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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 3, 2017

### The people have chosen! People's Choice Award Announced for Mālama Wao Akua 2017

*Makawao* – All votes have been counted and the results are in! The winner of the 2017 Mālama Wao Akua People's Choice Award is Maui artist Jupiter Nielsen, who is being recognized for his piece titled *Maui Manu Triptych*. "When I first moved to Hawai'i I loved all the showy tropical species of plants. Through volunteer work and reading books I learned of the subtle beauty of the truly Hawaiian landscape," says Nielsen. "Mālama Wao Akua has been an outlet for my passion since its inception. Folks on Maui don't often get to see their native forest and can think that it's gone. Artists can play an important role in conservation by bringing nature to the masses. It takes all of us helping in some way whether that is working, creating, teaching or supporting financially, and this art show has accomplished that goal!"

Other award winners in 2017 include:

Juror's Choice (Tamara Sherrill) - *When There Were Only 22* by Gabrielle Anderman

Honorable Mention (Tamara Sherrill) - *Koa Leaf necklace* by Christine Cafferata

Juror's Choice (Mike Takemoto) - *Summer Silversword* by Joanne Hopper

Honorable Mention (Mike Takemoto) - *'Alalā Within Us* by Jennifer Valenzuela

Juror's Choice Elementary School - *Jewel of the Forest* by Olena Rodeau

Juror's Choice Middle School - *Profile in Wisdom* –by Kaden Ortiz

Juror's Choice Middle School - *To lana* by Chaz Kaneakua

Juror's Choice High School - *Flora for Fauna* by Sarah Nassar

Conservation at Work - *Higashino Hands* by Bryan Berkowitz

Rarest Find - *Maui Manu Triptych* by Jupiter Nielsen

People's Choice Award - *Maui Manu Triptych* by Jupiter Nielsen

Mālama Wao Akua has been on display since September 15<sup>th</sup> and the artwork will remain in the gallery at Hui No'eu through November 7, 2017. The gallery is open daily from 9am – 4pm with free admission. Mālama Wao Akua is an exhibition presented in collaboration between Hui No'eu and East Maui Watershed Partnership that creatively merges the worlds of art and conservation with works of art that honor Maui Nui's native plant and animal species. A portion of artwork sales benefit Hui No'eu and East Maui Watershed Partnership.

Hui No'eu is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, community-based, visual arts education organization offering open access to quality visual arts instruction by professional teaching artists and arts opportunities through youth and adult art classes, exhibitions, outreach programs, community art events, and more. Founded in 1934, the mission of Hui No'eu is to unlock creativity through exceptional visual arts education and enhance this endeavor through the preservation of the historic Kaluanui estate. The Hui is honored to be celebrating 100 years of its historic Kaluanui estate in 2017. The Hui is open to the public daily from 9am-4pm with free admission.

East Maui Watershed Partnership is committed to protecting our islands fresh water source and native rainforest health. The 100,000 acre East Maui watershed produces over 60 billion gallons of water a year and is home to many rare and endangered species. These watersheds represent our source of water, culture, and biodiversity. From the original idea that started in 1991, there are now 10 similar partnerships across the State of Hawai'i. Learn more at [eastmauiwatershed.org](http://eastmauiwatershed.org) or [hawp.org](http://hawp.org).

**Image:** 2017 Mālama Wao Akua People's Choice Award: *Maui Manu Triptych* by Jupiter Nielsen

**Photo Credit:** Bryan Berkowitz

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For more information about the exhibition, please contact Hui No'eu Exhibitions Coordinator Katie Peterson at [katiep@huinoeau.com](mailto:katiep@huinoeau.com) or call 808.572.6560 x33. Contact East Maui Watershed Partnership for information about community & school group hikes and presentations or for information about the watershed: [pr@eastmauiwatershed.org](http://pr@eastmauiwatershed.org) or call 573-6999.