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Visions of Pele, the Hawaiian Volcano Deity **Is a Huge, Once-in-a-Lifetime Exhibit**

The Volcano Art Center staff thought that Pele's appeal to the creativity of artists could not be overestimated. They underestimated her appeal, speculating that as many as 100 paintings would be entered in Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park's competition for a single painting to hang in the Kīlauea Visitor Center after it is renovated. They were wrong. The 140+ outstanding paintings entered on August 11 indisputably proved that Pele lives in the hearts and imaginations of Hawai'i artists.

The park's Kūpuna Committee selected sixty-two paintings from all the entries for inclusion in the *Visions of Pele, the Volcano Deity of Hawai'i* exhibit. They then narrowed the field to thirteen finalists, and ultimately awarded the first place purchase award to Arthur Johnson of Kehena. The thirteen finalist paintings (including the winner) on display at the Volcano Art Center Gallery—along with the other forty-nine paintings chosen by the committee, which are on display at the Volcano House Hotel and Jaggar Museum—make a total of sixty-two stunning *Visions of Pele* at all three sites until September 28. It is surely the most important art exhibit ever assembled in Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park.

If you're on the Big Island, get in a car; and if you're on a neighbor island, get on a plane *before* September 28. Do not miss the opportunity to see this never-to-be-duplicated show of these varied and excellent *Visions of Pele*. Except for the winning painting, most are available for sale. We can guarantee that you'll never be able to choose from a more exciting selection of paintings of Pele.

The Pele painting competition differed from most art competitions in three ways: artists paid no entry fees, there was no time limit on when the paintings had been done, and artists could submit an unlimited number of entries. This opened the field to inspired amateurs as well as to established professional artists. The Kūpuna Committee could not see the artists' signatures and chose paintings from all three ranks.

The finalist paintings by the following artists (listed alphabetically) are on display at the VAC gallery: Marian Berger, Volcano; Inger Gulmala, Volcano; Arthur Johnsen, Kehena; Joseph Kalima, Jr., Hilo; Laka Morton (two entries), Volcano; Walter 'Kukahiko' Pakele, Hilo; Wendi Pa'ahana Roehrig, Kamuela; Philip Sabado, Wailuku; Olga Shevchenko, Honolulu; Clint Sloan, Kailua-Kona; Linda Rowell Stevens, Pāhoa; and Steve Sundram, Kihei.

Everyone involved with the competition acknowledges, and is thankful for, *all* the talent, time, energy, and money expended by every artist who took up the challenge, whether their paintings were selected for display or not. The artist community's volcanic outpouring of homage to Pele is truly indicative of the creativity she continues to inspire.

For further information about the exhibit, Contact the Volcano Art Center Gallery at (808) 967-7565 or visit www.volcanoartcenter.org.

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