

# SALLY LUNDBURG

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## {PRESS}

### **Biennial of Hawaii Artists X Catalog, Honolulu Museum of Art, 2012**

By David A.M. Goldberg / *Six Artists Pursue the Art of RE-cognition in the Deserts of the Real*

Sally Lundburg's "The Disappearing Place," a machine that counters cultural free-fall with a meditation on space and place, is one of two Hawai'i-specific works in the show. Lundburg has dismantled a fallen Big Island koa tree from her back yard and reconfigured it as a means of contemplating nature and community. The installation is structured by a cloud of some five hundred branches, each one painted white and bound to others by zip ties, kite string, plumbing tape, mason line and string. They cast a ghostly network of gray shadows on the walls and move slowly in the currents of gallery ventilation. Below is a small forest of logs set on their ends, packed into clusters, and divided into four stands. Each is capped with a tightly cropped monochrome portrait sealed beneath a thick layer of epoxy resin. Gently blurred by the diffusive qualities of the epoxy, there are images of men, women, children, young and old, representing a cross-section of Hawai'i history and ethnicities.

Lundburg collected these portraits over a fifteen-year period, sampling them from garage sales, swap meets, family and friends, and even the trash. Printed on silk, indicators of their age or era are obfuscated, creating the timeless quality of a memorial and an uncanny relationship between human visage and tree limb. There is an impression that if one were to cut any one of these sections, yet another face would be revealed in a kind of calculus of images. This is clearly a family tree whose images appear "repeatedly in my mixed media work," Lundburg says, and that she's "begun to see ... as a kind of real and imaginary genealogy of sorts that moves throughout my art practice."

A mobilized network of identities she expresses through different types of practice! Imaginary genealogy! This is entirety of the future that we are being promised through the development of commercial relativistic networks. Small digital portraits of our "friends" are sorted, clustered and organized, and though the network that binds us to them is largely invisible, the glacial tornado of branches above the viewer's head visualizes it. Lundburg reminds us that our clouds of community are messily connected, jury-rigged, bearing witness to the passage of time and the oscillating levels of our own efficiency. This is why her heavenly network, even in its symbolic purity of white abstraction, is not held together by homogeneous rational linkages, but by differentiation and diversity.

"The Disappearing Place" is rooted in Lundburg's family history in Hawai'i, which is always a complicated issue for white people with relatively short local genealogies. But by what authority can one devalue the experiences of any child who grew up in an intimate relationship with land that is deeply mediated by the living stories of a far older culture? Lundburg translates her history into this meditation on the powerful connections between earth, ecology and people that characterize life on the Big Island. The weaving of stories that begin on the US Mainland and elsewhere in Polynesia and Asia is deeply relativistic, but contemporary culture in Hawai'i has attempted to create a stable center out of this balanced mobile of contentious and sometimes violent difference.

# HANDEYE

*Provocative Hawai'ian*, May 3, 2012

By Leslie Mehren

Keith Tallett and Sally Lundburg are two vibrant Hawai'ian artists whose life and work gracefully intertwine. Partners in the truest sense of the word, they maintain individual styles and influences, yet create from a confluence of shared experiences and constant dialogue. Although both artists reference Hawai'ian culture in their art, they shun the notion of being relevant in a merely regional context. They prefer to see themselves as part of the larger conversation surrounding contemporary art while relating to issues that are particularly relevant to Hawai'i today. Citing artists such as Georgia O'Keeffe and Donald Judd, who fled urban life for distant locales in the American west, the couple found the freedom to continue their art practice in the remote calm of a Big Island farmhouse. After years of living in San Francisco, earning degrees at the San Francisco Art Institute and participating in a lively arts community, they chose to return to Hawai'i before the birth of their daughter, Kia'i. It wasn't just the surfing that brought them home. They knew they were building a future and could strike the right balance for their careers.

If there is a meeting point for the two artists, it is in their willingness to adopt new materials and methods to meet their needs. Sally's focus began with photography, film and video, but she has migrated into installation work, including wood logs and nests of twine and branches into her piece titled "the disappearing place" at the 2012 Biennial of Hawai'i Artists at Oahu's Honolulu Museum of Art. For that groundbreaking installation, Sally received the Ellen Choy Craig Award, which is given annually to an Hawai'ian artist of exceptional merit. "Sally is fearless," says Keith. "She has an idea, attacks it and if it fails she still makes something good come from it." Hawai'i's richly layered ecosystem inspired Sally's series, "Epiphytes and Invasives." The series examines parallels between the social development of post-contact Hawai'i and processes of adaptation in nature. Epiphytes, plants that grow on other plants, abound in rainforests, as can non-native species when left unchecked. Immigrants and natives, invaders and adapters, all run through Sally's imagery. The intersection of diverse lifeforms melds with a poetic compassion and a documentarian's eye for human experience and storytelling.

Keith and Sally collaborate as half of an arts collective called AGGROculture. Together with artists Margo Ray and Scott Yoell, they are showcasing urgent issues like the recent conflict between APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation) trade liberalization and local land use rights. AGGROculture embraces art's ability to provoke and inspire, which is not what people normally expect from the paradise of Hawai'i, but it is what you'd expect from two of Hawai'i's most provocative young artists.

# Honolulu Weekly

*A Small Exhibitions of Big Local Works*, May 9, 2012

By Ragnar Carlson

Now on view at Spalding House (the former Contemporary Art Museum), the art that composes “Biennial of Hawaii Artists X” demands a very few minutes of viewing time. You can see the exhibition in 20 minutes without hurrying.

Or you can look it at twice in a half-hour, or three times over the course of two visits in less time than it takes to eat lunch. But if you have any interest in a show purporting to have something to say about contemporary art in Hawaii, you should do all three.

This is a small exhibition of big work from six artists, all of it intensely engaged with time and place. To the extent that the biennial is intended to be representative of Hawaii artists, its success is difficult to gauge. As a collective expression about Hawaii itself, it feels right.

“The Disappearing Place” is an installation harvested from koa by Sally Lundburg. Logs layered with photographs and other images stack and rise 20 feet into an articulated series of memories in the form of a tree.

## West Hawaii Today

*Lundburg's installation on display at Honolulu Museum of Art, Spaulding House*

March 15, 2012

The Honolulu Museum of Art selected the Big Island's Sally Lundburg to be one of six artists contributing work to the Biennial of Hawaii Artists X, which opened last month. At the exhibition's opening, she also received the Ellen Choy Craig Artist Endowment Award from museum benefactor, and Choy's son, Timothy Choy.

Inspired by the idea of a supernatural world where humans and nature intertwine, Lundburg combined archival photographs, craft and hardware store materials, and a koa tree from the Big Island for her site-specific installation at the museum. Titled “the disappearing place,” she transformed the gallery with 170 koa logs collaged with black-and-white portraits, and suspended more than 500 branches from the ceiling, spiraling up the 22-foot high walls. The branches are coated in white primer paint and joined together in arching clusters by white zip ties, kite string, plumbing tape, mason line and tangled nets of thread.

Strategically lit, the suspended work casts dramatic, slightly moving shadows, which become as important as the physical material of the piece. The work is an allusion to a hidden world, and is inspired by a passage from cultural practitioner Hannah Kihalani Springer's introduction to the book “Growing Koa: A Hawaii Legacy Tree” by Craig R. Elavitch and Lisa Wilkenson: “Wao lipo, where the koa is the tallest of them all, casting the darkest shadows of them all. As populations grew, the forest retreated. The wao kanaka (realm of man) expanded. It is the forests that fetch the rains, keep the moisture close. It is the forests that make right again the air for us to breathe.”

The exhibition, held at Honolulu Museum of Art Spalding House in Makiki Heights, also includes work from Mary Babcock, Solomon Enos and Jianjie Ji all representing Oahu, Maui's Jaisy Hanlon, and Bruna Stude of Kauai. The exhibition is on view until July 22.

This program is supported in part by the State Foundation on Culture and the Arts through appropriations from the Legislature of the State of Hawaii and by the National Endowment for the Arts.



# Star Advertiser

*Exhibit challenges thought, perception*, April 15, 2012

By David A.M. Goldberg

Through painting, sculpture, installation, photography and video, contemporary artists Mary Babcock, Solomon Enos, Jianjie Ji, Jaisy Hanlon, Sally Lundburg and Bruna Stude present surfaces and textures of virtually limitless depth and nuance. All the work in “Biennial X” is related to our engagement with the natural world, albeit at various scales of time, from lifetimes to centuries. They are as intense as any sequence of modern mediated experience, but much more rewarding.

Sally Lundburg transforms a single koa tree that died on her Hawaii island property into what feels like a memorial forest grove. The floor is divided by three clusters of logs standing on end, each featuring a ghostly photographic image sealed beneath resin. Above the installation hangs a network of white branches woven through and bound with similarly colored fishing line, plumber’s tape, string and zip ties. The shadows cast by this cloud of arterial forms project a deeper space into the gallery walls.

All of this work offers a refuge from jabbering pundits and 24-hour streams of low-information news punctuated by shocking tragedies, by trading richly detailed tangible surfaces for the glow of the flat screen. Each of these artists has created unique and exemplary aesthetic and conceptual spaces that challenge and engage both thought and perception. As commercial media representations of our world veer toward incoherence, dogma, shock and outrage tend to replace depth, meaning and wonder. The Honolulu Museum of Art’s 10th biennial of Hawaii artists is an oasis in this desert of the real.



# Star Advertiser

*APECalyse Now?*, November 20, 2011

By David A.M. Goldberg

The AGGROculture Collective relates APEC’s pursuit of trade liberalization to local struggles against the profit-driven and often foreign-based use of land and resources. “The Rat and the Octopus” is a triptych of photographs featuring two allegorical characters, the land speculator and the construction worker, and their magic economic ritual that turns land into a commodity. In the left panel, the phone-toting speculator wears a lime-green suit printed with a repeating pattern of handshakes and blooming dollar-flowers. The construction worker in the right panel exudes confidence in a stylized safety orange jumpsuit with reflective stripes. In between the two shake hands to seal the unspecified deal for the coastline behind them.