



Twigonometry

Patrick Dougherty at Hui No'eu Visual Art Center

BY TOM STEVENS

Lowes and Home Depot, stand by. For three weeks in September, visiting environmental sculptor Patrick Dougherty and his Maui volunteers will need several dozen pairs of work gloves for a little back yard project. The yard in question backs the Hui No'eu Visual Arts Center, which has summoned Dougherty from North Carolina to create "the largest work of public art Maui has ever seen."

Not only will it be large; it will be made of guava sticks.

For the past 30 years, across the U.S. and all over the world, Dougherty has built immense and whimsical structures out of saplings, branches and interwoven twigs. Some of these stand several stories tall, although "stand" doesn't really do them justice. They lean, tilt, whirl, caper and commiserate.

Some include Hobbit-like doors and interior tunnels, making them ideal "lair for feral children or wayward adults," as one reviewer put it. Still others seem as formless as twists of smoke or Druidic beards of moss.

So, what will the Hui get?

Nobody knows. You'll just have to come and watch.

Because all his installations are site-specific, Dougherty won't know exactly what he's building until he cases the Hui, meets his volunteers and plunges into the rain forest.

If his 211 other installations are any guide, the Hui piece will be big, elaborate and surprising. It will also be temporary, as the elements reduce

even Dougherty's gnarliest creations to compost in a few years.

While he has worked with everything from bamboo to crab apple, his likely medium this time will be strawberry guava, for a couple of

For the past 30 years, across the U.S. and all over the world, Dougherty has built immense and whimsical structures out of saplings, branches and interwoven twigs. Some of these stand several stories tall, although "stand" doesn't really do them justice. They lean, tilt, whirl, caper and commiserate.

reasons. Firstly, the Hui will use Dougherty's installation to launch its new "Ho'ololi" Environmental Art Garden. As an invasive species rampant in East Maui, strawberry guava will provide a sobering teachable moment in Makawao.

Perhaps more to the point, Dougherty has worked with the material before. His 2003 installation "Na Hale O Waiawi" at the Contemporary Museum in Honolulu used woven strawberry guava to create several massive forms that resembled hula-dancing tree trunks.

Because he does nine installations a year and still needs to get home to his family, the 66-year-old

sculptor can only spend three weeks at each site. He thus depends on his volunteers the way Renaissance masters relied on their apprentices. Generally, the apprenticeship involves wearing pukas in a lot of work gloves. One set of volunteers even broke down their tasks into specialties: leaf strippers, stick weavers, detailers, scaffolders and benders.

As a teacher, Dougherty enjoys problem-solving with student volunteers and adults in an outdoor class that could take its name from one of his pieces: Twigonometry.

"Problems arise every day, so you have to be flexible," he told *The New York Times*. "I like working with sticks, but the process is really a chance to have these bigger learning experiences."

Awaiting those Mauians who accept the Hui's challenge to work alongside Dougherty will be a trove

of useful knowledge, a deep sense of artistic fulfillment, and a blister or two along the way. Readers curious to see how a truckload of sticks becomes a "fantasy forest" are welcome to view the proceedings during the Hui's regular hours, or register to become a volunteer. ■

Clockwise from left:

CLOSE TIES (2006)

Scottish Basketmakers Circle, Dingwall, Scotland.

Photo: Fin Macrae

HEDGING YOUR BETS (2009)

Mulvane Art Museum of Washburn University,

Topeka Kansas

Photo: Peggy Clark

SORTIE DE CAVE/FREE AT LAST (2008)

Jardin des Arts, Chateaubourg, France.

Photo: Charles Crie

SUMMER PALACE (2009)

Morris Arboretum, University of Pennsylvania,

Philadelphia.

Photo: Rob Cardillo



PATRICK DOUGHERTY
Artist in residence at Hui
No'eu Visual Arts Center

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 13

12:00 pm

BROWN BAG LUNCH

Watch Patrick Dougherty and
volunteers build a giant
Stickwork sculpture on
the Kaluanui Estate.

Lunch: \$25 (keiki: \$10)

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 15

5:30 pm

FREE LECTURE & PANEL DISCUSSION

Primitive Ways in an Accelerated
World: w/ Patrick Dougherty

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 22

6:00 – 9:00 pm

DINNER WITH PATRICK DOUGHERTY.

Guided by Patrick Dougherty,
preview the newly completed
sculpture and enjoy pupu
and cocktails under the stars.

Tickets: \$150 (\$110 tax-deductible)

For more info, or to volunteer,
call 572-6560

(pictured above) Patrick Dougherty:
Ruaille Buaille (Highjinx) (2008)
Sculpture in the Parklands In County
Offaly, Ireland. Photo: James Fraher