

Rod Ewins, *Fijian Artefacts: Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery Collection*. Hobart: Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, 1982. Pp. vi, 115, illustrations (no price available).

Clarity is the keynote of this excellent catalogue, from the impressive, glossy color-cover to the review of its contents on the back cover. The introduction explains how a wide diversity of nineteenth-century Fijian artifacts came to be housed at Hobart, Tasmania by contacts between Fiji and Hobart through whalers, traders, amateur collectors, and the Hobart Wesleyan Mission headquarters.

The subsequent five chapters illustrate and comment on approximately two hundred items--barkcloth, wooden artifacts, pottery, fiber articles, and a small miscellaneous category. Book design, photographs, ex-

planatory drawings, and attributions are provided by the author, Rod Ewins, a professional artist who was born and raised on Fiji and is now the Senior Lecturer in the School of Art at the University of Tasmania. His presentation is suitably descriptive and factual. He supplies Fijian terms, identifies materials, and describes craft procedures in a manner that makes this book a valuable single-source reference work on Fiji material culture.

Each section of the catalogue first provides a few paragraphs of general information, usually including nineteenth-century descriptions of the craft or its uses. Ewins then discusses individual pieces in an informative way; his observations on quality and provenience are useful because he gives reasons for his decisions.

The book concentrates on barkcloth and clubs, the two best-known Fiji artifacts. In his introduction to barkcloth, Ewins offers detailed information on materials and types specific to Fiji: white, patterned, and smoked. That women produce this material is amply illustrated by his photographs, though he does not mention it. His discussion of the designs as a means of "clan recognition" is especially good. Designs to this day are jealously guarded by their rightful owners and "pirating" for commercial purposes is deeply resented. Fiji-designed barkcloth seems easy to recognize; nevertheless, his summary of eight technical features will be valuable to museums, dealers, and all general buyers.

Clubs were ubiquitous artifacts on Fiji, used by men and women seemingly on every public occasion. Using Fergus Clunie's *Fijian Weapons and Warfare* (1977, Suva), Ewins classifies and describes the several types of war, dance, and ceremonial clubs. Other wooden artifacts that have won admiration are well illustrated, among them many-legged bowls for kava drinking and shallow bowls for priests' drinking rites. Ewins does not deal with their aesthetic appeal as abstract forms but offers useful comments on shapes and special features.

The technique of Fiji pottery, already well treated in ethnographic literature, is clearly summarized. Three examples of the water jars are beautifully illustrated in color, but most exciting to me are the three photographs of women shaping, firing, and applying resin finish to pots, all taken by the author in 1981. It is especially worthwhile to have factual information and identification of fiber works, baskets, and mats in one source, although more about the use of baskets should have been included. The most interesting miscellaneous item discussed is the presentation whale's tooth. Ewins disagrees with the current notion that this highly significant talisman was introduced to Fiji only during the whaling period.

Drawings and photographs from nineteenth-century publications and archival sources greatly enrich each section. I was especially pleased to see a number of photographs of contemporary craft work and ceremonies, taken by the Fiji Information Service and the author. In addition to its value for the historical and factual record, the alternating rhythm of text and illustrations, and the clear type and fine quality paper give this catalogue an artistic value that should appeal to a wide audience beyond Pacific specialists.

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