



**Butterfly /  
bataplai**

**DIGITAL PRESSKIT**  
A SHORT FILM FROM THE  
PASIFIKA DISAPORA



## BUTTERFLY/BATAPLAI

Butterfly/Bataplai is an 8-minute short narrative film that asks the question: *What does it mean to be authentically Indigenous?*

### LOGLINE

A Papua New Guinean/American woman challenges her evangelist father's strict rules to find her voice as a makeup artist.

### SYNOPSIS

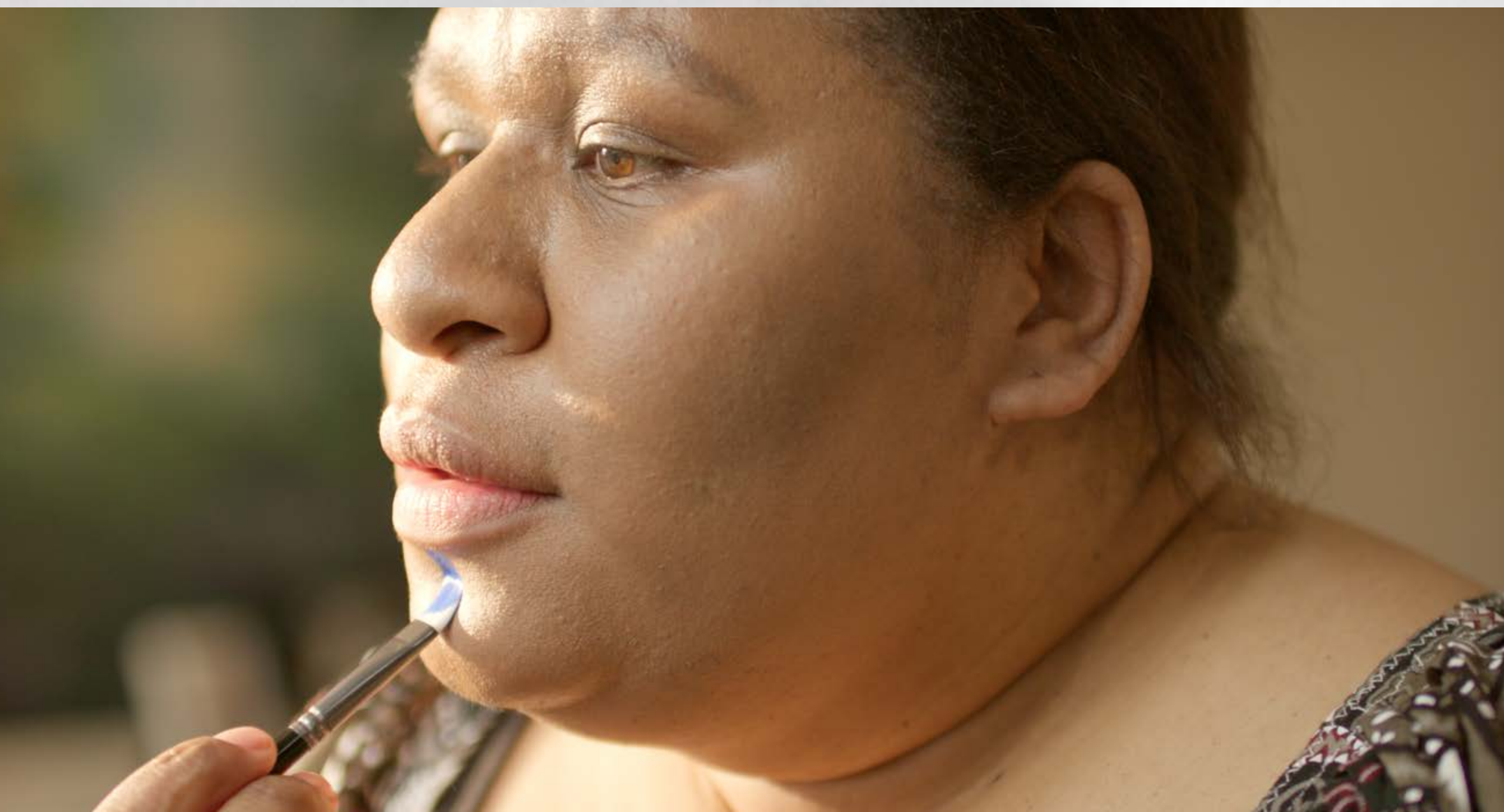
Raya (Regina Pande) loves makeup but her family does not.

She's torn between her secret dream of being a makeup artist and her family's strict religious beliefs.

In a nightmare, she receives a profound message from her Papua New Guinean ancestor who encourages her to look at her Indigenous culture for answers.











# Butterfly / bataplai

**DIRECTED, WRITTEN & PRODUCED BY VEIALU AILA-UNSWORTH**  
A VISUAL COMMUNICATIONS PRODUCTION

**2023 / DRAMA / 8 MINS / USA / ENGLISH, TOK PISIN**

**DISTRIBUTION, PRINT TRAFFIC, CO-CARETAKING:**  
VISUAL COMMUNICATIONS | [vcmedia.org](http://vcmedia.org) | Los Angeles, USA  
Margarita Verde - [margarita@vcmedia.org](mailto:margarita@vcmedia.org)

**GENERAL ENQUIRIES, SCREENER, PRESS MATERIAL, CO-CARETAKING:**  
Veialu Aila-Unsworth - [veialu.au@gmail.com](mailto:veialu.au@gmail.com)

**INSTAGRAM:** [@bataplai.film](https://www.instagram.com/bataplai.film)



## STARRING

Regina Pande

Graham Pande

Joana Mate

And the voice of Olivia Korken

## WRITTEN, DIRECTED, PRODUCED BY

Veialu Aila-Unsworth

## DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY

Judd Overton

## EDITOR

Veialu Aila-Unsworth

## MUSIC COMPOSED BY

Maxwell Stone & Otis Kane





## WRITER/DIRECTOR'S BIO

Veialu Aila-Unsworth is a Los Angeles-based filmmaker of mixed heritage from Papua New Guinea (Kairuku, Central Province) and Aotearoa New Zealand (settler descent).


Born in Papua New Guinea, leaving her homeland and losing her culture as a child has given her an unrelenting curiosity about *Identity* - she explores this in her work.


Veialu was awarded the 2022-2023 Armed With A Camera Fellowship by Visual Communications and is currently a mentor for the fellowship.

Her feature screenplay was chosen for The Black List's 2021 CAPE List, a list of 10 screenplays centered on Asian and Pasifika stories.

Veialu's hand-drawn short animated film screened at 30 festivals including the Berlinale, Mill Valley, ImagineNATIVE, and more.

For over 15 years, Veialu worked as an award-winning television creative producer, promo director, and copywriter with Australia's largest commercial television networks, NINE and TEN.

 [@lulu\\_loves\\_tv](https://www.instagram.com/lulu_loves_tv)

 [lululovestv.com](https://www.lululovestv.com)

## WRITER/DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Pasifika women belong everywhere!

We are multi-faceted, fierce, complex, curious, intelligent, imaginative, and so much more.

I want to challenge our invisibility onscreen.

For those of us in diasporas, living away from our cultural homelands, we are forging new identities, navigating multiple cultures, pushing against stupid stereotypes, finding acceptance and belonging, finding healing and freedom - finding our voice.

I explore this in BUTTERFLY/BATAPLAI.

My intention with this film is to show what it's like for one Papua New Guinean woman living in the diaspora trying to forge a path between her Indigenous roots, spiritual beliefs, and the Western world she lives in.

Inspired by a true story, BUTTERFLY/BATAPLAI explores the question: Who defines us as Papua New Guinean women, and to what extent do we get to decide that for ourselves?





## CAST



LEAD ROLE  
Regina Pande  
as "Raya"

[@reginajpande](#)



SUPPORTING ROLE  
Graham Pande  
as "Samuel"

[@greysoul2444](#)



SUPPORTING ROLE  
Joana Mate  
as "Aunty P"

[@wana.mate.5](#)



WITH THE VOICE OF  
Olivia Korken  
as "Female Ancestor"

## CREW

Our multicultural, international team live in the San Francisco Bay Area, Los Angeles, Colorado, Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea.

Producer, Writer, Director, and Editor:  
Veialu Aila-Unsworth [@lulu\\_loves\\_tv](#)

Director of Photography:  
Judd Overton [@juddovertondp](#)

Music Composed by:  
Maxwell Stone &  
Otis Kane [@otis.kane](#)

Featuring the song "Hypnotised" by  
Alyson Joyce [@alyson\\_joyce\\_](#)

Photographs by:  
Patrick Leahy [@paddyleahy](#)

Production Manager:  
Mary Parker

Assistant Director:  
Abigail Pañares [@pursuitofhabbyness](#)

First Assistant Camera:  
Kelsey Rivera [@kelsey\\_rivera](#)

Gaffer:  
Ian Lee [@ianjolie](#)

Location Sound Mixer:  
Donovan Murphy [@donovanbomb](#)

Boom Operator:  
Britton Thomas [@brittonisbest](#)

Makeup by:  
Regina Pande [@reginajpande](#)

Set Photographer / Production Assistant:  
Khepera Batties [@topographyjones](#)

Production Assistant:  
Heather Polcik [@hpolcik](#)

Sound Supervisor & Re-recording Mixer:  
Tyler Proctor [@tinkleinthesync](#)

Score mixed by:  
John Neill

Craft Services:  
Vir Satyan

Executive Producers:  
Visual Communications [vcmedia.org](#)

Mentors:  
Melodie Turori [@melodieturori](#)  
Kiana Rivera [@xcelsior\\_56](#)  
Mariquita Davis [@marimick](#)  
Faroukh Virani [@faroukhvirani](#)  
David Liu [@davidrqliu](#)  
Angela Park [@angela.j.park](#)  
Jeff Man [@jeffrey\\_j\\_man](#)

## LINKS

Official Instagram page [@bataplai.film](#)  
ABC (Australia) [Radio Interview with Actor Regina Pande](#)  
Director's [website](#)

## FUNDERS

Made as part of the [2022-2023 Armed With A Camera Fellowship](#), BUTTERFLY/BATAPLAI was funded by Visual Communications ([vcmedia.org](#)), a non-profit organization whose mission is to develop and support the voices of Asian American & Pacific Islander filmmakers who empower communities and challenge perspectives.





ACTORS GRAHAM PANDE & REGINA PANDE  
AT THE WORLD PREMIERE OF BUTTERFLY/BATAPLAI



## TECHNICAL INFO

Film Title - Butterfly / Bataplai  
Film Type - Narrative Fiction, Short Film  
Country - United States  
Year of Production - 2023  
Producer/Writer/Director - Veialu Aila-Unsworth  
Running Time - 07 minutes 30 seconds  
Film Color - Full Color  
Genres - Drama  
Special Subjects - Indigenous, Pacific Islander  
Format - Digital (16:9 aspect ratio, 23.976 fps)  
Screening Format - DCP / .MOV  
Audio - Stereo and 5.1 Surround Sound options  
Open Subtitles (burnt in) - English  
Languages - English, Tok Pisin  
Shooting Location - Ramaytush Ohlone land or  
San Francisco, California

Original Script - YES  
Original Music - YES  
Rights Cleared - YES

## FESTIVALS

2023  
Los Angeles Asian Pacific Film Festival  
Māsima Film Tour  
Micheaux Film Festival  
Papua New Guinea Human Rights Film Festival  
Hawai`i International Film Festival  
imagineNATIVE Film and Media Festival  
Philadelphia Asian American Film Festival  
Los Angeles Skins Film Festival

2024  
Barbados Independent Film Festival  
*Honorable Mention*  
DisOrient Asian American Film Festival in Oregon

## CONTENT ADVISORY

Flashing images, death (dead body covered by a sheet), emotional pain, intrusive thoughts about religious guilt.



## DEPARTURE LOUNGE

NEWS, BRIEFINGS, LOCAL KNOWLEDGE

## PARADISE Q&amp;A

## VEIALU AILA-UNSWORTH

This Papua New Guinean born filmmaker had her short film *Butterfly/Bataplai* premiere at the Los Angeles Asian Pacific Film festival earlier this year. *Mary Aseari* spoke to the writer, producer and director, who now resides in San Francisco.

**Q: What was the inspiration behind *Butterfly/Bataplai*?**

A: I was inspired by my lead actress, Regina Pande. We randomly met on Instagram and realised that we live in the same area (in San Francisco). We basically sat together as two multiracial Papua New Guinean women and talked about our experiences of what it felt like living between two worlds where you never really feel Papua New Guinean enough when you're in PNG or Western enough when you're in the West. We are in an interesting space of having to juggle multiple worlds and multiple values. Through these conversations we decided to base the film on her experience.



Filmmaker Veialu Aila-Unsworth (above); actress Regina Pande depicting her Western self and her PNG self (above right).

**Q: *Butterfly/Bataplai* premiered in the Los Angeles Asia Pacific Film Festival 2023. How did that come about?**

A: I was awarded, with six other Pacific Islanders, the Armed With a Camera Fellowship, which was created by Visual Communications, a non-profit organisation that runs both the film festival and the fellowship. And so the festival was used as the platform for the fellows to come together and release our short films to the world.

**Q: What is the message you hope to share in your films?**

A: First, I hope that people who feel like an outsider or are juggling

different worlds will connect with my story and with the experience of being a Pacific Islander, particularly a Papua New Guinean female living in the diaspora. Second, I hope it encourages other Pacific Islander women to tell their stories and make films.

**Q: What are your memories of PNG?**

A: I was born in Port Moresby and moved to New Zealand when I was four, but I still have vivid memories of PNG. I remember as a kid I would draw houses on stilts (like many PNG houses). I'd be asked why I drew the houses like that, and I'd answer, 'because that's how houses are.'



“

I hope that people who feel like an outsider or are juggling different worlds will connect with my story.

”

**Q: What's next in your filmmaking?**

A: I'd like to make a few more short films. I also hope to make a feature film. I have been working on a historical drama for years. I've lived with the characters (in the film) for a few years now so they almost feel like friends. I feel I have to bring them to life.

**Q: What are your observations of the PNG film industry?**

A: The industry is small, but through social media I can see there's so much talent. I follow a lot of creatives, videographers, cinematographers and animators, and the level of talent is amazing. I hope one day I get the chance to collaborate with some of them to tell a cool story. ■







# Butterfly / bataplai

A FILM BY VEIALU AILA-UNSWORTH

VISUAL COMMUNICATIONS PRODUCTION STARRING REGINA PANDE GRAHAM PANDE AND JOANA MATE  
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY JUDD OVERTON MUSIC BY MAXWELL STONE & OTIS KANE FEATURING THE SONG  
"HYPNOTISED" BY ALYSON JOYCE SOUND DESIGN BY TYLER PROCTOR PHOTOGRAPHS BY PATRICK LEAHY  
PRODUCED, DIRECTED AND WRITTEN BY VEIALU AILA-UNSWORTH INSTAGRAM [BATAPLAI.FILM](#)

FILM POSTER



# WRITER/DIRECTOR Q&A

## 1. HOW WERE YOU ABLE TO FUND THE PROJECT?

A majority of the funds came from Visual Communication's Armed with a Camera Fellowship. This fellowship is sponsored in part by grants from Sony Pictures Entertainment, The George And Sakaye Aratani Foundation, Los Angeles County Department of Arts and Culture, and Elizabeth Sung Memorial Scholarship Fund. The film is also partly self-funded.

## 2. WHAT WAS YOUR INSPIRATION FOR THE FILM?

The idea was inspired by my lead actor, Regina Pande. Growing up, she wasn't allowed to wear makeup due to her family's strict religious beliefs and this inspired our story. That's also why the story is specific to Regina's Kopi clan in Highlands of Papua New Guinea (PNG).

## 3. WHERE DO YOU VALUE REPRESENTATION IN YOUR STORYTELLING?

I value representation in every step of the storytelling process. For me, representation means broadening the range of stories being told and characters we see in the mainstream media, empowering storytellers to develop their voices, and decolonizing processes and attitudes that disempower us.

## 4. AND HOW HAVE YOU IMPLEMENTED IT IN THIS FILM?

Over 70% of the cast and crew are BIPOC and/or female. Over half are of Asian and Pacific Islander (API) heritage. I was intentional about wanting a diverse team before I started.

## 5. ANY UNIQUE CHALLENGES MAKING A FILM SPECIFIC TO YOUR CULTURE?

We have many tribes in Papua New Guinea all with different customs, languages, and often distinct facial features; culturally we are very diverse. For these reasons, I decided to find my actors first and then write the script so that the story was authentic to the tribal region and characters being represented. Finding PNG actors is challenging so I am always happy to work with nonactors. I actually met my amazing lead actor, Regina Pande, on Instagram. This was her first experience acting. I also learned that telling a story from a community that is still healing from the impact of colonization and marginalization means that extra time is needed to unpack and process our experiences. There were also a mixture of reactions from members of the PNG community to the news I was making this film - some negative - so I had to allow time to consult with the community.

## 6. HOW LONG DID THE PROJECT TAKE?

From the start of the screenplay to the first official screening, it took 7 months. The screenplay took about 2 months to develop and write. Pre-production was about 3 months. The main shoot was 1 day in San Francisco / Ramaytush Ohlone land. I also had 3 "mini" shoots (a few hours each) with just 1-2 crew. Music composing, recording and mixing took 4 months. Total post-production took about 4 weeks.

## 7. WHAT IS YOUR GOAL FOR THE FILM?

My goal is to challenge the invisibility of Papua New Guinea females onscreen, and for PNG and Pasifika women living in the diaspora to feel seen and less alone. I hope our film inspires Pacific Islander women to tell their stories and make films. If our film can broaden the world's view of what a Pacific Islander looks like, that will also make me happy!

## 8. WHAT ARE YOUR HOPES FOR DISTRIBUTION?

Film festivals, Pacific Islander community screenings, and online/TV channels highlighting Pasifika experiences and voices. I see it could be used as a discussion starter in the classroom for cultural or Pacific studies.

## 9. WHAT'S IT LIKE MAKING A FILM ABOUT YOUR CULTURE?

I left PNG as a child and grew up the only PNG person in a small town in Aotearoa New Zealand. I felt disconnected from my culture and very isolated. Most people in the West relate to Indigenous cultures like mine through negative stereotypes. Western-made documentaries also "othered" us and called us "primitive." It was hurtful. So I carried around a lot of shame. Making this short film with so many wonderful and supportive people was a very empowering and healing experience. I hope that our film helps PNG and Pasifika women living in the diaspora feel seen and less alone.





## BUTTERFLY/BATAPLAI

A FILM BY VEIALU AILA-UNSWORTH

### INSTAGRAM:

[@bataplai.film](https://www.instagram.com/bataplai.film)

### DISTRIBUTION, PRINT TRAFFIC:

VISUAL COMMUNICATIONS | [vcmedia.org](http://vcmedia.org) | Los Angeles, USA

Margarita Verde - [margarita@vcmedia.org](mailto:margarita@vcmedia.org)

### GENERAL ENQUIRIES, SCREENER, PRESS:

Veialu Aila-Unsworth - [veialu.au@gmail.com](mailto:veialu.au@gmail.com)

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MUSIC BY MAXWELL STONE & OTIS KANE FEATURING THE SONG "HYPNOTISED" BY ALYSON JOYCE SOUND DESIGN BY TYLER PROCTOR PHOTOGRAPHS BY  
PATRICK LEAHY PRODUCED, PRODUCED, DIRECTED AND WRITTEN BY VEIALU AILA-UNSWORTH INSTAGRAM [BATAPLAI.FILM](https://www.instagram.com/bataplai.film)