

Pelenakeke Brown Provocation

A Travelling Practice looks at the Samoan design principles and ancestral knowledge held within the landscape and context of the contemporary keyboard. The keyboard becomes a crossover site that intersects my many identities and art forms, as well as becoming a tool for freedom and creativity of expression.

As a disabled artist working within crip time, the power of movement that I can achieve through my keyboard and the liminal space of the internet is integral to help me connect, create, and facilitate my artistic practice. With this work I wished to expand what is considered movement and explore the specific choreography of the keyboard, both physically and conceptually, and ask how can one move without moving?

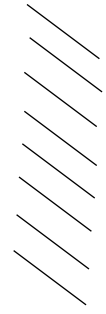
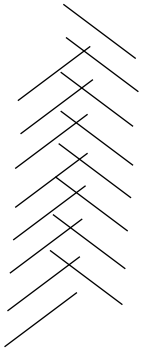
I focused on the small movements created in this contemporary landscape and how it invokes Samoan concepts. The keyboard is set up with a pre-existing set of relationships, from the keys that most people know and understand, and each movement, each tap, no matter how small, is a powerful propelling forward through time and space. Using the Samoan framework of the *vā** or spatial relationships, I analyzed the relationships of the keys, using the concepts already on the console to think about movement. Looking at the relationality of the keys of the keyboard, I realized many of the characters in the keyboard reflect many of the symbols of the Samoan tatau; specifically, the malu, traditionally worn by women. I was fascinated to see that in this modern technology there is this ancestral knowledge in plain sight. I wanted to connect the two in my use of text and visual images and explore what do some of these movements, look and feel like and how is this reflected in the Samoan tatau.

Tatau has continued to evolve and today it is still a significant and an important marker of identity especially within communities of the Samoan diaspora. Artist, tatau practitioner, and scholar, Tyla Vaeau Ta'ufou'u defines tatau as a travelling practice and connects tatau to the wider movement of Samoan people both historically and in contemporary forms in her thesis, *Fa'avaetuli: Like the Feet of Tuli >>> Samoan Tatau as a Travelling Practice*. With her permission and with much alofa ma fa'afetai tele lava, I have used her title as I similarly applied this spirit of exploring tatau as a movement practice in itself, through space and time, and the malaga I have taken both physically and conceptually to create this work.

This work connects to my wider multi-disciplinary practice as it explores the quiet intersections between race, disability, immigration, decolonization, and aesthetic.

*To learn more about the *vā*, please read Albert Wendt, "Tatauing the Post-Colonial Body," originally published in *Span* 42-43 (April-October 1996): 15-29. Sourced from New Zealand Electronic Poetry Centre, <http://www.nzepc.auckland.ac.nz/authors/wendt/tatauing.asp>





spoons
 movements
 constellations
 containment
 I am the tatau
 the process
 the travelling practice
 I am the everchanging movement of line in space
 the gentle tapping as I struggle to move forward
 knowing this is where I am meant to be
 or rather the only way forward is to tap

>> tap >>

<< tap <<

| forge forward |

This, the keyboard, is my modern tapping tool
 an instrument that enables me to move in the world
 freely

to format and create comfortably

In these journeys

I seek to

return

shift

control

command

delete

to find

alt(ernative) option(s)

This device

is an asymmetric mirror

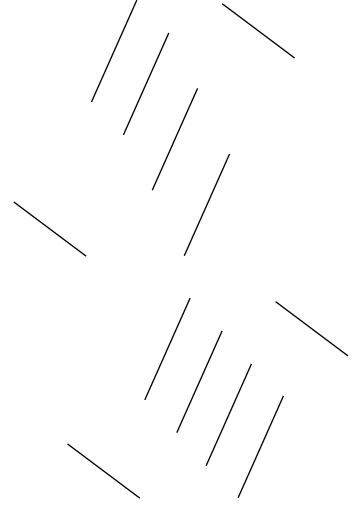
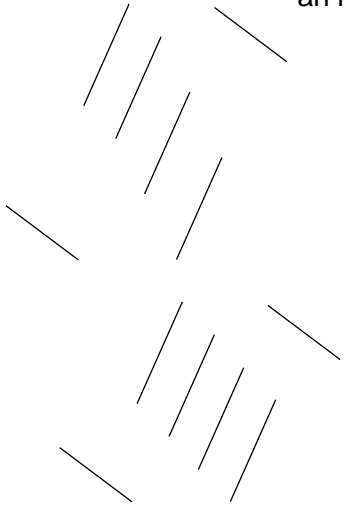
with double shifts

a sea of command

control, option, command, space, command, option

there are spaces b e t w e e n these keys

remember there is no such thing as empty space, Albert says



Contextual relationships
 and connections

<|>

threads

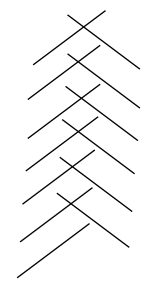
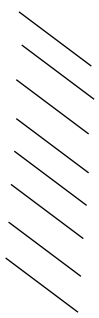
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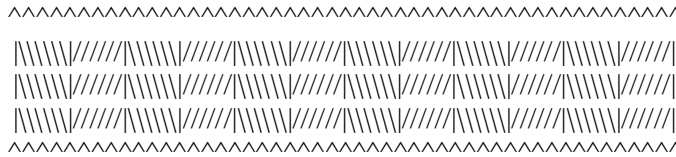
of belonging

\<|>/

|| alignment ||

Here in these strokes
 in this modern ta, ta, ta
 I can tap out my reality within this vā
 I am striking tā and carving vā with each tap





It is a claiming of space

<><><><><><>

The stories of my old lovers live here
the inking of the skin
like the memory of you on my skin
To ink

[] [] []

you on my skin
to type out your name(s)
is to etch your existence
I have uttered (all) your name(s)
carefully tapping out each of our stories
so many of them brief

-<<-<<-<<-<<-<<-<<->>>->>>->>>->>-

After it ends
I store these memories in my body
and I can always determine how honest I was
when I place my palm on my chest
and take a breath

[] [] []

If it's open
and I can feel the empty space
if there is a trace of movement
a possibility of the wind

<><><><><><>

and I can breathe freely
then I know that
the bird has left
with no crunch of regret

^^
↑

