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Paradise Maintenance Department

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On the multiple platforms of my art I engage in a kind of dance in the post-colonial night of Polynesian Pacific Islander associations and relationships that are my *mana*, my foundation. In this work I could call myself an activist but if anything my art works are a sort of comforting acknowledgement that this is what my eyes see, this is how my thoughts gather like clouds in the salt depths, as shadows and correspondences. In the narrative of Polynesia for everything living on the earth there is a corresponding being in the ocean. And for us humans we often correspond with sharks, we are sharks among the woods tonight, and in the cities, our frenzy of destruction. But for most Polynesians in modern society our bodies are cursed, this is the legacy of colonialism. We represent in popular mis-imagination a kind of sensuous abandon, as in post-war tiki kitsch pornography where pagan idols are surfed deliriously; bloated bodies of idle indigestion; symbols of alien violence and the mysterious. In this post-colonial world where my body does not seem to exist, except as a curse, I feel that the only way to re-discover myself is to take the road that led me here, to meet again my future. And all the while, new tsunamis alter the coasts, the rising sea covers island gardens, google earth and international home buyers manipulate trade winds, and the war of the elites hums bloody efficient, at all levels of assumptive thought, continuously changing the rules. If paradise does

not exist it would be invented, but those who maintain its acres and gondolas are not grateful, they live as terrorists unless they terrorize themselves first, and to be good most do, buried deep within their bodies, forever childlike, waiting for night in order to breathe. To remove this curse we are asked to shed our bodies, which we cannot do, to attain a paradise that we already possess, which is the freedom of our thoughts and feelings, and the strongholds of our conversations and relationships. The function of my artistic practice is to materialize my perceptions, to make the material of my thoughts apparent, and to make the world as I know it cohesive, if only by taking it apart a little.