



Binakol Blessing flags and banners by artist Lani Asunción installed at the light blades on the Rose Kennedy Greenway. Photo courtesy of Lee-Daniel Tran.

***SONG/LAND/SEA: WAI Water Warning and Binakol Blessing:
New Artwork from Lani Asunción Now on Display on the Rose Kennedy Greenway***

The installation reflects on the climate crisis, coastal flooding, and sea level rise in the context of environmental racism and gentrification.

July 10, 2024 - Boston, MA - [The Rose Kennedy Greenway Conservancy](#) is excited to announce its collaboration with Filipinx interdisciplinary artist Lani Asunción on a new public art installation, *SONG/LAND/SEA: WAI Water Warning and Binakol Blessing*. *Binakol Blessing*, a series of large-scale flags and vinyl banners on The Greenway's light blade structures, is now on display near Rings Fountain, just north of Milk Street. *WAI Water Warning*, a sculpture echoing ancient water clocks, will be on display beginning July 20.

Connecting each of these artworks is the central concept of *WAI*, which translates to 'water' in 'Ōlelo Hawai'i (Hawaiian language). Foundational to Hawaiian culture, *wai* sits at the root of many words associated with value, such as *waiwai*, which means both 'wealth' and 'life force.' Asunción



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calls our attention to *wai* as a warning, a healing blessing, and as a call to collective action toward the changes brought by the climate crisis.

To create the ***Binakol Blessing*** flags, Asunción reworked US military camouflage patterns, layering them with a traditional Ilocano woven *binakol* design from the Philippines. On the adjacent vinyl banners, images of waves from the artist's home state of Hawaii are overlaid with indigo-dyed knotted sailors' rope and a map of downtown Boston showing predicted sea level rise for the year 2070. These designs embody the immensity of the ocean and offer protection against malevolent forces.

WAI Water Clock is a 7-foot tall sculpture featuring a suspended cement vessel, brass bell, sailors' rope, and an etched brass bowl. This design echoes water clocks, a time-keeping technology used by humans for thousands of years to measure time based on the flow and filling of water within a specific-sized vessel. At its center, the vessel in *WAI Water Clock* cradles a nautical bell that viewers can ring using the knotted sailors' rope. Engraved with the word *wai*, the bell forms a visual and sonic water drop—a symbol of lamentation for the futures at stake and of Boston's coastline returning to the sea. Directly below the bell lies a handcrafted brass bowl, etched with a map of Boston's coastline surrounded by a message in binary code reminding us of these cycles of return: *all that is solid melts into air*.

As our earth undergoes rapid transformation, ***SONG/LAND/SEA: Wai Water Warning and Binakol Blessing*** stands as a stark reminder of the profound shifts reshaping the city of Boston.

"We're excited to see the ways in which Asunción's work has developed in response to the specific and unequal effects of climate change on Boston's own coastline and communities. From growing heat islands in Roxbury, Mattapan, and Chinatown, to recent flooding in Dorchester Bay and Downtown Boston, *SONG/LAND/SEA* serves as a reminder of the collective action and resilience needed to survive in a hotter, more extreme future," says Audrey Lopez, Director of Public Art at The Greenway.

To celebrate the opening of Asunción's installation, The Greenway will host a multimedia performance from Asunción on July 25, 2024 (rain date July 26) at 6pm, entitled ***Tabi Tabi Po (May I Pass)***, in collaboration with several local artists, dancers, and musicians. This performance is part of [The Greenway ARTbeat series](#), a seasons-long initiative supported by the Greenway Business Improvement District (Greenway BID) to enhance and expand public art and public programming throughout the entirety of The Greenway.

SONG/ LAND/ SEA: WAI Water Warning will be on display through the summer of 2025. [See more photos here](#) (photo credit: Lee-Daniel Tran).



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About Lani Asunción

Lani Asunción (they/she) is a Filipinx interdisciplinary artist exploring the intricacies of identity and belonging, confronting the inner weaving of intergenerational trauma with ritualized performance and public art that serve as acts of reclamation. Through transmedia storytelling and research, they create socially-conscious work that activates counter narratives of collective resistance to settler colonial foundations and points to collective liberation. Asunción's multimedia practice becomes a conduit for connection and disruption, breaking down barriers and inviting participation. By challenging established narratives and amplifying oppressed and marginalized communities, they seek to create spaces where alternative ethics of care, community healing, and social solidarity can thrive. Asunción comes from the Bay Area in California, Oahu, Hawai'i, Tennessee, and Ryūkyū Islands 琉球列島 (Okinawa, Japan) and is now located on the East Coast residing on the ancestral and unceded lands of the Massachusetts people in the Fort Point Arts District in Boston, MA.

Thanks to Our Supporters

Project support for *SONG/LAND/SEA: WAI Water Warning & Binakol Blessing* is provided by a Neighborhood Activation grant from the Mayor's Office of Arts & Culture with the City of Boston.

Public Art on The Greenway is made possible with major support from the Barr Foundation, Goulston & Storrs, the Greenway Business Improvement District, the Mabel Louise Riley Foundation, Meet Boston, and the Wagner Foundation.

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About The Greenway and the Greenway Conservancy (rosekennedygreenway.org)

The Greenway is a contemporary public park in the heart of Boston. The Greenway welcomes millions of visitors annually to gather, play, unwind, and explore. The Greenway Conservancy is the non-profit responsible for the management and care of The Greenway. The majority of the public park's annual budget is generously provided by private sources.

The Greenway Conservancy Public Art Program brings innovative and contemporary art to Boston through free, seasonal exhibitions that engage people in meaningful experiences, interactions, and dialogue with art, each other, and the most pressing issues of our time. Past Greenway exhibitions can be viewed on the Conservancy's website.

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