

## TATAU: SYMMETRY, HARMONY, AND BEAUTY IN THE ART OF SĒMISI FETOKAI POTAUAINAINE

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Tatau: Symmetry, Harmony, and Beauty in the Art of Sēmisi Fetokai Potauaine is generally informed by the *tā-vā* (time-space) theory of art and Tongan ethnography. This paper will look specifically at the body of works created by Potauaine for his exhibition *Tatau: Fenāpasi 'oe Fepaki / Tatau: Symmetry, Harmony, and Beauty* held at the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of Cambridge, Cambridge, UK, from July to October 2010. This exhibition and its associated catalog of which I was cocurator and coeditor, respectively, included ten multimedia works ranging from *tufunga tākupesi* (graphic designing), *tufunga tātongitongi* (sculpture), and *tufunga tākohikupesi* (sculptural drawings). Potauaine's creative process involves the mediation of *kohi-vā* (line-space) intersections. This process is a result of using the concept and practice of *tatau* (symmetry) as an artistic device-creating works of art that possesses *potupotutatau* (harmony) and *faka'ofa'ofa* (beauty).

### Introduction

TATAU: SYMMETRY, HARMONY, AND BEAUTY IN THE ART OF SĒMISI FETOKAI POTAUAINAINE (see Fig. 1) is informed by the *tā-vā* (time-space) theory of art and Tongan ethnography. Potauaine is a Tongan born Aotearoa New Zealand-based multimedia artist with a background and training in architecture. In 2009, Potauaine was awarded the coveted Commonwealth Connections International Residency. He carried out his residency for three months, from the end of April to the end of July 2010, at the Museum



FIGURE 1. **Sēmisi Fetokai Potauaine.**

of Archaeology and Anthropology (MAA), University of Cambridge in Cambridge UK. The residency provided Potauaine with an opportunity to engage with the MAA and its collections and to develop and produce a new body of work, which culminated in an exhibition of these works titled *Tatau: Fenāpasi 'oe Fepaki / Tatau: Symmetry, Harmony, and Beauty*. Potauaine's creative process in the production of works for this exhibition is a result of using the concept and practice of *tatau* (symmetry) as an artistic device,



producing works of art which possesses *potupotutatau* (harmony), and *faka'ofa'ofa* (beauty). This paper will focus on the *Tatau: Fenāpasi 'oe Fepaki / Tatau: Symmetry, Harmony and Beauty* exhibition and the significance of Potauaine's artistic practice being informed by his knowledge and practice of classical elements of Tongan philosophy and art. This, in turn, has provided Potauaine with the ability to produce innovative and unique works that are very much rooted in the *tā-vā* theory of art and Tongan ethnography.

My involvement with Potauaine formally started in November 2003 when he was one of ten artists of Tongan heritage included in an exhibition of emerging Tongan artists that I cocurated titled *Niumui*<sup>1</sup> translated as the "precociousness of a young coconut" (Brown-Moa and Māhina 2003). Potauaine and I worked together with a team that coedited the book titled *Veimau: Maau mo Potutatau Kae Fepakitu'u mo Fihitu'u / Order and Harmony Yet Conflicting and Complex* (Māhina et al. 2007). This book was published for the opening in 2007 of the Tūtoatasi Studyhall and Vava'u Academy for Critical Inquiry and Applied Research (VACIAR) in Vava'u, Tonga. Potauaine designed the front and back covers and also donated three paintings to VACIAR. In 2008, Potauaine and I were brought together as the two illustrators for a team working on a new Moana book series on children's stories. This led to the establishment of the team as Kula-'Uli Publishing (NZ) just prior to the launch of our first three books in August 2009 where Potauaine was the lead illustrator and artist for the three book covers (see Fig. 2a–c; 'Alatini and Māhina 2009; Māhina and 'Alatini 2009a, 2009b). In 2009, I was involved in Potauaine's *Tatau: Fenāpasi 'oe Fepaki / Tatau: Symmetry, Harmony and Beauty* exhibition and its associated catalog (see Fig. 2d) of which I was cocurator and coeditor, respectively. The exhibition included ten multimedia works ranging from *tufunga tākupesi* (graphic designing), *tufunga tātongitongi* (sculpture), and *tufunga tākohikupesi* (sculptural drawings) (Māhina, Dudding, and Māhina-Tuai 2010). In 2011, I was involved as the project manager and one of the artists in the Auckland-based Tonga women's arts collective, Kulupu Falehanga 'i Teleiloa, that collaborated with Potauaine on an art commission of a *ngatu tā'uli* (black-marked barkcloth) by Queensland Art Gallery (QAG) / Gallery of Modern Art (GOMA)<sup>2</sup> (see Māhina-Tuai and Māhina 2011a, 2012), Potauaine provided the designs and their layout on the surface of the *ngatu tā'uli* (see Fig. 3). In 2012, I was involved in two projects with Potauaine. One of them was the exhibition *Home AKL: Artists of Pacific Heritage in Auckland* held at Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki where I was involved as an associate curator (Māhina-Tuai 2012a,b). Potauaine again collaborated with two women, Kolokesa Kulikefu and Hūlita Tupou, from Kulupu Falehanga 'i Teleiloa by providing a design for an embroidery work (see Figs. 4a, b, 5). The second project involved a



FIGURE 2. (a) Fonu 'Iloa ko Sangoné / Sangone the Legendary Turtle. (b) Kalia Lahi Fakatoukatea ko e Lomipeau / Lomipeau the Giant Double-Hulled Canoe. (c) Ko e Tupu'anga 'o e 'Akau ko e Kava mo e Tó / The Origin of the Kava and Sugarcane Plants. (d) Tatau: Fenāpasi 'oe Fepaki / Tatau: Symmetry, Harmony and Beauty.



**FIGURE 3. Kulupu Falehanga 'i Teleiloa collective in front of the nga-tu tā'uli featuring the design layout by Sēmisi Fetokai Potauaine that was commissioned by the Queensland Art Gallery / Gallery of Modern Art in 2011. Back row from left: Talafungani Finau, Hikule'ō Māhina, Manuēsina Māhina, Lusi Tupou, Hūlita Tupou, 'Ana Tupou, Laukau Tupou. Front row from left: Kolokesa U. Māhina-Tuai, Leilani Vunga, Tu'utanga Māhina, Melaia Tupou, Sepi Lokotui, Manuēsina Tōnata, Monika Tupou, Kolokesa Kulikefu.**

book of which I was involved as a coeditor and contributor, about a commission of two public sculptures (see Fig. 6a, b) by Potauaine in Tonga as part of the National Public Art Programme to promote Tonga as a unique tourism attraction (Māhina and Māhina-Tuai 2012).

### **Tā-vā Theory of Art**

Sēmisi Fetokai Potauaine's art practice is informed by the tā-vā theory of art, which derives from the tā-vā theory of reality. The tā-vā theory of reality was developed in the late 1990s by Hūfanga Professor 'Okusitino Māhina,

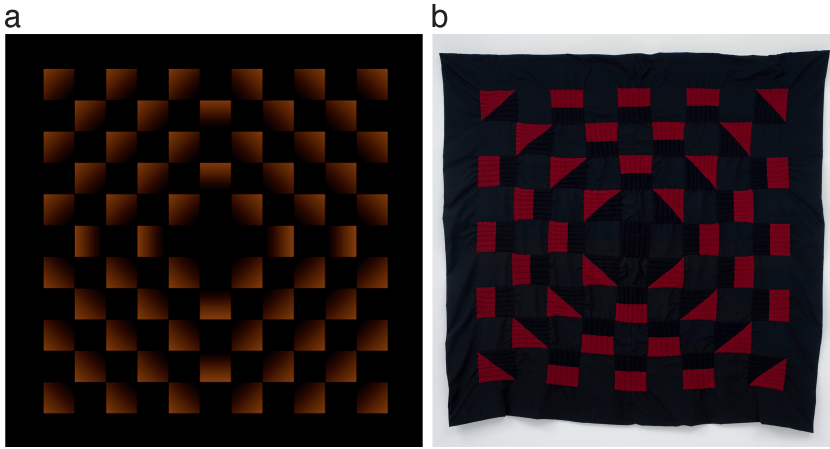
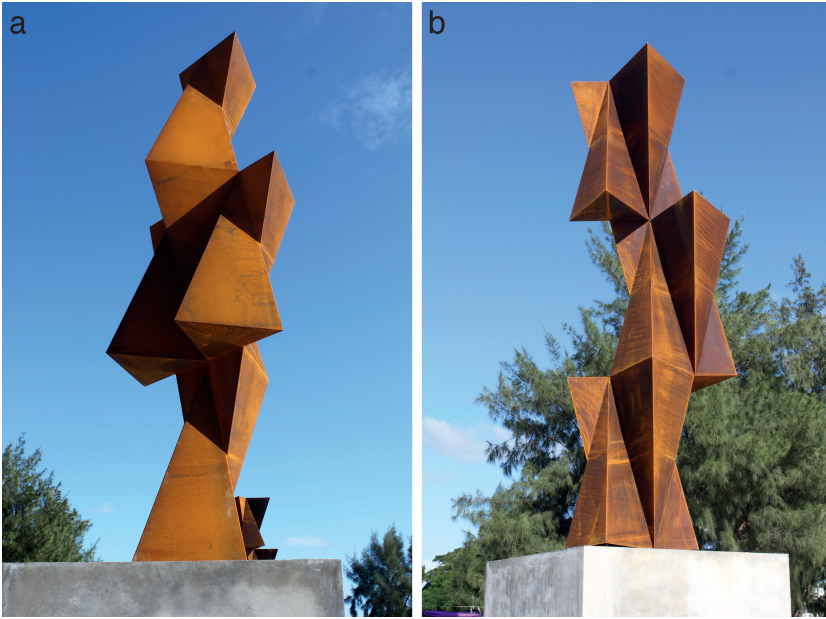


FIGURE 4. (a) Sēmisi's design for Veimaau Matala (Blooming Checker). (b) Veimaau Matala (Blooming Checker), 2012. An embroidery work using red and black wool on a black cotton background.



FIGURE 5. Left to right Tongan fine artists Hūlita Tupou and Kolokesa Kulikefu who carried out *nimamea'a tuikulasi* or the art of wool embroidery in this work.



**FIGURE 6. (a) Hinavakamea (Hina-the-iron-boat) made from corten steel, Vuna Wharf, Nuku‘alofa, Tongatapu, Tonga 2012. (b) Tunavakamea (Tuna-the-iron-boat) made from corten steel, Vuna Wharf, Nuku‘alofa, Tongatapu, Tonga 2012.**

with Maui-Tāvā-He-Ako Dr Tēvita ‘Ō. Ka‘ili as the leading proponent, and is based on the Tongan concepts and practices of time and space (See Ka‘ili 2008). This general theory of reality is applicable to all disciplines, and it is currently used as a school of thought by academics in the fields of history, anthropology, education, architecture, and art. Some of the tenets of this tā-vā theory of reality are listed in other essays in this volume. From the tā-vā theory of reality derives Māhina’s tā-vā theory of art, which includes the ideas that:

- all arts be they tufunga (material) faiva (performance) and nimamea‘a (fine) arts are based on tā (time) vā (space), fuo (form) and uho (content) of all things in nature, mind and society;
- art is socially organised formally, substantially and functionally in different ways across cultures;



- all arts are based on the mediation of conflicts in *tā* (time) *vā* (space) *fuo* (form) and *uho* (content) of all things across nature, mind and society;
- all arts are concerned with the mediation of conflicts in *tā* (time) and *vā* (space) and *fuo* (form) and *uho* (content) at the interface of intersecting *kohi* (lines) and *vā* (spaces) across material, performance and fine arts;
- all arts are concerned with the transformation of the spatial–temporal, substantial–formal and functional conflicts from a condition of chaos to a state of order through sustained symmetry, harmony and beauty.<sup>3</sup> (Māhina 2007: 16–17; see also Māhina 2004a).

By having the *tā-vā* theory of art as the foundation of his art practice, Potauaine’s investigation and creativity reaches a depth that is both philosophical and culturally specific to Tonga yet offering an appeal and uniqueness to the rest of the world. The *tā-vā* theory of reality and, in turn, the *tā-vā* theory of art provides Potauaine with the theoretical and practical tools to creatively and critically explore, develop, and produce his works of art. The theoretical tools in terms of the knowledge source that Potauaine draws from provide the foundation and depth that is evident in his art practice. A key element of the general *tā-vā* theory of art is the philosophical notion that at the heart of all arts is points of intersection or conflict (Māhina 2008: 32–33). The conflict that takes place at these points of intersection is what produces *tatau* or symmetry, harmony, and beauty in the art works. It is at these points of intersection or conflict that the work is at its pinnacle or most refined state.

### Tongan Arts

Potauaine’s art practice and art forms belong in the Tonga art genre of *tufunga*. Tongan arts is generally classified into three genres—*tufunga* (material), *faiva* (performance), and *nimamea’a* (fine) arts (Māhina 2008, 2008a, 2010, 2010a; Māhina and Potauaine 2010; Māhina, Dudding, and Māhina-Tuai 2010; Potauaine and Māhina 2011). *Tufunga* includes *tufunga tāvalivali* (painting), *tufunga lalava* (*kafa-sennit-lashing*), *tufunga langafale* (house-building), and *tufunga tātatau* (tattooing). *Faiva* includes *faiva ta’anga* (poetry), *faiva hiva* (music), and *faiva haka* (dance) (see Māhina 2004b, 2005, 2007, 2009, 2011b; Māhina and Māhina-Tuai 2007). *Nimamea’a* includes *nimamea’a lālanga* (mat weaving), *nimamea’a koka’anga* (barkcloth making), and *nimamea’a tui-kakala* (flower designing) (see Māhina-Tuai and Māhina 2011a,b,c; Māhina-Tuai 2012a,b; 2013, 2015).

The three divisions of art are further connected to the “gender” divisions of functions between men and women in Tonga where tufunga and faiva are predominantly male dominated and nimamea’a is predominantly the domain of women. There is a Tongan proverb that makes reference to the Tongan gender division of functions that goes, “*Oku tōkanga ‘a tangata pea ‘oku manga ka e falehanga ‘a fafine pea ‘oku hanga,*” which translates into English as “Men possess the garden measured by the feet and women possess the house measured by the hands.” This proverb is closely tied to the division of arts such as the genre of nimamea’a where Tongan women measure their work with their hands. For example, in measuring *ngatu* or bark cloth, women use two full stretches of one palm with thumb and middle finger outward, which is referred to as one *hanga*. And one *hanga* can also be referred to as one *toka* or one *langanga*.<sup>4</sup> So when you see *ngatu tāhina* (white-marked barkcloth) with lines and usually numbered along the borders, they each represent one *hanga*, *langanga*, or *toka*, which is usually the equivalent of one foot (Māhina-Tuai and Māhina 2011c). The gender divisions are also reflected in the two key colors of Tongan arts red and black, which represent men and women, respectively (see Potauaine and Māhina 2011). For example, the proverbs “*Kula ‘i Moana*” (red in the ocean) and “*Kula ‘i tōkanga*” (red in the gardens) are in reference to being “red” or burnt by the sun while deep-sea fishing or crop cultivation, respectively. For women, the term *‘uli* (black) features predominantly in social activities that are specific to women such *mā‘uli* (midwife) and *moa‘uli* (matchmaker), a term for matchmaking of a Tongan woman to a male. However, there are examples where these gender divisions can overlap such as women artists involved in faiva, as well as being involved in nimamea’a.

The three genres of Tongan arts are also classified in relation to the body (see Māhina, Ka‘ili, and Ka‘ili. 2006; Māhina 2007; Potauaine 2010: 16–17). Tufunga and nimamea’a are *tefito-he-tu‘a-sino* or non-body-centered meaning that the production of arts are situated outside of body, where the body is simply used as an instrument. Faiva on the other hand are *tefito-he-sino* or body-centered meaning that the production of art are made by the body and centered on the body, where the body is the medium with the mind critically engaged in the process of production. The refined knowledge and skills associated with these three art genres were hereditary professions and practiced as specialized forms of social activity.

All three genres vary in terms of their *fuo*, *uho*, and *vaka* or *hala*<sup>4</sup> (medium) and have multiple functions (Māhina 2008, 37). In classical Tongan arts, the quality and utility of art were combined to produce both beautiful and useful works, and quality is always given priority over utility (Māhina 2008a,b). Quality is comprised of what is internal or intrinsic to art and is connected

to the process of producing of art, such as tatau, potupotutatau, and *mālie* (beauty) or faka'ofa'ofa. Utility, on the other hand, is comprised of what is external or extrinsic to all arts and is connected to the outcome and, in turn, the use or function of art.

### A Tongan Worldview

The Tongan classification of art is highly sophisticated in terms of its circular and inclusive nature. Hence, over time and space, the three genres remain the same despite the use of new materials and advances in technology. That is because the particular knowledge and skills pertinent to each of the three genres remain the same; yet the ways in which they are applied, by whom, where, and in what on-the-ground contexts they are applied changes as people acquire new skills and new materials, collaborate with new partners, and migrate to new places (see Māhina-Tuai and Māhina 2011). Using terms such as “traditional,” “heritage,” “contemporary,” and “modern” to classify Tongan art today (and art of the Moana Pacific for that matter) is highly problematic (Māhina-Tuai, K. 2012a, 2012b, 2013, 2014). For example, Potauaine draws on ideas from the past such as the Tongan master art of tufunga lalava<sup>5</sup> while constructing and creating with new material (and forms) from the present such as vinyl and aluminium (see Māhina 2000). From a Western arts perspective his works would be regarded as contemporary or modern and would be distinguished from tufunga lalava, which would be regarded as traditional or heritage. From a Tongan worldview, Potauaine's creations go into the same pool of works by master artists who have gone before him, all under the genre of tufunga. Imposing a foreign and Western concept to define Tongan arts results in the compartmentalizing of art forms, which often leads to ignorance, misunderstanding, and misinterpretation. This is attributable to the severance of the natural cyclical flow of the Tongan worldview of art, which is aligned with the circular and holistic arrangement of tā and vā in Tonga and inclusive in approach as opposed to a more individualistic and exclusive Western worldview of art.

Working within the genre of tufunga, Potauaine's art practice uses the concept and practice of tatau as an artistic device (see Māhina-Tuai 2010). Tatau is comprised of intrinsic qualities of art that produce potupotutatau and, in turn, faka'ofa'ofa in works of art. On the other hand, potupotutatau is made up of a collection of individual tatau, all of which can be taken as definers of faka'ofa'ofa. The production of tatau is made by means of the device of *mata* (eye) and *ava* (hole). The concept of mata, meaning eye, face, or point, and ava is a device commonly used in tufunga (see Potauaine and Māhina 2010; Potauaine 2010). In Tongan thinking, mata and ava are two sides of

the same coin where the former is a tatau or mirror image of the latter and vice versa. For example, if you hammer a nail through a piece of timber and pull it out, you will have created a hole that is a tatau or mirror image of the (cross-section of the) nail itself. The mata and ava can be blunt or sharp, but the sharper the mata the more fine and intense the outcome. Hence, the sharper the point of the nail the more fine and precise the hole or the eye will be. Both mata and ava are a form of intersection. The point of intersection is a mata that, in turn, creates the ava, its mirror image. Physical instruments used by tufunga are: *mata'i polosi* (eye of the brush) with tufunga tāvalivali (painting), *mata'i peni* (eye of the pen), *mata'i kili* (eye-of-the-saw), *mata'i fa'o* (eye of the nail), and *mata'i hāmala* (eye of the hammer) used in tufunga langafale and tufunga tātongitongi.

### Tufunga: Tongan Material Arts

The *Tatau: Fenāpasi 'oe Fepaki / Tatau: Symmetry, Harmony, and Beauty* exhibition featured ten multimedia works by Potauaine, which included tufunga tākupesi, tufunga tātongitongi, and tufunga tākohikupesi. All of these works specifically investigate the notions of tatau, mata, ava, *kula* (red), and 'uli as opposite tendencies of artistic importance. As already discussed, mata is the mirror image of ava, and the terms are, in turn, opposites. *Kula* and 'uli are also opposite tendencies in that, apart from being the two key colors of Tongan arts, in Tongan epistemology, the former is representative of male and the latter of female.

Semisi's tufunga tākupesi include two works featured in the exhibition catalog and a trio of vinyl round works. The two works in the exhibition catalog are *Konokula* (Redawake) (see cover of Fig. 2d) featured on the front cover and *Kono'uli* (Blackawake) (see Fig. 7) included inside on page 20 (Māhina, Dudding, and Māhina-Tuai 2010). These two works were inspired by one of the *pōvai* (clubs) in the Tongan Collection at the MAA. The *kupesi* (geometric designs) engraved and decorating the club includes fauna and flora as well as people. This shows the inextricable link and conflicting relationship between people and the environment as expressed in the classical Tongan concept and practice of *fonua* defined by the cycle of birth, life, and death. The names *Konokula* and *Kono'uli* were taken from the famous *pōvai* named *Mohekonokono* (Sleep-yet-Awake) of the great warrior-chief Vaha'i of Fo'ui, Hihifo, Tongatapu. The use of opposite tendencies is evident in the name *Mohekonokono* and also in Potauaine's title for both works where *Konokula* is a tatau or mirror of *Kono'uli* and vice versa. Both these works illustrate the intersection of line and space together with the interplay of *kula* and 'uli creating depth and projection of the *kupesi* (geometric designs).

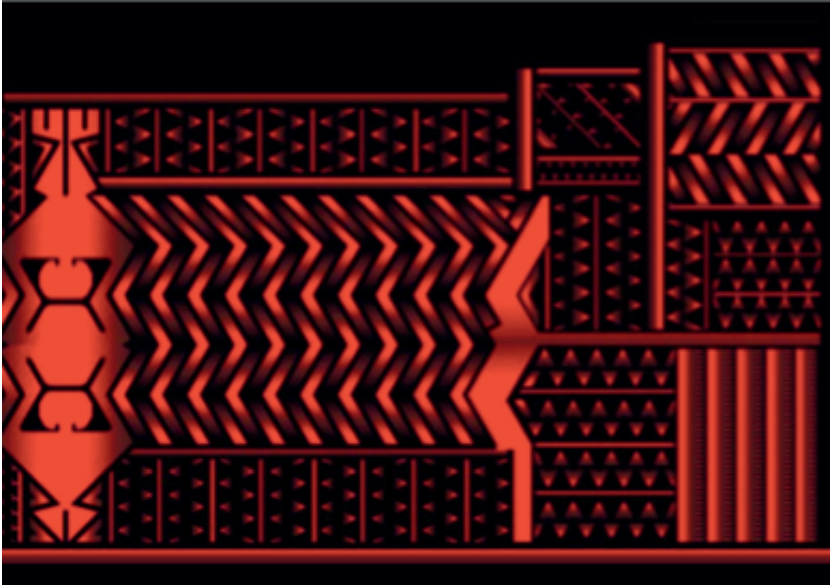


FIGURE 7. **Kono'uli (Black Awake), Tufunga tākupesi (Graphic design) 2010.**

The three tufunga tākupesi vinyl works are titled *Avakula* (Redhole), *Ava'uli* (Blackhole) and *Avanoa* (Zerohole) (see Figs. 8a–c, 9). These works are an artistic investigation of tā time and vā space, which is manifested by means of line and spaces in the forms of colors. This is similar to the scientific investigation that is made in terms of *ava kula* (red hole) and *ava 'uli* (black hole) (see Potauaine and Māhina 2011: 206–09). *Avakula* depicts an unequal movement from 'uli to kula involving the multidirectional movement of matter by means of energy. Some examples of *ava kula* or *mata kula* include *peau kula* (red wave, i.e., tidal waves), *maama* (enlightenment), and *ako* (education). *Ava'uli* is the exact opposite where it illustrates an unequal movement from kula to 'uli. Some examples of *ava 'uli* or *mata'uli* include *matangi* (winds), *fakapo'uli* (ignorance) and *moa'uli* (matchmaker). *Avanoa* portrays the mata or point of intersection of *Avakula* and *Ava'uli* where the opposition between them are at a state of *noa* or zero point or a state of equilibrium, balance, or harmony. Some examples of *ava noa* (zero hole) or *mata noa* (zero eye) include *vahanoa* (peaceful ocean), *matanoa* (peaceful countenance), and *talanoa* (peaceful talk), all demonstrating a state of equilibrium or balance. As a matter of mathematical and aesthetic interest, mata is produced by the



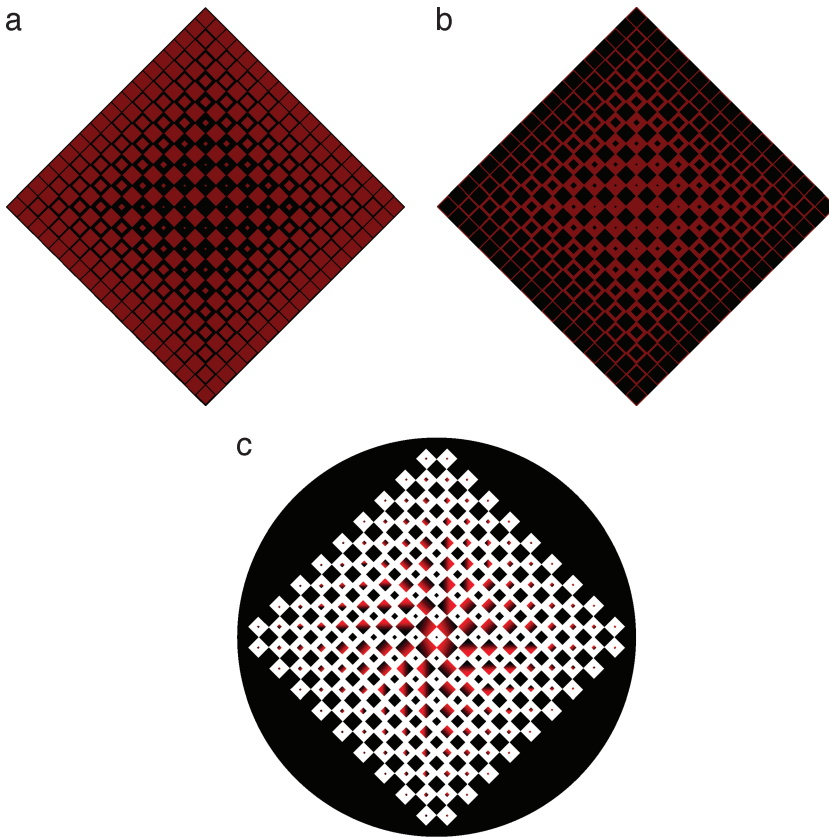


FIGURE 8. (a) Avakula (Redhole) 2010. (b) Ava'uli (Blackhole) 2010. (c) Avanoa (Zerohole) 2010.

point of intersection of two lines; kōhi is a collection of mata; and vā comprises a summation of kōhi, all marked temporally in various formal and substantial ways (see Māhina and Potauaine 2010; Potauaine 2010a,b).

The sculpture *Lei'ataua* (Bitwinshadows) is made of wood and painted red and black. The name means twin images. However, there are also added meanings when the name is broken down into parts; *lei* can mean two, as in *mahangalei* (twins of opposite sex or pairs of opposite sex) and whale teeth, as in *tufunga fonolei* (jewelry making); *ata* means shadow; and *ua* is two. The multiple meanings of the title are a reflection of the reading of the work. *Lei'ataua* deals with variations of symmetries, multidimensional forms, the

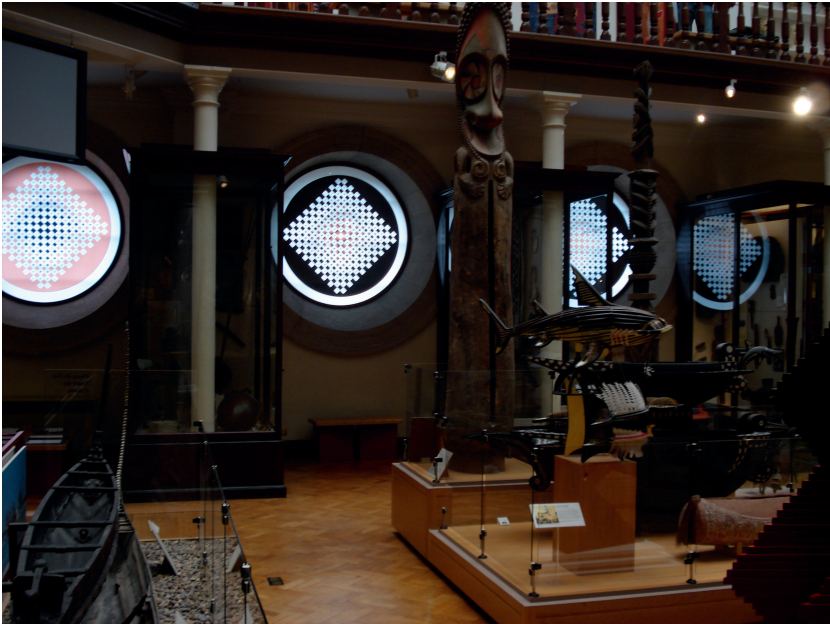


FIGURE 9. Image inside the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology gallery that Sēmisi's tufunga tākupesi vinyl works were displayed as window treatments during his *Tatau: Fenāpasi 'oe Fepaki / Tatau: Symmetry, Harmony and Beauty* exhibition in July 2010 and are still currently on display in 2016.

interplay of kula and 'uli, and the center of gravity of which is all underpinned by means of intersecting lines and spaces mediated through tatau to produce potupotutatau and faka'ofa'ofa

The tufunga tākohikupesi works are produced using 'aluminiume (aluminium metal). The works are *Fataniume* (Alumdeathomenbird) *Pekepekaniume* (Alumswallowbird), *Pekapekeniume* (Alumswallowbird), and *Mataniume* (Alumeye). The word *niume* in the title of the four works is short for 'aluminiume and is translated to alum, which is Latin for aluminium.

The word *fata* in *Fataniume* is the name of a bird of omen for death, which usually flies and sings at night. *Fata* also refers to the pallbearers and, hence, the name of the kupesi fata-'o-Tu'i-Tonga, which is an abstraction of the 'otu *langi* (royal tombs) of the Tu'i Tonga. The 'otu *langi* are like the Egyptian pyramids both the burial places of kings/pharaohs. The word *fata* also resembles the word *fatafata* meaning chest.

The word *pekepeka* is a small swallow-like bird. Both *Pekepekaniume* and *Pekapekeniume* like *Fataniume* and *Mataniume* are tatau of each other where one is the opposite of the other. The four artworks are multidimensional and multidirectional, showing the interplay of shadows and light, or black and red, and the time-space movement from representation to abstraction. All of this is informed by the intersecting lines and spaces, mediated through tatau or symmetry to produce harmony and beauty.

### Conclusion

The collection of works by Potauaine featured in *Tatau: Fenāpasi ‘oe Fepaki / Tatau: Symmetry, Harmony, and Beauty* exhibition is indicative of the depth and breadth of his art practice and art forms. This is a tribute to the pursuit of excellence in his art practice and his knowledge and practice of the *tā-vā* theory of art and Tongan ethnography. These works have been true to the definition of art as “a *tā-vā* (time-space) transformation of *fuo-uho* (form-content) conflicts in the subject matters under the productive process from a condition of *felekeu* (chaos) to a state of *maau* (order) through sustained tatau and potupotutatau to create *faka’ofa’ofa*.” (Māhina and Potauaine 2010, 16)

Potauaine has developed artistically and intellectually since our first formal encounter in 2003 with the *Niumui* exhibition. And *Niumui* was the first exhibition in New Zealand of artists of Tongan heritage and of the ten artists featured Potauaine is one of only a handful of artists that are still actively practicing today. A key factor for this, I believe, is through grounding himself in the knowledge and practice of the *tā-vā* theory of art and Tongan ethnography. Receiving the prestigious Commonwealth Connections International Residency in 2009 is a testament to his passion and drive and also his continual pursuit of knowledge and excellence of his artistic practice. It is also a testament that there are forward-thinking Western organizations, such as the Commonwealth Connections Foundation. In selecting Potauaine, they have not based it on the fact that he is an unknown and emerging artist (in both Tonga and Aotearoa New Zealand) but rather on his knowledge and practice as an artist and the quality and uniqueness of his art works. As a Tongan citizen, Potauaine was the second Tongan to have received the award. As an Aotearoa New Zealand resident, he is only the second artist from Aotearoa New Zealand although the first artist of Pacific heritage to receive the award. The key to Potauaine’s achievements to date is through the foundation that he is building by embracing and informing his art practice with the knowledge and practice of the *tā-vā* theory of art and Tongan ethnography. This, I believe, will continue to provide Potauaine with an edge and an ability to

always stay innovative and unique in his art practice, which was evident in the most recent projects I was involved in with Potauaine in 2011 and 2012.

The Tongan classification of art acknowledges the circular tendency of nature, mind, and society where we adapt, change, and evolve while at the same time hold on to the essence of what makes our works of art unique. Potauaine's art practice and, in turn his art works, capture the best of both worlds by combining what he draws from the past with the present to produce works of great refinement and sophistication. This coincides with the plural, circular, holistic, and inclusive nature of Tongan thinking and practice, in which people are thought to walk forward into the past and walk backward into the future, where the past and the future are permanently mediated in the changing present.

### NOTES

1. The title "Niumui" comes from the Tongan proverb Potopoto 'a niu mui, which literally means "the precociousness of a young coconut" and alludes to the younger generation striving for the best in what they do. Sometimes such attempts might fall short of the expectations of elders and the proverb justifies the actions of the younger generation by the simple reasoning that they are still growing, maturing, and finding their way in life.

2. Women from the village of Tatakamotonga in Tonga provided the natural red koka plant pigment and wide strips of plain barkcloth, and Kulupu Falehanga 'i Teleiloa produced the 22 × 4 m ngatu tā'uli in Auckland, New Zealand.

3. This was written in the Tongan language and the translation was provided by the author Hūfanga 'Okusitino Māhina for the purpose of this paper.

4. Hala is another Tongan word for medium as in "Tēvolo hala he sikotā" (the devil appears in the medium of a sikotā bird) ('Ō. T. Ka'ili, pers. comm., January 13, 2011.)

5. As the Tongan Master Art, tufunga lalava contains infinite designs and is the source of all abstract motifs featured in the various artforms under tufunga and nimamea'a such as tufunga tātatau (tattooing) and nimamea'a koka'anga (bark-cloth making).

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## GLOSSARY

- ako*—education  
*'alaminiume*—aluminium  
*'ata*—shadow  
*ava*—hole  
*ava kula*—red hole  
*ava noa*—zero hole  
*ava 'uli*—black hole

- faiva*—performance arts  
*faka'ofa'ofa*—beauty  
*fakapo'uli*—ignorance  
*fata*—pall-bearer  
*fatafata*—chest  
*Fataniume*—Alumdeathomenbird  
*fata-'o-Tu'i-Tonga*—pallbearer of the Tu'i Tonga  
*felekeu*—chaos  
*fenāpasi*—mediate  
*fepaki*—intersect  
*fonolei, tufunga*—jewelry making, art of  
*fihitu'u*—complex  
*fuo*—form  
*haka, faiva*—dance, art of  
*hala*—medium  
*hanga*—a measurement unit where women use two full stretches of one palm with thumb and middle finger outward which is referred to as one hanga.  
*hiva, faiva*—music, art of  
*kae*—yet  
*kakala*—designed flowers  
*kohi*—lines  
*kohi-vā*—line space  
*koka'anga, nimamea'a*—barkcloth making, art of  
*Konokula*—Redawake  
*Kono'uli*—Blackawake  
*kula*—red  
*kupesi*—geometric design  
*lālanga, nimamea'a*—mat-weaving, art of  
*lalava, tufunga*—kafa-sennit lashing, art of  
*langafale, tufunga*—house-building, art of  
*langanga*—measuring units which can also be based on half the width of a paka koka'anga or rubbing table  
*langi, otu*—royal tombs  
*lei*—two or necklace  
*Lei'ataua*—Bitwinshadows  
*maama*—enlightenment  
*maau*—order  
*mahangalei*—twins of opposite sex or pairs of opposite sex  
*mālie*—beauty  
*mata*—eye  
*mata'i fa'o*—eye of the nail

*mata'i hāmala*—eye of the hammer  
*mata'i hui*—eye of the needle  
*mata'i kili*—eye of the saw  
*mata'i peni*—eye of the pen  
*mata'i polosi*—eye of the brush  
*mata kula*—red eye  
*mata matangi*—wind, eye of the wind  
*mataniume* —alumeye  
*mata noa* —zero eye  
*matanoa* —peaceful countenance  
*mata'uli*—black eye  
*mā'uli*—midwife  
*mo*—and  
*moa'uli*—matchmaker  
*Mohekonokono* —Sleep-yet-Awake  
*ngatu*—barkcloth  
*ngatu tāhina*—white-marked barkcloth  
*ngatu tā'uli*—black-marked barkcloth  
*ninamea'a*—fine arts  
*niumui*—young coconut, the cleverness of a young coconut  
*peau kula*—red wave, tidal wave  
*Pekapekeniume* —Alumswallowbird  
*Pekepekaniume* —Alumswallowbird  
*peku*—blunt  
*potopoto'aniumui*—Tongan proverb that literally means 'the cleverness of a young coconut'.  
*potupotukehekehe*—disharmony  
*potupotutatau*—harmony  
*po'uli*—night  
*pōvai* —club/s  
*tā*—time  
*ta'anga, faiva*—poetry, art of  
*ta'etatau*—asymmetry  
*tākohikupesi, tufunga*—sculptural drawing, art of  
*tākupesi, tufunga*—graphic designing, art of  
*talanoa*—peaceful talk  
*tātātau, tufunga*—tattooing, art of  
*tatau*—symmetry  
*tātongitongi, tufunga*—sculpture, art of  
*tā-vā*—time-space  
*tāvalivali, tufunga* —painting, art of

*tefito-he-sino* —body-centered

*tefito-he-tu'a-sino* —non-body-centered

*toka*—measuring units which can also be based on half the width of a paka

*koka'anga* or rubbing table

*tufunga*—material arts

*tuikakala, nimamea'a*—flower-designing, art of

*ua*—two

*uho*—content

*'uli*—black

*vaka*—medium; boat; canoe

*vahanoa* —peaceful ocean

*vela*—fieriness