



BISHOP MUSEUM

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MEDIA CONTACT:

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Bishop Museum Announces New Exhibition, “The Healer Stones of Kapaemahu”

Original exhibition will explore the hidden history and contemporary meanings of four large pōhaku (stones) on Waikīkī Beach, through Hawaiian understandings of gender, healing, and inclusion. These pōhaku, The Healer Stones of Kapaemahu, are one of the rare public monuments to gender fluidity.

Honolulu, Hawai‘i — Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum announces a new, original exhibition coming to its Castle Memorial Building in June: *The Healer Stones of Kapaemahu*. The exhibition emerged from the research behind an Oscar-contending short film, *Kapaemahu*, that brought the unexpurgated legend to life.

The Healer Stones of Kapaemahu will explore the history and contemporary meanings of four large pōhaku (stones) on Waikīkī Beach. These pōhaku were placed long ago as a tribute to four māhū, people of dual male and female spirit, who brought healing arts from Tahiti to Hawai‘i. Although the stones have survived for centuries, the story behind them has been suppressed and the respected role of māhū erased. Using immersive media and innovative storytelling approaches, the exhibition revitalizes this traditional story to help restore this sacred site as a permanent reminder of Hawai‘i’s history of inclusion and acceptance.

“This exhibition presents our Hawaiian view of gender duality as a natural aspect of the human experience,” said Hinaileimoana Wong-Kalu, a curator of the exhibition who herself identifies as māhū. “It brings knowledge and wisdom of the past into the present-day conversation.”

The Healer Stones of Kapaemahu will be a multifaceted exhibition that combines film, art, archival documents, and images, storytelling, and other interactive elements, sharing that for Hawaiian history and culture to be understood and appreciated, it must be seen from a Hawaiian perspective. In the case of *Kapaemahu*, this perspective centers gender duality, erased from a beloved mo‘olelo (story) over time by foreign influences, as a natural and respected aspect of the human experience and a central element of the science of healing.

In presenting the original mo‘olelo, and examining the ways in which it, and the monument erected to honor its heroes, were altered in the 20th century, the exhibition also challenges visitors to ponder how other aspects of Hawaiian history and culture might have been suppressed, changed, or lost. More importantly, visitors will understand that these aspects of Hawaiian culture now have the opportunity to be restored and elevated.

Media Preview Opportunity on Thursday, June 16, 2022

Bishop Museum invites members of the media to attend an exclusive, pre-opening, closed-door Media Preview of *The Healer Stones of Kapaemahu*:

- Thursday, June 16, 2022
- 1-4 p.m. HST
- Bishop Museum, Castle Memorial Center
- Please RSVP with Lance Aquino via the contact information above

Interview opportunities:

- Bishop Museum Vice President of Public Programs, Brandon Bunag
- Exhibition Lead Curator DeSoto Brown, Bishop Museum historian
- Exhibition Curator Hinalimoana Wong-Kalu, Kanaka Pakipika, Cultural Expert
- Exhibition Curator Dean Hamer, Kanaka Pakipika/Qwaves, Lead Researcher
- Exhibition Curator Joe Wilson, Kanaka Pakipika/Qwaves, Producer/Director
- Exhibition Designer, Michael Wilson

For more information, please visit BishopMuseum.org/Kapaemahu.

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About Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum:

Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum’s mission is to inspire our community and visitors through the exploration, celebration and perpetuation of the extraordinary history, culture, and environment of Hawai‘i and the Pacific. The Museum was founded in 1889 by Charles Reed Bishop in memory of his wife Bernice Pauahi Bishop, a royal descendant of King Kamehameha I. Today, the Museum thrives as an educational center for the community and is widely regarded as the world’s premier institution for Hawaiian and Pacific content. Its vast collections of more than 25 million objects and specimens represent nine disciplines and include more than 22 million biological specimens, over two million cultural objects, 115,000 historical publications, and one million photographs, films, works of art, audio recordings, and manuscripts. These collections tell the stories of the cultures and biodiversity of Hawai‘i and the Pacific as well as the proud legacy of scholarly research spanning 130 years. Bishop Museum proudly serves more than 200,000 visitors each year, including 20,000 children on school visits. To learn more about the Museum’s research, collections, exhibits, and programs, visit BishopMuseum.org, follow [@BishopMuseum](https://twitter.com/BishopMuseum) on [Twitter](https://twitter.com/BishopMuseum) and [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/bishopmuseum), become a fan of Bishop Museum on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/bishopmuseum), visit Bishop Museum’s [YouTube channel](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCvK1j8v8v8v8v8v8v8v8v8v8), or call (808) 847-3511. Bishop Museum is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.