

Program Teaches Kids About Art, Science and Health

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Featured Article by Ron Eland

Through March 2, local artist Peter Kowalke will be showing his recent collection of paintings and prints, titled "Hawi Horses and Beach Faces" at MacArthur & Company.

Kowalke, originally from Oahu, now resides on the Big Island and is a painter, sculptor and ceramicist. He has shown in Hawai'i, Europe as well as the mainland United States, and has had over 25 professional art exhibits since the age of 16.

In this recent collection, Kowalke has chosen a return to horses as a somewhat rejuvenating subject.

"My first 'real' artwork was a sculpture of a horse made for a girl when I was twelve," Kowalke said. "My perception around horses is still infused with that bit of puppy love and now I'm just in that space when I work, and time passes unnoticed like when I was 12."

Kowalke is committed to art, not only as a livelihood and personal journey, but as a tool for teaching children and uniting local communities. Five years ago Kowalke and a board of trustees, created a company, called Art In Sight, devoted to the integration of



art, science and health education. Art In Sight has completed five major art installations around the island of Hawai'i . Young students and community members work together learning local ecology, history, culture, science and much more as they create public works of art. Each project and resulting art-work emphasizes the is-land ecosystems and a holistic psychology based in the belief of interconnectedness. Fifty percent of all sales from "Hawi Horses and Beach Faces" will benefit Art In Sight's Education Programs.

Mixed in with this youthful enthusiasm is a serious aesthetic practice nurtured over the last 28 years. Kowalke's classical training in Renaissance style drawing continues to integrate with his innovative and bold use of new mediums. In these paintings the use of fabric dyes, pure pigments, and metallic dust create a rich surface alight with saturated color and optical flecks which can only be seen 'while witnessing the originals in person. Also evident is Kowalke's exploration of composition and color acknowledging past modern masters such as Chagall, Gauguin, Van Gogh, Franz Marc and Milton Avery. Complementary color play, reductionist modeling of form and compositions referring to Japanese woodblock prints reveal Kowalke's homage to these modern masters.

Kowalke has a deep and, committed relationship with the land and various cultures of Hawai'i . Having grown up in Kailua, Oahu, he spend much of his time in the ocean and exploring the forests of the windward side. The natural beauty and melting-pot history of Hawai'i is essential to his artwork.

More information about Art In Sight, and pictures of various community projects is available at www.artinsight.wordpress.com.

"Hawi Horses and Beach Faces" will be featured through March 2 at MacArthur & Company in Waimea Center at the Roy's Restaurant at the Kings' Shops through March 31. For more information on this collection of paintings or other works by Kowalke, call 808-937-7556 or visit www.artinsight.wordpress.com.