



Nova Paul, *This is not Dying* [video still], 2010. 16mm film transferred to HD video, 20 minutes. Courtesy of the artist.

## ***Nova Paul***

### ***This is Not Dying*, 2010**

“Aotearoa/New Zealander Nova Paul’s film *This is not Dying* records everyday scenes from around her family Marae and Māori community, in the north of the North Island. Her practice is embedded in the languages of early cinematic and experimental filmmaking, and this 16mm, optically printed film uses the analogue process of three-colour separation. The beautiful, multi-coloured effect produced by this process mediates Paul’s relationship to her subject. She explains: “Like water that follows well-worn paths along a river, channels of colour trace around significant places to my family”.

Bright auras also radiate from people, such as young men riding motorbikes, and those eating a meal together and swimming in the springs. Their bodies become blurred, ethereal and ghostly, as distinct passages of time are recorded through red, green and blue filters, and then overlaid together. Multiple moments appear at once through tones that shift and merge, building a floating world of multi-coloured tenses.

Through Paul’s unique approach to filmic storytelling, Neoliberal structures are prised apart to present more promising possibilities. A sense of optimism is heightened by the film’s exquisite soundtrack, which is performed on steel and slide guitars by kaumātua (elder) and famed Aotearoa Māori Show Band figure Ben Tawhiti. The improvised traditional NgāāPuhī

song has moments of whistling and humming, adding to a blissful serenity and feeling of nostalgia.

*This is not Dying* looks to the past while engaging the present: its communities, technologies and politics. In so doing, Paul walks us into a different future, perhaps opening up a space to consider how communities based on traditions of Te Ao Māori can help navigate the pitfalls of a fragmented and globalised era.

*This is not Dying* (2010) has featured in numerous international screenings, including *Recontres Internationales*, George Pompidou Centre, France (2011); *Rotterdam International Film Festival* (2011); and *New Zealand International Film Festival* (2010). Paul's earlier three-colour separation work, *Pink and White Terraces* (2006) has also toured widely, including at the Whitechapel Gallery (UK) and in the Whitechapel Gallery *Artists' Films International* program at the Venice Biennale (2013). Her most recent film *Still Light* (2015) screened in the *Rotterdam International Film Festival* (2016). The publication, *Form Next to Form Next to Form* (2012) consists of stills from *This is not Dying* (2010), and won the 2013 Most Beautiful Book in Australasia Award. Paul is a senior lecturer at AUT University".

Press release courtesy of Stills Gallery. <https://ocula.com/art-galleries/stills-gallery/exhibitions/this-is-not-dying/>