COMPARISONS

HISTORICAL
AND
CONTEMPORARY OCEANIC WORKS
OF
ART
ABORIGINAL ARCHITECTURAL
SYMBOLS OF SPIRITUALITY, POWER & BLOOD


**Roof finial (gomoa)** New Caledonia, 19th-20th Century, 42 x 10 x 6 in. Wood © MFA, Boston

Julio Cesar Roman
ABORIGINAL ARCHITECTURAL
SYMBOLS OF SPIRITUALITY, POWER & BLOOD

Rooft finial (gomoa) New Caledonia, 19th-20th Century, 42 x 10 x 6 in. Wood © MFA, Boston
Pictorial Tapa. Wallis Island (Uvea) Polynesia. Mid 20th c. Pounded bark cloth with pigment. 31x127”

Margaret Preston
Pakeha Australian Artist

Shawn Edgette
CLIFF WHITING (TE WHANAU-A-APANUI),
Tawhiri-Matea (God of the Winds), Maori,
1984. Oil on wood and fiberboard, approx. 6' 4
3/8" x 11' 10 3/4". Meteorological Service of
New Zealand Ltd. Collection, Wellington.

Maori Feeding Funnel
Of Body and Spirit
Contemporary Maori Art

This painting is done by Maori artist Theresa Reihana. I was really drawn to her work; the color choice, content, and subject matter. I liked the fact it still is very much related to my ancient item hei tiki, which are at the bottom two corners. I like that the artist’s culture is what inspires her to create her work. The hei tiki represents fertilization, life and death. I feel this is a beautiful depiction of how it represents the creation of new life.

Jaime Lastick
Wayne Kleppe
Rocky Ka’iolihakihikolo ‘Eku Jensen created this akua kaalepa (crescent of images of major deities) entitled *Born the Night of the Gods* in 1989 (far right). According to Adrienne Kaeppler, it mirrors the semicircle of sacred images in the Hawaiian heiau (temple). The monumental size and awe inspiring sense of sacred presence of the figures serves to link contemporary Kaanaka Maoli (indigenous Hawaiians) with their traditional spirituality. Ku is the figure on the extreme right.
Pictorial Tapa. Wallis Island (Uvea) Polynesia. Mid 20th c. Pounded bark cloth with pigment. 31x127”

John Pule (2003)
Oil, pencil and ink on canvas
72”x60” approx.
From Paradise Now? Contemporary Art From the Pacific

Meghan Sellars
Marshall Islands. Navigation Chart

Moon Kim
*Mask (ges)*
New Ireland, Papua New Guinea, 19th–20th century
North-central Tabar Island, Melanesia, New Ireland
35.56 cm (14 in.)
Fiber, wood, and pigment

*Maua*
By Fa'afetai Amituana'I

Nadia Rodriguez

Mask (rom)
Ambrym island, Vanuatu, 19th–20th century
60.96 cm (24 in.)
Wood, rattan, fiber, and pigment
John Ioane prefers to call his performances rituals or christenings. This work, *Fale Sa*, “connotes being rooted to one’s culture and genealogical heritage as a source of strength, adaptation and beauty.” Ioane states that his performances are not rehearsed, that what happens depends upon the nature of the event, the place itself, and the time. This is the same mentality and foundation of ritualistic initiations in which the Rom Mask was traditionally used. *Fale Sa* and Ioane’s work in general is also connected to the Rom Mask and the rituals in which was used through the like appreciation and dedication to the strengthening of one’s personal connection to his own culture and genealogies.
Joe Nalo (Papua New Guinea artist)

Mangroves

Mangroves on the River: "Mangroves antap long wara".
76cm(h)x56cm(w) / 30"x22"

Headdress (susiu)

Sulka peoples, New Britain, Papua New Guinea, late 19th century
95.25 cm (37 1/2 in.)
Fiber, cassowary feathers, and pigment
Done by **Australian Aborigines**, covering art that pre-dates **European colonisation** as well as **contemporary art** by Aborigines based on traditional culture. Painting, wood carving, sculpture and ceremonial clothing, as well as artistic embellishments found on weaponry and tools.

Vanuatu. Southern Malekula. Grade Society Figure. Tree fern and paint. H. 240 cm. Pre 1912.

Esther Chung
Turamarubi peoples, Papua New Guinea, 19th-20th century
Turamarubi people
Turama River Delta, Papuan gulf, Papua New Guinea
Wood and pigment

Artist: Robert Barton
Size: 90cm x 90cm
Canvas: Bradmill cotton duck
Stretchers: Seasoned timber Stretchers.
Medium: Atelier Acrylic Paints and Finishings
Date created: June 2005
- Mawalan Marika's Yuwuyuwuity the Giant (Museum of Contempoary Art / Aboriginal Artist's Agency)
Title: ‘Bradshaw Rock Art’ by artist Ju Ju Wilson. It is 12” x 10” in size and the medium is ochre on canvas. Each of our Australian paintings are accompanied by a certificate of authenticity.
• The traditional kapkaps seen on the top left used as a head ornament or pendant. Varying from culture to culture across Melanesia, may be worn only on special occasions or by individuals of great importance. The ones pictured here are made by the peoples of the Admiralty Islands from carefully cut tortoiseshell and a flat tridacna shell disc held together by a string and bead through the centre. The Peabody Museum at Harvard currently exhibits this work in their permanent collection.

• The Kapkap seen on the right above is by a contemporary artist called Niki Hastings-McFall, entitled “Computer Kapkap”, 1997. The materials used are metal and other man-made materials. The current location of the piece is unknown. The work of this artist highly references her Samoan heritage as a way of rediscovering it.

• The contemporary piece would ideally be in a display case similar to those found in the Peabody Museum, along with the more traditional kapkaps.

• Hopefully people would ask themselves whether it is possible to keep a tradition alive without traditional materials.
Bisj Pole
Collected 1930’s
Now located MFA, Boston

Sara Haley
March 27, 2009
The Shield & The Guardians

The War Shield from the Trobriand Islands of New Guinea. Used to physically and spiritually protect one from their opponent during

Jacque Katsikos
Steven’s Solomon Islands heritage features prominently in his work, alongside the heavy influence of the West Coast environment that surrounds him. He frequently incorporates Solomon Island motifs, particularly those from the island of Malaita, including the frigate bird and references to ancestors and voyaging. Steven comments, “Rediscovering my own cultural identity seems an inevitable experience when struggling to make sense of a confusing new environment. Isolated from my roots I needed answers. Melanesian features are expressed and embraced into sculptural works of cultural importance to me. Often I tend to bring out strong and figurative Melanesian symbols - they all have a story to tell.”

“Tauti, Contemporary Pacific Arts Trust

Lizi Gross

STEVEN GVALIASI

http://www.tautaipacific.com/steven-gvaliasi/
Why are these pieces similar?

**KAWE: Ancestor Figure**
This figure is a clear reflection of the Asmat peoples in that it possesses various stylistic choices that serve ceremonial/spiritual purposes cultivated by the tribe. The rendering of its mouth suggests the ritual of cannibalism, the tattoos on the body indicate the ritual of tattooing, the female sex organ implies a recognition of women in art and the use of wood supplies the viewer with the notion of the most important material in Asmat culture.

**STEVEN GWALIASI: Ancestor Head**
This figure is a clear reflection of Gwaliasi’s culture in that it possesses similar stylistic choices. By mimicking the look and feel of wood, the artist works to provide the viewer with an ambiguous cultivation of the past versus the present. Because the figure is mimicking the head of a traditional ancestor figure, it suggests a longing connection to his personal heritage. Additionally, because the head appears to arise from the ground, it suggests that the rest of its body is buried under the ground. This is a clear indication of the position of Pacific Island tribes. In the past, these figures might tower above, but as represented in his depiction – there is an ongoing struggle to prevail. Although this representation is not influenced specifically by the Asmat tribe, Ancestor figures are a very dominant art form amongst all of the Pacific Islands. Therefore, this figure serves as a reminder of the past and contains a spirituality much like that of the ancestor figures of the past. The size and height of the figure is much like that of a modern gravestone. Thus, providing a juxtaposition of the past with that of the present. In terms of form, this sculpture has similar tattoo markings to that of traditional figures and appears to be very rotund. This is yet another contrast of the past verse the present, the affects of globalization and the overall struggle to maintain identity amongst often forgotten people.
Edith Amituanai photographs family members in intimate settings as a method of portraying the importance of family in her culture. In this particular photograph the subject is a woman sitting at a table eating a piece of toast. Without knowing any context of the photograph, I perceive her to be a stern and powerful loved one who holds a family together. In this lovely snapshot, I sense a very intimate connection between the photographer and her subject. The every-day situation has been captured in a way that seems to represent the value of strong family, the importance of family, and the generations of family that continue through time. Thus, it can be compared to the alangaan sculpture in that it is honoring a particular ancestor, or in this case, family member. Family and ancestors play an important role in the lives of the peoples of New Ireland. They also play a big role in the work of Edith Amituanai.