

ISLAND MESH: SEA VOYAGES FOR SUSTAINABILITY

OVERVIEW

The Australian Network for Art & Technology (AUS) and the Aotearoa Digital Arts network (NZ/Aotearoa) are turning their focus to the issues facing their neighbouring island states in the South Pacific region. In partnership with University of the South Pacific's Fiji-based Pacific Centre for Environment and Sustainable Development (PaCE-SD) they are delivering *ISLAND MESH: Sea Voyages for Sustainability*, with a pilot voyage departing Fiji for Rotuma in September 2015.

ISLAND MESH draws on the partners' interdisciplinary research expertise and their history of creating opportunities for creative collaborations between the arts and sciences, opening up new ways of seeing, experiencing and interpreting the world around us. This expertise is complemented by the in-principle support for the project from organisations including the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the World Wildlife Fund, Oceania and Sailing for Sustainability. Also on board, the Fiji Voyaging Society and the Oceania Centre for Sustainable Transport are making their Suva-based vessel Uto ni Yalo – a traditional 16-berth vaka - available to *ISLAND MESH*.

Three artists and three scientists will be selected from Australia and NZ/Aotearoa to join the crew on a pilot voyage to the island community of Rotuma, 460 kilometres north of Fiji. Joining the voyagers will be two young Rotumans who will also be introduced to traditional navigation practices by the captain and crew, with a view to sustaining this knowledge through transference to the next generation of seafarers.

In the lead up to the voyage, the participating artists and scientists will work with the Rotuman community and the project's research partners at PaCE-SD to identify issues of particular urgency and relevance to Rotuma. In addition, Dr Matthew Anderson, a researcher based at the University of Portsmouth (UK), is contributing an economic perspective to *ISLAND MESH* through his work on how best to identify, implement and mainstream alternative business models.

Once on land at Rotuma, the voyagers will participate in a week-long Talanoa and knowledge exchange program with the local community looking at the impacts of climate change on the island. The Talanoa structure provides the necessary space and time for deep and far-reaching conversations between the voyagers and the islanders, weaving a mesh of understanding to enable engagement and collaboration during the visit and into the future.

PROJECT PARTNERS

The Australian Network for Art & Technology (ANAT)

For over 25 years, Adelaide-based ANAT has provided leadership and support to individuals and organisations pursuing collaborative and creative research projects in Australia and beyond. ANAT's innovative programs include immersive residencies, emerging technology labs, online research tools, publications, seminars and workshops.

ANAT is a not-for-profit organisation supported by the Australia Council for the Arts, the Visual Arts and Crafts Strategy and the South Australian Government through Arts SA.

Aotearoa Digital Arts (ADA)

The ADA Network curates and commissions artwork, exhibitions, events and publications presenting and critiquing digital and media arts. ADA also contributes to the public understanding of digital art through its online forum, by hosting tours of renowned speakers and through holding master-classes and symposia.

ADA is a charitable trust, which realises its ambitious program with the support of Creative NZ and through a network of industry partners including Artspace, the Auckland University of Technology, Intercreate, Now Future, The Audio Foundation and The Physics Room.

**Pacific Centre for Environment and Sustainable Development (PaCE-SD)
University of the South Pacific**

Born out of the University of the South Pacific's 1999 strategic plan, PaCE-SD has established itself as a Centre of Excellence for Environmental Education, Research and Community Engagement in the Pacific Island Region.

The Centre is the University's answer to the region's need for further research of the environment in order to empower its people with the necessary knowledge to adapt to the impacts of climate change and to pursue sustainable development.

The Centre collaborates with relevant faculties across the university as well as national and international development partners and works alongside regional governments in an advisory capacity.