

## **Tania Short - Artist**

The atoll itself grew out of.. well the whole idea came out of our love of mapping. And I quite like the architectural drawings looking at those you could see the elevations and things for the grass and for the roof out there and wanted to make that come into the piece so it's not just flat.

Subtlety was a huge driver for us because there was so much happening with the other works and stuff, you know, and so you know making it sit back but making it be respectful of what's around it, really.

My family, on both sides, are Rarotongan and Maori – mixed heritage. And I've sort of done some work in the past looking at the direct line from East Cape up to Rarotonga and how historically, that was a main highway so we took that section and in order to get it to so you would get it that you were in the deep ocean, you had that difference between the rough and the smooth so you would get that feeling of movement as much as possible and then the cut images that are in there, on the top, on the surface of that, are more our idea of this accidental and deliberate voyages because of this map that Marty found in the library was talking about all the logged trips that they could find of Polynesians traveling inter-island and how most of them were accidental voyages and hardly any of them were deliberate. And we thought that was quite an interesting sounding idea and how do you know what's accidental and what's deliberate and when you come to the University to study you never know really where it's going to take you.

When you're doing a community work which involves so many different people and is representative of them all it's quite hard to do something that is specific just to yourself so the atoll kind of represents everyone by being one island but not anything particular or anything specific. Practically we thought it would be good to have somewhere people could sit and meet when they come into the area and there are many stories I have gotten from my father and my mum's side of the family.

In Rarotonga, in the house my father was brought up in, they have a rock in the middle of the lounge and the whole house is built around it. And they said it was like the meeting place of the spirits on the island. And I listen to Maori stories and they talk about bringing these talisman rocks with them on the original voyages in the canoes and how those were placed in maraes when they were built. And in Rarotonga, an outcropping of rock is actually called a marae. So I don't know whether the idea has changed and the building has become the name here but to me it's significant of all those things.