



GALLERY 5

Tia Mavanie

UneARTh

15 NOVEMBER 2024 –
5 JANUARY 2025

Lismore Regional Gallery



11 Rural Street
Lismore, NSW 2480

Open hours
Wednesday to Sunday, 10am – 4pm
Thursdays until 6pm
Closed on public holidays

W lismoregallery.org
T 02 6627 4600
E art.gallery@lismore.nsw.gov.au
@ [LismoreRegionalGallery](https://www.facebook.com/LismoreRegionalGallery)

Lismore Regional Gallery is a creative initiative of the Lismore City Council supported by the New South Wales Government through Create NSW and the Friends of the Gallery. The Gallery acknowledges the Widjabul Wia-bal people of the Bundjalung Nation as the traditional owners of the land upon which the gallery stands. We pay respects to elders past, present and emerging and extend that respect to all First Nations cultures and their contributing connection to land, waters, community and the arts.



Nisaba 2024
cardboard, paper, preserved leaves, timber
113 x 43 x 40 cm

Tia Mavanie is an artist working primarily in sculpture and installation. They explore the experience of diaspora and the Other via the intersections of identity, culture, gender and the natural world. Central to *UneARTh* is the use of the classical elements of Eastern and Western cultures (space, air, fire, water and earth) as mediums to unearth and reconnect with the historically erased Superwomen of Mesopotamia and their queer culture and mythology. Mavanie's practice draws on the act of regeneration and decay, highlighting the interconnectedness of all living beings and the intrinsic value of the natural world. They combine the performance of harvesting site specific, organic and recycled materials with historical research into their Mesopotamian ancestry, connecting the past to the present.

Writing ('Cuneiform') was first developed by the Mesopotamians in the ancient city of Uruk (present-day Iraq) 3200BC. 'Nisaba', an idol embodying knowledge, memory and wisdom, was the Mesopotamian deity of writing, storytelling, harvest and trade. Deities were immortal, possessing extraordinary powers and cloaked by 'melammu', an aura that inspired great awe or fear in humans.

Sanctuaries to Nisaba with libraries and scribal houses were a centre of worship across Mesopotamia for over 1,000 years. Scribal school tablets often end with the phrase, 'Praise be Nisaba'. She became synonymous with wisdom and learning and was invoked regularly by scribes, scholars, priests, astronomers, and mathematicians for inspiration and guidance. During the Old Babylonian Period, Nisaba's status declined along with all the other female deities when Hammurabi (1792-1750BCE) elevated the god Marduk as patron of Babylon and male deities above female. Nisaba was replaced by Marduk's son, Nabu, stripping Nisaba of her powers.

As her male counterpart's influence grew, Nisaba's vital role in the intellectual and spiritual life of the society diminished. Writing, once seen as a sacred domain for women under Nisaba's patronage, became increasingly viewed as an unsuitable occupation for women. In time, Nisaba was transformed into a secondary figure, recast as the devoted wife of Nabu, reduced to a faithful, dutiful secretary, tirelessly assisting her husband's rise to prominence. Nabu's fame, in turn, continued to soar beyond Mesopotamia to the Mediterranean world, embraced by multiple civilizations: the Greek, Roman, and eventually Christian.



City of Eridu 2023
cardboard
34.5 x 34.5 x 4 cm

The artworks in *UneARTh* delve into profound gender upheavals that have shaped the course of history, highlighting the once esteemed positions of female deities within ancient mythologies. This body of work seeks to reclaim and reassert the power and influence of women in mythological narratives, challenging historical imbalances and empowering contemporary women. Conceptually the works create a narrative about the cultural shifts that have marginalised women across time. They also aim to recalibrate the mythological pantheon, restoring female power to its rightful place in the story of humanity. Respecting women is not only a matter of justice and equality but also a path to a healthier, more sustainable relationship with the planet.

Tia Mavanie, 2024

list of works

Tia Mavanie
born 1973 Sydney, Australia
lives/works Lismore, Australia

City of Eridu 2023

cardboard
34.5 x 34.5 x 4 cm

City of Nineveh 2023

cardboard
37 x 37 x 6 cm

City of Ur 2023

cardboard
34.5 x 34.5 x 4 cm

Enheduanna 2023

pyrography, ink, watercolour on
timber
46.7 x 31.6 x 3 cm

Igigi 2024

burnt timber, metal
148 x 210 x 33 cm

Kubaba 2023

pyrography, ink, watercolour, wax
on timber
61.5 x 61.7 x 3 cm

Me Too 2024

burnt timber, wire
189 x 69 x 27 cm

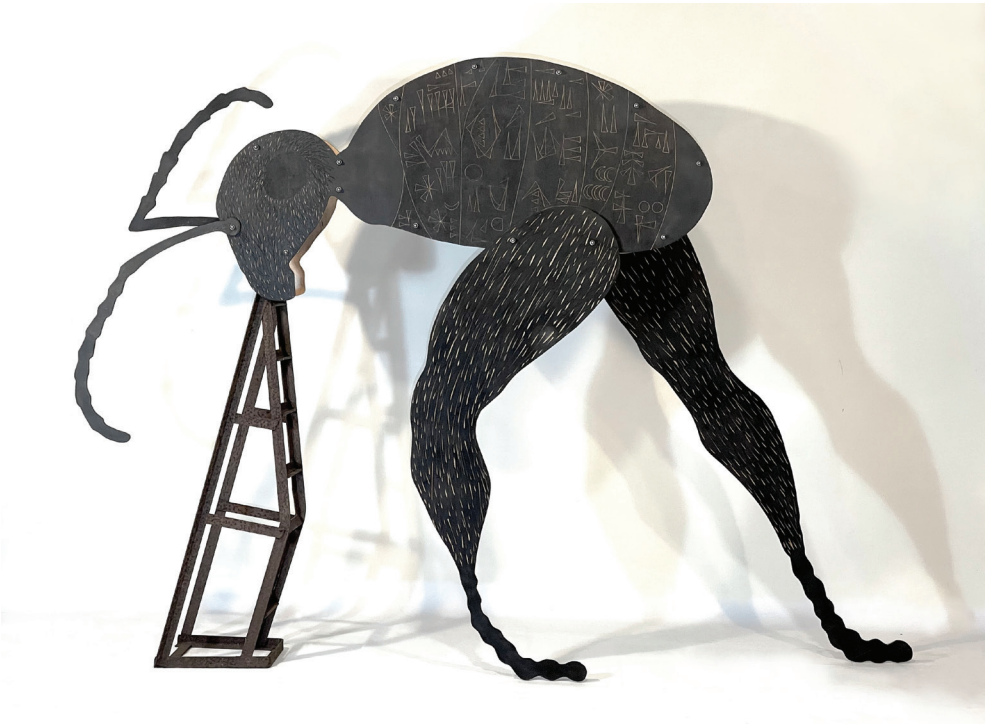
Nisaba 2024

cardboard, paper, preserved
leaves, timber
113 x 43 x 40 cm

Pilipili 2023

pyrography, ink, watercolour on
timber
35.4 x 27.8 x 2 cm

all works courtesy the artist



Igigi 2024
burnt timber, metal
148 x 210 x 33 cm