



PROJECT MUSE®

About the Artist

The Contemporary Pacific, Volume 15, Number 1, Spring 2003, p. ix (Article)

Published by University of Hawai'i Press

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1353/cp.2003.0025>



➔ *For additional information about this article*

<https://muse.jhu.edu/article/38601>

About the Artist

John Pule was born in 1962 in Liku, Niue. In 1964 he went to live in Auckland, where he still resides. Pule is a novelist, poet, painter, and multimedia performance artist. This issue features Pule's painting. Internationally recognized, Pule's art has appeared in the Museum of Australia in Sydney (1998); the Australia National Gallery in Canberra (2000); the Wellington Art Museum, New Zealand (2000); and the Auckland Toi Tamaki Art Museum (solo exhibition 2000); as well as in galleries in Korea, South Africa, and Hawai'i.



PHOTO BY JOHN PETTITT

Like many Pacific artists, Pule draws from the art traditions of his ancestors, particularly Niuean barkcloth (*hiapo*), as well as his family and personal histories and experiences. Images and designs on traditional Niuean barkcloth were drawn freehand, giving them an open and experimental look. Pule is inspired by this ancient tradition but is not bound by it as he creates paintings that display a much richer and freer artistic vision, one both personal and universal. Each painting tells a story or comments on some aspect of life or the artist's experiences. Familiar images (such as birds, plants, human beings, tattoo patterns, fishes, or lizards) gleaned from the earth, sea, sky, dreams, human action, fantasy, memory—indeed, from anywhere and everywhere—dazzle the eye. We have never seen them rendered or juxtaposed with such passion and originality in any other artist's work. Pule's paintings are inspired by the Gods of Polynesia, old and new. The end result is akin to experiences to be had at a Pacific feast or gathering.

The artist invites us to feast the eye, to see the contemporary Pacific with new eyes. Pule wants us to experience the Pacific's passion, loss, recovery, and creative dynamism.