

TALANOA: *Matala 'o e Fonua*

Master of Art & Design (Graphic Design)  
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This exegesis is submitted to the  
AUT University  
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*Dedication.*

This thesis is a tribute to Tongan women born on the Islands of Tongatapu and now residing in Aotearoa New Zealand. The *talanoa* immersed in these pages is a testimony of inner strength, perseverance and adaptation of the *matala 'o e fonua*, these women.

Tu'a 'ofa atu  
Talita Kiume Toluta'u

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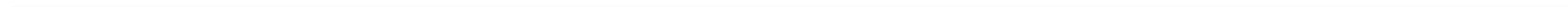
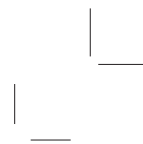
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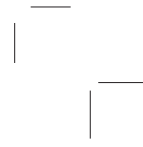
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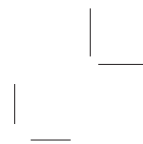
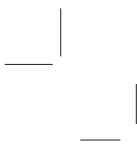




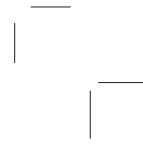
*Attestation of Authorship*

“I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person nor materials which to substantially extent has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning, except where due acknowledgement is made in the acknowledgements.”

Talita Kiume Toluta’u  
21 October 2008



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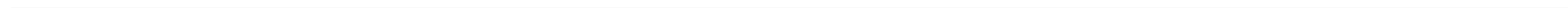


### *Acknowledgements*

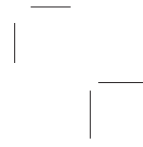
I would like to express my gratitude to the people who supported this research, and enabled me to complete this year.

My warmest gratitude to the three women who opened up their homes and lives for this research to *matala* into a film and book. The constant support and encouragement of my parents and family throughout this year is humbling and I thank them for all their sacrifices towards my studies. I would especially like to thank Taani Valu and his tremendous support with the film process. I owe a debt of gratitude to Mairi Gunn and Andrew Denton for their knowledge, skills and confidence in my ability to inspire creativity in my work. I would also like to thank Makeleta Moala for her words of experience, her sharing and assistance in realising this research.

Lastly, I am deeply indebted to Welby Ings as my supervisor, friend and mentor. Your endless commitment throughout the past three years has been diligent even when times were difficult. My self-confidence as an artist and designer continues to escalate to new heights.

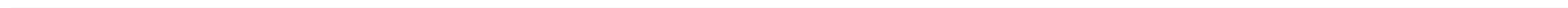


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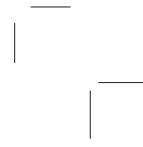


*Ethics Approval*

This research was subject to AUT ethics approval granted by the *Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee* (AUTEC) on 27 May 2008, number 08/77.



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*“Manatu’i ‘a e hala na’a ke toki ‘osi fononga mai ai,  
pea ka pau ‘oku toka kovi ae hala ko ia pea ‘oku tonu ke  
afe o ‘alu ‘i ha hala ‘oku toe toka lelei ange.”*

This adage is Tongan. It has often been said to me as a gentle caution by my parents and relatives. The words refer to a path (*hala*) on which we must travel. If it is hazardous (*toka kovi*) then we must seek out a better route. In relation to my creative research into the *talanoa* of diaspora, I am constantly reminded of its wisdom. This research charts unfamiliar waters, yet it also journeys along the same *hala toka kovi* or *hala toka lelei* the three women who form its focus, experienced. Like these women’s migration to Aotearoa, I did not undertake this journey knowing the shape of my destination, but like them, I knew clearly the purpose of my going.

*Malo lelei* (Greetings).

**PREQUEL**

The history of the Tongan women in my extended family has always been of personal interest to me. These women are witty, caring and family-orientated. They possess imaginations that are quick to expand on both the profound and the frivolous. Often they will portray themselves as ordinary people with nothing significant or unknown about their past. These women often will **play down** their experience by distancing themselves from investigation or redirecting questions onto another’s experiences. It is not generally in their proud nature to share or discuss their personal histories.

However, I know that the paths they traveled comprise of conflict, trauma, emotion, triumph, and extraordinary personal achievement. It is these aspects of their narratives this research is concerned with.



**ABSTRACT**

This study is concerned with representation. It considers the nature of a culturally located narrative form called *talanoa*<sup>1</sup> and its creative translation into film. The film *Talanoa: Mataala ‘o e Fonua*, that constitutes the designed outcome of this project considers the memories of three Tongan women who left their homeland to settle in New Zealand between 1970’s and 1990’s. It is designed as three related garlands that exist as a related unit. *Talanoa: Mataala ‘o e Fonua* is therefore, a creative synthesis of their *talanoa*, into a new form of documentary that is designed to capture the cultural and emotional resonance of their stories. The work orchestrates photography, animation, sound design, filmed footage and extensive postproduction research into a unique text that seeks to move the parameters of documentary beyond the visual interview. In doing so, the research draws heavily on Tongan paradigms of narrative and representation.

**BACKGROUND**

My father and mother migrated to New Zealand in the 1970s. I see myself as a first generation New Zealand born Tongan.<sup>2</sup> Growing up under their care I listened to their stories about how they depended on the ocean and the land for survival in Tonga. Over time, my mother’s story and those of the other women among my extended family increasingly captured my attention. I empathised with their journey because my personal growth and cultural identity was intrinsically woven to their past experiences. The stories they told were not like those written in my social studies books. They were not like the representations of our people portrayed on the meager items that flickered occasionally over the television set. These were something different. They were full of laughter, sadness, detail, memory and loss. There were secrets alluded to, and experiences of something missing. The spaces between what they said were as important as what was said. These were not stories. They were *talanoa*.

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<sup>1</sup> *Talanoa* is a Tongan term meaning **to talk, to tell stories**, or **to relate deep experience**. The *talanoa* shared by the three women in this film is designed to take an audience on a subjective, evocative and personal journey. It is not a recorded narrative (as in a *palangi* documentary), but rather a journey into the nebulous spaces of memory, emotion and the attachment to home that surface in the wake of diasporic migration.

<sup>2</sup> I prefer to use the dual identity **Kiwi-Tongan** to describe myself as I draw on resonances of both cultures.

Figure 1:1. Talita Toluta’u. *Selected studio portraits from the book Migrating Floral*. Still photographs. 2006.

*Preceding work*

[PHASE 1]

In 2006 my artistic interest in the migration experience of Tongan women developed from these *talanoa*. An early objective of my research as a photographer was to enable these women to present their *talanoa* to the wider New Zealand community.

What became apparent from the *talanoa* gathered was how relatively similar the emotional experiences of these women were. The outcome of months of interviews and photography sessions resulted in the publication of a book **Migrating Floral**. This was supported by a lyrical animation of the women’s portraits.

[PHASE 2]

In 2007, I integrated the Tongan term ‘*matala ‘o e fonua*’<sup>3</sup> into the development of my research. At this time I was influenced by the Tongan songs and poems written by the late Queen Salote Tupou III of Tonga. The *talanoa* embedded in her poetry inspired a desire to create visual representations of the *talanoa* of a small group of Tongan women. In doing this I was seeking the potential of metaphorical images similar to those found in the poet’s work. In her poetry metaphors formed a discourse of relationships between land, ocean, flowers, plants, and people.<sup>4</sup>

*Siueli ‘o e Pasifiki*  
*Tola ‘i he nusipepa tala ‘o Hauai‘i*  
*Fakalata ‘e e hula hira ‘ene vanaiki*  
*Ko e fanifo‘anga ‘o e filivaihi*  
*‘Ise ‘isa holo loto fie laka he taimi*  
*Ka kuo li taua ‘a ‘ofa ‘alovili*  
*De‘eve ‘e heilala ko ha ‘insisenisi*  
*Detekin ai si ‘i ‘atamai ‘oku fih*  
*Sai pe si‘i Tonga siueli Pasifiki*  
*(Wood-Allen, 2004, p. 194)*<sup>5</sup>

In the documentary that surfaced from this research, the women chose to adorn their hair with a *sei*.<sup>6</sup> The *sei* is traditionally worn on the side of the hair. Each flower is a personal choice. It is not simply decoration. Rather, it is part of identity and a projection of inner beauty. In this project, each woman relaxed after she attached the flower to her head. She would turn subtly towards the camera to show her *sei*. In this familiar gesture, she projected the inner grace of her being. The relationship of the *sei* to inner being is eloquently described in a verse taken from the poem *Katinia*. This song *Katinia* reflects Queen Salote III sense of loss. The verse describes the flower of the gardenia as her favoured *sei*.

<sup>3</sup> *Matala ‘o e fonua* is a term often used by Tongans to describe the growth of flowers or vegetation. It refers to the nature of life, growth, dispersal, and regeneration. I felt it was applicable to my work as my mother and other women involved in this project had grown and been nurtured in Tonga, she flowered and was dispersed by migration and flowered again in the foreign soil of Aotearoa New Zealand.

<sup>4</sup> Queen Salote was, and remains in the hearts and minds of Tongan people, a highly respected poet. This is due to the elegant and lyrical nature of the symbolic portraits she created of her kingdom, of womanhood and of the status of royalty.

<sup>5</sup> This is an extract from the poem *Siueli ‘o e Pasifiki* composed by the late Queen Salote Tupou III. When the Queen visited other Pacific nations during her royal visits she found these islands beautiful but nothing really compared to Tongatapu, her Pacific jewel. The English translation of the title of this poem is the “Jewel of the Pacific”.

<sup>6</sup> A single flower. When a Tongan woman boards an aeroplane she will often don a *sei* or *lei* necklace. When she performs a Tongan dance she often wears a *tekiteki* (floral head adornment). This lures attention to the beauty of her performance.





Figure 1:2. Talita Toluta'u. *Stills from Siniua Lui Toluta'u Interview*. 2008. A series of stills used to create a sense of the archived by using handmade overlay filters and integrating shot footage with archived material. 2008

*Katinia*  
*Katinia si'oto sei manakoa*  
*'Alaha kapui ai 'e si'ete 'ofa*  
*Ha sino mai ho'o to'onga*  
*Kae raifa 'a lo'ifofonga*  
*(Wood-Allen, 2004, p.174)*

STRUCTURE

This exegesis is divided into three sections. This first section has served as a positioning and introduction to the research. The next section offers a discussion of critical ideas underpinning the project. Specifically the concept of diaspora in relation to notions of attachment, and the concept of *talanoa* and its impact on the aesthetic and form of the three works that comprise the creative outcome of this investigation. A third section will outline the unique research designs developed for the realisation of this project under the Pacific research methodology *Kakala*. This methodology conceived by Konai Helu-Thaman in 2001 and used in her research into culturally inclusive teaching and learning offers a conceptual, metaphorical and structural framework appropriate for the distinctively indigenous nature of the research. The exegesis concludes with a list of references, and four appendices. These contain the English translation of the poems, and three individual transcripts of the original film interviews.

*Critical Framework*

*Si'i matangi kuo ma'iti'noa*  
*Kata toto tauke ne 'iloa*  
*To'onga 'a toto Nuku'atofa*  
*'Uta'anga si'a fine leiola*  
  
*'O ka li si'o lei ka ke 'alu*  
*Kae tuku ai 'a ho'o manatu*  
*Ke fa'ao mo si'oto salusalu*  
*'Oku tuku oe e talitali atu*  
*(Wood-Allen, 2004, p.198)<sup>7</sup>*

DIASPORA IN RELATION TO NOTIONS OF ATTACHMENT

The Tongan women participating in this research, in discussing their *talanoa* often referred to their cultural identity and practices as being connected to Tongatapu. A framework for considering the disjointing or **separation** experience they encountered can be found in discourse surrounding **diaspora migration**. In a general sense diaspora<sup>8</sup> has come to mean one who is physically detached from his or her ancestral home; in other words, all ethnic groups living as minorities outside of their homelands (Echeuro, 2008, p. 12).

<sup>7</sup> These verses were written by Queen Salote describing the custom of visitors leaving their garlands of flowers in Tonga to show that they are leaving their thoughts behind. Floral imagery dominated her poetry.

<sup>8</sup> Although Greek in origin, (meaning a scattering of sowing of seeds), the term is originally associated with the dispersal of Hebrews as a result of exile (Deuteronomy 28:25). Although **diaspora** has gone through subtle shifts in meaning over time, I use it to refer specifically to the dispersal of any population sharing common ethnic identity from their settled territory, and their taking up of residence in areas often far removed from their homeland.



According to Braziel and Mannur (2003) diasporic mobility questions the rigidities of identity itself—religious, ethnic, gendered, and national. Diasporic movements mark, not a postmodern turn from history, but a nomadic turn “*in which the very parameters of specific historical moments are embodied and, as diaspora itself suggests, these are scattered and regrouped into points of becoming*” (p. 3). In light of the contents exposed through talanoa of the women in this project we can sense a movement towards acquiring a dual identity by living in one country and maintaining patriotism to another, this is their point of **becoming**.

Jayne O Ifekwunigwe’s (2003) essay<sup>9</sup> talks about the development of her Ph.D. that was concerned with presenting narratives of self, and contextualising her specific feminist viewpoint through commentary on the lived, diasporic experiences of women. Ifekwunigwe’s ‘kaleidoscopic’ narratives are photo poetic chronicles of her childhood, that retell pivotal moments that shaped her complex subjectivity. Collectively, these texts capture the complex, evolving, everyday lived realities as a Metisse woman. She points out that the challenge in her research was to recall a turning point in the lived narrative that changed the nature of one’s life. The idea of a single turning point or ‘pivotal moment’ may be a debatable idea, but for the Tongan women who became the subjects of this creative enquiry, the moment they left their homeland to settle in New Zealand was a profound and emotionally resonant experience. The *talanoa* of this moment as related years after the event, is imbued with the fondness and longing that often accompanies the diasporic experience.

Shuval (2000) notes that an in-depth consideration of diaspora, may incorporate myths/memories of the homeland, a sense of alienation in the host country, and a desire for eventual return, which may be “*ambivalent, eschatological or utopian*” (p. 41). It also may include “*ongoing support of the homeland, [and] a collective identity defined by the above relationship*” (ibid.). In the *talanoa* ‘*Talanoa: Matala ‘o e Fonua*’ the women depicted are deeply attached to their homeland on physical, spiritual, emotional, and cultural levels.<sup>10</sup> This bond is a consequence of their physical detachment from their ancestral home, and it remains, to this day, strong in their framings of Tongatapu.

Echeruo (2008) expands the term **diaspora** to describe the displacement of African peoples through the eras of slave trading, and links these experiences to notions of paternity and maternity in framings of **home** as the “*fatherland*” or “*motherland*” (p. 13). Although the women in this research traveled a path less oppressed than that of the African slave communities, the close association to the homeland continued to be just as strong. Their *talanoa* continues to connect every **snapshot** of memory to the homeland making the narratives of leaving highly personal and imbued with deep feelings of attachment to their birth country.

The term diaspora may be used to refer to either the forced or voluntary dispersal of any population. The women in my research were not explicitly forced to leave Tongatapu; they were enticed to emigrate because of orchestrated promises of a **better** economic life. Morton (2002) suggests that Tongans are not in exile, as were groups first identified as diasporic (such as Jews), but conditions in Tonga, such as land shortage, unemployment, low wages combined with the increasing cost of living created a

<sup>9</sup> *Returning(s): Relocating the Critical Feminist Auto-Ethnographer* in *Theorising Diaspora: A Reader*, Braziel, J A and Mannur A., Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2003, USA. (p. 185).

<sup>10</sup> Tongan often have to operate in two different contexts, which are sometime called *anga fakatonga* , the traditional Tongan way, and *anga fakapalangi*, the Western Way. A culturally adept Tongan may be seen as knowing and exercising both bodies of cultural knowledge.



situation that made emigration imperative.

Many contemporary Tongans emigrated to Australia, New Zealand, and the United States to seek employment and a higher standard of living.<sup>11</sup> An important aspect for this Tongan diaspora remains closely tied to the fact that there are normally still, relatives at home. The families in Tongatapu are dependent on remittances from their emigrant families to sustain their lifestyles. These remittances may cover school fees for extended family members, church donations, medical expenses and/or the building or renovation of the family home. Zlotnik's (2000) study on women and migration indicates that migrant women are often important economic **actors** and their participation in economic activity is closely related to the needs of their families (p. 43).

Education is also considered to be one of the most significant reasons for moving temporarily or permanently away from Tongatapu.<sup>12</sup> The *talanoa* of the women in this research project share this particular feature. They emigrated to New Zealand at a young age and we hear permeating their narratives the educational objectives their families instilled in them before their departure from their homeland. Their families wanted their future generations to have a higher education, to attend university, to achieve their doctorates and to ultimately earn enough money to sustain an affluent lifestyle. Tongan expatriates, due to remittances sent to Tonga on a regular basis, rarely achieve this lifestyle.

Diaspora as an academic framing is not without its faults. The first difficulty with this concept may be seen in the way that the term itself appears to have lost its validity through some writers and scholars adopting it in an almost casual manner.

Diaspora, when integrated under sociological and humanitarian studies can often be overwhelmed by emphasis on ethnicity, culture and social events. This detracts from the central focus on diaspora; the need of the dispersed to retain a bond with the homeland. Hall (2000) sums up this **need** succinctly, ***“It is because this New World is constituted for us a place, a narrative of displacement, that it gives rise so profoundly to a certain imaginary plenitude, recreating the endless desire to return to ‘lost origin’, to be one again with the mother, to go back to the beginning”*** (p. 32).

The three women whose *talanoa* contribute to *Talanoa: Matala 'o e Fonua* have resided in New Zealand for more than a decade, and have adopted cultural identities and practices of their host country. However, what one might ask, *“Does this mean that their Tongan identity will inevitable be compromised or lost in the assimilation process?”* My work seeks to dig behind the apparent assimilation, through layers of imagery, recollection and sound to something closer to Hall's (2000) assertion that identity is a ***“production which is never complete, always in process, and always constituted within, not outside, representation”*** (p. 21).

I seek to re-engage *talanoa* as a form of narrative whose nature and ethos grows from the subliminal, archetypal and preconscious (Polanyi 1967). It engages the diasporic less as a documentary of dispersal and more as a longing for a deep emotional attachment to **home**. It aligns the diaspora with the emotional and in so doing gives resonance to certain visual treatments within the work. It is not the dispersal the work engages with, but the *talanoa* of the dispersal, and the emotional resonance and how this might **look** on film.

<sup>11</sup> Large Tongan communities can be found in Auckland (New Zealand), Sydney (Australia) and in North America (specifically in Portland, Anchorage, Los Angeles, and Salt Lake City).

<sup>12</sup> Morton's study (2002) on Tongans Overseas, helps us to understand the important role education has in many families considering emigrating to English speaking countries. She emphasises that the primary goal is to ensure the education of children so they can eventually contribute to the economic position of the family in both the host country and Tongatapu.

*Methodology*

26

*Manu 'o Palataisi  
Fotu 'i he lā'a  
Lapa 'I he langi ma;a  
Fine Tonga oku haka  
Pea toli he kakala  
'O luvā ki ha vulangi  
'O ka malu efiāfi  
Ake e manatu ai  
'Alu kae foki mai  
  
Si'i pua 'ene fisi  
'O ngaofe he uini  
Laukau 'o mahiki  
Manu 'o Palataisi  
Lū'u hifo mu'a he  
Malu 'o e pame  
Va'inga 'i he siale  
Sei 'o ha taka pe  
(Wood-Allen, 2004, p. 197–198)<sup>13</sup>*

THE SEARCH FOR AN APPROPRIATE METHODOLOGY

In traditional paradigms, a project like *Talanoa: Matala 'o e Fonua* may have employed established research methodologies associated with the gathering of data on a phenomenon outside of the self. These may have included case study methods, ethnography, ethnomethodology, grounded theory, phenomenology, or narrative enquiry. However, this research project is located as culturally positioned creative practice. It involves a synthesis of data from the *talanoa* of three women and its translation into the *talanoa* of the designer.

Thus, in developing an appropriate research design for the project, I needed to look beyond the established to consider the potential of more culturally applicable approaches. Obviously a concern with the appropriateness of a methodology is nothing new. Bullough & Pinnegar (2001) say “**methods must not prescribe problems; rather problems must prescribe methods**” (p. 4), and Gibbs (2006) notes, “**Methodological appropriateness is more important than whether the research methods selected can be classified within one paradigm or another**” (p. 233).

While this may be a given, what can happen to creative research positioned in frameworks that fall outside of *palangi*<sup>14</sup> paradigms of university research, is that it can be subtly encouraged to reframe itself so it sits more comfortably inside established conventions. Reason and Rowan noted this tendency in the early 1980s when they said,

*Thousands of researchers down the years have started projects they really believed in, and which embodied ideas they really cared about. But too often these projects got pared down and chopped about and falsified in the process of getting approval...It doesn't have to be this way... If we want to know about people, we have to encourage them to be who they are, and to resist all attempts to make them — or themselves — into something we are not.* (1981, p. xxiii).

With this project, it has been my intention to honour the nature of what this research examines and synthesises. I see Tongan culture as a site for developing an appropriate research design that might interface with, and help to resolve, questions implicit in the research that are also intimately related to

<sup>13</sup> Queen Salote used the **birds of paradise** as a metaphor for Tonga. Separated from her homeland, she expresses her deep connection to her small island nation through a delicate floral portrait of nuance and allusion.

<sup>14</sup> Non Pacific.



my culture. In the past, Pacific researchers have often found Western frameworks and methodologies inconsistent or limited in examining non-European, especially where they relate to issues pertaining to ethnic or cultural activity (Robinson D. et al, 2005). While certain western ideas like Polanyi's (1967), **tacit knowing**, Moustaka's (1990) **heuristic inquiry** or Clandinin and Connelly's (2000) **narrative form**, may contain useful concepts that relate to certain indigenous framings, a methodology needs to go beyond these to draw on specific resonances of Tongan cultural, philosophical and artistic frameworks.

*Talanoa* is not just storytelling. It goes beyond narrative structure and discourse to weave together the emotional, intuitive, remembered, subliminal, archetypal and preconscious. It contains not only what is evident but also the undercurrents, lost spaces, and emotional resonance of recounted experience. It is essentially an oral tradition, carrying with it an emphasis on rhythm, emphasis, pause, and flow that all sit outside of traditionally written western forms of narrative. *Talanoa* has moved between the spoken and the visual, across centuries of recalled experience. Its nature is partly defined by this existence inside these two forms of communication.<sup>15</sup> Thus a research design for this project cannot be selected from approaches that simply enable one to collect, analyse and **write up** data. It must be something that can creatively consider the non-evident and seek pathways into the subtle and nebulous. In so doing, it must find a way of securing the trust of the participants and eventually enable the researcher to **gift** back what they have given to the research.

There is no doubt that *Talanoa: Mataala 'o e Fonua* may be understood as Pacific research, informed and embedded within Pacific knowledge systems (Wood, 2003). It also operates inside a cultural expectation that one takes immense care with the preparation of artistic gifts so they are careful syntheses of the purist and most elegant forms. While the credibility and status of the creator is at stake, so to is the integrity of what is made. If relationships between the component parts are not cohesive, life and meaning cannot live inside the work and the value of what has been contributed by the participants is squandered and betrayed.

**KAKALA**

This project is designed to support the development of a clearer picture of Pacific realities that may reach beyond narratives falsified into romantic notions of enchanted gardens and quaint customs from a tropical paradise (Thaman, 2003, p.4). "*Talanoa: Mataala 'o e Fonua*" focuses on the *talanoa* of leaving of three Tongan women. In doing this it applies an indigenous research methodology called *Kakala* (Thaman, 1999).

On the surface *Kakala* translates as **fragrant flora**, however, the word actually refers to something far more complex, and in its complexity lies its applicability as a methodology to forms of creative practice surfacing out of a Tongan cultural context.<sup>16</sup> Thaman (2003) suggests that when exploring aspects of Pacific culture, it is important to refrain from trying to apply Western frameworks to describe epistemologies that fall outside of western cultural constructs.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>15</sup> This is partly why the project employs photography and film as its primary media forms. They sit in greater harmony with the traditions and nature of *talanoa*, than do the conventions of the written word.

<sup>16</sup> Pacific indigenous methodologies exist as tool for Pacific research to employ. For example, Halapua's (2002) *Talanoa* methodology. It is less applicable when discussing the creative aspect of this research. Alternatively, the *Fakalotofale'ia* model is characterised by a number of Tongan values and principles such as *'ofa* (love or compassion), *faka'apa'apa* (respect) which are considered essential in people's lives. Although this methodology allows Pacific Island researchers to define their works in another way, I did not find this process suitable. Like *Talanoa*, it did not allow the creative element of this film to surface. Thaman's *Kakala* methodology permitted the design component of this film to align with the essence of the *talanoa*.

<sup>17</sup> She developed *kakala* as a contribution to methodology when researching the development of culturally inclusive teaching and learning ideas for Pacific teachers and students. In this regard, she suggests that *kakala* is "*about learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together, and learning to be*" (p.2).

*Kakala* is based on the traditional process of fragrant garland making. Drawing on distinctly Tongan precepts, it reclaims and reconceptualises a method for processing research in a culturally meaningful way.<sup>18</sup>

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*Kakala* may be understood as having three distinct but related stages traditionally associated with Polynesian garland making. These stages are: *toli*, *tui* and *luva*. The methodology addresses a process where a researcher is able to weave a garland that is meaningful, appropriate and worthy of being passed on (*luva e kakala*). Because to date, the methodology has not been adapted to Art & Design practice, it is useful at this point to discuss how it was activated and developed in this project.

**TOLI KAKALA:**  
**COLLECTING AND SELECTING THE PARTICIPANTS**

Thaman associates the recruitment and interviewing processes in her research to the time of *toli kakala* or searching for, and selecting the most appropriate flowers and fauna, at the most appropriate time. This process is one that requires sensitivity and knowledge. One needs to understand the nature of the flowers (people), and the deep sense of the correct texture, maturity, colour, fragrance and location.

The **recruitment** or *toli kakala* process was highly distinctive. Although it acquired university ethics approval<sup>19</sup> the project required a level of understanding that worked beyond the concerns of its provisions. When I first began taking photographs of Tongan women in 2006 for the project **Migrating Floral** I approached a small number of Tongan, female friends and family members. The desire to

photograph these *matala 'o e fonua*<sup>20</sup> (flowers from the Island of Tonga) was met with hesitation in the early stages of the *toli kakala*. The participants were specifically Tongan women who had emigrated to New Zealand yet still retained a patriotic, emotional connection to the tiny nation. When invited, many were cautious about the objectives behind the research, but after I explained to each of them that these images were going to be used solely for the purposes of an academic study in a design project, many became less wary.

The *toli kakala* became further narrowed in its focus in 2007 when it became clear that some of these women were not willing to *talanoa* of their past. A few of them began to show genuine signs of discomfort as they tried to *talanoa* of events leading up to their departure from the island, and of their early days adapting to the New Zealand environment. Others began to shy away from the camera altogether, almost afraid of being caught in conversation. I found that some women went out of their way not to divulge personal *talanoa*. Instead they selected to answer only questions with which they felt comfortable, and did not make them look weak in front of the other women.

I felt that to do justice to the nature of the lives of the women eventually selected for this project that the *talanoa* needed to deal transparently with their feelings and memories. I wanted to find a distinctly Tongan way of formatting these narratives so that something of their sentimentality and loss was captured, not as emotional revelation but as a graceful and integrated part of their story telling. This is what was to separate this research from much other work on Pacific Diaspora. It was seeking an elegant way of communicating loss and affection outside of traditional **interview** forms. Rather than treating the unsaid

<sup>18</sup> Other Pacific researchers and academics from Polynesia have found the *Kakala* methodology to be useful in the development of their work (Koloto, 2000). Thaman believes that this process, although rooted in Tongan culture, may be adapted to other cultures and other contexts. It allows people to learn and educate others in a culturally meaningful way by reclaiming and reconceptualising within a Pacific context. *Kakala* is not only inclusive and holistic, it also emphasises learning; learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together, and learning to be. This is the result I aim to reach in *Talanoa: Matala 'o e Fonua*.

<sup>19</sup> Ethics number AUTECH 08/77.

<sup>20</sup> In Tonga, flowers were ranked according to their cultural significance, which is closely associated with their various mythologies. For instance, *heilala* is the Tongan national flower and considered to be the highest ranked of all Tongan *kakala*, it is classified by this society as the *kakala* of the High chiefs or noble person. The *Lose*, a flower recently introduced is considered the lower rank and referred to as the commoner's *kakala*.







as invisible, I sought to make it part of the fabric of discourse. In doing this, it was asking for a great deal of trust from the participants.

I knew if I was going to achieve a work of integrity, I needed to adhere strictly to the tenets of *tolī kakala*. First, I needed to carefully select women who were willing to *talanoa*; to open up in conversation and not be afraid of revealing their stories. The integrity of their **tellings** permeates the artistic and physical nature of the work. It could never be genuine if I attempted to control their *talanoa* in relation to the camera. The footage had to record the women with minimal interference. It needed to be respectfully attentive, but unobtrusive. It needed to fade back in the process of their telling so undisturbed; their *talanoa* could unfurl and blossom.

The three women who were eventually willing to *talanoa* in-depth, communicated with a sincerity that is rare to find in documentaries on Tongan women. These women are often proud and reserved. They are not given to public displays of vulnerability. Fortunately, I already had a long, and established relationship with these women. This meant we did not have to go through periods of bonding for me to secure their trust. However, all parties knew that the *tolī kakala* might be uncomfortable and in some instances would require them to *talanoa* about events, people and places in their lives they might rather not reveal in such a public way.

Part of the inherent nature of *tolī kakala* is a sensitivity to knowing the time to gather, one also has to know the potential and nature of each blossom. The designer/researcher must understand and be sensitive to the emotional beauty, the resonance of memory, and the propensity to *talanoa*.

She must select each flower and know its potential relationship to the others. Each flower must be gathered in its purest form, without affectation or damage and each flower must remain true to its own nature.

**TUI KAKALA:  
DEVELOPING AND CREATING THE FILM**

The second process in the methodology concerns the making or weaving of the garland. According to Thaman this is performed by persons who are highly skilled. On a superficial level this may be likened to data input, analysis and the write-up period when the collected and/or selected flowers and fauna are gathered and given to the *kau tui kakala*.<sup>21</sup> In traditional Tongan society, these women select the most fragrant and appropriate flowers for the garland. They create either a traditional or contemporary design that carries within it the creativity and vision of the artist.

As the designer of a contemporary text working inside the tenets of *kakala* it was necessary that I found relationships between the data that might lead towards an elegant but articulate synthesis of the spirit of each of the women's *talanoa*. I was not seeking to gather a bunch of flowers, but to arrange the form, perfume and delicacy of each story in such a way that it brought forward a uniqueness that spoke of individual memory, yet stylistically located the narrative in the context of the other garlands. Thus, three garlands would be created, each with its own identity but each belonging to a greater whole.

Like the *kau tui kakala*, I experimented with a range of approaches in achieving this end. In outlining some of the design considerations involved in creating the work, we may begin to see the levels of subtle complexity involved in creating such a garland.

<sup>21</sup> This is a Tongan term that refers directly to the people who will weave and create the garland. These people possess traditional knowledge of methods and designs, and comment on the correctness, presentation and symbolic meaning of the work. Traditionally, they have deep knowledge of the intrinsic nature of the *kakala* and the garland.



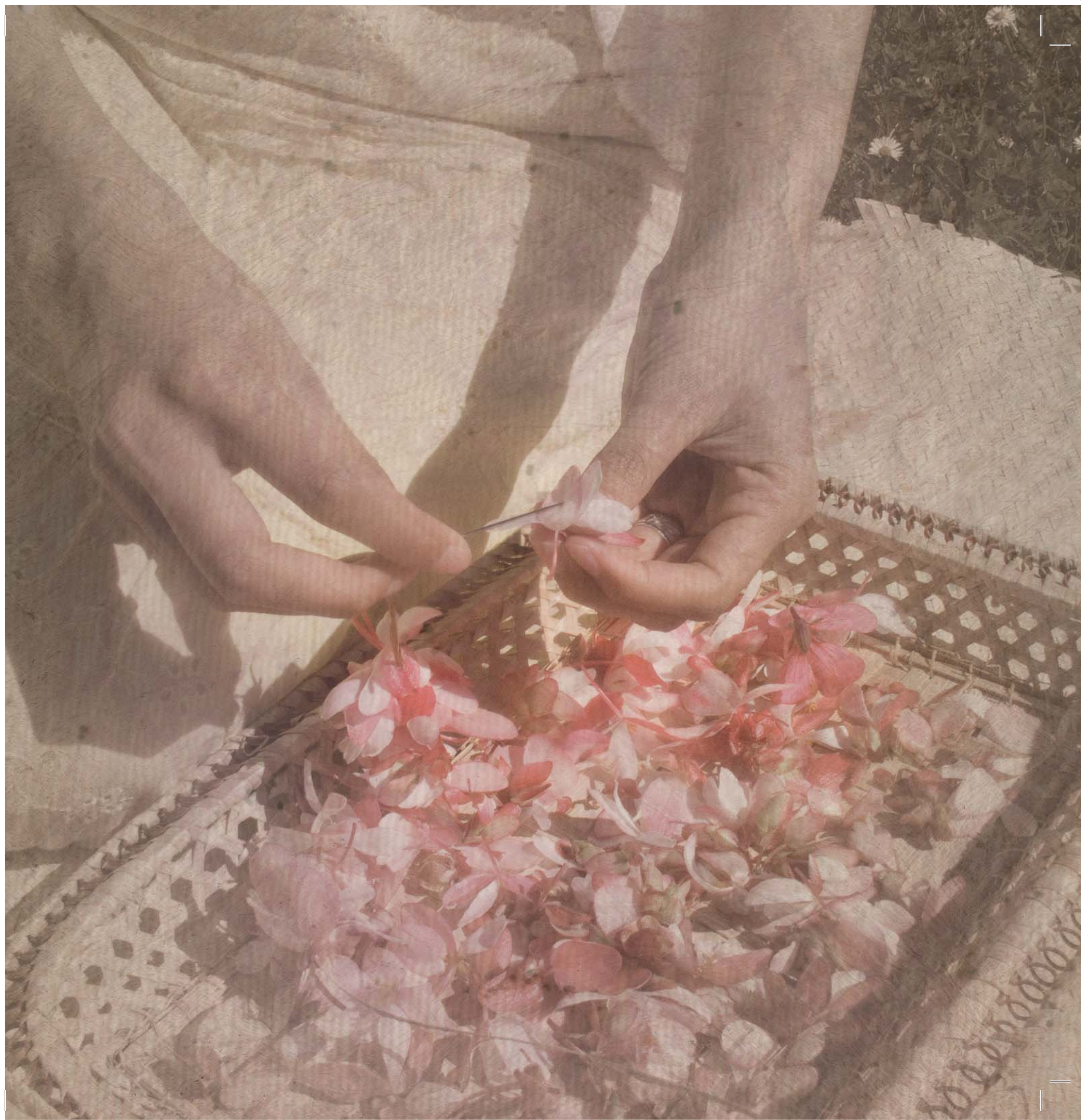




Figure 1:5. Unknown. *Hawaii flower sellers*. 1920. Postcard 1920s showing the colour-saturated palette of the commercial conceptualisation of the islands as exotic and brightly coloured.

Figure 1:6. Talita Toluta’u. *Monomono*. Still photograph. 2008. Example of bright colour palettes in a Tongan *monomono* (quilt). Floral images portrayed in the *monomono* are inspired by the bright vibrant flowers women *toli* to decorate their homes and bodies.

LYRICAL BEAUTY

The *talanoa* I created was not designed to be a series of interviews. It was a homage to each of the women with whom I worked. I sought to capture in film the subtle beauty and resonance of recollection and attachment. Initially I sought cultural references for the palettes I might employ in creating the colouration of the texts. Although many traditional approaches to representing the Pacific Islands have concerned themselves with colour-saturated **postcard** images of an exotic paradise, I wanted to reach beyond this.

Initially I considered palettes drawn from quilt making (*tui monomono*). These were vibrant and suggested the iconography of the floral, but were potentially too powerful as a transferable aesthetic. I wanted to avoid creating an over-ornamented aesthetic that might overpower the emotional grace of each woman’s story.

In contrast to this aesthetic, my investigations into the world of archived imagery revealed texts that were faded with time. The old photographs of family albums, the much stamped pages of passports and the bled colouration of archived film footage, suggested palettes that were more indicative of the period from which the *talanoa* of these women had surfaced.

[image removed pending copyright consent] F1:5



F1:6





Figure 1.7 Siniua Toluta'u.  
Photographs and ephemera. Mixed.  
2008.  
Examples of the colouration of  
passports and photographs.



Figure 1:8. Talita Toluta'u. *Stills of Siniua Lui Toluta'u from Migrating Floral documentary*. Footage. 2007. These stills are from initial experiments with colour. They show the use of handmade filters <sup>22</sup> dropped over filmed footage that had been desaturated. Although the

approach contained references to time and the faded nature of memory, I was concerned that they lacked a certain grace. I was not seeking to create an **old-time** documentary, but to reach for something more subtle and elegant.

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In concord with this, I began to creatively consider the colours of other traditional women's crafts in Tonga. I was interested if the delicate tones of fine mats (*fala*) and the subtle browns and textured creams of the *ngatu* or tapa cloth might be brought into the creation of the film. In these crafts I saw both the delicacy and subtlety of a limited palette. I thought by adopting this, I might be able to draw out the lyrical nature of the *talanoa* without it being overpowered by supporting or contextualising imagery.<sup>23</sup>

The artistic breakthrough came while I was working away from the film on a series of portraits of the women that might be useful in promoting the final work.<sup>24</sup> I had revisited the studio photography of earlier research but was considering the potential of recontextualising the portraits so they might sit in graceful and faded backgrounds that might refer to the enigmatic nature of recollection.

While I was pleased with the colouration and possibilities of this approach (see figures 1:9 and figures 1:10), I was not happy with the cropping. This was due to having shot the portraits against a black background. In later experiments I re-photographed the women in a white studio. This gave me more flexibility when working with subtle adjustments involving the outline of the head and shoulders.

<sup>22</sup> In order to achieve the right Pacific filter for the film, I experimented with the raw texture of a Tongan *ngatu* piece that did not have the *kupesi* (patterns) engravings. The focus was to not have the *kupesi* of the *ngatu* over power the images of the women. I scanned a piece of the *ngatu*, and imported it into After Effects programme and changed the capacity to create this filter design.

<sup>23</sup> These considerations were manifest in a number of animation experiments I conducted using After Effects. I was looking for the potential of certain design forms to operate as a reference to the garland and the flowering of a story.

<sup>24</sup> The final versions of these portraits appear in the exhibition in the St Paul's Street galleries and form the graphic signature of the promotion material designed for the completed work.







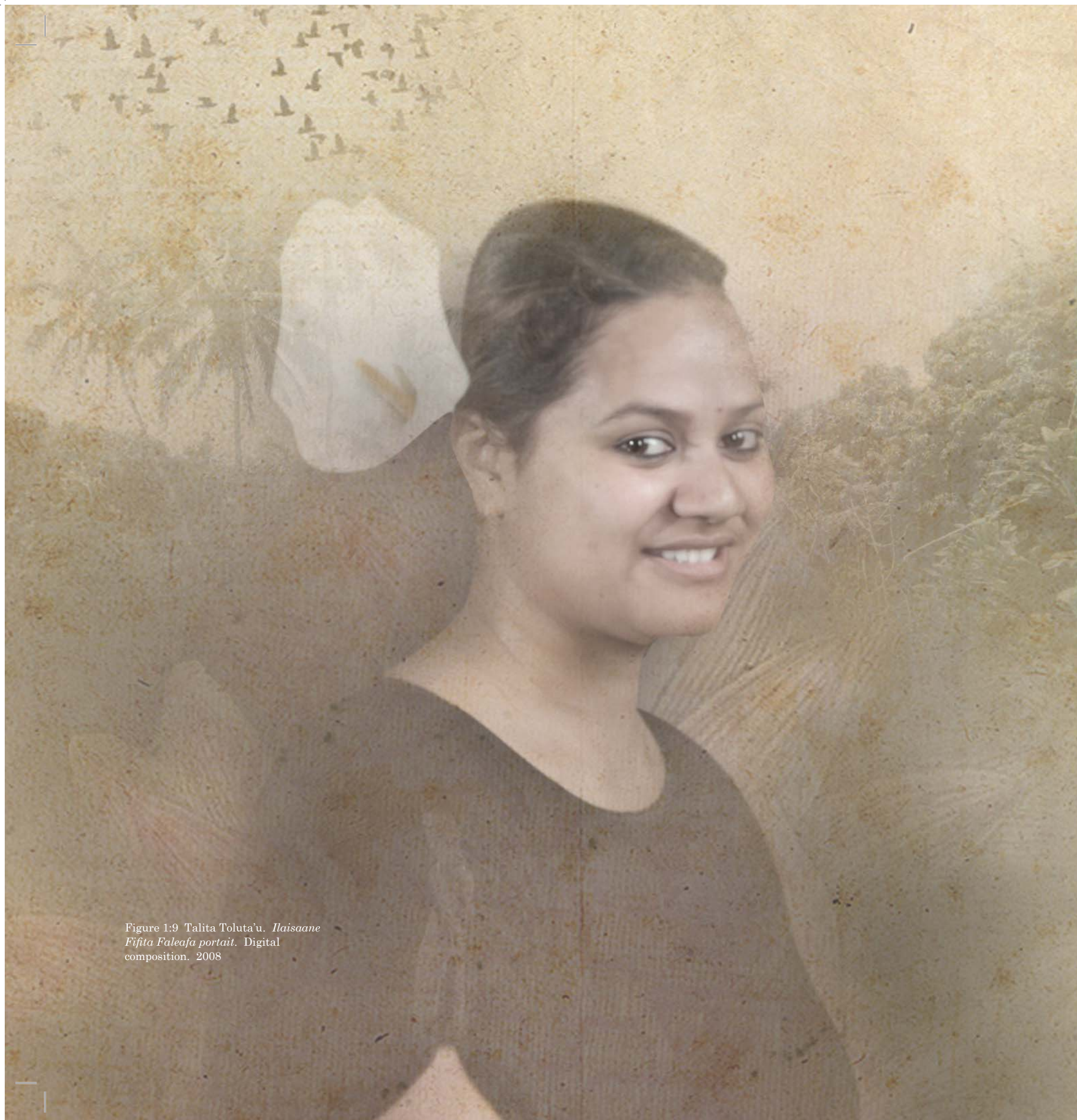


Figure 1:9 Talita Toluta'u. *Ilaisaane Fifta Faleafa portait*. Digital composition. 2008



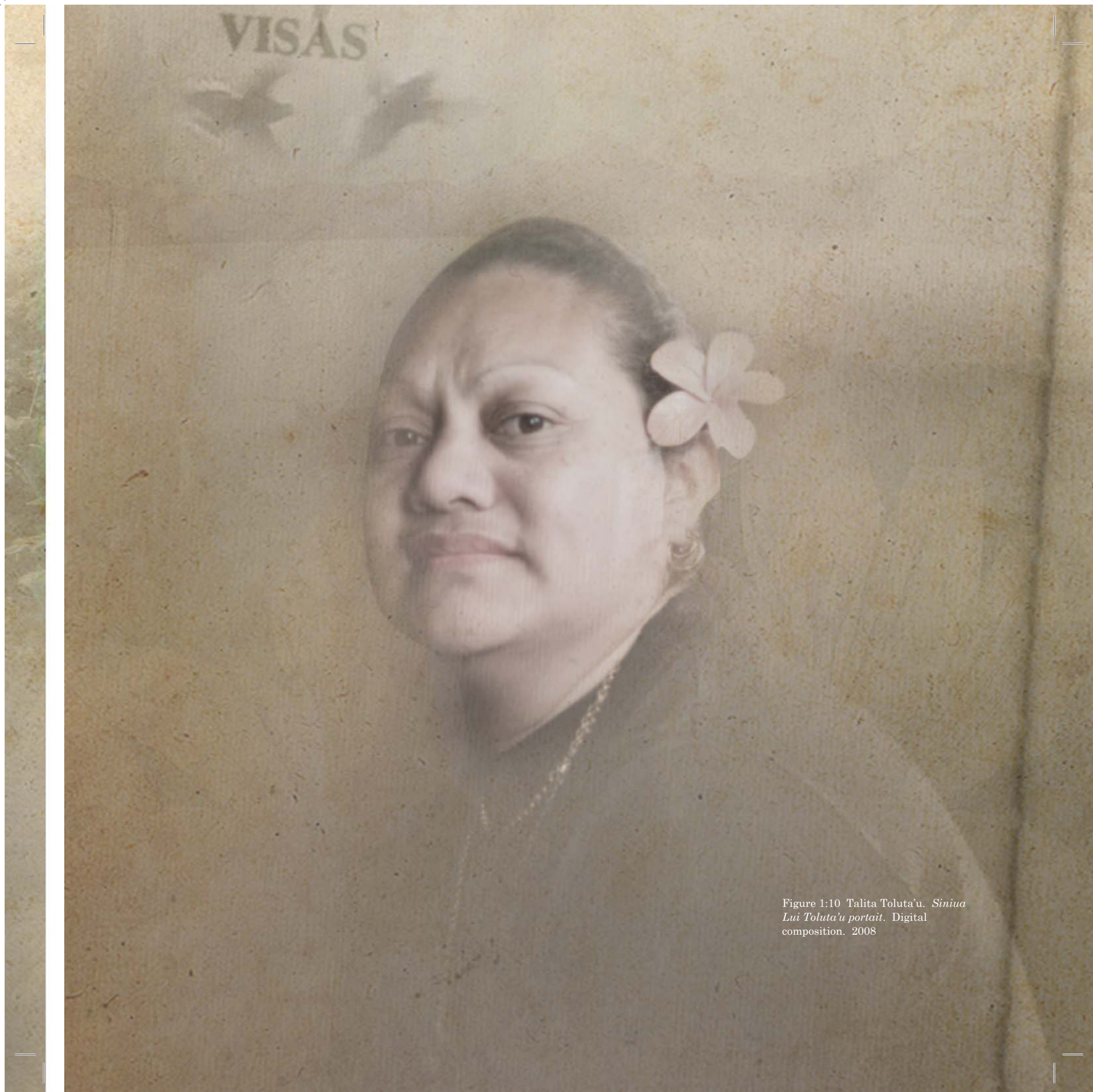


Figure 1:10 Talita Toluta'u. *Siniua  
Lui Toluta'u portait*. Digital  
composition. 2008

Figure 1:11 Talita Toluta'u.  
*Makeleta Tausinga Moala portait.*  
Digital composition. 2008

38 While much of the refinement of this film was realised in the digital domain, I found that certain compositional and textural approaches were more effectively handled by in the realm of photographic print. This was because I was able to reconsider notions of scale and become reacquainted with the potentials of physical substates. As a tangential outcome of this process, three additional large portraits of Ilisaane, Makeleta and Siniua were produced as tapa patterns using emerging technologies in print processing from the Textile Development Laboratories at the university. The substrate ngatu was brought especially from Tonga for these prints and the final images were realised by the Shima Seiki SIP-160F inkjet textile printer providing ability to use multi-colour, adaptation and scalability.

These photographic images are designed to accompany the film when it is shown in a gallery context. In addition, one of the designs is printed on 200gsm digital offset stock as the promotion poster for the film.



VISAS







Figure 1:12. Talita Toluta'u. *Layers of stills in Makeleta Tausinga Moala Portait*. Digital composition. 2008.

In *Talanoa: Mata la ‘oe Fonua*, this approach has been applied so we see the woman clearly defined in a world that is recalled. She has a tonal range greater than the environment that she remembers, but she is still part of it. In doing this I was attempting to show the relationship between the **recaller** and the **recalled** in a highly lyrical manner. I wanted the garland to position the woman as central but supported by a consort of images and contexts that would not intrude or distract too much from what she was saying.

**LAYERING**

*Talanoa: Mata la ‘oe Fonua* is distinctive in its aesthetic treatment because of its unique use of layering. This occurs in both the design of imagery and sound.<sup>25</sup> In some segments of the film there are over five layers of information subtly blended into a single frame. The idea behind this layering was the nature of loss.

Memory is not a constant. It does not recount in absolute linear detail the flow of events as they occurred. When women *talanoa* we experience their layering of recollection. We hear their emphases and re-orchestrations. Often one recollection will flow into another and the two will be joined, not by chronological correlation but through association.

The complex question that was asked of the design therefore was:

*How might one visually represent the multifaceted but coherent nature of talanoa in a visual form?*

The narrative layers of talanoa are not consistent, nor in every retelling are they always there. The narrative layers of *talanoa* are not consistent, nor in every retelling are they always there. Their borders are soft and given to dissolve or renegotiation. Sections are withdrawn depending for whom the recollection is recounted. Moreover, the emotional content of such tellings often lies beyond what we see and hear; meaning can exist in the absence and the undefined.

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<sup>25</sup> In designing the audio for these works I was careful initially to capture sound very clearly without the intrusion of undue environmental interference. This was because I wanted to place at the forefront the women’s stories, not the physical context in which they were being recorded. In Tonga we recorded the monologue of each woman’s *talanoa* using the AKG model C417 lapel micromic. By using this lapel, the audio frequency responses were very clear in speech and vocals. I was also able to reduce wind noise when using this system in an open-air environment. I took advice on this form of sound capture from Mairi Gunn who was the Director of Photography on the shoots. The editing of the narratives I undertook in Final Cut Pro. Once a core recollection was established I began to layer in subtle references to drum beats. In some cases these were sounds already existing in the atmosphere of the recorded footage. I sought to weave the background sound forwards and backwards through the edited sequences so it permeated relevant parts of the narrative. I chose not to use foley (sound effects). I was trying to position the emphasis on the recorded monologue. In the final orchestration of the works, sound occurs in very subtle layers that shift like the shadows on a garland. These shadows add depth to the blossom of each woman’s narrative, but do not overpower or subdue it.



The earthy *ngatu*<sup>26</sup> colour found in indigenous lapita pottery<sup>27</sup> was also incorporated into the film. By blending these colours in the manner of soft fusions I was able to pacify and unite background elements so they created a harmonious backdrop to the women’s *talanoa*. These earthy tones draw into the film’s discourse the traditional importance to the Pacific island nations of *ngatu* and lapita pottery. *Ngatu* is commonly used by the people of Tonga as a gift to present on special occasions such as funerals, weddings, birthdays and other celebratory events. Lapita pottery is considered by anthropologists to be important to Polynesian society as it represents a credible answer to questions regarding our origin.

COMPOSITION CONCERNS

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE FLORAL

The camera shots of the women utilised indicative floral imagery from their villages. For instance, Siniua’s home was adorned with the hibiscus, marigold and tiare flowers. In shooting I often pulled the camera’s focus away from a particular flower and sharpened it on another. The floral permeates much of Tongan iconography, poetry and life. In the film, each woman is adorned with a sei worn on the side of their head. Makeleta selected a bright yellow marigold that referenced her vibrancy. Siniua used the white tiare . This indigenous flower is smooth in texture and subtle in appearance, and referenced these same qualities in her personality. Ilaisaane chose the yellow frangipani, this underscored her dignity and sense of tradition.

In the grading of the film I often drew subtle attention to these flowers, not as decoration but as part of the intrinsic nature

Figure 1:13 Talita Toluta’u. *Stills from the talanoa of Ilaisaane Fifita Faleafa*. 2008  
In this image we see the remembered world with subtle emphases. Colour is desaturated but on a duplicated, translucent layer, small emphases are picked out. These may be likened

to small flickers of sunlight over a garland. These discrete emphases of colour draw our attention fleetingly to details within the film, but then like remembered impressions, they are ephemeral and gone.

of each woman. These sei are symbolic of the beauty of their *talanoa*.<sup>28</sup> When the women speak, we see these flowers as Tonga’s *matala 'o e fonua* on foreign soil.

TRACKING SHOTS

The tracking shots deployed in the film helped to capture the women’s arrival and departure scenes. This approach was used to enable the audience to get a more dynamic sense of the comparative chaos of leaving. By focusing the camera on the subjects as they got off the plane and tracking the shot as they made their way towards the main airport building, we see the congestion of the unknown, unfolding in contrast to the grace of the women’s memories of their villages.

OFF CENTERING

*Talanoa: Matala 'o e Fonua* is distinctive in its physical off-centering the speaker within the frame. In doing this, I was seeking to create relationships between physical context and recollection. The women are not positioned aggressively in the centre of the screen, (as in much television interviewing) instead they speak to us from the context of their world. The decision to use this form of framing was adopted because *Talanoa: Matala 'o e Fonua* is not an interrogation of the past; it is an **observed dwelling** within it.

The physical advantage of off-centering each woman was that I didn’t have to cut heavily between alternating views of the speaker or break the flow of her *talanoa* with constant repositioning of the camera. I could position the recording devices at a discrete and unobtrusive distance and allow each woman’s narrative to simply unfold in a single linear telling.

<sup>26</sup> *Ngatu* is a versatile bark cloth made from beaten tree bark. It is produced throughout the Pacific Islands and Indonesia. From clothing to ceremonial rights this material was associated with cultural and social identity. By blending the raw colour of the *ngatu* bark into the visual layers I wanted to create my special *ngatu* to gift to the audience, especially to the women in the film.

<sup>27</sup> Lapita is the name for an ancient Pacific archaeological culture that was the common ancestor of several cultures in Polynesia. Low-fired earthenware lapita pottery, has been discovered in the Bismarck archipelago, Samoa and Tonga. The distinctive form of the pottery is often embellished with patterns created with a dentate (toothed) stamp.

<sup>28</sup> In the same way that the *sei* creates an aura of beauty around the face, scented flowers are traditionally planted around the home in Tonga to perfume the house.







Figure 1:14 Talita Toluta'u. *Three Interview Locations in Tongatapu.* Photograph. 2008

CONTEXT

By placing the speaker in a context with which she was familiar (her village) I hoped to create a sense of security and authenticity that might support her *talanoa*. While I filmed the three women in their villages on Tongatapu, each told me where she wanted to be recorded. Ilaisaane chose to be filmed under the verandah in the shade of an old village hall in Hoi. Here she instantly relaxed. Her body posture throughout the filming was comfortable. During tense moments, when she became captured in the emotions of her *talanoa*, she would change her pose like that of a child shying away from attention.

Siniua was filmed sitting on a chair outside her parent's garden in Fua'motu village. Her body position was more formal and mature in its relationship to the camera. She controlled her movements and rarely turned away during her *talanoa*. While in conversation she was very relaxed, she displayed minimal movement. I felt she was more aware of the camera's presence and this impacted on how she chose to present herself in the film. Her presentation exuded status and a degree of formal engagement with the recording of her *talanoa*. As an extension of this, her *talanoa* was entirely in Tongan.

Makeleta was filmed sitting outside her grandparents home in Liahona village. She chose to sit in a similar manner to Siniua at the start of the filming, but as the film progressed her composure began to relax. At times, I sensed that she was trying to control her emotions within the unfolding *talanoa* by turning away from the camera. She was not shying away from the camera per se but sought to keep a moment of weakness hidden.

Tongan people seldom show signs of emotion to strangers, and the women knew that this film would be exhibited to strangers who may not have the same personal connection that the filmmaker had with them.

The careful selection of location by the women overrode any preconceptions I might have had for pre-visualising their *talanoa*. This meant that my framing of each shot became a response to their decisions. I was not **composing** them inside my own aesthetic preferences. In this regard, I was not **directing** them; they were directing me.

The advantage of this approach was that I became privy to a more reflective and graced **telling**. The sounds, scents, and familiar physicality of these locations spoke in concord with, and subtly supported the uniqueness of, their *talanoa*. These were familiar and redolent spaces.

As a result, there was a marked difference to each woman's *talanoa*, (compared to the tone of discussions they had had with me before the filming). Something of the *matala 'o e fonua* surfaced and became manifest through this contact with the physicality of home.





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F1314

**LUVA E KAKALA:  
FILMED DOCUMENTARY IS GIFTED OR RETURNED TO ANOTHER**

The final process in *Kakala* making is called *luva*. This means the giving away of the *kakala* to someone else, an act that is sometimes referred to as **garlanding**. In Tonga, a *kakala* is meant to be given away as a sign of *ofa* (compassion or love) and *faka'apa'apa* (respect). The receiver of a *kakala* may be a dancer, a special guest, a keynote speaker at a conference, or a student who in graduating, has achieved something special in the eyes of Tongan culture.

The exhibition and publication of my work will become my *luva e kakala* (gift to society).

A *kakala* is often passed on from the original recipient to another person, who in turn shares in the original purpose for which the *kakala* was given in the first place (Thaman, 2003). When one gives *kakala*, it is gifted in love, friendship and respect. The *kakala* is not just a physical object, it carries with it the spirit of its original purpose.

The responsibility of the researcher to return what she has made to those whose gifts inspired it, differs somewhat from certain traditional Western academic practices where contributors are generally called **participants** but the final work is removed from them, and often presented in language they cannot comprehend. *Luva* asserts that the place of the created work is with those who contributed to it, or as a gift to someone or something that is honoured. Accordingly this *talanoa* is returned to the three women and their families. It is gifted as a record of humanity, design and culture.

With the permission of the three women *Talanoa: Mataala 'o e Fonua* will also be entered in national and international film festivals.<sup>29</sup> This is so the recollections and tellings might reach wider audiences and enable others to recognise possible commonalities of experience and emotional connection. As an extension of this, I have also created it as a contribution to academic discourse in the realm of creative practice. *Kakala* as a methodology has never been applied to this discipline, but I modestly hope that in its explication, something of use may be provided for other indigenous researchers who choose to follow related paths.

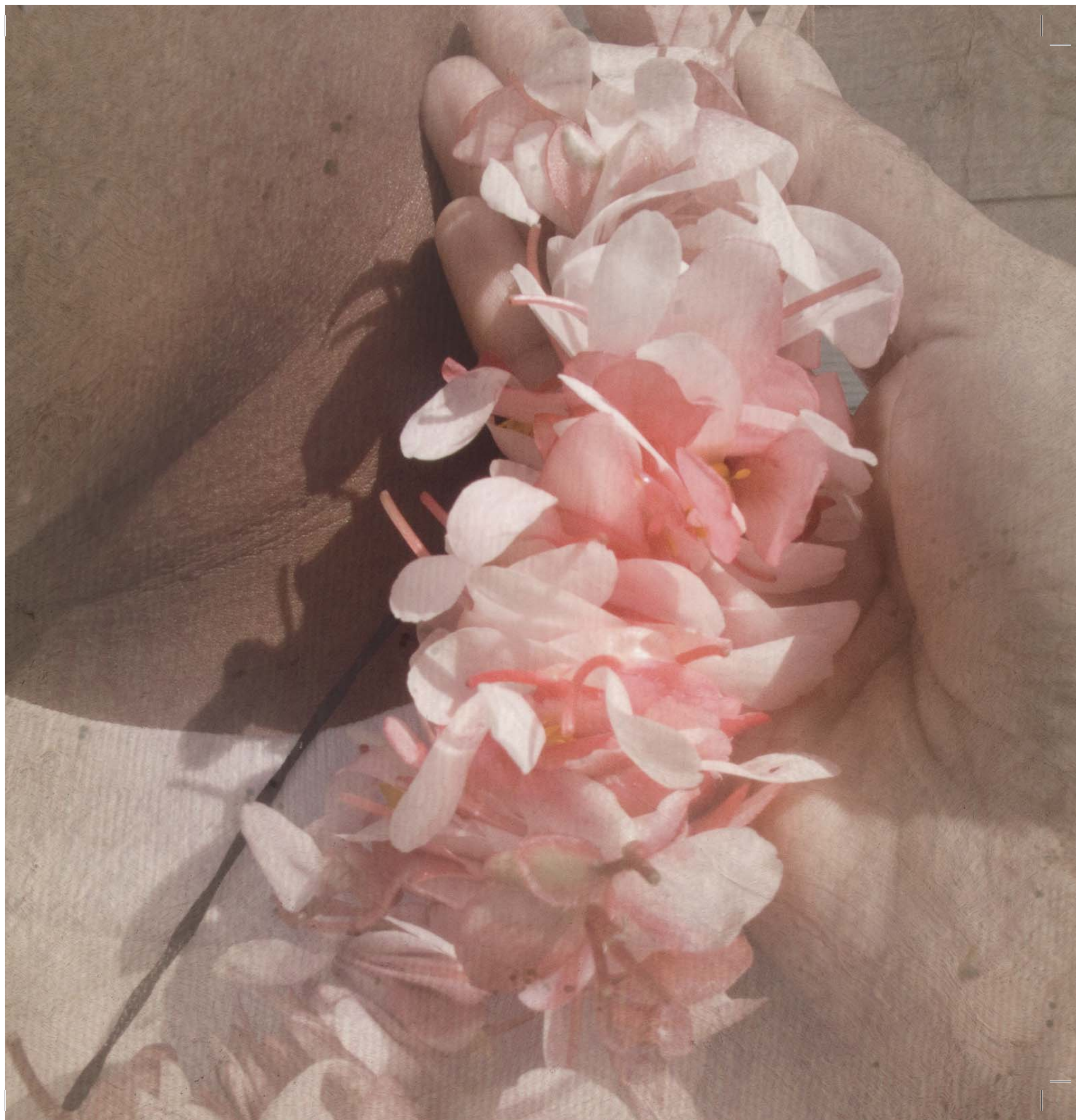
This thesis is therefore designed as a gift.

It is, both in method and in realisation, *kakala*.

It is given as a sign of *ofa* and *faka'apa'apa*.

<sup>29</sup> The work does not conform to the structural and formatting concerns of television documentary and is not designed for the environment of distraction in which television narratives operate. I have designed the work for cinemas using a 16:8 anamorphic. It is also formatted as a DVD that can be preserved in family archives where the subtle grace of the *talanoa* might be appreciated and shared.





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Figure 1:5

Resture, J. (2008). Unknown. *Hawaii flower sellers* (1920). Retrieved September 27, 2008, from the Oceania postcards and picture galleries website: [http://www.janeresture.com/oceania\\_postcards9/index.htm](http://www.janeresture.com/oceania_postcards9/index.htm)

*Katinia.*

Katinia si'oto sei manakoa  
'Alaha kapui ai 'e si'ete 'ofa  
Ha sino mai ho'o to'onga  
Kae vaifa 'a lo'ifofonga  
(Wood-Ellen, 2004, p.174)

*Gardenia.*

Gardenia, my favoured sei  
Your fragrance engulfs this love of mine  
Your ways are impressed on my mind  
And tears stream down  
(Wood-Ellen, 2004, p.174)

*Manu 'o Palataisi*

Fotu 'i he la'a  
Tapa 'I he langi ma;a  
Fine Tonga 'oku haka  
Pea toli he kakala  
'O luva ki ha vulangi  
'O ka malu efiafi  
Ake e manatu ai  
'Alu kae foki mai  
  
Si'i pua 'ene fisi  
'O ngaofe he uini  
Laukau 'o mahiki  
Manu 'o Palataisi  
Tu'u hifo mu'a he  
Malu 'o e pame  
Va'inga 'i he siale  
Sei 'o ha taka pe  
(Wood-Ellen, 2004, p. 197-198)

*Bird of Paradise*

Silhouetted against the sun  
Flashing in the clear sky  
A Tongan maiden dances  
Plucking the kakala  
Relinquishing it to a stranger  
When the shade of evening comes  
To remind him  
To return if he must go  
  
Dear blossoming pua  
Bowing in the wind  
Proudly lifting  
The birds of paradise  
Won't you stop a while  
In a shade of the palms  
Play amidst the gardenia  
The Wanderer's sei  
(Wood-Ellen, 2004, p. 197-198)



*Si'i Matangi Kuo Maili Noa*

Si'i matangi kuo ma'ili oa  
Kata loto tauke ne 'iloa  
To'onga 'a loto Nuku'alofa  
'Uta 'anga si'a fine leiola

'O ka li si'o lei ka ke 'alu  
Kae tuku ai 'a ho'o manatu  
Ke fe'ao mo si'oto salusalu  
'Oku tuku oe e talitali atu  
(Wood-Ellen, 2004, p.198)

*Siueli 'o e Pasifiki*

Fola 'i he nusipepa tala 'o Hauai'i  
Fakalata 'e e hula hiva 'ene vanaiki  
Ko e fanifo'anga 'o e filivaihi  
'Ise 'isa hoto loto fie laka he taimi  
Ka kuo li taua 'a 'ofa 'alovili  
Ve'eve 'e heilala ko ha 'insisenisi  
Vetekin ai si 'i 'atamai 'oku fih  
Sai pe si'i Tonga siueli Pasifiki  
(Wood-Ellen, 2004, p. 194)

*Oh, the Breeze Passes by Unaware*

Oh, the breeze passes by unaware  
But the resident laughs inwardly, knowing  
The ways of central Nuku'alofa  
Destination of a garlanded maiden

If you cast off your garland before you go  
You leave your thoughts here  
To remain with my salusalu  
That I shall keep, awaiting your return  
(Wood-Ellen, 2004, p.198)

*Jewel of the Pacific*

Newspapers spread tales of Hawaii  
How enchanting the hula, how sweet the singing  
Surfing place of the handsome locals  
How my heart longs to march with the times  
But my resolute love has anchored here  
Ve'eve'e heilala the incense  
Untying the knots on a mind perplexed  
Dear Tonga excels, jewel of the Pacific  
(Wood-Ellen, 2004, p. 194)

*Ilaisaane Fifita Faleafa*  
*Transcript of Interview recorded in Hoi, Tongatapu.*

Keys to transcript:

// quick hesitation  
... silence  
(...) interference background noise

Transcript: Transcript in English

*[Talita] What kind of relationship did your family have with the neighbours?*

*[Ilaisaane]* What kind of relationship I had with ah like what, with my neighbours is ah what I could remember about my neighbours they're really kind, friendly, we used to share everything//...um you know if we have// nice food at our house like if we have a//whenever we have a nice meal at our house // we usually share it with our neighbours...they're really good people you know really supportive of anything//if we have a funeral or or wedding or a birthday going on like a um big birthday a big wedding or something we usually um// our neighbours usually um help us out and you know they're really friendly kind people ah like I said before like in our small village we're one big happy family and everybody is really friendly you know and they're really...if you have something going on at all at your family they// they will come and support you and um be there for you.

*[Talita] Were all members of the village supportive of each other?*

*[Ilaisaane]* um my family was always known as you know from my grandparents they always um doing// farming// doing stuff to take to the market and stuff and you know um my family usually if there's a funeral or something we usually take um some yams and corned beef or something just to show our support and our family's been doing that that for years now you know and we're not just doing that// we just choose whoever families good but we do it to every family and our family is you know happy with whenever they mix with other family they're really happy and you know they don't have any concern or anything like that. But you know my family is all good with anything.

*[Talita] How did you interact with the village?*

*[Ilaisaane]* um...to me like um//coz I grew up most of my life// I grew up here and um everybody knows my grandparents and coz my grandparents use to look after me and ummm I used to just walk around, im one of those lost im like one of those lost people that I just walk around to peoples houses and just say hello and if they have dinner or lunch ill stay there and eat with them you know its... all I could remember was ummm in my time I, if I go like I usually just go to neighbours house and play with their kids or but we, I used to have a good relationship with people and stuff you know ummm used to have alot of friends here back home and now I come and see they're all married and move on with their life and most of them are your know most of them are already dead but um I used to have a good um mix with these people and im so happy you know umm I come to this village I see there's a lot of different people here and ummm marrying into our village people and its good to see people like that and im happy you know ummm just happy about everything.

**[Talita] Can you describe the kind of village atmosphere you remember? Your personal connection you have with the village?**

**[Ilaisaane]** um what kind of feelings I used to have when I was here was um// I felt love from my family and from the village as well um... oh I can remember was um I always feel welcome to every body's house cos I'm always at every body's house ah// eating or playing with ah the kids and you know is that feeling will always be in me um.. that village feeling you know it's it's a peaceful feeling you know sometime when I'm back home in new Zealand I// I sometime wish that um that I'm back home where its quiet and just nice calm and um I always you know every time I//I come here to Tonga to my village I always feel um sometimes I feel you know I feel that love to my family but at the same time I feel sorry for some of the families that I see here in my village but at the same time um every body's um... everybody share that love and um you know I'm all..I always have that happy feeling to come to my village because I know what kind of people they are and um the families are there and and stuff.

**[Talita] How would you describe a typical day in your village?**

**[Ilaisaane]** um what did I do... everyday..was I have a ummm I have a big job back in my house cause there were all boys, back in the days they were all boys they were my uncles boys and I was the only girl so my job was I have to sweep the front yard every morning before I go to school that's what I//I remember was my//my aunty used to get up and tell me have you done your job before you go to//to school and um o yeah I'll go do it like that's what I remember but um this what I remember I have to do like everyday kind of thing I have to sweep the front yard or the back yard or and stuff like that that I usually do.

**[Talita] What was it like for you growing up in your home?**

**[Ilaisaane]** In my household I can describe my family as a busy family at the same time really loving family ah what I can remember about my family was my uncles usually get up 5 in the morning and go to um to our um go out looking for pigs or something like that, 5 in the morning they go look for stuff to sell that's where we get our income from selling crops and stuff and um my aunt will always busy preparing our uniform and preparing food for our uncles and at the same time I could say my families really loving um whenever someone is down they are all there even though we have a lot of boys and I was the only girl at the house at the time but um you know at the same time I could say that my family is really supportive of anything If something happen in the family every body's there to show their support and that's how my family is always busy and loving and show their loving by giving food and just make sure that your comfortable and happy at home.

**[Talita] What status did your family have in the village?**

**[Ilaisaane]** I'll say that back in my days my family was one of the poorest I think like I said before that's why um one of my uncles would get up in the morning and just go look for something just to sell to um... just to go school or so we could get a bus fare ...or so we could have bread at home or something like that um that's why I say my family was one of the poorest and I could remember one of my grandparents um... I could remember my grandma she was about 60 and she still go to like go looking for food or something just to support like us even though there was heaps of us and you know even though we had nothing but we had each other ...we// I remember every morning we usually get up do our prayers before we um go do our individual chores but I say one of my...but//I can see now that we finally have

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success you know have something to um... in our family because umm most of my aunty and my uncles are overseas and they send stuff to support my family and I can see now that um they all working and having their own business running it and its really good to see that in my family and I'm really happy but back in my days I say one of my families was one of the poorest but that's all I can say about my family.

***[Talita] Is there a particular memory of your family life in Tonga?***

***[Ilaisaane]*** um I'll say it's probably the pig// the farm at the back cos um most of// most of my time I spend at the back with my uncles and my grandpa just feeding the pigs and just looking after the animals and um I say most of the time I would be spending on the garden looking after it doing the garden with my grandma and just um ah just everywhere in the house memories its always so good feeling in you... when you're at home you still feel that love um even though people pass away... my grandpa passed away long time ago I still have the memories in me when I'm at home in my village still feel that love from my grandpa and I...cos when I was younger I was more like a homely girl like I'm always at home helping my grandparents or helping my uncles you know just doing something to make myself busy at home

***[Talita] Can you describe what the house was like at this time?***

***[Ilaisaane]*** um back in my days we use to live near the bush area in our village and ah we use to have a small house and you know for a small house for a big family there was at the time there was eight of us in the house...we use to have a small house and we use to just sleep on the floor we would just have the mattress or anything on the floor and we just..you know

that's how we had a small house but a big yard//back yard and everything but cos we could afford to build a big house at the time um but I guess now we ah back in my days I think it was white and blue the colour of my house I think it was white and blue that's what I could remember um I think it was white and the sides were blue or something but that was back in the days and now we have a big house and you know I can there are so much rooms umm that you can fit in a whole lot of people into it so I can see the difference back in my days to now um how everything grow and how every things so big now compare to my days.

***[Talita] Do you still remember the day you left Tonga for New Zealand?***

***Do I still remember the day leaving Tonga to go NZ?***

***[Ilaisaane]*** Of course..Of course how can I forget um I...I still remember it cos you know um more of a emotional person some people say I'm a hard case but I'm really emotional like I remember I was about 11 and um one of the ladies came over to bring my ticket and um my uncle explained to me that I'm leaving Tonga and I was happy that I was going to New Zealand...It was like a dream come true cos I can go school and I can get this I can get that um... but at the same time I um when I see my family they were crying and you know saying that they not going to see me and that it going to be hard and just seeing my family kind of push me to um to don't go kind of thing but at the same time I wanted to go so I could be able to work and help my family from overseas and maybe I can help them build a house or something like that but um the feeling was um at the same time I was felt like 'oh my goodness I heard NZ is big' you know it's everything so massive and

you have to speak English and you're from Tonga and I was thinking 'O man it's gonna be so hard there in New Zealand' but um the feeling was confusing sometimes... but I was happy that you know but at the same time I was happy that I was going that I can work from NZ to help my family here in Tonga.

**[Talita] Why leave Tonga?**

**[Ilaisaane]** What was the main purpose for me going leaving Tonga to go NZ was my family all wanted me to get a good education and just to have a better life there coz um ah I'd say that it was too hard to umm like to umm look after me here it's just coz we didn't have enough money we didn't have the education at the time but umm but the main purpose was for me to have a better life live a better life then my uncles and them did that was the main purpose to hopefully get somewhere and to have a better education.

**[Talita] What were you feeling at the time of your departure from Tonga?**

**[Ilaisaane]** What was the feelings I went through was I was I was so sad because thinking about my friends and I was going to miss everything coz I hear it's so different back in NZ and in Tonga everything is just family and um... I was so thinking I was going to miss my family I'm so use to just the way that we are I'm not use to big things and I was thinking or I'm// you know it's no more going there like but at the same time I was like thinking that it was better for me to go to help my family coz the way they were the way my family were and stuff I was mix feeling of everything but ah I was say like excited but at the same time I was sad that I was leaving my family behind

a part of me wish that I could take my whole family with me to NZ and that was the feelings that I had was just sad but at the same time I was happy.

**[Talita] We talked about your family and how you left one family for another in New Zealand. How did your family in Tonga react towards you leaving?**

**[Ilaisaane]** When I was staying here with my grandparents they were always telling me about my parents in New Zealand and I always wanted to know them like they were um ah I wanted to get to know them and the kids back in New Zealand um they were very supportive and very happy um for me to go and they were very understandable about my other family in NZ you know they wanted me to go there get to know them and have that bond you know between families... yeah my family was very happy about it and at the same time they were giving me support and you know and just remember the main reason you going there you know just stay to who you are//you know they were giving me all these stuff before I went but they were very happy for me to go NZ to get to know my parents and the rest of the family

**[Talita] What were some of the events that happened leading up to your departure? What do you remember about leaving?**

**[Ilaisaane]** What I remember about me leaving to New Zealand was all I could remember was my//my... my I have a cousin he's in New Zealand now//but I had a cousin we were brought up together we were like brothers and sisters and I could just remember him just crying telling me to stay like I'm not suppose to go why am I going leaving him here in

Tonga...leaving him here in Tonga and that's one of the things I could picture his face crying ...and the other thing was we had a farewell umm feast it was a big feast...we had everything you can name it all the food we had umm pork everything umm and the other thing um// that I could remember was how I went to the airport the whole family went and my next door neighbour went we all went to the airport and as I was about to leave I could see that it was really hard for me to turn around and say goodbye cos um... they you know we were so close and they brought me up here and um... it was really hard I can see everybody showing their love for me but that was some of the events that happened.

**[Talita] Do you still remember the actual day you left this country?**

**[Ilaisaane]** How I could remember about my farewell here in Tonga when I was about to go to NZ umm I was so excited...I was so excited OMG it was my first time in the plane and it was going to be my first time overseas it was a mix feeling// but a part of me was ah always um sad cos I was going to miss my family and I won't see them and I don't know when I'm gonna come back and visit them umm at the same time it's going to be so exciting to go learn a new language and just be able to go and mingle with the other people and I heard I always hear people say... 'Don't you know that in NZ there are heaps of white people' and ah um I didn't know what was white people//It was a whole you know excited but at the same time I was nervous coz I was thinking what happens if the plane crash or something happen while we are on the flight but it was a very excited experience.

**[Talita] Do you have any memories of the aeroplane ride?**

**[Ilaisaane]** um what I could say was the plane man I was about to cry when the plane um take off coz I was sitting there like oh

my god please don't crash I was like my experience on the plane was scary but at the same time I remember the food was yum I think that's the thing that cam me down and that's all I can remember about the plane trip.

**[Talita] What did you expect New Zealand to be like?**

**[Ilaisaane]** What kind of things did I expect NZ to be like umm I think everything//when I go there everything was so massive and flash and I was like what a superstar coz everything looked so clean you know//and everything looked so massive and so greenie and so clean and just umm the stores and stuff was so nice I was more excited to see my family you know I was too excited to see my family I just couldn't wait to get out there and um you know what I expected everything so clean and flashy you and all the nice cars you know the nice clothing that people wearing and all the white people that were there heaps of personalities you know there were heaps of stores that was the first time for me to see heaps of shops and stuff and that's what I expected...I got it.

**[Talita] Did you hear any stories or anything about New Zealand prior to you leaving?**

**[Ilaisaane]** What I could remember about New Zealand was the kids were always doing the haka so that was one thing I remember in New Zealand was the kids doing the haka that was one of the famous Maori haka that New Zealander's do and I always see the little kids do it... and I was always wonder what is it and when I got there and experience the haka and now I know the haka came from New Zealand and that's one thing I remember about New Zealand //and just people saying that New Zealand so beautiful and so greenie



and you know it's better cos in New Zealand you have thing  
and that's what I could remember about in our village  
about New Zealand.

**[Talita] Is there anything else you want to talk about?**

**[Ilaisaane]** I think um the only thing is back in my days the  
only thing is I could remember about village was it was so  
hard for families to get to get income or something like that  
coz I remember back in NZ people get income and stuff from  
the government... but back here in home we don't have that  
it's more like every family has to work to get own income  
and that's one of the thing that people in my village are very  
hard working people they will do anything sell tapa cloth//or  
whatever is there to sell just to get an income it's really hard  
for families to do that but yeah that's the only experience...  
ah yeah and one more thing was how people cooked their  
food underground they still do that now but I remember um  
every Sunday we use to cook our food underground so that's  
every family do that but I reckoned that that is one of the  
experiences in my life...I use to do it myself like and the other  
thing I remember about myself always I use to like climb  
trees and I remember going to umm with my uncle one day  
and he was telling me to climb up the coconut tree and get  
some coconuts so I actually did it so you know sometimes my  
uncles would just call me and we would go climb the tree or  
something to get some fruits or something like that but that's  
what remember about myself.

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*Makeleta Tausinga Moala*  
*Transcript of Interview recorded in Kahoua, Tongatapu.*

Keys to transcript:

// quick hesitation  
... silence  
(...) interference background noise

Transcript: Transcript in English

*[Talita] Tell me your full name?*  
*[Makeleta]* My name is Makeleta Tausinga Moala.

*[Talita] Age and birth place?*  
*[Makeleta]* My... I was born in um Tonga 1971 12th of June  
and I am this year 36 years old.

*[Talita] Tell me a bit about your background*  
*[Makeleta]* My fathers from ah um a village in the outer  
islands of Vava’u its called ‘Otea um and my mother is from a  
village within Tongatapu the main island and that village is  
called um Tokomololo and dad relocated.. my my grandfather  
actually came from ‘Otea to um Liahona and we lived in a  
little village not far from here just our next door neighbour  
basically and the village is Matangi’ake but this is basically  
where our house has been and this is where I remember my//  
my ah childhood yeah or basically around around this area the  
house here and the chapel behind me.

*[Talita] What do you remember most about Tonga?*  
*[Makeleta]* My memory is kind of.. their kind of vivid  
memories because umm what I do remember was basically  
around when I was like 2 3 years old...the things that I  
remember mostly were basically about ah church gatherings  
like there was a dance I remember um a dance um I remember  
ah my parents ah taking me to church and I also remember a  
lot of time I spent outside the house with my the neighbours  
kids like we would play um there little little fun memories  
that I remember um about my time in Tonga you know  
short time at the age of you know 3 years old I don’t really  
remember a whole lot but what I do remember are little  
pockets of memories about these particular places that I’m  
yeah visiting this this week so it’s a good ride.

*[Talita] What village are you from?*  
*[Makeleta]* my family belong to... I would say the village  
that I most associate my family to would be definitely  
Tokomololo and Kahoua.umm the house that I’m sitting at  
right now, the land that I’m sitting in that’s Kahoua so that’s  
my grandfathers and my father’s land. I//I remember this  
particular place because we were always here when dad was  
teaching and Liahona high school was kind of just 5minutes  
around the corner so I do remember this village quite well.

*[Talita] What part of your family life did religion play?*  
*[Makeleta]* Religion um played... religion was first priority  
no doubt my father everything was based around the um  
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. so religion  
played a very big part I mean right now I’m sitting here in my



father's land and right behind me is the church that a lot of times our family spent a lot of time and effort even money to build the church behind me so um even the education, church also played a big part in that because education for us back then was around where dad was working at the time he was working for the local high school run by the church and that was a a Liahona High School which is yeah around the corner from this particular um village so religion kind of.. it took us it took us out was of Tonga but what I do the memories that I do hold of being in Tonga it was always around church so I did yeah I remember a lot of things my memories kind of centre around the church and around activities that were held around the church even the village activities were around the church so religion kind of is the centre of all the activities around this particular village// as well as my mother's village.

***[Talita] How did religion impact on your families decision to migrate to New Zealand?***

***[Makeleta]*** um I think the village life at the time I remember it was quite a communal way of existing... We existed collectively so we had my grandparents on one side my uncles and aunties on the other side so we were you would say we were a family village cause everyone lived around each other and so we helped each another quite a lot but then people started to leave Tonga... My I remember my dad's oldest brother migrated to America and then his other brother followed and his sister so it was inevitable that we were going to migrate as well and my dad didn't go to America my dad migrated to NZ... He umm dad actually visited NZ the year I was born and then he came back and he was he was sure that

we were gonna migrate to NZ um... and the reason being was it was cheaper to migrate to New Zealand and it was closer and he could uproot 6 kids um 7 kids and take them all the way to New Zealand so it was cheaper and easier for us to do that so yeah when we look around the village a lot of people left and we kind of all left at the same time as well so when they decided to migrate to the to America my father went the opposite way he decided to migrate to New Zealand and um thank goodness....

***[Talita] How important is education to your family?***

***[Makeleta]*** Education and religion like I said they were intertwined and they were important yeah.

Well dad would um// you know ever since we were little and I remember dad always saying that you know "Ko koe teke ako teke ako ma'u pe" you know and I've... I guess today everyone knows I'm still learning... I'm still// I'm still going through school I'm still learning and even better I'm working where I'm studying so um yeah I guess in a way his// those words have come true for him "Ko koe teke ako teke ako ma'u pe" "You will always be learning, you'll continue to learn" so I've kind of lived those words for him and um it was yeah it was a.. I guess every parent has they have goals and dreams for their kids um and ours was overseas it was never in Tonga so yeah we kind of packed our bags and we moved on from um Liahona and Tokomololo and went straight for Auckland.

***[Talita] Why was education so important to your father?***

***[Makeleta]*** um at the time we knew for sure that um well dad knew actually you know mum and dad knew that life was gonna be really hard for their children if we didn't get

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an education... now education here in Tonga was never free dad still had to pay for a whole lot of children to go to school and he couldn't see that happening for all of us so we knew that we were gonna have to either dad or mum gotta have to work on plantations and in the school at Liahona just to provide for all of us so it was kind of really important for us to just um.... uproot ourselves from our village and from that close knit community that we belonged to and then try and establish ourselves again in Auckland umm but we got there, when we got to Auckland it was good you know, took a while but we kind of found other Tongan families and we close knit to them so I found it quite good um// in that sense about uprooting and going into another society another foreign land altogether yeah it was it was just so important I mean and even till today I think I preach the same things to my kids you know telling them to// um look at your education your future is your education its gonna provide for you// the same.. I don't say sermon but the same words came from my father yeah I'm so thankful//I'm thankful to him for that cause now today I realise just how important that is....

***[Talita] What was your father's background in education?***

***[Makeleta]*** My father's background in the education is..my dad was actually a um a vocational teacher so that only came about when dad was in Liahona and when dad was schooled in Liahona dad kinda was a sporty guy// yep dad was a sporty guy and the classes that dad loved the most... dad loved maths and dad loved metal work you know anything to do... they called vocational metal work// vocational studies...that's like your home economics your wood works your technology

graphic design that kind of ah that those kinda studies// So when dad finished his um his time in ah Liahona and then um dad ah did kind of um part time work for the church and um he..dad..dad did what was called land surveyor so dad was contracted to these palangi people who came to Tonga and it was time for them to survey the land... and it was dad// was part of that team and he kind of was assisting the land surveyors and he kinda learned what they were ah... what their particular job and the skills required for that job so that kinda went to um back to the church and the church helped dad continue on his education towards um... not so much towards land surveying but more towards like the um vocational studies like ah he learnt to um gas work welding dad did a lot of welding so he took that and he also took the religion class as well but with his um welding dad loved measurements cause dad was really good at maths so he loved to do measurements yeah so a lot of his work he'd be able to look at a particular cube you know he'd be like able to measure something// he'd be able to um kinda measure it by cubic metres and he'll continuously you know dad would continuously love to this job he'd love to build things, he'd love to measure things... I think the love for measurements kind of took him on the land surveying thing around Vava'u he went around Vava'u and he did his land surveying around that time//Came back to Tonga, met mum and um continued on with his teaching at Liahona so they took that on full time as a teacher there and he taught the vocational studies and vocational studies basically was like the boys// mostly did those class and no girl was seen in there yeah but he//dad really um like yeah he dreamt of continuing on like he had so he had a lot of things that he wanted to pursue as well as

education was concerned but his background is strongly in teaching the boys how to work, //how to work the machinery, how to work the welding //the gas, everything and um other than that yeah he would also teach a lot of ummm he would be part of the religion studies as well, he taught a lot of religion classes and ummm he also tutored and taught in maths as well kinda it was his thing measurements was his thing so I guess that came under geometry that's what he said.... so he enjoyed it.....

***[Talita] How has your father or mother personally influenced your education experience?***

***[Makeleta]*** um certainly throughout my whole you know ummm this whole process its always been about my father but you know // silently its mum.. For us girls it's always been about mum and um the reason why I talk about my mother is because my mother comes from um a family where the women were not umm allowed and I say, use the word allowed because they weren't allowed to go to school... my father influenced my education right from day one I knew //I mean he would just tell us "education// education" but then in the background was my mother and my mother had a lot to do with why personally my travel in education, my whole education experience um the..you know the face in the front of everything I'm trying and I strive for as far as knowledge um progress in life it comes back around back to this woman and the reason being is because her story is sad... Mum wasn't allowed to be educated um her father didn't you know // he didn't encourage that. He encouraged her to learn to cook and to you know learn to cook and he encouraged her to learn to um do the washing, just do all of those you know womanly

things, female duties you know primitive as that may sound but those are kind of duties that my mother was encouraged to do...She wasn't // my mum didn't know how to read a book properly.. she wasn't able to read properly so when I look at um you know, even my dad you know he would comment every now and then that my mother was not educated um when we would talk about school day it would kind of you know almost put mum down in front of me so I made it necessary to always educate myself to make sure I got my education, make sure I had a degree because it always came back to mum you know... .I'm a learned person I'm a mother is a person who made me learn um and in her own way we always thanked her like she's so cause she wasn't given that you know, she wasn't given that right // and I felt that I had to give her that right and by going to school and to continue learning I learn from my mum as well um funny enough I go back and I talk to my mum about my education, mum understands it so well, dad doesn't understand it as well as mum does and dads supposed to be the learned person yeah...

***[Talita] Can you share some specific memories of members of the family going to school or something related to school?***

***[Makeleta]*** I remember very even in NZ but I remember when I was little they used to go off in their red and white uniform they used to go off I used to run after them, they used to chase me back, id run after them. I never wanted to stay home. When they come home I'd look in their bags, I looked for their books, I'd...I was so...you know I just was curious where do these people go and how come I have to stay home. Yeah that's the funny thing about it. I'd follow them they chase

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me back you know, they chase me back, flick me in the ear or something and my mother used to have a hard time trying to stop me from chasing after them ummm curiosity I always wonder where do you people go in the red and white uniform so yeah ah even when we got to NZ you know I...couldn't wait till I turned 5 so I can go to school. I always wondered where do they go for like 6 hours, what do they do and where do they go so, yeah curiosity I guess more than anything but they used to tease me and they used to stop me from reading their books like trying to read their books. They used to hide their books and their colour their pencils they used to hide all that from me but it made me more and more why are you hiding this, why can't I have a look at your books. Yeah, curiosity probably...

***[Talita] Did your brothers and sisters attend a church school or public school?***

***[Makeleta]*** my brothers and sisters didn't attend church school. My brothers and sisters attended a public school//Now that's kinda odd because my father was a teacher at a church school but he wanted us to attend the local primary school and the local primary in my mother's ah village in Tokomololo, and they wore ummm red and white, it was their uniform so I don't know why, still I don't know why dad didn't take us to, cause there were primary schools around, church primary schools, I still don't know why he didn't take us there you know to the primary schools umm I don't know whether it was because dad wanted to keep church, his work separate from his children's schooling yeah, I still don't actually haven't even asked him about that why he didn't take us to a Mormon school cause he was teaching at one yeah.....

***[Talita] Was it a difficult time for your family to stop life in Tonga and uplift to New Zealand?***

***[Makeleta]*** it was a difficult time for our family to um stop life and move on. It was, I think it was so it was more difficult for my mother because she was unsure as how she was gonna survive in New Zealand and I remember my mother crying like you know going to the airport she cried and cried and cried and she cried like so hard cause you know she was leaving her mother behind, it was so hard and my mum, mum held Tonia and Tonia was crying so hard and mum was try stop Tonia from crying um but she kept kicking mum and crying and I didn't cry um cause I was with dad and I felt secure but mum was like yeah she was crying um and she was um holding on to her mother and it was so hard cause I think it took her forever to let go of you know to me it seem like it took forever for mum to let go of her mother... let go of Ana um because she knew that it would be such a long time before she could you know get back to Tonga to see her mother and her sisters but you gotta understand you know um she wasn't educated and this was the scariest journey that she was gonna take and to take seven children on that journey on her own you know she knew that she was gonna, most of the day and night she'd be on her own with us and um it was just the scariest journey and she you know she revealed that to us when we were old enough to understand what it was like for her cause she//in Tonga here in the villages it was, it was good because like I said we let//we lived in a communal um society and we were able to rely on our neighbours, able to rely on our um uncles and aunties so that was really good but to take that many kids and move to, migrate to NZ and not know how she was gonna feed them, not know an...English at all that was



the hardest thing and I remember// I remember her crying and I'll never forget her you know when, when we left// when we had to go um right on to the back of the truck and go cause umm I think she yeah it wasn't heart breaking but I think she was scared// mum was more scared how she was gonna survive with so many you know, seven, eight kids how she was gonna survive um in there, in New Zealand um

**[Talita] Any other memories around education when your family resided in Tonga?**

**[Makeleta]** members of the family, oh I remember dad and I// I keep forgetting to share this, dad had a motorbike, dad had a motorbike and that was the only thing we had transport we had was dads motorbike. It took him from um Tokomololo and it took him from um mums village Tokomololo to Liahona on his motorbike and I think dad was pretty cool in his motorbike as well//So every morning dad would go to, go to Liahona go and teach then he would return back and he'd always return back with these milk biscuits it's not until I was like 10 or 12 years old when I asked mum oh I remember eating these ah milk biscuits and mum goes yeah cause in Tonga you know they couldn't give out bottles of milk or anything so they gave out milk biscuits so that the kids would have calcium yeah so it's very similar I guess to um the whole time when they introduced tooth brush and tooth paste to schools you know just the all the hygiene thing but it was also about the nutrition as well and I used to so look forward to him bringing back milk biscuits// it must have been the left over milk biscuits or something cause he'd come home with a bag of milk biscuits from Liahona and we just so eat it, all the little kids in the next door// our neighbours will come over so yeah we kid

of ummm really enjoyed that. I also remember waiting for my oldest brother to come back from school it was awesome he'd come back from school, come back with ummm little things for us so we really// we really liked that yeah...those are the limited times that I remember about education, little yeah, little things like that but I love their uniform even today// I love the red and white uniform I see the little kids walking with their uniform it reminds me of my little sisters and brothers going to school wondering off in their red tupenu or red lavalava and white shirts and my sisters in their little red pinfall uniform and their white shirts, hair plaited still they do that today yea..

**[Talita] Could you share any memories around the purpose of migrating?**

**[Makeleta]** If there's anything that share with the whole you know dads dream to move on//move on from here is that dads dream locked into two things and that was religion and education and it was really important for us to move on from Tonga and to move towards these two particular things... sealing our family in the temple was really important and just important was insuring that you know that all of us kids//my brothers and sisters were educated and educated overseas so that we had the opportunities that were available to us um yea so I guess from dads point of view it worked out really good and from mine I'm benefiting from it today it wasn't a um it was a positive move// it was definitely a positive move but at the same time we tie ourselves to this land we still look back to Tonga...We still consider ourselves as Tongan never kiwi always Tongan yea...I was born in Tonga I keep coming back to Tonga my ties are quite strong here in this land and I guess

as long as I'm able to still come back here yea...I disperse to a another land but I still come back to my homeland yea that's kind, that's kind of basically the summary of the whole the three years I remember Tonga and then the movement.

**[Talita] What do you remember from the last days/ week you had experienced before the departure to New Zealand?**

**[Makeleta]** The last day that we left Tonga//actually the last week we left I remember the dance//I remember the last dance umm and it was at the Tokomololo my mother's village//I remember that dance I also remember the// the kai we had you know you had a kai a big kai//A feast, a feast on the last Sunday we left and umm mum and dad made sure that we that we said goodbye to all our family and our friends so we had to fe'iloaki with our neighbours and say goodbye to them and umm I just watch my sisters and they cry and cried and cried//I knew something was happening...something big was happening but I didn't understand in depth what it was but my sisters were crying and crying and mum and dad were also around us and mum and dad were like continuously umm dad was always in tears and holding it back but mum you know..I still remember her cries like I can remember how it sounded so we just keep um we just keep going around homes and travelling around to different homes and going around to people and just saying thank you um I remember people giving us things yea when we ah left Tonga... left for NZ we had these little lamps Talita and they were like little antique lamps and you can turn it up it's the oil//the oil lamp they were little miniature they were so beautiful and we took them with us and those were gifts from our neighbours and so we took

them with us to New Zealand um and I remember mum giving away a lot of things in our house um yea and I don't remember how empty it was but I remember my dad like my dad and mum just looking back when we travel cos a truck picked us up and we all had sit in the back and it took us to the airport um those last weeks were and the last day were so...it was sad but it was exciting for me but really sad for them but it wasn't till later I didn't understand why they cried so much that day yea um mum said that she cried and cried and cried coz she didn't know whether she would see her mother alive again and my sisters said that they cried because they did not know how they were going to fit into New Zealand life so they were scared they were crying cos they were scared where they were going to end up and dad was crying because he knew he was taking a big family and he didn't know how he was gonna survive with such a big family so yeah we kind of we, we cried our tears but we cried for different reasons and I didn't cry at the time cause I was watching everyone else as little kids do, you watch everyone else and wonder 'what's happened what's happened' you're curious um it's not until I got on to the//It's not until I got to the airport Talita that it was a shock to me// that I knew that that aeroplane standing right there and those people crying meant that I was never coming back...

**[Talita] What could you remember from the last day in Tonga?**

**[Makeleta]** um the day that we were leaving, it was cloudy the you know it was cloudy the ay we were leaving and// cause I don't remember the sun that why// like I remember the sky so well// I don't remember the sun, all I remember is the white clouds that day so I knew it wasn't sunny and mum said

yeah that day it was 'uho'uha and when we got to the airport and we're getting ready walk into the plane it was like ah spitting// showering// sun shower it wasn't like rain yeah cos you um cos when we got on to the plane even when we got to New Zealand they open up the door it was pouring there so I kinda// I didn't quite actually know whether I was going from one place of Tonga to another cos when I got out on the airport when I arrived in Auckland it was raining as well so I wasn't quite sure whether I was going from another village in Tonga to another island yeah so no I//I remember that day it was very sad and people were crying their tears and saying their goodbyes and I was just a curious 2 and a half year girl looking up at all these giants and wondering why are you crying for// why you cry so much yeah...

**[Talita] Do you still remember the airport experience?**

**[Makeleta]** YEEP...when we umm got to the airport// first time ever for me to see Fuamotu airport was when we went to the airport to leave yeah and umm I remember always letting go of my sisters hand... Asi's hand// always letting go of her hand and and running off yeah// and the reason why I ran off was because I ran off to the other side of the gate so I could have a look at the plane coz when we were driving through Talita...I could see the tail// I can see the tail right// and um so curious cos um I never seen a picture of a plane and never seen a plane and all of a sudden here's this massive plane in front of me so while they were checking us in um I took off and I went around the corner and I had a look at the aeroplane and then while I was sitting standing there it was just such// it was so massive it was like a big building to me um everyone was looking for me cos it was time to go in and off course they

came and found me and I got a clip in the ear and they you know pull my hair and where have you been and growling me and I was just// I was kinda// I was walking and I was looking at the aeroplane umm and when we got in through the check in Talita we got into the check in and then it was time to go into the// to hop into the plane to go in towards the plane, I was, I held on to my father like there was no tomorrow coz that's how scared I was//The plane was just so humungous// it was frightening and you could hear the like you could hear all this noise so it was so frightening but when I got into the plane and I saw// it was warm inside and I saw the seats and the people umm you know I had to sit in between Asi and Kay... so yeah I sat with them and I felt really good coz I ate all the food... and yeah I guess for a two year old ah you know it was like a joy ride and not quite sure of it, I always watch why everyone was still crying in the plane, people were still crying hard out yeah and say we went and that was it// I don't remember looking out the window and I don't remember anything else, I just remember having a good old time in the plane and Tonia continuously crying... that girl can tangi she tangi right through the whole plane ride yeah and that was it... that was my last day// off we went...

**[Talita] What kind of feelings and thoughts were you and your family experiencing on your last day?**

**[Makeleta]** that day was the I think it was// dad was anxious and he was optimistic that he's taking his family but at the same time everyone was frightened// everyone was scared and when I talk to my sisters and my mother about it and my brothers, they said the reason why we cried Talita its coz we didn't know what was waiting for us//we were so comfortable



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living in Tonga coz we had nana and pa around the corner// we had my uncles and aunties// we had all the support but here we go// we uproot ourselves and we go to this foreign land, never ever been there before// don't know what's waiting for us and that's why they cried and cried like that you know// and Tonia was crying coz I don't know the// I think mummy said// mum said na'e mofi// she was... she had a cold or a fever or something yeah... she was crying but umm// no I didn't cry Talita// no I didn't cry at all cos I was busy watching everyone else you know cry and I was curious why all of a sudden I was in my Sunday clothes and it's not Sunday you know// that's what my day, my last day was like...

***[Talita] Was there anything that you were going to miss in Tonga?***

***[Makeleta]*** out of everything I was gonna miss my grandfather and my best friend Saleima my next door neighbour um my grandfather cos he was the kindest man you know// soft voice// we knew when our grandfather was coming around because everyone in the whole village knew and they run towards him you know and so we would of course try and be the first to meet him um I //I miss him the most and I miss Saleima...Saleima and I were tight you know we were very close friends// If she slept in I'd go wake her up// if I slept in she'll come wake me up and our mothers would do that and you know they call us and yeah my mother's village um and my best friend Seleima// I missed her// still miss her.mmm....

***[Talita] Any thoughts that I have missed that you would like to share?***

***[Makeleta]*** that week, that week just a whole lot activities happening and my pocket of memories and I can honestly say

they're pocket of memories because they're memories of a three year old um yeah they're just pockets of memories// I can't explain them in depth but all I can explain is the expressions on the faces of those people around me and um what was actually happening at the time and how I saw it yeah// they were good// they were good days, good to be back as well.

*Siniua Lui Toluta’u*  
*Transcript of Interview recorded in Fuamotu, Tongatapu.*

Keys to transcript:

// quick hesitation  
... silence  
(...) interference background noise

Transcript: Transcript in Tongan

**[Siniua]** Ko hoku hingoa ko Siniua Lui Toluta’u ko hoku fa nima ‘eni fa’ele’i Fuamotu Tongatapu koe kolo kou ha’u mei ai ko Fuamotu koe kou manatu’i lahi ‘i Tongani nau kei nofo fakataha pe mo hoku fangatokoua mo hoku tunga’ane he taimi ko ‘ia...ko e taimi ko ‘ia na’e ‘i ai a Tonga na’e tauataina pe ‘ae kakai ‘i he taimi ko ‘ia...ko e me’a ’oku ou kei manatu’i ‘i he kolo// ‘i he kolo ko e ‘eku u// ko e// na’e kei lahi ai ‘ae fangaki’i fale Tonga pea a um si’i si’i pea moe me’alele pea.// kei mei lahi pe kei nofo fakataha pe ‘ae famili...ko e tu’unga ko e na’e ai ko’e hoku famili pea tokolahi ko e na’e ‘ia hoku famili neu tupu’ai ko e toko taha ua...um pea// a ‘ia ko e toko hongofulu fefine pe toko taha tangata//pea ko e lahi taha ko e fefine// pea hoko ki ‘ai ko e fefine pea hoko ki ‘ai ko e fefine pea hoko ki ‘ai ko e fefine pea toki hoko ki ‘ai hoku tungaane pea toki fakaholoholo ki ‘ai ki mui ki he fakafika taupotu ‘o ‘au kia au ko au ko e si’i si’i taha... ‘io na’e mau kei nofo fakataha pe mo e mau ongomatu’a ‘i he taimi ko ‘eni (...) ko e ‘eku tamai ko e// ko hono hingoa ko Pioneti Lui...ko e tamai ko ‘eni na’e

ne tokanga’i mau tolu katoa famili fakakatoa ‘ae fanau toko tahataha pea ko e me’a na’e manako ki ‘ai ‘eku tamai ko e ‘alu ki ‘uta ‘o// ‘o to ‘e ngoue ha nge ko e mani’oki ‘ufi kumala ko e taum’ua ki he famili ke ma’u// ma’u me’a tokoni mei ai pe ko e ngaue kehekehe pe na’e lava ke fakahoko he tamai ko ‘eni ke makatu’ung ke ma’u he famili a mau tolu fanau ha tu’unga ‘oku lelei ‘i he nofo famili pe’a ne lava ke ma’u ‘ae me’alele pasi mo e loli ‘i he taimi ko ‘ia ko e feinga faingata’a// ko e ngahi ngaue ko ‘ia lavame’a na’e fakahoko e he mau tamai// ko e me’a ‘oku ou manatu ki he anga ko ia ‘eku tamai// ko e// ko e tamai anga lelei anga fakalongolongo ‘o ‘ikai ke le’o ho ha’a pe// vave ki he ‘ita// ‘oku ne// ko e tamai ko ‘eni ko e tamai anga fakalongolongo mo loto ‘ofa// ki he taha kotoa pe ‘i he fanau... ko e ‘eku fa’e ko hono hingoa ke Vea Tokelau Lui ko e ‘eku fa’e ko e fefine ngaue mo e// mo tokanga’i e famili ko e ngahi ngaue na’e lava ke fakahoko ‘eku fa’e ko e ‘ae ngahi ngaue fakatonga// ‘ae tutu a ‘ia ko e ‘oku ngahi mei ‘ai koe ‘o alu ko e ‘o ngahi mei ai ‘ae ngatu ‘ae tapa ko e ngahi ngaue fakafefine ‘eni na’e lava ke fakahoko ‘eku fa’e// pea ne hanga ‘o ‘ako’i ai ‘ae fanau lalahi ‘ia te au ke ne nau muimui ki he me’a ko ‘ia na’e ne fakahoko...ko e me’a ‘oku ou kei manatu’i ‘ihe anga ‘ae me’a na’e fakahoko ‘eku fa’e ko e fefine// ko e// ko e ‘eku fa’e ko e fefine anga ‘eku ‘iloi ki ai na’e// ko ‘ia na’e ‘ofa lahi ‘ia teau ko e tu’unga pe mahalo ko e...ko e me’a ‘oku ou kei manatu’i e anga ‘eku fa’e kou tui ko e tokotaha ‘ofa ‘eni te au... kou tui ko’e ha pe// ko au ko e si’i si’i taha pe he fanua na’a na ma’u pea na’e ‘ofa lahi ‘ia te au...pea na’e ne tokani’i kia te au ngahi me’a lahi// pea ko e ngahi me’a kotoa pe ‘oku ou kole ki ai ‘oku ne hanga o fakahoko mai kia te au...ko e taimi ko ia na’e lava ai ke lava ai ke// fakahoko o lava ai ke mau feohi ai fangatokoua ko ‘eni e hongofulu pea mo e tungaane e taha ko

e taimi ko ‘eni na’e mau// tutuku fakataha pe ‘i he famili ‘i he famili pe e taha pea// pea ‘oku fe’ofa’ofani aupito anga e mau feohi neongo ko au ko e si’i si’i taha ‘oe famili ‘oe fanau e toko tahataha ka na mau fe’ofa’ofani aupito he na’e mahino pe anga ‘ae anga fakatonga pe he ki he anga ko e ‘ae nofo ko e tuofafine mo e tungaane na’e mau fu’u fe’ofa’ofani aupito...ko e fale ko e na’e lava ke ngahi ko e ‘e mau tamai ke mau nofo kotoa ai ko ‘e ‘ae fanau ko ‘eni e tokotahataha ko e fale papa na’e ngahi pe ko e// fale papa ‘o lava ke mau nofo// nofo ai mautolu fefine pea toe ngahi pe makehe pe ‘ae fale makehe pe ia ke lava ke nofo pe ia ai ‘ae tungaane na;e ‘ikai ke mau nofo fakataha pe ‘i ha fale e taha na’e fakamavahe ke nofo kehe ‘ae tungaane mei he mau tolu koe fefine...ko e// ko e api koe na’e lava ke mau nofo ai ko e api// ko e ‘api fe’ofa’ofani ne lava ke ‘api ofa ne lava ke mau ‘ofa tokoni ke mau lava ke// ki he ngahi taha// ngahi taha kehe...

**[Talita] Pea fefe ho’o mou feohi fakakatoa?**

**[Siniua]** ko e anga ko e ‘e mau feohi fakakatoa ko e ‘ae fanau na’e mau feohi fe’ofa’ofani na’e lava pe ke ‘ilo he ‘iiki ‘oku ‘i ai ‘ae tama’iki lalahi na’e ‘ikai ke lava ke fai ha’a talahu’i ke mau// ke to’o he tama’iki ‘iiki ‘ae tu’unga ko ia na’e ai ‘ae tama’iki lalahi na’e takitaha ‘ilo pe ‘ae tu’unga ‘oku ‘i ‘ai mei he lahi o ‘au ki he si’i si’i taha pea na’e mau nofo fe’ofa’ofani// na’e ‘ikai ke// na’e ‘ikai ke ‘asi ha’a fa’ahinga ‘ulungaanga mei a kimautilu ke mau nofo fe’ita’ita’i// ‘e anga ko e ae nofo ko e a mautolu ‘e fanau na’e mau nofo fe’ofa’ofani pe na’e ikai ke ai ha me’a ‘e hoko...’io ‘ihe famili na’e taki taha ‘ilo pe he toko taha kotoa ae fanau ae ngahi ngaue oku totonu ko e ke au fai// na’e mahino pe ki he tama’iki lalahi ae founa ngaue ko e te au lava ko e

‘o fakahoko ko nau tolu e fakahoko ae feime’akai ke mam ma’u tokoni mei ai ae katoa ae famili pea moe fai e fo pea mo e ngahi ngaue faka’api// ko e tamasi’i tangata a ‘ia ko e tungaane ‘ia ko ‘ia na’e mei tokoni ki he tangata ‘eiki ae tokoni ae alu ki ‘uta ae fai ko e ‘e to ‘e ngoue ke lava ke mau ma’u me’atokoni mei ‘ai pea e famili pe hange ko e tama’iki lotoloto hifo hange ko au kei ‘iiki he taimi ko ‘ia// ko e ‘eku ngaue ko ia na’e lava keu fai he taimi ko ‘ia o fakahoko ko e ‘eku tufi ae veve la’i ‘akau ngangana ko e fakama’a moe ngahi me’a ko e ‘oku fiema’u ko e he tama’iki lalahi keu fakahoko fakafe’unga ki he me’a koe ‘oku ou lava...ko e taimi ko e// kou ‘ilo ko e tupu ‘ake he famili tokolahi kou tui pe na’e faingata’a ‘uhinga pe he ko e famili tokolahi ko e fanau tokolahi ‘oku ou tupu ai ae ae fe’inga ko e ae tamai moe fa’e ke malava ho na fatongia ko e ki he fanau ko e ‘uhinga maka tu’unga ko ‘ia ko e mau tokolahi ke feao ae ngahi faingata’a ko ‘ia kotoa...ko e ngahi me’a lelei kou manatu’i ai ko e ‘eku tupu hake he famili tokolahi ko e ‘eku manatu’i ko e ‘eku// ko e ‘eku ‘ongomatu’a ko e ‘ongomatu’a lelei na’e ‘ikai ke ngata pe he na tauhi ki mautolu fanau tokolahi ka na na toe ‘ofa hange ko e ngahi ngaue lotu he siasi pea moe fonua na’e na tokoni ki ai na’e ‘ikai ke ngata pea e tokon’i ki mautolu tokolahi ka na’e ‘ikai keu manatu’i pe na’e ‘i ai ha kovi na’e hoko ki he famili ‘ika’i... ko e ngahi me’a ko e ‘oku ou misi ko e he’eku tupu’aki ko e ‘i he mou’i fakafamili ko e ‘oku ou misi hange ko e ko ‘e feohi fakatokoua moe nofo fakataha ae famili ‘oku lava ke// ‘a ‘ia ‘oku mau lava ke mau movetevete ‘ihe taimini’ ‘oku ‘ikai ke mau nofo fakataha pea moe konga mahu’inga ko e malolo ko e ae ongomatu’a ‘eku tamai moe ‘eku fa’e kae pe he ki hoku tungaane// koe konga lahi ‘ia ‘i he ‘eku moui ni ‘a kiamautolu ko ‘eni fanua// mautolu fefine ko ‘eni ‘oku kei toe ‘oku mau

ongo'i 'ae mole ko e 'emau tamai moe mau fa'e...ko e tu'unga ko e na'e 'i ai ai hoku famili na'e fakafiemalie pe na'e 'ikai ke pe he na'e mau faingata'aia ke mau fehanghangai moe ha faingata'a na'a mau pe feingamalie pe 'i he makatu'unga 'i he ngaue totoi na'e fai 'e he tamai ko 'eni kia mautolu 'o mau ma'u ai ae moui fiemalie...ko e ngahi ngaue ko ia na'e lava ke fakahoko ko 'ia hoku fangatokoua lalahi pea pe he foki ki hoku tungaane// ko e ngaue na'e fakahoko hoku tungaane ko e ngaue ko e ki 'uta ko e tungaane ngaue malohi aupito ki 'uta na'e ne to 'ae ngoue ko e koe ufi manioki koe talo pea ave ia ki maketi o fakatau'ia ko e ma'u silini lahi 'ia ae ma'u 'anga mou'i lahi'ia ne fakahoko 'ia he tungaane ko e ko e to 'e me'akai 'o ave 'o fakamaketi 'o hange ko e meleni na'e lave ke ne fakahoko pea ko e ngahi ngaue ko e na'e lava ke fakahoko hoku fangatokoua lalahi na'e nau tokoni ko e ki he fa'e ko e fai ko e tutu 'o ma'u ai ae ngatu ngahi fiema'u koe ae kakai 'e ngahi ngaue fakatonga pe he ne lava ke fakatau ae ngahi ngaue fakatonga fakame'a pe he 'o ma'u ai ko e 'ae silini o tokoni ki he famili...ko e ngahi ngaue pe na'e lava pe ke mau ala nima o tokoni fakakatoa ki ai ko e 'emau tokoni pe mo poupou pe ki he ngaue lelei ko 'ia na'e fakahoko he'e tamai ko 'eni o mau tokoni pe ki he ngahi me'a pe na'a ne lava o kaukau'i...ko e anga koe ae feohi fakakaume'a ko 'eni na'e lava ke fakahoko hange ko e 'emau nofo fakakaunga'api fakanextdoor ki he kau nga'api na'e kehe ia he taimi ko ia na'e lava k eave e mautolu ae me'akai hange ko e sapate fakafeohi he sapate 'o ave me'akai 'ia ki he kaunga'api pea hanga leva he kaunga'api ko 'ia o ai mai ae me'akai ia o ave ia ma'a kiamautolu na'e fe'ave'aki me'akai pe he pea na'e va'ofi 'ai pe 'ae anga nofo fakakaunga'api na'e fe'ofa'ofani na'e hange pe 'ia ha famili pe 'e taha ae anga 'e nofo ko ia ae fietokoni'aki... ko e ngahi me'a na'e lave keu fakahoko he ngahi 'aho kotoa he pongipongi kotoa na'u// ko e me'a 'oku ou manatu ki ai ko e 'eku a ko ia he pongipongi laki fekau keu 'alu o tafitafi alu o fufulu

nifo pea ko e 'eku ha'u ko ia o fekau keu alu ki falekoloa o 'omai 'e fakatau mei 'ai// ke// pe ko e ma ko e ha pe ae ngahi fekau ko ia 'i he pongiponig pea kapau e ia ha ngahi ngaue faka'api hange ko e ko e ngahi niu e lava ke fakahoko he taimi ko 'eni kuo pau keu tokoni ki he// hono fakafehiko'i fakafo'i ki mu'a pea ai ia he pongipongi ki mu'a pea toki alu ki he 'ako lautohi...ko e taimi ko e nau 'ilo teu alu ki nusila na'u fiefia koe taimi ko ia na'e fakahoko mai teu folau ki nusila nau// ko e ngahi 'uhinga me'a ko 'ia neu folau ai ki nusila ko e ko e makatu'unga ko e folau 'eve'eva pea moe 'i he fakaafe fai 'aho...ko e me'a pe oku ou manatu'i he taimi ko 'ia na'e ngahi ai he famili ha ki'i me'akai i 'apini pe ko e kai fakafiefia pe amanki keu mafahe atu 'o 'alu ki he fonua muli...ko e ngahi ongo ko ia na'e lava ke ma'u amanaki ko ia keu mavahe atu ki muli ki nusila na'u ongo'i teu mavae moe hoku famili pe he ki hoku ongomatua fangatokoua tungaane ko e ngahi ongo ia na'e lava keu ma'u ko e mavahe atu pea mau nofo kehekehe...ko e ngahi ongo ko ia na'e ma'u koe hoku famili he taimi ko ia teu ke mau mavae na'e nau fu'u ongo faka'ofa'ia ia te au ko e amanki ke mau mavae pe ko e taha ko au ko e si'i si'i taha ia he fanau// ae amanaki ko 'eni ke mau mavae he'e taimi ko 'eni tei'ikai ke ai ha taha ia mautolu 'e mavahe ki ha feitu'u pea ko e ko e taimi lahi 'eni e mau fieongoi lahi ai mo hoku fangatokoua pea pe he foki ki hoku ongomatu'a amanaki ko e ke mau mavae...ko e ongo ko e na'e ma'u ko e he 'eku fa'e amanaki ko e ke mavahe atu na'a ne akonaki mai fakaha mai kia te au oku ne ma'u ha 'ofalahi ia te au amanaki ko e keu mavahe atu pea na'a ne hanga o fakahinohino'i au mo talamai ae ngahi me'a keu totonu keu iloi keu mavahe atu mei api ke alu o fakahoko i he feitu'u muli ko ia oku ou amanaki keu mavahe ki ai...ko e 'eku manatu ki he aho ki he



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ngahi me'a na'e hoko ko ia 'i he aho nau teu keu mavahe ai  
na'e 'uhouha ae aho ko ia neu alu ai he mavahe ai mei tonga  
ki muli ki nusila...ko e oku ou manatui momeniti faka'osi  
nau 'i mala'e vakapuna na'e 'i ai ai hoku famili fangatokoua  
tungaane amanaki ke mavae ko e fakahekaheka na'e mau  
ma'u ai ae ongo fe'ofa'aki amanaki ko e ke mau mavae na'e  
nau ma'u ae loto na'a nau tangi 'uhinga ko e 'enau 'ofa ia te  
au 'uhinga ko e oku nau ilo ko e vaha'a taimi loloa ikai ke  
mau toe fesiofaki...'io ko e fua taimi 'ia kia te au keu alu ai  
ha vakapuna pea na'e ma'u ae ongo ko ia kia te au ko ongo  
'ilifia moe loto si'i 'uhinga na'a ai ha me'a 'e hoko he vakapuna  
o mole ai eku moui koe ngahi ongo ia na'e ha'u kia te au...ko  
e ngahi taumu'a kia te au he taimi ko ia koe ako ke ma'u ha  
tu'unga 'oku lelei 'i he moui faka'atamai ko e ako...koe ngahi  
me'a na'e lava keu fanongo ki ai ki nusila ko e fonua muli a  
nusila pea oku ai hono kakai koe kau palangi moe kau mau  
koe kakai tukufonua ia a nusila ko e 'uhinga tekai keu feohi  
moe ha kakai pe he hange koe kakai palangi kakai mau moe  
ngahi me'a matanga i nusila ke lava keu alu o mamata tonu ki  
ai hange ko e alu o sio he momoko hange koe sinou hange ko e  
ngahi me'a ia na'e ha'u ki hoku atamai teu alu o sio tonu ai.

*Siniua Lui Toluta'u*  
*Transcript of Interview recorded in Fuamotu, Tongatapu.*

Keys to transcript:

- // quick hesitation
- ... silence
- (...) interference background noise

Transcript: Transcript in English

**[Siniua]** My name Siniua Lui Toluta'u I am forty five years old born in Fuamotu Tongatapu the village I come from it is Fuamotu what I remember most about Tonga I was still living with my sisters and my brother during this time...at this time in Tonga the people were free...the things which I remember in the village is when I// in the village I// I// there was in the fale Tonga and not that many vehicles// There was still lots of families living together...the way my family was at that time and the number of member of families ...um and// we had ten sisters and one brother//and the eldest is a female// and next is another female and next to her is another female and next is another female and next to her is my brother and then the rest after him and continue on to the last one at the end and that is me the youngest... yes we were all living together with our parents at this time (...) my father was//his name is Pioneti Lui...this father looked after all of the family all the children the eleven of us and the thing he liked to do all the time is go to the plantation field// to grow vegetation like the ufi cassava

kumara all this for the family// we got our food from other works this father was able to perform so that this family us children will get something better as a family and we were able to buy a bus a tractor at this time it was difficult// the works that our father was able to fulfil// these are things that I remember about the way my father was// He// he was a father with a quite personality and caring never raised his voice// get quickly get angry// he was// to everyone of the children... my mother's name is Vea Tokelau Lui my mother was a hard working mother// looked after the family the kind of works that she was able to perform my mother works that were considered to be Tongan// the fibers used to create the tapa cloth the patterns these are works considered to be women's work of my mother// and she taught the older children so that they will follow to the things which she taught them she did... these are some of the things I remember she did my mother// And //my mother the kind of women I remember// she really loved me a lot may be because...because what I remember of my mother she is a loving women...I think that// I am the youngest child they had and they really loved me...and helped me in a lot of ways// and whatever I asked of her she would do for me...at this time she was able to she was able to// bind us sisters and brother during this time while we were// brought up together as one family and// and our relationship as a family was loving and caring even though I was the youngest we were all caring of each other it was clear our loving ways towards each other as sisters and brothers we were very loving...the kind of house our father was able to build for us was a wooden house// a wooden house for us to live in// we the girls stayed in this house and a separate house was built for my brother we did not stay with him in the same house he

separated our brother to stay separate from us girls...this//  
this is the kind of house were able to live in// a loving home we  
loved each other helped out// anyone else// anyone else...

**[Talita] How was your relationship as a whole?**

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**[Siniua]** the way that we children got on it was loving caring  
the younger children knew that there were older sibling we  
could make problems for them// by taking their place as the  
older siblings the eldest knew their place even the youngest//  
there was no// it did not show among us that there was any  
feelings of animosity among us// the way we grew up together  
as children there was no ill feeling we were caring...yes in the  
family each person knew the chores they had to complete// the  
older children already knew the kind of chores that I could do  
they had to prepare our meals and do the washing and other  
house chores like that// the brother helped out our father  
in the plantation field to plant the crops so that the family  
can get food and the younger children like at the time// the  
chores that I did at that time was to pick up the leaves fallen  
onto the ground tidy up the things which the older siblings  
instructed for me to do just enough to what I can do...at that  
time// I know growing was difficult because there was too  
many children I grew up with what our father and mother  
tried to do so that they can provide for us as parents because  
we were so many it was difficult for them...I remember every  
good I grew up with in this family// the parents I grew up  
with were good parents and they raised such a big family  
but they also loved the church and the land the caring did not  
just stay with us but they others as well I do not remember if  
there was any bad things in the family no...the things I miss  
growing up in my family is the closeness of my family and

staying together// and today we are all apart we no longer  
stay together and the most important part is staying with my  
father and mother and my brother// this is a big part of our  
lives us children left// us children who are left really feel the  
absence of our father and mother...the way my family was in  
the past was good I did not have any problems things were  
good we never experienced much hardship because of the hard  
works our father put in so that we could have a good life...  
the works that my sisters were able to do and my brother //  
the work my brother did was mostly to the plantation field he  
planted Ufi cassava and taro and this was taken to the market  
so that we can get a lot of money this was the life that my  
brother provided for us he planted things and water melons  
to take to the market this is the work he was able to fulfil  
and the work that my older sister did was help our mother  
with the tapa cloth preparationi for the people these kinds  
of Tongan works helped to bring in money for the family...  
anything that we were able to help with for our families and  
our father we all did...they way we befriended our neighbours  
around our village it was different in those times because you  
can on a Sunday take food to your neighbour and they would  
do the same things to you and the other neighbours and it  
made everyone it was like were one family they was we lived  
in those days being helpful to each other...the things that I  
would do every day every morning// the things I remember  
every morning was to get up wash my face and brush my teeth  
and then I was told to go to the local store// to// to get bread of  
whatever was required to be done that day I had to help out//  
I had to do these things before I went to school...when I found  
out I was going to New Zealand I was really happy to know  
that I will be travelling// the reason I left was to go as a visitor

to a birthday...I remember on that day there was a lot of food made for the family to eat with me before I left the country...I what I felt at the time was leaving behind my family my sisters brother...I really felt sad as I was about to leave my family because I was the youngest child// as I was about to leave it was difficult for my family because no had left to travel overseas it was going to be me...the feelings my mother had at the time was to take me and teach me one last time the things which I need to know and how I was going to live overseas...I remember what the day was like when I was to depart from the country it was raining...the feelings that we all had at the time of my departure was a lot of love towards my family they were sad knowing that this may be a very long time before we see other...yes this was the first time for me to go on a aeroplane we felt scared for me to go on the plane should something to the plane and I lose my life these are the kinds of feelings I felt at the time...the plans I had at the time was to get a good education advance my mind...I heard that in New Zealand the people there are palangi's and Maori people who are the natives of this country I wanted to see these people and see the land the snow these are the things I had on my mind I would see when I got there.





Figure 1:16. Talita Toluta'u.  
*Exhibition night - Talita Toluta'u  
with family.* Photograph. 2008.

Figure 1:17. Talita Toluta'u.  
*Exhibition night - Talita Toluta'u  
with Ilaisaane Fifita Faleafa.*  
Photograph. 2008.

Figure 1:18. Talita Toluta'u.  
*Exhibition night - Manu Toluta'u and  
Linita Manuatu.* Photograph. 2008.

Figure 1:19. Talita Toluta'u.  
*Exhibition night - Tongan young  
women performs cultural dance.*  
Photograph. 2008.

**FINAL EPILOGUE**

The research of this book has consumed much of my life in the past three years. This epilogue summarises an inspiring journey into the private lives of Tongan women who experienced a different diaspora journey from that of the Jewish or Black community. It was an honest yet painful recollection of their departure from the comforts and security of their homeland to the unknown black sands of New Zealand.

I knew from the beginning of my journey that I wanted to create work that would immediately touch the audience's attention, and there would not be any confusion as to what my research conveyed. Diaspora migration was my chosen venture and the participants were Tongan women. The women enjoyed being filmed and documented for my work; they would laugh, tell jokes and cry throughout the interviews. It was vital that the honesty in their recollections was felt by the audience, a connection to the experience synchronising the researcher, the audience and the subject.

I specifically chose the title *Talanoa Matala oe Fonua* to be addressed in the Tongan language to align with the Tongan women's experience, and to bring to its audience the first language the talanoa or story was conveyed in. In English it is translated as "A Story, Flowers of the Land" because the nature of the film leans more towards the female experience of diaspora migration and the connection that one has to their homeland, while residing in their adopted homeland. The concept of flowers of the land comes from the idea adopted by many Western countries around the notion of having a national flower. In Tongan the national flower is the beautiful red heilala flower, and in New Zealand the bright yellow kowhai flower.

I often questioned myself as to how I will combine the creativity

aspect of my work with the wealth of information shared by these women to produce a book and film that capture the essence of the diaspora journey. I found my answer in the Pacific methodologies created by two distinguished Tongan scholars, Dr Sitiveni Halapua and Konai Helu-Thaman. Halapua produced the well thought simplicity of Talanoa, and Thaman intricately shaped the Kakala methodology. The Kakala and Talanoa methodologies could not be separated in the creative design discipline, like that of other disciplines. In this particular field of study, academic research combined with creativity was at times a daunting task.

My research emerged out of an absolute curiosity and fascination of the lives of the women in my family. I am in my mid-twenties and I found it difficult to imagine my life without the support of my parents and extended family. But looking around me, I found that majority of the women I know Tongan and other nationalities are predominantly migrants. I wanted to hear and document their stories. Often they were sad, courageous, full of turmoil and so forth. The talanoa echoed the Diaspora experience. “And so my talanoa and the making of your kakala began to matala, or unfold.”

The intimacy that one gathers from Konai Helu-Thaman’s “kakala Process” is undoubtedly one of the most reflective Pacific research methods available to any discipline. And from a Tongan author, making it evermore, so special to me. Kakala is a Tongan term used to describe a garland or floral adornment used to adorn the body. This process has over the years been revised. When Konai first distinguished the features of this process she called it: “Toli” – the collection and selection of flowers. In light of my research it was the collection and selection of the women participants in the film. “Tui” – the making or weaving of the Kakala. There are complexities involved in this stage as well

as intricacies to detail. As a graphic design artist I found this stage of the process most difficult of all the stages in this process. “Luva” - the final process is the giving away of a kakala to someone else. In my culture, this collection of fragrant flowers should be gifted to someone else.

The Talanoa methodology created by Dr Sitiveni Halapua draws our attention to how we can each listen, learn and relate to one another as members of society. Talanoa allows individuals to express oneself without concealment in face to face dialogue. More importantly this methodology embodies experiences of what we are, what we want, and what we do as members of a shared community. In this film, the dialogue is heard and felt, no concealment. It is the sharing of experiences, not often told by my Tongan sisters, mothers, aunties, grandmothers. The voices of the women in this film speak on behalf of the unspoken.

Combining these two Pacific methodologies meant the essence of the film is intimately bound to the lives of the women, and I felt that it also substantiated the means by which as an Artist, I could “Toli, Tui and Luva” my work.

Eventually I found fulfilment in my work, the Talanoa or story of the diaspora experiences of the women are captured visually, and more importantly we, the audience can feel their emotions. I also draw on the beautiful compositions of the late Queen Salote. To whom I have immense respect for in the art of poetry.

Today, I “Luva” my work to the academic community, my friends and family and the wider New Zealand society. Coupled with the words of Dr Sitiveni Halapua “The process of talanoa is fundamentally concerned with strengthening relationships that not only connect us, but also enable us to respect and learn from each other.”