Kalakaua and his period have served as the necessary link joining the past—the long history of Oceania and its endless legends, the centuries of Polynesian slumber—to an ultra-modern present. It was he who above all first envisioned the Hawaii of today with its exigent demands, its swift changes in ideas. . . . During Kalakaua’s reign modernity has been superimposed upon Hawaiian tradition but without destroying it, so that a curious combination of [foreign] and Polynesian elements has been effected. The sovereign himself has been the most perfect model of his period: the dual character, the grafted tree in bud before it first bears fruit.2

In 1874, David Kalākaua (Plate 1) was elected seventh monarch of the Kingdom of Hawai‘i, founding the Kalākaua (Keawe-a-Heulu) Dynasty. Born David La‘amea Kamanakapu‘u Mahinulani Nalōia‘ehuokalani Lumialani Kalākaua in 1836, he matured as an intellectual, musician, art patron, and politician in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Described by Mark Twain as “an accomplished English scholar,”3 he received a New England–styled education at the American missionary–run Chiefs’ Children’s School in Honolulu, was trained in law, and enjoyed artistic and scientific pursuits throughout his life. His political career began during his teens when he served as aide to a former king and member of the Privy Council, and continued in the 1860s as postmaster general, royal chamberlain, leader of a political and military organization called the Young Hawaiians, and, from 1864 to 1873, a noble in the Legislative Assembly. Kalākaua was eligible to be elected mō‘ī (king) through his rank as an ali‘i nui (high chief). His ancestors had served Kamehameha I (ca. 1758–1819), the first ruler of the unified Hawaiian archipelago, who, in essence, established the Kingdom of Hawai‘i.

Kalākaua assumed leadership of a nation burdened with many difficulties caused by foreign settlement—a declining and increasingly landless Native Hawaiian population, division among the Native elite, and threats of colonization—and vigorously worked to preserve his nation’s sovereignty. While his reign of seventeen years was not the longest in early modern Hawaiian history, it witnessed an explosion of creative activity centered in the kingdom’s capital, Honolulu. This king sought to instill a sense of cultural and national
pride among Native Hawaiians, notably through literature and the visual and performing arts. In fact, his reign has been described as “The First Hawaiian Renaissance.” Some of the cultural and national projects associated with his reign—such as 'Iolani Palace, the King Kamehameha Monument, the Hawaiian National Anthem, and the reinstitutionalization of public hula performances—have had lasting impact on Hawaiian communities and are today cherished symbols of Hawaiian culture and history. The Merrie Monarch Festival, for example, an annual hula competition begun in 1964 and named for Kalākaua, who was instrumental in reviving and preserving Native Hawaiian dance and chant, is a source of cultural pride and accomplishment. The Kamehameha Day Festival, centered on the monument to Kamehameha I commissioned by Kalākaua, also brings Kalākaua’s art patronage to bear on the present, as it remains a state holiday and major cultural event.

To describe the historical contributions to art that were made during the Kalākaua administration, this book analyzes four public manifestations of national culture produced during his reign: Kalākaua’s coronation regalia, ‘Iolani Palace, the King Kamehameha Monument, and the Hawaiian National Museum. The king and his advisers devised an array of royal regalia consisting of innovative and ancient forms and displayed them in grand form during his coronation ceremony in 1883 to an audience of Native Hawaiians, the local haole (white, or non-Native) elite, and international consuls; together, these insignia of Kalākaua’s chiefly and royal office expressed the legitimacy of his station and the excellence of his rulership. ‘Iolani Palace, completed in time to provide the stage for Kalākaua’s coronation and ensuing festivities, was designed and spatially situated to mark the modernity of the kingdom and demonstrate the sanctity of the king’s rule. Associating his reign with that of the first monarch of Hawai‘i, Kalākaua’s patronage of the bronze monument to Kamehameha the Conqueror emphasized his continuation of the nation’s distinguished tradition of wise and farsighted leadership. The Hawaiian National Museum, while modeled on ethnological and natural history collections, materialized historical and scientific claims to a long tradition of national achievement and progress. These cases are of particular interest because each articulated Hawaiian national identities and navigated the turbulence of colonialism in distinctive ways, and, in some form, they have endured as key cultural symbols for well over a century.

The visual examples explored in this study were produced during the mid-1870s to mid-1880s, the height of Kalākaua’s reign, and were products of the monarchy’s conscious, concerted efforts to promote a national culture in the face of colonial pressures, internal political divisions, and declining social conditions for Native Hawaiians, which in combination posed serious threats to the sovereignty and survival of the Hawaiian nation. During this period, formal colonizing efforts in the Pacific Basin intensified. Previously, the major colonial powers in the region—France, England, and the United States—had maintained an informal presence. The impetus to firmly establish colonial holdings escalated when Germany entered the region as a colonial power in the 1880s, causing other nations to make definitive territorial claims. England and France annexed Pacific Island states such as Fiji and Tahiti, respectively, and the autonomy of others such
as Samoa, the Solomon Islands, and Tonga was severely compromised. These colonizing efforts, combined with the race to secure trade passages to markets in East Asia, added fuel to pro-annexation opinions in the United States and among non-Native settlers in Hawai‘i supporting American allegiances. These political pressures clearly alarmed the Hawaiian rulership, which responded to growing threats to sovereignty in part by promoting a national culture that boosted positive international relations and appeased foreign agitators in the kingdom.

At the same time, symbols of Hawaiian rulership and identity also addressed the internal cleavage in Hawaiian politics involving competing chiefly lineages. Basing their arguments on lineage seniority, Kalākaua’s rivals argued that he lacked sufficient genealogy to properly lead the Hawaiian people. Before monarchical rule was established, the islands and districts of Hawai‘i were governed by a chiefly system based on genealogical purity through which members of the high chiefly class proved their divine lineages. Chiefs of the highest ranks (ali‘i nui) were responsible for the productivity of their lands and the well-being of the general population, oversaw lesser chiefs, and performed religious duties required to maintain the life of land and people or secure political power. Prior to Kalākaua assuming the throne, members of the Kamehameha chiefly line occupied the kingship, a lineage recognized as holding sacred mana, or power, originating to a great extent from its founder, Kamehameha the Conqueror.

In the last quarter of the eighteenth century, Kamehameha, a usurping, conquering chief from Kohala on the island of Hawai‘i, wrested power from his cousin and named ruler, Kiwala‘ō, and forcefully expanded his lands until they encompassed the islands of Hawai‘i, Maui, O‘ahu, Lāna‘i, Kahōolawe, and Moloka‘i. Later, in 1810, Kamehameha negotiated with Kaumuali‘i, the paramount chief (mō‘ī) of Kaua‘i, through diplomacy rather than battle (though strained by the threat of future violence) to secure acknowledgment of Kamehameha’s sovereignty. This event brought Kaua‘i and the neighboring island of Ni‘ihau into his domain and signaled the unification of the major islands of the Hawaiian archipelago under a single, centralized rule. Thus began the Kingdom of Hawai‘i and the Kamehameha Dynasty.

Kamehameha was succeeded by his sons Liholiho (Kamehameha II, 1796–1824) and Kauikeaouli (Kamehameha III, 1813–1854) and grandsons Alexander Liholiho (Kamehameha IV, 1834–1863) and Lota Kapuāiwa (Kamehameha V, 1830–1872). When the last Kamehameha died without naming an heir, William Charles Lunalilo (1833–1874), a grandson to Kamehameha’s half-brother, was elected to the throne. He too died without designating a successor, requiring another royal election in which Kalākaua was elected over his rival Queen Emma, wife of Alexander Liholiho.

Upon his assuming the throne, the legitimacy of Kalākaua’s kingship was called into question by some Native communities. Effective, proper leadership was central to the continued existence of the kingdom, especially in light of the rapidly diminishing Native population, which was succumbing to low birthrates, high infant mortality, and the impact of introduced diseases. While the precise Native Hawaiian population prior to
the arrival of Europeans is unknown, estimates range from about five hundred thousand to one million; these estimates indicate a depopulation of about 90 to 95 percent by the end of the nineteenth century. Meanwhile, the number of non-Native residents was growing, with their population concentrated in Honolulu; here, the number of foreign settlers increased from about eighty to one hundred in 1800 to well over eight thousand in the 1840s. Declining social and economic conditions additionally impacted Native Hawaiian health and morale. Foreign settlers alienated land and exploited resources with a seemingly unquenchable appetite, prompting historian Samuel Kamakau to describe haole, in a petition to Kauikeaouli, as “devastating the land like the hordes of caterpillars the fields.”

Native welfare continued to decline in the latter half of the century. In 1887, former U.S. minister resident to the Kingdom of Hawai‘i Rollin M. Daggett described Native Hawaiians as landless, hopeless victims to the greed and vices of civilization. They are slowly sinking under the restraints and burdens of their surroundings, and will in time succumb to social and political conditions foreign to their natures and poisonous to their blood. Year by year their footprints will grow more dim along the sands of their reef-sheltered shores, and fainter and fainter will come their simple songs from the shadows of the palms, until finally their voices will be heard no more for ever.

Hope for the survival of Native Hawaiians lay principally in the faith they placed in their leaders. A significant portion of the Native Hawaiian constituency doubted that Kalākaua, who was not of the Kamehameha line of chiefs, possessed adequate genealogy to assure their survival. Kalākaua therefore promoted national culture forms that supported the authority and efficacy of his rulership in indigenous political terms and looked to Hawai‘i’s tradition of chiefly rule and to the successes of his distant and recent predecessors for guidance and inspiration.

The four manifestations of Hawaiian visual culture analyzed here are distinctive in that they circulated as public forms that generated different meanings for different viewers. They resonated with cultural and political agendas—some shared and others conflicting—pursued by various communities interested in the future of Hawai‘i: Native Hawaiians, haole settlers, and international actors. While this study acknowledges that images and spaces produced, in important ways, meanings and contexts for non-Native audiences, I concentrate on how these visual statements articulated Native Hawaiian conceptions of history, chiefly rule, and nationhood, which were shaped by a century of contact with foreigners and the ways Native Hawaiians responded to their presence. I discard notions of cultural purity that suggest national culture represented an essential, fixed core of Native beliefs and practices and instead focus on how Hawaiian cultural integrity moved through complex interactions and creative engagement with the world.
Colonial Hawaiian Art and History

Despite their permanence as cultural and political icons, the examples of nineteenth-century Native Hawaiian visual culture examined in this study have received little art historical study. The same is true for Kalākaua’s visual arts patronage. This lack of attention is due in part to the nature of Hawaiian historiography. Numerous published accounts of colonial Hawai‘i, which are recognized as authoritative accounts and enjoy broad circulation, have made substantial contributions to the study of Hawaiian history. Many, however, largely represent Western points of view and draw heavily on Western written and visual sources. With important recent exceptions, little critical analysis has been directed to Native texts, visual or otherwise, of the colonial period. Despite a Native Hawaiian scholar community established at Lahainaluna, Maui, in the 1830s, which pursued a keen interest in recording Native Hawaiian histories and customs, nearly universal literacy among the Native population by mid-century, and Native presses active in the second half of the century, indigenous contributions to political, social, and cultural history have often been overlooked, marginalized, or dismissed.

Conventional histories frequently paint a particularly cursory or unsympathetic portrait of Kalākaua and his public art projects, variously representing him as a naïve leader who followed the counsel of mischievous foreign advisers, an ineffective ruler whose biased policies roused ethnic conflict, or a king who preferred merrymaking and pursuing various spectacles and entertainments to serious politics. Political scientist Noenoe K. Silva goes so far as to suggest that he is perhaps the most reviled and ridiculed of the Hawaiian monarchs. The cultural and political history of the Kalākaua period continues to be largely mystified in the non-Native imaginary, in which visions of Hawai‘i’s “toy kingdom” persist, emphasizing, for example, the miniature charm of ‘Iolani Palace or the quaintness of the Kamehameha Monument—delightful historical ornaments of modern, cosmopolitan Honolulu. Conditioned to a great extent by the visitor industry, popular conceptions of Hawaiian history reflect profitable images and obscure others, sustaining indifference to colonial and neocolonial histories in Hawai‘i.

Some scholars and biographers have authored more evenhanded accounts of the Kalākaua period, eliciting complex social and political issues of the time and indicating the degree to which the criticisms and biased treatment of Kalākaua’s reign are largely the legacy of this king’s political opponents. As histories of nineteenth-century Hawai‘i are histories of colonialism, recent scholarship addresses the struggles for control over power and knowledge that moved through cultural representations (such as performances, novels, poetry, scientific reports, and historical narratives) that were inseparable from “real” power struggles. Native and non-Native writers have infused Hawaiian historiography with consideration of a broader range of sources and perspectives on land, religion, literature, journalism, politics, government, and society. In addition to Hawaiian language texts, expressive forms such as music, dance, and oral histories are now centered in historical analyses. The effect of this recent history writing is not merely to recuperate lost
Introduction

voices and cultural forms, but it also indicates contemporary engagement in a cultural process that is inseparable from its audience(s) and is always tied to the present. Histori- cal representation, as Geoffrey M. White remarks, is a political practice whose “ability to make certain stories real, true, public, and collective, not only empowers some political futures and disables others but also discursively creates the very subjects of history.” Writers have not simply discovered the value of Native Hawaiian texts and images; they surface as cultural documents and practices that matter, seriously and urgently, in current historical consciousness. A society is what it remembers, and history is a practice of memory and remembering. Histories are certain objectifications of certain memories that inform the present and shape the future; they involve, like some Polynesian conceptions of time, a backing into the future, a facing toward the past that is conditioned by the present to chart the future. As Paul Sharrad states, “We become history’s creatures and write from its archive.”

The present-day archive of Hawai‘i, however, privileges literature, oral texts, and performance. Indigenous visual culture of colonial Hawai‘i has not received serious, sustained scholarly attention. Nuanced art historical inquiry has instead been primarily confined to studies of precontact cultures, contact encounters, or postcolonial representations. Colonial visual studies related to Polynesia principally focus on Western imaginings—images produced in the context of colonial settlement, missionary activity, and travel/tourism—that tend to render invisible contemporaneous indigenous visual cultures. Few scholars have scrutinized the cultural processes and effects of sustained contact on indigenous visualities after contact and prior to more recent independence or postindependence movements. Anthropologist Nicholas Thomas notes that while it is precisely during the temporal span of prolonged intercultural interaction that colonial expansion has been most intrusive and had the greatest impact on cultural change, little attention has been devoted to its study. This historiographic discontinuity has led to a significant art historical gap that assents to nineteenth- and twentieth-century fictions of disappearing indigenous cultures (seemingly visible only as apparitions in colonial representations) and hinders a more complex historicizing of Native visual cultures. Intercul- tural entanglements were as complex in colonial Hawaiian history as in the postcolonial cultural processes they shaped.

Visual culture of the Kalākaua era provides key historical documents that lend insight into how Native Hawaiian rulers met social and political challenges while mapping a path of modernity. Objects and images, and their public display, played a significant role in cultivating Hawaiian nationness. Examining visual culture is particularly important to understanding cultural change in Hawai‘i—a culture with a rich tradition of visual arts playing communicative and symbolic roles in making history and formalizing political, social, and religious ideologies. Objects associated with the hereditary chiefly class were infused with mana, a fluid divine power derived from the ancestors, and like chiefs, these objects were considered inherently powerful. Art historian Anne D’Alleva describes the historical value of objects and their preservation as key aspects of Polynesian material culture:
In these highly stratified societies, where most titles are hereditary, genealogy is of paramount importance, and objects passed down as heirlooms create connections between the living and the dead. Artworks can embody mana and make it active in this world, facilitating the transfer of mana from one generation to the next. As artworks are used by succeeding generations, they gain more mana, prestige and luster, characteristics that also accrue to the lineage and the individuals that own them.\(^23\)

The emblems and institutions cultivated by the Kalākaua administration preserved and activated the chiefly and divine mana inherent in specific images, objects, spaces, and individuals and did so in modern, innovative ways. Colonial-era image production cohered with conceptions of mana, and mana was also evidenced and channeled through creative activity, and it therefore encouraged rather than suppressed innovation.

While objects and images convey historically contextualized meanings for a given audience, they also have transformative potential, playing creative, active roles in cultural production. Material forms and spaces—and their production and circulation—comprise historical processes. In promoting or contesting national cultures, whether as individualized symbols, collections, or as formally arranged items in a museum, objects are instrumental in shaping identities, articulating national agendas, and representing the spirit of a particular community.\(^24\) “Charismatic symbols” or “key symbols”\(^25\) articulate what are proposed to be the essential characteristics of a given people, nation, or tradition that function to order, explain, and guide human experience and sociocultural change, as well as to galvanize action. Anthropologist Antonio Marazzi argues that public consensus is better achieved through the visual than through the oral or written, and that during moments of rupture such as social conflict or colonization, sensitivity to visual symbols is heightened.\(^26\)

The public national projects promoted by Kalākaua and his supporters advanced symbols that communicated broadly, connecting in different ways with the cultures, histories, and expectations of different audiences in attempting to unite members of the nation. Visual representation is therefore an important venue through which to examine constructions of nationness in colonial Hawai‘i. Public art and architecture related collective identities to objects and images; in an environment of prolonged cultural interaction between Native Hawaiians, non-Native settlers, and foreign states, new art forms and meanings emerged and indigenous forms and meanings were revalued and recontextualized, mobilizing a visual vocabulary that contracted in some ways and expanded in others.\(^27\) Counter to urban historian Nezar AlSayyad’s suggestion that particulars of form (which might include style, iconography, technique, and media) in cultural representations are of less consequence than the basic fact of their existence or implementation,\(^28\) the poetics of visual texts—the way they are constructed, viewed, and interpreted—contextualize and substantiate representations. The details of visual images are key to understanding how symbols produce meanings. The chapters that follow examine the specifics of images and spaces, as well as the circumstances of their production and circulation,
to demonstrate how some of most lasting monuments of Kalākaua’s reign negotiated a national and global presence for the king and the Kingdom of Hawai‘i.

Colonialism and Indigenous Visual Cultural Production

To maintain sovereignty and forge recognition in the international community, Hawaiian leaders utilized a variety of visual, institutional, and narrative means to formalize a national culture asserting the kingdom’s past, present, and future status as an independent state. The appearance of many of these nationalized symbols, such as feather standards (kāhili), feather cloaks (ahu ʻula), and ivory pendants (niho palaoa), evinced recognizably traditional Hawaiian forms, though now displayed in contexts such as coronations, palaces, and legislative assemblies, while that of others, such as state architecture, crowns, thrones, and figurative memorials, derived from Western sources. Many of the king’s critics dismissed the latter as evidence of Kalākaua’s love for extravagant display and desire to imitate Western rulers. A harsh characterization, for example, penned by George Fitch, columnist and newspaper editor in Peoria and San Francisco, described the Hawaiian nation as a “pygmy kingdom” and mocked Kalākaua’s pains to “ape European royalty.” Yet one cannot describe Kalākaua’s efforts as mere mimicry. His was not an insipid copycat modernist nationalism “traditionalized” or “Hawaiianized” through the nostalgic use of visual markers of the Native past. Some accounts imply that the deployment of “traditional” cultural symbols simply represent vestiges of the past and the use of introduced forms represent evidence of natural and effortless flows of European monarchical forms to Island polities. Countering such opinions, this study shows that objects and spaces were not so hermetically sealed as to hinder purposeful revaluation or the incorporation of novel meanings. Late-nineteenth-century Hawaiian nationalist culture was not an aggregate or composite of indigenous and foreign forms arranged side by side in “natural” or uninspired ways but rather a processual unfolding of Native Hawaiian conceptions of chieftliness and modern rulership that generated new cultural representations oriented to the future.

Criticisms launched by Kalākaua’s contemporaries of the hollowly imitative character of his cultural undertakings haunt analysis of colonial Hawaiian visual culture, implicitly raising questions regarding the authenticity of such works as 'Iolani Palace or the Kamehameha Monument as Native Hawaiian art forms. Hawaiian dance, poetry, and literature have clear indigenous referents; palaces, bronze monuments, and museums do not. It may be that nineteenth-century Native Hawaiian visual art—particularly syncretic forms of representation—has not received significant art historical study, due in part to the notion that after a century of uninterrupted contact with westerners, indigenous visual culture was too westernized to be “authentically” Hawaiian. The dearth of scholarly attention paid to colonial visual culture suggests that, because of its pervasive Euro-American references, it has been dismissed as evidence of the decline of “traditional” culture and its assimilation into global cultural, economic, and political
systems. Such political economy interpretations emphasize how political and cultural bodies are incorporated into the world system, underscoring global economies and inequities. Interpreting colonialism and its ensuing cultural transformations primarily in terms of hegemonic globalization relies heavily on a monolithic narrative that presents a totalizing, determinative view of global forces and homogenizes all colonial predilections and processes, creating what Ann L. Stoler calls a “colonial everyman.” The effect is also to diminish historical particularity and the significance of diversity and ambiguity within and between communities cohabiting colonial spaces.

Colonial processes were highly variable in the Pacific; they were conditioned by the histories and motivations of both colonizing and colonized entities and the agency of key actors in creating environments conducive to collaboration and resistance. Agents, processes, and outcomes of colonization in Hawai‘i are distinct from those in, for instance, Samoa, Fiji, or the Kingdom of Tonga. One wonders whether enduring nationalist monuments would have been created had Kalākaua not enjoyed the initial support of American interests in the kingdom, which were confident that Kalākaua would develop their economic investments and shape the nation into a form of their liking; or if Kalākaua, a non-Kamehameha, had not been elected king, compelling him to publicly demonstrate the legitimacy of his sacred rulership to his Native constituency, and to encourage his pursuit of foreign recognition by likening his rule to that of European monarchs through symbols possessing international currency. His intensely modernist and nativist sensibilities led him to cultivate an innovative Native Hawaiian nationalist culture. At the same time, the energy with which he pursued his cultural and political mission functioned, over time, to alienate his non-Native opponents who sought political control of the kingdom, inducing them to organize and, in 1887, to force Kalākaua to sign what is known as the Bayonet Constitution, effectively stripping him of political power.

Throughout his political career, Kalākaua was neither meek nor passive; he shaped the course of Hawaiian history—and art history—to a much greater extent than is credited in common accounts. Therefore, assumptions based on the hegemony of colonizing cultures or attributions of the ultimate loss of autonomy to indigenous people themselves, their “fatal attraction” to irresistible foreign goods originating in initial encounters, are here questioned. While the far-reaching impact of colonialism cannot and should not be ignored, Hawaiian cultural forms, nationalist or other, did not simply or inevitably adopt those of a “dominant” culture due to ideological coercion. The language of coercion and domination, fatal attraction, and naïve acquiescence does not satisfactorily characterize cultural change and exchange in Hawai‘i or other colonial cultures, where specific forms and significations mattered profoundly in the lives and futures of colonial subjects. To adopt this view is to ignore Native Hawaiian subjectivity and agency in the discourses that characterized national and international relations of the period and risks blindness to, or misunderstanding of, articulations of resistance. Such a misconception seems evident, for example, in AlSayyad’s writing on colonial urbanism and forms of resistance:
[The colonized] had little to cling to in their drive to establish their own sovereignty, and they were forced to use the ideologies and terms of the existing colonial world, with its baggage of concepts like independence, national identity, and freedom. In the struggle for independence, the dominated people had to envision their new societies based on the terms of their former colonizers.36

Native Hawaiians were not plainly infatuated with introduced images, goods, and practices based solely on their novelty; they were often selective and calculated in the ways they participated in trade and diplomacy with Western nations. Beginning in the late eighteenth century, Native Hawaiians of all social classes drew foreigners into their lives through trade, religion, and their incorporation into local communities as counselors and servants. In Hawai‘i, as in Polynesian chiefdoms like Tahiti and Tonga, indigenous rulers used foreign goods and technologies to consolidate their political domains.37 Examining the ways Hawaiian chiefs engaged alien peoples and ideas in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries provides examples of their interested and purposeful interactions and informs analysis of later Hawaiian visual culture. Kamehameha I, for instance, profited from the sandalwood trade directed to East Asia and commanded Europeans as his advisers, assistants, and translators to facilitate his interactions with outsiders. British sailors John Young and Isaac Davis introduced Westerns arms, which Kamehameha used to expand his chiefdom. In his journal, Spaniard Don Francisco de Paula Marin, who arrived in Hawai‘i in the 1790s and served Kamehameha and his powerful wife Ka‘ahumanu, indicates how at any time Kamehameha could bestow or confiscate the land, life, and property of haole in his employ.38 This king also appropriated foreign architecture, sailing vessels, weapons, metal, and furniture. He monopolized the trade of imported cloth and restricted its circulation among chiefs, accommodating these to the elevated status and sociopolitical value of fine textiles in indigenous culture.

Kalākaua perpetuated similar practices in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. He fashioned his court in regal style, incorporating European military emblems, royal symbols, fine Western furnishings, and the etiquette of the court of St. James, and housed his court in a modern palace. He marked national history and progress with a national museum and a modern memorial to the founder of the kingdom. These costly and conspicuous displays paralleled chiefs’ adoption of Western goods and practices earlier in the century to appropriate foreign mana. 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.39 Also, like his Kamehameha predecessors, Kalākaua sought the advice of foreign counselors, appointing numerous haole to high government positions, as well as enlisting them as personal consultants. He traveled the world and queried foreign visitors and settlers to gain knowledge of other nations in order to effectively participate in the international arena.40
One royal adviser stands out as a primary actor in the development of public art of the Kalākaua era and warrants brief introduction. Of American origin, Walter Murray Gibson was unflaggingly devoted to the welfare of Native Hawaiians (even if simultaneously an opportunist).\(^4\) He was a key actor in promoting Hawai‘i’s national culture, and it is often difficult to disentangle his impact from Kalākaua’s in the motivation, planning, and execution of many public undertakings, notably those considered in this study. Prior to arriving in Honolulu in 1861, Gibson traveled the Pacific and United States in search of exotic, unspoiled lands. He settled on the island of Lāna‘i, where he wrote in his journal, “This is the nucleus of development. Lines of power, of influence shall radiate from this shining crater. I set up my standard here and it goes hence to the islands of the sea.” He took as his task to “give birth to a better hope for humanity in Polynesia.”\(^4\) Gibson was a complex figure who appears to have come to the Islands seeking opportunity, adventure, and a people to save, yet he sincerely struggled to serve and provide leadership to Native Hawaiians. Though harboring paternalistic attitudes, he championed “weaker races” in their struggles against Western colonial powers.\(^4\)

 Granted citizenship in 1866, Gibson considered himself one of the people and adopted a Hawaiian name: Kipikona. In 1872, he formally entered politics as a legislative representative, proclaiming himself defender of the Hawaiians and promoting his agenda to renew Native culture and revitalize the indigenous population. He gained fluency in the Hawaiian language and in 1873 established a Hawaiian-English newspaper, *Ka Nūhou Hawai‘i* (“The Hawaiian News”), of which he was contributing editor. Through the paper, Gibson’s goal was to combat the growing political and economic power of the haole business community by rallying Native Hawaiian nationalism.\(^4\) In 1882, Kalākaua appointed him prime minister and minister of foreign affairs. Due to his vociferous pro–Native Hawaiian stance and what were perceived as grand and outlandish cultural projects and political ambitions, Gibson made many enemies among plantation and other business leaders, who accused him of being a dishonest, self-interested manipulator and inciter of race hatred in the kingdom.\(^4\) Nevertheless, though not identically motivated, together Kalākaua and Gibson pursued a highly public visual culture to signal the Hawaiian nation.

 In other significant ways, Kalākaua continued the efforts of earlier rulers to selectively adapt alien cultural, social, and political forms to benefit their rule and enhance their mana and power. For example, after taking a leading role in overturning the traditional religious order, the *kapu* system,\(^4\) Ka‘ahumanu adopted Christianity in the mid-1820s in order to be a *pono* (good, effective, and righteous) leader.\(^4\) With the departure of the old gods and customary ways of preserving and channeling mana, this *ali‘i nui* pursued new avenues to consolidate and build the kingdom and the influence of her lineage. Like Ka‘ahumanu, Kalākaua sought innovative means to proper rulership in a rapidly changing Hawai‘i. Rather than following a Christian path, however, he pursued a vigorous cultural nationalism, adapting institutions supported around the globe to indigenous conceptions of chiefly rule. In so doing, he sought to build bridges between Hawai‘i and other states and promote the kingdom’s equality in the community of nations. Kalākaua’s
clear concern with strengthening foreign relations led him to pursue diplomatic alliances with foreign leaders, following the political strategy of his predecessor, Kauikeaouli, who reigned as Kamehameha III from 1825 to 1854. Kauikeaouli initiated the process of gaining formal recognition of the Hawaiian state in 1842, sending representatives to the United States, England, and France.

As discussed in more detail below, Kalākaua persevered to guarantee the kingdom’s sovereign future through international relations and the education of future Native Hawaiian leaders. The outward indications of his efforts coalesced in his public presentations such as his coronation ceremony, through which he intended to attract the notice of local residents and the international community. The larger issue, however, is that while the ali‘i’s confidence in foreign institutions—religion, law, commerce, diplomacy, and education—ultimately undermined Native confidence in their own institutions and dispossessed them of their land and country, it was not, at least at the outset, unambiguously based on coercion, effortless cultural flows, or infatuation.

**Colonial Cultures in Hawai‘i**

Examination of the heterogeneous forms of Hawaiian nationalist culture compels consideration of the diverse communities comprising the nation and the competing and sometimes overlapping agendas they pursued. These communities, neither rigid nor bounded, interacted in multifaceted ways that conditioned how symbolic representations of the nation were created and viewed. Insisting on an unambiguous distinction between “Hawaiian” and “haole” cultures in the nineteenth century distorts the complexity of intercultural relations and cultural production, visual or otherwise.

Native Hawaiian society was never unmarked by internal social cleavages and political contests, and it cannot therefore be understood as an undivided, homogenous entity with a unified will and subjectivity. Native Hawaiians were varied in the ways they interpreted and the extent to which they engaged foreign ideas and practices and, later in the century, they were divided as to how to secure their continued existence. From early in the colonial era, ali‘i nui disagreed over the rejection of the established religion, the adoption of Christianity and missionary advisers, and how to manage the influx of foreigners. The kapu overthrow, for instance, was not born out of consensus; it involved a struggle within the Native elite, some of whom regarded foreigners and foreign ways with suspicion, while others viewed strategic engagement with haole as a means of fulfilling their political and economic aspirations.

The lives and concerns of Native Hawaiians were no more homogenous during the latter half of the century. This is particularly evident in the different experiences and interests of those inhabiting urban Honolulu and busy port towns, which were distinct from those living in the remote, rural districts of the Islands. Honolulu in the 1870s was the site of major cultural transformations. Cultural practices founded on middle-class American notions of taste and morality were cultivated in the city, such as the advancement of literature,
theater, and classical music. Many ali‘i and ali‘i nui, Kalākaua included, participated in these refined cultural mores. They were avid consumers of literature, opera, and fashion. Nationalist symbols displayed by Kalākaua publicly underscored the Honolulu social elite’s involvement in “high,” respectable, modern culture.

Visual culture examined in this book also reflected divisions within the Native elite and Kalākaua’s efforts to create unity among Native Hawaiians. As social and political pressures on the nation became increasingly acute, Native Hawaiian detractors joined the predominantly American-interested opposition to the king’s rule. Led by legislators John Kaʻuhane, John L. Kaulukou, J. W. Kalua, Joseph K. Nāwahī, and George W. Pilipō, representing Honolulu and districts on the island of Hawai‘i, the Native opposition was small but influential. Nearly all these critics had been supporters of Queen Emma, Kalākaua’s defeated rival for the throne in 1874. With the legislative elections of 1876, the “Queen’s Party,” or the “Emmaites,” initiated a political party system in Hawai‘i and maintained a keen distrust of the “DKs” (Kalākaua’s National Party) and their policies, such as the Reciprocity Treaty, ratified in 1875, which permitted Hawaiian sugar to be imported into the United States duty free. Kalākaua pursued the treaty to gain the support of the white business and plantation communities, but the Emmaites argued it benefited only a small group of haole and ultimately threatened the kingdom’s independence.

In addition to being a harsh critic of the king’s genealogical justification of his rule, Emma and her supporters censured Kalākaua’s nation-building projects, particularly those considered in this book: constructing a new palace, organizing a coronation ceremony, and erecting public monuments. Discord within the Native population indicated their uncertainty over which policies would more effectively assure their survival and prosperity. Those who perceived Kalākaua to be the nation’s biggest threat condemned what they saw as wasteful, irresponsible expenditures, preferring instead to invest in Native business, health and education, limit the importing of plantation laborers, and curb the growth of the sugar industry. In 1884 this opposition allied itself, to some extent, with missionary, business, and planter agendas. On the other hand, those who believed Kalākaua to be the only real hope for the future supported his spending aimed at encouraging indigenous health and morale, boosting Hawai‘i’s international standing, and expanding the plantation industry to stimulate the local economy and placate the haole elite. As Kalākaua’s public projects emerged in the Honolulu landscape, they marshaled grand Native historical narratives and concepts of modern chiefly rule, fusing them to Kalākaua’s reign and dramatically countering the Emmaites’ claims.

But it must also be noted that, as markers of civilized nationhood, commemorative monuments and museums additionally evoked non-Native histories and positions in the island kingdom and different visions of nationhood. Public art of the Kalākaua period resonated variously with diverse audiences and therefore cannot be easily confined to representing Native nationalisms. Just as Native Hawaiian communities were varied in their interests, non-Native settlers were divided in their goals, perceptions, and allegiances; Euro-Americans residing in or visiting colonial sites cannot be homogenized, nor can
they be seamlessly aligned with metropolitan interests. Competing agendas and interests based on ethnicity, national allegiance, rank, class, and religious affiliation impacted colonial processes and national culture in Hawai‘i. Even from early in the contact period, visitors’ and early settlers’ impressions were inconsistent. While indigenous Hawaiians were reviled in accounts written by members of the first companies of American missionaries—characterized as heathen, infantile, and dangerous—sailors of early trading vessels described Native Hawaiians and their chiefs as politically astute, militarily organized, and culturally sophisticated.

Helen G. Chapin’s study of newspapers published in Hawai‘i also indicates strong differences of opinion expressed by haole throughout the century. Establishment newspapers tended to be edited by missionaries or their descendants and represented American culture and values, as well as controlling interests in the kingdom. One example is the *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, which from 1856 to 1870 and 1889 to 1892 pressed a pro-American perspective. Opposition papers circulating from the 1830s critiqued missionary positions and promoted business interests, while those circulating from the 1860s to the end of the century also supported Native Hawaiian autonomy and the monarchy. Chapin describes how the *Honolulu Times* (1849–1851), edited by Henry L. Sheldon, the first American journalist to marry a Native Hawaiian woman, challenged the authority of the missionaries, their role as royal advisers, and the laws they introduced. Abraham Fornander’s *Weekly Argus* (1851–1853) also criticized missionary influence on government and was decided dedicated to the welfare of Native Hawaiians in social, political, and economic matters. Fornander, like Sheldon, was married to a Native woman, Alanakapu Kauapinoa, a chiefess of Moloka‘i. He continued to champion Native Hawaiian causes as proprietor of the *Polynesian* from 1861 to 1864. Just as haole opinions were far from uniform throughout the century, Kalākaua’s public art projects were supported, contested, and variously interpreted by various sectors of the haole population.

Other social factors complicate the significations of national art forms and the nature of Hawaiian national identities. Royalist supporters, many of whom frequented the court as the “Palace Set,” were a multinational, multiethnic community. They included Native Hawaiians, Chinese, English, Americans, Scots, Irish, and people of other origins and ethnic mixtures. Complex and ambiguous alliances, too, between “colonizers” and “colonized” were effected through marriages between Native Hawaiians of all social classes and settlers from various homelands, as well as among the children of these unions. Many *ali‘i nui* wed foreigners. Notable couples included Bernice Pauahi Pākī (1831–1884, a high chiefess of the Kamehameha line) and American Charles R. Bishop; Miriam Kekāuluohi Likelike (1851–1887, sister of Kalākaua) and Scotsman Archibald S. Cleghorn; and Lydia Kamaka‘eha (1838–1917, another sister of Kalākaua, who succeeded him as Queen Lili‘uokalani) and American John O. Dominis. Queen Emma was the granddaughter of John Young, Kamehameha I’s haole adviser. Adopted by her maternal aunt Grace Makaikui Rooke and Englishman T. C. B. Rooke, Emma was raised with British and Hawaiian customs, taught by a personal English tutor, and attended the New
England–modeled Chiefs’ Children’s School. She was noted for her decidedly pro-British views, and she, with Alexander Liholiho, established the Anglican Church in Hawai‘i.

Moreover, identities and positions were neither tidy nor transparent outside the kingdom. Imperial powers varied in their opinions about annexing Hawai‘i until the turn of the century; this rift permitted and motivated the circulation of Hawaiian nationalist forms, which sought to impact international attitudes. As early as the 1820s, the permanent status of Hawai‘i as an independent state was called into question. Its colonization was considered inevitable in a book review of 1828 in the *North American Review*:

> "Whether it would be wise or unwise, for the British or the American cabinet to desire colonies in the Pacific we leave for others to decide. There is no doubt, however, that things are now tending toward the occupation of the Islands by a foreign power."60 Later, during the second half of the century, American debates about whether to annex Hawai‘i intensified. Proponents of annexation—and expansionist policies generally—frequently cited social Darwinist justifications for their economic and political agendas. Arguing the superiority of Anglo-Saxons in the social competition for survival and their proper place as the guiding moral force for their less well-adapted brethren, pro-annexationists claimed Native Hawaiians would benefit from their benevolent leadership. Similar ideas circulated among some haole communities in Honolulu, evident in local newspaper and history writing. Hawaiian residents of like mind also published their opinions in the pages of the *North American Review*. Lorrin A. Thurston, for instance, a vocal opponent of Kalākaua, reasoned that because the indigenous people were incapable of preserving the independent state Americans had helped to create, American interests in Hawai‘i outweighed indigenous rights to independence.61

Those arguing against annexation often grounded their opposition on the American Constitution; they argued that it was unethical to substitute Manifest Destiny for the Constitution.62 Some recalled Secretary of State Daniel Webster’s affirmation of Hawaiian sovereignty in a letter he presented to two visiting Hawaiian representatives in 1842. In the document, he declared, “as the sense of the government of the United States that the government of the Sandwich Islands [Hawai‘i] ought to be respected; that no power ought to take possession of the islands, either as a conquest or for the purpose of colonization; and that no power ought to seek for any undue control over the existing government or any exclusive privileges or preference in matters of commerce.”63

Historian Eric T. Love, however, argues it was not defense of the American Constitution but rather racist ideologies that antagonized American imperialism and ultimately thwarted attempts to officially annex the Islands until 1898. Persuasive challenges to annexation came from those who rejected rationales based on social Darwinism and the notion of the “white man’s burden”; anti-annexationists feared incorporating what they characterized as a degenerate, inassimilable Hawaiian population. In light of the Chinese Exclusion Act, passed by the United States in 1882, and the growing numbers of Chinese laborers brought to Hawai‘i between 1865 and 1884, augmented by Japanese workers in the 1880s to the mid-1890s, many in the United States fought annexation.64 The Kalākaua
administration added a positive face to its appeals to anti-annexationists. Countering notions of a corrupt, unruly Hawaiian population, the visibility of national symbols and institutions akin to those in Western states intervened in international sight, imaging the civilized and modern character of the nation, insisting that the kingdom was due both respect and its sovereignty, and that outside interference or leadership was unjustified and unnecessary.

The range of competing and collaborating views described above demonstrates that identity positions of colonized and colonizers were not unequivocally discrete and overlapped in some ways. Indigenous, settler, and metropolitan cultures were historically conditioned and changed in relation to one another over extended periods of contact. In analyzing Hawaiian national arts and other cultural forms of the nineteenth century, one must therefore be wary of overprivileging or oversimplifying colonial agency and ignoring the possibility that indigenous expressions responded to phenomena other than those imposed externally. Indigenous populations did react to colonial presences, but this was not the sum of their cultural and political sensibilities. National culture was not exclusively dichotomized along the lines of Hawai‘i “versus” the West, nor did it position the West as the only model worthy of consideration.

At the same time, “culturalist” or “structural historical” approaches to the study of colonial cultures, which prioritize symbolic structures of meaning and action existing prior to contact to explain local response, are also inadequate; these fail to account for the interpretive changes in objects and ideas that occur with prolonged cultural interaction. Because this interpretive strategy confines actors “within the nativist space of traditional cultural categories, capable only of assimilating novel context to preexisting forms,” structural history cannot adequately explain processes and products of cultural change and translation. The visual analyses pursued in this study focus on how historical conditions and individual agency interacted with Native epistemologies and internationalist ideologies; the forms and significations of national representations did not emerge from static conceptions of Native rulership, nor were they articulations of passively or coercively absorbed alien notions of nationhood.

Binary colonial categories and identity positions are therefore discarded, and the mutual entanglements of those inhabiting colonial sites are emphasized. Instead of analyzing how bounded entities interact, how peripheries collide, attention is directed to the terrains and processes of cultural intersections or contact zones and how power is deployed and resisted in these spaces. Some scholars utilize spatial metaphors to problematize analyses of culture contact based on images of societies, nations, and cultures inhabiting autonomous, discontinuous spaces. Arguing that spaces have always been hierarchically ordered, they are concerned with the ways spaces become places—or communities—through ongoing interactions and interconnections that define and differentiate communities as they connect them. It is in these common spaces that identities are perpetually negotiated and represented and mutually implicated in one another, always contested, partial, and shifting, not bounded or constant. Understanding colonial cultural production in these ways
allows one to constructively approach questions regarding who the Hawaiian leadership was, why it fashioned visual culture to build national identity, what publics were being formed and addressed, and how symbols, spaces, and institutions generated meanings. Kalākaua-era public visual culture drew in fundamental ways on indigenous conceptions of the sacred rule of the king, but in equally consequential ways, it intently endeavored to propose “something more.”

Native Hawaiian Modernity and Resistance

Many studies of globalization address issues of culture contact and identity construction in postcolonial contexts of cultural production. Discussion of the myriad cultures generated within global flows of people, images, ideas, and technologies represents a shift away from the idea that global interactions breed cultural homogeneity. However, differences in power must remain central to such analyses to avoid benign or misguided celebrations of global multiculturalism or what Simon During terms “joyful postcolonialism.” While indigenous or other subordinated peoples created ways to withstand authority and reorder local customs in passive and active ways, their cultures of resistance cannot be separated from cultures of dominance. National visual culture of the Kalākaua era, conditioned as it was by the mutual entanglement of diverse communities established in the kingdom, responded to the loss, violence, pain, and death wrought through these interactions. Difficult choices faced the Hawaiian aliʻi as they negotiated paths to cultural survival and political sovereignty. Sally Engle Merry exposes the contradictions and uncertainties in the process of Native Hawaiian chiefs adapting Western, “civilized” institutions such as law, education, religion, and government (what Edward Said calls “the voyage in”) as a means of resisting imperialism and claiming political and cultural autonomy. In the process, Native Hawaiians indigenized these foreign institutions and practices, demonstrating what Marshall Sahlins terms the “indigenization of modernity”: “the demand of the people for their own space within the world cultural order. Rather than a refusal of the commodities and relations of the world-system, this more often means . . . a desire to indigenize them.” Thus Sahlins inverts the phrase “cultures of resistance” to “the resistance of culture.”

While Kalākaua and his advisers brandished ostensibly Western royal regalia, architecture, and monuments and developed a national museum, they appropriated and redefined these forms as profoundly Hawaiian; forms, however, that also manifest the power struggles stemming from their colonial context. These mediations can also be seen in the ways Native Hawaiians interacted with other foreign institutions, two of which, religion and literature, are briefly introduced here to demonstrate how this dynamic pervaded many aspects of colonial Hawaiian culture and to indicate the relationship between developments in art and other representational modes. So, for example, while almost all Native Hawaiians adopted Christianity by mid-century, it was not perceived or practiced in the same ways as in New England or by American missionaries living and working in the
Islands. Native religion had not been completely Christianized and appears to have persisted through, or despite, Christianity. As there are few published studies of early modern Hawaiian religious history, it is difficult to characterize religious beliefs and practices in the second half of the nineteenth century. Clearly, there existed syncretic movements such as Ho'omana Na'auao (Christian Science) and, in addition to Christian influences, Buddhism, Judaism, Baha'i, Theosophy, and Anthroposophy intermingled with indigenous beliefs. It is also noteworthy that among the ali'i, the majority of whom were members of the Anglican Episcopal or American Protestant churches, there are accounts of “unchristian” behavior. In 1887, Kalākaua’s sister, Princess Likelike, responded to a lava flow from the Mauna Loa volcano threatening the town of Hilo on the island of Hawai‘i by rejecting food, believing the akua (deity) Pele required her life as a sacrifice. Like- like had been educated by missionaries and was confirmed into the Episcopal Church in 1882, yet her Native faith had not been replaced by her participation in Christianity. Despite missionary claims of success in converting Native Hawaiians, indigenous beliefs had not been wholly supplanted by foreign religions.

Notwithstanding his membership in the Anglican Church, Kalākaua, too, had his doubts about Christianity as it was taught and practiced by haole missionaries. In a letter written in Paris in August 1881, he reflected on missionary-based criticisms of his parties and pleasures. Viewing the city’s lively “modern” life, he asked “if all these people were going to hell”: “Surely not! But what a contrast to our miserable bigoted community. All sober and down in the mouth keeping a wrong [S]abbath instead of a proper Sunday, the Pure are so pure that the impure should make the Sunday a day of mockery, with such rubbish trash that we have so long been [led] to believe, it is a wonder that we have not risen any higher than the common brute.”

In another letter, written to his sister Lili‘uokalani from Cairo in June of the same year, the king again expressed his doubts about Christianity, this time in the context of a smallpox epidemic on the islands of O‘ahu and Kaua‘i:

As you are a religious and praying woman, Oh! All the religious people praise you! But what is the use of prayer after 293 lives of our poor people have gone to their everlasting place[?] Is it to thank him for killing or is it to thank him for sending them to him or to the other place[?] . . . I never believed in the efficacy of prayer and consequently I never allowed myself to be ruled by the Churchmembers [sic] to allow a thanksgiving prayer to be offered to God for the good of the nation for in my opinion it is only a mockery. The idea of offering prayer when hundreds are dying around you. To save the life of the people is to work and not pray. To find and stop the cause of death of our people and not cry and whine like a child and say to [G]od “that it is good oh Lord that thou hath visited us thus.”

Kalākaua’s questionable faith in Christianity and his revival of Native Hawaiian religious practices were expressed in the national symbols promoted during his reign.
Christian references were noticeably marginalized while images of sacred chiefly rule flourished, some clad in syncretic forms, generating new conceptions of indigenous leadership.

Similar to transforming religion and art, Native Hawaiians revalued and repositioned another Western-introduced form of representation: published literature. Printing presses were first established by American missionaries at Kawaiaha‘o in Honolulu, O‘ahu (1822), and at Lahainaluna Seminary in West Maui (1834) to facilitate the education and conversion of Native Hawaiians. Eventually, newspapers and journals were founded that represented a range of opinions and served a variety of readerships. Some Native Hawaiians appropriated the literary form of the newspaper, claiming the space of journalism as a space of resistance, countering missionary, planter, and business writing in establishment papers. In her discussion of nationalist newspapers published in the nineteenth century, Chapin describes how literacy and technology empowered Native Hawaiians. Known as the “Editor King,” Kalākaua sponsored several Hawaiian language periodicals before and during his reign: Ka Hoku o Ka Pakipika (“The Star of the Pacific,” 1861–1863); the daily, Ka Manawa (“The Times,” 1870); and a literary journal, Ka Hoku o Ke Kai (“The Star of the Sea,” 1883–1884). These presses, among other Native publications, promoted indigenous self-determination and support of the monarchy, addressed social and health issues facing Native Hawaiians, celebrated indigenous culture, and kept readers abreast of international news. Ka Hoku o Ka Pakipika was the first Hawaiian language newspaper completely produced by Native Hawaiians and challenged haole characterization of indigenous Hawaiians as backward, uncivilized savages.

Silva describes how Kalākaua, himself, wielded the power of the pen in other politicized publishing venues that bore directly on the king’s public art projects. As will be discussed in greater depth in the following chapters, Kalākaua issued the Kumulipo, an epic genealogical narrative that connected him to the akua and the creation of the universe, garnering confidence among his Native constituency in the authenticity of his leadership. In the 1880s, he also established Ka Papa Kū‘auhau o Nā Ali‘i (The Board of Genealogy of Hawaiian Chiefs), which published a report, Hoike a ka Papa Kuauhau o na Alii Hawai‘i (1884), detailing their activities in recording, collecting, and safeguarding genealogies, religious practices, indigenous histories, mele, and chiefly relics. Likewise, the Hale Nau‘a Society, founded by Kalākaua in 1886, was charged with “the revival of Ancient Sciences of Hawaii in combination with the promotion and advancement of Modern Sciences, Art, Literature, and Philanthropy.” It published annual reports documenting traditional knowledge as preserved in genealogies, material culture, and cultural practices. The society combined Freemasonry rituals and symbols with Native Hawaiian religious practices and continued and formalized in modern institutional garb the protection and production of cultural wisdom.

Kalākaua’s literary activism and cultural revivals were sharply disparaged in the establishment presses, condemned as evidence of the Native leadership’s regression into darkness and savagery. Many criticisms were voiced through the widely circulating Hawaiian
Gazette and the Friend, periodicals representing haole business and missionary views. They characterized his interest in antiquities and Native customs as ridiculous, sinister, and evidence of moral degeneration. These attacks only fueled the king’s efforts and provoked impassioned response. In its first report, the Hale Nauā Society defended its purposes and practices and dismissed the ignorance of Western historians. The publication and circulation of these reports demonstrated to Native Hawaiians the value of their culture and history; that it was not to be discarded and in fact could be secured and cultivated through Western-inspired institutions such as scholarly societies and publications. This was also true for visual art production, which gave rise to novel discursive forms.

Imaging the Hawaiian Nation

As Native Hawaiians used paper and press to express their own views and values and deliver criticisms of their opponents, they similarly refigured and redeployed visual symbols, producing new expressive contexts. Nationalism was an effective strategy of resistance. National culture, as it was fashioned during the Kalākaua era, exemplified the “resistance of culture” generated through the complex interactions between indigenous, settler, and international communities and addressed a range of publics in diverse ways. It was shaped by social, political, and economic factors that developed through a century of contact with foreigners and the ways Native Hawaiians variously responded to their presence. As many scholars of Hawaiian history have observed, the primary issue facing Kalākaua and the key factor shaping his efforts to develop national culture was proving his legitimacy as a ruler to diverse audiences: Native Hawaiians who doubted his sacred authority as mōʻī; the haole settler population who resisted monarchical rule; and international leaders whose recognition of the kingdom’s sovereignty he required.

Nativism and Nationalism

The following chapters detail how national art of the period addressed these different communities by advancing images of Hawai‘i as a distinctive and modern nation. As with national cultures generally, it formalized “a genre of claims, understandings, and grounds for recognizing, promoting and legitimizing peoplehood . . . and sovereignty.” Processes of cultural articulation in colonial contexts possess what Handler calls “entitivitiy,” the conviction that an entity (e.g., a nation) is defined by unique characteristics. These characteristics provide “particular orientations of the world,” or ontologies that constitute the assumptions and interpretive frames that order peoples’ lives. They offer stability and coherence to social action. Such collective identities are selectively constituted so that certain essential characteristics are adopted and competing ones are rejected, marginalized, or resolved. This is not to say that Hawaiian national identity was characterized by continuity and boundedness, but rather that it presented certain historically conditioned declarations about cultural distinctiveness. The visual symbols and spaces of Hawaiian nationalist culture celebrated the vitality of Native tradition and a history of exalted lead-
ership. They referenced great chiefs of the past, presented revered images of indigenous values that had been long suppressed, and insisted on the continuity of the kingdom in its ever-changing, modernizing state.

Kalākaua understood that the political survival of the Native population required building confidence in their culture. Nationalist art, circulating in conjunction with the products of his journalistic activism, was intended to preserve Native traditions and histories. Other cultural activities promoted by the king assisted these efforts. For instance, he practiced and promoted Hawaiian poetry and dance (in its traditional and innovative forms), which had been in steady decline since the early nineteenth century. He referred to hula, Hawaiian dance, as the “life-blood of his people” and formally called to Honolulu, expressly for his coronation in 1883, all the elderly Hawaiians who still knew the ancient chants.89 Because these art forms were important means of expressing royalist and nationalist sentiments and were intimately associated with Kalākaua, they were greeted with strong criticism from his political opponents. Despite vocal disapproval, these performances flourished, indicating the efficacy of the king’s cultural program.

Similarly, Kalākaua rekindled indigenous visual arts through vigorous collecting and by initiating the manufacture of Hawaiian items such as ki-leaf (Cordyline terminalis) cloaks, cordage, sculpture, and featherwork.90 The king often showed foreign visitors his collection of antique feather cloaks and described his work to renew the art.91 Some of this activity was carried out through the Hale Nauā Society, which collected antiquities and enkindled the production of material culture such as fishhooks, plaiting, bark cloth (kapa), religious images, stone adzes, weapons, chiefly ornaments and garments, and netting (Figs. 1 and 2). These efforts coexisted with the king’s patronage of public monuments, palatial architecture, museums, and scholarly organizations, which

![Netting, part of netted bag (kōkō—piko and hanai), Hale Nauā Society (AH Arch206i). Photograph by S. L. Kamehiro, 2001.](image)
also contributed to the Hawaiian arts revival. The Kalākaua era witnessed an artistic renaissance that did not resign Native culture to dwell in the past; instead, it celebrated new artistic forms and concepts—in song, dance, literature, and visual culture—as these formalized the modern Hawaiian nation.

One further literary example, Legends and Myths of Hawaii, published by Kalākaua in 1888, exemplifies his adroitness in adapting new expressive forms to shape the character of the nation and illuminates a reading of Hawaiian visual culture. Regarded as an authority on Hawaiian oral literature, the king authored this volume to lend substance to his cultural resurgence and to establish a national literature. In the book, he argued that the former Hawaiian religious and political system (the kapu system) was not necessarily oppressive, as many outsiders judged, but rather “a protection to the lives, property and dignity of the priesthood and nobility,” and that its overthrow in 1819 was not a “beneficent sign of Divine Intervention.” Throughout the volume, Kalākaua detailed the stories of heroic chiefs, referring to them as “noble knights,” and championed their ancient traditions. While Legends and Myths honored Hawaiian tradition and history, it recast them in a Victorian Gothic style. Making frequent reference to Western classical and medieval history and published only in English, the book addressed a predominantly European and American readership. It linked and likened Hawaiian history and literature to that of Europe and the United States. Hawaiian protagonists were not presented as “backwards” or “primitive” but were framed by heroic plots that provided non-Native readers with narratives and figures that recalled similar literary traditions in Euro-American writing. Further, Legends also aligned indigenous religion with the Judeo-Christian tradition by describing the Native theogony as “an independent and perhaps original version of a series of creation legends common in the remote past to the Cushite, Semite, and Aryan tribes, and was handed down quite as accurately as the Jewish version. . . . In fact, in some respects the Hawaiian seems to be more complete than the Jewish tradition.”

Figure 2. Bark-cloth (kapa) sample, Hale Nauā Society (AH Arch206v). Photograph by S. L. Kamehiro, 2001.
visual culture projected a comparable tone and purpose as national literature, though, as will be shown, its meanings were conditioned by its own poetic.

**Internationalism and Hawaiian National Art**

Energetically advanced during Kalākaua’s reign, crowns, thrones, palaces, monuments, and museums were symbols and institutions that could be comprehended by local haole and international audiences. Western visual forms serving as emblems of the nation marked the king’s struggle to gain the acceptance and allegiance of non-Native residents, nodding to the cultural and social legacy of their presence in the kingdom, and these emblems indicated that Hawai’i’s rulers were not so dissimilar to political leaders elsewhere in the civilized world. Perhaps the prevailing concern for the royal court, however, was securing international acknowledgment of his sovereign kingship. Kalākaua, like his royal Kamehameha predecessors Kauikeaouli, Alexander Liholiho, and Lota Kapuāiwa, realized the necessity of maintaining fruitful relations with nations abroad. Just as the contemporary Hawaiian sovereignty movement appeals to national and global communities for recognition, Kalākaua deepened his attention to foreign relations. In addition to gaining acceptance of the kingdom’s independence in the international sphere, he sought to curb American influence by forging relationships with European and Asian states. His image of nationhood was in part directed outward, premised on Hawai’i’s right and responsibility to join the international community of nations. Hawaiian nationalism was tied to Hawaiian internationalism; it integrated visual forms and cultural institutions that denoted universal notions of modernity and civilization—what Orvar Löfgren (1989) calls the “international grammar of nationhood.” Accompanying global movements of goods and technologies, the images, institutions, and rituals defining national identities traveled widely, producing a common language of nationhood and an increased interdependence of relations between nations. Hawai’i’s leaders consumed the tropes of nationhood and forged symbols that were comprehensible to the international community.

Previous Hawaiian rulers engaged foreign diplomacy and adapted international symbols and technologies of nationhood, but Kalākaua raised it to a new level of intensity and visibility. He sought to image his progressive vision of the nation and meet the political and social challenges facing it. Operating in tandem with his public artworks, the king developed an expansive network of legations and consulates (numbering ninety-three by 1892) throughout the globe. Kalākaua also sponsored, from 1880 until 1887, a study abroad program for the purpose of instructing young Native Hawaiians who would later occupy leadership positions, especially in the foreign ministry. The king selected eighteen students to be educated in China, England, Italy, Japan, Scotland, and the United States. They studied engineering, law, foreign languages, medicine, military science, and the visual and performing arts. In 1882, Hawai’i joined the World Postal Union (established in Bern, Switzerland in 1874), an international organization facilitating global cooperation in communications. The king’s numerous foreign relations activities also included sending a delegation to Tsar Alexander’s coronation in May 1883, to which Kalākaua had been
invited, as well as to Queen Victoria’s Golden Jubilee held in London in 1887; holding a Grand Requiem Mass in Honolulu in honor of the Spanish king Don Alfonso XII in January 1886, which was attended by nearly the entire diplomatic corps; and participating in numerous world fairs.\footnote{99}

Also informing Hawaiian internationalist art was Kalākaua’s world tour, undertaken in 1881. Considering himself a cosmopolitan ruler, Kalākaua was the first head of state in the world to circumnavigate the globe. The aims of the trip were to secure labor immigration agreements, enlarge the prestige of the Hawaiian monarchy, and to familiarize himself with royal practices in other countries.\footnote{100} At his bon voyage banquet, attended by political and social leaders and foreign diplomats, Kalākaua stated, “Around this table are gathered people of many nations. In common with my predecessors, I desire the best welfare of all who gather under our flag in my dominions, and I believe that you who come from other lands, bringing with you the wealth, enterprise, and intelligence of those lands, sympathize with me in my desire to protect my native Hawaiian people, and strengthen my nation.”\footnote{101}

The leaders of China, Japan, Hong Kong, Thailand (Siam), Singapore, Burma, India, Egypt, Italy, England, Germany, Belgium, Austria, France, Spain, Portugal, and the United States received him.\footnote{102} Through his travels, Kalākaua promoted his imperial ambitions. It was during an audience with the Japanese emperor that he proposed a “Union and Federation of Asiatic Nations and Sovereigns” intended to challenge Western domination in the Pacific and promote the international prestige and power of the Pacific nations. Kalākaua envisioned himself as “The Colossus of the Pacific,” the head of a Confederation of Polynesian States.\footnote{103}

The king used the occasion of his world tour, Tsar Alexander’s coronation, and Queen Victoria’s Jubilee to solicit material support through foreign investment and labor contracts, particularly with England (for South Asian laborers) and Japan. During this mission, he indicated to his court aide, Curtis Piʻehu laukea, the need to maintain the interest of other countries to prevent American annexation. As “Special Envoy and Minister Plenipotentiary to the Court of St. Petersburg” from 1883 to 1884, Iaukea’s task was to facilitate Hawai‘i’s economic expansion, promoting the nation’s resources to those who could take advantage of them. With this purpose, he traveled beyond Russia to Vienna, Belgrade, Budapest, Paris, London, and Rome. As “Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to the Court of St. James” for Queen Victoria’s Jubilee in 1887, Iaukea was charged with a similar objective, made more urgent by Kalākaua’s suspicions of plots to overthrow him, led by those with American allegiances.\footnote{104} These various internationalist ventures and journeys extended Hawai‘i’s presence and visibility abroad. As the decade of the 1880s unfolded and internal, haole-led revolution seemed imminent, the king’s appeals to international actors were increasingly imperative for the kingdom’s survival.

Kalākaua’s world tour and Iaukea’s voyages on behalf of the king are also significant in that, as Thomas suggests, travel is a “peculiarly modern activity, in so far as it entails expansive steps away from ‘traditional’ ties, and—more crucially and distinctively—an
attitude of extension and displacement towards those traditions. . . . [T]ravel has also been widely regarded—not least by anti- and postcolonial critics—as an enlarging and liberating process that unsettles the confidence of authority.\textsuperscript{105} In his global cultural crossings, Kalākaua can be understood as bridging colonial peripheries as well as geographical boundaries. This voyaging, literally, and in terms of his incursions into the symbolic realm of modern internationalism, was an apt strategy for cultural and political resistance, as he and his kingdom seem to have garnered more positive, if often ambiguous, attention in overseas publications and travel literature, which was not as thoroughly steeped in missionary and business rhetoric emanating from within the Islands. Such accounts represented Kalākaua as a popular, educated, and capable ruler; Honolulu as an ordered, clean cosmopolitan city with modern technologies, architecture, and civic institutions; and, remarking on government, fashion, social life, and education, Hawaiian society as civilized and productive.\textsuperscript{106} It was in this open space that Kalākaua inserted his nationalist and internationalist agenda. Because of the ambivalence of colonial discourse, the visual and spatial signs of the Hawaiian nation disrupted what Homi Bhabha identifies as the stereotypical repetition of indigenous otherness required to “prove” the subordinate status of the colonized.\textsuperscript{107}

Hawaiian nationhood celebrated Native tradition, history, and modernity. Hawaiian sovereigns’ notions of rulership had changed over the course of the nineteenth century. In addition to their own interpretations of monarchy, which were largely founded on indigenous conceptions of superior chiefly leadership, they had worked with many European and American political and economic advisers who contributed to developing the constitutional monarchy. With advances in communication and transportation technologies, high chiefs became progressively more familiar with the apparati and symbols of Asian, American, and European rule. International markers of nationness were adapted to suit chiefly rule: a coronation to publicly legitimize the Hawaiian leadership to local and global communities; a palace to identify the political, economic, and social core of the nation—the center of Hawai‘i’s mana; a permanent public monument to commemorate the nation’s founder and foremost hero, Kamehameha I, which provided an example and inspiration to future rulers; and a museum to house the nation’s past and promote its intellectual contributions to world history, science, and civilization. These manifestations of nationalist visual culture are selected because, though they similarly address the themes and issues introduced above, they operated through different forms (i.e., icons and royal regalia, architecture and sacred spaces, commemorative monuments, and public civic institutions) and therefore produced different meanings. In all instances, though in unique ways, these examples speak to cultural intersections and historical processes, claims about distinctiveness and commonality, and the power of objects, institutions, and public display to create meaning and enable action.