As a liquid continent, Oceania images itself through the ocean, te Moana-Nui-a-Kiwa: a connective space of currents, vortices, drifts, suspensions, sediments, tides, foams and flows that resists fixity, performing in-flux. A collection of island nations, Oceania is particularly sensitive to the effects of anthropogenic and highly politicized climate change: the sea warms, acidifies and plasticizes with levels rising and storm energies intensifying to threaten ecologies and economies –social, political and architectural structures – as well as geographical limits. Yet there is a sea-change afoot as communities affirm their place in the ecosystem of the planet and adopt ecologically sensitive materials, practices, systems and infra-structures ... so our contemporary cultures shift.

The Oceanic Performance Biennial (OPB) was set up in 2013 as an emergent platform to engage in critiques and re-imaginings of the region through performance operating as a multi-modal tool that attracts, connects and communicates in playful or affective ways to publicly foreground pressing ecological issues. Following Isle$\&$, the inaugural event in Auckland, New Zealand, the 2015 OPB focused on the sea as a performatve site and complex changing ecology through events, installations, film, panels and papers that addressed the ecological, sociocultural, and geopolitical nature of the Pacific as a region within the global imaginary and contemporary site of change. As the Oceanic region’s contribution to PSI’s Fluid States, OPB 2015 linked into an internationally dispersed body of performance work addressing site-specific themes of the unstable, mutable, adaptable, and fluid.

Sea-change: Performing in a Fluid Continent asked how Pacific-oriented performance studies and practices can disturb, provoke and extend thought and action in relation to the seascape and it’s attendant social and biotic communities.

Over 3 days, Rarotonga (the island and community) hosted a series of public events, in which performance acted as a lens through which to "see change" via a public presencing in which the ocean was explored as origin, immersive medium, life-support system and mirror. Through the Cook Island concept of ta’okota’anga, the event gathered together local and international performers, activists, academics and communities to discuss Oceanic ecologies, utilizing an event dramaturgy that mobilized participants across the 3 vaka (tribal districts of Te Au O Tonga, Takitimu and Puiakura) that ring the island as well as from the sea to shore and on to the highlands.

Commencing with a reef sub voyage of the harbor at dawn and concluding with a twilight beach umu (earth oven meal); each day of the OPB was themed around issues of local fluxes and flows (in Avarua the urban place of meetings and partings), dreaming a pacific imaginary (on idyllic Muri Lagoon where the sun rises and beach weddings proliferate) and divining real ground (in and around Highland Paradise Cultural Centre on the West Coast where the sun sets).

OPB founder and director Amanda Yates worked with co-directors, Dorita Hannah and Cook Island artist, Ani On’Neill, who co-curated the event as a means of coming to know a place through meetings with locals and engagement with multiple sites such as lagoon, islet, spring, peace garden, jetty, community hall, tropical park, limestone ruin, paradisical tourist centre and an abandoned hotel as well as an old cinema, film location beach-shack and the Palace of Takitumu’s Pa Marie Ariki.

This event-in-motion required walking, bussing, boating, dancing, feasting, paddling, swimming and even some diving. Each day the string of performance events were interjected with local panels and paper sessions that provided moments of discussion and contemplation over pressing ecological issues that belied the seemingly idyllic surroundings. This would not have been possible if it weren’t for the local knowledge, contacts and family of Ani O’Neill who proved a tireless hostess.

Invited keynotes were arts collective Local Time (NZ/Aotearoa) and performance artist, Latai Taumoepeau (Tonga/Australia), with local contributors including Cook Islands’ climate change advisor, Dr Teina Rongo, ecological activists and Master Navigators who have sailed canoes across the Pacific using traditional practices.

... Ocean is us. (Epeli Hau’ofa)
OneOne

The process of shifting energy to matter, and matter to energy is expressed in this multimedia work, created by Daniel Belton of Good Company Arts with Janessa Dufty, Richard Nunns, Nigel Jenkins, Jac Grenfell and Simon Kaan. Utilizing sound, projected image, movement and the song of ancient river stones, this live installation expresses a sense of an ancient archetype being unearthed through real-world experience that is timeless and contemporary. Projected onto a sail slung vertically in a beach-side shack, OneOne was accompanied by the sound of waves as its audiences sat watching on the sand after sunset.
Pacific Sisters: (Re)constructing Paradise

The Pacific Sisters, who have been have been at the vanguard of Polynesian fashion, arts and performance activism for the past 20 years, welcomed all manu'ir /guests into the (re)constructed paradise of Te Vara Nui Cultural Centre - using sound, installation, adornment, spoken word, and motion. This site-specific activation brought the together artists Rosanna Raymond, Ani O’Neill, Aroha Rawson and Henry Taripo who, weaving time and space through their bodies, created shared moments via their particular ethnographic burlesque aesthetic. Leading the audience around the lush gardens, their various installations and performances reiterated their catch cry... No Fish, No Future.
**Pacific Sisters: (Re)constructing Paradise**

The Pacific Sisters, who have been at the vanguard of Polynesian fashion, arts and performance activism for the past 20 years, welcomed all manu’ir / guests into the (re)constructed paradise of Te Vara Nui Cultural Centre - using sound, installation, adornment, spoken word, and motion. This site-specific activation brought together artists Rosanna Raymond, Ani O’Neill, Aroha Rawson and Henry Taripo who, weaving time and space through their bodies, created shared moments via their particular ethnographic burlesque aesthetic. Leading the audience around the lush gardens, their various installations and performances reiterated their catch cry... *No Fish, No Future.*
Auckland-based arts collective Local Time extended their practice of site-responsive actions, chartering a tourist vessel for participants to visit sea life habitats in the Muri lagoon. The journey was framed by a conversation among members of the local Muri community on the customary maintenance of this environment and the forces shaping its future development.
Island Bride
Performance designer, Dorita Hannah (NZ), teamed with artist Linda Erceg (Aus) to create Island Bride, an ambiguous and spectral figure guiding OPB participants through the Rarotongan landscape over three days. As a spectral shapeshifter, the bride refers to touristic beach weddings and the drifting ghost nets of the Pacific that entrap sea creatures, flotsam and jetsam. This postcolonial figure whose train and veil are constructed from Erceg’s plastic biomorphs, is played by local artists, June Baudinet, Bree Acheson and Henry Taripo, who helped shape the events that took place in Avarua, on Muri Beach and in the site of the ruined Sheraton.
See-Level

Amanda Yate’s installation, See-Level, performs sea-level rise, foregrounding an abstracted future now, through a sequenced staging of sea-level indices. Sited in an abandoned touristic ruin, the Sheraton Rarotonga, the intervention prefigures the eventual colonisation of Pacific islands by a warming, rising ocean. While anthropogenic climate change has been forced by developed nations' fossil fuel usage, small Pacific Islands are on the front lines of a massive sea-change, with sea-level rise threatening island integrity while warming, acidifying and plasticising oceans degrade the customary food source of the moana, the ocean.
Local Time: Puna o te Vai Marau  
11th July 2015 1630 (-1000). 
This visit to Puna o te Vai Marau was based on Local Time’s continuing enquiries into 
puna wai (traditional water sources) and the issues of sovereignty connected to them. The visit, in consultation with 
ta’unga Tangianau Tuaputa, undertook a conversation on knowledge, indigenous self-determination and intergenerational transfer of resource management rights.
Tangai ‘one’one

NZ-based Tongan performance artist, Kalisolaite ‘Uhila, slowly walks counterclockwise around the main road circling Rarotonga Island, carrying a 10kg sack of sand that escapes through a hole in the corner. Countering the European hourglass this marker of time marks the place through which ‘Uhila moves, while he wears a black tupenu, taovala and sandals as a sign of respect for the Cook Island people and as a marker of his Tongan identity. The work comments on the intense labour in the plantations, or fishing and finding resources to sustain one’s family in a time of dwindling local resources and environmental challenges.
In Paradisum

Sound-based artist, Olivia Webb, Sound-based artist, Olivia Webb, chants the Latin Catholic Requiem Mass antiphon "In paradisum" (into paradise) as she walks in and out of sea at Sunset Beach. While her voice work connects musical traditions with space and site, cultural interchange and the history of Christian Missionaries in the Pacific, this performance cannot ignore the pressing issue of rising sea levels faced by Pacific Island Nations. It therefore speaks (or sings) to a loss of culture, as the sound is absorbed and washed away by the ocean.
Stitching (up) the Sea

Latai Taumoepeau’s durational performance and meditation, explores the fragility and vulnerability of the physical environment and intangible cultural heritage of the Moana. Wielding an ‘ike (mallet) traditionally used to beat mulberry bark into large ceremonial cloth called tapa or ngatu; glass waste material sourced locally is smashed into a mass of glistening shards. Returning glass to sand, Taumoepeau empties the glittering contents of each woven white plastic sack, typically utilized as sand bags, and wears them around her neck like ragged garlands (lei).