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Little Strykers turning up all over the island

By [William Cole](#)
Advertiser Military Writer

Is it art, protest, vandalism or all of the above?

A number of metal cutouts resembling the Army's Stryker vehicle that have been glued down in public places have officials, passers-by and police asking that question.

The 6-inch galvanized steel cutouts, whose outline is that of the armored vehicles, have appeared at Hale'iwa Beach Park, Shark's Cove, in front of the First Hawaiian Bank building, at the statue of Kamehameha the Great, in front of The Honolulu Advertiser building and, most likely, in several other places.

It turns out the cryptic displays, which carry no explanation and feature only a small number stamped on each, are no mystery.

Mat Kubo, an artist whose project is featured in "Hot August Knights" at The Arts at Marks Garage on Nu'uuanu Street, came up with the idea.

Kubo could not be reached for comment yesterday, but in an earlier interview with The Advertiser he said he is gluing 319 of the cutouts — the number of Strykers coming to O'ahu — in places where people congregate "to give the notion that there is this other presence here."

In the interview, Kubo said 25 percent of O'ahu is "off-limits military base," and that figure is growing because of the Stryker vehicles.

"I'm just trying to draw attention to that, and keep that in the public consciousness," he told the newspaper.

There's no question his effort is thought-provoking. One of the issues being contemplated is whether the glued-in-place cutouts amount to vandalism.

"You can't just glue stuff on public property," said Honolulu Police Capt. Frank Fujii. "You cannot just post anything on public property or private property without the owner's permission."

Fujii added there also could be tripping or slipping issues with a plaque affixed to a sidewalk, but he said someone would have to make a complaint, "and then we'll research the law."

Kubo calls his project "Miniature Monuments to Empire." In the previous interview, Kubo said some feel the Strykers are invasive, but individuals also may feel protected by them, and he wanted to "create some dialogue around the subject."

There are lots of opinions to go around.

"This sounds like to me whoever is doing this is vandalizing, because if they are sticking these little metal Strykers to the bottom of the Kamehameha statue with industrial-strength adhesive, that sounds like a vandalism issue," said Schofield Barracks spokesman Kendrick Washington.

"They are looking for taggers (graffiti spray painters) right now, right?" said Troy Griffin, another Schofield spokesman.



Artist Mat Kubo glued a plaque in the shape of a U.S. Army Stryker on the concrete ring that circles the King Kamehameha statue.

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A plaque in the shape of a U.S. Army Stryker light armored vehicle is seen on the edge of the concrete ring that circles the King Kamehameha statue in Honolulu yesterday.

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"I'm kind of pleased that folks are taking it into their own hands to do some creative forms of protest," Kajihiro said.

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Rich Richardson, creative director for Marks Garage, said the Stryker display "is not necessarily a protest. It's to engage people in conversation."

Willem Mosterd, 39, and Harriet Van Schaik, 39, both from Holland, thought the Stryker metal cutout was out of place on a concrete ring encircling the Kamehameha statue across from Iolani Palace.

"I think it's in the same category as graffiti," Mosterd said. "This way, it's very permanent and it will raise costs to get rid of it."

Van Schaik said "it's a good way to express your opinion, but this (statue area) is too beautiful, too historic to do it. He should get another spot."

Mosterd added that in Europe, posters go up, but they also come down pretty easily.

"This (the Stryker plaque) is very permanent," he said.

Freelance writer Victoria Gail White contributed to this report.

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