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RAIATEA (RANGIATEA) – THE RETURN HOME

SYNOPSIS

“E kore au e ngaro he kakano i ruia mai i Rangiatea” I will never be lost I am a seed that was sown in Rangiatea Raiatea.

Raiatea is the old name that Maori refer to as their spiritual home. The name comes from Rai the son of Atea, a chiefly women from this island. It is said that these seeds were so strong that would survive wherever they took root.

This documentary will track the migration routes of the Maori from Aotearoa up throughout the pacific returning to Raiatea. It will discover the journey they made, food they ate, their fishing techniques, knowledge of the sea patterns, bird patterns, the ocean routes, the language they spoke, Maori mythology, spirituality and customs voyaging back to Raiatea.

Using graphics the documentary will reconstruct the famous Maori migration.

Graphics will rebuild the stone Marae and show how the tribes gathered in ancient times and for what purposes. The graphics will show the size and scale of the stone marae of Raiatea, a-graphical re-enactment of tribes building the marae will be included.

Using linguists the documentary will portray how the Maori language is linked back to Raiatea and how it connects to all other Polynesians their cousins throughout the pacific. It will trace the dialectual differences throughout the Pacific.

The documentary will connect the modern world with the ancient world.

The documentary will bring science and history together making exciting, more visual drawing from the proverb “E Kore au e ngaro he kakano i ruia mai i Rangiatea.

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KAUAGE

SYNOPSIS

This documentary tells the moving story of Papua New Guinea's most well known contemporary painter Mathias Kauage (1947-2003) who has left an artistic legacy that finds few comparisons in contemporary art in the South Pacific region. Kauage's vibrant style and artistic innovations have inspired many that came after him, yet his talent has not been replicated.

Growing up in rural Papua New Guinea, Kauage took up painting when he met artist Georgina Beier in Port Moresby while working as a labourer. Challenged and inspired by urban development Kauage created a unique style visualising the merging of tradition and modernity in his own country. He also became well known overseas, being awarded the OBE by the Queen in 1989 and exhibiting in Africa, Europe, the US and Australia. Kauage painted many of his experiences outside Papua New Guinea, capturing ideas of political change, such as the fall of the Berlin wall and meeting the Queen, with a simplicity that is inevitably complex, and human. Kauage's paintings invite us to see the world through his eyes, the eyes of a generous man who saw the loss of his traditions invaded by modern technology. The film is a unique exploration into Kauage's stories of his paintings, recorded by Georgina Beier while he was alive. We revisit the places Kauage worked in discovering his legacy in the streets of Papua New Guinea. Through engagement with his family – many of them painters today- we will examine Kauage's works and explore questions of authenticity raised by the imitation of some of his ideas. Kauage – Inventor of his own tradition is a film that has high significance for Papua New Guinea and the South Pacific capturing the experiences of many South Pacific Islanders. Kauage's unique stories about the world that we have created will find wide audiences throughout the world. Visually stunning and engaging, the documentary asks the viewer to question their own perceptions of categories such as contemporary and traditional and what they mean in the face of humanity.

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POUVANAA, UN DESTIN POLYNÉSIE

SYNOPSIS

Pouvanaa a Oopa est le père du nationalisme tahitien et de la culture politique locale. Dès la fin des années 40, il fonde le premier parti politique, le Rassemblement Démocratique des Populations Tahitiennes, pour la reconnaissance des droits du peuple tahitien et est élu député.

Il s'oppose avec force à l'administration coloniale française. Bien que Pouvanaa affirme avec insistance son attachement à la France, il se réclame du préambule de la Constitution de 1946 sur le devoir de la France de conduire les peuples dont elle a la charge, à la liberté de s'administrer eux-mêmes. En défendant le thème « Tahiti aux Tahitiens », Pouvanaa et les siens militent pour une profonde modification des rapports entre la France et le territoire.

Avec l'application de la loi-cadre Defferre, il est élu, en 1957, vice-président du gouvernement et est donc le premier Tahitien à accéder au poste de second de l'exécutif, après le gouverneur. Toutefois, il devient de plus en plus gênant car ses revendications entrent en collision radicale avec la décision - encore secrète - d'implanter un centre d'expérimentations nucléaires dans le Pacifique.

C'est le temps des grandes manœuvres pour tenter de l'écarter de la scène politique. En octobre 1958, il est accusé d'avoir exhorté ses militants à mettre le feu à la ville de Papeete. Il est arrêté, jugé et condamné à l'exil pour 15 années.

Les documents rassemblés aujourd'hui par un historien passionné de l'histoire de Pouvanaa a Oopa depuis plus de 20 ans, et d'une magistrate, permettent de démontrer que le leader charismatique a été victime d'une machination.

Comme des signes du destin, les dates de vie et de mort de Pouvanaa a Oopa (1895-1977) s'insèrent entre deux faits hautement symboliques : l'année de sa naissance marque la signature du traité d'annexion de son île natale par la France. L'année de sa disparition coïncide avec celle de la mise en place du premier statut d'autonomie de gestion du territoire de la Polynésie française.

Mise en images pour la première fois à partir d'archives, la vie de Pouvanaa a Oopa, nous sert de fil rouge pour traverser une page tourmentée de l'histoire polynésienne sur laquelle se sont bâties les bases économiques, sociales et culturelles de la société polynésienne contemporaine.

Pouvanaa s'est trouvé à ce carrefour du destin polynésien. Par ailleurs, son histoire aborde de grands thèmes de l'Histoire : la reconnaissance des peuples, la raison d'État souveraine face à la justice, la défense de valeurs contre le pouvoir de l'argent.

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CHASING THE CODE

SYNOPSIS

People nowadays assume that history is recorded in the written word. But of the six thousand languages spoken in the world today, four thousand are non-written. Most of our global history is locked in oral cultures which employ specific protocols to tell their history.

If you had a white man from Europe and a Solomon Islander from Malaita who witnessed the same event one hundred years ago, the white man would write what he saw but the Malaitan man would pass on his story through the oral system. The two versions are both correct. But they are different. Either man is seeing the event from completely different cultures and different aspects.

John Renton was born on the main island of Orkney in far north of Scotland in 1848. At the age of fourteen, he enlisted as a seaman and sailed the world. Four years later in San Francisco, he was shanghaied. He eventually jumped ship with four fellow captives and drifted in a small boat for several months before arriving at the eastern coast of Malaita, Solomon Islands. He became the sole survivor.

For an astonishing seven and a half years, Renton endured a violent traditional life among these tribal head hunters. His rescue from the island in 1875 and subsequent life and death are well recorded. But what of these years on the man-made island of Sulufou?

European cultures tend to be linear in telling their history whereas Melanesian cultures think laterally. Renton told his story directly to The Brisbane Courier. The Melanesian version was entrusted to the Chiefs of Sulufou.

Story telling in Melanesia is told in 'codes', often verbal but also facial, hand-action codes, and singing. Children will hear the basic story but listeners who recognise the 'codes' will tap into a more profound level of meaning in the story. The white man's version of Renton's story is the public version - because the codes are not recognised. Rights of knowledge, concepts of copyright over specific stories are hereditary, a particular lineage - and a particular status within that lineage.

The chiefs who allowed Renton to stay and then gradually accepted him into their culture, are the ones who have the rights to detailed aspects of his story. Fleeting, styled glimpses of events in Renton's dramatic story on Sulufou will punctuate the narrative of the film.

This is a film of enormous contrasts, emotionally and visually. It is also a tale of two islands, one set against the wild and treeless landscape of the Orkney islands and the other against the lagoons and dense tropical forests of Malaita, Solomon Islands.

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MELE AI POHAKU: THE STONE EATING SONG

SYNOPSIS

After the 1893 illegal overthrow of Queen Lili'uokalani and her government, Ellen Keohiwaokalani Wright-Pendergrast composed Kaulana Na Pua o Hawaii, also known as Kaulana Na Pua. She did this at the request of members of the Royal Hawaiian Band who, as military personnel, refused to take an oath of loyalty to those who had overthrown the queen and declared themselves the Provisional Government. The band was told they would end up eating rocks if they didn't swear allegiance, a threat that inspired one of the song's verses: "Ua lawa makou i ka pohaku, I ka ai kamahao o ka aina," which translates, "We are satisfied with the rocks, The wondrous food of the land." Hawaii Pono I is the national anthem of the Hawaiian Kingdom, but Kaulana Na Pua, often referred to as "Mele Ai Pohaku" or "The Stone Eating Song," became the national anthem of the Hawaiian people after the U.S. takeover of Hawaii.

Today, 117 years later, Kaulana Na Pua remains one of the most beloved Hawaiian songs. It has been recorded and performed on numerous instruments, from piano to ukulele to slack key guitar and many more. It is played with or without the words but is commonly sung a cappella. A truly unique song, it is regarded as being overtly nationalist, but is revered as genealogical by Hawaiians who, regardless of contemporary politics, embrace it as a direct link to their not so distant relatives of the 19th century. The affection Hawaiians have for this one song expresses generational loyalty to their country and their ali'i (chiefs), as well as the maka'ainana (commoners) who, signing the Ku'e Petitions in 1897, refused to acquiesce to the traitors who seized control of Hawaii. Kaulana Na Pua embodies the eternal flame of Hawaiian resistance. This documentary, Mele Ai Pohaku: The Stone Eating Song, reenergizes the spirit of that resistance and transforms something that lives in the hearts and minds of all Hawaiians: the seed of Hawaiian sovereignty.

The film will make visible the complicated and much overlooked history of the takeover of Hawaii and Hawaiian resistance to that event through passionate performances of Kaulana Na Pua and powerful, emotional interviews about the song's meaning.

Vivid imagery will serve as background to the song's lyrics and the ideas conveyed by the people in the film, drawing the audience into the political struggle of the queen and her people, then and now. With each scene, Hawaiian musicians, kumu hula and cultural practitioners collectively dismantle the pervasive American myth of Hawaiian passivity and submission to the U.S. takeover in 1898.

Although it is massively underrepresented in mainstream American media, Hawaiian people speak out loud and in public about the U.S. presence in Hawaii as unjust and immoral, and commonly refer to it as an illegal occupation of an independently recognized country. A deeper exploration of how and why this song still resonates with Hawaiians reveals the story of the Hawaiian nation's past, and considers the question of the Hawaiian nation's future as something still to be determined.

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TERRES D'ARTISTES

SYNOPSIS

L'art contemporain du Pacifique exprime une communauté de sensibilités qui ne peuvent se décrypter par les seules grilles de lecture de l'art occidental. L'analyse formelle est largement insuffisante car elle ne dit rien des imaginaires et des contextes.

Le Pacifique c'est d'abord une grande diversité de cultures qui fondent des expressions originales, personnelles, influencées par des apports extérieurs mais aussi profondément ancrées dans les sédiments de mythes ancestraux. Ces cultures ont subi bien des ruptures. Par l'irruption de cultures extérieures elles ont dû plier, s'effacer et être amputées d'une part non négligeable de leurs identités.

Certaines ont su se perpétuer, retrouver ou garder une force imaginaire et symbolique. Elles sont aujourd'hui matures pour s'inscrire dans les grandes tendances de l'art contemporain. D'autres sont prisonnières d'une imagerie attendue en particulier par le tourisme de masse et témoignent de la perversité du marché. Entre argent et liberté, domination et aspiration aux racines, comment bat le cœur de l'art dans le Pacifique?

La création traditionnelle d'Océanie a inspiré par le passé certains de nos plus grands artistes comme Picasso ou encore André Breton. Ces emprunts puisaient aux origines pour dépouiller la création occidentale d'un long apprentissage esthétique porteur de dogmes et d'enfermement.

L'art océanien ou la liberté retrouvée ? Que faut t'il retenir de ce patchwork de cultures entretenant des parentés voire des fratries artistiques et qui ont aujourd'hui vocation à relier les hommes à leur patrimoine tout en initiant une identité particulière à cette région du globe ?

Comme le précisait le titre d'une exposition consacrée à des artistes du Pacifique au Kaohsiung Museum of Fine art (Taïwan) en 2007 :

A travers les océans et le temps : Qui sommes-nous ? D'où venons-nous ? Où allons-nous ?

De plus en plus nombreux sont ceux qui recherchent une certaine forme d'authenticité en art. Mais être authentique n'est pas de rester figé dans le passé. C'est d'abord révéler le soi. Aborder une vérité, affirmer un ordre de valeurs et interroger le présent.

L'art en Océanie, en Mélanésie, en Micronésie ou en Polynésie, n'échappe pas aux contradictions car il induit dans sa dynamique une place au doute. Toute forme de création a pour ambition de déformer même si elle fait référence à des artefacts traditionnels ou à des courants identifiés. Cette distorsion montre aussi par une mise en abîme les liens et les passerelles fondatrices qui conduisent les hommes et les femmes du Pacifique vers demain.

Entre spécificités et désir de l'autre, comment cet art circule t'il ? Que dit-il que nous ne connaissons pas ?

C'est à partir de ces constats qu'il nous est apparu nécessaire de faire un cheminement en images à travers l'art contemporain du Pacifique marqué aussi par ses insularités et ses difficultés à entrer en résonance avec les mouvements de fond qui affectent le monde.

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ORIGIN OCEANIA

SYNOPSIS

The Oceanic World has given voyagers from afar inspiration through its unique way of life and the mysterious ritual objects its people wrought.

We tell the story of how objects were taken from a matrix of beliefs – as souvenirs, as exotica, as works of art. These treasures now reside in the collections of Australasia, Europe, and North America. Behind each piece in each collection there is a story: They inspired artists such as Picasso and Matisse and were valued by great Popes and Monarchs.

But the real story lies in the place of their origin for there is a transcendent and immanent universe behind these exquisite talismans.

In Oceanic culture these images were the product of a people, not owned by individuals, nor made as representations of an aesthetic ideal or ideology. In the oral tradition of the Pacific, history and beliefs were transmitted through sacred objects – they were the homes of gods and spirits, not mere material works, but the ark that transported tradition and reverence across the vastness of Oceania.

The stories are original and surprising: Ho'a the Moai from Easter Island who resides in majestic silence in the British Museum, mysterious Kave and powerful Hikule'o, goddesses whose brooding presence in Auckland Museum brings awe. In Paris there is Nevimbumbao the Vanuatu female effigy whose striking appearance caused Picasso to exclaim, "C'etait comme un exorcisme", ("it was like an exorcism when I saw her"). Vanuatu's, L'Homme Bleu in the Louvre is described as the 'Pacific's Mona Lisa'. Vienna has the Tui Tonga's crown, Chicago an amazing Maori meeting house, Wellington's Te Papa has Cook's Hawaiian feather cloak, and Tahiti the pillow which Omai took to the heart of royal 17th century England.

The film's story moves from the great rooms of museums to the places where these works were created. The differences in perceptions are discussed: What Europeans call art works, are valued as traditional objects in Oceania. They come alive in settings of wonder and diversity. We traverse these remote places into a world of potency, myth and magic.

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FIRST TO THE AMERICAS

SYNOPSIS

Our story follows a new quest by scientists for indisputable evidence that Polynesian voyagers sailed across the Pacific to reach the Americas before Columbus.

In late 2010, our cameras will follow scientists from New Zealand and Chile as they investigate human remains on an island 30 kilometres off the coast of southern Chile. They believe there is a strong chance they can prove that Polynesians were present prior to 1500 AD. The island is one of the most likely locations that would be targeted by Polynesian voyagers who reached the coast. By applying the latest DNA technology, the scientists hope to show that the remains are those of Polynesian men and women, the period when they arrived, and whether they left descendants on the island.

If they succeed, the debate about whether Polynesians were able to sail right across the world's largest ocean will be ended, theories of prehistoric settlement of South America will have to be revisited, and the Polynesian Triangle redrawn.

The scientists have already examined remains recovered from the island. They believe they may be of Polynesian origin but were unable to assess whether the remains were prehistoric or the result of the arrival of Polynesian crew from whaling vessels. The only way to be sure is to excavate the site and analyse the cultural and biological remains in context. Did they bring adzes and cutting tool with them, and their chickens and dogs? The answers to these questions may also identify the likely origin of the voyagers.

We capture the tension, excitement and surprise of science as it happens: research, excavation and cutting- edge DNA analysis unfolding over several months in Chile and New Zealand. We also explore the fascinating sub-themes. The excavation will disturb the remains of indigenous people. How will the scientists deal with this? We see them seek the informed consent not only of Polynesians but also the descendants of the Mapuche tribes who were also living on the island more than five hundred years ago.

How did the Polynesians navigate these vast distances? Our documentary shows young Polynesians across the Pacific learning the celestial navigation skills of their ancestors on ocean-going voyages in traditional canoes. We also employ computer graphics to show how the seasonal winds and currents made it not only possible but likely that that Polynesians also sailed to Peru to bring back the sweet potato from the America to the Pacific.

And in the same spirit that we imagine the surprise of that encounter five hundred years ago when indigenous Americans first saw their Pacific neighbours arrive from across the horizon, we show the 21st century resumption of this long ago contact, as young Polynesians and Mapuche meet to exchange greetings songs haka and dance.

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MY ADOPTED FAMILY / MA FAMILLE ADOPTÉE

SYNOPSIS

How far is an infertile couple capable to go, to have its own children?

This is the story of Marc and Nathalie from Beaune, France. Unlike many other childless couples, they have decided to take destiny into their own hands. There is a little island universe in the middle of the pacific, where its inhabitants are used to sharing their children. In the last 50 years, this old tradition, the fa'a'amu, has grown beyond the borders of Polynesia and vigorously changed.

Around 100 couples like Marc and Nathalie come to Tahiti every year, roaming the streets for a mother, that destiny has chosen for them. Some get lucky after one day. Others never. Fate? But do those couples really understand, what sharing a baby with its Polynesian parents means? Marc and Nathalie have found Tomy and are taking it serious. They have promised to come back every year. So far they kept their promise -- Tomys' family has fully accepted them. Everything would be fine if there wasn't this intense wish: finding Tomy a little sister. And they have vowed not to leave the island until they find this baby. No matter how long it takes. Will they pull through with it?

Jusqu'ou un couple infertile peut-il aller pour avoir un enfant ?

Le film raconte l'histoire de Marc et Nathalie, un couple originaire de Beaune en France. Contrairement à certains couples sans enfant, ils ont décidé de forcer le destin.

Aux antipodes de Beaune, en plein milieu du Pacifique, existe une tradition que les Polynésiens nomment Fa'a'amu qui a considérablement évolué au cours des 50 dernières années. Elle consiste à partager son enfant avec d'autres parents. Près d'une centaine de couples comme Marc et Nathalie débarquent à Tahiti chaque année à la recherche d'une maman biologique que le destin aura bien voulu mettre sur leur chemin. Certains trouvent rapidement le bébé espéré, d'autres repartent effondrés.

Mais est ce que ces couples comprennent vraiment ce que partager un enfant avec des parents Polynésiens signifie ? Marc et Nathalie ont déjà adopté Tomy et prennent cette tradition très au sérieux. Ils ont promis de revenir chaque année et ont tenu leur parole. Ils font maintenant partie intégrante de la famille biologique de Tomy. Tout serait donc parfait si ils n'avaient pas décider de trouver une petite sœur à Tomy. De retour à Tahiti, ils sont à la recherche de leur nouveau bébé et peu importe le temps que cela prendra. Réaliseront ils leur rêve ?

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TUPAIA

SYNOPSIS

A dramatised documentary on the Tahitian High Priest artist and navigator Tupaia who piloted the Endeavour through the reefs surrounding Tahiti on Captain Cook's first voyage to the Pacific.

We tell his story through the eyes of the eyes of artist Michel Tuffery, who's family comes from the same island Ra'iatea as Tupaia. One of Michel's missions will be to find the grave of Tupaia, who died far from home in Batavia in 1770 without the rituals deserving of a high chief. Michel wants to put Tupaia's unquiet soul to rest.

As well as being a gifted artist Tupaia was also a linguist. When the Endeavour reached New Zealand he was the only one aboard who could speak to Maori, who believed that Tupaia, not Cook, was the commander.

Botanist Joseph Banks and other members of the Royal Society party on the Endeavour declared the Tahitian chief "a genius." Tupaia became a close companion of the artist Sydney Parkinson who introduced him to watercolours: the two often sketched the same scenes. Seven of their originals are in the British Museum. One of the most famous, a sketch of a Maori offering a crayfish to Cook, long believed to be the work of Parkinson, has now been attributed to Tupaia. Michel Tuffery believes their sketches are a fascinating first collaboration between artist from Polynesia and Europe. The documentary will follow his quest to track down the originals at the English and German museums.

Tuffery will also retrace Tupaia's journey beginning in Tahiti, where every July 14 his half-sisters strip to waist to perform the same dances as Tupaia's day. He will then return to the marae Taputapuatea on Raiatea that he shares with Tupaia and then on to New Zealand, Australia and Indonesia. Michel will paint as he goes. His art, a subversive re-versioning of the paintings from Cook's voyages, will be the glue that holds the documentary and drama together. Some will also serve as storyboards for re-enactments, as his two-dimensional images morph into three dimensional drama

The re-enactments will follow Tupaia's journey as he forges friendships with Cook, Banks and Parkinson in Tahiti, his diplomatic coups with the Maori, his frustration at being unable to translate the language of the aborigines for his British companions, and his sad death with Parkinson in disease-ridden Batavia.

Tupaia operates in parallel time frames, blending drama and documentary to tell the intertwined stories of two Polynesian artists Tupaia in the 18th century and Tuffery in the 21st.

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