

Inheritance - Jasmine Togo-Brisby's Plantation Histories

Global Plantation Series

Featuring: Jasmine Togo-Brisby, Shiraz Bayjoo & Anna Arabindan-Kesson

August 2020

The Global Plantation Series presents artist-directed digital discussions featuring **Shiraz Bayjoo, Jasmine Togo-Brisby** and **Sancintya Mohini Simpson** developed by **Anna Arabindan-Kesson** and Shiraz in collaboration with **International Curators Forum** that contemplate the global forms and meanings of the plantation historically, and in our contemporary moment.

In this recording, Anna and Shiraz speak with artist Jasmine Togo-Brisby about her research and practice as it relates to an ongoing engagement with the history of the enslavement of South Sea Islanders on Australian sugarcane plantations in the 19th century, and the contemporary legacy and impact of the Pacific's slave trade. The conversation addresses the generational reality of the plantation as home, the capacity of the archive to render plantation histories both visible and invisible, and the ways in which both Jasmine and Shiraz excavate family and public archives as a means of formulating new visual languages through which to make public these narratives.

Anna Arabindan-Kesson: Welcome everybody to the second conversation in the Global Plantation Series, hosted by the ICF International Curators Forum. I'm here with the wonderful Shiraz Bayjoo and equally wonderful Jasmine Togo-Brisby, with whom we'll be speaking this afternoon or morning or evening I think for Jasmine.

I'm just going to give a brief bio and overview of Jasmine's work taken from Page Gallery. So Jasmine is a fourth generation Australian, South Sea Islander whose great-great-grandparents were taken from Vanuatu as children and put to work on an Australian sugar cane plantation. Her research examines the historical practice of black birding - a romanticised colloquialism for the Pacific slave trade. And its contemporary legacy and impact upon those who trace their roots to New Zealand and Australia through the slave diaspora. She's based in Wellington. And she's one of the few artists delving into the cultural memory and shared histories of plantation colonisation across the Pacific. Her practice encompasses painting, early photographic techniques and processes, and sculpture.

So Jasmine, thanks so much for being willing to have this conversation today. I'm going to share my screen so that we can have a look at your work while we speak.

Jasmine Togo-Brisby: I really need to update that bio - that hasn't taken into consideration my recent research.

Anna Arabindan-Kesson: Well, maybe you can let us know what else has changed since that bio was put up.

Jasmine Togo-Brisby: So in that bio it states that my great-great-grandparents were enslaved on a plantation, but I've recently discovered, well, I always knew that they were house slaves, but I thought it was still on a plantation, but it actually wasn't, it was very separate to the plantation.

Anna Arabindan-Kesson: And that's something that we can talk about later when we talk about your work as well. I thought then just to begin, we could speak about this New York times article that came out just a few days ago, I think. And it's a response to the Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison's comment that there was no slavery in Australia. And it also is a response to the global conversations that have been taking place following the murder of George Floyd and the Black Lives Matter protests that are taking place across the world really.

So, I was wondering, did you read the article and what were your thoughts when you did?

Jasmine Togo-Brisby: Yeah, I did read the article. My Auntie is actually a featured within the content of that article. And that's an image of her as well at the heart. So, this article is based in Mackay, where the largest population of Australian South Sea Islanders is. And it's also the largest sugar producer in Australia. So I was quite glad that they did base it in Mackay and there's quite a point of difference between this article and ones which have been done in the past where it's very sort of - not tokenistic - but based in the past when it's not so much based on the contemporary legacy and also our contemporary culture as South Sea Islanders. So, I thought it was quite a good article and also in the response that there's that acknowledgement and recognition all the way from New York and our own Prime Minister is still trying to deny us.

Anna Arabindan-Kesson: I thought it was really wonderful to read it too. And also, when I was reading it and thinking about our conversation coming up, one of the things I remember when I first spoke with you, I think this is back in 2018 - and this was a history that I was not familiar with either despite having grown up in Australia and New Zealand. So, it was a moment for me to suddenly realise, 'Oh, I actually know nothing about the places that I live in.' And you were talking about how it was the work that people like you and other artists and curators have done that has brought this history out, literally that excavation that you've been doing in your family archives has meant that this is had to become much more of a public history. So, I wondered if maybe, because this is something that I think also Shiraz's work touches on too, I wondered if you wanted to speak a little bit more about the ways that you think about your work in this kind of relationship between the official

narrative versus what is hidden versus family narratives that you've grown up with. How you've explored that and how that has played out in the work?

Jasmine Togo-Brisby: Did you want to start Shiraz?

Shiraz Bayjoo: Well, first of all, I just wanted to ask, the plantations in Australia, were they predominantly in the north?

Jasmine Togo-Brisby: Yeah.

Shiraz Bayjoo: Because when I was in the North of Australia two years ago, I was really struck to how the landscape was so very similar to Mauritius. I think I mentioned this to you before. I suppose that kind of knowing that these landscapes or these spaces where the blueprint of the plantation, of colony was being re-created and reproduced. And I was interested in a little bit about the background to your own family's history and in relation to that.

Jasmine Togo-Brisby: To the landscape?

Shiraz Bayjoo: To being in that space, yes.

Jasmine Togo-Brisby: That's really broad, I don't know if I'm going to answer you properly, actually. I guess the sugarcane plantation is always the scene of home, you know? The scene of the refinery and driving past plantation after plantation after plantation - like that is home for us. Am I answering you properly? I feel like I'm not.

Shiraz Bayjoo: Oh, absolutely. Yeah. I was just interested in how that relationship to the image of that landscape...

Jasmine Togo-Brisby: And growing up, because we would drive... I have a lot of family in Mackay and then we lived in Townsville, so that was a five-hour drive. So, for the school holidays we would drive from one town to the other and in the 80s - 90s there was still the burning on the sugarcane plantations. So, all of those sorts of scenes, like that landscape was just all that we knew.

Anna Arabindan-Kesson: This is *sailor went to sea sea sea* - and I thought maybe we could start with that. Just again, going back to Shiraz's point about landscape, I thought the way you talked about home was very provocative, because another artist Brooke Andrew was saying to me, Australia is a plantation and just that formulation and your description of home completely changes ideas about what Australia is. The national imagination, but the global imagination too. And that's one way that this relationship between personal family history and the public official record really comes to an important point in your work, or your work pushes against that. So, I wondered if you could maybe talk a little bit about this work in relationship to that official versus private family...

Jasmine Togo-Brisby: It's interesting because people from outside of Australia don't often realise that we don't have a great deal of visibility as South Sea Islanders in Australia. Mainly a lot to do with the fact that Australia is obviously so vast and then we're quite a small population because of the mass deportations, our community is quite small. I'm just thinking about the national identity and nation building and where we slot into that, and for my experience in my life, we've really just sort of become invisible within that.

In relation to this work, gosh, working with ambrotypes, working with wet plate medium prints and looking at ways of trying to insert us within the Australian dialogue, basically, and what's a visual language that can be read and used as uniquely Australian South Sea Islander.

So, sort of touching on the archives and where is probably the most visibility is within the archives. So, it made sense that I would use a similar language. Does that make sense?

Anna Arabindan-Kesson: Yeah, absolutely. And I should probably say for people who don't know, this practice that we mentioned in your bio called "black birding," the enslavement of Pacific Island, South Sea Island people started in 1847 in Australia's history. And it continues until the end of the 19th century, early 20th century. But then because of the White Australia policy, and you were alluding to this, there is this mass deportation of a lot of the Australian South Sea Islander community. And so, there's this kind of double invisibility in that sense.

Jasmine Togo-Brisby: I really see it as... and I've read articles and texts where the government at the time spoke about the mass deportations. And still this is the largest mass deportation that's happened in Australian history. And they were looking at it like they wanted to learn from the mistakes that America has made, where they were left with all of these dark bodies in a nation, which they wanted to be (*inaudible*). So, the White Australia policy was definitely, the way that I see it and from my readings, was a response to them not wanting to end up like America. And for me it's quite sad to think that we could have been like America, where there's so many of our people in such a vast population, with so much visibility. And because of that visibility, is the education, to a certain degree, of the history of that country. I really feel like unfortunately, the White Australia Policy was quite successful.

Anna Arabindan-Kesson: Yeah, it was successful in a lot of ways. Successful in quotation marks.

Jasmine Togo-Brisby: Yeah, unfortunately.

Shiraz Bayjoo: And it's interesting what you were saying about how that then is a denial of being part of the national narrative and the national identity, because one

of the things that I was looking at very early on in Mauritius in terms of the archive that first things that first came up was looking at a lot of the architecture and how the modern parliament building in Mauritius is still the old governor's house or the old British governors house.

And I became quite interested in why the democratic nation would still keep so much of the apparatus and symbolism of coloniser into its modern image. And part of where I arrived with that was thinking about how actually the nation needed to have a certain degree of acceptance of the past, because it just couldn't be erased.

But that has then allowed a huge amount of movement going forward and creation of what the identity of the people would be as a republic. And I'm interested in how that denial in Australia to even acknowledge that so much of this has taken place, how much damage that still continues to take place within communities.

Jasmine Togo-Brisby: Yeah, it's really quite layered because as complex as that series of events is with the deportations and the White Australia policy, it even gets more complicated because then they wanted South Sea Islanders to assimilate as Indigenous. They wanted to just assimilate all brown bodies at the time as this one culture. So, there was a whole period of time where our people were being forced to identify as Indigenous and then they then had to come out of that again. So, it's such a damaging history to our identity.

And I guess that's why that makes me a little bit strong in the trajectory of my practice, in my work, is that I'm just relentless in making sure that we are seen and that our identity doesn't get lost in the way that I know the Australian government still clearly wishes it would just disappear.

Shiraz Bayjoo: In a sense that denial, that kind of erasure becomes the final act of violence in the whole series of...

Jasmine Togo-Brisby: Yeah, absolutely.

Anna Arabindan-Kesson: I think this photograph or ambrotype (*Kanaka women in the sugar cane: Hambledon plantation, 2017*) showing you literally in that history and in that archive does a good job of really interrogating that question of erasure, because to Shiraz's point about the violence of that erasure, and it's not just an erasure, it's a refusal or has been for a long time I think a refusal to acknowledge this history. And I think this work is so beautiful and seems full of longing to me when I look at it, as much as it's incredibly violent and it's also sort of rehearsing the way that violence continues through erasure, there's something so poignant about it. And it's partly the way you're positioned, and you're look, but I think it's also the way that the women in the photograph are looking back at you. I wonder if you could speak a little bit more about your process here.

Jasmine Togo-Brisby: It comes back to what I was talking about much earlier around the articles, which would hover around our people and it just became this sort of historical account. And then there was no contemporary legacy or that it was just a moment in history and then that sort of ended. And there's that and then there's the way that we use the archives as South Sea Islanders to go back and piece together all of the steps of our ancestors. The archive is really the only place that we can go to, to try and find that if there's no oral histories within families. So, I was looking at a few different ways of these particular archival images being used.

And then of course there was the fact that these images were not created for us in the first place, yet we use them as this tool to... You know. The images themselves were a violent act, these were used to prove to governmental agencies that there was no slavery in Australia. So, particularly in this photograph, the women have got on European clothing, so it was quite staged, taking the image to prove that they were being looked after and well cared for. And then there's the idea of who owns this image, that all of the women, all of the people within the photograph are unknown, the photographer was usually unknown as well. And then the institutions, even if we can prove that this is our ancestors, the institutions still own them as theirs. So, the government still owns us.

So, I was looking at all of these ways that our images are still being used and how people within the photograph are still spectacle. And I really wanted to try and take our people out of the archive - for them to be with us and for us to be with them. And how can I do that in a way that's that is something for us. Does that make sense?

Shiraz Bayjoo: Yes, absolutely. Do you feel there is a process of not just liberating these images and the figures within them? Because sometimes I feel particularly with the portraiture, that the act of us remembering and taking ownership back, is there almost a laying to rest some of those souls? I know that that sounds quite...

Jasmine Togo-Brisby: Yeah, I know what you mean though. It's treating them in a different way, you know? Which is really important, I think for me, I feel like it's important. And I feel like putting us together is bridging some type of gap, and I hope that doesn't sound too blah, but it's some kind of reconciliation I feel. There's something that happens in that moment and I use my mother and my daughter within these projections as well. And for us in that moment, it does something. I know my mom was really taken back seeing these archives projected on this massive screen, and then she stood with them. And it would be quite nice to do that with our community, not as a performance, but some kind of healing process, to be able to say... now I'm just hashing out ideas with you, but it is quite special when it's body to body, when it's the same size. It does something that the archival image doesn't do.

Shiraz Bayjoo: So, there is an act of like you said...

Jasmine Togo-Brisby: It's quite special.

Shiraz Bayjoo: And do you have a process once you've located material, found the images - is there a process in which you spend time with them and you contemplate the figures, who they were...

Jasmine Togo-Brisby: I think that because of our community is reasonably small, I believe that there's from one particular family back home, so I'm drawn more to the people who I believe have been repatriated back to the islands and the deportations. I feel like that - and I mean I could be wrong, obviously, I'm just making moves through emotion or from familiar faces. But because we don't know what happened to those people who were sent back, because a lot of them didn't go to their rightful ancestral lands and there are so many things which are unknown. So, there's this parallel of disappearing from the homelands and then also disappearing from Australia, this double-sided disappearing. And I feel like if I can work with those images, I'm most drawn to those ones.

And I do spend a lot of time with them on my computer. And then as a projection, I'll sit in the space with the projection, with my people and it's going to sound so spiritual but allow those images to speak to me.

Shiraz Bayjoo: So, actually sitting within the projection itself being immersed...

Jasmine Togo-Brisby: It's like even body on body...

Anna Arabindan-Kesson: I was wondering if you can just talk a little about this image (*Inheritance 2019*), which I love and is actually on it's on the website for the symposium.

Jasmine Togo-Brisby: So, this was from a whole exhibition of works, which I had done in a similar way. So, this is my daughter. And the exhibition was called *Adrift*, and it was really about creating an alternate archive, thinking about those images and working with the archival images in that way. And then I felt that if I'm going to progress and if I was going to do something, which didn't look like that archive, and inserted us into this imagined image, what would it look like? And it was the *Adrift* exhibition.

So, this image in particular, I use the ship as metaphor, as motif. And this is my daughter, so I'm always thinking about the way that these transmissions happen between my mom and me and then my daughter and me, and then skipping a generation between my mother and my daughter. So, this is my daughter and her inheritance, which is the ship. You could say so much about it, it's so layered, so nuanced.

Anna Arabindan-Kesson: And this is you and your mother (*South Sea Heiress 2019*)?

Jasmine Togo-Brisby: Yeah that's the same, I was looking at this way of how can I use a visual language, but in a way that people understand, because our identity is so... in this part of the world, it's hard for people to understand slave diasporas. Not hard for them to understand, sorry, it's not common for us to exist. So, there's this real sort of... between other Pacific artists and our work it's a real point of difference because we are using the colonial ship, as opposed to an (*inaudible*).

And I intentionally do that over and over and over again so that our narrative doesn't slip into the other narratives because it's... I don't think I'm explaining myself properly, but I'm trying.

Anna Arabindan-Kesson: I think it is very clear. It's something I've been thinking about. I'm reading this book by my former PhD advisor, Hazel Carby, titled *Imperial Intimacies*. And she talks about her family, which is Jamaican and English, she was born in Devon. And she talks there about almost being seen through imperial eyes, even though you are a subject of empire. And it resonated with me so much because someone who's like all of us, Brown bodies, even though it's the end of empire, but it's still in this colonial space. And it is I think very hard to even realize how you see landscape, history, just space through these images and histories, that you're just automatically filtering through. And so, I think again, this question of how these histories remain unseen, and it's very consciously unseen. It's not just a slip of the mind.

And so, I think when I look at your work, I think that's one of the ways that we're being forced to break that imperial vision making. And I think that also goes back to what Shiraz was saying about Mauritius, the spaces that are created to show these other histories. And that's probably not surprising that it's Maroon history, given how the Maroons function within Empire as this kind of...

Shiraz Bayjoo: Yeah, it's very powerful what you said Jasmine, about how you have to reinforce the slave narrative so that it doesn't get lost within other diasporas or other community narratives. And what I was mentioning before was that in Mauritius, for the Creole, for the e- slave community where they can't trace themselves, where we can't trace back to places of origin - that spaces have had to be created as focuses as Anna was saying, and that in this case, it becomes the Maroon history that is the one that is now being undermined as this happened here. I think in a similar way, as you're saying, it's the denial of the extent of what has taken place. And so, this is a pushback to say that these things happened here. So, then the spiritual or emotional, the community focus or the communal spaces get created around that.

And in this case, in Mauritius, it's the Maroon forests - it's literally the trees, the Banyan trees that became the monuments where the absence of any other kind of monumental memorialisation was possible. And I don't know if I'm wrong, but I feel like that these works are in a sense a movement towards that kind of memorialisation.

Jasmine Togo-Brisby: I think so. I think in the way that I'm trying to take up space, in that regard I definitely am. In the actual language, like this one's called *South Sea Heiress*, in the claiming of and the pride of owning that identity and the many layers of hybridity that goes along with that. So, in that regard, I'm trying to take up as much space as I can. I know that sounds awful but...

Anna Arabindan-Kesson: Taking up space is important.

Shiraz Bayjoo: Particularly when space was denied, right?

Jasmine Togo-Brisby: Yeah. I descend from house slaves, so they were made to be invisible, literally. So, I think that layer of my work, there's this irony that now these images are held within institutions and wealthy homes and it's so visible. When I really think about it and pick it apart it's crazy really.

Shiraz Bayjoo: Yeah, absolutely. One of my great-great-grandmothers was a house slave and we know that because she was given the name Charma or Charming by her owners, as an early surname. But that sort of invisibility then therefore becomes the denial of how you feel, the denial of your experience, (*inaudible*) even moving forward into now.

Jasmine Togo-Brisby: And I think being away from Australia has really helped me, which sounds crazy, but the constant... I mean, gosh, look at Scott Morrison's statement from a few weeks ago, that type of attitude - living there, being born there, that's where our culture was born - the oppression is so thick and just really doesn't allow for growth at all, let alone within the arts, within these institutions who are too terrified to make a space for that. But yes, being away from an Australia has somehow really built my strength and my practice, allowed my practice to grow. Because being part of the broader Pacific dialogue over here, just being invited and our narrative being embraced, has been incredible.

Anna Arabindan-Kesson: It's almost like you are extricating yourself from that history, in a way to create a new history or a new discourse - I hate that word - a new way of speaking about people and lives and stories, the ancestors that came before us. It's just fascinating that we were talking about Mauritius and your work of space making. When you were talking about the way that maroon history is commemorated Shiraz, the whole idea of maroonage is this history of extricating oneself from slavery. And this is what maroon communities did in the Caribbean, in

Mauritius. And so, I also see in your work Jasmine and also in yours Shiraz that it's not just about unearthing these histories, but it's also about moving out from under them and creating space outside of them to heal and flourish.

And you talked about treating the people in the archive differently, and I was just immediately thinking Jasmine that we think about treatment or treating in a kind of vocabulary of wellness. And so, it is a kind of act of care work, I think, that you're doing for your community and for these people that came before. What makes it this so powerful too, in terms of thinking about what these artworks can do in this current moment, in relationship to his official histories.

And I thought maybe since we were talking about your particular family history too, I wanted to just bring up these works because I think they also move us into another aspect of your family history that you began to talk about.

Jasmine Togo-Brisby: Sorry, I kind of jotted in there for a bit. So, it was about, I think, four or five years ago that my Auntie gave me this handwritten letter and it had an estate stamp on it with the address and it was dated. And within the content of the letter, the woman who had written the letter was talking about 'it's been a year since I've seen you, surely you haven't forgotten about your real family. Why haven't I heard from you?' And it was only one page and was addressed to my great-great-grandmother, and it was from a Mrs. Wunderlich.

So, because of the stamping that was on the letter and because she'd dated it and within the content of it, she talked about not seeing granny for a year, I was able to trace back my family and locate them at the Wunderlich's house in Sydney. And also, I had a studio photograph of my granny, which was stamped, and that studio was only open for like three years. So, I was able to see that she was still at that house when she was 17. So, through this process of dissecting this letter and days in pajamas on ancestry.com and searching this other family to try and locate my family. I actually found out a lot about them.

So, the Wunderlich's were a Sydney based family. The husband was a very wealthy entrepreneur, traveled the world all of the time, he was rarely home. And they had this pressed tin ceiling company. So, plaster ceiling rosettes and pressed zinc panels, and was really successful in Sydney and Australia. Most of the heritage buildings in Australia at the moment have got their work. And then they ended up coming over and having a factory also in Wellington. And again, all of the heritage buildings in New Zealand generally have Wunderlich ceilings.

So, it's part of my practice - reclaiming materials, I've dealt with sugar and sugar bags and with photography. And so, I guess I always knew, once I realised who they were, the Wunderlich's, once I realised who they were and what one of their businesses

was, I knew that I was going to respond in some type of way with their medium. So, this is my current show. I think there's one day left of this, *Dear Mrs. Wunderlich*. So, it's my response letter to her letter that you write to Granny.

So, I think with my work, visually I'm always trying to work between this beautiful and this - not ugly - but that kind of distressing sort of work. I like the lure of making things beautiful. And I see it as this layer of it, which is very similar to black birding, because our people were lured onto ships with these beautiful objects, with mirrors shining onto the beach, so when I realised that that's what I was doing, I really liked for people to be attracted to it. And then they're in too late, it's too late for them, they're already in too deep and they get to find out a little about the Pacific slave trade. So, this is one of my ceiling panels, my ceiling rosettes (*Ceiling centre, III (blak), 2020*).

Anna Arabindan-Kesson: And could you talk us through the rosette, the actual design.

Jasmine Togo-Brisby: So, I guess, first of all, again talking about the archives - that was the thing - I got really disheartened searching the Wunderlich archives for any trace of my family, because I thought I might find something. And then I did a project here where there were all of these Wunderlich ceiling panels in the Wellington town hall and they were getting refurbished. So, they had been all taken down and archived and wrapped and stacked with so much care. And it really got me thinking about the disparity between the way that these ornate ceiling panels are treated compared to the way that the Pacific slave trade and the way that the bodies were treated, not even names, you were lucky if you've got an indentured labour contract. My ancestors didn't have indentured labour contracts, so I was really looking at that glaring contrast between what's valued, what society values and what it doesn't.

And so, it got me to think about how I could make this ceiling rosette, the focal point of the ceiling, how I could make that in my own language, my own way. So, I was working with dolls, which I collect, these little racist memorabilia-style dolls. And as soon as I started to look at it, I molded a couple and then once I've seen them laying on my desk in my studio, visually I just saw that image of the trans-Atlantic slave trade, that illustration of all the bodies. And I was like, 'so this is, this is what we're doing.'

Anna Arabindan-Kesson: I was thinking that too, that that scene, the image, the print... and then the dolls, I mean, it's really eerie and then there's that sort of beautiful detail of the flower.

Shiraz Bayjoo: And then the hands as well...

Jasmine Togo-Brisby: The hands of the doll? Yeah. It's quite naive. And this thing happened when I was working on my last project where I'd already done a project on the Wunderlich's and the Wellington Town Hall, which was late last year but went through until through our lockdown. So, it was on for quite a few months. And after that project, I started Googling looking at the next way of working. And when I Googled the Wunderlich's, my project started to come up and I was so surprised because as an artist, you're trying to do this within the institutions, within this very academic type of way. And then to see it actually play out in the real world where I'm inserting our own narrative within their very selected narrative, it just kind of blew my mind and opened up a whole new way of looking at things and all the possibilities of what I could actually do within my practice.

So, with this exhibition, I was very determined that I was going to continue that way of inserting us within them. And so, the titles of the works are their archival titles. Because I thought, well, this is the way Google works, everybody researches on Google. And so, if I can get their archives to come up with my archives right side by side, then again, they're being forced to know both sides and it's exciting, you know?

Shiraz Bayjoo: Yeah. So, in a sense of that the works continue their own journey and they continue their effect and continue to...

Jasmine Togo-Brisby: Yeah. So, if you can utilise the internet in that way. I didn't think about using it as a tool in that way - I don't even know what the term is for that.

Anna Arabindan-Kesson: We'll have to wrap this up, but it was fascinating and wonderful to speak with you. So, thank you so much for this conversation. And as I said, at the beginning of this, it will be uploaded to the ICF website. You can all watch the recording and come prepared with lots of questions to ask Jasmine in the live Q and A session she'll be having with Shiraz and a couple other artists who we will be including in the series in the weeks to come. So, thank you very much.

Jasmine Togo-Brisby: Thank you so much for having me.

Disclaimer: Due to disruptions in the audio recording of the conversation there may be slight discrepancies in this transcription.

Shiraz Bayjoo studied Painting at the University of Wales, Institute Cardiff, and was artist in residence at Whitechapel Gallery during 2011. He has exhibited at Tate Britain and the Institute of International Visual Arts, London; 14th Biennale of Sharjah; 13th Biennale of Dakar; 21st Biennale of Sydney; and is a recipient of the

Gasworks Fellowship and the Arts Council of England. His work is represented in the Sharjah Foundation collection, UK Government collection, and French National collection, as well as private collections both in Europe and Asia. Born in Mauritius, Bayjoo's work focuses on the Indian Ocean and the European historical legacies that have shaped the region. Bayjoo has been a visiting lecturer and critic at universities both in Europe and the USA, most notably the Courtauld Institute, Central St. Martin's college of Art, MONASH university Australia, and Princeton University (forthcoming) USA. Bayjoo is participating in the Diaspora Pavilion 2 programme.

Anna Arabindan-Kesson is an art historian and writer, who is jointly appointed as an Assistant Professor of Black Diaspora Art in the departments of African American Studies and Art and Archaeology at Princeton University. She has lived and studied in Sri Lanka, Australia, New Zealand and England and prior to completing her PhD in African American Studies and Art History in the United States, Anna was a Registered Nurse. Her personal and professional background inflect her academic and curatorial work which focuses on the relationship of vision and visibility to histories of race, empire, and migration.

Jasmine Togo-Brisby is a fourth-generation Australian South Sea Islander, whose great-great-grandparents were taken from Vanuatu as children and put to work on an Australian sugarcane plantation. Togo-Brisby's research examines the historical practice of 'blackbirding', a romanticised colloquialism for the Pacific slave trade, and its contemporary legacy and impact upon those who trace their roots to New Zealand and Australia through the slave-diaspora. Based in Wellington, Togo-Brisby is one of the few artists delving into the cultural memory and shared histories of plantation colonisation across the Pacific, her practice encompassing painting, early photographic techniques and processes, and sculpture.