

TAUTAI

CONTEMPORARY PACIFIC ARTS TRUST

MARCH 2010

dagmar dyck a labour of love



Kupesi Styles



Ngatu 60 ae 62



Bound to Honour

March symbolises for our city a time where we celebrate all things Pasifika. Festivals such as Pasifika and Polyfest although ephemeral in nature are points in our calendar where we acknowledge the place and importance of Pacific cultures within the fabric of our society. Our visibility both politically and culturally can be attributed to the many Pacific people who pioneered in new fields and mediums. One such pioneer is painter and printmaker Dagmar Vaikalafi Dyck. Graduating from ELAM School of Fine Arts in 1995 Dagmar was one of the first contemporary Tongan women artists in New Zealand. In her seventeen years she has exhibited extensively in Australia and New Zealand with many of her works now in public and private collections. For many of us our first encounter with her work was in a public space perhaps a council building, a hotel or a reception. Seeing her works in our public space simply by its presence, asserted for many a sense of belonging within the social milieu of Auckland.

Born and raised in Auckland Dagmar who is of German and Tongan heritage, admits her childhood was more German than Tongan. Reflecting on her childhood she recalls very

'German Christmases' that filtered right down to the Christmas dinner menu. New Zealand formed a sort of meeting ground for both cultures; coincidentally it is also where both her parents met. Embracing both cultures was always encouraged in the Dyck home through countless family holidays to Tonga. In 1990 her parents moved to Vava'u and it was this shift that opened the door to new cultural opportunities. Working through the language barrier and the social perceptions of *hafekasi*, the visual experience of Tonga created for Dagmar a sense of home. As an artist Dagmar has travelled extensively to Germany, Australia and America yet her visual anchors have always been set in Tonga.

Dagmar emerged onto the Auckland art scene in 1993 while in her final years at ELAM. Her first exhibition modestly titled *New Prints 1995* at the Lane Gallery offered a new aesthetic in mainstream New Zealand printmaking. Her bright planes of colour were framed by bold black lines her motifs drawn from *ngatu* (decorated Tongan barkcloth), shells and other cultural referents. Many tried to grapple with this new hybridised style comparing her to Piet Mondrian's Neo-Plasticism, yet Dagmar

maintains her works then and now are more Matisse than Mondrian. As inspiration for her use of colour Dagmar looked to the paper cut outs of Tahiti by French artist Henri Matisse. Known for his mastery of colour the cut-outs captured memories and recollections of a place he visited sixteen years earlier. Like Matisse Dagmar's sensory use of colour conjures images of her time spent in Vava'u. The composition of her prints is a form of cartography mapping her memories and experiences of 'home'.

The following year in 1996 Dagmar explored Polynesian navigation and exchange in an early print series entitled *Plate Series*. These works referenced early European illustrations of Pacific objects by voyaging artists John Webber and Joseph Banks. Taken from history each object is re-contextualised within her *ngatu* inspired composition. By doing this she references the narrative qualities inherent in Tongan *ngatu*. In Tonga histories and events were often captured in the designs of *kupesi* boards (raised designed rubbing boards used to imprint patterns onto *ngatu*). Dagmar continues this visual narrative using illustrations of collected artefacts which represent discrete histories of contact and exchange in the Pacific. Placed within her



composition the hoard of artefacts such as headrests, ceremonial combs and kava bowls are more than curious objects in the wunderkammer they are also vessels of history, community and ancestry.

Heading into the new millennium Dagmar's art and life took a new direction as she entered motherhood. For Dagmar the bearings of this period of her career are marked by the arrival of her three beautiful children Ercan, Milania and Charlize. Through a string of exhibitions in the early 2000s Dagmar began an in-depth exploration into *koloa*, a general term that encompasses Tonga's tangible and intangible heritage, including material wealth. One of the first exhibitions of this body work aptly titled *Koloa 2001* at the Lane Gallery unravelled the labour intensive processes of weaving and basketry. Threaded throughout all of the works

was a visual process that documented the transformation of raw material to woven treasure. Following this, the exhibition *Embellish 2002* moved beyond the tangible object to explore the intrinsic values of *tapu* (sacredness) and *faka'apa'apa* (respect) embodied in *koloa*. Paintings in this exhibition such as *Bound to Honour 2002* looked at forms of Tongan dress such as *kiekie* (waist garments worn by women to formal events) as expressions of honour, respect and duty.

In 2005 whilst at a peak in her career Dagmar made the conscious decision to move to Wellington and take a break from the art scene to focus on raising her children. After a five year hiatus she has relocated to Auckland with a new sense of purpose. Inspired by her passion for sharing knowledge she completed a Graduate Diploma in Teaching in 2009. A true believer in hard work, while studying Dagmar also produced a refreshing new series of prints entitled *Kupesi Styles 2009*. Her use of colour is very deliberate in this series creating a clear distinction between old and new. Newer (appropriated) *kupesi* patterns such as the lion, crown and crest appear reinvigorated with colour. Juxtaposed next to these in the earthy tones of *ngatu* are older *kupesi* designs such as the *manulua*. This visual play of colour as a narrative tool indicates a more refined aesthetic which she attributes to her experiences as a mother, she explains, 'I would love to spend hours pouring over my work but children keep you grounded...time is precious and so my art practise has become more deliberate, more productive'.

Pushing her art further Dagmar ventured into new terrain in 2010 and participated in the

documentary project *Canvassing the Treaty*. The project paired three Maori artists with three artists of various cultural backgrounds and challenged these artists to examine the Treaty of Waitangi. Although this formula has been used in other art projects the desired outcome was not to contrive fractious marriages but for artists to work together and create shared visions for the future. Dagmar collaborated with prominent Maori artist Kura Te Waru Rewiri and together each artist drew from the rich symbolism of their culture. For Dagmar the Waitangi workshop opened her eyes to the parallel histories of contact between Maori and Pacific people. Drawing on their shared ancestry as descendants of the Lapita people Dagmar and Kura created a shared space from which to address the Treaty of Waitangi. Dagmar's participation in this project solidified for many Pacific people a sense of connection to New Zealand and its history.

Creating a sense of place and connection is a running theme throughout Dagmar's career. Exploring new mediums and new platforms from which to present culture, she has helped to bridge many Pacific people into the art world. Her distinctive style has served as a point of departure for many young artists as they search for their own artistic voice. For Dagmar success as an artist is measured not only by commercial success but more importantly her ability to share her culture with others. Like *ngatu* and other forms of *koloa* each painting and print becomes part of a circulating gift and a continuum of culture.

Faka'apa'apa atu
Nina Tonga

tautai news

Ni sa bula vinaka

Tautai Fresh Horizons

Our artist in residence for 2010 Jordan Souza arrived from Hawaii at the end of February to take up the five week residency. The residency offers 'a gift of time' to an artist who lives in the Pacific and is an opportunity for them to meet and interact with our art community in Auckland. We are grateful for support received from the United States Embassy towards Jordan's visit to New Zealand.

Circular Exhibition

Our thanks and congratulations to Leanne Clayton for her work in curating the Circular Exhibition at Artstation. The exhibition which ran from 2-13 March included the work of eleven artists. Leanne also arranged a very successful public program alongside the exhibition.

Sponsor

We thank Premium Beverages who have generously agreed to provide their "Coopers" premium beer product to us for our events in 2010.

OFFSTAGE 2

Following the successful OFFSTAGE performance evening at Galatos in 2009 Tautai is presenting OFFSTAGE2 at Galatos on 26 March 2010. The program for the evening will include experimental video works and artist performances.

Future Plans

The first of the Fresh Horizon workshops will take place in early April 2010 on the North Shore. Due to funding constraints it is anticipated that we will only be able to deliver three Fresh Horizons workshops this year and

not the four included in the program for the last two years.

Artist visits to the tertiary institutions in both Auckland and Wellington are currently being arranged and our tertiary exhibition is again confirmed at the St Paul St Galleries and will open in August.

As well as our current funding agreement with Creative New Zealand to the end of 2010, ASB Community Trust have confirmed funding for the next eighteen months. We are engaged with the Creative New Zealand review that is currently underway and will advise you of the outcome in due course.

We look forward to another positive and innovative year and thank you for your ongoing support.

Vinaka vaka levu
Gina Cole (Chair)

circular

artstation 3–13 march 2010

Curated by Leanne Clayton for Tautai this exhibition featured 11 artists responding to the cyclical aspects of our lives. Taking inspiration from a variety of objects and themes, the artists reinvented, re-appropriated and reused materials to create a diverse range of artworks. Artists included Lina Marsh whose colourful embroidered state houses celebrate migrant cultures settling down but also touch on state house suburbia. Other artists were Ela To'omaga, Ane Tonga and Theo Ah Wong,

sculptors Tui Hobson and Fa'afetai Amituanai, photographer Terry Koloamatangi Klavenes, multi-media artists Niki Hastings McFall and Siliga David Setoga, and Lily Aitui Laita who signified the importance of customary icons with the help of painted wooden coasters displayed to reference the Samoan national ensign.

In conjunction with *Circular* Tautai held two successful workshops. The first, a pacific inspired jewellery making workshop with New Caledonia based artist Ela To'omaga. The

second workshop involved students from an Auckland Girls Grammar English class, who got a taste of poetry with 'Fast Talking Pl' poet Dr Selina Tusitala Marsh. Given the basics of poetry writing, Selina asked the girls to respond to the *Circular* artworks using their new found skills.

Both workshops raised a lot of thoughtful discussion about the exhibition and left a lasting impression on the students who took part.



Opening night crowd around installation by Siliga David Setoga



Nina Tonga and Edith Amituanai



Lina Marsh's work



Luisa Setoga, Ela To'omaga Kaikilekofe, Leanne Clayton



Lily Aitui Laita's work

artist ela to'omaga kaikilekofe
held a pacific jewellery making workshop as part of circular



Maila Urale and Pusi Urale



Participants hard at work



Leanne Clayton, Ela To'omaga Kaikilekofe, Marlaina Key

selina tusitala marsh led a workshop with students from auckland girls grammar as part of circular



Dr Marsh with some of the students

jordan souza

tautai artist in residence 2010

Jordan Souza, Tautai's current artist in residence, did not follow what some may consider a conventional path to the practise of visual arts. A career in the arts was not on the agenda when upon leaving high school he enrolled in a marine biology programme at the Hawaii Pacific University. While he was a consistent student, marine biology did not have the significance for Jordan he imagined it would. He found himself filling his notebooks with drawings and an interest in tattooing eventually set him on a path towards art. After two and a half years of marine study, despite opposition from family and friends who thought he would have a more successful career as a scientist, he decided to enrol in a Bachelor of Fine Arts at the University of Hawaii in Manoa.

Initially, from his interest in tattooing, Jordan had a desire to explore drawing techniques so started his study within graphic design and drawing. It was on a whim to diversify and expand his practise that he took an introductory paper to sculpture. This impulsive decision turned out to have significant ramifications for Jordan's art practise as he went on to major in sculpture. Jordan studied stone work and wood carving and now works predominantly within sculpture, taking traditional Hawaiian concepts and pushing them into a contemporary context.

After completing his BFA, Jordan took up a tattooing apprenticeship under noted tattooist, photographer and anthropologist Tricia Allen. Tattooing has been an ongoing interest for Jordan and acts as another creative outlet, his art practise informing his tattooing and vice versa.



Jordan with last years artist in residence Jeffrey Feeger at the opening of Jeffrey's exhibition at Whitespace.

He is currently studying towards a Masters in Pacific Studies at the University of Hawaii focussing on tattooing. Jordan's research around tattooing was one of his reasons for applying to be Tautai's artist in residence.

Since being in New Zealand he has been overwhelmed by the local art scene and the welcoming treatment he has received. Being able to attend exhibitions and meet New Zealand artists has been an invaluable experience for Jordan as it has "re-inspired him to start making art again". One of the main factors that has led to this re-inspiration for Jordan has been "the people" – meeting new people, making connections and new friendships that may last a lifetime. He has also gained a lot of inspiration from seeing other ways in which contemporary art work can include Pacific ideas.

For the remainder of his residency Jordan plans to continue meeting artists and taking in as much of the art scene as he can. He is also keen to continue research for his thesis on tattooing and is looking forward to meeting more local tattooists and taking home a few tattoo of his own. After his residency is finished he plans to stay in New Zealand for a bit longer with research trips to Rotorua and Wellington planned. However, he is also anxious to get back home as he is part of an upcoming group exhibition in Hawaii and with his renewed impetus for art making is looking forward to creating something new. When asked what that might be Jordan replies "...it's a surprise".

Tyla Vaeau

Patron: Fatu Feu'u

Board of Trustees: Gina Cole (Chair), Caroline Vercoe, Cerisse Palalagi, Colin Jeffery, Graham Fletcher, Janet Lilo, Kolokesa Māhina-Tuai, Michelle Khan, Ron Brownson

Tautai Office: Christina Jeffery (Manager), Jean Clarkson (Fresh Horizons Program Manager), Nooroa Tapuni and Marlaina Key (Administrators)

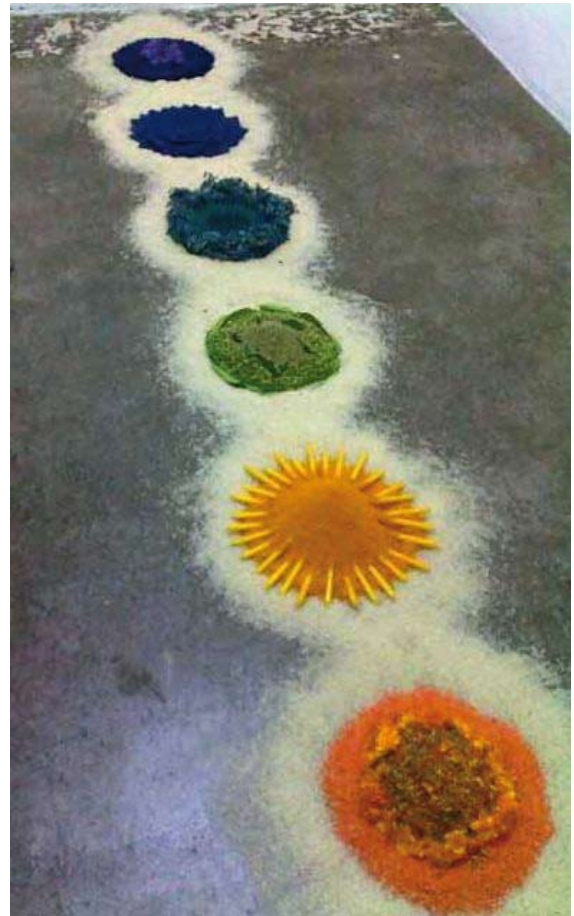
gallery



Loloma Andrews and Leanne Clayton at the opening of Sheyne Tuffery's exhibition at the Waiheke Community Art Gallery



A glimpse of Sheyne Tuffery's work at Waiheke



Part of Tiffany Singh's exhibition *Union* at MIC Toi Rerehiko



Niki Hastings McFall's *splotosome* at *Splore 2010*



Jeffrey Feeger and Deborah White with Campbell Smith from Verandahs Lodge who has been very generous with support of our artist in residence program

events & exhibitions

april | may | june 2010

Until December 2010. *Assembling Bodies*. Shigeyuki Kihara at University of Cambridge Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge, UK

26 February – 11 April. *La fine del mondo*. Edith Amituanai at Corbans Estate Art Centre, Henderson

10 March – 10 April. *The Gaze*. Includes Shigeyuki Kihara at Mark Hutchins Gallery, Wellington

11 March – 1 May. *Last ride in a hot air balloon*. 4th Auckland Triennial, includes Shigeyuki Kihara. ARTSPACE. Auckland

12 March – 1 May. *Union*. Tiffany Singh at MIC Toi Rerehiko, KRd, Newton, Auckland

15 March – 29 May. *Manuia*. Mahiriki Tangaroa, Kay George, Andy Leleisi'uao, Michel Tuffery, Michael Tavioni, Jerome Shedden at American Indian Community House, 11 Broadway, 2nd floor, New York

17 March – 16 April. *Dan Taulapapa McMullin*. Okaiocanikart, Newton, Auckland

19 March – 10 April. *Plastic*. Czarina Alisi Wilson at Fresh Gallery Otara, Manukau City

30 March – 24 April. *Emerging Artists Exhibition* at Warwick Henderson Gallery, Parnell includes Loloma Andrews

1 April – 16 April. *Hang Fire*. Includes Dan Taulapapa McMullin. University Art Gallery, University of California, Irvine, California

5 April – 13 June. *TINO RANGATIRA TANGA*. Leilani Kake. City Gallery, Wellington

13 April – 7 May. *New Works*. Dan Taulapapa McMullin. McCarthy Art Gallery, Parnell, Auckland

15 April – 8 May. *Tongan Style*. Curated by Kolokesa Māhina-Tu'ai and Manuāsina Māhina at Fresh Gallery Otara, Manukau City

27 April – 22 May. *Tohinoa 'o 'eku Manatu (Journal of my memory)*. Stone Kulimoe'anga Maka, Karen Stevenson. CoCA - Centre of Contemporary Art, 66 Gloucester Street Christchurch

29 April 2010. *Voices of Art - An evening of art for animals*. Includes Shigeyuki Kihara, Sherman Contemporary Art Foundation, Sydney

1 May – 31 July. *Unnerved: the New Zealand Project*. Includes, Lorene Taurerewa, Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane

5 – 28 May. *Haere Mai I Okai*. Dagmar Dyck, Filani Filana Macassey, Nestor Opetai'a, Reuben Friend. okaiocanikart@Reef Gallery 69 Beach Rd Auckland

13 May – 12 June. *Blood's Thicker Than Mud*. Terry Koloamatangi Klavenes at Fresh Gallery Otara, Manukau City

16 May – 12 June. *To the heart of the matter*. Chris Charteris. FHE Galleries, Kitchener Street, Auckland

28 – 30 May. *Braveheart Youth Trust Art Exhibition*. Includes: Lina Marsh, Jean Clarkson, Leanne Clayton, Loloma Andrews, ASB Showgrounds, Green Lane, Auckland

2 – 18 June. *Flora Kapkap & Koloa*. Dagmar Dyck, Ellie Fa'amauri, Sylvia Marsters. okaiocanikart@Reef Gallery 69 Beach Rd Auckland

17 June – 10 July. *Native Coconut*. Margaret Aull, Leilani Kake, Janet Lilo, Cerisse Palalagi at Fresh Gallery Otara, Manukau City

22 June – 16 July. *Flora Kapkap & Koloa*. Dagmar Dyck, Ellie Fa'amauri, Sylvia Marsters. Calder and Lawson Gallery, WEL Energy Trust Academy of Performing Arts, The University of Waikato, Hamilton

watch the Tautai Website and the Pacific Arts Diary
for news of upcoming events and exhibitions

www.tautai.org