



Film, New Media, Photography, Visual Arts



Film and New Media highlight the diverse cinematic and digital media works created by Indigenous Pacific individuals and those centered on Pacific culture. This initiative provides filmmakers and content creators a platform to present their unique perspectives, narratives, and artistic visions, with a specific focus on the Pacific region.

The Hawai'i Convention Center is currently hosting a self-curated visual arts exhibit, featuring artwork from various countries. Among the artists whose works have been showcased are Talanoaifaivaoli'i Maneafaiga J. Lagafuaina, Tasi Sunia, and Reggie Meredith.

Film



Gabrielle Faaiuso

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Through the lens of the camera, these visionary artists will help celebrate the power of film to inspire, educate, and unite us all.

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Gabrielle “Gabby” Alafagamalufilufi Faaiuso, a filmmaker from American Samoa, studied media at the University of Hawai‘i at Manoa. She now shares the stories of her Samoan people through her media businesses, *Alafaga* and *Fale* Film LLC. Her work includes creating public service announcements, short documentaries for government departments, federal agencies, nonprofits, and corporate commercials for private businesses. Recently named the Wyncote Fellow for 2024, Gabby is co-directing a short documentary about American Samoa's political status. As the owner of *Alafaga* and a Digital Film Track Artist, Gabby is passionate about weaving storytelling into her films, exploring the human experience, and connecting with audiences on a profound level.

Film



REGGIE MEREDITH-FITIAO
Master Siapo Maker

In the short documentary "Daughter of Barkcloth," produced by Ms. Faaiuolo, *siapo* maker Regina "Reggie" Meredith-Fitiao from the village of Leone in Tutuila, American Sāmoa, showcases her passion for preserving the art of Sāmoan *siapo* (barkcloth).

Reggie attributes her dedication to the women who came before her, particularly her mentor and Master of *Siapo* making, Aunty Mary J. Pritchard, as well as the support from *Tufuga ta Tatau* and *Siapo* maker Su'a Uilisone Fitiao.

Filmmaker: Gabby Alafagamalufilufi Fa'ai'uaso

Film



The film "Bush Cutter" offers a visual interpretation of a poem written by Tamiano J. Gurr, reflecting on his upbringing in American Samoa as a half-caste Pacific Islander. It explores the deep disconnect he felt with his ethnic identities. The narrative portrays his experiences of being segregated and feeling out of place, labeled as *palagi* by his own Samoan community. It highlights his journey towards finding acceptance, which began after he moved to Hawaii. Through the film, viewers explore his realization of the underrepresentation of Pacific Islanders during his college years in Hawaii. This awakening inspired him to establish "Pacific Roots", a brand committed to promoting island culture and educating youth about their ancestral heritage. This film aims to honor his journey and inspire viewers to embrace their roots and exceed societal expectations.

Filmmaker: Tulaga L. Whitcombe

Photography



Vincent J. Tofilau

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Be true to yourself. Embrace your unique artistic voice and cultural identity. Share your stories, traditions, and perspectives with authenticity and passion. Let your art be a reflection of who you are and where you come from.

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Vincent's lens is as diverse as the islands themselves. He has documented everything from cultural ceremonies to the raw beauty of the Samoan landscapes, including breathtaking aerial perspectives. His published works include photographs in the *Wall Street Journal* and the account *Laei a Samoa* by Teleiai Christian Ausage.

Vincent had clear objectives when he decided to attend FestPAC. He explained, "I participated in FestPAC because I wanted to reconnect with my Pacific heritage, learn from fellow artists, and foster a stronger sense of community among indigenous artists."

Participating in FestPAC taught Vincent invaluable lessons about unity in diversity and the shared challenges across Pacific cultures. The festival highlighted the significance of collaboration and cultural exchange among Pacific Island communities. This experience inspired Vincent to expand his creative horizons and produce art that resonates universally, connecting people across boundaries.

Vincent encourages others to cultivate deep connections with fellow artists, embrace collaboration, open themselves to new experiences, and remain flexible and adaptable on their artistic journey at FestPAC.

Photography



Photography

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Enjoy the moment, soak in everything, and learn from others.

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Daniel Whitcombe

Daniel Whitcombe, a versatile creative force, explores artistry across various mediums. As a photographer and filmmaker, he skillfully captures moments and narratives, crafting powerful visual stories filled with emotion and precision.

Inspired by his father, renowned artist Tulaga L. Whitcombe, Daniel recently moved back to American Samoa to follow in his footsteps. He considers representing his island in photography at FestPAC as a valuable learning experience in upholding his father's legacy and expanding his own artistic pursuits.

Before FestPAC, Daniel, surrounded by artists during his upbringing, only started photography this year. His goal was to showcase his raw talent and learn from more experienced artists. Based on the feedback he has received, he feels he has achieved this goal. Through the festival, he has learned about the sacrifices artists make to pursue their passions.

Daniel's creative process does not involve imitating others, though he draws inspiration from them. With his artistic journey just beginning, he sees his canvas as blank and looks forward to continuously adding to it to create unique art. He advises the next delegate in his category for FestPAC 2028 to enjoy the moment, soak in everything, and learn from others, noting that while ten days might seem long, it will fly by quickly.

Photography



Visual Arts

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There is so much to learn and embrace from our fellow Pacific artists and their cultures and stories through their artwork. I hope our young Samoan artists will be bold in chasing perfection in their craft as I continue to do the same and to be inspired by our own Pacific region.

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**Talanoaifaivaoali'i M J.
Lagafuaina**

Talanoaifaivaoali'i Maneafaiga J. Lagafuaina, a local artist from Nu'uuli, American Samoa attends Tafuna High School. He attributes his artistic development to the support, guidance, and prayers of his parents, Maneafaiga and Maria Lagafuaina, as well as his grandparents.

This marks Talanoaifaivaoali'i's debut at FestPAC. Previously, he exhibited his artwork at events like the Moso'oi Festival and the Constitutional Convention Art Exhibit in 2022. He secured 1st place in the Congressional Malofie Art Competition in 2023 and 2024, earning him a spot in the upcoming Congressional Art Competition in Washington, D.C.

Notable works in the Visual Arts category include:

"Morning Isolation" - Woman standing at sunrise near Vatia village

"Fala" - Woman weaving a fala with a male onlooker

"Light" - Three women glowing in daylight wearing fashionable attire

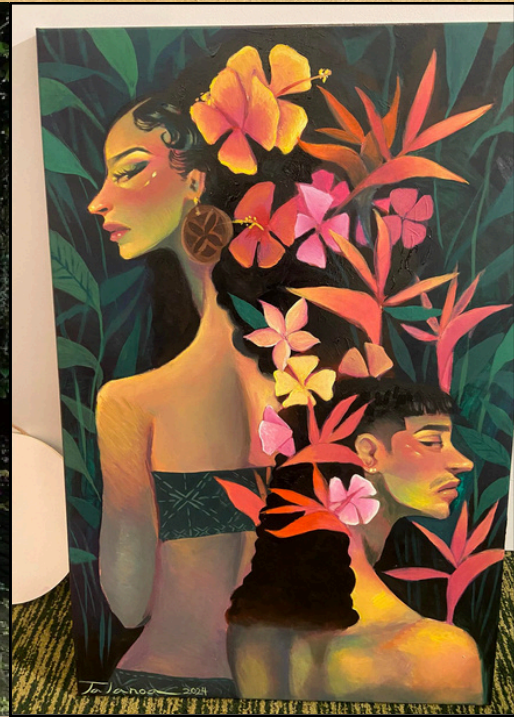
"Dissatisfaction" - Two ladies in the jungle; one with her hair down and one with the headpiece of a tuiga of leaves and flowers

"Flowers" - Woman sitting in the center of a swamp with flowers in her hair

"Evaga" - Self Portrait with dark background

Talanoaifaivaoali'i's festival experience has surpassed expectations, particularly in networking and showcasing his artwork. He aims for his art to consistently represent his Samoan and Pacific Islander heritage. He advocates for increased opportunities for young artists to engage in Pacific Arts Festivals, urging them to approach these experiences with openness, embracing the chance to learn from fellow Pacific artists.

Visual Arts



Visual Arts

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Art is the reason why
humanity is interesting.

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Samuelu Tasi

Mr. Tasi Sunia, born and raised in Utulei and Vaitogi, American Samoa, is the son of former Lieutenant Governor Faoa Aitofele and Elisapeta Sunia. He and his wife Sharon have four children: Thaddaeus, Talitha, Tasiyah, and Timaeus.

As a visual artist specializing in graphic design, Mr. Sunia's artwork at FestPAC's Art Exhibition includes digitally printed canvas framed photographs that depict the Siapo-making process. This is his third time participating in the festival, driven by his passion for American Samoa, its culture, and indigenous arts.

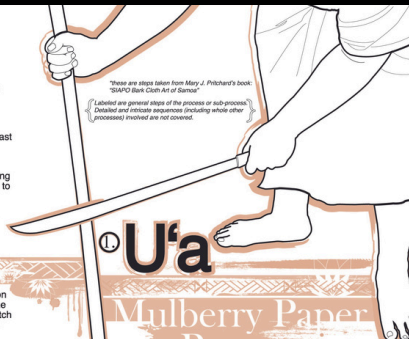
At FestPAC, Mr. Sunia successfully showcased American Samoa's graphic design, engaging viewers with his artwork. He learned about coexistence with artists from twenty-six (26) other island nations, emphasizing the challenges and importance of compromise for future generations. He is committed to preserving and advancing graphic design as an art form, distinct from technological imitations like artificial intelligence. Looking forward to FestPAC 2028, he advises future delegates to boldly adapt while staying true to artistic intent.

His fondest memory of the 13th FestPAC is witnessing the deep passion for arts and culture among his fellow American Samoans and their strong sense of solidarity.

Visual Arts



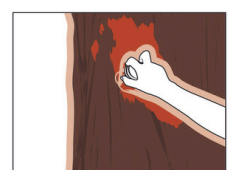

Mulberry Paper Preparation



- Harvest the adequately grown U'a (Mulberry) plant stalk.
- Separate the bark from the stalk.
- Separate the bast from the bark, roll up the bast and place in a container of fresh water.
- Scrape the bast, using certain seashells and constant applying of water to remove remaining bark bits and green growth from the bast and to soften and spread the fibers.
- Beating process: the bast is beaten into bark cloth using a wooden beater. Imposed on a wooden anvil, the bast is beaten repeatedly whilst folding bast into various positions.
- Stretching and Drying: the bast is laid down on clean mats; clean rocks are laid right down the middle length-wise. Two or more women stretch each side of the bast until stretched as far as possible without tearing. The sheet, if held down with clean rocks, dries up properly. When completely dry, the sheet is ready as a canvas for the decoration materials.

"These are steps taken from Mary J. Pritchard's book 'SIAPO Bark Cloth Art of Samoa'." (Labeled are general steps of the process or sub-processes. Deleted and intricate sequences (including whole other processes) involved are not covered.)

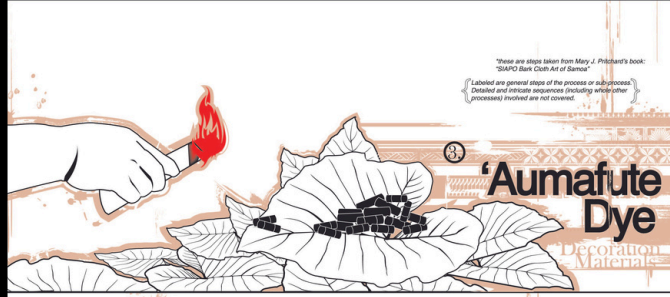
'O'a Dye: Decoration Materials

- Using a sharp tin lid (substitute for the traditional pipi shell), scrape off the outer bark of a fully grown 'O'a tree (*Sidaola javanica*).
- Scrape off the next layer of bark into shavings which are collected into a container, usually a coconut frond basket.
- Collect the shavings into a container, usually a coconut frond basket, and cover them with *Alcacia* (fa'afu) leaves to minimize evaporation and to protect from rain.
- Straining the shavings:
 - When only a small amount of dye is needed, the shavings may be squeezed out by hand, using a coconut fiber strainer (as shown in the second illustration).
 - For large quantities of dye, a special, larger (15 inches wide, 12 to 15 feet long) winger: *Umu*, or *To*, woven from Fasu fiber, was used to strain the dye from the shavings. Either method should produce a nice brown (more on the reddish tone).
- Store the 'O'a dye in a container with a loose lid to otherwise avoid an explosion due to light storage.
- During the artwork, be mindful that more than 3 coatings of 'O'a dye application will eventually display in a cracking fashion.

"These are steps taken from Mary J. Pritchard's book: 'SIAPO Bark Cloth Art of Samoa'." (Labeled are general steps of the process or sub-processes. Deleted and intricate sequences (including whole other processes) involved are not covered.)

'Aumafute Dye



- Collect stripped (Mulberry plant) u'a stalks, called 'Aumafute.
- Burn the 'Aumafute (the stalks should burn easily even when cut fresh).
- Pulverize the charred pieces.
- Mix the charred particles with the 'O'a dye.
- Use a cloth-like fabric from a coconut tree or (a modern substitution cloth) to strain the created mixture to produce a good black dye.

"These are steps taken from Mary J. Pritchard's book: 'SIAPO Bark Cloth Art of Samoa'." (Labeled are general steps of the process or sub-processes. Deleted and intricate sequences (including whole other processes) involved are not covered.)

AMERIKA SAMOA



2024 FESTIVAL OF PACIFIC ARTS & CULTURE - HAWAII



HO'OU LU LĀHUI Regenerating Oceania

13th Festival of Pacific Arts & Culture • Hawai'i 2024