

NEWS RELEASE
MAYOR RICK BLANGIARDI
MAYOR'S OFFICE OF CULTURE AND THE ARTS
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Communications Office: (808) 768-5768

**City announces Major Public Art Initiative: “Wahi Pana (Storied Places)”
celebrating O‘ahu’s cultural and historical sites**

Winner of the \$1 Million Bloomberg Philanthropies Public Art Challenge, the Initiative will support 11 art installations focused on Native Hawaiian History in key Honolulu destinations.



WAHI PANA

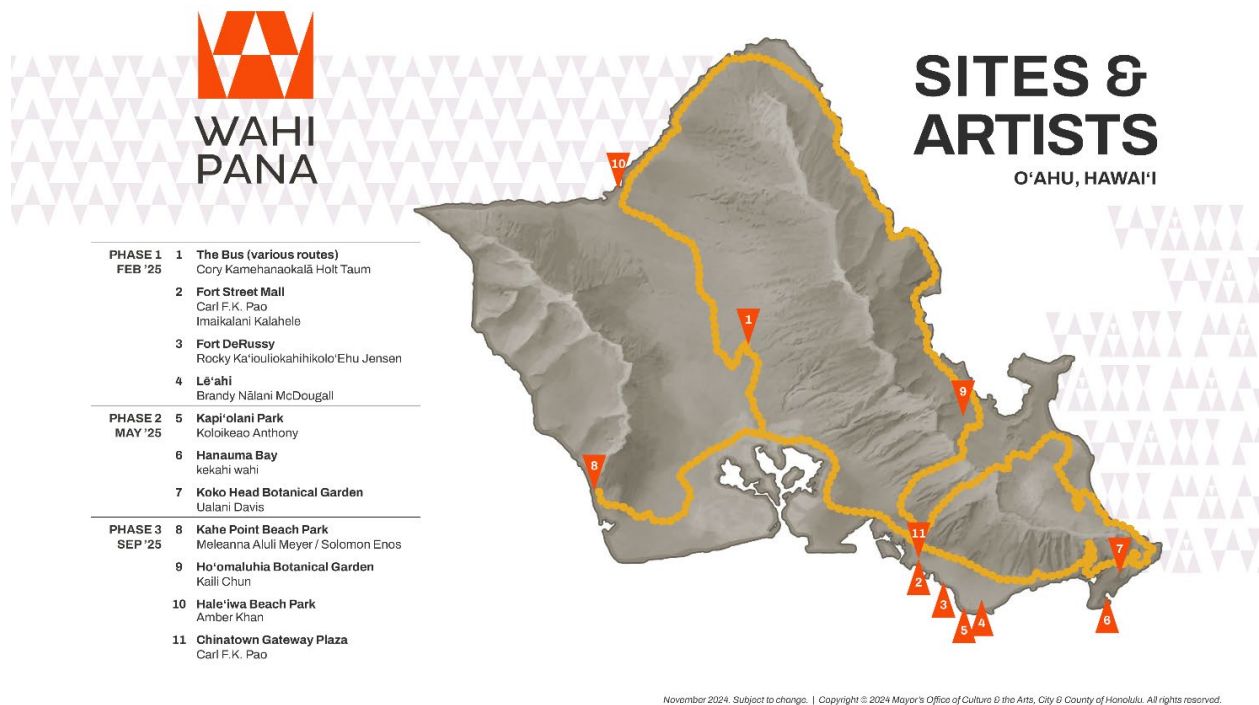
HONOLULU – Mayor Rick Blangiardi is proud to introduce *Wahi Pana* (Storied Places), a temporary public art initiative designed to activate culturally significant sites across O‘ahu, celebrating stories deeply rooted in Native Hawaiian history. Launching its first of three phases in February 2025, this project will feature 11 multimedia installations created by local artists and storytellers, debuting in February, May, and September. In partnership with the Department of Parks and Recreation, Office of Economic Revitalization, Bloomberg Philanthropies, Pu‘uhonua Society, Aupuni Space, Hawai‘i Contemporary, the O‘ahu Visitors Bureau, and Bishop Museum, this initiative is set to run from 2025 through 2028.

Wahi Pana (Storied Places) is a winning project of the Bloomberg Philanthropies [Public Art Challenge](#), which supports mayors, residents, and artists in creating public art projects that address civic issues in their communities. In 2022, Bloomberg Philanthropies invited U.S. cities to apply for funding, and eight winning cities were selected to develop projects focused on key challenges. Since 2014, this initiative has spurred economic benefits and inspired civic action across the United States. *Wahi Pana* will include eleven artistic installations that use diverse forms of creative storytelling, including sculpture, video, photography, poetry, painting, and mele (music). Native Hawaiian and Hawai‘i-based artists are commissioned to work with storytellers and community members to research and create site-specific artworks and performances that highlight the rich histories of each location. These installations will invite residents and visitors to engage deeply with O‘ahu’s unique heritage, enhancing historical and cultural awareness and fostering meaningful connections to Hawai‘i and its people.

“Wahi Pana will give all of us—residents and visitors alike—a deeper connection to O‘ahu’s history, land, and people,” said Mayor Rick Blangiardi. “By experiencing these powerful installations and the stories they tell, we gain a richer appreciation for the places we cherish. This initiative honors our island’s past and strengthens our collective responsibility for its future.”

As one of only eight cities awarded the Bloomberg Philanthropies Public Art Challenge grant, *Wahi Pana* is a purposeful tribute to Indigenous histories and an invitation for all to move throughout the island with a deeper cultural sensitivity.

“Public art provides free access to arts and culture while enlivening and reimagining our civic spaces. For residents and tourists, the projects create innovative ways to engage with public space, while bringing people together as a community,” said Stephanie Dockery of Bloomberg Philanthropies’ Arts Program. “*Wahi Pana*’s collaborative team of city government, cultural nonprofits, and artists will provide new methods to preserve and unearth the cultural heritage of Honolulu’s Indigenous community.”



Project Highlights:

- **Public Art Installation Sites Across O‘ahu:** Each location was chosen for its historical and cultural significance, including Kapiolani Park, Fort DeRussy, Kapolei, Kokohead Botanical Garden, Hanauma Bay, Ho‘omaluhia, Hale‘iwa Beach Park, Fort Street Mall, and Chinatown.
- **Artists:** Cory Kamehanaokāla Holt Taum, Carl F.K. Pao, Meleanna Aluli Meyer, Kaili Chun, Solomon Enos, Ualani Davis, Amber Khan, Brandy Nāalani McDougall, Koloikeao Anthony, kekahi wahi, Imaikalani Kalahahele, and Rocky Ka‘iouliokahihikolo‘Ehu Jensen.

- **Storytellers and Cultural Advisors:** Ka‘imi Kahikina, Kauwila Mahi, Paige Okamura, Leimomi Bong, Maile Meyer, Marques Hanalei Marzan, Puni Jackson, Ainsley Halemanu, Anne Marie Nalani Kirk, Royal Order of Kamehameha I, and more.
- **Engaging Audio and Digital Content:** Signage at each site will include QR codes that connect visitors to audio programs featuring mele, poetry, and mo‘olelo (stories) by Native Hawaiian storytellers and artists. Artist videos will also be accessible.
- **Public Programs:** *Wahi Pana* will host community programs and unveiling ceremonies at each site, encouraging everyone to deepen their appreciation of these storied places.

Story Behind Our Logo: The Epic of Hi‘iakaikapoliopele

The epic of Hi‘iakaikapoliopele tells the tale of Hi‘iaka, a goddess who balances healing and destruction as she journeys through sacred landscapes (*wahi pana*) of the islands. Her story emphasizes respect for place and the need to care for the land. Inspired by this mo‘olelo (story), artist Cory Taum created the *Wahi Pana* logo, symbolizing a woven lei that honors visitors. This logo reflects the project’s message of respect and care for both land and people, reminding us to engage thoughtfully with each other and with these cherished places.

Highlighted Project Sites:

- **TheBus** — *Cory Taum, Graphic Installation:* Taum’s graphics, inspired by Hi‘iakaikapoliopele’s journey, will be adapted as a bus wrap on select City and County buses, emphasizing the inseparability of these places from her being and safeguarding their integrity.
- **Lē‘ahi (Diamond Head)** — *Brandy Nālani McDougall, Poetry Installation:* In collaboration with Hawai‘i Triennial 2025 (HT25), Hawai‘i State Poet Laureate Brandy Nālani McDougall’s poetry installation explores the kaona (hidden meanings) of ka‘apuni (circumnavigation), using literary and visual forms to evoke the presence and significance of Lē‘ahi.
- **Fort DeRussy** — *Rocky Ka‘iouliahikolo‘Ehu Jensen, Sculpture:* Highlighting his monument, *Nā Lehua Helele‘i: The Scattered Blossoms* (1999), Jensen’s sculpture honors Maoli warriors at Fort DeRussy, serving as a poignant reminder of Indigenous narratives and ancestral presence in Waikīkī. (HT25 collaboration)
- **Fort Street Mall & Chinatown** — *Carl F.K. Pao & Imaikalani Kalahahele, Mural and Poetry Installation:* Pao’s tiled floor murals, an HT25 collaboration, visually translate ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i through coded designs, while Kalahahele’s poetry evokes Chinatown’s historical richness.
- **Kapi‘olani Park** — *Koloikeao Anthony, Graphic Installation:* At the old archery range, Anthony’s graphic installation references ki‘i (images), guiding visitors to recognize the sacredness of Papa‘ena‘ena Heiau.

Join us on this huaka‘i (journey) of connection—follow *Wahi Pana*’s progress at wahipana.com and on social media @wahipana to be part of the story as we unveil O‘ahu’s storied places.

For approved press images and videos, [click here <<add link after press conference>>](#)

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