

Kāinga a roto | Home within | Innerlijk huis 2010

Sonja van Kerkhoff + Sen McGlinn www.sonjavank.com/sensonja

Above are the constellations of Orion and Matariki (The Seven Sisters / Pleiades) as seen in June in Aotearoa at the time of the Māori New Year. Matiriki means 'the eyes of God' or 'little eyes.' Below these, the videos function like windows onto the land we inhabit. In particular they show the diverse beauty of New Zealand rivers, forests, beaches and farmlands. Below them, the carpet landscape underfoot will evolve during this exhibition.

This suite of videos also weaves between various worlds - the world of Tāne (the forest and the land), the world of Tāwhirimātea (the winds) represented by sounds of breathing and signs of the wind (such as in the flags filmed at the Parihaka Peace Festival), patterns on the surface of water, and a storm.

In "The Moving Heart", the world of Rangi (the heavens) is referred to through Toroa Pohatu's lyrics about the celestial inspiring and providing illumination. In the Maori language, Whānau Mārama means both family of the stars and family which inspires. The imagery of gliding albatross, manaia (bird-human figures) and taniwha (water-spirits) and Sonja's koru-filled sculpture harmonise with this gliding between realms: the familial and the celestial.

A similar switching between the personal and the external occurs in "The Dark Valley" in the use of text, while in "The Two Lands" the timing and visuals is what gives distance to a personal narrative.

Birds can be heard in all of the videos, beings which live on the land, in the air and on the water. In "The dark Valley" the rooster strutting on the beach seems out of place, an import, while in "The Tears of Rangi" the Pukeko (native hen) steps with care, and in "The two lands" crows scatter outwards. Birds are heard sometimes as part of the natural world and at other times as part of a soundscape.

However the world which dominates in all the videos is that of Tangaroa (the seas and rivers). Because water doesn't stand still, we are carried along, by the flow, the sounds, and by a narrative that is sometimes personal and traumatic - at other times juxtaposed against theoretical text.

Childhood is a recurrent theme in these videos. It is associated with inner or metaphysical movement, detachment and change.

These videos contain footage made by Sonja while in Aotearoa/New Zealand in January-February 2009 and December 2009-January 2010.

1. Ngā Roimata o Rangi | The tears of Rangi (first on the left as you enter) 17 min. 2 sec.

Another way of saying it is raining in Māori is "Ranginui (the skyfather) is crying for Papatuanuku." Personifying the natural world and hence showing our human dependence on and relationship with nature, also gives the falling rain an emotional association. The main theme of the video is about having 'feeling,' being able to feel despite traumatic childhood events. Tears are signs of emotion, a sign of being able to feel, to listen, to learn from and to relate to the environment.

Texts: Three lines of lyrics from "Four Seasons in One Day" by New Zealand musicians, Neil + Tim Finn (x-Crowded House), *Sociology* by Anthony Giddens, Paraphrases from the article *The Scapegoat Complex: Archetypal Reflections on a Culture of Severance* by George McGrath Callan. Some lines from *The Four Quartets* by T.S. Elliot.

Soundscape: created with sounds from freesound.org and recorded sounds on location, including a jam session with Pūherehua (bull roarers), a Māori traditional instrument.

2. **The Moving Heart | Te Ngākau Nekeneke** (*first on the right as you enter*) **7 minutes**

The constant shifting between the natural and cultural, dominated by the footage of gliding albatrosses, suggest the other-worldly. As spiritual beings, we gain meaning from associations and from change, from 'a moving heart' affected by our environment, whether land, water or sky.

Song: Whānau Mārama by Toroa Pohatu, Aotearoa/New Zealand, 3min. 30 seconds.

Carving: Whaikairo maihi (bargeboard carvings for the boathouse) made for the Volkenkunde Museum whare waka (boathouse) in Leiden, The Netherlands, August 2010 by carvers: Takirirangi Smith, Brett Rollo, Sam Hauwaho + Hingangaroa Smith.

Sculpture: Ngā hau e whā (The 4 winds), Molenpark, sculpture park, Urmond, The Netherlands by Sonja van Kerkhoff

The albatrosses were filmed at Taiaroa Heads, Otago Harbour, December 2009.

3. **The Two Lands** (*next to video nr.2*) **16 min. 9 sec.** *Alternates with and without the spoken text.*

Some of Sonja's experiences from 11 to 16 years, which led her to separate two worlds, that of her family, the unwanted, and the world outside of this, the wanted.

Voice: Sonja van Kerkhoff *Sound engineering of the voice:* Sandy Hoover, U.S.A.

4. **The Dark Valley** (*next to video nr.1*) **14 min. 10 sec.**

A soundscape of Maori traditional instruments, children and the natural world complements the images of misty hills and valleys which dominate a story about childhood and trauma, fantasy, projection and memory.

Text: Paraphrases from the essay, "*This is not a game: testimony and the making and unmaking of the child as a political subject*" by Julia Emberley in Australian Humanities Research. Special Issue. "*Testimony and Trauma: New Directions.*" 15.3 (2009): 48-64.

Sounds: Pūherehua (bull roarer) jam at the Tahora folk festival, Jerome Kavanagh playing the poi āwhiowhio, pūtātara, pūtōrino + nguru; jam with Taonga Pūoro (Māori traditional instruments) at a marae along the Whanganui River, various sounds courtesy of Luftrum, yewbic, greyseraphim, plagasul & children at Te Papa museum by jmfh from The Freesound Project (freesound.org) birds, sea, river, rain, forest, wind recorded on location.

5. **Heart of the Land | Te Ngākau o te whenua** (*located at the end*) **14 min. 12 sec.**

The Whanganui river is like a continuous vein leading to the heart of the land.

A lot of the footage was made while on a waka (canoe) on the Whanganui River and at midway in the video kiwis can be briefly heard as they called from one side of the valley to the other.

Music: Stilte na de storm | Peace after the storm by Tama McGlinn, 4 min piano.

The videos on the **Kāinga a roto DVD** are a little shorter or longer with credits and titles added.

Footage of this installation in Museum *Beelden aan Zee* will be added to www.sonjavank.com/kainga.htm where you can also download this text as well.

Locations which appear in these videos are: On a waka (canoe) as participant in the Te Ia Kōrero (Slow Flow) project organized by Julian Priest + Mike Poa, along the Whanganui river between Whakahoro and Hiruhārama/Jerusalem, Te Waikoropupu Springs, Collingwood, beaches and inlets in the Golden Bay area, Kaupokonui beach, Mt Dampner Falls, Moeraki, Muriwai beach, Otakou, Otago Peninsula, Parihaka, Rotorua, Patea beach, Sumner, Tahora, Mount Taranaki, Taranaki farmland, as well as some footage made in Leiden and Urmond in the Netherlands, and in the U.K. in 2009 and 2010.

Kete harakeke (*flax baskets*): by Robyn Webster + Debbie Gillanders

Piupiu (*flax hangings*): a gift from Ngā iwi o Ngāti Hinemanu/Ngāti Paki via Jerome Kavanagh

Sound engineering of all voices: Sandy Hoover, U.S.A.