

LUKE WILLIS THOMPSON

Yes, Germany voted in favor of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) when it was adopted by the General Assembly on September 13, 2007.

Opening: Thursday, June 12, 2025, 6 – 9 pm

Exhibition: June 13 – August 30, 2025

Luke Willis Thompson (born 1988, Auckland, NZ) presents his new film *Whakamoemoeā* and two new photographic works that together explore the transformation of systems that govern and facilitate Indigenous life in Aotearoa New Zealand¹. *Yes, Germany voted in favor of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) when it was adopted by the General Assembly on September 13, 2007.* is Thompson's fourth solo exhibition at Galerie Nagel Draxler.

Filmed at Waitangi in Aotearoa's North Island, Whakamoemoeā (2025) imagines an official state broadcast in 2040, delivered in the Māori language. It announces Aotearoa's adoption of a new constitution, transitioning from colonial Westminster-style governance to an Indigenous plurinational state. The moving-image artwork draws on the 2016 report Matike Mai Aotearoa, championed by the late Māori lawyer and intellectual Moana Jackson. The report envisions a constitutional transformation in Aotearoa that recognizes Māori philosophies and the rights established by He Whakaputanga o Rangatiratanga o Nu Tireni (The Declaration of Independence) of 1835 and Te Tiriti o Waitangi (The Treaty of Waitangi) of 1840. In Whakamoemoeā, the 200-year struggle for Māori tino rangatiratanga or self-determination is finally realized. Oriini Kaipara² delivers the broadcast, tracing a history of alienation, dispossession, resistance, and resilience. "The radical promise to the next generation is simple," she vows, "whoever you are, if you are on this land, you will be sheltered and cared for."

– Hanahiva Rose

Luke Willis Thompson's work has been featured in solo exhibitions at Moderna e Contemporanea di Bergamo (2019), Kunsthalle Basel (2018), Adam Art Gallery Te Pātaka Toi at Victoria University of Wellington (2018), Institute of Modern Art (IMA) in Brisbane (2016), and more. His work has also been included in group exhibitions at the Sharjah Biennale 16 (2025), Museum für Moderne Kunst in Frankfurt am Main (2018), Tate Britain in London (2018), the 10th Berlin Biennale (2018), and La Biennale de Montreal (2016), among others. In 2014, Thompson received the Walters Prize, and in 2018, he was awarded the 21st Deutsche Börse Photography Foundation Prize and nominated for the Turner Prize.

¹ Aotearoa is the Māori name for New Zealand

² In 2019, the New Zealand broadcaster, journalist and translator Oriini Kaipara was the first person with a moko kauae facial tattoo to present mainstream television news, which gained worldwide attention.