The Legacies Reader

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Foreword

Mark Williams

Legacies is CIRCUIT's 7th annual programme of Artist Cinema Commissions. Every year, since 2015, CIRCUIT has invited an international curator to invite a group of Aotearoa-based artists to respond to a curatorial prompt with a new moving image work for cinema.

Our 2022 curator-at-large is Thai/UK academic, writer, and curator Dr May Adadol Ingawanij. As with other international colleagues, May's appointment opens up new paths for exchange. Each successive curator discovers artists, works, and modes of practice shaped in Aotearoa New Zealand, and, in turn, the curator creates space in future international contexts for these ideas to resonate with a wider audience.

May has worked with CIRCUIT since 2009, showing CIRCUIT programming in Bangkok and India, and presenting in a 2013 symposium. In the lead up to *Legacies* May and I met several times over Zoom, catching up with works by artists already known to May, discovering new voices, discussing May's interests, and how all of these dovetailed into the contemporary potential of 'cinema'.

In an early text of curatorial ideas sent to the artists, May wrote about her attempt to write a poem, something that expressed her current situation as a Thai-born, UK-based academic with family both here and there, seeking to reconcile a place to be, or maybe, in a strife-torn world, what to do next. Over Zoom, the artists voiced their own responses. From this back and forth, May evolved a premise, and now we have the films, and this accompanying reader, which expands on the concepts of history, remembrance, collectivity, and animism that have permeated the kōrero between May and the artists.

For this publication, the artists were invited by Editor Thomasin Sleigh to respond to a specific question that May posed in her curatorial prompt, 'What does a legacy taste, smell, sound, feel, or look like?', and you'll read their varied responses published here, alongside essays by May, Huni Mancini, and an elegiac short story by Tina Makereti.

May's curatorial process sought to affirm the diversity of our experiences but also our shared ground. Likewise, *Legacies* takes place in the cinema, an apparatus designed for coming together, scattering afterwards, leaving us with the resonance of the temporal moment. In CIRCUIT's 10th anniversary year, we are grateful to May and the artists and writers gathered in this book for their contributions to *Legacies*.

Legacies

May Adadol Ingawanij

Legacies.

I sketch the word and wonder how to turn this abstract noun into a breathing form.

During lockdown I started trying to write a poem. I've never written a poem before. The luxury of learning to write differently, of finding another form, having a go at just writing a poem for the sake of learning something new, for the possibility and the sensation of becoming something else, kept getting pushed down the list of tasks and urgent things to do in middle-aged existence. To get me started, my partner got me an unusual kind of how-to book. It's called *How to Grow Your Own Poem*, and the poet-teacher Kate Clanchy teaches you to grow your own from the structure and scaffolding of existing poems. You write your own poem through an invocation of the form and the story that has come before.

I attended a workshop organised by the writer, film programmer, and cultural activist Jemma Desai. Her way of encouraging us to think about what else a film festival could be, how a film festival could unlearn its own complicity in hyper-competitiveness and exploitation, is to start the workshop by asking each of us to tell stories in response to the question: 'Where does your name come from?' I tell people that my last name is useless for tracing my ancestral roots. Quite the opposite. It's a record of two kinds of colonial legacy that's so fundamentally shaped my life, and that places me within a time, place, and modern catastrophe. It's a 'family name' that was among a list of names invented in the early twentieth century and imposed by a royal absolutist regime on a populace in Bangkok, most of whom were workers from China. The purpose was to colonise a multitude of labourers and to severe people's ancestral ties to a prior homeland in the throes of revolution.

Half a century later my last name became Americanised, at least Americanised in the version according to my dad's aspiration. A small story of being caught up in the Cold War, a time when my home region of Southeast Asia was engulfed in flames, US anti-communism unleashing a war known in Vietnam as the American War, and two genocides in Indonesia and Cambodia respectively. It was a time when the US bought allied-client states in the region, such as the Thai military dictatorship, with large 'aid' and a well-funded scholarship programme to bind aspirational young people into its developmentalist ideology. My dad was among the droves of young men, first generation university graduates born to clans of working poor migrants, who were inculcated via this route into anti-communist middle-class life. While

studying in Cold War USA he decided to change the English language spelling of our last name to a run of letters he felt came across as more 'American'.

These days I feel the absurdity and the bind of my 'Americanised' last name more acutely in proportion to the effect of my dad's dementia on his capacity to function in daily life.

Today I read that a journal of political and artistic affairs in Asia that I hugely admire, *The Mekong Review*, is suspending its operation as a consequence of the pandemic and the burnout of its founder-editor. Its Twitter announcement is frank yet somehow strangely hopeful, "After 7 great years, *Mekong Review* is ending its run under current management. If anyone is interested in acquiring the magazine & keeping the legacy alive, please get in touch." A few weeks before, out of the blue, a friend sends me a poem written in Thai by Ida Aroonwong, a mutual friend who had been the founding-editor of a Thai language journal of criticisms, asking if I would help them translate it into English. It's less an invitation to choose to accept or refuse than a summoning, calling on me and my past as someone who had previously written for this radical journal *อ่าน/Read*, which suspended its operation shortly after the coup in Thailand in 2014, the year my son was born. In its time, the journal had caused a stir for openly ridiculing the legacy of royalism of Thai politics and defying its censorship regime. Less ostensibly it struggled to break with the legacy of paternalism in the sphere of progressive arts and culture in the country, and the legacy of bitterness and betrayal of the once radical men whose revolution in the previous era had failed. My friend and I translated the poem's title ก่อนลั่นดาล into 'before she pulls the hatch'. The poem, written in the months leading up to the coup, is the curse of someone who calls herself a madwoman, an incantation of the mad in a society whose conception of truth and falsity had been perverted by such legacies.

In the curatorial prompt that I wrote to artists Edith Amituanai, Martin Sagadin, Ukrit Sa-nguanhai, Pati Tyrell, and Sriwhana Spong, I wondered out loud: What does a legacy taste, smell, sound, feel, or look like? I told them a few stories about the legacies that are my burden to carry, and the legacies that I want to make kinship with. A turn of phrase and a tone of voice surfaced from such a long time ago, how could that be? Did I just sound to my son like my mother had done to me? The place I had left and the culture I tried to shake off in my youth now becomes that something, good or bad or neither, at least not so categorically, to try to pass on. What do we do with the legacies that make us? How do they hold us back? How do

we go forward with the full force of the past? What stories do I tell my son? That we all have a place in the world through the legacies we were born into that we haven't chosen? Some of them we'll learn to inhabit and to pass on, others we'll learn to let go of. Legacies are things that we carry with our bodies, sometimes with pride and sometimes with shame, our emotional textures and our baggage, the basis of social bonding, an ancestral land, an enduring pain, a burden, some kind of ghost, an invitation into futurist kinship, stories for future making.

Edith tells me about a matriarch. While my editor friend's matriarchy takes the form of speaking the truth of the mad and the gesture of permanently shutting all doors, the matriarch in Edith's film makes roses grow from concrete. Kinship isn't so much an affirmation of blood ties as Epifania the matriarch's act of lifetime commitment to the future through her efforts of raising those who depend on her. The film honours her labour of nurturing a future with dance, with the joyousness of striking a pose, with gorgeous gentle lights. Sriwhana and I tell stories back and forth, we digress and make an afternoon with rambling tales of travels to the lands of our fathers that lie somewhere between returning and leaping into the unknown. What if ancestry is an act of translation? What if it is an incarnation of the architecture of a verse, so that something else begins to take shape in the duration of your recitation? The swarm creates a kinship, which makes recognisable the detail in the painting made by the one who now becomes the grandfather. Pati tells me about the aural ritual form that makes a cosmos and its people. The call and response whose reverberation creates kinship in cosmological scales of time. Martin sends a diary film and a portrait of his friend Caitlin bathed in serendipitous light. She transforms clay with her hands and overturns a modern idea that making art is the act of sculpting inert pieces of clay into things whose contours and forms are shaped by the creative vision coming from inside the artist who creates. The ritual of artmaking begins with a returning to earth of the clay that had previously been transfigured into curves and pots and spouts and bowls. To begin again is to return.

Ukrit and I share a burden as Thai nationals born into the aftermath of war and revolution's defeat. Resisting the force of amnesia also means returning to sites where traces of the crime and the lies that had caused so much damage have long since disappeared, and to keep trying to find new ways to tell stories about the ghosts that are still present. His film draws on fragments of the diary of an official working for the US propaganda service during the Cold War. The man travelled in the northeastern region of

Thailand with ancient ties to what the French colonisers named Indochina, showing open-air movies extolling the virtues of developmentalism and imparting anti-communist ideology. Cinema's own foundational myth, according to cinema's westernised ideology of its powers of technology and animation, that the early film audience fled the screen at the sight of the onrushing train, becomes implicated in the story that Ukrit encounters.

The abstract word 'legacy' functions for this project as a kind of leitmotif, an invitation to tell stories to each other of lived experiences of histories we cannot choose so as to learn to become, make kins, and imagine futures anew. Legacies as matters of: wars, colonisation; pre-modern artistic, cultural, linguistic and religious heritages, which will be manifest in bodily, architectural, spatial and sculptural form in our surroundings; nations and nationalisms, during and after colonialism, revolutionary and repressive, their continuing importance in the shaping lives and imaginings of futures in my home region of Southeast Asia, and perhaps elsewhere, and the ghosts that haunt my adopted land, a Britain that doesn't know how to decline and can't take responsibility for its imperial past. Legacies might be those which we desire or need to inherit and carry forward, or those—like authoritarianism and impunity—which we might rather seek to escape from.

My poem-growing project is going slowly. The legacy that claims me and houses me looks like water I think, a huge volume of water. How might these and other kinds of legacies resonate, perhaps differently in different locations and generations?

I hope you enjoy the films by Edith, Sriwhana, Martin, Ukrit, and Pati. I'm grateful to them for their generous sharing of experiences and imagination to connect. Our conversations will continue on CIRCUIT's website while their films make their way in the world, perhaps making conversational ripples in their sojourns.

Land with a Tangled Soul

Huni Mancini

There are things you learn from being close together: the warmth of touch and softness of breath; the sounds of laughter and song, and the swapping of tales and gossip in the kautaha, which enliven the steady, constant, syncopated rhythm of ʻike beating upon the tutua.

My grandmother, Lesieli, was a loving and dutiful woman; tireless in raising eleven kids while her husband was away for extended periods of time. I've heard stories that she would make food stretch for their tiny, demanding mouths, and how, every day after finishing her morning tasks, she would sit and beat strips of paper mulberry until thin sheets were formed.

She was a founding member of Langafonua ʻa e Fefine Tonga (Nation Building by Tongan Women) handicraft centre established by Queen Sālote Tupou III. It was there that she and other women from the village would come together to develop their talents and fulfil their obligations to the family, church, and community.

The handicrafts which they produced—ngatu, ta'ovala, kafa, kiekie—are an important part of Tongan identity. Emblems which come from the fonua, using elements that are made from the fonua.

The ocean is always moving

Legacy is a formidable word, grandiose and cold, like marble. It wields a kind of power over us, it gets into the body, becomes intimately felt. A legacy might be interpreted as a weight, one that moves through you and merges with your body, taking on a will of its own. It is a burden both for those who choose to carry it, and those who are forced to carry it.

In the language of contemporary archiving, legacy refers to something that's outdated, a practice that is obsolete because it isn't compatible with newer systems. For something to survive it must be agile and hardy, like vines that climb and strangle, laying down their roots in nodes as they continue to spread out and multiply.

When I was growing up, I was not aware of my origins. I did not know my language or customs and it was a source of shame and discomfort. I learned to hide my clumsiness and fill in the gaps. I'd soak up stories, values, and architectures of thought from other places. I didn't hear the beating of ngatu, or fananga—our legends and folktales. I was raised with the constant sound of TV presenters and canned laughter; white noise bridging a long, unbearable silence.

I was born in Los Angeles, and we migrated to Aotearoa when I was a child. My father was raised in Italy, and I used to imagine the river near where he was brought up, and its silt and eels making their way over to Oceania eventually. ʻEpeli Hau'ofa famously said we are the sea, we

1 James Bridle, *New Dark Age: Technology* and the *End of the Future*, (New York: Verso, 2018), 7.
2 Jazz Money, *Sacred Data*, Museum of Contemporary Art Australia, accessed 25 July, 2022, https://www.mca.com.au/stories-and-ideas/sacred-data/

are the Ocean, and the Ocean is always moving; a watery region that connects us all.

As a kid, my sense of dislocation was eased by the screen. Back then, the online world was less corrupt. The web drew us in because it was mesmerising, somewhere you could explore, get lost, and present yourself in the way you wanted to be seen. The internet allowed us to have continuous connection while also being left alone. We became tethered to others, but we could also keep at bay.

Today we might think of the internet as a cloud: a system of great power and energy that is transcendent and impossible to grasp, existing in some magical faraway place where everything just works. In reality, the cloud is not weightless and invisible. It is a "physical infrastructure consisting of phone lines, fibre optics, satellites, cables on the ocean floor, and vast warehouses filled with computers, which consume huge amounts of water and energy and reside within national and legal jurisdictions".[1]

Though it seems the internet is beyond physical, it is not immune from the enduring legacy of colonialism. When our data is collected online, we subject ourselves to the laws and governance structures of those who are collecting it. The digital space increases our access to cultural heritage, which can be incredibly important for dispersed or displaced peoples. But mismanagement of that digital space can also have massive consequences for our communities. In her essay *Sacred Data*, Wiradjuri poet and filmmaker Jazz Money writes:

> “Our oral histories are passed through an intricate web of ceremony and custom, with restrictions built in for those who shouldn’t or are not yet ready to access certain information. This process of management kept our people strong for millennia—knowing who should receive certain information how and when.”[2]

These are systems developed by our ancestors, and show us that First Nations peoples are gifted data managers, whose own methods of retaining and sharing of memory are a unique and powerful starting position for the conversation around legacy.

Our legacies are our stories

The body is an archive, a repository of knowledge carried within us. It stretches out like an umbilical cord, tethering us to our ancestors wherever we go. This body archive doesn’t exert the power and authority of the state or corporate archive; it doesn’t set limits on what can be known. It is the province of the elderly, the living repositories who hold a

3 Justice-Te Amorangi Hetaraka. Conference paper presented at University of Auckland, June 28 2022.

wealth of knowledge—often overlooked in the face of ever-increasing European influence.

At the archive where I work, one woman shared the memory of her grandmother, a well-known storyteller in their village in Tonga:

> “I still remember all the times myself and many kids from the village of Longomapu would gather around in her room to hear her tell us fananga. I remember that she loved to smoke tobacco and she used to make us children collect potupotu’i tapaka from around the village and exchange them for a fananga as payment.”

The ability to repatriate copies of her grandmother’s recordings would allow the family to listen to her voice and hear her stories again.

Our stories yield a richer picture of our histories and lives than a case file or archival documents might reveal. Our legacies are our stories. As we move around, migrate and relocate, our stories connect us, no matter how much distance we’ve covered. Genealogy is our origin story, or whakapapa as it is known in te ao Māori, and gafa or hohoko in Samoa and Tonga. It connects us to the earth, to each other, and to the universe. And there are lessons in those stories.

Justice-Te Amorangi Hetaraka, co-founder of *HĀ–Histories of Aotearoa*, has spoken about whakapapa as a way of fostering good health and relations through knowledge of self and each other. Her challenge to us is to learn our own whakapapa, and then whanaungatanga or connect with others by sharing our story:

> “Here we are in the present, standing on the shoulders of our whakapapa. If our actions aren’t informed by our whakapapa, we walk blindly into the future… Who are you? Who are you in relation to this place, to the history of this whenua? Because this place has a history. Colonisation violently robbed the people of this place from knowing themselves, from being able to see the future.”[3]

We are not just vessels to embody whakapapa, but rather, whakapapa is a tool that helps us to activate the living connection already within us.

The fourth cinema

New Zealand, the land of milk and honey where my family adapted and assimilated, was a country that belittled and condemned indigenous languages and cultural practices. But the resilience and ingenuity of tangata whenua has

enabled their practices to continue despite the odds.

At university I learned about indigenous filmmaking, and quickly saw how the screen could be used to untangle the conflicting narratives that colonisation has imposed.

The late Māori filmmaker, Barry Barclay, challenged the colonial gaze with his camera. Cinema has had a significant role in telling the stories of indigenous peoples in stereotypical and undermining ways. Barclay coined the term 'Fourth Cinema' and defined it as cinema by indigenous people, or as he explained, "cinema held in the hands of Native communities on the shore as opposed to the invaders on the ship's deck."[4] By generating alternatives to the Eurocentric "invader" lens, Fourth Cinema becomes a means to counter the dominant narratives of dispossession and Otherness that are associated with First Nations peoples.

His ideas took root with other celebrated Māori filmmakers like Merata Mita, whose films drew on Barclay's Kaupapa, and Taika Waititi, who continues to spread Barclay's ideas to a global audience through his films.

Barclay's legacy shows us that the moving image can be used to reconnect people with their origin stories. It shows us that modernity doesn't have to be a dichotomy between remembering and forgetting, and that we can be empowered by a state of flow between the past, present, and future.

Tala-ē-fonua

In the process of teasing out my own origin story, a pattern of intricate connection between land and body emerges.

In Tonga, Tala-ē-fonua means 'telling-of-the-land-and-its-people'. According to 'Okusitino Māhina, it is a mode of representing past and present events about the land and its people (fonua), passed down through generations by word of mouth (tala).[5]

Fonua is not only the land, it is also the placenta. A child comes from their mother's fonua and when they die they go back to the fonua. The umbilical cord, itself called fonua, is also buried in the land after birth, because in a Tongan worldview, people are the land.

Among the many forms of Tala-ē-fonua, there is the divine language of the extraordinary to which include tales (talanoa), myths (talatupu'a), legends (fananga), chants (laulau), poetry (ta'anga), and oratory (tufunga lea).[6]

Fananga, for example, have an ability to retain collective memory while also leaving room for the storyteller's own creative interpretation. The sung component, known as fakatangi, has a melancholic and almost yearning sound, reflecting the pre-Christian Tongan musical scale. It's said

4 Salma Monani, "Kissed by Lightning and Fourth Cinema's Natureculture Continuum", in *Ecoambiguity, Community, and Development: Toward a Politicized Ecocriticism*, ed. Scott Slovic et al., (Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books), 133.
5 'Okusitino Māhina, 'The Tongan Traditional History Tala-Ē-Fonua: A Vernacular Ecology-Centred Historico-Cultural Concept', (PhD diss, Australian National University, 1992), 1.
6 Ibid., 4.

that should a fananga not contain any fakatangi, it would be like food without salt, or a petrel without a tail.[7]

At the same time fananga are fluid and ever-changing; there is room for the story to change depending on the person telling it. Each story is grown from the structure and scaffolding of existing tellers. They aren't the work of one voice but many, over countless generations.

Memory and fluidity

I now know that my great-great-grandfather went by the name Kauvaka. Hailing from Vava'u, he was ka'ate to King George Tupou II and so he sailed back and forth from the capital before finally settling in Lapaha. It was there my grandmother Lesieli was born.

Despite the legacy of her bloodline, my grandmother's story has been largely absent from my life, leaving me to read between the lines. She had come to be known as the loving dutiful wife of Fine Halapua, my grandfather—the first Tongan to be ordained by the Anglican church. The story of his accomplishment is the one I grew up hearing the most about.

But my grandmother's ngatu also tells us something about ourselves. It tells us about the reciprocal relationship between Tongan people and the land. It tells us how our people have been formed, categorised, and organised in and through relations with each other. And it tells us about the delicate balance between memory and fluidity that has enabled our ways to survive.

In speaking of this, I speak from the position of a person of mixed heritage who was not aware of my origins, I did not know my language or customs and it was a source of shame and discomfort. But I also acknowledge the privilege I hold as a mixed person to be able to navigate the Pākehā world in easier ways. The realities of having lighter skin and European features, mannerisms and inflections in my speech, has allowed me the privilege to be in many spaces in this country, and especially archival ones.

When I think about having children of my own, I am overwhelmed by the idea they too will inherit these tangled legacies. Legacies that will be complicated further by the realities of climate change and ever-deepening economic inequality. They will inherit a world that asks them, more and more, to do without thinking, to move without friction, to adapt without question, to connect without interruption. I find relief in knowing they will hear our stories. As they continue to spread out, laying down roots of their own, our stories will be a reminder to use the past to inform the present and future. Enabling them to imagine other ways of living, and never failing to consider how the world might be otherwise.

7 Richard Moyle, *Tongan Music* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1987), 170.

Black Milk

Tina Makereti

The Birdwoman came into the world while no one was watching. It was her old people who sent her, the ones who hadn't chosen to make the transition, who stayed in their feathered forms, beaks sharp enough to make any girl do what her elders told her.

'It's time,' they said. 'They're ready.'

But was she?

There were things the people needed to know. But first she had to make her way into their world. She watched for a long time from her perch, trying to figure the way of them. They seemed so crude and clumsy to her—so slow with their lumbering bodies, their plain, unprotected flesh—no wonder they took plumage from her own kind, or made poor copies with their fibres. Their movements pained her—she would need to slow her own quickness, calm the flutter of wings, the darting of eyes that had protected and fed her all her wild life.

She saw what kind of woman she would be. She could keep some of her dignity if she held her head high, wore heavy skirts that fanned out and trailed behind her, if she corseted in the unprotected flesh and upholstered it with good tailoring. A fine tall hat, or elaborately coiled hair beset with stones that caught the light. She had seen women such as this, glided past them on the wind. They saw her too, but didn't point and call out like the children. They saw and took note in silence, sometimes lifted their chins in acknowledgement. She saw spiralled markings on some of those chins, dark-haired women, and thought she could read meaning there. Though this was a rare sight, and though she needed to blend in, she decided she should mark herself this way too, so that the ones who needed to would recognise her.

So she came into the world when no one was watching, only just grown enough to be a birdwoman rather than a birdgirl. Then she moved through the forest to where the people lived. On the outskirts of the settlement, the men saw her first. They removed their hats and looked everywhere but into her eyes, for there was something piercing in her manner that made them uncomfortable. She walked past them towards streets lined with houses, alarmed that without wings the dust gathered itself to her and stayed. How did they stand it, the people with all their gravity and filth?

The women were less circumspect. They looked her up and down from their doorways, and made assumptions about where she came from and what kind of woman she was.

'Looking for someone, dear?' called Eloise, who had survived four stillbirths and adopted every stray child in town.

'Perhaps she's in the wrong place,' said Aroha to

Eloise, loud enough for the Birdwoman to hear. 'Are you lost, dear?' Aroha was all right once you got to know her, but she was not an easy woman to get to know.

The Birdwoman thought about how to answer these questions, and the only answer that came to her was, politely.

'I am fine thank you, but I am wondering if there might be a place for me to stay. Can you recommend a house?'

The women were disarmed by her directness.

'Mrs Randall takes in lodgers,' said Eloise. 'Aroha, take her to Mrs Randall's, will you? I have this lot to account for. No knowing what might happen if I leave them to their own machinations.' Eloise was always using words that were too big for the meaning she intended.

Aroha's sullenness couldn't withstand the faint glow that emanated from the Birdwoman. Her hair seemed luminous and so marvellously soft that Aroha wanted to reach out but couldn't, for who knew what protection a woman such as this carried, seen or unseen? She'd never been so close to anyone quite so meticulous and, frankly, shiny. It was only moments before she found herself telling the stranger all the news of the town, including even her most delicious gossip.

There was a reason no one had been watching, the Birdwoman learnt, even though there were sentries on every hill. They were too busy watching each other and their firearms, too busy grappling with the ways of war, which, no matter how many times they went through it, could not be made intelligible. She knew they noticed her strangeness but no one had the energy to concern themselves about it.

Before now, she had only known them as the clumsy ones who took the small and fluttering bodies of her kin for food and feathers, even beaks and talons. And though it had sorrowed her, she knew there was a balance to it. The people called their greetings and gave their thanks, but they hunted. It was an old deal made right at the beginning: her line would be sacrificed to theirs. But the gods gave them two gifts to cope with the hurt—abundance, and a lack of other predators.

She got used to their ways. She helped. There were people to organise and mouths to feed. She kept her clothed dignity, but didn't mind rolling up her sleeves. And time passed. And the wars ended, but then even more people were hungry, and she didn't know if the old ones had been right after all—could she really do anything to help? Her sleeves remained rolled up, and she saw everything that had caused her family to send her to the ground—how they struggled, these landwalkers, her upright naked friends, how they hurt themselves like little children who had not yet learnt how to hold a knife safely or run without tripping.

She had been so busy with the people and their wars that she didn't notice until it was done. They never took her hunting, they'd seen her disapproval and didn't want to anger her. But one day they emerged from the forest with empty hands, nothing to offer their children.

'It's the rats,' a man said.

'It might be the cats,' Eloise nodded toward the friendly feral at her feet.

'It's the white man.' This was an old koro who was known to shake his stick and rant about the changing world. 'They take them for their museums. Put them under glass to stare at. I saw it when I went over there as a boy on the ships . . .'

'Āe, āe, koro,' the young ones rolled their eyes. They'd heard about the ships, the ships. But that was long ago. Before all the wars. The wars hardened them, and made them so tired.

'They trade in them. Take them by the hundreds.'

No one wanted to hear this part. No one wanted to believe it. But she heard.

'It doesn't matter what happened to them now. There's none left to take. Haven't seen a huia since I was a boy.'

Could it be that she had been gone so long? Could it be that she hadn't noticed the voices of her elders fading? Would she be stuck in this place with these fleshy fools forever? No. They weren't ready. How could they understand the gifts of her kind when they couldn't even restrain themselves or others? All that killing.

So she left, just as swiftly as she had come. She wandered between villages, her anger turned inwards, devoured by her grief. She forgot herself.

It was a dark place she got into. She no longer held her head high, no longer dreamed of the future. Despair sat on her shoulders where her wings should have been. Darkness consumed her, the quivering lip of a dying abalone, grease in the barrel of a gun. Sometimes she did not see or hear any birds for weeks.

Then, one day, she saw him, his great figure hunched so that he looked like one of hers, hair on his head shimmering in the way of the tūī. When he moved she thought she heard the whispered scrape of feather against feather. He came slowly, in a considered fashion, was heavy limbed, but when he turned a certain way—it was enough.

'Lady,' he said, and bowed.

He was a dark-feathered mountain. He was the shape of her nights. He was ink spilt in a pool of oil, volcanic rock, onyx eyes. The black enveloped them. There had been so many long days, she had seen so many things she didn't want to see. Lady, he said, and she liked the way the word

curved around her and gave her a place to rest.

They had many children.

She had no time to remember herself then.

'Mother,' the children would call, 'we're hungry. Mother, we're cold. Help us.' Their mouths open with constant needs and demands. She was kept busy from the start of the day to the end.

They worked hard together to grow the children. It was easier for her to forget the guilt-ache and shame of where she had come from, how she had let it get so bad, how she didn't help her people. Better to let her children grow up in her husband's world, without the burden of her knowledge. She settled on this as the right path, though her husband would sometimes look sidelong at her, as if considering some puzzle he couldn't figure.

'Wife, sometimes you seem very far away,' he said one day.

'I am here, husband, look at me. I am always here.' But he was not convinced.

'Yes, your body is here, but I see when you leave. It is like you are up there somewhere.'

Even in a marriage, there is only so much you can hide. Or share.

'You can tell me about it, if you wish,' he said.

'Sometimes I miss my family, but then I think of the children.' That had been her answer. Focus on the children.

It was difficult, then, when one by one the children began to lose their way.

She watched them leave, sooner than she wished, on their own journeys of peril. But when her youngest son showed signs of following the same path, she took him aside.

'There's something I should have told you kids long ago.' Her son stooped so that she could whisper in his ear. She told him where she had come from, about her own kind, how there were so few left. Their gifts. The covenant they had had with his father's people. She told him how she had been sent a long time ago, and the telling was like an unravelling of all the things she had seen: the wars and despair, the museums and grief, the long, dark nights and the joy of making children.

'You were hope made real,' she told him. And she hoped it wasn't too late, hoped that the knowing would help him, hoped that the story would make him stronger than he knew how to be.

Her boy saw a world that was not what he thought it was. He saw many things that he hadn't known possible before. He only had one question.

'Why didn't you tell us? Why didn't you tell everyone?'

She thought how she should have opened her mouth when she kept it closed. How silence doesn't help anything. But would they have heard her? Maybe she didn't give them the chance.

'Perhaps I should have spoken sooner. Perhaps not. It is time when it is time,' she said, and placed her hand on her son's shoulder.

The unravelling of her story was an ending. The darkness came flooding back in. This time it wasn't bleak or hurtful, it was a flash of curved beak in velvet dark. Black milk. The depths of Te-Kore-the-place-before-night. More inviting, more liquid than you ever expected black to be. Darkness that holds all of light in it. Home, she thought, and she heard the movement of feathers through air.

smell, sound, feel,
or look like?

What does a
legacy taste,
smell, sound, feel,
or look like?

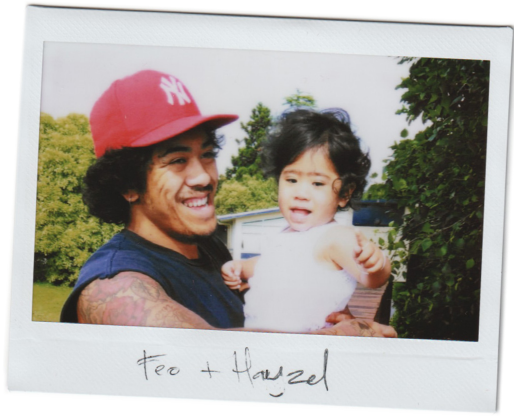
What does a
legacy taste,
smell, sound, feel,
or look like?

What does a
legacy taste,

Ukrit Sa-nguanhai

My mom miscarried her first child, a girl who hadn't been named. She was supposed to be my big sister. I hadn't known about this story until I was in high school, as Mom almost never mentioned it. So, I can't remember when I exactly acknowledged it. Unaware of my never-born big sis, I became a big sibling to my little brother and the first grandchild of the family. I got my nickname from my maternal grandfather. My mom told me he had prepared this name for me since I was in her womb. It's a funny name from a Thai gambling word that I used to be embarrassed about when I was a child, but I really like it now that I have grown up. However, my grandfather stopped naming grandchildren after me; he may have just run out of creativity after one.

Edith Amituanai



Hanley

Epi @ Rose place - April '22

Angelo

Nailah + (Hayzel in background)

Nifo

Sriwhana Spong

Dust

As a child, I heard whisperings, faint at first, that grew; murmurs of an island, like a grainy shadow, which had to be tenderly kept afloat as fiction. A friend who is a medium said to me one night, “Your grandfather wants to speak to you,” and I replied, “No.” Not because I didn’t want to hear from you, but because I couldn’t bear to hear you channelled into words. Hadn’t I followed your rattle, tuned into your buzzing? Can’t that be enough? So I said no, and the tapping stopped. But you became a swarm, which picked up your bule-pupa and carried her home, and I opened dizzy in your courtyard, where the buzzing became insistent.

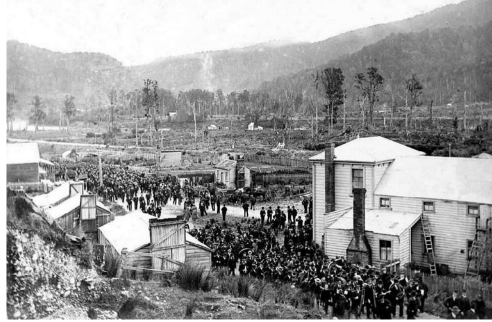
A few weeks later, my friend texted, “I think it might have been the grandfather on your mother’s side.” I texted back, “that makes more sense.” My maternal uncle hears voices, my mother speaks in tongues, and I feel, at times, your susurration, some days like a scourge of mosquitoes, other days like an eclipse of moths. A murmuration that is an accumulation of energy at odds with filial linearity, a vibration not a bloodline: a gyromancy, where felled by dizziness, at the point of falling, I see no successions, only shimmering diversions branching out in all directions like lightning in the rainy season.

Martin Sagadin

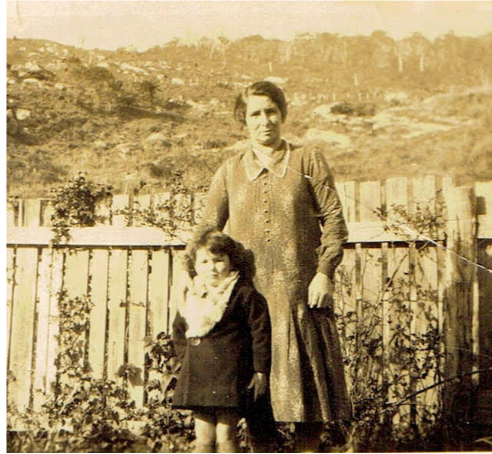
Garden of Clay, Ancestry, and Ritual

Parliamentary party at the opening of the Dobson Mine, 1920 (© Maye Dunn)

Widows and mourners of those killed in the 1896 Brunner disaster



Widows and mourners of those killed in the 1896 Brunner disaster (© Mary Moffitt)



Edith Moss and one of her children, c. 1920

My grandparents' families have a long history with mining. In the first picture an ancestor on my grandmother's side (William Parfitt, mayor of Grey) is celebrating the opening of Dobson mine in 1920. It will kill 9 men 10 years later.

The second and third photos are of widows and mourners of those killed in the 1896 Brunner disaster, which killed 67 men, one of which was my grandfather's ancestor. My grandad's grandad (Tom Coppersmith) also worked in the area of the Brunner mine, but on a smaller one that fed the bigger Brunner pit.

The fourth photo is of Edith Jane Moss with her child in Greymouth, around this era (she marries into my grandmother's family). My grandmother's family were politicians, gold miners and grocers, whilst my grandfather's family likely laboured under them as miners, farmers, and labourers. Together, through their relationship, they hold a multiplicity of histories within this shaky earth. Here I am trying to be very aware of this history, yet still digging in the earth for things of value.

—Caitlin Clarke, 2019

This piece of writing, a short ruminative journal entry by my friend and artist Caitlin Clarke was the catalyst for my interest in making a film with her. I'd previously been fascinated by Caitlin's practice, which in a mystical way involved returning and burying vessels to the places where she would harvest clay. I set about weaving this story into a short film.

"Digging in the earth for things of value" would comprise the major event in a film designed with vintage lenses in mind and a photography-adjacent approach to cinematography. Each shot would be a carefully composed landscape, on the one hand reflective of the inner landscapes of the artist and on another presenting real places where Caitlin's ancestral story has played out. The film would use a slow observational approach to documentary which I'd developed in my film *The Short Trilogy of Peace*, and which in itself was inspired by the Baltic poetic documentary tradition, by filmmakers such as Audrius Stonys, Šarunas Bartas, Sergei Loznitsa, etc. The film would be cyclic in nature, in part to showcase the cyclic character of Caitlin's practice, but also to allow for playing on a loop in a gallery setting, which was a novel way of anticipating the presentation for me.

With only a rough outline of the story, the film was shot over two visits to Christchurch, at Caitlin's home very close to the red zone (the abandoned and cleared post-earthquake suburbs) and on the Banks Peninsula, where we travelled with a small team, with me on camera, Chris Cubitt on sound, Cooki Martin as the production manager, and Caitlin with a yellow bucket, ready to collect clay. We stopped in a few places relevant to Caitlin's ancestry, but it was the ruins of the old mill in Pipers Valley that was the most interesting place to me, marked as it was only by a few rotten logs in the grass, but still so connected to the soil and the water in the physical space.

Collecting the soil took priority as the central scene in the film and this part was recorded in one go, as it unfolded in front of the camera. This gentle and dialogue-free scene would inform the rest of the film and the narrative would sit around it. The second visit was with an even smaller crew, this time just me and sound recordist Ella Waswo and the purpose of it was to capture the creation part of Caitlin's practice. Over an afternoon we looked over old photographs and followed Caitlin around her studio as she created several works. At this time we talked extensively about how to approach showing Caitlin's clay works, but the answer presented itself to us when later in the evening, Caitlin would hold the objects and observe the play of the last winter light on their glazes.

With all the material collected, the edit was unusually swift for such a contemplative and slow film. The majority of the footage that was shot ended up in the film with a cutting ratio of about 1.5 to 1—meaning that only about a quarter of the footage captured was discarded, which is also unusual for a digital production.

Setting up the individual sequences was the first task, then I played around with their order. The film ended up including these events:

> *Caitlin looks through her archives and family trees and recounts half of an anecdote about a family path that ended up stagnating and going nowhere. She struggles to find more photos.*
>
> *Images drift to the ruins of a mill on Banks Peninsula.*
>
> *In the evening Caitlin makes a new work, a large clay cup.*
>
> *As rain falls, Caitlin collects clay from a creek. She buries an item she has made earlier.*

> *In the last light of the evening, Caitlin observes works she has made in the past.*

These disparate but connected images are presented in a way where each scenario obliquely anticipates the next and the creative process taking place means that not one part of the film can exist without the other, regardless of the order in which these events are presented. Though there is an obscure connection between these images, they all rely on each other and talk to each other to create the final meaning of the film.

Isolating this artist and these events makes it seem as though there is an endless loop taking place, an air of things passed, lives lived, grief forgotten, replaced by kindness and softness captured in an endless sunset. And even so, there is a sense of a reality, of real time being gathered and presented to the audience, sometimes abstracted but always passing and permitting a stage for the ritual to take place.

Garden of Clay is a personal, very subjective vision of a gentle part of the world, aware of the hurts of the past, but existing in a sort of isolated monastic silent space. The environment presented is far from ascetic though, but instead one bursting with quiet creative possibility through the elements shown. With such an explicit presence of water, soil as well as air (opening shot is simply wind blowing through the trees, captured on the way to Banks Peninsula), fire is notably absent as an element, especially considering the fact that it is required in the firing of the clay works. The elements on display here are gentle and the film presents an intentionally gentle atmosphere, verging on idealistic or even romantic.

Each image is carefully composed and the camera doesn't move once the composition is established, save for a single zooming shot. The visual language encourages the viewer to slow down, it doesn't provide all the information but allows for the images themselves to give sufficient detail. Caitlin doesn't explain her process and the whole film plays itself out like a lonely rite that we are privileged to witness. It was a difficult task deciding how much information should be enough or indeed too much within the film itself. *Garden of Clay* uses Caitlin's initial writing as a jumping off board, a rich and often convoluted family history flattened against the family tree on her table, rolled up to make space for the creative work upon which this subjective filmic idea can also be built.

Pati Tyrell

Still from *Tulouna le Lagi*, Pati Tyrell, 2022

Films

Edith Amituanai
Epifania, 2022
Digital video, sound
8 min 30 sec
Camera: Ralph Brown

Sriwhana Spong
And the creeper keeps on reaching for the flame tree, 2022
Digital video, sound
5 min 3 sec

Ukrit Sa-nguanhai
Trip After, 2022
Digital video, sound
10 min 14 sec

Pati Tyrell
Tulouna le Lagi, 2022
Digital video, sound
5 min
Animation: Tanu Gago
Featuring: Jermaine Dean, Falencie Filipo, Moe Laga, Skivi Meredith, Fili Tapa, Manueli Vetenibua

Martin Sagadin
Garden of Clay, 2022
Digital video, sound
16 min 12 sec
Production manager: Cooki Martin
Sound Recording: Chris Cubitt & Ella Waswo
Sound Mix: Chris Sinclair
Colour Grade: David McLaren
Opening Title: Priscilla Howe
With Caitlin Clarke
Thanks to Abigail Egden, Ben Delany, Rose Salmon, Taipua Adams, Oscar Meins, Paige Jensen, May Adadol Ingawanij, Mark Williams

Contributors

May Adadol Ingawanij / เม อาดาดล อิงคะวณิช is a writer, curator, and teacher. She works on de-westernised and decentred histories and genealogies of cinematic arts; avant-garde legacies in Southeast Asia; forms of potentiality and future-making in contemporary artistic and curatorial practices; aesthetics and circulation of artists' moving image, art and independent films in, around, and related to Southeast Asia. She is Professor of Cinematic Arts at the University of Westminster where she co-directs the Centre for Research and Education in Arts and Media. She features in *ArtReview*'s 2021 Power 100.

Edith Amituanai was born in 1980 in Auckland, New Zealand. In 2005 she completed a Bachelor of Design (majoring in photography) at Unitec Institute of Technology, before completing a Master of Fine Arts from Elam School of Fine Arts at the University of Auckland in 2009. In 2007, Amituanai was the first recipient of the Art Foundation's Marti Friendlander Photographic Award. The following year she was nominated for the Walters Prize at Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki. She has exhibited extensively in galleries and museums across Aotearoa and internationally in Australia, Austria, Taiwan, Germany, and France. Her artwork is held in national collections including Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, and Govett-Brewster Art Gallery.

Tina Makereti (Te Ātiawa, Ngāti Tūwharetoa, Ngāti Rangatahi) is author of *The Imaginary Lives* of James Pōneke and co-editor of *Black Marks on the White Page*, an anthology that celebrates Māori and Pasifika writing. In 2016 her story 'Black Milk' won the Commonwealth Writers Short Story Prize, Pacific region. Her other books are *Where the Rēkohu Bone Sings* and *Once Upon a Time in Aotearoa.* She won two Ngā Kupu Ora Māori Fiction Awards and has been the recipient of the RSNZ Manhire Prize for Creative Science Writing and the Pikihuia Award for Best Short Story in English. She teaches creative writing at the IIML, Te Herenga Waka Victoria University of Wellington.

Huni Mancini is an archivist and writer based on Waiheke Island. Her heritage is Tongan from the villages of Lapaha, Mu'a and Hihifo, Niuatoputapu, and Italian from the villages Grillara/Monti in Rovigo, Veneto. She works with audiovisual taonga at the Archive of Māori and Pacific Sound, and holds a Master of Arts and PGDip in Information Studies.

Martin Sagadin is a Slovenian-born, New Zealand based non-binary filmmaker and artist. In 2018 they finished a Masters in Fine Arts with a focus on directing and writing at the University of Canterbury. Martin lives and works in New Zealand as a freelance writer and director making music videos and feature films.

Ukrit Sa-nguanhai is a Thai video artist and filmmaker who lives and works in Bangkok and Chiang Mai, Thailand. Recently, he has been interested in the aesthetics of amateur film, local film history, and collaborative works with local people.

Thomasin Sleigh is CIRCUIT's Writer in Residence and she edited this publication to accompany the 2022 Artist Cinema Commissions. She is a writer and editor with a focus on the visual arts. Thomasin's family emigrated from Zimbabwe to Aotearoa when she was young, and she is based in Te Whanganui-a-tara.

Sriwhana Spong is an artist from Aotearoa New Zealand, living in London. Spong produces scripts of her body that document in various mediums the oscillations of distance and intimacy produced by an approach toward another—most recently, a rat nesting outside her window; a newly discovered species of snake; a painting by her grandfather, the Balinese painter, I Gusti Made Rundu; and a twelfth-century Javanese poem. Recent exhibitions include *Live Art Commissions*, The Roberts Institute of Art, London (2022); *The 10th Walters Prize*, Auckland Art Gallery (2021); *Trust and Confusion*, Tai Kwun Contemporary, Hong Kong (2021); *Honestly Speaking*, Auckland Art Gallery (2020); *castle-crystal*, Edinburgh Arts Festival (2019); and *Ida-Ida*, Spike Island, Bristol (2019). In 2022, Spong will contribute a new work to the Istanbul Biennale.

Pati Tyrell is a Samoan interdisciplinary artist with a strong focus on performance. He uses lens-based media to create visual material centered around ideas of urban Pacific queer identity. He has shown work at Museum of Contemporary Arts Australia, Pingyao International Photography Festival, Centre Pompidou Paris, and was a 2018 Walters Prize nominee. Tyrell is a co-founder of the queer Pasifika arts collective FAFSWAG, who in 2020 received an Arts Foundation Laureate, and in 2022 showed at documenta fifteen in Kassel, Germany.

Mark Williams is the founding Director/Curator of CIRCUIT Artist Moving Image. CIRCUIT was launched in 2012 with the support of Creative New Zealand. Prior to the establishment of CIRCUIT Williams worked at the New Zealand Film Archive from 1999–2010, programming 60 exhibitions and 100 film and video screenings, talks, and performances, drawing primarily on artist moving image practice and associated historical/social documents from the Archive's collection.

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