

Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki appoints new curators

Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki announces the appointments of Dr Sophie Matthiesson as Senior Curator International Art and Ane Tonga as the Gallery's inaugural Curator Pacific Art.

Auckland Art Gallery Director Kirsten Paisley says, 'It's an exciting time for Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki as we grow our institutional capacity with the expansion of our curatorial team.'

'Together with our talented existing curators, these new appointments will be instrumental in achieving Auckland Art Gallery's ambition of being the leading art gallery not just in Aotearoa New Zealand, but across the Pacific region. We are excited to welcome Dr Sophie Matthiesson as our new Senior Curator International Art and Ane Tonga in the new position of Curator Pacific Art. I am confident that the expertise, ideas and energy provided by these appointments will contribute immeasurably to this Gallery and to the wider cultural life of Auckland.'

Both positions will report to Auckland Art Gallery's Head of Curatorial and Exhibitions, Dr Sarah Farrar.



Dr Sophie Matthiesson
Photo: Selina Ou

Senior Curator International Art, Dr Sophie Matthiesson

As the Senior Curator International Art, Dr Sophie Matthiesson will develop and manage the Gallery's historical and modern international art collection, including the Mackelvie collection.

Matthiesson has more than 20 years' experience as a curator and educator in England and Australia, and previously worked as a lecturer at the University of Leeds and the University of Manchester. Since 2007 Sophie has been Curator of International Art at the National Gallery of Victoria in Melbourne. Matthiesson's past curatorial projects include *Modern Britain* (2007), *Salvador Dalí* (2009), *Monet's Garden* (2013), *Degas: A New Vision* (2016) and *Van Gogh: The Seasons* (2017).

Dr Sarah Farrar, Auckland Art Gallery's Head of Curatorial and Exhibitions, says: 'Sophie has a reputation for creating engaging, high-profile exhibitions, and has played a key part in many of the National Gallery of Victoria's major international art exhibitions in recent years. We welcome Sophie to this senior curatorial position, where she will play an important part in the presentation of our future exhibitions, and drive research and development of the Gallery's collection of international art.'

Matthiesson says, 'I'm excited to be joining Auckland Art Gallery and delighted at the prospect of working with such a fine team, and such a strong and intriguing collection of historical and modern international art.'

Matthiesson commences her role in January 2020.

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Ane Tonga
Photo courtesy of Artzone Magazine

Curator Pacific Art, Ane Tonga

Auckland Art Gallery is expanding its curatorial team with the appointment of Ane Tonga as the inaugural Curator Pacific Art. The role, supported by the Auckland Art Gallery Foundation, will enable collection and exhibition development, as well as targeted research, that will increase access and engagement with Pacific art and artists. It will also give greater visibility to Pacific narratives in the Gallery's collection.

Sarah Farrar says, 'The Curator Pacific Art position will bring additional specialist knowledge of Pacific art practices to Auckland Art Gallery. This curatorial role is intended to foster closer dialogue within our Pacific communities, as well as actively contribute to discussion and debate about Pacific art.'

'We are thrilled to appoint Ane Tonga, who has established herself as a thought leader in Pacific and contemporary art in Aotearoa. Ane has a track record of generating new research, writing and curatorial projects on Pacific art and cultural heritage through her work at art institutions throughout the country.'

Tonga has ten years of curatorial experience across museums and galleries in Aotearoa New Zealand. She has previously held the position of Lead Exhibitions Curator at Rotorua Museum Te Whare Taonga o Te Arawa and prior to that was Assistant Curator at Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa. Tonga has recently been a guest curator at Adam Art Gallery Te Pātaka Toi, at City Gallery Wellington and at Objectspace, as well as Professional Teaching Fellow at Elam School of Fine Arts.

Tonga says, 'The development of the Curator Pacific Art position reflects the Gallery's commitment to Pacific communities as part of its vibrant future and, as the inaugural recipient of this role, I am enthusiastic about the opportunity to shape a new direction for Pacific art.'

Tonga commences her role in March 2020.

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