TAMA O le 'ELE'ELE

Art (Cover) by Ierenimo Pio, Spray paint on paper
Samoa Conference IV, 2018
National University of Samoa
TAMA O LE ELE’ELE, SAMOA CONFERENCE IV-2018

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Tama o le Ele’ele Art Catalogue
2018 Samoa Conference IV Juried Art Exhibition

Leua Latai & Minerva Taavao

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The former Vice Chancellor and President of the National University of Samoa, Professor Le’apai Tu’ua ‘Ilaoa Fui Lau Asofou So’o and the Samoa Conference IV Committee wishes to express their gratitude to Mr Nick Hurley, acting New Zealand High Commissioner for his assistance. The exhibition and art catalogue wouldn’t have been made possible without his invaluable support.
FOREWORD

I well remember being at NUS over five years ago when I was last New Zealand High Commissioner, seeing and discussing Samoan art. It was an historic time. In 2012 we worked in partnership with NUS to celebrate Samoa’s fifty years of independence and the Treaty of Friendship between Samoa and New Zealand. My absence from Samoa since 2013 has given me a unique opportunity to see for myself in this exhibition the exciting creativity that has developed over that time.

Back then, I wanted to recognise officially the artistic talents of Samoans, especially the work created in the fusion of New Zealand and Samoan creativity - in the same way as we all recognise the sporting talents of Samoans.

We wanted to highlight the amazing contribution of iconic artists like Fatu Feu’u, who left the village and Samoa in 1966 to go to New Zealand where he continues to be a major driver of Pasifika art, not only in his own work; but also as a major catalyst for fellow artists of Pacific heritage. We all know other artists such as Michel Tuffery who did inspirational art work around Samoa’s colonial and cultural heritage, and who has just designed the winning entry for the Pacific Islands memorial at New Zealand’s National War Memorial Park in Wellington. And there is of course Andy Leleisi’uao who last year won the prestigious Wallace Arts Trust Paramount Award. But there are numbers of others, both emerging and mature, who work in all sorts of mediums and who are inspiring New Zealand and the rest of the world.

Each of these artists demonstrates personally the way both cultures have become interwoven to produce the exhilarating Pasifika art we now come to expect in New Zealand.
In 2012, we also wanted to encourage Samoan artists based in New Zealand to reconnect with their Samoan culture. We arranged for a diverse group of artists to come to Samoa as a project, themed “Return to Hawaiiki,” which drew its inspiration from the cultural links between Samoa and Aotearoa going back centuries to early settlement of Aotearoa/New Zealand. Working with students and staff at NUS, they produced a range of works from music to murals to screen printing.

The artists included Josh Bashford, a young painting and print artist, Leanne Clayton working in print-making, Lonnie Hutchinson who creates multi-media and installation work and Matthew Salapu who is a musician working in areas as diverse as hip hop and classical music. We also had Daniel Mills who works on large scale paintings and murals, working with Samoan students in New Zealand.

We hoped that the engagement with such artists would help support artistic development in Samoa in the same way as Fatu has helped support a new wave of artists of Samoan heritage in New Zealand.

We hoped that the events and the interaction between the artists and Samoans would help build a platform for on-going collaboration between New Zealand and Samoa over the next fifty years - to continue to inspire and spark creativity among new generations of Samoans, drawing on the rich cultural resources represented by Samoans in New Zealand.

Seeing this exhibition demonstrates for me that our collective hopes are being fulfilled in the current generation. The creativity of Samoans is clearly evident and we can all be confident that the seeds of art planted a while ago continue to grow.
But that seed does not grow on its own. NUS plays a key role in nurturing the future icons of Samoan art. It is supported by institutions such as the Leulumoega School of Fine Arts, the Manamea Art Studio and the Tiapapata art centre. The exciting work in this exhibition demonstrates the value of those institutions in fostering and developing creative talent.

It’s why the annual Creative New Zealand residency at NUS continues to attract talented artists from New Zealand.

The flowering of talent would not have been possible without the commitment of the NUS, without the individual commitment of each artist, without the close partnership between the Governments of Samoa and New Zealand.

Thank you Vice Chancellor and your staff. And thank you to all the artists whose work has been displayed in this exhibition. I have been honoured to witness your work first-hand.

Tēnākoutou, tēnākoutou, tēnātatoukatoa.

Nick Hurley
Acting New Zealand High Commissioner
CURATORIAL STATEMENT:

TAMA O LE ELE’ELE JURIED ART EXHIBITION

The Samoa Conference IV Tama o le Ele’ele Art Exhibition is a juried exhibition, and it hails an historical milestone in the contemporary arts, culture and heritage in Samoa. The exhibition celebrates the energy, vitality, originality and the diversity of Samoan art in contemporary Samoa.

This exhibition gives centre stage for the first time to local Samoan artists living and working in Samoa. The title of the exhibition resonates with the Samoan metaphoric expression: “Tama o le Ele’ele”.

Tama o le Ele’ele embraces the artists’ connection to the land. In the ancient Samoan tradition, at the birth of a child (tama), the umbilical cord (pute) is cut and the placenta (fanua) is buried on ancestral land (ele’ele) in which the child is the heir. This connection with the land becomes the crux of a Samoan’s identity. ‘Tama’ denotes any reference to gender and embraces those whose ties descend from the land (palapala) and soil. We, the heirs to, children (fanau) living on this land gifted to us by our ancestors.

The works in this exhibition share a number of broad themes of cultural stereotypes, landscapes, fantasy, political and religious commentary, effects of climate change and Samoan heritage. Simple drawings portraying surreal images to doodles that encapsulate a moment in time and space, to complex layering of contexts that address racism and renditions of social injustices to global influences and the deteriorating
natural environment and effects of climate change are presented.

Of the thirty artists selected to exhibit in this exhibition, all of them live and practice in Samoa. These artists range from established artists to young emerging artists in performing arts, visual art and music. The art works express the complexity of their lives as Samoans rooted in this land and islands. Their personal experiences give them an insider perspective to their heritage, art and culture. Whilst they have access to the rich cultural heritage of their ancestors each artist brings an array of critical and informed independent thought in their expressions, illustrating an insider/outsider perspective of their culture and influence of other worlds. They have been able to look deep within themselves with fresh eyes in bringing to the fore front a unique range of imagery that speaks volumes of a generation not constrained with colonialist jargon but free from it.

In the works submitted, the artists whether established or just beginning all articulate a new visual language, drawing on their heritage, communal experience and rich understanding of who they are as people in the global context. The works expose a new way of seeing that reveals urgency, colourful, provocative, satiric, reflective and fresh views of Samoa-ness.

Contemporary Samoan art has been around since the late sixties and early seventies. Despite the success of Samoan artists moving and living abroad in the late sixties there was a distinctive art movement in Samoa that paved the way in the development of contemporary art in Samoa.
It was the year 1973 that foreshadowed the beginning of contemporary arts with an exhibit featuring three local Samoan artists, Momoe Malietoa Von Reiche, Ernesto Coter and Iosua Toafa. Some forty years later the arts has developed from the far cry of the seventies when the first contemporary art exhibition was held at the Tusitala Hotel. It was this exhibition that influenced the makeup of contemporary art of Samoa, as well as the ink drawings and water colour paintings by English painter John Poynton. Poynton’s paintings adorn hotels around Apia, including the Aggie Grey-Sheraton hotel at Mulifanua. One cannot dismiss his ram-shackled art gallery near the government building on Beach Road and his tall lanky figure a regular sight in Apia seen walking along the road holding his portfolio of paintings and drawings under his arm and food in his free hand from the sale of his works.

Today Samoa boasts of a handful of art galleries, such as the MADD Gallery managed and owned by Momoe Malietoa von Reiche. The Manamea Studio owned by former Leulumoega Fou School of Fine Art graduate Lalovai Peseta and his wife Nikki Mariner, the Beau Rasmussen Studio and the Vanya Taulealo Gallery, all contributing to education and the economic development of Samoa. We have three national museums the Robert Louis Stevenson Museum, the Samoa National Museum and the Congregational Christian Church of Samoa School of Fine Arts and Museum playing different roles in the preservation of our arts, heritage, tradition and crafts. Samoa has four schools of fine art the Beautiful Expressions of Nature B.E.N. School of Fine Art owned by former graduate of the Leulumoega Fou School of Fine Art Penehuro Papalii, the Tiapapata Art Centre administered by Steven Percival and his wife Wendy, the Leulumoega
Fou School of Fine Arts founded by the passionate Italian artist Ernesto Coter and his wife Maria Coter whose influences are evident in the arts and education in Samoa, and the Visual Art, Performing Arts and Music programs under the Faculty of Education at the National University of Samoa.

In addition, Samoa has its unique National Orchestra of Samoa supported by the Samoan Government and committed musicians volunteering their skills and talent to its development. In performing arts we have the Samoa Performing Arts & Creative Excellence studio, S.P.A.C.E. created by the late Tuilagi Seiuli Allan Alo for youth interested in pursuing a career in performing arts. Samoa has definitely come a long way.

In curating this exhibition it is significant to respond to the Samoa pathway, Small Island Development States (SIDS) efforts, to address the continuing challenges to maintain and mobilise the limited resources at hand for our future generations. The conference objective was to support, encourage and empower our existing local and emerging young artists to contribute to the diaspora of Samoan traditional and contemporary arts. The Samoa Conference IV theme; Our Heritage, our future: fostering sustainable development through leadership and innovation, aimed to bring together academics and practitioners to respond to the application of leadership, and innovation for sustainable development.

It is significant to address how the arts can pass on into the future the retention of our traditional knowledge, crafts, culture and heritage. How can we preserve these artefacts and knowledge? What means can we adopt to sanction the arts as a viable conduit in the economic development of Samoa? On reflection, world
organizations such as UNESCO, SIDS and UN all address the importance of sustainability through partnerships in building on each other’s strengths in moving forward.

This exhibition played a vital role in fostering partnerships in moving towards the future collectively, as evident in the response from our local art community. Selected in this exhibition were artworks and compositions from schools such as the Leulumoega School of Fine Art, the Manamea Art Studio, the Vanya Taulealo Gallery, S.P.A.C.E, the National Orchestra of Samoa, and the National University of Samoa. The Library of the National University of Samoa, exclusively sharing the Alfred James Tattersall Photographic Collection revealing a history and heritage of a time gone that is treasured. The photographs reveal the iconic leaders of the Mau movement that paved the way to what we are today, the independent state of Samoa. Displayed as well are portraits of our ancestors in traditional wear and landscapes of early Samoa in the 1900’s. Acknowledgement is extended to the Chief Librarian of the National University of Samoa, Avalogo Nanai Togi Manu Aifái Tunupopo and staff who initiated the photographic essay to be included for the first time for public view during the Tama o le Ele’ele art exhibition.

The artists in this exhibition all responded with enthusiasm submitting works of different genres. The artworks range from photography, to painting, drawing, installations, and soft sculpture. The reaction to the invitation to exhibit was overwhelmingly positive, demonstrating a great interest from the art community to participate. But is there enough support
for the arts in Samoa? Are we able to sustain the arts into the future?

The answer lies with the support of the Government of Samoa and the National University of Samoa in continuing to provide platforms to maintain vigorous discussions in sustaining and strengthening partnerships across the private sector in support of our arts, culture and heritage. Culture as defined by UNESCO is “…facing the future we have to treasure the past. For without roots we have no future.” (Culture Policy 2008: 1).

As the name of the exhibition entails, Tama o le Ele’ele is about the recognition and celebration of our creative arts, our cultural heritage, traditions and tufuga-artists. It is a reminder of the ability of what art can do to bring together groups of people towards a common goal and bridging the gap between each other. This idea embraces the significance of collaboration that is important in sustaining the future of the Arts in Samoa.

Leua Latai  
Curator
This review for the Samoa Conference IV Art Exhibition heralds an historical and ground-breaking exhibition. The exhibition included established and emerging artists in Samoa and art schools galleries and the national university. Never before has the public been able to experience such a rich array of artworks. The artworks in both two and three-dimensional form drew breath from Samoan communities, families, landscapes, events, values and fantasy.

Students and artists were selected from Leulumoega School of Fine Art, Manamea Art Studio, The Vanya Taule'aloo Gallery, and The National University of Samoa. This diverse group represented new emerging artists, and professional artists with established careers.

The works that were exhibited were chosen from a broad representation of the invited institutions and gave a thorough overview of the artists’ styles, sources of inspiration and skills. The exhibition photographs will attest to the quality of the works submitted.

The senior artists played a role of mentoring the younger artists and it was from the schools that we selected the winner for the Outstanding Awards and there were also three Honourable Mentions. Students from Leulumoega School of Fine Art, Manamea Art Studio and The National University of Samoa were recipients of these awards.
I am hopeful that the interest from this exhibition will inspire young artists to see a future in the arts and that The National University of Samoa will hold other exhibitions during these major conferences.

Signed

Dr. Vanya Taule’alo
# Table of Contents

**Acknowledgement**  

**Foreword**

**Curatorial Statement:**

**Jurors Statement**

**Manamea Art Gallery**

Lalovai Peseta  
Nikki Mariner  
Pele Loi  
William Mauola  
Louis Poutasi

**CCCS School of Fine Arts & Museum**

Kitiona Sinei  
Kolio Pita  
Benjamin Kalepo  
Stanley Setefano  
Pelelasio Penitito  
Heper Fesolai Maulalo  
Avealalo Siitaga  
Alofivae Fautua  
Sanele Leiataua
NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SAMOA
Lenora Rasmussen  
Tinai Kennar  
Edward Tauiliiili  
Ierenimo Pio  
Paese Papalii  

NATIONAL ORCHESTRA OF SAMOA  

SAMOA PERFORMING ARTS & CREATIVE EXCELLENCE (S.P.A.C.E)  

VA’A O MANU
PHOTOGRAPHIC ESSAY – ALFRED JAMES TATTERSALL COLLECTION, 2018
LIBRARY OF NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SAMOA  

“IN SEARCH OF THE ESSENCE” – DR. VANYA TAULE’ALO  

LEUA LATAI
Manamea Art Gallery
ARTIST BIO:

Lalovai is a Samoa-based artist who paints, tattoos and carves from Manamea Art Studio. He graduated from the Leulumoega Fou School of Fine Arts in 1998 and taught Visual Arts in Samoa until becoming a full-time professional artist in 2013. His paintings are influenced by his work as an award nominated tattooist, and are often monochromatic. He often draws on his own life experience and Samoan legends. Lalovai’s paintings have been exhibited and sold around the Pacific Region, Australia, New Zealand, and Europe.
ARTIST STATEMENT:

Samoans have been known to refer affectionately to their spouse as a food; a playful term of endearment. Lalovai entitled this piece 'My Pumpkin', inspired by a favourite photo of his wife. The monochromatic use of the colour orange also refers to the title. It's a dynamic and light-hearted Samoan painting: the rear view of a lavalava clad woman sitting cross-legged with her hair falling freely and full of tatau patterns.
Lalovai Peseta
“Focus”
16.5”x 23.4”
Acrylic on unstretched canvas, 2018

Lalovai Peseta
“Ifoga,” Private collection - Dr Vanya Taulealo
8’ x 4’
Acrylic on unstretched canvas, 2012
ARTIST BIO:

Nikki Mariner is a Samoa-based artist who paints full-time from Manamea Art Studio. Self-taught, Nikki’s figurative paintings use colour, texture, and tatau symbols to depict the interior lives of Pacific Island women in contemporary settings. Her personal life as a Samoan woman informs her practice as much as her doctoral research in Pacific History provides a rich and firm context to her work. Nikki’s original paintings can be found in private and corporate collections around the Pacific region, Australia, New Zealand, Europe and the United States.
ARTIST STATEMENT:

'Tausi on Linen' is a cameo piece in Nikki's Tausi Series. The Tausi series explores the interior lives of women who become a 'tausi' by default when their Samoan husband is bestowed with a chiefly title. In support of her matai, the tausi should exemplify virtues of tamaitai Samoa such as service and modesty, over the individual traits of her personality. She chooses this role out of love.

This painting shows her wearing her white church clothing with her hair tied up in a bun. A common sight seen every Sunday in Samoa this iconic image is a role, but behind the role of tausi is an individual woman.
ARTIST STATEMENT:
'Suga on linen' is a cameo piece on linen canvas, in Nikki’s popular 'Suga Series' of paintings. The Suga Series explores the individual lives of Samoan women with the intention of telling our own stories from the inside. Samoan women rarely paint Samoan women. It's usually male artists or non-Samoan artists who paint us. A recurring theme in the Suga paintings is how Samoan women find a balance between individual growth in a global contemporary life, and serving their family and cultural expectations. This little painting is a part of that conversation.
ARTIST BIO:

Pele was Lalovai's art student at Avele College, and came first in the nationwide internal assessment for Visual Arts when he graduated in 2007. He joined Manamea Art Studio as a full-time artist in early 2015. Pele focuses on carving and painting in his work at the studio. Pele's painting styles are in the vein of surrealism and expressionism. His artwork can be found in private collections in Australia and New Zealand.

Pele Loi
“A Mother’s Love”
23.4” x33.1”
Acrylic on unstretched canvas, 2018
Pele Loi
“The Painful Truth”- Best of Show
4’ x 4’
Acrylic on unstretched canvas, 2018
**ARTIST BIO:**

William graduated from the Leulumoega Fou School of Fine Arts in 2013 and joined Manamea Art Studio as a full-time artist in early 2016. William focuses on carving and painting in his work at the studio. William paints in two styles mainly, abstract and realism. His original work has sold to collectors, private and corporate, in Australia, New Zealand, and Samoa.

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**William Mauola**

“Aiā tatau a tamaiti”

4’ x 4’

Acrylic on unstretched canvas, 2018
ARTIST BIO:

Louis graduated from the Leulumoega Fou School of Fine Arts in 2013, and joined Manamea Art Studio as a full-time artist in 2018. Louis focuses on carving and painting in his work at the studio. Louis's painting is in the styles of abstract and realism. He is driven by Samoan tattoos and ‘siapo’ patterns.

Louis Poutasi
“Mamanu Samoa II”
16.5” x 23.4”
Acrylic on unstretched canvas, 2018

Louis Poutasi
“Tuinanau o mata”
16.5” x 23.4”
Acrylic on unstretched canvas,
CCCQS School Of Fine Arts & Museum
Kitiona Sinei is in his fourth year at the Leulumoega School of Fine Art. He is from the village of Manono and enjoys fishing. He finds inspiration in nature and his family. Kitiona is multi-faceted in his approach to art making and has a passion for carving and painting. His paintings are in the style of realism. He has participated widely in numerous local exhibitions. His painting, ‘Tepatasi,’ received best of show, at the National University of Samoa Conference IV, “Tama o le Eleele” art exhibition. ‘Tepatasi’ translated to look again comments on the consequences of dangerous driving. Sinei is reflecting on the lives of those who were taken by a tragic bus accident in 2018. He is imploring us to appreciate how precious life is.
Kitiona Sinei
“Tepatasi,” Best of Show
4’x 8’ x 2’
Acrylic on wood,
2018
Kolio Pita has always aspired to be an artist. He attended Leulumoega Fou College before committing fulltime studies at the Leulumoega School of Fine Arts. He is from the village of Tufulele and enjoys drawing human figures, painting portraits of family members and addressing his concerns on health. Kolio is passionate about nature and often paints the beautiful natural environment of Samoa. His paintings reflect his interest in the style of abstract expressionism and his concern for ones well-being. Kolio graduated in 2018 and has moved to New Zealand to pursue further studies.
Kolio Pita
“My niece”
2’x 3’
Acrylic on canvas,
2018
Benjamin Kalepo is from the village of Siumu. He has a passion particularly in carving and painting. His art is informed by nature, and everyday daily experiences. Benjamin finds inspiration in the works of various artists, in emotions and in life experiences. His paintings are his observations of modern life in the Samoan village. Benjamin graduated in 2018 and currently works at Tissan Studio.
Stanley Setefano has an interest in the styles of realistic art and expressionism. He is from the village of Moata’a and is proud of his culture and heritage. He enjoys participating in cultural activities as a ‘tauleáleá,’ immersing himself as a young man in family duties and responsibilities. These family and cultural obligations informs his practice and plays a major role in his artistic development. Stanley hopes to have his own studio and gallery in the near future.
Peelasio Penitito is from the village of Sinamoga. He is in his third year completing his studies at the Leulumoega School of Fine Art. Penetito is interested in graphic design, drawing and painting. He enjoys studying about other artists and likes to experiment with various mediums. He continues to explore other lines of work and actively seeks ways to improve his art. He is interested in modern art particularly in patterns and textures in nature as well as man-made textiles. He hopes to pursue further studies at a higher institution locally.
Heper Fesolai Maulalo is from the village of Faleasau. He has always aimed to be an artist and investigates what is real and reality in his paintings. He is interested in modern art and likes to read about the lives of contemporary artists. His current paintings comment on what we see and what is not seen in life, and the evolving changes in Samoan culture. Adopting the block painting technique, Heper fuses what is reality in life through his process.

Heper Fesola’i Maulalo
“Self Portrait”
2’x 3’
Acrylic on canvas, 2018

Heper Fesola’i Maulalo
“Portrait of Pelenato Liufau”
2’x 3’
Acrylic on canvas, 2018
Avealalo Siitaga is from the village of Laulii. He is an avid painter of landscapes and the natural environment. His works range from wood carvings of Samoan culture, portraiture and landscapes. He is inspired in keeping his culture and heritage alive and also enjoys learning about other artists. He likes to explore contemporary forms of his culture in his carvings. His style is reflective of modern art and realism. He is interested in developing his skills and understanding of the contemporary world so he is prepared to explore new opportunities in the arts.
Avealalo Siitaga
“Government Building”
2’ x 3.5’
Acrylic on canvas, 2018
Alofivae Fautua is from the village of Manono. He likes carpentry and constructing things and excels in sculpture and painting. The stain glass art works were commissioned for the Lotofaga Congregational Christian Church. The stain glass art exhibited are in the art deco style and depict the Christian creation story, illustrating his interest in the natural environment of Samoa. He graduated last year and currently works from home in his studio.
Alofivae Fautua
“O le foafoaga I” Honourable Mention
8’x 4’
Stain glass art, commissioned for the Congregational Christian Church Lotofaga
2018

Alofivae Fautua
“O le foafoaga II,” Honourable Mention
8’x 4’
Stain glass art, commissioned for the Congregational Christian Church Lotofaga
2018
Sanele Leiataua has a passion for modern art and realism which is reflected in his artworks. He believes that we are burdened by our obligations to ourselves, our family and our community and forget the wonders of the natural world and life. His paintings are mere observations of the beauty held within nature and environment which he enjoys painting.

Sanele Leiataua
“Manulele”
3’x 2’
Acrylic on canvas, 2018
Sanele Leiataua
“Survival”
2’x 3’x 2’
Acrylic on canvas,
2018
Lenora Rasmussen

“Teine Samoa,” Honourable Mention
11.7” x 16.5”
Water colour and ink on paper, 2018

ARTIST BIO:

Lenora Rasmussen is an undergraduate student at the National University of Samoa. She majors in English Literature and Visual Arts. She has a passion for the Arts and plans to make a career of it in the fields of photography, animation and graphic design. She currently received a scholarship to study abroad in China in 2019.

Lenora has sold her works and exhibited internationally. Her art has been published with the University of Auckland and Indiana South-East University.
Lenora Rasmussen & Beau Rasmussen
“Taupou Samoa,” Private collection Dr Seve Folototo
Collaboration with Beau Rasmussen
3’x 2.5’x 2’
Gold paint on canvass, shells and wood, 2018

Lenora Rasmussen
“Old Samoan farmhouse”
11.7” x 16.5”
Water colour and ink on paper, 2018
ARTIST BIO:

Tinai Kennar is a contemporary visual artist studying at the National University of Samoa. He aspires to teach art at a Secondary School in Samoa. He finds inspiration in his environment and daily conversation with friends. Tinai has participated in numerous international conferences such as the 2017 Pacific Art Association Conference and published his works in collaboration with Indiana Southeast University from the United States. His art works are in the art movements of surrealism and expressionism. His paintings are informed by nature, social issues and everyday life experiences. He currently runs a small business selling elei and paintings to support himself and his family. Tinai is studying towards a degree in History and Visual Arts.
Tinai Kennar
“Self-portrait”
3’x 5’x 2’
Acrylic on canvas, 2018

Tinai Kennar
“Tsunami”
4.3’x 5’
Acrylic on unstretched canvas, 2018
Tinai Kennar
“Samoan landscape,”
Best of Show
3’x 2.8’
Paper cutting on construction paper,
2018
Edward Tauiliili

ARTIST BIO:

Edward Tauiliili is completing his Foundation Certificate at the National University of Samoa and hopes to complete a degree in the Arts. He is interested in a career as an illustrator and a graphic artist. Edward has published his artworks in collaboration with the University of Auckland and Indiana Southeast University. His drawings blend his interest in Samoan motifs and legends. Edward likes to create narratives of his Samoan life experiences with his constant evolving world. He hopes to continue studying towards a higher degree in the Arts.
Edward Tauiliili

“Fallen angel,” Honourable Mention
8.3” x 11.7”
Pen and ink on paper,
2018
Edward Tauiliili
“Demonic emotions”  
8.3”x 11.7”  
Pen and ink on paper, 2018

Edward Tauiliili
“Bane Existence”  
8.3”x 11.7”  
Pen and ink on paper, 2018
ARTIST BIO:

Ierenimo Pio is an undergraduate student at the National University of Samoa. He is in his first year pursuing a degree in Business, Marketing and Visual Arts. He has a passion for the Arts and is interested in a career in business in promoting and selling his artwork. Ierenimo enjoys experimenting with various mediums. He finds inspiration in studies of the universe and strives to create inspirational works combining his interest in movie characters, the fantasy world and things that are Samoan. Ierenimo has sold and published his artworks overseas, in international art catalogues with institutions such as the Indiana Southeast University and locally.
Ierenimo Pio
“Vanimonimo”
Honourable Mention
16.5”x 23.4”
Spray paint on canvas, 2018

Ierenimo Pio
“Jack Frost with to’oto’o and fue”
12”x 17”
Spray paint on canvas, 2018
Leivila Okesene

"Joan"
11.7”x 16.3”
Pen and pencil on paper, 2018

Leivila Okesene

“Spiritual Journey”
11.7”x 16.3”
Pen and pencil on paper, 2018

Leivila Okesene

“Prisoner”
11.7”x 16.3”
Pen and pencil on paper, 2018

ARTIST BIO:

Leivila Okesene wants to be an illustrator and is interested in opening up her own graphics and comic studio where she hopes to work with an assistant in creating films. She enjoys drawing and painting as well as illustrating children’s books. Leivila is currently pursuing a degree in the Arts at the National University of Samoa.
Paese Papalii

**ARTIST BIO:**

Paese Papalii is an undergraduate student in her first year, pursuing a Bachelor of Samoan Studies with a minor in Visual Art. She enjoys drawing, painting, and designing and would like a career in teaching at secondary level. She likes to design and illustrate books. Her artworks have been recently published in international catalogues and books with the University of Auckland and Indiana South-East University.
Paese Papalii
“Doodling I”
11.7”x 16.5”
Ink pen on wax paper, 2018
Paese Papalii
“Wearable art” Honourable Mention
Recycled newspaper and milk cartons, 2018

Paese Papalii
“Wearable art”
Recycled bottle tops and newsprint
2018

Paese Papalii
“Wearable art”
Recycled newsprint and brown paper bags,
2018
National Orchestra of Samoa
The National Orchestra of Samoa was launched in 2012 by a small group of committed volunteer members. Since its’ launch great strides have been achieved in its development by all those involved in its beginnings. With perseverance and persistence, there is now a small core group of passionate musicians that have continued its growth. The Orchestra was established by the Government of Samoa.

The director of the orchestra P.J. Ieriko accepted the invitation for the orchestra to perform, at the opening of the Tama o le Ele’ele exhibition. The eight member group performed various numbers from local Samoan songs to a mixture of pop music to renowned classical pieces. The selected compositions proudly exhibited the talent of our young people very much attuned to the eclectic genres of music influencing them today.

With the Samoa conference theme emphasising the importance of our heritage, our future and fostering sustainable development through leadership, innovation and collaboration the National Orchestra of Samoa displays its innovative existence in its programs. Looking forward to the future the orchestra finds it crucial to continue to attract qualified volunteers and visiting international musicians to conduct training to improve the overall music skills amongst the orchestra and its members. As pointed out by its director that “the National Orchestra cannot be built in one day, but has a bright and very promising future.”
The late Tuilagi Seiuli Allan Alo creator of the first Samoan, Samoa Performing Arts & Creative Excellence Studio, S.P.A.C.E located at Fugalei, Apia.

*Image courtesy of Samoa Observer, 2017*
New S.P.A.C.E Director
Valentino Maliko continuing his Uncle Allan’s legacy
*Image courtesy of Samoa Observer, 2019*

S.P.A.C.E. dancer’s rehearsing at the dance studio at Fugalei, 2017
*Image courtesy of S.P.A.C.E, 2019*
S.P.A.C.E is a dance studio established by the late TuilagiSeiuli Allan Alo. He was the Pacific Outreach Coordinator and Director for Polynesia and the Oceania Dance Theatre at the University of the South Pacific, Suva, Fiji. He created to provide a platform to nurture young people interested in Performing Arts and has been influential in the development of performing arts in Samoa and the Pacific. S.P.A.C.E exists as an open space to cultivate and nurture the creativity of youth interested in the performing arts as a career.

“This is something that I have always been passionate about and this is something we haven’t done in Samoa. S.P.A.C.E was a warehouse that was given to me by my mother so I renovated the whole place. The project is about the development in the arts and creating a platform for young people to realise their
true potential in terms of the arts, whether its dance, music, painting or anything, its main purpose is to develop creativity in Samoa.”

S.P.A.C.E follows the philosophy by the late Professor Epeli Hauofa, that “unless we create spaces where we can create our autonomy and creativity we can never be free.”

S.P.A.C.E performing arts dance group led by its new director Valentino Maliko breathes a fresh spin on the dances with renewed energy, adding another layer to the performances Allan is renowned for. The selected pieces performed for the Tama o le Ele’ele exhibition resonated Allan’s dynamic choreography with renewed energy and fresh unique compositions by Allan’s nephew, Maliko. The audience witnessed a torch passed on and the continuation of what was Allan Alo’s legacy to a new generation of Samoan dancers. Witnessed were the fusion of the old and the new and a heritage of young performing artists continuing a legacy into the future.
Va’a o Manu
Photographic Essay — Alfred James Tattersall Collection, 2018
Library of National University of Samoa
Alfred James Tattersall was a New Zealand photographer who lived in Samoa from 1866 – 1951. He contributed a significant collection of images of Samoa and its peoples during the colonial era. Tattersall moved to Samoa in 1886 to work as an assistant in the studio of John Davis when Great Britain, Germany and the United States of America were vying for control of the Samoa Islands. Many of his photographs are significant in the history of Samoa and covered the periods of German Samoa 1900 – 1914, followed by Samoa under New Zealand which witnessed the rise of the pro-independence Mau movement. This period of colonial photography in the South Pacific provided tropical landscapes and indigenous people a ‘fascination’ for foreign photographers. Apart from his landmark historical event photographs, Tattersall also photographed hundreds of landscape scenery and studio portraits of Samoans posing in traditional attire. He had a photography studio in Wellington and later gifted most of his photo collection to the Alexander Turnbull Library - the Heritage Collection of which is now part of the National Library of New Zealand in Wellington.

“The Va’a o Manu Photographic Essay Tattersall collection was gifted to the people and government of Samoa by the Chief Executive Officer of the National Library of New Zealand during the 2000
millennium celebrations. “It was the Hon. Naomi Fiame Matáfa as the Minister of Education, Sports & Culture at the time who placed the collection under the care of the National University of Samoa Library. The collection comprises of black and white photographs named Vaá o Manu by Tupuola Malifa and Alfred Hunkin. Vaá o manu references the gift as a vessel of blessing between Samoa and New Zealand,” (Nanai, A.T., 2019). The Va’a o Manu photographs were a significant contribution to the exhibition by Tunupopo Avalogo Manu Aifaifai Nanai, the Chief Librarian of the National University of Samoa in recognition and acknowledgement of Samoan history and heritage. These images were displayed for the first time in public during the NUS Samoa Conference IV, Tama o le Exhibition revealing a pictorial history of Samoa’s journey to independence.
“IN SEARCH OF THE ESSENCE” – Dr. Vanya Taule’alo
I have long been an advocate for the natural environment in Samoa, and the wider sphere. My concern regarding the impact of climate change is critical and real. I have spent over twelve years researching and creating paintings, installations and photographic works based on themes relating to unsustainable use of fragile ecosystems, tsunamis, and climate change.

In this new series ‘In Search of the Essence’ I am drawn to the selection and collecting of treasured earthy objects. During the gathering and in the keeping of particular objects I recall their smell, touch, texture and place of origin. The integration of these memory objects with the creative process adds a further dimension to what I am conveying. I am commenting on the very elemental giving of life, of life itself and the taking away of life through our interactions with the earth, leading to decline of environs and species.

Earth Mother is the conduit to all life, all beings, and all the elements that make up our planet and other galaxies. She is distinctively female and bountiful. From her prolific life giving force, all living things emerge. Earth Mother is a conscious, living, breathing entity – with feelings and thoughts just like any other conscious living entity. In my mind I see her as a “Goddess” due to her unique wisdom, compassion and spiritual power. Samoan words associated with our Earth Mother are eleele earth, palapala, mud. blood, fatu, rock, heart, fanua placenta, pute, navel, (the place of attachment for the foetus and mother, the life giving connection).
Earth Mother surrounds us and is inside us; she is everywhere. She is the sand, rocks, wood, ash, and metals that make up the earth under our feet. She is also the water, rivers, the sea, the sky, the shells, the coral, the fish the insects and animals. The water in our flesh, our bones, and all the microscopic cells inside our bodies all come from Mother Earth and are part of the Earth.

The pains we inflict upon Earth Mother are of our doing, we are the abusers of the Earth, and we turn our lands and oceans into uninhabitable, barren masses. As a sentient being, she can feel the harm we are doing to her. The pollution, and the rapid destruction of liveable ecosystems, is the result of our inherent greed and lust for power. Our small islands will no longer shelter us, nor will we find our food security within the oceans, or from the lands.

“In Search of the Essence”, collected items are a visual signifier of the beginning, life, and later on of death. I delight in the soil, the colours, the textures, the shells, the wood; the burnt branches of a cinnamon tree felled in a cyclone, the ash from the smoker fire, and the beauty of copper wrapping coral and stone. I gathered these from many parts of the globe, and keep for use many years later. When I look at these objects, I recall place and people associated with them – these are important conveyers of smell, history and time and place.

Human kinds’ destruction of the earth greatly concerns me. By using these basic elements in my paintings I am showing my love and respect for Mother Earth, and my connectedness to her. Her bounty brings me joy and sustenance that is physical, emotional and spiritual. To witness her suffering and dying fills me with a sense of utter despair. We need to recognize that the planet and the people on it are ultimately one and the same.

**Paintings:**
The Essence – Earth Mother is a life giving force. She symbolises life, birth, motherhood, the channel, the vessel of all beings animate and inanimate. She is the elleleel, (earth), the palapala, (mud blood), fatu, (the rock, heart), fanua (the placenta) and the pute, (the navel, the place of attachment for the foetus and mother, the life giving connection).

Earth Mother gives us life and protection. At the top of the canvas, stones, coral and shells have been lovingly wrapped in copper wire. They are offered as presents given to us by Mother Earth, precious and to be treasured.

The Beginning – Into the light emerges organic shapes embossed into an intaglio print representing an ultrasonic glimpse of creation and the shells and coral are gifts from Earth Mother. Ash and sand are mixed with pigment paint and applied by hand to give the canvas a real and elemental feel. The colours of red and blue in all the paintings are spiritual and sacred colours.

The End – Full of symbolism the triangle is both a universal symbol of unity and also a symbol of Samoan mountains. The cross symbol indicates the death of life as we know it on earth, a loss of life and innocence. The small golden Togo plant died as a result of earlier climate research I was doing. By painting it as something golden and therefore valuable I gave it life in another form, able to transmit a message even through its untimely death. The other golden objects are a mangrove leaf and a piece of rubbish collected from the mangroves. Above these loved yet dead objects are placed pieces of charcoal used for the burning and cooking of food in Samoa. The paradox of survival versus the environment is poignantly portrayed in this work. The turtle symbol at the top of the painting represents a turtle that upholds and supports the earth.
Vanya Taule’alo
“The Essence”
from “In Search of the Essence” Series.
August 2018.
mixed media, ash, sand, pigment and acrylic paints, shells, stones, coral and copper on canvas

Vanya Taule’alo
Detail of ‘The Essence’
August, 2018
Stone, shell, coral and copper wire
Vanya Taule'alо
‘The Beginning’
“In Search of the Essence” Series
August 2018.
Mixed media mixed media, ash, sand, pigment and acrylic paints, intaglio prints, shells, coral and copper on canvas
Vanya Taule'alo
“The End”
August 2018.
mixed media, ash, sand, pigment and acrylic paints, shells, stones, coral and copper, leaf, seed and small togo (mangrove) seedling on canvas
My work addresses the conceptual deception which embraces the notions of desire and repulsion and the idealisation of indigenous people throughout history. The response to these views revolves around the authenticity and representations of Samoa, its culture, traditions and beliefs in the arts. In my art making process I create my own systems of deconstruction, the result becomes a depiction of a personal journey adding to what history has embedded through time, presenting a view from the perspective of a Samoan. The concepts evident in the early nineteenth century art and photographs reveal an outsiders fantasy of the exotic, which are the basis of my search for truth.

Throughout history, the western fantasy of the primitive has been expressed as a myth of savagery, and violence and I am particularly interested in the conceptual deception that contains the elements of desire and repulsion (Torgnovick, 1994), as well as how the western projects the savage as a form of escapism in nineteenth century art and photography. My continuing response to these ideologies and representations is in taking ownership of these systems in creating a Samoan interpretation and response. The installations I continue to create drive a standpoint that results in the rejection of these western notions.
Leua Latai
Detail of: Samoan woman sitting with legs outstretched
3’ x 3’ x 2.7”
Triptych: mixed media, siapo, waxed string, recycled specimen bottles, shells and found wood, 2017

Leua Latai
Samoan woman from the front, side and back
Mixed media, specimen bottles, waxed string, shells, siapo cloth and constructed wood, 2018
3’ x 2.8’ x 1.6’