# Traditional and Contemporary Aesthetics in Hawaiian Art

Posted on October 8, 2018

View this essay online:
https://academic-master.com/traditional-and-contemporary-aesthetics-in-hawaiian-art/

## Part 1: Assignment 5-1 – A Hawaiian Aesthetic

Identify and explain the nature of traditional and contemporary Hawaiian art according to Dudoit.

Mahealani Dudoit perceives the nature of traditional and contemporary Hawaiian art in a piece she wrote known as “Carving a Hawaiian Aesthetic.” Dudoit says that traditional Hawaiian art reaches back toward the things that are in front of us with the aim of recreating or rediscovering something from the past. Dudoit also explains that traditional Hawaiian art is a way of conceptualizing time. Dudoit states that contemporary Hawaiian art reaches toward the past, making the Hawaiian people translate their traditions into their present-day language. Dudoit claims that the native past is in front of the Hawaiian people to be utilized as a roadmap for their present.

- In the article, Imaikalani Kalahele said, “For me, art is ‘ono (delicious).” What do you think he means by this? Why compare art to food?

Imaikalani Kalahele describes the artwork as delicious (‘ono) in his poems. By this, I tend to think he compares art with a delicious and hearty meal that one would want to eat over and over again. When applied to art, delicious means that one would like to view or listen to a piece of art over and over again because of its lovely and distinct features. I think he compares art with food to illustrate the extent to which we need art in our lives or how essential art is.

- Explain the differences between Western conceptions of art and Hawaiian conceptions of art, according to Dudoit.

Dudoit perfectly illustrates the Western conceptions of art using a professor who teaches Hawaiian culture known as Pikea. Pikea does not come from the Hawaiian culture but gives lectures about Hawaiian culture. This means he teaches a culture that he does not fully understand. This is a perfect example of how the Hawaiian culture is losing its value. Western culture perceives an artist as a person who originates or gives existence to something. The Hawaiian culture perceives an artist as a person who composes and puts in order an item such as a lei (Pokui and Elbert 1986).

- In the video, Hoala Hou describes why these artists continue to practice Hawaiian art forms.

Artists continue to practice Hawaiian art forms to help in the survival of day-to-day life using even the simplest tools. Most of these tools are useful for the basic functions of day-to-day life. Hawaiian artists used art to represent Hawaiian gods who carry some significance up to date. Weaving has been an art form of the Hawaiian people and continues to the present day. The types of items woven include hats, baskets, mats, and others, which are of very fine quality. Hawaiian artists continue to practice Hawaiian art forms to ensure that the Hawaiian culture still lives on. If Hawaiian people do not practice Hawaiian art, they will eventually forget the old artistic way of doing things. This may mean that in several centuries to come, the Hawaiian culture may be completely forgotten, and this is not worth anything. Hawaiian artists continue with art because Hawaiian art involves making canoes, which are used in the present day. Artists must pursue the art forms of their ancestors to keep the Hawaiian culture alive.

- What issues make practicing these forms difficult today?

Practicing the Hawaiian art form in the present day proves to be difficult with the evolution of modern ideas and materials. The Hawaiian people in the past used wood, fibers, stone, and shells for artistry, which were available on the land, but today, modern materials such as plastic and metal have been incorporated into Hawaiian art. This proves difficult at some point, as carving metal and plastic requires a lot of skills.

# Part 2A: Assignment 5-2: Introduction to Hula

1. Define the following terms:
2. Ha'a – Ha'a is also hula pahu, which refers to the sacred dance (hula) that was performed for the gods.
3. Ala 'apapa – means the hula (dances) performed to entertain chiefs in the villages.
4. Hula Ku'I – Hula Ku'i is the mixture of older styles of hula with modern influences regarding composition and dressing style.
5. Hula Ki'I – Hula Ki'i is a type of hula where dancers use a real physical image or their bodies as a representation of an image.
6. Olapa – these were the dancers of the hula.
7. Loea – Loea means skill or expertise, cleverness. When this definition is applied to hula, it means a dance performed with a lot of skill.
8. To whom is the hula altar dedicated? What was the sign that the hula kapu were kept?

The hula altar was dedicated to the goddess of love, plants, and forests, known as Laka. Laka was acknowledged widely as the patron of the dance (hula). One of the signs that hula kapu was well kept and that hula training was going well was that the Kinolau stayed fresh and green on the Kuahu.

- What does the hula mean to Hawaiians today?

Hula is very important to Hawaiians today as it is the Hawaiian culture in dance form. Hula

accompanies song or poetry, which helps tell a story about Hawaiian culture. The hula is also a physical expression of the feelings, emotions, thoughts, and experiences of Hawaiian people.

# Part 2B

1. Kahiko presentation
2. What is the name of the halau in your chosen Kahiko Presentation?

MAH Kahiko

- What is the name of the mele in their presentation?

Hula Halau ‘O Kamuela

- Why did you choose this presentation?

The dancer in this presentation is skillful and flawless. This presentation is also my best presentation of the Merrie Monarch Hula Festival.

1. ‘Auana presentation
2. What is the name of the halau in your chosen ‘auana presentation?

Honolulu Kane

- What is the name of the mele in their presentation?

Kane auana

- Why did you choose this presentation?

The performance was excellent, and Kane Auana was in first place that year. The dancers were amazing.

# Part 3

- Where and when did Polynesian tatau begin?

Polynesian culture developed over 2000 years ago. The Polynesian tattoo was widespread across the Polynesian societies around the Pacific Ocean.

- Compare the history and role of tatau in each of the three regions: Samoa, New Zealand, and Hawaii. What is unique about each regional practice?

In the Samoan culture, applying tattoos was done by hand for over 2000 years. Tattooing was used to show ranks and titles. In New Zealand, their tattoo was known as Moko and depicted their refined artistry. The moko was used to show ties to the land and their rank among peers.

- What does the boat in Samoan Pe'a represent?

The boat in Samoan Pe'a represents the ancient times when the Samoan people traveled by boat. The boat is part of the Samoan Culture.

- What difficulties or obstacles do Tatau artists face today?

Tatau artists face the challenge of tattoos from other cultures being incorporated into the tattoos of the Hawaiian culture.

- What did a full-face moko indicate?

A full-face moko indicates one's complete identity as a Maori, including one's family background and history.

- What are the origins of the Polynesian armband?

The Polynesian armband originated from the Maori society. The Polynesian armband lives on up to the present day.

# Part 4: Assignment #5-3- Create your art

- Create an original piece of art based on nature. This could be a drawing, painting, sculpture, poem, song, dance, or any other medium.

COCONUT TREE HULA

The coconut tree sways gently,

Standing tall over other trees,

Performing the hula-hula,

As the wind blows.

- Scan or take a picture of your piece.
- Include a paragraph telling us about your piece, its inspiration from nature, and what it means to you.

The Coconut Tree Hula is a poem that is inspired by the Hawaiian coconut trees. I wrote this poem

because the view of the Hawaiian shores interests me a lot. I love how the shores look with the coconut trees, making the shores an entire gallery. I also love coconut, and this also drove me to the poem that I created.

## References


Dudoit, Mahealani. "Carving a Hawaiian aesthetic." *Oiwi, A Native Hawaiian Journal* 1, no. 1 (1998): 7.

Pukui, Mary Kawena. *'Olelo No'eau: Hawaiian proverbs & poetical sayings*. Vol. 71. Bishop Museum Pr, 1983.

Stillman, Amy Ku'uleialoha. "Remembering the History of the Hawaiian Hula." *Cultural Memory: Reconfiguring History and Identity in the Postcolonial Pacific* (2001): 187-204.

Mallon, Sean, and Uili Fecteau. "Tatau-ed: Polynesian Tatau in Aotearoa." *Mallon and Pereira 2002* (2002): 21.