

Gallery of Forgiveness Arts

images and poetry from the Hawai'i Forgiveness Project, 2005-2008

<http://www.hawaiiiforgivenessproject.org>



Hawai'i is fertile ground for talented artists and poets. This collection of award-winning images and reflections, assembled by the Hawaii Forgiveness Project, explores provocative and moving ideas.

A Chinese meditation and a stark ancient warning about war; a mysterious weaving and a goddess painted by a Buddhist monk; an agonizing sculpture and the innocence of a child -- this book explores forgiveness as a universal skill that can change our world.

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The Gallery of Forgiveness Arts

Forgiveness is a mysterious idea. It means something different to everyone.

Yet everyone senses that forgiveness is vital to the human soul, to our ability to renew, to hope and to change. To heal pain, to face the past, to traverse the boundary between justice and revenge, to move ahead into the future.

So the theme of forgiveness is well-suited to artistic creation: we all sense what it is, but its expression remains deep, enigmatic, and personal.

The Hawai'i Forgiveness Project seeks to make forgiveness a living experience, a skill that we exercise in our daily lives. One way to evoke a mystery is through the arts, a universal language that all can experience, regardless of background.

That's why we established the Forgiveness Arts Awards. Here we share images and poetry by artists from Hawai'i, presented to the public on International Forgiveness Day (the first Sunday in August), 2005 through 2008. You can also see this work online, at <http://www.hawaiiiforgivenessproject.org>.

The quality and diversity of the artistic community in Hawai'i is extraordinary; though we are small, we produce an astonishing variety of artistic expression, from ancient to modern, abstract to literal, intimate to universal. These works reflect the depth of our island 'Ohana.



a Hawaiian feather crown, or mahiole, from the collection of Captain Cook

Images of Forgiveness

2005 Gold Medal

At Peace

original photograph
Glenn T. Poulain

"For me this image of a Hawaiian sea turtle -- Honu -- reflects the spirit and harmony between man and creature, representatives of two worlds coming together as one and sharing a hostile yet magnificent environment.

"The word "peace" in itself is synonymous with calmness, tranquility, harmony and serenity. Living life with calmness, tranquility, harmony and serenity is living with understanding, forgiveness and acceptance.

"If man and creature can share in the harshness and delights of the world, surely so can man amongst men."

...Glenn T. Poulain



2005 Silver Medal

Picking Up the Pieces

acrylic on canvas

Ginger Royal

"In this series I focused on the non-threatening symbol of a child's doll, and through its anthropomorphic qualities created the ability of this internal cleansing process of healing and forgiveness to take place.

"Raggedy Andy provided the psychological and emotional witness of one's personal process of internal cleansing, giving room for the metamorphosis that has the true ability for emotional and spiritual cleansing.

"I focused on a child's room equipped with toys and the external elements creeping in (like war and unrest, though a child's sometimes candy-coated view, i.e. an army man falling from 'shave-ice' instead of parachute, the ammunition on the truck is candy kisses, and the 'land-mine' is actually a spinning top, the mirror symbolizes our universal sameness).

"The title 'Picking up the Pieces' refers to the aftermath that is inevitably needed and required to carry on positively and productively. Raggedy Andy, with his extended arm, becomes a universal symbol of help and hope in this painting."

...Ginger Royal



2005 Bronze Medal

Bean

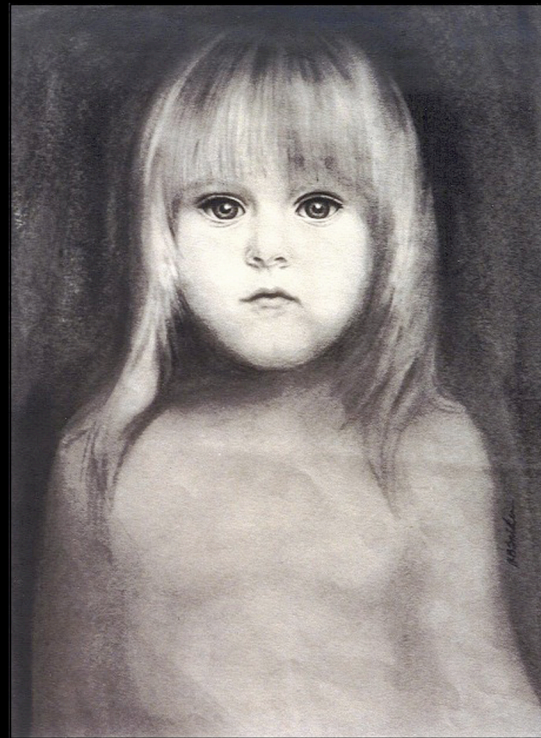
charcoal and pastel
Mary-Beth Snider

"This image is a depiction of myself as a child. One of the first pieces I ever did.

"This child was a victim of many of life's unkindnesses...emotional abuse, physical abuse, neglect, rape, molestation and incest.

"Through much work with my inner self, and the ability to forgive, the sadness and pain seen in her eyes is no longer there. I am living proof and am able to say that ALL things can be conquered in that one simple word...'Forgiveness.'"

Mary-Beth Snider



2005 Special Recognition

The Lift of Freedom

oil on canvas
Spar Street

"I feel it is very important for forgiveness to be in the forefront of our minds and hearts because, in my experience, it is in giving where I have been withholding love and kindness, that I find freedom and happiness in the parts of my mind that had gone sour and hard."

...Spar Street

The original of this painting hangs in the United Nations headquarters building in New York.



2006 Gold Medal

Lei Lokahi

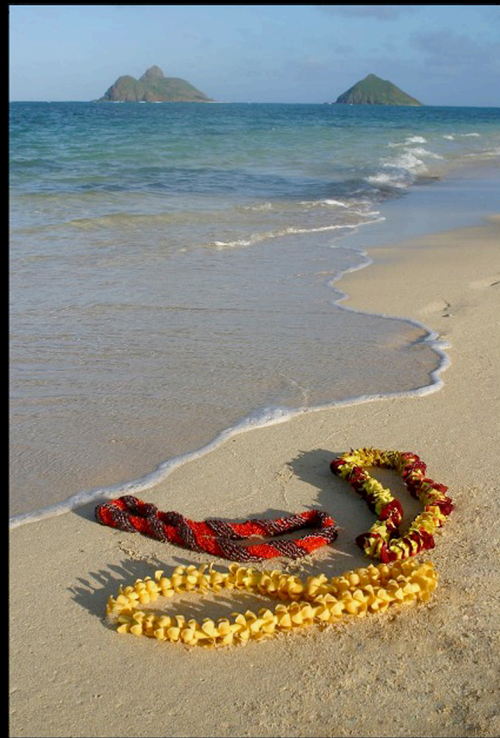
original photograph, 9 x 13 print

John Kalani Zak

"The theme of forgiveness is expressed by the representation of Lokahi, or unity. Humankind is represented by the red flower lei, the purple, yellow and green lei, represents the 'aina (the land), and the yellow pua kenikeni lei represents akua and the spiritual realms.

When one lives in lokahi, then unity, forgiveness, acceptance, and aloha flow, bringing peace to our inner and outer worlds."

John Kalani Zak



2005 Silver Medal

Twin Falls

original photographs, triptych

Larry Lovett

"These images were shot in quick sequence at Twin Falls, Maui. They represent the dynamic changes of the water element, the inner flowing force behind forgiveness."

Larry Lovett



2005 Bronze Medal

Cry for Peace

original oil on canvas, 24 x 36

Frank B. Shaner

"This image was inspired by Man's relentless march to dominate, crush, rule over and to destroy 'because my god is better than yours'..."

"The world has become very small. With technologies that are available to us today we live in very close quarters, so it is imperative that we strive to live together in a world that's gone mad. As stewards of this earth we must try to promote peace at all cost. Up from the ashes, a 'Cry for Peace' is shouted."

Frank Shaner





Poetry of Forgiveness

2005 Gold Medal

The Rock

Xiao Fang Zhou

original poem in Mandarin, translated into English

Time has the power to heal all wounds,
But the power of forgiveness is beyond time;
Moving the rock that is in your heart,
The spirit of light will raise you up.

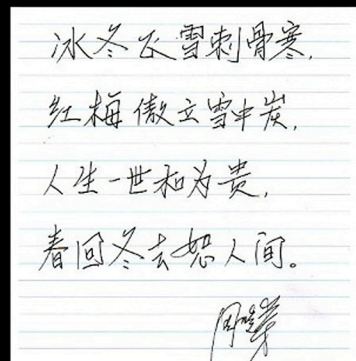
The answers are found already in your heart.
And you have the power to move that rock;
By changing yourself, others will change,
Peace on earth will not be contained.

Winter long gone, the spring has arrived
Awakened land is near at hand

Life has profound purpose,
Just yield and enjoy the journey.

Hearts are connected when hands touch hands,
Boundaries were set by lower mind;
Free the mind and soul becomes itself

You are touched by endless time.



"A friend helped me to make the Chinese-to-English translation read more smoothly. If I were to win, I would like to read the original in Mandarin (see the attached graphics file in my handwriting), and ask my daughter, who was born in America, to read the English translation."

Xiao Fang Zhou (formerly Ruby Khalsa)

2005 Silver Medal

Forgive and Not Forget

Paula Reger

life is too short
to carry a grudge

at first i thought
i wouldnt speak to you
i would not budge

but we're only humans
mortals on this earth

my love for you
outweighs the bad
by far
and I'll always love you
just as you are

i cant blame you
for the way i think
i cant blame you
for the way i feel

every single emotion
is first controlled by a thought

behind every emotion
is a thought

change my thinking about what you
said
and I will automatically change
the way I feel about it
and look at it in a new way

only i can do that
i am the master of my thinking
which makes me master of my
emotions

then i can begin to change my outer world
because i have done the inner work
of changing myself

self responsibility
letting go
forgiving

this is the lesson
i have learned

cant go on being mad at you
when really all i want
is to be with you

forgive you
i will

forget it
no

i will learn
from it
and
we will grow

2005 Bronze Medal

Body Language

Brenda Kwon

I am learning to change how my body speaks because
once upon a time standing too proud was an
invitation
for a stranger's hands
to slip beneath my clothes
in a well-lit corner of a crowded bookstore
where a circumference of words crushed me deep
into silence
that and his fingers pressed to my skin
as my body folded hard in protest
taught by culture and fear that I couldn't say no.

At ten years old I carried betrayal
in the curve of my shoulders
like they could push my growing flesh back inside
revoke my membership to the club of children
who believed that violation was just a half-step away,
that once you belonged you were a member for life

that each day her body spread into its curves
there was one more child,
one more child,
one more and one more,
one more paying dues in dread and defense,
creating her fort with the shell of her back.

And as her body showed its years in flesh,
she couldn't touch what seemed so exposed,
not the stretch of her hips
or the pull of her breasts
the things that made her feel like a whore the way
the grass outside felt dirty and wet,
the shit-smell of soil in the vulgar wind.

How can you love what asks for violation?
The ground left open fields the assault;
trash and concrete, bombs and poison,
and all she did was lay herself bare,
flat on her back,
napping wide in the sun
til some stranger wanted to thrust his drills,
his plows and machinery,
ripping her open and pinning her down.
And maybe it's just that she should've known better.

There's a safety in the hardness of stone,
'cause under concrete she sleeps like a carcass
believing that nothing disturbs the dead.
And outside she hears the stir of the city
that only wants her for what she provides.

But even the most solid surface gives way to
persistence,
and early each morning,
among the rumble of garbage trucks and whistle of
cars
there's one sound come like music,
as an army of rejects combs the streets.

They move in battalions sifting through refuse,
making change and survival from what's been
discarded.
And under the cold tombstone of sidewalks,
she awaits resurrection,
to be saved by those considered her dregs.
And it's that music of change in the morning cold
that reminds her how one can rise from the dead,
how what seems to be worthless holds the power to
transform,
how revolution can come one coin at a time,
subtracting the filth that pollutes her blood --

and so she starts her rebellion with one blade of grass
that pushes through her cemented shackles
and what it demands spreads over her gravestone,
cracking and widening, lifting, exploding the thing
she once thought
would forever cage her,
and with that one blade of grass
she reminds us how she used to grow
how she ran between water and leapt to the skies,
plunged deep into bassetts and beneath the sea,
and how she still knows how to rumble and quake,
to burn and pour because the city can't stop what she
truly is--

and she teaches me to remember the things I discard,
to remember the things I thought were useless--
to find salvation in what I considered my dregs
and so each month I think of the things I let go,
each month I listen when my body lets go,
each month it bleeds to remind me let go
it tells me that blood doesn't always mean harm,
it tells me that blood is the thing that gives life,

and so I listen,
and listen
to what my body speaks,
the speaking destroying that prison of words
as I rise and rise to stretch into my skin
and I push myself into my farthest reaches
where smallness and fear snap and disperse,
and like the gentle center of a flower in bloom,
I reveal my heart, freed of its shell.

"This is an excerpt from a spoken-word piece about
transformation. It uses the the abuse of the earth as a
metaphor for sexual molestation. In order to change
and find forgiveness, the speaker looks to the land's
response to exploitation, pollution and domination."

...Brenda Kwon

2006 Gold Medal:

Prisoner No More

Paula Reger

trying so hard to keep me captive
burdening me with trouble and pain
tearing at my heart strings
never letting up on me
but i was strong enough
taught myself how to forgive and let it all go
i also learned its okay to cry,
had to understand where you were
and realize it doesn't mean you're bad or wrong
able to find peace within once more
stop my selfishness and pity
i see the wheel now and how it turns
trying to control me
clouding my thoughts
i laugh now
i'm on to the game
grown much wiser
rising up and above
i feel the anger and fury
of fate and destiny

now that they know
i can overcome them and prevail
still trying desperately to hold the darkness over
my head
but they can't follow me anymore
or weaken my spirit or soul.

2006 Silver Medal:

FORGIVENESS MesSages

Jack Randall

MesSages – our world is full of them,
Spilling forth, tantalizing –
Beckoning us...to embrace their game.

The subtle ones most give me pause,
For they peer deeply into life's intention;
Forgiveness -- or just some other aim.

Sifted, sorted, ordered, and distilled,
A mottled tapestry that moves me –
Forgiveness in any form is still the same?

Was this poetic rendering an opportunity to pause?
Sent to me through the airwaves of intention
Bits destined to attract and build a flame!

Singe my sinking soul...intently to myself
Engage my spirit and cause me to seek this truth,
Deep within my mottled bag, I yearn to stake my claim.

MesSage – forgive; MesSage – forgive
Vanilla packaging, addressed, and ready to be delivered,
Send it away to all who need to blame.

2006 Bronze Medal

The First Written Poem

Lament to the Spirit of War Enheduanna circa 2300 B.C.

You hack everything down in battle...
You slice away the land and
charge disguised as a raging storm,
growl as a roaring hurricane,
yell like a tempest yells,
thunder, rage, roar, and drum,
expel evil winds!

Your feet are filled with anxiety!
Like a fiery monster
you fill the land with poison.

As a rage from the sky,
you growl over the earth,
and trees and bushes collapse before you

You're like blood rushing down a
mountain

Spirit of hate, greed and anger,
dominator of heaven and earth!

Your fire wafts over our tribe,
mounted on a beast,
with indomitable commands, you decide
all fate.
You triumph over all our rites.
Who can fathom you?

The first written work that was signed by an individual known to history, this poem was written by Enheduanna, daughter of King Sargon and priestess of Ur in what is now south-central Iraq.

Her poem calls out to us today for forgiveness. In her time, writing was largely known only to priests and tax collectors. Scriptures, stories, lists and tax records were kept on clay cylinders and tablets, and not signed by an individual author -- until this poem.

Introduction, by Michael North

2007 Gold Medal

The Breasts of God

Dreaming-Bear Kanaan

I feel like a baby breastfeeding on God...
the frontier of Forgiveness is the last undiscovered
country,
we go there across the ocean of compassion
in a vessel made of pure-surrender...
Spirit is the wind that whispers us along.

Tenderness told me a secret
while talking out loud in her sleep again...
she said: everyone, and I mean every one
longs to be touched with tender intent--
and she said it with such sleepy certain sincerity
that I could not help but to believe!

This morning was a poem of pain
and now is the night of new beginnings...
I keep falling in love with everything I see...
because some part of me knows that spirit peeks
from behind every particle in existence
with prayerful poetic purpose.

My heart breaks a thousand times a day
when that recognition goes unreturned...
and is reborn every second when I kiss the lips of Love.

I don't mind being broken in the name of beauty,
but sometimes I begin to wonder why Spirit teases me so
with this bitter sweet love song...

Then I realize, it is this kiss of darkness & light
which breaks our boundaries,
pushes us beyond the ephemera of the fleeting moments
and into the fullness of forever.

These arms of mine have unfolded
like a blossoming flower of friendship...
welcoming everything inside the softness of my lips
kissing the cheek of their soul.

Dreaming-Bear knows Pure-One,
what it means to feel lost and alone
in the wilderness of pain
and seeming separation from Source.
Until I made love to my sorrows on a bed of forgiveness,
kissing over the ugly parts until they became beautiful
even in their bleeding...

Holding my hurts so close to my heart,
that they eventually began to dance together
to the beat of belonging...
until they had a voice again and could say
all that they had felt in the silence of neglect,
and it was the sweetest poem of needing to be nurtured.

It said, in the form of tears:
touch me with infinite patience and understanding,
hold my fragility in the strength of your Spirit's palm
until I become healed and whole...
purify my pain in the fires of poetry
until I become prophetic in my love for Source--

So now Dear-Ones, whenever I see God
crying all alone in the solitude of Itself,
I tear my clothes off in anticipation
of swimming naked in the rush of those rivers...

I run willing wild and free,
casting my soul head-first into those divine depths,
knowing at last that though I drown
in the teardrops of tenderness,
and die to my seeming separation,
I will be resurrected in the currents of compassion,
absolutely certain of our belonging to the Beloved.

2007 Silver Medal

Piscean Dream

Suzanne Koan

My melancholy
became more true
and deep
and good
flowing
as it would,
touching bottom
at the well.....

my heart sank
fathoms
in view of the river
I became the river.

My desolate tears joined in
running off to the sea
naked and unencumbered
whole and divine
a steamy affair
as God caught me
in her net
while fishing
for brave souls.

2007 Bronze Medal

Lot's Wife

Loretta Sheehan

I see but I don't see, my eye
always trained for an injustice and
the fact that you couldn't answer
how could you do this to me
when I asked.

But how is it that I can't
let go of the lack of an answer,
for it seems emptiness
would be a blessing, not a wish
that needs to be carried.
And yet, like Lot's wife, salt
forever in her mouth, with no way
to shake the dust from her feet, I know
her burden of holding what is lost,
unable to turn away.

Some memory, tracing its fingers
against her skin, displeasing to God,
caused her to hesitate, to glance.
And once turned, how did she forgive
God for what she saw?

Perhaps she didn't. Perhaps God
did it for her, shrieking winds scattering
her grain by grain into empty spaces until
she became earth, which sees everything,
and needs no answer.

2008 Gold Medal

DAMNED

Steven Rosenthal
graphic poem



"I have no explanation for the poem or its subject. It speaks to the underlying emotional and psychological conditions that lead to conflict and the inherent contradiction of "war".

"The construction mirrors the conundrum of the subject in that the lines may be read in different orders, none of which come to resolution.

"The alternative title of the piece is 'DON'T'".

Steve Rosenthal

2008 Silver Medal

degree eternal

Erica Rainhart

ethereal air
invisible place
constantly unseen
animating entering exiting believing being knowing
separate until
I am
Real.

2008 Bronze Medal

I Kept the Violin

David Cornwell

When she was gone I kept
The violin I'd play.
The music
Filled her empty places
Where the two of us would stay.

The music brought her into pictures
And I could place her
Here and there,
She was translucent
But I felt it was perhaps
More lovely
To see her partly here and there;
As I began to see myself.

I'll admit I have gone
Quite to pieces, with a few
Not to spare.
At times I'd visit
Her transparency
And in reverie I would always
Collect some of my broken pieces
And listen to my music here and
There.





Figure of Queen Lili'uokalani, outside the State Capitol, Honolulu

Queen Lili'uokalani

Hawai'i's royal poet

The year was 1895. Queen Lili'uokalani of the independent kingdom of Hawai'i was charged with treason by a group of businessmen from America and forcibly deposed by a landing of the United States Marines.

She waited, imprisoned in her own home at 'Iolani Palace in Honolulu.

The Queen wrote a simple poem, which stands today as a witness to the strength and dignity of the Hawaiian people, and to the power of forgiveness.

Her words long outlive her captors.

'O kou aloha nō
Aia i ka lani
A 'o Kou 'oia 'i'o
He hemolelo ho'i

Ko'u noho mihi 'ana
A pa'ahao 'ia
'O 'oe ku'u lama
Kou nani ko'u ko'o

Mai nānā 'ino'ino
Nā hewa o kânaka
Akā e huikala
A ma'ema'e nō

No laila e ka Haku
Ma lalo o kou 'ēheu
Kō mākou maluhia
A mau loa aku nō

Your loving mercy
Is as high as Heaven
And your truth
So perfect

I live in sorrow
Imprisoned
You are my light
Your glory, my support

Behold not with malevolence
The sins of man
But forgive
And cleanse

And so, o Lord
Protect us beneath your wings
And let peace be our portion
Now and forever more



Images of Forgiveness

2007 Gold Medal

Quan Yin, Goddess of Compassion and Forgiveness

watercolor
Jonathan Ming Ji

Watercolor portrait of the Goddess Quan Yin, who in Buddhism is known as the Goddess of Compassion that aligns the path of forgiveness.

She is seen in this painting holding the world in her hands above her head with ease using her immense physical and spiritual strength. She is surrounded by the softness of flowers and the great vastness of the oceans that represent the divine feminine ability we all have, to transcend all diversity and transmute all negativities to love and forgiveness.

The seven white doves flying about her represent long life and harmony that parallel the seven-year life cycles. She is wearing a ruby-red robe representing the divine Mother, and two bracelets on each wrist that represent, on the left arm, balance of body and mind and on the right arm, balance of spirit and strength.

The artist is Master Painter and Grand Master Jonathan Ming Ji, who was a Zen monk for 25 years in China and is now an Abbot, heading the nonprofit Buddhist Art and Mind Center in Los Angeles. He resides in Kaneohe, O'ahu, Hawai'i.



2007 Silver Medal
Offering to Drinking Water
Offering to Food
Offering to Perfume

three images, archival ink and acrylic

Nan Holmes

"Forgiveness is the process of opening to what is possible.

"These images, from my series on the Green Tara -- the Tibetan goddess of compassion -- are expressions of forgiveness, love, humility, simplicity, honesty, and truthfulness, passed down through centuries of deep meditative practices. They are the Buddhist hand gestures or mudras used while chanting and meditating, reminding us to be still within and to act with caring while working towards healing.

"The hands, like our hands, are instruments for action and for taking personal responsibility for ourselves, others, and all other beings, seen and unseen, with whom we share this great universe."

Nan Holmes

2007 Bronze Medal

Just Let Go

photograph
Laura Drost

A photograph of my first bungee jump, from a 100'-tall bridge in the Angeles National Forest, California.

Bungee jumping was a personal challenge; it was not something I wanted to do but rather something I felt that I should do. In order to do it, I had to turn off my mind and forgive everything and everyone and just let go. It was an experience of trust, and in order to fully trust one must first forgive.

Laura Drost





2007 Gold Medal, Children's Awards

Forgiveness

colored pencil

Ann Cho, age 14;
student at 'Iolani School, Honolulu
born 1993

2008 Gold Medal

Death of a Warrior

clay sculpture

J Forest Ocean Bennett

"One of the 'Spirit Form' series of sculptures, "Death Of A Warrior" has personal significance to me. It came as part of the series of works I did during a particularly stressful time -- the letting go of sadness, hate, fear, my job, my career, my house, my possessions....I needed to forgive the Intelligence of the Universe for 'letting this happen to me'.

"Sometimes we get so used to feeling this unhealthy state of being -- however justified it may seem -- so much that it seems like an old friend we hate to let go of.... meaning letting it die, a painful process to be sure. So the 'Warrior' in each of us may pass through a time, feeling as this piece expresses."

J Forest Ocean Bennett





2008 Silver Medal

Mo'olelo for Ke Anuenue

canvas giclee print
Pearl Pualani Ling

"Mo'olelo means "story" or "history." The pictures tell a story, a history of a spiritual event and/or a worldly process. Petroglyphs tell the story and define the mo'olelo in each picture. Drawn primarily on 'a'aniu or coconut fiber, mana comes from where the tree has grown.

"Like the fiber that wraps around the trunk of the tree, supporting the frond like a brace, so do the mo'olelo support and strengthen the observer by creating an atmosphere of peace and tranquility. Mo'olelo are depicted as blessings both in the literary and artwork.

"The meaning of this piece:

"This is the mo'olelo for Ke Anuenue, the rainbow. The blessing is as follows: The rainbow comes forward, for it is a symbol of hope. It shows when things have ended and new hope and new life and new things are beginning. It is never-ending from end to end.

"The rainbow soars among the ancestors in the center of God from the mountains to the ocean in this place. It represents the beginning and the transformation and the change from one end of the rainbow to the next. The ancestors walk us. It is the pathway from heaven of the ancestors. It is the pathway of God, it is the message of God. That is the mo'olelo for Ke Anuenue.

"The process of forgiveness signifies the ending of one thing and the hope of a new beginning. Like the significance of the rainbow, one walks the path to get to the other side. That creates the transformation in the event that requires forgiveness of self and others. The rainbow reminds me that we never walk alone; our ancestors and God walks with us through the change."

Pearl Pualani Ling

2008 Bronze Medal
Mending Heart
hand appliqued quilt
Elizabeth Kent

"Originally I called my piece 'Stop Hurting Me'; the image was based on a heart that was broken in two. I made it to symbolize the pain of child abuse and domestic violence. In my 'day job' I work on issues related to abuse and working on this piece was a personal way to address some of my feelings and to channel them into something more positive.

"I showed the piece to Alfred Herrera, the President of The Childrens' Alliance of Hawaii, a non-profit that helps child victims of abuse. He wanted to buy the piece, but only if I was willing to change it from a breaking heart to a mending heart! I loved the idea because it is about resiliency and is more positive than what I originally set out to create. So I set out to make the change, and then saw the message about the forgiveness art show. Alfred and I spoke, and we both think it is serendipity that the two events occurred on the heels of one another.

"What does forgiveness mean? It is so personal. When are we ready to move from a breaking heart to a mending heart? I hope this piece makes people think about it, and look into their hearts.

Elizabeth Kent





2007 Special Recognition Award

New Beginning

digital photo
Husamuddin Akhras

Husamuddin Akhras is a Palestinian living in Hawaii. As a videographer and peace activist, he provides insight into true Islam (humility) to everyone he meets.

We see the words "I seek forgiveness from Allah" (*Astaghfir Allah*) in Arabic, in Husamuddin's hand, superimposed on a photo of a Maui sunset.

The inspirational outcome of the calligraphy combined with the photograph is "New Beginning."



kokio ke'oke'o, endangered I hawaiian hibiscus from Wāimea Valley, O'ahu



codes-schutte



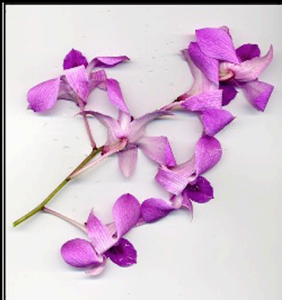
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Forgiving is the opposite of forgetting --
it is profound remembering of past
pain. Forgiveness breathes life into
inner and community space. It is both
personal and political.

To change our souls, our families,
community, our nation and planet --
we need to forgive.

Even the most unforgiveable.

Enjoy the words and images of some of
Hawai'i's sensitive artistic souls,
speaking the unspeakable and revealing
the invisible mystery of forgiveness.

