



Pacific Gallery Masks

South Australian Museum

The Pacific Islander people often make masks for use in ceremonies organised to celebrate special occasions such as weddings, funerals, or when boys and girls become adults, the harvesting of yams and when they set out on a sea voyage.



south australian museum education



This Outreach Education Program for schools is made possible by the partnership between the South Australian Museum and the Department of Education and Children's Services. Outreach Education is a team of seconded teachers, managed through the Open Access College, who are based in public institutions.

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Malekula, New Hebrides (Vanuatu). Upright case in the middle of the gallery, 'Spirits of Vanuatu'.

The people of Vanuatu were excellent seamen. This mask, *bang-ulu*, represents a maritime sea spirit. The tropical bird featured is a tern called *soliiip* known to fly hundreds of kilometres for food. It was followed by sailors to find land. The mask is modelled on a cane frame. Spiderwebs were used to give shape, and the mask is decorated with seaweed, ochres and vegetable fibres.



Papua New Guinea (southern side). Mask, (eharo), eastern Elema people, Papuan Gulf, PNG.



New Ireland (north western corner).

The 'tatenua' face mask is carved and painted, and features a large crest-like mop of hair.

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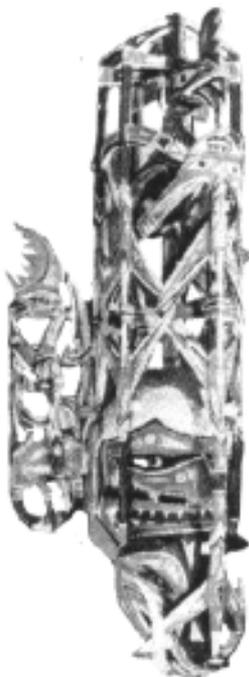
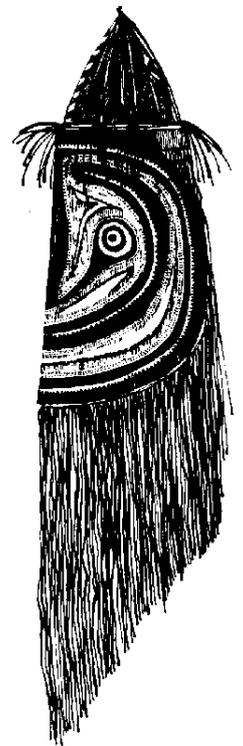


Lower Sepik River Mask (north eastern corner, near lift).

A carved and painted wooden mask. As is common throughout the lower Sepik area, the face is elongated and the nose exaggerated, the eyes are decorated with shells.

New Britain (Western side, opposite Sulka masks).

On this mask, traditional patterns have been used with modern paints. In New Britain the blue colour was traditionally obtained from shells. The mask is constructed from a sheet of bark, topped with a dome of fern leaves and cane, and a shawl of bark fibre.



New Ireland (north western corner).

The dramatic masks of New Ireland were produced by professional artists for use in the 'malangan' feast and ceremony that honoured the memory of a dead relative. The large 'openwork' mask is produced as a series of carved panels that fit together. A pig's snout with a human face above it is surrounded by a collection of carved birds, snakes and fish.

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Papua New Guinea Masks

1. Mask (eharo). From the Kerema area, eastern Elema people, Papuan Gulf, PNG.

Middle Sepik River Mask (north eastern corner near lift).

A large woven cane mask decorated with clay and ochre, completed with a cape or shawl of twisted grass fibres. The style is common within the middle Sepik River region.



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Dance masks made by the Sulka people, East new Britain Province, PNG.



In January 1982, a *hemlaut* mask was danced to celebrate the induction of a Sulka man into the Franciscan priesthood. This mask, which was collected by the PNG National Museum, featured a nativity scene below the "umbrel-la"— Mary, Joseph and two angels surrounding Jesus in a manger. The mask was named "Bethlehem".

The *susu* mask has a fringe of long leaves attached round its base and is worn on top of the head; the wearer has another "skirt" of long leaves suspended from shoulder straps. When the "spirit" stands straight, it appears to be over seven feet (2.1 metres) tall; when it crouches it shrinks almost by half. *Susu* masks are danced several in a line. Photo: Tagul village 1993; SA Museum.

