

Hunting the Collectors

Hunting the Collectors
Pacific Collections in Australian Museums,
Art Galleries and Archives

Edited by

Susan Cochrane and Max Quanchi



Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Hunting the Collectors: Pacific Collections in Australian Museums, Art Galleries and Archives, Edited
by Susan Cochrane and Max Quanchi

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

AAAPS	Australian Association for the Advancement of Pacific Studies
ABC	Australian Broadcasting Commission
ADB	Australian Dictionary of Biography
AGNSW	Art Gallery of New South Wales
AIA	Australian Institute of Anatomy
AIAS	Australian Institute of Australian Studies
ALIC	Australian Libraries and Information Council
AMA	Australian Museum Archives (Sydney)
ANG	Australian National Gallery
ANU	Australian National University
ANZ	Archives New Zealand
ANZAAS	Australian and New Zealand Association for the Advancement of Science
ASOPA	Australian School of Pacific Administration
AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development
BAAS	British Association for the Advancement of Science
BBC	British Broadcasting Commission
BHS	Banaban Heritage Society
BPC	British Phosphate Commission
CAAB	Commonwealth Arts Advisory Board
CMAA	Cambridge Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology
CRA	Conzinc Rio Australia
CSIRO	Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation
CSR	Colonial Sugar Refining
DEET	Australian Department of Employment, Education and Training
DHPG	Deutsche Handels-und Plantagen-Gessellschaft der Sudsee Inseln zu Hamburg
GEIC	Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony
HMC	Historic Monuments Committee
IAMPP	ICOM Australia Museum Partnership Program
ICOM	International Council of Museums
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IPNGS	Institute of Papua New Guinea Studies
IPS	Institute of Pacific Studies
LMS	London Missionary Society
MIM	Mount Isa Mines
ML	Mitchell Library (State Library of New South Wales)

MoMA	Museum of Modern Art (New York)
MSS	Manuscripts
NAA	National Archives of Australia,
NBAC	Noel Butlin Archives Centre
NCP	National Cultural Property
NEC	National Ethnographic Collection
NGA	National Gallery of Australia
NLA	National Library of Australia
NMA	National Museum of Australia
NSW	New South Wales
OPC	Official Papuan Collections
PARADISEC	Pacific and Regional Archive for Digital Sources in Endangered Cultures
PARBICA	Pacific Regional Branch of the International Council on Archives
PIMA	Pacific Island Museum Association
PMB	Pacific Manuscripts Bureau
PNG	Papua New Guinea
QLD	Queensland
QUT	Queensland University of Technology
RAMSI	Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands
RGSA	Royal Geographic Society of Australasia
SAM	South Australian Museum
SMH	Sydney Morning Herald
SPC	Secretariat of the Pacific Community
TPNG	Territory of Papua New Guinea
UCSD	University of California San Diego
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UPNG	University of Papua New Guinea

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The book took shape under the guidance of Prue Ahrens as Picture Editor for the design and final photo-ready stages of this book. Prue acted as liaison with Liveworm Studio, Brisbane, where Claire Pullen did a terrific job putting all the text and images into book shape, designing the cover and chapter heads, page layout and everything you see as you enjoy this book. Thanks go to Claire and Sebastian at Liveworm for helping us through the final stages. All papers were refereed and conform to standard review guidelines. We wish to acknowledge the contribution of many colleagues who made anonymous reviews.

The cover design is based on a photograph originally taken in c1923-24. It also appears as a partial photograph as the Chapter Header for Chapter 2. It is of Charles Karius, his cook and orderly at Karuama, TPNG. Photographer not known; National Library of Australia; nla-pic-an10571028-93. The partial images used for chapter heads for Chapters 3 to 14 and for Chapters 15 to 19 are based on photographs which appear in full in the text. See, Chapter 4, Figure 1 (Photographer not known, State Library of New South Wales, ML PXA 4358/1, p.33) and Chapter 7, Figure 3 (Photographer – George Brown, George Brown Collection, The Australian Museum, Sydney). The attribution for all other illustrations is included under the respective illustration.

This book is the second in the *Pacific Focus Series*, a new series from CSP (Cambridge Scholars Publishing). Other titles in this series are;

Art and Life in Melanesia, Susan Cochrane

Photographing Papua, Max Quanchi

Cinema of the South Seas, Prue Ahrens

From the Ivory Tower, Doug Munro

Foreword

IAN GALLOWAY

This volume of essays by scholars and museum professionals is dedicated to a new phase in the relationship between Australian institutions and their counterparts in Pacific Island nations. This investigation of collectors from the past, whose interests resulted in the collections presently in the custodianship of Australian museums, art galleries and archives, is offered in the spirit of future research collaborations and collecting activities.

In recent years a key focus of the International Council of Museums Australian National Committee (ICOM Australia)¹ has been responding to the needs of our museum colleagues in the Asia-Pacific region with the initiative of the ICOM Australia Museum Partnership Program. The preservation of heritage collections and sites poses particular problems in the Asia-Pacific region - problems that are attributable to high levels of humidity and salt in the atmosphere, voracious tropical insects and mould. In addition, tsunamis and cyclones often lead to devastating damage, and civil unrest, armed conflicts and fragile economies also have had a significant impact on museums in the region.

Pacific Island museums and cultural centres tend to have well qualified staff who work in accordance with established international standards and principles and who add highly innovative new techniques of heritage work particular to the Pacific context. However, they struggle with a perennial lack of essential resources in funding, equipment and buildings. The sharing of information and experience between institutions in the region is complicated by the vast distances which in turn increase the cost of transport and communication.

Pacific Islands Museum Association

The Pacific Island Museums Association (PIMA) was founded to address some of these concerns. It is a regional, multilingual and multicultural organisation that aims to represent the interests and concerns of museums and cultural centres in the region, advise and work with governments and other agencies in matters of heritage management and policy and facilitate the protection and restitution of tangible and intangible cultural property.² Museums and other cultural organisations in the Pacific are keepers of national stories and custodians of the region's cultural heritage and as such play a key role in the maintenance and strengthening of cultural identity in the region.

In August 2003, the Board of PIMA requested the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) to undertake a review of PIMA, including its organization and administration, with a view to developing recommendations for its performance and management and to develop a strategic framework for the organization for the next three to five years.³ The report identified a number of constraints for the organization that impacted on delivery of its programs to the region, most importantly the lack of continuity of adequate funding, and the distance between PIMA member organisations and the secretariat.⁴ At the time of the review, the lack of financial security had become even more acute since funding provided by the Canadian Government for the position of a PIMA Secretary-General came to an end in September 2003. The recruitment of a new Secretary-General was a key recommendation of the Review, as one of the duties of the position was to actively seek funding from the international community, governments and community organizations to support the work of PIMA.⁵

At a meeting of the Pacific Islands Forum in Auckland in August 2003, Pacific Island leaders identified their key goals as economic growth, sustainable development, good governance and security. However, they also strongly endorsed the proposal that the maintenance and strengthening of cultural identity be a core theme for Forum leaders. There was great concern that growing migration, urbanisation and global popular culture were eroding cultural identity. Despite this focus on culture by Pacific Island leaders the cultural institutions of the Pacific still find themselves at the bottom of the food chain when it comes to receiving financial assistance.

Relationships with Australian museums

Collectively, the essays in this volume provide an overview of the activities of governors and government agents, missionaries, traders, scientists, photographers, anthropologists and artists who amassed the wealth of Pacific collections that are now in Australian archives, galleries and museums. Space does not permit a review of the complex web of engagements between cultural institutions, but I will mention as an example the evolving relationship between the Queensland Museum and the Solomon Islands National Museum. Queensland's cultural and mercantile links with the Solomon Islands began in the nineteenth century and continue to the present day. Australian South Sea Islander communities, which are a unique component of Queensland's culturally diverse population, are descendants of indentured workers brought to Queensland between 1863 and 1906 mainly from Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands. Historically the Queensland economy owes much to them; the State's sugar industry was literally built on the backs of South Sea Islander labourers. Now recognised by the Queensland Government as a distinct cultural group, Australian South Sea Islanders are proud of their heritage and today are revitalizing *kastom*

by re-establishing direct cultural ties and making family visits to relatives in their ancestral villages in the Islands.

The Solomon Islands became an independent nation in 1978. In 1998-2003, ethnic tensions escalated to violence and a state of emergency was declared on Guadalcanal in June 1999. Eventually, the Solomon Islands government could not control the lawlessness, frequent outbreaks of violence and widespread extortion, and Prime Minister Kemakeza wrote to the Australian Prime Minister in April 2003 requesting Australian assistance. Australian, New Zealand and Pacific Island police, military and civilian personnel arrived in the Solomon Islands in July 2003 as part of the Australian-led Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands (RAMSI). Despite a violent outbreak in the aftermath of the 2006 elections, through the efforts of RAMSI, law and order was restored and a re-building of Government infrastructure continued.

ICOM Australia Museums Partnership Program

In 2003, *ICOM Australia* hosted a session at the Museums Australia Conference with an address by Lawrence Foana'ota of the Solomon Islands National Museum. Lawrence spoke passionately about the challenges that face Pacific Island Museums and their most pressing needs. At the Museums Australia Conference in 2004, *ICOM Australia* outlined a proposal for Australian Museums to create partnerships with Pacific Island Museums. *ICOM Australia* sought to identify a pool of skilled museum volunteers who were willing to work on identified projects addressing the urgent needs of Pacific Island museums. Agreement was reached between key Australian institutions that a limited number of museum staff could be made available for this purpose. Identifying the needs of Pacific Island museums requires a clear understanding of the specific needs of particular museums. To achieve this level of understanding a number of Australian institutions agreed to partner a Pacific Island Museum. This link was based on a variety of criteria such as the expertise of staff; the nature of collections held; past and current associations; geography; and travel considerations. On this basis the following partnerships have been established:

- Queensland Museum and the Solomon Islands National Museum
- Museum Victoria and the Fiji Museum
- Australian Museum (Sydney) and the National Museum of Vanuatu

The Solomon Islands National Museum, which was established in 1969, houses two major collections – an ethnographic collection and an archaeological collection. During the civil unrest numerous burglaries resulted in the loss of significant items from the ethnographic collection. At this time the Museum also lost its Ethnographer after he was threatened and subsequently fled the area. The Museum currently has

seven staff but with the civil situation now stabilised there is the opportunity to appoint a number of new staff. Training and collection management have been flagged as pressing needs for the Museum. The minor collections of approximately 4,000 items are not accessioned or catalogued. Projects approved and funded in the first round of the *ICOM Australia* Museums Partnership Project include a scoping study of the collection management needs of the Solomon Islands National Museum. This study was undertaken jointly by staff from the Queensland Museum and the Solomon Islands National Museum. As a result of this study a further proposal has been submitted to implement a comprehensive collection management training program. This training program will be run in conjunction with the accessioning, documentation, cataloguing and photography of the collection and the establishment of a new collection database.

In Fiji, also emerging from civil unrest, the Fiji Museum complex consists of an administration building and museum with somewhat minimal facilities. These have been updated periodically through international aid. A total of 28 people are employed including, administration, scientific staff and gardeners. A Memorandum of Understanding between Museum Victoria and the Fiji Museum was established in 1999. One of the Museum's most pressing needs is staff training, particularly in the field of conservation and preparation. Collection storage is another major issue for the Museum. In Sydney, the Australian Museum has joined with the Powerhouse Museum and the Fiji Museum to facilitate professional exchange between the Conservation Departments of each Museum. This will involve two Assistant Conservators from the Fiji Museum working closely with experienced conservators at the Australian Museum and the Powerhouse for a period of six weeks.

In Port Vila, the Vanuatu Cultural Centre was first established in the early 1960's as a natural history museum with bird, insect, mineral and shell collections and soon assumed an ethnographic function. The new National Museum building opened in late 1995. The combined National Museum and Cultural Centre has a staff of 24, and 90 volunteer fieldworkers distributed throughout the archipelago. There are two main buildings in the capital Port Vila and a small cultural centre on the island of Malekula. The Australian Museum in Sydney has established a close relationship based on collaborative research with the Museum and Cultural Centre and is currently working with the Cultural Centre in the re-construction and conservation of four *Lapita* pots. These 3000 year old pots, once reconstructed will double the number of known complete *Lapita* pots ever found. An important goal of this project is capacity building for staff in the Vanuatu Cultural Centre on conservation treatments especially with regard to pottery. It also provides web based access to the Australian Museum's collection of pottery from Vanuatu for the benefit of the people of Vanuatu and the international research community.

The proposal discussed at the 2004 Museums Australia Conference became

a reality with the launch of the ICOM Australia Museum Partnership Program in August 2005.⁶ The program is based on a number of simple principles; that all parties must derive mutual benefit from the program and project partners must communicate frequently and openly, understand one another's strengths and weaknesses and work from the basis of a long-term relationship of trust. Success will only be achieved if both the Australian and Pacific Island partners have a clear and agreed understanding of the challenges, priorities and desired outcomes. The next funding rounds will assess projects involving partnerships with the Solomon Islands National Museum, Fiji Museum, and the Papua New Guinea National Museum.⁷ The *ICOM Australia* Museum Partnerships Program is a small but important step towards addressing some of the many challenges experienced by museums in our region. This collection of essays on historical and contemporary aspects of collecting, display and conservation also will add a small step towards improved access and awareness of collections in Australia, and a wider understanding of Oceania and its peoples.

NOTES

- ¹ International Council of Museums (ICOM) is a non-governmental international organisation maintaining formal relations with UNESCO. It is an organisation of museums and museum professionals worldwide, dedicated to the development of museums and the museum profession. ICOM operates globally for the conservation, preservation and communication to society of the world's natural and cultural heritage. *ICOM Australia* is one of many national committees that make up this broad network of museum professionals. *ICOM Australia* represents its members and interests and implements ICOM programs in the region. At present, there are approximately 300 *ICOM Australia* members representing museums, galleries, historical societies, keeping places and educational institutions from around Australia.
- ² Other objectives of PIMA are to develop communication links that bring together professionals and institutions in support of Pacific Islands Heritage Management; promote community development in the vision of PIMA through consultation, education and access activities; enhance human resources through education and training; and develop and promote ethics and standards.
- ³ In December 2003, I was part of the Review Team and spent a week at PIMA's Headquarters in Fiji working with Rhonda Griffiths, Cultural Affairs Adviser of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), and Lawrence Foana'ota, Chairman of
- ⁴ Report of the Review of the Pacific Islands Museum Association (PIMA), Noumea: Secretariat of the Pacific Community Community, 2004.
- ⁵ It is pleasing to note that the position of Secretary General has now been filled

through the appointment of Meredith Blake, an Australian Youth Ambassador for Development.

6 While the *ICOM Australia* Museum Partnership Program (IAMPP) is coordinated and delivered by a number of Australian museums, participants can come from any Australian institution. The ‘home’ institutions meet the salary costs of Australian staff involved in the project while IAMPP meets operational costs such as materials, travel, accommodation and medical expenses.

7 Funding under IAMPP is made available only to Australian not-for-profit, incorporated, cultural organisations who can demonstrate an ongoing relationship with a partner cultural organisation in the Asia-Pacific region. This is a 12 month pilot program with the National Museum of Australia providing funding of \$50,000 in the first round and AusAid funding projects in the second round up to a maximum of \$50,000. As the 2005-2006 pilot program has limited funding, only Museums in the South-West Pacific region are included.

AUTHORS

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Prue Ahrens teaches Art History at the University of Queensland, Australia. Her research and writing focus on nineteenth century cross cultural interactions and representations, particularly in the Pacific, including Australia. In 2004, she was awarded a PhD from the University of Sydney for her research into missionary photography of the South Pacific, specifically the Reverend George Brown Collection at the Australian Museum, Sydney. She has publications in peer-reviewed journals in Australia, England, Scotland, France and the USA. Her work includes *Tour of Paradise: An American Soldier in the South Pacific* (Melbourne: Vulgar Press, 2006) a book based on an exhibition of the same name, which was displayed at the Tjibaou Cultural Centre and the Presidio Trust, as well as a number of American museums and universities, in 2006-2007. Her interests include Gauguin's fine art contemporaries in *fin de siecle* Tahiti, and Australian and American entangled histories in the South Pacific. She is currently researching a book titled 'Cinema of the South Seas' to be published by Cambridge Scholar's Press in 2009.

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Tatiana Antsoupova is an archivist in the Personal Records section of the National Archives of Australia in Canberra. Before joining the National Archives, between 1996 and 2005 she worked at the Noel Butlin Archives Centre of the Australian National University (ANU). Her activities at the ANU involved work on a number of Pacific-related collections, in particular on the archives of Burns, Philp & Co Ltd and CSR Limited.

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Vicky Barnecutt is a doctoral student attached to the Institute of Social and Cultural Anthropology at the University of Oxford. The focus of her PhD is on pre-colonial collecting activity in New Ireland, Papua New Guinea. She gained her MPhil Ethnology and Museum Ethnography at Oxford University in 2000. Future publications include a section on collecting in New Ireland in *New Ireland, Art of the South Pacific* 2006 (Musée du Quai Branly, Paris, 2006). Vicky has undertaken a number of research trips to New Ireland, with both archaeological and anthropological objectives. Her focus is on the early historical period of contact between Europeans and New Irelanders, and her thesis explores the theoretical and informative relationships between material culture and this period of history.

Harry BERAN

Harry Beran was born in Vienna in 1935, migrated to Australia in 1957, obtained his Ph.D. in philosophy from the University of Sydney in 1974, and taught philosophy in Australia until his retirement in 1998. He is an Honorary Associate in the Department of Politics and International Relations at Macquarie University. He has been collecting Massim art since 1969 and has published a number of books and essays on the art of this region. He is President of the Oceanic Art Society and has edited or co-edited two of the society's publications: *Oceanic and Indonesian Art* (1998) and *Shields of Melanesia* (2005).

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Susan Cochrane is a curator and author specialising in contemporary indigenous art. She gained her MA (Hons) degree at the School of Creative Arts at Wollongong University in 1984, followed by a Doctorate in 1995, both in the discipline of Art History. In 2005, she was awarded M.Phil in Creative Writing at the University of Queensland. Her publications include *Contemporary Art from Papua New Guinea* (1997), *Bérétara : New Pacific Art* (2001) and *Art and Life in Melanesia* (in press), and editor of *Aboriginal Art : Highlights from Collections in Australian Museums and Art Galleries* (2001). Research and writing commissions include essays, encyclopaedia entries, feasibility studies, catalogue essays, articles and reviews for leading art journals. As a curator she headed the Department of Contemporary Pacific Art at the Tjibaou Cultural Centre, New Caledonia (1995-1998) and was a consultant to the Asia Pacific Triennial (1996 and 1999), Sydney Olympics Arts Festival (2000) and other major arts events. Susan's research interests since 1984 have been in the field of recent and contemporary Pacific and Aboriginal art and art history. Her current research projects focus on the past, present and future representation of indigenous Pacific cultures in museums. She was awarded the University of Queensland Postdoctoral Research Fellowship for Women (2005-2007).

Barry CRAIG

Barry Craig is the curator responsible for researching the non-Australian Aboriginal ethnographic collections in the South Australian Museum but his special expertise is Melanesia, more specifically Papua New Guinea where he first worked in 1962. He obtained his MA (Hons) degree in Anthropology at the University of Sydney in 1970 and his PhD in Visual Arts at Flinders University of SA in 1997. He has carried out several ethnographic field-collecting expeditions in central New Guinea and the upper Sepik in the 1960s and 1970s and was Curator of Anthropology at the Papua New Guinea National Museum and Art Gallery 1980-83. His collections, numbering some 4100 items, are deposited in state museums in Sydney, Port Moresby, Leiden and Berlin. He has published numerous research papers and book chapters and has

been co-editor and contributing author for four books, most recently *Shields of Melanesia* (2005) and *Living Spirits with Fixed Abodes* (in press). He is currently a recipient of a three-year research grant from the Australian Research Council to explore the relationships between material culture on the one hand and language, propinquity, subsistence systems, environment and population characteristics on the other, in the upper Sepik-central New Guinea region.

Susan DAVIES

Susan Davies is a curator specialising in Australian Aboriginal and Pacific Islander material culture collected in the second half of the nineteenth-century. She is a graduate of the University of Sydney and Macquarie University (MA in History). She was curator of the ethnographic collections at the Macleay Museum, University of Sydney, from 1990 to 2005. During that time she curated several major exhibitions at the Macleay Museum, including *Island Encounters* (1997-1998) and *Collected* (2001-2002). Her previous work on the Macleay Museum's Australian Aboriginal collections - *Collected: 150 Years of Aboriginal Art and Artifacts at the Macleay Museum* - was published in 2002. For several years, she was involved in the University of Sydney's long-term project to repatriate Ancestral remains and objects of a secret and sacred nature to relevant Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Her research interests focus on nineteenth-century collectors and cross-cultural trade interactions, Pacific Islander and Australian Aboriginal material culture. She is currently working on an illustrated and descriptive catalogue of the Macleay Museum's nineteenth-century New Guinea collections.

Christine DIXON

Christine Dixon studied Art History at the University of Sydney. She was appointed to the National Gallery of Australia in 1986, and has curated exhibitions on subjects such as Chinese woodcuts, the Russian Ballet, William Morris and 1968. She is now Senior Curator, International Painting and Sculpture, and is the editor and major author of the complete catalogues of European and American painting and sculpture in the National Gallery of Australia's collection. Her particular interest is European Modernism 1890-1940.

Roderick EWINS

Roderick Ewins is an artist, author, and social anthropologist specialising in Fijian indigenous art, culture and socio-political history. He initially studied Medicine at Sydney University, but left to study art in Sydney and London, ultimately specialising in Printmaking. He subsequently undertook a postgraduate Dip.Ed and finally a PhD in Sociology, both at the University of Tasmania. His professional career from 1967-1997 was as a lecturer in Fine Art and administrator. Prior to his retirement he served

successively over a number of years as Dean of Fine Art, Academic Dean of Visual and Performing Arts, and Head of Department (Art). He won several national and international prizes for his printmaking, and in 1997 his lifetime archive of work was acquired by the Australian National Gallery. Since 1979, he has also been researching and writing about the traditional arts of Fiji, with numerous field-trips to all parts of the archipelago. This led to his PhD dissertation on Ethnic Art & Ritual in the Negotiation of Identity, in 1995. He has published many papers, book chapters, and book reviews, and the books *Fijian Artefacts: the Tasmanian Museum & Art Gallery Collection*, and *Matweaving in Gau, Fiji*, both in 1982, and *Staying Fijian: Vatulele Island Barkcloth and Social Identity* (in press). Most recently Rod has undertaken a review of the major collection of Fijian material in the South Australian Museum, and is working on a book with the working-title Colonial exotica: the South Australian Museum collection of Fijian objects.

Regina GANTER

Associate Professor Regina Ganter from Griffith University, Queensland, is currently conducting a project on ‘German thought and indigenous encounters in Australasia’ exploring the differences between English and German thought traditions in the ethnographic field. She is a leading historian in the field of encounter histories in Australia. Her books include; *Mixed Relations: Asian-Aboriginal contact in North Australia* (UWA Press 2006), *The Pearl-Shellers of Torres Strait: Resource Use, Development and Decline, 1860s-1960s* (MUP 1994), a volume on Asians in Australian History (*Queensland Review* Special Edition 6, 2, 1999), two volumes on the history and land use conflicts at Stradbroke Island near Brisbane, and numerous journal articles. She received the 1992 prize in Australian history awarded by the Australian Historical Association and is on the editorial board of *Australian Historical Studies* and an advisor to the National Centre for History Education.

David KAUS

David Kaus is currently Senior Curator in the Repatriation Unit at the National Museum of Australia. He first worked with the National Museum’s ethnographic collections when they were at the Australian Institute of Anatomy and transferred to the Museum when the Institute closed. David has maintained an interest in the history of both the Australian Institute of Anatomy and its collections. Since 1984, he has worked in the National Museum’s Indigenous section, now called the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Programs, developing exhibitions and the Museum’s collection and undertaking research. His current research interests are focused around the history of the National Museum’s ethnographic collections and Aboriginal material culture, on which he has published a number of research essays including ‘The National Museum of Australia’ in Susan Cochrane, ed, *Aboriginal*

Art Collections: Highlights in Australia's Public Museums and Art Galleries. He has an Honours degree in Prehistory from ANU and a Masters in Cultural Heritage Management from the University of Canberra.

Stacey KING

Stacey King is an international spokesperson and lobbyist for the Banaban people. She is a businesswoman with commercial interests in the natural health industry and also Papua New Guinea and Pacific indigenous arts and crafts. She is an author and historian who specialises in Banaban colonial history. Her association with the Banabans is more than a casual interest. Four generations of her family were involved with the early mining industry of Banaba/Ocean Island from the discovery of phosphate in 1900 to 1931. In 1991, she began research on her family's history for an historical novel based on their lives titled - *Land of Matang: Nakaa's Awakening* (1991). From her first meeting with the Banabans in 1992, she has worked extensively on aid projects to try and assist the impoverished Banaban communities on Rabi and Banaba Islands. She went on to become the founder of the Banaban Heritage Society in 1995, a non profit Queensland based incorporated association to preserve Banaban history and better the lives of the Banaban people. During this period she was involved in the research and co-ordination of various Australian and international television documentaries including, *Banaba – Grief for an Island Home in the South Pacific*, (1995), *Paradise Lost*, (1997), *Coming Home to Banaba*, (1997). She has also written various articles on the Banabans for world-wide publication over the past 16 years. In 1997, she formed a personal and joint collaboration with Ken Raobeia Sigrah, a Banaban clan historian and spokesperson. Together they have built one of the largest private collections on Banaban history from a European and indigenous perspective. Their first published work, *Te Rii Ni Banaba – the Backbone of Banaba* (2001), is a history book written from an indigenous perspective and endorsed by Banaban Clan elders. In 2004, she co-founded *Abara Banaba – Banaba our homeland*, an international lobby group to campaign on behalf of the Banaban community. In November 2004, she lead a Banaban delegation of four to the International Small Island Study Association conference in Kinmen Island, Taiwan where she presented the following papers, “Legacy of a Miner's Daughter and Assessment of the Social Changes of the Banabans after Phosphate Mining on Banaba” (2004). She has co-written papers on the following indigenous issues, “The Cultural Identity of Banabans” (2004) and “Essentially Being Banaban in Today's World: The Role of Banaban Law Te Rii ni Banaba (Backbone of Banaba) In a Changing World” (2004). In Jan 2006 she presented a paper, “Australia-Banaba Relations; the price of shaping a nation is now a call for recognition” at The Pacific in Australia - Australia in the Pacific conference Brisbane, Australia. She is now concentrating on a lobby campaign for Banaban recognition from the Australian government.

Ewan MAIDMENT

Ewan Maidment is a professional archivist who has worked at the Australian National University since 1982. Based at the Noel Butlin Archives Centre (formerly the Archives of Business and Labour) until 1994, he worked on the preservation of Australian industrial archives. Since then he has been the Executive Officer of the Pacific Manuscripts Bureau undertaking preservation reformatting of archives, manuscripts and rare printed material in, or relating to, the Pacific Islands, particularly records which are considered to be at risk of loss or destruction.

Jude PHILP

Jude Philp is Senior Curator of the Macleay Museum at the University of Sydney. She has previously worked with Pacific collections at the Australian Museum and with photographic materials at the Cambridge University Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology. She gained her PhD working with Torres Strait Islanders on aspects of their history and material culture especially relating to the material collected by AC Haddon and the 1898 Cambridge Anthropological Expedition to the Torres Strait. Jude has published on anthropology and material culture, with Leilani Bin-Juda and Anita Herle on aspects of Torres Strait Islander history, with Helen Gardner on Rev. George Brown's photographs of New Britain, with Jim Specht on Frank Herle and Alan McCulloch's New Guinea expedition and independently on Haddon's photographic archive and Torres Strait Islanders' material culture. She has curated a variety of exhibitions nationally and internationally and is principally interested in areas linking historic collections with the descendents of the originating cultures.

Max QUANCHI

Max Quanchi is a Senior Lecturer in Pacific Island History at QUT in Brisbane. His research interests are imaging and representation in colonial era photography and postcards, the history of cross-cultural encounters and Australia's historical and contemporary relationship with the Pacific Islands. He is a Life Member of the PHA and has taught in Australia and the Pacific. In 1995-2001, he co-coordinated a regional professional development program for history teachers in the Pacific Islands. As well as essays on photography in *History of Photography*, *Pacific Studies*, *Journal of Australian Studies*, *Meanjin*, *Journal of Pacific History* and *Australian Historical Studies* he has contributed on photography and history to the *Encyclopaedia of the Pacific Islands*, *The Literature of Travel and Exploration; an encyclopaedia*, *The Oxford Companion to the Photograph* and the *Historical Dictionary of Oceania* and authored and co-authored books including *Pacific people and change*, *Culture contact in the Pacific*, *Messy entanglements*, *Jacaranda atlas of the Pacific Islands* and *The historical dictionary of discovery and exploration of the Pacific Islands*.

Ken Sigrah RAOBEIA

Ken Sigrah Raobeia a Banaban born on Rabi, Fiji. He is clan spokesman and historian and also international spokesperson and lobbyist for *Abara Banaba – Banaba our homeland*. He is also a company director involved in the natural health industry and also Papua New Guinea and Pacific indigenous arts and crafts. From the age of 14 years he was trained by Banaban elders in cultural protocols in his inherited role as Clan spokesman. In 1972, he joined the Banaban Dancing Group, the official Rabi Council of Leaders group to perform in foreign countries. He travelled with the dancing group at the invitation of the Australian authorities to perform at the official opening ceremonies of the Sydney Opera House. In 1974, he toured with the group to Nauru, Banaba and Tarawa. In 1975, attended the South Pacific Festival of Arts at Rotorua, New Zealand. In 1997, he acted as interpreter for an United Kingdom television documentary: *Coming Home to Banaba*, filmed on Banaba Island. In 1997, he formed a personal and joint collaboration with Stacey King, an Australian woman whose family had been involved with the early mining industry of Banaba. Together they have built one of the largest private collections on Banaban history from an indigenous and European perspective. Since moving to Australia in 1997 he has worked on various projects relating to his community. In 2004, he co-founded *Abara Banaba – Banaba our homeland*, an international lobby group to campaign on behalf of the Banaban community. In November 2004, he was part of the Banaban delegation of four that attended the International Small Island Study Association conference in Kinmen Island, Taiwan where he presented the following papers; “The Cultural Identity of Banabans” and “Essentially Being Banaban in Today’s World: The Role of Banaban Law ‘Te Rii ni Banaba’ (Backbone of Banaba) In a Changing World” (2004). In 2005, he was elected as President of the Kiribati-Australia Association and was involved in various aid projects undertaken by the Association to supply computers to impoverished schools through out Kiribati and Rabi Island, Fiji. In 2006, he presented a paper, “Banaba-Ocean Island Chronicles: Private collections and indigenous record keeping proving fact from fiction” (2006) at The Pacific in Australia - Australia in the Pacific conference Brisbane, Australia. In May 2006, he coordinated an Austrian television production company and the making of a Banaban documentary to be filmed on Rabi, Fiji. His current work is on a lobby campaign for Banaban recognition from the Australian government.

Natalie WILSON

Natalie Wilson is an assistant curator in the Australian Art Department at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, where she has worked since 1998. In 1987, she completed a BA (Visual Arts) at City Art Institute, Sydney. She gained her MA in Art History & Theory at Sydney University in 2001. Between 1995 and 1998, Natalie lived in Germany, working as a translator and freelance researcher/writer for

several touring exhibitions at the Institute for Cultural Exchange in Tübingen: these included *Leonardo da Vinci: Scientist, inventor, artist* (Europe, USA, Singapore), and *Richard Anuskiewicz: Op art* (Germany, Switzerland). Recent research and writing commissions include material for the publications *Willy Eisenschitz* (2002), *John Coburn: The spirit of colour* (2003) and several essays for AGNSW publications including *Australian Art in the Art Gallery of New South Wales* (2000), and *Parallel Visions* (2002). She was CD-ROM manager for the catalogue raisonné that accompanied the AGNSW exhibition and monograph Robert Klippel (2002). In 2006, she co-curated *Theo Scharf: Night in a city* and co-wrote the accompanying online catalogue, a first for the AGNSW. She is currently a researcher and catalogue compiler for the Sidney Nolan touring retrospective exhibition, 2007–2008. In 2004, Natalie began cataloguing and researching the collection of Oceanic art in the AGNSW collection. She is currently working towards an exhibition of New Guinea Highlands art from the Stanley Moriarty collection, scheduled for 2008.

Susan WOODBURN

Susan Woodburn is an archivist and manuscript librarian with particular interests in medieval history and in early publishing in, and in the languages of, the Pacific Islands. She gained her B.A. and M.A. at the University of Adelaide, specialising in Australian history, studied librarianship in the United States (Case Western University) and completed an M. Phil. in medieval history at Cambridge University. She was the foundation Archivist and subsequently Special Collections Librarian at the University of Adelaide from 1983 to 2004. In the latter position she had curatorial responsibility for the significant Pacific collection based on the personal library and papers of H.E. Maude, a former official in the Western Pacific High Commission and South Pacific Commission and later a historian at the Australian National University School of Pacific Studies. She has written and given conference papers on the history of the University of Adelaide, its collections and benefactors and on missionary printing ventures in the islands of the Pacific, and also completed a biography of Harry Maude and his wife Honor. At the National Library of Australia she worked on a number of manuscript collections and undertook a survey of their Pacific collections for the inaugural conference of the Australian Association for the Advancement of Pacific Studies 2006.



CHAPTER 1

Hunting the Collectors
Introduction

MAX QUANCHI AND SUSAN COCHRANE

Hunting the Collectors

Max Quanchi and Susan Cochrane

Fascination with indigenous material culture and arts from the Pacific Islands began with European voyages to the South Sea in the sixteenth century. The engagement on a ship's deck, beach or hinterland between Europeans and Pacific Islanders resulted in the acquisition of curios, whether as gifts, or through barter, purchase or theft.¹ Sailors traded items from one island to the next, hoping to profit later from selling these treasures at their home European port. Naval officers and scientists appointed to voyages also built up collections from personal interest, as part of their official duties, or for sale. Initially destined for densely packed curiosity cabinets, most objects remained in private hands until the establishment of museums in Europe, the US, Australia and New Zealand. The expansion of institutional collections ensured that an ad hoc trade became a commercial trade in exotic weapons, decorations, utensils, art and natural history specimens. With the development of new disciplines and methodologies in ethnography and natural history in the eighteenth to nineteenth centuries, collecting extended from casual and opportune shipside bartering in curios to organised scientific expeditions; as well, museums made requests of individuals visiting or resident in the Pacific to collect certain types of ethnographic objects and natural history specimens on their behalf. This period also witnessed the undertaking of massive expeditions that took several years to complete, such as the USA Ex-Ex or Wilkes expedition of 1838-1842, the British *Challenger* expedition of 1873-1876 and the German Hamburg South Sea Expedition 1906-1910. In the late nineteenth to early twentieth century, the collections of individual collectors began to be purchased intact by institutions – museums, galleries and universities - and became as loosely catalogued a 'Pacific' collection.

Pacific collections in Australia range from the official to the rarely seen private collection; from large, systematic, catalogued series on defined themes, down to the uncatalogued singular minutiae of early cross-cultural encounters. This volume of essays investigates some of the Pacific collections held in Australian museums, art galleries and archives, and the diverse group of collectors responsible for their acquisition. It reveals varied personal and institutional motivations that eventually led to the conservation, preservation and exhibition in Australia of a remarkable archive of Pacific Island material objects, art and crafts, photographs and documents. Overall, the essays suggest that in Australia the custodial role is not fixed and immutable but fluctuates with the perceived importance of the collection, which in turn fluctuates with the level of national interest in the Pacific neighbourhood. This cyclical rise and fall of Australian interest in the Pacific Islands means many of the valuable early collections in state museums, like that of Thomas Farrell in the Australian Museum

in Sydney (see chapter 6), the Charles Karius photograph collection in the National Library of Australia and the 5700 Pacific objects at the National Museum of Australia (see Chapter 18) have not been exhibited or published, apart from one or two items. Despite little exposure and limited funding, many inspired and enthusiastic museum anthropologists, curators, collection managers and university-based scholars across Australia, and worldwide, have persisted with research on material collected in the Pacific.

The regional focus of the book

The regional focus of the book is on the southwest Pacific, sometimes referred to as Melanesia, and in particular the former Australian territories in eastern New Guinea, known since independence in 1975 as Papua New Guinea. Australia had a relatively short colonial experience in the southwest Pacific region. In 1902, British New Guinea was transferred to Australia, when it became known as Papua. Following Germany's defeat in World War 1, Australia gained the former colony of German New Guinea, which it governed first as a League of Nations Mandated Territory and then as a United Nations Trust Territory. They were jointly administered after 1947 as one entity, the Territory of Papua and New Guinea (TPNG). The essays in this book highlight the presence of Australian colonial officials, missionaries and traders in eastern New Guinea and consequently the high proportion of material from Papuan and New Guinean cultures in Australian collections.

Australian museums, galleries and archives also acquired art objects, artefacts, photographs and documents from other countries of the southwest Pacific, particularly the islands under British colonial control, such as the former New Hebrides (now Vanuatu), the Solomon Islands and Fiji. Collections therefore tended to reflect only those islands that had strong commercial or trade links to ports in eastern Australia, or the presence of missionaries and other residents with Australian connections.

Australian interest in the Pacific

The commercial and trade connections between Sydney and Hobart and the Pacific Islands was so strong by the 1830s that historians argued Australia had a "Pacific Frontier" of greater importance than its expansion inland.² Increasingly, the port cities of Sydney, Hobart, Melbourne and Brisbane, later extending to a network of ports on the central and north Queensland coast, provided links for investors, intending settlers, shipping, banking, mining and plantation interests. The expansion of European commerce, strategic interest and missionary contacts eventually led to

Dutch, German, British and French colonial rule over the islands of the southwest Pacific.

As the Australian colonies developed and major cities took shape, a distinct, albeit provincial cultural and intellectual community evolved, often in partnership with scholars in Europe, and this created scientific and geographic interest in the neighbouring Pacific Islands and their diverse cultures. For example, the Queensland Museum collected artefacts donated by the officers and crew of Pacific Island labour recruiting ships, or purchased them at various times during the labour trade voyages to Vanuatu, the Solomon Islands, Loyalty Islands and New Guinea. It was a small but diverse sampling of tools, decorative crafts, weapons and carvings. It was not a collection – a sequenced, single-flow of objects from a single source - but it might be assembled at some future date by the Museum and put on display as a Labour Trade Collection.³ The captain, crew or agents who gathered these items during their visits to the western Pacific were not collectors in the sense of operating solely for commercial profit by providing artefacts for the metropolitan market, or being sent to the Pacific specifically by a museum or gallery to collect a defined range of items.

Collecting

There is considerable scholarly literature on the two-dimensional nature of collecting.⁴ The essays here focus on European, Australian and American collectors within the Pacific region. Issues of indigenous agency, exchange, justice, reciprocity and utilisation of goods acquired through trading or bartering are alluded to but are not the central focus. The essays discuss instead the collector's motivation behind the collecting of objects and secondly the fate of the objects when they were placed in collections.⁵ Several essays discuss the haphazard manner in which the idea of a series or class created the notion of a collection⁶ and why substantial collections were left as “poorly integrated or documented groups of items”.⁷ A theme in the essays is the idea of an assemblage that was later labelled a collection. Another theme running through several essays is a concern with metaphor and metonymy in the selection process and the manner in which selection affects the shape of a collection. Susan Pearce has noted “the selection process is the crucial act of the collector, regardless of what intellectual, economic or idiosyncratic reasons he may well have when he decides how his selection will work, what he will chose and what he will reject”.⁸ (Most collectors discussed below are male.) The removal of items from the host culture means that objects become, in a museum collection, a metaphor for the holistic culture from which they came, but at the same time retain an “intrinsic, direct and organic relationship, that is a metonymic relationship”⁹