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Moena Maiotui,
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60 years since the first nuclear test: two days for a reminder



Tahiti, June 25, 2026 - The desire of the government of Polynesia is clear: to keep alive the memory of the French nuclear tests carried out in Polynesia, starting on July 2, 1966. Aldebaran, this first launch marked the beginning of 30 years of nuclear experiments that have profoundly shaken the Fenua.

The first attempt, 60 years later. This is the framework of the two-day event organised by the Delegation for the Monitoring of the Consequences of Nuclear Tests (DSCEN) on 2 and 3 July. A program of commemorations is imagined to "remember what has been done". A special event called "1966 – 2026. Aldebaran – Moruroa. Ono 'ahuru matahiti". For two days, a site is specially set up to host the event: the Pū Māhara gardens (rue Dupetit-Thouars, opposite Bougainville Park) which open their doors to visitors for the first time in several decades. The environmental and health impacts of nuclear tests will be addressed through conferences, exhibitions, documentary screenings and round tables.

For this occasion, the Centre des métiers d'art (CMA) has joined forces with the DSCEN to offer several artistic creations intended to be integrated into the future interpretation centre dedicated to the history of nuclear tests, Pū Māhara. Its completion of construction was confirmed by Titaua Peu. "When I took office, the president, with all his humour, told me: 'Here you are, you have four 4-metre long aito from Moruroa. You're doing something with it,'" says Titaua Peu, advisor for monitoring the consequences of nuclear tests at the DSCEN. This memorial site plans to open to the public in 2030.

In the meantime, she has finally found what to do with these aito, since three contemporary sculptures made from four trunks will be unveiled to the public on July 2. Shaped into ceremonial and rā'au instruments, these trunks were worked by Tahirai Iputoa and Tuavai Teinaore, students in the professional certificate of arts and crafts, specialising in sculpture, at the CMA.

"Our

first question, when we saw the trunks, was: Are they radioactive? We were told no. It has already taken a little sweat out of our brow," laughs Tahirai Iputoa. The sculptures are now 99% complete. "There will be the last 1% left on D-Day," he adds.

Another strong symbol: specialists in tapa, a traditional fabric associated with high royalty, will



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24/06/2026

offer a demonstration of how to make it. *"The link between tapa and nuclear tests, I would say it's power,"* says Tahurai Iputoa.

The memory will also pass through a huge 73-meter fresco created by Dhyhan Frébault and Rahiti Hapaitahaa Conroy, students in the National Diploma of Crafts and Design (DN MADE). Commissioned by the DSCEN with the support of the Centre des métiers d'art, this work will dress the façade of the Pū Māhara garden around the theme of navigation. The two young artists spent a little more than two months on its realization.

"These testimonies are becoming rare"

Photographer Julie Pomery will exhibit a series of shots of the landscapes of the former CEP rear base, Hao. *"I knew a former soldier who had gone there. That's what made me want to photograph these places in 2008,"* she says.

All participants recognize that nuclear testing remains a sensitive subject. For Julie Pomery, when she exchanges with the inhabitants concerned, *"there is a lot of shame"* and a desire for the subject to become less taboo. An observation shared by the two students of the DN MADE: *"This kind of event allows us to break taboos. At school, we learned almost nothing about this period, even though it is part of our history."*

For Titaua Peu, these creations are also intended to open up dialogue: *"The idea is to bring the debates to the Pū Māhara garden, so that they are not reserved for scientists alone. It is also that these young people can meet, discuss and debate."*

The advisor for monitoring the consequences of nuclear tests at the DSCEN explains that many testimonies from those who experienced the tests will punctuate the event on July 2 and 3. *"We have more and more missing people, these testimonies are becoming rare,"* she said.

Pratique :

Programme complet : <https://www.tntvnews.pf/tntv/wp-content/uploads/2026/06/Programme-DSCEN-ALDEBARAN-2026-BD.pdf>

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