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REPRESENTING THE ALI'I AND MONARCHY:
DRESS, DIPLOMACY, AND FEATHERWORK IN HAWAI'I

BY
TESS ELISE ANDERSON

SUBMITTED TO SCRIPPS COLLEGE IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
DEGREE OF BACHELOR ARTS

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Table of Contents

Table of Contents.....	2
Acknowledgments.....	3
Land and Language Acknowledgements.....	5
Introduction.....	8
Part I: The Visual Language of Dress: Feathers, Fabrics, and ‘Fusion’	12
“‘Fusion Fashion’ and <i>He Alo Ā He Alo</i> Encounters.....	16
The <i>Pā‘ū</i> and The Holokū.....	19
The ‘ <i>Ahu‘ula</i> and the Military Uniform.....	27
Part II: ‘Fusion Fashion’ and Photography: Kalākaua Dynasty Fashions	33
Self-Fashioning: The Queen’s Coronation Portrait.....	33
The Royal Jubilee: ‘Fusion’ Photography, Fabrics, and Feathers	41
Part III: The ‘Iolani Palace and The Ali‘i Garment Reproduction Project	52
The Importance of the Archive, Access, and He Alo ā He Alo.....	52
The <i>Ali‘i</i> Garment Reproduction Project: Working with Artisans, Cultural Practitioners, and Communities.....	60
Conclusion.....	70
Bibliography.....	72
Figures	84

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I owe profound thanks to Christina Hellmich, Ellen Pearlstein, Leona Hamano, Zita Cup Choy, Bernice Akamine, Glen Warton, and Kawika Lum-Nelmida for gifting me and my thesis project your time, knowledge, and *aloha*. My conversations with you all have expanded my horizons, allowed me to be an active and engaged researcher, and have ultimately humbled me by your efforts to help a student who reached out. Again, I thank Professor Lum for initiating and accompanying me throughout many of these connections. Mahalo nui loa!

I would like to thank my two best friends, Natalie Akins and Talia Perluss. It has not been easy throughout these past four years; we have supported each

other through losing a loved one, a pandemic that continues to threaten our loved ones, periods of intense depression, isolation, and academic stress. Despite these trials and tribulations, we have experienced the happiest moments: cathartic late-night laughs, unforgettable adventures abroad, regular meals at Mallott, and returning home to our feline children. I am so thankful for your friendship and sincerely congratulate you on finishing your theses.

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Land and Language Acknowledgments

I prioritize acknowledging that the research and writing of this thesis took place in the unceded, ancestral territories of the Tongva, Gabrieleño, and Serrano peoples. These tribes persist in calling this land their home, despite facing past and present actions of erasure by colonizers. Upon this land, I am a guest of academic study in Claremont, CA, and a settler who calls Long Beach, CA, her home. I can currently trace my family's roots to Cefalù, Sicilia, Italia, and Edmundston, New Brunswick, Canada. Edmundston lies upon a traditional gathering place and homeland of the Maliseet (Wolastoqiyik) peoples and is continuously protected by the Madawaska Maliseet First Nation. I encourage the readers of this thesis to consider the lands they utilize and become conscious of their Indigenous roots, histories, and the contemporary realities of colonial settlement and occupation.

I also would like to acknowledge the *pae'āina* (archipelago) of Hawai'i. I have been a digital and literal guest of the *pae'āina* visiting for my dual academic thesis in art history and art conservation and heritage science. The *pae'āina* is a territory recognized by Indigenous Hawaiians as their ancestral grandmother, Papahānaumoku.¹ I recognize that her majesty Queen Lili'uokalani yielded the Hawaiian Kingdom, and these territories under duress and protest to the United States to avoid the bloodshed of her people. I further recognize that Hawai'i remains an illegally occupied state of America.²

¹ Native Hawaiian Place of Learning Advancement Office, "'Auamo: To Collectively Engage: Land Acknowledgement," *University of Hawai'i, Mānoa*, accessed April 26, 2022, <http://manoa.hawaii.edu/nhpol/auamo/>.

² Ibid.

I recognize that each moment I am researching, visiting digitally, and in Hawai‘i, she nourishes and gifts me with the opportunity to breathe her air, eat from her soils, drink from her waters, bathe in her sun, swim in her oceans, be kissed by her rains, and be embraced by her winds. I recognize that generations of Indigenous Hawaiians and their knowledge systems shaped Hawai‘i in sustainable ways, allowing me to enjoy these gifts today.³

In this thesis, I intentionally use *‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i* language terms. After providing a translation in English once, I often do not offer a translation again to retain the indigenous meaning as possible rather than approximate with English equivalencies. The Hawaiian Kingdom prioritized education and healthcare for its indigenous and settler island inhabitants. By 1893, the population neared one-hundred percent literacy.⁴ Under the occupation of the *pae ‘āina* by the United States, the American government intentionally infiltrated Hawaiian education: enforcing denationalization efforts, like banning the *‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i* language.

Thanks to the grandchildren of the last generation of native-speaking *kūpuna* (elders), the second half of the twentieth century witnessed revitalization efforts to teach *‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i* to the next generation of *kānaka maoli* (native Hawaiians).⁵ ‘Keiki Kawai‘ae‘a, one of the founders of the Hawaiian immersion movement in Hawai‘i and director of the University of Hawai‘i at Hilo’s Ka Haka ‘Ula O Ke‘elikolani College of Hawaiian Language, explains:

“Saving languages is part of our knowledge pool. Language contains the way we see the world knowledge that has been created by that specific

³ University of Hawai‘i Foundation, “Saving the Hawaiian Language,” accessed April 26, 2022. <https://www.uhfoundation.org/saving-hawaiian-language>.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

group, knowledge that is unique to any other place in the world. It connects us to our identity of who we are and where we come from. Lose the language and you lose the culture, the knowledge pool, and that way of seeing and being in the world.”⁶

For this, I am grateful as a guest and a student. I seek to support the varied strategies that the Indigenous peoples of Hawai‘i use to protect their land, communities, and cultural heritage. I commit to dedicating time and resources to working in solidarity.⁷

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Native Hawaiian Place of Learning Advancement Office, “*Auamo: To Collectively Engage: Land Acknowledgement.*”

Introduction

In April 1887, Queen Kapi‘olani and her sister-in-law, Princess Lydia Lili‘uokalani, embarked upon a 106-day diplomatic journey from the *pae ‘āina* to the other side of the world.⁸ The royal women set sail to San Francisco, the first stop of many before arriving at their ultimate destination, Queen Victoria’s Golden Jubilee in London.⁹ The seventh monarch of the Hawaiian Kingdom, King David Kalākaua, was invited to the Jubilee, but because of the death of his youngest sister, Miriam Kapili Likelike (Mrs. A. S. Cleghorn), the *mō ‘ī* (king) requested that his Queen and Royal Heir represent the Hawaiian delegation at the festivities.¹⁰ Accompanying the nine-person traveling party were fifty-five suitcases full of daywear and evening gowns, men’s attire, uniforms, shoes, headwear, jewelry, fans, and *hulu manu* (featherwork).¹¹ As royal dignitaries, the travelers had to be prepared for many encounters and appearances with heads of state, the powerful political and social elite, ordinary citizens, students, workers, and journalists. As Queen Kapi‘olani and Princess Lili‘uokalani attended tours and dinner parties in each migratory sojourn, political allies and the press scrutinized their behavior, appearances, and majesty. Since the royal women

⁸ The Royal Party traveled over 7,000 miles, stopping in San Francisco, Chicago, D.C., Boston, New York, Liverpool, Norwich, and London; Teresa Williams Valencia, “Feathers, Diamonds, and Gowns: Hawaiian Fashion in the King Kalākaua Era,” in *Ho‘oulu Hawai‘i: The King Kalākaua Era*, edited by Healoha Johnston, (Honolulu Museum of Art, 2018): 182.

⁹ Royal Jubilees are celebrations held in honor of important anniversaries of being on the throne, in Queen Victoria’s case, her 50th year.; Valencia, “Feathers, Diamonds, and Gowns: Hawaiian Fashion in the King Kalākaua Era,” in *Ho‘oulu Hawai‘i: The King Kalākaua Era*, 182.

¹⁰ Queen Lili‘uokalani alludes to her brother inviting her upon the journey in efforts to cheer her up in her book, *Hawai‘i’s Story by Hawai‘i’s Queen*, (Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1898).

¹¹ Valencia, “Feathers, Diamonds, and Gowns: Hawaiian Fashion in the King Kalākaua Era,” in *Ho‘oulu Hawai‘i: The King Kalākaua Era*, 183.; While this quantity of ensembles and adornments may be considered unnecessary and excessive in modern standards, in 1950, Princess Elizabeth (Queen Elizabeth II) was rumored to bring 40 suitcases for a three-month vacation in Malta.; Kitty Kelly, *The Royals*, (Sydney: Bantam Books, 1999).

represented Hawaiian prosperity, political sovereignty, and modernity, they had to supplement their first impression through iconographic fashions. At the request of Queen Victoria, all of the diplomatic representatives in attendance of her Jubilee were to wear clothing characteristic of their home country.¹² For the *ali‘i* (chiefs) of the nineteenth century, especially in the Kalākaua era, Hawaiian ensembles had already adapted into ‘fusion fashions’¹³ of Victorian-era aesthetics and traditional *ali‘i* iconography.¹⁴ In response to Victoria’s wish and the Kalākaua era’s systemic promotion of cultural heritage and national pride, Queen Kapi‘olani commissioned showstopping evening gowns accentuating the most precious materials of the Hawaiian Islands—feathers.¹⁵

Various literary, graphic, and physical materials have been preserved, ensuring our contemporary access to the *ali‘i* dress and adornments from the late-eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.¹⁶ Remnants of the commissioned diplomatic garments composed of fabric and feathers only survive today in delicate scraps and embellishments, cared for in the storage rooms of museums.¹⁷ These ensembles were confined to a particular era of Victorian dress, and once the mode

⁴ ‘Iolani Palace Tour, “Fashion Fit for Royalty Tour,” March 16, 2022.

¹³ ‘Fusion Fashion’ describes “the incorporation of design elements from other cultures into fashion that originates in the western world,” (B1); Linda B. Arthur, “Fusion Fashion: East Met West in Hawaiian Textiles,” in *Paideusis - Journal for Interdisciplinary and Cross-Cultural Studies*, vol. 6, (2012): B1-21.

¹⁴ Valencia, “Feathers, Diamonds, and Gowns: Hawaiian Fashion in the King Kalākaua Era,” 186.

¹⁵ Valencia, “Feathers, Diamonds, and Gowns,” 186-189.

¹⁶ The literary/oral sources required to discuss the Hawaiian Kingdom, accurately and responsibly, come from both Hawaiian and English language sources in the form of newspapers, personal accounts, ‘*ōiwi* (native Hawaiians; “bones of the people”) scholarship, *oli* (chant), *mele* (song), and *mo‘olelo* (oral history).; Kamanamaikalani B. Beamer, “Ali‘i Selective Appropriation of Modernity: Examining colonial assumptions in Hawai‘i prior to 1893,” (University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, Hawai‘i), 139-141.

¹⁷ Marques Hanalei Marzan and Samuel M. ‘Ohukani‘ōhi‘a Gon III, ed., “The Aesthetics, Materials and Construction of Hawaiian Featherwork,” *Royal Hawaiian Featherwork: Nā Hulu Ali‘i*, (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2015), 26-31.

of the late 1880s fell out of fashion, the pieces were put away: sometimes lost, damaged by moisture and insects, or repurposed for other ensembles.¹⁸ The more versatile accessories and adornments were pieces such as fans, headwear, jewelry, *lei hulu* (feather necklaces and headpieces), and *'ahu 'ula* (capes and cloaks). Many *ali 'i* ensured the preservation of their collections by willing their *nā hulu ali 'i* (royal featherworks) and belongings to their descendants, or into the care of museums, like the Hawaiian National Museum (1872-1891) or the Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum after it opened in 1889.¹⁹

In this thesis, *Part I: The Visual Language of Dress: Feathers, Fabrics, and 'Fusion,'* provides the historic background of Hawaiian traditional dress, *hulu manu*, and 'fusion fashions' that manifested within Hawai'i from the late-eighteenth century to the late-nineteenth century. By analyzing case studies of historic *pā'ū*, *holokū*, *'ahu 'ula*, and military uniforms, I highlight the significance of Hawaiian dress as an iconographic tool of socio-political, spiritual, gendered, and diplomatic power. In so doing I also emphasize the persistence of *ali 'i* jurisdiction in times of indigenous and *haole* (foreigner) encounters. In *Part II: Self Fashioning through Portraiture and Photography: Ali 'i Agency, Adaptation,*

¹⁸ Personal conversation with 'Iolani Palace's Collections Manager, Leona Hamano, and Iolani Palace Historian, Zita Cup Choy.; Ellen Pearlstein and Irene Taurins, "Feathers On and Off the Bird: Documenting and Caring for Featherwork: Connecting to Collections Care Online Community," streamed October 11, 2018, accessed July 5, 2021, <https://www.connectingtocollections.org/caring-for-feathers/>.

¹⁹ The Bishop Museum was established to house the Hawaiian royal family's collection of Hawaiian art, objects, and heirlooms; later, expanding to include collections of documents, photographs, objects, and art from Hawai'i and other Pacific island cultures. The Bishop was founded in 1889 by Charles Reed Bishop in honor of his late wife, the Princess Bernice Pauahi Bishop, the last *ali 'i* descendent of the royal Kamehameha line and an established philanthropist. Her lands amassed nine percent of the Hawaiian islands and after her passing, she willed the revenues of these lands to continue to operate the Kamehameha Schools (established in 1887); Bishop Museum, "Legacy: Inspire The Next Generation," from website, accessed April 1, 2022, <https://www.bishopmuseum.org/legacy/>.

and Appearances, the Kalākaua Dynasty’s utilization of photographic portraiture and the staging of *nā hulu ali ‘i*, European regalia, and intentionally crafted ‘fusion fashions’ are accentuated as diplomatic tools used to represent Hawaiian sovereignty and modernity for both local and international audiences. The final section, *Part III: The ‘Iolani Palace and The Ali ‘i Garment Reproduction Project*, demonstrates the powerful persistence of these *ali ‘i* ensembles as iconographic manifestations of Hawaiian sovereignty, chiefly presence, and Hawaiian cultural heritage. Through the conception, creation, and implementation of the ‘Iolani Palace’s *Ali ‘i Garment Reproduction Project*, these reproductions of diplomatic dress enable cultural practitioners of featherwork, designers, fashion historians, museum professionals, and visitors to animate and experience the presence of the *ali ‘i* fashions in three-dimensional form.

These preserved modes of transmission have furnished scholars, artisans, and cultural heritage specialists with the tools to academically deconstruct and artistically replicate *ali ‘i* clothing from the Kalākaua Dynasty of the Hawaiian Kingdom. Contemporary reproductions of historic royal fashions are an act of restoration that has allowed indigenous communities, island inhabitants, and visitors to meet face-to-face with reproductions of Hawaiian material cultural heritage. While traditionally restoration emphasizes returning a work of art, or an artifact to its visual original state, in the case of the reproduction project, the garments of the *ali ‘i*, that no longer exist in full, are given a second life through reproduction.²⁰ In this contemporary encounter, these products and instruments of

²⁰ Wilkins, “Ruffling Feathers,” 234.

Hawaiian and foreign exchange, indigenous agency, and adaptation have survived to tell the *mo‘olelo* (stories) of their *ali‘i* and their diplomatic presence in Hawai‘i and throughout the world. This *mo‘olelo* reveals the *ali‘i* utilized traditional dress and its adaptations into ‘fusion fashions’ as agents and representations of power, status, and diplomacy between the late-eighteenth century and the late-nineteenth century. By harnessing the technological innovation of photographic portraiture the Kalākaua Dynastic Monarchs publicized iconographic compositions of Hawaiian nationality, contemporary kingship, and international presence. As dress and portraiture brokered diplomatic encounters between the Hawaiian Kingdom and the world, the reproductions of these garments in the twenty-first century represent another form of agency, where the Hawaiian communities of today have reproduced and care for ensembles that embody their *ali‘i* and their legacies. In a world where people are absorbing information and media faster than ever before, these reproductions force visitors to slow down, meet them face-to-face, listen to their stories, and realize the visual language and power of dress.

Part I: The Visual Language of Dress: Feathers, Fabrics, and ‘Fusion’

“what is made for the being, for the body—to adorn, to beautify, to bedeck—is also food for the spirit, for the soul. Within a garment’s textures and designs is a message from its creator binding the creator to the wearer. The velvet scarf, the ‘ahu ‘ula, and the feathered maihole all become the interwoven representations of encounters between those who made them, who gave them, who wore them, and who received them, and each signifies the creation of enduring relationships and the commitment to future engagement.”²¹

-Noelle M. K. Y. Kahanu and Maile Andrade

²¹ Maile Andrade and Noelle M. K. Y. Kahanu, “Introduction: A Journey of Encounters and Engagement,” in *Royal Hawaiian Featherwork: Nā Hulu Ali‘i*, (San Francisco, CA: Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, 2015): 21.

As with any meeting between two persons or groups, appearance and dress play a role in how each party identifies and perceives the other. When a diplomatic encounter occurs between international entities, it is pivotal that each consular agent dress in a manner that alludes to the representatives' positions of political power and their national identities. In these meetings of diplomacy,²² "habitus, gender, and representation are closely intertwined."²⁴ To dress one's figure—enveloping the flesh in assemblages of identity and materiality—is an active process of connecting one's body to a place, time, gender, age, and status in society.²⁶ In pre-contact Hawai'i, presenting the body and its adornments corresponded with visual signifiers of rank and social hierarchies.²⁷ Through various layers of ornamentation, the physical body was embellished with protective symbols, materials, and rituals.²⁸

The most exclusive form of chiefly Hawaiian dress and adornment was to wrap one's most sacred parts—the head, neck, and spine—in *hulu manu*.²⁹ The *hulu manu* of the Hawaiian Archipelago have long embodied the *mana*,

²² Diplomacy is defined for this thesis as "the nature of political authority and representation."; ;Catriona Standfield, "Gendering the practice turn in diplomacy," in *European Journal of International Relations* 26 (51), (2020): 146. <https://doi-org.ccl.idm.oclc.org/10.1177/1354066120940351>.

²⁴ While the enmeshment of dress, gender, and race have recently been explored in international relations scholarship; further inquiry must be broached in interdisciplinary research initiatives; Standfield, "Gendering the practice turn in diplomacy," 148.

²⁶ Jennifer Craik, *The Face of Fashion: Cultural Studies in Fashion*, (London: Routledge, 1993). <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203409428>

²⁷ Kaeppler, "Adorning the Adorned, 119.

²⁸ These layers included the skin with *kākau* (tattoo), clothing, chiefly adornments, like featherwork; and environmental elements like *kāhili* (chiefly standards), which signify and protect the presence of the *ali'i*; Kaeppler, "Adorning the Adorned," 115-119

²⁹ In special and rare cases, *pā* (pearl shell), *niho* (teeth) and *lauaho* (hair) are also utilized in feather arts: Marques Hanalei Marzan and Samuel M. 'Ohukani'ōhi'a Gon III, ed., "The Aesthetics, Materials and Construction of Hawaiian Featherwork," *Royal Hawaiian Featherwork: Nā Hulu Ali'i*, (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2015), 31.

genealogy, *‘akumākua* (ancestral spirits), and political power of the *ali ‘i*.³⁰ When crafted into *nā hulu ali ‘i*, the “royal jewels” of the Hawaiian environment extend the *mana* of the *akua* (gods) to the *ali ‘i* wearing or in possession of the piece.³¹ The *ali ‘i* harnessed the power of *hulu manu* and featherwork as visual merits, placing their rank, status, and inherent *mana* above *maka ‘āinana* and other rivaling *ali ‘i*.³² The feather arts utilized by men were *‘ahu ‘ula* and *maiho* (helmets), while women wore *lei hulu*.³³ Both men and women harnessed the art of *kāhili* (royal standards), which visually reinforced the social “system of sacred symbols and ritual objectifications,” which divided society on a class basis rather than gender. These featherworks are iconographic symbols of “the visible manifestation of invisible concepts of knowledge, and specifically to concepts about the embodiment of the divine.”³⁴ Chiefly regalia and dress were both a right only the *ali ‘i* could harness, at risk of violating the sacred system of *kapu* (forbidden; restrictions of taboo)³⁵, which reinforced the social, religious,

³⁰ The utilization of feathers in chiefly clothing is prevalent among many Pacific cultures and is theorized to have arrived in Hawai‘i by Polynesian voyagers who settled the archipelago around 1000 C.E.; Leah Caldera, ed., *Royal Hawaiian Featherwork: Nā Hulu Ali ‘i* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2015), 10-13, 30.

³¹ Clothing in Hawai‘i followed *tapu* (sacred system) where clothing embodies personal *mana*. So, wearing another person’s clothing, especially older relatives, or personas of higher genealogical rank, puts one’s body at risk of damaging their own *mana*.; Vibrant and iridescent “jewels” came in many colors were mostly sourced from the endemic birds—*‘i‘iwi* (*Vestiaria coccinea*; scarlet red), *mamo* (*Drepanis pacifica*; orange-yellow; black), *‘ō‘ō* (*Moho spp.*; lemon-yellow; black), *‘ō‘ū* (*Psittirostra psittacea*; dark green), *‘apapane* (*‘akakane*, *Himatione sanguinea*; crimson), and the *‘akialoa* (*Akialoa ellisiana*; bright green; grey; olive-green)—of the Hawaiian environment.; Marzan and ‘Ohukani‘ōhi‘a Gon III, ed., “The Aesthetics,” 26-31; Kaeppler, “Adorning the Adorned,” 123.

³² Malo, 1951 (1898): 29-30, 782.; Marzan and ‘Ohukani‘ōhi‘a Gon III, “The Aesthetics,” 26-31.

³³ Kaeppler, “Adorning the Adorned,” 119.

³⁴ Kaeppler, “Adorning the Adorned,” 119.

³⁵ “The *kapu* system of ancient Hawai‘i, a system of societal protection based upon religious beliefs, hinged on the concept of *mana* being both a positive and negative force,” Teresa Wilkins, “Ruffling Feathers: Hawaiian Featherart, 1770-2012,” PhD diss. (Indiana University, 2014): 53.; Kaeppler, “Genealogy and Disrespect,” 102.

and political structure of life.³⁶ David Malo, Hawaiian scholar and historian, recorded that the lands that produced feathers gave *hulu* as a tribute during *Makahiki* (new year) season and were heavily taxed by the *ali'i*, further linking the ownership of feathers to the chief's control of the land and labor systems in Hawai'i.³⁷

While featherwork was the most visibly striking and protective form of *ali'i* wardrobe, the most common textile in pre-contact Hawai'i was the chiefly-controlled high art of *kapa* (barkcloth). Groups of women transformed the pulp of *wauke*, or paper mulberry bark (*Broussonetia papyrifera*), into long rectangles of soft, foldable, and comfortable textiles (See Figure 1).³⁸ The fabric sheets were saturated with the maker's and wearer's *mana*, methodically beaten into the fibers, and stamped onto the surface in intricate patterns. *Kapa* garments covered the lower half of the body in either a *malo* (loincloth) for men, a *pā'ū* (skirt) for women, and a *kīhei* (shawl) or cape over one shoulder.³⁹ If the *kapa* of the *pā'ū* wrapped around a woman's torso (covering her bust and knees), this indicated she was of *ali'i* blood; if the *pā'ū* wrapped around the woman's waist (to her knees), she was a commoner.⁴⁰ An example of this wrapping can be seen in the lithograph of *Queen Ka'ahumanu with her servant on a rug* (1816); the Queen is depicted

³⁶ *Ibid*, 20.

³⁷ Stacy L. Kamehiro, "Featherwork in the Hawaiian Monarchy Period," *Royal Hawaiian Featherwork: Nā Hulu Ali'i*, (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2015), 81-82.

³⁸ Stacy L Kamehiro, "Hawaiian Quilts: Chiefly Self-Representations in Nineteenth-Century Hawai'i," in *Pacific Arts* 3/5 (2007): 23-36.

³⁹ Shannon Wianecki, "Beauty in the Bark," *Nō Ka'oi Maui Magazine*, posted January 2, 2014, updated January 2021, <https://www.mauimagazine.net/beauty-in-the-bark/>.

⁴⁰ James Bayman, "Ideology, Political Economy, and Technological Change in the Hawaiian Islands after AD 1778," in the *Bulletin of the Indo-Pacific Prehistory Association* 27 (September 18, 2007): 6. <https://doi.org/10.7152/bippa.v27i0.11970>.

seated upon a matt, wrapped in layers of patterned *kapa*, *lei hulu* upon her neck and head, and a *kahili pa'alima* (hand-held feather standard) in her hand (See Figure 2).⁴¹ These Hawaiian modes of dress and adornment conceptually and physically transformed with society after contact with foreigners, and in under half a century, the physical fabrics of society would change.

‘Fusion Fashion’ and *He Alo Ā He Alo* Encounters

When Native Hawaiians and *haole* (foreigners) first met—in 1778, during Captain James Cook’s third expedition—both participants belonged to fashion systems unknown to the other, composed of differing materials, styles, tastes, standards, and construction techniques.⁴² Adrienne Kaeppler, anthropologist of Pacific cultures and textiles, declares that the most notable early diplomatic exchange during the “age of exploration” in Hawai‘i (1778-the 1840s)⁴³ was when the high chief Kaplani’ōpu’u visited Captain Cook’s ships, subsequently, Cook visited the shore on January 26, 1779.⁴⁴ The practice of *ho’okupu* (sprouting)⁴⁵ and *he alo ā he alo* (face-to-face) encounters are intimately tied to *ali’i* diplomacy efforts.⁴⁶ The custom of *ho’okupu*, meaning growing or sprouting, is a ceremonial giving of gifts to “nurture the relationship between giver and

⁴¹ Roger Rose, “The Kāhili Standards of Hawai‘i,” *Royal Hawaiian Featherwork: Nā Hulu Ali’i*, (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2015), 62.

⁴² Kaeppler, “Hawaiian Featherwork in the Age of Exploration,” *Royal Hawaiian Featherwork: Nā Hulu Ali’i*, (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2015), 40.

⁴³ These trades and gifting of *nā hulu ali’i*, *mea waiwai ali’i*, and *kapa* provide modern scholarship with the basis for our knowledge of Hawaiian featherwork and dress for pre-contact Hawai‘i.; Kaeppler, “Hawaiian Featherwork,” 40.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ ‘Iolani Palace Museum, “*Ho’okupu*,” wall text from permanent exhibition.

⁴⁶ Noelle M.K.Y. Kahanu, Moana Nepia, and Schorch, Philipp, “He Alo Ā He Alo / Kanohi Ki Te Kanohi / Face to Face: Curatorial Bodies, Encounters and Relations,” in *Curatopia: Museums and the Future of Curatorship* (Manchester University Press, 2019), 296–316.

receiver or in return for *mana*.”⁴⁷ In *‘Ōlelo No‘eau: Hawaiian Proverbs & Poetical*, Mary Kawena Pukui recites, “I hele i kauhale, pa‘a pū‘olo i ka lima,” which she translates to, “In going to the houses of others, carry a package in the hand. Take a gift.”⁴⁸ Gifts can be exchanged between *maka‘āinana* and *ali‘i*, *kanaka ‘ōiwi* (Native Hawaiians, being of the bones) and the *akua* (gods), and in post-contact times, between the *ali‘i* and foreigners.⁴⁹ Noelle M. K. Y. Kahanu, *kanaka ‘ōiwi* (Native Hawaiian) curator, scholar, and museum exhibition liaison, defines *he alo ā he alo* as the intimate interpersonal exchange of trust through which each participant’s character, values, ethics, and respect is shared with and for one another.⁵⁰ Both of these valued traditions played extensively into the gifting and exchange of featherwork pieces to explorers, diplomats, and eventually, royals abroad. As *‘ahu ‘ula* and *maihole* were gifted by the *ali‘i* in *he alo ā he alo* encounters through the practice of *ho‘okupu*, the Hawaiian chiefs promoted diplomatic partnerships of *aloha* (love and friendship) beyond the island chain.⁵¹ In turn, the featherworks of Hawaiian artisans were traded, sold, and placed into the collections of foreigners worldwide.⁵²

⁴⁷ ‘Iolani Palace Museum, “*Ho‘okupu*,” wall text from permanent exhibition.

⁴⁸ Mary Kawena Pukui, “‘Ōlelo No‘eau: 1157,” *‘Ōlelo No‘eau: Hawaiian Proverbs & Poetical Sayings*, collected translated and annotated by Mary Kawena Pukui (Honolulu: Bishop Museum Press, 1983).

⁴⁹ ‘Iolani Palace Museum, “*Ho‘okupu*,” wall text from permanent exhibition.

⁵⁰ Kahanu, “He Alo Ā He Alo / Kanohi Ki Te Kanohi / Face to Face: Curatorial Bodies, Encounters and Relations,” 296.

⁵¹ In Hawai‘i, the practice of *ho‘okupu* (sprouting) and *he alo ā he alo* (face-to-face) encounters are intimately tied to the *ali‘i* diplomacy efforts. The custom of *ho‘okupu*, meaning growing or sprouting, is a ceremonial giving of gifts to “nurture the relationship between giver and receiver or in return for *mana*.”; ‘Iolani Palace Museum, “*Ho‘okupu*,” wall text from permanent exhibition.

⁵² Kaeppler, “Hawaiian Featherwork During the Age of Exploration,” 40.

From this point on, the exchange, dissemination, and collection of objects, ideas, and practices were quickly adopted into the consciousness and collecting habits of *ali'i*, foreign explorers and traders, and US missionaries. This period contributed to and overlapped with the Monarchy Period of Hawai'i (ca. 1810-1893), resulting in distinct changes to Hawaiian culture's social, political, economic, religious, and environmental fabrics. Jennifer Craik, fashion historian, argues that fashion is a visual, material, and social agent of acculturation: a cultural modification that happens when "cultures merge" and have "prolonged contact," ultimately manifesting from the diffusion of specific cultural traits into collaborative fusions of fashion and adaptation.⁵³ These acculturative changes in Native Hawaiian dress were accelerated by the political, economic, and spiritual interests of the *ali'i* and *haole* agents.⁵⁴ Stacy L. Kamehiro, art historian and scholar of colonial Hawaiian visual and material culture, suggests that by analyzing the "mutual entanglements of those inhabiting...terrains and processes of cultural intersections or contact zones and how power is deployed and resisted in these spaces;" scholars can better recognize the fluid conceptions of Hawaiian national iconography based upon "native epistemologies and internationalist ideologies."⁵⁵ As the outside world was introduced to the cultural heritage of Hawaiian *mea waiwai ali'i*, *kūkaulani* (chiefly fashion), and European conceptions of Hawaiian indigeneity;⁵⁶ the *ali'i* and *kama'āina* received and

⁵³ Craik, *The Face of Fashion*, 1993.; Linda B. Arthur, "Fusion Fashion: East Met West in Hawaiian Textiles," in *Paideusis - Journal for Interdisciplinary and Cross-Cultural Studies*, vol. 6, (2012): B2.

⁵⁴ Arthur, "Fusion Fashion," B2.

⁵⁵ Kamehiro, "Introduction: Hawaiian National Art," in *The Arts of Kingship: Hawaiian Art and National Culture of the Kalakaua Era*, (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2009): 12.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

adapted to incoming materials, technologies, and information.⁵⁷ When these experiences with foreigners transitioned into “prolonged contact” and settlement, the importance of dress and adornment proliferated in new ways. While analyzing the ‘fusion fashions’⁵⁸ of Hawaiian diplomacy, this thesis emphasizes the political and social agency through which Native Hawaiian leaders incorporated sacred symbols of Hawaiian cultural identity into a world where they navigated the mode of European monarchical aesthetics.⁵⁹

The *Pā‘ū* and The Holokū

In the Hawaiian post-contact world, chiefs power and agency over political affairs became increasingly tied to controlling the means of production, incoming material resources, and the dissemination of goods.⁶⁵ By the early nineteenth century, the readymade, incoming bolts of cotton calico and silk could imitate the wrapping of *kapa* around the body for a *pā‘ū*.⁶⁶ While traditional production methods and dyes persisted in *kapa* making, the skilled producers of the labour-intensive artform decreased dramatically from the declining Native Hawaiian population affected by incoming foreign diseases.⁶⁷

⁵⁷ Peter H. Buck (Te Rangi Hiroa), *Arts and Crafts of Hawaii* (Honolulu: Bishop Museum Press, 2003), 34.

⁵⁸ Arthur, “Fusion Fashion,” B1-21.

⁵⁹ Valencia, “Feathers,” 186.

⁶⁵ Kamehiro, “Hawaiian Quilts,” 24.

⁶⁶ Johnston, “Picturing,” 140.

⁶⁷ In a 2014 research study composed by Bisulca, Schattenburg-Raymond, and du Preez on Hawaiian dyes and pigments used on *kapa*, results indicated that traditional pigments and dyes were incorporated with imported materials in *kapa* production of the nineteenth century. In the study, over 150 pieces in the Bishop Museum’s collection were surveyed with fluorescence spectroscopy (XRF), UV-Vis-NIR fiber optics reflectance spectroscopy, Fourier Transform infrared spectroscopy (FTIR) and high-performance liquid chromatography. The results were analyzed by period, design, use, and historical context. With close collaboration of researchers and cultural practitioners, the fabrication methods tested were successful in the recreation of *kapa*. This study intends to expand contemporary knowledge of historical materials and techniques for

Not only were these fabrics remedies to issues of labor and supply, but they were luxurious goods that elevated the status of whomever “conspicuously consumed” and adorned their body with foreign materials, emulating foreign *mana*.⁶⁸ Kamehiro explains:

The concept of *mana* and the way it was attached to certain foreign materials and practices was key to these exchanges. Consumption amplified the chiefs’ *mana* and power: to their subjects, it demonstrated their capacity to properly channel the *mana* of the gods (*akua*); to foreigners, it suggested their divinity.⁶⁹

Therefore, consumption and the utilization of imports by Native Hawaiians should not be seen as novel infatuations with new materials, but as calculated displays of power, control, and exchange based on the social and religious structures of Hawai‘i.⁷⁰ For example, when the *ali‘i* publicly displayed feather garments in a ritual of presentation and subsequent destruction, the ‘worldly power’ and status of the *ali‘i* is emphasized by their ability to consume its *mana* in its entirety.⁷¹ Leading up to the apex of his power, Kamehameha I’s use of foreign goods and technologies such as clothing, arms, metal, furniture, and sailing vessels solidified his power and expanded his dominion over the Hawaiian archipelago.⁷² In direct response to the increasing demand for foreign fabrics, the *mō‘ī* monopolized the importation of cloth and limited *ali‘i* access to the prized

the perpetuation of kapa production today.; Christina Bisulca, Lisa Shattenburg-Raymond, and Kamalu Du Preez, “Hawaiian Barkcloth from the Bishop Museum Collections: A Characterization of Materials and Techniques in Collaboration with Modern Practitioners to Effect Preservation of a Traditional Cultural Practice,” in *Materials Research Society Online Proceedings Library 1656*, (January, 2014): 51-72. <https://doi.org/10.1557/opl.2014.811>; Healoha Johnston, “Picturing The Pā‘ū Rider in the Hawaiian Kingdom,” in *Ho‘oulu Hawai‘i: The King Kalākaua Era*, 140.

⁶⁸ Kamehiro, “Hawaiian Quilts,” 23.

⁶⁹ Kamehiro, “Introduction: Hawaiian National Art,” 12.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁷¹ Kamehiro, “Featherwork in the Hawaiian Monarchy Period,” 82.

⁷² Kamehiro, “Kalākaua’s Coronation,” 54.

goods; elevating Chinese and Japanese silks and European and American cotton calico textiles to the same superior status and social consciousness of other *mea waiwai ali 'i*—where for a short time, access and the ability to harness these materials was reserved for the *ali 'i*, like feathers.⁷³

With this adaptation to foreign textiles established, the newly settled Christian Missionaries were quickly implored by the skilled hands of Hawaiian women to share their knowledge of sewing, garment construction, and the tailoring of western aesthetics of fashion.⁷⁴ As the Missionary standards for modesty soon gained sponsorship by the prominent women *ali 'i*, a widespread pattern of dress was designed for the body and lifestyle of Hawaiian women—the *holokū*, a loose-fitting gown of long sleeves, a high neck, and a full-body length train (See Figure 3).⁷⁶ Journalist, artist, and educator, Leilehua Yuen, narrates the story of the first *holokū*:

Learning that women were on board *Thaddeus*, Kalākua Kaheiheimālie, a widow of the late Kamehameha, visited them and immediately demanded they sew her a European style dress. Grabbing the opportunity for ministry, the missionary wives immediately got up their sewing circle and set to work. As they stitched the chiefess' gown, they put her four attendants to practice stitching on strips of calico straps. Already skilled at sewing kapa with bone needles and thread they had spun from native fibers, the steel needles and silken threads of the missionary wives must have been a delight to the women...Stays, corsets, and laces were foregone, as they were only needed under the more highly constructed and complex gowns... Kalākua Kaheiheimālie became the proud owner of the first *holokū*.⁷⁷

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ The missionary wives came to the Hawaiian Islands after 1820 and settled by the 1830s.; *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ Mary Kawena Pukui, Samuel H. Elbert, and Esther T. Mookini, "Holokū" *The Pocket Hawaiian Dictionary with a Concise Hawaiian Grammar*, (University Press of Hawaii, Honolulu, 1975): 30; Another derivative of the *holokū* is the *mu 'umu 'u*, the undergarments which originally followed a similar design without the yoke or train. The *mu 'umu 'u* was easier to work in, relax, lounge, and swim in, making the garment ideal for commoners. *Ibid.*, 111.

⁷⁷ Leilehua Yuen, "The Holokū," in *Ke Ola Magazine*, online, posted September 15, 2014. <https://keolamagazine.com/culture/the-holoku/>.

By crafting the Hawaiian chiefesses Kalākua, Kīna‘u, Keōpūolani, and Nāmāhāna the European style “Mother Hubbard Dress,” the Missionary wives unknowingly collaborated with the *ali‘i* in the production of a nationally recognizable garment of Hawaiian dress, pride, and freedom; surpassing over two-hundred years of its endurance.⁷⁸ The garment was made in an act of proselytizing, intended to cover as much skin as possible to promote modestly while remaining breathable and adapting to changing bodies.⁷⁹ While the Native Hawaiian adoption of the *holokū* fit the Christian moral compass, the garment was reminiscent of the symbolic hierarchical and material demonstration of fabric consumption in the *kapa pā‘ū*.⁸⁰ Several layers of *kapa* enveloped the human body for the *pā‘ū*, whereas the *holokū* gathered greatly at the yoke, adding conspicuous volume and *mana* to the *ali‘i*.⁸¹ According to the diary entries of the Missionary wives, the *holokū* was standardized for Christianized Hawaiian women a mere two years later, in 1822; and by 1838, “women from all walks of life.”⁸²

Throughout this same period, featherwork practitioners adapted to the political, social, and spiritual agency of intercultural mixing. Despite its proliferation and dissemination in the age of exploration, the production of *hulu manu* decreased drastically like *kapa* and by the mid-nineteenth century, but their symbolic importance and power had not dwindled.⁸⁸ Feathered garments were

⁷⁸Yuen, “The Holokū.”

⁷⁹ Kaeppler, “Adorning the Adorned,” 134.

⁸⁰ Yuen, “The Holokū.”

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸⁸ Kamehiro, “Featherwork in the Hawaiian Monarchy Period,” 80.

worn, displayed, and made for specific people and events for the Hawaiian Monarchial family. Kamehiro further argues:

“Through the exchange, display, collection, and study of feather objects, Native Hawaiians of distinguished rank expressed their status, history, and culture, and shaped spaces of engagement with newcomers and foreign entities in local, regional, and global contexts.”⁹⁰

The singular example of a feathered *pā‘ū* was made for Nāhi‘ena‘ena for the occasion of her brother King Kamehameha II’s return from England, designed to harbor the connotations of an *‘ahu‘ula*, which was *kapu* for women to wear in traditional Hawai‘i (See Figure 4).⁹¹ The *pā‘ū* contains hundreds of approximately a million *‘ō‘ō hulu* on the woven *olonā* backing, spreading twenty feet in length and two and a half feet in width.⁹² The construction of the *pā‘ū* was monumental, as it was the first time a feathered *pā‘ū* had been created and the first time a piece of featherwork was constructed of this size by women.⁹³ Made by Native Hawaiian traditionalists at Lahaina, the *pā‘ū* represented hope for revitalizing the cultural practices of featherwork, traditional worship, and chiefly brother-sister marriages; which were dwindling under the power of chief-backed missionary reforms, supported by Nāhi‘ena‘ena’s mother Keōpūolani.⁹⁴ Since Nāhi‘ena‘ena had already navigated the dueling influences of ancient tradition and missionary

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ Hawaii Alive, “The Pā‘ū of Nāhi‘ena‘ena,” Bishop Museum, website, accessed April 15, 2022. <https://hawaiialive.org/the-pau-of-nahienaena/>.

⁹² Hawaii Alive, “The Pā‘ū of Nāhi‘ena‘ena.”

⁹³ John Charlot, “The Feather Skirt of Nāhi‘ena‘ena: An Innovation in Postcontact Hawaiian Art,” in *The Journal of the Polynesian Society* 100, no. 2 (1991): 119–65. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20706388>.

⁹⁴ The siblings were destined for a “brother-sister” marriage, a cultural practice which “ensured genealogical superiority among Hawaiian royalty.”; Betty Lou Kam, “The Feather Pā‘ū of Nāhi‘ena‘ena,” in *Royal Hawaiian Featherwork: Nā Hulu Ali‘i*, (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2015), 78-79.

instruction, she decided to break with the practice of wearing the *pā'ū* without undergarments and instead chose to wear the *pā'ū* wrapped over her modest, missionary approved clothing.⁹⁵ Upon her untimely death at the age of 21, the *pā'ū* was displayed at her funeral, never to be worn again. After the ceremony, the *pā'ū* was cut in half and sewn together along its length to create a funerary pall that would cover her brother, Kamehameha III's coffin in 1855, and King Kalākaua's coffin in 1891.⁹⁶

Throughout the rest of the Kamehameha Dynasty (1810-1874), fashions of the Hawaiian Islands mixed many materials and styles best to serve the occasion and status of the wearer. As the Hawaiian *ali'i* facilitated face-to-face diplomatic relationships with other sovereign monarchies, especially Great Britain's, the royal tastes for foreign and familiar fashion modes became more entangled.⁹⁹ Fashions from around the world disseminated quicker than ever, with the increasing availability of print technologies like fashion plates, magazines, and photography. Furthermore, many Hawaiian monarchs refined and catered their taste to foreign garments, styles, and materials while traveling abroad.¹⁰⁰

While cotton calicoes were popular fabrics among commoners, the female *ali'i* wore the finest silks for their *holokū*, embellishing them with patterns, ruffles, belts, and ribbons. As the royal Hawaiian women adopted the fortified undergarments of corsets required for the structure and support of long, heavy

⁹⁵ Kam, "The Feather Pā'ū of Nāhi'ena'ena," 78-79.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁹ Kamehiro, "Kalākaua's Coronation," 54.

¹⁰⁰ The Victorian Era is named after Queen Victoria of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland (1837-1901) and Empress of India (1876-1901); James Laver, *Fashions and Fashion Plates 1800-1900*, (London and New York: Penguin Books Limited, 1943): 3.

Victorian-style evening gowns, the *ali‘i* often relied upon the comfort and freedom afforded by the *holokū* and *mu‘umu‘u* for informal occasions and times off.¹⁰¹ In terms of adornment, since feathers were seen as the ‘jewels’ of the Hawaiian Islands, incoming gifts and purchases of diamond and gemstone jewelry were easily appropriated as a mode of bodily adornment for the women *ali‘i*.¹⁰² They accessorized their clothing with jewelry, feathered fans, feathered hats, *lei humupapa* (hat bands), and *lei hulu* garlands upon their heads and collars (See Figure 5). A *lei hulu* could easily be worn with a diamond tiara for an act of diplomacy or ceremony.¹⁰³

Queen Kapi‘olani, as the granddaughter of the last King of Kaua‘i, promoted the Native Hawaiian artforms of the Kaua‘i *lei hulu* and *Ni‘ihau* shell lei by both wearing and gifting these items as state gifts—symbolizing love, friendship, partnership, honor, and celebration—to foreign diplomats (See Figure 6). By intentionally incorporating the traditional adornments of *lei hulu* and *Ni‘ihau* shell lei into her wardrobe, Kapi‘olani preserves the iconographic power of Native Hawaiian identity and promotes it as a tool of Hawaiian diplomacy.

Gabriele Mentges, a scholar of post-colonial fashion, argues:

“Thus, traditional fabrics and dress become crucial as identity markers of...nationhood. To middle-class actors on the micro level, traditional or national dress helps to transmit values and norms between the generations. Moreover, the idea of tradition evokes and relates to ‘a certain habitat of meaning and memory’ of an imagined...past that simultaneously presents a historical and a present... Fashion, in this case, becomes an object of

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*; Yuen, “The Holokū.”

¹⁰² Alice Christophe, “Imperial Jewels: From Eugénie to Queen Kapi‘olani,” in *Ho‘oulu Hawai‘i: The King Kalākaua Era* (The Honolulu Museum of Art, 2018): 175-181.

¹⁰³ Christophe, “Imperial Jewels,” 175.

strategic cultural interests and planning. ‘Self-orientalization’ via fashion becomes an opportunity to symbolically consolidate territorial claims.”¹⁰⁴

This utilization of *hulu mea* as visual tools of national identity simultaneously serving as diplomatic agents transcends across the Kamehameha and Kalākaua Dynastic kings and queens. In particular, Kalākaua’s audiences with world leaders differ from the encounters the Kamehameha Dynasty had experienced on the archipelago and abroad during the eighteenth and earlier nineteenth centuries.¹⁰⁵ In Kamehameha I’s lifetime (ca. 1758 -1819), the King never personally left the islands of his dominion, but the succeeding Kamehameha Monarchs (1795-1874) worked rigorously abroad to achieve recognition of the Hawaiian Kingdom as an independent and sovereign state by the major colonial powers of the time (Britain, France, and the United States).¹⁰⁶ Their sacrifices and fortitude ensured that Hawai‘i was respected as an autonomous, non-colonized, and non-European state. Additionally, their open diplomacy strategies and ventures abroad would persist to the Kalākaua Dynasty (1874-1893).¹⁰⁷ Just as the Kamehameha Dynasty had done before, Kalākaua and his representatives¹⁰⁸ traveled around the world to learn about foreign exhibitions of empire,

¹⁰⁴ Gabrielle Mentges, “Reviewing Orientalism and Re-Orienting Fashion Beyond Europe,” in *Fashion and Postcolonial Critique*, eds. Elke Gaugele and Monica Tittion (The MIT Press, 2019): 134-5.

¹⁰⁵ Kahanu, “He Alo Ā He Alo / Kanohi Ki Te Kanohi / Face to Face: Curatorial Bodies, Encounters and Relations,” 296.

¹⁰⁶ During Kamehameha III’s reign, Hawai‘i was recognized as “independent” in the formal joint-declaration of Britain and France on November 28, 1843. This recognition pivotal to the restoration of the Hawaiian Kingdom after the first British ambassador to Hawai‘i, Mr. Richard Charlton, had falsely claimed ownership of, and accessioned Hawai‘i. This day is now *Lā Kū‘oko‘a* (Independence Day) in the Islands.; Beamer, “Ali‘i Selective Appropriation of Modernity,” 139.

¹⁰⁷ Beamer, “Ali‘i Selective Appropriation of Modernity,” 139.

¹⁰⁸ Kalākaua was the first head of state to circumnavigate the globe; Stacy L. Kamehiro, “Introduction: Hawaiian National Art,” in *The Arts of Kingship: Hawaiian Art and National Culture of the Kalakaua Era*, (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2009): 23-24.

technological innovations, and the government systems they hoped to utilize to solidify their sovereignty.¹⁰⁹ Through these meetings, the Hawaiian Kingdom recognized the necessity for appearances and actively preserved diplomatic partnerships with royalty and leaders from nations abroad.¹¹⁰

The ‘*Ahu‘ula* and the Military Uniform

As early as Kamehameha I, wearing European dress styles in tandem with featherwork became synonymous with important ceremonies and events. The dress of male *ali‘i* simultaneously appropriated the powerful and prestigious aesthetics of military uniforms and sharply tailored suits from American businessmen.¹¹¹ The parallel between military uniforms and ‘*ahu‘ula* and *maihole* are closer than they may seem, representing the dress of chiefly and royal bodies during warfare.¹¹³ The dress of male *ali‘i* simultaneously appropriated the powerful and prestigious aesthetics of military uniforms and sharply tailored suits from American businessmen.¹¹⁴ Kamehiro emphasizes that during diplomatic encounters:

“Notable ali‘i—for example, King Kamehameha I; Kalani‘ōpu‘u, chief of Hawai‘i; Boki, governor of O‘ahu; and Kaneoneo, chief of O‘ahu—frequently wore feather cloaks when meeting with foreign visitors.”¹¹⁵

¹⁰⁹ Kamehiro, “Introduction: Hawaiian National Art,” 8-10.

¹¹⁰ Kalākaua exponentially increased foreign diplomacy through expansive legations and consulates, a study abroad program for Native Hawaiians (1880-1887), Hawai‘i joining the World Postal Union (1882), sending delegations to Tsar Alexander’s coronation (May 1883), participating in World Fairs, holding the Grand Requiem Mass in Honolulu for the Spanish King Don Alfonso XII (January 1886), and sending delegations to Queen Victoria’s Golden Jubilee (1887); Kamehiro, “Introduction: Hawaiian National Art,” 23-24.

¹¹¹ The precursor to the suit is sailor’s shirts, which were readily traded between male *ali‘i* from incoming merchants and whaling industries. These loose-fitting, long-sleeved shirts were called frocks; and were soon to be exchanged for American business attire, composed of tailored shirts with collars and buttons. Arthur, “Fusion Fashion,” B1-2, 4

¹¹³ Kamehiro, “Featherwork in the Hawaiian Monarchy Period,” 81.

¹¹⁴ Arthur, “Fusion Fashion,” B1-2.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

In May 1819, when Liholiho was accessioning to the Hawaiian throne, the new King “wore a feather cloak and helmet over his red and yellow English uniform to acknowledge the transfer of power.”¹¹⁶ In 1824, when Kamehameha II and Queen Kamāmalu traveled to England to strengthen diplomatic ties, Liholiho did not wear feather garments, but “Kamāmalu and her attendant were seen wearing headdresses made of scarlet, yellow, and blue feathers” (See Figure 7).¹¹⁷ During a later reception, the chief Kekūanā‘a (identified as “Joanoa”) wore an *‘ahu ‘ula* and *maihole*, but King Kamehameha II did not. Kaeppler proposes that perhaps the garments were inappropriate to wear by the King because of their connection to other chiefs. Still, it may have been because of the media’s reaction to Hawaiian featherwork.¹¹⁸ It seems that the *‘ahu ‘ula* the couple had brought with them were discussed heavily in the media and not in the best light. Hellmich declares:

“Their dress was intensely scrutinized and analyzed in relationship to their physical appearance and manners—considered to be collective indicators of their civility and intelligence. Their featherwork, while appreciated, was thought to be part of their ‘savage’ and ‘primitive’ nature that needed to be shed in order to be received by ‘civilized’ English society and ultimately, King George IV. The party was subject to a mix of overt racism and civil cultural curiosity during their stay, and both were manifested in the press.”¹¹⁹

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷ Kamehiro, “Featherwork in the Hawaiian Monarchy Period,” 81.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 80.

¹¹⁹ Christina Hellmich, “Hawaiian Featherwork Abroad,” *Royal Hawaiian Featherwork: Nā Hulu Ali‘i*, (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2015), 118.

¹²⁰ Hellmich, “Hawaiian Featherwork Abroad,” 117.

Perhaps these accounts and instances of media attention are additional contributors to the changes in the collecting, display, and commissioning of *hulu manu* by the time of the Kalākaua Dynasty.

Before leaving for his royal tour in 1881, Kalākaua was already aware of the pageantry of royal courts and the visual iconographic value of national symbols. Keenly cognizant of the federating power of European diplomatic uniforms, the *mō‘ī* was motivated to adapt the language of military regalia to serve Hawaiian National interests better.¹²⁰ While diplomatic men in the 19th century were typically dressed in well-tailored suits and military uniforms, with high collars, epaulettes, royal sashes, and orders, Kalākaua was determined to give the uniforms a cohesive, Hawaiian touch.¹²¹

Before the diplomatic party began their journey, the King’s traveling companions, Colonel William N. Armstrong and Colonel Charles H. Judd, had uniforms designed of fine English cloth and embroidery upon the collar, breasts, tail, and cuffs with “gold wire to create images of *kalo* (taro) leaves and flowers and koa tree leaves” (See Figure 8).¹²² Having deep national sentiments, the *kalo* motifs on the breasts allude to the king’s *ali‘i* responsibility to protect and ensure the prosperity of the land and peoples of Hawaii.¹²³ Later on his world tour, the *mō‘ī* decided to once again commission new uniforms for himself, his

¹²⁰ Kamehiro, “Worlding the Kingdom of Hawai‘i: The Art of International Relations,” 87.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

¹²² *Ibid.*

¹²³ *Kalo* is a staple food for Hawaiians and has been linked symbolically to the *‘āina* (land) and island origins in traditional Hawaiian spirituality.; *Ibid.*

companions, and John Owen Dominis,¹²⁴ the Governor of O‘ahu. After experiencing the dress and pageantry of many countries, the king wrote to his sister, Queen Regent Lili‘uokalani, of his desire to further differentiate the delegations’ ensembles as representations of Hawaiian iconography, this time with a golden, velvet sash inscribed with gold *kalo* leaves.¹²⁵

When considering traditional Hawaiian chiefly regalia in the time of Kamehameha II, it may be unsurprising to learn that Kalākaua did not wear featherwork while upon diplomatic endeavors. The King’s lack of wearing featherwork was balanced by displaying the artform to foreign dignitaries as a object symbolizing the of the highest offices in his kingdom.¹²⁶ Colonel William N. Armstrong, the Hawaiian Attorney General who served as his immigration commissioner for the voyage, noted Kalākaua’s decision to present the feather ‘ahu ‘ula as an entity of its own, rather than wearing it, because “the wearing of these cloaks over a European military or diplomatic uniform would be incongruous.”¹²⁷ The King additionally had another member of his traveling party, his personal cook Robert von Oelhoffen, wear the cloak on certain occasions to allow the cloak to embody its intended display on a human form.¹²⁸

It is interesting to note that von Oelhoffen was not of *ali ‘i* heritage, but

¹²⁴ John Owens Dominis is also the husband of Queen Lili‘uokalani; they were married in 1862. Dominis would also join the traveling party to Queen Victoria’s Golden Jubilee in 1887.; Collette Higgins, “Following In Kapiolani’s Footsteps,” interview by Ihilani Gutierrez, *Na Moolelo Lecture Series*, IolaniPalaceTV, April 12, 2020, video, 6:50, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xMArVUGi6o4>.

¹²⁵ Kamehiro, “Worlding the Kingdom of Hawai‘i,” 87.

¹²⁶ *Ibid*, 87-88.

¹²⁷ *Ibid*, 87.

¹²⁸ *Ibid*.

German.¹²⁹ If he had worn the *‘ahu‘ula* at the discretion of the King, this is possible evidence that the *kapu* system and social restrictions of the later-nineteenth century had become further separated from their genealogical and spiritual iconography. The historical reality of *ali‘i* having the exclusive right to own and harness featherwork perhaps afforded Kalākaua to extend his agency onto another body for diplomatic purposes. With the gifting of feather capes and cloaks from *ali‘i* to foreigners all over the world, the destruction of the *kapu* system in 1819, and the *noa* (free of taboo) systems of order in the later Hawaiian Kingdom, it is possible that this action could be another adaptation to the socio-political utilization of *nā hulu ali‘i* in the Kalākaua Dynasty. Furthermore, the demonstrated need to display the *‘ahu‘ula* in the round speaks to the King’s traditional understanding of *nā hulu ali‘i* as being activated as a divine “glowing” thing when worn by a chiefly body, but in his contemporary moment, anybody in service to the King would suffice.

Even though Kalākaua did not personally wear *‘ahu‘ula* often, he respected and honored the iconography of hulu to the Hawaiian people and their international reputations. While he was abroad on his world travels, he collected feathers from the places he visited and is said to have paid a dollar per feather brought to him.¹³⁰ When he returned home to Honolulu, the feathers he collected were transformed into three cloaks, commissioned for his wife Queen

¹²⁹ Born in 1858, in Stuttgart, Bavaria, Germany.; “Robert Von Oelhoffen,” Geni.com, accessed April 26, 2022, <https://www.geni.com/people/Robert-Von-Oelhoffen/6000000001590954720>.; MyHeritage, “Robert Von Oelhoffen: Historical Records and Family Trees,” myheritage.com, accessed April 26, 2022. https://www.myheritage.com/names/robert_von_oelhoffen.

¹³⁰ Kamehiro, “Featherwork in the Hawaiian Monarchy Period,” 91-92.

Kapiolani.¹³¹ One of these cloaks is a clear example of ‘fusion fashion:’ composed of brown pheasant, brown fowl, and black fowl feathers, the Queen wore the cloak for carriage rides (See Figure 9).¹³² This *‘ahu ‘ula* is made by sewing feathers onto a fabric base of velvet and silk, rather than attaching them to fiber, an innovative technique of *humupapa* (stitched feathers) featherwork—used in this time to make hatbands and cloaks in a quicker span of time.¹³³ The cloak was finished with a red velvet collar and five “frog-style” clasps of East-Asian influence.

This cloak was not the only thing commissioned following his travels; after his return, Kalākaua expressed his desire for feathers to be collected, repurposed, and crafted into *‘ahu ‘ula* and *kāhili* for his royal coronation in 1883.¹³⁴ This was one of the only occasions that Kalākaua wore an *‘ahu ‘ula* on top of his military uniform. In the pageantry of the coronation, the lowering of King Kamehameha I’s Golden Mamo cloak upon King Kalākaua was not seen as ‘incongruous,’ but quoted in the Hawaiian Gazette as “The most effective part of the ceremony” with “the cloak [looking] graceful over the King's military uniform.”¹³⁵ Regardless of its success and iconographic power, the *‘ahu ‘ala* transitioned into an international symbol of Hawaiian nationhood and identity, breaking from a strictly *ali ‘i* association into “sanctified robes of state.”¹³⁶

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Kamehiro, “The Art of Kingship: Kalākaua’s Coronation,” 45.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

Part II: ‘Fusion Fashion’ and Photography: Kalākaua Dynasty Fashions

To appreciate the importance of appearance during diplomatic encounters between Hawaiian Monarchs and foreign Heads of State, scholarship must look at material and visual remains with an interdisciplinary lens while acknowledging the historical, international, social, and political agents stitched into every ensemble. Starting long before the late 1880s, the fashionable style of Hawaiian royal dress navigated an authentic appropriation of modern monarchy while characterizing the traditional and national visual appearance of Hawai‘i.¹³⁷ Since it had been over 100 years since the *ali‘i* had first contact with fashions of *haole*, the Hawaiian Monarchs had already accustomed to foreign modes of dress through encounters with explorers, merchants, missionaries, immigrants, and foreigners at home and abroad.¹³⁸ Kalākaua and Kapi‘olani selectively appropriated foreign and modern visuals of iconographic display while unifying Hawai‘i’s diverse communities through a national ocular language.¹³⁹

Self-Fashioning: The Queen’s Coronation Portrait

In portraiture, clothing was a key agent in conveying tenants of identity, modernity, spirituality, and monarchy in the late-eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Both Europeans and Hawaiians understood the power behind representation and fought for control over the narrative of Hawai‘i and Hawaiians sent to spectators across the sea. Through the patronage of portraiture, the *ali‘i*

¹³⁷ Kamehiro, “The Art of Kingship: Kalākaua’s Coronation,” 29-30.

¹³⁸ Jennifer Fish Kashay, “Agents of Imperialism: Missionaries and Merchants in Early-Nineteenth-Century Hawaii,” in *The New England Quarterly* (June 2007): 280-298.; Marzan and ‘Ohukani‘ōhi‘a Gon III, ed., “The Aesthetics, Materials, and Construction of Hawaiian Featherwork,” 30-32.

¹³⁹ Kamehiro, “Introduction: Hawaiian National Art,” 12-13.

appropriated the foreign modes of painting, and later photography, to advocate for the diplomatic support that they desired. Within these mediums through which diplomatic appearance and dress, Hawaiian sovereignty, modernity, and iconography could be exhibited through the staging and wearing of *hulu manu*.

Starting in the mid-nineteenth century, the *ali'i* actively participated in photographic portraits to promote Hawaiian sovereignty, modernity, and the iconography of Hawai'i's cultural heritage and nationhood.¹⁴¹ King Kalākaua became an ardent patron of photography as an enthusiastic promoter of Hawaiian national imagery, cultural heritage initiatives, and scientific modernity.¹⁴² While portraiture through painting had connotations of historical and genealogical legitimacy, photographic portraiture held promises of modernity and technological astuteness. The early printmaking techniques used by mass media sources to disseminate sketched portraits of the monarchs soon were overlooked when the field of photography and its products began circulating the islands in the 1840s and 1850s.¹⁴³ Photography as a medium opened a portal into new

¹⁴¹ Kamehiro, "Featherwork in the Hawaiian Monarchy Period," 97.

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Louis Daguerre's photographic process, the daguerreotype, invented in 1829 in Paris, was the first form of photography practiced on the Islands. A small number of photographers were active in the archipelago from the late-1840s through the 1850s. Still, by the next decade, a rapid increase in "photographic printing processes, a broader distribution of images, and a larger number of photographers" were able to offer and maintain portrait services in Hawai'i.¹⁴³ Photography scholar, Lynn Davis, insinuates that the demographic shifts in the Hawaiian Kingdom contributed to the field of photography diversifying on the Islands, with immigrants from America, France, Portugal, Japan, and China setting up practices. In 1845, Theophilus Metcalf, an engineer, had short lived experiments in daguerreotype portrait photography in Hawai'i; in 1847, French visitor, Senor Le Bleu, shortly sold photographic portraits in Honolulu while he was in town.; Hugo Stangenwald (1853-1858) and Stephen Goodfellow (1853) practiced photography for a time on the Islands.; Healoha Johnston, "Curator's Notes: Healoha Johnston Details the History between King Kalākaua and Portrait Photography," *Honolulu Museum of Art Blog*, uploaded 2018, accessed April 12, 2022. <http://blog.honoluluacademy.org/king-kalakaua-and-portrait-photography/>.

dimension of optical information transmission, a valuable tool for any monarch trying to promote an image of their kingdom and themselves at their coronation.

As a fusion of technological advancement, artistry, and utility, photography was a medium associated with the future and science—“something King Kalākaua picked up on and leveraged during his reign.”¹⁴⁴ As scholar Anne Maxwell argues, the increased circulation of portrait photographs of the royal family between the 1880s and 1890s contributed to the popularity and support of *ali‘i* sovereignty in domestic and foreign audiences.¹⁴⁵ The photograph is a diplomatic tool for the Hawaiian Kingdom, serving as a mobile, visual, and factual representation of the Kalākaua Dynasty and the Hawaiian people. Within the photograph, Kamehiro explains that the royal family could project:

“cultural refinement, sophistication, and modernity of the sitters, who were typically shown wearing sumptuous dress and expensive ornaments, with tasteful coiffures and accompanied by regalia. These details affected the perceptions of Americans and Europeans, refuting their primitivist and exotic stereotypes of Polynesians. For Native Hawaiians, the striking visibility of featherwork in photographs, especially in portraits of female *ali‘i*, would have signaled indigenous values associated with royal authority.”¹⁴⁶

A principal example of the intentional fashioning of Hawaiian royal presence and agency is in the 1883 photograph of Queen Kapi‘olani’s Coronation gown (See Figure 10).¹⁴⁷ In the image credited to James J. Williams,¹⁴⁸ Queen

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Kamehiro, “Featherwork in the Hawaiian Monarchy Period,” 97.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid, 98.

¹⁴⁷ The coronation ceremony for Kalākaua commenced nine years into his reign to elevate the ceremonial aspects of the Hawaiian Kingdom to an international consciousness and instill national pride.; Kamehiro, “The Art of Kingship: Kalākaua’s Coronation,” 29-35.

¹⁴⁸ James J. Williams was an English-born photographer who moved to Honolulu in 1880. In 1882, he purchased the photographic studio that he worked at, from Menzies Dickson, and changed its name to J. Williams & Company. King Kalākaua and Princess Ka‘iulani were other

Kapi‘olani stands in a three-quarter view to the left-side of the frame; her head is directed at the spectator and her face is composed in a kind, yet regal, combination of direct eye-contact and a small smile. The Queen is dressed sumptuously in her coronation gown, robes, and long train that wraps around her left side to cover the front-right half of the photograph. Upon the Queen’s head rests a diamond crown with a Maltese cross, her ears and neckline are adorned with elaborately set jeweled pieces, and at the center of her bustline, an oval broach sparkles above a broad, blue sash from her right shoulder to her front-left hip (See Figure 11). Her opposite shoulder and breast are decorated in royal orders and ribbons. In the back, left-hand side of the photograph, Queen Kapiolani’s Royal Coronation Crown is presented as another bejeweled claim of Kingship (See Figure 12). When analyzing the details of the Crown, a spectator can see a thick, golden band set with countless diamonds, opals, emeralds, rubies, and kukui nut jewels; above, inverted *hoaka*’s—a visual metaphor prevalent in both featherwork and poetry of the genealogy of chiefs—connect leaves of *kalo*.¹⁴⁹ Both on their own, and put together, these motifs reference the *ali ‘i* as the “source and guardian of life.”¹⁵⁰ The *hoaka* and allusion to *kalo* is a tactic seen in

Hawaiian royals who were often patrons of the studio.; David W. Forbes, “J. Williams & Co.,” *Hawaiian National Bibliography, 1780-1900:1881-1900*, vol 4, (University of Hawaii Press, 2003): 6, accessed April 25, 2022, https://www.google.com/books/edition/Hawaiian_National_Bibliography_1780_1900/jAuzOipG26YC?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA63&printsec=frontcover.

¹⁴⁹ Kamehiro, suggests that the “*hoaka* was intimately associated with chiefs; it denoted ‘glory,’ ‘brightness,’ and ‘splendor’ in Hawaiian verbal and visual language, offering a poetic and visual metaphor for the revered genealogy of chiefs.” These “forms seem to have been the prerogative of chiefs, and those featured on feather garments, sculpture, and royal regalia conveyed similar meanings.”; Kamehiro, “Palaces and Sacred Places,” 72.

¹⁵⁰ Kamehiro, “Sacred Places,” 29-35.

the dress of Kalākaua Monarchs and in Queen Kapiolani's Coronation Robe outstandingly.

The ensemble itself is constructed in the early-1880s Victorian style of a tailored three piece: bodice, skirt, and a robe acting as an overskirt. The fashion of the 1880s focused clothing design on slender, angular, and long lines which acted to concentrate adornment in the lower, back to accentuate and lengthen the body.¹⁵¹ The front of the dress has an essence of the early-1880's "princess line" corsetry and silhouette, made with an exterior cuirasse bodice and long corset underneath.¹⁵² When initially constructed there were two variations of the bodice made, one with a high neck and long sleeves for daywear, and one with short sleeves and a low neck for evening wear.¹⁵³ The bodice in the photograph is the eveningwear version and is of white silk, and has shoulder capped sleeves of lace. The skirt is just above floor length and is trimmed in a fringe, mostly covered by the robe from the sides to the back. The robe functions as both an overskirt and court train for Queen Kapi'olani, decreasing the layers of fabric while feeding the robe into the bodice and back of the garment. The robe is made of deep scarlet silk velvet and trimmed in ermine fir—the inspiration for the mantle is European—mainly British, like the Imperial Robe (Robe of Estate).¹⁵⁴ When compared to Franz Xaver Winterhalter's oil on canvas painting *Queen Victoria* (1859), the coronation robes of both Queen Kapi'olani and Queen Victoria share

¹⁵¹ Harper Franklin, "Fashion History Timeline: 1880-1889," *Fashion Institute of Technology: State University of New York*, last updated Aug 18, 2020, accessed April 14, 2022. <https://fashionhistory.fitnyc.edu/1880-1889/>.

¹⁵² Franklin, "Fashion History Timeline: 1880-1889."

¹⁵³ 'Iolani Palace Docent Led Tour, "Fashion Fit for Royalty Tour, March 16, 2022.

¹⁵⁴ Laurie Wickwire, "The Coronation Robes." Historic UK., accessed April 14, 2022. <https://www.historic-uk.com/CultureUK/Coronation-Robes/>.

incredible similarities in color, fabrics, and style; the main difference is the characteristic structures of the different eras (1838 versus 1883) and the symbolic embroidery on each ensemble (See Figure 13). The bodice, skirt, and robe of Queen Kapi‘olani’s garment were beautifully embroidered in golden *palapala* ‘ā ferns and leaves of *kalo* (taro), alluding the King and Queen’s *ali ‘i* responsibility to protect and ensure the prosperity of the land and peoples of Hawai‘i.¹⁵⁵ The colors of red and gold are very important to ancient Hawaiian religion and the art of featherwork; with yellow representing Kāne, god of life and creation; red representing Kū, the god of governance and warfare; and black representing Lono, god of fertility.¹⁵⁶ These illusions to the Hawaiian Islands, cultural heritage, and European Monarchy align with the projected imagery of Kalākaua Monarchs in the 1880s.

After addressing the iconography demonstrated within the dress of Kapi‘olani, it is important to analyze the staging of the queen within the picture plane and the use of royal regalia as props. The inclusion of both Hawaiian monarchical and European royal symbols in the portrait, echoes the vast utilization of same tactic during Kalākaua’s Coronation Ceremony, which played into the Kalākaua Dynasty’s promotion of Hawai‘i as a modern Christian nation, and part of the international family of monarchs. In the rear-right side of the photograph, the Queen stands before a crown and *‘ahu ‘ula* adorned throne. The

¹⁵⁵ *Kalo* is a staple food for Hawaiians and has been linked symbolically to the *‘āina* (land) and island origins in traditional Hawaiian spirituality. Kamehiro, “Worlding the Kingdom of Hawai‘i,” 87.

¹⁵⁶ Marzan and ‘Ohukani‘ōhi‘a Gon III, ed, “The Aesthetics, Materials and Construction of Hawaiian Featherwork,” 31.

throne itself is positioned to reflect the alignment of the Queen, as if she has just stood from her seat to engage the visitor who has entered her room. The throne is made of leather and wood but is covered by the feathered cloak from the armrests up, excluding the carved crown, topped with a Christian cross. The *‘ahu‘ula* that is draping Kapi‘olani’s throne is named Kalanikauika‘alaneo, which means “heavens hanging cloudless, and is named after the highest-ranking wife of Kamehameha I (See Figure 14).¹⁵⁷ Also known as Keōpūolani (“the gathering of the clouds of heaven”), she was the mother of Princess Nāhi‘ena‘ena and the next two Kamehameha Kings: Prince Liholiho (Kamehameha II) and Prince Kūikeyaouli (Kamehameha III).¹⁵⁸ The cloak was passed down to the father of King Lunalilio, Chief Charles Kana‘iana, and after his passing was purchased in 1878, by the government of King Kalākaua.¹⁵⁹ In the back left-hand side, a table is covered with another *‘ahu‘ula*; which is additionally topped with a fringed velvet pillow and her crown. The *‘ahu‘ula* on the table is known as the Kīwala‘ō cloak (See Figure 15); containing the *mana* of Kamehameha II’s maternal line, the cloak was owned by Kīwala‘ō, Keōpūolani’s father, and had been taken as a battle prize by Kamehameha I in 1782.¹⁶⁰ It is unlikely that either of the historical cloaks were worn by the Kamehameha monarchs before, or after the disbandment of the *kapu* system; the taboo against wearing the clothing of another *ali‘i* was

¹⁵⁷ Hellmich, “Plates: An ‘Ahu‘ula Associated with Kalanikauika‘alaneo, Maui Chiefess and Wife Kamehameha I,” In *Royal Hawaiian Featherwork: Nā Hulu Ali‘i*, edited by Leah Caldiera, Christina Hellmich, Adrienne L. Kaeppler, Betty Lou Kam, and Roger G. Rose, (San Francisco, CA: Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, 2015): 176.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ The Provisional Government gave the cloak to the Bishop Museum in 1893, following the overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom with US aided usurpers.; Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Kaeppler, “Hawaiian Featherwork in the Age of Exploration,” 48.

ingrained deeply into the sanctity of clothing.¹⁶¹ Through the acquisition and display of these Kamehameha cloaks, Kapi‘olani is projecting the Kalākaua Dynasty’s divine and political right to rule Hawai‘i through harnessing their predecessor’s *mana*.

In Kalākaua’s and Kapi‘olani’s efforts to “fulfill both traditional and modern expectations” of their sovereignty on the international stage and as Hawaiians working for Hawaii led them to both collect and commission featherwork. They displayed of the *nā hulu ali‘i* containing “the prayers of their makers and acquired the mana of their genealogical provenance and enterprise,”¹⁶² as sanctified robes of state, put Hawaii and Hawaiian cultural heritage into a metaphorical, modern-‘*ahu‘ula* of divine protection, like in the Royal Coat of Arms. Bishop Museum Archival Collections Manager Leah Caldiera states,

“In the tradition of the Ali‘i Nui and mākua before them, King Kalākaua and Queen Kapi‘olani consecrated these objects to become *mea makamae* (treasures belongings) of their people—fashioned, donned, and preserved in a continued legacy of affection: E ho‘oulu a ho‘ōla I ka Lāhui!”¹⁶³

While the creation and projection of a royal wardrobe depended greatly upon the denotations of materials, techniques, and fashion styles, the *ali‘i* clothing could also harbor connotations concerning privileges of authority, cultural attainment, power relations, identity, and divinity. The integration of featherwork into their staging of the portrait solidified the ancestral and political lineages of their right to rule Hawai‘i, while paying homage to past and present artisans of

¹⁶¹ Ibid, 48-49.

¹⁶² Calderia “Visualizing Ho‘oulu Lāhui,” 35. ;

¹⁶³ Ibid.

Hawaiian featherwork. This portrait is not a singular case of Hawaiian Monarchs staging their dress and *hulu manu* as iconographic tools, but one of many seen in photographic archives, both disseminated in Hawai‘i and around the world.

The Royal Jubilee: ‘Fusion’ Photography, Fabrics, and Feathers

For the array of international representatives at Queen Victoria’s Golden Jubilee in 1887, the celebrations and gatherings were not just an opportunity to wish the Queen well, but also a chance to showcase their monarchies, expand royal networks of exchange, and reinforce established diplomatic relationships. Fashion played an important role for these monarchical regimes, transforming their historical legitimacy into modes relevant to the modern age.¹⁸⁹ Belonging to the family of international monarchs, and speaking the same language through dress, was pivotal to be respected and honored as a sovereign nation. During their travels and time at the celebration, the Hawaiian delegation's dress intentionally reinforced an image of Hawai‘i as a prosperous, powerful, modern, and artistically accomplished.

There are many accounts of the types of dress and adornment worn during the delegation’s travels, including mourning dress, silk *holoku*’s, feather fans, jewelry, and feather incorporating gowns.¹⁹⁰ When the royal women began their journey, the passing of Princess Likelike had the traveling party dressed in black mourning clothes. On the day of their arrival in Washington, the Crown Princess and Queen called upon President Cleveland and his wife, and were invited to dine

¹⁸⁹ Valencia, “Feathers,” 175.

¹⁹⁰ Valencia, “Feathers,” 186.

at the White House for dinner on May 6, 1887, two days later.¹⁹¹ *The Washington Critic* reported the attire of the Hawaiian Delegation for this meeting:

“The Queen wore a sweeping robe of black satin, with a long train, bordered with gold embroidery. The entire front of the dress was made of the same embroidery. A short black lace shawl was draped on her shoulders, and on her head a plain black bonnet. She wore a jeweled order, and the Hawaiian colors hanging from it in narrow ribbons. The Princess Liliuokalani, who entered with her husband, General Dominis, wore a mourning costume and black crepe veil, pinned back over her bonnet.”¹⁹²

Reporting on the same instance, *The New York Times* observed:

“Queen Kapiolani wore a black satin dress, with short princess front, trimmed with gold embroideries. It was cut short in the front, displaying a pair of light high-cut black kid boots. The back of her dress fell in a Watteau train that was edged with deep gold braid. She wore a small bonnet and carried a black feather fan, with a centre [sic] of yellow feathers.”¹⁹³

Despite recording slightly differing accounts, congruously combining the journalistic reports paints a visual account of the fashions of diplomacy (See Figure 16). The day after the dinner, *The New York Times* published their description of Queen Kapiolani's gown as:

“Court dress of Hawaii, a full flowing robe of white silk, with a yolk and straight front that was covered with silken embroidery of leaves and wild roses and yellow peahen feathers in natural colors. The embroidery continued upon the side of the dress and deep upon the train. She wore a broad crimson sash across her breast. The dress was high in the neck and long in the sleeves.”¹⁹⁴

It is said that First Lady Cleveland was honored by the attire of the Hawaiian Royal women and wore her wedding dress in their honor (See Figure 17).¹⁹⁵ A beautiful satin, silk, and muslin gown lined in orange-blossom and laurel

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

¹⁹² Ibid.

¹⁹³ Ibid.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid, 187.

¹⁹⁵ ‘Iolani Palace “Fashion Fit for Royalty Tour” March 16, 2022.

trimmings; Lady Cleveland's ensemble surely impressed the Hawaiian Queen's in return.¹⁹⁶ Princess Liliuokalani herself explained Queen Kapi'olani's attire to dinner, describing:

"The toilet of Her Majesty Queen Kapiolani was of white silk brocade of the choicest Japanese manufacture, artistically embroidered with heavy raised and richly worked designs; it was cut in Hawaiian fashion, a loosely flowing robe of a pattern or mode very becoming to our women, whether made of inexpensive calico or print, or of the finest of silks or most lustrous of satins. A description of this dress was given by all the newspapers, and attracted so much attention that on our arrival abroad the Queen was requested to wear the dress at court, with which solicitation she was happy to comply."¹⁹⁷

When the women did arrived in London, Queen Kapi'olani and Princess Lili'uokalani arranged a portraiture session at Walery Studios, the photography studio of the British royal monarchs and nobility.¹⁹⁸ Like the coronation photograph series of Queen Kapiolani from 1883, these images attempt to promote Hawaiian national pride and sovereignty, while playing into the mode of Victorian aesthetics for fashion and royal portraiture. In an image taken at the session, it seems that Queen Kapi'olani posed in the dress she had worn to the dinner with the American President (See Figure 18). While the gowns worn by the Hawaiian Royal delegation seemed to please both the American Heads of State and the press, the most recognizable of Queen Kapi'olani's personal garments from her journey were to be displayed at the Jubilee, her Lei Hulu Mamo Gown (See Figure 19) and the Peacock Gown (See Figure 20), both incorporating

¹⁹⁶ Annette Moritt Dunlap, "Frances Folsom Cleveland's White House Wardrobe," *White House History Number 32* (Fall 2012), accessed April 15, 2022.

<https://www.whitehousehistory.org/frances-folsom-clevelands-white-house-wardrobe>.

¹⁹⁷ Queen Liliuokalani, "Chapter XX: Washington-The White House-Mount Vernon," *Hawai'i's Story by Hawai'i's Queen*, (Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1898).

¹⁹⁸ Kamehiro, "Featherwork in the Hawaiian Monarchy Period," 98.

feathers.¹⁹⁹ The *ali'i* women often ordered the materials for custom dresses and gowns abroad in the fashion centers of San Francisco, New York, and London; and this is the same case for Queen Kapi'olani's Lei Hulu Mamo Gown and her Peacock Gown, which were intentionally designed for attending the Royal Jubilee. While the *'ahu'ula* in the Coronation series served the symbolic role of the Kalākaua's Dynastic legitimacy, there are no *ahu'ula* within the portraits from London. Instead, the featherwork necessary to project and promote Hawaiian craftsmanship and royal presence was built into the construction of the gowns themselves. While there are journalistic and literary accounts of these garments, the main reason that we can study Queen Kapi'olani's appearance is through the memorialized technology of photographic portraiture.

In the Queen Kapi'olani's Lei Hulu Mamo photograph, the Queen stands in a three-quarter pose, facing the left-hand frame of the photo (See Figure 21). She looks dignified in posture, and looks at the viewer, despite having her head align in the same direction as her body. Her arm on the left side of the picture rests daintily on the top of an elaborately decorated table. On top of the table, a pot of 'mounted porcelain'—a piece of porcelain produced in China, Japan, or Europe, embellished with gilt bonze or silver mounts of Eastern design—holds a plant with long, wide leaves. Her hand is elegantly resting upon the table, as if she is picking up a pea. Her left arm is at her hip and clasps around a beautiful light-colored fan with a long tassel hanging down the front side of her dress from its

¹⁹⁹ The names I use for these ensembles come from The Friends of the Iolani Palace's Ali'i Garment Reproduction Project, these reproductions and their making will be covered later in the thesis.; Valencia, "Feathers," 186.

end. On both of her wrists, the Queen has three layers of bracelets. The necklace of small circles and a cross, bracelets, and earrings all seem to be made of green and yellow shells, possible cat eyes.²⁰⁰

The gown is composed of a black, velvet dress in the construction and cut of a late 1880's Parisian style dress.²⁰¹ Characteristic of this time, the bustle had just come back into fashion and accentuated the lower back, with voluminous folds of velvet and a long sweeping court train. Upon her upper left hipbone, four *lei hulu* garlands sprout from beneath a feather medallion in the shape of a tiny 'ahu'ula; as the *lei* sweep across the front of the garment, they space out and disappear under the overskirt of the train on the opposite side. The feathered medallions resemble a *hoaka*,²⁰² or crescent shape, like the 'ahu'ula, alluding to Queen Kapi'olani's chiefly lineage. Placed upon both Queen's shoulders, her left hip, and three in the center of her chest, the medallions adorn the bodice of the dress; a circular diamond broach with two dangling pearls rests upon the crescent on her chest. The *lei hulu* were made in the *lei Kāmoē* style—with the feathers wrapped face down, creating a velvet like rope of lemon-yellow feathers from the 'ō'ō bird; which had lemon-yellow and black feathers that gown mirrored.²⁰³ It is believed that the feathers were reused from older *lei hulu* or 'ahu'ula because

²⁰⁰ The "necklace, bracelet, and earrings of green and yellow shells—possibly cat-eye. Information from photo description at Bishop Museum," from a note written in the description of the image on Hawaii State Digital Archives.

²⁰¹ Valencia, "Feathers," 186.; Kamala Kapadia, "Fit for a Queen," in *Hana Hou! The Magazine of the Hawaiian Airlines* 19.6 (December 2016), <https://hanahou.com/19.6/fit-for-a-queen>.

²⁰² Kamehiro, suggests that the "*hoaka* was intimately associated with chiefs; it denoted 'glory,' 'brightness,' and 'splendor' in Hawaiian verbal and visual language, offering a poetic and visual metaphor for the revered genealogy of chiefs." These "forms seem to have been the prerogative of chiefs, and those featured on feather garments, sculpture, and royal regalia conveyed similar meanings."; Kamehiro, "Palaces and Sacred Places," 72.

²⁰³ Kapadia, "Fit for a Queen."

sadly, both the ‘ō‘ō bird, and its sacred feathers, were becoming scarcer to find on the Islands by the late 1880s.²⁰⁴ Worn to dinner at the Prime Minister and his wife, Lord and Lady Salisbury’s house for dinner, the Queen made the newspapers, who noted “the gown’s golden feathered trim and matching feathered coronet,” the headpiece seen in the photograph.²⁰⁵ Another reporter, “assuming the worst, described the sacrifice made by the birds in the name of fashion as “ a real Massacre of the Innocents.”²⁰⁶ All that remains of this dress is the photograph, the newspaper accounts, the *lei hulu* used in the ensemble—held in the Bishop Museum,²⁰⁷ and a “single feathered medallion,” held in the Bishop Museum for safe keeping.²⁰⁸

Queen Kapi‘olani’s personal attendant and dressmaker, James W. L. McGuire, is responsible for designing, creating, and collecting the thousands of feathers required to assemble the Queen’s Peacock Gown.²⁰⁹ McGuire kept a diary of his experience joining the royal delegation for the Jubilee and published his *mo‘olelo* of the behind-the-scenes trip.²¹⁰ During a stopover in New York City, Kapi‘olani and McGuire ordered the azure velvet from the B. Altman & Co. department store.²¹¹ The encounter was written about in the New York Times:

²⁰⁴ Valencia, “Feathers,” 186.

²⁰⁵ Kapadia, “Fit for a Queen.”

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁷ Personal meeting with the Friends of the ‘Iolani Palace, Leona Hamano and Zita Cup Choy.

²⁰⁸ Kapadia, “Fit for a Queen.”

²⁰⁹ James Washington Lonoikauaalii McGuire, was of Irish and Native Hawaiian descent and worked for the royal family for most of his life. He published his accounts of his travels in 1938, in the Hawaiian Language, titled “*He Moolelo Pokole o ka Huakai hele a ka Moiwahine Kapiolani i Enelani i ka Makahiki 1887 i ka lubile o ka Moiwahine Vitoria o Beretania Nui*” (*A Short Description of Queen Kapiolani's Voyage to England to Attend the Jubilee Celebration of Queen Victoria of England in the Year 1887*); Margaret Buckley McFarland, “Foreword,” *A Royal Journey To London*, (Topgallant Publishing Co. Ltd., 1975).

²¹⁰ Emily V. Warinner, “Part I: The Journey,” *A Royal Journey To London*, 2-3..

²¹¹ Kamala Kapadia, “Fit for a Queen.”

“Queen Kapiolani spent some time while in the city in visiting our palatial dry goods houses, and expressed herself more than delighted with the magnificence of our goods and the artistic elegance of American costumes. Messrs. B. Altman & Co. captured her admiration to such an extent that she ordered from their elegant house a Court dress in which to appear at the reception to be given her Hawaiian Majesty by Queen Victoria at Buckingham Palace...when giving the order for the dress her Majesty first consulted about the color. Azure blue was suggested, and when the Queen expressed herself very happily, saying: “My name in Hawaiian means ‘Arch of Heaven,’ and, as azure blue and ‘Arch of Heaven’ are synonymous terms, the color would be most appropriate.”²¹²

The color description in the article not only indicates the importance of symbolic allegories in designing a dress for Kapi‘olani, but the journalistic accounts of the dress help scholars reinterpret the presence and imagery of the dress, something only alluded to in photographs of the time. The journalists take care to allude to the queen’s admiration of American fashion in symbiosis to the taste and refinement of the elite of society, a very different depiction of the Hawaiian Queen than that of her predecessor Queen Kamāmalu, received fifty-years earlier.

In the photographs of Queen Kapi‘olani’s Peacock Gown and Princess Lili‘uokalani’s Ribbon Gown, the Hawaiian royals are arranged in a double portrait of Princess Lili‘uokalani standing while Queen Kapiolani sits (See Figure 22). On the left side of the picture, the Crown Princess stands with her body facing forward, with her head at a three-quarter angle, looking down at her Queen, with a sweet, proud smile. Her arms are daintily crossed in front of her waist, with her left arm on top of her right; in her left hand, she is holding a bouquet of tulips as a ring, and three bangles adorn her wrist. Even though Queen Lili‘uokalani,

²¹² “A Court Dress for Queen Kapiolani,” *New York Times*, May 29, 1887: 10.

had only had a week to prepare for the Jubilee, she ordered her dress in transit and wore the Ribbon Gown for the events in London where it was quite admired.²¹³ The Ribbon Gown is made of black velvet in a style like the Lei Hulu gown, a smooth front bodice, a bustle, and an extended train.²¹⁴ The evening-style gown has intricate lace extending from the floor to the bustline on both sides of the front paneling; within the skirt paneling, countless loops of ribbons project from the skirt, like feathers puffing out from the breast of a bird. A royal ribbon extends from her right shoulder to her left hip and a royal order is pinned to her left bust. Delicate lace adorns the neckline and strap-like sleeves of the bodice, as a beautiful, diamond broach lays in the center of the heart-shaped bustline. Princess Lili‘uokalani’s prized diamond butterfly broach with ruby eyes—purchased on the way to the Jubilee—rests upon the right side of the Royal Heir’s updo. A ribbon choker necklace with a pendant and bow at the base of her neck, finishes the ensemble.²¹⁵

Rested elegantly on the edge of her throne, Queen Kapi‘olani’s body is posed at a three-quarter angle towards the left half of the photograph. Her head faces the spectator, and her eyes demand a return of her glance. The Queen’s right arm is placed behind her body and parallels the Princess’s as it comes forward in

²¹³ While Queen Kapi‘olani already knew she was attending the trip, Kalakaua gave his sister a week to arrange travel plans, after deciding to invite her after the passing their sister, Princess Likelike. This resulted in herself and Queen Kapi‘olani ordering the appropriate ensembles while in transit to the Jubilee.; Docent from the Iolani Palace Fashion Fit for Royalty Tour March 14, 2022.

²¹⁴ Despite the overwhelming popularity of the color black in the Victorian Era, made popular by Queen Victoria herself after her husband Prince Albert’s passing; in my opinion, Princess Lili‘uokalani, may have chosen to wear black in honor of her recently passed sister Princess Likelike.

²¹⁵ Valencia, “Feathers,” 186.

the picture plane to hold a bouquet of flowers. Her left arm comes straight down with her elbow resting effortlessly upon the armrest of her chair; as the spectator takes their eyes down her arm, they see a spiral bangle bracelet, a stunning diamond ring, and a beautiful featherwork fan of peacock feathers. Queen Kapi‘olani’s tiara echoes the *hoaka* feather medallions with a central diamond-encrusted crescent. As a polished *kukui* nut necklace in the same setting as the Lei Hulu Gown adorns her ears and collarbones, a royal ribbon crosses her body from her shoulder at the back of her throne to her front hip. Four royal Hawaiian orders are assembled into a diamond formation, on the left half of her bodice, and a single diamond brooch mirrors Lili‘uokalani. Surprisingly, beneath all these layers of adornment is the most important iconographic method of conveying Queen Kapi‘olani’s sovereignty, lineage, and Hawaiian cultural heritage—her *hulu* dress.

Described in the New York Times article from earlier:

“Azure-blue velvet of the very richest quality was selected for the Court train and bodice, the train being adjustable, four yards long, and lined throughout with light blue moiré, finished under the edge with a puffing of moiré 12 inches wide, which has the effect of raising it from the floor and giving it the most graceful sweep. The train is three yards in width and disposed of in plaits. On the outer edge of the train is a band of peacock feathers, 12 inches wide at the end of the train, growing gradually narrower as it reaches the waist, where it was but an inch and a half in width. The bodice is cut low with point back and front, laced in the front with silk cord, the neck trimmed with exquisite duchesse point lace, thus adding to the effect of the feather trimming. The corsage is sleeveless, with a band of the feathers and duchesse lace. This gorgeous train will be worn over an underdress of light blue moiré with demi-train 60 inches in length, finished with a double rouching of the same over a balayouse of fine Valenciennes lace. The front and sides of the skirt show wide panels of peacock feathers, a band of the same feathers and a veil, and her majesty selected, to be worn

with this toilet, a pair of suede gloves of a light fawn shade, of blue velvet, lined with light blue moiré.”²¹⁶

Within the photograph, and others taken the same day, the Queen has been positioned on her throne to perfectly highlight the quality and fluidity of the velvet train, descending from her waist like a stream from a waterfall (See Figure 23). Despite being made of feathers non-endemic to Hawai‘i, its Hawaiian iconography is ingrained into the garment through its technical application to the fabric in *humupapa*. It goes without saying that Queen Kapi‘olani’s Peacock Gown was a statement crafted over countless hours, many skilled hands, and at a price of a pretty penny. One can imagine the effort and determination required for Kapi‘olani to get dressed in the ensemble (with her ladies' maids' help, of course), let alone walk with dignity and grace as she met her sister sovereign, but that is exactly what she did. Queen Kapi‘olani wore her Peacock Gown to her and Princess Lili‘uokalani’s private audience—*he alo ā he alo*—with Queen Victoria, and the meeting was a lovely success, with Her Majesty Victoria kissing her sister sovereign and sovereign-to-be, engaging in well wishes, recalling upon meeting and enjoying King Kalākaua in 1881, and introducing her children to Princess Lili‘uokalani.²¹⁷

²¹⁶ *New York Times*, “A Court Dress for Queen Kapiolani,” 10.

²¹⁷ Valencia, “Feathers,” 186.; From Princess Lili‘uokalani’s story, “Her Majesty Victoria greeted her sister sovereign, Kapiolani, with a kiss on each cheek, and then, turning to me, she kissed me once on the forehead; we were asked to be seated, the two queens sitting together on the sofa and engaging in conversation, which was translated by Colonel Iaukea. In the mean time I occupied one of the chairs. Queen Kapiolani expressed her congratulations on the great event of the day, and her gladness that the Jubilee found Her Majesty in good health, and added her expressions of hope that she might live many years to be a blessing to her subjects. The Queen received her good wishes with a like spirit of cordiality, thanking her for coming so far to see her, and then went on to speak with enthusiasm of the pleasure she had taken in meeting her husband, my brother, King Kalakaua. She said she had been much pleased with him, and had never forgotten his agreeable

During the later festivities of the Jubilee, a description by Princess Lili‘uokalani alludes to another aspect of the role of women and display during diplomatic encounters. As indicated to in Queen Lili‘uokalani’s account of a reception at the foreign office in London on June 22, the role of high-ranking women in diplomatic events was to adorn themselves with luxurious items that displayed the prestige, wealth, and genealogical status of the wearer. She writes:

“We were ushered into a large hall, well filled with ladies of rank, and all of them most magnificently dressed to do honor to the occasion. It would seem that each of these had brought out the family heirlooms in precious stones; they were duchesses with shining tiaras, marchionesses with coronets of flashing stones, noble ladies with costly necklaces or emerald ear-drops, little women who seemed almost bowed down under lofty circlets of diamonds over their brows, tall women bearing proudly off their adornments of stones of priceless value. I have never seen such a grand display or valuable gems in my life.”²¹⁸

Using this logic, it may have made more sense for the women *ali‘i* to be accepted and praised for their continued wearing of featherwork. The feathers are the ‘jewels’ of the Hawaiian Islands, and like the jewels of Europe, they are acceptable, encouraged, and almost required displays of wealth for women in ceremonial and diplomatic encounters. Diamonds are not as synergetic to a military uniform as feathers to a couture gown; instead of royal featherwork, Kalākaua wore royal orders and medals.

Nevertheless, like with any diplomatic encounter, *he alo ā he alo* is not enough to sustain a monarchical relationship without the practice of *ho’okupu*, or

visit... the Queen of England again kissed me on the forehead; then she took my hand, as though she had just thought of something which she had been in danger of forgetting, and said, "I want to introduce to you my children;" and one by one they came forward and were introduced. After this I hesitated a moment to see if she had anything further to say to me, and finding that she had not, I courtesied to her and withdrew.”; “Chapter XXIII: Sovereign of England and India,” *Hawai‘i’s Story by Hawai‘i’s Queen*, (Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1898).

²¹⁸ Lili‘uokalani, (1898): 182

gift-giving. The Hawaiian delegation extended *aloha* to Queen Victoria with *lei hulu* featherwork made by Queen Kapi‘olani’s own hand, mounted within a frame among diamonds.²¹⁹ The Hawaiian royals' diplomatic dresses were stitched with symbolism loud as a *mele*. The relationship Queen Kapi‘olani and Princess Lili‘uokalani fostered and sustained with the British Queen lasted until her passing in 1901, with exchanges of royal orders, letters of congratulations and condolences, and diplomatic gifts.²²⁰ When Victoria requested that the attendants of her Golden Jubilee dress in the traditional style of their lands, the Hawaiian delegation responded with garments glistening with metaphors of Hawaiian cultural heritage, indigenous sovereignty, and *ali‘i* divinity.

Part III: The ‘Iolani Palace and The Ali‘i Garment Reproduction Project:

The Importance of the Archive, Access, and He Alo ā He Alo

The actions taken by Hawaiian *kūpuna* to promote, preserve, and celebrate Native Hawaiian heritage has enabled contemporary indigenous communities the opportunity to meet *he alo ā he alo* (face-to-face) with *ali‘i* royal garments, *nā hulu ali‘i*, and *mea waiwai ali‘i*.²²² Noelle M. K. Y. Kahanu, *kanaka ‘ōiwi* (Native Hawaiian) curator, scholar, and museum exhibition liaison, accentuates the importance of *he alo ā he alo* relationships and encounters between museums, Native Hawaiians, *ka po‘e kahiko* (the people of Hawai‘i), diaspora communities,

²¹⁹ The newspaper *The Graphic* described the piece as “a piece of work made entirely of the feathers of a very rare bird from the Sandwich Islands. It appears that there are only two of this particular feather of the bird, and it has taken some thousands of feathers to make the wreath, which is the work of the Hawaiian Queen's own hands.”; Valencia, “Feathers,” 187.

²²⁰ Valencia, “Feathers,” 187.

²²² Marzan and ‘Ohukani‘ōhi‘a Gon III, “The Aesthetics, Materials and Construction of Hawaiian Featherwork,” 26-31.

and the ancestral objects held in institutional collections.²²³ As a facilitator of engagements between multiple realms and times, Kahanu emphasizes,

“there is no separation between Native Hawaiian collections and those who made them, who wore them, who used them; and, as ancestral embodiments, these collections are directly connected to their descendants, current-day Native Hawaiians.”²²⁴

The museum and the archive are inherently colonial spaces with histories and contemporary realities of power imbalances, gatekeeping, and pigeonholing narratives that support institutional goals.²²⁵ While the museum can, and has, been a contact zone for Pacific collections and their communities of origin; institutional procedures, physical separation, and accessibility to Hawaiian objects are all issues indigenous peoples face when trying to meet *he alo ā he alo* with their ancestors.²²⁶ In the words of Maile Andrade, *kanaka maoli* textile and visual artist:

“I was taught to listen to our *kūpuna* (elders), and I always believed that *kūpuna* meant interactions between different generations of those still living. But many years ago, I realized that I needed to expand my definition: that the pieces I was seeing in museums were *kūpuna* as well, and they were speaking to us. We had to listen and pay attention because there were so many voices to be heard in these treasures...there can be a dialogue.”²²⁷

²²³ Kahanu, “He Alo Ā He Alo,” 296–316.

²²⁴ Ibid.

²²⁵ Larissa Förster and Friedrich von Bose, “Concerning Curatorial Practice in Ethnological Museums: An Epistemology of Postcolonial Debates,” in *Curatopia: Museums and the Future of Curatorship*, ed. by Phillip Schorch and Conal McCarthy, (Manchester University Press, 2019): 44-55.; As scholars like Amy Lonetree, Linda Tuhiwi Smith, Maile Andrade, and Kahanu have argued in length, museums as spaces of contact and education have potential to, and must, decolonize their collections and modes of curatorship to better serve indigenous communities from which their objects originate.; Maile Andrade and others, “Introduction: A Journey of Encounters and Engagement,” 16-21.; Amy Lonetree, *Decolonizing Museums: Representing Native America in National and Tribal Museums*, (United States: University of North Carolina Press, 2012).; Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, (United Kingdom: Zed Books, 2013).

²²⁶ Andrade, “Introduction: A Journey of Encounters and Engagement,” 16-21.

²²⁷ Ibid, 18

These “lifelines” between the past and the present are products of social and political relationships among different groups of peoples, cultures, and places in their own time.²²⁸ When their “voices” can be heard and seen, the dialogue between ancestor and descendent, *he alo ā he alo*, is a proponent of the indigenous sovereignty, agency, and cultural legacies flowing between Hawaiian objects and the *ka po ‘e kahiko*.²²⁹ While museums around the world are beginning to collaborate with Native Hawaiian leadership and cultural practitioners to increase these exchanges and educational opportunities; some institutions, like the ‘Iolani Palace, are managing the problem of how to engage an audience when cultural treasures that had a specific utility for the royal family have been lost, damaged, or are too fragile to display.²³⁰ While institutionally run museums like the Bishop Museum, practice standard museology to preserve, exhibit, loan, and educate visitors and scholars about their collections,²³¹ a historic house museum like the ‘Iolani Palace, has more freedom to tell stories about the historic site they inhabit, even while having less flexibility in changing permanent exhibitions. These contact sites currently navigate new worlds of exhibition design, conservation treatment, educational programming, collaborations with cultural practitioners, and community groups of indigenous heritage. In this role, it is essential for museums to actively promote engagement “as institutions of living, contemporary cultures, representative of the Native peoples” which they represent

²²⁸ Ibid.

²²⁹ Ibid.

²³⁰ ‘Iolani Palace, “Artifact Restoration,” wall text.

²³¹ While this is true for the most part, The Bishop is different from many other museums housing Pacific cultural collections based on their recent and increasing collaborations with cultural practitioners, cultural specialists, indigenous curators, and accountability to local indigenous communities.

through exhibition.²³² Christine Mullen Kreamer, deputy director and chief curator at the National Museum of African Art, Smithsonian Institution, observes,

“communities often look to museums as places in which identity is articulated. As a result, museums have the responsibility of ensuring that exhibitions embody dynamic, not static, depictions of history and culture. Museums are increasingly asked to ensure that their exhibitions resonate with contemporary issues and present day realities.”²³³

The ‘Iolani Palace has implemented various programs and projects within the historical site that play with this dynamic, activation of history for contemporary audiences. From the *Ali‘i Garment Reproduction Project* to educational programming and interactive tours: visitors engage *he alo ā he alo* with chiefly treasures and reproduction textiles that center on “first-person Native voice,” *ali‘i* agency, and indigenous sovereignty.²³⁴

To represent the dynamics relating to the *ali‘i* ensembles in the Kalākaua Dynasty, the ‘Iolani Palace’s research and curatorial practices have transcended many academic and artistic disciplines. Built between 1879 and 1882, the ‘Iolani Palace has since served as a profound symbol of Hawaiian history, political sovereignty, and indigenous agency through the Kalakaua Dynasty (1883-1893). Kamehiro enthuses,

“‘Iolani Palace could dazzle the resident haole and international audiences...as well as resonate with the hopes and values of the Native population. It was an authentically modern and traditional Hawaiian symbol of the state of the nation.”²³⁵

²³² Teresa Roann Wilkins, “Ruffling Feathers: Hawaiian Featherart, 1770-2012,” PhD diss. (Indiana University, 2014): 264.

²³³ Christine Mullen Kreamer, “Defining Communities through Exhibition and Collecting,” *Museums and Communities: The Politics of Public Culture*, Ed. Ivan Karp, Christine Mullen Kreamer, and Steven D. Lavine, (Washington DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1992): 371.

²³⁴ Kurt Dewhurst and Marsha MacDowell, “Gathering and Interpreting Tradition: Rethinking the Role of the Museum,” *The Journal of Museum Education* Vol. 24, No.3, *Bridging Diversity: Building Community: Folkloric Models of Museum Interpretation* (Fall 1999): 3, 7-10.

²³⁵ Kamehiro, “Palaces and Sacred Spaces: ‘Iolani Palace,” 76.

Following the overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom, the ‘Iolani Palace housed the governmental affairs of the Republic of Hawai‘i (1894-1898), the Territory of Hawai‘i (1898-1959), and the American State of Hawai‘i (1959-1969).²³⁶ In 1962, the ‘Iolani Palace was given another opportunity to tell the stories of Hawaiian Kingship when the site was designated a National Historic Landmark.²³⁷ Starting in the 1960s and 1970s, restorations commenced repairing the royal seat of government to its condition of former glory. The Junior League of Honolulu conducted research and raised funding for the project, selecting Charles E. Peterson, a “recognized architectural historian and restoration architect,” to design an organized plan of restoration for the site.²³⁸ Between 1965 and 1968, The Junior League completed its research efforts regarding the Palace and its grounds, and by 1972, the Architectural Report was completed.²³⁹ With the construction of a new state capital building in 1969, the Hawai‘i State Government Offices were relocated and restoration commenced.²⁴⁰ By 1978, the ‘Iolani Palace was officially opened to the public as a historic house museum, and since then, restorations of the rooms and palace grounds have been completed section-by-section.²⁴¹

²³⁶ Kamehiro, “Palaces and Sacred Spaces: ‘Iolani Palace,” 55.

²³⁷ Ibid.

²³⁸ ‘Iolani Palace, “Restoration Timeline,” wall text.

²³⁹ Ibid.

²⁴⁰ Ibid.

²⁴¹ The restoration timeline posted by the ‘Iolani Palace follows as such: Halekoa, ‘Iolani Barracks restoration (1981); Throne Room restoration (1981); Dining Room restoration (1982); Coronation Stand, fence, and wall restoration (1983); King’s Library restoration (1983); Chamberlain’s Office restoration (1984); Landscape restoration (1984); Kana‘ina Building restoration (1987); Blue Room restoration (1991); Imprisonment Room restoration (1995); Palace Galleries open (2000); Bartels Galleries open (2003); Music Room restoration (2010), King’s and Queen’s Bedroom restoration (2011), and Basement Galleries redesign (in progress).; Ibid.

Founded by Mrs. Liliuokalani Kawanānakoā Morris, the grandniece of Queen Kapiʻolani, The Friends of the Iolani Palace (The Friends) have managed the property up to the present, providing stewardship for the restoration of the palace, the grounds, and its treasures.²⁴² While it was utilized by the occupying government after 1893, the interior of the palace had been modified and the possessions of the Hawaiian Kingdom had been sent to the Bishop Museum or were auctioned away. The quest to locate and recover many of the original furnishings and objects that bedecked the historical halls persists with the help of the archival photographs and research pioneered by The Junior League of Honolulu. The wall text titled “Artifact Restoration,” in the ʻIolani Palace states:

“Conservation treatment returns artifacts to their monarchy era appearance and seeks to preserve them for as long as possible. Research determines the look of an object during the monarchy. Once a treatment approach is established, broken or missing parts are repaired and replaced; surfaces are cleaned or coated to prevent deterioration; mounts are built to support weakened areas. If an original artifact is too fragile for exhibition, a carefully reproduced replica is shown while the original remains safe in storage.”²⁴³

When working in the arts and cultural heritage field, it is important to use the proper word choice when publishing information to a public audience. While the text indicates that conservation treatment “returns artifacts to their monarchy era appearance,” this practice falls more into the category of restoration, which emphasizes returning a work of art, or an artifact to its visual original state.²⁴⁴ Art conservation as a field includes all the actions, research, and education practiced

²⁴² Friends of the Iolani Palace, “Restoration Of The Palace,” Iolani Palace website, accessed April 25, 2022, <https://www.iolanipalace.org/history/restoration-of-the-palace/>.

²⁴³ ʻIolani Palace, “Artifact Restoration,” wall text.

²⁴⁴ Wilkins, “Ruffling Feathers,” 234.

to preserve cultural heritage physically: including preventative care, examination, documentation, and treatment.²⁴⁵ In the historic house museum of the ‘Iolani Palace, both restoration and conservation practices have manifested to return and maintain the grounds to the “time when their Majesties, King Kalākaua and his sister and successor, Queen Lili‘uokalani walked the grand halls.”²⁴⁷ While the physical bodies of the *ali‘i* no longer grace the halls of the ‘Iolani, The Friends have ensured that many of the important aspects of the monarch’s materiality—their chiefly regalia, textiles, adornments, and featherwork—can greet the visitors of the museum in original or reproduced forms.

During an imperative conversation with the ‘Iolani Palace’s Collections Manager, Leona Hamano, and Administrative Historian, Zita Cup Choy, I was informed of the procedures of managing the Hawaiian monarchical historic site, their stewardship of *ali‘i* treasures, and The Friend’s initiatives to educate the public regarding the living histories of the Kalākaua monarchs. Regarding the collections of the ‘Iolani Palace, Zita Cup Choy, in an episode of *Aloha Authentic* with Kamaka Pili, maintains that caring for the objects in the palace is incredibly important.²⁴⁸ In the ‘Iolani Palace, almost all of what you see, besides the textile reproductions, are original and have been used and owned by the monarchs and their guests.²⁴⁹ While it would be ideal for the ‘Iolani Palace to exhibit the *hulu*

²⁴⁵ AIC and FAIC, “What Is Conservation,” American Institute for Conservation and Foundation for Advancement in Conservation website, (Washington, DC, 2022), accessed April 14, 2022, <https://www.culturalheritage.org/about-conservation/what-is-conservation>.

²⁴⁷ Friends of the ‘Iolani Palace, “Welcome to Iolani Palace,” Iolani Palace website, accessed April 16, 2022. <https://www.iolanipalace.org/>.

²⁴⁸ Zita Cup Choy and Kamaka Pili, “‘Iolani Palace- The Former Residence of Hawaiian Royalty,” *KHON2, Aloha Authentic*, Episode 104, video, uploaded January 29, 2020, 10:57, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7fBvjIA4fs4&t=1049s>.

²⁴⁹ Choy and Pili, “‘Iolani Palace- The Former Residence of Hawaiian Royalty.”

manu, *kāhili*, textiles, and garments worn by the *ali* ‘i in the late nineteenth century, many of the items seen in archival photographs are lost to time or must remain in the storage rooms of the ‘Iolani Palace or the Bishop Museum.²⁵⁰

Hamano indicated that most of the *‘ahu‘ula* and *kāhili* identified in the nineteenth-century archival photographs or early inventories of the ‘Iolani Palace has gone to the Bishop Museum and have remained there since the overthrow of Queen Liliuokalani.

In the ‘Iolani Palace’s storage rooms, the *‘ahu‘ula* and larger clothing garments in the collection are wrapped in acid-free tissue paper, laid in archival boxes, and placed on shelves.²⁵¹ The textile room is fully enclosed and equipped with motion sensor LED lights, a datalogger to monitor for climate control, and a smoke detector.²⁵² The majority of the *‘ahu‘ula* in the collection are on loan for safekeeping.²⁵³ There is contention between two parties as to who is the owner, which places ‘Iolani Palace in an unfortunate situation that does not allow the *‘ahu‘ula* to be displayed until the issue of ownership has been resolved.²⁵⁴ Since the *‘ahu‘ula* are not displayed in the ‘Iolani Palace for visitors, they are resting and not stabilized for exhibition handling on mounts. In concluding our discussion

²⁵⁰ Personal conversation with ‘Iolani Palace’s Collections Manager, Leona Hamano, and the ‘Iolani Palace Historian, Zita Cup Choy.

²⁵¹ Every five years the boxes are inventoried and checked for preservation purposes.; Ibid.

²⁵² Ibid.

²⁵³ Sunlight has ultraviolet (UV) rays that damage dyes and pigments in cloth and feathers.; Riedler, R., C. Pesme, J. Druzik, M. Gleeson, and E. Pearlstein, “A review of color producing mechanisms in feathers and their influence on preventive conservation strategies,” *Journal of the American Institute for Conservation*, 53:1, (2014): 44-65.

²⁵⁴ Personal conversation with ‘Iolani Palace’s Collections Manager, Leona Hamano, and the ‘Iolani Palace Historian, Zita Cup Choy.

of the royal objects and *hulu manu* currently in the storage rooms and exhibition spaces of the ‘Iolani Palace, Hamano states:

“Because we are a house museum, many of our gallery rooms are permanent exhibits that are based on historical photographs and period newspapers. We try to keep the rooms as authentic as possible so that our guests can experience what the rooms originally looked like. So, unless we have the appropriate context or the space to display an *‘ahu‘ula*, only then would it be included in the gallery room. We are in the process of renovating the basement to include additional galleries. One gallery in particular will feature regalia and adornment and we are hopeful to get a loan from the Bishop Museum that will include numerous *‘ahu‘ula*.”²⁵⁵

The *Ali‘i* Garment Reproduction Project: Working with Artisans, Cultural Practitioners, and Communities

Since the ‘Iolani Palace does not necessarily have the context nor authority to display the *hulu mea* in their storage rooms, reproduction projects of the textiles and featherwork seen in historical photographs have permitted the ‘Iolani Palace to enhance the visual, tactile, and auditory visitor experience though animating the spaces and storytelling of Kalākaua Dynastic history. Two reproduction projects initiated by the ‘Iolani Palace are intimately connected to *hulu mea*, diplomatic presence, and collaboration with cultural practitioners: the *Ali‘i Garment Reproduction Project* and the *Kāhili Reproduction Project*. For the sake of this thesis, I will be focusing on the reproduction garments, while incorporating the perspective of Kawika Lum-Nelmida, the collaborating cultural practitioner of *hulu* for the two latest installments of *Kāhili Kū* (standing *kāhili*) in Queen Kapi‘olani and King Kalākaua’s bedrooms.²⁵⁶

²⁵⁵ Ibid.

²⁵⁶ United States Artists, “Kawika Lum-Nelmida,” United States Artists website, accessed April 27, 2022. <https://www.unitedstatesartists.org/fellow/kawika-lum-nelmida/>.

During our discussion of the *ali'i* garment and *kāhili* projects at the 'Iolani Palace, Hamano emphasized the importance of the word “reproduction” over “reconstruction” referencing the garment and *kāhili* projects at the 'Iolani Palace. She states:

“With regards to reproduction...I strongly stress that when working with a designer or artist on the reproduction of objects, such as a kahili or gown, it is important that they are given as much historical information as possible about the object. This enables them to reproduce the object as accurately & identically as described or depicted in written documents and historical photographs...They need to understand, and we've learned...that the artist does not have the artistic license to do what they want. A reproduction is not the same as recreation or redesigning....Sometimes an artist may not have the research skills. Research may not be their forte and that's alright. In such instances, it's up to us to equip them with as much research materials to assist him or her in reproducing the object.”²⁵⁷

While these reproductions are not authentic—“of undisputed origin”²⁵⁸— in some definitions of the word: they are “made in the traditional or original way...that faithfully resembles the original” and are “based on accurate, or reliable facts.”²⁵⁹ As the 'Iolani Palace historian, Cup Choy conducts much of the research regarding the archival materials: photographs, paintings, the material remains, newspaper articles, diary entries, and collection inventories.²⁶⁰ Without

²⁵⁷ Personal conversation with 'Iolani Palace's Collections Manager, Leona Hamano, and the Administration Historian, Zita Cup Choy

²⁵⁸ Oxford Languages, “Authentic Definitions,” Google Search, accessed April 27, 2022.

²⁵⁹ Oxford Languages, “Authentic.”

²⁶⁰ Throughout my conversations with cultural practitioners, archival specialists, and curators, it has become apparent that it is essential to gather as many voices, perspectives, and resources as possible when approaching a project. When utilizing historical written personal accounts, journalism, and newspapers, it is essential to attempt to verify its truth by comparing more than two sources (of separate patronage). While it is excellent when resources can be verified, not all historical accounts have the information needed to contribute to the reproduction of products authentically. When two or more sources differ in their interpretations of a singular event, this can lead to further confusion or imply incompetence of both journalists' accounts. This is just one reason that projects like the *Ali'i Garment Reproduction Project* and the *Kāhili Reproduction Project* have thrived with the collaboration of creative, cultural, academic, and museological voices; when working together, the most authentic reproduction is possible.; Based on personal

the preservation of these resources, the reproduction projects would not be possible because even with these materials: the historians, artists, and cultural practitioners had to make educated guesses and substitutions. Cup Choy explains:

“One of our major challenges with garments and feather work, especially the *kahili*, [is that] the photos are all black and white and all the other documents that we have might not mention colors. Even if they say ‘red,’ well, what kind of ‘red?’ They don’t necessarily give us the kind of information that we need to have to be able to recreate them. So, there’s a lot of educated guessing that goes on.”²⁶¹

In my conversation with Kawika Lum-Nelmida, cultural practitioner of *hulu*, we discussed the differences in available materials and the ethics surrounding the use of endemic birds versus invasive bird species, or in some cases, birds killed for food and sport.²⁶² For example, when approaching a reproduction project like the *kahili* for Queen Kapi‘olani’s room, cultural practitioners may be able to look at a source image and tell what type of bird feathers were used, but if those birds are extinct or endangered, the substitution of materials will most likely be needed.²⁶³ This was the case for one of the very first garment reproduction projects at ‘Iolani Palace.

Starting in 2016,²⁶⁴ the ‘Iolani Palace’s *Ali‘i Garment Reproduction Project* has prolonged the reflectivity of *ali‘i* royal ensembles as embodiments of Hawaiian agency, artistry, and authority in the Kalākaua Dynasty. The Friends of the ‘Iolani Palace commissioned Iris Viacrusis, Hawai‘i island-based Filipino

conversations with ‘Iolani Palace’s Collections Manager, Leona Hamano, Iolani Palace Historian, Zita Cup Choy, contemporary cultural practitioner of *hulu*, Kawika Lum-Nelmida, and curator at the San Francisco DeYoung Museum, Christina Hellmich.

²⁶¹ Personal conversation with ‘Iolani Palace’s Collections Manager, Leona Hamano, and Iolani Palace Historian, Zita Cup Choy.

²⁶² Personal conversation with Kawika Lum-Nelmida, cultural practitioner of *hulu*.

²⁶³ Ibid.

²⁶⁴ Ibid.

designer, who has an extensive background in fashion and historical construction design: training in Los Angeles and Paris, Hawaiian pageants, and designing for the Merrie Monarch Festival.²⁶⁵ Visacrusis was commissioned to pattern, design, and construct a series of garments from the *ali* 'i wardrobe and has collaborated together with art and fashion historians, archivists, collection managers, and cultural practitioners of *hulu* to fill the gaps in our knowledge through reproductions of Hawaiian material cultural heritage, both within the *pae* 'āina and overseas. The initial reproductions were Queen Lili'uokalani's Lilac Ostrich Feather (2016) and Black Ribbon gowns (2016), and Queen Kapi'olani's Lei Hulu (2016) and Peacock (2017) gowns (See Figure 24).²⁶⁶ Later in 2017, The Friends announced a second series of planned ensembles: Queen Kapi'olani's Coronation Gown, King Kalākaua's Dress Uniform, King Kalākaua's Masonic Uniform, Queen Liliuokalani's Traveling Dress, Queen Liliuokalani's Summer White, and Princess Kaiulani's Ivory Ball Gown (See Figure 25).²⁶⁷ Currently in the middle of producing the second series, 'Iolani Palace now has several reproductions of *ali* 'i ensembles activating the rooms of the Palace, embodying the presence of the Kalākaua Monarchs.

²⁶⁵ It was reported by Cordero that the curator of the 'Iolani Palace had seen one of the designer's costumes on the former Miss Hawai'i, Desirea Cruz, as she sang at the palace. The curator "inquired about the designer" of her ensemble and after meeting with Viacrusis to discuss his credentials, they learned that he is an active creator of Victorian and Edwardian costumes for the Merrie Monarch Festival, an annual hula, arts, and parade celebration, hosted by the non-profit organization of the same name, that honors the legacy of Kalākaua's perpetuation of native Hawaiian "traditions, native language and arts.;" Radiant Cordero, "Embracing Interpretations of the Past," in *The Fil-Am Courier* (December 16-31, 2016): 5.; The Merrie Monarch Festival, "Merrie Monarch: The Official Site of the Merrie Monarch Festival," accessed April 4, 2022. <https://www.merriemonarch.com/>.

²⁶⁶ While the initial proposal included set of four *ali* 'i gowns and raised \$20,000 for the commissions, the project's success has expanded to include over ten garments requiring further funds.; Kapadia, "Fit for a Queen."

²⁶⁷ "Ke Kiai O Ka Iolani Hale: The Guardian of Iolani Palace, (Iolani Palace, Haule Lau 2017): 5.

Prior to the reproduction projects, the only visuals of the *ali'i* dress at the 'Iolani Palace were in the painted portraiture and photographic prints of the Kamehameha and Kalākaua monarchs, discussed in *Part II*. The 'fusion fashions' of the *ali'i* wardrobe do not exist in stable conditions that can be displayed on dress forms,²⁶⁸ and in most cases, only scraps remain. Regarding the lack of *ali'i* dress in museum collections, Cup Choy explains:

“Clothing did not survive. It stayed within families where it might have been reused, repurposed, or cut down for someone who was smaller. Two pieces [could be] put together to make a larger outfit...or taken apart and used in other garments. There's not much record about what happened. Unless you find a family member who remembers. We don't always remember what our grandparents [have] told us, and likewise with all these folks... you're talking about four or five generations.”²⁶⁹

This is the case for many of the historical garments selected for the garment reproduction project. When initiating this project without complete physical source materials, Viacrusis depended heavily upon visual references of photographic portraiture (including the images taken of Queen Kapi'olani and Princess Lili'uokalani in London), painted portraiture, and remnants of the selected garments from the Kalākaua Dynasty.²⁷⁰ By studying multiple images of Queen Lili'uokalani's Ribbon Dress, Viacrusis realized that her gown had been repurposed a few times over with different embellishments.²⁷¹ As reported in *Hana Hou* magazine,

²⁶⁸ Textiles and historical garments become more delicate with age and exposure to elements like light and air. Without proper care and conservation assistance, attempting to mount garments onto dress forms can be catastrophic for the structural integrity of a gown made of natural fiber cloth.; Museum Textile Services, “Conservation of Historic Clothing,” accessed April 28, 2022. <http://www.museumtextiles.com/historic-clothing.html>.

²⁶⁹ Personal conversation with 'Iolani Palace's Collections Manager, Leona Hamano, and Iolani Palace Historian, Zita Cup Choy.

²⁷⁰ Ibid.

²⁷¹ Kapadia, “Fit for a Queen.”

“[Viacrusis] also helped Bishop Museum connect the yellow feather medallion in its collection to the lei hulu gown. Though the original lei hulu gown has followed the path of the ‘ō ‘ō whose feathers were plucked to make it, the medallion survives as a symbol of a once-grand royal culture.”²⁷²

In the case of Queen Kapi‘olani’s Lei Hulu Gown, only three of the four ‘ō ‘ō lei hulu (that trimmed the front of her skirt) and a single feathered medallion remain.²⁷³ These pieces are housed in the Bishop Museum collection, along with a short section of the Peacock Gown and the entire garment of Queen Lili‘uokalani’s Lilac Ostrich Feather gown.²⁷⁴ A vital part of Viacrusis’s research commenced when he “received permission from Bishop Museum’s curator, Betty Kam, to inspect remnants of the original gowns.”²⁷⁵ When Viacrusis was able to meet face-to-face with the Queen Lili‘uokalani’s Ostrich Feather gown, the garment exuded an ivory color, but under closer examination of the interior seams of the dress, he realized the silk was lilac; Indicating that the original color of the silk garment had oxidized over time from exposure air.²⁷⁶ Along with this evidence, the staff of the ‘Iolani Palace provided Viacrusis with historical literature from newspapers, inventories, and personal accounts of the ensembles. Within a document written by Queen Lili‘uokalani that described her favorite

²⁷² Ibid.

²⁷³ Ibid.

²⁷⁴ The Ostrich Feather Gown Reproduction represents a garment worn while Queen Lili‘uokalani adjourned Parliament in 1893, where she made her last plea to the Parliament to revoke the Bayonet Constitution.; Kapadia, “Fit for a Queen.”; Personal conversation with ‘Iolani Palace’s Collections Manager, Leona Hamano, and Iolani Palace Historian, Zita Cup Choy.

²⁷⁵ Mālielani Larish, “Iris Viacrusis: Creating Fashion from Paris to Paradise,” Ke Ola Magazine digital, posted March 1, 2018, accessed April 27, 2022, <https://keolamagazine.com/culture/iris-viacrusis/>.

²⁷⁶ Kapadia, “Fit for a Queen.”; For more information on silk oxidation, Zheng, Ke, Yanlei Hu, Wenwen Zhang, Juan Yu, Shengjie Ling, and Yimin Fan, “Oxidizing and Nano-Dispersing the Natural Silk Fibers,” in *Nanoscale Research Letters* 14, no. 1 (July 25, 2019): 250, <https://doi.org/10.1186/s11671-019-3080-1>.

flower as the crown flower, he selected a fabric for the reproduction that echoed the silver-lilac tone of the same floral (See Figure 26).²⁷⁷ It is combinations of material evidence, literary reference, and artistic educated guessing that have enabled these reproduction ensembles to stay as authentic as possible to the original *ali 'i* dresses.

Viacrusis' reproduction process consisted of heavy research, searching for the right materials, creating a mockup of the dress construction, and of course, collaborating with cultural practitioners of *hulu*. Viacrusis partnered with Auntie Doreen Henderson, a *kumu hulu* from the genealogy of the late Auntie Mary Lou Kekuewa of Honolulu,²⁷⁸ and her *Lei Hulu Hui* (club) to create the *lei hulu* for the Lei Hulu Gown's skirt and *humupapa* for the Peacock Gown's trimmings upon the bustline, skirt, and train edgings.²⁷⁹ For the Lei Hulu Gown, Momi Szirom, a member of the Hilo-based collective, made the lei hulu swags. Reported by Kamala Kapadia:

“As the ‘ō‘ō is long extinct, Szirom used goose feathers dyed golden yellow. She sorted them by size and curl, trimming them to precise lengths. Using a tiny toothbrush, she brushed them until they took on the wispy look of ‘ō‘ō feathers. She then bundled and tied them to cords in closely packed concentric rings, producing an effect that is simultaneously luxurious and delicate. Altogether Szirom put more than four hundred hours into the lei hulu gown's featherwork. ‘It's very meditative,’ she says, demonstrating her skill with deft, precise movements.”²⁸⁰

²⁷⁷ Larish, “Iris Viacrusis: Creating Fashion from Paris to Paradise.”

²⁷⁸ Karen Valentine, “Auntie Doreen Henderson: Fascination with Feathers,” Ke Ola Magazine online, posted July 1, 2018, accessed April 27, 2022. <https://keolamagazine.com/people/auntie-doreen-henderson/>.

²⁷⁹ The women of Lei Hulu of Hilo include Noemi, Sheila, Gay, Momi Szirom, and Auntie Doreen.; Larish, “Iris Viacrusis: Creating Fashion from Paris to Paradise.”

²⁸⁰ Kapadia, “Fit for a Queen.”

This community of *hulu* artists, Viacrusis, and his partner, Sean Spellicy, prepared thousands of peacock feathers by trimming and bundling the hulu for attachment to fabric panels.²⁸¹ For the two panels of the skirt, over 8,000 feathers were required, for the rest of the ensemble, tens of thousands of feathers were needed.²⁸² For hundreds of hours, this community of artists, designers, friends, and family gathered to bundle, *humupapa*, and *wiliwili hulu* into and for the reproduction garments of the *ali 'i* (See Figure 27). In this act of collaboration, the cultural heritage of the Hawaiian artform of *hulu* and the legacy of the *ali 'i* is preserved and prepared for exhibition to a wider audience.

These reproduction projects further enabled the 'Iolani Palace's own staff to participate in this act of restoration and cultural heritage perpetuation. Hamano, in reflection upon participating in the most recent rendition of the 'Iolani Palace's *Kāhili* reproduction project, indicated:

“The things that I’ve taken away from having been involved in the project is that I see that it's very labor intensive, it's time consuming, and it requires an abundance of resources... The other thing was a sense of perpetuating the cultural tradition of feather work, and in that, is the involvement of community. Zita and I participated in the project. We were involved in gathering the different feathers and bundling them for attachment to the branches of the kahili. Our predecessors also participated in the previous kahili reproduction project.”²⁸³

The final step in the reproduction process was involving the community of Honolulu in a greater extent through display and educational programing. After completing the reproductions of the first series, one-by-one the gowns were

²⁸¹ Ibid.

²⁸² Ibid.

²⁸³ Personal conversation with 'Iolani Palace's Collections Manager, Leona Hamano, and Iolani Palace Historian, Zita Cup Choy.

displayed for a month-long residency at Bloomingdales Ala Moana before traveling to the ‘Iolani Palace for permanent exhibition (See Figure 19).²⁸⁴ Once installed Radiant Cordero, assistant editor for *The Fil-Am Courier* admits,

“It was hard to ignore the statuesque and commanding presence of what was once just a mannequin; but now a perfect visage of history and royalty cloaked in Victorian fashion almost demanding a passerby’s curiosity. The magnificent presence of this gown reproduction is a testament to Viacrusis’s detailed work and fashion history expertise.”²⁸⁵

While this stop along the way to the palace can be seen as a venture that ensured the funding for further reproductions, it is apparent that this presentation of the garments utilized their iconography to inspire notions of Hawaiian nationalism and cultural heritage awareness. This could also be considered a diplomatic exchange between the commercial center of contemporary Honolulu and the historical center of the past, drawing people into the ‘Iolani Palace. Regardless of this hypothesis, once installed within the palace, these reproductions activate an essence of monarchical presence into each room. As a visitor is guided into the Blue Room, the painted portrait of Queen Lili‘uokalani in her elegant Ribbon Dress is mirrored by the three-dimensional reproduction (See Figure 28). Queen Kapi‘olani’s bedroom is now adorned with *kāhili kū* and the reproduction of her Lei Hulu Gown, as if the Queen is on her way to come to get dressed for a celebration (See Figure 29). While the palace itself is breathtaking and grand, adding the reproduction garments and *kāhili*

²⁸⁴ Friends of the ‘Iolani Palace, “Iolani Palace Unveils Second Dress In Alii Gown Reproduction Project,” Iolani Palace Press Release, posted October 11, 2016, accessed April 28, 2022. <https://www.iolanipalace.org/2016/10/11/iolani-palace-unveils-second-dress-alii-gown-reproduction-project/>.

²⁸⁵ Cordero, “Embracing Interpretations of the Past,” 5.

reproductions to the ‘Iolani Palace add a “texture” and beauty to each room that is indescribable.²⁸⁶

While photographic and painted portraits are an incredible resource for visitors to connect face-to-face with the monarchs, the reproductions of these diplomatic ensembles enable cultural practitioners, fashion historians, designers, and museum professionals to reproduce and experience the presence of the *ali‘i* fashions in three-dimensional form. In an interview, curator Teresa Valencia remarks: “The goal of the project is to provide visitors with a fresh understanding into the lives of the Hawaiian *ali‘i*, to enhance the visitor experience and to bring Iolani Palace to life.”²⁸⁷ As visitors are learning about the *mo‘olelo* of the *ali‘i*, they are also able to meet, *he alo ā he alo*, with reproductions of the garments and adornments present for monarchical celebrations, diplomatic meetings, and government convenings.

These reproduction projects, from conception to exhibition, are an innovative act of Hawaiian cultural heritage preservation and display. Through creating these reproductions of *ali‘i* dress, the ‘Iolani Palace has taken the very ensembles designed for international diplomatic appearances and preserved the iconographic effects of indigenous sovereignty and national pride. These reproductions are staged in the rooms of the palace: the very rooms where the Kalākaua Monarchs had patroned the first Hawaiian Renaissance, stood up for the Hawaiian peoples' heritage, health, and sovereignty, and in the case of Queen Lili‘uokalani, protested the occupation of their Kingdom through her own

²⁸⁶Ibid.; Personal Conversation with Kawika Lum-Nelmida.

²⁸⁷ Kapadia, “Fit for a Queen.”

imprisonment. The Hawaiian Kingdom crafted and preserved its own visual legacy, for both local and international audiences, through the technological art of photographic portraiture. Through commissioning the *Ali'i Garment Reproduction Project*, 'Iolani Palace has preserved pieces of *ali'i* 'fusion fashion' and cultural heritage by operating through an authentic and culturally collaborative mode of reproduction: allowing audiences to listen to, learn from, and engage *he alo ā he alo* with an iconographic representation of the Hawaiian Kingdom and their diplomatic presence in the Kalākaua Dynasty.

Conclusion

Hawaiian dress and fashion have adorned and dictated the complex, intercultural encounters between Hawaiian *ali'i* and foreign diplomats both on and away from the archipelago. From the late-eighteenth century to the late-nineteenth century, Hawaiian *hulu mea* have been witnesses to diplomatic encounters, agents of trade and *ho'okupu*, and acculturated into 'fusion fashions' for domestic and foreign audiences. The stories behind the cultural fluidity of *kapa* to cotton calico, the *pā'ū* to the *holokū*, and the *'ahu'ula* to the military uniform, provide the context necessary to dispose of the binary, colonial perceptions of indigenous and foreign agency in eighteenth and nineteenth-century Hawaii. Instead, the exchanges of materials, styles, and ideologies surrounding dress and adornment can be analyzed, as Kamehiro stated, in terms of "mutual entanglements of those inhabiting...terrains and processes of cultural intersections or contact zones and how power is deployed and resisted in these spaces."³⁰²

³⁰² Kamehiro, "Introduction: Hawaiian National Art," 12.

Through the commissioning of the *Ali ‘i Garment Reproduction Project*, the diplomatic and monarchical ensembles of the late-nineteenth century return to reanimate the presence of the Kalākaua Hawaiian royals, navigators of “native epistemologies and internationalist ideologies” through garment reproduction.³⁰³ This interdisciplinary collaboration among art and fashion historians, conservators, cultural heritage practitioners, the Friends of the ‘Iolani, Palace, and the public; presents an opportunity for *he alo ā he alo* encounters between the *ali ‘i*, museum, educator, native Hawaiians, island residents, and tourists. The fashions emulate the presence and majesty of the *ali ‘i*—the same visual tool used by the Hawaiian sovereigns through featherwork, fashion, and portraiture—to foster engagement, dialogue, and relationships between spectators and the past.

³⁰³ Ibid.

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Figures



Figure 1. A note from the museum registrar suggests that perhaps some of the textiles donated in the same lot as this sample were collected during the Cook Voyages. *Kapa* (Barkcloth), 1290 mm x 640 mm, 1770's, plant fiber (*Broussonetia papyrifera*), Museum of New Zealand: Te Papa Tongarewa, FE001475/4. No copywrite restrictions.



Figure 2. Jean-Pierre Norblin de la Gourdain (lithograph), *Queen Ka'ahumanu with her servant on rug* (1816), after painting by Louis Choris, the artist aboard the Russian ship *Rurick*, which visited Hawai'i in 1816. Louis Choris, Plate III, in *Louis Choris' Voyage Pittoresque Autour de Monde*, (Paris, 1822). Hawaii State Archives.



Figure 3. Unknown Photographer, Hawaiian Dress (Holoku), 1870s., Granger Academic Photo Use, Image No. 0064455



Figure 4. The Pā'ū of Nāhi'ena'ena on temporary Display in Hawaiian Hall at the Bishop Museum. Image from Bishop Museum on Twitter, @bishoppmuseum, posted on June 16, 2021 at 5:30 PM, <https://twitter.com/bishoppmuseum/status/1405321830949347328>.



Figure 5. Lucy Muolo Moehonua, (c.1840s-50s) the second wife of William Luther Moehonua, an adviser to the Kamehameha court. They married on September 11, 1849. She is the daughter of Kaaha and Kamaile and sister of Hiram Kahanawai. Image in public domain.



Figure 6. “A New York Studio Portrait of Queen Kapiʻolani wearing a hat and necklace of several strands of Niʻihau shells. This photo was taken en route to Queen Victoria’s Jubilee in England, by Henry Walter Barnett of Falk Studios, in May 1887.” Caption from the Bishop Museum, Henry Walter Barnett of Falk Studios, Public domain via Wikimedia Commons.



Figure 7. J. W. Gear, King Kamehameha II (Liholiho), Queen Kamamalu and their party from the Sandwich Islands attending a performance at the Drury Lane Theatre in London on June 4, 1824, print, Published by the Hullmandel Lithography Company, 29.8 x 31.2 cm, National Portrait Gallery. Creative Commons, https://npg.si.edu/object/npg_NPG.2010.59



Figure 8. Diplomatic uniform of Walter Murray Gibson made by Stephen Winkworth Silver & Company (London), 1875, cotton, wool, gold thread and metal buttons, photo taken 2018. Hawaii State Archives. Public domain via Wikimedia Commons.



Figure 9. Queen Kapi‘olani carriage ride cloak, Image Courtesy of the Bishop Museum. Honolulu Magazine.;Kathleen Wong, “Check Out Rare Pieces of Hawaiian Innovation in ‘Ho‘Oulu Hawai‘i’ Exhibit,” in *Honolulu Magazine online*, posted November 2, 2018, accessed April 28, 2022, <https://www.honolulumagazine.com/check-out-rare-pieces-of-hawaiian-innovation-in-hooulu-hawaii-exhibit/>.



Figure 10: Queen Kapiʻolani: Coronation Dress, 1883, Negative number: 2000.218; PC 124-CC, PP-97-14-002, Courtesy of the Hawaiʻi State Archives.



Figure 11: Queen Kapiʻolani: Coronation Dress Detail Photo, 1883, Courtesy of the Hawaiʻi State Archives.



Figure 12. The King and Queen's coronation crowns were ordered from England for the 1883 ceremony. The materials include diamonds, opals, emeralds, rubies, kukui nut jewels, crimson velvet, gold, and enamel. Photo Courtesy of Iolani Palace via Facebook.

<https://www.facebook.com/iolanipalace/photos/artifactfriday-for-the-kings-coronation-crowns-were-commissioned-for-him-and-que/10157323175475234>.



Figure 13. Franz Xaver Winterhalter, *Queen Victoria*, 1859, oil on canvas, 242.9 cm x 157.5 cm, The Royal Collection, RCIN 405131, Public domain via Wikimedia Commons.



Figure 14. Kalanikauika'alaneo cloak, 'Ahu'ula (cloak), pre-1878, Red 'i'iwi feathers, yellow 'ō'ō feathers, and *olonā* fiber, 134 cm x 131.5 cm, Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum, Provisional Government Collection, 06830/1893.003, Image from Kaeppler 2010a, pp. 120 (CL42). Willem de Rooij - Intolerance: Band 3: Hawaiian Featherwork



Figure 15. Kīwala'ō, 'Ahu'ula (cloak), 18th Century, Red 'i'iwi feathers, yellow 'ō'ō feathers, yellow *mamo* feathers, and *olonā* fiber, 152.4 cm x 366 cm, Bernice

Pauahi Bishop Museum, Provisional Government Collection, 06829/1893.003,
Image from Kaeppler 2010a, pp. 11 (CL13). Willem de Rooij - Intolerance: Band
3: Hawaiian Featherwork



Figure 16. J. H. Moser, Reception of Queen Kapiolani of Hawaii at the White House, from a sketch on May 04, 1887, Smithsonian Asian Pacific American Center, Google Arts and Culture,
<https://artsandculture.google.com/asset/reception-of-queen-kapiolani-of-hawaii-at-the-white-house-j-h-moser/BAGU5XNiUSmP0A>.



Figure 17. Photograph of “Frances Folsom Cleveland on her wedding day in 1886, dressed to descend the stairs, posed for this photograph to show her wedding gown and its orange blossom and laurel trimmings.” Photo from Library of Congress, caption from <https://www.whitehousehistory.org/frances-folsom-clevelands-white-house-wardrobe>



Figure 18. Walery, Queen Kapi'olani in her Japanese made holoku, for Queen Victoria's Jubilee in London, Albumen print, board, ink and adhesive, Negative: PC 124-V, 4 x 5, Curtis P. Iaukea Collection, PPWD-15-7-020, Courtesy of Hawaii State Archives.



Figure 19. Full View of the front (A), back (B), and detail view of bodice (C), of Queen Kapi‘olani’s lei hulu gown reproduction at Bloomingdales Ala Moana before heading to the Iolani Palace. Photograph taken by Daniel Ramirez, Creative Commons Licensing.



Figure 20. Front View of Queen Kapiolani's Blue Peacock Dress Reproduction on Display in The Iolani Palace's thrown Room, Photo courtesy of Bonnie Nims.
<https://keolamagazine.com/culture/iris-viacrusis/>



Figure 21. Walery, Queen Kapi'olani in Lei Hulu Gown for Queen Victoria's Jubilee in London, Negative: PC 124-G; 2000.217, 8 x 10, 4 x 5, PP-97-14-013, Courtesy of Hawaii State Archives.



Figure 22. Walery, Portrait of Princess Liliu'okalani and Queen Kapi'olani, London, 1887, Albumen print, board, ink and adhesive, Bishop Museum Archives, image courtesy of Bishop Museum Archives.



Figure 23. Queen Kapiʻolani, Seated in her Peacock Dress which was worn to the Jubilee of Queen Victoria, Negative number PC 124-C, size 8 x 10, PP-97-14-014, Courtesy of Hawaii State Archives.



Figure 24. The Ali'i Garment Reproduction Project: The first four garments of the project in the Throne Room of the 'Iolani Palace. Photo Courtesy of Friends of the Iolani Palace. From "Ke Kiai O Ka Iolani Hale: The Guardian of Iolani Palace, (Iolani Palace, Kauwela 2016): 3.



Figure 25. The Ali'i Garment Reproduction Project: Phase 2, next five proposed garments of the project. Photo Courtesy of Friends of the Iolani Palace. From "Ke Kiai O Ka Iolani Hale: The Guardian of Iolani Palace, (Iolani Palace, Haule Lau 2017): 5.



Figure 26. Queen Lili'uokalani's Ostrich Feather Gown Reproduction installed in the Iolani Palace throne room. Photo courtesy of Bonnie Nims. ;Mālielani Larish, "Iris Viacrusis: Creating Fashion from Paris to Paradise," Ke Ola Magazine digital, posted March 1, 2018, accessed April 27, 2022, <https://keolamagazine.com/culture/iris-viacrusis/>.



Figure 27. Iris Viacrusis and the women of Lei Hulu Hui of Hilo (Neomi, Sheila, Gay, Momi, and Aunty Doreen) working on the peacock panels and *lei hulu* for the *Ali'i Gown Reproduction Project*. Photo courtesy of Elyse Butler. Mālielani Larish, "Iris Viacrusis: Creating Fashion from Paris to Paradise," *Ke Ola Magazine* digital, posted March 1, 2018, accessed April 27, 2022, <https://keolamagazine.com/culture/iris-viacrusis/>.



Figure 28. Queen Lili'uokalani's Ribbon Gown reproduction dress installed in the Blue Room of the Iolani Palace. Photo courtesy of Jessica P. uploaded to Yelp on May 14, 2019, accessed April 28, 2022, https://www.yelp.ca/biz_photos/iolani-palace-honolulu?select=B_M37K-ak_FX7LIhBsa-5Q.



Figure 29. Queen Kapi‘olani’s Lei Hulu Gown installed in Her Majesty’s Bedroom. Photo courtesy of Professor Julia Lum.