

Fatu Feu'u – Video Transcript

"This sculpture, we call it Toa Pasifika is a warrior-type icon, because in most Samoan houses, especially Samoan Chief's meeting houses, they have a living Koa, a living warrior. His function is to protect the people, protect the property of the High Chief."

"And sometimes he's actually used for ceremonial purposes to perform to announce very important events. And that's the idea that I had on trying to create something like this, of a warrior-type head. And of course the warrior in many ways of Pacific iconographies is a very important thing. The function use of them nowadays, even though we don't see a lot of them, they are still around us.

"I thought the Fale needed a Pacific type warrior. In terms of a sculpture of this size – the piece is about 5.5 meters high, and coloured red – because it's my favourite colour in terms of making sculptures. Red is an important colour in the Pacific. Going back in the past they colour things red, black, or red, black and yellow, or just red, or very often just black. Therefore we have the kava bowls, or the stone on each side, which is used for lighting - to have some sort of light - for ceremonial things when they offered things to the Gods before Christianity arrived.

"And part of that as well is having separate stones, about half a ton in weight, which is used for pounding the kava, after that it's taken into the house to the wooden bowl to mix to have the kava ceremony. So these are all functions of the sculpture like this to protect and look after and serve the people of the property.

"You know the piece is actually sitting on top of the car park. Therefore when they agree the piece would look very good there, the engineer and the architect came up and said you can't put the piece up there right now, they had to take two weeks to reinforce, to brace, the car park. So they have a huge steel beam under the sculpture, in the car park before we put the piece there. So then they had to hire a huge crane to shift the whole piece, to lift it over the administration block. It took a couple of hours to place the thing with a lot of difficulty.

"The stones are very important in a lot of Polynesian cultures and Samoa. Is that the stones to place stones in front of the paepae that's the foundation of the house, especially with the Samoan chief's meeting houses, the stones are there to signify the authority or status of a particular chief in the community. They must have a meeting house of a chief or high chief, they must have a huge rock, usually about 2 tons in weight for pounding the kava before they don't chew the kava like some islands, in Samoa they have to pound it, huge rock recess on the top and they have another stone and they pound the root of the kava. Then they will take all this in banana leaves they take it inside the fale into a kava bowl and then the Taupo or the Tausala have to mix the kava from this.

"So it's very important to have all these functions done. If the high chief doesn't have a stone like this it diminishes his authority, or mana, in the community. The other smaller stone bowls I put together there, one goes on each side of the sculpture, symbolic of the mana and authority of this warrior person.

"Very often in the old days they made a fire on each side to signify the preparation of ceremony and the ceremony often had chants to ask spirits to give them the strength to fight a battle or to build a new house or to receive people to have a peaceful meeting with people. So these are symbolic meanings of the stones I prepared for the piece."