



Large
Print

Oceania

Introduction

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Audio tour



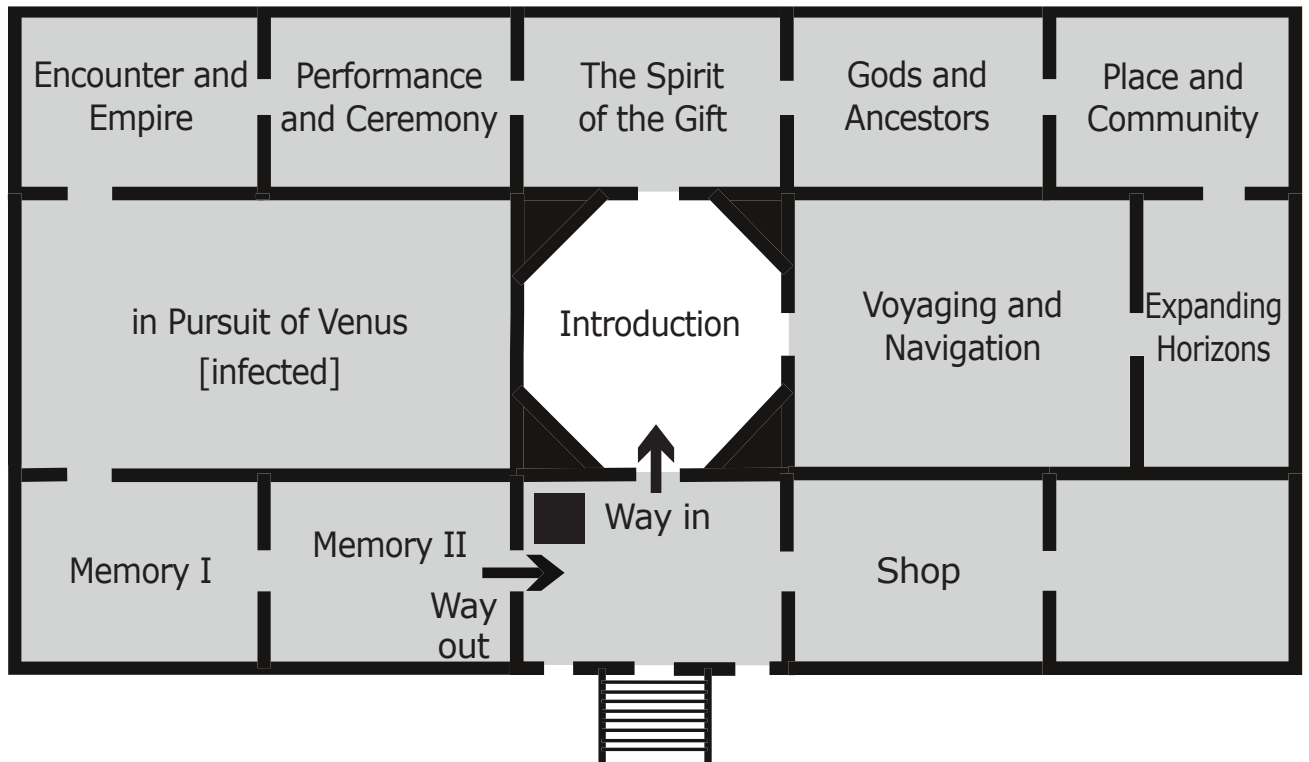
Main commentary



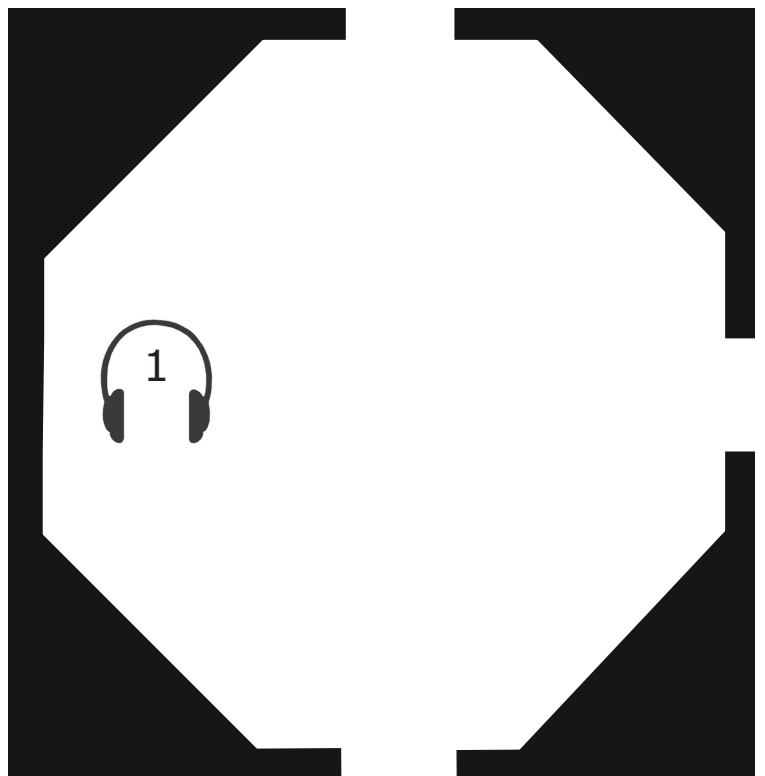
Descriptive commentary



Introduction to the exhibition



Introduction



Oceania

Main Galleries

29 September – 10 December 2018

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Introduction to the exhibition

Oceania takes us on a voyage through art, history and encounter across an area covering a third of the world's surface. Over thousands of years people settled many of the countless islands and archipelagos that lie scattered across the Pacific Ocean.

What links all these places is water, as evoked here by the installation 'Kiko Moana' by the Mata Aho Collective, four Māori women artists from New Zealand.

Within Oceania, Islanders encountered each other through voyaging and trade, stimulating artistic innovation.

From the eighteenth century, Europeans began to claim sovereignty over the area. Without taking into account any of the cultural history, European geographers subsequently divided Oceania into three regions: Polynesia (literally “many islands”), Melanesia (“black islands”) and Micronesia (“small islands”).

Islanders responded to both the challenges and opportunities offered by empire. Although early contact led to confrontation and depopulation, it also brought new artefacts, materials and ideas.

The creation of magnificent art traditions on the body, in the natural world and by way of performance, were and remain embedded in rituals, beliefs and social relationships, and expressed relations with kin and ancestors.

In the twenty-first century, contemporary Islander artists such as Kathy Jetñil-Kijiner of the Marshall Islands have responded to the continuing threats to culture and the environment.

From the first voyage of Lieutenant (later Captain) James Cook in 1768, artefacts were eagerly collected by Europeans.

Although there is a tendency to think that these objects were taken as “colonial loot”, most were gifted or exchanged willingly by Islanders who also wanted in return what the visitors had to offer.

Across the world, museums today actively collaborate with Islander communities and artists, some of whom see these artefacts as emissaries for their cultures. As such, these objects represent the legacy of both historical and current relationships.

List of works

Kathy Jetñil-Kijiner

Tell Them

Marshall Islands

Film, performance 3 minutes 22 seconds

2012

Poetry by Kathy Jetñil-Kijiner

Film by Masahiro Sugano

© Kathy Jetñil-Kijiner/Studio Revolt

Mata Aho Collective

Kiko Moana

New Zealand

Polyethylene and cotton thread

2017

Collection of the Museum of New Zealand

Te Papa Tongarewa, Wellington

Your feedback, please

As we are committed to access for all, we would like your feedback on our large-print provision. Feedback forms are available from the Information Desk on the ground floor.

We also offer one-to-one audio descriptive tours of the exhibitions with trained volunteer audio describers.

Wheelchair users can also benefit from our volunteers, who can assist with taking you around the galleries so you can enjoy our exhibitions at your leisure. With prior notice we can arrange these at a time that fits in with your schedule. Contact me for further information.

Thank you.

Molly Bretton, Access & Communities Manager



InTouch  **at the RA**

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