

Institutional Presentation by Leonardo: The International Society for Arts + Sciences + Technology

Creativity Infrastructure for Indigenous-led Hemispheric Exchange

Diana Ayton-Shenker, Vanessa Chang, Shamsheer Virk

Leonardo/ISAST

Oakland, U.S.A.

diana@leonardo.info, vanessa@leonardo.info, shamsheer@leonardo.info

Abstract

Leonardo — The International Society for Arts + Sciences + Technology — presents our approach to transdisciplinary art through network and field building with a vision for an inclusive and representative global creative community. We will share two indigenous-led projects from our fellowship and exchange programs that connect to the ISEA 2024 theme, Everywhen, and will serve as lenses through which to interpret the sub-themes of resilient stories, speculative practices, and ecologies of place. By sharing concrete examples of Leonardo's programmatic work, we wish to exchange knowledge, build community, and explore partnership with the ISEA 2024 community.

Keywords

indigenous media, indigenous knowledge, hemispheric exchange, cultural exchange, fellowship, publication, resilient stories, speculative practices, ecologies of place

Introduction

Inspired by the Everywhen concept, we will present at ISEA 2024 a selection of Leonardo projects that demonstrate our vision of an inclusive future, informed by underrepresented histories, and activated in the present. These projects from our fellowship and exchange programs are pushing the field of transdisciplinary art and expanding the community of creators it involves, both centering indigenous interdisciplinary artists: Creative Impact Lab Ōtepoti Dunedin is a Leonardo exchange led by Tiare Ribeaux; *Cosmovision* is a commissioned work produced by artist collective Postcommodity through a multi-year fellowship with Leonardo. With both projects, Leonardo continues to build creativity infrastructure for recentring indigenous practices in the field of art, science, and technology.

About Leonardo

As a not-for-profit 501(c)3 enterprising think tank, Leonardo offers a global platform for creative exploration

and collaboration reaching tens of thousands of people across 135 countries. Our flagship publication, Leonardo, the world's leading scholarly journal on transdisciplinary art, anchors a robust publishing partnership with MIT Press; our partnership with ASU infuses educational innovation with digital art and media for lifelong learning; our creative programs span thought-provoking events, exhibits, residencies and fellowships, scholarship and social enterprise ventures.

Leonardo operates as a full cycle creative engine with programs that spark innovation at every stage; from research scholarship, through training and education, fellowships and exchange, to publication. These activities in field building, thought leadership, enterprise, and media are guided by a vision for a creative community that is inclusive and representative.

Creative Impact Lab Ōtepoti Dunedin

Creative Impact Lab Ōtepoti Dunedin is a public diplomacy creative exchange that utilizes community-driven digital and new media art projects to address climate change. In this hybrid in-person and virtual exchange, U.S./Kānaka Maoli lead artist Tiare Ribeaux facilitated a workshop series introducing creative practices in emerging media that give access to new forms of expression. Participants learned rapid prototyping techniques for human-centered interactive media design as they explore climate change in Aotearoa New Zealand using an indigenous framework and methodologies. Supported by the US Embassy in Wellington and produced in partnership with Tūhura Otago Museum, the exchange was at once international — between citizens of the United States of America and Aotearoa New Zealand — and intercultural — between an indigenous Hawai'iian lead artist and a majority Māori participant group. Process and prototyping were prioritized over the final product. The experience was one of weaving traditional knowledge and practices together with contemporary technologies for sensing and representing the environment. *Plastia* by Tiare Ribeaux and works from the Creative Impact Lab Ōtepoti

Dunedin exhibition *Honohono* are on display at The Cube during ISEA 2024.

Cosmovisión: A platform for hemispheric indigenous self-determination

A project in development through Leonardo's fellowship program, *Cosmovisión* is an ongoing collaboration with indigenous art collective Postcommodity to develop an indigenous-led and designed generative musical instrument for performing, embodying, sonifying, and syncrizing diverse worldviews. Using video game mechanics, *Cosmovisión* explores and determines relationships between land, community and worldview. An intentional community of teams will create an archive of sound recordings that sonify these relationships as a practice of Indigenous-led community self-determination and meaning-making. The teams will then enter a friendly and performative multiplayer gaming tournament where victory will come to those who can best collaborate, listen to each other, and create harmony. *Cosmovisión* transcends the moment of performance; its sonic outcomes are informed by a series of workshops that gather representatives from local communities. Postcommodity is facilitating a *Cosmovisión* playtesting workshop at ISEA 2024 to inform the continued development of the work, as well as scaffold hemispheric alliances between American and Australian First Nation communities. Postcommodity will also exhibit an audio installation titled *From Here to Another Time* at The Renshaws gallery during ISEA 2024. *Cosmovisión* will premiere in 2025 at San Francisco Museum of Modern Art.

Cosmovisión evolves from a multiyear dialogue articulating a shared curatorial vision to recenter indigenous knowledge in meaning-making in art, science and technology practice. By working with Postcommodity on a project that is, at its heart, built around indigenous knowledge, Leonardo intends to amplify that work throughout our global network. The data gleaned from this process will serve as a foundational research archive for the larger collaboration between Postcommodity and Leonardo, through which we aim to integrate academic research paradigms with indigenous knowledge. We will also include special publications on our print and digital platforms. Other activations, including a 2024 symposium at Arizona State University centered around *Cosmovisión* and the urgent questions it raises, will contribute to the infrastructure of this effort.

Leonardo in the Everywhen

As facets of the Everywhen, these projects attest to the significance of resilient storytelling and ecologies of place to building hemispheric indigenous collaborations in art, science, and technology practice. Led by indigenous artists, both Creative Impact Lab Dunedin and *Cosmovisión* invite local participants to invoke, deploy, and create narratives that are closely entwined with the land from whence they emerge. In so doing, they cultivate speculative practices of

placemaking that are inclusive, accessible, and grounded in deep histories of human and planetary networks.

Leonardo's inclusive approach entails programs designed by, with, and for the communities we serve; as Creative Impact Lab Dunedin and *Cosmovisión* embody this work, they also create global channels for communication and collaboration. Leonardo's vision is to continue fostering indigenous cultural exchange through creative collaborations in art, science and technology.

Symposium Objectives

By presenting Leonardo's work to the ISEA 2014 community, we aim to connect with individuals and organizations who wish to exchange practices and lessons learned in the work of international, intercultural, interdisciplinary co-creation. We are also seeking partners for future exchange and fellowship programming in the Australian context; a goal that aligns with our network building strategy for expanded inclusion and representation for the people of Oceania and the Pacific Rim.

Presentation Requirements

This presentation is best suited for a lecture hall venue. We request a podium/lectern, microphone, amplified sound, and a projection screen for a complete multimedia experience of our work.

Presenter Biographies

Diana Ayton-Shenker, CEO

Diana Ayton-Shenker is CEO of Leonardo/ISAST; Executive Director, ASU-Leonardo Initiative; and ASU Professor of Practice jointly appointed at The School for the Future of Innovation in Society; and at The School of Arts, Media, & Engineering. Diana has published four books, including, *A New Global Agenda*, and *Tumbalalaika: A Collection of Poems*; and produced *New Babel*, a 10-story tall A.R. public art installation (Union Square Park, NYC) in collaboration with artist William T. Ayton, her partner and husband of 30 years. Diana speaks four languages and holds an LLM (International Human Rights Law, University of Essex Law School), and a BA with Honors (International Relations, University of Pennsylvania). She has held senior positions with Human Rights Watch, P.E.N., Mercy Corps, and the United Nations. Diana has taught at The New School, Bard College, the American University of Paris, and Hunter College of the CUNY.

Vanessa Chang, Director of Programs

As a curator, writer and educator, Vanessa Chang builds communities and conversations about art, technology and human bodies. She holds a Ph.D. in Modern Thought and Literature from Stanford University, where she was a Geballe Fellow at the Stanford Humanities Center and also ran the Graphic Narrative Workshop. She curated E.A.A.T. Experiments in Art, Access & Technology, Recoding CripTech at SOMArts Cultural Center, Intersections at the Leonardo Convening at Fort Mason Center for the Arts, and Artobots. She has appeared on NPR's *On the Media* and *State of the Art*, and her curatorial work has been profiled in

such venues as Art in America and KQED Arts. Her writing has been published in Wired, Slate, Noema, Los Angeles Review of Books, Journal of Visual Culture, among other venues.

Shamsher Virk, Senior Director of Programs & Operations

Shamsher Virk amplifies the impact of mission-driven organizations with strategic leadership, community engagement, communications, program development, and design. He has worked internationally on four continents in as many languages, entering new communities with a sustained commitment to inclusive process, responsive adaptation, and shared leadership. Shamsher is a United World College graduate and holds a BA in human ecology from College of the Atlantic with emphasis on social research methodology and interdisciplinary communication arts. He has been a fellow with Yerba Buena Center for the Arts and Emerging Arts Professionals.