

james craig

KO KAI 'Ā TE MAHINA

The Moon has been Eaten

images from a year on easter island

updated version — includes new images — feb. 2017

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James Craig

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February 2017

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In Easter Island the past is the present, it is impossible to escape from it; the inhabitants of today are less real than the men who have gone; the shadows of the departed builders still possess the land.

Katherine Routledge *The Mystery of Easter Island* 1919

It seems sadly inevitable that the residents of Rapa Nui will be homogenized into the 20th century within one or two generations. It is distressing to speculate that Rapa Nuians will probably fare no better in a new life style than did the American Indian, the Eskimo, or the Australian Aborigine.

Fred Picker and Thor Heyerdahl *Rapa Nui* 1974

As the moon in eclipse is eaten, only to be reborn, the people of Rapa Nui no longer eke out survival among the ruins. A proud people, they embrace and celebrate their past, unapologetically and imaginatively marrying it to the present as they reclaim their tiny, isolated island and work to forge a culture that is uniquely their own. It is testimony to the character of a people who, reduced at one point to just over a hundred souls, have resisted cultural oblivion by making the process of assimilation two directional. The Rapanui face an ever changing world with pride and identity intact. In the end, partly because of their isolation, and in spite of the ever present need to add to their gene pool, they may emerge more recognizable as a people than the rest of us.

The Moon has been Eaten 2012

For Nan

Who never flinched at marooning ourselves on an isolated island for long stretches, flying, riding bareback, going to sea in ridiculously small boats, eating raw fish or countless other challenges and firsts for her. I wouldn't have considered any of this without the love of my life.



This project came together thanks to the gracious and unfaltering support of many people. At home we had Tamara, a true friend in our time of need, who took care of the house when we couldn't find a sitter, dealt with the mail, paid bills, kept us up to date on everything and much more. We can't count the number of emergencies, large and small, we had to rely her to handle. When we told her we wanted to go back, again and again and again, until we were away two whole years out of five, she didn't waver. Tam is one of those people who see helping others as a privilege and resists with herculean effort any attempt to return the favor at anywhere near the level it deserves – an obstacle we are working to overcome... I would also like to thank the many supporters who helped launch the project with their purchase pledges, our own Dr. Galvez and my surgeon Dr. Meininger who saved my life – along with the project – midway through the first year, our daughter Caron and her husband for ferrying us to JFK and back innumerable times, Nipper Johnson for the formidable job of editing my grammar, and our Spanish teacher Ana Zuniga.

A number of Rapanui and other residents of Easter Island, some now good friends, were instrumental in making the project not only doable but the adventure of a lifetime. Others simply make us feel at home. Those pictured below had a direct impact on the completion of the project; most are mentioned in the anecdotes. To all of them: *mauru'ru* ...



Jacobo Hey Paoa



Isabel Paté Niares
(Hanana)



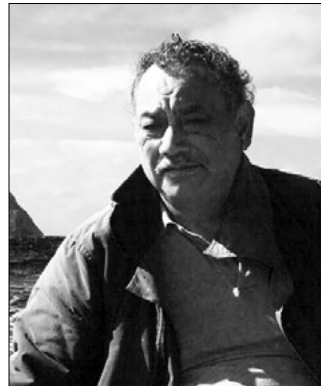
Alfredo Tuki Paté



Lolita Tuki Paté and Antoine
Muraccioli



Juan Luis Pont (Juanito)



Mataviki Pakariti



Catalina Hey Paoa



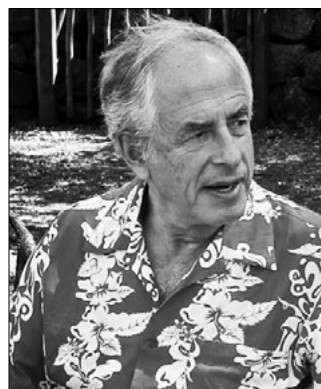
Felipe Tuki Tepano and Antonia
Paté Niares



Roberto Pakomio Silva



Helga Thieme



Gerardo Velasco
Huidobro



Dennis Lynch and Maria Tepano
Lynch (Maruka)



Ruperto Tepano Teao



Terry Reagan



Peludo

CONTENTS: *click to go*

Acknowledgements	4
Map	6
Introduction	7
Why Easter Island	8
The Project	9
Time-Line	10
About the Images	11
Living on Easter Island	53
Getting around the Island	54
Tapati Rapanui	95
Changes	124
Final Thoughts	188
Historical Outline	228
Image Index	190
<i>w/Exposure Data</i>	
Glossary of Rapanui Terms	197
Contact Information	201
<i>w/Web Site, Blog, Gallery</i>	

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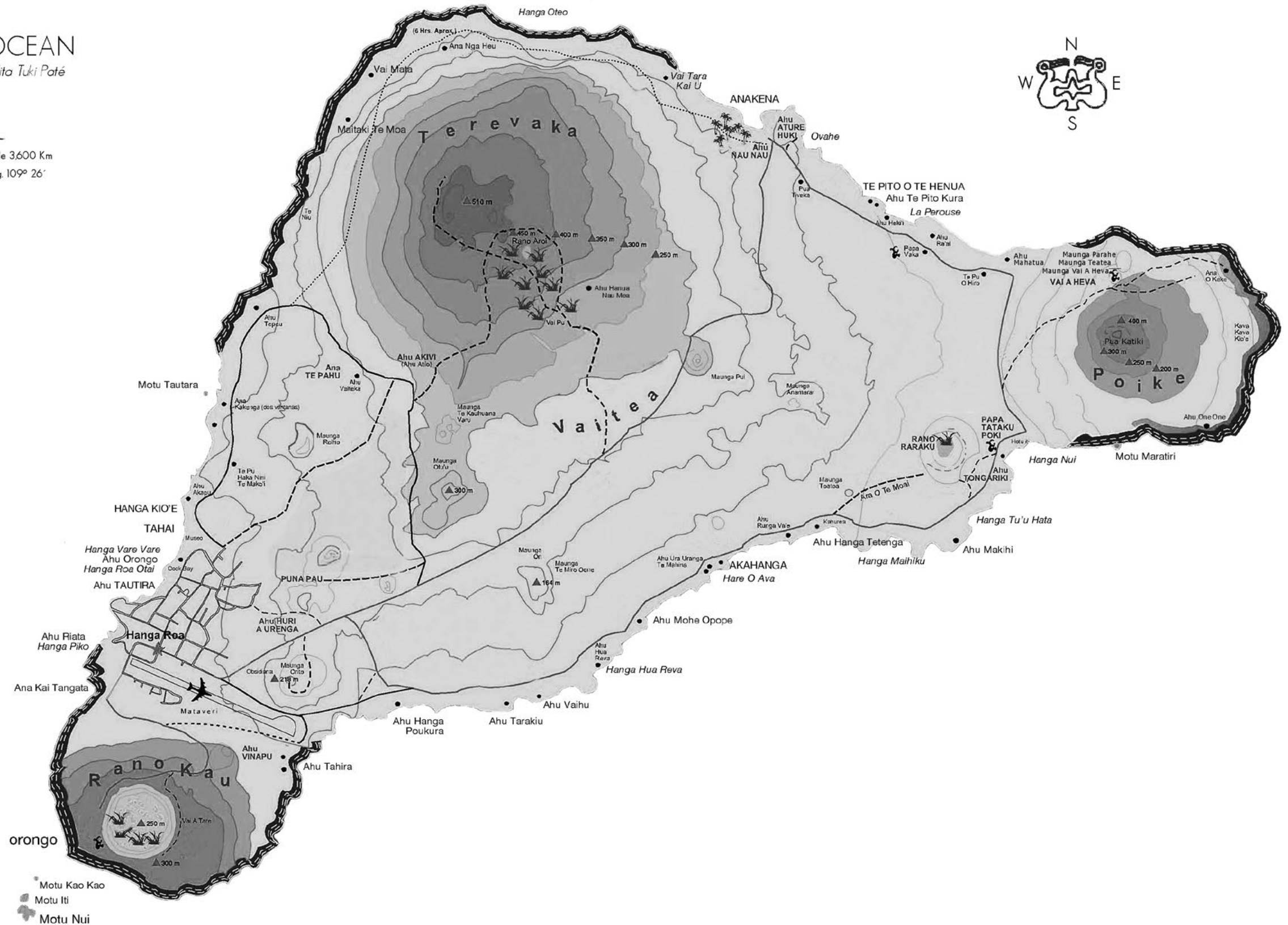
PACIFIC OCEAN

Map courtesy of Lolita Tuki Paté

1 Km

Tahiti 4,050 Km - Chile 3,600 Km

Lat. 27° 09' Long. 109° 26'



IMAGES FROM A YEAR ON EASTER ISLAND

Not until I came upon a copy of Fred Picker's *Rapa Nui, Easter Island* in a used book shop in Hanga Roa, after we had already completed the originally planned year on the island, did I consider putting my evolving portfolio into a book. Picker's collection of B&W images was published in 1974, but a lot has changed since then. Color pictures of the island today abound, but I could find no major effort since then to tell the story in black and white.

The B&W image is a study in light, shadow and texture, an exploration of truths hidden beneath a cloak of color. The end result, as with any work of art, can reveal as much about the artist as the subject. The fact that it's so exacting a medium is a plus for those of us who revel in feeling like we've been bloodied in our act of self expression. But I am not one of those B&W purists who believe fine imagery to be somehow defiled by explanation or even titles. If an image is strong enough to stand on its own, no amount of titling or commentary will sabotage that. For those who are interested in the project and context, personal anecdotes accompany the images.

This volume is my portrait of Easter Island, a tribute to an astounding place and a beautiful people. When I began mentioning the book idea to Rapanui friends, I was deluged with encouragement to include Spanish translation. Too often photographers, filmmakers and others come to the island, receive extremely generous cooperation, and either never share what they took from the experience, or do so in such a way that the islanders themselves have great difficulty enjoying it. I listened and am grateful. The Rapanui titles were my idea; it seems a fitting touch. The language is beautiful and the very sound of reading can add something tangible.

WHY EASTER ISLAND...

I wish I could claim that the project, or the images themselves and all that turned out so well for both of us, sprang from some telling insight or purpose on my part. But that wouldn't reflect the true nature of art, or life for that matter. The reality is that most art, as many of life's defining moments, is rooted in the lesser wisdom that accommodates accident, or something that could best be described by saying "well, it seemed like a good idea at the time."

We wanted a major art project, one that would lend itself to both my B&W photography and my wife's painting. One way to accomplish that would be to put our lives on hold and take up to a year focusing on a specific subject or location, totally immersing ourselves in our art, possibly far away from home. Instead of treating this as a fanciful notion, it became a thread to pick up and follow. We eventually agreed, after my initial project outline met with rejection, that I would present Nan with a dozen destinations from which she would choose – or not. Because I saw so much potential in a couple of proposals at the top of my list, I was having a great deal of trouble reaching the required number; most of which I can't remember. In a fit of desperation, I disingenuously added two random but plausible ideas that came to mind. The final, totally-not-really-serious scribbling: "spend a year on Easter Island."

Later Nan coolly ran her finger down the sheet, pointed to the reference to Easter Island and said "that one." Saying I was dumbfounded is an understatement. I would have been less surprised if I'd been sent back to the drawing board. But one doesn't argue one's way out of an agreement with this woman; that die was cast. We had both read about the island and its mysteries when we were younger, so we pulled our old books off the shelves. Then we began to research the idea. Between what we could find on the internet and information from a few people we contacted through web sites, we learned enough to cement our interest. There was a lot to do, and we were about to start on an adventure that would change us and our lives, not to mention strain our budget to the extreme.

THE PROJECT...

While the scale of the project and the distance we had to travel were new, we had put ourselves in the field for month-long excursions before, and had an outline to follow. We set a launch date several months ahead. Then we reserved a *cabaña* on the island for the time we needed and began promoting: *Images from a Year on Easter Island*. I learned a long time ago that the crowning moment of any artistic endeavor, the opening exhibit, can fall depressingly flat if the reception has to be seeded with friends and fellow artists to keep it from being, for want of a better term, anti-climactic. My way around that is to involve others in the project from the beginning. I sent out a brochure selling “pledges” for large framed images that were barely in the conception stage. In this case they would be for an exhibit at a local gallery a full year and a half from the date of the offer. For this project I had fifty takers. Using this formula, the opening reception is always a phenomenal success, with everyone showing up to make their selections.

The plan was simple, maroon ourselves for a year on the most isolated bit of inhabited land on the planet. I would amass a portfolio of B&W images while Nan painted. She would complete a dozen acrylic paintings of island scenes, but pointedly did not want the pressure of her efforts being a part of what was considered “the project.” In the end I did manage to convince her, with some assistance from friends, to take part in the opening exhibition.

A number of things stood out about Rapa Nui: the sheer isolation, the fact that English could, albeit awkwardly, get one by, no snakes – a biggie with Nan, and the fact that so little had been done in the way of B&W photography. It just felt right. We tried to foresee all of our needs, from equipment, including film and processing chemicals, to emergency medications, clothing and some of life’s amenities. From experience we knew that issues would arise in proportion to the reach of the project. But long ago we figured out that the best preparation for handling the inevitable hurdles is a flexible plan, a cool head, an active imagination and a sense of humor. At risk of offending Robert Burns: the *best laid schemes of men and moko go oft awry*.

TIME LINE...

May 2006 – With few clues as to what was ahead, we flew off to Easter Island. The only thing we were sure of was a place to sleep. Our stay, scheduled to be a year, would end abruptly after a little over four months. We flew home in October for my emergency *double lasso pulmonary vein ablation*.

January 2007 – Arrived back on island in time for *Tapati Rapa Nui*. Gradual shift to digital exposures. Extended our stay to the end of July – considering the project complete. Leaving was very emotional, we both cried. I would emerge with an exhibition of 39 images.

November 2007 – Four months after arriving home the prints were ready and the exhibit opened.

February 2008 – Returned to the island with a selection of 29 of my images, 10 prints of Nan's paintings and all the extras needed to put together a showing at the island *Museo*. At the opening reception we announced we were giving away the work at the end of the month. We set aside a few for specific individuals, leaving the rest to be claimed on a first-come basis. We stayed for four months. I worked on some more images, this time enjoying the lack of the pressure.

April 2009 – Couldn't stay away, returned again for three months. Began working on the book idea and intensified my concentration on new images.

August 2010 – Arrived back on island with a list of shots I wanted to round out the book. Spent three months filling in gaps. Obtained Rapanui translation of image titles. Back home brought the image total to a little over a hundred, ultimately selecting 98 for the book and writing accompanying anecdotes.

August 2011 – While preparing this volume we were given an opportunity to spend another ninety days on the island house/dog sitting; a chance to finish the writing, make sure I had the pictures I needed for the credits page and include an island map, all on site. We couldn't turn that down.

ABOUT THE IMAGES...

The negative is the score, and the print the performance... a rigid, unimaginative print that bows to mechanics is just as much an insult to the negative or original exposure as a mechanical performance is to a great piece of music.
Ansel Adams

The images in this volume are the end product of over a year on Easter Island and well over twenty thousand exposures. I began the project shooting PXP 120 Professional B&W film, developing and wet-scanning the negatives. I had already made the transition from darkroom to Photoshop, doing all my own printing digitally using Ultrachrome K3 pigmented inks. When the project was in eclipse due to my operation, I had an opportunity to reflect on new developments in the medium and how they might effect changes emerging in my own perspective.

The cameras with which I began the project, effective in the field mounted on a tripod and triggered via cable release, weren't providing the flexibility I wanted for making images of people, something relatively new for me. I simply never showed much interest until the island. This was the impetus for my acquiring a good digital SLR, and the subsequent use of recuperation weeks to work out how to wrestle digital files into submission, developing a system for creating B&W images from RAW exposures that equal or surpass those from film. The quality and depth I look for in the final image had not changed.

The fact that over the next few months back on the island I would find myself moving exclusively to the new format, abandoning film even in the field, was a total surprise. A final count finds that just seventeen of the images in the portfolio are from negatives. I enjoy watching other photographers try to identify the source exposure of a particular image, not a simple task even on close inspection. I even catch myself forgetting and mistaking one for the other.

The original thirty-nine images were conceived and executed as essentially the same size. This was a convenience for pricing and printing the original project. Subsequently I have reverted to allowing each image to seek the scale at which it is best viewed, requiring some resizing. Dimensions are provided in the Image Index.



Rapa Nui ~ Easter Island ~ Isla de Pascua

Rapa Nui is a small island occupying just 64 square miles of ocean and rising less than 1700 feet at its highest point. After it was “discovered” on Easter day 1722, it took the west another fifty years to find it again. Yet almost a millenium before, hundreds of settlers arrived in two large canoes, confidently following the lead of the first Polynesian explorers who happened upon this tiny speck in the Pacific ocean, over two thousand miles from their starting point.

Maruka, a Rapanui friend, asked her cousin Juanito to take us out in his fishing boat to circle the three *motu* or islets that play such a dominant role in island history, taking advantage of a short break in the weather. The ride was rough; we were often airborne, waiting for the inevitable hard slap as the boat hit the water. It didn’t take us long to figure out that the further forward one sits, the more air accumulates between wave and boat, and the harder one comes back down. The man sitting in the rear and steering just smiles. I managed this shot on the return trip as our guide was trolling for *atun*. It was scary to observe that in a few short minutes our little boat could have been completely out of sight of land.

Approaching the island from the west, Terevaka, the highest point, recedes into the distance on the left. In the center right is Hanga Roa, the one small town. Overlooking the *motu*, is Rano Kau. The small, vertical islet is Motu Kao Kao. Farther out, Motu Iti and Motu Nui appear as one at this angle. The image combines two exposures, and prints 40 inches wide.

Kona Ngongoro 'O Tahai

Tahai Ceremonial Center

The only *moai* with eyes restored, Kona Ngongoro, stands on Ahu Ko Te Riku at Tahai. Contrary to common belief, *moai* typically face inland, watching over the island and its people. Each represents a ruler, possessing his *mana* or spiritual force. The bones of the departed were interred in the *ahu* beneath. Full restoration of the statues would be impossible at this point, the stone too porous and weatherworn. At one time *moai* were polished with coral and probably painted with earth pigment on special occasions. This must have been an impressive sight.

Not until raised upon its *ahu* was a *moai* given its eyes. Few have been found, and those only because they were hidden and later accidentally stumbled upon. It is assumed that most were destroyed during the social upheavals that brought down the giant statues.

The Tahai area is a short walk from Hanga Roa. The complex is extensive with a lot to see: restored *haere paenga* or boathouse foundations, caves, a series of *ahu* and *moai*, earth covered stone dwellings using crawl spaces for entrance similar to those at Orongo, a large inlaid stone boat ramp to the sea, and some of the best sunsets in the south pacific. Small crowds gather most evenings to be either astounded or disappointed, depending on the happenstance movement of clouds on the horizon.



Ahu Ko Te Riku, Ahu Tahai

The smaller, more age-worn *ahu* with its lone *moai* defines the area. Known for its sunsets, the Tahai area also enjoys impressive dawns. Because there are a couple of *maunga* between there and the eastern end of the island, the sun shows itself a good hour after full daylight ensues. This day I took our very over-the-hill rental car into the shop for its monthly “check-up” in time to hike down and catch the early light and shadows.

B&W photography is the study of light. In Maryland we are far enough north where good, angled lighting lasts until about 10 a.m., returning around 6 p.m. from the opposite direction. On Rapa Nui, closer to the equator, the sun courses more directly overhead in all seasons. Good light can be gone from a half hour after sunrise until the half hour before sunset. The intense sun, assisted by the everywhere big sky, keeps things pretty evenly lit, the bane of any scenic art medium. If it weren't for the benevolence of constantly shifting clouds, setting up that great B&W exposure there would be even tougher than it is.

Location affords the Tahai, Hanga Roa area some extra protection from inclement weather. With the ocean on one side and Terevaka, Rano Kau and a string of *maunga* forming an arc on the other three, the clouds are often pulled to the hills and over the sea, forming a hole of blue sky and puffy white clouds even when there is pouring rain elsewhere.



Moai, Ahu Vai Moana Uri

Moai on Ahu Dark Blue Water

The *ahu* that holds this *moai* is called Vai Uri for short. The clan that inhabited the area was the Hau Moana, which would identify them as those who fished the nearby waters. The *ahu* has five *moai*, one of which is so small and worn, or broken, that it could be anything from a child ruler to a worn piece of a larger statue.

I call this fellow, the shorter one of the rest, Smiley. Along with his odd lack of height, yet equal breadth and shorter ears, he wears a stern, almost grumpy expression rather than the traditional regal one. He must have been quite a character in his day to warrant such a digression from the norm when it came to fashioning his *moai*. Unfortunately his name has been lost, along with those of most of his brethren. In spite of the extensive wear on the *moai* from rain, wind and the ravages of man, or maybe because of it, there remains something about all of them that seems alive. And the better you get to know them the less they all look alike.

The majority of *moai* were carved from the same Rano Raraku tuff in the sides of the crater at Rano Raraku and moved to their present locations. Experts debate as to how megaliths of up to eighty tons were moved so far, let alone topped with *pukao* sporting their own tonnage. The pseudo-theory in *Chariots of the Gods* that the statues were erected by extraterrestrials aside, I find claims that moving an average of two or three of these giants a year contributed appreciably to the deforestation of the island to be questionable at best.



He Hī Ika 'I Hanga Vare Vare

Surf Fishing, Hanga Vare Vare

At Hanga Vare Vare there is a good size tide-fed pool rocked in for use primarily by youngsters, especially during special events in the adjacent outdoor event center. These two young men decided to do some late afternoon fishing off the point. They didn't catch anything, and it wasn't long before they waved and left looking for a more promising site to catch supper. Most surf fishing is done with this simple rig, a piece of four-inch plastic pipe with a wooden grip nailed across one end. The line is attached and wrapped around the tube. To cast, you throw the line with one hand, extending the assembly with the other at an angle that allows the line to be pulled off the end. A little practice and I learned to cast pretty far. Reeling it in, hopefully with a fish on the other end, is simply a process of rewinding the line around the spool.

I took advantage of the late afternoon backlighting for the shot. At the approach of a rogue swell both of these guys would have been seen scurrying to safety. We have observed a net being used for fishing exactly once in all our time on the island. It was here at Hanga Vare Vare, on an extremely rare day when the sea was calm enough for a couple of people to control the net while a third went around in a snorkel chasing the fish in. When the rolled-up net was opened on shore, hundreds of fish tumbled out.



He Kau Ngapoki 'I Hanga Roa 'O Tai

Children Swimming, Hanga Roa

On warm summer days Hanga Roa O Tai can seem like the real center of town. There is a small, protected cove and tiny sand beach there. Children can be seen scampering in, on and around the fishing boats and hanging from the mooring ropes. Fishermen, scuba diving boats and others are patiently careful when moving around them. And for much of the day, there are a couple of giant sea turtles just under the surface swimming amidst it all. We have seen four at one time, coming to get the scraps the fishermen toss out as they clean and cut up the larger catches on site.

The complex system of mooring cable, anchoring both ends of boats, is a necessity. A combination of high winds and rough seas persists sometimes for weeks on end. This is also where anchored ships bring their crew and passengers, via either small boats of their own or some of these boats chartered for the purpose. Freighters anchor off shore here too, cargo hoisted onto a barge and ferried into Hanga Piko where there's a crane for unloading. We have seen ships sit for weeks off shore, unable to deliver their goods because of persistently rough seas.

Just to the right, next to the dive shop, is a wonderful little outdoor cafe serving *cortados* and homemade ice cream in a variety of unique flavors. My favorite is the occasional banana. To get this exposure I was standing next to a tall *moai*. Right across the street is the field where soccer is played. It is a short walk to Hanga Vare Vare and Tahai on one side and the center of town on the other.



Ngapoki Hapī Kai-Kai

Kai Kai Girls

Kai kai is a Polynesian art form performed using one's fingers and a long, looped string to create complex designs. This is accompanied by *pata'u ta'u*, recited stories or poetry. Different islands have different patterns and recitations.

Isabel Pakarati Tepano, the children's instructor, says that when she was young *kai kai* was a hobby and entertainment for adults; children watched and learned. Demonstrations of this complex and difficult skill, by both sexes and all ages, are an integral part of Tapati Rapanui. It is also one of the events in which queen candidates are required to participate, demonstrating and reciting before the entire community. Even though we catch but a word or two of Rapanui here and there, we love to watch.

Isabel Pakarati learned *kai kai* from her mother and has taken it upon herself to make sure the skills and understanding of the meaning of *kai kai* are not lost to her people. She holds beginner classes at the Museo, giving the youngsters what is today sometimes their first exposure. To watch her work with the children is to see a dedicated, infinitely patient lady imprint grace and culture on young minds along with the skills she teaches.

I spent an entire morning photographing a class as the students prepared for their final, formal presentation. But I was happiest with this view of two young students taking an unscheduled break, balancing on a large sculpture just outside the Museo door, with *kai kai* strings draped over neck and carving.



Moai Moko 'I Hanga Vare Vare

Moai Moko, Hanga Vare Vare

A large contemporary *moko* statue stands along the shore at Hanga Vare Vare between Hanga Roa and the Tahai area, visible in the background. Traditionally the word *moai* refers to the statues that dot the island. But the word itself refers to any statue or carved representation of a person or animal. Other works, in both stone and wood, are distinguished by identifying the subject. *Hanga* denotes one of the hundreds of little inlets that define the coast. Hanga Vare Vare contains a number of the larger modern sculptures and is where the annual Tapati Rapanui festival outdoor stage area is constructed.

This fellow is carved from red scoria or *hani-hani*, a very porous form of basalt lava, the same volcanic tuff used to make the *pukao* that sit atop many *moai*. The little three inch or so *moko* depicted here in large scale is the largest indigenous land animal on the island. Its anthropomorphized forms, more common in wood sculptures, were used as protective spirits guarding doorways and entrances. At the same time, the Rapanui, who seem to have little fear of man, beast or environment, typically exhibit an almost manic dread of the common but harmless little creatures.

Around town the most common, and the one typically carved, is the *moko tea tea*, or white lizard. If trapped he can shed his tail and flee to safety. Elsewhere, especially in stone walls and *ahu*, the *moko uru uru*, or mottled brown, is ubiquitous.



Ngaro Inga 'O Te Ra'a 'I Hanga Roa

Hanga Roa at Dusk

We were on our way back from Tahai, once more looking for the perfect sunset. The best are often on days when one would expect little to nothing; suddenly, at the last minute, the sky breaks clear on the horizon, streaking light through the clouds. It didn't work out that way this time.

But I had been thinking about this particular scene for a while, a time exposure at dusk looking toward Hanga Roa, most of which is to the left of the picture. Ahead is a row of *cabañas* leading up the island offices of Armada de Chile. The overcast sky, surf and the time of day were perfect for it. I set the tripod up, made my exposure decisions and framed my shot. With cable release clutched in ready hand, I gauged the sea and lighting, watching for just the right moment to begin the long exposure. I pressed, and waited with bated breath for the click of the shutter closing, only to observe a car come around the corner in the distance with headlights blaring, about ten seconds in. I cursed under my breath and hurriedly set up a couple more shots, hoping the light would hold and determined that the unknowing driver had ruined my masterpiece. Later when looking at the files, I realized that the exposure I had seen as a total loss was far and away the better because of, not in spite of, the headlights; the flash of light adds a balance to the scene the other attempts lacked. Another lesson learned.



Hōnu 'O Apina

Honu Carved into Coast

We like to walk the rocky shore at low tide, looking to spot faces, creatures and mysterious symbols that seem to emerge like magic from the sharp lava stone. The coast near Hanga Roa has become the canvas of choice for formal competition in recent decades, at least as far as making a lasting impression on the environment. Groupings like this one testify to the area being designated for carvers participating in the annual Tapati festival.

On first presentation, the works, enhanced with pigment and sand, can be quite impressive. Later, when all embellishment is washed away by rain and tide, what remains becomes a timeless part of the island, hidden to all but the searching eye, with no indication of how far in the past the execution. It's kind of haunting.

I can imagine an entire coastline so carved and decorated, a result of a hundred years or so of some such celebratory competing. Eons later, how many experts would make their living, gain a following through speculation as to the circumstances involved. Books would be written to argue theories and promote careers. But traditions that begin with religious significance, the usual suspect, have a habit of soon being observed as mere formality, often even as social importance peaks. And sometimes the reverse happens – casual creation gains unintended significance. I often wonder if the real inspiration behind the genesis of some – perhaps more than some – relics wasn't simply that someone thought it was a good idea at the time or somebody was just trying to outdo the other guy.



He Ngaro Inga 'O Te Rā'a Ki Roto Ki Te Vaikava

In the Evening the Sun Disappears Beneath the Sea

I found this Rapanui phrase for sunset in a small but often handy little Rapanui-English dictionary on the internet. It aptly captures the mood of the scene. Hanga Roa O Tai, "by the sea," faces west and catches some wonderful sunsets. In this view a couple of fishermen are on their way out for some night fishing. They will return at dawn to clean, cut and pack their catch on a little wooden table set up on the walkway at the right. There aren't many scraps, but a couple of large sea turtles that always seem to be about will get those.

During the day you can sit here and dine, enjoy a *cortado*, eat home-made ice cream and watch the surfers and the comings and goings of occasional ships' crews and passengers. Boats coming and going from fishing or carrying scuba divers are a regular sight. I showed up early one morning just as a boat was bringing in a couple of *atun* or tuna. It was fascinating to watch the men at work. The skin practically peels off an *atun*; the huge mass of meat is then carved into chunks. There certainly isn't much in the way of bones or skeleton. There was a man from a local hotel-restaurant waiting on the dock with foam containers to transport the fresh catch.

I asked if I could photograph the scene for my weblog and got some great stuff. The two doing the cleaning would occasionally toss a small piece of the raw meat into their mouths. They even offered me some. It literally melted in my mouth, unbelievably good. Although their English was pretty limited, they were able to teasingly insist that it was Rapa Nui Viagra.



Mataveri 'O Tai

Mataveri by the Sea

This view is just along the coast from Ana Kai Tangata. I originally set up the tripod for a scenic, taking a couple of shots before I noticed the lone fisherman. Nan and I watched this guy for quite a while, fascinated. No matter how large the wave, whether it completely washed over him or not, he never flinched. In fact, I had to wait for one that missed it's mark so he would be visible in the shot.

Coastal fishing can be almost as dangerous as being in a boat. There are stories of people being lost. The first time we tried it, using the traditional method of line wrapped around a makeshift spindle, I failed to note the approach of a large wave. Fortunately I was on a rather flat promontory and heard the warnings being yelled to me. I dropped to my knees and grabbed onto a projecting rock. When the wave finished washing over me and receded, I was thoroughly drenched and embarrassed. At all times one must keep one wary eye on the water, retreating inland at the first sign of an unusually large swell. It is a fascinating ritual to watch, especially since the Rapanui are more often than not hopping over the sharp coastal rock barefoot.

Originally, because of the lack of indigenous land animals larger than the tiny *moko*, just one of many limitations brought about by being so isolated, carved stone and, later, human bone had to be used to make fish hooks. There is an oral tradition about the first Rapanui to try it. He was ultimately killed for keeping his discovery from others while he prospered from the increase in his catch.



He Pahī Ko Esmeralda

Tall Ship Esmeralda

The *Esmeralda*, the largest tall ship in the world and a sister ship to one owned by Spain, is operated by Chile as a naval training vessel. A friend, Jacobo Hey, first Rapanui Governor of the island and now a judge, served on her when he was a young man. The four-masted ship can be seen anchored off Hanga Roa a couple of times a year. Occasionally the local fishermen ferry islanders, students and interested visitors out for a tour of the impressive vessel; well worth the very uncomfortable trip but not for the timid.

We went, noting a conspicuous lack of off-islanders. You pile into a fishing boat and proceed to bounce around on waves far too rough for Nan's taste. She latched onto the knee of the Rapanui next to her and held on for dear life. When they pull alongside the looming hull, you have to grab onto a rope ladder hanging over the side and make the surprisingly long climb. Granted there are very hospitable, Nan says young and handsome, midshipmen atop to help you on board; but it's a lonely, scary ascent. Getting back down for the return trip is worse. At the bottom, the ladder swings and the boat is bouncing around like a bucking horse. If it weren't for a couple of very strong fishermen helping, it could make for a very rough landing. One sturdy fellow simply plucked Nan off the ladder and set her down.

Without a real port, boarding and off-boarding a ship visiting the island, depending on the weather, can be anything from a challenge to impossible.



Ana Kai Tangata

Paintings relating to the “birdman” cult adorn the ceiling of a shallow cave along the coast between Hanga Piko and Rano Kau. Unfortunately the art, on crumbling shale and totally exposed to the elements, is slowly deteriorating, noticeable over even the last couple of years. If you look closely you can still detect traces of red, yellow and white earth pigment. My monochrome film shots captured nothing but blank stone. Getting a usable image in B&W required shooting in color and then applying a sequence of color filters, as I converted over, to bring out the various tones.

The name of the cave translates literally to “eat man cave”. But there is a lot of disagreement as to what this really means. While cannibalism was never an accepted part of the Rapanui culture, some of the older legends recount a time period when there were those on the island who resorted to it, initiating considerable upheaval that eventually led to its eradication. A lot about the history of Easter Island remains unexplained; the hints that survive only suffice to make one want to know more. To put things in perspective, my own ancestors in northern Europe were depicted by Julius Caesar, long after earlier empires had risen and fallen, as still fighting painted and naked.

There are other “cave paintings” on the island, and on a couple of the *motu*, but we have seen only pictures. Even if they weren’t closed to the public for preservation, most cannot be easily or safely accessed.



Moai Ma'ea Hani-Hani

Red Scoria Moai

This old gentleman, sometimes simply referred to as Moai Mea Mea or Red Moai, is carved from red scoria, the same rough, porous tuff that was used to cut the *pukao* that rest atop the heads of *moai*. He is believed to be the oldest statue on the island. About ten feet tall, he seems to stoop with age and stands next to a home on private land adjacent to the local Museo; quite a lawn ornament. His real name is long lost so I just call him, for obvious reasons, Lumpy. For much of the year he is partially covered with a white lichen that can diminish the appearance of many a *moai* or *ahu* on the island.

There are a number of such sights not found on island maps, and they're not on the tourist circuit. It can be a long, agonizing process to find out about, and arrange to see important and impressive relics that sit hidden away on private property, or simply too far afield to warrant policing if they were visited regularly.

The young lady who lives on the property works in the courthouse where her talents are irreplaceable. Daughter of an American-Rapanui marriage that resulted from a short-lived U.S. base on the island in the seventies, she was raised in the U.S. and speaks fluent English, Spanish and Rapanui. It is common on the island for one to assume the family name of whichever parent is Rapanui by birth, stressing one's island and tribal affiliation.



Menemā 'O Rapanui

Cemetery of the Rapanui

The cemetery at Hanga Roa is absolutely beautiful; individual plots imaginatively kept up by relatives. In this picture you can see a girl in a hooded sweatshirt on the right standing over a recent grave.

To get the exposure I envisioned, I had to get above the wide stone wall surrounding the cemetery, a wall that somehow does not always succeed in keeping the horses out. I borrowed a tall stepladder and perched on the corner where wall meets road and waited for the approaching sunset. This wasn't as simple as it sounds. I sat there, alone on a ladder about eight feet off the ground, for a half hour or more on three separate occasions, looking for just the right angle and light while people walked or drove by. When I'm chasing down elusive, sometimes unobtainable images that require extensive waiting, Nan prefers to stay home. At this point we had been on the island for over a year so nobody paid me any mind beyond an occasional wave.

The ladder came from friends, Dennis, an American, and Maruka, his Rapanui wife. They met when he was stationed on the island in the seventies. Neither speaking the other's language didn't stop them from marrying, or a very scared young bride from accompanying her new husband to the States. They now divide their time between their two homes.



Manu Makohe

Frigate Birds

There are few birds, other than recent introductions, that are indigenous to the island. The *manu makohe* is one. We've noted only a couple pairs of these, cousins to the albatross and quite large and impressive. They are subjects of innumerable carvings. The male is all black, the female having a noticeable white breast. These birds like to cruise high, and fast. I had noticed that sometimes one would zoom in low over Hanga Piko, the closest thing to a protected port on the island.

I confess to exhausting entire disks with exposures, hundreds upon hundreds, in my efforts. I wanted the one shot that somehow conveyed the awe I felt watching them. I was convinced that my 400 mm lens would do the job. But this day I didn't have time to switch. I was shooting a scenic so I was using the normal lens, settings were for maximum depth of field. Shutter speed was not all that fast and I knew I would have to pan the shot, matching the speed of the subject.

The big fellow swept in right over my head, moving so fast I wasn't sure until I saw the exposure that I had even managed to get him completely within the frame, let alone be successful in matching the pan speed to his. The female floated far enough above to diminish any motion. Admittedly, there was no conscious effort on my part to include her in the picture; I didn't even see her there. All that futile, frustrating work and an almost accidental grab shot did the trick. Go figure.



Ku Kai 'Ā Te Mahina

The Moon has been Eaten

Although we would later have to miss the solar eclipse in 2010, we managed to be on island during a lunar eclipse; when the moon falls completely within the shadow cast by the earth and is illuminated solely by sunlight reflected off the Earth's surface, or "Earthshine." Ancient Rapanui describe the sun and the moon as being eaten during eclipse, not at all hard to imagine. The moon appeared to be slowly swallowed as the shadow advanced, leaving me with no problem seeing the phrase as descriptive rather than literal in meaning. Only when it was completely obliterated, no bright areas showing, did our eyes adjust enough to view it as it is here.

The coloring was decidedly orange, an effect of the sun's rays bouncing back through Earth's atmosphere, scattering the other end of the spectrum. In B&W you can see the moon for what it is, a big floating rock, our stepping-stone to the distant stars. If the face of this moon doesn't look familiar, remember, it is being viewed from the southern hemisphere. It's upside down, or ours is, depending on your perspective. And an eclipsed moon allows for seeing the stars in the immediate background.

The southern hemisphere more directly faces the Milky Way, filling the sky with what seems like twice as many stars as we are used to in the north. On the island one can actually get dizzy and lose balance just by looking up into the night sky.



Mokomae

Tito, as most islanders know him, is very much a showman. He selected the venue for this shot himself. The name Mokomae translates, according to him, as Lord of War. We've also seen the word used to define a warrior class of islanders in the past.

He is a versatile fellow, running the local tattoo parlor (he did both of ours), dancing with up to two separate dance troupes, competing in Tapati and speaking pretty fluent English, French and Spanish along with his native Rapanui. On our 2010 trip to the island we found him carving a large wooden *moai*, with some absolutely beautiful work on display in the converted anteroom to his tattoo parlor. When queried, he said that he had only been carving for a month. That was more than a little intimidating.

We were told that he honed his tattooing craft on board ship in the Chilean navy, using a converted sewing machine needle. Of course, today he works with more modern equipment. With Mokomae, no two tattoos are exactly alike. He is presently working on a book of B&W photographs of his handiwork. From what I have seen, between his original and always beautiful tattoos and a great eye for posing his subjects, he is creating a very distinctive volume that will find a following among even those who do not normally appreciate the art form. I can't wait.



He Takona 'O Vanessa

Vanessa in Takona

When a friend invited me to join her in photographing Tito, the local tattoo artist and lead dancer for Kari Kari, and as a bonus the girls of Matato'a, I couldn't resist. Helga, a Chilean of German descent, publishes the wonderful colorful magazine *moeVarua*. It's given out at airports, hotels and on the plane from the mainland. Her pictures, articles and *Testimonials from the Past*, in both English and Spanish, do justice to a magical place.

Tito took time to prepare the girls before he got ready for his own picture. *Takona*, ceremonial body painting, is an important part of special events and official ceremonies. Earth pigment is applied in historically significant patterns, the meanings of which are still taught. I felt privileged to be there to watch the paint going on, an eyewitness to tradition. The half-face coverage used here is my favorite, it tends to make the women especially attractive while rendering the men more intimidating.

Vanessa, appearing again as *Dancing Girl*, *Matato'a* later in this volume, is one of my camera's favorite subjects. She is also well represented in my Rapa Nui Screensaver, a large folio of color images of the island and its people, available for download on line. Headdress feathers are from chickens, the white and black ones carefully collected.



He Takona 'O Carolina

Carolina in Takona

Carolina Tepano Hotus, here in headdress of *mahute*, black feathers and sea shells, has one of those statuesque faces that remind one of some North American Indians; many of whom similarly painted their faces. I photographed her in profile so as to not show the side undecorated. The more I get accustomed to it, the more *takona* seems a natural way to celebrate cultural heritage.

The impetus behind the session was Helga's interest in Rapanui ceremonial body painting. Every month a choice shot graces the cover of her *moeVarua* magazine, so she is always looking for more. I was grateful to be invited along, and make it a point to give her copies of any such exposures I get – just the color versions of course.

Carolina is also a dancer with Matato'a, one of the more prominent performing groups on the island. Even though some *groupos* like Kari Kari and Matato'a have toured Europe and performed in China, none of the dancers are what we would call professional. They hold down every-day jobs and perform, on the average, three evenings a week, working in practice sessions when they can. Leading up to and during Tapati, two weeks of cultural celebration in February, dancers and musicians take the lead in readying the masses who will be taking part in performance competitions, in less exacting but none the less exuberant fashion.



Po Mahina

Nan and I met Po Mahina when she was waitressing at Cafe Tahai along the main drag in Hanga Roa; they made a great Rapanui pizza. She speaks some English, which in the first few months of our stay made for a good excuse to eat out. Po Mahina is a taken name, meaning *night moon*, pretty much describing her personality, charming, bright and helpful, if something of an enigma.

When we arrived on the Island I was pretty much of a photographer of scenics only. By the end of that first year it was a far different story, one of the many ways our island stay changed both of us. Even so, I hesitated more than usual before asking if I could shoot a formal portrait, afraid my motives might be suspect. I finally asked around and decided it was okay; we made an appointment for the next day. Since she now manages a booth at the *Artesanal*, selling the family's carvings and jewelry, we moved outside where there was appropriate background and good lighting, along with the inevitable audience of children running around and a few tourists. I love this image. It reminds me of speculation as to the gender of Da Vinci's model for the Mona Lisa. Helga asked if she could use the original color exposure in an upcoming issue of *moeVarua*.

When we mentioned the Cafe Tahai to a couple from the States that we shared dinner and wine with a couple of times, they said they had eaten there and proceeded to let us know how helpful, friendly and delightful the waitress had been. They were referring to Po Mahina.



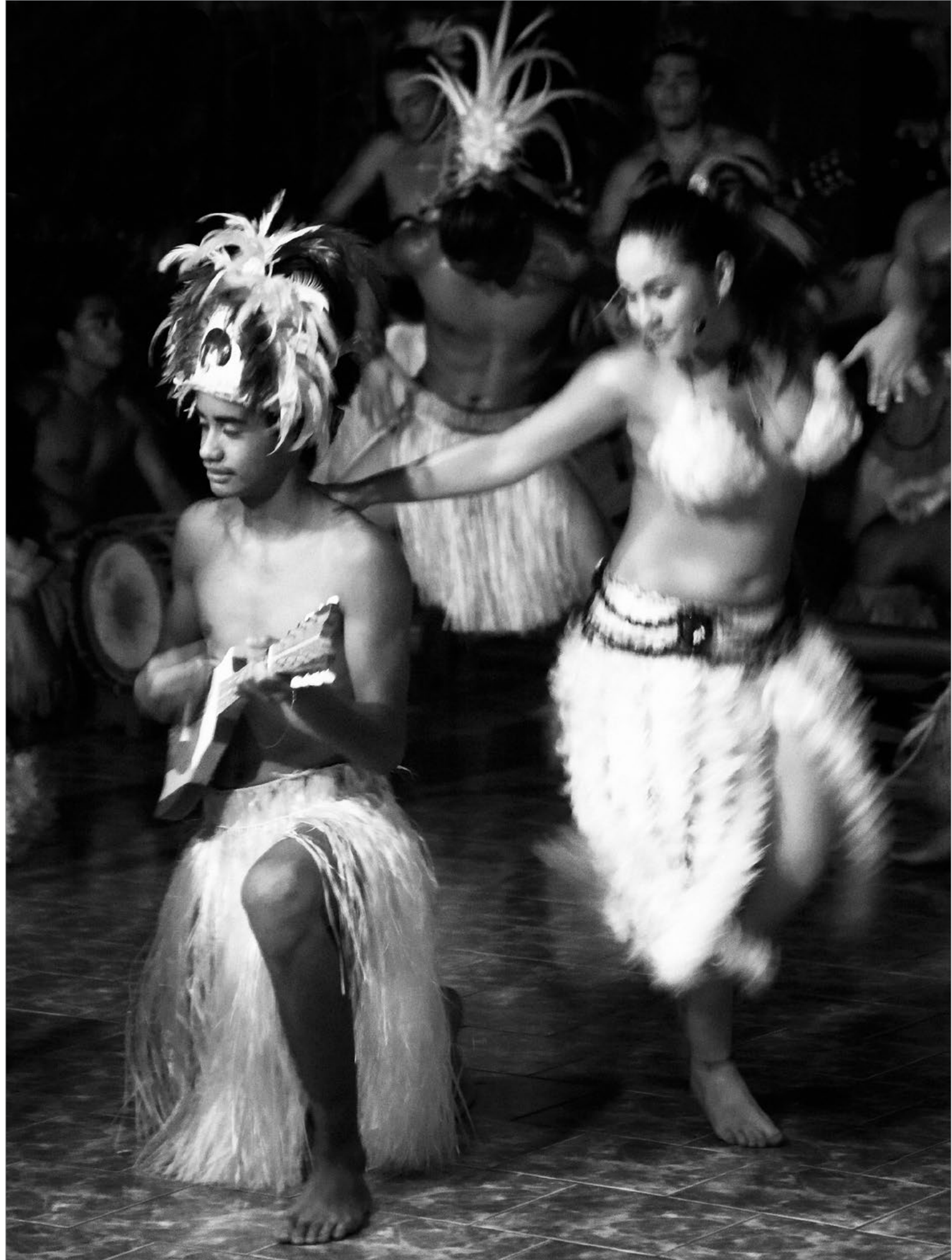
He 'Ori 'O Te Kari Kari

Kari Kari

There are a surprising number of Rapanui music and dance groups, not to mention dozens of great bands, on this small island. Some perform only on special occasions. Others, like Kari Kari and Matato'a, hold performances three evenings a week; both of these are must-sees for any trip to the island. Kari Kari is the larger troop, with an even larger, family centered, band of musicians of all ages dressed in traditional attire. And they have Tito, a.k.a. Mokomae, whose legwork is guaranteed to totally astound; Nan calls it his hummingbird dance. Just don't sit near the front for any dance performance unless you want to risk being coaxed onto the dance floor for audience participation late in the show. Both Nan and I have sacrificed ourselves on that altar a couple of times. Now, especially since we know we will be recognized, we make sure and sit too far away to be tempting targets.

Rapanui music tells a story, dance providing the visual accompaniment. As you can see in this image, women commonly wear feathers; grass skirts are traditionally worn more by men. Rapa Nui is one place that can put to rest any preconceptions one may have about men who dance, wear skirts, bracelets, necklaces, earrings and sport long hair adorned with feathers.

I used a slow shutter speed here, resulting in blur to parts of the image. In my B&W work I don't use flash, I prefer the struggle to get peak-of-motion exposures where movement is sometimes hinted at, sometimes obvious, but never completely frozen.



Takona 'O Te Matato'a

Ceremonial Body Painting, Matato'a

Matato'a translates to *warrior*. Application of earth pigment as *takona* is used here to open an evening performance. Red, white, yellow and black pigments are still produced using materials found on the island, in soils, plants and charcoal. I've helped with preparing the medium, laboriously pouring and sifting red and white earth to obtain a fine powder. Then it is mixed with water or crushed sugar cane, depending on the use, to obtain a paste, or *ki'ea*.

In the annual Tapati Rapa Nui festival, contestants of all ages are challenged to explain to the community and visitors the meaning of each design and its placement. Later, in the Tapati parade, everyone, including visitors, are invited to be painted and participate. It's as if half the island is in the parade while the other half lines the street and watches. Many follow along with their chosen section. Once we lost most of our clothes, got painted and joined in, all in the name of gaining points for our chosen candidate for Tapati Queen. Islanders and tourists with cameras were lining the streets. I cringe at the thought of those images being out there somewhere. We have now felt what it is like to have tourists from all over the world gawk, point and take pictures. The experience was both enlightening and humbling; and the irony of seeing Po Mahina take our picture was not lost on us.

Our grandson Aaron made a sketch from the one shot of us we allowed briefly out of the closet, it's on page 98.



Huaaaaaaa!

Kukin is a performer with the dance group Matato'a. When he saw this image hanging in my exhibition at the local *Museo*, he became very shy, awe-struck that he actually looked that good. He has since made the cover of a book about the island. Huaaaaaaa! is the island equivalent of our Marines' "oorah"; the "h" semi-pronounced with the "aaaa" trailing off, sometimes to a whisper. At exhibits in the states, I like to watch self-conscious people walk past his 15x20 image, stand before the picture next to it, staring, their eyes shifting sideways to take him in. After the island exhibit, I delivered the framed photograph to Kukin at the airport where he works, to a lot of good-natured teasing by his co-workers.

The restaurant patio used for this performance was so cramped that those in the front row were, at times, less than an arm's length from the dancers. From a seated perspective, this can be quite interesting. While digital cameras have improved the dynamics of natural or existing light photography, affording new flexibility in ISO or "film" speed, the poor lighting still presented a challenge. I watched and waited for this very brief moment.

When working, I don't want any action on my part to interfere with someone else's enjoyment. When I can't arrange an out of the way vantage point, I carefully position a monopod between my legs, holding the camera in front of my face so as to not block anyone's view behind me. I find that practicing photography etiquette nets far more gains in opportunity than it loses in missed shots.



Uka 'Ori

Dancing Girl

Vanessa is a petite, soft spoken, lovely young lady and, like most Rapanui women, can move her hips in ways that can both entice and incite fear in the hearts of mortal men. Her mother, also a striking looking woman, teaches traditional and non-traditional dance to the young.

Rapanui dance is an evolving combination of old island tradition, moves adopted from other parts of Polynesia and contemporary innovation. Island music and dance tend to the celebratory, often beginning slow and sultry, only to reach a blur of unbelievably coordinated motion. The effect is transfixing. Tattoos, common to both sexes, can be quite becoming and original, adding considerably to the effect. Not all Rapanui are tattooed, but it seems to be more widespread among the women. Island tattoos have a quality and beauty I've never seen before. The body is more than simply a canvas for works of art; the tattoo and the body are brought together to become the art. And dance is the venue in which the combination is best viewed.

After our first year on the island, we could not bring ourselves to leave without our own personal mementos. Nan sports a fantastic *moko*, little island gecko, on her ankle; while I have a *honu*, sea turtle, on my shoulder enclosing facing *manutara*, ceremonial island birds. Our daughters were more than a little surprised. The artist? Tito, of course. You can leave the island, but the island does not leave you so easily.



LIVING ON EASTER ISLAND...

Initially we rented a little cabana in Hanga Roa. The best decision we made was to have our laundry included. Our big mistake was not checking that there wasn't a tall avocado tree overhanging the metal roof; sometimes it sounded like the whole building was coming down around our ears. Between that, the incessant barking dogs and roosters crowing all night long, we learned to sleep through anything. Fortunately, since we spent a lot of time hiking, we usually went to bed exhausted. Since then we've tried to stay a little further out from town and all the commotion.

Residences are without heat or AC. A fan will do on occasional hot nights, while for those rare times when it gets chilly we found that plastic bottles filled with warm water are a more than adequate solution. Water from the faucet, like at home, contains chlorine so we filter it for cooking, but prefer to drink bottled water. Internet is slow, and power can go out at any point, for any length of time. Mail comes to the post office and must be picked up, each piece signed for. There are no house numbers or street name signs to identify where you live or help in seeking directions. Spanish is the primary language, although many people speak some English. It isn't unusual to encounter someone who speaks only Rapanui. It all gets very interesting.

Stoves are without pilot lights, so matches are a necessity. This also goes for some of the older (without battery) water heaters, the kind that hang on the outside of the house and heat the water as you use it. We'd been settled in a mere month when the island ran out of gas canisters. The long overdue shipment had been riding out rough seas at the other end of the island for weeks. With no port, supplies must be unloaded to a barge by crane. Even bakeries and restaurants were closed. Our first lesson in how vulnerable the island is, and easily cut off from supplies, major or minor.

The blog that I keep up while on the island, two years of postings since 2006, contains a lot of information about daily life, food and shopping, handling emergencies, events to attend, interesting people, what to do to preserve one's sanity when it pours rain for a week, and more – plus lots of pictures.

GETTING AROUND...

Vehicle rental is prohibitively expensive, and taxis are cheap only if you are a permanent resident. We purchased a barely running wreck for five thousand dollars, a car that in the States would go for a tenth of that, knowing we could get at least some of that back at the end of the year. Subsequently we found we could lease a functional vehicle for five hundred a month. And twice now we've had the good fortune to be loaned a car for a number of weeks. Everything is stick-shift. In town I never leave second gear anyway. Between the condition of the roads, kids, tourists, dogs, horses, chickens, lightweight motor scooters carrying whole families and bicycles, anything faster is just not sane. Although actually, one couldn't hit a chicken or a scampering pullet if he tried.

Driving at night can be dangerous; we know islanders who simply won't. Pedestrians rarely stick to the shoulders; motorcycles and cars can lack lights; horses seem to like standing in the road to graze on the side; kids can be anywhere at any time; street lights are scarce and weak. And the constant swerving to avoid potholes, though entertaining, is difficult enough in daylight.

On foot, in town or out, holding hands is not just good for romance, it's a safety measure. We can't count the number of times we've caught each other from tripping. Roads are uneven, sidewalk bricks rise and fall like waves on the sea, sharp volcanic rock from the size of pebbles to boulders hide everywhere, especially in tall grass. Heavy rains can bring new crops of them rolling down hill, road and walkway. In a place where there is always something to look at, it's best to keep one eye on where your feet are going. Dodging horse droppings is a secondary concern.

With much of the island inaccessible by vehicle, one often has to make a decision whether to rent horses or make longer excursions on foot. We usually prefer our own legs. This can make for all-day treks under a hot sun, carrying a lot of water. Non-leather sandals are the universal favorite, but can be awkward in the field. Within days my sneakers become permanently saturated with penetrating red dust, and completely useless off island.



Orongo

Orongo was the center of activity for the annual Birdman, or *tangata manu*, competition made famous by Thor Heyerdahl. The dwellings, accessed through long crawl spaces, were supposedly occupied seasonally – there is always a relentless wind atop Rano Kau. In 1869 an English ship's captain completely destroyed an even larger structure on this site in order to remove an almost pristine, basalt, eight foot, ancient *moai* – a thousand years old by one estimation – and transported it to the British Museum in London. The old fellow had obviously been sheltered and protected, even during the great destruction. Rapanui call him Hoa Hakananai'a, stolen friend. This was just one of innumerable acts of rapine by visitors who would, at the same time and without blinking at the tragic irony, castigated the islanders as thieves, often shooting them, because they would make off with whatever small items weren't nailed down, including the hat off one's head.

This complex of over four dozen dwellings on the outer rim of Rano Kau crater, overlooks three *motu*, Nui, Iti and Kao Kao, from the extreme southwestern tip of the island. From a high point on the other side of the extinct volcano you can see the surprisingly small landmass that is Easter Island stretching out to the east. I made a series of four exposures for this image, piecing them together. The result was a file with much higher resolution than one created with a single superwide-angle exposure, allowing for the greater enlargement often demanded of this type of scene. I print this image a full forty inches wide.

Rano Kau

Rano Kau crater is arguably the most impressive natural wonder on Easter Island. Almost a mile across and a thousand feet down, its aspect changes constantly with shifting light and drifting clouds. It's a separate ecosystem down there. Families living on the western end of the island made the grueling trek to the bottom in dry times to get drinking water and do laundry, etc. We know Rapanui who remember the tricky descent and exhausting climb back up with everything, including children, in tow. Heyerdahl found the last surviving *toromiro* tree here, an unlikely escapee from the ravages of sheep that ranged the land for decades while the true owners of Rapa Nui were restricted to town.

Excursions inside the crater are rarely allowed today. Loose rock on the cliff-side is easily disturbed and the long steep path can be hazardous. We were fortunate to have someone in authority ask us to tag along. We can't figure out which was more taxing, the trip down or back.

This is another of the half dozen or more images for which I used multiple exposures, knitting together the results, something I can remember resorting to but once before I began this project.



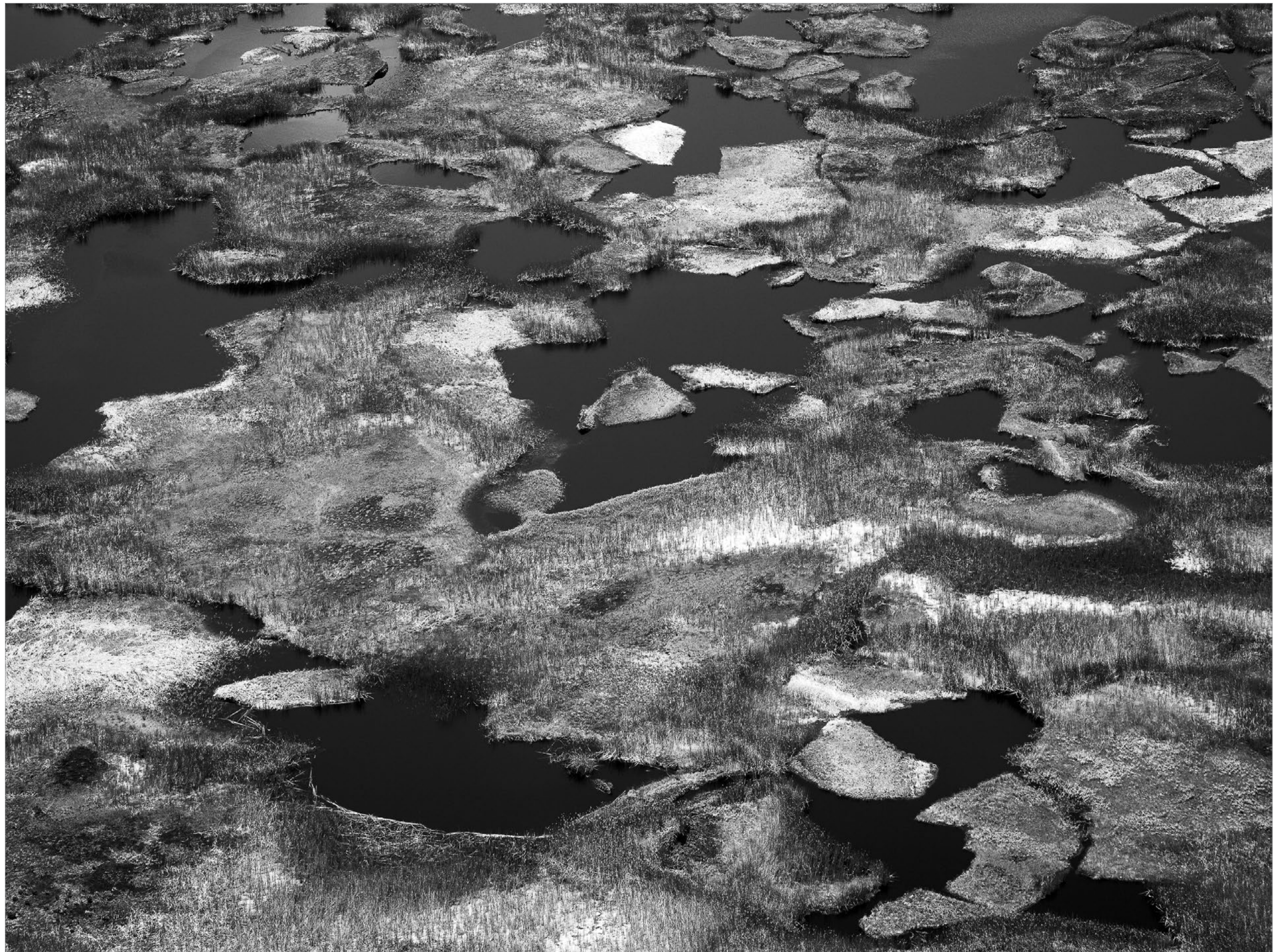
Nga 'Atu 'O Rano Kau

Floating Reed Mats, Rano Kau

The lake at the bottom of Rano Kau is about 65 feet deep and covered with floating reed mats. There isn't much of a view from the lake's edge because the reeds growing along the shallows, appearing more like short-grass from above, actually stand about ten feet tall. You are literally staring at a wall of green. I took this view with a 400 mm lens looking down from the top rim.

We were told that a research crew, out on the mats taking samples, lost a member who stepped on a soft spot, slipped through and was never seen again. Our friend Roberto, shortly before our first arrival on the island, isolated himself at the bottom of the crater for more than a month, making himself a lean-to, swimming and living off the land. I get the impression that the retreat was his version of Rapanui rehab, figuring out who he was, moving from impulsive, undisciplined youth to responsible adulthood. We didn't know the "old" Roberto, who evidently spent much of his time getting into trouble, but the "new" one is a good man.

There is a large boulder on the shore bearing some of the more mysterious petroglyphs on the island. Unfortunately we didn't get to see it; we didn't know about it until much later.



Motu Nui, Motu Iti, Motu Kao Kao, Mai Orongo

Motu Nui, Iti and Kao Kao from Orongo

This is the view that competitors within the birdman cult, or *tangata manu*, faced before their long ordeal. All three islets are much larger and further away than they appear. Fishing boats look like mere dots from here; one can be made out in the full-size image, recognizable only because of its wake. The multitude of rocks on the ridge at Orongo are completely covered with petroglyphs. I like to imagine them painted with earth pigment. For this exposure I spent a good deal of time awaiting the perfect play of light and dark on the water caused by the fast moving clouds.

Tribal chiefs selected champions to make their way down the steep cliff-side and swim across shark-infested waters to Motu Nui, *large islet*, to await the arrival of the season's first *manutara* or sooty tern. On the way they had to pass Kao Kao, the name referring to its sharp, needle shape, and cross Motu Iti, *small islet*. The first competitor to return with an egg won his chief a degree of dominance over the island and its politics for the next year. Many blame this period in Island history for the destruction of *moai* and *ahu*. But so much history is lost that it all becomes speculation.

The overlook that affords this view is a narrow strip of land that juts out between the sea on the outside and the steep slope of Rano Kau behind. As always when you gaze out from the heights on Rapa Nui, you can't escape feeling the weight of the island's isolation from the rest of the world.



Motu Nui Mai Roto 'I Te Vaikava

Motu Nui from the Sea

Motu Nui is the largest islet seen in the distant view of the three *motu*. It's riddled with caves adorned with phenomenal wall carvings and paintings, of which we have only seen pictures. Access to the islets is restricted, both for preservation of the paintings and safety concerns. The sea is usually too rough to make landing possible at all. Even when it is calm enough for the attempt, it is dangerous. We were told about one fisherman losing the fingers off one hand when his boat slammed sideways into some rocks as he was trying to put someone ashore.

Today the islet provides sanctuary for nesting birds. From the other side it looks at first glance to be a bit more inviting, with grassy slopes mixed in with the rocky areas. But, if it looks more habitable, it is even less approachable, a gauntlet of massive jutting rocks barring any approach. Always being one to see creatures in the shape of trees and rock, I can make out the back end of an elephant on the left, the point closest to the "mainland."

From the vantage point I wanted, I knew I would again have to work with two exposures, and join them together later. But this wasn't a tripod-friendly situation, and the sea was much rougher than it appears here, making things a little tricky. This was the same excursion on which I took the panoramic of the island that I use to open the book, as well as my exhibits.



Moai Ahu Tahiri

I would guess that the *moai* posing behind Ahu Tahiri is just the disconnected shoulders and head, the rest buried close by or long removed for some other use. Since I made this exposure, a ring of stones has been placed around him. Along with an increase in tourism has come a need to find ways to prevent the more disrespectful visitors from clambering over the ruins and finding destructive ways of having themselves photographed on them. This site, just a short drive outside of town, around the runway and onto the slope that begins Rano Kao, is a regular stopover for tour groups. But, like all but the major ruins, it is otherwise unsupervised.

When we first arrived on the island, in the off season, two planes from the mainland landed a week, not counting the Wednesday and Sunday evening stopovers on the way to Tahiti. Arrivals were still events that everyone noted. In the short time since then this number has increased to a flight a day, and seating can be difficult to arrange. Private chartering of large planes by groups has also become more common. Even with that increase, we are encountering fewer North Americans, Japanese and Europeans. They've been replaced primarily by mainland Chileans. Part of this may be due to world economic woes. But also, as time goes on, we meet fewer people at home who have even heard of this fascinating place.



Ahu Tahiri 'O Vinapu

Ahu Tahiri at Vinapu

Often compared to similar walls in Peru, Ahu Tahiri contains some of the finest stone work on the island. This is the high back, the seaward side, of the *ahu*; the approach slope and step-stone front are on the opposite side. *Moai* were mounted atop the broad top of the *ahu*, facing inland. Some authors cite Ahu Tahiri as evidence of more than just a passing contact with cultures on the South American mainland. To show a sense of scale and give some idea how immense these stones are, there's a *moko*, island lizard about six inches in length, near the bottom right corner of the large stone on the right. Good luck finding it.

Ahu construction varies dramatically. While most are impressive, effort was rarely made for this degree of precision in fitting of the stones. But there are a couple of others with workmanship approaching that of Ahu Tahiri, one about half way around Terevaka. In some, little actual cutting of stone occurs at all. Since it is impossible to date stone, any attempt to establish a construction order is next to impossible.

This is a companion *ahu* to Ahu Vinapu, in much worse condition, that gives its name to the area. Not only did huge *moai* have to be moved all the way up and down slopes from Rano Raraku on the far end of the island, and the *pukao* from Puna Pau, huge slabs of basalt used in construction of the *ahu* itself were originally cut near the summit of Terevaka and somehow dragged to the site. An impressive feat.



Pu'oko Moai 'O Ahu Vinapu

Weather-worn Face, Vinapu

Only the Rapanui would leave this large *moai* face undisturbed, looking up from the ground behind Ahu Vinapu. I must have worked on getting this shot a dozen times; wet, dry, cloudy, sunny, etc. trying to get the angle and light just right. I finally realized that my problem was a need for some parallax correction. I wanted both the *moai* face and the *ahu* behind it in the frame, but couldn't accomplish that and at the same time keep the desired angle on the face. They sell lenses for situations like this, expensive lenses with elements that shift and tilt for solving perspective problems. They are more recognizably used for fixing the issue with tall buildings narrowing as they go up. But I didn't have one with me.

Later, tilting an enlarger head one direction, and the lens another could have gotten me most of the way there; alright if I'd been willing to tolerate some distortion to the face. But this is where my move to the digital darkroom paid off. I was able to create exposures that included what I wanted, knowing that I would be able to scan the negatives, apply the changes in perspective as locally as I wished and get precisely what I envisioned. Huaaaaaa!

Even in this position, eyes looking skyward, this fellow seems as alive and observant as others still standing proud. I flinch at the thought of the horses or cows that roam the area walking on his face.



Tokerau, Vave, Ma'ea

Wind, Surf, Rocks

I was looking for the one shot that would convey the sense of chaotic forces balancing one another that I get from the island. Wind whips around, often from more than one direction; clouds rush by overhead crossways to one another at different heights. There is no pattern to the rocks, on land or in the water. And the sea seems to lack the regularity I've seen elsewhere; the relentless waves are both beautiful and unpredictable. The various forces compliment one another, leaving an atmosphere of primeval balance.

The three major eruptions that created Easter Island are supposed to be among the more recent in Polynesia, making it a young island. The fact that the sea drops off steeply has prevented the formation of coral reefs, leaving all at the mercy of the sea, with only the vast array of relatively unworn jagged volcanic stone to temper the waves. This is one moment, out of a couple hundred tries I made over a few days, that captures the feeling for me. Order in chaos, frozen in time.

The land itself isn't much different. And remnants of some ancient activities like stone mulching contribute to the sense of disorder. An occasional bird takes the edge off, but with limited vegetation and no indigenous land animals beyond an occasional scurrying *moko*, a sense of a very young world is ever present.



Ahu 'O Hanga Pou Kura

Ahu Hang Pou Kura is centrally located on the south coast, with an excellent view of Rano Kau. As with a number of other *ahu*, the real name is long lost, so it is referred to by the name of the inlet on which it is located. It has a number of medium sized, whole and broken *moai* lying where they fell in front. I liked the perspective from the backside, but the wind on this part of the coast was persistent and simply would not cooperate.

We returned to the site more than a half dozen times over a couple of weeks, always at the same time of day; I knew the lighting I wanted. I would set up the tripod and stand or sit there holding my cable release, waiting for the tall grasses to stop moving, ready to trip the shutter at the first sign of calm. Nan patiently explored the coast. Sometimes this is what photography is all about, waiting and waiting some more. An hour or so later, losing my light, I would pack up and plan my next try. Far too often in situations like this the moment just never happens. This one eventually did, in the form of a break in movement lasting a few precious seconds, as the wind shifted. If I had missed it, I'd still be kicking myself.

This is one of only seventeen images in the Rapa Nui portfolio to begin its life as a negative. I have printed it 18x24 and could easily go larger.



O'opo, Vai Kava

Blow Holes South Coast

The blow-holes on the south coast, a source of intermittent swooshing and hissing sounds complimenting the cacophony of crashing waves, are most impressive with the tide about half way in. They are visible from a good distance and it takes a very calm sea to make them inactive. I photographed the spouts a number of times, but wasn't going to be happy with anything but a particular effect. To schedule it I used a little piece of freeware called *Mr. Tides* on my laptop. Pin-point your location in the world and get all the tide, sun and moon information you need. Matching the tide to the right time of day for the lighting I wanted became a simple matter of waiting about a week and crossing my fingers that the weather held.

There are other blow holes around the coast, some requiring quite a hike to access; but this pair is my favorite. The rocky, volcanic coast here seems to invite aggressive waves, in-rushing water slamming underneath overhanging rock into cavities. Air and water is forced out through vents with tremendous pressure. Tone varies according to pressure, the size of the wave and whether it hits a back flow of water. With the surf as background, the irregular repetition of the low tones of spouting water, high pitched hiss of fine spray and water falling back onto rocks work together to create a symphony of peace and calm. It's a good place to sit, tune out the rest of the world and think.

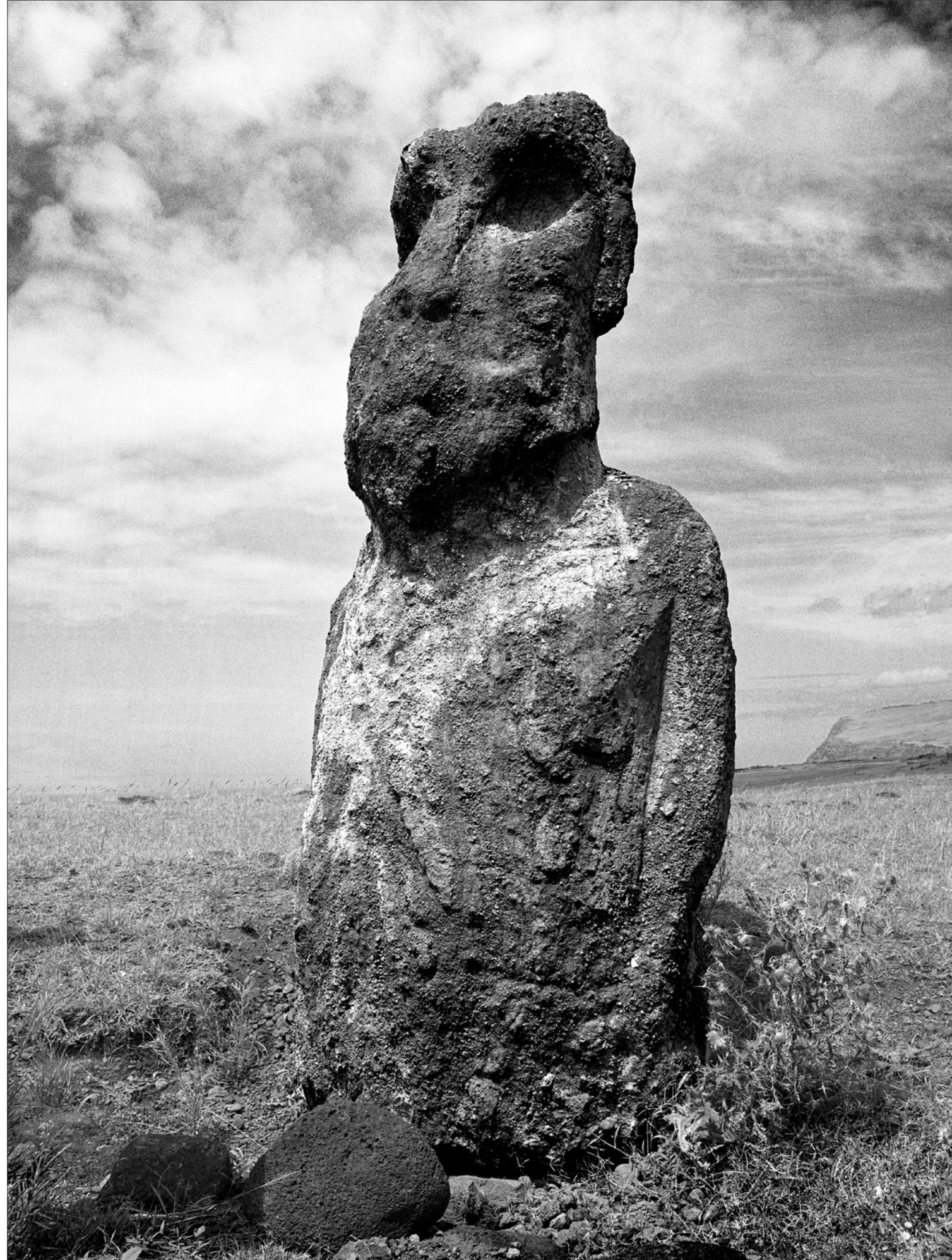


Moai Hokotahi

This gentleman stands all alone along the road between historic sites on the south coast. He's not on an *ahu*, instead appearing as if he were at one time some kind of marker or memorial along the ancient *moai road* he overlooks. Hokotahi actually means "lonely"; we call him Lonesome George. Most visitors, including formal tours, pass him by with hardly a glance. He's a long forgotten incarnation of someone who obviously once warranted celebrating, a poignant, personal reminder of the fate that befalls all, including the more prominent among us, as time moves forward. And if he knows his real name, his history, he's not talking.

The view here was influenced by the fact that he is closely girded by wooden posts designed to keep horses, and probably people, at arm's length. For the shot, I lay on the ground, looking up with the camera braced on my backpack; perspective could be corrected later. Ends of two posts still intruded into the frame from the sides, just barely. They were easily removed.

Rain and weather play havoc with *moai*. The volcanic tuff from which they are carved is showing its age. Moai Hokotahi today makes no pretense of power, nobility or magnificence. But he does seem to retain a kind of knowledgeable dignity, old, worn, having seen much, silent but still standing. If *moai* could talk, my money would be on old "Lonesome" for some interesting stories.



Ara 'O Te Moai

Moai Road

A main artery of the old “*moai road*” system runs parallel to the modern “highway” that runs along the south coast. Its longevity testifies to the considerable engineering put into construction, confirmed by excavation. Here someone, evidently with a sense of irony, put up a street sign.

A surprising number of undelivered *moai*, many broken, lie where they were abandoned along the road. Some are found on side trails, having all but reached their destination. But it's impossible to imagine that this network was used solely for moving *moai*. Gigantic slabs of basalt and large boulders were needed for *ahu* construction. Tons of jagged, volcanic building rock had to be moved, along with the large, smooth-worn surf rock found in only a few locations along the coast. These are used extensively for the approach to *ahu* and patio areas in front of *hare paenga*. And those huge *hare paenga* foundation blocks, no small challenge to move, are found almost everywhere.

This kind of open road system reflects a culture at its height, facilitating trade and communication. The *moai road* strongly suggests an extended era of peace, prosperity and cooperative effort. Impressive for a society made up of a large number of separate tribal units.

From this view you get an idea of the barren nature of the coastal plain. And you can see from the tire tracks that some locals occasionally make use of these ancient byways.



Ahu One Makihi

Nan and I spent a good deal of time hiking the coast, map in hand, determined to check out each and every *ahu* and ruin. This can prove a trying task under a brutal sun. And the vast majority of sites, the exceptions being larger, more impressive *ahu* on regular tour routes, have no identification whatsoever.

Ahu One Makihi – “*one*” meaning *sand*, the closest thing to a translation I can manage – has a small sign but few visitors, even though it is one of the closest *ahu* to Rano Raraku. Nan calls the fellow on the left “old yeller” because he is constructed of a more yellowish tuff than most *moai*. He’s also in pretty good shape for his age, considering he spends all his time on his back, exposed to the elements. So we wondered why his companion fared so poorly. In a book from 1891, far enough back to look for descriptions reflecting far less wear, I found an answer. The notes on this particular *ahu* describe the degraded *moai* as purposely mutilated.

This would be a pretty uncommon occurrence. Typically *moai* were simply toppled, sometimes large stones placed in their path to encourage breaking. Once the eyes were removed and the *moai* no longer standing proud atop the *ahu*, any *mana* they may have possessed would have been rendered powerless. One can only speculate that there was something about this particular leader that angered someone enough to want to exact vengeance.



Ana Hahata, Taha Tai

Cave with a View

A more accurate translation would go something like “cave with wide mouth on a gradual slope to a calm area of the coast” – some titles just won’t suffer translation, in either direction. The open cave is roomy and has a great view across the *hanga* at Tongariki to Poike in the background. The floor is almost always covered with fresh dried grass, a great place to escape the sun or a sudden downpour. Today it is a favorite place to hold week-end picnic cookouts that include surf fishing and eating the catch.

Camping out for a few days is a big thing with the locals, especially for the women and children. An extended family will pack a pickup full of anything they might need, including tents or lean-tos. Cooking utensils might be something as simple as a heavy wire grid to place over an open fire. Children can play in the surf, adults can fish or just hang out. And they are never far from home in case the weather turns nasty. Everyday living on the Island is close enough to roughing it for our taste.

To get this image I set up the tripod and framed two side by side views from inside the cave. Each perspective required two exposures, one allowing some detail on the rocks and the other for the bright, sunny outside. Since this image comes from negatives, combining “over” and “under” exposures had to be accomplished the old fashioned way.



Rano Raraku

Moai scattered about the outer slope of Rano Raraku crater can be seen from quite a distance. To get this shot I set up my tripod a short way off the road approaching Raraku. We've seen this field overgrown from too much rain and barren from drought. It has even been charred black from a massive burn-off. Only once have we been lucky enough to catch the expanse as gorgeous as this. Nan stood side by side with me, taking a snapshot she would later use to create a large painting. She made good use of the yellows, greens and reds that were in the foreground.

Lighting is such on the Island that one becomes dependent on clouds to save the day; just look at those shadows! It can sometimes mean a number of trips at the same time of day, to the same spot. But I always know exactly when I finally have what I'm looking for; time to pack it in and go back to town for lunch and a *cortado*.

Very few of my exposures are taken this close to our vehicle. More often, even when working from the car, I look up from my concentration to find that I've managed to inch myself a half mile or more away, trying to find the right perspective. It never ceases to amaze me how far Nan will go, how many miles she will trek without complaint, even when she has been assured it is just a road trip. Support like that is priceless.



Ara Haere 'O Te Moai, Rano Raraku

Moai Trail, Rano Raraku

A visit with the *moai* on Rano Raraku is one of the highlights of a trip to Easter Island. This narrow path winds among the scores of giants that inhabit the outer slope. Just to give some idea of scale, people like to stand under the fellow leaning forward over the path, reach their arms over their heads and touch his nose, and then have their picture taken pretending to hold him up. Of the nearly one thousand great statues on the island, almost two hundred, in various stages of creation, remain at Raraku. In this group, half or more of each *moai* is below ground.

Some Raraku *moai* were carved tapered to points on the bottom rather than being designed to stand on their own, never destined to find a home on a distant ahu. There is debate as to their function, whether they assisted in lowering others down the steep slope or had some less pragmatic purpose. All undelivered *moai* have simple bevels where the eye cavity should go. Only when a *moai* reached its destination would final touches, including eye sockets and eyes, be supplied. Until then, the *moai* had no *mana*.

The vast majority of surviving *moai* have extended earlobes, the famous “long ears.” The few that have short ears are thought by some to be older sculptures. Early visitors to the island found earlobe extension still practiced by some of the inhabitants. They describe the lobes being looped over the top of the ear when it was necessary to get them out of the way.



Moai Kai 'Oti Te Anga

Unfinished Moai, Rano Raraku

Two of the many *moai*, abandoned in mid-construction at Rano Raraku. The fellow in front is wearing the short beard sometimes seen on islanders. Their position in the side of the cliff – they are still attached at the bottom – gives away the judicious use of raw material. The final step was to cut away the stone underneath. A ridge of support was created, then gaps cut in the ridge. At least one *moai* on the inside cliff reveals this process. I would assume support logs were inserted in these gaps before the rest of the stone was chipped away.

Moai that were cut from the inside of the crater had to be raised and then lowered over a steep drop by ropes attached to huge poles. Holes for these support poles can be found along the top ridge. They are large enough to hold two people and more than four feet deep. Nobody knows the exact method used to accomplish all of this; but it's evident that some impressive engineering was used, especially considering the limited resources at hand.

Moai scattered around *ahu* resemble fallen giants, frozen in time. Those abandoned mid-delivery, without eye sockets, seem to be wasting away, awaiting the spark of life that will never come. The few that have been restored to stand again seem to be alive but mute, either unaware of the details of their past – like the people who created them – or just not talking. This pair, like numerous others, saw the hands of the creators stayed mid stroke.



Ko Roto 'O Rano Raraku

Inside Rano Raraku

From high on the cliff inside Rano Raraku you get a great view of the lake, its reeds and the land beyond. There's even a glimpse of the sea and the far coast. This megalith is in pretty good shape for lying so exposed to the elements; his is the classic *moai* profile. I made my first exposure with a wide-angle lens, but didn't like what I had. Then I tried two exposures, side by side, using a "normal" lens. The *moai* is so huge that the ends still receded into the distance. In order to duplicate what the mind thinks it sees, I took two shots from vantage points a few feet apart. The result is that the foreground figure is not held "in" the image by a single point perspective, the ends reflecting the greater distance from the viewer. Stretching across the view, the supine *moai* looms in front of the grand scenic behind. This little trick works only when you have a foreground and background, with no mid-ground connection.

The lake is much larger than it looks here, and the tall *totorā* reeds grow out of the water. There's a trail around it all, the same path used for the annual Rapanui Marathon held during Tapati.

During dry spells, this lake and the one in Rano Kau were the only reliable sources of fresh water on the island. Rainwater, when available, was collected and still is today by some who don't have town water.



Pu'oko 'O Te Pua'a Mate

Skull on Fencepost

This could be the North American southwest. Skulls of both cattle and horses are common, dead animals left where they lie because the island soil needs the nutrients. If a horse jaw is found in good condition, it is made into a musical instrument called a *kauaha*. Cow skulls end up on fence posts, stone walls, even cars.

While efforts are made to fence in, or out, livestock, one can encounter both horses and cattle anywhere, from the top of the remotest *maunga* to the middle of the road. It's not unusual to see horses roaming through town.

This is the view approaching the climb up to the steepest part of Rano Raraku. There's supposedly an old short-cut up the face but it doesn't look like anything we'd like to try. We made the hike up to check it out, not the best idea I ever had. It's a lot farther and steeper than it looks. We were both done in by the effort. But the worst part was what I call sticky-grass; the slope is covered with it. A sticky goo oozes out of the grass, gets into fabric and then attracts and holds dust. It's insidious. By the time we got back my shoes were totally ruined. And it's not even a native plant. We've been told that the seeds were brought from the mainland in the stomachs of livestock that wasn't in quarantine long enough. Now it's a major nuisance, crowding out indigenous island grasses.



He E'a 'Ote Ra'a, Rano Raraku

Sunrise from Rano Raraku

Getting up long before dawn is not my favorite sport, let alone driving a half hour obstacle course in the dark to the other end of the island. Between the potholes and the habit horses have of standing in the road to graze, the drive was slow and cautious. On top of that, I somehow read the little travel clock wrong – thinking I was being smart by awaking before the alarm – and arrived a full hour early. After an interminable, lonely wait, I made my way partway up the side of Rano Raraku, still in the dark; I lost track of the trail a couple of times.

Sunrise is gorgeous from this spot. The dark object in the left front is a rare kneeling *moai*; he's called *tukuturi* or “squatter”, a traditional stance for song or oral recitation. It's impossible to get a good shot of it in daylight because of a protective wooden railing. Here the old gentleman adds scale and an eerie presence to a view of Poike and Tongariki in the distance. Authors of books about the Island vary greatly in placing his construction, from among the earliest of his kin to one of the latest. He's a mystery; there are even those who claim it's a bearded woman.

In the field just over his left shoulder – he's facing me – two large *moai* lie buried face up. They have been exposed and examined only once, about a hundred years ago when they were accidentally discovered by Katherine Routledge. She then reburied them. I would really like to be there when they are dug up again.



TAPATI RAPANUI...

The first ten days of February, mid-summer on the Island, the Rapanui celebrate their cultural heritage, with the focus on choosing a Tapati Queen. It's sort of an island Olympics, complete with a very competitive, climactic parade with almost the entire population of the island either marching or watching. Each contestant, in every sport, song, dance and art



form imaginable, and some hard to fathom, proclaims which candidate he or she represents. Alignment often reflects an extended family group. Everything from cooking to spear throwing is contested in traditional fashion. There was a time when there could be four or more candidates; today two is the norm. Competitors identify allegiance with red, blue and white ribbons.

Our first Tapati left us a little overwhelmed, futilely trying to keep up with what was happening, when and where. By our second Tapati we had picked up enough Spanish, and even Rapanui words to decipher the schedules. That led to an interminable pursuit of events from one end of the island to the other. The nightly stage performances can last much longer than scheduled, compounding the problem. Eventually, due to exhaustion, something has to be skipped altogether, or at least cut out on early.

Everyone who participates in Tapati earns points for their candidate, down to tourists cajoled into taking part in the parade. The winning queen receives a college scholarship and a new car. The runner-up, based on her final score, is awarded credit towards a car, making every effort count right up to the end. If you have a friend or family of a friend who is running for "queen," it becomes difficult to avoid getting undressed – you set the limit on the degree yourself – being painted and taking your place in the festivities-ending procession. Inspired by the only snapshot showing Nan and myself going native, our grandson Aaron sketched the picture above. Not much I can say in my defense beyond the fact that we earned a few points for a good friend's daughter.

We would encourage anyone attending Tapati to be adventurous and show up at one of

the parade prep sites to get painted. No matter how bold you are, others will be more so. For evening performances and competitions, be ready for sudden downpours; they can empty the park in minutes. And you might want to pass on the popcorn; they use sugar in place of salt. Above all, get hold of a schedule and find someone to help you pen in some explanatory notes. No event is a disappointment, but some are must-sees.

Tapati is also a good time to get tips from islanders who speak English. Food markets and restaurants, especially sidewalk cafes, are a good place to listen for your mother tongue. One quick query and you could find yourself talking to someone willing to share some of their knowledge of Hanga Roa. The traditional tours can be experienced in a couple of days; but the best times you will have will be while you are on your own, especially during Tapati.

Finally, please be considerate, especially when taking pictures at outdoor events and performances. A few local mothers or siblings rushing forward to take pictures of family on stage is not a license for visitors to impede others' ability to enjoy a ceremony, show or competition. For many events, seats are set up for the elderly of the community. It saddens me to see hordes of wanna-be paparazzi charge in front of them, and everyone else, as if getting their shot trumps common courtesy. Tapati is an island festival; visitors are welcome guests.

It never occurred to me that so many of my final images would include people, let alone come out of the Tapati weeks. After all, it is a colorful festival and I work in B&W. Going back over my weblog entries from that time, I find notes to the effect that I planned on taking a break from my endeavors so that we could enjoy the festivities. But a project, like an individual work of art, at some point takes on a life of its own, directing as much as receiving direction. The end product is the result of a sort of negotiation between artist and subject, a tug of war best not won or lost.

Haka Pei

(*Tapati Rapanui 2008*) The annual *haka pei* competition is popular with locals and visitors alike. Hundreds, more than for any other local sport, come out to picnic and watch. Contestants, perched precariously atop sleds constructed by strapping two banana tree trunks together, are pushed off the top of thousand-foot high Maunga Pu'i for a run down the 45 degree angle slope on slick sun-dried grass. Speeds can reach upwards of 50 mph. The contestant who coasts the furthest past the bottom of the hill is declared the winner. Finishers are enthusiastically congratulated by teammates upon reaching the bottom, where there is always an ambulance waiting.

Nuku Te Mango, first image with hair streaming behind him, demonstrates ideal form, not always tenable. We have seen the heavy sled bounce a man off the front and then run over him; the smiling contestant soon arose from the cloud of dust to cheers, raising his arms to assure everyone he was uninjured.

I panned as Nico Yankovich, second image, made his run. One of the stars of the competition, he possesses a calm and control that makes it look easy. On a good run, near the bottom as the sled slows down, he'll gradually rise to his feet, using momentum to launch himself into the air just as the sled comes to a grinding, dust spewing halt. It's quite a sight.





Uka Haka Pei

Haka Pei Girl

(2008) Her name is Tahira Nahoe and she is twelve years old. She has just finished her *haka pei* run in the youth division, starting from about two thirds up the hill. This is not typically a sport for women. I know strong men who laugh when asked if they make the run, and assure me that they don't like broken bones and consider the annual event, though insanely popular, equally insanely dangerous.

Locals and venturesome tourists crowd the sidelines. It can be next to impossible to get a good vantage point; throngs of onlookers in constant motion flow along the ill-defined sidelines. For this exposure I used a 400 mm lens, and something I call my "secret weapon." It's a plastic, nine-inch foldable stool that I carry in the laptop slot of my backpack; just enough lift to get my head and lens above the crowd.

Tahira, having reached the bottom without incident, is walking over to her proud father. The look on her face, combined with the body painting with its prominent *komari* or vulva, seems to make the statement: "I am woman." The color version, face only, graced the cover of the July 2009 issue of *moeVarua* magazine.



Umu Tahu

Ceremonial Food Presentation

(2008) *Umu tahu*, food cooked in earth ovens, is ceremonially offered to the island elders at the opening, and sometimes closing, of important events. This is a formal request for approval, usually performed in full traditional dress and often preceded by a short dance. Here the ceremony is performed on the final night of the two week celebration of Tapati.

To prepare an *umu tahu*, Rapanui dig a pit in the ground and line the bottom with wood, above which stones are laid. Food is wrapped in banana leaves and placed on top of the heated stones. Then the pit is filled with dirt, locking in the heat; a pretty efficient way to cook with a small amount of wood. For larger feasts, we've noted stones laid in among the bananas, sweet potatoes, chunks of squash, chicken and fish – pretty much the limit of traditional fare – to assist in heat flow. There's hardly an area of the island where one can't find stone circles marking pits where food was cooked this way, many in the vicinity of *hare paenga* or boat house foundations

A major food staple, with close to a dozen varieties, is the sweet potato or *kumara*, an ancient import from South America. They vary surprisingly in appearance as well as taste, the most striking with white skins and a deep purple inside – imagine a purple sweet potato pie. Our personal favorite has a red skin and is white on the inside, tasting like a cross between our yam and a white potato.



Ana Iris

A great Rapanui face. Ana Iris and her husband are carvers and have a booth displaying their work at the *Artesanal* in Hanga Roa. I noticed her minding their exhibit in the internal courtyard at the opening reception for Tapati, where works created specifically for the competition were judged. It's a formal event, complete with snacks and wine served by island girls in traditional dress. I asked if I could take her picture, but Ana speaks no English and we hadn't as yet taken any Spanish classes. My mission was accomplished with a combination of gestures and pointing, often an integral part of our island conversation. We would both love to learn Rapanui, even though only about two thousand people in the world speak it. But it is not widely taught and almost everyone on the island speaks Spanish. We are taking classes in Español.

Although there are a few women carvers on the island, traditionally men do the carving while the women take care of the final surfacing of the piece. In the past, wood was "finished" with small, glossy sea shells. Rubbing compresses the wood cells, smoothing roughness and scratches, creating a surface that looks polished. Modern finishes are used by many, but not all carvers.

Islanders can't avoid being photographed by tourists and professional photographers; the camera is always on and books are always being written. Rapanui understand and are hospitable to the extreme. It must be a major frustration how seldom they get to see the results.



Amo Maika, Tau'a Rapanui

Banana Run, Marathon Rapa Nui

(2008) Contestants line up their *vaka* or reed canoes on the far shore of the lake in Rano Raraku crater. The first challenge of the Maraton Rapanui is to row the unwieldy boats across using traditional paddles. After the *vaka* is dragged ashore, a harness holding twenty kilos – forty four pounds – of bananas is slung across the shoulders. Thus begins a run around the lake, barefoot over hilly, rocky terrain.

Tu'u Ma Heke, a twelve time champion of the event, is here approaching the finish of this leg; his Tapati Queen candidate has just poured water over his head to help keep him cool in the hot sun. After completing the run around the lake, he will drop the bananas and continue around to the far side, at the half-way point picking up a heavy *pora*. I would estimate the seven foot or so, bundled reed flotation device to be about the same weight as the bananas. There contestants throw the *pora* into the water, completing the event with a swim across the lake. They have to carry, or drag the heavy, water-soaked *pora* onto shore for the finish.

There is no shortage of contestants for this event; although there are a few slow finishers. The youth division a few days later cuts the contestants a break; they only have to carry ten kilos of bananas.



Nu'u 'Ori

Rapanui Couple

(2007) He was in charge of smoking moray eels over an open fire; she was watching over a cauldron of banana or *platano* soup – something we have yet to try. The cooking and food presentation portion of the Tapati Rapa Nui competition lasts all day, making the spectator area something of a social event, ebbing and flowing like the tide. There were about thirty people in the roped off area working for their candidates; most, like this couple, dressed in traditional garb. They were endearing, he watching after her, she coming to his rescue when he had a “wardrobe malfunction.” They were posing here for someone they knew. I reacted instantly, raising the camera and clicking off a couple of shots. I liked the angle so much I didn’t ask them to look my way. Fortunately the wind had just shifted again, carrying the eye-burning smoke from the cooking pits to the background, and away from my direction.

I met the husband, Eddie Tuki, a few days later when I was at the hardware store looking for a battery connector for our junk-heap of a car, which, not unexpectedly, they didn’t have. He ran home to get one and gave it to me. Next trip to the island, after our exhibit at the Museo, I gave them the framed print. The day we left, they drove up to the airport with their whole brood in the pickup to introduce us to the baby and see us off.



Vaka 'Ama

Totoro Canoe Race

(2007) *Totoro* reeds grow in the shallow edges of the lakes in Rano Kau and Rano Raraku craters. They have many uses, including bundling for *pōra* and construction of heavy but buoyant canoes, or *vaka ama*. Sometimes outriggers are extended on one side for balance, but these seem to have problems negotiating turns in rowing competitions.

This race took the contestants out to sea and completely out of sight of the starting point at Hanga Roa O Tai. The small boat in the distance is one of the watcher boats, posted at intervals to mark turning points and be ready in case someone gets into trouble. We have seen more than one capsized rower pulled out of the water.

I climbed down the rocky bank to the edge of the water and waited for the leaders to round the final point. In the meantime the bright sun was being replaced by storm clouds. Just as the two leaders were coming into view around the point, the wind picked up and it began to pour. The one person who had braved the vulnerable perch with me hastily tucked his camera away and ran for cover. Recognizing a unique opportunity, I threw a loose-fitting sleeve from an old clear rain parka over my lens and camera – I keep it in my backpack for just such occasions – and continued shooting, the whole time dodging the worsening waves. I got the shot.

The scene could be from hundreds of years ago.



Lucy He Ma'u Ī To'ona Pora

Lucy Carrying her Pora

(2008) Lucy Haoa Tuki, winner of *Tapati Rapanui 2008*, here carries her own *pora* to the boat that will take her and the other queen candidates out to sea. They were to swim back a sizable distance; we could barely see the boat as it dropped them off.

Vivi wisely opted out because of rough seas. The third candidate, Merahī, unlike Lucy and Vivi, was a strong swimmer and would have no problem. We watched as the safety boat inched itself in alongside Lucy, offering repeatedly to pull her out of the water. She was beyond exhausted, but stubbornly refused all entreaties, slowly and desperately making her way to shore. Twice she lost her grip and slid from her *pora* and had to gather enough strength to climb back on. We didn't think she was going to make it. But this is obviously a very gutsy young lady. She finally got close enough to the beach to put her feet down and gamely carried her *pora* to shore, completely worn out and waterlogged. It was an impressive effort.

Queen candidates compete against one another in a number of separate events. Everyone had a lot of fun watching the spear throwing, obviously not a good sport for any of the three girls. Eventually, in order to keep from waiting all day and night for someone to hit the target, they moved the throw line forward, then again, and yet again. Good natured cheers went up when a spear finally nicked the edge of the banana tree stalk.



A'Ati Hōi

Youth Horse Race

(2008) There's a fair amount of local attendance at this event, but like many of the sports competitions, few visitors or tourists. The races are held on a dirt road along the south coast. Contestants are cheered on by family and friends standing along the road or perched atop fence posts. If it weren't for the tremendous amount of fine, penetrating dust that the horses stir up, this would be a lot more pleasant. My long lens was useful for keeping me and equipment as clear as possible from the dust, not to mention horses' hooves.

Like horse racing anywhere, long periods of waiting were interrupted by short spurts of intense competition. A few girls were competing along with the boys; all rode bareback. It fascinated me how, without a saddle, these youngsters seemed to be glued to the horses' backs. What I found most interesting were the looks on the riders' faces as they approached the finish line, a white chalk stripe drawn across the dirt road.

I felt a lot of sympathy for the poor rider bringing up the rear in his heat. His punishment was to, literally, eat the other riders' dust.



'Ori, Sau Sau

Sau Sau Competition

(2008) When we were told that Viviana, the daughter of a friend of ours, would be one of three queen candidates in the upcoming Tapati Rapanui celebration we knew we would have to arrange to be on the island.

Here Vivi performs her *sau sau* solo. This typically Polynesian dance was actually an import to Easter Island. It's on the list of events in which queen candidates are required to compete. It was Vivi's night; a number of performances by her people were scheduled. Some were large dance groups that we had watched rehearse for weeks. Unfortunately the weather didn't cooperate. Only a short way into the evening, what was hidden by the night sky was revealed. First a few of those large, determined drops that always seem to presage much worse, then deluge. Within about five minutes almost the entire audience had vacated the park.

Vivi never blinked. The band played on and she kept dancing. Recognizing an opportunity, I strolled right up to the edge of the stage, keeping my camera dry with my handy rain-jacket sleeve, choose my angle and got some great shots, Vivi's skin glistening wet from the rain. I got soaked; Nan, ever prepared, remained in her seat with an umbrella held gracefully over her head.

Cancelled performances were of course scheduled for a later date.



'Ori 'O Te 'Ariki

Dancing at the Coronation of the Queen

(2008) The final evening of Tapati Rapanui is devoted to the crowning of a queen, announcements of winners in various events and celebratory dance. Here the combined winning dance team, all the age groups joined, pay tribute to their candidate, Lucy Haoa Tuki.

Rapanui do not hesitate to introduce outside elements into their choreography, especially tango. Brought to the island early in the 20th century when an Argentinean navy crew was stranded on the island for an extended period of time, tango has become part of island tradition. At one point the couple in the center caught the spotlight, rendering everything else on stage to a background tapestry in motion, accenting the level of community participation. I like this moment in the dip, showing the strain on his muscles as he makes sure she is adequately supported.

A more formal version of Tango is included in the Tapati competition, with queen candidates in dresses and gentlemen in white trousers and jacket. Other early mainland influences on Rapanui tradition that have made their way into the competition are the accordion, or *oopa oopa*, and the sewing machine.

The outdoor stage, with painted background structure, is perfect for such performances. I would advise binoculars though if you choose to post yourself high and to the outside of the seated area. The up and close view is just too good to miss.



Haito Ika, Hanga Piko

Weighing of the Fish, Hanga Piko

(2008) I had to get up early for this one, alone. An important but little attended competition is the fish catch. Three two-man boats are sent out at sunset representing each queen candidate. They stay out all night, lining up at sunup for the weighing of the night's haul of fish. Everything caught is totaled, large and small.

Dawn was breaking as the boats entered Hanga Piko. I particularly liked the play of first light on the fishermen standing, sitting, looking and waiting. As each boat came in I leaned as far over the edge of the pier as I could and grabbed a shot. By the time the last contestants appeared, I knew just where I wanted to position myself and where the approaching boat would be when I pressed the shutter. The rest of the morning was a mass of confusion, everyone crowding in to see the bags of fish and the occasional catch too large for the sacks placed on the scale. Queen candidates were dutifully present, though looking a little worn after being up performing to all hours the night before.

Later the same day a huge *umu* is held in the field behind the *ahu* at Hanga Piko. Hundreds of fish are cooked over huge racks above an open fire. Anyone and everyone is invited to bring whatever food they want and picnic. You will see people with plates and silverware; others just grab a banana leaf and get in line. We consider it a must-attend Tapati event.



Tangata Tarai

Stone Carver

(2008) Contestants spread out on the grass at Hanga Vare Vare, each with a large chunk of stone. There might be three or more carvers for each queen candidate in each of a number of categories. The challenge is to create, within the allotted time, a carving that best represents one of a series of traditional themes. In this case it was the Birdman or *tangata manu* from Orongo on Rano Kau. The selected stone is actually pretty soft. Rough work can be done with a hatchet; wood chisels are used for the finer touches. We were warned when purchasing carvings from this white stone that, at home in low humidity, it can slowly turn to powder, reverting to volcanic ash. We coat our pieces with an easily absorbed acrylic spray. It works great and doesn't show a bit.

Based on the judging panel's final ranking, points are awarded to the artists, and by transposition to the appropriate queen candidate. The name we were given for this carver is Ispi, a nickname. Most Rapanui we know have one that traces back to childhood.

We knew a few of the carvers and had a good time watching the images gradually emerge from the blocks of stone. The temperature couldn't have been over 80 degrees this day, but the sun was brutal, the stone chips were flying and there was plenty of time for a lunch break.



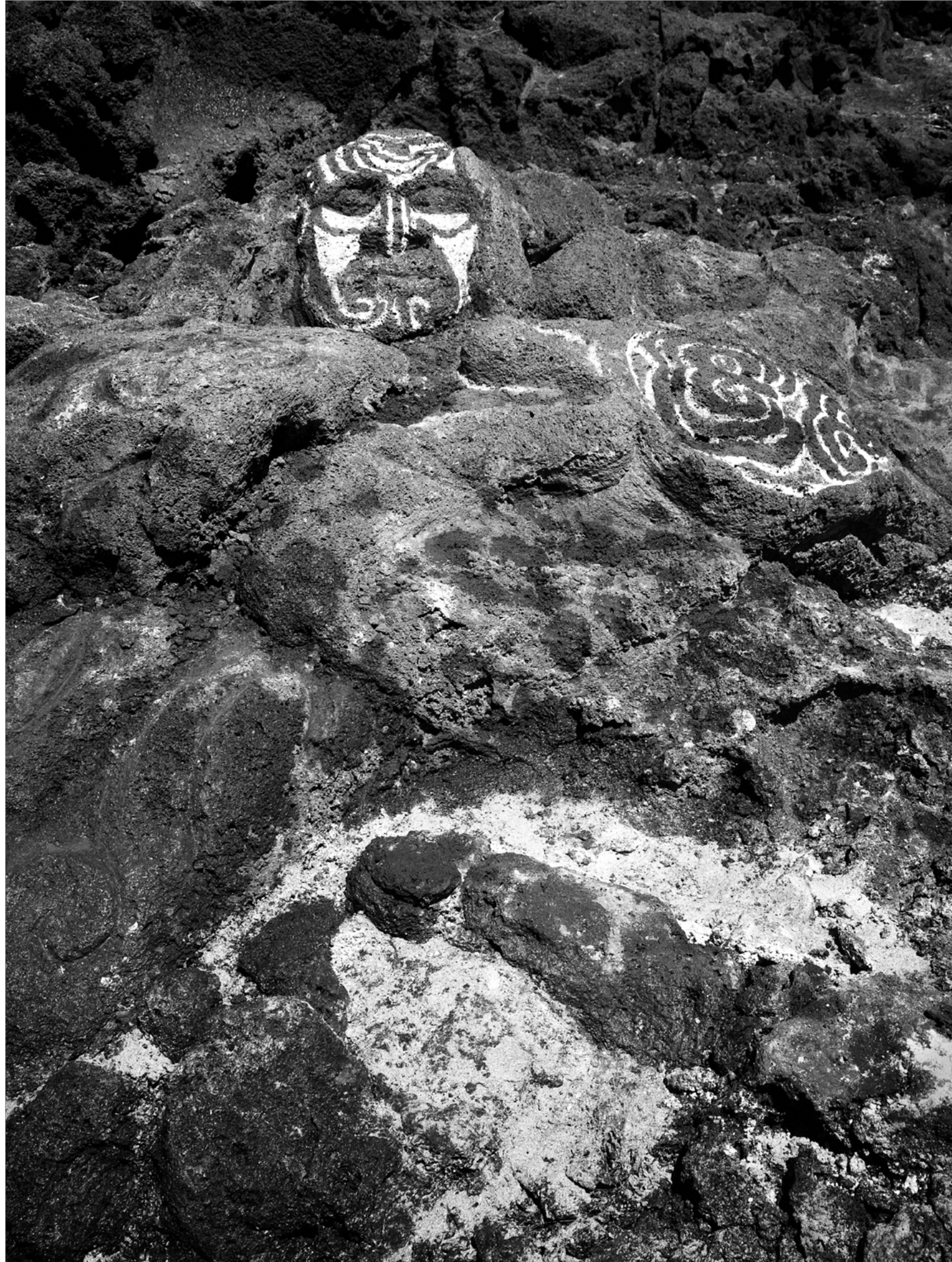
Matato'a, Tarai Ma'ea

Warrior in Stone

(2008) It was about half way through the two weeks of Tapati and the hard-stone carvers were at their designated site near town. They would be judged on what they could chisel into the sharp volcanic rock that defines the coast. It takes days, working long hours in the hot sun. The gentleman putting the finishing touches on this entry noticed us observing his progress. He politely approached Nan and asked her if she knew what a "*hua kiki*" is. Naturally she didn't, yet. He took her gently by the hand, led her to the foot of his life-size creation and, pointing, said: "That's a *hua kiki*!" It wasn't yet painted, so it took a few seconds before she realized what she was seeing. Then a short "oh" escaped her lips and her smile widened into a knowing grin.

I returned for my shot when the shore carvings, ready for judging, had been colored with earth pigment and enhanced with judiciously placed sand. The face and "important part" on this warrior were a rust red, the *takona* yellow. My B&W image, more subtle than the full color version, tends to elicit curious stares that only occasionally erupt into smiles of recognition.

Though the *hua kiki*, or less idiomatically the *ure*, can be found among petroglyphs and cave paintings, It's the *komari*, or vulva, that abounds, with well over five hundred on record. *Moai* themselves, in some traditional stories, are referred to as being phallic in shape – another perspective altogether on the stone giants.



A'amu Tuai

Historical Narration

(2008) His name is Moi Moi Tuki and his role was narrator in the historical skit performed by Vivi's group. He was speaking Rapanui but that hardly discouraged our interest; we could glean most of what was going on from the "acting." These performances are sort of like our Christmas pageants at home; the difference being the wide range of historical, mythological and traditional stories the Rapanui have from which to draw. You can find books with translations of many of these tales. This was a large, outdoor stage production, complete with *hare paenga*, fish catch and live chickens. The story is about a suitor proving his worth to the family and winning his bride. There was little idealization of living conditions; the set was honestly primitive, the extras reflecting the hard life their characters had to endure.

Tapati is performed completely in Rapanui; singing, recitations and interviews. In 2007 there was an announcer who came on in the beginning, at the end and occasionally in between who informed everyone in Spanish about the who and what of it all. Tapati 2008 was a little better, at least for us. Announcements and introductions were translated into both Rapanui and English by a young Englishman who was on island improving his grasp of the local language. He was taking lessons from Katalina Hey, who also helped me immensely with my Rapanui titles.



Nari-nari Tapati Rapanui

Drumbeat, Tapati Parade

(2007) You could hear this ensemble coming a couple of blocks away. They were definitely putting it all out there for their candidate.

We followed this part of the parade for a stretch, keeping pace on a slightly raised sidewalk, stalking for a combination of the right moment, good angle and a clear shot. In the end it was “almost” perfect. I knew I had it immediately, not noticing until later the back of a man’s head, as he stood in the street taking a picture, blocking part of the drum. Fortunately I had another image from a few moments earlier, not good at all otherwise, that featured a clear view of the drum. I simply ported over that small section from the other image. In the “old dark-room days” I would have to accomplish this trick with a complicated succession of exposures in the enlarger, followed by hours with bleach and spotting ink.

At one time Rapa Nui musical accompaniment was pretty much limited to *mae’a poro*, two stones for tapping together for rhythm, and voice chants. As trees were restored to the island and horses introduced, hollowed out logs and the *kaua’e* or horse jaw were added. Today the very musical Rapanui do not hesitate to adopt more modern instruments. But that doesn’t mean they abandon the old. The woman on the far right is playing the *mae’a poro*, and I’m sure there was someone playing the horse jaw somewhere close by – the jaw is clapped together and the teeth rattle, creating a unique percussion effect.



Pere'oa Nari-nari

Tapati Queen Candidate

(2007) The Tapati Rapanui parade, culmination of two weeks of competition and celebration, winds from the edge of town near the airport all the way to Hanga Vare Vare, just past Hanga Roa O Tai on the coast. It might be early afternoon when it begins, but it's dark by the time the last float pulls up on the road above the outdoor stage. Team Halina, running well behind up to this point, made up so much ground with their production that they came within a fraction of an upset.

A number of their floats were large wooden *moai* on sleds, each pulled by a dozen or more people. The candidate herself was carried the whole distance on a royal litter. This exposure was made at the halfway point, and nobody looks a bit tired. All of this required more volunteers than they had Rapanui. Tourists were recruited and painted up to take part. Candidates get points for every person, whatever their origin, that participates on their behalf.

One of the more fascinating innovations by this team was the participation of women in some events for the first time. A group of women, many painted black, hauled one of the heavy *moai* floats using two long ropes. And four women, also painted black, entered the long distance relay, complete with 20 kilos of bananas as "baton."

Note the woman playing the *mae'a poro* in the bottom left corner of the image.



CHANGES...

Since 2006 we have seen a lot change on the Island. Except for the advent of broadband, we have mixed feelings about the loss of simplicity and the endearing inconveniences we first experienced. Some notable changes:

- In 2006 there were only two planes a week bringing tourists and ferrying locals to and from the mainland. Today there is one a day, sometimes more. But we encounter the same number of, if not fewer European, North American and Japanese tourists. Newer and half hidden hotels charge upwards of \$600 a night and siphon guests off to tours and planned excursions in dressy vans. Much of the rest of the new traffic is mainlanders. Artisans are selling a lot more of their inexpensive items but less of the fantastic carvings the Rapanui are noted for. Haggling over prices, almost unheard of when we first came, is now common, even for cheap stuff.

- There was only one bank, with no AC. Doors stayed propped open, dogs slept on the floor and we accessed cash by presenting a credit card and having the transaction called in to the mainland. Even with all that the courtesy exercised by everyone always made it a pleasant experience. Today there are two banks, air-conditioning and ATMs.

- A better selection of food is coming to the island, and stores are much cleaner. Cream cheese was at first a rare find, and I found myself having to grind cinnamon and black pepper by hand. Now you can find almost anything you want if you are willing to pay for it. My favorite example is a bottle of real Vermont maple syrup, regular 16oz bottle, sitting in a shop downtown. Sure, expensive in the States, but not 32 dollars. Our first year we ate a lot of bread, sweet potatoes, fish, cheese and bananas. Now we dine much more like at home. The negative side is that people are eating more; obesity is becoming an issue, so is diabetes.

- In 2009 we were surprised and happy to see a pharmacy open up. Before then it was next to impossible to find things like aspirin or toothpaste. The government is building a new hospital, overdue by at least half a century.

– Power still goes off occasionally, but not nearly as often, and doesn't stay down quite as long. An issue that requires power to the entire island to be shut down in order to work on one connection is being addressed.

– Almost everything is twice as expensive as in 2006.

– We could always dine at a fine restaurant. You just didn't ask for a cup of coffee after your meal unless you consider a cup of hot water, a bowl of sugar and a jar of instant Nescafe to be dinner coffee. I drank a lot more tea. Today you can get a nice cappuccino in Hanga Roa. Menus are more varied, especially in the area of desserts.

– In 2006 only one island historical site charged a fee, good for a month. Today it costs 60 dollars for a single entry to Rano Raraku and Orongo. The rest, and there are a lot, are all still free. Most sites are now "closed" at night.

– Crime has come to the island, due to the increasing number of mainlanders coming to stay. Houses and cars are now locked, something we never worried about before. Twice in the last few months, when we forgot or neglected to lock the car, we came back to find it closed up tight by some anonymous local watching over us.

The obstacles the Rapanui face are daunting, made more immediate by the island's size and location. Fresh water, an issue in most places, is critical on the island. It has to be drawn from four deep wells where fresh water accumulates on top of seawater. And that's threatened by increased seepage of untreated sewage through the ground. Trash removal, too many cars and providing enough electricity are major issues. As fast as the world is changing, it's happening at an even faster pace on the island. Money to solve problems is in short supply. Many Rapanui see a partial solution in their quest for Rapanui control over permanent residency for non-Rapanui, an important but difficult hurdle in their long struggle to reclaim their island and identity.

Ahu Tongariki, Mai Haho 'O Te Vaikava

Tongariki from the Sea

I planned this shot for months, putting it off until the last possible moment. I finally asked Maruka if she could get her cousin, Matariki Pakariti to take me out in his boat. He and his wife live in a little cottage right at Tongariki, just to the left of the image, in the shadow of a true wonder of the ancient world. The ride, sans life jacket, was as expected really rough. I locked my legs around the seat board, kissed my camera goodbye in case I got thrown overboard, and began shooting. It took over a hundred and fifty tries to get what I wanted, and even then not one exposure was level. It was a scary and exhilarating experience. Later my escort told me, through Maruka who had remained behind with Nan, that most *gringos* position themselves in the bottom of his boat and peer out over the side.

We stayed out about an hour, going all the way to Motu Maratiri. Back on dry land, Matariki invited us to lunch. To my chagrin that entailed our going back out again, parking the boat between the *motu* and Poike and catching the fish. No waves at all there, but it was like an elevator, slowly rising and falling. Rough seas don't usually make me sick, but better than an hour of that and I was beginning to feel a little nauseous. In the left edge of the image you can see a beached fishing boat the size of the one I was shooting from.

A good meal of fresh fish and homemade bread cooked on a wood stove made me feel much better.



Motu Maratiri

Maratiri with Tongariki in the Distance

This image must be seen full size for full appreciation; that's the fifteen *moai* of Tongariki on the right side of the gap between the *motu* and Poike, just visible in the distance. The high waves cut me a break here but the swells made it like riding on an elevator, constantly changing directions. The trick was to time the shot on a swell, so the *ahu* in the distance would be visible.

There's a cave, Ana Ta Ava Nui, on the side of the *motu* facing the sea where, according to tradition, seven Hotu Iti warriors hid after being defeated in war, eventually escaping to surprise and exact revenge on the victorious Miru. In this case the seven men's names were recorded. It happens that Maruka is Hotu Iti – I sure hope she's okay with my mentioning the episode.

There on the right, between the *motu* and Poike, is where we anchored and fished. Matariki brought along a bucket of rocks. We would bait our hooks with a small piece of raw chicken, hold that against a rock and wind the line a few times around, including a piece of crumbly bread. Tossed overboard the line unwinds on the way down, releasing the bread and attracting fish. When it hit bottom, we would immediately begin rewinding. With almost every toss, a fish immediately bit and was hauled on board. When the bucket of rocks was empty, replaced by an almost equal number of fish, we headed home.

Nan and I are very appreciative to a gracious couple for their hospitality, and a day we will not soon forget.



Moai Haere Ki Haho

Traveling Moai, Tongariki

The nicknamed Traveling Moai dwarfs the small boat house foundation, or *hare paenga*, at his feet. He looks to be walking across the field, lost in thought. His real name is not known; he's called the "traveler" because he has journeyed around the world and has been featured at several international expos. Worn and beat up, you can still see that he had eyes at one time, and a chin beard.

I caught up with him in morning light as he pondered his fate, casting his long shadow across the now deserted land. Rano Raraku, where he was born, is in the background.

The Rapanui no longer allow the old monuments to be taken off the island, only to be returned broken in some way and in need of repair. They understandably don't see the promise of compensation for the inevitable damage as acceptable. This change occurred while we were on the island. We watched as petitions were signed, speeches made and street protests held almost daily downtown. The women of the island seemed to play a dominant role in all of this. A consensus gradually built until the government, already pressed by the Rapanui on a number of issues, acceded to the demand. I'm sure this disappointed many around the globe with hopes of gaining an exhibition.

Moai Haere Ki Haho can now relax. He doesn't have to travel any more.



Popohanga I Tongariki

Tongariki Dawn

A tsunami hit at this point on the island in 1960, washing the huge, long fallen megaliths at Tongariki as far as a hundred yards inland. Between 1992 and 1997 the *ahu* was restored, complete with fifteen of the *moai*; the effort was financed by the Japanese. In one sense they cheated, using huge modern cranes to raise the *moai*. Behind the *ahu* is a collection of older, more worn *moai* heads and trunks, mostly from earlier constructions than the *ahu* that was restored. The impressive structure stretches for two hundred yards, the fifteen resurrected ancients occupy the hundred yard central riser. They average over 20 feet tall, weighing upwards of 40 tons each. This doesn't include the massive *pukao*, only one of which has reclaimed its rightful place atop its *moai*.

Look close and you can see one very large, fallen, undelivered *moai* about fifty yards directly in front of the *ahu*. Not visible is the assortment of *pukao* arranged off to the right, dwarfing anyone who stands next to one.

My pre-dawn excursion would not be allowed today; access is blocked from dusk to after sunrise. Dawn is almost always a cloudy affair on the eastern end of the island. I couldn't help but imagine myself transported a few hundred years in the past, and that the world of yore was set to come alive right before my eyes. The sense of being alone was almost overwhelming.



'Uira A Ta'e Reku

Lightning Strike for Scoundrels

This proud trio stands on the right end of the *ahu* at Tongariki. Untypically, the names of the last two have not been lost to history. Some suggest that they may have been named later, like some others, but those names are generally a lot less personal. And considering their better condition and position on the *ahu*, it seems likely they represent area chiefs from near the end of the era that produced them. The statue on the right is *Ko Rahi*. *Ko* indicates that a proper name follows, *Rahi* means *many* or *much*. Though a meaningful translation is probably impossible, *Bringer of Bounty* might be a fair attempt. The big fellow with the *pukao* is 'Uira A Ta'e Reku. I can take a more confident stab at that one: *Lightning against Scoundrels*. Yeah, he looks like that might fit.

Size and scale are next to impossible to judge on the Island until you get right on top of something. These three stand about twenty-five feet tall, the heaviest weighing over sixty tons. The *pukao* can add another six to eight feet, not to mention the extra tonnage. One can't help but stand in front of these behemoths in awe-struck wonder. Shaped with stone tools and transported over miles of rough terrain, by means upon which no one can seem to agree, these stone giants were raised to face inland watching over a people completely isolated from the rest of the world.

Old "Lightening" once again stands proud and contemptuous of wrong doers.



Ahu Tongariki

Ahu Tongariki and its fifteen *moai* undoubtedly was, and remains, one of the grandest sites on the island. *Pukao* in place, *moai* smoothed out with coral and painted, eyes of coral and red scoria; imagine the pride of those living and working under their gaze and reassured by their combined *mana*.

Complicating reconstruction in the 90s was the fact that over the centuries the Rapanui would use parts from old *ahu* and *moai* to build new, or raised new on top of or adjacent to the old. What the evidence would seem to suggest as the reason for this, time and social change, has always bothered me. There's just something about the Rapanui disassembling old *ahu* in order to begin new that seems out of character with their cultural respect for their ancestors and history.

There is another possibility, but it's supported only by the kind of evidence that scientists try hard, on occasion to their chagrin, not to give much credence. Oral histories of the Waitaha tribe in New Zealand, who claim origin on Rapa Nui, speak of returning to the island to find death and havoc, *ahu* destroyed, *moai* broken and scattered everywhere by a massive tidal wave. That surely would bring about a lot of rebuilding and extensive use of old parts.

Just a thought, an observation from someone who otherwise avoids forming opinions concerning the persistent mysteries surrounding the island and its history.



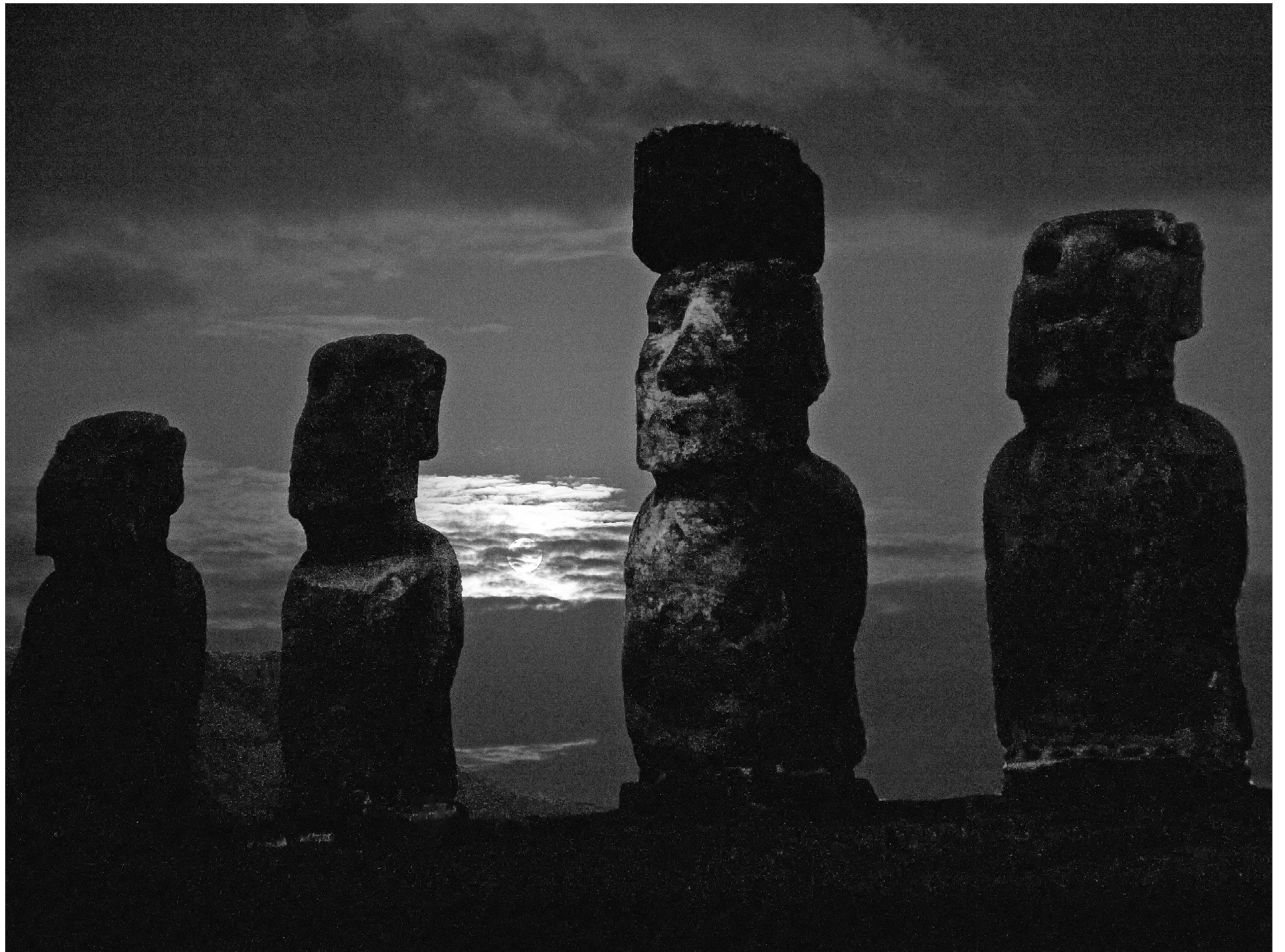
He 'Ea Inga 'O Te Mahina, Ahu Tongariki

Moonrise over Tongariki

Tongariki offers almost limitless opportunities for photographic statement. Here I went to the extreme of waiting for night and the full moon to rise. This can often be a fruitless quest; as the sun goes down, cloud cover likes to move out to sea and circle the island like a wreath, especially heavy to the east.

But all my efforts, including having to work my way over potholes, around horses and past the occasional vehicle without lights in the dark back to the other end of the island, were not in vain. At the last minute the moon condescended to peek through a hole in the clouds behind the *moai*.

Tongariki and other major historic sites have only recently had to be closed off to visitors at dusk. The vast majority of people treat the monuments with the utmost respect; they are sacred ground. But some tourists will climb on and about the *ahu*, willing to risk desecrating any ancient, crumbling structure in order to have their picture taken, just to prove they were there. And then there's the rare sociopath who wants to break off a souvenir or leave a personal mark behind in the form of some kind of destruction. We were on the island when a tourist, thankfully not from the U.S., decided to break off a chunk of a *moai* ear for a memento. He was caught.



Papa Tataku Poki

Tataku Poki Petroglyphs

There are a number of sites that feature large groupings of petroglyphs or stone carvings on huge areas of flat table rock, called *papa*. Although the carvings are worn from time and the elements, they can still be quite striking in angled light. The site at Tongariki is one of the largest groupings, located about a hundred yards in front of the *ahu*. Unworn and decorated with earth pigment, they must have been impressive.

Visible here are at least three “birdmen,” or *tangata manu*, in the background, with a bearded *make make* up front. The Rapanui beard, seen on a small number of moai and numerous petroglyphs, is typically just a chin thing, reflecting the type of beard still worn by a few islanders.

In the short time we have been visiting the island, sites like this have gone from being barely posted, just dots on a map, to walled in with walkways around the glyphs. All very necessary, even if it creates more problems to be overcome when photographing them. Best lighting is early morning or when the sun is close to setting over Raraku.

Among the numerous other carvings here is a particularly large *atun*. There are also bands of sometimes multi-rowed dots, the purpose of which is unknown. One such single line cuts through the center of this image.



Moai, 'Ite Pō Hetu'u

Moai on a Starry Night

A silhouette of the Travelling Moai, Haere Ki Haho, at night, with Rano Raraku in the background. The glow just above the horizon is from the lights of Hanga Roa on the far side of the island. I planned this shot for a while, waiting for a clear sky with no moon. I didn't want to lose the full effect of the night sky in the South Pacific. Some of the world's most powerful land telescopes are in the southern hemisphere where they can stare more directly into the Milky Way. Here I'm looking northwest.

Simply walking afield on Easter Island mandates great care in placement of one's feet. Even in bright daylight, one must be conscious of every footfall because loose stone lies everywhere, often hidden in the tall grass. Night presents additional problems. During long exposures I normally pace a little, or at least find a rock to sit on. On the island it is safer to test my patience by standing still. And, as I like to say with little exaggeration, there isn't a comfortable rock on the island anyway.

To stare out into the darkness, alone on the uninhabited side of a small island in the middle of a great ocean, at the edge of a very visible galaxy, is, to say the least, humbling.



'O Ahu One One

View from Ahu One One

While checking out old references to remote sites we came across the record of a nineteenth century Smithsonian expedition. It mentions an odd, arc shaped *ahu* built on the edge of a cliff on the southeastern tip of Poike. Even though there was supposedly little to see, the *moai* having long since fallen into the sea far below, we made the trek. Nan was hardly excited about another hike across Poike but gamely came along.

I didn't try to climb down to the *ahu*. The only possible advantage I saw to that was a better view of Tongariki in the distance. The name One One itself sounds like it might have been given later; it means covered in mud; you can see how much soil has built up, all the way to the top of the wall. The panorama is magnificent; standing here you have a clear view of the entire south coast all the way from Motu Maratiri in the foreground to Rano Kau at the far end of the island.

Imagine dozens of major *ahu*, stretching out along the coast, bearing countless monoliths representing past leaders. Add in a few small fishing boats, settlements, glimpses of *moai* road in places and a lot of farmed land. A magnificent sight; especially with a couple of the stone giants in their prime at the fore, eyes tilting skyward.



Ma'ea 'O Te Hetu'u, Poike

Map of the Stars, Poike

Katherine Routledge, in her book from 1919, referred to this rock as the *Map of the Stars*. But her directions are sketchy at best, and the only distance measurement she gives has to be doubled. Nobody else we could find knew anything about it, so we were on our own in stalking the site.

On two previous trips across Poike we had made unproductive side excursions in our search. Finally we allowed ourselves an entire day. After more than eight hours of hiking and doggedly searching, we turned back and took a shortcut across this seemingly barren field, simply wanting to get home. We wound up stumbling upon it.

A number of indentations or cupules are carved into the top of a four and a half foot tall rock. Their alignment duplicates the arrangement of the Pleiades star group, or *Matariki*. The Pleiades along with *Tautoru*, or Orion's Belt, were important star clusters in Polynesia, their position and appearance on the horizon marking seasons and the new year.

There are no orienting markers, other than what can be seen here. The second "hill" from the left is actually a stand of eucalyptus trees, far enough to fore of the three *maunga* and Poike on the left that shifting one's position alters the alignment considerably. And the *Map* doesn't look like much until you are right on top of it. A little more than a hundred yards beyond is a cluster of boulders called the *Rocks for Viewing Stars*. In between are remnants of a couple of *haere paenga*. Stand twenty feet away from any of it and you would swear there was nothing worth seeing for miles.



Pu'oko Moai 'O Ahu Toremu Hiva, Poike

Moai Head, Ahu Toremu Hiva

This guy is halfway across Poike, on the other side of Maunga Tea Tea and Parehe. Maunga Vai A Heva is off to the left. Looking at him it's hard to tell whether he is buried or half a head sitting on the ground, or something in between. Somehow his plight conveys that of the *moai* in general. There's the meager remains of a rather large *ahu* off to the right, much of it fallen into the sea. Most of Poike looks down over steep cliffs to the surf below. Guided tours to Poike, not on the usual route for tourists, can easily be arranged; wear sturdy shoes and take lots of water.

The terrain you see here is typical of Poike; the entire peninsula is fenced off for cattle, horses and an unmanaged herd of goats that somehow got started – I've photographed over a dozen perched on the cliffside of Maunga Parehe.

Neither the horses nor cows bother you at all. But occasionally a bull can be a problem. I've been known to cut a quarter mile circle around a large brahma with that intimidating hump. We've actually had a large, young bull paw the ground and start to charge at us. Remembering something I had read about looking tall, I turned my tripod upside down and extended it over my head, legs flaring out. He stopped in mid-run, snorted and ran away. From that point on, whenever on Poike, I carry the tripod at the ready. Evidently, he who has the biggest horns wins.



Vai A Heva, Poike

Maunga Vai A Heva is innermost of three smaller *maunga* on the north side of the Poike peninsula. Carved into the side of the cliff is a huge open-mouthed head, the mouth a natural water catch. But the water just lays in there, never drying out; I doubt very much if it was ever drinkable. In fact, Vai A Heva can be translated to mean bad water. The three *maunga* were important as a source for trachyte, lighter colored and sturdier than Rano Raraku tuff and used to carve a number of the somewhat smaller *moai* that stood on some Poike *ahu*. While most were later broken, one whole specimen, in amazing condition, reposes in the tall grass on the far side of the peak. It is a little of a challenge to locate.

Vai A Heva was the reason for our first of many trips to Poike. Getting a good angle on this fellow isn't easy because the ground slopes down steeply away from him. The afternoon lighting, with the sun just past overhead complimented his features.

How far did the tradition of painting with natural pigments go? Did they extend the practice to sites like this? Not looking at any evidence, but rather putting the question out in terms of human nature, I would have to guess that at times the island of Te Pito O Te Henua, a much older name for Easter Island, was a very colorful place indeed.



Poike Mai Hanga Ho'onu

Poike from Hanga Ho'onu

Poike peninsula is a barren, deserted peninsula that forms the eastern end of Easter Island. It's fenced off as range for beef cattle and horses. To begin your hike you crawl under a barbed-wire fence on a cliff overlooking the north coast. Aim straight for the gap between Parehe and Tea Tea; it's a steady, rocky, hot climb. From there, if you're still game, you can make your way to a number of sites of interest. Simply cut a wide path around any bulls. Nothing is easy on Poike.

Poike's main peak is Maunga Pua Ka Tiki, once home to Ka Tiki, the evil god who stole the sun during an eclipse. Today the large depression at the top seems to contain only a grove of eucalyptus trees. The spot, like everywhere else on Poike, gives off an overwhelming sense of isolation and loneliness. Add in knowing that it's a loooooong way back, priceless.

On horseback you have to use the ranch entrance half way between the north and south coasts. Those who don't ride regularly should try to limit themselves to two hours in the saddle; that is if they're fortunate enough to get a horse with a saddle. Nan has her own unique way of mounting a horse. She's petite so she just stands there looking up wistfully at the beast until a strapping Rapanui just picks her up and sets her on the horse's back. She gets down the same way. I just shake my head.



Pua Ativeka

Pua Ativeka Petroglyph

Our friend Maruka calls the larger glyph on the left “chicken lady,” a holdover from when she was a youngster. But she had forgotten how to locate it in the middle of the large overgrown plain near her cousin’s place between Anakena and Poike. She asked him to take us all on an excursion; later we would return the favor by leading Ruperto to the *Map of the Stars* on Poike.

There are a number of these *papa* on the Island. We’ve been told that they formed over hot lava tubes that give the slag an opportunity to smooth out before solidifying. They contain some of the most impressive, and enigmatic, petroglyph groupings on the island. To get the considerably worn glyphs to show up I had to return in the late afternoon with a large stepladder, hauling it a quarter mile across the rocky field. The ladder allowed me to look down on the carvings, while the angled lighting accentuated the shallow grooves.

There’s a face in the narrow center of what looks like a large octopus. Some of the smaller carvings are even more mysterious. The scattered large indentations appear to mimic the much closer assembly of dots on the *Map of the Stars* representing the Pleiades.

The name of the site refers to a guardian spirit of the Tupa Hotu Riki Riki tribe that inhabited the area. One proud Rapanui, who traces his lineage back 1600 years to the tribal founder, has established residence nearby.



He Kuta-Kuta 'O Te Rano

Volcanic Bubbles

Hardened volcanic bubbles can serve an interesting function. As the tide goes out, water left behind evaporates leaving behind salt crystals; waves regularly renewing the supply of brine in the bowls. The white in the centers is sea salt formed from just one tide cycle. We've known people to collect such deposits.

We didn't realize that this particular lava formation is uncommon to the Island. Our need to pinpoint a location for those who asked about the site generated a frustrating exercise in memory versus evidence. We both clearly remembered the site as being on the coast north of Hanga Roa; our recollections were specific and matched. But when I checked out date, time and companion shot data, thinking that it might help us give better directions, we were both in for a shock. Everything pointed to the opposite end of the Island!

Logic dictated, against every intuition on our part, that we first check out the area suggested by our photographic record. For over an hour we clambered over coastal rock, searching and trying to gauge how far we could have walked, and from which direction, in the eight minutes to the next shot. On the verge of giving up, I climbed a small cliff for a panoramic view of what we both thought to be beyond what was possible. There it was, just visible between waves, about fifty yards west of Te Pito Kura. So much for eyewitness memory.



Te Pito 'O Te Henua

The Navel of the World

According to tradition the large center stone shown here was brought to the island by the original settlers and held a place of great importance. During the upheavals it was supposedly rolled to its present position from its location on the adjacent Ahu Te Pito Kura, a reference to the prized possession and the word for navel or center. The expression Te Pito O Te Henua, the *Navel of the World*, sometimes used in reference to the stone, is a much older name for this lonely island in the middle of the Pacific.

Looking at the world from here, with a distant Hawaii to the north, Polynesia to the west, New Zealand to the southwest and South American coast to the east, I can understand the perspective. Te Pito O te Henua is almost smack dab in the middle.

In some stories the site marks the landing point of the original settlers under Hotu Matua. The *ahu* also held the now fallen Paro Paro, the tallest *moai* successfully raised, and the last to be toppled. It stood over 72 feet tall, not including its huge *pukao*. People come from all over the world to “touch” the stone. It possesses great *mana*. Tourists are told it can grant wishes, and are cautioned to return and give thanks if their wish is granted. It’s interesting to watch visitors walk up, kneel down and place both hands ceremonially on the stone. In the distance here you can see one such traveler getting into the moment.



He Ha'ere 'A Te Taha Tai 'I Anakena

A Walk on the Beach at Anakena

The gorgeous beach at Anakena is the only one of its kind on the island. It's located in a protected cove, but a long drive from town. The water is almost always calm. Adding to the atmosphere are two *ahu* with restored *moai* overlooking all that transpires. For this view I climbed up to the summit of Maunga Hau Epa overlooking the beach. Nan was but a tiny figure in the shadows below. An interesting way to share the sunrise.

The wind was blowing so strong I had to squat down and wrap my arms around the tripod to keep it from blowing over, heavy camera and all. Keeping the assembly steady for exposures was quite a challenge. At the same time my hat decided it wanted to try being a kite – I quickly learned on the island to rely on chinstraps. Typically, for the island, there was little to no wind below. As I was setting up my scenic, I spotted a Rapanui woman walking across the deserted sand. I held off until she reached just the right spot and clicked, crossing my fingers that my grip was holding the tripod steady.

Looking to the base of the hill, I saw that Nan too had seen the woman and was composing her own shot. After we returned home she completed a large work on canvas bearing the same title as my image. Two artists, two mediums, two perspectives.



Ahu 'O Anakena

Early morning light with Ahu Ature Huki in the foreground and Ahu Nau Nau behind. Ature Huki was the first *moai* in modern times to be restored. Thor Heyerdahl, whose exploits and books about the Island excited many of us as children, sponsored an experiment where the islanders themselves were given the assignment of raising the statue. They did so in little over a week by gradually levering the giant statue on stones until they could settle it in place.

The *moai* on Ahu Nau Nau are in relatively good condition because they were partially buried in sand, protected from the elements. In one of the tragedies that can occur in excavating, the only cache ever found of original *moai* eyes was exposed during digging here, only to be accidentally crushed before they could be retrieved.

This shot was the reason I climbed Maunga Hau Epa, from which *A Walk on the Beach* was taken a few minutes later. My vantage point was slightly below the summit, awkward for the tripod but happily out of the wind. I spent a good amount of time inching my way up and down, forward and back along the steep bank, setting the perspective, concentrating on the sand gap between the head of Ature Huki and the base of Nau Nau. Then I impatiently awaited the moment when the sun would poke its head over Poike.



Ahu Nau-Nau

Ahu Nau Nau at Anakena is almost always photographed from the front; I like the back view. The sand beach slopes down steeply here, so you get this looming perspective. The *moai* on Nau Nau are amazingly uniform. They are shorter, slimmer and have somewhat narrower faces with thinner, more pointy noses than others of their race. Even the *pukao* are more refined. Some of the original carvings that adorned the backs of the statues can still be made out. Anakena is where the *ariki* or island king lived, his *mana* working to the betterment of all the tribes.

At one point mid twentieth century, in an effort to catalog the scattered evidence of earlier civilization, discoveries were mapped and given numbers, many obtrusively painted on. A number of discoveries have been unearthed in the vicinity of the *ahu*, including considerable construction deep in front of the *ahu* and with it a much older, broken female *moai* that resides today in the island *museo*. Check out the head from an earlier construction used for wall support in the center of the image.

The second statue from the right is now missing the bottom portion of his right ear. He was vandalized while we were on the island. The culprit had to be put up in a hotel for weeks while his country's ambassador negotiated his release. It wouldn't have been a good idea to hold him in the island "jail" as prisoners are allowed machetes and other tools with which to continue their carving.



E Hakavari 'A Terevaka

Hiking around Terevaka

The coast around Terevaka, stretching from near Akivi all the way to Anakena beach, is one of the less visited parts of the Island. There is no road and the path sort of comes and goes. At best it is a rough six hour hike with no refuge from the brutal sun. But the trek is well worth the effort. The norm is to arrange to have someone pick you up at the finish and bring you back to your starting point, a scenario that allows little time for exploration or rest. We did it differently the first time, going half way and back from each end, splitting it up on different days. That way we could take our time and explore all we wanted. We still missed a lot.

This lone dead tree seems a fitting complement to a once inhabited plain overlooking the sea. I was framing my image when I noticed, in the distance, a lone hiker taking the trail around; hence the title. Those are horses between us and her. Near the mid point on this first trip we experienced a sudden downpour. Fortunately there was a large *ahu* nearby with a huge, leaning slab of stone. We crawled under it and ate bread, cheese and bananas – our hiking staple – and waited it out.

The bread, or *pan*, we get from our favorite little bakery is one of the things about the island we most look forward to when planning a return trip.



He Hōi 'I Terevaka

Horses on Terevaka

Horses set to graze on Terevaka, unlike those below in the plains, don't have to stumble around fields purposefully spread with volcanic rock – an ancient system of stone-mulching. They have much better pasture, and more in the way of drinking water. Here near the summit the Pacific ocean seems to close in on you from above the line of trees. Many of the trees planted in modern times were eucalyptus, large groves providing much needed timber. They grow fast and then topple, offering up their wood for use. It seems especially good for fence posts because field burn-off doesn't easily take them out. The problem with eucalyptus is that nothing else can grow under and around it. And don't even try to stand downwind of burning eucalyptus; the smell is sharp and pungent.

There are a lot of horses on the Island. I've been told that they had to be culled once, sending large numbers to the mainland. Owners keep pretty good track of their stock, branding them when they are young. Dead horses are typically left to rot where they drop; the soil needs it. Ruperto, Maruka's cousin, has a ranch northeast of Anakena. When he needs riding mounts he has the boys bring the herd into the corral where he matches the horse to the rider. Those we've ridden tend to be gentle, but stubborn as mules. They are used to running wild, foraging on their own, and will try to stop and graze whenever they feel like it.



'I Runga 'O Terevaka

Atop Terevaka

Nan sitting on top of Terevaka, the highest point on the Island. The umbrella, not an uncommon sight in the summer, protects her from the sun. The relatively mild summer temperatures, rarely over 85 degrees, doesn't diminish one iota the sun's subtropical brutality. And there is no driving up Terevaka; just getting there is a challenging hike. I had taken off on another one of my many asides, checking out something I thought I saw in the distance, while Nan stayed behind to rest. She's not a fan of these digressions, holding back until I return, which is most of the time, or wave my arms to indicate I found something interesting.

On the way back I realized I had a nice shot of her from the bottom of the slope, accented by tracks from some Rapanui who had been up there rounding up horses or possibly just four-wheeling.

Rising only two thousand feet on a very small island, one wouldn't think the weather would be any different on Terevaka than down below. But on many a sunny day you can look up from Hanga Roa and see black rainclouds completely obscuring the peak. The *maunga* draws them like a magnet. On a clear day the view from the top is grand; you can see both ends of the island, with ocean all the way around, a powerful reminder that you are on a tiny speck of land in the middle of a very big ocean.



Make Make 'O Ana Nga Heu

Make Make Cave

This shallow cave is located at the mid point around Terevaka, half way through what is at best a six hour trek. It is so difficult to spot, even though it's right off the trail, that many hikers miss it altogether. And the site dots on maps aren't much help; they're often placed at considerable distance from where they should be.

There are dozens of Make Make, the Rapanui name for the creator, carved into the ceiling, with enough variation in size and shape as to strongly suggest more than one artist. The problem is that the cave isn't even tall enough to kneel in. Chiselling these into the hard stone probably required lying on one's back. That's exactly what I had to do to photograph them, holding an ultra-wide angle lens a few short inches from the subject. The white areas on the stone look like residual white earth pigment.

No telling what might be found in an excavation of the cave floor. It looks like there could have been considerable soil build-up over the years. I would assume also that the original artist(s) didn't have the same issue with ants that I had. By the time I crawled out I was covered with the things, having ignored their onslaught as long as I could. It's interesting that *heu* is the Rapanui word for the "offspring of a union between individuals from two different tribes," hinting at the status of at least one past resident.



Ahu Hanua Nua Mea

Ahu of the Rainbow

We stumbled on this site while exploring; the tiny *ahu's* name wasn't on any map that we'd seen. We finally found the site mentioned in an article about, of all things, rainbows in *moeVarua*. To get there, at the geographical center of the island, you have to climb Terevaka and follow a ravine down the eastern slope. The long gully contains the only thing approaching a real stream on the Island, but only when it rains. That's Maunga Pu'i, Poike and Rano Raraku in the distance.

The *moai* is relatively small, though no less a challenge to haul halfway up Terevake to stand overlooking a ravine. Something of a mystery was recently excavated about 20 yards up the gully from here; we were fortunate to see some of it before it was reburied. Huge slabs of cut stone were used to create a large pool of some kind, right in the middle of the stream's path. Smaller slabs with large holes cut in them were placed a little higher up. There's all kinds of speculation as to the purpose of the construction. Whatever it was, it involved a sometimes scarce commodity, fresh water. Articles with pictures have been published.

A number of factors suggest considerable climate change over time for the island. One is evidence supporting settlement areas that would simply be uninhabitable today due to cold, wind and lack of water on an island that provided little more than *mahute* from which to make clothing.



Hare Paenga

Hare paenga are stone foundations for boat-shaped houses, some of the more fascinating remains of Rapanui culture. They vary in condition from a mass of scattered parts to fully restored examples. The enclosure they supported was of bent branches, anchored in the round holes carved into the tops of basalt foundation blocks. Grasses and banana leaves would keep the rain out. Entrance was through a short crawl tunnel, front center. Size varied from about twenty feet to over eighty in length; and there was almost always a patio of inlaid smooth shore rock in an arc around the front.

We've read in more than one source that these were used for royalty only, reflected in some sites where they are scarce. But then why are there fields with dozens of the foundations, some lined up in rows on slopes? This one is in the Te Peu sector, with Akivi in the distance. That's another *hare paenga* just above it in the center of the picture, more were to the right and left. One of the largest ones, with two entrances, dominates the area just down the hill.

While a couple of the foundations near town are better preserved, much more exciting are the remains you stumble across in fields far away from anything except the remnants of a long disintegrated *ahu*. You can almost feel what it was like to crawl out the front door in the morning and look around. The front here opens onto a grand view of the coast.



Ahu Akivi

These seven *gentlemen* on Ahu Akivi are the only *moai* to face seaward, albeit from a good half mile inland where the central plain begins its steep rise to Terevaka. It is told that they represent the crew of seven who discovered the island, bringing word back to Hotu Matua and his followers who were in need of a new home. Averaging over 16 feet, the Akivi *moai* are uniquely equal in height and relatively small. Excavation has revealed extensive construction beneath the ground in front of the *ahu*.

Though there is much argument as to the origin of the original settlers on Easter Island, some tradition holds that Ahu Akivi faces the direction from which they came, an island called Mangareva to the west. Others see this as ambiguous at best.

Demonstrating just how uncertain so much of the island's history is: when I ran my Rapanui titles by friends on the island, I was cautioned that there is a strong possibility that the *ahu*, contrary to all current references and maps, was at one time referred to by another name, A'tiu, and that the Akivi name for the area comes from a different, much smaller *ahu* nearby. It all gets very confusing.



He Rere-rere, Ahu Akivi

Akivi Leap

Roberto Pakomio was our neighbor during our first year, and one of the first to befriend us on the island. He's very much of a jack of all trades, stone wall builder, carver, musician. He writes all of his own songs and records them on CDs that compete for sales with those of dozens of other *groupos* on the small island. His music is a unique combination of traditional Rapanui and blues, with a rock and roll twist. On one trip I uploaded his first music video to YouTube; it has been viewed thousands of times and holds a five star rating. In it you can get a sense of the island as well as Roberto's charm, exuberance and talent. Title and link: [MO TAUA ANA MO ORA](#)

We listen to Rapanui music at home, Roberto's as well as some of the others, traditional and modern, and have no problem with not knowing what is being sung. Rapanui is a beautiful language.

Although Roberto does not like tourists pointing cameras at him, he agreed to spend an afternoon going native for some pictures. We had a lot of fun and I got some great shots. At one point a busload drove up to where we were working, cameras popping out of windows. Nan and I provided cover for Roberto during a hurried race to the car. One of our own favorite mementos is a short video of Roberto sitting on our porch playing and singing *Blowin' in the Wind* in Rapanui and English.



He Ara Ki Akivi

Road to Akivi

Such an innocent looking little dirt road; hard to imagine the reality from this scenic little shot. Rocks and ruts wreak havoc on the best of cars. On a good day you can do maybe two thirds of this agonizing drive in second gear, the rest in first. If it's dry, the dust can be choking. After a heavy rain, as if there's any other kind, you may have to stay in first gear the whole distance, or at some point simply give up and turn around. We did just that more than once before we learned how to finesse some of the rougher sections.

Akivi is in the plain between Hanga Roa and Terevaka. The road cuts from the paved "highway" up the long middle of the Island across to the coast and back around to town. Parts of it find you wondering if you are in one of those mountain-climbing four wheeler commercials. We've cleared "puddles" that look like they could swallow the car. More than once Nan has let loose with her favorite dire-straight exclamation of "we're gonna die" as I gritted my teeth and plowed through.

There are some wonderful views along this road. And the half between Akivi and the coast is definitely worth exploring on foot. There are ruins, rock carvings and a number of interesting caves, only one of which is on the tourist circuit, and they can be difficult to spot even when you're right on top of them.



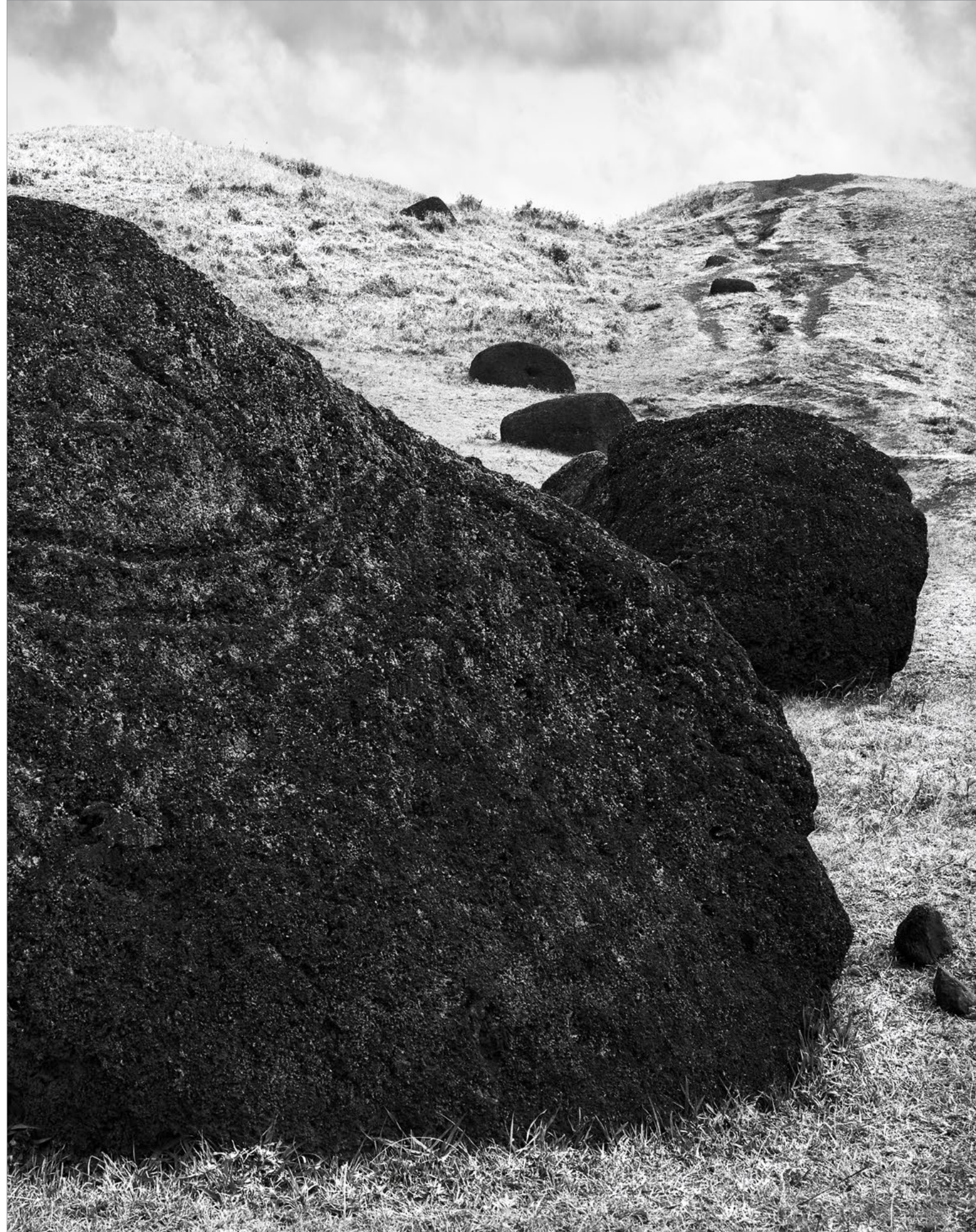
Pukao, Puna Pau

Topknots at Puna Pau

Pukao, the red scoria topknots atop some *moai*, can be found scattered around *ahu* and abandoned at various stages along their journey to their intended destination. Only a select few have been restored to their rightful place. As if getting a 60 to 80 ton *moai* over miles of irregular terrain to stand on its platform wasn't enough, somehow the early Rapanui were able to hoist the larger than life *pukao* up 15 to 30 feet to perch on top. An interesting, if to me questionable, speculation is that the *moai* were raised with *pukao* already in place. Today giant cranes do the job.

Pukao were cut out of solid red scoria, primarily from the crater in Maunga Puna Pau overlooking Hanga Roa. Varying considerably in size, they dot the slope leading down the outside of the crater, and can easily be seen from town a couple of miles away. Just like with the *moai*, production seems to have suddenly halted in the middle of a surge of activity.

There are carvings on many of these, but the wear is so severe that most are undecipherable. This view is looking up the slope to the edge of the crater over which they had to be moved before rolling them along a crushed stone path; a slightly raised edge presumably offered stability to the process.



Ahu Huri A Urenga

Four Handed Moai

“Four Hands” is a favorite of ours, but we rarely encounter other visitors. The site is well kept, not a minor effort, but not on most tour routes. It’s a small *ahu* with but one *moai* at the head of a large, rock paved plaza. It is also one of the few inland structures.

Huri has two sets of hands coming together across his belly. It’s often speculated that one set was a mistake. But that doesn’t make much sense, at least to us, in that the first set could have simply been sanded away. Both can be seen clearly to come out of the arms on the sides. I’ll venture my own guess. If you look closely, the bottom set of hands, along with the *hami*, is aligned dead center to the *moai*’s body, the norm. The upper set lines up with the slight tilt of his head to the right. Since the site is thought to be something of a solar observatory, the *moai* facing the sunrise on the winter solstice, I like to think the two sets of hands, along with the head turn, were conscious and somehow work into the area’s function. Another *moai*, on Ahu Akava located a couple of hundred yards behind and over the hill, faces the sunset on the same date – and sports hands of two very different sizes and vertical positions. Curious.

We looked for a carved version of Huri A Urenga in town but none could be found; it simply isn’t done. So we commissioned Felipe Tuki Tepano, a carver friend, to make one for us, about a foot tall. It’s a prized memento.



Vai Matā

Small, sidewalk cafes like Vai Mata – the name translates to something like *The Watering Hole* – are common in Hanga Roa. We tend to frequent the establishments run by friends or relatives of friends; it's just more fun. One little place up the street from Vai Mata makes a great Rapa Nui pizza. They don't serve *cerveza* but typically will let you go to the store across the street and bring it back.

The interesting, and somewhat surprising, item on this menu is *po'e*, a traditional food staple that can be difficult to define. Today every family has its own recipe; banana and squash provide a base. The heavy concoction rarely resembles the fruity pudding the Tahitians make. The difference from table to table is astonishing; I've even had *po'e* with bacon in it. From what we've observed, islanders generally avoid eating *po'e* when out.

Nan and Maruka got together and made pumpkin pies for a 4th of July celebration Terry held for our island friends. Not one Rapanui guest would touch it; I kept hearing the word *po'e*. Finally I convinced a twelve year old boy to try a bite, pointedly asking him in front of everyone if it was *po'e*. His answer, as he reached for more: "*no es po'e*." Even then, a third of those present opted out of pumpkin pie and ice cream. Maruka, Dennis, Nan and I ended up feasting for a week on what was left over.



Vai Mata

Vai Mata
Jugo Natural
Polle
Panqueques
dulce, salado
Café, Capuccino
Batidos

TORA
KOK

He Koa, He Mauruuru Ki Te Tangata Tarai

Tribute to the Stone Carver

I confess that this carving isn't quite as big as it looks. Much taller than a man, it's just not quite as impressive to an adult as it might seem here. This is how it would loom over an eight year old, and it's the way I wanted to see it. I made the shot from my knees. The raised fist clutches a *toki*, celebrating the carver and the basalt carving tool that he wields. This simple combination created the great monuments proliferating the Island. Inheriting a land of stone, the Rapanui built their culture from and around it.

It's a modern carving from red scoria, probably created for Tapati. It's mounted just above the coast at Hanga Vare Vare. I think it deserves to be raised a little higher, so everyone could get the full effect. We have watched far too many visitors walk past unimpressed. I have no idea who carved this, or if it was a team effort. The carving is a simple proclamation of strength, pride and purpose. It's no accident that this is the last image in my series; it's an appropriate parting impression of a small, isolated, proud island.



FINAL THOUGHTS...

Little is certain about the early history of the Island, though intriguingly there is no shortage of clues. Bits and pieces lay like disconnected parts of a jigsaw puzzle, much of it contradictory. Whether there were one, two or even three migrations to the island, and their origin; how much contact there was with the rest of Polynesia or South America; whether deforestation was the result of human action, natural disaster, environmental changes or a combination; to mention a few, are hotly debated issues. Add to these legends and oral histories among the Waitaha tribe in New Zealand, the Incas of Peru and on Mangareva concerning Easter Island and its population. One's curiosity is constantly piqued by new findings, both through excavation and scientific research. In lieu of stepping into the minefield of competing theories, I'll simply refer anyone interested to my web site for a list of books, magazines and informative web sites. From there your road will prove fascinating and enlightening, if unending.

By 1868 the Island population was reduced to a handful of individuals, none of whom were among the royal line, those who kept alive oral histories or had the ability to read the Island's Rongo Rongo tablets. Little beyond a body of intriguing but sometimes conflicting oral traditions and stories survives. In the space of a few years disease, enforced slavery and, at times, deliberate attempts to eradicate the population almost succeeded in doing just that. The journey back has been long and difficult.

But... as the moon in eclipse is eaten, only to be reborn, the people of Rapa Nui no longer eke out survival among the ruins. A proud people, they embrace and celebrate their past, unapologetically and imaginatively marrying it to the present as they reclaim their tiny, isolated island and work to forge a culture that is uniquely their own. It is testimony to the character of a people who, reduced at one point to just over a hundred souls, have resisted cultural oblivion by making the process of assimilation two directional. The Rapanui face an ever changing world with pride and identity intact. In the end, partly because of their isolation, and in spite of the ever present need to add to their gene pool, they may emerge more recognizable as a people than the rest of us.

HISTORICAL OUTLINE...

400 to 800 AD – first Polynesians arrive on the Island, probably from the Marquesas Islands to the west

800 to around 1100 – early period. *Ahu* were constructed, ceremonial stone platforms to hold the bones of the dead

1100 to 1500 or 1600 – middle period, construction of the *moai*, beginning with smaller, more rounded features, many with short ears. Stylized, more phallic figures emerged later, much larger with extended earlobes, eventually with *pu-kao*. Population estimates range to 10,000.

1600 to 1722 – period of strife, warfare, famine. Birdman cult emerges.

1722 – first recorded contact with the west, a Dutch ship captained by Jacob Roggeveen.

1770 – Spanish fleet reports an island still rimmed with statues.

1774 – Captain Cook arrives, some *moai* seen fallen, Island barren of trees.

1825 – British ship reports not one *moai* out of about a thousand left standing

1862 – Peru kidnaps half the remaining population, more than a thousand Rapanui, for “contracted” labor. The Catholic church intervenes but only 15 Islanders survive to return, carrying smallpox. The last king and his heir are among those who do not survive. Soon after this the Rapanui number only 110 individuals.

1867 – commercial exploitation begins with the arrival from Tahiti of Jean-Baptiste Dutrou-Bornier. He claimed most of the island, moving a number of Rapanui to Tahiti. He was eventually killed.

1888 – Island annexed to Chile, which soon undergoes a revolution; the new government neglects the Island even more.

1903 – Chile leases the island out as a sheep ranch. Rapanui are restricted to Hanga Roa and fenced in with barbed wire.

1953 – A failed uprising and dissolution of the ranch. Half century of overgrazing leaves the Island a virtual desert. Chilean navy takes control.

1966 – Islanders finally become Chilean citizens; are “given” back just over 10% of the Island, the rest declared state owned land.

1986 – US builds a runway capable of landing a Space Shuttle; this allows large planes to schedule commercial flights to the Island.

1995 – Rapa Nui included on the UNESCO World Heritage List.

Image Index *click on image for page*

Dimensions are for image only. Please see web site for matted measurements.



Rapa Nui
2009 – page 12
Canon 5D II 24-105L 24mm
30x8 and 40x10.5
ISO 400 1/500" f-11 (2 exp. joined)



Tahai Ceremonial Center
2007 – page 14
20x14.5
Canon 5D 24-105L 93mm
ISO 200 1/640" f-10



Ahu Ko Te Riku, Ahu Tahai
2009 – page 16
20x15 and 24x18
Canon 5D II 24-105L 32mm
ISO 200 1/100" f-22



Moai on Ahu Dark Blue Water
2010 – page 18
20x16
Canon 5D II 24-105L 105mm
ISO 400 1/640" f-11



Surf Fishing Hanga Vare Vare
2007 – page 20
20x15
Canon 5D 24-105L 105mm
ISO 200 1/1000" f-8



Children Swimming, Hanga Roa
2007 – page 22
20x15
Canon 5D 24-105L 105mm
ISO 200 1/50" f-9



Kai-kai Girls
2009 – page 23
15.25x20
Canon 5D II 24-105L 93mm
ISO 400 1/500" f-4



Moai Moko, Hanga Vare Vare
2007 – page 25
20x15
Mamiya 6 50mm
PXP 120 f-22



Hanga Roa at Dusk
2007 – page 27
20x15
Canon 5D 24-105L 65mm
ISO 400 4" f-22



Honu Carved into Coastline
2007 – page 29
20x15
Mamiya 6 75mm
PXP 120 f-22



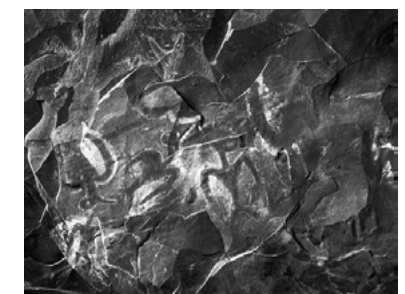
In the Evening the Sun Disappears
Beneath the Sea, 2008 – page 31
20x15
Canon 5D 24-105L 32mm
ISO 800 1/125" f-22



Mataveri by the Sea
2006 – page 33
20x15
Fuji 6x7 90mm
PXP 120 f-22



Tall Ship Esmeralda
2007 – page 35
20x15
Canon 5D 24-105L 73mm
ISO 400 1/125" f-16



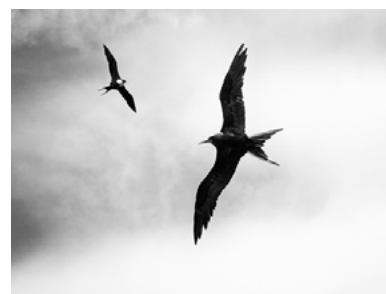
Ana Kai Tangata
2009 – page 37
20x15.5
Canon 5D 24-105L 50mm
ISO 200 1/2" f-11



Red Scoria Moai
2010 – page 38
15x20
Canon PS G9 10mm
ISO 100 1/100" f-4



Cemetery at Sunset
2009 – page 40
24x18
Canon 5D II 17-40L 17mm
ISO 1250 1/50" f-22



Frigate Birds, Hanga Piko
2007 – page 42
20x15
Canon 5D 24-105L 105mm
ISO 100 1/500" f-10



The Moon has been Eaten
2010 – page 44
20x15
Canon 5D 24-105L 24mm
ISO 1600 1" f-6.3



Mokomae
2009 – page 45
15x20
Canon 5D II 24-105L 40mm
ISO 200 1/4000" f-4



Vanessa in Takona
2009 – page 46
12.4x16
Canon 5D II 24-105L 30mm
ISO 200 1/250" f-5.6



Carolina in Takona
2009 – page 47
12.5x16
Canon 5D MII 24-105L
105mm
ISO 200 1/50" f-9



Po Mahina
2009 – page 48
12x16
Canon 5D MII 24-105L
105mm
ISO 400 1/100" f-8



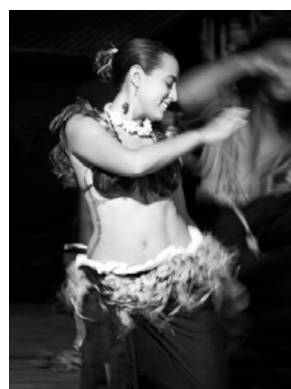
Kari Kari
2007 – page 49
15x20
Canon 5D 24-105L 105mm
ISO 1600 1/30" f-4



Ceremonial Body Painting
2007 – page 50
15x20
Canon 5D 24-105L 80mm
ISO 1600 1/25" f-4.5



Huaaaaaa!
2007 – page 51
15x20
Canon 5D 24-105L 84mm
ISO 1600 1/30" f-4.5



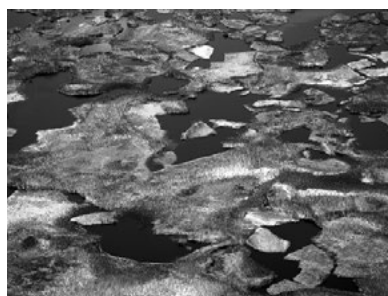
Dancing Girl, Matato'a
2007 – page 52
15x20
Canon 5D 24-105L 105mm
ISO 1600 1/25" f-4.5



Orongo
2007 – page 55
30x8 and 40x10.5
Mamiya 6 75mm
PXP 120 f-22 (4 exp. joined)



Rano Kau
2006 – page 57
22x11.5
Canon 5D 24-105L 24mm
ISO 200 1/40" f-22 (2 exp. joined)



Floating Reed Mats, Rano Kau
2007 – page 69
20x15
Canon 5D 24-105L 105mm
ISO 200 1/200" f-11



Motu Nui, Iti and Kao Kao from
Orongo, 2007 – page 61
20x15
Canon 5D 24-105L 45mm
ISO 200 1/30" f-22



Motu Nui
2009 – page 63
22x11.5
Canon 5D 24-105L 24mm
ISO 400 1/200" f-11 (2 exp. joined)



Moai Ahu Tahiri
2007 – page 65
20x15
Canon 5D 24-105L 47mm
ISO 200 1/25" f-22



Ahu Tahiri at Vinapu
2006 – page 67
20x15.5
Fuji 6x7 90mm
PXP 120 f-22



Weatherworn Face, Ahu
Vinapu, 2007 – page 69
20x16
Mamiya 5 50mm
PXP 120 f-22



Wind, Surf, Rocks
2007 – page 71
20x15
Canon 5D 24-105L 105mm
ISO 1600 1/2000" f-22



Ahu Hanga Pou Kura
2007 – page 73
20x15 and 24x18
Mamiya 6 50mm
PXP 120 f-22



Blow Holes, South Coast
2006 – page 75
20x16
Fuji 6x7 90mm
PXP 120 f-22



Moai Hokotahi
2007 – page 76
15x20
Mamiya 6 50mm
PXP 120 f-22



Moai Road
2006 – page 78
20x15.5
Mamiya 6 50mm
PXP 120 f-22



Ahu One Makihi
2007 – page 80
20x15.5
Mamiya 6 75mm
PXP 120 f-22



Cave with a View
2006 – page 82
22x11.5
Mamiya 6 50mm
PXP 120 f-22 (2 exp. joined)



Rano Raraku
2007 – page 84
20x15
Canon 5D 24-105L 45mm
ISO 100 1/40" f-18



Moai Trail
2007 – page 86
20x15
Canon 5D II 24-105L 47mm
ISO 200 1/50" f-22



Unfinished Moai, Rano Raraku
2007 – page 88
20x15
Canon 5D 24-105L 45mm
ISO 200 1/30" f-16



View Inside Rano Raraku
2007 – page 90
20x16
Mamiya 6 75mm
PXP 120 f-22



Skull on Fencepost
2007 – page 92
20x14.5
Canon 5D 24-105L 24mm
ISO 100 1/40" f-22



Sunrise from Rano Raraku
2007 – page 94
20x15
Canon 5D 24-105L 24mm
ISO 400 1/30" f-22



Haka Pei Run
2008 – page 98
20x15.5
Canon 5D 100-400L 400mm
ISO 200 1/800" f-10



Haka Pei Leap
2008 – page 99
20x15.5
Canon 5D 100-400L
400mm
ISO 200 1/800" f-10



Haka Pei Girl
2008 – page 100
15x20
Canon 5D 100-400L 400mm
ISO 400 1/1000" f-6.3



Ceremonial Food Presentation
2008 – page 102
20x15.7
Canon 5D 24-105L 105mm
ISO 1600 1/80" f-4



Ana Iris
2007 – page 103
12x16
Canon 5D 24-105L 88mm
ISO 200 1/30" f-5.6



Banana Run
2008 – page 104
15x20
Canon 5D 100-400L 400mm
ISO 800 1/1250" f-8



Rapanui Couple
2007 – page 105
15x20
Canon 5D 24-105L 105mm
ISO 100 1/160" f-5.6



Totora Canoe Race
2007 – page 107
20x15
Canon 5D 24-105L 85mm
ISO 100 1/250" f-9



Lucy Carrying her Pora
2008 – page 109
20x15
Canon PS G9 7mm
ISO 180 1/640" f-4



Youth Horse Race
2008 – page 111
20x14.5
Canon 5D 100-400L 340mm
ISO 1600 1/5000" f-8



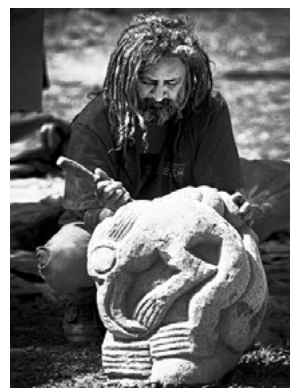
Sau Sau Competition
2008 – page 112
15x20
Canon 5D 24-105L 105mm
ISO 1600 1/60" f-4



Dancing at the Coronation
2008 – page 114
20x15
Canon 5D 24-105L 105mm
ISO 1600 1/400" f-4



Weighing of the Fish
2008 – page 116
20x15
Canon 5D 24-105L 28mm
ISO 1600 1/80" f-6.3



Stone Carver
2008 – page 117
15x20
Canon 5D 100-400L 235mm
ISO 200 1/2000" f-5.6



Warrior in Stone
2007 – page 118
15x20
Canon 5D 24-105L 40mm
ISO 100 1/200" f-11



Historical Narration
2008 – page 119
15.5x20
Canon 5D 17-40L 105mm
ISO 1600 1/250" f-4



Drumbeat
2007 – page 121
20x15
Canon 5D 24-105L 102mm
ISO 200 1/60" f-5.6



Tapati Queen Candidate
2007 – page 123
20x15
Canon 5D 24-105L 55mm
ISO 200 1/100" f-6.3



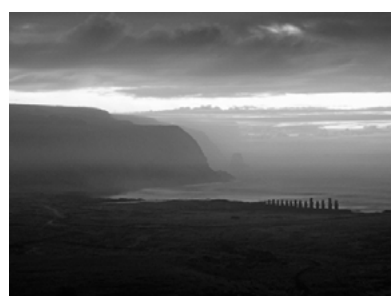
Tongariki from the Sea
2009 – page 127
24x18
Canon 5D II 24-105L 40mm
ISO 400 1/125" f-16



Motu Maratiri
2009 – page 129
20x15
Canon 5D II 24-105L 24mm
ISO 400 1/640" f-14



Traveling Moai
2007 – page 131
20x16
Mamiya 6 75mm
PXP 120 f-22



Tongariki at Dawn
2010 – page 133
20x15
Canon 5D 24-105L 105mm
ISO 800 4" f-22



Lightening Strike for Scoundrels
2007 – page 135
20x15
Canon 5D 24-105L 50mm
ISO 200 1/100" f-22



Ahu Tongariki
2007 – page 137
20x15
Canon 5D 24-105L 55mm
ISO 800 1/250" f-22



Moonrise Over Tongariki
2007 – page 139
20x15
Canon 5D 24-105L 105mm
ISO 1600 1/4" f-5.6



Tataku Poki Petroglyphs
2006 – page 141
20x16
Fuji 6x7 90mm
PXP 120 f-22



Moai, Starry Night
2008 – page 143
20x15
Canon 5D 24-105L 28mm
ISO 1600 1/30" f-4



View from Ahu One One
2009 – page 145
20x15
Canon 5D II 24-105L 67mm
ISO 200 1/100" f-22



Map of the Stars
2007 – page 157
20x15
Canon 5D 24-105L 24mm
ISO 400 1/250" f-18



Moai Head, Ahu Toremu Hiva
2007 – page 149
20x15
Canon 5D 24-105L 24mm
ISO 125 1/100" f-22



Vai A Heva, Poike
2006 – page 151
20x15
Fuji 6x7 90mm
PXP 120 f-22



Poike from Hanga Ho'onu
2007 – page 153
20x14.5
Canon 5D 24-105L 40mm
ISO 200 1/120" f-22



Pua Ativeka Petroglyph
2009 – page 155
20x15
Canon 5D II 24-105L 24mm
ISO 400 1/100" f-22



Volcanic Bubbles
2010 – page 157
20x15
Canon 5D II 24-105L 32mm
ISO 400 1/80" f-22



Navel of the World
2007 – page 159
20x15
Canon 5D 24-105L 24mm
ISO 200 1/125" f-16



A Walk on the Beach, Anakena
2007 – page 161
20x15
Canon 5D 17-40L 32mm
ISO 125 1/60" f-22



Ahu at Anakena
2007 – page 163
20x15
Canon 5D 24-105L 35mm
ISO 125 1/50" f-22



Ahu Nau-Nau
2007 – page 165
20x15
Canon 5D 24-105L 28mm
ISO 100 1/40" f-22



Hiking around Teravaka
page 166
2007 – 15x20
Canon 5D 24-105L 28mm
ISO 200 1/125" f-22



Horses on Teravaka
2007 – page 168
20x15.5
Canon 5D 24-105L 1105mm
ISO 200 1/50" f-22



Atop Teravaka
2007 – page 170
20x15
Canon 5D 24-105L 105mm
ISO 200 1/125" f-22



Make Make Cave
 2010 – page 172
 20x15.5
 Canon 5D II 17-40L 17mm
 ISO 1250 1/20" f-4



Ahu of the Rainbow
 2007 – page 174
 20x15.5
 Canon 5D 24-105L 35mm
 ISO 100 1/30" f-22



Boat House
 2009 – page 176
 20x15
 Canon 5D II 24-105L 32mm
 ISO 200 1/60" f-22



Ahu Akivi
 2007 – page 178
 22x11.25
 Canon 5D 24-105L 24mm
 ISO 100 1/125" f-16 (2 exp. joined)



Ahu Leap
 2008 – page 180
 20x15
 Canon 5D 24-105L 65mm
 ISO 100 1/800" f-4.5



Road to Akivi
 2007 – page 181
 15.25x20
 Canon 5D 24-105L 45mm
 ISO 1600 1/640" f-22



Topknots at Puna Pau
 2006 – page 182
 15.5x20
 Mamiya 6 75mm
 PXP 120 f-22



Four Handed Moai
 2007 – page 183
 15x20
 Canon 5D 24-105L 24mm
 ISO 200 1/125" f-20



Vai Mata
 2009 – page 185
 20x15.5
 Canon 5D II 24-105L 24mm
 ISO 400 1/40" f-10



Tribute
 2009 – page 187
 20x16
 Canon 5D II 24-105L 80mm
 ISO 200 1/50" f-22



GLOSSARY OF RAPANUI TERMS

A'ati - race	Hau - line or thread
Ahu - altar, burial cairn or platform	Henua - land, country, world
Akuaku - guardian spirit of family or clan	Hetu'u - star
Ana - cave	Hetu'u Ave - comet
'ao - long wooden ceremonial paddle	Hetu'u Popohanga - morning star
Apina - coast	Hetu'u Viri - meteor
Ara - road	Heva - upset, internal pain, overly fond
Ariki - chief or king	Hoe - knife
Ariki mau - paramount chief	Hoi - horse
Aringa - face	Hokotahi - alone
Ha'ere - to walk, go or come	Honu - sea turtle
Haha - mouth	Hopu - to bathe, wash
Hahata - open, empty, hollow	Hora - summer
Haho - outside	Hora 'iti - spring
Hami - small loin cloth	Hua'ai - generations, relations
Hanga - inlet or bay	Huri - to knock down
Hani-hani - red scoria, a volcanic rock	Huri huri - banana mixed with egg, lower, sugar and fried
Hanua nua mea - rainbow	Ika - fish
Hare - house	Ika mata - raw fish
Hare moa - stone chicken coop	Iorana - hello, goodbye
Hare paenga - boat shaped, stone foundation	Iorana korua - same, plural
Hapi - to learn, study	

Iorana koe - a singular hello to you
Iti iti - small
Kai - eat
Kai-kai - string art with recitation
Kahi - tuna / *atún*
Kao kao - steep, thin, skinny
Kau - swimming
Kava kava - ribs
Kie'a - red pigment
Koa - happy
Komari - vulva
Komari Koreha - moray eel
Kona - place, location
Koro - older man
Kura - best or choice
Kuta-kuta - foam or bubbling
Ma'ea - stone, rock
Mahana - day
Mahatu - heart
Mahina - moon
Mahute - fiber from Paper Mulberry used for cloth
Maika - banana
Maika puka puka - short banana variety
Make Make- the creator
Makona - full, as in of food

Mana - spiritual force
Manavai - stone enclosed garden areas
Mangai Ivi - fishhook of human bone
Manu - bird
Manu makohe - frigate bird
Manutara - sooty tern
Mata - eye or clan
Matá - obsidian
Mata'a - obsidian spear point
Matato'a - warrior class
Matu'a - parent
Maunga - hill
Maururu - thank you
Mirikuru - white pigment
Miro - wood
Moa - rooster
Moai - carved representaton of man or spirit
Moai kava kava - carved masculine figure showing ribs
Moana - blue
Moko - small indigenous salamander
Mokomae - warrior
Motu - islet
Nari-nari - mask, celebration
Nau-nau - sandlewood

Ngapoki - children
Ngarua - pebble or stone pillow
Ngoe' - milky way
Nua - elderly woman, out of respect
Nui nui - big
'O Tai - by the sea
Ohiro hiro - dust storm
'Ohumu - stingy
'O'one - dust
'One - sand
'Opata - steep, cliff, steep coast
Opo - escape, flee, run away
Ora nui - good health
Ori - dance
'oti - finished, enough
Paoa - to steal or rob
Papa - large flat stone
Pareu - cloth wrap for skirt or sarong
Pe Hé Koe - how are you
Pei-âmo - groove slide (Haka Pei)
Pepa - butterfly, moth
Pepeka - dragonfly
Pipi horeko - boundry stones
Pito - navel
Po - night

Po'e - polynesian pudding cake
Poki - son, daughter, child
Poki atariki - eldest child
Popohanga - dawn or sunrise
Poukura - colorful bird feathers
Pora - reed float for swimming
Pua oua - yellow pigment
Pukao - moai topknot
Puku - rock
Puna - wattering hole, well
Pu'oo - head, skull, hard headed
Ra'a - sun
Rake rake - bad
Rangi - sky, cloud
Rano - volcano
Rapa - short ceremonial paddle
Rapa Nui - Easter Island / *Isla de Pascua*
Rapanui - the people, language
Raraku - sculpt, carve
Reka - fun
Repa Hoa - friend
Reimiro - crescent shaped wood breastplate
Reku - scoundrel
Repa - young man
Rere - jump

Riku - to grow in abundance
Riri - angry
Riu - song
Riva Riva - good
Roe - ant
Rongo rongo - Rapanui hieroglyphic writing
Roto - inside
Taha - to lean, go down
Taha tai - shore, coast
Takerau - wind, air
Takona - ceremonial body painting
Tangata - man
Tangata honui - clan chief
Tangata manu - birdman
Tapu - restrictions
Tarai - carved or sculpted
Tataku - count, calculate, record
Tau'a - year
Tau - pretty, nice
Toa - sugarcane
Toki - small basalt axe
Tonga - winter
Tonga 'iti - fall
Tuai - ancient
Tupa - ancient stone markers on coast

Tu'u - to arrive
û - milk, woman's breast
Ua - rain
Uha - hen, sometimes wife or daughter
Uka - young woman
Umu - cooking pit
Ura - lobster
Uri - dark, black and blue
Uru - funerary banquet
Uruga - prophetic vision
Uuna - abundance
Vai - water
Vaikava - sea, ocean
Vaioira - generous person
Vairua - good fortune
Vaka - canoe, small boat
Vaka ama - outrigger
Varavara - sow, plant
Varegao - to crave, desire
Vave - wave
Vehi - song in someone's honor
Vere - to cut (plants, hair)
Veriveri - puddle, small pond
Vero - to throw, hurl
Vi'e - woman, wife



Jim Craig lives with his wife Nan in Havre de Grace, MD, where the Susquehanna River meets the Chesapeake Bay. He took up B&W photography in his early twenties to have something to do while his wife painted. Since then he has amassed a considerable portfolio of local scenics, as well as images from surrounding states, north to the tip of Nova Scotia and west to the badlands. This includes a one-month project hiking and photographing Acadia National Park in Maine. His work has been shown extensively in the area and can be seen at RiverView Gallery in Havre de Grace. Many of the images in this volume were featured in a one-man show at the Museo Antropológico Padre Sebastián Englert in Hanga Roa, Easter Island in 2008.

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... an annual arts event encouraging interaction between artists and the general public, free to the public and artists alike. AQ also provided tents, tables and staging for visual and performing artists to showcase their skills, again all free. Young artists were encouraged to try their hand at different venues of visual art under the direction of professional artisans. If the artists work together it can be done.

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Island blog: **easterislandjournal.com**

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Work can be seen at: **RiverView Gallery**

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photo by Nan Craig