

IMUA Looking forward to the future

Hawai'i Studio Group - West O'ahu Film Studios, Kapolei

Hawai'i Studio Group comprised of Island Film Group, Hawai'i Media Inc. & Stephen D. Smith with decades of experience in production infrastructure, real estate, and media technology have recently revealed plans for a state-of-the-art private film studio in Kapolei.



The newly unveiled master plan reveals a multi-purpose entertainment campus that is adjacent to the UH West O'ahu campus and its Academy for Creative Media, thereby creating seamless work force development opportunities through internships, training partnerships, and industry-engaged learning. The design features a public-serving town square offering retail, dining, lodging, and office spaces — alongside a secured, world-class studio complex with modern sound stages and production facilities.

Project Highlights

- 34-acre leasehold parcel in Kapolei, O'ahu, adjacent to the UH West O'ahu campus
- Phase One: Four 18,000 sq. ft. paired stages, production offices, mill, and retail/commercial space
- Phase Two: Additional sound stages, office space, production amenities, expanded live/work spaces, and a hotel
- Directly across from the Academy for Creative Media, UH's film and digital media program
- Strategically located near rail transit, the master-planned D.R. Horton Ho'opili community, which includes more than 11,000 new homes, and the growing Kapolei community

Phase One is estimated at \$125m and has a projected opening in Spring 2028.
<https://www.islandfilmgroup.com/hawaii-studio-group>

Film Folio Fun: HFA's very own founding members Ric Galindez and Danny Rosner are a part Hawai'i Studio Group.

Hawai'i Industry News:

HFA Christmas Industry Get-Together

Christmas Industry Get-Together

Date of Event: December 7, 2025

Time: 4pm – 8pm

Location: Moani's Waikiki

Live music & free pupus!! Come to celebrate the holidays, connect, & catch up with HFA and fellow industry members. HFA has been working hard for you and will have a special announcement along with some fun surprises! We look forward to seeing you there!



Wailuku Film Festival:

A warm welcome to newly announced Wailuku Film Festival (WFF) bridging voices and established artists across all formats and genres in four program categories: Hawai'i, Indigenous Voices, Watersports, and Student Films. With the recent conclusion of the Maui Film Festival after a 25-year run, Maui Film Commissioner, Brian Kohne, has curated a four-day celebration of creativity, culture, and community.

Save the Dates: June 18–21, 2026 — Wailuku, Maui, Hawai'i

For festival updates, submission guidelines, and announcements, visit wailukufilm.com or follow @wailukufilmfestival on Instagram and @wailukufilm on Facebook. Filmmakers can now take advantage of the Early Bird discounted film submissions window until Jan 20th!!!

Recognizing Achievements:

HFA would like to recognize 'Ohina Greenlight Award recipient, Katelyn Chong. Annually, 'Ohina offers a workshop for filmmakers to develop short scripts through mentorship with leaders in the industry. The 'Ohina Lab program, hosted at Shangri La & sponsored by Hawai'i Pacific Health provides funds, support, & resources to bring projects to life. Sean Oketani received the Judge's Award winning \$2,500 in support of his script. Mentor Awards recipients are Aukai Ligairi (Mentor, Noah Evslin), Jack Truesdale (Mentor, Jordan Kandell), & Nicholaus Sugai (Mentor, Bryson Chun). Be on the lookout for 2026 call for entries! ohina.org

Also recognizing, Leadership in Disabilities & Achievements in Hawai'i's anti-bullying Short Film campaign winners.

1st Place – Narrative "Click to Change" – from Hawai'i Technology Academy, 7th graders, Aria Cogswell, Eliana Jones, & Jadelynn Yuen

1st Place – Animated "Silent Rebellion"

– Homeschooler, 10th grader, Cortezi Limbert

Greenlit Projects for 2026:

Not only do we have Netflix's 'Untamed' greenlit for 2026 we now have 'Jumanji', Jason Momoa and Andy Sandberg's 'Protecting Jared', HIFF's 'Makawalu', and the indie feature 'Hotel Street'.

Hotel Street, the newest feature from acclaimed Native Hawaiian writer/director Christopher Kahunahana, has officially been greenlit for production in January 2026. A powerful milestone for Hawai'i's independent film community and a much-needed spark of hope for local cast and crew. Blending psychological horror with historical truth, Hotel Street asks a haunting, timely question: Why does history repeat itself? The film confronts America's recurring shadows. From the internment of its own citizens to the suppression of Indigenous and immigrant voices, from sex trafficking to the growing specter of nuclear conflict. These aren't tales from a distant era; they are wounds that continue to resurface, unhealed and urgent. The project is backed by a seasoned Hawai'i based producing team committed to revitalizing local production. Producers include Island Film Group, Hawaii Media Inc., Vince Keala Lucero, and Jason Cutinella of NMG. A coalition ready to champion a story with cultural weight, commercial appeal, and global reach. Hotel Street stands as a reminder of the power of Hawai'i storytelling: bold, relevant, and rising.



Member Spotlight: Ixchel Lopez

Producer/Writer/Director/Actor



Ixchel López is an actor, writer, director, and producer with a passion for creating unique and engaging stories that reflect the extraordinary beneath the ordinary. She is a multidisciplinary artist who transitioned from live theatre, improv, and sketch comedy to screen production. Ixchel is the founder of Olomana Film Productions, a Honolulu-based production company dedicated to uplifting and amplifying Hawai'i creatives. Her film, *Character Breakdown*, which she wrote and directed, recently premiered with the Hawaii Filmmakers Collective after winning grant funds to produce the film. The film is gearing up for the festival circuit in the US and Canada in 2026!

Ixchel has worked as an actor in Film/TV/Stage all over the US, but her favorite credits are right here in Hawai'i. Local credits include Hawai'i Five-O, *The Man and the Tree*, *Parental Consent*, *Vacation Friends 2*, and *Leti Reyes* in the final season of *Magnum, P.I.*, where she was directed by Jay Hernandez. She can also be seen in commercials for Foodland Farms, Subaru Hawai'i, Hawaiian Telcom, HMSA, and in a series of comedic commercials and PSAs for Niu Health, where she got to flex her comedy and improv skills.

As a writer, Ixchel penned the lyrics for *Bobaland*, which won the Audience Favorite Award at the 2022 HFC 48-Hour Film Challenge. She also wrote, produced, and co-directed *Love's Last Lei*, a film showcasing an all-local cast and crew for the 2025 Moverizer Film Challenge. Passionate about uplifting young wahine across the islands, Ixchel teaches performing arts at the Hawai'i School for Girls. Within the film program, she executive produced *Book In Time*, featured at 'Ōpio Fest, and wrote/executive produced *Flowers*.

Ixchel has always been a storyteller at heart, and she is eager to continue expanding her creative work in the film industry. With a strong desire to further develop her craft, she is excited for opportunities that will allow her to bring her stories to new audiences, work with others in the Hawai'i Film Alliance, and help advocate for our industry. www.helloixchel.com

Do you want to be featured next?



Each month, HFA shines a light on one of our incredible members making waves in Hawai'i's film and creative industries. And now we want to feature you next!

If you'd like to be highlighted in our next newsletter and across HFA's socials, send us your bio and a professional photo to social@hawaiiifilmalliance.org. Tell us about your journey, recent projects, or what inspires your work in Hawai'i's growing film community.

We want to get to know you and can't wait to celebrate your story!

Strengthening our Hawai'i Film Alliance

Our goal is to unify our industry so we can move forward with shared purpose and greater efficiency. We're taking on different aspects of the work—from legislation to infrastructure—to create lasting impact.

There are many ways to be a part of this movement. Signing up to receive a copy of our monthly newsletter is one way to stay informed and lend your support. You can also volunteer to join our committees.

- Communications/Social Media
- Website & IT
- Media
- Events

Each committee plays a vital role in shaping the future of film in Hawai'i. If one of these speaks to you, we'd love to have you onboard.

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Share your industry photos!

Whether you're on set, in class, behind the scenes, in the writers' room, or working post, we want to see your world. Help us showcase the incredible talent and hustle happening across Hawai'i's film industry.

Submit your photos to be featured on our website, social media, and future newsletters.

- Send your high-res images to socials@hawaiiifilmalliance.com
- Your name & role
- Project name (if applicable)
- Location
- Any credits you'd like included

Contact

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