

Pacific Arts Association
XIV International Symposium



Oceanic Blazing Forms

Memory, Place-making and Imagination

23-27 June 2026

RESEARCH
CENTER FOR
MATERIAL
CULTURE

WERELD
MUSEUM

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Welcome

Welcome to the 14th International Symposium of the Pacific Arts Association entitled *Oceanic Blazing Forms: Memory, Place-making and Imagination*. It takes place in Leiden at one of the four locations of the Wereldmuseum, the Netherlands. The symposium ties in with the exhibition *Time for Papua*, that opened festively on 12 February 2026 and will be closing on 3 January 2027. For the first time in forty years, the Wereldmuseum is showcasing a selection of its western New Guinea collection as well as especially commissioned work. Visitors are invited to explore the richness, intricacy and making traditions of the art and material culture of this former Dutch colony. In addition, visitors will discover concepts of time that relate to memory, place-making and imagination.

The symposium is also part of a series of gatherings aimed at rethinking global art histories through the expansive and intellectual space of the Wereldmuseum, which challenges the structures and assumptions of both art history and anthropology through new approaches to material culture. The title of these gatherings 'blazing forms', taken from Margaret Danner's poem *The Convert*, that initially applied to the blazing power of African art and material culture is here applied to Oceania to become *Oceanic Blazing Forms: Memory, Place-making and Imagination*.

Wayne Modest, Director of content

The organizing team

Alice Dimastrogiovanni, Erna Lilje, Wonu Veys, Carine Zaayman

The student assistants

Milena Fibich, Mateusz Kolasiński, Nafahry Pratt, Matilda Senatore, Dakota Smit, Emily Flavin

Programme at a Glance

Pacific Arts Association XIV International Symposium - Oceanic Blazing Forms: Memory, Place-making and Imagination - 23-27 June 2026

	Monday 22 June 2026	Tuesday 23 June 2026	Wednesday 24 June 2026	Thursday 25 June 2026	Friday 26 June 2026	Saturday 27 June 2026	Sunday 28 June 2026
09:00							
09:30		Registration	Keynote lecture - <i>Deirdre Brown</i> tea/coffee break	Keynote lecture - <i>Brian Dietrich</i> tea/coffee break	Keynote lecture - <i>Sania Balal</i> tea/coffee break		
10:00		Exhibition visit - Time for Papua	Session 3 Relational Collections Performance: <i>Te Rongo Kirkwood</i>	Session 7a Contemporary Art	Session 11 Papua Trajectories and Rituals		
10:30		Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch		
11:00		Keynote lecture - <i>Ronny Kareni</i>	Session 4 Journeys	Session 7b Contemporary Art	Session 12 Interpretations		
11:30		Session 1a Papua: Past and Present	Session 5 Rethinking Pacific Museums and Displays Honouring ancestors - <i>Dagmar Dyck</i>	Session 9 Imagining Object and Collection Futures			
12:00		Lunch	Lunch	Performance - <i>Reine Grace Hau</i> tea/coffee break	Performance - <i>Moewa Meder with Lysall Habarala</i>		
12:30				Session 10 Memory	Performance - <i>George Nuku</i>		
13:00					Closing - <i>Fadjar Schouten-Korwa, Inaria Kaislepo</i>		
13:30							
14:00		Session 2a Object Stories	Session 6 Fibre Arts				
14:30		Session 1b Papua: Past and Present	Double Exhibition opening Darwin in Paradise Camp Sami Art, Land, Power				
15:00		tea/coffee break					
15:30	Board meeting PAA-E and PAA (only for board members)						
16:00							
16:30							
17:00							
17:30							
18:00	Board dinner (only for board members)						
18:30							
19:00							
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20:00							
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21:00							
21:30							
22:00							
22:30							

Practical Matters

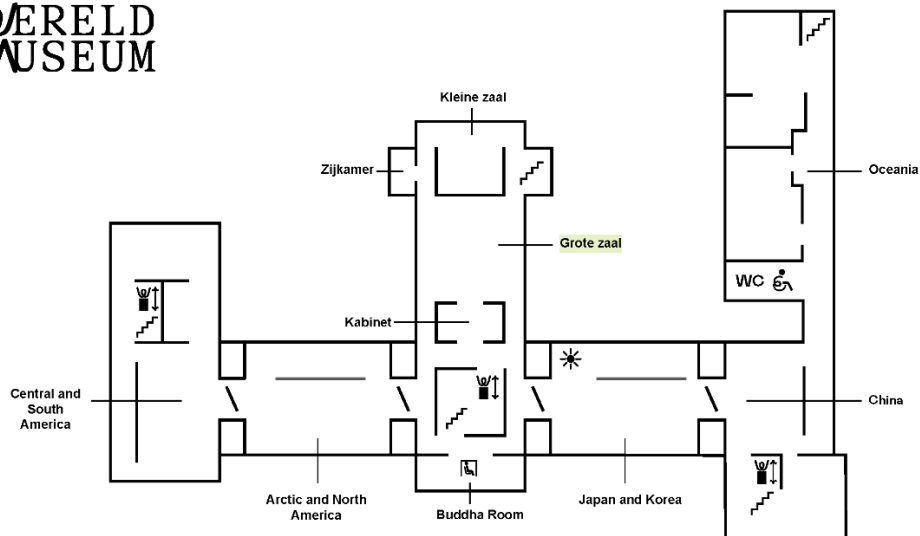
Please speak to a member of the organising committee or the conference wardens should you have any questions. General information can be found here.

Locations

The symposium is taking place on the Wereldmuseum Leiden grounds in the following rooms:

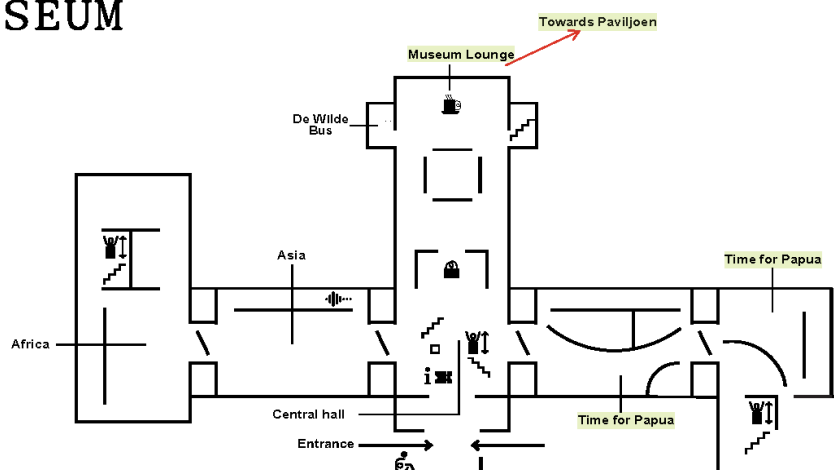
- **Grote Zaal:** located on the first floor and accessible via the central staircase or the lift. All the plenary sessions and some of the parallel sessions are taking place there.

WERELD
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- **Paviljoen:** located behind the museum lounge and accessible via the museum lounge doors crossing the parking space. Some of the parallel sessions are taking place there.

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- **Museum Lounge:** located on the ground floor, behind the museum shop and café. The tea/coffee and lunch breaks will be held there.
- **Wereldmuseum exhibition spaces:** all the museum galleries are accessible between 10:00-17:00

- **Tuin van de Smid:** the conference dinner will be held in a location on the outskirts of Leiden, Polderpad 8, 2322 LB Leiden
- **Missiemuseum Steyl:** Located at about 3 hours from Leiden, Veerweg 6, 5935 BL Steyl
- **Optional: Musée du Quai Branly-Jacques Chirac:** Located in Paris 37, quai Branly, 75007 Paris, France

Registration

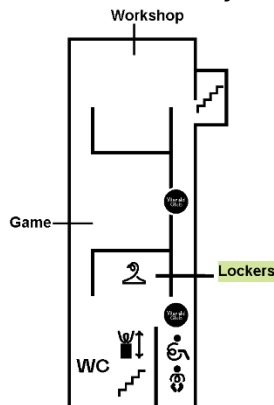
- Tuesday 23 June 2026 between 9 -10 am
- Ask museum staff members if registration is wished for at any other moment

Breaks and lunches

Breaks and lunches will be held in the museum lounge on the ground floor.

Coats and Bags

There are free lockers and coat racks available at -1 level in the museum. Please contact museum staff if you want to leave a large bag.



Wifi-connection

The following network connections are available:

- Username: **Wereldmuseum** – password: **bezoeker**
- Username: **RMCM** – password: *rcmc@leiden*
- Username: **eduroam** – password is provided by your university

Public transport

You can plan your journey online for the whole of the Netherlands via:
<https://www.ns.nl/en/journeyplanner/>

Taxis

Taxis are available at Leiden Central Station

- TCL Taxi Centrale Leiden: +31 71 210 0210
- Taxi Leiden (LTC) Leidse Taxi Centrale: +31 71 522 4000
- Taxi Centrale X-Cellent: +31 71 576 2893

Printing

Printing can be done in a nearby printing shop called: Printerette, Morsstraat 2, 2312 BM Leiden

Emergency

Call **112** in case of emergency

Plenary activities

Exhibitions

Time for Papua



Time for Papua brings different perspectives together: from refined wood carvings and *korwar* figures to prows and recent film works. You see how creators make history tangible, how objects form relationships, and how a dynamic perception of time clashes with imposed boundaries and economic interests. We bring together context, dissenting voices, and current examples. This unfolds a story of resilience and imagination: deeply rooted in place and past, yet focused on a just, green future. Come see, think along, and discover why now—more than ever—it's time for Papua.

The exhibition 'Time for Papua' can be visited every day of the symposium between 10:00 and 17:00.

Opening of Darwin in Paradise Camp, Yuki Kihara – Wednesday 24 June 2026, 16:30-18:30

In *Darwin in Paradise Camp*, Wereldmuseum Leiden presents the Dutch solo debut of the internationally acclaimed artist Yuki Kihara. In this visually spectacular exhibition, Kihara rewrites the Western narrative on nature, gender and identity through humour, beauty and critical inquiry. From a queer and indigenous perspective, she re-examines the legacy of artists and scientists who have shaped our view of the world. Through photography, video and installations, the exhibition invites visitors to look differently at history, imagery and the diversity of humanity and nature.

Opening of Sámi Art, Land, Power – Wednesday 24 June 2026, 16:30-18:30

How do you relate to land you live with? In *Sámi Art, Land, Power*, Sámi makers share what that relationship looks like. Their work reflects on living with nature, on changes in their environment, and on the question of who gets to decide what happens to that land.

The exhibition brings together contemporary art, fashion, craft and video, alongside objects from the collection. Together, they show how land, knowledge and identity are deeply connected.

Permanent Displays

The permanent displays can be visited every day of the symposium between 10:00 and 17:00. The museum has started a process of redisplay which will be finalised in 2030. Instead of regional displays, the collections will be shown in thematic galleries.

Plenary Day openings and meetings – Grote Zaal

Words of Welcome by Wayne Modest – Tuesday 23 June 2026, 13:00-13:10

Day opening – Wednesday 24 June 2026, 9:00-9:10

Day opening – Thursday 25 June 2026, 9:00-9:10

Day opening – Friday 26 June 2026, 9:00-9:10

General Assembly Meeting – Friday 26 June 2026, 14:00-15:00

Open to all PAA members, this meeting will be presided by the PAA-International president, Karen Stevenson and the PAA-Europe president, Karen Jacobs.

Plenary lectures – Grote Zaal

Keynote by Ronny Kareni – Tuesday 23 June 2026, 13:10-14:00

Moderator: Erna Lilje

Like a Tifa Drum: The Harder You Beat, the Louder We Become



Ronny Kareni

West Papuan-born musician, cultural organiser, media fixer, and advocate; distributor for JUBI Media

Like a *tifa* drum, the harder you beat, the louder we become. This truth sits at the heart of West Papua's socio-cultural and political life, where every attempt to suppress our voices only intensifies the rhythm of our resistance. This keynote traces a journey shaped through music and activism, grounded in the understanding that the *tifa* drum is both teacher and companion, carrying stories of reverence, resistance, and collective memory across generations.

Drawing on this lived experience, the keynote explores how rhythm becomes a method of survival and a strategy of visibility. When the state tightens its grip, the drumbeat intensifies. Art becomes a conduit through which West Papuans assert identity, dignity, and political presence, even in the face of censorship, displacement, and repression. Cultural expression becomes a medium for creativity and a political necessity. This keynote invites arts institutions and curators to a practical move in unison, drumming alongside communities and strengthening cultural artform as an ongoing form of arts cultural revival and resistance. Through the *tifa*'s resonance, we hear not only a beat, but a people refusing to be silenced.

Keynote by Deidre Brown – Wednesday 24 June 2026, 9:10-10:00

Moderator: Wonu Veys

Toi Te Mana: Understanding Māori art



Deidre Brown (Ngāpuhi and Ngāti Kahu tribes)

University of Auckland Waipapa Taumata Rau

How might we understand the great breadth and diversity of *toi Māori* from its Polynesian beginnings to the present day? In 2012, three Māori art historians—Deidre Brown, Ngarino Ellis and Jonathan Mane-Wheoki—embarked on the ambitious task of addressing this question by writing a comprehensive Māori art history from a Māori perspective. Their recently published book, *Toi Te Mana: An Indigenous History of Māori Art* (Auckland University Press, 2024; Chicago University Press, 2025) has won several national and international awards, including the global 2025 Apollo Book of the Year

prize. In this talk, Deidre presents the work of Māori artists as creative practitioners, recorders of history, and agents of change. She discusses the continuities between customary and contemporary art, and how the book's research made important new discoveries about Māori art and brought to light the long-forgotten stories of taonga Māori (Māori treasures) in museums.

Keynote by Brian Diettrich – Thursday 25 June 2026, 9:10-10:00

Moderator: Wonu Veys

Blazing Voices and the Capacity of Song and Dance: Expression and Social Action in Oceania



Brian Diettrich

Victoria University of Wellington Te Herenga Waka

This keynote address responds to the message and intent of Margaret Danner's *The Convert* (1960) that guides the 2026 Pacific Arts Association and its theme of *Oceanic Blazing Forms*. Danner was inspired by African art in a powerful awakening to new aesthetic shapes, but the poem prompts deeper questions about how to engage with the material world: what was the purpose of the figure in society and what unrevealed power might have remained hidden in its forms? In

this keynote presentation, I ask how we might consider performance beyond mere aesthetics, and I examine the capacity and power for social change within Oceanic song and dance in historical and contemporary contexts. How does performance create and impact change and how might this social capability complement our aesthetic understanding of art across the Pacific and globally? In what ways have Pacific communities and artists employed performance to confront colonialism, communicate solidarity, or address cultural and environmental crises? In this presentation I draw widely on examples of Pacific performance, before focusing in particular on song and dance within Chuuk in Micronesia, and where I've collaborated over the past 25 years. In an exploration of the social potential within song and dance, I hope to better understand the deeper, active quality of 'from-within-glow' by which Danner was awakened.

Keynote by Sana Balai – Friday 26 June 2026, 9:10-10:00

Moderator: Erna Lilje

Carrying the Line: Memory, Land, and Women’s Cultural Practices in Bougainville



Sana Balai

Independent Researcher

Aunty Sana Balai’s presentation examines how memory, place-making, and imagination operate as interconnected cultural technologies throughout her life and work. A Bougainville-born curator, cultural custodian, and mentor, Aunty Sana bridges ancestral knowledge systems with contemporary creative expression, drawing deeply from the matrilineal epistemologies of Buka Island. Her practice highlights how women’s cultural traditions—especially those passed through the *ha’tutu* (second-born sister) lineage—sustain systems of governance, land stewardship, and ceremonial authority that have shaped Bougainville for generations.

Her co-curatorship of *Women’s Wealth* at the 9th Asia Pacific Triennial (APT9) exemplifies this philosophy. The exhibition centred women as holders of economic, spiritual, and artistic power, presenting pottery, weaving, and other embodied practices as living archives of history and future possibility. Through this work, Aunty Sana illuminated the depth and resilience of women’s cultural labour across the Pacific. Beyond institutional settings, Aunty Sana extends her methodology into the diaspora communities, including Pasifika communities mentoring young and emerging artists as they navigate displacement, cultural continuity, and creative sovereignty. Through relational guidance, studio visits, and intergenerational dialogue, she creates spaces where artists can reconnect with ancestral memory while imagining new forms of belonging. Her approach demonstrates that place-making is not only geographic but also mnemonic and imaginative, reactivating kinship, story, and land-based knowledge across distance.

By weaving together Bougainville’s matrilineal knowledge systems, the collaborative ethos of *Women’s Wealth*, and her sustained mentorship of Pacific creatives, this presentation argues that Aunty Sana’s work offers a vital framework for understanding how Indigenous women’s cultural practices shape contemporary art, community resilience, and Pacific futures.

Plenary performances – Grote Zaal

Performance by Te Rongo Kirkwood – Wednesday 24 June 2026, 12:00-12:30

Carrying Memory: Intergenerational Continuum in *The Seer, the Seen, the Seeing*
Te Rongo Kirkwood, NZ Maori (*Te Wai o hua, Ngai tai ki tamaki, Kawerau a Maki*)
Independent artist

The Seer, the Seen, the Seeing is a digital triptych film installation commissioned as part of the 38th Rakow Commission by the Corning Museum of Glass. Designed to be projected across three walls in a darkened room, the work immerses viewers in an unfolding exchange between father and daughter on ancestral land at Piha, Aotearoa. Through filmed gesture, sound, and landscape, the piece embodies whakapapa memory as living, intergenerational continuum—what is received, what is carried, and what is transformed. While the original commission included glass forms, the film itself was conceived as a complete installation, carrying its own ceremonial and sensory presence. For PAA XIV's theme of Memory, the work proposes film as a vessel for whakapapa (genealogy), where image, light, and sound enact continuity across time and place. The 15-minute presentation will consist of a brief live introduction followed by the immersive triptych screening, allowing audiences to encounter memory as ceremony held in moving image.

Honouring the Vava'u ancestors by Dagmar Dyck – Wednesday 24 June 2026, 16:00-16:30

Performance by Renee Grace Hau – Thursday 24 June 2026, 15:30-16:00

A House of Adornments, Tracing and Transmitting Stories of Māori Adornments.
Renee Grace Hau (*Ngāti Tūwharetoa and Ngāti Whātua*)
University of Auckland

Māori adornments are the treasured jewels of the Māori world. They were revered, cherished, and, in some cases, idolised. To this day, Māori adornments are highly valued; however, there is still much to learn regarding *pūrākau* (stories) and *tikanga* (the correct way) practices associated with these treasures. Before Europeans arrived in New Zealand, Māori methods of transferring knowledge, history, and *tikanga* practices occurred orally and visually. Unfortunately, due to colonisation, Māori ways of living were severely impacted, leading to the decline of understanding around Māori adornments and associated practices. Over the past 50 years, the Māori world has seen a revitalisation of the Māori language and traditional practices, including visual arts, Māori performing arts and other essential characteristics of Māori cultural heritage. Fortunately, the ancestors of the Māori world immersed themselves in orality, subsequently leaving behind oral footprints of Māori adornments within various genres of Māori oral histories such as *waiata* (songs), *karakia* (chants), *karanga* (a ceremonial call), and *whakataukī* (proverbs). This presentation utilises a creative practice approach to journey through various Māori oral histories to gain a broader scope and

understanding of these treasured adornments. The findings and experiences along this journey are then interpreted through the creative practice of original *waiata*, *whakatau-ā-kī*, *karanga*, and *karakia* compositions to revive, retell and recirculate *pūrākau* of Māori adornments.

Lecture and performance by Hinatea Colombani & Moeava Meder with Lyall Hakaraia – Friday 26 June 2026, 15:00-15:45

'A FANO RA!

Hinatea Colombani & Moeava Meder

with the participation of Pacific artist Lyall Hakaraia

'Arioi Cultural Center, Papara, Tahiti, French Polynesia Aute & Tapa Revival projects

'A FANO RA! proposes a contemporary activation of Tahitian *tapa* as a living surface of memory, transmission, and Oceanic projection. Through this performative intervention, Hinatea Colombani and Moeava Meder shift *tapa* beyond its static ethnographic framing, reactivating it instead as an embodied language, a contemporary artistic medium, and an active expression of Indigenous cultural sovereignty. In Tahitian thought, *fano* evokes unfolding, expansion, flight, navigation, and movement outward toward the horizon. Here, 'A FANO RA! becomes both invocation and deployment: the re-emergence of *tapa* within contemporary space as a living Oceanic archive and sensory territory. Rooted in the duo's long-term research into the revitalization of *aute* (*Broussonetia papyrifera*) and Tahitian barkcloth knowledge systems, this activation reflects on histories of colonial rupture and the contemporary reappropriation of *tapa* practices in the Society Islands. At its core lies the reawakening of precolonial Tahitian chromatic and material palettes: mineral earths, soot, vegetal dyes, beaten fibres, and natural pigments gathered across Polynesia.

The activation intertwines *tapa* beating, *vivo* (nose flute), breath, spoken word, projected imagery, bodily movement, and the slow diffusion of Tahitian seawater onto barkcloth surfaces. A *tapa* kite becomes a suspended body between earth, ocean, wind, genealogy, and future worlds. Together with Lyall Hakaraia, the artists create a shared ceremonial and artistic space reflecting transoceanic Indigenous dialogues, cultural resurgence, and contemporary Pacific creation. Rather than presenting Oceania as a vanished world, 'A FANO RA! affirms the Pacific as a living field of movement, imagination, continuity, and Indigenous futures.

Performance by George Nuku – Friday 26 June 2026, 15:45-16:30

'The Vanishing Māori show presents - A Joint Reflection'

George Nuku

Independent artist

My performative piece features myself in a stage setting with three stage props representing different aspects of my theatre piece. I am both juxtaposed and in dialogue with all three stage artworks. My performative work covers various topics: a Māori measurement of life and the stories that surround this, before the arrival of the Pākehā; a parable around the subject of colonisation; a description of the idea of both cause

and effect, through a visualisation of a Māori canoe and its occupants embarking on an expedition; a transportation into more recent times regarding the return of Mokomokai in Rouen and the effect of that moment; an imagined future scenario, involving a Māori community and the return of an ancestral carving from a Museum. All of these topics take the form of separate stories that are artfully interwoven into each other to form a tapestry that transports the audience through both time and space – past, present and future.

Roundtable discussion by SOWP – Friday 26 June 2026, 16:30-17:15

Meet-up in Papoeahuis: A Home for Stories, History and Heritage

Fadjar Schouten-Korwa

Foundation of Cooperating Organisations for West Papua (SOWP)

Inaria Kaisiepo

Molen de Ster (Utrecht), Foundation of Cooperating Organisations for West Papua (SOWP)

Papoeahuis focuses on the stories of Papuans, told through images and words. It demonstrates how history, heritage and current developments in West Papua are linked to the Netherlands and to Papuan communities here and there. This creates a space for diverse perspectives, knowledge-sharing and interaction. *Papoeahuis* is an initiative of the Cooperating Organisations for West Papua (SOWP).

Symposium Dinner

De tuin van de smid, Thursday 25 June 2026, 19:00

De tuin van de Smid (the blacksmith's garden) is situated in the heart of the green polder area between Leiden and Zoeterwoude. It offers a hot and cold buffet style dinner with meat, fish and vegetarian options.

During the dinner, the Manu Daula awardee will be announced. See <https://pacificarts.org/manu-daula-award/> for more information.

Public transport

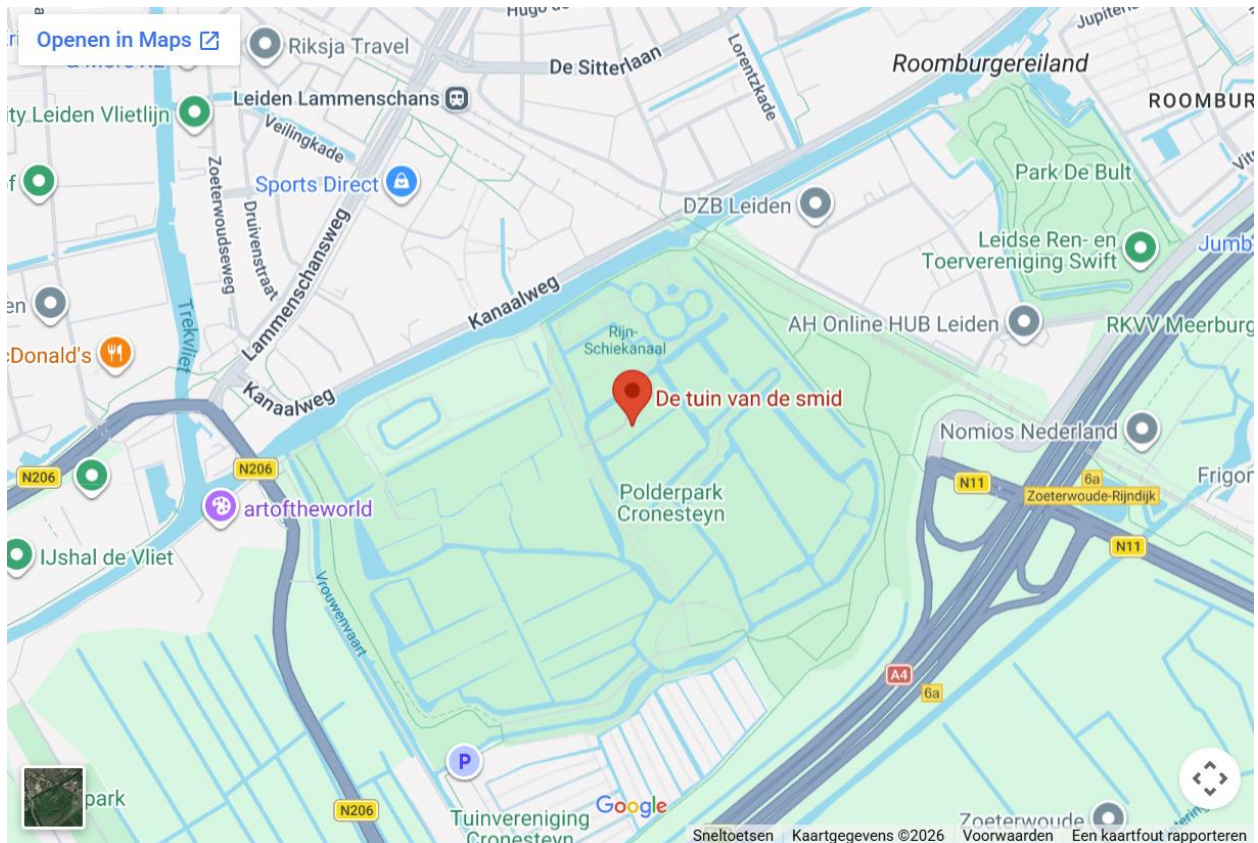
It's an 11-minute walk from Leiden Lammenschans Station. Busses 4, 45 and 400 go to Lammenschans Station. The train from Leiden Centraal also takes you to Lammenschans Station.

Taxi

Ask the driver to drop you off at the entrance of the grounds.

Walking or cycling

De tuin van de Smid (the blacksmith's garden) is easily accessible on foot or by bike. Stroll along winding shell-paved paths and through the castle woods, or cycle through the meadows, gazing out over the reed beds. You'll find us. There are no car parking spaces on the premises, but plenty of space for bicycles.



Excursions

Missiemuseum Steyl – Saturday 27 June 2026

On Saturday 27 June 2026 a visit to the Mission Museum Steyl is being organised. The bus to Steyl will leave at 9 am at the front of the Wereldmuseum Leiden. It will be lunchtime when we arrive. It will not be provided, but there are several good options close to the museum (see below). We will be back in Leiden approximately at 5:45 pm.

If you have an ICOMcard or Museumkaart, please bring it along.

The museum, founded in 1929 has retained its original layout and is hence a museum of a museum. Its important Pacific collections were assembled by the Congregation of the Divine Word - *Societas Verbi Divini* (SVD). The visit will be hosted by the curator, Paul Voogt.

See: <https://www.missiemuseum.nl/en>

Lunch options:

- Brasserie 't Vaerhóes Lunch-Borrel-Diner, Veerweg 18, 5935 BK Steyl.
- Botanische tuinen Jochumhof, Maashoek 2B, 5935 BJ Steyl.
- Friture 't Vaer, Veerweg 1a, 5935 BK Steyl – small outlet, only provides fast food.

Alternatively, take a packed lunch with you. You can purchase lunches from supermarkets such as the Jumbo or Aldi near Leiden Station or from the shops in the station itself. The lovely Jochumhof Botanical Garden is close to the Missiemuseum.

Optional: *Plumes of Paradise*, Sunday 28 June 2026, 15:00 at Musée du Quai Branly – Jacques Chirac, Paris

Delegates to the PAA International Symposium are offered a guided tour of the exhibition in Paris by Magali Mélandri and Stéphanie Xatart, the curators of the exhibition. Please book your tickets to Paris via Eurostar.com.

From the forests of New Guinea to the paintings of the great masters of the Northern School, a fascinating journey in the footsteps of birds of paradise, flamboyant creatures that have captivated the world for five centuries. This exhibition traces the circulation of feathers and representations of birds of paradise, enchanting birds native to the lush forests of New Guinea. Objects of desire, contemplation and inspiration, these spectacular creatures have travelled across eras and continents.

Bringing together nearly 190 works - jewellery, paintings, stuffed specimens, fashion items and accessories, objets d'art and illustrated works - the exhibition combines perspectives from natural history, art, ethnology, fashion and ecology. It sheds light on how these birds have been collected, represented, admired and transformed over time in Oceania, Asia and Europe. Designed in collaboration with scientists, academics and artists from New Guinea, the exhibition offers contemporary local interpretations. It invites us to rethink our relationship with living things and knowledge, taking into account the pressing issues of this century, and to discover these dazzling feathers with a fresh perspective.

See: <https://www.quaibrantly.fr/en/exhibitions-and-events/at-the-museum/exhibitions/event-details/e/plumes-du-paradis>

Please note that this trip is to be organised autonomously. If you intend to join the guided tour, please let the conference team know so that we can keep the count of attendees.

Parallel sessions

The parallel sessions are organised in regional or thematic sections. Therefore, several of the broader themes of this symposium are clustered in one session.

To indicate the original theme that people gave, the following abbreviations are used:

- M Memory
- P Place-Making
- I Imagination

Tuesday 23 June 2026 at a Glance

Tuesday 23 June 2026	
09:00	Registration
09:30	
10:00	Exhibition visit - <i>Time for Papua</i>
10:30	
11:00	
11:30	
12:00	Lunch
12:30	
13:00	Welcome by Wereldmuseum content director Wayne Modest
13:10	Keynote lecture
13:30	Like a Tifa Drum: The Harder You Beat, the Louder We Become - <i>Ronny Kareni</i>
	Session 1a - Papua: Past and Present
14:00	Memories from the Utrecht Missionary Society Papua collection: Histories of collecting, Display and New Beginnings - <i>Amélie Roussillon</i> (M)
14:30	Memory, Transformation, and Continuity in Asmat Cultural Life - <i>Andreas Wahyu</i> (M)
15:00	Cosmic Sovereignty: Documenting Longhouse Construction in Asmat, Indonesian Papua - <i>Jaap Timmer</i> (P)
15:30	Reconnecting with ancestors: The Cultural Memory and Identity in Asmat Spirit Feast - <i>Rosa Dahlia Yekti Pratiwi</i> (M)
16:00	tea/coffee break
	Session 1b - Papua: Past and Present
16:30	Book Presentation: A Journey through Asmat. The Brazza River Expedition Journal - <i>Ursula Konrad, Carolina Winkelmann, Nick Stanley</i> (M)
17:00	Papuan arts on the move: a diaspora conversation - <i>Nancy Jouwe</i> (P)
17:30	What's in a name: Dutch Papuans, traditional names, and navigating identity - <i>Nico Jouwe</i> (M)
18:00	

Themes: (M) Memory - (P) Place-making - (I) Imagination

Parallel Sessions – Tuesday 23 June 2026

Session 1a: Papua Past and Present - Grote Zaal, 14:00-16:00

Moderator: Karen Jacobs

14:00 *Memories from the Utrecht Missionary Society Papua collection: histories of collecting, display and new beginnings*

Amélie Roussillon

International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS)

- M** As early as the 1860s, the Protestant missionaries of the Utrecht Missionary Society (*Utrechtse Zendingsvereniging*) acquired thousands of items from their mission fields, in particular from the northern coast of western New Guinea. Their collections were progressively shipped to the Netherlands, where they were displayed and ultimately scattered among several museums, including today's Wereldmuseum. This paper proposes to unpack histories of missionary collecting in Papua, tracing back how these collections were mobilised and contributed to the Dutch colonial project. Through their display in multiple settings and throughout the centuries, they became entangled with layered stories of power and violence, but also with the progressive recognition and celebration of Papuan artistic heritage between Papua and the Netherlands. From these unfolded memories, this paper proposes to acknowledge the possibility for these collections to sustain knowledge transmission, while creating and inspiring new beginnings.

14:30 *Memory, Transformation, and Continuity in Asmat Cultural Life*

Andreas Wahyu

Asmat Cultural Archives and Research Centre

- M** In Asmat culture, knowledge is not passed down through writing, but rather through the body, objects, and living spaces. The *Jeu* house, rituals, songs, traditional musical instruments (*tifa*), carvings, and weaving serve as mediums for memory, connecting people to their ancestors, land, and community. Through the *Jeu* house and ritual celebrations, the Asmat transmit values, history, and cosmological relationships that maintain balance between the living and the past. The body is the primary archive where knowledge is cultivated and revived through song, dance, and ritual participation. Cultural objects, such as masks, ancestral statues, *tifa*, and weavings, are not merely aesthetic, but also serve as markers of collective memory, conveying stories of origin and intergenerational connections. The *Jeu* house is a space where bodies and objects interact, creating a connection between ancestral experiences and contemporary life. Today, the *Jeu* house also functions as a space for encountering and negotiating modern life. Rituals and the creation of cultural objects maintain connections with ancestors and serve as a way to affirm identity amidst change. In contemporary Asmat life, traditions have not disappeared but have transformed

in response to modernity, including the influence of religion, the state, the market, and environmental changes. Younger Asmat people are reinterpreting cultural practices through digital media, church teachings, and collaborations with cultural institutions. This process demonstrates that knowledge is transmitted not only in the symbolic realm, but also through everyday actions and existence. For the Asmat, memory is a way to affirm their ongoing presence in the world—a subtle form of resistance against the loss of connection among people, between people and their ancestors, and between people and the land on which they stand.

15:00 *Cosmic Sovereignty: Documenting Longhouse Construction in Asmat, Indonesian Papua*

Jaap Timmer

Macquarie University Sydney, Australia

- P** The Asmat longhouse (*jee*) is a vital place-making structure that anchors Asmat cosmopolitical life in southwestern Papua, Indonesia. This presentation reflects on a collaborative ethnographic documentation of longhouse construction in Atat village, initiated by cultural leader David Jimanipits and supported by the Asmat Museum of Culture and Progress. More than architecture, the longhouse is a spatial enactment of ancestral ethics, ritual continuity, and cultural sovereignty. It materializes Asmat cosmology, serving as a living archive and a site of ritual communication that reclaims disrupted landscapes and reasserts Asmat presence amid colonial and postcolonial pressures. In the face of accelerating social change, longhouse building becomes a mode of emplacement, an active process of reinhabiting and reworlding. Drawing on immanentist ontologies and recent debates in the anthropology of religion and material culture, I argue that the longhouse is not simply built in place but builds place itself. It is through this architecture that Asmat people sustain their ways of being, renew relational worlds, and negotiate autonomy. The longhouse thus stands as both a monument and a node where place-making is not symbolic but cosmologically generative.

15:30 *Reconnecting with ancestors: The Cultural Memory and Identity in Asmat Spirit Feast*

Rosa Dahlia Yekti Pratiwi

Asmat Museum of Culture and Progress, West Papua

- M** The Spirit Feast among the Asmat people is a ritual that reconnects humans with their ancestors and the natural world through cultural objects, symbols, and collective ceremonial acts. Through songs, dances, and the carving of spirit masks, the Asmat revive ancestral memories that form the foundation of their identity and communal solidarity. This study examines how the Spirit Feast functions as a space of cultural memory that transmits Asmat values, knowledge, and worldviews across generations. Employing an ethnographic approach, it

focuses on the embodied cultural practices within the ritual as ways for the Asmat to remember, interpret, and negotiate their relationship with the past amid social and environmental changes. The findings reveal that the Spirit Feast is not only a spiritual practice but also a vital medium for sustaining cultural continuity and reinforcing collective identity in contemporary Asmat society.

Session 1b: Papua: Past and Present - Grote Zaal, 16:30-18:00

Moderator: Erna Lilje

16:30 Book Presentation: A Journey through Asmat. The Brazza River Expedition Journal – Ursula Konrad

Ursula Konrad

Independent researcher

Carolina Winkelmann

Asmat Art Galerie

Nick Stanley

British Museum

- M** This book presents Ursula Konrad's journals of an expedition to Indonesia that she undertook at the age of 28 in 1971 and an account of its long legacy. With her husband, Gunter, she embarked on a mission to document the rare fauna and flora of Papua. In addition to locating and trapping elusive and beautiful birds of paradise, they came into increasingly close contact with the peoples of the Asmat region, living and working alongside, and befriending, many seldom-visited men and women. During this cultural exchange, Ursula and Gunter traded their Western goods, mainly metal axes (in high demand along the Brazza River) for a diverse collection of spectacular wooden carvings, previously little-known outside the region. The Konrads emerged – rich with experiences, relationships and dazzling cultural artefacts – wedded to the area, and committed to a life of enthusiastically promoting the amazing art of Asmat people to the outside world. These people, and their art, are now world famous, and it is the author's great privilege to have been a part of their story.

17:00 Papuan arts on the move. A diaspora conversation

Nancy Jouwe

Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

- P** In recent years, heritage institutions in cities like Amsterdam, Berlin, Bremen, Copenhagen and New York have displayed Pacific Arts while including material culture and indigenous stories from Papua New Guinea and West Papua. Simultaneously, a young generation of Papuan visual artists are invited to Biennales in Sydney, Yogyakarta, Lahore, and Sharjah. These examples show a heightened interest in Papuan arts and culture and a more public recognition of Papuan cultural expressions as art (rather than crafts).

The Netherlands specifically, holds the world's largest Papuan collection of material culture and this collection is included in the five-year research project *Pressing Matter*. Their consortium has generated deeper insights that connect to larger conversations in the Western world on colonial collections in museums, their provenance and shifting meaning-making processes. Not by coincidence, the long-awaited exhibition *Time for Papua* in World Museum Leiden, the Netherlands has opened in February 2026. These larger, transnational movements are met with curiosity by Dutch Papuans in the diaspora who, on their own volition, or by invitation, follow these processes. For the Papuan diaspora community these triggers aspects connected to memory, placemaking and the poetics and politics of art. In my paper I will reflect on these diasporic dynamics.

17:30 *What's in a Name: Dutch Papuans, traditional names and navigating identity*

Nico Jouwe

Freelance journalist, Hogeschool Rotterdam

- M** The paper explores how Papuans living in The Netherlands use traditional Papuan names to stay connected to their cultural heritage. The way they attribute meaning and importance to the use of traditional names for themselves or their Dutch born children varies among Dutch Papuans. Many Papuans carry multiple first names, like Dutch, Christian, Papuan names or names from other cultures. Drawing on the experiences of seven Papuans (portrayed in the travelling exhibition *What's in a Name*), their choices and motives, I considered how Papuans in The Netherlands use traditional names as ways to express their identity, history and navigate their lives in diaspora. The way Papuans express their identity and view their history is influenced by political developments since the sixties. Many consider the Indonesian takeover in the sixties as illegal. But the measure of engagement in the political struggle varies among Papuans in the diaspora. Using desk research a comparison is made to how diasporic communities in other parts of the world deal with issues of navigating their identity amid an environment that pressures them to assimilate.

Session 2a: Object Stories - Paviljoen, 14:00-16:00

Moderator: Julie Adams

14:00 *The Höltker Collection: Dispersion as Professional and Memorial Tactics?*

Nicolas Moret

Independent researcher

- M** The German SVD missionary Georg Höltker (1895-1976), who worked at the Anthropos Institute in Austria before leaving for what is now Papua New Guinea between 1936 and 1939, brought back around 200 objects from different regions and cultures. From the canton of Fribourg (Switzerland), where upon his return he settled due to the Second World War, he disposed of part of this collection, which

enriched the collections of eight Swiss and European institutions in various ways (sales and donations) and at different times (during and after the Second World War).

This paper, based on the results of a thesis on provenance research, aims to put these acquisitions into context, both geopolitically and in relation to the missionary's professional life, as well as to highlight the scientific, educational and financial significance of this distribution, drawing on the archives preserved in the various institutions and made available for my thesis (https://www.researchgate.net/publication/390729559_Les_collections_du_Territoire_de_Nouvelle-Guinee_du_missionnaire_Georg_Holtker_SVD_1895-1976_apports_des_archives_pour_la_comprehension_des_translocations_et_de_s_usages).

14:30 *Continuities Within Displacement: Memory and Material Histories in the Collections from Oceania at Ipswich Museum (UK)*

Carolina Gallarini

University of East Anglia, Norwich, Ipswich Museum, Ipswich

M The collections from Oceania at the Ipswich Museum are not still. Comprising objects from Kanaky and Fiji that have long remained unstudied, they invite reflection on how material heritage continues to move across time and context. The research approaches these artefacts as active carriers of memory, tracing the connections they sustain between places, histories, and people. Building upon my doctoral research on Kanak art and identity, I explore how curatorial practice can become a form of listening: to the unfinished stories carried by museum objects and to the silences that surround them. Through object study, archival research, and collaborative dialogue, the project reconsiders the relationship between material heritage and the transmission of knowledge, questioning how museums might sustain continuity while acknowledging rupture.

At Ipswich, the project engages with these overlooked collections to reconsider their place within living systems of knowledge. By tracing how memory persists through materials and museological frameworks, it explores the tensions between continuity and rupture that shape the lives of these objects. The research contributes to broader dialogues on provenance, belonging, and the shifting meanings of art within post-colonial contexts.

15:00 *The Residual Evidence of Memory and Moai Design in Rapa Nui Woodcarving*

Jo Anne Van Tilburg

Cotsen Institute of Archaeology UCLA

M The Rapa Nui anthropomorphic, portable wood figures are commonly divided into three classes: *moai tanata* (realistic human male), *moai kavakava* (emaciated human male figures), and *moai paa paa* (human female figures). All crafts were affected by Western contact, the advent of missionisation, and imposed commercialism. However, artists have for generations produced superb carvings

within ancestral traditions characterized by carefully executed, repeated, and replicated motifs constituting residual evidence of monolithic statue (*moai*) design and allowing objects to serve as encapsulate, familial memory aids. The author, working with Rapanui artist Cristian Arevalo Pakarati, has achieved detailed descriptions and observations of over 50 museum objects revealing coherence as well as distinctions in carving quality and artisan skills; however, no scientific sampling and testing were conducted. What these many wood figures appear to have in common is the metaphorical expression of transformation, and modern consultants consider them to represent powerful protective ancestral entities.

15:30 *Art, memory and place in central Polynesia: pre-Christian figure sculpture, seats and ‘pigs’*

Steven Hooper

Sainsbury Research Unit for the Arts of Africa, Oceania & the Americas, University of East Anglia, UK

- P** Artworks of ritual significance from central Polynesia (Society, Austral and Cook Islands) that survive from pre-Christian times (before 1820s) are limited in number and variety. There is no means of knowing if what survives in museums and collections in the Pacific and beyond is representative of the original corpus of material. If, as is probable, less than 10% of what originally existed during the period 1760s-1820s has survived iconoclasm, decay, storms and neglect, it is highly unlikely that the surviving material is a representative sample. Nevertheless, these rare artworks deserve continuing attention and comparative analysis of the kind pioneered by the Māori medical doctor and museum curator/director Te Rangi Hiroa (Peter Buck) in the 1930s and 1940s.

In this paper, materials from central Polynesia will be discussed in comparative perspective, both to try to establish with greater confidence their cultural meanings and origin in the region, and also to assess the implications for Islanders today of attribution to ‘Society’, ‘Austral’ and ‘Cook’ Islands for a period when those boundaries, and Anglo-French language divisions, did not exist. Relationships between islands will be proposed through analysis of artefact types, art styles and ‘pig’ imagery.

Session 2b: Object Stories – Paviljoen, 16:30-18:00

Moderator: Caroline Vercoe

16:30 *In the Shadows: A “Paddle” from the Austral Islands at Yale University*

Marissa Perez

Department of the History of Art, Yale University

- P** This paper investigates the microhistory of an example of a little-studied Pacific art form: often referred to as “paddles,” Austral Islanders on Raivaevae and Tubuai in the nineteenth century produced a limited number of finely-carved

wooden blades and oars that contain knowledge, memory, and environment within them. In recent years, Yale University has received “promised” gifts of Thomas Jaffe, a collector of global Indigenous arts who obtained one of these paddles which is now on display in the Peabody Museum of Natural History’s new “Hall of the Pacific.” Combining Indigenous-centred archival and material culture approaches, I situate this particular paddle in Indigenous Pacific @me and space, and place particular emphasis on the inherent individuality of the intricately carved designs that are inscribed onto the surface of the blades. In this talk, I will also stretch understandings of these paddles to include how they have been perceived through a colonial lens—investigating, for instance, their popularity with the English “ethnographic” art dealer William Ockleford Oldman’s print rubbings of them, which serves as an example of the ways in which the paddles and other Pacific arts have been extracted—physically, artistically and metaphorically—from their original contexts.

17:00 *Embodying Mana: The Role of Chiefly Headdresses in Articulating Sacred Lineages in Polynesia*

Talei Tu'inukuafe (Sāmoa, Fiji, Ngāti Raukawa ki te Tonga, Tūhourangi)

Auckland Museum

- P** Through an analysis of the Sāmoan Tuiga and Tongan Palā Tavake, this paper examines the cultural, political, and spiritual significance of chiefly headdresses in precolonial Polynesia, and focuses on their role in materialising chiefly authority and embodying mana—the sacred power transmitted through ancestral genealogies. These headdresses were not merely decorative or ornamental, they functioned as potent visual and performative affirmations of chiefly status, genealogical continuity, and the relational networks binding *ali'i* or *'eiki* (chiefs) to their *tupu'ga/tupu'aga* (ancestors), and the *fanua/fonua* (land). Through processes of making, wearing, and ritual use, these forms became active sites where ancestral presence was invoked, displayed, and maintained. By centring Indigenous epistemologies and genealogies, this paper challenges colonial readings of these headdresses, reframing and positioning them within a living continuum of ancestral knowledge and cultural practice. In doing so, it affirms that the significance of these adornments lies not only in their historical use but in their enduring capacity to maintain relational ties across generations. The framework that this paper articulates offers new ways to conceptualise art histories and museums’ curatorial and interpretation practices, as it directly connects these important *measina* (treasures) to their communities in a way that upholds not only the mana of the headdresses, but also that of the communities to which they belong.

17:30 *What's in a dress? The context of the siapo evening dress from Samoa in the Museum Fünf Kontinente in Munich*

Bernadette Samau

Sharon Roma

M The Museum Fünf Kontinente has asked Dr Bernadette Samau, National University of Samoa, to facilitate having a *siapo* evening dress made and brought over to Germany. Originally, we intended to show that *siapo* making is also a contemporary practice, with many innovative creations of wearable art in Pacific fashion. In the course of the conversation, we discovered that Dr Samau's ancestors Te'o Tuvale, a high-ranking *matai*, and Naitua, a taupou from Tanugamanono, had been in Munich in 1900/1901 with a travelling show. Upon their return to Samoa, they got married and started a large family. At the same time, Dr Samau is from a *tatau* guild family and therefore authorized to use specific *tatau* designs. This discovery led her family to have this *siapo* gown made into a distinct Te'o-Naitua dress with designs linked to them and the *tatau* guild. Before coming to Germany, this meaningful dress will be on display at the National Museum of Samoa. This paper explores the different contexts culminating in this highly symbolic dress: the travelling Samoa ethnic shows (*Völkerschauen*) to Germany, the role of Te'o Tuvale as a strategically acting *matai* in Samoa's colonial society, and the family links to other high-ranking *matai* and to *tatau* guilds today.

Wednesday 24 June 2026 at a Glance

Wednesday 24 June 2026	
09:00	Introduction to the day
09:10	Keynote lecture
09:30	Toi Te Mana: Understanding Māori art - <i>Deidre Brown</i>
10:00	tea/coffee break
Session 3 - Relational collections	
10:30	Unfreedom, Voices Redress: Collections, Connection and the Plantation - <i>Imelda Miller, Oliver Lueb</i> (M)
11:00	Place-making and relationality: In between Country and Museum - <i>Brian Martin, Roberta Colombo, Beatrice Voirol</i> (P)
11:30	Recording Kastom: Reconnecting Torres Strait Islander archives and objects to people and place - <i>Anita Herle</i> (M)
12:00	Carrying Memory: Intergenerational Continuum in the Seer, the Seen, the Seeing (performance) - <i>Te Rongo Kirkwood</i> (M)
12:30	Lunch
13:00	
13:30	
14:00	
Session 5 - Rethinking Pacific Museums and Displays	
14:00	The Past is Present: Objects of New Guinea, ancestral memory in German historical museum - <i>Katy Klaasmeyer</i> (M)
14:30	Men's houses as museum? Rethinking latmul ceremonial houses through past and contemporary perspectives (ESP, PNG) - <i>Enzo Hamel</i> (M)
15:00	Weaving Memory, Ancestral connection, and Kinship on Turtle Island - <i>Melodie Bergquist-Turori, Fran Lujan</i> (M)
15:30	The Festival of Pacific Arts – a multiplace-based memory (1972-2024) (Report) - <i>Jean-Emmanuel Frantz</i> (15 min) (P)
15:45	Numbulwar Memories - <i>Louise Hamby, Janette Murrungun</i> (M)
Session 6 - Fibre Arts	
16:00	Mats and memory: Samoan Weaving in a Globalized Economy - <i>Anne E. Guernsey Allen</i> (M)
16:30	Weaving - A living Art Form - <i>Jacqueline Charles-Rault</i> (M)
17:00	"We are no longer Maisin": Climate change and barkcloth Art among the Maisin people of Papua New Guinea - <i>Anna-Karina Hermkens</i> (P)
17:30	Honouring the Vava'u ancestor in the collection - <i>Dagmar Dyck</i>
18:00	Double exhibition opening
18:30	<i>Darwin in Paradise Camp</i> - <i>Yuki Kihara</i> <i>Sámi Art, Land, Power</i> (with artist talk)

Themes: (M) Memory - (P) Place-making - (I) Imagination

Parallel Sessions – Wednesday 24 June 2026

Session 3: Relational Collections – Grote Zaal, 10:30-12:00

Moderator: Stéphanie Leclerc Caffarel

10:30 *Unfreedom, Voices Redress: Collections, Connection and the Plantation*

Imelda Miller

Queensland Museum Kurilpa, Brisbane, Australia (QM)

Oliver Lueb

Rautenstrauch-Joest Museum – Cultures of the World, Cologne, Germany (RJM)

- M** Museum collections hold memories and knowledge for communities' form all around the world. Our project "Unfreedom, Voices, Redress: Plantation Cultures of the Western Pacific", provides us with the unique opportunity to explore collections of artefacts and photographs from the Pacific starting with the two museum collections at the Rautenstrauch-Joest Museum – Cultures of the World, Cologne, Germany and the Queensland Museum, Brisbane, Australia. Our aims are to explore the collections looking for voices, stories of especially women connected to Plantation Labour and forced migrations in the Western Pacific with a focus on German and British annexed areas. These two museum collections offer the opportunity to examine collections that originated in Australia – a country of displacement for South Seas Islanders – as well as those that were amassed in Germany – a former colonial power in the Southwest Pacific. Ideally, comparisons between the potentially different types of records in the collections can help to find new points of contact for reconnecting with descendants in the societies of origin and evoke new memories.

11:00 *Place-making and Relationality: In between Country and Museum*

Brian Martin

Monash University, Australia

Roberta Colombo

Musée d'éthnographie de Genève MEG, Switzerland

Beatrice Voirol

Museum der Kulturen Basel MKB, Switzerland

- P** When cultural material is taken from Country, the impact on people and place is manifold. The dynamics around cultural materials from Australia, today often stored in museum collections, are complex and compounded by this removal. However, cultural materials in museum collections have the potential to bring people together and to build deep relationality. Beyond that they add to the understanding, because cultural materials from Australia are often more than benign objects. How is relationality between community and museum contributing to place-making? In this paper we consider place-making as a way of thinking and ask how this contributes to what we term as 'Relational Return' rather than repatriation. Ceremony, ritual and practice are vital to an embodiment and immersive

experience with Place. Indigenous epistemologies contribute to decolonising processes in museums. In collaboration between community and museum a new story creates itself, bringing the now to existence in order to start a healing process.

11:30 *Recording Kastom: Reconnecting Torres Strait Islander archives and objects to people and place*

Anita Herle

Museum of Archaeology & Anthropology, University of Cambridge.

- M** This presentation focuses on a long-term collaborative project with Torres Strait Islanders, culminating in the publication and return of Alfred Haddon's hand-written journals from his expeditions to Torres Strait and New Guinea in 1888 and 1898. *Recording Kastom* provides the opportunity to reconnect Torres Strait Islander art, material and intangible culture, currently cared for by British museums, with the people and places from where it originated. Haddon's practice of identifying individual Islanders in his writings and photographs enable people to make direct connections to named ancestors, knowledge holders, artists and performers. When considered by descendants, the intimate details of identity and place contained within the data create new understandings and give renewed resonance and purpose to ethnographic descriptions. Torres Strait archives and historic collections remain a crucial resource for many Islanders, selectively and often privately used to better understand the past, as a source of inspiration for Islander artists and as a means to address pressing concerns regarding land rights, cultural and environmental sustainability, and political self-determination.

Session 4: Journeys – Paviljoen, 10:30-12:00

Moderator: Wonu Veys

10:30 *Tau o Mai | Journeys with Mai*

Nicholas Thomas

University of Cambridge

- I** This paper reflects on Sir Joshua Reynolds' 1776 portrait of Mai, the recent, successful campaign to bring the painting into public ownership (jointly by the Getty Museum and the National Portrait Gallery, London) and the recent and continuing activation of the work on the part of artists from Tahiti and SaVāge K'lub, the renowned Aotearoa-based collective, including the 2025/26 exhibition, 'Tau o Mai | Journeys with Mai', at the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge.

11:00 *Concepts of tradition at work in the present: the case of the modelled skulls from Papua New Guinea in a Dutch missionary museum*

Tiko Waundu

Anthropology Department at the National Museum and Art Gallery in Port Moresby
Paul Voogt
Missiemuseum in Steyl

- M** The Missiemuseum in Steyl (the Netherlands) opened in 1931 and its presentation has hardly changed since then. This has turned it into a time capsule, in which we can still see the world as the catholic mission wanted to portray it at the time. A wild, dangerous world, full of superstition, where the mission came to bring the light. This is also how a collection of modelled skulls from the Sepik region in Papua New Guinea is presented. The Missiemuseum researched the provenance of this collection and discussed restitution with the villages where they originally came from and with the National Museum and Art Gallery in the capital Port Moresby. The conclusion is that they do not want the skulls back, at least not for the time being. An important consideration is the presence of the spirits and how to deal with them, should these material shells of the spirits return. It shows that concepts of tradition are still at work in the present. Tiko Waundu, Principal Curator of the Anthropology Department at the National Museum in Port Moresby, and Paul Voogt, curator of the Missiemuseum in Steyl, worked together on this research and will report on their findings.

11:30 Looking East. The re-orientation of the Malukan diaspora to the Pacific

Wim Manuhutu
Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

- P** *Looking East: The re-orientation of the Malukan diaspora to the Pacific* presents the various ways through which the Malukan diaspora in the Netherlands is attempting to establish linkages with different parts of the Pacific. This happens through political, cultural and artistic practices. In this regard, West-Papua in some cases played the role of a bridge to the Pacific, reverting former colonial relations between the two areas. Cultural expressions from the Pacific in film, music, performance and other cultural practices (tattooing) have resonated within segments of the Malukan community as they provided means to connect to the Pacific. Artists were inspired by the work of Pacific artists (for instance Te Vaka and various Māori tattoo artists). In this presentation several case studies will be presented in order to illuminate these attempts to establish these connections. Individual artistic practices as well as group exhibitions and other cultural performances will be analysed and presented.

Session 5: Rethinking Pacific Museums and Displays – Grote Zaal, 14:00-16:00

Moderator: Christina Hellmich

14:00 *The Past is Present: Objects of New Guinea ancestral memory in German historical museums*

Katy Klaasmeyer

University of New South Wales

- M** Oceanic artistic practices generally operate in a framework in which the boundaries between ancestral time and the present moment are blurred; thus, objects from these communities often engage with the past and the present congruently, acting as living embodiments of ancestral memory. Many Oceanic artifacts, however, are held and displayed within European institutions, whose traditional concept of “history” does not allow for this cyclical, more abstract interplay of time.

This paper examines objects of New Guinea ancestral memory in German historical museums – specifically *Malagan*, a term referring to both ritual artifacts and its associative commemorative ceremonies in New Ireland, Papua New Guinea. With special emphasis on this object type and its use, this paper will investigate the complex nature of “memory” in New Guinea society and culture. A consideration of its context - German ethnographic museum display - will highlight the disparity of Indigenous communal memory with European orthodox notions of history as an objective, secular, recording of facts. Notably, my argument is not binary or oppositional; rather, I seek to place a certain historical relationality that might serve today to elucidate insights for future-forward institutional practice and logics. To that end, ongoing efforts of Western institutions to negotiate colonial legacies will be addressed.

14:30 *Men’s houses as museum? Rethinking latmul ceremonial houses through past and contemporary perspectives (ESP, PNG)*

Enzo Hamel

Sainsbury Research Unit for the Arts of Africa, Oceania and the Americas,
University of East Anglia

- M** Men’s houses are a staple architectural feature along the Sepik River both in the past and present. Drawing on ethnographic research in Kanganamun (East Sepik Province, Papua New Guinea) and literature on Indigenous models of museums in Oceania, I will explore how they are key ceremonial spaces in which men are reassessing new and old values as well as navigating both continuity and changes. I will discuss the status of the men’s houses in a diachronic perspective comparing historical records and contemporary comments gathered when I returned Gregory Bateson’s archives to Kanganamun in 2024. I will focus on why men are still invested in their construction and rehabilitation when the social and religious structures they were supposed to serve no longer exists in today’s context of Christianity and tourism. During my research, my collaborator and

friend, Patrick Kamanjane compared the men’s house to a museum because of its ability to tell and record local history. Following this statement, I will show how men’s houses are intrinsically linked to memory and the transmission of important secret-sacred knowledge. Finally, I will consider how and for whom knowledge is shared through the men’s houses’ materiality.

15:00 *Weaving Memory, Ancestral Connection, and Kinship on Turtle Island*

Melodie Bergquist-Turori

NAIITS: An Indigenous Learning Community

Fran Lujan

Pacific Island Ethnic Art Museum

M The Pacific Island Ethnic Art Museum (PIEAM) rests on Tovaangar, the traditional lands of the Tongva now known as Long Beach, California. At PIEAM, “objects” are honoured as ancestors and relatives that hold the memories of nature through time—the stone, tree, water and more. When the systematic fragmentation of colonialism separated Pasifika Peoples from their material culture, relationship was broken and transmission of the intangible knowledge living within those ancestor pieces was disrupted. This paper explores how Pasifika ways of being are recontextualised by the landscapes of Southern California, reimagining museum space as community house for Pacific Islander diaspora communities. PIEAM developed and practices diaspora protocols that honour both ancestral lands and the land we now reside upon creating relational space where the unique kinship between ancestor pieces and people may be restored, awakening memory and knowledge.

We will share from two perspectives: as a diaspora-born Māori Kūki ’Āirani artist invited into kinship with an ancestor piece at PIEAM; and as an Indigenous CHamoru museum director and curator who is the caretaker of the community house.

* The Pacific Island Ethnic Art Museum is the only Pacific Islands museum in the contiguous United States.

15:30 *The Festival of Pacific Arts – a multiplace-based memory (1972-2024)* (report)

Jean-Emmanuel Frantz

Independent, intermittent, and unruly researcher

P Founded in 1972 in Fiji, the Festival of Pacific Arts and Cultures (FESTPAC) gathers, every four years, the 27 member nations of the Council of Arts. This report offers new perspectives on the history and travels of FESTPAC in the wake of its thirteenth edition, held in Hawai’i in 2024. FESTPAC serves as a vital crossroads of memory, whose intangible and audiovisual heritage is now scattered across islands and institutions. Over time—culminating in its 50th anniversary in 2022—it has evolved into a reimagined space where ancestral traditions and contemporary creativity meet. Each edition leaves a lasting imprint on participating artists, while also acting as a catalyst for cultural infrastructure

projects and urban beautification. FESTPAC is equally a political moment, where struggles for decolonisation, the interplay between Nature and Culture, and efforts to protect the Blue Pacific Ocean find a platform for expression. With the founding generation now gone, it is crucial to reaffirm the legacy of FESTPAC as preparations begin for the next edition, to be hosted in 2028 in New Caledonia. The first groundwork for this future event dates back to 2022. Through concrete examples—supported by archival materials and video excerpts—this report presents FESTPAC as a dynamic space of memory, creation, and imagination. A presentation illustrated with moving images from the Pacific Arts Festivals and from personal archives. Written in French, the report will be translated into academic English and read to the audience. Answers to questions will be given in Anglo-Pijin.

Session 6: Fibre Arts – Paviljoen, 14:00-16:00

Moderator: Wonu Veys

14:00 *Mats and Memory: Samoan Weaving in a Globalized Economy*

Anne E. Guernsey Allen

Indiana University Southeast

- M** In 2019 the *‘ie samoa* (or *‘ie sae*) was inscribed in the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. Yet, the tradition of creating and bestowing of fine mats in independent Samoa has undergone considerable shifts in the 21st century. In 2008, the Women in Business Development group found only 3 or 4 weavers who could properly create *‘ie sae*. Since then, attempts to revitalise the art have been undertaken by the Samoan government and that NGO. This paper will consider what has changed and what has remained the same regarding the creation, quality, and use of these textiles. How has the knowledge related to the creation process been passed down and what are the obstacles to that practice? What changes in the bestowing of the mats have occurred? What is the impact of the globalized economy on their creation? What is the role of government and NGOs in the perpetuation of the art? What do individual weavers see as the purpose for their creation of these mats vs. the goals of those organisations?

14:30 *Weaving - A living Art Form*

Jacqueline Charles-Rault

Le Havre University, France

- M** Māori weaving or *raranga* has experienced a widespread revival since the late 1960s, which in turn has helped sustain Māori culture today. Weaving is considered a living art form, as it continues to bind Māori not only to their past but also to their cultural traditions and ancestry. Memory, knowledge and skills are all intertwined. Several factors have helped in the development of this revival of weaving, which include: the influence of prominent weavers and their cultural role of passing down knowledge and skills to younger generations, community workshops that have helped others in the community learn ancestry skills and

the continuous planting of *harakeke* on the marae and by local authorities to sustain the supply of this raw material needed for weaving practices. This talk will look at the some of the Māori women weavers who are keeping this living art form alive today, as well as some contemporary women artists and designers who use weaving and weaving techniques in their art practices.

15:00 "We are no longer Maisin": Climate change and barkcloth Art among the Maisin people of Papua New Guinea

Anna-Karina Hermkens

Macquarie University Sydney, Australia

- P** Considering the devastating impacts of climate change, and especially rising sea levels on coastal communities in Australia and the Pacific, there is a pressing need to understand not just the environmental, but also the socio-cultural impacts of these changes. In this talk I will detail some of the effects of rising sea levels on indigenous culture and the arts, with a specific focus on human-plant relationships, a topic that has historically been ignored. Among Maisin, tree-bark and plants are turned into cloths, garments and pigments that are intrinsically connected to the human body and self. Considering this intimate relationship, what are the impacts of rising sea-levels on this relationship, and consequently, on people's notions and experiences of place, clan identity, gender and self when these trees and plants can no longer grow in their increasingly inundated and salinised habitats? What does it mean for a culture to lose its most significant cultural marker of identity? The Maisin case illustrates how place-making is intrinsically connected with art and identity, and how these relations are impacted by climate change.

15:30 Numbulwar Memories

Louise Hamby

Australian National University

Janette Murrungun

Numbulwar Numburindi Arts

- M** This paper will explore the transmission of knowledge of making and use of fibre objects. In Numbulwar, in Arnhem Land in the Northern Territory this transmission occurs in two basic methods: information gained from historical collections and intergenerational knowledge. Recent research has uncovered various collections dating from 1921, 1935, mission times (1952-1978) and most recently 2014. Objects in these collections are bringing joy in connecting people with their relatives, the makers of the objects, and they sometimes act as mnemonics for past practice. They provide a gateway to memories held by older artists in the community. What was common practice when elders were young women is no longer being made or is a rarity. Now, the children of the older people are remembering what they observed as young people as is the case with Janette Murrungun and watching and learning from her grandmother the making

of *yirr* string bags. After Janette learned about making string bags she summed up her impression, “I fell in love with this object.”

At Numbulwar Numburindi Arts classic materials from Arnhem Land, pandanus and various bark fibres, sit alongside the new and fibres associated with commercial fishing known as ghost nets. Artists are using the new colourful material, particularly the ropes, by repurposing them, using techniques that have been used in the past. Collections from Rose River, Numbulwar, have shown a similar approach to new materials that came into the area nine years ago. The expression ‘same, but different’ is one used to describe new objects that have the same form as in the past.

Thursday 25 June 2026 at a Glance

Thursday 25 June 2026	
09:00	Introduction to the day
09:10	Keynote lecture
09:30	Blazing Voices and the Capacity of Song and Dance: Expression and Social Action in Oceania - <i>Brian Dietrich</i>
10:00	tea/coffee break
	Session 7a - Contemporary Art
10:30	Placing the past: Site-Specific Contemporary Art and Ecological Collapse in Oceania - <i>Maggie Winder (P, M, I)</i>
11:00	The Gafa That Blinds Us: Contemporary Pacific Artists Exploring Temporality, Ancestral Connections and Place - <i>Caroline Vercoe (P, I)</i>
11:15	From Ancient Futures to Falanoo: Activating ancestral presence in contemporary place-making - <i>Dagmar Vaikalaf Dyck (P)</i>
11:30	Pasifik ples wokim tude long Ostrelia: Contemporary Pacific Place-making in Australia - <i>Margaret Cassidy (P)</i>
12:00	
12:30	Lunch
13:00	
13:30	
	Session 7b - Contemporary Art
14:00	Saltwater healing: Yuki Kihara's Darwin in Paradise Camp - <i>Karen Jacobs (I)</i>
14:30	Whāia te Taniwha - Māori guardian creatures in memory & art - <i>Madi Williams (M)</i>
15:00	Whāia te Taniwha II - Celebrating ancestral narratives - <i>Kirsty Dunn (M)</i>
15:30	A House of Adornments, Tracing and Transmitting Stories of Māori Adornments - <i>Renee Grace Hau (M)</i>
16:00	tea/coffee break
	Session 10 - Memory and the Body
16:30	Matakite: A Prophecy, This is - <i>Travis Chai Andrade, Lyall Hakarala</i>
17:00	The skin as a repository of memory and knowledge. Wai'ma's female tattooing and social reproduction - <i>Anahī Luna (M)</i>
17:30	
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23:00	

Themes: (M) Memory - (P) Place-making - (I) Imagination

Symposium dinner at Tuin van de Smid

Parallel Sessions – Thursday 25 June 2026

Session 7a: Contemporary art – Grote Zaal, 10:30-12:30

Moderator: Karen Stevenson

10:30 *Placing the Past: Site-Specific Contemporary Art and Ecological Collapse in Oceania*

Maggie Wander

Santa Clara University, USA

P M I This presentation investigates contemporary site-specific art installations in Oceania that materialise the connection between ancestral pasts, colonial histories, and today's climate crisis. Colonially-induced climate change in Oceania stems from the historical processes of dispossession, urban and agricultural development, militourism, and resource extraction. Without a deeper engagement with these histories, we risk perpetuating unequal structures of power into the future. How, then, do site-specific installations by contemporary Pacific artists make manifest the relationship between the past, present, and future while materialising the dialogic relationship between place and memory in the context of climate change? To answer this question, I discuss Quandamooka artist Megan Cope's interventions in oyster habitats off the coast of Queensland, Australia, the recreation of a traditional fish trap in Aotearoa's Waiapu River by the Māori collective AWA (Artists for Waiapu Action), and a thatch structure anachronistically placed in Honolulu by the Hawai'i-based artist Sean Connelly. Exploring how site-specificity expresses the material entanglement between colonial history, ecological collapse, and the continuity of ancestral heritage, I argue these projects bring the past to bear on the present and future in ways that are crucial to Indigenous Pacific place-making and resilience in the face of ecological collapse.

11:00 *The Gafa That Binds Us: Contemporary Pacific Artists Exploring Temporality, Ancestral Connections and Place*

Caroline Vercoe

Faculty of Arts and Education, University of Auckland.

P I This paper explores Indigenous notions of temporality and the connections between land, the environment, place and genealogies tracing back into ancient times. It will contrast contemporary Pacific artists, including Māori artist Nova Paul and Tongan artist Latai Taumoepeau, whose work reflects these understandings. By locating their work within a continuum of ancient genealogies and their intertwined connections with origin stories and narratives, their work demonstrates and activates ongoing relationships between the past, present and future. Indigenous Pacific cultures have always viewed the land, sea and sky as holistically bound within ancient creation narratives and ancestral genealogical lineages. These stretch far back in time, beyond the reach of imperialism and coloniality, and far into the future, to connect and expand our conceptions of

time, space and place. They offer understandings of place that embody compelling and sustainable sources of knowledge, highlighting crucial relationships between nature, the body, communities and notions of self.

11:30 *From Ancient Futures to Falanoa: Activating ancestral presence in contemporary place-making*

Dagmar Vaikalafi Dyck

University of Auckland, Aotearoa, New Zealand

P 'Amui 'i Mu'a/Ancient Futures was a collaborative research and exhibition project that reconnected Tongan artists with ancestral koloa (treasures) dispersed across global museum collections. My practice within this project engaged these ancestral art forms not as static ethnographic specimens but as living sources of cultural memory and ancestral presence.

Central to this work was *tauhi vā*, the ethic of nurturing relational space, guiding engagements with curators, communities, and the taonga themselves. This foundation has since shaped my doctoral research on *falanoa*, an intergenerational, arts-based methodology. *Falanoa* repositions the woven mat (*fala*) as a dialogic site for *talanoa*, where stories, genealogies, and identities are interlaced through creative practice. If Ancient Futures reconnected us to ancestral treasures, *falanoa* extends this by activating contemporary spaces of place-making, belonging, and community for diasporic Tongans.

Together, these projects demonstrate how Indigenous art forms and methodologies, when grounded in values of reciprocity and relationship, can activate spaces of proclamation, resilience, and creative sense-making that affirm community across Aotearoa, the Moana, and beyond.

This 20-minute paper, accompanied by visual imagery of artworks and archival documentation, positions Ancient Futures as a foundation and extends into new doctoral research on *falanoa*. As both artist and academic, I bring an Indigenous and practice-led perspective that contributes uniquely to the symposium's theme of Place-making.

12:00 *Pasifik ples wokim tude long Ostrelia: Contemporary Pacific Place-Making in Australia*

Margaret Cassidy

University of Tasmania, Sessional Academic, University of Sydney / Oceanic Art Society

P Australia is a place of contemporary art-making for Pacific diaspora populations as well as a place of significant colonial collections of traditional Pacific cultural objects. This paper examines some contemporary connections to ancestors being made through the making and performing of art on this land that was both colonised by European settlers and became the coloniser for Pacific Islands and their peoples. Significant diaspora populations from across the Pacific who have settled in Australia are working with colonial collections within cultural

institutions as well as developing their own sense of place from the intersection of traditional and contemporary materials. This paper surveys recent important local exhibitions of Pacific art. Australia is a place of contemporary art-making for Pacific diaspora populations as well as a place of significant colonial collections of traditional Pacific cultural objects. This paper examines some contemporary connections to ancestors being made through the making and performing of art on this land that was both colonised by European settlers and became the coloniser for Pacific Islands and their peoples.

Session 7b: Contemporary art – Grote Zaal, 14:00-15:30

Moderator: Jacqueline Charles Rault

14:00 *Saltwater healing: Yuki Kihara's Darwin in Paradise Camp*

Karen Jacobs

Sainsbury Research Unit, University of East Anglia

- I Taking the 2025 exhibition *Darwin in Paradise Camp: Yuki Kihara at the Sainsbury Centre* as a main case study, this chapter reflects on Kihara's artwork as a revelation of the impact of marginalisation in an ocean environment. The notion of saltwater healing, used in a multifarious sense in reference to the oceans' healing properties and the need for fluid thinking as well as the need to look after the health of the Earth's oceans and its inhabitants, is employed as a framework for analysing Kihara's work. The paper discusses the potential of the exhibition as a space for healing.

14:30 *Whāia te Taniwha I – Māori guardian creatures in memory & art*

Madi Williams

Aotahi: School of Māori and Indigenous Studies, University of Canterbury, New Zealand

- M *Whāia te Taniwha | Follow the Taniwha* is the title of an art exhibition at the Christchurch Art Gallery New Zealand September 2025 - February 2026. The exhibition curated by Chloe Cull, Dr Kirsty Dunn, and Dr Madi Williams is Indigenous, led and comprised of all Indigenous artists. *Taniwha* are Māori guardian creatures who are often described as guides, shapeshifters, tricksters, and adversaries. *Taniwha* are also relations, and play an important role in informing tribal identity and culture. The exhibition celebrates taniwha as both ancestral and contemporary beings that continue to hold relevance for Māori today. This paper both explains the significance of taniwha (guardian creatures in Te Ao Māori - the Māori world) and contextualises the exhibition by explaining its foundations and inspirations. I explore how taniwha and their representations are an important means of knowledge transference, particularly in regards to the environment and oceanic spaces, and how to safely navigate it.

15:00 *Whāia te Taniwha II – Celebrating Ancestral Narratives*

Kirsty Dunn

Aotahi: School of Māori and Indigenous Studies, University of Canterbury, New Zealand

- M** Taniwha are Māori guardian creatures who feature in ancestral narratives and are renowned for their ability to defy easy description or categorisation. They are sometimes described as shapeshifters, guides, messengers, and adversaries, but they are also our relations whose stories continue to guide and inspire tāngata whenua (people of the land). In this paper, I build on my colleague Dr Madi Williams' work by describing the underlying narrative of the Whāia Te Taniwha exhibition: a collection of work which celebrates these elusive beings and highlights the ways in which Māori art is a powerful and potent medium for the transference of ancestral knowledge.
- With reference to a number of artworks in the exhibition, I describe the ways in which these works affirm iwi (tribal) identity and the inextricable connection between Māori, lands and bodies of water. I also explain how these works represent ancestral narratives in hybrid ways that blur boundaries - akin to the very creatures that they represent. I describe how it is this defiance, alongside ancestral narratives, that helps us to navigate contemporary challenges.

Session 8: Marquesan art – Paviljoen, 10:30-12:30

Moderator: Steven Hooper

10:30 *From past to present: Karl von den Steinen and Te Henua Enata*

Caroline van Santen

Independent researcher

- M** In July 2024 Te Henua Enata (Marquesas Islands) were included on the UNESCO World Heritage List as a site of both outstanding natural and cultural value. One of the criteria for this recognition was the knowledge passed down from generation to generation, combined with writings from, among others, late 19th-century ethnographic studies. One of these studies was conducted by German ethnologist Karl von den Steinen (1855-1929). When he arrived on Te Henua Enata in 1897 the Ènata were in a state of demographic collapse caused by European contact. However, it was also a period of change in which Ènata, building on old traditions, developed new creative art forms. Besides pursuing his personal interests in recording oral history, one of Von den Steinen's main objectives was to collect objects for the Königliches Museum für Völkerkunde (now Ethnologisches Museum) in Berlin. He acquired some older objects but also many contemporary ones, showing the newly developing styles. He recorded meticulously where he acquired the objects, in some cases even from whom and/or information such as an object's specific name. This presentation will explore the meaning and relevance of these objects and their recorded context for Ènata today.

11:00 *Matatiki – processes of recognition and transmission of the Ènata/Ènana graphic repertoire (report)*

Marine Vallée

Te Fare Iamanaha - Musée de Tahiti et des Îles / EASTCO EA 4241 - University of French Polynesia

In 2020, *matatiki* – the Marquesan graphic repertoire was inscribed on the French national list of Intangible Heritage. This initiative, led by the association Patutiki and supported by a vast amount of Ènata/Ènana community members appeared as a process associated with the large diffusion, in several of the valleys of the archipelago, of a documentary dedicated to the practice of *patutiki*. This presentation intends to highlight the steps accomplished - and those awaited - towards this formal recognition, as well as the aims and stakes carried out by this project in relation to notions of cultural identity, tradition and knowledge transmission.

11:30 *Ha‘a tiki: the art of sculpture between survival and revival in the Marquesas Islands*

Giacomo Nerici

University of Turin

M This paper – based on over a year of research in Henua ‘Enana/Fenua ‘Enata (Marquesas Islands) – explores the trajectories of (dis)continuity in sculpture from the decades of loss to the cultural awakening that exploded during the 1980s. The extremely elaborate Marquesan sculpture at the centre of the trade of fine copies towards the end of the 19th century underwent an impoverishment of forms and decorations in the first half of the 20th century. In these decades, long described with images of “loss” and “oblivion”, sculpture remained one of the artistic expressions tolerated by the colonial authorities because it was a source of small revenues and domestic objects for the Islanders. This allowed the transfer of motifs, objects and know-how, transforming them from a source of subsistence to intangible heritage within the cultural revival and the Matava‘a o Te Henua ‘Enana (Marquesas Arts Festival). By considering memories and the practice of *tuhuka/tuhuna ha‘a tiki* (master sculptors), this contribution aims to discuss the historical steps that made possible the semantic shift in which sculpture became a constitutive feature of the ‘Enana identity and its artistic (re)awakening.

12:00 *The Resilience of Marquesan ūu: A case study in the entanglement of continuity and change*

Carol Ivory

Washington State University

M Over the past 15 years, Marquesan *ùu* have remained an important cultural signifier, though both what they signified and their appearance, have changed through time. This paper will explore continuity and change in the role, meaning and stylistic characteristics of *ùu* in four time periods. It will first consider the dearth of information about its stylistic development between 1774 when the clubs were first documented, and 180 when the « classic » style is fully developed. It will then discuss the first half of the 19th century when *ùu* were both a weapon and prestige object for warriors and chiefs. Replaced as weapons by muskets in the 1810s, they remained status markers until mid-century, when a century of culture loss and population decline began. In the late 19th century, significantly changed in style, they re-emerged as an object for sale in the new small market economy and were often featured as emblems of cultural identity in studio portraits of Marquesan men. Since the late 20th century, *ùu* are again prominent, in dance performances, especially during the Matavaa, the Marquesan Festivals of Arts, and as objects made mainly on commission. This portion will reflect interviews with contemporary artists and cultural leaders.

Session 9: Imagining object and collection futures – Paviljoen, 14:00-15:30

Moderator: Oliver Lueb

14:00 *Creating and Curating Alternative Art Histories: A Digital Collaboration and Visual Repatriation Project at the American Museum of Asmat Art*

Gretchen Burau

American Museum of Asmat Art @ University of St. Thomas

Amy Nygaard

University of St. Thomas

I This paper proposes an alternative art history rooted in cross-cultural collaboration, digital access, and Indigenous self-representation. It centres the American Museum of Asmat Art (AMAA@UST), a university museum with a significant collection of Asmat art from southwestern New Guinea. Originally formed through Catholic missionary networks, the collection’s meaning is being reshaped through digital humanities, ethical museum practice, and a partnership with the Asmat Museum of Culture and Progress (AMCP) and the Asmat Cultural Archives and Research Institution in Agats. By foregrounding visual repatriation—returning digitised materials to source communities—this initiative imagines art history not as a static narrative of Western acquisition, but as a dynamic site of shared stewardship, student learning, and Indigenous agency. The project offers a potential model for how regional museums can work across institutional and geographic boundaries to decentre colonial legacies, amplify Papuan voices and material culture, while also integrating experiential pedagogy into curatorial practice. We view our project as a possible answer to how we can “imagine and conceptualise new and alternative art histories.”

14:30 *Imagining futures for a museum collection from colonial contexts: the Hamburg South Sea Expedition 1908-1910*

Jasmin Günther

Museum am Rothenbaum (MARKK), Hamburg

Jeanette Kokott

Museum am Rothenbaum (MARKK), Hamburg

- I Since 2017, the former Museum of Ethnology in Hamburg has been undergoing a phase of redirection. Now known as Museum am Rothenbaum, or MARKK, its team is working towards a temporary closure and subsequent multi-year renovation of the building. The reopening will present reconceptualised permanent displays, which dedicate one chapter to the Hamburg South Sea Expedition (1908–1910).

Tightly interwoven with the museum's history, the expedition spent two years in regions of Oceania considered German territories at the time. Thus, an extensive collection was created that comprises thousands of objects as well as Human Remains, photographs, paintings, and data. This complex legacy connects to various communities from Papua New Guinea, Palau, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Marshall Islands, and Nauru today. With the discussion of the expedition, the museum addresses its own problematic role in the realisation of an undertaking whose approach and implementation were shaped by colonial structures.

This paper seeks to outline different approaches towards the collection across time, drawing on materials from the past as well as findings from present (provenance) research and collaborations. The challenge is to imagine a future, or futures, for this diverse collection that is connected to many people, places, and contexts.

15:00 *Reimagining Provenance Research: Following "Primitive Art" from New Guinea to US Department Stores*

Robert J. Foster

University of Rochester and Western Sydney University

- I This paper responds to recent calls in art history and museum studies to broaden the concept of provenance (e.g., Higonett 2012; Jones and Forbes 2025). It outlines three phases of provenance research, the last of which moves in the direction of anthropological accounts of "the social life of things" (Appadurai 1986). It identifies the challenges and opportunities of this development through a case study of the sale of "primitive art from New Guinea" in US department stores during the 1960s. These exhibition sales, organized by St. Louis art collector Morton D. May and facilitated by prominent New York dealer Julius Carlebach, offered middle-class American shoppers an opportunity to acquire original objects of art at affordable prices. These sales also stimulated the growth of a post-WW2 art market in New Guinea, especially in economically marginal areas. The case study focuses on the social life of one carving that travelled from the Sepik region to its current resting place at the Buffalo Museum of Science.

What insights into the history and category of "primitive art" does such a "follow-the-thing" exercise yield? What do these insights suggest provenance research might do beyond establishing an object's ownership, authenticity and authorship?

Session 10: Memory – Grote Zaal, 16:30-17:30

Moderator: Wonu Veys

16:30 *Matakite: A Prophecy, This is*

Travis Chai Andrade

Sainsbury Research Unit, University of East Anglia

Lyall Hakaraia

Interisland Collective

M Matakite means prophecy. On May 15, Matakite was an Acti.VĀ.tion developed to showcase Pasifika sensibilities within and against wider fashion worlds. Whereas European fashion often demands bodies fit fabrics, Matakite, as a collection, honours our Pasifika bodies such that fabric fits our corporeal forms. These multihyphenate pieces allow creative and individualized expressions that can match many occasions. The songs and presence of Pasifika models and designers brought warmth to the taonga housed in the British Museum as an act of offering.

Matakite disrupts imperial designs and desires, placing artists, designers, and models in genealogies of global resonances, diplomacy, and liberation. As a prophecy, Matakite allows us to face our ancestors, guided by their stories, moving to the future before us. In this paper, we reflect on the experiences of creating and being in Matakite and how we will nourish these seeds in the future. We consider how the intentional practices that define Matakite showcase the richness of Pasifika genealogies and how the people of Oceania continue to innovate and adapt with new styles, aesthetics, and materials.

17:00 *The skin as a repository of memory and knowledge. Waima's female tattooing and social reproduction*

Anahí Luna

Sainsbury Research Unit, University of East Anglia

M Until the 1970s, Waima women from the Central Province of Papua New Guinea underwent the traditional process of marking their bodies by covering them with permanent images. This practice, inserted at the heart of social reproduction, allowed them to achieve a status and a visibility that nowadays is not pursued anymore. What type of knowledge did Waima's tattooing express in the past? Why was it compulsory just for women, and why did it stop? What can we learn about the patterns and their relation to other traditional arts? In this presentation, I will talk about my recent findings on this undocumented practice in Melanesia. I will

also discuss its relation to the gendered division of labour and the design patterns as perceptual tools inscribed in Waima's female bodies.

Friday 26 June 2026 at a Glance

Friday 26 June 2026	
09:00	Introduction to the day
09:10	Keynote lecture
09:30	Carrying the Line: Memory, Land, and Women's Cultural Practices in Bougainville - <i>Sana Balaj</i>
10:00	tea/coffee break
Session 11 - Papua Trajectories and Rituals	
10:30	Memories, circulations and places: Trajectories of the Asmat art collection held in the Musée L (Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium) - <i>Marion Bertin</i> (M)
11:00	Female and Male Initiation Rituals among the Ayfat of the Bird's Head, West Papua (Report) - <i>Wanda Avé</i> (15 min) (P)
11:15	
11:30	
12:00	
12:30	Lunch
13:00	
13:30	
14:00	AGM
14:30	
15:00	'A FANO RA! - <i>Himatea Colombani, Moeava Meder with Lyall Hakaraia</i> (45 min) (M)
15:45	The Vanishing Māori show presents - a joint reflection - <i>George Nuku</i> (45 min) (M)
16:30	
17:15	Closing: Meet-up in Papoeahuis: A Home for Stories, History and Heritage - <i>Fadjar Schouten-Korwa, Inaria Kaisepo</i> (45 min)

Themes: (M) Memory - (P) Place-making - (I) Imagination

Parallel Sessions – Friday 26 June 2026

Session 11: Papua Trajectories and Rituals – Grote Zaal, 10:30-12:00

Moderator: Aoife O'Brien

11:00 *Memories, circulations and places: trajectories of the Asmat art collection held in the Musée L (Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium)*

Marion Bertin

UC Louvain, Institut des Sciences Politiques Louvain-Europe, Fonds national de Recherche Scientifique (FNRS)

M In 2013, Robert Steichen, a former medical doctor and Université Catholique de Louvain scholar, gave his collection to the Musée L, the university museum in Louvain-la-Neuve. The collection comprises objects from the five continents, with a focus on medicinal substances and remedies. Some of the items were acquired by Robert Steichen during fieldworks, particularly in Asia. In 2025, I conducted preliminary research into the Pacific collection preserved by the Musée L, which is still not well documented. The 14th Pacific Arts Association Symposium will be a great opportunity to provide an initial overview of this collection, and particularly of the Steichen collection. My presentation will focus on a group of four Asmat artefacts that Steichen acquired in Surabaya (East Java, Indonesia) from a former Dutch colonial administrator in 1974. Drawing on material studies of the objects, museum archives, documents still held by Robert Steichen and interviews with the collector, this presentation will explore the provenance of the four objects. I will explore how they circulated from the Asmat territories to the Musée L and ask: what are their provenances? How did they circulate, and why? What different scales of memory are embedded in this group of objects: Asmat memories, global colonial memories and Steichen memories? Finally, how can these objects be displayed to convey their history to audiences in Louvain-la-Neuve?

11:30 *Female and Male Initiation Rituals Among the Ayfat of the Bird's Head, West Papua* - report

Wanda Avé

Independent Researcher

P This report is about the ethnobotanical and anthropological research I carried out in Central Bird's Head, West Papua in 1995-1996. My ethnobotanical knowledge contributes to a comprehensive understanding of the meaning of plants in the culture of the Ayfat, and their rituals in particular. Female initiation rituals are under-represented in anthropological literature. In the village of Ayawasi, female and male initiation rituals, male power, and female fertility and sexuality are all significant for the successful reproduction of society (Avé, 2024). Both rituals are performed in three phases, the separation, transition and incorporation phase, which may take weeks or even months. First, the novices are segregated from their social environment, in particular the blood of their mothers. The transition

phase comprises the training of relevant practices and knowledge transfer of medicines and sacred cloths (*kain timur*). These are essential to realize the transformation of the novices into adult members of their community. Both female and male novices are thus educated in the customs and rules, instructed about appropriate social behaviour and skills, inspired with courage, diligence, and responsibility. Finally, during the incorporation phase they are reborn into the village community in a new social role.

This report addresses the understudied topic of female initiation, besides male initiation rituals. It provides the necessary context for one of the objects shown at the Wereldmuseum's Papua exhibition

Session 12: Interpretations – Paviljoen, 10:30-12:00

Moderator:

11:00 **Oceanic Art Society: Thirty Years of Place-Making in Australia**

Noëlle Rathmell-Stiels

Oceanic Art Society

Bill Rathmell

Sydney University, Oceanic Art Society

P Since its first lecture in Sydney in 1995 the Oceanic Art Society (OAS) has furthered “the appreciation and understanding of Oceanic Art” amongst its Australian and worldwide membership of scholars (curators, anthropologists, art historians), collectors, dealers, administrators, travellers and others. The *Journal of the Oceanic Art Society* has increased in quality and scope to embrace all forms of Island East Asian, Australian and Pacific culture, ancient and modern. The OAS’ email newsletter and social media provide information on worldwide events about First Nations art from the region. The OAS’ ninth Forum in 2019, comprising scholarly and artistic lectures and museum/gallery visits, was a turning point, reflecting, “the OAS’ reverence for the contributions made by all our forebears as well as examining the (sometimes vexed) cultural interface”. All Forums now feature First Nations speakers, including this year’s, on art and culture of the Torres Strait.

Member and contributor Michael Mel has referred to the "Ples Name!" - “place in the middle” - a physical space at the centre of Papuan communities, where people come to debate, discuss, celebrate, mourn and tell stories from the past*. Museums, which started as collections of curiosities, are today dealing with histories and cultures and engaging with First Nations communities, moral ownership and repatriation issues. Many of the major collecting institutions in Australia have reduced Pacific curatorial resources and access to their large collections, starving Australia of opportunities for Oceanic art, history and cultural scholarship. The OAS aims to provide a "Ples Name!" - discussing and celebrating material culture in the storytelling of the Pacific region by young and old, indigenous and international.

*The Contemporary Pacific (Vol. 32:1, 48-71, 2020)

11:30 *Sail the Midnight Sun: Rediscovered Film of a Landmark Pacific Theater Production*

Steven Huismans

Independent researcher

Henriette Brouwers

Los Angeles Poverty Department

- M** This presentation introduces the recently rediscovered and restored 1981 documentary film made by Robert Klinkert, initiated by Ulli Beier, about *Sail the Midnight Sun*—a groundbreaking theatre production by the Raun Raun Theatre in Papua New Guinea. Based on the eponymous poem by celebrated Pacific writer John Kasaipwalova—recognized in the 2024 publication *The Rise of Pacific Literature* (Long & Hayward) as one of the Pacific's most important literary figures—the production is considered Raun Raun Theatre's most significant work. The fourteen carvings used as decor for the performance are now held by the National Gallery of Victoria. The production toured internationally (Papua New Guinea, Hong Kong, Australia, Edinburgh International Fringe Festival). Kasaipwalova, who had stopped writing, composed the poem after a prison visit from Dutch artist Adriaan Brouwers, whose own sculptural response—based on his encounters in the Trobriand Islands—was completed around the time of the poem's presentation and the play's premiere in 1980. The works are closely interwoven.
- The film, long thought lost, was found in February 2025 in the attic of the late filmmaker Klinkert and will be restored by Eye Filmmuseum. The presentation will include slides of carvings of Sopi mastercarver Yobwita from the Trobriands and sculptures of Brouwers.
- The film has a duration of 57 minutes and is being prioritized for digitization by Eye Filmmuseum specifically for the symposium. Instead of a brief report as an introduction, we could also prepare a more extensive document with photographs. Additionally, one or two of Brouwers' sculptures that relate to the poem and the play could be exhibited alongside the symposium.

Presenters' Biographies

A

Julie Adams, PhD - British Museum (BM)

Julie Adams is the Interim Keeper of Africa, Oceania and the America's at the British Museum.

Travis Chai Andrade (Kanaka 'Ōiwi), MA student – Sainsbury Research Unit

Travis Chai Andrade (Kanaka 'Ōiwi) is a 2025 Marshall scholar studying the Arts of Africa, Oceania, and the Americas at the Sainsbury Research Unit in Norwich. Lyall curated Matakite, and Travis assisted with writing and research.

Wanda Avé - independent researcher

In the 1990s Wanda Avé was affiliated to the Leiden Herbarium conducted by dr. Max van Balgooy. She was selected to become a member of the interdisciplinary Irian Jaya research programme (1993-2000) of Leiden University, Netherlands. Funding was provided by the Netherlands Foundation for the Advancement of Tropical Research (NWO-WOTRO).

Wanda Avé was trained as a tropical botanist at Leiden University. Unfortunately, due to serious health problems she was unable to finish her PhD. Recently, she has taken up her academic work, publishing her field data.

B

Sana Balai, curator, writer and researcher - University of Queensland Arts Museum

Sana Balai is a Bougainville-born curator, writer, and researcher renowned for her transformative work with Pacific, Aboriginal, and Torres Strait Islander collections. A respected elder and champion of inclusivity, she has shaped ethical curatorial practice and intercultural dialogue across Australia and the Pacific.

Melodie Bergquist-Turori, doctoral candidate - NAIITS: An Indigenous Learning Community

Melodie Bergquist-Turori is an artist, educator, and community scholar descended from Aitutaki and Pukapuka (Cook Islands), Sweden, and Germany. She is a PhD student at NAIITS: An Indigenous Learning Community, holds a Master of Arts (Theology) in Indigenous Community Development from NAIITS, and is associate faculty at Saddleback College.

Marion Bertin, PhD - UC Louvain, Institut des Sciences Politiques Louvain-Europe (ISPOLE), Fonds national de Recherche Scientifique (FNRS)

Marion Bertin holds degrees in art history, museology and anthropology. She has been working on the circulation of Pacific collections, especially Kanak collections from New Caledonia. She is now a Postdoctoral Fellow at the UC Louvain in Belgium and works on negotiations about human remains from Congo preserved in Belgium. She is also the co-vice-chair of the International Committee for Museology (ICOFOM) and a writer and treasurer for CASOAR.

Henriëtte Brouwers, Associate Director, Los Angeles Poverty Department

Born in The Netherlands, Brouwers directs, performs, and produces LAPD projects, a multi-disciplinary arts organization/performance group made up of homeless people in Los Angeles that presents artworks and events that instantiate the existence of the Skid Row community—affirming its assets, advocating for its rights and supporting its aspirations.

Deidre Brown (Ngāpuhi and Ngāti Kahu tribes), PhD - University of Auckland Waipapa Taumata Rau

Professor Deidre Brown is a leading Māori art historian and architectural scholar whose research explores Māori and Pacific art, architecture, and cultural heritage. Her work highlights Indigenous design, the transmission of cultural memory through buildings and objects, and the intersections of tradition, innovation, and identity in the built environment. Brown's scholarship and curatorial projects have significantly shaped understandings of Pacific and Māori heritage, both in Aotearoa New Zealand and internationally.

Gretchen Burau, MFA - Director of the American Museum of Asmat Art, University of St. Thomas

Gretchen Burau holds an MFA in Visual Studies and an MA in Art History. She directs the American Museum of Asmat Art and co-directs the Digital Humanities Initiative at the University of St. Thomas, where she also teaches Pacific Art. Her research explores Asmat art, digital humanities, and museum practices.

C

Margaret Cassidy, doctoral candidate - University of Tasmania (UTAS), Australia, Sessional Academic, University of Sydney - Editor, Journal of Oceanic Art Society
Margaret Cassidy is a PhD candidate at the University of Tasmania, Australia, where her research focuses on photojournalism and the visual representation of Pacific Islanders in the Australian news media. She teaches journalism and media at the University of Sydney.

Jacqueline Charles-Rault, PhD - Le Havre University, France

Jacqueline Charles-Rault is a lecturer at Le Havre University in France. As a Fine Art graduate, she has always been passionate about the arts. Her PhD focused on the art practices of four contemporary Māori women artists. As well as teaching, she has curated a number of contemporary Pacific art exhibitions in Normandy.

Hinatea Colombani, artist – 'Arioi Cultural Center, Papara, Tahiti, French Polynesia Aute & Tapa Revival projects

Together with Moeava Meder, Hinatea Colombani forms a Tahitian artists duo and couple reviving the ancestral art of tapa through ecological cultivation, natural dyes, and ritual performance. Their work bridges heritage and contemporary creation, activating barkcloth as a vessel of memory, identity, and imagined futures, rooted in Polynesian cosmology and environmental resilience.

Roberta Colombo Dougoud, PhD - Musée d'éthnographie de Genève MEG, Switzerland

Roberta Colombo Dougoud has been the curator in charge of the Oceania Department at the Museum of Ethnography in Geneva (MEG) since 1999. She has curated several exhibitions on Kanak art and Indigenous Australia, and she leads the MEG's project 'Connecting Collections and Source Communities'.

D

Brian Diettrich, PhD - Associate Professor in Ethnomusicology, Victoria University of Wellington Te Herenga Waka

Brian Diettrich is an internationally recognized ethnomusicologist whose research focuses on the music and dance traditions of Micronesia. His work explores how performing arts serve as vital expressions of cultural heritage, examining their roles in transmitting knowledge, fostering community, and navigating the impacts of colonialism and modernity. Diettrich advocates for holistic and participatory approaches to safeguarding Micronesian music and dance, emphasizing their importance in cultural resilience and identity.

Alice Dimastrogiovanni, Trainee at Research Center for Material Culture

Alice studied Art Education and Communication as a bachelor's degree at Accademia di Belle Arti di Brera in Milan and a Master's in Applied Museum and Heritage Studies at the Reiwardt Academy in Amsterdam. Beyond her academic background, her thought and practice are informed by her activism and participation in collectives including Liber Tutt, a queer feminist association she co-founded in the suburbs of Milan in 2018. Alice is currently interested in finding ways to generate energy for social change through embodied practices such as performance art, somatics, and community kitchens.

Kirsty Dunn, PhD - Aotahi: School of Māori and Indigenous Studies, University of Canterbury (UC), New Zealand

Kirsty Dunn (Te Aupōuri, Te Rarawa, Ngāpuhi) is a Lecturer in Aotahi School of Māori and Indigenous Studies at the University of Canterbury, specialising in Māori literature and art history. She is co-curator of Whāia Te Taniwha - an exhibition of Māori art at Christchurch Art Gallery, New Zealand.

Dagmar Vaikalafi Dyck, doctoral candidate - University of Auckland, (UoA) Aotearoa, New Zealand

Dagmar Vaikalafi Dyck is a visual artist, academic, and Assistant Pro Vice-Chancellor Pacific at Auckland University of Technology (AUT). With a 30-year career in the arts, she is also a doctoral candidate at the University of Auckland. Her research and practice bridge Indigenous knowledge, museum collections, Pacific equity, and cultural leadership.

F

Robert J. Foster, PhD - University of Rochester (UR) and Western Sydney University (WSU)

Robert J. Foster is Professor of Anthropology and Visual and Cultural Studies, and Richard L. Turner Professor of Humanities at the University of Rochester (US). His books include 'Art, Artifact, Commodity: Perspectives on the P.G.T.' Black Collection (2017, co-edited with Kathryn H. Leacock).

Jean-Emmanuel Frantz - Independent, intermittent, and unruly researcher

Jean-Emmanuel Frantz is a former student of the National Museum of Natural History (MNHN) in Paris, specialising in object anthropology under the supervision of Christian Coiffier. He conducted research on featherwork in Europe and Oceania. In parallel, he took part in several Pacific Arts Festivals (2000, 2004, 2008, 2012, 2016, 2024).

G

Carolina Gallarini, PhD - University of East Anglia (UEA), Norwich - Ipswich Museum, Ipswich

Carolina Gallarini is a researcher and lecturer in anthropology whose work centres on Pacific art, identity, and museum practices. Her PhD at the UEA explored Kanak art and cultural representation. She is now researching Pacific collections at the Ipswich Museum, focusing on material analysis, object documentation, and collection histories.

Anne E. Guernsey Allen, PhD - Indiana University Southeast (IU Southeast)

Anne received her Masters in Art History at San Diego State University (SDSU) (Samoan and Tongan tapa) and a PhD from Columbia University (CU) (village architecture in Samoa). She has written on Samoan architecture, textiles, and performance. Her most recent publications consider the concept of vā as expressed in village layout and individual structures and in the Samoan creation myth. Her current research concerns the production and use of various traditional mats in Samoa today.

Jasmin Günther, PhD - Museum am Rothenbaum (MARKK), Hamburg

Jasmin Günther is a graduate of Göttingen University (UGOE) (Germany), Aarhus University (AU) (Denmark) and James Cook University (JCU) (Australia). Since 2024, she coordinates a provenance research project on the Hamburg South Sea Expedition at the MARKK in Hamburg.

H

Lyll Hakaraia, Takatapui Rangitira - Interisland Collective

Lyll Hakaraia, Takatapui Rangitira / queer community organiser, co-founded VFD in London and Interisland Collective in 2018, a Pasifika arts and activist collective working with people across Moana Nui A Kiwa. Lyll curated Matakite, and Travis assisted with writing and research. Lyll is a Wairua community artist.

Louise Hamby, PhD - Australian National University (ANU)

Louise Hamby is a cultural heritage researcher with a focus on fibre from Arnhem Land and museum collections. She has produced several exhibitions and publications including, 'Containers of Power: Women with Clever Hands' and the seminal exhibition and catalogue 'Art on a String'. She was on the advisory committee for 'National First Nations Weaving Symposium'.

Enzo Hamel, PhD candidate - Sainsbury Research Unit (SRU) for the Arts of Africa, Oceania and the Americas, University of East Anglia (UEA)

Enzo Hamel is a CHASE-Stuart Hall Foundation-funded PhD student in Anthropology at the SRU, UEA. His doctoral research offers a collaborative analysis of Gregory Bateson's

archives. He undertook archival research in Cambridge (UK) and Washington D.C., and ethnographic research in the Iatmul region, in the East Sepik Province of Papua New Guinea.

Renee Grace Hau, PhD candidate - University of Auckland (UoA)

A descendant from the New Zealand Māori tribes Ngāti Tūwharetoa and Ngāti Whātua.

She is a PhD student with the University of Auckland's Art History Faculty.

Renee Grace Hau also works as an Education and Māori Language Lecturer and a singer songwriter who has a passion for Māori performing arts.

Christina Hellmich, PhD – Fine Arts Museums, San Francisco

Christina Hellmich has served as curator in charge of the arts of Africa, Oceania, and the Americas at the Fine Arts Museums since 2011 spearheading a broad range of international and regional exhibition, publication, permanent collection and artist-based projects.

Anita Herle, PhD - Senior Research Fellow & Emeritus Professor, Museum of Archaeology & Anthropology (MAA), University of Cambridge.

Anita Herle is Senior Research Fellow & Emeritus Professor at the Museum of Archaeology & Anthropology, Cambridge. Until 2023 she was Senior Curator for Pacific and Photographic Collections. She has been involved in numerous collaborative research and exhibition projects at MAA and in Torres Strait, Fiji, Vanuatu and Canada.

Anna-Karina Hermkens, PhD - Macquarie University Sydney (MQ), Australia

Anna-Karina Hermkens is a senior lecturer and researcher at Macquarie University, Sydney. Her PhD (2005) 'Engendering Objects: The Dynamics of Barkcloth and Identity among the Maisin in Papua New Guinea' (published with Sidestone in 2013), explored the interplay between gender, identity and material culture, in particular tapa, from a historical and anthropological perspective.

Steven Hooper, PhD – Professor and Director, Sainsbury Research Unit for the Arts of Africa, Oceania & the Americas (SRU), University of East Anglia (UEA), UK

Professor Hooper specialises in the arts of the Pacific region and North America. His main interests cover the relationship between Polynesian material culture, chiefship, valuable and exchange, ethnohistory, cultural property, ethnographical museums, the art market, publishing, book production and design. He completed his doctorate at the University of Cambridge, having conducted fieldwork in Fiji.

Steven Huismans, independent researcher

Steven Huismans has a background in law, cultural policy, and media. He worked closely with artist Adriaan Brouwers between 1981 and 1993. In 2024, Huismans discovered the connection between Brouwers' sculptures and the poem, theatre production, and film *Sail the Midnight Sun*, and helped make the film available again.

I

Carol Ivory, PhD - Professor Emerita of Art History, Washington State University (WSU)

Carol Ivory's research focuses on the art, history, and culture of the Marquesas Islands. She curated 'Matahoata: Art et Société aux Iles Marquises' at the Musée du quai Branly - Jacques Chirac (2016) and was President of PAA 2003-2007. Officially retired, she continues to consult on exhibitions and catalogues, present papers and mentor scholars.

J

Karen Jacobs, PhD – Professor, Sainsbury Research Unit (SRU), University of East Anglia (UEA)

Karen Jacobs is Professor of Art and Museum Anthropology, Sainsbury Research Unit, University of East Anglia. Conducted in collaboration with museums, Indigenous communities and artists, her research and curatorial work focus on the arts from Oceania and specifically on museum anthropology, ocean culture, missionary heritage, body adornments and contemporary art.

Nancy Jouwe, PhD student - Vrije Universiteit (VU) Amsterdam

Nancy Jouwe is part of the Dutch Papuan community, a cultural historian and freelance researcher, writer and curator. She is interested in the past and present of colonial history from an intersectional perspective. She functions as an external PhD student at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam and is a crown member of the Council for Culture.

Nico Jouwe, MA - freelance journalist, moderator and thesis advisor at Hogeschool Rotterdam

Nico Jouwe was born in Dutch New Guinea and raised in The Netherlands. He has a degree in Theoretical Psychology from Leiden University, operates as a freelance journalist and recently worked on the travelling exhibition 'What's in a Name', about the use of traditional names by Papuans living in the Netherlands.

K

Inaria Kaisiepo, Molen de Ster (Utrecht), Foundation of Cooperating Organisations for West Papua (SOWP)

Inaria Kaisiepo is an entrepreneur with Papuan roots, focused on connection and results. She currently runs the historic Windmill "*Molen de Ster*" in Utrecht. "*Molen de Ster*" is a historic and industrial venue in the heart of Utrecht. As well as being a city café and a venue for weddings, meetings and events, Molen de Ster serves as a cultural hub offering a varied programme. Since the 1990s, Inaria has been involved with various organisations focusing on indigenous peoples. As well as being secretary of SOWP, Inaria is a board member of the Nia Foundation, which aims to raise the profile of marginalised groups in society through, among other things, storytelling, and is a volunteer at Stichting de Sterremolen.

Ronny Kareni, West Papuan-born musician, cultural organiser, media fixer, and advocate, JUBI Media

Ronny Kareni is a West Papuan-born musician, cultural organiser, media fixer, and advocate whose work bridges music, diplomacy, and Indigenous resistance across West Papua, Australia, Southeast Asia and the Pacific. Shaped by collaborations with Wantok Musik SingSing, Tabura, Airileke, Sorong Samarai, and the Rize of the Morning Star

movement, his practice is grounded in the understanding that the *tifa* drum is both instrument and teacher — a vessel of collective memory, cultural revival and political resistance. As a media fixer and distributor for JUBI Media, an independent media outlet in West Papua, documentary films, Kareni supports West Papuan storytelling through a Papuan lens to reach global audiences. He is also the co-convenor of the West Papua Project at the University of Wollongong, a think tank for Indigenous knowledge, political education, and community-led research.

Te Rongo Kirkwood, artist - NZ Maori, Tribal Affiliations: Te Wai o hua, Ngai tai ki tamaki, Kawerau a Maki

Te Rongo Kirkwood (Tamaki Makaurau, Aotearoa New Zealand) is a contemporary artist working with glass, moving image, and performance. Recipient of the Corning Museum of Glass, NY, 38th Rakow Commission 2024, her practice combines Māori cosmology with material innovation to explore whakapapa, memory, ritual, and transformation.

Katy Klaasmeyer, doctoral candidate - University of New South Wales (UNSW)

Katy Klaasmeyer is a doctoral candidate (non-Pacific colonialist art historian) at UNSW - Sydney, Australia. Prior to this she spent 11 years as an art history Lecturer at California State University, Long Beach (CSULB) and other campuses in the Los Angeles area. Her most recent research was published in the book 'Women of German Expressionism' (University of Michigan Press) in 2023.

Jeanette Kokott, PhD - Museum am Rothenbaum (MARKK), Hamburg

Jeanette Kokott is curator of the Oceania collections at the MARKK in Hamburg, Germany. Since 2004, she has published on the collections and co-curated projects and exhibitions thematically related to the Indo-Pacific.

Terje Koloamatangi, artist, cultural tattoo practitioner, sculptor and researcher

Terje Koloamatangi is a Taranaki-based Tongan and Norwegian Sāmi artist, cultural tattoo practitioner, sculptor and researcher. His interdisciplinary practice centres on the revitalisation of *tātatau* (traditional Tongan tattooing), drawing on ancestral tools, *kupesī* (pattern systems), and Indigenous knowledges to explore embodiment, memory, and the sacred. Through my research and practice, I engage the relational space between past and present, diaspora and homeland.

Ursula Konrad, independent scholar

Ursula Konrad is a long-term visitor to the Asmat region of West Papua, and has curated several major exhibitions of Asmat art both in Papua and in Europe and for many years had permanent galleries in Germany. She has also provided art from the region to several international museums.

L

Stéphanie Leclerc-Caffarel, curator of Pacific collections - Musée du Quai Branly – Jacques Chirac

Stéphanie Leclerc-Caffarel is curator of Pacific collections at the Musée du Quai Branly – Jacques Chirac. She is also a research collaborator in the Department of Anthropology at the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of Natural History and a research

associate at the Fiji Museum. A graduate of the École du Louvre in Paris, she earned her Ph.D. from the University of East Anglia in 2014. Her current research focuses on the role of historical artifacts in contemporary Oceania, with special emphasis on restitution, revitalization of art practices, and co-creation of knowledge.

Erna Lilje, PhD – Wereldmuseum, the Netherlands

Erna Lilje, Curator Indigenous knowledge and material culture at the Wereldmuseum. Erna's work focuses on south coast New Guinea material culture. She pursues the idea that museum collections can tell us much more about the people who made and used the objects within them if we bring to bear a cross-disciplinary approach that encompasses present-day makers and cultural experts with a close study of the artefacts themselves. More recently, Erna has begun to think about the role and 'use' of contemporary artists in ethnological museums.

Oliver Lueb, PhD - Rautenstrauch-Joest Museum, Cultures of the World, Cologne, Germany (RJM)

Oliver Lueb is Curator of the Oceanic Collections at RJM with a regional focus on Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands.

Fran Lujan, Museum Director and Curator, Pacific Island Ethnic Art Museum

Fran Lujan is the Museum Director and Curator of the Pacific Island Ethnic Art Museum (PIEAM) located on unceded Tongva land also known as Long Beach, California. As an Indigenous CHamoru, her practice of care is rooted in re-Indigenisation through illuminating the multiplicities of diasporic Pacific Islander artists and cultural practitioners.

Anahí Luna, doctoral candidate - Sainsbury Research Unit, University of East Anglia

Anahí Luna, anthropologist and art historian, is currently a PhD Candidate at the Sainsbury Research Unit (SRU - UEA). Her research looks at Waima Female tattooing (hara hara) as a perceptual tool and a system of knowledge. She has done curatorial work in Mexico and the United Kingdom and published chapters on Miguel Covarrubias and the indigenous arts of Ancient Mexico and the Pacific.

Nancy Lutkehaus, PhD - Department of Anthropology, University of Southern California (USC)

Nancy Lutkehaus is an anthropologist who works in Oceania on issues of environmental displacement, politics, and gender. A visual anthropologist, her interests include museums, representation, art, film and photography. She is currently working on a book titled 'The Met Goes Primitive: Postwar America, the Politics of Culture and the Rockefeller Wing of the Metropolitan Museum of Art'.

M

Wim Manuhutu, lecturer political history, PhD student - Vrije Universiteit (VU)

Amsterdam

Wim Manuhutu is a historian and a museum professional with a long experience in and engagement with heritage and art practices in community contexts, particularly in the

Malukan community. His research interests include colonial and postcolonial history, museum studies, identity, transnational connections and representation.

Brian Martin, PhD - Monash University, Australia

Professor Brian Martin is a Bundjalung, Gamilaraay and Muruwari man. He is professor and director of the Wominjeka Djeembana Indigenous Research Lab in the Faculty of Art, Design and Architecture at Monash University. He has been an artist for over thirty years and has exhibited internationally.

Moeava Meder, artist – 'Arioi Cultural Center, Papara, Tahiti, French Polynesia Aute & Tapa Revival projects

Together with Hinatea Colombani, Moeava Meder forms a Tahitian artists duo and couple reviving the ancestral art of tapa through ecological cultivation, natural dyes, and ritual performance. Their work bridges heritage and contemporary creation, activating barkcloth as a vessel of memory, identity, and imagined futures, rooted in Polynesian cosmology and environmental resilience.

Magali Mélandri, Senior Curator - Musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac, Paris

Magali Mélandri is a Senior Curator and Head of the Oceania and Insular Southeast Asia Unit at the Musée du quai Branly – Jacques Chirac in Paris. She teaches the history and anthropology of Oceanic arts at the École du Louvre. Her 2024–2027 research projects focus on bark paintings from Arnhem Land and on the revitalization of weaving techniques in French Polynesia. She is co-curator, together with Stéphanie Xatart, of the exhibition *Plumes from Paradise: Journeys of an Extraordinary Bird from New Guinea* (11 May-8 November 2026).

Imelda Miller - Queensland Museum Kurilpa, Brisbane, Australia (QM)

Imelda Miller is the Curator First Nations Cultures at QM. She works with material culture and archival collections with a research focus primarily on Australian South Sea Islander identity.

Wayne Modest, PhD - Director of Content, Wereldmuseum – Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

Wayne Modest is Director of Content of Wereldmuseum. He is also professor of Material Culture and Critical Heritage Studies at the Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam. A cultural studies scholar by training, Modest works at the intersection of material culture, memory and heritage studies, with a strong focus on colonialism and its afterlives in Europe and the Caribbean.

Modest

Nicolas Moret, graduate - independent researcher

Nicolas Moret trained in the conservation of archaeological and ethnographic objects at La Haute Ecole Arc Conservation-restauration (HE-Arc CR) in Neuchâtel and obtained a university diploma in provenance research at the University of Paris Nanterre. He worked at the Cantonal Museum of Archaeology and History (MCAH) in Lausanne before joining the Cantonal Archaeology Service of the Canton of Valais (OCA) and the Opale Foundation.

Janette Murrungun, graduate - Numbulwar Numburindi Arts

Janette Murrungun graduated from the ANKA Arts Worker extension Program (AWEP) in 2024. Her work has been featured in 'Melbourne Design Week', and most recently at 'Tarnanthi 2025'. She presented her work and community at the National Gallery of Australia (NGA) and University of Melbourne (UniMelb) in 2024. She is from Rocky Point near Numbulwar.

N

Giacomo Nerici, PhD - University of Turin (UNITO)

Giacomo Nerici is a postdoctoral researcher / adjunct lecturer and the author (with Colajanni A. and Giancristofaro L.) of 'L'antropologia collaborativa. Una nuova visione del rapporto tra ricercatori e gruppi sociali' (2024), and of 'Sulle orme dei nostri antenati. Riappropriazioni culturali e usi del passato tra i Sami norvegesi' (2021).

George Nuku, Māori artist

georgenuku@hotmail.com, www.georgenuku.com

George Nuku (b. 1964) is a highly regarded Māori artist working in stone, bone, wood, shell, polystyrene and plastic. His works range from delicate pearl shell amulets, life-size stone and plexiglass sculptures, through to multi-storey Polynesian demi-gods and Māori culture heroes. He carries the tradition of his people, handed down for thousands of years, in an artform that promises to expand life and enhance survival. He is well known both in Aotearoa/NZ and internationally.

Amy Nygaard, PhD - Director of Museum Studies and Assistant Professor of Art History, University of St. Thomas

Amy Nygaard directs the Museum Studies program. Her research interests include postcolonial aesthetics, contemporary art of the global south, and new museum theory.

P

Marissa Perez, graduate student - Department of the History of Art, Yale University

Marissa Perez is a graduate student in the History of Art Department at Yale. Her research is focused on the circulation of Indigenous Pacific arts between the Indian Ocean, eastern "Polynesia", and their extraction to the Atlantic world between the early modern period and the nineteenth century.

Rosa Dahlia Yekti Pratiwi - Asmat Museum of Culture and Progress, West Papua

Rosa Dahlia Yekti Pratiwi has worked for more than nine years among Asmat people, West Papua, focusing on educational programme development, cultural research and archiving. She currently serves as an educator and curator at the Asmat Museum of Culture and Progress. Her interests include decolonisation, gender, and indigenous community participation.

R

Bill Rathmell, PhD – Sydney University, Oceanic Art Society

Bill Rathmell is a retired research administrator who was President of the Oceanic Art Society between 2017 and 2023.

Noëlle Rathmell-Stiels - Oceanic Art Society (OAS)

Art critic, writer and linguist, Noëlle was on the OAS committee from the beginning and is currently responsible for international communications.

Sharon Roma, Museum of Samoa - Falemata'aga

Utufa'asili Sharon Roma is a prominent museum professional in Samoa, currently serving as the Principal Museum Officer for the Museum of Samoa (Falemata'aga) within the Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture (MESOC). She has held this leadership position since January 2020, focusing on cultural heritage preservation, curating, and managing Samoa's national treasures.

Amélie Roussillon, PhD - International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS)

From 2022 to 2024 Amélie Roussillon was a postdoctoral researcher for the Dutch project "Pressing Matter, Ownership, Value and the Question of Colonial Heritage in Museums". Over the past decade, her research has focused on the history of collections from Oceania, especially from New Guinea. She now works at the International Council on Monuments and Sites.

S

Bernadette Samau, Phd - National University of Samoa

Bernadette Samau started her career at the National University of Samoa in 2012. She is currently a Senior Lecturer in Management and Marketing and the Head of the Department for Marketing and Management in the Faculty of Business and Entrepreneurship at the National University of Samoa. In addition to teaching Marketing and Management courses, Bernadette is an experienced industry trainer on tourism and customer service, tourism marketing and project management. She has facilitated various capacity-building trainings for both public and private organisations in Samoa. Bernadette is also a passionate academic researcher on issues relating to consumer behaviour, marketing psychology, cultural tourism, marketing strategy, strategic management, cultural studies and health and wellbeing.

Fadjar Schouten-Korwa, chair – Foundation of Cooperating Organisations for West Papua (SOWP)

Fadjar Schouten-Korwa is a human rights lawyer who has Dutch-Papuan roots. Fadjar is the chair of the Foundation of Cooperating Organisations for West Papua (SOWP) and she is co-founder of Papoeahuis (Papua House), which is a growing digital knowledge centre on West Papua. Through research, writing and legal support, Fadjar works to strengthen the position and visibility of the Dutch Papuan diaspora community and Indigenous Papuan communities in West Papua.

Karen Stevenson, PhD, University of Canterbury

Karen Stevenson, of Tahitian heritage, was born and raised in Los Angeles. She received her PhD in Oceanic Art History from the University of California, Los Angeles in 1988. She moved to Christchurch in 1995 to take up a position at the University of Canterbury where she is currently an Adjunct Senior Fellow. Karen has also been an active member of the Pacific Arts Association for the past 45 years and is currently its President. Her

writings and research have focused on the politics and institutionalisation of culture, art and identity, the Pacific Arts Festival, and for the past 20 years, on Contemporary Pacific Art in New Zealand. She has published widely and is the author of: *The Frangipani is Dead, Contemporary Pacific Art in New Zealand, 1985-2000*; *Johnny Peninsula, Reinventing Tradition* and *Filipe Tohi, Journey to the Present – Makahoko mei Lotokafa*.

Caroline van Santen, PhD - independent researcher

Caroline van Santen is specialized on the Marquesas Islands (PhD Sainsbury Research Centre – SRU, University of East Anglia - UEA) and is an independent researcher on Marquesan material culture and (art) history. She also works as a curator at the Zeeuws Museum, a regional cultural history museum in Middelburg, the Netherlands.

Nick Stanley, PhD, Honorary Research Fellow with the Department of Africa, Oceania and the Americas at the British Museum

Nick Stanley is an Honorary Research Fellow with the Department of Africa, Oceania and the Americas at the British Museum and has visited West Papua a number of times. He has written *The Meaning of Asmat Art: Indigenous Art in a World Perspective*, Sean Kingston Publishing, 2017.

T

Hilke Thode-Arora, PhD - Museum Fünf Kontinente, Munich

Hilke Thode-Arora is a German cultural and social anthropologist who works as a curator and head of the Oceania department at the Museum Fünf Kontinente, Munich. She specializes in Polynesia with a focus on Niue, Samoa and New Zealand. Her monographs include *Weavers of Men and Women: Niuean Weaving and its Social Implications* (2009) and *From Samoa with Love? Samoan Travellers in Germany, 1895–1911* (2014).

Nicholas Thomas, PhD – Professor, University of Cambridge

Nicholas Thomas has been director of the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology (MAA) in Cambridge since 2006. His books include ‘Oceanic Art’ (1995/2018) and ‘Gauguin and Polynesia’ (2024).

Jaap Timmer, PhD - Macquarie University Sydney, (MQ), Australia

Jaap Timmer is Associate Professor of Anthropology at Macquarie University, Sydney. He is the author of ‘Prophetic Histories’ (Berghahn 2025) and numerous articles on religion, history and sovereignty in Indonesian Papua and Solomon Islands. His recent research explores historicity, heritage and the notion of a ‘cosmic polity’ among the Asmat of Papua.

Talei Tu‘inukuafe, PhD (Sāmoa, Fiji, Ngāti Raukawa ki te Tonga, Tūhourangi), Auckland Museum (AIM)

Talei Tu‘inukuafe is the Associate Curator, Taonga Māori at Auckland Museum (AIM) and prior to this role, was the Collection Manager, Pacific. Talei has a strong background in collections and museums and recently received her doctorate in Art History from the University of Auckland (UoA). Her research centres indigenous knowledge frameworks,

to advance art historical understandings of materiality and adornment practices in precolonial Polynesia.

V

Marine Vallée, PhD - Te Fare Iamanaha - Musée de Tahiti et des Îles, EASTCO EA 4241 - University of French Polynesia

Marine Vallée is Assistant Curator at the Te Fare Iamanaha - Musée de Tahiti et des Îles. Trained in heritage and contemporary Pacific arts (Ecole du Louvre, University of Auckland), her research interests include history of collecting and curatorial practices, objects' provenance and their resonance in contemporary visual arts and cultures.

Jo Anne Van Tilburg, PhD - Associate Research Cotsen Institute of Archaeology UCLA
Jo Anne Van Tilburg is director of the UCLA Rock Art Archive and of the Easter Island Statue Project (EISP). She currently serves on the Governing Board, the Archaeological Institute of America (AIA).

Caroline Vercoe, PhD - Art History, School of Humanities, Faculty of Arts and Education, University of Auckland (UoA).

Associate Professor Caroline Vercoe (Samoa, Aotearoa New Zealand) teaches Global Art Histories, Pacific Art Histories and Visual Culture, and Contemporary Art in Aotearoa New Zealand at Waipapa Taumata Rau - The University of Auckland. She is also the Associate Dean Pacific in the Faculty of Arts and Education. Caroline specialises in contemporary Pacific art and performance art, with a particular interest in issues of race, gender and representation.

Wonu Veys, PhD, Prof – Wereldmuseum, Leiden University

Wonu Veys is curator Oceania at the Wereldmuseum and is also a professor by special appointment in the 'Arts and Material Culture of Oceania' at Leiden University. Her topics of interest and expertise include museums and cultures of collecting, Pacific musical instruments, Pacific textiles, gender, missionary collections, and the significance of historical objects in a contemporary setting.

Beatrice Voirol, PhD - Museum der Kulturen Basel MKB, Switzerland

Beatrice Voirol has been the Museum der Kulturen Basel MKB's curator of Oceanian collections since 2013. She is involved in various collaborative projects with communities in the Pacific, lectures in Anthropology at the University of Basel (UNIBAS), and is investigating the provenance of the MKB's collections.

Paul Voogt, curator of the Missiemuseum in Steyl

Paul Voogt is an anthropologist by training and curator of Missiemuseum Steyl since 2022. He engages in provenance research of the collection.

W

Andreas Wahyu, graduate - Asmat Cultural Archives and Research Centre (ACARC)

Andreas Wahyu is a graduate of the Driyarkara School of Philosophy in Jakarta. He then worked for six years as a facilitator for the Asmat Indigenous Community. Then, he was a curator and coordinator of the Archives and Research Program at the Asmat Museum of

Culture and Progress. Currently, he is a researcher and archivist at the Asmat Cultural Archives and Research Center.

Maggie Wander, PhD - Assistant Professor of Art History & Co-Executive Editor of Pacific Arts, Santa Clara University (SCU), USA

Maggie Wander is Assistant Professor at Santa Clara University and researches contemporary art, colonialism, and climate change in Oceania. She received her PhD in Visual Studies (University of California (UC) Santa Cruz), was previously Senior Research Associate at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (MET), and is currently co-Executive Editor of Pacific Arts.

Tiko Waundu, Principal Curator of the Anthropology Department at the National Museum and Art Gallery in Port Moresby

Tiko Waundu is an anthropologist and Principal Curator of the Anthropology Department at the National Museum and Art Gallery (NMAG) in Port Moresby since 2009, curating and managing the anthropological collections.

Madi Williams, PhD - Aotahi: School of Māori and Indigenous Studies, University of Canterbury (UC), New Zealand

Madi Williams (Ngāti Kuia, Ngāti Koata, Rangitāne o Wairau, Ngāti Apa ki te Rā Tō) is a Senior Lecturer in Aotahi School of Māori and Indigenous Studies at the University of Canterbury. She is currently researching taniwha (guardian creatures) and their various representations.

Carolina Winkelmann, curator - Asmat Art Galerie

Carolina Winkelmann has worked as curator at the Asmat Art Galerie, Mönchengladbach and Berlin and has also been a frequent visitor to Asmat. She co-edited *Asmat : Mythos und Kunst im Leben mit den Ahnen*, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, 1996.

X

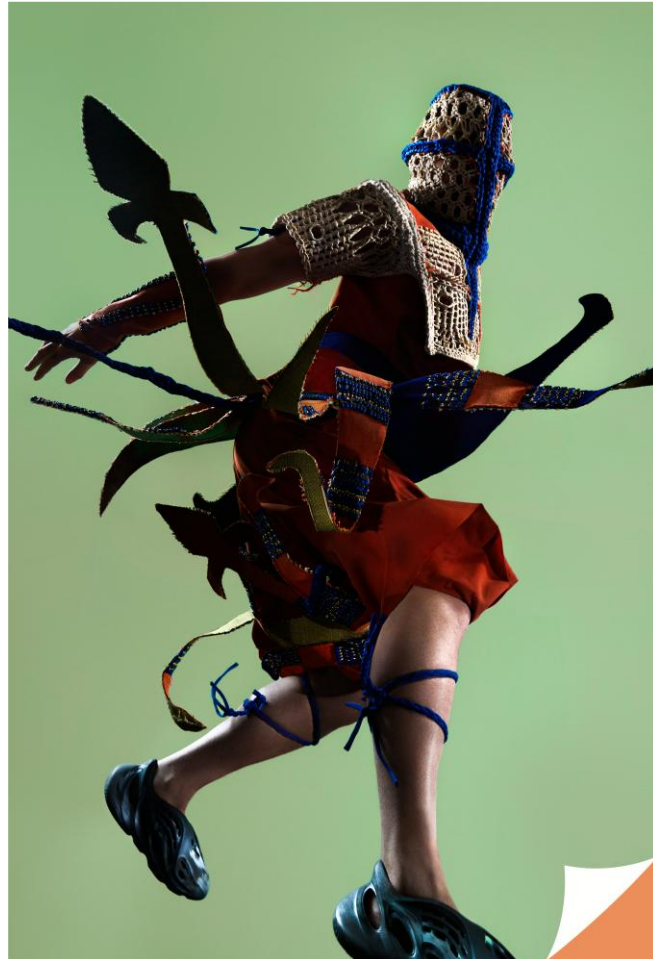
Stéphanie Xatart, art historian

Stéphanie Xatart is an art historian specialising in the arts of Oceania. She was a Research Assistant at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, where she was responsible for the Oceanic collection, and co-curator of *Material Journeys: Collecting African and Oceanic Art, 1945–2000*. Her research focuses on the materiality and agency of works of art, examining materials, artistic processes and aesthetics as generative of meaning and as instruments for subverting overly simplified categorisations. She is co-curator of the exhibition *Plumes from Paradise*.

Z

Carine Zaayman, Researcher and Research Coordinator at the RCMC/Wereldmuseum
As an artist, curator and scholar, Carine is committed to critical engagement with colonial archives and collections, specifically those holding strands of Khoekhoe pasts. Her work focuses on the afterlives of slavery and colonialism, particularly in the Cape, by bringing intangible and neglected histories into view. Her research aims to contribute to a radical reconsideration of colonial archives and museum collections, especially by

assisting in finding ways to release their hold over our imaginations when we narrate the past, as well as how we might shape futures from it.



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