

Shigeyuki Kihara

Artist Statement and Biography

Artist Statement

After Cyclone Evan, *Lelata* is one of 18 photographs from Shigeyuki Kihara's 2013 series *Where do we come from? What are we? Where are we going?*, the title of which comes from a 1897 painting by Paul Gauguin. These questions frame Kihara's examination of Samoa's colonial past, the impact of burgeoning globalisation, climate change, ideas of indigeneity and the role of government in an independent Samoa. Kihara "unpacks the myth" of the 'Pacific paradise', constructed by colonial powers and tourist photographs.

The photograph was shot in *Lelata*, on the island of Upolu in the aftermath of Cyclone Evan. This storm tore through Samoa on the 13th December 2012 and is considered the worst cyclone to hit the nation in over 20 years. Increasingly, Samoa has endured escalating levels of floods, drought and sea-level rise, and the government has started seeking international assistance to combat the effects of climate change.

In the cinematic spirit, *After Cyclone Evan*, *Lelata* features Kihara as 'Salome', a 19th century Samoan woman in Victorian mourning dress, who bears silent witness to the storm's devastation. The character of 'Salome' is inspired by an 1883 photograph, 'Samoan Halfcaste'; taken by New Zealand photographer Thomas Andrew, it features an unnamed Samoan woman posed in black, Victorian dress. The name itself comes from the biblical character Salome, also the subject of a controversial 1891 Oscar Wilde play, who used dance to manipulate political power.

Acting as both subject and director, and using her own body as artistic material, Kihara inhabits the character of 'Salome' in live performances, video works and still photography. The character becomes a metaphor and looks to expose the inequalities and complexities of the power structures associated with sexuality, gender, race and colonialism in both Samoa and the greater Pacific.

Artist Biography

Shigeyuki Kihara New Zealand

A native of Samoa, Shigeyuki Kihara is an interdisciplinary artist whose work engages in variety of social, political, and cultural issues. Often referencing Pacific history, her work explores the varying relationships between gender, race, culture and politics. Kihara's work has been presented at Asia- Pacific Triennial; Auckland Triennial and the Saka1m Quinquennial.

Kihara's first solo museum exhibition in North America entitled Shigeyuki Kihara; Living Photographs {2008-09) was held at the Metropolitan Museum of Art following the acquisition of her works by the museum for their permanent collection. Kihara's second solo museum exhibition in the US was recently presented at The Utah Museum of Fine Arts.

Kihara's works and performances has also been shown internationally, among others, includes Zendai Museum of Modern Art, Shanghai; Hong Kong Arts Center; Kaohsiung Museum of Fine Arts, Taiwan; Bazar Center for Fine Arts; Brussels; National Museum of Poznan, Warsaw; Centro Ricerca Arte Attuale, Italy; Rautenstrauch Joest Museum, Koln; Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin; Musee du quai Branly, Paris; Trodheim Kunstmuseum, Norway; National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa; de Young Fine Art Museum of San Francisco; Museum of Contemporary Art Australia, Sydney; Gallery of Modern Art | Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane; National Gallery of Victoria International, Melbourne and Te Papa Tongarewa Museum of New Zealand.

Kihara's work was recently a subject of a mid-career survey exhibition entitled Undressing the Pacific organized and presented at the Hocken Library at the University of Otago, New Zealand. An exhibition highlighting Kihara's 13 years of practice will tour nationally across New Zealand including the Wallace Arts Center, Auckland and Te Manawa Gallery, Palmerston North in 2014.

A publication on Kihara's work is currently being edited by Art historian Erika Wolf. Recently, Kihara's work was acquired by Allen Memorial Museum of Art (AMMA) in Ohio and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) both in USA.

Selected Grants and Awards

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| 2012 | New Generation Award, Arts Foundation of New Zealand
Paramount Award Winner, 21st Annual Wallace Art Awards, NZ |
| 2009 | Creative New Zealand Arts Council Pacific Innovation and Excellence Award |
| 2003 | Creative New Zealand Arts Council Emerging Artist Award |

Selected Solo Exhibitions

- 2014 Where Do We Come From? What Are We? Where Are We Going?, Pataka Museum, NZ, Culture for Sale, City Gallery Wellington, NZ
- 2013 salt 8; Shigeyuki Kihara, Utah Museum of Fine Arts, USA
- 2008 Shigeyuki Kihara; Living Photographs, Curator Virginia Lee Webb, Metropolitan Museum of Art, USA
- 2006 Vavau; Tales of Ancient Samoa, Gus Fisher Gallery, University of Auckland, NZ
- 2005 Fa'a Fafine; in a Manner of a Woman, Artspace, NZ

Selected Group Exhibitions

- 2014 WHERE WE'RE AT!: Voices from the (Global) South, Bozar Centre for Fine Arts, Brussels
- 2013 Sakahan: 1st International Quinquennial of New Indigenous Art, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa
Made in Oceania: Tapa -Art and Social Landscapes, Rautenstrauch-Joest Museum, Koln
Lips Painted Red: Strategies to create and maintain a female identity, Trondheim, Kunstmuseum, Norway
Artists address pornography, Gus Fisher Gallery, University of Auckland, NZ
Paradise Lost?, Satellite Gallery, University of British Columbia, Vancouver
- 2012 Edge of Elsewhere, Campbelltown Arts Centre, Sydney
Home AKL, Auckland Art Gallery, NZ
- 2011 Dis-discovery, Salamanca Art Centre touring Devenport Regional Gallery, Goulburn Regional Gallery and Tamworth Regional Gallery, Australia
Oceania, City Gallery Wellington, New Zealand
Collecting Contemporary, Te Papa Tongarewa Museum of New Zealand
- 2010 Last ride in a hot air balloon, 4th Auckland Triennial, Artspace, NZ
Samoan Art: Urban, De Young Fine Art Museum of San Francisco, USA
UNNERVED; the New Zealand project, Gallery Of Modern Art, Brisbane touring National Gallery of Victoria International Melbourne Australia
- 2009 Flower Power, CRAA Centro Ricerca Arte Attuale, Verbania Italy
What do you think about when you dance?, Campbelltown Arts Centre, Sydney
Assembling Bodies, Cambridge Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, UK

- 2008 Le Folauga; The Past Coming Forward, Kaohsiung Museum Of Fine Arts, Taiwan touring Auckland War Memorial Museum, NZ
Hand in Hand, Boomali Aboriginal Artist Co-operative and Performance Space, Sydney touring University of Tasmania Plimsoll Gallery, Tasmania, Australia
- 2007 Asian Attitude/Transient Forces; Contemporary Asian Art, National Museum of Poznan, Poland, touring Shanghai Zendai Museum of Modern Art, China
Whose Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf?, Te Tuhi the Mark Centre for the Arts, NZ
- 2006 Masquerade; Representation and the Self in Contemporary Art, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, Australia
Pasifika Styles, Cambridge Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, UK
- 2005 Asia Traffic, Today Art Museum, Beijing touring Shanghai Zendai Museum of Modern Art and Hong Kong Visual Arts Centre, China
- 2004 4th Asia Pacific Triennial, Queensland Art Gallery, Australia