

I experience the world as energy. I feel the unseen forces that connect us to one another and to the land we inhabit. This is a core tenet of Hawaiian spirituality that resonates deeply with me, and it is the reason my creative process is specifically aligned to Hawaii Volcanoes National Park. I seek to understand the power of this sacred land, embody it, and convey it to a wider audience of people who may only experience the surface-level beauty of nature.

Most art draws inspiration from the environment; mine aims to be a product of the environment, the result of being radically present and allowing the spirit of the land, of its inhabitants and ancestors, to materialize through me. Creatively, this is a vision that has been building for many years. This immersion will allow me to explore more abstract/conceptual elements in my photography and to tune in to the deeper messages of nature and spirit that cannot be perceived in the din of city life.

The tangible goals for this residency are threefold. The first is an exhibit of photographs that explore Hawaiian spiritual concepts and energies within the park interwoven with words by elders/healers that give them context and root them in native perspective. I am drawn to complex elemental relationships — lava, a constant source of creation analogous to our inner fire, transmutes states in an instant — and to the cords of communication that connect all beings. The exhibit may stay with HVNP, and I would like to provide access to digital content so the work can be shared widely. I also aim to partner with the Sacred Arts Research Foundation, an organization that advocates for the preservation of indigenous cultures, to exhibit in New York City. Secondly, the collected interviews and portraits will inform the first chapter of a book I am planning to write that draws from wisdom-keepers around the world. The final goal is a public workshop on how to tune into the inner self to create from a place of authenticity. To me, this type of event is much more impactful than one that discusses the aperture I used to achieve a particular effect. Too often the focus is

on the external aspect of art instead of the internal alchemy, the unique place of truth that informs it, and this misdirected focus is the reason many people are “blocked.” I will share my own process, as well as lead meditations and visualizations to free creativity. I'd like to partner with a teacher in the Hawaiian community to share techniques from that tradition – I've reached out to Dr. Serge Kahili King in Volcano for advice.

In the upcoming months, I would appreciate any introductions or help with establishing connections. During my stay, I would only need some logistical assistance with the workshop and exhibit. I work independently.

The intangible goals for this residency are far-reaching. I hope, first and foremost, that I can honor the land and the culture of those who live here through my contributions. I hope to be able to open new paths of perception for the visitors I interact with each day, inspiring them to go slower, look deeper, and find personal meaning in what they experience in the park. Care for the environment begins with awareness that we are not separate from it. Through this awareness, I can challenge my own ability to communicate through writing and photography and help raise the consciousness of the collective.