CREATIVE RESPONDERS

In Conversation with Latai Taumoepeau
Season 4, Episode 11
Podcast Transcript

Welcome to Creative Responders in Conversation, I'm Scotia Monkivitch from the Creative Recovery Network, and this is our monthly interview series where we hear from creative leaders, disaster management experts, artists and community members who are strengthening disaster management through creativity.

Today I'm pleased to share with you my conversation with Latai Taumoepeau.

Latai is a multidisciplinary artist whose practice is grounded in the traditions of her homelands, the Island Kingdom of Tonga and her birthplace Sydney, land of the Gadigal people.

Latai's practice cross-pollinates ancient and everyday temporal practice using mediums like performance, dance, installation and social engagement.

Over the past decade, her work has regularly explored the impact of climate change in the Pacific and the looming possibility of dispossession that many island communities face.

I first got to know Latai through 'Refuge', a project that regular listeners to the podcast will be familiar with - it was a five year project led by Arts House in Naarm / Melbourne that brought together artists, community members and the emergency management community to explore community preparedness for a range of different disaster scenarios. Latai was one of the leading artists in the Refuge program and you'll hear us refer to it in our conversation along with some updates of how that work has evolved.

Please enjoy my conversation with Latai Taumoepeau

Scotia: Welcome to creative responders, Latai. I'm on Jaggera Turrbal Country in Meanjin today. Where are you joining us from?

Latai: Hi Scotia. I am talking to you from Gadigal country and the Eora Nation also known as Sydney.

Scotia: Well, welcome. It's so great to catch up with you on the Creative Responder's podcast. I've been a great admirer of your work for a long time Latai, so I particularly like that combination of performance and social engagement that's so powerful through your work. I mean, you often refer to your work under the fairly broad term of performance artist. I just wanted to start by asking how you describe your practice and what it is that you do through your work, or what's the kind of drive that carries you.

Latai: Yeah, I think. Thank you. I love talking to you Scotia about it because I know you also understand performance as well. And so I feel like there's always a clarity in our conversation around how that sits inside the greater idea of action and climate change and environmental work.

But the way I describe my practice is by using a term from my own cultural heritage, which is faiva and faiva is body-centred performance. But “va” is our word for space and “fai” is to do space. So my practice of working with composition and choreographic principles is how I relate to working with my self, my body inside the space that is the environment and I don't really differentiate that performative practice or that performance art practice as something separate to how I perform my responsibility to Country or the environment or the planet. To me, it's all sits into the same world of responsibility.

So when I trained in contemporary dance, I had to reassess how I could enjoy making work, but also relate it to ways of expressing myself actually in in ways that I can work with the body in the way that I enjoy and see value in making work through movement and dance and poetry as well as it kind of relating to protest, resistance work and the campaign of of understanding what is going on in in the environment and how humans are creating the conditions that are making it very difficult for all lifeforms to exist harmoniously or maybe symmetrically. So yeah.

Scotia: It's about living performing life, isn't it, really the intersection of where you meet all those different influences or spaces.

Latai: Yeah, I think it's, you know, from the world of performance where we think about how we stage ideas and stage, you know, the question of like, how does social drama inform stage drama? You know, and to really think about that and think about how an artist who makes work around performance and around movement, abstract movement and design and the use of materials, how that can be part of the bigger conversation

and not something that's separate or or how to think about the urgency or how to use practice inside the the urgency of of the impact of climate change on lots of different communities has been the question that I've been asking and why I've had to adapt to my practice in a in a way to be able to just live, live life in a way that's constantly asking those questions and creating more questions that enable us to continue to figure out how we're going to do things. How are we going to do what we need to do inside the conditions of of climate change, that is getting dangerous, becoming more and more dangerous for more and more people. But I think for myself as a as a Tongan person, a Tongan woman, an Indigenous woman from the region of the Pacific, utilising what I have available to me has been at the forefront of how I've been able to do or perform the things that I feel are necessary and are also a way into such a complex series of structures, you know, whether they be social, political, environmental, spiritual.

Scotia: Well, it's like your work is the conversation, isn't it - the conversation that needs to be had. So is that how you see the role of the artist? Like you've got so many roles that you carry out in your life and they're all they're all seeded with each other, but the role of the artist more broadly. Is that how you understand it? A kind of a process of yeah, eliciting conversation or provoking conversation?

Latai: Yeah. Yeah, exactly. But also a conversation where I get to also live inside a cultural system of my own that's not separate to, you know, because I, as a settler, I, you know, want to understand my responsibility as well as a settler and how to how to understand living on Country when it's not, you know, how do I connect to Country with the same principles that First Nations people connect to Country, but also understanding my responsibility as the settler, but also understanding how I also have, my own land that I want, that I am trying to defend as well, and using the power that I have as an Australian to do that. So, you know, various levels of privilege come into play as well. And that it has to be. I mean, for my practice, one of the things that I had to really try and reconcile for myself was, how do I use the privilege that I have as an Australian to to generate awareness about an invisible community in the Pacific who have not contributed to the carbon emissions that are part of the big problem that we're experiencing. And so it's only through my first, you know, my Indigenous lens that I can do that. And it doesn't it shouldn't be a way of being that is after-hours outside of the way that I generate income. That has to be the same thing, one and the same thing. Also, the way that I perceive a major thing that I, I already started to grieve and mourn as an Indigenous person is if I, if I'm not practising my own Indigeneity, that is, those are the first things that go in, you know when I when. If I think about, you know, sea levels rising and, you know, the the possession of the land by the ocean is one thing, but the practice of the communities that exist on those lands are also things that that go that's that's the perspective that

Scotia: the cultural lineage

Latai: the cultural lineage I can use in my practice yeah

Scotia: One of your performance pieces that unpacks this complexity for you was a piece called Repatriate, which I heard you describe in an interview as a distress dance. This is a piece where you use the choreography of different Pacific dances to perform an urgent distress call that took place in a tank of water around you, which rises over a period of, I think it's 90 minutes. It was presented at the Auckland Art Gallery as part of exhibition called Declaration: a Pacific Feminist Agenda. I was I was wondering if you could talk a bit about the intersection that exists, how how you were kind of having that conversation through the work. And it's stressing not just an environmental but a humanitarian issue around climate change, but also your your framing of gender and feminism and responsibility and all those layers that you hold so closely in all of your work.

Latai: Yeah, I think Repatriate is a really good example for me to talk about because it looks at the relationship around anthropology and the region of the Pacific. You know, the title Repatriate kind of talks to ideas of when bodies are returned to places or objects inside the world of anthropology, where do they go when they're being returned to their place of origin and inside the Pacific, inside climate change, when we're looking at the social justice issue of displacement and loss and damage you know, the title reflects these ideas of where do you return things or people after impact of of climate change if that land is no longer there and it forces us to think about, well, where did it go and why is it not there anymore, you know. So it's it's trying to look at that larger conversation around displacement. But then the use of of dance, which is something that I've spent time doing, is learning dances from different Pacific Island nations who are, you know, were at the forefront of climate change and sea level rise, you know, a decade ago and now other places have joined the Pacific in that position. It's looking at the dances from places are what you know, of the narratives of places in the stories. That's the function of dance, of movement in lots of cultures whether it be folk dance which I've also done in different European contexts as well is learnt dances from different places like Greece and Germany.

Scotia: It's how your body resonates. It's how your body resonates on the earth, isn't it, when you're moving? Again, rhythm connecting new rhythm.

Latai: And also performing motifs and gestures that come from the landscapes of these places. You know, gestures that you perform with your hands come may or may come from plant life or animal life that are from that are specific to place. And you know, these

are that what make up an abstract sequence of of gestures that become a movement that become a dance, that become a choreography. And so the choice to perform these dances from these various Pacific Island nations are an embodiment of history from places. And so to place that moving body inside the conditions of a tank where it's being filled with water is to talk about that submergence of of place of various places.

And what's interesting about those dances, when that that particular exhibition in in Auckland Aotearoa in New Zealand is you know they are part of the the region that we know as the Pacific or the Moana. And so the audiences of, of New Zealand, of Aotearoa can read that language of dance. So it was very different to perform that in that context, you know, in contrast to performing it here in, in Sydney, you know, it's a part of a blood works festival because the reading of the movement is important. And I think this is what happens when we, when we visit museums, we look at various objects that have been collected or stolen from different places, and we can read so much, only so much of some of those those things. But people from those places, they they have a different connection to these things, you know, whether it be dance or sculpture or or textiles or, you know, a carving, you know. So for me, I wanted to align this loss of culture, which hasn't happened yet in an entirely I mean, of course, we're always evolving culture in lots of different ways, but within the context of climate change and in the the speed that it's happening, we we do we Indigenous people from the region lose more than other people because we're not just talking about place, we're talking about everything that holds true to that place which is recorded and documented in our dance, in our language, in our songs, all of that kind of science that that is embedded in that, that we call art, but actually, that's just the way of life of many people, many First Nations people in in various places. So for me, that work ‘Repatriate’ is is trying to look at a very complex series of ideas that exist in you know, in the way that people experience our culture from the region, but also how we we experience our culture. And so, yeah, the, the, the materials, the chosen materials in ‘Repatriate’ was, you know, I think it was firstly it was made as a, as a dance screen work. That's what it was. And what I was trying to explore is how do I, how do I convey something so urgent using screen, you know, and at that time in my practice, it was, you know, I was more about the live performance, you know. So that's really what helped me push that idea to to understand the vulnerability and the urgency and use water filling a tank as a way of marking or conveying that urgency and watching that submergence of a culture through the body performing, you know, the the dances of various places from the region that I that I had learnt in my lifetime. You know, not only I didn't learn them for that video work, they actually they exist in my body, they still exist in my body. And those are, you know, so the value of, yeah, lineage and, and intangible cultural heritage, which is different to objects that are collected from, from those same places and stored in museums.

Scotia: Well, it's interesting to you talk you talk about that idea of culture evolving as it does over time and in some ways is, you know, I'm kind of curious to say some people talk about on some of your work, I know from your talks about “practicing the future”. So in some ways, how do you take this urgency of conversation into practice in the future that still retains those cultural resonances or continues the storylines of of that in your body? Or your transference of that to your community conversation or, you know, because the reality is that we are evolving very quickly and to hold against all impacts of climate and colonisation the stories, is the kind of point of power, isn't it?

Latai: Yeah. And we don't have the time to sit around and, and have these big stories around how we do things, what we're going to do. You know, I think this is the importance of, of works like Refuge, where it was an artist-led project in work artist working with non-arts and trying to understand how we can have these big conversations and figure out ways of creating preparedness for for various communities, particularly in urban environments. And so one of the things that was really instrumental for me is how to bring these these ideas into into action where where we understand that things are changing very quickly and we, too, need to be prepared. And so I think one of the things that I that I reflected on whilst working on on Refuge was, you know, having visited various Pacific Island nations and seeing things like evacuation plans, you know, on islands and really they're so simple they. You know, they are literally - move up to a higher space. You know, when you isolated, when you're surrounded by water and a tsunami may be coming or you'll or a cyclone, you know, is happening there. And we don't have the in in various Pacific islands, there isn't the infrastructure that we have in developed countries like Australia is, yeah emergency services. You know, they these are these are not things that exist well, actually they do exist, but they

Scotia: They exist as a community network isn’t it?

Latai: Yeah, exactly. They're built into the community

Scotia: So that’s a long lines of resilience in those relationships

Latai: And they do they just get activated into those plans and so I wanted to explore that, you know, through Refuge. And so when I connected with the state emergency services in Footscray, it was really great to kind of observe how they do things and devise a training circuit that enabled communities to work through this circuit that, you know, that gave them ideas of what they might expect in a flood or a heat wave or and what they could do and and how they might just start those conversations with, well,

state emergency services start that conversation with with communities on a on a weekend, you know, so so.

Scotia: So the circuit second you talking about was like an exercise program using kind of the tools of preparedness and response and recovery - water bottles…la la la.

Latai: Yeah.

Scotia: And so that's something that you've continued to explore back in your hometown of Sydney, correct?

Latai: Yeah, I you know, it was so valuable doing it in, Naarm. And so I really wanted to what something that struck me was as was how children responded to that training circuit. Like they just wanted to get in there and do it and in one part of the training circuit. I had some bicycles that were engineered to freeze one single block of ice, you know. And so when the the scouts were invited to come and participate, the kids were like riding these bikes and getting really tired, but were calling out to everybody else in the room, to somebody come and take over and, you know, we have to do this together and that was exactly the response I wanted, was, you know, this collective action to help do this one activity. And so when I brought this to Sydney, I was able to collaborate with the the City of Sydney, New South Wales SES unit, which was next door to PAC - the Centre of Emerging and Experimental Art Centre. So it was really great to create that connection between these two organisations who share a courtyard and then devise and develop this, the children's version of the circuit during a school holiday program. And so we, you know, I also I really wanted to understand how to, how to do this with children because this is the, the reality is that they're the ones already witnessing this world of emergency with increased disasters. But it doesn't it doesn't necessarily mean they know what is going on specifically. And we're seeing with children doing these really fantastic movements of the of the strikes, school strikes really great. But, you know, I was thinking how do how do we make sure that they actually know how to that they're actually becoming empowered in in in various ways. And so the
Scotia: Well, understanding the understanding that it's something to be lived because we we are living it rather than seeing it as an opportunity to join your friends. It's actually living, living the experience and learning the skills that are required to be able to survive.
Latai: That's right. And you know, when you have children, they're so wonderful because some of them have some children have already experienced things like floods. And so when you create the conditions for them to share that information amongst themselves as well through, you know, an embodiment of understanding the difference between moving quickly and waiting for a long period of time. You know, there's certain principles in movement that enable them to understand that without only intellectualising

it and discussing it as something that's so foreign to them, but something that they can understand in their body is moving super, super slow or running super, super fast, you know, carrying things. And these these kinds of conditions are things that they understand or they may experience, but they may not have the capacity to when it's happening, to really understand what's happening inside their bodies, you know, the feelings and the sensations of, lots of noise or coloured uniforms that mean different things. So being able to prepare them and them, you know, be able to have some agency inside these situations that where, different communities are already experiencing is, is part of what I really wanted to use my artwork to to do is to yeah to enable communities to be empowered by the information that's available and being able to identify some of these circumstances in advance. And so they yeah, they, so they can feel that they have some control over over things. So, you know, things that I, I've known, I've learnt from the Creative Recovery Network over the past, this is the amount of time it takes to recover. And one of the things that we do in the in the training circuit is exactly that. Like there's this one exercise that comes from body weather, which is to move at one millimetre per second, you know, which is just. Yeah, it's something that when you, when you invite people to, to embody that concept, suddenly this idea of waiting and you know understanding this really stretched out time.

Scotia: Time of breath.

Latai: It's so powerful. But it's not something that it's something that you can utilise in preparedness for people to have a concept of what it means, different, different modes that, yeah, a preparedness can can offer, you know, people that don't, don't expect things to to happen to them. But those of us that are constantly inside the the reading of or the listening to different conditions of impacts that have been going on or are going on

Scotia: But so, so important to have that process when you're not in peak stress because you don't learn when you're in peak stress. So to be able to do this process when you have the time to assimilate the knowledge or the learnings, so important, isn't it.

Latai: So important. And you know, from that particular exercise, the children were born between the age of 9 to 13 and when they were doing move at one millimetre per second, they started shuffling their feet flat on the ground and they were like shuffling them back and forward. And it was much slower than what they were doing in the other parts of the circuit. But when I took them out on a food and medicine walk with SES, and that was led by a First Nations person who was showing them different edible things on the street, they realised that when the SES person talked to them about if a

power line drops like they suddenly they're in a hot zone. And the children said, Oh, we already did this in the circuit. We know that we can't lift our feet off the floor and we move like this. You know, they drag their feet and they don't lift them and lose contact with the surface because they they've embodied that and they know where to apply it now, you know. So yeah, they don't they're not when they if they find themselves in that situation, they won't be in extreme stress. They will have already embodied this kind of idea and this concept so they can apply it if, you know, if they think about it. And that to me is, is where dance movement composition becomes a really valuable method of relating some of this work that, you know, doesn't necessarily filter down through reports and, you know, diagrams and and things like that. And so,

Scotia: As you say it's embodied in that process.

Latai: Yeah. Yeah. And so because, you know, SES do things these they do this stuff already, you know, but somehow it doesn't it's not always getting through to people. And so this is just a really interesting way to connect communities to what's already available as well.

Scotia: So your idea of connection, this kind of lived conversation is prevalent through all your work. But I'm interested to hear about the piece that you're doing in the housing estate in Waterloo. I'm interested to hear about a current piece that you're doing in the housing estates in Waterloo. Can you tell us a bit about that project?

Latai: Yes. The project in Waterloo was a collaboration with with other artists and it was called Kaiga Commonwealth. And so it was tried to what we offered were three different kind of three different performative concepts from a specific perspective. Waterloo was quite interesting because there are two towers in Waterloo that's part of a housing commission estate. And these two towers have Pacific names. One is Matavai and the other Turanga. And these these names have come about because the two buildings acknowledge that these places that Captain James Cook had travelled to. And so I find it really interesting because each level of the housing estate is named after various Pacific Island nations. And so I was viewing them as island nations that are stacked on top of each other, which contrasts like a more horizontal plane of how Pacific Islands are situated across the Pacific Ocean, which is the way that we Pacific people perceive it as a continent, the ocean continent, and that the island nations are part of that ocean. But one of the things that it's it's still a work that is is in progress in understanding how connection between people who reside in those buildings, they have the name of our all of our island nations, but they don't have the way of our people. And so for me, I wanted to understand how we might extend, rather than just in name, but generate the culture of connectivity with those communities that exist, which are who are primarily elderly

and senior citizens. So those Twin towers were actually opened in 1972 and by Queen Elizabeth. And so another kind of idea concept that has been floating around for me was that there were two other queens that opened up that building, and one was the queen of Tonga and the other was the queen of New Zealand. So these are and these are folk lore that I don't think they're true, but I think they've been very a very interesting part of how I've understood those two buildings. But they are also going to be demolished and they're going to relocate all of those residents or they've been trying to relocate those residents to other places because it's you know, it's in Redfern, you know, it's Waterloo. It's it has, I think, close proximity to the CBD. And so this idea of displacement is something that I'm very familiar as a Pacific person. And so I find it very interesting that First Nations communities and senior communities and low income communities reside in these buildings that have Pacific Island nation names. And I wanted to kind of understand ways of working through cultural frameworks to further their connectivity that they have with each other in that building that also enables us to look at the displacement of these communities and parallel that to how I feel.

Scotia: Well it's an extraordinary parallel, isn't it? Extraordinary parallel to sociocultural history.

Latai: Yeah. And reflecting on the on the pandemic, I mean, which we're still experiencing but is also climate related. But thinking about the communities that exist that resided in, in the Housing Commission's in very close proximity to the Doherty Institution and thinking about the vulnerability of very particular communities inside these urgent times is also something that is just really necessary for us to always keep in the foreground of our minds I think that the way that we experience emergency events is always going to be a vulnerable community

Scotia [00:43:08] Well it's interesting, isn't it, when you kind of like, that project in some way is sort of like under a spotlight, isn't it? But it's about relationship, but it's also about how you, how you frame your relationship to opportunity and position. So we, we have this opportunity that a climate crisis gives us to wake up and see truths and have a kind of real look at where and who we are and where we're heading and how we want to live into the future. And like how do we use this crisis as an opportunity for change? Change that is about collective nurture and thinking about ourselves into this broader ecology that you talked about so beautifully at the beginning of the conversation, like it is an opportunity for us to shift shifts of paradigms upon which we're making choices. And in some ways, it's it's the force that perhaps that human nature needs in order to do radical change. Because we don't do that unless we're forced.

Latai: Yeah. It's also, you know, the the as a as an artist as well, you know, with many colleagues who are engaging in in this area, there's a huge opportunity for us as artists as well to to experiment with form you know, and and open up ways of thinking through the use of through interacting with different kind of cultural forms as well you know that it is exactly that like dance and movement and composition from my cultural perspective actually when I centre that, it actually blows everything out and makes it really exciting. Or if we think about the level of exraction, you know, when we're thinking about fossil fuels and we're thinking about extraction, we also it enables us to we're also in a position where we can question whether the way that we've been working in the arts is that conducive to how we want to imagine the future and, and how we how we make work, how we produce work, how what is our artistic voice? Thinking about how it's become really necessary to continuously produce new works in the world but is it really? There have been many talks that I've given where, you know, I've asked the question, do you really require a new work? Why can't you? This work is still relevant. I think I and even, you know, imagining that that work could continue to go from place to place and have less, you know, certain works that I've that I'm making have very few materials, you know, and they are easy to move from place to place but the the reason that that work exists is because it's it's trying to do some very heavy lifting with less and it's still relevant so challenging institutions to take accept works that are old but still relevant and are still fresh and new in terms of form, is also part of the challenge that we face as artists as well, is the demand.

Scotia: Yeah it's a very contemporary sense because I'm here in Meanjin and they're putting on the ring cycle and it's seen as the best thing to do. Whereas as a contemporary artist, your struggle to hold the longevity of work is a different story again, it's quite extraordinary, isn't it?

Latai: Yeah. I mean, it means and I'm really fortunate because my I have works that exist in that, that are in the public collection at goma. And currently three of those works are showing there at the moment and so for me it feels that that coming from a live perspective and trying to make works that have another life, that continue to to do the work of communicating to different communities at different times is also part of the construct that we we create different works in. And so it's yeah it's important to be able to to take your voice from one area and take it somewhere else. You know like recently having made a work in Finland and thinking what do we need to be saying from our part of the world up there? What is it that they need to hear from us? You know? And so these become really, really interesting questions to to ask in these times, because we're all trying to figure out how we're going to move forward. And sometimes the answers are just within our group of people or communities that we're talking to. But listening and

having these conversations with other people, you know, what does it mean to live in cold.

Scotia: Yeah and finding our principles that we carry forward in that conversation,

Latai: yeah

Scotia: You know, that's, you know, you have a big life later and often you talk about the sort of nest of your family and the people around you that hold you. I'm just interested to know how you take care of yourself. It's a very big challenge for working in this way and being so much a frontline worker in that broader sense of disaster management. But how do you care for yourself in this big journey?

Latai: It's really hard. I think I'm only learning how to now. And it is really about being able to take time. It's difficult, though. You know, we're we're self-employed artists. But for me, I, you know, I was unfortunate to inherit my parents land in Tonga and I am dreaming of growing a food garden and having, trying to make a small gap between the things that I need to exist. And yeah, I'm a bit obsessed with, you know, growing soil now, you know, so my practice is definitely shifting. But I think for me, caring for myself is also dreaming of, of having a life of growing food and being able to live some of my life in my ancestral home that comes from my grandparents really creating that connection for me as a as a young, as a child, you know. So that's what I'm working towards today is like, you know, I have 8 acres from my parents that I share with my siblings. And the plan is to to go and work there and invite artists to come and take some time off. And we just we can have conversations and we can contribute to some mangrove work or, you know, these kinds of things.

Scotia: some deep listening

Latai: Yeah. And, and with the time is being spent going into nurturing some plants you know maybe seaweed, mangroves and food. I think that to me it's time for me to invest in my own agency, I think. And that feels like that's something I can do. And so, yeah, I've got a little bit of a plan for the next two years to to do less moving around in the world and less making works that are outward facing, but more about going into soil production and and inviting people to to participate in that and having, yeah, closing that loop a bit I think. Yeah.That feels like care to me.

Scotia: Yeah like metred time to be able to breathe. Well I wanted to also congratulate you Latai on your recent award from Creative Australia, the award for Emerging and Experimental Arts. And it's so important and such a joy to see you there in that kind of

capacity being acknowledged for your deep embedded work, but also another opportunity to highlight the necessity in the power of of artists practising as you do, and particularly within the context of our ever changing future. And, you know, it's great to see that the institutions are valuing your contribution and the importance of the practice.

Latai: Yeah. Thanks, Scotia. It's a real honour to receive an acknowledgement like this, because often there's so much uncertainty when you know you're working and you feel like I feel quite strongly about things and sometimes it's really confusing is like thinking about, is that actually a good idea? And so sometimes, you know, it works out where you get these amazing awards that encourage, I find it really encouraging, you know, to that, that it's a signifier that says, you know, this is you are thinking and doing things in a way that are necessary and relevant. Because so often as as an artist working away, you second guess and you doubt like that this is something…particularly performance, you know I think performance is it's very rare that you get an opportunity to to have something tangible in the space that you're constantly working and working with and changing and moving around. And so with performance, it's often a lot in the head and a lot in the body, and it's often just yourself as the as the maker that is witnessing the tiny shifts as you move through an idea. And so yeah, I, I think especially, you know in the in the various fields of arts that exist where there are these I think it mimics exactly what you and I know in emergency work is that the silos in disciplines in the arts and the silos in emergency work exist and, and also in the environmental work is there, but working across them, we start to see how everything is relational and how futuring is really about moving through some of those vertical disciplines and I feel like that for me is the emergence of what I am trying to do is from thinking about, yeah, what is the best way to comprehend some of these things that we're feeling and experiencing. And sometimes it is an animation, sometimes it is a training circuit, sometimes it is a conversation, sometimes it's in making something, you know, something edible and that I think is um yeah, a really, I feel really quite moved and honoured to, to be acknowledged through, through that award. But it's also, it's kind of like a push to say yeah, keep going you know keep doing that thing and for other people.

Scotia: Yes. And to highlight that the act of performance or the act of being an artist is political and that we need to raise that political voice and I think that's so very true, the vital, the vital steps for the future are about that relational intersection. Like how do we actually come together around these very complex issues. So thank you so much for for your work, Latai, and for creating platforms for us to meet and to understand each other and to build those really necessary relationships for us to create positive futures for everyone.

Thank you so much and thanks for coming and joining us today, Latai, I wish you some beautiful gardening for the season ahead. And I hope that the year brings some of that beautiful soil rest.

Latai: Yeah. Thanks, Scotia. Thanks so much for having me. It's been a really wonderful conversation with you.

Scotia: Thanks for joining me for Creative Responders in Conversation and special thanks to Latai for making the time to be with us today.

We'll include links in our show notes where you can see Latai's work and read more about her practice.

This has been our final episode for Season 4.

I'd like to thank you, our dear listeners, for joining us throughout this year and wish you a safe and restful festive season.

I'd also like to thank all of the guests who joined us this season to share their work and perspectives.

As always, you can find our full archive and transcripts for each episode at our website - www.creativerecovery.net.au

Alongside our conversation series, we also have a range of documentary episodes where we deep dive into communities and projects that are harnessing the arts to strengthen disaster management.

They're all on our website or in the Creative Responders podcast feed if you scroll back you'll find them all.

If you've enjoyed this season, you might like to leave a rating and review on Apple podcasts - it really helps the show find new listeners and we'd love to hear from you.

This podcast is produced by me and my Creative Recovery Network colleague, Jill Robson. Our sound engineer is Tiffany Dimmack and our theme was composed by Mikey Squire.

Thanks for listening.