
HB
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Front Cover image by AJ Feducia
Sean Connelly
Thatch Assembly with Rocks (2060s) (detail)

Back cover image by AJ Feducia
Marques Hanalei Marzan
'A'ahu kino lau, 2017

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Honolulu Biennial 2017 is dedicated to the incredible artists, partners and our community who have made this first Biennial possible. Above all, Honolulu Biennial 2017 is reflective of the spirit of the late Jay Jensen**, a long-time advocate of our efforts, mentor and dear friend who quietly, humbly and thoughtfully lead our contemporary arts community for more than four decades. His passion and vision for contemporary art has forever impacted our community for the better.**

HONOLULU BIENNIAL 2017

MIDDLE OF NOW | HERE

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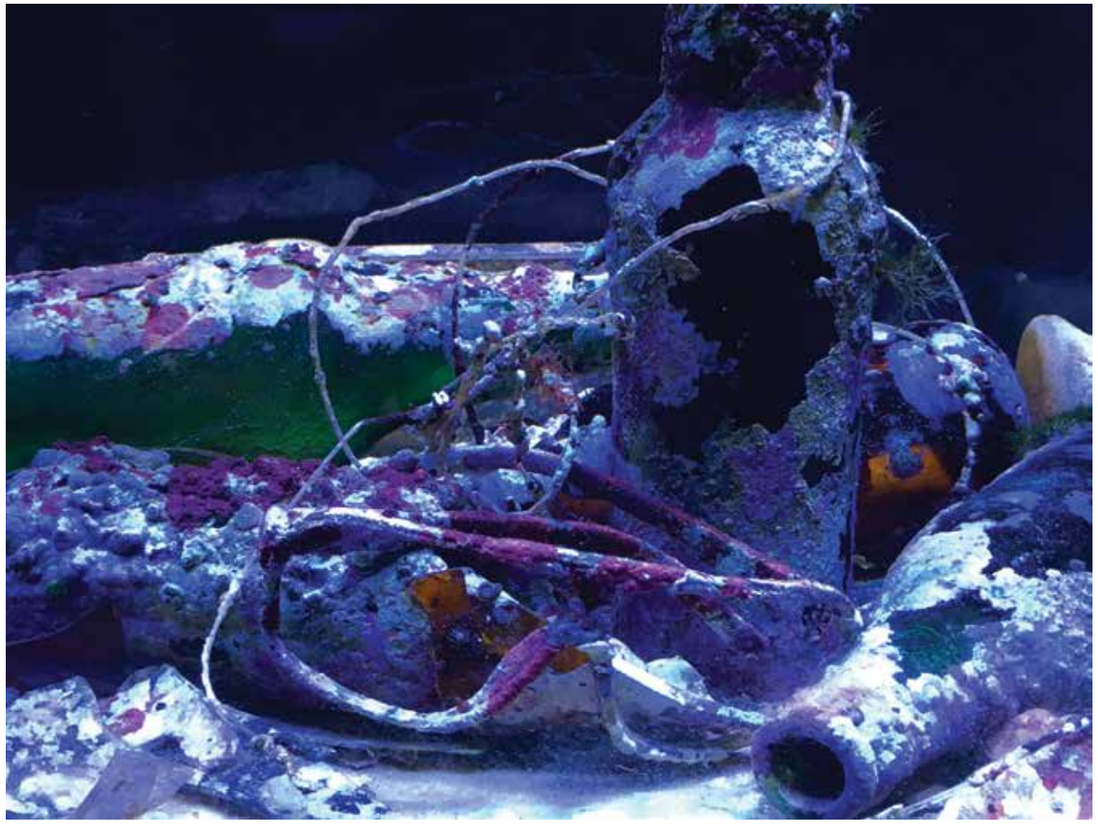
A Message from the Board of Directors

The Honolulu Biennial Foundation's Board of Directors extends a warm aloha to participants, residents, and visitors to Honolulu Biennial 2017: *Middle of Now | Here*. It is our time and your time—time to celebrate cultural diversity, exemplary contemporary artistic expression, and our shared humanity. Hawai'i provides the perfect backdrop for this cultural exchange and the opportunity to contemplate the meaningful social, environmental, economic, and political issues of today.

We are grateful to the gifted artists, fabulous curatorial team, steadfast founders, knowledgeable advisors, tireless staff, workers, and volunteers, generous sponsors and donors, prestigious arts, culture, and educational institutions, state of Hawai'i, city and county of Honolulu, and faithful families and friends. Thank you each for turning the vision of Honolulu Biennial 2017 into a shared reality.



Chris Ritson
The Corallinales (detail), 2017
Image courtesy of the artist

E komo mai

The Honolulu Biennial was conceived from our deep conviction that the artists of Hawai‘i should be part of the global conversation on contemporary art. We believe that our hometown of Honolulu, a dynamic, multifaceted, urban city in the Pacific, is the ideal geographical position for a new model of biennial making and regional focus. The Honolulu Biennial includes artists from the countries and continents in and around the vast Pacific Ocean. The Honolulu Biennial will have future iterations, with more conversations, ruminations, exchanges of ideas, and understandings of the countries, cultures, issues, and artists involved. We dedicate the Honolulu Biennial to our island home, its people, and everyone who has helped take this community-driven arts festival from dream to reality.

Katherine Ann Leilani Tuider
Isabella Ellaheh Hughes
Kóan Jeff Baysa
Founders

Lynne Yamamoto
Borrowed Time (installation view), 2017
Image courtesy of Christopher Rohrer and Honolulu Biennial Foundation

Islands of the Future

Fumio **Nanjo**
Curatorial Director

For many people the Hawaiian archipelago calls to mind images of a paradise in the Pacific Ocean. A map of the Pacific Ocean locates the island chain midway between North America and Asia, but Hawai‘i is also linked by the ocean to thousands of islands to its north, east, south, and west. Contrary to the belief that the Pacific is a vast, empty space, visionary Tongan scholar Epeli Hau‘ofa once affirmed that “the sea is our pathway to each other and to everyone else, the sea is our endless saga, the sea is our most powerful metaphor, the ocean is in us.”

As we face the future we confront new challenges together. The islands of the Pacific Ocean are already dealing with devastating climate change. New technologies such as artificial intelligence, digital currency, and bioart are now changing the foundations of society, modifying the very meaning of what it is to be human. These transformative flows of time and events are like powerful ocean currents, while islands are like the human beings who boldly exist within that flow. Islands, then, can be metaphors for human existence and the persistence of people despite successive waves of histories and migrations.

Islands have long been considered sacred centers of knowledge, exchange, and communication, with migrations between islands and continents introducing new views and ways of thinking. Hawai‘i is a vibrant Pacific Island intersection, and Honolulu is a global base for the economies of commerce, military, and tourism throughout the region, as well as a focal point for the place-based art and culture of Hawai‘i. We thank the participating artists from Hawai‘i, the Pacific region, Asia, and the continental US for gathering in Honolulu, and we anticipate that you will be inspired by their works.

I would like to express my gratitude to the cofounders of the Honolulu Biennial Foundation, Kóan Jeff Baysa, Isabella Ellaheh Hughes, and Katherine Ann Leilani Tuider, for the invitation to be the curatorial director of the inaugural Honolulu Biennial 2017; to Ngahiraka Mason, the curator of the Honolulu Biennial 2017; and to Dr. Greg Dvorak, Dr. Katherine Higgins, and Dr. Margo Machida of the Curatorial Advisory Board, for their counsel. I also wish to sincerely thank the board members of the Honolulu Biennial Foundation, sponsors, staff, volunteers, and supporters who all generously helped to realize this inaugural biennial.

Alfredo and Isabel Aquilizan
Crossings: Project Another Country (detail), 2017
Image courtesy of Christopher Rohrer and Honolulu Biennial Foundation

Locally Resonant and Globally Relevant

Isabella Ellaheh **Hughes**

If one is going to establish a biennial, one learns to be open and unyielding. Since its inception in 2011, the idea to "do something" in order to elevate the presence of Native Hawaiian and Hawai'i-based artists meant we had to properly institute and originate the Honolulu Biennial. With my cofounders Kóan Jeff Baysa and Katherine Ann Leilani Tuider, the Honolulu Biennial Foundation was formed in 2014 with the belief that not only does our home *need* the Honolulu Biennial, so does the art world.

"Locally resonant and globally relevant" for me defines the conceptual and aesthetic oeuvre of our contemporary artists and holistic art scene in Hawai'i. There is much to be learned and valued from island-based worldviews. Artists from the islands have an attuned sensitivity to the interconnectedness of nature, history, economy, family, culture, and preservation, offering space for probing questions and possible solutions. Particularly resonant in much of the work by Native Hawaiian contemporary artists, and also by local artists, is the non-linear concept of time, moving forward by looking backwards with humility, grace, vision and most importantly, aloha.

I was born and raised in Honolulu, Hawai'i, and have been fortunate to grow up immersed in Native Hawaiian culture, art, and local community culture. For the purposes of this essay, "local" is defined as the amalgam of ethnicities, their tangible and intangible cultural values, which primarily originate from Asia and the Pacific. I feel blessed to have found a life focus, fortunate to have been educated in the arts, and grateful that I had opportunities to intern for others and establish a career in contemporary art. The very first "big" exhibition I curated, *This IS Hawai'i*, was small by international standards, but when you are 24 years old, everything feels "big!" The exhibition was an ode to my home and our Indigenous Hawaiian contemporary artists. Like the Honolulu Biennial, it grew out of aloha for Hawai'i mixed with angst and reactionary frustration—where is the visibility for artists from Hawai'i?

Living and working all over the world as an independent curator, art critic, editor, and cultural projects manager in my 20s, not once did I attend a biennial that exhibited an artist from Hawai'i. Queries by colleagues resulted in the question: "Is there a contemporary art scene in Hawai'i?" On occasion, I would find in a museum's permanent collection work from an artist from Hawai'i, or on the even rarer occasion, come across work in a commercial gallery or art fair. The infrequency of these encounters felt depressing—and far too spaced out given the plethora of heady, vibrant talents, voices, stories, and wisdom shared by our contemporary Native Hawaiian, local, and Hawai'i-based artists.

The most audacious way to combat a lack of representation, to generate *inclusion* and conversation on and around Native Hawaiian, local, and Hawai'i-based artists within the global, contemporary art world, was to launch the Honolulu Biennial. The power in the word "biennial" is shocking—and perhaps speaks to the fallacy of what so much of the superficial side of the art world is built upon. The minute "Honolulu Biennial" was announced in 2014, within a week, the world began to pay attention to us—not to the Honolulu Biennial Foundation or the founders, but to Hawai'i and the idea of us having a contemporary art scene worthy of taking note.

We were invited by Klaus Biesenbach, director of MoMA PS1, to do a pre-biennial collaboration during the summer of 2014 for his Rockaways show and project, which included Honolulu Biennial artist collective Les Filter Feeders. He also graciously hosted a luncheon on the rooftop of MoMA PS1 where we announced our plans for the Honolulu Biennial amongst art-world colleagues. This gave us "biennial legitimacy." Prior to that, the VIP cards to Art Basel HK arrived and they were a higher-grade VIP card than I had previously received to similar events as an art critic and independent curator. I was able to envision the idea with still no money in the bank, with no experience launching such an endeavor, and with no backing except business woman Maile Meyer of Nā Mea Hawai'i, Robert Lambeth of the Hawai'i International Film Festival, and Carol Khewhok, a long-time arts administrator in Hawai'i. Eventually, through an introduction from fellow cofounder Dr. Baysa, Fumio Nanjo, one of the most noted contemporary arts curators and director of the Mori Art Museum, agreed to serve as our inaugural curatorial director, and Ngahiraka Mason, an equally noted curator of contemporary art, agreed to serve as our curator.

And so began an intense exercise in gaining legitimacy over the next three years, locally and globally. This legitimacy was important in order to raise funds to make the *idea* of the Honolulu Biennial come to fruition. During this journey we made financial forecasts and developed strategic plans which resulted in pre-biennial events and programs locally, nationally, and internationally. The Honolulu Biennial Foundation, in partnership with our daring founding title sponsor, the Howard Hughes Corporation, the government, donors, partners, board members, and most importantly, participating artists, has worked to raise the profile of Hawai'i on the

world stage as a contemporary arts capital.

The Honolulu Biennial Foundation was founded to support inclusion and recognition of our artists and our art scene in Hawai'i. We believe that increased recognition helps artists' careers and our economy, and attracts a new generation of more thoughtful, sensitive, culture-appreciative visitors and arts tourists. It is our hope that "arts tourists" do not want to merely engage in the consumption of a highly problematic "paradise," emblematic of our colonial legacy, but rather that these visitors will care to learn about our Indigenous culture, our history, and our people, visiting our historic, cultural, and artistic institutions and supporting local businesses.

A vital reason for founding the Honolulu Biennial Foundation was to bring to our islands—which do not have a single, dedicated art museum for contemporary art (The Contemporary Museum, TCM, which I practically grew up in, merged with the former Honolulu Academy of Arts to form Honolulu Museum of Art)—artists from other parts of the world in order to promote cultural exchange, tolerance, friendship, and understanding between our cultures and theirs.

We welcome our communities, Honolulu Biennial artists, and visitors to the Honolulu Biennial—a vessel of aloha, hope, tolerance, understanding, and reconciliation. Honolulu Biennial artist Eko Nugroho's newly commissioned mural in The Hub proclaims, "Make humanism great again." Now, seven years from the initial idea to launch the Honolulu Biennial, this is the message I hope rings truest and loudest for the inaugural Honolulu Biennial.

Mahalo nui loa to all the believers—this biennial is yours, you have given it *ha*, the breath of life, through your belief and collaboration.

Yayoi Kusama
Footprints of Life (installation view), 2010–2017
Image courtesy of Chris Rohrer
and Honolulu Biennial Foundation

Talk Story: Mobile Geographies

Ngahiraka **Mason**

Prologue

In a recent exchange with a downtown Honolulu retailer, he and I shared how special Hawai‘i is and why we are energetically drawn to this location, over and beyond professional commitments and personal interconnections. We instantly agreed that a defining feature we experienced in our journeys throughout the Hawaiian Islands is the practice and continuity of aloha. Despite diverse cultural, political, spiritual, and social differences, aloha makes Hawai‘i stand out in the Pacific and in the world. What is this aloha? At its simplest it is good manners, respect, and compassion, showing and performing mundane tasks with kindness, care, and joy. At its most complex it is still these things.

In explaining my role with the Honolulu Biennial, I shared the tenor of topics and issues addressed by artists, imparting an opinion that biennials should also be uplifting and bear forward feelings of happiness. We talked about art as a mirror that reflects the past, recent times, and present-day realities, and that understanding art *is* a pathway to uplifting people, as sharing awareness produces happiness.

In this exchange I realized that the impetus for making art is not the same impulse as that for experiencing art. Seeing and experiencing art is different from talking and writing about art. Interpreting art for understanding, rather than describing art for theoretical study, engages different parts of our emotional and cognitive acumen. The heart’s experience of art is dissimilar to the mind that seeks to describe and define the creative process. Like aloha, you first follow your heart.

In my exchanges with this retailer I came to see that one can be shaped by the process and frequency of aloha in Hawai‘i. Notwithstanding, my aloha for contemporary art is sometimes at odds with the conditions that produce and maintain contemporary art practice, especially here in the islands. The history of contemporary art in Hawai‘i is young when compared to other parts of the world, yet its achievements and historical perspectives have begun to unfold with an openness and richness.

Honolulu, Hawai‘i: Living Aloha

The image of Honolulu, Hawai‘i, in the twenty-first century is a destination paradise, a worry-free place to escape the demands of life, complete with beachfront apartments, and first world shopping malls. The struggle to refine and expand this image is tied to tourism and the US military, which provide the economic backbone in the Hawaiian Islands that its permanent inhabitants and visitors have come to rely upon.

The presence of corporations, investors, landlords, millionaires, and billionaires is felt in the Islands as earnestly as the high cost of living, which has led to large homeless populations forming on beaches, sidewalks, and public parks. Plastic, fishing, and cruise ship waste circulate the islands brought in on Pacific currents from mainland US, Japan, and the Pacific. Moreover, Hawai‘i ships in 85–90% of its food to feed its permanent population and tourists. Hawai‘i has no recurring natural resources, and thus relies on the importation of domestic and commercial building materials and household commodities.

“Living Aloha” is a shared, cultural mantra and a hallmark of this dynamic society that has developed a way of looking outward to the world by first reflecting inward on its people and this place. The chain of eight islands that comprise Hawai‘i is primarily inhabited by Native Hawaiians, settlers from America, and immigrants from Asia and the Pacific. This diverse group of people coexists in a uniquely local style of accord that finds common ground through “talking story” or through cordial exchanges. Hawai‘i’s permanent population is open to finding solutions to island concerns and innovating from an island worldview. The Honolulu Biennial was founded in this manner.

Why a biennial in Hawai‘i? Who are biennials for—the local community, artists, curators, or institutional recognition on the world stage? Has a limit been reached for exhibitions of this type? Is it sustainable to travel to biennial destinations and to set up the circulation of art as a monetary system? What is the role of art today?

The Honolulu Biennial founders proposed to support and create opportunities for Hawai‘i’s contemporary artists, to showcase art from the region, and to be conversant with our nearest neighbors connected by the Pacific Ocean. The Honolulu Biennial starts with the charting and mapping of a region as an approach to showcasing place. The inaugural biennial has unfolded contemporary art practices in Hawai‘i for the world. It has achieved practical understandings of the complexities of bringing together geographic, temporal, and cultural ideas that are regarded as important today.

Hawai‘i in the World: Island Thinking

The power of geography is real. Where we live shapes who we are, and our everyday surroundings affect our daily lives. A tropical climate, active volcanoes, coral reefs, mountains, waterfalls, and year-round blue ocean produce a different relationship to a place, when compared to living in a densely populated city comprised of high-rise living, fast rail and underground transportation, pollution, metropolitan culture, and concrete landscapes.

Geographic insights from this location are “sightseen” by artists; they are referenced and interpreted within a Hawai‘i contemporary art milieu. Michelle Schwengel-Regala recently voyaged between Hawai‘i and Pape‘ete, Tahiti, aboard the research vessel RV *Falkor* learning how scientists collect and understand data taken from the Pacific Ocean. Schwengel-Regala’s work comprised two parts, water column wire sculptures and knitted and embroidered

data textiles. The textiles were created to draw attention to deoxygenated zones in the Pacific; twenty-three knitted squares depict water quality in this region. Blue stitches on the squares show ocean depth and neon stiches refer to ocean temperatures, oxygen levels and fluorescence emitted by plankton. Paradoxically, the large open-weave water columns contrast with the instruments used by scientists to collect water samples. The artist's water column forms cannot hold water but suggest a state of crisis in the Pacific. Embedded in Schwengel-Regala's narrative is also a greater understanding of ancestral Polynesian voyaging in the Pacific, particularly between Hawai'i and Tahiti. In June 2017 the Hawaiian voyaging canoe Hōkūle'a returns home after completing four years of sailing across Earth's oceans, raising consciousness about the need to sustainably coexist with our planet.

Local Knowledge by Les Filter Feeders is a set of thirteen paintings that recognize the way the "locals" talk. There is a dynamic living system of urban speech in Hawai'i that operate within and interconnects with community knowledge of the ocean, land, and its cultural conditions. The artists wanted to show how local aphorisms can also relate to broader global systems of understanding; an example of this is the work titled *Never Turn Your Back to the Ocean*. Colloquial language and "local knowledge" are fluid within communities, as is absorbing ideas from lived experience. In this way, Les Filter Feeders establishes some fundamentals that facilitate ongoing connections between local and non-local communities.

Charlton Kūpa'a Hee melds his science and art training with land conservation interests in his artwork. His hand-built ceramic gourd forms are covered with contemporary stories that show cultural relationships between people and land. Hee is part of a generation raising awareness of invasive flora and fauna in Hawai'i by perpetuating living stories that matter. Hee's subject matter includes the endangered O'ahu tree snail and O'ahu 'elepaio, an endemic bird whose habitats are threatened and whose numbers are in sharp decline. Borrowing from the ancient Greek tradition of *sgraffito* scratching on urns and vases, Hee has transferred this decorative technique to Hawaiian gourd forms. The artist has swapped mythology-based narratives used by Greek artisans for conservation concerns, taking a unique approach to the discourse on land and living history.

Chris Ritson's bio-generative artwork *The Corallinales* is a series of living paintings, growing in two aquarium tanks under artificial light. His scientific background, belief in the importance of conservation, and sustainable lifestyle led Ritson to examine the artistic potential of working collaboratively with natural forms. Corallines algae have been scraped from ocean trash collected from the Honolulu Harbor, Waikiki, Diamond Head, and the surf break where Ala Wai Canal, an artificial and controversial waterway at the northern end of Waikiki, flows into the Pacific Ocean. The algae were placed in a supportive environment for the corallines to thrive on glass and plastic debris, producing abstract paintings. Displayed in a room adjacent to *The Corallinales* were a set of bio-generative works by Ritson titled *Ganoderma*, mushroom paintings with highly textured surfaces. The artist grew ganoderma mushrooms in plastic containers until they achieved sufficient size to dehydrate, preserve, and present as paintings. The value Ritson places on ecological systems during the creation of his works demonstrates an ability to work collaboratively with nature.

Drew Kahu'āina Broderick's vinyl billboard work *Billboard I. (The sovereignty of the land is perpetuated in righteousness)* consists of a digitized and manipulated image of swaying palms with a neon sign lit up with the word "Vacancy." Critical to the artist's presentation is a reproduction of a historical painting by eighteenth-century British artist George Carter, titled *The Death of Captain Cook* (ca. 1783). Broderick's response to the painting is an examination of authorship, historic violence related to Captain Cook's death at Kealakekua Bay, the realities of a highly militarized life, and commercial tourism in the Hawaiian Islands. Broderick grew up in an O'ahu suburb that overlooked the Marine Corps Base of Hawai'i between Kailua Bay and Kāne'ohe Bay in the ahupua'a of Ko'olaupoko where military convoys used the same streets that he walked when going to school. Broderick inhabits the role of protagonist and antagonist, and of artist and critic, to discuss repressed histories and aestheticized conceptions of Hawai'i.

Trained as both an ocean engineer and an artist, Jane Chang Mi combines her interests in the revisionist politics of land and ocean with her focus on the cultural and military site Pu'uloa (Pearl Harbor), on the island of O'ahu. Underwater archival video-documentation taken by divers surveying the waters of Pu'uloa provides the impetus for her installation *The Eyes of God*. Pearl Harbor has a rich history as a food basket, but is remembered for its 1941 bombing, which precipitated US entry into World War II.

While deeper truths about water, food, and shelter are obvious—we know the planet is mined out of balance—how do we move forward from this position? Sean Connelly's installation invites the contemplation of the future of building materials in places like the Hawaiian Islands, where steel is imported and not locally occurring. Connelly's installation *Thatch Assembly with Rocks (2060s)* incorporates locally sourced thatching, which the artist considers a recurring resource for architectural and artistic achievement. His architectural background and research interests suggest a return to local materials and the continuity of the ahupua'a—a sustainable system of land division and management traditional to Native Hawaiians.

Artist Kaili Chun tackles topics from an alternative viewpoint. Chun's *Veritas II* is composed of forty-nine steel cell forms that examine ideas of containment and exposure, agency and restraint, between Native Hawaiians and non-native Hawaiians. The sculptural forms were literally embedded in the land to draw attention to the long-term effects of the containment of people. The artist believes that art is a language to speak about issues through conceptual metaphors for repressive ideologies that she expresses through the materiality of her installations.

"Letting go" and "transcendence" are recurring themes in Andrew Binkley's art, which is focused on Buddhist concepts such as impermanence. Binkley's *Stone Cloud* is a large boulder floating in the sky, intended to create a shift in the perception of something solid that usually sits on the ground. Binkley reminds us that even in nature things do not stay the same,

indicating the physical and cultural shifts constantly occurring in the Pacific Islands.

Marques Hanalei Marzan is a student of Hawaiian material culture, a fiber artist, and a cultural specialist at Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum, home to the largest Pacific collection of its kind in the world, numbering over 77,000 cultural objects. *ʻAʻahu Kino Lau* (clothing for the many forms of the supernatural body) is a fiber, textile, and garment installation by Marzan that honors the four major gods of the Hawaiian pantheon—Kanaloa, Kaneʻohe, Lono, and Ku—venerated for their divine dominion over heaven and earth.

At the intersections of world and personal transformation is where one can meet change. Al Lagunero's practice is based in old wisdom, rooted in the nature of nature, which he recognizes as a vital teacher. Lagunero's commissioned performance, presented on opening night of the biennial, was inspired by a text written by Japanese monk Myōe (1173–1232), who lived at Kozanjo Temple in the mountains outside Kyoto. Myōe wrote "Letter to the Island," which is addressed to his favorite island. On delivering the letter to the island, Myōe's devotee casts the message to the wind. Lagunero's introspective monologue *The Nature of Nature* gave evidence to the function of *ʻāina aloha*, which is an innate awareness that the land (or the Islands) loves us.

Mobile Geographies

As much as the Honolulu Biennial introduces Hawaiʻi's artists to a plethora of artists from Asia, the Pacific, Australia, and the US, these geographies are also open to scrutiny and interpretation from this specific location, recognizing that artists take their worldviews wherever they go. In this way, the imprint of mobile geographies and technology and its global-reach connect us to the priorities of elsewhere. In some regions technology is used as a contemporary platform to raise awareness of issues, causes, and conflicts as they occur. Our dependency and reliance on information currents that flow and saturate without end (and sometimes without purpose) have impelled freedoms and access to people and ideas, unimaginable a decade ago. However, there is a shadow side to borderless cyber worlds, and actual borders in the lived world.

An artist residency program based in Honolulu regularly hosts artists from Islamic countries to create artwork and contribute to the growth of Islamic arts and culture in the state of Hawaiʻi. Artist Eko Nugroho has an optimistic approach to the political dynamics he encountered and the changing conceptions of "democracy" in the US. Nugroho created a series of paintings under the collective title *Above the Wall Under the Rainbow, Free Air (I luna o ka paia i lalo o ke anuenue, ke ea kuʻokoʻa)*. Within this context, the rainbow acts as a metaphor for beauty within diversity. The artist painted words calling for peace, love, and a return to our humanity. Amongst these slogans, veiled and masked human figures appear floating above threat and violence.

Acutely aware of the politics of his home region, Emirati artist Mohammed Kazem has an art practice that seeks to capture the intangible and make it tangible. The work presented by this pioneering conceptual artist, *Directions (Honolulu)*, took the country coordinates of artists participating in the Honolulu Biennial using Global Positioning System (GPS). The resulting collection of numbers and letters blur fixed ideas of borders. These coordinates were transferred to vinyl and adhered to glass window surfaces enabling natural light to cast a shadow image on wall and floor surfaces.

Wasl (Arabic for "union"), a video work by Palestinian American artist Sama Alshaibi, brings attention to peoples and cultures under threat of physical displacement, due to increasing fresh water scarcity and rising oceans levels. Underlying this project is the idea that the ocean does not follow boundaries set by individuals and nations, and that natural calamities can unite island nations. Alshaibi establishes that this recognition of human interdependence is essential to addressing pressing environmental issues.

This fact has correlations with the focus of Marshallese poet and artist Kathy Jetñil-Kijiner, whose homeland island was colonized and occupied first by German missionaries, then by the Japanese during WWII, before being "liberated" by the United States. Her project *Islands Dropped from a Basket* speaks to a Marshallese legend narrating how the islands were formed. The artist has interwoven an ancestral legend with graphic descriptions directed to Marshall Islanders affected by historic nuclear testing by the US, which not only devastated the islands and its peoples, but reduced its inhabitants to dependency on the US.

Californian-born Hakka Chinese American artist Alexander Lee produced "starburst" monoprints and hand-built ceramics related to below- and above-ground nuclear tests performed by France in French Polynesia. Lee's suite of mushroom clouds prints reference the 193 nuclear explosions undertaken in the region between the years 1966 and 1996. The installation titled *Te atua vahine mana ra o Pere (The Great Goddess Pere)—L'Aube où les Fauves viennent se désaltérer* also refers to a shared Polynesian deity Pere who was the goddess of fire, lightning, and volcanoes.

New Zealand Māori artist Brett Graham takes on American expansionism (recent and past) with four large discs that hang on walls positioned at true cardinal points in Honolulu. These "four directions" represent the histories, rights, interests, and subjugation of people and place. It includes the island of first contact, "Guanahani," to the east; "Code Geronimo" in the south, referring to a South West Apache resistance fighter whose name was appropriated as a code name for Osama Bin Laden; "Standing Rock" in the north, a sacred site under threat of violation; and Kahoʻolawe, Hawaiʻi, in the west, where the US tested weapons and nuclear projectiles for fifty years.

Beijing-based Chinese artist Zhan Wang creates sculptures that consider what it means to imitate nature. His presentation of two identical rocks—one natural rock and the other a stainless steel form—sit alongside each other, posing the question, does human activity supplant nature?

Ken + Julia Yonetani's recent work is comprised of uranium glass—depleted of uranium—repurposed as the glowing element of four hanging chandeliers, which are suspended in a dark room. When exposed in a dark room or under ultraviolet light, the uranium glass produces a rich glow-in-the-dark green color. The work was created in response to the 2011 Fukushima Daiichi nuclear disaster in Japan. The size of each chandelier represents the number of active

nuclear power stations in the United States, China, Japan, and Taiwan. The title of the work, *Crystal Palace: The Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nuclear Nations*, references the elaborate glass building designed for London's 1851 Great Exhibition, conjuring tensions between human ambition and technological development.

Taiwanese American artist Beatrice Glow addresses the extraction of natural resources from the Indonesian Spice Isles, which began with the Dutch and British transnational colonial expansion during the seventeenth century. Nutmeg was naturally occurring in Rhun and through trading became a highly sought after commodity. Glow's scented installation incorporates a blood-red Delftware porcelain tea set to amplify colonial commerce as exploitative of human labor and natural resources.

"The beach" is a contested space for artist Vernon Ah Kee, an Indigenous descendant of the Kuku Yalandji, Waanji, Yidindji, and Gugu Yimiithirr people of Far North Queensland, Australia. Australia's sand-covered coastal beaches are idealized and central to the identity of white Australia, yet these expanses are sites of historic and contemporary cruelty toward the Indigenous peoples of Australia. The central component of Ah Kee's project, *cantchant*, is a three-channel video work. One scene depicts a hanging broken surfboard wrapped in barbed wire being shot at, another shows the artist's family on the beach, and a third portrays Indigenous pro surfer Dale Richards riding waves on the artist's specially made surfboard.

Undertaking an alternative approach to "the beach" is Korean artist Choi Jeong Hwa with his large-scale installation *Gather Together*. The commissioned project involves making art from plastic buoys collected from Hawaiian Islands' coastline beaches. The artist's intention is to transform ocean debris into sculptural pillars and oversized draping lei, bringing the discarded, the overlooked, and the obvious together as a platform for seeing everything as art.

By way of contrast, Japanese artist Yayoi Kusama's room installation *I'm Here, but Nothing* is intended to be a grandiose caricature of modern Hawai'i. The room's furnishings are submerged in otherworldly, eerie purple light and fluorescent polka dots, Kusama's signature form. For Kusama, the polka dots symbolize the sun and other principles of nature.

In art today, how do we recognize the nature of reality and the reality of our nature as individuals in the world? Taiwanese artist Lee Mingwei is represented with the series *100 Days with Lily*, first made in 1995. Five large photographs show the artist's grief process following the death of his maternal grandmother. The artist ritualized the loss of his loved one by planting a lily and tending the natural cycle of the plant from germination, growth, full-bloom to the fading and death of the lily. He randomly chose a moment each day to document this hundred-day period.

Death is also part of New Zealand, Ngāpuhi, and Ngāti Hine artist Lisa Reihana's project *Tai Whetuki—House of Death, Redux*. The work unfolds the dramatic story of a dying warrior whose death is avenged by a chiefly mourning party. Using "day for night" cinematography, Reihana's project evokes imagined rites and rituals set in a dark landscape.

New Zealand photographer Fiona Pardington, who is both Scottish (Clan Cameron of Erracht) and Māori (Kāi Tahu, Kāti Māmoe, Ngāti Kahungunu), works with archival material and museum collections. Pardington creates, re-presents, and re-archives fragments and histories as a study that celebrates the assembling of collections and their preservation through a new series *Nabokov's Blues: An Enchanted Circle*. The project is a suite of photographs recognizing Vladimir Nabokov's life works and study of blue butterflies.

Graffiti Nature by teamLab from Japan is an interactive installation created for children of all ages. Visitors are invited to draw and color-in animals and flowers, which are scanned and projected onto the floor, as one ecosystem. Intended to amplify and imitate nature, this is an environment where flowers grow and bloom, animals interact, eat, repel, and attract each other—a place where the cycle of life and death is rendered through technology.

Yuki Kihara's photographic series considers nineteenth-century anthropometry and motion studies of Samoan men portrayed as powerful, primitive, and objectified specimens. Of Samoan and Japanese heritage, Kihara's project *A Study of a Samoan Savage* shows continuities between past and present representations of the Pacific male. New Zealand–born Samoan photographer Greg Semu addresses the male body through portraiture, tatau (tattoo) studies of his own body tattoos, and photographs inspired by religious images such as the dead Christ.

Conceptual artist John Vea's video and floor-based installation reflects on how he relates to family land in his Tongan homeland, while living permanently in Aotearoa New Zealand. Vea constructs a conversation between what it means to belong to a place and owning real estate.

Pacific Asian American artist Lynne Yamamoto was born and grew up in Honolulu. Her installation is inspired by plantation-style homes that can still be seen in neighborhoods around Foster Botanical Garden. The artwork recalls the early twentieth century period when Japanese immigrant enclaves wove around the land surrounding the Nu'uanu and Puehuehu Streams. Families who lived in communities such as the one remembered by Yamamoto were enriched by familial systems, shared values, and cultural perspectives.

Urban Honolulu in the twenty-first century, like other centers in the world, continues to evolve and change with new movements of migrants to the Hawaiian Islands. The range of people on the move now includes refugees, asylum seekers, and economic migrants in pursuit of a better life. In this seemingly organized push for a fresh start in Hawai'i, people also bring with them their histories, rights, and values, which are physical and mental but also of the spirit. It is human to want to remain connected to a past and to transport what we are and how we think to where we settle. People create human realities. We are the architects of our thoughts and we extend continuities of these realities.

Transformative Epistemologies

But for the hard-won voices of Pacific peoples, perspectives about island nations have changed little since Tongan scholar Epeli Hau'ofa wrote about them

in his seminal essay “Our Sea of Islands.” Island populations today are even more dependent on world powers for the military and financial aid, yet remain the most at risk from climate change and problems that originate from developed nations. Political issues of the twentieth century, prevailing views held by the West about Pacific Islands and Islanders continue to be perpetuated by politicians, well-meaning historians, and anthropologists, critics, and academics. Hau‘ofa was a Pacific leader who recognized in 1993 that islanders possess transformative epistemologies, which include island knowledge, island worldviews, wisdom, and native common sense.

The republishing of Hau‘ofa’s essay is powerful in the context of the Honolulu Biennial because his ideas champion transformative epistemologies from island perspectives and celebrate island thinking. Hau‘ofa models and exhibits his purpose in life: to share and reflect on self-knowledge, and to amplify island truths and one’s lived realities with directness, conviction, wisdom, and aloha. His legacy is important because it confirms that the future lies within us. We must express our own ideas, insert island meanings, and be clear about the richness and interdependency of our seas of islands.

Commissioned “perspective” essays were invited from Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars to examine how much we have learnt from Hau‘ofa and to place under scrutiny ideas of the Pacific and her diverse peoples. The ways that Pacific thought is interpreted are interrogated by contributors, and conceptions of being an islander are introduced as a framework for nuanced self-understanding. The purpose and function of biennials are commented on and is an occasion to amplify what artists from the region are responding to through their art. Discussed through the writings are approaches to traversing modern and historical thinking to celebrate contemporary aspirations from within this geographic location.

Where the Mo‘o Lives is a joint essay by Native Hawaiian scholars Dr. Manulani Aluli Meyer and Nāpali Souza, who examine the idea of *mo‘o*—succession and continuity. Together they provoke questions as to the “Aloha Spirit” within the Honolulu Biennial paradigm and exhibition-making process. They probe for answers as to whether continuity can be found in the experience of the Biennial.

Entering the Same Waters Twice, by Honolulu Biennial cofounder Kóan Jeff Baysa, is a reflective viewpoint that addresses the histories and internationalizing of biennial exhibitions and art fairs. Baysa explains how they differ yet are often transposed as one and the same event. These two global platforms not only show that rapid change has occurred over time but also how we have blurred the production and commodification of art. An introspective evaluation of the diversity of art produced in the Pacific region is brought forward for discussion by American academic Dr. Katherine Higgins’ essay *Positioning | Pacific Islands*. Higgins’ “positioning” paper thoughtfully describes navigating the limitations of critiquing Pacific art from within an academic framework, at the same time reminding the reader that island art making continues despite criticisms of its form, contemporaneity, and origin.

In his focused essay Recentering *“The Pacific”: Learning Oceanian Ways of Seeing*, American academic Dr. Greg Dvorak reviews the terms *Pacific* and *Oceania*. Dvorak draws on ideas argued by Pacific Islander scholar Epeli Hau‘ofa in the 1990s, presenting a précis of present-day conceptions of the Pacific Islands, and of colonial histories and trauma within the region, with a focus on Marshall Islanders living in US-occupied Hawai‘i.

Asian American scholar Dr. Margo Machida’s essay makes a case for Asian and Pacific Island diasporas within a trans-Pacific framework. Machida contends that the Honolulu Biennial ushers an important moment for dialogue and cultural convergence championing the idea that Asian American contemporary art be folded into regional and international diasporic debates.

In her essay *Mana Moana*, Tongan scholar and poet Karlo Mila repudiates contemporary Western ideas on how we inhabit the term *Pacific Islanders*. Mila draws on Pacific poetry, literature, and Western and Indigenous scholarship, to contend that Pacific thinking and creativity are more than the result of colonization and infinitely more than the sum of geopolitical theories that circulate the Pacific.

Dr. Moana Nepia’s thoughtful essay reflects on Pacific peoples as the living faces of Polynesian ancestors, to whom the continuity of culture is entrusted. Nepia offers insights as to how contemporary performance art contributes to growth in contemporary art practice, asking what makes art meaningful and memorable today.

The contributors to this catalogue recognize that the biennial heralds a transformation in how islanders express, comment on, and display distinct island thinking within a local and global milieu.

As curator for the Honolulu Biennial, I demonstrate the privilege of Western schooling and over twenty years in a traditional museum setting. But, my cultural education as an Indigenous Tuhoe person from Aotearoa New Zealand dominates my curatorial practice, which is place-based and driven by tacit knowledge, propelled forward by a search for understanding what I said yes to and how best to serve and honor the invitation to co-curate the biennial. It matters to me that the biennial experience is transformative for the artists and its multiple publics.

One can come to contemporary art with a personal worldview, and comprehensions of historical, modern, or contemporary art. One can also maintain Western training and combine these with cultural knowing. Information about social issues or knowledge of world politics has its place in society, but is not required to engage with the way artists express ideas. A one-world epistemology or single way to see ourselves in the world can separate people, but a willingness to engage with an open approach from multiple perspectives can transform how we decide to *see* each other, now and here.

Entering the Same Waters Twice

Kóan Jeff **Baysa**

As the inaugural Honolulu Biennial opens on 8 March 2017, Hawai'i joins a roster of close to two hundred recurring international art biennials and triennials that regionalize and internationalize art worlds. Hawai'i is unique in its position in the center of the Pacific, north of the equator, and Honolulu Biennial 2017 sharpens the growing global attention to its vibrant existing creative communities by showcasing the diversity of art and culture from Hawai'i, the Pacific Islands, Asia, North America, Australia, and New Zealand. The ancient philosopher Heraclitus remarked, "You cannot step twice into the same river." The title of this essay plays off of this epigram, referring to the waters of the Pacific as having properties and consequences of direction and transformation as functions of time.

Biennial (or biennale) is used as a general term for recurrent international contemporary art exhibitions, in contradistinction to art fairs which are essentially trade shows for art. The timely and relevant focus of Honolulu's inaugural biennial is reflected in its title, *Middle of Now | Here*, with characteristic biennial agendas that include regional strategies, internationalism, reimagining of history and political geography, renegotiation of public spaces, and site-specificity, all presented within the spectacle of a large-scale event with multiple venues in the host city. The art fair is presented in a similarly spectacular setting but in contrast is typically housed under one roof with fundamental strategies to promote and sell art. Whereas the biennial is where art and public spaces come together, the art fair is the space where art and commerce collude. However, as biennials expand as global purveyors of cultural capital and grow as economic engines for cities, they develop more complex relationships with the commercial art market, and the margins between art fairs and biennials blur.

That the agendas of the two forms have become blurred is reflected in the history of the original event, the Venice Biennale. First held in 1895 with the goal of establishing a new market for contemporary art, it brought artists and clients together, with sales remaining an integral part of the biennale until the sales commission was banned in 1968. The Venice Biennale has never been just about art. In 1930 Benito Mussolini saw the Biennale's potential as a propaganda machine and controlled it from his office. In 2015 the Vatican used its first appearance to rebuild relations between art and faith. Every other year the Venice Biennale is in step with Art Basel, the world's prime commercial fair for modern and contemporary art. The brand Art Basel has extended its global reach with Art Basel Miami and Art Basel Hong

Kong, appealing to and locating near the centers of international art collectors and art capital. Typically, the biennial itself lacks the funds to produce, ship, insure, and install large-scale works. Therefore, the financial involvement of galleries and dependence on commercial sponsors by both formats is largely unavoidable and indispensible, placing these events in an often conflicted position.

Contemporary art biennials use public spaces and address public audiences more than other cultural models and have become the dominant formats for presenting, promoting, and critiquing culture, and thereby carry the weighty potentials for fostering change. They offer newcomers to the global art community a stage on which to participate in the contemporary art scene and provide the globally expanding art audience with more venues to view current art. For artists, they are opportunities for heightened visibility and experimentation in extraordinary venues and contexts. The proliferation of biennials has fostered a coterie of artists traveling globally from country to country creating large-scale, site-responsive projects with sundry degrees of socio-political commitment and orientation. Installation, multimedia, and performance works increasingly dominate contemporary exhibitions. For the purposes of presentation and collectability, these formats are ill-suited to the small booths of art fairs and are better served by the biennial model.

There have been various motives for forming international biennials. Established in 1955, Documenta, which takes place every five years in Kassel, Germany, was in part an attempt to counter the cultural repression of Nazism. Asia's oldest biennial, the Gwangju Biennale in South Korea, was founded in 1995, inspired by the memories of civil uprising and repression from the Gwangju Democratization Movement in 1980. The inaugural Honolulu Biennial 2017 distinguishes itself from other biennials by its island location and ecosystem, delivered with Hawai'i's own unique, ineffable form of hospitality. Concentrating on issues of the Pacific area, it heralds a paradigm shift away from the usual continent-based perspectives. Biennial curators reflect the diverse shifts in global demographics and art audiences. In 2015, Nigerian Okwui Enwezor became the first African-born curator in the Venice Biennale's 120-year history. In 2017 the Whitney Biennial will open, organized by two of the youngest curators in the museum's history: Christopher Y. Lew and Mia Locks. In 2018 Japan's Mami Kataoka will be the first curator from Asia appointed as artistic director of the Biennale of Sydney, established in 1973.

Heretofore, Australia and New Zealand have received the most regional attention from the international art community because of the concentration of artists and works from Pacific islands in their larger cities and due to their established events, specifically the Biennale of Sydney and the Asia Pacific Triennial, based in Sydney and Queensland respectively, and New Zealand's Auckland Triennial. Outward from those perspectives are large expanses of water populated by islands, large and small, reaching out to the shores that define the perimeters of the Pacific Ocean. The inaugural Honolulu Biennial makes its mark by shifting the focus to the Pacific's geographic center, positing that these vast waterways always functioned as connecting bridges, rather than isolating expanses, that acknowledge, honor, and pay homage to the Pacific-wide shared histories of kinships and migrations.

Partially in response to threatening biennial fatigue, organizers scramble to come up with new paradigms. In 2008 *Prospect 1* was positioned as a post-Katrina initiative to boost tourism in New Orleans. The economic impact was $25 million, but in the end there was an $800,000 shortfall in the $5 million production budget. SITE Santa Fe staged its first international biennial in 1995, then decided to halt production of its trademark show. In 2016 it unveiled a different type of international exhibition with regional roots: titled *much wider than a line* the exhibition was "an articulation of the interconnectedness of the Americas and various shared experiences such as the recognition of colonial legacies, expressions of the vernacular, the influence of indigenous understandings, and our relationship to the land."

The landmark Whitney Biennial of 1993 was eye-opening, provocative, and inclusive, touching on timely issues of gender, AIDS, diversity, and poverty. Similarly, Honolulu Biennial 2017 will galvanize audiences by addressing timely and relevant environmental and socio-political issues of the Pacific area, many within new contexts. A notable example is global warming and the mass migration of native individuals from the Marshall Islands to Hawai'i, where some come to be treated for the medical sequelae of radiation exposure and many encounter and suffer sharp discrimination. Remarkably, the Marshall Islander invited to participate is a poet, not a visual artist, and she has created a brilliant and incisive installation that explores some of the keys issues facing her people.

In order to fulfill the definitions of a biennial, Honolulu Biennial 2017 needs to be recurrent. In order to be recurrent, we need to have continuity. In order to have continuity, we need to have longevity. In order to have longevity, we must be sustainable. The Honolulu Biennial must triumph with more than two successful iterations; otherwise those will be seen as just two large group exhibitions separated by time. The singular strengths of Honolulu Biennial 2017 include its unique location in Honolulu, dramatic indoor and outdoor venues, performance, poetry, and large-scale, kinetic, immersive, and interactive installations, the integration of native Hawaiian ceremonies, and the participation of artists ranging in age from twenty-eight to eighty-eight, representing numerous countries and constituencies.

Solutions to our most pressing social and environmental problems will not be found in extant antiquated social policies, nor in ossified political hierarchies, but rather as consequences of daring imaginings by artists and other visionaries, enacted moments of refusal and resistance, and consequent realizations of collective responsibility and action. The challenge of future biennial iterations will be to generate new orders and to build new infrastructures of transcultural exchange by using this recurring event as a medium and as a context for dialogue where vital concerns can be freely described, discussed, and challenged. Among those who affirm that art can make a difference, the inaugural Honolulu Biennial 2017 may well be viewed as among those creative global crucibles that facilitate educational achievements and instigate heightened public awareness that effect change.

Where the Moʻo Lives: A Perspective

Nāpali **Souza** and Manulani Aluli **Meyer**

I ulu no ka lālā i ke kumu.
We are products of our genealogical connections.

There is a belief that art starts at nothing. An empty canvas. A blank page. A shapeless mass. It is said that the job of the artist is to bring something new into existence, something out of the void, something that did not exist before.

In Hawaiʻi, genealogy is the meta-structure of space, place, and time. Genealogy is how we connect to each other and to *ʻāina*; from *ka wā kahiko*, to right now, to the space and time in front of us. In Hawaiian thinking, all our beliefs, perceptions, practices, neuroses—the stuff of creative inspiration—they are inheritances. They exist because of succession.

Moʻo is the Hawaiian word for succession and continuity. *Moʻo* are also ancient reptilian beings, revered as ancestral gods and guardians of Hawaiian fishponds. It's no coincidence that the word for genealogy is *moʻokūʻauhau*, the word for grandchild is *moʻopuna*, and the word for story is *moʻolelo*. *Moʻo* is what they share. Family lineage is biological and spiritual succession. Stories, and the knowledge they contain, survive because of *ʻōlelo*, because of talking and speaking, and through expression and practice, from one generation to the next. Succession. Continuity. Purpose. *Meaning*.

In the same vein, art is the succession of human connection. The job of the artist then is to situate material in a way that triggers a connection at the level of meaning-making. In that space between the artist and the viewer, this is where the moʻo lives. It is born from the artist's genealogy, a hologram of present/past, and within it the ability to transmit *moʻolelo* far into the future. Here is where culture matures. Here is where society transforms. Here is where *moʻolelo* inspires.

So, art starts not at nothing. It begins and thrives where the moʻo lives, and the moʻo lives in succession. It is the verb-nature of all life found in meaning-making, continuity, and the creative endeavor some

call *art*. The question remains: Where does the moʻo live in this very first Honolulu Biennial?

Puʻupuʻu lei pali i ka ʻāʻī.
Even the different and imperfect lei is beautiful when worn, like the foliage in the cliffs. Diversity is essential to the acceptance of oneself and of others. It is the fiber of culture.

We are not avid consumers of art. We are *producers*. Whether we call it design, potluck, lei making, stone carving, *aloha ʻāina*, or setting an *imu* for a family *lūʻau*. We here in Hawaiʻi have our own ways to experience the purpose and function of creativity. The *moʻo* thrives where meaning is shared. Continuity is thus found in how that sharing makes sense. We have never fully acquiesced to mainstream society's belief in art as a creation of artists for sale in galleries. What is the function of that? How is culture strengthened and extended?

Contemporary art here in the islands for Kanaka ʻŌiwi includes *all* expressions of life: music, dance, chant, care of land, child rearing, teaching, painting, surfboard shaping. The list is endless. The *moʻo* thus lives in all forms of continuity, and because continuity evolves as culture, what then is the *culture* of the Honolulu Biennial? Will we add something unique on a world-stage as island people, or will we simply link ourselves to a worldwide art phenomenon as another venue for the machinations of capital and political will?

ʻAʻohe hana nui ke alu ʻia.
No task is too big when done together by all.

Effulgent coherence, the idea that our values touch everything simultaneously, is an operating philosophy of island peoples. We here in occupied Hawaiʻi know this as a touchstone for consciousness in our daily lives. *Aloha aku, aloha mai*—Love comes from loving. Here is the purpose of life; the mutual causal world explaining why things endure. Does meaning sit at the surface of things, or do we engage in the space "between" to create the ongoing function of what meaning exists to produce? Here is where the contemporary of art makes sense to us. Yes, the moʻo is found in the *quality* of how things are done, not just the product.

Meaning is then also found in what the designated artist accomplished and how the fullness of that event was experienced—by everyone and at every moment. Here is an example: This Honolulu Biennial has been produced through the vision of *people*. A small and fresh collective formed around the idea that Hawaiʻi has something to express on a world-stage. Some called them naïve. Many doubted. They persisted, however, against all obstacles, odds and nay-sayers. It was to take them countless hours and years of volunteering, planning, meeting, and struggle to come to this stage of what you now see.

We have before us a *miracle* of vision, persistence, and trust. Three relentless founders discovered an international art director, an indigenous curator, and a cast of creative characters to pull off something *unknown*, *untried*, and *spectacular*. So, what then is it? Does the moʻo live in this exhibition? In Hawaiʻi we thus can ask the question: **Is aloha present?** Have friendships survived the toss and turmoil of putting it on? Is there community forming around the concept of meaning-making in all its expressions? How is the quality of relationships being forged as ideas develop? What culture is found when strangers, friends, board members, coworkers and artists share their excellence? Does the growing collective of individuals become *ʻohana*? *Aloha aku, aloha mai*: does continuity exist in how people are being cared for?

The moʻo runs throughout the all of life, but she lives where aloha finds safe harbor. We have seen it and cheered it on in both process and product of this very large public experiment. However, she has been tentative to claim a global space, but stepping from the shadow of all odds she now asks from us: Can Hawaiʻi maintain the Aloha Spirit that has made us distinct in the world, or do we collapse into mainstream art rhetoric based on a-cultural assumptions of power and money? Here is the question we are asking in this essay. Here is the question we are asking the world.

Aloha mai, aloha aku.
Continuity comes from loving.

Here is where the moʻo lives.

Drew Kahu'āina Broderick
Billboard I. (The sovereignty of the land is perpetuated in righteousness) (installation view), 2017
Image courtesy of AJ Feducia and Honolulu Biennial Foundation

Our Sea of Islands

Epeli **Hau'ofa**

This essay raises some issues of great importance to our region, and offers a view of Oceania that is new and optimistic. What I say here is likely to disturb a number of men and women who have dedicated their lives to Oceania and for whom I hold the greatest respect and affection, and always will.

In our region, two levels of operation are pertinent to the purposes of this paper. The first is that of national governments and regional and international diplomacy, in which the present and future of Pacific island states and territories are planned and decided on. Discussions here are the preserve of politicians, bureaucrats, statutory body officials, diplomats and the military, and representatives of the financial and business communities, often in conjunction with donor and international lending organizations, and advised by academic and consultancy experts. Much that passes at this level concerns aid, concessions, trade, investment, defense and security, matters that have taken the Pacific further and further into dependency on powerful nations.

The other level is that of ordinary people, peasants and proletarians, who, because of the poor flow of benefits from the top, skepticism about stated policies and the like, tend to plan and make decisions about their lives independently, sometimes with surprising and dramatic results that go unnoticed or ignored at the top. Moreover, academic and consultancy experts tend to overlook or misinterpret grassroots activities because they do not fit with prevailing views about the nature of society and its development.

Views of the Pacific from the level of macroeconomics and macropolitics often differ markedly from those from the level of ordinary people. The vision of Oceania presented in this essay is based on my observations of behavior at the grass roots. Having clarified my vantage point, I make a statement of the obvious that views held by those in dominant positions about their subordinates could have significant consequences for people's self-image and for the ways they cope with their situations. Such views, which are often derogatory and belittling, are integral to most relationships of dominance and subordination, wherein superiors behave in ways or say things that are accepted by their inferiors, who in turn behave in ways that serve to perpetuate the relationships.

In Oceania, derogatory and belittling views of indigenous cultures are traceable to the early years of interactions with Europeans. The wholesale condemnation by Christian missionaries of Oceanic cultures as savage, lascivious, and barbaric has had a lasting and negative effect on people's views of their histories and traditions. In a number of Pacific societies people still divide their history into two parts: the era of darkness associated with savagery and barbarism; and the era of light and civilization ushered in by Christianity.

In Papua New Guinea, European males were addressed and referred to as "masters" and workers as "boys." Even indigenous policemen were called "police boys." This use of language helped to reinforce the colonially established social stratification along ethnic divisions. A direct result of colonial practices and denigration of Melanesian peoples and cultures as even more primitive and barbaric than those of Polynesia can be seen in the attempts during the immediate postcolonial years by articulate Melanesians to rehabilitate their cultural identity by cleansing it of its colonial taint and denigration. Leaders like Walter Lini of Vanuatu and Bernard Narokobi of Papua New Guinea have spent much of their energy extolling the virtues of Melanesian values as equal to if not better than those of their erstwhile colonizers.

Europeans did not invent belittlement. In many societies it was part and parcel of indigenous cultures. In the aristocratic societies of Polynesia parallel relationships of dominance and subordination with their paraphernalia of appropriate attitudes and behavior were the order of the day. In Tonga, the term for commoners is *me'a vale* 'the ignorant ones', which is a survival from an era when the aristocracy controlled all important knowledge in the society. Keeping the ordinary folk in the dark and calling them ignorant made it easier to control and subordinate them.

I would like, however, to focus on a currently prevailing notion about Islanders and their physical surroundings that, if not countered with more constructive views, could inflict lasting damage on people's images of themselves, and on their ability to act with relative autonomy in their endeavors to survive reasonably well within the international system in which they have found themselves. It is a belittling view that has been unwittingly propagated, mostly by social scientists who have sincere concern for the welfare of Pacific peoples.

According to this view, the small island states and territories of the Pacific, that is, all of Polynesia and Micronesia, are much too small, too poorly endowed with resources, and too isolated from the centers of economic growth for their inhabitants ever to be able to rise above their present condition of dependence on the largesse of wealthy nations.

Initially, I agreed wholeheartedly with this perspective, and I participated actively in its propagation. It seemed to be based on irrefutable evidence, on the reality of our existence. Events of the 1970S and 1980s confirmed the correctness of this view. The hoped for era of autonomy following political independence did not materialize. Our national leaders were in the vanguard of a rush to secure financial aid from every quarter; our economies were stagnating or declining; our environments were detriorating or were threatened and we could do little about it; our own people were evacuating themselves to greener pastures elsewhere. Whatever remained of our resources, including our exclusive

economic zones, was being hawked for the highest bid. Some of our islands had become, in the words of one social scientist, "MIRAB societies" pitiful microstates condemned forever to depend on migration, remittances, aid, and bureaucracy, and not on any real economic productivity. Even the better resource endowed Melanesian countries were mired in dependency, indebtedness, and seemingly endless social fragmentation and political instability. What hope was there for us?

This bleak view of our existence was so relentlessly pushed that I began to be concerned about its implications. I tried to find a way out but could not. Then two years ago I began noticing the reactions of my students when I described and explained our situation of dependence. Their faces crumbled visibly, they asked for solutions, I could offer none. I was so bound to the notion of smallness that even if we improved our approaches to production, for example, the absolute size of our islands would still impose such severe limitations that we would be defeated in the end.

But the faces of my students continued to haunt me mercilessly. I began asking questions of myself. What kind of teaching is it to stand in front of young people from your own region, people you claim as your own, who have come to university with high hopes for the future, and you tell them that our countries are hopeless? Is this not what neocolonialism is all about? To make people believe that they have no choice but to depend?

Soon the realization dawned on me. In propagating a view of hopelessness, I was actively participating in our own belittlement. I decided to do something about it, but I thought that since any new perspective must confront some of the sharpest and most respected minds in the region, it must be well researched and thought out if it was to be taken seriously. It was a daunting task, and I hesitated.
Then came invitations for me to speak at Kona and Hilo on the Big Island of Hawai'i at the end of March 1993. The lecture at Kona, to a meeting of the Association of Social Anthropologists in Oceania, was written before I left Suva. The speech at the University of Hawai'i at Hilo was forming in my mind and was to be written when I got to Hawai'i. I had decided to tryout my new perspective, although it had not been properly researched. I could hold back no longer. The drive from Kona to Hilo was my "road to Damascus." I saw such scenes of grandeur as I had not seen before: the eerie blackness of regions covered by recent volcanic eruptions; the remote majesty of Maunaloa, long and smooth, the world's largest volcano; the awesome craters of KIlauea threatening to erupt at any moment; and the lava flow on the coast not far away. Under the aegis of Pele, and before my very eyes, the Big Island was growing, rising from the depths of a mighty sea. The world of Oceania is not small; it is huge and growing bigger every day.

The idea that the countries of Polynesia! and Micronesia are too small, too poor, and too isolated to develop any meaningful degree of autonomy is an economistic and geographic deterministic view of a very narrow kind that overlooks culture history and the contemporary process of what may be called world enlargement that is carried out by tens of thousands of ordinary Pacific Islanders right across the ocean from east to west and north to south, under the very noses of academic and consultancy experts, regional and international development agencies, bureaucratic planners and their advisers, and customs and immigration officials making nonsense of all national and economic boundaries, borders that have been defined only recently, crisscrossing an ocean that had been boundless for ages before Captain Cook's apotheosis.

If this very narrow, deterministic perspective is not questioned and checked, it could contribute importantly to an eventual consignment of groups of human beings to a perpetual state of wardship wherein they and their surrounding lands and seas would be at the mercy of the manipulators of the global economy and "world orders" of one kind or another. Belittlement in whatever guise, if internalized for long, and transmitted across generations, may lead to moral paralysis, to apathy, and to the kind of fatalism that we can see among our fellow human beings who have been herded and confined to reservations or internment camps. People in some of our islands are in danger of being confined to mental reservations, if not already to physical ones. I am thinking here of people in the Marshall Islands, who have been victims of atomic and missile tests by the United States.

Do people in most of Oceania live in tiny confined spaces? The answer is yes if one believes what certain social scientists are saying. But the idea of smallness is relative; it depends on what is included and excluded in any calculation of size. When those who hail from continents, or islands adjacent to continents and the vast majority of human beings live in these regions when they see a Polynesian or Micronesian island they naturally pronounce it small or tiny. Their calculation is based entirely on the extent of the land surfaces they see.

But if we look at the myths, legends, and oral traditions, and the cosmologies of the peoples of Oceania, it becomes evident that they did not conceive of their world in such microscopic proportions. Their universe comprised not only land surfaces, but the surrounding ocean as far as they could traverse and exploit it, the underworld with its fire-controlling and earth-shaking denizens, and the heavens above with their hierarchies of powerful gods and named stars and constellations that people could count on to guide their ways across the seas. Their world was anything but tiny. They thought big and recounted their deeds in epic proportions. One legendary Oceanic athlete was so powerful that during a competition he threw his javelin with such force that it pierced the horizon and disappeared until night when it was seen streaking across the sky like a meteor. Every now and then it reappears to remind people of the mighty deed. And as far as I'm concerned it is still out there, near Jupiter or somewhere. That was the first rocket ever sent into space. Islanders today still relish exaggerating things out of all proportion. Smallness is a state of mind.

There is a world of difference between viewing the Pacific as "islands in a far sea" and as "a sea of islands."[2] The first emphasizes dry surfaces in a vast ocean far from the centers of power. Focusing in this way stresses the smallness and remoteness of the islands. The second is a more holistic perspective in which things are seen in the totality of their relationships. I return to this point later. Continental men, namely Europeans, on entering the Pacific after crossing huge expanses of ocean, introduced the view of "islands in a far sea." From this

perspective the islands are tiny, isolated dots in a vast ocean. Later on, continental men Europeans and Americans drew imaginary lines across the sea, making the colonial boundaries that confined ocean peoples to tiny spaces for the first time. These boundaries today define the island states and territories of the Pacific. I have just used the term *ocean peoples* because our ancestors, who had lived in the Pacific for over two thousand years, viewed their world as "a sea of islands" rather than as "islands in the sea." This may be seen in a common categorization of people, as exemplified in Tonga by the inhabitants of the main, capital, island, who used to refer to their compatriots from the rest of the archipelago not so much as "people from outer islands" as social scientists would say, but as *kakai mei tahi* or just *tahi* 'people from the sea'. This characterization reveals the underlying assumption that the sea is home to such people.

The difference between the two perspectives is reflected in the two terms used for our region: *Pacific Islands* and *Oceania*. The first term, *Pacific Islands*, is the prevailing one used everywhere; it denotes small areas of land sitting atop submerged reefs or seamounts. Hardly any anglophone economist, consultancy expert, government planner, or development banker in the region, uses the term *Oceania*, perhaps because it sounds grand and somewhat romantic, and may denote something so vast that it would compel them to a drastic review of their perspectives and policies. The French and other Europeans use the term *Oceania* to an extent that English speakers, apart from the much maligned anthropologists and a few other sea-struck scholars, have not. It may not be coincidental that Australia, New Zealand, and the United States, anglophone all, have far greater interests in the Pacific and how it is perceived than have the distant European nations.

Oceania denotes a sea of islands with their inhabitants. The world of our ancestors was a large sea full of places to explore, to make their homes in, to breed generations of seafarers like themselves. People raised in this environment were at home with the sea. They played in it as soon as they could walk steadily, they worked in it, they fought on it. They developed great skills for navigating their waters, and the spirit to traverse even the few large gaps that separated their island groups.

Theirs was a large world in which peoples and cultures moved and mingled, unhindered by boundaries of the kind erected much later by imperial powers. From one island to another they sailed to trade and to marry, thereby expanding social networks for greater flows of wealth. They traveled to visit relatives in a wide variety of natural and cultural surroundings, to quench their thirst for adventure, and even to fight and dominate.

Fiji, Samoa, Tonga, Niue, Rotuma, Tokelau, Tuvalu, Futuna, and Uvea formed a large exchange community in which wealth and people with their skills and arts circulated endlessly. From this community people ventured to the north and west, into Kiribati, the Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, and New Caledonia, which formed an outer arc of less intensive exchange. Evidence of this voyaging is provided by existing settlements within Melanesia of descendants of these seafarers. [Only blind landlubbers would say that settlements like these, as well as those in New Zealand and Hawai'i, were made through accidental voyages by people who got blown off course presumably while they were out fishing with their wives, children, pigs, dogs, and food plant seedlings during a hurricane. The Cook Islands and French Polynesia formed a community similar to that of their cousins to the west; hardy spirits from this community ventured southward and founded settlements in Aotearoa, while others went in the opposite direction to discover and inhabit the islands of Hawai'i. Also north of the equator is the community that was centered on Yap.

Melanesia is supposedly the most fragmented world of all: tiny communities isolated by terrain and at least one thousand languages. The truth is that large regions of Melanesia were integrated by trading and cultural exchange systems that were even more complex than those of Polynesia and Micronesia. Lingua francas and the fact that most Melanesians were and are multilingual (which is more than one can say about most Pacific rim countries), make utter nonsense of the notion that they were and still are babblers of Babel. It was in the interest of imperialism and is in the interest of neocolonialism, to promote this blatant misconception of Melanesia. [3]

Evidence of the conglomerations of islands with their economies and cultures is readily available in the oral traditions of the islands, and in blood ties that are retained today. The highest chiefs of Fiji, Samoa, and Tonga, for example, still maintain kin connections that were forged centuries before Europeans entered the Pacific, to the days when boundaries were not imaginary lines in the ocean, but rather points of entry that were constantly negotiated and even contested. The sea was open to anyone who could navigate a way through.

This was the kind of world that bred men and women with skills and courage that took them into the unknown, to discover and populate all the habitable islands east of the 130th meridian. The great fame that they have earned posthumously may have been romanticized, but it is solidly based on real feats that could have been performed only by those born and raised with an open sea as their home.

Nineteenth century imperialism erected boundaries that led to the contraction of Oceania, transforming a once boundless world into the Pacific Island states and territories that we know today. People were confined to their tiny spaces, isolated from each other. No longer could they travel freely to do what they had done for centuries. They were cut off from their relatives abroad, from their far flung sources of wealth and cultural enrichment. This is the historical basis of the view that our countries are small, poor, and isolated. It is true only insofar as people are still fenced in and quarantined.

This assumption is no longer tenable as far as the countries of central and western Polynesia are concerned, and may be untenable also of Micronesia. The rapid expansion of the world economy in the years since World War II may have intensified third world dependency, as has been noted from certain vantage points at high-level academia, but it also had a liberating effect on the lives of ordinary people in Oceania, as it did in the Caribbean islands. The new economic reality made nonsense of artificial boundaries, enabling the people to shake off their confinement. They have since moved, by the tens of thousands, doing what their ancestors did in earlier times: enlarging their world as they go, on a scale not possible before. Everywhere they go, to Australia, New Zealand, Hawai'i, the mainland United

States, Canada, Europe, and elsewhere, they strike roots in new resource areas, securing employment and overseas family property, expanding kinship networks through which they circulate themselves, their relatives, their material goods, and their stories all across their ocean, and the ocean is theirs because it has always been their home. Social scientists may write of Oceania as a Spanish Lake, a British Lake, an American Lake, and even a Japanese Lake. But we all know that only those who make the ocean their home and love it, can really claim it as their own. Conquerors come, conquerors go, the ocean remains, mother only to her children. This mother has a big heart though; she adopts any one who loves her.

The resources of Samoans, Cook Islanders, Niueans, Tokelauans, Tuvaluans, IKiribati, Fijians, Indo-Fijians, and Tongans, are no longer confined to their national boundaries. They are located wherever these people are living, permanently or otherwise, as they were before the age of western imperialism. One can see this any day at seaports and airports throughout the central Pacific, where consignments of goods from homes abroad are unloaded as those of the homelands are loaded. Construction materials, agricultural machinery, motor vehicles, other heavy goods, and a myriad other things are sent from relatives abroad, while handcrafts, tropical fruits and root crops, dried marine creatures, kava, and other delectables are dispatched from the homelands. Although this flow of goods is generally not included in official statistics, much of the welfare of ordinary people of Oceania depends on an informal movement along ancient routes drawn in bloodlines invisible to the enforcers of the laws of confinement and regulated mobility.

The world of Oceania is neither tiny nor deficient in resources. It was so only as a condition of the colonial confinement that lasted less than a century in a history of millennia. Human nature demands space for free movement, and the larger the space the better it is for people. Islanders have broken out of their confinement, are moving around and away from their homelands, not so much because their countries are poor, but because they were unnaturally confined and severed from many of their traditional sources of wealth, and because it is in their blood to be mobile. They are once again enlarging their world, establishing new resource bases and expanded networks for circulation. Alliances are already being forged by an increasing number of Islanders with the *tangata whenua* of Aotearoa and will inevitably be forged with the native Hawaiians. It is not inconceivable that if Polynesians ever get together, their two largest homelands will be reclaimed in one form or another. They have already made their presence felt in these homelands, and have stamped indelible imprints on the cultural landscapes.

We cannot see the processes outlined here clearly if we confine our attention to things within national boundaries and to events at the upper levels of political economies and regional and international diplomacy. Only when we focus on what ordinary people are actually doing, rather than on what they should be doing, can we see the broader picture of reality.

The world of Oceania may no longer include the heavens and the underworld, but it certainly encompasses the great cities of Australia, New Zealand, the United States, and Canada. It is within this expanded world that the extent of the people's resources must be measured.

In general, the living standards of Oceania are higher than those of most third world societies. To attribute this merely to aid and remittances misconstrued deliberately or otherwise as a form of dependence on rich countries' economies is an unfortunate misreading of contemporary reality. Ordinary Pacific people depend for their daily existence much, much more on themselves and their kin, wherever they may be, than on anyone's largesse, which they believe is largely pocketed by the elite classes. The funds and goods that homes abroad people send their homeland relatives belong to no one but themselves. They earn every cent through hard physical toil in the new locations that need and pay for their labor. They also participate in the manufacture of many of the goods they send home; they keep the streets and buildings of Auckland clean, and its transportation system running smoothly; they keep the suburbs of the western United States (including Hawai'i) trimmed, neat, green, and beautiful; and they have contributed much, much more than has been acknowledged.

On the other hand Islanders in their homelands are not the parasites on their relatives abroad that misinterpreters of "remittances" would have us believe. Economists do not take account of the social centrality of the ancient practice of reciprocity, the core of all oceanic cultures. They over look the fact that for everything homeland relatives receive, they reciprocate with goods they themselves produce, by maintaining ancestral roots and lands for everyone, homes with warmed hearths for travelers to return to permanently or to strengthen their bonds, their souls, and their identities before they move on again. This is not dependence but interdependence, which is purportedly the essence of the global system. To say that it is something else and less is not only erroneous, but denies people their dignity.

What I have stated so far should already have provided sufficient response to the assertion that the islands are isolated. They are clearly not. Through developments in high technology, communications and transportation systems are a vast improvement on what they were twenty years ago. These may be very costly by any standard, but they are available and used. Telecommunications companies are making fortunes out of lengthy conversations between breathless relatives thousands of miles apart.

But the islands are not connected only with regions of the Pacific rim. Within Oceania itself people are once again circulating in increasing numbers and frequency. Regional organizations intergovernmental, educational, religious, sporting, and cultural are responsible for much of this mobility. The University of the South Pacific, with its highly mobile staff and student bodies comprising men, women, and youth from the twelve island countries that own it and from outside the Pacific, is an excellent example. Increasingly the older movers and shakers of the islands are being replaced by younger ones; and when they meet each other in Suva, Honiara, Apia, Vila, or any other capital city of the Pacific, they meet as friends, as people who have gone through the same place of learning, who have worked and played and prayed together.

The importance of our ocean for the stability of the global environment, for meeting a significant proportion of the world's protein requirements, for the production of certain marine resources in

waters that are relatively clear of pollution, for the global reserves of mineral resources, among others, has been increasingly recognized, and puts paid to the notion that Oceania is the hole in the doughnut. Together with our exclusive economic zones, the areas of the earth's surface that most of our countries occupy can no longer be called small. In this regard, Kiribati, the Federated States of Micronesia, and French Polynesia, for example, are among the largest countries in the world. The emergence of organizations such as SPACHEE (South Pacific Action Committee for Human Environment and Ecology), SPREP (South Pacific Regional Environment Programme), the Forum Fisheries Agency, and SOPAC (South Pacific Applied Geosciences Commission); of movements for a nuclear free Pacific, the prevention of toxic waste disposal, and the ban on the wall-of-death fishing methods, with linkages to similar organizations and movements elsewhere; and the establishment at the University of the South Pacific of the Marine Science and Ocean Resources Management programs, with linkages to fisheries and ocean resources agencies throughout the Pacific and beyond; all indicate that we could playa pivotal role in the protection and sustainable development of our ocean. There are no people on earth more suited to be guardians of the world's largest ocean than those for whom it has been home for generations. Although this is a different issue from the ones I have focused on for most of this paper, it is relevant to the concern for a far better future for us than has been prescribed and predicted. Our role in the protection and development of our ocean is no mean task; it is no less than a major contribution to the well-being of humanity. Because it could give us a sense of doing something very worthwhile and noble, we should seize the moment with dispatch.

The perpetrators of the smallness view of Oceania have pointed out quite correctly the need for each island state or territory to enter into appropriate forms of specialized production for the world market, to improve their management and marketing techniques, and so forth. But they have so focused on bounded national economies at the macrolevel that they have overlooked or understated the significance of the other processes I have outlined here, and have thereby swept aside the whole universe of Oceanic mores and just about all our potentials for autonomy. The explanation seems clear: one way or another, they or nearly all of them are involved directly or indirectly in the fields of aided development and Pacific rim geopolitics, for whose purposes it is necessary to portray our huge world in tiny, needy bits. To acknowledge the larger reality would be to undermine the prevailing view and to frustrate certain agendas and goals of powerful interests. These perpetrators are therefore participants, as I was, in the belittlement of Oceania, and in the perpetuation of the neocolonial relationships of dependency that have been and are being played out in the rarefied circles of national politicians, bureaucrats, diplomats, and assorted experts and academics, while far beneath them exists that other order, of ordinary people, who are busily and independently redefining their world in accordance with their perceptions of their own interests and of where the future lies for their children and their children's children. Those who maintain that the people of Oceania live from day to day, not really caring for the long-term benefits, are unaware of the elementary truth known by most native Islanders: that they plan for generations, for the continuity and improvement of their families and kin groups.

As I watched the Big Island of Hawai'i expanding into and rising from the depths, I saw in it the future for Oceania, our sea of islands. That future lies in the hands of our own people, not of those who would prescribe for us, get us forever dependent and indebted because they can see no way out.

At the Honolulu Airport, while waiting for my flight back to Fiji, I met an old friend, a Tongan who is twice my size and lives in Berkeley, California. He is not an educated man. He works on people's yards, trimming hedges and trees, and laying driveways and footpaths. But every three months or so he flies to Fiji, buys eight-to-ten-thousand dollars worth of kava, takes it on the plane flying him back to California, and sells it from his home. He has never heard of dependency, and if he were told of it, it would hold no real meaning for him. He told me in Honolulu that he was bringing a cooler full of T-shirts, some for the students at the university with whom he often stays when he comes to Suva, and the rest for his relatives in Tonga, where he goes for a week or so while his kava is gathered, pounded, and bagged in Fiji. He later fills the cooler with seafoods to take back home to California, where he has two sons he wants to put through college. On one of his trips he helped me renovate a house that I had just bought. We like him because he is a good storyteller and is generous with his money and time, but mostly because he is one of us. There are thousands like him, who are flying back and forth across national boundaries, the international dateline, and the equator, far above and completely undaunted by the deadly serious discourses below on the nature of the Pacific Century, the Asia-Pacific coprosperity sphere, and the dispositions of the post-cold war Pacific rim, cultivating their ever growing universe in their own ways, which is as it should be, for therein lies their independence. No one else would give it to them or to us.

Oceania is vast, Oceania is expanding, Oceania is hospitable and generous, Oceania is humanity rising from the depths of brine and regions of fire deeper still, Oceania is us. We are the sea, we are the ocean, we must wake up to this ancient truth and together use it to overturn all hegemonic views that aim ultimately to confine us again, physically and psychologically, in the tiny spaces that we have resisted accepting as our sole appointed places, and from which we have recently liberated ourselves. We must not allow anyone to belittle us again, and take away our freedom.

I would like to thank Marshall Sahlins for convincing me in the end that not all is lost, and that the world of Oceania is quite bright despite appearances. This paper is based on lectures delivered at the University of Hawai'i at Hilo, and the East-West Center, Honolulu, March/April, 1993. Vijay Naidu and Eric Waddell read a draft of this paper and made very helpful comments. I am profoundly grateful to them for their support.

1 For geographic and cultural reasons I include Fiji in Polynesia. Fiji however, is much bigger and better endowed with natural resources than all tropical Polynesian entities.

2 I owe much to Eric Waddell for these terms (pers comm).

3 I use the terms Melanesia, Polynesia, and Micronesia because they are already part of the cultural consciousness of the peoples of Oceania. Before the nineteenth century there was only a vast sea in which people mingled in ways that, despite the European-imposed threefold division, the boundaries today are still blurred. This important issue is, however, beyond the purview of this paper.

Mariquita "Micki" Davis
Magellan Doesn't Live Here (still), 2012–2017
Image courtesy of the artist

Honolulu Biennial: A Mana Moana Perspective

Karlo **Mila**

We sweat and cry salt water, so we know that the ocean is really in our blood.
—Teresia Teaiwa

Pacific art, Pacific peoples, the Pacific region itself—what do we mean when we say "the Pacific"? Grand gestures, even small ones, trying to answer questions about who we are and who we aren't, are always contested. As are grand biennales. Fraught. Fought over. And so they should be. The stakes are high.

Claims to name and know and capture who and what we are, can often just be another stake thrown from afar into the watery ground of the waving depths of the Pacific. Aiming but sinking. There is a shallow grave filled with these floating attempts.

What do we mean when we say "the Pacific"?

Alison Jones and Kuni Jenkins write critically that "the modernist project of mapping the world, rendering it visible and understood, that is, accessible, is an expression of a Western Enlightenment desire for coherence, authorization, and control."

And yet, here's the rub, as Epeli Hau'ofa pointed out: "All social realities are human creations … if we fail to construct our own realities other people will do it for us."

What do we mean when we say "the Pacific"?

I have encountered many such modernist mapping projects. Maps of words, numbers, graphs, diagrams, collections of objects and images that attempt to capture, contain, name and know and represent the Pacific.

The daughter of a trickster, this happily makes me think of the ever-undulating waters of the Pacific and the way that seas rise, tides erode, and water flows ceaselessly, forever changing, upsetting, and disrupting the supposedly stable boundaries imagined as the lines that define us. Actually, these shapes and lines, represented to us as facts, are full of flaws and are in fact, impossibly imaginary.

I suggest that, when others try and tell us who we are, with the force and fluidity of the largest ocean in the world we resist. Our art is a part of this. And it is in our art that we find the fractals, patterns, and portals beyond the dominion of a two-dimensional rendering.

And it is in our history and genealogical past that we find ancestral maps of the multiverse, distinctive layers of heavens, a whole other way of mapping, knowing and naming the world(s). Our art is part of this legacy of alter-native renderings of the worlds we find around us.

Steven Edmund Winduo suggests that the colonial project of cartography involves a double movement of erasure followed by over-inscription. This necessarily erases what was there before (framing it as empty and undiscovered) and then over-inscribes this with new markings, new text, new discourse, new geopolitical and cultural stories.

I would say that our art must contend with this. The erasure. The burning. The beating and breaking and even ritualised hanging of our sculptures of goddesses—still found in museums with the nooses around their necks. The wrecking. The looting. The stealing. The digging up of the dead in pursuit of the loot. The violent attacks that rendered our art into blasphemy—as one museum card read, "belonging to the household god of Emperor of Tonga when he was a devil worshipper."

The devastating, annihilating attacks. The loss. I sat with a young Cook Islands and Niuean artist the other day. He said to me sadly, "They cut the penises off our Tagaloas. What do we even do with that?" Our art is also about responding to that.

For many of us, the languages as well as the symbols, the glyph carved into beaches, the secrets held in the patterns on our barkcloth, the stories woven into the posts of our houses, the names of our great scuptured beauties are lost to us.

Techniques and tools of creating and recreating are lost to us. Some of it we are re-membering. Some of it we have never abandoned. Some of it we will never recover.

All of this, what is remembered and what is forgotten, what was mutilated and what was elevated, what was reliquished and what was taken, is part of our art.

What do we mean when we say "the Pacific"?

As Albert Wendt once famously joked, there is no such thing as a Pacific Islander until one arrives at Auckland airport. He suggested that prior to arriving in Aotearoa, such a label made little sense; there were only Samoans, Hawaiians, Tongans, and so on.

Yet back in 1970, the term "The Pacific Way" was invoked in an international context by Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara to denote a unity of peoples and perspective. The "Pacific Way" was theorized by Ron Crocombe later, in 1976, as quoted by Tanya Wendt Samu: "organic—a 'living, growing field of meaning'—open to change, modification and amendment. . . . [Crcombe] described the concept as fluid—as having 'soul—with room to manoeuvre.'"

Albert Wendt responded: "There are many Pacific Ways … What we want to encourage is the variety of voices, ways of seeing the Pacific. I don't encourage one Pacific Way, because there are hundreds of them—there were hundreds of ways—even pre-European."

Our art is all of this argument. Our art is some of that soul, so often creating more room to maneuver. Our art is the one way of unity. Our art is the hundred other.

What do we mean when we say "the Pacific"?

The German poet Rainer Maria Rilke famously once said that we must "try to love the questions themselves." Rilke advocated in the same breath that we must always hold on to the "difficult." The Tuvalu academic Dr. Margaret Southwick passionately recommends

refusing to resolve the complexity, and focusing instead on the spaces that open when we attend to complexity without foreclosing on what it means. And it has been my experience, as Hau'ofa suggests, other people will try and to do this for us. Mistaking open space as an invitation for noise.

And as for questions of "What do we mean when we say 'the Pacific'?" When we are referring to places of birth—not just of ancestors and people but of cultures we are intimately and genealogically bound to, and come from—then we deeply understand that the question of what we mean when we say "Pacific" must always remain open for as long as we are alive. And art is just a part of our beautiful life-in-offering answers.

For "What do we mean when we say the Pacific?" is a much more fundamental question, "Where do we come from?" This is bound to the even more fundamental and irretrievably intertwined question, "Who are we?" This, then, is a cyclic series of questions and answers passed among us over generations, each contributing in their way to the ceaseless seeking of meaning—our *tofa sa'ili*—and the endless intergenerational politics of cultural reproduction.

And what is our art, if not part of the movement of us creatively and collectively self-determining what that means to us. Who we are?

In 2017, more than ever these questions and answers take on a multidimensional, polyglot quality of heteroglossia as they are performed for multiple audiences. Not just us, not just you. We move across the local, cross-cultural, national, transnational, and global relational spaces traversed via migration, diaspora, vacation, residencies, touring, international performance, exhibition, and relocation.

There are things that change. And there are things that travel and yet remain the same. And there is also Marshall Sahlins' sublime insight that *"the strongest continuity may consist in the logic of the cultural change"* (emphasis in original). There are the ways that we change, paradoxically, in order to be more like ourselves.

What do we mean when we say "the Pacific"?

If we return to our own languages, beyond Magellan's legacy. And if you'll permit me a focus on my own area of connection to the Pacific. *Moana*, meaning "ocean," is a word considered Polynesian in origin that can be found in thirty-five contemporary Pacific languages, including those of the countries that I'm from and that of the one I live in.

Mana is an Oceanic word that can be found in twenty-six Pasifika languages. It refers to power, energy, abundance, authority, miracles—the ability to manifest the energy, flow, and fortune of the intangible with grace and efficacy so that it is recognized and impactful in the tangible world.

Mana Moana, then, is about the power, energy, vitality from the *Moana* and indigenous to the South Pacific region and connected to that unique cultural legacy of knowing and being. It is about being influenced by the rich worldviews that have evolved among the peoples living on the atolls, islands, archipelagos across the Pacific Ocean. As well as linguistic and cultural diversity, there are also clusters of commonality; that which travels and yet stays the same. The cluster of people I descend from is defined by the adaptations and innovations over centuries that makes us different from each other, but there is that which endures and remains among us all.

Even if these words are not found in your Pacific language, I'd suggest that perhaps all of our art is intrinsically *Mana Moana* on some level—in the feel and function of the word, not the cultural specificity of the arrangement of the sounds and letters.

Art is creative rather than passive; it is all about agency, intentionality, impacting, effecting, creating, manifesting, making, showing, telling—the whole something out of nothing magic. It has the movement of *atu or aku* (an Oceanic word in thirty-two of our contemporary languages)—that which comes from us out into the world (I imagine with centrifugal force), into the spaces around us.

To create art requires *mana* and energy flow, and for it to be recognized as art, it also requires mana, recognition, authority. The Honolulu Biennial is part of this reciprocal exchange within the dual dynamic of the movement and mantle of mana.

What do we mean when we say "the Pacific"?

The most valuable conversation, and the most rare, is the one we have among ourselves. By engaging with the art gathered here, we are able to have these conversations with objects and artwork that we do not perceive to be inanimate.

The other conversations, with others, can be many things, but it is only the conversations among ourselves that can be collectively self-determining. And what is our art, if not part of the movement of us creatively and collectively self-determining with mana, with beauty, with passion, and with purpose. And art is definitely a part of the movement of *Mana Moana*.

Recentering “The Pacific”: Learning Oceanian Ways of Seeing

Greg **Dvorak**

What do we mean when we use the term the Pacific? Are we referring to that vast ocean that Ferdinand Magellan haphazardly crossed in 1521, naming it “Mar Pacifico” after the peaceful seas that greeted him on his journey, despite his inability to find any “civilization” until, starving, he reached Guåhan (Guam) on the other side? Do we mean the “US Pacific Command,” the largest projection of American military power on earth, whose epicenter sits in Honolulu? Do we mean the horrific war that claimed the lives of millions in the middle of the twentieth century? Do we only mean the external fringe of this great ocean, commonly known as the “Pacific Rim,” jargon that emerged from Cold War ideologies and Japan-American business alliances? Are we referring to drinking mai-tais on tropical beaches? Or does the *Pacific* refer to something else?

Visionary Pacific Islander scholar Epeli Hauʻofa joked cynically that all too often the real Pacific was “the hole in the doughnut”—that most of the world’s conceptualizations of Oceania, the biggest region on earth, were based on what surrounded the ocean, rather than what was inside. Many continent-dwellers look upon this region as an empty, boundless blue void—“the middle of nowhere.” The perspectives of the people who have lived on those islands and navigated those seas for thousands of years are quite the opposite. Grounded solidly in the now-ness and here-ness of their island homes and looking out upon the spacious horizons of the sea, their world is enormous and filled with meaning. Their cosmologies reach back into ancestral memories of multiple crossings, brave survival and resilience, genealogical connections across huge distances. Yet, Indigenous people of the Pacific Islands are deeply connected to their pasts and their presents—aware of how their heritage informs contemporary reality, not stuck in a timeless yesterday. Their memories are also nuanced by the painful but varied traumas of colonization, militarization, and globalization. And they resist as they decolonize, fighting back resourcefully through art, literature, poetry, film, academia, and other forms of activism. Marshallese poet and Honolulu Biennial artist Kathy Jetñil-Kijiner poignantly reminds us, too, of how islanders are affected by climate change caused by industrialized countries, emphasizing that “we deserve to do more than just survive, we deserve to thrive.”

There are many conceptualizations of the Pacific, even within the Pacific itself. The three “nesias”—Micronesia, Polynesia, and Melanesia—are cultural-geographic areas that were determined entirely by outside explorers like Captain James Cook or Jules Dumont D’Urville. In fact, these boundaries are blurry and inconsistent. And the sheer multitude of islands—tens of thousands of islands and local communities within those islands—speaks to diversity as much as the idea that some larger islands, like Papua New Guinea, are home to people who rarely, if ever, see the sea. Island communities are also separated by the countries and languages that colonized them. Despite shared heritages of navigation and overlapping origin narratives, the enormity of the ocean and the legacy of colonialism sometimes results in a sense of myopia and alienation between different parts of Oceania, even for Indigenous communities. For example, Tahiti and the rest of French Polynesia neighbors the Cook Islands, and their local languages and cultures have a lot in common, but colonial influences led to new barriers: the former was colonized by France and speaks French, the latter by Britain—they speak English. Likewise, the people of Samoa watch rugby and cricket like their neighbors in Tonga and Fiji, while the people of Palau or the Marshall Islands watch American football and baseball (which they refer to as *yakyū*, since it was introduced to them during the thirty years of Japanese colonialism that preceded the war).

Hawaiʻi—an overthrown kingdom of people who continue to fight bravely for recognition and sovereignty despite being subsumed into the United States—is a proud northern Pacific homeland that serves as an intersection for so many different crossings. Honolulu is a gracious and well-loved place—a true Pacific city, its land precious to Native Hawaiians. It is also a city to which thousands of migrants from the Federated States of Micronesia, the Marshall Islands, and Palau have come in recent decades, as a part of the Compacts of Free Association that allow them to resettle in the United States in exchange for American military use of their lands and waters. Countless other communities of Pacific Islanders—Samoans, Tongans, Fijians, and many others, also live here. Asian immigrants and tourists—from countries such as Japan, Taiwan, China, Korea, and the Philippines—are joined by other visitors and migrants to Hawaiʻi from the continental US. These groups often struggle and clash. A tragic and painful reality in twenty-first-century Hawaiʻi is its anti-Micronesian sentiment.

I believe that the Honolulu Biennial has the power—through art—to mediate these differences and distances both locally and globally, by inviting artists and audiences from Hawaiʻi and around the region to engage with each other as equals and collaborators. Within Oceania, it promotes Honolulu as a site of transoceanic congregation and synergy that subverts and transgresses the arbitrary and impersonal boundaries of the three “nesias.” Though logistically challenging, in the future I hope that the Honolulu Biennial will be able to include even more artists from all parts of Oceania, forging a space where islander voices can be nurtured and their messages can be delivered to people everywhere. I am excited by this biennial’s

potential to reframe and remap Oceania as a place that *matters*, not as a paradise escape or strategic military zone, but as a convergence point for conversation, creativity, cooperation, and important problem-solving in our troubled world. Now more than ever, we need new hopeful visions to overcome the hate, fear, and ignorance that plague our planet. The Honolulu Biennial plays a significant role in welcoming artists from around Oceania and the countries that surround it to engage together in transoceanic solidarity. Hopefully, this will bring much-needed attention and empathy toward the political and cultural challenges that Hawai'i and Native Hawaiians face, while highlighting the unique struggles over identity and decolonization that others throughout Oceania face as well.

In his landmark essay, "The Ocean in Us," Epeli Hau'ofa posited the idea of an Oceanian as someone who loves the islands and the ocean and cares for this region—someone who believes in the vision of an interconnected, peaceful, dynamic, equal, fair, and just world interlinked by the nurturing and sustaining waters of the Pacific. He wrote: "All of us in Oceania today, whether indigenous or otherwise, can truly assert that the sea is our single common heritage." Hau'ofa endeavored to create a new kind of identity by advocating for people to join in a sense of responsibility and commitment to the idea of Oceania. This may seem utopian on the surface, but if we consider how Pacific Islander communities, including so many prominent Pacific Islander artists from this region, have strived for visibility and recognition—pushing back against being marginalized and ignored—it becomes clear that this is an invitation to respect each other's differences, to care for our earth, and to genuinely seek a new way of coexisting, fully, compassionately, and consciously. It is a call for us not only to take the Pacific seriously, but for all of us to become Oceanians at heart.

This inaugural Honolulu Biennial embraces that Oceanian spirit at its core, gathering artists from all around the Pacific Ocean at its center into one forum. It shines light on the neglected margins and re-centers our gaze away from the metropolis to the archipelago. It acknowledges the messy boundaries, the crossings, the navigations, the confluences and divergences, the multiplicities and contradictions, the turbulence and choppy waves of the oceans of culture and violence that churn around us and threaten to swallow us. It invites us to look beyond the hole to the whole, to validate and honor the places and times that we live in and look squarely at these realities. Most importantly, however, it invites us to stand in Honolulu, here and now, and engage with each other—to dive into the experience and see, listen, feel, understand. After all, the Pacific has plenty to teach us when we realize and appreciate how much it already connects us all.

The Honolulu Biennial: Pacific Convergences and Asian American Perspectives

Margo **Machida**

The title of the Honolulu Biennial, *Middle of Now | Here*, delivers a spirited rejoinder to perceptions of Hawai'i as an exotic, secluded island chain insulated from the world by the vast expanse of the Pacific Ocean. By declaring a mission to place Honolulu in a global context as a vibrant center for contemporary art, the Biennial posits instead that the surrounding sea provides a generative nexus to address the richly populated sphere of circulation and cross-cultural encounter that conjoins Hawai'i to Oceania, Asia, Australia, New Zealand, North America, and realms far beyond. In advancing wide-ranging trans-Pacific dialogue, this first-ever Honolulu Biennial follows on initiatives like the Asia Pacific Triennial in Brisbane, Australia. Promising to build on these precedents, the Honolulu Biennial presents contemporary work from widely dispersed Asian and Pacific Islander diasporas, while simultaneously providing a highly visible platform to feature artists of all heritages from Hawai'i.

As artists' projects trace overlapping routes across the world's oceans, they call forth an expansive vision of the sea as a boundless sphere for ongoing transit and interchange. Yet the biennial's location in this key American Pacific venue likewise serves to underscore the United States' close and long-lasting ties to the region, in light of the pivotal historic role played by Hawai'i in advancing the nation's emerging economic, political, and military interests, both regionally and ultimately on the world stage. Indispensable since the dawn of the eighteenth century as a way station for the China Trade and the whaling industry that together generated many early American fortunes, Hawai'i became a key hub for the US armed forces, a lucrative producer of sugar and pineapples, and a major destination for the global tourist industry. US expansion into the Pacific concurrently brought Asians to Hawai'i, including my forebears from Japan. By the mid-nineteenth century the Hawaiian Islands became a leading US point of entry and settlement for successive waves of migrants from China, Japan, Okinawa, Korea, and the Philippines. Recruited as agricultural laborers for the burgeoning plantation system, the local society was inexorably transformed as their descendants became the majority population.

By affording a robust platform to constitute visions of trans-Pacific connections, and the interrelated dynamics of regionalism and globalization, Hawai'i offers artists myriad opportunities to explore historic subjects and matters of increasing significance to the entire Asia Pacific region, including climate change and rising sea levels, land use, environmental sustainability, food security, health, Indigenous rights, militarization, and governance. Certainly, a spectrum of complicated, even combustible issues command attention, considering the United States' historic involvement in four major wars in the Asia Pacific during the twentieth century, and its 1898 annexation of the sovereign kingdom of Hawai'i. Not only do events related to the legacy of the US presence in the region resonate in present-day Hawai'i, but analogous conditions are to be found throughout the Pacific as artists grapple with the indelible geopolitical and economic impact of a Western presence, above all upon its Indigenous cultures and peoples. Such concerns include the long-term toxic effects on island ecosystems and Pacific peoples' health following atomic weapons testing conducted throughout Oceania by the US, France, and Britain during the Cold War.

The collective scope of works by the featured artists—who have either lived in or have ancestral origins that link them to the Pacific world—delineates topographies, constellations of human relations, societal positions, and subjectivities with a planetary span. Their vantage points are variously shaped by the centuries-long impact of goods, ideas, labor, and capital flowing through global maritime trading networks that complexly connect distant locales in the Americas to the Pacific, Asia, and Europe, and by colonialism, and by international tourism and its marketing through tropes of an idyllic tropical paradise. Following upon such sweeping topics, some artists focus on the methods and iconographies employed by Western art, photography, museum display, and visual and popular culture to depict, convey, and manage perceptions of the Pacific and its peoples.

The Honolulu Biennial also offers an array of works that recognize the significance of locality and place in illuminating the enduring impact of entwined histories and shifting alignments between the global and local. For instance, local sites like Pearl Harbor and the USS Arizona Memorial retain an iconic power in the American imagination, even as they serve as artists' touchstones to the resounding legacy of warfare in the Asia Pacific, and to the pervasive, ongoing US military presence.

With Asians presently comprising the majority population, the subject of Asian-Indigenous relations is an inevitable point of focus and contestation in Hawai'i, since Asians are viewed as also inhabiting the ancestral lands of an Indigenous Pacific people. This situation inspires a range of responses, artistic and otherwise, extending from trenchant critiques of Asian "settler colonialism," to expressions of close identification with Indigenous peoples and cultures that recognize the profound influence exerted by the native presence on local Asian sensibilities and perceptions of place. Whatever the stance, such art casts the distinctive character of Hawai'i into sharp relief as a significant zone of trans-Pacific settlement, contact, and convergence between various migrant and Indigenous peoples.

Hawai‘i’s built environment and material culture similarly act as a solid anchor for artists to register the islands’ Asian and Indigenous presence, and to gesture to the development of a local, hybrid vernacular architectural vocabulary. Here, work in the form of architectonic structures can be inspired as much by Asian immigrant “plantation-style” homes influenced by nineteenth-century New England designs, as by local building methods and natural materials found throughout the Pacific. Among these responses are artists’ efforts to foreground Indigenous knowledge and cultural practices as foundational to reconceiving humankind’s relationship to the natural world. Applied to oceanic cities like Honolulu, such approaches promote environmental sustainability by melding modern urban design with Indigenous forms and traditional principles of land use and resource management.

Hawai‘i’s beaches, the surrounding ocean, and maritime connections, as defining features of life throughout Oceania, provide another focus for artistic investigation. Beaches, as primary points of arrival and departure, are not only resonant with the histories of Polynesian transoceanic voyaging and migration, but also with the Western contact that forever changed Hawaiian society. These days, the beach is as much a prized location for expensive ocean-side properties, or a captivating vista for tourism, as it is a place for protest and occupation by Native Hawaiians decrying their displacement from these ancestral lands. Imbued with deep traditional cultural and spiritual significance, the beach remains a contested terrain, and an arena for intervention via artworks that manifest powerful claims of the enduring Indigenous presence.

As a specialist in contemporary Asian American art that addresses social issues, I regard platforms like the Honolulu Biennial as valued opportunities to extend the scope of analysis beyond the continental US, by placing work by artists of Asian and mixed heritage alongside their counterparts in Asia, the Pacific, and Asian diasporas around the globe. Recognizing the rapid growth and increasingly transnational character of the US-Asian diasporas, over the last decade my approach has broadened to explore trans-Pacific themes in contemporary art that connect Asian diasporas throughout the Asia Pacific, including work by artists in Hawai‘i of Asian, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, and mixed heritage. Accordingly this biennial is an exciting moment, as the exhibition serves to bring Asian American art into larger regional and global conversations. Although individual artists might not identify with, or may even reject being regarded as “Asian American” for personal, political, or historical reasons—including those Asians in Hawai‘i who conceive of their position in local terms—I nevertheless still consider this rubric useful. The term confers an expansive framing device that offers multiple points of entry to survey widely dispersed artists of Asian or of mixed-Asian ancestries entangled in an overarching US sociopolitical sphere that equally encompasses North America, Hawai‘i, and overseas territories and outposts scattered widely across the Pacific and Caribbean.

With Asian American artists moving toward models of circulation and exchange, the transnational approaches by which Asian American art and artistic practices can be investigated, analyzed, and positioned will continue to proliferate. Indeed, the acknowledgement of coextensive histories and multi-mediated standpoints is integral to articulating conjunctions and allegiances with other groups who share ties to maritime Asia, the Pacific, and the Americas. The continuum of socially engaged Asian American cultural production, viewed within such capacious inter-regional and international frameworks, substantially exceeds any narrowly defined categories of domestic US identity and race politics in which Asian American art was once commonly subsumed.

Positioning | Pacific Islands

Katherine **Higgins**

The Honolulu Biennial is a timely reminder of Honolulu's position as a metropolitan crossroads of the Pacific, a bridge between the Americas and the Asian continent. The strategic location, paired with the Honolulu Biennial Foundation's mission to foster greater intercultural exchange, cultural diplomacy, and understanding through art, is especially relevant in 2017, when the US finds itself in uncertain times. Art has the potential to serve as a uniting force and a medium through which we advance civic dialogue and focus on important issues, whether those are honoring the rights of native peoples, safeguarding the environment, or aiding refugees. The artworks invited and commissioned for *Middle of Now | Here* highlight enduring traditions of innovation and adaptation, while also challenging us to engage with social, political, and environmental issues in Hawai'i and the Pacific and to consider the position and potential of this strategic region in the future.

I write this essay a few weeks before visiting the inaugural Honolulu Biennial, and so it has become an exercise in critiquing my own positionality and the approach that I might take as I enter the exhibition venues. By recognizing that I am an outsider, I can appreciate but never know the intricacies of the cultural, epistemological, ecological, and aesthetic paradigms of our Kānaka Maoli hosts and the Indigenous artists who offer creative expressions that may be motivated by personal experiences, imagination, or ideologies, or political or environmental activism. From this starting point I hope to consider and appreciate the local, regional, and global contexts instead of expecting a message that is "Hawaiian," "Pacific," "Asian," or of the diaspora.

Therefore I launch this reflection with a familiar question: how can we approach and engage with art from the Pacific Islands in ways that debunk stereotypes and embrace the complexities of such a diverse region? Artists, curators, and critics are acutely aware of the limitations of the terminology we deploy and its inability to capture the intricacies and interpretations of art. Issues around preconception—insider/outsider, urban/rural, local/global—shape how we engage with *Middle of Now | Here* and, in particular, artworks responding to the Biennial's focus on environment, society, and culture in the Pacific region. These issues are relevant across time and space.

Artists endeavor to locate themselves, their communities, their pasts, presents, and futures in modern Oceania which has been settled, resettled, "discovered," mapped, bound, and depicted by others, but which is best understood through the artworks and voices of those rooted to or belonging to the islands. Design, whether visual or performing arts, includes culturally specific references that can function as guides for understanding one's location in space and time in relation to ever-transforming identities. The work by artists from the Pacific Islands is part of a continuum of innovations and enduring expressions informed by and responding to genealogical, epistemological, and ecological markers. Within a Pacific Islands context, these designs may be encoded representations of cultural identity and affiliation not bound by cultural milieu or disciplinary imperatives.

Ancient and colonial pasts are in front of us to learn from, and are part of the complex, shifting identities of those living in and connected to Oceania today. Looking to and learning from examples of Indigenous customary practices and technology can help us appreciate relationships across time and space. Navigation, building technology, and conservation practices developed over centuries and advanced throughout complex exchange networks across the region—New Guinea to Fiji, Tahiti to Hawai'i—long before the digital era allowed us to Skype between remote islands and metropolitan centers. Creative practices in the Pacific Islands today continue traditions of interconnectivity across networks that now extend across the globe. Art inspired by and created in the Pacific Islands exemplifies complexity and diversity across time and space, reminding us to remain cognizant of the limitations of categories and labels and the interpretive frameworks we deploy.

Calling these creative practices "Pacific art" may suffice in certain situations but inevitably begs more context, particularly in reference to work created during the past century when many Pacific nations experienced dramatic political, social, economic, environmental, and technological transformations, such as the transition from colonial territory to self-governance. During this time, new modes of artistic expression emerged, utilizing new media and techniques and embracing individual artistic freedom reflective of modern life in the Pacific Islands. The term *contemporary Pacific art* is insufficient here because of the inherent ahistorical nature of the term *contemporary* and the singularity affixed to such an immense geographic area that includes tens of thousands of islands with dynamic cultures, histories, and environments. Moreover, the word *pacific* denotes passivity and calm, attributes unbefitting of the diverse region with continental, resource-rich islands like New Guinea and coral atolls that require their inhabitants to exhibit resilience and resourcefulness to live in harmony with their capricious environments. It is also an inaccurate descriptor of artists who are not passive or docile; they can be fierce and magnificent in their creative expressions and resistance.

These concerns are part of a long-standing discourse amongst Indigenous communities and scholars who emphasize

learning from Indigenous epistemological, ontological, and ecological paradigms to counter the oppressive legacy of colonialism. New artistic practices are inexorably influenced by colonialism and globalization, as Greg Dvorak and Margo Machida have illuminated in this volume, which adds to the nebulous relationship that professionals, historians, curators, and others in the international arts community have with this art. Such experiences and legacies may be shared by artists from Indonesia or Japan, which affirms the need to challenge ethnic categorization and to approach artworks with an appreciation for their collective spirit and nuanced or even transgressive possibilities. Furthermore, the implications of racialized categorization undermine the achievements of artists who negotiate and embrace local, regional, and transnational identities.

I feel it is important to punctuate this critique with the reminder that these perspectives have not limited artists from the Pacific Islands. The Honolulu Biennial adds to an impressive list of venues that prominently feature artists from this region. Kathy Jetñil-Kijiner, from the Marshall Islands, performed at the United Nations in 2016, and Lisa Reihana was selected to represent Aotearoa New Zealand at the 57th Venice Biennale. These are only a few recent examples of accomplishments by artists from the Pacific Islands who share powerful messages that speak to their home communities and employ distinctive cultural expressions and artistic freedom to address issues that resonate across time and space.

The Honolulu Biennial has created a platform to share important artworks from and about Oceania in dialogue with artists from the Asia Pacific region and the diaspora, which I hope will elicit a discourse around issues faced by communities within and connected to the Pacific region. I look forward to walking through the exhibition spaces and learning from the expressions, calls for action, reflections, and critiques by artists in *Middle of Now | Here*. As I walk, I will focus on the ways the artists communicate with one another, perhaps employing specific local knowledge, language, or iconography, not out of an obligation to confront or traverse identity politics, but rather as part of a timely dialogue that can unite us. In the uncertainty of 2017 when combative political rhetoric alienates the US from its allies, I hope *Middle of Now | Here* inspires further engagement, connectivity, and the continued sharing of art, cultures, and knowledge within and among the Pacific Islands and the rest of the world.

… A Gathering of Voices

Moana **Nepia**

He toi whakairo, he mana tangata
Where there is art, there is human dignity
Māori proverb

The resilience and survival of Pacific cultures today reflects the values their people have placed on imagination, creativity, and education for thousands of years. Their arts represent dynamic and in many cases unique forms of cultural expression that help to give form to cultural life in the region we now call Oceania. They embody cultural knowledge, values, and practices and provide ways to identify and distinguish themselves, earn livings, protest, entertain, and amuse one another. Human dignity, pride, and capacities to adapt to change are evident within the striving for artistic excellence and the richness and diversity their creative practices represent. Within their *taonga*, or treasures, including the dances, literatures, songs, and photographic, video, and film traditions, we find potent expressions of personal experience, love, grief, joy, and celebration; we also gain insights into their pasts and some of the most difficult issues confronting Pacific Islanders today.

Ni un håhalla i un talanga-mu ya para un na'chetton yan i otro
Put your ears together so that you might understand
Chamorro proverb

Much of what we might read about Pacific artists and the arts in Oceania concerns its historical, social, or aesthetic significance. Without firsthand experience of making art ourselves, few of us will ever be privileged enough to learn about their creative processes, the physicality of their work, and manipulation of materials. Yet here we may witness sophisticated applications of ancient and contemporary knowledge, understand the role of artist as *kahu*, *kaitiaki* or cultural guardians, and see their work as part of a cultural continuum. As cultural practitioners and performers, artists in Oceania are powerful agents for initiating and demonstrating shifts in collective thought, while also helping to sustain flows of knowledge from one generation to the next.

we feel for the earth pulsating
and the strength of trees that
grow for desire . . .
John Pule, Niue/Aotearoa/New Zealand

Through the arts of performance and ritual, Pacific Islanders convey their connections to land, sea, material, spiritual, and immaterial worlds and to each other, seek to transform themselves, motivate and move their audiences, and commemorate important stages in the life of individuals and their communities. The power of performance resides partly within the power of the body and its physical presence, its muscularity and bones, its movement and capacity to move us emotionally, its subtle inflections and the tone of its many voices. As Māori *haka* (dance) expert Hēnare Teōwai once famously declared, “Kia korero te katoa o te tinana” (The whole body should speak). We sense what others might feel when they move. And while some of the costumes and adornments from these practices may be highly treasured, even sacred, others may be cast away with their potency and value diminished once the performance is over, and the responsibility to make, to take charge, and to perform once again, at the right time, is renewed.

A‘a i ka hula, waiho ka hilahila i ka hale
When one wants to dance the hula,
bashfulness should be left at home
Hawaiian proverb

For *Hikoi*, a performance work devised for the opening weekend of the 2017 Honolulu Biennial, performers circulate through the main exhibition venue and through the audience while responding to selected works with a series of sculptural vignettes. The processional nature of the work envisages the gathering of bodies and voices as a choreographic affirmation of ancestral and contemporary connections to Oceania, multiple histories and rhythms of migration, settlement, conflict, celebration, and cultural renewal. Paying homage to the work of other artists and the celebratory nature of the festival, it also draws upon Oceanic rituals of encounter where intimate gestural exchanges draw people together around issues of concern.

There our words
will find the delicate filaments
that anchor brain to belly or heart,
words to tease other words,
and words
that bear unseen
the source
which we must touch
to see.
Pio Manoa, Fiji

Encountered through the Māori concept of *Te Kore* (which translates as void and states of potentiality) or the Tongan/Samoan concept of va (a time/space continuum), the program of festival events, exhibitions, and installations is not complete, not fully resolved, until audiences interact with it. Artists, collectors, dealers and critics, curators, academics, and students of art come with professional interests and specialist expectations related to the communities they belong to. Performative responses, like *Hikoi*, reply to the *karanga*, or calls extending outwards from work on display, while acknowledging the *wero*, or challenges within them, and represent a contemporary example of reciprocity that features in customary Oceanic social contexts. How passive or active are we as audiences in listening to, viewing, or otherwise sensing work on display? Does the work provoke discussion and questions for us? How do artworks move us? What makes them memorable or meaningful? In the knowledge, histories, and stories that we bring into spaces of creative encounter, potential for new meaning to emerge resides in our interaction with the gestures, sounds, textures, and colors of what we experience. Within bodies, between bodies, with images, sounds, dances, and words, ideas are formed and spaced, and pulsate.

the truth is
breathing under our flesh
pushing out through the sentences
balancing on the tip of your tongue
and caught halfway between the kiss on the cheek
and the look on your face afterwards
Karlo Mila,
Tonga/Samoa/Aotearoa/New Zealand

As the living faces of our ancestors from many different parts of the world confront each other here, in the Hawaiian islands—fished by Maui from the depths of the ocean, let us pause to think of the audacity and genius this ancestral superhero displayed, the awe he inspired throughout the Pacific Islands, and the usefulness of his achievements—slowing the sun so that we might have enough time to accomplish our daily tasks, discovering the secret of fire, and reminding us of our mortal destiny. The artists whose work we celebrate in this biennial carry with them their own connections to Oceania, multiple histories, origin stories, and lineages of cultural knowledge imparted through generations of teachers and mentors. We see the past before us in their work and traces of those who have helped shape their careers. We also see in them features of Maui’s spirit and tenacity: they challenge us to think in new ways about who we are, how we are connected, and what we might become, given the complexities of life in a contemporary globalized world. Surprising us with the poetry, power, and poignancy of their work, they remind us too of the potential that resides within all of us to transform and imagine ourselves differently.

A multitude of voices . . .

Your rhythms add aching scours
to rain-cleaved fissures on storm-whipped cliffs
shedding giants
to wither in the aftermath of lovers retreating.

Your turnings
lament coast-miles
of skeletal remains

Stark beauties out-reach histories
of maomao and Nukutaurua,
singing solemn passages
to those who’ve filtered through bloodied sands,
and sedimented their loss upon reefs
of intrepid return
Moana Nepia, Aotearoa/New Zealand/Hawai‘i

Lisa Reihana
Tai Whetuki – House of Death, Redux (still), 2016
Image courtesy of the artist

Artist page

Vernon Ah Kee

AUSTRALIA

Indigenous Australian artist Vernon Ah Kee examines the ongoing effects of colonization in a three-channel video work, *cantchant*, and his charcoal and acrylic drawings titled *Unwritten #1–#5*, which are both installed at The Hub. Australia's sand-covered coastal beaches are idealized and central to the identity of white Australia, yet these expanses are contested sites of historic and contemporary cruelty toward Indigenous communities since the first settlers arrived on Australian shores in the late 1700s. Alongside confronting imagery that is symbolic of suffering, *cantchant* exhibits scenes of empowered identity featuring the artist's family standing together on the beach and Indigenous professional surfer Dale Richards riding waves on a surfboard designed by Ah Kee. Despite their colorful boards and beach apparel, these figures fail to fit in with the typical Australian beach discourse.

Similar themes of Indigenous suffering are evoked by the charcoal-entwined, faceless figures in the artist's ongoing *Unwritten* series. These bound and restrained figures conjure haunting histories of racism and violence, their ghostly features rendered unrecognizable, symbolic of forgotten histories and identities.

Vernon Ah Kee
cantchant (still), 2009
Image courtesy of Milani Gallery, Brisbane and the artist

Sama Alshaibi

PALESTINE, IRAQ | USA

Wasl, meaning “union” in Arabic, is part of Sama Alshaibi’s ongoing project *Silsila*, or “link.” Through this body of work, the artist examines connections between different cultures that are under threat of displacement, recognizing shared global issues that need to be addressed. In her work at The Hub, Alshaibi focuses on global mass migrations due to increasing water scarcity and rising ocean levels. These environmental catastrophes link islands and coastal regions around the world. Footage of different connecting bodies of water that surround the Middle East, North Africa, the Maldives and Hawai‘i demonstrate that the ocean and subsequently climate change fail to adhere to imposed boundaries. Alshaibi establishes that this recognition of geological interconnectedness and human interdependence is essential to addressing environmental issues. According to the artist, the story of water is an enduring paradox and starting point for broader and philosophical readings that place mystical and historical importance on the natural world and point to our uncertain ecological future.

Sama Alshaibi
“Wasl” (Arabic for “Union”) (still) from the series Silsila, 2017
Image courtesy of the Ayyam Gallery, Dubai and the artist

Alfredo and Isabel Aquilizan

PHILIPPINES | AUSTRALIA

Locally collected boats, cardboard boxes, domestic items and sugarcane are the raw materials for Alfredo and Isabel Aquilizan's installation at The Hub, *Crossings: Project Another Country*, which remembers migrant sugarcane laborers introduced to Hawai'i in the 18th and 19th centuries. The installation was configured to simulate boats arriving on (or leaving) a shoreline with compacted personal histories secured to the vessels with rope, a sign of extended ocean travel to a foreign home. In creating the work, the artists reconnected with their personal history with Hawai'i, a site of migration for many Filipinos at the height of the sugarcane industry. During this extended period, Chinese, Japanese, Korean and Filipino field laborers were brought to the Islands. As Filipino migrants to Australia, the Aquilizans relate to the experiences and difficulties of adjusting to a new home. Their boats filled with evidence of mass migration conjure themes of displacement, survival and community.

Alfredo and Isabel Aquilizan
Crossings: Project Another Country (installation view), 2017
Image courtesy of Christopher Rohrer and Honolulu Biennial Foundation

Andrew Binkley

HAWAIʻI | USA

Andrew Binkley's installation at Foster Botanical Garden, *Stone Cloud*, sparks a magical moment by creating a shift in perception. What appears to be a large boulder, inanimate and bound to the earth, is an inflatable form floating in the sky. An island unto itself, *Stone Cloud* hovers above the landscape, yet is tethered to the ground. Binkley's sculpture is covered in photographs of stones obtained from sea level up to mountain peaks that have been digitally manipulated to form the pattern of one large boulder. The tension between the reality and non-reality of this work questions what we believe to be solid and stable, conjuring feelings of impermanence, uncertainty and transcendence. The artist suggests that within stillness and solidity there is always movement and change.

Andrew Binkley
Stone Cloud (installation view), 2017
Image courtesy of Chris Rohrer and Honolulu Biennial Foundation

Drew Kahuʻāina Broderick

HAWAIʻI | USA

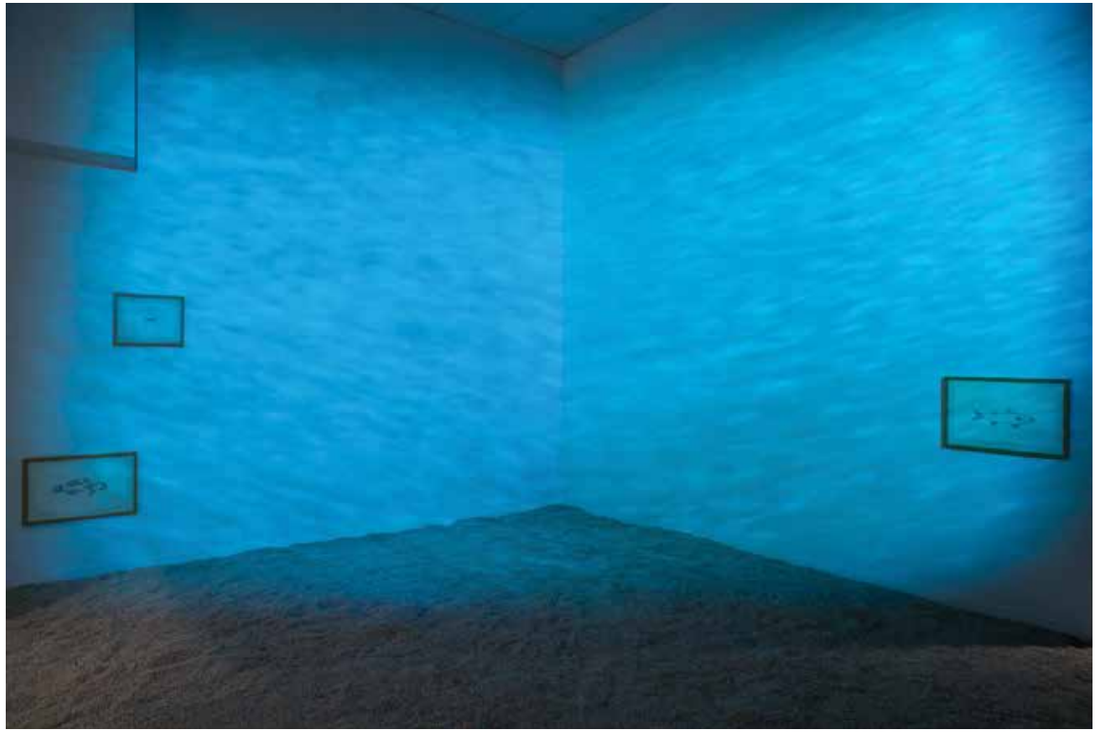
In *Billboard I. (The sovereignty of the land is perpetuated in righteousness)* on display at The Hub, Drew Kahuʻāina Broderick responds to a historical artwork by the 18th century painter George Carter, entitled *Death of Captain Cook* (c. 1783). This painting has been photographed, digitally manipulated and reproduced as a billboard — a prohibited form of advertisement in Hawaiʻi. Broderick utilizes the Carter painting to examine the authorship of Pacific history, specifically its fictionalized representations of the death of Captain James Cook and by extension to historic and present day colonial forces in Hawaiʻi. *Billboard I.* focalizes the romanticization of Carter's depiction of palm trees precariously growing off a cliff face, deprioritizing the rest of the painting's violent content. The "Vacancy" sign in the top left-hand corner further emphasizes a disconnect from Hawaiian land, which today continues to be readily exploited as a site for incessant militarization and tourism. The subtitle was adopted from the Hawaiʻi State motto, Ua Mau ke Ea o ka ʻĀina i ka Pono. This *olelo noʻeau* (saying) was taken from Kamehameha III's 1843 address delivered at the celebration of the end of illegal British occupation and the peaceful restoration of sovereignty to Hawaiʻi.

Drew Kahuʻāina Broderick
Billboard I. (The sovereignty of the land is perpetuated in righteousness) (installation view), 2017
Image courtesy of Christopher Rohrer and Honolulu Biennial Foundation

Jane Chang Mi

HAWAIʻI | USA

Trained as both an ocean engineer and artist, Jane Chang Mi combines her interests in the revisionist politics of land and ocean, focusing on the cultural and military site *Puʻuloa* (Pearl Harbor) on the island of Oʻahu. Underwater archival video-documentation taken by divers surveying the waters of *Puʻuloa* provided the impetus for her installation *The Eyes of the Gods* displayed at The Hub. This work remembers Pearl Harbor's prior history as a flourishing Native Hawaiian site of fishing and oyster gathering, which is often overshadowed by its destructive history as the location of the 1941 bombing that precipitated America's entry into World War II.



Jane Chang Mi
The Eyes of the Gods (installation view), 2017
Image courtesy of Christopher Rohrer
and Honolulu Biennial Foundation

Choi Jeong Hwa

KOREA

Choi Jeong Hwa's works in the Biennial reflect his ability to find beauty in today's increasingly commoditized society. His *Gather Together* works recall the large amount of plastic debris in the Pacific Ocean. The colorful installations suggest that if trash can become art, we should apply our creativity to the conservation of our natural environment. The title itself, *Gather Together*, references Choi's collaborative engagement with the local community during the creative production of these works. The buoys used in both installations were collected by Sustainable Coastlines from the beaches of the Hawaiian Islands. The component exhibited at Honolulu Hale has been described as a "modern day Stonehenge", for its circular display of steel pillars stacked high with ocean buoys. Displayed at the window of The Hub are several buoy-strung lei, transforming ocean debris into a symbol of aloha.

In East-Asian cultures, the lotus is a symbol of purity and enlightenment. This opens up the question of how to live in a global age and yet maintain an appreciation for the natural world. Choi's motorized, inflatable lotus, *Breathing Flower*, has moving petals that inhale an exhale breath into the work. Like a lotus emerging from mud, the bright pink coloring and large size of this sculpture appears striking against the modernist IBM building at Ward Village. Choi's oversized inflatable pink, winged pig, *Love Me*, appeared at The Hub as a bowing symbol of prosperity and good fortune for the inaugural Honolulu Biennial, in recognition of staging a large art festival in Hawai'i.

Choi Jeong Hwa
Breathing Flower (installation view), 2015
Image courtesy of Christopher Rohrer
and Honolulu Biennial Foundation

Choi Jeong Hwa
Gather Together (Honolulu Hale) (installation detail), 2017
Image courtesy of Christopher Rohrer
and Honolulu Biennial Foundation

Choi Jeong Hwa
Gather Together (pillars, Honolulu Hale) (installation view), 2017
Image courtesy of Christopher Rohrer
and Honolulu Biennial Foundation

Kaili Chun

HAWAIʻI | USA

Kaili Chun works with ideas of containment and exposure through provocative gestures and narratives that examine the relationship between Native and non-Native cultures. Chun's large-scale installation at Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum, *Veritas II*, comprises 49 structural steel-cells that appear strong yet fragile when viewed in their outdoor surroundings. The artist sees these sculptures as a metaphor for the imposition of settler ideologies which are literally embedded in the land. The long-term effects of this repressive containment of people is a mental separation of respect for land and tradition.

Untitled: Intervention 1 interrupts international museum standards of displaying objects. Working with Bishop Museum professionals, the artist chained and locked four vitrines that she crafted. In the museum's Picture Gallery setting, this intervention is a critical response to museum display methodologies, provoking alternatives to exhibiting the material culture and histories of living peoples.

Chun's work at the Prince Waikiki, *Hulali I Ka Lā*, pays tribute to Hawaiʻi's history, land, and ancestors. The installation consists of 850 individually hammered, copper *Hinana* (baby ʻoʻopu fish) forms suspended by steel cables. The directional flow of the artwork follows the journey of the Hinana from *mauka* (mountain) to *makai* (ocean). Grouped and moving as one, the individual forms represent the valuable contribution individuals make to the larger community. This is exemplified by the collaborative production of this project by the local community, hotel staff and guests.

Kaili Chun
Hulali I Ka Lā (installation view), 2017
Image courtesy of Christopher Rohrer and Honolulu Biennial Foundation

Kaili Chun
Untitled: Bishop Museum Intervention 1 (installation view), 2017
Image courtesy of Christopher Rohrer
and Honolulu Biennial Foundation

Kaili Chun
Veritas II (installation view), 2012–2017
Image courtesy of Christopher Rohrer
and Honolulu Biennial Foundation

Sean Connelly

HAWAIʻI | USA

Sean Connelly's installation at Foster Botanical Garden offers an intervention in time where traditional thatching materials local to Hawaiʻi remain a primary building technology for architectural and aesthetic achievement leading up to the enactment of Hawaiʻi's Statehood in 1959. In so doing, Connelly counters the normalization of industrial steel as a primary means of structural or sculptural pursuit. His use of natural material references its traditional use as a structural feature of Pacific architecture, favoring a localized form of construction that provokes historical and cultural dialogues. Drawing upon his architectural background, he offers room for rumination on island-based materials and continuity of the *ahupuaʻa* – the multifaceted, highly sustainable system of land division and management traditional to Native Hawaiians.

Sean Connelly
Thatch Assembly with Rocks (2060s) (installation view), 2017
Image courtesy of Christopher Rohrer and Honolulu Biennial Foundation

Mariquita “Micki” Davis

GUAM | USA

Magellan Doesn’t Live Here brings back to living memory the voyaging history of the Chamorro people from Guam. The title refers to Ferdinand Magellan, an explorer who voyaged to Guam in 1521. Two centuries later in 1742, British naval officer George Anson created drawings of Sakman, or outrigger canoes. These drawings inspired contemporary voyager, Mario Borja, and his crew to build and learn to pilot this ancient vessel. The film at The Hub follows the making and launching of the Sakman at the Pacific Arts Festival in 2016, which received a mixed reception and highlighted anxiety felt by many diasporic Islanders returning home literally and spiritually. In this work, Mariquita Micki Davis draws on the strengths of tradition and connection to land and sea.

Mariquita “Micki” Davis
Magellan Doesn’t Live Here (still), 2012–2017
Image courtesy of the artist

Les Filter Feeders
Sally Lundburg and Keith Tallett

HAWAI'I | USA

Les Filter Feeders' *Local Knowledge* series serves as alternative signage that provides warnings, invitations and anecdotal observations for communities in transition. Installed at the Lane Gallery at Honolulu Hale, these works bear sayings such as "NEVER TURN YOUR BACK TO THE OCEAN", "FLOODWATERSFLUSHSNAKES" and "EYES RUSELESSIFTHEMINDISBLIND". In this way, Les Filter Feeders have created a guide of local urban speech for newcomers and residents living in Hawai'i from other parts of the world. These paintings use humor, irony, misspellings and a strategic placement of letters and imagery to allude to hidden local aphorisms. The idea of "local knowledge" is something that is fluid and dynamic, absorbing ideas from a variety of sources and lived experience. This series establishes foundations for ongoing connections between local and non-local communities, strengthening Hawai'i's social fabric.

Les Filter Feeders
Sally Lundburg and Keith Tallett
NEVER TURN YOUR BACK TO THE OCEAN, 2017
NO BODY OWNS THE BEACH, 2017
from the series Local Knowledge
image courtesy of the artists

Beatrice Glow

USA

Beatrice Glow's installation at The Hub, Rhunhattan Tearoom, represents the sights and scents of Islands exploited for colonial expansion during the 1603–1800 spice trade period. Glow reveals histories behind the beginnings of global trade in the Indonesian Islands, where nutmeg and mace were at the center of the Dutch-English spice wars. In 1667, the Dutch swapped Manhattan Island in New York for English-controlled Rhun in the Banda Island archipelago in Indonesia, in order to ensure control of the spice industry.

This turbulent history of exploitation, greed and historical erasure is told through imagery covering a red and white Delftware tea set atop vitrines filled with cartographic drawings of the islands: Rhun and Manhattan, and terracotta nutmegs infused with the aroma of pungent spices. Displayed above the installation are four silk hangings depicting spices at the center of dispute and trade during the Age of Discovery: black pepper, tobacco and opium, as well as nutmeg and mace. The artist's use of Delftware, a 17th century Dutch imitation of Chinese porcelain, further draws attention to the increasing transpacific dialogue between the West and Asia occurring during this period.

Beatrice Glow
Rhunhattan Tearoom (installation view), 2015
Image courtesy of Chris Rohrer
and the Honolulu Biennial Foundation

Brett Graham

NEW ZEALAND

Brett Graham abstracts complex historical ideas into evocative sculptural forms to create compelling and wry artistic statements, as noted by New Zealand gallerist Alison Bartley. The title of his work at The Hub, *Target Island*, is derived from the name given to the Hawaiian island Kahoʻolawe, referring to its use for bombing practice by the U.S. Armed Forces between 1925 - 1990. The four, large discs reference the now obsolete U.S. Air Force calibration charts used to test the accuracy of their bombing instruments. Their titles also allude to the “four directions” of American expansionism and the peoples subjugated in the process of colonization. The compass points include “Guanahani,” the Island of first contact in the East and “Code Geronimo,” a reference to the famous Apache resistance fighter from the Southwest whose name was used as a code reference for Osama Bin Laden, the founder and leader of Al-Qaeda. The Northern direction “Standing Rock” refers to the sacred Lakota sites that are currently being desecrated by the construction of an oil pipeline, whilst “Kahoʻolawe” is in the West.

Brett Graham
Target Island (installation view), 2017
Image courtesy of Christopher Rohrer and Honolulu Biennial Foundation

Charlton Kūpaʻa Hee

HAWAIʻI | USA

Charlton Kūpaʻa Hee continues the traditional Hawaiian decoration of *ipu* (gourds) through hand-built ceramic vessels that make up the series *Pōhue: Storied Gourds*. These forms are thoughtfully decorated in the style of ancient Greek urns and vases, merging cultures and time periods to depict present day ecological relationships between people and the land. Hee's background in science and conservation inspired him to examine the effects introduced species have had on the natural environment and ocean reef ecosystems. Some of the species depicted include the brown Norway rat (*Rattus norvegicus*), small Asian mongoose (*Herpestes javanicus*) and the rose-ringed parakeet (Psittacula kramen). Hee also makes reference to several Hawaiian deities that are associated with the environment, including Lono (agriculture), Kuʻolonowao (forest) and Kanaloa (ocean). The outdoor setting of these objects at the Foster Botanical Garden and Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum enhances their ecological message.

Charlton Kūpaʻa Hee
Pōhue: Storied Gourds
(installation view at Foster Botanical Garden), 2017
Image courtesy of Christopher Rohrer
and Honolulu Biennial Foundation

Kathy Jetñil-Kijiner

HAWAIʻI | USA

Islands Dropped from a Basket:
From a Micronesian Daughter to Hawaiʻi

I.

In the hospitals back home
the wards are always full.

The night I brought my daughter
the ward was filled with coughing children
cramped into incubator newborn sized beds.
Those too big
slept on cardboard boxes on the floor.

One time my uncle was admitted for an ulcer

"The worst part
isn't hearing the rats
running outside the doors—
it's listening to the other patients
crying
in pain."

II.

My friend's job in Hawaiʻi
is to register Micronesians for health care

"We helped a girl here once—
she came in and she was so sick
but she was afraid
to go to the ER.
She didn't know if she had health insurance
And, you know, she was worried about
the discrimination."

One woman took her mother to the hospital
They treated them well
until they saw her mother wearing
a Chuukese skirt.

III.

In Oregon, my cousin helps register
Micronesians for healthcare

He told me about a Bikini Islander
who was a baby when his family was forced to
leave their island
for the US nuclear weapons testing program.

His family members
Parents grandparents siblings
All of them
died from cancer.

And now he's here
For cancer treatment
but was disqualified for many years
because of issues with his health care plan.

"Did you know
they sang
all the way to the ship
the day they left their island?"

IV.

There is a legend of a giant demon named Laio
who would rise from the sea, as tall as
coconut trees, and walk
to the island of Majuro.
There, he would steal food
place them in his basket
and walk back into the sea.

The third time the demon giant Laio came to
Majuro
he was spotted by a man
and, startled, he accidentally dropped
5 islands from his basket.

"My name is Lade," the man said.
"My name is Laio," the demon said.

Later the Irooj of Majuro gathered the people
And asked if anyone saw the demon
who stole from his land.
Lade raised his hand.

And when the Irooj asked what the demon's
name was
Lade said,

"Laio."

And from the depths of the sea Laio heard his
name spoken.

Laio rose from the ocean
wrapped his giant hand around Lade

and ate him.

V.

"Trump issues Executive Order Scaling Back
Parts of Obamacare"

"Trump's Health Nominee Think the Poor
Should Pay More for Health Care"

"The Trump administration is considering a
plan to weed out would-be immigrants who
are likely to require public assistance, as well
as to deport—when possible—immigrants
already living in the United States who depend
on taxpayer help."

VI.

Here is a basket from home.
Bowls of unplugged wires, fatal diagnoses
wrapped in aluminum foil, bottled
fetuses unearthed from the field outside,
children
woven into pandanus mats, grandmothers
chewing
cardboard box floors.

I came to you with greasy demons gorging
themselves on my insides, rats scurrying
through loose floorboard eyes.

In turn you, Hawaiʻi, gave me a sterile basket
of slow shoe shuffles, preserved fruits of
disbelief,

peeled and pounded suspicion. A flat-line
heart
baked in stone.

You must think we came here to borrow
your arms, piss from your kidneys,
pull your feet on for shoes,
to walk in your white coat grin.

But all we wanted
was seedlings
to take back home.

You should know
the thieves
were once in our land too.
They sucked the marrow from our reef
cracked open our sun
roasted our stories over a spit.
And, like you, we bled out our own children
for them to feast on.

VII.

When I moved here, six years old
I was warned:
never name names.
Always
whisper.

The demon won't eat you
if it doesn't hear you.

Kathy Jetñil-Kijiner
Islands Dropped from a Basket (installation view), 2017
Image courtesy of Christopher Rohrer and Honolulu Biennial Foundation

Mohammed Kazem

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

Mohammed Kazem uses Geographical Positioning Systems (GPS) to examine connections that transcend geographical boundaries. His thoughtful installation, *Directions (Honolulu)*, at The ARTS at Marks Garage was inspired by an incident at sea, where he was swept away at the mercy of the ocean. The feeling of separation from the familiar felt by Kazem during this experience prompted him to contemplate the restrictiveness of physical, sensory, intellectual and illusory borders. This work is comprised of vinyl numbers and letters that make up the country coordinates of each artist participating in the Honolulu Biennial. By reducing these geographical divisions to an abstraction of numerals and letters, Kazem creates borderless meeting points that are transformed by light passing through the artwork. This visual effect obliterates narrow perspectives on the world.

Mohammed Kazem
Directions (Honolulu) (installation view), 2017
Image courtesy of Christopher Rohrer and Honolulu Biennial Foundation

Yuki Kihara

SAMOA | NEW ZEALAND

Yuki Kihara's poignant photographs and moving-image work, accompanied by rare historical archives, draw attention to the layering of past and present histories and photographic representations of Samoan peoples. This series, *A Study of a Samoan Savage* at The Hub, considers 19th century studies in movement conducted by Eadweard Muybridge and Marcel Duchamp, as well as anthropometric studies of Samoan men who were photographed as powerful, primitive and objectified specimens. Kihara's work features the body of Maui, a Samoan and pan-Polynesian divine being, under Western scientific scrutiny. *A Study of a Samoan Savage* highlights the historical role of photography and performance in establishing a racial hierarchy grounded in pseudoscientific systems of human measurement and documentation. Kihara's work warns that Indigenous peoples are still being objectified, collected and consumed.

Yuki Kihara
Nose Width with Vernier Caliper, 2015
From the series A Study of a Samoan Savage
Image courtesy of Milford Galleries, Dunedin, and the artist

Yayoi Kusama

JAPAN

Yayoi Kusama's two artworks *I'm Here, but Nothing* and *Footprints of Life* both utilize the artist's signature polka dot motif and use of bold color. According to Kusama, dots are the fundamental form of reality and a symbolic motif closely linked to principles of nature. Installed at the iconic IBM Building, *I'm Here, but Nothing* is an atmospheric space inspired by Kusama's anxiety disorder, which causes her to see polka dots or other patterns materializing across her field of vision. In the work, fluorescent polka dots flicker in the ultraviolet light, transforming an ordinary apartment into another immersive reality that obliterates a sense of self.

Footprints of Life symbolizes the journeys of life: the struggles and joy of the world, the mysteries of the universe's cosmos, as well as Kusama's personal footprints as an introspective artist. This work originally debuted as a pre-event for the Honolulu Biennial in the concrete courtyard of the IBM building. In 2017, these organic pink and black forms were placed under a cluster of trees on the lawn of Foster Botanical Garden. Amid the natural greenery of the site, the work has new appeal and impact. Scattered throughout the Garden, the footprints symbolize islands in the Pacific Ocean.

Yayoi Kusama
I'm Here, but Nothing (installation view), 2000–2017
Image courtesy of Christopher Rohrer
and Honolulu Biennial Foundation

Al Lagunero

HAWAIʻI | USA

Nature of Nature

(Layers. New tides. Hold fast).

‘Eia kou leihinahina, ka lei o ka Po.
(Here, your lei hinahina, the lei of Po, the Eternity, The Woman)

The lei gathered at Kahuku.
Haunts us and returns wave after waves,

Her breathing fire stirs night,
“Do not forget the lei of Aloha, lest we lose it all.” It is she who carves Earth.

Whirring birds against dark cliffs, the old portent, calls storms. Ah! The Woman, Hina!

Woman for the Broad Stream, Man for the narrow...
Tis the God Who enters—not as Man. *

Before nowhere.
Shift Space!

Sing the stars through clouds

Our Song, surely, O Great Lono, is yours.
Hina clothes the stars strewn in darkness by Kane.

Ho’ohokukalani! (Pulama oli na hoku)

(Al: reach, repose, sleep)
“the long cloud lay, as today, and promised the seasons’ turning

Our own
Shadow.”

**Kumulipo*

Al Lagunero
The Nature of Nature
(live performance at the official opening party), 2017
Supported by Pulama Collier
Image courtesy of Meleanna Aluli Meyer

Alexander Lee

TAHITI | USA

Te atua vahine mana ra o Pere (The Great Goddess Pere) - L'Aube où les Fauves viennent se désaltérer is a two-room installation at The Hub in which Alexander Lee reflects on French Polynesia and its nuclear testing history through Pere the Polynesian goddess of fire who is said to have travelled from Tahiti to Hawai'i.

In the *Antechamber*, two charred vitrines encase a series of porcelain artefacts: flutes, fingerlinks, funnels, fishing wraps, genital wraps, ceremonial utensils and memory helpers. Lee provokes viewers to contemplate whether the objects have been irradiated by an explosion or if they are archaeological finds scorched by volcanic fire.

The main *Salon* room displays monotypes that visually represent the 46 aerial nuclear explosions that France conducted from 1966 until 1974. For Lee, the image of the nuclear explosion is a historical extension of Pere's volcanic eruption. Mushroom clouds thus become potent symbols of the social, political and environmental impact of modernity. The *Salon* was the site of three performances: a hula for Pele, a drumming performance recreating the sound of nuclear explosions and a champagne serving referencing the contrasting realities of this period in French Polynesian history.

Alexander Lee
Te atua vahine mana ra o Pere (The Great Goddess Pere) L'Aube où les fauves viennent se désaltérer (installation view in Salon), 2017
Image courtesy of Christopher Rohrer and Honolulu Biennial Foundation

Lee Mingwei

TAIWAN |USA

100 Days with Lily explores the meaning of loss and life's natural cycles when a loved one has passed away, as well as the experience of coping with this loss as we sense the passing of time. Lee Mingwei planted a lily bulb and lived with it 24 hours a day for 100 days as a form of ritual grieving for his late grandmother. On display at The Hub are five photographs of the lily at different stages of life, which have been overlaid with the artist's documentation of various moments shared with the flower each day. Despite the lily dying on the 79th day, Lee continued to carry the wilted flower with him for the remaining 21 days. During this undertaking, the artist witnessed the lily's entire life cycle of germination, sprouting, blossoming, fading and death – a metaphor for his grandmother's and his own journey. The artist's simple gesture reminds us to stay present in times of loss.

Lee Mingwei
100 Days with Lily (series) (installation view), 1995 / 2017
Image courtesy of Christopher Rohrer and Honolulu Biennial Foundation

Marques Hanalei Marzan

HAWAIʻI | USA

ʻAʻahu Kino Lau (clothing for the many forms of the supernatural body) is a textile installation at The Hub that honors Kanaloa, Kāne, Lono, and Kū, the four major gods of the Hawaiian pantheon who are venerated for their divine dominion over heaven and earth. The garments displayed in the exhibition embody these four beings, which are installed to inspire dialogue and forge unseen connections with the painted and woven wall hangings that carry the same titles. Each ancestral deity represents human characteristics and concepts, taking on a variety of earthly forms. The patterns and colors the artist associates with the gods include blue for Kanaloa, yellow for Kāne, white and black for Lono and red for Kū. Marzan presented wearable artwork in the Biennial's opening event, personifying the essence of these godly beings and invoking an earthly presence. Through this installation, the artist honors and empowers the diversity and strengths of these human manifestations of Hawaiian deities.

Marques Hanalei Marzan
ʻAʻahu kino lau, 2017
Image courtesy of Chris Rohrer and the Honolulu Biennial Foundation

Eko Nugroho

INDONESIA

Collectively titled *Above the Wall Under the Rainbow*, *Free Air* (*I luna o ka paia i lalo o ke anuenue, ke ea ku'oko'a*), Eko Nugroho's artworks at The Hub and Shangri La, A Museum for Islamic Art, Culture and Design, illuminate what is often forgotten. Beyond the walls, barriers and boundaries created by nation states is a sky that we share and air we all need; created for us by nature. The rainbow (*anuenue*) for Nugroho is an important metaphor and serves to remind us that diversity occurs in nature and is to be valued.

Nugroho's work often responds to current political dynamics and changing concepts of "democracy" - such as the new president of the United States. The artist's murals at The Hub and Shangri La comprise of painted slogans displayed between black and white figures, emphasizing the conditions and pressure of living in a globalized and fear driven world. Nugroho's written expressions call for greater inter-cultural understanding: "Make Humanism Great Again", "All We Need Is Tolerance" "Peace" and "War Is Asu (Asu is Javanese for f*cked). The paintings he created for Shangri La's Moroccan Room depict symbols from Javanese batik motifs and the natural environment surrounding the Islamic style-mansion.

Eko Nugroho
Above the Wall Under the Rainbow, Free Air (installation view at The Hub) I luna o ka paia i lalo o ke anuenue, ke ea ku'oko'a, 2017
Image courtesy of Christopher Rohrer and Honolulu Biennial Foundation

Eko Nugroho
Above the Wall Under the Rainbow, Free Air (installation view at The Hub)
I luna o ka paia i lalo o ke anuenue, ke ea ku'oko'a, 2017
Image courtesy of Christopher Rohrer
and Honolulu Biennial Foundation

Eko Nugroho
Above the Wall Under the Rainbow, Free Air (detail)
I luna o ka paia i lalo o ke anuenue, ke ea ku'oko'a, 2017
Image courtesy of Shangri La, Museum of Art, Culture and Design

Fiona Pardington

NEW ZEALAND

Vladimir Nabokov inspired Fiona Pardington's installation of 13 photographs at The Hub, entitled "Nabokov's Blues: The Charmed Circle." As the most famous novelist of his time, Nabokov was often featured, in pursuit of butterflies, on the cover of or inside magazines like *Time* and *Life*—and so became also the most famous lepidopterist of his time. Many thought he was just a hobbyist, but specialists from the 1940s to now have rated him a world-class scientist.

A Nabokov enthusiast since her teens, Pardington has paid homage by photographing, in European and American museums, only butterflies Nabokov caught and killed, or words, diagrams, or annotations in his own hand: "The butterflies must be his own, their thorax crushed by the fingers that held the pen with which he wrote. Butterflies taken, like relics. One degree of separation. Love and death fold together."

After waiting for years for the right camera breakthrough, as Nabokov would wait for the right weeks and weather to catch the species he stalked, Pardington has found ways to disclose the beauty and strangeness of what he could see in "the charmed circle of the microscope" ("On Discovering a Butterfly," 1941).

Brian Boyd, University Distinguished Professor, University of Auckland.

Fiona Pardington
Nabokov's Blues: The Charmed Circle (installation view), 2016
Image courtesy of Christopher Rohrer and Honolulu Biennial Foundation

Lisa Reihana

NEW ZEALAND

Tai Whētuki – House of Death Redux, by Lisa Reihana (Ngāpuhi, Ngāti Tu, Ngāti Hine), from Aotearoa New Zealand, is a video work shot in “day for night” cinematography that follows the dramatic story of a dying warrior whose death is avenged by a chiefly mourning party. Reihana envisions his journey into the Māori underworld, where he is welcomed by *Hinenui te Po* (goddess of death). Through envisaging a world of saturated shadows and mist, sustained slow motion, forest and swamp, *Tai Whētuki* depicts grief-heightened practices associated with ritualized mourning. The emotional trauma of death and grief is evoked within a sensory landscape. The foreboding presence of a Tahitian chief mourner clothed in a striking mother of pearl *heva tūpāpa‘u* (chief mourner’s costume), is enhanced by the display of Reihana’s moving-image work alongside a traditional version of this garment at the Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum.

Lisa Reihana
Tai Whetuki – House of Death, Redux (still), 2016
Image courtesy of the artist

Chris Ritson

HAWAIʻI | USA

Drawing upon his scientific background and sustainable lifestyle, Chris Ritson has produced two biogenerative installations for The Hub, *Ganoderma* and *The Corallinales*.

Ganoderma is grown from Ganoderma mushrooms that have been cultured in a sterile environment by inoculating sawdust from invasive trees with fungus mycelium. These mushroom paintings were cultured in plastic containers and after sufficient growth, their highly textured surfaces were dehydrated, preserved and presented as an installation.

The Corallinales is composed of Coralline algae, which will continue to grow throughout the exhibition. These marine plants deposit hard skeletons as they grow, providing the foundation for coral reefs. Coralline algae are highly susceptible to the effects of climate change, and their absence would destroy the reef. To create this installation, Ritson gathered algae-encrusted garbage from shallow reefs off Honolulu's urban coastline. This debris sits at the bottom of two saltwater-filled aquariums, which are designed to replicate the way climate change will affect the ocean's water chemistry. Specific Coralline strains that can survive in this warm, acidic environment reproduce and grow on panels submerged in the tanks, creating living paintings.

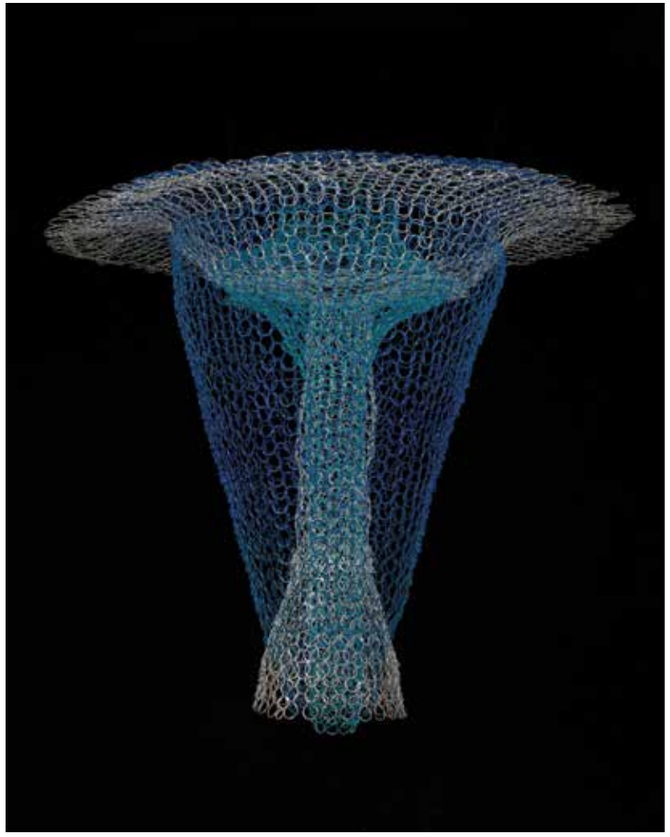
Bearing the importance of conservation in mind, Ritson explores the artistic potential of these natural forms. Both installations encourage the viewer to reconsider the role of the creator, and imagine an interconnected network by which we can collaborate with natural phenomena to sustainably produce artworks.

Chris Ritson
Ganoderma (biogenerative painting) (installation view), 2017
Image courtesy of Christopher Rohrer and Honolulu Biennial Foundation

Michelle Schwengel-Regala

HAWAIʻI | USA

Scientific expeditions and ocean water sampling have inspired Michelle Schwengel-Regala's *Data Textile Series* installation displayed at The Hub. Originally trained in taxonomy and conservation biology, Schwengel-Regala began her artistic career in scientific illustration and shifted to sculpture through fiber art. Her Biennial works consist of knitted and crocheted data textile squares and three-dimensional suspended wire sculptures that draw attention to de-oxygenated zones of the Pacific Ocean. These works are based on data collected at sea during her 2016 research trip as a resident Artist-at-Sea aboard the scientific research vessel R/V *Falkor*. The work prompts discussion of the natural world, scientific research and for humans to consider the impacts we have on nature.



Michelle Schwengel-Regala
Water Column 2 from Data Textile Series, 2017
Image courtesy of Christopher Rohrer and Honolulu Biennial Foundation

Greg Semu

SAMOA | NEW ZEALAND

Greg Semu's three works at The Hub all visibly exhibit traditional Pacific *tatau* (tattoo), a signifier of the subjects' cultural identity. Greg Semu himself appears in two of these works, including the triptych *Earning My Stripes*; his Samoan tattoos tapped onto his back progressively nearing completion throughout each photograph. These images draw attention to raised and red punctured skin, demonstrating the painful traditional technique used for this undertaking. In dialogue with Semu's photographs is a wallpaper installation covered in pages from his diary showing inscriptions, drawings and the development of his stylistic thinking.

After Hans Holbein the Younger - The Body of the Dead Christ references Holbein's famous 1521 representation of Christ in the state of death. Semu occupies the image of Christ in the state of death and entombment in full Samoan *pe'a* (traditional tattoo). It is uncertain whether in this evidently deathly state, Pacific culture will make the same miraculous recovery as Jesus Christ.

Further de-westernizing famous paintings, Semu's *Battle of the Noble Savage 1* reconfigures Jacques-Louis David's image of *Bonaparte Crossing the Alps* series (1801-05). In Semu's version, French colonial and Māori cultures become blurred resulting from cross-cultural attire adorning each fighter, suggesting each group is equally savage.

Greg Semu
After Hans Holbein the Younger – The Body of the Dead Christ (diptych detail) 2016
Image courtesy of Sherman Contemporary Art Foundation, Sydney and the artist

teamLab

JAPAN

teamLab explores different relationships that exist within the natural environment in their work displayed at The Hub titled *Graffiti Nature*. This audience-generated interactive project invites participants to draw a living plant or animal and then scan the image, enabling it to come to life and move across the floor of the blackened room. The stylized mountain and lake objects inside the exhibition space create the feeling of entering a natural landscape. As the room fills with different living creatures, laws of nature take hold, the cycle of life and death becomes rendered through technology. Some animals are eaten by others; meanwhile, those that remain eventually die and disappear. Through the collaborative and interactive efforts of Biennial visitors, the biological forces, beauty and diversity of the natural environment is visualized.

teamLab
Graffiti Nature (installation view), 2016 –
Image courtesy of the artists

John Vea

TONGA | NEW ZEALAND

John Vea's video installation at The Hub, *she sows this āina with her younger siblings, yet she cannot inherit that same āina*, responds to the Native Hawaiian concept of *Aloha Āina* (love of the land) within the context of his Tongan homeland. In contrast to Hawaiian land values and rights, Tongan women are unable to own *fonua* (land). For example, Vea's mother is the eldest of three female siblings; however, as the oldest son, Vea legally owns his mother's land, inherited from his deceased grandfather. Subsequently, this Tongan tradition has provoked legal battles between his immediate family and his grandfather's distant relatives. Examining the effects of this tradition, Vea's artwork is based on a game from his childhood called "Eggs in a Basket," which involves stealing as many rocks as possible from opponents within the allocated time frame. He applies this concept of competing for ownership of real estate, which has caused separation from *fonua*.

Vea's second installation at The Hub, *Concrete is as Concrete Doesn't*, critiques Western society's preoccupation with putting up artificial barriers between the natural world and people. During his 2016 residency in Hawai'i, Vea met artist/poet and activist Imaikalani Kalahele. Vea was struck by Kalahele's statement: "what we do with all da concrete rubbish?," which was in reference to the Island becoming a concrete jungle and the excessive use of this material by developers every time they build and rebuild. In this six-screen work, Vea lays a small number of pavements to create a path towards the camera, painstakingly reusing tiles to demonstrate the repetitive actions undertaken by builders. Satirically illogical, Vea's actions deliberately attempt to *negate* productivity, establishing a purposive purposelessness. Without any end product or service, it is labour in and of itself that we encounter.

John VEA
Concrete is as Concrete Doesn't (video still), 2017
Image courtesy of the artist

Lynne Yamamoto

USA

Lynne Yamamoto's installation is inspired by the 1920s and 30s homes that can still be seen in neighborhoods around Foster Botanical Garden, where the artwork is situated. The design of these homes employ either the bungalow or plantation (or both) styles of vernacular architecture. In this way, the artist invokes the memory of the plantation hierarchy by structurally condensing the bungalow style (associated with middle management) into the white painted front, and plantation style (associated with laborers) into the unpainted back. Yamamoto chose to focus on the porch entrance, a site of porosity between exterior and interior that allowed for air circulation and contemplation. The artist recalls when Japanese immigrant enclaves wove around the land surrounding the Nu'uanu and Puehuehu Streams, which was formerly owned by both Mary Foster and member of the Hawaiian Royal family, Queen Liliuokalani. In 1901, both women attended a service at the Honpa Hongwanji temple nearby, marking a significant event in the history of inter-cultural cohesion. Yamamoto herself walked through this neighborhood almost every day to school, further evoking the presence of historical memory within geographical and architectural space.

Lynne Yamamoto
Borrowed Time (installation view), 2017
Image courtesy of Christopher Rohrer and Honolulu Biennial Foundation

Ken + Julia Yonetani

JAPAN | AUSTRALIA

In their *Crystal Palace* series on display at The Hub, Ken + Julia Yonetani refitted antique chandelier frames with ultraviolet lights and “uranium glass”. Also known as “Depression glass” or “Vaseline glass”, it has very small traces of depleted uranium inside and poses no health risk. This material was used in the early to mid-twentieth century, in particular, in camera lenses because of its high transparency and high refractive index, as well as in jewelry and domestic tableware. The uranium glass in this installation reacts with the UV light to cause the refurbished chandeliers to glow an eerie fluorescent green. Each one bears the name of a country, while its size corresponds to the number of nuclear power plants and the amount of energy produced there. On display are 4 chandeliers that represent Japan, U.S., China and Taiwan, a selection of the nations in the world that generate this energy source. The title of the work references the elaborate glass building designed for London’s 1851 *Great Exhibition*, conjuring tensions between human ambition, technological development, high costs and associated consequences.

Ken + Julia Yonetani
U.S.A. from the series Crystal Palace: The Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nuclear Nations, 2015
Image courtesy of Christopher Rohrer and Honolulu Biennial Foundation

Zhan Wang

CHINA

Strangely eroded scholars' rocks, or *jiashanshi* (jia = fake, shan = mountain, shi = rocks) are a common feature in traditional Chinese gardens, where they are highly prized and appreciated for their fantastically odd shapes. Zhan Wang's practice grows out of this tradition as he used stainless steel boards to copy their exterior form and then welds and polishes them. Zhan's works on display at Honolulu Museum of Art (HoMA) and the IBM Building reflect and distort the surrounding scenery of their environment, implying that the reality we see is also obscured. Artificial Rock No.131 at the IBM Building is a highly polished stainless steel shell of a jiashanshi that is in dialogue with Jeong-Hwa Choi's lotus flower, which deals with similar imitations of the natural world. The work at HoMA, Artificial Rock No.133, is unique in Zhan's oeuvre. It consists of a pair of rocks, one natural and an identical stainless steel cast, challenging us to contemplate the effects of humans imitating nature. Does human activity surpass nature? What does nature tell us?

Zhan Wang
Artificial Rock No.131 (installation view), 2007
Image courtesy of Christopher Rohrer and Honolulu Biennial Foundation

Zhan Wang
Artificial Rock No. 133 (installation view), 2007
Image courtesy of Shuzo Uemoto
and Honolulu Museum of Art

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Vernon Ah Kee (b. 1967)
AUSTRALIA

cantchant
2009
three-channel video installation
dimensions variable
courtesy of Milani Gallery, Brisbane and the artist

Unwritten #1
2017
acrylic, charcoal and crayon on arches paper
101.6 x 152.4 cm
40 x 60 in.
courtesy of Milani Gallery, Brisbane and the artist

Unwritten #2
2017
acrylic, charcoal and crayon on arches paper
101.6 x 152.4 cm
40 x 60 in
courtesy of Milani Gallery, Brisbane and the artist

Unwritten #3
2017
acrylic, charcoal and crayon on arches paper
101.6 x 152.4 cm
40 x 60 in.
courtesy of Milani Gallery, Brisbane and the artist

Unwritten #4
2017
acrylic, charcoal and crayon on arches paper
101.6 x 152.4 cm
40 x 60 in.
courtesy of Milani Gallery, Brisbane and the artist

Unwritten #5
2017
acrylic, charcoal and crayon on arches paper
101.6 x 152.4 cm
40 x 60 in.
courtesy of Milani Gallery, Brisbane and the artist

Sama Alshaibi (b. 1973)
PALESTINE, IRAQ | USA

Wasl (Union)
from the series *Silsila*
2017
single-channel video with sound
9:00 duration
courtesy the Ayyam Gallery, Dubai and the artist

Alfredo and Isabel Aquilizan (b. 1962, 1965)
PHILLIPINES | AUSTRALIA

Crossings: Project Another Country
2017
used boats, domestic objects
dimensions variable
courtesy of the artists
commissioned by Honolulu Biennial Foundation

Andrew Binkley (b. 1979)
HAWAIʻI | USA

Stone Cloud
2017
photographically printed nylon, air
4.9 x 3.7 x 2.1 m
16 x 12 x 7 ft.
courtesy of the artist

Drew Kahuʻāina Broderick (b. 1988)
HAWAIʻI | USA

Billboard I. (The sovereignty of the land is perpetuated in righteousness)
2017
vinyl, neon
37 x 74 cm
144 x 288 in.
courtesy of the artist
commissioned by Honolulu Biennial Foundation

Jane Chang Mi (b. 1978)
HAWAIʻI | USA

The Eyes of the Gods
2017
single-channel installation with sound by N. Lincoln Hanks
13:01 duration
coral limestone
courtesy of the artist

Fishponds (Stokes)
2017
graphite on paper
dimensions variable
courtesy of the artist

Aʻhole
from the series *Iʻa*
2017
woodblock print
dimensions variable
courtesy of the artist

ʻAnae
from the series *Iʻa*
2017
woodblock print
dimensions variable
courtesy of the artist

Awa
from the series *Iʻa*
2017
woodblock print
dimensions variable
courtesy of the artist

Kaku
from the series *Iʻa*
2017
woodblock print
dimensions variable
courtesy of the artist

Nehu
from the series *Iʻa*
2017
woodblock print
dimensions variable
courtesy of the artist

ʻOʻopu
from the series *Iʻa*
2017
woodblock print
dimensions variable
courtesy of the artist

Choi Jeong Hwa (b. 1961)
KOREA

Breathing Flower
2015
fabric, air blower (motor and timer), LED lamp
3.5 x 8 m diameter
11.5 x 26 ft. diameter
courtesy of the artist

Gather Together (lei, The Hub)
2017
recycled plastic, rope
dimensions variable
courtesy of the artist
commissioned by Honolulu Biennial Foundation

Gather Together (pillars, Honolulu Hale)
2017
recycled plastic, steel
dimensions variable
courtesy of the artist
commissioned by Honolulu Biennial Foundation

Kaili Chun (b. 1962)
HAWAI'I | USA

Hulali I Ka Lā
2017
copper
dimensions variable
courtesy of Prince Waikiki and the artist
commissioned by Prince Waikiki

Untitled: Bishop Museum Intervention 1
2017
wood, chain, lock, plastic, netting
dimensions variable
courtesy of the artist

Veritas II
2012–17
steel
dimensions variable
courtesy of the artist

Sean Connelly (b. 1984)
HAWAI'I | USA

Thatch Assembly with Rocks (2060s)
2017
wood, thatching, rocks
dimensions variable
courtesy of the artist
commissioned by Honolulu Biennial Foundation

Mariquita "Micki" Davis (b. 1982)
GUAM | USA

Magellan Doesn't Live Here
2012–17
single-channel video with sound
21:23 duration
courtesy of the artist

Les Filter Feeders
Sally Lundburg and Keith Tallett (b. 1971, 1969)
HAWAI'I | USA

EYES RUSELESSIFTHEMINDISBLIND
from the series *Local Knowledge*
2017
archival inkjet print on Habotai silk, enamel paint, powdered pigment, epoxy resin on wood panel
dimensions variable
courtesy of the artists

FIND'MSHELTERHIDE'M
from the series *Local Knowledge*
2017
archival inkjet print on Habotai silk, enamel paint, powdered pigment, epoxy resin on wood panel
dimensions variable
courtesy of the artists

FLOODWATERSFLUSHSNAKES
from the series *Local Knowledge*
2017
archival inkjet print on Habotai silk, enamel paint, powdered pigment, epoxy resin on wood panel
dimensions variable
courtesy of the artists

HEREIS THE ONLY SPACE LEFT
from the series *Local Knowledge*
2017
archival inkjet print on Habotai silk, enamel paint, powdered pigment, epoxy resin on wood panel
dimensions variable
courtesy of the artists

LISTENFORDISTANT THUNDER
from the series *Local Knowledge*
2017
archival inkjet print on Habotai silk, enamel paint, powdered pigment, epoxy resin on wood panel
dimensions variable
courtesy of the artists

LOVINGYOUIS SURFING YOU
from the series *Local Knowledge*
2017
archival inkjet print on Habotai silk, enamel paint, powdered pigment, epoxy resin on wood panel
dimensions variable
courtesy of the artists

MYSUPERPOWERISESCAPE
from the series *Local Knowledge*
2017
archival inkjet print on Habotai silk, enamel paint, powdered pigment, epoxy resin on wood panel
dimensions variable
courtesy of the artists

NEVER TURN YOUR BACK TO THE OCEAN
from the series *Local Knowledge*
2017
archival inkjet print on Habotai silk, enamel paint, powdered pigment, epoxy resin on wood panel
dimensions variable
courtesy of the artists

NOBODY OWNS THE BEACH
from the series *Local Knowledge*
2017
archival inkjet print on Habotai silk, enamel paint, powdered pigment, epoxy resin on wood panel
dimensions variable
courtesy of the artists

RANDOMFREESTUFF
from the series *Local Knowledge*
2017
archival inkjet print on Habotai silk, enamel paint, powdered pigment, epoxy resin on wood panel
dimensions variable
courtesy of the artists

REMEMBERMEWHENYOUSEETHIS
from the series *Local Knowledge*
2017
archival inkjet print on Habotai silk, enamel paint, powdered pigment, epoxy resin on wood panel
dimensions variable
courtesy of the artists

THEENDOFMEISTHEENDOFYOU
from the series *Local Knowledge*
2017
archival inkjet print on Habotai silk, enamel paint, powdered pigment, epoxy resin on wood panel
dimensions variable
courtesy of the artists

THISHOUSEISKNOTAHOME
from the series *Local Knowledge*
2017
archival inkjet print on Habotai silk, enamel paint, powdered pigment, epoxy resin on wood panel
dimensions variable
courtesy of the artists

WEARE GOING TOBEOK
from the series *Local Knowledge*
2017
archival inkjet print on Habotai silk, enamel paint, powdered pigment, epoxy resin on wood panel
dimensions variable
courtesy of the artists

WILDFIRESHURRICANEFOREST&FLOOD
from the series *Local Knowledge*
2017
archival inkjet print on Habotai silk, enamel paint, powdered pigment, epoxy resin on wood panel
dimensions variable
courtesy of the artists

Charlton Kūpa'a Hee (b. 1989)
HAWAI'I | USA

'Āina momona
from the series *Pōhue: Storied Gourds*
2017
ceramic
25 x 25 x 25 cm
10 x 10 x 10 in.
courtesy of the artist

Eat, sleep, mate, repeat
from the series *Pōhue: Storied Gourds*
2017
ceramic
25 x 25 x 25 cm
10 x 10 x 10 in.
courtesy of the artist

For the Inta'z
from the series *Pōhue: Storied Gourds*
2017
ceramic
28 x 28 x 71 cm
11 x 11 x 28 in.
courtesy of the artist

Haumea
from the series *Pōhue: Storied Gourds*
2017
ceramic, aerosol, enamel
38 x 38 x 66 cm
15 x 15 x 26 in.
courtesy of the artist

Hō'iole (a.k.a. Taken in the night)
from the series *Pōhue: Storied Gourds*
2017
ceramic
30 x 30 x 20 cm
12 x 12 x 8 in.
courtesy of the artist

It didn't have to be this way
from the series *Pōhue: Storied Gourds*
2017
ceramic
30.5 x 30.5 x 61 cm
12 x 12 x 24 in.
courtesy of the artist

Kamapua'a flees to Kahiki (a.k.a. Reef walkers)
from the series *Pōhue: Storied Gourds*
2017
ceramic
30 x 30 x 30 cm
12 x 12 x 12 in.
courtesy of the artist

Kamohoali'i
from the series *Pōhue: Storied Gourds*
2017
ceramic
28 x 28 x 36 cm
11 x 11 x 14 in.
courtesy of the artist

Kanaloa
from the series *Pōhue: Storied Gourds*
2017
ceramic, aerosol, enamel
48 x 48 x 86 cm
19 x 19 x 34 in.
courtesy of the artist

Kanehekili
from the series *Pōhue: Storied Gourds*
2017
ceramic, aerosol, enamel
41 x 41 x 79 cm
16 x 16 x 31 in.
courtesy of the artist

Ku'ula
from the series *Pōhue: Storied Gourds*
2017
ceramic, aerosol, enamel
46 x 46 x 86 cm
18 x 18 x 34 in.
courtesy of the artist

Lono
from the series *Pōhue: Storied Gourds*
2017
ceramic, aerosol, enamel
56 x 56 x 84 cm
22 x 22 x 33 in.
courtesy of the artist

Namu
from the series *Pōhue: Storied Gourds*
2017
ceramic
28 x 28 x 28 cm
11 x 11 x 11 in.
courtesy of the artist

Pā'ū o Hi'iaka (a.k.a. Egg snatchers)
from the series *Pōhue: Storied Gourds*
2017
ceramic
30 x 30 x 46 cm
12 x 12 x 18 in.
courtesy of the artist

Pōpoki kī
from the series *Pōhue: Storied Gourds*
2017
ceramic
28 x 28 x 28 cm
11 x 11 x 12 in.
courtesy of the artist

Sons of O'ahu
from the series *Pōhue: Storied Gourds*
2017
ceramic, aerosol, enamel
33 x 33 x 56 cm
13 x 13 x 22 in.
courtesy of the artist

This is my nightmare
from the series *Pōhue: Storied Gourds*
2017
ceramic
30.5 x 30.5 x 61 cm
12 x 12 x 24 in.
courtesy of the artist

Unnatural Predators
from the series *Pōhue: Storied Gourds*
2017
ceramic
30.5 x 30.5 x 58 cm
12 x 12 x 23 in.
courtesy of the artist

Beatrice Glow (b. 1986)
USA

Afghan Poppies (The New Silk Road)
2016
digital print on silk
142 x 142 cm
56 x 56 in.
courtesy of the artist

Banda Island Archipelago (Nutmeg Cloves)
2016
digital print on silk
142 x 142 cm
56 x 56 in.
courtesy of the artist

Malabar Black Pepper
2016
digital print on silk
142 x 142 cm
56 x 56 in.
courtesy of the artist

Rhunhattan Tearoom
2015
acrylic and decal collage on ceramics, ink on paper,
terracotta infused with scents of colonial commerce
dimensions variable
courtesy of the artist

Tobacco
2016
digital print on silk
142 x 142 cm
56 x 56 in.
courtesy of the artist

Brett Graham (b. 1967)
NEW ZEALAND

Code Geronimo
2017
fiberglass-reinforced concrete
175 cm diameter
69 in. diameter
courtesy of the artist
commissioned by Honolulu Biennial Foundation

Guanahani
2017
fiberglass-reinforced concrete
175 cm diameter
69 in. diameter
courtesy of the artist
commissioned by Honolulu Biennial Foundation

Target Island
2017
fiberglass-reinforced concrete
1300 x 1300 x 200 cm
51x 51 x 8 in.
courtesy of the artist
commissioned by Honolulu Biennial Foundation

Target Island 2
2017
fiberglass-reinforced concrete
175 cm diameter
69 in. diameter
courtesy of the artist
commissioned by Honolulu Biennial Foundation

Standing Rock
2017
fiberglass-reinforced concrete
175 cm diameter
69 in. diameter
courtesy of the artist
commissioned by Honolulu Biennial Foundation

Kathy Jetñil-Kijiner (b. 1987)
MARSHALL ISLANDS | USA

Islands Dropped from a Basket
2017
three single-channel video with sound
coconut baskets, woven mats
courtesy of the artist
commissioned by Honolulu Biennial Foundation

Mohammed Kazem (b. 1969)
UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

Directions (Honolulu)
2017
vinyl text, light
dimensions variable
courtesy of the artist
with support from Shangri La, A Museum of Islamic Art, Culture and Design
commissioned by Honolulu Biennial Foundation

Yuki Kihara (b. 1975)
SAMOA | NEW ZEALAND

Bicep with Skinfold Caliper
from the series *A Study of a Samoan Savage*
2015
c-print mounted on Dibond aluminium
68 x 100 x 0.4 cm
27 x 39 x 0.2 in.
courtesy of Milford Galleries, Dunedin and the artist

Front, Side and Back View with Stadiometer
from the series *A Study of a Samoan Savage*
2015
triptych: c-print mounted on Dibond aluminium
3 panels: 67 x 46 x 0.4 cm each
3 panels: 26 x 18 x 0.2 in. each
courtesy of Milford Galleries, Dunedin and the artist

Head with Pelvimeter
from the series *A Study of a Samoan Savage*
2015
c-print mounted on Dibond aluminium
100 x 80 x 0.4 cm
39 x 32 x 0.2 in.
courtesy of Milford Galleries, Dunedin and the artist

Kicking
from the series *A Study of a Samoan Savage*
2015
c-print mounted on Dibond aluminium
50 x 100 x 0.4 cm
20 x 39 x 0.2 in.
courtesy of Milford Galleries, Dunedin and the artist

Leaping
from the series *A Study of a Samoan Savage*
2015
c-print mounted on Dibond aluminium
50 x 100 x 0.4 cm
20 x 39 x 0.2 in.
courtesy of Milford Galleries, Dunedin and the artist

Maui Descending a Staircase I (After Duchamp)
from the series *A Study of a Samoan Savage*
2015
c-print mounted on Dibond aluminium
83 x 67 x 0.4 cm
33 x 26 x 0.2 in.
courtesy of Milford Galleries, Dunedin and the artist

Maui Descending a Staircase II (After Duchamp)
from the series *A Study of a Samoan Savage*
2015
single-channel digital video, silent
6:23 duration
courtesy of Milford Galleries, Dunedin and the artist

Nose Width with Vernier Caliper
from the series *A Study of a Samoan Savage*
2015
c-print mounted on Dibond aluminium
80 x 100 x 0.4 cm
32 x 39 x 0.2 in.
courtesy of Milford Galleries, Dunedin and the artist

Siva (Dance)
from the series *A Study of a Samoan Savage*
2015
c-print mounted on Dibond aluminium
50 x 100 x 0.4 cm
20 x 39 x 0.2 in.
courtesy of Milford Galleries, Dunedin and the artist

Sprinting
from the series *A Study of a Samoan Savage*
2015
c-print mounted on Dibond aluminium
100 x 200 x 0.4 cm
39 x 79 x 0.2 in.
courtesy of Milford Galleries, Dunedin and the artist

Subnasale-nasal Root Length with Vernier Caliper
from the series *A Study of a Samoan Savage*
2015
c-print mounted on Dibond aluminium
80 x 100 x 0.4 cm
32 x 39 x 0.2 in.
courtesy of Milford Galleries, Dunedin and the artist

Subscapular with Skinfold Caliper
from the series *A Study of a Samoan Savage*
2015
c-print mounted on Dibond aluminium
68 x 100 x 0.4 cm
27 x 39 x 0.2 in.
courtesy of Milford Galleries, Dunedin and the artist

Walking
from the series *A Study of a Samoan Savage*
2015
c-print mounted on Dibond aluminium
50 x 100 x 0.4 cm
20 x 39 x 0.2 in.
courtesy of Milford Galleries, Dunedin and the artist

Walking II
from the series *A Study of a Samoan Savage*
2015
c-print mounted on Dibond aluminium
50 x 100 x 0.4 cm
20 x 39 x 0.2 in.
courtesy of Milford Galleries, Dunedin and the artist

Yayoi Kusama (b. 1929)
JAPAN

Footprints of Life
2010–2016
fiberglass, paint
dimensions variable
courtesy of the artist

I'm Here, but Nothing
2000–17
vinyl stickers, ultraviolent lights, furniture, household objects
dimensions variable
courtesy of the artist

Al Lagunero (b. 1945)
HAWAIʻI | USA

The Nature of Nature
2017
live performance
supported by Pulama Collier
commissioned by Honolulu Biennial Foundation

Alexander Lee (b. 1974)
TAHITI | USA

Te atua vahine mana ra o Pere (The Great Goddess Pere) L'Aube où les fauves viennent se désaltérer
2017
multi-room installation, ceramic, ink on paper, acrylic on cotton, acrylic and ink on polypropylene, timed performances, glass, wood
dimensions variable
courtesy of the artist

Lee Mingwei (b. 1964)
TAIWAN | USA

100 Days with Lily (series)
1995 / 2017
Silver dye bleach prints (ilfochrome)
5 panels: 166.5 x 115 cm each
66 x 45 in. each
courtesy of the artist

Marques Hanalei Marzan (b. 1979)
HAWAIʻI | USA

Lono (garment)
from the series *ʻAʻahu kino lau*
2017
textile, cordage, foliage, dress form
dimensions variable
courtesy of the artist
commissioned by Honolulu Biennial Foundation

Lono (wall hanging)
from the series *ʻAʻahu kino lau*
2017
textile, paint
dimensions variable
courtesy of the artist
commissioned by Honolulu Biennial Foundation

Kanaloa (garment)
from the series *ʻAʻahu kino lau*
2017
textile, cordage, foliage, dress form
dimensions variable
courtesy of the artist
commissioned by Honolulu Biennial Foundation

Kanaloa (wall hanging)
from the series ʻAʻahu kino lau
2017
textile, paint
dimensions variable
courtesy of the artist
commissioned by Honolulu Biennial Foundation

Kāneʻohe (garment)
from the series *ʻAʻahu kino lau*
2017
textile, cordage, foliage, dress form
dimensions variable
courtesy of the artist
commissioned by Honolulu Biennial Foundation

Kāneʻohe (wall hanging)
from the series *ʻAʻahu kino lau*
2017
textile, paint
dimensions variable
courtesy of the artist
commissioned by Honolulu Biennial Foundation

Kū (garment)
from the series *ʻAʻahu kino lau*
2017
textile, cordage, foliage, dress form
dimensions variable
courtesy of the artist
commissioned by Honolulu Biennial Foundation

Kū (wall hanging)
from the series *ʻAʻahu kino lau*
2017
textile, paint
dimensions variable
courtesy of the artist
commissioned by Honolulu Biennial Foundation

Eko Nugroho (b. 1977)
INDONESIA

Above the Wall Under the Rainbow, Free Air (The Hub)
I luna o ka paia i lalo o ke anuenue, ke ea kuʻokoʻa
2017
acrylic paint
dimensions variable
courtesy of Shangri La, Museum of Art, Culture and Design and the artist
commissioned by Honolulu Biennial Foundation

Above the Wall Under the Rainbow, Free Air I luna o ka paia i lalo o ke anuenue, ke ea kuʻokoʻa
(Moroccan Room, Shangri La)
2017
acrylic paint
dimensions variable
courtesy of Shangri La, Museum of Art, Culture and Design and the artist
commissioned by Honolulu Biennial Foundation

Above the Wall Under the Rainbow, Free Air I luna o ka paia i lalo o ke anuenue, ke ea kuʻokoʻa (Garden, Shangri La)
2017
acrylic paint
dimensions variable
courtesy of Shangri La, Museum of Art, Culture and Design and the artist
commissioned by Honolulu Biennial Foundation

Fiona Pardington (b. 1961)
NEW ZEALAND

All works:
from the series *Nabokov's Blues: The Charmed Circle*
pigment inks on Hahnemuhle Photo Rag
dimensions variable
courtesy of the artist, and Starkwhite, New Zealand

Individual titles from left to right:

Non-Exist Future Past: Time spiral, October 28, 1964, 1, 2016.
With thanks to the New York Public Library

Papilo zelicaon (Anise Swallowtail) , caught Oak Creek Canyon, Arizona, July 12 1959,1, 2016.
With thanks to the Cornell University Insect Collection, Department of Entomology, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY

Two specimens from unidentified species within family Lycaenidae, subfamily Polyommatinae ("Blues"), caught Oak Creek Canyon, Arizona, June 10 1959, 1, 2016.
With thanks to the Cornell University Insect Collection, Department of Entomology, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY

Speyeria coronis halcyone Edwards ♂, from Nabokov's copy of W.J. Holland, The Butterfly Book, 1, 2016.
With thanks to the New York Public Library

Speyeria diana I IX Butterfly Head, from Nabokov's copy of W.J. Holland, "The Butterfly Book", 1, 2016.
With thanks to the New York Public Library

Diagram of wing-scale rows, for "Notes on Neotropical Plebejinae," 1945, 1, 2016.
With thanks to the New York Public Library

That Skin, I Am: Insect metamorphosis,1, 2016. In Nabokov's copy of R.L. Stevenson, Essays in the art of writing, Chatto and Windus 1920.
With thanks to the New York Public Library

Wing-scale drawing of Plebejus (ex Lycaeides) melissa pseudosamuelis, ♂, 1, 2016.
With thanks to the New York Public Library

Wing-scale drawing of Lycaedis (now Plebejus) aryrognomon lotis, 1, 2016.
With thanks to the New York Public Library

Lycaeidis Melissa wing scales, 1, 2016.
With thanks to the Musée Cantonal de Zoologie, Lausanne, Switzerland

Lysandra (now Polyommatus) coridon wing scales, 1, 2016.
With thanks to the Musée Cantonal de Zoologie, Lausanne, Switzerland

Drawing of genitalia of Cyclargus thomasi (Thomas's Blue or Caribbean Blue), holotype, 520, 1, 2016.
With thanks to the New York Public Library

Wing-scale drawing of Lycaedis (now Plebejus) melissa melissa, 1, 2016.
With thanks to the New York Public Library

Lisa Reihana (b. 1964)
NEW ZEALAND

Tai Whetuki – House of Death, Redux
2016
two-channel ultra HD video, stereo sound
14:20 duration
courtesy of the artist

Chris Ritson (b. 1985)
HAWAIʻI | USA

The Corallinales (biogenerative painting)
2017
Coralline algae, marine organisms, glass, metal, wood, acrylic, electronics, seawater
dimensions variable
courtesy of the artist
commissioned by Honolulu Biennial Foundation

Ganoderma (biogenerative painting)
2017
Ganoderma fungi, sawdust, varnish
dimensions variable
courtesy of the artist

Michelle Schwengel-Regala (b. 1971)
HAWAIʻI | USA

Stations of the Voyage
from *Data Textile Series*
2016
fiber (wool from Hawaiʻi Island Romney sheep, indigo-dyed silk, nylon, polyester)
15 x 15 cm
6 x 6 in.
courtesy of the artist

Water Column 1
from *Data Textile Series*
2017
wire (aluminum)
dimensions variable
commissioned by Honolulu Biennial Foundation

Water Column 2
from *Data Textile Series*
2017
wire (aluminum, steel)
dimensions variable
courtesy of the artist
commissioned by Honolulu Biennial Foundation

Water Column 3
from *Data Textile Series*
wire (aluminum, steel)
dimensions variable
courtesy of the artist
commissioned by Honolulu Biennial Foundation

Greg Semu (b. 1971)
SAMOA | NEW ZEALAND

After Hans Holbein the Younger - The Body of the Dead Christ (diptych)
2016
digital photographic prints on acrylic
lightbox
40 x 180 cm
16 x 71 in.
courtesy of Sherman Contemporary Art Foundation, Sydney, and Alcaston Gallery, Melbourne

Battle of the Noble Savage 1
2007
lightbox
150 x 200 cm
59 x 79 in.
courtesy of Sherman Contemporary Art Foundation, Sydney, and Alcaston Gallery, Melbourne

Earning My Stripes (triptych)
2015
pigment print on Hahnemuhle paper
100 x 133 cm each
39 x 52 in. each
courtesy of Sherman Contemporary Art Foundation, Sydney, and Alcaston Gallery, Melbourne

teamLab
JAPAN

Graffiti Nature
2016–
interactive digital installation
dimensions variable
courtesy of the artists

John Vea (b. 1985)
TONGA | NEW ZEALAND

Concrete is as Concrete Doesn't
2017
digital video
32:00 duration
courtesy of the artist
commissioned by Honolulu Biennial Foundation

she sows this āina with her younger siblings, yet she cannot inherit that same āina
2017
single-channel video, rocks, wood, found materials
4:00 duration
dimensions variable
courtesy of the artist
commissioned by Honolulu Biennial Foundation

Lynne Yamamoto (b. 1961)
HAWAI'I | USA

Borrowed Time
2017
wood
dimensions variable
courtesy of the artist
commissioned by Honolulu Biennial Foundation

Ken + Julia Yonetani (b. 1971, 1972)
JAPAN | AUSTRALIA

China
from the series *Crystal Palace: The Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nuclear Nations*
2016
150 x 150 x 130 cm
59 x 59 x 51 in.
uranium glass, antique chandelier frames and electrical components, ultraviolet lights
courtesy of Mizuma Art Gallery, Tokyo and the artists

Japan
from the series *Crystal Palace: The Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nuclear Nations*
2015
80 x 80 x 101 cm
32 x 32 x 40 in.
uranium glass, antique chandelier frames and electrical components, ultraviolet lights
courtesy of Takahashi Collection, Mizuma Art Gallery, Tokyo and the artists

Taiwan
from the series *Crystal Palace: The Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nuclear Nations*
2013
30 x 30 x 83 cm
12 x 12 x 33 in.
uranium glass, antique chandelier frames and electrical components, ultraviolet lights
courtesy of Taiji and Naoko Terasaki, Mizuma Art Gallery, Tokyo and the artists

U.S.A.
from the series *Crystal Palace: The Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nuclear Nations*
2015
174 x 174 x 248 cm
69 x 69 x 98 in.
uranium glass, antique chandelier frames and electrical components, ultraviolet lights
courtesy of Mizuma Art Gallery, Tokyo and the artist

Zhan Wang (b. 1962)
CHINA

Artificial Rock No.131
2007
stainless steel
435 x 245 x 160 cm
171 x 96 x 63 in.
edition 3/4
courtesy of Howard Hughes Corporation, Long March Space, Beijing and the artist

Artificial Rock No. 133
2007
two pieces: stainless steel; stone
140 x 184 x 180 cm each
55 x 72 x 71 in. each
ed. 4/4
courtesy of Taiji and Naoko Terasaki, Long March Space, Beijing and the artist

Artist biographies

Vernon Ah Kee (b. 1967)
AUSTRALIA
Lives and works in Queensland, Australia

Vernon Ah Kee's works critique Australian popular culture, particularly the dichotomy between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal societies and cultures. His art practice consists of text-based work, video, installation, photography, digital design, painting, printmaking, and drawing. Through these mediums, Ah Kee brings attention to a contemporary Indigenous perspective. He obtained a Doctorate of Visual Arts from the Queensland College of Art, Griffith University, Australia and has recently exhibited at the National Gallery of Victoria, Australia; Special Exhibitions Gallery, Harvard Art Museums, Massachusetts; National Museum of Australia, Canberra; the 14th Istanbul Biennial, Turkey and Sakahàn Quinquennial, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.

Sama Alshaibi (b. 1973)
PALESTINE | IRAQ | USA
Lives and works in Arizona, USA

Palestinian-Iraqi artist Sama Alshaibi explores spaces of conflict and the power struggles that arise in the aftermath of war and exile. Through performance, video, photography, and installation, Alshaibi positions her own body as an allegorical site that makes the byproducts of such struggles visible. Alshaibi's monograph, Sand Rushes In (New York: Aperture, 2015) presents her Silsila series, which probes the human dimensions of migration, borders, and environmental demise. She has exhibited work in the MARTa Herford, Germany; Qalandiya International, Palestine; Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art, Arizona; Busan Museum of Art, South Korea and the Maldives Pavilion at the 55th Venice Biennale, Italy and The Museum of Modern Art, New York City. She received a Fulbright Fellowship to Palestine (2014-2015), and was named University of Arizona's 1885 Distinguished Scholar, where she is Chair and Professor of Photography.

Alfredo and Isabel Aquilizan (b. 1962, 1965)
PHILIPPINES | AUSTRALIA
Live and work in Brisbane, Australia

Isabel and Alfredo Aquilizan's sculptural and installation artworks often explore themes of family, community through ideas of migration and dislocation. These wider themes stem from their personal migration to Australia from the Philippines, combined with extensive international travel for their artistic practice. Through both abstract and referential objects they examine a contemporary idea of home and self within a diverse global landscape. Isabel obtained a Bachelor of Communication Arts at Assumption College Makati City, Philippines, whilst Alfredo completed a Masters of Fine Arts at Anglia Polytechnic University Norwich School of Art and Design, United Kingdom. They have exhibited work at Setouichi Triennale, Japan; Philippines Pavilion, 56th Venice Biennale, Italy; Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo; 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa, Japan; 5th Moscow Biennale, Russia; 11th Sharjah Biennale, United Arab Emirates and Ullens Center for Contemporary Art, Beijing.

Andrew Binkley (b. 1979)
HAWAI'I |USA
Lives and works in O'ahu, Hawai'i

Andrew Binkley uses interdisciplinary mediums such as photography, sculpture and site-specific installation to reflect on our notions of time and our relationship with impermanence. A former Buddhist monk, Binkley is a full-time artist whose practice uncovers and examines stages of transformation towards awakening and letting go. Binkley attended the Kansas City Art Institute and has exhibited at The Joshua Treenial, Joshua Tree National Park; the Honolulu Museum of Art Spalding House, Hawai'i and the Kaohsiung Museum of Fine Arts, Taiwan.

Drew Kahu'āina Broderick (b. 1988)
HAWAI'I | USA
Lives and works in Los Angeles, California and Honolulu, Hawai'i

Within his interdisciplinary practice, Drew Kahu'āina Broderick actively examines the commercial and cultural qualities of his Island home in Honolulu. He playfully disrupts and critiques the historical, sociopolitical and aesthetic (pre)conceptions of Hawai'i. Using humor and irony, Broderick navigates the repressed conversations between the seemingly contradictory realities of colonizer and colonized, foreign and local, one and the Other. Broderick received a Bachelor of Arts from Wesleyan University, Connecticut and has exhibited with the Honolulu Museum of Art School, Hawai'i; Gallery 'Iolani, Hawai'i; University of Hawai'i at Mānoa and the Honolulu Museum of Art. He is a member of Hawai'i-based collective, PARADISE COVE, the founder of Hawai'i-based contemporary art venue, SPF Projects, and an independent curator.

Jane Chang Mi (b. 1978)
HAWAI'I | USA
Lives and works in Los Angeles, California and O'ahu, Hawai'i

Trained as an ocean engineer and an artist, Jane Chang Mi considers land politics and postcolonial ecologies. She augments her science and engineering background within her artistic practice to visually work through these multi-layered and complex subjects. She completed a Masters of Fine Arts at the University of California and a Masters of Science and Engineering at the University of Hawai'i, Mānoa. She has recently exhibited work at Beaconsfield Contemporary Art, London; Human Resources Los Angeles; the Honolulu Museum of Art, Hawai'i and at the SomoS Art House, Berlin, Germany. She is currently the inaugural artist in residence at the World War II Valor in the Pacific National Monument, Pearl Harbor, Hawai'i.

Choi Jeong Hwa (b. 1961)
KOREA
Lives and works in Seoul, Korea

Choi Jeong Hwa sees and explores the creative potential of commonplace materials in his sculptures and installations. The artist's large colorful works explore and critique ideas of artificiality, consumer culture and the temporary. His works also celebrate the beauty of discarded and recycled materials, encouraging viewers to rethink what constitutes art. Choi completed a Bachelor of Fine Arts at Hongik University, Seoul and has exhibited work at Kiasma Museum of Contemporary Art, Helsinki; the Asia-Pacific Triennial, Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art, Australia; Fukuoka Trienniale, Japan; Gwangju Museum of Art, South Korea and Hayward Gallery, London.

Kaili Chun (b. 1962)
HAWAI'I | USA
Lives and works in O'ahu, Hawai'i

Kaili Chun's work evokes strong connections to global culture through conceptual installations that transform spaces into unique environments of exchange. By incorporating symbolism and narratives into her works, Chun examines historical events within a present-day context. Through this approach, she aims to generate greater understanding and connections across seemingly disparate cultures. Chun completed a Bachelors degree in Architecture from Princeton University, New Jersey and a Masters of Fine Arts from the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. She has exhibited work in the Honolulu Museum of Art, Hawai'i; at the Museum of Arts and Design, New York City; Landesmuseum, Hannover, Germany; Linden Museum, Stuttgart, Germany and University of Alaska Museum. Chun teaches at Kapi'olani Community College, O'ahu.

Sean Connelly (b. 1984)
HAWAI'I | USA
Lives and works in O'ahu, Hawai'i

Sean Connelly is an architect, visual artist, and interdisciplinary designer with a focus on form, spatial systems, and society. His work and research in economy and ecology explores Indigenous interactions of material, information, energy, and time. Connelly completed a Masters of Design from the Harvard University Graduate School of Design, Massachusetts and a Doctorate of Architecture from the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. He has exhibited works at the Honolulu Museum of Art, Hawai'i; Santa Fe Art Institute, New Mexico; Graduate School of Design Gallery, Massachusetts; ii Gallery, Hawai'i and Venice Biennale of Architecture, Italy.

Mariquita Micki Davis (B. 1982)
GUAM | USA
Lives and works in Los Angeles, California

Mariquita Micki Davis is a Chamorro artist who investigates and expands notions of artistic collaboration in the contexts of personal, family, and community memory. She produces videos, publications, performances, sculptures and installations within gallery settings and in other more unconventional spaces. Exploring the past within the context of the present, Davis examines and shares her Guamanian heritage within a new framework. She completed a Masters of Fine Arts at the University of California and has presented her work recently at the Festival of the Pacific Arts, Guam and Pacific Island Ethnic Museum, California.

Les Filter Feeders
Sally Lundburg (b. 1971) and **Keith Tallett** (b. 1969)
HAWAI'I | USA
Live and work on the Hawai'i Island, Hawai'i

Keith Tallett and Sally Lundburg examine shifting cultural landscapes through a range of media, including sculpture, installation, painting, photography, and video. Their projects embody a tension between natural and artificial, exploring themes of community and individualism, ecological and social invasions, as well as the accumulation of cultural capital. Sharing a studio since returning home to Hawai'i in 2003, they create and exhibit work both independently, and as a collaborative duo. Lundburg received a Bachelor of Fine Arts from The San Francisco Art Institute in California, USA and TalletT received a Masters of Fine Arts from the same institution. They have exhibited work together at Maui Arts and Cultural Center, Hawai'i; Honolulu Museum of Art School, Hawai'i; SPF Projects, Honolulu; 'Iolani Gallery, Windward Community College, Honolulu and The Honolulu Museum of Art.

Beatrice Glow (b. 1986)
USA
Lives and works in New York City, USA

Beatrice Glow is an interdisciplinary artist whose practice uncovers and reassembles invisible, suppressed stories that lie in the geopolitical shadows of colonialism and migration. Her work comprises of sculptural installations, trilingual publishing and participatory performances. Spanning diaspora and Indigeneity, her work investigates the oceanic, cultural and trade circulations between Asia, the Americas, Europe and the Pacific. She holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts from New York University, New York City and has recently exhibited works at the New York University; Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Santiago, Chile; American University Museum at the Katzen Art Center, Washington D.C.; Bronx Museum of Art, New York City and Zebrastraat Gallery, Ghent, Belgium.

Brett Graham (b. 1967)
NEW ZEALAND
Lives and works in Waiuku, New Zealand

Brett Graham is an artist of Māori (Ngāti Koroki Kahukura) and European heritage who examines issues affecting Pacific and Indigenous peoples today. Graham obtained a Doctorate in Fine Art from the University of Auckland and a Masters of Fine Art from the University of Hawai'i. He has work in the collections of the National Gallery of Australia; the National Gallery of Canada; the National Gallery of Victoria and Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, New Zealand. Graham has exhibited his work in the17th Sydney Biennale, Australia and the 52nd Venice Biennale, Italy.

Charlton Kūpa'a Hee (b. 1989)
HAWAI'I | USA
Lives and works in O'ahu, Hawai'i

Charlton Kūpa'a Hee is an artist and conservationist who uses historic and environmental references to explore contemporary values. His sculptural works offer an alternative perspective on invasive flora and fauna species to raise awareness of ecological and natural histories specific to Hawai'i. Hee studied a Bachelor of Environmental Science and a Bachelor of Studio Art at Santa Clara University, California. He has exhibited work at the Cedar Street Galleries, Hawai'i; The ARTS at Marks Garage, Honolulu; Linekona Gallery, Honolulu Museum of Art School; Gallery 'Iolani, Windward Community College and ii Gallery, Hawai'i.

Kathy Jetñil-Kijiner (b. 1989)
MARSHALL ISLANDS | USA
Lives and works in Oregon, USA

Kathy Jetñil-Kijiner is a Marshall Islander poet and spoken word artist who focuses on raising awareness on issues faced by island communities, including nuclear testing, militarism, the impact of climate change, forced migration and racism. Her installation at the Honolulu Biennial marks an expansion in practice for Jetñil-Kijiner, who is principally a poet. She received her Master's in Pacific Island Studies from the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa and has performed her poetry at the United Nations Climate Summit, New York; Southbank Center, London; United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, Conference of the Parties (COP) 21 and 22, Paris and Marrakech; Voices of Our Nations Arts Foundation, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia and Poetry for the People at University of California, Berkeley.

Mohammed Kazem (b. 1969)
UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
Lives and works in Dubai, United Arab Emirates

Mohammed Kazem's conceptual practice examines contemporary global issues that impact the social, political, and natural environment. He utilizes photography, video and Global Positioning System technologies to reflect on issues that are closely related to his personal biography, such as the changes in the United Arab Emirates or situations he has experienced through international travels. He investigates the alienating effects of geographic borders by dissolving the illusion of barriers that divide people. Kazem completed a Masters of Fine Arts at the University of the Arts, Philadelphia. He has recently exhibited work at the Maraya Art Centre, Sharjah; The National Pavilion of the United Arab Emirates at the 55th Venice Biennale, Italy; the 1st Yinchuan Biennial, Japan; the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York and at the Mori Art Museum, Tokyo.

Yuki Kihara (b. 1975)
SAMOA | NEW ZEALAND
Lives and works in Apia, Samoa and Auckland, New Zealand

Yuki Kihara is an interdisciplinary artist whose work explores the varying relationships and intersections between gender, race, sexuality, culture and politics. Her photographic, moving-image and performance works have been featured, among others, at the Orange County Museum of Art, California, Asia Pacific Triennial, Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art, Australia; Daegu Photo Biennale, Korea and Sakahàn Quinquennial, National Gallery of Canada; Ottawa. Kihara's artworks are in several collections, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art and Te Papa Tongarewa Museum of New Zealand.

Yayoi Kusama (b. 1929)
JAPAN
Lives and works in Tokyo, Japan

Yayoi Kusama uses repetition and patterns to create conceptual artworks that reflect her personal experiences and interest in the cosmos. She has been using polka dots as motifs in her work since the 1950s. For her, polka dots are a kind of language, a basic method of expression. She has explored this motif in a range of diverse genres, from drawing, painting, and sculpture to murals, public art, a variety of multiples, and media art. Kusama is currently one of the most internationally acclaimed Japanese artists today. She has exhibited her artworks at Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington D.C.; Tate Modern, London; Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Moscow; Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebæk, Denmark; Museo de Arte Latinoamericano de Buenos Aires (MALBA) - Fundación Costantini, Buenos Aires; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York and Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris.

Al Lagunero (b. 1945)
HAWAI'I | USA
Lives and works in Maui, Hawai'i

Al Lagunero's performance-based practice is grounded in old wisdom, rooted in the nature of nature, which he recognizes as a vital teacher. His work is informed by pilgrimages he has undertaken to holy places in North, Central, and South America, Asia and Europe. Locally, Lagunero has devoted much of his career to developing and supporting Hawaiian art and culture. He studied Fine Art at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, Arizona State University and the San Francisco Art Institute. Lagunero has exhibited at Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum, Hawai'i Pacific University, and Maui Arts and Cultural Center, Hawai'i.

Alexander Lee (b. 1974)
TAHITI | USA
Lives and works in Tahiti, French Polynesia and New York, NY

Alexander Lee converges memory and history into a rich visual language that encompasses printmaking, installation, performance, large-scale paintings, sculptures and drawings. His work explores the cultural, historical, and geographical specificities of the islands of Tahiti. Lee holds a Masters of Fine Arts from Columbia University and a Masters of Professional Studies from the Interactive Telecommunications Program at New York University, both in New York City. Lee's work has been exhibited at Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary (TBA21), Vienna; Museum of Contemporary Art Antwerp (M HKA), Antwerp; Musée de Tahiti et des Iles, French Polynesia and Cidade Matarazzo, São Paulo, Brazil.

Lee Mingwei (b. 1964)
TAIWAN |USA
Lives and works in Paris, France and New York, USA

Lee Mingwei's participatory projects are often open-ended scenarios of everyday interaction that change during the course of an exhibition. Many of Lee's works involve audience participation, allowing strangers to explore issues of trust, intimacy and self-awareness. He received a Masters of Fine Arts from Yale University, Connecticut and has held solo exhibitions at Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, New Zealand; the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City; Mori Art Museum, Tokyo and Taipei Fine Arts Museum, Taiwan, and exhibited at Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; 11th Shanghai Biennale, China and the 20th Biennale of Sydney, Australia.

Marques Hanalei Marzan (b. 1979)
HAWAI'I | USA
Lives and work in O'ahu, Hawai'i

Marques Hanalei Marzan is a fiber artist who draws upon his knowledge of Hawaiian culture and ritual practices to bridge the traditions of the past with the innovations of the present, creating a dialogue within his work that speaks to the continuity of culture. Marzan has completed a Certificate in Museum Studies from The George Washington University and a Bachelor of Fine Arts at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. He has exhibited his artwork at the Maui Arts and Cultural Center, Kahului; University of Hawai'i Art Gallery, Honolulu; the Museum of Art and Design, New York City and ii Gallery, Honolulu. Marzan also serves as Cultural Advisor at the Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum, Hawai'i.

Eko Nugroho (b. 1977)
INDONESIA
Lives and works in Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Primarily a painter, Eko Nugroho explores today's complex socio-political climate and intersections between local and global issues. He creates art influenced by traditional embroidery and batik dyeing techniques, as well as street art and comics. Masked cartoon-like figures are a regular motif in his works, referencing Indonesian symbolism and shadow theatre. Nugroho studied at the Indonesian Art Institute, Yogyakarta. He has exhibited work at the Asia Society Museum, New York; Frankfurter Kunstverein, Germany; 10th Gwangju Biennale, Korea; 55th Venice Biennale, Italy; Jogja National Museum, Yogyakarta and National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne.

Fiona Pardington (b. 1961)
NEW ZEALAND
Lives and works in Aotearoa New Zealand

Fiona Pardington is of Maori (Ngai Tahu, Kati Mamoe and Ngati Kahungunu) and Scottish (Clan Cameron of Erracht) descent. Her photography explores themes of memory, time, history, photographer and subject. By photographing taonga Maori (historical treasures), nature specimens and other museum artefacts, she revives their human and spiritual contexts, uniting postcolonial politics and reparative aesthetics. Pardington has a Doctorate in Fine Arts from Auckland University. In 2016 she was made a Chevalier of the Order of Arts and Letters by the People of France. In 2015 she was honored with a 30 year survey exhibition which toured museums in three New Zealand cities. Her work has been included in several important international group exhibitions and biennials including the Kiev Biennial, Ukraine, 17th Biennale of Sydney, Australia, and is held in many Australasian public collections, Musée du Quai Branly, Paris, National Gallery of Art, Washington DC and the National Gallery of Canada.

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Lisa Reihana (b. 1964)
NEW ZEALAND
Lives and works in Auckland, New Zealand

Lisa Reihana (Nga Puhi, Ngati Hine and Ngai Tu) constructs alternative Māori and Pacific histories and examines their historic intersections with British colonization. Applying cutting-edge technology, she creates cerebral and immersive photographic, moving-image and installation works. She completed a Masters in Design from the School of Visual Art and Design, Auckland and has recently exhibited work at Kochi-Muziris Biennale, Kerala, India; 1st Yinchuan Biennale, China; Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, New Zealand; National Gallery of Victoria, Australia; Museum Van Loon, Amsterdam; Frankfurter Kunstverein, Germany; Singapore Art Museum and the 12th Istanbul Biennale, Turkey.

Chris Ritson (b. 1985)
HAWAI'I | USA
Lives and works in O'ahu, Hawai'i

Chris Ritson imagines new ways of interacting with the environment through video, installation and generative sculpture. Using predominantly natural mediums, Ritson places value on ecological systems and the ability to integrate positively with them. He earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts at the San Francisco Art Institute and has recently exhibited work at Honolulu Museum of Art School, Hawai'i; Chuck Klaus Center for the Arts, Marymount California University; Honolulu Museum of Art; and Sydney International Animation Festival, University of Technology Sydney, Australia.

Michelle Schwengel-Regala (b. 1971)
HAWAI'I | USA
Lives and works in O'ahu, Hawai'i

Michelle Schwengel-Regala is a scientific illustrator and fiber artist who creates knitted sculptural and installation artworks that are inspired by the natural world, cultural history and scientific research. By using materials such as wire, silk and wool she produces art intended to raise awareness of environmental issues. Schwengel-Regala completed a Graduate Certificate in Science Communication, Science Illustration at University of California, Santa Cruz and a Bachelor of Science degree in Entomology and Wildlife Ecology from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She has exhibited recently at the Cretaquarium in association with Hellenic Centre for Marine Research, Crete, Greece, University of Hawai'i Mānoa; Honolulu Museum of Art School; Honolulu Museum of Art; Bishop Museum, Hawai'i and Honolulu Academy of Arts.

Greg Semu (b. 1971)
SAMOA | NEW ZEALAND
Lives and works in Sydney, Australia

Greg Semu reinterprets historical paintings by populating himself and other Pacific people into the picture frame. Semu re-enacts significant moments in history, challenging accounts of early European contact with Pacific cultures. His photographic works offer an alternative Samoan perspective on European history paintings. His self-portraits and images of other Pacific peoples celebrate traditional tatau (tattoos). Semu is a self-taught artist that has exhibited work at The National Gallery of Victoria, Australia; Palazzo Bembo, Venice; Daegu Photo Biennale, South Korea; Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, New Zealand and University of New South Wales, Australia.

teamLab
JAPAN
Based in Tokyo, Japan

teamLab is an interdisciplinary creative group that uses science and technology to explore artistic potentials through themes of nature. Their immersive digital environments and screens are often interactive, blurring boundaries between artwork and viewer. Forging connections between visitors, teamLab's works induce a collaborative viewing experience. They have exhibited their digital displays at Tokyo National Museum; Mori Art Museum, Tokyo; Grand Palais, Paris; National Museum of Singapore and the National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts, Taichung.

John Vea (b. 1985)
TONGA | NEW ZEALAND
Lives and works in Auckland, New Zealand

John Vea explores the tropes of migration and gentrification within Pacific landscape by enacting everyday narratives collected from his interactions with people from his local community and further abroad. His practice is grounded in sculpture, video, installations and performance works that evoke cultural narratives. Vea likens his process of collecting storylines to that of a journalist, allowing him to develop personal connections and an emic or etic sensibility that informs his work. He completed a Masters of Art and Design at Auckland University of Technology, New Zealand. Vea has exhibited works at Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, New Zealand; Papkura Art Gallery, Auckland; MTG Hawkes Bay, Napier, New Zealand; Te Tuhi Gallery, Auckland and Artspace, Auckland.

Lynne Yamamoto (b. 1961)
USA
Lives and works in Massachusetts, USA

Lynne Yamamoto's artworks engage notions of place and memory, immigration and cultural symbolism. She is interested in the manner in which narratives of seemingly ordinary people expand out to have larger implications historically and geographically. The physical qualities of her installations and sculptures enhance the historical contexts in which she situates her works. Yamamoto studied a Master of Arts in Studio Art at New York University, New York City. Recently she has exhibited works at the Treasure Hill Artists Village, Taipei; Honolulu Museum of Art Spalding House, Hawai'i; Wing Luke Museum, Seattle; Owens Art Gallery, Sackville, New Brunswick and Cincinnati Art Museum, Ohio. She is currently Jessie Wells Post Professor of Art at Smith College in Northampton, Massachusetts.

Ken + Julia Yonetani (b. 1971, 1972)
JAPAN | AUSTRALIA
Live and work in Kyoto, Japan

Ken + Julia Yonetani examine the interaction between humans, nature, science and the spiritual realm in the contemporary age. Their large-scale installations utilize material such as salt, sugar and traces of uranium to amplify concerns for environmental disasters, and the unsustainable and damaging impact of humans on the earth. Ken received a PhD in Visual Arts from Sydney College of the Arts. Julia holds a PhD in History from Australian National University. Together they have exhibited works recently at the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra; Bildmuseet, Umeå, Sweden; Kenpoku International Art Festival, Ibaraki, Japan; The Art Gallery of Ontario, Canada; Singapore Biennale and 4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art, Sydney.

Zhan Wang (b. 1962)
CHINA
Lives and works in Beijing, China

Zhan Wang's sculpture-based practice is inspired by traditional Chinese gardens. The highly polished surfaces of his steel scholars' rock forms literally and conceptually exhibit the artist's reflections on the rapid modernization of China. He graduated from the Beijing Industrial Arts College and obtained an Masters of Fine Arts at the Central Academy of Fine Arts (CAFA), Beijing and has exhibited his work at the The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Centre d'Art Santa Mònica, Barcelona; 54th Venice Biennale, Italy; National Museum of China, Beijing and Museum of Contemporary Art, Lyon. Zhan currently teaches sculpture at CAFA.

Beatrice Glow
Rhunhattan Tearoom (installation view), 2017
Image courtesy of Christopher Rohrer
and Honolulu Biennial Foundation

Contributor

Fumio Nanjo

Fumio Nanjo is the Director of the Mori Art Museum in Tokyo. He has held key advisory and curatorial roles with major entities such as the Venice Biennale, Taipei Biennale, the Turner Prize, the Asia-Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art, Yokohama Triennale and the Singapore Biennale. Nanjo became a Chevalier of The Order of Arts and Letters in 2016.

Isabella Ellaheh Hughes

Isabella is the co-founder and director of Honolulu Biennial Foundation (HBF). Born and raised in Hawai'i, she's also worked as an independent curator and art critic for a decade, having curated projects for Maraya Art Center, the Smithsonian, Art Dubai Projects, Ayyam Gallery and CONTACT at the Honolulu Museum of Art School in 2016. She is a regular contributor and editor of numerous exhibition catalogues.

Ngahiraka Mason

Ngahiraka Mason (Ngāi Tūhoe, Te Arawa, Ngāti Pango) is a researcher, curator and writer. Her interests strongly relate to old knowledge and new understandings within indigenous sites of knowledge to generate awareness of historical, modern and contemporary art and art practice, exhibition making, writing and thinking. Mason is the former Indigenous curator at Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tamaki, New Zealand. She lives and works in Honolulu, Hawai'i.

Kóan Jeff Baysa

Born and raised in Hawai'i, Kóan Jeff Baysa is a medical doctor, software developer, and international art curator and critic, focused on the cultural constructs and neuroscience of health perception and aesthetics. He is the Chief Medical Officer of Medical Avatar, Curator of The Institute for Art and Olfaction, and Co-founder of the Joshua Treenial.

Nāpali Souza

Nāpali Souza is a designer, writer, and attorney. He is co-creative director of Salvage Public, a Honolulu-based menswear brand he helped found in 2013. Nāpali also prepares mo'olelo with DTL, a Hawaiian strategy firm. He spent six years in the legal field, working in private practice and as a legal scholar with Ka Huli Ao Center for Excellence in Native Hawaiian Law.

Manulani Aluli Meyer

Manulani Aluli Meyer works and publishes in the field of Indigenous epistemology and its role in world-wide awakening. She obtained her doctrate from Harvard (Ed.D. 1998) and is currently the Director of Indigenous Education at University of Hawai'i West Oahu. Additionally, Manu is involved with community initiatives focused on education, health, food security, and prison transformation.

Epeli Hau'ofa (1939-2009)

Epeli Hau'ofa, was born in Papua New Guinea to Tongan missionary parents. He trained as an anthropologist and completed a PhD at the Australian National University in Canberra. Hau'ofa's seminal essay "Our Sea of Islands" has influenced generations of Pacific and non-Pacific academics, transforming the way Pacific Studies is taught and valued in the academy. Hau'ofa's academic and creative writing has contributed Islander worldviews on tradition and the modernisation of the Pacific. A former professor at the Pacific University of the South Pacific in Suva, Fiji, Hau'ofa founded the Oceania Centre for Arts and Culture, and served as its first Director.

Karlo Mila

Karlo Mila is an award-winning and widely anthologised poet of Tongan and European descent, who was born and raised in New Zealand. Her PhD focused on NZ-born Pasifika peoples and her postdoctoral research involved developing an Indigenous intervention, Mana Moana. She is currently developing this concept into a leadership programme in partnership with Leadership New Zealand.

Greg Dvorak

Greg Dvorak is a professor of Pacific Islands history and cultural/visual studies at Waseda University in Tokyo. His research focuses mainly on themes of colonialism, militarism, gender, and art, between Oceania and Japan. He is the founder of Project35, a collaboration of Japanese and Pacific artists and scholars. His book, Coral and Concrete, is forthcoming from University of Hawai'i Press.

Margo Machida

Dr. Margo Machida is Professor Emeritus of Art History at the University of Connecticut. Born and raised in Hawai'i, she is a scholar, independent curator, and cultural critic specializing in Asian American art and visual culture. Her publications include Unsettled Visions: Contemporary Asian American Artists and the Social Imaginary (Duke University Press).

Katherine Higgins

Katherine Higgins is an art historian, educator, and curator. She oversees multidisciplinary residencies and programs rooted in experimentation, risk-taking, and imaginative problem-solving at MIT's Center for Art, Science & Technology. Prior to joining MIT, Katherine was Outreach Director for the Center for Pacific Islands Studies at University of Hawai'i at Mānoa where she completed graduate programs in Pacific Islands studies and museums studies.

Moana Nepia

Moana Nepia (Ngāti Porou, Rongowhakaata, Ruawaipu) is a visual and performing artist, choreographer, curator, Arts Editor for the Contemporary Pacific, and Assistant Professor in the Center for Pacific Islands Studies at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. He trained at the Victorian College of the Arts in Melbourne, Chelsea and Wimbledon Schools of Art in London, and received his PhD from Auckland University of Technology, New Zealand.

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Crossings: Project Another Country (installation view), 2017
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