

Keith Tallett

*Mauna Kea Snowchains (Lock Da Hubs),
Flying Hawaiian Series, 2016*

Mixed media on panel

Courtesy of the artist (L.2016.03.02)

Keith Tallett plays with the idea of kapa watermarks, the near invisible patterns embedded into textile fibers during the making process, and the image of tire tracks imprinted upon a snowy landscape as he draws reference to snowcapped Mauna Kea on Hawai'i Island. Differences concerning development on Mauna Kea erupted in protests and road closures that blocked access to the mountain for several periods in 2015 and 2016. For the artist, vehicle tires that carry cultural practitioners, protesters, astronomers, police teams, and the construction crews to the mountain are printing a contemporary record of land use on the island.

Keith Tallett

*Heavenly Hi'ilawe (Lock Da Hubs),
Flying Hawaiian Series, 2015*

Mixed media on panel

Courtesy of the artist (L.2016.03.01)

The mixed-media paintings of the *Flying Hawaiian* series incorporate vinyl tire-tread patterns, enamel paint, fiberglass and resin to produce pristinely finished, highly polished surfaces. The graphic, stylized patterns embedded in Finish Fetish materials reference the language used in surf, car, and tattoo cultures common in Hawai'i. These subcultures and identifiable visual markers hold cultural capital that enables one to fit in, belong, and elevate in social status.

Hi'ilawe is Tallett's interpretation of Hi'ilawe Falls in Waipi'o Valley. His iconography alludes to the recent access issues concerning Waipi'o. To reach the falls, one must traverse the valley with a four-wheel-drive vehicle and cross private lands. Recent closures due to property and political disputes, dengue fever outbreaks, landslides and instances of overuse have made Waipi'o Valley and Hi'ilawe Falls almost unreachable. The highly reflective surface in Tallett's piece situates the viewer within the composition, merging person with the valley, despite access issues.

Eric Walden

Waikīkī, 2016

Polyurethane foam and polyester resin
Courtesy of the artist (L.2016-06.02)

This black-and-white board fragment is the nose, or front area, of a longboard. Surfboards with noses such as these are designed to support the weight of a surfer across the length of the board, enabling the rider to stand “toes on the nose” at the very tip, while riding rolling waves like those typical of Waikīkī surf breaks.

Fins, 2016

Polyurethane foam and polyester resin
Courtesy of the artist (L.2016-06.03)

Fins are mounted to the backside of surfboards serving as anchors in the water. They add direction and hold to the board for greater control and maneuverability on a wave. The purple rudder fin is suitable for longboards. Its large size provides a counterbalance to the weight of a surfer riding on the nose. The green pivot fin is also suitable for a longboard, but tailored to allow greater maneuverability on a wave. The blue high-aspect fin is suitable for short and longboards. Of the three, the blue fin allows the greatest amount of maneuverability and is the type of fin that would be mounted onto the surfboard *Baby V*, hanging nearby.

Pipeline, 2016

Polyurethane foam and polyester resin
Courtesy of the artist (L.2016-06.04)

This yellow-and-white fragment is a narrow surfboard tail designed to provide control and stability for surfers riding the big waves of O‘ahu’s North Shore. A thin tail like *Pipeline*, named after the iconic North Shore surf break, pulls into the face of a wave, giving its rider hold and control in the water when a powerful wave is barreling overhead.

Eric Walden

Baby V, 2016

Polyurethane foam and polyester resin
Courtesy of the artist (L.2016-06.05)

Eric Walden deconstructs a surfboard to offer a look at the engineering aspect of surfboard design in his installation of board fragments and fins, paired with a complete board. Walden situates himself within the 1960's surf aesthetic, but explains that "most boards made during that time, and in subsequent decades, were not made to perform in Hawai'i waters." In a departure from this approach, Walden structurally designs his boards for the needs of surfers riding Hawai'i waves. Named for the board's v-shaped back panel and tail, *Baby V* offers its rider the flexibility to make extreme direction changes on a wave, to pick up speed while drawing a line in the water, and is ideal for surf breaks along O'ahu's South Shore.

From the 1960s to 1990s, technology associated with surfboard materials evolved rapidly without a great deal of engineering refinement between phases. In combination with this, commercial surfboard production in California boomed, which meant the most widely circulated boards were not tailored for optimal performance in Hawai'i. Walden's design approach makes a subtle, but significant contribution to design in Hawai'i.

Iliahi Anthony

Felt Knot Lounge, 2011

Wool

Courtesy of the artist (L. 2016–09.02)

Woven Side Table, 2016

Maple

Courtesy of the artist (L. 2016–09.03)

Ho‘olei Folding Chair, 2012

Leather and stainless steel

Courtesy of the artist (L. 2016–09.01)

Iliahi Anthony’s furniture designs draw upon the techniques she learned as a life-long hula practitioner in combination with industrial materials and an affinity for clean, minimal lines associated with Hawaiian and Modern design. Hula practitioners skillfully deploy braiding, knotting, twisting, and weaving methods to hand-make hula implements and accessories. Anthony’s adaptation merges this training with computer programs to design pieces that can be commercially manufactured in a variety of natural and synthetic materials.

Her designs translate Hawai‘i’s cultural practices into functional objects that are indicative of long-standing aesthetic traditions made for contemporary island living. Anthony is a 2012 graduate of Rhode Island School of Design and is based in her hometown of Hilo, Hawai‘i.

Koa Johnson

Crow, 2015

Feathers and cotton

Courtesy of the artist (L. 2016–10.01)

Betta, 2016

Plastic rubbish bags and cotton

Courtesy of the artist (L. 2016–10.02)

Viper, 2016

Plastic disposable tablecloths and cotton

Courtesy of the artist (L. 2016–10.03)

Koa Johnson is best known for his line of bridal and formal gowns made under the brand bearing an abbreviation of his name, Kojo Couture. Each of Johnson's collections includes one dress created with unconventional materials and referencing Hawaiian history or material culture, interpreted through the lens of avant-garde fashion. The three dresses on view are part of Johnson's *Royals* series, named for the bold female monarchs of the past, and are designed to empower the wearer. Johnson uses feathers, a material used to create garments associated with Hawaiian royalty, and ubiquitous black rubbish bags and white disposal tablecloths to create gowns that simultaneously resonate with historical pertinence and a strong urban impulse. His sensitivity to tonal qualities and textures in the materials he chooses, along with his knowledge of diverse construction methods, enable his unexpected design choices.

For gowns as unconventional as these, hair simply won't do. Johnson commissioned Ry-n Shimabuku to create custom head pieces to top each look. Shimabuku's headdresses lend to the persona of the wearer, and maintain a link to Hawai'i's featherwork tradition. The headdress accompanying *Crow* is made using feathers, while the headdress accompanying *Betta*

makes reference to the iconic form of a Hawaiian mahiole, a crescent-shaped feather helmet, also associated with royalty.

(Left)

Mark Chai

'Ulu (Breadfruit), 2016

Silky oak veneer

Courtesy of the artist (L. 2016–08.01)

For this piece, Chai makes a connection between the natural pattern of silky oak wood veneer and the mottled surface and texture of 'ulu (breadfruit), a round, edible fruit.

(Middle)

Mahina (Moon), 2016

Sapele veneer

Courtesy of the artist (L. 2016–08.02)

(right)

Heliconia, 2016

Plastic

Courtesy of the artist (L. 2016–08.03)

Mark Chai's lamp designs frequently reference the flora and fauna of Hawai'i through his choice of materials and shapes, with a clear reference to mid-century design trends. While living in Japan as a child, Chai watched woodworkers build a fence without using a single nail. This lasting impression, paired with his interest in the architectural experiments of R. Buckminster Fuller, contribute to his construction methods and aesthetic sensibilities. *Heliconia*, named for the flower's leaf shape and vertical structure, holds its form in white plastic without adhesives.

Joseph Pa‘ahana

Transmuter, 2016

Video and vinyl

Courtesy of the artist (L. 2016–11.01, L. 2016–11.02)

Graphic artist Joseph Pa‘ahana explores the process of transformation in this video. Using still and moving images taken on a trip to Wai‘ale‘ale, Kaua‘i, and of the beaches and cityscapes of Honolulu where he lives, he considers the essential connection between humans and the origins of life. Incorporating rural and urban elements are indicative of Pa‘ahana’s style, and in this video, they are delivered in the same vernacular as the album covers, posters, and skateboard graphics he develops. The sunset’s reflection on the sand, flowing water, car and street lights, make up the effects and images enveloping the central figure.

The vinyl icon applied to the wall symbolizes this process. In petroglyphs found across the Hawaiian Archipelago, divine figures are often depicted with crescent-shapes bowing overhead, indicating a connection between the human and spiritual spheres. Here, Pa‘ahana identifies a visual relationship between the Hawaiian petroglyph figure and the wi-fi symbol in his interpretation of transcendence through stages of consciousness.

(Above)

Sig Zane

Rain from Clear Sky, 2016

Gator Board

Courtesy of the artist (L. 2016–12.01)

Sig Zane, a company named for its founder but now comprised of a growing design team, initially used the aloha shirt to circulate images associated with ancient stories, cultural practices, and Hawaiian symbolism based on elements found in nature. After 30 years, Sig Zane's designs are no longer tied exclusively to the garment. Partnerships with brands like Hawaiian Airlines, Louis Vuitton, and Big Island Cookies have translated Sig Zane's designs into architectural and interior settings, airplane exteriors, and cookie boxes. The designers consider their work an example of how Hawaiian perspectives and aesthetics can be evoked in new contexts.

Rain from Clear Sky features a rain pattern in keeping with kapa motifs, and is Sig Zane's expression of the extraordinary natural phenomena that can result when Hawai'i's mountain systems, wind patterns, and ocean currents converge in serendipitous ways to produce unusual conditions, like rainfall on a clear day. The monochromatic pattern uses its own shadow to create contrast. Rather than reproduce an image of rain falling from a bright blue sky, Sig Zane's white-on-white pattern plays on the idea of raindrops emerging unexpectedly. The piece was conceptualized collaboratively by Sig and Kūha'o Zane, the father-and-son design team, and is derived from the meaning of the name Kūha'oimaikalani.

CJ Kanuha

Kai Popolohua Mea a Kāne (purplish blue reddish-Brown Sea of Kāne; the far reaches of the limitless sea), 2016

Koa

Courtesy of the artist (L. 2016–05.02)

Professional surfer turned surfboard builder, CJ Kanuha, was trained in the ocean by his father, Clement Keliipoaimoku Kanuha, Jr. Together, they studied surfboards and traditional practices associated with the ancient sport of surfing. Kanuha's board-making process involves Hawaiian protocol and sustainable methods. He explains, "First you say a prayer, then ask permission, so everything's good from all perspectives. I'll look for fallen logs in the forest, or an uncle will know of a ranch where I can find one. ... After getting it out, I'll cut it into board slabs." The boards are then carved in the tradition of Kanuha's other mentor, Tom "Pohaku" Stone, where a plank of solid wood is sculpted into a finless surfboard intended for ocean use.

CJ Kanuha

Kai Pualena (yellowish sea, where streams flow in), 2016

Mango

Courtesy of the artist (L. 2016–05.01)

Kai Pualena is a kiko‘o, a type of long surfboard that measures anywhere from 8 to 16 feet, and is part of CJ Kanuha’s surfboard series *E Ola, E ‘Aka‘aka, E Aloha, E He‘e Nalu* (Live, Laugh, Love, Surf). This kiko‘o is carved in solid mango wood sourced from Hawai‘i Island where Kanuha lives. The scarcity of koa and Kanuha’s commitment to environmentally sustainable methods prompted an adaptation of his board materials. In this case, the board builder opted to use wood from a fallen mango tree, a readily available species that was introduced to Hawai‘i in the early 19th century.

Salvage Public

Sans Souci, 2016

Silkscreen on cotton

Courtesy of the artist (L. 2016–07.01)

Wall Rat, 2016

Silkscreen on cotton

Courtesy of the artist (L. 2016–07.02)

Salvage Public is a menswear line based in Honolulu, Hawai'i. Their t-shirt's are tailored for a slimmer fit and feature a longer hemline as an update to the more common loose-fitting shirt. Situating themselves in a tourist economy, but choosing local idioms in reference to Waikīkī, rather than conforming to the predictable and quintessential Lē'ahi (Diamond Head) landmark image, Salvage Public recalibrates the relationship between producer and consumer using the colloquial garment to circulate local vernacular. "Sans Souci," a popular beach spot in Waikīkī named for an old hotel that once stood nearby, and "Wall Rat," the term for kids who line up to jump into the ocean from the Waikīkī beach wall, are examples of their message t's. Even though their shirts have a specific, local resonance, their garments are immensely popular among tourists and locals alike, with a large commercial following in Japan.

Matthew Tapia

Take it Easy, 2016

Copper

Courtesy of the artist (L. 2016–04.01)

For the past six years, letter and graphic artist Matthew Tapia has documented iconic and, at times, overlooked signs that punctuate O‘ahu’s increasingly urban environment. His #signsofhawaii series on Instagram is a photographic archive of vintage signage. With nearly 52,000 followers, Tapia’s Instagram posts introduce Hawai‘i’s historic typography to a wide audience.

For Tapia, fonts, styles, and materials tell a story about the city, and are indicative of a certain time and place. His fascination with and ambivalence toward the nostalgia that pervades font styles in Hawai‘i acknowledges how 20th-century advertisements were deployed to promote an island paradise, and, over time, secured a place in Hawai‘i’s history in connection to what are now historic structures.

Take it Easy, designed by Tapia, is an extension of his interest in the signs of Hawai‘i, and presents his use of typography to convey a message. Take it easy, a sentiment frequently used in Hawai‘i as people bid farewell, is also the local equivalent of the now familiar adage “keep calm and carry on.”