

PAPAHĀNAUMOKUĀKEA



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Papahānaumokuākea: Recent Photographs by Wayne Levin Exhibit Opens at First Hawaiian Center

(Honolulu) Famed underwater photographer Wayne Levin's trip to Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument in 2009 was a life-changing experience. Not only did it expose him to the wild and pristine underwater world of the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands, he was struck by the Native Hawaiian cultural features on land and the overall spirituality of the largest conservation area in the U.S.

A three-month long public exhibit, *Papahānaumokuākea: Recent Photographs by Wayne Levin* features work from the photographer's 30-day long expedition to the Monument. Dozens of Levin's spectacular black & white and color photographs from Papahānaumokuākea will be on display at The Contemporary Museum at First Hawaiian Center in downtown Honolulu beginning July 2, 2010 and continuing until October 15, 2010. Sponsored by First Hawaiian Bank, NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries and Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument, the exhibit provides a unique, fascinating and up-close look at life in the Monument through Levin's lens.

Levin has been a professional photographer since the early 1970's. In the early 90's he participated in a book, documenting the misuse, by the U.S. military, and restoration of the Hawaiian Island of Kaho`olawe. In 1995 *Kaho`olawe: Na Leo O Kanaloa* received the Hawaii Book Publishers Association; Hawaii Book of the Year award in 1996. The photographs from this project were exhibited at the Bishop Museum in Honolulu and traveled throughout the Hawaiian Islands over the following two years. An exhibition, *Kaho`olawe: Rebirth of a Sacred Hawaiian Island*, was presented at the Smithsonian Institution in 2002. In 1993 Levin was one of six artists included in the *First Biennial Exhibit* at the Contemporary Museum, in Honolulu. The underwater portraits of his daughter, explored her interaction with the ocean while learning to swim, and further extended his black and white underwater portfolio. Levin's first book of black and white underwater work, *Through a Liquid Mirror*, received the Hawaii Book Publishers Association, Hawaii Book of the Year award in 1997. From 1999 to 2001, Levin traveled throughout the United States and Japan photographing aquariums. His objective was to investigate the phenomena of society creating hi-tech mini oceans as the world ocean became increasingly endangered. This project led to the book, *Other Oceans*, published by *University of Hawaii Press* in 2001. Levin's photographs have been exhibited nationally and internationally. In recent years Levin has continued to focus on depicting the underwater world in black and white. Levin's work from Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument will be among the photographs in a coffee table book; Inger Tully, Curator of Exhibitions for The Contemporary Museum and the organizer of *Papahānaumokuākea: Recent Photographs by Wayne Levin*; said, "We are delighted to have these outstanding photographs on display, depicting a region of Hawai'i that few people are able to visit. In conjunction with the exhibit we have produced a catalog showing many of the images on display at First Hawaiian Center." *Papahānaumokuākea*, set for release in 2011.

Papahānaumokuākea is cooperatively managed to ensure ecological integrity and achieve strong, long-term protection and perpetuation of Northwestern Hawaiian Island ecosystems, Native Hawaiian culture, and heritage resources for current and future generations. Three co-trustees – the Department of Commerce, Department of the Interior, and State of Hawai‘i – joined by the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, protect this special place, which is now being considered for inscription as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. For more information, please visit www.papahanaumokuakea.gov

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