

AGENCY

14–16 August 2026

A curatorial intensive in three questions

How do I learn?

How do I act?

How do I imagine?

Co-convened by Te Pātaka Toi Adam Art Gallery
and Artspace Aotearoa

Te **Adam**
Pātaka **Art**
Toi **Gallery**

Artspace Aotearoa

AGENCY brings together Clémentine Deliss, Kimberley Moulton, and Megan Tamati-Quenell for a three-day intensive exploring curatorial practice through three questions: *How do I learn? How do I act? How do I imagine?*

AGENCY responds to the limited formal frameworks for curatorial learning, exchange, and imagining in Aotearoa. This symposium foregrounds the vital role that rigorous and imaginative curatorial practice plays within contemporary art ecologies. Lectures articulate current positions in curatorial thinking and practice, and conversational workshops deepen and test these ideas collectively. The programme cultivates reflection, resource sharing, peer-to-peer learning, and the imagining of alternative futures for curatorial practice.

As a group we will examine methods and positions both within and beyond institutional settings, while addressing the specific conditions shaping curatorial work in Aotearoa—where curatorial labour remains unevenly resourced, and inconsistently defined. At the centre of the symposium is a generative question: what can the curator do today?

AGENCY: A curatorial intensive in three questions: How do I learn? How do I act? How do I imagine? is presented by Artspace Aotearoa and Te Pātaka Toi Adam Art Gallery and supported by Chartwell Trust, Goethe Institut, National Services Te Paerangi, Toi o Aotearoa Creative New Zealand Te Manu Ka Tau International Delegates Programme. We would also like to thank the whānau at Ngā Mokopuna for hosting us so generously.

Ruth Buchanan

Bridget Riggir-Cuddy

Abby Cunnane

Co-organisers

SCHEDULE

This event is hosted at Ngā Mokopuna, 42–50 Kelburn Parade on Te Herenga Waka—Victoria University of Wellington campus, Wellington. Lectures will be held in Aho Ruruku, the entry level amphitheatre of Ngā Mokopuna, and workshops within the same building, MOKO209 on the second floor.

Workshop participants already have a reserved place at all lectures and are not required to RSVP.

Friday 14 August

5:30pm	Arrival
6:00pm	Welcome and opening address, Abby Cunnane
6:15–7:30pm	<i>How do I learn?</i> A lecture by Kimberley Moulton

Abstract

How I Learn: Restoring the Spirit of Collections and Place, an Indigenous space-time curatorial methodology

There is a continuum of knowledge that manifests through contemporary practice and when artists and community activate object, space, and place. These objects and sites can act as mnemonic portals of which we can walk between Ancestral space and today. In this lecture I will consider Indigenous temporality in relation to place and Ancestral belongings in museum collections and the role of contemporary artists in re-storying these spaces beyond the historic past and colonial centre. This Global Majority inter-cultural and space-time dialogue will consider an approach to curatorial work through my framework of restoring the spirit and consider deep-time relational ecologies and materialities that guide me in my practice. Sharing examples of recent projects that meet at the intersection of contemporary art, historical archive, and place I will consider the way in which I learn from Country, community and collections.

7:30pm **Shared kai, Ngā Mokopuna
wharekai (all welcome)**

Saturday 15 August

10am–12.00 ***How do I learn?* A workshop
and collective close reading
of Kimberley Moulton's
lecture, led by Kimberley
Moulton and Bridget
Riggir-Cuddy.**

12.30–1.30pm **Lunch break (workshop
participants only)**

2–3pm ***How do I act?* A lecture by
Clémentine Deliss**

Abstract

How do I act: Modus Operandi

In her talk, Clémentine Deliss will present the Metabolic Museum-University, a transversal curatorial model for remediating contentious or forgotten collections. To illustrate her modus operandi, she will introduce her forthcoming

exhibition, the “Département des Pièges” (Department of Traps) that opens in November 2026 at the new museum in Brussels, Kanal-Centre Pompidou. The title of the exhibition pays tribute to the *Département des Aigles*, the fictional museum of modern art by Marcel Broodthaers, the leading Belgian Surrealist and Conceptual artist of the 1960s. Deliss’ exhibition is designed as a study space for visual thinking, an environment that merges the museum with the university. At the centre of the room is a large table in the shape of a lung surrounded by chairs. Artefacts from ten Brussels museums are placed in proximity to artists’ prototypes and sculptures by Guillaume Bijl, Kasper Bosmans, Aline Bouvy, Pélagie Gbaguidi, Otobong Nkanga, and more. Works by Belgian and international artists spanning the 17th to the 21st centuries line the wall and include Dutch still life painter Jan Weenix and Luke Willis Thompson. The common thread to all exhibits is the concept of the trap and the lure. The exhibition asks us to imagine new relationships between collections that suspend colonial divisions and speak about today’s worlds.

3–3.30pm	Afternoon tea (all welcome)
3.30–5.30pm	<i>How do I act?</i> A workshop and collective close reading of Clémentine Deliss' lecture. Led by Clémentine Deliss and Ruth Buchanan.
6pm	Beer and chips (all welcome)
7pm–8pm	<i>How do I imagine?</i> A lecture by Megan Tamati-Quennell

Abstract

How do I imagine: Ihi: The poetics of possibility

Megan Tamati-Quennell responds to the provocation *How do I imagine?* through a reflection on the conception and realisation of *Ihi*, her curatorial project for *Sharjah Biennial 16, to carry*, held in Sharjah, United Arab Emirates in 2025.

Drawing on Māori philosopher Māori Marsden's definition of ihi as 'a psychic rather than a spiritual force,' the presentation explores how transcendent

or autonomous power can operate within curatorial practice as a catalyst for cross-cultural solidarity.

As well as discussing the concepts evolved for *Ihi*, Tamati-Quennell will consider how her curatorial methodology of foregrounding Indigeneity and First Nations art, not as peripheral inclusions but as central and generative forces, offered alternate modalities and frames to the globe spanning exhibition of the Sharjah Biennial.

Her presentation contemplates the wider curatorial structure of *Sharjah Biennial 16, to carry*, developed collectively by the five curators—Alia Swastika, Amal Khalaf, Natasha Ginwala, Zeynep Öz and Tamati-Quennell—through five interrelated exhibitions: *Rosestrata: Trajectory/Translation*, *Throwing Shells*, *The Ancestral Well: Pulse to Terrain*, *Yaz* and *Ihi*.

Polyphonic, pluri-centric and porous in its structure, *Sharjah Biennial 16, to carry* enabled each curator—all women of colour—to speak from distinct positionalities while remaining connected within a shared curatorial ecology. Central to the broader curatorial context were questions conceived collectively, which underpinned the biennial offering;

*What does it entail 'to carry' your home,
ancestors and political formations with you?
What do we carry when it is time to travel, flee or
move on? What are the passages that we form as
we migrate between territories and across time?
What do we carry when we remain? What do we
carry when we survive?*

Within *Ihi*, these propositions resonated through ideas of carrying land, history, grief, ruptured and unsettled pasts, embodied and reclaimed knowledges, speculative futures and more, intrinsic within First Nations cultures, but which also extended meaningfully across the wider constellation of works within Tamati-Quennell's *Ihi* exhibition.

8.15pm

**Closing words by
Abby Cunnane**

Sunday 16 August

11am–1pm

***How do I imagine?*
A walk in Ōtari-Wilton's bush,
informal wind-down
Meet at entrance, 150 Wilton
Rd, Wilton.**

CONTRIBUTOR BIOGRAPHIES

Clémentine Deliss works across the borders of contemporary art, curatorial practice, and publishing. She studied art practice in Vienna, and later social anthropology in Vienna, Paris, and London, and received her Ph.D. from the School of African and Oriental Studies, University of London. As an artist-curator, her practice is characterised by an early concern for international artist-led dialogues, team constellations in curating, and new approaches to museology.

She is currently Curator at Large at KANAL-Centre Pompidou. Since 2024, she has been KANAL-Guest Professor at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Brussels, and since 2021, Global Humanities Professor in History of Art, at the University of Cambridge. Between 2010–2015, she was Director of the Weltkulturen Museum in Frankfurt/Main, where she instituted a new trans-disciplinary lab to remediate collections within a post-ethnological paradigm, working with a wide range of artists, lawyers, and writers. Her book *The Metabolic Museum* (2020) published by Hatje Cantz, came out in Russian translation in 2021

(Garage Museum), and in Spanish in March 2023 (Caniche Editorial, Madrid). Her book *Skin in the Game. Conversations on Risk and Contention* was published in December 2023 by Hatje Cantz/KW to accompany the exhibition at KW. Since 1996, she has produced the independent artists' and writers' organ *Metronome*, twice officially invited to documenta, first in 1997 (dx) and then in 2007 (d12). She lives in Berlin and has joint German and British nationality.

Dr Kimberley Moulton is a Yorta Yorta woman from Australia and a curator and writer. Kimberley is a respected international curator working across modern and contemporary art and historical collections. Leading research and curatorial practice in the field of connecting knowledge, histories and futures at the intersection of historical collections and contemporary art, her work centres regenerative re-worlding of art histories and ecological, cultural and relational Indigenous and Global Majority creative practices. She is currently Senior Curator Exhibitions at RISING, the Melbourne

international arts festival and most recently held tenure as the Adjunct Curator Indigenous Art Tate London (2023–2026). She has a PhD in curatorial practice from Monash University Melbourne and in 2023 was appointed Curator Emeritus, First Peoples at Museums Victoria.

Working with artists to amplify underrepresented art histories, her practice foregrounds connecting communities to collections, through repatriation and re-spiriting collections and place beyond the colonial past. This work has positioned Moulton at the forefront of local and international curatorial and writing praxis which supports contemporary art across multidiscipline areas to re-frame a new dialogue between object, place and community. Kimberley's research interests include Indigenous repatriation, Ancestral belongings and restitution, Indigenous space-time cosmologies and embodied knowledge in contemporary art practice.

Along with her curatorial work Kimberley is currently Deputy Chair of the Board for Australia's leading regional art gallery, Shepparton Art Museum and Director of the board for the Adam Briggs Foundation.

Megan Tamati-Quennell is a leading curator and writer. She has a 36-year curatorial career specialising in modern and contemporary Māori and Indigenous art. Megan is the longest serving curator in this field, receiving a CNZM in 2024 for her contribution to Māori and First Nations art. She is of Te Ātiawa, Ngāti Mutunga, Ngāi Tahu, Kāti Māmoe and Waitaha descent. Megan has held curatorial positions at the National Art Gallery, Te Papa Tongarewa and the Govett-Brewster Art Gallery and has worked as an independent curator at the Sharjah Art Foundation and in Busan, South Korea. She currently holds the position of Curator, Modern and Contemporary Māori and Indigenous Art at Te Papa Tongarewa. Recent career highlights include co-curating *Sharjah Biennial 16, to carry, 2025* and *Emily Karaka: Ka Awatea, A New Dawn*, the first major survey exhibition of senior Māori painter Emily Karaka, 2024. Megan is a PhD candidate in Fine Arts, in an Indigenous-led programme at Monash University, Melbourne, Australia.

READING AND RESOURCE LIST

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