

LISA REIHANA

PURSUIT OF VENUS

Artwork labels

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Lisa Reihana

Pursuit of Venus

Lisa Reihana's *in Pursuit of Venus* is a two-channel live-action video based on the celebrated nineteenth-century scenic wallpaper *Les Sauvages de la Mer Pacifique*, 1804–05, designed by Jean-Gabriel Charvet for French entrepreneur Joseph Dufour. Although *Les Sauvages* draws upon journal accounts of Captain Cook, Louis de Bougainville and de La Pérouse's Pacific voyages but the Māori, Pacific and First Nations peoples featured in the wallpaper are dressed in Neoclassical attire and removed from their cultural, political and historical reality.

Reihana employs twenty-first century digital technologies to animate the wallpaper and re-examine its conceptual framework. She creates a vast panoramic field populated by a myriad of people drawn from across the Pacific and Aotearoa / New Zealand. Reihana's re-imagining of the history of Pacific Islander People from the inside is a critical aspect of decolonisation. The Māori and Pacific performers bring forth visual poetics of indigenous culture and knowledge to recalibrate colonial history from their own standpoints.

Lisa Reihana

Māori people born 1964

in Pursuit of Venus

2015 Auckland, New Zealand

2 channel colour high definition video transferred to media
player, stereo sound,
15 min 58 sec, ed. 2/3

Purchased NGV Foundation, 2015

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For Kids

In 1804 French artist Joseph Dufour designed wallpaper that pictured Pacific people in an island paradise. When Māori artist Lisa Reihana looked at the wallpaper, she thought it didn't look real. She decided to make her own work, a sound and action video. She worked with Pacific Islander actors to show what she thought it was really like when Pacific peoples first met European explorers.

Look at the French wallpaper and Lisa Reihana's video. What similarities and differences can you find?