



NA BURE KALOU I DEGEI

THE SPIRIT HOUSE OF DEGEI

The Spirit House of Degei

NA BURE KALOU I DEGEI



Reconstructing Viti through cosmogonic stories underlying the origin of Fijian identity,
and the design for a Museum sited in lautoka.

Kate Remi Nalesu

Bachelor of Art & Design Masters, Spatial Design
October 2017

This exegesis is submitted to Auckland University of Technology for the degree of Masters in Art &
Design, Spatial Design.

2018

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 (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning."

22 January, 2018

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several loops and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Acknowledgements

I would firstly like to thank my family who understood the importance of my research over cleaning the house. Huge thanks to my classmate's Jewel, Andrew and Taewoo whom made deadline sbearable and are forever supplying my waistline with snacks.

And lastly my gratitude towards my tutors; Albert Refiti and Rafik Patel who have stood by me for two years. I am always learning and pushing my design knowledge further under your expertise. My Passion for Pacific Studies started in my third year in undergradutate and through my wonderful tutors it has grown into a Masters project.

I am also very thankful for my dog at this stressful time who supplies me with her unconditional love.

A handwritten signature in black ink, featuring a stylized, cursive script with a prominent loop and a long, sweeping underline.

Contents

11	Dedication
13	Abstract
15	Na itekitekivu Vakatulewa beginning before the beginning
17	Vakatutu Introduction
	Taleva tikina Literature review
23	Vu-na Origin
27	Untangling Degei
39	Mnemosyne Kasa or Vakacacali
47	Na bula vakayalo The spiritual life found in architecture
55	Ilago Threshold
	Vakadidike Vakaiwiliwili Research Methodology
63	Ena yasana vakara On the Western Side
71	Droini Drawing
73	Kunekune Finding Degei
77	Sauta Energy
79	Kalokalo Star
81	Tokaitua Ridge
83	Weroka Repeat
85	Sala ni Yalo Spirit Path
87	Sui ni gata Snake Bones
91	Kani balei Snake Skin
93	Veimaliwai Atmosphere
97	Bure Kalou Spirit House
99	Waqawaqa Presence
103	Proposed Design
105	Conclusion
112	References
114	Image Reference

I dedicate this to Tai Mere whom passed away seven years ago.
I wish you could see me now and the research I am pursuing,
the light you praised upon me made me proud to be of Fijian blood.
I miss the wisdom of your words and your teachings on life.
May the essence of your being live on through the blood you left behind.

My love always Remivani.

Abstract



Under the thrall of a tourist destination, the Fiji Islands have become the ideal place to holiday. Equipped with theme parks, lavish hotels and floating restaurants it is easy to see the appeal. The influence of 19th century colonialism still remains in the towns and old buildings, and especially in the structure of modern Fiji. However, visitors and tourists are becoming increasingly aware of Fijian culture, in the way that they desire to see a part of the world that is different, that thinks differently than the way everyone else does. This study therefore, aims to acknowledge these changes and to revisit and rehabilitate selected aspects of traditional Fijian culture through the design of a museum sited in Lautoka.

I begin by revisiting the Fijian identity in reinterpreting the origin stories of Fijian cosmogonies through cosmogram drawings and investigating sites and places connected to these stories. The project entails the design for a museum for the original settlers on Viti Levu. The museum's narrative follows the founding of Viti Levu, understanding the land, history, traditions, mythology and oral stories, related to Degei, the snake God. In doing so, the research addresses the following problems: the re-establishment of Fijian identity through new interpretation of Fijian cosmogonic stories from Viti, which leads to an attempt to spatialize a strategy to organise a building dedicated to the Fijian snake; the project also explores narrative underlying cosmic understanding of identity and how these might create a new way to think and construct architecture in the Pacific.

Na itekitekivu | Vakatulewa | Beginning before the beginning....



On Tuesday in late August 2017, my little cousin came over, her name is Dani (Da-nee) - a little Fijian girl with bright eyes and a big smile. Both of her parents were born and raised in Fiji and migrated to New Zealand some years ago, my dad who is also Fijian was already here arriving in 1993. I was in the middle of moulding my clay into a snake when she came downstairs to see me. Naturally as curious as seven-year-olds are, she was very interested in what I was doing. I told her

I was making a snake, discussing that I was developing a Fijian Museum based on the old belief system of our serpent God Degei. She looked at me all confused and told me “but snakes are evil”. I told her that snakes are mistaken for an evil presence since Christianity painted them that way, instead for us Fijians, the snake represents wisdom, knowledge, and healing; thus the snake is life.

Although she didn’t look convinced, she did not refuse the notion but quietly pondered the thought of the snake, beginning to make her own serpent from clay.

I do not see this project as something only for me, it is for Fiji. It is intended for the generation before me and after me - it is for the community. After the last page is turned in this exegesis, the design exploration does not end, the research of identity through the cosmos continues. Through the conversation with my little cousin, I realised there is a lot she does not know about her lineage, that her parents have not relayed to her, mainly because it is often thought that it is in the past - an extinct belief. It is the old ways. Yet just by my discussing with her the virtues of the snake in Fijian culture, I hope to have begun to plant a seed to be open-minded and question aspects of our traditional religion. Although she is seven, she is where the thought of rediscovering Viti begins.



Fig 1. Unknown image collected by Auckland Museum



Fig 2. Suva Fiji Temple.



Within this exegesis lies a sleeping serpent. Throughout this project the life force derived from mythology in Fiji will be rediscovered once again. Through this research I start to explore the identity of Fiji in the twenty-first century, one that has shifted its religious focus from depending on traditional origins to one that relies on the Western idea of a Christian nation.

The project entails developing a Museum which is built upon the mythopraxis (Refiti, 2014) of the original settlers on Na Viti Levu (The Great Fiji). The Museum's narrative follows the beginning of Viti, understanding the land, history, traditions, mythology and oral stories, investigating the role of Degei – the supreme Fijian snake God. Thus, I address the following questions;

How to re-establish Fijian identity through a cosmogonic interpretation of Viti literature and oral history to provide a spatial design strategy to organize a proposed museum located on Viti?;

How will such a project explain a narrative underlying cosmic understanding of identity?

Over the span of my 5 years of study at AUT, I have designed three projects based on the mythologies of Oceania dealing with aspects of interior, exhibition, and installation design. The diverse processes of each design has allowed me to pursue a design for a museum narrative that attempts to capture and enclose the atmospheric power of Fijian cosmogonic concepts. Unlike the previous bodies of work, this research is fundamentally influenced by my understanding of Pacific Architecture and the reflection of mythology and cosmology in building structures. Thus, I have attempted in this project to incorporate Fijian cultural history, the deity Degei and contemporary Pacific architecture to create an architecture that encompasses both the past and the present.



Fig 3.

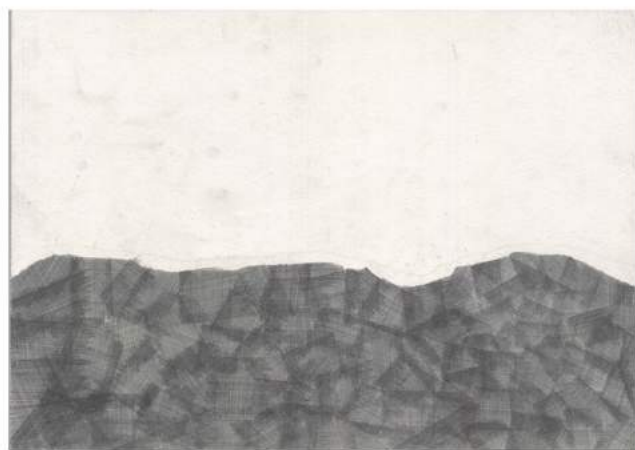


Fig 4.



Fig 5.

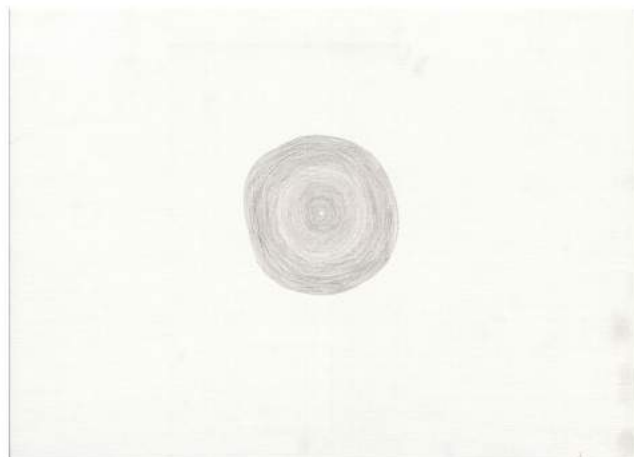


Fig 6.



Through this reflection, the research starts by addressing the history of the museum. Referring to the museum as being influenced by Pacific architecture in Fiji, discussing the structure of the Fijian bure and its' ritual background, especially the iconic structure of the ridge pole. I also look at a number of case studies; one is the Atoni House (1964), an example of how the cosmos function in architectural form. Through this research I start to develop the ordering of space through design and layout. I explore the idea of the threshold and entrance way by the ordering of space through the ritual of entry and principles of passing through a threshold. I start to explore the figure and body of the serpent, questioning the movement and the immortality of the celestial deity that has weaved through cultures and societies of different eras. Using the figure of the snake, I map the narrative and potential floor plan that will house artefacts from the Fijian Lapita collection. I also use the serpent to evolve an atmospheric detailing reflecting on the sense of curiosity and unease within the building.

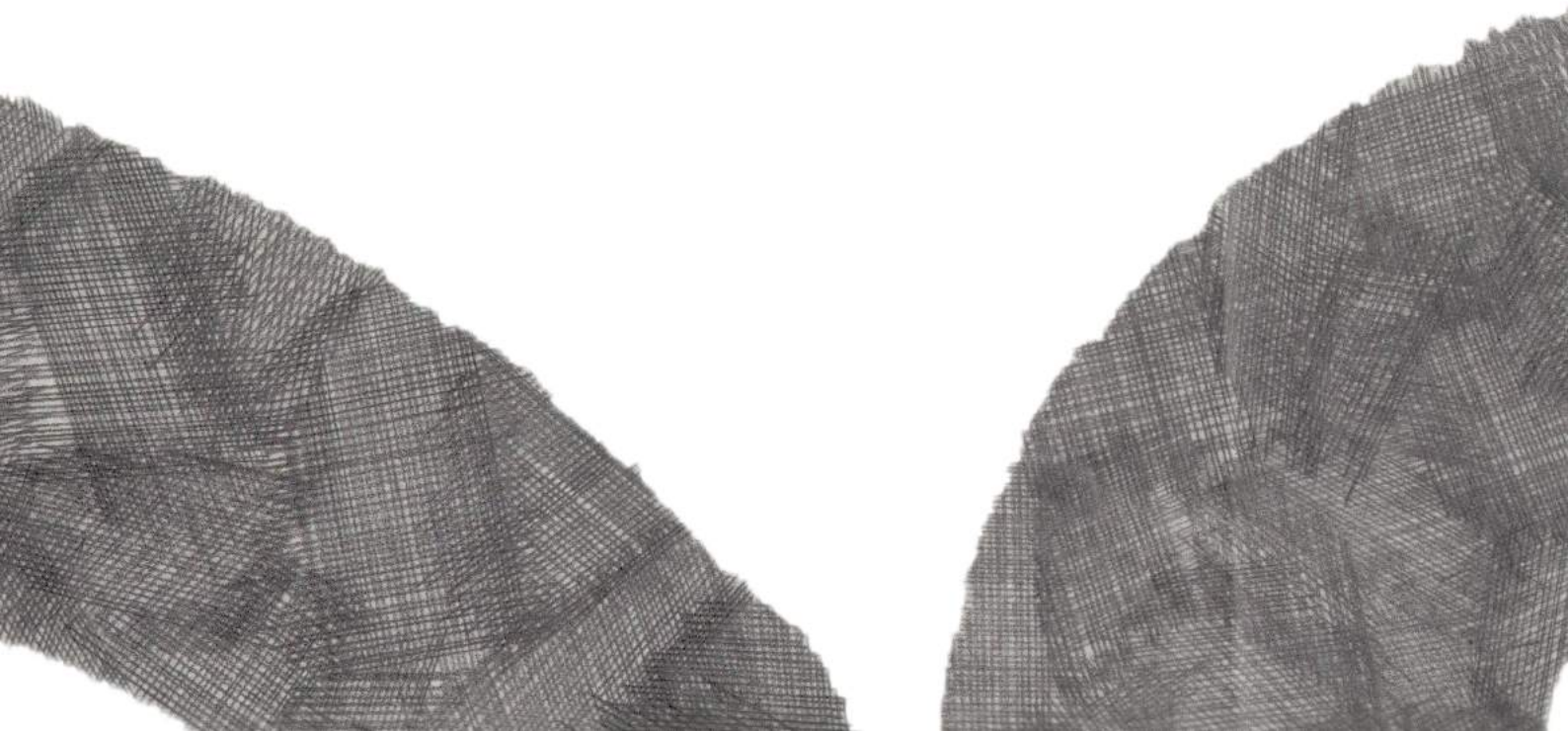
The methods utilised to realise this project involves a series of cosmogram drawings that investigate the quality of movement and atmospheric effects based on the serpent. These are abstract interpretations that develop into physical and structural design elements. Through these drawings I begin to question the movement between the divinity and mortals; curved line and the straight lines. I further explore in the cosmogram drawings the mythology that recounts visual forms allowing surfaces to appear depicting the origin of place and space related to Fiji. The cosmogram drawings are also explored in three-dimensional models conceptualizing the materiality of snakes, creating a new abstract identity in the way one may perceive a serpentine architecture.

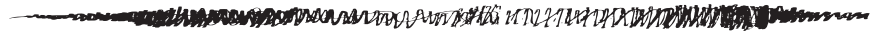
¹ For literature on snake and architecture see S. Papapetros, 2012; for literature on the Fijian snake God Degei see – Wake, 1873 and B. Thompson, 1892.

Taleva tikina



Literature review





“Their traditional mythology is dark, vague and perplexing”
Thomas Williams

To understand a society that is different from our own, to unfold the threads of that cultures identity; we begin the narrative at the origin; cosmology.

Cosmology and mythology is heavily intertwined with how we understand and view the world. It teaches us right from wrong, what is sacred (Tapu) and what is important (Mana). This understanding of cosmic power enables us to define our morals and establish trust and faith in a power that is greater than our being. I have always been fascinated with cosmology because of the power it has on our global community; it is an identifier. Our belief system is an connection to each other, it has the symbolic nature of the ocean, different currents interweaving, some stronger than the others, like the pacific it is the way we navigate each other.

The Fijian cosmology is not evident in the Fijian culture today, although it is the beginning, the tales of old have not been passed down to the generations. This is due to the Christianity cosmology of the representation of the Serpent depicted as Evil and Temptation. The Fijian community do not explore this individually aspect of their culture. Through this museum project I begin to research into our Serpent God Degei and the importance (Mana) of my culture to learn about who we are. The intangible (knowledge) and tangible (objects) are within the same collection of beginning, for the museum community to succeed in showcasing different perspectives of people the two must be conjoined to create a narrative that draws its power from the people and the land.

Fijian folklore is surrounded in a cloaked mystery with a complex system of deities. Every island in Fiji has their own superstition as well as their own gods that they made sacrificial offerings too. Common with Greek mythology, the Fijian Divinities are utilized for different activities such as harvesting, fishing, and planting, each worshipped depending on the season. Ranked at the top of the hierarchy is the serpent God Degei, the first deity of Fiji, and the ancestor of the people who reside in RakiRaki.



Fig 7. Photo by K, Nalesu 2017. Manipulated




Fig 8. Photo by K, Nalesu 2017. Manipulated

Within the villages of Fiji, regular worship to the gods in temples was a common practice. Their religion was based on fear, fear to anger the gods and awaken their destruction over the land. Their main ceremonial temple was the bure which held the mana; it is also a meeting house for chiefs. The bure was built with speed and efficacy with exquisite craftsmanship by the traditional builder's guild. The use of a bure was only for a certain period and then left unused which would turn to ruin for months on end until the occasion arose for the next communication with the deities. When the bure was occupied for worship the men would sit in front with the priest, while the women sat at the back closest to the door. At the altar hung a white masi or tapa cloth that was attached to the ceiling and draped in an arch to the ground. At the foot of the masi sat the priest awaiting the God to descend, the white masi cloth creating a divine pathway that would allow the Gods to float down from Bulu to be with the people.

The bure was a space to hold ritual of worship and feasts while other deities found residence within the vanua (land). Shrines to the deity are commonly found within the earth; rock, stone or cave "Stones are used to denote the locality of some gods and the occasional resting places of others"

2 Bulu – Spirit Land within Fijian Mythology – see L. Fison 1904, Tales of Old Fiji



Animals were often regarded with suspicion that they also held an influence over natural causes. Different clans often had deities they worshipped, for example, my clan in the Yasawas, the divine creature who watches over the island is a prawn. Most islands have a creature from the sea that protects the land, an island that they swim around. Located in Tiliva for instance is the God Roko Suka which is worshipped as a land-crab that is rarely seen. If a local sees the land-crab on the shore, they have to report it to an old man who then gathers special food that would be formally presented to the crab. This is to prevent the impression of neglect and avoid the consequence of such an insult that would result in drought, dearth or death.

Through the mystery of cosmic and mythical dealings, it teaches the population the importance of order and humbleness, that the life you had been given could easily be stripped away from you by another force that could not be understood in the logic of man. This was important to indigenous people because it teaches them to trust the unknown, to respect and allow ourselves to progress along a path that is connected to the divinity and the environment towards a future that has been laid out by the ancestors. Ritual whether in sacrifice, prayer or worship allows people to acknowledge that their lives embrace a relationship and connection to their Gods.

Untangling Degei

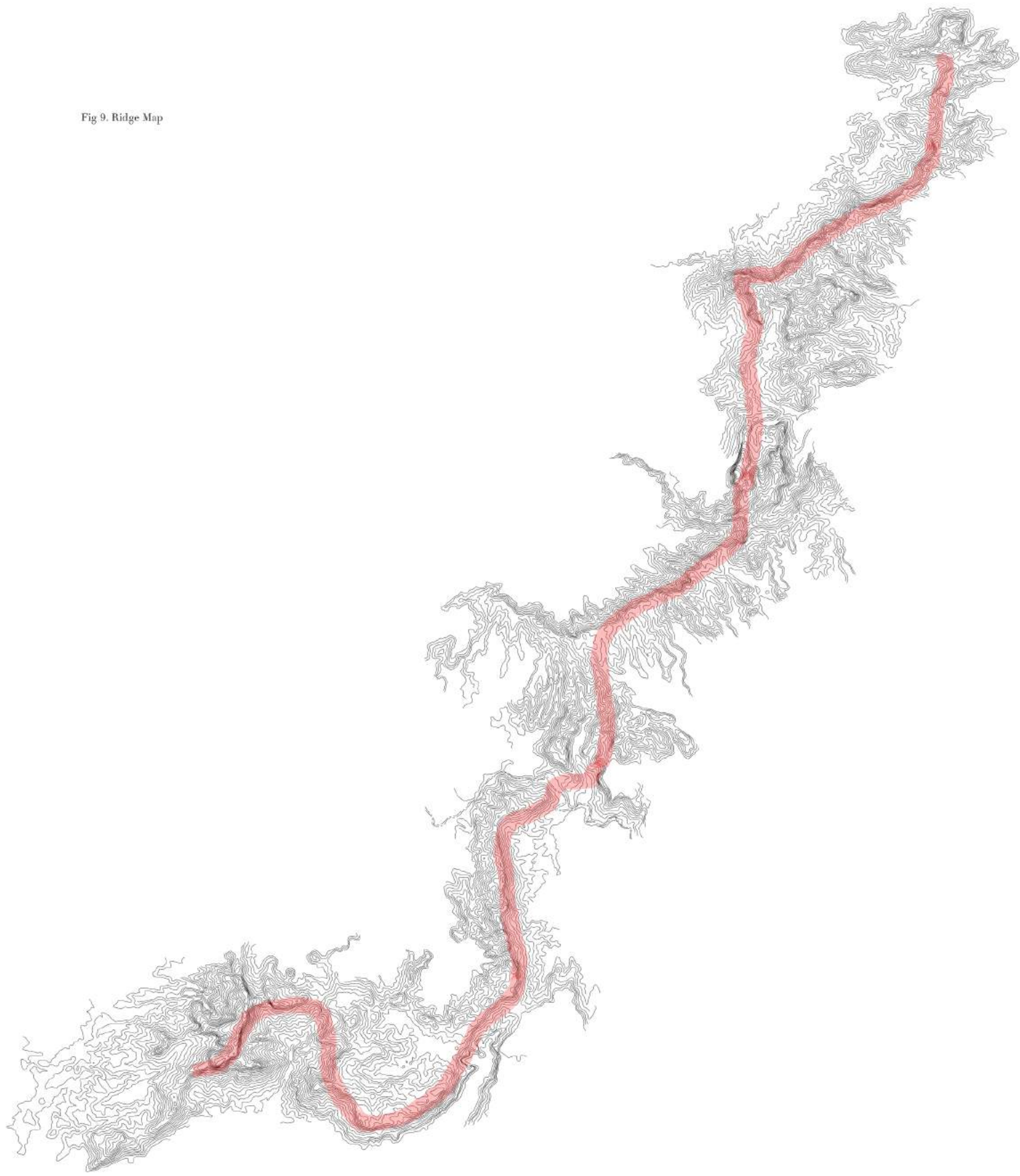



What would it be like to move like a snake? The thought is unimaginable, propelling your body forward without the involvement of feet “Slithering on your belly, that’s something extraordinary! How can one be a serpent! Just thinking about it puts the imagination to torture!”

Paul Souriau (Papapetros, 2012)

Spanning over the Islands located at the intersection of Polynesia, Melanesia, and Micronesia is a group of islands that stand alone outside the norm. The Fiji Islands once worshipped a God called Degei, a snake. He moulded the earth by shedding his skin, shaping the ridges by weaving his body in coils, his essence becoming imprinted on the land. The great serpent Degei lived alone and the only living creature he came in contact with was the hawk Turakawa which flew around his home. One-day Turakawa gave birth to two eggs and flew away never to return leaving Degei to care for the eggs by himself. With the warmth of his body, the eggs hatched into tiny humans which Degei placed on opposing branches of a Vesi tree. Unaware of each other’s presence these first humans became the first Fijians.

Fig 9. Ridge Map






Archaeologists have identified the first settlers on Viti Levu as arriving on Vuda (meaning the “origin”) Point, a coastal area that is north-western between Lautoka and Nadi around 1500 BC. The ship called Kaunitoni carried immigrants from Lutunasobasoba and Degei. They named Vuda ‘The First Landing’ after shortly departing for the Nakauvandra Range which is thirty miles east of Vuda. They climbed the ridge of the mountain that extended from Vuda to the Nakauvandra Range, this was how a man found their way to Degei (Gatty, 2009).

An immigrant to Viti, Degei landed on an uninhabited Fiji on the area later named Lautoka (‘from the spirit land’) on the western side of Viti Levu and the entrance to Bulu. Large in scale Degei now resides in the Nakauvandra Ranges in a cave on the ridge of the ranges. He is usually depicted as half snake half stone to represent his immortality as well as his unchangeable facade. His patience with people is short and easily angered when they displease him. He is said to be the water, the wind, and the earth, causing earthquakes when he moves his tremendous body creating mass flooding that wipes out villages. A story from the Nakauvandra region suggests that his twin sons Tokairambe and Tui Lakenba Randinadina murdered Turakawa (the hawk who laid the two eggs that Degei looked after) and left her at the mouth of Degei cave. Furious with rage he created a flood that swept the twins to their death downstream of the Wainibuka River.

Raki Raki Village



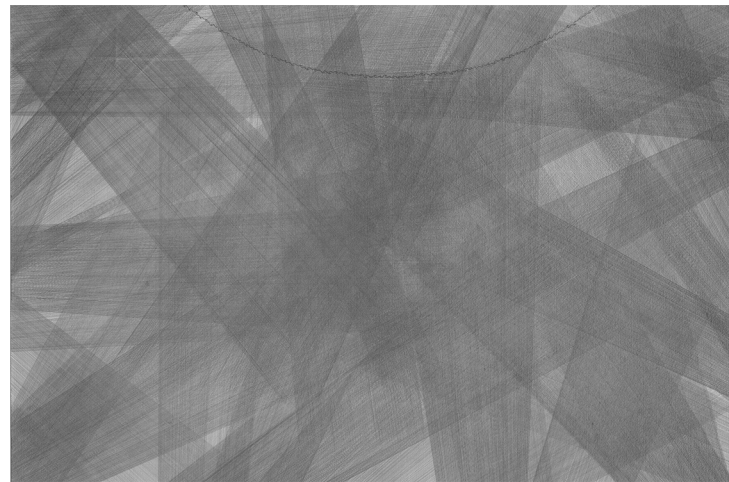
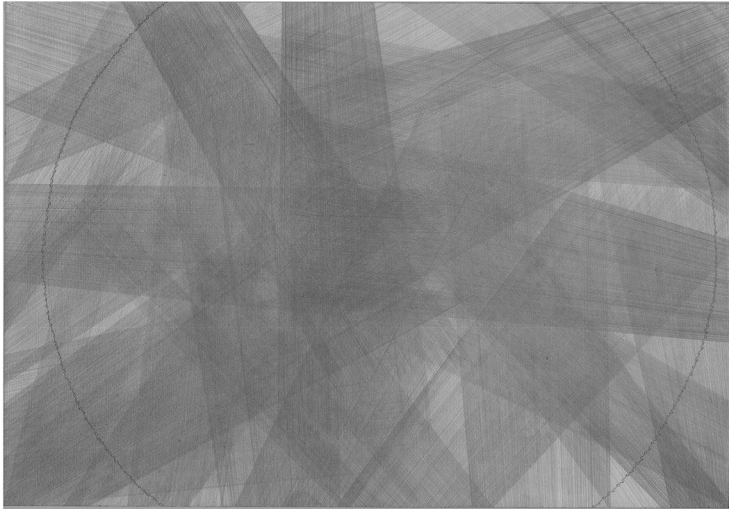
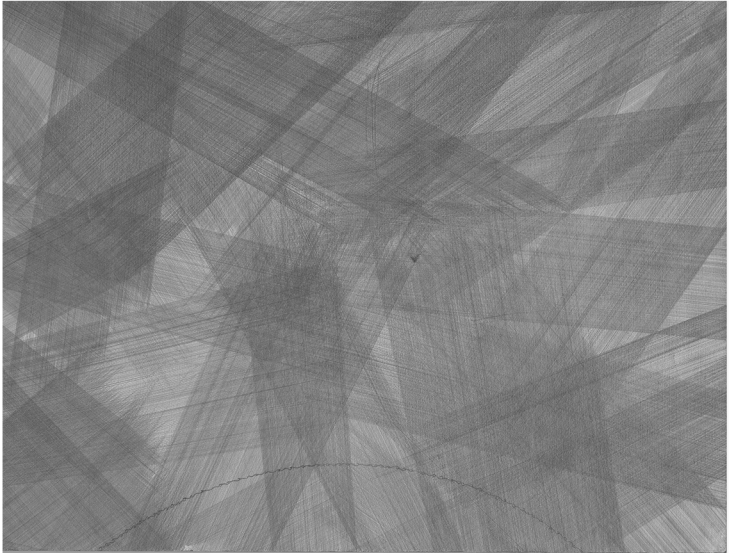
Fig 10. Photo by K. Nalesu 2017. Manipulated



Degei is specifically connected to RakiRaki, a village at the foot of the mountain range, a village known as the village of the dead because Degei has the responsibility to judge the newly dead souls that pass through the two caves of Cibaciba and Drakulu; the entrance to the underworld. The translation for Raki Raki is “fallow yam gardens” because the people of Raki Raki provide yams and another root crop for presentation to Degei. This connects with the origin story of the humans after being hatched from the eggs began to grow in size and were hungry, therefore must be fed. Degei provided them with yams and other root crops, he taught them how to cook the food they were provided with, this becoming the main substance for food on Fiji.

Fiji is the only culture in Polynesian that worships a serpent as a creator. In mythology, the serpent is always depicted as the essence of life. This is highlighted in Degei raising the children, he is the symbol of the protector of life in Fiji. In Greek mythology, it is believed that birds were the souls of death (Wake, 1873) and this provides an explanation to why Turakawa (who produced the eggs that hatched the humans), did not return because he was slain and could not return to the land of the living. This suggests that the Fijian creation myth is an animist belief system which is a tangle of threads connecting life and death, real and imaginary, solid and feathery, the idea of being grounded counterposed with the ability to view the world from a higher and ‘otherworldly’ perspective.

Fig 11. The Wisdom Tree Cosmogram



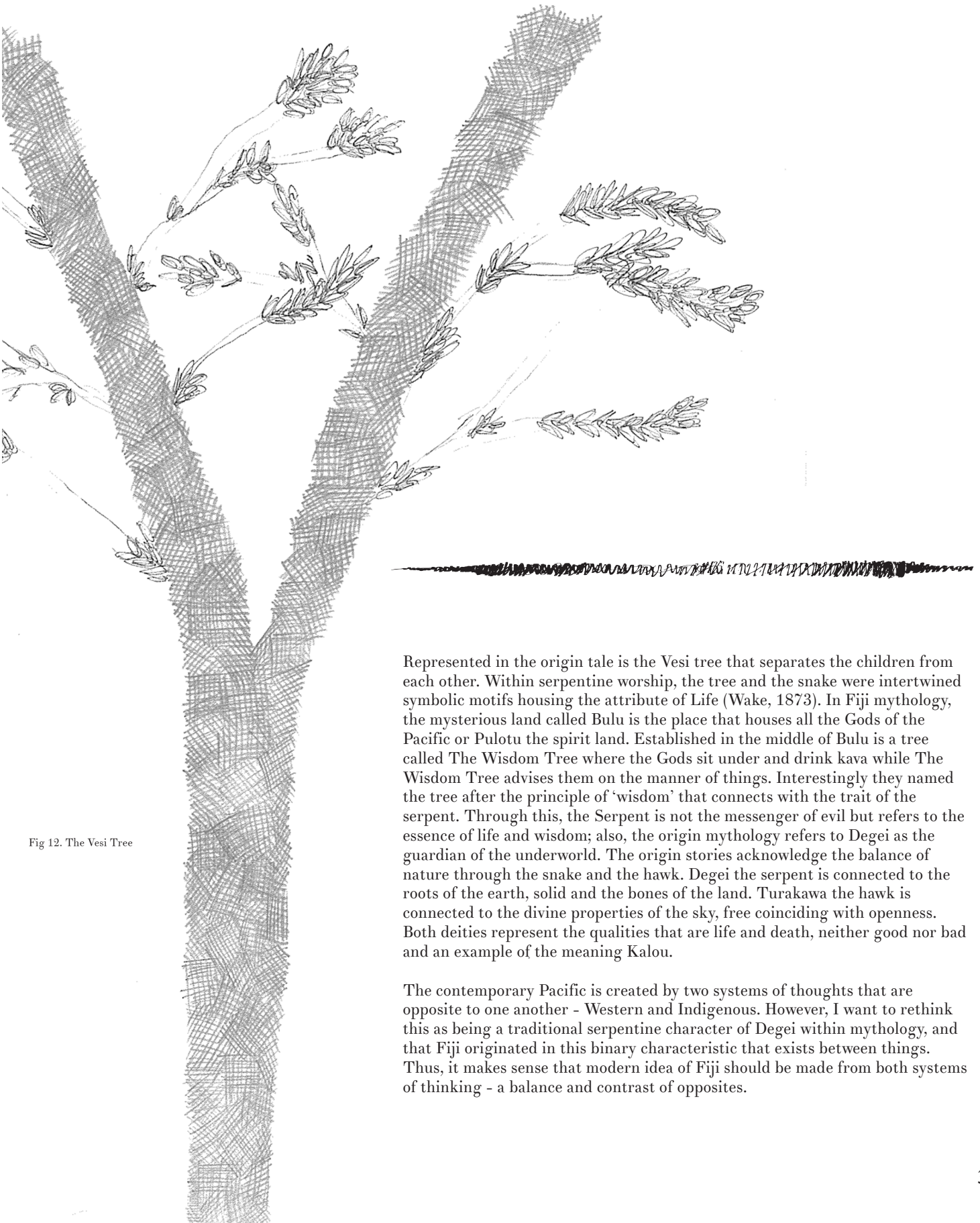


Fig 12. The Vesi Tree

Represented in the origin tale is the Vesi tree that separates the children from each other. Within serpentine worship, the tree and the snake were intertwined symbolic motifs housing the attribute of Life (Wake, 1873). In Fiji mythology, the mysterious land called Bulu is the place that houses all the Gods of the Pacific or Pulotu the spirit land. Established in the middle of Bulu is a tree called The Wisdom Tree where the Gods sit under and drink kava while The Wisdom Tree advises them on the manner of things. Interestingly they named the tree after the principle of 'wisdom' that connects with the trait of the serpent. Through this, the Serpent is not the messenger of evil but refers to the essence of life and wisdom; also, the origin mythology refers to Degei as the guardian of the underworld. The origin stories acknowledge the balance of nature through the snake and the hawk. Degei the serpent is connected to the roots of the earth, solid and the bones of the land. Turakawa the hawk is connected to the divine properties of the sky, free coinciding with openness. Both deities represent the qualities that are life and death, neither good nor bad and an example of the meaning Kalou.

The contemporary Pacific is created by two systems of thoughts that are opposite to one another - Western and Indigenous. However, I want to rethink this as being a traditional serpentine character of Degei within mythology, and that Fiji originated in this binary characteristic that exists between things. Thus, it makes sense that modern idea of Fiji should be made from both systems of thinking - a balance and contrast of opposites.



Fig 13. Medusa (1603) Bernini, Marble



Fig 14. Hermes Rod



In Greek mythology, the origin of the serpent arose through the depiction of Gods such as Hydra and Python and can be seen for instance on the symbolic ornamentation on Hermes rod (Wake, 1873) and the famously known Medusa's serpent hair (Frothingham, 1961). In the abode of the Greek Gods, Olympus, the serpent was given the status of high regard, holding the essence of wisdom, water, life, healing and the notion of immortality, along with the idea of change through the shedding of skin. Serpent worshipping was present in most places in the societies of Greece, Phoenicia, Egypt, India, Asia, Polynesia, Africa and the Americas. Many people who worshipped the snake as a deity believed that the movement of the serpent was the language of the Gods, it was the reason for the snakes unnatural and inhuman ability to propel their body forward, causing a suspicion and mistrust in their mysterious nature.

In certain tribes in Africa (Wake, 1873) the snake was the embodiment of one's ancestor and the "noiseless movement" and the ever-watchful gaze was a sign that a spirit was present. However, one was always warned when in the presence of a snake, not all spirits are guardians, not all spirits are good. It was a warning to be weary in the presence of the serpent. Although every civilization has a translated remark to add to the idea of the serpent, it is evident that animal is seen in as belonging to the house of something 'Other'.



When we talk about the snake our first reaction is a 'shiver' that trails up your spine. There is something unnatural and disturbing about the serpent which is undoubtedly due to the lack of limbs. Why is it that when we acknowledge the serpent we associate the creature with fear? Perhaps our subconscious warning us about this creature being of a divine presence. My personal take on the serpent is mainly regarding the idea of discomfort, mentally and physically. Imagine you are holding a snake, large and thick, the width of the body fitted comfortably within the palm of your hand. The body is alive as the length of the serpent coil up your arm and around your body. His surface is cool to touch and slithers around your skin, slow and purposefully. As it coils around your body you feel him tightening, his muscles contracting. You can feel the power within his body, it makes you uncomfortable to be within proximity to the serpent. What we must question is why humankind gets this uncomfortable feeling towards the serpent. The lack of 'feet' will be an aspect that contributes to this fear, however, I am swayed to analyze this notion of tightening within this powerful body, how a body can knot itself and fold within itself. The illusion of 'no bones' which the architectural body could follow the notion of 'no structure'. The lack of 'feet' however is a tortuous design that leaves the mind unsatisfied and disjointed with the concept of reality. It is an interesting idea of a Polynesian God without legs as I commonly refer to the deities of the Pacific as 'Walking Giants'. Propelling the body forward without 'feet' is a strange concept and in my opinion associated with the term of floating which is commonly described as the movement of ancestors and gods within their dimension. Could this reflect the Gods within a physical body? If so it would explain our unease when the serpent form is within eyesight, even the mere image of them triggers the 'hairs to raise' as we can envision the way they slide across a surface. Another interesting attribute that the serpent produces, is the awareness within ourselves. How we move and act, how we are aware of the velocity, sure to make no sudden movements as to cause disruption. The body of the human begins to mirror the snake, becoming slow and almost predatory as we watch each other waiting for the other to strike, a slow but purposeful dance.



What I want to deal here with is the notion of the museum as memory and in my project, it is the serpentine life force that lurks underneath Fijian society as a series of subtle questions that creates an affect of reflection on self-discovery. Arthur Parker suggests that museums are an opportunity waiting to be taken, an opportunity in my view is to realise it as a resource to narrate an idea of Fijian culture. Whether that is a museum, an arts centre, or a community gallery space. It is an opportunity for knowledge to be formed into a spatial idea and expanded. With each generation, the need to understand ones' heritage, identity, and culture that surrounds you becomes greater than the generation before. As we encounter a digital era we become obsessed with materiality, imagery and physical objects that embody a presence with reality.



What is a Museum? In *Exhibiting Archaeology: Archaeology and Museums*, Alex Barker (2010) describes the museum as an institution of knowledge and learning that accounts for the past and helps us towards the future. It is a system of tangible and intangible material that is always changing. A museum in Barker's words is a place "that is defined by its context". This notion is backed up by Arthur Parker (1934) in *The History Museum – An opportunity who suggests that the museum is not found in the artefacts but in the spirit of history and "human experience"* (p. 326). How we lived, the objects we made, the stories we heard and the journeys we embarked on, the narrative of life is the essence of every space and the potential presented by the museum as a place. It is interesting viewing artefacts from different cultures in the context of the museum they can sometimes be seen not as something treasured by a culture but viewed as an everyday tool.

When I met Simione Sevudredre, the director of Lands and Fisheries in Fiji, he described me as having 'one foot in each boat' as I grew up with a different cultural background it allows me to have the ability to see what others in Fiji may take for granted. A useful skill in regard to displaying artefacts for the Bure Kalou Museum. With the community already having a co-dependent relationship with the object being used so frequently, it would be discreditable for my project to design the artefacts to be displayed behind a glass window. Installing the idea that these objects aren't used today. Parker (1934) states there is a logical way we perceive museums, an orderly layout in a way to present artefacts. With the cosmos shaping the narrative and mythology developing the intangible, a logical outlook may be disregarded and an orderly layout may confuse the soul of the deity. The idea of layout and organization of artefacts on a timeline also will be absent as the soul of Fiji is still located in the present. The essence that I aim to develop in my conceptualization of the museum is driven by the notion that the cosmos influencing a systematic chaos throughout the way we experience a space or place. This moves away from the old sense of a museum being the establishment of an individual person's collection, organization, timelines, and layout that once was the core of the museum as an establishment.



Fig 15. Photo by K, Nalesu 2017




Fig 16. Photo by K, Nalesu 2017



Fig 17. Photo by K, Nalesu 2017




Fig 18. Photo by K, Nalesu 2017



Walking into the Fiji Museum in Suva I recognize the invisible force field placed around each artefact, cutting off any relationship between the artefacts and the local communities. This makes it difficult for the public to be involved and connect with objects and artefacts that connect them with the reality of the past. People have this desire to place themselves within a frame, to ask the question of what would they do in this situation, how would they act, would they be different from today. Placing a wall between that communication hurts the Genus Loci (Brook, 2001), it makes the audience distance themselves from reflection, from questioning and realisation.

A new wave within the collective institution is on the rise, a focus point of the communities and the collection they are involved with, this idea had already started to be taken into effect by the Auckland Museum. The Pacific Collection Access Project that is an ongoing process starting back in 2016 and running till 2019 entails the Pacific collection being on display for a limited time to allow the communities to come through and see their taonga, sharing stories about the artefacts and the people who made them, generating new information for the Auckland Museum to display when creating an exhibition in preparation for the Future Museum (Auckland Museum, 2013). Through this communication, we start to see the bridge between different cultures and perspectives forming an understanding for the public, and an acknowledgement for the community.



An aim that I hope to investigate and understand through my design practice is the notion of Vā or relationship between the collection, public, and community, how to effectively establish the balance between the once traditional sense of space and identity that comes with land, to the now twenty-first identity of self within the chaos of detachment from place (Refiti, 2014). In conventional museum layouts, when one walks into the building, a level of knowledge is almost required, these environments are proposed as self-guided tours. Yet the Pacific is still an unknown terrain within museum design - the artefacts, their narrative and connection to mythology. This questions how I am able to conceive the context without the formal conceptual design of a description on paper. The ideal outcome would be for the exhibition to speak of the origin tales without speech. Barker (1991) proposes two things that a museum should have: wonder and resonance. To first engage with an exhibition or object it must have the ability to render you motionless, make you wonder. This follows by the detachment of the current reality where your mind enters another dimension, one where you and this artefact exist together in a space of resonance.

Parker touches on the question of the tangible and intangible suggesting that the tangible 'advantage' over the intangible 'when it comes to understanding' (p.328). In some cases to an extent this would be true, however for any museum especially dealing with a complex cultural belief systems, one without the other would leave a hole in the public knowledge. A space that could become misinformed with erroneous information; the intangible has the ability to question things, but it is tangible that asks you to reflect on it. My aim is that through the design of a museum space, I can start to reinvent the ideals of the serpent as a positive symbolic deity in the way that I design the display of artefacts, using the opportunity of narrative as the way to make this tangible. This I hope will establish the essence and soul of the Fijian cosmology and mythology that starts to ask important questions about Fijian identity: who are the Fijians and what does it mean to be Fijian? The answer lies in the knowledge that we cannot be overlooked, that Fijian cultural history is unique and different. Our memory is us.

Na bula vakayalo || The spiritual life found in architecture



Isn't it odd that we live our lives within an interior space? We view the world through a lens, yet we are the focal point of our own image. We are the authors of a narrative and the main character. Pearson & Richards (1994) start to question cosmology, people, and things that are placed within bones of a structure whether by nature's course or artificial alignment. Yet they discuss in order for us to view the past we must place them in the present, creating an interior which we may place ourselves in.

Ladefoged (1998) expresses through Spatial Similarities and Change in Hawaiian Architecture that a dwelling is not just four walls and a roof, it is also the energy and life found in the space, creating a lived narrative and depicting a social ordering system that controls and manipulates our actions. Architecture is a ritual practice, we build a house to make a home, we destroy the house because our ordering identity has developed. We build a new house. We restore, we refurbish, we reinvent. Ourselves, our practice is always changing and evolving, this is shown through architecture, who we are is manifested into the breath of our homes, rooted deep into the bones of stone.

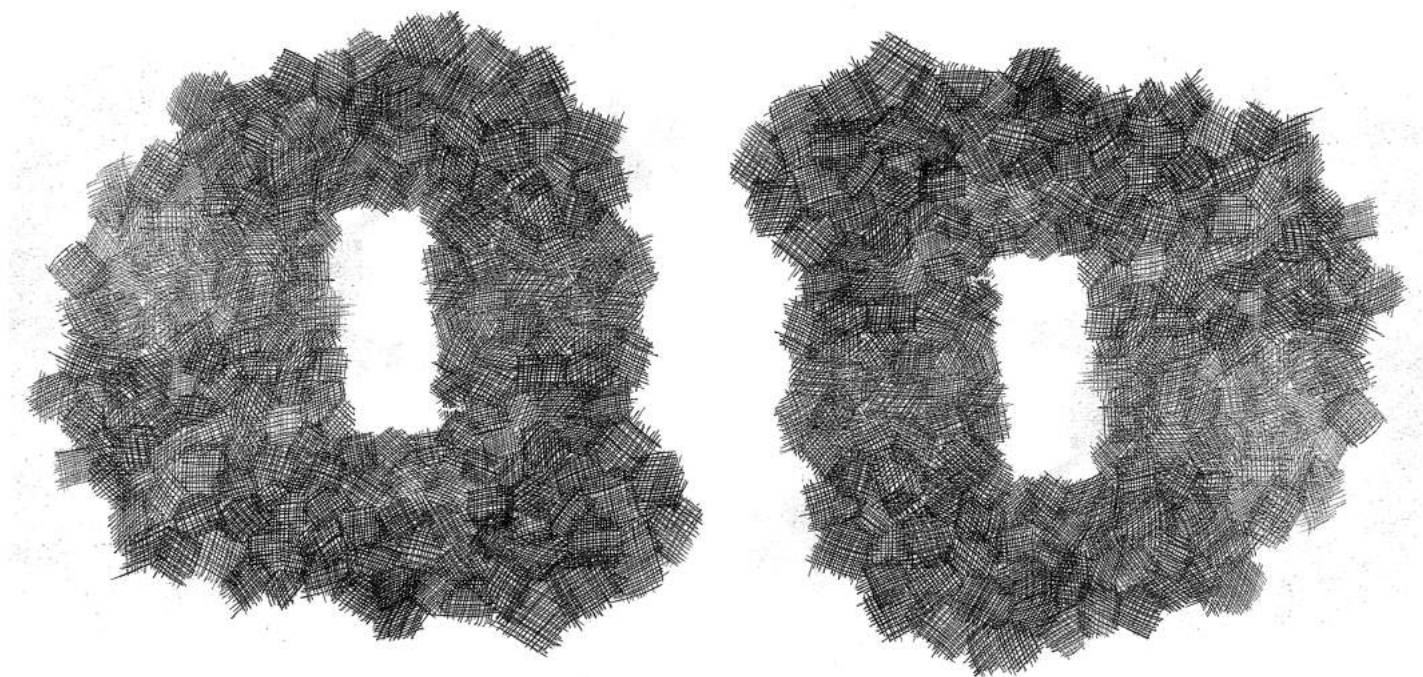


Fig 19. Threshold drawing



The village Raki Raki located in the Province of Ra was one of the first settlements established on Fiji. Degei's home on the mountain lies above Raki Raki and the people, therefore, they are people of the-supreme-God. According to mythology, Raki Raki is home to two villages that exist simultaneously in one place in different dimensions, each existing in a parallel universe. One is the village of the living, the other the village of the dead. Every night the People of Raki Raki leave their doors open so the dead may pass through the dwellings uninterrupted, not giving any reason for the dead to linger in the case there may be vengeful spirits around. One could not go walking around Raki Raki at night.

I share the mythology of Raki Raki not because of its significance to the dead but because this is an excellent example of how cosmology influences the way we make spaces and architecture. A spatial ordering system that is shaped by mythology. Pacific architecture in pre-colonial times was ordered differently than Western architecture and culture. Space, for instance, was not defined by walls but by "linking of the cosmos and the earth" (Pearsons & Richards, 1994).

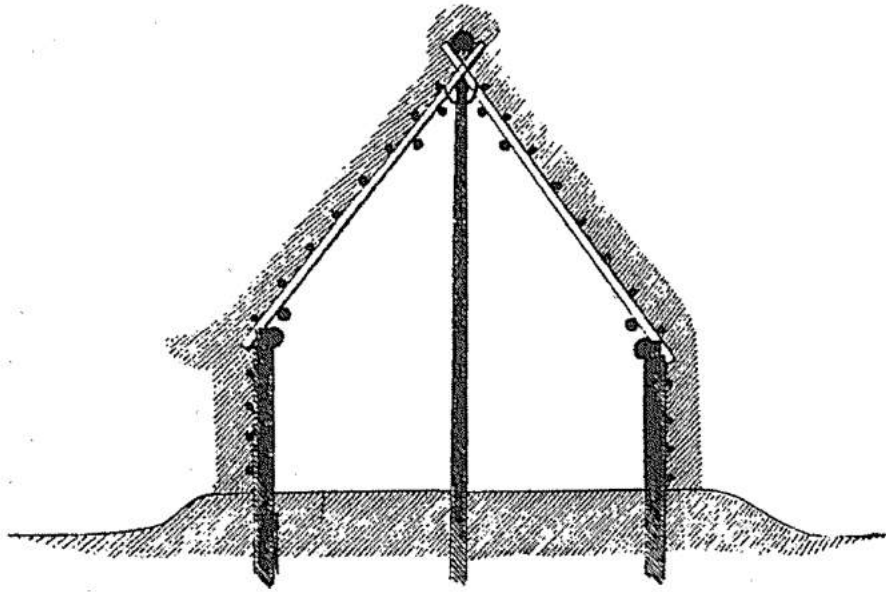


Fig 20. Sketch from Thomas Williams (1982)



Fig 21. Photo taken by Unknown



Fijian villages were founded and mapped-out based on the relationship between place and ancestors. The layout of settlements, like most in the Pacific, was done in relation to the first arrival point on land. According to oral stories, the first settlers arrived and scoped the land by walking along the ridge from Vuda Point to the sacred Kaduva mountains where Degei rested. This was considered the ideal way to discover land on which to settle, by marking the journey with broken sticks, which is known as Vi Ti ka (breaking sticks), led to the name of Viti Levu. This how space and place were identified and mapped. Existence in Fiji, therefore, can be regarded as space defined by mythology, which identifies places, mapping of the land, which is then settled. In the Pacific, one is measured by the tools one already possessed which is your body: feet, legs, hands. Space was measured in relation to the body. The body has a relationship with the cosmos as a vessel in which we reflect the cosmology into material substance through ritual, artefacts, space, and architecture. An architectural feature that establishes a relationship with the cosmos is a building with high ceiling, most commonly seen in structures used for rituals or temples (Vunidilo, n.d.). The oracle tower which was found in Hawai'ian heiau raised temples was a tall structure that was formed into the shape of a diamond with lashing at the top, and an open space below where ritual sacrifice and carved images were displayed (Ladefoged, 1998). Used in most dwellings, the iconic Pacific architectural motif was the ridge pole, a large and long central beam spanning across the middle of the building. In Fiji, this is a symbolic ornament of the household that normally protruded out from the building and decorated with elaborate vines and twisted grass cables where tassels were hung. The ends of the ridge pole are blackened on either side with great detail to increase the funnel shape which is decorated with large white shells, the reason being for the shells was that it was an indication of the highest respect. (Williams, 1858). Fijian houses often have two main important poles, one is a post going vertical and placed in the middle of the structure, while the other was a beam that lay horizontal on top. Under the ridge poles in former times men were used to sacrifice themselves to hold the poles up, giving stability to the household (Cumming, 1889). It was believed that the sacrifice marking the foundation of a new building was also to protect the family from vengeful spirits. Rituals in architecture was carried out in most cultures globally, with references to the cosmos being an important component of the identity of place.



Fig 22. Photo taken by Unknown

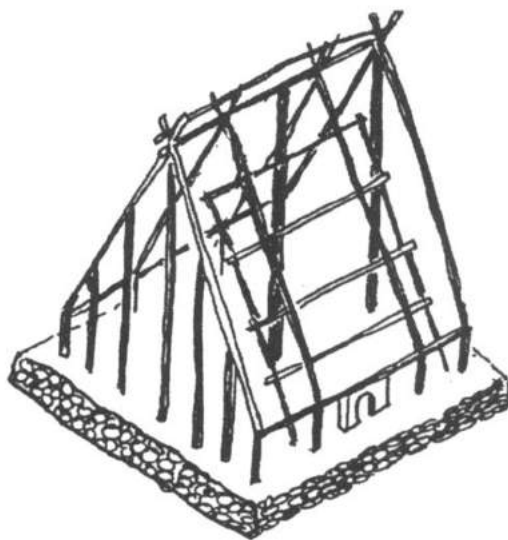


Fig 23. Sketch from Ladefoged, T (1998)

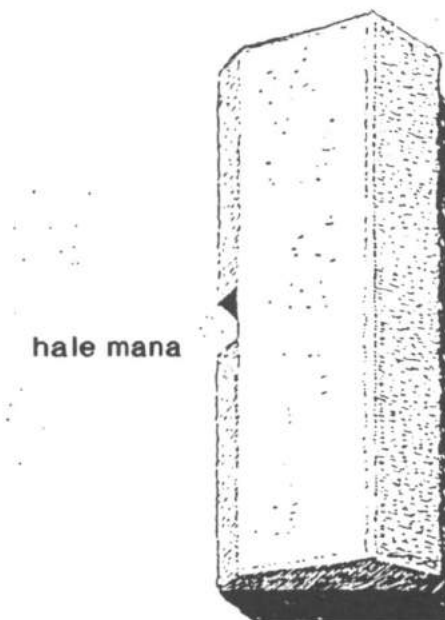



Fig 24. Sketch from Ladefoged, T (1998)



In Fiji, much like the different provinces and multiple dialects, the architecture varied depending on the climate, materials, and myths in the area. Every village has one or two bures, the chosen site for the structure is sometimes the location of where a chief had been killed. The Bure Kalou (spirit house) was placed upon a raised foundation, the height approximately three to twenty feet making it the highest building in the village. Placed upon the stone foundation, the Bure Kalou represents the divine essence of the temple not being consummated on land: “On setting up the pillars of the temple, and again when the building is complete, men are killed and eaten” (Williams, 1858, p. 222). These buildings were often surrounded by human skulls “arranged [forming] a sacred precinct” (Williams, 1858, p. 222). Like the buildings used for common households, the roofs’ were thatched from long grass leaves of sugar cane and stone-palm and which in some cases lay all the way down to the hearth disguising the bones of the structure. The dwellings were normally made in the form of a triangle creating a connection between the sky and land. In Hawai’ian architecture, Ladefoged (1998) states that the door into the dwelling “was located along one of the sides of the house and not at either end” (p.64). In Antoni houses, the door is not allowed to face the sun or the direction of their origin which is the east. The entrance way in Pacific architecture tends to be the main way in, which is unlike the village Raki Raki where the myth suggests two doors should be installed, while common dwellings had only one. When approaching the entrance, the opening would be lowered obliging the visitor to bow to the house before entering, the reason for this is being a family was less inclined to have visitors with murderous intent. Through this act, although the reasoning behind the door was not intentional for ritual, the lowering of the head is still a sign of respect and acknowledgement to the atmospheric qualities. This is the ritual of the threshold.



“ It is impossible to say how often one pauses uncomfortably for a moment on some threshold...- while passively. usually “unconsciously” accepting a prohibition of some kind”.
– Henri Lefebvre, The Production of Space (1974)

Thresholds are more than mere doorframes, more than the material that is used to construct them. They are windows, passages, rituals, a time warp. Each time you cross a threshold you are subjecting yourself to that environment; that spirituality within the interior, for that reason there is a subconscious pause in our actions where our mind's eye perceives the dimension and relays to our body the actions deemed appropriate for that space. This acknowledgement that goes unnoticed by us is normally hidden within the bridge between exterior and interior, commonly referred to in housing situations as the hallway, or in public buildings the patio or lobby. For a museum, the lobby is the middle space or *vā*, where two identities co-exist, yet don't exist. It is the threshold of nothingness that establishes the presence of everything hidden behind these walls. It is within this empty space that we dwell within our mind's eye, seeing a world before us, initiating the ethics of temporary and permanent within the threshold.



Fig 25.



Fig 26.



Fig 27.

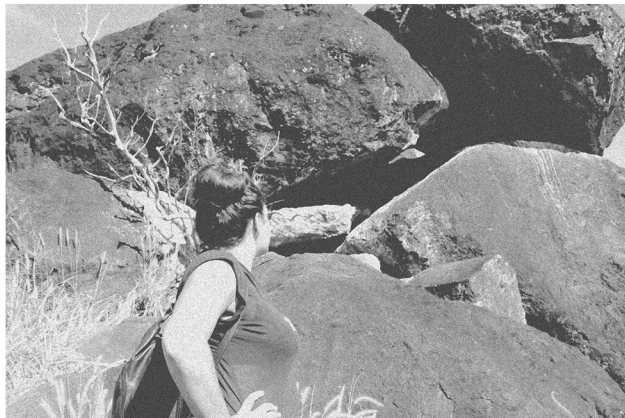



Fig 28.



Fig 29.



Fig 30.



Georges Teyssot (2008a) discusses there are two thresholds that we engage in: The world of Dreams and The worlds of Things (p.8). Framing that within the context of my museum project, I intend to show the crossing of the boundary and surfaces between mythology and artefacts. This could be represented through the Oceanic concept of mana and tapu (Shirres, 1982). Mana and Tapu are interesting terms when used within a design language. Mana is an inherent quality in objects or land, it identifies what is highly ranked in the system of things “being with potentiality for power” (p.29). For my context, I would refer to ‘mana’ as being contained within artefacts. Mana is life, it is knowledge, it is religion and ritual. Through mana we learn the importance of culture, of artefacts, of lineage. The body crosses the threshold of everyday life, to a higher regard for life, it is a learning process to show a respect for the living. Tapu is marking something sacred or divine with an utmost power that cannot be possessed. When something is put under tapu, there is no contact with the item under tapu and common society. Tapu places an invisible barrier that separates the object from everyday reality. As Degei is a cosmogenesis deity and creator of life on Fiji, the serpent would be regarded as extremely tapu, and thus establishing a sacred threshold that in Pacific terms is not be crossed unless the tapu has been lifted.

When I visited Fiji for the second time this year, I ventured up to Degei caves. There were no signs, no markings to identify that you are approaching a sacred space but just a very steep driveway that takes you to the top of a ridge. When I finally made it to the top, I could tell this area was not visited often, the locals call it Tabu (Fijian word for Tapu), a sacred spot that you do not enter, however, I believe this notion is driven by their fear to anger Degei. I walked the track and crossed the threshold of Tabu whereupon I placed both my hands upon a stone, acknowledging the serpent God that gave birth to Fiji. This created for me, a frozen time, a motionless zone that I can only identify as being Tapu. How can one understand this object of tapu if we are not allowed to acknowledge and reflect and learn from its context? How can this be made to revolve again and to redefine our identity as Fijians? However, I believe that through design-interpretation, there is a grey zone where the designation of threshold and Vā can come into place for people to pass through as a ‘cleansing zone’ that allows the body to accept the atmospheric qualities and conditions of Mana and Tapu.



Teyssot (2008b) states that for architecture to evolve we must start to view and conceive the threshold “in the image of man” (p.35) meaning that an in-between state (vā) can reflect the concept of “breathing in and out” (p.35). This idea is useful in the sense that breathing-in mana via the community, land, history of Fiji, and in return we also breathe the life of Degei out, introducing once again the cosmos into society. Developing this idea in the context of the snake, an investigation of the threshold conceptualized through the body of the serpent would allow me to develop a structure that moves in a continuous motion through the interior and exterior of the building allowing the public to flow effortlessly from one zone to another. Reflecting the concept of pneuma, the breath of spirit, allowing Degei to move over the land, and not just the erection of a place.

Vakadidike Vakaiwiliwili



Research Study

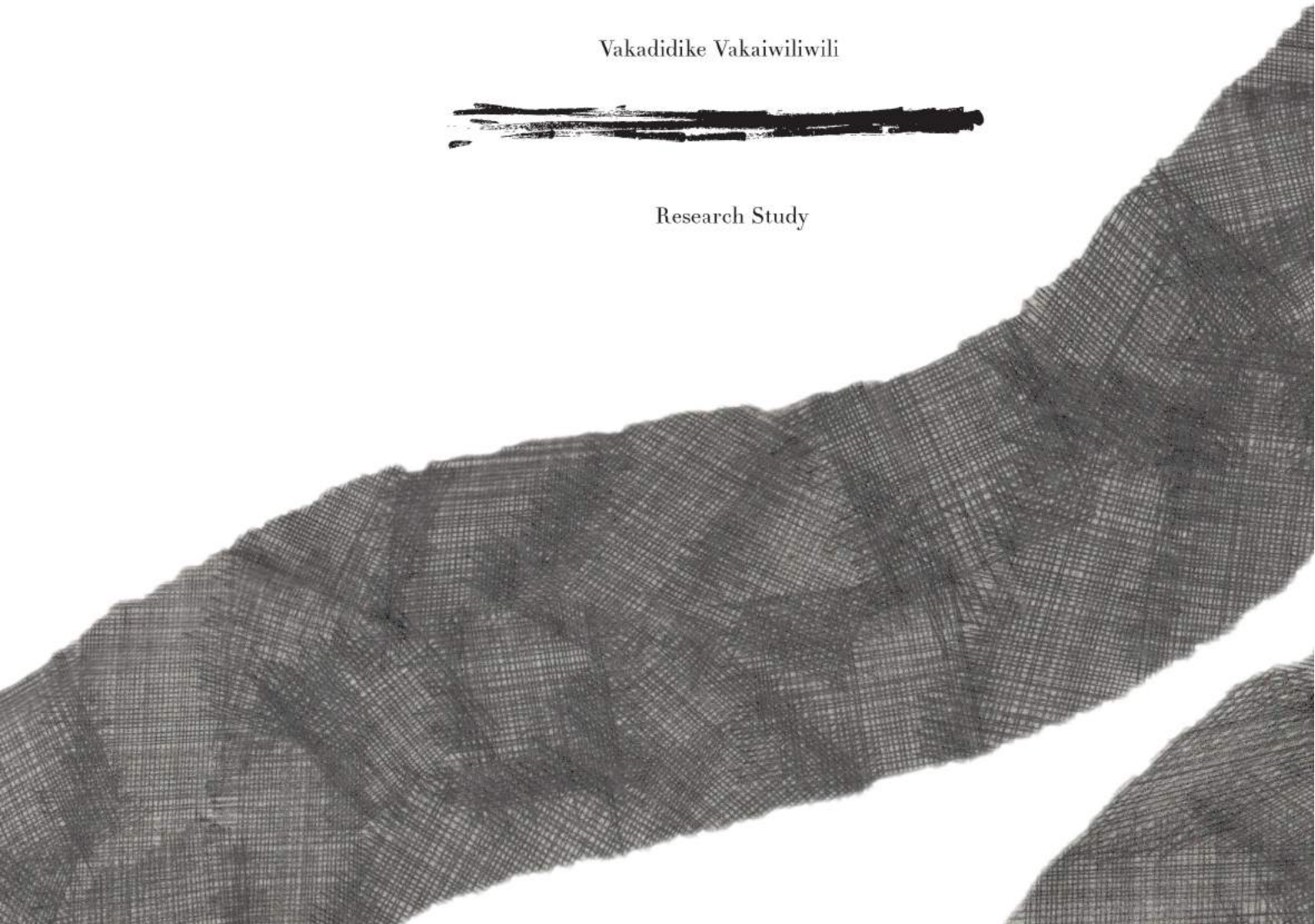




Fig 31. Provincial Map of Fiji

Ena Yasana Vakara || On the Western Side



14, Feb 2017; Fiji Monsoon Season.

Meeting with the Ba Province, proposing my Masters Project about a potential Museum for the Western Division.

Currently dressed in the appropriate attire to address government officials.

Currently overheating.

It has been established previously that Fijian legend suggests that Viti Levu was first settled by Degei the snake who arrived on the shore of Lautoka and climbed his way up to the sacred mountains of Kadrava. Fiji's indigenous name given by the original settler's is Viti, named after the technique called Vitika, the breaking of sticks to mark the tracks and traces that the initial ancestors made on the land. There are two main Islands, Viti Levu (The Great Fiji) and Mana Levu (The Great Land), with the Lau Group, Yasawas, and Kadavu Islands flanking the sides of the mainland. There are fourteen provinces dividing Fiji; Ba, Bua, Cakaudrove, Kadavu, Lau, Lomaiviti, Macuata, Nadroga-Navosa, Naitasiri, Namosi, Ra, Rewa, Serua, Tailevu. My project is sited in Lautoka, within the Ba province. Each province has a different dialect, an example would be my family, when greeting another in Fijian the common term would be Bula, however, because my ancestors belong to the Yasawas Group located in the Western division, our term is Thola. This begins to locate the area you are from and the province you belong to. On my first site visit to Fiji, Lautoka was the town I stayed in with my parents. We stayed in a small house ten minutes out of the township area. There were no street lights past the town border. We were local and officially off the tourist grid.

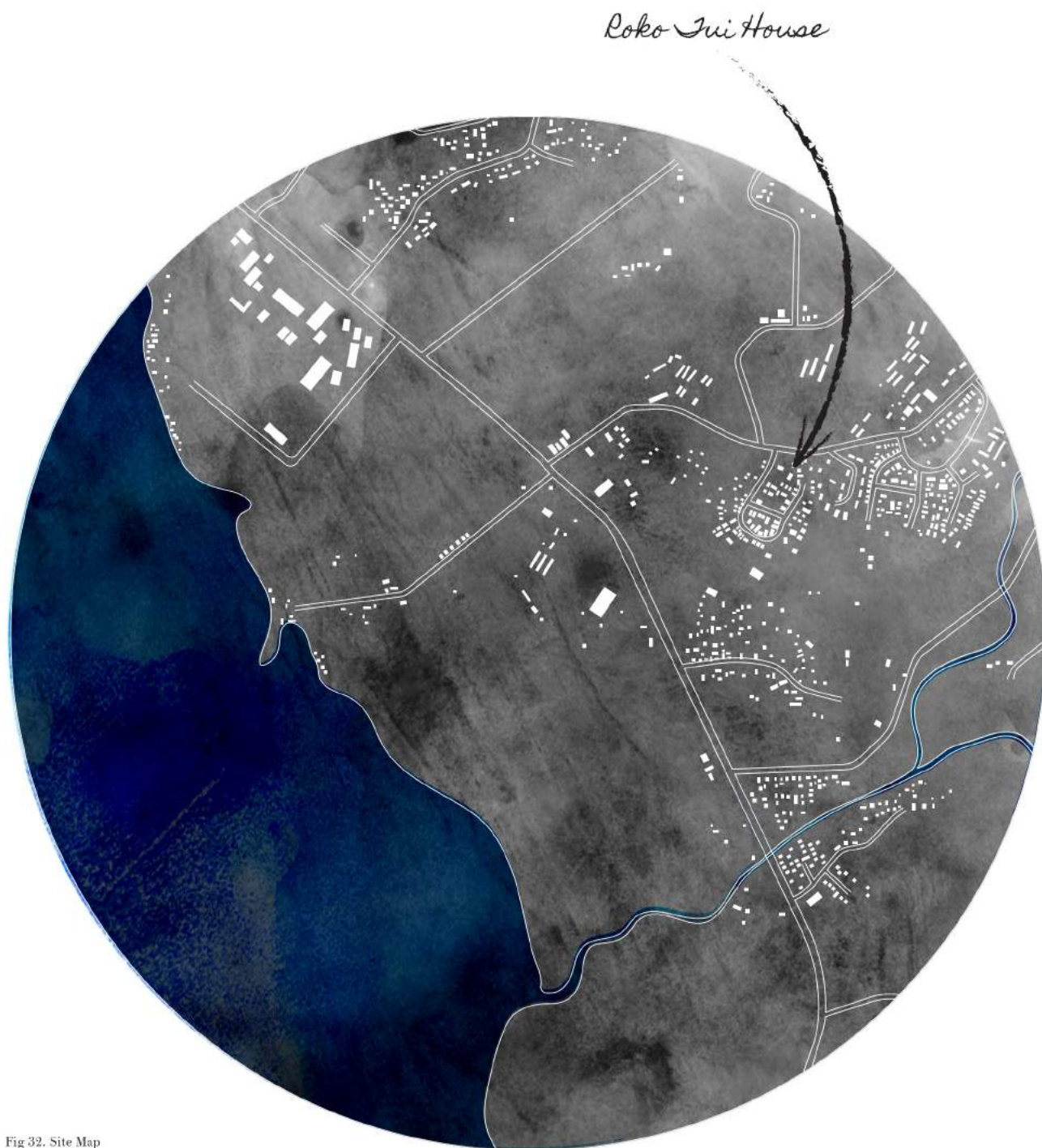


Fig 32. Site Map



When first approaching this design practice an idea for the site was going to prove difficult. I was not familiar with the landscape, and finding a location that was easily accessible to the public without being heavily populated was going to take time that I unfortunately was unable to accommodate. Prior to my meeting with the Ba provincial office, I made the drive to Suva the day before where I had the opportunity to meet with the director of Fijian Land and Fisheries, Mr Simione Sevuiredre suggested Lautoka as it was home to the official Ba Provincial office, the center of the Western Division.

Armed with that knowledge I arranged a meeting with Mereoni, senior assistant to the Roko Tui (meaning king or high chief of an area) of the Ba Province. Meeting Mereoni, I proposed to her my Master's project: a museum rediscovering the identity of Fiji. Delighted with the idea she told me the Ba province had just been discussing the concept of the First Western Division Museum prior to my arrival in Fiji. I asked if there was an ideal location the province was interested in using, this being the landscape ranged from rocky to muddy with the ideal landscape being heavily populated due to the ideal terrain. Mereoni told me about a 1800 colonial building that was evacuated with no present use, it is to her understanding, would be big enough to facilitate the principles of a museum. The official title of the building is the Marama Rokoveivuke (Roko Tui House), a government building which was utilized as a homestay for the officials and chiefs to stay-in when in town. Mereoni agreed to let me and my family view the building personally, taking us to the site about 10 minutes from the center of Lautoka.



Fig 33.



Fig 34.



Fig 35.



Fig 36.



When we visited, we pulled up to a building that was perched on top of a hill. The position of the Roko Tui House on the site allowed the building to act as a guardian to the different surrounding communities; views watching over the town, ocean, and mountainside. Stepping out of the car you are greeted with the view of the water with the Yasawas visible in the distance, connecting me back to my lineage. When walking to the house you pass under two frangipani trees on either side of the steps littering the walkway with white flowers that established the scent of Fiji. Walking around the North side of the house you are greeted with the views of the mountains forming the idea of solidarity and earth, ingraining the idea of Degei through the landscape, everlasting and majestic. With the views looking outward to the sea and inward to the land the building has already a sense of Vā as acting as a space in-the-between.

My site visit and personal experience of the Roko Tui house and its context allowed me to depict it through illustration, a site analysis that would convey the atmospheric qualities of the location witnessed in February 2017. The drawing is produced on the surface of an A0 300gsm piece of textured paper. Last year my main methodology was drawing using a range of lead pencils that were to produce abstract representations. This year I have continued the drawing methodology but chose a different medium. The medium needed to be a material that could flow into each, a transition as well as having space where you enter a different threshold, this required the use of a liquid substance; paint. Utilizing my hand as a tool I desired the paint to move across the page effortlessly, this was achieved by a sponge.



Fig 37. Site Analysis.



The colours on my palette consisted of; blues, greens, whites, purple, red, yellow and gold. I began with the blues using a dabbing motion all over the page, I did not keep to one place nor did I wish for there to be a center. The idea of the artwork is to take in the whole image and to have your eyes roam over the body of work, to find the beauty in every aspect. There are three layers of paint used in this artwork suggesting each generation adding to this culture. The idea of layering which has been a technique that has been used in my method process in previous years, adding new things to an already existing object to create something new. The rational thinking for this image is found in the colours, the spots where the colour is dense and dark are to acknowledge the solidarity of the location, caught between the towering mountain and the flowing sea. The blue and green colours are shallow but moving throughout the image depicting the water and the way it moves and shapes the land. The purple and red placed in the image although not consistently are to represent the royal chiefly meaning behind the house. The building is a government house, it housed important people who visited the Lautoka area. Purple signifies power although it is not overwhelming as the power is fading from the building, that is the atmosphere I am interested in reclaiming. The yellow is to portray the happiness of the site, the pure joy of standing on a hill and looking outward to sea and overlooking the people - a watchful guardian. The gold and white are to represent the divine beings that are to be placed on this site. The White spaces are interesting representing void spaces, thresholds and spaces to be entered, it is within the unknown spaces that opportunity begins to arise.

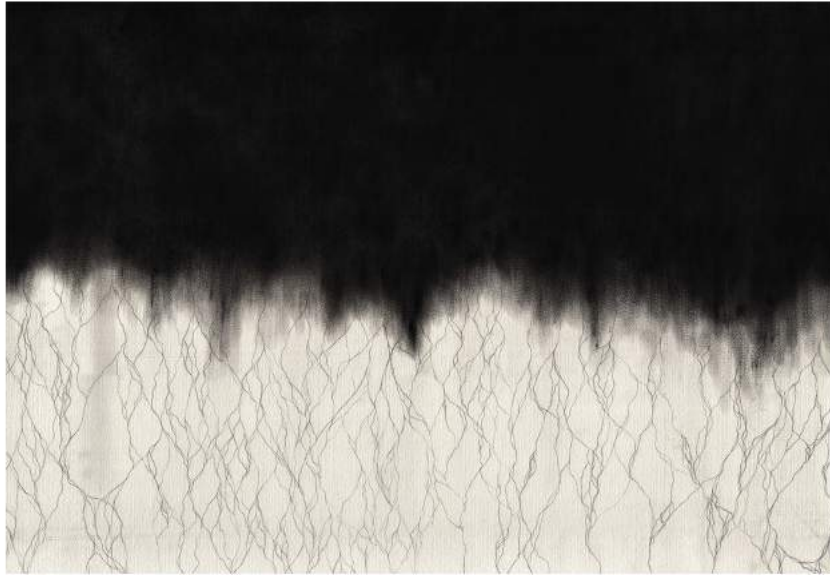


Fig 38. Hawai'ian Cosmogram.

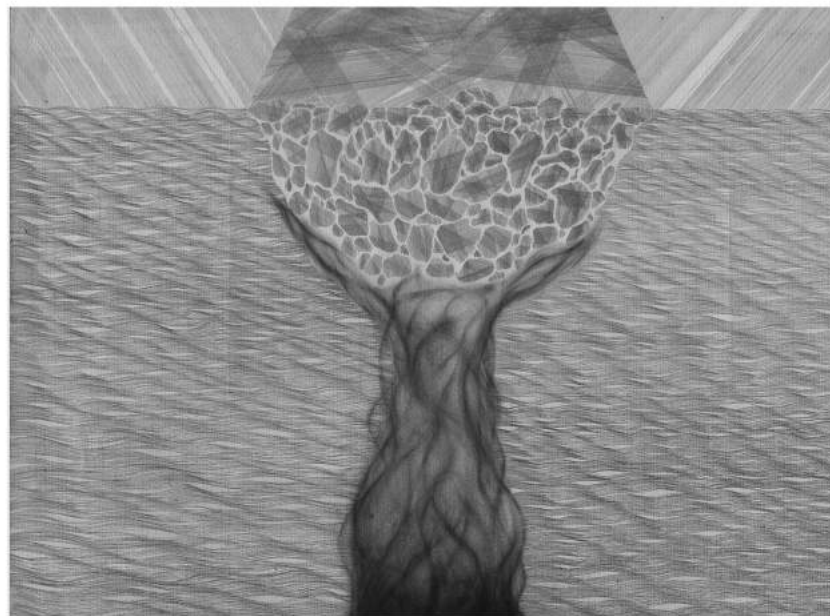


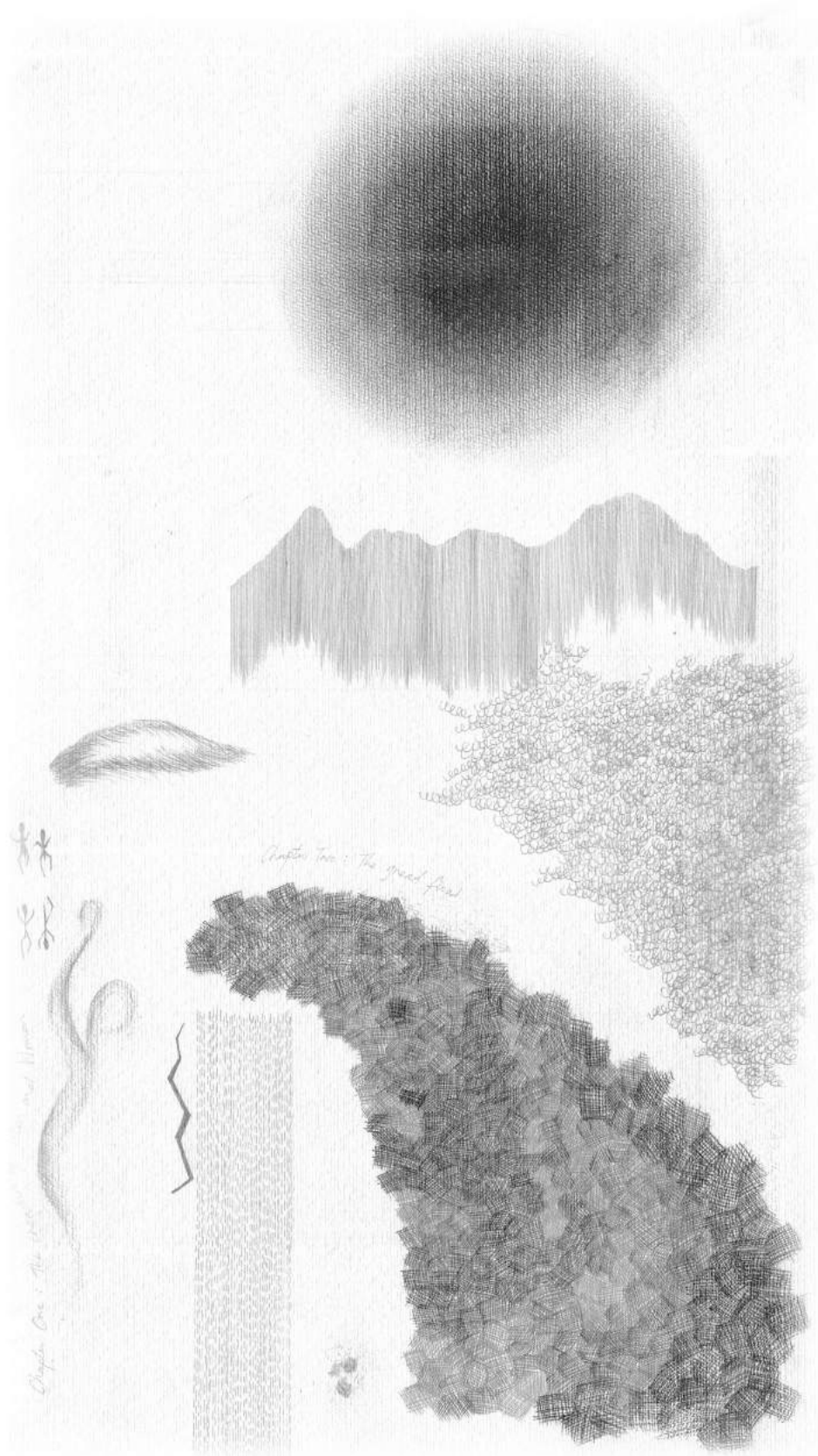
Fig 39. Tongan Cosmogrom.



Continuing from my honours work in 2016, the method and technique I chose for interpreting my ideas are hand drawings referred to as ‘cosmogram’ which I utilised to progress towards abstract forms and structures through to modeling.

Drawings are used to convey two ideas: rendering and sketching. Renders are often a drawing that represents the atmospheric quality of the space whereas a sketch is a design tool that is presented as a process enabling the thinking of future establishments. The sketch is understood for its quickness as the form is freehand however the artwork I have produced is carefully crafted with purpose and exploration making the image not so much a sketch but an exploration in detail of the sketch. The drawing was able to convey what words could not, especially with the movement of the snake, a visual process was needed in order to harness the unusual body language created by the serpent. Each line creates a width within a 2D plane, redrawing the original drawing into digital software it transforms again into a surface that has depth, width, and a layering system. However, the drawing process is limited in the sense of depth and contact with the restoration design of the original building, this is where the modeling is benefited to see the scale of the design in relation to its surroundings. The modeling process allows the reality of limitations to be introduced back into the design. Where the ability of drawing allows you to get out of the building the modeling allows you to enter the building once again. Fijian women and men use their hands in making, weaving and cooking. The appropriate use of hand-drawn work as my method would be effective as I also become a craftsman, narrating culture through the labour of my hands.

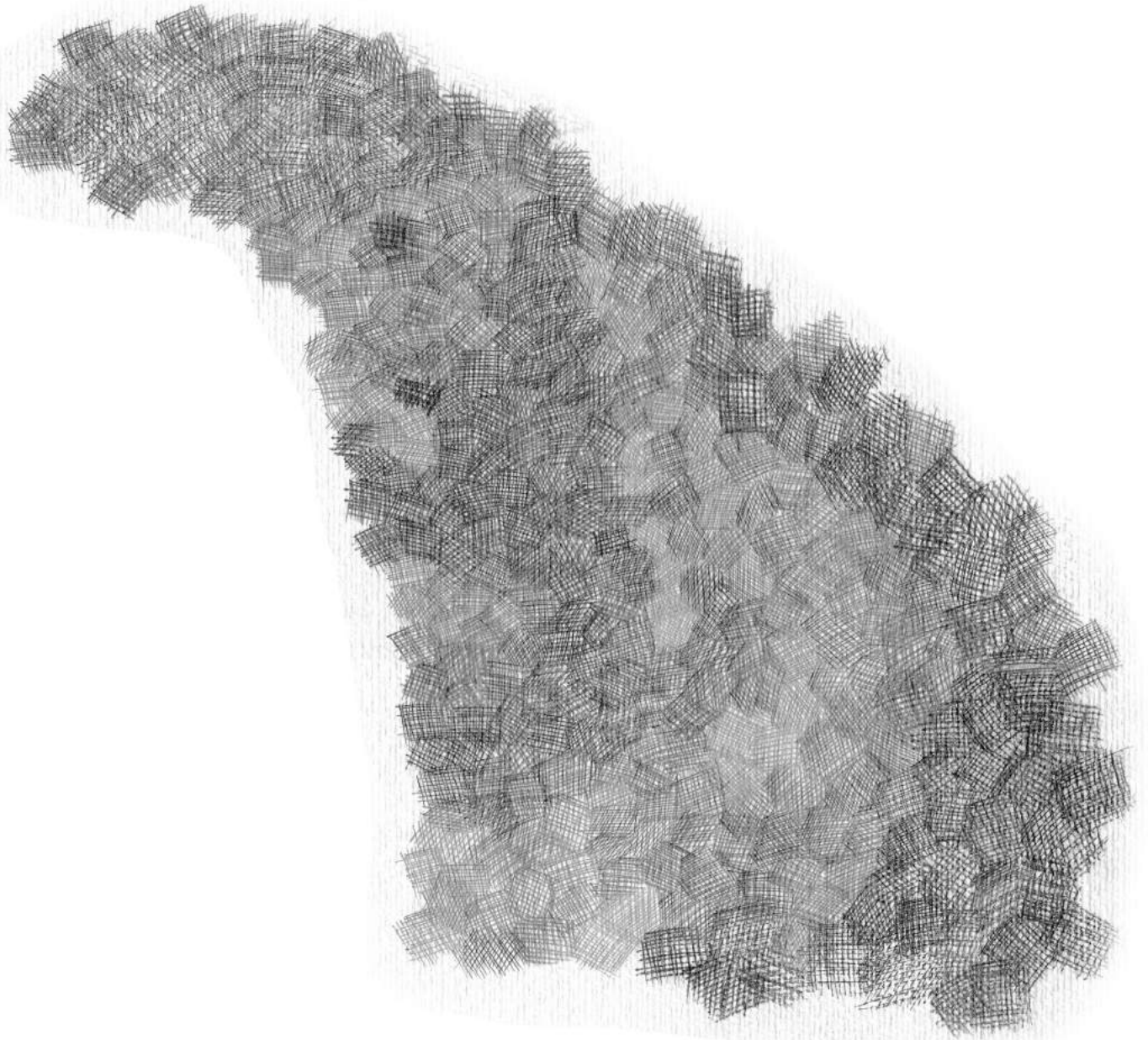
Fig 40. Collection of cosmos.





Last year I conceived a series of cosmogram drawings that represented the multiple origin stories in the Pacific - Tonga, Hawaii and the Fijian myth of the Wisdom Tree. This year instead of producing one massive cosmogram, I decided to work efficiently and produce a portion of the mythological tale. The images on the page are produced from Myths and Legends of Fiji (1976) chapters one through to four; Legends of Degei and the Spirit World, Legends of the Gods, Ratu Mai, Bulu the Snake God and Dakuwaqa the Shark God. A collection of small illustrations that start to shape the body of work throughout my practice. The most prominent artwork that I refer to is the Wave hatching. Based on the Great Flood made by Degei out of anger for the death of Turakawa.

Fig 41. Collection of cosmos.





This drawing has the principle of a sketch yet encompasses the notion of atmospheric quality found within a render. The drawing was formed through the freehand movement of the hand, it allowed the inspiration to be free from limitation and create the feel of the story to flow into a visual image. The Wave is a compelling drawing within this project because it has a similar effect to the weaving of baskets and mats. When I was creating this image the main aspirations that I was thinking about was 'power and scale'. The design had to create a sense of chaos within itself, a dynamic of depth that is suggested with a system of layering. The different contrasted elements within the hatching are interesting, made by the use of different toned pencils ranging from H to B it creates the effect of 'something' hidden however only in parts. Perhaps the final design is to express spaces that inhabit a darker world than what we are able to perceive just from the surface. The movement of the curve creates the sensation of a material folding over a space is an aspect that I'm interested in pursuing. It encapsulates the idea of another space suggesting the depths of a cave. The atmospheric conditions of being enclosed within a space that is dark with a solid mass that shelters you starts to manipulate the movements of the body; lowering your voice. The sinister shadows become a friend that you find yourself engulfed in creating the illusion of invisibility. Within this drawing, I began to see Degei, his cave, and the surface of his skin, the solid mass of his body rising above man. Within my museum I would like to explore the notion of the cave, a secret place that starts to utilize shadows and the body, manipulating societies thinking of the serpent and the idea of 'darkness' as a positive rather than a negative.

The following drawing is the Ridge illustration found from Chapter Three. I specifically am intrigued with this drawing by the rise and fall of the line, how it moves across the page. The contrast between the straight line and the curve creates a harmony within the artwork, that is an aspect I would like to create within my museum incorporating the Western structuring of the Roko Tui building and the fluidity movement of the serpent. When I view this image, I visualise a material suspended with the linear mass hanging down, creating a roof structure that enables the flow of the curve by the different lengths of the lines. The would also create the concept of the cave allowing the audience to walk under a mass that is lowered and then rising to an open space. Creating the sense of a journey much like the journey to Degei cave by walking the ridge from Vuda.

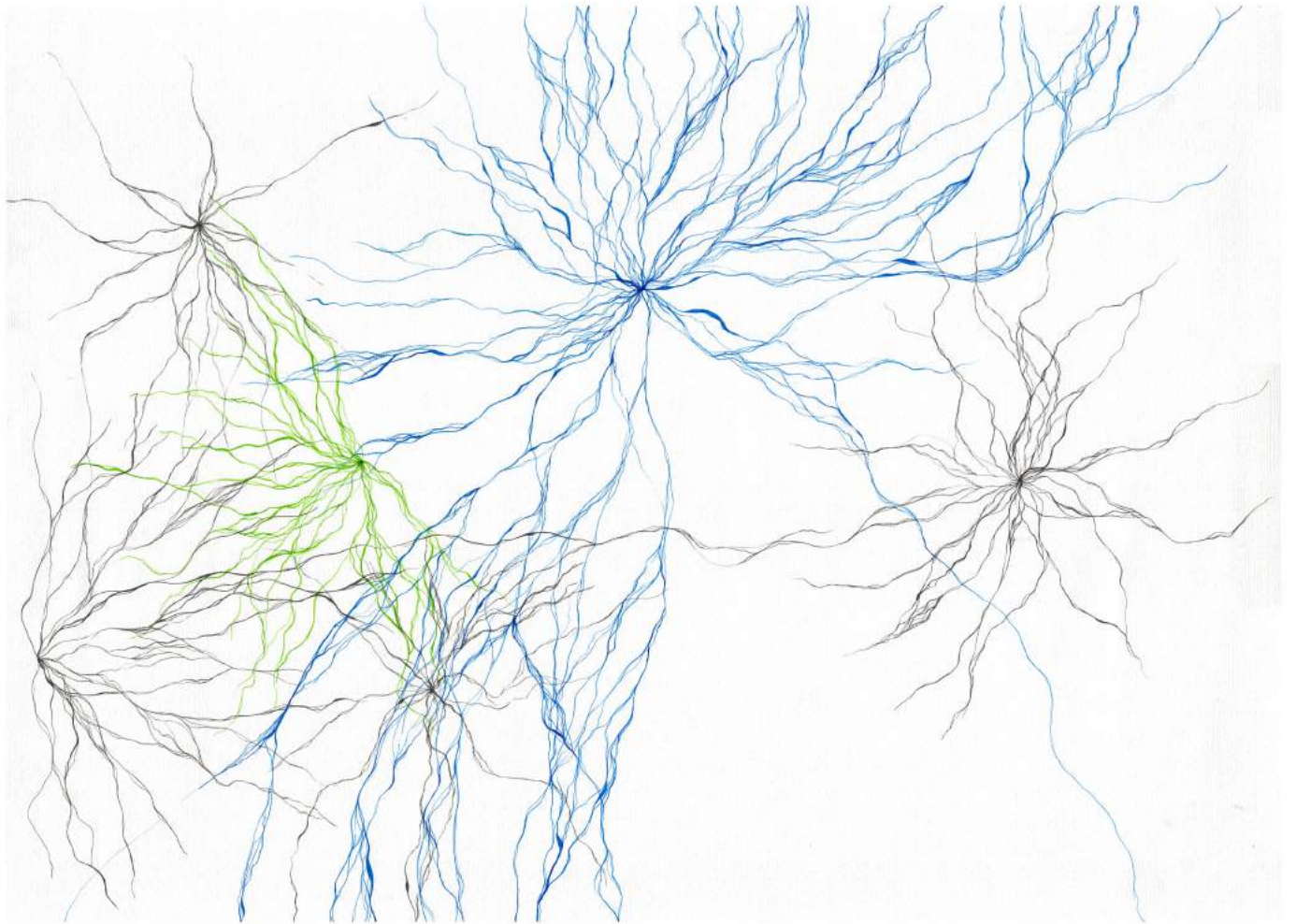


Fig 42. Process Work.

Sauta || Energy



‘Sauta’ means continuous motion or energy, is the title of the next image. Although the work is not a significant piece within the project, the fluidity of the movement produced is important and starts to shape the way I begin to move through the practice. The context behind the image was investigating the notion of vā, the different energies that are influential to the site in Lautoka. The chosen medium was ink and the tool used was a paintbrush, the colours represented the natural elements and key figures sited on the land. Blue represented the ocean, a constant energy that flows around the islands, it is the common home associated with the Pacific, it is what anchors us. The green represents the mountainside, strong and powerful, this energy engulfs the land, towering over the water, it is the roots of the earth. The black represents the influential aspects that are driving this project, my knowledge from the Fijian Museum in Suva located below, my knowledge about Degei steamed higher upon the page and the energy from New Zealand where I call Home. It is the transitioning of the line that flows into one energy to another, creating an image that requires the involvement from all materiality. Sauta starts to dwell on the idea of motion and fluidity, although the contextual background does not progress my design thinking into the next stage, the image plays an important role within the line and starts to shape the final concept.

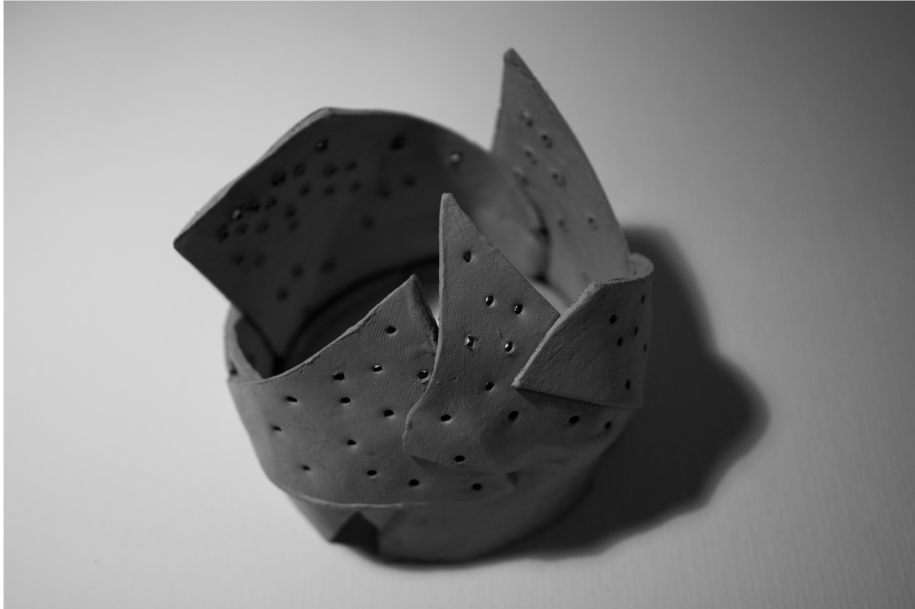


Fig 43.



Fig 44.



Beginning my conceptual movement into the snake deity I was very unclear on how to perceive a space that held the atmospheric qualities of a God. The influenced used to create this structure was the hawk and snake, light and solid. Prior to the making of the structure I had a meeting with my tutors, they were questioning the notions of the serpent; is it a snake? Do we see it? Maybe we see it without seeing it, an illusion. This began my research into the concept of snakes, are they more than just a body, this lead to my discovery of 'Serpens; The Serpent, a constellation of stars located in the northern hemisphere. The structural development of this model was based on the idea that we realise Degei through the mapping of stars. Although it is the first model and clear within the structural output that there is no sense of direction, later within my work I come back to this idea of mapping working with the idea of shadows and navigation. The sphere came from the interior snake body wrapped around the foundations of the wall, I wanted the serpent to still be housed within the space but not a dominant feature. The walls enclosing the space are made from fragments of skin which are influenced by the texture of the 'Wave' drawing, the layering effect of facets. I began wrapping the facets around the snake layering on top of one another. I did not want the space closed off from the sky as I believe the connection between the interior and exterior is an important link that needs to be addressed within the museum space, especially dealing with a cosmic relation.

The holes made on the exterior of the building were made to inhabit the play of light and shadow, creating a mapping of space. I did intend for fine string to run across the interior connection from each gap to the space opposite, creating a chaos or mesh framework. The reason for not carrying out that concept was the interruption of light and dark by placing materiality within the gaps. That is not to say that there could be another means of sunlight to flow through the linear form, however I think there is something beautiful in the simplistic form.

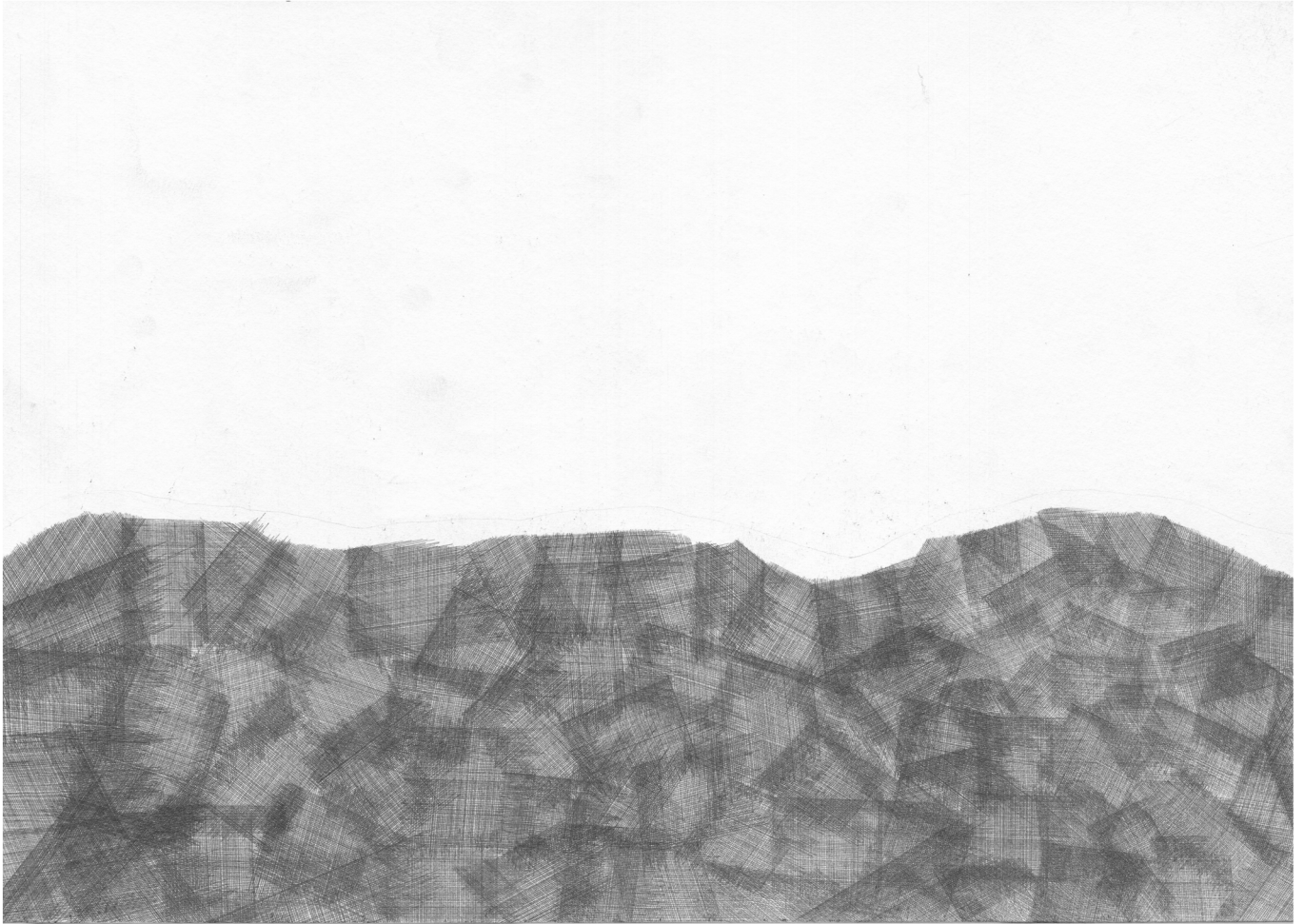


Fig 45. Experimental drawings on Snakes.

Tokaitua || Ridge



Tokaitua was created by interpreting the mountainside, drawing the line to rise and fall, like the contours of the land. I was interested in the concept of the sky and land, how one aspect is light and free, while the other is solid and dense. Progressing on from the hatching technique shown in the image Wave, I was curious to try using constructed lines by the ruler rather than freehand sketched. The meshwork of lines that I weaved together started to read as a dense surface, contrasting with the open void space above. When viewing the image, I saw it as a section cutting through the mass to view a pattern of materiality. The layering quality to the work is interesting and a technique that I have perfected in my previous work through hatching. It enables the idea that you are able to pull strings away changing the form of the shape, creating a new image from within the image.

The next piece of artwork is exploring the different structural formations. I was enticed by the concept of the perfect form, the perfect curve, which I personally think makes the serpent so fearful, the divine versus mortal, how it is impossible to draw the exact same line again.

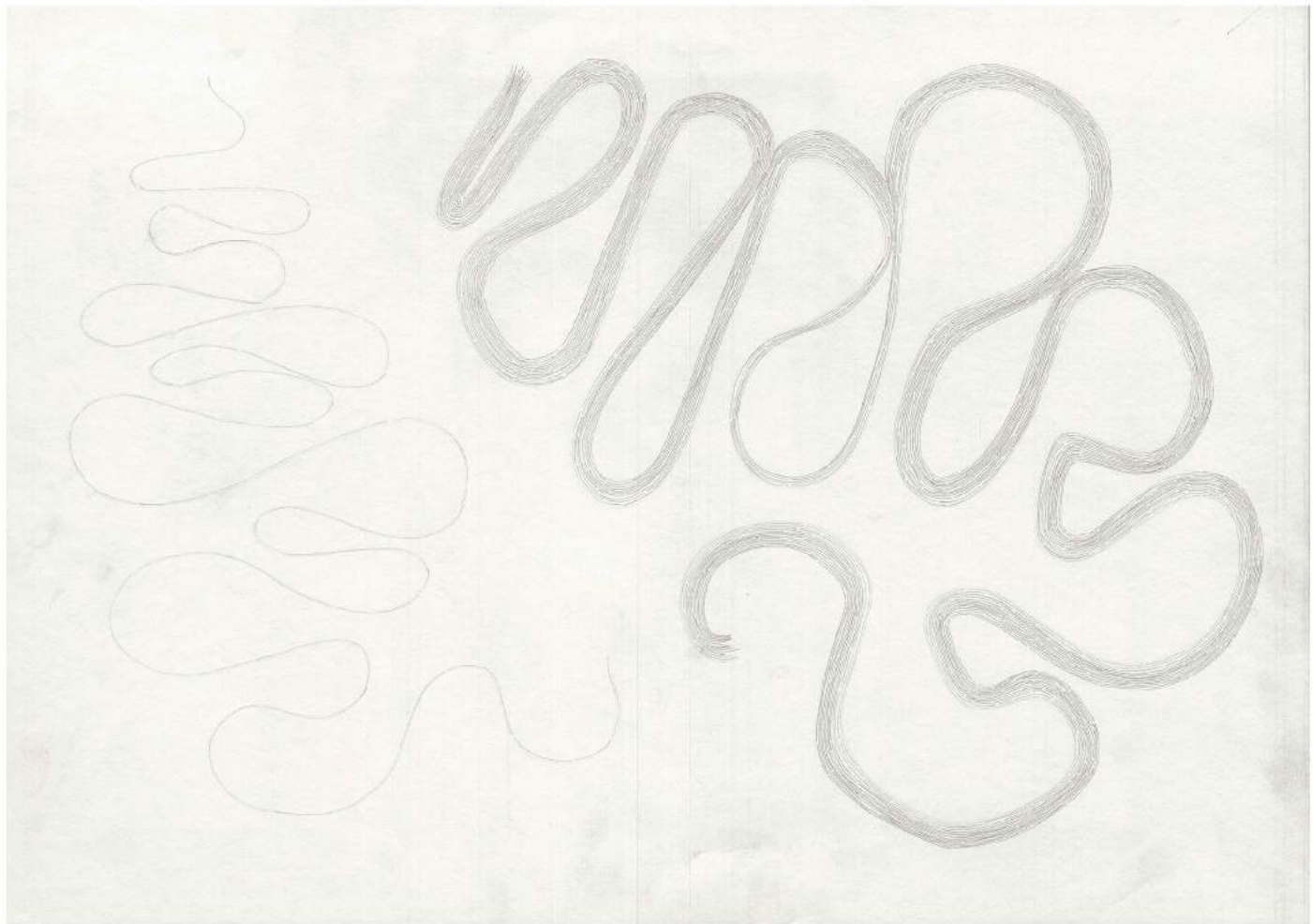


Fig 46. Experimental drawings on Snakes.

Weroka || Repeat



I depicted the interpretation of the movement of the snake's body. The way the body can shape perfect spaces that are introverted from one another that began to show signs of the possible gallery spaces through this one singular line. The method used to create this image was through the limitation of the human body. To draw the lines side by side but also following the run of the curve, the pencil had to leave the page to allow the angle to be adjusted. This created a break within the line, a pause like a ripple effect as the break of the line is seen throughout all but one. I started to question the 'uncomfortable' feeling when drawing these lines as an atmospheric condition, as the serpent is framed around this uncanny sense of fear, or move over the fear of anticipated movement, perhaps that is the affect within the two-dimensional and three-dimensional world that needs to be progressed further.

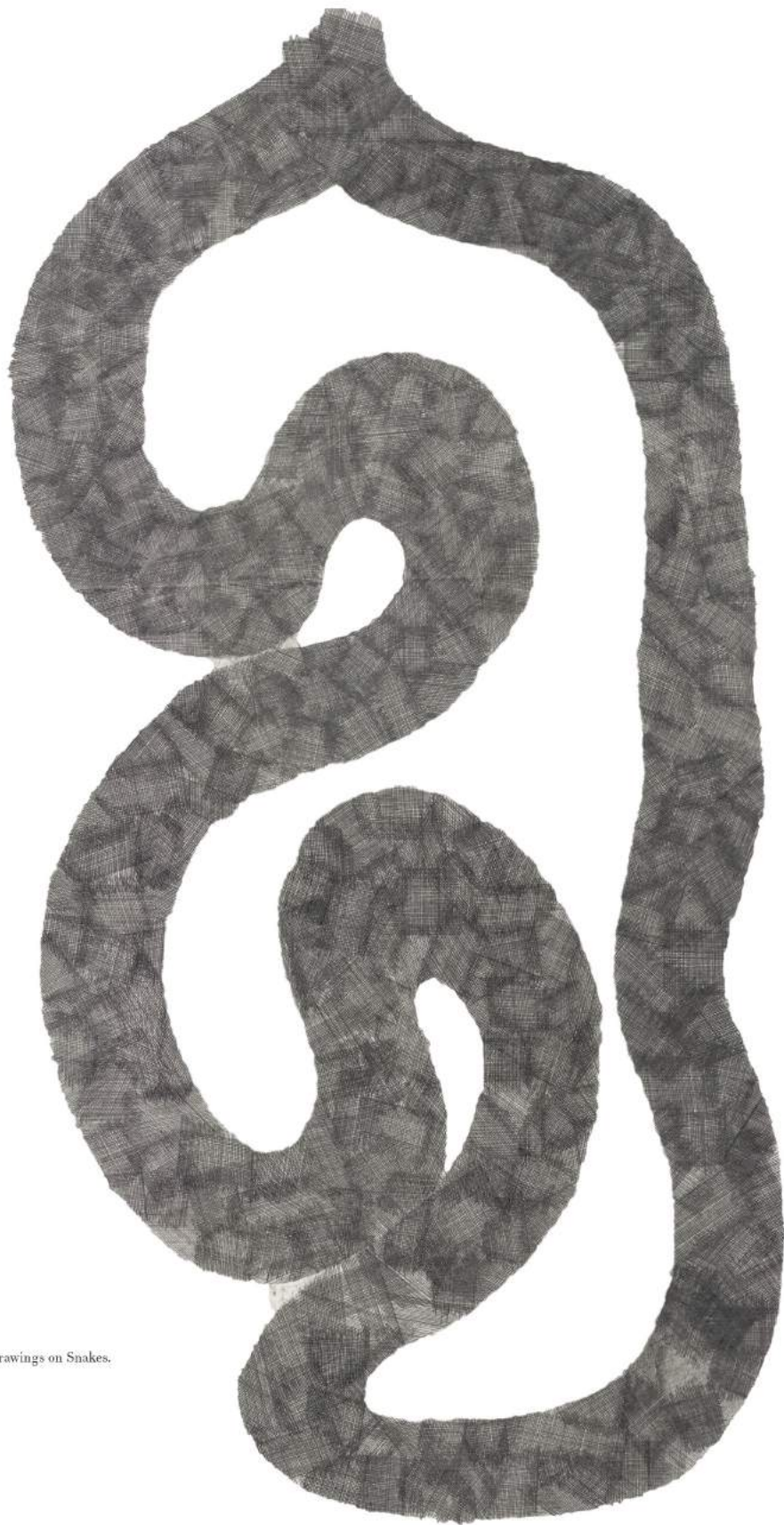


Fig 47. Experimental drawings on Snakes.

Sala ni Yalo || Spirit Path



Through Sala I was interested in manipulating the pathway of the audience through space, whether by artificial structures or the placement of artefacts. I began this exploration with the body of the serpent illustrated in plan view, this was drawn on top of the already pre-existing floor plan of the site, suggesting a continuous movement through each room. The technique used to create the surface of the snake was derived from my hatching pattern found in 'Wave' and Tokaitua. This drawing is an interesting because it does not remind me of a snake but of the rope that is used as a necklace to hold the whale's tooth called tabua. Most commonly found around the neck of a Fijian Chief the tabua rope is made from coconut fibers that are weaved together, it is the strongest rope in Fiji and an old practice that is still used to hold the mana of the whale's tooth. The pattern of the rope is weaved in a way that creates the impression of hatching on a larger scale, the woven material makes a square shape that is separated by a break of space before continuing to the next thread.

This was a useful process as it pulled me out of the building as I was becoming conflicted with the idea of doorways, which ones to keep or close off, limiting my design thinking to logical architectural approaches. Although at the time that was the thinking that was driving this image. The models produced from this artwork took on a different context and took me out of the building entirely. I stopped seeing it as a layout for a proposed floor plan an instead through Sala ni Yalo, I started viewing this image as a body of work through the curve layout, the fluidity of folding within a space. This becomes the aspect that I start to explore through modeling that I had not found in hand-drawn work.



Fig 48. Photo by K, Nalesu 2017.



Fig 49. Photo by K, Nalesu 2017.

Sui ni gata || Snake Bones



This model started to question the form of the snake. Made from modeling clay the structure is made from surfaces rather than a mass body. The surfaces are then manipulated to create interior caves made from the rise and fall of one of the surfaces. This was a new technique used to create the form of the snake, one that was surprisingly beneficial. Up till then I always viewed the serpent as a mass, a solid medium whose body was a literal representation. Through this model, I start to adapt my thinking to the notion that the serpent is made from layers and surfaces, much like my hatching these layers began to build 'something else'. The form of the shape was made in a curve layering three identical surfaces, stacking them upon each other. The third curve which was placed on top was an interpretation of motion creating the second snake, moving on top of the other two. I was very interested in the lip design the way the surface rose and fell creating spaces for the opportunity to explore, almost as secret caves. Within the spaces the atmospheric affects began to arise, the idea of Degei cave is seen within this model the creation of dark hidden caves creating the ability to conceal the 'other' that this project is addressing.



Fig 50. Photo by K, Nalesu 2017.



Fig 51. Photo by K, Nalesu 2017.



The linear element was to merge the idea of the curve that is soft, feminine, fluidity with the sharp linear planes, developing two languages to complete the other. The original way to view the model was with the surface lying flat against a platform, the bamboo protruding upwards. The bamboo was placed within the middle of the surface with the lip opening against the bamboo hinting that it is the beams that are holding the surface down. The beams when an audience looks through the space creates a screen that divided the exterior from the interior, masking one side from the other. For an exhibition, the model was suspended in mid-air upside down placing the beams downward. Through this adjustment, the model morphed again, instead of seeing beams that divided the space, the snake developed legs. Around the studies of the serpent it was suggested through archaeology and fossil research that snakes once did have legs, however as they had no use in aiding their movement over time evolution removed them. The reason I am keenly investigating the snake and how it moves is because within the Pacific cosmology the all-supreme-god whom rules over Fiji is the only serpent god that resides within the Pacific Island collection, a god that is still presently living on Viti Levu. Unlike all the other 'walking' giants with their two feet or more, the serpent has none. Through this model perhaps there is a chance to explore this idea of legs and walking, it is possible that Degei walked into the building instead of slithered. The model begins to develop the sense of mystery through secret hiding caves, screens that divide spaces and idea of movement through legs. It is interesting because that is what the deity of the serpent feeds upon, the unknown, the questioning of meaning.



Fig 52. Photo by K, Nalesu 2017.



Fig 53. Photo by K, Nalesu 2017.

Kani balei || Snake Skin



Kani Balei is an interpretation from the surface drawn work titled Tokaitua'. Made from netting material I created Kani Balei by layering pieces of material on top of each other. The structure was flexible and I could manipulate the form to any shape, however as the surface was not solid or had the elasticity to keep its shape the form would flatten once again to a surface if another force was not applied to it.

When creating Kani Balei, I was enthralled with how the mesh netting had the ability to take on the form of a snake just by a small detail. The texturing of the fabric was rough on one side, imagining the coarse scales would feel slightly rough. While flipping the surface over, it is smooth effect made from the use of PVA to merge the pieces together, this is what I imagine the belly of the snake to feel like; smooth, seamless and cool to the touch.

The intriguing part of the design was not the structure itself but the quality that was created by the structure. What I quickly realised from this model was the two-dimensional aspect, I could not visualise the encompassing space for people to occupy. In the process of making the snakeskin I would hold it up to the light to watch the shadows dance across the wall, it had a captivating presence that made the viewer want to be immersed within the shadow. I started to question the concept of shedding, how it enables a surface to be pulled away from another figure. I pasted Snake Skin to the wall, just the top area so the material blended into the surface, the bottom I attached a string that pulled the corner up securing it to the opposite wall. This created the idea that the skin was being pulled from the wall, creating a depth of a shadow where the skin had been ripped from the wall.



Fig 54. Photo by K, Nalesu 2017.



A shadow is a predator, it creeps in slow motion it is cunning. The shadow speaks of the time of day, it hides in the night waiting silently. It is a transition one that is permanent and temporary, disappearing but lingering in your mind's eye. It is a cloak that the tangible wears perfectly fitted to the body, it is the second face.

In the text "Exhibition as Atmosphere" Henry Urbach (2010) states it "is one thing when it is an object and quite another when it is an atmosphere" (p.11). Through the models we see them as objects, they are materials and surfaces it isn't until you lower your gaze that another object has appeared.

In an exhibition, the way I presented both Sui ni gata and Kani balei was with a suspension that was placed slightly above eye level. It was a strategic placement that invited the viewer to enter the space and view the model from up close, seeing the bottom and surround lips, however, not the foundation of the curve which the surface instrumentals were built upon. Without the plan perspective, the question hung in the air on whether the snake could be seen within the object, perhaps this was the unconsciously the desired effect I was proposing. The serpent is not seen in the object but rather in the atmospheric detailing in the shadow below, it floats in mid-air signaling a divine deity that is always seen above ground. Unlike Sui ni gata, Kani Balei produces a shadow environment meaning the shadow although articulated on the wall produces an interior much like the caves within Sui ni gata.



Fig 55. Photo by K, Nalesu 2017.



Evident within the shadow is the reflection of the sun, produced by the quality of light. Interesting that the shadow is the co-existence of light and dark, a relentless theme of contrasting cinematic of earth and air, snake and hawk.

The quality of the shadow I believe creates a ghostly presence, neither light or dark but see-through; an illusion. Shadows create the notion that something otherworldly resides within its depth, it is a mystery yet it can also be fearfulness which is the reason I call it a predator. When face to face with a snake you have an irrational fear that cannot be described as it why you have it, you watch them like a hawk any slight movement and you start to retreat. It is a game of cat and mouse, where there is a shadow, there is a body. What if the shadow had no body or was obscured from our vision? Would the atmosphere reflect the affect we have when in contact with a snake, I believe it would have the same predatory factor keeping our eyes on the unknown, a presence that has no face but is just a surface.

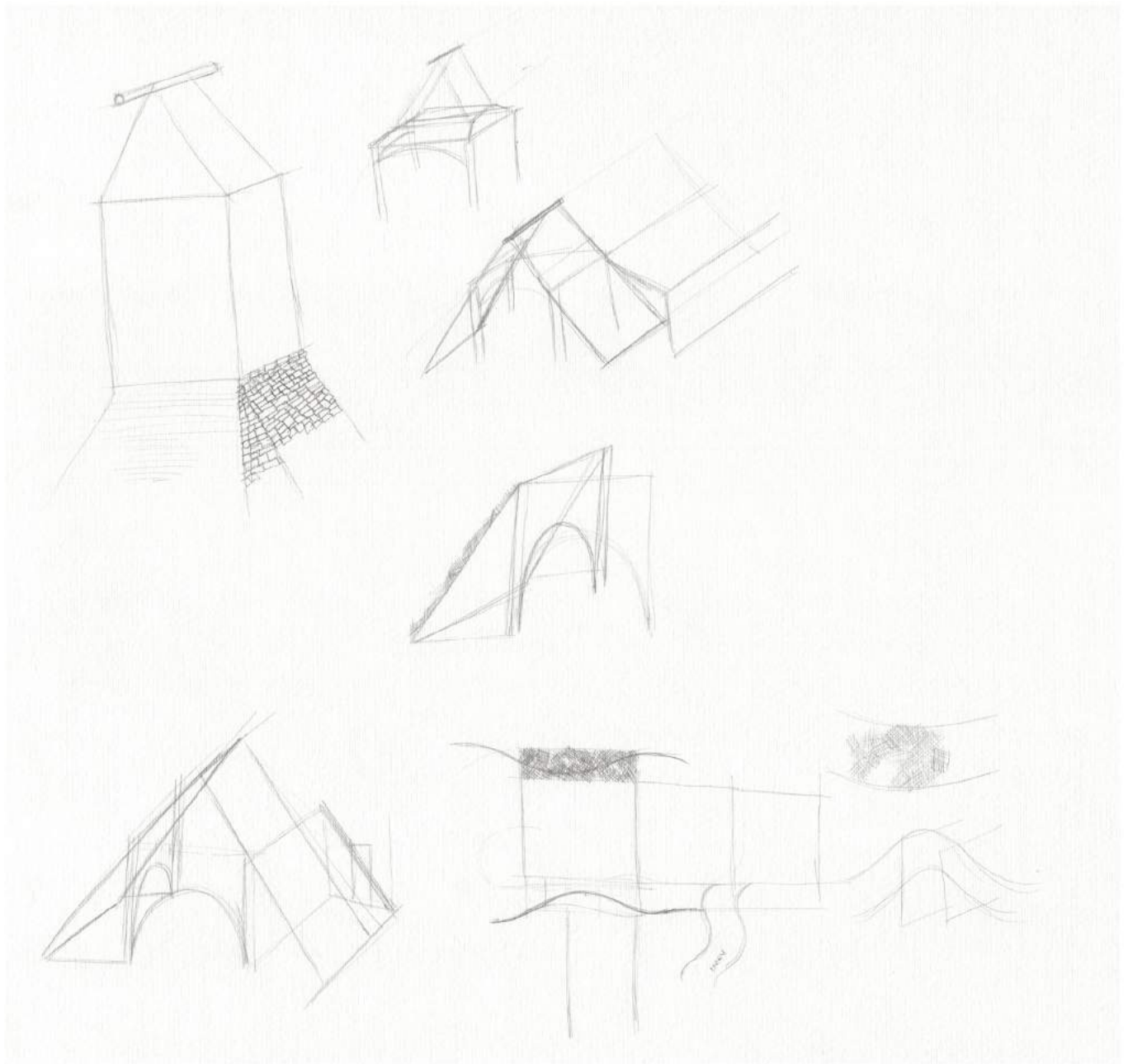



Fig 56 Bure Kalou Process work.

Bure kalou || Spirit House



The traditional architecture of Fiji is becoming less common in society, especially within highly developed areas. The bure which was seen in every village is now a distant memory of housing. When my family and I take trips to Fiji that aspect of the bure is never seen, even on my father's island in the Yasawas. The Western influence not only shifted the religious views but also the craftsmanship on their housing development. The roof structure in the Roko Tui House has been shaped flat with a slight tilt, within the middle of the roof running horizontally is a triangular point similar with the temple height. When first addressing the roof, the immediate thought was to abolish and recreate however through discussions I decided with the buildings historical value the exterior should stay the same and hide the secrets of the interior; like a cave. I was fascinated with the concept of the bure, the detailing in the thatched roof that flowed into the ground hiding the bones of the structure, the roof becoming a skin to a skeleton. With the pre-existing height of the roof I began exploring the bure within the bones of the Museum expanding the length to encompass three rooms thus becoming an open space used for; meeting, ceremonies, exhibitions and community affairs. I am investigating the way I design the roof within the space, the idea of the sides protruding downwards creating a pavilion, lowering the roof to creating the cave concept that I explored through the model Sui ni gata. Designing the entrance for the Bure Kalou is still under investigation, I am still intrigued by the lowered doorway which could easily be achieved by lowering the arches that structure the pre-existing center space. Bowing to the space is a slight manipulation to show respect to the building from all religious backgrounds. As this Museum is for the communities of Fiji I believe it is important that we have a bure on site as bure's are designed for the people, a place where we come all together to remember the importance of who we are.

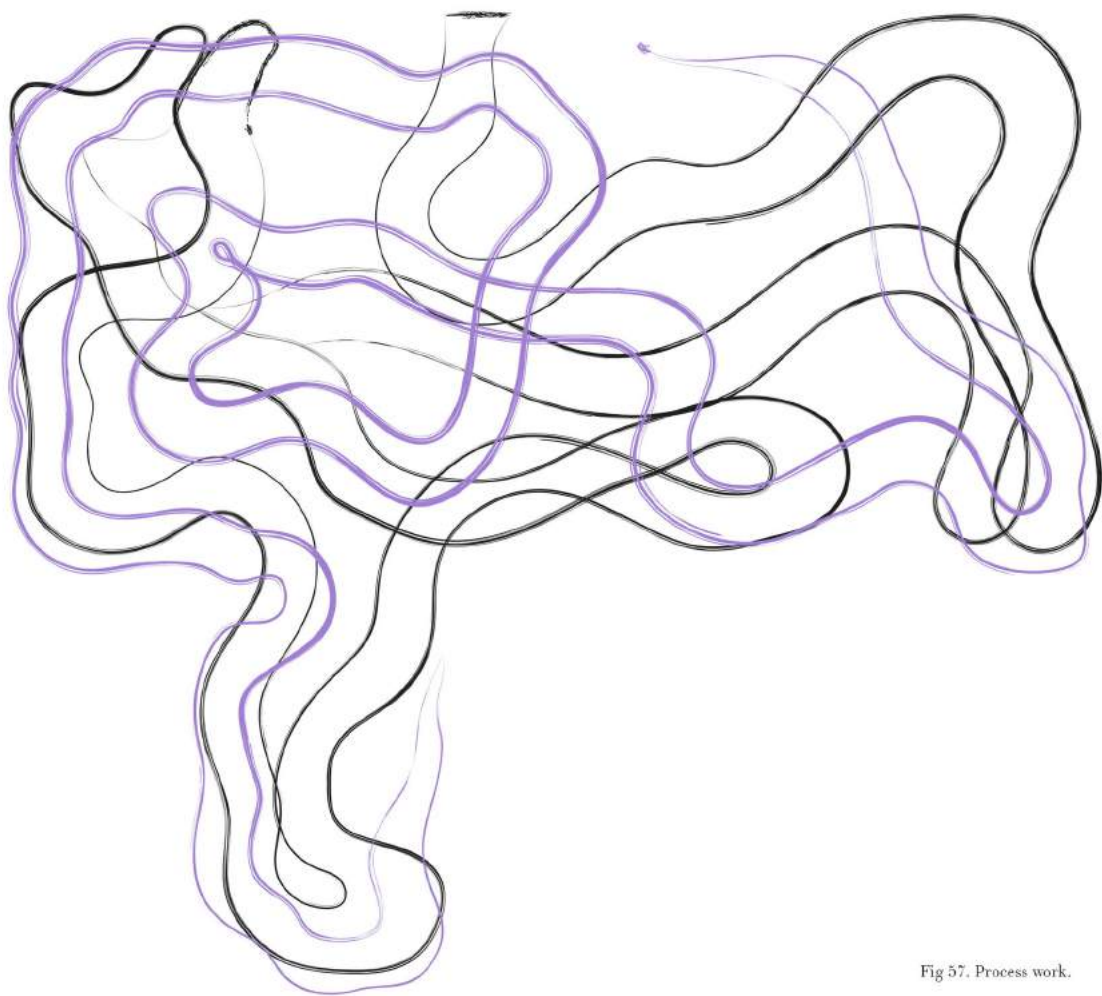


Fig 57. Process work.



Along with the design of Bure Kalou the inhabitant body of Degei the serpent needs to be weaved within the interior of the building. Expressing my interest in the folding characteristics of the snake's body I began investigating the notion of the body rising to the ceiling and curling underneath towards the earth, creating a layering effect from a plan view. The first image within Waqawaqa is two serpent figures that I have overlapped using Photoshop, I was questioning the certain aspects of the serpent; did I need to design the whole length of the snake? Which areas were interesting in the terms of movement and did the form establish the atmospheric condition of unease. When discussing the nature that the form of the serpent should take, I originally had the concept of Degei rising from the earth and inhabiting the interior of the building. However, prior to my change of thinking with making the interior secret from the exterior, I decided to view the building as the cave that cages Degei, imagining the great serpent uncomfortable with a home take does not burrow into the earth vertically but stretches horizontal with a platform that is raised off the land. Through this image I viewed Degei as constricted which was the desired effect although it did not inhabit the presence of unease within myself, I went back to the research of the serpent viewing images of the shape of Snakes, the way their body coils, the thickness in certain parts. I realised the reality of the serpent is not a perfectly shaped surface but concedes with a ridge that rises and falls in unpredictable areas. The thickness of the body also needed to be larger in scale, I envision Degei as a serpent that commands the attention and space, he is the deity that made Fiji acknowledging that this form is 'larger than life'. A power that is above humans.

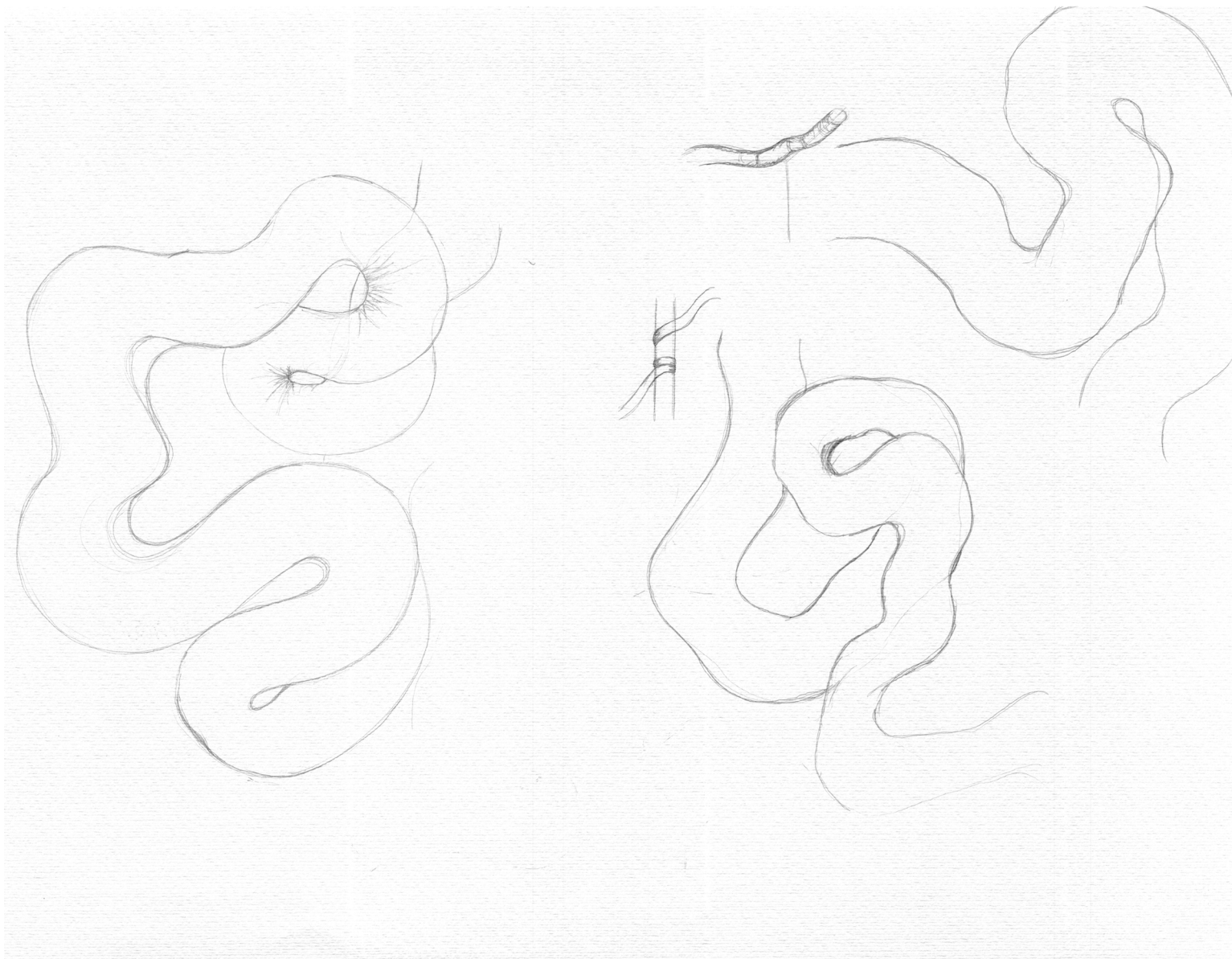


Fig 58. Process work.



I retreated to hand drawn work as the form of the snake was unresolved in the computer-generated work. Through the imaging research of the serpent, I illustrated the curve of the snake coiling itself in an imperfect surface. Designing the width thicker the form influenced the concept of required areas housing the figure of Degei. The fluidity of the body folding upon itself requires the use of two materialities, interested in the use of shadows and the affect it makes through atmospheres I envision the mass to flow above the public with the body coiling down to the floor using the bodywork of shadows to establish the figure of the snake. Another investigation would be the textured surface of hatching on the ground allowing the public to view the earth creating the sense of connection to the land.

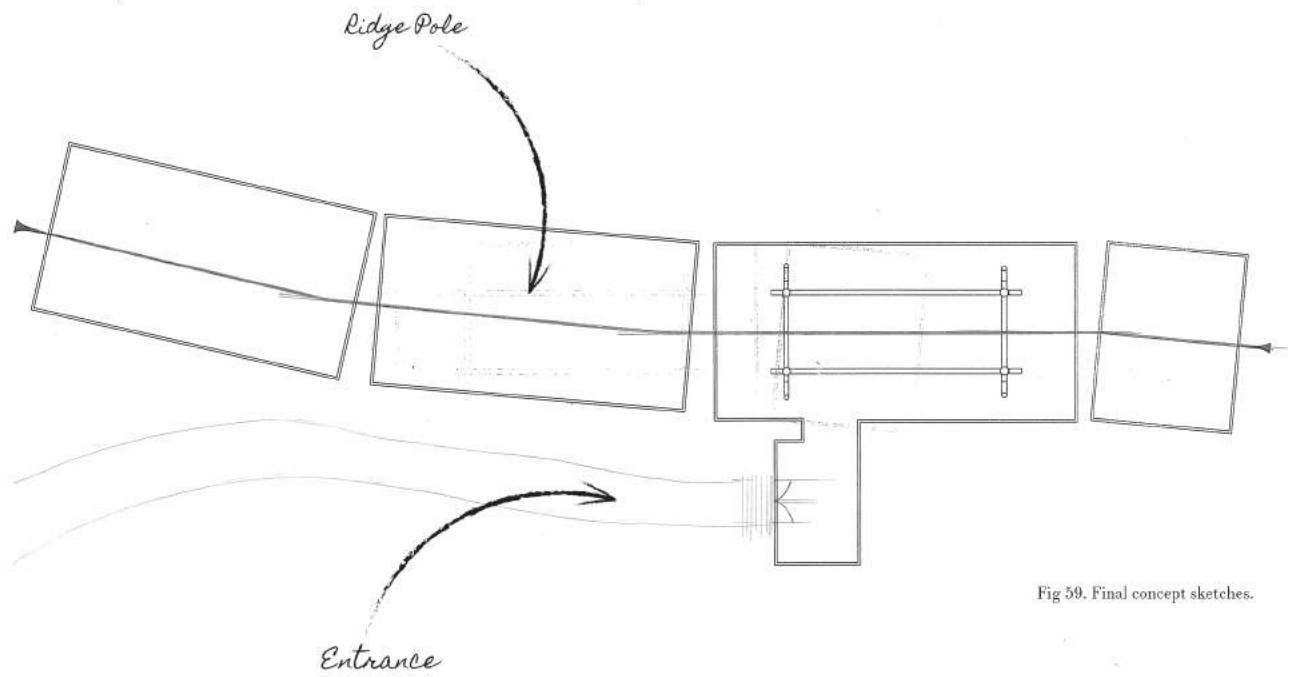


Fig 59. Final concept sketches.

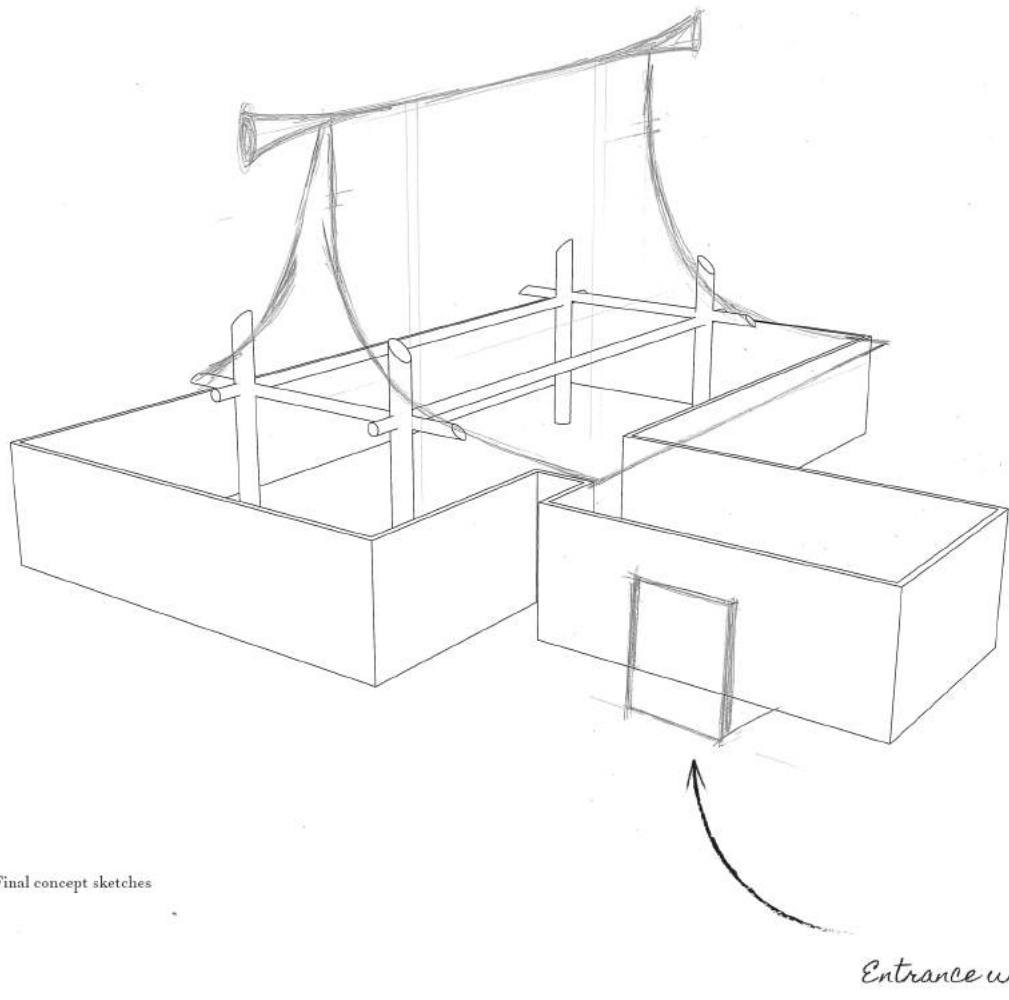



Fig 60. Final concept sketches


Proposed Design



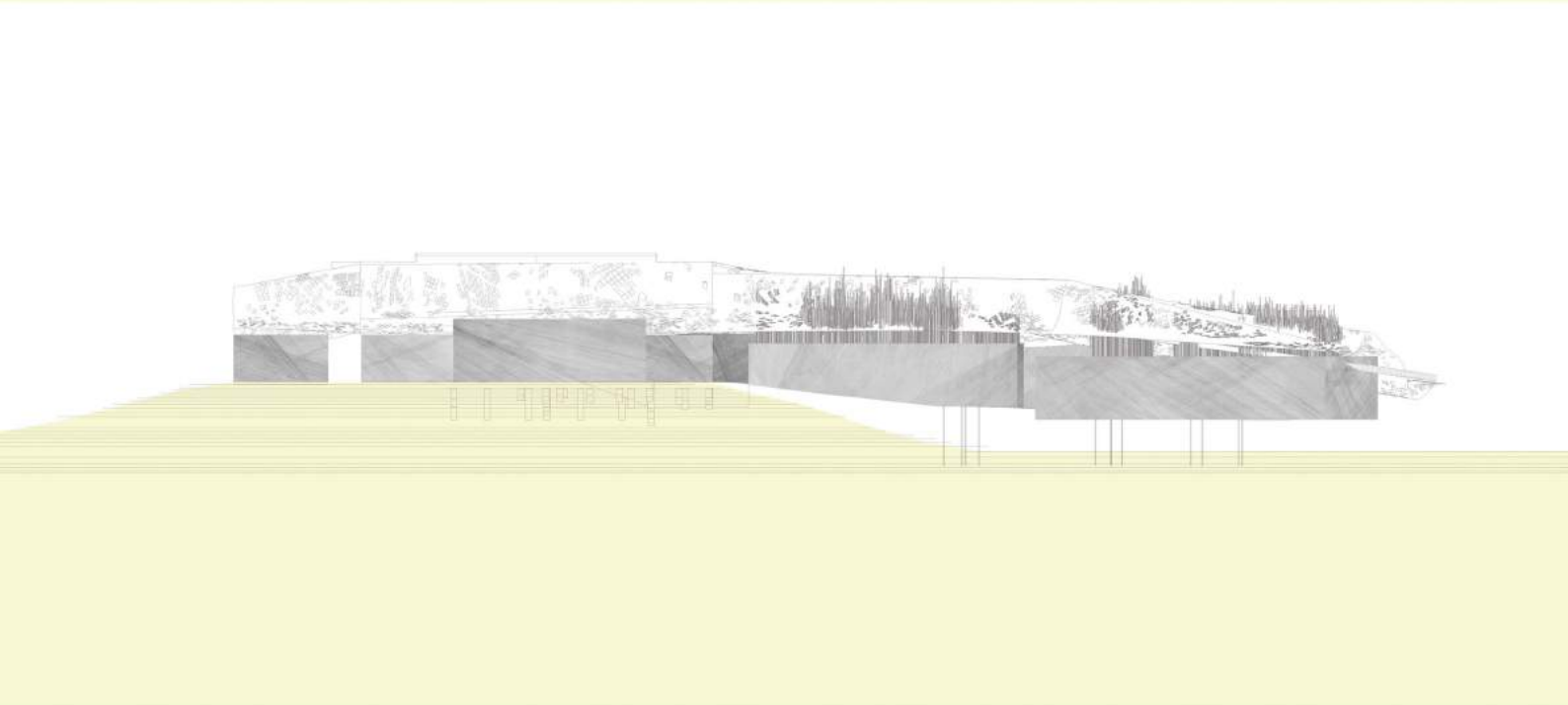
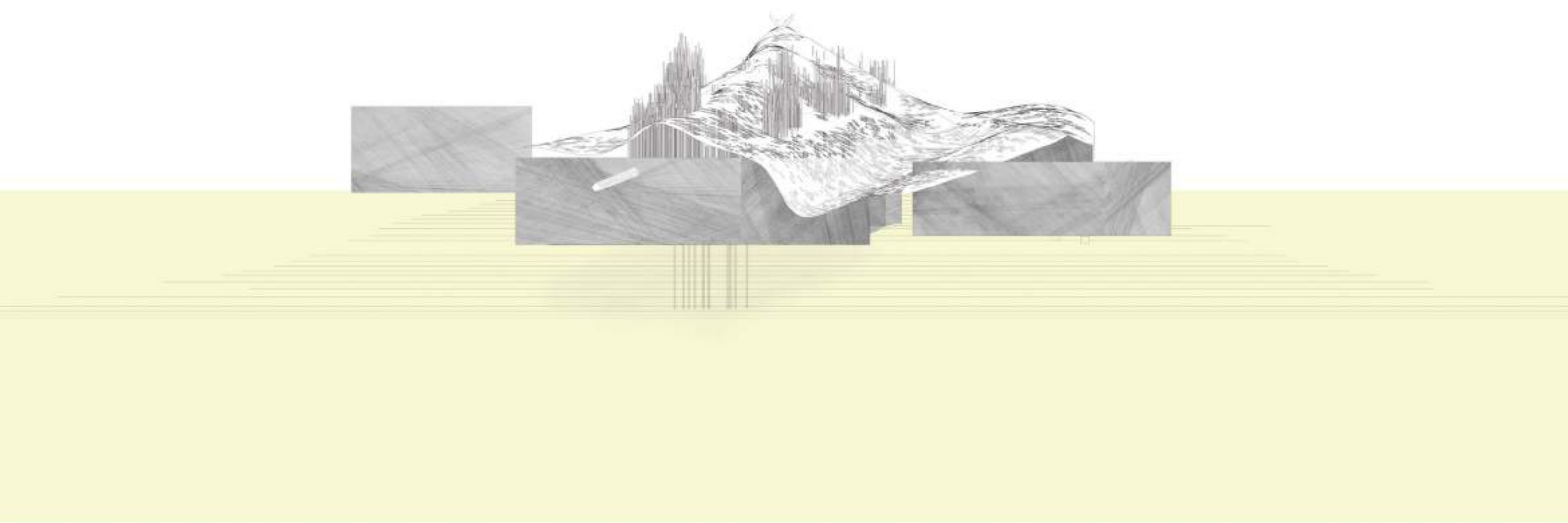
Heading towards my final design scheme I am continually working on concepts of the bure and how to place a traditional architecture into a colonial building. The entrance into the Museum I have strategically placed westward as that is the direction to the entrance Bulu, beginning the ordering of mythology through the threshold. Through the initial sketches, I believe the lowered entrance way is predominate in Pacific architecture including the ridge pole. The initial sketches show the placement of the door being lowered, this achieved through illusion by the placement of the framework on the architectural structure shifting downwards and cutting into the ground, acknowledging the connection between the vanua.

Currently investigating the entranceway whether the need for a break between the building and exterior entrance, creating a pause before you enter the space, thus separating the exterior and interior; Mana and Tapu. Currently, the concept for the floorplan is to build two new buildings in front of the existing Roko Tui house. These three buildings becoming exhibition galleries that house artefacts from the Ba province beginning with the Lapita collection found in the Yasawas. Within this museum I would like to install the same process currently being executed at the Auckland Museum; The Pacific Collection Access Project, inviting the community to speak about their culture and experiences. Inquiring new information that will involve the curators and community to represent our culture in a new and exciting way. Currently, the notion of how to house Degei within the Museum is still under investigation, whether the design embraces the form of the snake, parts of the snake or the materiality of the snake. The ideal movement of Degei I believe would be shown through subtle architectural structures; the fluidity of the curve. Through the sketched floorplan I have investigated the idea of the ridge pole that extends from the Bure Kalou protruding through all four buildings. The idea arose from the notion of the snake spine that connects the bones to the body. These initial concepts will be the on-going research practice that I will reflect and progress on within ordering mythology within an architectural framework. The advancement into the next stage will show signs of the initial thinking, as this is the drive forward into the final project.

Conclusion



The aim for this design is to express the importance of our heritage within our culture. To celebrate our different mythology of the serpent. Through this project work, the desire to showcase the Fijian culture has become a sense of pride. Allowing the Pacific community as well as the western identity to view who we are and what we have accomplished. The relation between architecture and mythology is evident through Pacific and Asia. Although it is a tradition that has become rare through this design practice I intend to re-establish the sense of identity through the deities once again in Fiji.



Final Design || Nov 2017

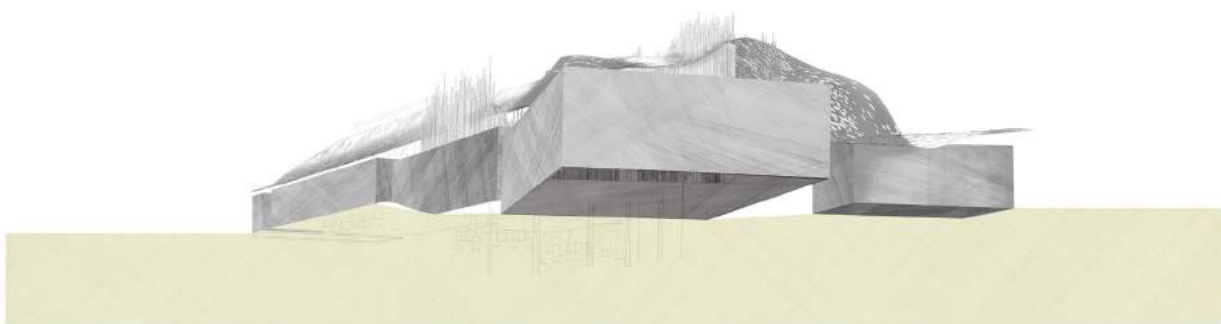
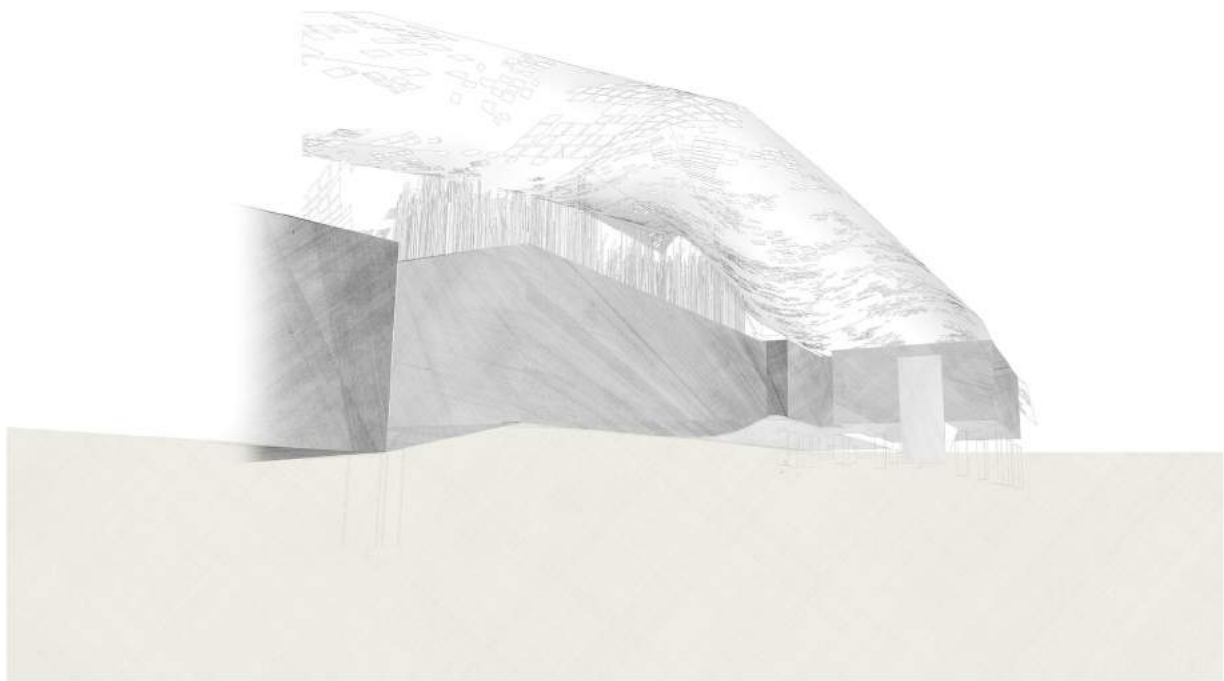


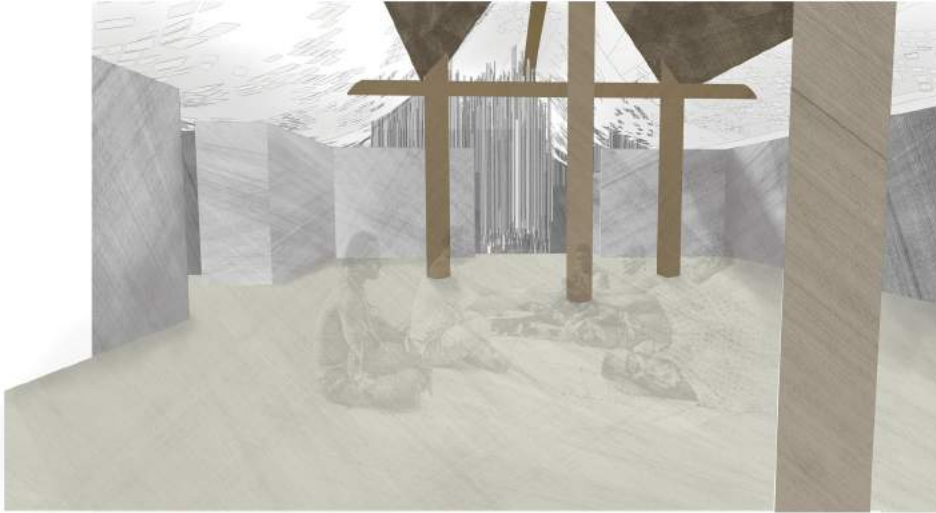
The final design incorporates the fluidity of the Serpent Degei and current structural architecture of the previous 1800 building [Roko Tui] sited in Lautoka.

The design of the roof was influenced by the skin of the snake, the ability to mould itself over another object. The roof folds over the ridge beams that follow the movement of the three galleries and floats above the walls. Thus, allowing the breath of Fiji to enter the space and allowing the Mana of the artefacts to release back into the sky and land.

The Museum galleries are open plan, this was designed so that the ancestors and deities may flow through the space without limitation. The main gallery space holds the Mana of the current site, I designed a modern-day Bure within the bones of the original architecture. This was a gesture of respect to the context of the site; the House of Chiefs. The boxed frames that house the artefacts are also influenced by the 1800 structure, straight and simple forms.

The exhibition space is created through the bones of the serpent, rising through the roof like a skeleton. The design not only embodies the beauty and fluidity of the snake through the representation of the roof but also the complexity in the detail of the light wells [Roof] and skeleton beams.





Where Nā Kua - The House of Knowledge Gallery Perspective



8

For Kūmānā - Things to Keep Gallery Perspective

References

Auckland Museum. (2016). Retrieved October, 2017, from <http://www.auckland-museum.com/collections-research/research/research-projects/pacific-collection-access-project>

Barker, A. (2010). Exhibiting Archaeology: Archaeology and Museums. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 39, 293-308. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25735113>

Cumming, G. (1883). *At Home in Fiji*. New York, United States: A. C. Armstrong

Cunningham, C. (1964). Order in the Atoni house. *Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences of Southeast Asia*, 120, 34-68. Retrieved from <http://www.kitlv-journals.nl>

Fison, L. (1904). *Tales of Old Fiji*. London, England: Hanson & Co.

Frothingham, A. L. (1916). Babylonian Origin of Hermes the Snake_God, and of the Caduceus I. *American Journal of Archaeology*, 20, 175-211. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/497115>

Gatty, R. (2009). *Fijian-English Dictionary: with notes on Fijian culture and natural history*. Suva, Fiji: USP Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data.

Hocart, A. M. (1912). On the Meaning of Kalou and the Origin of Fijian Temples. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*, 42, 437-449. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2843196>

Ladefoged, T. (1998). Spatial Similarities and Change in Hawaiian Architecture: The Expression of Ritual Offering and Kapu in Luakini Heiau: Residential Complexes, and Houses. *University of Hawai'i Press*, 37, 59-73. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/42928421>

Morris, M. (2013). Two Hundred and Eighty-Eight Lines. *Anyone Corporation*, 27, 128-136. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41765791>

Nalesu, K. (2016). *The Wisdom Tree: Fijian Mythology Cosmogram*. Auckland, New Zealand: Auckland University of Technology.

References

- 
- Parker, A. (1934). The History Museum – An Opportunity. *New York State Historical Association*, 15, 326-331. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23134640>
- Pearson, M., Richards, C. (1994). *Architecture and Order: Approaches to Social Space*. London, England: Routledge
- Reed, A., Hames, I. (1967). *Myths and Legends of Fiji and Rotuma*. Wellington, New Zealand: Penguin Group
- Refiti, A. (2014). *Mavae and Tofiga – Spatial Exposition of the Samoan Cosmogony and Architecture*. Auckland, New Zealand: Auckland University of Technology.
- Shirres, M. (1982). TAPU. *The Polynesian Society*, 91, 29-51. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20705620>
- Teyssot, G. (2008a). Mapping the Threshold: “A Theory of Design and Interface”. *Architectural Association School of Architecture*, 57, 3-12. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/29544683>
- Teyssot, G. (2008b). Aldo van Eyck’s Threshold: The Story of an Idea. *Anyone Corporation*, 11, 33 - 48. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41765182>
- Thomson, B. (1892). The Land of Our Origin: (Viti, or Fiji). *The Polynesian Society*, 1, 143-146. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20701249>
- Urbach, H. (2010). Exhibition as Atmosphere. *Anyone Corporation*, 20, 11-17. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41765361>
- Vunidilo, T. (n.d). Retrieved October 2017, from <http://www.thecoconet.tv/cocoblog/reviving-fijis-traditional-architecture/>
- Wake, S. (1873). The Origin of Serpent-Worship. *Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2841458>
- Williams, T. (1982). *Fiji and The Fijians: The Islands and their Inhabitants*. Suva, Fiji: Fiji Museum

Image References

- Fig 1. Unknown [Photograph] collected by Auckland Museum. Taken with personal camera, K. Nalesu. 2017
- Fig 2. Suva Fiji Temple. Retrieved from <https://www.lds.org/temples/details/suva-fiji-temple>
- Fig 3. Experimental drawings on Snakes [Scan] K, Nalesu 2017
- Fig 4. Experimental drawings on Snakes [Scan] K, Nalesu 2017
- Fig 5. Experimental drawings on Snakes [Scan] K, Nalesu 2017
- Fig 6. Experimental drawings on Snakes [Scan] K, Nalesu 2017
- Fig 7. K, Nalesu [Photograph] Taken with personal camera: Manipulated with software, 2017
- Fig 8. K, Nalesu [Photograph] Taken with personal camera: Manipulated with software, 2017
- Fig 9. Ridge Map [Process Work] K, Nalesu 2017
- Fig 10. K, Nalesu [Photograph] Taken with personal camera: Manipulated with software, 2017
- Fig 11. The Wisdom Tree Cosmogram [Scan] K, Nalesu 2016
- Fig 12. The Vesi Tree: Process Work. [Scan] K, Nalesu 2017
- Fig 13. Medusa (1603) Bernini, Marble. Retrieved from [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Medusa_Bernini_Marble_1630_Musei_Capitolini_\(10592680625\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Medusa_Bernini_Marble_1630_Musei_Capitolini_(10592680625).jpg). 2017
- Fig 14. Hermes Rod. Retrieved from <http://www.istockphoto.com/nz/vector/caduceus-symbol-of-god-mercury-illustration-gm498095492-79472735>. 2017
- Fig 15. K, Nalesu [Photograph] Taken with personal camera, 2017
- Fig 16. K, Nalesu [Photograph] Taken with personal camera, 2017
- Fig 17. K, Nalesu [Photograph] Taken with personal camera, 2017
- Fig 18. K, Nalesu [Photograph] Taken with personal camera, 2017
- Fig 19. Threshold drawing: Process Work [Scan] K, Nalesu 2017
- Fig 20. Sketch from Thomas Williams (1982) p. 80
- Fig 21. Photograph] taken by Unknown. Retrieved from <http://www.thecoconet.tv/cocoblog/reviving-fijis-traditional-architecture/> 2017
- Fig 22. [Photograph] taken by Unknown. Retrieved from <http://www.thecoconet.tv/cocoblog/reviving-fijis-traditional-architecture/> 2017
- Fig 23. Sketch from Ladefoged, T (1998) p. 66
- Fig 24. Sketch from Ladefoged, T (1998) p. 61
- Fig 25. K, Nalesu [Photograph] Taken with personal camera: Manipulated with software, 2017
- Fig 26. K, Nalesu [Photograph] Taken with personal camera: Manipulated with software, 2017
- Fig 27. K, Nalesu [Photograph] Taken with personal camera: Manipulated with software, 2017
- Fig 28. K, Nalesu [Photograph] Taken with personal camera: Manipulated with software, 2017
- Fig 29. K, Nalesu [Photograph] Taken with personal camera: Manipulated with software, 2017
- Fig 30. K, Nalesu [Photograph] Taken with personal camera: Manipulated with software, 2017
- Fig 31. Provincial Map of Fiji [Map] Retrieved from <http://asiapacific.anu.edu.au/mapson-line/base-maps/viti-levu-and-vanua-levu>, 2017
- Fig 32. Site Map [Process Work] K, Nalesu 2017



Fig 33.	K, Nalesu [Photograph] Taken with personal camera, 2017
Fig 34.	K, Nalesu [Photograph] Taken with personal camera, 2017
Fig 35.	K, Nalesu [Photograph] Taken with personal camera, 2017
Fig 36.	K, Nalesu [Photograph] Taken with personal camera, 2017
Fig 37.	Site Analysis [Scan] K, Nalesu 2017.
Fig 38.	Hawaiian Cosmogram [Scan] K, Nalesu 2016
Fig 39.	Tongan Cosmogram [Scan] K, Nalesu 2016
Fig 40	Collection of cosmos [Scan] K, Nalesu 2017
Fig 41.	Collection of cosmos [Scan] K, Nalesu 2017
Fig 42.	Process Work [Scan] K, Nalesu 2017
Fig 43.	K, Nalesu [Photograph] Taken with personal camera, 2017
Fig 44.	K, Nalesu [Photograph] Taken with personal camera, 2017
Fig 45.	Experimental drawings on Snakes [Scan] K, Nalesu 2017
Fig 46.	Experimental drawings on Snakes [Scan] K, Nalesu 2017
Fig 47.	Experimental drawings on Snakes [Scan] K, Nalesu 2017
Fig 48.	K, Nalesu [Photograph] Taken with personal camera, 2017
Fig 49.	K, Nalesu [Photograph] Taken with personal camera, 2017
Fig 50.	K, Nalesu [Photograph] Taken with personal camera, 2017
Fig 51.	K, Nalesu [Photograph] Taken with personal camera, 2017
Fig 52.	K, Nalesu [Photograph] Taken with personal camera, 2017
Fig 53.	K, Nalesu [Photograph] Taken with personal camera, 2017
Fig 54.	K, Nalesu [Photograph] Taken with personal camera, 2017
Fig 55.	K, Nalesu [Photograph] Taken with personal camera, 2017
Fig 56.	Bure Kalou Process work [Scan] K, Nalesu 2017
Fig 57.	Process work [Scan] K, Nalesu 2017
Fig 58.	Process work [Scan] K, Nalesu 2017
Fig 59.	Final concept sketches [Scan] K, Nalesu 2017
Fig 60.	Final concept sketches [Scan] K, Nalesu 2017

