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LORD VAEA OF HOUMA

Foreword: ‘Amui ‘i Mu’a/Ancient Futures— Back to the Future

Abstract

A short introduction to the ‘Amui ‘i Mu’a/Ancient Futures project, presented in both English and Tongan, by the Honorable Lord Vaea, ‘Alipate Tu’ivanuavou Vaea of Houma.

Keywords: *Tonga, ‘Amui ‘i Mu’a/Ancient Futures, art, visual culture, material culture, Dagmar Vaikalafi Dyck, Sopoalemalama Filipe Tohi*

‘Amui ‘i Mu’a/Ancient Futures honors our treasured memories, maintaining and preserving traditional oral knowledge and inspiring tomorrow’s successes. Our cultural memories are stored orally, written, and performed, but also carved, woven, and displayed in museums and art galleries in another dimension. So, it is ever more vital that projects such as ‘Amui ‘i Mu’a cast a spectrum of light on the artifacts for our future generations.

The “Ancient Futures” theme emphasizes Tongan arts acquired through exchanges, purchases, and gifts all held overseas as artifacts of exploration. The significant and detailed scientific accounts began when items were drawn, measured, packed, and stored by expedition savants. Now, museums preserve, observe, and protect these foreign cultural artifacts for generations to view, while the written accounts of the artifacts remain the adopted cornerstone for researchers and cultural historians. The Tongan diaspora employs our traditional artifacts, noting their spectacular ingenuity and using the format of modern art, absorbing new creative ideas, foreign symbolism, perception, and interpretive variance for a new, diasporic Tongan art form.

When visited by our practitioners, Dagmar Vaikalafi Dyck and Sopoalemalama Filipe Tohi, the dimensions changed and it all became reinvigorated. Ancient Futures illuminates and recasts the original artifacts, and the subsequently added new artifacts are spectacular. For instance, Sopoalemalama Filipe Tohi’s paintings of war clubs have an urban-looking background, and Dagmar Vaikalafi Dyck’s paint-textured weavings present

opportunities for new interpretations in altogether new dimensions. Dyck and Tohi are to be commended for their explorations and inspiration. It is they who help motivate Tongans to imagine our pasts and create our futures.

Talamu'aki: 'Amui 'i Mu'a

'Oku 'omai 'e he 'Amui 'i Mu'a/*Ancient Futures* 'a e manatu melie ki he kuohilí koe'uhí ko hono fakatolonga 'a hotau tukufakaholó pea hoko ko e fakalotolahi ki he lavame'a 'o e kaha'ú. Ko 'etau ngaahi 'ilo fakafonuá 'oku tauhi ia 'i hono hikitohi. 'Oku 'i he 'etau ngaahi faiva fakafonuá. 'Oku vahevahe meí he to'utangata ki he to'utangata pea 'oku tā tongitongi pe lalanga 'o faka'ali'ali atu 'i he ngaahi misiumé 'i ha ngaahi fōtunga kehe. 'Oku mahu'inga 'aupito ke fakahoko ha ngāue hangē 'oku fakahoko 'e he 'Amui 'i Mu'a ki hono fakamā'opo'opo 'o e ngaahi koloa fakamea'a ki he to'utangata 'o e kaha'ú.

'Oku fakataumu'a 'a e ngāue 'a e *Ancient Futures* ki he ngaahi koloa fakamea'a Tonga kuo tauhi meí he ngaahi fakafetongi koloa, fefakatau'aki koloa pe ko e ma'u ko e me'a'ofa 'a ia 'oku faka'ali'ali atu 'i he ngaahi fonua mulí. Na'e kamata 'a hono hikitohi 'o e ngaahi fakamatala fekau'aki mo e ngaahi koloá talu meí he taimi na'e mavahe ai mei Tongá ni 'a kinautolu na'a nau 'ave 'a e ngaahi koloá. Kuo tauhi mo fakatolonga 'a e koloá ni 'e he ngaahi misiume 'i he opé ke mātā 'e he ngaahi to'utangata pea hoko leva 'a e ngaahi fakamatala hikitohi ko e makatu'unga'anga ki he ngāue 'a e kau fakatotoló mo e kau tohihisitōlia fakafonuá. Kuo ngāue'aki 'etau ngaahi koloa fakamea'a 'i he ngaahi fonua mulí koe'uhí ko e ngaahi pōto'i ngāue makehe na'e fakahoko'aki fakataha mo e ngaahi founa ngāue fakaonopōni ke ma'u ha ngaahi founa fo'ou, ngaahi 'ata fo'ou mo ha fakakaukau fo'ou ki he ngaahi ngāue faka'aati Tongá.

'I he 'a'ahi mai 'a Dagmar Vaikalafi Dyck mo Sopolemalama Filipe Tohi, na'e kehe 'a e fōtunga 'o e ngaahi ngāue fakamea'a 'i he'ene hā fo'ou mo faka'ofa'ofá. Kuo toe fakafoki mai 'e he *Ancient Futures* 'a e founa ngāue fakamea'a 'o e kuohilí, 'a ia 'oku hā makehe mo faka'ofa'ofa eni 'i he'ena ngaahi ngāue ki muí ni maí. 'Oku kau 'i heni 'a hono tā valivali 'e Sopolemalama Filipe Tohi 'a e ngaahi pōvai 'o ngāue'aki ha ngaahi founa fo'ou pea tā 'e Dagmar Vaikalafi Dyck ha ngaahi lālanga 'i ha fotunga fo'ou. 'Oku houna 'aupito 'a e ngāue fisifisimu'a 'a Tohi mo Dyck 'i hono fakamā'opo'opo 'o e ngaahi koloá mo e fakalotolahi ki he kaha'ú 'o e fonuá. Kuó na lava ke tokoni ke fakafoki 'etau manatú ki he kuohilí ko e sio ki he kaha'ú.

Translation by Alioth Helu

The Honorable Lord Vaea, 'Alipate Tu'ivanuavou Vaea of Houma, is a member of the Tongan nobility. He was installed as Lord Vaea in 2009, upon the death of his father, Baron 'Alipate Vaea Tupou. He entered Tongan politics in 2010 as a noble's representative for the island of Tongatapu. Lord Vaea has long been interested in Tonga's past. He served as the Tongan Royal Palace archivist, as well as the chairman of the Tongan Traditions Committee. Lord Vaea is currently minister of internal affairs.