HONOLULU, HI April 8, 2021 – The Shangri La Museum of Islamic Art, Culture, & Design today announced the launch of its newest exhibition, Sanctuaries, by Kamran Samimi. The show features several mixed media works on canvas, and a large, outdoor sculptural installation. Samimi is the first Hawai‘i-based artist appointed Artist-in-Residence in the museum's history, which first opened to the public in 2002.

"Sanctuaries is the thoughtful outcome of an artistic residency that began in early 2020 and was extended several months due to the pandemic," said Konrad Ng, Executive Director of Shangri La Museum. "This unique, expanded timeframe captured deeply enriching engagements with our museum that only time could inspire. His residency reflects the high caliber of artistic talent in Hawai‘i and our unique cultural intersections."

"The result is a beautifully layered body of work that responds to an extraordinary time and place," said Leslee Michelsen, Curator of Collections and Exhibitions. "Kamran was selected as our first Hawai‘i-based Artist-in-Residence before the pandemic, which allowed us the serendipitous opportunity to continue working together despite being temporarily closed. Our commitment is to develop deeper roots in the local community, highlighting the site-specificity of our contemporary art collaborations and celebrating a fresh direction forward for Shangri La."

Samimi observed and studied the materiality of the museum and its surrounding landscape, from the collections and buildings to the stones on the hillside and the ocean waves crashing below, all as conduits to a spiritual space that resides deep within each. The artwork animates a specific facet of Shangri La: the earth beneath the museum, architectural structures, and the many individuals involved in its creation. The pieces employ mark-making techniques to convey the natural world's aliveness, the artist's cultural awakening, and ancestral connections with the museum. Sanctuaries is a visual celebration of the journey of self-discovery and reflections on the relationships, spiritual and natural, along the way.
"I'm always searching for the spiritual essence of the natural world, and it's very visceral and present throughout Shangri La. The site's many sacred spaces inspired me to reflect on my place in space and time in new ways," said Kamran Samimi. "These meditations directly informed the artwork I created over the past 14 months, and the title, Sanctuaries, expresses this."

Samimi grew up in rural Laupāhoehoe on the Big Island of Hawai‘i to parents of Iranian and Norwegian ancestry. He has exhibited at The Andy Warhol Museum (Pittsburgh, PA), Tokyo Midtown (Japan), and many venues around the state of Hawai‘i, including solo exhibitions at the Honolulu Museum of Art, The Gallery at the University of Hawai‘i, the Kirsch Gallery, and Kahilu Theatre. Samimi earned a BFA in Printmaking and an MFA in Print Media and Sculpture from the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa.

Sanctuaries is available for public viewing online at www.shangrilahawaii.org through October 2, 2021, and for limited in-person visits beginning July 1, 2021.

Shangri La Museum of Islamic Art, Culture, & Design enriches public understanding of the art and design of Islamic cultures in new and inspiring ways through exhibitions, digital and educational initiatives, public programs and guided tours, and community partnerships. Shangri La is a program of the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation through the Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art.

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Media Contact:

Andrea Galvin
Communications and Special Projects
Shangri La Museum
agalvin@ddef.org | 808.782.7340