



Nanea Lum
Artist Statement
April 29, 2022

In-betweenness is a condition of creativity for me, as well as a symbology of my identity. Kapa-making is a cultural discipline and responsibility; I allow myself the freedom of expression as a painter and contemporary artist. I practice growing and ceremonially harvesting wauke, cleaning its inner bark and setting it up to dry and continue to be processed into kapa. It is a lived reality which creates ephemeral marks in the system of 'āina that I would like to share.

Placing together kapa and lithography printmaking compels questioning of symbolic and meaning. The line of questioning these objects brings the viewer through a holistic view of the world. What is kapa? How is it made? What does the story mean? How long does it take to make these cloths? The value in these objects is in teaching these relationships to 'āina and broadly becoming relational to others. These works escape realism and surrealism as they respond to the compositional logic of my own memories, and coded representations of material.

Why is Hawaiian culture in contemporary art now? I can say that being a part of the exhibition team for the Hawaii Triennial 2022, the cultural life of Honolulu right now is poised for dominating the next global moment of art of the 21st century.

“Who defines what is central and what is marginal? These are theoretical and philosophical questions raised decades ago with post-colonial theory, yet today have an even greater resonance and urgency. For HT22, it is Hawai'i's geography, genealogies, and cultural histories that facilitate questioning of the status quo that began with the first Honolulu Biennial in 2017, *Middle of now / Here*, by curator and director Fumio Nanjo and curator Ngahiraka Mason, and continues with the 2019 Honolulu Biennial, *To Make Wrong / Right / Now*, by Nina Tonga, Josh Tengan, and Devon Bella. “

Dr. Mellissa Chu in her Director Curators address for HT22 *E Ho'omau Nō Moananuiakea / Pacific Century*, Curated by Mellisa Chu, and Drew Kahu'āina Broderick.

I spent the last eight years immersed in the Honolulu contemporary art scene to represent these years of creativity and research, in transformation of painting in the expanded field of collaborations with 'āina. Curators of HT22 identify for the public an issue that art deals with in coming from the Pacific.

“Daily life is increasingly defined by macro cultural shifts in the geopolitical realm as well as micro cultural shifts within communities that include intergenerational conflict, social and environmental justice movements, and intense issues around identity and kinship.”

My work is included in the group show, *ULU KUPU*, currently on view at the Hawaii State Art Museum which resulted from collaborations by multimedia artists in a workshop space in Mānoa. Facilitated by Tiare Ribeaux and myself at GRRIC Contemporary, we invited local artists to utilize the time and space provided to listen to each other's material explorations. The resulting collaboration spanned various media: video, photography, dance, performance arts, drawing, painting and installations. The artists focused on each other's inner worlds to collaborate together a story about the valley of Mānoa, and the many flowers that gather on O'ahu to create wonderful things. We followed a method of mapping that took groups of us to the water sources of the Mānoa streams. The rainforest of the valley in Mānoa is a source of research of art and culture at the University of Hawai'i.