

Pacific Art: Persistence, Change and Meaning, edited by Anita Herle, Nick Stanley, Karen Stevenson, and Robert L. Welsh. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2002. ISBN 0-8248-2556-X; x + 455 pages, tables, figures, maps, photographs, appendixes, notes, bibliography. US\$48.00.

The sixth international meeting of the Pacific Arts Association, held at the Field Museum in Chicago in October 1999, honored Philip J. C. Dark as he retired from twenty-five years of editing *Pacific Arts*, the association's primary publication. More than one hundred people in attendance heard nearly fifty papers. From this exuberance of scholarship and appreciation, the editors have selected twenty-nine papers to document the current state of research on Pacific art, especially from the perspectives of visual anthropology and art history.

As with all volumes drawn from an uncoordinated volunteering of presented papers, this volume faces an obvious organizational problem. The editors have solved it by arranging selected essays not by geography, but in thematic assemblages, treating not just aesthetic subject matter, but the possible permutations of the messages that artful objects bear. Many of the authors address questions of agency and meaning, and ask who the "active parties" in making, selling, collecting, and consuming art are; accordingly, in addition to studying objects as objects, the authors examine relations among artists, patrons, collectors, and museums.

The book establishes its tone with a testimonial by Hirini (Sydney) Moko Mead, who, assisted by Dark and

others, founded the Pacific Arts Association in 1974, and an introduction by Robert L. Welsh, who discusses how the association's meetings and publications have registered ongoing intellectual shifts. The first essay, "Persistence, Change and Meaning in Pacific Art: A Retrospective View with an Eye towards the Future," Dark's keynote address at the meeting in Chicago, reaches into many cultures to ground in experience an esteemed scholar's discovered wisdom; it urges devotees of Pacific art to ponder how artistic meaning can vary within a single community from year to year, even from crowd to crowd and person to person.

The editors have sorted the other essays into five parts. Of these, part 4, "Studying Agency and Objects," is perhaps the most traditionally conceived: it provides case studies of artistic concepts and their changes over time, as embodied in material objects. Roger Neich ("The Gateways of Maketu") uses historical accounts to study formal persistence in wood carvings done by Ngati Pikiao, living on the coast of the Bay of Plenty, Aotearoa. Peter Gathercole ("Te Maori' in the Longer View") contemplates Māori carvings assembled for an exhibition in New York in 1984—objects whose assembly and presentation influenced other exhibitions and stimulated the reconsideration of artistic displays. Jo Anne Van Tilburg and Cristián Arévalo Pakarati ("Reconstructing the Rapa Nui Carver's Perspective") evaluate the experimental replication of stone carvings on Easter Island. Adrienne L. Kaeppeler ("The Structure of Tongan Barkcloth Design"), repeating a per-

sonal academic refrain, reviews the development of metaphor and allusion in Tongan visual imagery. Similarly, historical methods mark the essays by Steven Hooper (“Memorial Images of Eastern Fiji”) on posts wrapped in barkcloth or sennit to commemorate chiefs, and Eric Venbrux (“The Craft of the Spider Woman”) on Tiwi bark baskets.

Also in a traditional vein is part 3, “Exploring Museums, Collectors and Meanings,” which considers the process of gleaning significance from collections. Shirley Campbell (“What’s in a Name?”) discusses the search for meaning in carved and painted boards that decorate oceangoing outrigger canoes used on kula expeditions by people of Vakuta, Trobriand Islands. The same concern animates essays by Deborah Waite (“Exploring Solomon Islands Shields”); Barry Craig (“A Stranger in a Strange Land”) on Kenneth Thomas’s ethnography in the North Sepik area of Papua New Guinea; Liz Bonshek (“Objects Mediating Relationships”) on material collected by Raymond Firth on Tikopia in 1928; Carol E Mayer (“In the Spirit of a Different Time”) on more than 1,200 objects collected by Frank Burnett and donated to the University of British Columbia in 1927; and Anita Herle (“Objects, Agency and Museums”), reflections on the centenary of the Cambridge Anthropological Expedition to the Torres Strait.

Cameras and film create a new and special kind of representation. Photographs come to the fore in part 1, “Interrogating the Past through the Photographic Image,” which questions how, in local and foreign con-

texts, photographs preserve evidence of art. It opens with Dark’s essay, “Using Photographs to Visualise [*sic*] the Art of the Kilenge,” a minuscule text, preceding fourteen pages of color photographs, chosen “purely for visual purposes, independent of [the] essay that accompanies them, to reveal an artist’s eye at work and to present a painter’s palette in film” (44). George A Corbin (“E. T. Giliard’s Ethnographic Photographs on the Middle Sepik River”) shows how photos taken in the 1950s in Kanganaman, a Iatmul village, can stand as cultural documentation. Virginia-Lee Webb (“Authorship and Image”) discusses hand-colored lantern slides made from photos taken in 1929 on the Crane Pacific Expedition; questioning the notion of photographic authorship, she warns scholars to approach photographs cautiously as documents.

Part 2, “Defining and Contesting Identities through Art,” treats the construction and display of identity, and indicates how the import of artistic traditions can alter with alterations in the social order. William H Davenport (“The Persistence of Facial Scarification on Body Art in the Eastern Solomon Islands”) locates discerning commentary on these themes in a formerly widespread custom, which persists only in the Santa Catalina Islands. In varying ways, other essays—by Judy Flores (“Art and Identity in the Mariana Islands: The Reconstruction of ‘Ancient’ Chamorro Dance”); Joshua A Bell (“A New Hale for the Nation”), a study of modern Hawaiian architecture; Angela J Neller (“From Utilitarian to Sacred”) on the repatriation of

a Hawaiian spear-support figure; and Phyllis S Herda (“Cook Islands Tivae-vae”) on Polynesian quilts—analyze how art endows with social value the construction of cultural identity. Nick Stanley (“Museums and Indigenous Identity”) puts Asmat art in a global context, surveying the participants, indigenous and alien, whose expectations mold modern creativity and regulate its eventual display.

Each essay in part 5, “Negotiating Change in Contemporary Pacific Art,” weighs “the tension between ‘traditional’ and ‘contemporary’ art, as well as ‘insider’ and ‘outsider’ perception of art” (111). The first two essays complement each other: Victor Totu (“The Impact of the Commercial Development of Art on Traditional Culture in the Solomon Islands”) focuses on artistic appreciation for traditional indigenous purposes, and Marcus Schindlbeck (“Contemporary Maori Art and Berlin’s Ethnological Museum”) reveals how the display of Māori objects in Germany affects German perceptions of Pacific art. The next three essays take this theme to Australia: Eric Kjellgren (“Painting for Corroboree, Painting for Kartiya”) concentrates on art in the East Kimberley area of Western Australia; J V S Megaw (“Transformations”), on indigenous Australian urban art; and Philippe Peltier (“Beyond All Limits”), on art in the central desert. The concluding essays turn toward Polynesia: Carol S Ivory (“Marquesan Art at the Millennium”) surveys the range of art forms influential in the Marquesas Islands, and Karen Stevenson (“The Island in the Urban”) regards present-day Pacific art as a movement in the modernist genre, one in which artists’

“traditions become icons bridging the worlds of their ancestors and their children” (414).

Earnestly conceived and carefully edited, the book is accessible to readers in all fields and from all backgrounds. Numerous color and black-and-white illustrations vividly enhance the text. Though published in the United States, the book flaunts instances of non-American style, especially in spelling and punctuation.

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The Time at Darwin’s Reef: Poetic Explorations in Anthropology and History, by Ivan Brady. Ethnographic Alternatives Book Series 12. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2003. ISBN cloth, 0-7591-0335-6; paper, 0-7591-0336-4; xxv + 134 pages, figures, map, appendixes. Cloth, US\$75.00; paper, US\$32.95.

All good ethnography and all good history are potentially good literature. *The Argonauts of the Western Pacific* is still in print not simply because its author pioneered fieldwork-based anthropology but because it is immensely readable. Since anthropology’s self-reflexive turn, practitioners of the discipline have scrutinized the discursive strategies employed by writers like Malinowski. Attention has been drawn to how the reporting of research may reflect the research process in the field.

Such awareness, however, has neither prevented anthropologists from writing literary ethnographies nor detracted from their appreciation.