

EcoArt Project

The Book of the Workshop...



The Workshop 21-28th September 2013

About Us

Heat Wave Artists Group

Beqa Eco Artists Workshop

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USP Affiliations: PACE-SD and FALE, Oceania Centre



01 The Aims of Our Workshop

It was an opportunity for our Centre artists to bond more formally as a group, and to learn new skills and observe different art processes.

To learn more about environmental issues and use our art as a medium to convey information and educate children and the public regarding these issues.

In order to achieve these aims, workshop activities were designed to allow us to achieve the following:

- 1) To develop new skills that expanded the way we artists conceptualize and make art.
- 2) To reclaim the connection to the land and leave the urban way of thinking.

- 3) To develop new methods of expression form a relationship with the environment that is reflected in creating art work.

- 4) To use art to “make a difference” by developing exciting and innovative ways of raising awareness and communicating information concerning environmental issues and climate change to various communities and new audiences – including school children.

02 The Workshop 21-28th September

An artist’s workshop was held at Lawaki Beach House from 21-28th September, 2013.

Pacific cultures and societies are central to the USP mission, vision and values and a theme that permeates every aspect of the Strategic plan. Central to the positioning of the university as the international leader in Pacific Studies, Arts and Culture is the creation of an internally recognized centre for visual and performing arts and pacific heritage which will showcase and promote pacific talent in all areas of art. The idea of an innovative interdisciplinary program, such as the one described here, which draws upon creative expression, community experiences and academic research on climate change to support and underlie these goal.

1. TRANSIENT WORKS AND MATERIALS EXPERIMENTATION



Example of a transient work



01 Transient Works Exhibition

As part of the workshop several “transient” artworks were created. These works were on view to all those who passed by their location during the time that the work existed.... All the transient works were made with “found” materials which were either disposed of responsibly (in the case of manmade rubbish), or allowed to return to their natural state....

These artworks culminated from the need to share the different ways that each artist discovered to put across the messages they wanted to share about climate change and caring for the environment using their art as the medium. The larger works were a group effort, with individuals also expressing their views through transient works

02 Materials Experimentation

During regular meetings/seminars prior to this workshop environmental issues were explored and discussed by the group. Works of various environmental artists had also been introduced and discussed. This was to give all artist participants a basic understanding of climate change and environmental issues on which to base their communication. Information was provided on the work and art practice of various environmental artists in order for our workshop artists to be able to contextualize their own work and practice. In many cases, artists had not previously worked with a sketch book.

The first 2 days of the workshop centered on materials experimentation. Examples of the work produced are given below:

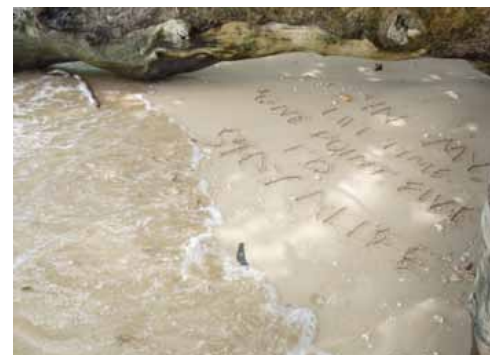


SAND SCULPTURE TRANSIENT WORK





NATURAL FISH TRANSIENT WORKS



Andy Goldsworthy, Tracey Emin & Reko Rennie inspired transient work



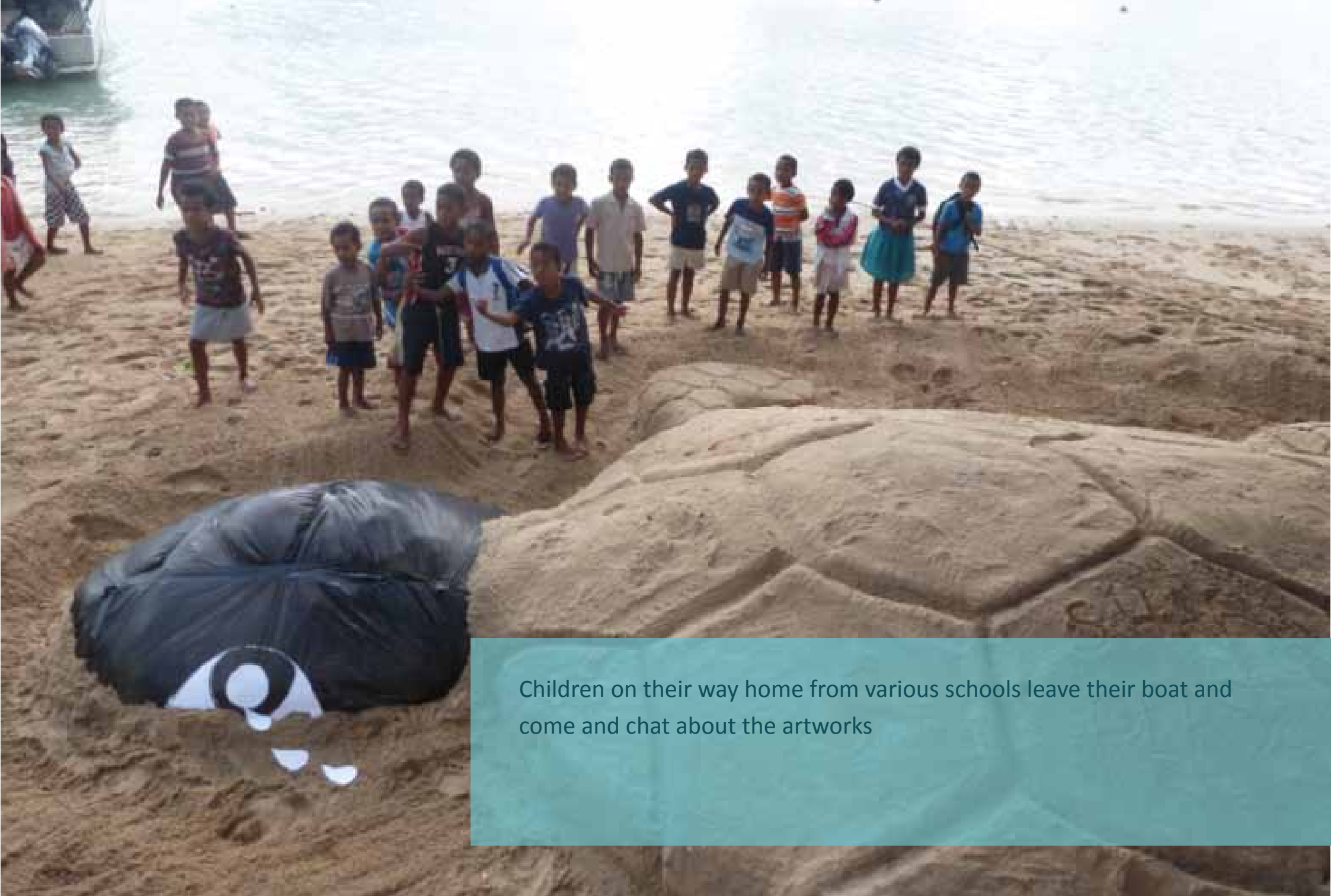
1.3 EXPERIMENTING WITH 2-D MEDIA

DIGITAL, FILM AND TRADITIONAL





Making the Turtle – the turtle was used to explain to children about the importance of not throwing rubbish in the sea – turtles are drowned by plastic bags – which apparently look to them like jellyfish



Children on their way home from various schools leave their boat and come and chat about the artworks



2.1 PREPARATION OF SCHOOL WORKSHOP ACTIVITIES



Designing “Shark” which would be built by the school children and used to teach that sharks ingest discarded plastic and die as a result. This should reinforce the lessons about not throwing rubbish into the sea.



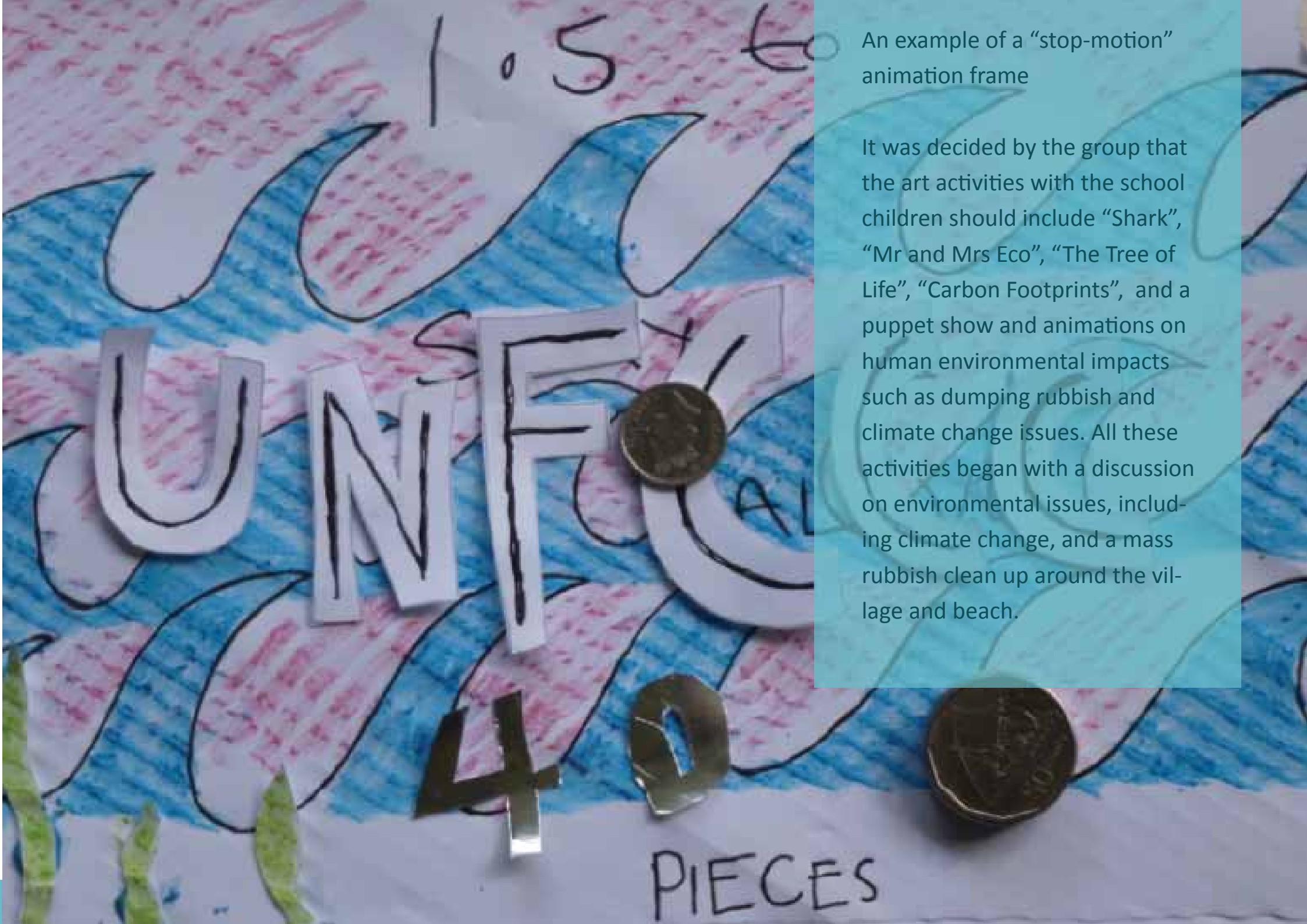
Writing a song about climate change – “Pacific Dawn” - to be performed for the children at the school.



*Designing a stage and backdrops
for the puppet theatre.*



Storyboarding the animations.



An example of a “stop-motion” animation frame

It was decided by the group that the art activities with the school children should include “Shark”, “Mr and Mrs Eco”, “The Tree of Life”, “Carbon Footprints”, and a puppet show and animations on human environmental impacts such as dumping rubbish and climate change issues. All these activities began with a discussion on environmental issues, including climate change, and a mass rubbish clean up around the village and beach.

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PIECES

2. ECOARTS WORKSHOP WITH NACEVA PRIMARY SCHOOL



Sevusevu in the village – we need permission to collect rubbish and natural resources.



The children welcome us to the school with songs and dances.

Setting out to collect rubbish from around the village and shoreline.



Discussions about climate change and environmental issues.... What are the causes and effects?
What can we do to help our environment?



Collecting rubbish art materials...!!!



An interesting collection of art materials...



Organising activities for "Shark" and "Mr and Mrs Eco"...



Sculpting the shark.... Then queuing up to feed it!!!



After the shark was fed, the rubbish was disposed of responsibly – in fact, the artists brought 4 bags of back with them to be placed in the USP recycling bins.... This was a valuable exercise as it was a fun art activity that emphasized the damage caused to sea life by improper waste disposal. Interestingly, the shark is Beqa's totem animal.

MR & MRS ECO

The idea of making these two recycled figures came from the recent local Hibiscus festival which has a Miss & Mr Hibiscus competition, which is a regular part of Fiji's annual Festival.

The idea was to collect rubbish and make two glamorous characters that had an element of fun and creativity in their creation – like scarecrows, they are the guardians' of the beach and watch for people dumping rubbish and damaging plants. Making two large people meant many students could be involved in the process. Also we used two trees that were close to each other as the body of the artworks.

Students went through the collected rubbish and found what they needed.



Materials used for Mr & Mrs Eco



Making Mrs Eco's bottle shirt...



Mr Eco's head...



Constructing Mr & Mrs Eco...



Mrs Eco...



The “Tree of Life” and “Carbon Footprints” allowed us to discuss concepts such as the carbon cycle, climate change, how our use of energy has a lasting effect on the environment and how we can reduce our use of energy.

PUPPET THEATRE AND ANIMATION

Puppet theatre and stop-motion animation were used to explore the themes of pollution and climate change.



Using rubbish and other found resources such as trees and leaves to create puppets, characters and backdrops for theatre and animation.



Climate change animation themes included coastal defenses, sea level rise, preventing pollution and food security.

Backdrop for the puppet theatre....

Our ARTISTS... **AT NACEVA PRIMARY SCHOOL**



The workshop ended with a song about the effects of climate change "Pacific Dawn".

MEETING WITH VILLAGE WOMEN'S GROUP



The female artists from Heat Wave joined in an EcoArts and craft demonstration with the local women's group. Climate change issues such as food and water security, sea level rise, and climate science were also discussed, along with other environmental issues.

Skills Enhanced

- We had access to local driftwood and the beaches to construct and make works and used existing trees to build new works
- Artists were able to experiment with new mediums and ideas and find ways of sharing new environmental knowledge with the Beqa children.
- This was the first time many had made sculptures, carved and used pastels. New skills were developed.
- We had group meetings to share new found skills and information.
- New ways of making art we explored the idea of transient works that are washed away naturally was recorded; 3-d work; animation; using found materials; using natural materials; wood carving; 2-d work.

Achievements

- We ran a successful workshop at the school
- Artists had the opportunity to share knowledge and teach others their new found skills
- Awareness of environmental issues was lifted and the workshop appraisals show how levels of knowledge increased
- Artists have begun to understand the power their art has to bring change
- We found some solutions to the rubbish problems of the island and made positive suggestions for dealing with future rubbish
- We wrote and played an environmental song that was shared with the school

Media Engagement

- The Fiji Times has meet with the artist and will do a story on the works shop
- We are going to make a DVD for school

Partnerships

- The Naceva school is keen to work with us and will visit USP in November
- We will be able to share our new found knowledge and Ideas with other local schools during the Nov-Dec 2013 EcoArts Exhibition at the Oceania Centre Gallery

Funding

Research Cluster

USP-EU Global Climate Change Alliance Project; EU ECOPAS Project; and the Climate Change Research Cluster.

Staff/artists

Sarah Hemstock, Johanna Beasley, Saimoni Fong, Lou Hughes (Exile Designs).

Centre artists

Tomasi Domomate, Ledua Peni, William Cavakau, Kamla Naidu

USP Students

Harieta Vilsoni, Allen Sanga, Tarek Wazni, Joana Taukei

Volunteer Artist

Sanjesh



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Sam and Christine from Lawaki Beach House for their patience and giving us the perfect location to make art. We could not have this much freedom anywhere else.

We would like to thank them and their staff for their generosity and allowing us to do what many resorts would not condone and for liaising with the local school (which their charity supports by providing school meals).

I would like to thank all the Centre artists and the other USP students who created the art works. Without the artists there would be no workshop or art works.

We have our Exhibition in November - December 2013 to showcase what we have gained from this wonderful experience.

Future EcoArts Project outputs:

1. At least 100 new original works of art.
2. A DVD of the workshop detailed in this book. The DVD will be aimed at educators across the Pacific and will show how to organize and implement “EcoArts” events – including delivering appropriate environmental awareness messages and education at little monetary cost. The DVD will be distributed widely by USP-EUGCCA project In-Country Coordinators.
3. A recording of the song “Pacific Dawn”.
4. An “EcoArts” exhibition in November-December 2013 at the Oceania Gallery, USP to coincide with the ECOPAS event.
5. Workshops and art activities for school children during the course of the “EcoArts” exhibition.
6. Four short animation / puppet theatre films.





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