

## Prints

Talosaga pouli 2001

*Ancient worship of the black lizard by night*  
woodcut

Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki

purchased 2002

Talosaga is a night prayer, or chant. This must be one of the first woodcuts inspired by the artist's visit to Samoa. Talosaga: Memories of worship by night and by day. Asking

# Fatu Feu'u 'O le tautai Samoa

Fatou is story telling. The art of telling a story but with meanings contained in it. Not all the truth is told but you get some of it suggested. I am willing stories visually about my culture. I don't want to righten it up into one meaning. It is better for the viewer to make his or her own meaning. I am a storyteller. Take one story, give it to a number of people, and then you can get a multiplicity of interpretations.

23 November 2002 – 30 March 2003

Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki

purchased 2002

This is a warrior head in the form of a club. This is a protective emblem. In Polynesian terms a 200 kilometre protective zone for fishing is not big enough. To convey the idea



# Fatu Feu'u 'O le tautai Samoa

Speaking of the title of this exhibit Fatu Feu'u comments:

*'Tautai* is concerned with how to navigate, how to do things, in being the fisher who seeks the fish, the person who knows the direction to take when they are initiating a journey. This is the question that challenges me to lead.

*Fagogo* is story telling. The art of telling a story but with meanings contained in it. Not all the truth is told but you get some of it suggested. I am telling stories visually about my culture. I don't want to tighten it up into one meaning. It is better for the viewer to make his or her own meanings. *Tala lasi Samoa*: take one story, give it to a number of people, and then you can get a multiplicity of interpretations'.



# Prints

**Talosaga pouli 2001**

***Ancient worship of the black lizard by night***  
**woodcut**

**Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki**  
**purchased 2002**

*Talosaga* is a night prayer, or chant. This must be one of the first woodcuts inspired by my painting - 'O le *Talosaga*. Memories of worship by night and by day. Asking for safe passage of travel.

The male figure is tattooed; a warrior person. Lizards embody a different meaning, as they were regarded as Gods of the night. The white gecko is tiny and is found inside houses, the black lizards are found outside. Lizards are good luck - *pili*.

Fatu Feu'u

**Ulu malauli 1999**

**woodcut**

**Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki**  
**purchased 2002**

*Malau* is a red fish, *maulauli* is when any fish becomes mature and is ready to be harvested. *Ulu malauli* depicts the idea of something moving around. All my prints tell a story.

Fatu Feu'u

**Ulutoa moana 1999**

**woodcut**

**Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki**  
**purchased 2002**

This is a warrior head in the form of a club. This is a political print; in Polynesian terms a 200 kilometre protective zone for fishing is not big enough. To convey the idea



that we as Pacific people have jurisdiction for things in the water. The expression is a warning, a *tapui*.

Fatu Feu'u

**Uluta tuli 1998**

**woodcut**

**Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki**

**purchased 2002**

This print is about me. The pattern is like a mask which comes from the *tuli* (knee). You see the head and knee. It is the first time I have taken something from my *tatau*. What you see is what is seen when you are sitting. This is like a self-portrait.

Fatu Feu'u

**Ulu manu folau 1999**

**woodcut**

**Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki**

**purchased 2002**

*Ulu* - the bird descends and ascends on a journey. This print references how navigators rely on nature for the directions when they travel. Identity is growing in a positive manner.

Fatu Feu'u

**Vi'iga poula 2001**

***Adoration of fertility ritual by night***

**woodcut**

**Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki**

**purchased 2002**

*Vi'iga* is to glorify or praise and it is an important symbol in my work, it is as if night is another world. Who am I to recreate the day? I like night. I work a lot at night. Most of my art making happens at night.

Lashing - *poutu* – refers to the main upright that is lashed in a *fale*.

Fatu Feu'u



**Poula 1992**

**woodblock on barkcloth, laid on paper**

**Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki**

**purchased 1993**

Painting ideas are fed from my works on paper.

Fatu Feu'u

**Folau 1993**

**woodcut**

**Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki**

**purchased 2002**

This print is constructed with motifs related to navigation. The profile of the two separate figures is related to Solomon Islands crouching figures, with mirror figures from the *tuinga* used in dances. The star figure references the stick maps used for navigation and the upturned boat - *paopao* – is a dugout canoe for working inside the reef.

These are the figures of the new generation, joined together. A wave border design with wave - *galu*. There are many different names for the waves that the *tautai* uses. I often use titles where the processes of nature are referring to relationships between people.

Fatu Feu'u

**Orongo 1992**

**woodblock on barkcloth, laid on paper**

**Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki**

**purchased 1993**

**Manaia 1989**

**lithograph**

**Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki**

**purchased 1993**



**Tausala 1990**

**lithograph**

**Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki**

**purchased 2000**

This is another female mask inspired by Lapita pottery designs. The face has three views. *Tausala* means a spiritual mask.

Fatu Feu'u

Frangipani - first appeared in my work in 1980. First exhibited in 1983. 1985 saw it in my printmaking. I saw it as a Samoan flower, then found it was all over the place. Dave Simmons showed me Pacific tapa with the frangipani. Frangipani is the oldest surviving Pacific design motif. 1987 - which was the year of my first big painting show. I was asked where the symbols came from. The frangipani has five petals on the flower but mine only has four petals.

In my Samoan district of Poutasi the women were doing a lot of tapa making and painting, they used this flower motif but they did not call it a frangipani. They called it *fafine*, the female shape.

Fatu Feu'u

**Alo alo 1990**

**lithograph**

**Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki**

**purchased 2002**

A woman of high birth, high rank. I made about six mask prints around 1990. None have been made since then.

Fatu Feu'u

**Tui Samoa 1992**

**woodcut**

**Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki**

**purchased 2000**

*Tui Samoa* is the name of a Samoan legend.

Fatu Feu'u



**Taputapu I 1990**  
**lithograph on barkcloth laid on paper**  
**Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki**  
**purchased 2000**

Sometimes I take the mask image and incorporate other things into it; for instance I want my images to look like part of my culture, this print resembles the way woodcut is done. The title *Taputapu* refers to the pollution of the Manukau Harbour and says 'you must not use this place, do not walk here, do not take fish from here'.

Fatu Feu'u

## Paintings

**Agaga Puaikura 2002**  
**acrylic on canvas**  
**Fatu Feu'u collection**

Here Feu'u employs a variety of motifs which have become signatures of his oeuvre. The most prominent is the frangipani, alternated with the stylised form of the ceremonial mask, the frigate bird, and the *atu* (tuna fish). These are combined with the larger rectangles at the base of the work containing a series of projecting triangles, arranged in oblique rows around a solid yellow band encasing short oblique dashes; this patterning references the markings of the *pe'a* (male *tatau*).

Kate Gallagher

**Masina le sogi 1997**  
***Moonscent***  
**oil and oil stick on canvas**  
**Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki**  
**purchased 1997**

A combination of motifs derived from *tatau*, *siapo* and navigation are employed to depict a narrative based on the Samoan legend of Sina and Tuna. Sina is both the



moon and the most powerful goddess of love in Polynesia. Tuna, an earthling, becomes obsessed with her and as a result he gives up his canoe and turns day into night. Through this endless darkness he gazes at her, waiting for his love to be reciprocated. However, his efforts are in vain – Sina never returns his love and Tuna has to be content with just the scent of her.

Kate Gallagher

### **Ivi'ivia 1995**

**oil and oil stick on canvas**

**James Wallace Arts Trust, Auckland**

A variety of motifs derived from Samoan art forms are combined here to form three figures, two males and one female. Feu'u pays homage to pre-Christian Samoan religious practices by positioning these figures between the sun and moon, who were worshipped as deities. These symbols form a multi-layered reference as they were also fundamental aids in Pacific navigation. The moon was also used as a graphic symbol to represent notions of recurring time.

Kate Gallagher

*Ivi* is the backbone. *Ivi'ivia* is something very difficult to handle. Here the figures are stripped down to their bones with mask-like faces.

Remember that the *taula'aitu* pertains to the ghostly world.

Fatu Feu'u

### **Le Ulumanu 1999**

**oil and oil stick on canvas**

**Denton collection, Auckland**

*Le Ulumanu* reflects a move away from the signature grid composition frequently employed by Feu'u. Here we see a combination of the motifs characteristic in his oeuvre but the composition is radically different. The motifs con-



verge and overlap, the most prominent being the stylised form of the mask. Before Christianity this symbolised a connection between humans and ancestral spirits. Derived originally from Lapita symbols the mask motifs found their way into the art of Samoan *tatau* around the knee region of the *pe'a*.

Kate Gallagher

**Alofa pea 'oe Samoa 1999**

**oil and oil stick on canvas**

**Private collection, Auckland**

The title and unifying theme for this series of paintings is *ifoga* (reconciliation). In this painting communication is positioned as a key element in this process. Feu'u employs two visual communication systems to convey his message that to obtain reconciliation one needs to recognise events in the past and move forward from them. The work highlights that a fundamental element of this process is *alofa* (love, compassion, concern) and celebrates Auckland's cultural diversity which exposes us to a variety of different beliefs, languages, legends and histories.

Kate Gallagher

**Fa'aisifoga 2001**

**acrylic on canvas**

**Fatu Feu'u collection**

**courtesy of Warwick Henderson Gallery, Auckland**

**Fa'aola mo taeao 1990**

***Conserve for tomorrow***

**oil on canvas, wood, bark cloth, pigment, ceramic**

**Feu'u Marsh Trust collection**

Samoan philosophies embrace a fundamental human need for gender balance based on the main Samoan deities; the sky, which has masculine properties, and the earth, which has feminine. The balanced compositional grid and border structure of the painted panels is derived from *siapo*, the only formal painting tradition in Samoa.



The repetitive motifs reflect Feu'u's desire to create gender balance between the dichotomy of male and female forms. Half of the eighteen squares depict the feminine frangipani motif, the other half depict masculine motifs.

Kate Gallagher

**'O le Talosaga 2001**

**oil and oilstick on canvas**

**Fatu Feu'u collection**

**courtesy of Warwick Henderson Gallery, Auckland**

This painting is filled with the prayers that the artist's mother and father would say over him at the end of the day. As memories these words almost become portraits of Fatu Feu'u's parents, where their 'likeness' is felt by re-hearing their voices.

Of the exhibition *'O le Talosaga* (Warwick Henderson Gallery 11- 28 July 2001) Fatu Feu'u wrote: 'These paintings are based on pre Christian chants utilising personal iconography developed to reflect the spoken word and beliefs, of these ancient religions of Samoa and early Polynesia. Some of the early Samoan worship was called *'O le fa'amalama o fanaafi*, which translates into English as 'The worship of fire'. A prayer ritual was conducted twice a day by means of offering and sacrifice to the Gods. Very often the people asked for security and protection from the enemy and also to prolong their life on earth before ascending to the heaven.'

## **Sculpture**

**Ole manaia 2002**

**bronze**

**Fatu Feu'u collection**

This mask references a young man who has to be initiated into navigation skills.

Fatu Feu'u



---

***Fatu Feu'u 'O le tautai Samoa is generously supported by Harriet Friedlander.***

All statements by Fatu Feu'u are recorded from a conversation with Ron Brownson, November 2002.

Copyright: Fatu Feu'u

Copyright: Kate Gallagher and Auckland Art Gallery



