

# Understanding Diaspora Pasifika (Sāmoan and Tongan) Intergenerational Sense-Making and Meaning-Making through Imageries

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Article abstract

This article presents imagery representative of Pasifika (Sāmoan and Tongan) diaspora (nofo ‘i fafo o Sāmoa/ tu’a Tonga) intergenerational sense-making and meaning-making. The main author, Ruth (Lute) Faleolo, presents a selection of eleven photographs shared with her by Pasifika knowledge holders across Aotearoa (New Zealand), Australia, and the United States, alongside six personally photographed people/events in Aotearoa. Collectively, these images show important Pasifika meaning-making and sense-making processes that are occurring intergenerationally in tu’a Tonga/ nofo ‘i fafo o Sāmoa. These selected images were collected as part of an ongoing larger study of Pasifika migration and mobilities (2013-2023). The second author, Sh’Kinah Tuia’ana Nauna Faleolo, presents pieces from her art collection (2015): Two Woven Identities and discusses her meaning-making and Indigeneity enfolding these pieces while growing up in Aotearoa. The third author, Lydiah Malia-Lose Faleolo, presents her Identity artwork (2019) and Duality design pieces (2023) that demonstrate her current and continued Indigeneity as a Sāmoan Tongan woman, living and studying in Australia. The fourth author, Nehemiah Thomas Faleolo’s artistic expressions captured in his annotated sketches and sculpture work were selected from a collection he had created in Australia. Nehemiah’s respected artwork and meaning-making, carefully documented by him in 2020 was (posthumously) selected by Faleolo family members, from his private exhibition and collection (Brisbane). Scanned documents and photographs stored on his mobile device have been contributed to this article on his behalf, with permission.

For many Pasifika living in Aotearoa, Australia and the United States, the processes of intergenerational sense-making and meaning-making occur in the diaspora contexts of faith, family, community, and education. The imageries presented by Ruth (Lute) Faleolo follow these thematic contexts, with short analyses about the intergenerational sense-making and meaning-making observed per photo. The purpose of her contribution to the discussion is to promote imageries as a way of conveying Pasifika understandings and knowledge. Sh’Kinah Tuia’ana Nauna Faleolo, Lydiah Malia-Lose and Nehemiah Thomas Faleolo’s contributions present personal accounts of intergenerational sense-making and meaning-making as experienced through their artistic expressions, within nofo ‘i fafo o Sāmoa/ tu’a Tonga contexts of Aotearoa and Australia.

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Faleolo, 2024



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## UNDERSTANDING DIASPORA PASIFIKA (SĀMOAN AND TONGAN) INTERGENERATIONAL SENSE-MAKING AND MEANING-MAKING THROUGH IMAGERIES

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with  
Nehemiah Thomas Faleolo  
(2003-2020)

**Ruth (Lute) Faleolo**, daughter of ‘Ahoia and Falakika Lose ‘Ilaiū, from Tonga. As an educator/researcher, she collaborates across multiple trans-Tasman and trans-Pacific projects to promote Pasifika well-being and academic success. Ruth’s current postdoctoral work (2020-2023) extends her PhD study of Pasifika trans-Tasman migrant well-being (2015-2020), by considering Pasifika mobilities, to and through Australia.

**Sh’Kinah Tuia’ana Nauna Faleolo**, eldest daughter of Thom Faleolo, from Saleaula, Falelima, Pago Pago and Leulumoega, Sāmoa; and of Ruth (Lute) Faleolo, from Mu’a Tatakamotonga, Pukotala, Houma and Ha’alalo, Tonga. As an artist and scientist, she has embraced both of her strengths in her meaning-making. Sh’Kinah has completed a Bachelor of Biomedical Sciences (2017-2019), and conjoint Bachelor of Dental Technology (2020-2022) and Bachelor of Dental Prosthetics (2021-2023). She has been a Research Assistant for the Pasifika mobilities project since 2021.

**Lydiah Malia-Lose Faleolo**, third daughter of Thom Faleolo, from Saleaula, Falelima, Pago Pago and Leulumoega, Sāmoa; and of Ruth (Lute) Faleolo, from Mu'a Tatakamotonga, Pukotala, Houma and Ha'alalo, Tonga. As an artist, she brings her cultural concepts and meaning-making into her studies and designs. Lydiah is currently undertaking an architectural degree. She has been a Research Assistant for the Pasifika mobilities project since 2022.

**Nehemiah Thomas Faleolo**, second son of Thom Faleolo, from Saleaula, Falelima, Pago Pago and Leulumoega, Sāmoa; and of Ruth (Lute) Faleolo, from Mu'a Tatakamotonga, Pukotala, Houma and Ha'alalo, Tonga. His contributions in this article are posthumous and had been documented by Nehemiah during 2020.

**Abstract:** This article presents imagery representative of Pasifika (Sāmoan and Tongan) diaspora (nofo 'i fafo o Sāmoa/ tu'a Tonga) intergenerational sense-making and meaning-making. The main author, Ruth (Lute) Faleolo, presents a selection of eleven photographs shared with her by Pasifika knowledge holders across Aotearoa (New Zealand), Australia, and the United States, alongside six personally photographed people/events in Aotearoa. Collectively, these images show important Pasifika meaning-making and sense-making processes that are occurring intergenerationally in tu'a Tonga/ nofo 'i fafo o Sāmoa. These selected images were collected as part of an ongoing larger study of Pasifika migration and mobilities (2013-2023). The second author, Sh'Kinah Tuia'ana Nauna Faleolo, presents pieces from her art collection (2015): *Two Woven Identities* and discusses her meaning-making and Indigeneity enfolding these pieces while growing up in Aotearoa. The third author, Lydiah Malia-Lose Faleolo, presents her *Identity* artwork (2019) and *Duality* design pieces (2023) that demonstrate her current and continued Indigeneity as a Sāmoan Tongan woman, living and studying in Australia. The fourth author, Nehemiah Thomas Faleolo's artistic expressions captured in his annotated sketches and sculpture work were selected from a collection he had created in Australia. Nehemiah's respected artwork and meaning-making, carefully documented by him in 2020 was (posthumously) selected by Faleolo family members, from his private exhibition and collection (Brisbane). Scanned documents and photographs stored on his mobile device have been contributed to this article on his behalf, with permission.

For many Pasifika living in Aotearoa, Australia and the United States, the processes of intergenerational sense-making and meaning-making occur in the diaspora contexts of faith, family, community, and education. The imageries presented by Ruth (Lute) Faleolo follow these thematic contexts, with short analyses about the intergenerational sense-making and meaning-making observed per photo. The purpose of her contribution to the discussion is to promote imageries as a way of conveying Pasifika understandings and knowledge. Sh'Kinah Tuia'ana Nauna Faleolo, Lydiah Malia-Lose and Nehemiah Thomas Faleolo's contributions present personal accounts of

intergenerational sense-making and meaning-making as experienced through their artistic expressions, within nofo 'i fafo o Sāmoa/ tu'a Tonga contexts of Aotearoa and Australia.

**Keywords:** Church; cultural heritage; diaspora—nofo 'i fafo o Sāmoa/ tu'a Tonga; images/imagery/ imageries; Indigeneity; family; material culture; traditions

*Dedicated to our loved ones who have passed on, ahead of us.  
We continue in hope.  
(Roma/Loma 8: 28)*

At the outset of the discussion, we would like to state our positionality as artists/ academics/researchers, in alignment with our shared traditions—which is to fa’a feiloa’i/ fakafe’iloaki[1] — passed onto us from our Sāmoan and Tongan elders, while growing up in Aotearoa (New Zealand). Today, most of our family live and work in Australia and we continue to embrace these important ways of knowing, living and being. Tulou, tulou! [2] We first and foremost give honour and glory to our Creator, God. Viia le Atua! Fakafeta’i kihe ‘Eiki! Secondly, in accordance with the cultural protocols of the First Nations people of Australia, we acknowledge that we live and work on the unceded lands of the Yugambah people, and it is our hope that, as we speak up for our Samoan and Tongan Indigenous knowledge holders, we will hear the resounding voices of Indigenous knowledge holders across all of Oceania.[3]

### **Ruth (Lute) Faleolo**

I am the first author and the second daughter of ‘Ahoia and Falakika Lose ‘Ilaiū. Both my parents are pastors of a Tongan Pentecostal church in Aotearoa, where I first learnt valuable biblical truths about my identity as an Oceanian descendant from Mu’a Tatakamotonga, Pukotala Ha’apai, Houma and Ha’alalo (Fainga’a-Manu Sione et al. 2024). Significant cultural perspectives and collective meanings taught to me, by my parents and grandparents, nurtured my identity as a Pasifika Tongan woman, while growing up in Aotearoa. These are important perspectives and meanings that continue to guide my personal and professional journey. My Sāmoan husband and I now live in Australia, while working alongside multi-generational and multi-sited Pasifika collectives in Aotearoa, Australia, Sāmoa, Tonga and the United States. Our cultural perspectives and meanings have naturally been passed onto our Aotearoa-born Sāmoan and Tongan children, now young adults who are studying/working and living in Aotearoa and Australia.

### **Sh’Kinah Tuia’ana Nauna Faleolo**

I am the second author and the eldest daughter of Thom Gregory and Ruth (Lute) Faleolo. Both my parents have always valued their Sāmoan and Tongan cultures in Aotearoa and Australia nofo ‘i fafo o Sāmoa/ tu’a Tonga.[4] The impartation of their cultural values to my siblings and me, while living in Aotearoa, and later in Australia, has helped us to maintain our intergenerational cultural identities in these places. Important cultural concepts (Sāmoan language/ lea faka-Tonga), alongside our shared cultural values were conveyed through their regular teachings to us while growing up, and even today when we gather (especially during our faka-famili[5] times). My artwork shared in this article

shows my connections and appreciation for my Sāmoan and Tongan cultures. I am proud of my Pasifika Indigeneity.

### **Lydia Malia-Lose Faleolo**

I am the third author and also the third daughter of Thom Gregory and Ruth (Lute) Faleolo. Both Sāmoan and Tongan cultural identities are reflected in my artforms and imageries performed in my everyday living; be it in my music playlist, Pasifika dance, or selected clothing for certain important events. I have grown up surrounded by my mother's cultural furnishings and cultural fabrics used throughout our home and personal property. Naturally, my familiarity with these materials has influenced my understandings of who I am in Australia and especially who I am as an artist/student training to be an architect. I have seen how these artistic expressions (paintings, sketches, and other visual imagery) are used for birthdays, anniversaries, and other important milestones that we celebrate; these creative traditions continue to embed and foster a strong Sāmoan and Tongan identity.

### **Nehemiah Thomas Faleolo**

Nehemiah is our second son, and I, Ruth, lovingly write this positionality statement on his behalf, as his mother. We have always raised our children, including Nehemiah, to respect their cultural roots, and to remember where we as Pasifika peoples have come from. Nehemiah was always a kind and considerate individual who, not only maintained his strong familial connections with his Sāmoan and Tongan cultural heritage and identity, but respectfully acknowledged his communal upbringing and birthplace in Aotearoa, embracing his close accord with Māori language and cultural designs. What is presented in this article is a selection of his artwork and annotated designs that capture his intergenerational meaning-making processes, as a young artist and budding mechanical engineer. Nehemiah's strong cultural affiliations to his birthplace (Aotearoa) and cultural heritage (Sāmoa and Tonga) were evident in his very close friendships formed with other young Māori and Pasifika in both Ōtara, Aotearoa and Beenleigh, Australia, where he thrived. These significant cultural connections are evident in his writings and in the imagery captured through his artwork.

### **Pasifika Imagery—Relevancy to our Art and Research**

Images are a powerful way to represent Pasifika research observations and findings (Dyck et al. 2022; Dyck & Fanamanu 2024); however, in Ruth's earlier experiences within Australian Mobilities and Pacific Studies, the use of her Pasifika peoples' images was not always welcome. She was often told by editors that she needed to downsize her article by removing images. Ruth recalls an instance while presenting images at an Australian Pacific History symposium, when an elderly non-

Pacific scholar, awaiting to present his paper, jokingly scoffed at her PowerPoint slides when she put up the images. He declared to the audience, while directing his mockery at Ruth: “Oh great! More pictures of your relatives!” Others in the room laughed as if in agreement with this statement but she pressed on and spoke endearingly about the images she had selected to show. Ruth bantered: “Oh now, that’s my uncle, that’s my cousin, that’s my aunty, and my other cousin...” The audience warmed up after that and showed an appreciation for the authentic narratives that were inter-woven with the imagery on display. This experience tells us four things about some non-Pacific researchers working in our Pasifika contexts:

- 1) they think we only take pictures of our relatives;
- 2) they are not overly impressed by our candid use of everyday Pasifika images in an academic presentation; or
- 3) we get the pictures as insiders, so this significantly de-values our work and research in their eyes, as outsiders who may not have easy access to these scenarios and intimate images (So, the joke that we are related is possibly FOMO[6] or jealousy?); and,
- 4) they do not see the value nor the power of imageries in our storytelling and contemporary Pasifika research contexts.

Just a side note on this; accessibility and familiarity in Pasifika research spaces is not a negative. It is a strength. In fact, the more connected and well known you are in your research spaces, as a Pasifika working with another Pasifika, the better the research will be. Being a fly on the wall observer does seem a bit weird to us on the inside, looking out. We prefer that we are not studied like lab experiments. Should you want to know more about us, join us, in the circle and capture the essence and authenticity of being there, engaging with us. So, this is food for thought if you are on the outside, looking in, wanting to get authentic understandings and images!

Our takeaway from such experiences is that we, Pasifika researchers, need to be the change; we need to promote our understandings and knowledge, in our way—from our perspectives, using our methods—without apology (Fainga’a-Manu Sione et al. 2024; Tone & ‘Ilaiū Talei 2024). It is important to acknowledge that there are non-Pacific researchers who do understand our ways of knowing. There is a level of reciprocal respect that is known by most Pasifika researchers and practitioners as *va/vā* (socio-spatial relations). This is a space that needs to be built and maintained for knowledge sharing to take place properly (Fa’avae et al 2022; Faleolo 2021). Every now and then, we find an individual in academia that has this understanding. Ruth’s academic mentor, Professor Paul Memmott[7] is one such person who has always encouraged her to use valuable photos she has taken during participant observations. “Ruth, one picture speaks a thousand words, so use these images when you can, to convey key Pasifika knowledge” (personal communication, 31 October 2016). Other open-minded scholars, like Associate Professor Katherine Ellinghaus and Dr. Rachel Standfield[8] are invaluable colleagues of Ruth, who acknowledge her as a Pasifika

researcher and the significance of her Pasifika understandings. This kind of support has allowed Ruth to flourish. Her self-directed Pasifika Mobilities study has further opened up spaces for other Pasifika researchers; together we have been able to promote our ways of knowing, living and being in academia. We remain grateful to these mentors for their continued support of our meaning-making processes, within our research.

## **Pasifika Images Promote and Pass on Our Understandings**

Our Pasifika knowledge systems and narratives are often captured in photographic images; recorded and re-told through other forms of artistic imagery, including audio and visual recordings of song, dance, merriment, and movement (Johansson 2024); as well as in hand-drawn pictures, patterns, and familiar cultural designs (Dyck & Fanamanu 2024; Fainga'a-Manu Sione et al. 2024; Faleolo et al. 2024; Tone & 'Ilaiū Talei 2024). We also have become adept at sharing our intergenerational ways of knowing through the internet—vahaope[9] (Faleolo 2020a; Fehoko et al. 2021). Later in this discussion, Sh'Kinah shares art pieces from her collection *Two Woven Identities*, which she had submitted during high school in Aotearoa (2015), towards the completion of her NCEA (National Certificate of Educational Achievement) Level 2 art portfolio.[10] Her creative imagery captures the significance of intergenerational meaning-making in her processes of cultural identity formation, while growing up in Aotearoa. What is significant about this particular collection is that Sh'Kinah travelled across the Tasman Sea, by plane, carrying these large boards in December 2015. They not only adorned her new family home in Brisbane, on their arrival, but were a source of discussion and artistic inspiration for her younger siblings growing up in Australia. The significance of displaying one's cultural art in the family home is likened to the use of traditional material culture in our Sāmoan and Tongan fale[11] back in the Islands; artistic creativity is esteemed as a way of intergenerational cultural connection in diaspora contexts.

This article is our small contribution towards increasing understandings of how Pasifika are sense-making and meaning-making in nofo 'i fafo o Sāmoa/ tu'a Tonga settings. The images have been collated throughout research carried out with Sāmoan and Tongan individuals, families and collectives in Aotearoa, Australia, and the United States. The use of Pasifika research methods, like e-talanoa (Fa'avae et al. 2022; Faleolo 2023a) and the talanoa moe vā methodological approach (Faleolo 2021) has allowed us to build a reciprocal and respectful relationship with multi-sited informants and participants of the research we are undertaking with Pasifika collectives (Fainga a-Manu Sione et al. 2023a; Faleolo 2021; 2023a).

Larsen (2008) promotes photographic images as an effective ethnographic method of representing accounts of mobility. They can convey what words often cannot. The images carry meanings and understandings shared by the owners of these photographs, for the purpose of promoting their stories. We are mindful that, as



Pasifika migrants to foreign nations, their details are to be kept anonymous for the security and safety of their families (Faleolo 2023c). Only general locations and place names are given in this account of their mobilities; however, in appreciation of those who have provided the images presented here, they are named in the final acknowledgement section.

Pasifika peoples in our contemporary collectives have always captured and stored their own imageries, both still and moving images. Ruth still has vivid memories of her own mother's sitting room walls and hallway walls (back in the '80s) decorated with numerous large sized picture frames that were filled with 20-30 polaroid pictures each. Photos of family members (nuclei and extended) who were in Tonga, Australia, the United States, and Aotearoa. Ruth's mother's stories connected her household to these many faces that peered at her through the yellow-stained glass; because each time she sat with Falakika Lose, looking at a frame, her mother would pick out a member and tell (and re-tell) memory stories about them, explaining the day the photo was taken, and how old she or Ruth was when it happened. So, having such experiences from her own upbringing, fostered her intrigue with the photos that people chose to display in their homes and the stories connected to those images.

Nowadays, this type of image-memory collection relating to family and sociocultural narratives is presented online, particularly through social media accounts, where people collect, store, and share these pictures with others (Faleolo 2023b; 2023c). As researchers, we treat both face-to-face and virtual spaces with respectful and reciprocal Pasifika protocols, acknowledging and connecting with owners of these knowledges in a way that maintains our *vā* (Enari & Matapo 2020). The analysis of these imageries uses *talanoa moe vā* to unpack meanings and narratives behind each image. Further analysis of contexts and meanings behind some images shared by online informants is carried out using the social media accounts where the photos were first posted online. The dialogue and texts shared with these images are often used to further identify aspects that may have been missed on initial *e-talanoa* (online dialogue). What is interesting and different between the online contemporary collections of photos and those stored on walls or in albums within Pasifika homes, is the movements or active motions captured more today than before. Previously, people's collections often showed formal and still standing poses, with minimal action photos. Also valuable to the study is the online collection of audio and livestream videos that are often shared on social media platforms. These latter types of imageries have not been presented in this article and are a topic for future discussion, although digital funeral livestreaming has been considered already by other Pasifika authors, Enari and Rangiwai (2021).

Pasifika are often asked by non-Pasifika people why we research and record life experiences of Pasifika in diaspora. As mentioned previously, Ruth was questioned as to why she promotes and presents Pasifika knowledge using images. The simple

answer to both queries, is so that Pasifika are not misunderstood, misinterpreted, or misrepresented; so that we are seen, heard, and, understood as a strong, agentic, and, connected peoples living and collectively moving through our homelands and diasporic contexts. Many Pasifika living in diaspora, away from the original Pacific contexts from which our cultural practices and values extend, are often misunderstood by non-Pasifika in the new spaces we have settled in, or misrepresented by social and economic statistics framed by mainstream deficit theory. It is our hope that this article and ongoing work from our research captures and presents imageries that are truthful to the essence of Pasifika people's migration journeys and progressive mobilities in Aotearoa, Australia, and the United States.

It is important to acknowledge that negative stereotyping and misrepresentations in media and literature of Pasifika migrant experiences within diaspora contexts is not unique to us. We are only too aware of the similarity of experiences for most Indigenous peoples in diaspora contexts including: Tangata Whenua—Indigenous Māori of Aotearoa; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of Australia, and the First Nations people of North America. All these nations and peoples have had similar misrepresentation and deficit framing applied to them and their ways of life (communities and cultures). It is culturally appropriate and of utmost importance that we acknowledge all these Indigenous peoples and their unceded spaces belonging to them, that we now live and work in as Pasifika.

## **Countering Negative Stereotypes**

The typical stereotypes of Pasifika pumped out by media coverage of urban crime is commonly aimed at exposing ethnic minorities despite such offences being a wider societal issue. Media tends to repeat and magnify the incidences of a percentage of Pasifika (small in comparison to the populations in which they exist) creating imageries and narratives that are used to taint the remaining Pasifika populations who live and lead good, honest, and hardworking lives in these places. Such journalism is written, unfortunately, by deficit-minded individuals and biased opinions geared towards perpetuating negative imagery in the minds of society that further generates fears or dislike of Pacific Islanders. It is unfortunate that such negative imaginaries exist after so much progress has been made globally towards equity and equality. Contemporary racism aimed towards Indigenous peoples, like Pasifika, is the effect of age-old colonial structures; much like the hangover from colonial drunkenness that has tainted the Oceanian realm since the arrival of European ships and their institutions on our shores.

Our aim with the collated images in this article is to counteract the deficit theories of Pasifika that are easily widespread and often go unchallenged. For instance, Pasifika are succeeding in church, community, family, and education (and there are more areas). Such imageries of a people, who have developed positive sociocultural systems within

their diaspora contexts and are thriving and contributing to society as a result, are not always welcomed by journalists or researchers seeking to entice readership with negative stories. This is not to say that we do not have any negative experiences, but that is not the focus here. This is discussed by several others elsewhere (Durham et al. 2019; Loto et al. 2006; Shepherd & Ilalio 2015). What is often not impressed by media and literature is how Pasifika have built-in defences and inherent agency within our collectives to counter and overcome challenges (Enari & Faleolo 2020; Faleolo 2020a; 2023b; 2023c). The ways that sense-making and meaning-making help to make a difference in the Pasifika families and communities is through the tough times when they pull their resources together or create opportunities for one another to grow from, and through, the struggle. Some of the images also show that, when it is time to celebrate and uplift individual/s in our collectives, we come together to strengthen va/vā (sociocultural relational spaces connecting Pasifika) with that person and his/her family (Fainga'a-Manu Sione et al. 2024).

For many Pasifika growing up in Aotearoa, Australia, and the United States, the processes of intergenerational sense-making and meaning-making occur in the diaspora contexts of faith, family, community, and education.

## **Intergenerational Sense-Making and Meaning-Making**

What is intergenerational sense-making and meaning-making? For this article, it is the act or process of interaction, communication or influencing that relates two or more generations. For instance, talanoa (ongoing dialogue) between elders and young children, or youth and their parents, whereby they are finding meanings and defining critical knowledge about their way of life, within their relational connections.

In Pasifika contexts of faith, beliefs in God, origin, destiny, life, death, and eternity stem from understandings often taught intergenerationally at church and in family homes. In Pasifika contexts of family, cultural values such as respect, solidarity and maintaining connections across generations are advocated. In Pasifika community contexts, cultural celebrations and traditions are maintained. And in Pasifika education contexts, the importance of collective success and individuals raising a standard for the next generation are praised.

The photographic imageries that follow are presented in the thematic contexts mentioned, alongside a short analysis about the intergenerational sense-making and meaning-making observed in each photo. Note that the images presented were collected as part of an ongoing larger study of Pasifika migration and mobilities (2013-2023) in Aotearoa, Australia, and the United States.

## Pasifika Diaspora Contexts in the United States

### Figure 1

*Pasifika Women Attending a Wesleyan Church in the U.S., 2019*



Figure 1 is an image of Pasifika women in a Washington-based Wesleyan church in 2019. This image speaks volumes about the intergenerational sense-making and meaning-making that occurs in the faith contexts. The interconnections that occur between Pasifika women of various ages in a diaspora church context is likened to the type of support that a village of women would provide in our Pacific homelands.

The length and style of dress that is worn by these Pasifika women indicates what is culturally appropriate and respectful of one another in the church space. It is the enactment of tauhi vā—an important process of maintaining our sociocultural relationships, as well as nurturing our spiritual connections through our actions towards one another.

**Figure 2**

*Pasifika Children Attending a L.D.S. [Latter Day Saints] Church Sunday Class in California, 2018*



Figure 2 was taken in 2018 of a Pasifika children's primary class, during their Sunday meeting held at the L.D.S. church based in California. They have been adorned physically and spiritually with religious and cultural teachings of how to dress, behave, speak, sing, and perform for onlookers during church events that celebrate and affirm their identity as Pasifika, as believers in Christ. These younger generations of Pasifika are growing up in a state that is a major destination point for Oceanian peoples looking to settle in the United States. The continuous flow and connections between Pacific homelands and these communities allows for material culture and ideas of being Pasifika to be maintained from a young age until maturation. The passing on of material culture, through attire and ways of being, including attending church with fellow Pasifika each week. All this helps to instill and nurture Pasifika meaning-making and sense-making in these contexts. Thus, the image captures how cultural traditions continue to

be taught and performed by the younger generations, as a way of keeping cultural traditions going.

### Figure 3

*Pasifika First Birthday Celebration in the U.S., 2019*



Figure 3 shows the use of material culture in California, at a Tongan child's birthday, and how these moments of celebration become a time to impress upon younger generations a sense of cultural identity.

The following images capture the gathering of Pasifika family members in school sites for the shared purpose of edifying and praising an individual's effort in education. Their success is seen as a positive contribution to the family as a whole, and, furthermore, the Pasifika community that supports this family is also positively impacted. Figures 4 and 5 are both of separate graduation events celebrated by Pasifika groups in California, again using material culture to bring a sense of elevation to the achievement of educational goals.

**Figure 4**

*Pasifika Graduate Celebrates with Family in the U.S., 2018*



**Figure 5**

*Graduation Celebrated by Family and Community in the U.S., 2019*



**Figure 6**

*Tongan Wedding Celebrated by Family in the U.S., 2018*



Figure 6 shows how a Tongan family group has brought special meaning and significance to the institution of marriage, in California, by using material culture.

Figures 3 to 6 are all examples of how Pasifika collectives made up of family groups, village groups or cultural groups will join with other collectives to celebrate individuals and their families in the United States.

Figures 7 and 8 reveal the high value placed on faith contexts for families, where gathering for weekly services and fun activities or shared meals brings more meaning to the intersections happening in the church, community, and family. Both images capture family groups that are members of the L.D.S. church in California.



**Figure 7**

*L.D.S. Pasifika Youth Break Bread as a Church Group in the U.S., 2019*



**Figure 8**

*Church Families Gathered for a Photo at the L.D.S. Oakland Temple, in the U.S., 2019*



## Pasifika Diaspora Contexts in Aotearoa New Zealand

### Figure 9

*Pasifika Families Singing Together in an Aotearoa Church, 2016*



Figure 9 shows several family groups performing a worship song at a South Auckland Assembly of God church in Aotearoa. Some women are wearing traditional attire as a way of edifying the act of church attendance. Such meanings have been translated into younger children wearing their Sunday-best dress also.

Similarly, Figure 10 and Figure 11 reveals the importance placed on church attendance by Pasifika in Aotearoa.

Figures 9, 10 and 11 reveal the intersections of faith, family, and community contexts.

**Figure 10**

*Pasifika Family Celebrates a Baby Baptism in an Aotearoa Catholic Church, 2018*



**Figure 11**

*Sāmoan and Tongan Family Members [12] Ready to Attend an Aotearoa School's Academic Sunday Ceremony in 2015*



Figure 11 shows our Pasifika family's primary school (yellow and navy) or high

school (blue/white and navy) uniforms, further adorned by Oceanian cultural attire. The children are dressed in this way (usually only worn for church services or formal family events) because they are attending a special annual Academic Sunday service hosted by their South Auckland school. The once-a-year service is attended by multiple local churches, represented by parents and children who attend the representative schools. This is like the annual practice of blessing children on the first week of school by Pasifika churches, as shown in Figure 12, where families are gathered outside a Catholic church in Auckland for a milestone photo to mark this occasion. In these very separate physical spaces of church and school, the intersections of faith and education occur very naturally for Pasifika who promote academic achievement alongside increased spirituality, for their children and youth.

**Figure 12**

*Sunday Gathering of Tongan Families to Bless Children Starting the New School Year in an Aotearoa Catholic Church, 2023*



Figures 11, 12 and 13 all reveal the way that education is esteemed by Pasifika, and how there is an expectation for young people to do well in school, as part of their maturation and sociocultural success in Aotearoa.

**Figure 13**

*Pasifika Graduates Celebrate with Song in an Aotearoa High School, 2015*



Figure 13 shows the shared fervour and excitement of Pasifika students graduating from a South Auckland high school, during their Senior Prizegiving event. They are presenting a series of familiar and Oceanian songs, with dance, to say thanks to their parents and teachers, who are listening in. The material culture from Pacific homelands adorning these graduating students carries cultural values from their homelands, passed down through these acts of giving. They have been placed on them by family and friends as they crossed the stage (before this final song). The placement and gifting of ula/kahoa lole (lolly necklaces) are symbols of love and appreciation carried from the Oceanian practice of putting ula/kahoa kakala (floral necklaces) during special events. The placement on these students of these necklaces is to signify and highlight their achievement of success in school.

Figures 14 to 17 are all examples of various community activities that occur in Aotearoa for Pasifika celebration of cultural identity, cultural values, and cultural traditions. These community contexts provide valuable experiences for children, youth,

and adults living in the Pasifika diaspora in Aotearoa to explore and express their understandings of being from the Pacific and belonging to a collective of Oceanic peoples.

**Figure 14**

*Pasifika Students Prepare to Perform for their Church Groups in an Aotearoa Auckland City Pasifika Celebration, 2016*



**Figure 15**

*Cook Islands Students' School Performance in an Aotearoa Public High School, 2015*



**Figure 16**

*Tongan Students and Staff Adorned in Fine Mats in an Aotearoa Tongan Community Event, Hosted by a Public High School, 2015*



**Figure 17**

*Pasifika Children Perform at a Family Fun Day Event in Aotearoa, 2014*



## Pasifika Diaspora Contexts in Australia

Figure 18 shows how multiple Pasifika churches in Logan, Brisbane invited mothers from several families in the community to celebrate their Mothers' Day together. They were served at tables laden with special Pasifika dishes made by local youth groups.

**Figure 18**

*A Pasifika Community Mothers' Day Shared Meal in Australia, 2019*



**Figure 19**

*Pasifika Children[13] Attending a Family PhD Graduation Event in Australia, 2016*





Figure 19 shows two young Pasifika girls wearing pule tasi/ pule taha (two-piece Pasifika style dress) gifted to them by their Tongan grandmother from Aotearoa, who had joined them to attend the family graduation event in Australia. The adult women in the background can be seen wearing similar attire. These events impress upon younger Pasifika children how one is to dress when attending a traditional family or cultural community event.

### Figure 20

*A Multicultural Community Event Attended by Pasifika in Australia, 2019*



Figure 20 is a scene from a community multicultural event that drew crowds of Pasifika families. These types of events are an opportunity for Pasifika to share and celebrate their cultural roots with their families and communities in Australia.

Figures 18, 19, 20 and 21 reveal the intersections between family and community contexts.

**Figure 21**

*A Family [14] Visit to Bring Food and Pray with a Sick Relative while in a Public Hospital in Australia, 2018*



Figure 21 is a snapshot taken when our family visited a relative in hospital. The visit entailed taking items of food and spending time in prayer with the family members

of the relative who was in hospital. The act of serving and caring is taught by the enactment of service and care for others in our extended family.

### Figure 22

*A Pasifika Student Leadership Program Hosted by Griffith University, Australia, 2022*

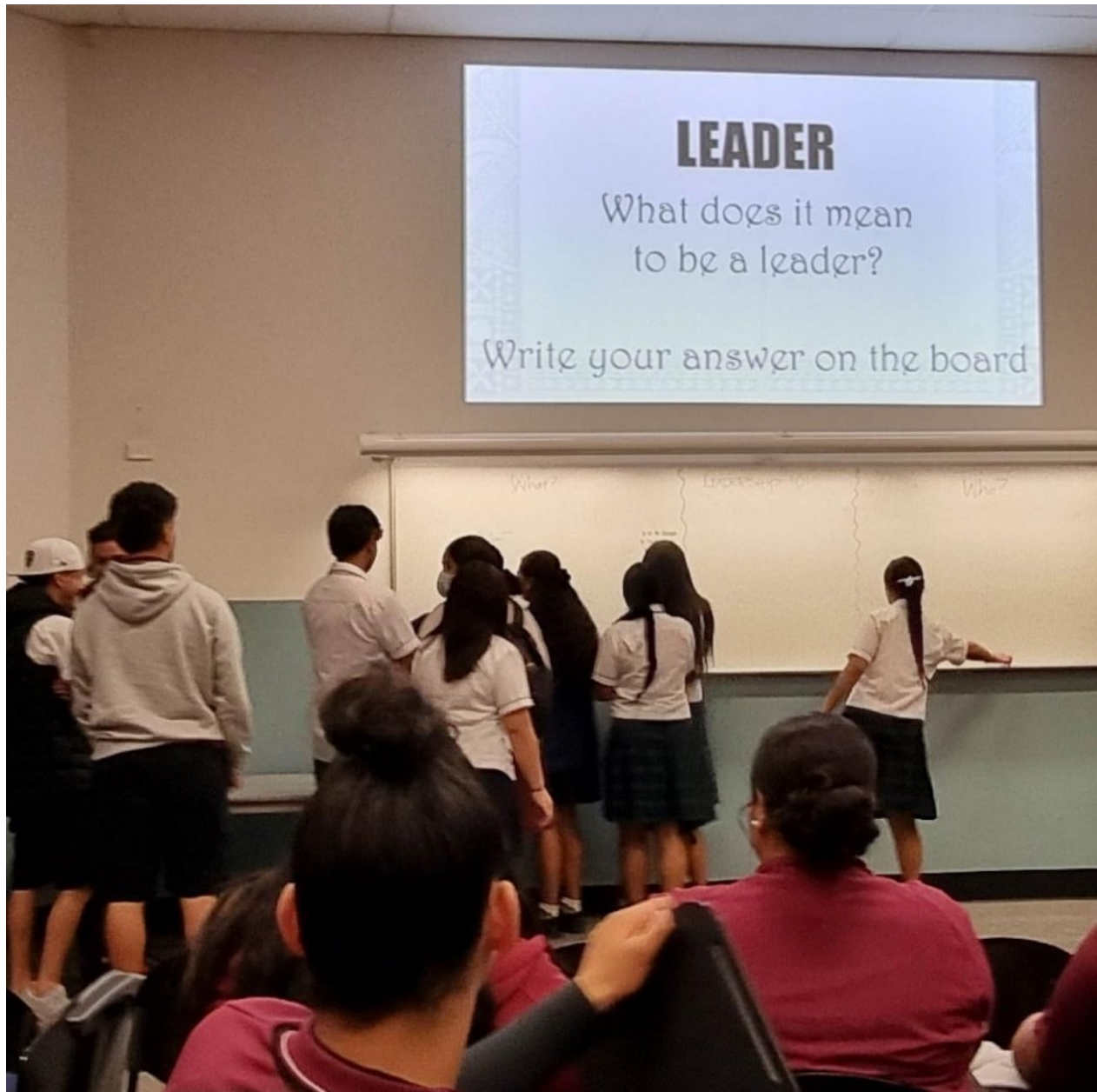


Figure 22 is a Pasifika leadership day that was held in an Australian university to promote cultural strengths and leadership capacity within schools with high Pasifika populations.

**Figure 23**

*Pasifika Students[15] Learning a Sāmoan Dance in a State High School in Australia, 2022.*



Figure 23 captures an afterschool practice with a community-tutored cultural group in an Australian-based high school. The intersection of education and community contexts in this space provides generations of Pasifika students an opportunity to learn about their cultural dances and songs from elders who volunteer to mentor them each year. The end of year school and community presentations of the dances and songs learnt are a highlight in this school's annual calendar.

**Figure 24**

*A Sāmoan Community Dance School's Graduation Performance in Australia, 2022*



Figure 24 is a Sāmoan community cultural celebration during their graduation event. This Australian-based community school passes on Sāmoan cultural knowledge (including language, creative arts and crafts) through afterschool and night classes accessible to all generations requiring this learning.

All seven Australian-based images presented here (Figures 18 to 24) reveal the way that Pasifika diaspora living in Australia have captured their cultural identities and celebrate or express these either in their family, faith, community, or educational contexts. Figures 22, 23 and 24 are evidence of how educational spaces, for Pasifika children and youth growing up in Australia, can provide powerful meaning-making and sense-making. Learners are empowered when their cultural knowledge is acknowledged and embraced by their learning institutions.

## ***Two Woven Identities* by Sh’Kinah Tuia’ana Nauna Faleolo**

The nine images I am sharing below, belong to a collection of 16 images that I had produced over a 6-month timeframe. I recently titled *Two Woven Identities*, after analyzing the nuances of cultural patterns and detailing within the pieces. This analysis happened while having a talanoa with my mother, Ruth (Lute) Faleolo (October 2, 2023) when she invited me to share my work as part of this important discussion. The process of analysis took me back on a reflexive journey where I took some time to study the details and techniques I had used. I remember that my teacher, Mr. Eteuati, had asked us to reference a selection of artists in the techniques we chose in some pieces; however, I am not able to recall who these artists were. Although, I am sure to the learned eye, these artists are known by the style or approach used. During the reflexive talanoa, I was pleasantly surprised at how much I enjoyed discussing these art pieces in depth; especially going through each piece and revisiting my meaning-making at the time of my younger self, living in Aotearoa attending Sir Edmund Hillary Collegiate, Ōtara, Senior School.

As a university graduate, now living in Australia, it was a delight to go back in time and re-imagine those key moments when I was embracing artistic expressions to articulate my Sāmoan and Tongan cultural identity. A lot of the time I worked on these pieces in quiet spaces, in isolation from my peers, because it was during lunch times[16] or at home in our garage-turned study/rumpus space alongside my younger siblings who set up adjacent study desks. It was a pleasantry to do art at home and school because it is something I enjoyed then, and still enjoy doing now alongside my studies. Over time, however, my medium for painting has moved from tangible paints, pastels, and lead (although I still use these from time to time) to touch screen devices, artistry apps, and a stylus pen. Regardless of the time and space that I have travelled between then and now, what still remains strong and resonates with me, as I am analyzing the nine images, is that my cultural connections remain strong.

**Figure 25.** This A4 image shows a comparison between modern and traditional wear. As a Sāmoan Tongan who was born in Aotearoa, for this school art project, I wanted to do something with the patterns that I was always drawing, especially the Tongan typical patterns that I liked to use. When I think about it, I was always drawing these designs because I had grown up seeing other members in my family using these on crafts that were gifted, or sketches that were drawn, or on the family banner posters we used to celebrate each other in our home, while growing up. Our homes, back in Aotearoa and here in Australia, have always been decorated with cultural materials and fabrics that have these designs on them. So, that was my exposure to these designs that I would naturally default to when I doodle. These same patterns are in the pule tasi/pule taha[17] that I am wearing in the image. I have blended these patterns with the woven pattern of the fine mats and kiekie[18] that I wear to show the contrasting images

of my contemporary wear (hoodie and jeans) and my traditional wear (pule tasi/pule taha and kiekie).

### Figure 25

#### *Pencil Sketch*



*Note.* By Sh’Kinah Tuia’ana Nauna Faleolo—a piece from *Two Woven Identities* collection, 2015.

**Figure 26.** This A4 piece shows me putting on the hoodie versus putting on a mat and kiekie; when I put on the kiekie, I feel connected to my culture, and I am remembering my culture. While putting on the hoodie and jeans, it just feels comfortable because it is an everyday wear. I am also conscious that I look like everyone else when I wear these. Growing up in Aotearoa, it was important to have these two types of wear; growing up in Aotearoa it was especially important that I know my culture and that I was comfortable with representing that. I never felt shy when I was wearing my cultural clothes; I felt proud and comfortable whenever wearing my kiekie. Even though some may look at you and think that you look different in that context of Aotearoa, I was proud that I have a beautiful culture. You will see that in the background of this image, there is a plug (end of an extension cord) that is symbolic of my cultural connections.

**Figure 26***Pencil Sketches with Blue*

*Note.* By Sh’Kinah Tuia’ana Nauna Faleolo—a piece from *Two Woven Identities* collection, 2015.

**Figure 27.** In this A5 piece, there are images of me putting on the kiekie. The plain background is purposeful to show off the designs of the kiekie as well as the patterns on the pule taha/pule tasi that I am wearing. I am highlighting these cultural motifs and emphasizing how detailed these traditional patterns are. It goes against what you would normally see in daily wear, where things tend to be quite plain. So, the cultural aspect of my drawings here stands out intentionally to emphasize that part of who I am.

**Figure 28.** This A5 image highlights the kiekie by using a technique of cut-out sections on cartridge sketch paper contrasted against the newspaper. The use of the newspaper was to create a negative space where the cut-out areas would highlight the kiekie sketched image. I also wanted to use some blue lines and blocking with blue masking tape to draw attention to the woven design/patterns of kiekie. The act of putting on my designer kiekie is contrasted against the common newspaper background; this is



material that we received every morning in the mailbox, at the time, so I used it to show how special the kiekie was to me.

**Figure 27**  
*Pencil Sketch with Newspaper*



*Note.* By Sh’Kinah Tuia’ana Nauna Faleolo—a piece from *Two Woven Identities* collection, 2015.

**Figure 28**  
*Pencil Sketch with Blue and Masking Tape*



*Note.* By Sh’Kinah Tuia’ana Nauna Faleolo—a piece from *Two Woven Identities* collection, 2015.

**Figure 29.** These collated images illustrate how the kiekie is made and shows my Nana Falakika Lose’s hands making the kiekie. In the other parts of the A5 image, it shows me putting on my kiekie. The connection between my wearing the kiekie and Nana’s hands making it are that I have a deep sense of appreciation for this material culture that is passed onto us, as traditions from our elders and ancestors.

**Figure 29**  
*Painting*

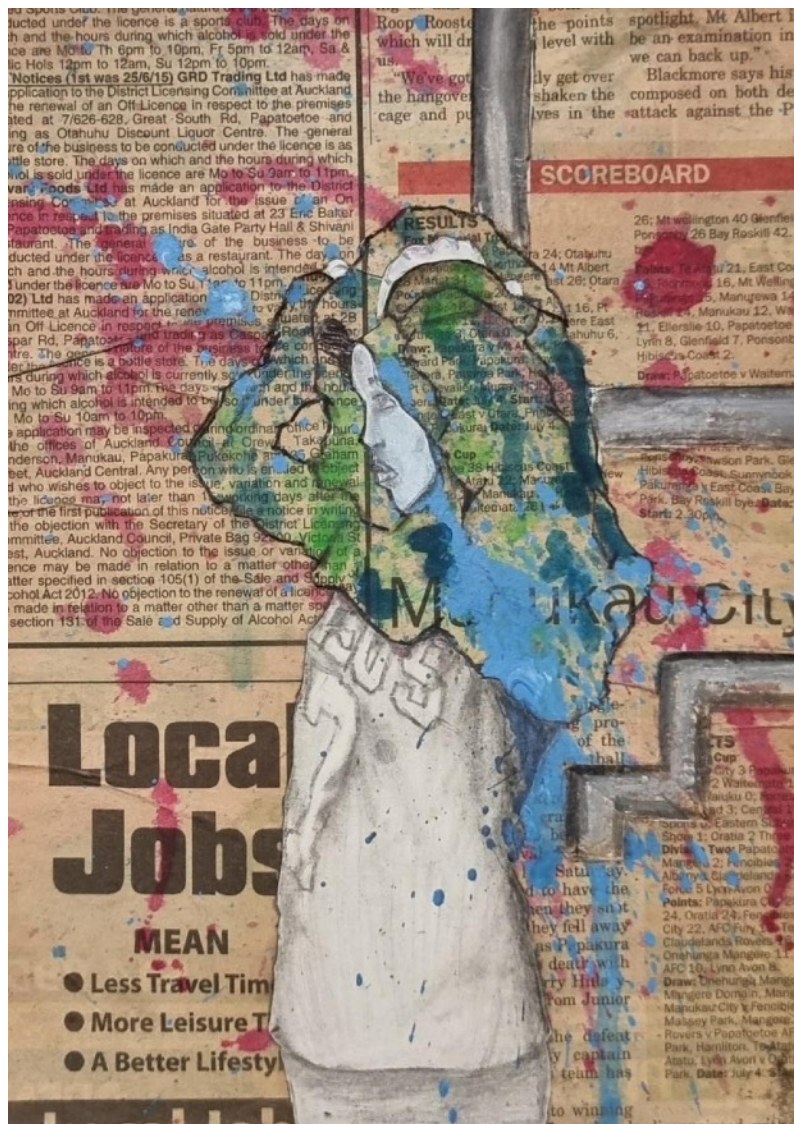


*Note.* By Sh'Kinah Tuia'ana Nauna Faleolo—a piece from *Two Woven Identities* collection, 2015.

**Figure 30.** The use of newspaper across the whole A5 image shows the common clothing that I wore on an everyday basis, while living in Aotearoa at the time. Because my common daily wear in this context was readily available at the local stores, I did not feel the need to be gentle with it when wearing it, or putting it on. This is in contrast to the other images in the collection where I am taking care to be gentle with the kiekie. This contrasting treatment of clothing, that is common or special to me, is

based on what my mother has told me, “The kiekie was made by my grandmother, and added to by your Nana, now passed on through generations.” So, I try to take care of these items knowing that others have worn the kiekie, and it is featured in a lot of our milestone moments. The kiekie is not just for me, it was worn by my mum, my sisters and my aunties.

**Figure 30**  
*Newspaper Sketch and Paint*



Note. By Sh’Kinah Tuia’ana Nauna Faleolo—a piece from *Two Woven Identities* collection, 2015.

**Figure 31 and Figure 32.** These two A3 pieces are actually forming one piece of connected imagery; kind of like my two cultural backgrounds. Both in my Pasifika-ness I

belong to two cultures and, in my upbringing, I have two worlds, modern and traditional. My lifestyle is unlike that of my grandmothers' lives back in the Pacific homelands from where we originate. Because I grew up in Aotearoa, I am shown in these images with a cultural identity as a Pasifika Sāmoan Tongan wearing a pule tasi from Sāmoa, on top of that wearing my kiekie from Tonga. Growing up in Aotearoa, having these cultural influences in my life has made daily life interesting, vibrant and interconnected to others in my cultural ways of life. These images show the interweaving of my grandmother's kiekie traditions with my everyday modern lifestyle, as well as my two cultural identities set in a different time and space to the traditions I embrace—a multidimensional Indigeneity. The extension cords again symbolize my connections to all of these parts of what makes me who I am. The two A3 pieces, adjoining to continue patterns across the two, leads the eye to a staircase that is symbolic of the progressive way that our intergenerational knowledge and material culture continually connects our past and present, and onwards to the future. The way I live my life is reflective of the continuity of my culture in a different context. In a diaspora context, I am still very much connected to my Sāmoan and Tongan roots.

### Figures 31 & 32

*Mixed Sketch, Paint and Newspaper Pieces*

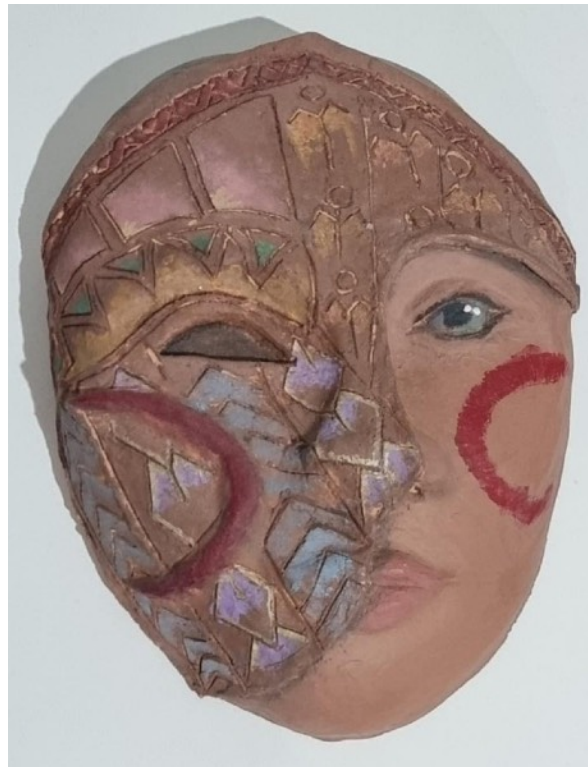


*Note.* By Sh'Kinah Tuia'ana Nauna Faleolo—a two-part piece from *Two Woven Identities* collection, 2015.

## Identity and Duality by Lydiah Malia-Lose Faleolo

Figure 33 is an image of a clay mask currently on display in our family's private exhibition in Brisbane. I created this piece of my art collection during 2019 as part of a school Year 9 Art assignment, *Tribal Mask Designs*. I designed the clay mask with my cultural identity in mind. The designs incorporate both my Tongan and Sāmoan heritage. The structural concept is based on the Tongan war dance hats[19], and then I used both Sāmoan and Tongan patterns to decorate the mask. What is significant about the war dance hats is that they are associated with the people of Wallis and Futuna whose islands were historically linked to both Tonga during the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries as well as Sāmoa since the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The island of Uvea (Wallis) is a place of my ancestors on my mother Ruth (Lute) and grandmother Falakika Lose's lineage through my great-grandmother 'Ana Malia Fisi'ihone Akauola's[20] (1923-1999) father, Halangahu who originated from Uvea (Wallis) and married my great-great-grandmother Nauna—a name that continues to be carried by my elder sister Sh'Kinah Tuia'ana Nauna.

**Figure 33**  
*Clay Mask*

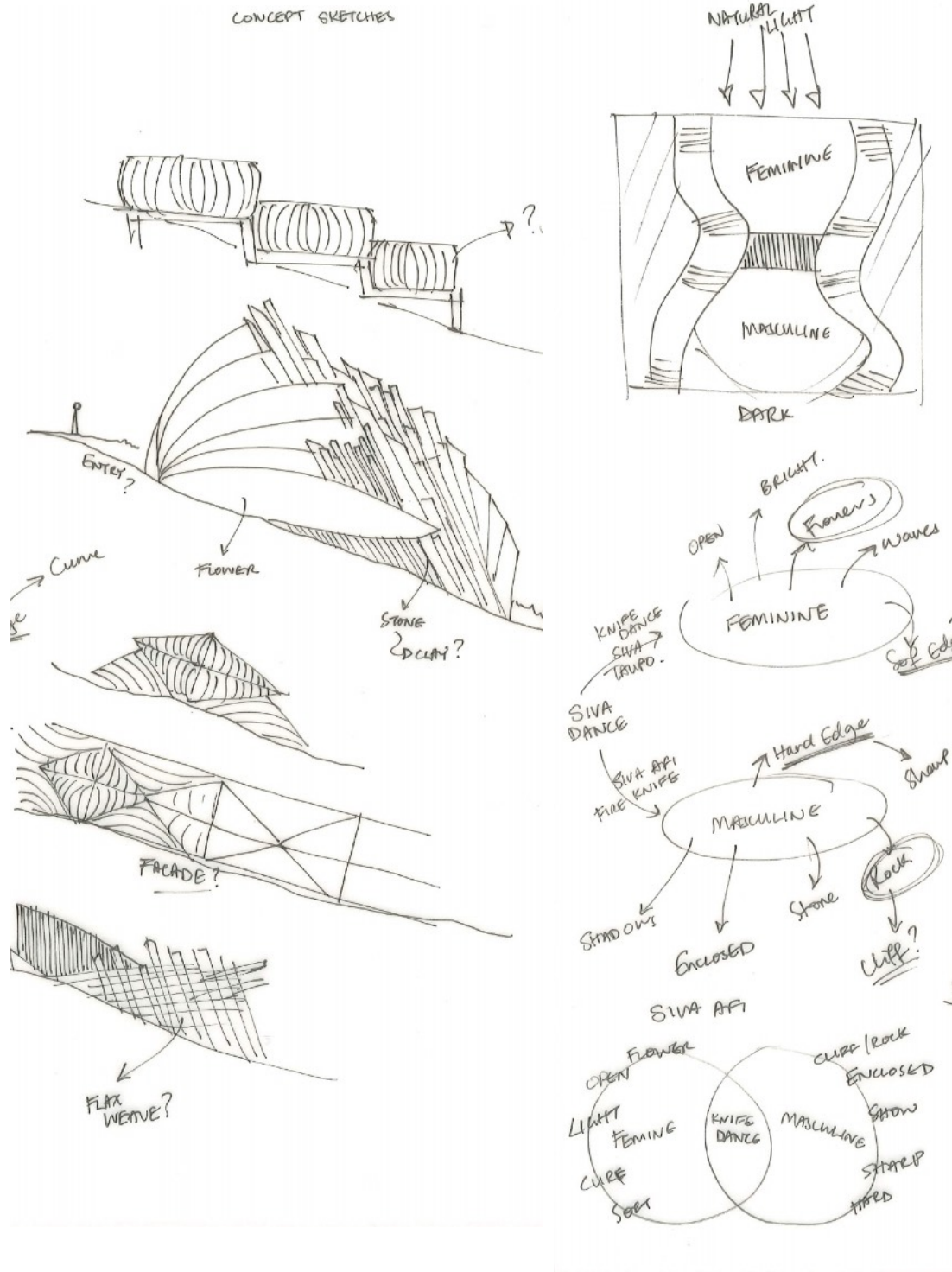


*Note.* By Lydiah Malia-Lose Faleolo—a tribal mask design titled *Identity* on display, private exhibition in Brisbane, 2019.

The designs I capture in the following images of concept sketches and concept models, reveal the beauty of both feminine and masculine aspects of Sāmoan dance that I have come to understand personally. These aspects are points of reference from my own performance experiences (2022) in the presentation of Sāmoan tauluga,[21] as the taupou[22] alongside members of my local school community in Brisbane.[23] I had been selected to perform as a high rank representative of the village[24] (our school) by my Sāmoan cultural mentors/tutors Ms. Leah Aoese and Ms. Sa Tafola. My performance of the tauluga—a traditional Sāmoan dance, considered the apex of Sāmoan art forms and the centrepiece of fa'a-Sāmoa (way of being – the Sāmoan way of life)—brings me great pride in carrying forth my Sāmoan heritage in my studies. This is an applied cultural connection to the villages and islands of my ancestors, and the knowledge and meaning-making gained from my upbringing as the third daughter of my father Leaula Thom Gregory Faleolo, eldest son of Aufa'i Leaula Saolotoga Faleolo (of Saleaula and Falelima, 1944-2021) and Malia Alosia Faleolo (of Pago Pago and Leulumoega, 1940-2022). Here, it is important that I also acknowledge my great-grandparents, Luisa and Toma Suafoa (parents of Malia Alosia Faleolo) and Malepe and Faleolo Aufa'i (parents of Aufa'i Leaula Saolotoga Faleolo). As an artist and as an architectural student in my first year at university, I want to honour my cultural heritage that has come through my father's line of descent from Sāmoa, through Aotearoa, where I was born, and further to Australia, where I currently live and study.

Figure 34 is a series of concept sketches that are part of my architectural design portfolio as a First Year Architecture student, at Griffith University (2023). The conceptual sketches are a selection of a few of my initial thoughts around my Sāmoan cultural heritage in building design. These sketches capture different cultural patterns to show my understandings of feminine and masculine forms in architectural spaces. These concepts of femininity and masculinity are beautifully married in the forms I have seen in two Sāmoan siva/dances that are performed with fire (afi) and knife (nifo oti)—Siva Afi and the Siva Taupou. These imageries of the flames of afi and the hard/sharp edges of the nifo oti are shapes that had come to mind in my concept sketches (Figure 34); replicating the ancient Sāmoan weapons that are still used in traditional dances, performed by our Sāmoan menfolk in the siva afi or by our Sāmoan women using the nifo oti as the taupou, to show their cultural prowess and skillful artforms.

**Figure 34**  
Concept Sketches



Note. By Lydiah Malia-Lose Faleolo, selected initial design ideas from First Year Griffith University architectural design portfolio, submitted as part of her *Duality* project, 2023.



Figure 35 is a conceptual model, made of corrugated cardboard. The model is based on some of the concept sketches (Figure 34), further developed to show how the ideas would translate to structural forms on a sloped landscape (an aspect of the assignment, as part of my architectural design project). Again, the concept model is capturing the different masculine and feminine movements featured in the two different traditional dances of siva afi and siva taupou (taualuga). This duality concept of masculine and feminine movements within Sāmoan cultural forms are developed across variations of this particular model.

### Figure 35

#### *Concept Model*

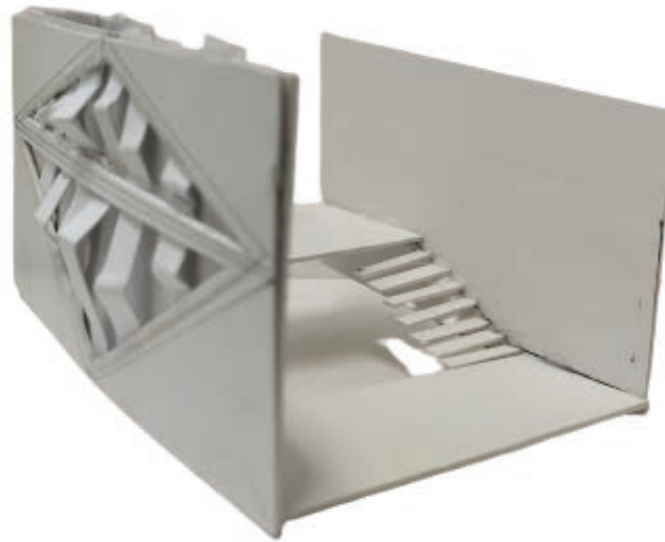


*Note.* By Lydiah Malia-Lose Faleolo—development of design ideas from First Year Griffith University architectural design portfolio, submitted as part of Second Semester project, *Duality*, 2023.

Figure 36 is another conceptual model that further develops the complementary movements and forms of Sāmoan dances (Figure 34; Figure 35)—Siva Afi and Siva Taupou Knife dances—displaying the strengths of both feminine and masculine movements and forms. This model incorporates my cultural concepts of duality into the form and function of the structural design, as shown in the cross-section view of the internal/external aspects.

### Figure 36

*Concept Model, Cross-section of Internal/External Aspects*



*Note.* By Lydiah Malia-Lose Faleolo—development of design ideas from First Year Griffith University architectural design portfolio, submitted as part of Second Semester project, *Duality*, 2023.

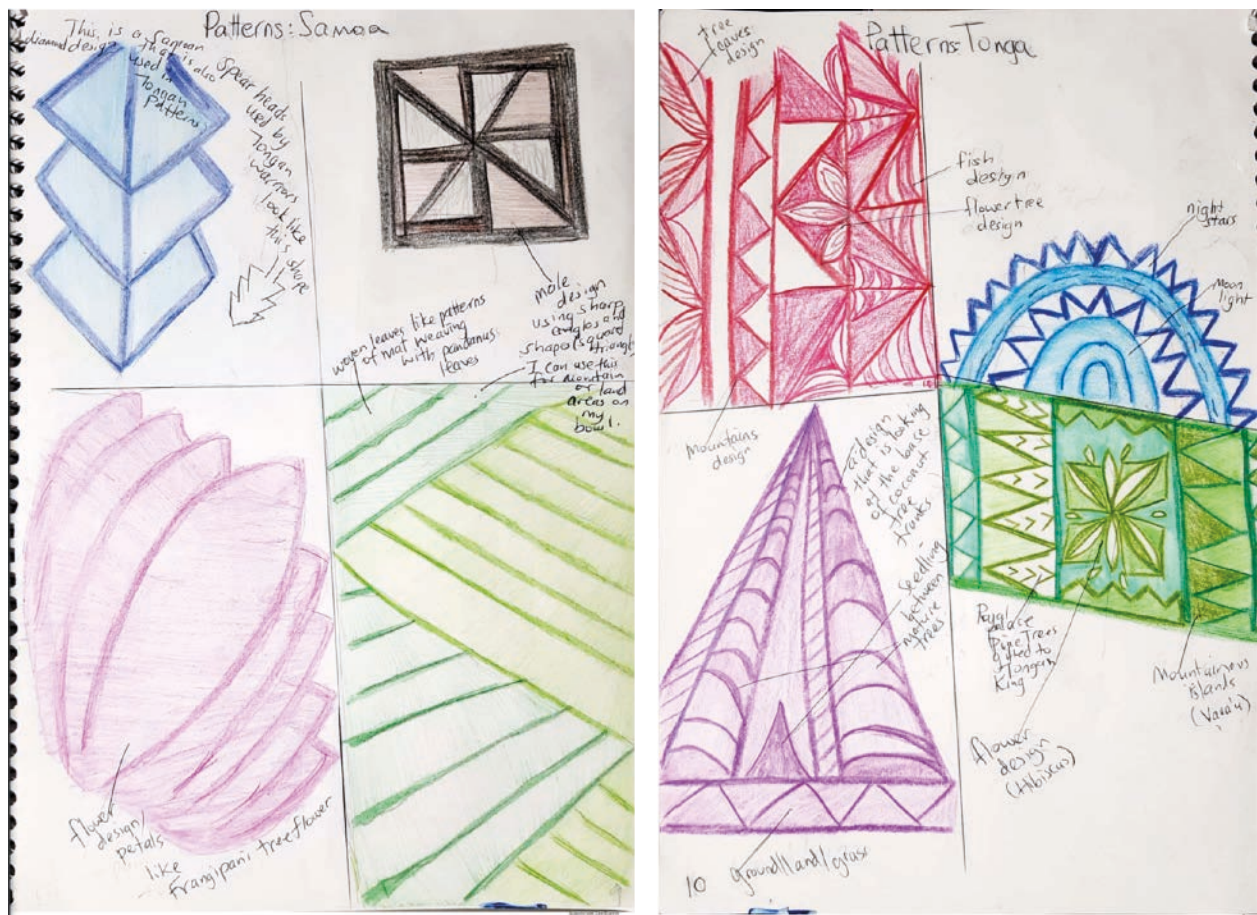
## A Visual Art Project by Nehemiah Thomas Faleolo

Nehemiah had begun his art project in mid-2020, while in isolation[25] and studying from home, to complete work towards the achievement of his Year 11 ATAR (Australian Tertiary Admission Rank). He had planned aspects of the final patterns to be used on his clay sculptured bowl (as shown in Figure 37, Figure 38, and Figure 39).

From his annotated sketches (Figure 37 and Figure 38), we can see that he was embracing his Sāmoan and Tongan cultures, using patterns with which he was familiar. He had often used these motifs on family banners and celebratory posters that he had often collaborated on with others in our family. From a young age, Nehemiah’s love for his culture was evident in his art pieces. This was even more evident in his final art projects and, in particular, the bowl pictured in Figure 39 (being painted) and in Figure 40 pictured at the Beenleigh State High School exhibition. This was to become a significant piece in his artistic collection; one of his treasured final creations (kept in a private exhibition, in Brisbane).

**Figure 37**

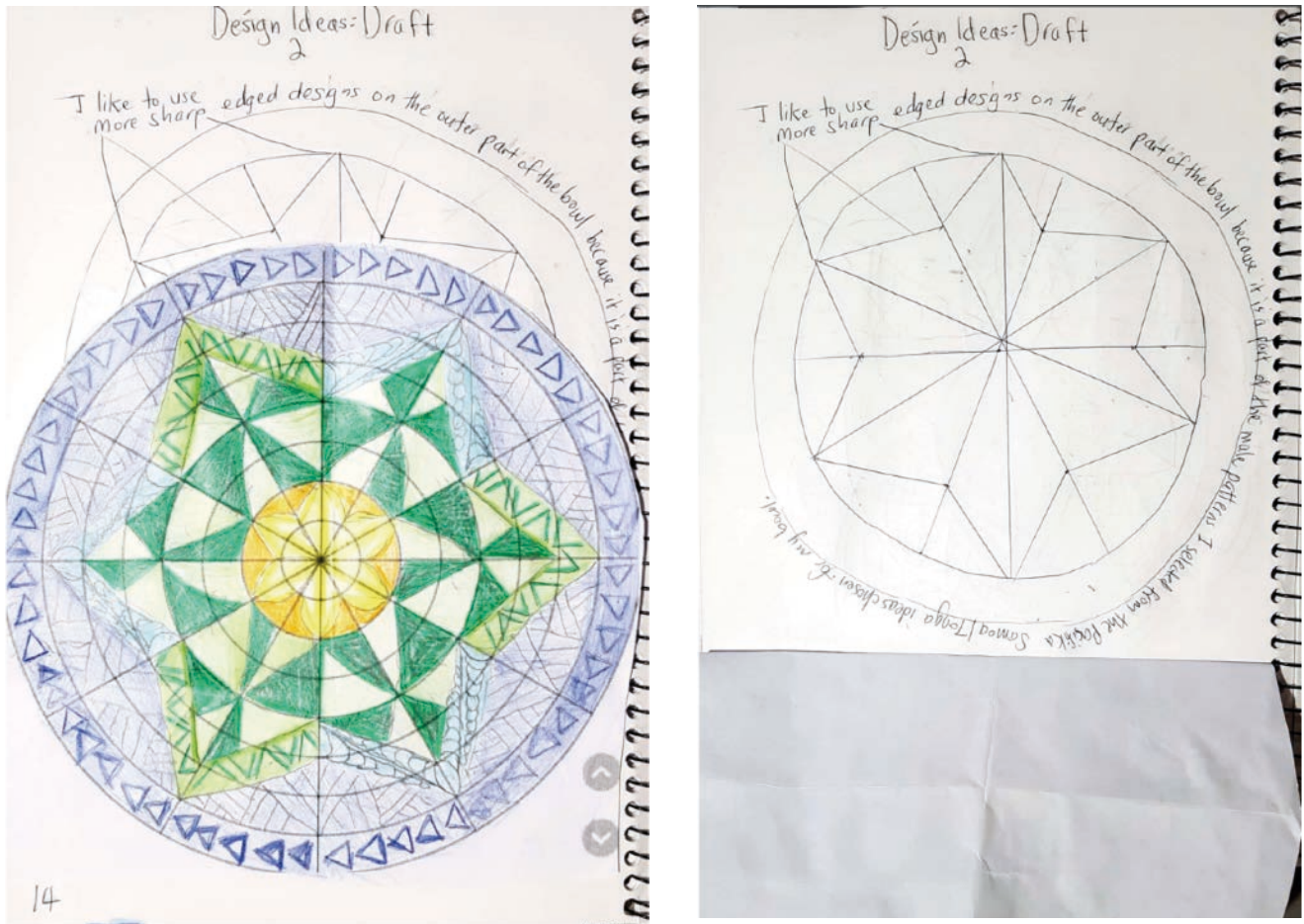
Scanned Extractions from Document (pp. 9-10), *Visual Art in Prac: Bowl*



Note. Annotated patterns, by Nehemiah Thomas Faleolo, 2020.

**Figure 38**

Scanned Extractions from Document (p. 14, with fold-out design), Visual Art in Prac: Bowl



Note. Annotated patterns, by Nehemiah Thomas Faleolo, 2020.

**Figure 39**  
Photo Image



*Note.* Taken by Ruth (Lute) Faleolo on behalf of Nehemiah Thomas Faleolo who had been documenting his progress and completion of his art project: *Visual Art in Prac: Bowl*, 2020.

**Figure 40***Photo Image*

*Note.* Taken by Ruth (Lute) Faleolo and shared in e-talanoa communication with Nehemiah Thomas Faleolo, who had completed and submitted this art project: *Visual Art in Prac: Bowl*, 2020 in time for the Beenleigh State High School Exhibition that year. His bowl was displayed alongside other Year 11 students' completed art projects.

Nehemiah's respected artwork and meaning-making currently sits in a private exhibition and collection (Brisbane). The scanned documents and photographs presented here were posthumously selected, by our family, from his collection. In 2020, these images were scanned and stored on Nehemiah's mobile device and had been emailed to his Art teacher, Landon Toweel,[26] as well as shared on Private Messenger with our family. We remember the joy and satisfaction Nehemiah felt when he had successfully finished his art projects. A passion for culture and creativity are evident in the carefully documented designs and thoughtful crafts produced by Nehemiah.

## Final Thoughts

As the 40 images have revealed, our Pasifika sense-making and meaning-making can easily be presented and better understood through imageries, within research contexts. These artforms are valuable in that they capture and (re)present our Pasifika narratives and intergenerational knowledge, often passed onto us in oral traditions and carried by us across time (tā/ta) and space (vā/va). In particular, the imagery presented in this article captures visuals of our material culture as it is applied to our daily living within nofo 'i fafo o Sāmoa/ tu'a Tonga (diaspora) contexts. Collaboratively, as researchers/artists/authors, we have discussed the multiple intersections of our Indigeneity and cultural heritage in this article. These imageries are a collation of our cultural sense-making and meaning-making as a multi-generational Pasifika family (Sāmoan and Tongan) moving across from our Island homelands of Sāmoa, and Tonga, to trans-Tasman contexts of Aotearoa and Australia. The intergenerational understandings, given to us by our elders and knowledge holders, are reinforced in our artforms such as the imagery that we have chosen to present here. Pasifika research and knowledge sharing practices in academia will advance greatly with the visual representations of our understandings.

## Acknowledgements

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We would like to acknowledge members of our Pasifika collectives in Aotearoa, Australia, and the United States who have provided images for this article. In particular, Rose Vainikolo-Taumoe'anga, Sepi Ohai Manako, and Nehu Tuakalau, have shared 11 of the photos presented. Please note that individuals were not named in these 11 photos to provide confidentiality for members of those collectives. The remaining images were photographed by the main author, Ruth (Lute) Faleolo, during her PhD study (2015-2019) with the University of Queensland, and during her postdoctoral work (2020-2023) carried out with La Trobe University. Members of her family, including the co-authors are named in the footnotes, with permission. Also, other photographic images of art work in this article have been shared with permission and acknowledgement of the artists: Sh'Kinah Tuia'ana Nauna Faleolo, Lydiah Malia-Lose Faleolo, and Nehemiah Thomas Faleolo. Images from the *Duality* project were captured by Lydiah Malia-Lose Faleolo and initially submitted to Griffith University as a part of her assessment work, and re-formatted in this article with permission.

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## ENDNOTES

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1 The Sāmoan concept of fa'a feiloa'i is an appropriate way to greet/meet someone in the Sāmoan way. Similarly, the Tongan concept of fakafe'iloaki is to greet/meet/introduce ones' self to another person when meeting/greeting at the start of conversation or events.

2 'Tulou tulou' is a phrase used in Sāmoan and Tongan contexts to enter/begin an activity respectfully in a sociocultural space. Usually in association with talanoa (to talk, engaging conversation, storytelling, reciprocal or ongoing dialogue).

3 We also acknowledge that our birthplace and extension of 'home' is in Aotearoa, where Māori, as Tangata Whenua are the First Peoples of the Land.

4 The Sāmoan concept of 'nofo 'i fafo o Sāmoa' means staying outside of Sāmoa, as in diaspora; similarly in lea faka-Tonga, the term 'tu'a Tonga' means outside or away from Tonga Islands, as in diaspora.

5 Faka-famili is a meeting/gathering of our family that occurs regularly during the week and especially in the evenings; a time when we talanoa (talk) and share ideas, updates, bible readings, songs, and prayer time together.

6 FOMO is an acronym used in place of the phrase "fear of missing out."

7 Professor Paul Memmott was Ruth (Lute) Faleolo's PhD Key Advisor and continues to be her academic mentor. <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0968-0666>

8 Associate Professor Katherine Ellinghaus and Dr Rachel Standfield were Ruth (Lute) Faleolo's lead investigators and advisors for the postdoctoral work *Pasifika Mobilities* carried out as part of the larger study, *Indigenous Mobilities to and through Australia: Agency and Sovereignties* (ARC DP200103269).

9 Vahaope' is a Tongan term meaning "digital open space" (Fehoko et al. 2021, p. 7).

10 Sh'Kinah Tuia'ana Nauna Faleolo completed her Art coursework during 2015 under the tutelage of Sāmoan artist, Mose Eteuati (<https://www.mutualart.com/Artist/Mose-Eteuati/10F68752BE258D0A/Biography>), who was Head of Art at Sir Edmund Hillary Collegiate, Senior School in Ōtara, Tamaki Makaurau. The references to artistic techniques used in this collection were in alignment with NCEA Level 2 requirements (Aotearoa NZ curriculum). This collection was later titled *Two Woven Identities* by Sh'Kinah Tuia'ana Nauna Faleolo at the time of writing this article (2 October 2023) conveyed during personal communication with Ruth (Lute) Faleolo.

11 Fale is a term used by both Sāmoan and Tongan people to refer to a building or structure (Tone & 'Ilaiū Talei, 2024).

12 Members of Ruth (Lute) Faleolo's family: (left to right) Faifekau (Ps.) 'Ahoia 'Ilaiū, Naomi Rebekah Faleolo, Lydiah Malia-Lose Faleolo, Nehemiah Thomas Faleolo, Sh'Kinah Tuia'ana Nauna Faleolo, and Israel Tuimanu'a Viliami Faleolo.

13 Daughter of Ruth (Lute) Faleolo, Naomi Rebekah Faleolo (on left) with cousin Rachel 'Ilaiū (on right).

14 Ruth (Lute) Faleolo's family members: (left to right) Israel Tuimanu'a Viliam Faleolo, Naomi Rebekah Faleolo, Sh'Kinah Tuia'ana Nauna Faleolo, Lydiah Malia-Lose Faleolo, Nehemiah Thomas Faleolo, Faifekau (Ps.) 'Ahoia 'Ilaiū.

15 Ruth (Lute) Faleolo daughters: (front row seated) in first position (closest to photographer) is Naomi Rebekah Faleolo, with Lydiah Malia-Lose Faleolo, seated in third position, to the right of her sister Naomi.

16 The artist and her elder brother Israel Tuimanu'a Viliami Faleolo took Art as a seventh extra subject and would have art lessons with Mr. Mose Eteuati during lunch breaks, to get guidance towards the assessment criteria. They were largely self-taught and self-directed in the completion of art pieces at their home study, finalising pieces in the evenings, during weekends, and term breaks. You will note that the artwork pieces presented by Sh'Kinah Tuia'ana Nauna Faleolo capture images showing scenes captured in their home study.

17 Pule tasi is the Sāmoan term and pule taha is the Tongan term for the two-piece dress ensemble worn by Sāmoan and Tongan women to formal occasions. See Faleolo (2019, p. 69; 2020c, p. 111) for an explanation and illustration of Sāmoan pule tasi worn during a performance or formal event.

18 Kiekie is a waist wrap-around, a traditional form of covering the body to show respect. They are made from various materials. The type that the artist is referring to in this context was made from plant materials in Tonga. See Faleolo (2019, p. 59) for further explanation of kiekie worn by youth in Aotearoa, and Faleolo (2020b, pp. 72, 75) for explanations of various material culture used to create kiekie.

19 Recreations of the Tongan war hats are still worn by Tongan dancers when performing their traditional war dances, like the kailao. The kailao is performed at significant ceremonies, where the warrior-like manner of costumes (including the war hats), stylized clubs or pate kailao, as well as fierce manner of dance moves that emulate fighting occurs with the accompaniment of a beaten drum/tin box which sets the tempo.

20 'Ana Malia Fisi'ihone Halangahu Akauola's descendants/hako have a social media link that connects multigenerations of our Tongan collective linking to Wallis & Futuna (Uvea) families. [https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100067240054197&locale=bg\\_BG&paipv=0&eav=AfZ-XVloDa68PsD8yEk1II69GMuK2-y-iRxZKRDXnwU3AjqvQmx2Y830d6pNRVGI0G4&\\_rdr](https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100067240054197&locale=bg_BG&paipv=0&eav=AfZ-XVloDa68PsD8yEk1II69GMuK2-y-iRxZKRDXnwU3AjqvQmx2Y830d6pNRVGI0G4&_rdr)

21 Tauluga is a Sāmoan concept that refers to the traditional Sāmoan dance.

22 A taupou is a ceremonial role of performing the tauluga and is usually a young girl that has been selected by the leader/high chief of a Sāmoan village to be elevated to a high rank and charged with the formal duty of performing the tauluga.

23 Beenleigh State High School Multicultural Ceremony video link (YouTube) shows the performances of Sāmoan dances referred to by the author Lydiah Malia-Lose Faleolo; begin playing at 2:04:00 for Sāmoan group performances; the taupou enters the stage to begin her portion of the dance at 2:14:33. <https://www.youtube.com/live/4xTiZy2J1eU?si=2qV4dPnqd-jBIPd9>

24 Lydiah Malia-Lose Faleolo was Head Prefect/School Captain at Beenleigh State High School in 2022, and as a senior member of the Sāmoan Cultural Group, she was selected by her leaders and cultural mentors/tutors Leah Aoese, and Sa Tafola.

25 During COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns and physical isolation (not attending school physically, but completing work and assessments online or by distance learning modes) for medical reasons.

26 Landon Toweel, Nehemiah's favourite Art teacher, had supported him during his final year to successfully complete his art projects. In 2021, Toweel collaborated with others at Beenleigh State High School, Rebecca Mariner and Stephanie Sudmalis, to transfer Nehemiah's art designs onto a Senior School Jersey logo in memory of him. The special design incorporated Pasifika cultural motifs that were a nod to Nehemiah's selected patterns used on his sculptures. We are grateful to Toweel for providing our son with materials and time to complete his art projects from home, during 2020. Nehemiah enjoyed memorable creative moments, with our family, while he finalised his clay sculptures and painted designs.