

Jasmine Togo-Brisby

# HOM SWIT HOM



Jasmine Togo-Brisby

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AN ARTSPACE MACKAY EXHIBITION



## PUBLISHER

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## COVER IMAGE

Jasmine TOGO-BRISBY  
*Bitter sweet* 2015, brown sugar and resin,  
14 x 19 x 14.5 cm each, dimensions  
variable. Courtesy the artist.

## INSIDE COVER IMAGE

Jasmine TOGO-BRISBY  
Installation view of *Bitter sweet*,  
Artspace Mackay, January 2022.  
PHOTO: Jim Cullen Photographer.

## INSIDE BACK COVER IMAGE

Jasmine TOGO-BRISBY  
'Hom Swit Hom' exhibition view,  
Artspace Mackay, January 2022.  
PHOTO: Jim Cullen Photographer.

**Australian South Sea Islander, Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal readers are respectfully advised this catalogue contains images of people who have passed away.**

The staff of Artspace Mackay acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we live and work, the Yuwi People. We extend this acknowledgement to all Aboriginal members of the Birri Gubba Nation and pay respects to Elders past and present, and to the young emerging leaders. We acknowledge the important protocols of the Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and Australian South Sea Islander communities across the Mackay region.

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# FOREWORD

As the title suggests, 'Hom Swit Hom' is a kind of homecoming for Jasmine Togo-Brisby. Jasmine is a fourth-generation Australian South Sea Islander, a direct descendant of South Sea Islanders brought to Australia between 1847 and 1904 to work on sugar and cotton plantations, through coercion and force via a practice known as blackbirding. She has spent the last six years working, studying, and developing her arts practice in Aotearoa New Zealand. This is the artist's first major solo exhibition and, fittingly, it takes place here in Mackay, Yuwi country, home to the largest Australian South Sea Islander community.

I first met Jasmine and became aware of her arts practice through her participation in the State Library of Queensland's 2019 exhibition 'Plantation Voices: Contemporary Conversations with Australian South Sea Islanders,' curated by friend and colleague Imelda Miller, Curator of Torres Strait Islander and Pacific Indigenous Studies at the Queensland Museum. Through Imelda, it was exciting to meet Jasmine, a contemporary artist exploring new ways to articulate a reimagined history of plantation colonisation. Through her reclamation of the visual and cultural material of blackbirding and the sugar industry, she invites us to consider the history and legacy of blackbirding from her South Sea viewpoint, an identity that is intrinsically connected to this narrative.

In conversation, Jasmine recalls vivid memories of driving to Mackay as a child each school holiday to visit family. She remembers driving through smoke filled roads while the cane was being burnt off on either side. This is a reminiscence familiar to many locals and for Jasmine it is directly linked to belonging and family. She states 'the sweetness of home is of community, family, [and] of being in the one

place in the world where I don't have to explain myself. With that sweetness also comes the bitter reality of why our community exists in the first place.'

A key artwork in 'Hom Swit Hom' is the evocative, large-scale installation *Bitter sweet* 2015 (see cover pages), comprised of over one hundred skulls cast in unrefined sugar and presented in a mound on the floor of a darkened room. Jasmine first created the work in 2013, after learning of the uncovering of a mass grave of South Sea Islanders on an old sugar cane plantation in Bundaberg. Today, mass unmarked graves remain scattered across plantations throughout Queensland and northern New South Wales. In Mackay, over 100 unmarked graves of South Sea Islanders were recently discovered on the outskirts of the Mackay cemetery. *Bitter sweet* inherently speaks of trauma but, through its acknowledgement of past injustices, it is also a means of healing. The work is a symbolic link between Jasmine and her ancestors, and thus a source of power and pride for the artist.

There are still many people in our broader community who are unaware of Australian South Sea Islander history, heritage and lived experiences. As viewers will see in 'Hom Swit Hom,' contemporary art can be an invaluable tool for meaning-making, and really getting to the heart of an issue. We at Artspace Mackay are committed to providing agency to Australian South Sea Islander artists to create works that increase visibility and awareness of their unique identity and narrative. It is with great pleasure that we present this powerful and moving exhibition by Jasmine Togo-Brisby.

**TRACEY HEATHWOOD**  
**Director, Artspace Mackay**





**THIS PAGE AND NEXT PAGES:** 'Hom Swit Hom' exhibition views at Artspace Mackay, January 2022.  
**PHOTOS:** Jim Cullen Photographer.





Small white informational label with text, positioned to the right of the small oval medallion.



# OUR OWN, OUR LIVES: AUSTRALIAN SOUTH SEA ISLANDERS

IMELDA MILLER, CURATOR PACIFIC AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER STUDIES, QUEENSLAND MUSEUM

Australian South Sea Islanders belong to a distinct cultural group who have made valuable contributions to Australia's cultural landscape—we have local histories with national significances and global connections. As a curator with Australian South Sea Islander heritage, I know that many people remain unaware of Australian South Sea Islander history, heritage and lived experiences. The exhibition 'Hom Swit Hom' by Australian South Sea Islander artist Jasmine Togo-Brisby explores her own experiences and gives a unique and personal insight into the Australian South Sea Islander experience.

Australian South Sea Islanders are the descendants of more than 62,000 South Sea Islanders who were brought to Australia between 1847 and 1904. At first, there were very few mechanisms in place to control and manage the movement and 'recruitment' of South Sea Islanders. This meant many were blackbirded—forced, tricked, coerced or lured

onto ships—while others came by choice. Most arrived on the east coast of Australia from Vanuatu, the Solomon Islands, as well as New Caledonia, Fiji, Kiribati, and the New Ireland and Milne Bay provinces of Papua New Guinea.

The voyage to Australia was hazardous and many did not survive the journey. Arriving in Australia, and sent to work on plantations, exploited Islanders were exposed to extremely harsh working conditions and long hours of hard labour in an unfamiliar land, for little or no money and often subjected to conditions like enslavement.

For more than 40 years, South Sea Islanders continued as a cheap labour force for the developing Australian sugar industry. As the sugar industry spread along the eastern seaboard so did the movement of South Sea Islanders, especially in Queensland in areas we now know as Cairns, Townsville, Mackay,



ABOVE: Australian South Sea Islander women working in the cane fields, Hambledon Mill, ca. 1890. John Oxley Library Collection. Image courtesy State Library of Queensland.

Rockhampton, Bundaberg, Maryborough, Sunshine Coast, Logan, and the Gold Coast.

Despite the odds, South Sea Islanders forged new lives for their families in their new

country. However, the development and implementation of race-based policies including the Immigration Restriction Act 1901 and the Pacific Islanders Act 1901—commonly known as the White Australia policy—led to the forced deportation of South Sea Islander labourers. This was the largest mass deportation in Australian history, with very little care given to repatriating them to their rightful homelands; some instead dumped on nearby islands. With the support of some of the wider community, proactive South Sea Islanders petitioned the Australian government, leading to about 1,200 Islanders being exempt from deportation and able to remain in Australia.

Those who were able to stay, including many in the Mackay region, continued to be the subject of discrimination under legislation that forced Islanders out of the sugar industry they helped create. Despite these massive disruptions, remaining Islanders went on to establish their own small communities on the outskirts of towns, eventually finding work in different industries including pastoral jobs, railways, meatworks, hospitals and domestic services. Yet their history remained largely unacknowledged; only after decades of

campaigning by the descendants of the South Sea Islanders who remained did the Commonwealth Government officially recognise Australian South Sea Islanders as a distinct ethnic group with its own Australian history and culture, made official on the 25th of August, 1994. The Queensland Government followed this in September 2000.

‘Hom Swit Hom’ is an emotional homecoming for Jasmine Togo-Brisby, as the Australian-born artist has spent the last six years working, studying and developing her arts practice in Aotearoa New Zealand. Like her South Sea Islander ancestors, she knows how it feels to be away from home, family and community, and to be a visitor in another land across the ocean. Through her art practice, Togo-Brisby has connected emotionally and physically to the journey of her ancestors, so as to explore new ways of articulating a reimagined history through her arts practice. This story, her story, is one of many.

I first met Jasmine Togo-Brisby in 2013 while developing an exhibition for the 150th anniversary of South Sea Islanders arriving into Queensland. After watching her work develop and move toward the

archives, I invited Togo-Brisby to be one of four Australian South Sea Islander artists in the exhibition I curated, ‘Plantation Voices: Contemporary Conversations with Australian South Sea Islanders’ at the State Library of Queensland in Brisbane in 2019. The exhibition highlighted the strength and resilience of Australian South Sea Islanders on the 25th anniversary of the official recognition of the Australian South Sea Islander community.



ABOVE FROM TOP TO BOTTOM, LEFT TO RIGHT: Australian South Sea Islander artists LaVonne Bobongie, Dylan Mooney, Jasmine Togo-Brisby and Joella Warkill, at ‘Plantation Voices’ 2019. Courtesy State Library of Queensland.

As the curator of 'Plantation Voices,' it was important to bring a community-focused voice, through a narrative strongly connected to the community's own personal, historical, and living experiences. With this in mind, it was essential to create space for historical material to be interwoven with the community stories, allowing connection between the people and the historical archives in an act of reclamation of photos and documents related to our ancestors. The exhibition platformed contemporary storytelling through digital stories from community, and expressions of contemporary art by Australian South Sea Islander artists further elevated the community's voice, agency, and visibility in the telling of this significant history from an emic point of view.

As an Australian South Sea Islander artist who uses historical archives, images, documents, reports and manuscripts, Togo-Brisby's work was an integral part of this conversation. Her photographic series 'The Past is Ahead, Don't Look Back' 2018 (see pages 17-18) retrieved historical images out of the archives that, in the artist's words, 'were not made for us, our people were the subjects, we were not intended to be the viewer.'<sup>1</sup> She then transforms them

by inserting herself and her daughter into the visual plane to reclaim these images and the people in them as our own. In this work, Togo-Brisby carries the depicted ancestors from the past into a present-day conversation about Australian South Sea Islander history and identity. These works are now a part of the State Library of Queensland collection, providing a beautiful legacy for future generations around the resilience of the Australian South Sea Islander community.

Togo-Brisby is a fourth-generation Australian South Sea Islander, and like many of her generation, her great-great-grandparents were taken from Vanuatu. She finds strength in the family stories and creates complex and layered works inspired by her family's oral histories and archives. The series 'Adrift' 2018-2019 (see pages 19-25) features three generations of her family; herself, her mother and her daughter. The works explore the histories of plantation colonisation across the Pacific, and more importantly, the series pushes the photographic representation of South Sea Islanders. By inserting the three generations into historical collodion wet-plate photographs, the images create spaces and voids for the past, present and future to

come together and enable a reimagining of our lived experiences.

*Mother tongue* 2020 (see pages 36-37) is another work by Togo-Brisby connecting the past to the present. In August 1863, the schooner *Don Juan* brought the first shipload of South Sea Islanders to arrive in Queensland. It arrived at the port of Brisbane in Moreton Bay, Quandamooka country, with 73 Ni-Vanuatu people on board. The ship's 'cargo' was commissioned by Robert Towns, in order to establish his Townsvale cotton plantation on the Logan River, Yugambah country. The names of those willing and unwilling passengers were not recorded. In 1900, after decades of service, the *Don Juan* found its final resting place in Kōpūtai (Otago Harbour), outside Dunedin. At low tide its carcass can be seen jutting above the waterline.

With rare and incomplete ship logs, and minimal physical remnants of South Sea Islander presence in the landscape, Togo-Brisby's filmic work *Mother tongue* is a moving interaction with the *Don Juan's* large watery grave. The work archives this vessel's remaining frame as a site of significance and a place of remembrance. It reclaims the *Don Juan's* skeleton as part of the South Sea

Islander experience, but this time on Togo-Brisby's and her ancestors' own terms.

Australian South Sea Islander culture and history continues to live, survive and thrive across the generations. The community actively seeks out family lines in ancestral home islands and celebrates their roots, identity and resilience. Mackay, on the lands of the Yuwi people, is today home to the largest Australian South Sea Islander community.

Our ancestors, including mine and Jasmine's, were visitors here, making a home, a place to belong, and a place to be understood. Held in Mackay, 'Hom Swit Hom' communicates the complexities of South Sea experiences of hardship, exploitation, and discrimination that have made our families strong and resilient. The exhibition offers a South Sea lens to centre personal stories of the human trade of South Sea Islanders. Togo-Brisby creates

works that encourage viewers to imagine history from the perspective of people whose identity this narrative is intrinsically connected to. Moving forward, it is imperative that artists of the Australian South Sea Islander lineage, including Jasmine Togo-Brisby, maintain agency in this space and continue to create artworks that increase visibility and awareness to a wider public.

#### ENDNOTE

1> Jasmine Togo-Brisby, *The past is ahead, don't look back*, John Oxley Library Blog, State Library of Queensland, 29 July 2019, <https://www.slq.qld.gov.au/blog/past-ahead-dont-look-back>

# RECURRING SHIPS: SITES OF RESISTANCE AND RESILIENCE

NINA TONGA, CURATOR CONTEMPORARY ART, MUSEUM OF NEW ZEALAND TE PA-PA TONGAREWA

Crows are often perceived as ominous creatures; their glossy black plumage and piercing eyes have been popularised in film and literature as symbols of evil and bad luck. These sinister connotations are heightened through their metaphoric associations with the harrowing practice of blackbirding, the kidnapping and coercion of people into indentured labour. Across parts of the Pacific, the painful legacy of the sudden disappearances of people from the beach and the sight of strange ships moored to the shore lingers in the cautionary lyrics of songs and oral histories. Few of the 62,000 Pacific peoples who were tricked or coerced into indentured labour in Australia, or those who were willing 'recruits,' ever returned.<sup>1</sup> Some did not survive the passage. Others did not survive the harsh conditions of their work. For their descendants, such as multidisciplinary artist Jasmine Togo-Brisby, the visual and cultural material of blackbirding and the sugar cane industry are central to the formation of the

diasporic culture and identity of Australian South Sea Islanders. Throughout her practice, the recurring images of crows and ships are chronotopes, markers of space and time, that ground her works in the narratives of the Pacific slave trade whilst also providing the framework for its revision and reimagining.<sup>2</sup>

Transmission and inheritance are artistic and philosophical imperatives that drive much of Togo-Brisby's research and practice. Her artistic sojourns to the past are collective journeys that visually affirm the matrilineage of 'Granny' (great-great grandmother) who links her mother Christine, the artist and her daughter Eden. Their collective presence across several works began at a poignant milestone when Eden turned eight, the same age at which their Granny was kidnapped off the beach in Vanuatu and taken to Sydney where she was acquired as a house slave for the Wunderlich family. These fraught family histories permeate through 'Adrift' 2018-19 (see pages 19-25), a

series of collodion photographs on tin and glass that evoke nineteenth century studio portraits. The family portraits capture three generations of women—the artist, her mother and daughter—posing in Victorian dress while holding or wearing a model barque.

The 'Adrift' series of portraits form a family archive that is intimately entwined with the legacies of the Pacific slave labour trade. The image of the slave ship across the series is repossessed in what art historian Cheryl Finley calls a 'symbolic possession of the past.'<sup>3</sup> In the evocatively titled group portrait *Adrift amidst the middle passage III* 2019 (see page 25) the artist's mother sits proudly with a model slave ship adorning her head. For the artist, these model ships are headdresses, forms of adornment that proudly assert their genealogical connections to the history of the Pacific slave trade. In other 'Adrift' portraits, the model ships are mounted on staffs or carefully held as precious objects. Cultural theorist

Paul Gilroy in his seminal book *The Black Atlantic* asserts that the image of the ship is a central organising symbol of slavery as he writes:

The image of the ship—a living, micro-cultural, micro-political system in motion—immediately focuses attention on the middle passage, on the various projects for redemptive return to an African homeland, on the circulation of ideas and activists as well as the movement of key cultural and political artefacts...<sup>4</sup>

More than mere vessels, Gilroy insists that the image of the ship is 'something more—a means to conduct political dissent and possibly a distinct mode of cultural production.'<sup>5</sup> This interpretation of the ship as a site of resistance and cultural production speaks to the recurring symbol of ships across Togo-Brisby's practice.

Ships slip in and out of Togo-Brisby's oeuvre leaving imprints that signify an enduring resistance against absence and erasure. In her September 2021 exhibition, 'In the Room of our Bodies,' ships appear in a series of works that explore the material history of the Wunderlich family, who

acquired her great-great-grandparents as house slaves in 1889. The Wunderlich family established a company in 1885 that produced ornamental pressed tin-metal (or art-metal) ceilings that can be found in many civic buildings including the Sydney and Wellington Town Halls. Today, these ornate architectural features are painstakingly preserved as heritage treasures with readily available replica panels in case of damage.<sup>6</sup> The preservation and adoration of these decorative ceilings mask the fraught history of the Wunderlich's direct involvement with the Pacific slave trade.

Dismantling the master's house quite literally, Togo-Brisby creates her own series of Wunderlich tin-pressed ceiling panels that explicitly expose the entangled histories of their families. Each of her panels are rendered in matte black with white and grey silhouette portraits and images of ships and crows painted over the top. The bold contrast of each panel, reminiscent of the cut-paper pictures of the nineteenth century, give her silhouettes a visual and symbolic prominence over the relief patterns that appear to recede behind. Quoting the Wunderlich catalogue design number in each of her titles, she ruptures the seemingly benign designs with

images that link them with the practices of blackbirding and the history of the Pacific slave trade.



ABOVE: Jasmine TOGO-BRISBY *Panel no. 856 (holding ship)* 2021, enamel paint on pressed tin (aluminium), 65.5 x 65.5 cm. PHOTO: Cheska Brown. Image courtesy the artist and Page Galleries.

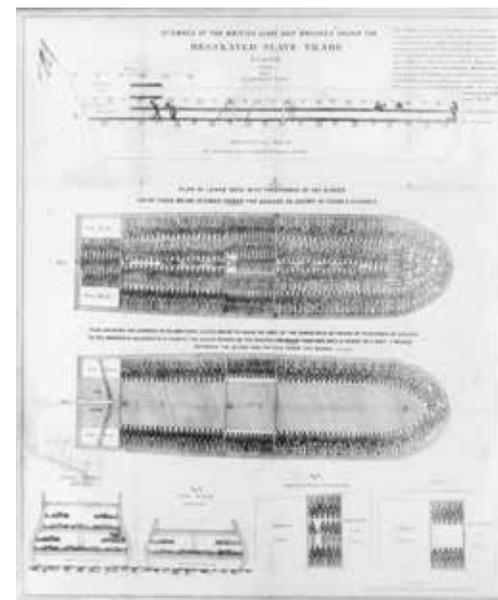
In *Panel no. 856 (holding ship)* 2021 (see this page), a silhouette of her daughter is centred within the circular design, her hands held outward holding a small model ship. In other works, including *Panel no. 1397*

2021 and *Panel no. 158* 2021, a small grey or white ship appears superimposed over their silhouettes. The apparition-like presence of these ships link each of the portraits and the Wunderlich panels to the unseen and unvoiced journeys of the enslaved in the past and their legacies in the present. Adding further ballast to these works are images of the once demonised crow appearing tamed in works such as *Panel no. 856 (holding crow)* 2021, where it is perched peacefully on the hand of her mother. The recurring symbols of the ship and crow, an aesthetic strategy, make a concentrated and conscious effort to take hold of memory that speaks to an entangled inheritance. Togo-Brisby shares, ‘... they are replicated to ensure a legacy that will never die.’<sup>7</sup>

Another kind of ship imagery emerges in Togo-Brisby’s sculptural works that draw on what Cheryl Finley describes as the slave ship icon.<sup>8</sup> The enduring image of the slave ship as icon traces back to the eighteenth-century British abolitionist 1789 engraving *Description of a slave ship* (see this page), a schematic representation of the crowded lower deck human cargo hold of the slave ship *Brooks*. The engraving exposed the underbelly of the vessel, depicting the means of transporting as many as 609 enslaved Africans to the Americas.

Alongside the schematic engraving was text describing the dimensions of space given to men, women, boys and girls, and descriptions of the inhumane conditions of the stowage. Over 7,000 of these engravings were printed as images to shock the public and to promote the abolition campaign to end the transatlantic slave trade. Togo-Brisby draws on the slave ship icon in a series of matte black circular plaster sculptures influenced by the ornamental tin-pressed Wunderlich ceilings. In *Ceiling centre, II (blak)* 2020 (see page 26) she has replaced the opulent pressed pattern with imagery of tightly arranged doll figures around a central image of a ship. Her composition of dolls lying down, some face down and others face up, emulates the cross-section views of the human cargo hold illustration.

Behind the initial shock-value of this work lies a more personal memory that relates to the artist’s beloved grandmother and her love and collection of dolls, a passion shared by the artist and her family. Here the slave ship icon is deployed as a symbolic marker that relates to the passages of slavery and equally to the multiple genealogies that connect to this present moment. Togo-Brisby’s works thus align with artists who descend from the transatlantic slave trade



ABOVE: Plymouth Committee *Stowage of the British slave ship "Brookes" under the Regulated Slave Trade Act of 1788* c. 1788, etching print, 48 x 40 cm. Collection of Prints & Photographs, Library of Congress.

where the slave ship icon is symbolically repossessed, re-rendered, reworked into images that simultaneously embody death and rebirth. Finley’s discourse on the slave ship icon likens it to a coffin and a womb, a site of death but also of new life.<sup>9</sup> The transition of loss and rebirth is a metaphoric journey that poignantly describes the

perseverance of enslaved peoples who survived an ineffable terror to become free.

Archival imagery of enslavement are constant sources of reimagining in Togo-Brisby's practice. Her works often begin by mining state archives and museum collections as sites of power and cultural production that house and preserve the narratives of Australian South Sea Islanders. Yet, they are not just a mass of texts in a building, they are also conceptualised symbolically as the 'law of what can be said, the system that governs the appearance of statements as unique events.'<sup>10</sup> Archives are thus sites of entanglement; the materiality of its contents reflective of the power and status that defines narratives that are remembered and circulated. They are not neutral places. They contain and omit voices that evoke memory and forgetting, preservation and loss, presence and absence. It is this archival entanglement that is ever-present in the photographic works of Togo-Brisby.

Photographic collections of Australian South Sea Islanders from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries are bittersweet sites of memorial, loss and connection. Prevalent across numerous archive collections in Australia are historical photographs of

Australian South Sea Islanders at work including images of women looking after the plantation owner's children; others capture labourers planting sugar cane or hoeing cane weeds with an overseer keeping watch. These photographs were taken as propaganda images to attract investors or to appease humanitarians and critics by creating images of sturdy, happy and healthy labourers.<sup>11</sup> Amongst the work-related photographs are several group portraits of plantation owners and their 'South Sea Island labourers,' often taken outside the main plantation residence. The composition of these portraits, where the owners and overseers are centralised or elevated in some way, is a microcosmic representation of their dominance. As forms of propaganda, the circulation of these images had an embedded communicative function of generating economic interest and providing public evidence of the dominance of the owners and the servitude of their labourers.

As archived objects, these historical photographs have become repositories of collective memory and coloniality for Australian South Sea Island descendants. In 2017, Togo-Brisby created a suite of photographs that mined these collections with interventionist and revisionist

intentions to reclaim them. In works including *Kanaka women in the sugar cane: Hambledon plantation 2017* and *Recruits 2017* (see pages 18 and 17 respectively), Togo-Brisby appropriates the historical photograph and quotes the descriptive captions as the titles of her work. By quoting the captions, Togo-Brisby revisits the histories of sites such as the Hambledon plantation or the deck of an arriving 'recruitment' ship.

As is common in many of the historical photographs, the Australian South Sea Islanders depicted in the images are unidentified and are described simply as 'Kanaka women,' or worse, as commodities simply referred to as 'recruits.' By appropriating these images and inserting herself within the image's dimensions, Togo-Brisby creates a visual genealogy that connects and reframes these unknown figures as ancestor figures. Her process asserts that these inherited images are not obfuscated solely by their colonial framing but that they embody the living air of a people.<sup>12</sup> It is an air that Indigenous scholar Louis Owens describes as being visible to those 'looking from within rather than without.'<sup>13</sup> Adopting this perspective, Togo-Brisby sees in these images not sugar plantation workers but her own family.<sup>14</sup>

Her renewed photographs conjure an Indigenous temporality where the ancestors and descendants are brought together as symbols of endurance and survival.<sup>15</sup> Togo-Brisby's adoption of the visual language and analogue techniques of wet collodion plates that were prominent in the nineteenth century also prompts a symbolic role reversal. Photography theorist Susan Sontag proclaimed the camera as a 'predatory weapon,' likening the taking of photographs to acts of aggression.<sup>16</sup> Her charged framing of the camera speaks directly to the ways in which the camera was used as a weapon of propaganda aiding settler-colonial interests. Togo-Brisby's appropriation of the same tools surfaces the enduring agency and resilience of Australian South Sea Islander communities

that is often obscured by the fixity of historical imagery. It is the same agency that propelled Australian South Sea Islander leaders in the early twentieth century to organise lobby groups and petitions to challenge racially discriminatory legislation and the mass deportation orders of the Pacific Island Labourers Act of 1901. Togo-Brisby's presence in the archival image parallels the ways in which thousands of Australian South Sea Islanders adopted the petitions as an instrument and tool to make their presence and resistance known.

For Togo-Brisby, chronotopes of ships, crows and sugar recur over time and countless bodies of work indicate an active presence where there was absence, and remembrance where there was loss. Where

ships appear in her works, a fluid sense of time materialises—the many passages and returns that heave, sway and surge across the archive give form to the unspoken and unseen. These vessels mark an embodied intertwining of the past and present where time, as Mikhail Bakhtin notes, 'thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible; likewise space becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time, plot and history.'<sup>17</sup> Togo-Brisby's practice affirms the continuance of Australian South Sea Islander stories that are communally authored and reclaimed for circulation along renewed routes to constantly chart lineages of future recognition and resilience.

#### ENDNOTE

1> Banivua-Mar, Tracy. *Violence and Colonial Dialogue: The Australian-Pacific Indenture Labor Trade*, Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007, 1-12. 2> Mikhail Bakhtin's original term, 'chronotope,' referenced by Paul Gilroy. Gilroy, Paul. *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*, London: Verso, 1993, 17. 3> Finley, Cheryl. *Committed to Memory: The Art of the Slave-Ship Icon*, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2018, 10. 4> Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic*, 4. 5> Gilroy, 17. 6> Togo-Brisby, Jasmine. 'Dear Mrs Wunderlich' <https://www.pagegalleries.co.nz/exhibitions/107-jasmine-togo-brisby-dear-mrs-wunderlich/overview/>, viewed 2021. 7> Togo-Brisby, Jasmine. 'In the Room of our Bodies' <https://www.pagegalleries.co.nz/exhibitions/127-jasmine-togo-brisby-in-the-rooms-of-our-bodies/overview/>, viewed 2021. 8> Finley, *Committed to Memory: The Art of the Slave-Ship Icon*, 5. 9> Finley, 6. 10> Foucault, Michael. *Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language*, edited and translated from French by A.M Sheridan Smith, New York: Pantheon Press, 1971, 129. 11> Quanchi, Max. "'Kanaka' Portraits: Indentured Labor in Colonial Australia," *Pacific Arts* 13, no. 2 (2014): 33-44. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/44737323>, 33-44. 12> Owens, Louis. 'Afterword: Their Shadows before Them: Photographing Indians' for *Trading Gazes: Euro-American Women Photographers and Native North Americans 1880-1940*, edited by Susan Bernadin, Melody Graulich, Lisa McFarlane and Nicole Tonkovich, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2003, 192. 13> Owens, 192. 14> Owens, 192. 15> Gerald Vizenor defines survivance as a renunciation of the legacies of dominance and victimry and the continuance of stories and an active sense of presence. See Vizenor, Gerald. 'Aesthetics of Survivance: Literary Theory and Practice,' for *Survivance: Narratives of Native Presence*, edited by Gerald Vizenor, Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2008, 4-23. 16> Sontag, Susan. *On Photography*, London: Penguin, 2008, 14. 17> Bakhtin, Mikhail. *The Dialogic Imagination* edited and translated by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist, Austin: University of Texas Press, 2008, 171.







LEFT PAGE AND PREVIOUS PAGE: Jasmine TOGO-BRISBY *Into something else* 2021, mixed media with crow feathers, 27 x 245 cm diam. PHOTO: Bo Wong. Image courtesy the artist. ABOVE: Jasmine TOGO-BRISBY *Recruits: unknown* 2017, collodion on glass, 56 x 48.5 x 6 cm. PHOTO: Jim Cullen Photographer. Courtesy the artist.



ABOVE: Jasmine TOGO-BRISBY *Kanaka women in the sugar cane: Hambledon plantation* 2017, collodion on glass, 52 x 56 x 6 cm. PHOTO: Jim Cullen Photographer. Courtesy the artist.



ABOVE: Jasmine TOGO-BRISBY *Trapped at sea* 2019 from the series 'Adrift' 2018-19, collodion on glass, 56 x 50 x 6 cm. PHOTO: Jim Cullen Photographer. Courtesy the artist.



ABOVE: Jasmine TOGO-BRISBY *Adrift in the abyss II* 2019 from the series 'Adrift' 2018-19, collodion on glass, 56 x 50 x 6 cm. PHOTO: Jim Cullen Photographer. Courtesy the artist.



ABOVE: Jasmine TOGO-BRISBY *Tidal transitions II* 2019 from the series 'Adrift' 2018-19, collodion on glass, 56 x 50 x 6 cm. PHOTO: Jim Cullen Photographer. Courtesy the artist.



ABOVE: Jasmine TOGO-BRISBY *Tidal transitions* 2019 from the series 'Adrift' 2018-19, collodion on glass, 56 x 50 x 6 cm. PHOTO: Jim Cullen Photographer. Courtesy the artist.



**ABOVE:** Jasmine TOGO-BRISBY *South Sea heiress II* 2019 from the series 'Adrift' 2018-19, collodion on glass, 56 x 50 x 6 cm. **PHOTO:** Jim Cullen Photographer. Courtesy the artist.



**ABOVE:** Jasmine TOGO-BRISBY *The ships stole our people I* 2018 from the series 'Adrift' 2018-19, collodion on glass, 56 x 50 x 6 cm. **PHOTO:** Jim Cullen Photographer. Courtesy the artist.



ABOVE: Jasmine TOGO-BRISBY *Adrift amidst the middle passage III* 2019 from the series 'Adrift' 2018-19, collodion on glass, 56 x 50 x 6 cm. PHOTO: Jim Cullen Photographer. Courtesy the artist.



ABOVE: Jasmine TOGO-BRISBY *Ceiling centre, II (blak)* 2020, plaster, oxide, fibreglass, and stain, 6 x 44 cm diam.  
PHOTO: Jim Cullen Photographer. Courtesy the artist.



ABOVE: Jasmine TOGO-BRISBY *Ceiling centre, IV (blak)* 2022, plaster, oxide, fibreglass, and stain, 7 x 55 cm diam.  
PHOTO: Jim Cullen Photographer. Courtesy the artist.



ABOVE: Jasmine TOGO-BRISBY *Ceiling centre, V (blak)* 2022, plaster, oxide, fibreglass, and stain, 5 x 42 cm diam. PHOTO: Jim Cullen Photographer. Courtesy the artist. RIGHT: Jasmine TOGO-BRISBY *Passage* (detail) 2022, crow wings, stained wood, crow feathers, plexiglass, and brass, 174 x 102 x 32 cm. PHOTO: Jim Cullen Photographer. Courtesy the artist.





LEFT AND ABOVE: Jasmine TOGO-BRISBY *Absented presence II* 2022, crow wings, stained wood, plexiglass, and brass, 174 x 102 x 32 cm. PHOTO: Jim Cullen Photographer. Courtesy the artist.



LEFT: Jasmine TOGO-BRISBY *Absented presence* 2022, crow wings, stained wood, plexiglass, and brass, 174 x 102 x 32 cm. PHOTO: Jim Cullen Photographer. Courtesy the artist.



**ABOVE:** Jasmine TOGO-BRISBY *From bones and bellies* / 2022, pigment print on backlit film, LED light box, edition 1/3, 109 x 15 x 7.5 cm. Courtesy the artist.



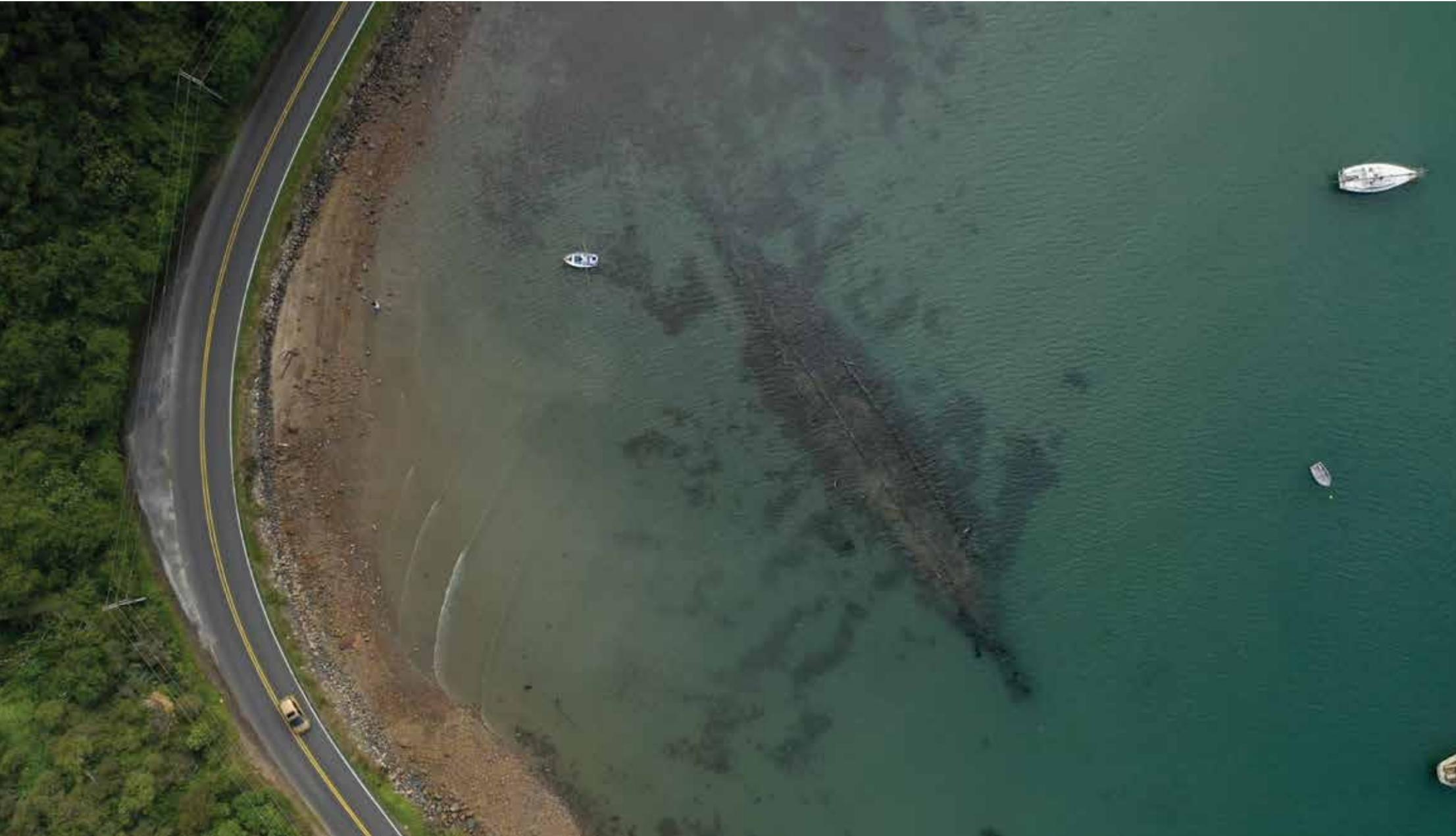
ABOVE: Jasmine TOGO-BRISBY *From bones and bellies II* 2022, pigment print on backlit film, LED light box, edition 1/3, 109 x 15 x 7.5 cm. Courtesy the artist.



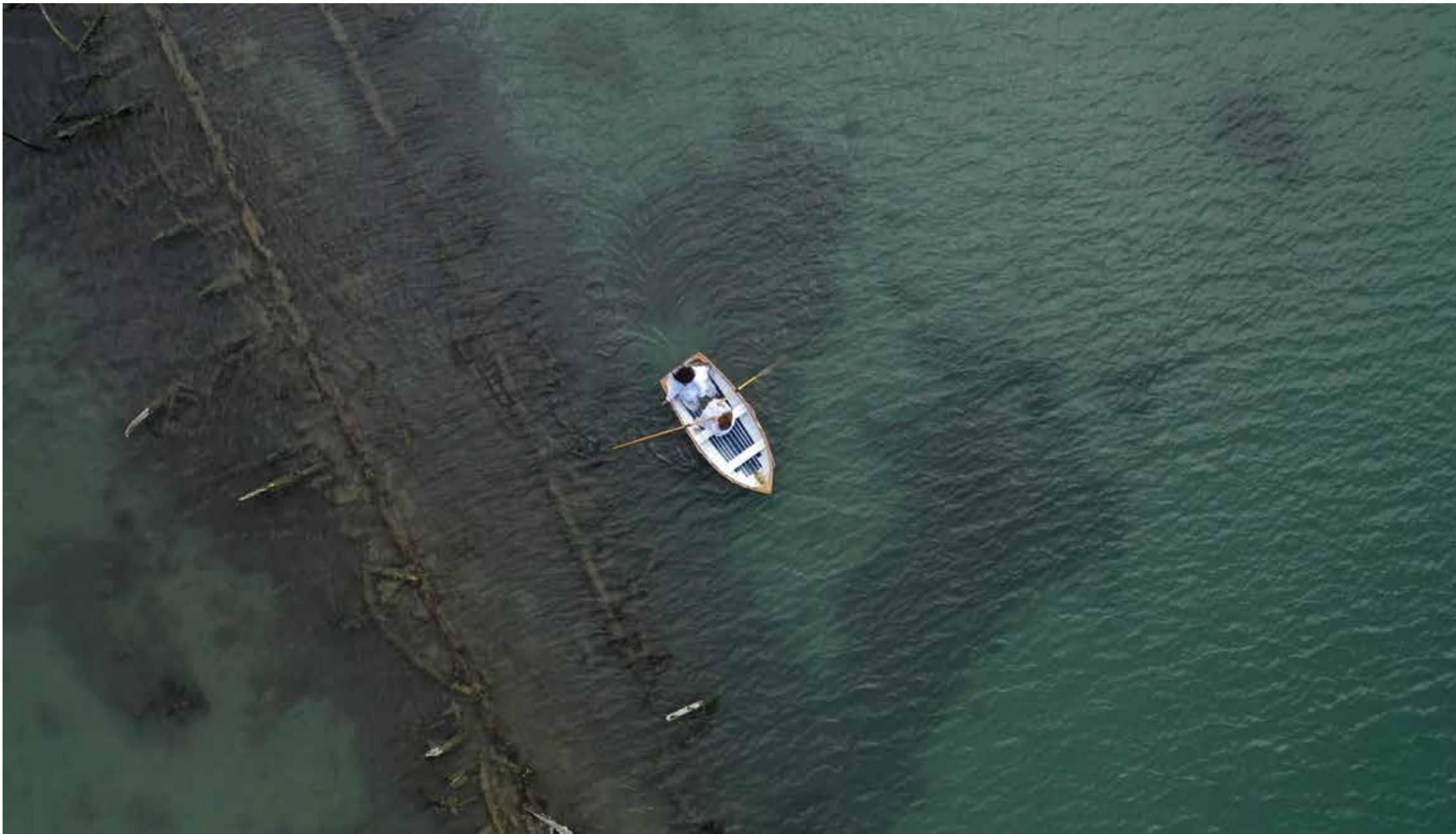
ABOVE: Jasmine TOGO-BRISBY *From bones and bellies III* 2022, pigment print on backlit film, LED light box, edition 1/3, 109 x 15 x 7.5 cm. Courtesy the artist.



ABOVE: Jasmine TOGO-BRISBY *From bones and bellies IV* 2022, pigment print on backlit film, LED light box, edition 1/3, 109 x 15 x 7.5 cm. Courtesy the artist.



ABOVE: Jasmine TOGO-BRISBY *Mother tongue* (film still) 2020, single channel video, colour, sound, 16:9, edition 1/3, 9 min 30 sec. Mackay Regional Council Art Collection, purchased 2021.



ABOVE: Jasmine TOGO-BRISBY *Mother tongue* (film still) 2020, single channel video, colour, sound, 16:9, edition 1/3, 9 min 30 sec. Mackay Regional Council Art Collection, purchased 2021.



# BIOGRAPHY

Born in Murwillumbah in 1982, Jasmine Togo-Brisby is a fourth-generation Australian South Sea Islander of Ni-Vanuatu ancestry. She is a Townsville- and Brisbane-raised artist living and working in Wellington, Aotearoa New Zealand. She began her visual arts degree at the Queensland College of Art, Brisbane, with works exhibited in Melbourne and several Queensland locations. After relocating in 2017, she has since exhibited in group and touring exhibitions across Aotearoa New Zealand, Australia, and further abroad. In 2022 she will complete her Master of Fine Art at Massey University, Wellington. Works by Togo-Brisby are held in institutions including Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, City Gallery Wellington Te Whare Toi, New Zealand National Maritime Museum Hui Te Ananui a Tangaroa, State Library of Queensland, and Artspace Mackay.

## Solo Exhibitions

'Mother Tongue,' 2022, Dunedin Public Art Gallery  
 'Hom Swit Hom,' 2022, Artspace Mackay  
 'In the Rooms of Our Bodies,' 2021, Page Galleries, Wellington  
 'Dear Mrs Wunderlich,' 2020, Page Galleries, Wellington  
 'If These Walls Could Talk, They'd Tell You My Name,' 2020, Courtenay Place Park Light Boxes, Wellington  
 'From Bones and Bellies,' 2020, Centre of Contemporary Art Toi Moroki, Christchurch  
 'Birds of Passage,' 2019, Dunedin School of Art, Dunedin  
 'Adrift,' 2019, Page Blackie Gallery, Wellington

## Group Exhibitions

'Declaration: A Pacific Feminist Agenda,' 2022, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, Auckland  
 'Almost Paradise: Mis/Perceptions of Leisure and Labor in the Asia-Pacific,' 2021, Shanghai Duolun Museum of Modern Art  
 'Nyinalanginy / The Gathering,' 2021, Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts  
 'Tākiri: An Unfurling,' 2019, New Zealand Maritime Museum, Auckland  
 'Beyond Kapene Kuku/Captain Cook,' 2019, Page Blackie Gallery, Wellington  
 'Plantation Voices: Contemporary Conversations with Australian South Sea Islanders,' 2019, State Library of Queensland, Brisbane  
 Worn Identities, New Zealand Portrait Gallery, Wellington  
 'Seeing Moana Oceania,' Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, Auckland

'OCEANIA,' Beaudesert Regional Gallery

'From Where I Stand, My Eye Will Send a Light to You in the North,' Te Tuhi Centre for the Arts, Auckland

'WANTOK,' 2018, Dowse Art Museum, Lower Hutt, Wellington | Māngere Arts Centre - Ngā Tohu o Uenuku, Auckland

'Colonial Sugar: Tracey Moffatt & Jasmine Togo-Brisby,' 2017, City Gallery Wellington Te Whare Toi

'Influx,' 2016, St Paul Street Gallery, Auckland | Pātaka Art + Museum, Wellington

'Bitter Sweet,' 2016, Te Uru Waitakere Contemporary Gallery, Auckland

'Fifty Shades of Blak,' 2016, Blak Dot Gallery, Melbourne

'Vai Niu Wai Niu Coconut Water,' 2016, Caboolture Regional Art Gallery

'Fish Hooks and Moving Trees: Pacific Transformations in Australia,' 2015-16, BEMAC, Brisbane | Bundaberg Regional Art Gallery

'From Here to There,' 2015, Pine Rivers Heritage Museum | Noosa Regional Art Gallery

'DNA: Deadly Nui Art,' 2014, Blak Dot Gallery, Melbourne

'Head & Sole,' 2014, Logan Art Gallery

'Echoes ASSI 150,' 2013, The Centre Beaudesert

'Memories from a Forgotten People: 150 Years of Australian South Sea Islanders,' 2013, State Library of Queensland, Brisbane

'Australian South Sea Islander 150,' 2013, Logan Art Gallery

# LIST OF WORKS

*Absented presence* 2022

*Absented presence II* 2022

crow wings, stained wood, plexiglass, and brass, 174 x 102 x 32 cm. Courtesy the artist.

*Passage* 2022

crow wings, stained wood, crow feathers, plexiglass, and brass, 174 x 102 x 32 cm. Courtesy the artist.

*Bitter sweet* 2015

brown sugar and resin, 14 x 19 x 14.5 cm each, dimensions variable. Courtesy the artist.

*Ceiling centre, II (blak)* 2020, plaster, oxide, fibreglass, and stain, 6 x 44 cm diam

*Ceiling centre, IV (blak)* 2022, plaster, oxide, fibreglass, and stain, 7 x 55 cm diam

*Ceiling centre, V (blak)* 2022, plaster, oxide, fibreglass, and stain, 5 x 42 cm diam

Courtesy the artist.

*Into something else* 2021

mixed media with crow feathers, 27 x 245 cm diam. Courtesy the artist.

*Kanaka women in the sugar cane: Hambledon plantation* 2017

*Recruits: unknown* 2017

collodion on glass, 56 x 48.5 x 6 cm. Courtesy the artist.

*Adrift amidst the middle passage III* 2019

*Adrift in the abyss II* 2019

*South Sea heiress II* 2019

*The ships that stole our people I* 2018

*Tidal transitions* 2019

*Tidal transitions II* 2019

*Trapped at sea* 2019

from the series 'Adrift' 2018-19, collodion on glass, 56 x 50 x 6 cm. Courtesy the artist.

*From bones and bellies I* 2022

pigment print on backlit film, LED light box, edition 1/3, 160 x 120 x 7.5 cm. Courtesy the artist.

*From bones and bellies II* 2021

*From bones and bellies III* 2021

*From bones and bellies IV* 2021

pigment print on backlit film, LED light box, edition 1/3, 110 x 170 x 7.5 cm. Courtesy the artist.

*Mother tongue* 2020

single channel video, colour, sound, 16:9, edition 1/3, 9 min 30 sec. Mackay Regional Council Art Collection, purchased 2021.

