

ABSTRACT

'Asi - The presence of the Unseen

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In 1993, Wolfgramm referred to the climax in faiva as 'asi (the presence of the unseen). This spirit of artistic expression is an agent sometimes identified when Oceanic people work together to bring artistic works to their apotheosis. This thesis asks, "What occurs when young Oceanic people work together creatively in a group, drawing on values from their cultural heritage, to create meaningful faiva?" The thesis seeks to understand how within this process, 'asi might bring forward a powerful sense of expression rooted in a relationship between involvement and a sense of belonging. Emanating from a critical consideration of faiva and 'asi, the research considers the dynamics of collective development and performance. Video, sound, drawing, poetry, performance and talanoa (every day conversations where the people involved share their personal experiences) are collected and analysed through a process of artistic and analytical reflection. The research considers two bodies of work. The first is a co-created work called Lila. This was developed by a team of research participants in 2019. The second is the development and performance of the researcher's experience and synthesis of thinking in a faiva called FAIVA | FAI VĀ. The significance of the research lies in its contribution to an understanding of 'asi, so we might identify and consider its potential agency for resourcing creativity and belonging inside the development and performance of faiva. The presentation will: outline what 'asi and faiva are, discuss the methodology used, consider the findings from the two bodies of work, and discuss benefits for young Oceanic people.

References

Wolfgramm, E. (1993). Comments on a Traditional Tongan Story Poem. Manoa. *Writing from the Pacific Islands (Summer 1993)*, 5(1), 171.