



**Mata Makawa – Mata Vou:
Old Face – Niu/New Face
(UN)Registered Savages
of Aotearoa**

Ulumate Project Prehistory

Ulumate or 'dead head' was the ancient practice of wig making by iTaukei (indigenous Fijians), dormant for the last 200 years in Fiji. This was normally practiced during the time of mourning, when the drau-ni-ulu (hair) was cut and made into a wig then worn until the hair beneath grew back.

In the pre-Christian era, ulu cavu were also worn in warfare. During postcolonial times, ulu cavu were worn by Qita (selected men) with wau (weapons) who looked after the plantations where wi (Brazilian plums) and duruka (the edible

insides of reeds) grew. A Qita wore the ulu cavu with white bark cloth up to his eyes, Mata Vulo (white face). It was forbidden to call him by his name or talk to him while he was in costume and at work.

Ulu cavu is the generic Fijian term for human hair wig. In ancient traditions of iTaukei in Fiji, an ulu cavu was intentionally made during a time of mourning, warfare or worship.

This exhibition is part one of the *Dua: Drau ni ulu tabu – the Sacredness of Hair – Ulumate Project series*.

Mata-Makawa – Mata-Vou: Old Face – Niu/New Face

Kia ora, bula vinaka and mālō lava.

Thank you for taking an interest in our exhibition. In 2019 we were fortunate to access Creative New Zealand (CNZ) funding, which sent us on a research trip to the United Kingdom, to look at ulumate in collections at the following institutions:

- Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of Cambridge
- The Horniman Public Museum and Public Park Trust
- Royal Museums Greenwich, National Maritime Museum

This exhibition is a direct response to the ulumate collections we encountered along the way.

It was interesting to see how we were treated in terms of regulations and protocols around the handling of taonga in the UK as opposed to here in Aotearoa New Zealand.

The masks are our kinesthetic, aesthetic, 3D responses to the particular ulumate photographed in the UK collections and exhibited on the walls of Te Tuhi. The poems are our literary responses to the masks.

(UN)Registered Savages of Aotearoa

Daren Kamali and Ole Maiava are multi-media artists, working together on the revival, research and making of modern-day ulu cavu. They formed the (UN)Registered Savages of Aotearoa in 2015. They have been working on the making of a contemporary ulumate, through research and collaboration with iTaukei artists and researchers in Aotearoa, Fiji and the world, towards completion by 2022.

“We look forward to connecting, further research, and sharing with museums, universities and communities in Aotearoa New Zealand, Fiji, Oceania, the UK and the USA.”

Vinaka vaka levu and mālō lava
Daren and Ole

(UN)Registered Savages of Aotearoa. Photo by Wun Job.





Daren's hair to be fashioned into an ulu cavu, 2019.
Photo by Daren Kamali.

Ulumate
(Museum of Archaeology and
Anthropology, Cambridge
collection), 2019.
Photo by Ole Maiava.



Origins of a modern-day ulu cavu

I am Daren Kamali, born and raised in Suva, Fiji. I migrated to Aotearoa New Zealand at the age of 17. This ulumate project has been a revival and developmental work in progress since the time I first started growing my hair in 1997, 23 years ago.

I had no idea that someday, growing my hair would eventuate into a research artistic project that would engage with and revive the old iTaukei practice of ulu cavu making, in the present.

Typically, in modern times and in most Pacific traditions, after the hair is cut, the intention is to bury it back in one's island home, with a tree planted above, most commonly a coconut tree.

In 2014, after 17 years of growing my hair, I reached a point where I was faced with and overcome by challenges

and changes in my life, due to the disconnection of love in my private life and the dislocation of family. During this time, I had commenced work as guest Educator Pacific at the Auckland War Memorial Museum (AWMM).

It was at the AWMM in 2014 that I discovered the practice of ancient Fijians – iTaukei – because of the ulu cavu wig displayed there. This particular ulu cavu was the first I ever saw or thought existed – the sight of it alone empowered me and led me to the idea of research and the creation of a modern-day mourning wig.

I officially began researching ulu cavu wigs in 2014, starting with the AWMM special collections. There is only one ulu cavu at AWMM and one in Te Papa Museum, Wellington, Aotearoa New Zealand.



Daren holding an ulumate, 2019 Photo by Ole Maiava.

2016: 'Fiji: Life and Art in the Pacific' exhibition at University of East Anglia, Norwich, London

In 2016, after a couple years of research on the ulumate project and also poetry/writing/performing practice, I was invited to the UK to be part of the opening of the *Fiji: Life and Art in the Pacific* exhibition that took place at University of East Anglia (UEA), Sainsbury Research Centre for Africa, Americas, Asia and Oceania.

I discovered that there was an ulu cavu on exhibition among 540 ancient iTaukei collection items on exhibition

and in the publication. I was informed by a close friend and fellow researcher of Oceania special collections that the Museum of Archeology and Anthropology in Cambridge had an amazing collection of ulu cavu from Fiji by A. Von. Hougal, which I was able to visit while I was there in October 2016. This discovery opened me up to further research and the idea of creating a research plan with fellow creative, Ole Maiava, under the banner of the (UN)Registered Savages of Aotearoa.



Ulumate (Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge collection), 2019. Photo by Ole Maiava.



Ulumate (Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge collection), Daren's fingers, 2019. Photo by Ole Maiava.

The inspiration behind my masks

By Daren Kamali

Mata Vulo Mask

Vulo is the spathe of the coconut tree: our tree of life to Pacificans. Spathe was used for igniting fires for feasts in the islands, in addition to mata vulo, which was a popular material used for mask making in the islands back in the old days.

This particular vulo traces Fiji's connection to Savaii , Samoa.

Brown and Blue Painting: Many Masks – No Face

Many Masks – No Face covers the islands (brown) and Moana Nui A Kiva (blue). This is of major significance today as we face this Covid-19 (Coronavirus) on a global scale.

Masks were worn in Fiji in ancient times in ceremony, rituals, warfare and celebrations. This was part of the attire of the ulu cavu wearer.

In postcolonial times the Qita wore an ulu cavu, a mata vulo or mask of his choice, and leaves covering his body as he stood guard of the village plantation. He and his team of Qitas were responsible for protecting the village plantation and the distribution after allocating the chief and his family's share.

Mata Magimagi and Waia

This was the last of my masks' response to be created – a challenging task as I had not prepared myself for: to make a magimagi (coconut sennit) and waia (number 8 wire) mask. It was made on the due day. This mask idea pretty much showed itself vaguely in a dream and I couldn't sleep, thinking how am I supposed to turn a coat hanger and some magimagi into a mask? So the vision arose after I gave up on the idea of a metal (roofing iron) mask.

Mata Vuni Niu

This is a significant piece too, as the palm branch was gifted to me by my 10-year-old son who was playing in the park and saw the branch lying there so I decided to bring it home.

This Mata Vuni Niu represents a young bati (warrior) with his ulu cavu wig.

Mata Masi Kuvui

This is a special mask to me, and I took my time with it, as it is moulded from my mother's chemotherapy and radiology plastic operation mask from 2016. The masi kuvui or smoked tapa cloth is from Fiji and it was used to mould to the plastic operation mask.

Mata Masi Kuvui is a hand-held mask, using a kava bowl ladle to hold the masi mask up to the face.



Mata Nii Yuni Nui
Half of a palm branch, masi kuvui (smoked tapa), magimagi
(coconut sennit), island seashells, vulo (coconut tree spathe), sasa
(coconut leaf midrib), West Papuan (Seru sasa (coconut midrib
comb), acrylic paint.

Taba ni Niu

Birds fly up North

Schools of fish
swim South

Bright Heavenly Cross
Sharp sharks Teeth

White dove
Stained in blood

On its way down to Burotukula

Magimagi lashed
Ocean shell
Tied to eye
to forehead

Masi kuvui round head
Yellow eels with sharks' teeth
Swim in the dark

iSeru mai West Papua
Sasa kei na vulo
Adorned on head

Triangle holes glow

Qita performs a Meke
In his plantation
At dusk

Mata Vulo



Mata Vulo Mask

Two-piece vulo material, stitched together with magimagi (coconut sennit), island seashells, hawk feather, acrylic paints (black and red).

Mata Vulo
Mata Vulo Mai Manase

Moso's giant step
Across ocean floor

Viti Levu to
Falealupo

Mata Vulo mai Savaii
Blown by Cyclone Tino

Washed up shells
From Lalomanu

Lashed together by sennit
Like our waqa

Loaloa kei damudamu
Black and Red

Black face
Red face

Blood
From Burotukula

Mata Masi Kuvui



Mata Masi Kuvui
Masi kuvui, kava ladle handle (for serving yaqona), black acrylic
paint for hair.

Tinaqu
Smoked masi
From the Mata plastiki

Tinaqu
Smoked face
From the plastic mask

Tinaqu
A mask to remember you
To remember your suffering

Tinaqu
Seven weeks of radiation
Seven days in the hot sun

Tinaqu
So massive is your courage
So great is your sacrifice

Tinaqu
So fierce your suffering
Yet you smile through it all

Tinaqu
Mother Mana
Warrior queen

Tinaqu
Your sorrow I share
Your song I sing

Na Tinaqu

Hidden Sore Ni Dogo



Mata Magimagi and Waia
Magimagi (coconut sennit), waia (number eight wire),
mangrove seed, masi, acrylic paint, cowrie shell.

Hidden sore ni dogo
Beneath
Magimagi Twirls
Bound round
Kapa wire

Mata magimagi
Coconut coir
Lashing saltwater nations
Frames the ulucavu
Young bati warrior
The qita
Play
The game
Tiqa
Harvest season has arrived
Laga – meke – kana

Waia Kaukamea foundation
Magimagi framed
Hidden sore ni dogo
Beneath
Qani vivili
On ear

A conspiracy of the ancestors

I am Fa'aoleole Maiava aka Ole Maiava. First generation Aotearoan, 43rd generation Samoan. I am a multi-disciplinary artist, a once, selfconfessed, sacrificial catalytic artist, where the artist gives up their own personal art goals, but proceeds to catalyse art spaces with the hope of opening up more opportunities for other 'under the radar' arts people within the wider arts eco-system.

Thirty years on, many of them spent as an arts event producer, arts teacher and curriculum advisor, I have arrived at the point of pursuing my own personal art goals. I'd like to thank Daren for sharing this journey with me.

One of my lasting memories of my mum – she passed away when I was 17 years old – was her appreciation of the sacredness of hair. We were not allowed to throw it in the rubbish; it had to be buried or kept. This was the juice that lead me to start collecting my children's hair when they were young and holding onto it for 30 odd years, and now my grandchildren's hair has been added to the collection. Like a conspiracy going back many generations.

The Ulumate Project has given me an umbilical cord back to my childhood. We move in the realm of our salt-water gods. Our waka bodies move to the surge of the ancient waves.

This is my second art gallery exhibition with Daren. The first was at Otara's Fresh Gallery in 2015, in

collaboration with Paula Schaafhausen in an exhibition titled *Ebbing Tagaloa*.

While working at Auckland War Memorial Museum under the directorship of Roy Clare, which I must admit, achieved a lot, not only for tangata whenua but especially for Pacific peoples, I first started working with Daren and we formed the (UN)Registered Savages of Aotearoa.

As a side note, I was hired as Senior Outreach Programmer, tasked with developing a programme targeted at Māori and Pacific people, as these were the groups that had least engagement with the museum. I had had regular dealings with the museum from 2007 until 2012 as the Director of Pasifika Festival, held annually at Western Springs Park in Grey Lynn, Auckland. I witnessed first-hand the difficulties Pacific staff faced, through three different directorships within a five-year period (unheard of in this type of role).

I still believe that the museum's Pacific dimension document, Teu le Va, which all Pacific staff working at the museum at the time were able to contribute to, is an exemplar. It will be good to see its effects, over the coming years, if implemented well.

The other pearl of wisdom I take away from my days at the museum is that for heritage arts to survive there also has to be a revival, in which contemporary artists must play a part.

Maka Supa Hiro



Maka Pepa - Maka Supa Hiro
Papier maché and acrylic paint.

Comic book teacher,
Hero or preacher,

Lightness

Reaching out of the paper
Your superpowers caper
Wearing your wig to war

Darkness

Aroused in store
On a foreign shore
Locked behind museum door

Freedom

Nose flute key
Sets you free

Blue water superheroes
Surf the rising tides
Te ngaru matua connects the ancestors
Their ancient power coincides.

Maka Kagi



Maka Siapo - Maka Kagi

Repurposed siapo, repurposed chicken feather adornments dyed red and yellow, polyurethane, contact adhesive.

Hair today, gone tomorrow?
A cliché borrowed,
Chiefly colours to heal the sorrowed.

Ancestral tapa, gifted in Vava'u
Ole mea Kū mau
Ole mea sa'o

Re-purposed
Re-minder
To treat ourselves a little kinder

Not to measure the skin's thickness
But to release the thoughts
That create the plastic sickness...

Rest in peace my precious niece.

Maka Ga Ka



Maka La'au – Maka Gaka
Driftwood, acrylic paint, repurposed salu of sasa (coconut
leaf midribs).

Slither
Sly
Sibilance

Bolo slides
sideways burrows
Beneath the Bure

Languid sea snake lounges
Sharks keep a safe distance

Graceful Kahu rides the shoulders
of Tawhiri Matangi Lured by reptilian
awakenings to share their eggs

At the beginning of Fiji time.

Face of the chief ghost/ Maka ole Sifi Ā'iku



“A conspiracy of the ancestors...”
In a time full of testers

Stealing with their eyes and ears
Amoeba gene pool steers

Gestating in a quantum entanglement
puzzle
Red feathered spear, peering down an iron
blue muzzle

Seeded in a flower bed in Grey Lynn
Hoping to gentrify the goodness within

Kama Kū
Le maka o le sifi ā'iku,

Tama Tu
Here to keep guard over you.

Maka Gikau – Maka ole Sifi Ā'iku
Nikau branch (sourced from artist's garden in Grey Lynn), acrylic
paint, polyurethane, smoked tapa.

The inspiration behind my masks

By Ole Maiava

When I first came face to face with the ulumate in the UK, a sense of wonder, a sense of struggle, a sense of grief and a sense of deep connection came over me.

I also connected straight away by thinking of my eldest child, who happens to be a tattooist, and the road that led him to that was through connection to the tattooist who tattooed my grandfather and whom I'm named after.

I dedicate this body of work to my son, Calen, and our connection back to the universe.

With that in mind, each of the senses I felt when I met these ulu cavu form the base inspiration for my masks, and I wanted to create another thread that united these senses, as an overarching premise.

Like traditional tatau, I have assigned a 'soa' or a partner – to take the blows whilst you have a rest to sustain your body – to act as a foil, to weather this journey for each of the masks as well as the poems.

I approach my art pieces with these senses in mind.

Maka Supa Hiro: the sense of wonder

This papier-mâché mask has taken many years to mature. The shape is based loosely on the artist's face, and fashioned back in the last century, depicting deep roots to the wonder expressed at the superhuman qualities of our tupuna!

Old heroes: Blown away with the extraordinary feats of our tupuna/ancestors, the waka technology, the stone tool making and celestial navigational knowledge.

Niu heroes: Blown away by the technology that now exists to look after taonga in these institutions.

I chose to use three acrylic colours, connecting my offspring to the artwork: titanium blue, burnt umber and natural umber.

Maka Kagi: the sense of grief

I was sad to know that these ulumate had at one time belonged to people back in the oceans of Kiwa and Kupe, connected to family. At the time of preparing for this exhibition, one of my nieces passed away. This mask has been fashioned using the body suit that she used during her laser treatment for cancer. Sadly, she passed in December 2019. Before passing, she gave me permission to use this for an exhibition.

I also had a Tahitian tamure dancer shaker, that was broken, which I had kept for 'that occasion that might happen, when I might need this' type of scenario, and voilà – it provided the yellow and red feathers, the chiefly attire.

While repurposing this memory, I thought about 'family', the glue that holds us all together, and that's where the contact adhesive comes into play.

The tapa that this mask is fashioned from is a repurposed piece I received at an impromptu drinking session that happened in Vava'u in the Kingdom of Tonga, back in my television making days, from a guy married to one of my cousins back in Lalovaea in Samoa. Small world we live in.

Tears can be for good and bad... and that's all relative, lol.

Maka Gaka: the sense of struggle

When I saw the ulumate exposed, I thought of all the struggles undertaken or connected with to get this here. How did it begin?

We all have an origin story ...

I chose wood for my 'struggle' material. These two pieces are pieces of driftwood I found on beaches in Aotearoa. Like them, my mum and dad found themselves here, drifted ashore to an unknown environment, cast off to find a future in the land of milk and honey.

Both arrived separately ...

The inspiration behind the design of these masks is based on the Fijian legend of Degei and Turukawa. I concentrated more on Degei than Turukawa, as you will see from the snake-like patterns and colours I have used. This is also a reference to the sea snake legends of the Moana nui o Kupe.

Maka o le Sifi Aitu: the sense of connection

The inspiration for this work was an exhibition of Rowena Rooney's, *Masi in my Blood*, that I saw at Corban Estate Arts Centre.

We have a nīkau palm growing in our backyard in Grey Lynn. We have been living on this piece of whenua for nigh on 12 years and have been watching this palm grow in the backyard. After that exhibition, I wanted to try working with this medium.

I was inspired by Daren's tales of the Qita and their protection of the gardens: I likened them to Samoan Aitu or ghosts. That's the base idea behind these pieces.

The mask reminded me of Vanuatu and the various costumes from there. I used the chiefly colours of red and yellow again, adorning it with acrylic stenciled smoked bark cloth.

One mask has its eyes cut out and one has not, so that they can navigate both dark and light.



Soa o le Maka Kagi

Crab prince tapa scuttles
Chasing the outgoing tides

Ruby red feather flutters
Cruising the on-shore breeze it rides

Chiefly yellow
Golden mellow

Rises from the shallows
Bringing to life, memories repressed
under the hood

Reminding us to always look for the good



Soa o le Maka Supa Hiro

Alter Ego
Where do the free go

Masked up in isolation
World stood still, by a virus conflagration

Some hide behind steeples
The real super - heroes are the ordinary
peoples



Soa o le Maka o le Sifi Aiku

Make me laugh
Make me cry
Make me understand why

Connected by a family tree
Riding a va'a loa smelly like the sea

The chief of ghosts
Keeps her secrets close

Woven from the ancient roots of fa'agogo
Captured by young ears that fa'alogo

Hearing their grandmothers' words on the
wind
One day all our fish will be tinned.



Soa o le Maka Gaka

Ōpōtiki driftwood found
Moana nui a kupe sound

Sea snake face
Coconut rib encased
Sennit clumsily woven
Virgin weaver

He and she in tree
Egg conceiver

Krait snake, slither and shake

Alone, jealousy takes hold
Serpent god acts bold
The origin of viti people behold

The shield mask weaves its tail
“our culture is not for sale”



Ulu cavu is turned inside out and wrapped with netting made from vau (hibiscus), 2019. Photo by Ole Maiava.

by Daren Kamali

Unwrapping the ulu cavu after 130 years

It was memorable and a significant milestone in our research process for the Ulumate Project to be the ones chosen, after 130 years, to unwrap the netting of a stored ulu cavu at the Museum of Archeology and Anthropology, Cambridge in October 2019.



Daren Kamali interacting with ulimate (Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge collection), 2019. Photos by Ole Maiava.

How do I D.Kolo-nize Myself

I D.Kolo-nize myself

By growing my dreads

I D.Kolo-nize myself

By cutting my hair

I D.Kolo-nize myself

By making a Ulu cavu wig

I D.Kolonize myself

By wearing a Ulu cavu wig

I D.Kolo-nize myself

When I wear a Mata Vulo mask

I D.Kolo-nize myself

When I walk through the old koro
plantation

I D.Kolo-nize myself

When I kaila – Cheeee Hoooo hoooo

I D.Kolo-nize myself

When I sweat and cry salt

I D.Kolo-nize myself

To the Waitui Atea

The Saltwater Realm

I D.Kolonize

Glossary:

Bati: warrior

Bati ni vuaka: boar's tusk

Bure kalou: spirit house

Yaqona: kava

Yalo: spirit

Magimagi: coconut sennit

Masi: Fijian tapa

Ulu cavu: warrior wig

Warrior Wig and Boar's Tusk Pendant

Ulu cavu
Scalped from a fallen enemy
Crafted and worn in battle
Bati Ni Vuaka
Smoked and oiled to shine
Adorned on young Bati

Painted face - black and red

Ulu cavu on head
Blood drips on Bati Ni Vuaka

Head separated from body
Yaqona mixed with blood
Consumed from dead enemy's skull
Flesh and guts on tongue
Bones and weapons in the Bure Kalou
Heightens the yalo of the Bati

Enemy's hair dries in the sun
Stitched together with magimagi
Laced in Masi

The Bati warrior
Wears Ulu cavu on his head
Bati Ni Vuaka round his neck
Black and red paint on his face
Ready for another war

Both ulumate poems were featured at:

- Silo Theatre's first stage production for 2020 (5-15 March): UPU is bringing the power of Pasifika poetry to the theatre stage for the Auckland Arts Festival 2020. Curated by award-winning poet Grace Taylor, and directed by the accomplished Fasitua Amosa, the production boasts a stellar line-up of New Zealand acting talent.
- *Fā'aliga: beyond the grass skirt* exhibition, in association with the Pacific Dance Festival 2018 at Mangere Arts Centre, Auckland, New Zealand. Curated by Rosanna Raymond and Iosefa Enari.



Daren Kamali at Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge, 2019. Photo by Ole Maiava.

Feedback from our Mana Mai Moana trip 2019

- We must pursue and continue the research, revival and legacy of the heritage arts, especially investing in our youth and Pacific language and culture living in diaspora.
- We must encourage more of our Pacific people to engage and work in various institutions overseas, in Europe, America (they lack the knowledge and presence of our Pacific people) and also at home, reviving our old ways and transforming them into today's practical world, otherwise we are at a great risk of losing our language and culture altogether.
- Gratefulness – that we have support from CNZ and from people, museums and institutions here in Aotearoa New Zealand, the Pacific and internationally. It's about building networks and a reputation, and the (UN)Registered Savages of Aotearoa, along with other incredible leading revival creatives in Aotearoa, are prime examples of how to make a little go a long way in terms of taking funding and stretching it out as far as you can like our fishing nets.
- Walk the talk: To continue thinking, creating, talking, doing and connecting with the right people. Treat others the same as (UN)Registered Savages of Aotearoa as we all have dreams.



Rachel Hand and Daren Kamali (Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge), 2019. Photo by Ole Maiava.



Detail of ulumate (Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge collection), 2019. Photo by Ole Maiava.

Daren opening up the netted
ulu cavu after 130 years, 2019.
Photo by Ole Maiava.



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