

"Laura Kina: Sugar" Press

Kakazu, Akiko. ["Portrait of Immigrant Brides: Okinawan Kina-san's Oil Painting Exhibition"](#) Okinawa Times. 6, September, 2010.

This article was originally published in Japanese. The English translation is courtesy of Miho Matsugu, DePaul University Assistant Professor Department of Modern Languages, Japanese Studies Program

Portrait of Immigrant Brides: Okinawan Kina-san's Oil Painting Exhibition

September 6, 2010

Akiko Kakazu - The Okinawa Times Overseas reporter

Oil painting exhibition "Sugar," opening on September 10th at Women Made Gallery in Chicago, IL, focuses on immigrants from Okinawa to the sugar cane fields of Hawai'i from 1900 to 1959.

The artist is fourth-generation Okinawan Ms. Laura Kina, who uses a pop art sensitivity to portray immigrant brides wearing work clothes in the fields, hands decorated with hajichi (Okinawan tattoos), beautiful figures doing extremely hard labor in stretches of burning fields and flooding creeks.

Displayed are ten works based on Ms. Kina's memories of her father George Kina, 66, who was born on Hawai'i as a third-generation Okinawan, and her grand parents, as well as what she learned from elders on the Big Island and photos.

Ms. Kina, born to an Okinawan father and a Basque Spanish American mother, grew up in a Norwegian immigrant community in Washington State, and studied art in undergraduate and graduate programs in Chicago.

She is currently teaching courses such as "Asian American Art and Culture" and "Art and Identity of Mixed Race" at DePaul University in Chicago. Her research and art work also focuses on consistent themes such as "Fluidity in Cultural Differences."

Ms. Kina has made works in her pursuit of portraying Asian American history and people of mixed race. On her current exhibition, Ms. Kina says, "I was moved by the fact that immigrant brides made their work clothes out of the kasuri fabrics they brought and continued to wear, remaking them repeatedly," throwing a new perspective on this historical chapter.