



"Kane of Kaua'i"
— oil and graphite
on canvas,
49.5" x 50",
2006, by
artist
Mac James.

Running rampant through nature

BY KEYA KEITA

Mac James wakes every morning with a humble gratitude for the natural beauty of Kaua'i. But the path that led the artist to his Anahola home has been a circuitous one, weaving through the world of art, entertainment and the urban machine.

The results of his eclectic journey are currently on display at Hanapepe's TimeSpace Gallery. The Mac James exhibit, his first on the island, runs through March 23 and is the first in a series of single-artist shows at the gallery.

James spent his childhood playing in the tall grasses of Florida's Gulf Coast but memories of sand and sun soon faded as his work as an illustrator was maximized by the 1970s rock 'n' roll industry of Los Angeles. He drew and designed album covers for such mega stars as Michael Jackson and Fleetwood Mac.

"In 1985 I just put it all down and decided it was time to become a fine artist," says James. "I took a year to paint and from that point on, I never looked back."

Throughout the 1990s, James worked in the urban environment where pop culture and "the urban crawl" informed his canvas with ironic humor. Yet while the metropolis marched on around him, the nature of his youth began to resurface, and after a short visit to Kaua'i with family he pulled up the anchor and arrived on island, rich with liberation and relief.

"I came with nothing, only a knowledge that I needed to be here," James says.

Inspired and influenced by his immediate environment, James' life on Kaua'i is the primary focus of his current art. Working for Silver Falls Ranch as a horse wrangler and emergency equine assistant has ushered in a wealth of animal imagery in his work. The diversity of his life experiences echoes in James' process — while raw nature serves as content and subject, the form is infused with a contemporary structure. This combination, James says, "allows nature to run rampant through my work on its own."

It has been an evolution in not only his work but also in his life. From sharks to shells, palms to ponies, James responds to his environment by honoring it through the lens of his own unique vision.

TimeSpace Gallery is located on the corner of Kona Road and Hanapepe Road in Hanapepe. To view James' work online visit macjamesonkauai.com.