

2 July 2018

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## Four artists explore connections to place

Adam Art Gallery Te Pātaka Toi at Victoria University of Wellington is delighted to present its latest exhibition showcasing four large-scale solo installations by contemporary Māori women artists. Each of the artists' works explore ideas of belonging and cultural connection to land and place.

Curated by Adam Art Gallery's director Christina Barton, the exhibition, *The earth looks upon us / Ko Papatūānuku te matua o te tangata*, brings into focus the work of Ngahua Harrison, Ana Iti, Nova Paul and Raukura Turei.

Timed to coincide with Suffrage 125 celebrations, the grouping of these four artists' works acknowledges that 125 years ago Māori women fought not only for the right to vote for members of the New Zealand House of Representatives, but also to vote and stand as members of the Māori Parliament, Te Kotahitanga.

As Barton states: "The show has two titles. 'The earth looks upon us' is borrowed from a statement by the Cuban American artist Ana Mendieta, whose important works from the 1970s serve as inspiration for the exhibition.

"The Māori title, 'Ko Papatūānuku te matua o te tangata', is a proverb identifying Papatūānuku, the 'earth mother' in Māori cosmology, as primal parent. This title was suggested by Professor Rawinia Higgins, an acknowledged expert in Māori language planning and policy at Victoria University of Wellington. From two differing perspectives, these titles suggest our connectedness to the earth."



Ngahua Harrison, *Said with salt in her eye*, 2011, digital print, courtesy of the artist

Three of the four artists have produced new work for the occasion, which has been devised in relation to the Gallery's striking architecture. These include a major installation in timber and clay by Ana Iti, a suite of new photographs by Ngahua Harrison, and a large-scale wall painting by Raukura Turei. The fourth artist, Nova Paul, presents for the first time her subtle and affecting film, *This Is Not Dying* (2010), as an analogue 16mm projection.

The exhibition is accompanied by an extensive public programme, including a one-day symposium on Saturday 7 July hosted at Victoria University of Wellington called *No Common Ground*. The symposium addresses histories of feminist art, mana wahine and queer practice and has been co-organised by Adam Art Gallery, The Dowse Art Museum and Enjoy Public Art Gallery.

There will also be a special one-off screening of eight films by Ana Mendieta on Wednesday 18 July. This will be the first time her works have been shown in Aotearoa New Zealand.

**Exhibition:** *The earth looks upon us / Ko Papatūānuku te matua o te tangata*

**When:** 7 July – 23 September

**Opening:** Friday 6 July, 6pm

**Where:** Adam Art Gallery Te Pātaka Toi, Victoria University of Wellington, Gate 3, Kelburn Parade, Wellington

**Cost:** Free

**Symposium:** *No Common Ground*

**When:** Saturday 7 July, 10am – 5pm

**Where:** Lecture Theatre 1, Te Toki a Rata Building, Victoria University of Wellington, Kelburn Parade

**Cost:** Free, \$15 brown bag lunch

**Screening:** *Ana Mendieta: Selected films*

**When:** Wednesday 18 July, 6.30 – 8pm

**Where:** Embassy Theatre Wellington

**Cost:** \$10 cash on door, email [Stephen Cleland](mailto:Stephen.Cleland@vuw.ac.nz) to book

For further details on the exhibition and upcoming events visit Adam Art Gallery's [website](#) and [Facebook page](#).

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