



HAWAIIAN.

NOT AMERICAN.

A Film by Kaulani Ceberano

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# SYNOPSIS

*Hawaiian. Not American.* unfolds as a call and response to Dr. Haunani-Kay Trask's 1993 speech. Using found footage and personal narration, the film places the viewer inside one Hawaiian individual's experience of identity, cultural loss, and life in the diaspora. It asks those unfamiliar with Hawai'i to listen before responding.

# ABOUT

*Hawaiian. Not American.* emerged from a process of research, reflection, and response. Built around found footage and text animation, the film was shaped through an ongoing dialogue with Dr. Haunani-Kay Trask's 1993 speech. The edit favors restraint and fragmentation, mirroring the distance of diaspora and the difficulty of translating anger into something legible for an unfamiliar audience. The film exists as a starting point rather than a conclusion, allowing process, limitation, and intention to remain visible.





# DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

*Hawaiian. Not American.* was created as an act of education through personal experience. This film does not speak for all Hawaiians, it is intended to place the viewer in my shoes alone. Others may carry different experiences, this film is meant to portray mine.

The film is structured as a first-person call and response to the writing of Dr. Haunani-Kay Trask. Her work shaped my understanding of identity, cultural loss, and displacement. Engaging with her words forced me to confront my position within the Hawaiian diaspora. I am far from home, but never free from the pressure. The restraint in the film is intentional but uneasy. It reflects the tension between what I felt and what I allowed myself to express.

This project did not fully arrive at the place I first imagined. Much of my anger was softened or withheld. That decision came from external expectations and from my own hesitation. What remains is disappointment. It is quieter but still present. The film observes and explains rather than erupts. In doing so, it exposes how difficult it is to speak honestly about cultural erasure while still being expected to educate.

*Hawaiian. Not American.* exists as a starting point. It asks viewers who seek education to listen first. Identity here is not a concept. It is a lived condition shaped by loss, distance, and memory.

# ABOUT THE DIRECTOR

Kaulani Ceberano is a Native Hawaiian filmmaker whose work spans stop-motion and live-action storytelling. Her films explore identity, memory, and cultural depth through experimental and personal forms of cinematic expression.

She is currently a student at the Rochester Institute of Technology's School of Individualized Study (SOIS), where she is designing a self-directed program focused on the business of film, animation, and media production. Kaulani aims to launch and lead her own animation studio and is building experience to support other artists as a creative consultant.

In 2024, she served as a judge for the Cultural Animation Film Festival (CAFF), a global showcase presented by Twiddle Productions Inc. that celebrates culturally-based animation.

Her work is grounded in lived experience and a commitment to bringing fresh perspectives and imaginative stories to life on screen.





# FAQ

*Hawaiian. Not American.* began conception in March 2025

- The film started as a more narrative-based project around fruit analogies
- It was originally planned to include more stop-motion segments and three puppets were fabricated for it
- Live-action footage was shot but did not make it into the final cut
- The structure shifted to a first-person response to Dr. Haunani-Kay Trask's 1993 speech
- The final edit combines found footage with animated text

## Process Notes

The decision to shift the film came from a desire to step out of my comfort zone and make the most of the footage and materials I had. What began as a more narrative-based project with stop-motion elements evolved into a first-person response to Dr. Haunani-Kay Trask's 1993 speech. At one point, I considered withdrawing from the class, but I was unsure if the film would have been completed if I did. I chose to push through and continue, shaping the project with what was available. This was a personal choice, reflecting what I felt able to share and express throughout the process. While this version represents the work I could do in this moment, I hope to continue developing the film at a later point. Expanding on its ideas and exploring its original narrative ambitions.

## Software Used

After Effects, Premiere Pro, Procreate

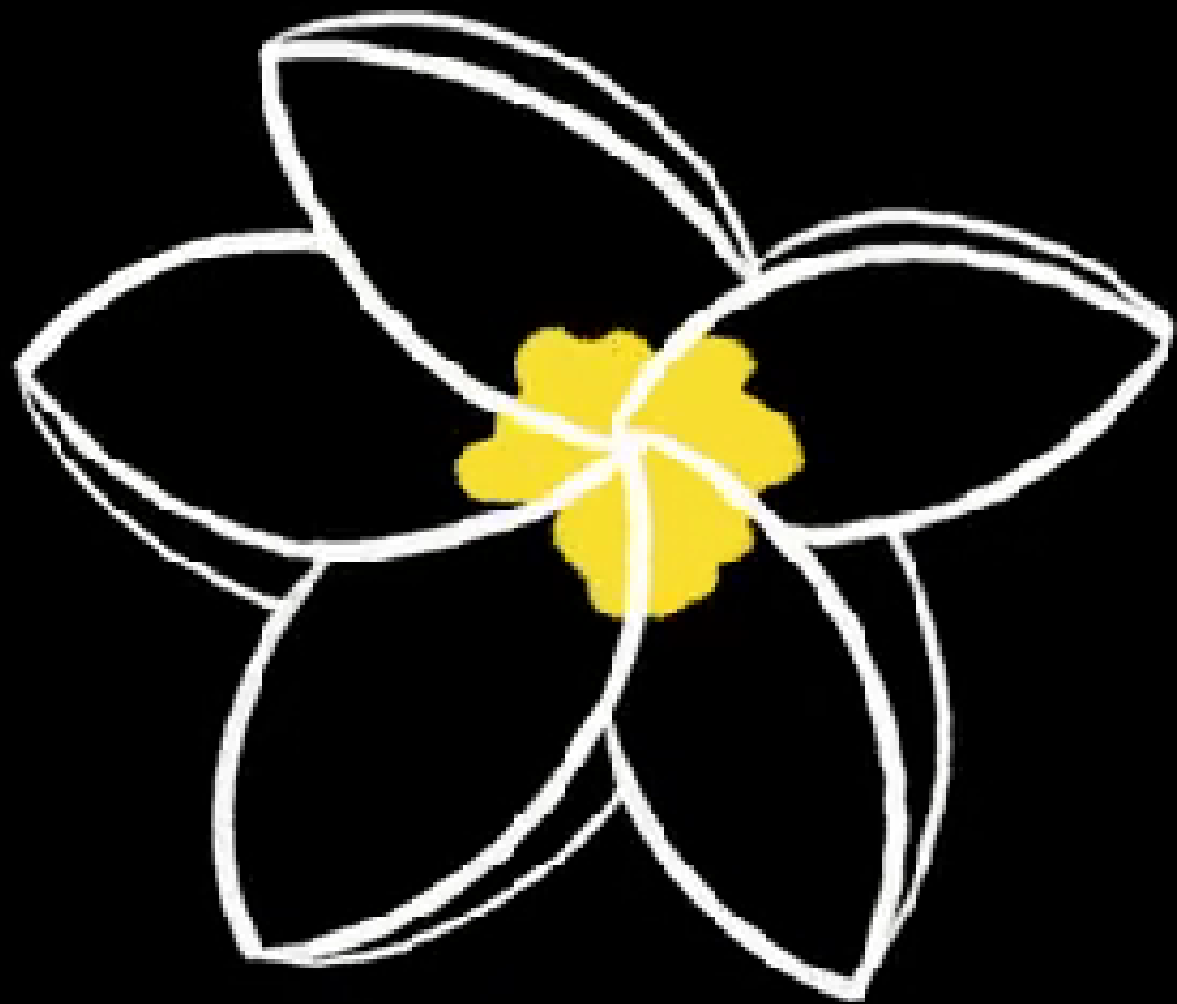




Still of Flip book effect of Hawaiian monarchs and icons

Still of Glitch effect of Dr. Haunani-Kay Trask

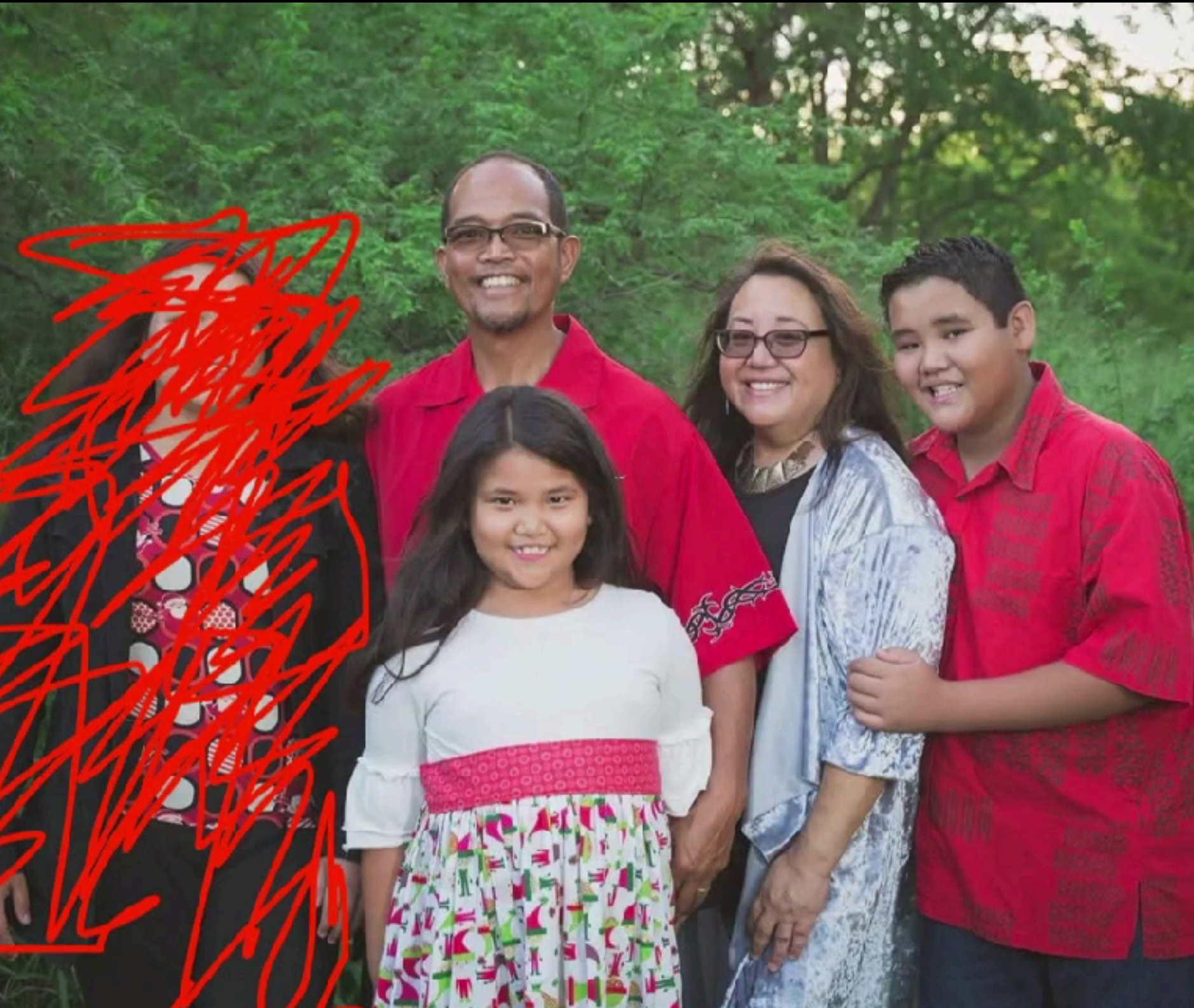
Still of Glitch effect of text



Still of animated gif of a plumeria used in end credits



Still of footage used from Dr. Haunani-Kay Trask's 1993 Address typically referred to as 'We Are Not American'



# CREDITS

Directed by Kaulani Ceberano  
 Produced by Heaven Gebremedhin  
 Sound Leveled by Andrew Breazna  
 Footage from Nā Make o ka 'Āina, Inc

## Special Thanks

Theodore Ignatovsky  
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 Christine Banna

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