FIVE OAKS MUSEUM

DIS place

DISPLACE MODULE 6:
GROWING COMMUNITY

Community Resilience, Conclusion, and artwork by Palmarin Merges

COMMUNITY RESILIENCE
AND A GROWING LEGACY

PLANTING THE SEEDS

Through the 1900s, Asian-Pacific Islanders in the Pacific Northwest organized into tight-knit communities in response to many obstacles. Japanese immigrants formed social organizations called kenjinkai to help members find jobs, while Chinese immigrants founded business coalitions called Benevolent Associations to protect immigrant workers and advocate for political affairs. Filipinos found solidarity through labor unions and led the legal fight against harsh labor contracts, housing restrictions, and other discriminatory limitations placed on Asian and Pacific Islander groups. Koreans formed large agricultural communities and found lasting connections through religious congregations. These community organizations planted the seeds for many vital connections that are still active today.

> How was forming organizations an important way for Asian-Pacific Islanders to create community ties and to stand up for their rights?

A GROWING POPULATION

As the cost of living rises in Hawai'i, many Asian and Pacific Islander families continue to relocate to the Pacific Northwest. According to a 2018 report by the Coalition of Communities of Color "Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander Communities are the fastest growing community (for whom data is available) in both the US and in Washington County, [Oregon]; they have grown by approximately 60% between 2010 and 2015."

One of the greatest contemporary challenges is the culture shock and feelings of displacement. Dozens of community organizations give those from the islands opportunities to honor their heritage even when separated by over 2,000 miles of ocean.

> How did you react to reading that Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders are the fastest growing community in the US?

> Do you and/or your family participate in a community organization? What is your experience like?

Nā Haumāna O Hawai'i, the Hawaiian student group, in the 2019 graduating class at Pacific University in Oregon. Each student is wearing multiple lei around their necks as is tradition in graduation celebrations back home in Hawai'i.

immigrant a person who comes to live permanently in a foreign country

labor union an organized group of workers who act collectively to protect their working conditions

culture shock confusion and anxiety caused by suddenly experiencing an unfamiliar culture

displacement when something or someone is forced to leave their usual place or home

lei a garland to be worn; often made with flowers with symbolic meanings

CONCLUSION

ʻAʻOHE LOA I KA HANA A KE ALOHA. DISTANCE IS IGNORED BY ALOHA

THE POWER OF COMMUNITY

The stories of Hawaiians in the Pacific Northwest are widely overlooked or misrepresented in textbooks and media. Hawaiians have long contributed to industry, development, culture, politics, and activism that the region continues to benefit from today. Regardless of ethnic group, time period, or region in which they settled, one thing is clear about these communities that have flowed and continue to flow between Hawaiʻi and the Pacific Northwest: the challenges of being displaced from one's home are no match for the power of community through shared resilience, resistance, and determination grounded in cultural identity.

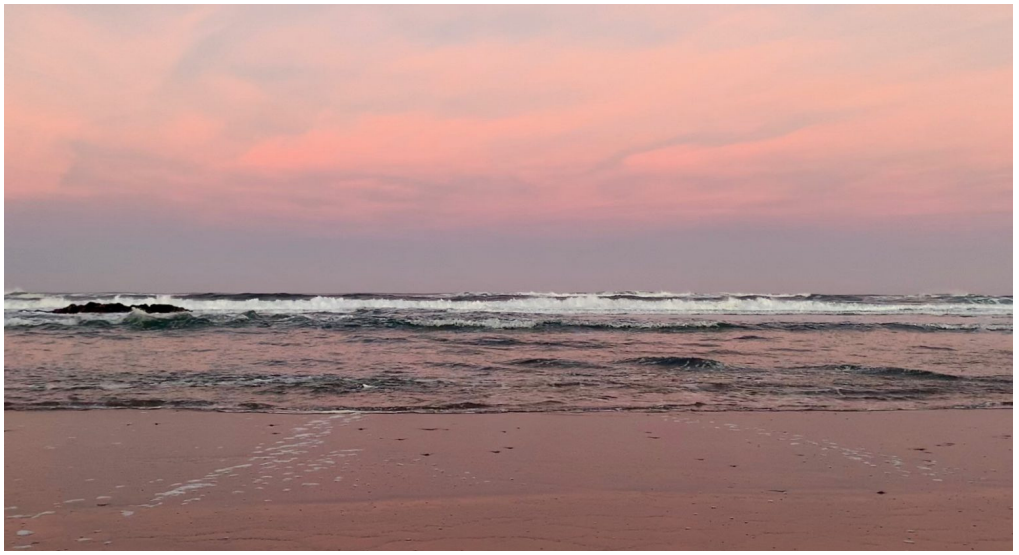
> Do you think it is important to learn about the stories of Hawaiians in the Pacific Northwest? Why or why not?
> Reflect on all of the DISplace modules. How does the DISplace exhibition show the power of community?

DISTANCE IS IGNORED BY ALOHA

If one traveled in a straight line across the ocean from the viewpoint of this image, they would arrive in Hawaiʻi directly from the Oregon Coast.

ʻAʻohe loa i ka hana a ke aloha. Distance is ignored by aloha.

> How would you explain what this saying means in your own words?



Looking directly towards Hawaiʻi from the Oregon Coast.

MAP YOUR LEARNING

> What have you learned about Hawai`i? Think about geography, food, music, language, etc.
> What have you learned about Hawaiians in the Pacific Northwest?
> What would you still like to learn about Hawai`i or Hawaiians in the Pacific Northwest?

Compare your answers to the "Map Your Prior Knowledge" section on the introduction page of **DISplace Module 1: The Ocean is a Bridge** to see how your learning has grown!

misrepresent	to show information in a way that is false or unfair
ethnic group	a group of people with shared culture and ancestry
resilience	the ability to adapt, recover, and carry on from difficult life events
aloha	deep sense of oneness and compassion; from alo (face) and hā (breath)

GROWING IN CIRCLES
WITH ART BY PALMARIN MERGES

LOOK CLOSELY

Take a whole minute to look closely at the artwork by Palmarin Merges.

> What do you see in the image?
> What do the circles look like to you?

ART ACTIVITY

Gather colorful papers and/or fabrics. Use scissors to cut them into small, medium, and large circles.

Arrange the circles in layers on top of one another and test different arrangements until you are happy with it. Then glue each circle onto the one below it. Glue the entire pile of circles onto a piece of white paper. If you would like, embellish the circles with marker.

GROWTH RINGS

Palmarin says about this artwork: "Each passing year is enfolded within its trunk as the tree grows. Tightly grouped lines express slow growth, drought or lack of sunlight; abundance is seen in rings that are broad and wide."

> Where in the artwork do you notice tight and thin rings? Where do you notice broad and wide rings?
> In your own words, how do tree rings represent growth?
> In addition to tree rings, what else might the circles represent?

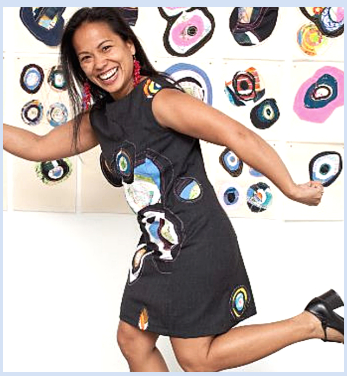
DISPLACE, DISTANCE, AND ALOHA

'A'ohe loa i ka hana a ke aloha. Distance is ignored by aloha.

> After reading about the artist on the right, do you think she would agree with this saying? Why or why not?

contour lines, targets and growth rings by Palmarin Merges

MEET THE ARTIST

Palmarin Merges is a Filipina born in Honolulu, Hawai'i. She moved to the Pacific Northwest in 2005, and now lives in Japan. She takes used materials and playfully transforms them into art to give them a new life.

> If you could meet the artist, what questions would you ask?