

Ai Iwane Solo Exhibition

“KIPUKA—Island in My Mind”

- Period Saturday, November 24th, 2018—Saturday, December 22nd, 2018
- Venue KANA KAWANISHI PHOTOGRAPHY
2-7-5-5F, Nishiiazabu, Minato-ku, Tokyo 106-0031 / Tel: +81 3 5843 9128
- Hours Tuesdays through Fridays, 13:00—20:00
Saturdays, 12:00—19:00 (closed on Sundays, Mondays, and National Holidays)
- ※Cooperation in curation: Shuichi Iketani

▼OPENING RECEPTION
Saturday, November 24th 19:00-20:00

▼TALK EVENTS
Saturday, November 24th 18:00-19:00
Ai Iwane (Photographer) × Shuichi Iketani (Editor)

Tuesday, November 27th 19:30-21:00
Ai Iwane (Photographer) × Yuji Nakae (Director of the film *BON-UTA: A Song From Home*)

*Admission free | no reservation needed | 25 seats available (first-come first-served)

▼ASSOCIATED EXHIBITIONS
November 17th (Sat)—December 2nd (Sun) “FUKUSHIMA ONDO” KANZAN GALLERY
November 21st (Wed)—December 3rd (Mon) “KIPUKA” Nikon Salon Osaka

▼FILM PREMIERE
Saturday, November 24th 12:30- Yurakucho Asahi Hall
BON-UTA: A Song From Home (Director: Yuji Nakae, Associate Producer: Ai Iwane)
Featured as part of special screenings at TOKYO FILMeX 2018 (officially released in 2019)



Paho, Hawaii, Hawaii
2015, archival pigment print
© Ai Iwane, courtesy KANA KAWANISHI GALLERY



Futaba, Fukushima
2014, archival pigment print
© Ai Iwane, courtesy KANA KAWANISHI GALLERY

■Please contact below for any image enquiries■



KANA KAWANISHI PHOTOGRAPHY is pleased to announce the opening of Ai Iwane's Solo Exhibition, *KIPUKA—Island in My Mind* on Saturday, November 24th, commemorating the release of her first monograph *KIPUKA* by Seigensha Art Publishing.

The location of her photographic works are Hawaii and Fukushima. The two places, which may seem to have no any relations at first sight, deeply resonate in the past through the culture of *Bon Dance*. Over three months during the summer, people in Hawaii enthusiastically enjoy the *Bon Dance* based from the *Soma Bon Uta*—a traditional song that originated around the Hamadori area in Fukushima. Iwane continuously commuted to Hawaii since 2006, and to Fukushima since 2011, and fructified her 12 years of research into the series *KIPUKA*.

Among the sprawling exploration of the two locations, this exhibition will specifically feature the photographs taken with the large format rotating panorama camera, the “Kodak Cirkut.” The camera was invented in 1904, and had been used by the Hawaiian Japanese immigrants when capturing the numerous family members on the occasion of burial ceremonies, which however currently is said that only around four or five cameras are still in function in the world. With this camera that comes along with a massive tripod and an accordion that rotates 360 degrees with a wind-up spiral, Iwane has photographed both locations of Hawaii and Fukushima.

The transforming Hawaiian landscapes in which first flourished with the massive sugar cane farms, but altered its appearance upon descending to the second and third generations, as well as the streaming lava of the eruption of the volcano; and the landscapes and people of Fukushima, who have evacuated from their homes designated as evacuation zones and still and sturdily continuing their everyday lives. Iwane fructified this massive body of work over her twelve years of field work, visualizing the vast history of emerging and terminating lives in the nature and human activities.

This exhibition commemorates her first monograph *KIPUKA* released from Seigensha Art Publishing, and is associated with other solo exhibitions *KIPUKA* at Nikon Salon Ginza and Nikon Salon Osaka, *FUKUSHIMA ONDO* at Kanzan Gallery, as well as the film *BON-UTA: A Song From Home* in which she participated as the associate producer. We are looking forward to kindly welcoming you at *KIPUKA—Island in My Mind*, which is Iwane's first solo exhibition held at KANA KAWANISHI PHOTOGRAPHY.

■Artist Profile

Iwane was born in Tokyo. She relocated to the United States and enrolled in Petrolia High School in 1991. She led an off-grid and self-sufficient life while studying. In 1996, she became an independent photographer after working as an assistant back in Japan. While working with magazines and music industry, Iwane has visited and researched unique communities in different countries, including Muntinlupa Prison in the Philippines (2010), Nikulin Circus in Russia (2011), and Sanxia, Taipei Veterans Home in Taiwan (2012). Since 2006, Iwane has focused on the Japanese community's culture in Hawaii and she settled her second base in Miharu, Fukushima in 2013. Since then, she has continuously examined the relevance between Hawaii and Fukushima from the aspect of immigration and put her research into her works. Her first monograph *KIPUKA* will be published by Seigensha Art Publishing in November, 2018.

<http://www.mojowork.com/>

※ Cooperation: Hama, Naka, Aizu: Cultural Cooperation Project

■Please contact below for any image enquiries■



Artist Statement on “KIPUKA—Island in My Mind”

KIPUKA

“Kipuka” is a Hawaiian word that means vegetation found in the ruins of the volcano lava, meaning a “place of new life” as a symbol of rebirth. I continued journeys in between Hawaii and Fukushima with this word always in my heart.

While continuing my researches among the song *Fukushima-Ondo*, which the immigrants of Fukushima passed along with themselves to Hawaii, I met a drum player of the *Bon Dance* which led me to set my base in Miharu, Fukushima. Learning their *Bon Dance*, festivals, and their rich folk culture, actually meant of learning what those people in evacuation had lost.

The inclining tombs left in the Difficult-to-Return zones in Fukushima reminded me of the tombs of the first generations of the Japanese immigrants in Hawaii. Villages of sugar-canes in which the Japanese immigrants had build had either vanished, left abandoned in the wild, have been swallowed by the volcano lava, or had been taken away by the waves and had been left on the seaside.

The wind-up spiral of the “Kodak Cirkut” that had been used in a photo studio in Maui in the 1930s was repaired by Haruyuki Ouchi, a craftsman of a clock shop in Miharu, Fukushima, in 2013, and started to function again. As I had started interviewing the residents of Tomioka and Katsurao who were evacuating in Miharu at that time, I asked them to take me to their old homes and fields, as I wanted to take photos of the Hamadori area in which the *Fukushima Ondo* originated from.

The cirkut camera rotated 360 degrees with its two meter film, and automatically connected the site they had been daily seeing into a circle without my framing. I continued to take photographs of the Difficult-to-Return zones, furthermore including evacuators from also Okuma, Futaba, Namie, and Iidate.

In 2014, I took the cirkut back to Hawaii and looked for the abandoned tombs of the first generations of the Japanese immigrants at the six islands in which they emigrated to, which were Kauai, Oahu, Maui, Lanai, Molokai, and Hawaii island. In 2018, the map of the Hawaii island was renewed again, with the vast volcano lava that occurred the first time in twenty years, swallowing up 700 houses.

Landscapes could disappear in a second at times. However, although away from home, the seeds of the lives who have survived would spread again, and will once again make the black land turn into a forest.

■Please contact below for any image enquiries■

Island in My Mind

The homo sapiens reached Hawaii through Tahiti and became the ancestors of Hawaiians as the closure of the history of the expansion of the sapiens who first originated in Africa. The area of Polynesia, Micronesia, and Melanesia (including Hawaii and Tahiti) widely spread over the vast Southern Pacific Ocean, but have similarities in their cultures and linguistics, and prove that they have had interchanges since the ancient times. Using the Star Navigation which they find directions by looking at stars, and by reading the swelling waving and using only the power of the wind, they have travelled among each other with canoes.

Since Hawaii was “discovered” by James Cook in 1778, a huge number of Westerners made their ways to Hawaii. The long battles among the royals had finally ended when King Kamehameha I acquired the latest weapons in his hands, and Hawaii became unified under a single government. The new ideologies introduced by the missionaries that came along with new technologies abandoned the ancient Hawaiian culture such as the Fula and the Hawaiian language, as they appeared “barbarous.”

Before too late, the Hawaiian Cultural Renaissance occurred in the 1970s as a resurgence of a distinct cultural identity. The symbolic project of the movement was to rebuild the voyaging double-hulled canoe, which was the ship that was used when the homo sapiens first reached Hawaii using only wind as its power, as well as the revitalization of the Star Navigation.

The canoe was completed in 1975, and was named Hokule’a. Although the canoe was constructed, the navigation method no longer existed.

Nainoa Thompson, the leader of the project, visited Mau Pailug from the island of Satawal in Micronesia, who was one of the only six existing inheritors of the Star Navigation. Master Mau trained Nainoa the various methods, and when the historical moment of the take off to Tahiti from Hawaii had come, Mau asked a question to Nainoa.

“Can you see the island?” The question puzzled Nainoa. “I could not literally see the island,” he recalls. “It was twenty-four hundred miles away. But it was a serious question. I had to consider carefully.” Finally, he said, “I cannot see the island, but I can see an image of the island in my mind.”

“Good,” said Mau. “Don’t ever lose that image or you will be lost.”

This was the final lesson for Nainoa from Mau.¹

* * *

For the series I photographed the Difficult-To-Return zones with the camera that was used on the occasion of Japanese ancestries gathering in a circle upon funerals, I named its title *Island in My Mind*. The island that appears in the middle of the circle surrounding the person standing in his/her homeland, is a place they could always visualize in their mind, although they may live afar. Landscapes can easily change or disappear within the annals of natural disasters and events. However, if you have the power to believe, you could surely reach that place again. That is the lesson I learned from them.

—Ai Iwane

¹ Hawaiki Rising: Hokule’a, Nainoa Thompson and the Hawaiian Renaissance by Sam Low



Towards KIPUKA—Island in My Mind

In the 1990s, when Iwane had just started off her career as a photographer, she definitely was a photographer who takes her personal life—the so called *Shishashin*. Vivid lurid eyes towards her lovers, her families, and herself. The somewhat penetrating melancholic perception. The naked sadness within people striving their lives. There within in her tough days was where she had her roots. She was also a resident of the city of sleepless nights. In a place where brilliance, desires, love, friendship, and alcohol, where all mixed up together, she was always an alternative existence. Her activities were never restricted as a photographer, as she had always been connecting people and places.

Since 2010, she had been focusing on a body of work that featured unique communities in the Philippines and Taiwan, which then bridged to her lifework of researching the Japanese Hawaiian immigrants and Fukushima. Iwane, who was born in Tokyo, does not have any personal connections with either locations nor the people. However, what could be found in common with all these people and places are the vibrant energy of lives found under their souls.

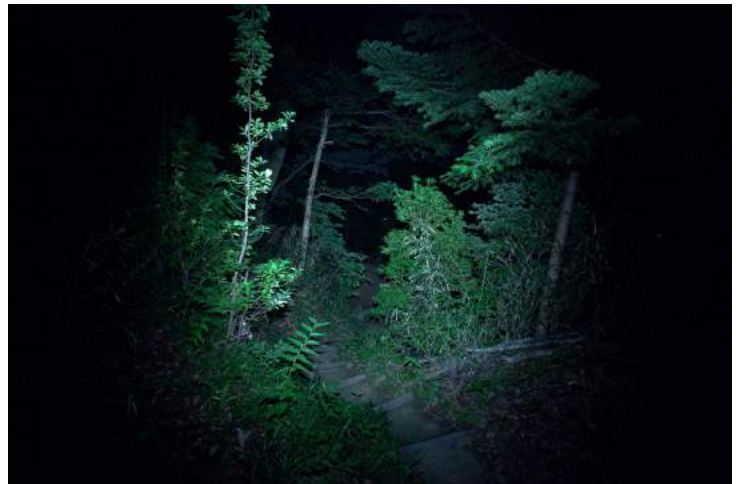
The deep groove of the Fukushima Ondo come and go across the Pacific Ocean, and flow into Iwane's veins. The true communities that Iwane features in her photographs surpass the geographic maps and blood relationships, and expand as a genuine alternative family.

—Shuichi Iketani



Fissure 8, Leinali, Hawaii
2018, archival pigment print

© Ai Iwane, courtesy KANA KAWANISHI GALLERY



Mibaru, Fukushima
2014, archival pigment print

© Ai Iwane, courtesy KANA KAWANISHI GALLERY

■Please contact below for any image enquiries■