



HAWAI'I CONTEMPORARY

ISABELLA ELLAHEH HUGHES

BOARD CHAIR

Isabella “Bella” Hughes is an arts professional and entrepreneur originally from Honolulu, based in Hilo, and working globally. She has 15 years in the arts as an independent curator, editor, art critic, cultural projects strategist and arts consultant. She is a co-founder and board chair of Hawai'i Contemporary (formerly Honolulu Biennial Foundation), co-founder and president of Shaka Tea, and a co-founder of FoundHer and Above the Equator.

A member of the 2018 Pacific Business News' '40 Under 40,' Hughes was appointed by Governor David Y Ige in 2018 to serve on the Hawai'i Technology Development Corporation Board (HTDC).

A frequent curator, moderator and panelist she has spoken for the US Japan Council Conference (Hawai'i Island); the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian (Washington, DC); Ayyam Gallery (London); Barjeel Art Foundation (Sharjah, UAE); Seattle Art Fair (WA); Maui Arts & Cultural Center (Kahului); German Marshall Fund (Washington, D.C.); Cafesjian Museum (Yerevan, Armenia), Contemporary Art Platform (Kuwait City, Kuwait); Beirut Art Fair (Lebanon); Traffic Gallery (Dubai); Vienna Art Week (Austria), Art Dubai (UAE) and for the Terasaki Conservancy (Honolulu).

Focusing on contemporary art from the Middle East, Asia and the Pacific, Hughes has been a nominator for the Smithsonian Artist Research Fellowship Program; Jameel Prize; Abraaj Capital Art Prize and has served as a juror for the YICCA International Contest of Contemporary Art; Art Omi International; the 40th Art Maui; CONTACT presented by the Pu'uhonua Society; and the annual Hawai'i Craftsmen show.

A frequent contributor and editor of exhibition catalogues, she's the former Dubai desk editor and contributing editor for ArtAsiaPacific and has written for Barjeel Art Foundation, Singapore Art Museum, Bahrain's Ministry of Culture, the Maldives Pavilion at Venice Biennale, Honolulu Biennial, Aga Khan Museum, Maraya Art Center, and is the editor of the monograph, “Sama Alshaibi: Sand Rushes In” (Aperture Foundation). As a curator, she has curated exhibitions globally, including for the Honolulu Biennial Foundation, Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian, US Embassy Abu Dhabi, Art Dubai, Maraya Art Center and Ayyam Gallery.