Blockbuster Video Audience Award for the Best Feature Film, based on votes from members of the Honolulu audience. The film’s first screening at the Honolulu Academy of Arts on 6 November 2002 was preceded by an elaborate protocol that lasted more than thirty minutes, in which students from the Halau Ku Mana welcomed the Māori actors, producer, and director. Flowers, chants, songs, and speeches were exchanged on both sides, affirming the connections between the native Hawaiians and the Māori performers and filmmakers. The audience included Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders, participants in the conference, and members of the general public. After we watched the film, its director, Don Selwyn, said in effect to those in the audience, “You can do this too. You can make your own movies, with native Hawaiian actors using your own language.” The response from many in the audience suggested that this was an important and moving moment. As they have done with their immersion schools, the Māori people may be helping others in the Pacific find ways to represent their cultures and revision their futures. While I hope and believe that there will be many more stories and films arising directly from the experiences of peoples native to the Pacific, I cannot think of a better use of the work of that western bard of Avon than remaking his texts as a means to reclaim indigenous cultures.

**VALERIE WAYNE**
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*Brett Graham’s installation at the Adam Art Gallery was one of the most powerful and affecting artistic statements on the nature of Pacific history and identity I have seen. The work may be cited as an example of what Andreas Huyssen has recently called “memory sculpture”—work that attempts, in an age of cyber-capitalism and media-induced amnesia, to evoke more cogent and embodied reflections on the present and the past (“Sculpture, Materiality, and Memory in an Age of Amnesia,” in *Displacements*, Art Gallery of Ontario exhibition catalog, 1998). Such work also focuses on the locality and specificity of historical experience. Reversing modernism’s investment in the universality of aesthetic experience, it seeks to embed aesthetic subjectivity in narratives of particular times and places. These are also, importantly, private works. They are not public monuments or national memorials; they have no official or representative status (however much they might recall such functions). As mnemonic prompts, they address the individual gallery-goer in a personal reverie about the relationship between the present and the past.*

*Kainga Tahi Kainga Rua* (First Home, Second Home) is an installation about the modern history of Banaba, or “Ocean Island.” It was produced as a collaboration between contemporary Māori artist Brett Graham and Banaban academic...
Katerina Teaiwa, interpreting ideas distilled from Teaiwa’s PhD research on the colonial exploitation of Banaba through Graham’s unique sculptural language. Their collaboration in many ways is a pioneering response to recent calls to decolonize Pacific history and rethink what are valid and effective modes of Pacific historiography. It is an experiment that attempts to speak across indigenous perspectives, to return marginalized histories to the field of representation, and to challenge how Pacific history might be experienced and communicated.

As “art,” this work is not an expressive but rather an inarticulate supplement to real history; *Kainga Tahi Kainga Rua* goes to the heart of history by examining what constitutes historical consciousness in the modern Pacific.

A brief wall text greeted the visitor to the installation and provided a basic narrative informing his or her encounter with it. I quote it in full: “Between 1900 and 1979 the island of Banaba or ‘Ocean Island,’ in what is now the Republic of Kiribati, was mined and relocated across the farming fields of New Zealand and Australia. Phosphate fertilizer or superphosphate was a crucial factor in the growth of the agricultural industries of both these nations. But their growth resulted in the displacement of the indigenous Banabans to Rabi Island in Fiji and 20 million tonnes of Banaban homelands to New Zealand and Australia. The growth of their agriculture could be interpreted as resulting in the ‘death’ of this Pacific Island. Today, Banaba is a silent graveyard of the phosphate mining industry. While the island was once crucial for New Zealand and Australia it is now all but forgotten by history.” As an addendum, we were told that the work reflected on “the relationship between New Zealand and Banaba from a Māori and Banaban perspective of kainga or home—the land that feeds and nurtures.” This text already takes history from a narration of facts to a reflection on what these facts mean from particular perspectives and across time. There is loss and irony in the text, but equally, affirmation and metaphorical play—qualities expanded and given substance in the work itself.

Installed in the lower gallery of the Adam complex, the work deployed elements from Graham’s repertoire of sculptural forms. One of the things that made the installation so effective was the way these elements were integrated into the gallery space. They did not just sit in that space; they animated it, incorporating its height and narrowness, its viewing vantages, its scale, and so on, into the total experience of the installation in a way that was both theatrical and phenomenological, spatial and temporal.

The sculptural elements within the work comprised ten large, identical “baths” clad in white, roughcast phosphate lined up along the length of the gallery floor (figure 1). These objects recalled the extraction of phosphate from Banaba. They alluded not only to the 20 million tonnes trucked off the island (two million for each bath) but also to the abstract logic of modern systems of production, transport, and labor by which that process was rendered “rational” and effective. At the same time, they were a row of white sarcophagi, transforming the lower gallery into a crypt or catacomb. The human scale
Figure 1. Kainga Tahi Kainga Rua, by Brett Graham, 2003. Adam Art Gallery.
of the baths, palpable as one walked around them, made the evocation of stone coffins even more intimate and personal. Here we were made to wander the “silent graveyard” proposed in Teiawa’s wall text.

Suspended above the baths were three spheroid shapes made from welded segments of rusted steel, which appeared to float or hover in the air. On each of these floating orbs was projected, in looped repetition, a brief fragment of archival film footage: a top-dressing plane showering fertilizer on New Zealand farmland; a line of Banaban dancers in traditional costume (performing a dance drama about their relocation to Rabi); and a digger excavating phosphate from a Banaban mine. These objects, however, seemed to occupy a different register of meaning from that of the funereal, earthbound baths below. While their rusted steel evoked the scene of ruin and industrial debris that now constitutes the Banaban landscape—abandoned machinery, bits of iron, nails, broken glass, empty concrete buildings, and the like—they also contradicted their material nature, seeming to float like surreal apparitions in a dream, a quality augmented by the projected images flickering across their surfaces. These hallucinatory orbs became sites of narrative, historical re-creation, and memory. They held us like “glittering eyes” as they told their story—in stuttering, illusionary, semicoherent fragments—of Banaba’s “death” and displacement, of New Zealand’s and Australia’s role in (and profit from) this fact, of history becoming History.

One might apply this doubling of “tomb” and “ruin” in the installation to the doubling referred to in its title, Kainga Tahi Kainga Rua; thus a “home” equated with loss and mourning and a “home” re-figured in the imagination (like the row of Banaban dancers enacting the story of who they are and where they came from, or indeed, like the installation itself). Within the western art tradition of the elegiac (poetically lamenting something now past), “the ruin” has often signified this opposition between matter that decays and dies and matter transfigured by art into another realm of fictive being. Something of this power of metamorphosis and metaphor is demonstrated by Graham’s installation and by the history to which it refers.

“Elegiac” was the basic mood of Kainga Tahi Kainga Rua with its “tombs” and “ruins.” I do not want to overstress this; the mood was not morose or melancholy but sober and reflective; and concerned as much with the present as the past. Nonetheless, I wondered about the elegiac in my response to the show. The elegiac is not an unproblematic mode of aesthetic discourse. Tied to imperial histories of “modernization,” “development,” “progress,” “the march of civilization,” and so on, it can shade into “imperial nostalgia,” that paradoxical mourning or sentimental yearning for the thing one has killed. In the past, the elegiac has been emblematic of historical consciousness in corrupt and murderous ways. Yet violence, loss, and transformation are also constitutive of history, and indeed of ourselves. And in any case, the elegiac has always had its doubles. For every ship captain regretting he ever came or anthropologist grieving
the transformation of the “pristine” islands into airstrips and petrol dumps, there were (and are) Islanders grieving too. Amid all the celebration and affirmation in the recovery of Pacific cultures today, what is the role of mourning and memory in decolonization?

*Kainga Tahi Kainga Rua* asks us to contemplate it in light of the concept of *kainga*—“the land that feeds and nurtures.” Of course, kainga was the perspective overrun by the colonial powers—British, Australian, and New Zealand—who mined the island and used the phosphate for their agricultural development and profit. Banaban land was cheap chemical fertilizer to be extracted, bought, and sold, and used like a commodity—activities legitimized in their violence by the dominant narratives of nation building and modernization. From the perspective of kainga, however, it was Banaba and Banabans who were scattered across New Zealand and Australian farmlands. But the “death” of Banaba, by the same token, is also the “gift” of Banaba that “fed and nurtured”—“fertilized”—New Zealand and other “homelands.” This sobering notion of the “death” of Banaba and its continuity in displacement as memory and metaphor, a notion encompassed by the idea of kainga, is what the installation invited its New Zealand audience (who on the whole have never heard of Banaba) to contemplate. It reminded them, as random gallery-goers, of what is not known and does not exist in their public memory, memorials, monuments, or narratives of nationhood. (On that score, the work deserves to be seen throughout New Zealand, and in Australia and Britain as well.)

But the installation goes further and proposes itself as a meditation on Banaban history across indigenous perspectives on kainga, Māori and Banaban. What can a cross-indigenous collaboration on the idea of “home” in light of colonial history tell us about the nature and potential of kainga as a category of Pacific identity? Can it be used to deepen or expand the idea of indigeneity? Graham does not excuse Māori from ignorance of the history at issue, or indeed from complicity in the use of Banaban “homelands” for the development of their lands. What is interesting is the common concept, refracted through comparable but different historical experiences. Radical deracination; collective displacement to Rabi; the literal dispersal of land (over two-thirds of the entire island); the reality of two homes—these and other factors influence the politics and metaphors of kainga and identity in different ways. This collaboration, then, was a significant venture in beginning to think through and articulate the indigenous experience of colonization as a complex and differential one, outside the paradigm of the colonizer and the colonized.

One final comment: For all the ways it critiques the violence of modern Pacific history, *Kainga Tahi Kainga Rua* also struggles to remember it—not as abstract fact, but as an existential reality in the present. It remembers the way history did not just happen to us, it constitutes us as who we are today. As a “memory sculpture,” *Kainga Tahi Kainga Rua* occupies a historical moment that, as
many people have commented, suffers
the “waning” of its historicity (Frederic
Jameson, *Postmodernism, or The Cultural
Logic of Late Capitalism*, 1991). Our
problem, says Huyssen, is not the hypertrophy (or excessive
growth) of historical consciousness
but its *atrophy*, a condition he, like
Jameson, attributes to the hypermedi-
ated culture of “late capitalism” with
“its continuing frenetic pace, its
media politics of live information and
quick oblivion, and its dissolution of
public space in ever more channels of
instant entertainment” (1998, 37).
Significantly, Graham’s installation
occupied the Adam Art Gallery simul-
taneously with two other exhibitions
equally concerned with the way the
historical past has shaped the present,
and equally committed to exploring
ways in which contemporary media
both structure consciousness and
might yet be turned against their over-
whelming role in our forgetfulness to
provide cogent and genuinely affective
encounters with the past. (*Bombs
Away* was a group show responding
to French, American, British, Russian,
and Chinese nuclear propaganda films
produced during the cold war, while
*Remembering Toba Tek Singh*, by
Indian artist Nalini Malani, was a
multimedia installation dealing with
the historical division of India and
Pakistan in 1947, after the end of
British colonial rule, and its subse-
quent impact on their nuclear testing
programs and national rivalry.)

**PETER BRUNT**

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**ARTPIX 3: Aotearoa/New Zealand.**

nation: Molly Cumming; design: Mats Hakansson; programming:

To review a journal of contemporary
art in CD-ROM format was a unique
experience for me. I must admit that
I still use my computer as a glorified
typewriter and was not at all sure
what I was doing, or what I was sup-
posed to do. However, it didn’t take
much to put the CD in and begin my
journey through four very different
“exhibitions” that collectively tapped
into the pulse of New Zealand art in
2001. As both an outsider and insider
(having immigrated to New Zealand
eight years ago, but having focused
my research on contemporary art
since my arrival), I felt at home with
the opening karanga ra (call of wel-
come). This immediately placed my
consciousness (which tends to wander
the world) firmly in New Zealand.
Aside from the flashing colors (which
got my attention), I was impressed
with the quality and quantity of infor-
mation that the CD held. While I was
uncomfortable with the format, I
found it quite easy to navigate and
quickly came to enjoy what that for-
mat could offer. ARTPIX 3 combines
text, still image, and moving image
to provide background information,
access to more ephemeral types of
knowledge (television ads and music),
as well as an interactive play with the
exhibitions themselves. It took about
two hours to examine (one could