

BLUE: CONTEMPORARY ARTISTS FROM OCEANIA

Benjamin Akuila | Morgan Hogg | Ming Ranginui |

Ashleigh Taupaki | Thi Vaihu | Luuk Zillich

13 June – 11 July 2026



[Morgan Hogg, 'Silver Tongues' (still), 2025, single-channel video, sound. Commissioned by Sydney Opera House for the Shortwave Program, enabled by The Skrzynski Foundation and Sydney Opera House New Work Now donors and produced by Blacktown Arts.]

8 Wall Gallery is pleased to share our current group presentation, *Blue: Contemporary artists from Oceania*, featuring works by Benjamin Akuila, Morgan Hogg, Ming Ranginui, Ashleigh Taupaki, Thi Vaihū & Luuk Zillich.

Opening Saturday 13 June, 4-6 pm, with words from the 2026 Premier's Arts and Culture Medal winner Leo Tanoi.

Blue: Contemporary artists from Oceania presents a new wave of Indigenous artists who reimagine traditional cultural practices in a contemporary setting. This group of Gen Z artists from the Islands across the Pacific Ocean/Moana - also known as the 'Blue Continent' - are a part of the next generation of makers reimagining traditional cultural practices in a contemporary setting.

Three of the 6 included artists are based in Australia, and the other half in Aotearoa/New Zealand. Morgan Hogg's recent video work commissioned by the Sydney Opera House for the Shortwave Program is on display, with exquisite stills from the film available for the first time. For Luuk Zillich, *Blue: Contemporary art from Oceania* is his first group show outside of his alma

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mater, the National Art School, from where he graduated with a BFA in 2025. Thi Vaihū is debuting her aute (mulberry paper bark) practice in Australia, after spending the past 4 years deep in her practice, learning from her kin and peers in the field, including mentorship from artist Atarangi Anderson. Vaihū, Anderson, and their peers are bringing ancient techniques, knowledge, and cultural understanding to a contemporary audience. Together, this next generation of Indigenous artists are leading the path and reconnecting us through the blue.

Curated by Sam Houben (Ngāti Kahu, Te Rarawa), the exhibition includes new works and recently commissioned installations, all of which are commercially available at 8 Wall Gallery.

BENJAMIN AKUILA (b. 2000) is a multidisciplinary artist of Tongan and Irish descent. Akuila's work explores ideas of cultural authenticity and identity performances within the Tongan-Australian diaspora through the material use of clay. Through investigating societal constructs of history, identity, and gender, Akuila utilises humour and heliaki (allusion) to subvert these preconceived notions.

MORGAN HOGG (b. 2000) is a multidisciplinary artist and creative producer of Cook Island Māori (Ngāti Tāne), Tahitian, and English descent. Working across installation and performance, her practice explores cultural identity, displacement, and intergenerational knowledge through the lens of her Kūki Airani heritage.

MING RANGINUI (b. 1998) (Te Ati Haunui-a-Pāpārangi) is multidisciplinary artist of Māori descent who works across installation and sculpture, often using traditional Māori weaving techniques incorporating whatu or tāniko, and works within themes of tino rangatiratanga (Māori sovereignty), spirituality, and survival.

ASHLEIGH TAUPAKI (b. 1997) (Ngāti Hako, Ngāti Rangitihi, Ngāti Kahungunu) is a multidisciplinary artist who works primarily in object, drawing, and research. She has recently completed a PhD in Fine Arts at Elam School of Fine Arts and Design. Her work investigates complex relationships between knowledge systems and cultural understanding through visual and conceptual frameworks.

THI VAIHŪ (b. 1997) (Ngāpuhi, Ngāti Whatua Ki Kaipara, Waikato Tainui, Tonga) is a kiriaute (Māori barkcloth practitioner). Vaihū grows, harvests and processes aute (mulberry paper bark) from Te Henga, Bethells Beach, New Zealand.

LUUK ZILLICH (b. 2003) is an emerging sculpture artist of Māori (Ngāti Pōneke) and Dutch heritage whose work explores materiality, memory, and identity. Through an intuitive carving process, patterns emerge subconsciously, often functioning as partial or unresolved self-portraits shaped by memory and instinct.

BLUE: Contemporary artist from Oceania continues from 13 June – 11 June 2026.