

# Overseas Experiential Studio - Vanuatu

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## Overview

This Overseas Experiential Studio in Vanuatu is intended to provide an opportunity for students to observe very different **peoples, cultures, environment, construction techniques and resource uses**. From looking, questioning and learning, together with the techniques practiced through a few years of architectural studies, you will be expected to apply yourselves to real projects to assist a community located in North Efate (the 'capital' island of Vanuatu).

Students will:

- Participate in Village life (inc (possibly) weddings, parties, anything)
- Learn from local (Ni-Vanuatu) culture and way, (particularly those of North Efate)
- Learn from the wisdom of international tropical architecture and remote area construction experts (Phil Harris, Wendy Christie)
- Apply what they have learnt from 3½ years architectural study in research, architectural drawing and communication, to further the rich ambitions of a real project.

## Context

The two villages of Mangaliliu (on the Efate 'mainland') and Natapau (on adjacent Lelepa Island) are located within the Buffer Zone to Chief Roi Mata's Domain World Heritage Area (CRMD), and are collectively known as the Lelema Community. These communities include the owners and managers of CRMD.

CRMD was inscribed on the World Heritage list in 2008 and is Vanuatu's first World Heritage area. The UNESCO World Heritage website states that: *"The continuing cultural landscape of Chief Roi Mata's domain, Vanuatu, has Outstanding Universal Value as an outstanding example of a landscape representative of Pacific chiefly systems."*

CRMD consists of three core areas that are closely associated with the life and death of the legendary Chief Roi Mata who lived in the area around 400 years ago. The site includes the ancient village site of Mangaas, Chief Roi Mata's residence on the main island of Efate, Fels Cave on Lelepa Island where he is said to have died, and the entire island of Artok or Hat Island where he was buried. The stories of Chief Roi Mata, which are still told throughout central Vanuatu, speak of a great paramount chief who brought about peace to the region after a long period of conflict. (Summarised from the UNESCO CRMD listing: Refer <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1280>)

## Project background

A long-term goal of the Lelema Community has been to establish better tourism infrastructure in the region.

Phil Harris was at the beginning of the project shaping in 2010. Wendy Christie, together with the Vanuatu Cultural Centre and the Lelema World Heritage and Tupirou Committees, has worked since 2012 in authoring its current form, embodied in the Nataeana Senta, which will be a World Heritage Visitor Centre with attendant accommodation. Gaining rights to land use, dealing with UNESCO requirements and defining funding channels have all delayed the project's push toward implementation – but both Community and Government desire for its progress has increased, not diminished.

The project still requires design development and working drawings production. These drawings are not merely technical, but would detail the project's ambitions of working with and furthering Community skills and employment, and local (affordable and durable) material sourcing. Project construction is presently unfunded, but this proposed studio (research) program is. With studio work completed, on funding, the

project will be able to be quickly implemented. We envisage studio work will include joining the community in construction prototyping and testing.

In recent years, encouraged by Government tourism agencies, we have added complementary small-scale but functionally critical tourist infrastructure projects – a landing, shelter and toilets – at the water’s edge, at Mangaroau within the Nataeana Senta site. These small structures have been the focus of the recent studios – and this year we’re ready to prototype – with real, locally sourced materials. These small structures and their construction methodologies are seen as precursors to the main game, the Nataeana Senta.

During our visits, other Community infrastructure needs have also arisen, including at the local and rapidly expanding Roau School.

## Projects

There is much to be furthered! Dependent on student numbers and Community priorities, we aim to achieve the following through long days and long nights:

### Primary project: Mangaroau small structures

Earlier visits conducted by the Course Coordinators and students have provided developed design ideas, and, for some projects for the studio, construction drawings.

It is an ambition of this year’s studio to review and adapt current work, and to **prototype** construction elements.

### Primary project: Nataeana Senta

Elements of the focal Nataeana Senta are all ready for design development. Additionally, the precinct has grown to include a Chiefs’ ‘welcome ground’, which requires:

- to be designed; and
- fitted into the precinct master plan

### Secondary project: Roau School

Ongoing master planning for the local school will require review, including to:

- update the master plan for changing considerations
- develop the precinct design for the Kindy (a project ready to build).

## And

Alongside this, Students will be asked to expand our growing body of knowledge about the Village context – and to expand work on a number of explorations around *understanding local “patterns”*:

- Understanding local customs and daily activities (e.g. how people live inside and outside their dwellings, where they sleep, eat, sit, bathe, wash, cook)
- Understanding the dwelling structures and construction as well as building materials used
- Understanding what is considered important (and perhaps taboo) in dwellings and their surroundings

## Preparatory work by students

Students are expected to do preparatory work prior to starting the studio. Each student is required to conduct literature/information search on (a) particular topic(s) relevant to Vanuatu and the study area

(North Efate Island in particular and nearby islands/ Shefa province) and provide discussion material for our next meeting prior to departure (end June – date and time tba).

The topics to be researched might include:

1. History and cultures
2. Socio-political and economic aspects including central and local governance systems
3. Tourism, foreign investment and impact on the society and environment
4. Climate and weather, natural environment (flora and fauna), geographical information
5. Vernacular built structures and buildings, structural systems, construction techniques, materials
6. Contemporary built structures and buildings, structural systems, construction techniques and materials used in Vanuatu, the Pacific, and tropical areas in general
7. Our project work to date

## Program

tba

## Itinerary (TBC)

Ref draft itinerary

## Assessments

*Provisionally:*

Research and travel diary	40% (individual)
Project participation	50% (individual/ group, tbc)
Final submission	10% (individual)

## Reading material/ references

Coiffier, Christian 1988. Traditional Architecture in Vanuatu, University of the South Pacific.

Roger Boulay 1990. La Maison Kanak, Agence pour le développement de la culture kanak, Editions de l'Orstom, Paris.

Plan of management for Chief Roi Mata's Domain (CRMD), Meredith Wilson on behalf of the World Heritage and Tourism Committee (WHTC), Lelepa Region, June 2006.

<http://www.environment.gov.au/heritage/apfp/publications/books/pubs/crmd-7-b-iv.pdf>

Chief Roi Mata's Domain Buffer Zone Management Plan: Prepared for the World Heritage Tourism Committee for the Lelepa Region. Downloadable from the internet.

Chief Roi Mata's Domain: Nomination by the Republic of Vanuatu for inscription on the World Heritage List.  
<http://www.environment.gov.au/heritage/apfp/publications/books/pubs/crmd-nomination.pdf>

Trau, A., Ballard, C. and Wilson M. 2014: "Bafa Zon: localising World Heritage at Chief Roi Mata's Domain, Vanuatu", in International Journal of Heritage Studies, Vol. 20, No. 1, pp: 86 – 103.

[http://www.researchgate.net/publication/241730916\\_Bafa\\_Zon\\_localising\\_World\\_Heritage\\_at\\_Chief\\_Roi\\_Matas\\_Domain\\_Vanuatu](http://www.researchgate.net/publication/241730916_Bafa_Zon_localising_World_Heritage_at_Chief_Roi_Matas_Domain_Vanuatu)

Wilson, M, Ballard, C. and Kalotiti, D 2007: "Chief Roi Mata's Domain - Challenges facing a World Heritage-nominated property in Vanuatu", A paper presented to the session on Cultural Heritage Management in the Pacific at ICOMOS 2007, Cairns, 21 July 2007. <http://www.aicomos.com/wp-content/uploads/wilsonballardandkalotiti.pdf>

Garoleo, Charlie 2013. Bungalow Standards Guide: A guide to bungalow businesses for tourism operators in rural Vanuatu, Department of Tourism Vanuatu, Port Vila. *To be provided*

Garoleo, Charlie 2013. Plant Species and Construction: A guide to local plant species used in construction in Vanuatu, Department of Tourism Vanuatu, Port Vila. *To be provided*

Nicolas Thomas: Islanders: The Pacific in the Age of the Empire, Yale University press, New haven and London, 2010.

Huffman, K. 2013. "Noho'n'dou yene nieve nungute'i numuwo'h yene' -respect is the foundation of life" in Chrispin Howarth, Kastom: Art of Vanuatu, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, pp. 30-35. <https://vanuatudaily.wordpress.com/2013/05/26/respect-is-foundation-of-life/>

Hickey, F. 2011, Ol kenu blong Vanuatu, Vanuatu National Cultural Council, The Christensen Fund, Port Vila. *To be provided*

Jowitt, G. and Shaw, P. 1999, Pacific Island Style, Thames and Hudson, London.

Lonely Planet Guide to Vanuatu and New Caledonia: Current edition. Essential travel information

## **What to prepare and bring**

All students must prepare and bring the following (apart from common personal items for travel):

1. Check with your doctor if you need vaccination and medication (eg. For malaria, food poisoning, allergic reactions, etc).
2. First Aid kit with good wound treatment supplies (bandaging and antiseptic solution).
3. Water purification tablets.
4. Life jacket.
5. Take out a travel insurance.
6. Bed sheets, light blankets/sarongs (optional – the families will provide these but it is up to you if you prefer to bring your own sheets).
7. Mosquito net for sleeping recommended.
8. Two solar lights (to use during stay, and to be given to each host family in Mangaliliu as a gift at the end of the stay).
9. Two small gifts to give to each family at Lelepa and Mangaliliu (total no more than \$20.00) – something that will be *useful* for the families.
10. Relevant stationery.
11. A5 travel diary (can be one of the sketchbooks), A4 or A3 paper/ sketchbooks.
12. Tapes (tape measures, masking tapes), model-making tools (to be discussed)
13. Insect repellent, sunscreen
14. Sensible shoes that can be worn in the water (sandals not recommended for bushwalking), toilet paper, etc.
15. IMPORTANT: For female students: You MUST NEVER wear revealing outfit/top/shirt/shorts/skirt. Please respect the local custom and wear knee-length skirt. Do not wear shorts or pants and always wear a top or dress with sleeves to cover your shoulders and upper arms. If you swim near the

village, please wear short-sleeve shirt and shorts. No bikinis or normal swimwear is to be worn when swimming in the village.

16. **Try to travel as light as possible and carry a soft bag instead of a suitcase** as you will be travelling by boats to two islands and staying in those islands (see itinerary)
17. Do NOT bring alcohol into the villages.

## **Cost and Payment**

1. Please arrange and pay for your own trip to and from Port Vila.
2. You will be staying at Gideon's Landing Eco Lodge for 2 nights (meals at Gideon are about \$15-\$25), Emma's bungalows for 2 nights (all meals inclusive), and with local families for 5 nights.
3. Included in the studio are bus & boat trips (from and to airport, from Lelepa landing to Emua Wharf for Nguna, and from Emua Wharf to Mangililiu).
4. Additional will be the cost of the Roi Mata Cultural Tour (essential, approx \$90).
5. Total payment to School for accommodation, most meals, bus and boat trips, some materials, approximately **\$1,450**. Deposit of \$900 to the School will be due by **Monday 12<sup>th</sup> June**.