

Discussion Guide



# American Aloha

A Film by Lisette Marie Flanary and Evann Siebens



[www.pbs.org/pov](http://www.pbs.org/pov)

## Letter From The Filmmakers

NEW YORK, 2003

### **Dear Viewer,**

Often called ‘the Second Hawai’i,’ California is home to the largest number of Hawaiians living outside of the islands and the hula has traveled with them across the Pacific Ocean. For many communities far from home, the hula dance remains a mental, physical, and spiritual way for people—no matter where they live—to connect to Hawaiian culture. *A’ohe pau ka ‘ike i ka halau ho’okahi* is a Hawaiian proverb that expresses that not all knowledge is taught in one school. Over the course of five years of making this film, we met many *kumu hula* (master hula teachers) who shared their stories of teaching Hawaiian traditions and culture through the hula dance in California. They opened up their schools, homes, and personal lives to us as we began our journey of documenting the Hawaiian community living on the mainland.

*Why would you ever leave paradise?* This is a common question posed to many people who have left Hawai’i and the answers echo similar reasons. Searching for better opportunities, large numbers of Hawaiians have left the islands in pursuit of education, jobs, affordable housing, or simply a better life. Perhaps to the seven million tourists who travel to Hawai’i for a tropical vacation every year, the islands seem a paradise. For those that call Hawai’i home, it is difficult to reconcile the love they have for their homeland with the economic reality of a cost of living that continues to escalate, rendering the ‘American dream’ out of reach.

Our three *kumu hula* portrayed in the film say so much about the past, present, and future of Hawai’i. Yet, the three different master teachers all have one thing in common: a dedication to perpetuating Hawaiian culture outside of the islands and into the future. This film is a strong testament to the growing sense of empowerment felt by the large and vibrant Hawaiian community living on the mainland. In addition to the three featured *kumu hula* and their *halau* (schools), there are hundreds of other teachers and thousands of students throughout the United States and even internationally who are continuing the renaissance of Hawaiian culture that began in the islands in the 1970s. For the last 30 years, a cultural revival has taken root and blossomed far beyond its origins. The hula dance is a living tradition that continues to evolve today.

When Evann and I began a production company together in 1998, we created a unique team that combined our strengths and passions. As a professional dancer, Evann’s expertise in making films about dance truly captured the beauty of the hula on camera. Being born and raised on the mainland, I also felt a special bond with the community. As a result, I started dancing hula in New York City. Evann and I had a responsibility, both as filmmakers and dancers, to maintain the integrity of the dance and culture, but we were also challenged with battling the popular stereotypes of ‘grass skirts’ that have been ingrained in the American consciousness through the media and movies.

At screenings where we have presented the film, we are inevitably asked why we chose to make a film that features *kumu hula* on the mainland rather than in Hawai’i. While there have been many films about hula in Hawai’i, this is the first film to explore the Hawaiian community living away from the islands and how the hula dance acts as a catalyst to bring people together in celebration of their heritage. We hope that this film will be meaningful to both islanders on and off the islands and also create a dialogue about the Hawaiian Diaspora.

Often times, the mainland community feels that they are judged as not as authentic by the Islanders back home. We believe that culture isn’t *where* you are, but *who* you are. Cultural identity and authenticity are issues of debate facing many cultures today and we hope that a deeper understanding of the challenges of perpetuating one’s culture away from one’s homeland will resonate for all who watch this film.

*Me ke aloha pumehana,*

**Lisette Marie Flanary and Evann Siebens**



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### Orthography

Technical inconsistencies prevent us from including the kahako / macron symbol in Hawaiian words to represent lengthened vowels in Hawaiian language. We do use the 'okina, which is represented by an apostrophe, to indicate the glottal stop. Both symbols are used in contemporary orthography, because the use of vowel lengthening and glottal stops in pronunciation can alter the meanings of words. Readers are advised to consult the Hawaiian Dictionary by Mary Kawena Pukui and Samuel Elbert (University of Hawai'i Press, 1986) and Place Names of Hawai'i by Mary Kawena Pukui, Samuel H. Elbert and Esther T. Mookini (University Press of Hawai'i, 1974), for authoritative pronunciations.

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## Program Description

For Hawaiians, the hula is not just a dance, but also a way of life. While most Americans know only the stereotypes of grass skirts and coconut bras, the hula is a living tradition that tells of the rich history and spirituality of Hawai'i through music, language, and dance. The present interest in the hula tradition is a result of a vibrant cultural renaissance that began in the late 1960s and early 1970s. However, because indigenous traditions now coexist alongside highly commodified entertainment, hula's history has left the Hawaiian community deeply divided over issues of definition, cultural authority, and identity politics.

*American Aloha: Hula Beyond Hawai'i* follows yet another chapter in hula's existence, that of its practice within communities of Native Hawaiians, the indigenous descendants of Hawai'i's original settlers, who have moved away from Hawai'i. Through a focus on three *kumu hula* (master instructors) who direct three hula schools based in California, the film explores the challenges of these groups to perpetuate hula faithfully, from the very traditional to the contemporary, as it evolves on distant shores. *American Aloha: Hula Beyond Hawai'i* is a reminder of the power of claiming tradition within communities creating a home away from home.

### Kuma Hula Featured in *American Aloha*



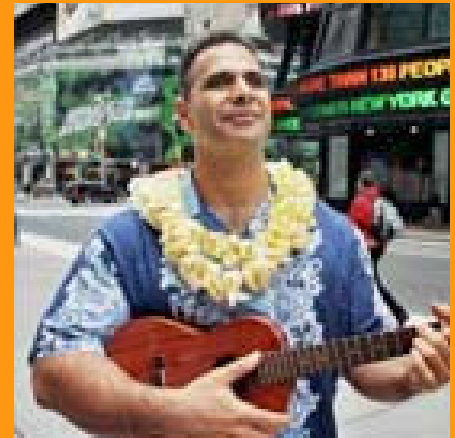
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## Key Issues

In addition to the obvious connections to the culture and history of Hawai'i, *American Aloha: Hula Beyond Hawai'i* will be of interest to anyone engaged in examining:

- **Dance as cultural expression**
- **Cultural preservation, perpetuation, and innovation**
- **Rights of indigenous populations**
- **Pacific Islander American, Asian American, and Native American communities**
- **Multi-ethnic and multicultural communities**

## Potential Partners

*American Aloha: Hula Beyond Hawai'i* is well suited for use in a variety of settings and is especially recommended for use with:

- **Your local PBS station**
- **Community organizations with a mission to promote education and learning such as P.O.V.'s national partners Elderhostel Learning in Retirement Centers, members of the Listen Up! network, or your local library.**
- **Museums and cultural institutions**
- **Dance schools: Find a hula class at Hawaiian Music Island [www.mele.com/halau.shtml](http://www.mele.com/halau.shtml)**

### **Hawaiian Civic Clubs and Cultural Organizations:**

- **For Southern California and Las Vegas go to [www.alohaworld.com](http://www.alohaworld.com).**
- **For the Hawaiian Inter-Club Council of Southern California go to [www.hiccsc.org](http://www.hiccsc.org)**
- **For the San Francisco Bay Area go to <http://pw1.netcom.com/~halkop/orgs.html>.**
- **For the Boston and New England go to [www.kalena.com/hawaiian\\_culture\\_boston.html](http://www.kalena.com/hawaiian_culture_boston.html)**
- **For the New York city Metro area go to [www.kalena.com/hawaiian\\_culture\\_nyc.html](http://www.kalena.com/hawaiian_culture_nyc.html)**

## Background Information

### HAWAI'I TIMELINE

- 2000 BC** Initial settlement of Hawaiian Islands by seafaring people from the south
- 1778** Arrival of British Captain James Cook opens the islands to contact from outside
- 1820** American Protestant missionaries begin converting Hawaiians to Christianity
- 1840s** Reform of land tenure system begins to disrupt traditional patterns of residence and access to resources
- 1874-1891** Reign of King David Kalakaua, who encouraged a revival of hula and other indigenous traditions nearly decimated after decades of missionary-inspired censure
- 1893** A group of American businessmen seize control of the government
- 1894** A Republic of Hawai'i is declared
- 1898** Hawai'i is annexed to the United States
- 1921** U.S. Congress passes the Hawaiian Homes Act
- 1941** Pearl Harbor is bombed, launching the United States into World War II
- 1959** Hawai'i is granted statehood
- 1970s** Vigorous renaissance of Hawaiian cultural traditions during a movement to assert ethnic identity as a positive rather than negative force
- 1993** President Bill Clinton issues a formal apology for the overthrow of Hawai'i's monarchy by American businessmen



## Background Information

### HULA

A hula dance is a choreographed interpretation of a poetic text. At the heart of a hula performance is the poetic text called *mele*; without a poetic text, there is no basis for the choreographed movement interpretation. Body movements combine pictorial hand and arm gestures with rhythmic lower-body patterns that are named.

The hula tradition is far more than just the dance. In fact, dances are the visual end products of a comprehensive cultural system presided over by hula's patron goddess, Laka. Religious rituals dedicated to Laka surround the training of dancers. The life of a hula dancer is permeated with prayers, offerings, and protocol. The plants used on the hula altar are also the basis for the lei adornments worn by dancers.

The term *haku mele* describes the process of poetic composition as weaving (*haku*) a poetic text. Poets are experts with deep knowledge of the Hawaiian language and its penchant for metaphor. A skillful poet is one who deftly weaves together metaphors of places and allusions to people, using images of nature. A *mele*, then, is a poetic text rich with *kaona*—multiple layers of meanings. Common techniques in love songs include referring to a person as a flower, and invoking water images—waterfalls, waves, streams, etc.—to describe lovemaking.

The dedication of much traditional hula repertoire to gods and ruling chiefs (who, in traditional Hawaiian society, were regarded as descendants of the gods on earth) has cloaked much of the hula tradition with an aura of sacredness. Yet from its beginnings in mythic antiquity, the hula has always also been a form of entertainment. One of the earliest recorded accounts

of hula is in the epic myth of the volcano goddess Pele. In it, her younger sister Hi'iaka learns a dance from her friend, and performs it to Pele's delight. (The Kanaka'ole family of Hilo, Hawai'i, is the guardian of traditional repertoire related to Pele; their theatrical presentation of this repertoire was broadcast nationally on PBS' *Dance in America* series in October 2001. To learn more about this program see the resource section on page 17)

After American Protestant missionaries converted Hawaiians to Christianity in the 1820s, the rituals of hula were maintained only in secret and by very few performers. The hula itself survived because its adherents maintained it underground, out of the sphere of missionary censure and suppression. In the 1870s, King David Kalakaua encouraged a revival of hula, and public performances flourished throughout the 1880s and 1890s.

By the early 1900s, the transformation of hula into general entertainment coincided with the rise of tourism. A new form of song that incorporated stringed instrument accompaniment and tuneful melodies, and subsequently the adoption of English-language lyrics, eclipsed in popularity the older chanted tunes accompanied solely by indigenous percussive instruments. This newer, westernized style of hula circulated widely, and eventually was subjected to distorted stereotypes in media and Hollywood movies that continue even today.

A roots-inspired revival of hula in the 1970s has brought about a coexistence of the older indigenous style of hula, now called *hula kahiko*, alongside the widely-recognized westernized style of hula now called *hula 'auana*. The basic features defining these two contrasting categories are listed on the following page:



## Background Information

### HULA KAHIKO

“ancient”

indigenous performance style

tunes are chanted

tunes are often not very melodious

multiple voices chant in unison

accompaniment is by indigenous percussive instruments

movement style of dance is vigorous

costuming is indigenous; may also imitate late 19th century photographs that show traditional skirts over western attire

### HULA ‘AUANA

“modern”

westernized performance style

tunes are sung

tunes are melodious

multiple voices harmonize

accompaniment is by stringed instruments such as guitar, ‘ukulele, piano, bass, etc.

movement style is softer, fluid, languid

costuming is often western apparel

Hula troupes are groups that represent privately run schools called *halau*. The director is a master instructor called a *kumu hula* who is responsible for all aspects of training, costuming, and presenting dancers onstage. Many *kumu hula* conduct extensive research on the background of poetic texts, and aspire to cultivate awareness among their students of the rich legacy of Hawaiian history passed to the present in poetic mele, and kept alive in the performance of hula.

### HAWAIIANS AT “HOME” ON THE MAINLAND

Most imagine Hawaiians and Hawaiian communities as residing solely in Hawai'i. However, Hawaiian communities have migrated to and settled on the continental U.S. mainland in increasing numbers for the last six

decades. According to the 2000 U.S. Census there are more Native Hawaiians living on the U.S. mainland than in Hawai'i. There is even historical evidence suggesting that Hawaiians began emigrating to the U.S. mainland as early as the late 1700s for economic survival.

Since the 1950s, Hawaiians have created growing communities in British Columbia, Mexico, Europe, and the continental U.S. mainland (e.g., in northern and southern California, Washington, Colorado, Florida, Arizona, Illinois, New York, Nevada, Texas, Utah, Oregon, and Virginia) (Office of Hawaiian Affairs, 2000). Such development of Hawaiian diasporic communities has occurred largely through Hawaiian civic clubs, canoe clubs, and *hula halau*. The goal of these associations and clubs originally was to form a haven for newly resettled Hawaiians away from “home.” However, since the 1970s, these groups have taken the lead in fostering Hawaiian cultural pride and establishing yet another



## Background Information

er home site for Hawaiians who have been dispossessed from and economically forced out of Hawai'i. Mainland Hawaiians have also raised new generations of Hawaiian youth who are enculturated into their Hawaiianness through mainland Hawaiian community life, namely Hawaiian civic clubs and *halau*. Thus, mainland Hawaiians have both refashioned and invigorated Hawaiian cultural identity in a way that is uniquely different from and yet continuous with Hawaiian practices back in Hawai'i. This is perhaps most evident in the mainland *hula halau*, the subject of *American Aloha: Hula Beyond Hawai'i*.

### **GLOSSARY OF HAWAIIAN TERMS USED IN AMERICAN ALOHA: HULA BEYOND HAWAI'I**

**'aina** – land

**aloha** – love, affection; greetings, salutation

**'aumakua** – ancestral family spirit

**halau** – school

**haumana** – student

**hula** – dance,

**hula 'auana** – “modern dance,” i.e., dance using flowing and languid movements, and accompanied by westernized song and instruments

**hula kahiko** – “ancient dance,” i.e., dance using vigorous and bombastic movements, and accompanied by indigenous percussive instruments

**kaona** – layers of hidden meaning in Hawaiian-language poetry

**keiki** – child

**kumu** – source, foundation

**kumu hula** – hula master; literally, one who is a source of knowledge of hula

**kupuna** – elder; grandparent

**maika'i** – good

**makana** – gift

**mana** – power, life force

**mele** – a poetic text; also its performed rendition as song

**Na Mo'i Hawai'i** – the ruling monarchs of the Hawaiian Kingdom, 1810-1893

**'ohana** – family, related by blood, marriage, or adoption

**Palama** – a place of enlightenment

## Using This Guide

**This guide is designed to help you use *American Aloha* as the centerpiece of a community event. It contains suggestions for organizing an event as well as ideas for how to help a very wide range of audience participants. Rather than attempt to address them all, choose one or two that best meet the needs and interests of your group.**

### Planning an Event

In addition to showcasing documentary films as an art form, screenings of P.O.V. films can be used to present information, get people interested in taking action on an issue, provide opportunities for people from different groups or perspectives to exchange views, and/or create space for reflection. Using the questions below as a planning checklist will help ensure a high quality/high impact event.

- ***Have you defined your goals?*** With your partner(s), set realistic goals. Will you host a single event or engage in an ongoing project? Being clear about your goals will make it much easier to structure the event, target publicity, and evaluate results.
- ***Does the way you are planning to structure the event fit your goals?*** Do you need an outside facilitator, translator, or sign language interpreter? If your goal is to share information, are there local experts on the topic who should be present? How large an audience do you want? (Large groups are appropriate for information exchanges. Small groups allow for more intensive dialogue.)
- ***Is the event being held in a space where all participants will feel equally comfortable?*** Is it wheelchair accessible? Is it in a part of town that's easy to reach by various kinds of transportation? If you are bringing together different constituencies, is it neutral territory? Does the physical configuration allow for the kind of discussion you hope to have?
- ***Will the room set up help you meet your goals?*** Is it comfortable? If you intend to have a discussion, can people see one another? Are there spaces to use for small break out groups? Can everyone easily see the screen and hear the film? If you plan to invite dancers, is there space for them to dance?
- ***Have you scheduled time to plan for action?*** Planning next steps can help people leave the room feeling energized and optimistic, even when the discussion has been difficult. Action steps are especially important for people who already have a good deal of experience talking about the issue(s) on the table. For those who are new to the issue(s), just engaging in public discussion serves as an action step.

## Facilitating a Discussion

**Controversial or unusual topics often make for excellent discussions. By their nature, those same topics also give rise to deep emotions and strongly held beliefs. As a facilitator, you can create an atmosphere where people feel safe, encouraged, and respected, making it more likely that they will be willing to share openly and honestly. Here's how:**

### Preparing yourself:

**Identify your own hot button issues.** View the film before your event and give yourself time to reflect so you aren't dealing with raw emotions at the same time that you are trying to facilitate a discussion.

**Be knowledgeable.** You don't need to be an expert in hula or Hawaiian culture to facilitate a discussion, but knowing the basics can help you keep a discussion on track and gently correct misstatements of fact. If you need more background information than is included in the beginning of this guide, look over the resources listed on p. 17 and 18.

**Be clear about your role.** You may find yourself taking on several roles for an event, e.g., host, organizer, projectionist. If you are also planning to serve as facilitator, be sure that you can focus on that responsibility and avoid distractions during the discussion. Keep in mind that being a facilitator is not the same as being a teacher. A teacher's job is to convey specific information. In contrast, a facilitator remains neutral, helping move along the discussion without imposing their views on the dialogue.

**Know your group.** Issues can play out very differently for different groups of people. Is your group new to the issue or have they dealt with it before? Factors like geography, age, race, religion, and socioeconomic class, can all have an impact on comfort levels, speaking styles, and prior knowledge. If you are bringing together different segments of your community, we strongly recommend hiring an experienced facilitator.

### Finding a Facilitator

Some university professors, human resource professionals, clergy, and youth leaders may be specially trained in facilitation skills. In addition to these local resources, nonprofit arts organizations or Hawaiian civic clubs may be able to refer you to experienced and available facilitators.



Photo: Lisette Marie Flanary

*Dancers representing the Hawaiian court open the performance celebration (Ho'olaulea) in Southern California*

## Facilitating a Discussion

### Preparing the group:

**Consider how well group members know one another.** If you are bringing together people who have never met, you may want to devote some time at the beginning of the event for introductions.

**Agree to ground rules around language.** Involve the group in establishing some basic rules to ensure respect and aid clarity. Typically such rules include no yelling or use of slurs and asking people to speak in the first person (“I think...”) rather than generalizing for others (“Everyone knows that...”).

**Ensure that everyone has an opportunity to be heard.** Be clear about how people will take turns or indicate that they want to speak. Plan a strategy for preventing one or two people from dominating the discussion. If the group is large, are there plans to break into small groups or partners, or should attendance be limited?

**Talk about the difference between dialogue and debate.** In a debate, participants try to convince others that they are right. In a dialogue, participants try to understand each other and expand their thinking by sharing viewpoints and listening to each other actively. Remind people that they are engaged in a dialogue.

**Encourage active listening.** Ask the group to think of the event as being about listening, as well as discussing. Participants can be encouraged to listen for things that challenge as well as reinforce their own ideas. You may also consider asking people to practice formal “active listening,” where participants listen without interrupting the speaker, then re-phrase to see if they have heard correctly.

**Remind participants that everyone sees through the lens of their own experience.** Who we are influences how we interpret what we see. So everyone in the group may have a different view about the content and meaning of film they have just seen, and all of them may be accurate. It can help people to understand one another’s perspectives if people share their views and identify the evidence on which they base their opinion.

**Take care of yourself and group members.** If the intensity level rises, pause to let everyone take a deep breath. You might also consider providing a safe space to “vent,” perhaps with a partner or in a small group of familiar faces. If you anticipate that your topic may upset people, be prepared to refer them to local support agencies and/or have local professionals present.

## General Discussion Questions

Immediately after the film, you may want to give people a few quiet moments to reflect on what they have seen. You may want to pose a general question and give people some time to jot down or think about their response before opening the discussion. It is generally advisable not to have a break between the film and the discussion, unless you think participants are so uncomfortable that they can't engage until they have had a break. If you save your break for an appropriate moment during the discussion, you won't lose the feeling of the film as you begin your dialogue.

One way to get a discussion going is to pose a general question such as:

- **Does the hula shown in *American Aloha: Hula Beyond Hawai'i* surprise you?**
- **If you called a friend to tell them what this film was about, how could you summarize it in 25 words or less?**
- **What new insights or knowledge did you gain from this film?**
- **How would you explain the meaning of the title of the film *American Aloha: Hula Beyond Hawai'i*?**



## Discussion Questions

### ON THE HULA

- Sissy Kaio describes hula as “a way of life.” What do you think she meant? What performance traditions do you know that can also be described as a way of life?
- All three *kumu hula* are Native Hawaiian i.e., indigenous descendents of Hawai’i’s aboriginal settlers. After watching the film, what do you think the hula means to each of them? Do you see similarities and differences in their perspectives?
- What are some of the challenges facing *kumu hula* who teach hula outside Hawai’i?

### ON HAWAIIAN SOCIETY & LOCATION

- Native Hawaiians are descendants of aboriginal settlers who arrived in the islands over 2000 years ago. Yet two centuries of subsequent settling of peoples from the United States, Europe, and Asia has resulted in a multicultural population in Hawai’i. All three *kumu hula* discuss how their being Native Hawaiian is inextricably related to their commitment to hula. How important do you think it is that people who perpetuate Hawaiian culture be Native Hawaiian?
- All three *kumu hula* talk about their decisions to leave Hawai’i for educational and employment opportunities. How important do you think it is that people who perpetuate the hula be based in Hawai’i?
- Sissy Kaio demonstrates eloquently the kind of close spiritual relationship that Hawaiians develop with meaningful places: “Here on the mainland, we’ve found this special place—a sacred place—we named it *Palama* [which means a place of enlightenment]. We’ve taken a long journey, but we still look out westerly to our home in Hawai’i.” What meaning might Hawai’i have to a Native Hawaiian child of indigenous descent who was born in California and has never been to Hawai’i? What meaning might Hawai’i have to a non-native child born there?

- How do you think a cultural tradition, like hula, that is grounded in a specific place, can change in its meaning outside the place in which it was created? How do you think changing locations (for example, performing hula on the mainland) might influence the dance and its role in the culture?

- Although much of the hula tradition continues to be surrounded by ritual practices rooted in the indigenous (i.e., pre-Christian) religious system, many modern hula dancers identify as Christians. Is there a contradiction between praying to the Christian God and dancing to Laka, a non-Christian goddess?

### ON CULTURE, PRESERVATION, AND INNOVATION

- Hula owes its existence to people in Hawai’i, yet it is being carried on by people who now live on the “mainland”—the continental United States. Do you think that hula masters on the mainland are draining creative energy and resources away from the islands? Or are they adding to the culture by helping it expand?
- Mark Ho’omalulu says “Today is complex, so hula is complex too. And anybody who wants to stop that is not perpetuating the hula. They’re preserving the past and the past belongs in the past. You can honor it, and review it. But if you are going to live there, let me get my shovel ‘cause I need to bury you where you belong.” Do you agree or disagree?
- Patrick Makuakane asserts that “[The hula] is a dance that comes from a very rich involved tradition.” What are the implications of having people perform hula in films, tourist venues, or at private parties without understanding the meanings of specific moves, or the significance of the overall dance?
- Some of the hula masters who have chosen to innovate say that the authenticity of their work has been called into question. How would you determine what makes an authentic hula (or any other traditional dance)? Who should get to decide?

## Discussion Questions

- Within the hula community there is a debate about how best to preserve tradition. Some believe that you should perform a dance exactly the way that it has been taught traditionally, and that to do otherwise is disrespectful. Others believe that the only way to keep tradition alive is to innovate. How do you think that your family or community traditions should best be preserved?

### **ON POLITICS & HISTORY**

- Patrick Makuakane says, “In 1893, Hawai‘i’s last monarch, Queen Lili‘uokalani, was overthrown by a provisional government comprised mainly of American businessmen, many of whom were descendants of missionaries.” In 1993, President Bill Clinton signed into law a congressional bill that apologized to the Hawaiian people for the takeover by Americans, and the annexation of the islands in 1898 without a vote by Hawai‘i’s people. Is it possible to undo a century of social and cultural transformation in Hawai‘i?
- What has been the impact of the American presence in Hawai‘i on the indigenous culture of Hawaiians?
- For Native Hawaiians, a Hawaiian identity is based on indigenous descent. How does this compare to an identity that is based on one’s residence in a state? Or in a territory like Guam, or a commonwealth like Puerto Rico? How does a Native Hawaiian identity compare with being a Native American, or an American Indian? How does the status of Native Hawaiians compare with immigrant groups in the United States?

### **ON CULTURAL EXPRESSION IN YOUR LIFE**

- Discuss the range of age, gender, and body types among the dancers shown in the film. How do these people correspond to your conceptions of a “dancer”?
- Mark Ho‘omalulu says that hula master Uncle George Na‘ope “described hula as the innermost expression of yourself, the poetry put into motion.” Mark also says “It’s a great way of expressing yourself and I think it is a common thing for all cultures to do.” How do you express your innermost self? What cultural messages have you received about acceptable and unacceptable ways of expressing yourself?
- Sissy Kaio says that there is nothing that can replace the land back home because “our ancestors lived there, died there.” What kind of attachment do you have to the land where you were born or where you now live? What role does land play in your identity?
- Patrick Makuakane explained that hula “taught me about my Hawaiianness. It opened this door to my past that I never had before.” How do dance and music connect people to their heritage? What role do music and dance play in preserving cultures? What happens to a culture that is denied access to its dance or music?
- Jane Kuniyoshi observes that whenever she hears Hawaiian music, “I think of Hawai‘i and automatically I’m there.” What kind of music transports you to other places? How does music express or reflect the culture in which it was composed? What does current American popular music suggest about American culture?



## Taking Action

- Compile a list of Hollywood films that include stereotyped or inaccurate performances of hula. Craft a disclaimer to run at the beginning of those films explaining that it does not accurately depict the dance. Share your list with networks that air films and ask that the titles you have identified be eliminated from their play list or broadcast with your disclaimer.
- Look at jackets of CDs, LP records, and sheet music from various decades. Check out some of the numerous websites with thumbnail images of Hawaiian music products. Antique stores and thrift shops are also great places to find discarded souvenirs. Discuss how Hawaiians and the hula are represented in the images. Some places to look are:

**CD thumbnails at Hawaiian Music Island:**

[www.mele.com](http://www.mele.com)

**Sheet music covers at hulapages.com:**

[www.hulapages.com/covers\\_1.htm](http://www.hulapages.com/covers_1.htm)

**Hawaiian Nostalgia Prints at Hawaiian Days:**

<http://hawaiiandays.com/index2.htm>

**Vinyl LP thumbnails at Haku's House of Jump and Rattle:**

[www.hakushouse.com/hawaii.html](http://www.hakushouse.com/hawaii.html)

**Vintage Hawaiiana 1860-1960 at Susan Mast Enterprises:**

[www.hawaiiana-shop.com](http://www.hawaiiana-shop.com)

- Locate and share general magazine articles on hosting luau-themed parties. Then write or email magazine editors to suggest how Hawaiian-themed parties might be represented instead.
- Locate stereotyped images of hula in advertising, and contact store managers and corporate management to express concern over the kinds of damage that such stereotyping could do.

- Sponsor a performance by a local *hula halau* that includes explanations of the dance's meaning and origin. There are websites online that include Hawaiian-language song lyrics with translation such as Nahenahe: Sweet Melodies of Hawai'i at <http://nahenahe.ksbe.edu> Download and circulate lyrics and translation to one or more songs, to both performers and audience.
- Find out what your school district teaches about Hawai'i. Work together with teachers and administrators to infuse the curriculum with information that includes and respects Hawai'i's indigenous population and traditions.



## Resources

### **P.O.V.'s *American Aloha* Website**

[www.pbs.org/pov/americanaloha](http://www.pbs.org/pov/americanaloha)

### **Learn More About Hula**

Hula is the way Hawaiians have passed down stories and legends throughout the ages. Learn more about the *hula kahiko* (“ancient”) and *hula 'auana* (modern — Westernized) styles in our multimedia presentation and read about the *kaona* or multiple meanings of three *mele* (poetic texts) in the “Heart of Hula” section.

### **“Bashfulness Should be Left at Home”**

Hawaiian was not a written language until the 19th century, so much of Hawaiian cultural history is collected in oral traditions. Hear for yourself by listening to this collection of Hawaiian proverbs.

### **Aloha on the Mainland**

With the cost of living in Hawai'i estimated at 27 percent higher than the continental United States, large numbers of Hawaiians have left the islands to pursue professional and educational opportunities. Find out more about these vibrant communities of Hawaiians living away from home.

### **Behind the Lens**

Filmmaker Lisette Marie Flanary and Evann Siebens talk about what inspired them to make *American Aloha*, their goals for the film and the challenges of integrating historical context into a film about current-day events.

### **EXPLORE HAWAI'I'S HISTORY AND THE CONTEMPORARY STATUS OF NATIVE HAWAIIANS**

#### **A Brief History of the Hawaiian Islands 300AD – 1900**

[www.deephawaii.com/hawaiianhistory.htm](http://www.deephawaii.com/hawaiianhistory.htm)

#### **Hawai'i – Independent and Sovereign**

[www.hawaii-nation.org/](http://www.hawaii-nation.org/)

#### **Links to Hawaiian Sovereignty and Culture Resources on the Web**

[www.hawaii-nation.org/links.html](http://www.hawaii-nation.org/links.html)

### **FIND OUT MORE ABOUT HAWAIIANS ON THE MAINLAND:**

#### **U.S. Census Bureau links to information on Asian Pacific American populations**

[www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/race/api.html](http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/race/api.html)

#### **Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander Population: 2000**

[www.census.gov/prod/2001pubs/mso01nhpi.pdf](http://www.census.gov/prod/2001pubs/mso01nhpi.pdf)

#### **“Mainland Hawaiian Events”-an events calendar maintained by AlohaWorld.com**

<http://alohaworld.com/cgi-bin/suite/calendar/calendar.cgi>

#### **Hawaiians Abroad**

[www.hawaiiansabroad.com](http://www.hawaiiansabroad.com)

#### **Aloha Worldwide at *Honolulu Star Bulletin***

<http://starbulletin.com/aloha>

### **LEARN MORE ABOUT HULA TRADITIONS:**

#### **The Hula Pages**

[www.geocities.com/~olelo/hula.html](http://www.geocities.com/~olelo/hula.html)

#### **Huapala Hawaiian Music and Hula Archives**

[www.huapala.org/](http://www.huapala.org/)

***Holo Mai Pele: A Mythic Hawaiian Tale of Love and Revenge* Website for PBS Dance in America presentation “*Holo Mai Pele*” by Hilo’s acclaimed Halau o Kekuhi, broadcast nationally in October 2001.**

[www.pbs.org/holomaipele/](http://www.pbs.org/holomaipele/)

## Resources

### LEARN MORE ABOUT THE HAWAIIAN LANGUAGE:

The Hawaiian Language Website

[www.geocities.com/~olelo](http://www.geocities.com/~olelo)

Hawaiian Glossary—contains sound files with oral translations by Aletha Kaohi and E. Kalani Flores

[www.aloha-hawaii.com/hawaii\\_magazine/hawaiian/index.shtml](http://www.aloha-hawaii.com/hawaii_magazine/hawaiian/index.shtml)

Kualono – Univ. of Hawai'i – Hilo Hawaiian Language website

[www.olelo.hawaii.edu/](http://www.olelo.hawaii.edu/)

### WATCH MORE HULA DANCING:

Virtual Festival: Hula in Hawai'i Sponsored by the Smithsonian Institution Office of Folklife, this page includes two clips of hula 'auana.

[www.folklife.si.edu/vfest/hawaii/hula.htm#kahiko](http://www.folklife.si.edu/vfest/hawaii/hula.htm#kahiko)

Merrie Monarch Hula Festival

[www.thehawaiiichannel.com/hulafest/](http://www.thehawaiiichannel.com/hulafest/)

### SUGGESTED VIDEOTAPES AND DVDS

*Hawai'i: Songs of Aloha.* Produced for PBS by SDR Films. 2000.

*Kumu Hula: Keepers of a Culture.* Produced by Vicky Holt Takamine and Robert Mugge. 1989.

*Merrie Monarch Festival.* Highlights from the annual television broadcast of this premiere event are offered for sale; see KITV Channel 4 <http://www.the-hawaiiichannel.com/hulafest/> for ordering information.

### GET AN UPDATE ON THE HULA HALAU:

Academy of the Hawaiian Arts,  
Kumu Hula Mark Keali'i Ho'omalulu  
[www.academyofhawaiianarts.com](http://www.academyofhawaiianarts.com)

Hula Halau 'O Lilinoe and Na Pua Me Kealoh,  
Kumu Hula-Sissy Kaio Kaio

<http://members.aol.com/HalauOlilinoe>

Na Lei Hulu I Ka Wekiu, Kumu Hula -  
Patrick Makuakane

[www.naleihulu.org](http://www.naleihulu.org)

### What's Your P.O.V.?

*P.O.V.'s online Talking Back Tapestry is a colorful, interactive representation of your feelings about American Aloha. Listen to other P.O.V. viewers talk about the film and add your thoughts by calling 1-800-688-4768.*

[www.pbs.org/pov/talkingback](http://www.pbs.org/pov/talkingback)

### SUGGESTED READING:

Deborah Wei and Rachel Kamel, Eds. *Resistance in Paradise: Rethinking 100 Years of U.S. Involvement in the Caribbean and the Pacific* (American Friends Service Committee and Office of Curriculum Support, School District of Philadelphia, 1998).

Dorothy B. Barrere, Mary Kawena Pukui and Marion Kelly. *Hula: Historical Perspectives* (Bishop Museum, 1980).

Rona Tamiko Halualani. *In the Name of Hawaiians: Native Identities and Cultural Politics* (Univ. of Minnesota Press, 2002).

Paul Spickard, Joanne L. Rondilla, and Debbie Hippolite Wright, Eds. *Pacific Diaspora: Island Peoples in the United States and Across the Pacific* (Univ. of Hawai'i Press, 2002).

To buy or rent **American Aloha: Hula Beyond Hawai'i** call 212-505-6676 or email [bluefilms@aol.com](mailto:bluefilms@aol.com)

Front cover (top): Mark Eby

*Pele Kaio and dancers of Hula Halau 'O Lilinoe prepare for competition on a California beach*

Front cover (bottom): Mark Eby

*Caption: Kawena Kaio-De'Ocampo and Nicole Riveira of Hula Halau 'O Lilinoe*

## Co-presenters:



**American Aloha: Hula Beyond Hawai'i** was produced in association with the Independent Television Service with funds provided by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. Unique in American Public Television, ITVS was established by Congress, "to fund and promote programming that involves creative risks and addresses the needs of underserved audiences," while granting artistic control to independent producers. ITVS has funded more than 350 single programs and limited series for public television. Many of these ITVS programs have been featured on P.O.V. including Sundance Audience Award Winner *Scout's Honor* by Tom Shepard, Peabody Award Winner *A Healthy Baby Girl* by Judith Helfand and Emmy Award Winner *Nobody's Business* by Alan Berliner.



Pacific Islanders in Communications (PIC) supports the development of national public broadcast programming by and about Pacific Islanders—descendants of the indigenous peoples of Hawai'i, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, American Samoa, and other Pacific islands.

At the heart of this mission is PIC's philosophy. To build voice and visibility for Pacific Islanders in the national broadcast arena and beyond. To illuminate the realities and complexities of the Pacific Islander experience. To counter negative stereotypes and shape new images around who we are as contemporary people in a changing world. To build new audiences. To generate cross-cultural dialogue and enrich America's sense of what it means to be diverse.



*The Diverse Voices Project* is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), a private, nonprofit corporation created by Congress in 1967, develops educational public radio, television, and online services for the American people. The Corporation is the industry's largest single source of funds for national public television and radio program development and production. CPB, a grant-making organization, funds more than 1,000 public radio and television stations.



P.O.V. is now in its 16th season. Since 1988 P.O.V. has worked to bring the best of independent point-of-view documentaries to a national audience. The first series on television to feature the work of America's most innovative documentary filmmakers, P.O.V. has gone on to pioneer the art of presentation and outreach using independent media to build new communities in conversation about today's most pressing social issues.

Major funding for P.O.V. is provided by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, the New York State Council on the Arts, the Open Society Institute, PBS and public television viewers. Funding for *Talking Back* and the *Diverse Voices Project* is provided by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. P.O.V. is presented by a consortium of public television station including KCET/Los Angeles, WGBH/Boston, and WNET/New York. Cara Mertes is executive director of P.O.V. P.O.V. is a division of American Documentary, Inc.

### P.O.V. Interactive

[www.pbs.org/pov](http://www.pbs.org/pov)

P.O.V.'s award-winning web department creates a web site for every P.O.V. presentation. Our web sites extend the life of P.O.V. films through community-based and educational applications, focusing on involving viewers in activities, information, and feedback on the issues. In addition, [pbs.org/pov](http://pbs.org/pov) houses our unique *Talking Back* feature, filmmaker interviews and viewer resources, and information on the P.O.V. archives as well as a myriad of special sites for previous P.O.V. broadcasts. P.O.V. also produces special sites for hire, specializing in working closely with independent filmmakers on integrating their content with their interactive goals.

### American Documentary, Inc.

[www.americandocumentary.org](http://www.americandocumentary.org)

American Documentary, Inc. (AmDoc) is a multimedia company dedicated to creating, identifying, and presenting contemporary stories that express opinions and perspectives rarely featured in mainstream media outlets. Through two divisions, *P.O.V.* and *Active Voice*, AmDoc is a catalyst for public culture, developing collaborative strategic engagement activities around socially relevant content on television, on line, and in community settings. These activities are designed to trigger action, from dialogue and feedback, to educational opportunities and community participation.