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February 15, 2014

The Guam Council on the Arts and Humanities Agency (CAHA) Gallery
Terlaje Professional Building, Hagåtña, Guam

Workshop 1: What Is FestPac?

The Festival of Pacific Arts

A History of Guam's Participation

A presentation by

Dr. Judy Flores



Sponsored by:





Programme

Dr. Judy Flores, PhD
Pacific Arts Scholar and Artist

*“The Festival of Pacific Arts: A History of
Guam’s Participation”*



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Hafa Adai!

WORKSHOPS IN PREPARATION FOR THE 12TH FESTIVAL OF PACIFIC ARTS

Guam Council on the Arts and Humanities | Guampedia.com

Guam Preservation Trust | Guam Visitors Bureau



Beginning in 1972, Pacific peoples have come together every four years to share and exchange their culture at the Festival of Pacific Arts. They come from more than 27 countries, and the number of participants has increased to more than 2000.

SPC Official Website, Human Development Program, 2009



Selection and Role of the Hosting Country

- The Festival is held in a different Pacific Island Nation every 4 years
- Host countries rotate among Polynesia, Melanesia, and Micronesia
- Participants are the guests of the host country from the time of their arrival until departure
- The host country bears the cost of local travel, accommodation, meals and other forms of hospitality for the visiting participants. Entry to all artistic events is free to the public.



Selection and Role of the Hosting Country

Hosting the Festival is a major cultural, technical and economic challenge, requiring broad community participation and cooperation. The Festival also provides tremendous opportunities for social and cultural interchange and for the exposure of local products, and can help to enhance tourism within the host country.



Selection and Role of the Hosting Country

- The Festival provides Pacific peoples with an opportunity to assert their identities, both for themselves and to share with other people of the Pacific
- The host country has the opportunity to present itself: to its own people, to invited countries and to the Festival audience.



Festival Participants

- The Festival of Pacific Arts helps maintain a sense of “Pacificness” among island communities: awareness that we are part of a greater Pacific-wide culture.
- Recognition of a common Pacific identity helps individual communities to revive and cherish their own traditional forms of cultural expression.



Festival Participants

- The Festivals have no competitions, and performers do not seek to compete with others, but the Festival has stimulated a new sense of cultural pride among islanders young and old



Festival Participants

- It enables young contemporary artists and performers to express themselves and their talent, and
- helps to bridge the gap between traditional cultural expressions and the aspirations of our youth.



Guam's Participation History

- 1972 Festival of the South Pacific, Fiji Islands
- Guam was represented by Pandanus Weaver Tan Elena Benevente.





1976 Festival of Pacific Arts, New Zealand

- *Presenting our culture to our neighbors and sharing a common heritage.*
- *Acting for friendship between the peoples of the region.*
- *Culture as a key to individuality.*

Guam's participation was through Governor's Office, represented by a UOG modern dance group and a Palapala (family party) band



1980 Festival of Pacific Arts, Papua New Guinea

A Celebration of Pacific Awareness

- **Guam's first official delegation as a member of SPC**
- **Organized by the Insular Arts Council, Office of the Governor**
- **Participants included members of MARIANAS HOMEGROWN band, with JD Crutch**



1985 Festival of Pacific Arts, French Polynesia

Pacific, my new home

Our own Pacific way for our new home

For a Pacific way in development

- Originally scheduled for New Caledonia in 1984, political incidents there caused it to be moved to Tahiti and held in 1985
- Guam delegation comprised of dancers and singers selected through auditions for a musical performance that told Guam's history through song and dance.
- Cha cha and our Spanish-era dances, along with songs by Johnny Sablan, were prevalent



1988 Festival of Pacific Arts, Townsville, Australia

Making the “Dreamtime” a rebirth for the Pacific peoples in their common destiny, working, living, and achieving fulfillment together through their arts and cultures

- To this 5th Festival, Guam sent a cast of singers and dancers for another musical history of our island called “Kantan I Taotao Tano” – Songs of the People of the Land.
- The play was very popular at home but only performed once at the festival
- Frank Rabon was able to organize the dancers to perform at smaller, daily venues
- Master weavers, blacksmith, kantan Chamorita singers were featured



1992 Festival of Pacific Arts, Cook Islands

Seafaring Pacific Islanders

Pacific Islanders as great ocean voyagers

- Popularity of the Festival made competition for selection very challenging
- CAHA organized a competition for groups to develop their own presentations
- A song & dance program by Chamorro Studies teachers was selected
- Crafters included the master weaver, blacksmiths and apprentices, storyboard and canoe carver Segundo Blas, fishnet (talaya) maker Tony Guerrero, and chanter Jess Rivera to represent our ancient heritage.
- Festival focus on Canoes inspired Guam participants



1996 Festival of Pacific Arts, Samoa

Tala Measina

The 7th festival paid special attention to young people, beginning with the dramatic choreographed opening ceremony, in which over 2000 Samoan children took part (SPC Website)

- Guam organizers had coordinated the erection of a huge latte from stones found in Samoa, in front of the Guam Hut at Festival Village
- Ancient Chamorro dance was prominent, led by Traditional Master Frank Rabon
- Weavers, carvers, ornament makers, blacksmith, and tattoo featured by Guam
- Guam was beginning to fit the presentation styles of the other Pacific island nations



Comments by Festival Observers

From members of the Study Group on Musics of Oceania:

- One saw Guam's performance in 1976 and said it was "made up" and "not real" – but this 1996 performance was "quite spectacular"
- Performance at 1980 Festival was uninteresting, but they now have...something interesting (Adrienne Kaepplar, Smithsonian)
- Hula master resented the use of the ipu heke



Comments by Festival Observers

- “was very favorably impressed with the workmanship and creativity evident in the objects and with the artist’s articulate explanations of his work and his friendliness and eagerness to answer my questions.”
- felt that their rhythms and use of sticks was much more associated with Micronesia, as opposed to Polynesia. She commented her excitement in seeing the use of the Bilembaotuyan, but felt it should be use more prominently to show its status as a Chamorro icon (Barbara Smith – Prof. Emeritus, UH)



Comments by Festival Observers

- From the very start we (our group, Te Waka Huia) and the Guam delegation became very friendly. Up until that time, the only knowledge that we had of Guam was that it was a large U.S. airforce base. We also discovered that Guam had an indigenous race of people who were “Chamorro” and that they were very keen to mix with nations of the Pacific – with an outside chance, perhaps, of deepening their quest to find their roots in their own culture. Their culture was a mixture of Spanish, Philippine, and American.
- In 1990 Te Waka Huia visited Guam and a great time was had by all, and [in Western Samoa] once again the bond was strengthened. This 7th Festival has again been great for there are some in the Guam group who were in the 1988 festival. I saw them on opening night and I thought they were different, in that they exuded much more confidence and they were making a statement that they were beginning to be more comfortable about themselves, even though the other cultures of their country are still being portrayed and being done well! Without a doubt, the research [by those involved] is becoming evident. With the passion that some have about their language, culture, I can only wish them a fruitful sojourn into the past. (Ngapu Wehi, 1996)



Comments by Festival Observers

- Guam's presentation has reached a level of sophistication enjoyed by Hawaii, Tahiti, Cook Islands, and Samoa (both Samoas). Rabon is responsible for this outstanding performance, assisted by Maria Yatar. The performers look and sound like our Pacific brothers. The *Uku* (group singing) is very much like the *Ute* in Rarotonga and Tahiti (Speaker Carlos Taitano, 1996)



2000 Festival of Pacific Arts, New Caledonia

Words of Yesterday - The souls of our forefathers

Words of Today- Free expression and a clamour of competing voices

Words of Tomorrow - The Way Forward

- The Guam delegation to the 8th Festival was comprised of more than 80 participants, including dance groups headed by Frank Rabon
- Better prepared to conform to the Festival expectations
- Parade of Countries with Guam well organized & proud
- Literary/storytelling group, continuation of tattoo art, representatives to discuss current issues with other Pacific islanders in the forums
- Festival Village Guam Hut with weavers, carvers, tattoo artists, and iconic ornament makers. A young master weaver, Philip Sablan, specialized in weaving coconut leaves into sculptural shapes
- Included a culinary group



2004 Festival of Pacific Arts, Palau

Oltobed a Malt - Nurture, Regenerate, Celebrate

The 9th Festival of Pacific Arts was attended by over 2000 participants.

- First festival hosted by a Micronesian island
- Chartered flight from Guam - more affordable
- Frank Rabon w Traditional Dance Group
- Leonard Iriarte w Chamorro Chant Group
- Extensive crafter's group of ornament-makers, carvers, blacksmiths, several traditional weavers, and visual artists.
- Our literary/storytelling group
- Culinary group who demonstrated organized the Guam-hosted fiesta during the closing days of the festival.
- Guam bid to host Festival 2016



2008 Festival of Pacific Arts, American Samoa

Su'iga'ula a le Atuvasa: Threading the Oceania 'Ula

- Since 2004, CAHA has been tasked with the final selection of participants, but relies on practitioners to guide their decisions
- All delegation members need to raise 50% of their travel costs
- Issues of Inclusion and Exclusion because of undefined selection criteria
- Guam was awarded and officially accepted as hosts for the 2016 Festival



2012 Festival of Pacific Arts, Solomon Islands

- Very important for Guam delegation to create interest for 2016
- Guam sent a large delegation, close to the 150-person maximum
- Selection Criteria organized by CAHA
- Handover of Festival Flag to Guam in Closing Ceremony
- CAHA now has policy and criteria for 2016 Guam Delegation – to include off-island Chamorros



FestPac is an Islandwide Event

We encourage every community, along
with individual volunteers, to make
FESTPAC 2016
a proud moment in Guam's history
BIBA GUAHAN!



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Si Yu'os Ma'åse!

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12TH FESTIVAL OF PACIFIC ARTS

"What we own, what we have, what we share ~ United Voice of the Pacific"

"Håfa lyo-ta, Håfa Guinahå-ta, Håfa Ta Påtte ~ Dinanña' Sunidu Siha Giya Pasifiku"

GUAM 2016