
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 28, 2005

**HAWAI'I ARTS SEASON CELEBRATES CULTURE AND ARTS
OF THE PACIFIC IN SPRING 2006**
– Hundreds of events take place statewide between February 23 and May 14 –

HONOLULU – Hawai'i is a state that celebrates seasons. There is whale watching season, big surf season, and even canoe racing season. But don't forget about the Hawai'i Arts Season. From February 23 to May 14, that Season is in full swing offering a "snapshot" of Hawai'i's great year-round culture and arts pursuits. Beyond the great beaches and outdoor adventures, there are hundreds of cultural attractions, events and performances waiting to be discovered. On every island the arts thrive. The theme of the 2006 Hawai'i Arts Season is "Celebrating the Pacific." It is a state-wide opportunity to experience the most traditional hula, dating back a thousand years, catch a way off-Broadway production, see an opera, or wander an exhibit of antiquities; the list is endless. Curtains rise on world-class entertainment. Gallery walls are crowded with art, from ancient to new.

On any weekend, on one or more islands, visitors are welcomed to join residents at culture and arts celebrations that can be found in no other state. Hawai'i is the only U.S. state that was once a monarchy, with its own language, music and dance. Here the connection to the cultural richness of the Pacific is easily accessible and guaranteed to be a totally unique arts experience.

How to tap into the culture and arts scene? Plan a visit during the Hawai'i Arts Season. Visit GoHawaii.com/Arts to get started. Many events are free. Advance ticket purchase is wise for the larger events. From the moment of arrival in the islands the Pacific magic takes over. Grammy-winning Hawaiian slack-key guitar music plays in airports and elevators, beachside bars and shopping malls, folks say Aloha, and a dozen free publications are waiting in street displays to give directions to hundreds of only-in-Hawai'i arts season events.

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The Hawai'i Arts Season 2006 calendar will feature three new "blockbuster-don't miss" additions which arts and culture enthusiasts will want to add to their travel itinerary. They range from "never seen before" exhibits at the Honolulu Academy of Arts to a book and music festival with prominent authors and entertainers.

A WINDOW IN TIME

The Arts Season begins with the once-in-a-lifetime exhibition, "Life in the Pacific of the 1700s," at the Honolulu Academy of Arts. Captain James Cook, the Westerner who sailed the Pacific, mapping the island and continental coastlines and circumnavigating the globe, is noted his "discovery" of the Hawaiian Islands in the late 1700s. As he extensively sailed the Pacific, he and his crew collected hundreds of cultural objects at each island stop. The collection was contributed to and held in safety, since 1779, at the University in Gottingen, Germany. It has only been available for scholars to study, never exhibited in a museum. The collection, to be shown only in Hawai'i, includes art objects from Pacific islands including: Tahiti, New Hebrides, New Caledonia, Tonga, Marquesas, New Zealand, Hawai'i, all pre-dating Western contact.

A second Academy exhibit, Captain James Cook in Kealakekua Bay, shares etchings and drawings depicting Capt. Cook's demise on Hawai'i's Big Island, on his third voyage to the Sandwich Islands.

CRATER FESTIVAL REDUX

The 70's clothes and music are called "retro," the Peace symbol is laminated on surfboards, but some folks still talk of the long ago, 60's and 70's mini-Woodstock festivals inside Diamond Head Crater. On April 1, dig out the "love beads" and "have a beautiful day." For the first time in 30 years, newbies can finally experience what their elders have reminisced about. Now re-named "The Diamond Head International Music Festival," it will be a day filled with international rock and pop music stars, joined by Hawai'i's top entertainers on the Crater Stage. Food and craft booths will rise and the world's only "party inside a volcano" will rock on!

WORDS & MUSIC

Honolulu Hale, city hall in downtown Honolulu, will be the site of the April 22-23, all-new Arts Season event. The Hawai'i Book and Music Festival will be packed with book signings by New York Times best-selling authors and over 100 prominent local writers. Tent pavilions will stretch across the lawns, filled with artists, arts and

crafts, book sales and even “poetry slams.” There will be storytellers, contemporary Hawaiian music, games and a “who’s your favorite character” parade. Kids can dress as their favorite literary hero, inviting a large number of Harry Potter look-alikes. The book and music event is sponsored by the City and County of Honolulu and a group of local companies.

Hawai'i also celebrates with parties, programs and extraordinary exhibits across the Islands of Aloha. Here's a snapshot of the unique experiences that await:

LAVA FLOW

To experience the islands, and the phenomena of their creation and continual growth, visit the new Bishop Museum Science Adventure Center, featuring an erupting volcano and deep-sea remote-operated discovery machines. Pump hot lava through a lava plume, crawl through a lava cave and understand the mythical power of an active volcano. On a quieter note, enjoy the Mary Kawena Pukui Storytelling Festival on the Museum's Great Lawn. This festival brings together noted storytellers from the Pacific Rim and beyond, sharing the oral traditions and the art of storytelling.

MAUI CELEBRATES

Easter weekend on Maui, April 13 to 16, is when Hawai'i's finest artisans, teachers, hula dancers and chanters gather at the Ritz-Carlton Kapalua for the annual Celebration of the Arts. Themed *Kukulu I Ho'oilina - Establish a Legacy*, the four day event begins each day in traditional Hawaiian style. First a silent and reflective pre-dawn dip in the ocean, followed by the cultural specialists leading the group as they chant up the sun. All-day art adventures and workshops are free and open to the public.

Also at the Ritz-Carlton Kapalua, The Masters of Hawaiian Slack Key Guitar Series livens up every Wednesday evening of the Arts Season. On Tuesday and Friday mornings the Ritz offers a presentation by Clifford Nae'ole of the *Hawaiian Sense of Place*, including the award-winning film saga of the Hawaiian people; *And Then There Were None*.

The Maui Arts and Cultural Center and Hui No'eau have art exhibit and performance calendars with jam-packed Arts Season weekends. “Friday Night Is Art Night” is a “don't miss” at the galleries in Lahaina town. WOW! Wailea on Wednesdays features an art-packed afternoon at the Shops at Wailea.

HILO HULA

Hawai'i was once a monarchy. Hawaiian royalty loved parties. Keeping that culture alive and well, hula *halau* (schools) from every island participate in the annual Merrie Monarch Festival in Hilo town on Hawai'i's Big Island, April 16-22. For those who don't get a ticket (there are only 5,000), there is still plenty of hula. A full Merrie Monarch performance by 28-year festival participant, Halau Mohala 'Ilima, under the direction of noted *kumu* (teacher) Maupana de Silva, happens April 1, at the historic Hawaii Theatre in downtown Honolulu.

More on the Big Island. For Arts Season the Volcano Art Center offers arts and writing programs, Pele inspired painting and sculpture exhibits and storytelling events bring the legends and lore of the volcanoes to life. The Season culminates with a Hawaiian music concert by the famed Lim Family of Kohala and the Na Mea Hawai'i Hula Kahiko performance on the hula platform overlooking Kilauea Crater.

GUITARS ON KAUA'I

Every week of the Season the strum of slack key guitars fills the air on the island of Kaua'i. At the Hanalei Family Community Center musical tributes are offered to sea turtles, Hawaiian monarchs, famous musicians, Hawaiian cowboys and historic events. The birthday of one of Hawai'i's most beloved monarchs, Prince Kuhio, is celebrated with an all-day festival at the Grand Hyatt Kauai Resort and Spa. The Royal Order of Kamehameha opens the day with the protocol to honor the birth of a ruler. Dancing, music and a *lu'au* follows.

FIRST FRIDAY

Plan to be in downtown Honolulu for First Friday evening of every month of Arts Season. Over 25 galleries and shops are tucked between great Asian food eateries and Chinese herb shops, all over Chinatown. On First Friday the galleries open their doors and spill onto the sidewalks with shows by Hawai'i's established and emerging artists. Catch glass blowing at The ARTS at Marks Garage, find kitschy, fun stuff at Roy Venter's Gallery, see classic beauty in the paintings of Peggy Hopper and way-off-the-wall art happenings at 39 Hotel. The Contemporary Museum at First Hawaiian Center in downtown has cutting-edge new shows. For a "rest stop" in the gallery-hop, the Hawai'i State Art Museum (HiSAM) celebrates the fine artists of the islands in their *Enriched by Diversity* exhibit, along with their revolving and permanent collections. Every downtown eaterie sandwiches food with art.

ISLAND BLOSSOMS

May Day is Lei Day in Hawai'i. From bankers to busboys, everyone wears a lei. The biggest event of the day on O'ahu is at Waikiki's Kapi'olani Park at the base of Diamond Head. Hula presentations celebrate the flowers of the islands. A day-long, city-wide lei making competition is an all-day Kodak moment. Lei sellers give mini lessons on lei making. Lei princesses are crowned on every island. As the sun sets the lights come on for one of O'ahu's great traditions, The Brothers Cazimero May Day Concert, when over 7,000 fans gather in the Waikiki Shell to enjoy an evening of Hawaiian music and hula.

Across the state, many hotel employees receive a lei from the boss and pass it on to a visitor, always with a kiss and a smile. Hotel lobbies are filled with Hawaiian crafters, employee groups dance hula, play music and celebrate the day. Each island has a Lei Day celebration.

MORE, MORE, MORE

Productions by the Hawaii Opera Theatre, the Honolulu Symphony, Ballet Hawaii and many great local theater companies fill every weekend of the Hawai'i Arts Season calendar. Neighbor island venues, like the spectacular Maui Arts and Cultural Center and the Volcano Art Center on Hawai'i's Big Island, offer productions unique to that island, as well as host national and international music, theater and dance productions. Pacific cultures will be honored by Ballet Folklorico of the Philippines and the Nrity Agram Dance Ensemble from India. Both Kaua'i and Maui have long-running slack key guitar festivals. The music and dance of Fiji, Samoa, New Zealand and more are presented at the Polynesian Cultural Center on the North Shore of O'ahu. A glowing moment in the Arts Season is the Center's Annual Fireknife Dance Competition!

Free in Honolulu: Every week in the Arts Season visitors can enjoy the free classes in Waikiki and neighbor island hotels. For example; create at an ancient rock art print or take a free ukulele class or enjoy a presentation on Hawaiian Collectibles like ceramic hula girls, old Aloha shirts, or surf memorabilia, all at Outrigger Waikiki on the Beach. Take free Hawaiian chant or a hula classes at Native Books – Nā Mea Hawai'i in Ward Warehouse. On the Neighbor Islands, check with the hotel concierge for the multitude of free events hosted at each hotel. Wonderful art adventures are everywhere. Parks and shopping center stages are filled with entertainment, every weekend.

The Hawai'i Arts Season is sponsored by the Hawai'i Tourism Authority and the Hawai'i Visitors and Convention Bureau. For a complete listing of Hawai'i Arts Season events, visit GoHawaii.com/Arts.

For information about planning your next vacation to Hawai'i – The Islands of Aloha – visit HVCB's website at GoHawaii.com/Vacation or call 1-800-GOHAWAII.

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