

**Plain language wall labels for ACE exhibition:**

## **Shared Skin**

15 February – 12 April 2025

Hana Pera Aoake (NZ), Atong Atem (AU), Jacob Boehme, KTB + the Narungga Family Choir (AU),  
Juanella Donovan (AU), Jared Flitcroft (NZ), Jumana Manna (GER), Tuan Andrew Nguyen (USA),  
Bhenji Ra (AU), Steven Rhall (AU), Marikit Santiago (AU), and Jennifer Tee (NL)

# **ACE**

Hana Pera Aoake

*Earth Maintenance (after Mierle Laderman Ukeles) (2022-ongoing)*

Audio file

Poster print

Courtesy of the artist

*Earth Maintenance* is adapted from my manifesto 'On the Maintenance of Art and Community (On Imagining the Future in the Present) aka Care', first published in *Fine Print Issue 32: Digital* (2023). This manifesto draws from Mierle Laderman Ukeles' 1969 work *Maintenance Art*, an exhibition proposal she developed after becoming a mother.

In this version, Aoake focuses on *Earth maintenance*, exploring the environmental damage caused by the Tasman Pulp and Paper mill—the industry that shaped the town where Aoake lives. This land belongs to their daughter and partner. Their house overlooks their sacred mountain, Pūtauaki, now covered in exotic pine trees. Their river, the Tarawera, is just a five-minute walk away. Once known as the "Black Drain," it was discolored by the mill's chemical pulping, bleaching, and colored paper production.

The accompanying audio was recorded by Gordon Jackman, a longtime Greenpeace activist, disability advocate, teacher, musician, artist, and expert on dioxin poisoning. Since the 1970s, he has worked to address the environmental and spiritual harm caused by industrial toxins like dioxins and PCP. While working at the Kawerau Museum, Aoake met Gordon and his partner, Catherine Delahunty. Catherine, an activist, environmentalist, *Te Tiriti* educator, mother, grandmother, and former Green MP, reads the text in the recording.

Both Catherine and Gordon have worked with my community through Greenpeace and continue to support *Sawmill Workers Against Poison (SWAP)*, advocating for stronger health protections—for both the land and the people affected by industrial pollution.

The text Catherine reads is *On the Maintenance of Art and Community (On Imagining the Future in the Present) aka Care*, a piece I wrote about being an Indigenous artist and mother in a world changed by destruction.

Atong Atem

*A Facet for Every Turn* 2022

Series of 6 silk georgette fabric panels

120 x 4500 cm each

Courtesy of the artist

Atong Atem is a South Sudanese artist and writer, born in Ethiopia and now living in Naarm/Melbourne. She mainly works with photography and video to explore migrant stories, postcolonial ideas, and the connections between home, identity, and public and private spaces. Her portraits are inspired by African studio photography skills while questioning how people have historically and currently viewed African subjects. She also aims to honor traditional crafts in her artwork.

*A Facet for Every Turn* is printed on six silk panels and displayed at a great height. It combines portraiture and traditional craft to tell ancestral migration stories, especially for the African diaspora who now live in many places around the world. The silk's lightness gives the images of women in custom dress an airy, dreamlike quality, representing memory and emotion. By presenting migration stories through portraits, Atong challenges how African bodies have been historically photographed and seeks to reclaim their representation in Western history.

Jacob Boehme, KTB + the Narungga Family Choir  
*Dhargarri Buggi Buggilu (Tomorrow, a long time ago) 2025*  
Single channel video  
Gathered sand from Guuranda country 5:35 minutes  
Courtesy of the artists

*Dhargarri Buggi Buggilu (Tomorrow, a long time ago)* is a family project that celebrates Narungga culture and land while highlighting the next generation of Narungga artists. Created by a team of Narungga creatives, it brings together Aunties, Uncles, cousins, nieces, nephews, brothers, and sisters to express their love for Guuranda, the Aboriginal name for Yorke Peninsula. Together, they explore Guuranda's colonial history, shared land, and their hopes for maintaining sovereignty and caring for Nharangga banggara (Narungga Country).

Juanella Donovan

*Continuum* 2022

Woven emu feathers, human hair, fibre, hemp thread, coral gumnuts, quandong seeds, hessian, red and yellow ochre, emu fat, recycled garden hanger, lamp

Dimensions variable

Courtesy of the artist

Juanella Donovan is an Adnyamathanha, Luritja and Lower Southern Arrernte woman from South Australia. She uses art to share stories, keep traditions alive, and stay connected to her culture and land.

*Continuum* includes a hanging light made from woven emu feathers, hair, and natural materials, along with small woven bowls. Juanella and her three daughters, Ngarlaa, Ngayan, and Ngintaka, created these works together. The light represents knowledge and guidance, just as stories are passed from Elders to younger generations.

Jared Flitcroft

*Tama* 2017

Single channel video

9 minutes

Courtesy of the artist

Jared Flitcroft is a Deaf filmmaker from Wellington, New Zealand. He earned a Bachelor of Media Studies from Victoria University and was the first Deaf graduate of the New Zealand Film and Television School. Jared is the chair of New Zealand Deaf Film Inc., where he leads workshops and collaborates with industry professionals. He also chairs the New Zealand Deaf Short Film Festival.

*Tama* is a short film about a young Māori Deaf boy who dreams of performing the haka, a traditional Māori dance. He struggles to be understood, being ignored by his father and bullying from his brother. During a life-changing car trip, he confronts his family and grows from an undervalued boy into a proud young man.

Flitcroft's film highlights different ways of communicating and how they connect with culture. It uses three languages—New Zealand Sign Language, te reo Māori, and English—showing that disability is not a barrier in filmmaking but an opportunity for more inclusive storytelling.

Jumana Manna

*Foragers* 2022

Single-channel video, 63mins

Courtesy of the artist and LUX distribution

*Foragers* is a film about the politics of foraging in Palestine and Israel. Israeli laws ban the picking of wild plants like 'akkoub (a artichoke-like plant) and za'atar (wild thyme), leading to fines and court cases for Palestinians. Foraging has been part of their culture for generations, but these restrictions limit their connection to the land. While Israeli officials say they are protecting nature, many see the laws as a way to control access to resources.

It is filmed in the Golan Heights, Galilee, and Jerusalem, mixing real-life footage, fiction, and old recordings. *Foragers* follows people as they gather plants, cook, and defend their rights in court. The film highlights their deep knowledge and resilience, asking: Who decides what traditions survive and what is lost?

Jumana Manna is an artist and filmmaker who explores history, land, and power. She was born in Jerusalem and now lives in Berlin.

Tuan Andrew Nguyen

*The Boat People* 2020

Single-channel video, 4k, Super 16mm transferred to digital, colour, 5.1 surround sound, 20 mins.

Courtesy of the artist and James Cohan Gallery, New York

Tuan Andrew Nguyen is a Vietnamese-American artist who uses video and sculpture to explore the power of storytelling. His work is based on research and community connections, focusing on history and memory.

*The Boat People* is inspired by objects found in Bataan, Philippines, a place shaped by war, migration, and survival. Set in a post-apocalyptic future, the story follows a group of children led by a brave young girl.

Calling themselves *The Boat People*, they sail the seas, collecting stories from objects left behind. They carve wooden replicas of these objects to understand history, then burn them and scatter the ashes in the ocean, symbolically setting them free.



Bhenji Ra

*Biraddali Dancing on the Horizon* 2024

Single channel video

30 minutes

Courtesy of the artist

Bhenji Ra is a Filipina-Australian artist who combines dance and video to create projects focused on social justice.

*Biraddali Dancing on the Horizon* follows a journey of learning across generations. It begins with a trip Ra took with her teacher and collaborator, Sitti Airia Sangkula Askalani-Obeso, a Tausug elder and cultural guardian of the *pangalay*, an ancient dance from the Tausug people of the Sulu Archipelago and the Bajau of Sabah in the Philippines.

The project develops a movement language that connects ideas of gender with past and present colonial histories in the Asia-Pacific. This builds on Ra's ongoing work, which challenges Western dance traditions and explores different ways of expressing gender and identity.

Alongside Ra's film, the installation features a specially made ceremonial mat, created in collaboration with a community of weavers. By honoring past traditions and working with people who carry this knowledge today, the installation highlights the importance of passing down cultural practices through movement and storytelling.

Steven Rhall

*Us (still)* 2014

Single channel video

1:31 minutes

Courtesy of the artist

Steven Rhall is a multidisciplinary artist who explores the connection between First Nations art and the Western art world. He examines how art is represented, classified, and valued through installation, performance, sculpture, curatorial projects, and public interventions.

*Us (still)* presents a suburban home as a portrait, showing its changes over time. Using family home videos, Rhall removed the people from the footage, unexpectedly revealing the original filmmaker. Though she remains mostly unseen behind the camera, her choices—what she captures and how she moves through the house—offer insight into her perspective and what matters to her.

Marikit Santiago

*Apple of My Eye* 2020

Oil, acrylic and pen on found cardboard

198 x 185 x 11 cm

Courtesy of the artist

Australian-Filipino artist Marikit Santiago combines painting and sculpture, drawing from her experiences as a mother. Her art and motherhood are deeply connected, shaping each other through both joy and struggle.

*Apple of My Eye* reinterprets Michelangelo's *Pieta*, where the Virgin Mary holds Jesus after his crucifixion. In Santiago's version, she appears twice: on the left, she takes Mary's place, nursing her daughter Sarita; on the right, a coiled python rests on her collarbone, symbolising Eve's temptation and original sin.

Jennifer Tee

*Tao Magic/ The Moon flows out to the Sea. Conus Marmoreus. Honey Brown/ Pink 2024*

Glazed ceramics, perforated

24 x 24 x 12cm

*Tao Magic/ The Moon flows out to the Sea. Terra Red/ Cobalt Blue/ Midnight Lila 2024*

Glazed ceramics, perforated

24 x 24 x 12cm

*Tao Magic/ The Moon flows out to the Sea. Matte Eggshell/ Taupe 2024*

Glazed ceramics, perforated

24 x 24 x 12cm

*Mineral Pearl Pineapple cloth body; Mooning 2023*

*Canela Brown & Old Rose, left sleeve; Antique Gold & Canela Brown sleeve, right side; glass objects*

Pineapple cloth

Dimensions variable

*Transient Shroud/ Being Less Human 2025*

*Antique Gold, Pineapple cloth body Sage & Canela Brown left sleeve, Mineral Pearl right sleeve, glass objects*

Pineapple cloth

Dimensions variable

Jennifer Tee is a multidisciplinary artist exploring the connection between spirit and matter through collage, sculpture, ceramics, textiles, and performance. She draws on Eastern philosophy to engage with recurring themes in Western culture and art history.

While researching her Chinese-Indonesian heritage, Tee discovered tampan and palepai textiles, or "ship cloths," which was a term used by European settlers. She then created a series of typography maps using pineapple fiber waste, honoring her father's migration from Indonesia to the Netherlands in the 1950s. Her work explores themes of belonging, transition, colonialism, and humanity's relationship with nature and the cosmos.

Influenced by collaborations with First Nations artists and choreographers, Tee's sculptures and textiles reflect the cyclical rhythms of the moon, oceans, and migration over time.