

UC Santa Cruz

Pacific Arts: The Journal of the Pacific Arts Association

Title

Artists Concern: Visualising Environmental Destruction in Papua New Guinea

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/0516q9rb>

Journal

Pacific Arts: The Journal of the Pacific Arts Association, 20(1)

ISSN

1018-4252

Author

Struck-Garbe, Marion

Publication Date

2021

DOI

10.5070/PC220153307

Copyright Information

Copyright 2021 by the author(s). This work is made available under the terms of a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives License, available at <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>

Peer reviewed

MARION STRUCK-GARBE

Artists Concern: Visualising Environmental Destruction in Papua New Guinea

Abstract

This article presents ways in which two contemporary artists in Papua New Guinea (PNG) are dealing with issues of climate change and the destruction of nature in PNG and the Pacific at large through their art. Laben Sakale John and Gazellah Bruder are two well-known PNG artists who visualise their feelings and thoughts about environmental degradation and the impact of climate change in intense and expressive ways. Laben Sakale John addresses tropical storms and Australian bushfires, while Gazellah Bruder is concerned about ocean pollution, deforestation in PNG, and the extinction of wildlife. Both are aware that the lifestyles of Indigenous peoples and their traditional livelihoods are also threatened. Their works of art evoke a sense of loss and sadness but also of urgency, that something effective must be done—by all of us—to combat climate change on a global scale.

Keywords: *Pacific, Papua New Guinea, contemporary art, artists, climate change, environmental destruction, destruction of nature*

For decades, Papua New Guinea (PNG)—a country in which more than 80 percent of the population still makes their living off the water and land in remote rural areas—has suffered from environmental degradation, habitat loss, decreasing biodiversity, and pollution from mining. Poor governance has led to unsustainable resource-use practices and serious damage to the environment. The long-lasting exploitation of forests and the clearing of land for agribusiness projects such as palm oil plantations have led to extensive loss of forest areas. Open-pit mining and the disposal of mine tailings have resulted in the pollution of rivers, coastlines, and the ocean. These environmental wrongdoings no longer happen unnoticed, as increasing numbers of the population are engaging in local protests against practices that negatively affect their lives.

Environmental nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) have been raising awareness and promoting education about the destruction of flora and fauna in PNG since 1975, when the country gained its independence from Australia.¹ In 2008 some contemporary artists in its major cities began addressing climate change and its consequences for the people of PNG in their work, communicating the threats that land loss and ocean pollution pose to the nation's

collective livelihood.² Some of their art also accused foreign industrial nations of being responsible for the climate crisis in the Pacific region.³ These artists have contributed to a greater awareness among people that have had difficulty unifying due to tribal boundaries, remote terrain, and resulting isolation. Advocacy and actions against government decisions that negatively impact the environment are increasing. Internet access and mobile phones now enable a broader and faster distribution of knowledge and information. Thus, people gradually begin to realise that they still are vulnerable and are living in an age in which humans are damaging the environment. As Susan Cochrane has noted in the same context, “Art, in all its forms of expression, is a powerful tool to deliver strong messages in a way that scientific language cannot.”⁴



Figure 1. Laben Sakale John, *Cyclone*, 2020. Acrylic on canvas, 20 x 30cm. Courtesy of the artist

Beyond the Horizon

Laben Sakale John is one of the best known Papua New Guinea artists who addresses political and social issues.⁵ He is a painter, printmaker, illustrator, and photographer in Port Moresby,

the capital of PNG. While Sakale John often portrays family themes—mother and child, everyday life, and domestic violence—in his work, he also addresses environmental issues and the consequences of climate change. He usually paints in a distinctive abstract style with intensive colouring in which blue plays a central role. The two small paintings discussed in this paper are rather atypical for his painting style in their more realistic representation. Sakale John comments on his recent work in this way: “The Pacific island countries inclusive [of] Papua New Guinea are experiencing rising sea levels. Some of our islands may not be around in 20 years’ time.”⁶ When asked how he became interested in environmental issues, he replied:

I first took environmental pictures when I saw on TV and read in newspapers about the sea-level rise in Mortlock Island, an island in the Autonomous Region of Bougainville. That rise is a direct result of climate change. Apart from watching videos and seeing photographs of the effects of climate change, I as an artist was convicted to visually present climate change through my paintings. Through paintings people can relate well to the effects of climate change.⁷

The life-threatening impact of climate change—including rising sea levels and violent storms—is forcefully depicted in his 2020 painting *Cyclone* (Fig. 1); the sea floods the coast, overland power lines collapse, strong winds bend palms, and houses are washed away. It seems as if all life is swallowed by the blue of the sea. According to Sakale John, the cyclone in the painting doesn’t refer to any particular cyclone but represents one of the many natural disasters that strike the Pacific islands. The powerful brushstrokes underscore the cultural and environmental trauma, and the unleashed elements seem palpable. The sea, revered by Pacific Islanders as a provider of food, becomes the enemy.

In Sakale John’s *Australian Bushfire* (Fig. 2) he focuses his climate change concern on the neighbouring country of Australia and the fierce, devastating bushfires it experienced in 2019–2020. Sakale John has strong connections to Australia; he has had exhibitions in several Australian cities and many of his customers and collectors live there. In addition, he has curated two exhibitions of work by artists from PNG in Brisbane. While working in Australia, Sakale John had an immediate experience of the spreading bushfires:

I was in Brisbane during the time when the bushfires began to take much of Queensland. The house of a good friend of mine was about to be burnt by the fires. Thus, I volunteered to help put the fire out but, lucky enough, the fires didn’t get to the house. But there I learnt of several properties lost and many becoming homeless . . . Every time when PNG is troubled with natural disasters Australians are always the first to respond, so I felt from within my heart that I needed to help in my own way . . . That’s why I did the Australian bushfire painting.⁸

Bushfires also occur in PNG, but the presence of the kangaroo in Sakale John's painting makes explicit that this is a bushfire in Australia. The kangaroo appears to have nowhere to go and seems to be trapped, with fire creeping up the trees and blazing on the ground. The bright red underscores the intensity of the ecological fiasco.



Figure 2. Laben Sakale John, *Australian Bushfire*, 2020. Acrylic on canvas, 20 x 30cm. Courtesy of the artist

PNG artists often reflect on the beauty and diversity of their culture, drawing inspiration from traditional bodily adornment and village life. Works by PNG artists have themes and motifs that are predominantly related to PNG; they often express a longing for the past, a desire for social improvements, they address realities of life in the country, and increasingly effects of climate change on the islands and their people. With Sakale John's work *Australian Bushfire*, we have an image that looks beyond the horizon. Knowing PNG's long legacy of political and economic interdependence with Australia, it sends a remarkable cosmopolitan message when a PNG artist picks this motif to express his compassion for all living creatures, including those in neighbouring Australia.⁹ Sakale John sees the alarming effects of climate change as a cause for concern at the global level *as well as* the local level. He connects the two in his own statement on the painting where he highlights his concerns: "The earth is getting

warmer and hotter and as such most plants and big forests dry up leaving them prone to bushfires. In PNG we do have many of these bushfires that usually burn during long dry seasons.”¹⁰

A Courageous Approach

Just as Sakale John’s paintings address the vulnerability of nature and all life, including the global-warming-induced risks to which humans are exposed, the work of Gazellah Bruder concerns the consequences of ocean pollution. One of the most famous female artists in PNG, Bruder received her diploma in fine arts at the local University of Papua New Guinea at the age of 19.¹¹ She developed a unique painting style early on, one which differs significantly from those of other PNG artists, because traditional PNG motifs, patterns, and objects are rarely found in her work. Since then she has dealt in her arts and in public statements with what it means to be a woman in today’s PNG and she often addresses current issues such as oppression, violence, and inequality. For three years now she has engaged with the theme of environment. Many of her works have been shown nationally and internationally, especially in Australia, Great Britain, and Germany.

In two of her recent paintings, Bruder deals with the consequences of ocean pollution. In *The Weeping Turtle* (2020, Fig. 3) she depicts a hybrid creature composed of a fish, a bird, and a turtle using bright, strong colours like blue for fish and sea and a deep-red turtle heart. They all live in a threatened ocean environment. The painting shows the common suffering these sea creatures experience as the ocean is no longer able to provide them with shelter, space, food, and other resources necessary for life. Plastic and toxic waste has changed the substance and the surface of the ocean. The marine animals no longer find food easily and they become restricted in their movement. Bruder’s creature seems to be caught in a net, the one visible eye dazed, confused, and appearing to weep, yet its vivid green colours suggest the will to live. In the words of the artist:

The heart of the ocean is broken. Man has wreaked destruction upon its habitat and marine life: overfishing, pollution, and the literal danger that drag nets and plastics pose to sea turtles and other vulnerable marine life. The turtle weeps at the future of its species, of the future of the sea birds and all fish . . .¹²

The people in the top right edge of the painting seem to be along the shoreline and might have little interest in what happens to the sea. They seem to go about their business as usual, while the turtle cries.



Figure 3. Gazellah Bruder, *The Weeping Turtle*, 2020. Mixed media on canvas, 30 x 40 cm. Courtesy of the artist

Bruder also conveys the desperation she feels in the face of environmental disasters in the form of poetry:

THE WEeping TURTLE

I imagine Grandfather Turtle
Old man of the seas
He weeps at the destruction
And havoc wreaked upon the
Earth, sky and great waters . . . His great heart broken,
For all of creation

Humankind has polluted its airways
Choked and strangled
Poisoned the air
And burned the earth
Scorched under the burning sun

Grandfather Turtle, can barely
Swim from ocean to ocean
Its seas once a playground
For play, suffocated
With debris of a thousand ships

As humankind plays
God, judge and jury,
The icecaps melt and our
Seashores vanish

Nature wreaks havoc
As earth, wind and fire
Devoured leave mankind
A barren wasteland
Unfit and inadequate
A fitting end and woe
To humanity's selfishness

Bruder's poem suggests that people living on land will share the fate of the animals of the sea. For them, too, the sea is like a mother that nourishes and connects with others. The people standing at the edge of Bruder's canvas represent individual citizens' position: watching the sea and the land being exploited and polluted by corporations. Their red background,

thus, appears as a warning, while the bright red heart in the composition is the heart of the ocean which is truly hurt.



Figure 4. Gazellah Bruder, *Scorched*, 2020. Mixed media on canvas, 30 x 40 cm. Courtesy of the artist

Scorched (2020, Fig. 4) reveals the bitter consequences of this human behaviour. It shows only the skeleton of a turtle which is scorched due to a water shortage and extreme heat. The sea turtle seems to move from the blue-green area in the top left of the canvas, perhaps representing healthy living, to the yellow-red threatening area in the lower right to die a horrible death. The skull's eye sockets stare at withered plants in this inferno. The artist, with a furious and broad brushstroke, has dripped the colours very thickly to signal her emotional response, as if she were in a rage.

As a turtle can be found in many of her paintings, I asked Bruder what she associates with this animal and why she had chosen a turtle as her subject of environmental paintings. She stated:

The turtle is in many cultures always depicted as [representing] ancient long life, gentle and unfathomable wisdom. For me personally, I always see my father in the old turtle being kind, gentle, and constant. It is symbolic of strength and endurance. Imagine this world . . . without turtles. These ancient seafarers, land dwellers, swamp inhabitants. Imagine a world without them. It would be devastating when the last sea turtle dies; when they cease to exist, [if] in our lifetime they became extinct.

The turtle is my spirit animal. It is the creature I mostly identify with and hope to endure a lifetime as they do. I dream of someday visiting a nesting site for leatherback turtles or even the green turtle. In my lifetime I would like to witness hatchlings leave their nest for the ocean's edge.¹³

While Bruder's paintings perhaps speak to how exploitation has destroyed nature and its creatures, one can also see the artist referencing the devastation of all Papua New Guinea. Since the death of her father, she sees both herself and PNG as vulnerable. She has a strong bond with the Gazelle Peninsula in New Britain, where her father was from. This area has several mythological tales that feature a turtle as a central figure, often linked to the origin of the island. In the turtle she sees her paternal ancestors. Like her father, the turtle stands for protection, stability, and the continuation of life in the sea and on land. In her paintings, the suffering of the turtle is central, while in her poetry, people are central as the cause of suffering; their selfish and unreasonable behaviour kills life on earth and in the sea. With such wide-scale destruction, the turtle cannot fulfil its task as an environmental protector. Its tears, seen in *The Weeping Turtle*, do not help; it dies in *Scorched* and with its death the earth becomes a barren wasteland.

Bruder has composed a companion poem for this painting that underscores the desperation she feels in the face of the environmental disaster and harm:

SCORCHED

The heat comes in waves
As its hot burning flames
Scorch the leaves and Savannah grasslands
Billowing thick smoke
Fail to save... the flames
Devours our earth

What of it . . .
El Nina El Nino
Dry warm breeze
Tricks us, rain?
The air is hot,
Parched throats seek
Cool drench from heaven

The creeks they have dried up
Small springs leave no playground
For slippery tadpoles
Scorched, burnt to a crisp . . .
Literally touched, by the heavens

Yes, life ceases
Bones of the dead
Litter Mother Earth's apron
Evidence of life lived and lost

Rain clouds cease to exit
The blue sky now torments us
Gathering clouds
And gently blowing them away

Scorched. . . Our earth

Another subject that Bruder returns to through her art is issues of gender, often dealing with what it means to be a woman, especially in Papua New Guinea. The bodies of women repeatedly appear in her paintings and mono-prints. For her, the female body shows its true beauty in its imperfection; she sees in the body changed by pregnancy and childbirth proof of the emergence of a real woman, a truly beautiful woman who radiates self-confidence and asserts perseverance against all odds.¹⁴ Consistently her theme is female identity and her reflection on her life as a single mother. At times she incorporates the female body in her artistic

confrontation of environmental issues, which simultaneously represents vulnerability, protection, and nurturing. Through her expressionist style Bruder wants to sensitize people to life itself and the significant role that women play in society. Women need to recognize their importance, she states, noting: “Appreciate your-self more than anyone else can. When you love yourself, you only invite what adds value to exist in your life. You empower yourself to rid your life of any form of toxicity.”¹⁵ It is from these ideas that she draws her own strength, which is conveyed through her artworks’ strong brushstrokes and powerful colours.



Figure 5. Gazella Bruder, *Beautiful Mother Nature*, 2020. Mixed media on canvas, 30 x 40 cm. Courtesy of the artist

In *Beautiful Mother Nature* (2020, Fig. 5), the female form seems to merge with the elements of the forest. The green-blue composition shows a woman rising from the unknown and merging with the yellow-green of the forest and land. Mother Nature is a woman of strength and confidence. Her legacy is to tell the world that there will always be new growth and life. The woman's body and ferns represent a more optimistic view than the two previous pictures. Despite the continuing destruction of the forests, the painting wants to convey hope. Mother Nature is ready to embrace all creatures and will ensure that the earth turns green again. The woman's body and ferns represent the new growth in a forest.

This painting is also accompanied by a poem, one that alleges that Papua New Guineans, in general, often neglect or destroy nature. At the same time the poem reinforces what is already in the painting. Here, Bruder invites us to see the beauty of nature while pointing out our current carelessness.

BEAUTIFUL MOTHER NATURE

Beautiful Mother Nature
She is the miracle
Born of fire and brimstone

From the ashes
She pushes forth
The curl of her Crown
From beneath
Devastation

From her bosom springs forth
Life . . . water . . .
Quenching the thirst
Quelling dying embers
Tempting life, push forward

Beautiful Mother Nature
She embraces all living things
Her apron the ferns
Her skirt the Savannah
Leaves cup her bosom

Her crown
Her head of hair
Delectable shoots to feed
The insects, birds and man

Beautiful Mother Nature
Why must we her children
Forsake her, take her for granted
Continue to show disdain

Mother keeps us safe, she shelters
Us, clothes us . . . feeds us . . .
Think of how beautiful she is . . .

At the end of the poem, she seems to be more pessimistic, and this is evident in interviews with the artist. Bruder's view is that although Mother Nature takes care of people, her children, they do not take care of her; they even despise and devastate her:

Such is our responsibility to make certain we protect them and their habitats. Man and his destructive behaviour consistently and continuously altered our earth and the ecosystems that exist. Driven by our greed to cut down every last tree, to harvest and overfish our oceans, our behaviours in how we continue to slash and burn, and pollute the air we breathe and our waters. What will it take to stop and change our behaviour? We have seen how in the last months, without our intention, the Pandemic Covid-19 has brought some healing to our earth. But, did we need to face such a devastating global event to force us to stop polluting our earth and to keep our humanity out of nature?

My fear is that as we—the guardians of this great planet—continue to behave ignorantly the consequences will be irreversible and unforgivable.¹⁶

In these comments, as well as in her paintings and poems, Bruder goes beyond the usual accusations aimed at foreigners: that they are causing environmental damage and harm to the livelihood of PNG's Indigenous people. She implicates everyone globally and requires all, including the people of PNG, to take responsibility for the earth and its survival. This is a courageous approach.

Conclusion

This article provides a snapshot of two of PNG's contemporary artists dealing with themes like climate crises and the country's human-made environmental calamities. These artists visualize their concerns about how Papua New Guinea and the Oceania region are increasingly threatened by such disasters. The artworks and poetry of Laben Sakale John, Gazellah Bruder, and others—among them Alexander Mebri, Robert Kua, John Danger, Winnie Weoa, and Julie Mota—show the tragedy and suffering that people are experiencing due to environmental

degradation caused by climate crisis, natural disasters, overexploitation, deforestation, and ocean pollution. What will people have to eat when all fish are gone? When all rivers are polluted? Where will they go once they have lost their own gardens and their own land? Such are essential questions today.

Today's contemporary artists of PNG not only aim to attract local audiences—thereby raising awareness, stimulating debate, and perhaps even enhancing protests—but they also send strong messages to the outside global world. Their international audience has, however, remained essentially limited to nearby Australia and, in rare cases, extended to North America or Europe. Even in Papua New Guinea they have limited outreach. They can occasionally exhibit in Port Moresby's National Museum and Art Gallery and in the few private galleries or locations that are popping up. Moreover, these smaller art venues face uncertain futures because the local sales market remains small, with only handfuls of expatriates and tourists and a few middle-class individuals interested in buying pieces of art and paying in cash. Yet, the artists have begun to organize themselves and are coordinating their efforts. What used to be the monthly Ela Beach arts and craft market is now a weekly event that moves every Saturday to a different designated hotel location. This attracts a reasonable crowd of customers willing to purchase from the huge range of items exhibited. Street artists can supplement their income from what they sell and even most of the more recognized artists can make a living from selling their works.

It is difficult to assess to what extent artists can communicate their messages by selling at those events or on the roadside in front of the big hotels in Port Moresby, but their works and stories are also portrayed in weekend supplements of PNG's few newspapers and magazines. They communicate with their fellow Papua New Guineans not only through their art but with their written words as well. Nevertheless, print media rarely reaches the countryside. Thus, although the artists want to make a difference at home, their images are aimed more at audiences beyond Papua New Guinea's borders. As PNG's artists continue to navigate between the local and the global, these dilemmas have not yet been resolved.

The environmental threat is perceived differently by everyone. Its perception is shaped by one's own environment. Gazellah Bruder and Laben Sakale John live in an age where environmental degradation and damage has been felt and experienced for years. They show us how environmental factors make life in their home communities more precarious for both animals and humans. Extremely negative impacts on the well-being and livelihood of everyone, caused by human-induced climate crisis, deforestation, and marine pollution, are very evident. Because art makes visible what is otherwise hidden and thus enriches the human experience, triggers emotions, and poses questions, the works of Bruder and Sakale John make important contributions to PNG's reflection on environmental issues. These artists stimulate discourse and further a better understanding of what is currently going on at the local and global levels. As Jeff Koons is reported to have once said, "Art to me is a humanitarian act,

and I believe that there is a responsibility that art should somehow be able to affect mankind, to make the wor[l]d a better place - this is not a cliché!”¹⁷

The extent to which the works shown can live up to this statement also depends on possibilities to present them to a broad audience. In Papua New Guinea, this is essentially limited to a few places and a few events in the capital of Port Moresby. This means that a large majority of the population has limited opportunities to view and engage with these works of art, which are a kind of cry for help across borders, to the world, to the industrialised, rich nations which heavily participate in creating all this harm.

Marion Struck-Garbe is a graduate in Social Anthropology and Socio-Economics. She has worked on various subjects such as violence, international relations, ecology and contemporary art and literature in Oceania and is a lecturer at the Asia-Africa Institute of the University of Hamburg since 1987. As a student she lived and researched in Tonga and Fiji. In the nineties she lived five years in Papua New Guinea where she supported women artists and curated several exhibitions in Port Moresby. Since 2000 she organized about 20 exhibitions on PNG-contemporary art in Europe. She lives in Hamburg.

Notes

¹ Papua New Guinea (PNG) was colonized from 1884 onwards in various steps. While the western half of the island was already under Dutch rule, the eastern part became sub-divided into a German territory in the North and a British territory in the South. When Australia became an independent state in 1902, British New Guinea came under Australian rule. When the Germans entered into World War One in Europe (1914), Australia immediately moved to take the northern part of New Guinea as well and became the dominant colonial power in this area. During World War Two, the whole island became the scene of fierce fighting with Japanese troops (1942–1945). Huge numbers of American troops were stationed there supporting the Australians who, after the war ended, united the two administrative entities in the east of the island archipelago in 1949 as Papua and New Guinea. While the western half of the island, which tried to become independent in 1961, was violently incorporated by Indonesia (1961–1969), Australia turned around and pushed the country into independence in 1975 as Papua New Guinea, creating a convenient buffer zone in between itself and Indonesia.

² Marion Struck-Garbe, “Reflections on Climate Change by Contemporary Artists in Papua New Guinea,” in *Pacific Climate Cultures: Living Climate Change in Oceania*, eds. Tony Crook and Peter Rudiak-Gould (Warsaw: De Gruyter Open Poland), 106–120, <https://doi.org/10.2478/9783110591415>.

³ Alfred Banze, Marion Struck-Garbe and others, “DEUTSCH 1914 / PAPUA NIUGINI 2014”, Artistic Dialogues about an almost forgotten Common Cultural History, exhibition catalogue, Camping Akademie, Berlin, 2015. See also the website “Deutsch 1914 / Papua Niugini 2014”, <http://papua2014.de>.

⁴ Susan Cochrane, “Floating Land—Rising Sea: Arts and Minds on Climate Change”, *LiNQ (Literature in North Queensland)* 37, no. 1 (Dec. 2010): 93.

⁵ Laben Sakale John was born in 1976 in the remote Hakwange area near Menyama (Morobe Province). After his talent for painting was discovered at school, he received a scholarship to study at the Faculty of Fine Arts at the University of Papua New Guinea, which he completed in 1998. His paintings can be easily recognized by their colourfulness and expressionist abstract painting style. His linocuts are characterized by bold patterns and strong lines. Here, too, the focus is on everyday life and the tension between gender roles. Besides painting, photography became a second artistic and professional mainstay for Sakale John. Today, he is an internationally recognized artist who has exhibited in the United States, Europe, New Zealand, and Australia. He curates an annual exhibition with art from PNG in Brisbane. Sakale John is an artist with all his heart; the love for what he creates and does every day is the driving force in all his works.

⁶ Laben Sakale John, email messages to author, March 3, and August 18, 2020, January 20, 2021.

⁷ Laben Sakale John, email message to author, March 3, 2020.

⁸ Laben Sakale John, email message to author, August 18, 2020.

⁹ Relations between PNG and its rich “big brother” Australia have been close but never easy, even post-independence. Australians started mining in PNG early on, built up what is now PNG’s administration, and continue to support the country’s NGOs and government with aid money. Some PNG artists have benefitted from Australian opportunities in terms of exhibitions, sales, and scholarships. At the same time, it is a deeply unequal relationship, creating among Papua New Guineans a feeling of being exploited, neglected, and belittled. The fact remains that when PNG is hit by major catastrophes like an earthquake, flood, tsunami, or volcanic eruption, Australia is always the first to provide humanitarian aid. Against all this background it is remarkable to see Sakale John engaging when his Australian friends were hit by the bushfire inferno, as did the PNG government, which sent PNG fire fighters to assist Australia.

¹⁰ Laben Sakale John, email message to author, January 20, 2021.

¹¹ In 2011, Bruder continued her studies in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Papua New Guinea where she received an honorary degree in visual anthropology and earned a degree in art and design. During our last conversation, on September 29, 2019, in Port Moresby, she said, “For me, art is not only colour and beauty of the picture; art should also tell a story. In my works I express how I feel as a woman and how I live in Papua New Guinea. I paint and draw from the inside out.” In her visual and written expressions Bruder shows the discrimination and harsh oppression endured by women and their ongoing struggle against it. At the same time, she emphasizes their beauty and her high regard for them as hard-working women. Again and again, she interprets female forms in a very special way, often in lino- and mono-prints. Bruder is a single mother of two and she has overcome some tough times. She managed by taking different jobs to make a living. She is a woman with a fighting spirit who does not give up hope. This is also reflected in her rich artwork.

¹² Gazellah Bruder, email messages to author, March 3, and August 18, 2020, January 20, 2021.

¹³ Gazellah Bruder, email message to author, March 3, 2020.

¹⁴ Marion Struck-Garbe, “Moderne Malerei Papua Neuguinesischer Künstlerinnen,” *Pacific News* 20 (July/August 2003): 27–31, <http://www.pacific-geographies.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2017/06/moderne-malerei-papua-neuguinea.pdf>

¹⁵ Gazellah Bruder, email message to author, August 18, 2020.

¹⁶ Gazellah Bruder, email message to author, January 20, 2021.

¹⁷ Jeff Koons, *Journal of Contemporary Art* (website), New York City, October 1986, accessed March 31, 2021, <http://www.jca-online.com/koons.html>