



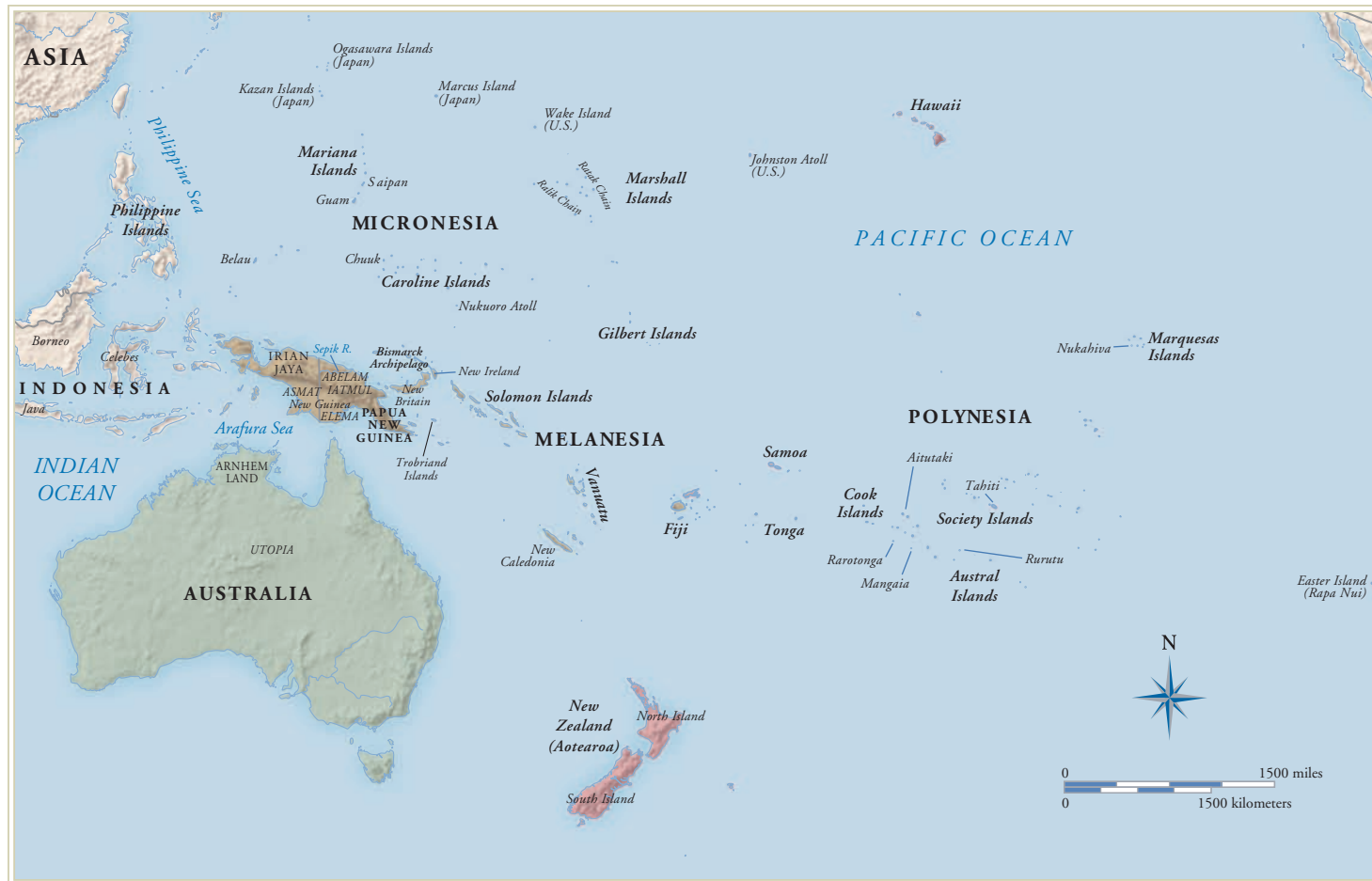
33-1 Moai, Anakena, Rapa Nui (Easter Island), Polynesia, 10th to 12th centuries. Volcanic tuff and red scoria.

The colossal stone sculptures of Easter Island predate the arrival of Europeans in Oceania by several centuries. Almost 900 moai are known, even though each statue took 30 men a full year to carve.

OCEANIA

When people think of the South Pacific, images of balmy tropical islands usually come to mind. But the islands of the Pacific Ocean encompass a wide range of habitats. Environments range from the arid deserts of the Australian outback to the tropical rain forests of inland New Guinea to the coral atolls of the Marshall Islands. In all, more than 25,000 islands dot Oceania (MAP 33-1), and the region is not only geographically varied but also politically, linguistically, culturally, and artistically diverse. In 1831 the French explorer Jules Sébastien César Dumont d'Urville (1790–1842) proposed dividing the Pacific into major regions based on general geographical, racial, and linguistic distinctions. Despite its limitations, his division of Oceania into the areas of Melanesia (“black islands”), Micronesia (“small islands”), and Polynesia (“many islands”) continues in use today. Melanesia includes New Guinea, New Ireland, New Britain, New Caledonia, the Admiralty Islands, and the Solomon Islands, along with other smaller island groups. Micronesia consists primarily of the Caroline, Mariana, Gilbert, and Marshall Islands in the western Pacific. Polynesia covers much of the eastern Pacific and consists of a triangular area defined by the Hawaiian Islands in the north, Rapa Nui (Easter Island) in the east, and New Zealand in the southwest.

Although documentary evidence does not exist for Oceanic cultures until the arrival of seafaring Europeans in the early 16th century, archaeologists have determined that the islands have been inhabited for tens of thousands of years. Their research has revealed that different parts of the Pacific experienced distinct migratory waves. The first group arrived during the last Ice Age, at least 40,000 and perhaps as many as 75,000 years ago, when a large continental shelf extended from Southeast Asia and gave land access to Australia and New Guinea. After the end of the Ice Age, descendants of these first settlers dispersed to other islands in Melanesia. The most recent migratory wave occurred sometime after 3000 BCE and involved peoples of Asian ancestry moving to areas of Micronesia and Polynesia. The last Pacific islands to be settled were those of Polynesia, but habitation on its most far-flung islands—Hawaii, New Zealand, and Easter Island—began no later than 500 to 1000 CE. Because of the lengthy chronological span of these migrations, Pacific cultures vary widely. For example, the Aboriginal peoples of Australia speak a language unrelated to those of New Guinea, whose languages fall into a distinct but diverse group. In contrast, most of the rest of the Pacific islanders speak languages derived from the Austronesian language family.



MAP 33-1 Oceania.

These island groups came to Western attention as a result of the extensive exploration and colonization that began in the 16th century and reached its peak in the 19th century. Virtually all of the major Western nations—including Great Britain, France, Spain, Holland, Germany, and the United States—established a presence in the Pacific. Much of the history of Oceania in the 20th century revolved around indigenous peoples' struggles for independence from these colonial powers. Yet colonialism also facilitated an exchange of ideas—not solely the one-way transfer of Western cultural values and technology to the Pacific. Oceanic art, for example, had a strong impact on many Western artists, including, as already noted, Paul Gauguin (FIG. 31-19). The “primitive” art of Oceania also influenced many early-20th-century artists (see “Primitivism,” Chapter 35, page 920).

This chapter focuses on Oceanic art from the European discovery of the islands in the 16th century until the present, although the colossal stone statues of Easter Island (FIG. 33-1) predate the arrival of Europeans by several centuries. Knowledge of early Oceanic art and the history of the Pacific islands in general is unfortunately very incomplete. Traditionally, the transmission of information from one generation to the next in Pacific societies was largely oral, rather than written, and little archival documentation exists. Nonetheless, archaeologists, linguists, anthropologists, ethnologists, and art historians continue to make progress in illuminating the Oceanic past.

AUSTRALIA AND MELANESIA

The westernmost Oceanic islands are the continent-nation of Australia and New Guinea in Melanesia. Together they dwarf the area of all the other Pacific islands combined.

Australia

Over the past 40,000 years, the Aboriginal peoples of Australia spread out over the entire continent and adapted to a variety of ecological conditions, ranging from those of tropical and subtropical areas in the north to desert regions in the interior and to more temperate locales in the south. European explorers reaching the region in the late 18th and early 19th centuries found that the Aborigines had a special relationship with the land they lived on. The Aboriginal perception of the world centers on a concept known as the Dreamings, ancestral beings whose spirits pervade the present. All Aborigines identify certain Dreamings as totemic ancestors, and those who share the same Dreamings have social links. The Aborigines call the spiritual domain that the Dreamings occupy Dreamtime, which is both a physical space within which the ancestral beings moved in creating the landscape and a psychic space that provides Aborigines with cultural, religious, and moral direction. Because of the importance of Dreamings to all aspects of Aboriginal life, native Australian art symbolically links Aborigines with these ancestral spirits. The Aborigines recite creation myths in concert with songs and dances, and many art forms—body painting, carved figures, sacred objects, decorated stones, and rock and bark painting—serve as essential props in these dramatic re-creations. Most Aboriginal art is relatively small and portable. As hunters and gatherers in difficult terrain, the Aborigines were generally nomadic peoples. Monumental art was impractical.

BARK PAINTING Bark, widely available in Australia, is portable and lightweight, and bark painting became a mainstay of Aboriginal art. Dreamings, mythic narratives (often tracing the movement of var-



33-2 Auenau, from Western Arnhem Land, Australia, 1913. Ochre on bark, 4' 10 $\frac{2}{3}$ " \times 1' 1". South Australian Museum, Adelaide.

Aboriginal painters frequently depicted Dreamings, ancestral beings whose spirits pervade the present, using the "X-ray style" that shows both the figure's internal organs and external appearance.

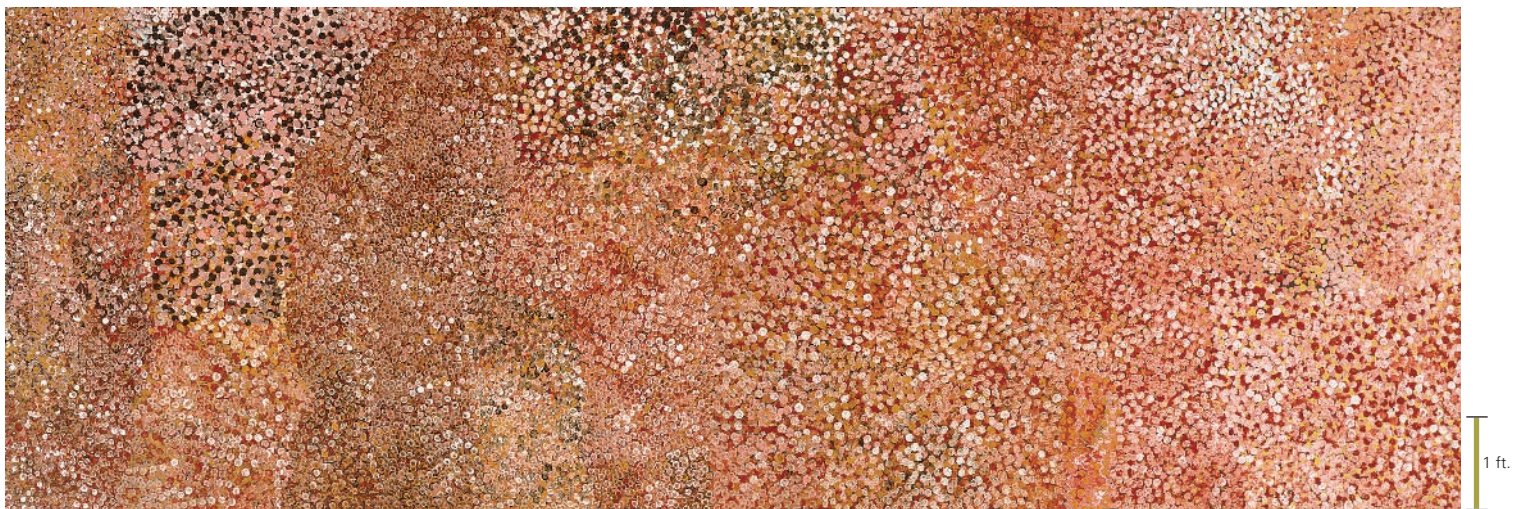
ious ancestral spirits through the landscape), and sacred places were common subjects. Ancestral spirits pervade the lives of the Aborigines, and these paintings served to give visual form to that presence. Traditionally, an Aborigine could depict only a Dreaming with which the artist had a connection. Thus, specific Aboriginal lineages, clans, or regional groups "owned" individual designs. The bark painting illustrated here (FIG. 33-2) depicts a Dreaming known as Auenau and comes from Arnhem Land in northern Australia. The artist represented the elongated figure in a style known as "X-ray," which Aboriginal painters used to depict both animal and human forms. In this style, the artist simultaneously portrays the subject's internal organs and exterior appearance. The painting possesses a fluid and dynamic quality, with the X-ray-like figure clearly defined against a solid background.

EMILY KAME KNGWARREYE Aboriginal artists today retain close ties to the land and the spirits that inhabit it, but some contemporary painters have eliminated figures from their work and produced canvases that, superficially at least, resemble American *Abstract Expressionist* paintings (FIG. 36-5). **EMILY KAME KNGWARREYE** (1910–1996) began painting late in life after cofounding a communal women's *batik* group in Utopia. Her canvases (FIG. 33-3) clearly reveal her background as a fabric artist, but they draw their inspiration from the landscape of her native land. Using thousands of color dots that sometimes join to form thick curvilinear bands, she conjured the image of arid land, seeds, and plants. The often huge size of her paintings further suggests the vastness of the Australian countryside.

New Guinea

Because of its sheer size, New Guinea dominates Melanesia. This 309,000-square-mile island consists today of parts of two countries—Irian Jaya, a province of nearby Indonesia, on the island's western end, and Papua New Guinea on the eastern end. New Guinea's inhabitants together speak nearly 800 different languages, almost one quarter of the world's known tongues. Among the Melanesian cultures discussed in this chapter, the Asmat, Iatmul, Elema, and Abelam peoples of New Guinea all speak Papuan-derived languages. Scholars believe they are descendants of the early settlers who came to the island in the remote past. In contrast, the people of New Ireland and the Trobriand Islands are Austronesian speakers and probably descendants of a later wave of Pacific migrants.

Typical Melanesian societies are fairly democratic and relatively unstratified. What political power exists belongs to groups of elder men and, in some areas, elder women. The elders handle the people's affairs in a communal fashion. Within some of these groups, persons of local distinction, known as "Big Men," renowned for their political, economic, and, historically, warrior skills, have accrued power. Because power and position in Melanesia can be earned (within limits), many cultural practices (such as rituals and cults) revolve around the acquisition of knowledge that allows advancement in society. To represent and acknowledge this advancement in rank, Melanesian societies mount elaborate festivals, construct communal meetinghouses, and produce art objects. These cultural products serve to reinforce the social order and maintain social stability.



33-3 Emily Kame Kngwarreye, *Untitled*, 1992. Synthetic polymer paint on canvas, 5' 5" \times 15' 9". Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney.

Aboriginal painter Kngwarreye's canvases reveal her background as a batik artist. Her abstract paintings draw their inspiration from the seeds and plants of the arid Australian landscape.



33-4 Left: Asmat bisj poles, Buepis village, Fajit River, Casuarina Coast, Irian Jaya, Melanesia, early to mid-20th century. Above: Detail of a bisj pole. Painted wood. Asmat Museum, Agats.

The Asmat carved bisj poles from mangrove tree trunks and erected them before undertaking a headhunting raid. The carved figures represent the relatives whose deaths the hunters must avenge.

Given the wide diversity in environments and languages, it is no surprise that hundreds of art styles are found on New Guinea alone. Only a sample can be presented here.

ASMAT Living along the southwestern coast of New Guinea, the Asmat people of Irian Jaya eke out their existence by hunting and gathering the varied flora and fauna found in the mangrove swamps, rivers, and tropical forests. Each Asmat community is in constant competition for limited resources. Historically, the Asmat extended this competitive spirit beyond food and materials to energy and power as well. To increase one's personal energy or spiritual power required taking it forcibly from someone else. As a result, warfare and headhunting became central to Asmat culture and art. The Asmat did not believe any death was natural. Death could result only from a direct assault (headhunting or warfare) or sorcery, and it diminished ancestral power.

Thus, to restore a balance of spirit power, an enemy's head had to be taken to avenge a death and to add to one's communal spirit power. Headhunting was still common in the 1930s when Europeans established an administrative and missionary presence among the Asmat, but as a result of European efforts, the custom ceased by the 1960s.

When they still practiced headhunting, the Asmat erected *bisj poles* (FIG. 33-4) that served as a pledge to avenge a relative's death. A man would set up a bisj pole when he could command the support of enough men to undertake a headhunting raid. Carved from the trunk of the mangrove tree, bisj poles include superimposed figures of dead individuals. At the top, extending flangelike from the bisj pole, was one of the tree's buttress roots carved into an openwork pattern. All of the decorative elements on the pole related to headhunting and foretold a successful raid. The many animals carved on bisj poles (and in Asmat art in general) are symbols of headhunting.



33-5 Iatmul ceremonial men's house, East Sepik, Papua New Guinea, Melanesia, mid- to late 20th century.

The men's house is the center of Iatmul life. Its distinctive saddle-shaped roof symbolizes the protective mantle of ancestors. The carved ornament includes female ancestors in the birthing position.

The Asmat see the human body as a tree—the feet as the roots, the arms as the branches, and the head as the fruit. Thus any fruit-eating bird or animal (such as the black king cockatoo, the hornbill, or the flying fox) was symbolic of the headhunter and appeared frequently on bisj poles. Asmat art also often includes representations of the praying mantis. The Asmat consider the female praying mantis's practice of beheading her mate after copulation and then eating him as another form of headhunting. The curvilinear or spiral patterns that fill the pierced openwork at the top of the bisj poles can be related to the characteristic curved tail of the cuscus (a fruit-eating mammal) or the tusk of a boar (related to hunting and virility). Once the Asmat carved the bisj poles, they placed them on a rack near the community's men's house. After the success of the headhunting expedition, the men discarded the bisj poles and allowed them to rot, because they had served their purpose.

IATMUL The Iatmul people live along the middle Sepik River in Papua New Guinea in communities based on kinship. Villages include extended families as well as different clans. The social center of every Iatmul village is a massive saddle-shaped men's ceremonial house (FIG. 33-5). In terms of both function and form, the men's house reveals the primacy of the kinship network. The meeting-house reinforces kinship links by serving as the locale for initiation of local youths for advancement in rank, for men's discussions of community issues, and for ceremonies linked to the Iatmul's ancestors. Because only men can advance in Iatmul society, women and

uninitiated boys cannot enter the men's house. In this manner, the Iatmul men control access to knowledge and therefore to power. Given its important political and cultural role, the men's house is appropriately monumental, physically dominating Iatmul villages and dwarfing family houses. Although men's houses are common in New Guinea, those of the Iatmul are the most lavishly decorated.

Traditionally, the house symbolizes the protective mantle of the ancestors and represents an enormous female ancestor. The Iatmul house and its female ancestral figures symbolize a reenacted death and rebirth when a clan member scales a ladder and enters and then exits the second story of the house. The gable ends of men's houses are usually covered and include a giant female gable mask, making the ancestral symbolism visible. The interior carvings, however, are normally hidden from view. The Iatmul placed carved images of clan ancestors on the central ridge-support posts and on the roof-support posts on both sides of the house. They capped each roof-support post with large faces representing mythical spirits of the clans. At the top of the two raised spires at each end, birds symbolizing the war spirit of the village men sit above carvings of headhunting victims (on occasion, male ancestors).

The subdivision of the house's interior into parts for each clan reflects the social demographic of the village. Many meetinghouses have three parts—a front, middle, and end—representing the three major clans who built it. These parts have additional subclan divisions, which also have support posts carved with images of mythical male and female ancestors. Beneath the house, each clan keeps large carved slit-gongs to serve as both instruments of communication (for sending drum messages within and between villages) and the voices of ancestral spirits. On the second level of the house, above the horizontal crossbeam beneath the gable, the Iatmul placed carved wooden figures symbolizing female clan ancestors, depicted in a birthing position. The Iatmul also keep various types of portable art in their ceremonial houses. These include ancestors' skulls overmodeled with clay in a likeness of the deceased, ceremonial chairs, sacred flutes, hooks for hanging sacred items and food, and several types of masks.

ELEMA Central to the culture of the Elema people of Orokol Bay in the Papuan Gulf was *Hevehe*, an elaborate cycle of ceremonial activities. Conceptualized as the mythical visitation of the water spirits (*ma-hevehe*), the Hevehe cycle involved the production and presentation of large, ornate masks (also called hevehe). The Elema last practiced Hevehe in the 1930s. Primarily organized by the male elders of the village, the cycle was a communal undertaking, completion of which normally took from 10 to 20 years. The duration of the Hevehe and the resources and human labor required reinforced cultural and economic relations and maintained the social structure in which elder male authority dominated.

Throughout the cycle, the Elema held ceremonies to initiate male youths into higher ranks. These ceremonies involved the exchange of wealth (such as pigs and shell ornaments), thereby serving an economic purpose as well. The cycle culminated in the display of the finished hevehe masks. Each mask consisted of painted barkcloth (see "Barkcloth," page 881) wrapped around a cane-and-wood frame that fit over the wearer's body. A hevehe mask was normally 9 to 10 feet tall, although extensions often raised the height to as much as 25 feet. Because of its size and intricate design, a hevehe mask required great skill to construct, and only trained men would participate in mask making. Designs were specific to particular clans, and elder men passed them down to the next generation from memory. Each mask represented a female sea spirit, but the decoration of the mask often incorporated designs from local flora and fauna as well.

33-6 Elema hevehe masks retreating into the men's house, Orokolo Bay, Papua New Guinea, Melanesia, early to mid-20th century.

The Hevehe was a cycle of ceremonial activities spanning 10 to 20 years, culminating in the dramatic appearance of hevehe masks from the Elema men's house. The masks represent female sea spirits.

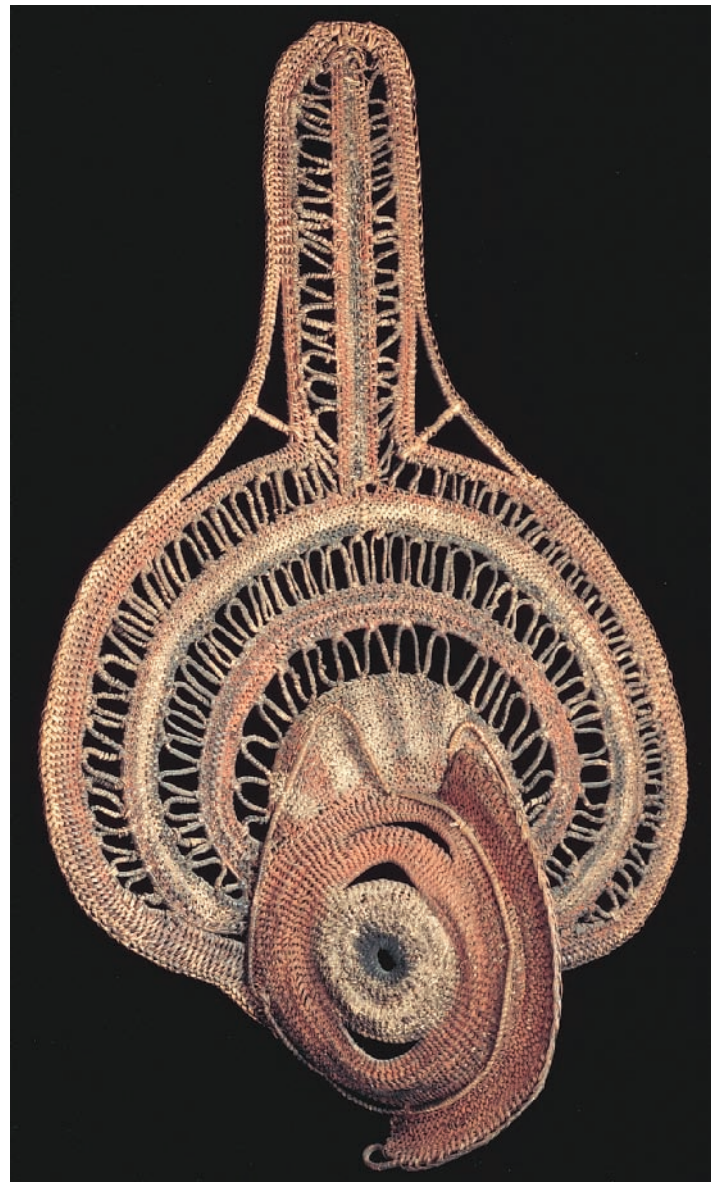


The final stage of the cycle (FIG. 33-6) focused on the dramatic appearance of the masks from the *eravo* (men's house). After a procession, men wearing the hevehe mingled with relatives. Upon conclusion of related dancing (often lasting about one month), the Elema ritually killed the masks and then dumped them in piles and burned them. This destruction allowed the sea spirits to return to their mythic domain and provided a pretext for commencing the cycle again.

ABELAM The art of the Abelam people highlights that Oceanic art relates not only to fundamental spiritual beliefs but also to basic subsistence. The Abelam are agriculturists living in the hilly regions north of the Sepik River. Relatively isolated, the Abelam received only sporadic visits from foreigners until the 1930s, and thus little is known about early Abelam history. The principal crop is the yam. Because of the importance of yams to the survival of Abelam society, those who can grow the largest yams achieve power and prestige. Indeed, the Abelam developed a complex yam cult, which involves a series of rites and activities intended to promote the growth of the tubers. Special plantations focus on yam cultivation. Only initiated men who observe strict rules of conduct, including sexual abstinence, can work these fields. The Abelam believe that ancestors aid in the growth of yams, and they hold ceremonies to honor these ancestors. Special long yams (distinct from the short yams cultivated for consumption) are on display during these festivities, and the largest bear the names of important ancestors. Yam masks (FIG. 33-7) with cane or wood frames, usually painted red, white, yellow, and black, are an integral part of the ceremonies. The most elaborate masks also incorporate sculpted faces, cassowary feathers, and shell ornaments. The Abelam use the same designs to decorate their bodies for dances, revealing how closely they identify with their principal food source.

33-7 Abelam yam mask, from Maprik district, Papua New Guinea, Melanesia. Painted cane, 1' 6 ²/₁₀" high. Musée Barbier-Mueller, Geneva.

The Abelam believe their ancestors aid in the growth of their principal crop, the yam. Painted cane yam masks are an important part of the elaborate ceremonies honoring these ancestors.



1 in.

New Ireland and the Trobriand Islands

East of New Guinea but part of the modern nation of Papua New Guinea are New Ireland and the Trobriand Islands, two important Melanesian art centers.

NEW IRELAND Mortuary rites and memorial festivals are a central concern of the Austronesian-speaking peoples who live in the northern section of New Ireland. The term *malanggan* refers to both the festivals held in honor of the deceased and the carvings and objects produced for these festivals. One of the first references to *malanggan* appears in an 1883 publication, and these rituals continue today. *Malanggan* rites are part of an ancestor cult and are critical in facilitating the transition of the soul from the world of the living to the realm of the dead. In addition to the religious function of *malanggan*, the extended ceremonies also promote social solidarity and stimulate the economy (as a result of the resources necessary to mount impressive festivities). To educate the younger generation about these practices, *malanggan* ceremonies also include the initiation of young men.

Among the many *malanggan* carvings produced—masks, figures, poles, friezes, and ornaments—are *tatanua* masks (FIG. 33-8). *Tatanua* represent the spirits of specific deceased people. The materials used to make New Ireland *tatanua* masks are primarily soft wood, vegetable fiber, and rattan. The crested hair, made of fiber, duplicates a hairstyle formerly common among the men. For the eyes, the mask makers insert sea snail opercula (the operculum is the plate that closes the shell). Traditionally, artists paint the masks black, white, yellow, and red—colors the people of New Ireland associate with warfare, magic spells, and violence. Although some masks are display pieces, dancers wear most of them. Rather than destroying their ritual masks after the conclusion of the ceremonies, as so other cultures do, the New Irelanders store them for future use.

TROBRIAND ISLANDS The various rituals of Oceanic cultures discussed thus far often involve exchanges that cement social relationships and reinforce or stimulate the economy. Further, these rituals usually have a spiritual dimension. All of these aspects apply to the practices of the Trobriand Islanders, who live off the coast of the southeastern corner of New Guinea. *Kula*—an exchange of white conus-shell arm ornaments for red chama-shell necklaces—is a char-



33-8 Tatanua mask, from New Ireland, Papua New Guinea, Melanesia, 19th to 20th centuries. Wood, fiber, shell, lime, and feathers, 1' 5½" high. Otago Museum, Dunedin.

In New Ireland, *malanggan* rites facilitate the transition of the soul from this world to that of the dead. Dancers wearing *tatanua* masks representing the deceased play a key role in these ceremonies.

acteristic practice of the Trobriand Islanders. Possibly originating some 500 years ago, *kula* came to Western attention through the extensive documentation of anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski (1884–1942), published in 1920 and 1922. *Kula* exchanges can be complex, and there is great competition for valuable shell ornaments (determined by aesthetic appeal and exchange history). Because of the isolation imposed by their island existence, the Trobriand Islanders had to undertake potentially dangerous voyages to participate in *kula* trading. Appropriately, the Trobrianders lavish a great deal of effort on decorating their large and elaborately carved canoes, which feature ornate prows and splashboards (FIG. 33-9). To ensure a successful *kula* expedition, the Trobrianders invoke spells when attaching these prows to the canoes. Human, bird, and serpent motifs—references to sea spirits, ancestors, and totemic animals—appear on the prows and splashboards.

33-9 Canoe prow and splashboard, from Trobriand Islands, Papua New Guinea, Melanesia, 19th to 20th centuries. Wood and paint, 1' 3½" high, 1' 11" long. Musée du quai Branly, Paris.

To participate in *kula* exchanges, the Trobriand Islanders had to undertake dangerous sea voyages. They decorated their canoes with abstract human, bird, and serpent motifs referring to sea spirits.



1 in.

Because the sculptors use highly stylized motifs in intricate, intertwined curvilinear designs, identification of the specific representations is difficult. In recent decades, the Trobrianders have adapted kula to modern circumstances, largely abandoning canoes for motorboats. The exchanges now facilitate business and political networking.

MICRONESIA

The Austronesian-speaking cultures of Micronesia tend to be more socially stratified than those found in New Guinea and other Melanesian areas. Micronesian cultures frequently center on chieftainships with craft and ritual specializations, and their religions include named deities as well as honored ancestors. Life in virtually all Micronesian cultures focuses on seafaring activities—fishing, trading, and long-distance travel in large oceangoing vessels. For this reason, much of the artistic imagery of Micronesia relates to the sea.

Caroline Islands

The Caroline Islands are the largest island group in Micronesia. The arts of the Caroline Islands include the carving of canoes and the fashioning of charms and images of spirits to protect travelers at sea and for fishing and fertility magic.

CHUUK Given the importance of seafaring, it is not surprising that many of the most highly skilled artists in the Caroline Islands



33-10 Canoe prow ornament, from Chuuk, Caroline Islands, late 19th century. Painted wood, birds $11'' \times 10\frac{5}{8}''$. British Museum, London.

Prow ornaments protected canoe paddlers and could be lowered to signal a peaceful voyage. This Micronesian example may represent facing sandpipers or perhaps a stylized human figure.

were master canoe builders. The canoe prow ornament illustrated here (FIG. 33-10) comes from Chuuk. Carved from a single plank of wood and fastened to a large, paddled war canoe, the prow ornament provided protection on arduous or long voyages. That this and similar prow ornaments are not permanent parts of the canoes reflects their function. When approaching another vessel, the Micronesian seafarers lowered these ornaments as a signal that their voyage was in peace. The seemingly abstract design of the Chuuk prow may represent, at the top, two facing sandpipers. Some scholars, however, think the entire piece represents a stylized human figure, with the “birds” constituting the arms.

BELAU On Belau (formerly Palau) in the Caroline Islands, the islanders put much effort into creating and maintaining elaborately painted men’s ceremonial clubhouses called *bai*. Whereas the Iatmul make their ceremonial houses (FIG. 33-5) by tying, lashing, and weaving different-size posts, trees, saplings, and grasses, the Belau people construct the main structure of the *bai* entirely of worked, fitted, joined, and pegged wooden elements, which allows them to assemble it easily. The Belau *bai* (FIG. 33-11) have steep overhanging roofs decorated with geometric patterns along the roof boards. Skilled artists carve the gable in low relief and paint it with narrative scenes as well as various abstracted forms of the shell money used traditionally on Belau as currency. These decorated storyboards illustrate important historical events and myths related to the clan who built the *bai*. Similar carved and painted crossbeams are inside the house. The rooster images along the base of the facade symbolize the rising sun, while the multiple frontal human faces carved and painted above the entrance and on the vertical elements above the



33-11 Men’s ceremonial house, from Belau (Palau), Republic of Belau, Micronesia, 20th century. Ethnologisches Museum, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Berlin.

The Belau men’s clubhouses (*bai*) have extensive carved and painted decorations illustrating important events and myths related to the clan who built the *bai*. The central motif is a Dilukai (FIG. 33-12).

Women's Roles in Oceania

Given the prominence of men's houses and the importance of male initiation in so many Oceanic societies, one might conclude that women are peripheral members of these cultures. Much of the extant material culture—ancestor masks, shields, clubs—seems to corroborate this. In reality, however, women play crucial roles in most Pacific cultures, although those functions may be less ostentatious or public than those of men. In addition to their significant contributions through exchange and ritual activities to the maintenance and perpetuation of the social network upon which the stability of village life depends, women are important producers of art.

Historically, Oceanic women's artistic production has been restricted mainly to forms such as barkcloth, weaving, and pottery. In some cultures in New Guinea, potters were primarily female. Throughout much of Polynesia, women produced barkcloth (see "Tongan Barkcloth," page 881), which they often dyed and stenciled and sometimes even perfumed. Women in the Trobriand Islands still make brilliantly dyed skirts of shredded banana fiber that not only are aesthetically beautiful but also serve as a form of wealth, presented symbolically during mortuary rituals.

In most Oceanic cultures, women cannot use specialized tools and work in hard materials, such as wood, stone, bone, or ivory, or produce images that have religious or spiritual powers or that confer status on their users. Scholars investigating the role of the artist in Oceania have concluded that the reason for these restrictions is a perceived difference in innate power. Because women have the natural power to create and control life, male-dominated societies developed elaborate ritual practices that served to counteract this female power. By excluding women from participating in these rituals and denying them access to knowledge about specific practices, men derived a political authority that could be perpetuated. It is important to note, however, that even in rituals or activities restricted to men, women often participate. For example, in the now-defunct Hevehe ceremonial cycle (FIG. 33-5) in Papua New Guinea, women helped to construct the masks but feigned ignorance about these sacred objects, because such knowledge was the exclusive privilege of initiated men.

Pacific cultures often acknowledged the innate power of women in the depictions of them in Oceanic art. For example, the splayed Dilukai female sculpture (FIG. 33-12) that appears regularly on Belau



33-12 Dilukai, from Belau (Palau). Wood, pigment, and fiber, 1' 11 $\frac{5}{8}$ " high. Linden Museum, Stuttgart.

Sculpted wooden figures of a splayed female, or Dilukai, commonly appear over the entrance to a Belau bai (FIG. 33-11). The figures served as symbols of fertility and protected the men's house.

bai (men's houses; FIG. 33-11) celebrates women's procreative powers. The Dilukai figure also confers protection upon visitors to the bai, another symbolic acknowledgment of female power. Similar concepts underlie the design of the Iatmul men's house (FIG. 33-5). Conceived as a giant female ancestor, the men's house incorporates women's natural power into the conceptualization of what is normally the most important architectural structure of an Iatmul village. In addition, the Iatmul associate entrance and departure from the men's house with death and rebirth, thereby reinforcing the primacy of fertility and the perception of the men's house as representing a woman's body.

One reason scholars have tended to overlook the active participation of women in all aspects of Oceanic life is that until recently the objects visitors to the Pacific collected were primarily those that suggest aggressive, warring societies. That the majority of these Western travelers were men and therefore had contact predominantly with men no doubt accounts for this pattern of collecting. Recent scholarship has done a great deal to rectify this misperception, thereby revealing the richness of social, artistic, and political activity in the Pacific.

rooster images represent a deity called Blelek. He warns women to stay away from the ocean and the bai or he will molest them.

Although the bai was the domain of men, women figured prominently in the imagery that covered it, consistent with the important symbolic and social positions that women held in Belau culture (see

"Women's Roles in Oceania," above). A common element surmounting the main bai entrance was a simple, symmetrical wooden sculpture (on occasion, a painting) of a splayed female figure, known as *Dilukai* (FIGS. 33-11 and 33-12). Serving as a symbol of both protection and fertility, the Dilukai faces east to absorb the sun's life-giving rays.

POLYNESIA

Polynesia was one of the last areas in the world that humans settled. Habitation in the western Polynesian islands did not begin until about the end of the first millennium BCE, and in the south not until the first millennium CE. The settlers brought complex sociopolitical and religious institutions with them. Whereas Melanesian societies are fairly egalitarian and advancement in rank is possible, Polynesian societies typically are highly stratified, with power determined by heredity. Indeed, rulers often trace their genealogies directly to the gods of creation. Most Polynesian societies possess elaborate political organizations headed by chiefs and ritual specialists. By the 1800s, some Polynesian cultures (Hawaii and the Society Islands, for example) evolved into kingdoms. Because of this social hierarchy, historically most Polynesian art belonged to persons of noble or high religious background and served to reinforce their power and prestige. These objects, like their eminent owners, often possessed *mana*, or spiritual power.

Easter Island

MOAI Some of the earliest datable artworks in Oceania are also the largest. The *moai* (FIG. 33-13) found on Easter Island are monumental sculptures as much as 40 feet tall. They stand as silent sentinels

on stone platforms (*ahu*) marking burial or sacred sites used for religious ceremonies. Most of the moai consist of huge, blocky figures with planar facial features—large staring eyes, strong jaws, straight noses with carefully articulated nostrils, and elongated earlobes. A number of the moai have *pukao*—small red scoria cylinders that serve as a sort of topknot or hat—placed on their heads (FIG. 33-1). Although debate continues, many scholars believe that lineage heads or their sons erected the moai and that the sculptures depict ancestral chiefs. The moai, however, are not individual portraits but generic images that the Easter Islanders believed had the ability to accommodate spirits or gods. The statues thus mediate between chiefs and gods, and between the natural and cosmic worlds.

Archaeological surveys have documented nearly 900 moai. Most of the stones are soft volcanic tuff and came from the same quarry. Some of the sculptures are red scoria, basalt, or trachyte. After quarrying and carving the moai, the Easter Islanders dragged them to the particular *ahu* site and then positioned them vertically. Given the extraordinary size of these *monoliths*, their production and placement serve as testaments to the achievements of this Polynesian culture. Each statue weighs up to 100 tons. According to one scholar, it would have taken 30 men one year to carve a moai, 90 men two months to move it from the quarry, and 90 men three months to position it vertically on the platform.



33-13 Row of moai on a stone platform, Rapa Nui (Easter Island), Polynesia, 10th to 12th centuries. Volcanic tuff and red scoria.

The moai of Easter Island are monoliths as much as 40 feet tall. Most scholars believe they portray ancestral chiefs. They stand on platforms marking burials or sites for religious ceremonies.

Tongan Barkcloth

Tongan barkcloth provides an instructive example of the labor-intensive process of tapa production. At the time of early contact between Europeans and Polynesians in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, ranking women in Tonga made decorated barkcloth (*ngatu*). Today, organizations called *kautaha*—groups of women not of noble birth—produce it, although high-ranking women are often sponsors of the *kautaha*. In Tonga men plant the paper mulberry tree and harvest it in two to three years. They cut the trees into about 10-foot lengths and allow them to dry for several days. Then the women strip off the outer bark and soak the inner bark in water to prepare it for further processing. They place these soaked inner bark strips over a wooden anvil and repeatedly strike them with a wooden beater until they spread out and flatten. Folding and layering the strips while beating them, a type of felting process, results in a wider

piece of *ngatu* than the original strips. Afterward, the beaten barkcloth dries and bleaches in the sun.

The next stage of *ngatu* production involves the placement of the thin, beaten sheets over semicircular boards. The women then fasten embroidered design tablets (*kupesī*—usually produced by men) of low-relief leaf, coconut leaf midribs, and string patterns to the boards. They transfer the patterns on the design tablets to the barkcloth by rubbing. Then the women fill in the lines and patterns by painting, covering the large white spaces with painted figures. The Tongans use brown, red, and black pigments derived from various types of bark, clay, fruits, and soot to create the colored patterns on *ngatu*. Sheets, rolls, and strips of *ngatu* play an important role in weddings, funerals, and ceremonial presentations for ranking persons.



33-14 MELE SITANI, *ngatu* with manulua designs, Tonga, Polynesia, 1967. Barkcloth.

In Tonga, the production of decorated barkcloth, or *ngatu*, involves dyeing, painting, stenciling, and perfuming. Mele Sitani made this one with a two-bird design for the coronation of Tupou IV.

Tonga

Tonga is the westernmost island in Polynesia. Its arts are varied, but one of its most distinctive products is barkcloth, which women have traditionally produced throughout Polynesia.

BARKCLOTH Artists produce barkcloth from the inner bark of the paper mulberry tree. The finished product goes by various names in Polynesia, but during the 19th century, when the production of barkcloth reached its zenith, *tapa* became the most widely used term. Although the primary use of *tapa* in Polynesia was for clothing and bedding, in Tonga large sheets (FIG. 33-14) were (and still are) produced for exchange (see “Tongan Barkcloth,” above). In addition, barkcloth has a spiritual dimension in that it can confer sanctity upon an object wrapped in it. Appropriately, the Polyne-

sians traditionally wrapped the bodies of high-ranking deceased chiefs in barkcloth.

The use and decoration of *tapa* have varied over the years. In the 19th century, *tapa* used for everyday clothing was normally unadorned, whereas *tapa* intended for ceremonial or ritual purposes was dyed, painted, stenciled, and sometimes even perfumed. The designs applied to the *tapa* differed depending upon the particular island group producing it and the function of the cloth. The production process was complex and time-consuming. Indeed, some Oceanic cultures, such as those of Tahiti and Hawaii, constructed buildings specifically for the beating stage in the production of barkcloth. *Tapa* production reached its peak in the early 19th century, partly as a result of the interest expressed by Western whalers and missionaries. By the late 19th century, the use of *tapa* for cloth had

been abandoned throughout much of eastern Polynesia, although its use in rituals (for example, as a wrap for corpses of deceased chiefs or as a marker of tabooed sites) continued. Even today, tapa exchanges are still an integral part of funerals and marriage ceremonies and even the coronation of kings.

The decorated barkcloth, or *ngatu*, shown in FIG. 33-14 clearly shows the richness of pattern, subtlety of theme, and variation of geometric forms that characterize Tongan royal barkcloth. MELE SITANI made this *ngatu* for the accession ceremony of King Tupou IV (r. 1965–2006) of Tonga. She kneels in the middle of the *ngatu*, which features triangular patterns known as *manulua*. This pattern results from the intersection of three or four triangular points. “Manulua” means “two birds,” and the design gives the illusion of two birds flying together. The motif symbolizes chieftain status derived from both parents.



Cook and Marquesas Islands

Even though the Polynesians were skillful navigators, various island groups remained isolated from one another for centuries by the vast distances they would have had to cover in open outriggers. This geographical separation allowed distinct regional styles to develop within a recognizable general Polynesian style.

RAROTONGA Deity images with multiple figures attached to their bodies are characteristic of Rarotonga and Mangaia in the Cook Islands and Rurutu in the Austral Islands. These carvings probably represented clan and district ancestors, revered for their protective and procreative powers. Ultimately, the images refer to the creator deities the Polynesians venerate for their central role in human fertility.

33-15 Staff god (Tangaroa?), from Rarotonga, Cook Islands, Polynesia. Wood, 2' 4½" high. Cambridge University Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge.

The “body” of the Polynesian god Tangaroa consists of seven figures that probably represent generations of his human offspring. Several of the figures have erect penises, a reference to procreation.

The residents of the central Polynesian island of Rarotonga used various types of carved deity figures well into the early decades of the 19th century, when Christians converted the islanders and destroyed their deities as part of the process. These included carved wooden fishermen’s gods, large naturalistic deity images, and at least three types of staff gods (also called district gods), some more than 20 feet long.

One of the smaller but best-preserved examples (FIG. 33-15) may depict the Polynesian creator god Tangaroa. His head, with its enormous eyes, is about a third of the height of the sculpture. The “body” of the god resembles a spinal column and consists of seven figures with alternating frontal and profile heads. They probably represent the successive generations of humans Tangaroa created. The imagery suggests that these humans come from the body of the god. Several of the figures have erect penises, an unmistakable reference to sexual reproduction and the continuation of the race for many generations to come.

MARQUESAS ISLANDS Although Marquesan chiefs trace their right to rule genealogically, the political system before European contact allowed for the acquisition of power by force. As a result, warfare was widespread through the late 19th century. Among the items produced by Marquesan artists were ornaments (FIG. 33-16) that often adorned the hair of warriors. The hollow, cylindrical bone or ivory ornaments (*ivi p'o*) functioned as protective amulets. Warriors wore them until they avenged the death of a kinsman. The ornaments are in the form of *tiki*—carvings of exalted, deified ancestor figures. The large, rounded eyes and wide mouths of the *tiki* are typically Marquesan.

Another important art form for Marquesan warriors during the 19th century was *tattoo*, which, like the hair ornaments, protected the individual, serving in essence as a form of spiritual armor. Body decoration in general is among the most pervasive art forms found throughout Oceania. Polynesians developed the painful but prestigious art of tattoo more fully than many other Oceanic peoples (see “Tattoo in Polynesia,” page 883), although tattooing was also common in Micronesia. In Polynesia, with its hierarchical social structure, nobles and warriors in particular accumulated various tattoo patterns over the years to enhance their status, mana, and personal beauty. Largely as a result of missionary pressure in the 19th century,



33-16 Hair ornaments from the Marquesas Islands, Polynesia, collected in the 1870s. Bone, 1½" high (left), 1⅔" high (right). University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Philadelphia.

These hollow cylindrical bone ornaments representing deified ancestors adorned the hair of Marquesan warriors during the 19th century. The warriors wore them until they avenged the death of a kinsman.

Tattoo in Polynesia

Throughout Oceanic cultures, body decoration was an important means of representing cultural and personal identity. In addition to clothing and ornaments, body adornment most often took the form of tattoo. Tattooing was common among Micronesian cultures, but it was even more extensively practiced in Polynesia. Indeed, the English term *tattoo* is Polynesian in origin, related to the Tahitian, Samoan, and Tongan word *tatau* or *tatu*. In New Zealand, the markings are called *moko*. Within Polynesian cultures, tattooing reached its zenith in the highly stratified societies—New Zealand, the Marquesas Islands, Tahiti, Tonga, Samoa, and Hawaii. Both sexes displayed tattoos. In general, men had more tattoos than did women, and the location of tattoos on the body differed. For instance, in New Zealand, the face and buttocks were the primary areas of male tattooing, whereas tattoos appeared on the lips and chin of women.

Historically, tattooing served a variety of functions in Polynesia beyond personal beautification. It indicated status, because the quantity and quality of tattoos often reflected rank. In the Marquesas Islands, for example, tattoos completely covered the bodies of men of high status (FIG. 33-17). Certain patterns could be applied only to ranking individuals, but commoners also had tattoos, generally on a less extensive scale than elite individuals. For identification purposes, slaves had tattoos on their foreheads in Hawaii and on their backs in New Zealand. There are also accounts of defeated warriors being tattooed. In some Polynesian societies, tattoos identified clan or familial connections. The markings could also serve a protective function by in essence wrapping the body in a spiritual armor. On occasion, tattoos marked significant events. In Hawaii, for example, a tattooed tongue was a sign of grief. The pain the tattooed person endured was a sign of respect for the deceased.

Priests who were specially trained in the art form usually applied the tattoos. Rituals, chants, or ceremonies often accompanied the procedure, which took place in a special structure. Tattooing involves the introduction of black, carbon-based pigment under the skin with the use of a bird-bone tattooing comb or chisel and a mallet. In New Zealand, a distinctive technique emerged for tattooing the face. In a manner similar to Maori woodcarving, a serrated chisel created a groove in the skin to receive pigment, thereby producing a colored line.

Polynesian tattoo designs were predominantly geometric, and affinities with other forms of Polynesian art are evident. For example, the curvilinear patterns that predominate in Maori facial *moko* recall the patterns found on *poupou*, decorated wall panels in Maori meetinghouses (FIG. 33-20). Depending on their specific purpose, many tattoos could be “read” or deciphered. For facial tattoos, the Maori generally divided the face into four major symmetrical zones: the left and right forehead down to the eyes, the left lower face, and the right lower face. The right-hand side conveyed information on the father’s rank, tribal affiliations, and social position, while the



33-17 Tattooed warrior with war club, Nukahiva, Marquesas Islands, Polynesia, early 19th century. Color engraving in Carl Bertuch, *Bilderbuch für Kinder* (Weimar, 1813).

In Polynesia, with its hierarchical social structure, nobles and warriors accumulated tattoo patterns to enhance their status and beauty. Tattoos wrapped a warrior’s body in spiritual armor.

left-hand side provided matrilineal information. Smaller secondary facial zones imparted information about the tattooed individual’s profession and position in society. Te Pehi Kupe (FIG. I-19) was the chief of the Ngato Toa in the early 19th century. The upward and downward *koru* (unrolled spirals) in the middle of his forehead connote his descent from two paramount tribes. The small design in the center of his forehead documents the extent of his domain—north, south, east, and west. The five double *koru* in front of his left ear indicate that the supreme chief (the highest rank in Maori society) was part of his matrilineal line. The designs on his lower jaw and the anchor-shaped *koru* nearby reveal that Te Pehi Kupe was not only a master carver but descended from master carvers as well.

tattooing virtually disappeared in many Oceanic societies, but some Pacific peoples have revived tattooing as an expression of cultural pride.

An 1813 engraving (FIG. 33-17) depicts a Marquesan warrior from Nukahiva Island covered with elaborate tattoo patterns. The warrior holds a large wooden war club over his right shoulder and

carries a decorated water gourd in his left hand. The various tattoo patterns marking his entire body seem to subdivide his body parts into zones on both sides of a line down the center. Some tattoos accentuate joint areas, whereas others separate muscle masses into horizontal and vertical geometric shapes. The warrior also covered his face, hands, and feet with tattoos.

33-18 Feather cloak, from Hawaii, Polynesia, ca. 1824–1843. Feathers and fiber netting, 4' 8 $\frac{1}{3}$ " × 8'. Bishop Museum, Honolulu.

Costly Hawaiian feather cloaks ('ahu 'ula) like this one, which belonged to King Kamehameha III, provided the protection of the gods. Each cloak required the feathers of thousands of birds.



Hawaii

The Hawaiians developed the most highly stratified social structure in the Pacific. By 1795 the chief Kamehameha unified the major islands of the Hawaiian archipelago and ascended to the pinnacle of power as King Kamehameha I (r. 1810–1819). This kingdom did not endure, however, and Hawaii soon came under American control. The United States annexed Hawaii as a territory in 1898 and eventually conferred statehood on the island group in 1959.

FEATHER CLOAKS Because perpetuation of the social structure was crucial to social stability, most of the Hawaiian art forms produced before American control served to visualize and reinforce the hierarchy. Regalia for chieftains and other elite individuals were a prominent part of artistic production. For example, elegant feather cloaks ('ahu 'ula) such as the early-19th-century example shown here (FIG. 33-18) belonged to men of high rank. Every aspect of the 'ahu 'ula reflected the status of its wearer. The materials were exceedingly precious, particularly the red and yellow feathers from the 'i'iwi, 'apapane, 'o'o, and mamu birds. Some of these birds yield only six or seven suitable feathers, and given that a full-length cloak could require up to 500,000 feathers, extraordinary resources and labor went into producing the garment. The cloak also linked its owner to the gods. The Polynesians associated the sennit (plaited fiber or cord) base for the feathers with deities. Not only did these cloaks confer the protection of the gods on their wearers, but their dense fiber base and feather matting also provided physical protection. The cloak in FIG. 33-18 originally belonged to King Kamehameha III (r. 1824–1854), who gave it to Commodore Lawrence Kearny of the U.S. frigate *Constellation* in 1843 in gratitude for Kearny's assistance during a temporary occupation of Hawaii.

KUKA'ILIMOKU The gods were a pervasive presence in Hawaiian society and were part of every person's life, regardless of status. Chiefs in particular invoked them regularly and publicized their own genealogical links to the gods to reinforce their right to rule. One prominent Hawaiian deity was Kuka'ilimoku, the war god. As chiefs in the prekingdom years struggled to maintain and expand their control, warfare was endemic, hence Kuka'ilimoku's importance. Indeed, Kuka'ilimoku served as Kamehameha I's special tutelary deity, and the



33-19 Kuka'ilimoku, from Hawaii, Polynesia, late 18th or early 19th century. Wood, 2' 5 $\frac{3}{4}$ " high (figure only). British Museum, London.

This wooden statue of the Hawaiian war god comes from a temple. His muscular body is flexed to attack, and his wide mouth and bared teeth set in a large head convey aggression and defiance.

Kuka'ilimoku sculpture illustrated here (FIG. 33-19) stood in a *heiau* (temple) on the island of Hawaii, where Kamehameha I originally ruled before expanding his authority to the entire Hawaiian chain. This late-18th- or early-19th-century Hawaiian wooden temple image, more than four feet tall, confronts its audience with a ferocious expression. The war god's head comprises nearly a third of his entire body. His enlarged, angled eyes and wide-open figure-eight-shaped mouth, with its rows of teeth, convey aggression and defiance. His muscular body appears to stand slightly flexed, as if ready to act. The artist realized this Hawaiian war god's overall athleticism through the full-volume, faceted treatment of his arms, legs, and the pectoral area of the chest. In addition to sculptures of deities such as this, Hawaiians placed smaller versions of lesser deities and ancestral images in the *heiau*. Differing styles have surfaced in the various islands of the Hawaiian chain, but the sculptured figures share a tendency toward athleticism and expressive defiance.

New Zealand

The Maori of New Zealand (Aotearoa) share many cultural practices with other Polynesian societies. As in other cultures, ancestors and lineage play an important role.

MEETINGHOUSES The Maori meetinghouses demonstrate the primacy of ancestral connections. The Maori conceptualize the entire building as the body of an ancestor. The central beam across the roof is the spine, the rafters are ribs, and the barge boards (the angled boards that outline the house gables) in front represent arms. Construction of the Mataatua meetinghouse (FIG. 33-20) at Whakatane began in 1871 and took four years to complete. The lead sculptor was WEPIHA APANUI of the Ngati Awa clan. On the inside of the meetinghouse, ancestors constitute a potent presence through their appearance on *poupou* (the relief panels along the walls). The panels depict specific ancestors, each of which appears frontally with hands across the stomach. The elaborate curvilinear patterns covering the entire *poupou* may represent tattoos. Decoration appears on virtually every surface of the meetinghouse. In the spaces between the *poupou* are *tukutuku* (stitched lattice panels). Above, intricate painted shapes cover the rafters. In the center of the meetinghouse stand *pou tokomanawa*, sculptures of ancestors that support the building's ridgepoles (not visible in FIG. 33-20). The composite presence of all of these ancestral images and of the energetic, persistent patterning creates a charged space for the initiation of collective action.



33-20 WEPIHA APANUI, Mataatua meetinghouse (view of interior), Maori, Whakatane, New Zealand, Polynesia, 1871–1875.

Maori meetinghouses feature elaborate decoration. In this late-19th-century example, Wepiha Apanui carved figures of ancestors along the interior walls. The patterns on their bodies may be tattoos.



33-21 CLIFF WHITING (TE WHANAU-A-APANUI), *Tawhiri-Matea (God of the Winds)*, Maori, Polynesia, 1984. Oil on wood and fiberboard, 6' 4 $\frac{3}{8}$ " \times 11' 10 $\frac{3}{4}$ ". Meteorological Service of New Zealand, Wellington.

In this carved wooden mural depicting the Maori creation myth, Cliff Whiting revived native formal and iconographic traditions and techniques. The abstract curvilinear design suggests wind turbulence.

CLIFF WHITING Largely as a result of colonial and missionary intervention in the 18th through 20th centuries, many Oceanic cultures abandoned traditional practices, and production of many of the art forms illustrated in this chapter ceased. In recent years, however, a new, confident cultural awareness has led some Pacific artists to assert their inherited values with pride and to express them in a resurgence of traditional arts, such as weaving, painting, tattooing, and carving. Today's thriving tourist trade has also contributed to a resurgence of traditional art production.

One example that represents the many cases of cultural renewal in native Oceanic art is the vigorously productive school of New Zealand artists who draw on their Maori heritage for formal and iconographic inspiration. The historical Maori woodcarving craft (FIG. 33-20) brilliantly reemerges in what the artist CLIFF WHITING (TE WHANAU-A-APANUI, b. 1936) calls a "carved mural" (FIG. 33-21). Whiting's *Tawhiri-Matea* is a masterpiece of woodcrafting designed for the very modern environment of an exhibition gallery. The artist suggested the wind turbulence with the restless curvature of the main motif and its myriad serrated edges. The 1984 mural depicts events

in the Maori creation myth. The central figure, Tawhiri-Matea, god of the winds, wrestles to control the children of the four winds, seen as blue spiral forms. Ra, the sun, energizes the scene from the top left, complemented by Marama, the moon, in the opposite corner. The top right image refers to the primal separation of Ranginui, the Sky Father, and Papatuanuku, the Earth Mother. Spiral koru motifs symbolizing growth and energy flow through the composition. Blue waves and green fronds around Tawhiri suggest his brothers Tangaroa and Tane, gods of the sea and forest.

Whiting is securely at home with the native tradition of form and technique, as well as with the worldwide aesthetic of modern design. Out of the seamless fabric made by uniting both, he feels something new can develop that loses nothing of the power of the old. The artist champions not only the renewal of Maori cultural life and its continuity in art but also the education of the young in the values that made that culture great—values he asks them to perpetuate. The salvation of the native identity of the next generation of New Zealanders will depend on their success in making the Maori culture once again their own.

OCEANIA

AUSTRALIA AND MELANESIA

- The westernmost Oceanic islands have been populated for at least 40,000 years, but most of the preserved art dates to the past several centuries.
- The Aboriginal art of Australia focuses on ancestral spirits called Dreamings, whom artists represented in an X-ray style showing the internal organs.
- The Asmat of New Guinea avenged a relative's death by headhunting. Before embarking on a raid, they erected bisj poles bearing carved and painted figures of ancestors and animals.
- The center of every latmul village was a saddle-shaped ceremonial men's house representing a woman. Images of clan ancestors decorated the interior.
- Masks figured prominently in many Melanesian cultures. The Elema celebrated water spirits in the festive cycle called Hevehe, which involved ornate masks up to 25 feet tall. The Abelam fashioned yam masks for rituals revolving around their principal crop. In New Ireland, dancers wore tatanua masks representing the spirits of the deceased.
- Seafaring was also a major theme of much Melanesian art. The Trobriand Islanders decorated their canoes with elaborately carved prows and splashboards.



Auuenau, Western Arnhem Land, Australia, 1913



Canoe prow and splashboard, Trobriand Islands, 19th to 20th centuries

MICRONESIA

- The major themes of Melanesian art are also found in Micronesia. For example, the people of the Caroline Islands produced carved and painted prow ornaments for their canoes.
- The Micronesian peoples also erected ceremonial men's houses. The bai of Belau are distinctive in having Dilukai figures in the gable of the eastern entrance. The Dilukai is a woman with splayed legs who faces the sun and serves as a symbol of procreation and as a guardian of the house.



Men's ceremonial house, Belau, 20th century

POLYNESIA

- Polynesia was one of the last areas of the world that humans settled, but the oldest monumental art of Oceania is the series of moai on Easter Island. These colossal monolithic sculptures, which stood in rows on stone platforms, probably represent ancestors.
- Barkcloth is an important art form in Polynesia even today. The decorated barkcloth, or ngatu, of Tonga was used to wrap the corpses of deceased chiefs and for other ritual purposes, including the coronation of kings.
- Body adornment in the form of tattooing was widespread in Polynesia, especially in the Marquesas Islands and New Zealand. In addition to personal beautification, tattoos served to distinguish rank and provided warriors with a kind of spiritual armor.
- Meetinghouses played an important role in Polynesian societies, as elsewhere in the Pacific islands. The meetinghouses of the Maori of New Zealand are notable for their elaborate ornament featuring carved relief panels depicting ancestors.
- Images of named gods are common in Polynesia. Wood sculptures from Rarotonga represent the creator god Tangaroa. The Hawaiians erected statues of the war god Kuka'ilimoku in their temples. The tradition continues today in the work of sculptors such as Cliff Whiting of New Zealand.



Moai, Easter Island, 10th to 12th centuries



Tattooed warrior, Marquesas Islands, early 19th century