

# ***WATER MORALITY***



## ***Exhibition Catalogue***

**Orquidea Collective**

10 May – 27 July 2025

## ***Water Morality***

*Water Morality* is an experimental project and multi-sensory installation that combines the works created by members of Orquidea Collective – HibiZ cuZ, Jin, and Porobibi. It includes our newly built sound sculpture, *Mahikai Ark*, and Arafura Domain – a collaborative work using fibre, wood, and clay. The exhibition explores the relationship between the Pacific Ocean and our creative practice.

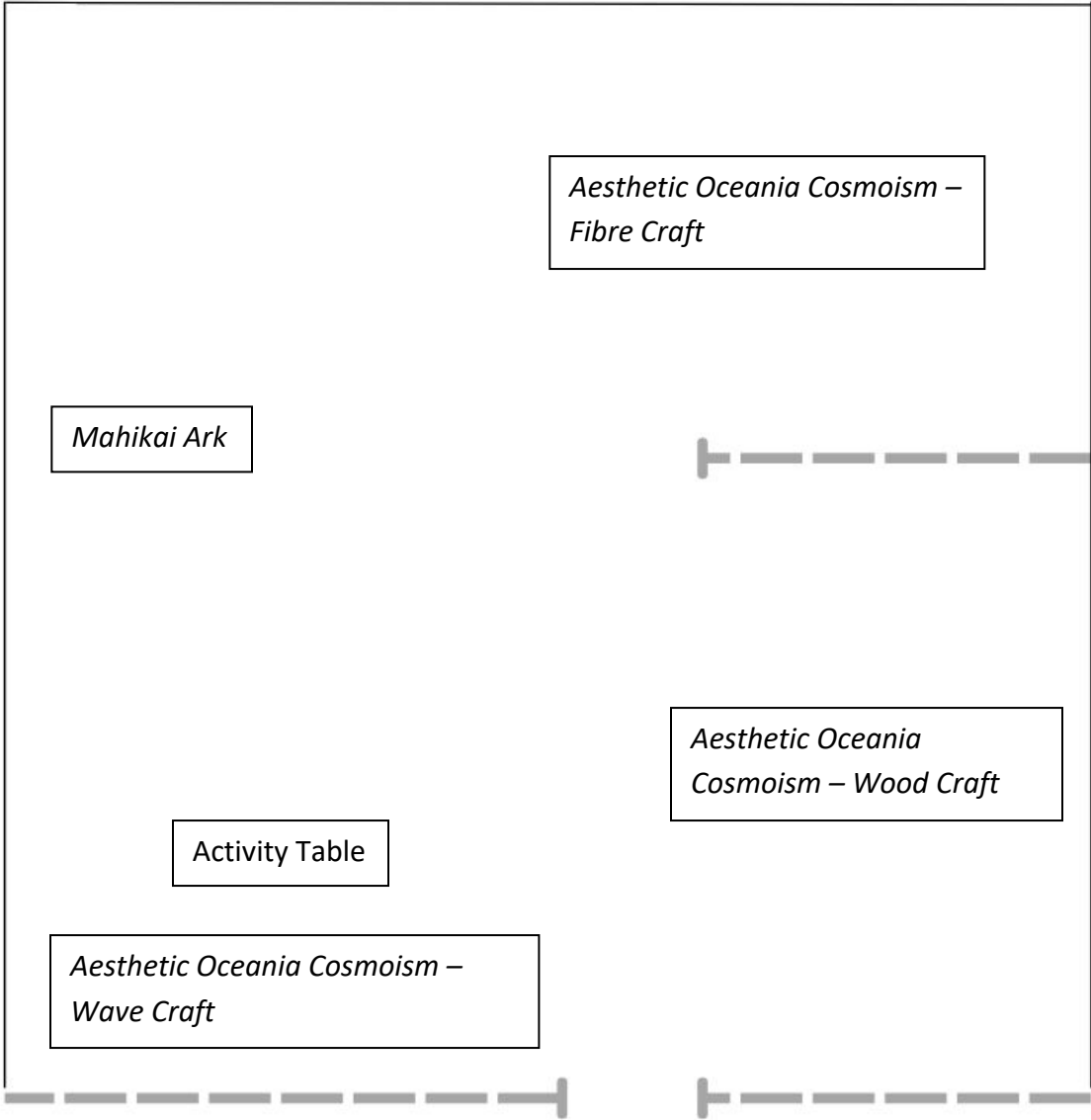
In *The Deluge Ark(ive)* exhibition text, Dr Sonique (2017) says:

*Our blood and our tears have the same salinity as the ocean. It is a reminder of the origin of all life on the planet and a warning that we share our well-being with our vast and indifferent mother.*

Our work is inspired by rediscovering our sea of islands (Dr Epeli Hau'ofa, 1993) and the Ocean, particularly the Arafura Sea – the portal to a meeting place, a passage for connection directed by the will of water – to forge a new discipline which we call, *Aesthetic Oceania Cosmoism*.

This collection of works combines models of improved art practices and integrates methods of human–land–sea ontologies and typologies. The translation of theory into practice coincides with the ideals of “people art” – nomadism, coexistence of collective knowledge, radical art practices, holism, multiple perspectives and the nature continuum.

# Exhibition Floor Plan



## ***Aesthetic Oceania Cosmoism – Wave Craft***

2025

Mixed media on wood

Dimensions variable

*Wave Craft* is centred around the repetitive circular motion that moves through different bodies and materialities – breath, time, climate, wind, vibration, the natural mystic, sonic, astral and aural. This point of connection and space is where deities, flora, fauna, human and all the different bioregions and ecosystems are connected to the cosmos, air, water and sound waves – the Wave of Being.

The installation is a visual and metaphoric setting of island living – each design introduces a new experience of sound, inviting the audience to reimagine the process of sculpture and reactivate their memory of nature's textures – humanism, materialism, geological structures, the ocean, trees, and the elements.

## **Reflective anecdote:**

To be formless is to sync in with nature's vibration, which will affect human subjectivity. Have you ever wondered why you go to see the ocean to cry, or why you go to the mountain high?

The answer lies within the feelings of being dissolved – when you can see the wide-open horizon, you feel like a tiny particle amongst the wholeness of yourself and the entire cosmos, where water and air have no boundaries.

Then the human ego, anthropocentric, slowly deteriorates from reality as you go – a walking water. This is the story of the wave that connects us, imprinted on the wood by fire.

“Please look after Mama Earth,” said the wood.

## ***Mahikai Ark***

2023

Custom-built speaker boxes, an amp rack and Tapa sailing jib

Dimensions variable

*Mahikai Ark* is a five-channel sound sculpture made from custom-built wooden speaker boxes that are inspired by traditional outrigger canoes. The earthy exteriors of the wooden sound boxes reiterate the importance of woodwork in the legacy of Pacific cultures.

The jib, a triangular sail, is constructed from Tapa; a natural cloth made from tree bark, also referred to as Masi (Fij) or Ngatu (Tonga). Inherited from her family, HibiZ cuZ has restructured this Tapa to fit its new function as Mahikai's sailing jib. The assemblage of the Tapa sail jib on traditional canoe symbolises the sentiment of "carrying our family and tradition up high in the sky."

The audio includes a curated list of songs from each artist that reminds them of family stories, and the sonic memory of songs and sounds from their upbringing.

## **Space Canoe**

Poem dedicated to *Mahikai Ark*

Interstellar stowaways  
freedom spores onboard

Interstellar stowaways  
crack in empires core

Interstellar stowaways  
clear the muck we raised in

Interstellar stowaways  
sabotage invasion

Interstellar stowaways  
help us change the situation

Interstellar stowaways  
together we find solution

Interstellar stowaways  
eating up all pollution

Interstellar stowaways  
recycle into movement

We sail the ocean black  
navigate the milky way

We sail the ocean black  
we travel the space ways

We sail the ocean black  
my god it's full of stars

We sail the ocean black  
fish in distant nebulas

We sail the ocean black  
in a zero g canoe

We sail the ocean black  
Mahikai Dub Crew!

– *Hifa*

## ***Aesthetic Oceania Cosmoism – Fibre Craft***

2025

Tualau clan Ngatu, Batik, Kain tenun, Bilums and Nokens

Dimensions variable

*Fibre Craft* is an installation that focuses on amplifying the art of weaving as part of Oceania Cosmoism, led by the embodied feminine spirits of Great Oceania. Produced as Land and Sea-based discourse, *Fibre Craft* is a study in understanding the landscape of continuity, which includes cosmology, mapping, stories, deity symbolism, survival, and inter-relationships.

The installation consists of skilfully crafted textiles that are essential parts of ceremonial wear, communal ritual, and nature–cultural continuum – they are a strong symbol of Pacific identity.

The works include Noken and Bilum bag (Papua Island), woven cloth Ngatu (Tonga) and Batik/Kain tenun (Malayo Archipelago). They are also called Tapa (Tahiti), Masi (Fiji) and Siapo (Samoa/Futuna). They are the inheritance and belongings of members of Orquidea Collective.

## ***Aesthetic Oceania Cosmoism – Wood Craft***

2025

Mixed media on wood

Dimensions variable

*Wood Craft* is an installation of woodwork pieces from Jin's collection, Orquidea's *Blue Eden* project (Seventh Gallery, 2024) and *Grevo'Mu no.1* – a log drum instrument that was a collaborative work with Nadeem Tiafau Eshrahgi and Ripley Kavara as part of the *Great Ocean Volumes* project (Arts House, 2024).

This installation explores narrative communal communicate and ritual continuity to discuss and discover the commonality, ethics, and the sacred. When creating this work, Orquidea considered the principles of bioethics adaptation, haptic cognition, and Land and Sea-based ontologies. Here in the Arafura Domain, through reclaiming wood works and clay, a new technique of storytelling and expression of *Aesthetic Oceania Cosmoism – Wood Craft* – is introduced.

Following the bioethics adaptation principle, Orquidea has worked with available wood sources in our surroundings; Red River Gum, Mahogany, Ficus, Wandoo wood, structural plywood and reclaimed wood from discarded buildings and projects. Relevant symbolism has been applied onto the found wood as a study of body mechanics, stimulations to explore neural memory, and feelings. The result is the sculpture, instrument, furniture and weaponry displayed here.

## Works from Jin's collection featured in *Aesthetic Oceania Cosmoism – Wood Craft*

### 1. *Reclamation of defence*, 2025

This piece is still in development.

Medium: Reclaimed woods of unknown species friction-fit together to form a shield from Maluku.

*Reclamation of defence* sheds light on the deforestation currently present due to the Occupying Indonesian Government in the Maluku Islands. This demonstrates that despite the few resources we have, whether scrap or offcuts, we still, and always will, have the ability to shield ourselves from the exploitation of our land, water and peoples.

### 2. *Hilted*, 2025

This piece is still in development.

Medium: Wandoo wood gifted from dear friends.

*Hilted* is the carving of a paternal figure. The hilt of a sword, often ornamented with carvings of animal heads in Arafura culture of Maluku. Our tribe came from head-hunters.

### 3. *False Offerings, 2025*

Medium: Balsa wood, beach plastics and a fallen redgum tree gifted by a dear friend.

Offerings that are gifted to the gods, replaced with single use items that pollute the waters, leaching toxic chemicals into the land and ultimately harming Arafura. The figure shows disappointment that the natural world has been left to corporations that destroy the natural way of being.

### 4. *Guide me through the stories again, 2025*

Medium: Discarded wood, believed to be Tasmanian Oak

A paddle, an oar, one and the same.

Attached to this piece is both a poem and story about the migration of a family, fleeing to seek asylum in a new country.

*Guide me through the stories again* is a personal reminder of where, how and why we came to be here on this Island.

### 5. *New Faces of the old practice, 2025*

This piece is still in development.

Medium: Gifted wood from dear friends and bamboo

*New Faces of the old practice* is a way of expressing the joy of woodcarving, using intuitive techniques and design to make masks that represent our faces with old ways of being.

The bamboo mask is the prototype.

## About Orquidea Collective

Orquidea Collective is an inter-Pacific artist collective based in Naarm, utilising art as means of ecological expression and education. Founded in June 2018, Orquidea Collective actively encourages the growth of fine art ideas in an urban/sub-urban context and cultural scope through exhibitions, collaboration, and experimentation.

The main goal of this collective is to propose a new discipline within Pacific Art Renaissance, without superficiality or artificiality hindering the art-making process or development.

Combining their Pacific knowledge and cultural philosophies, Orquidea Collective takes on an experimental creative project that aims to evolve towards better praxis.



**ORQUIDEA**  
**COLLECTIVE**

## The artists

HibiZ cuZ (she/her) specialises in fibre craft, drawing from her Malay, Tongan and Fijian heritage. She likes to relocate one idea and material of symbolism to another, through forming connections and locating new meanings through the process of relationality. She works with the mediums of clay and woven cloth, through traditional techniques such as Batik, Ngatu (Tonga), Masi (Fiji), and Noken/Bilum (Papua).

Jin (he/they) is a meticulous wood carver whose body of work draws upon his connection to Maluku and paternal link to the Nekaulu clan. He has worked with wood as his main medium but also practices with clay, as a tribute, story and exploration. His craft is developed through haptic cognition, and adaptation in the creation process, working with the materials in the surrounding environment to complement the need of carving and sculpture. The designs centre on the attribution around a facial figure and incorporate symbolism of spirals, swells, spikes and blades. Both spirals and swells represent the upright attitude, meanwhile spikes and blades represent cutting of words, lies, and deceit. These make up the substance of human characteristics.

Poru (he/him) has experimented with wood to (re)introduce a new technique and expression of storytelling, inspired by his traditional Serui prau building and paintings (traditional Northern coast Papuan canoe). He includes the idea of seamless flow with nature – nature continuum: navigating in between nature ecosystems, migration, spatial design, metaphysics, and human emotion, to draw together the wisdom of the water living – Pacific Ocean – mutual understanding – fusion of horizons.