

**DAN TAULAPAPA McMULLIN**

## ***The Healer's Wound* (Exhibition and Artist's Book)**

### **Abstract**

*The Healer's Wound is an exhibition of new work by Dan Taulapapa McMullin curated by Mariquita ("Micki") Davis and held at Pilele Projects in Los Angeles, California, June 29–July 27, 2024. The exhibition coincided with the publication of the second edition of Taulapapa's artist's book, *The Healer's Wound: A Queer Theirstory of Polynesia*, edited by Marika Emi and curated by Drew Kahu'āina Broderick (Honolulu: Tropic Editions and Pu'uhonua Society, 2024).*

**Keywords:** *Dan Taulapapa McMullin, Micki Davis, Pilele Projects, Samoan art, gender, contemporary art, artist's book, exhibition, Oceania, queer cultures, colonialism, fa'afafine, fa'atane, mahu.*

*The Healer's Wound* refers to the conflict between colonization and Indigenous queer cultures of the Pacific Islands. In language or queer language or language that exists between languages, interpretation provides a space for engagement. This is the core work of my research, manifested in an installation curated by Mariquita ("Micki") Davis at Pilele Projects in Los Angeles, California (June 29–July 27, 2024).

The exhibition consists of new works that comment on the research and creative work I did for the second edition (2024) of my artist's book, *The Healer's Wound: A Queer Theirstory of Polynesia*.<sup>1</sup> The book is a postcolonial queering of the archive through a collage of texts and images from the peoples of the Polynesian archipelagoes—from the northeast in Hawai'i to the southwest in Aotearoa, including Sāmoa, Manu'a, Tonga, Viti (Fiji), Tahiti, Rarotonga, Rapa Nui, and others. The second edition reimagines much of the material presented in the first edition, with new research, and includes a new collection of poems with painting marks.

Recovered images are colorized in the book and collaged with Indigenous and colonial texts in many Indigenous and colonial languages (Figs. 1–6). Visually and thematically, the work is influenced by Samoan *suifefiloi*, the weaving of many

garlands into one, or of many narratives into one story, a process influenced by contemporary conversations on contingency, speculative realism and Indigenous futurism.

The exhibition included two aluŋa embroideries—*Aluŋa I: Fa'atane* (2024, Fig. 7) and *Aluŋa II: Fa'afafine* (2024, Fig. 8). These revisit a postcolonial religious practice of missionary embroidery. Aluŋa are pillows that were embroidered with Bible verses in Samoan, which I remember from my childhood. My approach critiques the homophobia and transphobia of the missionaries and of monotheism itself. Fa'atane is a traditional social category of Sāmoa, cognate throughout Polynesia, which means the way (fa'a) of a man and husband (tane), referring to a person born as a woman who is living as a man. Fa'afafine means the way of a woman and wife (fafine). These are terms of gender transition and mixed gender identity—identities that were condemned by the explorers, colonialists, missionaries and anthropologists of the West. My artworks are part of my attempt to heal my community, or at least myself.

*Loŋoloŋo I* (2024, Fig. 6) and *Loŋoloŋo II* (2024, Fig. 8) are about Polynesian symbol-making and are presented with collage prints that sample Samoan siapo barkcloth patterns. Like the aluŋa pillows, these siapo making practices were part of my upbringing in traditional Samoan arts with my grandmother Sisipeni and great grandmother Fa'asapa in Malaeloa village, Tutuila Island, Sāmoa 'i Sasa'e.

*'O 'Upu: Words* (2024, Fig. 9) is a print that surveys the first printed queer words of Polynesia, as they were first interpreted by missionaries and anthropologists based on interviews with Polynesian speakers. Many of these words passed out of usage in the economy of words influenced by postcolonial missionaries and the military, as colonialism sought to assign an abject value to their meanings.

The paintings that accompany these text-based works are expressions of my feelings about the people in the photographs that have become a part of my archive of queer Polynesia—images from photographic archives that do not identify the persons as queer in any language, but to my eye are queer in my own emotional response or reading. In their visual expressions of living, and in my imagination, they live still, even as they give me life.

*Dan Taulapapa McMullin is a fa'afafine artist and poet from Sāmoa i Sasa'e (American Sāmoa). Their artist's book, The Healer's Wound: A Queer Theirstory of Polynesia (2022, 2024), was originally published by Pu'uhonua Society and Tropic Editions of Honolulu for the 2022 Hawai'i Triennial. Their book of poems, Coconut*

*Milk* (2013), was in the top ten of the American Library Association's 2014 *Over the Rainbow List of Books of the Year*. Their work has been shown at the Museum of Modern Art, the Museum of Contemporary Native Art, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, the de Young Museum, the Honolulu Museum, and the Honolulu Triennial. Their film *Sinalela* won the 2002 Honolulu Rainbow Film Festival Best Short Film Award, and their film *100 Tikis* was the opening-night film of *Présence Autochtone 2016* in *Tiohti:áke Montréal*. Taulapapa's studio is in the Muhheaconneck lands now known as Hudson, New York.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Dan Taulapapa McMullin, *The Healer's Wound: A Queer Theirstory of Polynesia*, 2nd edition (Honolulu: Tropic Editions and Pu'uhonua Society, 2024).



Figure 1. Dan Taulapapa McMullin, *The Healer's Wound: A Queer Theirstory of Polynesia*, 2nd ed., 2024, pp. 14–15. Courtesy of the artist



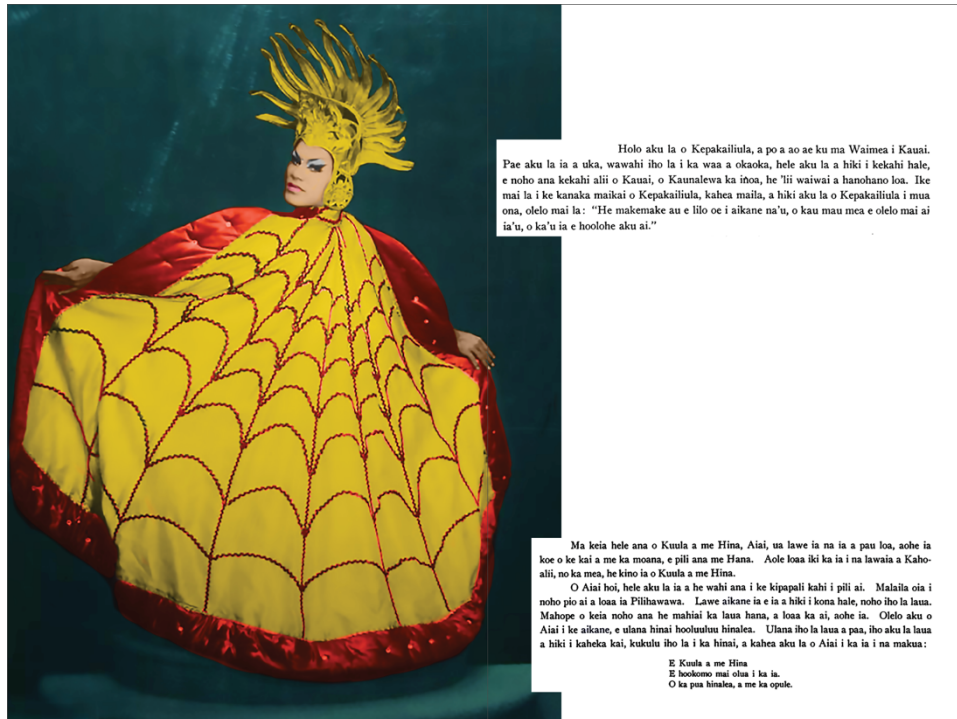
Figure 2. Dan Taulapapa McMullin, *The Healer's Wound: A Queer Theirstory of Polynesia*, 2nd ed., 2024, pp. 48–9. Courtesy of the artist

November 21st.—Took our leave. Passed on to Anuhe : spoke three times to 65 in all. At one place, a woman was present, who, they told us, was inspired by their god Mahoo. She spoke several times, asking, “Where were there any saved through our *parrow* or speech : Pomarre is dead, and we are all dying with your diseases, brought here by the English? When will you give over? We will hear our own gods : they will kill you !”

Ahipihepihe, s. a remarkable remedy to cure languor or weakness, frequently used by Tahitian women, who have lately lien-in, and by persons of both sexes in chronic disorders ; perspiration excited by the steam of plants, such as the *mapua* or wild mint, and hot stones, and when the perspiration is most copious, the person comes out and plunges into a river to bathe



Figure 3. Dan Taulapapa McMullin, *The Healer's Wound: A Queer Theirstory of Polynesia*, 2nd ed., 2024, pp. 66–7. Courtesy of the artist



Holo aku la o Kepakailula, a po a ao ae ku ma Waimea i Kauai. Pae aku la ia a uka, wawahi iho la i ka waa a okaoka, hele aku la a hiki i kekahi hale, e noho ana kekahi alii o Kauai, o Kaunaleva ka inoa, he 'i'i waiwai a hanohano loa. Ike mai la i ke kanaka maikai o Kepakailula, kahea maia, a hiki aku la o Kepakailula i mua ona, o'lelo mai la: "He makemake au e lilo oe i aikane na'u, o kau mau mea e o'lelo mai ai ia'u, o ka'u ia e hoolohe aku ai."

Ma keia hele ana o Kuula a me Hina, Aiaia, ua lawe ia na ia a pau loa, aohē ia koe o le laia i me ka moana, e pili ana me Hina. Aole loa iki ka ia i na lawaia a Kahaloa, no ka mea, he kino ia o Kuula a me Hina.  
O Aiaia hoi, hele aku la ia a he wahi ana i ke kipaipali kahi i pili ai. Malaila oia i noho piko ai a loaia i Pilihawawa. Lawe aikane ia e ia a hiki i kona hale, noho iho la laua. Mahope o keia noho ana he mahiai ka laua hana, a loa ka ai, aohē ia. O'lelo aku o Aiaia i ke aikane, e ulana hinai hooluulu hinaia. Ulaia iho la laua a paa, iho aku la laua a hiki i kaheka kai, kuku iho la i ka hinai, a kahea aku la o Aiaia i ka ia i na makua:

E Kuula a me Hina  
E hoolohe mai oia i ka ia.  
O ka pua hinaia, a me ka opole.

Figure 4. Dan Taulapapa McMullin, *The Healer's Wound: A Queer Theirstory of Polynesia*, 2nd ed., 2024, pp. 92–3. Courtesy of the artist

HE WHAI MO TE TANGATA WERA I TE AHI, KIA MAHU AI.  
Te whai kurukuru matahi,  
Kurukuru matahi,  
He ro ki uta,  
He ro ki tai,  
Tikina mai whakorangia,  
Hei mahi kai mau mataua e Tiki-matakahurangi,  
Ka mahu, te mahu, e,  
Pera hoki na ho ahi tahu naku ki runga o Hawaiiki,  
Kia pehia mai botupe, hotooru,  
Hotumanga, hotukakega,  
Io koe kei tauamahakitia e koe te kiri o tenei mate,  
O tenei mahaki,  
Tuaia mate te wera, kia tinea mate ka,  
Kia tinea, mate te anini,  
Kia tinea, mate te hura,  
Kia tinea, mate te whewhe,  
Kia tinea, mate te ahi auu, i Hawaiiki,  
Ka pakia, ka pakia,  
Raua te kiri, raua te kiri, raua te kiri to,  
Whai anu, whai anu te puna,  
Nga puna i runga e ho mai ki to kiri,  
Te ua a whatu e, ho mai ki to kiri,  
Te ua nganga e, ho mai ki to kiri,  
Nga puna i runga e, ho mai ki to kiri,  
Te pupu, me te houna e, ho mai ki to kiri,  
Nga puna i raro e, ho mai ki to kiri,  
Nga puna i Hawaiiki e, ho mai ki to kiri,  
Whai anu, whai anu te puna to,  
Nga puna i Aotearoa e, ho mai ki to kiri,  
Hei whakawai anu mo to kiri,  
Hei whakanata mo te kiri o tenei mahaki,  
Hei whakanene mo to kiri,  
Hei whakanahu mo to kiri,  
Hei whakareka mo to kiri,  
Hei whakaora mo to kiri,  
Miri miri ana, e toto ana,  
E whakaora ana, e whakanene ana i to kiri,  
To kiri, to—to—he—.

MAHU, cicatrized; healed: *Ki roto ki te whare whatu-kakahu ra tahutahu at ka mahu tangata ra*—A. H. M., II. 7. Cf. mahutu, quite healed.

MAHUTU (*mahuti*), quite healed. Cf. mahu, healed. [For comparatives, see MAHU.]



HE WHAI MO TE WERA, KIA MAHU AI.  
Te whai a te kuku,  
Ko te whai a te kaka,  
Mahumahu akunaei,  
Mahumahu apopo,  
Tahatahe mai to kiri toto ki mata niho,  
Mahu,  
Mahu rekā,  
Koi uta;  
Koi tai;  
Ka ake i te whai a te raupapa,  
Te whai e anu matao,  
Whakareka te kiri,  
Whai te whai kis aniwaniwa,  
Whai te whai kis rekareka,  
Te whai e anu matao,  
Whakareka te kiri,  
He toto tuia,  
He toto motumotu,  
He toto ngumhu,  
Ka tahu ki wha,  
Ka tahu ki te wai auu,  
Ka tahu ki te wai rau;  
Ki te wai takanga,  
Takanga marumaru,  
Tena te wera ka huhuti,  
Kia mahu,  
Mahumahu akunaei,  
Mahumahu apopo,  
Tahatahe mai to kiro toto,  
Ki to mata niho,  
Mahu,  
Mahu rekā,  
Ko toto kiri,  
Ko toto kiri,  
Hui ake,  
Ki te wewewene i runga,  
Hui ake.

WHAKA-MAHU, to cease to heal; a remedy: *Hei whakamahu mo to kiri*—G. P., 480.  
Samoan—*mafu*, to heal up (of an ulcer): *O le pa'u o le tino as i ai se papala, a ua mafu*;  
The flesh in which there was a boil, which is healed. Tahitian—*mahu*, to cease or stop; to be quenched, as thirst; satisfied, as desire. Mangaitan—*mau*, to be healed: *Heu ana koe i te mau a Rongo*; Be healed with the healing of Rongo. Hawaiian—*mahu*, a man who assimilates his manners and dresses his person like a woman; a hermaphrodite; an eunuch. Cf. *maha*, convalescence; to begin to recover from sickness; *mahani*, to heal up, to granulate, as a wound, so as to disappear.

healed mahu, raupapa, tumahu.

Figure 5. Dan Taulapapa McMullin, *The Healer's Wound: A Queer Theirstory of Polynesia*, 2nd ed., 2024, pp. 50–51. Courtesy of the artist



Figure 6. Dan Taulapapa McMullin, *The Healer's Wound: A Queer Theirstory of Polynesia*, 2nd ed., 2024, pp. 132–33. Courtesy of the artist



Figure 6. Dan Taulapapa McMullin. Left: *Loŋoloŋo I*, 2024. Collage print on paper, 40 x 43.75 in. Right: *Aluŋa I: Fa'atane*, 2024. Embroidery thread on a pillowcase containing a pillow, 28 x 22 x 10 in. Courtesy of the artist



Figure 7. Dan Taulapapa McMullin, *Aluŋa I: Fa'afafine*, 2024, installation view. Embroidery thread on a pillowcase containing a pillow, 36 x 20 x 12 in. Courtesy of the artist



Figure 8. Dan Taulapapa McMullin. Left: *The Fishers*, 2024. Acrylic on panel, 24 x 18 in. Center: *Lonjoloŋo II*, 2024. Collage print on paper, 44 x 45.5 in. Right: *The Farmers*, 2024. Acrylic on panel, 18 x 24 in. Courtesy of the artist

**Agafakafefine, s.** Womanishness, effeminacy.

**Agafakafefine, a.** Womanlike, effeminate.

**Ai, v. a.** [*ahi*] to copulate, applied to both sexes

**ai** *Sa*, n. a companion, mate, fellow; hence, a rafter of a house; a similar one; also the opposite, or contrary of, as, a lekaleka, a kenai sa na balavu, balavu is the opp. of lekaleka. See Sasana.

**Sa-na, v.** to put the rafters on a house: *Sani*, pass. v. or a. having the rafters on. *Sasana*.

**AI-KA-NE, v.** *Ai*, No. S, and *kane*, male. 1. To cohabit, as male with male, or female with female.

2. To commit sodomy; hence

**AI-KA-NE, s.** An intimate friend of the same sex; a friend or companion of the same sex.

2. Those who mutually give and receive presents, being of the same sex.

3. Sodomy; dissoluteness of habit.

**Aipai, s.** sodomy.

—*v. a.* to commit sodomy; see *paia* and *mahu*.

**'akatañe, incho. tāne.** Act like a man, have manly qualities; be a tomboy. *Mei iōna tamariki 'anga mai tēnā tamā'ine i te 'akatañe 'aere'anga mai.* That girl has been a tomboy ever since she was a child.

**'akava'ine, caus. va'ine.** Behave like a woman. *Te 'akava'ine i ā koe!* How womanish you are!

**ala.neo.** 1. nvs. Clear, calm, serene, unclouded, free from impediment; clearness, calm, stillness; emptiness, nothing; desolate (ter. 30.3). *'Alaneo ke uka, 'a'ole ao,* clear were the uplands, without clouds. *E Lono i ka pō la'ila'i, ku'ua mai ka 'alaneo* (Malo 183). O Lono of the clear night, let down clear skies. *Hāhā nā lima i kahi e'ia'e ai, a ho'ōka'i me ke 'alaneo* (Kel. 136), the hands grope at places to find things and collide with nothing at all. 2. vs. Of a single color or texture, especially of a feather cloak without design and made of feathers of a single kind and color. 3. N. Swelling disease, dropsy, generalized edema, kidney disease. 4. n. Name of a class of 12 male supernatural beings called *papa pae mahu*, said to be hermaphrodite healers from Kahiki. One at least was according to legend turned to stone and has been moved to Kūhiō Park, Wai-kiki, O'ahu. See *Pae-māhū* in Pukui, Elbert, and Mookini, 1974.

**Companion, s.** *Hoa; takapui; tapui; whakauru.*

**companion hoa.** *My wife is my constant companion.* Ko tōku hoa wahine tōku hoa pūmau. *close ~ takatāpui.* *David and Jonathan were close companions.*

*Coitus contra naturam per* Ay á to cauja anum

*Coitus fictus inter mulieres* Mahēra

**Disaster, mala.**

**EFFEMINATE, amio fa'afafine.**

**Efféminé.** — pepeke, reherehe.

**Fafine, s. a woman.**

**fa'afafine n.** Effeminate man or youth. *'O lo'o iā'a'alo fa'afafine ma ~:* The girls and ~ youths are playing together.

**Fakafafine, à la manière des femmes.**

**Fakafafine, s.** A monster.

**Fakafefine, a.** Effeminate, womanish.

**Fakafefine, v.** To act like a woman.

**FA'ATANE, v.** to be masculine, of a woman.

**Haávehine, manière des femmes.**

**HERMAPHRODITE, s. faafafine.**

**homosexual adj.** (~ act): s. *tauūātane.*

**homosexuel, raerae (néologisme)** pā'i'a. *Voir aussi mahu*

**HOO-WA-HINE, v.** See WAHINE, woman.

To make special friendship with a woman; applied only to men.

2. To imitate, as a man, the manners of a woman.

**Huahuanatos, s. an hermaphrodite.**

*love aroha, kuata, kuuwata, maariri, ngariri, pohane.*

**Mahu, fertilité, abondance.**

**MA-HU, v.** To blow out steam or smoke; to smoke, as a smothered fire; to throw out hot vapor, as from a volcano.

**MA-HU, s.** Steam; hot vapor; smoke.

**MA-HU, s.** A man who assimilates his manners and dresses his person like a woman.

2. A hermaphrodite; a eunuch.

**MA-HU, adj.** Silent; indisposed to conversation; silent, as a deserted place.

**MAHU (H) [? ← mahu (I)]**

S. A deaf and dumb, mute person. VHI

| **ma.mahu (I)**

To strike dumb with fear, awe, terror; to terrify; || **mamahue.** VHI

| **mā.mahu**

Taciturn, silent. ANA

Retiring, not given to conversation.

Morose, sullen; given to sudden anger.

**MAHU || \*hu (III)**

**MAHU**

S. An hermaphrodite; a man or woman of the loosely termed "intermediate sex"; usually a man having the social proclivities of a woman.

ANA

A dot, simpleton; lit. one partially unlearned, ignorant; not wholly unlearned, not wholly ignorant.

A term of derision; dumb; || **mahu**

(II).

**MAHU-ARIKI**

S. The name of a god. HAO

**MAHU, cicatrized; healed: Ki roto ki te whare wharu-kakahu ra tahutahu at ka mahu tangata ra—A. H. M., II. 7. Cf. mahutu, quite healed.**

**Māhū, s.** être efféminé qui a choisi de vivre parmi les femmes et de partager leurs occupations.

**Mahumahu, a. pn.** négligent, vilain, sale.

**MAHUTU (mahuti), quite healed. Cf. mahu, healed. [For comparatives, see MAHU.]**

**MAMAIA**

S. A religious sect; the people in it persisted in the worship of the ancient gods, practised spells and incantations, eschewed the society of their fellows, and did not marry; elsewhere they were said to be only women.

ANA

M. Belonging to the mamaia sect.

**Misfortune, mala. Mishap, mala.**

**Monster, s. Faahikehe, fakafafine.**

Mujer u hombre vestido del sexo contrario= *Bāu iha*

*Paia, a.* slippery; smooth.

*Paia, s.* sodomy; see *aipai*.

**POHANE, sodomy; to practise sodomy.**

**Whaka-POHANE, to present the buttocks, as for pohane.** A singular use of the word is to be found A. H. M., III. 11, Maori part.

**sālewalewa, hermaphrodite. Syn. vaka-sālewalewa.**

**Sodomie, — piri, piri mai piri**

atu, — *gatu mai gatu atu.*

sodomy karipapa, moe whakaeneene.

sodomy, practise pohane.

**Tāka, s.** A fall; a change from one point to another: name of a person. v. n. Falling; as, "E tāka āna te tāngata kiriro; The man is falling down." "E tāka āna te āu; The wind changes to a certain point." "Tāka tāka; Falling, changing, &c. repeatedly."—Causative, "Waka tāka tāka; Causing to fall or change."

**TAKAHOA, a companion. Cf. hoo, a friend, a companion; takatāpui, an intimate companion of the same sex; takahore, a widow or widower.**

**TAKAHORE, a widow; a widower. Cf. takahoa, a companion of the same sex; hore, nok. 2.**

**A naked person. Cf. tahanga, naked.**

**Tahitian—cf. taā, single, unmarried, separate; taanoa, naked; tahaa, naked.**

**Hawaiian—cf. haala, a widow; a widower.**

**Tongan—cf. takabe, unmarried, single; destitute of clothing.**

**TAKATĀPUI (takatāpui), a close friend belonging to the same sex: Ko tonu hoo takatāpui, ko Tiki—P. M., 128. Cf. takahoa, a friend, a companion; takapui, going about in company; tapui, an intimate companion.**

**Tāne, s. a man, a male.**

**TAUĀTANE, v. i.** to have dancing with men only. 2. To engage in fight with men, *i.e.*, brave men.

**TAUĀTANE, s.** a species of sodomy, sed non introiens.

**Tipai, s. the sin of sodomy; see aipai.**

**Ufaufamuori, s. a barren woman, a hermaphrodite.**

**Ufaufamatoa, s. the same as ufaufamuori.**

Mrs. Pukui recalls that the usual term for male homosexual activity was *'ipi laho* or *'ipilaho*,

"testicle pressing" or "scrotum bumping."

**Vakaalewa, or Vakayalewa, a. womanlike, feminine: of, or pertaining to, women: ad. in a womanlike manner.**

**vakanācukura, sodomy. Syn. vei-vutu.**

**WHAKA-MAHU, to cause to heal; a remedy: Hei whakamahu mo to kiri—G. P., 480.**

**Samoan—mahu, to heal up (of an ulcer): O le pā'u o le timo sa i ai se papala, a ua mahu; The flesh in which there was a boil, which is healed. Tahitian—mahu, to cease or stop; to be quenched, as thirst; satisfied, as desire. Mangalan—mahu, to be healed: Mau aea koe i te mau a Rongo; Be healed with the healing of Rongo. Hawaiian—mahu, a man who assimilates his manners and dresses his person like a woman; a hermaphrodite; an eunuch. Cf. maha, conva-**

**lescence; to begin to recover from sickness; mahani, to heal up, to granulate, as a wound, so as to disappear.**

**vei-vutu, to pound, with pestle and mortar; trans. vaka-ka or -daka (intern.). I vaka, a pestle for pounding. Recip. vei-vutu, sodomy; cf. vakanācukura. (F. L.).**

**Vehine Haā vahana, femme qui a toutes les habitudes des hommes.**

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Figure 9. Dan Taulapapa McMullin, 'O 'Upu: Words, 2024. Text collage print on paper, 44 x 70.5 in. Courtesy of the artist