

*A Death of Prosperity* is a new commission from Mount Maunganui artist Darcell Apelu. Drawing on her research in Niue at the Lafaiki Residency and at the Yorkshire Sculpture Park in the United Kingdom (2019), Apelu considers the various promises of prosperity that drew waves of migrants to Aotearoa. Propaganda of the British empire attracted settlers to colonise Aotearoa in the 19th century, and in the 1950s Pacific populations were drawn to Aotearoa, compelled by the nation's economic growth at that time.

A functioning fountain installed in Te Tuhi's foyer bears the inscription, "You will never possess the soil, you will never be secure", inverting the words of British colonist Edward Gibbon Wakefield's directive, "possess yourselves of the soil and you are secure". Apelu's version asserts an understanding of land within te ao Māori as being held collectively, on one hand, and on the other, asks: is prosperity even attainable for most within late capitalism?

Darcell Apelu is an artist of Niuean, and New Zealand European descent who completed her Master of Art and Design at Auckland University of Technology in 2013. The Mount Maunganui raised artist works across moving image, sound, performance and installation. Her practice is informed by her experiences as an afakasi female; she uses her body as a way to address this 'otherness'.

Apelu is also a highly regarded international competitive woodchopper, which has a subtle presence her practice. In the performance piece, *New Zealand Axemen's Association: Women's Sub Committee President* (2014), the artist uses her skills to strike out against assumptions about her identity.

*(This document was automatically generated by Contemporary Art Library.)*