

*Ka mua, ka muri* is a new sound and moving image installation by Aotearoa New Zealand-based artist Shannon Te Ao (Ngāti Tūwharetoa) that explores our experience of time, history and song. The exhibition consists of a two-channel film, which uses the road movie genre as its starting point, and locates two sisters in the immediate wake of an unnamed tragic event. Following on from his most recent work *what was or could be today (again)* (2019), the work includes two original songs developed by Te Ao in collaboration with Kurt Komene (Te Ātiawa, Taranaki Whānui). These function as both script and score and reflect a social embodiment that privileges poetic imagery. The exhibition's title, *Ka mua, ka muri*, is derived from a whakatauki (proverb) often cited as a central guiding principle within Māori ideology. Meaning "to walk backwards into the future," it suggests time exists on a continuum where past, present and future co-exist and are inherently tethered through ancestry and action. Central to this is an understanding of the critical importance of language as a vital means to maintain links to indigenous knowledge systems, culture, and identity, a theme that recurs throughout Te Ao's practice. *Ka mua, ka muri* has been co-commissioned by Oakville Galleries and Rēmai Modern, with the support of Creative New Zealand.

Working predominantly with performance and film, the elegiac installations of Shannon Te Ao (Ngāti Tūwharetoa, b.1978, Sydney) explore fraught dynamics of Indigeneity, language, and loss. Te Ao draws on a range of existing literary material including Māori lyrical sources such as whakataukī and waiata, as well as poetic and lyrical texts from popular culture. Richly layered, Te Ao's works enact a compression wherein past and present co-exist, and daily life is inextricably linked to multifarious social, cultural, and philosophical histories. Te Ao is a Senior Lecturer at Whiti o Rehua School of Art, Massey University, Wellington.

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