

SHORT FILM

*Just because I can't speak, doesn't mean I have nothing to say*

Electronic Press Kit

TAMATO A



# FILM OVERVIEW



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# FACT SHEET

Camera, Lighting and Audio Equipment Used:

- 2x Sony PXW FS700
- Rokinon Prime Lenses (35mm and 50mm)
- Sachtler Cady Tripod Head
- Sound devices 302 Audio Mixer
- Arri 2000w Fernal

Technical Specifications:

- Aspect Ratio: 16:9 with a 1.85 mask.
- Total running time: 11 mins and 32 seconds.
- Resolution: 1080p 24FPS
- Stereo Audio.





# SHORT SYNOPSIS

Tamatoa is a coming of age short film based on a young Maori boy Toa who has Autism.

The film follows Toa's journey as he navigates the challenges of his condition and his internal perspective of the outside world.

Throughout the film Toa begins to find courage through the strength of his relationships with his grandmother Nana and his mother Lani.

As tensions rise at Toa's school, he is faced with a decision. Will he retaliate against his bullies or will he find another way to overcome the conflict?

Inspired by real relationships this film is dedicated to children with Autism Spectrum Disorder and their loved ones. We hope to inspire audiences to strive for a more inclusive, diverse and understanding society.





# LONG SYNOPSIS

The story of Tamatoa is an amalgamation of rational fear that parent's of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder face in stark contrast of a judgmental society.

When Toa and his mother Lani move in to Nana's House, there is a sense of comfort being surrounded by family portraits and Nana's patterns around the house.

As Toa goes to school, we notice the immediate challenges he faces and the outside perspective that he is not welcome.

With the bullies seeking to taunt and ridicule him, Toa gets increasingly anxious, causing him to physically manifest pain when he sees Malachi, Tiny and Hemi. Lani becomes concerned and confronts the principal about her son's destructive behavior.

In the final scene, we see both mother and son stand up for themselves and each other. Showing that with courage, culture and family we can overcome anything.



# DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

The inspiration for this film came from my relationship with my son Isaiah, who has Autism Spectrum Disorder. Throughout our family's journey with his condition, we've had to educate ourselves on certain challenges that he faces on a daily basis due to ASD.

It has made me realize how essential it is that he has a strong cultural understanding of his identity and his connection to his Maori heritage, so that in future should he ever encounter bullying or judgement, he already has the strong foundations of his whanau integrated into his understanding of the world.

I made this film as a tribute to him and children like him. To emphasize that we as a society need to educate ourselves to be more inclusive and accepting of all kinds of human beings.





# TAGLINE

"Resolving conflict through culture"

# LOGLINE

"Just because I can't speak, doesn't mean I have nothing to say"



# MANAAKI KEARNS



Starring as **Toa**

Manaaki plays our main character Toa, who navigates the daily challenges of Autism Spectrum Disorder.

Toa is targeted by a group of notorious bullies, who relentlessly follow him around taunting him for entertainment.

Manaaki's performance is compelling with such complex characterization. Tamatoa is Manaaki's debut short film.



# TAULUA KEARNS



Starring as **Lani**

Lani is played by the immensely talented, Taulua Kearns. Her performance portrays the dynamics of single motherhood and helping her son manage his condition.

Taulua's performance is emotionally raw and heartfelt. The sincerity in her portrayal of her character Lani is paramount as she's the grounding force behind our protagonist's character journey.

# ELI DAVIES



Starring as **Malachi**

Malachi is the film's antagonist. His character is relentless in teasing Toa and making sure he is seen as an outcast by the rest of his peers.

Eli's performance is evocative and captures the evolution of a dominating bully, begrudgingly gaining respect for Toa. This is Eli's debut short film.



EXTRAS

**Puhunga Tupaea**

starring as Nana

**Jaygar Ewart**

starring as Mr Clarke

**Mapuana Berry**

starring as Mrs Orehu

**Piripi Enoka**

starring as Tiny

**Kanye Robson**

starring as Hemi

# THEMES

## **FAMILY**

The main theme running throughout the film is Toa's relationships with his mother and his grandmother.

In relation to character journey, his family have created his strong sense of identity through his knowledge of his whakapapa. This is the foundation of his story.

## **CULTURE**

Culture plays an important part of the story line. It is the basis of the protagonist's resolution in the final scene and is spread out in different sequences throughout our film.

Personally, I believe culture and identity go hand in hand especially in the Maori community.

## **COURAGE**

Courage evolves as Toa finds strength from his family and his strong understanding of culture, showing that if you believe in yourself you can overcome any obstacle.

By the conclusion of the film Toa is overwhelmed with Wairua and finally finds his voice, communicating through Haka.



# CAMERA OPERATOR

## VIRAN RANAWEERA

Viran has been interested in film making from a very young age. He began this obsession when he discovered the special features of a DVD movie where it shows the behind the scenes of the film and how it was made. Ever since then he has had a strong curiosity towards film making.

His love for cinematography began alongside his hobby of photography. This is where he first discovered the basic controls of composition and lighting. Once he purchased his first DSLR camera, there was no stopping him from creating short films, music videos, promotional content for corporate enterprises and experimental content.

He realized that he wanted to pursue film making as a career in his early high school years when he created his first Public Service Announcement as a Media Studies assessment in class. Viran enjoyed this experience so much and was told by friends, family, and mentors that he had a real future in this industry if he were to go into it. So, he did. Now he studies at New Zealand's leading film school, South Seas Film School, to improving and learning new skills to become an exceptional Director of Photography.





# 1ST ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

## MATARIKI BENNETT

Matariki Bennett was born in Auckland, New Zealand. She is a descendant of Te Arawa iwi (Ngati Pikiao, Ngati Whakaaue). Her father, Michael Bennett is a Scriptwriter and Director and her mother, Jane Holland is a Costume Designer. Because of her families' involvement in the industry, Matariki has always been interested in working in film.

As a child, Matariki was always busy writing, and was mentored online in creative writing by American author, Jane Ratcliffe from the age of 12 until she was 16. At high school, Matariki got involved in Spoken Word poetry, and went on to win the NZ competition Word the Front Line, alongside her group, Ngā Hinepūkōrero. The group then travelled to Australia to compete in the Trans-Tasman Poetry Slam, which they also won. Earlier in 2019, the team was invited to compete in the largest youth poetry slam in the world, Brave New Voices, where they made it to Semi Finals, coming in 11th in the world.

Matariki has pursued Scriptwriting and Drama Directing at South Seas Film and Television school to kick start her career as a film maker. She hopes to bring more representation of young Māori women in film so that other rangatahi like her can see themselves reflected on screen.





# PRODUCER

## JAREK HOREJSEK-GRUNWELL

Jarek is 21 years old and was born and bred in Whakatane in the Bay of Plenty, he comes from both Czech and English lineage. Jarek has been passionate about Film and Television throughout his life, specifically dramas/thrillers. After being exposed to the film industry in LA and London during his OE he decided to pursue a career in the industry, specifically production management.

Over the last year he has completed a Diploma in Film and Television specializing in Production Management at South Seas Film and Television School. During his time there he learnt key management and communication skills. He looks forward to pursuing a career in advertising.



# EDITOR

## JACK HAY

Coming from a family of film buffs, Jack Hay was surrounded by film from a young age and has always had a passion for movies. Studying Film and Psychology at Victoria University of Wellington, Jack gained an understanding of the academic side of film, though sought a more practical skill set.

This lead him to pursue some work with TVNZ and commercial agencies working as an audio and camera assistant, and eventually to study at South Seas Film & Television School.

Having specialized in Post-Production Editing, Jack has a knack for offline drama editing, but can turn his hand to any work that comes his way. Armed with a host of new skills and his enduring love of cinema, Jack is excited to enter the film industry.







