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Day 3 Highlights of the 13th Festival of Pacific Arts & Culture

The third day of the Festival of Pacific Arts and Culture saw the opening of new exhibitions, additional cultural performing sets, and display of ongoing heritage arts.

Visual Arts (Painting)

The youngest member delegate of American Samoa is 17 year old Mr. Talanoa Lagafuaina, the first place winner of the 2024 Malofie Congressional Art Competition. His first place art is currently being displayed in the U.S. Capitol. He is the proud son of Manny and Maria Lagafuaina.

Mr. Lagafuaina is a prominent and upcoming artist who has already established a strong presence in the artistic community - as evidenced by his participation in the 13th Festival of Pacific Arts & Culture. Amongst his artistic accomplishments showcased for the Visual Arts category are the following paintings:

- "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

Mr. Lagafuaina's visual arts showcase will be on display daily until the end of the Festival Pacific event.

Heritage Arts (Tatau)

Mr. Su'a Uilisone Fitiao is no stranger to the heritage arts of *Tatau* or the traditional Samoan tattoo. The *Tatau* team representing American Samoa will be demonstrating one of our most revered and sacred art forms in the Pacific —the *Laei* o Samoa, or the Samoan traditional tattoo. This ancient practice holds deep cultural significance for the Samoan people, symbolizing strength, courage, and honor. Accompanying Su'a Uilisone is his dedicated Apprentice Mark Iulio, along with Isaiah Alesana and Su'a Jackery Falelua Alesana.

Visitors to the Bishop Museum are invited to witness the awe-inspiring work of these artists as they breathe life into their craft, showcasing the intricate details and deep symbolism of Samoan artistry. From the *Tatau* to the other traditional art forms, the exhibition offers a glimpse into the unique cultural identity and artistic expression of American Samoa.

Yesterday was American Samoa's first *Tatau* demonstration from 12:00 PM to 5:00 PM. The public are welcome to visit these sessions at the Bishop Museum from 7:00 AM to 5:00 PM.

Performance Cultural Arts (Choral, Heritage Dance, Traditional Fashion)

Once again, the performance group from American Samoa captivated the audience with energetic *siva* (dance), *ailao afi* (fire knife dance) and beautifully harmonious singing. The Performance group entertained the audience at the Hawaii Convention center village hale (house) and at the Honolulu Night Market - Our Kaka'ako.

As part of the dance group's performance, they paid tribute to the late Olo Letuli, honoring his legacy as the pioneer of the *ailao afi* or the fire knife dance. A new addition to the choral performance set was 'Pusi Nofo' arranged by Christopher Marshall. *Pusi Nofo* is a Samoan action song. Cats accompanied the first Europeans to arrive in Samoa and have been the frequent subject of songs and dances ever since. This song may be sung twice, the second time faster.

The fashion team also put on a spectacular show last night at the grand Honolulu Night market. Instead of following traditional runways or walking down the red carpet, American Samoa's fashion ambassadors brought their visions to life by embracing the uniqueness of the culture, turning the ordinary into extraordinary by bringing the samoan *siva* spirit across the Pacific ocean. An explosion of feathers, vibrant colored materials, and *siapo* took center stage, leaving a lasting impression at the Festival of Pacific Arts and Culture by taking part in a highly anticipated fashion show at the Kakaako Night Market.

Every single performance piece narrated a timeless and elaborate tale, showcasing rich cultural heritage and creative originality.

Lead creative designer Tuifaasisina Korina Seiuli Lee and creative co-designers Ammon Fepuleai, Tuafaleloa Keniseli Fanolua, and Isabella Mageo showcased a blend of traditional Samoan motifs and modern fashion elements highlighting the designers' profound love for their cultural roots. Each contemporary *siapo elei* was a display of creativity and craftsmanship imbued with the spirit of *fa'a-Samoa*, featuring an exquisite collection that captured the essence of our cultural identity. Each entry recounted a story, reflecting the deep cultural roots and artistic innovation of the designers, emphasizing the importance of fashion in showcasing cultural expression and pride.

Pilina - FestPAC 50th Anniversary Exhibit Opening

The Hawai'i State Art Museum celebrated the grand opening of Pilina, a retrospective multimedia exhibition commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the Festival of Pacific Arts and Culture (FestPAC), on June 8, 2024. This remarkable exhibit, co-curated by Frances Koya Vaka'uta, Ph.D., and Alyssa Mei Ungacta Chau, welcomed a large and enthusiastic crowd to Capitol Modern. American Samoa was represented by our local Arts Council Official, Tasi Sam Sunia.

The exhibition includes a photographic exhibition, ephemera, and select cultural heritage objects, highlighting their value and significance for resilience building and sustainable development aspirations. FestPAC has been held since 1972 as a platform to showcase the diverse cultures of the Pacific Islands region.

The exhibit will continue to run until September 2024, offering ample opportunity for visitors to experience the diverse and vibrant cultures of the Pacific Islands.

For more information about the exhibit and upcoming events, please visit the Hawai'i State Art Museum's website or contact the museum's press office.

Young Pacific Leaders Program

American Samoa's representatives to the Young Pacific Leaders (YPL) program at FestPAC are making a significant impact through their diverse activities and engagements. Tulimalefo'i Vaofanua and Kacey Iloilo, two distinguished leaders, are showcasing their commitment to community development, health education, environmental stewardship, and cultural preservation.

During FestPAC, the YPL representatives have been actively involved in a range of activities from community engagement at Papahana Kuaola, to entrepreneurship insights at I Mana Ka Oiwi, and a roundtable discussion with the U.S. Department of State. They also had the privilege of learning leadership wisdom from Mufi Hanneman, practicing innovation through design

thinking and artificial intelligence, and educational exchanges with University of Hawaii's President David Lassner. Through these efforts YPL ensures that its participants are well-equipped to make a positive impact on their communities and the broader Pacific region.

We encourage everyone to continue supporting our artists as new exhibits and showcases become available throughout the rest of the festival.

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