



Sam Hamilton/Sam Tam Ham  
*Te Moana Meridian*  
25 Aug–07 Oct 2023

Tavares Strachan  
*One Hundred More Fires*

**Sam Hamilton/Sam Tam Ham** (b. 1984, Auckland, New Zealand/Tāmaki Makaurau, Aotearoa) created *Te Moana Meridian* as a vessel for proposing a radical new United Nations General Assembly Draft Resolution to formally relocate the prime meridian from Greenwich, London, to Te Moana-Nui-ā-Kiwa/the South Pacific Ocean. Since its inception at an 1884 conference in Washington DC, the prime meridian has functioned to implicitly serve the hegemonic ambitions of the British colonial empire. Rather than serving as a “beacon of humanity,” the prime meridian today more resembles a bygone imperial relic. Just as all roads once led to Rome, all time and space coordinates still point to London as the “center of the world.”

*Te Moana Meridian* proposes to elect a new “center of the world” while acknowledging that doing so has the potential to reframe the dynamics of global power. Where should this new center be located? *Te Moana Meridian* proposes the open waters of Te Moananui-ā-Kiwa/the South Pacific Ocean. As Hamilton/Tam Ham says: the prime meridian should be “anchored in the global commons and personified by the ocean; connective, circulatory, omnipresent, integral to all life. To avoid drowning, we must become the ocean.”

As a five-channel video installation, *Te Moana Meridian* features an international cast of performers, artists and practitioners, including: Mere Tokorahi Boynton (Te Aitanga-a-Māhaki, Ngāi Tūhoe), Holland Andrews (NYC, US), Dr. Tru Paraha (Ngāti Hineāmaru, Ngāti Kahu o Torongare), Crystal Akins Meneses & The Lincoln City Children’s Choir (Oregon, US), Clara Chon (Aotearoa/NYC), Rhonda Tibble (Ngāti Porou, Te Whānau a Apanui, Ngāti Kahungunu, Te Aitanga a Mahaki), British mother and daughter performance duo Deryl and Ruby Thatcher (UK), Alexa Stark (US), and others.

Some years back Bahamian-born, New York-based artist **Tavares Strachan** (b. 1979, Nassau, Bahamas) asked himself a simple question: Who gets to decide who is remembered and who is forgotten? Before the Internet, the *Encyclopedia Britannica* was an important repository of universal knowledge. Compiled almost exclusively by white men, it left great swaths of human knowledge untouched. Moved by this epistemological gap, Strachan put together his own compendium: *The Encyclopedia of Invisibility*, featuring 15,000 entries that cover a forgotten archive of people, places, concepts, objects, artworks, scientific phenomena and other stories. Among the entries are writings on Matthew Henson, the Black American explorer who first arrived at the North Pole in 1909, Saint Lucian poet and playwright Derek Walcott, and the saola (*Pseudoryx nghetinhensis*), a bovine known as the Asian unicorn.

A recent entry in Strachan’s *Encyclopedia* is Camilo Cienfuegos. A key figure of the Cuban Revolution, the young revolutionary was popular enough to be widely hailed as “the Comandante of the people.” His death at 27 in an airplane crash raised a whirlwind of suspicion about the ambitions of Fidel Castro and Ernesto “Che” Guevara, as well as concern about who would get to write his story. With his large-scale neon sculpture *One Hundred More Fires* (2023), Strachan literally brings Camilo Cienfuegos’ story back into the light.

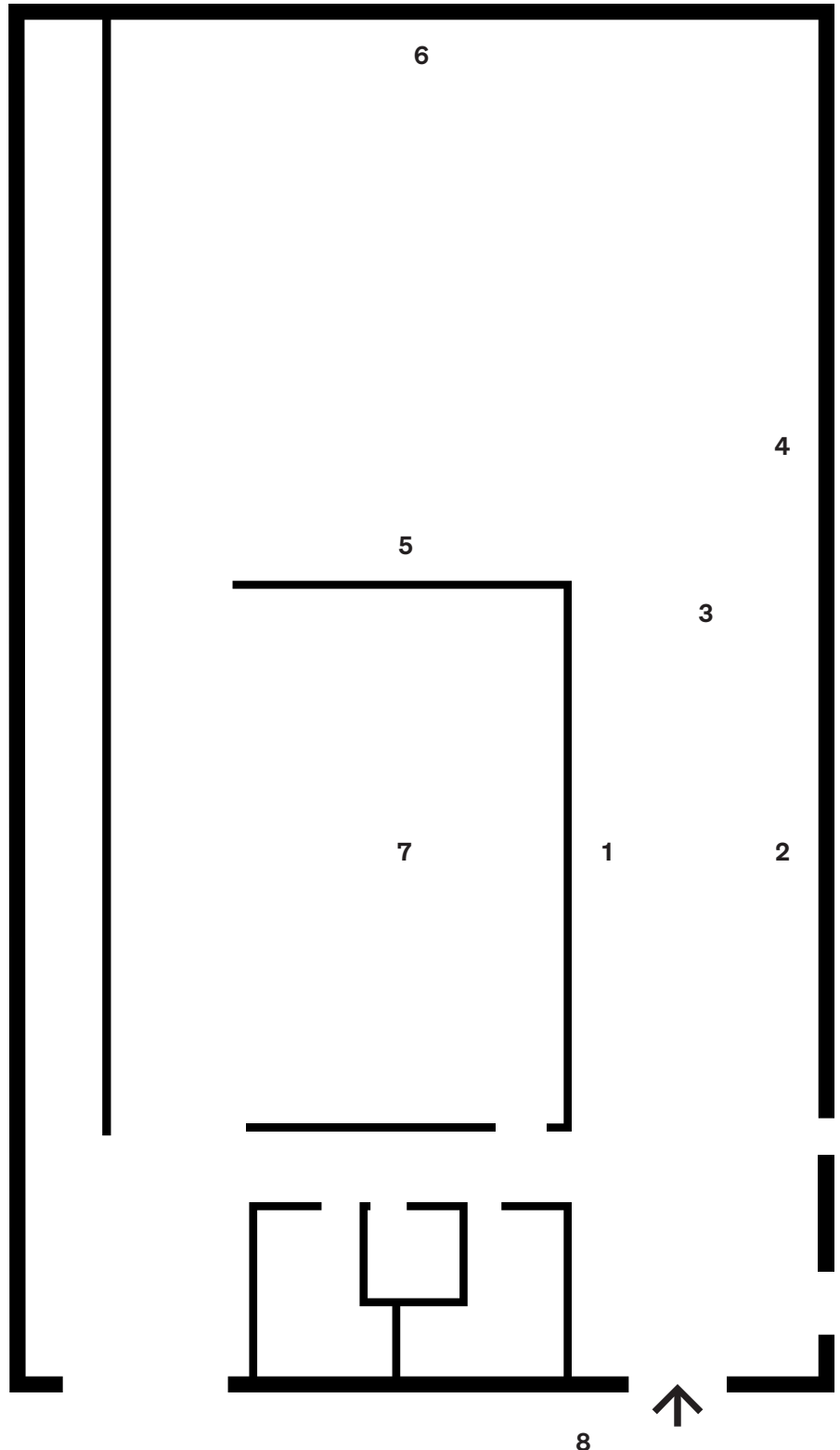


Scan this QR to read the full Moana Meridian proposal

# Works in the exhibitions

## Sam Hamilton/Sam Tam Ham

- 1**  
*Proposal for a new United Nations  
General Assembly Draft Resolution to relocate  
the international prime meridian* 2019–2022  
Acrylic paint on stretched canvas
- 2**  
*Te Poutūmarotanga o Te Moana /  
he poutūmaro mō te ao hou* 2020–2022  
Acrylic paint on stretched canvas with Te reo  
Māori Translation by Rhonda Tibble
- 3**  
*Free Te Moana Meridian proposal posters*  
2023  
Printed paper
- 4**  
*Acknowledgments* 2022  
Acrylic paint on canvas with salvaged wood frame
- 5**  
*\$51.4779925, 180.00* 2020  
Acrylic paint on stretched canvas with motor  
mechanism
- 6**  
*Te Moana Meridian* 2022  
5x channel HD video, stereo sound, 00:21:24  
**Performers & locations** (left to right):  
The Lincoln City Children's Choir (with Crystal Akins Meneses)  
Siletz tribal territories of the Oregon Coast (NE rim of the Pacific Ocean)  
**Holland Andrews** (NYC, US)  
The Portland Art Museum Crumpacker Library  
**Deryl & Ruby Thatcher** (London, UK) & **Sam Tam Ham**  
The Royal Observatory of Greenwich, London, England; and Nch'i-Wāna/  
Columbia River Basin, Washington, US  
**Mere Tokorahi Boynton** (Te Aitanga-a-Māhaki, & Ngāi Tūhoe)  
The Lower Legislative Council Chamber of the New Zealand Parliament  
Building, Aotearoa/New Zealand  
**Dr. Tru Paraha** (Ngāti Hine)  
Pākiriri, Aotearoa/New Zealand (SW rim of Te Moana-nui-ā-Kiwa/the Pacific  
Ocean)  
**Te reo Māori translation:** Rhonda Tibble  
**Costumes:** Clara Chon, Alexa Stark  
**Production:** Crystal Meneses, Grace Kook-Anderson, Lauren Waude,  
Chris Ulutupu, Roland Dahwen, Ralph Brown, Kai Tillman, Eli Haan, Creed  
Taylor, Kane Laing, Haz Forrester, Callie Day, Jaffy, Zoë Nicholson,  
Isla Howe, Jackson Hobbs



## Works in the exhibitions

continued from previous

### Tavares Strachan

7

*One Hundred More Fires* 2023

Clear tube with super blue, orange and clear gold neon, transformers

143 × 92 × 8 inches

Courtesy of the artist

### Anna Gray + Ryan Wilson Paulsen

The project *more missives* was first envisioned as a series of experimental publications in brick form distributed across the various venues of the biennial. Approaching the brick as a form of public speech and a weapon of the people, the artists have created small crowds of these heavy rectangles for fun, for contemplation, and for future use. Each brick is inscribed with text or otherwise carries a message, and they will be a recurring form, carefully placed at the various venues.

According to Anna Gray + Ryan Wilson Paulsen, “A loose brick almost always has multiple lives. A brick is a unit, a tool, an anchor. A brick is an idea, heavy in your hand. A brick is a message punctuated by the sound of glass. A brick is for commemoration, for barricades and garden beds. A brick is to protect you from the breath of wolves. A brick is to break and build something new.”

8

*more missives* 2023

Brick

## About the participants

### Sam Hamilton/Sam Tam Ham

He/him or they/them; Pākehā (Te reo Māori term for white New Zealander), b. 1984 Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland, Aotearoa New Zealand. Currently based in Portland, Oregon, located on the territories of the Chinook people.

Sam Hamilton is a working-class interdisciplinary artist / creative researcher whose practice functions more like an ecology than a discipline. A modular complex of networked transmutate. A nurturing nebula of interweaving inquiry; material, methodological, phenomenological, intercontextual.

A confluence

A garden

A song

Their practice has led them to produce work inside an active volcano crater / an astrophysics observatory atop a remote desert mountain / Sāmoa with dance artist and chief Ioane Papali'i / an anarcho-artist squat in Greece / on islands of industrial rubble in the US / a inside a Shinto shrine in Japan with Māori choreographer Cathy Livermore / a German royal palace banquet hall with director Lemi Ponifasio / and a 3-month self-directed Sound Art research project in the Amazon rainforest.

Hamilton has been a full-time practicing and working artist for 15 years, maintaining a constant state of activity producing and presented work within and across many different creative, cultural, and professional contexts in Aotearoa, Australia, North and South America, Europe, and Asia. Among other places, their work has been presented at Whitechapel Gallery (London), ISSUE Project Room (NYC), Locust Project (Miami), ARTSPACE (NZ), Extrapool (Netherlands), The Center of Contemporary Art & Culture (USA), St Paul St Gallery (NZ), Dokfest (Germany), Dunedin Public Art Gallery (NZ), the NZ International Film Festival (NZ), Wel-

continued



## About the participants

continued from previous

lington City Gallery (NZ), Brick Bay Sculpture Park (NZ), and a six-month solo exhibition at the Portland Art Museum. Among a number of significant accomplishments, Hamilton received the prestigious New Zealand Arts Foundation New Generation Award in 2011.

For much of the last decade they have also been working as a creative member of the internationally acclaimed Lemi Ponifasio/MAU Dance Company, helping produce and perform major stage works for the Louvre Museum Abu Dhabi (UAE), Brooklyn Academy of Music (US), Berliner Festspiele (Germany), Holland Festival (Amsterdam), Onassis Center (Greece), Luminato (Canada), Ruhrtriennale (Germany), the Unesco HQ (France), the New Zealand Festival (NZ) and much more.

Between 2005–2011 they created, directed and managed the FPS Live Cinema Programme for the Auckland International Film Festival, as well as the independent DIY artist festivals, the Alleluya Noise Festival, the Cinema Ascension Festival, the Feel Good Things Festival, as well as organizing many other creative community projects and events across Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland.

## Tavares Strachan

b. 1979, Nassau, Bahamas; Lives and works between New York, USA and Nassau, Bahamas

Tavares Strachan's conceptual, interdisciplinary practice activates connections between art, science, history, and cultural critique to mobilize our senses, intellect and curiosity, asking us to consider our own relationship to what is seen and what is unseen.

Themes of invisibility, displacement and loss are elemental to Strachan's investigations, which question ensconced systems and truisms by reframing canonized bodies of histories, and unsettling the conditions by which some are legitimized and others obscured. He uses the rubric of received knowledge to make networks and structures of power more visible, and to bring to light forgotten or little-known historical epics and human achievements. Aeronautical exploration, expeditions to desolate locations and extreme environments, and allegories of the human aspiration to surmount mortal limitations and adverse circumstances, are some of his settings for telling the history of the invisible.

Strachan embodies the migratory, cross-cultural, multidisciplinary, and open-ended nature of contemporary artmaking. Extensively researched, his projects are, oftentimes, monumental in scale and scope, and realized in collaboration with specialists and organizations across a wide spectrum of fields. He draws on both the resources and community of his birthplace, dividing his time between New York and Nassau in the Bahamas, where he has established the art studio and scientific research platform B. A. S. E. C. (Bahamas Aerospace and Sea Exploration Center) and OKU, a not-for-profit community project encompassing an artist residency and exhibition spaces, a scholarship scheme, and after-school creative programs.

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## About the participants

continued from previous

### Anna Gray+Ryan Wilson Paulsen

Anna Gray + Ryan Wilson Paulsen are two people who work together as one artistic entity. Together they make project-based work, using art as an extended form of study and a testing ground for ideas about language, politics and social life. Their projects are often grounded in translating between text and image and expanding the individual act of reading into visual, collective form.

Their work has appeared in many public places as well as at institutions such as The Renaissance Society (Chicago, IL); The San Diego Museum of Art (San Diego, CA); SPACES (Cleveland, OH); Locust Projects (Miami, FL); Portland Institute for Contemporary Art (Portland, OR); and on the pages of *NOON Literary Annual*. In addition to teaching, they enjoy working on the land where they live and spending time with their children.

### Christian Viveros-Fauné

Christian Viveros-Fauné is a New York-based writer and curator, ex-art dealer and ex-art fair director (VOLTA and NEXT). As a writer, he has published in, among other venues, *Art in America*, *Art in Australia*, *Artnet*, *Artnews*, *ArtNexus*, *Art Papers*, *Art Review*, *The Baffler*, *Departures*, *El Mercurio* (Chile), *Exit-Express* (Mexico), *Frieze* (UK), *Lápiz* (Spain), *The New Yorker*, *The Paris Review Daily*, *The New York Press* (where he was the weekly art critic between 1998–2003), and the *Village Voice*.

Viveros-Fauné has also contributed essays for various catalogs of contemporary art, among them *Guillermo Kuitca* (Hauser & Wirth), *Vitamin D3: New Perspectives in Drawing* and *Vitamin T: Threads and Textiles in Contemporary Art* (both Phaidon), *Zhao Gang: The Road to Serfdom* (Ullens Center for Contemporary Art, Beijing, China); *Angel Otero: Everything and Nothing* (Contemporary Art Museum Houston), *Neo Rauch* (David Zwirner); *Authentic/Ex-centric: Conceptualism in Contemporary African Art* (Biennale di Venezia 49); *Lisa Yuskavage* (Museo Tamayo de Arte Contemporaneo, Mexico City); *Beuys and Beyond* (Deutsche Bank Collection traveling exhibition); *Bronx Calling: The First Aim Biennial* (Bronx Museum, NY).

Between 2001–2020 he curated, among many other exhibitions: *The Neighbors: Slideshows for America* and *Life During Wartime: Art in the Age of Coronavirus* (USFCAM, Tampa, FL); *Gran Sur: Contemporary Chilean Art From the Engel Collection* (Alcalá 31, Madrid, Spain); *Zhao Gang: History Painting* (Pérez Art Museum of Miami, Miami, FL); *Miki Kratsman: People I Met; Camino de Servidumbre II*; and *Superflex: The Corrupt Show and the Speculative Machine* (MAC Quinta Normal, Santiago, Chile); *Jorge Tacla: All That is Solid Melts into Air* (Fundación CorpArtes, Santiago, Chile); *Angel Otero: Elegies* (Bronx Museum, New York, NY); and

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## About the participants

continued from previous

*Richard Mosse: The Devil You Know* (CAAM Atlantic Modern Art Center, Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Spain), as well as hundreds of gallery exhibitions in the U.S. Viveros-Fauné also curated (with Jota Castro) *Dublin Contemporary 2011*, the inaugural Irish biennial of contemporary art.

Viveros-Fauné was awarded the 2010 Andy Warhol Foundation Arts Writers Grant, named inaugural Critic-in-Residence at the Bronx Museum for 2010–11 and served on the 2012 committee to select Chile's representative to the 55th Venice Biennale. In 2017, he appeared in Barry Avrich's award-winning documentary *Blurred Lines: Deconstructing the World of Contemporary Art*. In 2018 he received a grant from Chile's National Fund for the Development of Culture and the Arts to organize the exhibition *Transformers* at Washington D.C.'s Art Museum of the Americas. In that same year, he was also hired as Curator-at-Large for USF's Contemporary Art Museum. Since then he has organized six exhibitions for USFCAM (and counting).

As a writer and critic, Viveros-Fauné has edited and published six books in English and Spanish, most recently *Social Forms: A Short History of Art and Politics*, with David Zwirner Books. A collection of his criticism, *Greatest Hits: Arte en Nueva York 2001–2011*, was published in 2011 by Editorial Metales Pesados in Chile, followed in 2017 by *Greatest Hits II: Arte en Nueva York 2001–2015*, published by Spain's CENDEAC. He has been a Lecturer at Yale University and Pratt Institute, as well as a visiting critic at NYU, Rhode Island School of Design and Holland's Rietveld Academie. He was named Kennedy Family Visiting Scholar at the University of South Florida for the academic year 2018–2019.

He currently serves as Curator-at-Large at the University of South Florida Contemporary Art Museum and writes for *The Art Newspaper* and the *Village Voice* 2.0

**Social Forms: Art As Global Citizenship** is curated by Christian Viveros-Fauné and organized by Converge 45 and its institutional partners as part of its 2023 citywide exhibition. With more than fifty artists presenting work at over fifteen venues spanning the city of Portland, the exhibition centers on the idea of art-as-a-social-form: contemporary and historical artworks that ask us to consider global power shifts taking place in contemporary society.

**Converge 45** supports Portland's creative ecosystem by promoting the work of artists & organizations in the Pacific Northwest and improving access to broader art discourses within our communities.

**Te Moana Meridian** is funded by the New Zealand Arts Council, Oregon Arts Commission, and The Ford Family Foundation, and supported by Activate Arts Now, Creative Capital, The N.M. Bodecker Foundation, The Speaker of the House of the New Zealand Parliament, The Portland Art Museum, The Audio Foundation, with additional support from Converge 45, Activate Arts Now, Grace Kook-Anderson, Sou'wester Lodge, Lincoln City Community Center, Millers Ark, Artspace Aotearoa, Vā Moana Pacific Spaces Research Cluster, PICA, Creative Capital, Transmediale Berlin, *Drain* Magazine, NZ Embassy in Washington DC, Adriel Luis, Melissa Laing, Diane Blomfield, Alex Hebler, sidony o'neal, Rear Admiral Roy Clare CBE, DL; Ashton Georaras, Daniel Gnu, Vaimaila Urale, Moana Peterson, Melinda Kawalska and the Hollywood Theater, John Niekrasz, Avantika Bawa, John Akira Harrold, Ben Evans James, Mack McFarland, Jabon Mitas, Adriel Luis, Lana Lopesi, Mark Williams, Janet McAllister, Van Pham, Tyson Campbell, and many of Sam Hamilton/Sam Tam Ham's incredible friends.

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Oregon Center for Contemporary Art recognizes that our programming is held on the traditional lands of the Chinook, Cowlitz, and many other Nations. We take this opportunity to offer respectful recognition to the Native communities in our region.

Please take a moment to consider the many legacies of violence, displacement, migration, and colonization, as well as the continual displacement of Native people by the government of the United States. Oregon Contemporary, as part of our Equity Statement and Plan, agrees to recognize the inequities inherent in our culture and take action to dismantle them.

Join us in acknowledging the contributions Indigenous peoples have made, and continue to make, to our region and beyond. Text (907) 312-5085 or visit [native-land.ca](http://native-land.ca) to find out whose land am I on?

## Oregon Contemporary

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