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Hawaii's First Traditional Tattoo Festival to be Held in Kohala

*Free Community Events Will Showcase Traditional Tattoo Rituals from Pacific & Arctic Cultures
Oct. 25-28*

Hawi, HAWAII, August 27, 2019—Hawaii's first Traditional Tattoo Festival will be held in the district of Kohala Oct. 25-Oct. 28, 2019. The four-day event features demonstrations by master Indigenous tattoo artists from Pacific and Arctic cultures, a free opening evening of celebration, a free all-day cultural fair with traditional arts demonstrations, music, food alongside an admission-free tattoo documentaries film festival and a ticketed two-day symposium designed for traditional tattoo enthusiasts and practitioners alike.

Sponsored by Kohala Institute, and supported by grants from Hawaii Tourism Authority Community Enrichment Program and Hawai'i Council for the Humanities, the Traditional Tattoo Festival is a celebration of Indigenous arts, vision and cultural resilience. The festival, with its diverse panel of international master artists, highlights ancient arts traditions shared by Indigenous communities worldwide.

Master practitioners and master artists include Keone Nunes of Hawaii; Lane Wilcken of the Philippines; Holly Nordlum of Alaska; Cudjuy Patjidres of Taiwan; Dion Kaszas of Canada; Julia Mage'au Gray of New Zealand and Sarah Whalen Lunn of Alaska. Lars Krutak, tattoo anthropologist who hosted *Tattoo Hunter* documentary series on the Discovery channel, will share his experience of travelling the world to research and experience varied art forms of body modification.

Nunes, of Wai`anae, O`ahu, has been pivotal in reintroducing the art of the traditional Hawaiian tattoo, called kakau or tatau. His approach to this traditional practice is that of the sacred, one of spirit and transformation.

"Kakau gives mana (spiritual power) to a person. The tools (I use) are conduits and the experience is connected to the ancestors," Nunes shares. "This gathering is extension of spirit. All who join us will be able to receive mana and transform."

The Traditional Tattoo Festival begins with an **opening celebration at 6 pm, Fri., Oct. 25, at the Blue Dragon Tavern & Cosmic Musiquarium** across from Kawaihae Harbor. Guests will enjoy live music and local food with the opportunity to meet the festival's invited master tattoo artists.

On Sat., Oct. 26, a free local fair from 9 am-3 pm at the Kohala Village HUB in Hawi will feature traditional tattoo demonstrations, arts workshops, food trucks, dancing with live music as well as kapa, lauhala and wood carving demonstrations. Designed for the entire ohana, the Saturday fair will also include a film festival with award-winning screenings throughout the day.

Skindigenous is a series of half-hour documentaries on the art of tattooing as practiced by Indigenous peoples around the world. Each *Skindigenous* episode dives into a unique

Indigenous culture and tattoo artist to discover the tools and techniques—and the symbols and traditions—that shape tattooing art.

A feature presentation includes *Tep Tok: Reading Between Our Lines*, a documentary that explores how rituals interweave with women's sense of identity during the ongoing tattoo revival in the Central Province of Papua New Guinea. This feature follows four Papua New Guinean/Australian women on deeply personal journeys that pay homage to their grandmothers and the traditions that they uphold.

A two-day Traditional Tattoo Festival symposium will be held Sun.-Mon., Oct. 27-28, at the GRACE Center, Kohala Institute, Kapa`au. Master practitioners will lead live demos and share techniques as well as their mana`o during talks that will include time for questions and discussion. The symposium will also offer storytelling, fireside `awa ritual and locally-sourced meals.

Cost of the full conference package, including opening night ceremony, meals, a tote and temporary tattoos and two days symposium entrance, is \$200 before Sept. 15, \$250 thereafter. Overnight accommodations are additional and available on site at the GRACE Center as well as through nearby locales including the Kohala Village INN, Hawi.

A conference day rate is also available: \$30/day or \$50 for both days (without meals, symposium registration, tote and overnight accommodation).

The Traditional Tattoo Festival is a long-held vision and dream of Joël Tan, event organizer and manager of the GRACE Center at Kohala Institute.

“The festival focuses on inclusivity. We hope to dissolve colonial divisions and reaffirm interrelatedness between Indigenous peoples,” Tan says. “Given generations of oppression and cultural suppression across Indigenous cultures, we now have a significant need to preserve and share traditional and ancient knowledge.”

Nunes affirms Tan's thoughts.

“This is history. We now live during a time when Hawaiian people and those of Indigenous cultures will experience a renaissance of culture and life, the emergence of even greater spirit,” Nunes shares. “The time has arrived for every person to flow within the currents of wisdom and spirit.”

For registration and a detailed schedule of events, visit www.TraditionalTattooFestivalHI.com or phone 808.889.5151.

About Kohala Institute, a 501c3 organization:

The mission of Kohala Institute is to inspire the discovery and deepening of human connection through collaboration on behalf of a sustainable world. We nurture connection with land, universal values and aloha.

Kohala Institute is an immersive environment within the 'Iole ahupua'a. Its GRACE Center campus, with several gathering rooms and 80-person lodging, provides a powerfully neutral setting for intercultural exchanges between masters, students and enthusiasts.

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Sidebar for Media

Bios of Master Artists

Keone Nunes, Hawai`i

Keone Nunes of Waianae, Oahu, has made hundreds of tattoos on Native Hawaiians and non – Hawaiians. Yet, as he says, he is not a tattooist. Keone’s cultural practices didn’t initially include tattooing but his life journey took him in that direction. His dedication to the practice has made him instrumental in reviving this Hawaiian art form that was nearly lost.

Cudjuy Patjidres, Taiwan

Cudjuy Patjidres (aka Cudjuy) is an Indigenous Paiwan tattoo artist from the Sapulju Community of Taiwan. At the age of 25, he discovered the nearly extinct hand-tapping tattoo traditions of his people in an old book and started tattooing traditional patterns by machine shortly thereafter. In 2015, he attended the Indigenous Ink Festival in New Zealand and witnessed the magic of hand-tapping first hand, especially the work of Keone Nunes and others. Returning home, Cudjuy began handcrafting his own hand-tapping tools and through painstaking practice, he mastered the use of traditional tools. His inspiring work has resulted in the revival of Paiwan tattooing practices across a new generation of tattoo bearers. As part of its film series, the Hawai’i Tattoo Festival is proud to present a new documentary on Cudjuy entitled *Images from My Dreams: The Story of Cudjuy Patjidres* produced by the National Taiwan Museum.

Lane Wilcken, Philippines

Lane Wilcken is a scholar, cultural tattoo practitioner, and advocate for the critically endangered practice of "batok" or cultural tattoos of the Philippines. He also has studied other related Indigenous traditions of the Philippines and greater Pacific with nearly three decades of research and experience. His mother is from the Philippines and his father is of English and Scandinavian descent. Lane is the author of *Filipino Tattoos Ancient to Modern* and *The Forgotten Children of Maui*. He is also a contributing writer to *Back from the Crocodile's Belly: Philippine Babaylan Studies and the Struggle for Indigenous Memory* and *Shamanic Transformations: True Stories of the Moment of Awakening*, as well as several articles for various magazines and journals.

Holly Nordlum, Alaska

Holly Mititquq Nordlum is an Inupiaq multi-media artist who has worked to revitalize both an apprenticeship program for traditional Inuit tattooing and bring healing to each client they tattoo.

Sarah Whalen Lunn, Alaska

As an artist of mixed heritage, both Iñupiaq and Caucasian, Sarah feels it is important to facilitate conversation on the social issues facing us. A lot of her personal needs to create art, whether it is traditional tattooing or painting, stems from her own need to work out emotions and heal. As a visual artist, Sarah works with a lot of raw passions, showing the world her perspective and her place in it. It is not always easy to see but it is always a true reflection of what she feels.

As a traditional tattoo artist, Sarah works to help reconnect people to culture and reclaim the heritage of cultural tattooing that was diminished as people became colonized. She believes that all art has a chance to open the dialogue necessary for the change we need and this is the art she strives to create.

Dion Kaszas, Nova Scotia

Dion Kaszas is a tattoo artist, cultural tattoo practitioner, painter, teacher, and scholar of Nlaka'pamux (Interior Salish) heritage. As a professional tattoo artist he can be found working at HFX Tattoo in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada. He also works in other artistic mediums, including oil, watercolour, graphite, mixed media collage, and video.

Dion's passion for tattooing extends beyond his artistic work into a Masters degree in Indigenous Studies at the University of British Columbia Okanagan in Kelowna, British Columbia. His area of research is Indigenous tattooing, focusing keenly on the revival of Indigenous peoples tattooing practices, using Indigenous and Creative research methodologies.

With artists Jordan Bennett (Mi'kmaq) and Amy Malbeuf (Métis), Dion started the Earthline Tattoo Collective in 2015 which aims to enhance, expand, and support the work of traditional and cultural Indigenous tattoo practices across Canada.

His work has been featured in *Spiritual Skin: Magical Tattoos and Scarification*, *Tattoo Traditions of Native North America: Ancient and Contemporary Expressions of Identity*, *The World Atlas of Tattoo*, and highlighted in newspaper articles from the New Zealand Herald to the CBC. He has exhibited in several exhibitions in Kelowna, Ottawa. In 2015 Dion was a visiting artist in residence at the *Pedagogy of Place-As Principal Element of Indigenous Art* at UBC Okanagan. In 2018, he was featured in *Skindigenous*, a 13-part documentary series produced in association with APTN exploring Indigenous tattooing traditions around the world.

Julia Mage'au Gray, New Zealand

Julia Mage'au Gray, has been marking skin since 2013 and transitioned into this art form after many years as dance practitioner, choreographer and director of Sunameke Productions.

It was her role of film maker of the Sunameke Productions three part documentary, *Tep Tok: Reading Between Our Lines*, and the journey to raise awareness for the dying art form of marking skin in Papua New Guinea that moved her into a new role of 'tattoo artist'.

She uses the "Hand Poke" and "Hand Tap" method of tattooing and was taught by a number of Pasifika Tattoo Artists namely Tihoti Mataura, Pat Morrow and Croc Tatau.

Lars Krutak, Tattoo Anthropologist, Photographer, Writer

Dr. Lars Krutak is an anthropologist and curator who has spent the last two decades studying tattoo traditions among 50 Indigenous societies. He is a Research Associate at the Museum of International Folk Art. Krutak hosted the Discovery Channel series *Tattoo Hunter* and is the author of five books on body modification. He is senior editor of (2018) [*Ancient Ink: The Archaeology of Tattooing*](#) and author of (2014) [*Tattoo Traditions of Native North America: Ancient and Contemporary Expressions of Identity*](#).