About the Artist: Carl F K Pao

Carl Franklin Ka‘aila‘au Pao was born in Honolulu and resides in his hometown of Kailua on the island of O‘ahu. He received his Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in 1994 from the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa and Master of Fine Arts in 1999 (with first-class honors) from Elam School of Fine Arts, University of Auckland, Aotearoa. Pao teaches art at his alma mater, Kamehameha Schools. He was also a co-owner/operator of Lodestar Collective gallery. Pao has exhibited his sculptures, paintings, prints, graphic designs, and ceramics throughout Hawai‘i; in the continental United States in New York, California, Washington, Kansas, and Massachusetts; and in the Pacific in Aotearoa, Sāmoa, and New Caledonia. Pao’s artwork can be found in both public and private collections throughout Hawai‘i as well as internationally.

Pao’s work is inspired by and grounded in his Kanaka Maoli culture. He enjoys using a diverse range of media, while exploring themes involving identity, spirituality, history, the environment, and politics. A fundamental way in which Pao communicates his ideas is through kaona and wā, concepts that are rooted in his Kanaka Maoli heritage. Kaona pertains to the veiled layers of knowledge that are accessible only to the experienced person, and the wā is the “space between.” Pao believes that residing in the wā is the kaona of the universe. The purpose of his work is to enable the viewer to enter the nebulous realm of the wā where the kaona exists. It is also through the wā that Pao believes he is able to access inherent knowledge of his ancestors. Pao draws inspiration from his friend, Auckland-based Samoan artist John Ioane, who explains the wā as being a place “where the magic of art occurs.” Taking a holistic approach, Pao hopes that his work engages the viewer at multiple levels including the physical, mental, and spiritual.
Waikāne
Acrylic on canvas, 1999, 8’ × 4’
"Ihe
Koa, 2005, 36" × 1" × 1"
Coast Guard (5 of 5)
Acrylic, paper, shellac on canvas, 2004, 5' x 8'
Collection of the Pacific Command Headquarters, Camp Smith, Honolulu, Hawai‘i
Ha'ina Kolo
Ka Holo 'Ana: Voyage
Acrylic, paper, shellac on canvas, 2001, 48" x 60"
Collection of the Ilikai Hotel, Honolulu, Hawai'i
Kumu
Acrylic and pencil on canvas board, 2005, 20” x 16”
Private collection, O‘ahu, Hawai‘i
Wā/Mū
Acrylic, paper, shellac on canvas,
2000, 30" x 30"
Air Force (1 of 5)
Acrylic, paper, shellac on canvas, 2004, 5' × 8'
Collection of the Pacific Command Headquarters, Camp Smith, Honolulu, Hawai‘i
Navy (4 of 5)
Acrylic, paper, shellac on canvas, 2004, 5' x 8'
Collection of the Pacific Command Headquarters, Camp Smith, Honolulu, Hawai’i