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- BUSINESS
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- HOME VIDEO
- MEDIA

- OSCARS
- PEOPLE
- INTERVIEWS
- PRODUCTION LISTINGS
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- AWARDS & FESTIVALS

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The Land Has Eyes

By Duane Byrge
Ta Meka Prods.

PARK CITY -- "The Land Has Eyes" is a captivating saga of one girl's mustering up the heroic spirit of her heritage to confront the modern world.

Set on the remote island of Romua in the South Pacific, it's a visually entrancing work, capturing the pristine beauty of those luscious climes and cluing us in to a culture that has been defiled in many ways by European colonization.

At once an illuminating ethnography of a remarkable people, "The Land Has Eyes" is most satisfyingly a tale of triumph and assertion. It focuses on Viki (Sapeta Taito), an industrious Romuan teen who aspires to someday win a scholarship to Fiji. Strong-minded, which is not considered a virtue by the women in her family as well as her peers, Viki takes it upon herself to do what her more traditional parents cannot accomplish. In essence, she crosses cultural boundaries when she stands up for her father's good name, and she transcends female expectations when she strives to achieve her highly personal goals.

This beautiful film brims with a gentle wisdom, courtesy of writer-director Vilsoni Hereniko. His luscious visualizations are inspiring portraits of not only a land but, most satisfyingly, the vibrant heritage that gave the strength to this young girl's triumph.



Sapeta Taito stars in "The Land Has Eyes."

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