



## BISHOP MUSEUM

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### **Rapa Nui: The Untold Stories of Easter Island**

*Bishop Museum original exhibit explores the cultural, scientific and artistic contributions of Rapa Nui*

**Honolulu, Hawai‘i** – Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum presents a new exhibit that delves into the wonders of Rapa Nui, or Easter Island. Showcasing Bishop Museum’s extensive cultural and natural science collections from the island, “**Rapa Nui: The Untold Stories of Easter Island**” draws from recent studies conducted by Bishop Museum researchers and collaborators to highlight some lesser-known stories about the island. More than 150 cultural treasures and never-before-seen biological specimens from the museum’s collections will be on display together for the first time in the museum’s history.

The exhibit will be on display in the Castle Memorial Building from Nov. 3, 2018–May 5, 2019, and will be joined by a complementary exhibit “Ka U‘i: Contemporary Art from Rapa Nui,” curated by Macarena Oñate and featuring works by eight Rapa Nui-based artists who explore Rapanui identity, politics, the environment, and ancient art forms through contemporary media including sculpture, photography and painting. As part of this multifaceted endeavor, a concurrent exhibit, “Hare Tao‘a, Hare Tanata” will open at the Museo Antropológico Padre Sebastián Englert (MAPSE), the local museum on Rapa Nui, from Nov. 13, 2018–Feb. 2019. This collaborative exhibit has been developed by Bishop Museum together with colleagues at MAPSE, and will feature a highly significant stone carved with intricate petroglyphs from the Bishop Museum’s collections, images from Bishop Museum’s Archives, and objects from the collections of the Rapa Nui museum. The creation of the exhibitions “Rapa Nui: The Untold Stories of Easter Island” and “Hare Tao‘a, Hare Tanata” is a prime example of how Pacific island communities and relationships can be strengthened through museum initiatives.

The “Rapa Nui: The Untold Stories of Easter Island” exhibit will allow visitors to go beyond the world-famous moai (carved stone statues) to learn about the unique environment of Rapa Nui, the island’s history, and about how the island community is striving for sustainability in a global context. For

example, visitors will learn about the new marine protected area that was recently established to protect and preserve Rapa Nui's unique ocean environment, and where Bishop Museum scientists have and continue to carry out extensive research. These waters are home to a high number of fish species that are endemic to Rapa Nui, meaning they are found nowhere else in the world. The endemism in Rapa Nui waters is second only to Hawai'i, and visitors will come face-to-face with specimens of endemic species of fish from the museum's ichthyology collections. The exhibit will include specimens that were discovered and described by Bishop Museum ichthyologist Dr. John E. Randall in collaboration with his Chilean colleague Dr. Alfredo Cea, each with its own story to tell.

A highlight of the exhibit will be the museum's entire collection of 30 kai kai, or string figures, used to recount oral traditions and tell stories, which were collected by ethnographer Alfred Métraux in 1934–35. An interactive experience will allow visitors to try their hands at kai kai and learn some of the stories told through string figures. Métraux collected these figures from Amelia Tepano, the most knowledgeable cultural expert in this practice at the time of his visit. Today, kai kai are passed down from generation to generation and are shared during cultural events, including the annual Tapati cultural festival. Some of Métraux's historical photographs will also be displayed as part of an interactive component that allows visitors to compare images of landscapes from more than 80 years ago with more recent photographs that were taken by a Bishop Museum research team in 2016.

At the center of this original exhibit will be an immersive rock garden that shows how previous generations of Rapanui people transformed their island home by employing an innovative and sustainable approach to agriculture. Visitors will be able to walk across the immersive "garden" to learn how the practice of building these unique gardens supported the construction of around 1,000 large moai statues. Beyond the garden will be a full-size 3-D model of the moai Hoa Hakananai'a. This moai, which is in the British Museum's collections, stands nearly eight feet tall. Intricate carved petroglyphs on his back include fertility symbols associated with the taŋata manu (birdman) competition that took place each spring on Rapa Nui until the 1860s.

A number of moai will be joined by the largest collection of artifacts in one place etched with the enigmatic roŋo roŋo script. This written script, which has eluded decipherment, was carved into wooden tablets and staffs. Chiefly adornments such as ua (ceremonial staffs), rei miro (breastplates) and intricate feathered headdresses will attest to the skill and artistry of Rapanui artists. Recent examples of costumes worn during the island's Tapati cultural festival will be on display together with images of this annual festival that serves to celebrate and perpetuate Rapa Nui cultural traditions.

"The cultural achievements of Rapa Nui are truly remarkable and have drawn worldwide attention for good reason. Over the past decade, new research has challenged the popular narrative of resource degradation and cultural collapse on Rapa Nui, replacing this view with one of resilience, sustainability and success," said Dr. Mara Mulrooney, curator of the exhibit and the museum's director of cultural resources. "We are thrilled to be working with the Rapanui community to tell their stories here at Bishop

Museum, where we care for some of the largest and most significant holdings of cultural and natural science collections from this incredible island.”

Bishop Museum is grateful to contributing sponsor Matson for support of “Rapa Nui: The Untold Stories of Easter Island.”

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### **Bishop Museum Admission, Parking & Hours**

#### General Admission

Adults: \$24.95

Seniors (65+): \$21.95

Youth (4–17): \$16.95

Children (3 and under): Free

Children age 16 and younger must be accompanied by an adult.

#### Hawai‘i Residents, Hawai‘i College Students and Military with ID

Adults: \$14.95

Seniors (65+): \$12.95

Youth (4–17): \$10.95

Children (3 and under): Free

#### Planetarium

Planetarium shows are an additional \$2.95 per person per daytime show; free for members with ID.

#### Parking

\$5 per car per visit; free for members with sticker.

#### Hours

Open every day from 9 a.m.–5 p.m.

Closed on Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day

Bishop Museum Café by Highway Inn offers a limited menu of Hawaiian plates, poke bowls, sandwiches, and snacks from 10:30 a.m.–3:30 p.m. daily. Museum members receive a 10% discount with their membership card.

### **About Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum:**

Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum’s mission is to inspire our community and visitors through the exploration and celebration of the extraordinary history, culture, and environment of Hawai‘i and the Pacific. The Museum was founded in 1889 by Charles Reed Bishop in memory of his wife Bernice Pauahi Bishop, a royal descendant of King Kamehameha I. Today, the Museum thrives as an educational center for the community and is widely regarded as the world’s premier institution for Hawaiian and Pacific content. Its vast collections of more than 25 million objects represent nine disciplines and include more than 22 million biological specimens, 77,000 cultural objects, 115,000 historical publications, and one million photographs, films, works of art, audio recordings, and manuscripts. These collections tell the stories of the cultures and biodiversity of Hawai‘i and the Pacific as well as the proud legacy of scholarly research spanning more than 125 years. Bishop Museum proudly serves more than 200,000 visitors each year, including 20,000 children on school visits. To learn more about the Museum’s research, collections, exhibits, and programs, visit [www.BishopMuseum.org](http://www.BishopMuseum.org), follow @BishopMuseum on Twitter and Instagram, become a fan of Bishop Museum on Facebook, visit Bishop

Museum's YouTube channel at [youtube.com/user/BishopMuseum](https://www.youtube.com/user/BishopMuseum), or call (808) 847-3511. Bishop Museum is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.