

HAWAII COUNCIL FOR THE HUMANITIES & HAWAII INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL PRESENT

FILM FOR THOUGHT 2019

CHANGE MAKERS

AKICITA: THE BATTLE OF STANDING ROCK | CHANGING THE GAME | FOR SAMA

GEOGRAPHIES OF KINSHIP | MAUNA KEA: THROUGH THE KIA'I LENS | WE ARE THE RADICAL MONARCHS

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FILM FOR THOUGHT 2019: CHANGE MAKERS

Change Makers. Shannon Cristobal and I, at Hawai'i Council for the Humanities, felt very lucky to work with the thoughtful team at HIFF to bring together some reflection around such a critical and energizing theme. I would describe our six essayists as scholars, definitely, but also as community leaders, teachers, *mākua* (in a parent role), guardians, farmers, artists, storytellers, activists: change makers. Their reflections contain insight, struggle, personal experience, genuine questions, and their own commitment to the work of changing our world.

How do we make change?

I am the executive director at our nonprofit, Hawai'i Council for the Humanities. In my previous work, I identified proudly as an activist and community organizer. Our nonprofit is not an activist or advocacy organization. Hawai'i Council for the Humanities does not support a particular political person or platform, or advocate for one right answer, yet we are equally dedicated to connecting people with ideas that enrich lives, broaden perspectives, and strengthen communities. In other words, we are all about making change.

We are really interested in the *how* of change. For us, the *how* is the humanities. We center our histories, cultures, philosophies, literatures, languages, and values. We commit to a process characterized by asking for diverse perspectives, listening with an open mind and heart, pushing further into what might be uncomfortable or complicated, and reaching for connection.

In conversations with our dedicated staff at Hawai'i Council for the Humanities, we talk about (as a colleague and friend at Oregon Humanities puts it) "questions more than answers." Some of our important questions are: how can we create experiences that expose or challenge our thinking or deep beliefs? How can we create experiences that connect us with who we are and our roles in our communities? How can we go deeper than we normally go? Whose voices are missing? How does sharing and listening together lead to transformation?

The filmmakers in this Change Makers program ask us to listen close and dig into complex and difficult histories and contexts. As the historian, musician, and Hawaiian activist George Jarrett Helm Jr. would say repeatedly: "do your homework." The real people in these films inspire us to be courageous. How *in* are we? How willing are we to grow and change in and for the sake of the new worlds we are making? The writers of these essays remind us to be authentic to our own perspectives. The power of our unique voice is in honesty, when we speak with care from who we are and all we have been given. I invite you to add your voice to this conversation.

How do we make change? Together, when we connect one story to another—trans youth athletes to Standing Rock to Syria to radical girls of color to Mauna Kea to Korean adoptees. To me, to you. This offering is for us, in the hope and trust that the more we connect, listen, learn, the more we can change.

Sincerely,

AIKO YAMASHIRO

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Hawai'i Council for the Humanities

AKICITA: THE BATTLE OF STANDING ROCK



HAWAI'I PREMIERE

UNITED STATES 2019 | ENGLISH | 123M

12-NOV 7:30 PM DOL

15-NOV 3:15 PM DOL

23-NOV 2:30 PM PAL

SYNOPSIS

"We were not strangers to Standing Rock," Pua Case (Kanaka Maoli) reminds us when she arrived at Standing Rock in September 2016 in support of fellow water protectors, the Lakota Sioux. Captured on camera by director Cody Lucich (Maidu), her coming, as well as the coming of other indigenous peoples from all over the world to what was the largest indigenous occupation in America since Wounded Knee, reveals a growing indigenous resistance in the face of environmental degradation and impending climate change.

As we follow Lucich's lens through the camp, discovering the inner workings of organized protest, their leaders share their experiences, thoughts, and emotions, inviting us around a virtual campfire and helping us realize that indigenous oral history traditions, translated into cinema, are every bit as instrumental as the direct actions conducted on Standing Rock. But Kanahus Manuel (Secwepemc/Ktunaxa) also reminds us that the camera doesn't capture everything: "you have to be there," challenging us to go one step further and act upon the lessons of the film, just as indigenous people do every day. Akicita (Ah-Kee-Chee-Tah) is the Lakota Sioux word for warrior, and this film reminds us of their legacy. "They don't stop. They never stop," says Nataani Means (Oglala Sioux), "that's why they call it a movement."

DIRECTOR	Cody Lucich
SCREENWRITER	Cody Lucich
PRODUCERS	Gingger Shankar, Heather Rae
CINEMATOGRAPHER	Cody Lucich

THOUGHTS

'O wai 'oe? Who are you? Who is your water?

These questions silently amplified as I dove deeper into the frontlines of Standing Rock in North Dakota through Cody Lucich's film, *AKICITA: THE BATTLE OF STANDING ROCK*. This film highlights overlapping and growing intersections between Indigenous rights, clean water, humanity, heart, courage, tradition, family, broken promises, authorized violence, environmental degradation, and future (resources for us all). Lucich transports you to the frontlines as water protectors douse you in realities rarely shared onscreen. Here, "freedom fighters," guided by their ancestral warrior spirits, held the frontlines at Standing Rock. It was a generation's moment to take a stand to protect their water from the potential of irreversible damage—oil spills into clean drinking water that flow from the black snake—the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL). The words of Sioux elder, Ladonna Allard, remind viewers that in her generation, water fed her as a child. A genuine and humble ask to remember: that water is life.

Moment by moment, viewers are given a perspective of how it felt to be on the frontlines as the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL) approached the camp where hundreds of thousands gathered with the Standing Rock Sioux. In these first minutes of the film I was pulled to memories of my own experiences at the frontlines on Mauna Kea on July 17, 2019. Beads of water falling from my eyes as my heart raced into the screen. Armed black uniforms greeting unarmed humans with rubber bullets, tear gas, and pepper spray along the Missouri River. Across Pu'u Huluhulu, our precious kūpuna taking their seats along a dark road leading to our sacred morning. Eyes closed holding tears back. Heavy rains beat like drums on Papa. The chants as I open my eyes, "Mni wiconi. Water is life." Tears flowing. The sounds of cries, screams, and calls from Standing Rock begging us to remember our humanity. I saw reflections of us in each other. I cried, asking Spirit, "Is this what people see when they read about us, the kia'i holding the lines for Mauna Kea from the Thirty Meter Telescope?"

‘O wai ‘oe? Who are you?

Water connects us all. Knowing the origin of our water brings connection to place regardless of origin or descent. Knowing the origin of our water also brings a responsibility to care for the life that gives us life. The range of emotions that flood through mind, heart, and spirit when you stand face-to-face with armed officers, ready to give up your life—standing for water, who gives life to us all. Standing on grounds solidified by trust and love, the water protectors welcome you to the frontlines where realities of love, struggle, foresight, violence, divide, trust, and commitment are grown, transformed, sealed, and buried. We grow connections woven through prayer, action, and ceremony, and they will continue to unfold worldwide as Indigenous peoples, comrades, allies, protectors of the earth say, “no more.”

Uncensored, Indigenous-centered, water-conscious, Lucich’s stand for clean water is one that calls us all to answer the question: ‘o wai ‘oe?

LOKE ALOUA

Po’o of Malu ‘Āina Center for Nonviolent Education and Action
Po’o of Hui Kaloko-Honokōhau

***Loke Aloua** is an Kanaka ‘Ōiwi from Hawai‘i Island dedicated to protecting the waters of Kaloko, Honokōhau, Mauna Kea, Pōhakuloa, and Ola‘a. She received her B.A. in Anthropology from the University of Hawai‘i at Hilo and M.A. in Archaeology from Simon Fraser University.*

CHANGING THE GAME



HAWAI'I PREMIERE
UNITED STATES 2019 | ENGLISH | 95M

15-NOV 5:45 PM DOL
16-NOV 11:00 AM DOL

SYNOPSIS

In sports, everyone says you have to “play fair.” But what is fair for everyone when it comes to trans athletes competing in gender segregated sports? Michel Barnett poses this question in his riveting documentary *CHANGING THE GAME*. His film captures the stories of Mack Beggs, a transgender male from Texas who has to compete in girls’ wrestling due to the in-state rules, Andraya Yearwood, a transgender female from Connecticut fighting for her place in the women’s track team, and Sarah Rose Huckman, a transgender female skier from New Hampshire who is helping shape state policy defending LGBTQI rights. For these young trailblazers, being an athlete is as much a part of their identity as their gender expression. But they are also teenagers who just want to grow up and live their lives the way they would wish to.

“Marked by a thoughtful, non-dogmatic point of view and by the presence of several engaging characters, the pic should reach beyond LGBTQ film festivals to become part of the larger social conversation about these timely and pertinent issues.” —*HOLLYWOOD REPORTER*

DIRECTOR	Michael Barnett
SCREENWRITERS	Michael Barnett, Michael Mahaffie, Amanda Griffin
PRODUCER	Clare Tucker
CINEMATOGRAPHER	Michael Barnett

THOUGHTS

"[L]aughter emerges in the realization that all along, the original was derived."

—*Judith Butler*

CHANGING THE GAME (Dir. Michael Barnett, 2019) is a powerful documentary that follows the lives of three teenage athletes—Mack Beggs, Sarah Rose Huckman, and Andraya Yearwood—and the people, institutions, and communities they meet through the courses of their high-school athletic careers. As the film unfolds, we become witness to these lives in pulses: intense hours of training. Bright afternoons with friends. Conversations: Boys, Girls. Situations: Fair, Not fair. Dysphoria. Suicidality. Perspective. Ongoingness.

And so we watch. We meet Texas. New Hampshire. Connecticut. We meet Grandma B, self-described hardcore conservative Southern Baptist. We meet coach: terse, honest. We meet proper liberalism. Trans-exclusionary feminism. Broadcasted bigotry, passed off as Op-Ed news. We watch, as Mack, Sarah, and Andraya receive the frustrations, fear, and hatred of a patriarchal society conditioned to extinguish the monstrous, the queer, the magical—which, in this case, includes beings who refuse the idea that genitalia is the primary determinant of the expression and potential of a life. We watch, as the lives of these three teens are buoyed by love.

As transgender athletes who participate and excel in athletics, Mack, Sarah, and Andraya are thrust onto center stage in conversations about gender and participation in sports. In some ways, this conversation is not new; highly successful Olympic athletes have historically come under scrutiny, often for their "overly masculine" appearance, since at least 1932. Moreover, as early as the 1970s, professional athletes have been excluded from participation, often citing trans athletes' advantage over their cis counterparts—though after the 1972 passage of Title IX, trans athletes have been able to sue their respective organizations for the right to participate. Today, similar concerns about unfair advantages of transwomen, often related to hormone levels, remain. And, the International Olympic Committee professional sports organizations, and the National Collegiate Athletic Association reserve the rights to test and/or govern athletes' hormone levels on a case-by-case basis, and often based on appearance.

High school athletics do not have a national (or, in the case of the Olympics, international) governing board. This forces individual states, counties, and schools, to define policy around transgender participation in sports. In certain areas in the U.S., conservative politics have resulted in exclusionary policies, requiring hormone therapy, surgery, and gender marker changes prior to participation. Moreover, athletics can take a central role in youths' lives throughout high school, and this role can also change drastically after high school is over. In this context, what rights do associations have to minors' bodies and what pressure might youth feel to make decisions about athletic participation that will have lifelong impacts?

There are big and small questions that athletic association boards will have to answer. One of the most generous things about this film, to me, is that it doesn't get caught in the agenda of answering them. Rather, through the rhythms it builds, the film holds open questions for the audience that Mack, Sarah, and Andraya ask, through their existence. These questions reverberate, collide—and settle, bidding answers of whose lives are valued in this game of life, and how.

In the lingering brilliance and shadows of the pulses of the film, my habits of intellect keep me threading thoughts about the trappings of systems that undergird and direct the fact that some bodies, and not others, must fight for a right to exist. And/but mostly, I am left, broken open. Encountering the nettings of the heart. Struck, having witnessed humans being undone by one another. And so, *CHANGING THE GAME* changes me, in the way that every person brave enough to be themselves in this world changes me: amplifying my own bravery, grounding my trust in the resilience of good things. Humbled, having been given the gift of this life.

ADHANN IWASHITA

Independent Scholar

Adhann Iwashita is a queer trans/gnc post-high school (and college intramural!!) athlete-poet who finds home in ka 'āina, ke ao, and other forms of love. He/they enjoy(s) hard work and deep friendship. Adhann matriculated from Columbia University/Teachers College with a Ph.D. in Applied Anthropology in 2017.

FOR SAMA



HAWAII PREMIERE

UNITED STATES 2019 | ARABIC WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES | 96M

16-NOV 5:30 PM DOL

17-NOV 3:45 PM DOL

SYNOPSIS

The tireless and endless Syrian conflict is well documented on the news, as well as in film — Among them Feras Fayyad's *LAST MEN IN ALEPPO*, Evgeny Afineevsky's *CRIES FROM SYRIA*, Matthew Heineman's *CITY OF GHOSTS*, Talal Derki's *THE RETURN TO HOMS* and Sebastian Junger's *HELL ON EARTH*, as well as the Oscar-winning short doc *THE WHITE HELMETS* among others. But *FOR SAMA*, from directors Waad al-Kateab and Edward Watts, puts the children at its center, and the courage of one woman whose mission was to chronicle this humanitarian crisis from the ground level at any cost.

The documentary unspools Waad al-Kateab's life through five years of the uprising in Aleppo, Syria as she falls in love, gets married and gives birth to Sama, all while conflict rises around her. As the title says, for one child in particular: Sama, the young daughter of al-Kateab and her husband Hamza, a doctor who ended up running the only one of the nine hospitals in East Aleppo that wasn't bombed in Russian airstrikes. In many ways, *FOR SAMA* is a time capsule for a future adult Sama, as an attempt to explain why al-Kateab and her husband stayed in Aleppo under the Assad regime. However, it is not unwavering, as the years of bombing and death take a toll on Sama's parents, as they question whether love of country is reason enough to risk death?

An intimate and epic journey into the female experience of war, *FOR SAMA* won the Documentary Feature Prize at this year's SXSW, where it world premiered, and touched audiences a few months later as an official selection of the Cannes Film Festival.

DIRECTORS	Waad Al-Kateab, Edward Watts
SCREENWRITER	Waad Al-Kateab
PRODUCER	Waad Al-Kateab
CINEMATOGRAPHER	Waad Al-Kateab

THOUGHTS

FOR SAMA communicates the impossible cruelty of a war where the most vulnerable people—children, women, the sick, the elderly—were not merely casualties of this conflict, but were in fact its primary targets. Many viewers in the US and Hawai'i will have almost no frame of reference for understanding the events portrayed in this film, nor the privileged position that allows the cruelty and sadism of war to remain merely concepts, rather than the reality of daily life. By showing that so many victims were children, the documentary shatters the Western fantasy of childhood innocence, forcing us to take seriously that there is nothing sacred or off limits in the moral depravity of warfare today. Those who survived did not do so because they were good people, or because they had resources, support, or allyship. Survival simply came from the barest and most random of chance, and where geopolitics found it more convenient to allow for escape rather than pursue annihilation.

At the time of the military siege from 2012 to 2016, international media regularly covered these civilian deaths, as well as the use of chemical weapons and barrel bombs, and of course, the Syrian "refugee crisis" in Europe. These images of catastrophe convinced many that there was nothing that could be done, while little coverage was given to those Syrians who decided to stay in Aleppo. FOR SAMA reveals the possibility of making a life—and even new lives—among such conditions, and in a place now mostly known internationally for devastation and destruction. What is documented in such a remarkable way in this film is the resolve of a handful of people in providing refuge for thousands of others. The force of life so evident in the film's tender moments, and in the midst of the most profound violence, shows us that those who Waad encounters are more than the helpless victims of humanitarian concern. The people whose lives are portrayed in this film bear the true weight of horror, but lose none of their humanity in their struggle to be there for each other when they were targeted by their state, and abandoned by the international community.

Rather than merely pity those who did not survive the war, or celebrate those for whom good fortune and resolve made them heroes, this film compels us to consider what responsibilities the international community has to the 11 million internally and externally displaced Syrian refugees seeking protection from this catastrophe. When claims are made in European and US media about the practical limits of accepting refugees, and when decisions about future refugee policies are framed in terms of charity and generosity, the stories contained in FOR SAMA should also be considered in the context of international obligations to respond to genocide, rather than only a question of good will.

NICOLE SUNDAY GROVE

Department of Political Science, University of Hawai'i-Mānoa

Nicole Grove is Assistant Professor of Political Science at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, with affiliations in the Department of Women's Studies, the Hawai'i Research Center for Futures Studies, and the International Cultural Studies Program. Her research considers the intersections of international relations and transnational Middle East politics.

GEOGRAPHIES OF KINSHIP



HAWAI'I PREMIERE

UNITED STATES 2019 | ENGLISH, KOREAN, SWEDISH WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES | 82M

10-NOV 2:15 PM DOL

11-NOV 4:00 PM DOL

SYNOPSIS

In this powerful tale about the rise of Korea's global adoption program, four adult adoptees return to their country of birth and reconnect with their roots, mapping the geographies of kinship that bind them to a homeland they never knew. Along the way there are discoveries and dead ends, as well as mysteries that will never be unraveled.

Ultimately what emerges is a deepened sense of self and belonging, as well as a sense of purpose, as GEOGRAPHIES OF KINSHIP'S four protagonists question the policies and practices that led South Korea to become the largest "sending country" in the world—with 200,000 children adopted out to North America, Europe and Australia. Emboldened by their own experiences and what they have learned, these courageous characters become advocates for birth family and adoptee rights, support for single mothers, and historical reckoning.

Emmy Award-winning documentarian Deann Borshay Liem, internationally known for her landmark adoption films *FIRST PERSON PLURAL* and *IN THE MATTER OF CHA JUNG HEE*, explores the complexities of post-war adoption programs that have been in existence for over half a century. The Korean adoption experience and subsequent diaspora have transformed not only how adoption is practiced worldwide, but also how kinship, identity and race are perceived and contested.

DIRECTOR	Deann Liem
SCREENWRITER	Deann Liem
PRODUCER	Deann Liem
CINEMATOGRAPHER	Michael Chin

THOUGHTS

GEOGRAPHIES OF KINSHIP, like Deann Borshay Liem's previous work MEMORY OF FORGOTTEN WAR, is a powerful rumination on the concepts of reunion (re-union) and remembering (re-membering). The film traces the journeys of diasporic Korean adults who visit the Korean peninsula seeking a connection to family, place, and ultimately themselves while navigating the complicated legacies of colonization and war. As adult transnational adoptees raised in the U.S. or Europe pursue answers about their origins, the legal-structural-language-distance-time barriers to reunion and bodily remembering often seem insurmountable. From the 1950s to today an estimated 200,000 South Korean children have been sent to be raised by primarily White families in foreign countries. This is a worldwide first in many ways, and a phenomenon that cannot be reduced to the individual goodwill of prospective parents or economic standards of supply and demand. Many of these children had living parents. Many were removed from Korea under false identity documentation. Most spend the majority of their lives with little to no contact with their geography, language, and family of origin.

Adoption stories are often presented as heartwarming human-interest pieces about the joy of receiving a child or the rare successful reunion with a birth family. Liem, to her merit, does her subjects justice by not snipping their memoirs away from their civic and national contexts. Instead, she presents a rampagous bouquet with roots, stems, and all—foreign military occupation, myths of ethnic purity, the collateral damage of aggressive economic growth, U.S. structures of race and empire. With a raw display of trust the film invites viewers to gently hold its intimate tragedies and engage thoughtfully with their underlying causes, as it seamlessly weaves historical footage with contemporary interviews. We see grainy reels of friendly U.S. soldiers holding both combat gear and Korean children (whose relatives they may have unwittingly fought). We follow a mixed-race woman into a government office seeking any documentation that she existed there, once. Complex scenes challenge us to interrogate U.S. prerogatives in foreign conflicts, our respective societies' aspirations about creating nuclear families (going so far as to export/import children) while simultaneously censuring divergent family formations (single mothers, extended family care) and regulating women's sexuality, and policing identity by pureness of blood. Who and what do these policies and values serve? What happens to these bodies and lives?

Against this damning indictment of a nation-state's failure to guard and care for its most vulnerable members, the truest revelation of *GEOGRAPHIES* is how these grown adoptees engage with their experiences of myriad loss and its attendant amorphous grief. How can adoptees, parents, siblings, grandparents imagine reunion when they have spent a lifetime unable to name or see what they miss? What might they create in its void? What emerges from this stunning account of wrongs is an evocative portrait of resilience, agency, and regeneration.

In their interviews, several individuals describe a longstanding numbness and rote performance in their adoptive lives that were broken by moments of personal clarity. These moments came from actively nurturing parts of themselves they understood to be true—such as learning Korean language, checking the family mailbox for correspondence, focusing on education. They gained agency while, and despite, living as involuntary subjects of powerful geopolitical forces. And even to the dismay of loved ones, they began to make decisions that ran counter to these forces. All four adoptees take on the work to change larger legal and social structural barriers, and strikingly, their efforts ripple out to impact their original families and broader communities.

These change makers present clear examples of seeking meaning on one's own terms, of how we might develop a painful understanding of our place in the world and then challenge it by envisioning a better one.

For Korean adoptees, what does this better world require? Recognition, legal rights, access to resources, access to each other? An apology? As we reflect on our own journeys, absences, and agency, the film gently leaves us with the affirmation that loss and grief are experiences our bodies concretely feel and re-member in relationship to real places and people—and so are joy and connection. How do we engage our bodies' histories as we address our future?

"I had finally found the place where I had touched the earth before."

– Estelle

CJ KEE

Honolulu, Oakland, Minneapolis, and Ulleungdo

CJ KEE is an adoptee based in Honolulu, Hawai'i and feels exhilarated by sleek waves, moving insights, and delicious meals. Many ideas expressed in this essay are based on research and work by scholars and activists involved with transnational adoptee communities, which continue to create knowledge and change.

MAUNA KEA: THROUGH THE KIA'I LENS



SPECIAL SCREENING

UNITED STATES 2019 | ENGLISH, HAWAIIAN | 60M

9-NOV 6:15 PM DOL

11-NOV 1:00 PM DOL

23-NOV 12:30 PM PAL

SYNOPSIS

FREE to the public, this special program presented by the Hawai'i Council for the Humanities presents films that capture the zeitgeist defining 'Kapu Aloha' movement happening on top of Mauna Kea and the fight to block the controversial Thirty Meter Telescope (TMT) project from breaking ground. To kia'i protectors and their supporters, Mauna Kea is sacred land, and TMT is seen as an extension of post-colonial encroachment. To TMT proponents, this is a movement against science and innovation.

This short film program will consist of the following documentaries: Jalena Keane-Lee's *STANDING ABOVE THE CLOUDS* follows Native Hawaiian mother-daughter activists at the forefront of the movement. Award-winning filmmaker (HIFF37's Best Made in Hawai'i Film for OUT OF STATE) and Sundance Native Lab fellow Ciara Lacy's *THIS IS THE WAY WE RISE* is an exploration into the creative process, following Dr. Jamaica Heolimeleikalani Osorio as her calling to protect Mauna Kea inspires her work as a poet.

The rest of the program will involve videos that have been shared online during the summer, as well as works that will be produced especially for this program (TBA). The film screening will be followed by an extended Q&A with filmmakers and key activists.

—Anderson Le

DIRECTORS

Ciara Lacy, Jalena Keane-Lee, Mikey Inouye

THOUGHTS

At the Pu'uhonua o Pu'uhuluhulu and at the Mauna Kea Access Road, there are two simultaneous battles taking place. One is the physical battle to hold space and block the only road to the summit of the mountain, an effort that began on July 12, 2019. Thirty-eight arrests later, the TMT is now four months behind schedule to begin construction as protectors and a human blockade of elders have refused to yield the road. The success of this stronghold has in no small part been due to the other battle waging simultaneous to the occupation of the Mauna by protectors—and that is the battle of the story.

This battle is one of optics, of framing, of ideas, and ultimately of truth. It is waged through photos, film, op-eds, press conferences, memes, advertisements, poetry, and music. It is just as much a David and Goliath scenario as the kia'i sitting peacefully on a road against the largest coordinated state law enforcement effort in Hawai'i's history. On one side are professional marketing firms, university and state communications directors, the Governor's social media platforms, and half-million-dollar advertising budgets, all in symphony to convince the public that the TMT is good for Hawai'i and that the protectors are lawless and irrational. On the other side is a network of professional, semi-professional, and grassroots media makers equipped with cameras, portable wi-fi, and battery packs. This is Nā Leo Kāko'o, the Mauna media team that I help coordinate and liaison between other Mauna Kea leadership. The majority of the team are Kānaka Maoli who spend our lives advancing the broader Hawaiian movement and social justice. We are as invested in the protection of Mauna Kea as the kūpuna on the frontline and give all we've got to help create the visions and stories we need to find victory.

The Mauna media team has been working to interrupt the State's story-making of Hawaiians as angry, violent, unwilling to share, and uncompromising. These are narratives that have been recycled throughout our history by foreigners who wish to benefit from the theft of our lands. We are now telling stories for us on our terms. Collectively, they convey a historic transformation of our people.

When we shyly step into the access road during ceremony to figure out the hula that dances our cosmogonic relationship to the mountain, this is not a story of performance, but of purpose and function. When we turn in wonder and recognition to the sounds of Nēnē and 'Amakihi at sunrise and to the sight of 'Ōpe'ape'a fluttering overhead as the day turns to night, this is not a story of a day trip to the Bishop Museum or bird sanctuary, but of re-acquainting ourselves with long-lost relatives. When Pacific Islands nation representatives arrive at the kupuna line with songs and gifts of Oceanic lands, this is not a story of "cultural exchange," but one of restored diplomatic traditions. When professors, farmers, lawyers, and poets teach classes at our makeshift lava-field university, this is not about grades or publications, but a story of feeding our nation's growing thirst for knowledge.

These are stories of reconnection and becoming and each one emerges at our frontline. I am not speaking metaphorically here. We are refusing access to machines of mass destruction, and these forms of connection are the means by which we are holding that space on an access road, in a parking lot, in the middle of a lava field on a mountain. Our living culture has become our most powerful line of defense. This is the story we aim our cameras at. Can you see us winning?

'ILIMA LONG

Phd Student In Indigenous Politics, University Of Hawai'i-Mānoa

'Ilima Long is a member of HULI, the Hawai'i Unity and Liberation Institute, which provides non-violent direct action training and support for Hawaiian issues. She serves the movement to protect Mauna Kea as the media coordinator for the Mauna media team, Nā Leo Kāko'o. She is learning as she goes!

WE ARE THE RADICAL MONARCHS



HAWAII PREMIERE

UNITED STATES 2019 | ENGLISH | 97M

13-NOV 6:15 PM DOL

17-NOV 1:30 PM DOL

24-NOV 1:00 PM WAI

SYNOPSIS

"Shows that the future is indeed female."

—*Deadline Hollywood*

Winner of the Audience and Jury Awards at the Seattle International Film Festival, as well as the Audience Award at InsideOut Toronto, *WE ARE THE RADICAL MONARCHS*, from director Linda Goldstein Knowlton (*SOMEWHERE BETWEEN*, HIFF 2011), chronicles the founding and growth of the Radical Monarchs, an Oakland-based alternative to the Girl Scouts for young women of color (ages 8-13) at the front lines of social justice and allyship.

A group of tween girls chant into megaphones, marching in the San Francisco Trans March. Fists clenched high, they wear brown berets and vests showcasing colorful badges like "Black Lives Matter" and "Radical Beauty." Meet the Radical Monarchs!

Set in Oakland, a city with a deep history of social justice movements, the film documents the journey of the group as they earn badges for completing units including being an LGBTQ+ ally, preserving the environment, and disability justice. Started by two fierce, queer women of color, we follow them as they face the challenge to grow the organization, both pre- and post the 2016 election. This film, like the Radical Monarchs themselves, centers the experiences of women of color, and will give you hope for the future!

DIRECTOR	Linda Goldstein-Knowlton
PRODUCERS	Katie Flint, Linda Goldstein-Knowlton
CINEMATOGRAPHER	Clare Major

THOUGHTS

WE ARE THE RADICAL MONARCHS is a film centered on young girls of color, their brilliance, and how much we all need them because this world needs some serious fixing. In the social justice film work I have done for the past eight years, I have learned a lot about our stark reality. Latina girls graduate from high school at lower rates than other groups. Black girls are seen as more adult and therefore in need of less protection than White girls. Less funding is allocated to programs for girls of color compared to programs for boys. Discrimination and marginalization are normal experiences for girls of color. When I ask the young women I work with in Hawai'i what issues affect them, they say things like: cultural prejudices and stereotypes, pressure to be light-skinned, not been taken seriously, sexual harassment and other violations, body shaming, the pressure of gender norms, and feeling they can't be themselves—and this is just scratching the surface. Once you ask yourself, "What do you do with the information you have?" an activation to change reality becomes imperative. This is what compelled Anayvette Martinez and Marilyn Hollinquest to found the Radical Monarchs in late 2014. They used their knowledge and skills to create a space centered on young girls of color that helps them stay "rooted in their collective power, brilliance, and leadership in order to make the world a more radical place."

Many adults underestimate young people and avoid conversations on issues they are uneasy discussing. In contrast, the Radical Monarchs honor the knowledge and curiosity of their participants, facilitate difficult conversations, and uplift them as the power-full beings they are. A social justice curriculum emerges organically from what the young girls know and what they need to know. Together as Radical Monarchs, they can share knowledge, ask difficult questions, reflect, think through how to respond at the grassroots level, and most of all have fun. They celebrate as badges are earned upon completion of a unit. They meet activists from their communities. They march and demonstrate, and speak in support of bills that matter to them. They are civically active and engaged participants of the body politic. They are living and breathing social justice.

Making this organization possible is no easy job. We witness the hard behind-the-scenes work of the two cofounders, who have to juggle program development and expansion, fundraising, the other jobs they have to make ends meet, and family responsibilities. And as they do, they learn. They learn the importance of being place-based and how long it takes to train new troops, while remaining financially sustainable. They strategize with community allies about how to make Radical Monarchs available to more young women of color. When Marilyn asserts that the revolution must include self-care, it struck a chord with me and I would guess all the rest of the community organizers, activists, members of the nonprofit sector in the audience, and anyone who works grueling hours for a better world.

Ultimately, this is a story about sisterhood as a transformational experience. As one of the Radical Monarchs stated toward the end of the film, the troop has transformed from being a group of strangers to sisters. In fact, sisterhood is also what made Anayvette reach out to Marilyn to co-found the Radical Monarchs. In sisterhood, there is power and comfort. The Radical Monarchs feel they can do the work of world changing because they know they have another sister there standing up for them. I keep hearing that the future is female, but this film convinces me more than ever that the present is female. These young girls of color and their adult allies are making the change, now. They are strong, they are fierce, they found their roles and responsibilities in society and know how to fight for what they believe. Yes, the present is female, and it is a movement, not just a moment.

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