

## **Art of the Pacific Islands (guest lecture by Dr. Eric Kjellgren)**

### **Key Ideas**

- The Pacific region is vast, with four separate cultural regions: Australia, Melanesia, Micronesia, and Polynesia. These areas, in turn, have diverse cultures within them (for example, New Guinea has 800 separate cultural groups).
- The art of the Pacific Islands is often divided by gender. Women work in the fiber arts and men work in carving wood, stone, and shell.
- Much of the art in the Pacific Islands was devoted to portraying gods, spirits, or ancestors.
- In Polynesia, the people were ruled by hereditary chiefs. Many prestige objects are from this area.

### **Mia Objects (by order of region noted in the lecture)**

#### ***Australia***

- Bark Painting with Suns, Fish and Plants, 20th century, Djunmal, 95.37.2

#### ***Melanesia (Black Islands)/New Guinea***

- Bis Pole, 20th century, Asmat (Bismam group), 74.79.1
- Plaque, mid-20th century, Abelam, 2004.107.7
- Hand drum (kundu), 20th century, Iatmul, 98.37.3
- Bioma Figure, 20th century, Unknown artist, Papua New Guinea, 98.37.2
- Malagan Pole, c. 1910, Unknown artist, Papua New Guinea, 68.9.3
- Malagan Frieze, 19th century, Unknown artist, Papua New Guinea, 85.94
- Malagan Figure, c. 1890, Unknown artist, Papua New Guinea, 85.93
- Kapkap, 19th century, Unknown artist, Solomon Islands, 92.99.1
- Kapkap, 19th century, Unknown artist, Solomon Islands, 99.4
- Feather Currency (tevu), 19th century, Unknown artist, Solomon Islands, 90.80A,B

#### ***Micronesia (Tiny Islands)***

- Nothing from Micronesia on display in our galleries

#### ***Polynesia (Many Islands)***

- Chief's Stool (no'oanga), 1800-1825, Unknown artist, Cook Islands, 2001.2.3

- Ceremonial Paddle, 1820-1840, Unknown artist, Austral Islands, 47.40
- Necklace (lei niho palaoa), c. 1800-1850, Kānaka Maoli, 2008.69
- Tapa Cloth, 1800-1825, Unknown artist, United States (Hawaii), 2000.25.2
- Post Figure (poutokomanawa), c. 1840, Ngāti Kahungunu Māori, 2001.65A,B
- House Panel, c. 1880, Pāoa Māori, 2000.137
- Mere Pounamu, Date Unknown, Māori, 99.101.3
- Moai Kavakava, 18th century, Unknown artist, Rapa Nui (Easter Island), 72.3

## **Additional Resources**

The American Museum of Asmat Art at the University of St. Thomas:

[http://art.stthomas.edu/asmart/?utm\\_source=ustredirect&utm\\_medium=Vanity&utm\\_campaign=Asmat%20Art](http://art.stthomas.edu/asmart/?utm_source=ustredirect&utm_medium=Vanity&utm_campaign=Asmat%20Art)

Metropolitan Museum essays

European Exploration of the Pacific, 1600–1800:

[http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/expa/hd\\_exp.htm](http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/expa/hd_exp.htm)

The Asmat: [http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/asma/hd\\_asma.htm](http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/asma/hd_asma.htm)

Early Maori Wood Carvings: [http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/maor/hd\\_maor.htm](http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/maor/hd_maor.htm)

Easter Island: [http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/eais/hd\\_eais.htm](http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/eais/hd_eais.htm) and a similar moai figure: <http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/works-of-art/1984.526/>