



Celebrating 70 Years 1953 - 2023

A Timeline

In 1946, the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa brought Hester Robinson from Ohio to begin a Weaving Program in the newly formed Art Department. Robinson met experienced weavers in the community as well as those eager to learn more about weaving.

Six of these women formed Hui Mea Hana on July 23, 1953, literally a group of people working with their hands, the forerunner of the Hawai'i Handweavers' Hui. Twenty-seven weavers joined the founding members at this first meeting at the Honolulu YMCA on Hotel Street, now known as the Hawai'i State Art Museum.

From the 1950s to 1990, HHH was based at Foster Gardens where members collaboratively wove on three looms. Members incorporated natural fibers collected from the garden grounds in their weaving, selling them at the Foster Garden Sale. In the 1960s and 1970s, members became interested in basketry and other fiber arts and taught weaving at the University of Hawai'i and cosponsored workshops at the UH Fiber Department with support of State Foundation on Culture and the Arts grants. Members also taught weaving at Bishop Museum's Craft Program until it closed in the 1980s. From 1990 to 2021, the Honolulu Academy of Art School at Linekona (now the Honolulu Museum of Art School) held classes in traditional and contemporary weaving as well as provided a home for the Hui's bimonthly meetings, workshops and biennial exhibitions.

In 2010, a chapter of HHH was started on the Island of Hawai'i bringing together another community of eager weavers and fiber artists.

In 2021 when the Honolulu Museum of Art changed its educational focus, the HHH established a studio in conjunction with the Downtown Art Center in Honolulu's Chinatown. With more than a dozen floor looms, weaving and spinning equipment and supplies, and an extensive library of books on the textile arts, HHH has established itself as an educational center for the textile arts — spinning, weaving, dyeing, basketry, batik, shibori and all manner of crafts related to fiber.

Who We Are

The Hawai'i Handweavers' Hui (HHH) is an active statewide community of weavers and fiber artists with chapters on O'ahu and Hawai'i Island. HHH is a 501(c)3 membership-based organization, founded in 1953, one of the oldest arts organizations in the state of Hawai'i.

HHH's mission is to encourage and promote excellence in handweaving by bringing together weavers, spinners, dyers, fiber artists and educators who share the joy and passion of the fiber arts.

In 2023, HHH celebrates its 70th anniversary with over 150 members. We are an active group that provides public demonstrations at a variety of community events throughout the year. We offer scholarships to those interested in learning the craft of weaving. We sponsor workshops to enhance weavers' knowledge. We have a biennial exhibition that showcases contemporary weaving in Hawai'i. And we have classes at our studio at the Downtown Art Center where we teach a multitude of classes in the fiber arts.

HHH's activities and momentum are the result of volunteers who give of their time and energy to promote the craft that they love. With an extensive mailing list of interested community members, a more active and engaged membership, HHH is continually expanding its presence in the Honolulu community and on the Big Island, collaborating with other arts organizations and craft events.

Handweaving Today

From its beginnings as a necessity to create functional cloth for daily living, handweaving today has transitioned into a contemporary art form. The processes have remained the same throughout history but the product today, functional or not, is inherently a personal statement. Each step, from design through the making of the cloth, is time consuming and requires thought and skill. Each handwoven item tells a story of transformation from raw fiber (such as animal fleece, cotton bolls, silk cocoons) to delicate fiber and art pieces.

HHH has followed this transition from necessity to leisure activity, bringing together a group of enthusiastic and cooperative members who share in the creative future of the textile arts. We embrace the idea that handweaving, a craft of past millennia, will endure for future millennia.