

DR. VILSONI HERENIKO

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Summary

Former Director of two Pacific Studies Centers (Fiji and Hawai'i); internationally-recognized authority on the arts, literatures, media and cultures of Oceania; more than 40 years teaching at university level; award-winning filmmaker, playwright, university professor, and creative artist. Fully-tenured with a large body of scholarly and creative work. The only professor from the Pacific teaching in a film program in the United States who is a film director and screenwriter with an extensive background in Pacific Studies. The only Fijian who has made a narrative feature film that was submitted by Fiji for the Academy Awards. At least 1711 mentions of scholarly work and 6,109 total views on the scholarly site academic.edu. All films and some plays are distributed globally to universities and libraries through ProQuest.

Teaching Positions

2012 Aug.- present. Professor, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, Honolulu, Hawai'i.

2010-2012. Director and Professor of Pacific Islands Studies, Oceania Centre for Arts, Culture and Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific, Suva, Fiji.

2002-2010. Professor of Pacific Islands Studies, Center for Pacific Islands Studies, UHMānoa, Honolulu, Hawai'i.

2005. Visiting Fellow, Corpus Christi, University of Cambridge, Cambridge, England.

2005. Visiting Professor, University of Washington, Seattle, Washington.

1997-2001. Associate Professor of Pacific Islands Studies, Center for Pacific Islands Studies, UHMānoa, Honolulu, Hawai'i.

1996. Visiting Professor, University of Pittsburgh, Semester at Sea.

1991. Assistant Professor of Pacific Islands Studies, Center for Pacific Islands Studies, UHMānoa, Honolulu, Hawai'i.

Courses taught at the School of Cinematic Arts: Indigenous Aesthetics, Screenwriting, Oral Tradition to Screenplay, Oceanic Media and Culture, Images of Paradise, Representations of Pacific Islanders in Film and Video, Capstone Creative Production, Sustainability in the Motion Picture Industry, Authors in Cinematic Arts.

Education and Training

Ph. D.

(On American Govt. Scholarship to the East-West Center.)

University of the South Pacific, Suva, Fiji

Dissertation: *Polynesian Clowns and Satirical Comedies* (first major work on indigenous Pacific Theater.) External examiners accepted dissertation "as is."

Master of Education (On British Council Scholarship)

Newcastle University, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, England.

Bachelor of Arts and Graduate Certificate of Education (On Fiji Govt. Scholarship)
University of the South Pacific.

Publications

Books

2001. *Last Virgin in Paradise* (a serious comedy), Suva, Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific.
1997. *Sina & Tinilau*, Suva, Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific.
1996. *Woven Gods: Female Clowns and Power in Rotuma*. Honolulu: Center for Pacific Islands Studies and University of Hawaii Press.
1989. *The Monster and Other Plays*, Suva, Mana Publications.
1987. *Two Plays: A Child for Iva & Sera's Choice*, Suva, Mana Publications.
1985. *South Pacific Islanders*. London. Wayland Publishers.
1981. *A Child for Iva*, Auckland, Heinemann Publishers.
1977. *Don't Cry, Mama*. Suva, Mana Publications.
1977. *Art in the New Pacific*. Suva, South Pacific Creative Arts Society.

Editor

2022. *The Contemporary Pacific*, Honolulu, Center for Pacific Islands Studies and UHPress, Vol. 34.2.
- 1994-1997 Advisory Editor, Talanoa: *Contemporary Pacific Literature Series*, University of Hawai'i Press.
- 2002-2008. Editor, *The Contemporary Pacific*, Vol. 14.2 – Vol. 20.2.
1999. *Inside Out: Literature, Cultural Politics, and Identity in the New Pacific*. with Rob Wilson. Lanham, Boulder, New York, Oxford. Rowman and Littlefield Publishers.
1997. *Wasafiri: Pacific Writing*. With Briar Wood, London: University of London.

Chapters/Articles/Reviews

2024. Screenplay of *Sina ma Tinirau* and Interview in *The Fantastic in the Pacific* edited by Cristina Bacchilega, ku'ualoha ho'omanawanui, and Pua Warren, University of Hawai'i Press, Honolulu.
2024. (Forthcoming). "Activating the Va: Performance, Academia, and the Sublime", *Oceania*, edited by Jadran Mimica and Sally Babidge.
2022. "Editor's Note: Interdisciplinarity Reimagined", *The Contemporary Pacific*, Vol. 34.2, IX-XVII.
2019. "Authenticity in Cinema: Notes from the Pacific Islands" in *Journal de la Societe des Oceanistes*, 148, 1-11.
2019. Afterword "Virtual Museums and New Directions" in *Curatopia: Museums and the Future of Curatorship*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 327-335.
2018. "The Canoe, the Wind, and the Mountain: Shunting the Rashomon Effect of Mauna Kea" in *Pacific Studies*, Vol.41, No.3-Dec.,119-130.
2018. "Authors' Response" in *Pacific Studies*, Vol. 14, No.3-Dec.,154-157. 2018. Review of Disney's "Moana" in *The Contemporary Pacific*: 30:1, 216-224.
2016. "An Interview with Sia Figiel" in *Freelove* (a novel), Loihi Press, Honolulu, 220-

239.

2016. "Taaluga: Decolonising and Globalising the Pacific", in *Transpacific Americas: Encounters and Engagements between the Americas and the South Pacific*, Routledge, 167-173.

Awards, Honors, Grants

2023. Award from the European Research Council to make short film titled *Woven*. Film completed in May 2024 and submitted to international film festivals.

2023. Official Selection of Woven Coconut Frond Basket, Hawai'i Craftsmen, Honolulu Downtown Gallery.

2022: Best Animated Short: Berlin Independent Film Festival; Best Short Award: Made in Hawai'i Film Festival, Big Island, Hawai'i; Winner: Beyond Border International Film Festival, Kolkata, India; Best Animated Short of the Year: Indie Short Fest, Los Angeles International Film Festival; Winner: The Black Panther International Short Film Festival, Delhi, India; Nominated for Best Short: Hawai'i International Film Festival; Honorable Mention: Deep Focus Film Festival, New York.

2022. Star of Oceania Award in Film, Media and the Arts, Pacific Business Center at University of Hawai'i.

2022. Recognition Award for Woven Coconut Frond Basket from Hawai'i's State Foundation for Culture and the Arts. SFCA acquired basket for its Permanent Collection.

2021. Award from the European Research Council grant for film *Sina ma Tinirau*, Project title: Indigeneities in the 21st Century, Germany.

2021- present. Invited to be an affiliate of a global project titled "Indigeneities in the 21st Century. See website: <https://www.indigen.eu/team>

2020. Official Selection of woven coconut frond basket for curated exhibition, Hawai'i Craftsmen, Honolulu, Downtown Gallery.

2020-2021. Awarded \$20,000 from the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa Collaboration in Film and Animation Strategic Investment Grant to produce *Sina ma Tinirau*.

2020. Invited to join Board of Directors, William S. Merwin Conservancy Board.

2020. Winner, "Niu: The Tree of Life - An Island Fable for Today and Tomorrow", Living Archive Storytelling Competition, Online Platform.

Films and Screenings

2024. *Sina ma Tinirau* screened at the Festival of Pacific Arts and Culture held in Honolulu, Hawai'i.

2023. *Sina ma Tina* screened at The Smithsonian National Museum of American Indian's Native Cinema Showcase, Santa Fe, New Mexico.

2022. *Sina ma Tinirau* screened at the following film festivals: The Fantasy Film Festival, Paris, France; Fantaspoa – International Fantastic Film Festival of Porto Alegre, Brazil; Be Epic! London International Film Festival, United Kingdom; Guam International Film Festival; ImagineNATIVE Film + Media Arts Festival, Toronto, Canada; Maoriland Film Festival, New Zealand; Wairoa Maori Film Festival, New Zealand; FIFO, Festival International du Film documentaire Oceanien, Tahiti, French Polynesia.

2021. Commissioned film by Pacific Islanders in Communications for social media. I am the writer, director, producer and narrator of this short film titled *A Niu Way* now streaming online. It has nearly 1.9K views as of 11/25/2023.

2018. Opening Film, *Moana Rua: The Rising of the Sea* (about rising sea levels in Oceania) at the University of Southern California. Organized by the Royal

Anthropological Institute's Film Festival, Los Angeles, USA.

2018. Film Screening, *Moana Rua: The Rising of the Sea* and *Let the Mountain Speak* (visual poem about Mauna Kea) at Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand.

2017. World Premiere, "Let the Mountain Speak" at the Honolulu Biennial as well as the Ohina Short Film Festival, Honolulu, Hawai'i.

2016. World Premiere, "Salesi" (short film), Hawai'i International Film Festival.

2016. Official Selection, "Salesi", Jeonju International Film Festival, Jakarta, Indonesia.

2016. "Mirage" (short film), Brisbane Asia Pacific Film Festival, Australia.

2016. World Premiere, "Mirage", Ohina Short Film Festival, Honolulu, Hawai'i. 2016.

Official Selection, "Mirage", Wairoa Maori Film Festival, New Zealand.

2015. World Premiere of "Moana Rua: The Rising of the Sea" at Damodar Cinema in Suva, Fiji. Event organized by the Delegation of the European Union for the Pacific and the University of the South Pacific in Fiji.

Plays and Performances.

Theater and Performances

2024. Forthcoming, Lead Actor in Narrative Short Film titled *Woven* co-directed with Alex Cantatore.

2018. Director, "When Strangers Meet" by Jeannette Paulson Hereniko (one-woman show), performances at Doris Duke Theatre and Kumu Kahua Theatre in Honolulu, Hawai'i; Kahilu Theatre in Waimea, Hawai'i; and BodyVox Theatre in Portland, Oregon.

2015. Writer, Producer and Co-director of a musical production on climate change titled "Moana: The Rising of the Sea". Performances at Bergen (Norway), St. Andrews (Scotland), Copenhagen and Brussels. Also performed for the international conference of European Society of Oceanists (ESFO) and at the European Union in Brussels.

2012. Executive Producer and Writer/Co-Director of "Drua; The Wave of Fire" (stage musical), Festival of Pacific Arts, Solomon Islands.

2012. Performances of "Vaka: The Birth of a Seer" (stage musical), University of the South Pacific, Suva, Fiji. 2011. Writer/Director, "Fine Dancing" (play), University of the South Pacific, Suva, Fiji.

2003. Consultant to production of "Fine Dancing" at Ernst Lab Theater, University of Hawaii, Honolulu, Hawai'i. 1997. Writer and Director of "Fine Dancing." Ten performances on the beach of Magic Island, Honolulu, Hawai'i.

Professional Service, Boards, Committees

2023. Committee Member of Ph.D. Committee for candidate in Dept. of English.

2023. Committee Member of M.A. Committee for candidate in Center for Pacific Islands Studies.

2023 (since 2018): President of NETPAC (Network for the Promotion of Asia Pacific Cinema).

2023. Member of SCA's Programming Committee and Communications Committee.

2021-present. Faculty Representative, Advisory Board of School of Cinematic Arts, UHManoa.

2021-2022. Chair of the Academy for Creative Media's Personnel Committee as well as Faculty Personnel Committee. I was also a member of a Tenure and Promotion Committee for UHMānoa.

2021. Chair of Steering Committee for the Dept's newly-formed Advisory Board.

2021. Member of two Ph.D. Committees for the Department of Theater and Dance and the English Dept.

2020. Appointed Researcher Affiliate for the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme funded by the European Research Council and based at the Dept. of Social and Cultural Anthropology at Ludwig- Maximilians-Universitat at Munich, Germany.

2020-2022. Member, Commission on Racism and Bias, UHMānoa. 2020 - Present, Member, Board of Directors of the Merwin Conservancy.

2019. Chair, Search Committee, Academy for Creative Media, UHMānoa.

2019. Member, Search Committee for Department of Theater and Dance & Center for Pacific Islands Studies.

2018. Chair, Search Committee, Academy for Creative Media, UHMānoa, Honolulu, Hawai'i.

2018. Head of NETPAC Jury (Network for the Promotion of Asia Pacific Cinema), Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF), Toronto, Canada.

Conferences, Scholarly and Public Presentations

2023. Featured Speaker, Fiji's Attorney General's Annual Conference, Nadi, Fiji.

2023. Distinguished Lecture, Association of Social Anthropology for Oceania (ASAO), Kona, Hawai'i.

2023. Featured Speaker and Panelist, Animation conference at Griffith University, Australia, titled "Valleys Deep: Mountains High": The peaks and troughs of animation practice.

2021. Featured Speaker, "Vā Moana: Space and Relationality in Pacific Thought and Identity", Organized by the Auckland University of Technology and the University of Hawai'i, Auckland and Honolulu, 23-24 November. Title: "A NIU WAY: Nurturing the vā with the coconut palm tree".

2020. Panelist for the Hawai'i International Film Festival and Pacific Islanders in Communications to critique and analyze the newly-released Maori feature film "Cousins".

2020. Panelist for the Hawai'i Book and Music Festival to discuss "Culture and the Arts" during the corona-virus pandemic.

2018. Keynote Speaker, Oceania Comparative and International Education Society (OCIES), Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand. Title: "Connectivity: Re-imagining our Collective Futures Together."

2018. Discussant for the 7th International Conference on Environmental Future: Humans and Island Environments, held at the East-West Center, Honolulu, Hawai'i. Topic: "What role can humanities play in island conservation?"

2018. Featured Speaker, Cilect/Capa Conference on "Storytelling in the Asia Pacific: Cultural Crossroads and Multinationalities in Film", hosted by the School of Film and Media Studies at Ngee Ann Polytechnic, Singapore. Title: "Authenticity in Pacific Islands Cinema."