26: Oceania
26.1: The Rise of Pacific Cultures

26.1.1: The Rise of Pacific Cultures

The ancestors of modern-day Pacific Cultures came to the regions of Polynesia, Micronesia, Australia, and Melanesia in two distinct waves, from 38,000 BCE to 1500 BCE.

Learning Objective

Outline the history and geography of Oceania

Key Points

- Oceania encompasses the people indigenous to Australia, New Zealand, and the Pacific Islands. The area is often broken down into four separate regions: Polynesia, Micronesia, Australia, and Melanesia.
- The ancestors of the people of these islands came from Southeast Asia by two different groups: the first came to New Guinea and Australia by 38,000 BCE, while the second came 30,000 years later and expanded into further remote islands. The Lapita, dating from about 1500 BCE to 500 BCE, are thought to be the ancestors of the modern day cultures of Polynesia, Micronesia, and some parts of Melanesia.
- The Lapita culture was formed by the second wave of Oceanic settlers coming from Southeast Asia.
- The period from 1000 BCE to 1000 CE is characterized by increasing trade and interaction between the Pacific Islands and mainland Asia, as well as the settling of new areas.
- By 1500 E, the first European explorers reached Oceania. Although previous artistic and architectural traditions continued, the various regions began to diverge and record more distinct cultures.

Key Terms

moai

Monolithic human figures carved by the Rapa Nui people from rock on the Chilean Polynesian island of Easter Island between the years 1250 and 1500.

Lapita

A term applied to an ancient Pacific Ocean archaeological culture that is believed by many archaeologists to be the common ancestor of several cultures in Polynesia, Micronesia, and some coastal areas of Melanesia.

Introduction: Oceania

Art of Oceania properly encompasses the artistic traditions of the people indigenous to Australia, New
Zealand, and the Pacific Islands. The area is often broken down into four separate regions: Polynesia, Micronesia, Australia, and Melanesia. The ancestors of the people of these islands came from Southeast Asia by two different groups at separate times. The first, an Australoid people and the ancestors of modern day Melanesians and Australian Aboriginals, came to New Guinea and Australia, with the Melanesians expanding as far as the northern Solomon Islands by 38,000 BCE. The second wave of people came from Southeast Asia 30,000 years later, where they reached further remote Pacific islands. These early people lacked a writing system and made works on perishable materials, so few records of them exist from this time.

Map of major culture areas of Oceania: Micronesia, Melanesia, Polynesia, and Australia

The four cultural areas of Oceania are illustrated on this map, including the land masses of Australia, New Guinea, and New Zealand and the numerous Pacific Islands.

By 1500 BCE, descendants of the second wave of settlers began to expand and spread into the more remote islands. At around the same time, art began to appear in New Guinea, including the earliest examples of sculpture in Oceania. From around 1000 BCE on, the Lapita people consolidated and began to create the contemporary Polynesian cultures of Samoa, Tonga, and Fiji. From there they ventured further out into the Pacific and settled the Marquesas and northern Cook Islands.

The Lapita

The Lapita were an early culture with an influential artistic tradition. Dating from about 1500 BCE to 500 BCE, they are thought to be the ancestors of the modern day cultures of Polynesia, Micronesia, and some parts of Melanesia. The culture was formed by the second wave of Oceanic settlers, and the name comes from the site of Lapita in New Caledonia, which was among the first places its distinctive sculpture would be found. Their art is best known by their ceramics, which include elaborate geometric motifs and sometimes anthropomorphic imagery. It is thought some of the designs may be related to modern Polynesian tattoos and barkcloths. The ceramics were created by firing a comblike tool that stamped the designs on to wet clay; each stamp would have one design and would be layered until an elaborate pattern was created. Their usage is believed to have been primarily practical, used in cooking, serving, and storing food.
Interaction with Mainland Asia

The period from 1000 BCE to 1000 CE is characterized by increasing trade and interaction between the Pacific Islands and mainland Asia. Starting around 600 BCE, works of the Dongson culture of Vietnam—known for their bronze working—can be found in Oceania, and their imagery has a strong influence on the indigenous artistic tradition. New areas were also settled during this time, including Hawaii, Easter Island, Tahiti, and New Zealand. Starting around 1100 CE, the people of Easter Island began construction of nearly 900 moai (large stone statues). At about 1200 CE, the people of Pohnpei, an island in Micronesia, embarked on another megalithic construction, building Nan Madol, a city of artificial islands and a system of canals. By 1500, the first European explorers reached Oceania. Although previous artistic and architectural traditions continued, the various regions began to diverge and record more distinct cultures.

Moai at Rano Raraku, Easter Island

Starting around 1100 CE, the people of Easter Island began construction of nearly 900 moai, or large stone statues of human-like heads.

Attributions

- The Rise of Pacific Cultures
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26.2: Australia

26.2.1: Aboriginal Australian Art

Aboriginal Australian art can be traced back at least 30,000 years and is one of the longest continuously practiced artistic traditions in the world.

Learning Objective

Differentiate between the periods and regional styles of Aboriginal Australian rock paintings

Key Points

- The history of visual arts in Australia ranges from ancient Aboriginal rock paintings to the western-influenced contemporary works of today.
- Rock paintings are divided into three periods based on the styles and content of the art: the Pre-Estuarine (c. 40,000–6000 BCE), Estuarine (c. 6000 BCE–500 CE), and Fresh Water (c. 500 CE–present) periods.
- There are three regional styles of cave art: the geometric style (known for its concentric circles, arcs, and dots), the simple figurative style, and the complex figurative style.
- Rock paintings are believed to have served several functions, from ceremonial to merely decorative. Today, they are preserved and protected in national parks throughout the continent.
- The influence of Aboriginal artwork in Australia carries over to the 19th and 20th centuries in the works of many artists, as well as in the resurgence of Aboriginal art today.

Key Terms

indigenous

Born or engendered in, native to a land or region, especially before an intrusion.

aboriginal

First according to historical or scientific records; original; indigenous.

advent

Coming; coming to; approach; arrival.

Aboriginal and Indigenous Art

The visual arts have a long history in Australia, from ancient Aboriginal rock paintings to colonial landscapes to contemporary movements of today. Aboriginal art in Australia can be traced back at least 30,000 years; the rock art of Australian Aborigines is one of the longest continuously practiced artistic
traditions in the world.

Rock paintings are divided into three periods based on the styles and content of the art: the Pre-Estuarine Period (c. 40,000–6000 BCE), the Estuarine Period (c. 6000 BCE–500 CE), and the Fresh Water Period (c. 500 CE–present). There are also three regional styles of cave art:

- The geometric style (known for its concentric circles, arcs, and dots) found in Central Australia, Tasmania, the Kimberly, and Victoria;
- The simple figurative style found in Queensland; and
- The complex figurative style found in Arnhem Land.

Rock paintings are believed to have served several functions, from ceremonial to merely decorative. Today, they are preserved in national parks throughout the continent and protected through organizations such as the Friends of Australian Rock Art.

Aboriginal Rock Art, Ubirr Art Site, Kakadu National Park, Australia

Aboriginal art in Australia can be traced back at least 30,000 years.

Influence of Aboriginal Art Today

The influence of Aboriginal artwork in Australia carries over to the 19th and 20th centuries in the works of William Barak, who recorded traditional aboriginal ways for the education of Westerners: Margaret Preston, a non-indigenous painter incorporating Aboriginal influences in her works; Albert Namatjira, an Arrernte
artist whose landscapes inspired the Hermannsburg School of art; and Elizabeth Durack, notable for her fusion of Western and indigenous influences.

In 1971, Geoffrey Bardon encouraged the Aboriginal people of Papunya to paint their *Dreamtime* stories about creation, people, animals, and customs on canvas. This led to the development of the Papunya Tula School, or *dot art*, now possibly Australia's most recognizable style of art worldwide. Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri, Long Jack Phillipus Tjakamarra, and William Sandy are some of the best known Papunya artists. Other Aboriginal artists have incorporated western mediums into their work, such as Emily Kngwarreye, Rover Thomas, and Freddy Timms.

### 26.2.2: Colonial Australian Art

European colonization had a profound and permanent affect on the artwork of Australia.

**Learning Objective**

Discuss the impact colonialism had on Australian art

**Key Points**

- Europeans first began depicting the natural landscape and wildlife of the Australian continent during initial voyages in the late 1700s.
- The colonial art market primarily desired landscape paintings, which are often described as making a gradual shift from a European sense of light to a more Australian one, as the lighting in Australia is notably different from that of Europe.
- The first artistic representations of the Australia scene by European artists were mainly natural history illustrations, depicting the distinctive flora and fauna of the land for scientific purposes and the topography of the coast.
- From 1851, the Victorian Gold Rush resulted in a huge influx of settlers and new wealth, and wealthy landowners and merchants recorded their material success by commissioning landscape paintings.
- The origin of distinctly Australian painting is associated with the Heidelberg School of the 1880s–1890s, which integrated an impressionistic plein air approach and idealized the rural landscape.

**Key Term**

*plein air*

A French term referring to the practice of painting outdoors, where a painter reproduces the actual visual conditions seen at the time of the painting.

**Colonial Art (1770–1900)**

The visual arts have a long history in Australia, from ancient Aboriginal rock paintings to colonial landscapes to contemporary movements of today. Europeans depicted the natural landscape, plant life, and wildlife of the Australian continent during initial voyages in the late 1700s. John Lewin and Harriet and Helena Scott were among the first professional natural history illustrators, while artists such as Augustus
Earle focused on ethnographic portraiture of Aboriginal Australians.

The colonial art market primarily desired landscape paintings, which are often described as making a gradual shift from a European sense of light to a more Australian one. The lighting in Australia is notably different from that of Europe, and early attempts at landscapes attempted to reflect this. The art of this era is also characterized by transformation, where artistic ideas originating from beyond (primarily Europe) gained new meaning and purpose when transplanted into the new continent and the emerging colonial society.

**Early Colonial Art (1770–1850)**

The first artistic representations of the Australia scene by European artists were mainly natural history illustrations, depicting the distinctive flora and fauna of the land for scientific purposes and the topography of the coast. Sydney Parkinson, the Botanical illustrator on James Cook’s 1770 voyage that first charted the eastern coastline of Australia, made a large number of such drawings under the direction of naturalist Joseph Banks. Until the turn of the century, all drawings made in the colony were crafted by soldiers, including British naval officers George Raper and John Hunter, and convict artists, including Thomas Watling. Most are in the style of naval draughtsmanship and cover natural history topics, specifically birds, while a few depict the infant colony itself.

**Later Colonial Art (1850–1895)**

From 1851, the Victorian Gold Rush resulted in a huge influx of settlers and new wealth. S. T. Gill (1818–1880) documented life on the Australian gold fields; however the colonial art market primarily desired landscape paintings, which were commissioned by wealthy landowners or merchants wanting to record their material success. Some of the artists of note included Eugene von Guerard, Nicholas Chevalier, William Strutt, John Skinner Prout, and Knut Bull. Louis Buvelot was a key figure in landscape painting, illustrating a more domesticated and settled view of the land. Among the first Australian artists to gain a reputation overseas were the impressionist John Peter Russell and landscape painter Rupert Bunny.

**The Heidelberg School (1885–1910)**

The origin of distinctly Australian painting is associated with the Heidelberg School of the 1880s–1890s. Like European Impressionists, artists such as Arthur Streeton, Frederick McCubbin, Tom Roberts, and Charles Conder applied themselves to recreating a truer sense of light and color as seen in the Australian landscape. They began an impressionistic *plein air* approach to the Australian landscape that remains embedded in Australia's popular consciousness, both inside and outside the art world.
Shearing the Rams, 1888–1890, oil on canvas by Tom Roberts

Colonial artists such as Tom Roberts (1856–1931) captured aspects of everyday life in Colonial Australia, such as this scene of men in a barn shearing rams.

Their most recognized paintings involve scenes of pastoral and outback Australia. Central themes of their art are considered those of work, conquering the land, and an idealization of the rural pioneer. By the 1890s, most Australians were city-dwellers, and a romantic view of pioneer life gave great power and popularity to images of the rural landscape.

Golden Summer, Eaglemont (1889) oil-on-canvas, by Arthur Streeton

Artists such as Arthur Streeton (1867–1943) attempted to capture the unique golden light and color that characterize the Australian landscape.

A sheep herder and his sheep move across a golden field.

Attributions
Aboriginal Australian Art


Colonial Australian Art

26.3: Wood Carving in Oceania

26.3.1: New Guinean Wood Carvings

With its diverse cultural heritage, the island of New Guinea holds some of the most striking art in all of Oceania.

Learning Objective

Describe the ancient stone figures, famous wood carvings, and the work of contemporary artists of New Guinea

Key Points

- The earliest examples of art in New Guinea are thought to have appeared around 1500 BCE in the form of early Oceanic rock sculptures, found mainly in the highlands.
- The region is most famously known today for its elaborate wood carvings, including sculptures, masks, canoes, drums, and storyboards.
- The Asmat, an ethnic group of New Guinea, are known for their elaborate wood carvings in the form of bisj poles, which are designed to honor ancestors. The latter half of the 19th century saw a decline of some traditional art forms as westernization began taking its toll on the area.
- However, the 20th and 21st centuries have seen a comeback in traditional New Guinean art and a burgeoning movement of contemporary artists such as Mathias Kauage.

Key Terms

highlands

A mountainous or hilly section of a country.

oceanic art

The artistic traditions of the people indigenous to Australia, New Zealand, and the Pacific Islands, including Melanesia, Micronesia, and Polynesia.

headhunting

The practice of taking and preserving a person's head after killing the person.

Overview: Art in New Guinea

New Guinean art is many-sided and complex. The sheer diversity of cultural groups existing in the region have resulted in many unique styles of cultural expression, from art and architecture to music and weaponry.
Ancient Sculptures

Traditional art of New Guinea falls under the greater classification of Oceanic art—art made by the native peoples of the Pacific Islands and Australia. The earliest examples of art in New Guinea are thought to have appeared around 1500 BCE in the form of early Oceanic sculptures. These sculptures, found throughout the island but mostly in the mountainous highlands, first appeared as stone figures that took the shape of mortars, pestles, or freestanding figures. Imagery including birds, human heads, or geometric patterns were often carved onto the tops of pestles or mortars or into the freestanding figures. While the original significance of these pieces is unknown, they may have been used in the context of rituals.

Wood Carvings

The region of New Guinea is perhaps most famously known for its tradition in wood carvings, which are especially prevalent along the Sepik River of Papau New Guinea (an Oceanian country that occupies the eastern half of the island of New Guinea and its offshore islands in Melanesia). Elaborate carvings often took the form of sculptures, masks, canoes, drums, and storyboards, many of which are in overseas museums today.

Hand drum, Papau New Guinea


The Bisj Poles of the Asmat

The Asmat are an ethnic group of New Guinea, residing in the Papua province. They have one of the most well-known woodcarving traditions in the Pacific, and their art is sought by collectors worldwide. Asmat art consists of elaborate stylized wood carvings, such as the bisj pole, that are designed to honor ancestors.

A bisj pole is a ritual artifact that can be erected as an act of revenge, to pay homage to the ancestors, to calm the spirits of the deceased, and to bring harmony and spiritual strength to the community. Carved out of a single piece of a wild nutmeg tree, bisj poles can reach heights of up to 25 feet. Their carvings depict human figures standing on top of each other, as well as animal figures and carvings in the shape of a canoe prow. Bisj poles are carved by Asmat religious carvers (known as wow-ipits) after a member of their tribe or
community had been killed by an enemy tribe. The Asmat believed that if a member of the community had been killed, his spirit would linger in the village and cause disharmony. Bisj poles were erected in order to satisfy these spirits and send them to the afterlife (known as Safan) across the sea.

A bisj pole of the Asmat

Carved out of a single piece of a wild nutmeg tree, bisj pole carvings depict human figures standing on top of each other, as well as animal figures and carvings in the shape of a canoe prow.

Many rituals involved the bisj poles, including dancing, masquerading, singing, and headhunting—all performed by men. Bisj poles often had a receptacle at the base that was meant to hold the heads of enemies taken on headhunting missions. Canoe prow symbols represented a metaphorical boat that would take the deceased spirits away to the afterlife; the human figures would represent deceased ancestors. Although the practice of headhunting ended in the Asmat region in the 1970s, the poles are still used in rituals today.
Papau New Guinean wooden sculpture

A Papua New Guinean wooden sculpture seen from multiple angles, Stanford University New Guinea sculpture garden.

Development of Art Over Time

New Guinean artistic tradition continued even with increasing trade and interaction with European explorers through the 17th and 18th centuries. The latter half of the 19th century saw a decline of some traditional art forms as westernization began taking its toll on the area. In the 20th century, however, New Guinean and other Oceanic art began making a comeback.

The first wave of contemporary New Guinean artists included Mathias Kauage, Timothy Akis, Jakupa Ako, and Joe Nalo. Kauage, whose work included drawing, painting, and woodcuts, won Australia's Blake Prize for religious art; four of his works are in the Glasgow Museum of Modern Art, and he had a solo show in 2005 at the Horniman Museum entitled "Kauage's Visions: Art from Papua New Guinea." Other noted Papua New Guinean visual artists include Larry Santana, Martin Morububuna, and Heso Kiwi.

26.3.2: Malagan Carvings

New Ireland, a large island in Melanesia, is most known for its elaborate wooden carvings used in traditional rituals and ceremonies.

Learning Objective

Describe the malagan carvings, tatanua masks, and kulap sculptures of New Ireland

Key Points

- New Ireland has a rich cultural history heavily influenced by Oceanic art.
- The most well-known art from this region includes malagan carvings, tatanua masks, and kulap sculptures used in traditional ceremonies, such as the funerary malagan ritual.
- Wooden malagan carvings were used during the rituals they are named after to honor the deceased; they are now world-famous and held in museums around the world.
- Tatanua masks, carved from wood and elaborately painted and decorated, are often worn by ceremonial dancers during malagan rituals.
- Kulap are small funerary sculptures believed to contain the soul of the deceased.

Key Terms

Oceanic art

The artistic traditions of the people indigenous to Australia, New Zealand, and the Pacific Islands, including Melanesia, Micronesia, and Polynesia.
funerary

Of or relating to a ceremony honoring the deceased.

Overview: New Ireland

New Ireland, a large island in Melanesia lying northeast of the island of New Britain, has a rich cultural history in the Oceanic arts. Art from this region was often highly decorative, portraying elaborate forms and often tied to themes of ancestry, hunting, or spiritual ceremonies. Some of the most well-known artworks of New Ireland are malagan carvings, tatanua masks, and kulap sculptures.

Malagan Carvings

Malagan ceremonies are the most large-scale and famous of the many events that take place within the region of New Ireland. These ceremonies are large, intricate cultural events that are often funerary in nature, held by the family of the deceased to communicate with deities and to honor those that have passed. They take place irregularly and typically take several days, requiring months or years of preparation. While a malagan ceremony is always held in the name of one or more people who have died in recent years, it is not at all a mortuary rite; many other interactions take place within the overall event, including announcements, repayment of debts, recognition of obligations, resolution of disputes, and many other customary activities.

Statues of the Deceased

Malagan carvings, now world-famous, are the wooden carvings that are created for use in these ceremonies to honor the deceased. Mannequins or statues representing the soul of the deceased are carved by local peoples to celebrate the dead person's characteristics. The deceased are remembered through the various depictions that are carved on the statues, each of which has a symbolic meaning. These carvings are elaborated with anthropomorphic symbols, which are thought to represent the link between the people of New Ireland, their creation, and the spiritual world to which they eventually pass on.
Malagan carvings, Papua New Guinea

Malagan wood carvings are created for use in malagan ceremonies.
Two intricately designed and decorated statues.

Tatanua Masks

A tatanua is a type of traditional wooden mask worn by ceremonial dancers during the malagan ritual. These masks are normally carved from lime wood, decorated with sugar cane fibers and wool or other animal hair, and painted using chalk and natural dyes. The type with a high headdress is created using a cane framework that was then covered in bark, although later imported fabric was used as the covering. Besides the fabric, some masks also included imported optical brighteners, which made some nominally white areas slightly blue.
Collection of malagan masks from the Ethnological Museum of Berlin

Masks were commonly used by dancers during the malagan ceremony to honor the spirits of the deceased.

The masks are frequently identifiable by the pierced ear lobes and prominent mouth, which is normally carved as if the mouth is open. The masks can also be identified by the asymmetrical hair design: the mask is left bare of hair on one side to mimic how a New Ireland man would shave his head to show that he was in mourning.

Tatuana mask
The tatuana masks of New Ireland were traditionally used in malagan ceremonies.

Traditionally, these ceremonial carvings were burnt at the conclusion of the event; however, during the colonial era, significant quantities of malagan statues and masks were collected by European administrators and can now be seen in museums all over Europe. In modern times most are now retained, as the carving tradition is known only by a few. Contemporary masters of malagan form include Ben Sisia of Libba Village (northern New Ireland) and Edward Salle of Lava Village (Tatau, Tabar Islands, New Ireland). Many malagan carvings are in museums around the world today.

**Kulap Sculptures**

Kulap are small funerary sculptures produced in the Punam region of southern New Ireland. They were believed to contain the soul of the deceased person whom they were meant to represent, and they would be ritually smashed once the period of mourning was over. In more recent years, some have been sold in their intact forms to Westerners, particularly to German administrators. Kulap are carved from chalk limestone native to the region, and they are often painted; they are expressly produced by artisans from the Rossel Mountains.

The chalk limestone used for carving kulap is found in the river beds of the hilly Punam region of southern New Ireland. Carved kulap may sometimes be painted, and some of the figures are carved in stylized forms and painted in pure white color. The figurines generally depict the deceased in a sitting posture. Kulap were kept in small enclosures, and only specific people were allowed to handle such figures, as it was believed that the soul of the dead should be temporarily confined to these figures to prevent them from harming the village environment.
Kulap carvings

Kulap figurines, made of chalk or limestone, are currently preserved in many museums in Berlin, New York, Australia, and Africa.

26.3.3: Wood Carving in the Caroline Islands

The Caroline Islands boast a rich history of traditional art, including elaborate wood carvings, sculptures, textiles, and ornaments.

Learning Objective

Differentiate between the art traditionally produced by men and women in the Caroline Islands

Key Points

- Belonging to the region of Micronesia, the Caroline Islands have a rich history of Oceanic art.
- Among the most prominent works of the region is the now-ruined, megalithic, floating city of Nan Madol, which is often called the "Venice of the Pacific."
- Artwork in these communities was often gendered: men created elaborate wood carvings and
sculptures, while women created textiles and ornaments.

- Dilukai are wooden figures of young women carved over the doorways of chiefs' houses in the Palauan archipelago to protect the villagers' health and crops and ward off evil spirits.
- While colonization threatened historical artistic traditions, independence from colonial powers has since allowed for a renewed interest in traditional arts, and a notable movement of contemporary art has begun to emerge in the region.

Key Terms

Oceanic art

The artistic traditions of the people indigenous to Australia, New Zealand, and the Pacific Islands, including Melanesia, Micronesia, and Polynesia.

archipelago

A group of islands.

Caroline minuscule

A script developed as a calligraphic standard in Europe so that the Latin alphabet could be easily recognized by the literate class from one region to another.

Overview: The Caroline Islands

The Caroline Islands are a widely scattered archipelago of tiny islands in the western Pacific Ocean, to the north of New Guinea. Technically belonging to the region of Micronesia, these islands have a rich history of Oceanic art.

Nan Madol

Among the most prominent works of the region is the megalithic floating city of Nan Madol, which today lies in ruin off the eastern shore of the island of Pohnpei. Construction on the city started in 1200 CE and was still underway when European invaders began to arrive around the year 1600. Often called the "Venice of the Pacific," Nan Madol was constructed in a lagoon and consists of a series of small, artificial islands linked by a network of canals.

Nan Madol was the ceremonial and political seat of the Saudeleur Dynasty, which united Pohnpei's estimated 25,000 people until about 1628. Set apart between the main island of Pohnpei and Temwen Island, it was a scene of human activity as early as the first or second century CE. By the 8th or 9th century, islet construction had started, but the distinctive megalithic architecture was probably not begun until the 12th or early 13th century. Around the turn of the 19th century, the city underwent a decline, and it was abandoned altogether by the 1820s.

Today Nan Madol forms an archaeological district covering more than 18 km² and includes the stone architecture built up on a coral reef flat along the shore of Temwen Island, several other artificial islets, and the adjacent Pohnpei main island coastline. The site core with its stone walls encloses an area approximately 1.5 km long by 0.5 km wide and contains nearly 100 artificial islets—stone and coral fill
platforms—bordered by tidal canals. Many islets were once occupied by the dwellings of priests, while some islets served a special purpose such as food preparation, canoe construction on Dapahu, or coconut oil preparation on Peinering. High walls surrounding tombs are located on Peinkitel, Karian, and Lemenkou, but the most prominent is the royal mortuary islet of Nandauwas, where walls 18–25 feet high surround a central tomb enclosure within the main courtyard.

Ruins of Nan Madol

Nan Madol is a ruined city adjacent to the eastern shore of the island of Pohnpei that was the capital of the Saudeleur Dynasty until about 1628.

Art of the Islands

During the 19th century, the Caroline Islands were divided up among the colonial powers, but art continued to thrive. This work was typically gendered in the communities. Men in the Caroline Islands created elaborate wood carvings, including stylized bowls, canoe ornaments, sculptured figures, ceremonial vessels, and richly decorated ceremonial houses. Women created textiles, ornaments, bracelets, and headbands. Stylistically, this art is streamlined with a practical simplicity but typically finished with a high standard of quality.

Dilukai

Dilukai are wooden figures of young women carved over the doorways of chiefs’ houses (known as bai) in the Palauan archipelago. They are typically shown with legs splayed, revealing a large, black, triangular pubic area with the hands resting on the thighs. These female figures were carved to protect the villagers’ health and crops and ward off evil spirits. They were traditionally created by ritual specialists according to strict rules, which, if broken, would result in the deaths of the carver and the chief. Female figures presenting their vulva can be found in many cultures, symbolizing fertility and (spiritual) rebirth and protecting from evil spirits. When Christian missionaries arrived in the region, they disapproved of the Dilukai and so changed the context, claiming that their purpose was to shame an immoral woman.
Dilukai from the Caroline Islands, Belau (Palau),
19th–early 20th century, Metropolitan Museum of Art

Dilukai are wooden figures of young women carved over the doorways of chiefs' houses (bai) to protect the villagers' health and crops and ward off evil spirits.

The Effects of Colonialism

During the first half of the 20th century, Western and Japanese imperialism began to affect the region. A number of historical artistic traditions simply ceased to be practiced, while others were maintained. By the second half of the century, however, when the Caroline Islands secured their independence from colonial forces, there was a resurgence of interest in traditional arts, and a new generation of artists began to learn these forms. Toward the end of the 20th century, a notable, regional movement of contemporary art had emerged throughout Micronesia, to which artists from the Caroline Islands contributed.

Attributions

- New Guinean Wood Carvings
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Malagan Carvings
"375px-Funerary_Figure_%28kulap%29.jpg." https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kulap#/media/File:Funerary_Figure_(kulap).jpg. Wikipedia CC BY 2.0.

Wood Carving in the Caroline Islands
26.4: Polynesia

26.4.1: Crafts in the Cook Islands

The Cook and Marquesas Islands, located in the South Pacific, are known for their woodcarving, weaving, quilts, and tattooing.

Learning Objective

Outline the art and history of the peoples of the Cook and Marquesas Islands

Key Points

- The Cook Islands, composed of 15 small islands whose total land area is 92.7 square miles, are a parliamentary democracy in free association with New Zealand.
- Woodcarving, weaving, and tivaevae—the art of handmade Island scenery patchwork quilts—are well-known artistic traditions of the Cook Islands. The islands have also produced several internationally recognized contemporary artists.
- The Marquesas Islands are a group of volcanic islands in French Polynesia, an overseas collectivity of France in the southern Pacific Ocean. The first recorded settlers prior to 100 CE were Polynesians, most likely from Tonga and Samoa.
- The Marquesas have a long history of complex geometric tattooing, covering the whole bodies of both men and women.

Key Terms

tapa

A kind of cloth prepared by the Polynesians from the inner bark of the paper mulberry; sometimes called also kapa.

adze

A cutting tool that has a curved blade set at a right angle to the handle and is used in shaping wood.

Overview: The Cook Islands

The Cook Islands are a parliamentary democracy in the South Pacific Ocean in free association with New Zealand, composed of 15 small islands whose total land area is 92.7 square miles. Although Cook Islanders are citizens of New Zealand, they have the status of Cook Islands nationals, which is not given to other New Zealand citizens. The Cook Islands were first settled in the 6th century CE by Polynesian people who migrated from nearby Tahiti to the southeast. British navigator Captain James Cook arrived in 1773 and 1777 and named the islands the Hervey Islands; the name "Cook Islands," in honor of Cook, appeared on a
Woodcarving in the Cook Islands

Woodcarving is a common art form in the Cook Islands. The proximity of islands in the southern group helped produce a homogeneous style of carving; however, each island developed its own characteristics within this style. Rarotonga is known for its fisherman's gods and staff-gods; Atiu for its wooden seats; Mitiaro, Ma'uke, and Atiu for mace and slab gods; and Mangaia for its ceremonial adzes. Mangaia is the source of many fine adzes carved in a distinctive, idiosyncratic style with the so-called double-k design, and it also produces food pounders carved from the heavy calcite found in its extensive limestone caves. Most of the original wood carvings were either taken by early European collectors or were burned in large numbers by European missionaries.

Cook Islands carved wood figure, British Museum

The Cook Islands were regarded for their fine wood carvings, many of which were taken or destroyed by European missionaries.

Craftwork in the Cook Islands
Today, carving is no longer the major art form with the same spiritual and cultural emphasis given to it by the Maori in New Zealand. However, there are continual efforts to interest young people in their heritage. The island Atiu, in particular, has a strong tradition of crafts both in carving and local fiber arts such as tapa. The outer islands produce traditional weaving of mats, basketware, and hats. Particularly fine examples of rito hats are worn by women to church, which are made from the uncurled immature fibre of the coconut palm. The Polynesian equivalent of Panama hats, they are highly valued and are keenly sought by Polynesian visitors from Tahiti. Often, they are decorated with hatbands made of minuscule pupu shells that are painted and stitched on by hand. Although pupu are found on other islands, the collection and use of them in decorative work has become a specialty of Mangaia. The weaving of rito is a specialty of the northern island of Penrhyn.

Weaving in the Cook Islands

Weaved hand fan with a carved figure handle.

Another popular art form in the Cook Islands is tivaevae—the art of handmade Island scenery patchwork quilts. Introduced by the wives of missionaries in the 19th century, the craft grew into a communal activity, which is probably one of the main reasons for its popularity. By custom, a tivaevae is not measured by monetary value nor production cost; its value is said to be reflected by the love and patience that the creator(s) have put into making a stunning work of art. Cook Islands women often described their tivaevae as being "something from the heart."
Woman sewing a tivaevae, Rarotonga

Tivaevae, the art of handmade patchwork quilts, is not measured by monetary value or production cost, but rather is valued for the love and patience that the creator(s) have put into making a stunning work of art.

Contemporary Artists

The Cook Islands have produced internationally recognized contemporary artists, especially in the main island of Rarotonga. Artists include painter and photographer Mahiriki Tangaroa, sculptor Eruera (Ted) Nia (originally a filmmaker), master carver Mike Tavioni, and community-project artist Ani O'Neil. Many of these artists have studied at university art schools in New Zealand and continue to enjoy close links with the New Zealand art scene.

Marquesas Islands

The Marquesas Islands are a group of volcanic islands in French Polynesia, an overseas collectivity of France in the southern Pacific Ocean. The Islands form one of the five administrative divisions of French Polynesia. In the history of the Marquesas Islands, the first recorded settlers were Polynesians, who, from archeological evidence, are believed to have arrived before 100 CE. Ethnological and linguistic evidence suggests that they likely arrived from the region of Tonga and Samoa. The islands were given their name by the Spanish explorer Álvaro de Mendaña de Neira, who reached them on 21 July 1595. Much of Polynesia, including the original settlers of Hawaii, Tahiti, Rapa Iti, and Easter Island, was settled by Marquesans who were believed to have departed from the Marquesas as a result of overpopulation and drought-related food shortages. Much of the rest of Polynesia was colonized by Marquesan descendants centered in Tahiti.

These islands share similar artistic traditions of other Pacific Islands, including the art of tattooing. The Marquesas have a long history of complex geometric tattooing, covering the whole bodies of both men and women. Today, Marquesan culture is a mélange created by the layering of the ancient Marquesan culture, with strong influences from the important Tahitian culture and the politically important French culture.
26.4.2: Stonework on Easter Island

Easter Island is famous for its monumental statues, called moai, created by the early Rapa Nui people.

Learning Objective

Describe the structure and creation of the moai and ahu of Easter Island

Key Points

- Easter Island is a Polynesian island in the southeastern Pacific Ocean, located at the southeasternmost point of the Polynesian Triangle.
- The Rapa Nui people had a Stone Age culture that made extensive use of several different types of local stone, including basalt, obsidian, red scoria, and tuff.
- The large stone statues, or moai, for which Easter Island is world-famous, were carved from 1100–1680 CE. A total of 887 monolithic stone statues have been inventoried.
- Ahu are stone platforms that often carried moai; of the 313 known ahu, Ahu Tongariki has the most and tallest moai.
- Easter Island has one of the richest collections of petroglyphs in all Polynesia, with over 4,000 petroglyphs cataloged.
- Tongorongo is an apparent script with glyphs that include pictographic and geometric shapes; the texts, which were incised in wood, have yet to be deciphered.

Key Terms

moai

Monolithic human figures carved by the Rapa Nui people from rock on the Chilean Polynesian island of Easter Island between the years 1250 and 1500 CE.

ahu

A stone platform that carried the moai statues of the Rapa Nui people of Easter Island.

boustrophedon

Written from right-to-left and left-to-right on alternate lines.

Background: Easter Island

Easter Island is a Polynesian island in the southeastern Pacific Ocean, located at the southeasternmost point of the Polynesian Triangle. A special territory of Chile that was annexed in 1888, Easter Island is famous for its 887 extant monumental statues, called moai, created by the early Rapa Nui people. It is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, with much of the island protected within Rapa Nui National Park. In recent times, the island has served as a warning of the cultural and environmental dangers of exploitation. Ethnographers and archaeologists also blame diseases carried by European sailors and Peruvian slave raiding of the 1860s for devastating the local peoples.
Easter Island and the islands near South America.

This map shows Easter Island, a Polynesian island in the southeastern Pacific Ocean, at the southeasternmost point of the Polynesian Triangle.

Stone Work

The Rapa Nui people had a Stone Age culture that made extensive use of several different types of local stone, including basalt, obsidian, red scoria, and tuff. The large stone statues for which Easter Island is world-famous, known as moai, were carved from 1100–1680 CE. A total of 887 monolithic stone statues have been inventoried on the island and in museum collections so far. Although often identified as "Easter Island heads," most of the statues have torsos and end at the top of the thighs, and a small number are complete with the figures kneeling on bent knees and their hands over their stomachs. Almost all moai (roughly 95%) were carved out of distinctive, compressed, and easily worked solidified volcanic ash or tuff found at a single site inside the extinct volcano Rano Raraku. The native islanders who carved them used only stone hand chisels; while many teams worked on different statues at the same time, a single moai took a team of five or six men approximately one year to complete. Each statue represented the deceased head of a lineage.

The Rapa Nui are also know for their construction of ahu, or stone platforms, many of which (approximately 125 of the 313 known ahu) carry moai. Ahu Tongariki, one kilometer from Rano Raraku, had the most and tallest moai of any of the ahu. These stone platforms evolved from the traditional Polynesian marae. In this context, ahu referred to a small structure sometimes covered with a thatched roof where sacred objects, including statues, were stored. The ahu were usually adjacent to the marae, or main central court where ceremonies took place. On Easter Island, both ahu and moai evolved to a much greater size. Ahu are found mostly on the coast, where they are distributed fairly evenly, except on the western slopes of Mount Terevaka and the Rano Kau and Poike headlands.
Ahu Tongariki near Rano Raraku

Ahu Tongariki is a 15-moai ahu that was excavated and restored in the 1990s.

One of the highest-quality examples of Easter Island stone masonry is the rear wall of the ahu at Vinapu. Made without mortar by shaping hard basalt rocks of up to seven tons to match each other exactly, it has a superficial similarity to some Inca stone walls in South America.

Houses of the Rapa Nui

Two types of houses are known to have existed in Easter Island History: hare paenga, a house with an elliptical foundation made with basalt slabs and covered with a thatched roof that resembled an overturned boat, and hare oka, a round stone structure. Related stone structures called tupa look very similar to the hare oka, except that the tupa were inhabited by astronomer-priests and located near the coast, where the movements of the stars could be easily observed. Settlements also contain hare moa, or oblong stone structures that were used to house chickens. The houses at the ceremonial village of Orongo are unique in that they are shaped like hare paenga but are made entirely of flat basalt slabs found inside the Rano Kao crater. The entrances to all the houses are very low, requiring a person to crawl in order to enter.

Petroglyphs

Easter Island has one of the richest collections of petroglyphs in all Polynesia, with over 4,000 petroglyphs cataloged. Designs and images were carved out of rock for a variety of reasons, including to create totems, to mark territory, or to memorialize a person or event. There are distinct variations around the island in terms of the frequency and particular themes among petroglyphs, with a concentration of Birdmen at Orongo. Other subjects include sea turtles, Komari (vulvas), and Makemake, the chief god of the Tangata manu or Birdman cult.
Easter Island once had an apparent script called *rongorongo*. Glyphs include pictographic and geometric shapes; the texts were incised in wood in reverse boustrophedon direction. It was first reported by a French missionary, Eugène Eyraud, in 1864. At that time, several islanders said they could understand the writing, but according to tradition, only ruling families and priests were ever literate, and none survived the slave raids and subsequent epidemics. Despite numerous attempts, the surviving texts have not been deciphered, so it is not certain that they were actually writing.

**Attributions**

- **Crafts in the Cook Islands**

- **Stonework on Easter Island**
26.5: Art of New Zealand

26.5.1: Maori Art in New Zealand

Traditional New Zealand art consists of the art of the Māori people, who first settled the island between 1250–1300 CE.

Learning Objective

Identify the key elements of prehistoric and traditional Māori from New Zealand

Key Points

- New Zealand art includes traditional Māori art and more recent forms taking inspiration from Māori, European, and other traditions. Polynesians settled New Zealand in 1250–1300 CE and developed a distinctive Māori culture.
- Charcoal drawings, estimated between 500 and 800 years old, can be found on limestone rock shelters in the center of the South Island, with over 500 sites stretching from Kaikoura to North Otago.
- Māori visual art of New Zealand consists primarily of four forms: carving, tattooing (ta moko), weaving, and painting.
- Carving was done in wood, bone, and stone, and carvings were used to create jewelry and decorate houses, fence poles, containers, and other objects.
- Ta moko is the art of traditional Māori tattooing, done with a chisel. Men were tattooed on many parts of their bodies, including faces, buttocks, and thighs, while women were usually tattooed only on the lips and chin.
- Weaving was used to create numerous things, from decorative wall panels in important buildings to functional clothing and bags.

Key Terms

koru

A spiral shape based on the shape of a new unfurling silver fern frond and symbolizing new life, growth, strength, and peace; an integral symbol in Maori art, carving, and tattoos.

Māori

The indigenous Polynesian people of New Zealand, originating with settlers from eastern Polynesia who arrived in New Zealand in several waves of canoe voyages at some time between 1250 and 1300 CE.
New Zealand is an island country in the southwestern Pacific Ocean. The country geographically comprises two main landmasses—that of the North and South Islands—and numerous smaller islands. Because of its remoteness, it was one of the last lands to be settled by humans. Polynesians settled New Zealand in 1250–1300 CE and developed a distinctive Māori culture. Europeans first made contact in 1642 CE. The British and Irish immigrants brought aspects of their own culture to New Zealand and heavily influenced Māori culture, particularly with the introduction of Christianity. More recently, American, Australian, Asian, and other European cultures have exerted influence on New Zealand.

New Zealand art includes traditional Māori art, which was developed in New Zealand from Polynesian art forms, and more recent forms, which take their inspiration from Māori, European, and other traditions.

**Early Charcoal Drawings**

Charcoal drawings can be found on limestone rock shelters in the center of the South Island, with over 500 sites stretching from Kaikoura to North Otago. The drawings are estimated to be between 500 and 800 years old and portray animals, people, and fantastic creatures. Some of the birds pictured are long extinct and were drawn by early Māori; however by the time Europeans arrived, local inhabitants did not know the origins of the drawings.

**Traditional Māori Art**

Māori visual art consists primarily of four forms: carving, tattooing (ta moko), weaving, and painting. Traditional Māori art was highly spiritual and conveyed information about ancestry and other culturally important topics. Most traditional Māori art was highly stylized and featured motifs such as the spiral, the chevron, and the koru. The colors black, white, and red dominated.
Portrait of Hinepare of Ngāti Kahungunu by Gottfried Lindauer, showing chin moko, pounamu hei-tiki, and woven cloak

This portrait shows traditional jewelry (known as hei-tiki), woven cloth, and chin moko, or tattooing.

Carving

Carving was done in wood, bone, and stone. Wood carvings were used to decorate houses, fence poles, containers, and other objects. Both stone and bone were used to create jewelry such as the hei-tiki. The introduction of metal tools by Europeans allowed more intricacy and delicacy, causing stone and bone fish hooks and other tools to become purely decorative.
Māori carving

Late 20th century red carved house post depicting the navigator Kupe. Although an essentially traditional style, this carving was created using metal tools and uses modern paints, creating a form distinct from that of pre-European times.

Ta moko

Ta moko is the art of traditional Māori tattooing, done with a chisel. Men were tattooed on many parts of their bodies, including faces, buttocks, and thighs. Women were usually tattooed only on the lips and chin. Moko conveyed a person's ancestry. The art declined in the 19th century following the introduction of Christianity, but in recent decades it has undergone a revival.
Weaving

Weaving was used to create numerous things, including wall panels in meeting houses and other important buildings, as well as clothing and bags (known as kete). While many of these were purely functional, others were true works of art, taking hundreds of hours to complete and often given as gifts to important people. In pre-European times, the main medium for weaving was flax; however, following the arrival of Europeans, cotton, wool, and other textiles were also used.

Painting

In classical Māori art, painting was not an important art form. It was mainly used as a minor decoration in meeting houses, in stylized forms such as the koru. Europeans introduced Māori to their more figurative style of art, and in the 19th century, less stylized depictions of people and plants began to appear in place of traditional carvings and woven panels.

26.5.2: European Art in New Zealand

European contact with New Zealand heavily influenced traditional Māori art of the region.

Learning Objective

Describe the influences of European art in New Zealand

Key Points

- Europeans first made contact with New Zealand in 1642 CE, and the British and Irish invaders heavily influenced Māori culture and art, particularly with the introduction of Christianity.
- Europeans began producing art in New Zealand as soon as they arrived, with landscape art and painting becoming very popular.
- From the late 19th century, many Pākehā (New Zealanders not of Māori origin, usually of European ancestry) attempted to create a distinctive New Zealand style of art, sometimes appropriating Māori artistic styles.
- From the early 20th century, politician Apirana Ngata fostered a renewal of traditional Māori art forms, establishing a school of Māori arts in Rotorua. Many Māori artists became highly successful in blending elements of Māori culture with European modernism.

Key Terms

korus

A spiral shape based on the shape of a new unfurling silver fern frond and symbolizing new life, growth, strength, and peace; an integral symbol in Māori art, carving, and tattoos.

Māori

The indigenous Polynesian people of New Zealand, originating with settlers from eastern Polynesia
who arrived in New Zealand in several waves of canoe voyages some time between 1250 and 1300 CE.

**Background: New Zealand Art**

Because of its remoteness, New Zealand was one of the last lands to be settled by humans. Polynesians settled New Zealand in 1250–1300 CE and developed a distinctive Māori culture, and Europeans first made contact in 1642 CE. The British and Irish invaders brought aspects of their own culture to New Zealand and heavily influenced Māori culture, particularly with the introduction of Christianity. More recently, American, Australian, Asian, and other European cultures have exerted influence on New Zealand.

**European Influence on Art**

**Early Landscapes and Portraiture**

Europeans began producing art in New Zealand as soon as they arrived, with many exploration ships including an artist to record newly discovered places, people, flora, and fauna. Landscape art was popular among early invaders, with prints used to promote further settlement and invasion of New Zealand. Notable landscape artists included Augustus Earle and William Fox. However, the most successful artists of this period, Charles Goldie and Gottfried Lindauer, were noted primarily for their portraits of the indigenous Māori people.
Early European Portraits

Portrait of a New Zealand man, Sydney Parkinson, 1784, probably from a sketch made in 1769.

19th Century

From the late 19th century, many Pākehā (New Zealanders not of Māori origin, usually of European ancestry) attempted to create a distinctive New Zealand style of art. Many, such as Rita Angus, continued to work on landscapes, with attempts to depict New Zealand's harsh light. Others appropriated Māori artistic styles; Gordon Walters created many paintings and prints based on the koru. New Zealand's most highly regarded 20th century artist was Colin McCahon, who attempted to use international styles such as cubism in New Zealand contexts.
Portraits of Hinepare of Ngāti Kahungunu by Gottfried Lindauer (1890), showing chin moko, pounamu hei-tiki, and woven cloak

Gottfried Lindauer was known for his portraits of the Māori people.

20th Century

From the early 20th century, politician Apirana Ngata fostered a renewal of traditional Māori art forms, establishing a school of Māori arts in Rotorua. The visual arts flourished in the later decades of the 20th century, with the increased cultural sophistication of many New Zealanders. Many Māori artists became highly successful in blending elements of Māori culture with European modernism. Ralph Hotere is New Zealand’s highest selling living artist. Others include Shane Cotton and Michael Parekowhai.

Attributions

- Maori Art in New Zealand
European Art in New Zealand

26.6: Hawaiian Art

26.6.1: Pre-European Hawaiian Art

Hawaiian art can be divided into pre-European art, non-native art, and art produced by Hawaiians incorporating western ideas.

Learning Objective

Evaluate indigenous Hawaiian art

Key Points

- Hawaiian art can be divided into pre-European art, non-native art, and art produced by Hawaiians incorporating western ideas.
- Polynesians arrived in Hawaii 1,000–2,000 years ago, and in 1778 Captain James Cook and his crew became the first Europeans to visit Hawaii, calling it the Sandwich Islands.
- Traditional Hawaiian art includes wood carvings, feather work, petroglyphs, bark cloth (called kapa in Hawaiian), and tattoos.
- Kapa is a fabric made by Native Hawaiians from the bast fibers of certain species of trees and shrubs; it is based primarily on linear elements and used primarily for clothing, bed covers, robes, and banners.

Key Terms

hula

A form of chant and dance which was developed in the Hawaiian Islands by the Polynesians who originally settled there.

Captain James Cook

A British explorer, navigator, cartographer, and captain in the Royal Navy who made detailed maps of Newfoundland prior to making three voyages to the Pacific Ocean, during which he achieved the first recorded European contact with the eastern coastline of Australia and the Hawaiian Islands, and the first recorded circumnavigation of New Zealand.

Overview: Hawaii

Hawaii represents the northernmost extension of the vast Polynesian triangle of the south and central Pacific Ocean. While traditional Hawaiian culture remains only as vestiges in modern Hawaiian society, there are reenactments of the ceremonies and traditions throughout the islands. Some of these cultural influences are strong enough to affect the United States at large, including the popularity (in greatly modified form) of
luaus and hula.

The Hawaiian archipelago consists of 137 islands in the Pacific Ocean that are far from any other land. Polynesians arrived there 1,000–2,000 years ago, and in 1778 Captain James Cook and his crew became the first Europeans to visit Hawaii (which they called the Sandwich Islands). The art created in these islands may be divided into art existing prior to Cook’s arrival; art produced by recently arrived westerners; and art produced by Hawaiians incorporating western materials and ideas.

## Traditional Hawaiian Art

Art existing prior to the invasion of Europeans is very similar to the art of other Pacific Islanders. This art includes wood carvings, feather work, petroglyphs, bark cloth (called *kapa* in Hawaiian and *tapa* elsewhere in the Pacific), and tattoos. Native Hawaiians had neither metal nor woven cloth. Production of these styles of art continued after Cook’s arrival, and a few craftsmen still produce traditional Hawaiian arts, either to sell to tourists or to preserve native culture.

![Hawaiian kapa, 18th century](image)

**Hawaiian kapa, 18th century**

Kapa is a kind of bark cloth, or fabric, made by Native Hawaiians from the bast fibers of certain species of
Kapa

*Kapa* is a fabric made by Native Hawaiians from the bast fibers of certain species of trees and shrubs. It is similar to *tapa* found elsewhere in Polynesia, but it differs in the methods used in its creation. Kapa is based primarily on the creative combination of linear elements that cross and converge to form squares, triangles, chevrons, and diagonal forms, giving a feeling of boldness and directness. The fabric was used primarily for clothing, such as the *malo* worn by men as a loincloth, the *pāʻū* worn by women as a wraparound, and the *kihei* worn over the shoulders. *Kapa moe* (bed covers) were reserved for the aliʻi or chiefly caste, while kapa robes were used by kāhuna or priestly caste. Kapa was also used as banners to hang leis and images of gods.

Cultural anthropologists over the course of the 20th century identified techniques in the creation of kapa that are unique to the Hawaiian Islands, involving soaking the bark in water, laying it out on a stone tablet, and beating it with a rounded beater. In the 18th century, pieces of kapa were often made of grooving or ribbing, done by pushing a dampened cloth into the grooves of a special board. The process of making kapa was done primarily by women; young girls would learn by helping their mothers, over time doing more of the work until they could make kapa themselves.

26.6.2: Non-Native Hawaiian Art

Non-native Hawaiian art began with the arrival of the first westerners to the island and was characterized by the work of the Volcano School.

**Learning Objective**

Discuss how non-native produced Hawaiian art differs from indigenous Hawaiian art

**Key Points**

- While Polynesians arrived on the island of Hawaii 1,000–2,000 years ago, the first westerners did not arrive until Captain James Cook and his crew became the first Europeans to visit the island in 1778.
- Some of the first westerners to visit Hawaii were artists, who sketched and painted Hawaii's people and landscapes using imported materials and concepts.
- The Volcano School was a group of non-native Hawaiian artists who painted dramatic nocturnal scenes of Hawaii's erupting volcanoes.
- Some of the artists of the Volcano School also produced watercolors, which, by the nature of the medium, tended to be diurnal.
- Two volcanoes on the Island of Hawaii, Kilauea and Mauna Loa, were intermittently active during the 1880s and 1890s, when interest in Volcano School paintings peaked.

**Key Term**

**diurnal**

Happening or occurring during daylight, or primarily active during that time.
Overview of Hawaiian Art

The Hawaiian archipelago consists of 137 islands in the Pacific Ocean that are far from any other land. Polynesians arrived there 1,000–2,000 years ago, and in 1778 Captain James Cook and his crew became the first Europeans to visit Hawaii. The art created in these islands can be divided into traditional Hawaiian art; art produced by recently arrived westerners; and art produced by Hawaiians incorporating western materials and ideas.

Art Produced by Non-Native Hawaiians

Early Exploration

Some of the first westerners to visit Hawaii were artists—both professional and amateur. Many of the European invaders’ ships had professional artists on board to record their discoveries and document the landscape, people, flora, and fauna of the region. These artists sketched and painted Hawaii's people and landscapes using imported materials and concepts. Artists in this category include Alfred Thomas Agate (American 1812–1849), Jean Charlot (French 1898–1979), Robert Dampier (English 1800–1874), Joseph Henry Sharp (American 1859–1953), and many others. Night scenes of erupting volcanoes were especially popular, giving rise to the Volcano School.

The Volcano School

The Volcano School was a group of non-native Hawaiian artists who painted dramatic nocturnal scenes of Hawaii’s erupting volcanoes. Some of the artists also produced watercolors, which, by the nature of the medium, tended to be diurnal. Two volcanoes on the Island of Hawaii, Kilauea and Mauna Loa, were intermittently active during the 1880s and 1890s, when interest in Volcano School paintings peaked. Getting to Kilauea, the more frequently painted volcano, required an arduous two or three day roundtrip journey on horseback. Printmaker and art educator Huc-Mazelet Luquiens called this period "a little Hawaiian renaissance."
Jules Tavernier's painting *Full Moon over Kilauea*, 1887

Jules Tavernier was a member of the Volcano School, a group of non-native Hawaiian artists who painted dramatic nocturnal scenes of Hawaii's erupting volcanoes.

Jules Tavernier (1844–1889), a French artist, was arguably the most important Volcano School painter. Other artists include Ernst William Christmas, Constance Fredericka Gordon Cumming, Charles Furneaux, D. Howard Hitchcock, Ogura Yonesuke Itoh, Ambrose McCarthy Patterson, Titian Ramsey Peale, William Pinkney Toler, William Twigg-Smith, and Lionel Walden, among others. A selection of Volcano School paintings is usually on display at the Honolulu Museum of Art.

26.6.3: Hawaiian Art with Western Influences

Hawaiian art today retains a great deal of traditional Hawaiian influence while also incorporating western styles and themes.

**Learning Objective**

Explain how Western influences manifest in Hawaiian art

**Key Points**

- The art created in these islands can be divided into traditional Hawaiian art; art produced by recently arrived westerners; and art produced by Hawaiians incorporating western materials and ideas.
- A great deal of artwork produced by indigenous Hawaiians, as well as Hawaii’s native-born and long-term residents, now incorporates western materials and ideas, including paintings on canvas and quilts.
- Many Hawaiian artists remain distinctly Hawaiian in subject matter, while others range among widely diverse styles.
- In 1967, Hawaii became the first state in the nation to implement a "Percent for Art" law, in which 1% of the construction costs of new public schools and state buildings is designated for the acquisition of works of art, either by commission or by purchase.

**Key Terms**

**Hula**

A form of chant and dance that was developed in the Hawaiian Islands by the Polynesians who originally settled there.

**Captain James Cook**

A British explorer, navigator, cartographer, and captain in the Royal Navy who made detailed maps of Newfoundland prior to making three voyages to the Pacific Ocean, during which he achieved the first recorded European contact with the eastern coastline of Australia and the Hawaiian Islands, and the first recorded circumnavigation of New Zealand.
Overview of Hawaiian Art

The Hawaiian archipelago consists of 137 islands in the Pacific Ocean that are far from any other land. Polynesians arrived there 1,000–2,000 years ago, and in 1778 Captain James Cook and his crew became the first Europeans to visit Hawaii. The art created in these islands can be divided into traditional Hawaiian art; art produced by recently arrived westerners; and art produced by Hawaiians incorporating western materials and ideas.

Western Influence on Hawaiian Art

The arrival of westerners to Hawaii and the subsequent formation of Hawaii into a state of the U.S. have greatly impacted the art of native Hawaiians. A great deal of artwork produced by indigenous Hawaiians, as well as Hawaii’s native-born and long-term residents, now incorporates western materials and ideas, including paintings on canvas and quilts. Many Hawaiian artists remain distinctly Hawaiian in subject matter, while others range among widely diverse styles. Most of the art currently produced in Hawaii integrates a melding of traditional Hawaiian and western influence. Notable artists include sculptor Satoru Abe (born Hawaii 1926–), sculptor Bumpei Akaji (born Hawaii 1921-2002), sculptor Marguerite Louis Blasingame (born Hawaii 1906–1947), ceramicist Sally Fletcher-Murchison (born Hawaii 1933–), Joseph Nawahi (born Hawaii 1842–1896), Reuben Tam (born Hawaii 1916–1991), Isami Doi (born Hawaii 1903–1965), and others.
Stone bas-relief of fallen male nude by Marguerite Louis Blasingame

Sculptor Marguerite Louis Blasingame is one of the many 19th century artists who incorporates both Hawaiian and western themes in her art.

Hawaiian Art Today

In 1967, Hawaii became the first state in the nation to implement a "Percent for Art" law. The Art in State Buildings Law established the Art in Public Places Program and designated one percent of the construction costs of new public schools and state buildings for the acquisition of works of art, either by commission or by purchase. Public collections of Hawaiian art may be found at the Honolulu Museum of Art, the Bishop Museum (also in Honolulu), the Hawaii State Art Museum, and the Georg-August University of Göttingen in Germany.

Hawaii is also home to numerous cultural events that illustrate the rich traditions of the island pre-European influence. The annual Merrie Monarch Festival is an international Hula competition, and the state is home to the Hawaii International Film Festival, the premier film festival for Pacific rim cinema. Honolulu is also home to the state's long running LGBT film festival, the Rainbow Film Festival.

Attributions

- Pre-European Hawaiian Art
  - "Boundless." [http://www.boundless.com/](http://www.boundless.com/). Boundless Learning [CC BY-SA 3.0](http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/). Wikipedia [CC BY-SA 3.0](http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/).
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- Non-Native Hawaiian Art

- Hawaiian Art with Western Influences

26.7: Modern Oceanic Art

26.7.1: Pacific Arts Festival

The Pacific Arts Festival celebrates the arts of indigenous cultures in the Oceanic region.

Learning Objective

Describe the significance of the Pacific Arts Festival

Key Points

- The Festival of Pacific Arts, or Pacific Arts Festival, is a traveling festival hosted every four years by a different country in Oceania.
- The Pacific Arts Festival was conceived by the Secretariat of the Pacific Community as a means to stem the erosion of traditional cultural practices by sharing and exchanging culture at each festival.
- By its vastness, the Pacific Ocean inhibits social and cultural interchange between the inhabitants of its island countries. The festival is not a competition but a cultural exchange, and it serves to both reunite people and reinforce regional identity and mutual appreciation of Pacific-wide culture.
- Participating countries select artist-delegates to represent the nation at this crossroads of cultures, which is considered a great honor.

Key Term

Oceania

A geographical region composed of many islands (Melanesia, Micronesia, and Polynesia) plus Australasia; it is located between Asia, Antarctica, and the Americas.

Introduction

The Festival of Pacific Arts, or Pacific Arts Festival, is a traveling festival hosted every four years by a different country in Oceania. It was conceived by the Secretariat of the Pacific Community, former South Pacific Commission, as a means to stem the erosion of traditional cultural practices by sharing and exchanging culture at each festival. The major theme of the festival is traditional song and dance. The first festival was held in May of 1972 in Suva, Fiji, and it has been held roughly every four years since in countries around the Pacific. The 2012 Festival was hosted by the Soloman Islands from July 1–14 with the theme of “Culture in Harmony with Nature.” From May 22 to June 4, 2016, the 12th ever Festival of Pacific Arts was held in Hagåtña, Guam, with the theme of “What We Own, What We Have, What We Share, United Voices of the PACIFIC.” The next Festival will take place in 2020 in Hawaii.
Map of Oceania

This map illustrates the nations of the Oceanic region.

The Festival's Value and Purpose

By its vastness, the Pacific Ocean inhibits social and cultural interchange between the inhabitants of its island countries. The festival is not a competition but a cultural exchange, and it serves to both reunite people and reinforce regional identity and mutual appreciation of Pacific-wide culture. Participating countries select artist-delegates to represent the nation at this crossroads of cultures, which is considered a great honor.

The Pacific Cultural Council selects the host country, recognizing that each participating country desires the opportunity to showcase its unique indigenous culture by hosting the festival. Host selection is based on principles of equity, and preference is given to countries which have not yet hosted. The festival's host country pays participants' costs of local travel, accommodation, meals, and other forms of hospitality. Entry to all artistic events is free to the public, thereby maximizing cultural outreach and inclusion.

In 2008, about 2,000 artists attended the Festival of Pacific Arts from the following participating countries: American Samoa, Australia, Cook Islands, Easter Island, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, French Polynesia, Guam, Hawaii, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Niue, Norfolk Island, Northern Mariana Islands, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Pitcairn Islands, Sāmoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, and Wallis and Futuna. Taiwan was allowed to send a delegation of 80 performers and artists, most of whom were Taiwanese aborigines, to the Festival of Pacific Arts for the first time in 2008.

Attributions

- Pacific Arts Festival