

Highlighting history at FestPac

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In Pacific Island cultures, our familial, cultural, environmental, and political histories inform us of who we are and guide us as we navigate through issues. Recognizing this, Guam has formally created a space to showcase History at the Festival of Pacific Arts 2016.

History is an important part of our cultures and has much to contribute to what the Festival of Pacific Arts offers. Exploring and portraying our unique yet overlapping historical pasts are opportunities to learn about each other and, even more importantly, ensure that such traditions and knowledge are transmitted to the next generations.

History has been a part of the Festival of Pacific Arts informally, since in Oceania history is documented, shared and passed on through numerous mediums— song, chant, oral narrative, dance, visual art and inscription — much of which has a strong tradition of presence in the Festival of Pacific Arts, as we will all soon get to see first-hand.

In carving out a distinct space for showcasing History as a Pacific Island tradition and the contributions it offers to our communities, History's first formal presence at next year's Festival of Pacific Arts will host three types of activities and events.

On a daily basis, from their seats on guáfak (a woven mat), History delegates will share stories and the history of their cultures and societies. They will tell us of the places of power in their islands and their stories of place. We will share our myths, legends, and heroes and heroines and get to hear theirs.

Historians will impart historical



and cultural stories with lessons, including those of our colonial histories and types of cultural and other resistance. Important to learn will be about each of our journeys to independence or incorporation. We will all share the empowering histories of islander cultural persistence in times of rapid change and modernization as well as of cultural revitalization in the face of these dynamics.

Festival attendees are invited to gather around and listen to historians from islands as close as our neighbors to the south in Yap and Palau to those from islands across the Pacific such as Vanuatu, the Solomon Islands or the indigenous communities of Australia.

Special History events will be held on three separate occasions. The first will focus on our creation stories, and where better to share them than at Fouha Bay in Humatak, the place of creation for Guåhan yan i manaotao Guåhan (Guam and its people).

Another will explore World War II experiences and island social, cultural, environmental, and political transformations. On this day, historians

will tour the Hågatña historic walking trail with special emphasis on the defense of the Plaza de España by the Guam Insular Force Guard as well as on the bulldozing of village houses, churches and other buildings which formed Paseo. Historians will stop along the walk to view the remains of the Santa Cruz church, which lay in the waters surrounding Paseo.

The third event will showcase our island youths and the ways that they are sharing CHamoru culture and history through modern mediums. All festival attendees will be invited to view the sharing of select videos and presentations representing university documentary projects, local radio shows, local groups creating interactive software apps and animated movies, rap and slam poetry performances, children's educational programs, local journals and our very own island version of History Day.

As a final offering, Guam's History delegation will promote our currently existing historic village tours that have been serving our community for years. To showcase these tours, as well as encourage festival delegates and all attendees to participate, the History delegation will be liaising with villages to assist in translating their historic village brochures into two of the Festival's official languages, CHamoru and French, and to develop podcasts to serve as virtual tour guides to accommodate possible tour overflow and those who require CHamoru or French narration for the tours.

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