

Pacific Arts Association

Newsletter – August 2019

Co-edited by Jacqueline Charles-Rault & Crispin Howarth

Message from the President

Dear PAA members and colleagues

Firstly, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the outgoing members of our executive committee and welcome our new members. I would like to express my gratitude to Steven Hooper for six years of dedicated service as our president. Over this tenure he has guided the many arms of our association towards its goal of enhancing the interest in and understanding of the arts of Oceania. Furthermore, I would like to express my immense gratitude to both Christina Helmich and Maia Nuku for their commitment to the PAA, as well as their tenacity in maintaining our financial and membership records!

I want to acknowledge your perseverance and tireless work over the past 6 years.

Secondly, recognition also goes to those continuing to serve on the executive committee (a couple have shifted roles); Carol Mayer (Vice-president North America), Wonu Veys (Vice-president Europe) Caroline Vercoe and Marion Cadora (Information Managers), Anne Allen (Journal), and Crispin Howarth and Jacqueline Charles-Rault (Newsletter). And finally, a warm welcome to Henry Skerritt (Treasurer) and Lisa McDonald (Vice-President Pacific). I look forward to working with you all!

Over this past year much effort has gone on behind the scenes to reinstate our website and its content. Caroline Vercoe, Marion Cadora and Kyle-Jordan Reid have been working diligently on this and have recently migrated the website to a new platform that will be more user friendly. The new website is a continuing work and is intended to be the most accessible global face of PAA.

The XIII International Symposium at the Queensland Museum in Brisbane 25-28 March 2019 was a great success (see below). The conference organisers (Chantal Knowles, Imelda Miller and many others) did an exceptional job utilising the facilities and staff from; The Queensland Museum, The State Library of Queensland, QAGOMA, and the Queensland Government. I would like to acknowledge and extend my thanks to all involved. In association with the Symposium, the Pacific Chapter hosted a conference in Vanuatu (see below). I very much appreciate Lisa McDonald's dedication to the conversations she created.

In last year's newsletter, Steve mentioned his intention of setting up archives for the PAA. He commented:

Many members over the years have been taking photos, especially in the digital age – Christian Coiffier is always assiduous in this – and it would be good to develop an archive for the PAA before some of this material is lost. For the moment, members and others are welcome to send me documents or images with notes (by Wetransfer if heavy; s.hooper@uea.ac.uk), and I will assemble them. Perhaps we can appoint a voluntary PAA archivist to collate and organise this material. If anyone would like to volunteer for this relatively light task, please let me know.

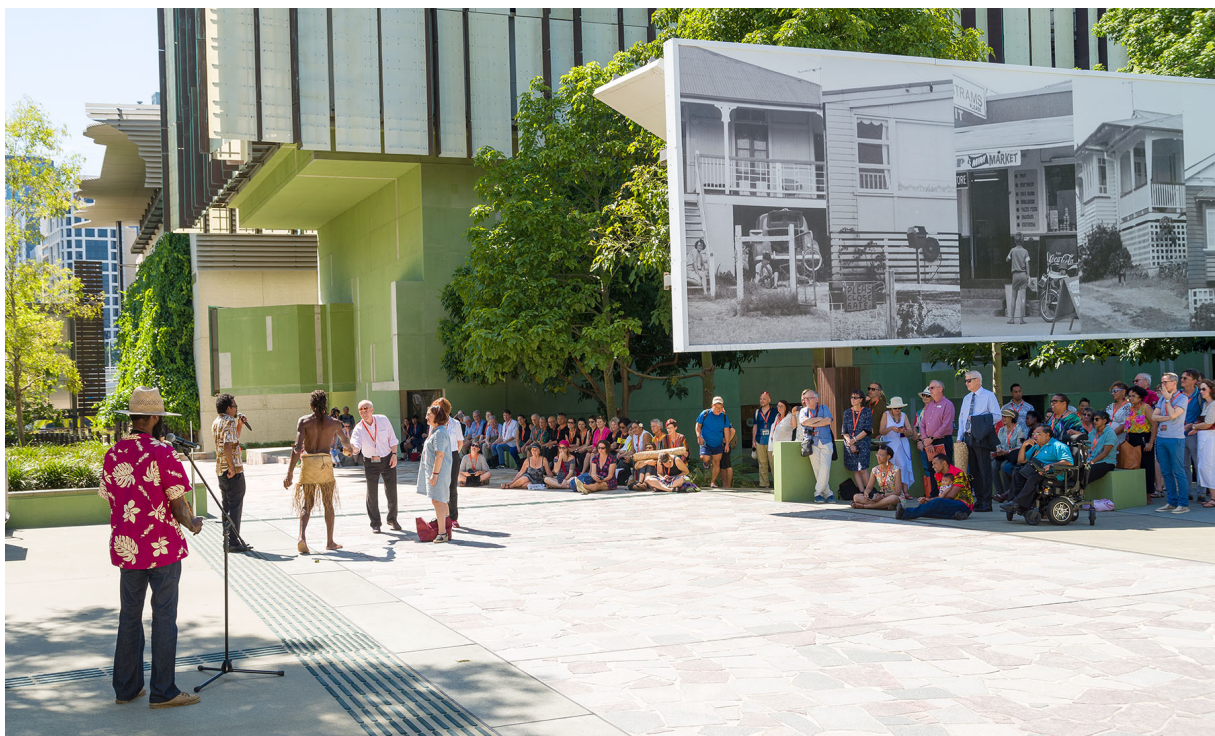
There was further discussion about this in Brisbane, and Christian Kauffman took on the responsibility of liaising with the Quai Branly as a possible host for our archives. It was also felt that the website could also be used as a digital archive. And I suggested that a Journal volume could be dedicated to the organisation's history.

The PAA continues to move forward. Our Vice-presidents (and their committees) for Europe, North America and the Pacific are working diligently to organise their annual conferences and our colleagues continue to involve themselves in a variety of activities. My best wishes for a productive and successful 2019/2020.

Karen Stevenson, President PAA

Report from the XIIIth Pacific Arts Association International Symposium hosted by Queensland Museum, Brisbane, 24-28 March 2019.

Queensland Museum and its cultural precinct partners Queensland Performing Arts Centre; Queensland Art Gallery and Gallery of Modern Art, State Library of Queensland and the Centre for Contemporary Indigenous Australian Art, Griffith University hosted the triennial symposium under the theme: *Resilience: Sustaining, Reactivating and Connecting Culture*. The symposium coincided with QAGOMA's *Asia Pacific Triennial* (APT9) and followed the Australian Association for Pacific Studies (AAPS) masterclass and Epeli Hau'ofa lecture given by Dr Frances C Koya Vaka'uta, Director of the Oceania Centre for Arts, University of the South Pacific.



Opening events at Brisbane's Cultural Precinct ©Queensland Museum 2019

On Monday 25 March, the sun shone as Aunty Kerry Charlton and Shannon Ruska opened the symposium with a welcome to country and blessing. This was followed by an awe-inspiring performance by Marcel Meltherorong: *Roots Magik* an opportunity to connect with the Pacific chapter's PAA meeting in Vanuatu which preceded the international symposium. Butchulla artist Dr Fiona Foley, used her art practice and Country as a lens to explore the continuing disenfranchisement of Aboriginal people through policy-making and the legal frameworks of the settler-colony. Her keynote provided an important context for understanding many of the presentations and performances that followed. I would like to thank Patricia Adjei, Kathy Jetnil Kijiner and Dr Greg Dvorak, and Dr Bianca Beetson for their keynotes.

Over four days presenters and delegates discussed the themes Knowledge, Identity, Wealth and Creation and Collaboration. Several artists featured in APT9, including Areta Wilkinson were able to activate their works as part of the programme. Alongside this we were also able to launch two books and attend the closing of an exhibition *Coming Together Through Strength and Culture*.

Highlights for me including the APT tours and activations; the conversation on ghost net art with Lynnette Griffiths, Florence Gutchen, Racy Oui-Pitt, Anita Herle and Carol Mayer; the panel discussion on *Old collections, restoring connections, new collaborations: the Milingimbi Makarrata*; and Taiwanese Biung Ismahasan's pecha kucha *Articulating Resilience of the Indigenous Performative Space*.



Shannon Ruska, Jim Thompson, Imelda Miller, Aunty Kerry Charlton, Steven Hooper, Aunty Nancy Bamaga
©Queensland Museum 2019

The intention in bringing the PAA to eastern Australia was to emphasise the continuing and enduring connections between Australia and its Pacific island neighbours. I hope we achieved our aim and I thank the cultural precinct partners who through their different areas of expertise ensured the symposium covered Pacific art in its many forms from performance, writing, visual arts and more.

Thank you to everyone who travelled to attend and contribute to the symposium and in particular the PAA in providing bursaries to support 12 Pacific Islander artists to attend.

Executive Committee News

When the executive committee met in Brisbane, they made the decision to honour members of the PAA who have provided sustained and dedicated service to our organisation. The Distinguished Service Award (DSA) is an acknowledgement of an individual's contribution in service to the PAA over many years. The 2019 recipients of the DSA honour, Deborah Waite and Hilary Scothorn-Tohi, were announced at the Symposium dinner.

At the Symposium Anne Allen, The PAA Journal Editor urged members to support the Journal. Anne asked for member submissions and is keen to receive a diverse range of contributions including; photo essays, reviews, interviews, gallery/exhibition reports, notes from the field, curator reports, artists work and poetry. Diversifying the range of contributions will enable us to create a more dynamic journal.

We would also like to urge our colleagues to take advantage of the opportunity to become the editor for a 'special edition' of the Journal focusing on an issue/topic/artist of your choice.

If you wish to contribute to the Journal, Anne can be contacted directly at aeallen@ius.edu
Anne was also pleased to announce that vol 17 will be out shortly.

Our New Executive Committee:

President: Karen Stevenson

Past-President: Steven Hooper

Europe: Wonu Veys

Pacific: Lisa McDonald

North America: Carol Mayer

Treasurer: Henry Skerritt

Secretary: Caroline Vercoe

Information Manager and Webmaster: Caroline Vercoe and Marion Cadora

Newsletter: Crispin Howarth and Jacquelyn Charles-Raute

The Manu Daula – Frigate Bird Award 2019

The members of PAA present at the General Assembly held on 27 March 2019 at Brisbane in the Queensland Museum elected by secret ballot for the Manu Daula to be awarded to Dr Carol Mayer.

At the presentation of the Award the following dedication address was read:

"You have shown an ever-increasing passion for and imagination in creating relationships in the arts of the Pacific.

New and strong ties, ropes, strings linking individuals, communities, institutions with their peers on many shores of the Pacific and across the Globe: Contemporary artists in Papua New Guinea (and particularly in the Sepik area), in Vanuatu, and especially on Erromango,

on the islands of Fiji, in Aboriginal Australia, and – last but not least – from the Torres Strait Islands as well as, on your shores, from among many First Nations of North America. All members present please join me in saying: Long live Carol Mayer and her network of resilient individuals and peoples.”



Four glowing Manu Daula Award recipients at the PAA XIII International Symposium, Brisbane.

PAA - Pacific

The Pacific Arts Association (Pacific Chapter) ran a successful excursion to Port Vila, Vanuatu prior to the XIII International Symposium. *Making Connections: ni-Vanuatu Artists, Objects and Histories* was held at the National Library and Archives of Vanuatu, 20-22 March 2019. The conference was conceived as an opportunity to learn about the kastom (customs) and kalja (cultures) of Vanuatu and attracted 25 attendees from ten countries who enjoyed the opportunity to meet local colleagues and discuss potential collaborations.

After a keynote by celebrated artist, educator and cultural leader Eric Natuoivi, more than 20 local speakers discussed topics including the Vanuatu Cultural Centre, men's and women's kastom, performance, festivals and contemporary art. Visits were held each day to

the National Museum of Vanuatu and Haos Blong Handicraft (Art and Craft Market), while evening events comprised exhibition viewings hosted by the Foundation Suzanne Bastien and the Alliance Française de Port Vila. Attendees at the group dinner were entertained by local fire dancing troupe Vanua Fire. As part of the official programme, the Pacific Chapter also supported a print workshop facilitated by Laura Sunderland.



Eric Natuoivi welcoming attendees to the Nawita Contemporary Art Association and Red Wave Vanuatu Contemporary Art Association exhibition, Port Vila. Courtesy Lisa McDonald.

The organisers wish to sincerely thank: Canterbury Museum; Georges Cumbo and staff of the Alliance Française de Port Vila; Eric Natuoivi; Honourable Minister Ralph Regenvanu; Laura Sunderland; Macha Paris and Staff of the Foundation Suzanne Bastien; Nawita Contemporary Arts Association; Pacific Arts Association; Red Wave Vanuatu Arts Association; Richard Shing and staff of the Vanuatu Cultural Centre.

PAA - North America

The PAA regularly organises an affiliate panel and a business meeting as their major participation in the College Arts Association's (CAA) Annual Conference, held in various venues across the United States. This is an excellent opportunity for the PAA to share research and ideas with an international audience who might otherwise not have the opportunity to learn about the robust artistic and cultural production in the Pacific Islands. As well, this is an opportunity for members to spend time together visiting local museums, collections and artist centres. At the 2019 meeting they were treated to a curator's tour of *Atea: Nature & Divinity in Polynesia* at the Met.



Visiting the exhibition *Atea: Nature and Divinity in Polynesia* at the Metropolitan Museum. Left to right: David Odo, Maia Nuku, Maggie Wander, Brittany Myburgh, Julia Lum.

In February 2019, Carol E. Mayer was away on a research trip, and Maggie Wander had the opportunity to organize the Pacific Arts Association (PAA) panel at the 107th annual conference of the College Art Association in New York City. The panel theme was inspired by a session at the European Society for Oceanists conference that Maggie co-chaired with colleague Marion Cadora. That panel, titled “Intervening Archives of Oceania” was a diverse collection of approaches to defining the “archive” in the Oceanic context.

Maggie wanted to continue this conversation at CAA by looking for cross-disciplinary and innovative approaches not only to the Oceanic archive, but also to theories and methodologies that could be used or developed to study this unique region.

Brittany Myburgh spoke about Lisa Reihana’s digital work *In Pursuit of Venus (Infected)* to argue that Indigenous new media projects by Oceanic artists are a specific Pacific methodology that disrupt notions of linear time, mediate colonial representations, and recover perspectives that are obscured in other types of archives.

Mariah Briel spoke about 17th century European maps of the Pacific as archival traces of ignorance - a fascinating instance of a theoretical framework having the capacity to open up spaces of inquiry that are specific to Oceania’s unique history of cultural contact with Europe.

And finally, Henry Skeritt challenged mainstream curatorial processes by viewing exhibitions and museum collections not as “archives” on display, but instead as active sites of knowledge production through close collaboration with the community from which these objects come. Dr. Skeritt’s presentation was especially exciting because he joined the panel

via Skype in order to present alongside the artists about whose work he was speaking – providing a much-needed Indigenous voice among a panel of non-Indigenous scholars.

Plans for the 2020 CAA conference in Chicago are well in hand. It will be held at the Hilton Chicago, February 12-15. A panel of speakers have been confirmed: Angela Lynn Robinson (University of California, Los Angeles), Aaron Katzeman (University of California, Irvine), Carol E. Mayer (Museum of Anthropology at University of British Columbia) and Katerina Teaiwa (Australia National University) will address the topic “Environmental justice & Arts Activism in Oceania.”

The call is currently open for applications for the CAA International Member Conference Travel Grants <https://www.collegeart.org/programs/travel-grants/international> and the Graduate Student Conference Travel Grants <https://www.collegeart.org/programs/travel-grants/graduate-students>.

We are organising some interesting excursions to the Field Museum, The Art Institute of Chicago, Museum of Contemporary Art, the Pacific Unity Sculptures at the Treasure Island Museum, perhaps view the film “Hidden Pacific” at the Museum of Science + Industry. PAA members are urged to attend. Our numbers are quite small, but they are growing, perhaps bolstered by the knowledge that CAA has introduced a day rate, so attendees do not have to pay the whole conference registration fee. See you there!

PAA - Europe

The PAA-Europe meeting entitled *Challenging Times: Provenances in Museums* will be held at the Museum der Kulturen Basel from 19-21st September 2019 and is organised by Beatrice Voirol.

Museums face challenging times: what seemed a must for an ethnographic museum in the past – such as a collection of skulls – is now a sensitive issue. In collecting, objects were removed from their original contexts, items made of rare and precious materials such as ivory or gold aroused desires, and exotic weapons were acquired by the score. The exhibition explores the motives for this former collecting mania and poses questions as to the appropriate handling of sensitive objects today.

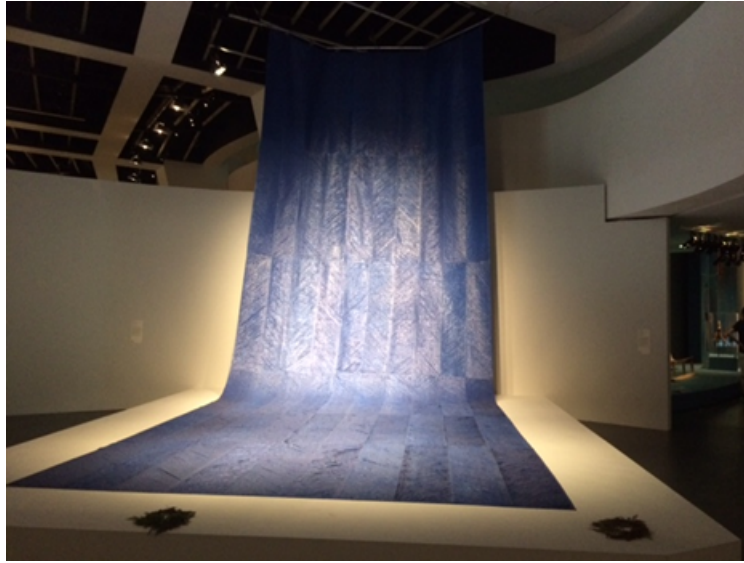
The meeting is held to coincide with the museum’s temporary exhibition *Thirst for Knowledge meets Collecting Mania*.

Participants will be offered the possibility to have a guided tour of the Fondation Beyeler on Saturday 21 September. The world-famous Fondation Beyeler has a small, but exquisite Oceanian collection.

Scholarships for participation at the Annual PAA Europe Conference

The Pacific Arts Association Europe is offering an annual scholarship to support the participation of Pacific Islander artists and students at the annual PAA-E conference. The scholarship is for a maximum of €300, in addition to the conference fee and attendance at the conference dinner.

Week-End Océanie – 28th-30th June 2019 at Musée du Quai Branly



Mata Aho Collective - *Kiko Moana* Photo ©Jacqueline Charles-Rault

Le Musée du Quai Branly in Paris hosted a celebration of the Pacific and the Pacific arts at the end of June to mark the end of the *Océanie* exhibition that brought together: films from the Pacific, dance, music, readings, workshops, performance art as well as a conference. The entire weekend was open to the public free of charge.

The exhibition *Océania* was commissioned and exhibited at the Royal Academy in London in collaboration with Le Musée du Quai Branly and the participation of the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology in Cambridge at the end of 2018. Curated by Peter Brunt and Nicholas Thomas it was opened on March 12th till the 7th July in Paris. The exhibition in Paris displayed 170 objects, some of which were from the museum's collection and featured contemporary Pacific art. Some of the contemporary artists involved in the exhibition were invited to speak at the conference during the weekend of festivities. These artists included: Fiona Pardington, Greg Semu, George Nuku, Jeanine Clarkin, John Pule, Uili Lousi, Alana Jelinek and Mata Aho Collective.

The conference lasted two days and was split into four panels dealing with Sustainable Development and Indigenous Knowledge, Climate Change, The Role of Museums and Artistic Practice as a Rendering Tool. Most of the artists present were included in the last panel and they all spoke and presented their work to the audience, which was translated into French or English by professional translators who were present throughout the conference. The organisation was exemplary and special acknowledgement goes to PAA member Stéphanie Caffarel and her colleagues at the Quai Branly Museum who managed to put together such an exciting and interesting conference, made even more so by the number of contemporary artists present.



During the conference - photo© Jacqueline Charles-Rault

Mata Aho collective (photos above) formed in 2012, is comprised of four Maori women who come together at regular intervals during the year to work collectively on their large-scale fibre art work. Their practice is built on the role of tuakana/teina relationships (intergenerational mentorship), researching taonga Māori within museum collections and collaboration informed by indigenous methodologies. Their work *Kiko Moana* (2016) exhibited in both Oceania exhibitions was originally made for the Documenta14 in Kassel, Germany. The large-scale installation measuring 11 x 5 meters is made from 60 light blue duty tarpaulins, chosen for their diverse utility and accessibility, which were repeatedly folded and stitched. Mata Aho wanted the work to allude to the rippling surface of water and to taniwha. In Maori traditions, taniwha are supernatural creatures that were said to reside just under the water in oceans, rivers, lakes and caves. They would eat and kill people. Other particularities of taniwha are communication, protection and travel. Mata Aho felt that these were important qualities, especially as the work was destined to travel to Europe to be exhibited. Another important aspect of the work was to collect taniwha stories from friends and family to share and exchange ideas and experiences. During the conference at the Quai Branly Museum, Mata Aho shared and read aloud to the delight of the audience one of these taniwha experiences that belongs to one of the members grandmother.

Mata Aho : <https://www.mataahocollective.com/>

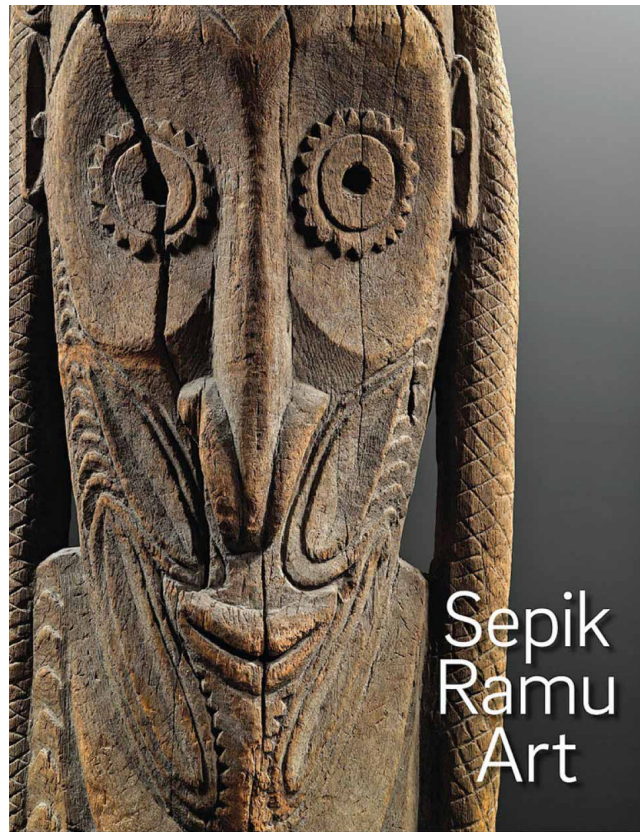
Book news



War Art & Ritual Shields from the Pacific

2019, 2 vols boxed, 484 pages, Bill Evans (ed), private press Bill Evans, Sydney, 750 copies.

This is an ambitious work, signalling the culmination of a lifetime's passion upon one single form of material culture by Bill Evans, a Sydney based art dealer. Volume one has firm focus on shields from Island South East Asia with essays by Steven Alpert, Robyn Maxwell and Andrew Tavarelli. The second volume is dedicated to shields from Melanesia with essays by Harry Beran, Barry Craig, Natalie Wilson, Crispin Howarth and Kevin Conru. Being primarily a study of a singular object type – the shield, this publication visually demonstrates the overwhelming diversity of form and decoration on shields across Island Southeast Asia and Melanesia. Evans has selected many exceptional shields; the Island Asia material comes mainly from private hands and while the majority are shields from Borneo, there are highly decorated dancing shields from both Bali and the Moluccas. The Melanesian material is predominantly drawn from Australian museum collections many of which have not been published before, particularly those from the Bismarck Archipelago and PNG Highlands.



Sepik Ramu Art

Sepik Ramu Art celebrates the broad diversity of art productions from the plain of the Sepik and Ramu rivers. This volume, edited by Kevin Conru, illustrates about two hundred artworks from three important European private collections. The objects, brilliantly photographed by Hughes Dubois, were for the most part collected before WWI, and reflect the Northern European collecting approach at that time with its predilection for fine small artefacts. The majority came from the region of the lower Sepik and Ramu rivers, where most of the commercial activities were established.

The list of provenances includes prestigious museums such as the Linden Museum in Stuttgart, the Ethnologisches Museum in Berlin, the Rautenstrauch Joest Museum in Cologne, and the Liverpool Museum. A number of the works presented derive from the collections of German and Dutch Catholic congregations (such as the Societas Verbi Divini) gathered by their mission stations. Others were collected by early visitors and residents in the region, such as gold prospector Ernst Tappenbeck, Wilhelm Häberle of the Neuguinea-Kompagnie, and the German-era Governor, Albert Hahl. The majority of the artefacts passed through the hands of renowned mid-twentieth-century dealers and collectors including Ludwig Bretschneider, Munich; Boris Kegel-Konietzko, Hamburg; Arthur Speyer, Berlin; Philip Goldman, London; and Matthias Lemaire, Amsterdam; or the collectors, Ernst Heinrich in Bad Cannstatt; Cornelius Meulendijk and Carel Groenevelt in Rotterdam, James Hooper in Arundel, Walter Bondy in Paris and Jef Vanderstraete in Lasne.

The book comprises three articles written by important scholars. In her essay *Layers of Light: Twentieth-Century Photographs of Sculpture, Architecture, and the People of the Sepik River*, Virginia-Lee Webb discusses early photographs taken in the area pointing out the significant role played by those remarkable documents in the growth of our understanding of the

culture and environment of the Sepik Ramu. The second article *Brag Masks and Kandimbong Figures: Two Sculptural Arts of the Sepik–Ramu Delta* by Crispin Howarth deals with wood carvings from the Murik Lakes. This study can enlighten our aesthetic appreciation of the art forms from other groups, as the Murik were key players in the cultural and art trade in the lower reaches of the two rivers. Barry Craig in his survey *New Bends for an Old River* explores the cultural evolution and innovations within different communities of the Sepik Ramu resulting from environmental changes, population movements, consequent encounters and exchanges.



Entry view of the Ancestral Visions exhibition at Lempertz, Brussels. Courtesy Emilie Jolly.

To mark the launch of this publication, Kevin Conru, in association with the German auction house Lempertz, curated an exhibition in its beautiful Brussels Art Nouveau' premises. About one hundred of the book's illustrated objects were exhibited from May 24th to June 28th. The selection, chosen to illustrate the extraordinary diverse creativity of the Sepik Ramu peoples, included numerous important works of art, masks, food hooks, shields, ornaments, malu boards, charms and house posts, some in series, such as the four Biwat flute stoppers, and the four Angoram cult figures, which show the variety of artistic solutions within a corpus of works.

FESTPAC2020



The 13th Festival of Pacific Arts now under the title of FESTPAC2020 will be hosted in Honolulu and Kaka’ako, Hawai’i. The festival occurs once every four years with FESTPAC2020 running for ten days, 10th-20th June 2020. 28 Pacific nations will be represented by nearly 3000 cultural practitioners, performing and visual artists.

For further information regarding the festival: <https://www.festpachawaii.org/>

Forthcoming and Current Exhibitions

Fiji: Art and Life in the Pacific opens December 15 2019 at LACMA and runs until June 14 2020.

Héros et esprits de Nouvelle-Guinée at the Musée de la Castre, Cannes, continues until 27 October 2019

Atea: Nature & Divinity in Polynesia at the Metropolitan Museum of Art continues until October 27, 2019

Bouteilles à la mer at Muséum d’Histoire naturelle de Bourges continues until November 24, 2019.

In Pursuit of Venus [infected] at the de Young Museum opens August 10 and runs until January 5, 2020.

Thirst for Knowledge Meets Collecting Mania at the Museum der Kulturen, Basel, continues until Jan 19 2020.

Australian Art at the Museum Volkenkunde, Leiden, continues June 20 2021.

Editors' End Note

Coordinating and compiling the PAA Newsletter in the age of social media has its challenges and we need your help. The next Newsletter will be sent out in the first quarter of 2020. We are looking for contributions, news items, reviews and notes from across the globe relating to events, activities, exhibitions, publications and any other interesting happenings associated with Pacific art. If you wish to share with other PAA members please be sure to send us in advance the relevant information and images (emails below).

Thanks, and appreciation, to Lisa McDonald, Emilie Jolly, Wonu Veys, Chantal Knowles, Maia Nuku, Carol E. Mayer, Maggie Wander and Christian Kaufmann for contributions to this edition.

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About the Editors

Jacqueline Charles-Rault has been the director of the cultural service at Le Havre Normandy University for 6 years. She has curated 3 contemporary Pacific art exhibitions. She has been a member of the PAA for over 10 years and is now a member of the board for PAA-E.

Crispin Howarth is the curator for Pacific arts at the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra. The most recent exhibition at the NGA is *Tā Moko: Māori Markings* until August 25th 2019.
