Luke Willis Thompson
B42040A1A1A
18 April–31 May 2026
The Physics Room

B42040A1A1A is a concentrated installation of two ambitious moving image artworks developed over the past three years. Each film imagines a decolonial future for Aotearoa through the visual language of political theatre. Developed in partnership with Te Wai Ngutu Kākā Gallery, Tāmaki Makaurau, this is the first presentation of Fijian New Zealand artist Luke Willis Thompson in Ōtautahi.

Whakamoemoeā (2024), was commissioned by Megan Tamati-Quennell for Sharjah Biennial 16. Set in 2040, the film envisions the exact moment constitutional transformation in Aotearoa is announced to the world. Broadcaster, journalist, and MP for Tāmaki Makaurau, Oriini Kaipara, is cast as the spokesperson who delivers an official address in te reo Māori at Te Whare Rūnanga, Waitangi. Kaipara announces a transition from a colonial Westminster-style of governance to an Indigenous plurinational state, fulfilling the visionary aspirations of the 2016 report Matike Mai Aotearoa, led by the late lawyer and jurisprudence philosopher Moana Jackson.

The second work in the series is, similarly, set in a not-too-distant future. *Soro* (2025) envisions a future redress of the 2021 Dawn Raids Apology. Focusing entirely on a solitary NZSL interpreter, Alan Wendt, while an inferred Prime Minister delivers the speech out of frame, Thompson imagines a bold and expansive set of reparations being delivered by a future Prime Minister. Aotearoa takes a stand to right the wrongs of the past, which are determined to be rooted in the fundamental injustice of colonisation. Captured in black and white 35mm film, Soro presents a dream-like atmosphere where Aotearoa's alliances to Western powers are cut and a strategic commitment to a united Oceania is made.

Seen together, the works cement a new phase in Thompson's practice. They consolidate and build on a certain realism that Thompson has carefully tuned in previous works, by for instance, using real-life individuals as opposed to actors, and engaging deeply with significant sites. Yet this new future-orientated approach (which Thompson has described as a kind of 'political sci-fi') also enables him to develop an increasingly auteurist vision for his practice, which sees him blurring the lines of philosophy and biography, political activism and storytelling, and exploring the potential of operating between spoken, written, and performed languages.

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Works:

Luke Willis Thompson, *Whakamoemoeā*, 2024. 4K digital video, colour, 5.1 surround sound, 21 mins. Commissioned by Sharjah Art Foundation and produced by Ordinary Films and Kura Productions. Courtesy of the artist, Coastal Signs, Tāmaki Makaurau and Galerie Nagel Draxler, Berlin.

Luke Willis Thompson, *Soro*, 2025. 35mm film transferred to 4K digital video, black and white, silent, 12 mins. Commissioned by Te Wai Ngutu Kākā Gallery, funding support from Niu Dawn Funding Initiative, Creative New Zealand. Courtesy of the artist, Coastal Signs, Tāmaki Makaurau and Galerie Nagel Draxler, Berlin.

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Whakamoemoeā was commissioned by the Sharjah Art Foundation and produced by Ordinary Films and Kura Productions. Soro was commissioned by Te Wai Ngutu Kākā Gallery and received generous support from the Ministry of Culture and Heritage's Niu Dawn Initiative, administered by Creative New Zealand, as well as the Gow Family Foundation, and Kodak Ltd. Courtesy of the artist, Coastal Signs, Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland, and Galerie Nagel Draxler, Cologne/Berlin.

With thanks to Little Andromeda and Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū for their support in realising the exhibition in Ōtautahi.

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Luke Willis Thompson is a Fijian (Rukua, Yageta) New Zealand artist. He studied at the Städelschule, Staatliche Hochschule für Bildende Künste, Frankfurt am Main 2013-2015, and the Elam School of Fine Arts, University of Auckland 2006-10.

Recent exhibitions include: Luke Willis Thompson | *B42040A1A1A,* Te Wai Ngutu Kākā Gallery, Auckland (2015-2016); 15th Shanghai Biennale, Shanghai, 2025-2026; *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,* Galerie Nagel Draxler Kabinett, Berlin (2025); Sharjah Biennial 16, Old Al Diwan Al Amiri, Al Hamriyah, Sharjah; *Mouvement des Malades*, Michael Lett, 2024; *Hysterical Strength*, GAMeC, Bergamo (2019), *_Human*, Kunsthalle Basel, Basel (2018); *Luke Willis Thompson*, Adam Art Gallery, Victoria University of Wellington (2018); *Field Guide*, Remai Modern, Saskatoon (2017); *autoportrait*, Hopkinson Mossman, Auckland (2017); *Luke Willis Thompson*, Chisenhale Gallery, London (2017); *Cemetery of Uniforms and Liveries*, Galerie Nagel Draxler, Berlin (2016); *Misadventure,* Institute of Modern Art (IMA), Brisbane (2016); *Sucu Mate/Born Dead*, Hopkinson Mossman, Auckland (2016) and *nicht mehr, nicht minder als der Sugar*, Reisebürogalerie, Cologne; New Museum Triennial, New York, 2015; The 5th Auckland Triennial, 2013