

KAVA_LAGI FIJI 2025

Kalokalo_Aqua_Vernacular_Adaptation



Kava bowl (photo: Joseph Allen Skinner Museum)



KAVA (Kalokalo_Aqua_Vernacular_Adaptation)

The project, appropriately named “KAVA” for the LAGI FIJI 2025 competition, is conceived and designed as an element that combines multiple aspects related to its inhabitants, culture, climate, environment, symbolism, and the vernacular building methods specific to Marou Village, Naviti, Fiji. All of this is aimed at achieving a result that is not merely a utopian idea, but rather an artistic and architectural artifact that is feasible, scalable, and easy to build by the local community themselves—where the presence of culturally rooted elements contributes to hope and resilience for a better future in harmony with the environment.

For us, after reading the welcoming words of Mr. Llisari Naqau Nasau (Sau Turaga —Chief Maker— of the Village of Marou), in which he mentioned: *“I am the one who hands the kava bowl to the chief so that he may drink,”* it became clear from the very beginning that we had to incorporate the significance of this ceremonial vessel into the conceptual design of the artistic and architectural work. Not necessarily in a literal or obvious way, but by establishing a functional analogy—imagining it as a vessel that receives a vital liquid to be shared with the community, while also acting as an elevated artifact on stilts. This elevation not only makes it stand out visually but also serves, architecturally, as an effective and vernacular strategy against flooding.

Our design embraces modularity as a strategy for easy construction, progressive growth, and adaptive use. At the same time, it allows for the harmonious and functional integration of energy production and storage through solar panels, while the shape of the roof enables the collection of rainwater for use during Marou’s dry season.

KAVA is not only conceived as a habitable work of art, but as part of a much broader ecosystem encompassing the entire Marou Village. In this sense, the project itself functions as a journey across the landscape, allowing for a wide range of activities related to learning, human connection, observation of flora and fauna, ecosystem preservation, and cultural and artistic expression. All these dimensions are intertwined in order to counteract the adverse effects currently faced by the community, such as soil erosion, flooding, and the powerful cyclones that threaten their lives, crops, and livelihoods.

From above, the artistic installation appears as a star (*Kalokalo*), and just like a star, it also produces light. Aqua, because it holds water within; Vernacular, because it is built using local materials; and Adaptation, because it integrates into the landscape, is scalable, and modular.



Overall top view



Axonometry of the site

- 1) KAVA
- 2) Crops
- 3) Reforestation (Trees used in construction) Vesi (Intsia bijuga)
- 4) Reforestation (Trees used in construction) Bambusa vulgaris
- 5) Water collectors and lamps
- 6) Water collectors / lamps / roof
- 7) Floating platforms (Bamboo)
- 8) Coastal protection and flooding
- 9) Cyclone protection
- 10) Mangrove estuary reforestation



Dry season



Flood season