists are contingently and performatively produced but also their willingness to participate and assume their role

as hosts. It also references the complex sometimes- convoluted politics of representation and difference that tend to dominate academic and critical conversations about Pacific artworks.

Like any comedy routine The Loni and Roni Show embraces ironic/iconic imagery: the coconut, a palm-treed beach, the compulsory frangipani. This duality may overshadow the more subtle and paradigmatic readings possible, for instance the significant use of coconut and coconut oil which has long been a form of sustenance and survival is also representative of the Pacific and its people. Throughout the Pacific coconut oil was used to anoint and beautify the body and also used in religious ceremonies as a method of purification. As a primary food source, many island economies have depended on the export of copra (dried coconut). In this exhibition artists acknowledge the changing representational economy of Pacific symbols by reinvesting in these motifs and images, laying them out and marking them by hand. In new mediums, art and everyday life in the Pacific bubbles up to the surface anew.

Within Aotearoa the great diversity that is the Pacific finds proximity. We find ourselves at a vector of change and possibility; local and global pleasures, leisure’s and cultures, bring ways of thinking, dreaming, things for us to do, to be and become. Although very much Anglo, Christchurch as Otautahi is on an Island in the Pacific, it’s history is entwined with people who trace diverse and splintered genealogical lines back to Pacific homelands, at the same time recognising the silhouette of Christchurch Cathedral as ‘home’. Here, we are in the process of making history, finding new ways to articulate our stories and new ways of describing our journey...as we do, we acknowledge our heritage, our ancestors and our sense of belonging.

### Credentials

New in the Pacific but still underground, bound by sound around  
Movement from the speakers who never weaken  
Voice of the people in the shadow of the steeple  
Say a prayer before I tear flesh from the metal mesh  
Morphing concepts in 3D, expanding minds as an emcee  
Want my credentials check my CV  
I used to be fresh off the boat, now I'm starving and broke  
Performing arts in play that we wrote  
Setting up Dawn Raids on Sons Romeo and Tusi was the best fun  
Leaving crowds on the stun, we had only just begun  
Don't call me aimless cos I have the prospects,  
Controlling cans on bombsites, tight outlines on mics  
Krylon or cramped, acoustic or amped,  
Tuned to frequencies, shows hip-hop weekly  
So bully for you, represent with my crew  
Permanent like a tattoo etched in skin  
My rhymes come deep within  
Check out our credentials coming 3D from the depths of the Pacific  
Don't you know we're found, bound in the underground sound,  
Step into your now...  
There's only one way I'm coming from the underground,  
Running with the phatness of my brown skin not the blackness  
On the microphone we take you home to the motherland,  
ON the other hand the beats and pieces setting trends for the millennium  
Triple 6 hell no we ain't defending them, more like sending them,  
Down to the depths of hell, y'all my crew up in the house and it ain't hard to tell  
When you come from the city where the baldheads dwell  
Many many styles to show how versatile we rock it  
My ability hold the key so now I lock it  
I lock that down it's the underground, you can't stop it...  
Check out our credentials coming 3D from the deep seas of the pacific  
Don't kid around with the sound from the underground  
The underground sound pounds to throw our weight around

– Anton Carter, Beats and Pieces, 1998



To Western eyes the Pacific has long been envisaged as a world colonised, where ailing economies and unhurried lifestyles make ideal landing points for world-weary travellers as they escape the urban throng to paradise. We know the Pacific, that vast ocean and its many islands as populated but comparatively empty. As much a fictional construct as it is a real place comprised of many, the Pacific occupies our imagination, memories and dreams. The people of the Pacific, their stories, arts, traditions and icons stand alongside commercial tourist images and symbols that evoke its presence.

For Tangata Pacifica fiction exists alongside reality and so in diaspora the word Pacific resonates as home rooted to a sense of identity that we carry with us. The return home is always an experience of change.

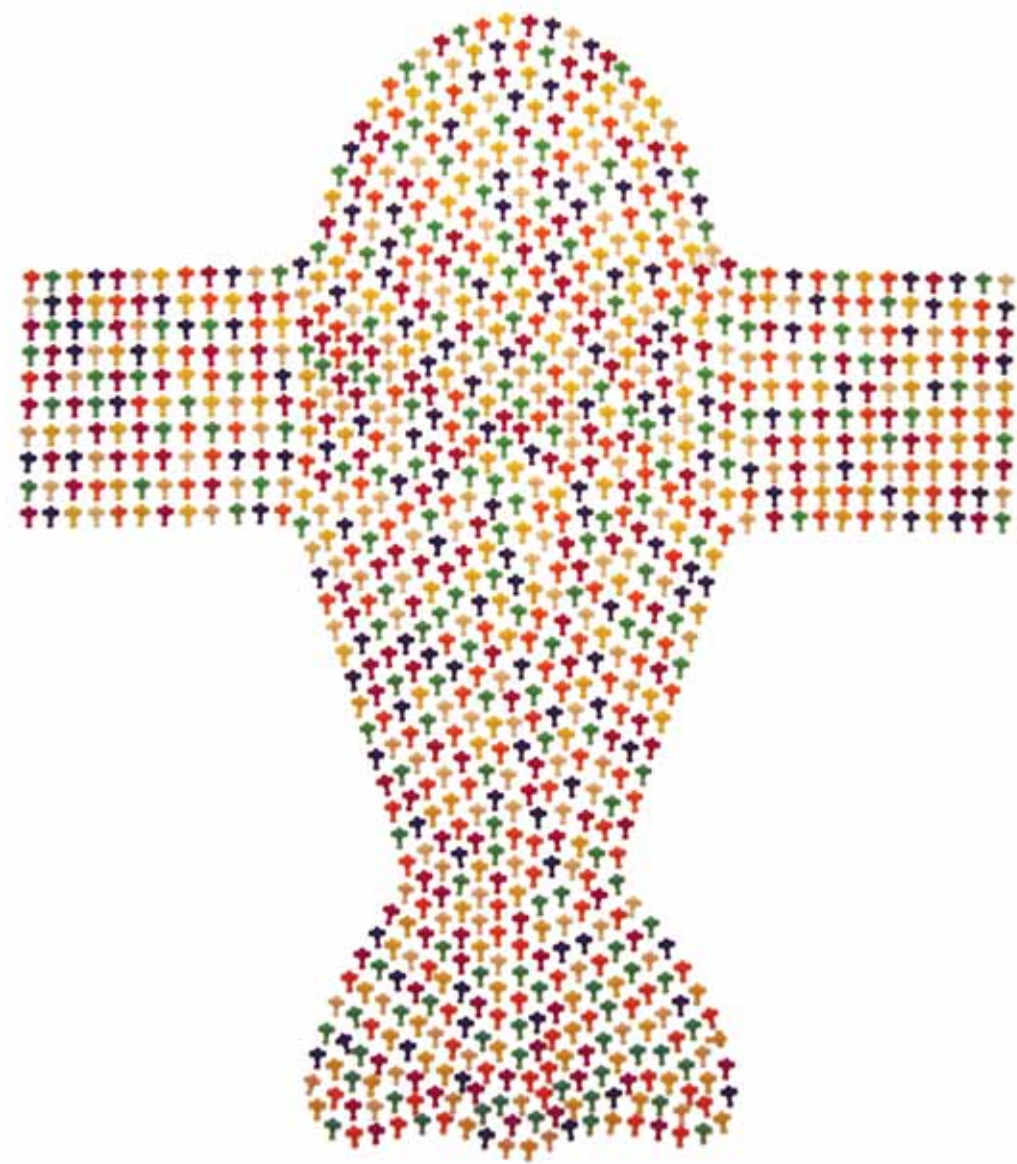
Once thriving lagoons of shellfish and sea life bordered by colourful coral reefs and evening calm beaches now stand quiet, their rock pools barren but for the dull pink and grey wake of black sea urchins lonely for company. As the sun sets, the nightly visits of the coconut crab have become a treasured spectacle as their flesh becomes a delicacy. Downtown you find more varieties of fish on supermarket shelves than in the market and yes the man down the road is still sick from the pesticide spray, which also got into the water supply last week.

Never before has that vast empty Pacific seemed more discovered, more 'luxurious', more easily accessible and less like paradise than now.

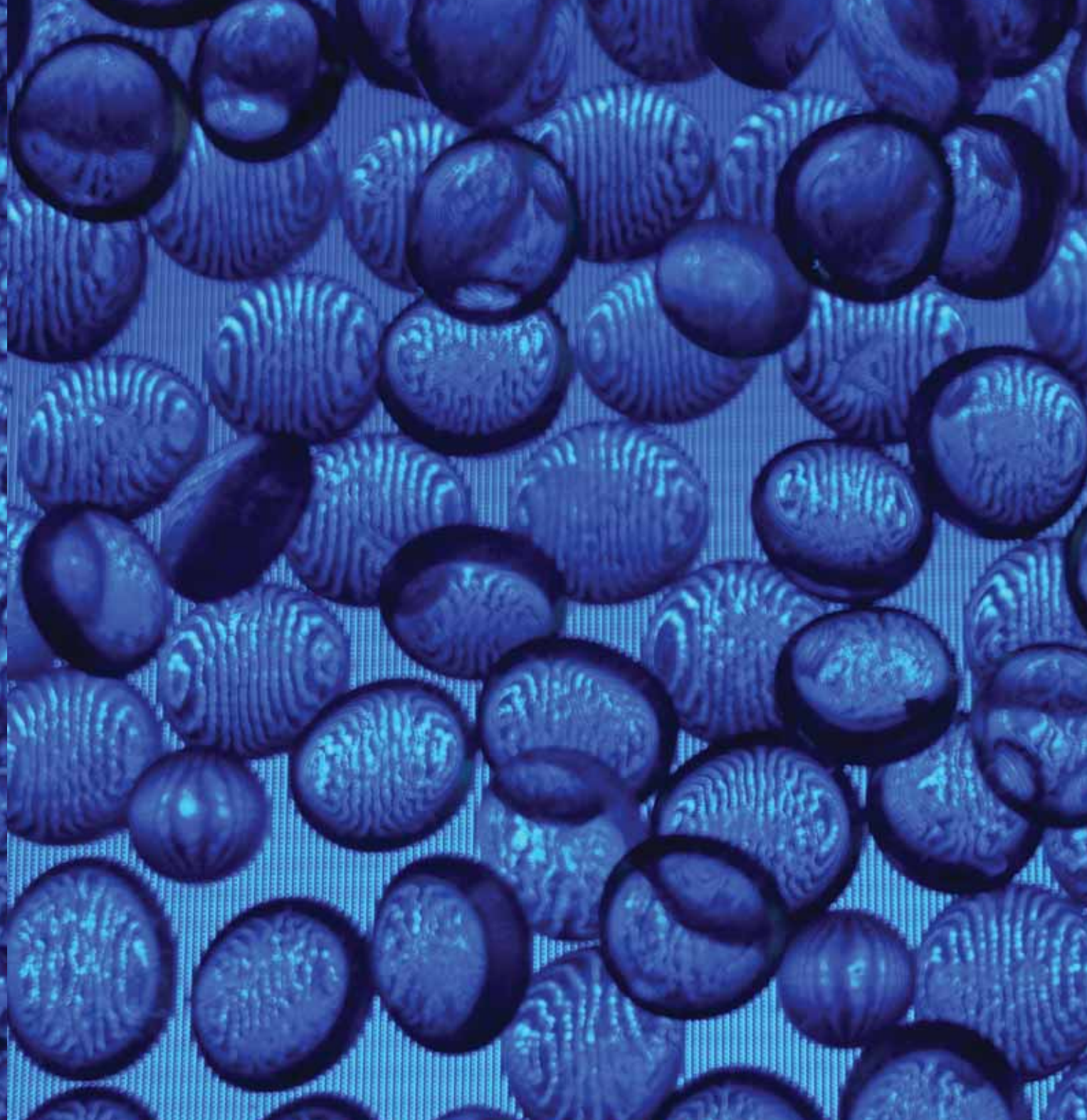
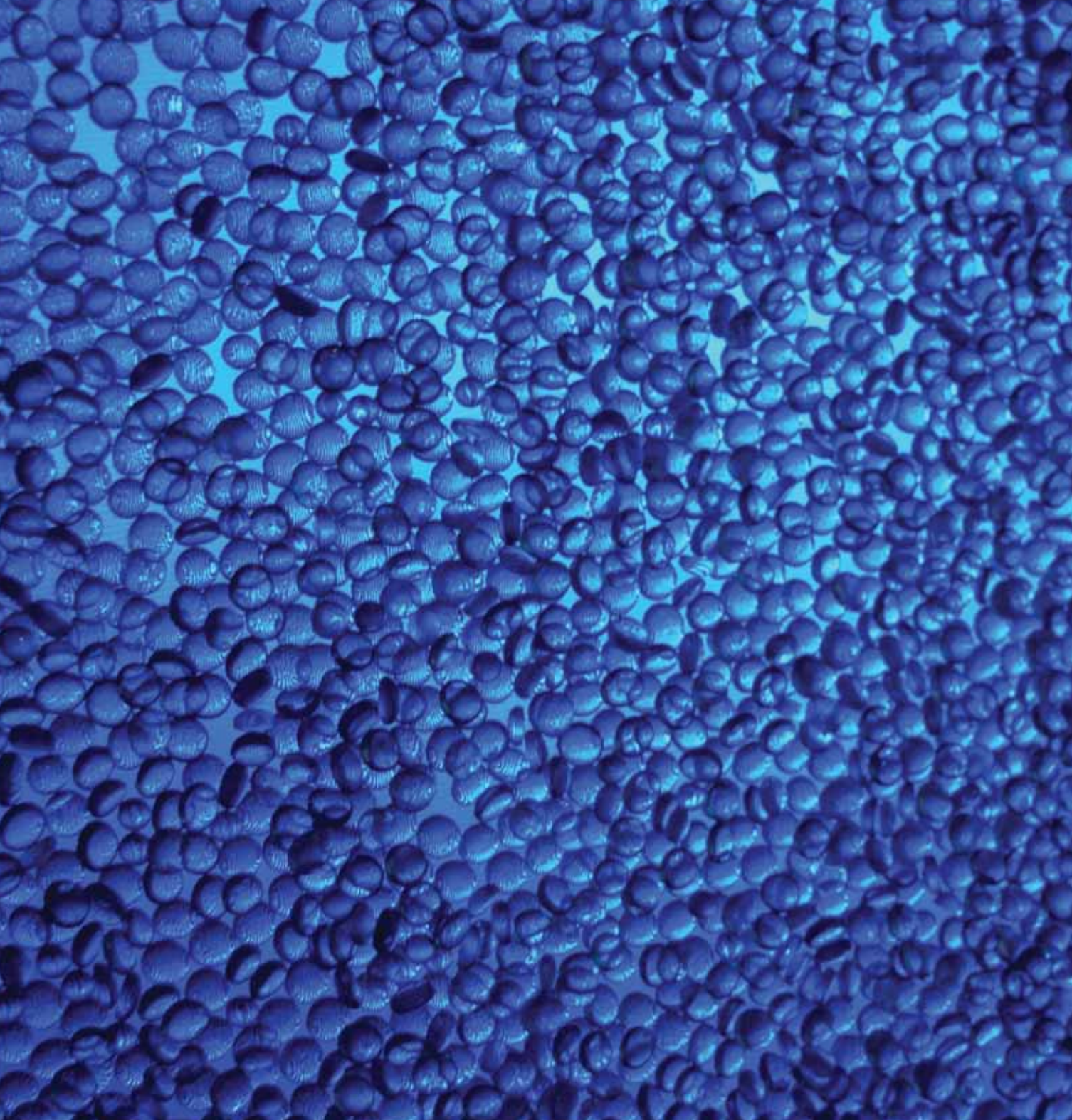
#### Global warming, fact or fiction?

Everyday life is "hotting" up as we live to a dodgy environmental logic of high risk and return. Subsequently, our love for this cash and trash culture is always enjoyed at a price and while it is the natural environment into which we retreat to breathe deeply and relax - as the song goes "you always hurt the one you love". The clean blue Pacific that is our paradise fills with the souvenirs of our pleasure and leisure: Coke cans, aluminium beer tabs, plastic cups and confetti, fond symbols, misplaced beacons of commercial worship and icons of contemporary life find new meaning in that place we 'home'.

Our obsession with having a lifestyle takes us nowhere when we lie on our deck chairs marking our presence with remnant presents. Litter; the flotsam and jetsam of our life as consumers always travels with us. Our pursuit of pleasure becomes the banal shore of a conscious disregard for the environment. We consume and eat rich to be merry. Rejoicing in our indolence and intoxicated by the sun we lust for brown skin and the gaze returned. . . on goes the oil. Everything is on Visa and the view is superb. . . The rhythms of nature continue to run their cycle.







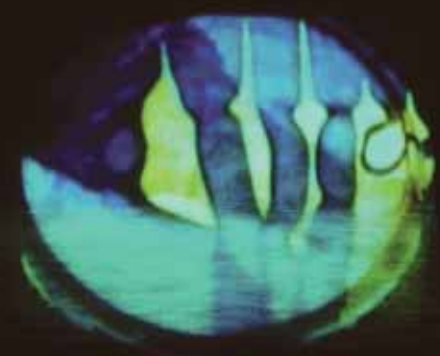
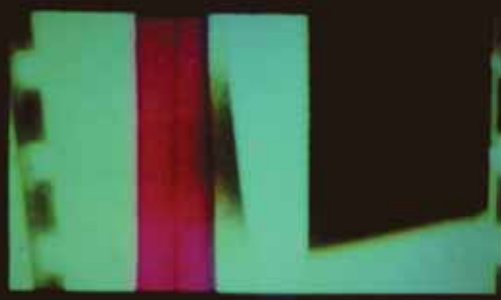
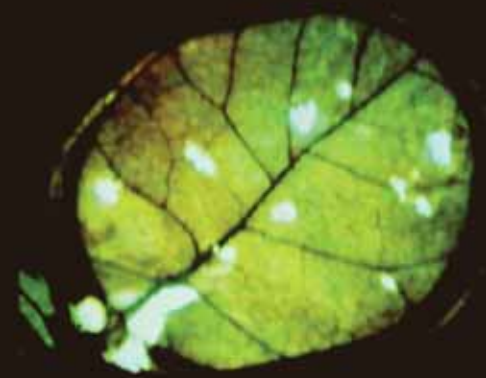


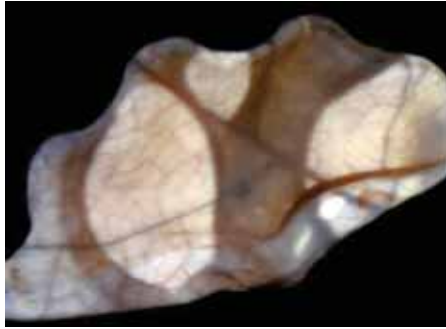
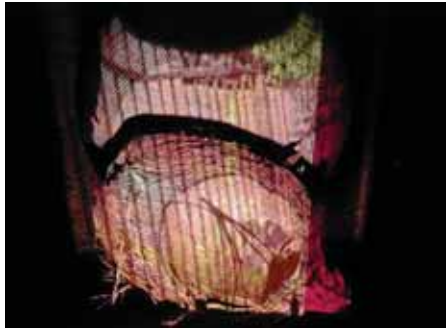














all she wants is a Mermaid Barbie

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Tangaloa mummified  
in anglophile glass houses  
lets out a dusty wheeze, quick,  
get a symbolic plastic  
instant plasma inoculation  
against the contamination  
of the old gods

Take this palagi goddess  
to have and to hold  
half fish, half woman  
all synthetic, plastic flowers  
infertile vaginas for her hair  
like the ones you wear

is She  
a new breed of afakasi?

See the Pacific swell  
that's Her, getting in the water  
spilling over the tides  
swallowing whole villages  
with a queenly wave of one hand  
treasure island  
- paradise lost?

And is that it  
have we lost?  
Mermaid Barbie is

made from the same  
clay mould of the  
Mother, I am  
squeezed into shape  
pressed through  
standardised issues  
by the expanded forces  
of new colonial  
multinationals

stem celling our souls  
for control  
of demand  
of demand  
of control  
All as beautiful  
as a perfectly castrated  
G.E. banana

The ancestors just smile at me  
pretending to be a tourist  
looking around like I can't see  
without sunglasses, concrete slides  
on the bottom of my shoes, light shines  
opaque in the grey water, a broken mirror  
for your Snow White beauty myth

divided into parts that belong  
and parts foreign, like Jiff and  
toothpaste on your chin  
sunlight soap in your eyes  
You can't wash out 'till you look  
bright, whitening out the pale  
mulberry bark moon  
combing your barbie wire  
hair with forgetfulness

Did you remember how  
to travel these stars  
under the graves of the  
ancestors long buried  
I once opened a door,  
my feet are doors  
that fall through space  
grabbing at nothing  
asking what can I hold on to  
what can I have to  
hold on to, only this  
or let go my  
shelter of blood mass  
bone and skin go feet first  
falling through space  
the stars are no different  
from the points of light  
in my face, that drip  
iridescent  
tears to the sea  
which I am  
holding  
and letting flow

– Danielle O'Halloran, 2003

What is the Pacific but the site of our own becoming and the place where our over invested belief in and desire for a paradise of our own brings us back to where we are? Here, our coconut-cartooned consciousness, fragrant fragments of memory and longing within urban landscapes, forces us to take our pleasure in the artifice of poolside fantasies (Baudriallard's right if everyday were a holiday the cities WOULD seem more mysterious). Mysteries make magic for the sul but leisure time is the prerogative of the elite... damn! Most of us are still under – underpaid, undermined and undervalued.

Take us to the Pacific sea where glittering beaches rock through your senses as electric ions and the smell of frangipani invades every cell in your body. Surrounded by water, all islands are the 'same' really; places of isolation, lonely places; negotiating them eagerly doesn't make them any more hospitable - the natives are too 'wild'. Let's contain the Ocean. What does our environment say to us, what stories does it tell, how does it resource us - creatively?

Here in Aotearoa/New Zealand, the South Pacific, we are nuclear free. We have a certain faith in science and at the same time a deep mistrust in the powers that govern its use. We haven't had to weather the environmental assault of nuclear testing and the anguish of bearing jellyfish babies but we understand the effects well enough to feel the threat as heavy metals and toxic wastes migrate, as black ships around our beautiful Ocean.

"Meantime, back at the hotel, while tourists bath poolside in their deck chairs, Pina Colada in hand, the seawater is heating up and the coral and fish are dying"





**Lonnie Hutchinson**

Ngai Tahu / Samoan / Multimedia and performance artist.

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Spatial consideration and the formal qualities of materials are primary to Lonnie’s practise as a performance and conceptual artist. In this she consciously guides the propeoceptive experience of the viewer as a means of addressing issues in her work. Since moving to Christchurch Lonnie has been inspired by the local landscape and the way it relates to her dual heritage and sense of spiritual belonging. This interest has been carried over with her investigation of star mounds in Samoa which she visited last year.

**Veronica Vaevae**

Cook Island / Multimedia and digital manipulation.

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Most of the work in this show has been a development of work made during her time in Rarotonga as artist in residence (2001). Her work is primarily a response to the environment, taking images of everyday objects and altering them in a way that kinaesthetically informs the viewer. Subsequently, Roni’s early works reflect her interest in street culture and visually translating the pace of city rhythms and hip-hop. As a boogie boarder Roni is much inspired by the sensation of surf and sea and attempts to relate this physical experience. Her interest in representing the physical sensation through a digitised visual medium has seen her explore the marriage of words and poetry to video stills.

**Danielle O’Halloran**

Samoan/Scots/Poet and performance artist.

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Danielle lives in Christchurch and is a former member of Militant Angels and current member of Daughters of the Pacific. Danielle is also part of the WEAVE women’s collective who promote peace issues and public awareness of the Treaty of Waitangi through performance.

**Anton Carter**

Samoan/MC/Writer.

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Anton works as the Pacific Arts Advisor for Creative New Zealand. He is a founder member of Pacific Underground and still performs and is extensively involved in the music scene as an MC for the likes of Nomad, Rhombus etc.

**Stephanie Oberg**

Cook Islands/ New Zealand.

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Stephanie is a first time curator with a masters degree in Art History. She has a particular interest in Pacific arts (traditional and contemporary) and in fostering a more active Pacific art scene in Christchurch. Stephanie is a founder member of Daughters of the Pacific and Tivaevae Revival.

The work for this show was assembled in a recipe like fashion, a sprinkle of this, a bit of that. The term jellyfish babies was used by the women of Rongelap to describe babies born without heads and limbs following American nuclear testing in the Bikini Islands (1954)



ph +64 3 379 5583 fax +64 3 379 6063  
email [physicsroom@physicsroom.org.nz](mailto:physicsroom@physicsroom.org.nz) <http://www.physicsroom.org.nz>  
2nd Floor, 209 Tuam St, PO Box 22 351, Christchurch, New Zealand

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