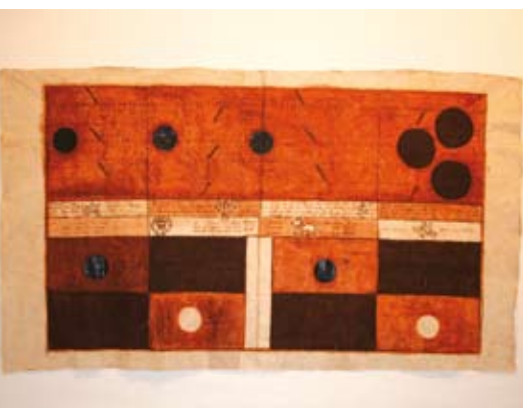


## kulimoe'anga stone maka smoking memories



Fala Tangata



Fefine 'o 'Api



Fata

English poet John Dryden's famous poem 'Hidden Flame' begins:

"I FEED a flame within, which so torments me  
That it both pains my heart, and yet contents  
me:

'Tis such a pleasing smart, and I so love it,  
That I had rather die than once remove it."

These words can be used to describe the current work of Kulimoe'anga Stone Maka.

Smoke, in its various forms and effects, has played a significant role in his life and has defined Stone as the artist, husband, and father he is today. Smoke signifies memories of his youth in Tonga, from the preparation of an *'umu* to the smoked mat worn at funerals.

It is the memory of his father that was the catalyst, prompting Stone to begin working with smoke as a medium for his art. An artist, fisherman, builder, singer, painter and a role model, his father died of lung cancer in 1984 when Stone was just 13.

In 1997, Stone left his teaching position in Tonga on the premise of a visit to a sister in Auckland but in the back of his mind he always knew he would stay to further his art. Soon after, he enrolled in Whitecliffe College of Art

and Design where he was able to experiment and work alongside artists who have become his peers such as Daniel Waswas and Siliga David Setoga.

During those years, Stone's art revealed a tumultuous relationship with Tonga, one with the utmost deference for traditions that caused him to question aspects of the Tongan monarchy. *Fala Tangata* "refers to suffering for freedom and human rights and equality of men for hundreds of years. It tells about the confinement or imprisonment of commoners and how they were led in their ignorance by those who have power. I use black and red dye, and oil on tapa to signify the combination between two worlds, the old and new, good and bad, black and white, negative and positive. I use dark hues, not because I believe dark represents evil, but because of its quality. It also represents that the leaders of the Friendly Archipelagos still live in the 'Dark Ages'. The nature of the black tapa tells of power and how the King overrules. The black tapa marks the period of misunderstanding of commoners and their ignorance. It refers also to a society that sees and hears truth and facts, but believes that keeping silent is better as it shows respect."

Stone painted on *ngatu* made by his mother and sisters using pigments he made from clay and other natural products, he also tested different techniques such as smoking. Moving from the figurative, Stone's art shifted to uncluttered compositions which might be labelled abstract expressionism but they are actually in homage to *ngatu'uli* or black tapa. Unlike the characteristic Tongan *ngatu*, *ngatu'uli* relies on representational forms, mostly geometric shapes.

Research, like that of *ngatu'uli*, is inextricably linked to Stone's artistic practice and fuels his creativity. He creates a two-fold story, comprised of Tongan and Western aesthetics alongside a personal narrative.

Connecting research with his own memories inspired Stone's return to Tonga in 2004. The trip was part of his final year at Manukau Institute of Technology. This was an influential experience which allowed him to rethink and reposition traditional cultural practices in terms of his own art. Visiting different villages, Stone researched and documented traditional *ngatu* making and smoking techniques helping him develop his own practice as well as preserve the local knowledge.

For Stone to use smoke as a methodology to create *Faka'ahu: Contemporary Fumage*, exhibited at CoCA (Christchurch) and McCarthy Gallery (Auckland) in 2009, is a reflection of his honesty as an artist. Realising the paralleled quandary smoke has had in his life has caused Stone, in his own way, to embrace the very medium of torment to express himself. His commitment to respect and use a medium that 'torments' and 'contents' his being and vocation is a quandary in itself. Many artists would have avoided such a medium because of its synchronicity, instead he chooses to embrace it.

Stone manipulates the controlled smoke to convey an ambered essence on canvas using techniques he learned during his youth in Tonga. The process of smoke painting requires extreme patience and planning, thus the themes and depictions in Stone's works are never abrupt reactions but delicate compositions. For hours on end, he feeds the flames to produce the quantity and quality of smoke required to satisfy his visual desires. Although he is now able to control the smoke to create steady forms and tones, it did not come easy. Many mats perished during the experimentation with flames contained in metal drums, copra ovens, and low fires with mats coiled around a tee-pee-like frame to catch the smoke. In Tonga, a paper design is adhered to mats before they are smoked leaving a printed design. Initially, Stone used this printing method but has since engineered his own tools and techniques to control the flow of smoke, applying it in steady, carefully prescribed strokes of colour.



The manipulated smoke stains the canvas with earthy tones, red and brown fields of colour, which subtly pulsate while circles hover to balance the compositions. The circles signify women, the female essence is important to Stone because according to Tongan custom, "women are ranked higher than men in every part of society and circles symbolize infinity, akin to women giving life. These symbolic representations extend to the smoke, as Eve was created from the rib of Adam and comparing this to fire and smoke, fire symbolizes males and the smoke is borne of fire." Also, smoke has countless helpful, healing, and preservative purposes but can be harmful if abused.

Stone has achieved the difficult task of balancing Tongan and Western elements in a dynamic style through an innovative technology. He continually strives to improve the methods of painting with smoke in his Christchurch studio.

Earlier in 2009, he was awarded the Macmillan Brown Pacific Studies Artist Residency where he completed a portion of the *Faka'ahu* series exhibited at the University of Canterbury. Currently Stone is investigating how he can take this innovation to the next level as he endeavours to make smoke into three-dimensional art works.

Walking into a smoke exhibition is a sensory experience. The potent aroma might evoke memories of smouldering embers from cooking, the comfort or danger of an open fire, or the scent it leaves on our clothes.

Stone finds inspiration in memories. By reaching to tradition to illustrate his reality, Stone pays tribute to the skills of his ancestors and relatives in Tonga while reconfiguring it to make a statement and stand strong amongst international contemporary artists. While Stone's oeuvre includes political and social commentary, the multilayered meanings within the smoke paintings cross generational divides as well as the oceanic divide between Tongans in the Islands and those in Aotearoa. Whether an elder craftsman or young cosmopolitan art aficionados, each viewer encounters memories within the sensory experience of smoke paintings.

"These smoke marks were found on the walls of my house in Tonga. They have become my object. They have become my art form."

Katherine Higgins

## embark

Tautai group show EMBARK opened at LeSa Gallery in Wellington on Friday 6 November. Gallery owner Sheyne Tuffery commented that the exhibition was a good eclectic mix of young emerging artists from the greater Auckland area.

Leanne Clayton's embroidered fans and Letufa Taniela's garment of actual New Zealand fashion labels were standout pieces remarked Sheyne, while Loloma Andrews tiny copper suitcases were very petite and refreshingly original. Fa'afetai Amituana'i painted foes (paddles) looked stoic and very traditional next to Taniela

Taniela's large digital prints of Maori warriors in motion. Marlaina Key's perplexing photography showed a miniature context of High St in Auckland, which looked modelled for a movie set. Daphiney Owen's photographs were more of a personal message in the relationship of kin in her portraits of a Pacific elder with their grandchild.

'EMBARK would be a great show to have every year with more artists involved as it provided a fine blend of fresh perspectives in Pacific art', says Sheyne.



Letufa Taniela *NZ Fashion Labels*



Leanne Clayton *Embroidered Fans*



Loloma Andrews *Copper Suitcases*



Marlaina Key *High Street, Auckland*

# tautai news

Ni sa bula vinaka

## Tautai Fresh Horizons

The third and fourth Tautai Fresh Horizons workshops for 2009 took place in Palmerston North at the end of September and in the Women's Prison in Auckland in November. We have continued to broaden the workshops and give students different art experiences. In Palmerston North the tutors were Victor Rodger and Janet Lilo who were joined by musician Matthew Salapu aka 'Anonymouz'. The tutors for the prison workshop were Jean Clarkson and Leanne Clayton with Natasha Urale-Baker.

Thank you to all the artists who have tutored workshops this year and all those who have assisted. Particular thanks to Fresh Horizons Manager Jean Clarkson for providing quality and diverse experiences to all participants. The workshops always receive positive and

enthusiastic feedback from participants and tutors. The host institutions have also expressed their recognition of the value of the workshops.

## Tautai Exhibition

The EMBARK exhibition at the LeSa Gallery in Petone provided an opportunity for Tautai to support a number of young and emerging artists in showing their work in a gallery space outside Auckland. Thanks to gallery director Sheyne Tuffery for his support of this event.

## Tsunami Art Auction

Tautai was pleased to support this artist initiated project to raise funds for relief and rebuilding efforts in the Pacific. We were happy to provide the artist group with office and administrative support and to cover the fee for Webb's direct costs. Congratulations to

all who were involved either through donating or buying works or volunteering on the night. Special thanks to Webb's for their professional assistance and for conducting the auction on a no commission/no buyer premium basis.

## Professional Development Day

A full day of workshops, discussion, ideas and networking followed by a social gathering on Friday 4 December 2009 was a positive way to end what has been a very busy and productive year for Tautai.

Our thanks to all who have taken part in events as either artists or supporters, and to sponsors, board members and staff. Best wishes for a safe and happy festive season.

Vinaka vaka levu  
Gina Cole (Chair)

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## artists for tsunami relief | art auction

A few days after the tsunami hit I was contacted by some artists asking if Tautai could perhaps assist with organising an auction to raise funds to support relief efforts. On the 1st October the organising group (Niki Hastings McFall, John Ioane, Lonnie Hutchinson, Steven Ball, the Urale family, Marlaina Key) met for the first time and nineteen days later on 20 October the auction took place. There were 85 pieces of art auctioned on the night and there is a total of \$87,740 to put towards relief and rebuilding efforts in Samoa and Tonga.

We were all totally unprepared for the amazing generosity of artists. Offers of work

came from all over New Zealand and in the end we were in the embarrassing position of having to decline any more because logistically we just could not deal with them.

We had some great partners who willingly supported us – Webb's, Villa Maria, Cooper's and Carlton Hire. PHREON, Geon and Whitespace. And then of course there were all the volunteers, too many to name but without whom nothing would have been possible. Fa'afetai lava.

Our thoughts have since had to turn to how to distribute the money. There were and are many many options and we have spoken with

individuals and with groups who have first hand information and knowledge of the situation in Samoa and Tonga. The group decision was to put the money into an interest bearing account and to wait until after Christmas by which time it will be clearer about how governmental and international aid project funding has been used and then identify possible gaps in funding.

We are delighted that Tautai was able to provide support and infrastructure to see this project through and I have to say I felt very proud of our "Tautai family" and all that was achieved.

Christina Jeffery

Photos courtesy Janet Lilo



Dancers performing the siva



The auction crowd



Volunteer bar staff: Isabella Rasch, Vaimoana Eves, Gina Cole

# tautai fresh horizons

## palmerston north

The end of September saw the Tautai Fresh Horizon's workshops at Te Uru Mararau at Massey College of Education in Palmerston North where we were hosted by the Centre for Multi-cultural Education. We had another first class line up of artists as tutors - Victor Rodger joined us again after the success of his writing workshop in Christchurch. The writing group's enthusiasm and commitment resulted in a great

read-through on the last day. This was helped by input from Centrepont Theatre actor/director Kate Elliott.

Also joining us again, Janet Lilo took a group in creating large-scale three-dimensional work in corrugated cardboard. This crew created several impressive works including oversized spraycans, a coconut palm and large box letters spelling "fobsville". We also welcomed a new

tutor, classically trained musician Matthew Faiumu Salapu aka 'Anonymouz' to the group. He brought his portable recording studio with him and this enabled the students in his group to record their own songs. Matthew was impressed with the talent in his group and the results more than justified our decision to include music in the programme.

Jean Clarkson



Janet Lilo with her group



Victor Rodger sharing thoughts



Students creating 3D art



Students hard at work



Rehearsal time

# fresh horizons

## auckland women's prison

Mid November saw Jean Clarkson, Leanne Clayton and Natasha Urale Baker at the Auckland Women's Prison for a three day workshop. Leanne and Jean led an enthusiastic group of women in a print workshop and Natasha worked with a small group who composed both music and words for a song. Jean, Leanne and Natasha all left feeling very satisfied with what had been achieved and in no doubt that their presence was much appreciated. Funding for this workshop came from JR McKenzie Trust.



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)

## arts pasifika winners

creative new zealand

Photos courtesy Evotia Tamua



Shigeyuki Kihara  
Contemporary Pacific Artist Award



Sopolemalama Filipe Tohi  
Senior Pacific Artist's Award

## tautai professional development day



Participants listening to Jon Bywater's presentation

## postcard

from Shigeyuki Kihara

In September I ventured onto a four week whirlwind trip partly funded by Creative New Zealand. First stop was London where George Nuku, Rosanna Raymond, Lisa Reihana and myself participated in an exhibition *'ethKnowcentrix; Museums inside the Artist'* at the October Gallery. The exhibition opening saw a packed crowd queuing outside the gallery waiting to get inside! The artist forum saw each artist paired with local UK artists Raimi Gbadmosi, Noel Wallas, Malika Booker and Issac Julien to discuss each others work. Second stop was Bonn, Germany where George Nuku and I staged an artist presentation of *'ethKnowcentrix'* as part of the Pacific Arts Association Europe symposium held at Bundeskunsthalle.

From Bonn George and his wife Maia Jessop and baby Te ao nehe and I travelled together to see the 53rd Venice Biennial. The architecture of Venice is amazing and we saw a diverse range of artworks from across the globe.

My final destination was the Big Apple where I was fortunate to catch up with many of the new friends I made during my trip to New York last year. I caught up with Virginia Lee Webb the curator to my recent solo exhibition at the MET as well as Coco Fusco. Coco is an artist, cultural theorist and head of Parsons New School for Design. She invited me to attend an amazing and intense symposium on performance artists from Guatemala (Central America) hosted at her school which was accompanied by a series of live public performances and installations hosted at Exit Art. I also visited many free public lectures, galleries and museums and later swayed to the deep vibes of Dance Hall on Sunday nights.

Two weeks after arriving back in Aotearoa I flew to Samoa for a week to check on my family after the recent tsunami. My family wasn't directly affected however I was able to see for myself the devastation on Upolu Island caused by the tsunami. I was very moved, inspired and humbled by the collective spirit of renewal and the enthusiasm the local people had in the midst of the aftermath of the tsunami. Catching up with my family, friends and eating Samoan home cooking helped me feel grounded and rejuvenated while allowing time to process the information gained during my long distance travels.

Now, I'm ready to do it all over again.

Wishing you a safe and happy Festive Season and a successful New Year

## events & exhibitions

### january | february | march 2010

28 Nov – 3 Jan. *What do you think about when you dance?* Shigeyuki Kihara at Cambeltown Arts Centre, Sydney

29 Nov – 7 Feb. *Sleight of Hand.* Lorene Taurerewa at Pataka, Porirua

19 Dec – 20 Jan. *Beyond the Image.* Chris Charteris at Woollaston Estate, Nelson

2 – 28 Jan. *Celebrating 10 years.* Includes Chris Charteris at Birds Nest Studio, Kuaotunu

9 – 30 Jan. *Edge to Elsewhere.* Includes Shigeyuki Kihara at Gallery 4A, Asia Australia Arts Centre, Sydney

26 – 30 Jan. *Mandragora.* Directed by Louise Tu'u at Herald Theatre Auckland

18 Jan – 28 Feb. *URBAN KAINGA.* Includes Siliga David Setoga and Terry Koloamatangi Klavenes, City Gallery, Wellington

22 Jan – 13 Feb. *(K)IWI – Notions of a Nation.* Reuben Friend at Fresh Gallery, Otara

Sunday 7 Feb. *'Six New Zealand Artists come together to explore our history and create shared visions for our future'.* Documentary includes Dagmar Dyck. Maori Television 9pm

12 Feb – 8 Mar. *The Garden of Earthly Delights.* Sheyne Tuffery. Waiheke Community Art Gallery, Waiheke Island

16 Feb – 7 Mar. *Between Two Worlds – Entre Deux Mondes.* Fatu Feu'u, Isabelle Staron-Tutugoro, Vanya Taule'alo at Salamander Gallery, Christchurch

19 Feb – 13 Mar. *Matua o Faiaogo Muamua – Parents are our first teachers.* Pelenato Liufau at Fresh Gallery, Otara

2 Mar – 9 Apr. Sia Figiel at McCarthy Art Gallery, Parnell

3 – 13 Mar. *Circular.* Theo Ah Wong, Fa'afetai Amituana'i, Leanne Clayton, Tui Hobson, Terry Koloamatangi Klavenes, Lily Aitui Laita, Lina Marsh, Niki Hastings McFall, Siliga David Setoga, Ane Tonga at Artstation, Auckland

10 Mar – Dec 2010. *Assembling Bodies.* Shigeyuki Kihara at University of Cambridge Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge, UK

10 Mar – 10 Apr. *The Gaze.* Includes Shigeyuki Kihara at Mark Hutchins Gallery, Wellington

13 March. *Pasifika.* Western Springs, Auckland

13 Mar – 20 June. *Last Ride in a Hot Air Balloon.* 4th Auckland Triennial. Includes Shigeyuki Kihara. Auckland Art Gallery

17 – 20 Mar. *Art Dubai.* Includes Shigeyuki Kihara. Dubai, United Arab Emirates

19 Mar – 10 Apr. *Plastic.* Czarina Alisi Wilson. At Fresh Gallery, Otara

26 March. *OFF STAGE 2.* Mediated moving image and live performance at Galatos, Newton, Auckland

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

[www.tautai.org](http://www.tautai.org)