



INAUGURAL HĀLĀWAI FILM FESTIVAL TO CELEBRATE, SHOWCASE AND CULTIVATE TALENT AND CULTURAL RESOURCES OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS IN THE NEW YORK METROPOLITAN AREA

**Hālāwai Film Festival
New York, NY
October 28-30, 2023**

NEW YORK, NY (October 11, 2023) – [Hālāwai](https://www.halawai.org), a 501(c)(3) non-profit, announces the official selections of the Hālāwai Film Festival (HFF), bringing films from across the Pacific Islands to New York City. Hālāwai is focused on showcasing and cultivating Pacific Island culture and talent in NYC. In this spirit, Hālāwai’s inaugural festival will partner with **International Cultural Arts Network (ICAN)** to bring a Conversation with veteran actress **Rena Owen** and rising star **Lindsay Watson**, as well as feature **Makana**, the award-winning guitarist, during the closing gala.

The inaugural festival will run October 28-30th, 2023, at some of the most celebrated venues in New York City. Buy your [tickets now!](#)

“We are so happy and honored to be given the opportunity to see these amazing Pasifika films on the big screen! Our community has come together to bring an amazing program to share with the Pacific Island community and our new friends on the mainland!”

- Stacey Young, Festival Director, Halawai Film Festival

Saturday, October 28th:

The Opening will be presented by the **New York Public Library for the Performing Arts** at Lincoln Center on Saturday, October 28th at 12:30 pm with:

- A celebration of Hawaiian dance with a performance by *Pua Ali'i 'Ilima o Nuioka*
- *Ka Huaka'i: The Journey to Merrie Monarch* (Hawai'i, Gerard Elmore)
- *Plastic: A Love Letter to the Estranged* (Samoa, Va'a Magalogo)
- *Hafekasi* (Australia, Annelise Hickey)
- An in-depth discussion about Lahaina recovery efforts, moderated by Andy Wang, Hālāwai's President and host of the award-winning podcast *Inspired Money*
- *Waikiki the Film* (Hawai'i, Chris Kahunahana)

Starting at 3pm, Hālāwai will proudly host a conversation with **Rena Owens** and showcase emerging student films at **Film at Lincoln Center**

- **ICAN** will host a Conversation with New Zealand screen-legends, Rena Owen. Best-known for her lead role as Beth in Lee Tamahori's New Zealand cult classic "Once Were Warriors" as, and George Lucas' "Star Wars: Attack of the Clones" as Helen. She is one of only 6 actors who has worked with both George Lucas and Steven Spielberg. Rena has also starred in the TV series, "Siren" where she plays Helen, and in Seth McFarlane's "The Orville". This interactive conversation will discuss representing authentic portrayals of Pasifika characters on screen, the unique opportunities and challenges of working on productions across the Pacific Rim and becoming a crossover success in Hollywood. Audiences will get invaluable insight on these inspirational careers that reflect the past, present and future of Pasifika entertainment.
- Emerging student films:
 - *Viral* (Hawai'i, Stefan Schaefer)
 - *Fili* (Hawai'i, Peter Filimaua)
 - *A Hui Hou (Until We Meet Again)* (Hawai'i, Kainoa Presbitero)
 - *Kalo* (Hawai'i, Gabby Kamalei Guarna)
 - *Nahuakai'pō: Voyagers of The Night* (Hawai'i, Kaimana Broadhurst)
 - *Where Old Hawai'i Still Lives* (Hawai'i Lauren Luke)

Sunday, October 29th:

The Hālāwai Film Festival moves to the **Village East by Angelika**, where films will roll starting at 11am, highlighting selections of features, documentaries, short films, and animated short films.

Features:

- *My Partner* (Hawai'i, Keli'i Grace)
- *The Wind and the Reckoning* (Hawai'i, David L. Cunningham)

Documentaries:

- *Kai Piha: Nā Loko I'a* (Hawai'i, Ann Marie Kirk)
- *"Of the Sea" - A Story of Another Ocean Lover* (Hawai'i, Bruno Lemos)
- *The Way* (Aotearoa, Danny Aumua)
- *The Healer Stones of Kapaemahu* (Hawai'i, Hinaleimoana Wong-Kalu, Dean Hamer, Joe Wilson)

Short Films:

- *Brolesque* (Aotearoa, Libby Hakaraia)
- *Choking Ghost* (Hawai'i, Conrad Lihilihi)
- *E Mālama Pono, Willy Boy* (Hawai'i, Scott W. Kekama Amona)
- *E Rangi Rā* (Aotearoa, Tioreore Ngatai Melbourne)
- *Find Where I Belong* (Aotearoa, Kahu Kaiha)

- *He Karu He Taringa* (Aotearoa, Tahuaroa Ohia)
- *Hawaiian Soul* (Hawai'i, 'Āina Paikai)
- *Ruarangi* (Aotearoa, Oriwa Hakaraia)
- *Street Lights* (Aotearoa, Te Mahara Tamehana)
- *The Cardboard Window* (Hawai'i, Kaiwi Lyman-Mersereau)
- *The Mainland* (Hawai'i, Conrad Lihilihi)
- *The Retrieval* (Aotearoa, Aree Kapa)
- *The Voyager's Legacy* (Aotearoa, Bailey Poching)
- 'OHINA Short Film Block:
 - *Last Hawaiian Sugar* (Hawai'i, Deja Bernhardt)
 - *Kālewa* (Hawai'i, Mitchel Merrick)
 - *Moon and the Night (Ka Mahina a Me Ka Pō)* (Hawai'i, Erin Lau)
 - *River of Small Gods* (Hawai'i, Bradley Tangonan)

Animated Short Films:

- *Aikāne* (Hawai'i, Daniel Sousa, Dean Hamer, Joe Wilson)
- *Rolling Down Like Pele* (Hawai'i, Laura Margulies)
- *Symphony of the Hawai'i Forest* (Hawai'i, Laura Margulies)
- *Tala's Bedtime Story* (Samoa, Peter Filimaua)

After highlighting *The Wind and the Reckoning* as the closing feature, Hālāwai Film Festival travels down the street to **The La MaMa Experimental Theatre Club** for the closing event featuring **Makana**, the Grammy-nominated Hawaiian slack key guitarist. Hailing from Mānana Ahupua'a, where he learned kī hō'alu (Hawaiian slack key guitar) at a young age from Bobby Moderow Jr. and master Raymond Kāne, he became the last protégé of legendary slack key guitarist, Sonny Chillingworth, at the age of thirteen. Makana has received global recognition for his mastery of tradition as well as his own pioneering style.

Monday, October 30th:

The Delegation of Flanders in the USA will host a VIP Pau Hana (to celebrate the end of the work day). Due to a deep connection to St. Damien of Moloka'i, a Belgian priest, the Delegation of Flanders has partnered with Hālāwai in its efforts to educate the public about the 8,000 people afflicted with Hansen's disease in the 1860s, which resulted in their exile to Kalaupapa and Kalawao on Moloka'i. At this event, we will continue the conversation about the film *The Wind and The Reckoning*, and hold space in order to connect media and filmmakers from various organizations and countries. The VIP reception will further foster a conversation between top entertainment talent from the Pacific Islands and the wider entertainment community.

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For more information:

Press kit: <http://www.halawai.org/hff-press-kit.html>
press@halawai.org

Hālāwai:

Hālāwai is a 501(c)(3) non-profit based in New York City, with a mission to advance and support an inclusive community with shared interests in the culture and future of the people of Hawai'i and other Pacific Islands.

Hālāwai is presenting the inaugural Hālāwai Film Festival in October 2023, with three days full of movies, hula and other interactive experiences that delve into Pacific Island culture.

ICAN: International Cultural Arts Network (ICAN) is a non-profit founded by Hawaii film industry veterans – Angela Laprete, Brian Keaulana and Robert Suka - with the mission to elevate, educate and empower diversity with focus on Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders (NHPI) in Hawaii's TV and Film Industry. To compete in the global marketplace, ICAN will bridge cultural connections with top tier industry professionals to elevate training, build infrastructure, and streamline a pathway for authentic representation in various forms of storytelling and entertainment.

'OHINA: 'OHINA debuted in 1999 to support local independent filmmakers and to give them an opportunity to exhibit their films to the community through a short film showcase. Named with the Hawaiian term for "gathering" or "collecting," 'OHINA provides an annual exclusive venue for a collection of works by Hawai'i filmmakers to be gathered and presented to the community. Although entries can come from around the world, there is only one requirement: a creative relationship to the Hawaiian Islands.