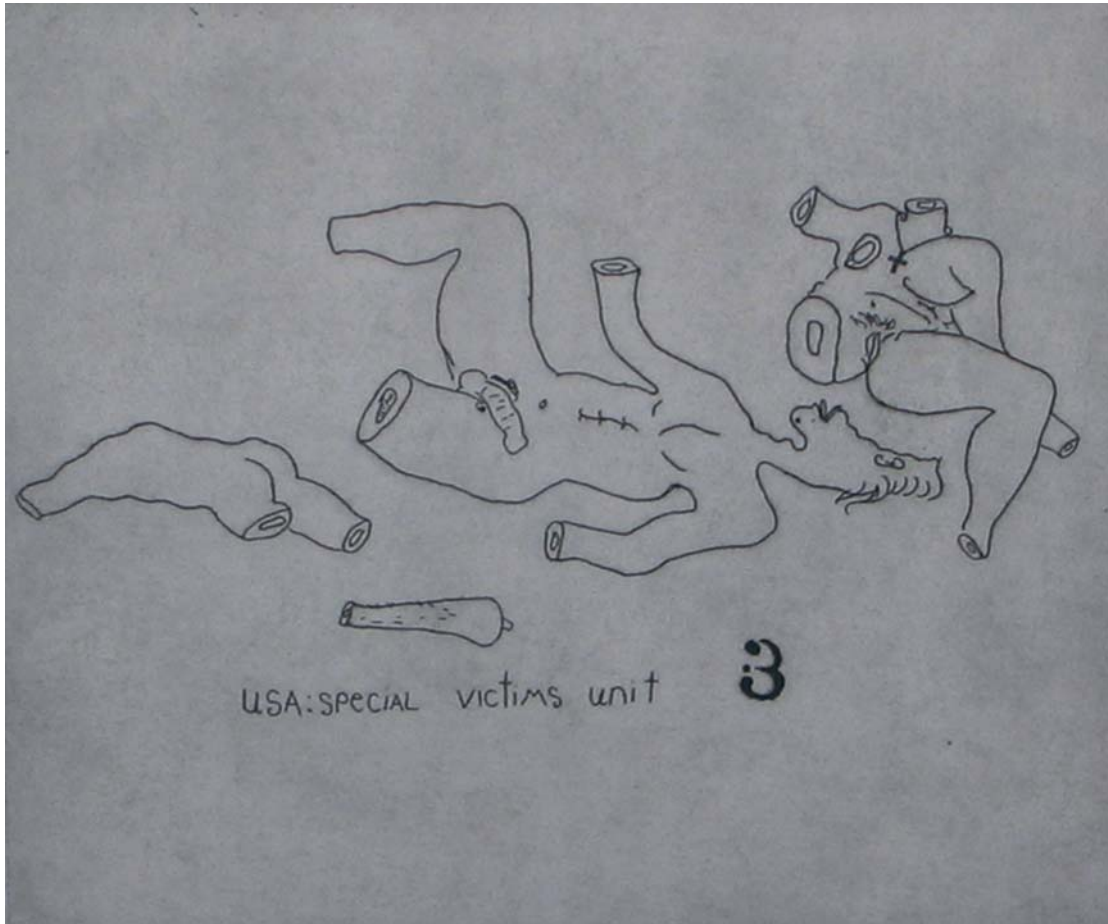




## JOHN PULE



*OPERATION KIWICRACKER*  
2003 (50 X 60.5 CM)

All artworks from 'The American Series', etching on paper. Edition of 30. Courtesy the artist and Gow Langsford Gallery, Auckland.

Niuean born artist John Pule is one of New Zealand's most respected artists; a writer and a painter who breathes poetry into even the most critically aggressive of his works. Born in Liku, Niue in 1962, Pule emigrated to New Zealand in 1964. He now lives in Auckland. Although his work is deeply evocative of a sense of the Pacific, this artist's work is characterised by a richly individual voice that is capable of speaking across cultures. Professor

Nicolas Thomas has described the searing individuality of his voice as having 'no precedent in either traditional Polynesian art or in modern Western genres.'

Pule's return visits to Niue have continued to nurture the stories of that place that has lingered with him since they were first told to him as a child by his aunt, Mocca Famu Falemanogi. In Pule's work, the magic

of memory is infused with the hard facts of history and the brutal presence of events in current times. Although many of Pule's themes are darkly critical, there is a sense in which the forceful spirit of his attacks are infused with an equally forcefully potential for regenerating productive engagements for the future. The imposition of Christianity on Island people has come in as a particularly heated target. In works that simmer with an unsettling and semi-articulate grief, Pule attacks those who carried retribution and guilt in the place of revelation to the Pacific.

John Pule has done a number of works responding to the events and aftermath surrounding September 11. The works in this exhibition, collectively titled 'The American Series', is among these. Pule describes

his first response to the event:

I made these prints while sitting in front of the television during the America's Cup, at the same time a plethora of images (featuring the) bombardment of the invasion of Iraq (were running next to advertisements for) American crime investigation dramas (such as) 'CSI' and 'Criminal Intent'.<sup>2</sup>

For Pule, the daily presentation of 'current affairs' as an inextricable part of entertainment is an absurdity that demands response.

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<sup>1</sup> Nicholas Thomas, 'Possessions. Indigenous Art/Colonial Culture', Thames and Hudson, London 1999.

<sup>2</sup> Email from John Pule to Kirsty Divehalt, Gallery manager, Gow Langsord Gallery, New Zealand. 9th August 2005.