

**HONOLULU BIENNIAL 2017 ANNOUNCES APPOINTMENT OF NGAHIRAKA MASON
TO CURATORIAL TEAM**

**FORMAL DATES, TITLE, AND INITIAL SITES FOR THE BIENNIAL
ARE ALSO ANNOUNCED**

(Honolulu, Hawai‘i, July 27) – Honolulu Biennial 2017, organized by the Honolulu Biennial Foundation (HBF), announced today the formal title and dates for the inaugural edition of the multi-site, contemporary visual arts festival. Titled, *Middle of Now | Here*, the Biennial will run from March 8 through May 8, 2017 throughout various locations within the city. Additionally, the Honolulu Biennial announced the appointment of Ngahiraka Mason as Curator for the event. Mason previously served, for more than 20 years, as Curator of Indigenous Art, Maori Art at Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki. She joins the Biennial’s Curatorial Director Fumio Nanjo, Director of Tokyo’s Mori Art Museum, in developing the vision and experience, and in selecting participating artists.

Local Hawai‘i-based and Native Hawaiian artists will be featured alongside emerging, midcareer, and leading national and international artists from the countries and continents linked by the Pacific Ocean, giving the Honolulu Biennial a distinctive focus within the global trope of biennials. Several of the featured artists were announced earlier this year, and include MAP Office (Hong Kong); Brett Graham (New Zealand); Les Filter Feeders (Hawai‘i); Charlton Kupa'a Hee (Hawai‘i); Fiona Pardington (New Zealand); Yuki Kihara (New Zealand/Samoa); Mohammed Kazem (U.A.E.); Andrew Binkley (Hawai‘i); and Yayoi Kusama (Japan). The full list is in formation, and will be announced in the fall.

Taking place in a variety of historic, public, cultural, and urban spaces, the initial list of exhibition sites was announced today and includes: Honolulu Hale (city hall), Foster Botanical Garden, and McCoy Pavilion, provided through in-kind, co-sponsorship with the City of Honolulu, Mayor’s Office for Culture and the Arts, and Department of Parks and Recreation; the Arts at Marks Garage and Pegge Hopper Gallery located in historic Chinatown; and Hamilton Library at the University of Hawai‘i at Manoa. Additional exhibition sites and partners will be announced later this fall.

Supporting Nanjo and Mason on the curatorial advisory board are scholars Dr. Greg Dvorak, Dr. Katherine Higgins and Dr. Margo Machida, with Dr. Dvorak also serving as Tokyo advisor to Nanjo.

A statement on the curatorial theme by Nanjo and Mason explains that:

Introducing Honolulu Biennial 2017

The inaugural Honolulu Biennial 2017 (HB2017) showcases the diversity of ideas, art, and culture from the people who live today throughout the places connected by the Pacific Ocean. It will include contemporary art from Hawai‘i, the Pacific Islands, Asia, North America, Australia, and New Zealand. By exhibiting the work of artists from all around this vast region, Honolulu Biennial 2017 shines a spotlight on the collective artistic vision from this important and dynamic Pacific neighborhood.

Why Hawai‘i?

*Hawai‘i is not, and never has been, the “middle of nowhere.” Honolulu Biennial 2017 emphasizes that, as a major center for art and cultural exchange, Hawai‘i is both the middle of Now and Here. **Now**—in the 21st century, our landscapes and lives are in a constant state of change and transformation, in turbulent and contradictory ways. **Here**—Hawai‘i is a vibrant metropolitan crossroads of the Pacific and an ideal host for a convergence of fresh perspectives and aesthetic sensibilities that will shape and transform art, technology, and commerce long into the future. This archipelago has long been the sacred home to the Hawaiian people, as well as a significant place where varied populations have come together. It serves as a vital bridge between the East and West. Hawai‘i is an artistic and cultural hub, a haven for the global exchange of ideas and aesthetics.*

Why the Pacific?

Honolulu Biennial 2017 presents the creative forces thriving within the Pacific Islands region and areas that surround it. The Pacific Ocean is the largest unified living space on the planet, covering more than 30 percent of the Earth’s surface—greater than all the continents combined—with upwards of 25,000 islands that are connected by the sea. The Tongan visionary and scholar Epeli Hau‘ofa wrote: “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.” The people and places of the Pacific thus illuminate the complexity of today’s connected, modern world, far beyond this hemisphere.

Honolulu Biennial Foundation

Honolulu Biennial Foundation (HBF) is a 501c3 and supports the local arts infrastructure with a global outreach by presenting a new arts festival, Honolulu Biennial. The launch of Honolulu Biennial marks Hawaii’s first entry into the international biennial circuit. Honolulu Biennial will focus on art from the Pacific, the Asian continent and North America, debuting next year, running from March 8 – May 8 2017 throughout different sites within the city.

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