



Thomas Bjelland Photo: Russell Hoover

THE ART OF TEE

For more than two decades Thomas Bjelland has been producing artwork and design specializing in Surf lifestyle for tee shirt screen printing.

With some of the Surf industries most prominent labels such as Quiksilver, Honolua Surf Company, Hobie by Hurley, Local Motion, Hawaiian Island Creations and Roxy as clients, as well as various resort manufacturers, he has amassed a portfolio of approximately 500 hundred or more tee shirt designs. With this book *The Art of Tee* Thomas combines his lifelong passions of Surfing and Art to display an ongoing endeavor to produce the finest screen prints possible.

"It's always a little thrill to see someone wearing a shirt I have designed. The years of stylistic development and dedication to craft are solidified in the simplest way, someone enjoying the product that I have collaborated in producing. I've had the pleasure of working with many talented and knowledgeable individuals along the way and fine companies which have enabled me to lift this pursuit of craft to the highest levels attainable".

"I've included some biographical Surfing content to put in context the parallel relationship of creating artwork that hopefully reflects an authentic lifestyle well lived. I hope you enjoy this book as much as I have enjoyed making it".

Thomas Bjelland 2019



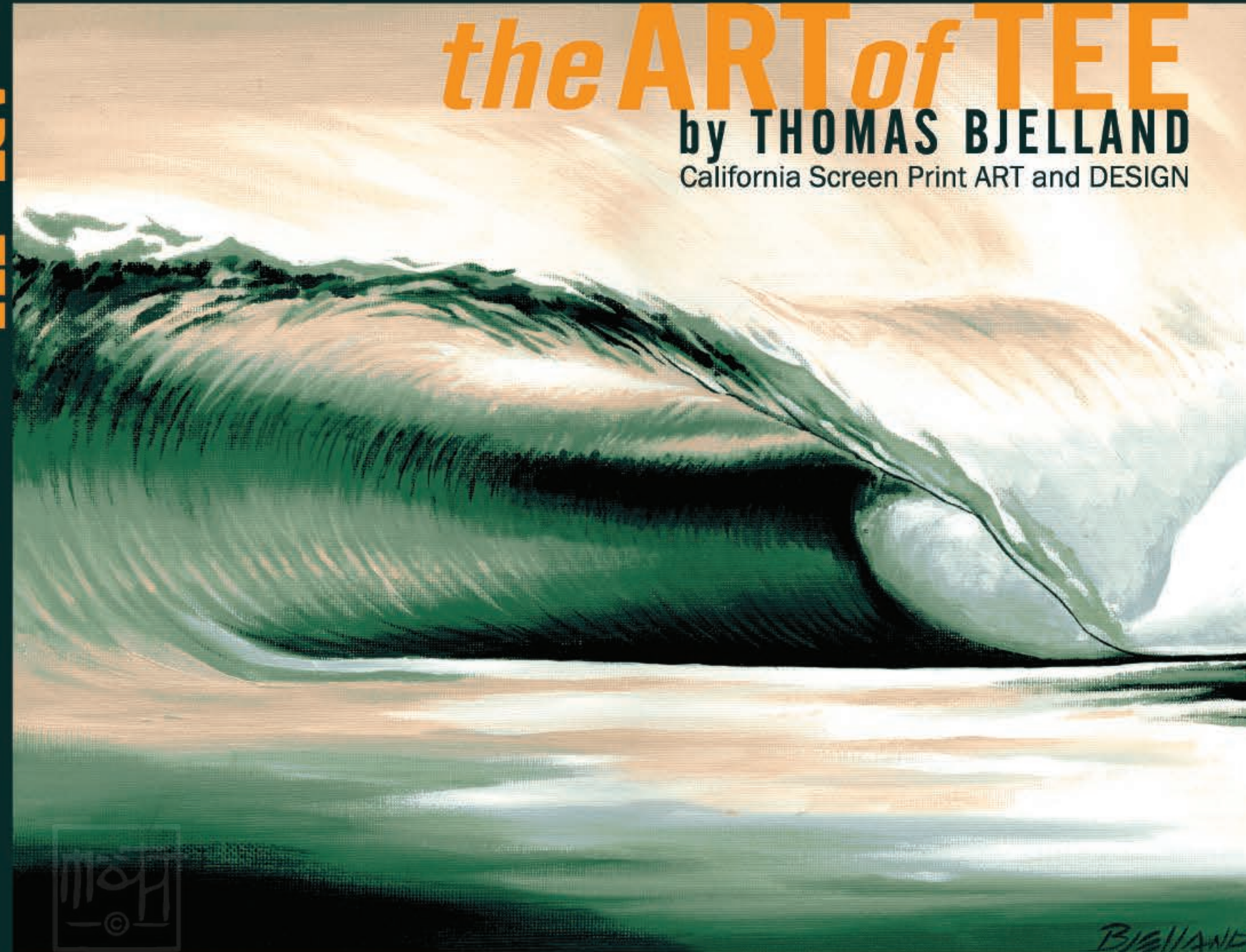
BJELLAND DESIGN

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the ART of TEE by THOMAS BJELLAND



the ART of TEE
by THOMAS BJELLAND
California Screen Print ART and DESIGN



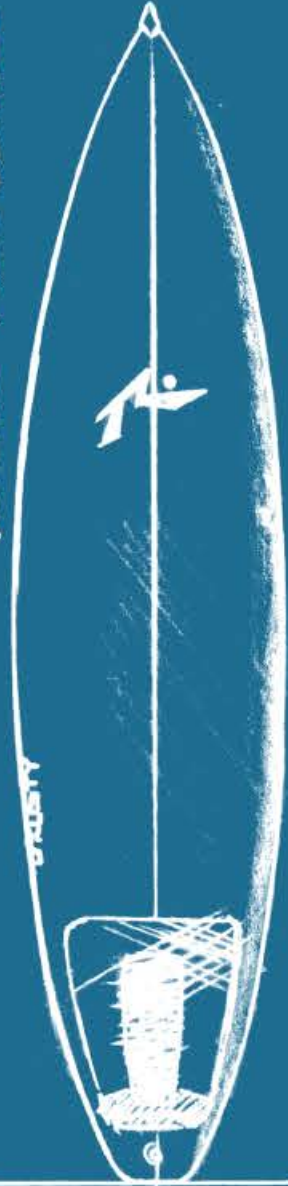
BJELLAND

the ART of TEE

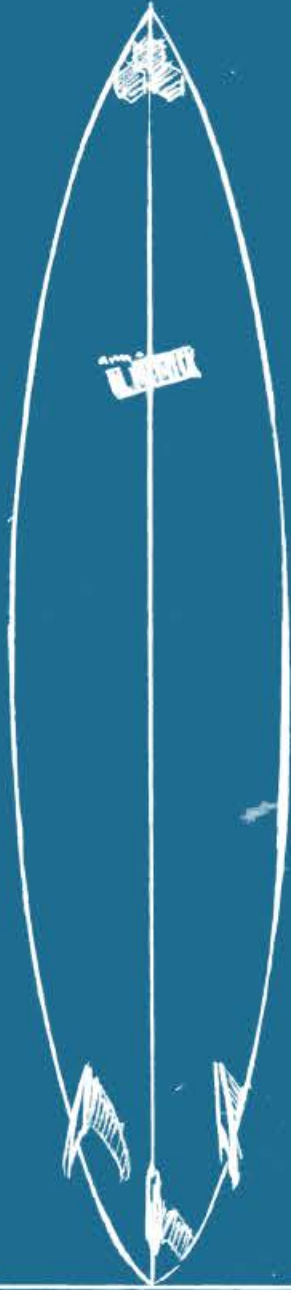
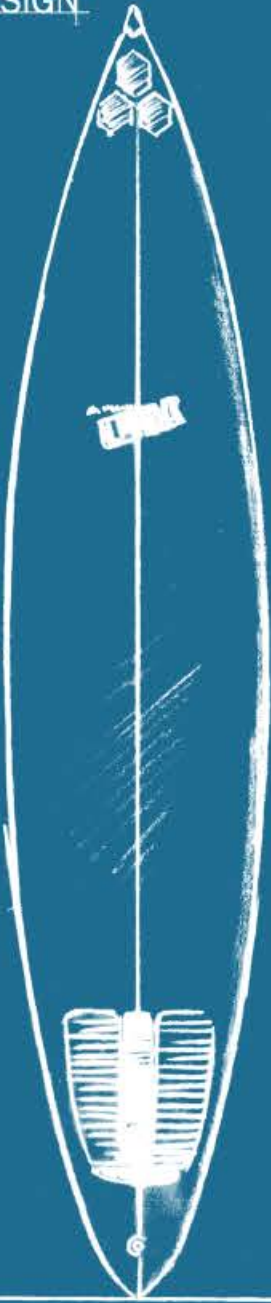
by THOMAS BJELLAND

California Screen Print ART and DESIGN

6'8" RUSTY THRUSTER
OUTSIDE FINE LOWERS



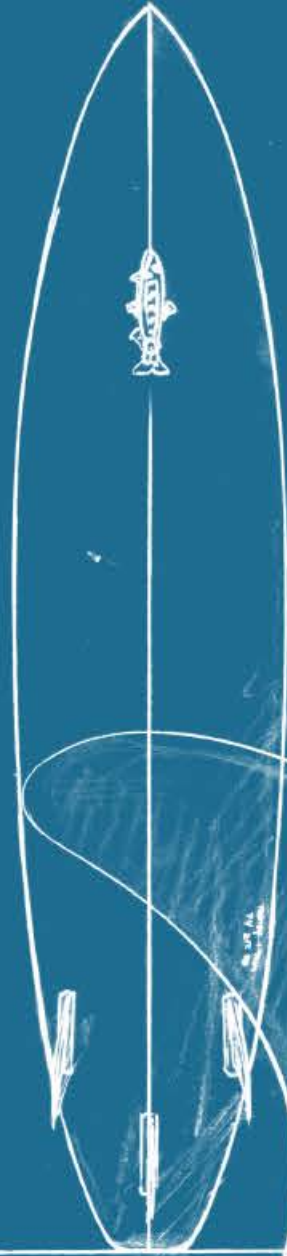
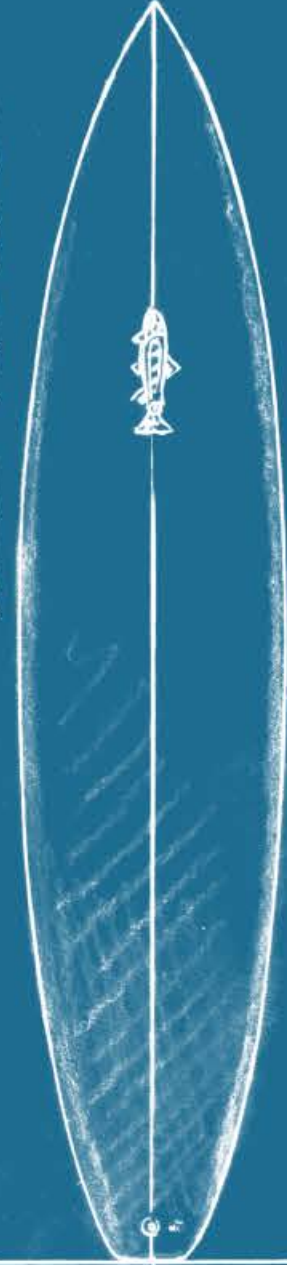
7'6" MERRICK ROUNDPIN
CLOUD BREAK GUN



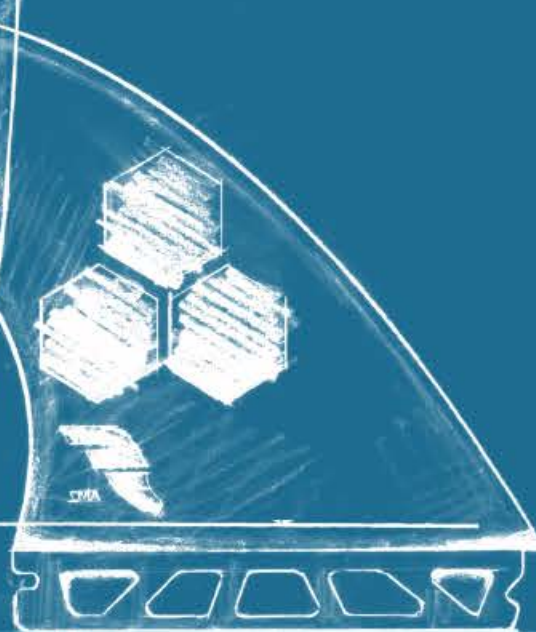
6'8" MIKE EATON / BUGS
BONZER CIRCA '74 TOWNSTAIL



6'8" RUSTY THRUSTER
OUTSIDE FINE LOWERS



7'4" BARNEY VANDERMUELLEN
CALIFORNIA WINTER STEP UP





IN MY ROOM

1969, I'm nine years old.

The view from my bedroom window looks across the neighbor's lawn and framed horizontally in the garage window I can see the back third of Allan's hand-shaped and glassed single fin. It appears to be some sort of magic vessel—sleek lines standing out in sharp contrast to the concrete confines of our pleasant Long Beach, California suburban tract neighborhood. Our block has houses with hardwood floors, many covered in olive shag carpet,

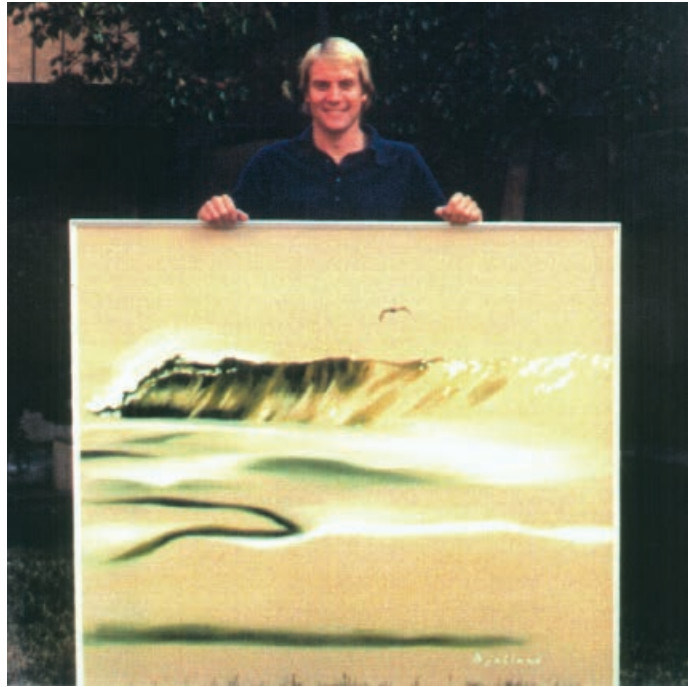
Thomas' room • 1974
Long Beach, California

Jacaranda and Carolina Cherry trees in the parkways, the floor plans repeating every fourth or fifth house.

At some point that year Allan gave me a stack of *Surfer* magazines he had gone through, along with a few *Surfings*. The pages back then were filled half with color and half with black & white photos. The images captured by the photographers were of longhaired athletes in concert with nature on a spectacular stage. I was enthralled by the combination of sport and beauty. I played Little League [baseball] and Gray-Y sports, so I knew and enjoyed the athlete part, but the colorful waves and surf-dance were a whole 'nother level of experience I was eager to explore. The art and design of the magazines connected with the emerging creative aesthetic that I had been developing ever since I was an as a toddling artist, when I lay on the floor and drew on the bottom of the furniture and signed my name *Mot*. Among the issues was the one-of-a-kind, classic, surf zine insert *Tales from the Tube*.

Thomas surfs Sunset Beach, California • Circa '77





Cocooned alone in my bedroom, with a backdrop of dark faux-walnut wall paper, I sat at my dark walnut laminate desk and copied the surf images from the magazines in marker pen and colored pencil to amuse myself, a complete escape from the pre-electronica, melancholic, everlasting days of sixty's youth.

Next year at age ten, I got my older brother Tim's 6'8" garage-built Brockman short board. The very first whitewash I caught at Crabs in Seal Beach, I stood up and rode until the fin dug in the sand, the exhilaration of gliding on water a feeling I am still addicted to forty-four years in. Growing up we had been dropped off by our folks and bodysurfed and belly boarded summer swells at the Huntington Cliffs and south side of the pier, but with that first session, hook, line and sinker set, it turns out I've been a surf artist forty-five years on and counting.

I hope you will enjoy this first published book of mine—*the ART of TEE* as much as I have enjoyed creating it. Thomas Bjelland 4/30/2019

Thomas shows off the finished "Peace, Perfect Peace" • Circa 1980



1. Surfstoked California Teenaged Artist
2. 70's Cork Bulletin Board with Neatly Displayed Surf Photo Magazine Center Spread Pullouts
3. Bjelland Vineyards Wine Bottles
4. IXOYE psuedo/wood sign
5. Manual Typewriter (learned typing in High School)
6. Surf Movie Flyers - Five Summer Stories, Forgotten Island of Santosha
7. Faux Walnut Wallpaper
8. Carved/Molded Wall Piece psuedo/wood
9. Levis 501 - nice belt!

Surf stoked teenage *Thomas 70's room* diagram.
[From previous page]



"Peace, Perfect Peace" 1980 • Oil on Canvas • 36" x 48"



KE IKI HALE

Fall semester off from Long Beach City College, my oldest friend Scott McIntosh and I spent three months on the North Shore of Oahu, 1980, the year John Lennon was sadly taken from us.

I mean—what else would a prime—in shape—surf-stoked goofyfoot like me do? Get a bolt and have a go at Pipe! I'm pretty sure that's an authentic Lightning Bolt under my feet, it sure rode insane there. I got the board at an inland surf shop in Cypress, CA. Apparently a kid had won it in some kind of sweepstakes contest, it had Gerry Lopez signed in ink on the glass—not underneath on the foam. One day I was sitting on the beach watching the surf after a midsize Pipe session. Senor Lopez walked past from his estate down to the shoreline and glancing at the board gave me a nod and subtle, sly grin. I was way to shy to say hello or inquire about the board, but felt elevated a little. The Bolt could handle a steep drop. Fond memories are of seeing it pointed straight down on a steep drop, sure I'm on the precipice of poking, then the soft rounded edges of the nose would ease it onto the round contour wave face and thrust out of a bottom turn and beyond, a magic sled for the task.

Most of my sessions that season were short, but intense, a couple a day if good conditions or bodysurfing out front at Ke Iki reef most every day. I surfed mostly the Backdoor/Off the Wall/Log Cabins area but primarily smallish Pipe—not inside out macking third reef Pipeline—but close a couple of days, including the compulsory dues payment—getting pitched for not paddling far enough down the face on takeoff before standing—a friendly tip pointed out from Marvin Foster paddling back out. Warm water, powerful, the very first session I paddled out included a few nice barrels and was the best session of my life until then, an unbelievable playground!

Thomas Laying Down a Bottom Turn • Pipeline, Hawaii • Circa 1980



A Dog's Life • Keiki Hale, North Shore Oahu



Thomas Dropping In • Pipeline, Hawaii • Circa 1980

Ke Iki Hale, where we rented a bungalow and the landlord Alice Tracy were super cool, the North Shore still 100% country. Back then you could sway in a hammock stretched between two coconut trees and listen to the birds chirp overhead, a couple cars might go by every ten to fifteen minutes, Kam highway was far from living up to its name as the tireless, occasionally gridlocked thoroughfare it has now become.

There were few girls on the North Shore back then. Abundant surf and awesome sunsets ruled the day on Ke Iki beach. But there were a few bitches there. Poor, hapless, female dogs like the one who was harassed twenty four hours a day while in heat, her yelps ringing out in the dark night from the rubbed raw advances of roving male dogs loose in the neighborhood. Scott, my travel mate, and future Tavarua bure buddy had a state of the art AIPA twin-fin



HB Southside 2010

photo: tim montag

Huntington Pier **Southside**—2nd peak over, my wave of choice there on a straight West swell in December. In Fall and Winter with sandbars in position, perhaps the most consistently rideable quality wave in SoCal.

-TB



HB Northside 2009

photo: tim montag

Huntington Pier **Northside** 2nd peak over, the wave on offer on a North/Nortwest swell in April. In Winter and early Spring also a very consistent wave option—the pier sandbars offer a shoulder to the otherwise walled swells thumping the length from Bolsa Chica south to Huntington State Beach.

-TB

HUNTINGTON PIER

Forget about the big contest events at the pier in Summer, it's all about West swell the rest of the year for me. I'll endorse Huntington on its day as nothing short of world-class beach break. I've enjoyed many a fun session there over the years, Fall and Winter mainly for consistency & occasional flashes of brilliance. Heck, when the sandbars are right, and any combo of West swell is in the water, it can get downright epic! That's not to say it doesn't come with a considerable entry fee. If you want to surf there be prepared to suffer innumerable drop-

ins, hassling, kook behavior, and general disrespectful etiquette of every kind imaginable. Considering I've been a summertime Lowers regular for more than 20 years, it's saying a lot to declare the crowd is way worse, particularly on Northside. Guys who ride longboards their entire careers regardless of how good the surf gets, standing on the tail and committing the egregious sin of never even considering a stroll to the nose—then don't give any quarter to other surfers as to their obvious wave hogging capabilities. Throw in the SUP enthusiasts who refuse to give any peace to the lineup between sets, churn-butter just outside and barging in when the

sets finally come—dangerous! Much like the clueless beginners and other inconsiderate miscreants who are sure to be in the way for that last section, ruining an otherwise nice ride, no chance they could ever duck-dive a four-foot wave to get out of the way, they've got to make it over the shoulder! Then there are the pier-bowl pack-mentality locals & "pros" that will challenge every wave possession. Good surfers, who may currently be the next big thing, talented and determined to make a name for themselves and vocally let everyone know about it, but will move on every five years or so like all the others before them pushed out by the next generation of groms clawing

at their heels.

Sounds like a lot of whining? Surely it's a love/hate relationship. Often on a crowded day before paddling out I will remind myself that I am willingly entering such a melee and that I may endure such infractions to surf etiquette and promise not to reduce myself to getting upset or lowering myself to groveling. But give me a good West swell with sandbars in place on Southside, and the possibility of linking a long punchy wave from outside to inside is certainly a pleasure not to be missed!



PAY TO PLAY

I hereby willingly and of my own accord will commence to paddle out on Northside. I cannot expect to avoid nearly every conceivable infraction to surf etiquette that can possibly be committed and promise not to lower myself to getting upset or groveling. It is possible that I could catch a few gems that will sustain me from want until the next time in my present condition.

Since (that bitch—who I enjoyed a two day tryst with at Cottons) *Marie* scraped away what remained of the sandbars from what was left after the big storm of the previous winter, I'm afraid the Emperor has no clothes. What can and hopefully will be again world class beach break is an imitation of something - resembling its former glory, but not quite the cat's meow. The crazy thing to me is how few people share this idea with me. I could be a bit picky.

After all, there're a lot of other waves in the world! If you can get to them is the question. But it's always been nice to have HB as a dependable option since the first time I bellyboarded there forty years ago.

Thomas Bjelland 9/25/15

07/18/2015
11:08 AM

07/19/2015
10:49 AM

1998 • Acrylic on Canvas • 24" x 36"



LOWERS 2012

photo: richard holcombe

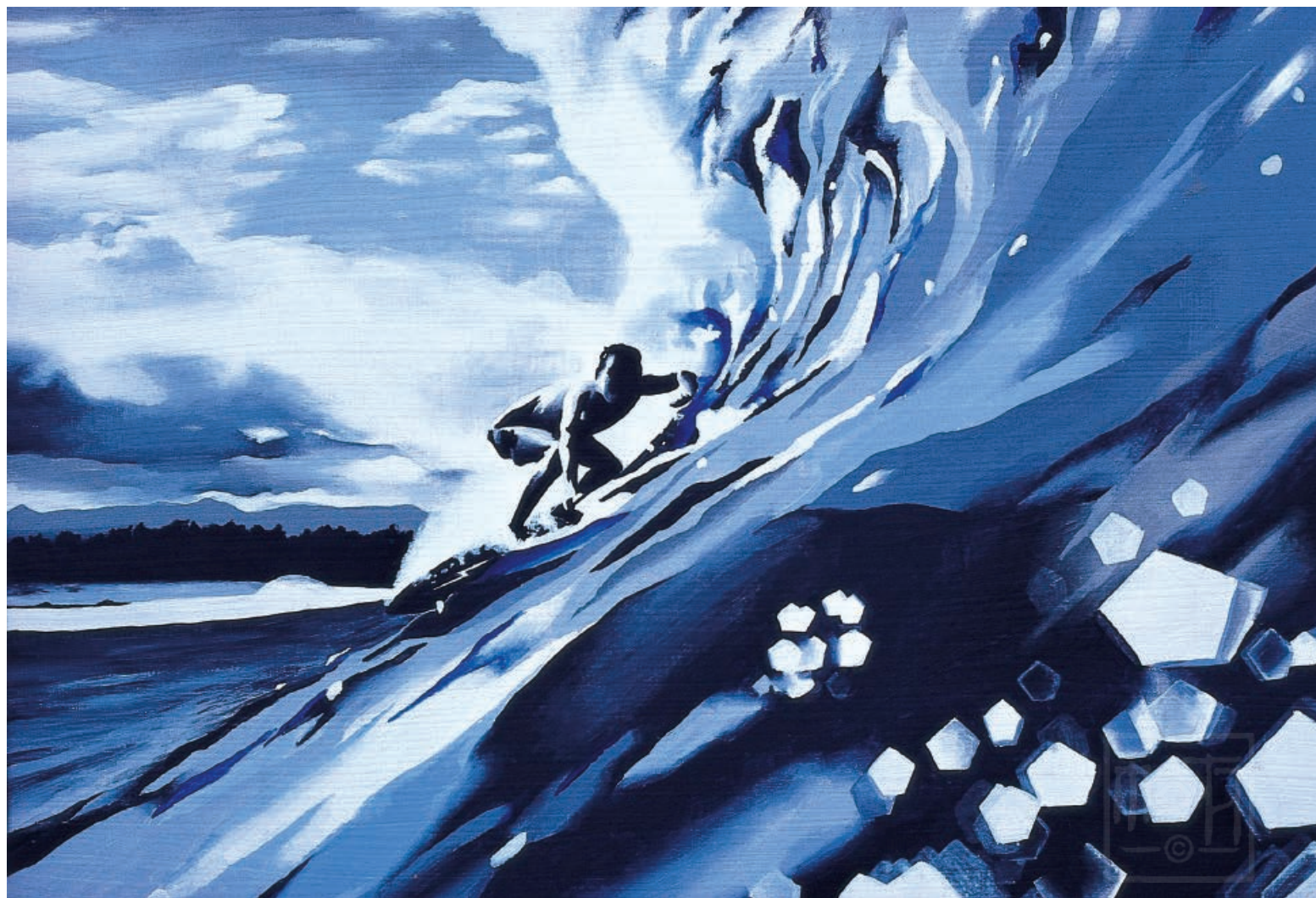
Early season SouthWest (is best!) 225 degree New Zealand high interval ground swell—you can tell it's the high-end juice by how the board wake on the bottom half of the wave is compressed. **Outside peak bottom turn** with seventy-five yards of tapering wall ahead, I'm stoked off my nut riding my (age fiftyone) version California "Winterboard"—a 7'4" custom Terry Goldsmith Rusty. It's a stretched out version of my usual Lowers 7'0" "Summerboard". I ordered/developed this shape over the years specifically for this wave starting at a 6"8" around age thirty, went up to 6"10" at forty, and then 7'0" at fifty. *Cheers! to catching a few at sixty!* **Thomas Bjelland**

SHAPER	TERRY GOLDSMITH		
MODEL	CUSTOM		
LEN	74	WIDTH	20
			26
BY	TOM BJELLAND		
	158110		

TRESTLES

When I had the revelation that I hadn't missed a proper ground swell at Lowers for eighteen seasons in a row I wasn't sure if I should congratulate myself or figure out if I needed a "real" job. I had no idea it was "*The world's most rippable wave*" as it is now dubbed by WSL commentators, for all those years I just knew I loved it! And looking back at two decades of being a freelance artist/designer able to work most everyday throughout the year (I like to work!) so that I could score it in summer when it is on is not such a bad tradeoff. Except you can't take that to the bank, only the memory banks—which I guess ain't too bad either—*or not*—still sorting that one out.

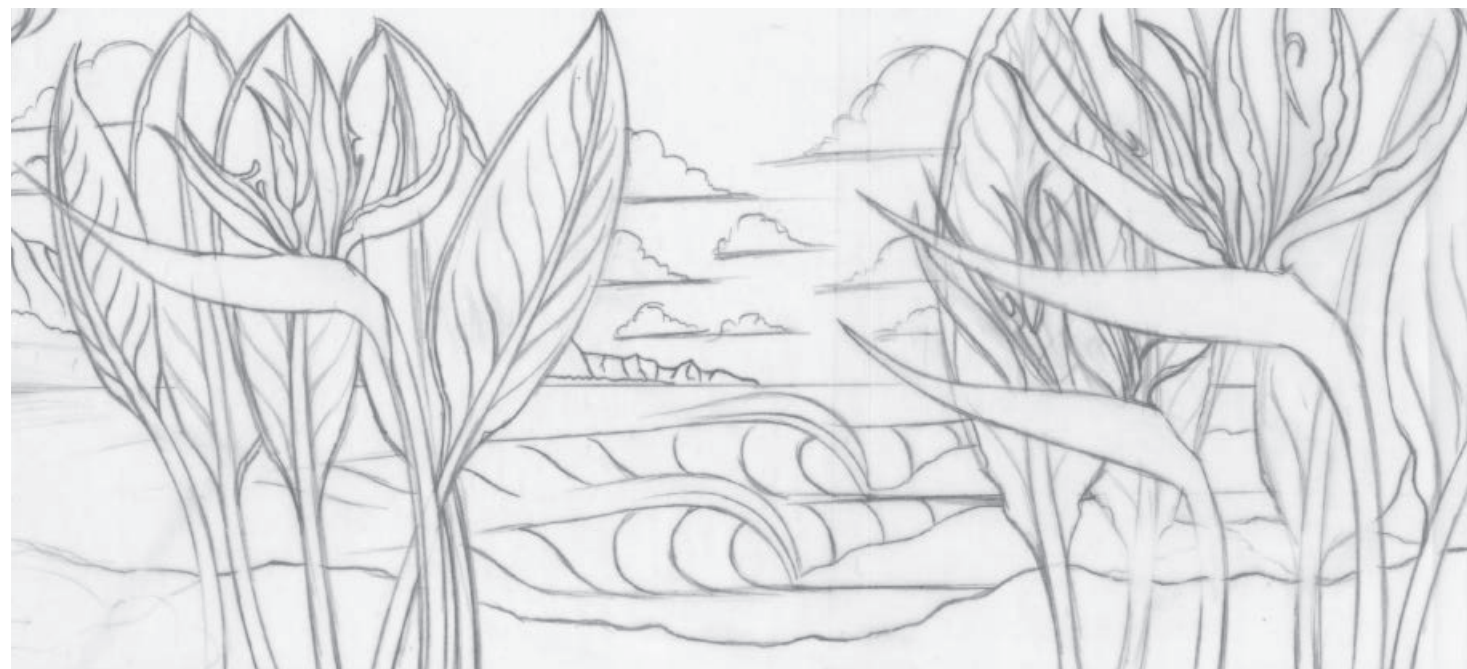
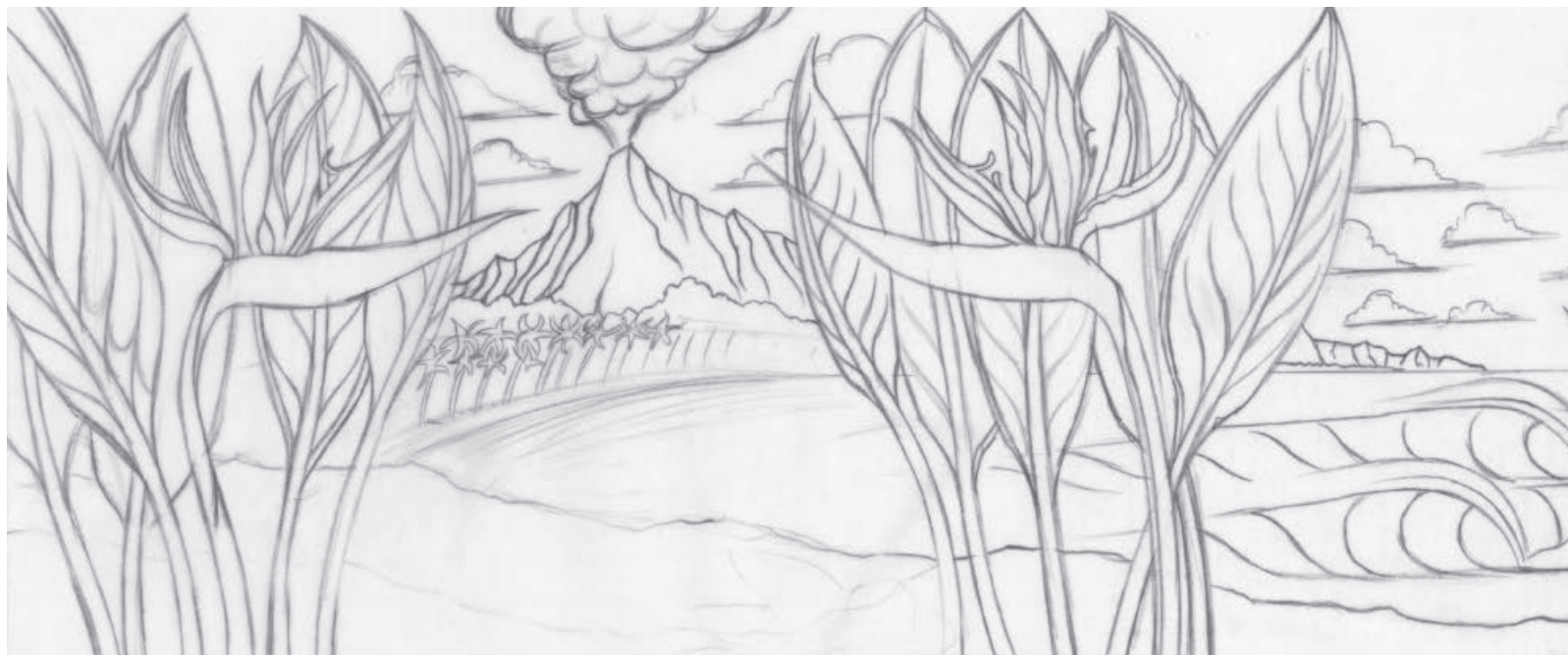
Unfortunately for me the scene there has degraded somewhat from one that took a lot of effort to break into and pretty much goverened itself to now being overrun by hoardes of every type of surfer on even the slightest mention of South Swell internet forecast. Seventy out at dawn patrol even if it's not really working, a far stretch from the days when you sized up your local indicator spot and made the call to hit it or not. For a time I had it down to a four hour late-morning shift routine, half hour drive from Newport/Costa Mesa, half hour walk in—suit up, two hour session, repeat return (I still don't bike it as I enjoy the decompression walk—perhaps enjoying a whiff of sagebrush), not often doable now with today's traffic and all. I have a deep love for some of the breaks in this special area—Up-pers also in Summer, Cottons and Church on a solid West in Winter and have been stoked to enjoy them on numerous swells over the years.



"Storm Bowls" 1980 • Acrylic on Gesso Board • 12" x 18"



"Rabbit '79" 1980 • Graphite on Paper / Mac Digital Color • 10" x 8"



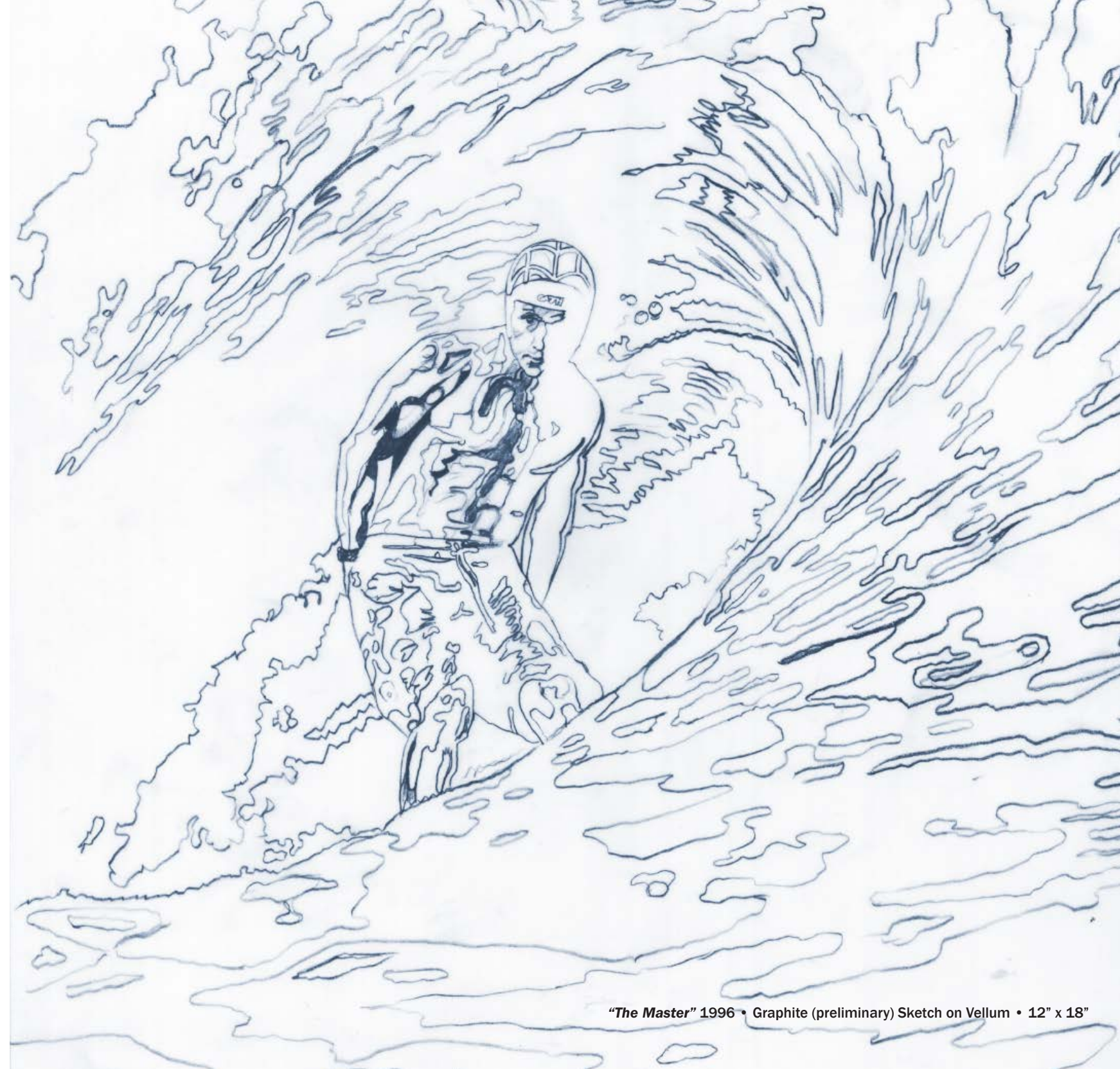
1996 • Graphite (preliminary) Sketch on Vellum • 18" x 6"



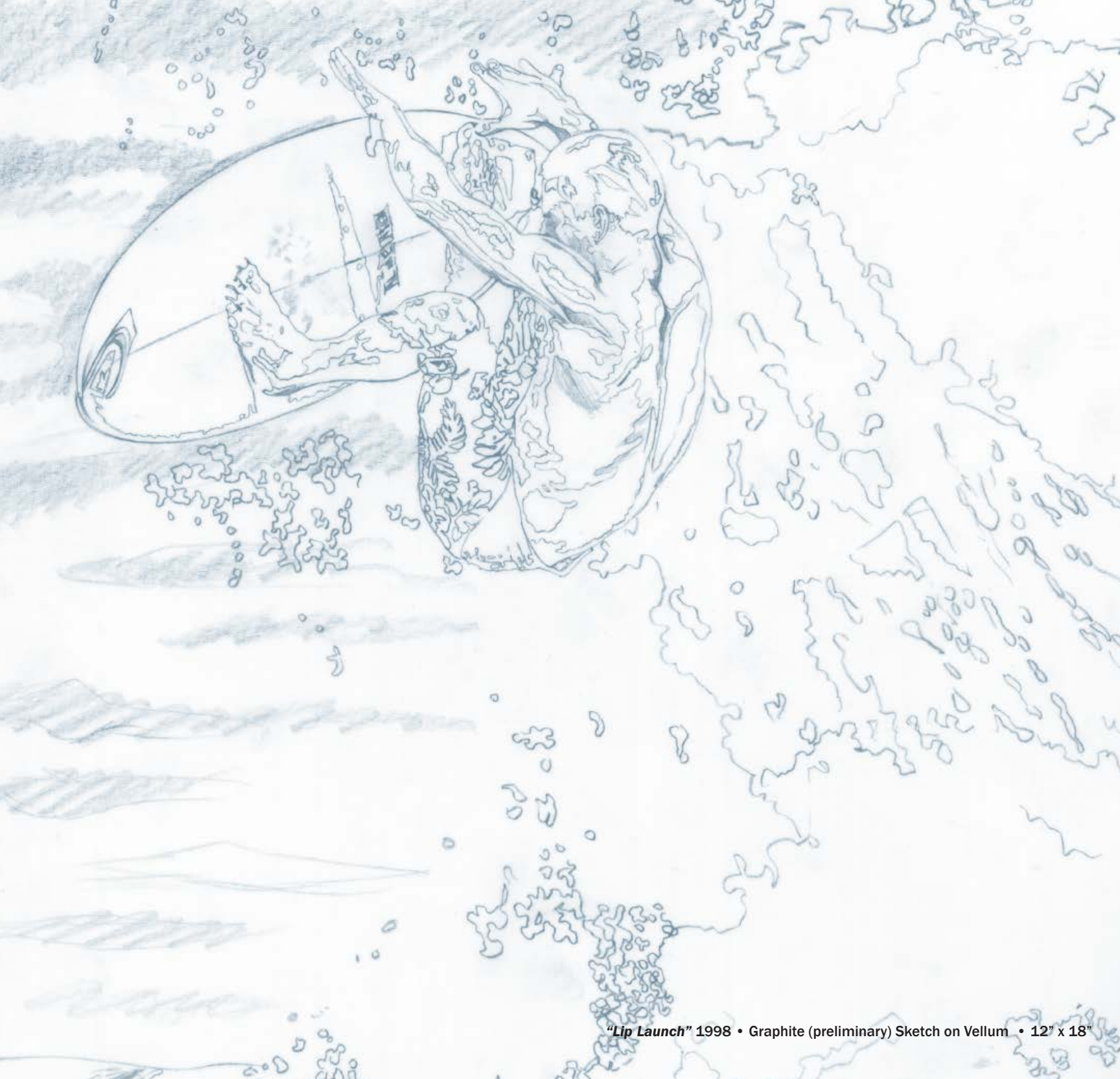
"Kona Winds" 1996 • Acrylic on Gesso Board • 18" x 6"



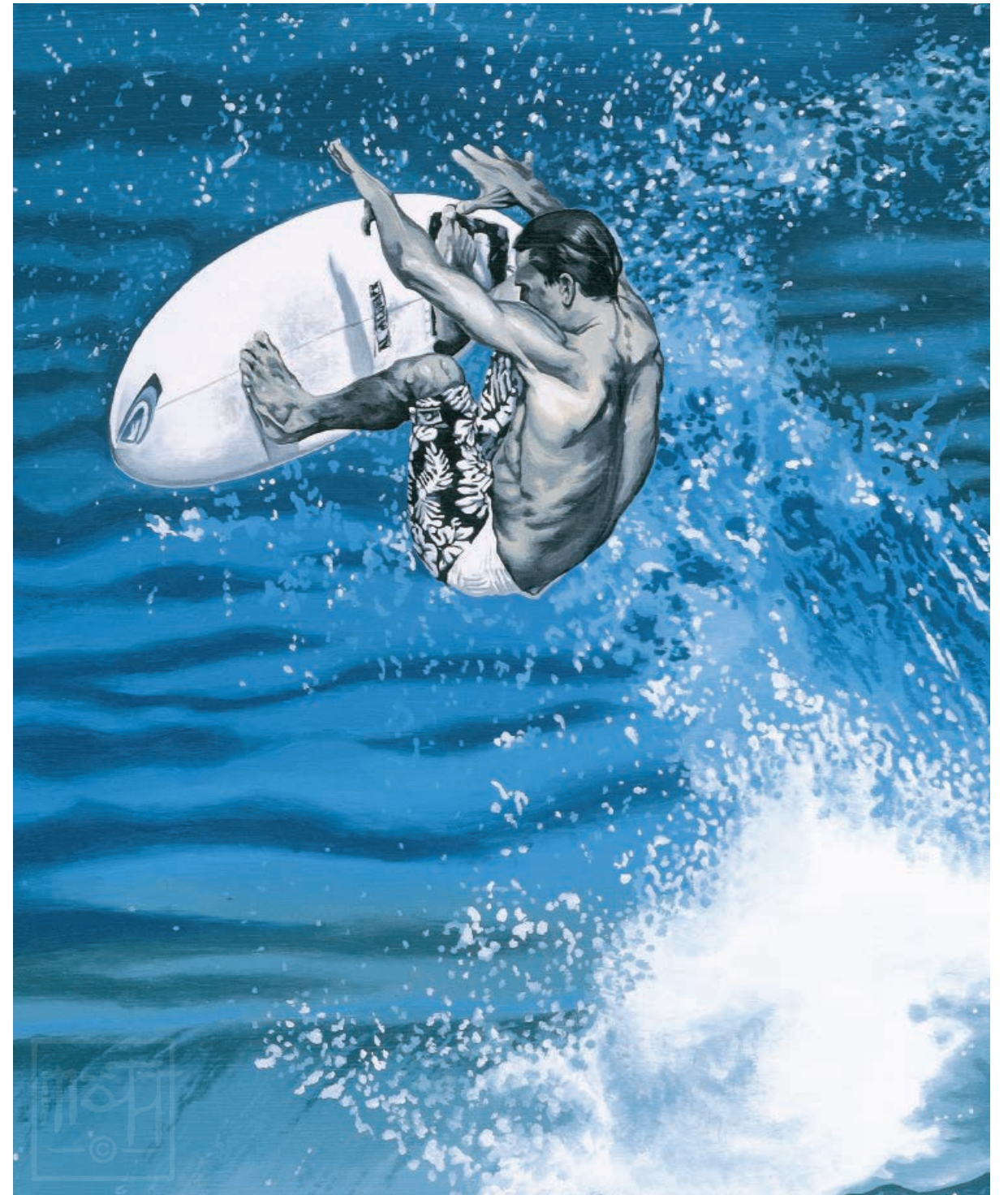
"The Master" 1996 • Acrylic on Gesso Board • 12" x 18"



"The Master" 1996 • Graphite (preliminary) Sketch on Vellum • 12" x 18"



"Lip Launch" 1998 • Graphite (preliminary) Sketch on Vellum • 12" x 18"



"Lip Launch" 1998 • Acrylic on Gesso Board • 12" x 18"



"Haena" 1996 • Acrylic on Gesso Board • 12" x 18"



"Rail Grab" 1998 • Acrylic on Gesso Board • 18" x 12"



1996 • Gouache on Paper/Mac Digital • 10" x 6"



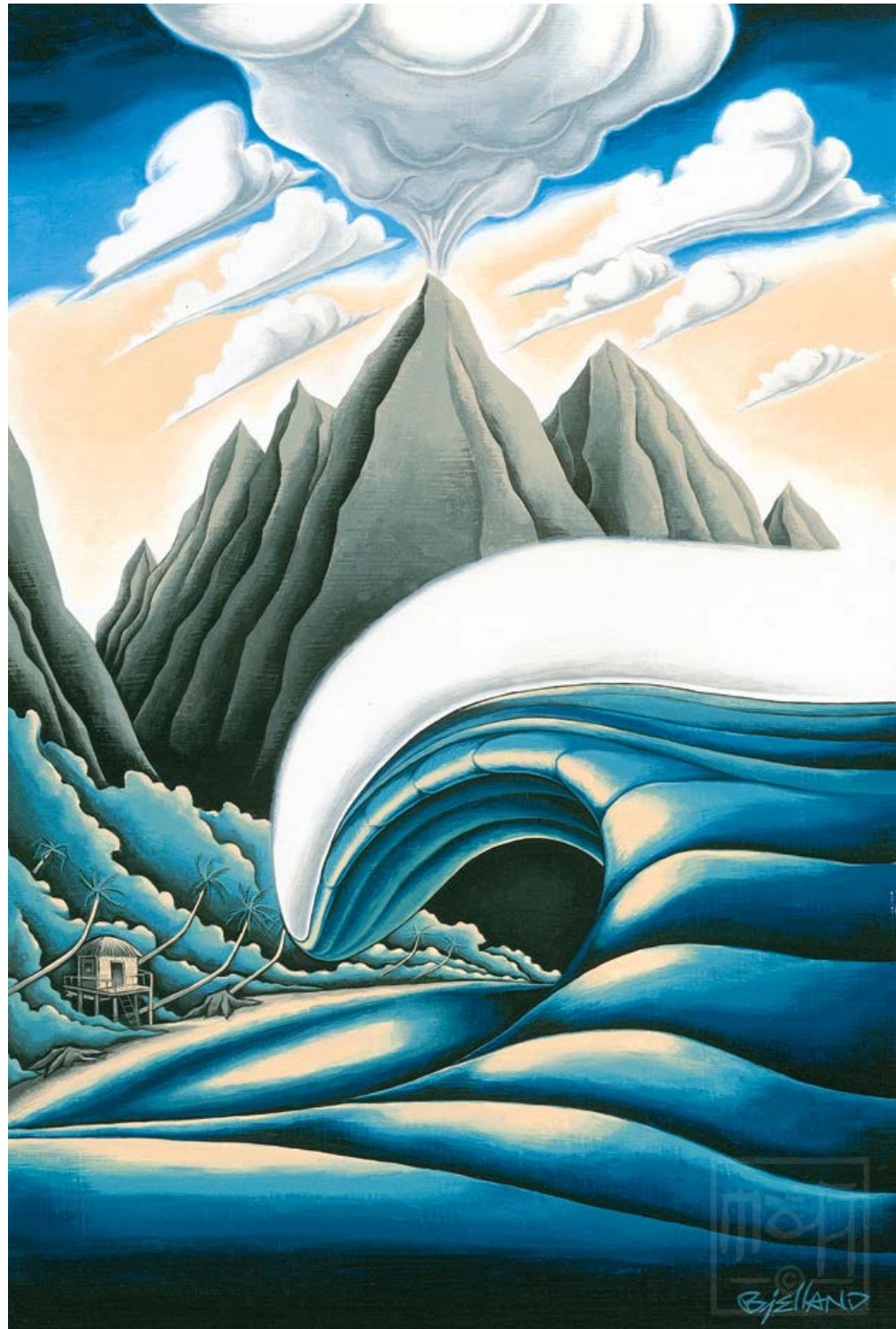
"Burleigh Heads" 2015 • Scratch Board /Mac Digital • 12" x 18"



"Tavi Peeler" 1995 • Acrylic on Canvas • 48" x 36"



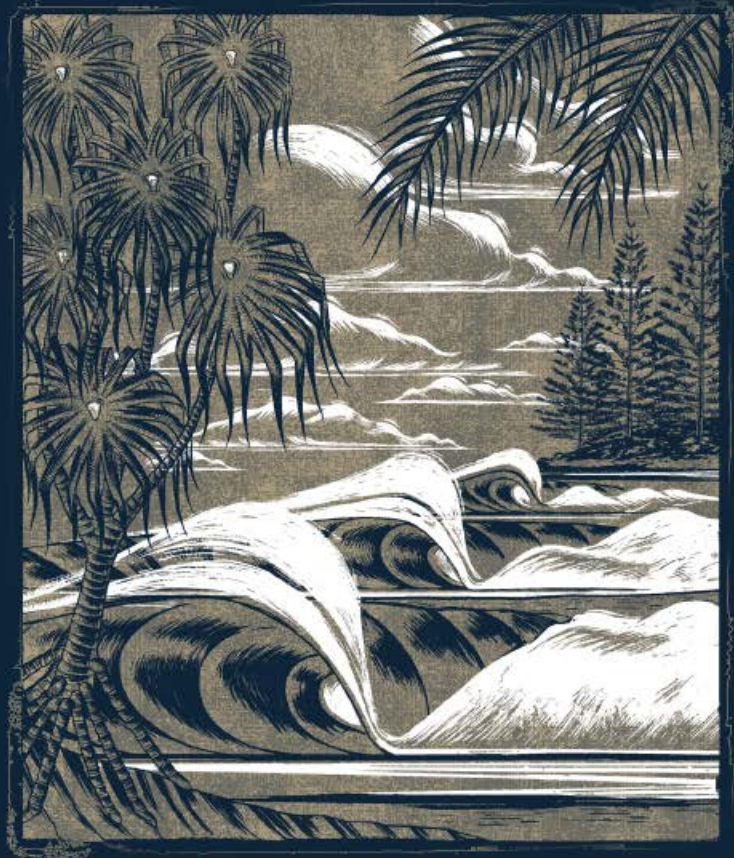
1995 • Acrylic on Gesso Board • 18" x 12"



1995 • Acrylic on Gesso Board • 14" x 20"



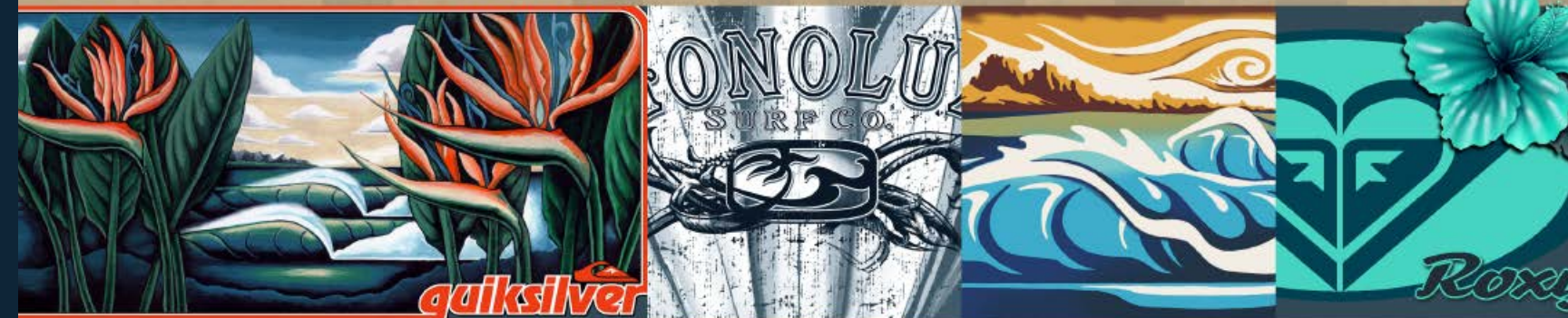
"Thalia Street" 2013 • Scratch Board/Mac Digital • 10" x 13"



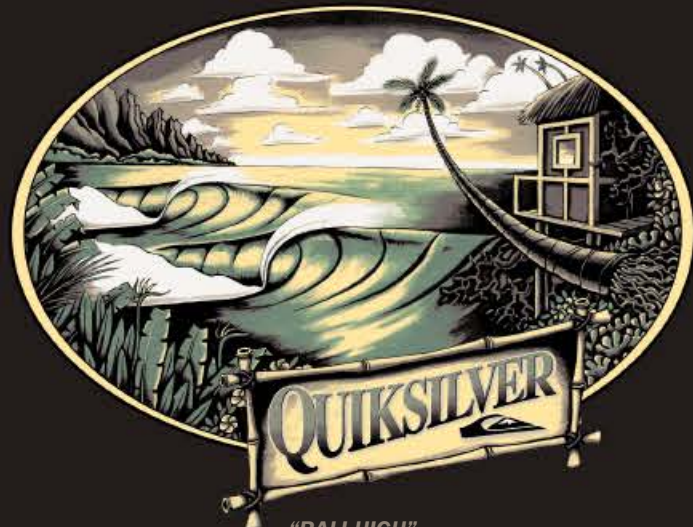
"Burleigh Heads" 2015 • Scratch Board / Mac Digital • 12" x 18"

the **ART** *of* **TEE**

PART 2 SCREENPRINT ART & DESIGN



QUIKSILVER • ROXY
HONOLUA SURF CO.
HOBIE by HURLEY
LOCAL MOTION



"BALI HIGH"
Marker Pen and Prismacolor Pencil / Mac digital

"BALI HIGH"
*Exploration high—count me in.
Endorphin high—please begin!
Exotic ecstasy—for a little while at least...
Bagus!*

the **ART** of **TEE**
by THOMAS BJELLAND





"THE MASTER" • Acrylic on Gesso Board / Mac digital



"RABBIT '79" • Graphite on Paper / Mac digital



"RAIL GRAB" • Acrylic on Gesso Board / Mac digital



"LIP LAUNCH" • Acrylic on Gesso Board / Mac digital



"STORM BOWLS" • Acrylic on Gesso Board / Mac digital



"NORTH SWELL (SUNSET)" • Acrylic on Canvas / Mac digital

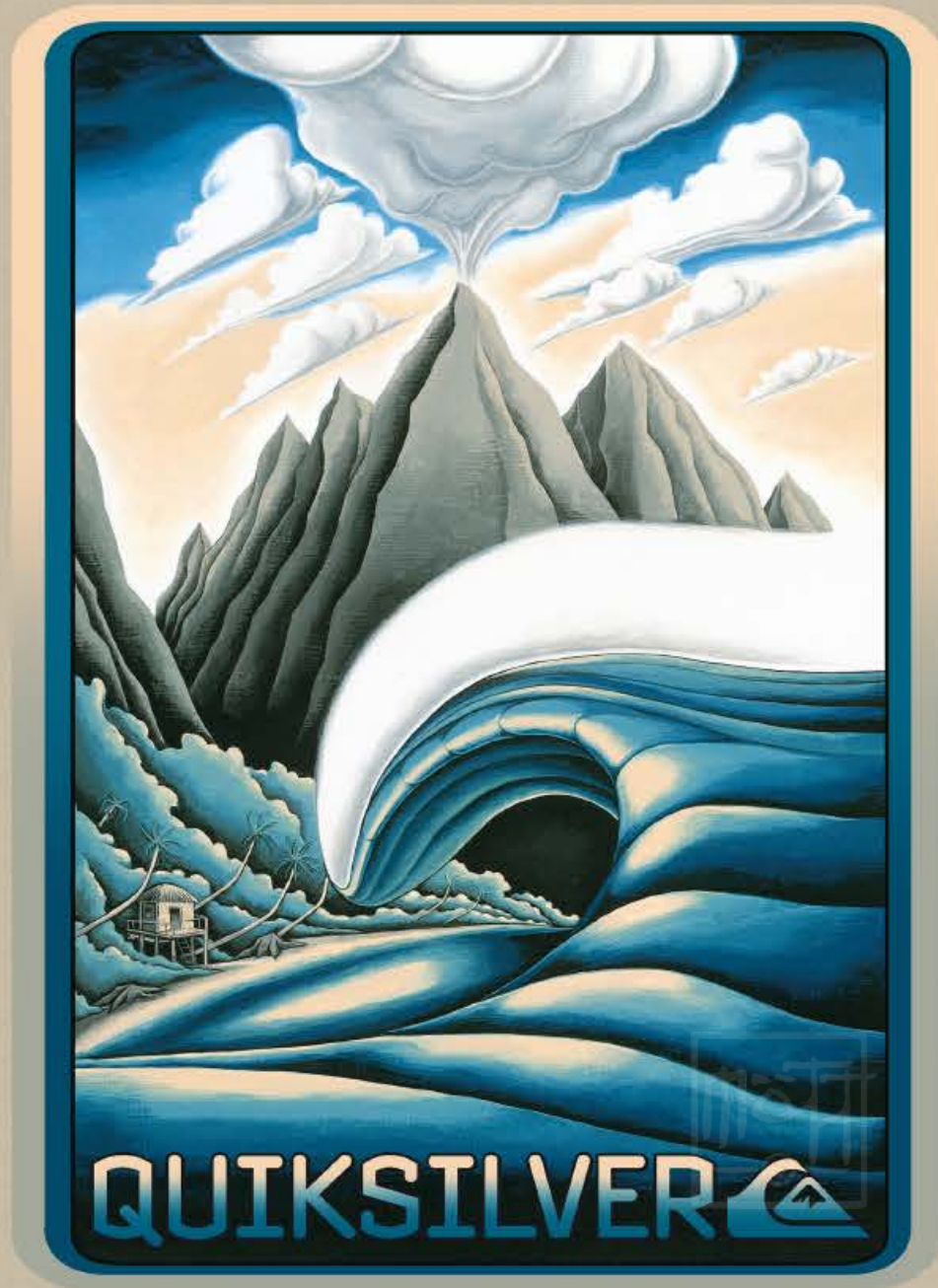


"NATURAL PROGRESSION" • Marker Pen and Prismacolor on Paper



"PERFECT PEAK" • Acrylic on Gesso Board / Mac digital

"KRAKATOA" • Acrylic on Gesso Board / Custom Brush Script / Mac digital



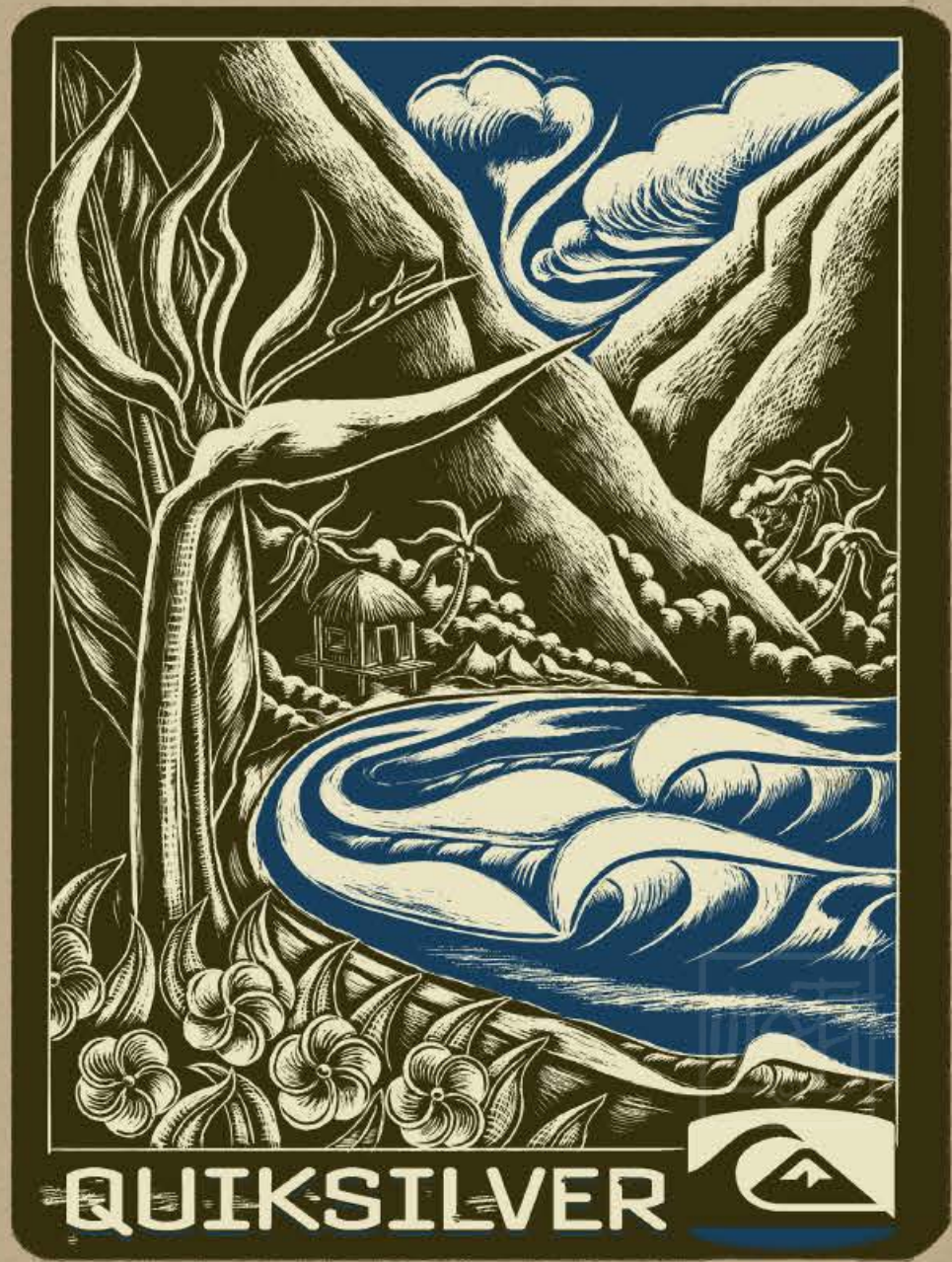
QUIKSILVER



"SALTY PEAKS" • Acrylic on Gesso Board / Mac digital

"FOUR SEASONS" • Marker Pen and Prismacolor on Paper / Mac digital

"KAVA BOWL" • Custom Sumi Ink Brush Script / Mac digital



"KONA WOODCUT" • Scratchboard / Mac digital



"DIAMOND LIFE" • Marker Pen and Prismacolor on Paper / Mac digital



"AJA" • Marker Pen and Prismacolor on Paper / Mac digital



"HOKUSAI HEX" • Marker Pen and Prismacolor on Paper / Mac digital



"BISCUS"

*Tropical flora adorns Wahine's ear.
Long black hair, hi-lites brown and gold,
kissed by Sun and Sea.
(How about me?)
Nature's (strong) princess,
please say YES!
to one haole boy...*

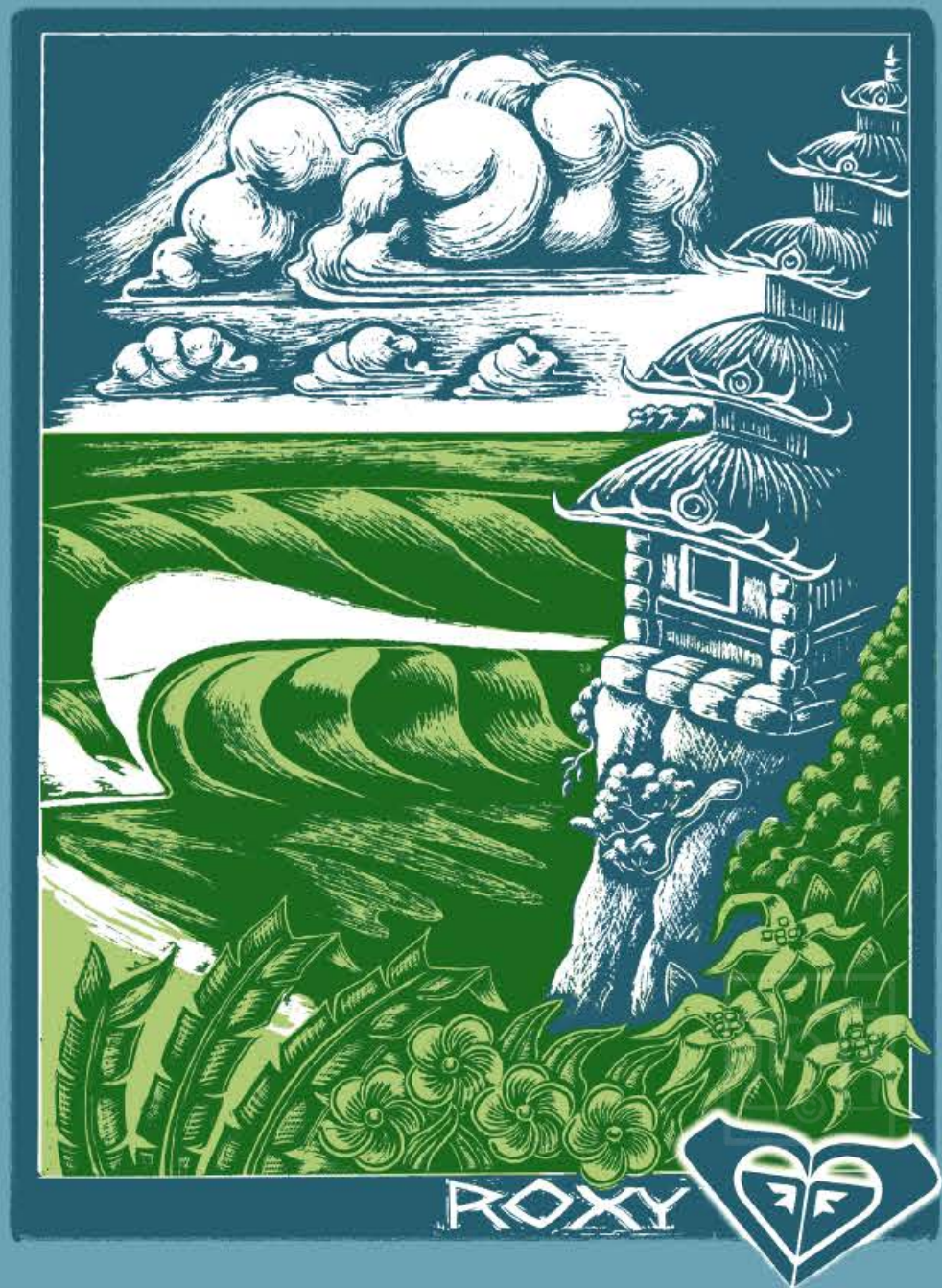
Roxy

the ART of TEE
by THOMAS BJELLAND

Part 2 Tee Screenprints
ROXY



"LAHAINA" • Acrylic Airbrush on Board / Mac digital



"TEMPLE LEFTS" • Scratchboard / Mac digital



"DIAMOND HEAD" • Acrylic Airbrush on Board / Mac digital

"BISCUS" • Acrylic Airbrush on Board / Mac digital



"BISCUS OVAL" • Acrylic Airbrush on Board / Mac digital

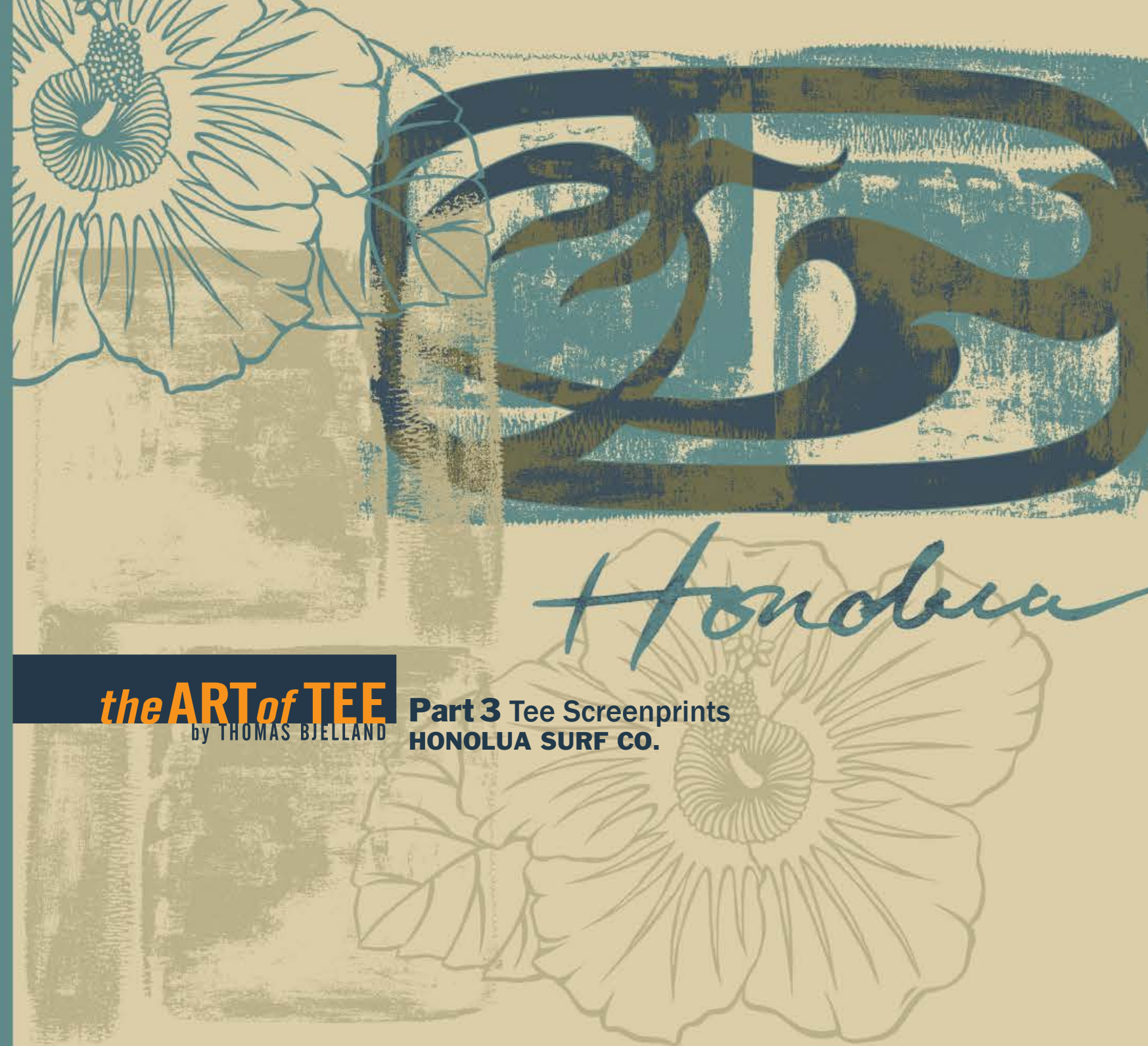
"ALOHA WREATH" • Acrylic Airbrush on Board / Mac digital





"TRAVELER" 2006
Gouache on Paper / Mac digital

"TRAVELER"
*To distant shores,
across oceans,
across time zones,
making new friends.
Embracing new ideas
to a different State of Mind.*



the ART of TEE
by THOMAS BJELLAND

Part 3 Tee Screenprints
HONOLUA SURF CO.



“LOST COAST” • Gouache on Paper / Mac digital



“ALOHA LABEL” • Gouache on Paper / Mac digital

“BOARDROOM II” • Graphite on Paper / Mac digital



“AHI STAMP” • Custom Type/ Block Print Style / Mac digital

“TRADEWINDS” • Custom Sumi Ink Script / Gouache on Paper / Mac digital



“TRADEWINDS” • Custom Sumi Ink Brush Script / Front Mini-Band





"LEI DAY" • Gouache and Pen on Paper / Mac digital

"CLUB MEMBER" • Custom Vintage Type / Gouache on Paper / Mac digital

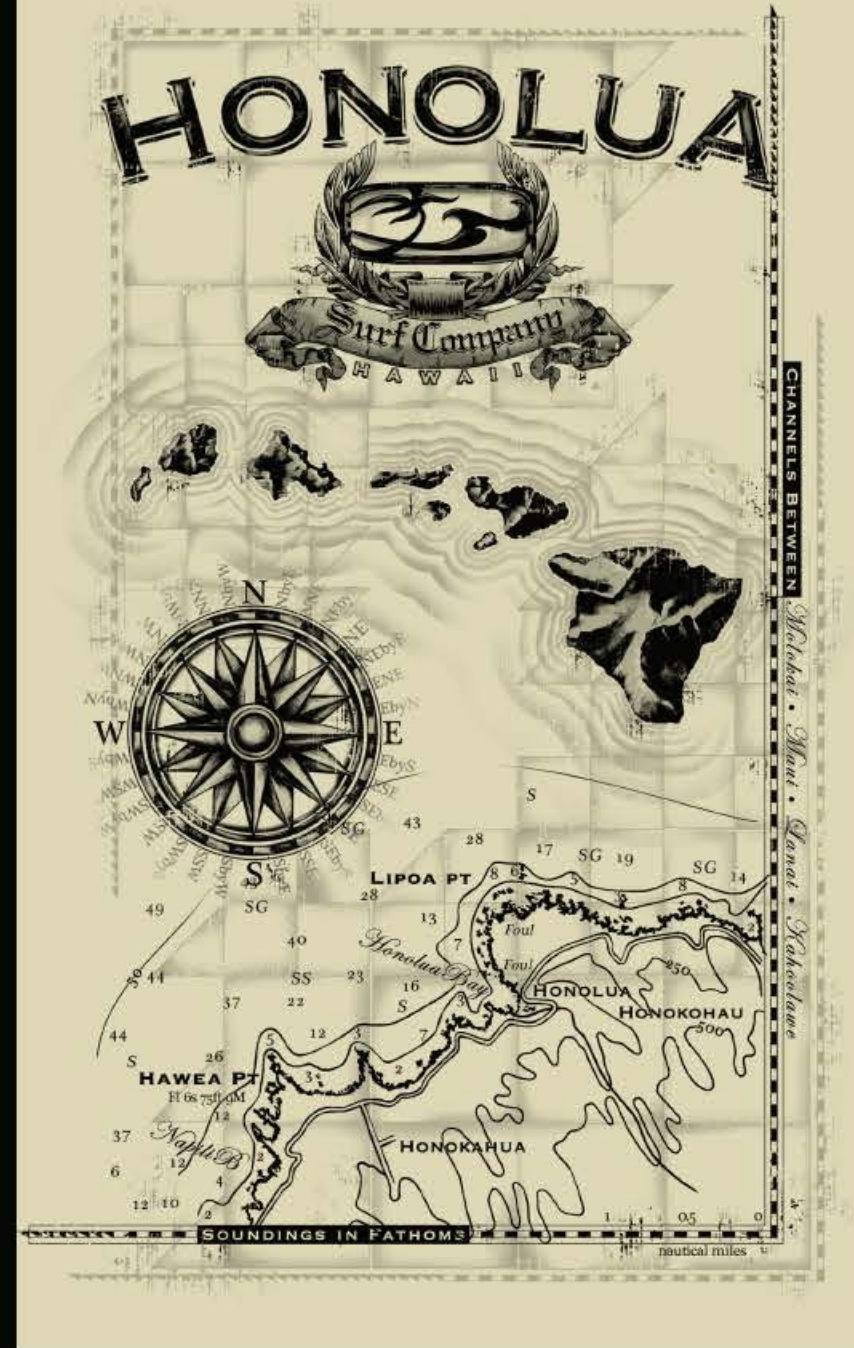
"HAIGHT ASHBURY" • Custom Type-Ink / Gouache on Paper / Mac digital

"HANALEI" • Custom Sumi Ink Brush Script / Gouache on Paper / Mac digital

"AQUARIUM" • Graphite on Paper / Ink Roller / Mac digital



"HONOLUA BOWL" • Gouache on Paper / Mac digital



"FATHOMS" Boardshort Graphic • Gouache on Paper / Mac digital



"ISLAND GROWN" • Gouache on Paper / Mac digital

"QUIVAH" • Gouache on Paper / Mac digital