

Border Crossings

ORIGINS

Festival of First Nations



Explore the world's indigenous cultures

June 9-25 2015

MUSIC * THEATRE * FILM * DANCE * FAMILY * TALKS
FOOD * VISUAL ART * CEREMONY * PARTICIPATION

www.originsfestival.com

Welcome to Origins: Festival of First Nations

“You left me my lips, and they shape words” - *Archie Weller, Aboriginal Australian writer*

David Milroy – First Nations Associate



I am a Palyku man. Our tribal lands are in the Pilbara region of Western Australia on the edge of the Western Desert. I've been told it is one of the most isolated places in the world but I'd like to think that the rest of the world is isolated from us. I'm also a Burungu, which we call our skin name. This name defines my relationship to every other Aboriginal person I meet who uses our skin names. We have four. I practice my traditional culture, which has remained unchanged from the beginning.

In Australia it is often said our culture is an oral culture because we don't have the written word. To a degree that is true but I would say we are an aural culture before anything else. Our way is to listen and learn from our Elders and in time, earn the right to speak. Even then, we are taught to choose our words carefully. “Too much *Wonkga!*” (talk) in our culture is frowned upon. Yet we are living in a world where faster is seen as better. The great chain of consumption; where fast economies and fast talk are all apparently better for the planet and its inhabitants. Watch the pace of an American children's movie and you'll know what I'm talking about. Fast food, not a lot of nutrition! The thirst for knowledge has become the modern times mantra that has relegated wisdom to the to the catacombs of human endeavour.

Being a part of one of the most studied prodded and measured races on Earth I have seen the lack of wisdom in the pursuit of knowledge but have had the humbling experience of hearing true wisdom from my Elders.

Each year we have our cultural time, which can last up to six months. Most of our Elders will have a mobile phone and we all agree a Toyota is even better than a good pair of boots. We, like many other First Nations people, have had to adapt to survive all the 'tion' words thrown at us, Assimilation, integration, miscegenation, Stolen Generations, One Nation (Right wing political party) and all the other 'tion' words.

We have also become discerning about what we choose to embrace or reject from Western Culture. In our region I'm happy to say that regardless of the mining boom and the not so 'Brave New World' we live in, the fundamentals of family and culture remain intact but nevertheless under constant pressure to kowtow to the 'tion' words.

Is there a Great Chain of Mono Culture that would have us all dancing to the same tune? There is not one culture and there never can be one culture on this planet. Our cultures are intrinsically connected to the lands we live on through our beliefs, songs, dances and ceremony. Our cultures are as varied as the Earth itself. The closest thing humanity has to a Monoculture is a Multi-National company that has no border anchors or alliances, a free agent that takes what they want, detached from law or morality in the pursuit of profit.

There is a lot to be learned from an aural culture but sadly the First Nations have been subjected to a history of being ignored and silenced. Nevertheless our voices still speak with authority and dignity through our culture and our arts. Border Crossings continues to provide the rare opportunity to bring our voice to the world stage.

I am privileged to know Michael Walling, a rare man indeed, and thank him and his staff for providing this wonderfully inspiring festival.

David Milroy is a playwright and musician. He is former Artistic Director of Yirra Yaakin Noongar Theatre, and currently Chair of the Palyku Native Title Working Party in the East Pilbara. David will be performing his songs at The Origins Concert at Rich Mix on June 11, and at Indigenous Australia Late: Origins Festival at the British Museum on June 12. He gives The Menzies Centre Talk at Rich Mix on June 13.

Michael Walling – Festival Director



It is in equal measure an honour and a pleasure to welcome you to the 2015 Origins Festival of First Nations – our largest, most wide-ranging, most provocative festival to date. This June, we range across the world from Latin America to the Arctic Circle, across London from Crouch End to Acton, across venues from the Southbank and the British Museum to Cavendish School and Bethnal Green Academy.

This extreme eclecticism is far more than lip service to the diversity agenda: it is central to our Festival's vision for the transformation of our contemporary cultural, social and political space, which is itself inspired by the First Nations cultures at its heart. Indigenous societies are not segregated or stratified – they are open and organic, inclusive of Elders and children, deeply respectful to their guests. They are not destructive of our planet's limited resources, but profoundly aware of ecological balance and imbalance: these are cultures that have lived for millennia in a close relationship to landscape, leaving scarce a mark upon it, while supposedly more “developed” nations are set on a path of ecological destruction. Indigenous people do not passively consume commercial “entertainment” – they actively produce and participate in their vibrant arts and cultures. And that is why they also offer us examples of genuine democracy – of social, political and cultural spaces in which participation is the norm; in which the dynamic exchange of ideas is a way of being; in which entire communities come together in ceremony, performance and assembly – in festival - so as to move forward as one.

This is very different from the way we live here in London – and that is what makes Origins far more than just another event in the city's busy cultural calendar. As we bring the great artists of the indigenous world to our theatres, to our parks, to our schools, to the hallowed halls of the British Museum, and to paint a mural in our streets – we engage and dialogue with them to ask fundamental questions about how we can re-occupy our own land, regenerate our own ecology, reinvigorate our culture, our democracy, our lives.

Michael Walling is Artistic Director of Border Crossings and Visiting Professor at Rose Bruford College.

Ngāti Rānana



Ngāti Rānana, the London Māori Club, offers a welcome to our visiting artists at The Origin of Origins.

Since the 1950s, Ngāti Rānana has provided New Zealanders residing in the UK and others interested, an environment to teach, learn and participate in Māori culture. The three guiding principles of Ngāti Rānana are *whanaungatanga* (togetherness), *manaakitanga* (hospitality) and *kōtahitanga* (unity).

Ceremony

The Voladores de Papantla

Rich Mix – June 20 (Healing)

Emslie Horniman's Pleasance – June 20 & 21 (Voladores ceremony)

Part of the Year of Mexico in Britain. In association with The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea's InTRANSIT Festival, Cumbre Tajin and ExpressArte. Special thanks to Glastonbury Festival.

The Ritual Ceremony of the *Voladores* expresses important myths and concepts regarding the Universe and Nature. If the ceremony takes place during cyclical moments in the cosmos, such as during carnivals, the solstice or at the start/end of an agricultural cycle, that is, when renewal and strengthening is needed, not only of the world but also of humanity and victuals, the great phallus will again penetrate the earth and cause great fertility, recreating a cosmogonic myth. The moment the tree is "planted" in the middle of the town square, the center of the cosmos, the world is shored up and once again, as in the myths of origin, the heavens and the earth separate. The captain of the dance, upon raising his arms, renews the axis mundi that is fixed in the navel of the earth and reaches to the sky; this gesture takes on cosmogonic meaning. Upright, at the apex of the mast, he plays his flute and imitates the primordial sound; bowing in reverence to the four directions of the world, he gains sovereignty over cosmic space, temporal space and the movement of the solar star. Once cosmogony is recreated, as in the case of birds, his flight can be interpreted as the movement of solar rays, of heated forces. With his movements, the circular course of the Sun around the earth recommences. The descent of the beings associated with the infraworld –cold beings, the creatures who inhabited the earth before the appearance of real men– once again opens up that plethoric space of fertility and the renewal of the entire universe is complete. Sovereignty over the four directions of space is acquired through these rites, and one commands the view of the entire temporal space. - **Nájera Coronado**

The Zugubal Dancers

Rich Mix – June 11 (The Origins Concert)

British Museum – June 12 (Indigenous Australia Late)

Emslie Horniman's Pleasance – June 20 & 21

There is an ancient saying the elders always teach:
'Muruygaw muykupal pathamukmik'

- The fire lit by our ancestors a very long long time ago...
- The firewood is slowly burning out...
- We as descendants must push the remaining firewood into the fire...
- We must also place new firewood into the fireplace to keep the flames alive...
- The fire of our culture must continue to burn...

Zugubal Dancers is about reviving ancient culture.

All stages of every performance are relating to our ancestors guiding us on Land, Sea and Sky.

Mawa mask performances allow us not to celebrate within but to simply re-enact what our ancestors have practiced for countless generations.

Our spiritual ancestors sing, dance and guide the Zugubal dancers in every way.

Cultural protocols apply to all the chants, performances and costumes.

Our voices are resonators for the knowledge of our ancestors.

Through our songs, chants and dance, we tell stories of the knowledge of the past.

Through the *Mawa* masks we reconnect with the *Zugubal* (spiritual beings) & *Muruygal* (spiritual ancestors).

The knowledge of culture must be passed down to the next generation of *Zenadh-Kes* Islanders in order for the culture to survive.

This is all about our ancient culture before the white man introduced Christianity and the outside world. – **Alick Tipoti – Director & Designer**



Theatre Beautiful One Day

Southbank Centre – June 24 & 25



Devisor / Audio Visual Designer
Devisor / Performer / Cultural Consultant
Devisor / Performer
Devisor / Performer
Devisor / Director
Devisor / Performer
Devisor / Performer
Devisor / Performer
Devisor / Dramaturg

Set & Costume Designer
Lighting Designer
Composer & Sound Designer
Technical Production Manager
Stage / Tour Manager

Sean Bacon
Magdalena Blackley
Kylie Doomadgee
Paul Dwyer
Eamon Flack
Rachael Maza
Jane Phegan
Harry Reuben
David Williams

Ruby Langton-Batty
Frank Mainoo
Paul Prestipino
Glenn Dulhanty
Brock Brocklesby



We would like to show our respect and acknowledge the Traditional owners of Palm Island, the Manbarra people, and the Historical owners, the Bwgcolman people. We pay respect to their Ancestors and Elders past, present and future, and to any Elders that may be with us today.

Devisors' Note:

Beautiful One Day is a show about the irrepressible life and times of Palm Island.

In November 2004 an Aboriginal man on Palm Island died in police custody. A week of protests by the community culminated in what some have called a riot and others, direct action. From the point of view of the mainland, these two events seem to have dominated the recent history of Palm Island. They have been the focus of street protests, political manoeuvring, books, articles, documentaries and numerous court cases right up to the present day.

Beautiful One Day began as the work of three theatre companies who came together over a shared sense of outrage at these events of 2004. Our first meetings took place in Sydney and Melbourne in mid-2011 and they focused very much on the rather appalling exercise of white authority in 2004 and its aftermath. But then...

In the middle of 2011 we sent our first emissaries to Palm Island. Rachael Maza and Paul Dwyer caught a plane to Townsville, Queensland, drove two hours north to Lucinda and hopped on the Palm Island barge. On the foreshore as they pulled in to Palms they saw seven white painted rocks – memorials to the seven leaders of a 1957 strike for better living and working conditions on the island. Within minutes of leaving the barge Rachael Maza met a man who knew her father over half a century ago. These first encounters, as first encounters do, changed everything.

Palm Island is usually put in the category of 'remote Aboriginal community'. As Auntie Maggie Blackley says, it's not really remote at all. It's certainly not remote for the people who live there. It's a truism, though strangely overlooked, to say that the view of Palms from within Palms is far more comprehensive than the view of Palms from Brisbane or Canberra, where so much of the community's fate is decided. This show makes an entry-level attempt to see Palm Island from Palm Island. And for the people of Palms, the events of 2004 take their meaning from the long history of white rule and black protest, which preceded them.

Our greatest assets in this attempt are our three company members from Palms: Auntie Maggie Blackley, Kylie Doomadgee and Harry Reuben. We met each of them on the island and each of them has shaped and informed this show in their own inimitable way. The work was co-devised and has been led at different times by each member of the company. It is the product of conversation, research, careful listening, and good advice from those many people on Palm Island who have lent their experience and knowledge and sometimes their actual words to the show. We are not simply grateful to these people, we are held in bond by their good faith.

The show was made on Palm Island, in Sydney and in Melbourne. On Palms we worked a lot on Maggie's back veranda at Pencil Bay, nestled in a veritable slice of paradise; our days began with a swim and ended by candlelight. We also worked in the mall between the council building and the Palm Island store, in lounge rooms and on verandas, in the motel, the PCYC, the Community Meeting Room, and the new restaurant of the Coolgaree Bay Hotel. Then we came back to Belvoir and put it all together.

It is now eleven years since the events of 2004 and they have long since begun to fold back into the older, longer rhythms of white control and black tenacity. But those events remain raw for many people on Palm Island. Their meanings and consequences are uncooled and still formed. The view of Palms from Palms naturally takes in the view of Australia from Palms, and we may not necessarily like what we see. Palm Island is a measure of our country's long-standing habits of obtuseness and close-mindedness, especially towards the First Australians. But at the same time the view from Palms is a generous one. Determined, practical, honest, fierce and spirited – Palm Island and its people are full of human magnificence...

As Auntie Maggie says, 'I was always gentle, steady and strategic.' In that spirit, our show is about more than Palm Island, and it is only a beginning.

Beautiful One Day is produced by ILBIJERRI Theatre Company and Belvoir with support from Creative Victoria, the Australia Council for the Arts, the Balnaves Foundation, City of Melbourne & the Ministry for the Arts.

**CREATIVE
VICTORIA**



Beautiful One Day opened at Belvoir St Theatre on Wednesday 21 November 2012.

Origins performances co-produced by Southbank Centre in association with the Australia & New Zealand Festival in London.

Theatre

Oxlajuj B’aqtun

Emslie Horniman’s Pleasance – June 19-21

A collective creation by Grupo Sotz’il (Guatemala)

Qúqúmatz: Authority, Wisdom, Truth, Space-Time cycle Mercedes Francisca García Ordoñez

Rejqalem: Time carrier Juan Carlos Chiyal Yaxón

Wuqu’ Kaqix: Seven Guacamayos, Proud, ambitious, jelaous, liar, destructive, Egocentric and ignorant character Daniel Fernando Guarcax González

Jun Ajpu’ and Yaxbalamkej: Sun and Moon, Unity and spirituality, vision and light, Blowpiper, walker, human being and jaguar Gilberto Guarcax González (Ajq’ij) and César Augusto Guarcax Chopén

Keme’: underworld, darkness, death Luis Ricardo Cúmes González

Tukur: owl, messenger from the underworld Marcelino Chiyal Yaxón

Artistic Director: Víctor Manuel Barillas Crispín

Technical and Logistic Support: Joselino Guarcax Yaxón and Clara Alicia Sen Sipac

Music: Collective creation by Grupo Sotz’il, with the exception of the last tune, which is a traditional compilation



This piece is dedicated to our ancestors. To them we owe the knowledge and the inspiration. We are here to continue their legacy. It is also a tribute to all those ancestors who led the fight to maintain balance through the resistance of the Maya people. In particular it is dedicated to Lisandro Guarcax, our companion, our guide and the founder of Sotz’il Jay, murdered on the day *Oxlajuj B’atz’* – 25th of August 2010. In his own words:

“*Nqarayij chi ronojel qasamaj nk’atzin chi nqetamab’ej nk’aj chik winaqi*”
“We wish that all our efforts will be translated into the knowledge of the others”

We would like to thank our guides and teachers, our families, our communities, our partner organisations and our friends. Without them our endeavours would not have been posible as they help us to keep alive the artistic flame of the Maya people.

Synopsis

The energetic elements attract and contract in the cosmos to create fire, the essence of life. These elements move through spirals in search for harmony; but there are forces that cause huge imbalances between light and darkness, so creating conflict.

The lords of *Xib’alb’a’* (guardians of the underworld) clash with the twins *Jun Ajpu’* and *Yaxb’alamkej*, manifest as the human being and the spirit, through the mystic ball game.

Time and the essential energies’ movement go alongside with the clash of the dual forces that, although opposed, are all necessary for existence: Is Humanity prepared to honour these energies and give them their deserved place in order to find harmony?

What is *Oxlajuj B’aqtun*?

The Long Count calendar or *Oxlajuj B’aqtun* comprises five different measurements of time: *b’aqtun* (400 years), *k’atun* (20 years), *tun* (360 days), *wināq* (20 days) and *q’ij* (day) which get combined with the days and numerals from the sacred calendar *Cholq’ij*.

Whenever a *b’aqtun* (one of the longest measurements of time) is preceded by sacred number 13 (*Oxlajuj*), the result is the duration of a Maya Era, meaning *Oxlajuj B’aqtun* which is the equivalent to 13 periods of 400 years – 5,200 years of 360 days. Like days, eras are continuous, as for us time is cyclic, as we walk through a spiral in which past and future are parallel to one another.

Our ancestors left us prophecies, in codex and stelae, of the start of a New Era: a New Dawn in which the different calendars align to start a new cycle of 13 *B’aqtun*. The last day of the most recent Era, that of the People of the Maize, was during the 2012 Winter solstice of the Gregorian calendar – 21 of December 2012. This was not just a numerical or

astrological coincidence. Our ancestors transmit us the hope that each Era brings new things; the energies of the cosmos will start to work in different ways, changing the energetic relationship within the elements: the stars and the planets, the valleys and the hills, the plants and the animals, Humanity and the Universe. Such energy is also embedded in our Being, giving us the opportunity, if we are ready, to come closer to Plenitude.

The *Origins* performances of *Oxlajuj B’aqtun* coincide with the summer solstice.

Cultural Centre Sotz’il Jay

“So the doors of *Tulán*, where we had came from, were closed. A bat was guarding the doors of *Tulán* whilst we were produced and begotten and whilst we were given our baggage in the dark of the night. Oh, our sons!” (*Memorial of Sololá*)

Grupo Sotz’il is a group of young artists that constitute the Cultural Centre *Sotz’il Jay*, dedicated to the research, education and promotion of Mayan Art. Our mission is to reclaim the artistic ancient Maya wisdom for future generations, and to develop and spread the Kaqchikel Maya culture.

Sotz’il is a Kaqchikel-Maya term that means “the energy of the bat”. The Memorial of Sololá reminds us that the bat is the *nawal* (protective energy) of the Kaqchikel. Furthermore, ‘*Ajposotz’il Jay*’ or ‘The house of Bats’ was the lineage that led the Kaqchikel people in the *Iximché* city-fortress until the arrival of the Spaniards in 1524.

At present, the typical jacket of the Sololá Municipality displays the stylized figure of the bat on its back and sleeves, a legacy of our ancestors that our group embraces in order to be called Cultural Centre *Sotz’il Jay*.

Theatre

Just Another Sámi

Rich Mix – June 12-14

A musical documentary by Ferske Scener (Norway)

| | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Written, directed and performed by: | Håkon Mathias Vassvik |
| Composer and performer: | Torgeir Vassvik |
| Performer: | Kari Rønnekleiv |
| Dramaturg: | Kristin Bjørn |
| Scenography: | Joachim Brodin |
| Scenography assistant: | Barbara Kapelj Osredkar |
| Producers: | Ferske Scener and Annika Ostwald |



Culture is never a fixed entity, but always in a process in change and development. So also for the Sámi, and Just Another Sámi is an example of how music and storytelling from different traditions merge to raise questions of identity, tradition, and belonging in a 21st century world.

The Sámi are indigenous people of northern Europe. Their presence in these areas stretches back as far as any known source can tell. There is no official registry of who is of Sami, but estimates vary between 50,000 and 80,000 people. Their land, Sápmi, is divided by the nation-state borders of Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia.

Often associated with reindeer herding and their colourful *kofte*, the Sámi have a rich cultural heritage which also includes fishing and handicraft. Like most indigenous peoples their history is marked by repression and discrimination by the majority cultures, and in many places their culture, religion and traditional livelihoods were almost wiped out by governmental efforts and policies. Many were also cut off from the Sámi language. In Norway, the Sámi language was not allowed in schools until after WWII, and often not spoken in the home for fear or shame. Some variants of the language are only spoken by a handful of Sámi people today, as current generations were cut off from it at a young age.

Much has changed, however, over the last 50 years. Politically, the Alta affair was a real game-changer. Governmental approval of a hydropower dam between Alta and Kautekeino in 1978 sparked the biggest protests in Norwegian environmental history, with strong alliances between the Sámi and Norwegian environmentalists. The dam was built, but in the aftermath the rights and recognition of Sámi became top of the agenda. In 1989 the Sámi Parliament was established, and Norway was the first country to ratify the ILO Convention 169 on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in 1990. They have also amended the Constitution to include a duty to provide the Sámi with the possibility to develop their language, culture and social life.

The Sámi revitalisation movement started in the 70s, when a new generation of educated, young Sámi started building pride in their identity and cultural traditions, as well as their relation to the land. They were inspired by and made alliances with other indigenous peoples, and over the next decades significant shifts occurred both in terms of rights to land and water, greater amount of self-determination, a flourishing cultural life and a growing pride in the Sámi identity.

Today, the Sámi's position as indigenous people is better than many other places in the world. This does not mean things are perfect: many of the Sámi languages and livelihoods are under pressure from the majority society, and across Sápmi there is an increasing pressure from extractive industries such as mining and timber, hydro-electric dams and also the tourist industry. Neither Finland nor Sweden have ratified ILO 169, and Sámi still experience more racism than other groups. Along the coast where the coastal Sámi live, the culture is less visible and sometimes harder to come to terms with for people who discover in adulthood that they have Sámi heritage.

Nevertheless the legal, political and cultural changes overall are positive. More young people learn or wish to learn Sámi today than before, and the *joik*, a song-like performance that is unique to the Sámi, is very popular. *Joik* is performed solo, in dialogue and in groups, and *presences* whoever is joiked about rather than being purely descriptive. Music, poetry, and also theatre traditions has grown together with a great number of Sámi cultural festivals.

"Indigenous theatre has a dual role", writes Marie Kvernmo, who has worked as performer and written her MA Thesis on the Sámi National Theatre *Beaivváš*, "as a healer and an identification for the insiders, and a culture educator for the outsiders." Whichever of these you belong to as audience member, *Just Another Sámi* is a powerful performance about identity and belonging both to a small community and a people whose history is dominated by the rule of states who have failed to understand their integrity as a people. The story is as upbeat as it is haunting, and the performance is a prime example of how different genres and traditions merge into great storytelling.

Ragnhild Freng Dale: Scott Polar Research Institute, University of Cambridge



KULTURRÅDET
Arts Council
Norway

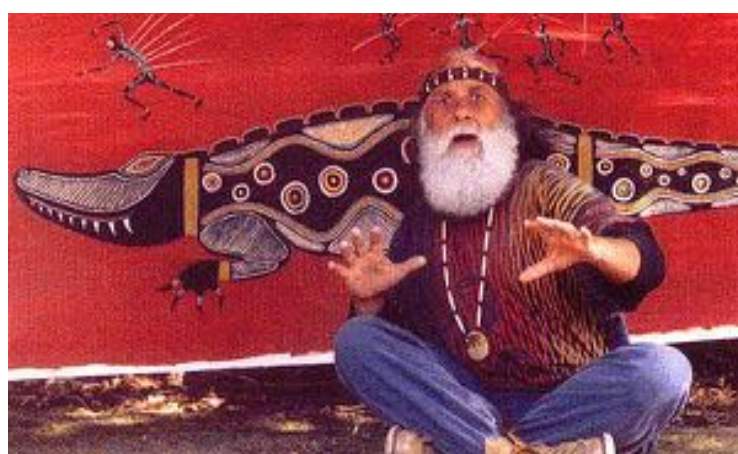


FOND FOR
LYD OG BILDE
Kulturrådet



Storytelling for Families

Rich Mix – June 13 & 20



Kelvin Mockingbird (Navajo, USA), and **Francis Firebrace** (Yorta Yorta, Australia) share the most ancient and potent theatre of all, the art of the storyteller.

In First Nations cultures, the storyteller is a crucial figure, but so is the listener. When the storyteller speaks by the campfire, in the listening circle, it is with an immediate and direct awareness of the audience, of the community. This listening is not the passive reception of a pre-determined product, but an immediate and live engagement with an evolving, growing and sustaining mythology. **MW**

Theatre

Kava Girls

Rich Mix – June 12-14

Ninotchka Tingleff as Debra Taylor
Olivia Muliaumaseali'i as Salma Austin
and making her stage debut as Sinalei is Geri Love

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| written and directed by | Sani Muliaumaseali'i |
| Lighting design by | Dominic Warwick |
| Sound design | Kevin Jianoran |
| Musical Direction | Kathryn Bolitho & Chris Taylor |
| Choreography | Nina Thilas Mohs |
| Samoaan Choreography | Sani Muliaumaseali'i |
| Adornments | Rosanna Raymond |
| Backing tracks arranged by | Andy Philip with Dave Bryant, Torquil Munro, Greg Hagger |

Fa'afetai and thank you to: Aiga, Peter Rice, Robert Trew, Shireen Nathoo, Luana Asiata, Roslyn Mahe, Eddie Muliaumaseali'i, Sarah Sweeting, Michael Walling, Clearpoint Management, Battersea Back Clinic, Dance Attic Studios, Richmix, Origins Festival, GAFA Arts Collective (GAC) Photo: Salvador Brown.

Mixing the Kava

Classifying *Kava Girls* as a musical, or a play, or anything was something I was reluctant to do. *Kava Girls* adheres to western musical & theatrical form but also demonstrates a layering of concept, culture & art practice.

I felt it important to present something that was universal in its appeal but still exhibit some mystery. The intrigue is provided by the Samoaan culture. This generates respect. Although not exactly autobiographical, *Kava Girls* does reflect my world. The world of theatre and of being Samoaan. I am not entirely sure which came first. My Samoa is not the same as someone who was born and raised there. I am a descendant of immigrants and abide by the culture I've created. 'We are all our own creations' says Sinalei. My culture has been mostly learnt through immersion and partly by rote. I am well qualified to be

Samoan, though often it is one of the roles I cover. Sinalei is a Fa'afafine: neither male nor female, but both. She covers both sexes but never really "goes on" – she is, however, forever Fa'afafine. Forever Samoaan.

The Ava ceremony (or Kava as it is more famously known) is something the Fa'afafine can never actually perform. This is the metaphor upon which *Kava Girls* rests. The other two characters are more straightforward, given they are the west incarnate – they swirl around Sinalei gently asserting the cultural framework within which this Samoaan exists. A smooth concoction of culture is possible, but often a disaster of post-colonial interference prevails resulting in an incongruous cultural netherworld.

Kava Girls examines ownership: of self, of the worlds we create, of the choices we make and the consequences thus rued. We witness how far from our essence we can stray to survive: we examine our values and the price we pay for success.

Sani Muliaumaseali'i - Creative Director & Co-founder



GAFA
ARTS COLLECTIVE

CLEARPOINT
Management and Media Group

Dance Attic
STUDIOS

Theatre

Ayahuasca

Rich Mix – June 13, 14, 20

A solo presentation for an audience of one by José Navarro (Peru)
Original Music and Sound Design: Javier Serrano & Alberto San Andrés

Shamans say that ayahuasca shows you your path. Not "the" path, but your own. It is a songline of sorts, not as a map of the land but a map of your life. The songline can untie the choking riddles of your life and show you the winding way, deep in the green heart's forest, simple as sunlight and resonant with the motivation of a soul's journey.

Ayahuasca (pronounced "eye-er-wass-ka") is a powerful hallucinogenic drug widely used by shamans throughout South America. It is made from the vine *Banisteriopsis caapi*, boiled for twelve or more hours with certain other ingredients added and the bitter, foul-tasting liquid is drunk. It has many names, many properties; vine of visions, vine of souls. *Aya* means, in the Quechua language, spirit or ancestor or dead person, while *huasca* means vine or rope. It is thus sometimes known as the vine of the dead, because shamans say it puts you in touch with the ancestors, and through it they can communicate with the spirit world. (The name is perhaps influenced by the fact that drinking it can make you feel as if you're dying.) It is also known as *la purga*, the purge, for it dramatically courses through the body, often making the drinker vomit furiously. Perhaps the most common term for it, through, is *la medicina*, for it is used as a medical diagnostic tool, and as a curative for physical and psychological problems. Noe Rodriguez Jujuborre, a healer of the Muinane people of Colombia, told me once that under its influence, he sees the diagnosis of an illness, and the image of the plant that will cure it is "imprinted on my mind."

So that night I would drink ayahuasca. It was dusk and the insects of twilight were hissing and thrumming and all the forest's night players were coming to life, the fizzy, zestful *chicharras*, cicadas, were fermenting their sing and frogs honked, bellowing for a mate. I took my notebook with me as ever, though writing anything in the near-coma that ayahuasca induces was hard.

In Juan's hut there were rugs, blankets and mattresses around the walls, with buckets if anyone needed to vomit. As well as Juan, there was another shaman, Victor, and an apprentice who poured out measures of ayahuasca in to a carved wooden cup, like an egg cup. Just before I drank, I felt a vertiginous fear; this is as "pure alkaloid poison," I remembered reading, and the hallucinations may be terrifying. But then, I thought, my journey of depression was already frightening and I already felt poisoned. I drank. It was like drinking hemlock and stars; as foul as the one, as brilliant as the other.

Juan began to sing an *icaro* – a gentle song, thin as the wind in the reeds, ethereal, sweet and far away. As he sang, he repeated the word *ayahuasca* like an invocation; its sound onomatopoeic, soft and shimmering, a word of whispers and mystery.

Jay Griffiths (from *Wild: An Elemental Journey* – Hamish Hamilton)



Film

The Rolf de Heer Trilogy

I first met David Gulpilil, Australia's pre-eminent Aboriginal actor, after I'd already cast him in the title role of *The Tracker*, back in the year 2000. I was shocked during this first meeting, because not only did I have difficulty understanding David's English, but I also had nothing to say to him, nothing I felt I *could* say to him, so vast were our apparent cultural differences. He may as well have been an alien. It was not an auspicious start to any collaboration.

Luckily David invited me to visit him where he lived, in the remote Aboriginal community of Ramingining, in north-eastern Arnhem Land in the Northern Territory. And luckily I did accept that invitation. We could share some experiences, and a real collaboration could begin.

I spent a week with David then, in the middle of the wet season, when the mosquitoes were at their worst. I found myself to be in the most foreign country I'd ever been to, despite it simply being part of, as I thought of it then, my own country. Few people spoke English at all well and many didn't speak it at all. The complexities of their kinship system were such that here it was me who was the complete alien. I went on a learning curve which, almost 15 years later, hasn't stopped.

The Tracker, which we shot some months after this first visit to Ramingining, was a film shot away from David's people and away from his country. Having learnt something of where David came from, we set about making major effort to make him comfortable in our midst and in a strange country. At one stage his wife was going to play the fugitive (a different crime would have been needed, of course), just so David could have someone to talk to in his own language. Those efforts, along with the political nature of what presented, meant David revelled in the role. He would wear the neckchains with pride, and refuse to take them off between takes and different shots.

But David wanted more. He wanted us to make a film on his country, with his people, which is eventually how *Ten Canoes* was born, in collaboration with David. That meant many visits to Ramingining, and a need to work more generally with the mob up there, especially as David left Ramingining in the early planning stages of the film, more than a year before the shoot. His departure was caused by fear... David's fear of being speared, as he'd offended people or customs to the extent that he felt certain he'd receive severe tribal punishment.

Others of the elders and strong people stepped forward to replace him, and I spent as much time figuring out how to make a film in such a different culture as I spent trying to put the film together. First, and most importantly, I figured out that for this film to be possible, then editorial control, control over the script and whatever might be in it and how we portrayed anything in that script, had to be in the hands of the mob. I knew by now that they worked by a consensus of the appropriate elders, and if I felt that something was going wrong, I'd have to convince those elders.

An example came a week or so before the shoot was finally scheduled to begin. Word suddenly came through that there was going to be a significant meeting because a number of the men had decided there ought be no women in the film. At a certain point in the meeting (which was in Aboriginal languages, which I couldn't understand), when it seemed that consensus for this no-women viewpoint was fast approaching, I was asked for my opinion. I said they were entitled absolutely to do it this way, but if they chose to go ahead, then they would need to find a new director. I had made promises to people (the women amongst others) that I was not able to break. I suggested I could help them find someone else to direct the film.

The meeting then continued in language, and half an hour later, consensus was reached...the women would stay. But this had been their decision, not something imposed, which meant that although the problem did not go entirely away, it was able to be handled from this point on, because there was ownership of the decision.

Ten Canoes happened, completely against the odds, because of this ownership, and ownership came from a knowledge that they had actual creative control. *Charlie's Country*, some 8 years later, was equally so. I made sure that David, as much as me, had ownership of the content of the film (he's very political, hence the film's politic), and I made sure the Ramingining mob had ownership of the process of shooting in Ramingining and the cultural accuracy of what was depicted. And as had happened on *Ten Canoes*, *Charlie's Country* was much the better for it.

Rolf de Heer

The Tracker

(Australia 2002. Dir: Rolf de Heer. English 90 mins. Hackney Picturehouse: June 12)



Ten Canoes

(Australia 2006. Dir: Rolf de Heer, Peter Djigirr. Ganabingu / English. 90 mins. British Museum: June 13)
Followed by a Q&A with Dr. Ian Henderson and David Milroy



Charlie's Country

(Australia 2014. Dir: Rolf de Heer. English and Yolngu. 108 mins. Hackney Picturehouse: June 14)
Followed by a Q&A with Rolf de Heer and Michael Walling



Film Community Screenings

Whale Rider

(New Zealand 2002. Dir: Niki Caro. English and Māori. 101 mins. Odeon Putney: June 8. Vue Acton: June 16)



White Lies

(New Zealand 2013. Dir: Dana Rotberg. English and Māori. 96 mins. Vue Acton: June 23)



White Lies owes much of its genesis to *Whale Rider*. Not only are both feature films based on literary works by acclaimed author Witi Ihimaera, but it was *Whale Rider* that inspired *White Lies* director and writer Dana Rotberg to move half way across the world to New Zealand from her native Mexico.

Rotberg's decision to move to New Zealand was certainly spontaneous but such was the power of her reaction to *Whale Rider*. "At the time, I didn't even know anything at all about New Zealand. I was taken by the film in a very, very profound way, and I thought, 'if I could choose where I want to live and where I want my daughter to grow up, I would choose that place'." The morning after she saw *Whale Rider*, Rotberg purchased two one-way tickets for herself and her daughter to New Zealand.

Witi Ihimaera – author of *Whale Rider* and *Medicine Woman* writes:

The novella *Medicine Woman* is really about the woman who saved my life. When I was born I was a sickly infant with chronic breathing problems and, after trying a number of Pākehā doctors, my parents took me to see a Māori "doctor" who was known as Blightface because of the livid red scar across her nose and left cheek.

She practiced illegally among Māori patients, travelling alone with a horse and mule on various circuits to Ringatū marae on the East Coast or throughout inland Gisborne and across into Tūhoe country. According to my mother, my parents were scolded, I was taken away into a tent full of steam mixed with herbs and various softening oils and honey were dripped through my lips and, then, Blightface put the hook of her finger down my throat and began to pull out string after string of phlegm.

Such a character is the stuff of highly individual fiction and it's a wonder that I had never written about Blightface earlier. I guess I was waiting for an inner story to manifest itself with a fictional moral dilemma that I could give my fictional Blightface as she travels among the Ringatū faithful who provided her main customers.

That story came when I read about the classic English actress Merle

Oberon, who famously played Cathy to Laurence Olivier's Heathcliff in *Wuthering Heights*. Nobody realised until she died that she had been born in India or part Indian and part Māori descent, and that the Indian servant who greeted guests at the door had been her own mother.

And so the Merle Oberon story entered into the novella to provide its huge emotional and terrorising heart. As Blightface visits Gisborne she is approached by a Māori servant who works for a beautiful Pākehā woman Mrs Rebecca Vickers who wishes Blightface to rid her of an unwanted baby. The three women enter into an unholy alliance, filled with intrigue and deception. And at the core of it, Blightface must answer to her own moral code: can she, as a person dedicated to saving life become complicit in ending life?

I am particularly proud and humbled that John Barnett, South Pacific Pictures, and Dana Rotberg, director, have taken upon themselves the loving challenge of bringing Blightface's immensely human story to the screen.

El Regreso

(Venezuela 2013. Dir: Patricia Ortega. Spanish and Wayuunaiki. 107 mins. Vue Wood Green: June 20)



"*El Regreso* deals with the need to recognize yourself in someone you consider other. It's a film about friendship and the displaced" Patricia Ortega explains, while also revealing that the film was inspired by the massacre which happened in Bahía Portete (Alta Guajira Colombiana) in April 2004, where 40 paramilitaries attacked locals, mainly killing women and causing a massive displacement of people. The members of this community moved towards the areas around Uribia and Maicao, within their own country, but around 300 people made it as far as the city of Maracaibo, in Venezuela, through fear of being killed.

"We chose to make a fictional film to protect the identity of those affected who are still engaged in the fight to regain their territory", explains Ortega and adds, that although the beginning of the story of *El Regreso* is based on these events, "the rest of the story is focused on the perspective of a 10 year old girl who finds herself forced to flee to another country alone to save her own life, separated from her family, unable to speak Spanish; on how she defends herself in order to be able to communicate; on what she does to survive along in a place totally new to her. Although it is fiction, the reality was and continues to be much harsher."

Initially the real location of the events was Bahia Portete, in Guajira in Columbia, but because of security problems, Oretga decided to recreate the town on the coast of Quisiro, located in the North of the western side of the lake of Maracaibo in the state of Zulia. They moved to this location with a team of more than 50 people to film the start and finish of *El Regreso*. The rest of the story takes place in the centre of Maracaibo: the flea market, Callejon de Los Pobres (Street of the Poor) and the adjacent area, where they had to fight with the hubbub of people and sounds of the city.

Translation – Rosanna Lowe

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Film

Standstill



(Canada 2013 – Dir. Majdi El-Omari. English, Mohawk, French and Arabic. 105 mins. Ciné Lumière: 10 June)
Followed by a Q&A with Majdi El-Omari and Gabe Hughes.

It is a dilemma when an artist, a filmmaker, or a writer talks in his work about a culture not his own. As a Palestinian I see a lot of films that exploit my own people either with good intentions or bad intentions. Making this film took me a lot of time in deeply researching and examining every detail: I was scared that I might be using First Nations for my own intention. Only when I got their approval, could I start filming. When I say “their approval”, I am saying the approval of the Kanienkehaka (Mohawk) with their deferences. I was proud to get their input, enthusiasm and trust. Once a community feels that the artist is sincere, honest and seriously interacting with them, they trust him/her and they help in spite of of their disappointments from previous experience. In the end they liked the film, and they are the most important audience for me.

When I first arrived in Canada I heard a lot about indigenous people based on stereotyped images, and as a Palestinian I always doubt any prejudgement unless I can explore it myself. Again as a Palestinian I identify myself with any people who are being treated unfairly, and who are not allowed to enjoy basic human rights or celebrate their culture. Once I met Kanienkehaka (Mohawk), I found how strong they are. 500 years and they still resist assimilation. Indigenous people never mind sharing the land with others, but they never thought that this would have such a huge impact on them and their relation to their culture and land. Unfortunately instead the indigenous culture being allowed to flourish, celebrated and shared by other cultures, it is under attack, and especially under psychological attack. The worst form of oppression is to separate people from their own culture and create barriers against them using their own language, their original names, their traditions; to limit their movement after ages of being free to move, hunt and interact with nature; and even to convince them that there is something wrong with their culture. Indigenous culture throughout the world is an example of a harmony between humanity and Nature. Indigenous people are still trying to resist and fight in order to practice and celebrate their culture, their land, and their basic human rights. I am interested in Indigenous people and culture because as a Palestinian I can understand their suffering and their ongoing resistance. - **Majdi El-Omari**



Background on the Oka Crisis

From 11 July to 26 September 1990, the Mohawk of Kanesatake defended their traditional lands and burial grounds from the expansion of a golf course by the neighbouring town of Oka, in Quebec, Canada. With past efforts (as recently as 1986) to peacefully reclaim this territory proving ineffectual against the impending destruction of the land, the Mohawk of Kanesatake took action, beginning a protest that would grow to barricades and road blocks on major Canadian routes, met with support from Indigenous groups and police and military resistance. Their efforts garnered international attention and support, and highlighted the value of traditional territories and Aboriginal sovereignty. - **Gabe Hughes**

Uvanga



(Canada 2013 – Dir: Marie-Hélène Cousineau and Madeline Piujuq Ivalu. English and Inuktitut. 88 mins. Ciné Lumière: 11 June)
Followed by a Q&A with Marie-Hélène Cousineau.

Anna and Tomas were not inspired by anyone in particular, but there are many families like theirs in the world today: separated, mixed-blood children discovering their roots and shaping their identities; grandparents connecting with newly found grandchildren; and adults trying to mend broken relationships. This story could have taken place anywhere, but the one we are telling takes place in the North in a remote community on Baffin Island. The script is anchored in the culture, lifestyle, people, and place of Igloolik, Nunavut.

The film is truly an actor’s film. We had the opportunity to work with an exceptional team of experienced Igloolik-based actors. Interestingly, they had never worked on a contemporary story before. Working with them helped us sharpen the scenes and the Inuktitut dialogue developed in the script. We used this same approach with *Before Tomorrow* (Origins 2011) to ensure absolute cultural authenticity.

In shooting the film, we wanted the camera to focus on the actors and let them shine. The camera work allows the audience to view the world of the film through the characters’ eyes. We wanted the film to depict an explosion of emotions and the flow of life, without dwelling on resolutions or closure. With this emotionally open and natural approach, we hope that the audience will feel close to the characters through the events of their lives. - **Madeline Ivalu and Marie-Hélène Cousineau**

The Road to Home



(UK 2014 – Dir: Dominic Brown. English. 55 mins. Arthouse Crouch End: 13 June)
Followed by a Q&A with Benny Wenda

I first met Benny Wenda at my friend Jay Griffiths’ birthday party. I had not long before finished reading her extraordinary book *Wild*, which had introduced me to West Papua. Until then, I had no idea that the Western half of New Guinea was a colony of Indonesia, or that her people had been struggling for independence for over fifty years. Jay’s account was shocking in its exposure of the brutality and rapacity of the colonial power’s activities there, and its collusion with the West in claiming the land for resource extraction. One example of this is the displacement and killing of thousands of people to make way for the giant American- and British-owned Freeport Mine, the largest gold mine in the world, which has reduced a sacred mountain to a crater and poisoned the local river system. And there was Benny, sitting in Jay’s front room, holding the ukulele from which he is never separated. We were introduced, and in his calm, modest and playful way, he told me a little of his life: how he grew up in a village that was bombed, how he campaigned for independence and was imprisoned, how he engineered a daring escape and eventually came to England. Dominic Brown’s film tells us a bit more of his incredible story, and does a little to further his quest for his people’s liberation. – **Michael Walling**

Drunktown's Finest



(USA 2014 – Dir. Sydney Freeland. English and Navajo. 95 mins. Arthouse Crouch End: 24 June)

Navajo writer/director Sydney Freeland began the journey to create *Drunktown's Finest* in 2005, when she decided to take up the task of crafting an on-screen story that would accurately represent the variety of lifestyles present on the reservation she called home. Inspired by films such as Alejandro González Iñárritu's *Amores Perros*, Sydney chose to create characters that reflected three dissimilar cultures found in her backyard – the macho, the LGBT, and the religious. When she was accepted into the Sundance Director's Lab in 2010, Sydney shared the script with Robert Redford, who responded well to the material and, in early 2011, signed on as Executive Producer of the film.

Hamaca Paraguaya



(Paraguay / Argentina 2006. Dir: Paz Encina. Guaraní. 78 mins. Rich Mix: 13 June)

Followed by a Q&A with Prof. Stephen Hart.

When I talk about silence, I talk about silence and about time. Silence refers to an indefinite moment shared by loneliness, sorrow, a link that attempts to not break down, a never ending wait, and the search for the meaning of life. Thus, each silent period is a return to everything, and time has to be taken to express that.

Ever since I conceived the temporal aesthetics of *Paraguayan Hammock*, I decided that each image would last as long as it was necessary for it to fully express itself, and not as long as others needed to look at it. In each shot small actions last as long as they need to last: the beginning and end of a breath, a fan that takes its time to refresh the air, the chirping of a cicada, an orange peeled and eaten at just the right moment. My main interest is that each image captures not only the beauty of things, but also the precise moments evoked by a perfect detail emanating from each action that lasts until it is truly seen.

It is as if I was giving away a blank page for each silence.

These silent moments are experienced. The main sequences take place in slow silent moments charged with directly expressed meanings; they are silent moments that leave throughout the scenes a temporal trace, they are moments gifted with implicit meanings and understandings that consent to an exchange in significances allowing the spectator to participate openly and what matters is not the action itself, but the sense

it acquires within the womb of the film.

I decided not to be fearful of time, and in the paradox of using the fewest letters possible, I believe that I hereby introduce a world that is mine; a silent world, giving time between each word, a time described by the word "silence" from which I try to finally touch all the boundaries between past and present.

They are superimposed temporal series and a deceiving memory of the present no longer exists. New meanings and silent cries outline misunderstandings that are not said but expressed; they are sustained answers that allow us to see an emotion that will never be mentioned. Eloquent silent moments stand out and reveal what can leave at any moment and leave us a sound instant that shows up in the form of a gesture, a trace, an echo, a wicked emptiness. That's what *Paraguayan Hammock* is. – **Paz Encina**

Jimmy P: Psychotherapy of a Plains Indian



(USA / France 2014. Dir: Arnaud Desplechin. English. 117 mins. Arthouse Crouch End: 23 June)

Followed by a Q&A with Dominique Godreche

Dominique Godreche interviews director Arnaud Desplechin:

Did you come to make *Jimmy P.* because of a specific interest in Native issues?

It came from my interest in psychoanalysis, as I am a great reader of psychoanalytical books, as well as for the Native culture, which I discovered as an adolescent when I read *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee*.

We have those childhood dreams—*When I grow up I will be a cowboy, or an Indian*. I wanted to become an Indian! Then, there is the issue of genocide, and the Native tragedy; my parents were activists, and followed the events in the media after the Alcatraz occupation. We were aware of what was going on.

I discovered the book [*Psychotherapy of a Plains Indian*], which has a dialogue, through psychotherapy, between a Native patient and his European therapist. It's written like a theatre play, and I immediately saw the intense dramatic potential of the story. I decided to adapt the therapeutic sequences to make the movie.

The two central characters in the film are both strangers: As a Native in this place now called "America," Jimmy is a stranger in his own land, and Devereux is a French ethno-psychiatrist living in exile. Is this a movie about exile and social exclusion?

Of course, the exclusion issue is important. They meet in Topeka, one comes from New York, the other from Montana, and in both places they're seen as aliens. But the key point is this meeting between a Jewish man and a Native, just after the war, and how they become Americans: how do you become an American? I was very concerned by the issues of genocide, and ethnocide, as one is Jewish and the other Native. That story, with its melancholy and grandeur, touched me.

What did the encounter with the Native world bring you?

I had important experiences. I was invited to the Browning Sundance, which was an intense moment—the physical endurance, the drum. Also, when Benicio and I were given our Indian names. Those experiences feed you. They change you for the rest of your life. That goes far beyond the movie.

The Origins Lecture

Winona LaDuke

Rich Mix – June 15



The last 150 years have seen a great holocaust. There have been more species lost in the past 150 years than since the Ice Age. During the same time, Indigenous peoples have been disappearing from the face of the earth. Over 2,000 nations of Indigenous peoples have gone extinct in the western hemisphere, and one nation disappears from the Amazon rainforest every year.

There is a direct relationship between the loss of cultural diversity and the loss of biodiversity. Wherever Indigenous peoples still remain, there is also a corresponding enclave of biodiversity. Trickles of rivers still running in the Northwest are home to the salmon still being sung back by Native people. The last few Florida panthers remain in the presence of traditional Seminoles, hidden away in the great cypress swamps of the Everglades. Some of the largest patches of remaining prairie grasses sway on reservation lands. One half of all reservation lands in the United States is still forested, much of it old-growth. Remnant pristine forest ecosystems, from the north boreal forests to the Everglades, largely overlap with Native territories.

Native American teachings describe the relations all around—animals, fish, trees, and rocks—as our brothers, sisters, uncles, and grandpas. Our relations to each other, our prayers whispered across generations to our relatives, are what bind our cultures together. The protection, teachings, and gifts of our relatives have for generations preserved our families. These relations are honored in ceremony, song, story, and life that keep relations close—to buffalo, sturgeon, salmon, turtles, bears, wolves, and panthers. These are our older relatives—the ones who came before and taught us how to live. Their obliteration by dams, guns, and bounties is an immense loss to Native families and cultures. Their absence may mean that a people sing to a barren river, a caged bear, or buffalo far away. It is the struggle to recover that characterizes much of Native environmentalism. It is these relationships that industrialism seeks to disrupt. Native communities will resist with great determination.

I live on an Anishinaabeg reservation called White Earth in northern Minnesota, where I work on land, culture, and environmental issues locally through an organization called the White Earth Land Recovery Project and nationally through a Native foundation called Honor the Earth. We, the Anishinaabeg, are a forest culture. Our creation stories, culture, and way of life are entirely based in the forest, source of our medicinal plants and food, forest animals, and birch-bark baskets.

Virtually my entire reservation was clearcut at the turn of the century. In 1874, Anishinaabe leader Wabunoquod said, “I cried and prayed that our trees would not be taken from us, for they are much ours as is this reservation.” Our trees provided the foundation for major lumber companies, including Weyerhaeuser, and their destruction continued for ten decades.

In 1889 and 1890 Minnesota led the country in lumber production, and the state’s northwest region was the leading source of timber. Two decades later, 90 percent of White Earth land was controlled by non-Indians, and our people were riddled with diseases. Many became refugees in nearby cities. Today, there-fourths of all tribal members live off the reservation. Ninety percent of our land is still controlled by non-Indians.

There is a direct link in our community between the loss of biodiversity—the loss of animal and plant life—and the loss of the material and cultural wealth of the White Earth people. But we have resisted and are restoring. Today, we are in litigation against logging expansion, and the White Earth Land Recovery Project works to restore the forests, recover the land, and restore our traditional forest culture. Our experience of survival and resistance is shared with many others. But it is not only about Native people.

In the final analysis, the survival of Native America is fundamentally about the collective survival of all human beings.

Winona LaDuke
(abridged from *All Our Relations* – published by Honour the Earth)

Film

Thunderbird Woman

(Germany 2003 – Dir. Bertram Verhaag, Claus Biegert. English. 70 mins. Rich Mix: 20 June)
Followed by a Q&A with Winona LaDuke and Bertram Verhaag.

Founder of the Honour the Earth Project, Winona LaDuke’s honours include the Reebok Human Rights Award, the Thomas Merton Award, the Ann Bancroft Award, the Global Green Award, and the prestigious International Slow Food Award for working to protect wild rice and local biodiversity. She has twice run as the Green candidate for the Vice-Presidency of the United States.

Visual Art

Tracks: Land and Landscape in Aboriginal Art

Rebecca Hossack Gallery – throughout the festival

Aboriginal art is full of interesting paradoxes. It is both the most ancient and the newest. Its iconography, its forms, its subject matter date back many, many millennia. And yet as a modern art movement, producing works on canvas and paper that can be exhibited in galleries, and hung on walls. Aboriginal art only really began in the second half of the Twentieth Century. There are rock paintings dating back over fifty thousand years, but most of the early aboriginal art forms wood carvings made only for the duration of a particular ceremony.

To western eyes contemporary aboriginal paintings can often appear as glorious abstract patterns, and yet to the artist they represent something between an Ordnance Survey map, the book of Genesis, and the Good Food Guide. Marks, dots, blobs, stripes and circles that seem purely decorative are in fact signs and symbols rich in meaning.

Almost all aboriginal painting is a record of the artist's country – the land of which he or she is the custodian. The picture will record not merely the land's physical aspect but also its mythological one. Aboriginal culture is wonderfully rich in creation stories – every feature of the landscape was created by some mystic being or ancestor in an ancient – but still living – past known to us as the Dreamtime. To paint a landscape an aboriginal artist will record the creation-story along with its terrestrial residue.

Although certain elements of these Dreamtime stories are common to all aboriginals, aboriginal culture is not homogenous, nor is the art it produces. Aboriginal Australia is a continent – like Europe. It is made up of many different nations. There are many different nations. There are many different languages, different physiognomies, different cultural traditions, different diets, different 'national' characteristics – and different ways and means of painting.

The coastal people of Arnhem Land in northern Australia produce intricately cross-hatched paintings on bark using natural ochres. Contrary to popular belief these bark-paintings are not an 'authentic' indigenous art form. The movement developed during the 1950s in response to the desire of anthropologists and missionaries to take artefacts back home with them. The natives of Arnhem Land traditionally took refuge from the wet season in simple bark shelters and sometimes they would while away the hours decorating these shelters with little scenes drawn in ochre on the walls. These decorated slab-like bark walls could make an interesting souvenir – but a rather cumbersome one. It was a short step for the aboriginals – in response to the requests of westerners – to produce such scenes on small portable pieces of bark.

The story of how Geoffrey Bardon, a young Sydney art-teacher working at the aboriginal settlement of Papunya in the desert some 260 kilometers west of Alice Springs, encouraged some of the disaffected inhabitants to paint their stories in acrylic paint – first as a mural on the wall of the school house, and then on pieces of board – has been told often enough. It is fast becoming part of the mythology of Aboriginal art. By providing artists with a readily accessible medium he unleashed a Niagara of creative talent.

The example of Papunya was taken up in other aboriginal communities across Australia – at Balgo Hills, Yuendumu, Utopia, Turkey Creek, Fitzroy Crossing, Haast's Bluff, Ngukurr and elsewhere – as the art movement spread and prospered. The power of the paintings was recognized almost immediately, and artistic success soon led to commercial success. After two centuries of marginalization - or worse – the Australian aboriginals at last had something that placed them at the centre of Australian life.

In 1995 I visited Emily Kame Kngwarreye at the outstation of Utopia, east of Alice Springs. Emily was a tiny woman then in her eighties. She was sitting in the dust and talking with great force as she stabbed at a large canvas with her huge paintbrush, slowly conjuring up a shimmering carpet of reds and pinks – a sort of desert Monet. She was one of Australia's most celebrated artists. She earned over AUS\$ 500,000 a year and – as she told me – owned more cars than she could remember. She was a source of wonder and succour to her extended family. Her young relatives would sometimes sweep by, lift her from the ground where she was painting, load her into the back of their utility truck and drive her the 200 kilometres in to Alice Springs. There they would deposit her outside the newest jeans-store, and offer her painting-services in exchange for clothes. She was a sort of human credit card.

Over the past twenty-eight years I have been exhibiting aboriginal art at my gallery in London. In that time the movement, rather than flagging, has grown in strength and vigour and diversity. A new and wonderful world of art has been revealed. The response to it in Britain has been both heartening and instructive. The critics – with a few honourable exceptions – have struggled to come to terms with the movement. Hamstrung by anxieties about their own ignorance or wary of the minefield of political correctness, they have anxiously dismissed the art as 'ethnic franchising' or ignored it all together. There has been almost no attempt to describe its variety and abundance. And yet, amongst the public, there has been an ever-broadening flood of interest, recognition that here is art of the highest order. It has made an appeal to the old, the young, the culturally informed and the first time viewer. – **Rebecca Hossack**

Bella Lane Embroidery

Rich Mix – June 12-14



Bella Lane was born and grew up in the Amazon Rain Forest near Iquitos in Peru. Since 2001 she has lived and worked in London. From a very young age Bella displayed a natural talent for sewing by hand and machine. Today she is a Master Specialist in Hand Embroidery, working on many projects with clients from all around the globe. At her 'London's Embroidery Club' she teaches students of all ages and nationalities, her mission being to promote and foster the art of hand embroidery at all levels and to pass these skills to future generations.

Bella is a "Stitch Collector" and throughout her years of experience in her field she has gathered indigenous sewing and embroidery stitches from all over the world as a result of extensive travels and overseas assignments. Currently she is working on her first embroidery books, with a view to publication in 2015/16.

Elliot Tupac

Secret Venue – June 15-17



Elliot Tupac, who paints a mural as a live event during Origins, is a Peruvian street artist with deep ancestral roots in the Andean lands of Huancayo in the Mantaro Valley. The colourful craftsmanship of artisans in the region inspired him to develop a new style of painting, the Peruvian Cartel Chicha, combining indigenous tradition and the modern cityscape. With no formal art or design education, Tupac has developed his own creative approach to typography, revolutionizing the way contemporary art is perceived across Latin America.

www.elliottupac.com

Music

The Origin of Origins – Rich Mix – June 9

The Origins Concert – Rich Mix – June 11

Origins at the British Museum – June 12

Baka Beyond – Bush Hall – June 14



Music at Origins recognises the centrality of the musical and dance experience to indigenous life and First Nations communities. Music is at the heart of their cultures – it gives them the space to contemplate, the energy to celebrate and a deep, rhythmic connection to the earth. Whether it is the drone of the didgeridoo, the beat of the drum or the airy song of the Native American flute, music generates a spiritual connection between First Nations communities and the land. It speaks of the need for justice – because music is about balance, measure and harmony. It speaks of the need for equality – because music generates a space we cannot choose but share, reminding us of the larger social spaces that we should also hold in common.

Musicians and dancers at Origins:

Atlachinolli (Burning Water) - an Aztec group based in London, who are carrying the ancient traditions of Mexican dance around the world, sharing the knowledge and understanding of the Aztec people of Tonantzin towards Tlalnantzin (our venerable Mother Earth.)

Baila Peru – a London-based group performing the traditional music and dance of the Andes.



Baka Beyond – a world music group fusing Celtic and other western music styles with traditional Baka music from Cameroon. Over years of performing, the band has evolved into a dynamic, multi-cultural live show playing all over the world. Their enchanting harmonies and spectacular dancing defy anybody to sit still! Baka "Pygmies" are currently being forced from their ancestral homelands in the name of "conservation". Their benefit concert marks the launch of Survival International's "Parks Need Peoples" campaign in support of the Baka people.

Heath Bergersen – an Aboriginal didgeridoo performer, Heath is also an actor. He played the title role in Border Crossings' 2004 production *Bullie's House*, and appeared in the film *Rabbit-Proof Fence*.

The Lani Singers - husband and wife, Benny and Maria Wenda come from the Baliem Valley in the remote central highland region of West Papua in the south-west Pacific, and play songs that are rooted in the sacred rituals of the Lani tribe.



Mau Power - Mau Power is a lyrical storyteller from Thursday Island in the Torres Straits. For many years he has been guided by two cultures, Indigenous culture and Hip Hop culture. "The only way for me to tell the story of how these cultures entwine and connect is for me to tell my own story."

David Milroy – Aboriginal Australian singer-songwriter, playwright and film-maker. First Nations Associate for Origins 2015.

Kelvin Mockingbird - I am K. Mockingbird of the Dineh Nation. I come from a small town called Pinon Arizona where I listened much to the Wind and spoke to the Stars.

Torgeir Vassvik – Sámi musician from Norway, combining yoik and overtone singing with drumming, traditional instruments, and nature sounds.

Food

Native American Lunch – Rich Mix – June 14

Native people belong to oral cultures that pass down information from one generation to the next through stories, histories, legends, myths, and beliefs called Traditional Ecological Knowledge or TEK: a cumulative body of knowledge that includes agriculture, harvesting techniques, gathering and growing food and food practices. TEK involves the relationship of living beings with their traditional groups and their environment.

The elders imprint these historical accounts onto the youth. Women have traditionally served as tribal historians where foods are concerned, and committed to memory a body of past experiences on how to prepare wild game, how to find wild plants, which plants are edible, their names, their uses for food and medicine, and how to grow, prepare, and store them as well as a multitude of other information relating to food. Food is indeed more than just something to eat. It is many cultural traditions that are woven into the fabric of life, like a beautiful blanket, of what it is to be Native American.

Indigenous culture groups adapted to, consumed, survived, and thrived on foods (cultivated and wild plants, animals, herbs, and fungi) native to their particular homeland and ecosystem. Additional ingredients were acquired through trade with neighboring culture groups and these trade routes were distant and diverse.

Chef Lois Ellen Frank, Ph.D. (Kiowa) and Chef Walter Whitewater (Diné/Navajo) will talk about what Ancestral and Native American foods mean to each of them and how the foods they serve and prepare as Native American chefs are a part of the larger circle of life. From the animals they use in their cuisine; to the hand harvested wild rice and other ingredients they purchase from other Native communities; to the foods they hand gather themselves, food is sacred, revered, and respected by both of these chefs. Nothing is wasted, and every part of what makes up Native American cuisine is used and incorporated into their menus. – **Chef Lois Ellen Frank**

Talks

Talks Programmes– Rich Mix – June 13-14

Topics for the Origins talks programme 2015 include:

Everything you never knew about contemporary life in the Arctic.

What does it mean to be indigenous today?

Meeting lively things: indigenous artefacts in museums

The Menzies Centre Talk: David Milroy

Thinking indigenously about food and spirituality

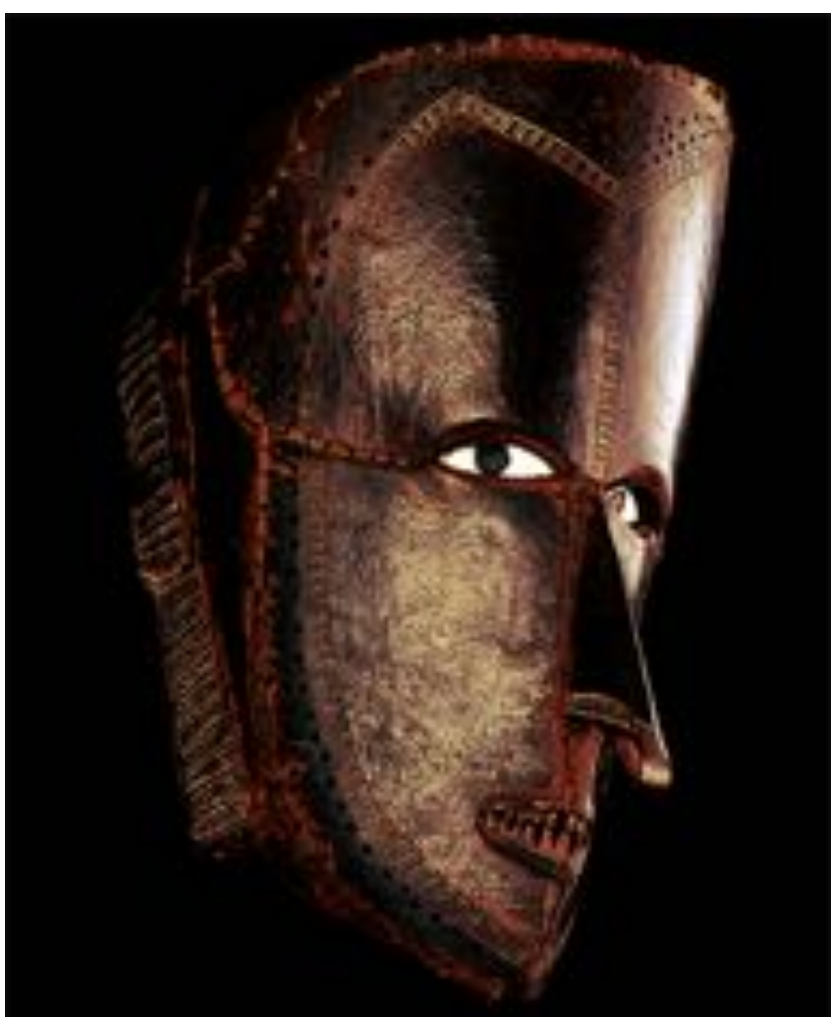
Indigenous cultures in Latin America

Two-spirited: Indigenous cultures and the LGBT experience

Full details on the website!

Heritage

Participation and Learning



Museums try to represent the greatness of a nation. They are more than a simple collection of objects; museums are sanctuaries of culture and history. Museums enclose a special value in seeking to portray the spirit of a people, of their past and their aspirations.

All museums aim towards a certain level of universality, establishing communication and contact between cultures. However, museums are also privileged places expressing narrative of power and domination of one culture over another.

This is what happens at The British Museum, one of the most emblematic museums of Great Britain's glorious imperial past, and at the same time one of the most important centres of universal culture. My view of this museum, for years, was one driven by a curiosity for ancient cultures, and also by my status as a Latin American migrant searching to reconnect with my identity in a cosmopolitan city, like London.

Above all, The British Museum is the focal point of an enormous collection of cultures from all over the world, from China, Persian culture, Greek, Roman, Egyptian, African and many more.

In 2011, following my participation in one of the Museum's programmes with London communities, my attention was centred on a collection of pre-Hispanic artefacts from Peru, which were located in various rooms throughout the museum. There were also Mayan and Aztec cultural objects. The Mexican Gallery was opened in 1994. Recently, BBC Radio 4 and The British Museum unveiled the "100 objects of world history". Among these things were some from ancient Peru – Paracas tissue, the "Guerrero Moche" (Moche Warrior), and a llama from another Inca – and others from Bolivia and Mexico.

Together with the controversy over the ownerships of some of these objects – such as Greece and the Elgin Marbles – the artifacts exhibited in the museum continue to transmit a cultural and artistic message, beyond normal museum formality.

The ancient artifacts from Peru in the museum come from various cultures including Chimú, Moche, Nazca, Inca and Paracas. I have taken the opportunity to take some tours in the museum, telling the story surrounding these objects. The best thing that you take away from this experience is the diversity within the Andean lands and the significant social and technological achievements made by these societies, achievements that were only stopped because of the arrival of the European conquistadors.

In the case of the Latin American indigenous peoples' culture, it continues to maintain a certain validity, especially through their worship of Pachamama or Mother Earth.

As argued by Stephen Small, migrants in urban centres play a central role in challenging the hegemonic representations of non-Western cultures.

Claudio Chipana – Independent Researcher

Indigenous people living and/or working in London and elsewhere in Britain make vibrant contributions to the cultural vitality of the metropolis and the nation. Among them, performers and artists of many kinds do not so much display "exotic cultures" as invite and provoke important conversations and inter-cultural exchanges. In this fateful moment for the planet and humanity (faced with global uncertainties of many kinds), consideration of what it means to be indigenous, to belong to places and to wider-than-human communities, is of unrivalled importance. *Origins* provides many wonderful opportunities to reach new understandings and find new motivations for global and local citizenship. It may also encourage those of us who have not thought of ourselves as "indigenous" to think again about where we belong, how we relate to our ancestry and our history, how we might treat the places where we live. All of us (indigenous or otherwise) might also reflect on the presence of indigenous material and performance cultures in museums, galleries, theatres and other venues.

There have been indigenous people (in the sense that the United Nations as well as many First or Aboriginal Nations use the term) in Britain since at least the time of the Roman Empire (e.g. there were Africans in the Roman Army). But with the European colonial expansion from the fifteenth century onwards, Native Americans and Africans have been visitors or residents here. Not all of them came or stayed willingly. With colonisation and trade with Pacific Island peoples another influx of ideas, foods, art and other aspects of culture occurred. The English language, for instance, adopted the word "taboo" from Polynesian dialects. Similarly, colonialism involved the inclusion of significant "collections" and "displays" in museums and shows. This is not just history. Legacies of encounter and exchange mingle with those of appropriation and expropriation to shape our continuing cultural and material landscape. There are indigenous buildings and objects in museums that continue to speak loudly to the descendants of their makers and users. There are graves of indigenous individuals in London, Oxford and elsewhere. The cuisine of Britain benefits significantly from horticultural and culinary arts gained among indigenous peoples. Where would we be without chocolate? The World Wars led Māori and other soldiers to serve here – including at least one of the "Great Escape" escapees. Global climate change is increasing the global movement of Pacific Islanders as their islands become threatened by rising sea levels and their livelihoods by ocean acidification.

Origins is one vital aspect of the ongoing conversation between indigenous and other-than-indigenous communities. It is founded on a deep respect for and a profound willingness to learn from indigenous performers, artists and other cultural knowledge holders. But more long term and everyday presences of indigenous people in London and elsewhere in Britain provide a larger context for these few exciting festival weeks every couple of years. Tracing the dynamics of indigenous people's continuing affections and affiliations with their homelands, even as they contribute to the life of this land, requires further research. This may include discussions about the teaching and learning of indigenous languages, the sharing of foodways and cosmologies, the negotiation of access to ceremonies of well-being or initiation. It may embrace dialogue between traditional and new forms of tattooing and other body modifications, debates and contests over the appropriateness of museum displays, and much more besides. *Origins* promises to open up new possibilities for these and other conversations.

Graham Harvey – Professor of Religious Studies, Open University

Origins 2015 has a huge programme of community engagement and education, working with Cavendish Primary School, Bethnal Green Academy and CARAS. Workshops, talks and classes are also available to other schools, colleges and community groups. Several of the artists and companies involved in *Origins* are also offering workshops for groups attending the festival: not only to enhance young people's experience of *Origins*, but also to encourage them to use their cultural background as an inspiration for creativity.

At Cavendish, the whole school is coming off timetable for a week of activities around indigenous cultures, featuring visits to the British Museum, a special screening of *Whale Rider* and visits from artists including Kelvin Mockingbird and the Zugubal Dancers, as well as lacrosse and boomerangs. At Bethnal Green Academy students will be studying Peru in their MFL lessons, with a visit to the Andina restaurant to discover how Quechua food is prepared, meeting the Cultural Attaché from the Peruvian Embassy, and establishing links with an orphanage for young indigenous Peruvians. CARAS (Community Action for Refugees and Asylum Seekers) will also have a special *Origins* programme, including visiting the British Museum, enjoying artist-led workshops and helping to host artists and audiences during the festival.

Lucy Dunkerley – Associate Director

If you are a teacher, youth worker, community group or artist and would be interested in collaborating with us please email lucy@bordercrossings.org.uk

Credits

Origins: Festival of First Nations is produced by Border Crossings

Border Crossings

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To produce top-notch intercultural performances...
To run the UK's only Festival of First Nations cultures....
To offer free and sustained engagement to youth and diverse communities.....

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