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HAWAI'I TRIENNIAL ANNOUNCES CURATORIAL THEME & TITLE: ALOHA NŌ

Hawai'i Triennial 2025 | 15 Feb – 04 May 2025 | O'ahu • Maui • Hawai'i Island

HONOLULU (Feb. 2, 2024) — Hawai'i Contemporary, presenter of Hawai'i Triennial, the state's largest, thematic exhibition of contemporary art, announced today the title of **Hawai'i Triennial 2025 (HT25): ALOHA NŌ**. More than a ubiquitous Hawaiian greeting, aloha is a Hawaiian philosophy and way of life. Aloha is an *action* that embodies a profound love and truth-telling, a practice that has been kept and cared for by the people of Hawai'i for generations. This practice of aloha engenders a deep connectivity to the 'āina (land), environment, elements, and each other. By collapsing two, seemingly opposite, meanings — “no” in English with “nō,” an intensifier, in 'ōlelo Hawai'i (Hawaiian language) — ALOHA NŌ seeks to reclaim aloha as an active cultural practice and situate it as a transformative power that is collectively enacted through contemporary art.

Curated by Wassan Al-Khudhairi, Binna Choi, and Noelle M.K.Y. Kahanu — the first non-hierarchical trio of curators for the Triennial composed of women of color — HT25 is a multi-site exhibition of contemporary art from Hawai'i, the Pacific, and beyond. As part of an established field of art biennials and triennials around the world, HT25 is an internationally recognized, large-scale exhibition that presents the latest artistic works and explores local-global dialogues through a Hawai'i- and Pacific-centered lens.

After a nearly year-long process of curatorial research and collaboration, the curators arrived at the title and theme of ALOHA NŌ; they shared the following remarks:

“This past year was profoundly painful for so many of us — locally, nationally, and globally,” said Kahanu, HT25 curator. “As we thought about the role of contemporary art and the Hawai'i Triennial, we kept returning to the notion of aloha, as a means of conversing about healing, solidarity, and shared humanity. ALOHA NŌ allows us to process grief and emerge more whole, and ready to love anew.”

“In aloha I feel the strength and power needed to confront the extreme challenges humanity faces today,” said Al-Khudhairi, HT25 curator. “ALOHA NŌ is a call to action, it is radical love and fierce refusal. Through this philosophy, we hope to share an exhibition that invites viewers to think with us — not only about how to better understand each other and the world we live in, but also to empower us to act and bring positive change. We must learn from aloha to work collectively and with love.”

“Every day, externally and internally, we encounter how broken and torn this world of our time is, as if there's no space for love. Yet, Auntie Manulani Aluli Meyer, whose articulation and practice of aloha we are indebted to, once told us upon our visit with her in Pālehua, ‘only loving left to do.’ I believe her words emphasize the importance of unlearning mere antagonism and practicing loving in every (im)possible moment and way. I know that possibility is abundant in Hawai'i, its culture and people. With ALOHA NŌ, I am certain that, together, we will bring that possibility to light,” said Choi, HT25 curator.

On view 15 February – 04 May 2025, across the Hawaiian Islands of O'ahu, Maui, and Hawai'i Island, this fourth iteration of the Hawai'i Triennial marks the first time the exhibition will expand beyond the island of O'ahu. At

present, collaborating sites of exhibition and/or programming include Bishop Museum; Capitol Modern; Donkey Mill Art Center; East Hawai'i Cultural Center; Foster Botanical Garden; Hale Hō'ike'ike at the Bailey House; Hō'ikeākea Gallery at Leeward Community College; Honolulu Museum of Art; Kaimana Beach Hotel; Mānoa Heritage Center; Shangri La Museum of Islamic Art, Culture & Design; and Ward Village. The organization is also working with the Honolulu Mayor's Office of Culture and the Arts to add further sites of exhibition and/or programming.

“Through the framing of ALOHA NŌ, the next iteration of the Hawai'i Triennial will explore universal themes through the cultural specificity of place,” said Rosina Potter, executive director of Hawai'i Contemporary. “We are energized by the collaborative work of the exhibition and inspired by the connections and partnerships we've forged across our local and Pacific communities.”

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An artist list for HT25 will be announced this spring.

Ahead of HT25, Hawai'i Contemporary will host **Art Summit 2024, 13 – 15 June 2024**, in Honolulu. Art Summit is a symposium-style, thematic precursor to Hawai'i Triennial, in which ideas related to ALOHA NŌ will be explored and unpacked. Centered around high-caliber discourse, the multi-site event will comprise a series of discussions, workshops, and screenings featuring curators, artists, thinkers, and culture bearers from Hawai'i, the Pacific, and the world.

To read the full curatorial statement on ALOHA NŌ and to learn more about Hawai'i Triennial 2025, please visit hawaiicontemporary.org.

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Wassan Al-Khudhairi is an independent curator. Most recently, Al-Khudhairi held the position of Ferring Family Foundation Chief Curator at the Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis, where she organized exhibitions and new commissions with artists Hajra Waheed, Dominic Chambers, Gala Porras-Kim, Martine Gutierrez, Derek Fordjour, Stephanie Syjuco, Paul Mpagi Sepuya, Bethany Collins, Lawrence Abu Hamdan, Guan Xiao, Hayv Kahraman, among others. She was co-curator for the 6th Asian Art Biennial in Taiwan in 2017 and co-artistic director for the 9th Gwangju Biennale in South Korea in 2012. She served as the Hugh Kaul curator of modern and contemporary art at Birmingham Museum of Art, and as founding director of Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art in Qatar, Al-Khudhairi oversaw the opening of the Museum in 2010 and co-curated the exhibition *Sajjil: A Century of Modern Art* and curated *Cai Guo-Qiang: Saraab*.

Binna Choi is a curator based in South Korea and the Netherlands. Choi served as the director at Casco Art Institute: Working for the Commons in Utrecht (2008–2023). Under her fifteen-year directorship, Casco carved its position as a place for affective community with situated artistic and curatorial study-practice and experimentation, in particular, on the notion of the commons and (art) institution and for transnational alliances and solidarity. Her key curatorial-collaborative projects at Casco include *Grand Domestic Revolution* (2009–2012), *Site for Unlearning (Art Organization)* (2014–2018), *Travelling Farm Museum of Forgotten Skills* (2018–2023), next to engagements with networks like Arts Collaboratory (2014–), Afield (2019–), and Cluster (2012–2014) with different capacities. Choi has also engaged with large-scale perennial exhibitions: as co-artistic director for Singapore Biennale 2022, named *Natasha*, and as curator for 11th Gwangju Biennale (2016), titled *The Eighth Climate (What does art do?)*. Choi is an elective member of Academy of the Arts of the World in Cologne, Germany, where she curated the exhibition project *Gwangju Lessons* (2020), which traveled to the Asia Culture Center in Gwangju, South Korea.

Noelle M.K.Y. Kahanu (Kanaka 'Ōiwi/Native Hawaiian) is a 15-year veteran of Bishop Museum in Honolulu, where she developed scores of exhibitions and programs. She worked on the major renovations of Hawaiian Hall (2009) and Pacific Hall (2013), as well as the landmark *E Kū Ana Ka Paia* exhibition (2010). She has a law degree from the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa and previously served as Counsel to the U.S. Senate Committee on Indian Affairs in Washington, D.C., where she worked on issues affecting Native Hawaiians, American Indians, and Alaska Natives. She is currently an associate specialist in Public Humanities and Native Hawaiian Programs in the American Studies Department at University of Hawai'i at Mānoa and is the acting director of the Museum Studies Graduate Certificate Program. Her current research and practice explore the liberating and generative opportunities when museums “seed” rather than cede authority.

About Hawai'i Contemporary

Inspired by the unique histories of Hawai'i, a gathering place for diverse peoples and cultures, Hawai'i Contemporary connects with communities from across our islands and across regions united by the Pacific Ocean. As a collaborative art partner, we cultivate cultural alliances to organize our signature initiatives, including Hawai'i Triennial, the state's largest periodic exhibition of contemporary art from Hawai'i and around the world, which is held every three years. The multi-site Triennial is complemented by year-round public and education programs and preceded by an international Art Summit, featuring artists, curators, and cultural thinkers. A not-for-profit arts organization, Hawai'i Contemporary (formerly known as Honolulu Biennial Foundation) continues to build on the success of its past art exhibitions — Honolulu Biennial in 2017 and 2019, and Hawai'i Triennial 2022 — to contribute to and grow a vibrant arts ecosystem, creating an accessible gateway for contemporary art in Hawai'i nei. // hawaiicontemporary.org // [@hawaiicontemporary](https://twitter.com/hawaiicontemporary) // HawaiiTriennial2025 // #HT25

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Media images available for editorial use upon request.

*The visual identity for Hawai'i Triennial 2025 was created by O'ahu-based graphic design firm Welcome Stranger. The design features the pewa, which is used in Hawaiian woodworking to mend wooden objects. The presence of a pewa denotes a beloved object, often passed down through generations, making it more beautiful and precious to the beholder. By focusing on its distinctive fishtail shape, the pewa serves as a visual device that symbolizes connectivity, unity, longevity, and healing.

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NOTE TO THE EDITOR

This press release contains words in 'ōlelo Hawai'i (Hawaiian language), one of two official languages of the State of Hawai'i. 'Ōlelo Hawai'i utilizes two diacritical marks: a kahakō (macron) and an 'okina (glottal stop). Please note that an 'okina — and not an apostrophe — is used in the word Hawai'i.

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