

CREATIVE RESURGENCE INFORMATIONAL MEETING



Senate Committee
on Labor, Culture & the Arts

December 3, 2020

Senate Committee on Labor, Culture & the Arts

CHAIR: Senator Brian Taniguchi

VICE CHAIR: Les Ihara, Jr.

COMMITTEE: Stanley Chang, Kurt Fevella & Jarrett Keohokalole

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HAWAII STATE SENATE YOUTUBE VIDEO

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The recording was transcribed and edited for written format with an effort to preserve each speaker's voice and content.



Senate Committee on Labor, Culture & the Arts

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Speakers in Order of Appearance

Jonathan Johnson
State Foundation on Culture & the Arts

Lala Nuss
Conscious Concepts

Dr. Akiemi Glenn
Pōpolo Project

Dr. Teri Skillman
Hawai'i Art Alliance

Snowbird Bento
Kumu Hula, Ka Pā Hula o ka Lei Lehua

Vilsoni Hereniko
Academy of Creative Media

Raiatea Helm
Hawaiian Recording Artist

Dave Moss
Honolulu Symphony Orchestra

George Kon
T-Shirt Theatre

Kealoha Wong
Hawai'i Poet Laureate

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Native Books

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Senate Committee
on Labor, Culture
& the Arts

**BRIAN
TANIGUCHI**
Senator



Good morning and aloha everybody. Welcome to an informational briefing regarding the role of the arts and culture in Hawai'i especially during this time in the pandemic. To start us off this morning, I'd like to ask Snowbird Bento to provide us with some inspiration (Snowbird Bento chants oli, Kau ka hali'a i ka manawa la).

Aloha and thank you for that. I'm Senator Brian Taniguchi, Chair of the Senate Committee on Labor, Culture, and the Arts. Joining us are Vice Chair Les Ihara, Committee Members Stanley Chang, Jared Kaohokalole, and Kurt Fevella. Also joining us is Rep. Cedric Gates, who is also the Chair on the House Committee on Culture and the Arts, and Jonathan Johnson, the Executive Director for the State Foundation on Culture and the Arts.

This meeting is live-streamed by the Hawai i State Senate (https://youtu.be/NMFLf_oHKvk). We are not able

to accept public testimony at this informational briefing. You are welcome to submit comments and questions to the Committee members (emails are provided above). To get started, may I first introduce again, Jonathan Johnson, the Executive Director of the State Foundation on Culture and the Arts.

State Foundation on
Culture & the Arts

**JONATHAN
JOHNSON**
Executive
Director



Good morning and Aloha, Chair Taniguchi, Chair Gates, Members of the Committees, and the Creative Resurgence. I'm Jonathan Johnson, the Executive Director of the State Foundation on Culture and the Arts, the State's arts agency. The role of the State Arts Agency and the reason that the government is involved in the arts, is to ensure access to the arts for all people across the state, in every community, not just Honolulu. Our focus is on the geographic and

economically underserved. Why? Because participation in creativity ensures a healthy community. Hawai'i's cultural organizations play a major role in what makes our island special. As Hawai'i faces the effects of the public health crisis, we recognize that the culture and the arts field is particularly vulnerable to the economic impact of this emergency. We also know that we are one of the most innovative sectors as you will hear today. I am confident with their creativity and we will find a way through this time. In Hawai'i, we are fortunate to have both the support of the Administration and the Legislature.

Thank you. Working together, we will emerge, all be it different than before the crisis. So, today we will hear from cultural organizations and from creatives statewide demonstrating tremendous ingenuity and generosity as communities strive to stay safe and healthy. In recognizing the State's budget crisis, I'm particularly interested in hearing about the agenda of partnerships and opportunities for shared goals brought forward by these creatives. Mahalo and this is going to be really fun. Take care.

Creative
Resurgence
Emcee

LALA NUSS
Conscious
Concepts



Aloha mai kakou, mahalo for joining us and welcome again to this virtual gathering to support the establishment of a Creative Resurgence Caucus in the Hawaii State Legislature.

My name is Laurien Helfrich-Nuss and I come from Honouliuli & Hilo. My background interweaves the global tourism and hospitality industry, non-profit and grassroots community development, regenerative entrepreneurship, creative arts programming, environmental resilience, and equity advocacy initiatives. I come to you today as a keiki o ka 'āina and community member advocate and I have the privilege of being your

facilitator for today's program.

Mahalo nui to Senator Taniguchi, the Senate Committee for Labor, Culture, and the Arts, and staff for officially hosting this virtual event and providing technical support.

Today we will be exploring, through stories and artistic expression, the breadth and depth of Hawai'i's creative sector that expands 1000's of years and 1000's of miles. Mahalo to everyone for showing up to share, dream, advocate, and imagine together in this important discussion.

For today's program, we are honored, excited, and grateful to have a dozen individual Hawai'i artists and creatives offering their invaluable time and energy in contributing to this initiative, especially during these unprecedented times.

I want to acknowledge the historic challenges we find ourselves in presently. A globally impactful experience being felt in so many different ways, from public health to economy and everything in between. I want to honor and uplift our frontline workers and those who continue tirelessly to provide relief and recovery

for those being impacted the hardest.

Today, we will have the opportunity to hear from voices that embody the brilliance of Hawai'i's creative practices and cultural knowledge, pointing to the reasons why a State Caucus dedicated to representing the creative sector is so crucial and timely to establish in 2021.

In the spirit of collective creativity, and bringing creativity into the room, I have brought a piece of art gifted to me by the amazingly talented local artist, Culture Shaka by Justin White.

I invite all of you for a moment, to think about a time in your life that the arts and creative sector impacted you. Was it watching your child's performance at a school play or dance recital, a song sung at a friend's wedding celebration, an arts exhibition you discovered with your family, or a craft you learned and refined with other artists?

Now think about what your life, our communities would be like without the arts and creative sector. No theater, concerts, live performances, virtual programs, films, dance, etc. And now imagine what your life, our

community's well-being would look, sound, feel, taste, be like with a thriving creative sector. NOW, I invite you to carry that thought with you through today's program.

Families, cultures, businesses, careers, and knowledge are all built through acts of creation, making creativity central to our society, culture, our very way of life, and wellbeing. Throughout the pandemic and the sheltering orders, the creative sector has revealed itself as the "Second Responders," catalyzing critical response efforts, virtual arts education and experiences, commerce, and professional development.

I grew up exposed to the arts in some way, shape, or form, whether learning to dance hula, experiencing culture through museums and theater shows in other cities or witnessing my mother, Paula Helfrich, assist in establishing the Hawai'i State Art Museum over 20 years ago.

As a member of the informal, yet official Creative Resurgence Hui that emerged out of the COVID-19 pandemic, I take great pleasure in introducing

one of our founding hui members and an inspiring peer. Our first presenter and speaker today is Dr. Akiemi Glenn, a Honolulu-based scholar and culture worker. She is a linguist who works in Indigenous language revitalization and a filmmaker, artist, and cultural practitioner. Akiemi is also the founder and executive director of the Pōpolo Project, an organization whose mission is to redefine what it means to be Black in Hawai'i and in the world through cultivating connection between individuals, our communities, our ancestors, and the land, changing what we commonly think of as Local and highlighting the vivid, complex diversity of Black cultures and identities. Without further ado, Akiemi will share a bit more about the Creative Resurgence Hui and her reason for creative sector advocacy.

Creative
Resurgence
Co-founder

**DR. AKIEMI
GLENN**
The Pōplolo
Project



We are part of a group called Creative Resurgence, brought together in April 2020, as the COVID-19 pandemic placed our whole world on a tilt that made it impossible for us to ignore the many dimensions of structural failure in our society. Early in Hawai'i's shelter in place, many of us found the impulse to check in with community members and colleagues. Two of us, Luafata Simanu-Klutz of Pacific Islanders in the Arts and myself, Akiemi Glenn of the Pōpolo Project, tried to think through this time together as friends and colleagues. We're creative, learning people, and our conversations attempted to make sense of what was happening internationally while feeling the intensity of the impact locally, especially on those most marginalized in our community. We watched our larger Hawai'i community mobilize COVID-19 responses that were focused on reckoning with the public health and economic impacts of Hawai'i's tourist-

focused economy completely coming to a standstill. At the same time, we watched as we all turned to the visual and performing arts as a way to cope with the trauma of the moment while knowing that the arts and culture were not usually first priorities for investment during a crisis, or anytime. Still, the arts and our heritage cultures are where people go to make sense of life, to plumb what our real values are, and to find creative solutions.

Creative Resurgence started via an invitation that Dr. Simanu-Klutz and I put out to people in our community, among them, grassroots community organizations, teaching artists, arts administrators, museums, arts advocacy organizations, representatives from city and county, and state government, and we invited them just to talk story with us about what was going on. Here in Hawai'i, talking story is a creative act. It is something that we prize. It is listening intentionally, but also building an understanding together.

We gathered via Zoom in the early days of this pandemic in April, meeting every week. Together, we realized that as we were trying to make sense of

what was happening around us in the early days of the COVID pandemic in Hawai'i, we all were turning to the arts. We were logging on to Netflix, playing music that mattered to us, we were digging deeply into our ethnic cultures and finding sustenance in the food that our parents made for us in years past. It seemed that as our community was responding to the moment, as we were figuring out how to be, how to maintain throughout this pandemic, the arts, our cultures, the creative urge of our communities were all central to how we were making it through.

Over time, our informal Zoom call began to coalesce as the participants clearly became an affinity group moved to understand each other's perspectives and experiences as practitioners and champions of the arts. We found that we shared values that we believed would take us forward, not just in our respective work, but in using this moment to gain clarity about a vision for a thriving future for Hawai'i that we could collectively commit to work toward. This is a shared vision that acknowledges that creativity in all

its facets is paramount and central to our survival.

This group has been dynamic since the outset and has organically grown and changed in the time that we have spent together over the past months. Together, we have been able to articulate two important truths, the values that guide our work.

First, we acknowledge that Hawai'i is itself a creative place. It is not just a place where creatives live, but rather the 'āina itself is engaged constantly in acts of creation. We can see that all around us. We are inspired by it, and we thrive here because of it.

Secondly, we assert that every one of us, as humans, has the creative urge within. We know that, from the highest quality and well produced productions to the most informal backyard pā'ina, creativity is the medium through which we connect with each other and share experiences with our neighbors and with the world, how we understand ourselves and how we can imagine a future going forward.

In our small group we have used the pandemic as an opportunity for us to

collectively identify places to direct our energy in our respective organizations and communities. We have organized ourselves as a collective and apportioned out different kinds of work for our members to undertake.

One of our internal working groups spends time helping us stay aligned with our messaging and thinking through our stated values, making sure that they remain central to the work we do both inside the collective and as we as a group interface with the larger community.

Another of our working groups has developed a micro grants program, launching today in the community of Kalihi on O'ahu and in the community of Hāna on Maui. With this work, our goal is to place financial resources in the forms of small cash disbursements in the hands of our community members to uplift their creative efforts, whether they are working artists, or working on a creative project that brings life to them and the people around them.

The last of our working groups is tasked with being vigilant for new opportunities that may emerge in the landscape as things change in this uncertain time. They are thinking about

ways that we can make a collective impact as Creative Resurgence. That working group is responsible for initiating this senate informational hearing and the program that you will see today. I want to thank each of them for their hard work in weaving the wide-ranging and rich conversations of the past few months into a form that is accessible to our larger community through this connection with our state legislators today.

Without too much more from me, I'd like to turn it back over to Lala so you can hear from artists, practitioners, and others who have been doing this thinking along with us. I want to encourage our legislators and others to consider how this creative urge, evidenced all around us in nature, in the ocean, in the land, can be centered in our responses to COVID-19 and redirect the resources we steward. We encourage you to center this creative urge not solely for its economic benefit, but also for the reason that through its resurgence it re-affirms our humanity at a time when we all truly need it. Mahalo.

Creative
Resurgence
Emcee



LALA NUSS
Conscious
Concepts

Mahalo nui, Akiemi, for your contributions and solidarity in supporting our black, indigenous and Pacific Islander communities through your life's work.

We are using the word "creative" very broadly to be inclusive of diverse arts and cultural traditions and genres that are dynamic and fluid in practice. In the Western framework, the arts and humanities are separated disciplines.

In an Asia-Pacific world view, they are integrated and evolving creative practices and professions. Many cultures and languages don't have a word for art because creativity is so intimately interwoven into the fabric of their societies.

Up next, we have Dr. Teri Skillman, the CEO for the Hawai'i Arts Alliance. She earned her Ph.D. and M.A in Ethnomusicology from the UH Mānoa Music Dept. She has worked as an arts administrator and educator for

thirty years, teaching in international schools in New Delhi, Kuala Lumpur and Abu Dhabi, and lecturing at UH in Ethnomusicology and Music Education. As an arts administrator, she developed public programs and exhibits for the Judiciary History Center, UH Mānoa Hamilton Library, Museum Studies and Historic Preservation, and the Center for South Asian Studies. I had the pleasure of meeting and working with Teri during the 2019 Honolulu Biennial, now known as Hawaii Contemporary. Teri will be providing insight into the economic importance of our creative sector.

Creative
Resurgence
Hui/Emergent
Strategies group



**DR. TERI
SKILLMAN**
Hawaii Arts
Alliance

The Creative Resurgence hui has 3 groups as Akiemi indicated. The Statement group, the Micro-grants group and the Emergent

Strategies group. Inspired by author Adrienne Maree Brown's book, *Emergent Strategy: Shaping Change, Changing Worlds*, the Emergent Strategies group decided to work on a proposal for a creative caucus at the HI State Legislature.

We were inspired by Women's Caucus and the Keiki Caucus and we were driven by stories of gig working artists who were devastated by COVID and ineligible for PUA & Unemployment. We noticed that there were NO BILLS in the last legislative session for the creative sector and since the pandemic, the narrative in the media has focused on the devastation of the tourist industry including hotels and restaurants. Both of these venues employ local artists as gig workers to present programs.

Artists play so many roles in society. In Hawai'i, many of us have two jobs because the salaries are too low for the high cost of living. Artists almost always have 2 jobs, one to "pay the bills" and one to "express the soul." Artists are WORKERS. Can you fill in the blank for this statement?

**"I'm a working artist
and a _____."**

**"I'm a working artist
and a domestic worker"**

**"I'm a working artist
and an uber driver"**

**"I'm a working artist
and an educator"**

**"I'm a working artist
and a chef"**

**"I'm a working artist
and a parent"**

**"I'm a working artist and
an arts administrator"**

In the same way, Arts & Cultural organizations, such as museums, are small to medium sized businesses that employ artists on contract as gig workers if they are not organizational employees, in order to present programs for the Public.

During the pandemic, health care workers and essential workers have been our First Responders. They have been saving our lives. The Second Responders are the Creatives in our communities who have pivoted to providing creative virtual programming to keep us positive and sane.

In the Creative Resurgence Caucus proposal, the goals are articulated in broad themes such as, Advocacy, Access and Education, Creative Spaces, State Policies, and Taxes. We encourage the public to read the proposal and sign in support of establishing a Creative Resurgence Caucus in the Legislature (<https://bit.ly/379xUuQ>). The proposal does not request funds but rather seeks changes in existing laws or seeks new policies that will better recognize and support the Creative Economy in Hawai'i.

The Creatives want to step up and help the community to recover and move forward. We want to be a contributing sector for a more positive direction in the State's recovery. Please tell us stories of how the creative sector impacts your life (<https://bit.ly/2JmgsLc>).

According to the Americans for the ARTS in the 2017 Arts and Economic Prosperity Study, the Creative Economy In Hawai'i generated \$205.6 million in total economic activity. Nonprofit arts and cultural organizations spent \$125.9 million. An additional \$79.7 million was event-related spending by their audiences. This supported almost 6,000 full-time equivalent jobs and generated \$154.1 million in household income to local residents. The Creative economy delivers \$23.2 million in local and state government revenue. This economic impact study sends a strong signal that when we support the arts, we not only enhance the quality of our lives, but we also invest in the economic well-being of the State of Hawai'i.

According to the National Endowment for the Arts, Hawai'i spends \$1,871 - \$2,917 on Folk & Traditional Arts Funding per capita (per 10,000 people). This is one of the highest rates in the nation! Hawai'i has a diversity of arts, culture and humanities workers and businesses that we include in the label **CREATIVE**. Now more than ever, we need to collaborate, make space for the

diversity of creative expressions, we need more public venues, and need to find ways to support and employ Creatives from Native Hawaiian, Pacific Island, and Pacific Rim communities who are residents of Hawai'i. These are some of the reasons why we need the Creative Resurgence Caucus in the State Legislature to advocate for the Creative sector.

Creative
Resurgence
Emcee

LALA NUSS
Conscious
Concepts



Mahalo, Teri, for pointing to these critical services, resources and contributions of the creative sector.

A Creative Resurgence Caucus dedicated to representing the incredibly diverse ecosystem of arts, genealogies, ethnicities, talents, and abilities from across the Pacific and beyond is vital to our social response and economic recovery here in Hawai'i. The foundation of our cultural heritage is rooted in

Native Hawaiian ways of knowing and being.

Snowbird Puanani-o-paoa-kalani Bento is the Kumu Hula of the multi-award winning hālau hula, Ka Pā Hula O Ka Lei Lehua. Having gained this traditional title through a series of 'ūniki, a traditional "graduation" process bestowing upon the recipient the kuleana, privilege and responsibility, to transfer the wisdom and knowledge of her teacher's and their hula genealogies to her students. She is a life-long learner and educator, having taught from pre-school through the collegiate levels.

Snowbird has worked continuously at the Kamehameha Schools for the last 27 years, starting as a teaching assistant in the high school Performing Arts Department and currently serving as a Cultural Consultant in the Ho'okahua Cultural Vibrancy division. She is the standing President of the Lālākea Foundation, a non-profit organization comprised of Kumu

Hula from throughout Hawai'i. The Foundation's mission is to perpetuate the ancient art form of hula and other cultural practices. She is also a commissioner on the 13th Festival of Pacific Arts and Culture, slated to be hosted by Hawai'i in 2024.

Music, hula, Hawaiian language and culture are part of the foundations of who and why she is.

**Ka Pā Hula
O Ka Lei Lehua**



**SNOWBIRD
BENTO
KUMU HULA**

Aloha kakahiaka, Senator Taniguchi and members of the Senate Committee on Labor, Culture and the Arts. My name is Snowbird Puananiopaoakalani Bento. I am born and raised in Pauoa Valley, O'ahu.

I am an educator and a hula practitioner. I advocate for integrating Hawaiian cultural ways of learning and knowing through the acquisition of knowledge that's rooted in our kūpuna wisdom with the technologies

and lessons of the present in order to create social change, equity, and empower the next generation of learners to become the next generation of local and global leaders.

This morning I'd like to share a personal story as to why we need a Creative Resurgence Caucus. I am a child of this place and as such, I have an inherent obligation to steward and cultivate this place for the future generations of those who will call Hawai'i their home. Cultural identity defines who I am based on the place and space we have occupied from time immemorial through our ancestral DNA. I grew up in a house that was filled

with music. Music was the way and continues to be the way we show our emotions, unify, deal with hardships and loss. My mother is a hula dancer. My uncle is a musician who was part of the Hōkūle'a Saga album and a Nā Hōkū Hanohano award-winner back in the 1970s. But my uncle's story is that he could not make a living off of his creative passion alone and so he became a fireman. He was a federal firefighter for many years before he became an OSHA certified safety inspector. I watched him create a life for himself and his 'ohana, not off of his passion, but off of the need to be able to survive in Hawai'i.

I am influenced by my time at Kamehameha Schools. It allowed me to elevate and expand my knowledge, wisdom, and experiences through the culture and the arts. I knew that I loved music. I just didn't know how much. It was my time as a student that helped to foster that growth. Participating in Song Contest, becoming part of the Hō'ike production team for many years. It allowed me to work with the Polynesian Voyaging Society, being at different landfalls for Hōkūle'a and Hikianali'a, and even for homecoming.

It has also influenced and informed the current work that I do in education with Ho'okahua as we look at our technological advances and the opportunities that this virtual wa'a. If you will, it will help to continue to carry the message of education and the importance of our cultural identity throughout the rest of the world, 'Aha Moananuiākea.

Education is a medium of transference of culture and the arts. They go hand in hand. There's no doubt in my mind that keiki who have been influenced by culture and the arts, thrive and survive in their regular studies because they want to continue to grow and learn in this way.

All of these things help inform me throughout my lifetime and will continue to inform me about how and why I interact with my environment the way I do, whether it is my immediate 'ohana around me or my community at large, or even the global community that we are all very much a part of.

My uncle's story is one of equity and quality of life. All of our lives in Hawai'i are touched by culture and the arts in some way, shape or form. Whether it is in tourist programming,

whether it is in the production of the very first Hawaiian language based theatrical production to be held and premiered at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa's Kennedy Theatre, to sold out audiences. Seven out of eight performances were sold out, saying to us that there is a need and an audience for this type of culture and arts experience.

Most often we are treated as secondary parts of this economy rather than as equals. In the success and survival of our economies, whether it be in tourism or promoting theatre or participating in global conversations with the leading international groups, we look to indigenous wisdoms to inform current practice. So how do we provide for the quality of life that every person is inherently deserving of so that we can live in this place that we call home? How do we provide and care for our creative sector as contributors to the overall health and well being of our island home and our economies? How do we empower our future leaders to think of sustainable ways to provide for our people? Not just our future leaders but our current leaders as well?

Those questions can be answered in the need for a Creative Resurgence Caucus because every single one of us have been touched by arts and culture here in Hawai'i. We will continue to be touched by the influences of our culture and our arts for the next hundred generations. We need to see our Creatives as an equal part of the sustainability and economy of our island home. Mahalo for your time. Aloha.

Creative
Resurgence
Emcee

LALA NUSS
Conscious
Concepts



Mahalo nui, Kumu Snowbird, for sharing your mana'o and invaluable gifts of cultural proliferation in this space today.

Next, I would like to introduce someone I have been inspired and impacted by over the years. Dr. Vilsoni Hereniko is a Professor of the Creative Academy at UH, a filmmaker, storyteller, weaver, an embodiment of Pacific Island excellence.

Vilsoni's life work reflects the importance of the Pacific Island worldview, and that influence into Hawaii's creative sector. I have had the privilege of facilitating community discussions with him as a guest speaker as well as host a debut

showing of one of his powerfully profound films, *Let the Mountain Speak*. Please welcome Dr. Vilsoni Hereniko into the space.

Academy of
Creative Media

**VILSONI
HERENIKO**
Professor



I want to thank everyone for the opportunity to share my personal story. When I was asked to be part of this effort, to draw attention to the importance of the arts. I felt that this was important for me to do. In sharing my story, I hope that it will draw attention to the importance of creativity. It was very moving for me to hear Snowbird Bento's story about her uncle who had to do something else instead of following his passion. I am the lucky one who has made a living by following my passion. And what is that? From a very early age,

my father told me stories, so called myths and legends of my island. Those stories sustained me on my island for sixteen years. I worked very hard, got an education and even though my family was very poor. I was the youngest of eleven children. Many times there was no food to eat. I managed to get a scholarship. From then onwards my education was funded through scholarships. I believe that the secret was that I continued to follow my passion which is the love of storytelling. My father also taught me how to weave from coconut fronds at the age of ten.

Today I will share my story about how during the pandemic this traditional practice that my father taught me, helped me heal and helped me share

this gift with my friends. It improved not only my quality of life but theirs as well. I have a screen presentation that I would like to share with you.

“Creatives, including artists, are essential workers in our society and our economy, helping us recover, reflect, and rebuild.”

I want to provide evidences in support of this assertion. On my island of Rotuma, when I was growing up, it is nine miles by 2 miles. About 2,000 Polynesian people live there. It is 300 miles north of Fiji. Coconut trees were everywhere. This is what coconut grove looks like and all those trees are heavily laden with coconuts. No one on my island was afraid of a coconut falling on their head. In fact, I never heard of anyone dying from a coconut falling on their head. When I first arrived in Hawai'i thirty years ago to teach at the University of Hawai'i, I was shocked to see all these coconut trees in Waikīkī and around Honolulu without coconuts

on them and so I wrote this poem that goes like this:

Like eunuchs,
they grace the shore line of Waikīkī beach,
Coconut trees without coconuts.
Symbols of lost identities.
Exotic images as a backdrop
With semi naked tourists
lounging on the beach.

And for the past thirty years, I have always wanted to restore coconuts to the coconut trees of Honolulu. I mentioned that my father was a storyteller and fired my imagination.



"For the very first time... this humble coconut basket, made from an abandoned leaf, was able to find a place in this exhibition of very talented artists."





He told me and my siblings stories of heroes like Maui who set out with a goal in mind and he came back having achieved that goal. And through these stories I know that there was hope, that I did not have to remain poor for the rest of my life.

Today I am invited to schools, to an elementary school not too far from here to tell stories that remind me of the stories that my father told me when I was growing up. These stories inspire the children of Hawai'i.

I told two stories recently and at the end of that I got about 60 thank you notes about a story I told them about a race between a swordfish and a hermit

crab. It's a story with a moral. If you bully people, if you terrorize people in the way that the swordfish terrorized the sea creatures and challenged the hermit crab to a race, only to lose and die in the process. These two are examples of notes I got back. It is better to be nice rather than to be mean.

Story has the power to transform our lives. During the pandemic, after the first lock down when I went to look at the coconut trees of Waikīkī, and because everyone was in hiding, the coconuts returned. I was so inspired by the coconuts that were back on the trees so I wrote a fable inspired by the

pandemic. This I am making into a film that uses animation and live action. I got funding from UH Mānoa to the tune of \$20,000 to make this film. I'm making a second short film funded by Pacific Islanders in Communications about my response to the COVID pandemic. I draw attention to how the restoration of the coconuts to the coconut trees of Waikīkī inspired me and gave me hope. I am making a third short about coconut related cultural treasures and objects in museums around the world, especially in Europe. This is in collaboration with a funding body in Germany that is very interested in the theme of indigeneities in the future.

How do indigenous people navigate their way? I am also making a documentary that compares niu (coconut) culture between my home island of Rotuma and Hawai'i... Here are some examples of the conceptual art of the telling of origins of the coconut tree of the people of Oceania. For many of these cultures, the coconut tree was a gift from the spirit world to sustain us for the rest of our lives.

During the pandemic, I am part of a movement called Niu Now. We have

had six webinars in the last six months to share knowledge about niu culture in an effort to restore this to Hawai'i. We need to draw attention to our need to support our local farmers, local produce, and buying not only niu but taro and ulu too. These foods are meant to sustain us. We don't have to be so dependent on imported foods....

The coconut tree for me, is very much like my elder sibling, in much the same way that the taro is an elder sibling for the Hawaiian people. During the pandemic, I realized that I have a talent for weaving ... coconut baskets from abandoned leaves... I have to fight with the City & Co. workers to get coconut fronds. I submitted a basket to the Hawaii Craftsmen annual statewide exhibition... For the very first time... this humble coconut basket, made from an abandoned leaf, was able to find a place in this exhibition of very talented artists.

The Arts reflect and explain who we are or should be. They help us heal and they improve the quality of our lives. This is why we need a Creative Resurgence Caucus... Once upon a time the coconut tree was the most important tree for the Hawaiian people



and it still is for the rest of Oceania.... There's a coconut grove outside Hilton Hawaiian Village... I go there and look at the trees. Coconuts came back to this coconut grove and they went to full maturity because everyone was more or less in hiding. There is an opportunity to educate people about this tree of life, bring it back to its former glory. Here in Hawai'i I feel that we are wimps. We are afraid of a coconut falling on our heads. More people are killed on the road driving than a coconut falling on our heads. Are we not able to figure out a solution

to this problem? The coconut tree has become the most maligned, the most alienated, the most oppressed, just like the Hawaiian people. It is such a sad story.... This is the tree of life and if today I have been able to draw attention to the need to bring this tree back to Hawai'i and its people. It is meant to sustain us for the rest of our lives. And this is why a Creative Resurgence Caucus is so important. Thank you.

Creative
Resurgence
Emcee



LALA NUSS Conscious Concepts

Mahalo, Vili, for sharing this incredible story so ancient yet so relevant to our present day circumstances and experiences.

Creative Resurgence Caucus is a critical vessel to advocate for the integration of arts and culture into solutions that will support community wellbeing, the State's economic priorities and our next generation's artistic educational abilities and needs.

The next artist we celebrate today is Raiatea Helm, a Hawaiian music vocalist who is inspiring younger generations and preserving the authenticity of mele. Originally from Moloka'i, Raiatea comes from a legacy of musical talent and cultural resilience, best known for her Leo Ki'eki'e (Hawaiian falsetto).

Raiatea's success as an artist includes many prestigious awards including two Grammy nominations, six Nā Hōkū Hanohano awards, and a Native Arts & Cultures Fellowship,

being the first Hawaiian female vocalist nominated for a Grammy. Raiatea is currently working towards a University Degree in Musicology at UH Manoa with an emphasis in Hawaiian music, language and culture. Most recently, has been expanding her gifts through teaching, passing on a lineage of passion, talent and aloha, inspiring the next generation to preserve and proliferate the authenticity of knowledge and culture through mele. It is my honor to introduce Raiatea Helm.

Nā Hōkū
Hanohano Awardee

RAIATEA HELM Hawaiian Recording Artist



Mahalo nui to Senator Taniguchi and the Senate Committee for Labor, Culture, and the Arts. Thank you for allowing me to share my passion and love for Hawaiian Music today. I am also here to support all island artists.

My late Uncle, George Jarrett Helm, Jr., played a pivotal role during the Hawaiian Renaissance of the 1970s.

His love and dedication for Kaho'olawe brought awareness to cultural identity and mele Hawai'i. Culture, Music and Arts, all are inseparable; if you lose one, in essence, you lose the other. Our kuleana today is to nurture those elements that make our culture unique. If we don't we will lose our Hawaiian essence.

After several years of exploring traditional Hawaiian Music and Jazz, performing with the Honolulu Symphony, to performing in a band with Mick Fleetwood and Willie K., all these were instrumental in my growth and appreciation of Hawaiian Music.

When I first started to get into Mele Hawai'i, my father introduced me to the Music of Lena Machado, Nina Keali'iwahamana, Leina'ala Haili, Genoa Keawe, Mahi'ai Beamer, and others. In recent years, I learned more about other historical Hawaiian vocalists and musicians such as Elaine Ako Spencer, Mekia Kealakai, Alfred Apaka Jr., famous Hawaiian Tenor Tandie McKenzie, Nani Alapa'i, vocalist of the Royal Hawaiian Band under Henri Berger and the list goes on and on. We have such a rich history of Hawaiian Music.

The reason I chose to go back to school was to explore other ways to use my voice and to underline the importance of education to the next generation.

In 2017, I gravitated to the Music of Queen Lili'uokalani through Aunty Nola Nahulu's Hawaiian Chorus at the University of Hawaii at Manoa. The following year, I found myself collaborating on a musical project spearheaded by Uncle Moon Kauakahi and the Hawaii Symphony Orchestra in which I sang Ka Wai Apolani. The venture was put together by Lili'uokalani Trust. I never imagined that performance would lead me full circle to serve in that organization.

Lili'uokalani Trust has allowed me to carry on this legacy of bringing authenticity to Hawaiian mele while allowing our kamali'i to explore many other realms of Music, whether traditional or contemporary.

Historically, any culture's demise begins with dismantling the glue which holds the culture together. In Hawai'i that glue is language through mele and hula. It is, therefore, instrumental to ensure and maintain that cultural piece so that we don't lose what it means to be Hawaiian.

We must continue to foster Hawaiian Culture through the arts, and that is why I support the "Creative Resurgence Caucus."

Mahalo again for giving me the opportunity to support what has become my life mission -Hawaiian Culture and Arts!

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Mahalo nui, Raiatea, for your work in uplifting our community through your voice and through the incredible work you are doing with our youth through the Lili'uokalani Trust.

Up next, acclaimed and boldly creative arts leader, Dave Moss, is the new Executive Director of the Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra. A recovering violist, Dave has performed at venues from Disney Concert Hall to Carnegie Hall, Madison Square Garden to Coachella, and was equally at home performing with The Who, Kayne West, Renee Fleming, or in the Broadway production of Hamilton. He holds music performance degrees from The Juilliard

School and Oberlin Conservatory of Music, and an MBA in Finance and Economics from the University of Chicago.

In the midst of the pandemic, the Hawaii Symphony Orchestra has been in production with the "Sound of Resilience", amplifying how "More determined, united, and inspired than ever" the collaborative resilience of artists are, during challenging times.

The public can virtually tune in from the comfort of their homes to watch and listen via LIVE-stream concerts, broadcasted from the Hawaii Theatre. Great to have you with us today Dave, mahalo for being here.

Honolulu
Symphony
Orchestra

DAVE MOSS
Executive
Director



Good Morning and mahalo for the opportunity to join you this morning to speak on behalf of this Creative Resurgence Initiative. Thank you, Lala, for the kind introduction. I must admit that I am truly humbled to be invited to this table, to share my experience, and to advocate on behalf of our cultural organizations.

If the suit and tie are not a clear indication, I am indeed, quite new to Hawai'i. I began my tenure with the Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra on March 10th and little did any of us know how quickly the world would change. As you can imagine, our business model at the HSO was firmly planted in revenue from in-person events. As a nearly five-million-dollar organization, employing 64 salaried musicians with health and benefits, 12 full-time employees, the countless stagehands, parking attendants, and front of house staff that welcome our community to performances – the Pandemic has made our future a bit daunting.

Something that really, truly keeps me up night after night. Our success was previously defined as having 3,000 people in the Blaisdell concert hall – an idea eight months into a global pandemic that is but a fleeting memory.

Speaking of memories, I like to use this metaphor when talking about the importance of the arts. For a moment, think back to the celebrations in your life, think back to the tragedies, think of your favorite films, or the times that you could gather safely with your 'ohana. Is there a soundtrack? Or do you find yourself reciting a line of arithmetic or Pythagorean's theorem.

We, as the artists, the musicians, the painters, the poets, the dancers, are indeed the second responders. We step in to bring healing, to uplift, and offer reflection to the depressed and anxious communities.

This is indeed the impetus behind the launch of the Sounds of Resilience, a live streaming program that began back in September. As a mission driven organization, our mission is to provide our community with music no matter the circumstances. We recognize how difficult the circumstances were but sacrifice to keep the music alive. It

might have easier for us to step away from this mission, to take a year off but with the support of our community has demonstrated how music can significantly enrich, heal, and inspire our lives.

What happens next as we emerge into a resilient future for the arts & culture here in Hawai'i? When you think of the HSO, you probably think of Beethoven, Brahms, or perhaps Mahler, you know all those old, dead men of western cannon, who have defined quote "classical music" for the better part of three centuries. Well, not me. When I think of the symphony, I think of a medium for change. I think of the sonic power of 84 individuals, all coming together, without necessarily saying a word to communicate. We aspire to the day when our symphony again collaborates with local talent, like Raiatea, and work with up and coming artists such as Isaac, Kimmie Miner, Josh Totofi, and the list goes on and on. And really harken back to the Hapa Haole tradition that formed here in the 1920s with a symphony orchestra as the backdrop. We go further back in the tradition to the arrival of Henri Berger in 1870 with the Western music tradition beginning to merge seamlessly with

Hawaiian traditions.

These past eight months have shown us just how resilient the arts can be and what the future can look like if we adapt. The future holds the opportunity for the arts and culture sector to play a larger part in the diversification of an economy and to play a role in a respectful return to tourism for Hawai'i. Music and art create a sense of place that is truly unrivaled by any other industry.

From an economic perspective, the arts and culture sector contribute over \$2.5 billion combined to our local economy and it employs over 12,000 individuals here in Hawai'i. We have the economic data that truly shows the impact when investment is made to support the arts. On average, every one dollar that is invested into this sector, nearly six dollars in taxable revenue is returned. A recent report in the state of Vermont showed a 775% return on investment when just \$500,000 was invested into the performing arts.

We have an opportunity as we emerge for this pandemic, to shape our local arts and culture sector to be truly reflective of this community. And this is our top priority at the Honolulu Symphony Orchestra. As we plan

for our future, a future in which the Hawai'i symphony is rooted in being an organization that reflects the whole State of Hawai'i by being uniquely of, for, and by Hawai'i.

Creative
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Emcee



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Mahalo Dave for sharing your story of resilience, being brand new to Hawaii, and taking on this kuleana to continue to make music accessible to our communities during these times is so incredible.

Our next speaker, I have recently gotten to know and be inspired by. George Kon has worked with students as the Director of T-shirt Theater for 40 years! He has mentored students at Farrington High School in the Performing Arts Learning Center. Through the pandemic his students are still producing theatrical performances - which has pivoted to adapt to the virtual world. It is a great pleasure and joy to introduce a new and dear friend, George Kon to the space.

Mahalo for your time and I eagerly look forward to our continued work together and for our community.

T-Shirt Theatre &
Creative
Resurgence Hui



GEORGE KON
Executive
Director

Mahalo, Lala, and thanks Senator Taniguchi for shining some light on Creative Resurgence. T-Shirt Theatre has made its home at Farrington [High School] since 1985.

When Covid hit, we lost Farrington's funding, which was ¼ of our annual budget. Ouch! But we're jaunty! Push us down & we bounce right back up, like the daruma doll, cuz that's what creatives do. Find a better way! One truth that's emerged in the pandemic is that the most vulnerable need visibility.

Last spring, I thought T-Shirt Theatre had 3 Chuukese boys until one day, Ethan who looks like Dave Moss, says I'm Chuukese and every time I go to a family party they ask, "eh what you

doing here haole boy?” And I have to say, I’m half Chuukese, that’s my mom over there.” We called the scene “Looks the Part.”

It was funny and wise and when we showed it to Farrington, whoa, it brought down the house. The next day, in the hallways, the boys noticed people’s eyes were different. The boys were stopped and congratulated, not ignored or put down.

The shyest of the 3 boys, Ben, had an epiphany. “Wow, our scene changed people’s hearts. Why don’t we form a club for Pacific Islanders?” 45 kids joined Mic4Peace and they won first

place at the Homecoming Banner contest. Riding their wave, I challenged them to write a script & I would help them put it into T-Shirt Theatre’s spring show. They created a solid one act play in January & were poised to show it to the school when Covid hit. Celebrate Micronesia Festival asked for a video, which has already been seen by over 10,000. So, here’s a 6-minute clip from Mic4Peace’s “Deep in Our Roots” (<https://bit.ly/37Xb6i8>).

And that’s why we need Creative Resurgence! Mahalo!

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Mahalo George and to the youth for embodying their creative and cultural brilliance despite the adversity they face.

Up next, it is so good to introduce a nationally known artist and educator with a physics and poetry background, Kealoha, an internationally known Slam Poet and a Poet Laureate of Hawai'i. I've

had the honor of listening and working with Kealoha over the years whether that was at First Fridays, Arts at Marks Garage or at the East West Center. It has been a while since we last saw each other. Excited to introduce a dear friend and epic human, Kealoha..

Hawai'i
Poet Laureate

**KEALOHA
WONG**
Slam Poet



Right on and thank you, Lala. Aloha mai kākou everybody. I'm born and raised here in Honolulu and I have had a pretty windy path. Growing up, I would never have even said that I was an artist or value Art. You know what I'm saying? To me I was an engineer, I like mathematics, I was physics, I was science. Those are the things that I thought made the world spin. That was my mindset for a big chunk of my life. When I was in high school though, on just some random Wednesday or some day like that, we all got shuffled into an assembly where we were going to hear an up and coming artist read some poems or read from a book that she had just written. Her name was Lois-Ann Yamanaka and she was reading from Saturday Night at the Pāhala Theatre. That morning, what I witnessed, completely changed my view point of what Arts was and what Art could be.

So I sat there and I heard this wonderful woman speaking my voice.

It was as if she had gone into my head and started speaking for me. What I realized then is that poetry wasn't just the stuff that you could read in books, it wasn't just old men from a long time ago, it was a living, breathing culture. I had a spark ignited in me that day that stuck with me for the rest of my life. Of course I still continued on with my mathematics and science and all that. I went on and got a degree in nuclear engineering but eventually, when I was living in San Francisco, the poetry thing came around again. I got introduced to an art form called poetry slam or performance poetry. That's when the initial experience of Lois-Ann Yamanaka in my assembly as well as combined with my experience in San Francisco, led me to go onto a whole new career path which was to become a performance poet. I have been doing this professionally for almost 17 - 18 years. A big chunk of that work has been with the Artists in the Schools program, going into schools and trying to create that same spark that was given to me by Lois-Ann Yamanaka when I was in high school.

That's kind of the general thesis of where I am coming from and why I support the Creative Resurgence efforts. What I witnessed in high school was an act of Art that I was not expecting. It was an act of Art in a public place where I did not go to it, I did not sign up for it. I was presented with it and it changed my life. I think those instances where we can bring art to people when they are least expecting it. It is to speak to the choir, but when you can convert someone who wasn't ready for that, that is when Art has its most profound impacts. Anything we can creatively do to bring more art to more people, is what I believe we need in our current modern day society, including this pandemic situation and beyond. This effort is not just about how we respond to the pandemic but about how we continue to foster a strong artistic movement that makes us better people and better humans overall. That's what I wanted to share today in support of Creative Resurgence.

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LALA NUSS Conscious Concepts



Mahalo nui Kealoha for sharing your incredible gift in this space today. Your life path and career is a reflection of why a State Caucus dedicated to representing the incredibly diverse ecosystem of arts, genealogies, ethnicities, talents and abilities from across the Pacific and beyond is vital to our social response and economic recovery here in Hawai'i.

I can't think of anyone more fitting in my opinion to share a lifetime and lineage of insight and experience that has contributed to the proliferation of the culture, arts, literature and art-spaces in Hawaii.

Maile Meyer, whom I consider ohana and a beloved mentor is the founder of Na Mea Hawaii/Native Books, Pu'uhonua Society, and Aupuni Space.

Most recently Maile has teamed up with the Waiwai Collective, opening a new creative co-working art space

called Arts and Letters, located on Nuuanu St in Chinatown, Honolulu - previously the Peggy Hopper Gallery.

Maile has played a critical role as a consultant, project manager, facilitator, advocate, and place-maker for contemporary native Hawaiian and Pacific Island art that spans from grassroots community initiatives to projects with Disney's Aulani Resort, the Sheraton Waikiki, Hawaii Convention Center and Pow Wow Hawaii, just to name a few. I could go on, but instead I will offer Maile the floor.

Native Books
Na Mea Hawai'i
Arts & Letters
Aupuni Space
Pu'uhonua Society



MAILE MEYER
Entrepreneur

Welina mai, greetings to you, Senator Taniguichi, and members of your vital COMMITTEE that includes a focus on culture and the arts.

After listening to our speakers, I am so grateful to be in the company of

people who make my heart sing. That's what we need right now, to lift our voices in every other form of soulful expression-- to believe that we will thrive, here in our Islands under any and all adversity. We have in the past, and no one knows it better than the Hawaiian community, no one knows better than the artists what isolation and pandemics feel like, but you know what? We will continue to—we all sing a different song, but it's still a song, we all paint a different scene, and each of us sees it as we do, that's the true beauty of creativity, we recognize ourselves in each other and we express ourselves at our deepest level when we have empathy for others. That's why a coalition and a collaborative effort is incredible. It is so right and we are going to do it whether you guys support us or not. Just kidding!

My art-origin story is a simple one. My mother, Emma Aluli Meyer, was the PTA president at St. Anthony's Church In Kailua, with seven children in tow, she was determined to bring arts and culture to "the country"— which really was Kailua in the 70s.

With the help of a substantial donation from an arts supporter (a legislative support as an example), an incredible artist/gallerist, Chuck Wellborn, and a team of volunteers that took shifts watching the gallery, setting up chairs, cleaning after workshops and classes, the Young of Heart Workshop & Gallery came into being in the 1970s. Two of those volunteers were my sister—filmmaker, artist and advocate Meleanna Meyer and myself. I have been making art, putting away chairs and sweeping floors in art spaces since I was a young child.

I saw through young eyes, and for a lifetime, the impact art, culture, music, dance has on our species—and it's not tied to money, it's tied to access and experience, we are moved through creativity in ways we can not quantify or measure. Whether you help lift up this caucus or not, we will, as a creative community, holomua—continue, especially during these trying times, arts and culture help get us understand, navigate and thrive in trying times.

All of the ventures I have been involved in and am involved in create pathways to recognize and celebrate what is uniquely of place, this place, the pae'āina of Hawai'i nei—this 'āina on all of our Islands —across the state. We are connected where we are in the middle of the waterways. It's amazing what we can do understanding that connectivity.

I'll use books as a simple example—thirty years ago, no living Hawaiian authors, only those from the past. Now the shelves of Native Books/Na Mea Hawai'i are lined with Hawaiian poets, scholars, novelists, and illustrators. It's not a miracle, it's an opportunity that comes with understanding the connected nature of resources, education, access, and a myriad of other variables, some of which you, Senator and your committee, can create and facilitate. We have done heavy lifting. We have been meeting and the Creative Resurgence group has been amazing.

Sometimes, it is because of our own history and unexamined biases the audience or impetus for change, comes from outside because we just don't think we have it. Until Disney came to Hawai'i with the Aulani Hotel, the largest private collection of Native Hawaiian art in Hawai'i was commissioned by the "new GM" at the Sheraton Waikiki, Kelley Saunders, and Hawaiian architect Rob Iopa. Disney saw that collection that we organized and recognized the talent of artists in Hawai'i, and commissioned over a million dollars of Hawaiian and locally made art for their property.

The recent commitment by Hawai'i State Art Museum to showcase the work of native Hawaiian contemporary artists, artists from their collections and artists from across the Pacific is a huge step towards celebrating ourselves through our own resources. Blessings to Karen Ewald and Jonathan Johnson for really understanding where our strengths and resources exist in us. The upcoming Hawaii Contemporary Art Summit and Triennial creates a profound method of exchange between local, national and international communities.

We don't have to look any further. We are the solutions we are looking for—we have capacity and a epigenetics of place thanks to the rooted culture of Hawaiians for collaboration found nowhere else in the world—Hawai'i is already a place that thrives with an informal creative caucus, we encourage you to add yourselves as elected officials of the people, as a natural extension of the profound work that continues in Hawai'i nei in arts & culture. I am here to support the collective efforts of community to continue to empower itself through the Creative Resurgence Caucus. Mahalo.

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Mahalo nui Maile for the prolific amplification of cultural resilience and brilliance that you have gifted our people and place with...and so many others around the world.

Last but surely not least, Accomplished as an award-winning recording artist, pianist and composer, music scholar and cultural practitioner, our next speaker, Aaron J. Salā is a Hōkū Hanohano award winner and the 2016 National Fellow in Music for the Native Arts and Cultures Foundation. Trained classically in voice and piano as well as in Hawaiian chant, Aaron has performed in such renowned venues as Carnegie Hall, Wembley Arena, the Wilten Basilica, and the Hawai'i Theatre Center.

His sought-after talents as a choral conductor and arranger have led him to work with Kamehameha Schools, with Bette Midler and Kristen Chenoweth. Ever cognizant of how his Pacific Islander culture and practice informs both his creative process as well as his worldview, Aaron has been purposeful in seeking creative opportunities that will uplift the communities from which he comes. An ethnomusicologist from the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, he is a Faculty Specialist at UH-West O'ahu and Director of Cultural Affairs at Royal Hawaiian Center. It is my pleasure to welcome Aaron Salā.

Nā Hōkū
Hanohano Awardee
Creative
Resurgence Hui

AARON SALĀ
Faculty,
UH West Oahu



Thank you so much, Lala, and mahalo nui to Drs. Teri Skillman and Fata Simanu for their invitation to reflect upon our meeting today. I also send a mahalo to Drs. Akiemi Glen and Simanu for bringing together the coalition known as Creative Resurgence. Mahalo nui to Senator Taniguchi for hosting this meeting and for supporting the greater, long term vision of Creative Resurgence.

The term reflection comes from the Latin word, reflectere, which means to bend back. The best image I can think of to impart this concept is that reflection is not simply about looking in a mirror. Reflection comes about from walking past the mirror and then turning back to look into the image that is there—to THINK ABOUT IT, PAY ATTENTION TO IT, to appreciate all the curves, and wrinkles, the out of place strand of hair, and not just to tolerate those imperfections but to celebrate them in their perfectness.

In an effort to help contextualize my own reflection on those who have spoken today, I want to share a story about a letter that has made its rounds in social media several times.

In 2006, a certain Ms. Lockwood, teacher at Xavier school in New York required her English class to compose letters to a famous author. Five of those students chose to write to the famed, if not controversial, author, Kurt Vonnegut. Unlike the other authors who received letters from the students, Mr. Vonnegut responded.

This is what he wrote:

Dear Xavier High School, and Ms. Lockwood, and Messrs. Perin, McFeely, Batten, Maurer and Congiusta:

I thank you for your friendly letters. You sure know how to cheer up a really old geezer (84) in his sunset years. I don't make public appearances any more because I now resemble nothing so much as an iguana.

What I had to say to you, moreover, would not take long, to wit: Practice any art, music, singing, dancing, acting, drawing, painting, sculpting, poetry, fiction, essays, reportage, no matter how well or badly, not to get money and fame, but to experience becoming, to find out what's inside you, to make your soul grow.

Seriously! I mean starting right now, do art and do it for the rest of your lives. Draw a funny or nice picture of Ms. Lockwood, and give it to her. Dance home after school, and sing in the shower and on and on. Make a face in your mashed potatoes. Pretend you're Count Dracula.

Here's an assignment for tonight, and I hope Ms. Lockwood will flunk you if you don't do it: Write a six line poem, about anything, but rhymed. No fair tennis without a net. Make it as good as you possibly can. But don't tell anybody what you're doing. Don't show it or recite it to anybody, not even your girlfriend or parents or whatever, or Ms. Lockwood. OK?

Tear it up into teeny-weeny pieces, and discard them into widely separated trash receptacles [sic]. You will find that you have already been gloriously rewarded for your poem. You have experienced becoming, learned a lot more about what's inside you, and you have made your soul grow.

God bless you all!

Kurt Vonnegut

As one who considers myself an artist, my initial response to this letter is "well, duh," but art has the masterful capacity to infiltrate

everything we do—a deftly-drafted business partnership contract is art; a perfectly coded piece of AI tech built to supplement medical work in surgery is art; preparing the next generation of investigative journalists with standards of evidence and meticulous attention to detail is art.

The letter is a powerful decree not so much to art in all its vestiges, but to the artistic necessity of becoming and to the persistent, if not insistent, voice in the head that works tirelessly to keep one on the journey to always becoming, empowering a soul to grow...until it is integrous, and powerful, and limitless...

Like no one else in the hierarchy and stratification of our community, it is in the DNA of artists—of creatives—to reflect upon and then reawaken or reinvent our work

As in the case of Dr. Hereniko, who at the height of his career has enjoyed world renown as a filmmaker as a literary, as a storyteller who has now re-found beauty and value in someone else's trash...

Or to reflect upon and to look beyond and uplift the future as in the case of Ms. Helm, who, too, enjoys world renown for having one of the most beautiful voices that God and the universe have ever bestowed upon a

human and who has acknowledged the need and harnessed the humility—mid career—to return to education. As a role model for the youth with whom she now works, Raiatea does not know what a mentor she has become to her students...

Or to reflect upon and then to empower as in the case of Mr. Kon who, as a matter of his daily life works with some of the most disenfranchised, under-privileged students in our state. His work is simple: He goes to school every day and says to these students: “I see you.” That simplicity belies the tremendous heavy lifting that starts with building trust in a community whose trust we don't deserve.

Sometimes, the best reflections come from someone else holding up the mirror in order to challenge us to become better versions of ourselves as in the case of Maestro Moss. In a meeting just last week, Dave said to me “any orchestra in the world can do Beethoven or Mahler or Dvorak, but we need every orchestra in the world to know Hawai i and the Pacific through music that we commission, and we debut, and we honor, and we celebrate.” He is not wrong. Who better to take on the music of Hawai i

and our Pacific family than us through the Hawai i Symphony Orchestra? Sometimes, when someone else holds up the mirror, in considering our own reflections, that someone-elseness of the one holding up the mirror washes away because, in our becoming, we find that we are all on the same journey. As a result, Dave has very quickly become my brother...from another mother.

We certainly need a Creative Resurgence caucus—one that sees the inherent and incredible value that the creative sector brings to the life blood of our communities and our land, and in order to establish a caucus of this kind, we must first implore our legislators and policy makers, and ourselves, to reflect upon the irresponsible ways in which we have cared for ourselves and our home and then to reflect upon the need to realize (that is, to make real) the inherent and incredible potential that is possible when creatives—painters, sculptors, glass-blowers, ballerinas, lauhala weavers, writers, chanters, singers, bassists, feature-filmmakers, video-game developers, second-language learners, administrators, pianists, actors, engineers, teachers, historians, conductors, lighting designers, kazoo players, sound women, camera

people, ukulele virtuosi, stage crews, politicians—understand the need to reawaken, and reconnect, and RESURGE in order to uplift our whole community with ourselves.

Two things about Mr. Vonnegut's letter are especially striking to me: the first is that there is no fair tennis without a net. There are standards of excellence that we must commit to holding ourselves to and those standards represent a responsibility we have as creatives to imbue into our work an impeccable, and unimpeachable, integrity.

The second piece of Mr. Vonnegut's letter that struck me is the tearing up of our poems into teeny-weeny pieces in order to discard them into widely separated trash receptacles. As creatives and creators, we must harness our egos to bring life to our art. As reflections of our creations, we must maintain a steely cold calm and transcend into a true humility. Our creations are beings we birth at once for ourselves and for the world, and when we allow our creations to live on, to be carried by the wind, to take on the lives they were each meant to live, we also empower those pieces of ourselves to become...in the world...in their own ways, embracing their own

multiple futures. In so doing, we have also solidified our paths to becoming really good ancestors.

In our individual and collective journeys to becoming, we must constantly remind ourselves...we must constantly reflect upon the fact that if we have the ability to breathe, then we also have the capacity to create and in that creativity is an artistic sense of self that is at the very core of humanity. We have to harness that creative resurgence. It will grant us the resilience to see through this extraordinary and difficult time. It is the path upon which we will find ourselves again, and it is the way we will empower our continued becoming in the journey of our lives. Our creative resurgence will see to it that our souls continue to grow, and grow, and grow.

And this is why we need a Creative Resurgence Caucus.
Mahalo and aloha.

Creative
Resurgence
Emcee

LALA NUSS
Conscious
Concepts



Mahalo nui, Aaron, for your beautiful weaving of our individual stories in amplifying our collective abilities.

As today's session has hopefully expressed, Creatives are innovative, emergent, iterative, purposeful. We must amplify and intentionally support those that are working in and with communities in their processes of becoming, doing and being. The creative sector comprises diverse traditions and genres of ancient and contemporary existence.

Cities and States around the world are increasingly acknowledging the critical role creatives play in the resilience and existence of our societies' wellbeing.

Senate
Committee
on Labor,
Culture
and the Arts



**SENATOR
BRIAN
TANIGUCHI**
Chair

Thank you Lala. I wanted to add my thanks to all the presenters this morning. It really has a big impact on me and I hope to all our members. The Creative Resurgence Hui has conveyed to the Committee some ideas for legislative proposals including a Caucus. Let's all continue to work together and stay in touch. Before we conclude, do the Committee members have any comments they would like to offer? I thought Aaron did a pretty good job of summarizing everything but any comments from any of the members here today?

Senate
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on Labor,
Culture
and the Art



KURT FEVELA
Senate
Committee Member

Yes, I have, Senator. I just wanted to thank everyone of the presenters. It was very up lifting. Something as I got elected and blessed to be the senator for my community, that's one of the biggest things that I advocate. Not a lot of Senators know my background. I used to be a sound person for the groups Tropical Nights and Kapena back in the day. So I understand the need of the gigs and musical art and just continuing what we need to do as a people of Hawai'i. I just wanted to thank you guys for this opportunity to be here. Senator Taniguchi, thank you. It is a great committee. I love this committee because it is very diverse and educational. I learn a lot. As much as I live in Hawai'i, I got to learn more about it in my committees with my fellow senator. I appreciate everyone of you guys out there and thank you again for letting us be a part of you guys' presentation.

House
Committee on
Culture, Arts, &
International
Affairs

**REP.
CEDRIC
GATES**
Chair



Thank you, Senator. This is Rep. Gates. Aloha. I just also wanted to say mahalo to all of the presenters today, all of the creatives, and I am looking forward to working with you folks in the future. I really appreciate that Senator allowed me to participate in this Info Briefing today and hearing the wealth of 'ike and mana'o from all of you folks is inspiring. You folks have a big job at task and we're looking forward to supporting you guys moving forward. Mahalo.

Senate
Committee
on Labor,
Culture
and the Arts

**SENATOR
BRIAN
TANIGUCHI**
Chair



Anybody else? Well in that case, I want to thank members and thank you to all the presenters again. A recording of this informational briefing is available here https://youtu.be/NMFLf_oHKv. With that I will adjourn the meeting. Thank you very much everybody.
Mahalo nui. Aloha.



Resources

Creative Sonoma, “Artists are Second Responders”

sentaniguchi@capitol.hawaii.gov

Californians for the Arts, “Artists are Second Responders”

<https://www.californiansforthearts.org/artists-r-2nd-responders>

H. R. 1793 Artist-Museum Partnership Act of 2019

<https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/1793>

H. R. 3121 Performing Artist Tax Parity Act of 2019

<https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/3121/text?>

Jersey City Arts Fund

<https://jcaf.squarespace.com>
KQED, “California Arts Advocates Make

Case for Artists as ‘Second Responders’ to Pandemic”

<https://www.kqed.org/news/11817285/california-arts-advocates-make-case-for-artists-as-second-responders-to-pandemic>
New Jersey Arts & Culture Municipal Tax Levy ACT

https://www.njleg.state.nj.us/2018/Bills/AL19/335_.HTM
New Jersey Municipal Tax Levy Bill draft

https://www.njleg.state.nj.us/2018/Bills/A4000/3832_RI.HTM

PLACE Act (S. 3232) proposed by Brian Schatz in the US Senate

<https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/7487/text?>

Voters in Jersey City Just Approved a New Tax in Support of the Arts, Setting the Stage for Other Cities to Follow

<https://news.artnet.com/art-world/jersey-city-votes-support-arts-1921231>

What We Can Learn from the Brief Period When the Government Employed Artists

<https://www.artsy.net/article/artsy-editorial-government-paid-working-class-artists?>

DIVERSE CREATIVE ARTS, CULTURE, & HUMANITIES ORGANIZATIONS IN HAWAII

Aha Kane
Ahuna Ohana, Inc.
Alexander & Baldwin Sugar Museum
All the World's a Stage Theatre Co.
Alliance for Drama Education
Aloha Festivals
Aloha Performing Arts Company
American Music Festivals
AOAO O Na Lokola O Maui
Arts & Letters
Art on the Zoo Fence
Arts at Marks Garage
Asia Pacific Dance Festival
Aupuni Space
Bamboo Ridge Press
Bare & Core Expression
Bishop Museum
Celtic Pipes and Drums of Hawai'i
Central Theatre Arts Academy
Children's Discovery Center
Chinatown Improvement District
Cinema Italiano in Hawaii
Creative Arts Experience
Creative Lab
Daughters of Hawaii
Donkey Mill Art Center
Doris Duke's Shangri La
Downtown Arts Center
E-merge Collective Hawaii USA
E Ola Mau Na Leo O Kekaha
East Hawaii Cultural Council
East Maui Taro Festival
East-West Center
Ebb & Flow Arts, Inc.
Estria Foundation
Filipino Community Center, Inc.
Frank DeLima's Student Enrichment Program
Friends of Hokulea and Hawaii'loa, Inc.
Friends of Honolulu City Lights
Friends of Moku'ula, Inc.
Friends of the Library of Hawaii
Groove Child Charities
Grove Farm Museum
Hale Halawai Ohana O Hanalei

(Hanalei Community Center)
Hale Mua Cultural Group
Hana Arts, Inc.
Hana Cultural Center
Hanalei Hawaiian Civic Club
HI Alliance for Nonprofit Organizations
Hawai'i Women in Filmmaking
Hawai'i Youth Opera Chorus
Hawai'i LGBT Legacy Foundation
Hawaii Academy of Recording Arts
Hawaii Army Museum Society
Hawaii Arts Alliance
Hawaii Book & Music Festival
Hawaii Children's Discovery Center
Hawaii Children's Theatre
Hawaii Community Foundation
Hawaii Concert Society
Hawaii Contemporary
Hawaii Council on the Humanities
Hawaii Council on Portuguese Heritage
Hawaii Craftsmen
Hawaii Education of the Arts
Hawaii Handweavers' Hui
Hawaii Jaycees
Hawaii Korean Cultural Center
Hawaii Mission Houses Museum
Hawaii Okinawa Center
Hawaii Opera Theatre
Hawaii Performing Arts Festival Inc.
Hawaii Plantation Village
Hawaii Public Radio
Hawaii Public Television
Hawaii Shakespeare Festival
Hawaii Symphony Orchestra
Hawaii Theatre Center
Hawaii United Okinawa Association
Hawaii Youth Symphony
Hawaiian Historical Society
Hawaiian Music Hall of Fame and Museum
Hawaiian Scottish Association
Hawaii's Volcano Circus, Ltd./Seaview Performing Arts

Hilo H. S. Performing Arts Learning Center
Hilo Orchid Society
Historic Hawaii Foundation
HNL Mayor's Office on Culture and the Arts
Honolulu Aquarium
Honolulu Blend Show Chorus
Honolulu Botanical Gardens
Honolulu Chorale
Honolulu Ekiden Foundation
Honolulu Museum of Art
Honolulu Printmakers
Honolulu Theatre for Youth
Hui Malama I Ke Kai Foundation
Hui o Laka / Koke'e Museum
Hui No'eau Visual Arts Center
Hula Preservation Society
ImprovEd Hawaii
Interisland Terminal
Iolani Palace
IONA Contemporary Dance Theatre
Japan-America Society of Hawaii
Japanese Cultural Center of Hawaii
Joy of Sake Ohana
Kahilu Theatre
Kahumanu Farm Festival
Kaimuki H. S. Performing Arts Center
Kalani Honua Inc.
Kalihi-Palama Culture and Arts Society, Inc.
Kalikolehua - El Sistema Hawaii
Kaua'i Academy of Creative Arts
Kaua'i Chorale
Kaua'i Community Players
Kaua'i Economic Development Board
Kaua'i Historical Society
Kaua'i Museum
Kaua'i Music Festival
Kaua'i North Shore Community Foundation
Kaua'i Performing Arts Center

DIVERSE CREATIVE ARTS, CULTURE, & HUMANITIES ORGANIZATIONS IN HAWAII'

Kaua'i Society of Artists
Kaua'i Underground Artists Incorporated
Kawaihoa Foundation
Kekahu Foundation/KKCR Radio
Kennedy Theatre
Kokee Natural History Museum
Kona Historical Society
Kumu Kahua Theatre
Lahaina Heritage Museum
Lahaina Restoration Foundation
Lamaku Society
Lana`i Community Association Pineapple Festival
Lanai Art and Culture Center
Louis Pohl Gallery
Lyman House Memorial Museum
Maile Foundation/Kauai Mokihana Festival
Manoa Heritage Center
Maui Academy of Performing arts
Maui Arts and Cultural Center
Maui Choral Arts Association
Maui County Hawaiian Canoe Association
Maui Dance Council
Maui Friday Town Parties
Maui Historical Society
Maui OnStage at the Historic Iao Theater
Maui Pops Orchestra, Inc.
Maui Youth Philharmonic Orchestra
Mission Houses Museum
Mohala Hou Foundation
Molokai Arts Center
Molokai Community Services Council
Movement Center
Mu'olaulani
Na Aina Kai Botanical Gardens
Na Leo Lani Chapter of Sweet Adelines
Na Maka O Puuawai Aloha Foundation
Na Mea Hawai'i/Native Books
Namolokama O Hanalei Canoe Club
Nanakuli Performing Arts Center
Nisei Veterans Memorial Center
'Ohana Arts Festival and School
'Olelo Community Media

Onium Ballet Project
Pacific Aviation Museum Pearl Harbor
Pacific Islanders in Communications
Pacific Tongues
Pacific Tsunami Museum
Paepae O Heeia
Pa'i Foundation
Palama Settlement
Pasifica Artists
Performing Arts Center of Kapolei
POW! WOW! Hawaii
Project Focus Hawaii, Inc.
Pu'uhonua Society
Purple Striped Honu Theatre for Kids
Queen Emma Summer Palace
Shangri La
Slack Key Music Center
Society for Kona's Education & Arts
State Foundation on Culture & Arts
Still & Moving Center
Storybook Theatre of Hawaii
TAG - The Actors' Group
Tau Dance Theater
The Green House
UHM Dept. of Art
UHM Dept. of Music
UHM Dept. of Theatre & Dance
UHM Museum Studies
'Ukulele Festival Hawaii
Volcano Art Center
Wai Wai Collective
Waimea Ocean Film Festival
Waioli Corporation
Waipahu Plantation Village
West Hawaii Dance Theatre

If the Arts are not kept in mind when supporting beyond the arts movement, artists will slip through their views and once again be lost. It is the intersection of arts and other movements that should be kept in focus because the artists in these movements bring us together and help articulate the issues.

Creative Artists are Second Responders. They are keeping us sane in quarantine and can help shift the paradigm at the intersection of social justice movements as we re-emerge.