

# MADISON BYCROFT

Born 1987 in Kurna Yarta (Adelaide). Lives and works in Marseille, France, and Kurna Yarta (Adelaide). Pronouns: they/them

## *The Fouled Compass* 2021

Single-channel HD film, sound  
24:13 minutes

Courtesy of the artist.

To 'foul' is to muddy, to obscure, or to pollute. Yet, in nautical terminology, a 'fouling' can be understood as an 'entanglement', which is most often imaged with a chain-wrapped anchor. Artist Madison Bycroft takes these definitions as both prompt and structure in their work *The Fouled Compass*. Taking its name from a line in the Adrienne Rich poem *Diving the Wreck* (1973), Bycroft's film recontextualises the phrase, placing the work within a lineage of feminist, queer and nonbinary literature, emphasised through the other excerpts in the film from writers including Virginia Woolf (1882–1941), Gertrude Stein (1874–1946) and Dionne Brand (b. 1953).

We are the half-destroyed instruments,  
that once held to a course,  
the water-eaten log,  
the fouled compass.

Thought to be invented in China in 206 BCE, the compass was first used as a geomancy or divination device for feng shui and fortune telling. Importantly, the film hijacks the compass, entwining its meaning and use beyond its employment as a powerful political object that aided colonial expansion. Bycroft actively fouls the navigatory potential of the compass, leaving us to weather a course with no 'true north,' and to journey alongside a narrative caught adrift in the ocean. We are left to think with water, to float in its storied potential, a wet act of protest focussed on the pleasure of journey, not the destination.



## AMRITA HEPI

Born 1989 in Thul Garrie Waja / Gurrumbilbarra (Townsville). Bundjalung / Ngāpuhi.  
Lives and works in Naarm (Melbourne). Pronouns: she/her

### *The Anguilla Pursuit* 2021

Two-channel video, colour and sound  
4:31 minutes  
16:9

Courtesy of the artist, and Anna Schwartz Gallery, Melbourne.

Filmed throughout the architectural icon of the Sydney Opera House, artist Amrita Hepi's *The Anguilla Pursuit* choreographically traces the migratory journey of the *Anguilla reinhardtii* (the longfin eel). In autumn, when rainfall increases along the east coast of Australia, mature eels travel from the freshwater ponds of the Sydney Royal Botanic Gardens all the way back to their place of birth in New Caledonia in the Great Ocean. The cycle of life continues, with new generations of eels making the treacherous trip back to the pond in the Royal Botanic Gardens annually. When access to the ocean via stormwater drains is hampered by built infrastructure such as the Opera House, these animals leave the water, sliding and wriggling hastily across land in a desperate attempt to reach the ocean.

The pace of the film intensifies as Hepi herself stretches out of Sydney Harbour, up the never-ending steps of the Opera House and across its various concaves. As the journey ends, Hepi falls to the ground and slithers along the floor, down the stairs, fully inhabiting the movement of the eels. Seen through an eel's eye view, Hepi embodies the animal as a symbol of pursuit and return, fearlessly transitioning from one state of life to the next. Ultimately, the film is about migration, biological memory, and the urgency of survival and resilience against all odds.



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## *Sometimes I want bell hooks but what I need is better te-reo* 2016

Single-channel video, colour and sound  
3:41 minutes

Courtesy of the artist and Anna Schwartz Gallery, Melbourne.

*Languages die because they are no longer spoken. This happens because their speakers die out without passing them on to the next generation. Only rarely is this because of the extinction of an entire society or race. Usually it happens because from generation to generation (it takes only three or four) the speakers shift to another language. Languages do not die natural deaths. They do not fade away without outside influence. Languages are killed by other languages.<sup>1</sup>*

Filmed adjacent to a churning body of water, two dancers—Amrita Hepi and Jahra Rager Wasasala (iTaukei Viti/Aotearoa)—perform a physical dialogue with nature. The title of the work mentions the trailblazing Black theorist and public intellectual bell hooks (1952–2021), who explored the intersectionality of race, capital, gender, and what hooks described as their ability to produce and perpetuate systems of oppression and class. bell hooks penned most of her important texts amid the backdrop of race relations and civil uprisings in the United States, so while relevant and highly referenced in writing about race and colonisation, they aren't specific to Aotearoa, the Great Ocean, and so-called Australia.

The title also mentions te reo (te reo is Māori for 'the language') as an avenue and a remedy to heal from these systems of oppression. In 1979, 139 years after the signing of the *Te Tiriti o Waitangi* (*The Treaty of Waitangi*) following the Pākehā (European New Zealander) colonisation of the numerous Māori nations making up so-called New Zealand in 1840, te reo Māori was considered so endangered it would suffer language death due to the state assimilation of English as the dominant language through mission schools and other monocultural influences.

Influenced by cultural memory, resilience and the renegotiation of traditions to inform future generations, Hepi and Rager commune with matrilineal connection with the great moana (ocean) through perpetual movement, connection and love.



1. A. Bell in R. Ka'ai-Mahuta. "The impact of colonisation on te reo Māori: A critical review of the State education system." *Te Kaharoa*, vol.4, 2011

## ANGELA TIATIA

Born 1973 in Tāmaki Makaurau (Auckland). Sāmoan. Lives and works in Gadigal Nura (Sydney). Pronouns: she/her

### *Hibiscus Rosa Sinensis* 2010

Single-channel HD film, colour, silent  
1:31 minutes

Collection of The University of Queensland, purchased 2019.

Angela Tiatia's artistic practice investigates the ongoing commodification of Great Ocean women through Western grand narratives and popular culture. The silent film *Hibiscus Rosa Sinensis* challenges the masculine colonial gaze that expresses these ideas, with the artist placing her body in front of the camera as the central protagonist. Slowly, steadily, the artist devours a red hibiscus flower—long and still considered a symbol of the Islander feminine body-affirming cultural belonging distinct to the West, and enacting resistance against cultural misappropriation. In becoming the consumer rather than the consumed, Tiatia subverts the sexual objectification and belittling of feminine Great Ocean bodies as merely motifs for tourist attractions and souvenirs.

The work was filmed on the site of a failed Sheraton Resort in Vaimaanga, Rarotonga, in 'Avaiki Nui (Cook Islands), which when abandoned in 1998 nearly financially crippled the Cook Island Government. With a professional background as an haute couture model and television news presenter, not only does Tiatia retain agency over her body from Western exploitation, but also alludes to the reclamation of fragile island ecologies from rampant tourism expansionism across the Great Ocean.





# ANGELA TIATIA

Born in 1973, Tāmaki Makaurau (Auckland). Sāmoan.  
Lives and works in Gadigal Nura (Sydney). Pronouns: she/her

## *The Pearl* 2021

Single-channel 4k video, colour and sound  
9:00 minutes

Courtesy of the artist and sullivan+strumpf, Sydney.

In *The Pearl*, artist Angela Tiatia layers complex symbols to recast the subjectivity and agency of Great Ocean women. Originally intrigued by the small bronze sculpture of Venus made by Henri Matisse during his 1930s travels across the islands, Tiatia in turn travelled to Tahiti Nui (French Polynesia). The goddess Venus in Greco-Roman mythology is often depicted emerging from a shell, born of seafoam and arising out of primordial waters. This origin story of Venus is predated by the Great Ocean creator-god Ta'aroa, who was born from a clam shell. While Captain Cook's *Endeavour* voyage was said to observe the transit of the planet Venus from Tahiti Nui in 1769, it is now understood as a guise for the widespread colonisation of the Great Ocean and its many sovereign territories. Tiatia actively complicates the symbol of Venus which has often been exploited, scapegoated and mischaracterised within this wide geocultural context.

Surveying the aesthetics of her own Sāmoan culture, Tiatia sought objects often sold as tourist items—porcelain figurines of women adorned in lei, conch shells, frangipani wreathes. She landed on the ubiquitous plastic clam shell. Durable, accessible, and affordable, it is often used by children in the backyard to cool down during summer. Born from Tiatia's fountain of pink clams are orchids, birds of paradise, a whole suckling pig adorned with candy, cowrie, lei, fa'i (bananas), among other items signalling ceremony. In its impressive screenspan, Tiatia elevates these forms to a digital siapo (imprinted barkcloth) or Tivaevae (embroidered quilt), allowing the audience to pause and hover across and around the objects.

Tiatia's research also led her to Taputapuātea, Ra'iātea's sacred memorial stone marae—an ancient meeting complex and site of ritual and knowledge sharing—which is now a UNESCO World Heritage Archaeological Site, said to be the centre of the Mana Moana (Polynesian) triangle. Known by several names across several cultures, Ra'iātea is also often referenced as the head of the giant octopus, with its tentacles spreading out across the ocean accurately referencing the many celestial navigation routes of island communities in the centre and the east of the Great Ocean.

At the centre of *The Pearl's* oceanic world, atop a triangular malae (central ceremonial clearing in Sāmoan villages), sits a penina (pearl) sliced through with an sapelu (machete) as submerged deity-sized women and their vestiges watch omnipresent from the ocean. A line has been drawn in the sand, positioning matrilineal histories and futures of the Great Ocean as no longer for sale, no longer commodity, but resolutely resilient, self-determined, and governed in care for all kin.



## ENSAYOS COLLECTIVE

Ensayos is a collective research practice initiated by a group of artists and researchers in 2010 on the archipelago of Tierra del Fuego, which is located at the southern tip of Patagonia, Indigenous lands of the Selk'nam, Yaghan, Kawéskar and Haush peoples. Ensayos (Spanish for “inquiries”, “essays” or “rehearsals”) was initially focused solely on the ecopolitical issues impacting Tierra del Fuego and its inhabitants—past and present, human and nonhuman. Now, other archipelagos have come into view, with research “pods” growing in Norway, New York and Australia. The mission of Ensayos is to expand eco-cultural conservation work in Tierra del Fuego and other archipelagos through collaborative art, science and community projects in partnership with existing ecological and cultural conservation initiatives.

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Through sound, text and scent artworks, Ensayos presents research-in-progress addressing de-extinction, multispecies dialogues and memory. This work highlights the necessity of global peatland protection. As wetland ecosystems, peatlands prevent plant material from fully decomposing. They are known by many names worldwide; fens, marshes, swamps, mires, carbon sinks, bogs and tuberas.

Currently, the peatlands of Patagonia are representing Chile at the 59th Venice Biennale (2022) in an exhibition entitled *Turba Tol Hol-Hol Tol*. Curated by Ensayos founder Camila Marambio, *Turba Tol Hol-Hol Tol* is a collective project that seeks an experimental path toward understanding of, and preserving, peatlands. “Hol-Hol Tol” translates to the “heart of the peatlands” in the language of the Selk'nam people.

As a result of creative fieldwork, each pod was invited to provide a scent from their local peatlands to contribute to the multisensory experience of *Turba Tol Hol-Hol Tol*. These scents are re-presented here in *Oceanic Thinking*. Audiences are invited to smell, read, and listen to entangled stories charting the interconnected, diverse, and rich ecosystem of each of these sites. Ensayos remind us to pay attention, and to connect with knowledge held in the archives of peat and within our own bodies.



[turbatol.org](http://turbatol.org)



[ensayostierradelfuego.net](http://ensayostierradelfuego.net)

Minjerribah/Terrangeri, Moreton Bay, Australia

*A Gift of Scent [Minjerribah/Terrangeri]* 2022

HD audio recording on headphones  
14 minutes

Created by Karolin Tampere. Edited in collaboration with Caitlin Franzmann.  
Composed with recordings of Denise Milstein's interview with Sonja Carmichael, Freja Carmichael and Caitlin Franzmann. Field Recordings by Leecee Carmichael, Caitlin Franzmann, Randi Nygård and Lawrence English. Additional field recordings by Nigel Jacket, Andrew Spencer and Lars Edenius from xeno-canto.org. Additional voices Ernst Risan and Guro Risan. Poem written by Caitlin Franzmann and recited by Amaara Raheem. Music by Vera Dvale. Mixed and Mastered by DJ Sotofett. Courtesy of Ensayos collective.

*jalo gaba* 2022

glass vessel, ungaire reed, incense cones

Vessel: Sonja Carmichael and Caitlin Franzmann with glass artist Jarred Wright.

Incense: co-created through conversations, shared research and the many hands of Sonja Carmichael, Freja Carmichael, Leecee Carmichael, Renee Rossini, Caitlin Franzmann, Glynn Carmichael, Jasper Coleman and Ira.

A smokey portal carrying knowledge from damp peat archives caressed by a cool salty breeze. A blend of healing essences slowly burned, gifting wallum scented signals to vital canopies of generations to come.



## Bog Hollow, Amenia, New York

### *A Gift of Scent [Bog Hollow, Amenia, New York]* 2022

HD audio recording on headphones

14 minutes

Created by Karolin Tampere. Edited in collaboration with Caitlin Franzmann. Composed with recordings of Denise Milstein interviews with Christy Gast and Augustine Stegers. Field Recordings by Randi Nygård and Karolin Tampere. Additional voices Ernst Risan and Guro Risan. Music by Vera Dvale. Mixed and Mastered by DJ Sotofett.

Courtesy of Ensayos collective.

### *Damp and Rich* 2022

glass vessels, scents

Scent: Christy Gast and Augustine Zegers.

Glass vessel: Jarred Wright.

#### Damp (left)

A full-body submersion into the damp ecosystem of vital, water-retaining mosses, and waterlogged flora. An invitation to imagine the uneven contours of *Sphagnum capitula* as perfectly designed aqueous carrier bags. A call to drip, pour, leak, slip, slide, and become slippery.

#### Rich (right)

A dense meshwork of the musky, malted, medicinal, and tarry saps, excretions, and notes that connect peatland life through the aromatic molecules they produce within their digestive, root, and trunk systems. They are knotted together by an acidic note mimicking the uniquely low pH of the bog that makes all this richness possible.

Bogerudmyra, Oslo, Norway

*A Gift of Scent [Bogerudmyra, Oslo, Norway]* 2022

HD audio recording on headphones  
12 minutes

Created by Karolin Tampere. Edited in collaboration with Caitlin Franzmann. Composed with an interview with Randi Nygård. Field Recordings by Søsja Jørgensen, Randi Nygård and Karolin Tampere. Additional Field Recordings by Lars Edenius, Stein Ø. Nilsen, Magnus Wadstein, Dag Österlund (xeno-canto.org), Jennifer Jerret (NPS & MSU Acoustic Atlas). Additional voice Guro Risan. Poem by Randi Nygård and recited by Ernst Risan. Music by Vera Dvale. Mixed and Mastered by DJ Sotofett. Courtesy of Ensayos collective.

*Wolves in the Mire* 2022

glass vessel, scent

Scent: Randi Nygård and Simon Daniel Tegnander Wenzel. Glass vessel: Jarred Wright.

As we press our fingers into the peat moss, a strong scent of ocean, wet soil, dried grass, seaweed, pine, and rain, arises. There are hints of wet wool and animals, like a dog, or a wolf. It is fresh, earthy, dark, resinous, fertile, and rich.

*Peatlands are ancestors* 2022

infographic wall vinyl  
Courtesy of Ensayos Collective

*Bog is Good, ¡Vivan las Tuberías!, Hol-Hol Tol* 2022

3 digital renderings, projected  
Designed by: Christy Gast, Camila Marambio, Rosario Ureta with collaboration from WCS-Chile. Courtesy of Ensayos Collective