

Artists' Biographies

Tui Emma Gillies is an artist who works in tapa. She has exhibited her work widely in Auckland, Wellington, Tonga, Sydney, Melbourne and England. Gillies received a Creative New Zealand grant in 2014 to travel to Tonga with her mother Sulieti Fieme'a Burrows to work on a ngatu (tapa) project in her mother's village, Falevai. The art of ngatu had not been practised in the village for decades and the mother-daughter duo worked with the women of Falevai to revive the tradition and produce two large ngatu which will be exhibited as *Falevai Flava* at Fresh Gallery Ōtara in 2018. They presented a paper about their experiences at two Pacific Art Association Europe conferences in Vienna and Madrid in July 2015. Gillies has had works purchased by Auckland Museum, GRASSI Museum in Germany & NGV Melbourne. She has co-curated two exhibitions, *Tauhi Vaa*, at Fresh Gallery Ōtara, and *Women's Work*, at NorthTech in Whangarei, and she presented at the curators' hui at the Dowse Art Museum in Lower Hutt. Gillies and Burrows recently travelled to Birmingham, England for the Festival of Quilts, where they exhibited their works and held multiple workshops.

Sulieti Fieme'a Burrows is a traditional Tongan artist. She has been creating tapa paintings, kahoā heilala necklaces and various other forms of traditional Tongan art ever since she was a child in Vava'u.

Sulieti's kahoā heilala were exhibited in the *Tauhi Vaa* exhibition in Fresh Gallery Ōtara. Each necklace was created by hand, a painstaking process where every flower is modelled individually from clay. One was purchased by Otago Museum. Another two were purchased by Auckland Museum. The National Gallery of Victoria also commissioned a kahoā heilala from Sulieti for their collection.

Burrows success at *Tauhi Vaa* was an example of how high-quality traditional work with an original stamp can sit comfortably alongside contemporary work in an exhibition. This set her up with the confidence to work with her daughter Tui Emma Gillies on a large-scale ngatu (tapa) art project with the women of Falevai, Sulieti's home village in Vava'u. In 2015 she travelled with her daughter to Europe to present at two conferences at the Museo De America and The University of Vienna. This year Burrows and Gillies travelled to the Festival of Quilts in Birmingham, England, to exhibit their work and hold workshops. Burrows continues to pass down the traditions and skills she has learnt by teaching traditional workshops at various places around Auckland.

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