



## BACK TO A FUTURE: REIMAGINING PACIFIC ENCOUNTERS

TE PAPA  
OUR PLACE



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AT VENICE

## OVERVIEW OF RESOURCE

The Venice Biennale Learning Resource is made up of five learning pathways exploring three interrelated and overarching themes.

### THEMES

#### 1. New Zealand Art on a Global Stage

This theme highlights the significance of La Biennale di Venezia (the Biennale) and a contemporary artist's participation within it. Students examine artist selection, past artist contributions, and Venice itself.

Students will consider the logistical elements of installation and exhibiting in Venice, why Lisa Reihana was selected for the Biennale, and how her work might 'read' in a European context.

#### 2. Representation and Difference

*Who we are and who others see when they see us.*

This theme focuses students on the subjective nature of representation – how values, attitudes, and beliefs impact on how identity is communicated to others.

There is a specific focus in this theme on the motivations and purpose of Lisa Reihana's work as a reaction to Joseph Dufour's wallpaper (1804-05). Students use comparison and contrast to explore the way Reihana has portrayed multiple cultures, narratives, histories, and peoples.

Students will also look at other examples of contemporary artists responding to, redressing, and retelling history – especially Māori, Pacific and women artists.

#### 3. Time and Change

*How things were and how things are.*

This theme requires students to examine time, continuity and change – not only through the differences in artist motivation, but also in the differences in art-making practice.

Dufour's wallpaper used techniques on paint and paper to create a panoramic experience. Similarly, Reihana's work creates a panoramic, immersive experience – but through completely different technologies.

Students will examine the impact of static vs. moving image as well as begin to understand some of the challenges and opportunities of creating art using time-based media.

Students will look at the collaborative art-making process and seek similarities and differences in the artists' motivations.

The pathways are linked to Art History, Visual Arts, and Social Sciences. That said, we've intentionally left achievement objectives within specific learning areas open-ended so that you can adapt these learning pathways to suit your context and your students.

Each pathway focuses students on critically engaging with Lisa Reihana's artwork and creating student response. As *Lisa Reihana: Emissaries* speaks of the importance of claiming identity, there is an emphasis in the activities on capturing authentic student experience and voice.

Prepare for using these inquiry-based learning pathways by reviewing the suggested activities and the discussion starters. Within each pathway, there are links for the extra-curious, should you or your students want to delve further into any one area.

The pathways are available to print off as PDF guides. Please be aware, however, that the guides are designed to be used in conjunction with the content on our website.

[Learning Pathway One – New Zealand at La Biennale di Venezia](#)

[Learning Pathway Two – Clothes maketh the \(wo\)man: Costuming, representation and identity](#)

[Learning Pathway Three – Back to a future: Reimagining Pacific encounters](#)

[Learning Pathway Four – Reimagining history through art: The power to retell stories](#)

[Learning Pathway Five – Wallpaper vs screen: Technologies in art-making practice](#)

# INTRODUCTION

In this pathway, students examine some of the motivations behind European exploration in the Pacific and investigate the story of the original art work from which Lisa Reihana draws. Students also have the opportunity to delve into the fascinating connections between Te Papa’s taonga and *in Pursuit of Venus [infected]* exhibition.



Model, 1:24 scale, of His Majesty's Bark "Endeavour", 1769, made by the National Maritime Museum in 1968. Gift of the United Kingdom Government, 1969. Te Papa (NS000011)

## CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

We've purposefully left achievement objectives within specific learning areas open-ended. This means that **teachers are free to adapt these learning pathways to suit their context** and their students.

That said, this section connects easily to the following subjects:

### SOCIAL STUDIES

- Understand how cultural interaction impacts on cultures and societies
- Understand that people move between places and how this has consequences for the people and the places

### ART HISTORY

- Activities in this pathway can be adapted for use with the following internal and external assessment standards:
  - **Level 1**
    - AS91016 Demonstrate understanding of the subject matter of art works
    - AS91017 Demonstrate understanding of links between context(s) and art works
  - **Level 2**
    - AS91181 Examine the meanings conveyed by art works
    - AS91182 Examine the influence of context(s) on art works
    - AS91184 Communicate understanding of an art history topic
  - **Level 3**
    - AS91483 Examine how meanings are communicated through art works
    - AS91484 Examine the relationship(s) between art and context
    - AS91486 Construct an argument based on interpretation of research
    - AS91487 Examine the different values placed on art works

# A. THE EXPLORERS' PACIFIC

## INTRODUCTION

Students examine Captain James Cook's voyages and Joseph Dufour's wallpaper that inspired Lisa Reihana's work.

Students investigate the motivation for Cook's voyages and the purpose of Dufour's wallpaper when it was created.

These activities focus students on the subjective nature of representation and how values, attitudes, and beliefs impact on how identity is communicated to others.

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of these activities, students will have:

- examined the motivations behind the portrayal of Pacific cultures within *Les Sauvages de la Mer Pacifique* (1804–05)
- compared Dufour's wallpaper to a primary source from Cook's voyages
- transferred what they have learnt into text or image.



Joseph Dufour et Cie, after a design by Jean-Gabriel Charvet, *Les Sauvages de la Mer Pacifique* (*The Native Peoples of the Pacific Ocean*), circa 1804-5, woodblock and gouache on paper. Purchased 2015 with Charles Disney Art Trust funds. Te Papa (2015-0048-1)

## SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

### 1 TELESCOPE TELLER

*In this activity, students record their initial observations before investigating the context and purpose of Les Sauvages de la Mer Pacifique.*

The vast majority of Europeans that had the wallpaper installed in their house in the 19th century knew very little of the Pacific. *Les Sauvages de la Mer Pacifique* (1804-05) was their first glimpse of a ‘utopia’ on the other side of the planet.

Emulate this, by asking pairs of students to roll up an A4 piece of paper to make a long, narrow viewing tube, or ‘telescope’. Without context or background, one student views this [high-resolution image of Les Sauvages de la Mer Pacifique](#) through their ‘telescope’ and reports to their peer on what they can see – then students can swap places. Focus on setting, theme, and subject, with questions such as:



Who are these people?

Where are they?

What are they doing?

What are the clues that help you answer these questions?

What would you like to know more about?

Share ideas in a whole class discussion.

Students then read about [the significance of the Dufour wallpaper](#) to gain understanding of Dufour’s intention and purpose of the wallpaper.

Finally, create a shared class brainstorm on [Popplet](#), summarising everything they have learnt. Students can call out ideas to add, or enter the text or images themselves to a collaborative class board.

## 2 COOK'S BOOK

*In this activity, students compare Dufour's wallpaper to a primary source from Cook's voyages and create a dramatic response.*

Read through some of the excerpts of journal entries from Cook's [first voyage](#), [second voyage](#), and [third voyage around the Pacific](#).

Students imagine they are James Cook, who, after returning from some exploring, has happened to see *Les Sauvages de la Mer Pacifique* in a patron's dining room.

Students choose to write a letter, record a voicemail message, or perform a monologue directed at Dufour, telling him:

- how they feel about his interpretation of the Pacific
- the similarities and differences between the panels and what they saw on their voyages
- the ideas of the Pacific that someone would get from viewing the wallpaper.

### FURTHER QUESTIONS YOU MAY WANT TO DISCUSS:



What is problematic about the use of *Les Sauvages de la Mer Pacifique* and Cook's diary entries as historical sources?

What did Dufour's wallpaper mean for European understanding of the Pacific and exploratory endeavours?

Who was telling the story of the Pacific in the 18th and 19th centuries to a European audience and what are the implications of this?

Why were there scientific explorations?

What is the transit of Venus?

Why do you think Cook and his crew collected what they did?

What do these collections tell us today?

Where did Dufour get his information and where did Reihana get hers? What are the differences in their sources and how does that impact on what we see?

## B. HEAR THE TAONGA SPEAK

### INTRODUCTION

Lisa Reihana's *in Pursuit of Venus [infected]* (2015–17) goes back in time and re-explores the narratives of encounter history in the Pacific. It tells the stories anew, not from Dufour or Joseph Banks or Cook, but from indigenous and Pacific peoples, and from an artist's perspective, firmly re-grounding the stories.

The role of digital media within Reihana's work allows her the opportunity to storytell – staging scenes that express ideas of identity and belonging. In *in Pursuit of Venus [infected]*, Reihana uses recreated taonga, costume, and activity to create dramatic mini-scenes, or vignettes, that explore the story of Cook's voyages through the Pacific.

Te Papa is kaitiaki of many taonga from New Zealand and the Pacific. It has examples of many of the objects that Reihana was inspired by and drew from in creating *in Pursuit of Venus [infected]*.

These activities look at how Reihana represents cultures in *in Pursuit of Venus [infected]* and how significant the choice of cultural object is to providing an authentic sense of place and people.

### LEARNING OUTCOMES

Within these activities, students can:

- develop a personal response to Lisa Reihana's *in Pursuit of Venus [infected]*
- examine the role of taonga in retelling the story of exploration and encounter.



Ahu parau (chest apron), 1700s, pearl shell and plant fibre. Gift of Lord St Oswald, 1912. Te Papa (FE000336/1) see [the slide show carousel](#) for further information

## SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

### 1 STOP, COLLABORATE, AND LISTEN

*In this activity, students develop a response to art through collaboration and performance.*

Students spend time independently, in groups, or as a class, watching the [interviews with Reihana](#) and reading the [curator comment about Lisa Reihana: Emissaries](#) before exploring the [high-resolution stills of the work](#).

In groups, students work together to compose a collaborative poem about *in Pursuit of Venus [infected]*. In a timed five minutes, students brainstorm as many nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs as they can that describe Reihana's work, writing each word on an index card.

Once the time is up, all students stick their word cards on the board to create a 'word wall'.

On their own, or in pairs, ask students to now compose two lines of poetry that begin with the phrase 'In pursuit of Venus,' by using the vocabulary words on the wall.

Share lines and determine the order in which you will read the collaborative poem. Consider adding music, movement, and varying rhythm, intonation, and volume.

This activity could be adapted to be one that students complete on their own as a personal response to art. Students could record their poems on smartphones or add images using [Voicethread](#).

## 2 A NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM

*In this activity, students explore the connections between Reihana’s work and Te Papa’s collections.*

Divide the class into groups of four.

Delegate positions to each person in the group:

- 1 Timekeeper – keeps the group on track and on task.
- 2 Scribe – writes the responses the group has to the questions.
- 3 Presenter – presents the ideas back to class once the activity below is complete.
- 4 Wandering Eye – scans [these stills from \*in Pursuit of Venus \[infected\]\*](#) to find reference to chosen taonga/art work in place in Reihana’s work.

Each group views one of the objects in Te Papa’s collections that is showcased on [the slideshow carousel](#) and reads the descriptor.

Each group creates a diptych – either digitally or by printing, cutting, and pasting the images alongside each other. They then annotate their diptych by answering the questions below with specific focus on the costume, activity, and interaction of the figures in *in Pursuit of Venus [infected]*.

### STUDENTS ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS ABOUT THEIR IMAGE:



Where is this taonga/art work from?

What is it made of?

What was its function?

What does it tell us about life when it was made?

Why do you think this was chosen by Reihana to be in *in Pursuit of Venus [infected]*?

## 2 A NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM (CONTINUED):

Groups then report back on the taonga they have studied and the importance of it within *in Pursuit of Venus [infected]*.

[Watch the conversations](#) between Te Papa's Nina Tonga, Curator Pacific Art and Puawai Cairns, Senior Curator Mātauranga Māori as they discuss concepts and questions around the process and politics of collecting and collections.

### FURTHER QUESTIONS TO ASK:



Who owns history?

What role does material culture play in this?

What layer does Reihana's contemporary artistic response add to our understanding of European exploration in the Pacific?

What migration stories are happening today?

Who is telling these stories?

## LINKS FOR THE EXTRA CURIOUS

- Part of this hour-long talk has Reihana speaking about her fascination with Dufour's wallpaper (start from 20 minutes in):  
<https://vimeo.com/138022794>
- Watch this Māori TV news article about Lisa Reihana's work:  
<https://www.maoritelevision.com/news/regional/reanimation-wallpaper-depicting-polynesian-and-european-encounters>
- Watch this news article about the arrival of the Dufour wallpaper at Te Papa:  
<https://www.tvnz.co.nz/one-news/new-zealand/rare-scenic-wallpaper-portraying-captain-cooks-travels-acquired-te-papa>
- Many taonga are being repatriated. View the repatriation of Cook's cloak to Hawai'i from Te Papa,  
<http://www.newshub.co.nz/home/new-zealand/2016/03/historic-hawaiian-artefacts-head-home.html>
- Watch this episode of *Tales from Te Papa* about the Banks and Solander Collection, which helps to further explain the function of Cook's voyages:  
<https://youtu.be/PrRaJPStihU?t=18s>
- David Attenborough speaks about the legacy and importance of Joseph Banks' work:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PXFH6pNVNuY>
- Watch the transit of Venus 2012 NASA video:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Z9rM8ChTjY>
- Learn about Cook's clock at the Royal Society:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9fcWWBksfng>
- Learn about the Venus Transit Orrery:  
<https://youtu.be/A6-riPwjCXA>

- This National Treasures Australia clip speaks about the Endeavour journal from 1770:  
<http://aso.gov.au/titles/documentaries/endeavour-journal/clip1/>
- A documentary about Captain Cook, the man behind the legend:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GnxADGOidYU>
- A rather old, but interesting, explanation of the importance of Cook's first voyage to document the transit of Venus:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=73xbzB5XWWk>
- The transit of Venus remains an important astronomical event in explaining our place in the universe. Check out the BBC coverage of the last transit of Venus here:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ul4IkNG42Tw>
- Michel Tuffery, a New Zealand Pacific artist, has also taken encounter history in the Pacific as a starting point. Watch his multimedia projection piece at the Sydney Arts Festival here:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pEOIAm5KWAQ>
- Marian Maguire melds together Greek vase painting with colonial history:  
<http://www.marianmaguire.com/the-labours-of-herakles.html>

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