

Featured Artist: Frank McClure

The Unlimited Nature of Carving



Frank McClure is an “Invited Artist” at the Hawai’i Forest Industry Association’s Annual Hawaii’s Woodshow held in Honolulu where he has received a number of awards. In 2007, he received two “First Place” awards, one “Honorable Mention”, as well as the “Artists’ Choice” and “Peoples’ Choice” awards. Two of his three entries, *Milonia* and *Fleurisma*, were purchased by the Hawaii State Foundation on Culture and the Arts.

The forms of nature inspire Frank McClure to create. Living in Hawai’i with access to an abundance of tropical wood, Frank creates amazing sculptural pieces out of what others refer to as “junk”. Using the stumps, roots, and crotches of trees taken down for numerous reasons, Frank transforms them into unique and fluid sculptural forms-- beautiful works of art.

About conceptualizing his work Frank says, “I am very fortunate to be able to start my design process at the tree itself. I believe this opens opportunities to me that might not be otherwise available. Ultimately however, nature herself is the mother of design.”

Frank has lived in Hawai'i since 1969. In 1990, after living on the north shore of Kaua'i for 15 years, he moved to the five acres he now owns on Hawai'i Island, where he built his home.

With a background in construction and years of working on surfboards, Frank embarked on creating his first piece--a seven-foot long model canoe made of Ohia, Mango, Koa, Hau and Kiawe woods in 1992.

In 1994, he had the opportunity to work as a set carpenter on the movie *Waterworld*. The savings from that job allowed him to explore a more creative form of woodworking. Since then, he's been carving forms inspired by nature and winning multiple awards in Hawai'i.

"I began working with wood as a carpenter. However, it was my love of plants, or more specifically, my interest in native Hawaiian plants that exposed me to the spectacular beauty of Hawaii's hardwoods. The skeletal remains of a living tree, what we call wood, is the product of genetic factors and environmental forces. My work is a fusion of the results of my life experiences with those of the tree.

The virtually unlimited nature of carving allows me to give the unique qualities of each tree a larger role in the design process. My current work draws heavily on the tools and skills I used as a youth in the surfboard industry. The flowing organic curves are created with an array of power carving, grinding, and sanding tools. I also have several personally modified tools and specialized chainsaws which aid in the originality of my designs. I have always believed that conventional tools used in unconventional ways can yield new techniques.

I was influenced by several people whose work I've admired, however I am self-taught. In some ways, having no formal art training has allowed me to avoid some of the restraints of convention. I am fortunate to have the opportunity to work with one of the more productive Koa loggers here on the Big Island. The Koa that I use in my work is salvaged from stumps and otherwise unmillable portions of trees from the slopes of Mauna Kea".

Frank's work has been featured in *Architectural Digest*, *Woodworker West*, and *Native Peoples Magazine*.

To view more of Frank's work, you can visit his website at http://web.mac.com/fmclure/Frank_McClure/Home.html