



Non-Western Art History

The Art of Oceania  
Part One

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The Art of Oceania



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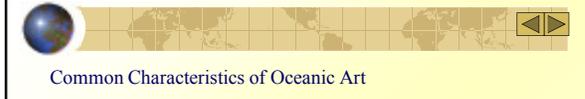


The Art of Oceania




- ✦ Melanesia
  - Settled by 40,000 BC
  - Includes Australia, Papua New Guinea and part of Indonesian
- ✦ Micronesia
  - Settled by 1500 BC
  - Includes 2,500 islands between Australia & Japan
- ✦ Polynesia
  - Settled 200 BC – 900 AD
  - Includes New Zealand, Hawaii and Easter Island

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Common Characteristics of Oceanic Art

- ✦ Developed regionally with many distinct cultures, belief systems, rituals and art styles.
- ✦ Materials vary greatly across the region
- ✦ Major purpose is religious, for rituals, and includes oratory, poetry, dance and music
- ✦ Artworks enable Pacific Islanders to interact with supernatural forces and operate their societies
- ✦ Many Pacific Islanders believe that the human body is the meeting place of the everyday world of man and the divine world of the ancestors and the god.

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Common Characteristics of Oceanic Art

- ✦ Two spiritual ideas are central to the majority of people in Oceania:
  - *Mana* – sacred power in individuals, works of art and a wide variety of objects.
  - *Marae* – sacred places with large amounts of *mana*. These are focal points for rituals dedicated to the gods and ancestors.
- ✦ People acquire *mana* through lineage and skillful and courageous deeds.
- ✦ *Mana* can be decreased through cowardice or enslavement.
- ✦ *Mana* in artworks comes from the materials, artist, quality of workmanship and care and correctness of rituals preceding work.

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Melanesia

- ✦ The first areas in Oceania to be settled beginning about 40,000 BC
- ✦ Includes:
  - Australia
  - Sumatra
  - New Guinea, Papua
  - Solomon Islands
  - New Ireland Islands

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*Drawing of a design from a Lapita Pottery, 1,000 – 900 BC,  
Scan: Art Beyond The West*

*Shield, mid- 19<sup>th</sup> century,  
Solomon Islands  
Metropolitan Museum  
of Art*

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*Lightning Brothers, 20,000 – 9,000 BC,  
Rock painting, Australia*

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### **Jukurrpa – The Spiritual World**

- *Jukurrpa* (Dreaming) is the world created by the ancestors, its religious ceremonies, laws and art forms.
- The indigenous people of Australia (Aborigines) believe:
  - the spirits of their ancestors emerged from the earth and the sea and created the land and its mountains, rivers, plants, animals and people
  - the ancestors remain within the world today in all its natural features, from creation to the present
  - they continue to create, causing the changes seen everyday
  - society is all a part of this spiritual world
- To live among the spirits, the aborigines must communicate with them and invoke their blessings to survive, often through art and ritual.

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*Contemporary Aboriginal Artist Creating X-Ray Style  
Painting. Source: Wikipedia*

*Hunter and Kangaroo, 1912, H: 51 inches,  
Arnhem Land, Australia, Paint on bark,  
Source: Art Beyond the West*

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*Gurramathi (Magpie Goose)  
George Malibirr, 1984, Materials,  
Asian Art Society*

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*Sacred Places at Milmindjarr  
David Malangi, 1982, H: 41 inches,  
Ocher on Bark, South Australian  
Museum, Scan: Art Beyond The  
West*

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*Man's Love Story*, Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri, 1978, 83 x 100 inches, Synthetic polymer paint on canvas, Source: *Art History: A View of the World: Part Two* by M. Stokstad and M. Cothren

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*Yarla Jukurrpa (Bush Potato Dreaming)*, Victor Jurrpurrula Ross, 1987, Acrylic paint on canvas, The British Museum

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*Container for Magical Substances*  
19<sup>th</sup> – early 20<sup>th</sup> century,  
Batak People, Sumatra, Indonesia  
H: 13.5 inches,  
Wood, Chinese trade ceramics,  
Metropolitan Museum of Art

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*Puppet Head (Si Gale-gale)*  
Late 19<sup>th</sup> – early 20<sup>th</sup> century,  
Batak Peoples, Sumatra, Indonesia,  
H: 11.25 inches, Wood, brass, lead  
alloy, water buffalo horn, pigment  
Metropolitan Museum of Art

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*Female Ancestor Figure*,  
Batak Peoples, North  
Sumatra, Indonesia  
19<sup>th</sup> century or earlier,  
H: 20.25 inches, Wood,  
Dallas Museum of Art

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*Ceremonial Textile (Ulos Ragidup)*  
Late 19<sup>th</sup> – early 20<sup>th</sup> century,  
Batak Peoples, Sumatra, Indonesia,  
H: 42.5 inches, Cotton,  
Metropolitan Museum of Art

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*Ceremonial Banner*, 18<sup>th</sup> century, Lampung People, Sumatra, Indonesia  
L: 48.5 inches, Cotton, beads, nassa shells, fiber, Metropolitan Museum of Art

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*Bis Pole*, Asmat People, New Guinea, Papua, Late 1950s, H: 17 feet, varies, Wood, paint, fiber, Source: Scan, Art Beyond The West

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*Bis Pole*, Asmat People, New Guinea, Papua, Late 1950s, H: 216 inches, Wood, paint, fiber, Metropolitan Museum of Art

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*Body Mask*, Asmat People, New Guinea, Papua, Mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, H: 64 inches, Wood, fiber, leaves, paint, Metropolitan Museum of Art

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*Drum*, Mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, Asmat People, New Guinea, Papua, H: 22.75 inches, Wood, lizard skin, paint, fiber, Metropolitan Museum of Art

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*Ceremonial container*, Mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, Asmat People, New Guinea, Papua, H: 36 inches, wood, paint, fiber, cassowary quills, seeds, feathers, Metropolitan Museum of Art

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*Mask (Buk, Krar or Kara)*  
19<sup>th</sup> century,  
Torres Strait Islander People,  
W: 25 inches, Turtle and  
clam shell, wood, feathers,  
resin, seeds, paint,  
Metropolitan Museum of Art

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*Drum (Garamut),* 20<sup>th</sup> century,  
Sepik River People, New Guinea, Papua,  
L: 98 inches, Wood, Metropolitan Museum of Art

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*Reconstruction Drawing of the  
House of Taga resting on latte,  
Trinian Island, c. 1600,  
Source: Scan, Art Beyond The West*

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*Figure from a Ceremonial Housepost*  
19<sup>th</sup> – early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Kambot People,  
New Guinea, Papua, H: 96 inches,  
Wood, paint, fiber,  
Metropolitan Museum of Art

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*Interior of a Ceremonial House*  
Collected 1972-73,  
Abelam People, New Guinea, Papua,  
Museum de Kulturen, Switzerland  
Source: Scan, Art Beyond The West

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✦ This ends our presentation on  
the Art of Oceania Part One



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