

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: Dalani Tanahy

Dalani Tanahy was born in San Diego in 1961. She is a kapa maker based out of Mākaha, O‘ahu. She moved to O‘ahu in 1979 to attend Brigham Young University, eventually settling in Mākaha in 1986. She began making kapa in earnest in 1994, after taking a class taught by Kawai Aona-Ueoka through Kawai’s nonprofit, Kapa Aloha. Her skill as a kapa maker has largely evolved out of her own experimentation and study. Dalani supports herself as a full-time kapa practitioner through workshops, teaching university students, and commissioning unique pieces for individuals and agencies. She has also worked on grant-funded projects, including making kapa for the repatriation of iwi kūpuna.

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Dalani Tanahy (DT)

Mākaha, O‘ahu

March 13, 2023

BY: Avalon Paradea (AP)

AP: All good. I just want to make sure I had it with me because even though things are being recorded, it's always nice to have notes as well. So I'm going to start off with just kind of basic questions. What is your name?

DT: My name is Dalani Tanahy.

AP: And when and where were you born?

DT: I was born in San Diego, in 1961. And then again in Mākaha, in 1985.

AP: [Laughs] I love that. That's awesome.

DT: [Laughs]

AP: Well said. All right, so what do you currently do for a living?

DT: I am currently a kapa practitioner, teacher, artist for a living.

AP: When did you first start making kapa?

DT: You know, I'd have to say in 1968, in San Diego at school. When teachers actually used to teach a wide range of interesting things and lots of art. And we had a section on the Pacific and made our bark cloth out of brown paper bags, as they often still do. I remember making it a distinctively, probably Samoan pattern, because I was familiar with that. My family, my mother's family is from Maui, and so we went to Hawai‘i every year. So I was familiar. I knew all these kinds of things already. So, I did that, which was funny when I actually became a kapa maker, and then my parents told me, "You know, when you were a baby, we used to just put all your toys in one corner and you wouldn't move." And I was like, "As if I was being groomed to make kapa." To sit in one place and just [laughs] and play right there in that corner!

AP: Enjoy your corner. That's all you get.

DT: That's gonna be your life!

AP: I love that. I love that you bring up the brown paper bags. It's something that, surprisingly when I was in school, I don't remember us doing that. But my husband did. He went to Kealakehe

Elementary, Intermediate and High. And was telling me recently, you know, "Oh, yeah, even just the brown paper bags alone. It gets the kids thinking..."

DT: Yeah.

AP: And that's important. So would you have been like, a child then when you were doing that?

DT: Yeah, yeah. I was probably like, second or third grade when we were doing that. But then my kapa making in earnest started in about, probably 1994. When Kawai Aona-Ueoka was doing workshops on toolmaking. And actually, when I moved to Hawai'i in 1979, and I was going to school up at BYU (Brigham Young University) Hawai'i, my Hawaiian language class, we went to Bishop Museum. That was the first time I saw Hawaiian kapa. I had just gotten married. I had a giant Tongan kapa that a lady from church had given me with a whole Tongan wedding trousseau, and you know, I dragged that thing all over the place when we moved. But I had never seen Hawaiian kapa. I was an artist as a child and growing up, you know, and seeing that, I clearly remember thinking, "Wow, that is something I think I would like to learn more about." I perceived that it was rare somehow, special somehow, and then had to wait 15 years because there was no "beep-bop-beep [smart phone], find it for me now. Get it, call somebody, send the money, I'm good to go." I tell kids now, "You guys will never know what it is to wait." Or be bored apparently, or have to entertain yourself in your own mind because there's a thing to entertain you, get it for you, everything for you. No one has to wait. But I had to wait 15 years. And then when this girl came out here and was teaching that class, I was like, "Ahh! My journey begins!" And so we spent a weekend making the tools and then she left. And she did not teach us anything [hands-on] about kapa making, but she left us with little baby trees and our tools. And I kind of just launched myself from there, so.

AP: That is really impressive. I'm sorry, what was the name of that person?

DT: Kawai Aona. A-O-N-A. Aona-Ueoka. U-E-O-K-A.

AP: Awesome. Kawai Aona-Ueoka. And where was she from?

DT: She was from, when I knew her... Well, you know, I think she was maybe from Nānākuli. But when I knew her, she was from Kahalu'u side. Because she was growing... so she had a nonprofit called Kapa Aloha. So that was back in the early '90s, and maybe even late '80s, of trying to revive kapa arts and places to pound. The same thing we're always doing, year after year, trying to revive, and do, and whatever. She had gotten a grant to teach these workshops on toolmaking.

AP: That's really cool. That's really interesting. How did you end up finding her? Just word of mouth?

DT: We just saw a notice somewhere. I was doing something with somebody and they said, "Oh, [check out this class]." I was like, "Oh, I'm going." So, yeah.

AP: That is really, really cool. Would you say that she was your kumu then? Or..?

DT: You know what, I don't say she was my kumu. She taught us how to do the tools, or introduced that to us. But she did not teach us anything kapa making, which was kind of devastating to me at that time. But then, me working on that, and then I used to surf with Maile Andrade's sister when she was living out here. And so she said, "Eh, you know, I think my sister does that stuff, you should call her." Because I was pretty much just learning from DNA and grit. I had a four by four I was pounding on and just trying, once those trees actually grew. So I was really kind of making it up as I went along. I don't even think I had a copy of "Ka Hana Kapa" [book by William T. Brigham] in my hands yet. So I was just like, pretty sure it's like this, and pretty sure like this, but, just kind of struggled through that. And then I called Maile and I said, "Hey, I'm doing this thing." She was like, "Oh yeah, no, just keep pounding." It's like, "Oh, okay, thank you. You're probably right." She goes, "Really, it is just keep pounding." And then I was involved in a restoration up at Kane'aki Heiau, back up in here [referring to Mākaha] with a bunch of members of the community. And then that's when I met Eric Enos, and he runs the Ka'ala Learning Center back in Wai'anae Valley. And, auspiciously, they had just finished writing a curriculum for the fourth grade for kapa making. Auspiciously, they had a whole mountain full of wauke trees, and a whole workshop full of tools, to make the tools, to make the kapa of those trees, and the curriculum to teach the children. And all they lacked was some suckah -- I mean, somebody -- to teach! [laughter] So when we were doing that, trees that I was growing were ready. And so I cut them down and I put them in the stream. Now, that was the year we had this huge, huge flooding back here and the flood, it washed the mud off the mountain and into the towers back there, and just all this trauma. It ripped the river, Mākaha Stream, huge. But in my mind, [in peaceful voice] "I'm putting this kapa into this river. Like my ancestors did!" But the river's like, [Dalani mimics the sound of raging water] "Grrrffshh!" And it was all full of mud. And when I pulled up the trees I was like, "Hmm, they're colored already." [laughter] Oh, my gosh!

AP: Which is how they got that nice brown!

DT: Yes, exactly. So so funny. Oh my gosh, you know what, I tell you, having to learn on my own was hilarious, but it took me all over the place in here. I mean, I used to roll up the wauke and go take it down to the beach and put it in the tide pools and leave it. Or I'd tie it all to a juice jug, tie it out to the reef while I was surfing. I'd put a thing on it, I'd write a thing says, "Don't touch this, it's Dalani's." Because I surfed every day out there, people knew me. And so I'd have all this... too bad I didn't have a camera. There'd be all this wauke, just boom, boom in the ocean. I'd come and get it and it had just like, beaten itself to death on the rocks. I was like, "Lesson learned. Lesson learned!" I mean, things that I cannot teach you. But you know, when you're just out there just going for it and doing every stupid thing, that was probably the best part of trying to learn. It's easy to say, "Oh, my Kumu was," but it's another thing to say, "Yeah, we stuck it in this raging river. We left it in the tide pools. We did all this stuff."

AP: That's amazing.

DT: So when I met Eric, then they asked me if I wanted to take this job. I had been running a surf shop for about six years out here [in Wai'anae], I had been working at a cabinet shop for a couple years. ... He took me to see Pua Burgess, because she was on the board. And they asked me if I wanted to do this, because it seemed I had this interest in it. And I said, "Yeah, you know,

okay, so couple things. I really don't know jack about kapa. I have no idea what I'm doing. I'm making it all up as I go along. Also, I am super shy and I really hate to talk in front of people on purpose. I don't care if they're eight years old. I don't want to do that." And they were like, "You'll be fine. We'll be with you. It's good. And the teacher promised she'll make lemon bars." I was like, "Oh, well, lemon bars? Oh, all my fears have just faded away then." So I ended up getting hired by them and teaching with them.

AP: And what school was this?

DT: So the first school they had was Nānākuli Elementary. So we did Nānākuli and Nānāikapono, when it was on that side, on the beach side. And I'll tell you, when I do talk about who I learned from, I always have to put down the children. And actually, that's ongoing, you know, because you always learn. And then you see that, too, when you watch people do it with uncorrupted eyes. Like at this point we're just like, "I do it this way because I've done everything, and this is what I like best." But then when you see people revisit the things that you kind of went, "Hmm, nah," it's like, "Well, maybe I need to go back and revisit that thing," 30 years later, or whatever. So I did learn a lot from watching the kids, you know? And I'd see them, and they're kids, and they're "blah, blah, blah" and pound, pound, pound and the kapas are spreading out. And I'd be like, "Hmm, m-my first kapa didn't look like that! What's the difference here?" Probably the freedom of being eight years old that lets you just go for it. Yeah. Oh! And we're in Nānākuli. This is all Polynesian kids, the DNA! The DNA coming through them, making them all practitioners already.

AP: I love that! That's really meaningful.

DT: So sorry, it's a really long story how I started doing kapa, but it was...

AP: No, that's the whole point of this though. And that's where, I try not to interject too much because the whole idea here is I'm interviewing you, but I do have to just say, in my experience doing workshops with kids, they just come in unfiltered.

DT: Yeah.

AP: You know, and it's just "Oh, why do you think that?"

DT: And you can use that stuff, man.

AP: It's crazy.

DT: It's good stuff! [Laughs]

AP: I know. There's some wisdom there.

DT: Yeah!

AP: You know, where it's just like, "How did you come up with that?"

DT: Yeah, yeah.

AP: "Who are you channeling right now?"

DT: [Laughs]

AP: Seriously! So I really like that a lot, and I think it makes a lot of sense. Because, again, it's not like... most of us... nobody had this linear progression unfortunately, right? Because, "Oh, yes, my great, great grandmother on my great grandfather's..."

DT: Yeah, you gotta talk to lauhala weavers for that one. They're all about their lineal everything. But the kapa makers are all a bunch of lone wolves. Just kind of got it from here and there, and there and here, you know. Because I didn't, by the time I actually got to where I knew what I was doing, I still hadn't met anybody else, really. I didn't know Moana [Eisele] them [referring to other well-known kapa makers] or anybody until a few years later. And then we started kind of getting together with people. And the thing I regret is that I didn't do a master apprentice program with each of them.

AP: Right. Right.

DT: Because everybody came from such different places in their learning, and it's all interesting things, you know.

AP: Truly. And that's just it, because everybody has their own unique flavor when it comes to this work. What would you say your relationship with kapa is right now?

DT: Oh, sort of a toxic entanglement. [laughs] Well... I started renting this piece of land we're on here now...

AP: And where are we? Just for the record.

DT: We're in Mākaha. I've lived out here since 1986. So I have a, we bought a house out here when a young poor family could actually buy a house for \$68,000.

AP: Oh my gosh.

DT: I know, right? When my son turned 30 I wanted to kill myself because I should have been paying off that mortgage but, nope! We just refinanced it for like the third time. Somebody down the line will be paying it off. Anyway, so... but there was this piece of land, this acre next to it, that was one that the original lots when Chinn Ho owned all of Mākaha Valley. And after he wasn't able to build his Marin County, then he sold it all off. So I was able, kind of in a strange way, to rent this land. And I remember sitting out here in the haole koa, and the kiawe, and the tall grass going, "I could do something with this. I can make this into something." And thank goodness I had just got married and brought my young strong husband over here from Egypt. And I tell him all the time, "I could have never done this if you weren't here." Because it was just so much. Put

in the water, and build the gates, and clear it, we could go rent a machine and clear it, and all this stuff. And then I started doing my year long classes, so we started planting wauke all over the place and doing things. And then finding out that this was like, a perfect place for growing wauke. I have sent many, many wauke babies to their untimely deaths when my students are like, "We want to grow, try growing wauke at our place." "Okay." "Kumu, my tree is still only like, this high [short]." I go, "Haven't you had it for like a year?" "Yeah, what's wrong with it?" "It ain't it. It's something there, it's not happy." Wauke is notorious for being able to just stunt itself forever. And I said, "Well, if you can get it to grow and to have some children, little brothers, whatever, hopefully they'll adapt and they'll be fine." But sometimes the ones you put in are just like, "Nope." But everything we plant here just grows like gangbusters, so...

AP: I know. It's really impressive. What varieties do you grow?

DT: So I have the laumana that I got from Ka'ala Farm... see, and I'm not even sure I still have the ones from Kawai. She gave us a type of laumana, too, and laumana being the one with the, kind of the more fingery-looking one. And the ones from Ka'ala, they got from Malia Solomon, who I believe got them from Tonga. So there was... so Andrea Seelenfreund... her and this guy from Taiwan have been doing wauke genealogy and DNA testing and things for many years. Yeah, so cool. And so they were able... what they've been trying to do is just track how it moved from Taiwan. And so they found the path that brought it with the Polynesians. But then the second path, when it came back as part of the revival, and so a lot of that came from Tonga. But then I also have a couple of varieties from Maui. And I have Roen's variety, Roen's one, but the one she also got from Maui.

AP: Oh, interesting.

DT: She told Wes it was from Maui. So I have the one I got from her. And then I got one from 'Āo Valley. I got one from Lisa Schattenburg and from up her place, but I'm not sure where she got those from. And then I got one from my friend who had them growing in his place in Wailuku that were really good. And those are all po'a'aha type, meaning kind of the red veined, rounder leaf variety. Oh, and then I got some that I stole from UH, from the School of Hawaiian Knowledge. So they had a few, I think Maile had planted them. So they had these couple and then they had these wild raggedy ones growing by the lo'i. But I knew these ones, by the learning center... What's the whole name of that school?

AP: Kamakakūokalani, The Hawaiian Center....

DT: Yep. So I knew these trees that were there were old. But they were only like, three and a half feet tall. So I said, you know what, I'm just taking a couple of you guys home. I'm sure I asked permission of somebody. I just went "snap, snap," pulled out a couple of those guys, brought them home, stuck them in the ground where they promptly took off, and then spread all over the place.

AP: Those are also po'a'aha?

- DT: Yeah, those are po‘a‘aha too. And po‘a‘aha I don't usually love because it gets really branchy. And you just have to monitor that all the time if you're trying to grow nice, straight trees. And it can just do interesting things that my laumana doesn't. But I also found that it does have a really nice bark too, so. And then I have another one, that kind of looks like the one that Roen has that I always said had the "giraffe skin" on it. And actually, I think I was quoted in one of Andrea's [Seelenfreund] books about this "giraffe skin," [laughter] because it just had the big spot kind of things on it.
- AP: It does, yeah.
- DT: And I have one that looks kind of like it. I don't think it's the same, though. Because this one, it will grow into a tree. And I've been cutting it down for years, I don't water it or do anything. It's growing in the back of my house, and can't get rid of it. And it makes nice kapa, but the skin is so thin that you couldn't use it for classes, because they would scrape it all off. But if you can get it old enough and careful enough to do the stripping, then it makes really nice... there's that one kapa they talk about, the ‘oloa kapa, the really fine thin white one. I feel like that could be that type of kapa, because it's naturally so thin already. But I don't love working with that, so it just continues to do what it wants and I keep it as a sample plant.
- AP: That's nice, though. It sounds like you have quite the diversity of genetics then here on the property, which is really, really awesome. I take it they're all male?
- DT: I'm gonna take that, because there are no flowers on any of these trees.
- AP: Yeah, because that's where Roen's patches, when they have flowers, it's boy flowers on them. And it's something that I'm interested in trying to learn a little bit more about, is finding where there might be females versus males. Some people have told me that in the past, Hawaiians only had the female of the plants.
- DT: Mhm, see and I always read that it was the male of plants.
- AP: Right, and then I was told that though recently by Ka‘iulani. And I was like, "Oh, maybe I misread. Or maybe I also read somebody misinterpreting or mistranslating". So...
- DT: Or everybody's right! Or everybody's wrong!
- AP: Right! Or it depends on where you are, because Hawai‘i is not one place. You know what I mean? It's like, maybe in one area, they only had male and others they only had female. So it's really, really possible, you know.
- DT: So that's why when I say, when they grow, that it's like its "little brothers."
- AP: Yeah.
- DT: Because they're not propagating.

AP: No. Exactly. I said it to someone the other day, I was like, "It's almost just one plant."

DT: Yeah.

AP: When you go into Roen's patch, it's like, these are all just, try to find...

DT: They're all sprouting off that guy over there.

AP: Exactly. And sometimes we find these stumps of ones that like, I don't even know how they cut them down, to be honest. I'm like, "What was this?" And Roen's like, "You'd have to have asked my mother." And I'm like, "Well, wish I could." So then in that case, when it comes to sourcing your wauke, you have it all right here. That's awesome.

DT: That is. And Wes probably mentioned that we've been getting stuff from Fiji, too. Because there's a lot of classes I do and things where, I don't think anything's wrong with outsourcing for some of this stuff. You know, we do a lot of classes to make kapa for the iwi. They want people to go through all the... so they order that all the tools for the first and second beatings. But, you know, we're only working for a weekend, so you really can't use them all. But you ordered them, so, let's use 'em! So I'll buy just the dried strips from Fiji and then process those, so that I can bring them to class and then people can also pound that. Which, typically, as a teacher, I don't like that, because you didn't put in the time getting through the first stage, because there's such different stages. But... it just speaks to being able to teach this thing that's so huge. And then make it into these bite sized little pieces for these random -- not random purposes, I mean, it's an important thing, that we do it for. And then having to adapt and do other things that may be outside your comfort zone. Bringing in Fijian stuff, "Ehh" [shrugs]. But on the other hand, "Ehh, don't really want to pick all my good trees for this." Because they don't know what they're doing, I don't know what's gonna happen [laughter].

AP: I feel that. There have been those moments at Roen's where I'm like, "Oh, that one's nice." You know, "That's yours, Roen. Don't let somebody else, don't let the 11 year old kid take that." You know what I mean? Like...

DT: And she's like, "It's fine, there's more."

AP: No, truly.

DT: Oh, yeah, yeah. When we were teaching kapa, when I was in the schools a lot, one of our things was trying to just integrate the whole program into the school, so I wouldn't have to be there. So we did PD credit classes for the teachers. We talked to the principals and convinced them, let us grow wauke there. We made tools so that they would have tools on site. But then of course, the teacher you taught at this school, then left, and then the kūpuna all end up taking all the tools home, and then the Filipino yard guys end up cutting down all the wauke trees. So unless somebody is just always there to manage it, it was really difficult to keep that kind of program. It was a good program, and we gave everything, but it was just hard for it to stay there if somebody wasn't always watching it. And that's always the thing, when they want to grow farms, or do stuff, if you don't have somebody who's just going to commit their soul to it, then you really can't

do it. Or you can do it for that year, and then cross it all out. But at Nānākuli El., oh my gosh, we grew just the most beautiful trees. Right up against the fourth grade class. Full stream of sun all day. We amended the soil, we put in a drip line, I made the kids go sing and dance for the trees all the time. And when they grew, and I was cutting them down, I was like, "Arghhh! I need to take these guys home!" [Laughs]. I said, "Oh no, these children worked hard to get these beautiful trees. It's okay." I always just act like there's no more trees. And then you look and there's nine thousand babies and it's like, "Oh, yeah, there's a couple trees here." Get over it.

AP: I think there are those moments though, where it's like, "Oh, my God, this is so... It takes so long." So of course there's an attachment there. And when you do know that the material is good it's like, you don't want it to go to waste. You don't want to see the wrong thing happen to it, whatever that might be. So then right now, are there any schools that are growing wauke in the area?

DT: You know, KS [Kamehameha School] has a patch. Yeah, I never get to use it when I go up there. It just depends on whatever teacher has kapu'd the patch at any given moment. Oh, I think... Mā'ili Elementary, I think has some growing. And I mean, I haven't worked with the schools for quite a while. I do more adult classes now. But I know there is more out there, like there's a girl who works at Waimea falls, and they've had wauke growing out there, she makes kapa and demonstrates it. And so I think she's taking care of a patch over there. And you know, a lot of people, we talk to people all the time who want to help and they want to grow wauke, but it really needs to be cultivated. I mean, it was never domesticated. They always just kind of work with it how it was, but there are things you can do to make sure that you are at least... you know, the good kapa starts right now, with the trees in the ground. And people don't think about that. And I had this hālau that came to me and they wanted to make these things to wear for Merrie Monarch, yeah? And I said, "Okay, well, it's January, and I believe Merrie Monarch is in like, four months." "Well, yeah, but you know..." I said, "Okay, well, we can do that. So did you bring the trees?" And they're like, "Well, we were hoping..." "Oh, see and that's your problem right there." Because these trees are earmarked already, for like the next two years. I mean, the minute it's in the ground I already know where this guy is gonna be going. I said, "We got classes and classes for iwi. I got university, I got this, and that, and the commissions and the da-da-da-da-dah." So I said so, "Why don't we plant you guys a patch, take care of it, and the next year," they're like, "Mmhmhmm." Next thing, I get a phone call, "Oh, so Kōkua Kalihi Valley is gonna give us some of their trees." And I was like [raises eyebrow]... because, I know their trees, but I don't know their trees.

AP: Right.

DT: But I know them.

AP: Right. [Laughs].

DT: And I was kinda like, "Okaaay." So I said, "Okay, you know what, you guys come over. You're gonna help me clear my garden. I'm gonna give you guys a class on making kapa. Then you guys go cut the trees the week before we work. Try and get trees that look like this and this," but I know those trees, so, I don't know. And so they did, and they brought them back. I'm so spoiled,

because my trees are so good. And those trees in Kalihi, they're kind of, the bark is kind of rugged, you know. It's very just "eh-eh-eh-eh-uh" [jagged noises] like that. I was talking to somebody one time and we were wondering if because it's in a wet place, that it's just a little more open-celled or something to bring in the water. Where in a dry place, it just locks itself up so nothing gets out. Because you see how nice and smooth these are [referring to her wauke trees]. But those were really, I mean, it's a lot of work to get through that kind of stuff.

AP: Interesting to think about. I'm sure there's a huge difference. I mean, they're taking up water completely differently.

DT: And they have water all the time. These guys pretty much just drawing it up through the roots when they get it. So, yeah, so a bunch of crazy stuff. So, they worked on their things. They look okay, so... They'll be the first hālau coming out on kahiko night so watch for them. Very nice, very sassy, sexy dance they got going on [laughs].

AP: Oh, that is very exciting. I'm definitely going to pay attention, then!

DT: And then even Sabra [Kauka], she got a grant this past couple of years with the gal who won from Kaua'i last year, [Leina'ala] Jardin. She got a grant to work with them to make their pā'ūs. So they'll be wearing pā'ūs at Merrie Monarch, too.

AP: Very nice.

DT: They'll probably be really nice. This kapa are kinda like, little bit rough. It was pouring down rain, they were standing in water in here, up to their ankles, pounding their kapa [laughter].

AP: The dedication.

DT: I said, "Wow, it's gonna look like you guys ran through the forest and then came, stopped to dance, but okay."

AP: I love that. That's amazing though, and it's so, so cool. You mentioned you mostly teach adult classes at this point?

DT: Yeah... Well, there's a school in town called SEEQS [the School for Examining Essential Questions of Sustainability]. That's like about sustainability and stuff. And it was so funny when one of the counselors said, "We'd love for you to come back and teach, because we don't have a lot of Hawaiian culture things." And I went... [pauses for effect] I'm thinking, quietly for once, "Oh, that's interesting, because Hawaiians! And sustainability! And hellooo!" [Laughs] How are you not using the island itself as your curriculum?

AP: Right? I mean, it's everywhere. And there's so many people doing things. Like, are you living in a bubble? I'm sorry, I... stuff like that really annoys me, personally. All you have to do is get out and talk with people, it's not that hard.

DT: Just give it a couple of years, we will be living like that again.

AP: Well, we might have to.

DT: We might have to. I know.

AP: I love the idea. It also might be a total necessity. But yeah, that's where I think a lot about the agriculture, too. I mean, because once upon a time, this would have been right next to the lo'i, and so there's this whole relationship there that, it would be great to see that come back.

DT: But not because we had to, because we're cut off completely from the world, but because we want to. But people don't operate that way.

AP: Exactly. It's always out of, everything's out of necessity most of the time at this point, you know?

DT: Yeah.

AP: So for your adult classes do you teach here? Do you teach in particular venues?

DT: Both. Both. Before the pandemic happened, because I remember that week was like, "No, Merrie Monarch! I guess we're staying home." I was sitting in the Academy of Art parking lot, because I had been teaching there for about six years. "Classes are canceled." I had Aulani the next day, because I'd been teaching there since they opened and, "Oh, hotel's shut down." Everything I did was like, boom, shut down right there. So I was at UH West and the kids said, "Please don't stop our class." I said, "No, no. We can work outside at the farm, don't worry." And then I had my year long class here. And I told those guys, I said, "You know, this is pu'uhonua to me." I said, "You guys come, mask, no mask, whatever you want to do." And they're like, "Yeah, yeah, we need to come". Because you know, when they talked about how people were like -- in New York or cities -- where they were literally in the house. And it's like, I can't even fathom that, you know why? Farm! And there is no resting, and hiding and quarantining on the farm! [Laughs] We were outside, my grandkids would come down here and play and we'd go the beach. And it's like, the only thing that's different is it's nicer and quieter now. Because nobody's here we have it all back and...

AP: We got really quiet on Hawai'i Island. Going to the farmers market on the Saturday was such a treasure. It was just, boom!

DT: Sad for the vendors because they're missing...

AP: But you know, I actually feel like... Yes, they definitely didn't make as much money, no doubt about it. But at the same time, then there were things like the PPP loan, and things like that helped a lot of people. And it was less stressful in the sense of not just having these hoards of... oh, my God. I mean, just the parking alone is basically impossible now, you know.

DT: Really?

AP: Oh, it's, on Saturdays up in Waimea... it's crazy. It really is. And it's just a farmers market.

DT: And that's just, that's tourists?

AP: Yes, that's tourists.

DT: Wow. Like being bused up there?

AP: No, no, they're driving their rental cars up there. They're all staying in South Kohala. So it's just, for them, it's a 30 minute drive, 20 minute drive. And I'm in Waikōloa Village, so I'm coming up with all of those people. And I just didn't realize before. Because when I go to the farmers market, that's my grocery shopping. I'm in and out. I talk story with the farmers, I get my stuff, I'm out. But now it's all these people mulling about, taking their selfies, their açai bowls and, you know, it's just like, please... I just want to get my cheese. I just want to get my cheese. But yeah, classes though, I can only imagine that would have been a challenge, right?

DT: It was. It kind of was. You know, the upside of during the pandemic was that a lot of... since the hotels all shut down, the ones who had money and had been planning to renovate went ahead and did that. So I was actually working the whole time on pieces for hotels. Yeah, and actually, it was probably one of my most lucrative couple of years in my whole career! [Laughs] Was the pandemic!

AP: Go figure!

DT: Just, oh my god...

AP: I'm glad to hear that though. Because honestly, it makes me happy when I hear people were able to get through this weird time.

DT: People in my classes, I had so many who worked in the tourism industry, for the airlines, and I told them, I said, "You know what? Don't even worry about paying or anything. Just come. Just come so you can get out. Bring your kids if you want, they can play on the swing set, play with the dogs, whatever. Just come and leave all of that." And some of them did. Some of them did. It was, it was alright. So this year, I'm at UH West. And then I'm with two different, with a grant from OHA [Office of Hawaiian Affairs] and a grant from ANA, to do the kapa for the iwi repatriations. They bringing back a lot. But there are a lot here, that are still sitting in boxes in DOCARE offices and DLNR offices, that also need to go back. So there's a couple of groups who are teaching people the protocol of building the stone structures to put them in, making the kapa, making the lauhala baskets to put the bones in. And you know, when you talk about these things, it's not like, all these full skeletons are coming back. For the most part, it might just be a couple of bones from each individual, jawbone or skull bones. So we're not really trying to make these giant pieces of kapa. So it works out and gives lots of nice exposure to people, and people able to kind of give back to the "beyond community," the community that has left us. So I have a bunch of those going on throughout this year. And then I'm supposed to start another one of my year long classes. I have two students who got grants to do master apprentice stuff, and so I wanted to kind of start the class with them, and have those two and then build a class around that. So we're waiting for them to get their funding and then we'll start something. But then in the

meantime there's the farm. Then there's commission work, and then there's writing and doing all these other kind of things that are going on. It kind of never stops. So when I say my relationship with my work is toxic entanglement -- doesn't necessarily mean toxic. But it is... it is like how those plants that grow on the tree and they're stuck, and suck all the life out of it. It's probably like that. [Laughs].

AP: It sounds like an overgrown wauke patch, is what it sounds like.

DT: Yeah, it's pretty interesting, because it literally is a 24/7 thing. And I tell people, "Wow, I long for the day of just clock in, clock out, go home, don't think about it." But that ain't my life. Even as an artist, it's been really hard for me over this time, because my art was drawing, just life drawing. I mean, as a child, and a teenager and everything, there was not a piece of paper in my vicinity that didn't have some kind of horse, or dragon, or skateboard, or something on it. I still have friends from high school who tell me, or middle school, that say, "I still have that math paper with a dragon you drew on the back for me." Because, [whispers angrily] "Fine, I'll, draw a horse on the back of it." [Laughs] I was telling my husband that, because I was looking at this... you know that girl Lehuauakea. So I have to do a thing with her next year at some museum, it's a paper museum but they want to pull in barkcloth as, "This is paper too." Something like that. So they wanted us to create some stuff but I was looking at one of her pages of things and, very prolific and just, all this stuff going on. And even Nikau [Hindin], and... I was in Pictures Plus one day dropping some stuff off, I saw these big ol' rolls of kapa something, and I was like [wordlessly makes an interested face, pauses]... roll them open. I said, "This is Roen's work." And she had all that pinching crazy 3D stuff going on. When I saw her at the opening of the show [Ola Ka No'eau at Bishop Museum], I was like, "Roen, I have to steal this." She's like, "Yeah," she goes, "I learned it from this Spanish papermaker [Manzano], he was showing me. You just take it and wet it, and do this, and this, then I stitch it on." I said, "I love it," and I really need to... So as an artist, I liked to draw. I liked life things. As a kapa maker, and as someone who became a person in the revival of the kapa making, it was important to stick to that style. I always get emails from people, "Oh, we found this kapa. Is it Hawaiian?" "No, it's Tongan. It's Tongan. It's Tongan. It's Fijian. It's Tongan. That one's Hawaiian! Where'd you get it? Tell me about it!" But that's maybe one out of 100, you know. And so I've been in that parameter of those kapa. And for the first whole bunch of years, it was really only the post-contact stuff, which, as you know, is very different from the pre-contact stuff. And I've only recently begun embracing the pre-contact stuff. But then at the same time, it still isn't the art I love, and there's only been maybe two or three kapa in all my career that I have actually drawn on. Because to me, once you separate the paper from the artwork, then they're two different things. But if you have the traditional designs that people associate with the paper, then you can only see it as one entity. You know it's kapa because you know these designs belong on kapa. But once you start drawing horses and dragons on it, then the kapa is something else and the dragons and the things are something else.

AP: That makes sense.

DT: So that's what always kept me from using kapa as a canvas for the art that I actually did like to do.

AP: Do you still do [drawing]...?

DT: I don't. All my stuff... And then because I don't just make kapa, I don't just make it. I make it when there's a down payment and then I kill that tree. Right [laughs].

AP: Right. "And your life is forfeit now."

DT: And then most virtually all of those people want a story. So then I have to create a specific story for that person, place, thing. That kapa is going to have this very specific thing, in this language that I don't know, but I reinterpret to match. So that's why I don't even really create new designs for 'ohe kāpala, because there are so many. If you tried to replicate everything that [Peter] Buck collected, that'd be the rest of your natural life. And then it's always how you use it, and how you interpret it. I have people who say, "Oh, I just recovered from cancer, can you make me a kapa that talks about that? About my recovery from cancer? I have four kids, could you make a kapa that talks about each of them? Oh, I'm going through a new stage of my life where I want to get in touch with my divine feminine, can you make a kapa that talks about that?" Do you know which designs those are?! [Laughs].

AP: That's amazing. Then you have so much creative power, but then you probably also have a lot of...

DT: Angst! Oh, what? [Laughs].

AP: [Laughs] It's got to be... that's a burden.

DT: It is a burden. It's huge. I mean, I have to detox every time -- not detox, decompress -- every time after that. Because you hope they're gonna like your interpretation, in this language, you don't know. You've probably seen the "Divine Feminine" one that I did, because I had it posted. It was the one that was kind of curvy.

AP: Yes, yes.

DT: Yeah, that was the one for that girl.

AP: There we go. Yeah, and I can see it in it.

DT: Yeah, when I finally sat down to figure it out, I said, "What if I think of our feminine divines, and go to Pele, and go to Hi'iaka, and go to Hina." So that, but then, you know... When I was looking at Lehua's stuff, and looking at anyone... and Roen's always just been an outlier with her work. She's like, "I don't make like that! I goin' make it like whatever I want to make it look like! My mom can do that." And even Marie's stuff, it just pulled so strongly from both sides. From just this crazy artistic side and this absolutely Hawaiian design side. So hard to... I did try to replicate that style one time on a piece and it was like, "Man, that was a frickin' a lot of work." Because there's so much elements and things going on. And people can always tell my stuff because it's, it's pretty straightforward, it's pretty traditional, it's not all crazy. But as I've been looking at everybody's stuff and I'm going, I really got to, I have to make kapa... see, but then

every time I say that, it's like... you know, I was just going through this whole thing. I was talking to my husband, I bought a new sketchpad, I said, "I got to start drawing on stuff." Make up things that are maybe a theme, like stories from the islands or stories of the volcanoes. Because I'm to a point where I can't just print and it doesn't mean something. It's got to be a story. I can't... and that's the horrible thing.

AP: No abstractions there.

DT: Yeah. Yeah. And then I got this big commission like yesterday, and it's like, oh, I sent her my portfolio, I get the feeling it'll probably be pretty much my straight thing, and that'll be till July. It's like 10 feet by six feet. Friggin' monster. So it's crazy. But then the other thing is that, as a person who just did not love the language of math... [exasperated shriek] Oh, my gosh! Why is this all geometry!? It's all this... [laughter] So I've had to express my artistic self in a form that I do not love, do not understand, and I'm never really sure if it's nice or not, when I'm done. People are like, "Oh, my gosh, it's amazing!" I'm like, "I guess it could be." I mean, the "Divine Feminine" one, I really did like that one. I liked how the story came out, I liked how I interpreted it and stuff. But I don't feel that way about every single piece. And you know. Sometimes it's just like, "Well, I hope they love it." And I've only ever had one piece come back, and that was only because I used too much blue. [Laughs] It didn't match his piece. But I had all this 'uki'uki, I was just like, "Oh my gosh, I gotta use this blue."

AP: Oh, heck yeah!

DT: And yeah, he didn't love it, so...

AP: I gotta go through my freezer and use up some things right now.

DT: Right? Right? [Laughs]

AP: Some stuff is gonna have some really weird colors in here, because some of this stuff..

DT: What color is this? It's called "cleaning out the freezer" color. [Laughter]

AP: Literally, I know. It's like, "All right. I got some purples, some blues, some greens..." When it comes to commissioned pieces, like as you're discussing, if somebody comes to you and they're like, "Well, I want to celebrate the birth of my child" or whatever, do you show them a sketch or a draft, or do you just come up with it?

DT: I tried to get away from that. Because, you know how you're creating as you're working? Even as you're printing and going, "I think I should incorporate this." And I will usually tell people, I can't really draft this. I mean, I did start and for forever, I mean, I just never did. Everything started the minute I start printing. But I did start drafting at least placement of things, like, "Okay, these can be here. Let's do lines here, and then we'll have a thing there, and then this colored thing here, a scheme and a stuff." And because a lot of the designers always asking for drafts of stuff. And I'm like, "Okay, so it's gonna kind of roughly be like this. But hopefully..." I mean, then I did the stuff at Disney, and they would just torture me all the time for drafts of

everything. And I finally printed out what I figured I would do onto muslin, and it was actually pretty close, kind of sort of, when I was done. The thing is that people don't really know what they're looking at, so there's nothing to compare it to. So you can take advantage of that. So, yeah [laughs]. And thank goodness, because it's on the whole lobby ceiling. So thank goodness they did love all the design and everything, how it turned out and stuff, and the story behind it.

AP: And are you still doing classes at Aulani?

DT: No, it was hard for the pandemic, you know. Then they were like, "So if you want to come back, you wear a thing and a thing, and we'll do it outside and this many people and blah, blah." I was like, "Umm..." So I mean, even the academy didn't call us back. They got all new people to do something else, and that was actually kind of a fun class. But the good thing is I don't have to drive so far, and I'm able to just either bring everybody out here. UH West is nice and close. Whatever I got going on, I'm still able to make the money I need to pay for... I mean, I'll never be [Robert] Wyland, doing this. But probably mostly because I don't work that hard. And I don't want to. I mean, I'll be 62 this year, I don't want to work that hard. I got packs of grandkids. I want to just kind of chill and breathe and wander out here when I need to, and pound things when I need to.

AP: So what about your kids and your grandkids? Do they also do kapa? Or any of that stuff?

DT: No! I mean, my kids all had to learn how. By the time I started kapa I was probably in my mid 30s, and so they were all a little bit older. I started having my kids right after I was married. And then I started surfing, and that was "surfing is life, the rest is details," right there. I always tell people I couldn't have done kapa while I was surfing because I wouldn't have given up surfing! So by the time I started, I just remarried and then I was doing kapa stuff. So my kids knew how to the point that they could come with me and help me do classes or something, if I needed helpers. And then when my grandkids got here, when they're toddling around and they'd see me, "Oh, Grandma, Grandma," so I make them sit down and learn how to pound and everything. And so they all can. I had some of my nieces from the mainland come, and so my grandkids here taught them how to make kapa. They showed them all the steps, explained everything to them. And I've done stuff at their schools, which, you know, make me celebrity over there. So they can, but no one has a real interest in pursuing it. Probably because they see just how all-encompassing and all-involving it is. And even to be able to do it professionally, where you actually are paying for your life this way, it's a lot. It's a lot of stuff. And so you know, it's fine. It's fine that they don't. And even all the people that I've taught. I don't keep little cadres of people like how Verna and Roen, I know she got all you guys packed. And I just never wanted... I wanted people to come and learn it, and then go and do it, and do something with it. And as I got to like my ninth and tenth classes, and still not seeing a whole lot of people doing stuff... because some of them have. I don't know if you ever seen Page Chang's work?

AP: Oh, I know who you're talking about! Yes, I love her bracelets. I probably have, yeah...

DT: She does really cool jewelry and stuff. She was one of my students. She was like in my second year long class here. And she went and now she teaches, she grows wauke, she got her whole family involved and stuff. So that's good. But that's probably like, one, you know, who was able

to do that. I have started thinking why, what's really holding people back? Well, it's so many things. No place to grow trees, no place to pound. If you live in a condo, really hard to pound kapa. Out here, I am the least offensive of sounds in my neighborhood. I can pound out here all day, all night, nobody's gonna bother me. Just that time...

AP: Mhm.

DT: Just that time. So even to do it as a side thing is still hard. Because you still just need so much resources and time, and motivation to do it. So if you're just doing it for fun, or, I know there's people who have done it just for the iwi repatriations, they just want to make it for that and that's all they do. They do it when they have time and they're fine with that. So, I don't know, we're trying to... always just kind of trying to figure out... My son bought property up in Makakilo that he's going to build on, but it's like two acres. He got an agriculture loan to do that. So, I'm the ag component of that. I need to start pulling all these babies up, getting them in pots, and getting them all ready to move up there. And hopefully they'll be fine. Yeah. And then the thing is to try and make more teachers. I mean, I have the luxury of piles of tools. Because I've been teaching, we've always been making all the tools. If you're going to teach or demonstrate, you got to have this set of tools to do this with. That's a thing right there. But there needs to be more of me, that people can then come do this thing at this hotel, or we have this group coming, or "dah-dah-dah-dah." Whatever randomness that you could send people to that could... But then, even the ability to teach it. Because there's so much information you got, and you're teaching for five minutes as people keep walking by. So then, what is the thing, what's the thing that you really need to know? I can't tell you everything. And that's the mistake people have when they're trying to talk about it, in those kinds of, is trying to tell too much. What's the elevator speech couple of things that I can tell you about kapa, that you'll walk away and go home and say, "Oh, we saw this girl doing this, and she told us this." What's those couple of bits that you'll remember? And that's a hard thing, because my real elevator speech is about 9000 floors. So unless you got that... [Laughs] I don't have the 14th floor elevator thing, it is 9000 floors literally.

AP: I hope so. You have no idea how much I appreciate this right now. We went to Amy Greenwell's a couple of weeks ago...

DT: Yeah, they had a thing, yeah?

AP: Yeah, Grow Hawaiian Fest. You know, they used to do the Grow Hawaiian Festival every year. And then there was the whole yada-yada with Bishop trying to sell off Amy Greenwell's. And so that was dramas, and they stopped doing the festival for a while. But then when the Friend's of Amy Greenwell bought the property in 2019, then in the very beginning of 2020, they had the Grow Hawaiian Festival for the first time in a while. It was a big deal because it wasn't just the festival, it was a celebration that, "Yay! We got it! It's ours! We have it! It's safe. It's secured." And then, two weeks later, lockdown. It was just like, "Ohh! And now we're all going to sleep for the rest of the year."

DT: Right.

AP: So this year was really exciting, because it was the first one they've had in three years. It felt like a real honor to be able to be there. But right, how much time did I have for people passing by? "What are you doing?" "Oh, making kapa." "What is that?" "Whooh. Okay, let's see, where do we start?" You know?

DT: So that's why you already have to have that pill ready. "What are you doing?" "Well, this is what the Hawaiians wore..." So they don't talk at all. You just tell them, you just give them the pill, and then off they go. They're happy. "Would you want to try? I have this set up here. You can try pounding it, da-da-da-da-dah." And off they go, they're happy. So I learned that part, you don't let them ask questions, or else you'll be there all day. The minute they say, "What is this?"

AP: I kind of just go at this point.

DT: Mhm.

AP: Yeah.

DT: Good.

AP: Now, you brought up something that is definitely of interest to me, and that's the tools. So for your tools, did you make most of your tools?

DT: Yeah.

AP: Oh, okay. Wow. So you make your own tools, then?

DT: Well, before I was in kapa, I'd been studying lua for a couple years, which is the Hawaiian fighting arts. And so we had access to masters, like Umi Kai and these guys who master weapons makers and stuff. Well, they were kind of early masters and that was like 20 years ago, 25 years ago. And I was doing Hawaiian traditional arts. I was canoe paddling, competition surfing, and I've been in hula for many years already and different hālau. All this kind of stuff, in kapa, all these teachings and all these things all kind of came together in that. So, when I started doing kapa and I already had experience working with native woods. Because they had the ability to go to Big Island and go gather the kauila and the 'uhi'uhi and stuff that had fallen, and we made our tools out of that. It just segued right into tool making for kapa. But then as we're teaching, and as people want classes and they want to make their own tools, it's like, "No, you're not going to have the kauila. And no, now the 'ōhi'a is sick. And no..." you know. What do we have? What's comparable? Because those woods are so specific for making kapa, you know?

AP: True.

DT: Not everything can handle the beating, the wetness, the carving, all that kind of stuff. My favorite non-native at this point is the Lignum vitae, which is a Mexican hardwood. It's very black. Write it down, you can order it, you can find that online and order it. My son used to live in Washington, DC, and... well, actually in Virginia. And I went up one time and I found a guy who is working with the Mexican government to restore and take care of a forest of Lignum

vitae. Because that wood was used on ships in the 16- and 1700s, for the bearings. Because it was so dense, self-oiling. If you carve it and then put your oil on top of it, the next morning, the oil is still sitting there exactly how you left it. Doesn't soak in at all because the thing is already so full of its own. I mean, the oil doesn't come out while you're working, but it's just that nature. Yeah, it's in it. I be like, "I, what? Why are you like that?" So that's a good one. Yeah. Yeah, we'll just use all the African rare endangered woods. It's okay. They work well, they work well for us [laughter].

AP: And then do you have some tools that are native hardwoods?

DT: Yeah, I do. I have some nice... I have lama, I have the 'uhi'uhi, and kauila ones. And you know, when uncle Sol [Apio]... oh, I'm so sad that he's just... well, life moves on, what can you say? But he used to always give us blanks of things. And you know, because he made Marie's tools, and he made them based on the museum models, which were cows! And I always felt bad. I think I was just telling Mary [Sakamoto] about that. And she said, "Oh yeah, we would just cut them off and then make stamps out of all those squares." [Referring to trimming down Marie McDonald's very large kapa beaters]. I'd go, "Oh, yeah, that's what... I should've just carved something into the square." [Laughter] Because I always felt so bad, but they were... and Marie loved them like that for some reason, but it was so unwieldy. The way I hold my beaters anyway is like... it's like this [demonstrates personal style, holding beater closer to the base]. It's like that. I don't hold it from the handles. And I teach people not to hold it that way because it's sore. So I need that little more balanced kind of thing going on right there. But we got kiawe everywhere, so we'd use that. That, for hohoas, because you know, it's so twisty, yeah? Hard to get nice straight lines out of it.

AP: It must be hard to make those tools, though, out of kiawe wood. Because it is dense, yeah.

DT: It is pretty dense. I mean, I've done some. I don't do it routinely. And then some of the woodworker guys I know, they gave me stuff. We made really nice beaters out of lychee, recently.

AP: That's a beautiful wood, too.

DT: Yeah, it really is. This guy gave me some bloodwood, which really was... when you carved and oiled it, looked like you stirred a big ol' bowl of cow's blood with it. Also, stained the kapa for quite a while [laughs].

AP: That's interesting. Yeah...

DT: Even the purple heart will do that, too, when you first use it out.

AP: See? And that's just it, it's probably not so bad after a while. A month.

DT: Yeah, because the wood fades and everything kind of... and you beat out the color and stuff on it.

AP: Yeah. For the native woods, were you able to find wood locally on this island? Or elsewhere?

- DT: I was given some by, I had this hālau came, they were doing a project. And there was a girl from DLNR in there, and she said, "You know, we had to cut down all of this nā'ū." There was nā'ū here [lower elevation, and nā'ū here [higher elevation]. And they had to cut this one all down at this lower elevation, because it got sick. And they didn't want this going up to the higher elevation one. She goes, "And we didn't know what to do with it, but we knew it was something. So we just have it. I brought you some, do you want to try..." [Dalani makes grabbing sounds]. Got it in here, plug in my planer... [sound effects mimicking planing]. Go, "Ahh, smell it! Ahh! Yes!" Any orphan thing you have, here's my place, throw it over the fence, bring it to me. My son left his very good job at Hawaiian Airlines to pursue his dream job at DLNR.
- AP: Really? Wow, he's with DLNR?
- DT: He gets his commission this week.
- AP: That's hard.
- DT: Oh, no. It's not hard at all. I said, "So what would your day actually entail?" He goes, "Well, you know, responding to whatever complaints people have, and then pretty much picking where you want to spend your day." He lives in Kapolei, so they want them to be where they live. So from Kapolei down there up to Ka'ena, that'll be his whole place.
- AP: No? [Laughs]. Actually, that sounds pretty nice.
- DT: So it's like, "I'm going to need you to locate and make friends with all the people who know all the woods and bring home everything to me!" She also gave me a native... because you know, you cannot find the nā'ū big enough sizes. Because you need, the wood gotta be that big to make a hohoa, right? You need that heartwood. And, oh my gosh, it's so beautiful, actually [gets up to grab tools].
- AP: Oooh.
- DT: So, this is the nā'ū right there.
- AP: Wow!
- DT: Yeah, so pretty, huh?
- AP: It's incredible, actually.
- DT: Smell it. Smell it.
- AP: Oh, my goodness. It's funny, I would have actually thought this lama just from the...
- DT: Yeah. So here, here's a lama one.

AP: This is lama! Oh, my goodness. I think lama is the prettiest. Don't tell the other woods.

DT: Okay, well, the kauila won't mind about that one!

AP: I do love kauila, though.

DT: And then this is the Lignum vitae.

AP: Well, look at that. I wouldn't have... I would have just probably thought this was koai'a or something. This is nice though, it's got a good...

DT: Really nice weight.

AP: Good heft to it.

DT: And it can just absolutely hold the lines and the beating, and everything. Really, I have so many. People keep giving me wood and we keep acquiring things. But these are really the only two guys I actually pound with.

AP: Right? Yeah. You got favorites, right? Exactly. And that makes sense, because once you find something that you're like, "Well, it works," why do you need to go back to other ones unless you're doing something really specific? This is great, though.

DT: Somebody gave me this one, gave me some pieces when I made a baby kapa for them. When I make those kinds of traditional pieces, I don't like to charge for them. So I tell people, "Give me whatever you want." Trade me a thing, or you can trade money, it's fine, but if you want to trade chocolate... my children always scold me for that. "Stop taking payment in chocolates!" It's fine. [Laughter].

AP: I think that's nice, personally. I love the idea of bringing back a bit of a bartering, when you can do it. When it's an option and when people had something that you're like, "Sure." I think it's great because then you've got a story behind, "Oh, how did you get this? This beautiful necklace?" "Traded the kapa for it," whatever, you know. So the wood, you're doing a lot of your own tools and stuff. What about for the design work that you do on your kapa? What sort of materials are you using for the design work?

DT: For the dyes and stuff?

AP: Yeah.

DT: So as you know, as I heard you say, you have things in the freezer. People love dye things, and I'm so glad they always ask people like Bernice [Akamine].

AP: I just saw her, too.

DT: How's she doing?

AP: She's doing good, yeah.

DT: Oh, that's good.

AP: Because her husband, yeah, Glenn works there. And she's there all the time, too. But I finally had a moment where the children weren't swarming me at the kapa, and I was like, "I need to walk around and say hi to people." She had a beautiful kapa kite, lupe, that she had up on display. I think for sale, actually, in their gift shop, and it was just beautiful. I was like, "I want to make a kite." But I want to make a functional kite.

DT: Yeah, that's when that Embry-Riddle degree comes in handy. Because I had to do a few of those, and that's something else, to get them up in the air. That's why I appreciate when her [Bernice] and Ka'i [Ka'iulani de Silva] will do those dye classes. A dye demo is one thing, but people want to do dye class. And they do not realize the resources that I'm going to waste in this class. Because ultimately, what is the benefit of this to me or to you? You learn a thing, but I had to go out and strip and gather all this stuff. So I tell people, "Yeah, I don't really like to do dye classes." I mean, I have. When they built Disney, and they asked me, because I was gonna do demos and stuff there, they said, "What can we grow for you to have?" So we grew wauke, and by the time one of them finally got big and nice and ready, then the gardener just cut it down. And they cut it down here [indicates low to the ground]. You know? [Laughs] Did someone not get the memo about the... it was like two years later. I was there every week doing these classes, checking these trees, taking the branches. Anyway, I know, I know. It's fine. We didn't even know where they took it. They had an offsite place where they would take the trash. But they grew 'uki'uki everywhere and I tell you, it was so happy. Fat, fat berries every week. When I do my class, I finish, I take a plastic bag, I filled it. I just cut all the stems where all the berries [connect]. I still have that in my freezer 13 years later, you know.

AP: I believe it.

DT: Because you know how we are, and how so stingy, yeah? [Laughs] I mean, I mix things in a thimble. In a thimble! I tell people, we have this 55 gallon attitude about everything, that everything comes in these vats and drums, and we can just keep pouring it out. I said, "You see this 'opihi shell with this bit of dried stuff in it? That's because later I will reconstitute this, and then continue painting with it." That's how precious this stuff is! I mean, I have 'alaea from Kaua'i that's like, 20 years old. Because we just grind tiny little bits. I have finally been able to expand, too. I love buying oxides online. I love that. Plus, those dyes won't ever fade. I was such a purist using all natural everything. But I don't add mordants or anything to it, and so things fade, kind of extremely so. I did start like adding... I buy the jar of the heavy watercolor and I'd add that to the dyes, or add the dyes to that, or whichever. Natural dyes and watercolor. I did have to do a thing one time in acrylic paint up at the Turtle Bay Hilton. Because they weren't in a frame, they're in this open thing in the lobby, and so I painted it with acrylic paint, just so nothing would happen to it. That was a little bit kind of traumatizing for me to use acrylic. And I had to paint on the front and the back. Which they didn't pay me for. They were like, "Oh, we have a budget of this, and..."

AP: Why on the back?

DT: Because that's how it's seen. Like it's in the lobby, in the..

AP: Oh, the way that they have it displayed, you're gonna see both sides of it.

DT: I mean, they're like, 10 feet long. There's six of them. Like this. So there's a couch on this side, couch on this side, couch on this... So the bar and stuff was on this side. The check in is on this side. So you see it from all sides. And I've never painted on both sides before either, because we don't paint on both sides! So I had to match it.

AP: Oh god!

DT: Dude!

AP: Talk about math! Oh my goodness!

DT: Talk about lose your mind. And they came with, "Oh, our budget's only \$10,000." "Yeah, that'll get you like... okay. No worries, we'll figure this out." Sometimes you're paying for exposure, right? So, it's okay.

AP: True. True.

DT: Yeah, so with the dyes, when I have my classes, I teach about that class. I tell people, "If you want to do with dyes and stuff like that, then you need to first learn to see those plants." We pass plants all day long and we go, "Oh, that's pretty. Oh, that's nice. Oh, look at that." But you know, when our kūpuna passed the plants, it was like, "Here's the medicine, we'll get that later. This wauke looks good, we can make your malo now. This thing over here, the guys are going to cut those to redo the roof of the house." The plants had meanings, they had things you knew what they were for, you knew how old and when to use them. And you know, all this kind of stuff, and we don't look at plants that way. If you want to make dyes, you need to see the things that are growing around you. Understand the plant and when to gather, and how to harvest, and how to save it. Can you dry it? Can you freeze it? Stuff like this. Just that component there, as you know, is a whole dissertation unto itself, because there is just so many things to understand about that. I have ma'ō growing here, I have the milo growing here. I've had a hard time getting the 'uki to grow, and even those poor 'uki at Disney, they tend to get whitefly. Like the ones here. Because even they grew ton of them at UH West, when they built that, because you know, they have that state mandate. So they call Hui Ku Maoli Ola, bring in all his random things and native things. And they were so happy there. And I told the students every day, bring a Ziploc bag after your classes, just pick a bunch and throw them in the freezer. So I was trying to pick as much and then pandemic happened and the school was closed, and I didn't get down there. And when I finally did get back there and went to go look, white fly had gotten in. There was some random plants left. But when they first went in and got established, it was just lush with berries. If you're not always babysitting it to get the white fly off of it, then it's hard to manage. And then they started planting, they started bringing in the mauka cousin of that. So the one that has the smaller blueberries on those long stems, but it's not a pretty blue. It's like an army green actually, that

one. So then they started planting them, I was like, "Meh. Well, good thing I still have those bags in the freezer." So whenever I see them, I'm just like, yeahhh. When they built a... a Cheesecake Factory, and what'd they plant around it? 'Uki'uki all around! So I call the manager, I said, "So blah, blah, blah, can I cut your stuff?" She's like, "Uhh, you know, let me check. Give me your number." "I brought my own scissors, I will just..." [Laughter] And even those ones, I went back another time, they were all sick, all white fly.

AP: Oh, gosh.

DT: Yeah, it's just weird.

AP: It's funny because like, to be honest with you, I haven't really seen white fly on the 'uki'uki, on Hawai'i Island at least. So I wonder if there's something going on with that. And you have to think too, once upon a time, historically, nobody had to worry about white fly. That's not, that's not a native...

DT: See, and there's certain plants that attract white fly. Like the hau, like lauhala sometimes. I never get white fly on my wauke, but I have seen it go after wauke if you have lauhala or the Singapore Plumeria. White fly loves that particular one. And then it'll just jump all over everything. You really do have to, with the tools, with dyes, with the wauke, you have to tune yourself in and train yourself to understand the plants. So that, for your work, what you need them for, you're able to get the best out of them.

AP: Right. So you've mentioned you grow the ma'o, the milo, you're able to get 'uki'uki from various locations, which I do too. The Kamehameha Hotel, they have a whole patch growing just along the side of the road right there and I just go down there. And if somebody asks me what I'm doing, "I'm..."

DT: "Pruning."

AP: Yep. Just... weeding.

DT: Native gathering rights [laughter].

AP: Right, exactly. It's funny 'cause it's always all the old uncles and then they get into it.

DT: Right! Right!

AP: "Well, it's for dye, for kapa." And they're like, "What? What?"

DT: Or like the Filipino gardeners. They always love to hear all about what you're doing. They do! Filipinos, they love their plants, they know their plants. They eat everything, so, it's like, "Can I make a soup out of this? If I had chicken." [Laughter].

- AP: There was one time I was picking 'uki'uki and some guy thought I was pulling pōpolo. And I was like, "Oh, I also use that for dye too. But not right now." But what about, do you go out and do any wild harvesting? Wild gathering of anything?
- DT: I used to go up when I was working at Ka'ala Farm because we were back in the valley, and there was a lot of kukui nut trees grew in the back. So we used to go up and gather the bark and stuff from the kukui. And now I just wait until Wes goes to wherever he goes, and go pull roots and stuff up with him. It makes it so easy. Because we'd go and then I'd be like, "Okay, so I'm just going to take this little bit off this tree, and then we'll cover the tree with the mud. And we'll do all the things to it." And then I read, oh, yeah, you can take a huge chunk off the tree before you hurt it. I was like, "Really? Okay. [tearing sound effects] Crrkk." Then even just to make that hili is such a process, but I used to do that a lot. And then we also used to go back... back when I was at Ka'ala Farm, we used to spend a lot of time all over the place in the mountains. So we found places that had different color 'alae, like yellow 'alae, purple 'alae, stuff like that. Even when I was on Kaho'olawe, I knew a girl, might have been Kawai -- no, no it was somebody else -- and she said, "Oh my gosh, there's so many colors of clay on Kaho'olawe." So, the one time I went was with Moana [Eisele] and Denby [Freeland], and a couple other people. And we went to pound kapa, we didn't have to clean or find the bombs, or do anything. We were just pounding kapa the whole time. On Kaho'olawe, yeah. In their hale, their beautiful hale they built. And so, I asked if I could, pick stuff up. And you know, the rule is, if you didn't drop it, don't pick it up. But they said, "Okay, this area where we're going, you can pick stuff up, it's all clean. If you see anything, clay or anything like that, then gather it." Like, "Right on!" So I found some kind of interesting stuff like that. Before I grew an achiote tree, I saw an achiote tree in Kalihi when I would go teach a class -- I was doing something up there all the time, where was I? I don't know -- but I would stop at that person's house, "Hi. So I'm blah, blah, blah, blah, and can I blah, blah, blah, blah?" "Oh, yeah, sure." But then at the academy, they have some nice ones going over there too, the Academy of Arts. And so I tell people about that. You can buy it dry in the Filipino store, but if you wait till right before the pod opens, open it, take those [seeds] out, put in with a little water and vinegar, you shake 'em up. Such a fugitive color and comes off all over your body, too. Unless you seal that one in. And even that, when I would use 'alae, I would make a seal with egg white. I'd beat it into like a meringue-ish kind of thing, and then just paint that on it, just to keep it from rubbing off on your hands. But you know, it's such a pain in the butt. And eggs are so expensive now, so I just use Modge Podge! [Laughs] Matte Modge Podge! That will do the job, or a spray, or something.
- AP: On Kaho'olawe? It's so funny you mention that, just because I remember, not even that long ago, we're talking like a year ago, being like, "Yeah, eggs are a really good method. And what an easy thing, right?" You know, and all my friends, "Oh, wow, yeah, that makes sense." Because I mean, who's gonna care about like, two eggs going missing? Well now, it's like, two eggs go missing, then I get a call from my brother Alex...
- DT: Get schooled, man! Yup, "Where's the eggs!?"
- AP: "Where's the eggs? I was gonna make cookies!" Like, "I guess we don't have cookies, but I have an art piece. You can't eat art, sorry." Well, it sounds like you do a lot of different things then, in terms of... Do you have any favorites when it comes to the dyes? The plants, or the 'alaea?

DT: Hmm... See, how would I... I would define a favorite as... Either the thing I have the most of, or the thing that's easiest to use. I'm really fond of... Oh, well, you know who's my favorite, so -- I hated making that black with the kukui, the burning one. I watched Moana make it, and I was just like... and I made it before. What I found was that it took so long to dry. And it rubbed and it was just weird. I didn't love it. So I actually didn't use black for years. But I had students in Seattle who made me black walnut, and then discovered you can buy the black walnut powder, also. [Laughs] But the black walnut was beautiful. And you know, so dark, dark, dark brown, so not as harsh as black, but you know, so nice. So I was using that forever. And then one day I read this article about a woman who was going to paint that really long, long, long squid that's at the Smithsonian, which -- years later, I did see that squid. But she wanted to use squid ink to do it. So she was talking about this and how she bought the squid ink, and it's the food grade one. And so it's like, "Amazon, show me the way." And little jar, food grade, cuttlefish ink, \$13 a jar. Bought it all because it lasts forever. It's so concentrated. It's like jello, the consistency of it. I'll give you one before you leave.

AP: Oh, gosh. It's up to you.

DT: No, no, because I bought tons of it. But I'm wondering if you can take it in your carry-on, though. Maybe I'll mail it to you.

AP: Oh, I have luggage.

DT: Oh, do you have luggage?

AP: Yeah, I got luggage.

DT: Okay, okay I'll give you one.

AP: Sweet! Awesome.

DT: 'Kay, remind me, tell me, "Squid ink!" Because I have. And because you just take out a little bit and mix it with water to make an ink.

AP: I see. So it's concentrated?

DT: Yeah. it's literally like if you made jello in the jar, that's the consistency.

AP: Is it fishy smelling at all?

DT: Little bit, just little bit. But that goes away, eventually.

AP: I mean, everything's got its funk.

DT: It dissipates. Beautiful color, beautiful black. Easy to work with, doesn't fade.

AP: I wonder if that was also traditionally used at any point in time?

DT: They said they did. One time, some friends of mine were fishing, I saw them. They had a bunch of tako, I said, "Hey, can you give me the squid ink, brah? The ink sack?" And they're like, "We'll just give you all the na'au and you pull out the sack." [Laughs] I bring it home and I was like, "They got a lot of sacks in here." But then I thought about it... when you put it in the water, you know how it dissipates? And how even when the squid do that. And then I kind of realized that, it's probably not like they have this giant barrel of squid ink, but it's probably more of a secretion, like how we may cry. Because you need so little to make enough of a cloud to escape in... and then I felt bad, like, "How many cuttlefish died for this jar?" [Laughs] Because I dipped right out of the ink bag, and I had kapa, "Why do I have all this?"

AP: They gotta be the same ones that we're eating, too. You know what I mean? That's gotta be the dried cuttlefish, and then they just take the ink sack out...

DT: I hope so!

AP: ... it has to be.

DT: They don't do that with the sharks!

AP: Let's just pretend that that's the case.

DT: Oh, okay. That's the story we'll tell ourselves. [Laughter] To feel better.

AP: Honestly, it would be very wasteful if they were just... you know what I mean?

DT: Which is exactly... Hello? Humans!

AP: I know, I think I have a lot of faith in humanity. It's so funny because I studied anthropology, so like, on one end I'm like, "People, humans, love them." Then on the other hand I'm like, "I've seen some of the most..."

DT: But they love money more!

AP: ... intense things ever."

DT: It's a little sad, yeah I know...

AP: We can make some bad, bad decisions. But maybe we can change our ways. But I do want to try the squid ink one of these days because another person... I'm blanking on her name right now, but she's in Maui and she also has used to squid ink before and she's like, "It's great."

DT: Yeah, no. I'll give you a jar before you leave. It's really awesome.

- AP: That's where, I don't know if you've tried this yet, but I've gotten Roen and everybody into... I have a friend that works for Cyanotech. And so one day I'm over at his house and he's like, "You know, they just give me extra of the spirulina powder and the capsules." And he's like, "It's really good for your health." So I take some home, and you know what I did? I made paint. And when I tell him I made paint with it, he's like, "You don't eat it? I'm sorry, wait... you're, you're painting..?"
- DT: No, but I'm gonna lick it off the painting later. Don't worry! I'm not wasting it [laughter].
- AP: I always tell my friends, though, I'm like, "Just make sure your cat isn't around because the cat, literally, will try to eat it."
- DT: What? Eat the spirulina? Really? Oh, how funny.
- AP: Yeah, because there's a bit of a fishy smell to it, just a little bit and then it dissipates. But my cat will lick it and I'm just like, whoa. I got to keep it up somewhere she won't jump.
- DT: That's right. The spirulina...
- AP: But it's a great color. It does change over time, but it gets more blue...
- DT: Oh, interesting.
- AP: ... before it fades. Although I do have one friend that, she swears that it only fades with her. And I'm like, "I don't know, maybe you're doing something different. I have no idea."
- DT: That's why, these days, UV spray on everything. If you can't make everything out of 'alae or beef it up with the paint, then...
- AP: Yeah, if it's not charcoal or earth pigments, then you're gonna have transformations no matter what.
- DT: I had done these pieces for a hotel in Kaua'i for their lobby. There were three of them. They all had a story about that area on Kaua'i and for some reason, and I don't know why -- because it's very counterintuitive to the way I think about framing kapa -- I modge-podged it to stretched canvas. And then I completely covered it in the modge podge.
- AP: Sealed it in.
- DT: I don't even like framing it because, it's like... and I think I wrote this one time, because I think you answered and said, "Entombing!" Yes! It's like that. Because, that's what it was like, and it was just, it was so weird. But then, after a few years, they contacted me and said, "Oh, we love these artwork, but they faded quite a bit. Do you think you can fix them?" And I was like, "Yeah, sure." I mean, they were gonna pay me to fix them, so, "Okay, so send 'em back." And then I looked at them and so sure enough, the 'alae were fine, the squid ink and the black walnut, anything with that kind of stuff was fine. And everything else was [rewind sound] "errrrp." The

yellow and a bunch of these colors. So I ended up having to hand paint -- and it was all stamped -- I had to hand paint all the designs with acrylic. So I did the whole thing, I sent them back. It looked fine, was brighter and a little more vivid now. And I said, "And these will never fade."

AP: Yeah, "Now you don't need to worry about this. Don't call me again."

DT: They weren't even in a brightly lit place. But you know how a lot of this artwork ends up in those semi-open lobbies? And see, it was freaking me out that I chose to do this because I've never done that before, and I don't know why. But when I took them to deliver them and I looked at the artwork they had, guess what was in all the corners? Mold. Because it was semi-open and it's Kaua'i. So these will, they will never mold, they will never anything. It's just, it's weird when I get these weird things and if I actually go with it, then I find out that, "Yeah. That was the better choice."

AP: Right. And that's just it, right? It's a labor of learning. It's never done. From what I can tell, anyway. And I've only... what have I been doing kapa for, six years now? It was very sweet, but somebody recently was like, I don't know if they used the word "master," but they said something and I'm like, "Oh-oh, no, no, no. Truly, don't say that." I'm not, I'm a haumāna, I will always be a haumāna.

DT: Oh, yeah. We will all always be haumāna.

AP: That's just it, though. And that's the spirit of this work.

DT: And actually, the further along you get, if it hasn't made you arrogant, then you will realize you know jack. You still know nothing. I'm just telling people stuff, but I don't even know. Now I'm questioning everything I've been doing [laughs].

AP: Truly. And that's where I got to a place, I don't know, couple years ago, where I was like, "Oh, I finally made a piece that I was really proud of. Yay!" And then that's when I found out about this "Specimens of Hawaiian Kapa" that this gentleman Don Severson put together back in '70s.

DT: Oh, yeah, yeah.

AP: He took all these pieces and he cut them into little squares. Pua Van Dorpe was part of the consultation on this, from what I understand. She wasn't directly involved, but... I mean, I guess she was, she...

DT: Oh, she had her own snipping moments, too.

AP: Of course, they all did.

DT: All those guys did. I tried, but yeah, no. They weren't having it [laughs].

AP: That's where the first time I saw one of these books, I was alone. They have a copy at UH Mānoa, at the library. And I just was... I remember crying. I was like, "I can't cry on it. I need to

make sure I'm crying over here in the corner." Because I was like, "Oh my god, it's so beautiful, but also, it's very sad to see." But the second time I went to go see one was at the State Library, they have another copy. And this time, I brought a friend, which was really good because it's a very heavy thing to look at alone. And so I'm sitting there with my friend, and we're very gently with our gloves on lifting the pieces with the watermarks. And, thank God she said it, she's just, "How did they get it so thin?" "I dunno." She looks at me, "What are we doing wrong?!" I'm, "I dunno! Don't ask me, I don't know!" It's hard to conceptualize, because it is just... and especially in my case, I haven't been making long enough, I'm not able to dedicate as much time as I'd like. So my pieces are still very rough. When I show people example pieces when I do demos, I'm like, "Keep in mind, my example pieces are not, this is not even close to..."

DT: But they're probably perfect for dragging around for demos, though. And everybody's playing with them. "No, touch it, please. I need you to." Literally! "Soften it for me," you know? Yeah! [laughter].

AP: That's where, at Amy Greenwell's the other day, it was just pouring rain.

DT: Oh, my gosh.

AP: I kept thinking, it's a good thing we're doing kapa, and not anything else. Because this is fine. This is good. This is nice, you know. Even my example pieces that are getting wet, it's fine. I'll dry it. I don't bring pieces that have designs on them. Dyed pieces, maybe, but not with design work on them. Let me just see where I'm at with some of my questions, here. What would you say some of your favorite aspects are, of making kapa?

DT: I have pretty much learned to embrace all of it. Well, so growing up and... Let's see, my growing up happened really fast, because I was 18, got married, had kids. So I continue to be growing up. But when I was young and doing a lot of my artwork and stuff, and people will say, "Wow, you know, you should be an artist when you grow up." And as I thought of that over time... but it occurred to me that, "But I like to just draw when I like to draw," which at that time was all the time. Instead of math, I would draw. But it was like, "Well, what if I had to wake up every day and be an artist? And create something every day." And then, you look at the people who did art. You know, like Wyland and these kind of guys who just, every day, "Wow, I get to paint a whale today! And I'm gonna paint it on a building! And then I'm gonna take a picture and put it on note cards and cups and things, and I'm gonna make a jillion dollars." But I didn't see how that would work for me, and so I never really considered it. Thankfully, I was able to go through that whole incubation at Ka'ala Farm. When I left them to start my own business, I'd been there for like 15 years. Even in that time, I was being approached by people. Maile Andrade was always sending people and things to me. She was like, "Hey, you're doing this fine. Here, go do this and see these people, and go to that thing," or whatever. As time went on, then I started thinking, "I wonder... I wonder if I could do this on my own. If I could just..." Plus, they were making me crazy already. It's like, "So stay here, lose my mind but have a paycheck, have insurance, have retirement, duh-duh-duh-duh. Or, think about this, or, do your own thing, no idea what you're doing, hope that this is going to work. Umm... sure. Let's go that way." And you know, I don't come from these kinds of people. My mom was a teacher for a thousand years. My dad worked for gas and electric company for a thousand years. His mother's family actually, when they

moved to California from Utah, they were very enterprising. They bought tons of land, they farmed, they had their own construction businesses, and just all kinds of stuff. All kinds of stuff. And I asked my dad, I said, "Dad, you never wanted to just have your own business?" He goes, "Nope. I wanted to go to work and do my job and come home." Because he, when we bought our house when I was like, two, he told my mom, "Just find a place with a big yard." And I still remember the schematic landscape drawing of what he was going to do. It was this whole Japanese garden, had a koi pond, had a bird cage, had a swimming pool. They had the plants all just so, this and the other thing. And that's what he'd do. And it's still there, when I go home. My parents are 90 years old, and my mom just fell on her face the other day. Thank goodness she doesn't break a hip or her wrist. She landed... or her teeth, this time. Hit her chin, and...

AP: That's tough!

DT: You old people! Flaming old people! Ahh! So that's what he wanted to do. He didn't want to spend 24 hours a day, and maybe he saw them [his family] and how hard they worked, or whatever. He loved his job at Gas and Electric. When he retired, straight at 65, and went on with some other hobbies he had and didn't have to worry about all this business stuff. So it wasn't anything that I saw growing up, that I wanted to pursue it. And being kind of a cautious person was something. Really didn't know how that would work out. But I went ahead and kind of started that. Really, few years later, when I went back to school, then I was like -- I took a business class -- and I was like, "Wow. Imagine if you took this first! Everything you want to know!" [Laughs] Because all this stuff about the licenses and, if you want contracts with the state, you gotta da-da-da-da, and all your GE taxes, and all your bla-bla-bla-blah. "Oh, I gotta do what? When? Okay." All this stuff they covered in that class, I was like, "O-M..." That blew... I tell anybody, you wanna start a business? Take the class. Go take a class. Just sign up for a class online, whatever, and get all that stuff figured out first. So you know exactly what you're doing, and to who, and with what, and da-da-da-da. I mean, that's why people love their government contracts, they're lucrative. Even just to do stuff for the state, things with Culture and Arts, you have to have all this stuff, and you have to be compliant with all of your taxes and your things, your GEs, and all those. All those things. So, I went ahead, started that thing out. I started doing that. And then, 2009 and we were in the middle of that one big crash. I was like, "I wonder if this was a good time for this?" But you know what? God willing, everything... Even though it's really stressful, because I don't pursue work. I really don't chase work at all. I mean, I'll do things and go, "Oh, maybe I'll just throw this on Instagram, see if people buy it. Oh, and, all gone." But I have enough. If I actually worked, if I was actually working, Avalon, I would have stuff in galleries, stuff in an online shop. We've made jewelry and we've made things, but I hate making little things! But they're so cool and people love to buy 'em, but I hate making 'em! I'd rather... it's enough to cut a tree, spend your time pounding it, and get rid of that thing. But I could actually do stuff. And fortunately, this is something I can probably do for the rest of my natural life, which works because I have like, zero retirement. Well, during the pandemic, when I had all those big jobs, I was actually able to start putting away money in a slightly obsessive way. Because every time I had retirement money, I'd take it out and then use it to go to Egypt and get husbands. [Avalon laughs]. It's just a thing with me, I guess. But it is kind of borderline stressful that, "Today's the day no one's gonna want any kapa thing. No one's going to need a class, no one's gonna anything." But that hasn't happened. My daughter's writing an ANA grant now, for us to grow a pile of material. Even when my son bought that land, and they were

asking, "Well, how much income do you think this will make?" I said, "I hold back, what could be done, only because we don't have the trees to support it." If I contacted every elementary school and say, "Hey, do you guys want a class? It costs this much. We will come teach all your fourth graders all year this, all year this," I could do that with every school on the island, and they would have us. But I don't have the trees to support that. Or the people. So we're writing this whole grant to address this kind of thing. How could you really make this an economic, this whole cultural economic division that isn't selling out, but is giving a thing. And you know, I never did get that from people, either. A lot of times when people want to do cultural things, either they are selling out by, I don't know, whatever shenanigans, or they go into it to exploit it. But I have been a professional kapa maker since I started at Ka'ala Farm. And for a long time, I forgot that part, that I was a professional kapa maker. And I would count it from when I had the business, because that was kind of separate, you know. But it was like, no. I was professionally being paid to teach, and grow, and produce, and everything with kapa. I was doing it already that long.

AP: How long was that gap, then? Between doing it at Ka'ala and then having..?

DT: There wasn't a gap. I left Ka'ala to start the business. And I had already actually started the business. My second husband, he said, "I'm gonna make you a website." I was like, "No, what if everybody comes and wants kapa? I can't. Ahh!" I said, "Just make it informational." Right after that, then Martin & MacArthur calls, and they said, "Oh, we want a big kapa, and put it in frames and sell in our shop." I was like, "See! Look what happened already! I can't keep up with this!"

AP: That's just it, it seems like celebratory, but then it's also like... it's so stressful! All of a sudden you've got this work that you need to do, and there's an expectation there, too.

DT: Just everything is a surprise all the time. All the time. Like, this girl from... and I think it might be the same job that Roen made a bunch of stuff for, something in Kona. I don't know which hotel or what it was, but she called me up, she said, "Oh, we want this giant piece." And so...

AP: Kona Village.

DT: Is that what it is?

AP: Probably.

DT: Okay. Is it a big project?

AP: From what I understand... I don't fully understand it just yet, because I have yet to sit down and do my research. But it sounds like a pretty big thing.

DT: Where is it?

AP

I don't actually know exactly where it's located. This is where I keep...

DT: Probably on the beach, on the ocean side, though.

AP: It is. It's on the ocean side, from what I understand. I keep meaning to sit down and just Google, try to find their website. I assume they have a website. But I'm in the middle of my last semester of grad school and I'm like, "I... will do this later."

DT: Yeah, that ain't going anywhere. So she said, "Oh, so can you this and that, send me some stuff." And I was like, "That's a huge piece." So I kind of figured out my cost for the piece and then I was like, "Okay, make it this much. Add 30% for whatever." So then I had this kind of fat number, bigger number. So that one big piece that Roen sent to the museum? So yesterday, I messaged Mary, I said, "Eh, ask Roen how much she'd sell that piece for. Not to me, I can't afford it." Which made me think, wow, we should have really been doing things like, kapa exchanges with each other. 'Cause now, all these ones who are dead... So we need to do this kind of thing. So that piece looks like it's about three feet by, probably at least 10 ten feet. And she said it was seven grand. So for the piece that I did, I quoted them 16, because it's six by 10. And I said, "Okay, I think I can live with that." And then I was gonna say, "I can be negotiable on the price..." And I said, "No! Stop doing that! Stop doing that!"

AP: I'm proud of you.

DT: Thank you! Me too, I am too. I was like [pauses] "... Just let it go. Just let it go." She goes, "Okay, I'll get back to you next week. I'm gonna show the client and dah-dah-dah-dah." This designer, she's here, she's on Hawai'i somewhere. And yesterday, she wrote back, she said, "Hi, we would like to proceed. Please let me know where to send the check for the down payment and stuff." I was like, [joyful sounds] "Ahh! Ah! Oh, oh, ok." Because my husband and even my daughter are always like, "Mom, stop underpricing that stuff." And I was like, it's so hard sometimes. I don't want to up it because I think you have money, but then we have... I mean, I do so many kapa... "Our baby's gonna be born, we want to catch it in kapa." No stress there. Or, "Oh, we want a baby blanket, or we want a wedding kapa, or I need a piece for the kanoa." One of my friends said, "I want you to make me a kapa for my ashes." I said, "Are you planning on going somewhere?" He goes, "No, no, I just want to have everything ready." He said, "How much would that cost?" He was one of my lua people. I said, "Oh, I want a leiomano. I never finished my sharktooth blade yet." And he said, "I don't have one," he said, "Can't I pay you?" I said, "I'd rather have a leiomano! But, you can pay me. Pay me whatever you want, I'm not even gonna give you a price. You can just throw money at me, it's fine." As a practitioner, and as somebody that people look at you as this... There's a commercial side, yeah. There's the traditional side, yeah. You got to balance all of these sides out, so that it works for your real life, but so that it also works for how people perceive you as this cultural bearer. There's no shame in it, to be able to make money doing what you do. People came to know me from my time at Ka'ala, because we did so many things. We were everywhere. When I was working there, they'd call me, come do demo for HTA stuff [Hawai'i Tourism Authority], or for OHA stuff [Office of Hawaiian Affairs]. And then you meet people. And then when you go to Pacific Festival of the Arts and meet people. I was on a plane one time and [Jerry Santos] was there. So I'm sitting on the plane, and he's across the aisle from me. And he looks at me, and he goes, "Aren't you the kapa maker?" And I was like, "Aren't you the famous guy?" [Laughs] He goes, "You know why, I saw your work in the Hana Hou Magazine and blah, blah, blah." I said, "Yeah, slow news day.

I've been in Hana Hou like, four times." I said, "They must run out things when they're just doing kapa all the time." And it was so funny, and people will do that. [Whispers] "Aren't you the kapa maker?" "I am." [Laughs] It's so funny.

AP: That's got to be fun, right?

DT: It is! It is pretty fun. My family gets a kick out of it. If I'm on a magazine or something, I'll take it home. I have to bring home two, so my mom and dad don't fight over them. Oh my gosh, actually, I have these girls coming this week, coming Thursday and Friday to film for -- they have a thing they do online -- but they're quilters. Quilting, and stuff like that. From UK and Oregon. Yeah.

AP: Oh, not local kine quilters?

DT: [Shakes head] Mmm-mm. But fortunately, I have a patchwork quilt made out of kapa that I did. I'll have to bust that [out], they'll love that.

AP: That's exciting.

DT: So they're gonna do a whole thing. I said, "Here, look at this film that this crew from the BBC did. So you can get an idea because they came one time." They had this four part series called "Handmade in the Pacific." And so, I don't know how they found me, but they came. I was like, "Yeah, let's do it." And so they filmed the whole start to finish process. With the finish, the girl was wearing the pā'ū and dancing down by Lili'uokalani's statue. Oh, my gosh. You know, I got such an appreciation... and you know, the crew was two guys. Was the director and a film guy. The film guy is from here. But the production values were really, really good. It was a really nice film. But you know, just, "Okay, so we gonna take a picture of you walking, cutting down the tree and then walking out of the grass. Okay, let's try that one more time. Okay, let's try that from this angle. Okay, let's do like..." And after that week, I was thinking, you know, and they're just filming me going about my day. I said, "I got a whole new appreciation for actors," and just all the, "Okay, let's take it one more time. Okay, let's try couple more takes just for when we look at editing and see if there's any, and dah-dah-dah-dah." It's like, holy mackerel! It was crazy.

AP: No, yeah, I mean, it's... that's where like, here I am, just... I don't know how to do any of this stuff. I'm good at recording, I'm good at talking, and listening, and stuff. But I'm thinking it'd be really interesting to learn a little bit more about the videography side of these things, too. Because as I get more interested in recording people's stories, I think this is... we need to do more of this.

DT: Especially if we keep losing people and stuff.

AP: That's the big thing. Yeah. I mean, I'm going to Kaho'olawe next month, for my first time.

DT: Oh, are you? Oh, nice.

AP: And Uncle Emmett [Dr. Noa Emmett Aluli] just passed away. And I was like, oh... he was this real big, heavy hitter who... I'll never get that chance to meet him and talk story with him. And that's unfortunate. I'll know people who knew him. It's just gonna continue, obviously. Life goes on, right? And so, just wanting to maintain those stories and...

DT: And hopefully, that influence for most people has embedded itself somewhere. I tell people, I said, "Look, when I die, and this art gets lost again, not my problem." Because I have been teaching for all these years, and all these people, and everywhere. And if anything happens, it's not my fault. Not my fault. Nothing more I could do.

AP: Well, there's no doubt about it. Like with Roen, people come and go, but then there have been this core group that kind of stays.

DT: Yeah, thank goodness. Yeah.

AP: Yeah. And right now we've got a young girl who just turned 11 recently, and she's been coming up there for... the past couple years have been a blur. I'm going to say she's been coming up for a year and a half now, maybe? Since she was about nine. So it's good that she keeps coming. It's taking her a while to get really ma'a. But she's also a kid, and she's doing six other after-school activities. You know what I mean? It's just one of many. But it's also...

DT: But she wants to do..?

AP: She wants to, she wants to be there.

DT: Wow, nice.

AP: And she's into it and she's having fun. I do have to just tell her, "Close the mouth, pay attention to the kapa." [Laughter] She gets very excited and wants to talk. I'm like, "Okay, I love hearing about your drama at school. But you got to just, you got to just do it. And you're beating holes in the kapa again!" But it's great, it's good that we have her.

DT: Yeah!

AP: Because I think about, when I was her age, what were the things that I was doing at that age? And they were instrumental. They make a big difference. I hope, I don't think kapa is going anywhere, because I think people like you, and Roen, and Verna have taught some people who at this point are carrying it on. But still, that possibility is always there. It's something I do think about, where it's like... do you think kapa makers 500 years ago thought, "Oh, this isn't gonna be done one day"?

DT: But I feel like when they did stop, they weren't traumatized by it. When I ask people, "Why do you think they stopped?" This and this happened, and this, and history, and things, and introduction of materials and everything. "So do you think they were traumatized when they stopped doing it?" "Oh, yeah because our culture!" I don't think so at all! Because what'd they get? Something way better than kapa. And that's how they saw, they're pragmatic. When you live

this live-or-die life. The most brokest, poorest person will still never die. You can get food stamps, you can buy meals at McDonald's, you can do all this stuff, you won't die. But in those days, you will die if there's no food, if there's no this, no that. So when you found a better product, when they got knives and guns, and fabric, I mean, what wasn't there to love? The interesting part that you always have to remind people is that, there was still 100 years in between when they got new stuff and when they stopped. That they actually looked at all this stuff and said, "But how can we do that with our art? How can we incorporate these cool designs? How can we use these knives to carve better stuff? How can we..." It just got so drastically different, right? When they were influenced by that stuff. Which is fine. That's cool, that was awesome. So it wasn't like "kapa, no kapa." It was like, trickle down, trickle down, people moving into town, people doing other things. We had people going to university and everything. My grandma's grandma went to Oakland, to Mills College. And her mother didn't go to college, but my mother did, and her siblings. My grandfather sent five of the six of them to BYU. And my mom said that when it was her turn to go, she told my dad, "Can't I just go to UH?" And he's like, "Why?" She said, "You know, It's close. I don't want to go so far away." He goes, "No, go to BYU. It's a church school, you're going to the church school. You're going over there." And so she's like, "Okay, but oh, I want to go to UH, wah wah wah." But when she graduated, she went and bought herself a car, and then she got a job. And she said her and her friends were all like, "Well, where should we go? Where are all the men?" "San Diego." So they got jobs in San Diego and [laughs]... met my dad at church, and just never had the desire to move back. She brought us back every year, when we were kids and it was fun to fly. And then when we were old enough, she'd just put us on a plane, "Tell grandma I said hi," and sent us all over here. So I spent almost every summer here. So when I finished high school, and got engaged to one of my cousin's from here, then I moved here. My first year here was like, "Oh, my god! [Excited noises] And they let everybody play with fireworks on their own? What is that!? What is that!?" You know, San Diego, you have a sparkler and professionals handle the fire... lost my mind!

- AP: It was so funny. I was in California for Fourth of July a couple years ago, and I was like, "Oh, I've never seen it be such a big deal." I was like, smart, though! Because I mean, being from Waikōloa, we get so many fires. But you guys get fires out here, too, yeah? Yeah. I kinda liked it.
- DT: This was actually a very subdued New Year's. I was surprised.
- AP: It was. I was here for New Year's.
- DT: Oh, were you over here?
- AP: I always come here for New Year's. And not because I want to be around all the noise, it's just because I have so many friends here. I do Christmas at home with my family, I live with my family. But my brother lives here, one of my brothers lives here. And so I always come out to do New Year's with him and a good friend. We usually go up Hawai'i Kai, and that's always fun. Except, it's my friend's family's place, and his cousin is like... this guy's spent, I'm not kidding, two to four grand on fireworks. He's really into it. So when you get to the house, he's been

setting them off since one in the afternoon, you know. It's just non-stop, and I mean non-stop. Like you take a break to go shishi, and he gets the big one...

DT: And it's the big ones. It's the big "boom, boom" ones here.

AP: And everybody just expects it. Everybody loves it. But I go a little deaf. This year, I was like, I think I'm just gonna hang out with my friends in Honolulu this time. I love you guys, but last time, I honestly couldn't hear for five days after.

DT: I'd come up with the earphones.

AP: I might actually do that. Next time, I might just be like, "Look, I know I'm gonna look like a dork but I love being around you guys."

DT: "But I also love hearing."

AP: But I love hearing! [Laughter] I gotta take care of myself now, is what I'm learning.

DT: Right? How old are you?

AP: I'm 31.

DT: Only a child!

AP: Haha! Thank you.

DT: But you know what, but yes... sunscreen! Never stop working out and moving, everything. Because I tell you, when I was in a hospital in December... and I've been working out, I've been going to gym. I had a girl training me because I'm always intermittently a slug, and then I gotta, [tough voice] "Be Arnold." And then when I was in the hospital, I mean, it was like five days on my back, IVs, just... nothing. I took advantage of the situation. I just turned off the phone, left the TV off. I was literally sleeping. I was like this the whole time. The bed was up. I have my legs up like this, I'd lay like this because they'd poked holes in me looking for stuff. I had these drainage things out here. And so I just laid like that, like all day, all night, because I can't eat. I got a full length catheter. I don't have to get out of bed to pee. So I'm just, you know... [Laughs].

AP: You're just, that's it. That's your life.

DT: I'm contained in it, like a larva. I'm just a larva, they're feeding me, stuffs coming out, I'm fine. But I tell you, when I got out and then had to walk and move and stuff, I just felt... I felt like every muscle had melted off. My skin was all da kine, I was just... And thank goodness my husband rented me an AirBnB for another week to recuperate from that. Because I would have come home and tried to do stuff in the yard, because that's what we do. So I'm trapped there, can't do anything, watch TV and... [Dalani's husband appears in the driveway] Did you get it? Lovey? Yeah? Say hi. Hey, say hi to my friend!

AP: Hi!

DT: Because I'm being interviewed! Look, we got cameras and stuff!

AP: So one other question, because we kind of touched on the dyes and the woods and things like that, is: In the many years that have been making kapa, have you noticed any changes in the environment or environments that you source your materials? Or where you grow things right here, any changes over time?

DT: Not so much. I do feel like if I was still up in the land, I would probably see changes of things. I remember going to places, like, if we want to go gather the pala'ā fern, and that's a fern that's really hard to grow in a pot. Even that fern lady, over on the other side, she said that pala'ā is so hard to grow. We knew a good place where you could get it, and then you're picking the brown dead ones anyway, to make that dye. And, oh, man, I remember making a bucket of that, and it was just a beautiful, brown, nice dye. I wish I could do that. See, that's why I miss not being back in the forest anymore, is that. But then I also remember going to places where hālau would come sometimes to gather things, and if that kumu is not teaching you correctly, all the tops of the tī leaves are gone, and all the palapalai is all pulled out from the roots, and horrible things like that. And I feel like -- and I'm gonna suspect it's true that, with the, "Oh, here I am in this desolated, nowhere place, you should all come here and see it!" -- all of that kind of stuff has probably gotten worse. Like, where people were growing maile, the maile lau li'i grows back up in here. I've heard people say, "Yeah, hard to find that. People pulling it, they don't know how to gather it and da-da-dah." And that's always the thing, before you touch anything, you have got to be trained from somebody who's done it, how to gather stuff. And back to why I really don't teach dye things, unless it is from plants that are right here. I have the milo here, I can go pick those pods, I can take them to class, I can make my class. And then I tell them, watch as you're driving to school or from wherever you're coming from and going. Watch for this one plant. See if it's somewhere and see if there's a place you could harvest it, so that you can gather it again. Watch for these things, and are they somewhere you have to ask somebody if you can get it, or is it on the side of the road? When people decide they want to do this thing... Because, we all just learning from the monkeys on the phones. I mean, some of those stuff are really good, I will admit. There's some really good stuff that people do, and you can tell they really care about how they're teaching, whatever it is. But then there's a lot of stupidity out there, too. And there's a lot of people who just see a thing and decide, "Oh, I want to do that thing," without really putting in that kind of time and thought. I mean, nobody puts in time and thought into anything anymore, I feel like, a lot of times. So that's why it's always been important to me to try and grow as much things. I mean, you want to grow your plants for tools; okay, that's a 20 year project. So you start that with the next child and plant, you know, a milo tree. By the time that kid is 40, you'll be able to cut something and make some of your tools with it. Otherwise, you're kind of growing it for the next three generations down.

AP: Right. Yeah, and that's... I think that that's one of those common phrases, "you're planting for the next generation." Literally, because we might not live to see this tree develop into something that might be a resource in your lifetime. But then also, even if it does develop... like, within a year, you've got wauke that's ready to go. But it's not just for you, it's for the students, the haumāna.

Maybe one of them will one day be like, "Hey, I'm gonna come help you on the farm and help you take care of these things." Makes a big difference, I'm sure.

DT: Yeah.

AP: What would you say are challenges? Any challenges that you see in the perpetuation of kapa?

DT: Like I told you straight off the bat, having that place to, having.... so what is your motivation? Why are you making this? How far down that rabbit hole do you think you'll go? Or how far do you think you'll take it? As far as, you know, are you just going to be an artist? Because no one ever is just an artist. People find out you make kapa, somebody's gonna make you come teach a class. Or do a demo, right? As you know. [Laughs] "I just wanted to learn how!" "Eh, well, now you gotta teach. Now you gotta come to the school. Now you got to do this and that." And so, how much kuleana are you prepared to accept as part of the trade off for being involved in this art? How much of your soul are you willing to put into that? And because I've taught so long, and because I've taught such a diversity of, you know, from preschool to elder hostel, which is essentially preschool, to college level, and all over the place... but then what do I see come back after all that teaching? Who else do I see taking it to the next couple of levels? What do they still need support? Do they still need something? So I was trying to do a class that was teaching people to teach kapa. Because you cannot assume that once you learn how to do kapa, that you also will know how to teach it. As you know, because it changes every time for every group. Especially you get calls from like, the hotels and all these kind of randomness that, "Teach this little thing." What's the attention span of people these days, who have zero attention spans, you know? And you got to look at people's motivation, and then you only need to give that much energy for that much attention. We're so used to just, "Oh, I love kapa so much, I'm just gonna blaaah everything I know!" But you're really just going, "Oh, this is a cute Hawaiian thing. So what is this? Oh, okay. Well there's another cute Hawaiian thing, what is this?" So why am I just, heart and soul, and, [pretends to cry] "It's, it's so deep and meaningful to me, let me share." "Oh, oh, but I like that." All those layers of reading people. And that's a thing. So few people who teach, should be teaching. As you know! [Laughs] Just because you know a thing, don't mean you should try and learn it to other people.

AP: Right. Yeah. And then I guess that actually kind of answers my follow up to, "What are the challenges?" which is: what would be beneficial then, in perpetuating kapa? What are some things that you think people, our society, our state could do in helping to perpetuate this particular art?

DT: I think, I mean, thus far, we've gotten good support from a lot of the Hawaiian organizations, like the Pa'i Foundation and MAMo [Maoli Arts Movement]. They do a lot of things because of Auntie Vicky's [Vicky Holt Takamine] whole commitment with showcasing Hawaiian artists. She told that story at the opening up a show, that when they built the Convention Center, and then they commissioned all these artists, not a single one was from Hawai'i. They were all mainland artists, to create for this showpiece of the island's Convention Center. That now has pukas in the roof, and now they got... [laughs] it's all leaking. So at that time, she kind of just made that her mission that we need to get Hawaiian arts into these things. Then the state Art and Culture Foundation [State Foundation on Culture and the Arts], those guys, they buy the artwork

for art in public places kind of stuff. I have a couple pieces that they have. That bigger kind of stuff, I have seen that in action over the years. Not just for kapa, but for all native artists, and things like that. And even derivatives of native arts. Like when Micah Kamohoali'i went to Milan and Paris, everybody's Fashion Week. But you know what, braddah, he is crazy, but he really works hard for that stuff. And he pulls his whole family into it, and they just do this. He was in... not Hana Hou magazine. What was he in? It was an article about him... maybe it was Hana Hou. I think I cut it out of it. Because he is just so... like, the first time they called them and said, "Oh, this is from Fashion Week, we want you to come and bring your stuff." He's like, "Yeah, right." Hangs up the phone, but then he's like, "But what if it was them?" [Laughs] And he's just, he's just a bubbles guy. So there's people like that, and even Manaola and these guys who just... but you know, but it's not like they're the first. Because you look at Shaheen, Alfred Shaheen, and those guys in the '40s and the '30s. And everybody who saw these designs as the ones who pioneered the Aloha Shirts, and all that kind of stuff.

AP: And I'm actually not as familiar with all of that. I'm actually starting to get more interested in the history of, not just aloha shirts, but just clothing in Hawai'i. Because that is what kapa was. And then we do see the designs. I mean, how many braddahs walk around wearing their aloha shirt that has kapa designs on it, but do we know..? I mean, Manaola is doing a great job and bringing the story to the forefront. His website is actually a great resource, for the names of the different 'ohe kāpala and things like that. But still yet, there were, as you're saying, there's other people. See, I'm not even familiar with them. So obviously, this is homework for me to do is go home and... Alfred Shaheen?

DT: Shaheen.

AP: Okay. Yeah. Yeah.

DT: Even like with Manaola and their names of designs, you see, that's his interpretation of those names of those designs. Because we never had names. I mean, when Buck gathered all those pieces and put them in the museum, he didn't have names for them. And they did get names. But when you actually think about printing a piece of kapa, or drawing, like, you've seen those old pieces... and it's like, "I see pretty pictures, but I don't see a thing that I could definitely say they're talking about this, that, or the other thing." You can look at the Tongan stuff, you can see the shells, you can see the tree, you see whatever kind of stuff they were actually figuratively using. And you know, it's funny that in our figurative work, it was only in the petroglyphs. The only place you will see figures, in the stone! In the hardest thing to work! But you won't see it in a mat, you won't see it on the ipu, you won't see it in the kapa. There is nothing figurative. It is all geometric. So that's kind of funny, you see the rainbow guy, and the dogs, and all that stuff in the rocks!

AP: It is really incredible. When I go down to places like Puakō, and you just have this big field...

DT: Oh, yeah. It's crazy.

AP: It's like, man, that is hard.

DT: It's like, were all you guys down here, like all the same time? Or were we just, "Hey, let's all go down and scar some stuff." Or like, one guy and one guy made... what? Huh? What was even the setup of that? [Laughs] That all those rocks got so much carvings!

AP: It'd be so cool to go back and really be able to see. And some people have done some great work in being able to tell, "Well, the wear pattern on this one suggests that it might be 50 years old." But even still, it's all still subjective.

DT: Yeah.

AP: It's hard to know for sure.

DT: So even when we look at design work, and even how I have to interpret it. I mean, like I said, I don't carve... typically I don't make new designs. Unless there's something specifically I'm trying to say, and specifically I see something in my head that makes me say, "Yeah, I'll make a design of this." But then when you look at the way it's printed, where you have a vertical stamp being printed in a horizontal manner that completely obliterates this one guy. So when I was teaching, I would tell them, I asked, "Who knows what 'E pluribus unum' means?" Which nobody knows, and you're all lame, and I don't know what they're teaching you in US history, but you need to know everybody's history, okay?" Because when you put it all together, you understand. It means, "From many, one." Pluribus, plural. Unum, uno. Many ones. So I steal that, and I say, "Unum pluribus unum. One, to the many, makes one." Because this one stamp, stamped 100 times, creates this one visual entity. Now, what you thought your carving has meaning here, is that going to translate when you print it all the way across this way? Because that's how these stamps were meant to be used. That was the way they're meant to be. And when you teach that class, and people are all hung up on this thing... So when I do the design components of classes, we make them with the foam, with the sticks. And I buy the sticky foam, and we put them on, and they carve it off. So that you can see, because you can't see what this design will do until you print it. I mean, I've carried my camera around a bunch of times with people's designs, because I see some crazy stuff coming out of that. Where people are just "lalalalala," and then you print it and it's amazing stuff. And I said, "See now, if you thought it meant this when you carved it, does it still mean that when you've printed it like this? And does it need to? And what, what, what?" So the whole thing about what it means for our work, it's just... I just leave it up. Everybody wants a meaning of a thing. Everybody wants it to mean something. Does it need to? Can it just be, "Purdy, I like it?" It's what I've told people. I say, "It's purdy, and I like it." [Laughs] Don't mean nothing! Means nothing. But now I can't print like that anymore. I hate to, it's just, it's wasteful. I don't know. I wanted to do a series of all the 'Ōlelo No'eau, or a bunch of them. Because some of them are just too out there. But I wanted to just do this whole thing of... just like, all my random pieces, all my practice pieces, all the kapa left behind, whatever. I'd just print something on there that was based on an 'Ōlelo No'eau. Plus I think it could be a good selling point, practically.

AP: Are you kidding? Oh my god, people would love that!

DT: Right?

- AP: Truly. That's the thing too, is, the meaning is inherently there, when you're choosing to do something like that. I also think if you do something that is just pretty, people are going to find the meaning in it. Or they're gonna apply meaning to it.
- DT: You would hope so. You would think, maybe.
- AP: I would hope so. But maybe I'm giving people too much credit. [laughs]
- DT: You are. You really are. They really do want to know what it means. Because of the history and the connections of kapa, and that thing, that they have meaning in it. That it's kind of inherently there, and then in people's heads. Not like when you look at an abstract piece and go, "This means the anguish of the Ukrainians," or something. You look at a kapa piece and you go, "But what does it mean?" assuming that the native people have hidden some kind of thing in there. I don't know... As you know, there is only so many questions people can ask, right? It becomes a suite, there's a suite of questions that people can ask. So then it comes to you. Why do you keep answering it this way? And have you gotten any new information? Has somebody told you something different? Can you add something to that answer? That answer should change regularly, you should go through all those questions and then say, "How do I answer? Is that still my answer? Or have I learned something new, or divined something new, about why I answer that way?" And I've had to turn over a lot of the ways I answer things, because I've gotten new information. I mean, I'm a person who's like, "Okay, so, but why? So tell me about this? So explain this?" One time when I was at Aulani, a guy from South America, I forgot where, he came in with his son and so he's looking at the kapa display. He goes, he's telling the son, "See, and our people used to do stuff like that, too." I was like, "Where? Where did your people do this? What did they do? And what kind of plant? And what, what, what?" He was like, "Oh, I don't know. I just know we used to do it." Useless! Useless to me! Arrghhh! [Laughs].
- AP: I have had so much fun talking story with you. And I know I can keep going forever and ever.
- DT: And so can I, 'cuz 9000 floors, we're only on like 6000! [Laughs].
- AP: I was gonna say!
- DT: No worries. I know. I hope you got most of what you need.
- AP: I really did, and then some. I mean, that's where I only have the questions as a general guide. Because I was like, I'm doing talk story. I'm not, "Okay, question number 2, now."
- DT: Yeah. It's just when you're writing and going, "Ah... I meant to, I missed this really important thing!"
- AP: Like, let me just take a quick look at a-da-da-da. Yeah, no, I mean, that's... That's where like, even at the very beginning of our conversation... I'm just gonna go and turn this off. But you know, you, you brought up things before I even got to asking about them!