

Emily Parr, born 1992, Tāmaki Makaurau, (Ngāi Te Rangi, Moana, Pākehā)

Through the time spiral: 'Oli Ula

2021

HD Video

12 minutes, 30 seconds

My Dearest Minna (letter)

2021

HD Video

6 minutes, 15 seconds

Owing to recent happenings (telegrams)

2021

HD Video

6 minutes, 15 seconds

Through the time spiral: 'Oli Ula remembers the lives and home of the artist's great-great-grandparents. Their home was named 'Oli Ula after a garland strung with the sweet fragrant red flower of the Samoan 'oli tree and was located close to the gallery at 9 Eden Crescent, near where the spring Te Wai Ariki emerges.

Built in 1903 and remaining until 1976, 'Oli Ula was the home of Gustav Kronfeld, a Jewish merchant, his wife Louisa Silveira of Lotofaga (Sāmoa) and their ten children. The house had two stories and twenty-something rooms and the walls were adorned with taonga and measina. Narrating the voiceover, Parr's film uses a su'ifefiloi methodology, reflecting the Samoan tradition of making flower garlands in which a mixture of flowers are sewn together and strung into a necklace, an ula.¹

The film uses memories of Moe and Tony Kronfeld along with a hand-drawn map of the house by Olive Solomon (née Kronfeld) to describe 'Oli Ula and its occupants. Remaining faithful to Moe and Tony's words, the artist brings them into the present tense and links them with her own—stringing the flowers into the ula. Parr guides us through the house, her detailed descriptions of each room aiding our own visualisations as we imagine each space—the plentiful parlour stocked with food, a

¹ Albert L. Refiti, "Mavae and Tofiga: Spatial Exposition of the Samoan Cosmogony and Architecture" (The Auckland University of Technology: 2014), 38-42. Lana Lopesi, "Moana Cosmopolitan Imaginaries: Toward an Emerging Theory of Moana Art" (The Auckland University of Technology: 2021), 42-43.

rocking chair occupied only by the father and the display of portraits of two Rangatira Māori by Lindauer. Every description conjures a picture of the physical and cultural environment of the house and the lives of the family. The artist's narration expands to that of a silent onlooker witnessing the activities occurring in the household. Recalling when Louisa encounters an intruder in the house, Parr speaks directly to the viewer stating "It's okay, we can stay here in the hallway. Louisa and the boys have this under control."

Central to the narrative is the experience of Gustav who during the First World War was interned on Te Motu-a-Ihenga under suspicion of aiding the Germans, spending several years separated from his family. Documentation of correspondence between Gustav and his family, postal censors and military authorities are explored in *My Dearest Minna (letters)* and *Owing to recent happenings (telegrams)*. Through these three films, Parr weaves together multiple time periods, locations and generations of the artist's family. Displayed in the former telephone booth for the building, Parr acknowledges the symbolism of this space to her project. By utilising the booth as a kind of communicative portal, able to send and receive messages across space and time, Parr imagines the booth as a means of conveyance with Te Wai Ariki a witness to these unfolding histories.

Courtesy of the artist