



## Carving- Samoan Design



The American Samoa Carving team includes Tile Tuala-Tamaalelagi, Ioane Taua'i, and Fitulua Matamua. They were involved in two main carving projects and other supplemental ones during the festival. Embracing the belief that Polynesians were the original navigators, this year's focus was on a 'Hoe Uli (foe)' project, where artisans sculpted a large steering paddle symbolizing the navigation of our futures and taking control of our individual and collective destinies as oceanic people.

The second project was to build a *Wa'a kaulua (paopao)*: a double-hulled canoe reminiscent of those navigated by our forebears. The *Paopao* is in the process of completion and will be presented as American Samoa's gift of appreciation to the FestPAC Host Country.



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**To'oto'o Tile Talamoa Tuala-Tama'alelagi Sosene Feagai**

“ I am grateful to be an instrument in God's work, and I will maintain my passion for my work as it spreads happiness to others. ”

Mr. Tile Tuala-Tama'alelagi is a native of Lauli'i, American Samoa. He is the son of Samoan author Aeo'ainuu Aleki Tuala-Tama'alelagi and Elisapeta Tuala-Tama'alelagi.

Tile's love for the Samoan arts was inspired by his brother Taulapapa Tivia Sosene-Feagai, owner of the Samoa Lokostyle retail caterer for Samoan clothing, souvenir, accessories and handicrafts needs. Tile often recalls how his brother served as the catalyst for his artistic aspirations, describing him as a natural artist whose talent he has always admired.

Mr. Tile entered into the Congressional art competition in 1997 under the guidance of his Fagaitua high school art teacher Voloti Malietoa, whose mentorship and encouragement played a pivotal role in shaping Mr. Tile's artistic journey during his formative years. The competition, which aimed to showcase the artistic talents of high school students across the United States, presented a unique opportunity for Mr. Tile to not only showcase his artistic prowess but also to gain recognition and potentially secure a scholarship that could help him pursue his dreams of becoming a professional artist.

Mr. Tile attended the Leulumoega Fou School of Fine Art from 1999 to 2002. The Fine arts school not only enhanced his artistic skills but also opened his eyes to a world of endless opportunities. It was here that he began to develop his artist branding 'slavecreata', creating unique and distinctive pieces of art that capture the essence of his identity. These creations bear such a distinctive mark that anyone from American Samoa who lays eyes on them will immediately recognize the artist behind the work. Tile was involved in a carving project carried out by the Leulumoega Fine Arts students under the leadership of former principal Pelenato Liufau 'o le fe'e'. The project was showcased at the old Faleolo Airport.

Tile became associated with the Arts Council team during the 2008 Pacific Festival held in American Samoa. He and his team of carvers sculpted a 35-foot wooden tree that stood in front of the Arts Council office for many years.

He dedicates his life's work to his late parents, Mr. Aeo'ainuu Aleki Tuala-Tama'alelagi and Elisapeta Tuala-Tama'alelagi.



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**Ioane Tauai**

Ioane Tauai comes from Saletele, Fagaloa, and Leone in American Samoa. His interest in art was sparked by Mr. Samuelu Matamua, a talented carver who previously served at the TAOA office. After retiring, Mr. Matamua returned to Samoa, taking his tools to Fagaloa, where he started teaching the children in the community. The wisdom he shared with the young villagers was later inherited by Mr. Tauai's generation.

According to Mr. Tauai, Samuelu Matamua was the reason why carving was introduced to Saletele, Fagaloa. Mr. Tauai came to Tutuila in the early 2000s and has resided in the village of Leone ever since. During his unemployment period, he started carving and teaching carving to interested folks of the village. He mentioned Saleapaga and Samalaulu, who requested 70 *Tanoa* 19-inch sizes for a wedding in Hawaii. He felt delighted that his talent was starting to support his family's needs, and his work was now being sent abroad. At that moment, he noticed a surge in requests for carvings from Tanoa, jewelry, birthday signs, and more. Recognizing he couldn't meet the demand alone, he decided to teach the art to other interested carvers to help share the workload and the rewards with customers.

Tauai, currently employed at the Territorial Administration on Aging (TAOA) office since 2014, enjoys classes and visits from schools, as they provide him with the opportunity to share his carving knowledge and inspire future generations of carvers. Familiar with experiences related to the FestPAC concept, Tauai has traveled to different countries fueled by his love for Samoan arts. His message to the youth is: "Nurture your talent and share your wisdom as it can take you to many places."

This year, Tauai taught a carving session for seniors at Faasao-Marist High School, made possible by Land Grant 4H funding. At the end of the program, he awarded three students who demonstrated exceptional carving skills.

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Our sacred obligation to our kin and heritage is to illuminate the path of Samoan ancestral crafts for the generations to come.-

[Translated]

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**Fitulua Matamua**

Mr. Fitulua Matamua is from Sauano, Fagaloa in Samoa. He is a third generation carver. His grandfather is the late Samuelu Matamua who was a well known carver in American Samoa during his time and employed at TAOA.

In 1991, Fitulua arrived in Tutuila and began working at TAOA in 2004. Fitulua has consistently shown a keen interest in the diminishing art of carving, a traditional Samoan art form that started gaining popularity and attracting consumer interest recently. He worries about the lack of interest shown by the youth in American Samoa towards this art form.

Fitulua dedicates his life's work to his family and the youth of American Samoa. His greatest hope is for the upcoming generations to appreciate the significance of all Samoan traditional arts and be motivated to preserve and regenerate the love and interest of our most treasured cultural and heritage arts.



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# AMERIKA SAMOA



2024 FESTIVAL OF PACIFIC ARTS & CULTURE - HAWAII



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