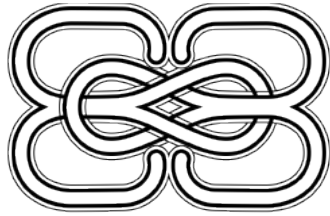


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[Play_Station  Film Festival]

10 October 2024

Hosted by The Physics Room at Lumière Cinemas

Tom Denize, A.J. Manaaki Hope, Dilohana Lekamge, Quentin Lind, Christopher Ulutupu, Yumoi Zheng

play_station artist run space is pleased to present play_station Film Festival, a new festival for artist cinema. PSFF is presenting six recent works by Aotearoa artists including three new commissions. The festival will travel across Ōtautahi Christchurch, Te Whanganui-a-Tara Wellington and Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland hosted by The Physics Room, The Engine Room and Artspace Aotearoa.

A.J. Manaaki Hope, *i te mutuka o te Haeata*, 2024, single channel video.

Commissioned by play_station artist run space

Home is not a fixed place but a continuous physical and emotional process of construction and deconstruction. *i te mutuka o te Haeata* (at the end of Daybreak) was filmed over six months between Te Akau Tai Toka, Murihiku and Dùthaich, the north west coast of Scotland. It traces the ties between these two lands whose whakapapa have become forever intertwined, despite their geographic locations being completely separate. Through an intertextual lens of history and memory, the film interrogates attempts to transplant pieces of home into foreign soil, an act that created a lasting ecological and cultural upheaval. The soundscape of handmade taonga pūoro layers sound to evoke the ahua of the land and the delicate balance that was lost.

A.J Manaaki Hope (Waitaha, Kāti Māmoe, Kāi Tahu, Ngāpuhi, Ngāti Kahu, Ngāti Mutunga, Pākehā) is an interdisciplinary artist whose work explores the tensions between displacement, memory and landscape. Using handmade taonga pūoro crafted from recycled native materials, they create evocative soundscapes that underscore themes of displacement and ecological fragility. Rooted in both visual and auditory art forms, their practice draws upon ancestral connections to place, often invoking the complex histories of colonialism and its lingering effects on the land. Blending visual art with sound, they seek to illuminate the ongoing impact of colonial histories on both ecological and cultural landscapes.

Tom Denize, *Involuntary Body*, 2023, single channel video.

Involuntary Body is a single channel video work conveying the stasis of fantasy and the rupture of its departure. It tumbles and shifts inside me; moves me without my knowing; transmutes my desire into a crude supercut. I love being the bearer of this fantasy, and in that, I love to let it destroy me.

Tom Denize is an emerging artist originally hailing from Te Whanganui-a-Tara, Aotearoa, now based in Naarm/Melbourne and currently undertaking a Masters of Fine Arts at The University of Melbourne. Utilising installation, video and photographic methods Tom's practice is primarily concerned with queer theologies and temporalities, and how these things can reframe understandings of place, memory and desire.

Quentin Lind, *Scenes Around Palmerston North*, 2020, single channel video.

Barry Searle (the artist's grandfather) was a filmmaker and farmer his entire life, having self produced one action/drama film shot entirely in the Manawatū area around 1969 and continuing to shoot documentary footage up until his passing in 2019. The work Quentin has made takes Searle's archive as a starting point and combines it with his own archival footage from teenage years in Palmerston North, examining the impact the region had on both of them as artists. The film features scenes of domesticity and daily life alongside the turbulent ride of youth as a means to crystallize an aesthetic unique to the Palmerston North / Ashhurst area across generations. The soundtrack is taken from Searle's film.

Quentin is a Manukau-born, Manawatū-raised artist who completed his MFA at Elam in 2016. His work examines geographic identity and is heavily influenced by visual and cultural language specific to the city he grew up in.

Dilohana Lekamge, *A well-told lie*, 2024, single channel video.

Commissioned by play_station artist run space

A well-told lie explores the ability for an untruth to grow into myth as the fascination for it develops over time. The title is taken from Michael Ondaatje's 1982 fictionalized memoir, where he states in the acknowledgements that "in Sri Lanka a well-told lie is worth a thousand facts." This narrated short film traverses three tales of speculations, thefts, and falsehoods, with the understanding that the idea of place seen through the eyes of another is often distant from its truth.

Dilohana Lekamge is an artist, writer, and curator based in Tāmaki Makaurau. She is currently an Archivist at Satellites. Previously, she has been the Curator and Exhibitions Manager at DEPOT Artspace and Gallery Coordinator at Fresh Gallery Ōtara. She completed the writer's residency at RM Gallery and Project Space in 2023, curated the exhibition *The house is full* at Te Tuhi in 2022, and in 2021 she was the Associate Curator for The Performance Arcade. She was a Facilitator at MEANWHILE from 2017 to 2019. Her artwork has been exhibited in galleries throughout Aotearoa.

Christopher Ulutupu, *The Pleasures of Unbelonging*, 2023, single channel video.

Commissioned by Tautai, CIRCUIT and The Berwick Film Festival

Focusing on a mother and her children walking through various landscapes to seek refuge and clarity, the work responds to James Baldwin's text "Stranger in a Village" from his book *Notes from a Native Son* (1955) and Ulutupu's own experience of shooting a video work in 2018. In Baldwin's text, the author describes his experience of residing in a small village in the Swiss Alps and the ensuing racial tensions of entering a space that was 'untouched' by the presence of Black people (like himself). During the production of Ulutupu's *Lelia* (2018) for the SCAPE Public Season 2018, Ulutupu encountered similar tensions.

Christopher Ulutupu is a contemporary artist of Samoan, Niuean and German descent. Christopher uses the conventions of cinematic storytelling to interrogate the relationships between landscape and indigenous identities. He employs a cast of actors consisting almost entirely of friends and family in his work. These actors sing, dance and perform, often hamming it up for the camera. There's pop-culture reference abound, from girl-group renditions of Britney Spears to a loose re-enactment of an infamous drug-fuelled photoshoot for a luxury furs catalogue. However, in these references brown bodies take centre stage. The artist is as much interested here in contending with Samoan and Pacific representation as he is centring his personal relationships—in his work, a singer is his sister, the keyboardist his partner, one bride is played by his mother. Inspired early in his career by postcard imagery of Pacific Island nations marketed to early 20th century European audiences, Christopher's video work challenges an assumed affinity between exotic-nature and exotic-person. Vignettes or scenarios are regularly set against striking landscapes, but equally featured are highly constructed environments. With a background in film and theatre, Christopher understands the dramatic potential of scenery. One video might take place high atop the Southern Alps, while another might feature a green screen waterfall. Both tactics are part of the world-making of film, and this is part of Christopher's skill as a storyteller. Like any good speculative fiction based beyond reality, he creates an internal logic of storytelling. It's a logic that challenges assumptions placed on brown bodies and seeks to imagine new alternatives for contemporary indigeneity.

**Yumoi Zheng, *Tea*, 2024, single channel video.
Commissioned by play_station artist run space**

This video is divided into four parts. Two old ladies at a tea party, a faggot worshipping her gods, a conversation at the massage room, and an ethereal object in the forest singing the song from tropical nostalgia.

Yumoi Zheng is a transfeminine queer artist who works across multiple media and art practices. Currently based in Hainan, China. Zheng explores the intricacies of her own identities through her creative practice, in which she talks about being apart from her family, growth, loneliness, blessings, and the secretive nature of memories. Recent exhibitions include *Distance is a Blade*, with Akil Ahamat and Olyvia Hong, curated by Amy Weng, The Physics Room Contemporary Art Space, 2024, *always love xxx*, with Isadora Lao, 2024, Toi Pōneke Arts Centre; and *talk soon xxx*, 2022, Playstation Artist-Run Space, all Pōneke.

Thank you to Lumière Cinemas for hosting this event.