

Currents

Life on the Valley Isle

Index: Ahead of the Class C2
Publishers Weekly best-sellers C4

MALAMA WAO AKUA

Going back to nature means giving back to nature for participants in Viewpoints Gallery's unique encounter with living art by LEHIA APANA Staff Writer



The Maui News photos by LEHIA APANA

Clockwise from top left: "Apapane" by Neal Wagner from the 2004 Malama Wao Akua art contest; "Nukupu'u" by Julie Bunce from 2005; photo of a happy-face spider by Randy Miller taken during a recent art hike; "Ka 'O'opu Kupaiianaha" watercolor by Kiani Yasak from 2004; Randy Miller on a recent art hike; Linda Lafragiola snaps a photo of a koa tree during a recent art hike; "Within the House of the Sun" by Beth Marcil took top honors at the 2007 art contest; Malama Wao Akua founder and community outreach/education liaison for the East Maui Watershed Partnership, Kat Lui, leads artists on a hike through Waikamoi Preserve

Artists are constantly using nature as their muse. Thanks to an upcoming art exhibition, they can start returning the favor.

East Maui Watershed Partnership and Viewpoints Gallery are teaming up to host the annual Malama Wao Akua art contest, shining the spotlight on Maui's native flora and fauna in a juried exhibition to be held Oct. 2 to 21.

"Artwork has a way of speaking to people that scientific reports or newsletters can't," says Kat Lui, contest founder and community outreach/education liaison for East Maui Watershed Partnership.

"Art is something that can deeply touch and inspire someone, so we really wanted to use that to reach people."

Organizers are encouraging artists to discover Maui's native species firsthand, create something beautiful and share it with the public. They've even gone so far as to host hiking trips into native rain forests to help stir some of those creative juices.

Artists on a recent hike through Waikamoi Preserve were like kids in a candy store, "ooing" and "ahing" at the chirping of the akohokohe, the smell of the maile leaves and colors of a tiny happy-face spider.

"To be out in nature and see these things in person and to hear the birds is pretty exciting," says photographer Randy Miller. "We're able to see things we normally wouldn't be able to."

Armed with digital cameras and keen eyes, hikers shared in the excitement of spotting a rare bird, insect or oddly shaped plant. Lui led the curious group through the lush terrain, stopping along the way to examine native species and pointing out invasive ones, too.

"I've been on a lot of hikes before, but it was a great opportunity to be around someone like Kat with her knowledge of the plants and trees," Miller says.

Artist Beth Marcil agrees. "Kat is so knowledgeable and enthusiastic that she gets you excited about it too," she says.

Marcil's "Within the House of the Sun" painting featuring two nene geese and the protected silver- sword took top honors at last year's contest. Her involvement has turned her into an artistic ambassador, allowing her to share conservation messages about the island's fragile environment.

"I think art is a unique avenue to promote a lot of things that wouldn't be seen otherwise. It's just a very natural way to bring these very important issue to people's attention."

— Beth Marcil
Top-prize winner in last year's Malama Wao Akua art contest

"I think art is a unique avenue to promote a lot of things that wouldn't be seen otherwise. It's just a very natural way to bring these very important issue to people's attention," she says. "It's really encouraging when there are groups of people trying to protect the environment and it's an honor to be a part of it."

Marcil has gained a renewed sense of energy after a recent hike with fellow artists and plans to submit another piece for this year's show.

"Getting to go with a group of artists is just such a nice opportunity to connect with other people from the community," she says. "I find myself seeing things I normally wouldn't by looking through other artists' eyes."

The contest is open to Maui residents of all ages and abilities, which means that past hiking groups have ranged from accomplished and rookie artists to high school photography students and even senior citizens.

"One of the main goals is to really reach out beyond the choir so that others can become the choir and use their brushes and cameras to reach people," explains Lui. "What better way to inspire people than to bring them directly to the forests?"

Participants are invited to enter just about any kind of art they can think up. The only steadfast rule is the subject matter must be a native Maui species or landscape.

See LIVING ART
on Page C3

MALAMA WAO AKUA 2008

- Location: Viewpoints Gallery, 3620 Baldwin Ave. in Makawao
- Submission deadline: Sept. 30
- Exhibition dates: Oct. 2 to 21
- Opening gala: 5 to 8 p.m. Oct. 4
- A portion of all entry fees and art sales will benefit EMWP.
- For details on eligibility requirements, call 573-6999 or visit www.eastmauiwatershed.org.

Living art

Continued from Page C1

"The show is pretty open, but we're going to be really strict on that theme," says Lui, who adds that scientists will be on hand to confirm the subject is native to Maui.

The spectrum of mediums have been as diverse as the artists represented, with past entries including watercolors, oils, jewelry, ceramics, vases, batik, mosaics and photography.

The annual contest and exhibition began in 2004, an idea that sparked while Lui was sitting in an art class.

"I was painting an akeohekohe and I thought, wouldn't it be fun if we could get artists to do work on native species ... I

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—Kat Lui
Liaison for East Maui Watershed Partnership and contest founder

ended up walking around Makawao town and popping my head into galleries trying to get support," she explains.

Viewpoints Gallery jumped at the idea and has backed the project ever since. Lui experimented with alternative ways to get her message across, which gave birth to a conserva-

tion-themed poetry slam in 2006. While the event was a success, many artists begged to bring the exhibition back.

"We were looking for new ways of reaching out to the public," explains Lui. "But because we did that, we got a lot of feedback from the community asking us to keep doing the art show. It really showed me that this is a good thing and that it should be continued."

Viewpoints Gallery art consultant Peter Rehffuss has witnessed firsthand the effect the art has on the community.

"In the past people have been really taken by the level of talent that we have here on the island and all the different approaches that artists take in expressing themselves," says Rehffuss. "It's not just an art

show, it's education, information and outreach as well."

Viewpoints Gallery will soon transform into a colorful classroom, inviting visitors to enjoy the art, and perhaps learn a few things along the way.

"Not only will you enjoy the pieces visually, but we'll have information about the subjects next to the art," Lui says.

The contest has been a learning experience for the artists as well, adds Rehffuss.

"I know a lot of artists who didn't know what to use as subject matter. The process has forced them to learn about what is native and what isn't," he says.

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The Maui News / LEHIA APANA photo

Armed with digital cameras, Beth Marcell and Randy Miller gather inspiration during a recent art hike through Waikamoi Preserve.

Lahaina RESTORATION FOUNDATION

Wo Hing MUSEUM

SEPTEMBER 2008



MOON FESTIVAL

September 14
10 am to 7 pm

The public is invited to this year's Moon Festival which will be held on Sunday, September 14th from 10 am to 7 pm on the grounds of the Wo Hing Museum. The celebration will include a Chinese Moon Festival display. Lion dances and Kung Fu martial arts demonstrations will be held from 6 to 7 pm. Moon cakes and souvenir items will be available for purchase.

Wo Hing Museum
858 Front Street
Open daily
10 am to 4 pm.

Lahaina Restoration Foundation MISSION STATEMENT
For the benefit of both our residents and visitors, and in cooperation with others, we strive to faithfully restore, maintain and interpret the physical, historical and cultural legacy of Lahaina, Maui, first capital of the Kingdom of Hawaii.

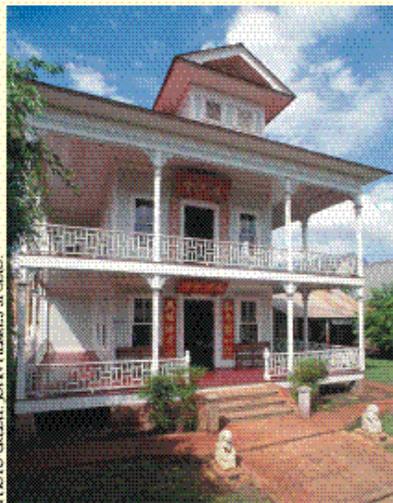


PHOTO CREDIT: JOHN FERRERIS SILVERO

Wo Hing Museum 858 Front Street

Fortunately in 1983, a long term agreement between the Wo Hing Society and the Lahaina Restoration Foundation was made to restore the building and open it to the public as a museum. The restoration was completed one year later. The Wo Hing Society building was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1982.

The Wo Hing Museum is the only Chinese museum in the state of Hawaii. Wo Hing Society members actively perpetuate important Chinese traditions, such as the Moon Festival, Paisean or Chingming (ancestor day), and Chinese New Year.



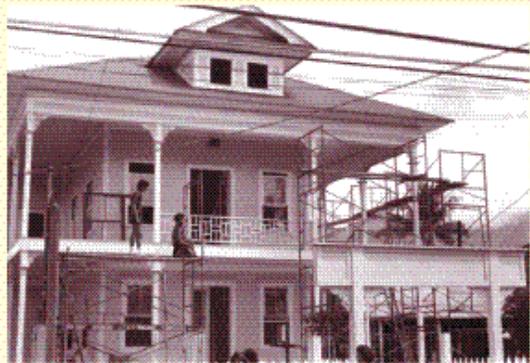
One of 30 wooden plaques from the Wo Hing Museum

Help us solve a mystery!

Is the left photo the original Wo Hing Society building? Note the shadow of a roof top in the upper right hand corner of the early 1900s photo of the Sing Fat Company. According to family members, the store was located across Front Street from the Wo Hing Society building. If you have any information about these photos, please contact the Lahaina Restoration Foundation at 661-3262 or by email at info@lahainarestoration.org.

Built by the Wo Hing Society in the early 1900s, this building and its fraternal organization provided its members - Chinese men brought to Hawaii by the sugar plantations - with a sense of community and a mutual support system in a foreign land.

By the 1940s however, the Chinese population in Lahaina had dramatically declined, and the Wo Hing Society building fell into disrepair. "It languished for many years, right in the middle of town, an architectural jewel, and a key to a fascinating chapter in Lahaina's history." - Jim Luckey, executive director emeritus of Lahaina Restoration Foundation



Renovation underway in 1983

The Wo Hing Society Documents Project

In 1999 Wo Hing Society documents, some dating as far back as 1906, were uncovered. With grant support from Hawaii Council for Humanities and the County of Maui, these documents have been digitally preserved with translation of the ancient Chinese calligraphy done by volunteer Chinese scholars from all over the world. Additionally, translation of the many wooden plaques located within the Wo Hing Museum, also in ancient Chinese calligraphy, is being done for the first time.



Was this the original Wo Hing Building?



Note the shadow of a roof on the right of this photo.