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## Isle crafter incorporates jewelry with insect wings

**T**ravis Kimura almost didn't have a choice but to become a crafter. From his days as an infant in the 1980s, he would be at his mother's and his auntie's craft fair booths and just grew up around hand-made items.

His creations are largely inspired by nature and include jewelry, hand-painted caps, crocheted yarn lei, etched glass, tote bags, wooden Christmas ornaments and other personal items.

Among his popular, eye-catching jewelry items are Ear Wings, or earrings incorporating butterfly wings preserved with a process similar to lamination.

Kimura gets his wings from breeders in Hawaii, on the mainland and in South America who sell him just the wings of butterflies that have died of natural causes. "I do not support or promote breeders or farmers that harm, hunt or kill butterflies," he says on his website and affirms in person.

He also makes reversible

pendants that display the wings in lockets he has sealed with epoxy, both to preserve the wing inside and to prevent the wearer from opening the locket, which would cause the wing to fall out. The Ear Wings start at \$20, and the pendants, \$25.

He has been creating the butterfly wing jewelry since 2009, and "I still have people who bought from me the first year and say, 'Look, I'm still wearing them,'" Kimura said.

Because he often is at the almost monthly Waikiki Artfest events including the one this weekend, many of his customers are visitors. It is humbling to him that his made-in-Hawaii creations go home with visitors from around the world.

Finer pieces by Creations by Kimura are made using sterling silver or 14-karat gold-filled wire that he shapes and solders. Some pieces feature South Seas or Tahitian pearls, while others include superpopular sun-rise shells, and range in



price from \$50 up to \$1,000, depending on the cost of materials and amount of his labor.

Kimura will use solid gold for custom orders, by customer request.

"Almost everything I make is adjustable or has an extender chain," and you can wear it in different ways, Kimura said. "It gives you more bang for your buck."

Some soldered wire pendants form the shapes of paw prints, or an octopus, for instance.

"It's my favorite animal," Kimura explains. "It has eight arms, so it can multitask, it camouflages itself, and I like to blend in a lot, and they taste good," he chuckled.

His mother, Stephanie, was among the first crafters on Oahu to craft items from dried protea flowers from Maui, while his Auntie Paulette Ramos made wooden ornaments. "I still have my Power Rangers and



PHOTOS BY CRAIG T. KOJIMA / CKOJIMA@STARADVERTISER.COM

**Hawaii crafter Travis Kimura of Creations by Kimura creates hand-painted caps in addition to jewelry that incorporates butterfly wings.**

Ninja Turtles" that she made, he said.

His late father, David, was a potter who went to high school with noted Oahu potter Jeff Chang, he said.

"Almost everyone in the family" is artistic, he said. When he wasn't at a craft fair, Kimura would go fishing with his father almost every weekend.

His life's passions thus far have been art, cooking and fishing.

His love for animals made him want to be a veterinarian or marine biologist, but as it happens, veterinarians frequently must deal with death, and marine biologists must spend time on the ocean, but Kimura gets seasick.

He went to culinary school but decided he didn't want cooking to be his profession, though "I eventually want to make a cookbook," he said, primarily consisting of his family's recipes. Eventually he would like to open an old-timey, local-style diner, noting that Columbia Inn, Wisteria and Hungry Lion all have closed over the years.

Underneath it all, "I always wanted to be an artist," he said, and has been plying his artistic craft full time for the past two years.

"I get to do what I love, and I'm my own boss, which

### WHERE TO BUY

>> **Queen Emma Summer Palace**

Daughters of Hawaii Gift Shop  
2913 Pali Highway  
Monday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

>> **Waikiki Artfest**

Saturday and Sunday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.  
Kapiolani Park, by the bandstand

>> **Kawaii Kon**

March 27-29  
Hawai'i Convention Center (admission fee)

>> **Aiea High School Family Fun Fair**

April 17, 4 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Aiea High School football field

>> **Online:** creations-bykimura.weebly.com

can be good and bad," he chuckled.

He can tell himself, "I'm going to make stuff on Saturday," but when Saturday arrives, his muse and mojo don't show up for work.

Being a veteran of the craft fair circuit, Kimura has gained a fair amount of knowledge for what sells. Now he likes unisex jewelry and accessories, as well as items intended for guys.

"Buy Local" runs on Aloha Fridays. Reach Erika Engle at 529-4303, erika@staradvertiser.com, or on Twitter as @erikaengle.