



'Ofa-ki-Levuka ('Ofa) Guttenbeil-Likiliki

'Ofa-ki-Levuka ('Ofa) Guttenbeil-Likiliki holds close to her heart her belief in God, her belief in feminism and upholding human rights and human dignity for every single human being regardless of colour, ethnicity, sex, gender and religion. She does many things but what she loves most is telling stories in whatever possible way she can. She prioritises giving voice to the lived realities of women's stories across the Pacific.

"The creating of this film for me, is a collaboration in solidarity of diverse stories and voices from Pacific women writers and creators. That in itself is already a solid sign of empowerment." 'Ofa-ki-Levuka Guttenbeil-Likiliki

Amberley Jo Aumua

Amberley Jo Aumua is of Samoan and Maori descent from Manurewa, New Zealand. She is a writer and director who holds a Bachelor of Performing and Screen Arts. Her shorts include Kopurapura (16), Waiting (17) and Moa Ma Le Pinko (18).

"I hope Vai will achieve an insight and understanding into the beautiful, yet conflicting world of Pasifika women." Amberley Jo Aumua

Becs Arahanga

Becs wrote and directed the short film Laundry at the end of 2016. Laundry was selected for the NZIFF Best Shorts and Show Me Shorts, where it was nominated for four awards. Best Edit, Best Screenplay, Best Director, and Best Film. Laundry is still in it's festival life, having recently played at ImagineNative in Toronto, San Diego, FIFO in Tahiti, Tampere Film Festival, and Seattle International Film Festival.

"I think it is incredible that we are making a film that connects women of the Pacific nations together, we are of the water hemisphere and I hope this film reflects the determination we have to share the joys and sufferings of others; faith in the limitless possibilities of life; and the vow to defend and celebrate diversity." Becs Arahanga

Dianna Fuemana

Dianna's career in theatre as a playwright and director spans 20 years with her plays being produced in both New Zealand and internationally. She transitioned to film making in 2012 when she won the New Zealand Film Commission internship to NYC with Killer Films. Her first short film 'Sunday Fun Day' was shot in 2016. It won the Sun Jury Prize at the Imaginative Film and Media Arts Festival in Toronto, 2017.

“Bringing Niue and her people and stories to the screen is a rare opportunity. This film will give rise to the voices on the island who keep our island home fires burning.” Dianna Fuemana

Marina Alofagia McCartney

From a Geordie Father, Samoan Mother and Cook Islands step-Mother, Marina is powerfully aware of her cultural heritage, how this affects the way we are viewed and how we view others. She holds an MA in Screen Production (First Class Honours) and is an award-winning filmmaker and teaching fellow at Pacific Studies, University of Auckland. Her academic areas of expertise are Pacific Studies, Pacific Filmmaking, Pacific representation on screen and representations of the Pacific woman.

“One of the most enduring images used to promote Oceania is that of the “Dusky Maiden”. Yet our histories reveal a different reality to this construction. Vai presents an opportunity to visually explore a different Oceanic woman; a much-needed representation that counters the historical and current imagined construction.” Marina Alofagia McCartney

Miria George

Miria is a poet, and writer, director, producer of theatre. An award-winning playwright, Miria’s work has toured New Zealand, Australia, Hawai’i, Canada and the United Kingdom. Her plays include and what remains, Sunset Road, The Vultures and The Night Mechanics. Miria recently directed the Premiere Season of Bless The Child by Hone Kouka for the New Zealand Festival & Auckland Arts Festival. In 2017, Miria was the Fulbright-Creative New Zealand Pacific Writer in Residence at University of Hawai’i and won the Bruce Mason Playwriting Award. Miria holds a Masters in Creative Writing from the International Institute of Modern Letters. Also a published poet, The Wet Season is Miria’s debut collection of poetry, published by the Wai-te-ata Press.

“Vai is a platform that propels the diverse perspectives of va’ine Pasifika across Te Moana-nui-a-kiva and throughout the world. The kaupapa calls together Indigenous women - artists who are challenged to build creatively together, to present a vision of their whenua.” Miria George

Sharon Whippy

Kai Loma, ‘in between’, that’s me, that’s where I write from, my writing inhabits this space. Fiji born with roots in Savusavu and Vanua Balavu, I grew up in Auckland, now I live and work in Melbourne.

I’ve written all my life – poetry, prose and short stories. To see our stories brought to life is a privilege, it shouldn’t be, but it is.

“This gift will allow me the opportunity to work alongside, collaborate with and learn from talented and creative Pacific Island women writer/directors. This is the chance for me to take part in the creative process, and strengthen my voice as a storyteller. To afford me guidance on my path as a Fijian Kai Loma female writer.” Sharon Whippy

Nicole Whippy

Nicole Whippy was born in Suva, Fiji where she lived for the first couple of years of her life until her family migrated to NZ. She has lived in Auckland for 38 years. She is best known for her work as a Television and Theatre Actress. Vai will be her film directorial debut.

"It is an absolute honour to find myself here creating Vai with my sister and 8 other strong, inspiring Pasifika women. I hope that as a roopu we each represent our island with dignity while showcasing the uniqueness of that nation, its people and landscape." Nicole Whippy

Matasila Freshwater

Matasila is a writer/director with a background in anthropology and film. She is passionate about using fantastical elements, whimsy and dread to explore cultural complexities. Matasila's last NZFC funded short animated film, Shmeat, was a NZIFF Official Selection for New Zealand's Best Short Film and appeared in a number of festivals including 2016 Sitges International Fantasy Film Festival and was awarded Best Animation in A Night of Horror Film Festival in Sydney.

"I haven't had many experiences of seeing myself, family or the people surrounding me, reflected in the media I consume. Vai has been an incredibly formative experience in changing that, by celebrating the diaspora of Pacific identity and telling stories from specific world-views and voices." Matasila Freshwater

Kerry Warkia & Kiel McNaughton Producers

Kerry Warkia is a producer who has been at the forefront of some of New Zealand's most innovative content for both television and web. Passionate about telling Māori and Pasifika stories she is now about to produce her second feature film *Vai* set in 7 Pacific island countries. Most recently Kerry has produced a groundbreaking feature film *Waru* made up of 8 vignettes - each a 10 minute single shot - made in collaboration with 9 wāhine (female) Māori film-makers. In 2014 Kerry was acknowledged as that year's "Woman to Watch" at the NZ WIFT Awards, a testament to Kerry's determination to tell a diverse range of stories that ignite her passion.

Kiel McNaughton is a director and producer most experienced in television comedy and drama. After spending four and a half years in front of the camera as a core cast member on New Zealand's most watched soap *Shortland Street*, Kiel moved behind the camera to direct and executive produce the award-winning comedy series *Auckland Daze*. He has since directed full seasons of *Find Me A Māori Bride* and *This Is Piki* and co-produced the feature film *Waru*. As well as producing *Vai* with Kerry Warkia, Kiel is also producing and directing on 2 comedy projects with Millen Baird.