

Kona-Based Artist John Ferdico is July's Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park Resident Artist

VOLCANO, HAWAII, US, July 12, 2018 /EINPresswire.com/ -- ISLAND OF HAWAII -- Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park and The National Parks Arts Foundation are proud to announce that John Ferdico, a photographer and installation artist originally from New York, but who for years has called Kailua-Kona his home, will be July's Artist in Residence near the Park which is at the moment closed to the public due to high concentrations of Sulfur Dioxide, explosive ash clouds, ejected rock, and earthquakes at Kilauea's summit that began in March of 2008.



Ferdico will also produce a presentation for visitors and the public at large, on July 20th, 2018 at 10 am, at the Kahuku Unit of the Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park. Directions: Enter the Kahuku unit of Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park on the mauka (uphill) side of Highway 11 near mile marker 70.5. This event is made possible with support from the National Park Service, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Friends of Hawai'i National Park.

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John Ferdico, NPAF artist in residence

Ferdico, a visual artist born in New York, but was raised in Kansas City, where he received his B.A. in Fine Arts from the Kansas City Art Institute. After that, he received his MFA from the San Francisco Art Institute, and lived in Oakland, CA, before moving to Hawai'i in 2012. The Artist takes hyperreal model aircraft, painstakingly builds them, paints them, and then uses them as a launching platform for a surrealist visual experiments that both entrance and estrange. Says Ferdico

about the process: “What I try to do is make each piece appear to be this exquisitely detailed and accurate model, but with this strange marking scheme. I suppose it is a Surrealist strategy, meant to cause the viewer to reconsider the more ordinary elements seen in the juxtapositions.”

Currently, his art process focuses on making multimedia works that mix craft at a high level with a wandering search to make modern devotional objects, that indicate toward but don't spell out, mystery and veneration. Says Ferdico: “I started looking at various folk art forms because there is a remarkable similarity of intent in the making of objects. We make mementos, we make icons that evoke stories and lessons of virtue, we make charms meant to protect us from harm. And that's where the ideas about culture, spirituality, and technology emerge for me. I decided I want to do the same thing artists have always done, but I want to reference of our own culture, reflect the

complications of our modern beliefs, and use the materials of our own era. So I ended up gluing pictures on model airplanes, using the imagery to suggest some surreal camouflage that might transform the object into a likeness of some mythical being.”

For Ferdico, the experience of relocating to Hawai'i has been transformative for his view of the world and his art process: “Having lived in big cities all my life, the move to Hawaii is a strange one, but one I feel so lucky to have blundered into making. What I like most about it may also be what has the biggest impact on my art, and it's a difficult one to reconcile. Moving here I quickly learned Aloha is not a mere greeting, but the incantation of a profound moral philosophy. For me it became an invitation to a calmer, more decent, and more thoughtful life. Aloha elevates compassion and deference above the search for truth, the typical western imperative. Maybe this is because Aloha doesn't seem to aspire to an idealized existence, and maybe that's because the beauty of this environment doesn't cause people to need more. But for an artist for whom art is as much a referendum as an exaltation, and for an artist whose urge to express is mainly by contrariness and dissent, I sometimes feel uncomfortable making art here. Or maybe Aloha has soothed my contrariness and dissent, making me feel less urge to express.”

And because the United States is an infinitely practical place, what is this art useful for? John Ferdico has a preliminary answer: “I have this crazy urge to hang one over my bed so the North Koreans won't nuke Hawaii.”



The Formation (detail), 2013. John Ferdico

NPAF is a 501(c)3 non-profit dedicated to the promotion of the National Parks of the U.S. through creating dynamic opportunities for artworks that are based in our natural and historic heritage. This project is supported by the National Endowment for the Arts, Friends of Hawai_i Volcanoes National Park, and other generous benefactors. All NPAF programs are made possible through the philanthropic support of donors of all sorts ranging from corporate sponsors, small business, and art patrons and citizen-lovers of the Parks. NPAF is always seeking new partners and donors for its wide-ranging artist-in-residence programs.

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