RE-POSITIONING PERFORMANCE:
CURATING TAHITIAN PERFORMANCE AS
APPLIED ETHNOMUSICOLOGY IN HAWAI‘I

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By

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Acknowledgements

The project described in this thesis came to life as a product of community, in this case from many members of the Hawai‘i-Tahitian community on O‘ahu. More than informants, many of these specialists participated actively in the project, and it is their voices that comprise the exhibition and much of this document. A complete list of these collaborators appears in Appendix A, but I would like to single out a handful:

Etua Tahauri participated in the making of a video documentary, reviewed exhibit content, lent many objects, and spoke at the opening reception. He accepted me as a student, but his openness, kindness and sense of humor made him more than a teacher. Raymond Mariteragi and Jeanne Moua Larsen both participated in a public roundtable discussion on the topic of ‘ori tahiti in Hawai‘i. Raymond also provided invaluable feedback on the exhibit. Among the many ra‘atira I worked with, these ‘orometua have been instrumental in promoting ‘ori tahiti and Tahitian culture in Hawai‘i.

Pola Teriipaia also participated in the documentary film production, provided performance videos, conducted a costume workshop, provided musicians and drummers of Manutahi Tahiti (free of charge) for a performance event, and lent numerous costumes. Pola made me feel a part of the Manutahi family. Tyrone Temanaha, Jr., participated in a special audio recording session for the interactive, created original artwork incorporated throughout the exhibit, conducted a carving demonstration and tō‘ere workshop, and lent numerous instruments; Kevin Kama also allowed use of a performance video of ‘Ia Ora O Tahiti Nui, provided instruments for the exhibit, and unexpectedly donated a fa‘atete to the ethnomusicology collection.

Cathy and Charlie Temanaha, Tahia Foster Parker, Mafatu Krainer, Robyn Manu Williams, and Denise and Christopher Ramento all generously provided an array of items and conversations for the exhibit. Tahia, Fatu, and Robyn in particular spoke with me for long periods, and made me feel welcome in their culture and community. So too did Tino Hoffmann, who spoke with me at length about Tahitian drumming and the exhibit. My
time spent working with these wonderful collaborators, immersed in local Tahitian culture is something I will never forget, due in part to a tātau from the hand of Tino.

Use of the Bridge Gallery at Hamilton Library was facilitated and supported by a number of people: Karen Kosasa first suggested the venue, as well as an internship with Bronwen Solyom. Assisting Bron with three of her own exhibits provided welcome and useful experience, and brought with it lots of good stories and the welcome interruption of a cup of tea. Stu Dawrs, Pacific specialist and chair of the library exhibits committee made the exhibit possible by accepting my proposal (unofficially, for some time), and also provided much of the content for the conjoint exhibit, *Ite ‘Upa’upa: Resources in Tahitian Performance*. Library Music Specialist Gregg Geary made available additional materials for that exhibit. Karen Peacock, Curator of the Hawaiian and Pacific Collections, and Paula Mochida, Interim University Librarian both spoke at the opening reception, and made this work possibly by virtue of the library’s wonderful resources and dynamic programming. I was very saddened to hear of Karen Peacock’s passing in 2010, and hope that my work in some way contributes to Pacific scholarship, a field for which she set a high standard indeed.

The exhibit could never have run as well as it did without Teri Skillman. A fellow ethnomusicologist / museum professional and a good friend, as Events Planner for Hamilton Library, Teri insured the exhibit’s success. She arranged all marketing, departmental fundraising, and special events; found a computer to borrow for the interactive, loaned me her car, and made sure that I was eating. She provided a sounding board for ideas, an eye for design, and companionship in times of stress.

A number of student volunteers from the ethnomusicology program and Art 360 helped immensely during exhibit preparation, installation, and de-installation. Dawn Lovig’s parallel research in the Hawai‘i Tahitian community allowed an opportunity for us to pool resources, bounce ideas back and forth, and commiserate. Dawn also loaned me her car. Many more colleagues, friends, and family members provided encouragement, feedback, and emotional support.
Tahitian hālau embody many of the cultural ideals common throughout the Pacific, foremost being love of family and respect to elders. To my academic kumu, Ric, Karen, and Chet-Yeng, I am forever indebted. You set a high standard of excellence and inspire the same, plus a healthy dose of humility and humor. Barbara Smith, Fred Lau, Byong Won Lee, Jane Moulin, Jack Ward, Lisa Yoshihara, Wayne Kawamoto, Byron Moon, and Laurence Paxton (who unwittingly lent me a car) all provided academic foundations, encouragement, leadership, and inspiration.

Mauruuru roa!
Abstract

This study examines a specific but multi-faceted applied ethnomusicology project, a gallery exhibition and related special events focusing on Tahitian performance on O‘ahu, Hawai‘i. The exhibit, *Tau Rima Tahiti: Crafting Performance*, resulted from collaboration with performers, craftspeople, and cultural specialists on O‘ahu, furthering research into this diasporic tradition by focusing upon the performance of craftsmanship as a precursor to ‘*ori tahiti*. Drawing heavily from the field of museum studies, I examine the process (performance) of that exhibit’s production, including the critical issues involved with such a project, and a reflexive examination of my role as curator. The study shares my methods of research and presentation, and assesses the resulting exhibit as a representation of individuals, traditions, and performances.
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A note on terminology

Many persons in Hawai‘i conflate Tahitian and Hawaiian terms, leading sometimes to a linguistic hybridization. Aside from proper nouns, Tahitian and other less-familiar terms remain italicized throughout the text to direct the reader to items in the Glossary. Terminology generally refers to the tradition of ‘ori tahiti as seen and practiced in Hawai‘i, and references to Tahiti proper are made explicit.
CHAPTER 1
CRAFTING PERFORMANCE:
GROUNDWORK FOR EXHIBITION AND RESEARCH

1.1 Introduction

Applied ethnomusicology is a growing area of research and necessarily incorporates additional fields of study and various modes of production. Acting as a “culture broker” (Davis 1992:362), the ethnomusicologist reframes or re-positions the performance tradition for benefit to the source culture, often by exposing or validating that group to a wider public. The existing academic literature on this practice is primarily theoretical in nature and leaves open the basic question of how ethnomusicology is applied, and the myriad products that may be borne from it. This study examines a specific but multi-faceted applied project, a gallery exhibition and related special events focusing on Tahitian performance on O‘ahu, Hawai‘i. *Tau Rima Tahiti: Crafting Performance*, on exhibit during March and April of 2009, focused upon the craft processes of ‘ōri tahiti in Hawai‘i. A performance, two workshops, and a roundtable discussion supplemented the gallery exhibit. Just as the craftspeople featured in the exhibit work to develop and refine the components of this tradition, the exhibition was developed—crafted—to expand upon the performance aspects of ‘ōri tahiti.

Tahitian music and dance represent arguably the most prominent Tahitian cultural traditions maintained away from the homeland, and hold a unique role in the cultural milieu of O‘ahu. The recent exhibition engaged the public and practitioners with this localized musical tradition, delving into musical and dance forms, stylistic interpretations, and material culture including organology of the instrumental tradition. While many local culture-bearers travel frequently to Tahiti, this research deals specifically with the local Hawai‘i-Tahitian diaspora. Nevertheless, parallels may be drawn to the homeland tradition and also to other diasporic groups. This study goes on to address the exhibition process itself, examining the effectiveness of gallery presentation
for this dynamic cultural practice. Analyzing the issues of representation, exhibition content and design, accessibility, and community impact will shed light on the roles and responsibilities of the ethnomusicologist in such a process. Reflection and analysis of pre- and post-exhibition research will contribute to a greater understanding of the exhibition process, its application as ethnomusicology, the exhibition’s benefits and drawbacks, and recommendations for future projects.

1.2 Background

‘Ori tahiti, Tahitian dance and music, though suppressed by missionaries in Tahiti from the early 19th Century, experienced a cultural revival through the 1950s and 60s. Today it is a focal event throughout French Polynesia and increasingly popular in other parts of the world. Hawai‘i boasts a number of Tahitian festivals, competitions, workshops, professional staged shows, and for-hire performance groups. Classes in Tahitian dance and music are popular throughout Hawai‘i. Participants in these groups are quite diverse, ranging from ethnically Tahitian cultural specialists such as ra‘atira, directors, to recreational participants who learn about Tahitian culture as a “welcome outsider.”

Tahitian dancing was first seen on O‘ahu in the late 1930s, first taught in 1949, and incorporated into Waikīkī performance shows in the 1950s (Paisner 1978:66). The opening of the Polynesian Cultural Center (PCC) in Lā‘ie in 1962 further popularized Tahitian performance and traditional arts as one component of its survey of Polynesian culture. The PCC, in association with Brigham Young University Hawai‘i, has also facilitated the immigration of Tahitian performers and instructors, who have gone on to perpetuate Tahitian culture through a growing number of professional performing groups and community hālau.1 Arguably the most important events for these community groups are Tahitian festivals, known alternately as heiva (Tah. amusement) or fête (Fr. festival). In Tahiti, the largest heiva takes place during turai, the month of July, focused around

1 The Hawaiian term for a school (literally a meeting house for hula instruction) is used extensively by teachers and participants of Tahitian performance groups in Hawai‘i.
Bastille Day on July 14. The Pape‘ete Heiva features mā‘ohi, indigenous Polynesian,\(^2\) competition, craft, and exhibition. Ever since the resurgence of traditional dance in the 1950s, dance competitions have been a significant component of the heiva. Tahitian festivals in Hawai‘i and on the US mainland are modeled after these turai heiva activities. Today, one source sites 26 Tahitian dance groups in Hawai‘i that participate in heiva festival competitions (Black Pearl Designs 2009). The islands of O‘ahu, Maui, Kaua‘i, and Hawai‘i each hold at least one heiva competition annually. These festivals are focal events for the Hawai‘i-Tahitian community, with group and solo competition, and craft vendors.

Though central to these festivals and other cultural presentations such as eclectic luauas or those found at the PCC, contemporary Tahitian performance and cultural display have been conspicuously absent from alternative exhibition spaces such as local museums and galleries. The Bernice P. Bishop Museum and the Honolulu Academy of Art both display Tahitian performance items, but they are shown as anthropological or “primitive art” displays, respectively. Neither of these presentations draws connections to the dynamic and ongoing activities of performing groups in Hawai‘i or Tahiti. Furthermore, attendance at local heiva consists predominantly of participating groups and family members, with apparently lower attendance from the general public. Between eclectic tourist-oriented professional shows and festivals produced by and for participants, there has been little opportunity to share with the O‘ahu general public the elements of ‘ōri tahiti, even as simply as defining it in contrast to hula and other forms.

### 1.3 Purpose of the Study

This exhibition series comprises a case of applied ethnomusicology, a subfield that has received increasing recognition and study over the last several decades (Sheehy 1992, Davis 1992). Applied ethnomusicology and the ensuing issues it entails are under-represented within the field in general. As an applied project, Tau Rima Tahiti is distinct

\(^2\) Mā‘ohi describes indigenous Polynesian culture and peoples, and is the term often used by Tahitians and other practitioners in Hawai‘i.
in several ways. This thesis seeks to illuminate the process of curating an ethnomusicologically informed gallery exhibition, and to closely examine the product of the exhibit itself. I will show how a sensitive and flexible curatorial process, and novel approaches to bridging the gap between cultural practitioners and the general public, may have similar application and be improved upon in the future.

1.4 Project Inception

Having conducted prior research and fieldwork with Tahitian performers in Hawai‘i, I set out to devise a collaborative project involving the performance culture in an alternative venue from the annual local heiva, which led to the idea of a gallery exhibition. Such a presentation necessarily relies heavily upon material artifacts, and incorporating performance itself would be a challenge. Preliminary work for the exhibition began with exploring the material culture of Tahitian performance in Hawai‘i. Through discussions and interviews with cultural specialists, the theme of repositioning performance to include craftsmanship arose.

Material culture of Tahitian performance includes costumes for musicians, ra‘atira, and dancers (gender-specific clothing specific to the ‘ōte’a and ‘aparima dance forms), as well as musical instruments (primarily slit-drums, skin drums, and stringed instruments), and occasionally other props or implements. A number of skilled craftspeople produce these items in Hawai‘i, including ra‘atira and professional carvers and instrument builders. Instrument builders develop their craft through the result of patient trial and error, perfecting the standard instruments and also creating entirely new, yet “Tahitian” instruments. While instrument making is generally a solitary endeavor, ra‘atira often include their performers in the process of costume making, transmitting their skills and knowledge through hands-on participation. Costumes must adhere to the

3 In organological terms, “slit drum” is an erroneous classification, as the instrument in question has no membrane (drumhead); it is an idiophone and correctly termed a “slit gong.” However, since the former term has been in long use and is well known among ethnomusicologists, the misnomer persists.
program theme, and are expected to utilize elements from the natural environment, with a high value placed on the use of endemic Tahitian materials incorporated into creative designs. This ongoing production of performance implements parallels the Tahitian homeland tendency toward innovation and experimentation.

This ongoing craft production prompts us to consider the relationship of material production and object preservation. Roger Keesing cautions against “the view that in preserving the material forms and performance genres of a people, one preserves their culture” (1989:34). Such a colonialist-era misconception would fail to acknowledge evolving performance practices and the transmission of cultural knowledge. In Hawai‘i, indigenous preservation through the transmission of craftsmanship rather than mere objects is a significant component of Tahitian cultural preservation. Kristina Kreps (2003) has examined indigenous and colonialist collections and museums, challenging the outdated notion that non-Western, “concept-centered” societies are not concerned with the collection, care, and preservation of cultural property. She points out that indigenous curation may be driven by three motivations: preservation of cultural heritage, agents for transmitting cultural heritage, and care of active ritual and cultural artifacts.

Tahitian costumes and implements are transient components in the transmission of cultural heritage. Objects used in performance may experience one of several fates: re-use in future performance (i.e. standard musical instruments), recycling of materials (i.e. costume components), preservation as a keepsake (i.e. costumes or novel instruments), or discarding (as a byproduct of recycling or an inherently temporary instrument). While collection and preservation of performance objects occurs, it is not a significant priority within the performance tradition. Tau Rima Tahiti shares this ongoing craft tradition to a wider public, validating some of the lesser-known aspects of Tahitian culture in Hawai‘i. The production of this exhibition spanned the fields of academic research and public education, resulting in a public application of ethnomusicological theory and method.
1.5 Applied Ethnomusicology

Daniel Sheehy refers to applied ethnomusicology as,

an approach to the approach to the study of the music of the world's peoples…. It begins with a sense of purpose, a purpose larger than the advancement of knowledge about the music of the world's peoples; a purpose that answers the next question, To what end?” (1992:323, emphasis in original).

Applied ethnomusicology is often referred to as a form of “paying back” the source community, typified by such activities as recording, festivals, exhibits, and non-scholarly (but well informed) publication (ibid.). Martha Ellen Davis writes that applied projects “are intended to reinforce respect for one's own culture—threatened by changing values borne by modernization—and to provide mechanisms, structures, and means to do so” (1992:361). Applied ethnomusicology primarily serves the source community rather than the scholar, through recognition, validation, compensation, or sociopolitical advancement.

Svanibor Pettan writes that applied ethnomusicology projects most often relate to “minorities, diasporas, ethnic groups, immigrants, and refugees…. The common denominator for all these groups of people is that they face a dominant group, and suffer discrimination on different levels” (2006:36). It is for these minority groups that applied projects are of greatest benefit. Public education, institutional and governmental recognition, and cultural preservation are major motivators. Both Sheehy and Davis refer to sociopolitical motivations that often lie behind applied projects. A particularly political example would be the official 1993 designation of Austrian Roma as a Volksgruppe, which resulted in part from the promotion of a Roma musical tradition (Hemetek 2006). More subtle purposes include “outreach,” educating the public on minority traditions and cultures, and “inreach,” feedback into the original source community (Sheehy 1992: 333).

The Hawai‘i-Tahitian performance community is relatively small yet visible. Recognized as mā‘ohi, Tahitian culture enjoys the cultural resurgence across Polynesia and particularly in Hawai‘i. Its people and performers of ’ori tahiti do not suffer from
racism or discrimination in Hawai‘i. Rather, the practice may be broadly and inappropriately lumped with other Polynesian forms—recognized as Polynesian but perhaps not specifically as Tahitian. As a diasporic tradition in a rapidly modernizing performance context, ‘ori tahiti is threatened to some degree by dilution, waning youth interest, and artistic progress, with the potential to leave behind some aspects of the older tradition. At the outset of this project the primary goals were, (1) public outreach and education in a new context; (2) community inreach by validation of cultural practices; and (3) inreach by giving back the cultural resources collected throughout the exhibition series.

Sheehy notes that there are numerous strategies or approaches to applied ethnomusicology, but that,

each may be viewed as having one of four basic qualities: (1) developing new "frames" for musical performance, (2) "feeding back" musical models to the communities that created them, (3) providing community members access to strategic models and conservation techniques, and (4) developing broad, structural solutions to structural problems (1992:330-331).

I will show how Tau Rima Tahiti meets the first three of these qualities. The development of any applied project must necessarily come from within the source community. Davis writes,

the most successful means of conservation of arts in the living tradition must be done by the community members themselves… [the researcher] acts as a de facto agent of the artists or community, in activities and objectives based on needs and priorities determined by them, or in their interest and meeting with their approval (1992:368-369).

Though it gained broad support among the Hawai‘i-Tahitian community, Tau Rima Tahiti was initially conceived of not by local Tahitians, but by myself, a student researcher and cultural outsider. I held myself accountable to the informant and collaborating community. While I was not aware of all of the “needs and priorities” of the community at the outset of this project, its development, feedback, and the relationships it cultivated led to a greater benefit to the performing community than originally envisioned
by either party. This exhibition series resulted in educational outreach as well as inreach through various means, including a qualitative reframing of the manner in which we view performance; and documentation / conservation of specific traditions. I will show how, with an open and collaborative dialog, using an informed ethnomusicological approach and multiple modes of discourse, exhibition can lead to rich cultural rewards for the source community.

Transplanting the Tahitian performance tradition from community stage to curated gallery has inherent advantages, i.e., increasing public knowledge and validating culture, and drawbacks, including appropriateness of venue, inherent selectivity, limitations of curator and materials. This study will examine the value and impact of exhibition and representation vis-à-vis the informant and at-large Tahitian community, and provide a resource for negotiating these issues in future collaborative exhibitions and community projects.

The data for this thesis are multifaceted and novel in approach, broadly divided into pre-exhibition material and post-exhibition material. Pre-exhibition material includes ethnographic and musical research, interviews, materials, and multimedia acquired for the purpose of the exhibition. Post-exhibition materials include feedback from the informant community and general public, the special events and their outcomes, and continuing follow-up discussions with cultural practitioners.

1.6 Methodology

The exhibition, Tau Rima Tahiti: Crafting Performance, was the result of pre-exhibition data: fieldwork, interviews, and design feedback with the local Tahitian community during the fall of 2008 and early part of 2009. The exhibition was shown in the Bridge Gallery of Hamilton Library (UH Mānoa) during March and April 2009. Pre-exhibition data was collected for the gallery content, including over 70 items loaned for

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4 Outreach during the Spring of 2008 was extremely preliminary in nature, and much of the fieldwork component of this project was not feasible until early in 2009.
display, loaned and originally produced video material, musical recordings incorporated into an interactive kiosk, and supporting text drawn from ethnographic and secondary research. I kept an activity log of the research, planning, and installation process.

Post-exhibition data includes general feedback as well as the content of special events. General feedback included visitor questionnaires and follow-up interviews with primary informants and lenders. The general questionnaire provides quantifiable feedback from visitors, while the “participant exit interviews” offer reflective reactions to the successes and shortcomings of the exhibition and curatorial process from the informants’ perspective. I was also fortunate to receive exhibition feedback from two student groups: a forum discussion involving ethnomusicology students and faculty that addressed content and curatorial issues, and a systematic evaluation of the show by exhibition design students in the Department of Art and Art History. The latter employed Beverly Serrell’s guidelines from *Judging Exhibitions: A Framework for Assessing Excellence* (2006).

Exhibition-derived data is drawn from three separate events: the opening reception (March 19, 2009) which included informants and cultural representatives; a performance, craftsmanship demonstration, and drumming workshop in conjunction with Artmania in the UH Department of Art and Art History (April 5); and a roundtable discussion with Tahitian culture-bearers (April 16). The Artmania and roundtable events provided alternate modes for the public to interact with the content of the gallery exhibition as audiences to a performance, through interactive participation in music and craft practices, and by active discussion.

Interpretive analysis of the data will show general tendencies as well as individual reactions. Insofar as feasible, triangulation will connect the lay visitor and informant data, identifying elements that are of value to both the Tahitian community and the general

5 Hamilton Library hosted one additional event, a lecture on French Polynesian literature by visiting professor Didier Lenglare. This was not directly related to the content of the exhibition series, but its programming grew out of the exhibition.
public. The examination of my personal role as curator is necessarily highly reflexive. Informed by my predecessors in ethnomusicology and museum studies, I employ participant interviews and personal reflection to assess my own impact upon the project as curator.

### 1.7 Outline of Chapters

The chapters that follow analyze the exhibition process from research through production and follow-up, exploring the relationship of curator and community in the production of such an exhibit. The introductory chapter contextualizes this exhibition in the current Tahitian performance tradition on O‘ahu. Chapters 2 and 3 explore exhibit development, including research, design, and musical/performance content. Chapter 2 explores the exhibition. I outline the local Tahitian practice, building upon the work of Moulin, Paisner, and Lovig, and compare this collaborative process with other community-driven exhibitions, including the work of Miriam Kahn, Andrade et. al., and Lois Silverman. Chapter 3 presents the musical research and incorporation of musical analysis (transcriptions and interactivity) into the exhibition, and provides an overview of the resulting exhibit design and layout as a basis for the following closer analysis.

Chapter 4 explores the exhibition as a form of mediated presentation, looking at the role of the ethnomusicologist as curator, the processes of representation based upon ethnomusicological fieldwork, and the presentation of performance. Chapter 5 examines the exhibit feedback from the general public, participants/informants, and academic focus groups. I employ learning theories of George Hein and the exhibition assessment model developed by Beverly Serrell. Chapter 6, conclusion and recommendations, draws conclusions on the effectiveness and feasibility of the project in general, a reflexive examination of my personal role in the exhibition, and the application of this project as applied ethnomusicology. I also examine the ways in which this project can continue to

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6 Dawn Lovig’s master’s thesis, currently in process, is entitled “The Performance of Tahitian Dance Music as Cultural Consumption in Multicultural Hawai‘i.”
give back to my informants and the local Tahitian community, and the potential for re-
production and alternate projects.

1.8 Subject Positionality

As a mainland-raised popaʻā,7 I am acutely aware of my position as a cultural
outsider and the unwelcome possibilities of imposing a neo-colonialist perspective upon
the production of this exhibition and my interaction with the local community. Even the
perception among the Tahitian community that I was disingenuous in my work could
raise concerns about the purpose and professionalism of this project. I attempted to offset
these dangers by drawing from my own performance experience with Tahitian groups in
Seattle, past research with Tahitians in Hawaiʻi (including participants in the current
project), and a cultural relativist sensibility. I also drew from my former professional
work in cultural heritage preservation with numerous immigrant groups in the Seattle
area. Nevertheless, my recent role as curator has introduced challenges in negotiating
existing community relationships and placed me in the precarious position of an outsider
acting as culture broker for a community that is at once diverse and cohesive.

1.9 Significance

The exhibition series itself is significant in reexamining the context of
performance and the interrelationship of performing arts and material culture. A close
look at the ongoing process of craft production illuminates what aspects of the tradition
are unchangeable, open to substitution, or open to innovation. The subsequent analysis of
gallery curation and the exhibition series, demonstrates several useful methods for
applying ethnomusicology in future contexts. The issues and outcomes of such a project
will explore the evolving role of the ethnomusicologist as culture broker and public
curator.

7 The Tahitian term popaʻā literally translates as “burnt,” a reference to the delicate and
pale skin of Europeans, and is comparable to the Hawaiian term haole, white or
foreigner, a common colloquialism in Hawaiʻi.
This is the first major systematic research study in the state of Hawai‘i to address the growing field of applied ethnomusicology (ProQuest 2009). Hawai‘i is a diverse site where issues of ethnicity, identity, and cultural representation play out in a wide range of subcultures and venues. This dialogic study of produced performance will be a resource for future collaborative projects. Though limited in scope, the analyses contained in this thesis will continue the process of providing alternative modes for scholars and the public to work together in the study, celebration, and promotion of traditional and contemporary arts.

The current research also has a very real community benefit. Scholarly research is often viewed as taking place only in the metaphorical “ivory tower” of academia, but applied projects such as this represent, among other things, the “ethical responsibility to ‘pay back’ those whose music and lives we study and make our livings from” (Sheehy 1992:323). Through applied work, this “giving back” often comes in the form of research and resulting materials that are accessible to the general public. Scholarly publication reaches a different audience, the “educated elite.” Concurrent publication or exhibition for both audiences results in a multi-pronged approach for reinforcing cultural traditions (Davis 1992:373). Both the exhibition Tau Rima Tahiti and the resulting “byproducts” of this project are accessible and beneficial to the Hawai‘i-Tahitian, lay public, and scholarly communities.

The study of Tahitian performance, particularly within the Tahitian diaspora in Hawai‘i, has not received much scholarly attention. The University of Hawai‘i would seem the most appropriate institution to foster research into the arts of Polynesia, but though there is contemporary research in process (Lovig), only one master’s thesis (Paisner 1978) has addressed performance in the diaspora.⁸ The most recent monograph on Tahitian dance (Moulin 1979) and the Paisner thesis are now thirty years old. The present work hopes to remedy this lack of recent attention. The focus of this research is

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primarily upon the process of reinvesting the material in the community, and the efficacy of the gallery exhibition in doing so. This analysis will contribute to the collaboration of ethnomusicology and museum studies, examining in detail the challenges and rewards of representing performance traditions.
CHAPTER 2
THE CRAFT OF CURATING:
RESEARCH, DESIGN, AND EXHIBITION

2.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the exhibition design and development process for Tau Rima Tahiti. Building upon recent studies of the local Hawai‘i-Tahitian performance tradition, Pacific Island cultural exhibitions, and other community-driven collaborations, I outline the process of information gathering and design of the exhibition series. I then describe the resulting exhibition. The focus of this chapter is to highlight the commonalities and differences of this exhibition with former applied projects. Points of departure from the existing literature shed new light on prior projects and applied ethnomusicology.

2.2 Tahitian Dance Research in Hawai‘i

The Dance of Tahiti (Moulin, 1979) remains the key text providing an overview of the group dances of Tahiti and surrounding islands. Following a historical overview, Moulin outlines dance contexts, forms, music, and costume. Generally speaking, the heiva competitions in Hawai‘i mimic those in Tahiti, and Moulin’s text provides a fixed reference useful for interpreting the local performance. Though over thirty years old, the basic dance genres, music, and material culture have not changed drastically since its publication. Tahitian judges and ra‘atira in Hawai‘i work hard to maintain consistency with the homeland, yet artistic creativity, innovation, and geographic displacement inevitably result in some differences, which became apparent throughout the research and production of Tau Rima Tahiti.

Contemporary with Moulin’s monograph, Miriam Natalie Paisner (1978) examined the methods and contexts of teaching Tahitian dance on O‘ahu. Paisner traces the arrival of Tahitian dancers and teachers and the incorporation of Tahitian dance in
luau and hotel shows. She identifies a conflict between the “fast, athletic, flashier movements” (ibid., 67) popular in Waikīkī, and more well-researched, subtle, and historically informed Tahitian dance. Predating the establishment of the Heiva i Honolulu, Paisner’s discussion of performance is primarily restricted to dance schools per se, most with paying or non-paying performance outlets. She gives brief mention to a nine-day-long Hawai‘i-Tahiti Fête held in Waikīkī in 1962, and the establishment in 1973 of the Kaua‘i-Tahiti Fête. Paisner writes,

> It is important because a tradition is developing in imitation of the Fête in Tahiti to which dancers look forward each year and because of inclusion of performers from outside of Hawai‘i. Competition is a major objective. In the competition, individuals and groups compete for prizes of trophies and money, just as in Tahiti. (Ibid., 73)

While it is not the focus of her study, the establishment of several heiva in Hawai‘i would grow to become a major force for promoting the dance.

Tahiti Nui International formed in 2002, and in 2009 produced their seventh Heiva i Honolulu. This and several other events on O‘ahu and the neighbor islands drive many of the amateur groups in Hawai‘i. In addition to local events, ensembles and soloists compete at neighbor island and mainland festivals, notably in Merced, San Jose and Las Vegas. The Heiva events in Pape‘ete, Tahiti are restricted to local participants, but for the first time in 2009, a separate event, the International Heiva i Tahiti, invited exhibition performances by groups hailing from Hawai‘i, the US mainland, Japan, and Mexico. Numerous groups and soloists traveled to Tahiti for this event, which also provided them an educational opportunity to witness the main Heiva in situ.

Etua Tahauri, one of the founders of Tahiti Nui International, explains how the resurgence of Tahitian dance and culture in Hawai‘i has been a slow process. He explains how judging criteria have evolved over time to encourage a higher standard of performance:

> This is not Tahiti. This is Hawai‘i, this is America. And the people that we are involved so much with, they are not Tahitian, they are international. So, we don’t make the rules too hard for them… we want them to slowly progress. You can’t
get the meat before the milk. You have to start soft and build it up. Now, after 25, 30 years, they’re starting to come, to meat. (Pers. comm., 22 January 2009)

The international participation in Tahitian dance that Tahauri speaks of is not a recent phenomenon. Paisner also gave an overview of dance students, noting that “there is no age or social status barrier to studying Tahitian dance” (1978: 69) and that “any and all ethnic groups have been observed taking Tahitian lessons” (71). The demographics and social function of Tahitian dance groups in Hawai‘i are explored in current research by Dawn Lovig.

Lovig’s thesis will examine the creation of a specific Tahitian dance identity within the larger multi-cultural society as a reflection of both globalization and localization whilst conveying the participants’ individual agency (Lovig, pers. comm., 29 January 2009). Her study focuses upon the participants’ experience within the established rehearsal and performance context. The globalizing factors that Lovig considers are in many ways the impetus for my own research. Hawai‘i is likely even more culturally diverse than at the time of Paisner’s thesis, both in the realm of Tahitian performers and the general public. Concerned that Tahitian culture has become either non-distinct within Polynesia or confused with Hawaiian traditions, all of my Tahitian collaborators saw Tau Rima Tahiti as a way to educate the public about Tahitian culture, particularly in contrast to what many see as the popular but sometimes misinforming “Polynesian revue.” I will discuss this perspective later in this chapter (section 2.5).

As mentioned in chapter 1, gallery exhibition offers both advantages and challenges in presenting a performance tradition. The logistical challenges of mounting the exhibition were made clear with the final selection of the exhibit venue. After seeking out museum and community venues, it became apparent that most had extended exhibition calendars (the East West Gallery) or were too limited in scope and lacked adequate security (Hale Honolulu). In June 2008 I contacted Stu Dawrs, Exhibit Committee Chair for Hamilton Library, and secured the Bridge Gallery space for the following March and April. This established the schedule for research and design, as well as the particular challenges of the Bridge Gallery.
In terms of content and design, the foremost curatorial challenge was in representing such a dynamic art in a gallery setting; ‘ori tahiti is both physically active and loud, but the exhibit space lies within a research library. I was also aware of the inherent selectivity of collaborating individuals and limited availability of materials. Without being able to feature every aspect and object of the local tradition, how was I to present representative voices and materials for the exhibit? An exhibition philosophy based upon museum theory and a review of similar exhibitions provided useful guidance.\(^9\)

### 2.3 Previous Exhibits and Curatorial Theory

In Tahiti itself, music and dance materials can be found in the national museum, the Musée de Tahiti et des îles. Founded in 1974, this natural and ethnographic museum of the French Polynesian islands features a small historic display of music and dance in the permanent gallery. In contrast to the Hawaiian and mainland U.S. museums already discussed, this Tahitian museum acknowledges the contemporary performance tradition. For over twenty years, regional groups competing in the Heiva have been required to submit samples of their costumes to the Ministry of Culture, which oversees the contest. These contribute to an ever-growing retrospective collection of contemporary costumes. In 2002 the museum presented *E ʻori i tō iho tupu: Costumes de danse et instruments de musique contemporains* (contemporary dance costumes and musical instruments). The catalog for this exhibition provides short essays on functions, forms, prohibitions on dance since the late 18\(^{th}\) Century, and the evolution of costumes and instruments. A key theme throughout the catalog is an acknowledgement of the many changes that have taken place in the practice. Millaud writes, “current dances, called traditional dances or ‘ori tahiti are certainly very different from those of the late XVIII century” (2002:22).

\(^9\) Since much of the literature concerning exhibition is drawn from the museum field, I will use the term “museum” in reference to the planning and design theories for this exhibition.
Historical etchings, prints, and observations are contrasted with the contemporary materials.

Lois Silverman has discussed the process of making and interpreting history, defining interpretation as “a story or perspective that is crafted, albeit with expert documentation, by certain people for certain ends” (Silverman 2004:235). In Tahiti, the Musée de Tahiti et des îles presents artifacts of performance, both historical and contemporary, to the very community whose ancestors created the tradition and who today practice or at least see it often themselves. Louise Peltzer, then-Minister of Culture of French Polynesia, wrote the introduction to the exhibit catalog, *E ʻori i tō iho tupu*. She cites the opportunity for Tahitians to understand this aspect of their history and culture. Here the story has been crafted in Tahiti, predominantly for Tahitians, for the sake of understanding an important aspect of Tahitian cultural heritage. The Musée de Tahiti mounted subsequent exhibitions in both 2006 and 2008, the latter including a special retrospective on costume maker Joseph Uura. Such exhibitions of contemporary costumes are reported to be hugely popular among resident Tahitians. Visiting the Musée de Tahiti provides insight on the Heiva, which itself encourages further examination. Museum exhibitions and the Heiva performances are thus mutually reinforcing.

Unfortunately, no catalogs have been published for these exhibitions since 2002, and I have been unable to personally attend the exhibitions in Tahiti. Nonetheless, the Musée de Tahiti et des îles sets a high standard.

Exhibiting Tahitian traditions and materials in Hawai‘i introduces additional and unavoidable challenges. Both the Bernice P. Bishop Museum and the Honolulu Academy of Arts exhibit Tahitian objects, collected in situ, in their permanent exhibits. Both of these exhibits focus upon pre-contact Tahiti within Polynesia and the Pacific. One of the most significant recent exhibitions of Pacific objects shown on O‘ahu was *Life in the Pacific of the 1700s: The Cook/Forster Collection of the Georg August University of*

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10 Tourism is a major industry in French Polynesia, and certainly a significant number of museum-visitors come from abroad. Nonetheless, the sense of community pride and ownership of one’s own history is significant here.
Göttingen, at the Honolulu Academy of Arts in 2006. Consisting of objects collected at “first contact,” this exhibition offered a rare view of pre-contact artifacts. *Life in the Pacific of the 1700s* was lauded for its aesthetic design, historical import, and corollary programs and publications. It was also heavily criticized for the near absence of interpretive material, cultural distinctions, and indigenous perspective within the exhibit. It also included factual inaccuracies and, most importantly, failed to make connections to contemporary Pacific culture and practices (Andrade, et. al. 2007). The text-free exhibit design neither required community input in its planning stages nor provoked dialogue during the visitors’ experience. Kosasa describes how, through aesthetic fetishization, the Academy’s strategy “undermined the potential for the objects to tell crucial stories about Pacific cultures” (Andrade, et. al. 2007:344). These shortcoming of *Life in the Pacific of the 1700s* can be traced to the outdated museum model of the last two hundred years.

The traditional museum as we know it grew out of “cabinets of curiosity” and through the 19th Century developed into an educational and moral tool of the state (Bennett 1995). By the 20th Century, the museum gained a more benevolent role. In 1930, Paul Rae summarized that role as


Eileen Hooper-Greenhill identifies this as the modernist museum, “based upon the nineteenth-century European institutional form that is still very familiar across the world today” (Hooper-Greenhill 2000:8). She proposes an alternative, the post-museum. The former represents a brick-and-mortar repository collecting and showing didactic exhibitions “thought to demonstrate universal laws about the disciplines” (ibid., 5). The post-museum is less concerned with object accumulation and more interested in intangible heritage. It acts as one part of a community-oriented series of events, and encourages a multiplicity of voices and perspectives (ibid., 152).
The decolonization of the modernist museum has been a dominant trope since the 1990s. Museums around the world whose collections are drawn from source communities thought to be threatened or dying out, are now working with those same communities as a resource to inform their collections, as an important audience for exhibitions, and as “authorities on their own cultures and material heritage” (Peers and Brown 2003:1). Community collaboration in exhibit design is one way in which this decolonization is taking place. If Life in the Pacific of the 1700s represents a contemporary but modernist exhibition, Pacific Voices, at the Burke Museum of Natural History and Culture in Seattle went a step further in involving community in the brick-and-mortar museum.

Beginning in 1989, curators at the Burke collaborated with an advisory board representing twelve immigrant communities from the Pacific Rim. The Burke utilized this collaborative approach in order to both empower the participant communities and to represent culture in general as “adaptable, dynamic, and evolving rather than fixed and bounded” (Kahn 2000:57). While by no means the first collaborative exhibit, the Burke’s inclusion of so many cultures was arguably the most ambitious to date. It was also one of the first exhibitions of contemporary immigrant Pacific communities (Hawaiian, Samoan, Maori) within a mainland US city. Shortly after the opening of Pacific Voices, Miriam Kahn explored how the development process addressed the preexisting issues of representation in the museum, acknowledging the many difficulties of such an approach.

Following community outreach and the establishment of an advisory board, the community members themselves outlined the themes for the Burke to pursue:

Advisors decided that the exhibit should be about sources of cultural identity for people of Pacific Rim origin now living in the greater Seattle area. They identified three themes around which the exhibition was to be organized: language and oral tradition; ancestors, elders, and teachers; and ceremonies. (Ibid., 61)

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11 Participants included Hawaiian, Samoan, Maori, Filipino, Japanese, Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean, Lao, and several Northwest Coast communities including Lushootseed and Inupiaq.
With a well-defined focus, individual communities worked with curators to develop specific exhibits. The final exhibition featured culture-specific components (Hawaiian hula, Korean wedding ceremony, Samoan saofa’i title-giving ceremony) and multicultural exhibits (language and oral tradition, Pacific voyaging). The exhibition, which opened in 1997, was met as a success in both the popular media and academic publications.

In her analysis, Kahn identifies difficulties springing from “the complexity of a polyphonic exhibition strategy, a blurred sense of authorship, and a layered translative process” (ibid., 62). Specific difficulties included differences of opinion between curators, advisors, and exhibit designers, and within the advising communities. Exhibit label text was particularly challenging, attempting to balance the advisors’ deference to historical research, the curators’ wish to include a multiplicity of contemporary voices, and the need for a clear and uniform layout and language. All of these difficulties were negotiated with a belief in the importance of the collaborative process.

The curator, the traditional voice of authority in the modernist museum, represents only one perspective. The native storyteller has another, as do his compatriots. The polyphonic exhibit offers multiple meanings and perspectives rather than an idealized prototype, thus de-centralizing authority from the omniscient curator. Hooper-Greenhill writes of the post-museum:

Knowledge is no longer unified and monolithic; it becomes fragmented and multi-vocal. There is no necessary unified perspective – rather a cacophony of voices may be heard that present a range of views, experiences and values. The voice of the museum is one among many. (2000:152)

I sought to develop Tau Rima Tahiti on this post-museum model. As a stand-alone exhibition, not bound by a museum collection per se, the exhibition featured and drew from the contemporary community from its inception. More than a unidirectional flow of information, I engaged community advisors in a two-way dialog, particularly in regard to the exhibit’s special events. As an ethnomusicologist, I discussed content and topics with performers and presenters, helping to frame their performance within the current setting.
Such a dialogic approach to exhibition and performance is central to the principles of applied ethnomusicology, and represents perhaps the most important commonality between the two fields.

2.4 Preliminary Planning

Armed with this background in museum theory and before exhibition-specific outreach and research began, I developed a general outline for the project at hand. I envisioned the exhibition as primarily featuring Tahitian music and dance, necessarily relying upon the physical objects of costume and musical instruments, but incorporating performance elements as well. The exhibition would be informed by outreach in the Hawai‘i-Tahitian community, and reflect the issues and topics of concern to community members. In this endeavor I was hoping to follow the process employed to produce Pacific Voices, and sought to develop a community advisory board. During May 2008, telephone calls to several members over a period of weeks fell rather flat. Several key community members proved impossible to reach, a result of performance, travel, and work schedules. For other respondents, the general reaction was supportive though somewhat passive. A typical response, while attempting to recruit board members, was “let me know when you have a board established.” I felt a need to create critical mass before anyone would make a strong commitment as an advisor, a paradoxical predicament. It became clear that community advising would have to grow out of the content research.

Over the summer of 2008, while away from Hawai‘i, I secured the Bridge Gallery exhibition space at Hamilton Library, as well as a Fall 2009 internship with Bronwen Solyom, Curator of the Jean Charlot Collection. I would work with Ms. Solyom on the installation of several exhibits in the Bridge Gallery during the Spring 2008 semester. I also began discussions with Teri Skillman, the library’s communication and events

12 Several of these, including Raymond Mariteragi and Rose Perreira, would turn up later as strong supporters of the project.
coordinator, to plan a companion one-day outdoor event, featuring performance and demonstration as well as a roundtable discussion of cultural specialists.

I estimated that the gallery space could accommodate about fifteen costumes on mannequins or armatures, as well as a number of instruments and supporting material. The presentation of active music and dance performance remained a key concern for the exhibition. I planned to make use of a large format video screen to show dance performance, with specific content as yet undecided. I also wrestled with methods for presenting the complex music to an audience unfamiliar with it. Drawing from my background as a recording engineer, I envisioned an interactive audio station, similar in fashion to a mixing board, which could allow the visitor to listen to discrete components of the drumming ensemble. Included with this interactive component would be transcribed examples of the music.

Between September 2008 and January 2009, without an advisory committee, I undertook field research and interviews with a number of Tahitian groups, ra’atira, and instrument makers. This fieldwork would focus the key themes for the exhibition, provide content material in the form of interviews, and secure loan items. I met with twelve primary community advisors representing six competing dance groups and independent instrument makers on O‘ahu. Appendix A lists key participants. Through gentle persistence and occasional vetting by members of the community, I gained the trust and support of these collaborators.

2.5 Outreach

Initial meetings with directors and craftspeople consisted of conveying the general premise of the exhibition as well as my research goals as a student of ethnomusicology. I told them that I was working with other members of the Tahitian performance community to develop an exhibition of the tradition in Hawai‘i, specifically examining aspects of craftsmanship for costume and instrument production and how these relate to the local performance tradition. Resoundingly, those I spoke with were eager to share what they could in order to educate the general public about Tahitian dance.
Misconceptions about Tahitian dance and a confusion of ‘ori tahiti with hula were brought up as major concerns, and an impetus for participation.

Mafatu Krainer, a dancer, drummer, and instrument maker, paraphrases a misinformed tourist: “sometimes at the luaus, they’ll say, ‘oh we saw a good luau show,’ and there was no hula in it, it was only Tahitian [and] Samoan fire knife” (pers. comm., 16 May 2009). By defaulting to the broadly known Hawaiian term luau, the spectator misinterprets all things Polynesian as Hawaiian, or at best fails to distinguish the cultural origin of different components. While the first-time viewer may be understandably ignorant, many Tahitian specialists would prefer that the tourist’s first exposure be an opportunity for education.

Misinformation of Tahitian culture springs from the commercial use of Tahitian dance without reference to the culture. Tahiti remains, to many Americans, quintessentially exotic. In Hawai‘i, images of Tahiti and Tahitian performance have been used to attract tourists from the mainland, to entertain them once on-island, and as a commercial device within Hawai‘i. Paisner describes how the Kodak Hula Show incorporated Tahitian dance,

mainly for the tourists so they could photograph costumes of Tahiti. It was never intended to be authentic–just attractive to tourists. Brochures of Hawaiian travel companies increasingly depict Tahitian-garbed dancers rather than Hawaiian. The aura around Tahiti/Tahitian still exists. (1978:65)

And that aura persists. Debra Pola Teriipaia, ra‘atira of Wahiawa-based Manutahi Tahiti, notes the continuing use of Tahitian dance imagery by Hawaiian Airlines and Subway sandwich company:

Everyone, including the tourist industry, seems to use the Tahitian culture. With their fabulous ads and these five dollar foot long [sandwiches], they put the hula with the Tahitian. They seem to mess everything up…. This is Tahiti, it’s a separate island, it’s not Hawaiian, it’s not a fast Hawaiian dance, it’s Tahitian. (Pers. comm., 9 May 2009)

Many Tahitian performers cite both lack of education and misinformation as damaging to the local Hawai‘i-Tahitian culture. The appropriate venue for an entertaining and
educational presentation of Tahitian dance would be the numerous *heiva*, staged throughout Hawai‘i and the US mainland.

Tahitian festivals are an opportunity for the lay public to learn about Tahitian culture, specifically music and dance. However, my own experience at the Heiva i Honolulu (2008, 2009) and Hilo Fête (2008), and discussion with colleague Dawn Lovig, indicates anecdotally that the vast majority of attendants at these festivals are participants, guests of participants, or others involved in Tahitian cultural activities. The layman attendant is present, but is neither in the majority nor catered to. Many unwitting visitors struggle to grasp the origins of Tahitian performance and objects. Mafatu Krainer, who sells instruments and carvings at numerous festivals, is familiar with this scenario, most common on the mainland:

Sometimes we’ll be at a festival and people… just kinda walked into the festival and they’re like “what is this?” And then it’s kinda difficult to explain. I have to go through each instrument. A lot of times people ask me where I’m from and I say Hawai‘i and they say “oh so these are Hawaiian drums.” So let me explain myself better: the drums are from Tahiti and my dad is from Tahiti, and I explain each drum. And I might do that ten times a day. (Pers. comm., 11 January 2009)

In his book *Fieldwork*, Bruce Jackson spends a short chapter (mostly anecdotal), discussing rapport. He points out that every informant has their own motives to participate in a researcher’s project (1987:71). The informants and collaborators for this project all proved extremely generous with their time, willing to share whatever they could and to “talk story” at length. In lieu of complete altruism, what, then, was their motivation? For instrument and costume makers who sell their goods, participating in this exhibition was free advertising. Yet despite potential financial incentives, the overriding motivation was their view of the exhibition as a way to expand public knowledge of Tahitian culture in Hawai‘i. Teaching gallery visitors about Tahitian performance would mean a more educated viewer, able to comprehend the music and dance closer to its own

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13 Krainer goes on to admit that he can, at times, get tired of the conversation: “By the last time I get all irritated. I just say ‘oh, they’re made in China’” (ibid.), but laughs at the recollection.
terms. By helping with the exhibit, they could help to educate visitors about Tahitian culture. Perhaps some visitors would even be inclined to attend a *heiva* or take Tahitian music or dance lessons.

### 2.6 Research Process

These initial interviews were free-flowing conversations based on a series of general questions, including biographical information, the role of material objects in performance, and the tradition of craft production and innovation. An outline of interview topics appears in Appendix B. At the outset, particularly in telephone conversations, I found myself hearing the same general overview of Tahitian dance and culture: the differences from hula, the gender-specific movements, the differences between 'ōte'a and *aparima*, and the importance of theme in a contest program. In effect each informant gave me, the outsider, a short definition of *ori tahiti*. These descriptions gradually led to more in-depth conversations. The individuals and groups I worked with generously offered their support, as well as a few challenges.

#### 2.6.1 Support

I first contacted the group Manutahi Tahiti, directed by Debra Pola Teriipaia (known as Auntie Pola to most) in September 2008, and attended their rehearsal in Wahiawa on the 13th of that month. She graciously introduced me to her assistant instructors and to the entire ensemble during their group meeting, as “Uncle Scott, a student from the University of Hawai‘i who’s doing research for a Tahitian project.” I was immediately touched by her use of the kinship term “uncle.” Alongside the corresponding “auntie,” this term is widely used in Hawai‘i for a non-relative, implying a certain level of familiarity and trust. This subtle word choice introduced me as a welcome member of the community, and as an adult to be treated with some respect by the younger members of the group.

Auntie Pola was welcoming of my interest in material culture, and promptly invited me to film costume-making during the practice. I had read Manutahi’s website material describing the group’s origins teaching at-risk youth, and its ensuing mission,
To encourage and develop successful, empowered, and self-confident youth by providing education in Tahitian culture, promoting academic excellence, supporting family unification, encouraging volunteerism and community involvement, and participating in national competitions. All of which will lead toward the greater prosperity of our community. (Teriipaia 2009)

It was clear from our subsequent interview that Auntie Pola took these goals to heart. She cares deeply about the youth of her community who had become her extended family. She is the type of teacher who may seem outwardly stern, but projects a great sense of humor and a love for Tahitian culture and her students. She respects her teachers and expects the same from her students. I think in part because of her dedication to these issues, she welcomed me as an emissary of higher education, both to support my work and to set an example for her students.

While I had envisioned working with informants and collaborators, I had not anticipated taking on the position of teacher or role model. My research and this project took on a new meaning: I was to set an example of professional academic research, and represent higher education as a possible goal for these students. Manutahi’s mission includes “promoting academic excellence,” and I was to lead by example. Though unexpected, this role was definitely appropriate. Pola recognized the positive potential to influence her students. The only additional effort required of me was the acknowledgement that I could have a positive impact upon her students.

Nicole Beaudry has written of the difficulty for some informants living in remote areas to understand the motivations of ethnographic researchers:

“Northern people are now acquainted with masses of university students who come in search of dissertation material, and they wonder why they are targeted…. they feel as if they are being used like objects—observed, analyzed, written about, and left. (Beaudry 1997:77)

Thanks to the proximity of Wahiawa to my university in Mānoa, the stated goals of Manutahi Tahiti, and Auntie Pola’s insightful ability to capitalize on my presence, she was able to understand my intentions and introduce me to her group in the best light. I was able to have a much more positive personal impact on the group than some other
research experiences, such as Beaudry describes.

While most Tahitian dance groups make their own costumes, musical instruments come from a much smaller number of sources. Tyrone Temanaha, Jr., with whom I had studied Tahitian drumming previously, suggested two other carvers for me to contact, Mafatu Krainer and Etua Tahauri. Mafatu, known as Fatu, is the son of Miko Krainer. The family operates two businesses: Tahitian Tree Services, Inc., and Tahitian Instruments. Fatu was an early supporter and generous collaborator, lending a large number of instruments and Tahitian jewelry for the exhibit. Etua Tahauri is a senior Tahitian-born tō‘ere carver based in Hau‘ula on O‘ahu’s North Shore. He was one of the founders of Tahiti Nui International, from which he has resigned, and now serves as an ‘ori tahiti judge at numerous festivals in Hawai‘i, the US mainland, and Tahiti. At my first telephone contact with Etua, he was a bit hesitant. He sounded overly busy and couldn’t take the time for an interview, and asked me to call back next week. The following week we made an interview appointment at his home in Hau‘ula, but he asked me to email my questions ahead of time so that he would have answers ready and we could progress quickly. I pessimistically anticipated two hours of driving for a thirty-minute interview, and hoped that the interview would be worth the effort.

When I arrived in Hau‘ula and we began our conversation, he stated that I could make an audio recording of our conversation, but no video. I had not planned to video record, so this was fine. This initial meeting turned out to be three hours long. Though the conversation meandered sometimes widely from the outlined questions, Etua was interested in the project and wanted sincerely for me to “get it right.” I asked if I could return when he was making tō‘ere, so that I could take some photographs to document the process. He agreed, and told me to call him the next week, when we would make another appointment.

When I arrived back in Hau‘ula on February 6, Uncle Etua met me in his work clothes, and had clearly already been working on drums as well as preparing for my arrival. He had lined up seven tō‘ere, in various stages of completion, and I readied my audio recorder and still camera. Just then, he said he was ready for me to video record.
Having thought that he was opposed to video, I was fortunate to have brought my equipment including enough blank tape for what followed. This video would be a centerpiece of the exhibition. Etua, who also carves Hawaiian *pahu*, has been the focus of professional documentary films before. He understood the power of this medium and magnanimously offered it to me on a platter. Later, both Fatu and Tyrone told me that Etua had called them up to ask about me. “Who is this guy? What does he want?” They both assured him that my intentions were good. Without their support, I may not have been able to reach Etua or gain his trust.

My experience with Etua provides several examples of fieldwork dos and don’ts. I thought his initial reception of the project was unwelcoming, but in fact he turned out to be a strong supporter and collaborator. Our initial meetings were a variation of one of the most common tropes in fieldwork, what Bruno Nettl refers to as the “come back and see me next Tuesday” response (Nettl 1983:249). For reasons unknown to me at the time, Etua did not allow me to rush in right away. I was unaware that Etua would “check my references,” but having Fatu and Tyrone vouch for me was exactly the introduction I needed. I was much later told that Etua was “quite a talker,” and that anyone engaging him may get more than they expected. Perhaps my persistence for a meeting and initial face-to-face introduction was equally as important as my references; it’s impossible to know.

Reflecting further upon my attitudes at the outset of our relationship also sheds insight to the internal thoughts of the researcher. As I described, I was pessimistic about my first visit to Etua in Hau‘ula, not expecting it to be productive and useful. However, it turned out to be the complete opposite. In hindsight I regret my initial misgivings. I had carried on despite my negativity, granting Etua the trust and faith that he would be open and willing to help. Had I not, I would have run the risk of cutting off Etua’s association through my own misgivings, and am all the more grateful that my outward presentation and his generosity averted any potential tension.

Working with Etua also taught me valuable technical considerations for fieldwork. Simply stated, he taught me to over-prepare for research. By anticipating a
short interview, I very nearly ran out of tape to record our initial conversation. I had to pause recording during non-relevant tangents in order to conserve tape, a dangerous situation to be in. This occurred again when I video-recorded Etua’s drum carving. Again, I was unprepared and nearly ran out of film, juggling multiple tapes to find empty space on them. As a former recording engineer, I had been over-confident in my technical skills. I had good quality equipment and I knew how to use it, but I’d overlooked the number one guideline for field recording: bring all your equipment, and don’t forget lots of extra tape (and batteries)!

2.6.2 Challenges

I was unfortunately unable to contact or work out a time to meet with several key individuals. The role of ra’atira or instrument maker really is not a full-time job. Many of these specialists work standard day-jobs or juggle multiple projects, and may be active with a paid performing ensemble many nights of the week. Several local Tahitian judges were professionally retired, and therefore busy traveling to the US mainland, Mexico, and throughout Hawai‘i for various Tahitian events. Other ra‘atira were swamped with rehearsal and performance obligations (some instructors teach at multiple sites), and though initially interested and supportive, could not take the time for an in-depth interview. During the Winter and early Spring, groups participating in the Heiva i Honolulu were already deep into program-specific rehearsal, preparation, and fundraising.

An additional difficulty of this research was the fact that I was working amongst competing businesses and ensembles. Fieldwork required me to talk to groups currently in preparation for competition against each other. The leader of one drum ensemble chose not to talk to me about their music and instruments, as this was to be kept private until its debut at the Heiva competition. Other groups shared their plans with me, entrusting me to keep them secret. Some groups and individuals also carried a political history that influenced their interaction: groups that had splintered from others sometimes left “bad blood,” and underlying conflicts, though outwardly cordial, at times became very
apparent. In one instance, this became potentially disastrous for my research, a scenario I will discuss in chapter 4.

I was concerned at times that I would not be able to acquire sufficient material objects for the exhibition. In initial interviews, many individuals offered costumes and instruments for loans, but follow-up inquiries were pushed off. I specifically sought gendered pairs of costumes as representative of the performance, but many ra’atira only had female costumes on hand. One ra’atira promised the loan of many costumes from previous performances, but in fact sold them en masse to a performance group in Japan. Several groups did not produce the promised loans, or offered them with only very minimal specific information for the interpretive labels. In these instances, the narrative text would have to be more general or biographical than object-specific. Frighteningly close to the exhibition, I received a sufficient amount, but of course reflecting what was available from the lenders. Five groups loaned 22 costumes, and four instrument makers loaned 29 instruments. Two of the instrument makers provided jewelry and carvings, and a small handful of photographs and printed material completed the collection. I feared that the small number of actual lenders might make the exhibition appear to favor those groups and individuals, and hoped to diminish any perceived bias in the exhibition.

It is a simple fact of fieldwork that the researcher is dependent upon the informant. Countless researchers have struggled with developing rapport, and dealt with canceled appointments. Beyond the research component of interviews, eliciting physical artifacts and materials for an exhibition comprised an even larger amount of trust in the work I was conducting. Working amongst competing groups presented political overtones, whereby I attempted to present myself, and my work, as impartially as possible. Community input and participation in past projects (i.e. Kahn 2000) has included similar difficulties. This social and political aspect of collaborative exhibition I necessarily had to take in stride, but it is a topic to which we will return in chapter 4. Before examining the development of music and performance components or assessing the trickier curatorial issues of the exhibit, I will briefly describe its final design and give an overview of the artifact and text components.
2.7 Design, Installation and Exhibition

A number of themes emerged throughout my fieldwork: innovation, resources, transmission, and craftsmanship. These became a framework for dividing the content into thematic categories. I framed the exhibit with text panels comprising an exhibit overview, and introductions to the dance, instruments, and framing themes. I had hoped to solicit the introductory text panels from practitioners, but had little input in terms of original authorship. The interpretive text was thus a combination of curatorial and community voice, with the graphic layout designed to make this clear. Several key informants reviewed the complete introductory text: Etua Tahauri, Tahia Parker, and Pola Teriipaia. They made only a few minor emendations/corrections. Quotes illuminating the four framing themes appeared in larger-than-object-label text panels placed throughout the gallery space. As much as possible, descriptive object labels were supplemented by relevant quotes by the lender or on pertinent topics. I also offered all quoted collaborators the opportunity to review their statements, again with minimal feedback. I strove for a curatorial voice in the middle ground between *Life in the Pacific of the 1700s*, with its lack of indigenous voice, and *Pacific Voices*, with the advisor as co-curator. The complete exhibit text, with selected object labels, can be found in Appendix C.

Regarding the exhibit title, Christopher Ramento first suggested the term *rima* as referring to handwork or crafts, literally “by hand.” I had several conversations with Etua Tahauri regarding the title. In February he suggested *Te ‘ohipa a te rima o Tahiti*, roughly “handwork of Tahiti.” I was concerned with the cumbersomeness of a long Tahitian title, fearing that it would be off-putting to much of the public. He was adamant, and I tentatively agreed. He shortly called me back though, and said *Tau Rima* was good. It referred to a good, steady hand. He said that it is also a compliment, such as for good playing at *boules*, and worked equally well for craftsmanship involved in performance. I suggested the English subtitle, “crafting performance,” and he agreed. Others would weigh in on this title after the exhibit opened.

For the overall exhibit design, I wanted to highlight each object in a manner that would show its function without distracting elements. I was inspired by the minimalist
costume armatures used in *E’ori i tō īho tupu*. Inspired by the extensive use of bamboo for innovative Tahitian instruments, I designed armatures and barricades of that material. For several costumes requiring a body form, I used mannequins but with bamboo supports for the *hei upo’o*. Based upon feedback from the general public and focus groups (see 5.3.2, 5.4.3, and 5.5.1.1), costumes on these armatures and mannequins would become the most visually stunning feature of the exhibition, lining the walls of the Bridge Gallery. I also positioned several of the drummers’ costumes and instruments on a small raised platform or stage. This was designed to mimic the *Heiva* competition venue, in which the drummers often perform on a platform behind the dancers. Additional instruments and photographs were placed in two vertical museum cases and one table-top case. In order to “brand” the graphic elements, I commissioned a design from Tyrone Temanaha Jr., not only a drummer but a fine tattoo artist. A handful of student colleagues assisted me during the fabrication and installation stages. One ra’atira, Tahia Foster-Parker, came to the installation to personally mount the costumes she had loaned onto their armatures. A complete exhibit floorplan appears in Figure 1, as well as selected photographs of the gallery, figs. 2-5.

I have not yet described the selection and production of *‘ori tahiti* performance elements seen in the gallery exhibit and associated events. These aspects comprise to a large degree the ethnomusicological fieldwork and novelty of the exhibit as an applied ethnomusicology project. Chapter 3 will be dedicated to this material.

14 Several mannequins were generously provided by Carolyn D’Angelo of the UH-Mānoa Historic Costume Collection. Additional installation support was provided by David Landry, who allowed me access and use of the woodworking shop in the Department of Art.
Figure 1: Exhibit Floorplan
Figure 2: Approach to the Bridge Gallery from Hamilton Library main entrance, showing the title banner and eye-catching costumes.

Figure 3: Costumes along the mauka wall, on bamboo armatures.
Figure 4: The musicians’ “stage” at the ‘Ewa end of the gallery, with signage on the bamboo barricade.

Figure 5: Costumes and display cases along the mauka wall, looking toward the entrance (Figure 2).
Describing this exhibit as a gesture toward the post-museum would not be complete without a description of its online presence. Coincident with the opening of the exhibit, I worked with Michael Thomas, Project Manager of the University of Hawai‘i Virtual Museum, to provide an online version of the exhibit. Michael created landing pages on the Virtual Museum’s website, featuring the introductory and interpretive text, and hosting video elements (Figure 6). This homepage for *Tau Rima Tahiti* can be found at http://www.museum.hawaii.edu/exhibits/taurima/. University photographer Scott Beales visited my staging area in the ethnomusicology department prior to installation to shoot individual artifacts. I delivered the resulting digital stills along with corresponding label text, developed for the gallery exhibit, to Michael, who uploaded that information to the UH Virtual Museum’s Flickr account (Figure 7). Through this portal, Flickr users and anyone with access to the web can find these images, text, and videos. Each image includes searchable tags, and users can comment or flag images as their “favorites.”
Figure 6: Homepage for *Tau Rima Tahiti* on the University of Hawai‘i Virtual Museum, http://www.museum.hawaii.edu/exhibits/taurima/.
Figure 7: ‘Ahu roa on the UH Virtual Museum’s Flickr account.

Since this online component is a spin-off version of the full gallery exhibit, I will just briefly mention a few of the issues and challenges surrounding its development. Working within the framework of Flickr and existing web structure of the Virtual Museum forced some limitations in terms of web page design and layout. Maintaining easy accessibility for online visitors requires (or required at that time) the use of a limited
font set and layout options. Even more challenging was the incorporation of diacritics necessary for Tahitian text. The website did provide convenient links to visitor research questionnaires, partnering organizations, and contributing craftspeople. Another difficulty of working with the Virtual Museum is that the artifact images are lumped into the Virtual Museum’s private account, restricting my ability to access and refine text elements and tags. I would also have liked to have provided a graphic design consistent with the exhibit text layout, such as the tattoo motif shown in the exhibit banner (Figure 2) and the interactive computer screen (Figure 41). On the whole, this online component increased “visitation” by making it virtual; I have heard from several individuals who visited the exhibit online, and a handful of Flickr users have commented or tagged exhibit images.

2.8 Chapter Summary: Expectations and Reality

In this chapter I have given an overview of Tahitian performance research in Hawai‘i and recent Pacific exhibitions in Honolulu, Pape‘ete, and the Burke Museum in Seattle. Building upon these prior exhibits, I had planned a collaborative community exhibition based on Hooper-Greenhill’s post-museum, modeled on the collaborative process of Pacific Voices and incorporating a significant amount of musical and ethnomusicological data on the Hawai‘i–Tahitian performance tradition. Despite a slow start and the lack of a formal advisory community committee, the exhibition and special events came together through generous support and feedback from the local Hawai‘i-Tahitian community. Whether by lack of focus or in spite of well-intentioned plans, many aspects of the exhibition differed from the original vision.

One of the primary project goals was to develop the exhibit from within the Tahitian community, using a core advisory group. The lack of such advisors left the onus of curation more heavily on myself than I would have preferred. The post-museum model emphasizes community collaboration, particularly in respect to the needs and motivations of any source community. Delayed by a failure to establish a panel of advisors early on, the project was “fast-tracked” through the compressed time available. This is one reason I cannot wholeheartedly label this project as exemplary of the post-museum, but I believe...
it gestures toward such a model and provides many lessons in negotiating such a project in the future.

I regret that more groups could not be represented in the exhibition, but I am grateful for those who were able to participate to the extent that they did. In particular, the performance elements were heavily biased to only three ensembles: Manutahi Tahiti was featured in the gallery performance video, costume-making video, live performance, and costuming demonstration; Tyrone Temanaha Jr. (who lent instruments, provided content for the interactive kiosk, and conducted the tō’ere demonstrations), and Mafatu Krainer (who lent many instruments and items of jewelry) both perform with Te Vai Ura Nui. That ensemble’s ra’atira, Cathy Temanaha, also loaned a pair of costumes. Pola, Tyrone, and Fatu collectively provided a noticeable percentage of the materials on display, both in object loans and quoted text.

The exhibit venue differed from my original plan, but despite its challenges, brought many benefits of its own. This Gallery was of a suitable size and saw an impressive number of daily visitors. The Bridge Gallery is a type of alternative exhibition space: it is not the exclusive domain of concerted gallery-goers, but presents its content instead to unwitting passersby. The library and nearby university departments also provided technical resources for the exhibit. I believe that as a graduate student at the university, I was given broad latitude by the library administration to undertake this exhibition, pushing the possibilities of the Bridge Gallery space. The incorporation of performance elements, in the gallery and at special events, pushed these boundaries even further, and will be the focus of chapter 3.
CHAPTER 3
CURATING PERFORMANCE:
MEDIATED PERFORMANCE OF MUSIC AND DANCE

3.1 Introduction

The performance of ‘ori tahiti constitutes the most significant aspect of the exhibit, from the context of which we can understand the artifact components and the framing themes of craftsmanship. The stage performance is in fact the culminating product of craft production. It was crucial to show this resulting performance, and also to break down some of the musical elements in order to provide an entrée to the lay visitor. In the following I give an overview of the performance content of the exhibit, with an emphasis upon the musical research and mechanics of production. I will delve more deeply into analyzing the product and effect of this construction in the following two chapters.

3.2 Video Components

The video screen in the Bridge Gallery featured four short films, including the two originally produced documentaries and two performance excerpts:

- **Tō’ere-making featuring Etua Tahauri**  12’35”
- **Pūpū tā’iri tō’ere** performance by ‘Ia Ora O Tahiti Nui  9’09”
- Costume making featuring Pola Teriipaia  8’44”
- ‘Ori tahiti performance by Manutahi Tahiti  11’26”

I personally produced and edited all of these videos using Adobe Premiere CS3. Each of the four segments featured title pages and subtitles (discussed below) styled in the design aesthetic of the exhibit. More specifically, fonts in the video echoed the printed text, and I employed fadeouts to a black screen echoing the “invisible black” of the musicians’ stage and costume armature bases. I strove to produce the four videos in a consistent production style, an accessible aesthetic, and provide rich content for the visitor. Unlike
the exhibit text, video did not include interpretive content, only brief identifying subtitles. Documentaries included first person narration by the actor-subject.

The video content for the film with Etua came from a single recording session, and included additional narration recorded the week prior. In the film Etua discusses his background and personal history of drum carving, describes the drum making process, and talks about ‘ori tahiti in Hawai‘i. The costume-making film featured recordings from several visits to rehearsals in Wahiawa beginning in September 2008, including a group picnic with demonstration by an assistant teacher, and culminates with a performance on November 27, 2008. Again, I recorded additional audio of Pola during visits to the Manutahi rehearsals. Pola discusses her background, the costume making process, and dance groups in Hawai‘i. I will discuss the style, editorial decisions, and content of these videos in greater detail in section 4.3.1. For the gallery display, I mounted below the video screen an ‘ōte’a belt and helmet used by Manutahi Tahiti in the 2008 performance featured in Pola’s costuming video.

Figure 8: Video installation in the Bridge Gallery.
Somewhat more straightforward to produce and explain are the two accompanying performance videos. The first of these was a film of Manutahi Tahiti’s presentation at the San Jose [California] Fête in 2006. When I visited her home in Wahiawa on February 16, Auntie Pola brought out Rubbermaid tubs filled with costumes, laying them on the furniture and occasionally modeling them herself or calling upon her daughter. Several pieces, including a female ‘ōte’a and male ra’atira costume, came from a 2006 production based upon Pele and performed at the San Jose Fête that year. Pola offered me a video of this performance, produced by Playback Memories, a company that conducts professional videography for many Tahitian and other cultural festivals. Inclusion of this video, I decided, would show the Pele costumes in the context of ‘ori tahiti performance, as originally intended. After receiving permission from Playback Memories to use the video, I created a series of excerpts with subtitles identifying the dance forms.

Requirements for group presentations of ‘ori tahiti vary somewhat from competition to competition. Sometimes, a single group performance will include ‘ōte’a, and ‘aparima, and others times these are separate presentations. The ‘ahu roa, not a part of the traditional dance repertoire, is invariably presented as a standalone performance. In The Dance of Tahiti, Moulin observes both the hivinau and pā‘ō‘ā waning from the typical ‘ōte’a performance. Of the latter, she observes, “it has now virtually diss appeared from the typical show, and one only hopes that the pā‘ō‘ā will make a reappearance before it is totally lost” (1979:84). In fact, this appears to be happening in contemporary competitions in Hawai‘i and the US mainland.

Tahiti Nui International and other heiva organizers have surely been important in reviving these two dances, which are typically included as part of the ‘ōte’a performance.

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15 Professional videography is typical of many Tahitian American festivals, and festivals sometimes do not allow attendees to record their own video without paying a premium. I received written permission from Playback Memories to use excerpts of this film in the exhibition, and to later distribute my edited version to participants with an approved disclaimer.
Rules published by the Tahiti Fête of San Jose, for example, state, “although not required, groups should perform either the “Hivinau” and/or the “Pa’o’a” during the ‘Ote’a” (Tahiti Fête of San Jose 2011). The Kiki Raina Fête of Merced, California stipulates that, all groups may present either Aparima, ‘Ote’a or both styles of Tahitian dance including, but not limited to, Hivinau, Pa’oa, solo Ori Tahiti, Couples, Comedy, Drama or other forms of Tahitian Dance to Music. A traditional Drum Pehe section may be included. Ahuroa that is a separate category may not be included in Aparima/ ‘Ote’a combined presentation. (Kiki Raina Fête 2011)

The rules employed by Tahiti Nui International are more restrictive, and more effectively force groups to employ these formerly waning dances. Tahiti Nui International divides competition categories into “group à la carte” and “group ‘ôte’a overall.” The “à la carte” events include:

1) Vahine Ahupurotu (Jr.-Hura Ava Tau and Sr.-Hura Tau levels)
2) Mama Ruau Ahupurotu (Hura Metua Pa_ari) This is a single Division
3) Vahine Aparima (Jr.-Hura Ava Tau and Sr.-Hura Tau levels)
4) Pupu Ta’iri Toere [Drumming] (Jr.-Hura Ava Tau and Sr.-Hura Tau levels)

(Tahiti Nui International 2011)

Note here the absence of ‘ôte’a. The group ‘ôte’a overall event, on the other hand, includes the following stipulation:

Your Group must perform, continuously, for a period of thirty (30) minutes maximum, according to the mandated criteria listed below. These criteria may be organized or choreographed in any order that your Group chooses to do so.

1) An Ote’a presentation with a theme
2) All music and drumming must be live
3) An Orero presentation by the Ra’atira or someone designated in the Group
4) A Pa’oa and Hivinau
5) A Group Aparima
6) A Tamure dance by a couple (tane and vahine)

(ibid.)
All of the ra’atira and other specialists I spoke with about dance described the hivinau and pā’ōʻā as key dance forms. It seems logical to conclude, also, that groups competing in multiple competitions, some requiring those additional forms, will carry the hivinau and pā’ōʻā with them to less-stringent competitions. After all, such a culturally informed presentation will improve their score. The exhibit text describing these dance forms appears in Appendix C: Exhibit Text, and they are more fully described by Moulin (1979).

At the 2006 Tahiti Fête of San Jose, Manutahi Tahiti competed (in the hura ava tau, or “amateur” division) in three separate presentations: ‘ōte’a, aparima, and ‘ahu roa. The 14’30” ‘ōt‘ea presentation included hivinau and pā’ōʻā, and served as the venue for competing in the tā‘iri tō‘ere (drumming) competition. From these three video segments, I selected the opening ‘ōrero (ra’atira speech), ‘ōte’a, hivinau, pā’ōʻā, ‘ahuroa, aparima, and a final ‘ōte’a, totaling a length of 11’30”. For the ‘ōrero and each of these dances, I provided subtitles to identify the forms.

The second performance video came from the 2009 Heiva i Honolulu drumming competition, or pūpū tā‘iri tō‘ere. Only two ensembles participated in this drumming competition, Te Vai Ura Nui and ‘Ia Ora O Tahiti Nui. With the permission of lead drummer Kevin Kama, I chose to show ‘Ia Ora O Tahiti Nui’s performance. I chose to feature that group because of their very novel instruments which I had seen previously.16 The group first presents standard pehe, in the following order: Pahae, Pa‘ea, Takoto, Puarātā, Hitoto, and Samba. This exposition lasted 2’30”, and flowed directly into the 6’30” composition performance. As in the performance video of Manutahi, I added subtitles to identify the pehe during the requisite exposition. Other than the pehe subtitles, fade-in and fade-out, this piece was not edited for content. Unlike the Manutahi dance performance, the pūpū tā‘iri tō‘ere was a comfortable duration to show in its entirety.

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16 The performance by ‘Ia Ora O Tahiti Nui was also chosen to minimize a bias toward Te Vai Ura Nui, since I had already been in working with Tyrone Temanaha, Jr. to develop the interactive kiosk.
The brief discussion of tō’ere pehe in this video invite a more detailed examination of that form, a focus of the nearby interactive kiosk.

### 3.3 Interactive Music Kiosk

Tahitian drumming is energetic and attention-grabbing. If practitioners are concerned about the blurring of Polynesian traditions, particularly Tahitian amongst the Hawaiian, surely tā’iri tō’ere could be a vehicle to illustrate the distinctive nature of the tradition. The instruments, ensemble interaction, and musical structures contrast greatly with Hawaiian music. As a musician myself I have been intrigued by the energy and the musical form of the drumming, and hoped early on to develop an interactive station to convey this music to visitors in a way that would be welcoming, engaging, and educational. I acknowledge, however, that tō’ere drumming is not essential to ‘ori tahiti, as it is not typically a part of the ‘aparima.

The ‘aparima is “always intended as an actual danced story” (Moulin 1979:53). In Tahiti there exists a form known as ‘aparama vāvā, or “mute” ‘aparima, which uses no text to tell a story through pantomime. ‘Aparima vāvā sometimes employs the drum ensemble, but in a more subdued and secondary nature than during the ōte’a. The ‘aparima hīmene, or in Hawai‘i simply ‘aparima, employs a string band and relates a sung text through the dancer’s gestures. This ‘aparima has unmistakable Western influences, including the song form, guitar, ‘ukarere, and pahu drum. Moulin goes on to note that “the ‘aparima is truly a hybrid” (ibid., 68). Rather than explore the evolution of the Tahitian ‘ukarere (banjo) from the Hawaiian ‘ukulele and the Western-influenced folk songs of the string band music, I chose to highlight the drumming that is central to most of the Hawai‘i-Tahitian dance tradition. It is to that tradition that we now turn our focus.

The drumming ensemble for ōte’a perform a series of rhythmic patterns, known as pehe. Moulin explains, “these rhythms are actually distinct musical sentences, identifiable to the Tahitian and given specific names” (1979:44). Moulin lists twenty-two
pehe, stressing that her lists is by no means exhaustive, and the repertoire is constantly expanding. Even the standard pehe

may vary slightly musically according to the performance group. The basic rhythm will remain the same, but it may be repeated a different number of times or furnished with a different ending, depending upon the group. (Ibid.:45)

The pehe are the foundation of the drum ensemble music, a starting point from which to “spin out” original compositions, and provide a recognizable home base, rhythms with which the dancers are familiar and have a repertoire of appropriate dance movements. As such, these pehe are also part of the competition, as demonstrated in the gallery video of ‘Ia Ora O Tahiti Nui. Similar presentations occur at the Tahitian Heiva, as demonstrated by a video of Heikura Nui at the 2001 Heiva in Pape‘ete (ICA 2001).

A list of the “most commonly known” pehe may be shorter in Hawai‘i than in Tahiti, if Heiva guidelines are an indication. In the pūpū tā ‘iri tō‘ere rules for the 2009 Heiva i Honolulu, the organizers write:

Among other beats, your entire creation must include at least six (6) of the following original beats:

- Pahae
- Paea (Pa‘ea)
- Takoto
- Puaratā
- Hitoto
- Porapora
- Tiare Taporo
- Samba
- Bounty

(Tahiti Nui International, 2009)

Notably, Moulin lists neither the Pahae nor samba beats. Tyrone and others often refer to Pahae as simply “basic,” or “the basic beat.”17 Samba is widely known in Hawai‘i, and its name clearly indicates a Brazilian origin, though its specific history and incorporation into the Tahitian repertoire is unknown. Both samba and Pahae appear today in in the curriculum of the Conservatoire Artistique de la Polynésie Française (2011). The

17 While examining a tō‘ere during a rehearsal of ‘Ia Ora O Tahiti Nui (January 29, 2009), ra‘atira Kevin Kama invited me to play the instrument, and instructed the other musicians to “just play basic beat,” meaning Pahae.
The Heiva i Honolulu pūpū ta’iri tō’ere, or drumming à la carte presentation, begins with an ‘ōrero or speech of welcome and introduction from the ra’atira, who may also be the arata’i, or lead drummer. The ra’atira verbally introduces each pehe by name, and initiates the beat with a musical announcement (Moulin 1978:48), often comprising one cycle of the beat, after which the ensemble joins. The group first plays the basic form of the beat, followed by a faster form which includes the tūmau, improvising tō’ere, and may be called the orooro or “rolling style.” The pehe ends with a toma, period, either a predetermined coda or synchronized stopping point. After presenting each of their required pehe, the ensemble then launches into their original composition, which includes these and other rhythms.

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18 Despite the fact that the Heiva i Honolulu recordings were made after the opening of the exhibit, stylistic differences were made evident and frequently referenced throughout the fieldwork. The staged presentation provides a clear and concise selection of pehe from which to base the analysis.
The following transcriptions show differences in the basic beats presented by Te Vai Ura Nui and ʻIa Ora O Tahiti Nui for the pūpū taʻiri tō‘ere at the 2009 Heiva i Honolulu, March 14, 2009, as well as the study recording for Manutahi Tahiti. Since the competition requirements are for any six of the nine listed beats, not all are available for direct comparison. Table 1 lists the pehe presented by each group’s heiva performance plus the study CD.¹⁹

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Te Vai Ura Nui</th>
<th>ʻIa Ora O Tahiti Nui</th>
<th>Manutahi Tahiti*</th>
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<td>Puarātā</td>
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<td>Pahae</td>
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<td>Porapora</td>
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<td>Porapora</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Samba</td>
<td>Samba</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Manutahi Tahiti’s study CD includes three additional pehe: pahere, tahape, and torota. Since these were not represented in comparison groups, they are omitted from this table and subsequent analysis.

Both of the Heiva i Honolulu presentations are fairly uniform in structure. Tyrone Temanaha, Jr. acts as arataʻi for Te Vai Ura Nui, leading an ensemble of eight drummers. The raʻatira, a separate individual, verbally introduces each pehe, which is then musically announced by Tyrone on a small handheld tōʻere petit. The arataʻi is shortly joined by ihara and a small pahu. This segues into the orooro style, played on the larger tōʻere, with accompanying instruments pahu tūpaʻi rima, faʻatete, and a second pahu joining. Each pehe ends with a toma and brief pause before the subsequent verbal

¹⁹ This listing does not reflect the performance order of pehe during the Heiva i Honolulu.
pehe introduction. For ‘Ia Ora O Tahiti Nui, the ra‘atira and arata‘i is Kevin Kama. While the subsequent composition features thirteen players, only seven participate in the pehe presentation. As in Te Vai Ura Nui, each beat is verbally identified, musically announced on the tō‘ere petit by the arata‘i, joined by additional musicians, and segues into orooro on large tō‘ere, ending in toma. Their instrumentation differs: the basic beat features pahu tūpa‘i rima and a knee-high fa‘atete with hide drumhead, while the orooro sections include pahu and a smaller fa‘atete with synthetic skin, which emits a higher, more piercing tone. The Manutahi Tahiti study CD was recorded by Aaron Grainger, who plays the basic beats on both tō‘ere and pahu.\(^{20}\) This recording is a noticeably slower tempo for the sake of its educational purpose, not featuring any orooro drumming.

The following examples are of each basic beat as presented by the arata‘i, as well as the pahu which provides a foundation and hints at an implied inner pulse. Since ‘Ia Ora O Tahiti Nui included the pahu only in their orooro presentations, it is omitted here unless otherwise noted. For the sake of comparison, I have transcribed the pehe using Western staff notation. Figure 9 provides a legend for the subsequent transcriptions.

Figure 9: Notation legend for drumming transcriptions

20 Aaron simultaneously plays the tō‘ere with his right hand and pahu with the left, a technique seen frequently among teachers and in short-staffed rehearsals. I have witnessed Aaron, Tyrone Temanaha, Jr., and Tino Hoffmann play thus in rehearsals. Robyn Manu Williams told me that her father, Dennis Kia, even performs ambidextrously, a practice somewhat frowned upon.
3.3.1.1 Hitoto

This *pehe* is properly sixteen bars or 32 beats: the first section repeats, the second section repeats followed by a restatement of the entire pehe, including these internal repetitions. In both *Heiva* presentations, the *arata'i* plays the first four bars, after which the ensemble joins.

Figure 10: *Hitoto* by Te Vai Ura Nui

![Figure 10: Hitoto by Te Vai Ura Nui](image)

Figure 11: *Hitoto* by ‘Ia Ora O Tahiti Nui

![Figure 11: Hitoto by ‘Ia Ora O Tahiti Nui](image)

These two versions of *Hitoto* differ in the *toma*-like syncopations at mm. 3-4, but they are otherwise identical. Similarly, the Manutahi recording features unique syncopation, as well as additional differences:
Figure 12: *Hitoto* by Manutahi Tahiti

The second half of Manutahi Tahiti’s *Hitoto* differs significantly from the earlier versions. Instead of the syncopated accent in mm. 5-6, the rhythm remains straight. The second half of the *pehe* does not precisely repeat. Rather, it features a first- and second-ending similar to the standard *toma*. The voicing between ‘*opu* and *hei* nonetheless preserves the “flavor” of *Hitoto*. Notably, the *pahu* is syncopated in mm. 7-8, and adds a pickup note leading into the repeat of m. 5. A similar *pahu* syncopation appears in the *orooro* version by ‘Ia Ora O Tahiti Nui, though it remains straight in Te Vai Ura Nui’s *orooro*.

### 3.3.1.2 Puarata

*Puarātā*, like *Hitoto*, is a 32-beat *pehe* consisting of two repeated sections, the second of which is, in fact, the standard *toma* ending phrase. In both *Heiva* presentations, the *arata‘i* plays the first four bars, after which the ensemble joins on the repeat at m. 1.
Note again the general difference during syncopated sections, specifically the *toma* of Tei Vai Ura Nui (fig. 13) compared to the other two examples. Additionally, ‘Ia Ora O Tahiti Nui (fig. 14) plays straight eighth notes through m. 4, possibly a byproduct of playing much faster than the other groups. They retain the rhythmic cadence on the final quarter-note pulse of m. 4.
3.3.1.3 Takoto

*Takoto* is analytically interesting in that it is asymmetric, but by examining multiple versions we see that the underlying pulse of the *pahu* may vary, and obscure this fact. In the basic presentation of *Takoto* by ‘Ia Ora O Tahiti Nui, the *tō’ere arata’i* plays one cycle after which the remaining *tō’ere, pahu tūpa’i rima*, and *fa’atete* join. The *tō’ere* and *pahu tūpa’i rima* play in unison, the *tō’ere* accenting the initial *hei* stroke.

**Figure 16: Takoto by ‘Ia Ora O Tahiti Nui**

When the group shifts to *orooro* style, the *pahu* emphasises the *‘opu* strike of the *tō’ere*. Though the *tāmau* obscures an accurate transcription of all of the *tō’ere*, superimposing the basic beat with *pahu* results in the following:

**Figure 17: Takoto by ‘Ia Ora O Tahiti Nui (orooro, transcription a)**

The metric pulse effectively shifts to the *pahu*, and we may re-spell the same rhythm as in Figure 18:

**Figure 18: Takoto by ‘Ia Ora O Tahiti Nui (orooro, transcription b)**
The final note of the *pehe* coincides with the downbeat of Figure 16 and Figure 17, so this re-spelling does not accommodate the end of the phrase structure. In analysis by an outside observer (myself), this shift of pulse plays a temporary psychological trick, but I have not been told this by musicians or dancers within the tradition.

**Figure 19: Takoto by Manutahi Tahiti**

![Takoto by Manutahi Tahiti](image1)

Manutahi’s rehearsal version places the *pahu* similarly to ‘Ia Ora O Tahiti Nui, though the *pahu* joins the (again, slightly different) syncopation in the final grouping of 3 eighth notes. The entire *pehe* is played on the *'opu*, but the sixteenth notes (what would be the *hei* strikes in other versions) are accented, suggesting this metric pulse.

Te Vai Ura Nui offers a very different underlying pulse. In this version, the arata‘i plays one cycle solo, just as ‘Ia Ora O Tahiti Nui in Figure 16. Additional *tō‘ere* join the *arata‘i* in unison on the repeat. The third iteration brings in the remaining basic ensemble with *pahu* and *ihara*, but notice the *pahu* beat:

**Figure 20: Takoto by Te Vei Ura Nui, transcription a**

![Takoto by Te Vei Ura Nui, transcription a](image2)

The *pahu* here plays a steady pulse of eighth notes, distinctly different from the previous two ensembles. This serves to normalize an otherwise asymmetric beat (3+3+3+3+4+2) into an easily discerned pulse. The interplay of the opening *hei* accent against the *pahu* also suggests, in comparison to Figure 16 and Figure 19, a hemiola in the first two groupings of a regular phrase of 3+3+3.
Figure 21: Takoto by Te Vai Ura Nui, transcription b

The tō‘ere part remains consistent across each of these examples, with the only major difference being this interpretation of the underlying pulse. Does this change the beat in a way that is significant to Tahitian dancers and musicians? These varying interpretations of Takoto, particularly the appearance of hemiola and variation in placement of the pahu, reaffirm the preeminence of the tō‘ere. In the Western music-trained mind of this researcher, the variation in the pahu is notable, but to the Tahitian musician, the pahu is secondary to the lead instrument, the tō‘ere.

3.3.1.4 Paʻea

Pa‘ea, like Puarātā, includes the toma pattern as part of the pehe. The first phrase of Paʻea is six beats, repeated once to result in twelve beats, then followed by the eight beat toma. The announcement of Pa‘ea by ‘Ia Ora O Tahiti Nui omits the initial two beats, focusing instead on the syncopated hei strokes.

Figure 22: Pa‘ea by Te Vai Ur Nui
Figure 23: Pa’ea by ‘Ia Ora O Tahiti Nui

The hei strokes of these two groups differ slightly. Though Figure 23 has more strokes in the hei section (mm. 1-2 or 4-5), the rhythm emphasized is that of Figure 22 (mm. 2-3). The additional notes may also be accommodated by the slower speed of this version.

3.3.1.5 Porapora

Another two-part pehe, I will use the designation of an A and B section to discuss Porapora. Te Vai Ura Nui’s announcement includes only the ending B section:

Figure 24: Porapora by Te Vai Ur Nui
As in other pehe shown already, we can see variation in the initial syncopated rhythms. The defining feature of the A section seem to be three beats of hei followed by the ‘ōpū “Scotch snap” (sixteenth, dotted eighth note) on beat four. Each version begins the B section with two quarter note beats (the second on hei in fig. 25) followed by a sort of short toma for the pehe, but they differ in one very significant way. The B section by Te Vai Ura Nui is eight beats, but only six for Manutahi. The last four beats of the B section of each example nearly match, particularly the straight eighth notes of the penultimate bar. This suggests that though the A section may seem the most significant, the B section with its distinctive final two bars represent an equally defining feature.

3.3.1.6 Samba

Though not listed by Moulin (1979), the pehe Samba is a requisite beat for numerous contemporary heiva including the Heiva i Honolulu 2008 and 2009. ‘Ia Ora O Tahiti Nui included samba in their presentation, and Manutahi features the beat on Grainger’s training CD.
Returning again to Moulin’s monograph, she notes, in reference to pehe, that “the Tahitian approach to music does most certainly accept invention, and new compositions are regularly being added” (1979:46). Samba is certainly a more recently composed pehe which has become, in Hawai‘i at least, very well established. One can only assume that the directors of Tahiti Nui International and guest judges of the various heiva have codified the pehe Samba in the context of Tahitian music, i.e., Samba is most likely performed in Tahiti. The name explicitly identifies the origin of this beat. Looking to the Garland Encyclopedia of World Music, we find samba under the entry for Brazil. Among several musical examples we find the agogô, or double bell, marking a similar rhythm (Olsen 1998: 315).

Here we see the tō‘ere version of samba alongside the Brazilian agogô. The final eighth note of the tō‘ere, not present in figure 25, appears in parentheses. The “x” noteheads of the agogô indicate the bells pressed together, a type of time-filling ghost stroke, barely audible. The two instruments differ only significantly on the final beat, which is de-emphasized by the time-filling agogô stroke. Since the incorporation of this beat follows the Tahitian tendency to borrow and adapt new sounds, its specific origin is less important than its mere presence. The widespread adoption of pehe Samba through validation at various heiva reiterates this open acceptance of the “other” into the Tahitian
– a practice as important to the music (pehe) as to instrumentation (i.e. pahu, ‘ukarere, guitar).

3.3.1.7 Pahae

Both Te Vai Ura Nui and ‘Ia Ora O Tahiti Nui begin their presentation with Pahae, the “basic beat.” This beat is conspicuously absent from the Manutahi Tahiti CD, perhaps because it is so ubiquitous as to be unnecessary in such a format.

Figure 29: Pahae by Te Vai Ura Nui

![Diagram of Pahae by Te Vai Ura Nui]

Figure 30: Pahae by ‘Ia Ora O Tahiti Nui

![Diagram of Pahae by ‘Ia Ora O Tahiti Nui]

The last two bars of Pahae are similar to the toma or ending motif, and (as we may have come to expect) differ slightly. Like the toma, they may be presented as interlocking parts among the tō‘ere, but in this presentation all tō‘ere play in unison. The interlocking of tō‘ere can be seen in the full transcriptions of Pahae in Figure 31.

3.3.2 Pehe Summary

This comparison shows that the named pehe differ between drumming ensembles in a range of manners and extremes, but remain quite recognizable. The most typical difference between group styles is the division of syncopated phrases related to the toma, most notable in Pahae and Puarātā, and to a lesser extent in the short syncopations of Hitoto and Takoto. The syncopated pahu, representative of each Manutahi example, may
be an extension of this variable. It may also be a result of one musician playing both parts and synchronizing his instruments during the syncopation. The shifting pulse in Takoto may appear at first to be a structural difference, but in fact the tō’ere rhythms are constant.

An additional factor of arguable importance is that of speed. Drummers take pride in how fast they can play pehe, and the ensemble is a factor in this. Several drummers have admitted that their group has their own style, and Allen Ramento even told me “we pretty much play the same beats as everyone else, just faster” (pers. comm., 27 September 2008). Speed may play into the feasibility of additional subdivisions within the beat, resulting in a payoff of speed vs. intricacy. Unfortunately it is nearly impossible to distinguish the interlocking orooro versions of these pehe in their ensemble form, but the manner of interlocking and the style of the tāmau are additional rich sources for examination. The differences are, in the end, purely stylistic, and hint at the diversity of this tradition within well-defined parameters of the well-known pehe.

### 3.3.3 Production and Installation

Based upon the relative consistency of the pehe between ensembles, I hoped to make clear in the exhibit the musical structure as well as instrumentation. Rather than a recently incorporated pehe such as Samba, an asymmetrical meter like Takoto, or a compound pehe (Hitoto, Puarātā, Pa’ea, Porapora), gallery presentation to both the layman and those familiar with the tradition prompted the selection of Pahae, “basic beat,” for the interactive kiosk. When I suggested conducting a recording session to Tyrone Temanaha, Jr., I asked him which pehe would be appropriate for the exhibit. He indicated strongly that Pahae was the best, and that showing two versions would provide an important distinction in styles.

Tyrone participated in a multi-track recording session that resulted in two versions of Pahae, each featuring six unique instruments. I recorded and mixed these tracks using DigiDesign ProTools, with Tyrone playing one instrument at a time while synchronizing with the accumulated tracks. This multi-track process allowed a transcription of each
instrumental voice. Tyrone referred to these two versions as “slow” and “fast.” He also
used the term “basic” in reference to the slow version, but did not use the term orooro. Following the recording session, I transcribed each version as follows in Figure 31 and
Figure 32.

21 In a follow up interview, Raymond Mariteragi specifically describes this version as
orooro.

22 For notation legend, see Figure 9.
Figure 31: *Pahae*, slow style; multi-track recording with Tyrone Temanaha, Jr.
Figure 32: *Pahae*, fast style; multi-track recording with Tyrone Temanaha, Jr.

(continued)
These transcriptions make clear, to the trained eye, the interlocking nature of \textit{tō’ere} and supporting drums in Tahitian drumming. In the slow version of \textit{Pahae}, the \textit{tō’ere} are divided into the \textit{muri}, \textit{ropu}, and \textit{i mua}, names which translate as “behind,”
“middle,” and “in front,” and describe their rhythmic placement in the composition. The fast version of *Pahae* features three tō’ere as well, but with different names. Tyrone refers to the lead instrument as tō’ere tāmau arata ‘i, joined by the tāhape and the familiar i mua.\(^{23}\)

I knew that staff notation has a high level of accessibility to students of Western music, so chose to use this most common notation format to illustrate *Pahae* in the interactive kiosk. For the sake of comparison, and to invite visitors unfamiliar with staff notation, I provided two alternative formats: time unit box system (TUBS), and graphic timeline notation.

James Koetting introduced the TUBS system to describe African drum music with interlocking rhythms. Koetting explains,

> Each box in TUBS represents one fastest pulse…x…, a basic time unit in the music, with subdivisions within the fastest pulse being notated with special techniques…. Each box in TUBS is left empty if no sound occurs in the time unit represented by the box; and is filled when [sic] one or more symbols to indicate any sounds occurring and to characterize their sonority by representing the techniques used by the performers to produce the pitch, loudness, tone quality, and carrying power of the sounds. (1970:127)

TUBS is particularly useful as a teaching tool, as Koetting used it with the UCLA African Study Group. Koetting also writes that one of its benefits is that it makes clear sounds that “are so close in pitch that it is often difficult to distinguish one from the other as they play interlocking rhythms” (Titon 2004:75). This is a trait of the Tahitian drum ensemble’s interlocking tō’ere.

\(^{23}\) During the recording session with Tyrone, I was sometimes straining to understand clearly what he referred to each of the drum voices. Though he saw a draft before installation, it later became apparent that some of these labels are in fact inaccurate. Moulin describes tāmau as the basic beat, which may be performed by multiple players. The tāhape is “the improviser of the groups, the one who gives the pehe life and musical interest” (Moulin 1979:49). Similarly, the tō’ere in the slow style should be ropu (“center,” the lead tō’ere which begins the beat), muri (“behind,” whose syncopations fall behind the ropu), and i mua (“in front,” whose syncopations anticipate those of the ropu). See Figure 31 and Appendix A.
Figure 33: TUBS transcription legend. Each box indicates an equal period of time, and the symbol in the box tells you what to play. If a box is empty, the instrument is resting.

- One note within the time unit
- Unit divided in half: two notes within the time unit
- Resting unit or subdivision
- Unit divided in half: the first half is a rest followed by a note
- Accented note (longer size)

**Skin drums:**

- Open tone
- Muted slap tone
- Grace note (barely precedes the main beat)
Figure 34: *Pahae*, slow style; TUBS transcription

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bar 1</th>
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<th>Bar 3</th>
<th>Bar 4</th>
<th>Bar 5</th>
<th>Bar 6</th>
<th>Bar 7</th>
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Figure 35: *Pahae*, fast style; TUBS transcription
The third and final form of transcription came as a graphic rendering. I thought that this would create a refreshing alternative to the very codified and “boxy” versions already explained, and would hopefully break down assumptions that the written notation is a learned and therefore exclusionary mode. As a researcher, I hoped to provide a transcription that would be objective and accurate; and as an exhibit designer I wanted a visually appealing and legible descriptive transcription. Charles Seeger (1958) described the inappropriateness of Western staff notation to describe music from another tradition. He wrote,

In employing this mainly prescriptive notation as a descriptive sound-writing of any music other than the Occidental fine and popular arts of music we do two things, both thoroughly unscientific. First, we single out what appear to us to be structures in the other music that resemble structures familiar to us in the notation of the Occidental art and write these down, ignoring everything else for which we have no symbols. Second, we expect the resulting notation to be read by people who do not carry the tradition of the other music. The result, as read, can only be a conglomeration of structures part European, part non-European, connected by a movement 100% European. To such a riot of subjectivity it is presumptuous indeed to ascribe the designation “scientific.” (Seeger 1958:187)

Seeger advocated the use of arbitrary scientific transcription devices, particularly the melograph, a tool able not only to show the attack, sustain, and decay of musical sounds, but also their timbre.

Since all of the instruments in the Tahitian ensemble are percussive and produce predominantly transient sounds, I felt it only necessary to create an objective visual rendering of each instrument’s attack. I sought to create a graphic rendering in the sense of a linear timeline, but without the arbitrary time units as in the TUBS notation. The rendering would be easier to read and not as overwhelming as that from a melograph, with only the limited information of each instrument’s attack and amplitude along a timeline.

Returning to the multi-track recording in ProTools, I took a series of screen shots of each track as they appeared on the digital timeline (Figure 36). Along the horizontal timeline, the centerline represents silence, with peaks showing relative amplitude. I then
imported these screenshot images into Adobe InDesign and tiled them into a single image. I created ruler guides identifying the centerlines and arbitrary degrees of amplitude away from the centerline (Figure 37). I then created a standard series of “noteheads,” differently sized oval shapes to represent three different volume levels, and placed copies of these noteheads on each waveform that reached the requisite amplitude peak (Figure 38). This was a manual process, and I was careful to center each notehead horizontally on the attack. In practice, this step included some subjective choices in terms of amplitude representation.

Figure 36: Multi-track screen shot of audio waveform

Figure 37: Screenshot of waveform with arbitrary amplitude scale
One drawback to this form of graphic transcription was the amount of space required. In order to show each instrument in both the “slow” and “fast” versions, I made the decision to include only one cycle of each repeated *pehe* (Figure 39, Figure 40).
Figure 39: *Pahae*, slow style; graphic transcription
While finalizing the transcriptions, I worked with Christopher Formanek to design an interactive program using MAX MSP, a powerful interactive multimedia platform. I had exported each separate instrumental track as an audio file, so that each set of six tracks had matching durations. This allowed Chris to link the six tracks on a looped playback. When finalized for the exhibit, a computer running MAX MSP in “presentation mode” featured two sets of instrument photographs. The top group represented instruments of the slow Pahae version, the lower group the fast version. Identifying labels corresponded to the instruments of the transcriptions. Each instrument could be selectively made audible or mute. Users could play either the fast or the slow version, and

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24 Just to the right of the computer kiosk, the musicians’ stage display featured all of the instruments shown in the photographs on screen, with additional descriptions.
freely toggle the audio for each instrument. I added an image of the *Tau Rima Tahiti* tattoo motif for graphic consistency.

Figure 41: Interactive kiosk computer screen

We installed MAX MSP and this program document on an iMac computer, on which the CPU is encased in the screen. I developed a large image including all six musical transcriptions as well as introductory text (Figure 42). Once printed, I mounted the graphic to poster board, cutting out the screen and speaker ports, and affixed the panel to the iMac. Once the program was open, users required only a mouse to interact, thus reducing the possibility of tampering with the program or computer. I also supplied a larger format, printed version of transcriptions in a bound notebook next to the computer.
Figure 42: Interactive kiosk graphic panel

TÖ’ERE AND PEHE

Central beam is a single piece of wood in hand-carved, msapined style. (These are made, evolved in material.) The length of the ‘au is to be used in the kiosks. Both the inside and the outside of the ‘au are to be seen. The inside, or the image, the outside walls of the ‘au are to be seen. Through these walls, the pehe is to be seen. The inside of the pehe is to be seen. Through these walls, the pehe is to be seen. Through these walls, the pehe is to be seen.

Historically, a number of versions of the ‘au played in various settings. Beginning in early 19th century, the ‘au is to be played in various settings. Beginning in early 19th century, the ‘au is to be played in various settings. Beginning in early 19th century, the ‘au is to be played in various settings. Beginning in early 19th century, the ‘au is to be played in various settings. Beginning in early 19th century, the ‘au is to be played in various settings. Beginning in early 19th century, the ‘au is to be played in various settings. Beginning in early 19th century, the ‘au is to be played in various settings. Beginning in early 19th century, the ‘au is to be played in various settings. Beginning in early 19th century, the ‘au is to be played in various settings. Beginning in early 19th century, the ‘au is to be played in various settings. Beginning in early 19th century, the ‘au is to be played in various settings. 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The installation of this interactive kiosk was somewhat hindered by technical problems, particularly during the first two weeks of the exhibit run. Once it was in place, however, the station presented relatively few problems. I made sure to check on it frequently and did reset the program file a few times, but for a DIY interactive with available technology, the system proved quite sufficient.

3.4 Live Performance and Special Events

Because a staged dance performance could not be fully realized within the gallery’s walls, I planned a special performance to showcase ‘ori tahiti and provide demonstration workshops. This event and the roundtable discussion completed the Tau Rima Tahiti exhibition series. I worked with Hamilton Library to plan an outdoor Saturday event featuring performances and participatory demonstrations of instrument and costume making, tentatively planned for April 4. Lisa Yoshihara, Director of the UH
Art Gallery, drew my attention to an Art Department open house taking place on April 5. ArtMania, a department-wide event organized by graduate students, featured demonstrations, workshops, lectures, an art sale, and music stage. Not only would parking be free that Sunday (campus parking on Saturday carries a fee), but the event already had wide publicity and an expected audience. Signage could direct visitors to the Bridge Gallery. Tying in to this existing event clearly offered advantages over creating an entirely unique stand-alone event through Hamilton Library. “Piggy-backing” onto ArtMania not only ensured an existing audience and infrastructure, it presented the “path of least resistance,” allowing me some freedom from having to recreate an event already in process.

As it turned out, I had some difficulty in coordinating with the ArtMania planners. At one point the multifaceted Tau Rima events were scheduled simultaneously in the auditorium. In the end, Manutahi’s performance time was wrong in the program. Unable to reschedule the entire ensemble, the online event calendar and posted signs attempted to smooth this error. In similar future projects, organizers would be well advised to take advantage of existing events as opportunities for collaboration, but should, when working with another producing organization, be prepared to act as a constant advocate to ensure that the final event accommodate performers and programming needs.

ArtMania organizers allocated a section of the breezeway outside the Art Auditorium for Tau Rima Tahiti demonstrations, and I posted flyers directing visitors to the Bridge Gallery. Manutahi Tahiti performed a 30-minute set in the Auditorium. Their participation was notably free of charge, typically at a cost of over $500. Following the performance, Auntie Pola taught visitors Tahitian style ti leaf braiding, which differs from the Hawaiian style of braiding. Shortly afterwards, Tyrone Temanaha, Jr. arrived and demonstrated the final carving steps for his tō’ere. After this carving demonstration,

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25 Due in part to a misprint in a preliminary published program, attendance at Manutahi’s performance was much lower than expected, fluctuating between 30 and 40 spectators in a hall with capacity for 300. Rain and conflicting events lowered the total ArtMania attendance far below the anticipated numbers.

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he taught a tō’ere workshop. Both the ti leaf braiding and tō’ere workshops were on a drop-in basis, with participants coming and going throughout. Many ArtMania attendees visited the Bridge Gallery, including the performers and family members from Manutahi, Tyrone, and his family.

On April 16th Hamilton Library hosted a roundtable discussion in conjunction with the exhibit, entitled “Tahitian Performance Resources in Hawai‘i.” This was an opportunity for attendees to engage with Tahitian cultural specialists in an open conversation about the issues presented in the exhibition. The discussants for this roundtable were Raymond Mariteragi and Jeanne Moua Larsen. Mariteragi is the President of Tahiti Nui International, and works at the Polynesian Cultural Center as Director of Cultural Islands and Tahiti Islands Cultural Specialist. Jeanne Larsen, a former Mrs. Tahiti recipient, is a frequent competition judge, a pāreu maker, and niece of Medeleine Mou’a, a major figure in reviving Tahitian dance in the 1960s. Raymond requested to begin the event with an opening ʻōrero, a speech of thanks and welcome in Tahitian. I moderated the following discussion, which touched upon craftsmanship, tradition and modernity, and Tahitian language issues. This roundtable represents an extension of the ethnomusicology fieldwork and research undertaken for the exhibition series. This method of engaging the practitioners provided additional data on Tahitian dance and culture in Hawai‘i. A video recording of this roundtable discussion has been deposited in the UH-M Ethnomusicology Archive.

3.5 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I have outlined the process of collecting and presenting the dynamic tradition of ʻori tahiti in a gallery setting, supplemented with coincident live events. Video material included performance recordings and original documentary videos. The performances videos generally illustrate contemporary ʻori tahiti in Hawai‘i, and reflect the performance competition aspects of the Hawai‘i-Tahitian tradition. Documentary features reflect the current tradition by highlighting two cultural practitioners. Informed by past publications on Tahitian drumming music, I have presented seven pehe or musical phrases, and described the process of developing one of
these into a multi-track interactive computer program incorporating ethnomusicological transcriptions as a tool to engage gallery visitors. These methods may serve as technical guides for future exhibits or musical outreach activities.

The production of these components also brought to light several challenging curatorial issues in regard to musical exhibition. Live and recorded performances remain to some degree out of the control of the curator—performances were authored by the musicians rather than designed by myself, with some components varying somewhat from my expectations. Additionally, the stylistic differences in *pehe* and the complicated structure of compound beats were too complex to present in an interactive station. Compounded with the performers’ preference to keep some musical elements within the oral tradition, the interactive presentation explored only the most basic rhythm, *pahae*, but in as much detail as seemed feasible. And finally, the time and space limitations required a narrow focus, unfortunately avoiding detailed exploration of the music for *’aparima* and discussion of the dance itself in all forms. The processes I have described and the content of these elements, raise important questions about curatorial voice, authority, and representation. Let us move now into a discussion of these important theoretical issues.
CHAPTER 4
MAKING MEANING:
REPRESENTATIONS FROM
THE CURATORIAL PROCESS

4.1 Introduction

As the culmination of research, design, construction, and writing, once in place an exhibition stands as a text in itself, as a singular artifact, a result of the multifaceted process of curation (O’Hanlon 1993). The development process for Tau Rima Tahiti featured many elements which compounded the complexity of this process, including collaboration, polyvocality, performance elements, and the specific instance of myself as curator and my position in relation to the Tahitian-Hawaiian community. These factors have led to a distinctive layering of representations in the culminating exhibit. What follows is a close examination of this system, with particular attention to the collaborative process that resulted in such representations. I also look at the representation of musical elements, and how these specifically grew out of ethnomusicological fieldwork. I will reflect upon my role as curator in re-positioning performance and discuss these many layers of representation at play in Tau Rima Tahiti.

4.2 Curating Representation

Museums and individual exhibits make meaning through a system of representations. Using Stuart Hall’s brief definition, representation in this sense entails “the production of meaning through language” (Hall 1997:17), though language includes more than just the written or spoken word. Representation describes, depicts, or brings something to mind, as well as symbolizes or substitute for things, ideas, or abstract concepts.

Through selection of artifacts, exhibit themes, layout design, and text, exhibits represent overt and covert meanings to the visitor. The process of creating meaning
through such a system of representations has been termed the ‘poetics of exhibiting,’ further described by Henrietta Lidchi as “the practice of producing meaning through the internal ordering and conjugation of the separate but related components of an exhibition” (1997:168). Curated exhibits are inherently mediated, intentionally produced constructions that favor some perspectives over others and some voices over others. Hooper-Greenhill writes, “Collections as a whole, and also individual exhibitions, are the result of purposeful activities which are informed by ideas about what is significant and what is not” (2000:3). Once the curator has identified significant components, and removed all the rest, what remains is all that the visitor sees.

We cannot expect the cultural significance of a specific type of Tahitian dance costume or musical instrument to be understood by someone entirely unfamiliar with Tahitian culture. Nor can we expect non-Tahitians to understand such items from the same perspective that Tahitians do; such an attempt would entail re-creating culture entirely. Curators must make choices to prioritize, selecting objects and crafting text in order to distil a comprehensible exhibit from a much wider body of information.

*Ta’ū Rima Tahiti* constitutes a system of representations, comprised of objects, their arrangements, text, multi-media elements, and events. Though largely informed by collaborators, as curator I take responsibility (and criticism) for the resulting construction of the exhibition as a whole. First however, it is important to point out that exhibit-based representations grew out of existing circumstances. The exhibit development process itself built upon representations within the Tahitian-Hawaiian performance community.

### 4.2.1 Preexisting layers of meaning

‘Orī tahiti in Hawai‘i is, itself, a representation of something else: ‘orī tahiti in Tahiti. Among Tahitian dance groups and cultural specialists on O‘ahu, references to the performance and craftsmanship in Tahiti – the homeland – carry a strong and well-deserved aura of authenticity, as well as inferences of technical and aesthetic superiority. In many ways, *ra‘atira*, craftspeople, and cultural specialists on O‘ahu idealize that tradition, while the observed Hawai‘i-Tahitian practice may differ in many ways. In
interviews, specialists refer to romanticized practices, such as the painstaking process of making more skirts. I often heard use of the first person plural, or ‘royal we,’ giving the impression of “we Tahitians” or “back home in Tahiti we…..” Such a reference has the effect of conveying a myth about Tahitian culture in Hawai‘i.

Tahiti Nui International has the mission to promote and teach Tahitian culture, but they do not expect to entirely replicate it. Etua Tahauri describes how after thirty years of ‘ori tahiti in Hawai‘i, groups are beginning to capture the essence of that tradition. But, “they haven’t really completely perfected everything, because Tahitian culture is kind of vast. Now we’re only hitting the dancing most of the time, the drumming. So we’re not hitting other parts of the culture. We only see things, a little piece, part of the cake. Not all the recipes.” (Pers., comm., 22 January 2009).

From Etua’s description, Tahitian dance (in Hawai‘i) represents the broader Tahitian culture, and is a small step toward understanding that culture. Through festivals, Tahitian elements are perpetuated, and overtly affirmed by competition success. The judges at these festivals, themselves a relatively small group of resident and visiting Tahitians, effectively facilitate this process by reinforcing the skills, aesthetics, and style of Tahitian performance culture. Such festival judging is entirely in line with the practice in Tahiti, but it carries a degree of abstraction when taken further afield.

‘Ori tahiti, perhaps more than some other cultural performance genres, is actually a perfect vehicle for the transmission of culture. It features music and dance, and reinforces Tahitian language in songs and ‘ōrero, the culturally important art of oratory. On top of these aspects, the performance theme reflects aspects of traditional Tahitian culture. Oftentimes, this theme follows a mythical story. ‘Ori tahiti therefore teaches Tahitian culture as performing arts and through the vehicle of performing arts.

4.2.2 Curators in the Field

As an ethnomusicological endeavor, the content of Tau Rima Tahiti grew out of my inquiry into ‘ori tahiti in Hawai‘i. The field of ethnomusicology places great importance upon musical participation, understanding of musical structures, and an
integration of musical with anthropological inquiry. In the Spring of 2007 I participated in a Tahitian drumming class at the University, taught by Tyrone Temanaha, Jr., which introduced me to the structures of Tahitian drumming as a participating student musician. I also began rehearsing regularly with an ‘ori tahiti group in Seattle during the summer of 2008. For the purposes of this exhibit, embedding myself into a single group in Hawai‘i as a participating musician was not necessary and possibly would have been counter-productive. My previous experience was, however, crucial to my research for the exhibit.

Many of the principles of Tahitian drumming which I learned in Tyrone’s class informed my questions about the ensemble, and later appeared in the exhibit as representations of the musical tradition. Students in that class all played tō’ere, and learned the ropu, muri, and i mua parts for some 8 or 10 pehe.26 This knowledge allowed me to recognize most all of the typical pehe played by the O‘ahu ensembles, and focus upon the larger musical compositions as constructions built up from the pehe. This experience also allowed me a foundation for understanding the instrumental and musical artifacts that varied from the norm.

On several occasions during field research, I was invited to play instruments, as an invitation from builders to test their musical quality, but possibly also, in retrospect, as a test of whether I knew anything at all about the instruments and music. Upon one such invitation, I tentatively began playing and soon had a full ensemble in tow (see footnote 17, p. Error! Bookmark not defined.). On a later occasion, and with only that experience to draw upon, Kevin Kama told me “you’ll be a good drummer some day” (6 February, 2009). Perhaps not laudatory, but an encouraging statement.

Tō’ere represent the lead instrument of the ensemble, and a fully voiced drum group requires a minimum of three tō’ere players. All groups that I visited, in performance if not at all rehearsals, have more than three musicians. More interesting to me was the variation in tō’ere instrumentation. Rather than a single instrument for each

26 In a final performance, Tyrone played pahu and brought in musicians from Te Vai Ura Nui to play the fa’atete and tūpa‘i rima.
musician, many groups featured multiple tō’ere per player. Moulin notes that of the three general sizes of tō’ere, the largest (measuring 80-100 cm) appeared sometime after 1960 (1979:92). This large size instrument has risen as the primary tō’ere. Several informants also told me that they and others preferred the deeper toned instruments, a result of the larger resonating body of the drum. Notably, the larger size tō’ere, with its lower pitch and resonating frequency, has less “bounce back” for the rā’au and therefore is more difficult to play. Larger pieces of lumber, particularly of the milo, are also more difficult to obtain. These factors lead to the situation that the most sought after drum is the most rare, expensive, and difficult to play; a situation which makes a quality performance on such all the more impressive.

Both Te Vai Ura Nui and ‘Ia Ora O Tahiti Nui featured the tō’ere petit in their Heiva presentations, and I frequently saw a tō’ere petit mounted horizontally on a stand in front of the large tō’ere (that is, away from the musician). But the instrumental palette of the tō’ere player seems to be expanding. Even aside from the drastic departures seen in pūpū tā’iri tō’ere performance, some groups like ‘Ia Ora O Tahiti Nui may perform with three or four tō’ere per musician. Yet despite these expansions, the large tō’ere appears in all groups to be the main instrument. For the exhibit, this prompted me not to emphasize the multiplication of instruments ensembles, but to focus instead upon the most basic instrumentation. Omitting text on the evolving tō’ere also made content more accessible to visitors. Most importantly, this curatorial decision reflected the practice as I saw it in my fieldwork. Notably, the tō’ere drummers of Manutahi Tahiti (a hura ava tau, or amateur group), played only the large tō’ere. In contrast, I did include the innovative creation of new instruments in reference to the pūpū tā’iri tō’ere.

Fieldwork also prompted me to consider my interactions with musicians and cultural specialists, and to develop appropriate ways to present their voices in the exhibit. In the course of interviews and conversations, many informants compared the Hawai‘i-

27 Additional new data on Tahitian instrument organology appears in Appendix E: Observations in Hawai‘i-Tahitian Organology.
Tahitian practice to that in Tahiti proper, or made references to group departures, conflicts or splinters. Rather than presenting all of these complex issues and not wanting to paint any participant in a bad light, I chose to present the most basic forms as seen in Hawai‘i. Prior to and during the field research stage, I also conducted secondary research upon ‘ori tahiti in Tahiti (Millaud 2002; Moulin 1979, 2001, 2004), and, to a lesser degree, Hawai‘i (Paisner 1978). This process comprised my learning about the tradition, and then conducting fresh field research to either confirm or provide alternatives to these previous texts. The result of course had to be synthesized and formatted for the gallery, without extensive references to previous texts.

The fieldwork for Tau Rima Tahiti consisted primarily of recorded interviews, including discussions of material culture in the local Hawaiian tradition of ‘ori tahiti. These interviews comprise an extensive body of data on the current state of ‘ori tahiti, and the crafts which are an important part of it. They also include biographical sketches of numerous ra‘atira, craftspeople, and cultural specialists. I developed close rapport and friendships with a handful of these people in particular, and wanted to represent all of them in the best light possible in the gallery. As an opportunity to share their tradition with a wider public, I wanted these collaborators to speak for themselves and for their traditions. When reading a transcribed interview of these individuals, I can truly hear the voice of the speaker, and wanted most of all to convey those unique voices to the gallery visitor. I hoped that inclusion of many diverse voices in the exhibit could reflect the many voices I heard during fieldwork.

4.2.3 Reading Tau Rima Tahiti

As an artifact in itself, Tau Rima Tahiti is open to interpretation by a range of visitors. Viewing the exhibit as text, or a system of representations to be interpreted and thus create meaning(s) to the viewer, allows us to analyze the issues and problems caused by such a construction. Using the representational categories that grew out of the ethnomusicology forum discussion, I will discuss the received voice of the exhibit. First, let us look at two issues of representation that arose from the exhibit and ensuing discussions. Inherent biases in the performance community and the exhibit raised
questions about gender representation, which in turn suggest a portrayal of the essentially exotic nature of ‘ori tahiti.

### 4.2.3.1 Gender and Exoticism

As a reflection of Tahitian performance culture in Hawai‘i, *Tau Rima Tahiti* presents a cultural practice consisting predominantly of female dancers supported by male drummers. Of the 22 costumes in the exhibit, only seven were adult male costumes, including two *ra‘atira*, one male dancer, and four drummers (two of which consisted of *hei upo‘o* only, and were acknowledged by the lenders as gender-neutral). Two more costumes were for *tamāroa*, young boys. Thirteen of the 22 total costumes were female, and 14 of 15 ensemble dance costumes were female. Of those, 10 were from the ‘ōte‘a genre, with three *aparima* costumes and one ‘ahu roa.

This gender-biased view of the tradition has several implications. Foremost, it reinforces the exoticism of Tahitian dance. The observation was made in the forum discussion that Tahitian dance has been essentialised in the form of the female ‘ōte‘a, which emphasizes the rapid movement of the hips. This is the view of Tahitian dance promoted in tourism materials and, significantly, in the tourist venues of Waikīkī. The exhibit content, with emphasis on female ‘ōte‘a costumes, seems to reiterate this essentialised form of ‘ori tahiti. Thus these costumes are what one would expect from an exhibit of Tahitian dance. The interpretation of a female-dominated dance tradition is not necessarily the ideal, yet in some ways this accurately reflects the practice on O’ahu. Tahia Parker, *ra‘atira* of Marania Haorangi, provided three costumes. Her group notably has no male dancers. Of the other lending groups, most show a majority of females in their performances. Moulin seems also to support the notion that in Tahiti there are more female than male dancers. She notes that a hotel show may feature “only five to eight female dancers and two to four males” (1978:18), and diagrams for larger ensembles show equal numbers of males and females as well as a 2:3 ratio in favor of females. There are, of course, specific ‘ōte‘a dances featuring only females (‘ōte‘a vahine) or males (‘ōte‘a tāne) respectively.
In the exhibit video of Manutahi Tahiti’s 2006 “Pele” performance, the ‘ōte’a features seven male and 22 female dancers, a roughly 3:1 ratio, as well as a male ra’atira character. The ‘aparima and ‘ahu roa in this performance are strictly female. By comparison, ‘aparima dances in Tahiti feature male, female, or mixed gender dancers (Moulin 1978:68). The same is theoretically true in Hawai‘i, though there appear to be significantly fewer male dancers. In the case of Marania Haorangi, this is a pedagogical choice, allowing ra’atira Tahia Parker to focus only on female dance movements. With men in the apparent minority, the ‘aparima may be restricted to females for ease of choreography even when males are present. The ‘ahu roa, a term literally meaning “a long dress,” is a strictly female (and diasporic) form.

Instrumental ensembles for ‘ori tahiti almost exclusively consist of males. With only a few notable exceptions, drumming is a male domain. This gendered role has a long history in Tahiti (Moulin 1978:21-22 and 2004). Tyrone credits his mother, Camelia, with breaking down some of the gender barriers to drum performance. Tyrone relates,

She’s been playing pahu for a long time, almost 30 years. She was playing here, cuz it was all so [restrictive] back then [in Tahiti]… especially her years, very taboo to play. Girls were not allowed to play. Very “man thing,” very male [oriented]. They didn’t like it. Even to this day, some people just don’t. She’s actually one of the first girl influences for a lot of girl drummers these days, is her, my mom. (Pers. comm., 4 May 2009)

Tyrone goes on to mention a handful of female drummers in Hawai‘i and on the mainland. These include Tiana Lea Falo; Denise, a tūpa ‘i rima player alongside Tyrone in Te Vai Ura Nui; and Dina, who plays with Here Tama Nui and other ensembles. He also mentions an all female group of drummers he has worked with, performing at one time with E Honu Iti E of Tracy, California. Additionally, I observed a female teacher sometimes playing pahu During Manutahi Tahiti rehearsals.

The pertinent question for gender and exoticism in the exhibit is whether the product reinforces, plays to, or subverts expectations and stereotypes of Tahitian dance. The predominance of eye-catching female ‘ōte’a costumes, contrasted with male dance drummer costumes and all-male musicians in the performance videos seems to reinforce
the expectation but also to reflect the landscape of Tahitian Dance in Hawai‘i. Had I received many gendered costume pairs, as originally planned, the exhibit may have portrayed a more evenly balanced gender ratio in the local tradition, yet this may have been a less-accurate view of the landscape. Tahitian costumes tend toward colorful, flashy (description by a forum member), and exotic. Dance costumes are designed to be eye-catching, and my choices in selecting which costumes to show centered around variety and diversity within the exhibit.

The topic of costume and artifact availability did not arise within the exhibit narrative. Though text included clear acknowledgment to lenders, explicitly voicing that “this collection is what was available” would seem to undermine the generosity of collaborators. Nonetheless, it is important to consider the implications of the costume selections. Reading the exhibit as a reflective representation of the local tradition, the visitor may allow the exhibit to reinforce existing expectations about who dances—women, and who drums—men. Reading the exhibit as mediated, however, adds a level of complexity. The selection of costumes and videos, supporting these gender expectations, implies an institutional support of gender bias. The exhibit/curator shows Tahitian dance in Hawai‘i as predominantly female and drumming as predominantly male. Despite the equal importance of male and female dancers, and the increasing number of female drummers, the exhibit reinforces these expectations and stereotypes. Additionally, two of the male costumes are not for dancers but for ra‘atira, leaders and spokesmen who hold authority (real or staged) over the ensemble.

Though still a minority, the exhibit did not acknowledge the increasing number of female drummers in Hawai‘i, a significant development and one well worth attention. A close examination of this emerging female presence may be the subject of a future exhibit or study.

4.2.3.2 Voice

Narrative text in the exhibit included voices of both cultural specialists and the third person curator. I attempted to include as much community narrative as possible in
order to put the exhibit in community ownership. I personally selected these quotes from recorded interviews and edited them for clarity. In stark contrast to the voices of the cultural specialists is the voice of myself, the curator. Four introductory text panels are entirely voiced by the passive and third-person curator. The curatorial voice acts as a moderator to balance the many community voices, but its presence does signal authority and power. Both the curator and informants can be heard in the object labels. Or, the curator employs utterances by community members in order to further illuminate curatorial descriptions. This distinction is important because the curatorial voice is that which directs the action and the design of the exhibition.

External parties as well as informants reported that they enjoyed the diversity of voices within the exhibit. One member of the forum noted that there was a “really good sense of voices. The ratio of [informant] voices to [curator’s] is pretty high, it’s nice.” Several informants also discussed the presence of multiple voices. Tyrone noted “I know a lot of things came from a lot of different people” (pers. comm., 4 May 2009). This multiplicity may be related to a common phrase in Hawai‘i, a‘ohe pau ka ‘ike i ka halau ho‘okahi, or “not all knowledge comes from the same school.” Tahia expanded on this idea:

Also it’s accurate according to how people take it. Like Pola will say something about how she feels about something. Which is her right to do. And I will say something else. But we come to the same result. So I will say that it’s accurate. It’s like a jewel: You embellish it, embellish the things with what other people say. Some agree with you, some disagree, but you understand why this person is disagreeing about it. But like I say, you always come to a different result. You always have a beautiful dancer, beautiful show. (Pers. comm., 7 May, 2009)

Such multiplicity also helped the participants in their own work, in turn “learning from the other schools.” Tahia continues, “when I saw how Pola does her thing, it opened me up to other ways of doing things too… more ways of doing things, but I was never exposed to it. So it becomes something good for us too” (ibid.). Tino Hoffmann made a similar observation, describing the exhibit’s display of how “each group have their own
way of making costumes, and their own philosophy about making the costumes” (pers. comm., 7 May 2009).

As an attempt to reflect the actual landscape of ‘ori tahiti on O‘ahu, the presentation of many voices hinted at the multiplicity of practitioners—far more than I could actually interview or include. I highly doubt that any visitors read the text tallying the number of speakers quoted, but suspect that after reading a small handful of quotes from various speakers, the reader accepts simply that there are many speakers included. This multiplicity of voices was cited by informants as well as visitors as a powerful aspect of the exhibit. The many quotes in the gallery text were not deemed important simply by their presence, but for the unique utterances they contained, utterances which to some degree were re-crafted after they were uttered.

The spoken word, as anyone who has attempted an accurate verbal transcription can attest, varies greatly from “proper written English.” Colloquialisms, interjections, run-on sentences, and individual quirks make literal transcriptions difficult to read despite the organic and comfortable nature of the utterances in original, oral form. For selected quotes, I imposed curatorial editing to allow statements to flow more smoothly on the page while attempting to maintain the individuality and character of the speaker. This “gentle editing” walks a fine line: too little editing threatens to leave the spontaneous oral utterance confusing (and, at worst, illogical); too much editing smooths the distinction between voices, blurring all speakers into a bland uniformity.

I offered all informants the opportunity to review text material, particularly my edited version of their own speech. Only two individuals (Etua and Tahia) took me up on this offer, and they made no corrections to the text. In follow-up interviews with informants, specific editing did not arise as a concern. One of the forum participants noted, “I was surprised at the variety of their voices,” signaling that edited text retained the individualism I had hoped it would. Another forum participant observed, that some of the phrasings, though not grammatically correct, “kind of made it more meaningful in its own way.” This response points out the fact that despite grammatical inconsistency, oral
transcription can retain individual character, and convey a more authentic representation of the speaker.

More than written words, the exhibit presentation, the overall arrangement and techniques, lead to representation and the production of meaning (Lidchi 1997:174). The components of this presentation include not only text, but artifacts, their placement, and aesthetic design. Working from the text already discussed, let us begin with the visual impact of the written material. All text panels were not designed equally:

- Introductory and thematic panels provide an overview, and present the forms and themes to be explored further.
- Object labels (in the voice of the curator and frequently supported by specialist quotations) identify and describe objects, photographs, and media components.
- Thematic quotations taken from interviews with cultural specialists were grouped together based upon the framing themes.

In analyzing the exhibition Paradise, Henrietta Lidchi identifies the subtle difference between forms of text. She notes, “panel texts connote authority but are, conversely, more interpretive. Labels and captions, on the other hand, are more ‘literal’; they claim to describe what is there… each encoding through the semblance of decoding” (ibid., 175). Though contributing specialists in Hawai‘i spoke to me in English, most of the materials in the exhibit had Tahitian names, and Hawaiian terminology was sometimes employed. For the most part, only isolated phrases required translation or description. Even simple translation or description of Tahitian terms “accord ‘a voice’ to the people featured” (ibid.).

The visual presentation of text panels suggested differences in authority and status. The introductory panels, representing the curator, were in fact the only panels in full-color. The large introductory panel (24” x 32”) and three supporting panels (11” x 17”) featured black text on a color background, with a bold red title and the signature tattoo motif. Labels featured plain text for the curatorial voice, normally a basic description, with quotations from community advisors appearing in italics and block indentation to set them apart, clearly attributed. Thematic quotations, on larger stock than
object labels, featured similarly formatted italicized quotations with attribution, without the presence of a curatorial moderator. Though object labels and thematic quotations were printed on parchment-tone paper stock, which mimicked the color background, object and thematic text was effectively monochrome. This put the introductory curatorial panels at a visual advantage. They call attention by their color, but in so doing they draw attention away from the community voices, reasserting curatorial power. More subtly, the voice of the curator claims the financial resources of color printing, perhaps overshadowing the native voices.

When designing the exhibit, I took the aim that the impartial curator would “set the stage” and lay a foundation upon which the local specialists would build. Those introductory panels were necessarily large to contain a great deal of contextual and general information. The cost of color printing was in fact negligible, as this came in the form of an in-kind donation. Nonetheless, the visual impact of the curator’s text panels may be perceived as a bias. This touches upon the politics of exhibiting and specifically questions the relative power of the curator as exerting control, as appropriating and subverting the local cultural specialists. Such was certainly not my intention and did not arise in conversation with cultural specialists. Nonetheless, a close critical examination requires me to entertain just such an interpretation. One participant in the ethnomusicology forum observed the tension between curatorial and “native” voice, noting, “there’s a respect, honoring what the insider’s telling you. But as a curator, it is your job going to be one step going beyond that.” Such a “step beyond” involves both critically assessing the insider’s statements and actions, as well as taking the responsibility to consolidate and summarize disparate and often esoteric information.

Moving on to the gallery layout design, artifacts were displayed in three formations: on open display, in cases, and as multimedia components. Costumes and instruments on open display are shown (for the most part) as they would be worn or arranged. The reconstruction of a group of musicians, represented by costumes and instruments, extends the open display into a semi-realistic grouping. Similarly, the gendered pair of ‘ōte’a costumes from Te Vai Ura Nui are situated as a couple. Open
display and such reconstructions allow the objects to resemble their intended use and function. In open display, according to Lidchi, “the presence of the object and its context or presentation eclipses the fact that it is being represented. The fact of representation is obscured” (1997:173). I cannot claim that the open displays in Tau Rima Tahiti made presentations transparent. I placed these items throughout the gallery in order to describe, by example, ‘ori tahiti and the framing themes. Placement in the exhibit, with the supporting context provided by exhibit text, in fact adds a layer of representation: the framing themes ask the visitor to examining costumes not merely as garments but as a performed construction, the result of an individual or group of craftspeople. In this sense, the exhibit embraces Lidchi’s problematizing of representation as it adds a layer of complexity and meaning to the visitor’s thoughts.

Displaying artifacts in glass cases establishes a “museumizing” process, placing the objects in a setting entirely foreign to their intended use. Musical instruments in glass cases are mute, and more importantly they are made mute by the act of exhibition. Jewelry, made to adorn the body, is isolated from human touch. In Tau Rima Tahiti, the costumes, instruments, and jewelry stand in for or represent the craft processes that led to their creation. They connote the design, collection of materials, and construction that brought them into being. They also represent the builders and craftspeople who made them. And finally, they represent the culminating event of their creation, the actors (dancers and musicians), and performance of which they are a part. This final element was made more real by the presence of multimedia elements in the gallery and additional events.

4.3 Curating Performance

Gallery exhibition not only features performance, but is also itself a form of performance. Cultural performance has been defined as: “events that have a limited time span, or at least a beginning and an end, an organized program of activity, a set of performers, an audience and a place and occasion of performance” (Harrison 1991:1-2). Furthermore, cultural performance is “constitutive and thereby creates meanings and does not simply release those that lie dormant in the text” (ibid.) Harrison identifies exhibits as
performances under this broad definition, as a finite scripted presentation developed by specialists, namely the curator, and directed to the visiting audience. The “performers,” in this context, comprise objects, text, and other exhibit content. Harrison’s concern with museum context is that museum objects accumulate ‘restored’ behavior, which tends to be more about documenting, cataloging, and other museum processes than about the original context. Harrison concludes,

The only active choice (potentially the only “culture in action”) in most museum practice is that of the museum professionals. A question for the future of the museum is going to be how to restore the ‘other’ behaviors—or even is it possible to construct the ‘other’ “culture in action” in the museum. (ibid., 11-12)

_Tau Rima Tahiti_ focused upon performance both as pre-production and as culminating event. “Performance” inherently implies a great deal of energy and action. By presenting such action, rather than merely static artifacts, the exhibit attempts to transcend the power issues of which Harrison warns. I attempted to design the exhibit’s performance aspects in such a manner as to provide agency to the Hawai‘i-Tahitian community, an attempt to “construct the ‘other’ ‘culture in action’ in the museum” (ibid.). The resulting performance components included videos, the interactive kiosk, and live performance/participation event. I have already discussed the mechanics of these constructions, and so will here focus upon the curatorial considerations in these three constructions, and also an interpreted reading of each form. The process and results of curating performance in this context may prove instructive.

Videos of these performances substitute for the physical presence of ethnographic subjects, the human performers and craftspeople. They contextualize the objects on display, and provide didactic guidance to otherwise abstract concepts. Similarly, the interactive drumming kiosk provides a framework to understand the musical structures. Selected live performance, demonstration, and participation, though limited in scope, extended this performance from virtual to real.
4.3.1 Videos

It is tempting to describe these videos as impartial observations replicating the performance of craft and 'ori tahiti, but this is certainly not the case. While written ethnographies create representations obviously filtered through the eyes of the researcher, video production attempts to transcend this filter by presenting a more objective, “realistic” portrayal. However, just as a fictional film is intentionally designed, documentaries are largely sculpted through selective editing and stylistic conventions of production (Titon 1992a:90). As Titon notes, when viewing ethnographic films, “we are not usually aware of suspending disbelief; instead we believe that the moving images correspond to something that “really happened” and that the camera was merely a witness” (ibid.). The conventions Titon cites are familiar to most of us, ranging from the mechanical (scene cuts, compressed time, panning and zooming techniques, and incorporation of historic photos, i.e. the “Ken Burns effect”) to the overtly interpretive (voiceover by an omniscient narrator, cutaways to a specialists academic surrounded by books).

By the early 1990s, a “narrator-less representational style [had become] conventional in folklife documentary films” (Titon 1992b:480), but this reinforces the role of camera as a mere witness and occludes the still-present representational process. The “narrator-less” format has become a cliché in its own, with some filmmakers making the choice of “rejecting the convention of narrator-less documentaries that present the illusion of reality” (Dornfield et. al. 1989). Some ethnographers have employed techniques to diffuse authority, such as narration by the subject-actor rather than an omniscient narrator, or appearing in their own films as interviewers, making obvious the constructed nature of the film (Titon 1992a:92).

In spite of its tendency to obscure the production and representational process, I chose to edit the two originally produced videos sections with only the narration of the subject. These videos combine demonstration of craft processes supplemented with biographical material from the speakers. Both of the actor-subjects, Pola Teriipaia and Etua Tahauri, are teachers and performers. They are comfortable on stage and able to
speak about their activities and their art. To me, this made any interjecting narrative unnecessary, as it would detract from their own agency in representing their craft and themselves. Both of these videos begin with a title screen, identifying the subject and their title, during which the speaker’s voiceover begins without video. The visual content follows costume or drum making, in a progressive sequence though compressed time. The film of Etua, for example, compacted a two hour demonstration into 12 minutes, with voiceover from an earlier interview.

That drum carving video was fairly straightforward. The entire film was shot in one afternoon, comprising about two hours of demonstration. I filmed selectively during this time (much of the work became repetitive after his spoken introduction), and edited 40 or so minutes of video down to about twelve minutes. Overdubbed narrative material came from our recording session the week prior.

The compression of time was more exaggerated in the film of Pola Teriipaia, which included footage from several occasions between September and November 2008. As her narration begins, we see Auntie Pola showing others the process of making a dance belt: measuring, cutting, and trimming tassels; building up, trimming, and covering the lauhala belt; and placing tassels and shells on the belts. In the background are rehearsing dancers and audible drummers. Pola mentions costume themes and design, emphasizing the “Tahitian way of doing things,” but does not discuss this specific costume or its intended performance venue. At the 7-minute point, she describes the full costume, including the tassel hip band we have watched her make, and “helmets,” as Pola refers to the hei upo’o. She discusses the need for comfort of helmets on a 3-mile walk and keeping them small to avoid problems from wind. Here the video transitions to a performance with this same costume: the 2008 Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade in New York City. Manutahi performers were part of the “Polynesian Dance Ensemble of Hawai‘i,” as shown in subtitle. We first see hula dancers performing to the song

28 The costume film includes a section narrated by Belinda Miranda, as well as a short performance clip, both of which are identified by subtitles.
“Hawaiian War Chant.” As Pola’s voice cuts out, the dancers from Manutahi move to center stage for the remainder of the song. The video returns to Pola’s voiceover for the final 30 seconds of the segment.

This performance, viewed by some 44 million people as part of the Macy’s Parade, features Hawaiian and Tahitian dancers performing to a *hapa haole* song. Even before considering its incorporation in *Tau Rima Tahiti*, this performance prompts a great deal of discussion, particularly in terms of cultural confusion. As Pola herself has said,

Everyone, including the tourist industry, seems to use the Tahitian culture… they put the hula with the Tahitian. They seem to mess everything up… This is Tahiti, it’s a separate island, it’s not Hawaiian, it’s not a fast Hawaiian dance, it’s Tahitian. (Pers. comm., 9 May 2009)

But this festival performance does exactly that. There is no overt differentiation in the televised performance between the Hawaiian and Tahitian traditions. The group’s designation as “Polynesian” is inclusive of many cultures, but the conglomeration of cultures is not defined in the performance, and no mention of Tahitian culture is made.

During the broadcast, Matt Lauer noted in his introductory remarks, “here they’re performing to one of the state’s oldest and most revered songs, this is the Hawaiian War Chant” (Macy’s 2008). Lauer’s terminology emphasizes the state of Hawai‘i as a political body, a contentious point considering the colonial relationship between Hawai‘i and the U.S. The musical selection, “Hawaiian War Chant,” was published by Johnny Noble in 1936, using a borrowed melody and lyrics from Prince Leleiohoku’s “Kaua i ka Huahua‘i” of 1860. George Kanahele notes that Noble altered the song so much, in fact, that he had to call it a “war chant.” This is probably one of the specific examples Charles E. King had in mind when he criticized Noble (and others) for “murdering” Hawaiian music. (Kanahele 1979:123).

“Hawaiian War Chant” was performed by Hilo Hattie in Waikīkī, gained wider notoriety as part of “Tiki culture” in recordings by Martin Denny (1957) and satirical bandleader Spike Jones (1960), and has been in numerous films since 1942’s *Ship Ahoy*. The version
used for Manutahi’s parade performance was recorded by Nā Leo Pilemehana specifically for this performance. The Polynesian Dance Ensemble of Hawa‘i, formed for the occasion, was organized by John Riggle, who also acted as musical director. *Kumu hula* Iwalani Walsh Tseu led the hula dancers, from the island of Hawai‘i, with the Tahitian dancers of Manutahi rehearsing separately before they got together en route to New York. In a piece published in *Midweek* the day before the performance, Nalani Choy of Nā Leo describes their music:

> We wanted something definitely upbeat and jazzy. Music arranger Shawn Pimental produced the tracks and gave it a big band sound. We loved it and added our vocal harmonies to match. (Sunderland 2008)

The big-band style that Choy mentions includes a string band complete with drumset, horn section, steel guitar, and a tō‘ere-like drumming track. The horn section and the fast tempo (mm. $\frac{3}{4} = 260$) certainly echo the big band recording of the piece by Tommy Dorsey (for the film *Ship Ahoy* in 1942, at a tempo of mm. $\frac{3}{4} = 286$). The layering of tō‘ere, however, further confuses the cultural context. My impression, from the recording, is that these instruments are actually synthesized in the studio recording and not actually tō‘ere at all. In the final presentation, the hula and ‘ori tahiti dancers appear intermingled in the large group, but each using their respective dance styles. This juxtaposition of the two styles mimics the juxtaposition of Hawaiian music (*hapa hoale* or otherwise) with Tahitian drumming.

Describing this as one of the “most revered songs” of Hawai‘i (or Polynesia) would be somewhat of a stretch, but this was probably not the intention of Pola nor John Riggle. *Hapa haole* music, despite its colonialist origins and overtones, is an important part of the Hawaiian musical palette, and is featured prominently in contemporary hula ‘auana. The “Hawaiian War Chant” in particular is frequently performed by hālau hula in Hawai‘i and abroad. Suffice it to say that “Hawaiian War Chant” is a prominent contemporary hula, but perhaps would not be deemed by all as the singular example of Hawaiian nor Polynesian performance culture.
I was well aware of the intended use of this costume from the outset, but in terms of the production of this video, I made the curatorial decision not to present the Macy’s context earlier on. It was not relevant to the preceding film, where her statements focused upon the mechanics of making the costume elements. The separate audio recordings of Pola focused upon the process of costuming for a typical competition performance. Would emphasizing the parade venue lessen the value of the costume or video? In some ways, I feared it would. Though mention is made throughout the exhibit of commercial performances, the heiva competitions are, in many ways, the idealized venue for ‘ori tahiti.

My primary goal in editing and producing both of these videos was to present the subject-actors in a first person narrative, telling their personal stories while demonstrating their respective crafts of instrument and costume making. Etua and Pola, in their respective videos, are performing craftsmanship. Their performances contrast to the staged music and dance, and extend that performance to include craft production. These videos also provided an entrée to the music and dance for visitors unfamiliar with the tradition.

If I had concerns about the video of Manutahi dancers in a televised parade being an atypical venue, the complementary performance videos strongly reasserted the competition venue for Tahitian dance. In contrast to paid performances, competitions explicitly reward tradition and authenticity, and are a focal point for the Hawaiian-Tahitian community. Featuring Manutahi Tahiti and ‘Ia Ora O Tahiti Nui in these performance videos grew naturally out of my prior fieldwork.

The ‘ori tahiti performance video, a recording of Manutahi Tahiti’s 2006 “Pele” performance in San Jose, featured four of the costumes on display in the gallery. I deemed this cross-referencing factor to be a great benefit. Not only could visitors see the dance as intended, they could examine the costumes up close, an opportunity unavailable in the live or video recorded presentation. I should point out again that Manutahiti Tahiti, a grass-roots school based upon providing activities and opportunities for youth, competes in the hura ava tau or “junior” division. While the group has many fine
dancers, excellent teachers, and a great intent to strive toward high-quality performance and presentation, the group’s emphasis is upon education, community and personal growth. I might have chosen to feature a hura tau group to demonstrate the dance. Those groups include, on average, older dancers (ca. 18-30 as opposed to 8-20, purely from personal observation), and larger drum ensembles. The hura tau groups perform at an obviously higher level, and are eligible for more significant awards at the heiva. For the simple sake of demonstrating the dance forms, the hura ava tau performance by Manutahi was perfectly adequate, and its ability to reinforce costumes also on display overshadowed any other concerns. Additionally, this performance featured a wide age range of dancers, reflected the range of costumes on exhibit (including small tamāroa) and the nature of dance as a “school” and youth development program. The drumming performance video, in contrast, featured a hura tau group.

A recording showing the pūpū tā’iri tō’ere rounded out the collection of videos. In contrast to the drumming which accompanies the dance of ‘ori tahiti, the à la carte or pūpū tā’iri tō’ere presentation allows for greater variety of instruments. The requirement of pehe presentations also provides a convenient vehicle for didactic presentation. Rather than having to dissect a larger performance or arrange additional recording sessions, the sequential presentation of pehe was easily subtitled for illustration in the exhibit. ‘Ia Ora O Tahiti Nui featured a hugely elaborate instrumentation for this performance. By showing this presentation I hoped to highlight the emphasis upon innovation in the material culture, reinforcing the framing themes of the exhibit.

I had expected three groups to participate in the pūpū tā’iri tō’ere category of the Heiva i Honolulu 2009. Unfortunately, Here Tama Nui of Honolulu pulled out of the competition when a close relative of the ra’atira signed on as a judge. Here Tama Nui had previously presented drum compositions with very innovative musical instruments, and I had been looking to their performance. The only two groups competing would be ‘Ia Ora O Tahiti Nui and Te Vai Ura Nui. Since the latter ensemble decided to compete just a few weeks earlier, their performance featured only the standard instrumentation. At the culmination of the Heiva, Te Vai Ura Nui with Tyrone Temanaha won the hotly
contested drumming category. Featuring the video of ‘Ia Ora O Tahiti Nui was an important political choice, as I did not want to convey favoritism to Tyrone, who was featured in the nearby drumming interactive.

The videos themselves, according to visitor feedback from the general public and contributing participants, were very well received. I witnessed visitors to the gallery sitting to watch the video on several occasions. Their fixed length of the videos, however, presented inherent risk. One great challenge for any curator or exhibit designer is to overcome the short attention span of visitors. This may be accomplished in one of two ways: firstly, make information brief and concise, so that the visitor may take it in quickly; secondly, provide a strong “hook” to attract the visitor and keep their attention. Traditionally text has been the primary media in museums, but in the digital age video and multimedia are no longer novel. Somewhat unfortunately, we can learn a lesson from television, where advertising commercials average 30 seconds. The 12’30” video on tō’ere carving seems to push this guideline quite far. Thirty seconds does seem far too brief to cover the content, but in retrospect it may have been better to keep such a demonstrative video closer to the four- or five-minute range.

I believe that the video compilation provided the perfect complement to lengthy process video in its attention-grabbing performances. Indeed the dynamic art carries the greatest power to harness the visitor’s attention. When the performance segments appeared, their music became audible from most any point within the gallery, helping to draw visitors toward the video or immerse them in the music of the tradition. And even though this video screen was oriented to face the Ewa door (away from the gallery entrance), I witnessed visitors walking straight through the gallery but turning back to look at the video behind them as they passed. Having been slightly drawn in during such a brief pass, perhaps they would stay longer the next time.

4.3.2 Interactive Multimedia

Production of the computer interactive, as I described in section 3.3, was inspired by my experience in Tahitian drumming and hopes to deconstruct its musical form.
Tyrone, Kevin, and others suggested that *Pahae* would be the most appropriate *pehe* to demonstrate. Following the recording process, I created three types of transcription for the exhibit, beginning with Western staff notation, the format with which I was most familiar. I was slightly anxious that Tyrone or others would see such a demonstration and transcriptions as “cheating.” While it was natural for me to use Western notation to transcribe this recording, would this provide a helpful tool for visitors? More importantly, would “spelling out” the rhythms in such a manner undermine the nature of this music as an oral tradition? Tahitian drumming is predominantly taught orally, sometimes supplemented today with recordings by a teacher for home study. The drummers of Manutahi Tahiti, for example, distributed a CD of *pehe* for new drummers.

Tino Hoffmann, who grew up in Tahiti, recalls that “back home you just sit down and listen. The lead drummer just tells you the beat, and you gotta listen with your ear” (pers. comm., 7 May 2009). The only use of didactic notation for Tahitian drumming, that I am aware of, is the text *Musique Polynésienne au Collège. Volume II: Aspects Rythmiques*, published in 1993 by the *Conservatoire Artistique Territorial* in Pape‘ete, Tahiti. This text shows drum patterns using Western staff notation with the absence of noteheads, simply stems and flagged pairs of stems. The Tahitian *conservatoire*, an institution modeled after the French schools for the performing arts, has been teaching Tahitian music and dance since 1981 (Moulin 2001:238). Tino recognizes a discrepancy between traditional and conservatory learning.

…the *conservatoire*, they started doing that because they’re learning the music first and then they’re familiar with the music scale [and notation]. Once you know how to read the music [notation] then it will be easier and really faster for you to learn it. (Pers. comm., 7 May 2009)

The interactive kiosk provided three types of transcription notation in the hopes that one or more would have been useful to the visitor in understanding the music. As Tino mentions, if someone is familiar with Western notation it will be of use, if not, then oral transmission remains a perfectly adequate system. In the gallery, improvisational use of the interactive kiosk (listening to various instruments and combinations thereof)
presented a basically oral transmission of the parts. The transcriptions might help, but they were not required reading material to effect learning in this setting.

Part of my motivation for including transcriptions was of course academic. I wanted to learn, through the exhibit as a field test, whether alternative modes of transcription were useful to visitors. In this regard, the exhibit produced a setting for gathering research on the effectiveness of transcriptions. Unfortunately, the general research tool (a written questionnaire) elicited little response in terms of the transcription. However, ethnomusicologist colleagues and professionals were intrigued by the use of the transcription.

### 4.3.3 Live Performance

The *Tau Rima Tahiti* events in conjunction with ArtMania, described in section 3.4, were developed as the sole opportunity to present live performance and craft demonstration/participation. While planning this event, I inquired of several performance groups whether they would be able to perform. I knew that Tahitian groups, even the “school” ensembles, were available as for-hire performers, and as such I expected to pay for a performance. Many groups have established rates for performance. Somewhat to my surprise, the *hura tau* groups I talked to required payment far above what I was able to fund for the exhibit—in the range of $1500 for a 30-minute performance. This seemed unfeasible for ArtMania and the exhibit budget. When I contacted Pola to ask if Manutahi would be able to perform, she agreed to provide dancers and musicians for free. Once again, I felt that Pola was acting not only as working musician, but as a strong supporter of the exhibit. She also perhaps saw this participation as an opportunity to bring her students to the UH campus. I talked to Pola about wanting to show the variety of dances, and she agreed that they could present ‘ōte’a and ‘aparima for the performance, with live musicians.

The Manutahi performance featured about eight dancers (all female) and six drummers (all male). Interestingly, the drummers included Julius Skipps, a musician I had met months before but did not associate with the ensemble. He joined them for this
performance as lead drummer. Prior to their performance, Julius directed a rehearsal with the drummers out of doors near the art department. These musicians did not perform for the ‘aparima pieces, instead using recorded music. After I made introductory remarks mentioning the nearby gallery exhibit, I introduced Auntie Pola. She acted as emcee, introducing each dance and describing their forms.

Despite arranging for a performance of ‘ōte’a and ‘aparima, I did not plan with Pola the set list in any more detail. I had expected live music for the entire performance, wanting to show the string instrument as drumming music. One of the pieces performed to the CD recording was decidedly contemporary in style, featuring heavy beat and synthesized instruments. These concerns, after the fact, might have been the payoff of the choice (and cost) of Manutahi to perform. Rather than a highly polished performance set with professional (i.e. paid) musicians and dancers, this was in fact a nonprofessional, non-paid group. The dancers and musicians, to varying degrees, were students, mostly in middle or high school. The choice to present Manutahi was both economical and a result of my good working relationship with Auntie Pola. As in the performance video in the gallery, this hura ava tau group was more than adequate to show the separate forms. Pola’s remarks, which included names and descriptions of the dance forms, even added content akin to curatorial text. As I stepped back and let her present the group, she framed their performance for a general audience, one willing to learn about the tradition.

In addition to the performance by Manutahi, Pola conducted the ti leaf braiding workshop, and tyrone arrived to demonstrate drum carving. Fatu had planned to show up as well, to work on drum carvings alongside Tyrone, but had to cancel several days earlier. In order to encourage others to participate in Pola’s braiding demonstration, I sat down with her to participate. I found myself echoing Pola’s instructions, and at one point, realized that I was teaching instead of Pola. I encouraged her to step back in, and she remarked that I was doing a fine job as a teacher. While I think she was sincere, I would have preferred that Pola be featured as the teacher. I was a newcomer, and despite my willingness to teach, wanted to highlight her skills and knowledge as a Tahitian cultural specialist. By personally working to encourage participation in this workshop, I
accidentally inserted myself into the wrong role. I also participated in drumming workshops with Tyrone in an effort to build interest in passersby at the event. Tyrone’s drum carving demonstration was just that; several art students in particular were very intrigued in his work and talked with Tyrone at length.

Aside from my concerns with inadvertent teaching alongside Auntie Pola, these craft performances featured very little framing material. The curatorial decisions leading to the performance boiled down to whom I could attract as demonstrators. Pola and Tyrone were both great collaborators for the gallery exhibit, so I was very comfortable inviting them to be part of this event. Their performances at Artmania reinforced the content of the gallery, to which all visitors were directed. They also both received honoraria from the Hamilton Library events programming budget, funds which came from specific departments co-sponsoring the exhibit as a whole. I never got the impression from either demonstrator that their participation was contingent upon getting paid.

4.4 Curatorial Negotiations

In what Hooper-Greenhill calls the “modernist museum,” the curator holds the position of ultimate power. As the primary voice of the larger institution, this curator “depicts ‘reality’ and shows ‘the way things are’ in an apparently neutral way” (Hooper-Greenhill 2000:17). This supposed impartiality is a thin guise for the power wielded in representing the objects and narratives of the museum’s collections and exhibits. Foucault discusses “strategic knowledge” as inseparable from relations of power, and extending this perspective into the museum we interpret curatorial power as strategic and inherently biased to the intentions of the institution. An extreme example of this is the arrangement of ethnographic materials in the Pitt Rivers collection, ordered in such a way as to position Western society as the apex of human civilization (Lidchi 1997:187-191). Displays of such knowledge “constitute [reality] in specific contexts according to particular relations of power” (ibid., 185). Through the critical work of identifying how museums exert power and influence cultural politics, the role of the museum and curator have begun to change.
Julia Harrison has discussed the role of producers in the creation of exhibits, including “a wide variety of people... but the key ‘specialists’ in the process are curators (or a team of people who perform the curatorial task) as it is they who set the theme, write the script and direct the production” (1991:3). Building upon Hooper-Greenhill’s suggestion of the “post-museum,” Tau Rima Tahiti has attempted to somewhat alleviate these issues of power. I argue that the collaborating informants for Tau Rima Tahiti aided the curator as the “team of people who perform the curatorial task” (ibid.), and defray the power issues that Foucault threatens. The exhibition grew out of collaborative discussion and with ongoing feedback from cultural specialists. Yet throughout, I acted as curator, director, and ultimately author. Like Miriam Kahn and Pacific Voices, the intentions and needs of collaborators in Tau Rima Tahiti could not be entirely foreseen: collaborators’ priorities, social dynamics, and mission drift detracted from exhibit goals. Ultimately these challenges remained important parts of the community and the performance culture portrayed. Throughout the process, I sought to negotiate these challenges, maintain order, and produce the expected exhibition and events.

4.4.1 Curatorial Flexibility

Both as curator and as a graduate student, the successful production of Tau Rima Tahiti was of paramount importance to me. This much is obvious. Yet the exhibition was not entirely self-serving. There was an educational benefit to the university and public as visitors, and a benefit of exposure to the Tahitian-Hawaiian performance community. I could not hope and did not expect collaborators to “drop everything” for the sake of the exhibit. Nonetheless, I was tasked with motivating their involvement, eliciting stories and knowledge, and securing loans. Several events challenged me in this regard.

In most instances of gallery exhibition, the final work is presented as a complete presentation upon opening. As if by removing a shroud, every item would be complete and permanently in place for the duration of the exhibition. Several culturally motivated factors conspired to make such a “static” exhibition impossible. Significantly, the nature of the performance tradition and the contemporary status of the artifacts on display led to a more flexible display than I had originally envisioned.
Prior to the exhibition, I had secured a number of instruments and pieces of jewelry for display. The instruments ranged from newly built to decades old. Loans from Etua Tahauri included the tō‘ere under construction in the adjoining video, and two other recent instruments, as well as a small presentational tō‘ere which was given to him in Tahiti. Tyrone Temanaha, Jr. loaned four tō‘ere, including three built by himself and one made by Gerard Tepehu many years before. Tyrone also loaned two tāhape, small hand-held tō‘ere. At the time of the opening, I had not secured the loan of a Tahitian banjo, an important element in the music for ʻaparima. As exhibit loans had come in, I did not feel that I had space to accommodate banjos, and so did not actively pursue one for the exhibit. All lenders were aware of the duration of the exhibition and that items would be on display through the end of April 2009, a point made clear in loan forms created for each lender (shown in
Appendix D).

Just after the exhibit opened I was contacted by both Etua and Tyrone, requesting the return of instruments so that they could offer them for sale at the Heiva i Honolulu. Additionally, Etua asked for return of the decorative tō‘ere, so that he may give it as a gift to the producers of the Kiki Raina Fête in Merced, CA, at the end of March. Considering cultural and economic sensitivity, and the underlying importance of maintaining relations with these collaborators, I of course returned the instruments. Both lenders were willing to return the drums if they did not sell at the Heiva. I felt the impression, from Etua in particular, that the most important opening moments of the exhibit were past (though he had not yet seen the exhibit).

On March 11, I met separately with Etua and Tyrone. Etua provided me with two alternate tō‘ere of his own making. Tyrone also provided two other tō‘ere, one built by Joe Tauatea, and one refurbished by Miko Krainer. I also inquired about the availability of a Tahitian banjo, and he was very amenable. In fact, Tyrone had a solid body 8-string “flying V” banjo, as well as a narrow hand-carved 4-string instrument with intricate Marquesan carving. The latter had been made in Hawai‘i by Emile Itchener, and taken to Tahiti where Tyrone had it carved by an artist at le marché, the public market in Pape‘ete. This exchange of instruments was certainly not a loss. Though I was sad to lose the elegant display tō‘ere and that which featured in Etua’s construction video, serendipity provided two banjos to fill their space. I certainly felt a sense of loss when Etua and Tyrone requested their items be returned prematurely, but felt that the resulting display with banjos was more complete and well-rounded. Practicing flexibility and being willing to accommodate collaborators and artifact lenders had the real benefit of an improved exhibit. My willingness to work with them also, I think, aided our working relationship and their continued openness in my research.

I knew from the outset that exhibiting items from craftspeople selling their wares may present difficulties should they be “sold out from under” the exhibition. On the other hand, placing these items in a gallery space raises them to a “gallery” level of recognition. Furthermore, each artist’s materials were credited to their name, and contact
information was available for anyone interested in purchasing featured or similar material. The artists were happy to provide materials because (1) this exhibition acknowledged and raised the level of recognition for their work; (2) the exhibition made Tahitian cultural materials more well-known to the public, supporting general as well as commercial interest in the material; and (3) they might make money by sales directly related to the exhibit. Tahitian festivals are a largely in-crowd event, expanding the market of patrons is certainly an incentive. None of these artists reported making sales directly from the exhibit, but neither did they regret participating because of this. Additional economic benefits did come to light after the close of the exhibit, and will be discussed in chapter 6.

Very near the close of the exhibit, on April 20, Kevin Kama contacted me. He was traveling soon to Japan for a performance and teaching tour, and one of the groups he was visiting had requested to purchase a pahu. Given the short notice, he had not had time to make another instrument, and so needed to pick up the pahu currently on display. This was just over a week before the end of the exhibition run, and immediately preceding the spring recess. Again, I could only accommodate his wishes. Kevin remarked that his wife had seen the online exhibit, but since he had not yet been to the gallery this would prove an opportunity to show him around. Upon visiting, he was very positive, and in fact offered his loaned fa‘atete as a permanent gift to the Ethnomusicology Collection, in thanks for the work I and my collaborators at the university had done in exhibiting ‘ori tahiti. This was indeed a very tangible form of gratitude.

There was one more case of mid-exhibit revision which I did foresee, but is worth mentioning in regard to the need for flexibility. During my visit to the rehearsal of ‘Ia Ora O Tahiti Nui on January 29, 2009, Kevin Kama specifically asked me not to divulge the instruments he and his drummers had built. I felt that Kevin’s group, with their highly innovative instruments, would make for an interesting example in the exhibit, and I had acquired interview material which gave additional insight to their performance. Considering the timing of the exhibit opening (March 2) and the date of the Heiva i
Honolulu (March 12-14), I felt it necessary to withhold an exhibit video of pūpū tā‘iri tō‘ere until after the Heiva. With the designed “soft opening,” this omission from the opening two weeks of the exhibition seemed appropriate. Since this video was in place by the time of the formal opening, associated special events, and planned group visits, I trust that its absence went largely unnoticed. I made a judgment call to balance the comprehensiveness of the exhibition against the current cultural performance calendar. This slight “fudging” of the calendar for this element was, I believe, appropriate.

4.4.2 Curatorial Conflict Mediation

An additional difficulty of working amongst the local Tahitian community entailed negotiating the political history between individuals and groups, and how this history affected their interaction with me. Many of the ra‘atira I spoke with noted that tensions can arise when dancers or musicians leave for another group, but that as long as they are up-front about their wishes, this is acceptable. Auntie Pola explains,

> Sometimes our dancers move groups, and that’s okay, because we have a nice conversation. That’s okay. Sometimes they move groups and they just move maliciously. And then you have a problem. (9 May 2009)

Every ra‘atira I discussed this with noted that moving amongst groups is typical and easy in Tahiti, but somehow more difficult in Hawai‘i.

Tyrone attempted to put these tensions and splintering groups in perspective:

> All that tension, all threw out from our group, from the way beginning. Our group was one of the biggest strongest groups…. It still is, but… a lot of things has been happening. Like if you ever heard the groups Ma‘ohi Nui, or Tahiti Toa, or… Kevin them’s group [‘Ia Ora O Tahiti Nui]. Who else. Auntie Pola’s group… Mariteragis… Tihati’s show. They all came from our group. All of them came from our group, they learned from our group and so and so. Things… get sour sometimes and they think they’re better than anybody else. And that’s where problems come…. So that’s what happened with our groups. But we [are] still tight together. We still talk to each other. But we know what happened back then, what’s good for us now. (Pers. comm., 4 May 2009)
Tyrone paints a picture that this splintering action of groups into other groups is a long-established tradition in Hawai‘i. While the act of separating to form another group may be difficult, after the matter is done (sometimes years afterwards), the groups can be equals and collegial. Tyrone concludes that the experience of painful splinters is a lesson to be remembered when moving forward: “We know… what’s good for us now” (ibid.).

At the time of the Heiva i Honolulu 2009, ‘Ia Ora O Tahiti Nui had only been in existence for two years. Many of their members, including one of three co-ra’atira, had left Te Vai Ura Nui to form the new group. During the period of planning Tau Rima Tahiti, there remained an undercurrent of tension between these ensembles, made more apparent at the Heiva i Honolulu 2009. Te Vai Ura Nui did not compete in the group hura tau competition, citing their reduced number of dancers and drummers caused by the recent splinter. Both groups, however, entered the drumming competition. ‘Ia Ora O Tahiti Nui put a total of 25 drummers on stage, with most playing traditional as well as recently constructed instruments in an elaborate display of tradition and innovation. Te Vai Ura Nui’s drummers decided to compete only two weeks prior to the competition, about March 1, and their resulting performance featured seven drummers on traditional instruments only. Tensions were high between the two groups, and this conflict was reportedly hinted at in an opening ‘ōrero by Tyrone (Robyn Manu Williams, pers. comm., 14 May 2009). Te Vai Ura Nui won the competition, and doubtless felt justified that their comparatively small ensemble rose above. According to an informant with relatives in the judging pool, their win was by a single point. Despite this win for Te Vai Ura Nui, their competitor swept the hura tau (senior group overall), costume, and ra’atira awards, taking home the perpetual trophy. Working closely with both of these ensembles and ra’atira, I was careful to remain open and impartial to their political history.

In addition to conflicts caused by group migration and splinter, performers may also carry personal history with other individuals. In one instance, this became potentially disastrous. On February 6, 2009, I attended a fundraiser event for ‘Ia Ora O Tahiti Nui. Just a week earlier, I had met with Kevin Kama and other drummers from the group, who
generously shared with me their process for making skin drums, the *pahu*, *fa’atete*, and *tūpaʻi rima*. One of these drummers was suggesting that I may want to record their upcoming rehearsal and performance during the ProBowl at Aloha Stadium. Shortly, Kevin came outside to join the conversation.

Our conversation transitioned into a discussion of my working amongst multiple groups. I gave him the honest observation that compared to some, he had been very forthcoming and generous in sharing his knowledge, and that I was grateful for it. He became suddenly perturbed that he, a non-Tahitian, was so giving when ethnic Tahitians remained so insular and protective. He conveyed his frustrations with the provincialism of ethnic Tahitians. He suggested that it was necessary for me to talk to many people, and that he had already given enough of his time and I should move on to others. He inquired about others I had visited. I named several individuals that I had spoken with, and explained that I was still seeking more informants. Unknown to me, one of the names I mentioned was a chief rival and antagonist, which made Kevin even more upset. “He is not a good guy. He burned us when we came here [to O‘ahu] and he is no good.” I professed I had no idea and was still trying to understand the political landscape. Furious at this point, he wished me luck and bid me good night, abruptly ending the conversation and perhaps our relationship. I realized that Kevin’s tirade was at least partially fueled by alcohol, so let him “cool off” before following up. When we spoke a week later he apologized for his anger and quickly changed the subject.

The competitive tensions of competing ensembles are also present among professionally performing groups, which is more likely the situation with the antagonist to whom Kevin was referring. This drummer runs a small commercial group that performs regularly in Waikīkī. The issue of ethnic provincialism is significant. While many performers are not ethnically Tahitian, Kevin suggested that Tahitians have a “chip on their shoulder” about being the best, and that they feel threatened by non-Tahitian competitors. He holds his commitment to the tradition, and his experience drumming in

29 Kevin is of Hawaiian and Chinese descent, hailing from the island of Hawai‘i.
Tahiti, as a sign of his expertise, which is nonetheless underappreciated by some Tahitians in Hawai‘i. His perspective results in a portrayal of racism within the diaspora. I did not pursue this line of inquiry directly, and it did not arise as a common theme among other groups and individuals I spoke with.

4.4.3 The Curator and Mission drift

Museums, as public institutions, are mission-driven. A key component to any museum’s mission is a well-defined collecting policy. Many museums experience a tension when donors offer a gift with stipulations such as requirement of exhibition or an “all or nothing” requirement to receive a haphazard collection including just a few choice objects. Such situations can lead to the threat of “mission drift,” whereby an institution (whether by accident or as an isolated concession) expands its collections outside of the stated collecting mission. For example, Honolulu’s Contemporary Museum only collects and exhibits art from within the last 50 years; the Bishop Museum once declined the offer of a brass palm tree sculpture because it did not suit the museum’s collections (Betty Lou Kam, pers. comm., 29 September 2008). To accept objects outside of the stated mission invites additional drift, and diverts staff and available funds from the mission. Though not a collecting practice, the production of Tau Rima Tahiti did invite a degree of mission drift. The exhibit theme entailed presenting the Tahitian performance and material culture as produced in Hawai‘i. Through an expanding notion of how to tell this story, and at the urging of collaborators, the exhibited materials came to include material pushing the boundaries of that theme.

The differences between material culture in the locale of Tahiti versus Hawai‘i arose repeatedly during my fieldwork discussions. Since the differences and similarities figured as an underlying theme, it would be difficult to address this continuum without examples from Tahiti. Many musicians had instruments made in Tahiti, and indeed artisans such as Miko Krainer, Tyrone Temanaha, Jr., and Tahia Parker learned their skills in that homeland. The exhibit included several tō‘ere made in Tahiti, as well as a ra‘atira costume used in Tahiti by Heikura Nui, under the direction of Gerard Tepehu. The fact that these items came from Tahiti was evident through the text, and provided
some interesting comparisons for those who read the exhibit labels. More problematic was the inclusion of other cultural items and printed materials.

In my first meeting with Etua Tahauri, he mentioned his collection of shell lei, or hei pūpū. He described his urge for gathering this collection:

… it’s happening in Tahiti that slowly a lot of missing items, even in the museum. But I took a lot of pictures. I see… what kinda shell they use, where it came from… A lot of our items have gone overseas. I decided to copy a lot of stuff. Photocopy a lot of stuff. And then have it produced while the old folks are still living, the craft people…. A lot of them died already, [including] the shell makers. So I had them reproduce the same shell. Same style of making… I do have some over there. (Pers. comm., 22 January 2009)

Etua’s collection of hei pūpū resulted from him commissioning these crafts, based upon the materials in the Musée de Tahiti es des îles. Rather than relics dating from ancient times, they were made only 20 to 30 years ago. They were also some of Etua’s most prized possessions from Tahiti. I found myself swayed by their aura of authenticity and by his obvious pride in this collection. He mentioned these pieces to me on subsequent occasions, but I did not see them until just prior to the exhibit. On February 25 Etua and I retrieved this collection from his daughter in Lā‘ie. Encased in a glass table-top display case, the collection totaled some 20 hei and 6 carved wooden bracelets. In the end I displayed five hei pūpū, one hei taupo’o huruhuru (feather hat band) and three of the bracelets. The text labels for these pieces briefly described that they were reproductions based upon museum pieces, and the hei description included a short excerpt from Etua’s remarks, above.

Another tangential object came from Tahia Parker. During an interview, she brought out from a closet an elaborately carved u‘u, ceremonial Marquesan club. She described that her father “made this for my husband. He found out we were getting married… and then he made this for him. This is one thing that each man of the family has” (Tahia Parker., pers. comm., 20 January 2009). Tahia described how in her family the u‘u was a symbolic “head of household” item, employed “as an armrest when they stand up, [but historically] they use it as a weapon” (ibid.). She also discussed how u‘u
may be used by men as a dance implement. At one time, she said, *u‘u* could be seen in
dance performance at the Polynesian Cultural Center. This piece, itself a symbolic family
and cultural item, was therefore representative of similar objects used in dance
performance.

I also acquired from Etua several single pages from a Tahitian magazine showing
traditional and ornate contemporary costumes, as well as a paperback book outlining
traditional weaving, *Te Rara’a / Polynesian Weaving / Le tressage polynésien*. The
costume photos could certainly be compared to those on display. Some parts of *Te
Rara’a* were relevant to exhibit items, such as the woven hip-bands on several costumes.
In the exhibit, the book was displayed open to a page showing fiber weaving technique,
along with a photocopy of the cover. Notably, one respondent to the exhibit questionnaire
listed “magazines” as the least successful component of the exhibit.

Recognizing that the Tahitian-origin elements just listed were on the periphery of
the exhibit themes, I chose to group them together in one of the glass wall cases, that
nearest the entrance on the *mauka* wall. Here I placed: one *tō’ere* by Gerard Tepehu, the
three carved bracelets from Etua, two banjos, Tahia’s *u‘u*, and the magazine and *Te
Rara’a* pages. To the right of this case, nearest the entrance, was the *ra’atira* costume
from Heikura Nui. The *hei pūpū* were displayed in a tabletop glass case on the opposite
side, along with jewelry made locally by Mafatu Krainer. The bulk of this material would
thus be seen at the finale of the exhibition if one took the designed clockwise circuit.

However, aside from setting these materials apart in such a manner, the text did not
overtly separate them from the neighboring materials. Similarly, the description of *hei
pūpū*, though present, was understated.

In attempting to craft an exhibit within narrowly defined parameters, I may have
set myself up for an expansion of exhibit content. As Etua said, “Tahitian culture is kind
of vast” (pers. comm., 2 February 2009), and ‘*ori tahiti* is a vehicle to understand that
culture. Why would artifacts and objects outside of the stage performance not be brought
into the conversation, or for the exhibition? With the possible exception of Etua’s *hei
pūpū*, each of these items did have a place in the performance and history of ‘*ori tahiti*.  

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Implements sometimes referenced in performance, as well as texts and photos about performance materials were appropriate, though perhaps not smoothly incorporated. The latter had a more negative effect upon the exhibit design than the exhibit narrative. The incorporation of materials made in Tahiti is perhaps of more concern, as its incorporation gestures to a much larger question, and suggests a much larger exhibit, exploring in detail the differences in homeland and diaspora tradition of Hawai‘i.

### 4.5 Representing Diasporic Tensions

Any text containing and sharing ethnographic research – whether a research paper, book, film or gallery exhibition – takes on the responsibility of representation. The author creates meaning, and that meaning reflects upon the source culture. In a diasporic tradition, particularly one with close ties to its homeland, those representations become even more layered. The Hawai‘i-Tahitian tradition is elegant and, by now, well established, but it does not wholly reflect ‘ōrī tahiti in Tahiti. I wrote in the gallery introductory text,

> Tahitian performance groups in Hawai‘i are displaced from the original source of their art and raw materials. They relay the myths and tell of a land that is far away. In transplanting Tahitian culture, craftspeople in Hawai‘i show great resourcefulness and skill. By using local resources, cultivating relationships, and employing great creativity, they display a design sense and resulting product that is remarkably and undeniably Tahitian.

Throughout research and the formulation of exhibit content, my collaborators made constant references to Tahiti, pointing out numerous differences between the two sites. Along the way, some could be heard idealizing that distant island and sanitizing the local Hawai‘i-Tahitian tradition to fall more in line with the homeland. While formulating the exhibit as I have here discussed, I was necessarily aware of these tensions and my task of appropriately reflecting of the local tradition, without emphasizing divergences from the homeland that would paint locals in a bad light. I will briefly outline some such differences that were not made explicit in the exhibition.
Many collaborators made frequent reference to the use of natural resources—the availability of flora in Tahiti and the practice of picking fresh flowers for performance costumes. Many also mentioned glue guns, “plastic flowers” and store bought items from places like Aloha Hula Supply. I included some mention of these in the thematic quotes in the gallery. I did not mention the use of zip ties, or the very extensive use of Velcro. As an interesting counterpoint to the discussion of natural resources, Raymond Mariteragi pointed out that while there is a great availability of natural resources in Tahiti, those resources are not necessarily being protected. Laws and regulations in Hawai‘i protect against over-harvesting, a practice which may inform policy in Tahiti.

The Polynesian Cultural Center is a significant influence on O‘ahu. Many fine performers and teachers have emerged from the performance opportunities at the Center, which also hosts Tahitian, Samoan, Maori, and hula competitions. As an institution connected to Brigham Young University and the Mormon Church, the PCC also maintains high standards of modesty, which are reflected in costuming throughout the Center and its special events. Te Mahana Hiro’a O Tahiti, the PCC’s annual Tahitian dance competition, publishes a number of stipulations in regard to costumes. Females are required to “wear a one piece top that will prevent their mid-rib area from being exposed”, and pāreu must extend below the knees; for males choosing to wear a maro, traditional loin cloth, they must also wear “a tight or a pair of undershorts that comes down slightly above the knees” (Polynesian Cultural Center 2011). While I can find no fault in modesty and the moral education that BYU and the PCC support, particularly for underage participants, such stipulations are nonetheless divergent from the Tahitian tradition that may feature coconut brassieres and short pāreu for both males and females.

Terminology of materials and more general phrasing also varies somewhat between the two locales. The preponderance of English, and perhaps French as well, has affected use of the Tahitian language in Hawai‘i. Though Tahitian has no voiced bilabial (“b”), English speakers immediately recognize the island of Bora Bora in speech or writing. The island, and the pehe carrying the same name, is properly called Porapora in Tahitian, and is so labeled on drumming competition rules and in this thesis. Nonetheless,
Aaron Grainger and others can be unmistakably heard to voice the initial consonant, producing the English “Bora Bora.” Perhaps more subtly, Tahitian terminology may here be elided or truncated. This became apparent in label text regarding Tahitian headwear. In a number of interviews, collaborators referred to these items as hei po’o, a divergence from the more traditional hei upo’o. Tahia Parker explained to me that in the spoken term, glossing over the “u” was a natural occurrence. Tahia pointed out that when you speak “with mom and dad, we want to say hei upo’o, [but] we can say hei po’o, it’s like a current word that we use” (pers. comm., 7 May 2009). Jeanne Moua Larsen also told me that such a glide, and specifically in reference to the hei upo’o, is very common in the Tahitian language in Hawai‘i, and not a source of major contention. Other Tahitian terms seemed rare in the local Hawaiian tradition, instead replaced with multi-lingual terms, describing a specific dance as a “girl’s ōte’a costume” rather than ‘ōte’a vahine. 30

Similarly, there appears in Hawai‘i frequent language shifts between Tahitian and Hawaiian. Use of the Hawaiian term hālau is a prime example—the term is so synonymous to the Tahitian dance schools, and so well known in Hawai‘i that it is extremely appropriate. Instrument makers also substituted Hawaiian for Tahitian terms in our conversations, including types of wood for tō‘ere milo (HI) instead of miro (TAH), and kamani (HI) instead of tāmanu (TAH); and carving motif such as ‘ulu (HI) in place of ‘uru (TAH) for breadfruit. Since these instrument makers live and work in Hawai‘i, acquiring these materials from other locals who are not necessarily Tahitian, the default terminologies are Hawaiian.

The performance format of heiva in Hawai‘i differs from that of Tahiti. As Tino Hoffmann described, a group performance in Tahiti would last a full hour and include an ‘aparima section, but there would be no ‘ahu roa, which originated as a dance genre in the Hawaiian setting. Similarly, Tino points out that the solo competitions in Hawai‘i are primarily a vehicle to create revenue from entrants. He would prefer the Tahitian format,

30 Admittadly, this led to some erroneous text in the first draft of the exhibit and online text, where I mistakenly transposed such terms.

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where individual groups select their best male and female dancers to represent the ensemble as solo dancers. Tino also mentioned the lack of ‘utē and hīmene tārava, two competition song forms. While not all aspects of the Tahitian competition are present in Hawai‘i, this may be changing in some ways: beginning in 2012, the Heiva i Honolulu will include an ‘utē division.

These are just a handful of differences. More structural is the lack of Tahitian language as a mode of discourse and a framework for representation among the participants, and a deeper understanding of the stories and locales which feature in Tahitian song and performance. Despite these differences, the Hawai‘i-Tahitian performance tradition pays a great homage to the homeland tradition. In retrospect, the exhibit’s introductory text, describing the local tradition as “remarkably and undeniably Tahitian,” may more appropriately have been tempered to make clear the localized nature of the Hawai‘i-Tahitian tradition, but with respect to local craftspeople and performers. Etua noted the high quality of craftsmanship himself, stating, “a lot of our people from Tahiti are surprised at how well the costumes are done here” (pers. comm., 22 January 2009). Many of the Tahitian-born and raised specialists I worked with expressed similar statements. I strove to represent the local tradition, as an outgrowth of ‘ori tahiti in Hawai‘i, without overt reference to distinct differences. Perhaps the exhibit text could have overtly referenced the “Hawai‘i-Tahitian performance tradition,” thus acknowledging that confluence of cultures and resources in the diasporic tradition.

4.6 Chapter Summary

In this chapter I have explored the construction and interpretation of Tau Rima Tahiti in reference to the critical themes of representing the Hawai‘i-Tahitian practice of ‘ori tahiti. In portraying this performance tradition, I have attempted to provide sufficient cultural context that the exhibit components may be viewed with reference to their significance within the tradition. Without an exhaustive overview of Tahitian culture in general, this provides an entry point for the visitor to comprehend the materials in similar terms as they were intended. I have attempted to make transparent my personal motivations, experiences, and challenges throughout this process. Based upon fieldwork
and secondary research, I sought to portray this Hawai‘i-Tahitian performance tradition in a positive light in order to educate the public, but not in a manner that would idealize a mythical homeland tradition nor highlight practices that diverge drastically from the homeland tradition in Tahiti. Significantly, the incorporation of ethnomusicological research into a curatorial narrative has been both novel and very useful in representing ‘ori tahiti and its performers. This has allowed both a description of the musical elements and processes, as well as provided new tools for presenting musical structures to the gallery visitor. Additionally, my experience as a performer of the music allowed an increased level of rapport with collaborators and insights into the aspects of material culture that are important to musicians and performers. Having thus explored the representations of Tau Rima Tahiti from the perspective of the curator, chapter 5 will gather exhibit feedback from a range of audiences.
CHAPTER 5
EXHIBITION FEEDBACK

5.1 Introduction

This chapter will examine the myriad reactions to *Tau Rima Tahiti*, from lay visitors to primary informants, academics, and focus groups. Informed by the extensive literature on audience research, I collected general visitor feedback throughout the exhibition and special events. I also conducted follow-up interviews with informants who contributed to the exhibition. Individual academic critiques and two student focus groups lend additional perspectives. I shall analyze each of these data sources in turn. Examining this diversity of voices will identify common trends among all visitors as well as the unique perspective of certain groups. The goal of this chapter is to analyze the visitor and participant experience in order to identify strengths and flaws in the exhibition, academic merit, and the benefits of an ethnomusicologically informed curatorial process.

5.2 Visitors Study

Visitor studies are a form of summative evaluation, based upon data systematically collected from visitors. Such studies are often designed to track the success of exhibits, both in terms of audience and content. George Hein summarizes, “visitor studies are carried out because we are interested in finding out what visitors think and how they feel about their visits” (Hein 1998:100). Studies can also justify the cost and effort of mounting an exhibition, by identifying to what degree the target audience received the intended information. Beverly Serrell writes:

Summative evaluation is often (although certainly not always) goal related; that is, evaluation looks for evidence that the exhibition’s objectives were met and defines success in those terms. The question exhibit evaluators ask is “Did it work?” or “Was it effective?” Evaluation usually compares visitor feedback about the exhibition to the exhibit developer’s intentions and objectives. (2006:94)
Visitor studies may come in several forms including interviews, surveys, and visitor tracking. As an alternative gallery space where audience research is not a normal practice, I decided not to burden visitors with exhaustive interviews, nor could I commit the time and energy to tracking studies, which would require real-time observation. Hein points out that questionnaires are appropriate for quick answers and unarguably cost effective (1998:115). He cautions that good questions can be difficult to compose in order to elicit the most productive feedback. I sought to keep the survey short enough to be filled out in a brief visit, yet informative from a research standpoint. As I analyzed the feedback data, I discovered some shortcomings in survey design, but was able to glean much useful information.

I placed visitor questionnaires in the Gallery for the duration of the installation, at the ArtMania event, and linked from the online exhibit. Several signs in the gallery directed visitors to the feedback forms. I also made personal requests to several student groups that visited the gallery to complete feedback forms. In total, I received 54 response forms from the Bridge Gallery, which included visitors attending as a result of the ArtMania event. Notably, many gallery visitors during ArtMania were the performers from Manutahi Tahiti, as well as Tyrone’s family members. This greatly increased the number of visitors who identified as participants in ‘ori tahiti. I received no online questionnaires. The exhibit questionnaire featured 17 questions in three categories: demographics; feedback on the exhibit’s value, successes, and shortcomings; and comparison to other exhibits in the same gallery space, future projects, and open feedback. The full text of the questionnaire appears in

31 Three forms were submitted at the ArtMania event, but forms in the Bridge Gallery for the same day were not distinctly coded to track attendance at ArtMania.

32 I used www.surveymonkey.com to collect surveys online. Though no responses came from the online exhibit, by using identical surveys in both arenas I was able to input all paper surveys to surveymonkey, thus taking advantage of its analytical tools.
Appendix D. Visitors completed the questionnaires with a range of thoroughness: demographic and multiple choice questions elicited the most responses, while open-ended feedback questions returned a much smaller number of responses.

5.2.1 Visitor Demographics

I knew from the outset that the Bridge Gallery venue would greatly influence visitor demographics. The logistics of getting to and parking on campus greatly restricted community access. Though an “alternative venue,” the gallery was not easily accessed by the general public, supporting instead a largely campus-based audience. The gallery is also, quite literally, a bridge between two buildings, a major thoroughfare for library patrons. On the positive side, the number of chance visitors was very impressive, and I hoped that many who passed through would take a moment to stop or perhaps return for a more leisurely visit. During the 2008-2009 academic year, Hamilton Library boasted a total gate count of 614,130 patrons (UH-M Libraries 2009:7). Most library visitors see the entrance to the Bridge Gallery, and it is the most-traveled of the two passageways to the Science, Medicine, and Technology collections, and the University Archives.

The questionnaire identified that Tau Rima Tahiti visitors were overwhelmingly from the campus, whether students, faculty or staff. Only 31% of visitors had no university affiliation, and the largest segment, 45%, fell between 16 and 30 years of age, in line with the majority of undergraduate and graduate students. Gender divisions leaned toward female at 69%, an exaggeration of campus enrollment, which favors females by 55% (UH-M 2009:28).
The ethnic background of visitors to the gallery only loosely reflects that of campus enrollment: the Pacific Rim demographics of the campus shifts further to the south in the exhibit attendance, showing a higher percentage of Pacific Island than mainland Asian attendees. UH statistics do not specify Tahitian or French Polynesian affiliation, lumping this group with the 4% of the campus defined as “Pacific Islander.” 14% of the recorded exhibit attendees identified as “non-Hawaiian Pacific Islanders.” Despite the small sample size, this suggests that *Tau Rima Tahiti* did in fact invite
visitation by students and off-campus individuals of Tahitian ethnicity and involvement (including, of course, performers during ArtMania).

![Campus and Exhibit Ethnicity](image)

Figure 48: Campus and visitor ethnicity

Additionally, eleven of the fifty-four respondents identified themselves as participants or family supporters in Tahitian arts or performance. Figure 49 shows these eleven individuals’ experience in Tahitian performance.
Figure 49: Tahitian Involvement

Finally, I was curious what percentage of visitors came to the exhibit intentionally or happened upon it by chance. Of the questionnaires received, respondents divided fairly evenly between intentional (51%) and chance (49%) visitation. It is certain that many chance visitors did not engage enough to want to complete a feedback form, but the high response rate by chance visitors is a testament to the nature of the alternative gallery space to attract an audience.

5.2.2 Success of the Exhibit

Nineteen visitors reported having seen prior exhibits in the Bridge gallery, and 30 respondents offered a comparison to former exhibits. Visitors overwhelmingly reported that *Tau Rima Tahiti* compared to other exhibits as “outstanding” or “better than average.” Others identified the challenges of working in the Bridge Gallery space and applauded the difficulties overcome.\(^{33}\)

\(^{33}\) “A wonderful exhibit in a small venue – excellent.”
The questionnaire asked which aspects were most interesting and informative, which were least useful, and how they may be improved upon. Forty-one respondents offered their answer to which elements were most interesting. I coded their responses by key terms, shown in Table 2.

“The best Bridge Gallery exhibit I have seen – impressive.”
Table 2: Aspects labeled most interesting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Term</th>
<th>Count</th>
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<tr>
<td>costume</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>display</td>
<td>3*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>video</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>instruments</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>computer</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>history</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>audio</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>labels</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>language</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>performance</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>quotes</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>research</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>craft</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*seven respondents mentioned the design or display, but four of these were in reference to the costumes specifically.

An overwhelming twenty-one of these respondents mentioned the costumes, and several expanded by noting the craftsmanship of costuming, the rare ability to see them up close, or the stylized mannequin armatures. One respondent even noted the duplications of costumes on exhibit and featured in the performance video: “I loved being able to see the complexity/quality of the costumes and then how they looked on the video

34 “Never thought about the craftsmanship involved in the costuming before. Only watch performance. This will increase my appreciation”
“I like the dance costumes exhibited as they would be worn”
“Seeing the actual costumes up close. Usually don't get to see all the details”

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during performance.” This duplication of context, allowing a view of the dance (moving, active) alongside the costume (static, inert), offered to this visitor an enriched perspective. Those respondents who mentioned costumes as a success revealed themselves to include family members of Tahitian dancers, persons involved in related traditions, and fans of textiles in general.

Six respondents mentioned the videos, specifying the tō’ere-making, costume-making, or performance segments. Five mentioned the instruments or drums in general, and four mentioned the interactive computer program. Though they weren’t the outstanding features that one may think of in response to the original question, research, the presentation of craftsmanship, and exhibit labels were mentioned as well. One respondent even mentioned a major goal of the exhibit design: “I liked the quotations from “experts” because I could hear the voices of the people who know and love the subject.”

Even though forty-one respondents gave feedback on what they found to be most interesting in the exhibit, only twenty-four provided an answer to what was least interesting or useful, and twenty-eight offered suggestions on how to improve the exhibit. These two questions are somewhat redundant, and I recognize this as a flaw in the questionnaire. I will therefore deal with them simultaneously.

35 “Costumes—help me get ideas for my daughter’s costume.”
“Tahitian dance. I felt there is similarity.”
“I appreciate beautiful textiles from different countries.”
36 “I felt that the video of the tō’ere being made was really helpful to visualize the process.”
“I loved being able to see the complexity/quality of the costumes and then how they looked on the video during performance.”
Table 3: Areas for improvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Term</th>
<th>Least Useful</th>
<th>Needs improvement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>labels</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>computer</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lighting</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>instrument</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>magazines</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>more</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>display</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sound</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>history</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>map</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tech prob</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>context</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>live demos</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ava bowls</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Origins of dance</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Encouraging as the response of “not applicable” seems, I know there is always room for improvement. Several individuals cited problems with the text and labels, for a

\[37\] See section 4.4.3
variety of reasons. Content-related points include observations that text was “cheesy”, that there was too much text (one visitor called the labels “blocky”), and that discussions of the music in particular seemed too technical. Three individuals suggested a larger font for the labels.

Four visitors identified the interactive computer station as a strength, yet three others saw it as a drawback. To some degree I can attribute this disparity to individual preference. Table lists all of the comments regarding the computer kiosk:

Table 4: Computer kiosk feedback

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Pro</strong></th>
<th><strong>Con</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Took time w/ excellent hands-on drumming exhibit.</td>
<td>1. Interactive computer. I'm not a computer fan. No time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I loved being able to hear the sound of the drums &amp; see the notation--the computer.</td>
<td>2. Computer, not “real life.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Loved the computer program good graphics (colors help differ.).</td>
<td>3. I guess if the comp program isn't working...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Interactive drums.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first response in the “con” column sounds like strictly personal preference. If the mode of interactivity is wholly off-putting to a visitor, there is little or no way to overcome that challenge without multiple alternate modes of interactions. Since computers offer a nearly infinite variety of applications and are often presented with a welcoming interface, the use of computers in museums continues to increase. The complaint here seems to be against the computer rather than the design or content it presents. This contrasts with “con” statement #2, which is a qualitative statement about artificiality. I assume that this respondent wants to play a real drum, perhaps with other people, to experience the ensemble firsthand. Again, gallery limitations restrict the level of interactivity available, but the drumming workshop during ArtMania was advertised in
the gallery. The computer is definitely not “real life,” but others found it a useful tool for listening to and understanding the music. Regarding “con” #3, the kiosk was not functional for the first week of the exhibit, and was offline on a few occasions. This surely inspired more annoyance than was recorded in the questionnaires.

Additional technical issues included the power supply to the video screen, and volume levels for both the computer kiosk and video. To conserve power, library staff often turned the video off overnight, but did not necessarily start it promptly in the morning. More importantly, neighboring staff or studying students found and adjusted the volume on the video screen, often tending toward soft or silent. If viewers could not find the unmarked controls to raise the volume, the video was nearly useless and the exhibit quiet indeed.

5.2.3 Educational Outcomes

In order to assess visitors’ education outcomes, I first inquired to their previously existing familiarity with Tahitian performance and material culture. I offered a scale of 1 to 6, 1 being “none” and 6 being “avid fan.” The subsequent question asked, “how has this exhibit increased your personal knowledge of Tahitian performance and material culture?” with five options available from “none” to “greatly.” The largest number of respondents (36%) reported as “have seen some but don’t know much about it” (“2” on my scale of 0-6). 53% of all respondents reported a “significant” (4/5) increase in knowledge from the exhibit. Every respondent, even the most knowledgeable, reported learning as a result of the exhibit.
In the open-ended comments section of the questionnaire, several visitors suggested changes to the exhibit design, such as the inclusion of a map, better lighting for certain objects, a novel paint scheme for the gallery, and a handful of even more minute changes. The ArtMania event was the only truly live performance event, and many visitors, myself included, would have appreciated more live performances in conjunction with the exhibition. Several people included this under what I identify as a general request for “more”:

---

38 I suspect that many such design minutiae suggestions came from students of the Exhibit Design and Gallery Management class.
• More costumes; pictures of people in it
• Bigger [gallery] area, larger print would be nice
• More hands-on i.e. interacting w/ the instruments
• More dance/drumming performances
• More group performances
• Additional history/background

One visitor, in their request for “more,” offered an entirely alternate focus for the exhibit narrative, a request perhaps more appropriate under the topic of future or expanded projects. Two suggested more audio, either ambient music throughout the exhibit, or an alternative location, such as that the exhibit be, “held not in library, Tahitian is also about making LOUD music... not whispers!”

The questionnaire asked for additional venues, either for this exhibit or a “next stage” outgrowth. Twenty-six respondents offered suggestions, ranging from “anywhere you can take it” to specific locations. A full 35% of respondents suggested some museum venue, and among them the Bernice P. Bishop Museum was the most popular. Several people mentioned campus and other educational locations such as the Asia Pacific

39 This respondent was interested in the historical shift of the role of dance since the 1700s. S/he offered,

“Too much drums. Need more ‘why dance was done, how it came to be, fertility story.’ Was a male dominated polynesia before europeans arrived… Tell the truth! before Christianity, dance (erotic, naked) was used to hold mens' attention for storytelling and fertility ceremony, all the men had sex with the girls! ...I want to see the real original dance & costumes before christianity!” [sic]

While the exhibit included brief historical notes and the adjacent ‘Ite ‘Upa’upa: Resources in Tahitian Performance display, such a narrative was never part of the exhibit, least of all from the standpoint of the contemporary practitioners with whom I worked. While I am tempted to brush such a critique aside, it resonates in light of the critique following in section 5.5.1.
The Department, the Music Building, local community colleges and high schools. Several suggested Waikīkī as a place to educate tourists, and the State Library as an urban non-museum site with high traffic.

**Suggested Exhibit Sites**

![Diagram showing exhibit site preferences]

**Figure 52: Suggested future exhibit sites**

### 5.2.4 Visitor Research Summary

After having analyzed the data, a number of flaws in the design of the feedback questionnaire have become obvious. Several of the multiple-choice questions, such as previous familiarity and expansion to other venues, attempted to elicit answers along a continuum but their wording may have caused confusion. The performers and demonstrators attending during ArtMania, as well as the contributing cultural specialists, were very supportive and completed feedback forms to help my research. In fact, during ArtMania, Pola Teriipaia specifically encouraged her dancers to fill out the forms. This definitely impacts the relationship of survey results with the total visitors. For example,
20% of the respondents reported participating in Tahitian performance or craft, a number that could not realistically reflect the demographics of the campus or normal visitors to the library.

Some of George Hein’s cautions regarding questionnaires seem, in retrospect, like traps that I should not have fallen into. He warns that “the ability of visitors to apply their own interpretation to a question should never be underestimated” and “the task of thinking through the questions to be asked is worth the effort” (Hein 1998: 116). He goes on to encourage informal feedback on the research tool as well as field-testing in the actual setting. For the sake of both time and complexity, my attention to design of the questionnaire suffered, reflected in the many off-topic or confused answers. The choice of questionnaire as a research tool is dangerous in itself. Again, Hein cautions that the ease of distributing questionnaires “is offset by the problem of getting them back… this rate always raises questions about whether the respondents are representative of the whole sample polled” (ibid.:115). The fifty-four respondents pale in comparison to the total library visitors, but without a comprehensive observational study, it remains impossible to quantify how many actually took time in the gallery space.

In general, however, the formal visitor research is encouraging in terms of audience, design, and outcomes. Almost one-third of the visitors were not affiliated with the university, and half came upon it by chance. *Tau Rima Tahiti* compared favorably to prior exhibits in the Bridge Gallery. The suggestion that it be taken to prominent museums and additional campuses reflects a qualitative approval. Every responding visitor said that the exhibition increased their knowledge of Tahitian arts and culture. Visitors’ feedback on content and design was helpful in many ways, including positive comments on the interactive kiosk and videos. As an applied ethnomusicology project, feedback regarding the presentation of musical elements was very useful. Many respondents noted, and I wholly agree, that more events, multi-media, and hands-on activities would certainly improve such an exhibit. Multi-media should be smoothly running, consistent, and appropriately adjusted to the gallery space. Technical tools and
texts should certainly not alienate visitors, though even when every attempt is made to make such tools accessible, they may not please every potential visitor.

As a footnote to this review of the visitors study, I would like also to briefly present feedback to the online component. By nature of web traffic statistics, this data is more demographic than narrative, with little content feedback but an accurate record of visitors. The additional venue of the UH Virtual Museum allowed for a much greater number of virtual visitors to the exhibit. Though we did not track all visitors to the *Tau Rima Tahiti* landing pages on the virtual site, image hosting on Flickr does track hits. Table shows page view statistics for the 75 Flickr-hosted images (including four video excerpts), which I have categorized by type.

Table 5: Flickr image hosting statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Costume</th>
<th>Instrument</th>
<th>Jewelry</th>
<th>Video</th>
<th>Other(^a)</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hosted</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page Views</td>
<td>6,363</td>
<td>8,485</td>
<td>1,792</td>
<td>1,295</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>18,122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average views/item</td>
<td>205.26</td>
<td>303.04</td>
<td>162.91</td>
<td>323.75</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>241.63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note:* page view statistics are cumulative, April 2009 through September 2011.

\(^a\)The *u‘u*, loaned by Tahia Parker, does not fit neatly into the other categories, so is presented here as its own category.

In the complete data list showing individual images and page views, a few standout images are worth mention. In the costume category, page views range mostly between 54 and 391, but the single image of an *‘ahu roa* dress received 975 page views. Similarly, an image of *pahu* and *fa‘atete*, receiving 1,075 views, soared above the instrument images, otherwise receiving 655 and fewer hits. In the video category, the craft documentaries, receiving 281 and 288 views, received fewer hits than the performance videos, with 338 and 387 views. By and large, these disparities and standout
figures can be attributed to the nature of Flickr and web surfing. Since the collection and individual images were “tagged” with key words, those words arise in search engine results. Any search for specific types of instruments (tō’ere, pahu, tūpa’i rima) or costume (‘ahu roa) is likely to find these pages. The Tau Rima Tahiti image of an ‘ahu roa, for example, ranks fifth in a Google search for that term, regardless of diacritics and without narrowing the search parameters to “images” (for which that page ranks first).

The use of such keywords when first uploading images for the online exhibit directly resulted in the very impressive amount of page views the exhibit has received. At the current time of writing (October 2011), those 18,122 page views average to over 600 views per month since the material was originally posted online.

Nine of the Flickr-hosted images have been tagged as “favorites” by web users registered with the Flickr service, and four images received written comments. These comments appear to come from Tahitian group directors and enthusiasts. One comment reads, “Hi, I’m an admin for a [Flickr] group called Hawaiian Lei and we’d love to have this added to our group!” Another comment, regarding a photo of a tō’ere drum, reads, “this toere is beautiful! I’m looking to purchase a large lead/low tone toere with beautiful carvings like this. Could you please let me know how I can get one? Thanks.” I exchanged email correspondence with this individual, who hails from Chicago, passing on contact info for the drum builders with whom I worked in Hawai‘i. On another occasion, Virtual Museum Manager, Michael Thomas, forwarded me an email he received requesting more information and transcriptions for the pehe named and described online. Though such contacts are few, this last came to me in 2011, proving that the online presence continues to be “discovered” by new viewers over time.

The online exhibit, receiving well over 18,000 page views, proved a significant expansion to the gallery venue. Despite some difficulties with site management and layout (see 2.7), this format allows for visitation from afar, and continues long after the close of the gallery exhibit to receive attention and interest.
5.3 Focus Group: Gallery Design Assessment

During the Spring of 2009, I had the opportunity to enroll in “Exhibit Design and Gallery Management,” listed as Art 360. Normally taken by upper-division undergraduate students in the Department of Art and Art History, the course is cross-listed at the graduate level for students pursuing the Master of Fine Arts. Curriculum focuses upon design principles for gallery exhibition, touching briefly upon curatorial and management principles. Students design and critique numerous exhibitions on and off campus. Toward the end of the semester, instructor Lisa Yoshihara introduced to the class Beverly Serrell’s Framework for Assessing Exhibitions from a Visitor-Centered Perspective, outlined in her 2006 text, Judging Exhibitions. After an introduction to its methodology, the class divided in two, half assessing the John Young Museum (also located on the UH-Mānoa campus) and half assessing Tau Rima Tahiti. Before analyzing their assessment, I will provide a brief overview of Serrell’s system.

5.3.1 Description of the Framework

Beginning in 2000, Beverly Serrell worked with a small panel of museum professionals from the Chicago Museum Exhibitors Group to develop a systematic technique of assessing museum exhibitions. Building upon the American Association of Museums’ (AAM) Standards for Museum Exhibitions, this group designed the Excellent Judges Framework, which emphasizes the visitor experience over technical accuracy or design specifics, particularly in educational museum exhibits. Serrell explains that in contrast to AAM exhibition awards, “we would judge exhibitions by how it felt to be in them, not what they said about themselves in a review or in a binder of PR materials, or showed in colorful slides” (2006:5). Rather than a simple checklist or grading scale, the Framework relies upon the process of discussion among museum professionals. It assesses four criteria “in a way which encourages those characteristics in future exhibitions” (ibid.:17). The four criteria ask to what extent and in what ways the exhibition succeeded in being “comfortable,” “engaging,” “reinforcing,” and “meaningful.” Serrell includes with her book a worksheet to facilitate the assessment,
supplied as Appendix F: Framework for Assessing Excellence, which outlines the Framework process and provides definitions. The process includes five steps:

1. **The First Meeting**

Six to ten participating judges meet and become oriented with the process of the Framework, particularly understanding of the four Criteria.

2. **Creating Call-outs**

The judges visit the exhibition independently, and record their “Call-outs” during the visit. These are spontaneous affective statements, “your feelings and reactions to what you are experiencing—along with some analysis for why or what made you feel that way” (ibid.: 52). Call-outs provide a basis for the next steps.

3. **Assessing the Aspects**

The Framework worksheet lists 4-8 specific Aspects for each of the four Criteria, and asks the judge to grade the degree to which the Aspect was present or not present. Aspects are marked from “Excellent, a wonderful example,” to “Self-defeating” using one or two plus (+) or minus (−) symbols.

4. **Rating the Criteria**

Based upon their assessment of Aspects, judges then assign a rating level to each Criterion, from 1 to 6, and write a rationale, which references the aspects and draws from Call-outs. The rating levels are defined as:

1: Excellent – Consistently good Aspects (+’s) with many excellent (++’s).
2: Very Good – Consistently good Aspects (+’s) with very few or no misses (−’s).
3: Good – Mostly Good Aspects (+’s), but with some misses (−’s).
4: Acceptable – A balance between good Aspects (+’s) and missed Aspects (−’s), or a few noteworthy things.
5: Misses Opportunities – Mostly missed Aspects (−’s), but there may be a few good Aspects (+’s).
6: Counterproductive – Mostly self-defeating (−’s), with many missed Aspects (−’s).

5. The Second Meeting

In the follow-up meeting, each judge’s criteria ratings are recorded and discussed in detail. The group notes strong disagreements and records specific features that all judges agree on.

5.3.2 Results of the Framework

Following the orientation to the Framework, seven students visited *Tau Rima Tahiti* with their worksheets, and re-joined to discuss their results. The course instructor, Lisa Yoshihara, moderated the group’s follow-up meeting, which lasted about 45 minutes. To begin the process, we recorded each judge’s criteria level ratings (table 5). Figure 53 presents a graphic representation of the same results showing the high, low, and average rating for each Criterion:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Judge</th>
<th>Comfortable</th>
<th>Engaging</th>
<th>Reinforcing</th>
<th>Meaningful</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S.</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

40 The instructor and participating students in this class gave permission for me audio record the follow-up meeting and use the results of their assessment for this paper. In the following discussion, I identify each judge by a single initial.
Each judge then discussed their ratings, justifying their score for each of the Criteria. In order to explore in more detail the specific reactions that provoked these responses, I will discuss the group’s findings from each Criterion.

5.3.2.1 Comfort

The Criterion of “Comfort” includes exhibit orientation, environmental conditions, functionality, ergonomics, opportunities, curatorial honesty, and accessibility. Several judges mentioned in their rationale that the gallery space was comfortable and inviting, though it drew criticism for being text-heavy or the labels being uncomfortably small. Two judges recommended that text could be made more palatable by providing extended descriptions in a portable hand-held folio rather than entirely on the walls. Judge J. defended the long text labels, stating,
I think it's better to be text heavy than not to... because if you don't want to read the labels, you don't have to. I could select an object that I was personally interested in, like the drums, and then there was depth of information there, where I could find out about it. But things where I wasn't so interested, I could get the general [idea]—I would skim over the labels.

Several judges commented on the gallery’s position in a library. On the negative side, Judge S. wrote, “the only part of this exhibition that made me less comfortable was its setting—in a library. If it were in a different place, perhaps HAA....” In the class discussion, Judge S. continued, “I felt like I couldn't enjoy the music or the video as much as if it were at another place.” In contrast, Judge A. wrote, “being in a library where it’s quiet & solemn this exhibition broke the monotony, but in a comfortable new way.” Judge J. also wrote, “the space was colorful and pleasant; I felt I could talk without disturbing anyone.” The only specifically negative Aspects reflected in the Framework were ergonomics (Judge H.) and sound/light levels (Judge S).

5.3.2.2 Engaging

“Engaging” proved to be the highest-scoring criterion for this exhibit, though Serrell notes that “judges often rated Engagement higher than the other three Criteria” (2006:66). Only Judge H. broke from the group’s excellent (1) ratings, with a rating of 2. S/he wrote, “The computer kiosk & video were great additions to the exhibit. They gave what the instruments around sound like, how they were made ...I just wish there was a sample instrument I could interact with.” One judge conducted an impromptu observational study while visiting the exhibition, noting that “most people tend to just walk through it, glancing at the visuals. Two people stopped to look at the cases, and one person did stop and actually watch a video.... It was very engaging, it pulled me in.” Several of the judges mentioned the videos as particularly engaging. Judge J. wrote, “you got to meet [Etua, and he] was so human and so not clinical, he was this real guy in Hawai‘i, carving with his chainsaw and talking about it.” Although the interactive computer kiosk did receive mention, it was not discussed in any detail. This leads me to wonder to what extent the content was understood as intended, or re-interpreted by the visitors. One of the judges actually mentioned that, “you could sit down with another
person [at the computer] and the graph was repeated on both sides.” The two transcriptions were in fact different, so perhaps the layout or text-heavy specialist language caused this misinterpretation. The layout and overall design was lauded by one class member, who did not actually participate in the assessment:

In that small space, you kind of had things that people could discover… I kept noticing new things as I went through it over and over, so I think that was really successful especially in that tiny little Bridge.

5.3.2.3 Reinforcing

Most of the judges rated *Tau Rima Tahiti* as “excellent” in the Criterion of “Reinforcing”: “The information was accessible and compact (Judge J.),” “being able to read the actual words of the people who made the objects reinforced the fine craftsmanship (Judge H.),” “Short and sweet, good conceptual flow, good ending (Judge B.).” In our conversations, two judges expanded positively on the interconnection between different elements. Judge S. mentioned,

I really enjoyed how, as I walked through, everything kind of built on itself. First you see all the materials, and in detail you can be up close with them. And then you see how they're made, you see how they're used. And I really enjoyed to see all of the different aspects like that.

Judge J. talks about a similar progression. In finding the connection between objects and other elements, s/he interprets them in terms normally reserved for literature:

It was like character development. You were showing real stuff, from people that live here; I like how I encountered an object and it would be so-and-so's, and I was like “who's that?” and it made me want to go back and find out like who that guy is, whose drum this is.

This “character development” may have emerged as an unavoidable result of the small pool of contributing artists. For example, Etua, Pola, and Tyrone loaned numerous objects, and featured strongly in the multimedia and thematic quotes. Nevertheless, by dispersing one artisan’s works and words throughout the exhibit, the design allowed for the type of discovery that J. discusses. This follows George Hein’s “network” theory of
museum learning, wherein knowledge is constructed via “an integrated system of ideas without a single sequence or hierarchy” (1998:78). This mode of learning contrasts with the didactic timeline; rather than an imposed framework, it is within the visitor’s mind that the larger sense and logic emerges.

The low rating for the “Reinforcing” criterion was reported by Judge M., who saw a disparity between texts and objects. S/he expanded in our discussion:

I almost walked away thinking that it was music and performance, but then the show’s entitled “Craftsmanship” so then I felt it was just a little incongruous between what the text said when I stopped to read it, and what the visuals initially showed me and engaged me on.

This raises concerns about whether the main theme of the exhibition was conveyed to the lay visitor. Perhaps craftsmanship could have been portrayed by exhibiting more objects in the process of construction. Nevertheless, visitors always have the opportunity to interpret an exhibition on various levels, from merely glancing to critically engaging. A lack of full understanding does not imply a wholly missed opportunity.

5.3.2.4 Meaningfulness

I view “Meaningfulness” as arguably the most important Criterion in the Framework, particularly in the context of this thesis. The exhibition should be meaningful to the lay visitor as well as the specialist, the academic, and members of the local Tahitian community. From the Framework judges, this category received three ratings of “excellent,” three “very good” and one “good.” Judge K. wrote simply “very educational! I loved the personal narrative/quotes. Added a personal aspect.” Judge S., who also rated the show “excellent,” wrote the rationale, “having all of the steps (real objects, sound, video, etc.) showed the importance of each object and proved that they weren’t only objects, but they are used in people’s lives.” Judge H. wrote, “though I was uninterested at first, the exhibit raised an interest & awareness of the fine craftsmanship that go into creating the objects.” Several judges discussed its meaningfulness due to the social and cultural environment in Hawai‘i. Judge B. picked up on that theme, writing, “for people
living in Hawai‘i, we know how integrated Tahitian culture is in Hawai‘i, and for that this exhibit is excellent in furthering our understanding. For people out of state it may be just a little more difficult to engage them.” S/he continued in our conversation, “It was great for locals, I learned a lot about these things that I see at [a public venue] like Ala Moana stage, and I guess we take it for granted how complicated and how deep it is.” Judge B. has identified that the intricacies of Pacific Island cultures and the multicultural milieu of Hawai‘i may in some context be conveyed in too subtle or specific a manner for tourists or outsiders. Judge M., who gave a 3 rating for Meaningful, wrote “too text heavy… great objects & great visuals but text not always supportive.” S/he addresses this criterion with the same language as the Reinforcing criterion, referencing a disparity between visuals and texts. These two criteria are closely allied in terms of conceptual content for the visitor. Again, this can be seen either as a shortcoming or an acceptance of multiple modes of learning and depths of understanding the exhibition.

Judge J. wrote the rationale, “honest and informative content,” and continued during our discussion, “it was relevant, cuz we live in Hawai‘i, and Pacific Island [and] Tahitian culture is present here, and so… it was reinforcing and meaningful.” S/he noted the predilection of museum exhibits to create alternate worlds or environments, to immerse the visitor in a false reality. This judge saw static and idealized exhibition as an oversimplification of culture and a discredit to that culture. S/he noted that traditional arts, including ‘ori tahiti and hula are often imagined in an ancient and primitive setting, but typically take place in very modern contexts such as parades, gymnasium, and the Waikīkī Shell. Another class member contrasted the exhibition environment to that of the Polynesian Cultural Center. S/he discussed the immersion of the guest in a false environment, and noted when I go to PCC, I see through it because I know people [who work there] and I know what’s going on, and it’s kind of disenchanting for me. But when you’ve got a setting where it’s just about the artifacts and it’s not about creating an environment… [that becomes a more honest presentation]. I thought it was really cool how you weren’t trying to trick me. It wasn’t like “oh, I’m walking into Tahiti” I thought that was a cool element.”
5.3.3 Summary of the Framework Assessment

To summarize the four aspects as reported:

• Comfort: The gallery was inviting though text-heavy labels were too small. Judges divided on whether the location, in a quiet library, imposes an outside pressure or provides a convenient escape.

• Engaging: The videos and to a lesser extent the computer kiosk were very engaging, and judges reported a sense of discovery despite the small space.

• Reinforcing: Judges enjoyed the interrelationship of materials, though the concepts of “performance” and “craft” were unclear.

• Meaningfulness: The exhibit was able to draw visitors in, reportedly more meaningful to local residents who are already familiar with the multi-cultural Pacific landscape. The exhibit was “honest.”

Toward the end of the discussion, instructor Lisa Yoshihara mentioned four modes of exhibition that may be used in a gallery: exhibition as a display of objects/artifacts; as a communicator of ideas; as an activity; and as an environment. The class agreed that *Tau Rima Tahiti* succeeded in using the first three modes, but the library space precluded the creation of and immersion in a constructed environment. The judges agreed on three consensus statements about the exhibit:

• Diversity of colors was attractive and pulled visitors in to the show.

• The exhibition was text-heavy.

• The exhibition was reinforcing because it built upon itself. The further visitors went in, more components reinforce the key concepts.

The students in Art 360 admitted that they tended to have a predilection for fine art museums over other types of galleries. Nonetheless, they were truly engaged with the exhibit and assessment of *Tau Rima Tahiti*. Following the course emphasis in gallery design, we spent a large amount of time discussing the minutiae of layout, design, and lighting; welcome input since these aspects were under-emphasized by other groups.
Serrell’s primary intent for the Framework is in professional settings—for in-house exhibit development, formative evaluation during exhibit development, and cross-institutional professional development. She also recommends the Framework for use by museum studies students, and discusses working with one group from Michigan State University (Serrell 2006:78). Serrell cautions that some of the concepts may be less familiar to students as opposed to working professionals, but this may be surmounted by taking adequate time to discuss the Framework’s concepts in detail. She writes that students may not yet have had critical debates to inform their visitation. She noted this specifically with the aspect of Attribution, but continues, “once it has been pointed out, however, they quickly learn to be sensitive to [Attribution], and it generated some of the liveliest discussions” (ibid.: 80). Though the Gallery Design class was undergraduate level, no such glaring difficulties arose through using the Framework. The class had visited several galleries on- and off-campus, which I am sure helped acclimate them to professional standards, regardless of whether a setting emphasizes fine art or ethnography.

Participating students were very engaged in this discussion, and found it to be an appropriate type of exhibit to employ Serrell’s Framework. Indeed, based upon students’ use of the Framework in the John Young Gallery, the Framework seemed lacking when applied to a purely fine arts exhibit. If anything, I hope that the students were sufficiently critical of the curator, their classmate. Their lively discussion of voice, representation, and authenticity was helpful and enlightening to me. A group of ethnomusicology students would expand on this critical discussion of the exhibit.

5.4 Focus Group: Ethnomusicology Forum

The UH-M Ethnomusicology Forum is a semi-weekly graduate seminar exploring current issues in the field. The Fall 2009 Forum curriculum explored alternative careers for ethnomusicologists. For the final meeting of the semester, students discussed *Tau Rima Tahiti* “as text.” As professor Ricardo Trimillos outlined, “cultural presentation and representation are part of both applied and academic positions, so it is a specific case for us to consider” (email to author and forum, 9 April 2009). This discussion featured more
critical content analysis than the Framework assessment, due to both academic perspective and varying familiarity with the Tahitian culture in Hawai‘i. Students were asked to consider the exhibit’s effectiveness, innovation, and alternative approaches on a number of levels. I will briefly summarize this forum meeting by each of the component aspect topics, and then move on to the critical issues.

5.4.1 Exhibit Components

Several members noted the eye-catching nature of the costumes and their ability to draw people into the exhibition. They described the costumes as striking, and reported that less engaging elements (such as the transcriptions) may have received less attention due to their proximity to the costumes. One person referred to the “superficial aspect of pleasing the eye” that these costumes evoked. We discussed this as one of multiple modes of learning from and appreciating an exhibit. One member remarked that the exhibit in itself serves as a strong method of validating or reinforcing the cultural artistry on display.

Several discussants wanted more information on the costumes and their makers: specific dances, more biographical information on the featured individuals, and details of costume components and materials. One member questioned at what time in the history of the tradition had the costumes became “flashy” and “commercial,” with another defending the culture while tacitly essentializing the aesthetic: the costumes are “flashy because it's Tahitian culture; they wanna make it flashy, so it's gonna be flashy.” Someone else raised the question of comparison between the O‘ahu- and Tahiti-made Tahitian costumes, and the expectations for their degree of workmanship. This again was not a central aim of the exhibition, but by explicitly avoiding this question in exhibit text, its absence becomes critically blatant.

A brief conversation of natural resources for costume led directly into musical instruments. We examined the aesthetic implications of contemporary material substitution, most clearly seen (and heard) in the herculite drumhead seen on a fa‘atete by KBS instruments. The discussion picked up on Kevin Kama’s quote in the exhibit,
referring to its sound: “It works, it’s a different sound, but it works.” The exhibit did not explore this issue further, but the forum members were interested in the implications. How is the sound different and how different is too different? Similar parallels exist in other instrument traditions, such as the Japanese use of silk, nylon, and tetron koto strings, or the scarcity of traditional membrane on the Korean taegum. There are advantages and disadvantages to the old and new materials: traditional organic materials for strings and drumheads “feel” better, and may “sound better,” but modern synthetics are inexpensive, last longer, and hold up to varying weather conditions. I pointed out that despite having modern components, the builders maintained a degree of craftsmanship, not giving in to ready-made accessories. For example, drum hoops and lugs are made from steel bar and welded to chain link, though this setup could be purchased in whole from drum equipment suppliers.

The discussion group seemed to appreciate the instrumental presentation, particularly the “stage” setup, the instruments in various stages of construction, and the brief examination of builders’ trademark carvings. A couple of discussants said that they would have appreciated photographs showing the playing positions for both the drums and stringed instruments; such demonstrations were absent except in the video program.

The interactive computer station and transcriptions were spoken of highly. The computer program itself “was clear, it was easy to use and figure out.” Peculiarities of the program became apparent to some visitors over time or through observation, such as the ability to affect the recording in real time (rather than only at the end of a complete cycle). The group discussed such a use of the technology as creative artistic participation. Though the discussants, ethnomusicologists and musicians all, appreciated the transcriptions, several of them expressed concern that transcriptions may not have been clear or useful to non-musicians. The student reviewer of this aspect found the introductory text to be informative and engaging, and the transcriptions accurate, but found the definition between the two recorded samples confusing. Though labeled “fast” and “slow,” the two excerpts differ musically in more ways than simply tempo.
The student assigned to address the video elements of the exhibition divided them into two categories, “process” and “product.” The former consist of the craftsmanship videos of costume and tō‘ere making, the latter dance and drum performances. S/he appreciated that both “process” videos included biographical information, noting how this provides “more of the context of Tahitian culture in Hawai‘i.” Both videos reference other objects in the exhibition by the same makers, making points mentioned in the video and texts more visible. For example, Etua is a drum maker only, while Tyrone is a drum maker and a performer. Knowing this distinction provides some insight into the differences between their drums in the exhibit.

In terms of technical details, the group appreciated video subtitles for pehe and dance types, though they could have been taken further, such as full descriptive subtitles. Had the videos been at a computer or a controllable player, visitors could have cued whichever movie they wanted to watch, rather than hope to catch it from the beginning. In a better equipped museum gallery, user friendly on-demand push button controls might be used to play the desired video from its beginning. Discussants also suggest a video watermark of which film was playing in order to orient the viewer. The competing volume of the video and interactive station arose as a technical issue.

The discussant for this topic also reported on the different audiences that seemed to watch the videos. S/he was present the day of ArtMania, and saw several drummers and dancers, as well as non-participants in the gallery. It appeared that individuals involved in ‘ori tahiti seemed to enjoy the performance videos, and non-participants gravitated toward the process videos. S/he concluded, “it fulfills the expectancies [or preferences] of different audiences.” Another discussant hypothesized that “maybe non-dancers don’t know what to look for,” suggesting that the aesthetic details and physical language of the performance tradition are inaccessible, but the craftsmanship could be clearly demonstrated and easily understood.

Very briefly, I should mention that this group also brought up a video in the Phase II Gallery, part of the supporting exhibit ‘Ite ‘Upa‘upa: Resources in Tahitian Performance. Featuring Tahitian dance excerpts from three commercial films and one
heiva contest, this compilation showed what discussants described as a “non-politically correct,” “haoles gone bad” version of Tahitian dance. In addition to contrasting historical though sometimes dubious costume designs with the contemporary exhibit, this video was alarmingly provocative in terms of commercialism and sexual overtones. Unfortunately, some viewers did not take the time to place this video in context as representations of Tahitian dance and in relation to the Tau Rima Tahiti exhibit.

Several members of the ethnomusicology forum, in distinct contrast to the gallery design students of Art 360, preferred the simple “racetrack” display (along the walls only), in contrast to a more meandering gallery experience. One noted, “I was overwhelmed… it was helpful that there were walls…. Another reported that s/he “never got to the end,” but repeatedly got distracted by discreet elements. Everyone enjoyed the bright colors and the inviting nature of the costumes. They were also impressed by the fact that the objects were shown on open display in a public venue; such objects would typically be behind glass or more secure in museum settings. While I had felt constrained by the layout of the Bridge Gallery, this group saw it as perfectly appropriate, even a controlling factor against what could have been a grossly overwhelming “artsy” gallery experience. One member also referenced the costume armatures, noting that in light of natural materials for the performance crafts, the display armatures themselves were explicitly organic.

5.4.2 Critical Issues

The discussion group did not directly address the topic of community involvement, though they discussed “community” in terms of the diversity of contributors and voices present. This topic is inherently difficult to assess, since, as Beverly Serrell explains, planning and research are inherently invisible to the visitor, and cannot be

41 The video compilation in ‘Ite ‘upa ‘upa featured excerpts from the University of Hawai‘i Libraries’ video collection of Tahitian dance, including scenes excerpted from Tabu (1932), Bird of Paradise (1932) Mutiny on the Bounty (1962), and the Heiva i Honolulu 2005.
accurately analyzed in the exhibition itself (2006:5). The group discussed the presence of community, particularly through the quotations in the exhibit. Several members commented on the “really good sense of voices” and editing of publicized verbal transcriptions. Such editing is a technical process, resulting in mediated representation of the speaker.

In terms of contributing authors, several discussants sought more clear identification of the informants. One specific concern was the range of approaches to costume making, such as which ensembles and directors favored the group process and which favored a commissioned costume. The discussant noted, “that would say a lot about the group’s overall performance and [their] emphasis on the cultural aspect.” It seems to me that such an overt description of any group or individual’s predilection to commissioned costumes, particularly in the context of an exhibit examining craftsmanship, would not present them in a very positive light.

Everyone in the forum conversation noted specific instances of learning through the exhibit. The group recognized the variety and aesthetic quality of Tahitian costumes, styles, components, integration of costumes in the performance, and diversity of approaches. Aspects of instrument construction piqued several participants’ interest; one was impressed that to’ere carvers employ power tools, and contrasted this with more “traditional” construction by other contemporary cultural groups. Issues of tradition, innovation, and the evolution of instrumental forms were addressed, illuminated by the presence of plywood and plastic or PVC drum shells.

Examining the exhibition as a pedagogical medium questions the efficacy of the exhibit in general, the audience reached, and the various methods of interacting with the audience. The exhibit, in contrast to the live performances occurring throughout O‘ahu, sits away from the locale of traditional performance, and in an unlikely location. This led to the comment,

I couldn’t place where I would see these [costumes]. I had a lot of questions about the context. Are the people watching supposed to understand? Is the performance for cultural insiders or outsiders?
Though I had attempted to address each of these questions (or at least problematize them by raising the insider/outsider topic), this visitor’s concerns are indeed valid. Clearly there is a different understanding for insiders and outsiders. I had hoped for the exhibition to serve both communities, and was happy to hear that “it fulfills the expectancies [or preferences] of different audiences… If some people have a criticism, somebody else, [in contrast] would probably like it.” Not every aspect appealed to every visitor, and that should not be interpreted as a major fault. One aspect identified as perhaps exclusive to a small crowd was the collection of musical transcriptions, though the audio component of the interactive station was accessible and reportedly useful to all.

Every gallery exhibit must balance content with design, and this came up repeatedly in the forum discussion. All of the discussants spoke positively of the design, but they shared a concern that it should have a didactic and not merely aesthetic intention for the visitor. The same discussant that questioned the context noted that it is “hard to make it not just eye candy, but to represent cultural realities.” The handful of requests for additional information may have provided deeper understanding on some topics, but add to the “overwhelming” amount of information. The possibility of formal educational tours did not come up in this discussion. Had I the time to plan and coordinate such activities, student groups from nearby schools (such as Mid-Pacific Institute and the UH Lab School), could have taken guided tours of the exhibit, with pointed discussion questions and even supporting curriculum. Tau Rima Tahiti missed this opportunity, a standard practice for many formal museums and galleries.

5.5 Individual Academic Critiques

5.5.1 Jon Jonassen

On the 7th of April, 2009, I received a short email from Dr. Jon Tikivanotau Michael Jonassen, regarding Tau Rima Tahiti. Jonassen is Chair of Political Science in the College of Arts and Sciences at Brigham Young University-Hawai‘i, located in Lā‘ie, O‘ahu. Hailing from the island of Rarotonga in the Cook Islands, Professor Jonassen formerly served as Cook Islands’ High Commissioner to New Zealand, Australia, Papua
New Guinea, and Fiji. He has taught at BYUH since 1993 and sits on the Pacific Institute Board of Fellows, “giving cultural advisory support and facilitating the Polynesian Cultural Center’s immersion in and influence of the wider Pacific in the 21st Century” (BYU-Hawai’i 2009). He is an active musician, performer, and co-founder of the Cook Islands Music Association. He lists, among his research interests, Culture and Politics in Cook Islands, Pacific Regionalism, and Cultural Plagiarism (BYU-Hawai’i 2005). His email directly questioned the academic integrity of Tau Rima Tahiti, and accused me personally of “cultural plagiarism… (intentionally or unintentionally) under the guise of academic research and an assumed authenticity” (e-mail message to author, 7 April 2009).

Though this communication was quite unexpected, I was already aware of Dr. Jonassen and his perspective on these issues. Jonassen authored *Cook Island Drums* in 1991, in which he discussed the interaction between musical traditions of Tahiti and the Cook Islands. He describes this relationship as a “one-sided flow of culture into Tahiti” during the 1960s and 1970s (cited in Moulin 1996:134). Helen Reeves Lawrence cites several scholars42 who agree to a Cook Islands origin for the tō’ere, likely in the late 18th Century (Lawrence 1992:128). The flow of information and culture between the two islands groups is more likely bi-directional. In a 1996 article examining cultural borrowing in the Pacific, Jane Moulin notes:

> the sociocultural links binding these two archipelagoes are especially strong ones… A closely related language, a shared Protestant religion with its strong tradition of congregational hymn singing, and a history of artistic exchange in music and dance all add to an overall feeling of cultural connection. (Moulin 1996:130-131)

Moulin cites Jonassen’s own reference to a mythologial Rarotonga-Tahiti cultural relationship, and goes on to fault Jonassen for failing to recognize this “longer history of cultural sharing” (ibid.:134).

I read Dr. Jonassen’s email comments and digested them in reference to his published views of Tahitian dance and instrumentation as “stolen” from the Cook Islands. While I understand this inter-island exchange as a heritage of ‘ori tahiti, I felt it important that the exhibition represent the contemporary tradition from the perspective of local practitioners. As I responded to Dr. Jonassen,

Within the context of “Tahitian performance,” and specifically with my collaborators here on O’ahu, these elements are perceived and presented as traditionally Tahitian, though perhaps a better term for some of these elements would be “acculturated.” (email from author to Jon Jonassen, 7 April 2009).

This provoked the response that,

When you place a proclaimed “traditional” expert on a platform, you have in fact contributed to the probagation [sic] of a particular perspective that may be more self serving. You may have become part of the problem. And you cannot have it both ways: being traditional and then being contemporary at the same time. (email to author, 7 April, 2009)

I cannot argue against the importance of this issue, yet as a curator, I find it difficult to delve into each of the myriad related issues that could be explored. As I had pointed out, the exhibit theme was narrowly defined and such issues would be a good focus for a future exhibit or project. The original email from Dr. Jonassen referenced the online exhibit with apologies for missing the opening event. So far as I know, he never visited the exhibition in person, as I would have expected some type of follow-up. In that regard, this issue of cultural plagiarism by Tahitians against Cook Islanders seems to be a hot-button topic for Jonassen, and one I may likely never have satisfactory answers for.

5.5.2 Adrienne Kaeppler

As mentioned above, the Spring 2009 Ethnomusicology Forum focused upon alternative careers for ethnomusicologists. Prior to the meeting that focused upon Tau Rima Tahiti, the Forum received a visit by noted Pacific scholar and museum
professional, Adriene Kaepler. An alumna of the University of Hawai‘i, Dr. Kaepler is a past curator of the Bernice P. Bishop Museum, and currently the Curator of Oceanic Ethnology at the National Museum of Natural History at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC. She visited the Forum on April 13, 2009, primarily to field questions regarding her curatorial experiences. Prior to our meeting, professor Ricardo Trimillos escorted her to Tau Rima Tahiti, which figured into the group’s discussion later that day. I was also able to follow up with her after that discussion.

Dr. Kaepler’s comments regarding the exhibit primarily focused upon the interpretive text and the interactive kiosk. The group discussed interpretive label-writing, specifically considering how much text is enough or too much. Dr. Kaepler noted her own tendency and preference for text; one appreciates the opportunity to learn more, but “you can always stop reading when you want” (pers. comm., 12 April 2009). She also noted enjoying the first-person quotes throughout the exhibit. She reportedly spent a good portion of time at the interactive kiosk. Noting that she doesn’t much care to read instructions, Dr. Kaepler explored the interactive music station and had a great time, enthusiastically reporting, “I actually learned something!” Rather than interpret this as resulting from low expectations, I acknowledge Dr. Kaepler’s great expertise and knowledge in this field and am indeed pleased to have presented new information. She noted that Tau Rima Tahiti reminded her of an exhibition at the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa in 2005-2006, entitled Culture Moves! Dance Costumes of the Pacific. This exhibition featured traditional and contemporary costumes from throughout the Pacific region, as well as accompanying performances.

In our follow-up conversation, Dr. Kaepler brought up the exhibit Life in the Pacific of the 1700s, noting that the Honolulu Academy of Arts conducted an extensive amount of outreach to the Tahitian community and other Pacific cultural groups on

43 Notably, Dr. Kaepler curated a Bishop Museum permanent exhibition in Polynesian Hall, which explores the cultures of Polynesia, Micronesia, and Melanesia.
O’ahu. She encouraged me to ask my informants whether they had seen that exhibit. In particular, she was curious whether these communities were “museum-goers” in general.

**5.5.3 Jane Moulin**

The author of the only extant monograph on ‘Ori Tahiti, UH-Mānoa professor of ethnomusicology Jane Moulin is somewhat conspicuously absent from this research as an advisor. Though an original member of the thesis committee, she stepped down in February 2009. In our telephone discussion at that time, it was agreed that she was not a good fit for the project and that I would be better to proceed with an updated committee. Moulin voiced concern over the feasibility and progress of the exhibit at that time, and the level of input from the local Tahitian performance community. As discussed in chapter 2, I did have initial difficulty making inroads to this community, but believe that these boundaries were overcome.

Professor Moulin did attend the exhibit opening, the performance by Manutahi Tahiti at ArtMania, and the Roundtable discussion. In April 2009, I received from her a brief list of terms from the exhibit text that she suggested I examine for translation, spelling, and context, as well as a more detailed list taken from the online exhibit. I have not received from her any further critique of the exhibition series.

**5.6 Informant Feedback**

In my post-exhibit interviews with each of the collaborating informants, our discussions included feedback to the exhibit design and content, as well as representation and the broad topic of artistic development in Hawai‘i as it differs from Tahiti. Many aspects of these discussions arose as a springboard from the exhibition content itself. Here I will briefly summarize their feedback to the concrete elements of the exhibition, and their recommendations for future projects.

Participants who visited the exhibit were extremely pleased with the final display, in terms of scope, content, and design. Several participants noted that it was informative
Raymond Mariteragi compared *Tau Rima Tahiti* to recent exhibits held at *Fare Iamanaha* in Pape‘ete. He noted an improvement over those, in particular that *Tau Rima Tahiti* included more than costumes, it featured the musical elements of *‘ori tahiti*. He appreciated, “The explanation of the different use of the tō‘ere, and how each instrument can be brought in. The difference with the traditional playing and the orooro which is more contemporary” (pers., comm., 13 May, 2009).

Tyrone spoke to the exhibit’s reception by elder local Tahitians, and its ability to inspire pride in the culture and tradition:

My mom loved it, my grandma likes it. So that’s coming from a lady that lives in Tahiti all her life. And it’s like we’re representing us too. And it gives us a good feeling, that our stuff is important. (Pers. comm., 4 May 2009)

Tyrone acknowledged the differences between Hawai‘i and Tahiti, including the reality that this exhibit does not represent Tahiti, but showcases a local tradition referencing the homeland. He also commented upon the exhibit’s ability to reinforce Tahitian culture to Hawai‘i-Tahitian youth:

In Tahiti they live it, they drink it, they do it all. But in Hawai‘i, there’s a lot of kids that are Tahitians that have been raised in Hawaii or in American society and they don’t know anything about it. It’s good for them to see what also is their culture, to see what it is… Even just a little bit is nice. (Ibid.)

Tahia Parker describes bringing one of her Marania Haorangi students to the exhibit:

44 When I first brought Etua into the gallery prior to the opening reception, his first observation, in reference to the amount of material on display, was, “whoa… you’ve been hustling” (pers. comm., 19 March 2009).
I have one dancer who came and saw [the exhibit]; her costume was the solo one. She said “Auntie, it felt good, because my costume, everybody saw it.” I said, “Yeah!” And then she said, “It was *my* costume, Auntie!” So it was good to her, ‘cause she has a really low self esteem… her mom is always there to guide her into things, but she said when she saw her costume it felt good. (Pers. comm., 7 May 2009)

This student experienced a boost in self-esteem at seeing her own costume in the exhibit, which, from a representational standpoint, makes perfect sense: in the gallery exhibit, the costume represented the dance and the process of its own construction, but more realistically represented its owner, this young student. In this case, the process of representation served a very positive purpose.

Pola describes an additional benefit to the students in her group:

> It was cool because I was glad to bring my *tamari'i* to see a college, a university, and they’re so impressed with the university. [One said,] “This is as big as Wahiawa! I wanna go here!” You know, just going there inspired the kids. The library, you know, she saw the library, she’s looking at the books…. (Pers. comm., 9 May 2009)

The exhibition venue, which appeared in many ways to be a drawback, here resulted in another very identifiable benefit. Some of these students had appeared in the performance video from 2006, or the 2008 Macy’s parade video. Participants at ArtMania of course featured as direct performers in the exhibition series. Their participation in the exhibit made them a part of this higher education undertaking. By inviting them as participants and featured performers, they were welcomed into a setting that was previously distant, aloof, and inaccessible. Pola had already graciously allowed me into her *hālau* and her home as a scholar and ambassador of higher education; perhaps the opportunity to bring her students to the campus further inspired Pola, and prompted Manutahi’s free ArtMania performance? Regardless of the impetus, this unforeseen benefit surprised and delighted me.

Collaborators also noted the exhibit design. As Tino Hoffmann described it, “for me it looks just like a museum. Not just an exhibit but more like a museum. The way that you… exhibit[ed] the costumes, very original. It really brings the costumes, the colors. I
never thought of it like that” (pers. comm, 7 May, 2009). I don’t know exactly how Tino defines these terms, but there seems to be a qualitative distinction between “exhibit” and “museum,” or perhaps a scale distinction between a small display and a museum-grade exhibit. Tyrone Temanaha, Jr. echoed Tino’s sentiment, noting that the display was not overdone, but clean. He thought, in fact, the design cleanliness to be indicative of the outside curator, suggesting, “if it was a Polynesian person it would probably been like a little over done. Like putting ti leaves all over the place and trying to make it more… it was good, it was just right” (pers. comm., 7 May 2009). Tahia Parker referred to specific design elements, such as the use of bamboo for costume stands and the graphic design incorporating Tyrone’s Tahitian tattoo design. She observed,

it’s like a *ra’atira*, when she has an idea in her head like costumes, she goes out, like back home we go to our nature and we pick what we want, it’s kind of like what you did too, you were using bamboo. I don’t know it’s—to me it was something, like every single thing related to something. I guess as an artist you notice it. How you used the tattoo, the Tahitian, and put into the arrow [on orienting signage]. (Pers. comm., 4 May 2009)

Other participants were more willing to point out aspects in which the exhibit could have done more. Robyn and Tino both mentioned volume control in the exhibit, wishing that the video and the computer kiosk were in a more soundproof environment. Tino even remarked, “when you want to express the music, the drumming, you gotta go all out” (pers. comm., 7 May 2009). Etua Tahauri pointed to the difficulties of the exhibit location. He suggested perhaps additional programming to bring people onto the campus. Pola noted more than once that the label text should be larger, especially for patrons out of the college-age bracket.

Recalling my formative difficulties on deciding a title for exhibit, Raymond Mariterangi offered his own input:

You know the word *Tau Rima*? You’ve got it backward. It’s really supposed to be *Rima Tau*. *Tau* is – how do I explain... You know when you play drum and *to’ere*. Even though you are already a great player, every time you grab a *tō’ere* and you start off, your level of skill comes to a point where it reaches what you call *tau*. Your hand becomes *tau*. *Rima tau*. Or *tau te rima*, when you use it as a
Once you reach that level, “okay, we can start.” I’m warmed up. I’m up to a point that there’s no way I’m going to make a mistake. That’s what the word tau means. It also comes from the word atau. Atau is right hand... you got rima atau, right hand, rima aui, left hand. So it’s just like saying that the right hand is really the main hand... The right hand is the authority. And when you take it to the highest level, you take it to the right hand. When I first saw that [exhibit title], “auē!” …but it doesn’t matter. It means same thing.

Despite my efforts at trying to gather input on the title and theme of the exhibit, I was reliant upon the informants I could reach at that crucial moment. Raymond has a different interpretation of the title and the vicissitudes of Tahitian language than Etua. Language, as noted from the Roundtable discussion, is an important and recurring theme in the Tahitian community, particularly elder and native speakers of Tahitian. But in the end Raymond concludes, “it means the same thing.” Raymond admits that this discussion is a semantic one, splitting hairs that are not that important in the big picture. I also sought recommendations for future venues from these collaborators. Raymond Mariteragi recommended, “at the Heiva people come and they see the dances, and then if it’s [exhibited] somewhere, then they’ll go look at it, find more interest. And maybe get a better understanding what it takes” (pers. comm., 13 May 2009). I also received several very optimistic off-island venue suggestions. Possibly inspired by her group’s recent performance, Pola recommended New York City “because it’s the museum capitol, as far as arts and culture is concerned…. Washington [D.C.], that’s more academic. But for culture and arts, I think New York” (pers. comm., 9 May 2009). Her second suggestion was San Francisco, recommending the inclusion of research on ‘ori tahiti groups throughout California. Pola’s final venue suggestion was Tahiti. “So that they can see what we do. They’re always interested in what we’re doing ‘cause we’re like catching up with them” (ibid.). Raymond, Etua, and others had also mentioned that Tahitians would be very impressed with the skills and products of practitioners in Hawai‘i and further abroad.
Robyn and Tino both suggested that future exhibits might explore more of the musical aspects, specifically song composition (the ‘utē song genre in particular), and the function and technique of Tahitian banjo. In seeking involvement in future programs, however, it seemed that these collaborators did not find development of gallery exhibit in their skill set. Tyrone seemed to echo statements I heard during the initial planning for this project:

If somebody would put their feet by the door, I’m sure a lot of people would follow through. Sneak in there. If I had the time and talent to do all that too, I would definitely do it. If I had a place to do it, I would definitely do it. There’s a lot of steps you gotta go through. Finding the place and so and so. I would never had thought of doing it. Until I saw the exhibit. It really inspired me a lot. (Pers. comm., 4 May 2009)

Similar to my planning stages months before, Tyrone suggests a need for “critical mass.” One must admit, a “gallery exhibition” has the strong aura of a complex academic product. For my collaborators, it sounds like a daunting project, one for which they did not feel qualified. I will explore additional outlets and future projects in Chapter 6.

5.7 Feedback Analysis

Each of the feedback groups above brought their own tendencies to their understanding and analysis of the exhibit. While the visitors’ study allowed for quantifiable data in the areas of demographics and qualitative rating scales for its success and educational outcomes, the majority of feedback data is narrative and requires interpretation. I will attempt to synthesize this disparate and somewhat overwhelming narrative feedback data by discussing the broad similarities and differences between the feedback groups.

Each feedback group had much to say about the exhibition design, and were generally very positive. The Gallery Design students (Art 360), were understandably most critical in this area, but generally positive, with a final recommendation that the exhibit would work better in a more isolated gallery with more flexibility for such concerns as paint scheme and blocking of windows to the construction outdoors. This
group and the ethnomusicology forum notably differed in their reaction to the “racetrack” layout of all elements along the exterior walls. Design students would have preferred a meandering, exploratory path; a design concept very popular in museums today. Ethnomusicology students reported that the layout defined the space in a manner that was digestible, reporting that a “meandering” exhibit path can sometimes lead to feeling lost and confused. Informants remarked particularly upon the cleanliness of the exhibit, the appropriate but not-excessive use of natural materials.

The video and interactive elements received many positive comments. Once the technical problems with the interactive kiosk were remedied, this was very popular with all participants, despite the fact that volume levels continued to be a problem through the duration of the exhibit. The use of text in relation to these media elements varied: ethnomusicology students explored the computer and accompanying transcriptions; Dr. Kaeppler jumped into the interactive reportedly without reading the instructions but enjoyed and found it educational. Notably, the forum students observed that Tahitian musicians and performers gravitated to the performance videos, while “outsiders” gravitated to the process videos. I shared this observation, particularly when accompanying Auntie Pola, who was engrossed in videos of her own group’s performance. The forum and informants also greatly appreciated the subtitles labeling pehe and dance forms in the videos. Informants in particular wanted more volume from the media elements to replicate the intensity of actual performance.

Interpretive text and signage in the exhibit arose with each assessment group. All appreciated the multiplicity of voices present in the text, though forum students raised the issue of language and editing in the printed vernacular language. While the forum and Dr. Kaeppler (academics) concluded that too much text is better than too little, gallery design students felt that without reading all of the text, the exhibit themes may have been lost on visitors. This brings up the growing possibility of a disjunct between curatorial intent and reception by visitors who may not read all of the text. Informants reported being engrossed in the exhibit text, many reportedly reading every printed element. Some of the
Tahitian syntax errors criticized by Dr. Moulin were defended by cultural specialists, including Tahia Parker, Jeanne Larson, and Raymond Mariteragi.

Major concerns over the exhibit scope and intent came from a small minority. Professor Jon Jonassen, who did not visit the exhibition in person, voiced concern that the exhibit did not make clear the relation between music of the Cook and Society Islands. One anonymous survey respondent also wanted more information about the music and dance preceding European and Christian influence. I believe that the introductory exhibit text, which contextualizes the exhibit subjects and themes, answered both of these concerns.

### 5.8 Chapter Summary

This multifaceted feedback has provided a wealth of information, broader than any individual study could hope to accomplish. The visitor’s study, in addition to providing a profile of the visitors, has given quantifiable feedback in terms of the exhibit’s successes and shortcomings, and suggestions for alternate venues and future events. The gallery design assessment provided a process-based analysis, with quantifiable scores in terms of exhibit success, but more importantly a rich discussion of many issues common to all exhibits, and specific to *Tau Rima Tahiti*. The ethnomusicology forum group assessed the exhibit both in terms of the observable elements and its community and pedagogical intents. Academic critiques raised issues of historical context, museum-going tendencies of source communities, and the disparity between perceived academic accuracy and the flexibility of an evolving local culture. Feedback from the cultural specialists provided a reflexive examination of their involvement and the placement of their individual contributions into the whole of the exhibit.

The exhibit reached a wide and diverse audience, both on and off campus, intentional and chance visitors. It was visually inviting and rich with interpretive and interactive material. The informants reported great satisfaction with the exhibit, and were very proud to have contributed. Though insider and outsider experiences of the exhibit
differed, both groups reported that it was successful. The bulk of this chapter has dealt with measuring success in terms of conveying information. We will now turn, in chapter 6, to assessing the project as a whole, its potential as a data source for future events, and additional directions for research in ethnomusicology and museum studies.
CHAPTER 6
PERFORMING CRAFT:
CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

I undertook the development of Tau Rima Tahiti for two reasons: to examine and share the contemporary tradition of ‘ori tahiti on O‘ahu as a multilayered performance practice, and to explore and illuminate the process of collaborative exhibit curation as an ethnomusicological method. Motivated to educate the public about the tradition, as well as to support my own educational goals, participating collaborators were extremely open and willing to be a part of the project. My prior experience as a participant observer in ‘ori tahiti (as a musician) and intent to positively represent these individuals and their tradition aided my acceptance. Throughout my role as curator, I tried to understand the tradition through the layered meanings it has taken on as a diasporic practice, and found myself negotiating historicized myths, social conflicts, and coincident obligations, all requiring flexibility, tact, and humility on my part.

In developing the content of the exhibit, I sought to feature the native voices of my collaborators, employing direct quotes in the gallery text, subject-narrated documentary films, and editorial input. In order to produce a cohesive narrative, I framed that content in an omniscient curatorial voice. This conflation prompted a close look at representation through design, text, video, and performance. The exhibit raised questions about power, historicity, exoticism, and gender. Despite these concerns from a critical audience, general reception was very positive.

The exhibit largely served a university-affiliated audience, but both ‘ori tahiti participants and those unfamiliar with the tradition reported very positively on the content, design, multivocality, and multimedia elements. All survey respondents reported gained knowledge from the exhibit, and each participant I followed up with reported their
satisfaction and appreciation for the exhibit and collaborative process, which is pertinent to the project’s application as applied ethnomusicology.

In reference to the potential strategies of applied ethnomusicology outlined by Dan Sheehy (1992:330-331, and section 1.5 of this study), Tau Rima Tahiti accomplished three of the four suggested approaches. Namely, it:

1. developed a new “frame” for musical performance by presenting it in an alternative gallery space and novel public events, to an audience largely unfamiliar with the tradition as well as to participants viewing it with a new perspective;
2. fed musical models back to the community by providing the gallery as a forum to share ideas, and also provided a roundtable gathering at which to discuss critical issues facing the Tahitian performance community; and
3. reinforced the conservation techniques of video and audio production to document the performance of ‘ori tahiti as well as the craftsmanship performance, the pre-production of music and dance; and encouraged among youth of the Hawai‘i-Tahitian community the tools of higher education, that some of them may develop additional methods of feeding back to their community.

6.2 Project Outcomes and New Directions

As a result of the exhibit, two of the participating ra‘atira in particular found a new venue to showcase their costumes and their cultural knowledge. A few months after the exhibit closed, I visited the website of Black Pearl Designs. Scott Nagata had developed a new section of his retail website, titled “Artisans” (Black Pearl Designs 2011). The landing page for this section features a graphic design with the title, “Featured Artisans of Polynesia: bringing the cultural arts & crafts to you.” Below this title appears a description:

The name says it all. We have created this section to help promote the artisan crafters of Polynesia. These artisans have a passion for their crafts. They have
honored their skills, some of which can be traced back to the ancient Polynesians who voyaged by canoe to the isolated islands of the South Pacific Ocean. All their creations are a labor of love. Feel free to explore and discover their offerings. Many of these crafts are becoming more and more rare. (Ibid.)

When I first saw this section in late 2009, it only featured two artisans, Pola Teriipaia and Tahia Foster Parker. I knew that both of these ra‘atira previously made and sold costumes commercially, but was delighted to see this retail presence highlighting them as craftspeople and emphasizing cultural heritage. Each artisan’s page includes a biographical sketch and portrait, and available costumes. The sample costumes were all conspicuously displayed on familiar bamboo armatures (though Tahia’s “maiana” hipband is advertised with a photo directly from the Flickr photostream of Tau Rima Tahiti). Based upon the site content and my previous relationship with Scott, I did not feel that Tahia and Pola had been co-opted (from the exhibit) as a revenue stream. Rather, the exhibit directly inspired this venue for showcasing the crafts, artisans, and performers of ‘ori tahiti.

Collaborators from the Hawai‘i-Tahitian performance community saw a great benefit in the exhibit’s observed ability to educate the public about their tradition. The exhibit gave back to the community by validating the tradition and individuals within it, providing an educational model for students, and inspiring an artisan-centered focus in a prominent online retail venue. For these reasons, Tau Rima Tahiti succeeded as an applied ethnomusicology project.

I envisioned, as part of the “giving back” phase of the project, to provide a future life for this exhibit. I suggested to these collaborators that the project might be taken on by some member or group from the Hawai‘i-Tahitian community. Unfortunately, that suggestion did not prompt anyone to pick the project up. Many cited that they were far too busy, unfamiliar with museum and gallery practice, and unable to analyze and present the music and dance concisely to non-participants. Perhaps this disparity springs from

45 At the time of this writing (2011) it has expanded by adding five more artisans; the content and products from Tahia and Pola remain.
terminology, tone, and perspective. I am optimistic that ra’atira would be interested and able to continue a similar project, but recognize that continuing outgrowths should not replicate the gallery setting, but expand upon it by offering alternatives. As a personal reflection, I know gallery exhibition was something I brought to this community because I was most interested in that outlet.

As an alternative medium to share this gathered information, I propose to compile a brief but representative catalog of the exhibit. This catalog will include photographs compiled for the online exhibit, and narrative, descriptions, and quotes from the exhibit text. Video stills and additional transcribed comments from the collaborators, already created for the purpose of this thesis, will add additional insights. This catalog could also include musical description and transcriptions of Pahae and, briefly, several of the other basic pehe from the exhibit, as well as an accompanying DVD of the exhibit videos. This catalog would serve as a record of the exhibit for the university library, and be accessible to the general public. The catalog will also be distributed to primary informants and participants in the project. As a tangential project, I have also been invited by Tahiti Nui Intnrtntnl to assist in a research and publication project at some future date, which I very much look forward to. The production of Tau Rima Tahiti introduced me to this community, making my skills available for future projects of the community’s own design—a more appropriate design method than imposing externally motivated projects.

6.3 Suggestions for Future Research

The most frequent topics and questions that arose through my fieldwork concerned comparisons between Tahiti, the homeland, and Hawai‘i, the diaspora. This exhibit and thesis have not attempted to make such a comparative analysis, instead examining the Hawai‘i-Tahitian tradition on its own merits, with occasional pertinent references to the tradition in Tahiti. A closer examination of this local tradition would be extremely enlightening, on such varied topics as the lineage of performing and competing ensembles, an examination of the ‘ahu roa as a diasporic invention, and performance differences between the Tahitian and Hawaiian locale. Research into the drumming has prompted an examination of the expanding roles for females in Tahitian drumming in
Hawai‘i and the diaspora. This may offer significant insights to gender studies in Polynesia by examining women in a traditionally male-dominated musical field.

Musical transcriptions in the exhibit, particularly the descriptive graphic transcriptions, have provoked, for this researcher, questions and concerns about the rigidity of rhythmic structures in Tahitian drumming. Following the analyses of Christiane Gerischer (2006) in regards to Brazilian percussion, I would suggest an analysis of microrhythmic phenomena as a manifestation of musical “style” and “feel” between Tahitian drumming ensembles. On a similar instrumental topic, the sometimes shockingly innovative musical instruments incorporated into pūpū tā‘iri tō’ere have expanded the palette of Tahitian instruments, without always insuring competitive advantage in the heiva competition setting. I would suggest a closer examination of the innovative musical instruments or ‘ori tahiti, both in Tahiti and Hawai‘i.

As the first study concerning the application of ethnomusicology to a museum studies model, there are many ways to further cross-discipline collaboration and research. One of the significant aspects of this melding of fields has been the incorporation of musical structure and description into the exhibit framework. I believe that transcriptions can be useful tools in conveying information about otherwise unfamiliar musical traditions, but much more attention is needed in order to assess and improve the use of musical transcription for an audience lacking formal training in musical notation. I would suggest exploration into other interactive technologies to convey musical structures, particularly of an oral tradition or in systems that do not translate—tonally or rhythmically—to a Western staff notation. Current models in interactive gaming, such as “Rock Band,” which measures pitch to assess the accuracy of participants’ version of a piece of music, may be fruitfully applied to a museum setting featuring non-Western musics. I have referred in this text to several exhibitions involving ‘ori tahiti and Tahitian culture in general, in both Hawai‘i and Tahiti; a more detailed exploration of cultural representations in each of these museum exhibits would provide a fruitful comparison.
6.4 The ethnomusicologist as curator / applied ethnomusicology revisited

My role as curator in this exhibition ran the danger of being perceived as an outsider’s “pet project.” Through a sensitive approach to ‘ori tahiti and a comfortable rapport with collaborating specialists, this was happily not the case. Specialists in the Hawai‘i-Tahitian community accepted me, for the most part, as a worthy conduit through which to deliver their cultural knowledge. To some degree, I was able to gather the information because of my outsider status, a situation not uncommon in fieldwork situations (Jackson 1987:69). The “stranger value,” facilitating sharing of privileged information to an anonymous and temporary visitor, worked in conjunction with a professional valuation of the exhibit project. This allowed me, especially in retrospect, a great deal of access to this community. I also think that representing my collaborators in a public venue rather than a strictly academic outlet made them more appreciative of my work because it was tangible to them. After the exhibit opened, the “stranger value” of our relationships melted away a bit.

Ethnomusicology differs from musicology, largely by the significant use of fieldwork, in addition to the historical documents of libraries and archives (Myers 1992:22). Such a study normally entails participant observation in a musical culture, balanced with the emic perspective of informants. Musical culture is ephemeral, and its description and analysis come only through the processes of careful observation, musical participation, attentive listening, and sensitive analysis. Eileen Hooper-Greenhill describes the post-museum as incorporating many of the principles that are important to ethnomusicology:

The post-museum will hold and care for objects, but will concentrate more on their use rather than on further accumulation… [and] will be equally interested in intangible heritage… it is the memories, songs and cultural traditions that embody that culture’s past and future. (2000:152)

I am tempted to draw the parallel that ethnomusicology is to musicology as the post-museum is to the modernist museum. The two elder practices, musicology and the
modernist museum, seem from this perspective to objectify cultures and artifacts. Their alternatives seek holistic understanding, a focus upon process over product, and upon contemporary dynamic realities rather than past histories. *Tau Rima Tahiti*, an application of ethnomusicology in the sense of the post-museum, bridges these models in a most appropriate and effective way.

Research into applied ethnomusicology has much to offer the general field of ethnomusicology. It is one thing to understand, analyze, and critically assess musical culture; it is quite another to translate the resulting findings into language that is accessible for the public and for the informant. The effort to “give back” to source communities requires the language to do so–language quite different than what we may use in scholarly publications. Such has been my experience in creating text and musical transcription in *Tau Rima Tahiti*.

An additional concern in transferring ethnomusicological research to the public is for the researcher to temper their observations in light of the public venue. Analysis of music and utterances may belie an inconsistency or paradox (for example Manutahi’s performance to “Hawaiian War Chant” despite Pola’s statements regarding commercial appropriation of ‘*ori tahiti*). The analytical ethnomusicologist may be tempted to report on such ironies as an intriguing double standard, but when the forum of discourse is amongst colleagues, performers, and the public, this is socially and professionally inappropriate. Deference and respect, always important in relationships with performers and informants, must be maintained throughout a public project.

The converse of these challenges in applied ethnomusicology are its many benefits to the subject community and to further ethnomusicological research. Public validation and celebration of this tradition certainly increased my professional reputation in the Hawai‘i-Tahitian community. It may be novel for an informant to know that they have been quoted in an academic journal, but the ability to visit a gallery exhibit provides tangible validation. Potential additional projects have already arisen out of this exhibit, and I am confident that my current reputation would facilitate additional applied as well as research endeavors.
This thesis has attempted to re-position performance in a myriad of ways: by transferring ‘ori tahiti from the stage to the gallery; by exploring the performance of craft as equal to the performing arts; by examining the gallery exhibit, Tau Rima Tahiti, as a performance in itself; and by analyzing the production of that exhibit as a template upon which to ruminate and to improve. Through this exhibit and paper, I hope to have contributed to public and scholarly knowledge of ‘ori tahiti in a manner that would celebrate and pay respect to the tradition; and to refine public education by improving the manner and method of representing musical culture.
## APPENDIX A: KEY PARTICIPANTS / COLLABORATORS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Role/title</th>
<th>Group/business</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maeva Anderson*</td>
<td>Ra‘atira</td>
<td>Oriata</td>
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<tr>
<td>Franz Tino Hoffmann</td>
<td>Drummer</td>
<td>Ōte’a Kia Mana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kevin Kama,* Shane Largo,* Willie Gualdarama*</td>
<td>Instrument makers, musicians</td>
<td>KBS Instruments, ‘Ia Ora O Tahiti Nui</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mafatu Krainer*</td>
<td>Drum &amp; jewelry maker, dancer, musician</td>
<td>Tahitian Instruments, Te Vai Ura Nui</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeanne Moua Larsen†</td>
<td>Pāreu maker, judge</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Raymond Mariteragi†</td>
<td>TNI board member, PCC director, judge</td>
<td>Tahiti Nui International, Polynesian Cultural Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tahia Parker*</td>
<td>Ra‘atira</td>
<td>Marania Haoragi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rose Perreira</td>
<td>TNI Board member, contest judge, clinician</td>
<td>Tahiti Nui International</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christopher Ramento*</td>
<td>Ra‘atira</td>
<td>Here Tama Nui</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Role</td>
<td>Organization</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denise Ramento*</td>
<td>Ra’atira</td>
<td>Here Tama Nui</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julius &amp; Kehau Skipps*</td>
<td>Drummer, instrument resale</td>
<td>Tepehu Instruments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Etua Tahauri</td>
<td>Tō’ere maker and carver</td>
<td>Polynesian Instruments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cathy and Charlie Temanaha*</td>
<td>Ra’atira</td>
<td>Te Vai Ura Nui</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tyrone Temanaha, Jr.*</td>
<td>Tō’ere maker and carver</td>
<td>Te Vai Ura Nui</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catherine Teriipaia*</td>
<td>Ra’atira, costume manager</td>
<td>Polynesian Cultural Center, Tamari’i O Patitifa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debra Pola Teriipaia*</td>
<td>Ra’atira</td>
<td>Manutahi Tahiti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robyn Manu Williams*</td>
<td>Ra’atira</td>
<td>‘Ōte‘a Kia Mana</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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* Participated in preliminary interviews, informing exhibit content and text.
† Panelist at the Tau Rima Roundtable.
APPENDIX B: PRELIMINARY INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

General

What is your background with Tahitian dance? How did you get started and how did you arrive in your present role?
How / from whom did you learn about costume making and design?

Costumes

Who makes costumes? (i.e. director/designated individual/group members/family)
Do males and females both participate?
How does material availability influence designs?
How does costume design reflect “tradition”?
In what ways to costume designs “break from tradition”?
What factors contribute to costume design? (does this also affect choice of performance theme?)
How important is manual craftsmanship (i.e. costume making) as a skill passed to group members?

Instruments

How are group instruments acquired? (by individuals, by the group, as awards?)
How important is the visual presence of the musicians and instruments?
What factors are involved with the

Description

Would you describe a costume which is currently in use or being made? (design, material, colors, inspiration, craftsmanship)
Would you describe how specific costume designs support a performance theme?
APPENDIX C: EXHIBIT TEXT

Tau Rima Tahiti: Crafting Performance

*Tau Rima* is a colloquial Tahitian term that describes skilled work or steady hands. It refers especially to craftsmanship, competition, and performance. *Tau rima* and great creativity go into every costume, carving, and musical instrument that *‘Ori Tahiti* is a production in the grandest sense, combining many elements in its spectacle. Dance, music, and costume all work together to convey a common theme, so each production depends on the design and crafting of new materials. *Ra’atira*, group directors, along with their dancers and musicians, make new costumes appropriate to the performance theme. Skilled carvers and builders make traditional Tahitian instruments, as well as new instruments, which add variety and musical creativity.

Tahitian performance groups in Hawai‘i are displaced from the original source of their art and raw materials. They relay the myths and tell of a land that is far away. In transplanting Tahitian culture, craftspeople in Hawai‘i show great resourcefulness and skill. By using local resources, cultivating relationships, and employing great creativity, they display a design sense and resulting product that is remarkably and undeniably Tahitian.

‘Ori Tahiti: Tahitian dance

Amateur and professional dance groups in both Tahiti and Hawai‘i perform for special occasions or entertainment, and may participate in *Heiva* festivals. These festivals provide a venue for solo and group competition. For the overall presentation, each group chooses its own program theme. This theme drives song selection, choreography, and costume design. Groups take great pride in their fine costumes, which also factor into the judging criteria. Each group’s presentation is dramatically introduced or narrated by the *ra’atira*, director.

The group *à la carte* presentations focus on isolated genres, both dance and *Pūpū tā’iri Tō’ere*, drumming presentation. One additional dance form found in the *à la carte* exhibition is the ‘ahuroa or ‘ahupurotu. A slower version of the ‘aparima, this form is named after the full-length dress worn by the *vahine* or *māmā rū’au*, the grandmothers. In solo competition, dancers employ ‘ōte’a style movements. Awards range from jewelry and small trophies to musical instruments and cash prizes.

(panel continued next page)
The full group presentation must include the following dance genres:

‘Ōte’a

This presentation dance is almost synonymous with Tahiti. The ‘ōte’a features coordinated movements, with dancers arranged in rows and columns and accompanied by the drum ensemble. Dancers wear elaborate costumes featuring the more skirt, made from the shredded inner bark of the hau, hibiscus tree.

‘Aparima

Often described as “dancing with the hands” (Etua Tahauri), the ‘aparima tells a story of daily life through established dance motifs. Dancers wear simple but elegant pāreu or malo wraps, and sing to the accompaniment of guitar and ‘ukurere, Tahitian banjo.

Hivinau

Opposing circles of male and female dancers surround the drums, and offer a stock phrase in response to the ra‘atira hivinau’s heightened speech. At turns the opposing circles face one another and share a brief ‘ōte’a style dance.

Pā‘ō‘ā

Another call-and-response recitation, the pā‘ō‘ā features seated dancers who accompany the drums by slapping their thighs. The chorus either echoes or continues the ra‘atira pā‘ō‘ā’s humorous or bawdy story, and individual couples may rise to dance amidst the song.
Tā’iri Tō’ere: drumming

With the exception of ‘aparima and ‘ahuroa, ‘ori Tahiti is accompanied by the distinctive Tahitian drumming ensemble. The head drummer of the group invariably plays the lead tō’ere slit drum. The foundation of ta’iri tō’ere, literally “striking the tō’ere,” is a catalog of standardized pehe, rhythmic patterns. Each pehe has a name and corresponding part for each of the ensemble instruments.

Tō’ere

Described as a “slit drum,” the tō’ere is not a drum at all but an idiophone carved from a single piece of wood. Today carvers and musicians recognize the best woods for the tō’ere to be milo (Tahitian miro), tou, mara, and kamani. Builders prize milo not only for its rich tone and ease of carving, but for the dark color of the heartwood. The instrument is played with a single tapered ironwood stick or ra’au. A minimum of three tō’ere are required to form the interlocking rhythms for the pehe.

Fa’atete

This small skin drum is played with two light sticks and enriches the music with its high timbre. Drum ensembles may employ as many as three fa’atete players, but they may each play several drums in varying sizes. The same musician often plays ihara, a length of split bamboo played with the fa’atete sticks.

Pahu Tūpa‘i Rima

The term pahu refers generally to any skin drum, but terminology varies for this instrument: pahu tūpa‘i rima, pahu tupai, pahu irima, or simply tupai. Played standing and struck with the hands, the tupai sounds an open and closed stroke, lending a rich lower body to the ensemble sound. Like the fa’atete, the tupai is traditionally carved out of coconut, milo, or some other wood, but increasingly in Tahiti and Hawai‘i, builders fashion these drums from bent plywood or even PVC pipe.

Pahu Tari Parau

The double-headed rope-tensioned drum, usually referred to simply as pahu, was introduced to Tahiti from Europe, but standardized early in the 20th Century. The
lowest pitched drum, it provides the basic heartbeat of the *pehe*, and acts as an accentuating bass drum for the string band of *‘aparima* and *‘ahupurotu*.

*Vivo*

The indigenous nose flute is featured most commonly during an introduction or invocation.


**Tau Rima: craftsmanship processes**

The materials of Tau Rima Tahiti reflect the values, skills, and resourcefulness of local craftspeople. Some of these elements are visible in the objects, but the “performance of craftsmanship” is largely behind the scenes, where many processes are at work. As active producers of Tahitian craft, *ra‘atira* and instrument makers face the issues raised by each of the following themes throughout their creative lives:

**Innovation**

‘*Ori Tahiti* is a tradition passed through generations, preserving and sharing history, poetry, and cultural knowledge. Simultaneously, Tahitians value creativity and innovation to the extreme. New costume elements, instruments, and dance steps appear regularly. While testing the boundaries of tradition, such experimentation by Hawaiian craftspeople is innately Tahitian.

**Resources**

The production of Tahitian performance objects relies upon material and human resources. Craftspeople cultivate relationships in Hawai‘i as well as Tahiti, show resourcefulness and frugality in acquiring appropriate and cost-effective materials, and seek out knowledge from elders and cultural specialists to guide their work.

**Transmission**

*Ra‘atira* defer to their own teachers and impress upon their students the diverse knowledge and skills central to Tahitian culture. For some, group participation in costume making is educational as well as economical, while other *ra‘atira* find the consistency of a single costumier a reliable necessity. Instrument makers may receive initial guidance, or make their first attempts based on observation and intuition; theirs is an art that develops out of long experience and personal investment.

**Craftsmanship**

Tahitian performance crafts show a wealth of detailed expertise. Instrument production includes both skin-drums and *tō‘ere*, slit-drums; production begins with the selection of wood and materials, but progresses through ornately detailed carving, functionally unnecessary but highly valued and ultimately meaningful. Costume production shows how a wealth of material and technical knowledge can be directed toward a singular thematic presentation, both functional and dramatically effective.
In Tahiti everything is changing, they change real quick. They change with the times.

—Mafatu Krainer

You can extend yourself—your creativity, when you have a lot of material. If you don’t, it’s impossible. But you have to have all the material you need to be able to do the nice work.

—Tahia Foster-Parker, Marania Haoragi

A lot of the drumming competition is to incorporate something different, just for creativity. We’ve played bottles filled with water, you know, something like that. People try different things just to be creative and it might catch on.

—Mafatu Krainer

Our new generation, they’re going into modern, modern-made stuff… Not that I don’t accept the progress, you have to accept progress. But you don’t want to leave the roots—a lot of people maybe will cut off the branch, and re-plant, with their own modern ideas, up-to-date ideas.

—Etua Tahauri

I like creativity, but my number one is tradition, to keep it as traditional as possible.

—Denise Ramento, Here Tama Nui
Resources

When there’s a lot of costs involved in your costuming, you go where you can get the same thing but at a lower price, because it can get astronomical at some point. Especially when you’re dealing with shells. So when the shells from the Philippines are less than the shells from Tahiti I’ll get it from the Philippines. It’s the same shell.

—Pola Teriipaia, Manutahi Tahiti

It’s good to have contacts all over ‘cause there’s really nothing over here on this island. I’ve never found a bunch of miro on this island. Never. Because there’s so much people that grab miro on this island. Not just for tō’eres. Samoans and Tongans they make tiks…

—Tyrone Temenaha

…The only thing I got from the mainland is the feathers. And the hau. From here, from Aloha Hula Supply. The rest is from Tahiti. I went to an uncle who does tapa… when I decide to make a costume I go home and I get material from there.

—Tahia Foster-Parker, Marania Haoragi

The changes started from the very beginning because of rarity. It’s harder to get the material here. Those days [more] was harder to get. So they were using cellophane and plastic skirts. But it’s a pain in the eye when you look at it. We didn’t like the ideas of using modern plastic stuff. We [Heiva organizers Tahiti Nui International] over the years have influenced them to maintain Tahitian costume and Polynesian costume instead of plastic.

—Etua Tahauri

Black ones are very important… but the milo’s still milo, it’s still good, you know, it doesn’t matter if it’s black. I think it helps, but the music is still gonna be the music.

—Tyrone Temanaha, Jr.

For us, being in the tree industry—we might not come across all the good woods, but we know everybody else in the tree industry. And so then, when they come across it, then they call us in to save money not having to dump it, and we’ll pay for the wood. In Hawai‘i that’s kind of how it goes.

—Mafatu Krainer
Because of the bird flu, there’s just a big shortage of feathers... For instance, the white long feathers, five years ago I would pay $150 for a pound. Right now you’re paying $400 for a pound. So that has a lot to do with costuming now. If we do use the feathers it’s very sparse, it’s not as abundant on our costumes, but we still do use it—if it goes with our theme.

—Pola Teriipaia, Manutahi

My family owns Tahitian black pearl farms. So when they are done with the use of the mother of pearl, they will bring like bags of these, and I will take it to Josèf, he’s one person that’s known in Tahiti for carving... And then he will clean it for me, polish it, and then the design that I would like to have, he will do it for me.

—Tahia Foster-Parker, Marania Haoragi

All the shells I get from Tahiti. When my dad comes every couple months then he’ll bring me a box of shells.

—Mafatu Krainer

But you cannot beat Tahiti, they got the really beautiful, real things.

—Denise Ramento, Here Tama Nui
Transmission

I am so fortunate that I had learned to do it. And I’d taught my children, Christopher, Terese, Allen, how to do it. And now we’re trying to teach the students.

—Denise Ramento, Here Tama Nui

I had to research on my own because I’m learning, and I do not know all the stories from my family, from my island. So I will go and research with Grandma. Like with my grandma who passed away, Mere. And then I will go to a different grandma who will tell me about—they still have the same basic, same story. But some will have their own view of things, so they will add up.

—Tahia Foster-Parker, Marania Haoragi

And it’s good for culture too. We teach our kids the culture, and that’s how we teach it, they just watch. See us putting drums together, think it’s natural. They think everybody does that.

—Mafatu Krainer

When I decide to make a costume I go home [to Tahiti] and I get material from there. I usually make my daughter help me on the beach look for things, ‘cause I want her to be involved. And then we will bring it home and explain to the kids where we got it.

—Tahia Foster-Parker, Marania Haoragi

We want everyone to make their own costume because then they would appreciate and know that there—they don’t just get and dress up and pretty up. They have to learn. This is what a school is about. This is the difference between a school and a production show.

—Denise Ramento, Here Tama Nui

You don’t just pass on a song, you pass on everything that goes with the song. And that is the way they pass it on, and pass it on, and pass it on.

—Pola Teriipaia, Manutahi Tahiti
I’m very open, open to help those who are willing to perpetuate the culture. Although they are not Tahitian but their heart is.

—Etua Tahauri

If you’re a Tahitian dancer you gotta know how to make costumes. In our days anyway. Nowadays they just go to Hula Supply or Aloha Hula Supply and buy the generic costumes—which is okay. But I still feel strongly that a dancer, a well-rounded dancer should know how to make costumes, should know how to define her costume with her dance.

—Pola Teriipaia, Manutahi Tahiti
Craftsmanship

A lot of our people from Tahiti are surprised at how well the costumes are done here. Because I think, they are very creative.

—Etua Tahauri

They would have to get those skirts and they would do it ahead of time. Picking the bark of the wild hibiscus tree, pulling the outer bark and wrapping it. And then soaking it in the lagoon for several months, until the fibers of the bark start loosening up. And it stinks like heck. And they got bundles and bundles of bark, and then they retrieve it. And then they start peeling it off the bark. And then you find out that the bark is just full of fibers. And then they let it dry in the sun. And then they eventually will wash it, clean it, and again let it dry. And then they start their making of their skirts.

—Catherine Teriipaia

Every time I make one it’ll never be the same. No matter how, because the woods are different. The thickness, maybe you might try to come close to it. But there’s always difference.

—Etua Tahauri

It’s not easy making tō’eres. Period.

—Tyrone Temanaha, Jr.

We make the costumes all by hand. And now, technology, we got sewing machine and glue gun. Don’t forget glue gun.

—Catherine Teriipaia

With the tō’re, a lot of the commission is just by that, just by the sound. Carving is all extra, doesn’t really have too much to do with the drum... Sometimes we get people that ask to do that, where they ask us to make a stand with different small tō’re, those tō’ere pitis… but, that kind of stuff is just more—what is your feeling toward the drumming, you know, that’s tough... we try to keep a little bit more basic.

—Mafatu Krainer
Selected Object Labels

‘Ōte‘a Vahine, “Pele”
Manutahi Tahiti, 2006

Our theme was Pele the fire goddess that came over from Tahiti. And, so, our costuming was around fire and flames. We had a lot of oranges, yellows... golds, reds coming out of the white skirt. And that was because we were talking about Pele. So yeah, your costume defines the theme of your dance.

—Pola Teriipaia, ra‘atira

Recipient of the best costume award at the Tahit Fête of San Jose 2006, this costume is actually two in one. During the performance of this tribute to Pele, the dancers would:

- Turn over the hip band, so that the longer yellow strands of more are on top.
- Discard the handheld ‘i‘i and wear the wrist tassles, the long more strands currently attached to the back of the heipo, helmet.
- Turn the heipo around.

‘Ōte‘a Tamari‘i
‘Ōte‘a Kia Mana

In sizing the more skirt to each dancer, directors and costume assistants trim the bottom of the skirt to reach a uniform length from the ground. The excess fibers are retained for ‘i‘i, tassles, or in this case, the tamari‘i (keiki) hip belt.
Vahine Soloist

Marania Haoragi

According to our theme I decide on the color, and then I make different headpieces. And whichever looks good on the kids, and whichever they vote that they like the best, then that’s the one that we use. But after that they end up wearing it as solo gear. So I don’t do it for nothing. I usually do a few of them.

—Tahia Foster-Parker, ra‘atira

Vahine & Tane

Te Vai Ura Nui, 2008

The shellwork in this pair of costumes immediately tells the audience (and judges) that the theme involves the sea. Winner of best costume at the Heiva i Honolulu 2008, Te Vai Ura Nui’s costumes evoke a small fishing village.

It’s a tradition that when you leave Tahiti they give you a shell lei. When you arrive they give you a flower lei. So, we go to Tahiti all the time. These are real traditional Tahitian leis.

Now they’re giving Filipino leis in Tahiti. It’s sad, but their resources are running out too. So we have to cherish what we have.

—Cathy Temanaha, ra‘atira
‘Ôte‘a Vahine

*Here Tama Nui, 2005*

The title of this production, “Te Faufa‘a O Te ‘Ora” (“the Riches of Life”), has a secondary meaning, which references mothers. The size of the parau, mother of pearl shell, on the heipo shows that it was patiently left in the ocean long enough to grow to size.

*The dance that was done with this costume was presented to acknowledge, to pay tribute to what makes up moms. So the costume was very ornate because of their handwork.*

*And this style of costume actually came from the 70’s. When I say the style is—today, as you know there’s a lot of feathers, a lot—it’s very dramatic. But the style of costuming back in the ‘70s and the ‘60s, it was more more, a lot of more. But today actually, we’re kind of low on more. The suppliers are boosting up their prices, for one ‘cause they have to ship it here, and number two is, not enough trees.*

—Christopher Ramento, ra‘atira

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‘Ôte‘a Vahine

*Ôte‘a Kia Mana, 2006*

*For this costume here, we had the girls with the brown skirt, and we had one girl take apart all the skirts. Un-knot all of it, and put it all in different groups. So we had one in brown, one in the natural. We had people with feathers doing everything. And then we just pass it all down.*

*So one girl is hand-sewing the lauhala, so that the next girl can come and cut it out, give it to another girl who can sew the edges down so it doesn’t unravel. Then they’ll cover it with the tapa.*
If there’s twenty girls they’ll do 20 of it. And then by the end we’ll at least have all the hips done and by the next weekend we’ll do all the headgears, and we’ll have all the headgears then. That, I’ve found to be better than everybody doing it on their own. ‘Cause we would have people make so much mistakes. And come back and I’ll have to explain to one person, then another person will come back and have the same mistake. And I’ll have to explain it again…

—Robyn Williams, ra’atira

**Pahu Tupai**

Mafatu Krainer

*We try to make our instruments a little bit more traditional, or what we might think is traditional. In Tahiti everything is changing, they change real quick. They change with the times. I see a lot of the pahu ‘irimas and what they do is they just use like a djembe, and they just put legs on the djembe. So I don’t know if it’s convenience or... I think they really like that sound of the djembe, the high pitched sound... it could be a lot of things.*

—Mafatu Krainer

**Fa‘atete**

KBS Instruments

Cheaper and easier to acquire than cow or goatskin, nylon-reinforced herculite can be seen on many pahu tari parau, usually as the back, non-playing membrane.

*The best is skin of course. That’s herculite on the back side... but we used to put it on the fa‘atetes. It works, it’s a different sound, but it works.*

—Kevin Kama
Tō‘ere Hei
Miko Krainer

In playing position, the tō‘ere sits upright, and its head may be encircled by a hei, the Tahitian flowered garland or hatband. Often the “top” and “bottom” are interchangeable. It only follows that the side of the instrument is called ‘opu, belly.

For my dad’s tō‘eres, on the tops and bottom there’s rings. And he carves the same ring on each drum. And that’s his signature, that’s him saying that he made this drum. It’s a traditional pattern, but that’s just kind of his signature. Some of ‘em are traditional like that, kind of like the scallop you know, just the fish scale pattern, wave patterns. Some, just a leaf.

—Mafatu Krainer

Tō‘ere Hei
Gerard Tepehu

Tahiti-based Gerard Tepehu is known both for the plant motif and scalloping which covers the top end of the instrument

You can tell by this right here, the circles... each maker has their own design, their own signature, so you know who made the drums. On the bass drum, the legs is where you can tell who made that.

—Kevin Kama

There’s this print that looks like thumbnails, that go like this on the tō‘eres, that look like thumbnails. Well that is like people, unity. But, everybody has their own saying about what those markings is. But you’ll see that on tō‘eres, every tō‘ere, it’s like one of the old school prints. But then it’s been diluted... so you can’t really tell what it is.

—Tyrone Temanaha, Jr.
**Contemporary banjo**

Le Marché, Tahiti

The two middle strings (C and E) of the Tahitian banjo are an octave higher than the Hawaiian 'ukulele. This tuning and the doubling of strings makes for a brighter sound, appropriate for accompanying 'aparima.

*Banjos are kinda hard to make, and take a lot of time. So, it’s almost easier now, we’ll just bring banjos from Tahiti and just sell them. ‘Cause in Tahiti you can get a banjo for really cheap, $200. And the most you can sell banjos for here is like $300 or $350. So there’s not really too much profit. But if you’re to sit down and make a banjo it’s just hours and hours and hours.*

—Mafatu Krainer
Assorted Jewelry
Mafatu Krainer

Black pearl, mother-of-pearl, and bone jewelry often adorns solo dancers, and to a lesser extent, group costuming. Mafatu Krainer carves jewelry as well as components for group costuming. Pahu tupai figurines or a tō’ere pendant carved from antler are particularly popular with drummers.

When my dad comes every couple months then he’ll bring me a box of shells. Usually they’re already clean, they’re already shined. Pearls are big business, so that’s just a by-product of the pearl industry. So shells I’ll get from Tahiti, and a lot of the bone I’ll get here. I’ve got some friends that ranch. Ranch friends. I’ve got a bunch of bones... and then I cut ‘em and use ‘em as I need ‘em.

—Mafatu Krainer
APPENDIX D: RELEASE FORMS AND QUESTIONNAIRES

Forms approved by the Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects, UH-Mānoa.

D.1 Agreement to Participate (release of interview material)

Agreement to Participate in

Material Culture of Tahitian Performing Arts in Hawai‘i

Research and Exhibition
Scott Bartlett, principal investigator

This research is being conducted as part of a gallery exhibition and a thesis for a master’s degree. The purpose of this research and exhibition is to examine and exhibit to the public the many aspects of costume, instruments, and other materials central to Tahitian performance. You are being asked to participate because of your involvement with Tahitian performance and the Tahitian community in Hawai‘i. Your participation in this project is completely voluntary.

The research will include one or more recorded interviews at an agreed upon time and place. Interviews will be informal and conversational and will focus upon your involvement with Tahitian performance and your knowledge of costumes and instruments. The duration of the interview may range from ten to sixty minutes. You may refuse to answer any question or terminate the interview at any time. Interviews will be audio recorded, and may include video or still photography. Portions of transcripts or recordings may be included in the public exhibition and the final written thesis. You may elect to review any excerpts that will be included in the public exhibition. There is no guarantee that information that you provide during the interview will be a part of the exhibition. The exhibition will take place at the Hamilton Library Bridge Gallery, on the campus of the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, during March and April of 2009.

Research data will be confidential to the extent allowed by law. Agencies with research oversight, such as the UH Committee on Human Studies, have the authority to review research data. At the conclusion of the project, media materials produced in conjunction with the exhibition will be deposited with the UH Graduate Division and Music Department. Since this project documents only one snapshot of an ongoing performance
tradition, original recordings and transcripts will be retained by the principal investigator. Recordings will not be employed beyond this project without your express and written consent.

Because of your personal involvement in the Tahitian community in Hawai‘i, it is important that your name appear as the interviewee in the exhibition and thesis. This may potentially lead to a loss of privacy through the use of your name in future studies.

If you wish, “Anonymous” may be substituted for your name. There will be no direct benefit to you for your participation in this project, but you will be invited to a reception and other events related to the exhibition.

If you have any additional questions regarding this research or your rights as an informant, please feel free to contact me or the UH Committee on Human Studies.

Scott Bartlett  
c/o UH Music Department  
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Honolulu, HI 96822  
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“I certify that I have read and that I understand the foregoing, that I have been given satisfactory answers to my inquiries concerning project procedures and other matters and that I have been advised that I am free to withdraw my consent and to discontinue participation in the project at any time without prejudice.

I herewith give my consent to participate in this project with the understanding that such consent does not waive any of my legal rights, nor does it release the Principal Investigator or the institution or any employee or agent thereof from liability for negligence.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name (printed)</th>
<th>Signed</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Please mark and initial the following only as appropriate:

- [ ] I wish any statements I make to remain anonymous. Initials: __________
- [ ] I wish to review attributed statements prior to exhibition. Initials: __________

Please complete both copies of this form. One copy will be filed by the primary investigator, and you will retain one copy for your own records.
D.2 Visitors’ Feedback – Research Questionnaire

(Descriptive handout accompanying the questionnaire, a two-sided 8 ½ x 5 ½ sheet, following page.)

Research Statement:

**Tau Rima Tahiti visitors’ feedback**
Scott Bartlett, principal investigator

This research is being conducted as part of a master’s thesis project. The purpose of this research and exhibition is to examine and exhibit to the public aspects of costume, instrument, and other materials and crafts central to Tahitian performance. You are being asked to participate because of your visitation and participation in related events. Your participation in this project is completely voluntary.

This questionnaire will take about five (5) minutes to complete. You may refuse to answer any question or terminate the form at any time. You will not be compensated for your participation. You may fill out the questionnaire anonymously. If you wish to provide contact information for a more in-depth interview, you will be asked to sign an additional release form. Contact information will remain strictly confidential.

Research data will be confidential to the extent allowed by law. Agencies with research oversight, such as the UH Committee on Human Studies, have the authority to review research data. If you have any additional questions regarding this research or your rights as an informant, please feel free to contact me or the UH Committee on Human Studies.

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Committee on Human Studies

Please retain this sheet for your own records.
Tau Rima Tahiti: Crafting Performance

Exhibit Feedback :: Scott Bartlett, principal investigator :: UH Music Department

Thank you for visiting this exhibit either at the Hamilton Library Bridge Gallery or the UH Virtual Museum. This exhibit is one component of a masters thesis project in ethnomusicology. Your feedback to the exhibit would be extremely appreciated! Mānuʻunu! rou!

1. (circle) Age BELOW 15, 15 – 30, 30 – 50, 50 - 70_____
   Sex ___M ___F

2. University affiliation
   ❑ Student
   ❑ Staff/Faculty
   ❑ No University affiliation

3. Do you identify as (all that apply)
   ❑ Hawaiian
   ❑ Tahitian*
   ❑ Caucasian/European___________
   ❑ Other Pacific Islander__________
   ❑ East/SE Asia__________
   ❑ Other__________
   ❑ Prefer not to answer

4. Are you involved in Tahitian arts or performance?
   ❑ No
   ❑ Yes* ❑ Dancer ❑ Builder
   ❑ Musician ❑ Family/support
   ❑ Director ❑ For ___ years
   ❑ Artist

   Please describe in more detail how you are involved:

5. Did you intentionally plan to attend the exhibit, or happen upon it by chance?
   ❑ Planned visit
   ❑ Chance visit

6. If you are not active in Tahitian art or performance, how familiar were you with it before attending this exhibit?
   ❑ Not at all familiar (where’s Tahiti?)
   ❑ Have seen some, but didn’t know anything about it (i.e. public performance, hotel/dinner shows)
   ❑ Somewhat familiar (I recognize it when I see it and know a few terms)
   ❑ Had a basic understanding (I took a class or workshop, or have been told a lot)
   ❑ Attend performances on occasion (go to heiva competitions if convenient)
   ❑ Avid fan (I seek it out and have competition dvds and a Tahitian cd collection!)

7. Has this exhibit increased your personal knowledge of Tahitian performance and material culture?
   ❑ Not at all
   ❑ Slightly
   ❑ Moderately
   ❑ Significantly
   ❑ Greatly

8. Which aspects of the exhibit did you find most interesting and informative? Why?

9. Least interesting or least useful? Why?

10. What features could be improved upon? How?

11. How would you describe the exhibit (without quoting exhibit signs!) in one sentence?

12. Have you visited exhibits in Hamilton Bridge Gallery before?
   ❑ No (proceed to #14)
   ❑ Yes; How many? _____ over how many years? _____

13. How does Tau Rima Tahiti compare to other recent Bridge Gallery exhibits?
   ❑ Disappointing
   ❑ Less than average
   ❑ Comparable
   ❑ Better than average
   ❑ Outstanding

14. In exhibit text and overall design, who did you feel was narrating the exhibition?

15. Would you like to see this exhibit expanded into other venues?
   ❑ No, it’s been done and wasn’t that great
   ❑ Sure… I guess so.
   ❑ Yes, but it would need a lot more work
   ❑ Yes, and more work could help
   ❑ Yes, it has great potential to expand and develop

16. Where would you like to see this exhibit?

17. Please feel free to add additional reactions or suggestions!

*If you identify as Tahitian or as a Tahitian performer, I would welcome a more in-depth discussion of your reaction to this exhibit. If you are willing to have further discussion, please provide contact information below (contact info will remain strictly confidential).

Name ____________________________________________
Email ____________________________________________
Telephone ________________________________
D.3 Exhibit Loan/Gift Agreement

(This form was created for internal tracking only, and was not considered by CPHS.)

I am hereby providing a gift or loan for Tahitian Performance Material in Hawai‘i, a museum exhibit curated by Scott Bartlett, graduate student researcher at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, March-April 2009. I attest that the following object(s) are my own property at the time of this transaction, and I have sole authority to gift or loan. This research and exhibition are being conducted as one component of a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts in Ethnomusicology. The final project document will be deposited in the University of Hawai‘i library.

Description of Object(s) and identifying marks:______________________
_____________________________________________________

The above object(s) is/are given as a

☐ Gift Object(s) will studied and/or exhibited at the discretion of the curator. At the completion of the exhibition, object(s) will be deposited in a collection for future study or exhibition. If no such collection is available or feasible, object(s) will be disposed of at the discretion of the curator.

☐ Loan Item will studied and/or exhibited at the discretion of the curator. At the completion of the exhibition, object(s) will be returned. Pending funding availability, postage or expenses incurred by the exhibition. In the event of insufficient funding, expenses will be the burden of the lender, or terms will be renegotiated.

Signed:_________________________Date:__________

Print name (as attributed): _______________________________________________

Received by: _________________________________Date:__________
Scott Bartlett, graduate researcher and curator

If you have questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me!

Scott Bartlett
2411 Dole St., MB 115
Honolulu, HI 96822
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Special care instructions and addenda to this agreement may be noted on reverse.
APPENDIX E: OBSERVATIONS IN HAWAIʻI-TAHITIAN ORGANOLOGY

The core instruments of the Tahitian drum ensemble have not changed significantly since publication of The Dance of Tahiti (Moulin 1979). They do exhibit modern changes in materials, leading to a consideration of what degree to which an instrument may vary yet remain acceptable to the tradition. In contrast, the pūpū tāʻiri tōʻere competition often features highly innovative instruments inspired by the traditional battery. Here I briefly list developments in construction for the basic instruments as used in an ʻōteʻa performance, and introduce innovative instruments from one ensemble.

Basic instruments

Tōʻere – The lead instrument of the ensemble is still made in a wide variety of sizes and types of wood. Ornate carvings on the body of the tōʻere seem increasingly common (even occasionally featuring mother-of-pearl inlay), no longer merely a kitschy trifle for tourists. The only significant change to the tōʻere appears to be the number and variety. Rather than one drum, many ensembles feature from two to five instruments per musician. Small drums may be combined in a series, creating a box on which each side is a tōʻere of slightly different pitch. This construction may be placed at a longer reach from the drummer, who still plays primarily on a single large tōʻere.

Pahu / Tariparau – Plywood seems to have taken over as the material of choice for the body of the double-membrane pahu. Wooden counter-hoops are invariably rope tensioned. Calfskin heads are occasionally replaced by herculite or other synthetic fabrics, decreasing the affect of changing weather and resulting need re-tension frequently. Tahiti Nui International labels the instrument tari parau, but in general it is referred to in Hawaiʻi simply as pahu. The beater is usually a commercially made bass drum mallet, as for a marching band. It is not uncommon for a musician to alternately play two differently sized drums, or to use two mallets instead of one.
**Faʻate te** – Constructed of either a solid carved section or plywood as the *pahu*. The *faʻate te* may have rope-tensioning, but a common form features metal turnbuckles. As for the *pahu*, heads may be of herculite or other material. The *faʻate te* drummer may play two or three drums, as well as a horizontally mounted *ihara*.

**Pahu tūpaʻi rima** – Though still constructed from a solid tree section, newly made *tūpaʻi rima* are more often either plywood or PVC. Large diameter (ca. 12”) PVC tubing is cut to length, with voids cut at the base to mimic the original pedestal drum. A septum must be added, often of plywood epoxied in place, to close off the base of the resonating chamber. The calfskin head is invariably rope-tensioned. In marked contrast to the rarity of its occurrence 30 years ago, the *pahu tūpaʻi rima* is an important member of the drum ensemble, with large *hura tau* ensembles employing three to five *tūpaʻi rima* drummers.

**Vivo** – Rather than fading from the ensemble, the bamboo nose flute features in many performances. Organizers of many *heiva*, including the Heiva i Honolulu, list the *vivo* as a required element.

**Innovations for pūpū tāʻiri tōʻere**

The *pūpū tāʻiri tōʻere* or à la carte drumming performance explicitly highlights tradition (the initial *pehe* presentation) and innovation (the ensuing original composition). Though not requisite for the composition, many ensembles feature innovative instruments in their performance piece. The following examples from ‘Ia Ora O Tahiti Nui offer a small sample of directions in which the groups have expanded the instrumental repertoire.

---

46 I was told more than once that PVC was an increasingly common material for the drums in Tahiti. This leads to an interesting situation in which the Hawaiian practitioners called the PVC instrument “traditional” by virtue of its appearance in Tahiti.
‘Ia Ora O Tahiti Nui

During their 2009 Heiva i Honolulu performance, twelve musicians of ‘Ia Ora O Tahiti Nui performed on a myriad of original instruments, moving to different instruments during the performance.

Figure 54 ‘Ia Ora O Tahiti Nui drum ensemble at the Heiva i Honolulu 2009

At the far left of fig. Figure 54, two musicians play a series of bamboo percussion tubes arranged by pitch. They also turn on occasion to play four suspended fa‘atete. The grouping at center of this image play tō‘ere, but the instruments have been modified.
The normally unused side of the *to‘ere*, opposite the hollowing slit, has been modified by undercutting to create detached lamellae. When struck with a padded mallet, these emit a sharp “crack.” The instrument in Figure 55 features three distinct lamella tones. Additionally, each instrument features a scraper created by multiple crosscuts. This instrument appears during the central section of the composition. Before and after, four musicians play more traditional *tō‘ere*, and more of them.
The musician in Figure 56 has a “box frame” set of four small *tō’ere*, as well as a medium sized *tō’ere* projecting above his left shoulder. The uppermost *tō’ere* of the box frame also features a scraper along its upper face. Obscured in this photo (by the dark *tō’ere* at stage front), this drummer has his own large *tō’ere*, for a total of six instruments.

Figure 56  Multiple *tō’ere* setup
At the far right of Figure 54, three musicians play a novel series of instruments: each musician has two *tō’ere* mounted horizontally on a platform, while above are suspended bamboo triangles. The two upper legs of each triangle are bamboo *tō’ere*, emitting a very high tone of two distinct pitches. The base section of each triangle is an *ihara*, or split bamboo idiophone (Figure 57).

![Figure 57  Tō’ere and bamboo triangle constructions](image)

It is worth noting that the large support stands which bookend the stage setup are all painted to match the musicians’ *pāreu*, and decorated with foliage. Visual aesthetics, though not an explicit criteria in the drumming event description, appear just as important here as in the group overall competition.
APPENDIX F: FRAMEWORK FOR ASSESSING EXCELLENCE

Worksheet with definitions for using the Framework (Serrel 2005), employed by Art 360 focus group as discussed in 5.3.
Assessing Excellence in Exhibitions from a Visitor-Centered Perspective

Use this Framework to talk with your peers about excellence and improve your professional practice.

1. First Meeting

Gather a team of six to 10 museum professionals and meet for at least two hours to become familiar with the Framework and to come to a common understanding of procedures before judging an exhibition.

You will be rating and discussing an exhibition regarding its level of achievement for four different Criteria. Is the exhibition:


1. Comfortable
An excellent exhibition helps the visitor feel comfortable—physically and psychologically. Good comfort opens the door to other positive experiences. Lack of comfort prevents them.

2. Engaging
An excellent exhibition is engaging for visitors. It entices them to pay attention. Engagement is the first step toward finding meaning.

3. Reinforcing
In an excellent exhibition, the exhibits provide visitors with abundant opportunities to be successful and to feel intellectually competent—beyond the "wow" of engagement. In addition, the exhibits reinforce each other, providing multiple means of accessing similar bits of information that are all part of a cohesive whole. Visitors are confidently on their way to having meaningful experiences.

4. Meaningful
An excellent exhibition provides personally relevant experiences for visitors. Beyond being engaged and feeling competent, visitors find themselves changed, cognitively and affectively, in immediate and long-lasting ways.

Ratings are based on two different kinds of data:

Call-outs: your experiences in the exhibition as a visitor
Aspects: the evidence you found that supported each Criterion

At the end of the first meeting, pick an exhibition to visit.

Exhibition Title

Institution ___________________________ Your Initials _____________ Date of Visit ___________

2. Create Call-Outs

Visit the exhibition by yourself. Keep notes about your experience in the form of sentences with feeling verbs—your thoughts, feelings and responses as you experience the exhibition as a visitor. These are your Call-outs.
### Assess the Aspects

After visiting, leave the exhibition and then assess the Aspects—the evidence defining each Criterion—listed below. Using your Call-outs as a reference, think about to what degree each Aspect was appropriately present or not present in the exhibition. Using the following guidelines, put pluses and minuses in the right-hand columns.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>++ Excellent, a wonderful example</th>
<th>— Not quite there</th>
<th>NA Does not apply (Not all Aspects apply to all exhibitions).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>+ A good example</td>
<td>— Self-defeating</td>
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</table>

#### 1. Aspects of Comfortable

- a. Physical and conceptual orientation devices were present.
- b. There were convenient places to rest.
- c. The lighting, temperature, and sound levels were appropriate.
- d. Everything was well-kept, functioning, and in good repair.
- e. There was a good ergonomic fit. Exhibit elements could be read, viewed, and used with ease.
- f. Choices and options for things to do were clear. Visitors were encouraged to feel in control of their own experiences.
- g. Authorship, biases, intent, and perspectives of the exhibition were revealed, identified, or attributed. The exhibits reveal who is taking, fact from fiction or opinion, the real from the not real.
- h. The exhibition welcomed people of different cultural backgrounds, economic classes, educational levels, and physical abilities.

#### 2. Aspects of Engaging

- a. The physical environment looked interesting and invited exploration.
- b. Exhibits caught my attention and enticed me to slow down, look, interact, and spend time attending to many elements.
- c. Exhibits were fun—pleasurable, challenging, amusing, intriguing, and intellectually or physically stimulating.
- d. Exhibit components encouraged and promoted social behaviors. Exhibits encouraged visitors to call one another over, read out loud, point at, and converse about the exhibit material.
- e. Experiences came in a variety of formats (e.g., graphics, text, objects, AI, computers, living things, models, phenomena) and a variety of sensory modalities—sight, sound, motion, touch, etc.
- f. Regardless of a visitor’s prior knowledge or interests, there were interesting things to do.

#### 3. Aspects of Reinforcing

- a. The exhibition was not overwhelming. There were “just enough” things to do.
- b. Challenging or complex exhibit experiences were structured so that visitors who tried to figure them out were likely to say, “I got it,” and feel confident and motivated to do more.
- c. The presentation had a logic. It held together intellectually in a way that was easily followed and understood.
- d. The information and ideas in different parts of the exhibition were complementary and reinforced each other.
- e. The exhibit built on itself.

#### 4. Aspects of Meaningful

- a. Ideas and objects in the exhibition (natural specimens, living collections, cultural artifacts, demonstrations, and activities) were made relevant to and easily integrated into the visitors’ experience, regardless of their levels of knowledge or motivation.
- b. The exhibition made a case that its content had value. The material was timely important, and resonated with the visitors’ values. Meaning is the “so what.”
- c. The exhibition content touched on universal human concerns and didn’t shy away from deep or controversial issues.
- d. The exhibit experience promoted change in people’s thinking and feeling, even transcendence. Exhibits gave visitors the means to make generalizations, change beliefs and attitudes, and/or take action.
Rate the Criteria

To what extent did you think each Criterion was likely to be experienced in the exhibition?

Assign a rating level (1-6) to each Criterion.

Level 1  Excellent—Consistently good Aspects (+’s), with many excellent (++’s)
Level 2  Very Good—Consistently good Aspects (+’s) with very few or no misses (−’s)
Level 3  Good—Mostly good Aspects (+’s), but with some misses (−’s)
Level 4  Acceptable—A balance between good Aspects (+’s) and missed Aspects (−’s), or a few noteworthy things
Level 5  Misses Opportunities—Mostly missed Aspects (−’s), but there may be a few good Aspects (+’s)
Level 6  Counterproductive—Mostly self-defeating (−−’s), with many missed Aspects (−’s)

Using the evidence of your Call-outs and Aspects, write a Rationale for your rating.

1. Comfortable
   Level  Rationale:

2. Engaging
   Level  Rationale:

3. Reinforcing
   Level  Rationale:

4. Meaningful
   Level  Rationale:
Assessment Comparison Meeting

Allow at least two hours for the follow-up meeting. Start by recording everyone’s ratings in the chart below.

Criteria Level Ratings Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Judge’s Initials</th>
<th>Comfortable</th>
<th>Engaging</th>
<th>Reinforcing</th>
<th>Meaningful</th>
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Any Strong Disagreements?
Discuss areas of greatest disagreement among the ratings above. Why do you disagree?

Recording Consensus
Discuss, then list, specific features, experiences, or feelings about the exhibition—both positive and negative—that you ALL agree on.

1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5. 

Social Moderation
After all the discussions, did anyone want to modify their ratings? If so, alter the ratings in the chart above.

Congratulations! You are now an Excellent Judge!

This project was supported in part by the National Science Foundation.
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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

All terms are Tahitian unless otherwise noted. Tahitian definitions are an amalgamation of Wahlroos (2002), Moulin (1979), and the author’s field research with practitioners in Hawai‘i. Hawaiian definitions compiled from Ulukau, the Hawaiian Online Dictionary, (Hale Kuamo‘o 2004) and French definitions from Langenscheidt (1980). Definitions are in regards to the Hawai‘i-Tahitian tradition unless otherwise noted.47

agogô (Portuguese) – double bell used in Brazilian samba.

‘ahu purotu – dress worn by a beautiful young lady (‘ahu=dress, purotu=beautiful [especially of women]); synonymous with the dance form ‘ahu roa in Hawai‘i.

Note: In Hawaiian heiva rules, spelling often omits space: ‘ahupurotu.

‘ahu roa – long dress (‘ahu=dress, roa=long); also a form of ‘ori tahiti in Hawai‘i, a slow-tempo ‘aparima performed by females wearing such a dress.

Note: In Hawaiian heiva rules, spelling often omits space: ‘ahuroa.

‘aparima – original and beautiful dances which often recount the life and legends of old Tahiti or current themes by hand movements and song (‘aparima hîmene) or hand movements only (‘aparima vâvâ, traditionally and usually performed by women in a sitting position). Literally: to illustrate or mimic with the hands.

arata‘i – to guide, accompany in order to guide; also the lead or directing tō‘ere voice.

boules (French) – a form of lawn bowling originating in France.

bounty – a pehe name that dates from the days of the filming of the movie “Mutiny on the Bounty” in Tahiti 1960-1961 (Moulin 1979:46).

47 Alphabetization and orthography of diacritical marks in this glossary follow Wahlroos (2002).
‘Ewa (Hawaiian) – a reference to ‘Ewa Beach, an area on the leeward cost of O‘ahu, west of Honolulu; used as a directional reference along the leeward shore i.e., “[toward] ‘Ewa Beach”; the directional opposite of Koko Head.

fa‘atete / fakatete – a single-headed membranophone played with two slender sticks, ca. 30-40 cm in height.

Note: The term fakatete comes from the Tuamotus.

fête (French) – feast, celebration; a term for the Bastille Day festival in Tahiti which features ‘ori tahiti.

hālau (Hawaiian) – long house, as for canoes or hula instruction (hālau hula).

haole (Hawaiian) – white person, American, Caucasian.

hei – lei, neck garland, necklace.

hei pārau – mother-of-pearl necklace.

hei pūpū – shell lei.

hei taupo‘o – hat-band wreath.

hei tiare – flower lei.

hei upo‘o – wreath, as the type worn on the crown of the head. Also a general term for a headdress worn as part of the costume for ‘ori tahiti.

heiva – a general word for Tahitian dancing events, dancing entertainment, or dance assemblies; a Tahitian dance festival and/or entertainment; pastime, entertainment, physical exercise.

hīmene – song; see also ‘aparima.

hitoto – a pehe said to come from the Tuamotu Islands. It has been performed in Tahiti since perhaps 1957 (Moulin 1979:46).

hīvinau – form of ‘ori tahiti featuring dancers in two concentric circles and call and response vocals to the accompaniment of the drumming ensemble.
hula (Hawaiian) – indigenous Hawaiian dance which illustrates the text of a song or chant.

hula ‘auana – contemporary hula, accompanied by string or other contemporary instruments (‘auana=to wander).

hura ava tau – junior level competition category for ‘ori tahiti.

hura metua pa’ari – master level competition category for ‘ori tahiti; limited to elder performers in the ‘ahu roa dance category (Tahiti Nui International specifies a minimum age of 45 years).

hura tau – senior or professional competition category for ‘ori tahiti.

ihara – bamboo slit drum; today the instrument called ihara is a bamboo stick rattle, with multiple longitudinal splits, and usually struck with sticks by the fa’atete player who mounts the ihara horizontally. Similar to hula implement called pu’ili.

keiki (Hawaiian) – child/children.

Koko Head (Hawaiian) – a headland on the southeast extremity of O’ahu, used as a directional reference along the leeward shore, i.e., “[toward] Koko Head”; the directional opposite of ‘Ewa.

kumu hula (Hawaiian) – teacher of hula.

lūʻau / luau (Hawaiian) – feast; today it often refers to a feast and dance performance, possibly featuring multiple Polynesian cultures.

māʻohi – Polynesian; indigenous, native, of the country.

makai (Hawaiian) – directional term meaning toward the ocean; the opposite of mauka.

maro – loin cloth.

mauka (Hawaiian) – directional term meaning inland or toward the mountain; the opposite of makai.

miro – pacific rosewood, a material sought after for tō’ere and other carved objects

Note: HI “milo”; thespesia populnea.
mua (i mua) – in front of (in time or space), before.

muri (i muri) – behind, after.

‘ōpū (Hawaiian) – belly, stomach, abdomen.

‘ōrero – orate, make a speech.

‘ori tahiti – Tahitian style dance, a group dance typified by gender-specific movements and accompanied by the Tahitian percussion ensemble (for ‘ōte‘a) or string band (for ‘aparima).

‘orometua – teacher.

orooro / 'oro'oro – fast style of Tahitian tō‘ere drumming, often featuring to as “rolling” or persistent improvisation.

Note: Wahlroos provides the definition “grate or rasp food,” of which the appearance of “rolling” the rā‘au on the tō‘ere is reminiscent.

‘ōte‘a – traditional and spectacular Tahitian group dances of a given theme or of mixed themes, often performed at official occasions… choreographed movement performed by men or women, usually by both (Wahlroos). The term sometimes refers to the dances of an ‘ōte‘a set, which may also included pā‘ō‘ā and hīvinau

pa‘ea / paea – a pehe named after the Pa‘ea district of Tahiti, “perhaps the most common of all the pehe” (Moulin 1979:46).

Note: In Hawaiian heiva rules, spelling sometimes omits diacritics (‘eta): paea.

pā‘ō‘ā – form of ‘ori tahiti featuring solo or couples dancing to the accompaniment of the drumming ensemble and vocal call (heightened speech by the ra‘atira pā‘ō‘ā) and response (chant by the ensemble).

pahae – a pehe generally recognized as the most common or basic in the Hawai‘i-Tahitian tradition. Moulin labels this pehe “arata‘i” (2004:114-117), a term which also reflects.
**pahu / tariparau** – double-headed rope-tensioned drum, of Western origin but fully indigenized (in Tahiti and Hawai‘i) as the “bass drum” timekeeper. Generally referred to simply as “pahu.”

**pahu tūpa‘i rima** – single-headed cylindrical drum played with the hands (rima), typically waist- to chest-high.

**pāreu** – light material or fabric, often with colorful designs, worn around the hips as per a lava lava or sarong.

**pehe** – chant, song, or melody; often used in reference to the “distinct musical sentences” (Moulin 1979:45) played by the tō’ere and drum ensemble.

**petit** (French) – small; the multilingual phrase “tō’ere petit” or simply “petit” refers to a small Tahitian slit drum.

**popa‘ā** – person of white race, Caucasian.

**Porapora** – the island known in English as Bora Bora, lying in the Leeward Society Islands; also a pehe named after that island.

**puarātā / puarata** – the wild flower Metrosideros villosa (Sm.); also a pehe.

*Note: In Hawaiian heiva rules, spelling often omits diacritics (tārava): Puarata.*

**pule** (Hawaiian) – prayer [TAH pure].

**pūpū tā‘iri tō’ere** – á la carte or standalone drum competition, found at most heiva competitions, and typically including a presentation of pehe followed by an original composition.

**pūrau** – hibiscus flower or tree [HI hau].

**ra‘atira** – director of an ‘ori tahiti ensemble or group of musicians; a director character who may present ‘ōrero.

**rā‘au / rā‘au tā‘iri** – tapered ironwood (‘aito) stick, ca. 30-35cm, used to play the tō’ere.

**rara‘a** – to plait or weave.

**rima tau / tau te rima** – warmed up and ready to play.
rimaʻi – craftsman, artisan, by hand.

rōpu (i rōpu) – in the middle.

samba – a specific named pehe, possibly influence by Brazilian samba music.

saofaʻi (Samoan) – title-giving ceremony.

tāʻiri – to hit, to play a drum.

tāhape – an improvising tō’ere voice.

Takoto / tākoto – a pehe said to come from the island of Tākoto or TaTakoto in the Tuamotus.

Note: in Hawaiian heiva rules, spelling omits diacritics (tārava): Takoto

tamahine – girl, young woman, daughter.

tāmanu – beach mahogany, (calophyllum inophyllum) [HI kamani].

tamariʻi – child/children.

tamāroa – boy.

tāmāu – consistently, constantly; the “basic” repeating tō’ere voice.

tātau – tattoo.

tau rima – a good steady hand, a compliment for good handiwork.

tei oha i te rima o Tahiti – Tahitian crafts or handmade work.

tiare tāporo – a pehe dating from about 1957 and named after the lemon flower (Moulin 1979:46).
tō‘ere – the slit drum (technically a slit gong) formed of a partially hollowed length of miro, tāmanu, or tou, though formerly (and still today as a teaching tool) made of bamboo. The highest prestige instrument of the drum ensemble, ranging from 30cm to 100cm in height.

toma – period or comma. In music, a phrase which signals the end of a pehe or transition between pehe.

tūpaʻi – fist, hammer; hit with a close fist, punch, pound, beat.

turai – July.

‘ukarere – string instrument adapted from the Hawaiian ‘ukulele, with eight strings in double-courses. Formerly constructed around a membrane-covered coconut shell, today most are constructed from a solid wood body partially hollowed and covered with a thin wooden veneer soundboard. This membrane/soundboard construction leads to the common name. “Tahitian banjo.” or simply ‘banjo’.

‘uru – breadfruit.

‘utē – humorous song, part of heiva in Tahiti (expected to be part of the Heiva i Honolulu 2011).

u’u – traditional Marquesan ceremonial staff or club, sometimes used as a prop in ‘ori tahiti.

vāvā – mute (see ‘aparima).

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University of Hawai‘i. 2009. “Fall Enrollment Report, University of Hawai‘i, Fall 2008”. 30 pp. Honolulu

