



Oceanic Art Society, PO Box 1084, Edgecliff, NSW 2027
email: secretary@oceanicartsociety.org.au
website: www.oceanicartsociety.org.au
ISSN 1326-592X



Journal - Volume 21, Issue 2, May 2016

furthering the appreciation and
understanding of Oceanic art

A mystery resolved

The world is becoming ever smaller, driven mostly by the increasing interconnectivity provided by the internet. People anywhere can research and access the most obscure and idiosyncratic alleyways of human endeavour. This is certainly true in the world of Oceanic art where auction houses online catalogues now are viewed all around the world. The quality of online images has increased dramatically in the last few years and allow buyers to gain a very sound appreciation of objects many thousands of kilometres away. While never equalling the experience of handling an object 'in the flesh' it has made, at least for fine and valuable objects, the art market truly global.

But it is not just in the transaction of objects that the internet has transformed our behaviour: it is also in the way that people can research artefacts; their origins and traditional usage. It has also allowed collectors to delve deeper into the individual journeys of particular objects. A good case in point here is the beautiful Aboriginal shield from the Murrumbidgee region that was featured on the back page of

the last edition of the OAS Journal. Brussels-based Michel Ghins, the owner of the shield, who was not a member of the OAS, had embarked on a quest to identify the collection numbers on the shield. Referring to the OAS website's data base on inscriptions and labels (painstakingly collated by Harry Beran and others) he was unable to solve the mystery of the markings. Referred finally to the OAS editorial team we ran the image and accompanying story in the hope of eliciting further information. Which, indeed, happened. One of the collection numbers (A.P.133) turned out to be that of Alex Philips, the well-known Melbourne collector and dealer. An overjoyed Michel has uncovered a little more of the history of his shield, the OAS has gained another member (Michel joined) and the enormous power of the internet to be able to send images anywhere, instantly, was again revealed. We hope that when the newly redesigned OAS website is fully functioning this wonderful resource will be used by members to conduct their own research into their treasured objects, and also share their knowledge, which, collectively, is a huge resource in itself.

(Continued page 3)



Spirit board (kwoi) from the Purari people. From the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge. Collected by A.C. Haddon in 1914. For more details see page 10.

dates for your diary

Wednesday 11 May 2016 – Film preview: *Te Kuhane o te Tupuna/ Spirit of the Ancestors* in conjunction with Pasifika Film Fest. 6:30 for 7:00 Australian Museum, Hollstrom Theatre. Details page 2.

Wednesday 20 July 2016 – OAS Lecture, Mark Blackburn - *Understanding Polynesian Art.* Australian Museum, 6:30 for 7pm.

Saturday 23 July – OAS Tribal Art Fair, 10am - 3pm - St Matthias Church Hall Oxford Street Paddington NSW.

Wednesday 14 September 2016 – OAS Lecture 6:30 - 9pm - Australian Museum, details to be advised.

To be confirmed, currently **Saturday 12 November 2016 – OAS AGM and Lecture** Crispin Howarth - *Meeting the Fellows Collection* 10am - 12:30pm - Australian Museum, followed by a luncheon, details to be advised.



NEXT LECTURE

Wednesday 11 May, we have a change of lecture content. The presentation on the Fellows Collection from the Trobriand Islands will now be given at our November meeting.

However, OAS is delighted to announce that our next lecture meeting on Wednesday May 11 at the Australian Museum, in the Hallstrom Theatre, will be a collaborative effort between OAS and PFF (Pasifika Film Fest) with a preview showing of one of their finest films scheduled for the Pasifika Film Festival later in the year:

Te Kuhane o te Tupuna / Spirit of the Ancestors



2015 film. Director: Leonardo Pakarati. Executive Producer: Paula Rosetti

This is the story of a grandfather and a girl who travel from the remotest island in the world, Easter Island, in search of the sacred power of their ancestors, the Mana. It is also a documentary film of the journey in search of the lost Mana, an Easter Island statue of significant cultural importance. It explores the social and political landscape of the island of Rapanui as the people attempt to claim back what is rightfully theirs: Their land and a lava-rock image of tremendous presence, representing one of the world's most extraordinary cosmological views.

Dr Grant McCall had this to say about the film:

“Excellent work! This is one of the most interesting documentaries

about Rapanui (Easter Island) that I ever have seen in the last forty years! First rate production values as well.”

Grant McCall, Nissologist and a renowned expert on Pacific Islands, particularly Easter Island, has kindly accepted our invitation to attend the showing of the film and is happy to field questions afterwards. (Nissology: *“The study of islands on their own terms”*. (McCall 1992; 1993))

...one of the most interesting documentaries about Rapanui that I ever have seen...

Tickets: \$25 for OAS members, Australian Museum members and those booking direct through the

PFF. Non members \$35. Arrival time 6:30pm for refreshments, 7:00 Film. This event is being partly catered by the Australian Museum. We are expecting a considerable number of people attending, and bookings are essential. Please note the change in admission prices.

Email secretary@oceanicartsociety.org.au or telephone Sydney 02 9332 3984 for bookings.

Art Dealer in the Last Unknown



Join Ron Perry in the jungles of New Guinea 1964-1973



New Guinea Tribal Art eGuide



by Carolyn Leigh

\$35 USD + shipping

ORDER NOW

at Art-Pacific.com

plus

only \$3.99

at Amazon & Apple

Event Calendar at Art-Pacific.com/calendar.htm

OAS Executive Change

Dominic McGeary has resigned as President of the OAS Executive Committee. Amongst his contributions, Dominic has been a driving force in the social media networking of the society building

an extensive and dynamic OAS Facebook page; he has worked hard to progress the positive development of a new website; and has provided enthusiastic initiative to our functions and events. We

thank Dominic for his passionate advocacy of both Oceanic art and the aims of the society.

David Welch
OAS Vice President

OAS Member Notes

OAS member Marina Garlick advises that Melbourne's Museum of Victoria has a display of several items from the *War Trophies or Curios* collection on show upstairs in the *Te Pasifika* exhibition.

Marina also advises that the National Gallery of Victoria International currently has a splendid exhibition

of Pacific art on Level 3 in the Contemporary art section. Most of the items are contemporary but there are quite a few older pieces. There is a wall of masks, another of shields, Omi barks, Highlands and Omi headdresses, five Tamar figures and more. They are apparently on show until August and well worth a visit.

This link shows the NGV Oceanic collection. Run your cursor over each item for different views: <http://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/explore/collection/collection-areas/?area=oceanic>

Continued from front cover:

This edition of the OAS Journal contains a fascinating summary of Mike Donaldson's talk on Australia's Rock Art and Mike's meticulous documentation of it. One cannot help but be reminded of the vast artistic legacy left by Aboriginal peoples from thousands of years before the arrival of the first Europeans. Barry Craig continues with his intriguing story of the early collectors of the New Guinea artefacts that now reside in the South Australian Museum, this time with part two of his article on Albert John Hunter. Crispin Howarth relates the particular history of three Garra hook sculptures from the Hunstein Ranges, which have been generously donated to the National Gallery of Australia by Sir David Attenborough. We also feature in this edition another succinct book review by Peter McCabe, this time of Virginia-Lee Webb's *Embodied Spirits: Gope Boards from the Papuan Gulf*.

Lastly I would like to remind members of the forthcoming event at the Australian Museum, which the OAS is hosting with Pasifika Film

Festival, where the film *Te Kuhane o te Tupuna/Spirits of the Ancestors* will be shown on May 11. It promises to be a most stimulating evening.



Want to sell one of these?

Keen collector seeks quality Polynesian, Melanesian and African clubs. Please email jpegs to dsaid@ozemail.com.au

www.tribalartbrokers.net

In Praise of Tribal Art: <http://www.tribalartbrokers.net/praisetribal>
My Beady Eye: <http://www.tribalartbrokers.net/mybeadyeye>
Join David Said on facebook for regular updates
<http://www.facebook.com/david.said.165>

Napa dance club, Santa Cruz, good condition and excellent remnant pigments.



Australia's Rock Art

Presentation by Mike Donaldson to Oceanic Art Society, Sydney, 9 March 2016

Rock art includes pigment art which may be painted, drawn, or stencilled, and petroglyphs (commonly referred to as carvings or engravings) on rock surfaces. Some commentators include any man-made markings on rocks that are not of obvious utilitarian origin, such as pounded depressions or cupules, and abraded grooves, as rock art. I see these as ritual markings rather than 'art'. Most agree that axe-grinding grooves, seed grinding hollows, and stone arrangements that may be burial structures, are not 'art'.

Rock art in Australia varies enormously from area to area, reflecting the local cultures developed over many thousands of years. The art in southern Australia is characterised by petroglyphs and simple geometric painted designs, while the art of northern Australia, particularly the Kimberley, Arnhem Land, and Cape York, comprises complex paintings using multiple colours. Why this is so remains a subject of widespread inquiry.

Rock art is notoriously difficult to date, unless charcoal has been used in a painting which then allows dating by radiocarbon techniques. Kimberley Wanjina paintings can be dated this way to about 3000 years, and other



Wanjina, Kimberley. Photo courtesy of Mike Donaldson.

carbon-bearing substances such as beeswax used in some rock art motifs can also be dated. Red ochre was used for many of the oldest surviving paintings, and there are no radiometric techniques available to date these pigments. Instead, we have to find places where suitable datable mineral deposits overlie or underlie paintings. Some success is currently being achieved by dating uranium-bearing

minerals in thin accretions deposited over paintings by evaporating ground water. Rock fragments with red ochre stains found in archaeological excavations in the Kimberley have been dated to about 40,000 years BP by analysing associated charcoal in specific excavated layers, and this is taken as evidence that Australia's rock art is likely to date from that time. This would make Australia's paintings as least as old, if not older, than the famous cave paintings of France and Spain.



X-ray painting, Arnhem Land. Photo courtesy of Mike Donaldson.

Some of the earliest art in southern Australia, thought to be late Pleistocene age (<10 000 years), is known as the Panaramitee tradition. It comprises petroglyphs of circles, animal and bird tracks, and some lizards, usually fully pecked (intaglio). These occur in the Flinders Ranges in South Australia, across to Broken Hill, and to the north of Alice Springs. It is notable that images of the game animals such as kangaroos and emus are entirely absent from these extensive art sites. In contrast, younger petroglyphs in the Sydney region, perhaps up to 5000 years old, are large simple outline figures of kangaroos, emus, fish and humans.

Drawn charcoal figures of people, kangaroos, and fish are also common in rock shelters in this area.

Petroglyphs in the Pilbara are quite distinct from the Panaramitee or Sydney basin petroglyph styles. They show much more sophistication in technique and subject matter, and provide an important record of man's artistic endeavour over at least 20 000 years, dating back to before the last glacial maximum when the coast was some 150 kilometres distant from its present location.

Kimberley rock art is something else again. Early motifs include 'Irregular Infill Animals' (kangaroos, thylacines) that probably are about 40 000 years old. But these distinctive figures are overpainted by the enigmatic Gwions or Bradshaw figures which depict people in fine anatomical detail and with an array of body accoutrements and weaponry. These small monochrome red paintings are very finely detailed using some type of brush, and early investigators were told by Aboriginal people that they were done by 'people before their time', or by bush spirits. Wanjinas, 'cloud spirits' that are part of contemporary Aboriginal culture, are in contrast typically large (up to 5 metres long) and painted in white, yellow, red, and black ochres. They are never shown with a mouth as it is said that would cause incessant rain resulting in flooding and drowning of all mankind. These paintings date back at least 4000 years.

Australia's rock art is a priceless invaluable heritage

The art of Arnhem Land is equally colourful as that of the Kimberley. It also spans a period dating back to before the last glacial maximum 18 000 years ago. Some periods of Arnhem Land art are very similar to some early Kimberley art, in particular the Mimi figures which have stylistic similarities with the Dynamic Gwions of the Kimberley. But later traditions developed independently, and Arnhem Land paintings some distinctive styles such as the famous X-ray paintings that show elements of animal's internal organs and backbones.



Carnarvon Gorge stencils. Photo courtesy of Mike Donaldson.

Across the Gulf, Quinkan art in the Laura region of Cape York Peninsula has another very distinctive style. These great paintings of people, animals, plants, and Quinkan spirits were only discovered by Europeans in the 1960s and there are hundreds of sites recorded, although most remain inaccessible. Unfortunately most of the associated stories have been lost to us.

To round out this tour of Australia's rock art, let's finish with the extraordinary

stencil art of the Carnarvon Gorge in south-east Queensland. The technology of stencilling hands, weapons, fruits, plants, and even whole-body humans reached its pinnacle in these spectacular white sandstone gorges.

Australia's rock art is a priceless invaluable heritage that should be more appreciated by all Australians, and is yet to be discovered by most of the world. My books depict the art in its context and I hope that they encourage more people to get out and find it, appreciate it, and ensure it is protected for all the future generations.



Panaramite petroglyphs, South Australia. Photo courtesy of Mike Donaldson.

Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Sailor – Part III (b)

By Barry Craig. Continued from the last issue of the OAS Journal



In this issue of the OAS Journal, I provide a short biography and a sample of the collections of:

Albert John Hunter

(Part 2, the first part of this paper was in the OASJ Vol. 21, Issue 1, Feb 2016.)

It isn't clear how Hunter came by certain objects from the Admiralty Islands, Wuvulu and Aua islands to the west, that were obtained from him by the South Australian Museum in 1919, as he wasn't appointed as District Officer, Manus, until 1922.

Of particular interest is the ornament, often described as a 'war bonnet', from Manus (Fig. 6). Parkinson stated (1999:177):

Probably nowhere else is the state of war so permanent as among the Moánuus .



Figure 6. 'War bonnet', obtained by A.J. Hunter, Manus Island, c.1918-19? Pacific Cultures Gallery, South Australian Museum A.11868. Photo: Tony Vlavogelakis

. . . [They] are never lacking in excuses for war . . . [and] go to war without any reason but out of love of fighting. The death of an enemy is the main thing . . . War trophies, consisting of boats and equipment, shell money and other property, are not spurned; houses are burned and cooking utensils smashed. Any living human, falling into the hands of the victors, is taken away as a slave. Whoever does not flee is slain, be they man or woman, young or old . . . If there is time, they also take the corpses of the fallen and sell them to the Usiai.

Sea battles in canoes are not infrequent. Both parties approach and, when in audible range, heap scorn and insults on each other. Then both canoes of the sons of the warring chiefs move forward a little and both sons engage in combat in which three lances have to be thrown. When this single combat is over, an attack takes place from both sides simultaneously. The strategy is to kill the steersman of the canoe and then to prevent another taking his place. The canoe is then tipped over and the crewmen speared in the water.

Parkinson notes the wearing of ornaments fastened around the neck and suggests they are 'amulets to protect the wearer against wounding in battle' (1999:162-3). Bühler noted that this kind of ornament, featuring a human head, sometimes with a

diminutive body concealed by the dense arrangement of feathers of the frigate bird, 'was worn on the back in battle and made its wearer invulnerable. The man Pondoken, whose head is depicted, was a great mythical warrior who killed many enemies' (Ohnemus 1998:65).

Hunter's collection included a few wood bowls from Manus, one of which is particularly fine (Fig. 7) and may have been made for sale to foreigners. It is slightly oval and stands on a central round pedestal (an unusual feature) with two short handles carved as stylised bird heads, one at each end. The rim and the base of the pedestal are carved with geometric designs and in-filled with white lime.

Wood bowls were used for serving food and also to hold the skull of a deceased relative and became the locus of the spirit or soul of that person; 'devotional offerings of aromatic herbs' were placed in the bowl alongside the skull.

Some 300 kilometres west of the Admiralty Islands are Wuvulu and Aua Islands. These are coral islands barely above sea level. Hunter's collection includes a wood dish, probably from Wuvulu. Parkinson (1999:188) notes that wood bowls are of varied form on Wuvulu and 'The finest, uniquely shaped, are the rectangular dishes with an arched bottom and curved sides



Figure 7. Bowl, obtained by A.J. Hunter, Manus Island, c.1922-23. South Australian Museum A.39882. Photo: B. Craig.



Figure 8. 'Baler' [Wood bowl], 'Matty Island' [Wuvulu], collected by A. J. Hunter c.1922. South Australian Museum A.39860. Photo: B. Craig.

(fig.72). This is called *apia*'. The bowl obtained by Hunter, although described as a baler in the register, is of that kind (Fig. 8).

Another three items from Hunter's collection are a small quadrangular wood bowl (Fig. 9), a small flat rectangular wood bowl (Fig. 10), both probably from Tami Islands, and an anthropomorphic figure (Fig. 11) probably from Finschhafen at the south-east corner of the Huon Peninsula.

The small quadrangular bowl (A.39883) is of highly polished black wood. The wood is undoubtedly of the *Azelia biyuga* tree; the black colouring is applied by rubbing on soil with a manganese or graphite content that is found on Umboi Island and Logaueng, a hill south of Finschhafen, mixed with the sap of beech almond root (Bodrogi 1961:100). A geometric pattern on each side of the bowl, perhaps representing conus rings (*kematen*) is painted white and red, and an anthropomorphic figure (perhaps a *balum* spirit) with outstretched arms forms a handle at each end of the bowl.

Bowls have a practical function as food containers but are the major trade item. Bodrogi (1961:99) quotes Lehner (1911): *...certain trades are restricted to certain areas. Nobody would, for instance, dream of carving a wooden bowl in Bukawa [despite being an expert wood carver himself] . . . The reason for such restraint is this: it might occur that a person from Bukawa represents a snake or lizard for decorative purposes and that animal happens to be the bobolo of the Tami. This would be reason enough for the Tami to stop all communication with the whole village of the culprit, a danger which induces all Bukawa people to leave the whole business alone.*

The small flat bowl (A.11892) has two compartments and is used to sort beads made from small conus shells (Bodrogi 1961:104-105 and Figs 110, 111). This bowl has a representation of a double-headed lizard carved and painted on its underside and three projecting lugs carved as *yabo* (circular pig tusk ornaments).

The figure of indeterminate gender (A.11894) is closest in form to figures from Finschhafen and nearby Buabalum. It has the representation of a *Varanus* lizard (*pap* in Yabim) on its back. Bodrogi writes that these figures were kept in the men's club houses (*lum*), sometimes hanging from the rafters, and suggesting a cult function (1961:65). It is also possible that this figure has been cut from the end of a beam of a men's cult house.



Figure 9 (left and below). Wood bowl, 'Huon Gulf' [probably Tami Islands], obtained by A.J. Hunter c.1914-16? South Australian Museum A.39883. Photos: B. Craig

For the Yabim of the Finschhafen area, Bodrogi states 'the portrayal of a human figure, head, or face never shows an ordinary human being, but the *balum* spirit which plays an outstanding role in religious and social life' (1961:159). A translation from German to English of Stephen Lehner's account of the *balum* cult of the Bukawa was published in *Oceania* (5,3: 338-345).

Balum refers to the men's secret cult, the spirits of the dead, the ancestral spirit of the clan, and the bullroarers whose sound is the voice of the *balum* (called *kani* on the Tami Islands). The secrets of the *balum* were learnt by youths at their initiation. Initiation ceremonies were held every ten to eighteen years hosted in turn by the Kate, Tami Islanders, Yabim and Bukawa, with candidates coming from villages throughout the region. For this purpose, peace was declared.

When the men took the youths away for initiation, they told the women that their sons were to be swallowed by the *balum* and would be regurgitated as young men. During the seclusion of the novices in the initiation house, built in the bush away from the village, they were physically chastised, placed under food and water restrictions, were taught to blow whistles and flutes, and to swing the *balum* bullroarers. Male initiation involved circumcision and if a novice bled to death as a result of a clumsy circumcision, the men told the women that the *balum* was unable to regurgitate the boy. After circumcision, the novices, still in seclusion, were told many stories and given moral instruction, and expressly warned not to breathe a word to the women of what they had been through.

Circumcision was explained to the women as the result of the *balum* biting the novices when it swallowed them. A pig was sacrificed for each novice to

Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Sailor – Part III (b)

Continued from page 7



Figure 10. A.11892. Bead-sorting bowl, probably Tami Islands, obtained by A.J. Hunter c.1914-16? Pacific Cultures Gallery, South Australian Museum A.11892. Photo: Tony Vlavogelakis.

ensure survival from the ordeal (and eaten in secret by the men) but a large pig feast for everyone finalised the initiation celebrations when the young men were presented to the village.

Before returning to their home villages, the newly initiated youths were presented with boars' tusk ornaments (*yabo*) which were traded from the Siassi Islands. Only the Siassi men knew how to obtain full-circle tusks from their boars. Full-circle tusks are extremely valuable, more so than the conus-ring ornaments (*kematen*) made by Siassi and Tami Islander women that imitate the shape of the *yabo* and are used as an ornament by adolescent boys and girls.

References

- Beier, U. and P. Aris. 1975. *Sigia: Artistic Design in Murik Lakes*. Gigibori 2, 2:17-36.
- Beran, H. and B. Craig. 2005. *Shields of Melanesia*. Adelaide: Crawford House Publishing Australia in assoc. with Oceanic Art Society, Sydney.
- Bodrogi, T. 1961. *Art in North-East New Guinea*. Budapest: Hungarian Academy of Sciences.
- Haberland E. and S. Seyfarth. 1974. *Die Yimar am Oberen Korowori (Neuguinea)*. Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner.
- Kelm, H. 1966. *Kunst vom Sepik*. I. Berlin: Museum für Völkerkunde.
- McCarthy, J.K. 1963. *Patrol Into Yesterday. My New Guinea Years*. Melbourne: F.W. Cheshire.
- Neuhaus, R. 1911. *Deutsch-Neu-Guinea*. Band 1. Berlin: Dietrich Reimer.
- Olig, S. 2008. Zeichen am Sepik. *Münchener Beiträge zur Völkerkunde* 12:209-255.
- Ohnemus, S. 1998. *An Ethnology of the Admiralty Islanders. The Alfred Bühler Collection, Museum der Kulturen, Basel*. Bathurst: Crawford House Publishing.
- Parkinson, R. 1999. *Thirty years in the South Seas*. (English translation by J. Dennison) Bathurst: Crawford House Publishing in association with Oceania Publications, University of Sydney.
- Reche, O. 1913. *Ergebnisse der Südsee-Expedition 1908-1910*. Hamburg: Friederichsen & Co.

- [1] *The Advertiser*, Adel. 2 October 1912, p.15.
- [2] *Observer*, Adel. 1 December 1917, p.19.
- [3] Unpublished MS in South Australian Museum Archives AA145. Also in this archive is Hunter's unpublished MS, 'Some Experiences of a District Officer in the Mandated Territory of New Guinea', and a large number of photographs.



Figure 11. Balum spirit figure, probably Finschhafen, obtained by A.J. Hunter c.1914-16? Pacific Cultures Gallery, South Australian Museum A.11894. Photo: Tony Vlavogelakis.

Advance Sale Notice

The Todd Barlin Collection Of Oceanic and Asian Art

Part Two May 8

Online catalogue available

Enquiries Jim Elmslie 0407 913 870
AOA@theodorebruceauctions.com.au

Theodore Bruce Auctioneers
6 Ralph Street, Alexandria, 2015, NSW
www.theodorebruceauctions.com.au

 THEODORE BRUCE



Shield, Motu People, Central Province,
Papua New Guinea, 19th Century,
Provenance: BL Hornshaw Collection (1878-1937)

An impressive gift to the National Gallery

By Crispin Howarth

Half a lifetime ago, in 1971, Assistant District Commissioner, Laurie Bragge, conducted an exploratory government patrol accompanied by Sir David Attenborough behind the Hunstein Ranges of East Sepik Province; an area that had remained largely unexplored until late 1962. Travelling from the Sepik tributary of the Korosameri into the Salumei River then across land to connect with the April River before returning to the Sepik, the patrol visited several communities including the Bahinemo villages of Inaro and Gahom known for their hook sculptures.

David Attenborough is known to many but perhaps less so for his passion for collecting tribal art and so he took the opportunity to learn about and purchase several examples of the Bahinemo art. At Inaro village, situated steeply on a hill overlooking the Salumei River, David purchased three hook sculptures, called *Garra*, which have just been gifted to the National Gallery of Australia. These impressive sculptures were kept in the small, low-ceilinged cult houses and represent bush spirits. They were believed to assist in the hunt

David Attenborough is known to many but perhaps less so for his passion for collecting tribal art

for cassowaries, pigs and other game and in catching fish. Their broad shape with flattened, rather than rounded hooks is characteristic of *Garra* from the Salumei River and two are of the largest sizes (122 and 147 cm tall). David's diary entry for the 6th May gives some information regarding these larger two *Garra*:

"I spent time talking to the local Tul-tul about the two big examples. They are not old but were made quite recently as replacements for ones which Wayne Heathcote bought some time ago.

The more circular of the two is a 'Meri' for it has a 'bokis' at the bottom, with an actual hole.

The slim one is 'manfella' I tried to encourage them with saying that the projections were in some way phallic 'im cock belong im?' But they are quite emphatic that they were 'hook tasall'.

Their function is to be shown to young boys at initiation which here is two punches of the nostrils in the front of the nose. However they said that they were not having many initiations these days."

The patrol continued for several weeks over arduous terrain and the resulting ABC/BBC documentary 'A Blank on the Map' captures the fascinating moments of first contact with a tribal group.

This generous gift from an adventure long ago came as a kind response to last year's exhibition at the NGA *Myth + Magic: Art of the Sepik River*. These *Garra* will soon go on display alongside the Gallery's other five Hunstein hook sculptures (where else in the world can you see eight *Garra*?) and, in June, Laurie Bragge will talk at the Gallery on Sepik art and his experience on this expedition.

These gifted works will be on display later in the year alongside four more *Garra* in the NGA collection.



Garra (female hook), Garra (male hook) and Garra (hook) c 1966-1971, wood. National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, Gift of David Attenborough, 2016. Courtesy National Gallery of Australia

Art Dealer in the Last Unknown



Join
Ron Perry in
the jungles of
New Guinea
1964-1973



\$35 USD + shipping

ORDER NOW

at Art-Pacific.com

plus

only \$3.99

at Amazon & Apple

Event Calendar at

Art-Pacific.com/calendar.htm

New Guinea
Tribal Art
eGuide



by Carolyn Leigh



“Embodied Spirits: Gope Boards from the Papuan Gulf” by Virginia-Lee Webb



5 Continents Editions Publisher, Italy, 2016. Reviewed by Peter McCabe



Spirit board (gope) from the Gope ethnic district. From the Tomkins Collection.

Early photos of the Papuan Gulf show an abundance of highly decorated oval boards often grouped together with a collection of skulls in what have been referred to as “shrines”. These boards have specific names within subregions of the Gulf including *hohao*, *kope*, *kwoi*, *titi ébiha* and *gope*, but it is by the latter name they are best known outside of New Guinea. *Gope* come in a seemingly endless variety of designs, most of which have some anthropomorphic image, often with a grinning face. There are full-page colour images of 136 *gope*. The majority (99) are from the private Tomkins Collection and others have been selected from museum and private collections from around the world.

The book provides a superb overview of *gope*. It is destined to become a classic reference for

Gope come in a seemingly endless variety of designs, most of which have some anthropomorphic image, often with a grinning face.

identification of regional styles, having a much wider range of illustrated *gope* than the earlier classic reference books based on eponymous exhibits: *Art Style of the Papuan Gulf* (1961) and *Coaxing the Spirits to Dance* (2006). However, unlike the other two books it does not place *gope* within the wider spectrum of Papuan Gulf art. The book includes several *bioma* but, while impressive, seem to have been selected as close relatives of *gope*, tending to have short protruding limbs compared to many classic *bioma* figures that have long limbs projecting from a relatively small body. There are no skull racks included in the book though their stylistic patterns are closely related to *gope*.

Embodied Spirits starts with four articles, authored by Robert Welsch, Virginia-Lee Webb and



**Michael Hamson
Oceanic Art**

“I am always interested in buying top quality Oceanic art”

360 Palos Verdes Drive West • Palos Verdes Estates, CA 90274 • USA
Tel (310) 373-1392 • Fax (310) 373-5501 • Cell (310) 619-4562
mhamson@michaelhamson.com • www.michaelhamson.com

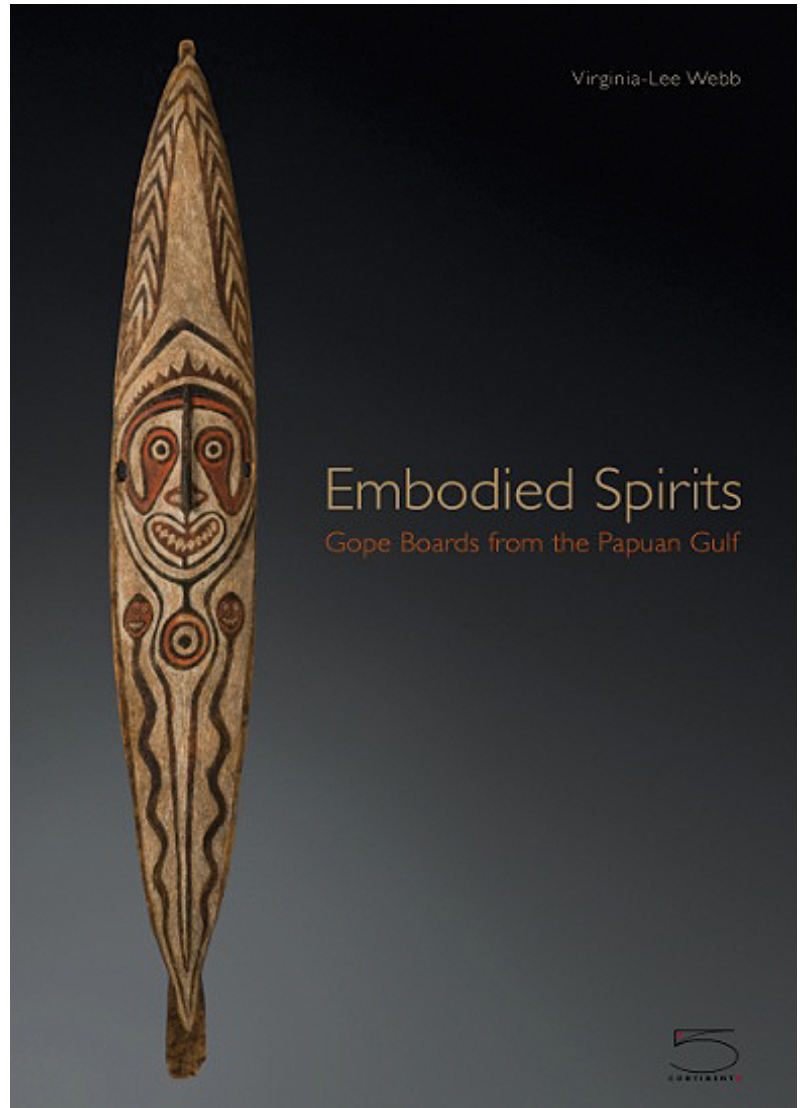
book review

Schulze-Westrum, that discuss the form and meaning of *gope* and the history of photographic recording and collecting of *gope* by Westerners. These are excellent articles though the large format and weight of the book (356 pages) makes it a little difficult for casual reading on an easy chair.

Each illustrated *gope* has its own unique style and charm and few have been published before. There are many field photographs of *gope* throughout the book that hint at the original importance of these boards to the inhabitants of the Papuan Gulf. Schulze-Westrum collected 40 of the boards and several are accompanied by photos taken at the time of collection. A significant number of other *gopes* originated in Australian collections: Todd Barlin and George Craig, in particular are cited in the provenance of a number of the *gope*.

Embodied Spirits is a great tribute to the past artists of the Papuan Gulf. It is a must for any lover of Papuan Gulf art.

Each illustrated *gope* has its own unique style and charm and few have been published before.



Front cover of *Embodied Spirits* showing spirit board (hohao) collected from the Elema people in the 19th century. Tomkins Collection.

POLYNESIAN ART

We are desperately looking for all items for our collection.

All enquiries promptly and cheerfully answered.

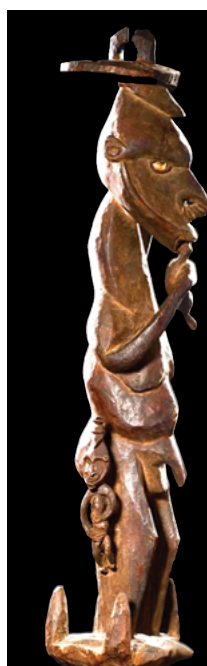
Send photos with details to:

Mark and Carolyn Blackburn

1188 Bishop Street
Suite 2801
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

mobile 808 228 3019

email: Mblackburn@aol.com



Chris Boylan Oceanic Art

I am interested to buy single pieces or collections of pre-1960 Oceanic Art.

I have not had a gallery for many years, but my warehouse is accessible for visits when I am in Sydney. Please call me.

cboylan@tpg.com.au TEL +61 0405 093 577

special pieces

Presentation display holders for shell money

By Col Davidson

These items are extremely rare and apparently unknown until recently.

Over a period of time Richard Aldridge has seen about twelve of them in the tiny area between the Orokolo villages and Chu village. Of these he was able to obtain about eight – so less than ten of these items have been available to collectors or museums.

They are made of bone, possibly cassowary, and have numerous holes in the flat “ear” at one end. Richard at first thought them to be limesticks but an elderly villager explained that they were used solely to display the red shell money discs for bride price payments

– each hole was used to thread a string of the small red shell beads for the presentation.

The red shell discs mentioned are now quite rare in the area but originally were traded from the Motu people near Port Moresby who obtained these money items, called *ageva*, from nearby islands where they were manufactured.

These “money presentation sticks” are somewhat similar in use to the Massim *gabaiera* mentioned by Seligmann. These were mushroom shaped spatulas which held strings of the *sapi-sapi* red shell discs and were also used in presentations.



Papuan Gulf area, early 20th Century, Collected by Richard Aldridge in the tiny area from Orokolo villages to Chu village – just a few kilometres to their east. From 200mm to 275mm long.

other events

Sydney, Australia: Powerhouse Museum

Exhibition: *A fine possession: jewellery and identity.*
Last day May 22, 2016

New York, USA: Sotheby's Auctions

African, Oceanic & Pre Columbian
7 May 2016
Viewing 29 April - 6 May
1334 York Avenue
sothebys.com/african-art

Sydney, Australia: Theodore Bruce Auctions

Todd Barlin final sale
9 May 2016
6 Ralph Street Alexandria NSW
www.theodorebruceauctions.com.au

Los Angeles, USA: Bonham's Auctions

African and Oceanic Art
11 May 2016, 10am
Preview 7 - 10 May
+1 (323) 436 5416
www.bonhams.com/tribal

Guam:

12th annual Festival of Pacific Arts
May 22 - June 4 2016
<http://festpac.visitguam.com/>

Melbourne, Australia: National Gallery of Victoria, level 3

“NGV Collection Focus: Art of the Pacific”
Now until August, 2016.

Melbourne, Australia: Museum of Victoria

Several items from the War Trophies or Curios collection can be seen in the *Te Pasifika* exhibition.

Editor: James Elmslie
PO Box 1084 Edgecliff NSW 2027 Australia
email: secretary@oceanicartsociety.org.au
Contact number: 61-2-9332 3984
Journal design: David Hourigan Design
Web Master: Jerry Liew
Facebook: Jerry Liew
Advertising: Irene Ashburn

Membership rates for 2016:
\$55 single, \$65 joint and \$165 for three year OAS Membership.

Annual Advertising Rates:
1/4 single column \$250 for 5 issues
1/4 double column \$500 for 5 issues
A4 inserts (supplied by advertiser) \$200/ issue
A4 colour inserts (printed by OAS) \$360/ issue

OAS actively seeks articles and photographs of interest for this publication, and requests your participation.

Opinions in signed articles are those of each author and not necessarily those of the OAS, and spelling variations of some words may be found as they reflect global differences.

OAS acknowledges all Pacific artists, past and present.