

GREG SEMU

THE RAFT OF THE TAGATA PASIFIKA (PEOPLE OF THE PACIFIC)

Artwork labels

© COPYRIGHT

This document remains the property of the National Gallery of Victoria and must be returned upon request.
Reproduction in part or in whole is prohibited without written authorisation.

Greg Semu

***The Raft of the Tagata Pasifika
(People of the Pacific)***

This exhibition of new large-scale photographic works draws attention to the impact of colonisation on First Nations People across the Pacific. It pivots on Greg Semu's work in the Cook Islands with a cast of twenty-two actors in restaging and digitally capturing two epic nineteenth-century European history paintings of heroic survival at sea. Semu re-imagines and reconfigures Théodore Géricault's *The Raft of the Medusa*, 1819, and Louis John Steele and Charles F. Goldie's *The Arrival of the Māoris in New Zealand*, 1898, which was based directly on Géricault's work. From this digital photographic material, Semu has created monumental light-box installations. Employing photography's capacity for interrogating truth, Semu questions the veracity of Goldie and Steele's *The Arrival of the Māoris in New Zealand* and leads us towards a shared Māori view of their ancestors' migratory voyage to Aotearoa / New Zealand.

This project is supported by Creative New Zealand and the Wallace Arts Trust.

Light

2015

type C transparency, light box

Collection of the artist, Sydney

The Raft

2014–15

type C transparency, light box

Collection of the artist, Sydney

The Search

2015

type C transparency, light box

Collection of the artist, Sydney

The Sighting

2015

type C transparency, light box

Collection of the artist, Sydney

Birth

2015

type C transparency, light box

Collection of the artist, Sydney

Death (La Pieta of the Raft)

2015

type C transparency, light box

Collection of the artist, Sydney

Fa'afafine

2015

type C transparency, light box

Collection of the artist, Sydney

The Arrival, diptych

2015

type C transparency, light box

Collection of the artist, Sydney

For Kids

The Māori people were skilful seamen who travelled across the Pacific Ocean to New Zealand. *The Arrival of the Māoris in New Zealand* is a famous New Zealand painting of 1898, which shows the Māori as half-starved victims clinging to survival at sea.

In this work, Greg Semu has re-imagined what the ocean voyage would have been like for the Māori. He worked with 22 actors on location in the Cook Islands and took many digital images to create these light boxes.

Look at the light boxes and imagine what it would have been like on that Māori voyage to New Zealand.