

*Faito'o Fakatonga: The visual practice of traditional  
medicine making and healing practices from Tonga  
to Aotearoa*

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## **Attestation of Authorship**

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge, 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 accepted for the award of another degree or diploma or a university or institution of higher learning.

Signed

5<sup>th</sup> October 2016

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## Abstract

This project is a moving image art project using the concept of *Veitalatala* (poetic documentary) (as defined by Talita Toluta'u (2014)) that will explore *faito'o* (traditional medicine) and *kau faito'o* (native doctors), the practice of medicine making and healing practices from the Pacific to Aotearoa<sup>1</sup>. This project will focus on telling stories of the Tongan matrilineal history of *faito'o*, the passing on of knowledge and how this is maintained today. I am a first generation New Zealand born Tongan living in Aotearoa. I will first explore the medicinal plants and their cultivation, how they are used and made into medicines in the country of origin, Tonga, then explore the new and different plants that are used by the *kau faito'o* in Aotearoa. This project focuses on traditional medicine making and healing practice from the Pacific to Aotearoa by exploring the hands of expert medicine makers and how processes of making are repeated, with bodily tacit knowledge. This research has developed into an interest in how practices are culturally maintained across generations in the Pacific. The time it takes to make medicine from plants and the patience of the maker are explored poetically through duration and extended footage. Narratives of making and of plant knowledge in particular are the focus of this project.

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<sup>1</sup> Aotearoa is the Maori name for New Zealand

# HISITOLIA NOUNOU I' E KELEKELE O E KAMA

## (THE SHORT HISTORY OF THE LAND)

*My mum gave me a Tongan newspaper to read that outlined the history of Kama. This history says that a Samoan chief named Ama lele, who is my 6<sup>th</sup> great grandfather, travelled to Tonga with his daughter Tohu'ia to marry the 6<sup>th</sup> King Tu'iHa'atakalaua. This was the beginning of the connection between Tonga and Samoa. Tu'iHa'atakalaua told Ama to walk, wherever he stopped this will be his kelekele (land), Ama walked along Ma'ufanga; Tu'iHa'atakalaua gifted this land to him.*

*Ama had a son named Ha'amonga, he inherited the land from Ama; Ha'amonga was asked by a Catholic Priest Fr Kalino who was sent by faka'fanua (the Noble in Ma'ufanga), if they could kindly give them some land to build a church as the Catholic priest was told by faka'fanua that Ha'amonga had plenty of land. Ha'amonga, who then had a son named Felise with Litia the daughter of Kalisitiane Tutoe. Felise was next in line to inherit the land and he gifted more land to the church to build a school, this school is called Api Fo'ou College, St Johns High School. Felise then had a son named Taniela who with his wife Vai moana had my grandfather, Papa Titie Vakauta Kakala Lolo Mana'ia Kama. My Papa Titie married my beautiful Nana Talia Tufui Melekiola Kama from Lapaha. My mum Malia Telesia Kama sits with me outside my Papa's land that was gifted to my fore fathers from Tu'iHa'atakalaua and tells me about the history of my family; this has led me to how my Nana moved to Ma'ufanga, where she grew her own medicinal garden for the next generation of Kamas*

ia kua Tupou 'Uluaki. Ko  
Sernisi Fifita na'e ta'ane  
ia mo Mano 'o-Kotone  
'ofefine 'o e Tu'itonga  
ko Laufilitonga pea kua  
'uhunga ia ne Katolika ai 'a  
e famili Kama.

Ko Ma'ufanga ko e  
feitu'u tapuhā mo toputapu  
'aupito ia 'i Tonga be kuohili  
koe'uli ko e hifo'anga ia 'o  
e 'Otuamu'a ko Tangaloa  
mo e 'alo'i'anga ia 'o  
'Aho'eitu, ko e 'uluaki Tu'i  
Tonga pea ko e tupu'anga  
mo e telio'anga foki ia 'o  
e hou'eiki lafahi 'o e fonua  
be kuonga mu'a.

Na'e fili 'e 'he 'uluaki  
Kama 'a Ma'ufanga kene  
nofo'i mo hoko ko hono  
kelekele he na'e ilifia'i  
'e he hou'eiki 'o Tonga  
'a Ma'ufanga ko 'ene  
toputapu nai ke nau ti'u  
noa 'ia kiai. Ko e 'uhinga 'o  
e lea Ma'ufanga ko e fanga  
hifanga'ua. Ko ha feitu'u  
ne lava ke hola 'o kumi  
hufanga kiai ha talu pe, pe  
ha kakai kuo fakacauha'i  
kimaotui pe ilifia ki he'ensau  
mo'ui koe 'ahi ko ha  
moueuvu pe ha tau.

Ko e Vakataurua na'e  
 'uhunga pe ia ki he tau  
 ma'e na'ngahi vaka kumi  
 'uhunga ki Ma'ufunga mo  
 ia tate hekeheke 'o Tonga  
 ni. Ko e konga labi 'o  
 fefono'anga he kuo'ahi  
 ki Tongatapu rui Hahake  
 ki Hihifo pe Vae loto mo  
 lahi loto ngue'aki 'a tau.  
 Na'e 'a pe ki 'Ukualaka  
 mo e kau to'a lalahi he  
 ngahi mala'e tau 'i ka  
 feitu'a pe 'i Tonga ni, ko  
 e kokalope pe 'enua ka  
 tau'a he tau ko 'enua finge  
 ki tahi 'o kumi ha vaka 'o  
 heila ki Ma'ufunga he vave  
 taha. Ka 'iloange kuo fii  
 taha finge'oto 'i Ma'ufunga  
 na'e pau ke manavale mo  
 manava'a 'e ka Yona.

*Ko e kau ta'ahine taupo'ou na'a nau kau he ma'u metali*

'Oku hala 'a e husitolia  
'a e Kolisi 'Apifo'u 'o  
pehē na'e 'uluaki fokotu'u  
'a e ako Katolika 'i  
'Ahopanikolo 'i Ma'ufanga  
he na'e 'i ai pe 'a 'i ako  
Katolika ia na'e fokotu'u  
'e he kau Pātele Falanisē  
'i Pea ka 'i he hili hono  
haveli 'e Tupou 'Uluaki 'a  
'e Kolotau 'o Pea 'i 1852,  
na'e feholaiki 'a e kau Pātele  
Falanisē pea na'e kau 'a  
Ma'ufanga he feitu'u na'a  
nanu hola ki ai. Ko e hā na'i

e 'uhinga ne fokotu'u ai 'a'e  
lotu Katolika 'i Ma'ufanga  
mo hono foaki 'e Kama  
Ha'monga 'a e kekeleki  
ki he Siasi Katolika hili ki  
ia 'oku ki'i mama'o atu 'a  
Pea ka 'oku lau miniti pe  
'a e lue me Ma'ufanga ki  
he 'Afio'anga 'o Tupou  
'Uluaki. Mahalo pe ne 'ai  
hu fika'apa'apa makehe 'a  
Tupou 'Uluaki ka Kama  
ko e 'uhi ko hono tu'unga  
fakaetaimai ki he Fale 'e  
Ma'a Moheho pe ko e kei  
ma'u pe 'e Tupou 'Uluaki  
'a e marmalu mo e lifia  
nai ki he toputapu nai 'a  
e kekeleki 'o Ma'ufanga  
kene houhau ki he fokotu'u  
'a e katolika ai.

Na'e toe 'i ai foki 'a  
e felave'i vaofi 'aupito  
fakata'ata'a 'a Kama mo e  
Fale 'o e Tu'i (hufunga he  
fakatapu) 'o makehe mei he  
tupu'anga 'o Ha'amoheofo.  
Ne kaunga nai 'eni ki hono

malava ke fokotu'u 'a e  
lotu mo e ako Katolika  
i 'Ma'ufanga? Ko Felise  
Kama 'a e na'a ne foaki  
'a e kekeleke 'a e Kolisi  
'Apifo'u, ko 'ene fa'ē  
Litta, ko e tamai 'a Litta ko  
Kalisitiane Tutoe, tehinā  
si'si'i 'o Tu'i'anga  
Liufau. Na'e to'e mali 'a  
Liufau mo e fehuhu 'a  
Tupou 'Uluaki 'a Tanfa  
Haumofaleono. Ka ko  
Kalisitiane Tutoe, tamai 'a  
fa'ē 'a Felise Kama na'e  
to'e mali ia mo Mele Moala  
ma'i Kolomotu 'a ko e  
fehuhu 'a Ma'afu 'a e na'a  
ne tau'i 'a Fisi ko e 'alo  
'o e Tu'i Kaniokupolu ko  
Aleamotu'a. Ko Kalisitiane  
Tutoe ai pe na'e to'e mali  
ia mo 'Ema Lavaka ko e  
'offeeine 'o Tupouto'a pea  
ko e tuoffeeine 'o Tupou  
'Uluaki 'o ma'u ai 'a Semisi  
Fifita. Ko e fa'ētangata lava  
'a Felise Kama ko e fa'ē

En'n'z Icyha I. Yukie

Palamā Saman Vajpulo  
pca mo c Tāfēkaulati 'a  
Na'mali' His Excellency De

na'e kakato e ngane koena  
 'i he 'aho pe 'e 57.

ai homo maketi'i e ngaahi  
feitu'u e ala lava atu ki ai

fe'unga mo e kau folau  
'eve'eva' pea mo hono  
fakahoko foki 'a e ngaahi  
fakatotofo fekau'aki mo e  
takimamata fakahikufua.  
Pea 'i he malumalu  
'o e polokalania tatuu pe-  
'oku to e tokoni 'i foki 'e he  
Pule'anga.Nu'usila'aki'enua  
fakapa'anga hono to e va'aki  
'o e Lao ki he Takimamata

polokalama kuo'osi 'ilo'i  
ko e Takimamata 'a e taha  
'o e ngaahi sekiton 'e peisi  
mei ai e luga fakalakalaka  
faka'ekonomika 'a e  
Pule'anga Tonga.

"Pea 'i he'ene pehe' ko  
e taumu'a ia 'a e Pule'anga  
Nu'usila' kena hoangane  
mo e Pule'anga Tonga'  
pea pehe ki he kakai 'o e

Ko Hisitolia nounou l'e Kelekele oe Kama, 2012  
Learning the history of the land of my mothers upbringing  
Printed copy of the Tongan newspaper



Kalevalio - 2012

Fig.2  
Hisitolia nounou l'e kelekele oe Kama, 2012  
Pamphlet made by the church of the history of the land of my mother.  
Printed copy of the pamphlet





Fig.3  
Taniela mo Vai'moana Kama, 2016  
*My mother's grandparents, my grandfather Tities parents*  
*Printed photograph*



Fig.4  
My grandparents, Talia mo Titie Kama, 2016  
Image taken in their garden of Ma'ufanga  
Printed photograph

## INTRODUCTION

Faito'o fakatonga is the Tongan term for traditional Tongan medicine that is practiced by kau faito'o (traditional Tongan healers or native doctors). It is a knowledge-based practice, and forms part of the main focus for this project. These practices and the knowledge connected with them have been passed down through my matrilineal lineage from one generation to the next. My mother has practiced faito'o fakatonga since my earliest memories; growing up we received a daily morning dose of either boiled or pounded raw medicinal plants and tubers in a shot glass before we got up and got ready for school. This was part of my routine growing up in a Tongan household on New Zealand soil. My mother would select specific faito'o for specific days; this was also dependent on what medicinal plants, tubers, leaves, fruits and vegetables my mother could get, or if any of us children needed a specific faito'o then that would be the faito'o for the day. Some days we would get garlic juice, another day we would get kihikihi a faito'o made from pounded oxalis or Mum's vai haka made up of Artemisia, Solanumuporo (Polo Tonga/Polo fifisi), Aloe Vera and lemon juice. On rare occasions, if someone was coming back from Tonga, she would serve up Angoango juice made from pounded Zingiber Zerumbet, the same family tree as ginger, but this is bitter and has an earthier taste than ginger.

Accordingly, my project explores the importance of faito'o fakatonga for a New Zealand born Pasifika<sup>2</sup>, along with the importance faito'o carries, via the passing on of traditions, values, culture, family, history, ofa (love) and faka'apa'apa (respect) for the living and the dead. This exegesis will explore how faito'o is an important part of history that keeps memories alive by bringing the past forward into the present so it can be remembered not forgotten. This exegesis will also explore why it was important for me to visit Tonga for the first time, as well as my newfound appreciation for why my parents decided to migrate to New Zealand. This project will explore the writing of Tongan theorist Okusitino Mahina who wrote, *"TA, VA and Moana: Temporality, Spatiality and Indigeneity"*. I will look closely into one of his chapters titled: *Art as Genealogy of times and space*. Through this chapter I will explore the spatiotemporal concepts that exists

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<sup>2</sup> Pasifika, Pasifika is spelt using the Tongan alphabet.

through the matrilineal line of faito'o. As art is an important part of the Tongan culture, Okusitino has stated that Tongan art is divided into three different categories, (Performance Faiva), (Material tufunga) and (fine arts nimamea'a) (Mahina, 2010) Within the three categories of art, it has become vivid that <sup>3</sup>TA and VA are identified and the idea of outside of body and the body itself become divided between the three genres. This project will also explore the writing of Professor Epeli Hau Ofa, whose essay is titled; 'Our seas of Island'. Through Epelis' essay he writes about two levels of operation, national governments, and regional and international diplomacy. Epeli writes that the views and actions regarding Oceania made by the Europeans were distasteful and derogatory towards the indigenous culture. (hau'ofa 1973, p149) There was disapproval from the Christian missionaries who regarded the indigenous people as savages, wild and lascivious; these ideas and labelling are still instilled into my view about my ancestors today. My ancestors were knowledgeable and experienced people, they were navigators who explored and discovered remote Islands, it is believed that the people of Oceania were the first people to discover and set foot in the North and South of America before Christopher Columbus. My ancestors discovered how to cure themselves, locating medicinal plants wherever they travelled, they were smart, wise and were geniuses that I did not learn about in my schooling. This research will also employ indigenous scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith's book, *"Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous People"*. Through Smith's book, I have come to understand how writing, history and theory are of critical concern when rewriting the past, because traditional Tongan medicine has been rewritten or has been modernized through practice. Traditionally the history of indigenous medicine and culture has been documented and written by Europeans. I will lastly discuss the ideas around my practice, which focuses on a collection of moving images and letter writing. Through filming myself for my artwork and writing letters that are personal, I have been able to build the courage to do performances, which give viewers a sense of being and belonging to these complexities of experience. The significance of this personal journey of practice based

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<sup>3</sup> TA and VA is the old Tongan term for time and Space. Tongan theorist Okusitino's theory of TA – VA enters all grounds of inquest within nature mind and society. The term TA, Mahina has described this as the action of making or becoming more intense while VA is seen as a space to return to. Through art, TA and VA is a constructed continuously of chaos, yet it is controlled by beauty and harmony (Massey University 2008).



research has helped me understand the importance of my history and how faito'o fakatonga will help me learn more about my ancestors, my grandmother, my grandfathers, and more importantly my mother, who is my gateway to learning about faito'o.



Fig.5  
Untitled, 2016  
Mums main ingredient for her Vai haka (medicinal drink)  
Vai haka (medicinal drink)



Fig.6  
Untitled, 2016  
Kihikihi, medicinal Oxalis plant. Mums main ingredient for her  
This herb is pounded and used for mouth infection



Fig.7  
Untitled, 2016  
Polo' tonga, Solanum uporo  
This is one of the ingredients used in mum's haka vai for



Fig. 8  
Untitled, 2016  
Ango'ango, Zingiber Zerumbet  
This tuber is pounded and used for mouth infections  
infections

# **1 FAMILY TRIP TO TONGA: THE DAY I STOOD ON TONGAN SOIL**

The 26th April was one of the most stressful days ever; we were going on our first family trip to the birthplace of my parents, Tonga. With no excuse as to why we were late, we just were, we missed our 5pm flight to the Kingdom of Tonga and my heart sank along with my savings as we booked five tickets to Tonga on the next available flight. We woke up at 5am the next morning determined not to miss this flight: thank you to Aunty Soana and Tina, my Mum's sisters, for ringing our house and being our alarm clocks and to Aunty Tina for getting angry because we had not left home already. By 7am we made it to the airport, we boarded our flight and were ready for take off. As we lifted up into the clouds, I could not fathom the idea of actually flying to Tonga for the first time. I did not know what to expect, but I imagined Tonga to be how my cousins had described it to me. However, I was eager to see what Tonga looked like with my own eyes: the people, the homes, the gardens, the beaches, the food and more importantly my grandparents and family who have passed on.

We were thirty minutes away from reaching our destination, Tonga, and all these unknown, excited, nervous and wild emotions started filling my body and soul of being Tongan and going to Tonga for the first time. I felt my gratitude to my parents for making the choice to migrate to New Zealand so we, my brothers and sisters and I, could have more opportunities to choose from. I started to appreciate my parents more than ever. As we landed in Tonga, I could not contain myself. I wanted the staff to open the doors as early as possible. My body was electric from all the excitement of being in Tonga! As we exited the back doors of the plane, a gush of hot wind flew past our faces and I, my nephew JP, my sisters Mia and Ana, and even our mum, all looked at each other and thought "how are we going to survive nine days in this hot humid weather?" Yet as I inhaled this hot humid weather of Tonga, I remembered that this is the birthplace of my parents and that what I have learnt from my Mum about faito'o fakatonga back in New Zealand, she had first learnt it here. I did not care about the weather anymore, I just wanted to see and discover Tonga. As we made it outside the airport and onto the open land of the friendly island of Tonga. My family trip to Tonga was about to begin.

## 1.1 FIRST LETTER TO TONGA<sup>4</sup>

*As we landed in Tonga, my heart was pounding with feelings unknown. As I took my first step outside into the open land of Tonga. I inhaled the hot and humid weather and shouted to the heavens ‘PAPA TITIE KAMA, PAPA SIONE TAANI, I AM HERE’. As we rode in a bright yellow work van with tyres as seat legs, I opened the dusty window and inhaled another blast of still hot, humid Tongan air. The trees were blowing like trumpets welcoming me into their kingdom. I screamed out again to the heavens, PAPA TITIE KAMA, PAPA SIONE TAANI I AM HERE, ITS ME LESIELI’ then a cold breeze gently and swiftly brushed my face and I knew, I was meant to be here. My papa was waiting for my arrival, the birth place of my parents, my grandparents, the land of my ancestors. It felt unreal. I stuck my head out again and let this hot Tongan air strike my face a million times as we drove past each village. My first moments in the kingdom of Tonga were incredible. As we passed every house, and their tropical trees and plants, I saw something I have always heard about but never seen until today. I saw Nonu trees. They were everywhere: Nonu trees, Nonu trees and more Nonu trees. I couldn’t believe it. I’m liking this a lot! My sister and I were curious and had burning questions about Tonga, like why are there so many dogs, why are cows tied up, why are they burning rubbish on the side of the road, my first time in Tonga was not what my cousins described it to be, it was more and I loved it. The smell of burning rubbish, the smell of food, every time we passed each village, brought back memories of my childhood, and each time I inhaled this air, my memory of celebrations, parties, scamming drunk uncles for money, fights, laughter, crying, early mornings at family reunions, aunties and uncles, cousins, families, friends, family from overseas, umu, roasting pigs in the back-yard, singing “Khumbaya my Lord”, became so vivid, I closed my eyes and breathed in this hot Tongan air that let me relive each moment in my head, each family reunion, each holy communion I attended, each first and twenty first birthday we have celebrated. Tonga set free my memories that had been locked away. Everything I loved about Tongan celebrations back home in New Zealand the land of the long white cloud and meat pies. I became appreciative that I got to experience a Tongan upbringing in a Tongan household, on New Zealand soil. It felt like Missing Pieces that New Zealand program, where even though you’re grateful to your adopted parents, wanting to find your birth parents for answers to fill in those*

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<sup>4</sup> I had written this on my first day in Tonga. I took a journal with me to Tonga; documenting everything I had experienced, as this was my first time in Tonga. This became my starting point for my project and my artwork involving letter writing, which I have continued throughout this thesis project. I have performed this letter many times at home staring straight into the clouds, where the continuous sky connects me to places I cannot see.

gaps and then embracing them, this is what it feels like, because all I want to do is explore everything, know everyone, eat kale sipi<sup>5</sup>, sipi tunu<sup>6</sup>, drink coconuts, become a local. This was my first time in Tonga, these were my first emotions, I screamed out to the heavens one last time,

PAPA TITIE KAMA, PAPA SIONE TAANI, I AM HERE! ITS ME MALIA LESIELI  
KAMA FINAU, ITS ME, YOUR GRAND DAUGHTER, I AM HERE.

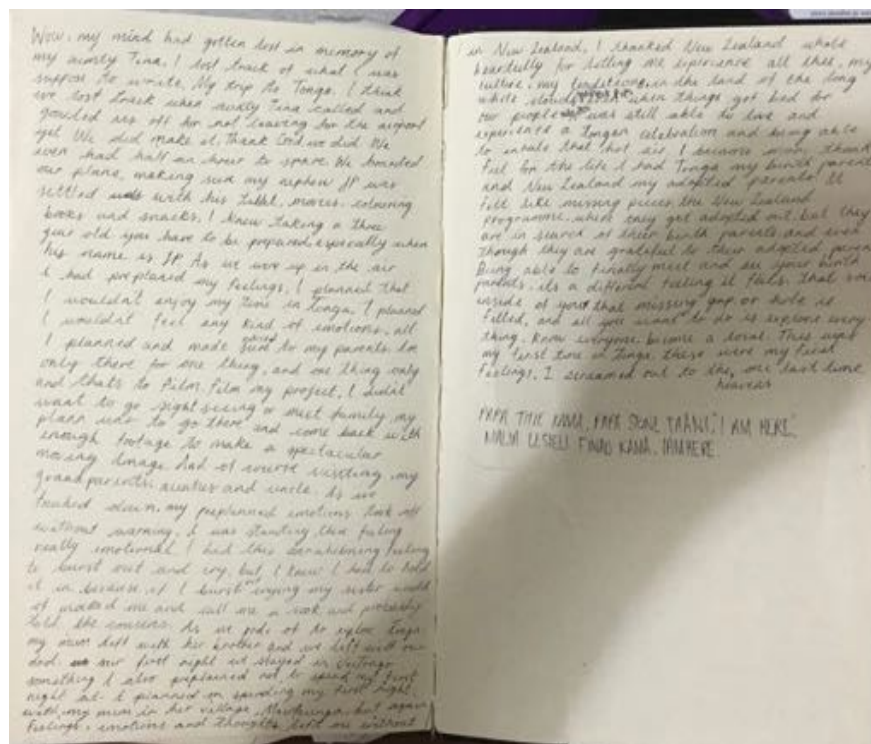


Fig.9  
Untitled, 2016  
Letter written to my grandfathers in Tonga.  
29.7cm x 42.0cm

Tonga was incredible, walking around my Papa's land thinking about the life my parents had, living in Tonga. It became increasing fragile and emotional knowing their struggle having been brought up on the little Island of Tonga. I realised medical care was a struggle, and people only go to the doctors and hospital when it was evident that death was near. Mum told me there are two types of medical treatment, faito'o fakatonga (traditional Tongan medicine) and faito'o Palangi (Western medicine). In Tonga she explained some of the treatments either need traditional medicine or Western medical

<sup>5</sup> Kale sipi is a dish made up of lamb flaps and curry powder, this is popular with Tongans and is sold in Tonga as a takeaway.

<sup>6</sup> Sipi tuni lamb flaps barbequed over coal



treatment: a traditional healer would know which medical treatment the patient would need.

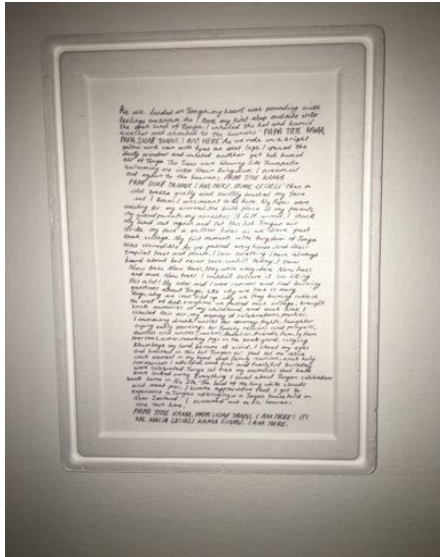


Fig. 10  
Untitled, 2016  
Letter to my grandparents.  
60cm x 34.5cm x 22.5cm



Fig. 11  
Untitled, 2016  
Letters written on polystyrene lids,  
60cm x 34.5cm x 22.5cm  
Book of letters  
29.7cm x 42.0cm

During one of the beautiful nights sitting outside on the veranda in Ma'ufanga, I asked my Mum about the faito'o Nana Talia made for her and her brothers and sisters, and then she explained how her mum made Angoango using Zingiber Zerumbet tubers in the back yard: this traditional treatment is used for children's mouth infection and respiratory tract infections. As Mum was explaining the story of my Nana Talia, she stopped and gazed around our surrounding and said in a child like manner 'I wished my parents were still alive'. It was weird hearing my mum at the age of 64 saying it that way, crying out for her parents, but I guess at any age you are never too old to want your parents. Mum looked around the home she grew up in and said 'if my mum was alive she can tell you heaps of things about faito'o because there are some faito'o she made that I don't remember, its been too long.



Untitled, 2016  
My Papa Titie and Nana Talia's front garden in Ma'ufanga  
Printed photograph  
42cm x 59.4cm  
Fig. 12

My mother has instilled the understanding of and knowing about faito'o to me, which I have practised on myself and have modernised using organic ginger juice from the supermarket. Through this practice VA and TA seem to be notable as time and space seems to acknowledge a longing of the past. Through my project I want to show the importance of keeping the practice of faito'o alive, maintaining our culture and history for the next generation, and honouring the living and the dead. Through the matrilineality of faito'o, it has become evident that it is much more than knowledge; it is the spiritual connection that makes the practice of faito'o important and valued. It is the understanding and the craving of linking that through faito'o the next generation of descendants will be able to inherit and obtain the practice passed down to them. Accordingly one of the aims of this project has been how to visualise this passing down and sharing of knowledge and experience.



Untitled, 2016  
Using bottled natural juices and natural fruits and herbs for medicinal remedies  
Printed photograph  
42cm x 59.4cm  
Fig. 13

## 1.2 THE BEAUTIFUL WILDERNESS OF MEDICINAL GARDENS

### 1.2.1 TONGAN MEDICINAL PLANTS<sup>7</sup>

<b><u>Tongan name:</u></b>	<b><u>Scientific name:</u></b>	<b><u>Part of plant used:</u></b>	<b><u>Healing agency:</u></b>
Ango	Zingiberaceae	Tuber	Upper respiratory Infection, diabetes Mellitus
Mo'ota	Dysoxylum Forsteri	Leaves	Mental health
Kihikihi	Oxalis corniculata	Leaves	Childrens diseases, Internal sores
Kavakava'ulie	Piper methysticum	Leaves	Kahi, part of Concoction for Tapitopito, for Newborns. Also used to wade away bad spirits.
Polo tonga/ fifisi	Solanumuporo	Leaves	Sores given orally And tropically.
Angoango	Zingiber Zerumbert	Tubers	Respiratory tract Infection, Diabetes Mellitus.

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<sup>7</sup> The table of traditional medicinal plants have been used and practiced within my family. I have performed the Ango (Zingiber Zerumbert) in Tonga together with my mum. Through learning I had to watch her hand pound the hammer onto the rock, There was a pattern to the pound, a beat the helps keeps the juices of the Ango together and not splashing everywhere. I have learnt that all the medicinal plants, leaves and tubers were used for specific; today research and tests are being done as many of the plants treat other problems and can possibly find cure cance



Unknown	Artemisia	Leaves	Gout, rheumatism Stomach cramps Furuncle.
Unknown	Okra	Fruit and leaves	Diabetes, treat Urinary problems

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Fig. 14  
 Untitled, 2016  
 Medicinal garden in Tonga  
 Printed photograph  
 42cm x 59.4cm



Untitled, 2016  
Medicinal garden in Tonga  
Printed photograph  
42cm x 59.4cm  
Fig. 15 - 16

While in Tonga, I was invited to a home of a traditional healer, there I had learnt her garden only grew medicinal plants. As I walked around smelling and feeling the texture of the medicinal plants, I started to think about our garden at home and the medicinal plants we have growing.





Fig.17 -18  
 Untitled, 2016  
 Infusing both medicinal garden from Tonga and New Zealand.  
 Projected

This moving image installation, brings both gardens of mum's house together; I projected mum's backyard in New Zealand and the front garden in Tonga, however as this test did not include any dimensional shapes that the images were projected on to, the concepts of TA/VA were not established. This artwork reminded me of sitting outside in Ma'ufanga listening to stories and then coming home and comparing the two gardens. The left side is the garden in Tonga and the right side is the garden in New Zealand. As I was trying to find ways of bringing both gardens together, I thought about projecting the moving images onto each other. This gave me an idea of bringing both soil and both medicinal plants from two different countries together in a form of a moving image. As I stated earlier in 2.3 footnote, I am committed to the process of working together, belonging to a place or places and when the moving images overlap they suggest a spatiotemporality between here and there: Auckland and Ma'ufanga.

### 1.3 GOODBYE LETTER TO TONGA<sup>8</sup>

*Dear Tonga,*

*Today is my last day here with you. I woke up and decided to walk around my papa's village, Ma'ufanga. I woke up late and missed the 6am mass. Mum and Ana were already up. They had left with Uncle Folo to the fish markets at 7am before all the good fish were bought. They came back with heaps of Tongan fish, ready to be gutted and refrigerated and packed into polly bins. The day before we vao (scraping the skin) of some mei<sup>9</sup>. The fish were in the freezer and Mum was making some lu<sup>10</sup> to eat for us before we headed back to New Zealand. I headed off to venture in Ma'ufanga one last time. I wasn't sure when I'd be back. All I know is that I wanted to walk around the land that was gifted to my forefathers by Tu'I Ha'atakalaua. I walked to the shop run by Asians who speaks fluent Tongan. I bought a can of Fanta, a melted ice cream imported from New Zealand, an uncut bakery bread and Tongan lollies that are imported probably from China as I have not seen these lollies in New Zealand. As I walked around eating almost all imported food, I felt sadness. Nine days in the kingdom of Tonga was not enough. There were things I hadn't experienced in Tonga, like swimming in the beaches, tunu sipi on the beach, helping out making Sunday dinner, I wanted to experience an umu from early mornings to family get togethers, seeing how they roast their pig on a spit, do they still dip the pig in the beach to salt the pig's skin, going to a Tongan mass, the Sunday mass was in English. Even though I was lucky to have eaten these foods, I wanted to experience the process of making, watching everyone's hands work together, but it wasn't like that, we were guests, so we were served. Some*

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<sup>8</sup> I had written this letter on my last day in Tonga. I had written about my experience in Tonga. Throughout my trip in Tonga, we were guests, we did not experience what it is like to work for something in Tonga, we were handed cooked food and we were taken to resorts for entertainment and for dinner. Throughout my trip to Tonga, I did not experience the process of making; watching hands big and small work together. This became a question of what it is like to belong. Through this letter I began to explore TA and VA, the space between them, the locals and myself. Through my project I have watched my mum's hands work, to teach and educate myself.

<sup>9</sup> Mei is a breadfruit, it is a staple food in Tonga.

<sup>10</sup> Lu is a Tongan dish, made out of taro leaves, coconut cream, onions, salt and lamb flap.



*people might like it, but I prefer to help out so I can watch and learn. Mum said that's how she learned how to do many things, by watching her mother. I then walked to the markets right outside my papa's land and brought me tunu sipi and manioke – this was my favourite takeaway in Tonga. I practically had this every day. At one time of our trip, Mum stopped me from going there so I could eat the food she cooked. It was the way they cooked their sipi, that you won't be able to get in New Zealand. I'm going to miss this place. Till next time Tonga!*

## 2 METHODOLOGY

The kakala methodology was created by Tongan Professor Kanai Helu Thaman, who designed this framework for Pasifika students to instil pasifika ways of learning into studying. (Akoaotearoa, 2011) Kanais kakala model is based upon the process of fragrant garland making. The first step to making a fragrant garland is Toli kakala; Toli is selecting and choosing the most fitting flowers, which uses skilled collectors to toli, knowing which flower to pick, the colour, the feel, the smell, the location and the maturity of the flower. (Frengley, 2007) Throughout this project I have been researching and travelling to Tonga, collecting and learning about the knowledge of faito'o fakatonga, the stories shared by my mother. Accordingly my research aims for this project are:

1. To identify traditional Tongan medicine that has been passed down through the matrilineal line.
2. To explore the epistemology that faito'o fakatonga has through spatiotemporal notions.
3. To honour the living and the dead, bringing the past forward so that the history of my indigenous culture and traditions are alive and present for the next generation.

The second step is Tui kakala, for this second part of the fragrant garland making, is that the gathered flowers are handed over to the kau tui kakala. (Akoaotearoa, 2011) These are the people that weave the garland together. They choose the most fragrant flowers and the freshest of flowers. They then create a traditional or contemporary design for the garland using their artistic skills. The kau tui are knowledgeable people who have experience with the process of making, utilising their skills and their expertise to analyse the making of the garland, including its correctness and presentation.

The last step of the garland making is the completion of the garland. This is called the luva kakala, this last step is giving, presenting and sharing with the community, the viewers and the readers. Through my project I will be able to present my artwork and

thesis, distributing and supplying the viewers of what my final project and my research as an artwork will be.

## 2.1 TA AND VA, (TIME AND SPACE) OF THE MATRILINEAL OF FAITO'O

Tongan theorist Okusitino has expressed the intersecting positions of TA (time) and VA (space) where TA is seen as the past in the front, Kuongamu'a (time in front), lolotonga (time in present) and kuongamui (time in the back). (Mahina Okusitino 2010, p 184-188) This is seen within the Tongan and the Moana culture, where it is believed that we walk forward into the past and walk backwards into the future. (Mahina Okusitino 2010, p.184-188) This then becomes a constant blending and un-blending of continuous changes and struggles of the present. As Mahina articulates the three walks of TA, kuongamu'a, lolotonga and kuogamua, it seems that TA is an ontological factor where the existing time intersects within VA (space). Mahina, explains that TA is an old term for time which means to beat; this helps establish time, within beats, while VA is space, space symbolises the freedom between bodies and belongings. Mahina also discusses that art is a form of human activity, a product of temporality, spatiality, social independent existence, intersecting objects and having the mentality to be. (Mahina Okusitino 2010, p 184-188) My project has become evidence that TA and VA are present in my work. Faito'o fakatonga has been the matrilineality of generational knowledge that I continue to learn.

VA is a continuous cycle of ongoing changes and arrangements that creates intersecting lines throughout space and time. Va, Space is a concept that has become an important part in the pursuit of cultural identity (Refiti. Albert. L, 2014 p.13) In a text titled: Mavae and Tofiga: Spatial Exposition of the Samoan Cosmogony and Architecture written by Albert L. Refiti. As TA intersect so does the placement and displacement of VA on foreign soil and within the next generation of Pasifikas. As the next generation of New Zealand Pasifikas lead, their mind set, knowledge and strength are more or less led by the Western way of living. Pasifikas living in New Zealand, in time learn to find their placement and adapt to new surroundings.

We base a lot of our theory on the concept of what is VA and TA, what they do, the process and the continuous cycle of how TA and VA works to make changes, adapting and settling to changes, modifying and remodeling the future for the past, as Mahina said, 'You walk forward into the past and backwards into the future' (Mahina Okusitino 2010, p 184) This is what I believe this project is about. I have been able to learn about my history, my traditions and my culture. I have been able to look back so I can see what it is that is in front of me.

Last year I was able to attend one of the PAA, Pacific Arts Association seminars. One of the guest speakers on that day was Manu Aluli Meyer. I remember when she asked everyone the difference between 'looking' and 'seeing' and at first I thought they were both the same. She repeated the question then someone in the audience said, you use your eyes to look and your heart to see. This was when I decided to shift my way of seeing the process and the making of faito'o. The time it takes to make, the precision and the way faito'o is handled. It is never rushed, never made with negativity and always made out of love and for love. Making Faito'o out of ofa (love) is an ancient tradition, today, it is still made out of ofa, the amount of time TA you are willing to use is the amount of respect VA has for the ever-changing future.

My knowledge and understanding of faito'o fakatonga came from watching my mum and then asking questions. I have grown up taking faito'o fakatonga since I could remember, it is in my blood and I know I will be practicing it. Through watching the movements of mum's hands, and through making the movements of mum's hands, I saw generational knowledge being passed into my hands. As mum was pounding the Angoango onto the rock, I imagined my nana Talia pounding onto the rock. Watching mum pound onto the rock, made me think about the history of the rock, the knowledge that mum has been carrying. It is my turn; I get to beat into the past and beat the past into the present, creating a pattern of beats that will be shared between mother and daughter. My artwork shows my mothers hand tuki<sup>11</sup> Angoango, learning the pattern of beats that is required to beat the Angoango so that the juice of the medicinal tubers does not go everywhere. I was able to pick up on the beat of the pounding. Through this project (see

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<sup>11</sup> Tuki is the Tongan term for beat or pounding.

fig 20), I was able to watch and learn the process of tuki Angoango. I began to imitate the beat and add my own beat in the mortar and pestle for my art performance



Fig. 19  
Untitled, 2016  
Mum pounding Zingiber Zerumbert tubers  
on my nanas rock in Tonga.  
Moving Image, 6min 7sec



Fig. 20  
Untitled, 2016  
Pounding Zingiber Zerumbert tubers on my nanas rock in  
Tonga.  
Moving Image, 6min 7sec

My art performances started at the end of year for my Honours, I had learned to understand and acknowledged that the practice of faito'o is sacred and respected. For my end of year, I tuki kihikihi, an herbal raw drink made up of pounded Oxalis. Using a mortal and pestle made from stone. This year, as I have discovered my nanas rock, I came to realise the importance this mortal and pestle is. I began to think about leaving an important part of faito'o in a physical form that can be passed down the line in New Zealand. Performing the Tuki I became more aware about my surroundings that each hit I make I become one step closer to my nana Talia. Each tuki I hit, I create a beat that forms a pattern, each tuki I hit becomes TA and VA and every tuki I hit within the mortal and pestle, I bring both past and present together, creating a sound of intensity yet humbling to hear and in experience



Fig. 21  
Untitled, 2016  
Tuki Kihikihi (pounding Oxalis)  
Talk week  
Art Performance, 1min



Fig. 22  
Untitled, 2016  
Talk week  
Art Performance, 1min

### 2.1.1 FAITO'O-

Faito'o was known as traditional medicine for peasants, poor and low class people of Tonga. The king of Tonga, his family, the nobles in Tonga, high chiefs of Villages and people of high rank considered traditional Tongan medicine disgraceful, degrading and an insult to their being. The story of a Tongan chief, Finau Ulukalala, noted by William Mariners an Englishman (Parsons, Claire. D. F 1983) who was stuck on the Island of Tonga, stated that Finau refused his dying daughter traditional Tongan medicine, as they came from a high ranking class. Today faito'o fakatonga has changed as TA and VA shows the healing ability that comes from medicinal plants, chants, prayers and knowledge.

An example is diabetes, which is a sickness that is spreading rapidly, especially on the island. Imported food from Western countries, such as lamb flaps which is a Tongan favourite, fizzy drinks and many more contribute to the unhealthy diet of the indigenous islands. For diabetes the western medicine needed to stabilise and control this sickness is called Metformin. Tonga's alternative solution for lowering sugar levels and decreasing blood glucose in diabetes is treated by using a vegetable called okra also known as lady fingers. (Diabetes.co.uk) You place sliced okra in a jug of water, you let it sit there overnight. It is best to drink it first thing in the morning. It helps you control your cravings for sweet things. (Diabetes.co.uk) I was told by a traditional healer, that you drink the okra infused water half way and you fill it up three times and then come back and get a new bottle of okra infused water. TA and VA have been an important part of my project however, TA and VA have been an important part of my project and these concepts are an important part of the traditional healing methods, however traditional medicine is changing as Mahina mentioned that the past is constantly changing for the present. "Walk forward into the past and walk backwards into the future" (Maul. Stefan 2016) I didn't know what he meant by this until I realised that we seem to walk straight ahead yet our eyes are still stuck in the past. Being a New Zealand born Pasifika, I have learnt and understand the importance of faito'o fakatonga, what my mother and grandmother have grown up learning and then practising. Within the spatiotemporal I have seen faito'o being modernised and adding onto ancient knowledge, yet the true meaning of ofa and faka'apa'apa(respect) for the kau faito'o ( traditional healers), the

plants and the practise still comes back to how our ancestors would prepare traditional Tongan medicine.

## 2.2 PEOPLE OF OCEANIA

Tongan Professor Epeli speaks about the indigenous people of Oceania who were labelled as savages, wild and lascivious, by challenging the stereotypical idea of the disapproval by the Christian missionaries (Hau'ofa Epeli 1973, p149) who looked down on indigenous culture and how we today, acknowledge the idea that our ancestors were wild and untamed and how we view this as a positive outlook towards our forefathers. Through story telling, research and learning, I disagree with the term 'savages' applied to my forefathers. I have researched and found information about them through family and articles written about my family. They have gifted land and more land to the Catholic Church; I remember my mum saying that our family has given so much land that now we hardly have any.

From stories that have been told to me, by my mother, my uncles, my aunties and also reading the history of the Kama in Ma'ufanga in the Tongan newspaper, my forefather has shown ofa and faka'apa'apa. The knowing of where the land has come from, where my mother grew up, where she learned the practice of traditional Tongan medicine, locating medicinal plants around the house and in the garden, the history behind it, has been all an important part of this project, to film myself tuki Angoango (pounding Zingiber Zerumbet) in Ma'ufanga, learning from my mother's actions.

As Epeli shares his views and observation about the people of Oceania; he says that the Europeans did not invent belittlement instead it was the indigenous high ranking class of Oceania. (Hau'ofa Epeli 1973, p149) In Tonga the term me'a a vale is used to refer to normal people; people with no ranking status, this term is now applied to commoners today. The term me'a a vale was used by aristocracy to control vital information from the commoners of Tongatapu. (Hau'ofa Epeli 1973, p149) From Epelis' essay *Our sea of Island*. Vale in Tongan means dumb or ignorant I am not certain why their own people would call them this, but as Epeli has said it was used to control and limit information from the commoners, for reasons unknown. Commoners then, were people



with knowledge, they are people who learn by watching how to fix, to build, to heal, to grow, to survive and to make a living. Our ancestors used the stars to navigate, the sea to explore and the earth to live. My project is about the matrilineal nature of faito'o, the passing of knowledge to the next generation. As Okustino Mahina said, we walk forward into the past, speaking of when the future is coming to our culture, our traditions; this even means using terms that describe the people of Oceania given by Europeans and by high class indigenous people in society. We still seek the past, we use the terms from the past and the past is in the present. That's why the constant changing and the struggles in the present are for the future, yet the present becomes the past and the future is the present.

### 2.3 REWRITING HISTORY AND ADDING ONTO HISTORY

Linda Tuiwhai Smith analyses the writing, history and theory of indigenous peoples. Much of our history has been written by Europeans. When I was reading about the history of Samoan chief Ama, I came across an article written by a European which said that Ama won many victories and had control over most of Samoa. He then sailed to Tonga. This is where the connection of the royal lineage to Tonga between Tu'I Ha'atakalua and the Samoan chief Ama began, and Ama insisted that tu'I Ha'atakalua marry his daughter Tohu'ia.

Through reading the thesis of (Sioasi L Ilaiu 2007, p26-32) titled *The Tu'I Kanokupolu Matai Establishment and Why would Tu'I Tonga Fuanunuiava have vied to become one? (a GENEALOGICAL ANALYSIS OF POST 1550 AD new political hegemony in Tonga.)* Sioasi states that Samoan chief Ama was banished from Samoa for reasons still unknown, (Sioasi. L. Ilaiu 2007, p26-32). When he and his warriors set sail to Tonga, he also took his daughter Tohu'ia to Tonga in a tactical move to marry Tu'I Ha'atakalua, and where Ama plotted to reignite his chiefly role and sail back to Samoa. (Sioasi L Ilaiu 2007, p26-32) Instead he stayed in Tonga. I found this interesting comparing the two short stories of chief Ama. Even with a little information taken out of the first story of Ama, or not being known to the writer, I still think its relevant to have every piece of information noted down. It is like comparing a book to a movie: you will never get the whole truth. Through

my project of Faito'o fakatonga, I want to preserve knowledge and stories told by our mothers and our grandmothers. They are the gateway of knowing and understanding about the past for the future. Without their knowledge and their stories about the past, the future would not be able to learn and understand. Smiths's *Decolonising Methodologies* gives an insight into why writing, theory and history, are important, it is for us as indigenous people of Oceania to write our knowledge, our past and our present (Smith. Linda Tuhiwai 1999,p 29-30) so that it can be passed down to the next generation of Pasifika.

### 3 STORYTELLING: MUM AND ME: DREAMS

#### 3.1 MY PAPA TITLE KAMA AND MY NANA TALIA'S ROCK

I grew up without my papa Titie and my nana Talia. The first time I saw my papa Titie was my first night in America on 26 December 2014. As I slept in the living room, I dreamt that I saw my papa for the first time and he did not say anything – all he did was make me laugh, he pulled different faces and when I turned around he would pull another funny face, and when I turned back to him he acted like he had not done anything. My aunty woke me up as she saw me crying, thinking I missed home already. I did not. I missed my papa who I had not met. From that day on, I could feel my papa's warmth and his spirit encouraging me to be strong. As strange as this sounds, he has been my protector and the person I go to for comfort and support.

I believe some dreams come to us as a message from the spirit world. I have experienced dreaming about things that I do not understand but I seek help from family members, or even the Internet for people who can interpret my dreams. My mum and I always exchange dreams. Most of our dreams have come from family who have past on. My mum told me of a dream she had when I was a few weeks old. She dreamt that her father came and told her to pick the grapefruit leaves and make tea out of it. Mum said she didn't hesitate and made herself some tea using grapefruit leaves. Mum said, with her first cup she felt that her body was able to move freely and she didn't have pain all over her body. From that day mum has given us tea made from grapefruit leaves. It is delicious and refreshing to drink.

Native Chilean artist Mariela De La Pas has spent twenty years focusing her art through the sacred powers of plant viewed on her website ([Marieladelapaz.com](http://Marieladelapaz.com)) Her work reflects on traditional and spiritual healings, as in her series, *The women of the earth* (2013). Mariela explores the ancient rituals that awaken the ancestral memory of the universal soul. Through Mariela's oil paintings, she draws her work from ancestral wisdom. Her twenty paintings from this series consist of bright colours and figures of traditional healers, chanting, meditating and connecting with the spirit world. Through Mariela's work I have been able to express my own experiences of connecting to the spirit world,

without feeling judged. I have been able to pay tribute to my grandfather and my grandmother by expressing my creative writing, acknowledging and honoring the past.



Fig.23  
My grandparents, Talia mo Titie Kama, 2016  
Image taken in their garden of Ma'ufanga  
Printed photograph

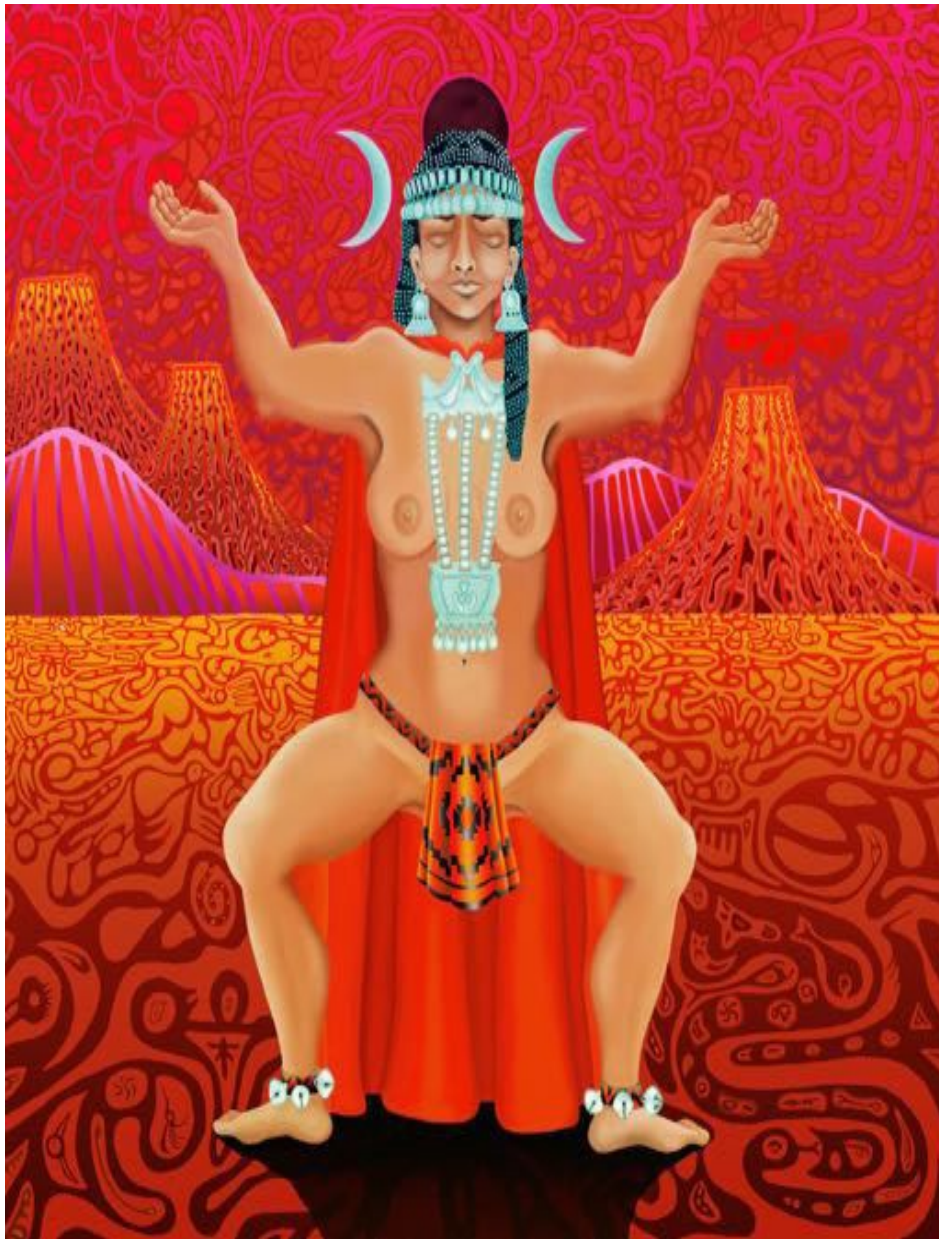


Fig. 24  
The women of the Earth, 2008  
Mariela De La Paz  
No measurements

*The earth is at the same time mother, she is mother of all that is natural, mother of all that is human. She is the mother of all, for contained in her are the seeds of all*

Hildegards of  
Bingen Liana  
Lorna.com  
(2015)

This quote by writer Liana Lorna, has made me examine my place and time. My mother has been my provider and the land has provided for my mother. She has been able to practice traditional medicine. *"She is mother of all that is natural" with my project I believe history*

*plays an important part of the 'now'. Even when using ginger juice from the supermarket, the mother is the main provider, at least for me, she provides a safe, organic traditional medicine that has been used and practiced since guns and bullets were invented” (Lorna.com).*

I had a dream that my papa Titie came to visit me. He didn't tell me anything but he told me to look through the window in the hallway. As I leaned over, I looked at a small tree we have in the left front of the house near the driveway. It was blooming with green and purple pink leaves. I have never seen this tree this way and my papa said put the leaves in boiling hot water and then use it to faka'ahu<sup>12</sup>. Then he lifted his index and middle finger and tapped the front of his head. I woke up and I couldn't understand what he meant when he tapped his head. The next day I told mum that I'm going to pick some leaves from the tree over there to faka'ahu because papa said so. She looked at me and told me there are no leaves on the tree now. I walked outside and the tree looked dead. Mum said in winter the leaves hola<sup>13</sup>. Then I explained my dream to her and she looked shocked when I told her papa tapped his head. Mum said the tree is called Mo'ota. The leaves are used for mental health and puke tevolo<sup>14</sup>. This year has been a stressful year and I haven't been thinking straight and I feel like my papa sensed that I wasn't coping as well as I normally do.

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<sup>12</sup> Faka'ahu is the Tongan term for sauna or steaming. Normally when you faka'ahu with the Mo'ota you place it in boiling hot water and you cover yourself with a blanket or anything thick that can trap in the heat and the medicinal leaves

<sup>13</sup> Hola is the Tongan term for running away, e.g. She hola from washing the dishes.

<sup>14</sup> Puke tevolo is the Tongan term used for being possessed by spirits, more so evil spirits.





Fig.25  
Untitled, 2016  
Mo'ota  
This plant is used to steam yourself with for mental health.  
Printed photograph  
42cm x 59.4cm



Fig. 26  
Untitled, 2016  
Herbal grapefruit tea  
My papa visited my mother in her dreams and told her to  
make tea it will help her  
Printed photograph  
42cm x 59.4cm

### 3.1.1 MAKA (ROCK)

On my first trip to Tonga, I learnt about a particular rock that's been in my family for generations: it used to be my nana Talia's. I watched my mother use it when we were on our family trip. The rock is now being used as a door holder, as my uncle is the only relative left of my mum's brothers and sisters living in Tonga. When I held the rock, I felt like I was holding all the knowledge of my family history; holding the rock meant it was my turn to practice medicine. This rock has been key to my believing that it will help guide me, that it would let me pound the same way my grandmother pounded, that the rock will provide music that I can creatively write to: I have been dreaming of ways that this rock will speak or show me knowledge and let me experience it

I have been working with moving images this year, as I find that it works really well with my project. This is the documentation of what I presented to my supervisors. This was when TA and VA played into my project using the white plinth I created a VA/TA (space and time) within there and here, the past and the present. Within VA and TA my installation explored how space is given and how the space between my mother and the practice of medicine in Tonga is still acknowledged.







Fig. 27 – 30  
 Untitled, 2016  
 Series of projected installation  
 Pounding of Ango'ango in Ma'ufanga  
 Moving image,  
 3 min 34 sec

The Ha'amonga 'a Maui is constructed using three huge stones, two facing upright and the last stone supporting the two upright stone slab. (Ancient Origins) The Ha'amonga weighs thirty to forty tonnes. The stones face towards the north and south, where the sunrise begins. It is believed that the Ha'amonga was constructed 800 years ago, but some

believe the Ha'amonga is older than that. The story is said that Maui carried the Ha'amonga on his shoulders from Wallis Island and continued his journey with the Ha'amonga to Tonga on a huge canoe. (Ancient Origins 2014) People believe that Maui created this stone structure for the mortal kings of Tonga. Tongan artist Filipe Tohi is one of the few Polynesians who still works with stone. According to (Tepapa Collection.govt.nz) Filipe created an abstract sculpture of the Ha'amonga in 1996, consisting of numerous stones put together to create his large circular piece. Tohi's sculpture represents the eye of Maui, a Polynesian demi-god to Hawaii, New Zealand, Tahiti and Tonga. Collections (Tepapa.govt.nz) Filipe's sculpture symbolises the story telling behind the Ha'amonga. I became curious about the importance of the rock my nana has left behind. As the next generation takes photos and hears about the son of Maui who carried the Ha'amonga to Tonga, how much of a god he is, how will my nana's rock be seen to my generation and to the next. How will this rock that has been passed down to my nana not be of importance. No one knows how long this rock has been in our family, or whether my great grandmother used it, or the wives of my forefathers. This will always be a question that will leave me and my family guessing. How important is this rock, what other purposes was it used for, and how long has it been in our family?

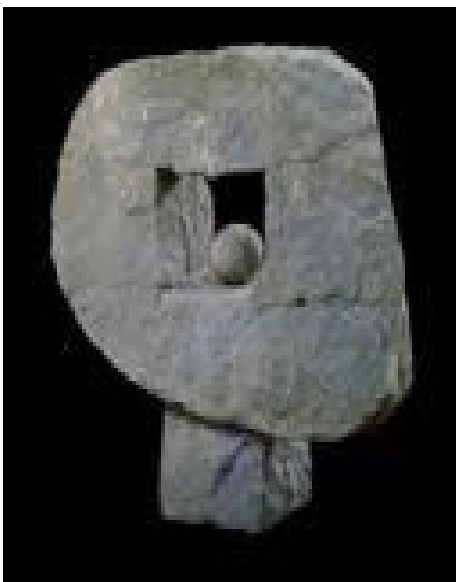


Fig. 31  
Ha'amonga mata'a Maui, 1996  
Filipe Tohi  
174cm x 153cm x 61cm



Fig. 32  
Untitled, 2016  
My first trip to Tonga with the famous Ha'amonga rock  
Printed Photograph,  
6cm x 4cm

No one knows who made the Ha'amonga, where it came from and how long it has been there. Just like my nana's rock, the Ha'amonga holds that knowledge. It is almost like a hidden secret. It is there because it has to be there, and as frustrating as it is, wanting to learn about it, what history it holds and the work behind the stone, is a mystery without hearing different theories of where it came from, who the rock was made for and who brought it to Tonga.

Throughout my project, knowledge, understanding, knowing and experience is what my project has been trying to find out. I have been able to explore the different tubers to tuki (pound). By using my nana's rock, I realise that I am sitting on the same land that my nana sat on when she taught my mum, and the experience of my mother now teaching me, which has become a personal journey of rediscovery and belonging: I belong to this matrilineal line of faito'o. As I have now been to Tonga, I want to explore what other materials around the house in Ma'ufunga have been used to practice faito'o. This experiment (Fig 33) involves a moving image of my mum teaching me how to tuki Angoango (pounding Zingiber Zerumbet) creating a spatiotemporal, where both time and space is present.



Fig. 33 - 35  
Untitled, 2016  
Series of projected moving images  
Moving image,  
3 min 36 sec

### 3.2 MY PAPA SIONE TAANI AND UNCLE AKI TAANI

I was able to meet my Papa Sione as he lived in Mangere. He was the only person from my father's family who made us feel like we were part of their family. We hardly knew our cousins. Today I still have not met some of my first cousins. I have never lived apart from my mum, and so we would visit my papa at his home, taking KFC, if I had not spent my pocket money for the week, I would buy my papa a chocolate bar. One time he told me not to buy him snickers chocolate bar, because the peanuts are too hard to chew, so I brought him Mars chocolate bar. This did not have any peanuts. I remember one time, he hid it from his wife. He placed it in his pocket and he broke little pieces and quickly placed the piece of chocolate in his mouth. I loved seeing this, because seeing him happy made me happy. My grandfather passed away in Tonga and I was not able to attend his funeral. It was hard because my dad did not know how much I cared for his dad. Instead my older brother and sister went.

This year I was able to visit both my grandfathers and their graves before we headed to Tonga. Both my papas had a sweet tooth, so I took them some chocolate biscuits and some chocolates. Yes this does sound weird but it felt right.

I had a dream about my grandpas, both of whom have passed away. I was staying at my grandpa Titie and Grandma Talia's api (home). I was forced to go to my dad's village for a celebration. Instead of staying around for the celebration, I saw grandpa Sione and Aki standing on the side telling me to go visit them. I went straight to their graves and stayed there. I showed them my dance moves (I cannot dance), I told them about university, and then all of a sudden I just started crying and screaming. I told grandpa Sione, that he was the only one ever, that made me feel like I was part of their family, and now that he was gone, I am not (part of the family), and then his face appeared so vivid. He smiled but I could tell his face was sad, and then I started hugging his headstone really tight. He was about to reach out but he moved his hand back like he wanted to comfort me. My uncle Aki stood there like he was blaming someone for why I was crying, and papa nodded his head at him. I crawled up onto his grave and slept. I noticed Aki was guarding me like a security guard making sure no one came near me spiritually. Everyone was scared of Aki because they looked at him and walked off. Uncle Aki always looked back and gave me a friendly and comforting smile while Papa Sione sat next to me thinking deeply.

They then asked, how's Mia? I went back to grandpa Titie and grandma Talia happy that I had spent time with grandpa Sione and finally meeting Aki. Aki told me, Sione tells him to walk with me when I walk home from uni late at night, and I said that is you'. I told Aki, a couple of weeks ago I described you to my dad, what you wore, your hairstyle and your moustache. My dream ended, with Aki telling me to look after mum. I woke up and my face was wet, my pillow was drenched. It was therapeutic that they visited me at that time. I sat up and I felt lighter, physically and emotionally. I thank my Papa and uncle everyday for being there for me and I promised them I will make them and my mothers parents proud.



I often stare at this photo of my Papa and I sometimes see him smiling as if this photo has come alive.



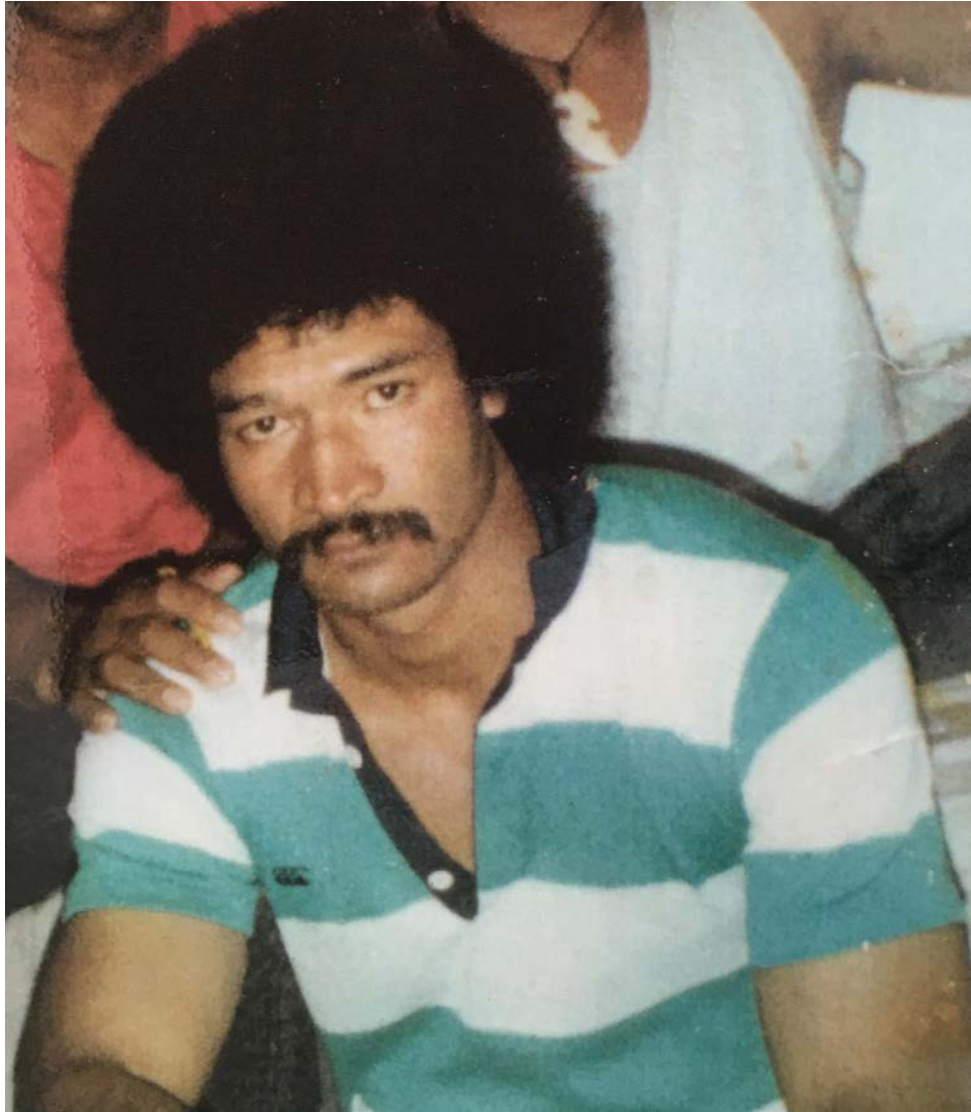


Fig. 36  
Untitled, 2016  
Papa Sione Taani (P.43) and Uncle Aki Taani  
Printed photograph

My project explores the matrilineal nature of *faito'o*; this practice has opened my exploration to dreaming about my grandfathers and how they have helped me to locate medicinal plants and leaves around the house, for helping me mentally. Most of my dreams have been about my grandfathers and not my nana. This is strange as my project centers around her practice and her knowledge of *faito'o*. However, I know through the understanding of the practice of *faito'o*, I have learned more about my nana, the person she is, the *ofa* she spread and the *faka'apa'apa* she has shown to practise *faito'o* with her children.

### 3.3 LETTER WRITING

Throughout this research project and prior, I have written letters that have helped me find who I am as a New Zealand born Pasifika. I love writing poetry, experiences and stories, so writing letters came naturally and it has inspired me to be creative with words. Letters have been another form of artistic practice for myself; it has helped direct what my artwork will look like and how my emotions will be shared.

Hawaiian poet Imaikalani Kalahale has inspired me. Imaikalani has appeared in many anthologies of native Hawaiian literature. (Poetryfoundation.org) His poetry is a collection of polyphonic performance; this is spoken in English and his native tongue, Hawaiian Creole. Kalahale concentrates on the issues that Hawaiians face, the land, the concerns of their culture, their identity and being exploited by Americans and the decolonization of Hawaii. (Kalahale. Imaikalani 2002) Imaikalani expresses his ancestral knowledge in his poetry and his art.

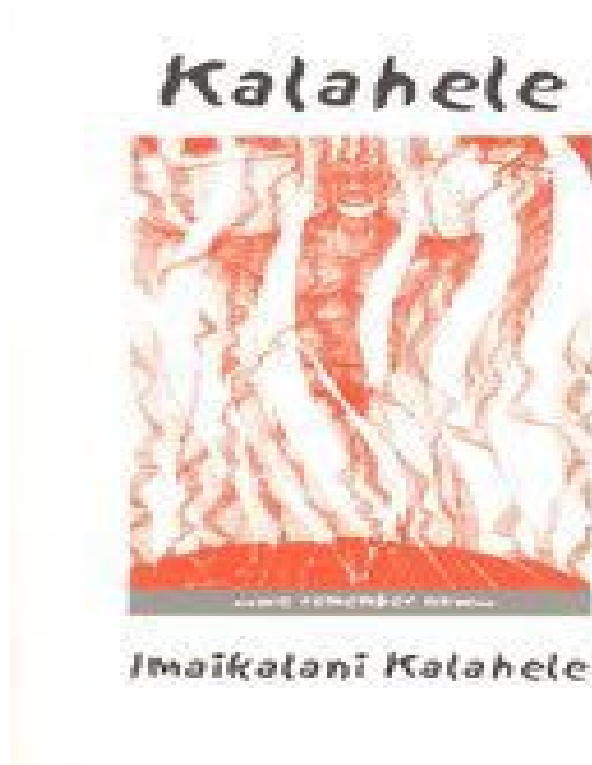


Fig. 37  
Kalahale, 2002  
Imaikalani Kalahale  
Book front cover  
University of Hawai'i Press

*Oh! No its garlic juice<sup>15</sup>.*

*My Body stiffens as a new morning arrives. Before dawn I  
plead to the sun, asking him if he would kindly take a day off,  
unfortunately he didn't seem to like the idea because I could  
feel his light beaming bright into my second hand turquoise  
curtains as if he agrees with my mum. My hands become  
sweaty, my forehead is dripping like an unfixed leaking tap. Its  
6am and my Tongan nose gives me a warning sign. My body is  
paralysed, my legs want to run but it feels like someone put  
shackles, chaining an anchor, stopping me from leaving. I hear  
the sound of rock on rock, rock on rock, pounding, pounding  
and pounding. I hear the floor creak the sound of footsteps  
heading in my direction. My mouth gushes and is filled with  
morning breathe and saliva, trying to forcefully escape like as  
if they are locked inmates.*

*Instead my mouth is drowning, they are working together to set  
themselves free.*

*The door opens and I hear mum calling Seli, Seli tu'u ke  
olunga.*

*This morning's fine choice of mum's faito'o is pounding garlic  
juice with a squeeze of lemon in a shot glass.*

---

<sup>15</sup> *OH! No its garlic juice* is an artwork I wrote that described one of mum's many traditional medicines. Writing letters has been an important part of my practice. This has given my work a different meaning of how to approach things. I have found that letter writing and any creative writing works well with my project. Using the same journal I took to Tonga, this work is more of humours than my other writing, which have been more personal and sad.



My body shivers as a new morning arrives before dawn  
 I plead with the sun asking him if he would kindly take  
 a step off. Unfortunately, he didn't seem to like the idea  
 because I could feel his light beaming bright into  
 my secondhand turquoise curtains as if he agreed  
 with my mum. My hands become sweaty, my forehead  
 is dripping like a unfixed leaking tap. The lamp and  
 my tongue nose gives me a warning sign. My body is  
 paralysed, my feet legs want to run but it feels like  
 someone put shackles chaining a boy/anchor stopping  
 me from leaving. I hear the sound of rock on rock  
 rock on rock, pounding, pounding, pounding. I hear the  
 floor creak the sound of foot steps heading forth  
 My mother mouth ~~is~~ <sup>is</sup> filled with ~~silence~~ <sup>silence</sup> and  
 trying to ~~force~~ <sup>forcefully</sup> escape like  
 locked prisoners. Instead my mouth is drowning  
 attempting to ~~working~~ <sup>working</sup> together to set themselves free  
 The door opens and I hear Sali tuu he alonga  
~~shoes~~ <sup>shoes</sup> The taste of ~~garlic~~ <sup>garlic</sup> juice  
 Today's choice of ~~beverage~~ <sup>beverage</sup> is ~~garlic~~ <sup>garlic</sup> juice with a square  
 of lemon  
 in a that  
 glass.

Fig.38  
 Untitled, 2016  
 Oh! No it's garlic juice.  
 29.7cm x 42.0cm

My body shivers as a new morning  
 arrives before dawn I plead with the sun  
 asking him if he would kindly take a step  
 off. Unfortunately, he didn't seem to like  
 the idea because I could feel his light  
 beaming bright into my secondhand  
 turquoise curtains as if he agreed with  
 my mum. My hands become sweaty, my  
 forehead is dripping like a unfixed  
 leaking tap. The lamp and my tongue  
 nose gives me a warning sign. My body  
 is paralysed, my feet legs want to run  
 but it feels like someone put shackles  
 chaining a boy/anchor stopping me from  
 leaving. I hear the sound of rock on  
 rock, pounding, pounding, pounding. I  
 hear the floor creak the sound of foot  
 steps heading forth. My mother's mouth  
 is filled with silence and trying to  
 escape like locked prisoners. Instead  
 my mouth is drowning attempting to  
 working together to set themselves free.  
 The door opens and I hear Sali tuu he  
 alonga.

The morning's first choice of beverage  
 and ~~beverage~~ <sup>beverage</sup> is ~~garlic~~ <sup>garlic</sup> juice with a  
 square of lemon in a that glass.

Fig. 39  
 Untitled, 2016  
 Oh! No its Garlic Juice.  
 60cm x 34.5cm x 22.5cm



Fig. 40  
 Untitled, 2016  
 Waiting room for patients in a traditional healer's home in Tonga  
 Projected image  
 Talk week



Fig. 41  
 Untitled, 2016  
 Final Installation work for Talk week  
 Projected image  
 Projected moving image, 3 min 34 sec  
 Talk week

## 4 CONCLUSION

As Tongan theorist Okusitino Mahina states, in Tongan and Moana culture, “We walk forward into the past and walk backwards into the future” (Mahina Okusitino 2010,p 184-188). Through creating installations, for this project, I’ve been able to to create a TA/VA space that brings together video projections, using box-like objects that contain internal and external spaces., and their processes of installation. Specifically, I have projected my work onto Polly Bins as this creates a literal and cultural time and space that is akin to the distance that the pounded Zingiber Zerumbert has travelled from Tonga to New Zealand. These artworks, throughout this thesis journey, have been a personal experience that has allowed me to travel to Tonga and understand the life there. I have filmed this experience including the making of Angoango, through my mother’s hands to my hands. My letter writing has enabled me to spiritually connect with my grandparents, by doing this I can feel their sense of ofa, protection and belonging. Letter writing has helped me to understand who I am, who I want to be and has provided a stable outlook of awareness of faito’o fakatonga, through this project and through communications with the spirit world.

## 5 MASTERS EXHIBITION

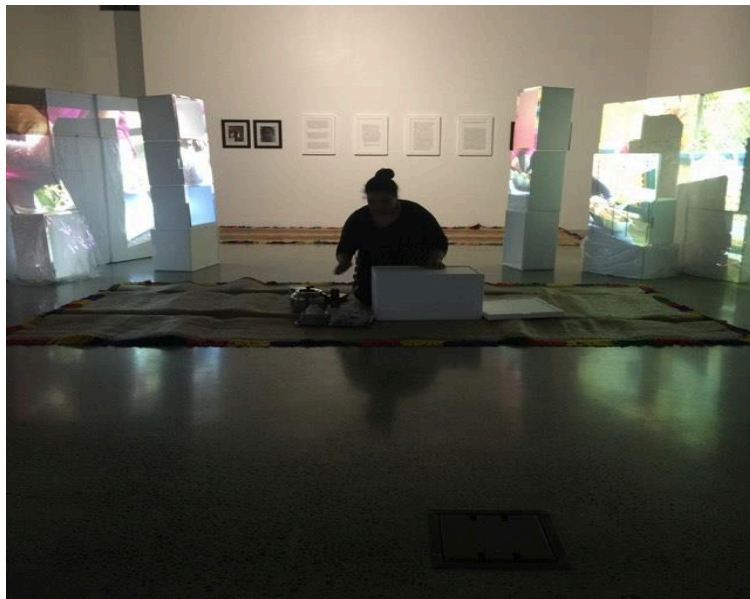


Fig. 42 – 43  
Untitled, 2016  
Making and serving grapefruit leaves tea.  
End of year Exhibition  
Art performance, 10 min



Fig. 44 - 45  
 Untitled, 2016  
 Moving images projected opposite each other on polystyrene bins.  
 End of year exhibition  
 Moving images, 6 min 7 sec



Fig. 46 - 47  
 Untitled, 2016  
 Moving images projected opposite each other on polystyrene bins.  
 End of year exhibition  
 Moving images, 6 min 7 sec







Untitled, 2016  
 End of year exhibition  
 Printed images of my Grandfathers, Titie Kama and Sione Taani, Nana Talia and uncle Aki  
 29.7cm x 42cm  
 Written letters on polystyrene lids,  
 60cm x 34.5cm x 22.5cm  
 Fig 48-50



Fig. 51  
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Figure. 51 *Untitled*, 2016. End of year Exhibition Final Installation. Projected moving image onto Polystyrene bins, 6 min 7 sec 7 sec

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## 8 IMAGE REFERENCE

Figure. 24 *The women of the Earth*, (2008). Mariela De La Paz. No measurements. Humanity Media, *Holy Love*, (2016). Retrieved 01 September 2016

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