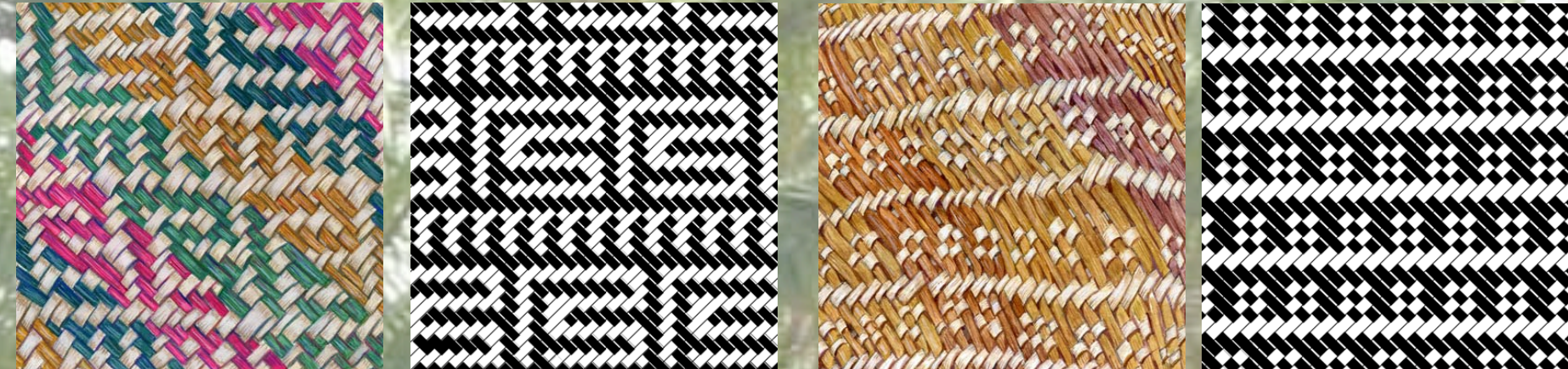


# AKEKE KIKIRIA: A'ORO NU EVERA ARUKU

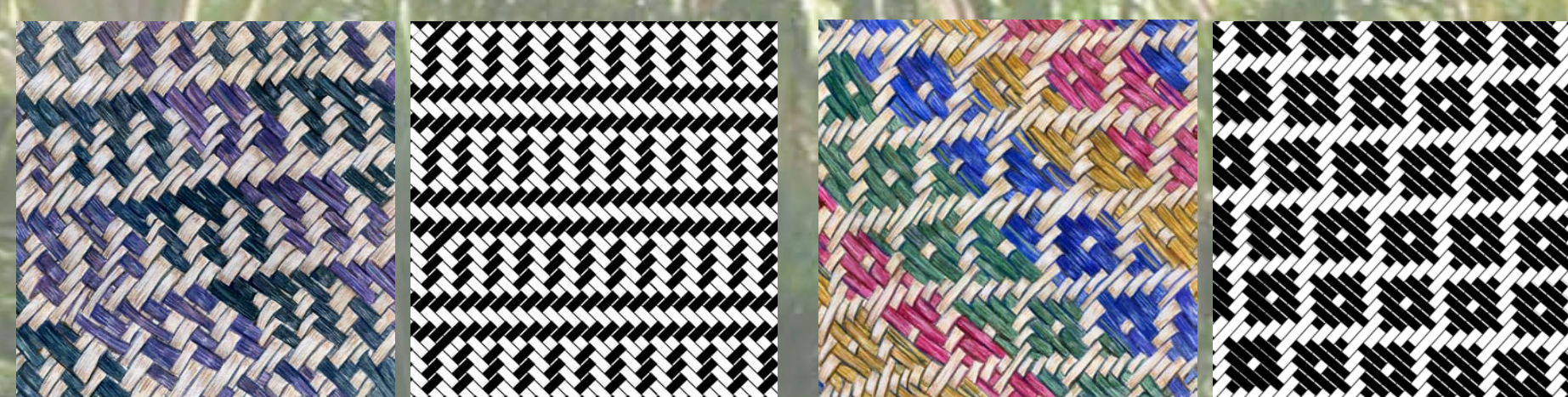
*Akeke kikiria* (design) or *akeke vo'oa* (bag) are made by women for people to hold personal items. Acquiring young fronds of *pu* (sago palm, *Metroxylon sagu*), women process the palm fibers and dye them. Gathering the fibers to be used, women make a knot, which they hold between their toes or knees as they plait the basket. Making an *akeke* can take between two days to one week. Plaiting is done in the morning or evening when it is cool so as to avoid breaking the fibres. Many of the designs shown here invoke *opa* (totemic ancestors) and link people to the environment and their ancestral histories. These baskets are a unique female art form of the Purari Delta and show women's creativity and skill. Unfortunately, *akeke kikiria* are being replaced by bilums. By documenting these designs the hope is that this will stop, people will take new pride in these beautiful things, and a new generation of women will learn to make *akeke kikiria*. (Joshua A. Bell, National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, bellja@si.edu)



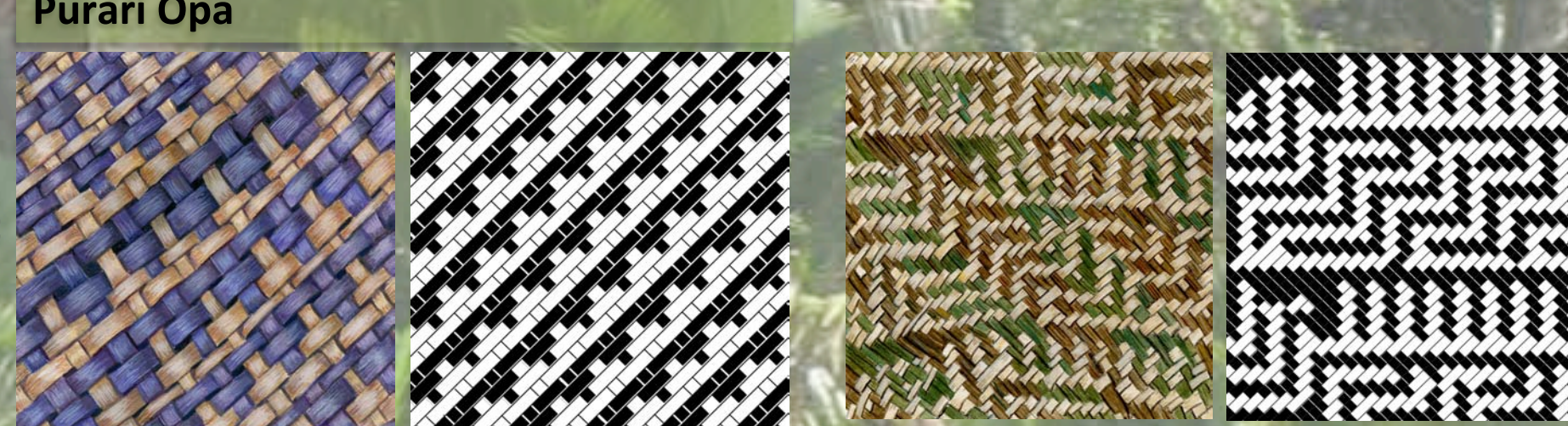
**Kuma Para (Butterfly Wings) Aivei Opa**      **Eve Upu (Elbow Pattern)**



**Vai'i Maiari (Hornbill) Purari Opa**      **Ropo (Star Pattern)**



**Varia Nikoai ('Varia you give me') Purari Opa**      **Diamond Pattern**



**Omaro Ni'iri (Teeth of a wood-boring insect) Purari Opa**      **Mixed Pattern**



**Koi Paku (Koi Face)**      **Iko (Pattern of the ancestor Iko) Urama Opa**

Illustration by Alexis Demetriades 2012



Top: Diamond pattern made by Aea Kevin (2010); Bottom: Vai'i Maiari pattern made by Vima Kauri (2010)



Image Key: (1) Tapara shreds *pu inamu ó* (young sago palm leaves), (Mapaio 2001); (2) Shredded *pu inamu ó* bleaching in the sun; (3) Umu and Aea pressing sago fibres in the mud to make brown fibers (Mapaio 2002); (4) Puka holds *daeko* (Turmeric root, *Curcuma australasica*) used to obtain yellow dye (Mapaio 2001); (5); Branch of *aea iri*, the leaves of which are boiled to make red dye, Ne'a (2010) (see *Koi Paku* and *Ropo*); (6) Vaipa Kae plaits an *eve upu* design (Mapaio 2002); (7) Aea plaits a diamond design (Ne'a 2010)

