Artist: Brandy Nālani McDougall

Kūpikipikiʻō
  1. Resist
  2. Makawalu
  3. ‘Āina Hānau

Artwork Description
Across from the Manuscript Gallery, poet and Indigenous studies scholar McDougall recites a series of bold calls to action asserting a kānaka maoli (Native Hawaiian) sense of place emerging from Shangri La, linking genealogies and cosmologies of empowerment and connection.

Artist Statement
Poems: "Kūpikipikiʻō," "Resist," "Makawalu," and selected sections from "'Āina Hānau"

As a Kanaka ‘Ōiwi poet, Brandy Nālani McDougall’s work honors Hawaiian ‘āina, culture, histories, and aesthetics, while also confronting American imperialism, militarism, and social and environmental injustice. Her poetry is rooted in the rich genealogies of moʻolelo, moʻokū'auhau, and mele, and has been shaped by Pacific writers who have used their words to resist and overturn imperialism and racism, such as Haunani-Kay Trask, Albert Wendt, Hone Tuwhare, Dewe Gorode, Chantal Spitz, and John Dominis Holt. Using the name of the ‘āina on which Shangri La has been built, Kūpikipikiʻō, the poems performed for the 8x8 exhibition reflect on both the creative and war-wrought connections between Hawaiʻi and Arab nations, whose beautiful and brilliant artworks carry the stories, histories, poetries, and prayers of their peoples, and are now under the care of Shangri La. As a country that was illegally annexed by the U.S. in 1898, Hawaiʻi has since increasingly been militarized so that the U.S. can wage war against Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq, and Syria and back Israel against Palestine. Kūpikipikiʻō is an inoa ‘āina that can be translated with multiple meanings, but is often described as “rough, agitated” creating the inspiration to reflect on these connections. Like the ocean of Kūpikipikiʻō, the poems are turbulent in their move from the rough fire of war and resistance in defending one’s country and independence, exposing the histories and ongoing violence of American imperialism and militarism (and U.S.-backed regimes), to the creation that can come from upheaval, a green replanting of renewal and birth, of stories the poet tells her own children about their deep connections to ‘āina and every other being, seen and unseen, upon it.

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